

FOREST HILL, GALASHIELS

Supplementary Planning Guidance



aerial view of the site looking south west



above - the site from the west
below - looking west over the site



Introduction

This guidance sets out the main opportunities and constraints relating to the proposed housing site at Forest Hill, Galashiels. It also provides an outline framework for the future development of the site within the period covered by the Scottish Borders Council Finalised Local Plan (following adoption).

The comments within the sub-headings below indicate where detailed attention is required to address specific issues and where developer contributions will be sought. The comments and advice contained within this document should be considered in conjunction with the appropriate planning guidance given at local and national level. A selection of related policy advice and guidance is referred to in this document, but it should not be regarded as comprehensive.

Site Description




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Extract from Scottish Borders Local Plan
Finalised December 2005

Land Use Proposals (H3 Applies)

 housing

Policy Boundaries

 development boundary (G8)

The site lies to the south-west of Galashiels and covers an area of 2.5 hectares (6.2 acres). To the north and east it is bounded by residential properties and to the south and west it is mainly bounded by agricultural land (EGL 42 above). The site is identified for housing purposes in the Finalised Local Plan and in that document the indicative capacity is shown as 50 units. A more detailed assessment of capacity is included as part of this paper.

Development Vision

The aspiration for the site is that it should provide a high quality, sustainable mixed residential development which takes advantage of the excellent views over the surrounding landscape. At the same time, it is expected that great effort should be made to integrate the new development in the landscape, pay due regard to existing landscape features, provide a sheltered environment for the new houses on what is a relatively exposed site and set out a landscape framework which will reduce the impact of the housing on the surrounding landscape.

Constraints and Opportunities

Consultations and research have been carried out to establish likely constraints and requirements in terms of Local Plan policy, electricity, gas, water, drainage, access, flood prevention, biodiversity, archaeology and architectural and landscape heritage.

Consultation responses have been received from Scottish Power, National Grid (formerly Transco), SEPA, Scottish Water and Scottish Natural Heritage. Critical issues are summarised below.

Certain constraints will require to be addressed through appropriate developer contributions, as indicated:

- **Affordable housing:** This will require to be provided under the provisions of Policy H1 and the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing (see Affordable Housing below).
- **Education:** Galashiels Secondary School will face severe capacity issues from 2013 onwards. Two primary schools now have severe capacity issues and four primary schools have no or inadequate playing field capacity; two new primary schools are required (see Developer Contributions below).
- **Open space, landscaping and play facilities:** these must be provided together with proposals for long term maintenance (see Developer Contributions below).
- **Gas** – a National Grid gas main is available nearby.
- **Access and transport** – see separate section below.
- **Water and drainage** – see separate section below.



high quality residential development

Developers are expected to take account of these comments, as may be appropriate for the site development.

Access and Transport

Rail:

Galashiels falls within an area identified for a contribution to the Waverley Railway Project (see Developer Contributions below).

Road:

Road construction should not be conceived in isolation, but as an element in the overall design of the development.

The Council's 'Standards for Development Roads' should serve as a guide for the form of development on the site, but should be flexible enough so as not to inhibit the design of an innovative less car dominant layout which respects the landform and character of the area. The Council embraces the concepts of PAN 76 on 'New Residential Streets' which promotes an informal system of well connected streets with natural traffic calming (building lines, squares, shared road surfaces etc) built in and equal priority given to all transport modes such as passenger transport walking and cycling.

Where parking spaces are allocated to individual properties the provision requirement will be 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit (discounting garages) along with 25% visitor parking which should be provided in groups of at least 2 spaces and must be strategically

located. For communal parking the provision requirement (including visitor parking) is 1.5 to 1.75 spaces per dwelling unit.

