Proposed Residential Development
on land at Red House Farm,
Burton on Trent

On behalf of Barwood Strategic Land II LLP
and Mr and Mrs G Skipper

Design and Access Statement

September 2012
INCLA_N131R01
# Introduction and Site Analysis

1.0 Introduction and Site Analysis

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & SITE ANALYSIS
Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Barwood Strategic Land II LLP, in support of an outline planning application (all matters reserved) for the erection of up to 250 dwellings, associated structural landscaping including woodland planting, public open space, access, drainage, associated infrastructure, earthworks and other ancillary and enabling works including the demolition of all existing buildings”.

The Design and Access Statement seeks to demonstrate how the design of the masterplan for the proposed development of Red House Farm has evolved from a study of the application site and its context, in combination with consultation with key stakeholders and through a detailed public consultation strategy. It shows how the site’s constraints and opportunities have been considered and achieved through the evolution of the design.

The masterplan proposals include the provision of up to 250 residential dwellings. The development will establish improvements to the local landscape and wider community by providing:

- New Public open space;
- Improvements to existing Public Rights of Way;
- Ecological enhancement through the creation of wildlife corridors, water bodies and new areas of woodland.

The document analyses the constraints and opportunities including townscape, archaeology, surrounding amenities and facilities, transport infrastructure and existing nearby green spaces in order to inform the vision and design principles for the site.
The Red House Farm site is approximately 13.4 hectares in size and is located on existing agricultural and commercial land; used for lawn turf cultivation, with large sheds (use class B2) on site.

Access to the site is from the north (Lower Outwoods Road), although there is a gated access from Reservoir Road to the south.

The site is set between the two residential areas of Outwoods to the north and Shobnall to the south. Lower Outwoods Road leads from the north of the site, down hill and round to Queens Hospital and Reservoir Road leads from the south of the site down to Forest Road.

The site is approximately 2km from the town centre of Burton-upon-Trent to the east of the site with industrial extension to the south and residential areas to the north. Derby is located 17km north east.

Major transport routes include the junction to the A38, 3.5km from the site to the south of Burton-upon-Trent. The A38 is the most significant transport route within close proximity to the site, which links to the A50, 7km northeast and M6 Toll 23km southwest.

There is a variety of building character and land uses surrounding the site; ranging from Victorian and 1920’s terraces and semi-detached housing to the south. To the north of the site, within Lower Outwoods the housing is predominantly 1970s detached housing. To the west of the site lies more open countryside with small villages and woodland groups.

Parts of the Marstons Brewery on Shobnall Road to the southeast date back to pre-1880 when it was the Albion Brewery. Modern expansion has now taken place. Other factory and brewery buildings can be seen in the Burton-upon-Trent townscape.
Land use

The predominant land uses surrounding the site are open countryside to the north and west with residential to the south and northeast. Other land uses nearby include health service, industrial, highway infrastructure and commercial.

The open countryside consists of small to medium size agricultural fields with strong hedgerow boundaries. Small blocks of woodland and individual trees are a common feature across the countryside field pattern, with individual farmsteads scattered between villages. The woodland cover is limited to strips and small blocks to the settlement edge and along watercourses.

The residential areas adjacent to the site are spurs of Shobnall to the south and Lower Outwoods to the north.

Industrial / commercial land use is focussed to the south of the main town, adjacent to the A38 and railway, and east of the application site.

Recreation facilities to the southeast of the site provide open space, including leisure centre, sports track and skate park. There are pockets of green open space within residential areas to the northeast.

The A38 passes through Burton Upon Trent, to the southeast of the application site. There is no direct access from the A38 to the site, as it is raised over the settlement. The junction is to the south, within the industrial park.
Planning Context

The current Development Plan for the application site is formed by the West Midlands RSS and the East Staffordshire Local Plan (2006).

The Regional Spatial Strategy forms part of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in the determination of this application. Whilst the Localism Act makes provision for its revocation that must be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment which is yet to be undertaken.

The RSS remains a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

East Staffordshire Local Plan
This was formally adopted in 2006 and covers the issues of housing, employment, transport, conservation and the protection of the environment. It is noted that the Local Plan is out dated and is soon to be replaced by the emerging Core Strategy for East Staffordshire (new Local Plan). Until such time, however, the ‘saved’ policies of the Local Plan are a material consideration for the proposed development.

The Local Plan Proposals Map confirms that the application site falls outside but adjacent to the defined settlement boundary for Burton Upon Trent, where Policy NE1: Development Outside Development Boundaries applies. This policy steers development to be located within the defined boundaries although it does not rule out development in this location if the criteria of Policy NE1 can be met.

The site also falls within the National Forest Area, where reference has been made to Policies NE14 and NE15 of the Local Plan and the National Forest Planting Scheme.

In developing any proposals at the site, regard will also be made to the relevant saved policies of the Local Plan in relation to design, layout, landscaping, accessibility and adopted Supplementary Guidance (SPG) including the Council’s Open Space SPD, Design Guide SPD and Housing Choice SPD.

