



Design & Access Statement

New Residential Development

Land off Hillock Lane, Gresford

Wrexham LL12 8YL



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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Norris Jones Developments in support of a Full Planning Application to be submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council for the erection of 109 dwellings at land south of Hillock Lane, Gresford shown edged red on - *Site Location Plan*.

1.2 Norris Jones Developments is a joint venture partnership between Delamere Homes and the landowner of the site.

1.3 The document provides an overview of the development proposals and demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the physical context in relation to:

- Access
- Scale
- Massing
- Surroundings

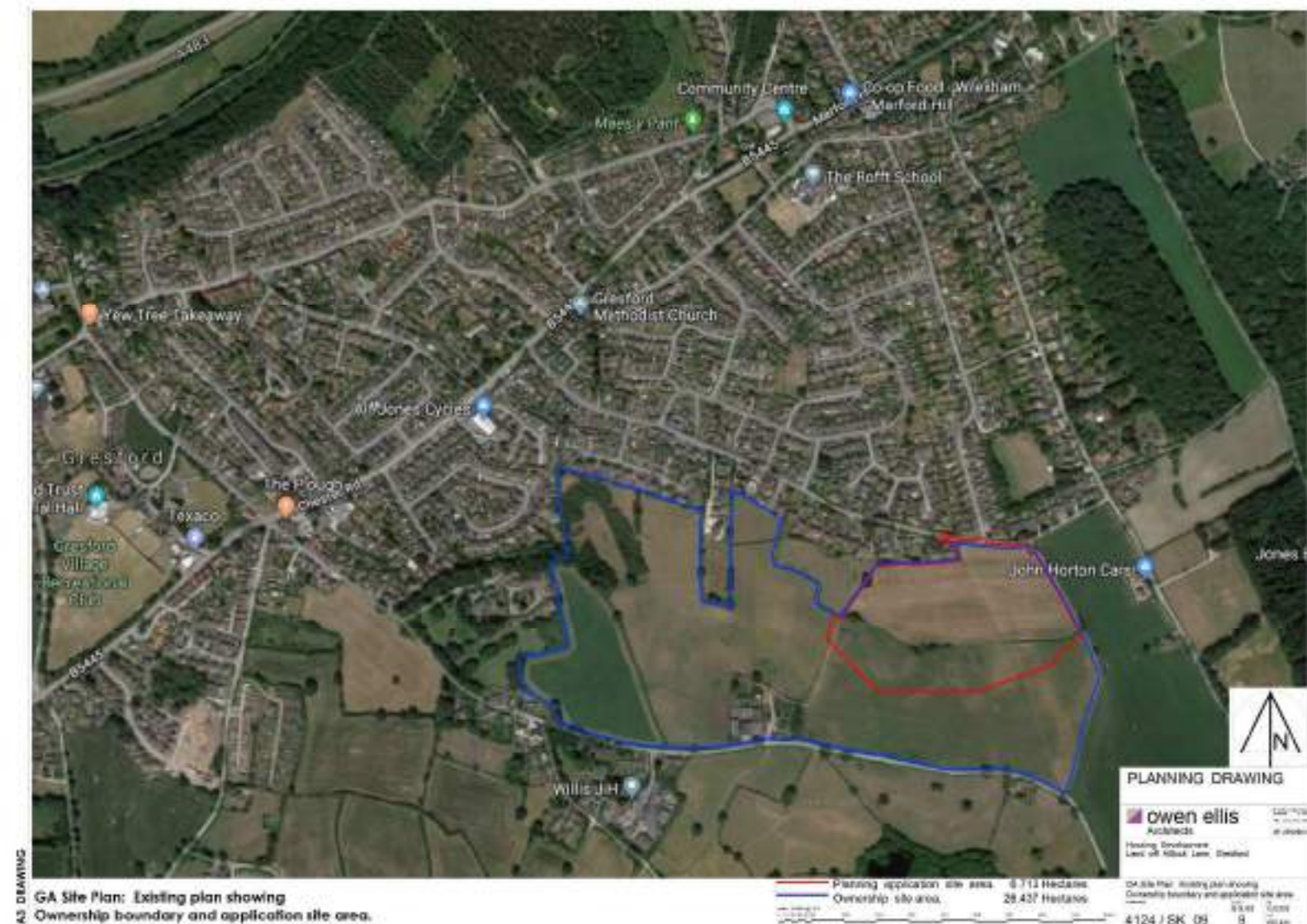
1.4 The document should be read in conjunction with the suite of plans and drawings submitted as part of the application including the following supporting documents:

- Full suite of architectural drawings
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Confidential Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey
- Confidential Badger Survey Report
- Bat Survey Report
- Report to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Agricultural Land Classification Report
- Air Quality Report
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Heritage Assessment
- Flood Consequences Assessment
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme
- Geoenvironmental Site Investigation Report
- Geophysical Site Investigation Report
- Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)
- Sustainability Statement

