

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

07/0005

24.01.07

Gladedale (formerly Broseley Homes)

Land south west of Community Centre, Fairview Terrace, Greencroft

Erection of twenty nine dwellings with associated roads

Annfield Plain Ward

The Application

1. Planning permission is sought for the erection of 29 dwellings on land to the south west of the Community Centre, Fairview Terrace, Greencroft. The application site covers an area of approximately 0.527 hectares, resulting in a density of development of 55 dwellings per hectare. A mixture of two and three bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses are proposed together with one three bedroom detached property.
2. The application site comprises the former South Pontop Farm site, although there has been anecdotal evidence that buildings and open areas previously on the site may have been used for storage with regard to the adjacent (now redeveloped) Avenger Batteries factory. The site is bounded to the north by the Community Centre, to the east by the long established dwellings on Fairview Terrace, to the west by open space, and to the south by the recently completed Broseley Homes development, Fairview Gardens.
3. Whilst the status of this land (as brownfield or greenfield) is difficult to define, it is in poor form, undulating and with waste material and rubble upon it. The site is therefore visually unattractive. Gladedale homes currently have a number of portable buildings positioned on the site relating to the adjacent residential development.

History

4. There is no planning history relating to the application site.

Policy

5. The following policies of the adopted Local Plan are relevant in determining this application

General Development Principles (GDP1)
Large Sites Identified for Housing Development (H03)
Parking Access and Servicing (TR2)

Consultations

6. County Highways Development Control Officer- Requires 2 visitor parking bays to be shown to the front of plots 52, 53 and 54. The parking arrangements on the internal roads, the width of driveways in relation to adoptable carriageway opposite remains an unresolved issue (driveways must be no wider than the adoptable carriageway from which they lead, in order to prevent longitudinal vehicular over-run of pedestrian footways).

The suggested solution is either widen the carriageway or relocate the parking bays. An amended site layout to resolve these issues is required therefore for the purposes of ensuring the adequacy of parking levels.

Subject to this there are no objections from the Highways Development Control Officer.

7. County Council Rights of Way Officer- There are no registered public rights of way on the Definitive Map, either within or abutting the proposed development site.
8. Development Plans Section- The proposed scheme seeks permission for the erection of 29 dwellings on a former agricultural 'storage yard' which is located towards the edge of the built-up area of Annfield Plain.

The site is located on the west side of Fairview Terrace, bordered to the north and south by built development and to the east by the Victorian terrace which gives the road its name. The housing to the south of the proposed scheme, The Croft, is a recently completed development by the applicant, Broseley Homes. This gives a good indication of what the proposed development will look like in terms of materials, scale and design.

Status of the land

Planning Policy Statement Note 3 (PPS3) sets out the guidance for determining whether land is regarded as brownfield (previously developed land) or greenfield land. The policy imperative is to favour the development of previously developed land (pdl) ahead of greenfield land. PPS3 (*para.40 & 41*) states:

A key objective is that Local Planning Authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed.

The national annual target is that at least 60 per cent of new housing should be provided on previously developed land. This includes land and buildings that are vacant or derelict as well as land that is currently in use but which has potential for re-development.

Guidance in the Submission Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) places the same emphasis on prioritising brownfield developments, recommending

at least 65% of new housing is built on pdl. The District currently has a large housing supply (allocated sites and sites with permission) already in place, which means that there is no requirement to grant permission for greenfield sites in order to satisfy the housing allocation as set by the RSS.

In general the land appears quite degraded and has the appearance of a builders depot; it is currently used by Broseley Homes Ltd. for storage of various building materials/wastes, etc. An historical search suggests the former and pervading use of the site has been for agricultural purposes and there is evidence of several sheds on the land, only one of which remains on the site albeit in a poor state of repair. Despite the presence of these permanent structures on the site, PPS3 states 'land which is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings' is not classed as pdl.

While planning policy encourages development of pdl ahead of greenfield land, there are instances where development of greenfield land can be acceptable and beneficial. In its current state the proposed site is unsightly and of limited amenity value, due in part to the actions of the applicant, and would benefit from improvement works.

Layout and Design

The redevelopment of the former factory site to the south has extended the built up residential area of the settlement in this direction, creating a 'gap site' in between The Croft and the Community Centre. The proposed scheme would serve to fill this gap in the streetscene and better complement and reflect the continuous terrace line on the opposite side of the road.