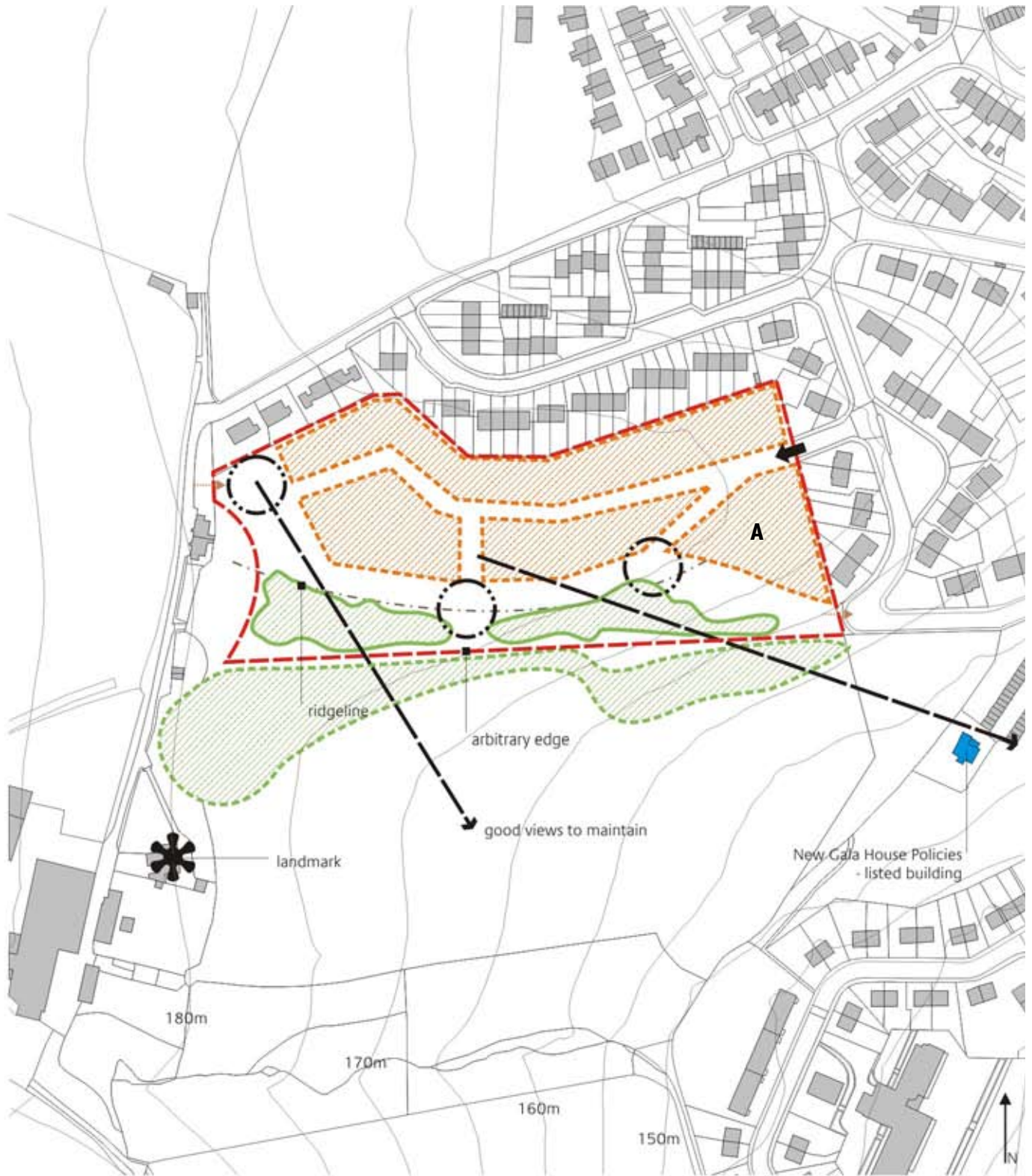
A single access point from the cul-de-sac off Forest Hill (to the east of the site) is proposed. Given the number of units it is recommended that the carriageway width would be a minimum of 5.5 metres. Secure and convenient walking and cycling connections must be provided to local facilities and public transport access points. Traffic calming should be introduced as a self-enforcing measure to maintain vehicle speeds below 20 mph.

In addition the opportunity should be noted for pedestrian/cycle links through to the west end of Mossilee Crescent and to the sharp bend in the road in Forest Hill (as a good link to Balmoral Primary School).

A Transport Assessment (TA) is required for developments of 50 or more dwelling units and may be sought for developments of between 25 and 49 units. The developer will be expected to pay for or contribute towards the cost of identified off-site transport work required as a result of the development and/or the cumulative effect of overall development.

SBC is to undertake a traffic study for Galashiels and the surrounding area to assess the impact of the Local Plan allocations on the road network and to identify and assess infrastructure upgrades required including possible improved linkage between the A6091 and the B6374. Developer contributions will be sought in this respect.

fig 1 - Design Guidance Plan



scale - 1 : 2500

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- main vehicular access
- pedestrian access
- proposed tree planting / within site
- proposed tree planting / outwith site
- focal point
- landmark
- listed building
- suggested site dev. structure
- site boundary

Urban Design and Landscape

The key requirements for the development are:

Buildings and place making

- the development should demonstrate efficient use of energy and resources in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply, to comply with Local Plan Policy G1
- the buildings should be 1 or 2 storey
- building colour themes should be white into buff render with grey roofs
- consideration should be given to the use of local sustainable materials, particularly stone and timber throughout the development
- site area A is considered to be the best location for affordable housing
- the buildings should present a frontage to the internal street system and could be terraces in part – the development should avoid presenting rear garden fencing to the principal street
- the focal points or places should be created as shown on the Design Guidance Plan
- the development should incorporate a footpath network through the site linking to the proposed focal points as shown on the Design Guidance Plan