1.5 The Design & Access Statement has been prepared to address the requirements of 'Design & Access Statements in Wales (April 2017)', in particular the statement;

- i) Explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development namely;
 - a) amount of floor space
 - b) layout
 - c) scale
 - d) landscape
 - e) appearance

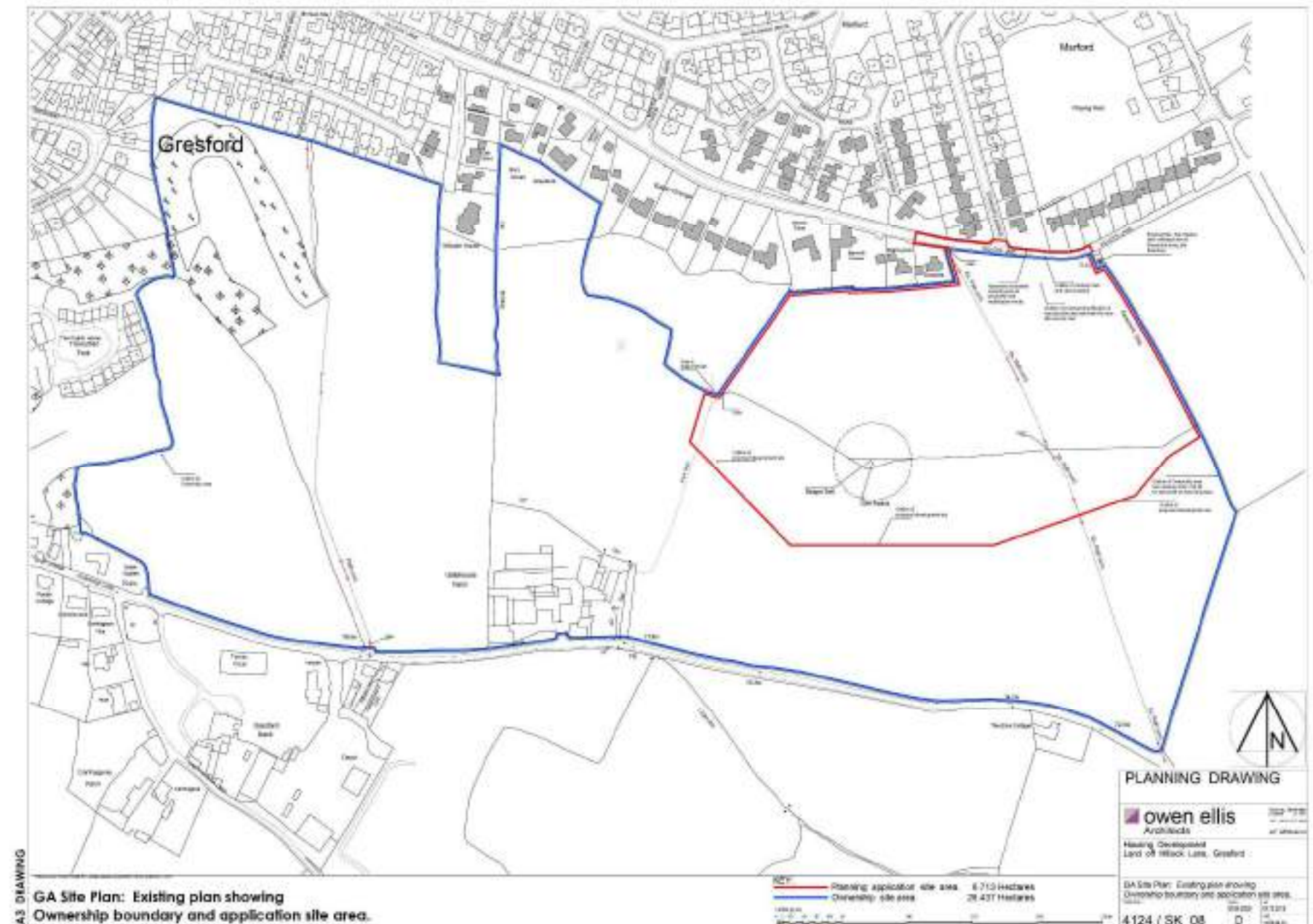
- ii) Demonstrates the steps that have been taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account.
- iii) Explains the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the relevant local plan documents have been taken into account.



Site Location Plan

SECTION 2 – SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site sits to the south east of the existing settlement of Gresford and extends to approximately 6.7 hectares.
- 2.2 The site comprises a parcel of agricultural land and forms part of a wider ownership that extends to approximately 26.5 hectares
- 2.3 The proposed access to the site is from Hillock Lane.
- 2.4 The site is generally flat to the northern half and gently sloping to the south.
- 2.5 The site is currently used for agriculture.
- 2.6 Part of the northern site boundary backs onto existing housing on Hillock Lane whilst the east, south and west boundaries have an open aspect to surrounding farmland.
- 2.7 A public right of way cuts across the site running broadly north south and is accessed from Hillock Lane.



