Project number 25.20.019

Date – August 2026

Design and Access Statement
for residential development on
land to the north of
Old Quarry House, Fenway, Steeple Aston

coombes:everitt architects

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1 Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared to accompany an outline planning application for a new residential development on land to the north of the 'Old Quarry House', in Steeple Aston.

1.2 This statement seeks to set-out our initial site assessment, reflect the approach taken in developing a design solution and present the proposed scheme.

1.3 Coombes Everitt Architects have been appointed by Matthew Watson to develop an indicative scheme for a development on land to the north of the 'Old Quarry House'.

2 Location

2.1 The village is located on the edge of the Cherwell Valley, in the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire.

2.2 The village is located about 12 miles to the north of Oxford, 7 miles west of Bicester, and approximately 10 miles south of Banbury.

2.3 Heyford Railway Station is approximately 1 mile from the village which provides links to the wider rail network.

2.4 There are a number of amenities in the village including a post office, shop, public house, pre-school, school and a sports and recreation club and sports pitch.

2.5 Steeple Aston is a Category A village.

2.6 The proposed site is in the northwest section of the village and would be accessed off Fenway.

3 Site Context

3.1 The land for the proposed development sits behind the properties that front onto Fenway.

3.2 To the west there is the cul-de-sac of Coneygar Fields and to the east the larger development of Grange Park which runs along the eastern boundary of the proposed site.

3.3 All four boundaries of the site are defined by hedgerows that include a number of mature trees. There are also a number of trees within the site, some of the trees on site are subject to TPO's (the current order is TPO 5/2018).

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An arboricultural survey of the site has been undertaken, and this has identified and categorised each of the trees and groups of trees as well as providing information in relation to their respective root protection zones.

3.4 In the past the site was extensively quarried.



Quarry image 1961

3.5 The quarrying of the site pre-dates the development of the dwellings fronting Fenway as well as the adjacent developments of Coneygar Fields and Grange Park.

3.6 Since the quarrying ceased the site has been managed and mown grassland and now presents as an attractive parkland comprising a number of small coppice and individual trees. Modified grassland was observed to cover the majority of the area of the site with 15 species of grasses and forbs. It appeared to be mown and is described as being kept to a regular management regime retaining a short sward of <10cm at all times.



Quarry image

3.7 There is no public access to the site and the only access to the land is through the property known as 'Old Quarry House'.

3.8 The site is broadly flat but does sit at a higher level than Fenway and rises very gently towards the north.

3.9 There is a footpath along the northern boundary of the site. Due to the existing hedgerows and trees, there are limited views into the site from the footpath and there is currently no access on to the site from this right of way.

3.10 There is also a footpath to the western side of Coneygar Fields. Due to the distance and existing hedgerows between this footpath and the site there is little opportunity for views from this footpath looking east towards the site.

3.11 The public view points into the site are limited.

3.12 The properties to the south of the site that front onto Fenway were constructed in the 1970s and are predominantly constructed from reconstituted stone blockwork with concrete or plain tile roofs.



Old Quarry House



Property fronting Fenway

3.13 The properties within the village generally fall into two categories. The historic properties located along the original roads that form the core of the village are predominantly built in natural stone. Albeit with a few red brick elements.



View along Water Lane



View along Fenway

3.14 Some of the properties open directly onto the foot path whilst others have pocket gardens to the front defined by low natural stone walls.



Fir Lane

3.15 The newer developments such as Grange Park are predominantly constructed from brick with concrete roof tiles.



Grange Park

3.16 Most of the dwellings in the village are two storeys although there are some single storey elements.

3.17 Nearly all of the properties have pitched roofs with gables rather than a hipped roof form.

3.18 A number of the trees on the site are protected by a TPO.

4 Initial Site Assessment

4.1 The site has the potential to accommodate a number of homes of varying sizes.

4.2 It would represent a logical infill between the existing residential land use on Fenway and Shepherds Hill to the south, Coneygar Fields to the west and Grange Park to the east.

4.3 The site would have good pedestrian links to the village via Fenway and the amenities that exist there.

4.4 Due to the size of the site and therefore the scale of development that can be readily achieved on the site it is likely that the scheme will incorporate a number of affordable units.

