

Land at Mill Lane, Lopen



Outline application for the erection of 9 dwellings and the demolition of existing buildings with all matters reserved except access

Land OS 7519, Mill Lane,
Lopen, Somerset, TA13 5JS

September 2020

Prepared by Boon Brown Architects

1. Introduction

This Design & Access statement is submitted in support of an outline application for the erection of 9 dwellings with all matters reserved except access. The application includes the demolition of existing buildings and the formation of a new vehicular and pedestrian access.

This document describes and explores the application site, its setting and context. It will also explain the design rationale behind the submitted layout and how this is an appropriate response to the site analysis undertaken. It is also intended to aid and influence the detailed design stages. It will explore the architectural style of the village and provide inspiration for the appropriate character, appearance, form, proportion and materiality of this development.



2. Context

The context and setting of the development site is an important factor in creating a cohesive and appropriately designed scheme proposal. New development in visible locations needs to respect and enhance the character of that area. This is achieved through a combination of well-designed buildings with adequate space for meaningful new landscape planting.

2.1. Site location

The application site is a 0.49ha parcel of land on the southern periphery of Lopen village. Lopen is a settlement approximately 1.5 miles to the south-west of South Petherton and 1.4 miles north of Merriott, both villages have a range of local services including shops, pubs, a restaurant, schools, sports areas and faith facilities. Several other villages are in close proximity including Over Stratton, Hinton St George and Seavington St Michael which also contain local services. The village is well serviced by employment opportunities including Lopen Business Park and good proximity to the A303.

The site occupies the Northwest corner of a larger series of interconnected fields. The land slopes gently to the East toward the Business Park & South toward Mill Lane. The main road through Lopen adjoins the site along the Western Boundary with the main settlement of Lopen to the North. There is little in the way of landscape features within the site however the Northern boundary provides a dense and important screen of native species hedgerow and trees.

Access into the site will be gained via a new junction from Holloway to the south of the existing field access. It is intended that access to the remainder of the fields will still be gained from within the application site.



2.2. Site Context

Lopen is a pretty and characterful rural village that has a varied mix of building styles, ages and forms. The majority of the village is constructed from local Hamstone which gives a consistent tone throughout and contributes to the sense of place. The position and placement of the buildings throughout the village gives a real community feel and village atmosphere. The most immediate context to the development site is characterised by detached family homes fronting onto and clustered around the road, these buildings tend to be associated with large outbuildings to the side and rear. This character is largely continued by development along Frog Street to the West of the site, and also Church Street to the North. The roads within Lopen are rather informal and have a single footpath along one edge. Recent new build properties within the village have employed traditional materials, local stone and tiled roofs to reflect the existing character, to complement and enhance the village scene successfully.

A number of the buildings within the village are listed buildings highlighted in yellow here. Some of the more interesting ones are opposite and adjacent to the site and their merit is detailed further within the attendant heritage report. The majority of Lopen is within a Conservation area which is just to the North of the application site and indicated in green.



1.

2.

3.

Land at Mill Lane – Lopen

The application site and its immediate surrounding environs is illustrated by the following photographs:



Photo 1: View looking North along Holloway showing Western boundary hedge



Photo 2: View of Eastern Boundary looking West



Photo 3: View across looking North from mill Lane.



