

SITE H4, FINSTOWN

Housing Development Brief



Looking south west over the site



above - the site in context looking north
below - looking west across the site



Introduction

This guide sets out the main opportunities and constraints relating to the housing sites known as H4 at Finstown and provides an outline framework for the development of the site. The sections of the guide indicate where detailed attention is required to address specific issues. The comments and advice contained within this guide should be considered in conjunction with appropriate planning guidance given at local and national level and with the conditions set out in the tender documentation for individual parts of the site.



Site Description



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Extract from Orkney Local Plan
Finalised 2004

Land Use Proposals

- proposed housing site - Policy LP/H1
- recreation, leisure, amenity open space - Policy LP/S3
- settlement boundary - Policy LP/H1

The site lies to the south of the A965 and covers approximately 1.50 ha. In the north it is bounded by Finstown Cemetery and the A965, to the west by H3 (currently undeveloped) and to the south and east by open farmland. The north part of the east boundary is shared with commercial garage premises on the A965. The site is identified in the Orkney Local Plan for residential development with an indicative capacity of 5 dwellings. The densities specified for both H3 and H4 are very low and it is accepted that these figures will be exceeded by new development.

view over the Ouse from the upper part of the site

H4 together with H3 site represent a major opportunity for new house building in Finstown. Part of site H3 has recently received planning permission for a development of 29 houses. The application was submitted by Orkney Builders and was approved in February 2009 (Application Number: 08/582/PPF). This application covers the first phase of the development of H3 and lies adjacent and to the east of the existing development at Grimond Road. This proposal takes account of the need to expand Finstown Cemetery and is therefore set back between 25 - 45m from the existing south cemetery wall. The proposal for H3 is a critical for the implementation of H4 as it will provide one of the access roads to the site.



traditional style, appropriate materials and colour

Development aspiration

The aspiration for the site is that it should provide a high quality 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 reasonably sheltered environment for new homes and set out a landscape framework which will reduce the impact of the housing on the surrounding landscape. The development should also set new standards of building and external space which are appropriate for the 21st century and meet the aspirations of the residents of the area.

Design criteria

Buildings and place making

It is anticipated that the development of H4 will take place in three phases generally running from north to south. These are likely to be:

- phase one – the development of 10-12 Council houses (a mix of 1 and 2 bed units and possibly 2 larger units)
- phase two – an 8-10 unit Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme
- phase three – serviced sites for onward sale for self build projects

This will create a series of three small development groupings which reflect traditional patterns of building in the village.

It is expected that building design will reflect the prominent location of the site and sensitivity to the traditions of building in Orkney. Traditional building is acceptable as is contemporary building which has clearly developed from local styles of vernacular building. Suburban styles finished in brick or which include barge boards and boxed in eaves will not be acceptable. As a general guide:

- the development should demonstrate efficient use of energy and resources in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply
- 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 sustainable materials, particularly stone and timber throughout the development
- 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 streets
- focal points 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 and to Hedde Road through the H3 site

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 or decorative gateways to individual developments is not acceptable
- existing field walls and or woodland blocks in the vicinity of the site should be used as clues for new boundary or subdividing elements
- the site edges facing open countryside are potentially very unnatural and should be broken up with a combination of block woodland and stone walls
- edges along the roads through the site should take references from the surrounding countryside – stone walls and grass verges
- a sense of enclosure should be created throughout the development by linked frontages



-  vehicular access
-  suggested site dev. structure
-  proposed tree planting / within site
-  focal point
-  long views

and garden walls and verges with consistency of materials

Ecology and habitat

- planting should focus on native species
- there are opportunities for habitat reinforcement and creation through the site in association with the SuDS and along the along the east west and boundaries of the site

Landscape considerations

General tree planting:

The site is an important and prominent feature of the village. It slopes upwards from the A965 and the rear of the cemetery towards Heddle Road in the south. This southern part of the site is particularly exposed and prominent. Finstown is unusual for a settlement on Orkney in that it has a noticeable amount of tree cover. The development should include efforts to establish a strong landscape framework of trees throughout the development but especially along the north and east boundaries of the site.

