

Design & Access Statement

Land at Linner Farm Cottage,
Halebank Road, Widnes

September 2024



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SECTION

01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 FOREWORD

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Highall Developments Ltd in support of their Full Planning Application for residential development on land at Linner Farm Cottage, Halebank Road, Widnes. The proposals comprise 39 affordable dwellings with associated access and landscaping and demolition of several vacant outbuildings.

This application seeks planning permission for the development of land North of Halebank Road, for residential purposes.

This document should be read in conjunction with the supporting planning and heritage statements, supplementary drawings and technical reports. The purpose of this DAS is to describe the site, its context, the design concept and principles which will inform the final design.

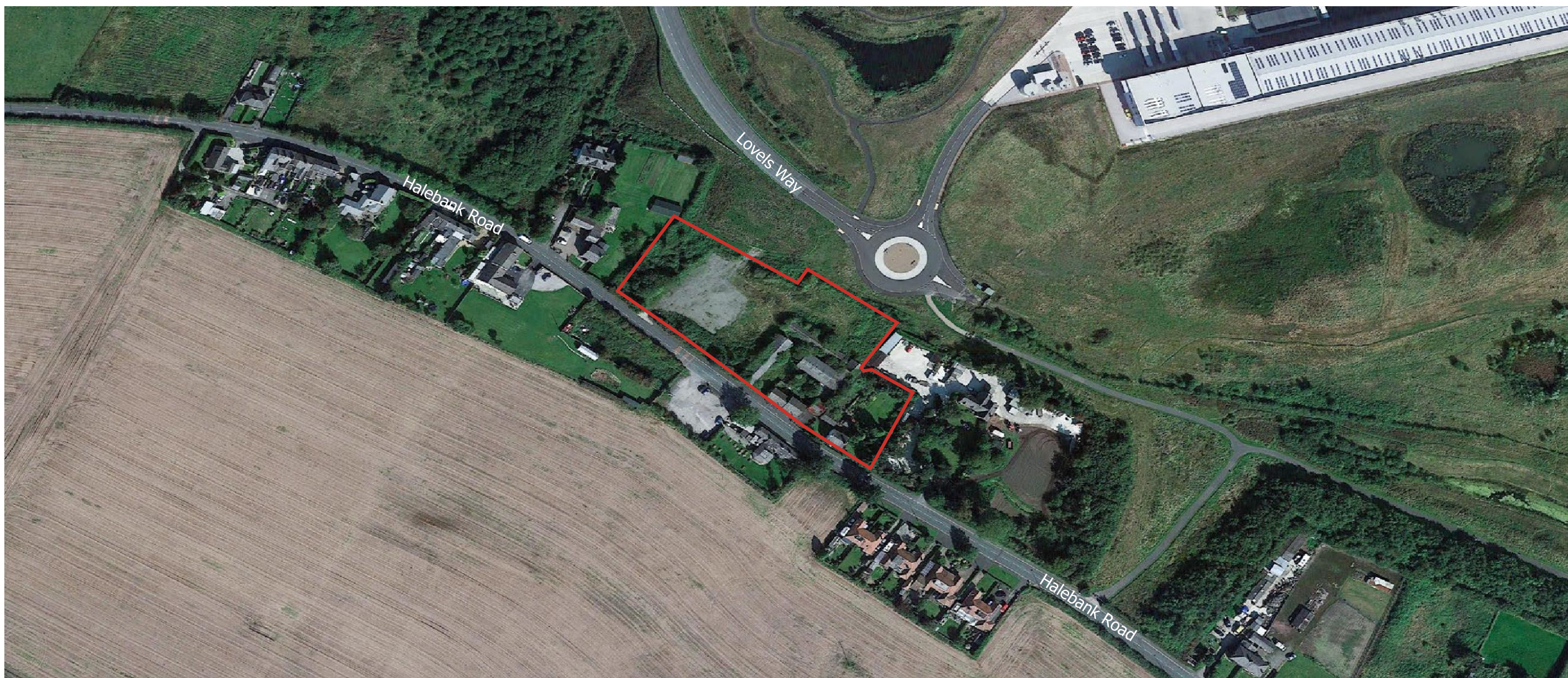
The structure of this document and the detail within follows the guidance from CABE's 'Design and Access Statements: How to read and use them' (2006) and Part 2, Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

This Statement is set out as follows:

- Section 2: Context Analysis - an assessment of the site's wider context in terms of urban structure, historic development, streets and landscape character.
- Section 3: Site Analysis - a more detailed focus of the site and immediate surroundings in terms of townscape and visual structure; movement and connections; environmental assets; and residential amenity, concluding

with key opportunities for development of the site.

- Section 4: The Scheme - parameters for the site, supported by a final layout that demonstrates how the site can be developed in accordance with the parameters including key design principles which shows how the scheme ties into the surrounding vernacular, incorporating architectural details, materials, and scale of building, with reference to landscaping.
- Section 5: Summary and Conclusions



Site Location Plan, with application boundary edged in red.

SECTION

02

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

The site, measuring 0.8 hectares, is mostly rectangular and located North of Halebank Road, in Widnes. It features open grassland on its Northern, Western and Eastern side, designated as open space and part of a greenway.

