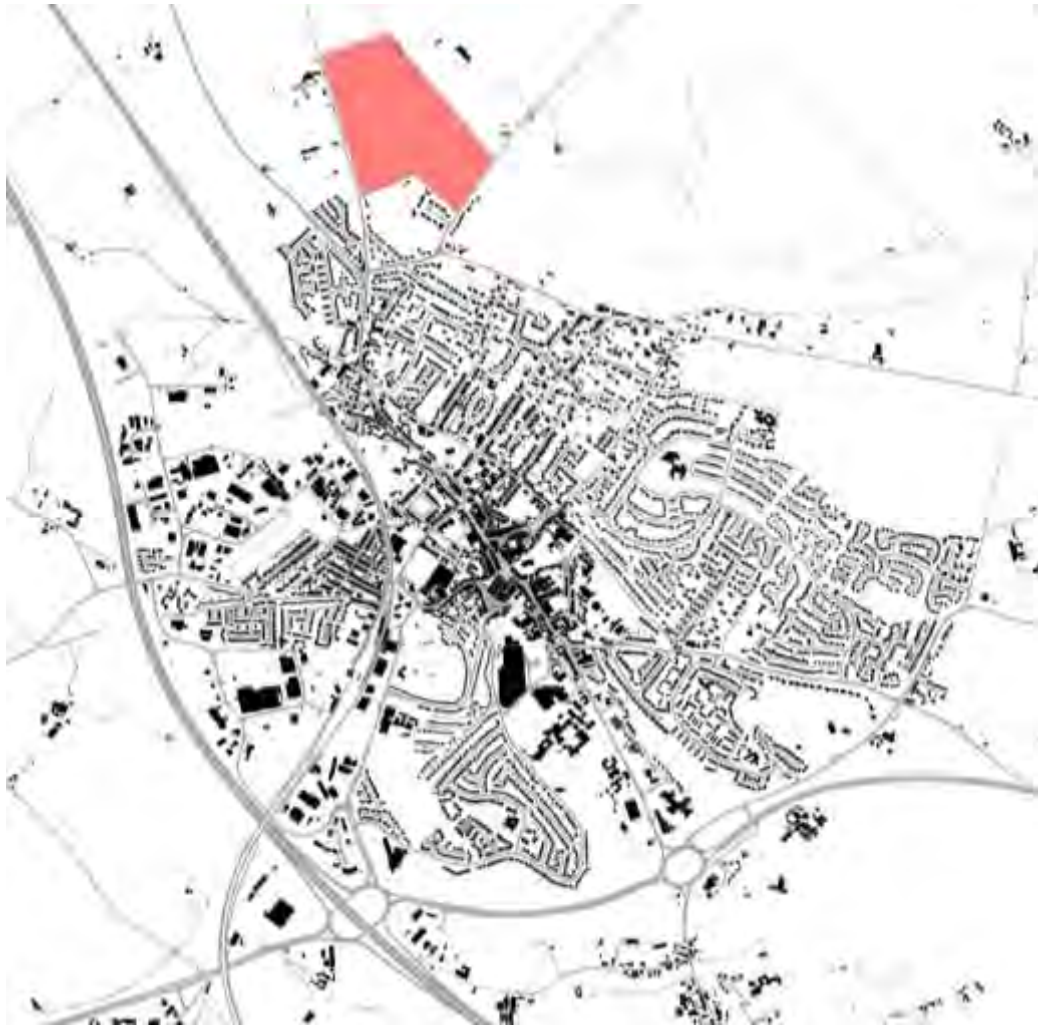


Appendix 1 - Example Design Brief

Fairhill Urban Extension Design Brief

November 2015



Background

1. Eden District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the district, to guide new development over the period 2014-2032. The Council published its final draft of the plan for six weeks formal consultation on 19 October 2015. The plan will be submitted to Government in December 2015 and a public examination will take place in Spring/Summer 2016. It is intended that the Local Plan will be adopted by the Council towards the end of 2016.
2. The draft Eden Local Plan directs half of all of Eden's future growth towards Penrith which equates to 1800 new homes in the town in the plan period. The plan allocates a number of strategic urban extension sites around Penrith for development in order to meet this requirement.
3. The draft plan allocates site N1 for residential development and expects it to be delivered in the first five years of the plan period (2014-2019). The plan recognises the potential for further development in this area and as such sets aside site N1a as a 'reserve site'. This means that whilst at present it is not considered necessary to develop the site to meet housing need in the plan period, due to other sites being available, the site is expected to come forward at a point further into the future. If once the plan is adopted other allocated sites for whatever reason do not come forward as anticipated and not enough housing is being developed, then the Council will consider N1a as a suitable site to be developed to meet this need.



