



Image: Google Maps

**HDF – Addendum to Design and Access Statement Response (ref 1931-D01(-))**

**December 2021**

Reserved Matters Application – Land at Harras Dyke Farm, Whitehaven

*Application ref(s) 4/21/2195/OR1 and 4/21/2196/OR1*

## Overview of Response

This Addendum supports the submission of amended drawings that embrace opportunities identified by statutory consultees, following their review of originally submitted proposals.

To summarise proposed changes:

The scale and location of proposed public open space has been reconsidered; the large expanses of open spaces surrounding the development, particularly on the southern and eastern fringes, remain as originally proposed while the size and prominence of the central primary open space has been increased by integrating active open space that was originally located towards the northwest corner of the site. The overall provision of open space significantly exceeds current policy requirements.

There is a modest change in dwelling mix, with slightly more link and semi-detached housetypes, although the overall number of dwellings remains at 90. Overall site coverage has reduced by approx. 4,000ft<sup>2</sup> to 103,894ft<sup>2</sup>, while average density is 11,125ft<sup>2</sup>/acre (previously 11,418ft<sup>2</sup>/acre).

The site layout, particularly in the northern portion of the site, has been extensively remodelled around the central open space and the primary access route. Now characterised as The Green and The Avenue respectively, these areas are tree-lined with wide grass verges alongside the highway and strongly defined front garden boundaries incorporating hoop-top railings. This sense of place is further strengthened by a carefully considered landscaping scheme that emphasises the importance of these areas within the overall site.

The perimeter of the site ("the Edge"), whilst always being outward facing in nature, is now more sinuous with dwellings being arranged in smaller and more distinct groupings; most dwellings continue to face towards external boundaries while some are placed perpendicular or obliquely. Several dwelling types offer double-frontages to assist in enhancing visual interest at key changes in direction while boundary treatments reflect the rural edge incorporating modest use of estate railings, particularly at external corners, plus hedging.

Within the remainder of the site, following feedback, the linear street pattern of the original proposals has been much modified with additional dwellings having car parking behind the building line and even greater emphasis on landscaping within public spaces. The character of these areas ("Contemporary") is modern, informal and open plan.

Key building groups, finished in render, are used to create visual focus at the site entrance, the eastern and western boundaries and around the Green in particular. Additionally, it is now easier to catch glimpses into the heart of the development from key vantage points around the perimeter. Views through the development are framed by trees and extensive underplanting.





**Context**



Image: Google Maps

The site is relatively flat overall, although it does actually crown in a north-south alignment through the centre of the site. Levels fall towards the west, south and east – the south-east corner is the lowest point and the drainage outlet is located there.

Large diameter underground water pipes, owned by United Utilities, are installed inside and parallel to the eastern and the southern boundaries of the site. An overhead electricity pylon is located in the north-eastern corner.

The agricultural value of the site is compromised by its historic uses and exposed open nature. The ecological site assessment confirms that the site is generally of low conservation value.

The original D&AS confirms that the site is designated as Urban Fringe and that development should “...consider opportunities to enhance and strengthen green infrastructure to provide a link between urban areas and the wider countryside.”

This site sits on the south western edge of Harras Moor immediately adjacent to, what was once, the separate hamlet of High Harras. High Harras has developed since the mid c20th from a loose grouping of buildings (Hope Inn, Windsor Terrace, Harras Dyke Farm) through linear development along Harras Road.

More recently, High Harras has become, in plan at least, the western edge of modern development at The Highlands, although vehicular access to High Harras remains distinctly separate as noted below.

Historic plans show that, since 1865, the surface of the site has changed very little. A mineshaft, even in 1865 referred to as ‘Old Shaft’, is present just inside the eastern boundary and a public footpath (No 431022) crosses the site from east to west, now connecting High Harras with Whitehaven Golf Course. It is widely known that extensive open-cast mining took place locally which extended into the northern part of the site. The open-cast site was closed and reinstated c1990 and, at that time, an extensive field drainage system was installed taking flows from Harras Moor through to an outlet at the south-east corner of the site.

Image: Google Maps



### **Identity and Built Form**

Historic buildings in High Harras are characterised as traditional Cumbrian buildings of simple architectural style, finished in render with stone detailing under slate roofs. More recent development on the southern side of Harras Road comprises mostly of detached bungalows and dormer bungalows with occasional two-storey houses. On the north side of Harras Road, dwellings are predominantly two-storey semi-detached houses, although there are a couple of bungalows. Most recent development is located immediately to the west of the site and comprises substantial, mostly two-storey, detached properties in extensive plots.

Immediately to the west of High Harras, the development at The Highlands is a very substantial and relatively modern (1980/90's) urban style development accessed from Loop Road but with pedestrian links to High Harras from Harras Road.

Overall, historic buildings are significantly outnumbered by more modern dwellings, particularly those built from 1980's onwards. Traditional finishes (render, slate, stone detailing) are now less prevalent than brick and tiled finishes.

Locally, most dwellings face directly towards access roads and have front and rear gardens of varying scale while more traditional dwellings are groupings of linked properties.