The open area to the North acts as a buffer from the nearby major transport technology centre (Alstom Transport Technology Centre) and a railway further North.

To the East, the site is bordered by a detached private dwelling, with a number of outbuildings, hardstanding and private gardens.

To the West, the site is bordered by outbuildings, private gardens and semi-detached dwellings.

The sites landscape consists of a mix of outbuildings, constructed in red brick, associated with Linner Farm Cottage. The Eastern portion includes the grounds of Linner Farm Cottage, a three-bedroom dwelling. West of the cottage, the site comprises a cluster of farm buildings, most of which have fallen out of disrepair and adjacent land, including some hardstanding areas. Additionally, the Western section of the site, characterised by open scrubland, is designated as Green Belt.



Image Locator Plan



2.2 CONTEXT PLAN

The contextual analysis on the right shows the distribution of local amenities and services within reasonable walking distance to the development site.

The NPPF highlights the importance of sustainable transport and pursuing sustainable development through the promotion of walking and cycling.

It is commonly accepted that walking has the greatest potential to replace short car journeys, in particular those under 2km. The plan opposite shows the 400m (approx. 6 minute walk), 800m (approx. 9 minute walk) and 1km (approx. 12 minute walk) catchment areas. Walking represents an alternative to the car for short range 'top up' shopping trips and local leisure journeys to the nearby town.

The site benefits from excellent accessibility, with various public transport hubs nearby. It is primarily situated in a residential area, enriched with community amenities such as convenience stores, eateries and recreational grounds such as public parks and allotments.



Within 800m of the site lies the Halebank primary school as well as a number of recreational amenities such as the Halebank Park and children's play area. Other community facilities such as eateries, convenience stores and bus stops

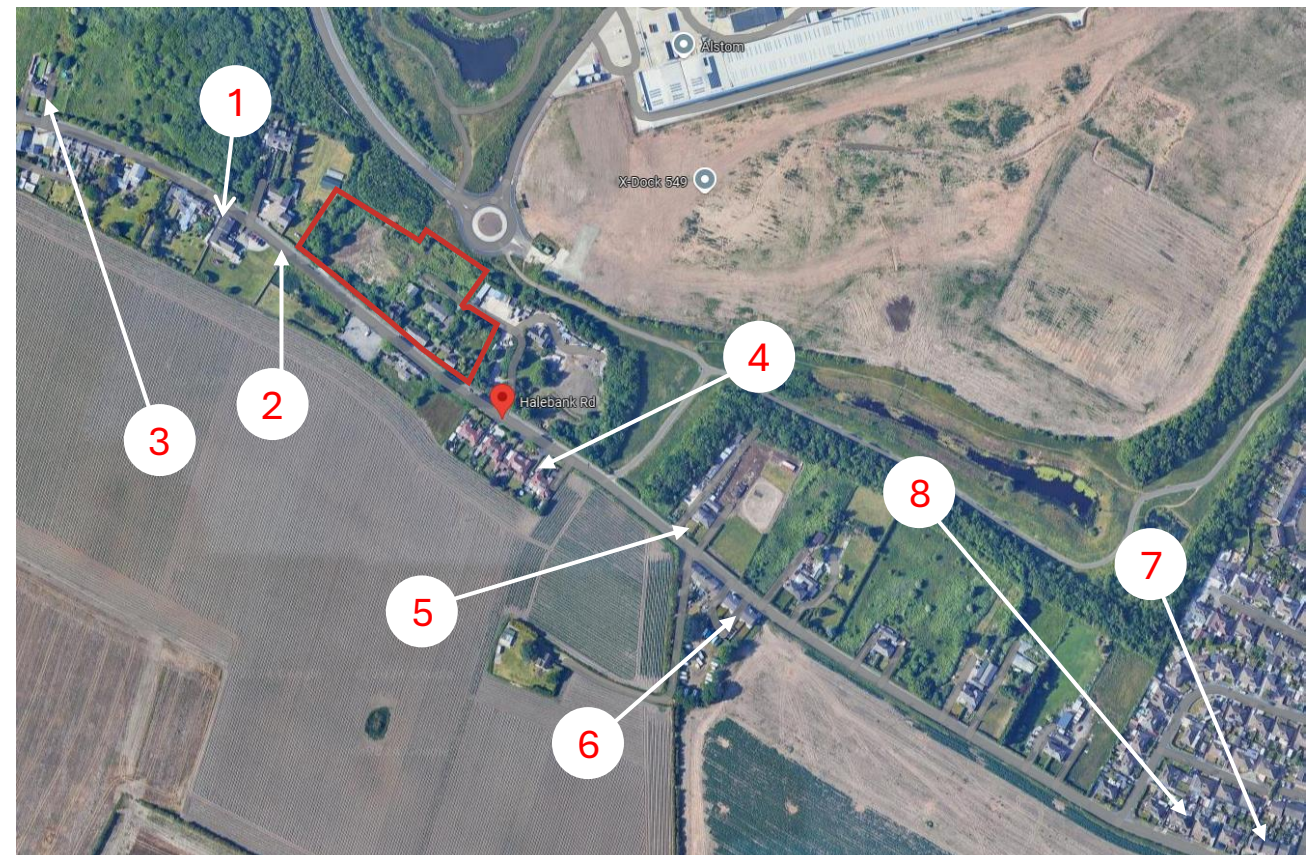
are located within 1km of the site. All of the aforementioned facilities can be reached using either the adopted highway pavements, or the network of off-road paths, both of which are illustrated within the above context plan.