4.5 The type and mix of dwellings to be provided for both the 'Open Market' and the 'Affordable Housing Sector' on the site will be developed to be in accordance with the Cherwell local authority guidance.

4.6 There are a number of trees within the site, some of the trees on site are subject to TPO's (the current order is TPO 5/2018) however there is ample space within the site for a considered development to be implemented around the trees.

4.7 Retaining the trees will help to provide an established and attractive setting for the development.

4.8 The site will be accessed through the plot which Old Quarry House occupies. There is ample space to the eastern side of the existing property to provide a suitable sized access to serve a residential development.

4.9 The access will provide a designated highway and footpaths for pedestrians to adoptable standards.

4.10 To avoid the tpo trees and tree groups in the southwest corner of the site the development will be located approximately 60m into the site. This means that there will be adequate separation between the proposed development and the rear of the properties that address Fenway and Shepherds Hill. It will also serve as a welcome green gateway into the site.

4.11 The site is not within a designated area such as a conservation area or an AONB. There are no listed buildings within close proximity to the site.

4.12 There is currently a footpath to the north of the site, separated from the application site by existing boundary vegetation.

5 Constraints and Opportunities

5.1 As with any site there are a number of constraints and opportunities to be considered when developing a proposal.

5.2 Constraints

There are a number of trees within the site, some of the trees on site are subject to TPO's (the current order is TPO 5/2018). There is ample space to work with and around the existing trees and their presence on the site will help to provide an attractive and established setting.

5.3 Opportunities

The site has the potential to accommodate well planned residential development in an attractive setting within a sustainable location.

There are a number of local amenities close to the site including shops, schools and bus stops all within easy walking distance.

The development of the site, which will include a comprehensive landscaping scheme, will enhance its visual impact on the long-range views towards the site.

There is the opportunity to provide a range of small and family homes to meet local housing need.

6 Design Principles

6.1

- To address the constraints and opportunities identified through the site appraisal.
- To retain existing healthy mature trees within the site and on the site's boundary as a landscape feature and enhancement
- Create a hierarchy of access ways, vehicular and pedestrian routes through the site that provide a low-speed environment for vehicles and a safe place for other users.
- To develop a site layout that provides communal and private amenity spaces.
- The scheme will provide a range of dwellings and a housing mix in accordance with the Local Authority guidance.
- The dwellings will reflect the scale and character of the adjacent properties i.e. predominantly two storeys with pitched roofs.

7 Indicative Layout

7.1 Following our initial site assessment, it was felt that a development of up to 23 dwellings could be accommodated on the site.

7.2 Due to the hedgerow and trees which sit to the north of the properties on Shepherds Hill and the TPO trees in the southwest section of the site it was determined that the proposed development would sit approximately 60 meters into the site.

7.3 This ensures that there is adequate separation between the proposed properties and those to the south of the site and their private amenity space.

7.4 To the west of the site there is the development known as Coneygar Fields, to the east there is the Grange Park development.

7.5 Both of these developments comprise two storey detached dwellings with pitched roofs.

7.6 An implied building line running between the northern most sections of these developments has been taken to define the extent to which we feel the development can extend into the site.

7.7 The layout has been developed to reflect a natural form of rural development configured to respect the village form.

7.8 As an outline application with all matters apart from access reserved, we are not providing details of the proposed dwellings. However, the description below sets out our intention for the character and appearance of the development.

7.9 A larger building at the entrance to the site comprises four apartments with an attached single storey annex and a terrace of three smaller properties to the north. This collection of buildings echoes the typical farmstead type developments that are seen in the countryside surrounding Steeple Aston.

7.10. The private amenity spaces to the units take the form of pocket gardens defined by low natural stone walls. This is a form of plot enclosure that can be seen in many instances within the village.

7.11 Along the northern boundary of the proposed development there are a number of detached properties. These are laid out in a less formal manner to those at the entrance to the development and at its centre Thus, being more representative of the type of development typically found at the end of rural settlements.

7.12 The gaps between these detached properties provide views through to the parkland setting to the north.

7.13 Towards the western side of the development the properties are arranged around a shared surface courtyard. This helps to restrict the amount of hardstanding within the development.

