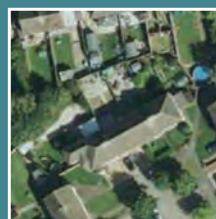
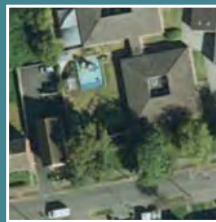


# Berwick Drive Garage Site, West Bletchley Development Brief



[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/urban-design](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/urban-design)

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Milton Keynes Council wishes to appoint a Contractor to develop a former garage site for the provision of housing for the Council on a “design and build” basis on a site at Berwick Drive, West Bletchley.

## 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Brief

The purpose of this document is to provide prospective Contractors with development and design guidance for the development of the site. This will allow Contractors to submit informed proposals that respond to Council expectations for the site. The Brief has undergone consultation with a variety of stakeholders and where appropriate has been amended to reflect the comments made.

## 1.2 Location and Ownership

The site extends to approximately 0.39 ha (0.95 acres) and is located within the West Bletchley area of West Bletchley Parish. The site lies at the rear of properties that front Berwick Drive and Forfar Drive. Vehicular access is off Berwick Drive. (see figure 1).

The site is currently in the freehold ownership of Milton Keynes Council.

## 1.3 Structure of Brief

The Brief is divided into four sections:

Section 1 outlines the purpose of the brief, its location and ownership and other administrative information for Contractors.

Section 2 describes the policy context of the site, both in terms of planning and the Council’s corporate objectives.

Section 3 provides an analysis of the site itself and the surrounding area. A thorough understanding of this will

have an important bearing on the key design principles and parameters.

Section 4 represents the Key Design and Development Principles, that should inform any development proposals. An accompanying Parameters Plan spatially illustrates the design principles. Section 4 concludes with an Illustrative Layout that adheres to the design principles and Parameters Plan and outlines how the site might be developed.

## 1.4 Accuracy of Information

Descriptions of the site and or drawings contained within or issued in connection with this brief are for information purposes only and the Council does not warrant their accuracy. The developers should satisfy themselves prior to entry on the site that its boundaries are agreed and are physically delineated and/or accurately described in the relevant legal documentation.

Please note that any costs borne in responding to this brief are entirely at the contractor’s risk and the Council are not bound to accept any tender received.



Figure 1: Site Location

## SECTION 2: POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF's core planning principles include:

- “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.”

The NPPF (para 50) states that: “To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)”

As of 6 April 2015, National Planning Policy has been strengthened to make it clear that the Government's expectation is that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be provided in new developments. To this effect it is expected that, where planning applications are for major development, the Local Planning Authority must ensure that SuDS are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. Milton Keynes Council will therefore determine planning applications in accordance with national standards and local policy, whilst taking into account technical advice provided by the Lead Local Flood Authority.

### 2.2 Local Plan (December 2005)

The Milton Keynes Local Plan was adopted in December 2005. The following Local Plan policies have been 'saved' by the Secretary of State. They remain in force until superseded by other planning policy documents in the Council's Local Development Framework e.g. the Core Strategy & other Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

The site is identified in the Local Plan as lying within the limits of development (H7). Housing development will be assessed against the following criteria:

- “(i) Whether the site has been previously developed
- (ii) Whether any buildings on the site are empty or under-used and suitable for conversion to residential use.
- (iii) The location and accessibility of the site to jobs, shops and services by means other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility.
- (iv) The compatibility of housing development with existing land uses in the surrounding area
- (v) Whether there is sufficient capacity in existing infrastructure, including water supply, drainage and other utilities, and community facilities (such as schools and health facilities) to serve the proposed development
- (vi) Whether there are any physical and environmental constraints, such as contamination, noise and flood risk, affecting the site.”

Policies D1 and D2 are general design policies that apply borough-wide. They look at the impact of development proposals on locality and the design of buildings.

Policy H9 requires that for development proposals of 5 or more dwellings a range of house sizes and types should be provided.”

## 2.3 Adopted Core Strategy (July 2013)

The Core Strategy forms part of the Development Plan for Milton Keynes.

Policy CS 10 (Housing) states that: “The Council will plan to meet specific housing needs across the Borough including the following: affordable housing, multiple occupancy, elderly persons, special needs, single people, religious, ethnic or lifestyle groups.”

