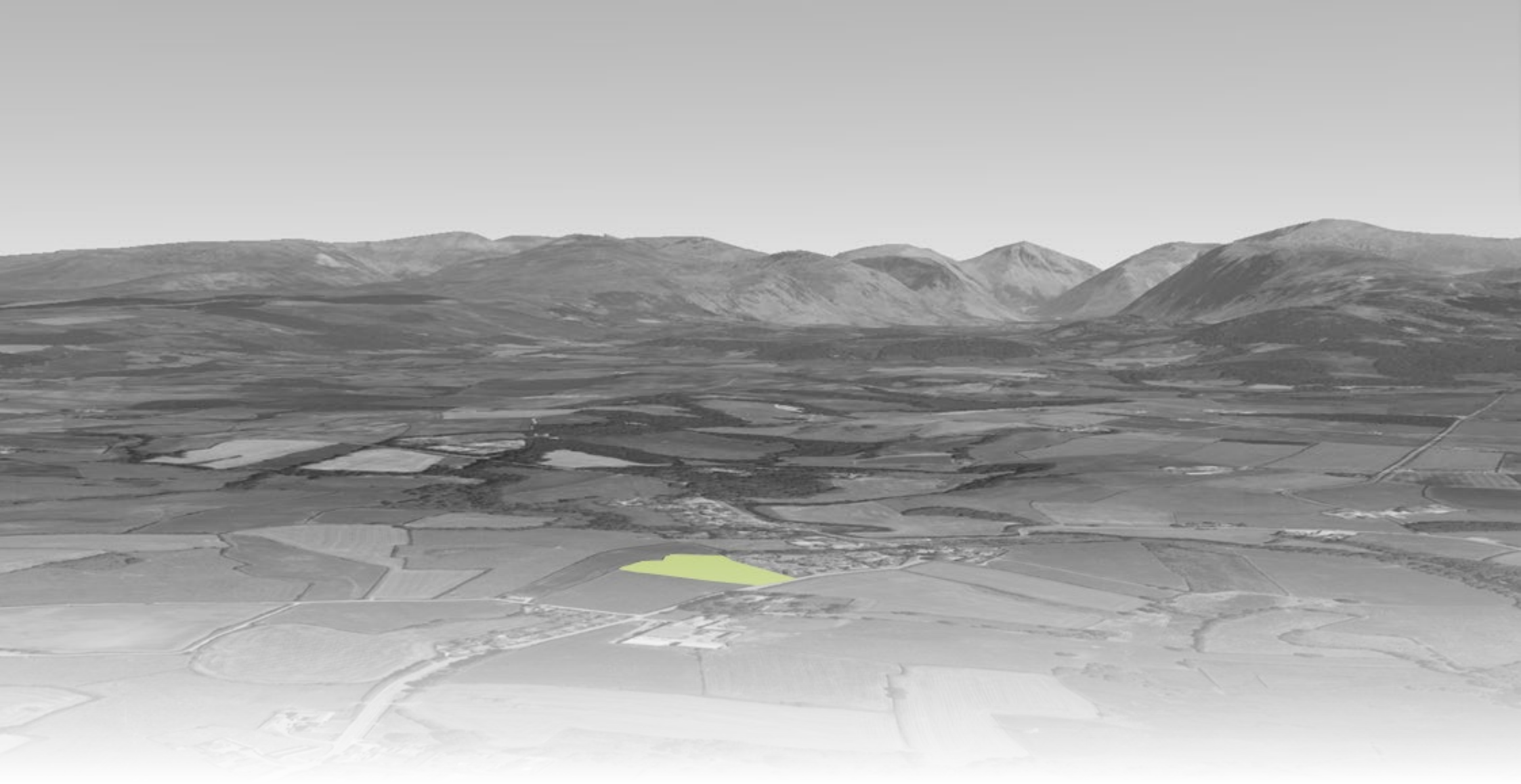




Design & Access Statement

2324 Land West of Holmrook

May 2025

Administration:

Project:	Land West of Holmrook.	
Project Ref:	2324	
Date:	08.05.25	
Site Location:	Land West of Smithy Banks, Holmrook, Cumbria, CA19	
Author:	TH	
Checked By:	JC	
Revision:	D	
Issues		
Rev:	Date:	Purpose:
A	20.11.24	Draft
B	27.05.24	Planning Submission
C	02.06.25	Planning Submission
D	04.06.25	Planning Submission
E	12.08.25	Revision for Planning

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1. Overview

This Reserved Matters application seeks consent for the following:

- Development of 21 residential dwellings comprising a mix of 3, 4, and 5-bedroom homes as depicted on the adjacent site plan.
- Provision of associated off-street parking for all dwellings.
- Vehicular and pedestrian access from the B5344, south of the application site.
- Associated landscaping, drainage, and other supporting infrastructure, including the provision of approximately 0.3 acres of public open space.



Figure 1.0: Proposed Site Plan

Section 2:
Introduction

2. Introduction

2.1 Background & Purpose

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Ashwood Design Associates on behalf of Genesis Homes to support the reserved matters application for a new residential development, comprising of 21 new dwellings and associated infrastructure on the land west of Holmrook.