7.14 Most of the parking spaces have been accommodated in single storey parking barns. These have the benefit of providing covered parking in a form that is more in keeping with the rural setting than detached garages.

7.15 The layout has been developed to work with the TPO trees that are on the site and seeks to ensure that the larger trees have ample space to continue to thrive and will not cause excessive shading over the private amenity space of the proposed dwellings.

7.16 The trees are an important part of the character of the site providing an attractive, natural woodland setting and as such we are very keen to ensure they are retained for the fullness of their lifetime. The site has been configured such that the majority of the trees are located within open space.

7.17 We can confirm that the layout and proposed house types have been developed utilising the principles of space planning and residential design as set out in the Cherwell Residential Design Guide as such any detailed application will be able to accord to the policies set out within the Cherwell Design Guide.

7.18

- A range of house types have been proposed and, in some cases, combined to form short terraces or courtyards to enable us to develop a layout that creates a range of interesting public and private amenity spaces.
- The footprints of the buildings follow the traditional built forms found in the village. Referencing the historic properties in the village rather than the more recent developments.
- The dwellings have been positioned to allow for views through the scheme to the wider site and surrounding landscape.
- A number of the TPO trees have been included within the scheme and are located in shared amenity space so they have space to grow healthily whilst at the same time providing attractive focal points within the development.
- There is a hierarchy of access ways through the development. Starting with the primary access road which then has a number of secondary access ways leading from it in the form of shared drives and courtyards.
- Properties are limited to two storeys in height with the inclusion of some single storey elements to help create an articulated roofscape.
- The buildings would predominantly be constructed utilising natural stone with some elements of red brickwork and render incorporated to help breakdown the visual mass of the proposal. These materials reflect the palette of materials that can be found in use on the historic buildings around the village.
- Gable widths have been kept to between 5.8 and 6.5m.
- Roof pitches will be a minimum of 45 degrees, and the ridge lines will run parallel to the principal elevation
- Roofs will be finished with either clay tiles or slate.

- Properties have been orientated such that at least one roof plane for each property has the potential to accommodate solar PV panels to assist with the generation of electricity to help run the properties sustainably.
- The largest structure within the proposal is a two-storey building which accommodates four 2 bed apartments located at the entrance to the site. This building will be designed to read as a wide frontage detached house. This sits alongside a terrace of three cottages and in conjunction with the associated outbuildings that accommodate the parking and cycle/bin storage associated with these dwellings the element of the scheme has been designed to read as an historic farmstead development.
- At the eastern end of the proposal a number of dwellings including two single storey properties have been arranged around a shared hardstanding courtyard. This echoes a form of development that can be seen elsewhere in the village.
- Boundaries that face on the open space beyond the development will be formed from low stone walls, estate railings or post and rail fencing with hedgerows planted alongside them assisting with the transition to the countryside.
- The minimum separation distance as defined within the design guide have all been exceeded.
- Larger properties will have a more formal elevation and may incorporate sash windows.
- The smaller properties will be developed in an informal cottage style with dropped eaves and casement windows.
- Chimneys will be integrated structures and will be constructed in brick with clay chimney pots.

8 Highways and Parking

8.1 The scheme will provide the necessary vehicle parking as prescribed by the Local Authority.

8.2 This will be in a combination of garages, parking barns and private drives. Spaces will also be provided for visitor parking and the primary road access into the development is of adequate width to allow for on street parking.

8.3 Cycle parking will be provided for each dwelling as prescribed by the Local Authority.

8.4 This will be provided either within oversized garages or a designated cycle storage area for the apartments within the parking barn.

9 Sustainability and Access

9.1 Safe and secure access is provided for throughout the development with well laid out footpaths to the main access road and segregated paths within private courts and drives.

9.2 Furthermore, the proposed scheme has been designed to provide modern, high-quality living environments, and offer homes that are highly sustainable.