Within submitted proposals and as further explained below, we have: created a soft outer edge to the development to help integrate it into the wider landscape and improve biodiversity opportunities; developed a series and hierarchy of streets along which dwellings are located; designed a series of open spaces to create a sense of place and; integrated links between streets and open spaces to allow residents and visitors to enjoy movement throughout the development.

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**28/01/2022**



## **Movement (refer to the Circulation Routes Plan)**

The site is bounded on the south by HARRAS Road and on the east by Red Lonning.

Red Lonning was upgraded during the period of open-cast mining and is a relatively high-standard route that runs from the A595 at Parton in the north and connects to the road running between Hensingham and Moresby Parks. Whitehaven Golf Course lies east of the site, across Red Lonning while St Benedicts and Mayfield Schools are approx. 300m southeast of the site along Red Lonning. Whitehaven School is located on the northern fringe of Hensingham, approx. 1km from the site.

HARRAS Road offers connections into Whitehaven Town Centre and to Loop Road (the A595) via the junction adjacent the Sunny Hill public house.

To the west of the site is a public footpath (No 431011) running north-south across HARRAS Moor while public footpath (No 431022) crosses the site and connects to public footpath (No 431023) which crosses Whitehaven Golf Course.

Further down HARRAS Road, there are footpath links into The Highlands at two separate locations.

Movement and circulation routes within the site are shown on the Circulation Routes Plan.

The highway access location from HARRAS Road was stipulated in the Outline Planning Approval and submitted proposals utilise this agreed access point. The Avenue character area extends from the site access in a north-east direction before curving towards the centre of the eastern boundary. The highway within the Avenue is 5.5m wide (a primary access) until it passes The Green, where it reduces to 4.8m wide thereafter. The primary access continues from The Avenue, around the north-eastern perimeter of The Green, serving the northern portion of the site.

Secondary accesses (4.8m carriageway width) extend from the primary access providing access to (i) the (currently undeveloped) remainder of the site to the west of the application site and (ii) an emergency vehicle access to HARRAS Road in the south of the site. Further secondary access roads link to shared surfaces and shared driveways from which all remaining properties are accessed.

Primary and secondary roads incorporate footways while pedestrians can also utilise shared surfaces; additional non-adopted footpaths are proposed, as shown, and will be managed/maintained by the management company.

The presence of the existing public footpath is acknowledged and, should Reserved Matters proposals be approved, a separate application to address the public footpath will be made in due course.



## Nature (refer to the Landscaping Plan)

The proposed layout capitalises on, and enhances, the opportunities identified in the original D&AS to increase biodiversity and integrate the development into its setting.

The native field hedgerow to the northern boundary contains the site and helps to improve the micro-climate in this high open landscape. Hedgerow trees help to break up the rooflines of the development as seen from the north.

Shrub and scrub planting on the north east corner of the site encloses the open space, making it feel safe and comfortable while also blocking headlights shining into the site from southbound vehicles using Red Lonning.

Along the eastern boundary, a substantial open space (incorporating SuDs) separates the development from Red Lonning providing extensive biodiversity opportunities.

Along this edge, roadside planting is not continuous and enables an informal, fragmented boundary to provide glimpsed views into and out of the development. There is sufficient enclosure to create a comfortable, safe and defined open space within the development while also allowing the development to connect with its surroundings. An orchard area set in traditional grid also allows glimpsed views into and out of the development, with trees providing seasonal variety and biodiversity benefits. The capped mineshaft offers an opportunity for a mining industry interpretation while community areas with all-weather surfacing allow opportunities for interaction. From within the development, you will look across extensive landscaped SuDs areas in the foreground, with the Lake District hills beyond.

In the southeast corner of the site, the primary SuDs adjacent to Harras Road/Red Lonning junction creates an airy and spacious green space at this key vantage point. Additionally, dwellings fronting Harras Road are set back because of a water easement running just inside the southern site boundary. The building line along Harras Road extends the existing building line established by those existing plots lying to the northwest of the site; this further contributes to an open approach at the junction of Harras Road and Red Lonning. The existing stone wall fronting Harras Road is retained, with minimal adaptation to create the site entrance and visibility splays.

The western portion of the site remains undeveloped in current proposals, although the potential for development of this remaining land has been retained – footpath and highway connections to the west are shown. The western site boundary is marked by estate railings with carefully considered landscaping and dwellings looking outwards.

Perimeter planting is divided into a series of different planting styles contributing to different character areas. Please refer to the submitted Character Areas Plan.





## Public spaces and Uses

The majority of the perimeter of the site is defined by open space and community uses. This contributes towards a soft transition between adjacent land uses and proposed dwellings. Open spaces, landscaping and footpath links extend through the centre of the development creating a framework of green spaces in which new dwellings sit.

The central open space provides room for active and passive recreation for all ages while also providing a green heart to the development; it is extensively overlooked by surrounding dwellings so that passive surveillance occurs naturally. Infant and Junior play areas are provided in the central open space while a Trim Trail and multi-functional open space towards the northeast will appeal to older children and teenagers. Incidental open spaces, with seating, are found around the development, allowing opportunities for general community interaction.