Emerging Core Strategy
East Staffordshire Borough Council are currently consulting on their Preferred Option Local Plan, which once adopted will set out the spatial vision for the Borough up to 2031. This plan will eventually replace the correct adopted Local Plan.

The Consultation Preferred Option Local Plan sets out options for delivering the growth within the Borough, including the strategic allocation of land for new housing and employment where there is recognition for some of this growth to come forward on greenfield sites.

Red House Farm is identified as falling within Growth Option 2c and 2b; where the Council has sought to disperse growth around Burton Upon Trent. It is recognised that this option represents a sustainable approach and could provide a broad mix of new homes and employment land.

Consultation on the Preferred Options Local Plan closed in September 2012.

Other Material Considerations
Budget and Growth Review 2011
This was published in March 2011 and sets out proposals for planning reform; to ensure planning supports economic growth and sustainable development that is needed to re-build the economy as the country emerges from recession.

One key principle of the Review document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, whereby “the default answer to development and growth is ‘yes’ rather than ‘no’; except where this would clearly compromise the key sustainable development principles of national policy”. The Review goes on to state that; “the presumption will give developers, communities and investors greater certainty about the types of applications that are likely to be approved, and will help speed up the planning process and encourage growth”.

The Budget and Growth Review 2011 sets out proposals for planning reform; to ensure planning supports economic growth and sustainable development that is needed to re-build the economy as the country emerges from recession.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012 and establishes that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (para 6). One of the 12 core planning principles (para 17) of the Framework is to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The Framework recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 56). The Framework acknowledges the importance of positive planning in the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development.

Overall, para 58 of the Framework confirms that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public spaces as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

There is recognition within the Framework that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond the aesthetic considerations (para 61). Proposals should also not be refused by LPA’s which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with the existing landscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (para 65).

Applicants are expected to work closely with those directly affected by development proposals to evolve designs that take into account the views of the local community. Proposals that have demonstrated this within their design evolution should be looked on more favourably (para 66).
Landscape Character

The Staffordshire County Council SPG ‘Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 - 2011’ defines landscape character types; as a division of the Trent Valley Washlands Character Area as defined by the Countryside Agency (1999).

The application site falls into the ‘Settled plateau farmland slopes’, which has the following distinctive landscape features:

- ‘Hedgerow oak and ash trees;
- ‘broadleaved and conifer woodlands;
- ‘irregular hedged field pattern;
- ‘narrow lanes and hedge banks;
- Old villages and hamlets;
- Small streams and field ponds;
- Manors and parkland;
- Undulating, sloping landform.

The council document also notes a number of Incongruous landscape features:

- Extensive fencing;
- Busy roads;
- Electricity pylons;
- Agricultural intensification;
- Large modern farm buildings;
- Modernised dwellings and commuter properties;
- Village expansion.

Figure 3 - Surrounding Landscape Character

Settled Plateau Farmland Slopes
Areas of Built Character
Settled Plateau Farmlands
Terrace Alluvial Lowlands
Application boundary line
Design & Access Statement

Red House Farm, Outwoods, Burton upon Trent

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The application site is currently used for lawn turf cultivation, with some stripped areas where bare earth is visible and some areas left to meadow.

There are several large barns and sheds (in Class B2 use) within the Red House Farm footprint, with bare earth and concrete hardstanding areas.

Low hedgerows bound the application site, with hedgerow trees in those to the south. Hedgerows along the northwest edges are lower and more gappy.

The land to the west of the site is predominantly open countryside, consisting of small to medium size agricultural fields with hedgerow boundaries and individual and groups of trees within and around fields.

Topography

The central area of the application site is plateaued at approximately 96m AOD, sloping away to the western boundary towards the brook at approximately 75m AOD. The wider site eventually slopes to the southern edge of Lower Outwoods at 65m AOD and to approximately 55m AOD at the bottom of Reservoir Road.
Existing Site Views

1. View from southern application site boundary towards Henhurst Farm
2. View to the west, looking downhill towards the watercourse
3. View across existing band of meadow towards industrial sheds
4. View along existing hedgerow along northwest boundary
5. View from PROW 9, looking across the application site
6. Looking along PROW 11 towards the site entrance
Site Surroundings

1. View the application site entrance, looking along Lower Outwoods Road

2. View from PROW 11, looking east towards Burton upon Trent town centre

3. View along Forest Road to the south of the application site

4. View along Station Street, in town centre

5. View from Battlestead Hill, looking across Burton upon Trent

6. Typical red-brick housing in Anslow to the west of the application site
Lower Outwood Road to the north and Reservoir Road to the south of the site provides access to existing residential areas. Shobnall Road to the south is the major route from the west, into Burton upon Trent centre.

Three bus routes operate in the immediate area, along Shobnall Road and serving the Queen's Hospital on Belvedere Road. The nearest bus stop to the site is on Belvedere Road, at the bottom of Lower Outwoods Road.

