

Reserved Matters Design Statement

Land adjacent to Mepal Road,
Sutton, Cambridgeshire

May 2022

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Introduction

Vistry Homes is seeking approval for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping (“the Reserved Matters”) for 164 dwellings (excludes self-build plots) pursuant to the Outline Planning Permission ref: 19/01707/OUM (“the OPP”) granted on the 12th April 2022 by East Cambridgeshire District on land adjacent to Mepal Road, Sutton, Cambridgeshire.

The OPP approved the provision of up to 173 dwellings, including 5% self-build plots, alongside new public open space, village green, football pitches and land for a new burial ground. The OPP also approved vehicular access to the site via a new junction off Mepal Road (see approved drawing C5081-M-012 001 Rev A).

The reserved matters application area comprises circa 15.29 hectares of the site. It excludes the area for the Burial Ground Land and area for the proposed Self-Build plots.

Vistry homes intend to deliver the new homes under the Linden Homes brand as a continuation of the adjacent Laithwaite Gardens (Phase 1) new build development (nearing completion).

Purpose

This Design Statement has been prepared to provide an explanation of the Reserved Matters proposals in the context of the outline planning permission and local and national planning policy. It builds upon the analysis and principles set out within the Design and Access Statement submitted with the outline planning application. The application seeks approval of the following Reserved Matters:

- **Layout** – defined as the way buildings, routes and open spaces within a development are situated and orientated about each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development.

- **Scale** – defined as the height, width and length of each building proposed in relation to its surroundings.
- **Appearance** – defined as the aspects of a building, or place, within the development that decide how a visual impression is made. This includes the external form of a development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.
- **Landscaping** – defined as the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of a site. This includes screening by fences, walls or other means the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks the laying out or provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art the provision of other amenity features.

Structure

This Design Statement is set out as follows:

- **Planning Application History** – sets out the planning history of the site to date in terms of the outline planning permission.
- **Planning Policy and Design Guidance** – provides an overview of the local and national planning policy and design guidance relevant to the Reserved Matters.
- **Site Context** – provides an overview of the site’s location and surroundings, along with a constraints and opportunities analysis of the site and an analysis of the local vernacular.
- **Design Proposals** – explains the key principles of the proposed layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.

Planning Application History

Outline Planning Permission

Outline Planning Permission was granted on the 12th April 2022, subject to conditions and a S106 Legal Agreement, for the following description of development:

“Demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 173 dwellings and provision of land for community facilities (sports pitches and burial ground), including access (not internal roads), open space, sustainable urban drainage systems and associated landscaping. All matters reserved apart from access”

Development Framework Plan

At the outline planning stage, a Development Framework Plan (see extract at Figure 1) was prepared to show the disposition of land uses and a proposed movement structure. It also identified elements required through the neighbourhood plan policy such as the village green, football pitches, landscape and wildlife corridors. Key design principles include:

- New housing will reflect the urban grain of the adjacent residential areas in terms of density and layout.
- Network of connected routes utilising both new streets and recreational footways.
- The secondary streets and open spaces have been aligned to provide framed view corridors towards the Grade I Listed church, creating a strong sense of place by anchoring the development into its surroundings.
- The development area will be set back from the northern edge of the site, behind an area of new landscaping and open space to provide a robust edge to the redefined settlement envelope.
- The new homes will be set back from the eastern boundary of the site, to provide areas of new tree and scrub planting and to soften views of the homes from the approach along the A142. This area will also accommodate a landscaped bund to mitigate against potential noise concerns from the A142.

- New areas of open space will accommodate a range of green infrastructure uses, including community facilities, a village green, and a burial ground. These uses are located in the western portion of the site and integrate the development with the existing pitches and bowls club located to the southwest.
- Areas of incidental green space within the development will provide space for children’s play areas, and informal recreation.
- New tree and hedge planting throughout the development and within the new areas of public open space will result in a net gain of tree cover on the site.

Outline Planning Conditions and Obligations

There are planning conditions attached to the OPP which require certain details to be submitted with any Reserved Matters application, including:

- Condition 18 requires a site-wide Biodiversity Strategy.
- Condition 21 requires details of the noise attenuation bund along the north-eastern boundary of the site.
- Condition 23 requires a noise impact assessment.
- Condition 25 requires an energy and sustainability strategy.

These documents should be read alongside this Design Statement.