Photo 4: View looking North along Eastern boundary hedge

2.3. Constraints & Opportunities

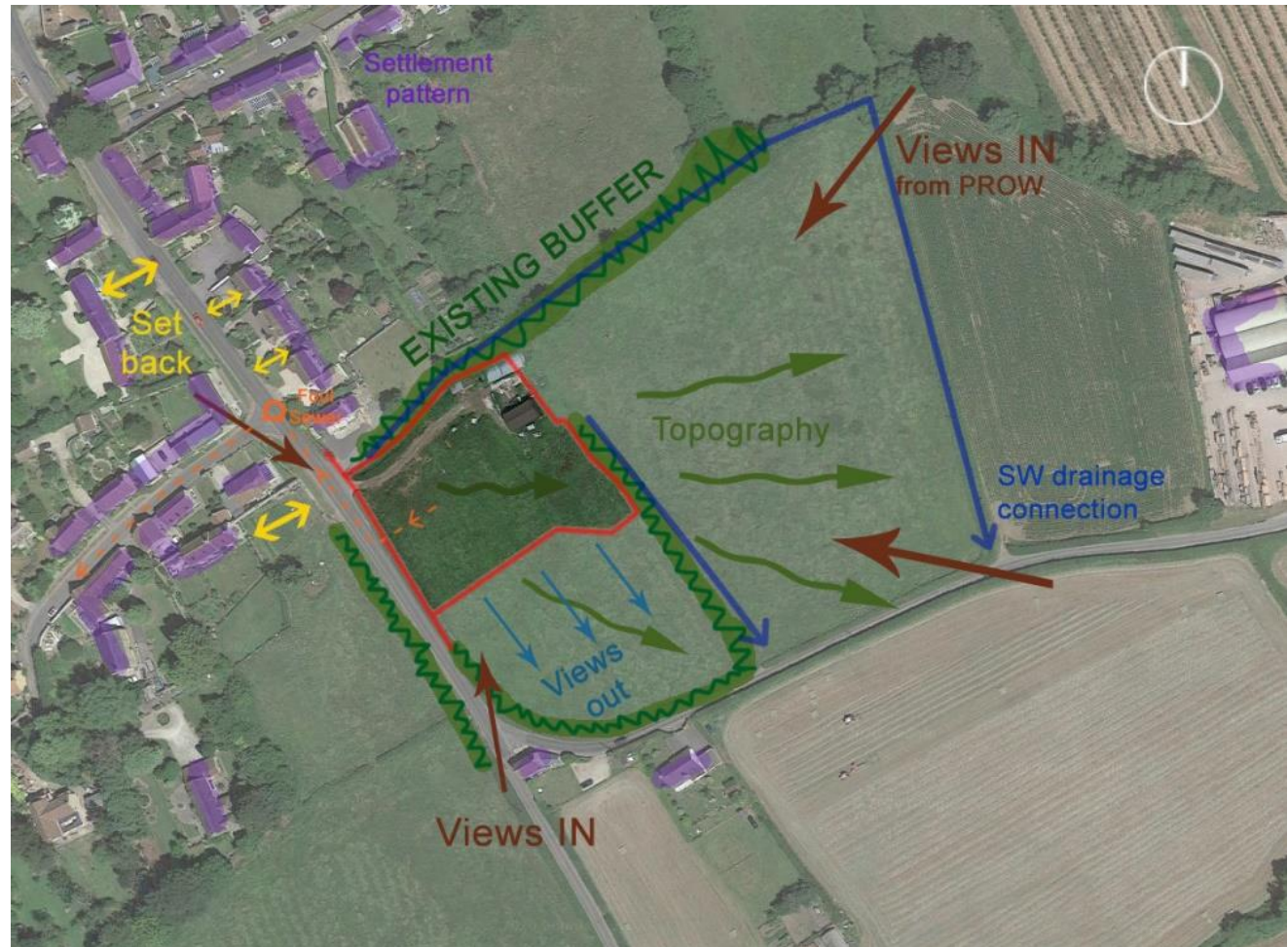
The layout has been influenced by the physical and contextual constraints present within and around the application site. The attendant consultant reports submitted with the application: Landscape impact, ecology report, drainage, strategy and highways have also informed the submitted layout.

Opportunities

- Community generating layout with inward focused centre,
- Existing vegetation naturally provides screening.
- New strategic planting & infill planting in gaps in existing hedgerows.
- Significant new planting to increase bio-diversity along swales and drainage basin,
- Some views out toward the South,
- Visually enhance the 'gateway' into the village

Constraints

- Aspect of neighbouring properties & potential for overlooking,
- Foul drainage connection – potential to need a pumped main.
- Surface water attenuation.
- Topography,
- Open boundary to the South,
- Views to the site from public footpath to the Northeast & Southwest.



3. Design

This is an Outline application with all matters reserved except access, therefore the layout and designs shown within this section are purely illustrative to demonstrate how a scheme of 9no. dwellings could be accommodated. However it is intended that this document provides a basic framework of design objectives and guiding principles for the detailed designs to be based around at reserved matters stage. The design and styling of these properties will be the key to a successful and well integrated development that Lopen can be proud of.

3.1. Use & Amount

The site currently consists of vacant land used as a paddock.

The proposed use is residential consisting of just 9no. dwellings with adequate provision of private garden amenity space, parking and manoeuvring space.

An adopted road will be formed to serve the residential units. All dwellings will be provided with off road parking spaces commensurate with Somerset Parking Standards

The family homes provided in this scheme offer a mix of building styles and sizes across the site as shown in the adjacent table. The housing mix is based upon the existing context of Lopen.

The site area is 0.49 Ha and the density of the scheme is therefore 18 dwellings per hectare, which is considered to be low density. This level of development provides a scheme in which the houses have space around and between them, it also provides private garden areas and green space.

ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE		
Plot No.	No. Beds /No. Persons	No. Parking Spaces
1.	3B6P	2
2.	4B7P	4
3.	3B6P	2
4.	4B8P	2
5.	4B8P	4
6.	3B6P	2
7.	4B7P	4
8.	3B6P	2
9.	4B8P	4

3.2. Scale & Mass

The proposed dwellings are suggested as a mixture of 1.5 & 2 stories in height and have been designed with a traditional roof span dimensions in mind.