9.3 The proposed development will:

i. Be designed to allow compliance with and exceed the current requirements of Building Regulations by providing a highly insulated building fabric with low levels of air permeability, thus making the building as carbon neutral as possible without the need of providing 'bolt-on' green technologies.

ii. Each new home will benefit from high levels of natural light, low water use appliances; and low energy fittings and appliances to reduce energy demands and the use of natural resources.

iii. Houses to be fitted with modern efficient heating and whole house ventilation systems to improve internal living environments.

iv. Homes security to comply with,' Secure by Design' standards.

v. Each house will have a level threshold entrance and entry level wc in accordance with AD Part M.

vi. Each home will have allocated parking spaces to allow residents to keep cars off-road.

vii. Each home will have access to an electric car charging point to encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles.

viii. The development will provide secure cycle storage to all homes to encourage sustainable journeys.

ix. The site is within easy walking distance of the village centre and other local facilities.

x. The site is within easy walking distance of local schools.

10 Waste

10.1 In terms of domestic waste, each of the houses will have storage space for waste and recycling containers within rear garden areas, all in accordance with the Building Regulations and Local Authority collection regimes.

10.2 In addition, integrated waste and recycling storage provision will be incorporated within kitchen layouts.

10.3 Collection of waste is to be from the kerbside in accordance with Local Authority requirements.

11 Landscaping and Biodiversity

11.1 The proposal will have limited landscape implications. The site is well screened by its existing hedgerow and tree line boundaries. There are also very few vantage points from where views into the site can be achieved.

11.2 The existing landscape has developed over the past 50-60 years since the quarrying works on the site ceased.

11.3 The setting is best described as a 'Parkland' character with a collection of small coppices and individual trees sat within a grass land.

11.4 Whilst the existing site is a green space much of it comprises cut grass land as such there are opportunities within the development to enhance the biodiversity of the landscape.

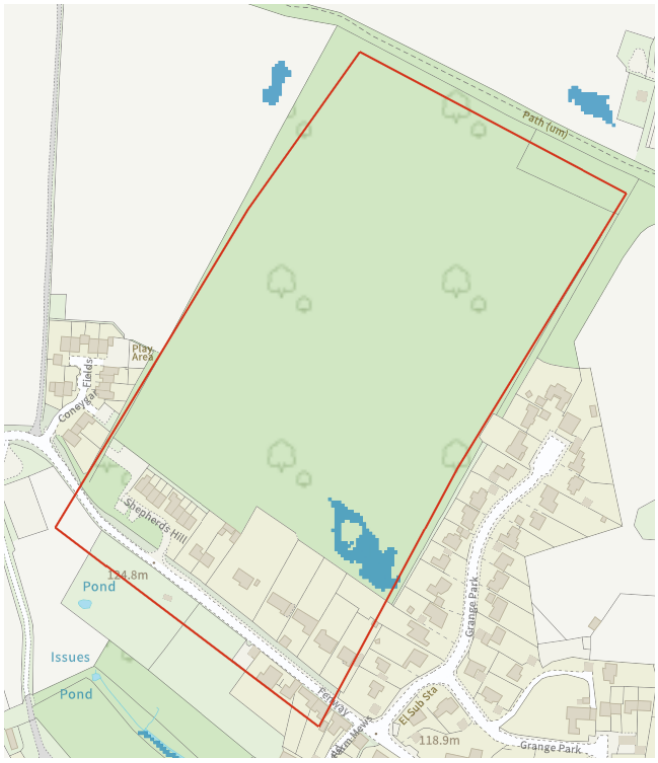
11.5 Additional grass species can be introduced and wildflower meadow areas sown to improve the habitat for pollinators.

11.6 In addition, there is space to create an orchard area comprising a mix of fruit trees that will further enhance the biodiversity of the site.

11.7 The existing trees are all to be retained and the scheme has been designed such that very few of them are within private garden space meaning that they can be monitored and maintained over the future decades to ensure they remain healthy.

12 Flooding

12.1 The EA search identified a small section of the wider site that may be susceptible to surface water flooding.



Extract from EA Flood Zone Map

12.2 The area identified as being at risk is located in an area where there is not any development proposed and it is outside the red line of this application.

13 Conclusions

13.1 We believe the proposals represent an appropriate form of well related and sustainable development in this location.

13.2 The proposals are of an appropriate scale and mass, provide an aesthetic that complements and respects the location and the residential amenity of existing neighbours.

13.3 We trust that this application is acceptable and compliant with relevant planning policy and therefore can be supported.