Figure 1: Proposed Urban Extensions

Introduction

4. This document sets out key design principles for the development of sites N1 and N1a. The Council has sought specialist urban design advice and the result of this advice is summarised in this document. The Council will expect the key issues and design principles set out in this brief to be incorporated into the design for the masterplan area.

The Site

5. The site is located on the north western fringe of the built up area of Penrith immediately to the north of Salkeld Road and east of Inglewood Road. The site lies in an elevated position, sloping downwards towards the southwest. The highest edge of the site lies on the eastern fringe, bordered by Green Lane along its entire length.
6. The site is one of three potential allocated sites all extending in the same north westerly direction, however this is the most elevated and potentially extensive of the three sites, rising to 220 metres elevation along the Green Lane boundary. The hill above the development site to the east is occupied by a golf course with intermittent planting belts of pine trees. To the north of the proposed site, the land falls away to reveal panoramic open views across attractive elevated rolling countryside.
7. There are important public views towards the Lake District Fells from all three bordering roads. The main east coast railway line, the M6 motorway and the A6 road run from north to south a few hundred metres from the western boundary. It is highly likely that any development would be visible from these three routes, especially travelling from south to north.
8. The line of a strategic Roman Road which appears to have been the main west coast route between England with Scotland bisects the site midway along its long north south axis. Although it is not clearly apparent on the ground, archaeological remains are likely to be present as the track bed of the road itself. The site includes a number of traditional dry red sandstone walls generally running downslope in a westerly or south westerly direction. In addition the site is fringed with dry stone walls and by semi mature trees and, in places, by hedgerows. Attractive groups of mature deciduous trees provide an attractive foreground along parts of Inglewood Road.
9. There are no public footpaths crossing the site, however Green Lane is a popular walking route with a footpath link to the extensive network of routes on Beacon Hill. The elevated level route of Green Lane offers local people the best and most uninterrupted views across to the Eastern fells of the Lake District from anywhere in the locality. To the south of the site, a water treatment works and the low roofed bungalows of Fairhill Close offer little interference with these views, while just beyond them the Fairhill playing fields and the town's heavily wooded cemetery provide a significant break from the main built up areas of the town.

Key Issues

10. This section sets out the key issues that will be required to be addressed in masterplans for the area:

Reinforcing the rural setting of the town

11. The draft Eden design guide notes the distinctive character of Penrith as follows: 'The town spreads in a broad arc around the lower south and west slopes of Beacon Hill and many long perspectives looking north are attractively terminated by the dense woods which cover the domed plateau of the hilltop. The New Streets which rise almost in straight lines uphill are characterised by strong and even building lines of Victorian red sandstone villas and terraces. The rooflines of these properties step up the hill to produce an even rhythm, or visual succession in the street scene.'
12. The distinctive capping of forest does not extend across the hilltop above this site however it is considered highly desirable to continue this theme as it is such a defining characteristic of Penrith. An enclosing fringe of woodland would define the edges of the town clearly and soften the urban edge. A dense belt of woodland to the north of the site would shield the urban edge from the wide and long views from the north. The potentially upsetting impression of the town growing unchecked into open countryside would be overcome: the countryside would appear instead to be encroaching on the town.

Extending the distinctive urban character of Penrith with a logical and legible urban form whilst maximising site potential for future residents

13. The traditional manner in which housing was built on the steep hills within Eden District was in streets running parallel with the direction of slope. The New Streets of Penrith offer a suitable model here: housing and boundary walls were arranged in a linear pattern helping to frame views both up towards the forest and downslope over the town towards the mountains. A repetition of this urban form rotating around the hill slope in the new development would extend this locally distinctive characteristic and forge a strong bond with the existing townscape. It would also allow retention of views for local walkers along Green Lane.
14. The development will become the entrance to the town from both Inglewood Road and Salkeld Road and a sense of arrival and welcome should be created in the new development bordering these approaches.

Retaining and exploiting the features of the site including the Roman Road, dry stone walls, trees and hedgerows

15. The dry stone walls are a unique feature of the local countryside. They are built in the local red sandstone and have the unusual characteristic of protruding bands of flat stone - a feature which is also present in the traditional barns of the locality. Retention of these walls would lend local character to the development and lay the framework for rectilinear framework for the street layout. The line of the Roman road should be retained as far as possible as open space in order to avoid disturbance to archaeological remains.

Constraint of the boreholes and the need for logically laid out and useable open space

16. The boreholes adjacent to the site to the south require a zone of unbuilt upon land around them which would naturally be the location for the main open space of the development. It would be beneficial to the setting of the development in this exposed landscape if the open space flowed through the site as this would allow the space to break up the bulk of the housing area when viewed from a distance and retain a finger of green running into open countryside.