Due to the site's proximity to services and public transport services, the reliance on the use of a private car or vehicle will be reduced, which can only have a positive impact on the environment.

2.3 Local Context



The existing buildings along Halebank Road and the surrounding area are varied in styles, age and materials. The dominant building material is red or stock brick with contrasting elements of render and hanging tile. Typically, in the area local to the development site as indicated on the context images, reasonably sized front gardens provide adequate space for off road car parking to the side or front of the properties. A number of the newer properties along the road can be seen with upfront parking. There are some single-story bungalow dwellings, with the majority being 2 storey semi-detached or mews houses.



SECTION

03

SITE ANALYSIS

3.1 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

There is an opportunity to create a vehicular and pedestrian point off Halebank Road, utilising the existing entrance into the site.

The proposed developments sites proximity to established residential areas, employment opportunities and road infrastructure makes it an ideal location for the proposed development.

There are existing trees and hedgerows along the sites edges that serve as well-established boundaries, particularly along the Southern boundary of the site. The existing landscape assets offer privacy to adjacent land and contribute to screening the development. Retaining these presents an opportunity to assimilate the site seamlessly into its surrounding environment.

There is opportunity to create pedestrian access via Halebank Road and recreational access to the North.

The Western part of the site, as indicated on the C&O Plan (right) is designated as Green Belt land. Proposed development in this area must adhere to the principles set out in the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (March, 2022).

There is a number of existing outbuildings associated with Linner Farm Cottage on site. There is opportunity to demolish the vacant, dilapidated structures in order to maximise the developable space on site.

There is opportunity to retain and refurbish the existing Linner Farm Cottage, which is a three-bedroom residential dwelling. Private gardens may also be provided to the East with a new designated parking arrangement.



Constraints and Opportunities Plan.

	Application Boundary		Site Access		Pedestrian Access		Existing Outbuildings
	Vehicular Route		Greenbelt Land		Farm Shop		Linner Farm Cottage
	Recreational Route						Existing Landscaping
	Pedestrian Route						

SECTION

04

THE SCHEME

4.1 USE AND AMOUNT

The development proposals are illustrated indicatively within the proposed site layout (right), which identifies the proposed development areas, site access and landscaping.

The application site covers a total area of approximately 0.9 hectares. Given the scope of works and scale of the proposed development, the layout comprises of residential use only, with 39 units and associated parking. These units range from 1 to 3 bedroom semi-detached, mews and apartment dwellings. The overall amount and locations are a result of layout design, which in turn responds to the constraints and opportunities detailed within the preceding sections of this document.

The schedule of accommodation (right) outlines the mix of residential dwellings proposed, including the split and total square footage.

The total gross area of the site is 2.22 acres / 0.9 hectares, with the net density across the site equating to just over 22 units per acre. Net density is based upon the net residential area, land that is developed for housing and directly associated uses, including access roads within the site, private gardens, car parking, incidentally open space and landscaping.

The development's main vehicular and primary pedestrian access point will be from Halebank Road. Additionally, a new pedestrian access point is proposed to the northern boundary. These access points are designed to seamlessly integrate with and improve existing public footpath routes. A temporary construction vehicular and pedestrian access point is proposed to the southern-east of the proposed access, which will be utilised during the construction phase only. In accordance with the principles outlined in the Design of Residential Development SPD, May 2012, accessibility and connectivity have been prioritised in the design of the site with dedicated footways separating pedestrian and cyclists from road traffic.



Proposed Site Layout.

4.2 SCALE

The scale of building is of importance if the development is to integrate into the existing context. With this in mind, the massing, rhythm and building orientation are carefully considered.

In accordance with the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (March 2022), a maximum of 6 housing units is proposed for the western part of the site, ensuring an appropriate and sympathetic size of development on land allocated as Green Belt.

The interface with existing dwellings has been respected and considered to conserve the privacy of the current residents of 'Smithy House' as well as a retained Linner Cottage.

The site comprises 2 storey buildings as indicated within the storey heights plan (right). This is in keeping with the area and in particular the existing Linner Farm Cottage.



Proposed Storey Height Plan.

4.3 LAYOUT AND STRUCTURE

The development will be expected to reflect the relevant planning policy, relating to matters of access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping, as well as reflecting the principles set out within the planning and heritage statements.

Below are the key general guiding design principles considered throughout the layout design process:

- 1 The building orientation and layout were carefully considered at the design stage in order to create an overall inward facing development. Active frontages are proposed to Halebank road to create connectivity to existing infrastructure where possible.
- 2 Existing boundary vegetation along the South and East boundaries are to be preserved and protected during construction.
- 3 Every dwelling is allocated its own secure and private garden, together with parking and cottage apartments provided with amenity space and 1 parking space per each 1-bedroom property.
- 4 Clear road hierarchy formulated with different road widths, shared surfaces and materials.
- 5 Linner Farm Cottage retained, enhanced and provided with private gardens and designated access and parking.
- 6 Proposed site access location allows existing landscaping along Halebank Road to be retained to screen the development, with potential recreational pedestrian connectivity to the North.