Ashwood Design Associates were appointed by Genesis Homes earlier this year and have since worked collaboratively with the applicant to progress the scheme from initial concept and feasibility stages through to the final proposed site layout. The purpose of this DAS is to explain the rationale behind the proposed development. It outlines the design evolution, responds to site-specific opportunities and constraints, and demonstrates how the scheme aligns with relevant national and local planning policies and design guidance. It should be read in conjunction with the supporting planning documents submitted as part of this application.

2.2 Genesis Homes

Genesis Homes is a well-established regional housebuilder with a proven track record of delivering high-quality residential developments that meet local needs. Backed by a team with over a 100 years of housebuilding experience, the company has played a key role in shaping sustainable and desirable communities across the region. With this application, Genesis Homes seeks to build on that legacy by reaffirming its core vision: *"To lead the way in the creation of quality, vibrant and welcoming housing developments in our region."*

Genesis' design ethos and commitment to delivering high-quality developments have been intrinsically woven into every stage of the design process, resulting in a scheme that prioritises placemaking, fosters community, and delivers visually appealing, well-considered homes for all.



Figure 2.0: Example Genesis Development, Carlisle



Figure 2.1: Example Genesis Development, Lazonby



Section 3:

Site Context & Analysis

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.1 Site Location: Regional Setting

The applicant site is located in Holmrook, a small rural village in West Cumbria, adjacent to the River Irt. The village lies on the western edge of the Lake District National Park, a landscape recognised for its outstanding natural beauty.

Holmrook is connected via the A595, the principal coastal route in West Cumbria, providing direct access to key settlements such as Whitehaven to the north and Millom to the south. The village is also served by the nearby Drigg Railway Station, located approximately 1 mile to the south-west. Drigg lies on the Cumbrian Coast Line, offering regular services to regional destinations including Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, and Whitehaven, with onward connections to the national rail network.

The site sits within a wider rural context comprising open agricultural land, scattered residential clusters, and natural features such as rivers, woodland, and undulating countryside. This combination of scenic landscape, and proximity to both the Lake District and west coast employment centres makes Holmrook a sustainable and desirable location for new residential development.

Key:

1. Holmrook (Site Location).
2. Egremont
3. Whitehaven (Local Services & Employment Area).
4. Ulverston
5. Sellafield (Local Employment centre).
6. BAE Systems (Local Employment Centre).