SECTION 2 – INTERPRETATION

INTERPRETATION 1

This drawing shows our initial thoughts on how the analysis on the previous page could be translated into an acceptable layout.

Subsequently feed back from the Planning Officer indicated that they would like better integration and surveillance of green spaces and would prefer the dwellings to the south to be orientated so their front elevation rather than rear garden space looks out over open countryside.

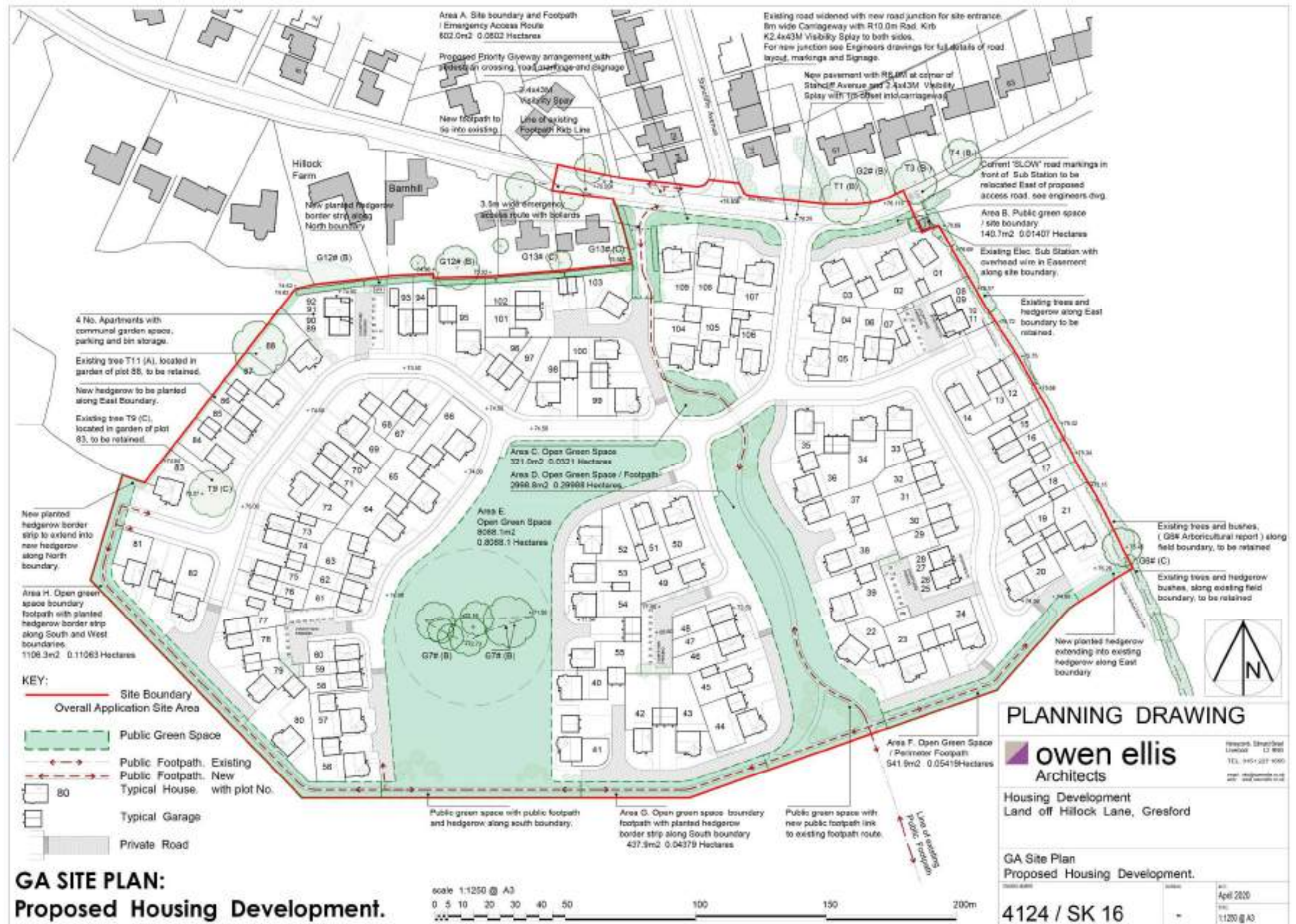
The following page shows our revised layout which;

- has houses where possible looking out of the site to take advantage of rural views
- the green spaces all have good natural surveillance from house frontages
- the existing footpath through the site is incorporated into an expansive green route, which also has natural surveillance.



INTERPRETATION 2

Revised plan incorporating
Planning Officer feed back



SECTION 3 – SURROUNDING AREA & CHARACTER

The historic core of Gresford lies to the west of the B5445 centred around All Saints Church with later Victorian and Edwardian expansion along the B - road. The arrival of the colliery in 1888 led to a demand for housing and the pressed red brick terraces and smaller houses date from this period.