Proposed Site Layout.

4.4 PROPOSED HOUSING

Elevations of the proposed dwellings are designed to possess articulation and interest. Windows are positioned to provide surveillance and overlook the public realm. Dwellings located on corner plots are provided with additional windows to side elevations to reduce prominent blank elevations and increase surveillance. Elevational styles and materials of the proposed dwellings reproduce the architectural features used on existing housing within the area, therefore complimenting the local surroundings. Part rendered units will be intermixed into the street scene, drawing influence from Linner Farm Cottage to provide an attractive and interesting street scene.



4.5 APPEARANCE



Street Scene A-A.

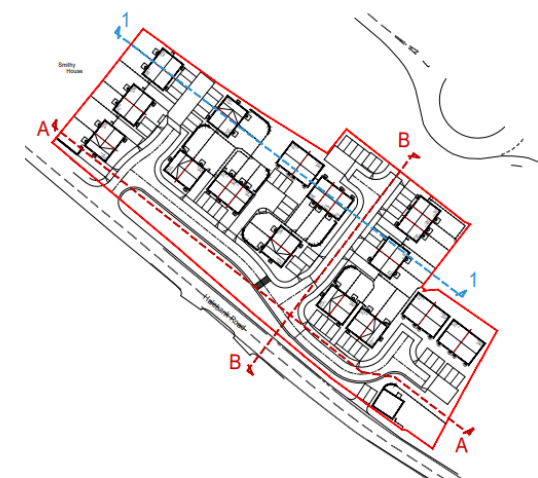


Street Scene A-A.

Locator NTS.



Street Scene B-B.



4.6 PROPOSED MATERIALS

This page aims to demonstrate the mixture of materials employed within the site to vary and enliven the design. Dwellings within the layout will consist entirely of Red facing stock brick, some accent plots having part Arctic white render features to tie in with Linner Farm Cottage. The roof scape is to be slate grey in colour to echo the materials in the surrounding area.



Proposed Materials Layout.

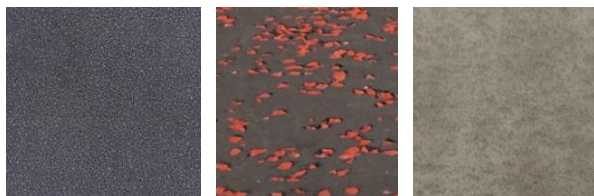
4.7 HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING

The hard and soft landscaping within the scheme aims to create a high-quality settlement, that is sympathetic to the surrounding area. The lifespan of the landscaping will be of critical importance when considering surface finishes and planting if longevity is to be achieved. The landscaping will provide texture and make the development feel established. Careful choice of planting will help to improve the biodiversity of the site along with the retained trees and hedgerow. This in turn will help to create a suitable habitat for urban dwelling wildlife.

Proposed tree and hedge planting will be a key feature of the development, with clustered groups of trees to the South of the main estate road and within open areas. Landscape to front gardens is to be predominantly lawned with tree and shrub planting to key focal areas, improving visual interest in the street scene.

Much of the existing hedge and trees are proposed to be retained, providing an underlying green structure to the development. The key aim here, is to retain and reinforce the existing boundary hedge North of Halebank Road, to screen and secure the development.

The proposed hard landscaping to all primary vehicular and pedestrian routes are to be black tarmac, with private shared access drives tarmac with red chippings to provide a visual break. All associated private footpaths that serve front and rear doors from the drives will be laid in textured utility paving, natural stone in colour.



Black Tarmac, Tarmac (w) red chippings and natural colour textured utility paving.



Illustrative Hard Standing Plan.

4.8 BOUNDARY TREATMENT

This proposed housing layout has been designed to create distinct spaces, reinforcing the divide between public and private areas of the site. Strong boundary treatments will further reinforce these boundaries and create distinctive local characteristics.

Private gardens are defining characteristic of a home and therefore, all proposed houses are to be provided with rear gardens and private space in some cases to frontages. Rear gardens will be bound by 1.8m high close boarded timber fences with secure, lockable access gates.

Brick screen walls are to be built to corner turner plots, to match the host dwelling external finish (brick/ render). This is intended to provide a secure, yet visually appealing barrier at focal boundaries within the development's street scene.