In general the design of the scheme is acceptable. The units that face onto Fairview Terrace provide an active frontage to the development, which serves to help integrate the scheme into the surrounding area. By fronting onto Fairview Terrace a less 'insular-looking' form of development is created, while active edges with doors and windows that open onto the street also increases passive surveillance.

The proposed layout of the rear portion of the site is less coherent, and it is felt there are aspects of the scheme that could be improved. Unit number 36 in the submitted plans appears to be quite 'isolated' and poorly integrated into the layout. Upon entering the estate this unit will be a prominent building and present a featureless gable in the streetscene.

The density of the scheme is high at 55 dwellings to the hectare given the site's location at the edge of the settlement, around 0.7 kilometres from the main shopping area and public-transport hub. A lower density could be beneficial and allow more room to achieve a better layout of dwellings at the rear portion of the scheme. The dwellings located at the western boundary of the site are butted up against the fence; a wider margin here would allow for a thicker border and some extra tree planting which would help soften this aspect when viewed from afar.

I note in the submitted plans that some of units at the rear of the scheme are clad with red roofs. It is felt that all roofs to the rear of the scheme ought to be grey to reduce their visual impact in the landscape when viewed from outside the settlement.

Transport and Parking

There are 40 parking spaces in the scheme, which is calculated using County advice which classes garages as being equal to 0.5 of a space. This is within the Durham County Council Accessibility and Parking Guidelines, which recommends 1.5 spaces per dwelling.

The scheme is located next to two bus stops.

Energy efficiency and Biodiversity

Energy efficiency measures that could be reasonably incorporated into the development should be sought in line with national planning policy.

The scheme includes some tree planting in a variety of species, which is welcomed. It is felt that this could be increased on the western boundary to better integrate the scheme into the landscape when viewed from afar.

Affordability

While the scheme is for low cost units, these are not classed as affordable provision in PPS3. The 2006 Housing Needs Assessment for the District estimates that there will be a shortfall of 130 affordable units per annum over the next five years in the District. The immediate implications for affordable housing are that an affordable housing target of between 35 - 50% of new units would be justified on all suitable sites, and that thresholds below the current minimum of 25 dwellings per hectare (as prescribed by Government advice contained in Circular 6/98 and PPG3 (2000)) should be seriously considered.

9. Natural England- Concerns only winter survey carried out. No objection should plans be submitted to indicate mitigation measures prior to determination (plans now received).
10. Neighbours have been consulted and a site notice posted. One letter of objection has been received by a neighbour. Concerns in summary are-
 - site is a roost for bats, quite a lot of activity in summer
 - traffic problems from existing Broseley site adjacent, where parking is occurring on the main road at the front of the development, instead of using garages/drives to the rear, buses have trouble passing
 - problems with rats from the old farm buildings disturbed by builders of adjacent development
 - Disruption from adjacent development was excessive- electricity lines were cut through, temporary traffic lights were erected, dirt on road, noise

- from construction
- There are more suitable sites

Officer Assessment

11. Full planning permission is sought for the erection of 29 dwellings on land to the south west of the Community Centre, Fairview Terrace, Greencroft.
12. This is not an allocated site within the Local Plan, however it is considered appropriate that the proposal be assessed against the criteria as indicated in policy H03 of Local Plan for the allocation of new sites for development, given the relevance of the criteria to this proposal.
13. Several buildings have been removed from the site, and whilst the history of the site is unclear, the buildings are likely to have previously been used for agriculture. The site normally therefore would not be considered appropriate for residential development, however the adjacent site was the former Avenger Batteries Factory and Yard, and it is also possible that the site was used at some time in part for storage purposes relating to this business. The proposal site is positioned between the Community Centre building and the existing Broseley Development, Fairview Gardens. The development of the site would therefore not be considered to be a significant encroachment into the wider countryside beyond the settlement.
14. The proposal would be appropriate to the existing form and pattern of development within the settlement, and would allow for a natural and logical continuation of linear development along Fairview Terrace. The site is also extremely untidy and visually unattractive, with rubble and other debris upon it. Visually therefore, the development of the site would be a significant improvement to the locality. This is considered to be a significant material consideration in favour of the proposal, and in line with the criteria identified in pre- text to policy H03 of the Local Plan which indicates that when allocating new housing sites that consideration be given to the need to utilise derelict sites and to consider to the impact upon the landscape.
15. In accordance with central government guidance in the form of PPS 3, the site is within a sustainable location with good transport links, is near to local schools, shops and employment facilities.
16. The Highways Development Control Officer has no objection to the proposal but does require an amended plan to indicate some minor changes to the internal road to meet adoptable standard and the Highways Authority requirement. The plan should indicate two visitor parking spaces to the front of the site and this can be dealt with by way of condition.
17. The parking arrangement (other than the two visitor parking bays to be requested by condition) is proposed internal to the site, and no driveways would feature to the frontage of the development. This is considered visually to be the most appropriate arrangement and would mirror the design of the adjacent Broseley Development, where parking is internal to the scheme.

