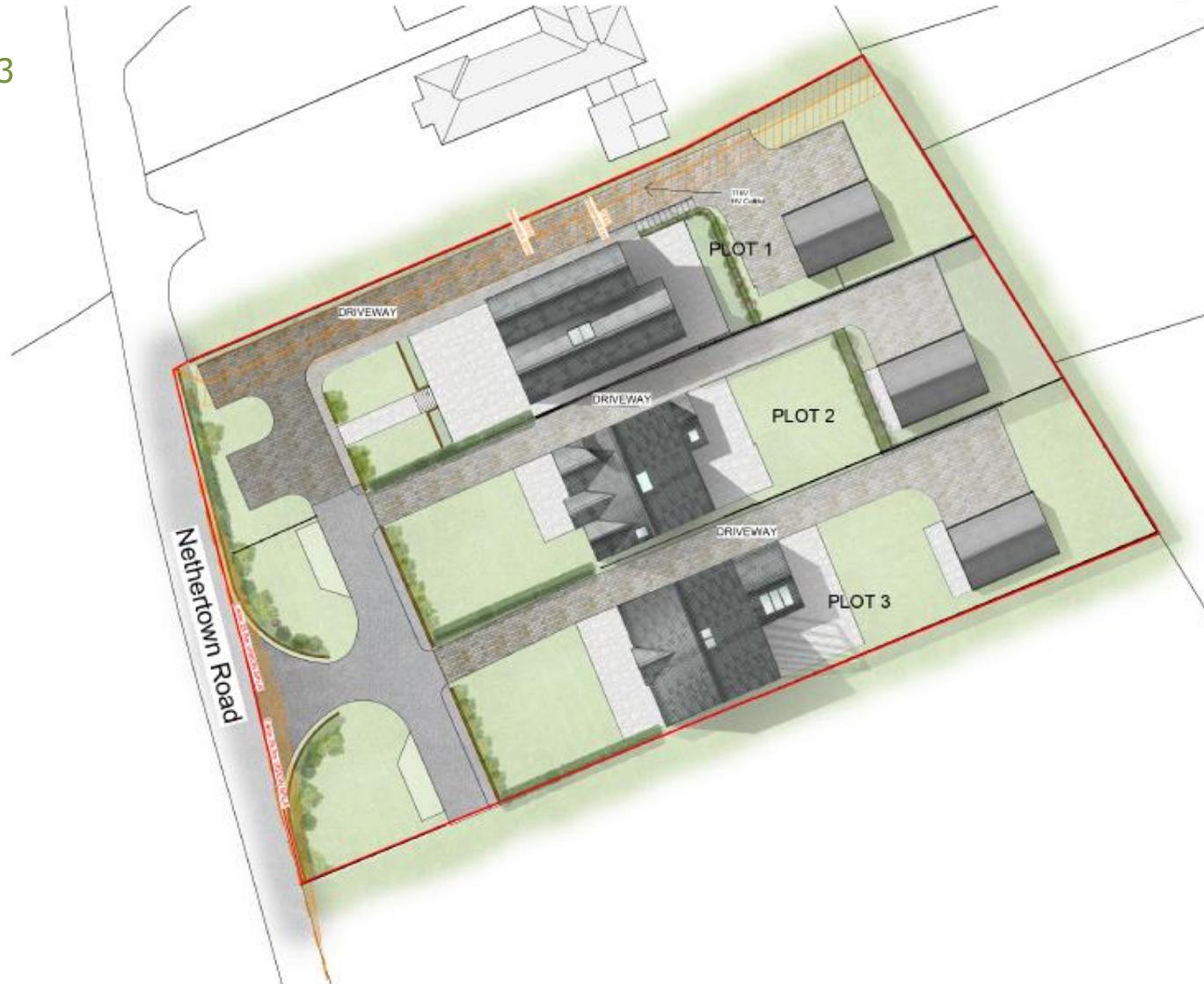


Land at Nethertown Road, St Bees

Design and Access Statement

November 2013



ASHWOOD
DESIGN ASSOCIATES LTD



1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Ashwood Design Associates on behalf of Sunshine Properties West Coast in support of a planning application for residential development at Nethertown Road, St Bees.