You will note significant tree and under-storey planting within public open spaces, including verges along the Avenue. An extensive footpath network encircles the development and link to roads and footways within it. All open spaces and non-adopted areas/footpaths are subject to management by the resident-controlled management company and are for the benefit of both new and existing communities in the area.

New homes enjoy semi-private front garden spaces, with boundaries defined by fencing (hoop-top railings to The Green and Avenue; estate railings to selected locations around the Edge), by hedging in selected locations, or by changes of materials in Contemporary open plan areas. Front gardens are generally turfed, with specimen trees and under-storey planting supplementing that in adjacent public open spaces. Where front gardens incorporate driveways, the drives are generally finished in tarmac.

Private rear gardens are screened in all locations by buildings and brick screen walls, so that timber 'hit and miss' fencing, used to create high levels of privacy between individual garden spaces, is completely hidden from external view. Fencing/walls to rear gardens is typically 1800mm high ensuring that more visually intrusive items (washing lines, trampolines, sheds, etc) are largely screened from external view. Rear gardens are generally laid to grass with perimeter paving to the dwelling and modestly sized patios.

Parking courts are finished in high-quality materials and enclosure is provided by brick walling and fence panels that create privacy and security while also allowing good visibility into these spaces for passive surveillance. Parking courts are sensibly and conveniently located, well-lit and dwellings generally have direct access into these areas from their private rear garden spaces.

A hierarchy of streets has been created and, together with additional footpath links, these provide pedestrian access to front doors of all dwellings.



## Homes & buildings

Along proposed streets, there are two, three, four and five bedroomed dwelling types.

All dwellings, irrespective of scale or type, are built in similar high-quality materials with simple, contemporary detailing drawing on local influences from High Harras and The Highlands in particular.

Three character areas have been created, as shown on the submitted Character Areas Plan, they are:

The Green and The Avenue – this is the ‘heart’ of the site and is slightly more formal in character, with formal tree planting and simple understated planting along wide streets incorporating verges. It’s relative status is visually enhanced by hoop-top railings to define all private front garden boundaries.

The Edge – the perimeter of the site is casual and informal, being semi-rural with diverse, natural and native planting. Where front garden boundaries are defined, they are marked by estate railings or native hedging.

Contemporary – the remainder of the site where modern, open-plan landscaping has a locally distinctive character incorporating colour, texture and seasonal variety.



Within these Character Areas, key building groups, finished in render, are used to create visual focus at selected locations. These focal points comprise of linked properties with greater visual mass than individual dwellings. Located at the site entrance, mid-way along the eastern and western boundaries and around the Green in particular, these wholly rendered properties are reminiscent of those traditional buildings of High Harras interspersed between more modern development at The Highlands.

There are several dwelling styles:

- two-storey dwellings with pitched gable roofs, both with and without flat roofed single-storey bay windows
- two-storey dwellings with hipped pitched roofs that have flat roofed single-storey bay windows
- two-storey dwellings with pitched gable roofs, incorporating projecting front gables, and either with or without flat roofed single-storey bay windows.

These properties are a modern interpretation of locally prevalent dwelling types and finishes. Traditional render finishes are used to draw attention to architectural features (and feature properties) while brick is used extensively, as is prevalent on The Highlands and on the most modern dwellings along HARRAS ROAD.

Some properties do not incorporate a garage and have a parking space either within the plot curtilage or in an adjacent parking court. The visual impact of parked cars is significantly lessened as a consequence of providing parking courts.

A large proportion of dwellings have an integrated single garage with an up-and-over type door. A small number of properties have detached single garages, with an up-and-over type door and pedestrian access door. Detached garages lessens the impact of parked cars as driveways tend to be discretely located behind the building line of dwellings.

This Reserved Matters Application does not seek to discharge the planning condition relating to affordable housing (which will be addressed separately at a later stage) however it is clear that the range of dwellings types provided in this application is sufficiently varied in size and type to cater for affordable housing requirements.





## Resources

This is a relatively exposed site, being only slightly inland of the coast at relatively high elevation.

Dwellings around the perimeter of the development face outwards and, together with landscaping of native hedgerows and suitably resilient planting species, is intended to contribute towards a relatively sheltered micro-climate within the development where users can enjoy the streets, open spaces and enclosed private areas in relative comfort.

The buildings themselves have simple fenestration and detailing and will be built with durable materials to modern environmental standards.

Opportunities to increase biodiversity are considerable given the extensive landscaping within open space areas across the development. Proposed drainage systems follow site topography and incorporate attenuation and treatment areas within proposed SuDs.

## Lifespan

Highways, drainage systems and utilities are intended to be adopted.

Public and private spaces are clearly defined: private areas will be maintained by dwelling owners while public areas will be managed and maintained by a resident-controlled management company.

All open spaces are intended to be high-quality, accessible and usable places; they will be durable, easily maintained, well-lit and incorporate passive surveillance.



Image: Visit Cumbria