Landscape and orientation

- establishment of a permeable and outward looking high quality mixed residential development
- buildings should take advantage of views to the west and south
- buildings should be set out with the grain and contours of the site and the surrounding area
- by preference houses should not breach a ridgeline, but if this is unavoidable, a backdrop of trees of an appropriate scale should be introduced
- new blocks of woodland planting need to be substantial in size to work properly

Boundaries and edges

- the development should avoid making 'compartments' - ie overly uniform boundary planting around each site margin
- the use of inappropriate brick walls, coniferous hedges, decorative gateways to individual developments is not acceptable



above: reworking of 'traditional' house styles in the landscape
below: boundary wall exemplar



- existing patterns of field walls/hedges/woodland blocks/shelterbelts in the countryside around each site should be used for clues for new boundary or subdividing elements
- the site edge facing open countryside is potentially very unnatural and should be broken up with a combination of block woodland, hedgerow (with mature trees at intervals) and stone walls
- the edge along main roads should take references from the countryside – stone walls, hedges and deciduous trees
- existing trees/hedges should be retained and protected even if they are not appropriate species as they help to marry new development to the landscape
- a sense of enclosure should be created throughout the development by linked frontages, garden walls and hedges and consistency of materials

Ecology and habitat

- a planning application for the development of this site will require

to be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment

- planting should focus on native species
- there are opportunities for habitat reinforcement and creation along the south and west boundaries of the site

Parking and the external environment

The developer should consider a range of solutions to reduce the impact of car parking on the residential environment. This might include a combination of:

- avoiding front garden space being entirely given over to parking
- using traditional front garden walls and hedges to structure the street appearance
- designing in shared small scale semi-private courtyard parking
- placing larger parking courtyards behind perimeter blocks
- building shared surfaces in traditional materials rather than using coloured concrete block surfaces - for example in parking zones and domestic runways

Water Management

The site itself does not lie close to any water courses, but there is a history of flooding in the locale due to run-off problems. In these circumstances, although it is unlikely that the site will be liable to flooding, a Flood Risk Assessment should be carried out as part of the planning submission.

There may be capacity issues both with the water and waste water networks in this area and Scottish Water has included Galashiels in the draft programme for investment: to this end developer contributions may be required (see Developer Contributions below). Developers are advised to check with Scottish Water for up-to-date information.

A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required as part of the planning application submission. In line with the requirements of PAN 61 (Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) an appropriate SUDS will be required as part of the site development. This must be designed as part of the overall site and should be visually attractive, safe and accessible for maintenance purposes.

Given the nature of the site it may be acceptable for the SUDS to be located outwith the shown boundary of the site (to the south), provided that agreement of the landowner(s) can be shown.

Density

Following the assessment of the site it is felt that the net developable area should be limited to 1.8 hectares (4.4 acres) and that the density should not exceed 25 units per hectare for standard housing units and 30 units per hectare for affordable housing. This would give a maximum capacity of 46 residential units.

It should be noted that this figure is indicative only and that the final number

of houses will be determined at the detailed design stage.

Density Calculation

The calculations for density within the site are approximate and are based on the Net Developable Area (NDA). This area excludes landscape buffer zones and site constraint features. Where appropriate, buffer zones may include as part of the garden areas. The figures shown in the table below assume that for standard houses the density will be 25 houses per hectare and for the affordable housing element 30 houses per hectare.

Affordable Housing

To comply with the Council's Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing, provision of affordable housing units will be required on-site. It is estimated that the site has a capacity of 48 units. 16 of these units should be affordable.

The final number of affordable housing units that will be required will be determined at the detailed design stage and will be dependent upon the type, mix and size of proposed houses for the overall development of the site.

Developer Contributions

Under the terms of Policy G5 of the Finalised Scottish Borders Local Plan 2005 developers are required to make full or part contribution (through the terms of a Section 75, or alternative legal, Agreement) towards the cost of addressing specific infrastructural or environmental deficiencies. With respect to the site at Forest Hill, Galashiels the following issues require to be addressed:

- Railway: Waverley Line Reinstatement (Stage One)

- Roads: contribution required towards upgrading the existing access road serving the site and wider transport improvements
- Education: The site is within the catchments of Balmoral Primary School and Galashiels Secondary School. Contributions towards increasing secondary school capacity will be required at the approved Council rate.
- Open space, landscaping and play facilities: Provision of appropriate landscaping, open space and play facilities will be required together with details of their long term management.

Further Information

For further information on the development of this site please contact:

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site name	total site area (ha)	net developable area	density normal per ha	area for standard units (ha)	total standard units	density affordable per ha	area for affordable units	total affordable units	net developable density	total units
Forest Hill	2.50	1.80	25	1.26	32	30	0.54	16	26.50	48

