## **Community Update May 2015**

# Proposed development of land north of A4103, Withington





## **Full Planning Application Submitted Council Planning Reference: 151150**

David Wilson Homes (DWH) are pleased to advise that they have submitted a full planning application to Herefordshire Council to develop land to the north of A4103, Withington, with a high-quality residential development, landscaping and new public open space.

David Wilson Homes believe the proposal site could comfortably deliver approximately 80 new homes and originally consulted with the local community on such numbers. However, following feedback with the local community, the plans have been revised and improved and a reduced number of dwellings are now proposed.

#### The submitted full plans include:

- 69 high-quality new homes
- 35% of the new homes proposed would be built as affordable housing (24 dwellings) for local people
- A development where all homes will be two storeys or less following the public consultation all homes of two and a half storeys were removed
- A significant area of new public open space which was increased in area following the public consultation
- · Extensive new landscaping and tree planting
- · Sustainable drainage features, including a balancing pond
- Improved pedestrian links, including a new footpath along the southern boundary
- · Single vehicle access point from the road to the west

Further information regarding the submitted plans and the changes and improvements that have been made to the proposals following a review of local feedback received is contained within this newsletter.

## Background

#### The site

The proposal site is located to the south of existing housing at Southbank, opposite Orchard House, close to the main settlement of Withington. The site is bounded to the south by the A4103 and to the east by an area of agricultural land.

The site is ideally suited to deliver new homes, being adjacent to the existing built settlement and well within walking distance of local amenities such as the school, shop, local nursery and village hall.

## Planning background and local housing needs

Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy has identified Withington for some additional housing growth. The proposal site was also previously included by the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as a potential future housing site. Local feedback received has also highlighted that the proposal site is a preferable location to provide the new houses required in Withington.

Herefordshire Council currently has a shortfall in its housing supply and is considering sustainable sites, including those previously identified in its SHLAA, to meet the local area's future housing requirements.

#### **Community consultation**

DWH held a public exhibition in December 2014, which presented preliminary plans and ideas about how the site could be developed. **55 local people attended.** 

DWH are very encouraged by the positive response it has received from the local community about its plans to date. 63% of the local feedback received supported its proposals, particularly the site's location, which is viewed by many local people as the most preferable site in Withington to deliver the new homes required.

Local feedback, including from Withington Parish Council, was also received in the form of comments, concerns and suggestions regarding the proposals. David Wilson Homes have carefully reviewed all the feedback received to date and, where possible, has evolved its proposals to address the community's comments.

#### **Summary of proposals**

The proposed development would feature:

69 new homes set within a spacious, attractively landscaped layout. The number of homes proposed was reduced from circa 80 following consultation with the local community. The submitted plans include:

- 45 open market homes, including I five bedroom property, 29 four bedroom properties, 13 three bedroom properties and 2 two bedroom properties
- 24 affordable homes, 35% of the total proposed, including one, two and three bedroom houses, to specifically meet local housing needs
- Just over 10% of the proposed dwellings are single storey or dormer bungalows
- None of the proposed new homes are above two storeys; in keeping with the character of the local area

**Beneficial housing mix:** The diverse mix of house types proposed would cater for the broadest markets, including families, downsizers and first time buyers — helping to contribute to a wide range of local housing needs and creating a balanced community.

**Height and design:** The homes of two and a half storeys were omitted following the public consultation. As a result all the homes proposed would be two storeys in height or less. The design would incorporate building materials and architectural features associated with the local area, including brickwork detailing and exposed rafters to feature plots, red brick and white roughcast render.

**Car parking:** Car parking would be provided for each property with at least 2-3 car parking spaces per dwelling (not including garages).

- I. Access the development would be served by a single vehicle access from the existing road to the west which would comply with highway safety standards.
- **2. Improved pedestrian links** improved pedestrian links form an integral part of the proposals and as such, following consultation with the local community, a new footpath at the southern boundary of the site is proposed, to better link the business park on the main road to the village.



- **3.** A significant area of new public open space this would be created around the southern edge of the development. Approximately 20% of the site will remain undeveloped and safeguarded as new public open space. The area proposed as public open space was significantly increased following consultation with the local community.
- **4. Landscaping** new tree planting and landscaping would be provided to further enhance the proposals and to contribute to the character of the local area.
- **5. Tree removal** following requests from neighbouring properties the trees bordering Southbank will be removed and replaced with more appropriate native landscaping.
- 6. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) features the proposed design will accommodate Sustainable Urban Drainage features (SUDs) including a balancing pond, which will also be an attractive habitat for local wildlife and can be planted with native plants to encourage local biodiversity.