Site Context and Key Issues

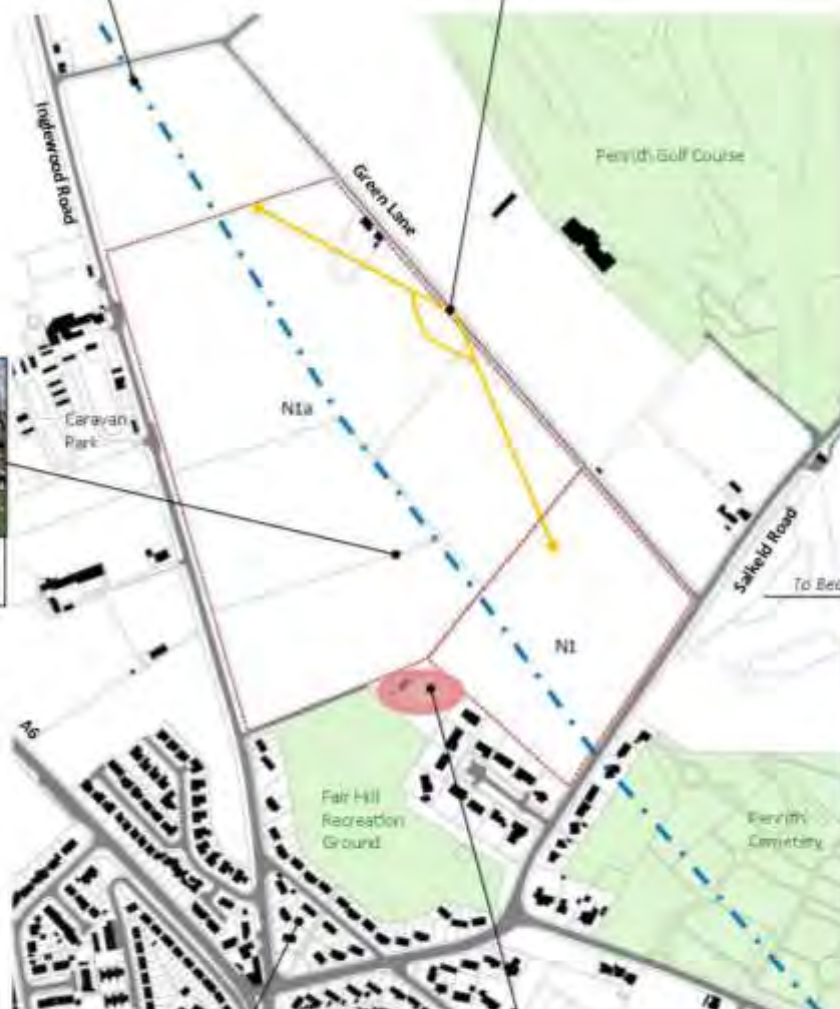


Green Lane is a popular recreational walking and cycling route and enjoys extensive views over the town and to the Lake District fells beyond.

The course of a Roman road dissects the site.



Hedgerows and stone walls traverse the site.



Penrith's distinctive setting is characterised by the wooded slopes of Beacon Hill.

Existing 20th century suburban housing.

An underground reservoir and boreholes result in environmental sensitivities and the requirement for an undeveloped buffer zone.

Key Design Principles

The rural setting

17. The distinctive almost Germanic setting of Penrith as a town nestling below a pine forest covered hill top should be reinforced. The developed area should extend this positive impression of Penrith when viewed from the M6 approach from the south and from the M6, A6 and west coast mainline as they pass the site to the west. This should be achieved by the extension of the forest northward around the fringes of the present site. A belt of woodland of at least 35 metres in depth should be created along the northern fringe of the developed area of the site so as to shield it from the extensive open countryside views from the north. The entire fringe bordering Green Lane should be planted with a woodland belt of no less than 25 metres in depth, containing gaps in the planting to retain long views over the site towards the Lake District from Green Lane.