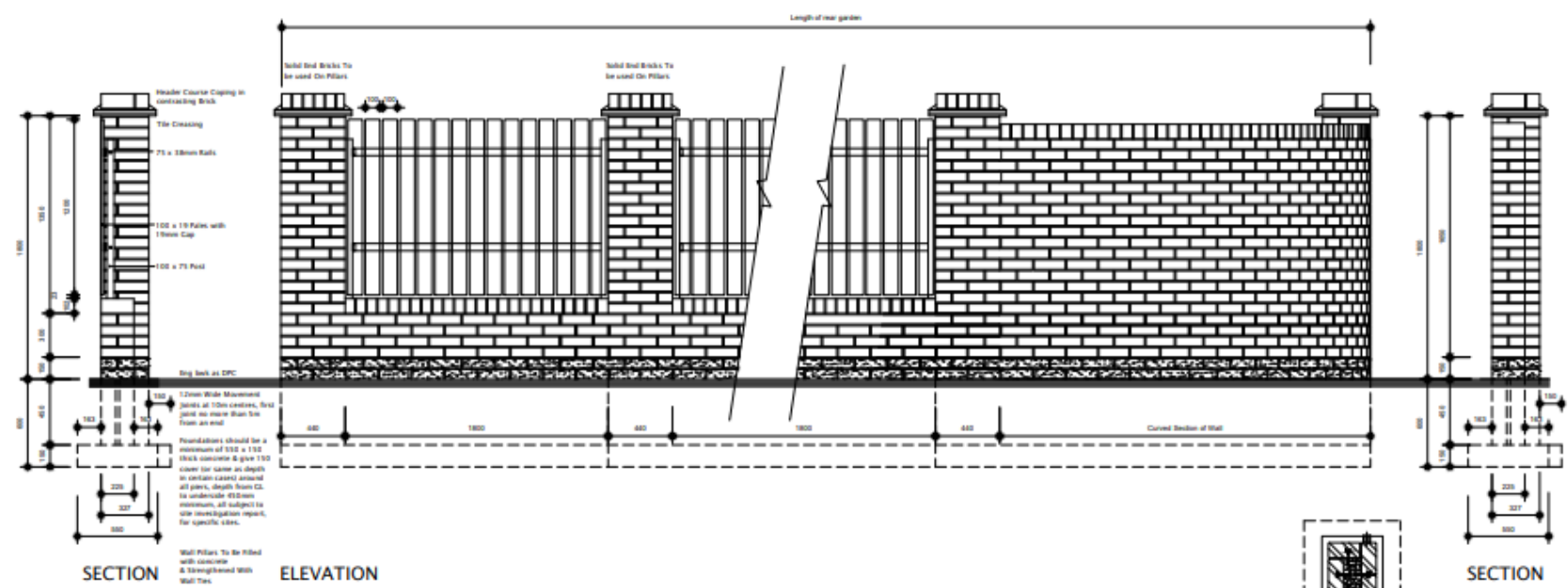


1.8m Close boarded timber fence and 1.8m brick wall with timber fence in fill.

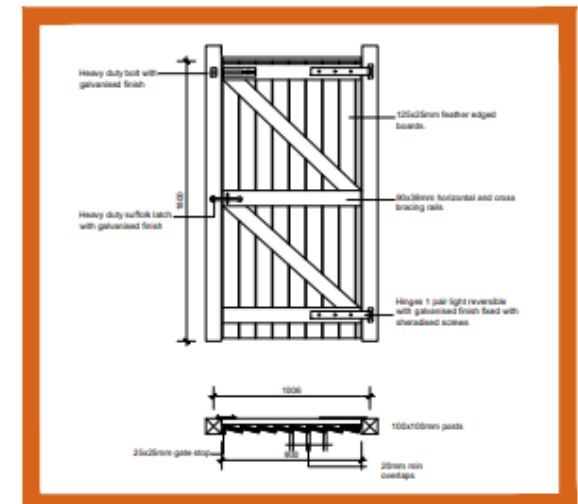
See boundary treatment details for further information and specification of the various proposed boundary treatments.



Proposed Boundary Treatment Plan.

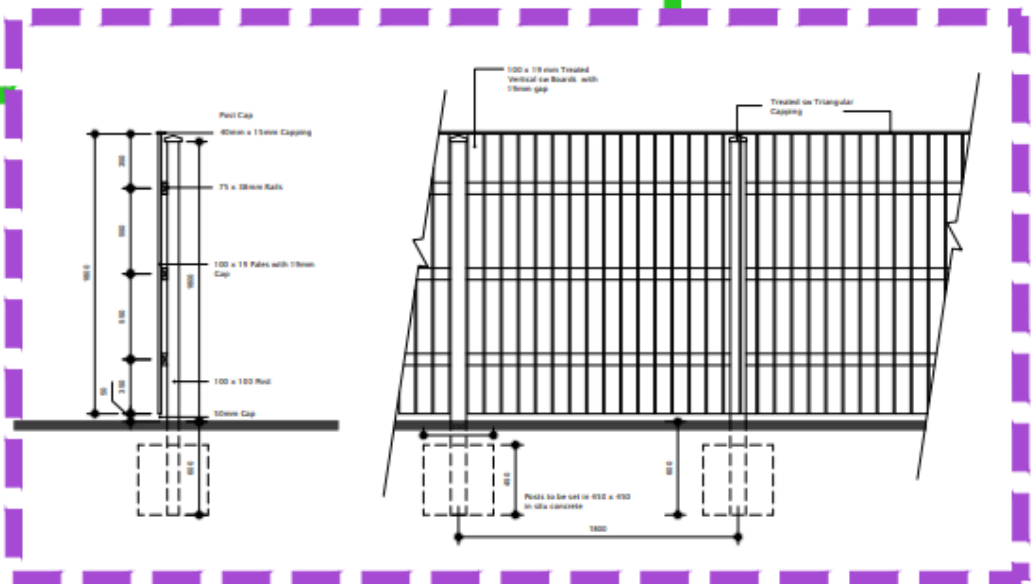


Note* - Wall to be rendered to Linner Farm Cottage to match existing property



1.8m high Timber gate to Rear Garden

1.8m high Brick/ Render Curved Wall with Timber Infill Panels.