The height and placement of the buildings has been carefully considered to lessen any impact on the publically accessible views into the site. The plots are 1.5 - 2 storeys which reflects the agrarian grouping of detached houses and barns that can be seen around the village.

The new native species buffer planning along the Southern and Eastern boundaries will screen the development over time, offering glimpsed views into the site. The illustrative street scene below shows the development after 5 years when the buffer planting will have grown to 4-5m in height, it is anticipated that after 10 years the buffer will mature into a valuable habitat providing increased screening and biodiversity enhancement.



3.3. Layout

The concept behind the illustrative layout has been to continue the attractive character of Lopen with family sized detached houses fronting onto the road. The development then leads into a group of more agricultural style buildings as can be seen elsewhere in the village. There is an opportunity to enhance the approach into Lopen from the South and provide new modern family homes within the heart of the village.

This development provides a scheme which is both inward looking creating a community feel and which also respects and contributes to the rich architectural language and built form of Lopen.

The access is taken from Holloway midway along the frontage to provide a safe and open junction. The new road provides turning, on street visitor parking and access to the courtyard serving plots 3-6. A single footpath along the Northern side of the road has been created in keeping with much of Lopen. Grass verges have also been provided to create an open village feel. The road will continue to provide access into the adjacent field and paddock to the South. This layout provides adequate space for cars, refuse vehicles and fire appliances to enter the development, turn and depart in a forward gear. Each dwelling has on plot parking spaces in accordance with Somerset parking standards. Parking has been deliberately placed to avoid their dominance within the street scene and where possible concealed behind houses, walls or via under crofts and carports.

New planting within and around the site is the key to successful integration of the scheme into the fabric of Lopen. The site is a 'gateway' into the village and the new planting buffer and ditch along the southern boundary will gently blend this development into the village setting.



Mitigation of lost habitat by the creation of new bio-diverse habitats will ensure the prosperity of this sustainable development.

Land at Mill Lane – Lopen

House and outbuildings

The concept is to create an open attractive, community style development which references the rural character of Lopen.



Landscape buffer

A landscape buffer has been provided to the Southern boundary to soften the edge of the development against the open countryside. In turn this enhances the approach into the village from the South. Native species hedge will be provided beyond the post and rail plot boundaries to the East.



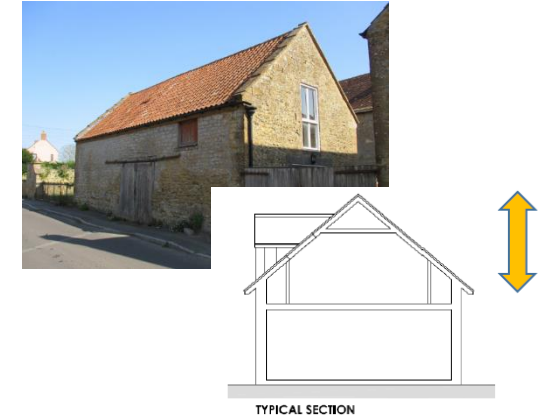
Frontage

The plots along the frontage have the opportunity to anchor this development into the grain of Lopen. These dwellings should reflect the farmhouse style family homes that can be found throughout this attractive village.



1.5 Storey

The design should endeavour to keep the impact of this development low by keeping roof heights low and limiting domestic scale dormers to inconspicuous elevations and only where necessary. Similar style buildings can be found in Lopen. Traditional roof spans and pitches should be employed to minimise the bulk of roof spaces.



Openness

The dwellings have been placed to provide an open aspect as well as providing ample private gardens. Plots have been positioned to provide focal points opposite junctions, enclosing space and providing natural surveillance.



Road

The illustrative layout presents a more rural based approach to highway provision which generally has a footpath on 1 side of the road. Green verges help to soften the appearance.



3.4. Landscape

A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out as part of this planning application which was used to inform the scale, form, massing, materials and strategic planting of the proposed development which have all been carefully considered.

Landscape Master Plan

The landscape master plan has been produced and incorporates the landscape mitigation measures recommended in the LVIA report and embodies measures which enhance the existing landscape setting whilst promoting biodiversity in line with recommendations highlighted in the Ecology survey.

Ecology

The Ecological assessment has been carried out for the site and reports have been included with this application. All boundary trees and hedges have been retained; it is proposed to manage these to improve their condition and in some cases supplemented with new native species planting. This will increase the density of the features from a screening viewpoint but also provide a valuable ecological environment. Wildflower meadow mixes of local provenance are to be used along hedgerows and around the sustainable drainage features to further strengthen these habitat corridors. Bird boxes, hedgehog friendly fencing and bee bricks are also to be erected in suitable locations as recommended in the ecology report.