The proposed development site comprises approximately 0.41 hectares of land located to the South of the Local Service Centre of St-Bees.

The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to examine the character and structure of the development in response to the need to promote better quality and more sustainable design in development; and objective embedded through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This document should be considered and read in conjunction with the accompanying reports and plans submitted as part of this application.

1.2 The Application Site

The site is an area of greenfield land which is currently, and has historically, been used for agricultural grazing purposes.

The site is bound to the North and East by private residential properties. To the West is Nethertown Road running along the length of the boundary and to the south is adjoining fields.

The topography of the land rises gently towards the North boundary and falls off into the valley beyond the boundary.

1.3 Description of the Development

The proposal is for 3 new self build dwellings for private individuals who live locally and want to move to a more appropriately sized and designed property. As all three parties are involved in the design stage a coherent design approach will be used for the designs, this will include uniformity of building form, materials, landscaping and style of architecture. For self build plots this provides an opportunity to create a development that aligns with planning and clients requirements to provide a carefully considered proposal.

1.4 Purpose of the Document

The document should be considered alongside the full suite of documents which form the reserved matters application.

This document will demonstrate the design journey and relative consideration to implement the designs presented, this will be done from a local perspective and cross referencing this to the local plan, NPPF and design best practice.

1.5 Structure of the Document

This report is structured as follows:

Section 1 - Introduction and Vision Statement;

Section 2 - Planning Policy Context;

Section 3 - Site Assessment;

Section 4 - Design Proposals;

Section 5 - Summary



Site Location Plan

Vision

Nethertown Road Development will be an aspirational development built to provide high-quality living in an area of beauty overlooking the coast.

The development will provide housing to meet the needs of a growing and economically thriving workforce who seek a higher quality of home in a location which is convenient for their employment. Whilst being only a stone's throw from the heart of the Centre of Nuclear Excellence, the development will provide rural exclusivity in an inspirational setting.

The development will provide housing to meet the identified needs for executive homes in the area and will further support the local community which will support and enhance the vitality of St Bees.

The layout and design reflects and reinforces the existing characteristics of properties along Nethertown Road and the various styles of architecture found around St Bees. The distinctive characteristics include long narrow sites, large front drives / gardens leading to a relatively narrow fronted property sat within the long site.

The buildings footprints are appropriate for the size of the sites, but the main elevations are restricted in width, this is common to the properties in the area and various examples are presented through this document. In order to allow connectivity to the surrounding environment and views over the coast, a high ratio of glazing is allocated to the front and rear elevations to provide natural light within the properties.

The site sits within a topographical basin and is fronted with an attractive natural stone wall, the proposed design seeks to fit within the basin and protect the long range visual impact of the site, where visible from Nethertown road the site will be appropriately landscaped to sit naturally within its surroundings and bound by the existing natural stone wall to the front.

The vision for this reserved matters proposal is strong and ambitious and the design principles set out in this document show the design evolution from context analysis to layout development, resulting in a proposed development of the highest quality.

2. Planning Policy

2.1 Planning Policy Context

The site is located in a sustainable location on the edge of the existing built form of the village of St Bees.

The application is submitted seeking approval for the reserved matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. The principle of development and the point of access was approved by way of Outline planning application 4/20/2491/001. The purpose of this statement is to set out the key design principles in support of the development of the site, and it should be read in conjunction with the plans and other supporting documentation.

The key design principles evaluated within the have been arrived at through careful consideration towards ensuring the proposed development adopts and enhances the characteristics of the surrounding area and the design principles set out within the approved outline application.

This Reserved Matters application seeks to only address the outstanding matters of access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. The remaining conditions from the Outline planning application will be addressed through a concurrent application to discharge the relevant conditions.

The scheme is designed to reflect all relevant local and national policy in relation to the provision of housing.