Milton Keynes benefits from an innovative and strategic approach to open space provision and surface water management. In line with local policy contained within the Core Strategy, all new developments will be required to ensure that flood management is planned at the largest appropriate scale, providing sustainable and strategic surface water drainage as part of a network of multi-purpose open spaces.

## 2.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) should be considered when preparing any planning application for the site:

- New Residential Development Design Guide (2013)
- Affordable Housing (2012)
- Sustainable Construction (2007)
- A suite of Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance Notes relating to Developer Contributions
- Milton Keynes Council’s Addendum to Parking Standards was adopted as SPG in 2009. It sets out the Council’s standards relating to parking provision for residential development.

## 2.5 Corporate Plan (2012-16)

The Corporate Plan sets out how the Council and its partners will work together to achieve their collective ambitions for Milton Keynes. It states, under 2.2 Theme - Living in MK, that one of the Council’s priorities is to “encourage the building of a mix of sizes, types and tenures of homes, including social rented accommodation, that will meet the needs and aspirations of Milton Keynes’ existing residents and the new residents we wish to attract.”

## 2.6 Housing Strategy (June 2013)

The Council’s Housing Strategy sets out the following Strategic Priorities to deal with the Issues that are identified in the Strategy;

- 1) To increase the supply of housing
- 2) To tackle housing conditions
- 3) To improve access to and affordability of housing

A key Objective is to start a council house building programme that will initially focus on properties for older people and people with disabilities. The Strategy also requires that housing should be built to the former English Partnerships Quality Standards (2007) which include:

- Secured by Design (to design out crime);
- Lifetime Homes (to make housing accessible for as many people as possible);
- Building for Life Silver standard (a national standard set by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the house-building industry); Building for Life 12 (BLF12) has now replaced Building for Life ‘Silver’. This in turn would be need to be assessed by the Council’s UDLA team at a pre-planning application stage and signed off/agreed by UDLA prior to a planning application being made. Schemes should achieve 9 ‘greens’ as a minimum.

## SECTION 3: CONTEXT/SITE APPRAISAL

### 3.1 Introduction

It is important to understand the existing site and surrounding area and their features, as this informs the layout and design principles for any redevelopment of the site. Figures 2 and 3 provide an analysis of the site and its context.

### 3.2 The Bletchley Context

The site is situated in the West Bletchley area of West Bletchley Parish which is predominantly residential and is separated from Bletchley and Fenny Stratford by the West Coast Main Line railway. The site lies in the residential 'district' bounded in the south by Whaddon Way and in the north by the A421 Standing Way. Bletchley is an older more established area of Milton Keynes and the residential development of predominantly 2 & 3 bedroom houses including the garage site dates back to 1950. A plan showing the location of the Berwick Drive Garage site in Bletchley is set out in Fig 2.

The properties in Berwick Drive and Forfar Drive were originally council-owned but a large number have been purchased under the Right to Buy.

There are local shops at Melrose Avenue. There is also a local centre and community centre on the corner of Warwick Road and Whaddon Way. Barleyhurst Park, Rickley Park and Holne Chase Primary Schools, Romans Field School, The White Spire School, Lord Grey Secondary School and Milton Keynes College are all within walking distance of the site.

The nearest bus stops to the site are on Whaddon Way and Shenley Road within 400m of the site. A medical centre, doctors surgery and dental practice are all within the area surrounding the site.



The vehicular entrance to the site is via a narrow access road which is between dwellings along Berwick Drive.



Typical properties along Forfar drive.