Indeed this was a request of the Planning Division when the application for the adjacent development was considered.

18. There is concern from the single objector that this has encouraged parking directly on Fairview Terrace. This is a relatively wide road however, and whilst a bus route, this is not a very heavily trafficked road. It is considered preferable in planning terms for the parking to be provided within the site, particularly as this was a stipulation on the adjoining site, and in order that the overall development would therefore have a uniform appearance.
19. There remains an old stone and brick building on the site, which is in very poor form and structurally would appear to be unsafe. The developer has submitted a bat survey to which Natural England raised no objections, subject to the submission of a plan to show bat mitigation. That plan has now been received and shows the location of a bat box in a garden, and bat void within a proposed dwelling. This is considered acceptable in order to mitigate against the potential loss of any bat roost, and also given the unsafe nature of the last remaining building on the site.
20. The design of the scheme is considered generally acceptable and minimum distances would be provided to maintain privacy and amenity as indicated in SPG 7.
21. The proposal does not include the provision of any open space or play equipment. In accordance with Policy H022 of the Local Plan the Council requires the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of play provision on site with a sum of £300 per dwelling payable. The Council would therefore receive a fee £8700 for off site play provision should permission be granted.
22. Whilst the status of this land (as brown or greenfield) is difficult to define, it is in poor form, and is visually unattractive. The proposal would be appropriate to the existing form and pattern of development within the settlement, and would allow for a natural and logical continuation of linear development along Fairview Terrace, and as such, on balance, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Recommendation

23. Conditional Permission
 - Time Limit (ST)
 - Approved Plans (ST01)
 - No development shall commence until a plan has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority which indicates an acceptable internal road layout, repositioning of parking bays (as indicated in correspondence between the applicant and the Highways Authority 16th March 2007) and provision of two visitor parking bays to the frontage of the development, to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall then be carried out in accordance with the plan as agreed.
 - Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy

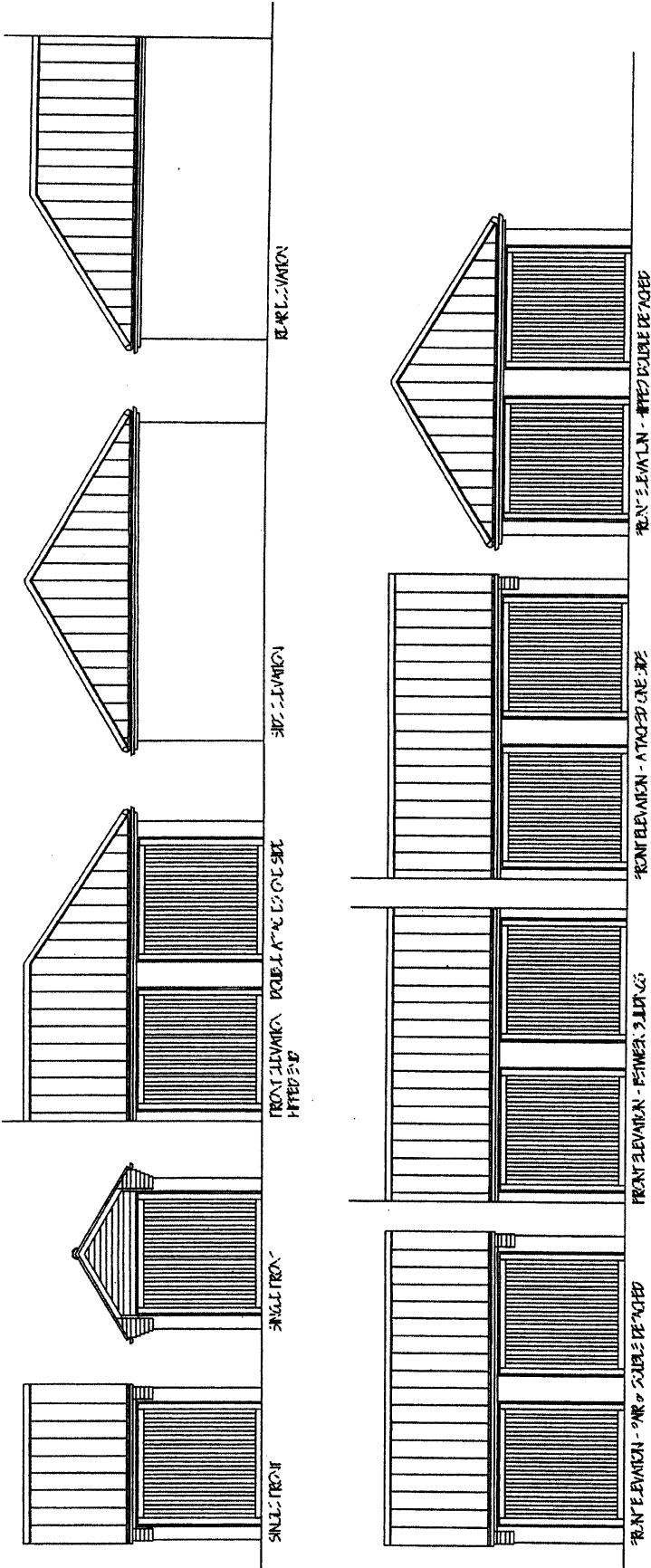
- TR2 of the Local Plan)
 - Materials (AO5)
 - Drainage (D01)
 - Landscaping (LO1)
 - Ground Levels (GL01)
 - The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures as indicated in the bat survey as submitted and plan BH12:L:02A received 16th March 2007.
- Reason: In the interests of Bat preservation

Reason for Approval

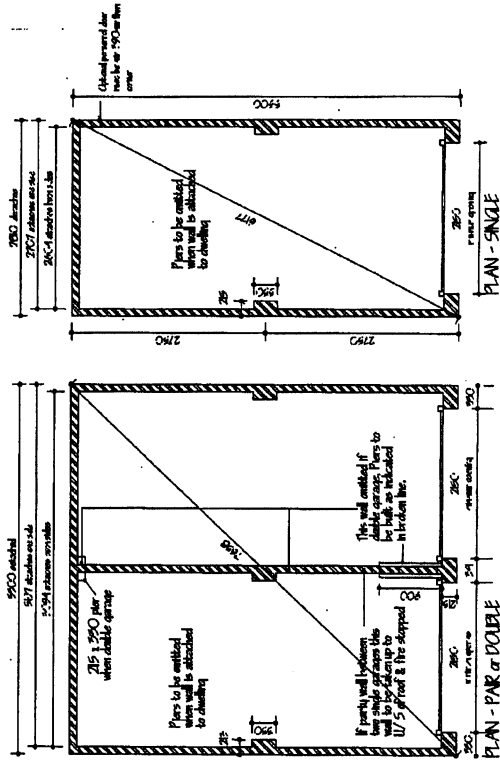
24. The proposed residential development is considered to comply with Policies GDP1, HO3 and TR2 of the District Local Plan and Supplementary Guidance Note No. 7 on the layout of new housing and there are no other material considerations which outweigh the decision to approve the application.

Report Prepared by Shaun Wells, Senior Area Planning Officer

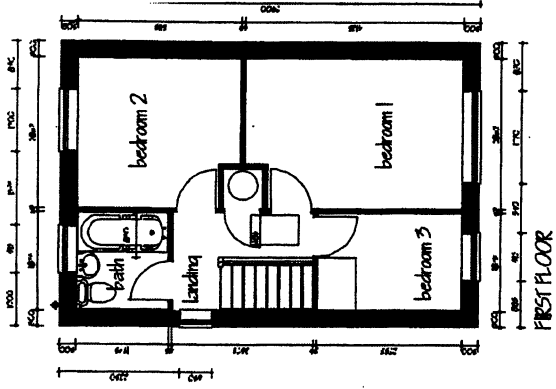
W:\Development Control Committee\290307\07.0005.doc