2.2 Local Development Plan

The Development Plan consists of policies within the Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 (CLP), adopted December 2013. The adopted Local Plan is currently 'Part 1' only consisting of a 'Core Strategy' (CS) of strategic policies and development management policies.

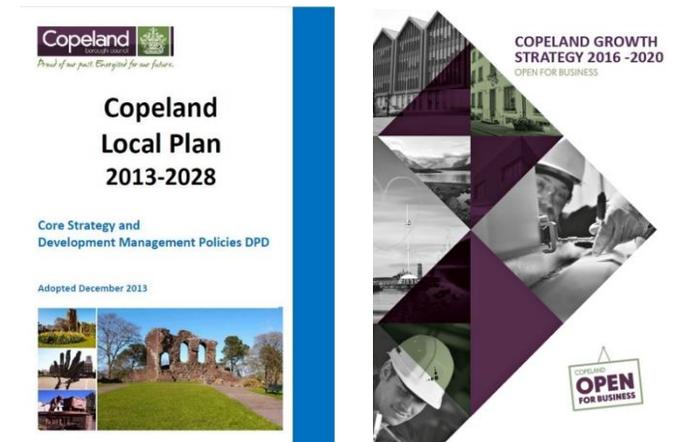
It is considered that the most relevant policies found with the CS in relation to this proposal are as follows:

- ST1 Strategic Development Principles;
- ST2 Spatial Development Strategy;
- SS1 Improving the Housing Offer;

- SS2 Sustainable Housing Growth;
- SS5 Provision and Access to Open Space and Green Infrastructure;
- ENV1 Flood Risk and Risk Management;
- ENV2 Coastal Management;
- ENV3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- ENV5 Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Landscapes;
- ENV6 Access to the countryside;
- DM10 Achieving Quality of Plan;
- DM11 Sustainable Development Standards;
- DM12 Standards for New Residential Developments;
- DM22 Accessible Developments;
- DM24 Development Proposals and Flood Risk;
- DM25 Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species;
- DM26 Landscaping;
- DM28 Protection of Trees.

Material Considerations

Copeland Borough Council published the Copeland Growth Strategy 2016-2020 (Open for Business) in 2016. The Growth Strategy recognizes that in order to attract new jobs, skills and investment, new housing is essential to support economic growth. It states: **"Housing is also a key economic driver, both in terms of the jobs it supports and to the economy as a whole. Providing new housing is essential to support economic growth, with an estimated 30,000 new homes required by 2025 across the county."**



2.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, it provides a framework within which local plans can be produced.

Planning law dictates that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF must be taken into consideration in planning decisions.

It is considered the most relevant contents found within the NPPF in relation to this proposal are as follows:

- 2. Achieving Sustainable Development;
- 11. Making Effective Use of Land;
- 12. Achieving Well-Designed Places;
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding & coastal change;

2.4 National Design Guide (NDG)

The NDG highlights that the long-standing, fundamental principles for good design are that it is; fit for purpose, durable, and **brings delight**.

It is straight forward to demonstrate these qualities for a building, we can identify its activities and users, the quality of detail, materials, construction, we can also make judgements about its beauty.

Components for Good Design

The NDG expresses the importance of good design involving attention to other components of places, these include;

- The context for places and buildings;
- Hard and soft landscaping;
- Technical infrastructure such as drainage;
- The layout;
- Buildings form and scale;

- Appearance of the buildings;
- Materials and their detailing.

All developments are made up of these components, the choices made during the design process contribute to achieving the ten characteristics and shape the character of a place.