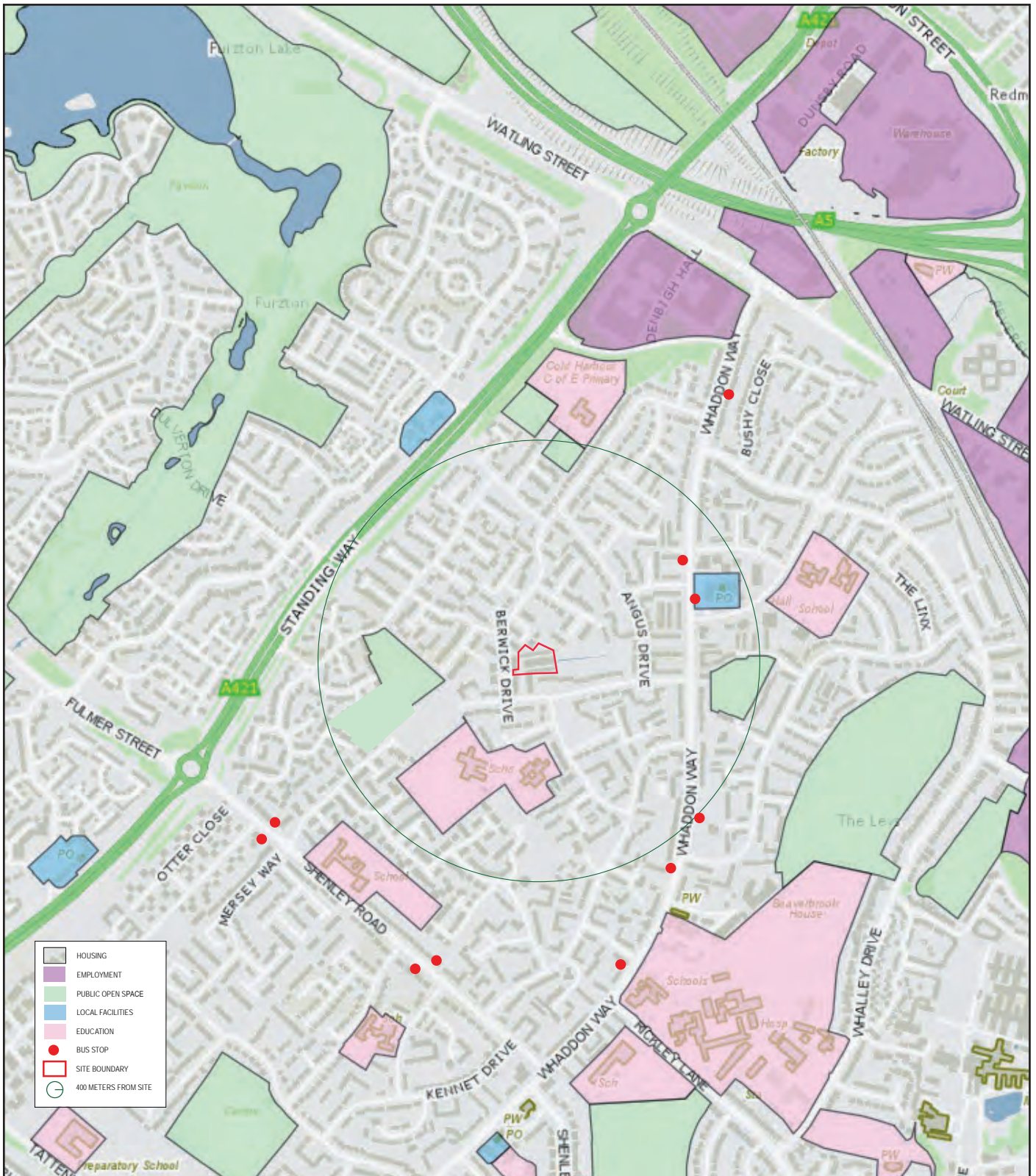


Figure 2: Surrounding Area

### 3.3 Surrounding Area

#### 3.3.1 Public Realm

The site is located within a network of existing residential streets, which have carriageways between 4m and 5.9m wide, the properties have large set backs and 1.5m footways. However as this site sits within an existing block and isn't proposed to be a through route, a 'tighter' urban form would not impact on the character of the wider context because the development would be largely hidden from public view.

#### 3.3.2 Land Uses

The site is located within a residential block. It is bordered on the north by the rear of properties that front Inverness Close and Orkney Close, on the west by the rear of the Berwick Drive, and on the south by the rear of dwellings that face Forfar Drive.

To the east of the site is a large green space containing an open water channel running east to west. The channel is culverted at both ends and runs under the site.



The site comprises of residents garage parking area.

#### 3.3.3 Building Appearance & Heights, Setbacks and Edge Conditions

Existing development bordering the site is 2 storey terraced and semi-detached housing. The houses are a mixture of buff, red brick and tiled cladding with tiled hipped roofs.

