

# **Blaby District Council**

## **Gullet Lane and Links Road, Kirby Muxloe**

### **Development Brief**

**May 2010**

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Plan of the area

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This development brief sets out the requirements of the Local Planning Authority for new development in the Gullet Lane and Links Road area of Kirby Muxloe. It expands on the policies in the adopted Blaby District Local Plan and sets out information to assist in the preparation of detailed proposals.
- 1.2 This brief has been the subject of public consultation with the residents in the development brief area, the Highway Authority, the Parish Council and other local bodies. Comments from this consultation process have been fully considered and incorporated into the brief as appropriate.
- 1.3 The brief was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by the Council on 18 May 2010

## 2. The need for, and objectives of, the Development Brief

- 2.1 The recent pressure for development in this area of Kirby Muxloe has given rise to concern by residents about the possibility of future development, especially in the light of the recent planning permission (subject to a section 106 agreement) for the demolition of two adjacent properties on Gullet Lane and their replacement with twelve dwellings, penetrating the rear gardens. It is considered that a development brief is needed to give assurance to residents and developers that the area will be managed sensitively and that new development will respect the distinctive character of the area.
- 2.2 The objectives of the brief are to:
  - i) clarify development plan policy;
  - ii) promote high standards of development; and
  - iii) acknowledge the intrinsic character of the area and ensure that development does not harm it.

## 3. Planning policy context

- 3.1 This section considers the relevant national and local planning policies and guidance which underlie this development brief and which will form the basis of the determination of planning applications for development.
- 3.2 **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development** sets out the government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.
- 3.3 **Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing** contains the government's policies on shaping places where people live, with particular regard to the location and design of development.

- 3.4 **Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas** contains the government's policies on protecting the countryside and defines appropriate forms of development in rural areas.
- 3.5 **East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2009** sets out broad strategic policies on design and development.
- 3.6 **Blaby District Local Plan 1999** shows the area within a primarily residential area, where the following policies apply:

### **Policy R1**

Within the primarily residential areas, identified on the proposals map, planning permission will be granted for residential development, and residential institutions, except where the proposed development would:

- (i) have an unsatisfactory relationship with other nearby uses that would be significantly detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of those properties, including considerations of privacy, light, noise, disturbance and an overbearing effect; or
- (ii) have an unsatisfactory relationship with other nearby uses that would result in residents of the proposed development being unable to enjoy a reasonable level of residential amenity, including considerations of vibration, emissions, hours of working, vehicular activity, privacy, light, noise, disturbance and an overbearing effect; or
- (iii) be significantly out of keeping with the character or appearance of the area; or
- (iv) result in the over-development of the site due to factors including scale and mass; or
- (v) be of unsatisfactory layout, design or external appearance; or
- (vi) involve "tandem development"; or
- (vii) result in an extension of "ribbon development".

### **Policy C1**

Defines areas of countryside within the area of the Local Plan.

### **Policy C2**

Within the area identified as Countryside on the Proposals Map, planning permission will not be granted for built development, or other development which would have a significantly adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

Planning permission will, however, be granted for limited small scale employment and leisure development (including dwellings essential for these needs), providing that all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) It is sited, designed and landscaped in a manner which limits the effect on the appearance and character of the landscape;
- (ii) It is in keeping with the appearance and character of nearby built development;
- (iii) It would have a satisfactory relationship with nearby uses, including considerations of vibration, emissions, hours of working, vehicular activity, privacy, light, illumination, noise, disturbance and an overbearing effect;
- (iv) It would not unacceptably sever or fragment an agricultural land holding.

Where planning permission is granted for a dwelling essential for employment or leisure needs, it will be subject to a planning condition which limits occupation.

## **Policy CE22**

Planning permission will only be granted for development which:

- (i) Takes into account, and retains where appropriate, existing landscape, ecological or geological features.
- (ii) incorporates general landscaping and planting of an appropriate quality to assimilate the development into its local landscape and ecological context.
- (iii) provides a well landscaped and informal edge where development adjoins the countryside or other areas of open land.