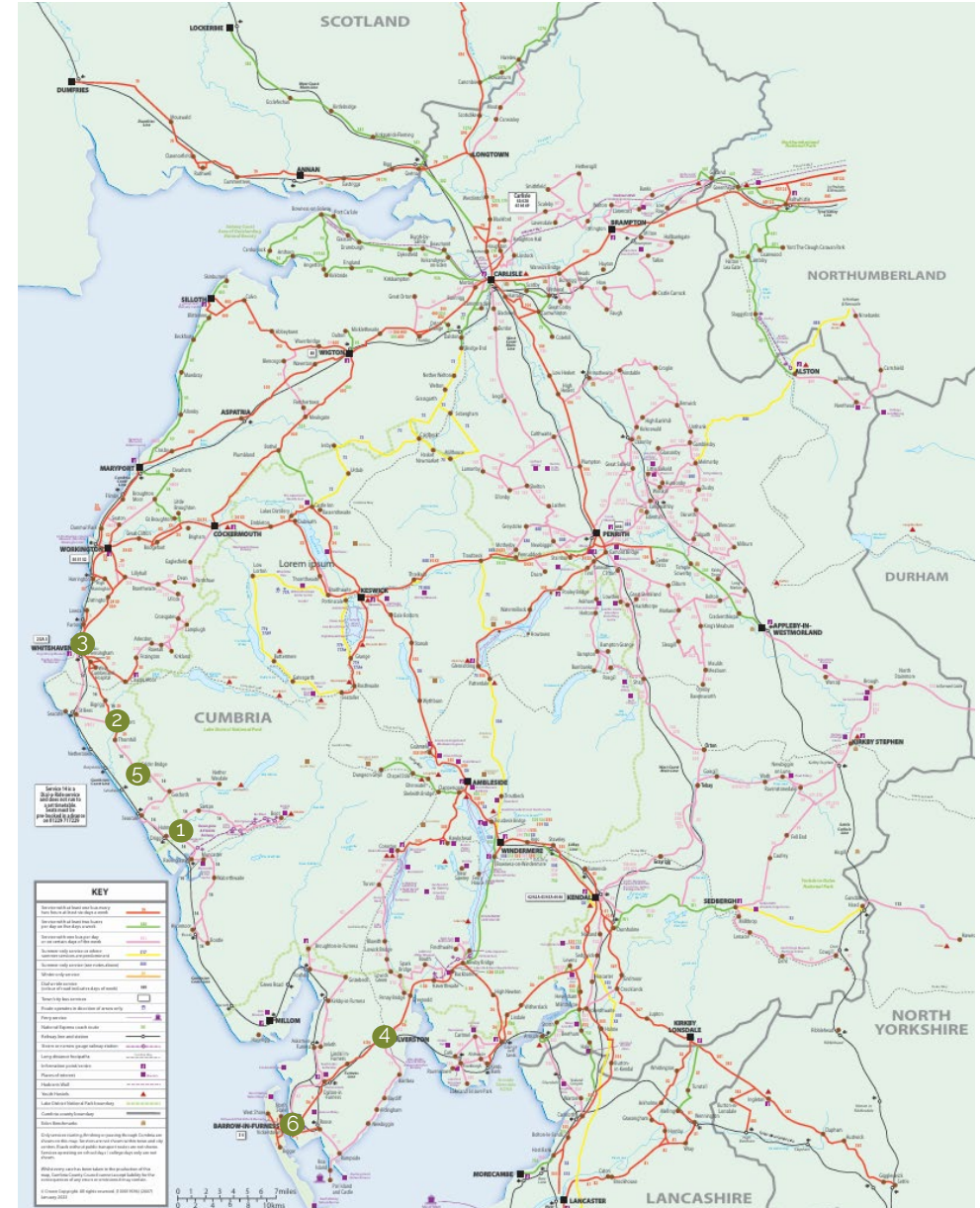


Figure 3.1: Applicant site - regional setting & Transport Links.
Map extracted from Cumbria Passenger Transport Map

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.2 Site Location: Local Setting

The site is located on the western edge of Holmrook, immediately adjacent to existing residential settlement. It is bordered by dwellings along Smithy Banks and forms a logical and natural extension to the built form of the village. As shown in orange on the adjacent map, the site is identified by the former Copeland Local Planning Authority as lying within the established settlement boundary.

Access is taken from the B5344, located to the south of the site. This classified local road runs through Holmrook and connects directly to the A595, providing convenient vehicular access to surrounding settlements and employment centres. The immediate setting is predominantly residential, featuring a mix of detached and semi-detached homes that reflect the traditional rural vernacular of the area.

To the north and west, the site adjoins open countryside and gently undulating farmland, reinforcing Holmrook's rural setting. Beyond the open field to the west lies the neighbouring village of Drigg. While the proposed development would extend the village westward, the retention of the intervening open field ensures a clear and visually distinct separation between Holmrook and Drigg.

To the east, the River Irt defines the village's natural boundary and contributes to its ecological and landscape character. As development to the east is constrained by the river corridor, the western edge represents the most appropriate and sustainable direction for future village expansion.

The site is well-related to the existing village fabric and offers an opportunity to deliver sensitively designed new housing that supports local growth needs while respecting Holmrook's rural character and landscape context.

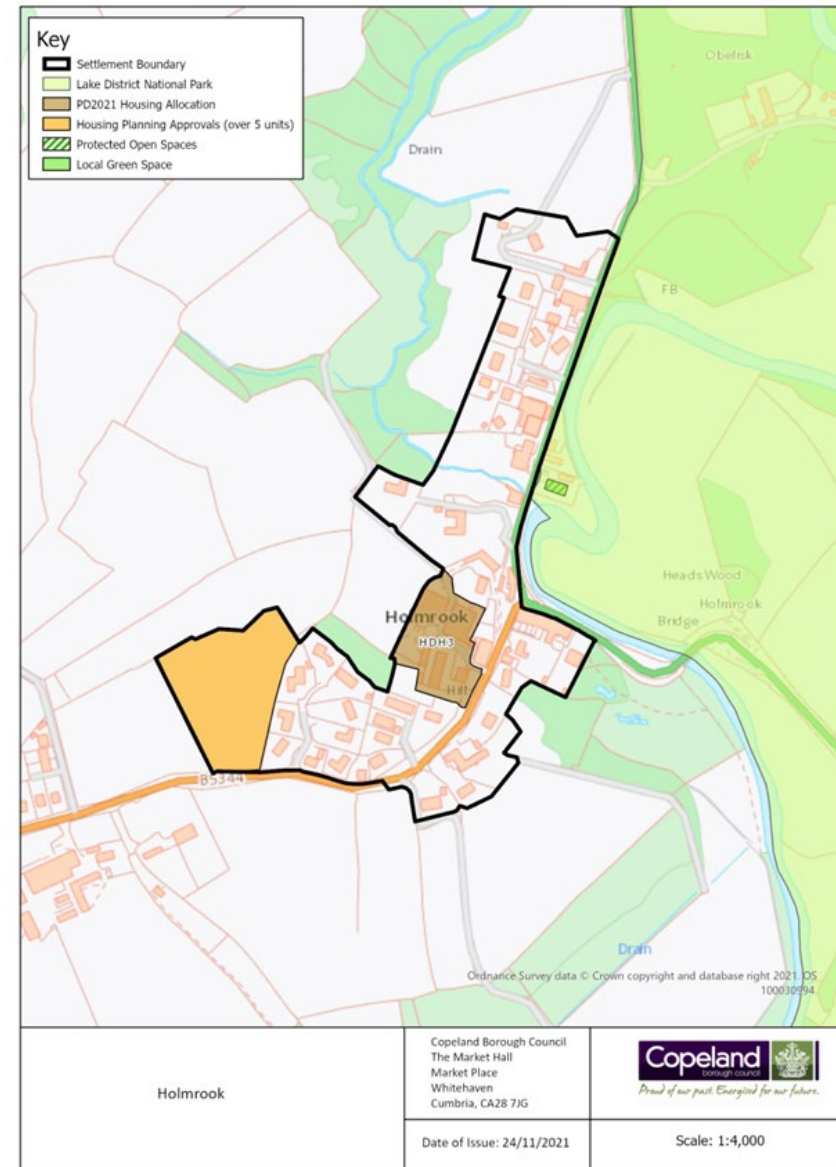


Figure 3.2 Settlement Map of Holmrook, extracted from Copeland Local Plan.