Along Berwick Drive, buildings are set back 5 to 7 metres from the pavement. Front boundary treatments vary and include low brick walls, and hedges. In some cases, gardens are open plan with no boundary treatment and utilised for on plot parking provision.

Along Forfar Drive, buildings have a larger set backs ranging from 10 metres to as much as 30 metres in places providing wide tree and shrub planted grass verges between property boundaries and the road.



View east from the site over large green space containing the open water channel.



Rear boundary of existing dwellings on Orkney Close backing onto site

### 3.4 The Site Itself

The site itself is a residential parking area consisting of 85 garages which sits on a total area of approximately 0.39 ha. Accessed off Berwick Drive by a long narrow drive with an adjacent footpath.

The site is bordered on the north, west and south sides by the rear garden walls and fences of the surrounding houses and on the east side by a green open space with a water channel running through the centre.

The capacity of this adjoining site serves as a flood alleviation system to a wider drainage network.

The garages will require demolishing as part of the re-development of the site and attention is drawn to the fact that roofs may contain asbestos.

A footpath crosses the site accessed via several narrow pedestrian alleys. Some alleyways will need to be extinguished and ownership of land transferred to adjoining properties. None of the footpaths that lead into or traverse the site are public highway or public rights of way. However, it is considered that the connecting nature of the through route that the footpath provides will need to be incorporated into the street layout of the development.



Side boundary of existing dwellings back onto the site

### 3.5 Opportunities and Constraints

The preceding sections of the development brief provide an appraisal of the site and its context to help inform the following opportunities and constraints:

#### Opportunities

- The site is close to bus stops and existing shops
- Brownfield site that is readily developable
- The site is reasonably flat
- Existing vehicular access is present
- Surrounding properties have fairly long back gardens backing onto the site. This provides sufficient distances from the site to facilitate infill development
- No known existing ecological constraints

#### Constraints

- Vehicular access off Berwick Drive will require careful design consideration
- Existing pedestrian through routes to be incorporated into the street layout.
- Two footways will require extinguishing and access to rear gardens provided via a lockable gated access.
- Private rear garden access of existing properties bordering the site requires careful consideration to avoid undesirable alleyways
- Relationship to on site culvert and adjacent water channel needs careful consideration.
- Demolition required
- Likely asbestos.
- Some level changes across the site