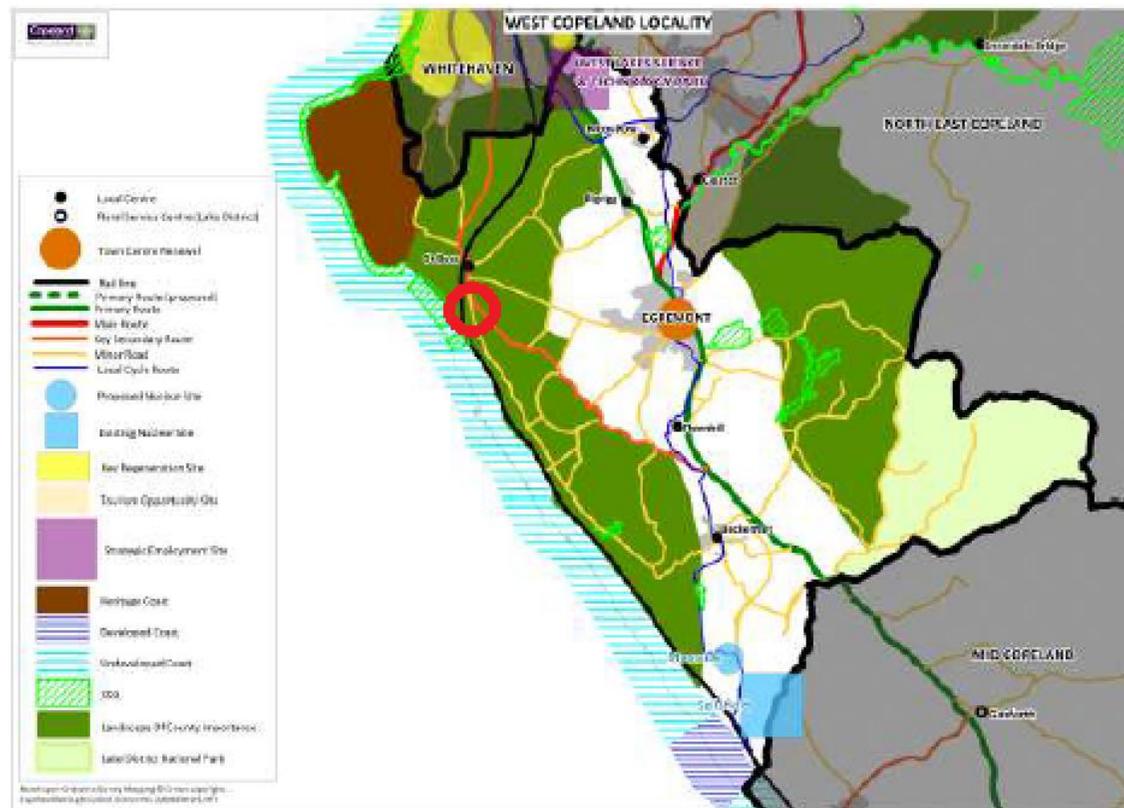
3. Site Assessment

3.1 Local Character

The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Southern settlement boundary of St-Bees. The site is an area of greenfield land which is currently used for agricultural grazing purposes.

The topography of the land rises to the rear and either side of the site, forming a natural basin for the development to site.

St-Bees is one of the larger Local Centres within the Copeland settlement hierarchy and benefits from a number of key community facilities including shops, schools, churches, sports facilities and public transport, all of which are within walking distance of the application site.



3.2 Existing Built Form

The site is located to the east of Nethertown Road, as a continuation of the residential properties forming the edge of the settlement.

The site is open farmland and is influenced by:

Basin like topography with rising land to the rear and sides;

- Fairly modern housing, yet ill designed surrounding properties set
- back from Nethertown road with long drives and front gardens;
- Dense new three storey housing on Fairladies which forms the newest development in close proximity to the site.
- Gradual gradient sloping from the front of the site down to the the west before immediately dropping off to the coastline.

- | | |
|----|---|
| A. | Low point within the site |
| B. | Raised land form above height of dwellings blocking views of development from approach, North, East and South. |
| C. | Continued Street scene of adjoining properties |
| D. | Approach from Nethertown |
| E. | Dramatic fall in topography down to coast, removing views of development from immediate coast. |
| F. | Fairladies Development of dense three storey housing with balcony's to front and various use of materials and gables. |
| G. | Monks Hill Development with large amounts of glazing and peculiar shapes of extrusions to the dwellings built out of the natural land form. |
| H. | Abbotts Way comprising of dense 60s properties on a high point visible to the surrounding countryside and St Bees. |
| I. | Train Station |



3.3 Surrounding Uses and Context

St-Bees

Historically, Saint Bees proved to be popular in 1816 for the St.Bess Theological College and it was the first for clergy training of Church of England outside Oxford and Cambridge. The Priory was extended in the 1860s to accommodate additional lecture rooms. Over 2600 clergy have been trained before it closed in 1895.