Later development has largely followed the fashion of the period, consequently it is relatively easy to date later infill housing to the 1960's, 70's and so on, for the most part none of these houses follow any vernacular traditions in form or materials.

Hillock Lane contains a small number of cottages dating from the turn of the century but is largely made up of 20th Century housing in different styles.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Earlier part of Gresford centred around All Saints Church
2. Earlier part of Gresford centred around All Saints Church
3. Edwardian terrace in red pressed brick overlooking the Village Lake
4. Commercial Centre largely Edwardian and later, using a mix of brick and render with slate roofs
5. Entrance to Hillock Lane from B5445 with Edwardian property on East corner and modern detached villa on West
6. Small cottages in sandstone and render dated 1914, 1970's bungalow to left
7. 1980's detached house on Hillock Lane set back with a shared drive
8. Similar properties as 7
9. Early 1970's detached houses on Stancliffe Avenue off Hillock Lane
10. Semi detached 1970's property opposite site entrance
11. Edwardian semi detached on Old Wrexham Road using a mix of pressed red brick and render
12. Similar Edwardian properties on B5445 incorporating pedimented first floor windows



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



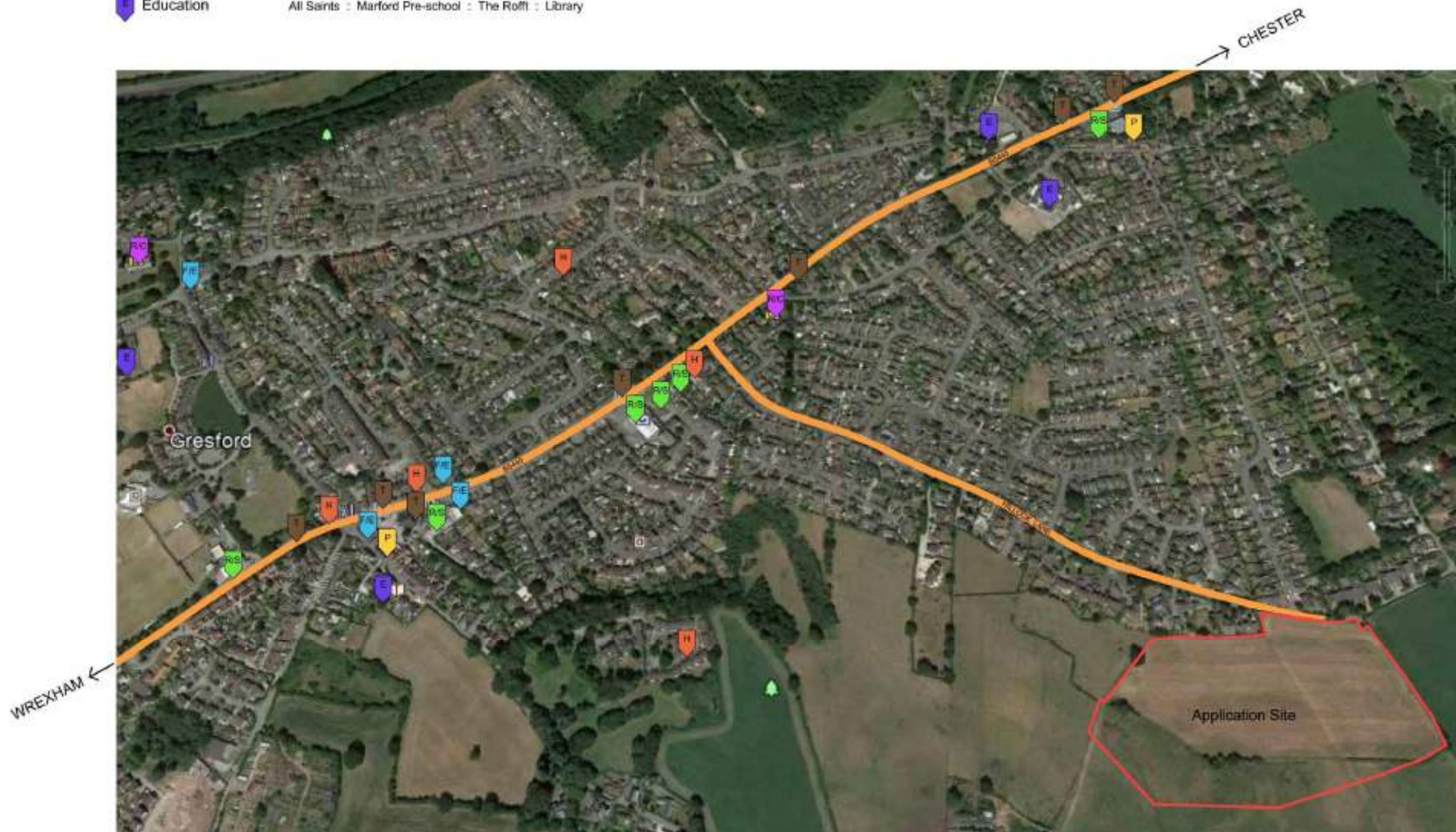
Photo 11



Photo 12

SECTION 3 – SURROUNDING AMENITIES

 Retail / Shops:	The Co-op Marford Hill : Spar : Dickens Butchers : Halo Hair Studio & Gresford Hair Salon : Texaco Service Station : All Jones Cycles : Gresford TV Services : News Agents : Off Licence : Travel Agents : Post Office	 Health	Pharmacy : Dental Practice : Alyn Family Doctors : Trewythen Home : Trewthen Park : Emerald House
 Food / Eating	Golden City : The Plough : Chand : The Yew Tree : Gerrards : Spar	 Transport	Taxi Rank : Bus Stop
 Public House	The Plough : Griffin Inn : The Red Lion	 Religious / Church	All Saints Church : Gresford Methodist Church
 Education	All Saints : Marford Pre-school : The Rofft : Library		



SECTION 4 - PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The site is currently allocated as ‘Green Barrier’ within the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However, Wrexham are in advanced stages of adopting the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP – 2013 to 2028) which will supersede the current UDP. The site has no allocation within the emerging LDP and falls outside the Gresford settlement boundary and is therefore considered open countryside within the emerging LDP.

NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) considers housing in the countryside and states;

‘it is important to recognise that development in the countryside should embody sustainability principles, benefiting the rural economy and local communities while maintaining and enhancing the environment, there should be a choice of housing, recognising the housing needs of all, including those in need of affordable or special needs provision.’

PPW also states that

‘Development on the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can be best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access and habitat and landscape conservation.’

In terms of allocating land for housing within development plans, PPW states;

In identifying sites to be allocated for housing in development plans, local planning authorities should follow a search sequence, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, within settlements, then settlement extensions and then new development around settlements with good public transport links.’

The PPW states; *‘Local planning authorities should consider the following criteria in deciding which sites to allocate for housing in their development plans:*

- *The availability of previously developed sites and empty or underused buildings and their suitability for housing use;*