Road serving three rows of garages

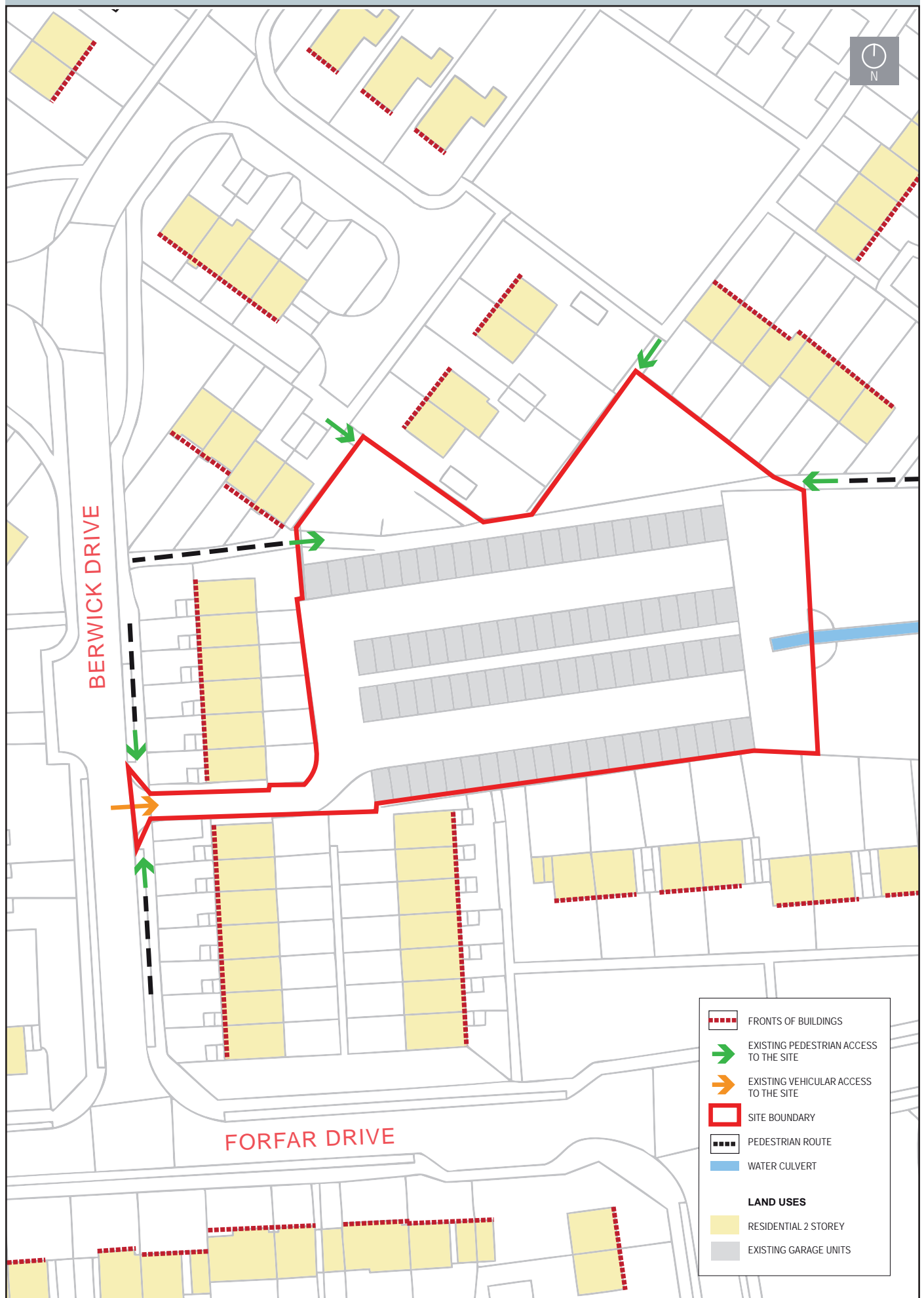


Figure 3: Site Analysis

## SECTION 4: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### 4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the principles relevant to the design and development of the site. A Parameters Plan accompanies the principles which serves where appropriate, to spatially represent the key design principles. An illustrative layout is also included that reflects the design principles and parameters plan.

### 4.2 Design Principles

#### 4.2.1 Structure/Layout

The layout of the development should ensure that there is a clear public front with entrances and a secure private back. The layout should not result in ambiguous space that is not clearly public or private or public space that is not properly overlooked / addressed.

For infill garage sites such as this one, the layout will also be informed by the need to protect the amenity of existing surrounding properties which generally means creating the maximum back-to-back distances possible.

#### 4.2.2 Building Lines

Development should be set back a minimum of 2.0m behind front gardens as long as acceptable back-to-back distances can still be achieved.

#### 4.2.3 Frontages

The internal street and associated public open space must be overlooked by development. All front elevations to this street should have active frontages (an 'active frontage' is a building facade that responds positively to the street and particularly at the ground floor includes uses, entrances, and windows that generate activity, which then improves safety on the street).

Side elevations to the street should have an animated frontage (an 'animated frontage' is a building facade that responds positively to the street and particularly at the ground floor provides visual activity and potential for overlooking but with no required direct access onto the street).

#### 4.2.4 Building Heights

The size and shape of the site and length of rear gardens of surrounding properties suggest that new housing will predominantly be of two stories in height.

#### 4.2.5 Vehicular Movement

Access should be provided to the site via the existing driveway off Berwick Drive.

Provision should be made for an appropriate turning area within the development site.

Roads should be built to MKC adoptable standards. If this is not achievable and a private road is proposed, then provision for refuse collection point should be provided within 30 metres of dwellings. The refuse vehicle should be able to get within 25 metres from the collection point.

#### 4.2.6 Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

Footways should be provided to the front of the proposed dwellings.

#### 4.2.7 Parking

Car parking provision must be in accordance with Milton Keynes Council's Parking Standards in force at the time of planning submission.