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.3 Surrounding Natural and Built Environment



3. Site Context & Analysis

3.4 Site Features & Existing Uses

The application site extends to approximately 1.3 hectares and is currently a greenfield site used for grazing and agricultural purposes. The site boundaries are largely defined by established hedgerows, which mark the northern, eastern, and southern edges. The western boundary is not physically defined but instead follows the settlement boundary of Holmrook. Beyond this boundary, the site continues into a larger field, which eventually terminates at the boundary adjacent to the dwellings that form the edge of Drigg.

In terms of topography, the site is relatively level throughout, with a gentle slope downwards in the northeastern part of the site. Beyond the northeastern hedgerow, the land slopes away more steeply.

3.5 Site Access

The site is currently accessed via a gate located in the southeastern corner along the southern boundary. While, under normal circumstances, this access point could be upgraded to avoid the removal of established hedgerow, there is an opportunity to enhance safety by relocating the site entrance. Moving the access point away from Smith Bank would allow for improved visibility and create a safer, more suitable entrance for both vehicles and pedestrians.



Figure 3.4 Existing site Plan.



Figure 3.5 Existing Site Access.

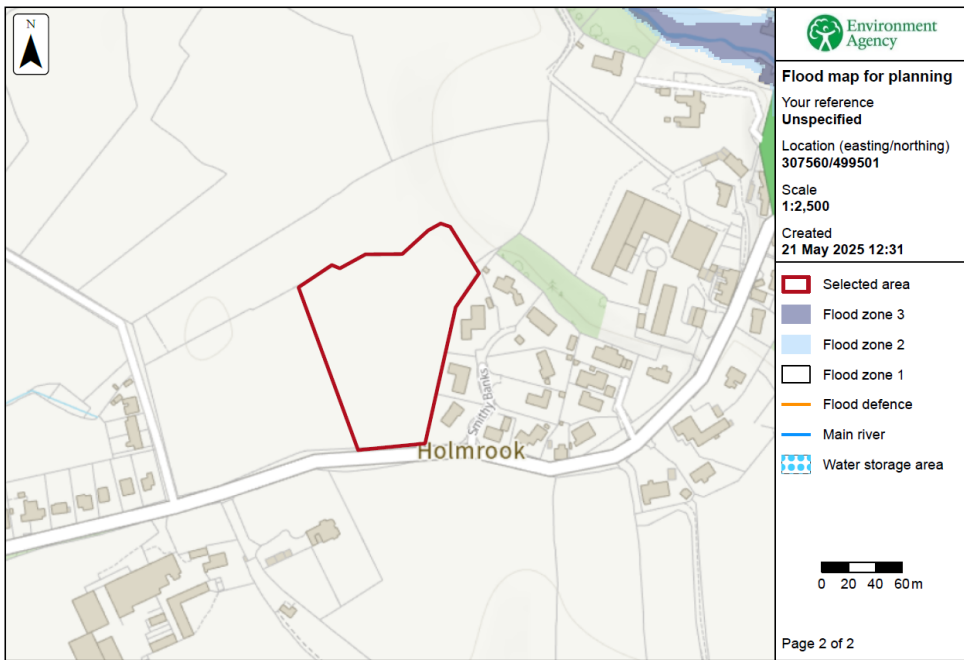
3. Site Context & Analysis

3.6 PROW and Pedestrian Access

Initial searches indicate that there are no public rights of way (PROW) within the application site. immediately outside the site boundary, a pavement runs along the B5344, providing a pedestrian link between Holmrook and Drigg. This pavement benefits from existing street lighting, ensuring safe and convenient pedestrian access to and from the site. Additionally, it connects to a wider network of nearby bridleways and footpaths, further enhancing local accessibility.

3.7 Flood Zone Mapping

The site is located within a 'Flood Zone 1', as identified by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency defines this zone as an "area with a low probability of flooding."



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Figure 3.6: Environment Agency Flood Map

