

# Whorlton Meadows - Brierley Homes

Swainby, North York Moors National Park



## Securing approval for new houses in the most valued and sensitive landscape

Planning Potential have worked with Brierley Homes for many years and secured permission on several sensitive sites across Yorkshire.

Just one example is the permission for the demolition of a former primary school and the erection of nine residential dwellings, a community car park and landscaping in Swainby, a picturesque village within the North York Moors national park.

Getting planning consent for a commercial development in a National Park is difficult. They are usually seen as inappropriate and intrusive and are typically met with vociferous opposition from local communities and Councils. Working with the client, we advised a proactive and transparent approach from the outset and attended a well-attended (!) parish council meeting to outline the aspirations for the site.

Our understanding of the intricacies of planning policy helped Brierley Homes address a number of misconceptions in the local community and an inclusive and proactive engagement programme was carried out. This included a public consultation event as well as separate meetings with elected members. Local opposition is usually fuelled by a sense of frustration which stems from a feeling of being disenfranchised; engaging with Parish Councillors at the same time as the Ward Councillor helped to mitigate this in what was a very sensitive location.

This approach helped to create a residential development that everyone could enjoy, visually and practically. It also positioned Brierley Homes as a business that listened to the public's views and acted on them. Planning Potential worked closely with Brierley Homes to develop strong, consistent messages which supported its corporate social responsibility values.

Working closely with the scheme's architects, the application scheme embodied the aspirations and principles of local policy. A meticulous design process followed where various options were exhausted and sensitive site layout plans were refined to ensure that the final proposal would be the right fit for the local community, with carefully sited and proportioned dwellings.

The proposals were approved by North York Moors National Park Authority through a delegated decision – an impressive feat given the sensitivities and testament to the evolution of the proposals and the extent to which the local community shaped the final scheme.

Prior to submission the Council also consulted on its emerging Local Plan. A draft policy requiring new properties to be 'principal residences' was initially incorporated into the Local Plan, and we submitted written reps to loosen the wording and the Inspector agreed with our arguments. The publication version of the Local Plan also restricted the number of new dwellings that could be built to five and limited their size to no more than 93sqm. We also submitted reps stating that this was too rigid, and the Inspector agreed, omitting the restrictions completely.

## Rachel Steel, Project Manager at Brierley Homes:

"Planning Potential's collaborative way of working to ensure that our proposals were appropriate to the setting, whilst retaining the ambitions of the architectural proposals was central to the successful outcome. They were instrumental in advising on the strategy and Planning Potential's attention to detail and expertise really shine through on this project."

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