## **Policy T6**

Planning permission will not be granted for development unless off street parking provision is made for the vehicles of employees, residents and visitors in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 2 (of the Blaby District Local Plan). Provision below the maximum standard may be acceptable where it can be shown that the location has good access by transport other than the private car and where this level of provision would not result in road safety or traffic management problems.

- 3.6 **‘Highways, transportation and development’ (revised edition 2009)** deals with highways and transportation infrastructure for new developments in areas for which Leicestershire County Council is the highway authority.

Note: Gullet Lane south-west of Mees Bridge and Links Road are unadopted.

## **4. History, character and appearance of the area**

- 4.1 The morphology of the area, including the way in which the area has changed over time and how the layout has altered and developed, is crucial to understanding its character.

### **History**

- 4.2 Gullet Lane would appear to be an historic route dating back many centuries. The old field boundaries are still evident in the property boundaries of some of the dwellings. By comparison, Links Road is relatively new, being laid out in the 1930s.
- 4.3 The available evidence shows that there was only one property in the area, Elms Farm, Gullet Lane, on the 1886 edition Ordnance Survey sheet. By 1903, there was also The Homestead, by 1915, there were five additional properties and by 1930 a further thirteen on Gullet Lane. In the 1930s, some five properties were built on Gullet Lane and eight on Links Road, in the 1940s one on Links Road and in the 1950s, six more dwellings were built on Gullet Lane and nine on Links Road. From the 1960s onwards, three dwelling were built on Gullet Lane and eight on Links Road.
- 4.4 Development has, therefore, largely been confined to the 20th century. The section of Gullet Lane between Station Road and just beyond the railway bridge had been substantially completed by 1939; the rest of Gullet Lane was mainly developed in the 1950s. Links Road was developed initially in the 1930s, with a later phase in the 1950s.

### **Character and appearance**

- 4.5 This entirely residential area is laid out in a spacious fashion, enhanced by the adjacent golf course and farmland, and is a small enclave within the village of Kirby Muxloe. The area is largely within an open setting, with countryside to the north-west and south-west, a golf course to the south-east and residential development, some of which is very new, to the north-east. A railway line in a deep cutting bisects the area and the two parts are linked by a narrow bridge, Mees Bridge. The area contains a large number of trees, with some fine specimens and there are Tree Preservation Orders on five properties on Gullet Lane. Trees are particularly dominant on Gullet Lane south-west of the railway line and parts of this area have a woodland appearance, with trees dominating over built form. Hedges are a defining feature of many plot boundaries, heightening the arcadian character of the area. The appearance of the area is enhanced by the lack of street furniture and

signage; there are a few telegraph poles and some concrete and metal lamp posts.

- 4.6 The area has a low density, with space between and around the buildings. The dwellings face the streets, although the newer backland type of development on Links Road does not have a strong relationship with Gullet Lane. Some of the older properties on Gullet Lane are sited close to the road, whilst others are set back a considerable distance from the road. However, the overall appearance is of two streets closely lined with dwellings.
- 4.7 There is a variety of plot sizes; some are extremely large, others are quite small. The roads differ in width; there is a single carriageway with passing places on parts of Gullet Lane, whereas Links Road is wide enough for two vehicles to pass. One of the dominant characteristics of the area is the absence of pedestrian footways and the prominent grass verges.
- 4.8 Gullet Lane south-west of the railway was originally designated a bridle path and is unadopted. It comprises a single track gently curving road which gives access to a variety of plot sizes, with some very short plots near the railway line giving way to larger plots further along the north side of the road. Some relatively new plots have been carved out to the south side. The road is narrow and well treed, giving a sense of enclosure, but opening out onto fields towards Elms Farm.
- 4.9 Gullet Lane north-east of the railway has spacious plots with large dwellings to the north, and much narrower plots with smaller dwellings to the south, where the dwellings are close to the road. The approach from Station Road is well treed, with grass verges and hedges. Towards the railway bridge, the tree cover is less.
- 4.10 Links Road, which was created in the mid-1930s, is unadopted, straight and has a very open appearance. There are wide grass verges, often edged with stones and flanked by hedges demarcating the front boundaries of the spacious plots. There has been some tree planting in the verges.
- 4.11 There is an eclectic mix of dwelling types, although all are detached. There are bungalows and two storey houses, with ages ranging from the early 1900s to the present. Many of the dwellings were originally built of a modest size, usually comprising three or four bedrooms. Architects tended to be local, primarily from Leicester, and their work did not appear to be of more than local significance. None of the dwellings are listed by English Heritage.
- 4.12 The architectural designs of the dwellings are very varied, being developed over a period of time in a piecemeal fashion. The seeming lack of an overall plan results in an area which does not display a cohesive and integrated form and there is little homogeneity. Some dwellings were influenced by the Arts and Crafts style, others are of a