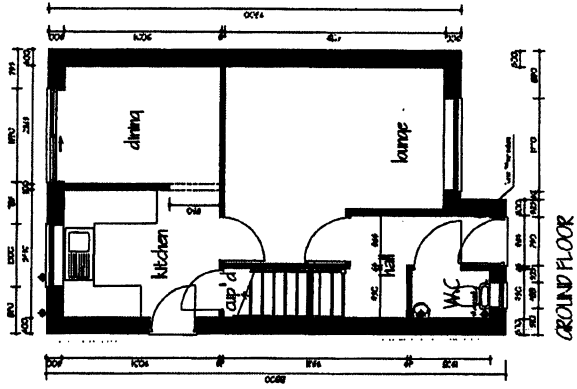
PROPOSED GARAGE PLANS



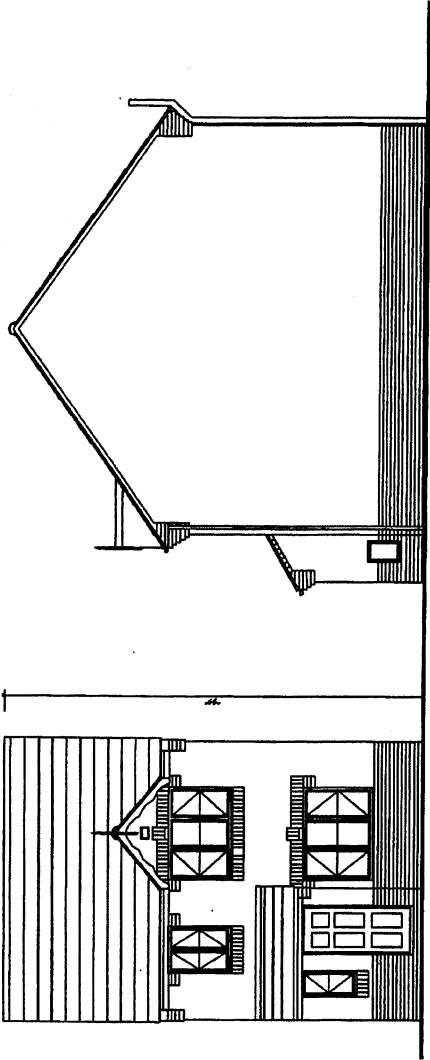
Erection of twenty nine dwellings with associated works
 Land south west of Community Centre
 Fairview Terrace
 Greencroft
 07/005



FIRST FLOOR

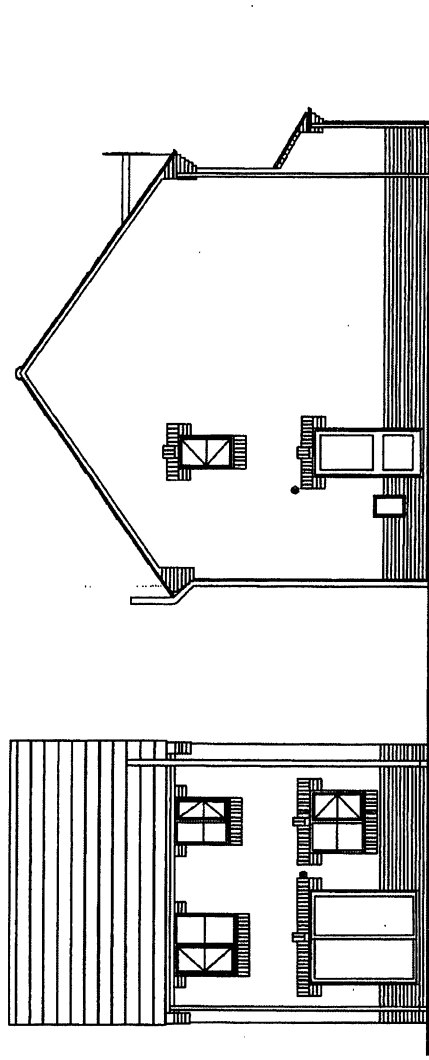


GROUND FLOOR



FRONT ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION

Erection of twenty nine dwellings with associated works
 Land south west of Community Centre
 Fairview Terrace
 Greencroft
 07/005