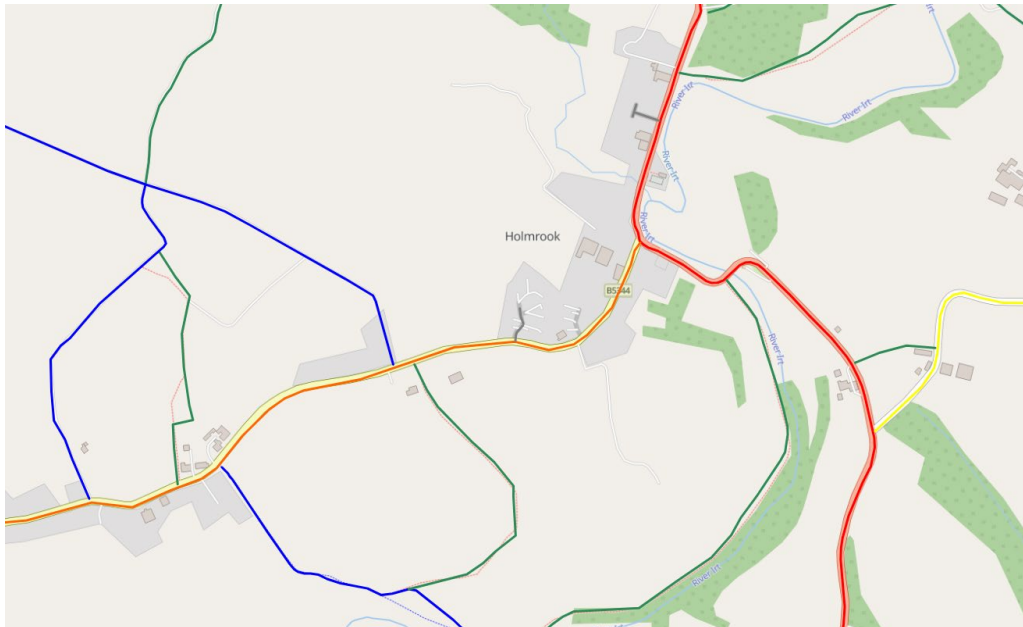


Figure 3.7: Map Extracted from Cumbria's Public rights of way map. Red Line denotes highway network, Blue bridleway and green footpaths.

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.8 Site and Surrounding area Photos



Figure 3.8 Photo Location Plan

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.8 Site and Surrounding area Photos

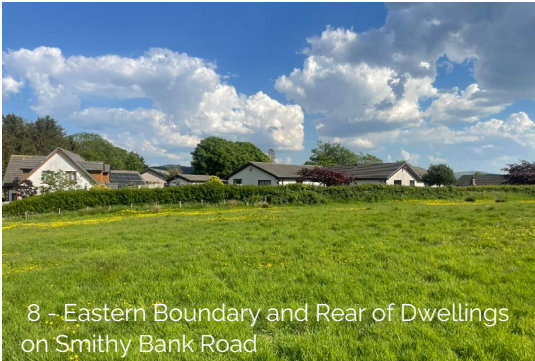


Figure 3.8 Photo Location Plan

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.8 Site and Surrounding area Photos



Figure 3.8 Photo Location Plan

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.9 Planning History

The site currently benefits from an approved outline planning application for residential development, with all matters reserved except for access (Application No: 4/21/2534/001), approved on 20 June 2022. This outline permission establishes the principle of residential development on the site, confirming that the location is considered suitable for housing. This application also addresses key aspects of the scheme, including layout, appearance, and landscaping.

The approved application includes detailed proposals for access arrangements, which have been deemed acceptable in principle by the local highway authority. Supporting documentation submitted as part of the application includes a planning statement, ecological assessments, a drainage strategy, and a preliminary site layout, all of which informed the Council's positive determination.

This planning history provides a robust foundation for bringing forward the development, demonstrating the LPAs support for residential use in principle, subject to the satisfactory resolution of design and technical matters as outlined within the conditions of the approved decision notice.



Figure 3.9 Site Plan approved under application (Application No: 4/21/2534/001).

3. Site Context & Analysis



3.10 Site Constraints and Opportunities

- KEY
- Existing Roads.
 - Existing Pavements.
 - Existing Hedges, Trees & Vegetation.
 - Pedestrian Movement.
 - Existing Site Access.
 - Potential Position of New Site Access.
 - Potential Future Connectivity.
 - Key Views and Site Lines
 - Brown Dots Denote a Change in Levels.
 - Pink Dots Denote a Sensitive Boundary.
 - Potential Property Frontage
 - Denotes Number of Storeys (Building Height).
 - Existing Street Lighting.
 - Prevailing Winds
 - Sun Path

3. Site Context & Analysis

3.11 Site Constraints and Opportunities (Further Commentary).

The site presents a range of physical and contextual characteristics that inform both the constraints and opportunities for development. These elements, when carefully understood and integrated, offer the potential to shape a high-quality scheme that is sensitive to its surroundings and contributes positively to the character of Holmrook.

Along the eastern edge, the site directly adjoins existing residential properties on Smithy Banks. These dwellings are positioned in close proximity to the boundary, requiring the new development to be carefully designed to preserve privacy and avoid overlooking. Respect for residential amenity will be achieved through thoughtful orientation, appropriate separation distances, and the retention of the well-established hedge that lines this boundary. This mature vegetation provides an effective natural screen, helping to mitigate the visual impact of new housing and maintain a soft edge to the development.

The site itself is generally level, making it well suited to residential development from a construction and accessibility perspective. However, a gradual slope is evident towards the northeastern boundary, leading to a more significant bank and drop in elevation beyond the site. This natural feature further reinforces the need for a respectful and cautious design approach along this edge, where both topography and neighbouring amenity must be taken into account. The site is also well positioned in terms of access to local services. While the presence of an overhead power line presents a potential constraint, rerouting it would be the most effective solution to avoid compromising the design of the site.

One of the most striking attributes of the site is the availability of long-range views. From the northern portion of the site, there are expansive views towards Wasdale Head, while the southern end opens to vistas of Whitfell and the southwestern fells of the Lake District National Park. These views present a valuable opportunity to orient dwellings and public spaces in a manner that connects future residents to the

surrounding landscape, enhancing visual amenity and creating a strong sense of place.