Distinctive urban form and views

18. The aim should be to create an attractive and legible urban form in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The form of the development should create a legible hierarchy of streets. The main road should follow the line of the Roman road and side streets to the east should branch off at right angles running up and down slope. This arrangement will give those residents a view over towards the mountains and so should add to house values. It will also allow quick and direct access from the houses to the community facilities and open space. The streets to the west side should be orientated north south to capitalise on views over the new and existing parkland and the hills beyond. In order to integrate the development into the existing route network, a vehicular access should be provided off all three adjoining roads and at least one road should pass through the entire development connecting Inglewood Road with Salkeld Road.
19. In order to allow the new parkland to connect seamlessly with the existing playing fields, it is recommended that a new vehicular access to the water works be created off the proposed spine road from the east so that the existing access track can be removed.
20. The streets should terminate as culs de sac close to the margins of the site. No housing should be built at the heads of the culs de sac, but pedestrian access should be provided at frequent intervals onto Green Lane. In this way the existing rural walks are opened up for the enjoyment of new residents, again adding to house values at no cost to the developer. Views down the new streets will be framed by housing and will continue to be a source of enjoyment for walkers.
21. Some of the peripheral buildings of this new part of the town should create a sense of arrival and welcome on the approaches to Penrith from the north (Inglewood Road) and the north east (Salkeld Road). Whilst it would not be appropriate for most housing to be accessed directly off the approach roads, some houses should step forward to create pinch points as minor landmarks actively addressing the road frontage. The farm house of Bellevue Farm on Salkeld Road achieves this with its gable end adjacent to and parallel with the road.

Exploiting the site features

22. The streets should be laid out so as to maximise the retention of the dry stone walls, which should be repaired where necessary. These walls could form either front garden or rear garden boundary walls or could in places define the edges of the open spaces. Where possible, the existing hedgerows on the site and around its perimeter should be retained and incorporated as rear garden boundaries or the open space. All of the existing mature trees around the site should be retained and allowed sufficient space around them to continue to flourish. Where such trees are to be incorporated into garden ground, the gardens should be correspondingly larger than would otherwise be the case, in order to allow adequate space between dwellings and trees and reduce the pressure for felling which might otherwise arise from the desire for unshaded garden ground.

Open space

23. All open spaces should have a clear practical use in addition to their aesthetic value. The rural fringe location should be exploited by opening up access to neighbouring routes particularly Green Lane and by creating a logical continuation of the long distance walking route running around the lower slopes of Beacon Hill. An attractive large linear space within the site will extend the rural fringe ambience of the locality into the new community. A single open space running from the park at the south of the site northward along the line of the Roman road is therefore recommended. This will help to break up the bulk of the development and soften its impact on the rural setting. Local residents will all be within easy reach of the open space and long views will be maintained. This provision would enhance the biodiversity and recreational potential of the site, all in accordance with the NPPF.

Community facilities

24. The facilities should include a village hall with one large room and two small meeting rooms and an appropriate level of equipped play areas. The village hall should be located towards the south of the site so it may be used also by existing residents. This would facilitate the integration of the new community into the social fabric of the town. The building should be designed as an attractive landmark and should be located adjacent to the large open space. In this way it will be prominent in views across much of the site as a focal point for the new community. The development of the wider site may require the provision of an additional primary school, as this scale of development would exceed that being planned for through the Local Plan. Further discussions with the County Council will determine whether there is a need for a school on the site. If there is, it should be provided in the community hub area.

Detailed design

25. Houses should be arranged to create a strong sense of rhythm running up the hillsides. Where culs de sac abut the woodland at Green Lane, the head of the cul de sac should be left open to allow views of the woodland from below and to retain framed views of the mountains looking out from Green Lane. A common building line is desirable, however

the houses at the top of each street could be set closer together to help contain the view and partially enclose the street.

26. The character of new housing should be derived from an understanding of the simple forms and characteristics of the older buildings in the locality. Typical features of older houses are illustrated in section 1 of the draft Eden design guide. Most houses should display a generally vertical emphasis in the orientation of windows and other elements and have a generally simple, regular form. Bay windows are a common feature in the New Streets of Penrith and these could be introduced to take best advantage of oblique views up and down the streets of this development.
27. The layout should be arranged so that where possible long views are terminated by building frontages or gables containing windows. Corner buildings should present animated frontages to both street elevations.
28. The materials palette should include some use of local sandstone as well as art stone and self-coloured render to match the red colour of the sandstone.
29. The council's normal requirement for 21 metre inter visibility may be relaxed in places where this can help create a strong sense of enclosure to the street, for example by allowing projecting corner buildings. 21 metres should be retained for distances from existing houses.
30. Consideration should be given to animating the roof-scape by the use of vertical projections, such as ventilation stacks. Also some solar thermal installations could be introduced.
31. Consideration should be given to orientating house roofs to maximise benefits of solar insolation by orientation to within 30 degrees of south.
32. Provision should be made for bin and recycling stores. This could be achieved by the introduction of the traditional feature of covered passageways between terraced houses.
33. House fronts should be bordered with low walls or hedges. Long stretches of high perimeter fencing must be avoided especially along the fringes of the site clearly visible from the surrounding roads. Such fencing is however suitable when abutting directly onto the new areas of woodland.

Design Principles for Fairhill