modern appearance but overall, the dwellings are of individual designs, with no evidence of a unity provided by architectural form.

- 4.13 Original materials included brick, stucco, render, stone, boarding, wooden detailing and tile hanging, with roofs of plain tiles, pantiles, concrete tiles, slates and thatch, but no particular materials dominate. Roof forms vary between gable ended, hipped, swept, catslide and parapet, with a variety of pitches and heights and some include dormers. Dormer roofs are flat, gabled, hipped, sloping and thatched. There are a number of decorative and structural features including string course detailing, deep eaves, bay windows, bow windows, stained glass, balconies, chimneys, a turret and some distinctive doorways. There is a wide variety, displaying little consistency.
- 4.14 There have been changes, some quite radical, to many of the dwellings since they were built, with various extensions, alterations and additions. Those to the fronts and sides of the properties have altered the initial designs quite substantially; others, especially those to the rear, have had less impact on the area. A number of properties now have replacement upvc windows.

## **5. Development Principles**

- 5.1 This section sets out the key principles for future development in Gullet Lane and Links Road to ensure that the Council's aspirations for retaining the distinctive character and appearance of the area and achieving high standards of development are met.
- 5.2 The area is almost entirely residential and is identified in the Blaby District Local Plan as one where Policy R1 for primarily residential areas and policy C2 other developments in the countryside apply. It is anticipated that it will remain a mixture of residential and countryside. Policy R1 states that planning permission will be granted for residential development, and residential institutions, subject to various factors relating to:
- residential amenity;
  - the character or appearance of the area;
  - over-development (scale and mass);
  - layout, design and external appearance;
  - "tandem development"; and
  - "ribbon development".
- 5.3 The factors which contribute to the intrinsic character and appearance of the area, which it is essential to retain, can be summarised as:
- landscape features such as trees, hedges and roadside grass verges;
  - low density of development, emphasised by space between and around the buildings;

- streets closely lined with dwellings; and
- dwellings which are detached and of individual designs with a wide range of materials, forms and decorative features.

5.4 Together, these factors underlie the principles of development. It is intended that these will apply not only to the development of new dwellings, but also to the extension of existing dwellings, as incrementally, this can have just as great an impact on the character of the area.

### **Principle 1: Residential amenity**

The relationship of any new development or extensions to existing development must respect the amenities of neighbouring residents, in terms of privacy, light, noise, disturbance, overbearing effect, vibration, emissions, hours of working and vehicular activity in line with the policy applied by the Council across the whole of Blaby District. The Council does not consider it appropriate to stipulate precise criteria, preferring to consider each proposal on individual merit.

### **Principle 2: Layout**

New development should follow the existing pattern of development. The layout of the two streets shows a very clear relationship between the built development and the street pattern, with strong frontage development to the two streets. This pattern of streets closely lined with dwellings should be retained.

The spacious layout of individual properties lining the streets and the retention of trees, hedges and verges is essential to maintaining the intrinsic character of the area. Large openings in the street scene, for example for new access points, would detract from the character of the area.