The approach to the site from Drigg reveals it as a key gateway into Holmrook. This offers a unique opportunity to create a better sense of arrival. By introducing a defined frontage that faces the open field and incorporating an area of public open space at the entrance, the development can provide a welcoming threshold to the village. This not only enhances the visual quality of the site from key viewpoints but also helps to stitch the new development into the existing settlement fabric, reinforcing Holmrook's identity and structure.

The potential to reposition the site access further from the adjacent cul-de-sac improves vehicular visibility and overall highway safety, particularly in the context of existing traffic-calming measures along the B5344. This adjustment would support a more efficient layout internally while also enhancing the interface between the development and the public highway. Meanwhile, pedestrian access is already well-supported, with an established pavement and street lighting running along the southern boundary of the site, offering safe and convenient walking routes towards Holmrook and Drigg. These connections promote sustainable travel choices and ensure future residents can easily access nearby services and facilities.

In addition, the site is well-served by nearby public rights of way, providing immediate access to the surrounding countryside and encouraging an active, outdoor lifestyle. Taken together, the site's constraints (such as proximity to existing dwellings and subtle topographical changes) can be effectively addressed through sensitive design, while its many opportunities, including landscape views, access, and integration with the settlement, form the foundation for a high-quality, responsive residential environment.

Section 4:
Proposed Design



4. Proposed Design



Figure 4.1: Initial Concept.

4.1 Initial Concept

The initial concept was developed in response to the outline planning approval (Ref: 4/21/2534/001) and the site layout prepared by Eden Environment. This early design proposed housing arranged around a central area of POS, aiming to create a focal point within the development.

However, several issues emerged during further design development. A key concern was the visual impact when approaching Holmrook from Drigg. As identified in the site's constraints and opportunities analysis, the site offers a clear chance to form a more defined and positive village entrance. The initial layout, like the approved outline scheme, placed the rear of houses along the western boundary, missing the opportunity to create a welcoming gateway to the village.

This layout was also considered too dense, failing to reflect Holmrook's rural character and typically lower housing density. A reduction in dwelling numbers was therefore agreed as necessary.

Finally, plots 10, 11, and 12 were poorly suited to the site's topography. Located in an area with notable level changes, these plots would have required significant earthworks, raising concerns about landscape integration and buildability. In response to these issues, the layout was redesigned to better reflect local character, respond to site constraints, and deliver a higher-quality development.

4. Proposed Design



Figure 4.2 Finalized Site Plan

4.2 Finalized Site Plan

Following several iterations, the adjacent site plan has been finalized to deliver a well-considered and cohesive layout. This revised design achieves an appropriate housing density of 17.4 units per hectare, which strikes a balance between efficient land use and maintaining the village's character.

The scale and massing of the buildings have been carefully calibrated to reflect the surrounding built environment, ensuring new homes integrate harmoniously with existing properties. Building heights and forms vary subtly across the site to avoid monotony and to create visual interest, while key frontage plots help to define the streetscape and settlement edges.

The arrangement of dwellings, combined with thoughtfully designed public open spaces and retained landscaping, establishes a positive visual impression upon arrival to the village. This considered approach promotes a sense of place and community while respecting the rural context and local vernacular.

4. Proposed Design



4.3 Analysis of Proposed Design.

This section will assess the proposed masterplan against common design practices and demonstrate how it responds to the previously identified constraints and opportunities, clearly outlining how these factors have shaped and influenced the design.