Open space and play areas:

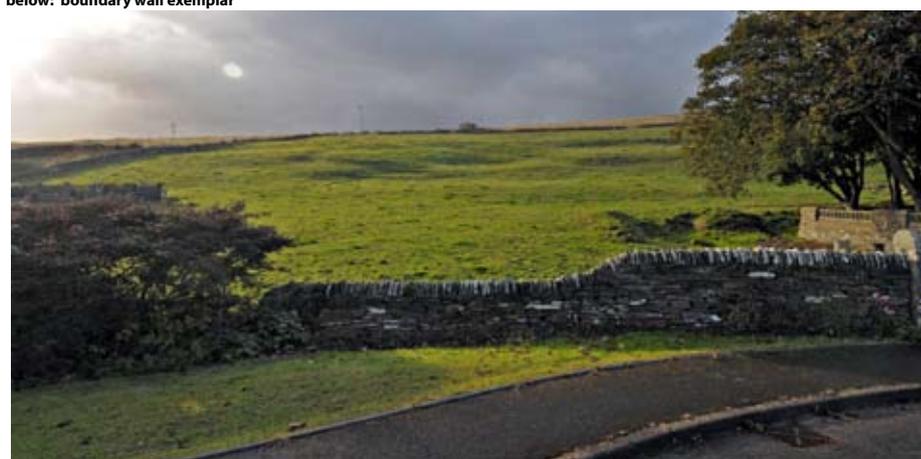
The development should include a network of linked open space areas incorporating a children's play area, passive open space and habitat supporting natural areas which may also be part of the development's Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS). These open space areas could be linked along the SuDS from the south of the site to the north eastern corner of the proposed development area. This concept is shown on the design guidance plan. Specific proposals should be produced for a well designed and appealing play area which should include play equipment and seating for the enjoyment of young children and families living on the site. This should be produced and agreed in partnership between the planning authority and the community council.

Boundary treatments:

The edges of the development are particularly important in integrating



above: integrating buildings in the landscape
below: boundary wall exemplar



the new buildings in the surrounding landscape. The existing field boundaries, which are predominantly post and wire fences, do not provide particularly good exemplars for the new development. The development should be screened from the cemetery in the north and along the eastern boundary which is prominent in long views towards the site from the A965 from Kirkwall. Other site boundaries should avoid suburban detailing such as timber hit-and-miss fencing. Stone walls built in the local tradition of flat dry construction are acceptable.

Hard and soft landscaping:

The environment of Orkney can be quite hostile to many plant species and it would be inappropriate to plant up the development with species taken out of context from the UK mainland. Trees and shrubs that already grow successfully in the village should be used in preference to 'alien' species.

Specific landscape criteria will include:

- existing landscape features represent opportunities for place-making and care should be taken

to integrate important features as indicated above

- existing patterns of field walls/hedges/woodland blocks/shelterbelts in the surrounding countryside should be used as clues for new boundary or subdividing elements
- the eastern site edge facing open countryside is potentially very unnatural and should be broken up with a combination of block woodland and stone walls
- the western edge of the site should relate to the H3 development on the adjacent land to the west and the developer of H3 will be expected to liaise with the H4 developer to produce a mutually acceptable plan linking open space, boundary treatments and Suds
- generic suburban detailing should be minimised and the use of kerbs, introduction of footpaths on rural roads where not really necessary, use of brick for walls, coniferous

hedges, decorative gateways to individual developments are not acceptable

- planting should focus on native species
- new blocks of woodland planting need to be substantial in size to work properly

Access and road design

General requirements:

Road construction should not be conceived in isolation but as an integrated element of the overall design of the development. The Council's standards 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 concepts laid down in PAN76 *'New Residential Streets'* and the January 2009 Consultation Draft *'Designing Streets'* issued by the Scottish Government. These documents promote an informal system of well connected streets with natural traffic calming (building lines, shared road surfaces etc) built in and equal priority given to all modes including walking and cycling.

Traffic attenuation should be introduced as a self-enforcing measure to maintain vehicle speeds below 20 mph.

Specific access requirements:

Access to and from the site should be taken from the access point from H3 and from the A965 through the strip of land immediately to the east of the cemetery. With regard to the H3 access, this has already been accepted through the granting of planning permission for the development referred to above for

29 houses. Negotiation will be required with the Council's Roads Department over the access onto the A965. The preference expressed here is for a two way access which will help to attenuate traffic speeds on the A965 but the Roads Department may insist on a one way access. In this latter case, the preference would be for an exit onto the A965 rather than an entrance to the site. It may be necessary to create more generous site lines at this access through setting back the cemetery wall.

Parking requirements:

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

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

Pedestrian access and provision:

In addition to the road access points described above, pedestrian access provision should be made onto Heddle Road in the vicinity of the point shown on the design guidance plan.

Water resource management

General requirements:

Although there are some drainage issues in the locale, the site does not lie close to any significant water courses and it does not have a local history of flooding as far as we are aware. However the SEPA Flood Map does indicate that the watercourse along the east boundary of the site south of the A965 and east of the cemetery wall is liable to flooding from the sea and this affects the main road itself and the first few metres of the proposed access to the site. Clarification of the accuracy of this will be contained in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment being carried out as part of the masterplan study for the village.

In line with the requirements of PAN61 *'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.



typical traditional road verge detail



materials and boundaries detail