1.8m high Close Boarded Garden Fence.

4.9 SERVICING

Parking Arrangements

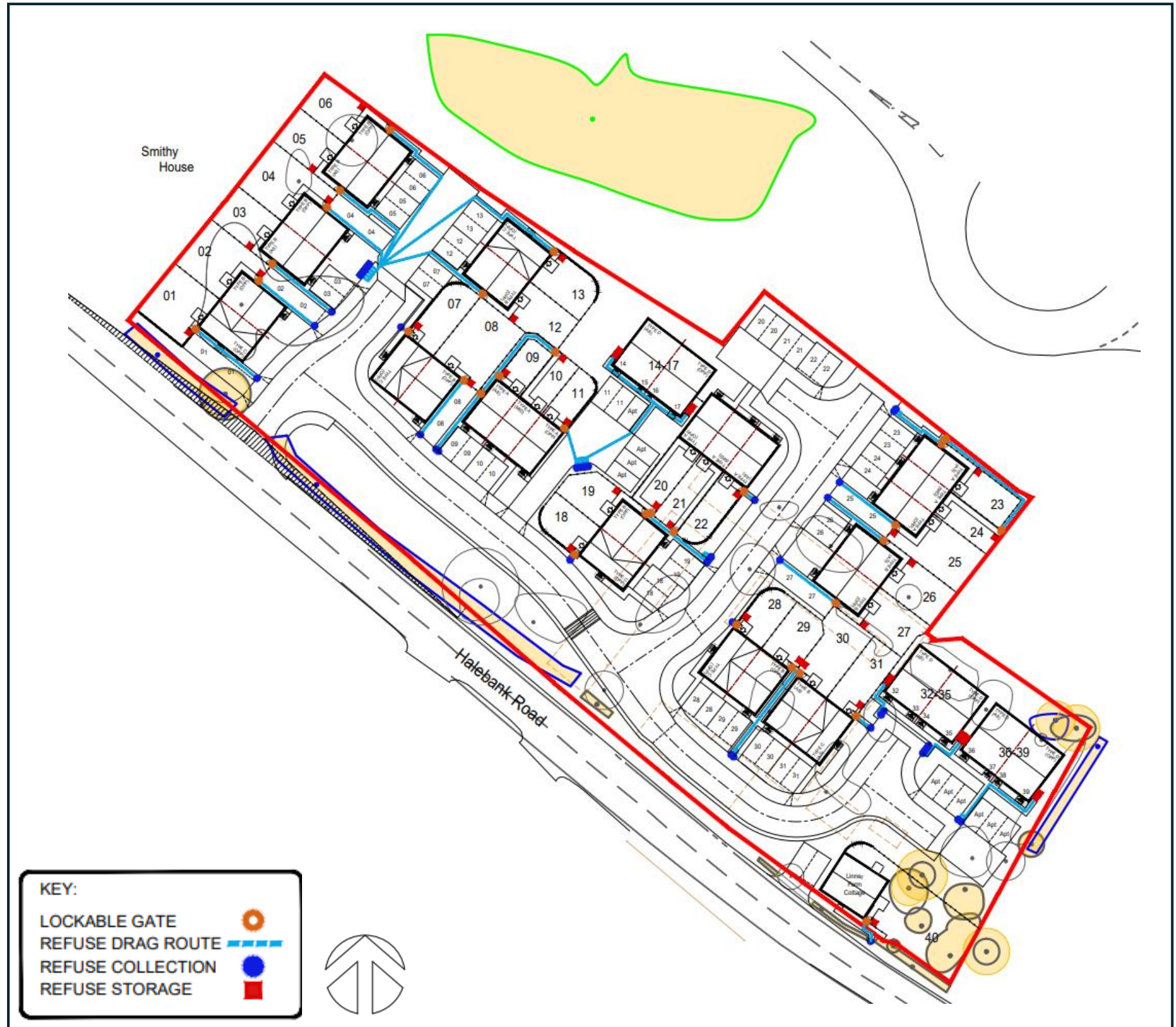
All proposed dwellings are proposed to have private parking within their own curtilage. The parking provision on site is considered adequate and would comply with the Standards established by the Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan, Appendix D and supporting guidance documents.

Varied parking solutions are proposed in order to reduce the impact of traffic on the street scene, by ensuring each house has off street parking. Side curtilage parking has been provided where possible, further aiding street scene by allowing building lines to define spaces.

Refuse

Refuse and recycling has been a design consideration during the development of the proposed layout. As a result, each property will be provided with an area within the rear garden of the property, to site 4no. bins (a 360 litre refuse bin, 240 litre garden waste bin and two 240 litre wheeled recycling bins).

Additionally, all plots will have a gated access route from the rear garden area to the highway at the front of the property to enable bins to be left out on collection day. Bins will be presented for collection by residents at the end of the private driveways or designated bin storage locations, no more than 15m away from the highway, in accordance with BS5906:2005 (British Standard: Waste management in buildings — Code of practice). Refer to the waste management plan that has been submitted as part of this application (right).



Waste Management Plan.