During the 1840s St Bees School embarked on an era of rapid expansion starting with the construction of the quadrangle in 1846 using compensation from the rich mine-owning Lowther family. By 1916 numbers had reached 350, many new buildings had been erected, and the school had become known nationally.

The site has views to St Bees Head which is the only Heritage Coast between Wales and Scotland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

It is of key note that although St-Bees has a long historic presence it is not classified as a conservation area, this has an important impact on the design of recent developments. Of later years the village has been expanded to sustain the local service centre with developments including;

- Fairladies
- The Crofts
- Abbey Vale
- Monks Hill

As par of this section we shall assess these developments for notable characteristics that were worth influencing the design of our development.



Fairladies

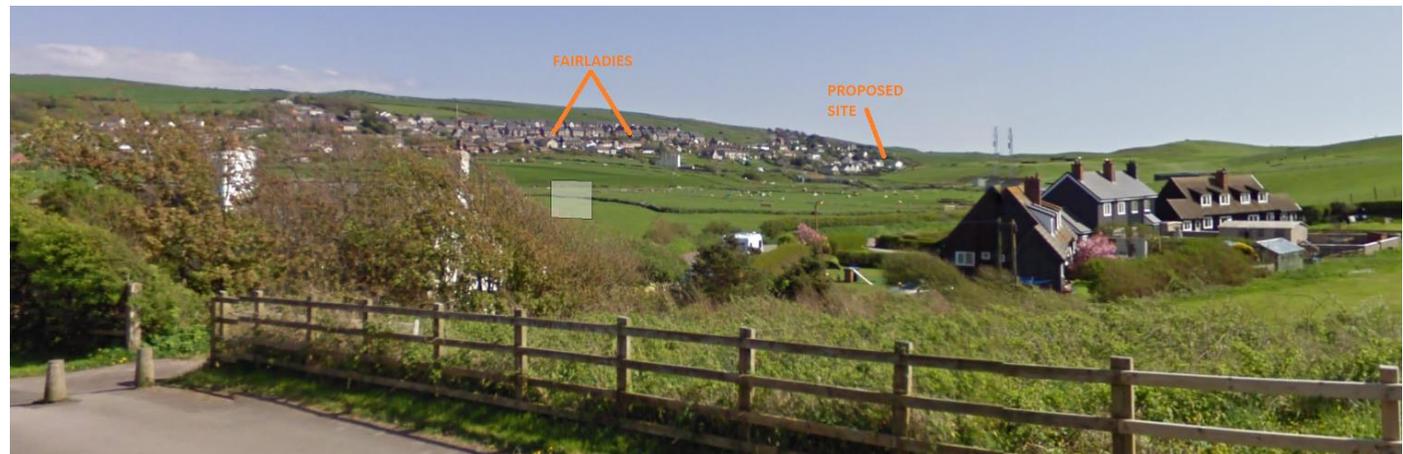
Fairladies is a development recently complete by a local developer Story Homes, the massing and density of this development is far greater than our proposed development with extensive use of three storey properties with irregular building forms, balcony's, large glazing expanses, multiple materials on principle elevations and contrasting decorative stonework, large expanses of hardstandings to principle street scenes.

The variation in design style is vast with no evident influence of design principles found within local guidance, differences can be seen on the adjacent images including multiple building forms with a use of gables, no gables, dropped eaves, three storey properties. This extends to the large variation materials and associated difference in colours, at least 7 are evident on the wall construction alone.

The development gives a sense of large overbearing masses in the form of dwellings as your travel through it. From a distance around St-Bees where both Fairladies and our site are visible the impact of Fairladies is minimal despite its density and large mass.