Although development to the rear of the dwellings on the north western part of Gullet Lane between Station Road and Mees Bridge relates acceptably to the existing housing adjacent to and behind it, this form of development would not be appropriate in other locations where plots back onto open countryside.

Policy R1 in the District Plan excludes tandem development. This is where new dwellings are built immediately in front of, or behind, another and sharing the same access. Such development will not be permitted in this area.

Policy R1 also excludes ribbon development, which relates to properties on the edge of settlements which have side gardens abutting the limits to built development, as on Gullet Lane and Links Road. The limits have been drawn to respect the curtilages to the dwellings to allow scope for extensions to the existing dwellings. However, proposals for new dwellings in such situations will be resisted.

### **Principle 3: Density**

The area has, overall, a low density due in part to some very large plots, especially those on the north western side of Gullet Lane at both ends, and those at the south-eastern end of Links Road. The need for any proposed development to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area would be likely to preclude intensive forms of high density development.

### **Principle 4: Space**

In addition to the low density, and perhaps more readily visible, are the spaces between and around dwellings. Very few dwellings completely fill the frontage widths of the plots. Most have space to the sides and many have significant space to the front. New development should respect this spaciousness and retain some space at the sides of the plots.

### **Principle 5: Design and external appearance**

There is considerable scope for design of new development and this brief is not intended to stifle innovation. Individually designed dwellings are a characteristic feature of this area and no particular style of dwelling predominates, although new development should respect neighbouring dwellings and be in character with them. As there is already an eclectic mix of materials and styles, it is not appropriate to be prescriptive on these matters.

The scale and mass of any new development must respect that of the existing development and must be in keeping with it. New development should not dominate existing development. Neighbouring buildings should provide guidance for the appropriate scale and mass of new development.

If the existing layout of the area and the space between buildings is respected, together with the height, depth and massing of existing built form, then new development can be assimilated without harming the character of the area.

### **Principle 6: Landscape**

Any new development should retain as many trees as possible and where appropriate, should make provision for additional tree planting. Any significant trees which are perceived to be under threat will be assessed to establish if a Tree Preservation Order is justified.

Hedges should be retained on the front boundaries of dwellings and additional hedges planted to enhance new development.

The roadside grass verges should be retained, with new access points kept to a minimum, so that the verges continue to provide a significant feature in the street scene.

## **General Permitted Development**

- 5.5 It should be noted that some residential development is permitted under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2008 and in these cases, specific planning permission is not required. For example, this allows, amongst other things, for some porches and single storey side extensions to dwellings. Although this could have the effect of reducing the space around dwellings, the restriction in height limits the impact of such extensions. Other minor operations, such as means of enclosure and the formation of means of access to a highway in some cases, are also permitted.

## **6. The role of the Brief in Development Control**

- 6.1 The development brief is intended to assist in the understanding of what is likely to be acceptable and what is unacceptable. It gives quality and consistency of advice and reduces uncertainty to contribute to the efficiency of the planning process.
- 6.2 The brief will be used:
- to inform advice to those seeking to carry out development in the area;
  - in the assessment of planning applications to ensure that the particular attributes of the area are respected; and
  - in appeals against the decisions of the Council to refuse planning permission for development. Once the brief has been the subject of public consultation and adopted by the Council, it will be given considerable weight by Inspectors as a material consideration at planning appeals.

# Appendices

## References

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development  
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing  
East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2009  
Blaby District Local Plan 1999  
'Highways, transportation and development' (revised edition 2009)  
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2008  
Ordnance Survey sheets dated 1886, 1903, 1915, 1916, 1930 and 1971  
Blaby District Council's Planning and Building Control Departments' Registers from 1929 – 1958, individual property records and Tree Preservation Orders  
Archaeological and historic assessment of Gullet Lane/Links Road area of Kirby Muxloe  
Various web sites

# Boundary of the area covered by the brief