The S106 Legal Agreement secures the provision of the following:

- 30% affordable housing comprising 77% affordable rent and 23% shared ownership.
- Public Open Space and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- Community Facilities (Village Green and Football Pitches) of not less than 3.10ha, comprising one main youth pitch and one ‘nine vs nine’ pitch.
- Minimum of 5% self-build plots.
- Burial Ground Land of not less than 0.47ha.



Figure 1: Extract of Development Framework Plan 4405_105_G prepared by CSA Environmental

Planning Policy and Design Guidance

Sutton Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2019)

The site forms part of allocation **Policy NP4 Land north of The Brook and west of Mepal Road** for:

- i. 'approximately 250 homes, including affordable homes, providing a mix of house types and sizes from starter homes to family homes and retirement homes to meet the requirements of the village;*
- ii. integrated and expanded community facilities including:*
 - a. a new village green, all weather pitch and sports pitches located adjacent to the existing facilities at the primary school and Brooklands Centre;*
 - b. areas of play for infants, juniors and youths at appropriate locations throughout the development in accordance with adopted guidelines;*
 - c. the provision of land for a burial ground on-site, or the facilitation of provision at a suitable location elsewhere in the village;*
- iii. the retention of existing landscape features and provision of new extensive landscape and wildlife areas and landscape screening from the A142;*
- iv. safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists from the site to the village centre (through The Orchards), primary school and recreation facilities (through Stirling Way); and*
- v. vehicular access from Mepal Road.'*

Other relevant policies include:

- **Policy NP7 Housing Mix** – states that new development will be supported where it provides a mix of housing types and sizes that reflects the needs of local people.
- **Policy NP2 Protecting and Maintaining Features of Landscape and Biodiversity Value** – states that all development proposals will be expected to retain existing features of landscape and biodiversity value and, where practical to do so, provide a net gain in biodiversity.

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted 2015)

- **Policy HOU1: Housing Mix** – requires an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes that contribute to current and future housing needs, including a proportion of dwellings that are suitable or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities (Lifetime Homes standard or equivalent).
- **Policy HOU2: Housing density** – states that appropriate density will be judged on a site-by-site basis taking into account existing character, efficient use of land, residential amenity, with large sites providing a range of densities.
- **Policy HOU3: Affordable housing provision** – requires the affordable housing to be physically integrated into the open market housing development by using appropriate design methods.
- **Policy ENV1: Landscape and settlement character** – states that development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, form, design, materials, colour, edge treatment and structural landscaping will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect, conserve, and possibly enhance landscape and settlement character.

- **Policy ENV2: Design** – identifies numerous design criteria for All development will be designed to a high quality, enhancing and complementing local distinctiveness and public amenity by relating well to existing features and introducing appropriate new designs. regard to local context including architectural traditions and does not take advantage of opportunities to preserve, enhance or enrich the character, appearance and quality of an area
- **Policy ENV7: Biodiversity and geology** – requires development proposals to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of land.
- **Policy ENV8: Flood Risk** – seeks the use of sustainable drainage systems for flood risk reduction.
- **Policy COM7: Transport Impact** – seeks permeability and connectivity within development proposals.
- **Policy COM8: Parking Provision** – states that development proposals should provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking and make provision for parking broadly in accordance with the Council's parking standards. For C3 residential, the standard is 2.4 car spaces per dwelling as an average across the development.

East Cambridgeshire Design Guide (2013)

The East Cambridgeshire Design Guide SPD states that the character of a new development will need to address the urban/rural, historical, and geographical context as well as links to other places and sets out locally appropriate development forms. It also provides guidance to acceptable plot sizes, garden sizes and separation distances.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Chapter 12 of the NPPF encourages designs that are sympathetic to local character, establishing and maintaining a strong sense of place through the arrangement of streets and spaces, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide.

National Design Guide (2021)

The National Design Guide was published by the Government in January 2021. This National Design Guide, along with the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools. The NDG sets out Ten Characteristics:

- Context: Enhances the surroundings
- Identity: attractive and distinctive
- Built Form: a coherent pattern of development
- Movement: accessible and easy to move around
- Nature: enhanced and optimised
- Public Spaces: safe, social and inclusive
- Uses: mixed and integrated
- Homes & buildings: Functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources: Efficient and resilient
- Lifespan: made to last

Site Context

Location

The site lies on the northern edge of the village of Sutton to the west of Ely. It comprises two agricultural fields; a large broadly rectangular arable field to the east, separated by a dense hedgerow from a smaller, rectangular pastoral field to the west and is accessed from the south-east along Mepal Road. Linden Homes' Laithwaite Gardens (Phase 1) new build development is located to the south-east, with the remainder of the southern boundary defined by the rear garden boundaries of properties on St Andrews Close, with further residential properties beyond.