- *The location of potential development sites and their accessibility to jobs, shops, and services by modes other than the car, and the potential for improving such accessibility;*
- *The capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, including public transport, water and sewerage, other utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals), to absorb further development, and the cost of adding further infrastructure;*

- *The scope to build sustainable communities to support new physical and social infrastructure, including consideration of the effect on the Welsh Language, and to provide sufficient demand to sustain appropriate local services and facilities;*
- *The physical and environmental constraints on development of land, including, for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk, taking into account the possible increase of such risk as a result of climate change, and the location of fragile habitats and species, archaeological and historic sites and landscapes;*
- *The compatibility of housing with neighbouring established land uses which might be adversely affected by encroaching residential development; and*
- *The potential to reduce carbon emissions through co-location with other uses.’*

LOCAL POLICY

The emerging LDP has removed the Green Barrier allocation (now renamed ‘Green Wedge’ within the LDP) from the site. This decision was made following the Wrexham Strategic Green Wedge Review (October 2017) undertaken by the Council. The removal of the site from the green wedge is a clear indication that the site will not cause coalescence with neighbouring settlements or impact any defensive barriers identified by the Council. The allocation of this site for housing will relieve pressure on the proposed green wedge allocations and allow the development of a sustainable edge of settlement site.

During the preparation of the emerging LDP, Wrexham County Borough assessed the suitability of a number of candidate sites for housing development in the area; the emerging LDP identified there is a lack of brownfield land available within the County Borough and development would have to be located on greenfield land to meet the housing need of the County Borough. This assessment underpinned the housing allocation within the emerging LDP. The site was assessed by the Council (*as highlighted in the ‘Gresford/Marford Site Register’*) for potential allocation within the Local Development Plan (LDP) (Site Ref: GRE004AS & GR01OS). The site was discounted for housing allocation; as it *‘Fails stage 1 of the Candidate Site Assessment process – Constraints unlikely to be overcome’*.

These constraints are identified as access, highways, ecology, trees and, best and most versatile agricultural land reasons but have subsequently been reduced to Highways issues only.

Having reviewed the Council’s assessment of the site and undertaken our own research, we disagree with the findings and are confident that the site is unconstrained and can come forward quickly to meet the housing need.

SECTION 4 - PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (Contd)

STAGE 1 – CONSTRAINTS

As highlighted in the previous sections, these constraints have been assessed and it is not considered these are ‘unlikely to be overcome’. It is clear through initial investigations that the site is sustainable, can be accessed, will not cause significant impacts on the highway network, ecology or trees in the local area. It is considered the site passes stage 1 of the candidate site assessment process.

STAGE 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH THE LDP VISION, OBJECTIVES AND THE PREFERRED SPATIAL STRATEGY

The vision of the County Borough is set out within the Deposit Plan. The allocation of this site will contribute to ensuring that Wrexham is an

‘attractive, distinctive and accessible place where people want to live, visit and invest’.