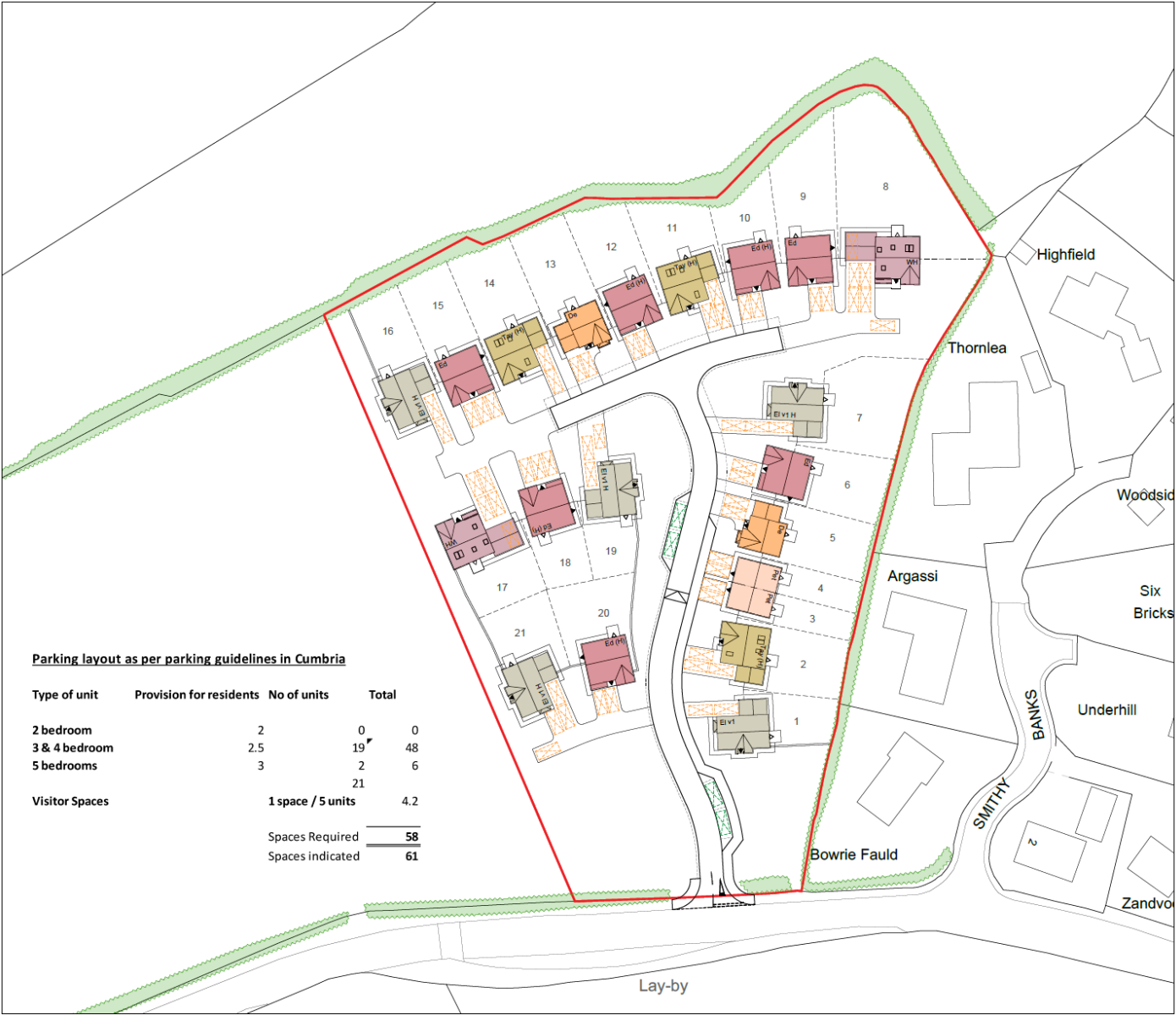
Plots 1–7 are set back more than 21 metres from the rear of the existing residential properties along Smithy Banks, in line with the recommended distance in the Cumbrian Development Design Guide. This, along with the retention of the existing hedge, will help protect the residential amenity of the existing properties.

Areas of spatial compression created by Plots 1, 20, and 21 open up to a key site vista framed by Plots 10–13, reinforcing visual connectivity across the site.

A key area of public open space is positioned at the entrance to the site, framed by a sense of spatial compression created by Plots 1, 20, and 21. This space provides a clear sense of arrival, helping to define the character of the development and contributing to its legibility. It offers visual relief upon entry, enhances the overall landscape structure, and sets a positive tone for the wider masterplan.