4.10 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPE

Sustainability

The proposals for the site will provide a sustainable form of development. Sustainability is derived from the provision of an inclusive, safe and well managed environment; from a high-quality design that respects the built and natural environment. The site is well connected to public transport facilities, employment opportunities and local services and that reduces the consumption of energy and reduces waste. The proposed development will be designed to reduce the consumption of water and energy by means of water saving and energy efficient appliances and fittings/ systems. As a whole, the development will be designed to meet the current Building Regulation requirements and will therefore achieve national standards of energy efficiency and ventilation.

Surface Water Drainage

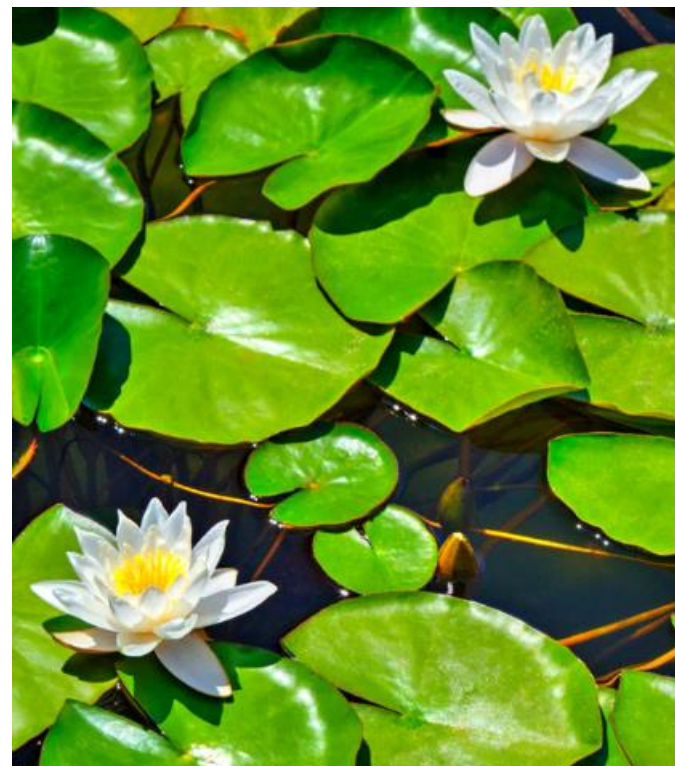
Surface water drainage is implemented in the housing layout in accordance with the submitted drainage design. The drainage design aims to limit wastewater and water pollution and reduce flood risk in line with national guidance and Policy ENV1: Flood Risk and Water Management.

Ecology

The development of the site will aim to improve the local environment. The existing site consists of areas of former scrub, vegetation, dilapidated buildings and areas of hardstanding. The proposed development aims to regenerate the site in line with emerging Local Plan and Council's aspirations for the local area.

Landscape proposals will provide enhanced biodiversity, with a range of native tree and shrub planting, as well as incorporating features to encourage wildlife to thrive. Other measures will be implemented within the site to deliver biodiversity enhancement and are summarised below:

- Reinforcement of the landscape structures on boundaries that abut existing built form to the East and West through native tree and hedge planting, helping to create an appropriate green edge to the development and to filter views from existing residential properties;
- Tree planting within the residential area to break up the appearance of urban development, and within areas of proposed open space to increase level of tree cover generally within the site;
- Green space provided by residential gardens as they mature, will provide a range of foraging, nesting and commuting opportunities for a variety of species, including invertebrates, birds and small mammals.



4.11 SUSTAINABILITY

Access

The site location is considerably sustainable and has excellent links to the wider road, cycle and transport network. The access into the site has been made possible for various modes of transport through the provision of appropriate car, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Pedestrian Links

Provisions to include the comfort for all pedestrians using the public realm within the proposed layout are to include:

- Clear visual links between the entrances to the site and entrances to buildings;
- A legible layout for visitors;
- All pedestrian circulation routes to be level or gently-sloping (as defined in Section 1, Approved Document M, Access to and Use of Buildings, Building Regulations 2015);
- New pedestrian link South of vehicular access, providing a dropped kerb crossing for connectivity to Halebank amenities.