Land at Mill Lane – Lopen

Planting

Planting mixes within the development includes both native and ornamental trees and planting mixes with species selected for their suitability, aesthetic seasonal qualities, and value to wildlife. Hedge and shrub planting is to be used to define plot boundaries, to act as defensible boundaries and to soften parking areas.

Materials

The building and wall materials are to be rural in character to reflect the heritage of the village with the use of local stone. The roofs should be covered with clay double roman tiles with some slate used sparingly to break up the roofscape. The rear gardens of these properties shall have stock proof post and rail timber fencing reflecting this rural location and are wrapped with a native species hedge.

Lighting

Inappropriate street lighting is to be avoided and can detract from the rural scene, both at night with excess glare and during the day with regular spaced tall lighting columns. Subdued lighting which provides the minimum requirement in selected locations where safety is a consideration such as road crossings is to be used. Lighting should be attached to buildings and individual lamp columns reduced to the minimum. The maintenance of the night sky should be a consideration together with the impact upon wildlife for which current good practice is to be observed.



3.5. Appearance

Building style

The proposed family homes will portray a rural, traditional appearance that is in keeping and respectful to the attractive character of Lopen.

The impact of this development will lessen over a number of years and will become part of the build form of Lopen and nestle into the countryside aesthetic.

Lopen has a number of traditional houses and cottages from which inspiration can be taken for both the form & siting of the dwellings but also the palette and application of materials.

There are also a number of properties which highlight the importance of using the correct materials for the setting. Red brick and render are less suitable and stand out within the village when used. The use of reclaimed materials in particular roof tiles is a great way of instantly mellowing a development.

The elevations should portray a traditional style which has been influenced by the vernacular character of Lopen, the surrounding areas and the agricultural setting.



Windows

Window styles should have glazing bars and large panes of glass should be avoided. Painted windows are prevalent in the village and UPVC should be avoided. Stone mullion windows and label moulds might be excessive across the whole development but their use on key focal points would add interest.



Window heads can be timber lintels, brick headers, stone or smaller windows could have nothing.



Doors & Entrances



Front doors should be traditional in style in timber. Painted and stained doors are common throughout the village.

Porches can be recessed or projecting and the more successful examples in the village are substantial rather than a bolt on canopy. Integrated lighting is essential and links to the concept of 'dark skies' with the removal of standard street lighting.



Roof lights should be conservation type and low profile in black.

Chimneys

It is common for chimneys to be built in brickwork, examples can be seen throughout the village.



Lighting

There are no street lights in the village and the development should use low level lighting on buildings and carefully placed bollard lighting to illuminate the scheme to create a safe environment.



Boundaries

Boundaries on the public sides of buildings should be carefully chosen, stone walls with cock & hen coping is used frequently and some limited use of brick could provide a contrast to this. Railings and hedging provides a softer frontage and should be used to accentuate buildings throughout the site. Rear boundaries can be post and rail with stock proof fencing and between properties horizontal hit and miss fencing provides a gentle screen.



Materials

The materials will be key to the success of this development and a range of natural materials are envisaged including Local stone, Ham stone detailing, brick, timber cladding, clay double roman tiles and natural slate. There should be a variety of front doors and window styles to give the appearance of somewhere that has evolved over time.

Paving and hardstanding should be formed from natural materials, tarmac should be dressed with gravel to avoid stark areas. Rumble strips and edgings should in granite setts and incorporated to delineate public / private spaces.



4. Access

4.1. Site Access

Vehicular access will be obtained off of Holloway through the creation of a simple priority T-junction. The junction has been designed in accordance with DMRB/MfS requirements, with the appropriate visibility splays provided. Please see the attendant Transport Statement prepared by Hydrock for further detailed proposals.

The internal carriageway will be 6.0m wide with a single footpath and built to adoptable standards.

A 2m wide footpath with grass verge along the Northern edge of the new access road will provide pedestrian access to the site and the courtyard. The internal courtyard will provide shared surface Tegula paving with granite setts defining parking areas, driveways and private spaces.

The layout has been developed to create an environment where pedestrians and cyclists have equal, if not higher priority than private vehicles. This is achieved by implementing a road alignment and planting such that vehicle speeds are naturally kept low.

All vehicles have adequate space to enter, turn and leave in a forward gear.

4.2. Accessibility

All dwellings will be designed to be Part M Building regulation compliant providing level access thresholds, Part M compliant downstairs toilets etc.

Each dwelling has been provided with sufficient parking spaces to comply with Somerset Parking standards.