In conclusion the key design influence we want to achieve from Fairladies is to achieve a similar minimal visual impact from a distance, this will be achieved by placing the proposed dwellings within the basin like topography of the site, keeping the dwellings to 2 storey in heigh and having low density.

Further to this we will take a conservative approach towards the breaking of mass to the front elevations with inclusion of gables and glazing and a two contrasting wall materials. This will create interesting but consistent design approach found on all three properties.



The Crofts & Abbey Vale

The Crofts and Abbey vale are very similar in appearance and can be assessed in conjunction. They both form dense developments using ordinary dwellings offering very little in terms of architectural attractiveness. Irregular building form can be seen throughout on both with split elevations with extruding elements and various roof styles, including the use of balconies.

Examples of varying roof pitches can be found throughout with gables filled with glazing and irregular openings within the properties.

The visual impact of both developments can be clearly see from various points around St-Bees.

In conclusion there is not any architectural merit that would be considered suitable to inherit in a executive property as of those within our development. What is evident is that there is a flexibility in the buildings form and use of glazing / gables if executed correctly within our development.



Monks Hill

Monks hill is the closest example in terms of size to our development of recent construction, it can be analysed to understand what should be considered acceptable in other applications such as this application.

The estate comprises of six properties which may be considered executive, they are located adjacent to a building of significant appearance and history. They are built on topography which exposes them to long range views around St-Bees and the use of materials helps to make them more evident and quite bright in appearance.

the properties themselves have a very irregular building form with an impression of large scale and mass as you view them, they are built out of the ground with the use of large retaining walls and garages under the properties. They include many extrusions of walls, glazing, porches, terraces, balconies, bay windows, and dormer windows with varying eaves heights from single storey to two storey and several heights in between. There is large quantities of glazing with a mixture of materials used in the wall construction and balconies.

A sense of overbearing mass is felt as you drive past the site or walk around it. In conclusion the development gives more of a influence of what not to achieve than application of good design from the local plan and relevant design guides. This application will seek to adhere to the design guidance and have considerate massing, scale, form and visual impact as well as considering the adjacent architecture.



3.4 Opportunities and Constraints

The development site is located approximately 700m from the centre of St-Bees, immediately adjacent to the existing built form of the village.

The site has good access to a range of local services and facilities nearby including schools, public transport, shops and recreational facilities.

The site is characterised by sea front views and natural topography for the development to sit within and protect its visual impact from the area.

The access road from Nethertown road is a minor road and not used for main access in to St-Bees. The main access from the south is located to the rear of the development but the view of the development is blocked by existing properties and trees.

The image to the right indicates the site main constraints and opportunities with proposed dwellings positions for context.

3.5 Topography

The site occupies an area of around 0.41 hectares and is irregular in shape and comprises a large open field that has been used for grazing sheep.

A topographical survey of the site has been carried out. The site is located within a basin with the highest part being to the rear corners of the site. The land beyond the front of the site falls gently before dropping to the coast.

Whilst new buildings will always disrupt the underlying shape of the land to some extent, attention has been paid to siting, orientation and density of housing to preserve the 'lie of the land'. The proposed houses will sit within the land rather than on the land as other local developments, this will result in retaining walls being hidden to the rear of the site. The front of the dwellings will sit on the natural topography from the front to allow the properties to blend in naturally with the landscape and be only visible from the immediate front of the site.

3.6 Access

A full Access Appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain the most appropriate, safe and sustainable access point for the proposed development. Access to each of the plots will be from a private road within the site boundary meaning only one access is required to Nethertown Road.

The proposed access will also form a passing place for the narrow minor Nethertown road.



4. Design Proposals



4. Design Proposals

4.1 Design Principles

The proposed site design has been carefully considered and developed from the key design principals from assessing the site and influenced by discussions with the local authority. This section demonstrates what the principals are and how they have been incorporated as the design has evolved from conception through to the final design.