The developer is advised to contact the Council's Highways Engineer (Development Management) at an early stage with regard to car parking requirements. Parking spaces should be provided adjacent to the dwelling, either to the side or to the front. (Please see section 4.4 for additional information on parking)



Figure 4: Parameters Plan

#### 4.2.8 Detailed Design Appearance

While the buildings will largely be hidden from view from the surrounding existing street network, careful consideration to the appearance of the buildings still needs to be applied.

The neighbouring dwellings provide few positive design cues (other than roof form and materials) to inform the character of the development. Examples of orange, yellow and red brick and/or cladding and white render with tiled hipped roofs can all be found on adjacent properties. Consequently, there is scope for designers to adopt a contemporary approach to architectural design, particularly where this would help to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Regardless of what architectural style is employed, buildings should be well proportioned, and be constructed of high quality materials.

#### 4.2.9 Landscaping

Development proposals should be accompanied by a plan illustrating indicative landscape principles for the site.

Landscaping should be used wherever possible to reduce the impact of blank side and rear boundary fences or walls, blank gable ends and to soften the appearance of parking courts. Streets should be defined with public amenity street trees; these must include a number of 'special/landmark' trees to add character and help create a sense of place

#### 4.2.10 Boundary Treatments

Public and private space should be clearly demarcated through the use of front boundary treatments.

Low hedges or shrub planting would be an appropriate boundary treatment to delineate the interface between the access road and front gardens to the proposed houses.

Because new housing will predominantly back onto the rear of existing housing, rear boundaries will already be in existence. However, if these are deemed inappropriate height, material, or poor state of repair they will be required to be replaced.

Boundaries facing the public realm should be constructed of brick. If new rear / side boundaries are needed, a 1.8m solid structure is required.

#### 4.2.11 Safety and Security

The developer must consult with the Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) at an early stage in the design process: initially, regarding design and layout and subsequently, regarding any additional physical security or community safety requirements.

Developers should contact Brian Rodger 01908 257991 [brian.rodger@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:brian.rodger@milton-keynes.gov.uk) to discuss safety and security issues.

#### 4.2.12 Scheme Design

The following design requirements should be met by the scheme:

- General Needs:
  - 1 Bed/2 Person homes – 51m<sup>2</sup>
  - 2 Bed/3 Person homes – 66m<sup>2</sup>
  - 2 Bed/4 Person homes – 77m<sup>2</sup>
  - 3 Bed/5 Person homes – 93m<sup>2</sup>
  - 4 Bed/6 Person homes – 106m<sup>2</sup>
- Wheelchair Standard Bungalows:
  - 1 Bed/2 Person homes – 55 – 60m<sup>2</sup>
  - 2 bed/3 Person homes – 70 – 75m<sup>2</sup>
  - 3 bed/ 5 Person homes – 90 – 95m<sup>2</sup>
- The scheme must comply with the former English Partnership's Quality Standards 2007 (which incorporates Secured by Design and Lifetime Homes) with the following revisions:
  - BLF12 with a minimum of 9 'greens'
  - Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as a minimum
  - MKC Residential Design Guide
- An Automatic Water Suppression System (i.e. a domestic fire sprinkler system) will be required in each home together with a firm alarm and detection system linked to a remote 24 hour call centre in line with the recommendations of the Chief Fire Officers Association as set out in their guidance "A GUIDE TO AUTOMATIC WATER SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS (AWSS) AND THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICATION". It can be obtained at the following address: <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/11543> This item would be in addition to and not a replacement for the normal requirements of the Building Regulations
- A local authority building control 12 year social housing warranty will be needed
- Bungalows should be built to Wheelchair Standard as per the 'Wheelchair Housing Design Guide' second edition by Stephen Thorpe and Habinteg Housing Association.

#### 4.3 Illustrative Layout

Using the design principles and the Parameters Plan outlined in the previous sections, an illustrative layout option (Fig 5) has been drawn up.

The layout indicates that a maximum of sixteen units with life time home specification comprising of: Nine 2 bed houses, six 2-bed flats and one 2 bed wheelchair compliant bungalow, all with on plot parking, could be accommodated on the site.

An area for a residential car park that can accommodate 11 wheelchair compliant spaces has been suggested on Forfar Drive to deal with the displaced parking provision for existing residents who currently utilise the garage site for parking. This provision is proposed to enable successful development of the site without impacting on the needs of the existing residents.