The western site boundary is marked by intermittent scrub vegetation with agricultural fields beyond. To the north, lies a farm track with further agricultural land beyond and to the east lies Mepal Road and the A142.

Constraints and Opportunities

A number of constraints and opportunities were identified at the outline planning stage based on a suite of supporting technical and design assessment work. The key constraints and opportunities relevant to the Reserved Matters:

- Location of vehicular access approved under 19/01707/OUM.
- Provision of a new landscape wildlife corridor along the northern and eastern edges of the development.
- Location of attenuation basins and swales dictated by site levels and outfall location.
- Provision of a landscape bund to help mitigate road noise from A142 and provide screening to enhance outlook for future residents.
- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible.
- Need to respect the amenity of existing dwellings along the southern boundary by offsetting residential development and providing a landscaped edge.

- Integration of public open space and creation of two focal spaces within the core of the development, along with corridors with walking routes
- Provision of new Locally Equipped Area of Play and LAP.
- Location of self-build plots informed by delivery, build routes and construction timings.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the site (OPP red line boundary)

Local Character Analysis

Immediate surroundings

Laithwaite Gardens – features a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings with parking allocated to the front or side of dwellings. Building materials comprise predimatively buff and yellow gault bricks, with some use of red brick, and red and grey concrete tiles. Dwellings feature with cottage style casements, pitched dormer, flat portico stule door canopies, arch brick headers and stone cills.

St Andrews Close – comprises 21st century development, featuring smaller lanes and mews accessed off the principal route of Stirling Way. A variety of house types and variations in ridge heights creates interest in the streetscene. Materials used in this development comprise buff coloured brick and red roof tiles, and are generally reflective of the local character. features buff coloured brick and red roof tiles

The Orchards – comprises mid-late 20th century development with semi-detached and terraced properties and bungalows. Building materials comprise red and buff brick with red and grey concrete tiles.



Figure 3: Image of Laithwaite Gardens development



Figure 4: Image of St Andrews Close development



Figure 5: Image of The Orchards

Sutton Historic Core

Sutton's historic core is focussed along the High Street, the main thoroughfare through the village. The grain of development is historically linear with properties located on the back edge of the footpath, with gardens behind. There are several lanes perpendicular to High Street that run north and south. There is a mixture of terraced and detached properties as well as historic and modern in fill.

There are a variety of building materials and styles within the village. The majority of buildings are brick built in buff and red shades with a mix of slate and tiled roofs. Several along the High Street have also been rendered or painted, mostly in cream/white shades.



Figure 6: Images of Sutton High Street

Architectural details and materials

The below sets out examples of the architectural details and materials within the historic parts of Sutton.



Design Evolution

Pre-application engagement

Pre-application advice on the draft Reserved Matters proposals was sought from East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council Highways. A meeting was held with officers, along with an independent urban design consultant from Place Services. Below is a summary of the feedback received which has been addressed where possible within the Reserved Matters submission:

- Support for the general arrangement and approach to access off Mepal Road. The approach to open space, block structure and drainage follow the outline principles.
- Need to maximise the frontage with Mepal Road through use of built form and landscaping to create a gateway into the development.
- Consider the relationship between the new development and Laithwaite Gardens (Phase 1).
- Create a strong tree lined and building frontage to the spine road, with active frontages.
- Reconsider location of bungalows rather than located on spine road.
- Ensure a connected landscape approach
- Consider need for natural surveillance to the south-west corner of the site through re-positioning of new homes and overlooking of parking courts.
- New homes should relate to the historic centre of Sutton or the rural edge character in terms of a combined approach to detailing and materials.