Strategic Objective SO5 promotes diverse communities. The Deposit Plan explains this is to be achieved by delivering housing (including affordable housing) to meet the needs of the County Borough. This site will provide an opportunity to deliver homes within a sustainable location and contribute to meeting the housing need in Wrexham. In addition, Gresford is an area with an identified shortfall of affordable housing, this site will help address this shortfall.

The site is located within a tier 2 (key settlement). Policy SP2 states

‘The settlement hierarchy identifies a framework for the location of new development based on an understanding of each settlements existing facilities / services and their capacity, infrastructure, employment opportunity, planning constraints, viability and opportunities for new development which has been informed by the sites assessment process’.

Tier 2 is the highest ranking category within the settlement hierarchy after Wrexham Town (Tier 1). It is considered this site will comply with the spatial strategy of the Deposit Plan.

Gresford is considered a sustainable location and has been identified as a tier 2 settlement due to its settlement functions which have been assessed by the Council. The Deposit Plan currently allocates 0 (zero) housing sites within the key settlement despite its sustainable location and size. The lack of allocations is of concern and will prevent the growth of Gresford in comparison to other key settlements in the County Borough.

STAGE 3 – SEA/SA (STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT / SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL) ASSESSMENT

We have assessed the site against the sustainability criteria as set out within the SEA/SA with consideration of the above sections

Table 1 Key

++	Very Positive Effects
+	Positive Effects
±	Some aspects of the policy have positive effects and some negative
-	Negative Effects
--	Very Negative Effects
?	Uncertain/Insignificant



Land off Hillock Lane, Gresford	Assessment
1. Role of Wrexham	
2. Economy	
3. Wrexham Town Centre	
4a. Active Travel	
4b. Highway Capacity	
5. a. Housing (viability)	
5 b. Housing (Need)	
6. Healthy Living	
7a. Welsh Language	
8. Infrastructure	
9a. Ecology & Habitats	
9b. Natural Resources	
9c. Historic Environment	
9d. Landscape	
10a. Carbon emissions	
10b. Climate Change Resilience	
11. Minerals	?
12. Waste	

Table 1: Site Assessment in the context of the suitability criteria (SEA/SA)

Summary

As highlighted above, it is considered that the site passes all stages of the Council’s site assessment process. It is located within Gresford which is identified as a tier 2 (key settlement) and is considered a sustainable location. The delivery of this site is unconstrained and deliverable in the short term.

SECTION 5 - PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

5.1 UNIT TYPES

The proposed layout will provide 109 dwellings in total comprising:

- 6 No 1 bed flats
- 6 No 2 bed flats
- 15 No 2 bed houses (semi and terraced)
- 23 No 3 bed houses (semi and terraced)
- 32 No 4 bed detached houses
- 27 No 5 bed detached houses

The mix has been determined by local market conditions and discussion with an affordable housing provider.

5.2 AFFORDABLE PROVISION

The developer is committed to providing 25% of the dwellings as affordable, these are indicated on the layout. They are distributed in this manner to ensure that a phased approach to building the development will ensure an affordable provision within each phase. A local affordable housing provider has agreed to take the units on completion.

5.3 DENSITY

The proposals will provide 20.6 Units / hectare for the developed area (excluding green spaces). The developer has stressed that space between and around properties should be sufficient to avoid overlooking and that each property has adequate garden and parking space.

5.4 PARKING PROVISION

The development achieves the parking standards laid down in Wrexham Borough Councils Local Planning Guidance Note 16.

1 bedroom	-	1.5 car spaces per unit
2 bedrooms	-	2 car spaces per unit
3 / 4 bedrooms	-	3 car spaces per unit
5 or more bedrooms	-	4 car spaces per unit

Garages have not been counted towards on site parking.

5.5 GREEN SPACE

The development incorporates 14,236m² of open green space, located in two areas. The requirement for open space specified in Local Planning Guidance Note 10 stipulates 0.4 hectares per 50 dwellings which for 109 dwellings equates to 8,720m² (0.872 hectares); the provision therefore significantly exceeds the requirement.

Area 1

A large open space of 8,088m² is centred around an area of existing hedgerow and trees and is located so that it has a boundary with the adjacent fields creating visual links to the landscape and a wildlife corridor. The opportunity has been taken to have the housing around this area looking onto the space to encourage natural supervision and for those units to have the benefit of an open aspect.

Area 2:

The public footpath through the site will incorporate wide verges to allow for tree and native shrub planting so that the impression of a ‘narrow alley’ is avoided. The path will also be a natural wildlife corridor linking the suburban areas of Gresford with the wider landscape.