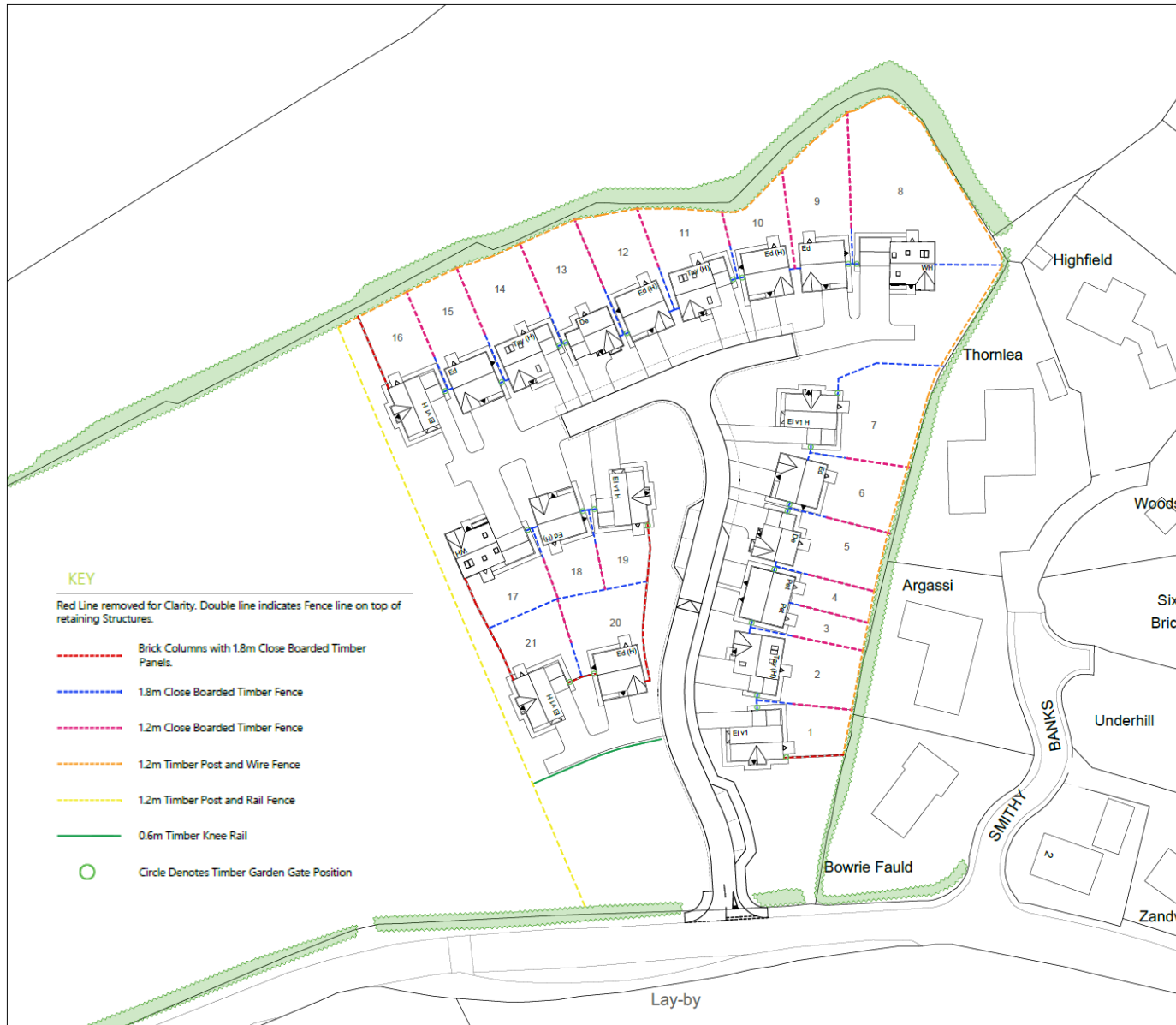
Figure 4.3 Analysis of Proposed Design

4. Proposed Design



4.4 Parking Provision.
The adjacent plan illustrates the proposed off-street parking arrangements and designated visitor bays, in accordance with Cumbrian design guidelines. While there is an overprovision across the site, this is considered a positive response to the site's relatively rural context, where higher levels of car dependency are expected.

4. Proposed Design



4.5 Boundary Treatments.

The boundary treatments have been carefully considered to enhance both the character and functionality of the development.

A combination of 1.8m and 1.2m close boarded timber fences is proposed to define the rear gardens throughout the site. In prominent locations, such as where garden boundaries form part of key sightlines or public vistas, brick piers with 1.8m close boarded timber fencing are introduced to add visual interest and reinforce the development's character.

For Plots 1 to 16, it is proposed that the existing timber post and wire stock proof fencing within the rear gardens be removed and replaced. This will help to protect and enhance the existing hedgerows.

Along the currently undefined western boundary, a timber post and rail fence is proposed. This option offers a more visually appealing and contextually appropriate solution than a stock proof fence, aligning better with the rural setting of the site.

Front of dwellings are to remain open, to retain open feel, soft landscaping may be employed to help define some curtilages.

4. Proposed Design



4.6 Elevation Treatment Plan.

The proposed elevations are predominantly finished in brick, with three distinct brick types used across the site: Malvern Village (identified in pink), Kemplay Antique (identified in blue), and Caversham (identified in green). In addition, white render is employed, identified in yellow.

These materials are generally distributed in a varied manner throughout the development to create visual variety and architectural interest, reflecting the informal mix of materials often found in rural villages where buildings have evolved over time. The combination of different brick types adds depth and richness to the streetscape while ensuring a cohesive overall appearance through complementary tones and textures. In certain locations, such as Plots 9 and 10, materials are purposefully paired to introduce symmetry and strengthen a key vista stop.

The chosen brick tones and render finish have been selected to reflect the material character commonly found in Holmrook and the surrounding area. The brick colours draw inspiration from traditional Cumbrian buildings, incorporating warm earthy tones and weathered textures that complement the local vernacular. The use of white render on key feature elevations mirrors its historic presence in the village, helping the development to sit comfortably within its rural context while contributing to a sense of place and continuity.

4. Proposed Design



4.7 Affordable Housing

Condition 15 of the outline approval stipulates: "In the case of any Reserved Matters or Full Application for approval of detailed design for this site, if the scheme consists of 10 or more dwellings, the applicant must enter into a planning obligation pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which will cover the provision of affordable housing contributions."

In accordance with this requirement and the 10% affordable housing policy, the proposed development will deliver two affordable three-bedroom properties. This ensures compliance with the outline consent and contributes to the creation of a mixed and inclusive community.

The commitment to housing diversity is further reinforced through the overall housing mix, with the site layout offering a well-balanced range of three- to five-bedroom homes, reflecting identified local housing needs and supporting long-term sustainability.

Section 5:
Conclusion

5. Conclusion

The proposed development of 21 dwellings and associated infrastructure represents a considered and contextually appropriate addition to the village of Holmrook. This Design and Access Statement has demonstrated that the scheme aligns with both local and national design policies, with a final layout that carefully responds to the site's rural setting, its natural features, and the distinctive character of the surrounding built environment.

The masterplan establishes a clear and welcoming gateway into Holmrook from Digg, with the frontage of Plots 16 and 21 reinforcing the settlement boundary and contributing to a strong sense of arrival. The layout balances density, massing, and materiality in a manner that reflects the local vernacular and supports the creation of a visually cohesive and inclusive community.

This statement is submitted on behalf of our clients to illustrate the opportunity to deliver a high-quality, visually engaging, and locally responsive residential development in Holmrook. Through detailed site analysis and an in-depth understanding of the village's character and context, Ashwood Design Associates is confident that the proposal represents a strong example of rural design that meets the expectations of planning policy and design excellence.