Initial discussions with local bus operators has shown that in principle there is a support to provide a link from Lower Outwoods Road to Reservoir Road which would also benefit in providing a more direct link for emergency vehicles accessing Queens hospital.

There are existing public footpaths to the north and northwest of the site, across surrounding fields; linking from Anslow and Beam Hill to Outwoods Hill. The Public Right of Way (PROW) along the northern site boundary is well used; connecting by a stile to the top of Lower Outwoods Road and continuing southeast along a farm access track. A permissible path connects from Red House Farm land, down hill to Shobnall Fields and the National Cycle Route.

The current main access to the application site is from Lower Outwoods Road, along the narrow residential road; providing vehicular and pedestrian access through a private gated entrance.

The current secondary access to the application site is from Reservoir Road to the south; up a wide residential road and via a locked, gated access.
The site was subject to an archaeological assessment in August 2012, which involved consultation with the county’s Historic Environment Record, analysis of historic maps and aerial photographs and a walkover survey.

This confirmed that there are no designated heritage assets within the site. However, it did highlight the archaeological potential of the wider area; identifying one scheduled monument, one conservation area and nine listed buildings within the site’s wider zone of influence.

The assessment also confirmed that there are no undesignated heritage assets of prehistoric or Roman date within the site boundary, although a ‘D’ shaped enclosure, identified from aerial photographs in the southernmost field, is of potential archaeological interest. In the wider study area, an undated cropmark enclosure to the north occupies a similar topographic position and may suggest a wider distribution of activity than the HER indicates.

There is no evidence for archaeological activity of significance within the site from the Middle Ages onwards, and it is likely that, prior to the Norman Conquest, the area comprised woodland. In the later medieval period, two deer parks were created to the west and south of the site. Outside of these, the landscape gradually came into agricultural management and continued to develop through the post-medieval period.

The agricultural nature of the wider study area at this time is further evidenced by ridge and furrow earthworks to the north, west and south of the site. However, the absence of ridge and furrow earthworks within the site probably suggests it was subject to a pastoral management regime, rather than arable cultivation.

Due consideration has also been given to the settings of the heritage assets located within the site’s wider zone of influence.

Assessment has concluded that the proposed development will have a negligible impact on the settings of these designated heritage assets and is therefore in keeping with legislative and planning policy requirements.

With regard to the possible enclosure within the site, it is considered that this can be effectively managed through a programme of recording undertaken prior to development commencing.

Further detail in relation to EDP’s Archaeological Assessment is provided separately.
Surrounding Housing Typology

The surrounding housing types have been looked at, as a guide for design, layout and size of the proposed housing development. The surrounding housing ranges from Victorian terraces and pre-WW1 semi-detached housing to modern detached units and townhouses.

**Lower Outwoods Road**
Mixed styles: small Victorian terraces, 1970s detached brick housing and modern bungalows on side streets, off narrow road.

**Denton Road**
Predominantly modern bungalows line Denton Road, with 1940-60s semi-detached housing along the roads perpendicular to this. Large back gardens.

**Reservoir Road**
Variety of styles; semi-detached, bungalows & detached with garages. Range of ages; generally post 1930s. Along a wide, straight road with large back gardens to the countryside.

**Henhurst Hill**
Small, modern red-brick housing development that forms part of the linear extension of Shobnall to the west. Sits between older semi-detached houses set back from the road, off private drives. Large detached properties.

**Marston’s Brewery**
Long line of small terraces, pertaining to the brewery. Dating from late 1800s. Entrance from rear through gardens, which have been made smaller as the modern brewery has grown. Red-brick with sash windows.

**Pipers Way**
Modern, Miller Homes development; townhouses, flats over garages, 3-storey apartment units. Cul-de-sac development off Shobnall Street, which consists of small Victorian terraces.
Local Amenities and Facilities

Due to the edge of town location of the application site there are several local amenities and facilities in immediate proximity.

The Shobnall Leisure Complex to the southeast provides a valuable recreation resource incorporating a leisure centre, skate park, athletics track, pitch and putt, tennis courts and playing fields. In addition there are other local clubs including theatre and bowls in this location.

The Queen’s Hospital (NHS) is to the northeast of the application site.

There are a number of schools and colleges within a 2km radius of the application site, including:

- The De Ferrers Academy and Outwoods Primary School to the north
- Shobnall Primary school at the bottom of Reservoir Road
- Two others, adjacent to the hospital site, in Horninglow, and off Shobnall Street to the southeast.
- There are other colleges within the town centre.

There are some small allotment sites adjacent to the railway to the east of the application site.

There are several public footpaths and bridleways across the surrounding countryside to the north, west and south of the western edge of Burton Upon Trent, which join to ‘other permissible’ and cycling routes within the town centre.

Local bus routes run along Shobnall Road to the south of the site, to the town centre and outlying villages. A local bus service also links the hospital to the town centre, along Lower Outwoods Road to the northwest of the application site.