## **Summary of benefits**

- Development of a site which can accommodate new homes and lies close to local facilities
- A high-quality, residential development, providing new homes at a time when Herefordshire Council is short of housing
- A good mix of new homes to cater for the broadest markets, including families, downsizers and first time buyers
- Provision of new affordable housing for local people
- A spacious layout delivering generous new areas of attractive open space for use by the wider community
- A proposal which has received local support, particularly in relation to the suitability of the site to deliver the new homes required locally.









Street view along Eastern Boundary: Plots 28-36 & 16-21

### Responding to local feedback ...

All comments received by DWH during its pre-application consultation with the local community have been reviewed. **The main issues raised by the local community are addressed below:** 

**Support for new housing in this location and the design and layout proposed:** DWH are very encouraged by the positive response from the local community regarding the proposal for new housing on this site and the design and layout proposed. The proposal offers a good mix of high-quality homes to cater for the broadest markets, including families and first time buyers, close to local amenities, including Withington Village Hall, Withington Primary School and Nursery and Withington Post Office.

#### Improving pedestrian links and local connectivity:

DWH intends to construct footpaths to improve linkage and security. The proposals will now provide new footpath links through to the properties fronting onto the A4103 to the south of the site and also improve the link to the existing bus stop and telephone box located at the junction with the A4103. Further footpath extensions to link to the Whitestone Business Park have been discussed and are subject to further investigation in conjunction with Highways Officers. With respect to existing links, any improvement would be subject to the agreement of the County and any affected landowners.

**Drainage:** A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to Herefordshire Council for their comment, ahead of DWH submitting its planning application. To ensure surface water run-off is dealt with appropriately, DWH proposed design accommodates a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features to minimise the surface water run-off. These have been designed as shallow drainage channels/swales leading into a balancing pond with gentle side slopes in the ground where water running off the site and the surrounding area can collect and soak away. The rate of flow from the site will be no worse than the existing agricultural field.

**Wildlife:** The site has been surveyed by a qualified ecologist and found to be of generally low ecological value. However, the hedge to the west represents one of the best ecological features on the site. The proposal shows that this hedge will be retained by placing a new footpath to the east of the hedge. In order to achieve a net-gain in bio-diversity on this site, bird, bat and bee boxes will be introduced, together with wild flower and grasses in the increased area of open space, to encourage ground-nesting birds.

**Number of houses proposed (density):** In the interests of sustainability, the density proposed seeks the efficient use of this site whilst recognising the need to respect the character and appearance

#### **Questions**

If you have any further questions or would like more information you can visit our website at **www.consultation-online.co.uk/withington** or call our Freephone information line on **0800 298 7040** 

of the local area. Following a review of the local feedback received, the number of homes proposed was reduced from circa 80 to 69, reducing the overall density of the proposal and significantly increasing the provision of public open space. The proposed houses will now be built to a density of approximately 26 dwellings per hectare (dph), which is considered to be in keeping with the character of surrounding properties, and is actually less than the density of the neighbouring Southbank development.

**Height:** DWH have removed all of the properties that were previously shown as  $2^{1/2}$  storeys from its plans. All homes would now be two storeys or less, to better reflect the local vernacular.

**Affordable Housing:** There is a recognised need for new housing, including affordable homes in Herefordshire. DWH have and will continue to enter into discussions with the Council, raising the feedback attained from the community, but ultimately the tenure of the affordable housing will be decided by the Council. The plans for Withington will provide 35% affordable in line with Council policy.

**Trees:** Residents of Southbank identified trees along the boundary as being dangerously tall, requesting they should be replaced with something more manageable. Whilst the majority of the site's existing boundary trees would be retained, in direct response to community feedback, DWH propose to remove the trees along the northern boundary adjoining Southbank and replant with more appropriate sized native species.

**Traffic:** DWH has submitted a Transport Statement (TS) which fully considers all highway issues associated with this proposal. The Transport Statement concludes that there is current capacity on the local roads and there are no transport or traffic reasons why the proposed development should not proceed. Ongoing discussions with the Council's Highways Officers will also ensure that the development is suitable and acceptable for the village.



Proposed house type