Residential Standards

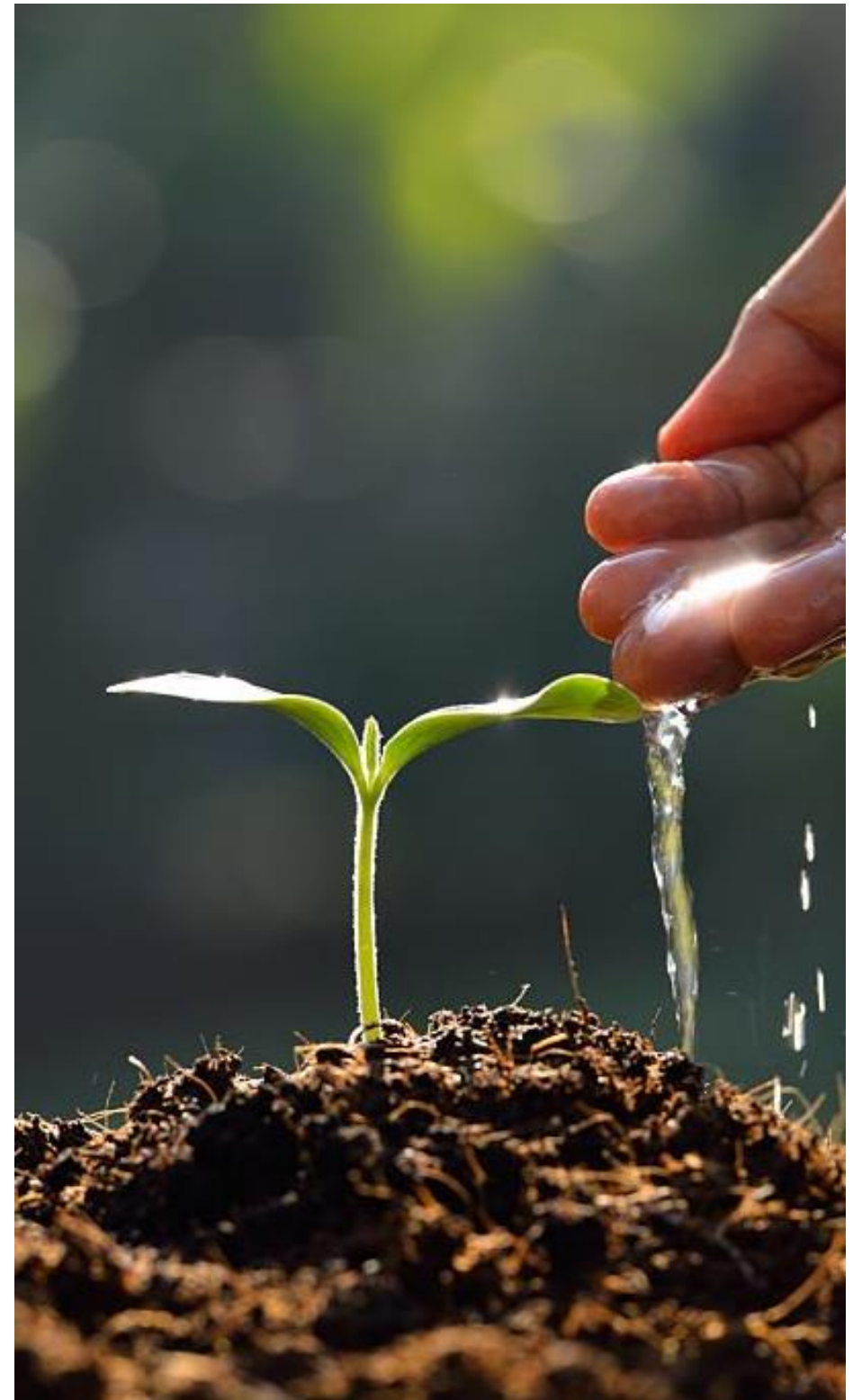
Access to and within the public external environment is designed to ensure that there are no excessive changes in level between the highway and the private spaces. Houses are to be constructed at a minimum standard of latest Building Regulations ensuring each property has level access for ease of wheelchairs (as defined in Section 1, Approved Document M, Access to and Use of Buildings, Building Regulations 2015). Where parking is not within curtilage, footpaths and gates are provided to ease access and create direct route.

Designing out Crime

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with relevant policies outlined in the Halton Local Development Plan, in order to mitigate any risk of crime. A key objective of this development has been to create a safe and accessible environment which restricts opportunities for disorder and enhance the area for new and existing residents. The layout has been designed to ensure that all areas of the public realm, created as part of the development, can be overlooked by the residential properties. This has been achieved by fronting properties onto the existing and proposed pedestrian networks and providing in-curtilage parking which is secure and well overlooked. The site layout and design of the dwellings have been carefully considered to integrate the site with its current neighbours. In addition, the layout ensures that a safe environment is created by means of maximising opportunities for natural surveillance. All building entrances are highly visible from the street and private rear gardens will be fenced with access restricted to residents only. Whilst providing a degree of physical security, a 1.8m timber fencing to rear gardens across the development is most effective as a psychological deterrent to opportunistic crime.

Landscape Strategy

The development area has been carefully considered to ensure that as much of the established vegetation structures are retained. The housing layout has been developed around the proposed green spaces with dwellings along the private and shared drives fronting onto the open spaces ensuring they are overlooked whilst also achieving a positive green aspect as part of the layout. Internally, incidental green spaces and tree planting within proposed street scenes will add a further green element to the proposals, creating a sense of place and an attractive settlement for residents and visitors.



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SECTION

05

CONCLUSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

The proposed development aligns closely with key design principles outlined in the Halton Residential Design Guide SPD, the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, and the National Design Guide. Through context and design analysis, it is evident that the proposed development carefully integrates with the surrounding area's ethos, materials, and character. We believe that this development proposal presents a thoughtful and cohesive approach that respects and enhances the existing built environment while meeting the needs of the community and stakeholders.

The layout of the proposed scheme has been designed to reflect the existing opportunities and constraints of the land at Linner Farm Cottage and aims to develop the site in line with the emerging Local Plan and Council's vision for the locality. The existing site features have been retained and used to enhance the amenity of the site creating a development that positively responds to the existing landscape character of the site.

The residential development will offer 39no. high-quality family homes, exclusively affordable provision, including 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes designed as semi-detached and terraced properties as well as 1 bedroom cottage style flats. The proposed development will not only develop the vacant land but also create an attractive living environment for the new residents for many years to come.



Proposed Colour Site Layout.