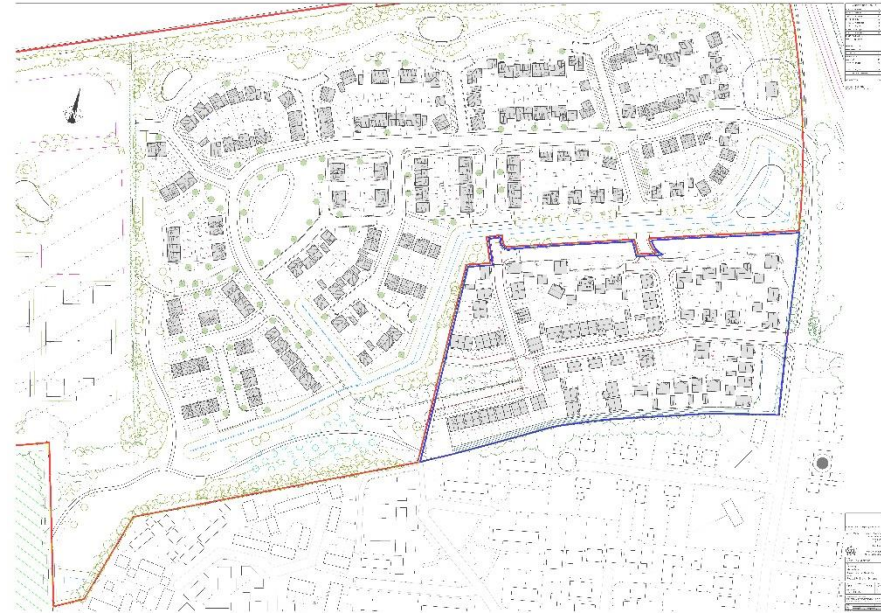


Figure 7: Extract of Feasibility Sketch Scheme presented at the pre-application stage

Design Proposals

Use and Amount

This Reserved Matters application seeks approval of the detail for 164 dwellings and associated parking, 4.16ha of open space and 1ha of sustainable urban drainage. It also includes the layout and landscaping for the village green and football pitches.

Housing Mix

164 dwellings comprising 112 market dwellings and 52 affordable dwellings are proposed.

Type	Market	Affordable	Total
1 bed		8	8
2 bed	8	28	36
3 bed	56	14	70
4 bed	48	2	50

In accordance with Policy HOU1, an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes are proposed to contribute to current and future housing needs. The proposed mix includes a notable amount of one, two and smaller three-bedroom properties to meet local need. The proposed mix also includes a proportion of dwellings which are suitable or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities, including four bungalows and four ground floor maisonettes. The proposed housetypes also offer options for home-working. Overall, the proposed mix seeks to meet local need, market demand and to make most efficient use of the land.

The affordable dwellings are shown in clusters of no more than 15 dwellings and are designed to be indistinguishable from the market dwellings. The proposed affordable mix has been informed by advice received from Kim Langley, Housing specialist strategy and enabling officer from East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Layout

The proposed layout follows the key design principles set out in the Development Framework Plan:

- Hierarchy of streets with a central spine road leading to shared surface streets and private drives.
- 4.16ha of open space set within landscape corridors and a central formal area.
- 400sqm LEAP, along with an informal natural play area.
- 2.5m high landscape bund in the north-eastern corner to offer screening and noise mitigation.
- Retention of existing vegetation where possible.
- Inclusion of sustainable urban drainage features including a large attenuation basin and several swales.

To protect the amenity of future occupiers, plot depths have been designed to ensure a back-to-back distance of at least 20 m is achieved, with a minimum garden length of 10m (unless garden space for maisonettes). In most cases, dwellings have a minimum of 50sqm of private amenity space, unless it is a maisonette.



Figure 8: Extract of submitted Planning Site Layout

Movement and Street Hierarchy

Following the street hierarchy illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and guidance within the Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Development Management General Principles for Development (May 2021), the proposed layout accommodates the following hierarchy of streets:

- **Spine Road** – 5.5m carriageway width with 2m wide footways on each side.
- **Shared Surface Streets** – 6m width block paved carriageway with 0.5m paved maintenance strips and no surface delineation.
- **Private Drives** – min of 4.1m width, where possible, and limited to serving around five dwellings.

The application is accompanied by swept path analysis (tracking) to show that the streets can accommodate emergency and service vehicles. It is our intention to seek adoption of the secondary streets and shared surface streets by the Local Highway Authority.

At the outline planning stage, it was also proposed to provide vehicular connections north-south and east-west through to Laithwaite Gardens (Phase 1). Due to the location of the drainage swales and the roads not being adopted and remaining private within Laithwaite Gardens, these vehicle connections have been omitted. However, a further cycle/footpath link is proposed.

Pedestrian Routes

A new 2m informal footpath will run predominately around the perimeter of the site to provide an attractive circular leisure route, with connections to the village green and football pitches. It will also connect into the 3m footpath/cycle on Laithwaite Gardens through into The Orchards, along with connecting to the PROW and new 2m footpath located adjacent the site entrance.