SECTION 5 – PROPOSED LAYOUT IN CONTEXT



SECTION 5 – FINALISED PLAN INDICATING HOUSE TYPES



SECTION 6 - AMOUNT & SCALE

- 6.1 The proposed development is for residential (Use Class 3a) and will offer a mixture of properties from one to five bedrooms. All properties other than the affordable units will be offered for sale on the open market.
- 6.2 The schedule of accommodation below shows the intended housing mix and building sizes proposed, Floor plans for each house type are illustrated in the adjacent figures.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

Type/Ref	Description	Height	Size ft ²	m ²	No of Units
A	1 bed apartment	n/a	464	43.0	6
B	2 bed apartment	n/a	612	57.0	6
C	2 bed mid terrace	2 storey	952	88.6	1
D	2 bed semi	2 storey	880	81.0	14
E	3 bed end terrace	2 storey	952	88.6	4
F	3 bed semi	2 storey	974	90.5	18
G	4 bed detached (integral garage)	2 storey	1,549	144.0	10
H	4 bed detached	3 storey	1,564	145.3	22
I	5 bed detached	3 storey	1,905	177.0	27
J	3 bed mid terrace	2 storey	1,009	93.7	1
	Total				109

- 6.3 The application is for residential housing and as such the scale and massing of the proposal reflects the need to provide predominantly two storey properties. Some of the larger 4 and 5 bed properties use the roof space to provide a third floor thereby reducing their overall footprint.
- 6.4 Careful consideration was given to the overall scale of the proposed dwellings, ensuring that the development respects existing scales and provides an appropriate extension to the existing settlement.

HOUSE PLANS



Ground Floor
Type A & B – 1 & 2 Bed Apartments



First Floor



Ground Floor
Type C & E – 2 & 3 Bed Terrace



First Floor



Ground Floor
Type D – 2 Bed Semi



First Floor



Ground Floor
Type F – 3 Bed Semi



First Floor

SECTION 6 - AMOUNT & SCALE (Contd)

HOUSE PLANS



Ground Floor
Type G – 4 Bed Detached (integral garage)



First Floor



Ground Floor
Type I – 5 Bed Detached 3 Storey



First Floor



Second Floor



Ground Floor
Type H – 4 Bed Detached 3 Storey



First Floor



Second Floor



Ground Floor
Type J – 3 Bed Mid Terrace



First Floor

SECTION 7 - LANDSCAPING

An arboricultural assessment of the existing landscape has been carried out by Urban Green and their findings are included within the application pack. In planning the housing layout due credence has been taken of their findings and trees have been accommodated within the layout.

The open green space within the proposal has been sited to enhance the group of trees and hedgerow located to the south field boundary. In addition its location abutting open farm land increased its value as a wildlife habitat and enhances the sense of openness. The term 'borrowed landscape' is used to describe a green space that has greater impact due to the view beyond it.

The existing public footpath through the site will be retained and enhanced by allowing a 10m wide

landscaped route to be created. Pedestrian routes within the site will link into it and link it to the open green space.

The amount of open space is discussed elsewhere but exceeds the Council formula of 0.4 hectares / 50 houses.

Entrance from Hillock Lane: the new houses are accessed by a private drive running parallel to the lane which will provide space for a new landscape buffer to be created.

Extensive tree planting will be undertaken within the development and the south and west boundary will be planted to establish a new habitat rich hedgerow.



SECTION 8 - APPEARANCE

8.1 PLACEMAKING

Design should concentrate on creating successful ‘places’ for people. Building layout and style, hard and soft landscape, highway design and use of materials should all work together within the development to create a cohesive overriding character. These elements must also take account of local context to ensure that the design will fit harmoniously into its surroundings

8.2 ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY & STYLE

The following broad design principles will be adopted throughout the development to ensure that the character is coherent.

8.3 BUILDING MATERIALS AND COLOUR

The materials will reflect the late Victorian and Edwardian expansion of Gresford by using materials that reflect that period;

- ‘Slate’ roofs
- Pressed red ‘Ruabon’ bricks
- Cream / off white render
- Traditional sash and casement style windows

Recent 20th Century schemes have paid little or no attention to the

local vernacular; consequently, the properties along Hillock Lane show a variety of styles that have no empathy with Gresford’s vernacular appearance.

8.4 BUILDING LAYOUT

Building layout will be used to frame streets and provide a gateway into the development.

Pedestrian routes and green space will generally be overlooked by adjacent properties. Building layout will seek to enhance the sense of place throughout the scheme, creating nodes, vistas and focal buildings. Corner buildings at the site entrance will be articulated to define the corner and provide active interfaces on both sides.

8.5 BUILDING STYLE AND FORM

Buildings will comprise a selection of forms to ensure the site offers the variety of homes needed. It will include houses from 1 bed flats to 5 bed detached houses, nonetheless all the buildings will have a ‘family’ appearance by using a consistent palette of materials referred to in paragraph 8.3.

Buildings are predominantly two storey with some of the larger units extending to 3 storey by using the roof space.