The illustrative layout provides an examples of how the site could be developed. Developers are encouraged to come up with their own design solutions, based on the design principles and the parameters plans outlined in the development brief.





Figure 5: Illustrative Layout

## 4.4 Development Requirements

### 4.4.1 Building for Life 12

Development proposals should be assessed against Building for Life 12 (<http://www.builtforlifehomes.org/go/building-for-life-12>) at the pre-planning application stage. This assessment should be signed off by the Council's Urban Design & Landscape Architecture team, prior to a planning application being submitted.

### 4.4.2 Archaeology and Conservation

Since the site is currently being used for garages there are no concerns with regard to archaeology and conservation.

### 4.4.3 Ecology

Since the site is currently being used for garages there are no concerns with regard to ecology. There are no trees or bushes that would provide a suitable habitat to wildlife that would lead to development restrictions and/or any delays. However, as the site is adjacent to a green space and water course, the developer would need to carry out an ecological survey and impact assessment before applying for planning permission.

Local Plan Policy NE3 on Biodiversity Enhancement has the objective of achieving positive gains for biodiversity in the design of new development. All new residential development exceeding 5 dwellings will be required to incorporate proposals to enhance biodiversity.

New buildings provide many opportunities for wildlife with benefits for biodiversity and the building occupiers. Specialist boxes or spaces are available (for example bird/bat bricks, swallow nest cups and sparrow terraces). Elements such as climbing plants can create habitat; enhance the visual appearance of buildings as well as providing cooling, insulation and microclimate moderation.

### 4.4.4 Topography

The site is relatively flat, however, there are two raised triangular areas and a footpath that runs through on the north of the site, which sit approx. 1m-1.5m higher than the rest of the garage site.

The culverted drain that runs through the site will also require careful consideration.

### 4.4.5 Arrangements for Visiting the Site

The developer shall be deemed to have visited the site prior to submitting its tender and to have acquainted itself with means of access, the nature of the work to be executed, the nature of the site and all other circumstances affecting the execution of the works such as supply of and conditions affecting local labour, carriage, haulage, unloading, scaffolding and the like. No claim will be allowed on account of any omission or error arising from the lack of knowledge of such matters.

### 4.4.6 Site Investigation

The site has a hard-standing surface with some garages. The British Geological Survey Maps show that the soil is MK Drift of Till Mid Pleistocene underlain by Oxford Clay.

The site is not in an area where a Geological Radon Assessment will be required for new build.

There is no other environmentally significant issue in the Council's databases. The site would appear to be very simple geologically and in terms of any pollution/contamination issue. The developer is to make all/further investigations as necessary to ensure a suitable knowledge of the existing site conditions sufficient to complete the works

#### 4.4.7 Existing Mains/Services

The developer must ascertain for itself the location and availability of main services, sewers etc. and shall allow for charges and costs in connection.

The developer shall be responsible for determining the runs of existing services and drainage and shall be held liable for any damage they may sustain as a result of the works. The developer shall allow for all necessary diversions of existing services.

#### 4.4.8 Contamination

The developer is to make further investigations as necessary to ensure a suitable knowledge of any existing contamination sufficient to complete the works. The developer's attention is drawn to the fact that the existing garages might have asbestos roofs and will require specialist handling during demolition.

#### 4.4.9 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

When making planning applications it is essential that, to get the best results, the integration of water and SuDS options are considered early in the site evaluation and planning process, not just at the detailed design stage. Full consideration of SuDS at the pre-application and outline stage is important to ensuring surface water management is fully integrated into the development, leading to an effective drainage design, providing multiple benefits and with costs considered from the outset. Developers will need to submit a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with any planning application for development of the site. Sustainable drainage will be required to deal with surface water run-off on site. Measures that could be incorporated include green/brown roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, permeable pavements, and filter strips and swales. Further guidance and information can be found in the "Milton Keynes Council Surface Water Drainage; Local Guidance for Planning Applications", which is available on the Council's website.

A culverted water channel currently runs from west to east under the site. This opens onto and runs through the greenspace to the east. This space acts as a balancing pond that intentionally floods in times of high rainfall. Development proposals for the site should note that existing maintenance and future access to both the culverted channel and the greenspace must be considered and proposals must not reduce capacity or hinder access.

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