Car Parking

The proposed layout provides an average of 2 spaces per 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings and 3 spaces per 4 bedroom dwelling (including garage in some instances). This accords with Local Plan Policy COM8 requirement for an average of 2 car parking spaces per property across the development.

A variety of car parking typologies is being proposed to ensure that car parking does not dominate the street scene, with a mixture of on-plot frontage parking and side tandem parking.

44no. visitor parking spaces which accords with the 'up to 1 space per 4 dwellings' set out within Local Plan Policy COM8.

Cycle Storage

Cycle parking will be provided either within secure rear garden sheds or appropriately sized garages.

Bins

The proposed layout ensures that all required drag distances and bin collection distances are met in accordance with RECAP and ECDC waste guidance.

Scale and Density

The proposed dwellings are predominately 2 storeys, with some 2.5 storeys to add variety to the street scene and terminate key vistas.

A looser grain and lower density of development, comprising detached and semi-detached dwellings with a varied building line, is proposed along the northern and eastern sections of the site providing an appropriate edge and transition to the open countryside. More centrally, the development becomes denser with rows of terraced dwellings introduced. The average net density for the residential development area is 30 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Appearance

A traditional approach is taken to architectural design as per Phase 1 and to reflect the local vernacular of Sutton. Two character areas have been created through use of building form, architectural detail, materials, boundary treatments and landscaping.

Rural and POS Edge

The Rural and POS edges to the development are defined by informal building lines featuring larger detached dwellings and pairs of semi-detached dwellings. Dwellings feature soldier arch head detail, brick cills and 'A' frame door canopies and cottage style doors.



Figure 9: Example of Rural and POS Edge house type design

Spine Road

Dwellings fronting the Spine Road have been given a more formal appearance through the introduction of stone headers and cills or brick voussoir detail. Dwellings are set back from the road to create a landscaped, tree-lined street. Portico style canopies and formal panel doors are proposed.



Figure 10: Example of Spine Road house type design

Materials palette

Use of predominately buff brick with some red brick and roughcast render to feature plots to add visual interest.



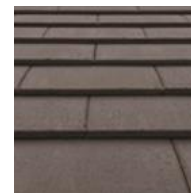
Buff Brick



Red Brick



Ivory Render



Grey Roof Tiles



Red Roof Tiles

Landscaping

Public Open Space and Play

The proposed size and location of the new areas of open space and play (excluding village green and football pitches) follow the principles shown on the Development Framework Plan, including:

- 4.16ha of natural, semi-natural and amenity open space
- 400sqm LEAP 4 and informal area of natural play

The open space areas will be seeded with wildflower grassland, wet wildflower grassland (in the SuDS area) with over 200 new urban street trees proposed. Amenity grassland will also be provided for recreational use. Native plant species will be used to create the wildflower, wet wildflower grassland and marginal plug planting.

On-plot landscaping

New trees and formal areas of shrub planting will be provided. Enhanced landscaping will be proposed for dwellings fronting the public realm, such as the use of semi-formal boundary hedgerows to define the public and private realm. Sufficient space will be provided for areas of new landscaping areas to soften and break up the appearance of frontage car parking.

Community Facilities: Village Green and Football Pitches

The Reserved Matters application includes proposals for the soft landscaping for the village green and football pitches area. The village green features a large area of amenity grassland surrounding by areas of wildflower and scrub planting.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A Biodiversity Net Gain has been calculated for the site based on the proposed detailed landscaping and drainage designs. New habitats are created through wildflower grassland, wet wildflower grassland, new trees

including an orchard area, wet features within the attenuation basins with marginal plug planting.

Boundary hedgerows and tree lines will be retained where possible, with existing gaps used for access. Additional species-rich native hedgerow and ornamental hedgerows are proposed at suitable locations throughout the development and at residential frontages. A number of ornamental shrubs be used in the residential areas.

The DEFRA Metric 3.0 overall score is a gain of 14.82% for habitat units and a 401.45% gain for hedgerows/linear features.

In addition, the following enhancements are proposed:

- Bird and bat boxes to be erected onto new dwellings and retained mature trees (where possible)
- Hedgehog gaps to be created in garden fences to ensure small mammal movement is maintained throughout the site.
- Areas of hibernacula with Open Space to benefit reptiles, amphibians etc.