Elevations will be simple and regular. Varied ridge heights will be a common theme throughout the development and further variety will be gained by using bay windows, front door canopies, pedimented dormers and render to some first floor elevations.

8.6 FRONT ENTRANCES AND BOUNDARIES

All houses will be oriented to the street so that entrances enhance street activity and supervision.

Rear garden spaces will be screened from the street with secure fences and gates to meet Secured by Design Standards.

Front gardens will be largely ‘open’ to the street enhancing the feeling of space,

Driveways will be porous brick/block paving to distinguish them from public tarmacked streets.



2 Bed Semi



3 Bed Semi



5 Bed Detached

SECTION 9 - ACCESS & HIGHWAYS

ACCESS, PARKING PROVISION AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

9.1 ACCESS

The development will be accessed by a new entrance from Hillock Lane, as this is the only location where the site fronts onto Public Highway. A detailed assessment of the proposal and Traffic Movements has been carried out by Croft Transport Planning and Design and their report is included within the application pack.

Hillock Lane will be widened at the access point to provide sufficient room for two way traffic, pavements both sides of the road and a full 2.4m x 43m visibility splay.

9.2 EMERGENCY VEHICLES

A development of this size (109 units) requires guaranteed access for emergency vehicles, this will be ensured by;

- The first section of the new access road will be 8m wide
- The footpath which effectively by-passes the road entrance will provide a 4.5m wide surfaced route protected by hinged bollards, this will be available for emergency vehicles only

9.3 PARKING

All properties have either parking within their curtilage or in designated communal parking areas (this applies to flat blocks and smaller terraced units). Parking provision is provided in line with Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Note 16.

9.4 FOOTPATH CONNECTIONS

Pedestrian permeability has been carefully considered as part of this scheme, consequently pavements have been proposed to both side of all adoptable roads which link with the existing public footpath passing through the site. In addition, pedestrian links are provided at the ends of some cul-de-sacs to ensure connectivity across the site and easy access to green space.

9.5 REFUSE

All houses including mid terrace units have access from rear gardens to kerbside without the need to go through the dwelling, consequently all bins will be kept within the rear garden space or in the case of the flats within a designated bin store area.

Adequate hard standing will be provided to the rear of each property to contain the current Wrexham collection policy comprising;

- General black/blue waste bin
- Wheelie box for sorted recycling
- Food waste caddy
- Garden waste bin (optional)

It will be the householders' responsibility to move the appropriate bins to the highway on collection days.

9.6 ACCESS FOR DISABLED AND WHEELCHAIR USERS

The public realm will be designed to ensure that inclusive access is afforded throughout. All changes of level at road junctions will be provided with dropped kerbs and tactile warning devices as prescribed by current Building Regulations.

The design of the dwellings will comply with Part M of the current Building Regulations and the affordable social dwellings with Welsh Government Housing Quality Standards.

SECTION 10 - CRIME PREVENTION

The following paragraphs illustrate the fundamentals of crime prevention incorporate into our design.

10.1 FOOTPATHS AND WALKWAYS

Through the design of our block form, natural surveillance of footpaths and walkways are proposed throughout the development. Footpaths will be well lit.

10.2 FRONT OF BUILDINGS

The natural surveillance benefits of residential development will similarly assist in enhancing the security to fronts of buildings. On a more physical level, improvements to structural security are also proposed and are to include such interventions as access doors to all properties to be fitted with 5 lever mortice locks.

10.3 PRIVATE SPACES BEHIND BUILDINGS

Private spaces behind buildings, essentially gardens, will be fenced and benefit from the same levels of natural surveillance as the fronts of properties

10.4 NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

The enclosing arrangement of dwellings and close proximity of footpath and parking areas will ensure that the development benefits from the maximum level of natural surveillance. Visual refuges where intruders could remain unobserved have been minimised.

10.5 BUILDING ENTRANCES

All building entrances whether accessed from the public highway or the private drives are proposed to benefit from physical security measures, such as 5 lever mortice locks.

10.6 BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

Private boundaries include secure screen walling (to boundaries which abut the public realm) or fencing at a minimum of 1.8m high with gated access,

Whilst providing a degree of physical security, it is also most effective as a psychological deterrent to opportunistic crimes.

10.7 LANDSCAPING

Landscaping as proposed will incorporate a choice of trees and shrubs that will contribute to security by means of their density and hostility to climbing.

SECTION 11 - CONCLUSION

In developing this proposal, the design and consultant team have sought to deliver a desirable, high quality living environment.

The mix of properties from one to five bedrooms will appeal to a broad range of buyers and ensure the development supports a vibrant community.

28 of the new homes will be affordable, managed by a local social housing provider and will provide units with a range of bedroom numbers from one to four.

The aesthetics of the scheme has been developed to reflect the local vernacular and as such would make a fitting addition to Gresford's built environment.

The scheme will provide 109 units towards Wrexham Borough Council's five year housing requirements which currently cannot be met through existing sites.