The following principles have been applied to the this proposal:

Design Principles

- A high quality, low density development with 'Executive' plots to meet the identified need;
- A development which is aspirational in layout, house types and plot orientation, making the best use of the land available, with use of a coherent design style across all the properties which inherit the very best architectural emphasis from the surrounding sites characteristics;
- A development which respects the areas heritage and is built of highest quality standards and materials;
- A scheme which is topography led, with strategic placement of dwellings to protect the sites visual impact;
- A development which will respect the visual amenity of existing residents;
- Housing will be orientated to ensure maximum solar gain, providing sustainable building consideration;
- Improved highway safety with inclusion of new passing place;
- Strong design quality for the dwellings with carefully considered massing, scale, style and use of materials.

4.1 Design Development

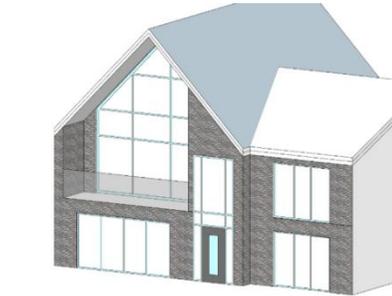
The following illustrates the design development undertaken to ensure the design principles were incorporated within the final design.

Concept Design

The concept design illustrates the initial designs that inherited massing and style from local developments.

The primary inclusions were as follows;

- Irregular extrusions to the buildings form
- Differing roof pitches with large amounts of glazing as found on local developments outlined above.
- Varied use of materials.
- Exceeding minimum standoff distances to neighbouring properties.
- Offering views from within the site towards the coast and open countryside.



Original Planning Submission

The original planning application took the characteristics found from concept and created a more carefully considered design approach. The key areas highlighted requiring amendment include;

- Consistent roof pitches and property massing.
- Consistent use of small quantity of high quality natural materials.
- Use of gables and glazing as found throughout St Bees
- Use of terraces and glazing as other developments in st bees
- Reduced massing with properties designed to sit within topography of site.
- Rear parking / garages forming retaining structures to allow reduction in front street scene mass
- Standoff distances from neighboring properties in exceedance of requirements.
- **A key influence for the use of Lakeland stone is demonstrated on the image below where a fabricated version of the stone has been acceptable within a recent development.**



4.1 Final Design

The final design has evolved through careful consideration and consultation between the whole design team including influence from the planning officers to ensure the key design principles from all necessary stakeholders have been included.

The property purchasers, two of whom work within the nuclear and the third from agricultural sectors influence on the design should be considered with weight, all three purchasers desire the properties to be executive homes as an identified need within the local plan.

All three occupants desired the same style of architecture which was influenced by leading examples of architecture readily available to them, this informed the brief for the architect to design the development. Without the restriction of a conservation area or requirement of a specific design standard identifiable within the local plan for St-Bees, the style presented is deemed an example of high quality architectural design.

4.2 Massing and Scale

The main evolution of the designs following feedback from the local authority was regards to the massing and scale of the properties. The previous submission had extrusions of wall mass with use for terraces and projecting rooms, however the revised mass has been aligned within a single line to align with the existing linear development of the adjoining properties.

In order to create interesting elevations a combination of varied roofs, materials and features have been implemented to ensure a high quality design is achieved. The massing of the elevations is broken up for each of the properties with the use of continuous vertical glazing, or feature render / stone gables and surrounds.

Although this style of architecture is not present in St-Bees currently, it provides an example of great improvement on previous developments to increase the quality of architecture in the area and allow influence on future architecture with a high standard. It is important to highlight that the style of architecture is timeless due to its use of natural materials and simple building form, it will stand the test of time and continue to be a leading example of architecture.

4.3 Materials

The principle objective of the design process was to create a development which would enhance the local architecture with use of high quality materials, originally Lakeland stone was proposed which compliments the architecture with the largest impact. Following feedback towards the suitability of the use of Lakeland stone which is not immediately local to St-Bees the properties were re-designed for use with a more suitable alternative as seen in the illustrations adjacent. The stone is then complimented with natural slate and neutral grey coloured windows and fascia's.

The effect is a simple building form of sympathetic scale with the use of materials including glazing to create interesting and aesthetically pleasing properties.

