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4.0 Landscape

4.1 Landscape Principles

The landscape design demonstrates that a high quality and wildlife friendly landscaping scheme will be provided within the context of the development and that the design is in line with the aims of Reading Borough Council's Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

The information provided in support of the application provides details of the following:

- Finished ground levels in relation to existing site levels, in particular around trees that are to be retained and protected.
- Routes of new and existing underground services including drainage, power, lighting, communication cables, inspection chambers, and attenuation tanks to demonstrate these have been incorporated into the design to minimise the impact on trees to be retained.
- Means of enclosures, which include and describe the types and heights of fences and walls.
- Details of planting which include large canopy tree species to be planted within the site and around the local neighbourhood.
- Details of soft landscape which include native, wildlife friendly and pollinating plants, that are suitable for the nature of the development.

Description

Access into the site off Hexham Road for pedestrians and vehicles is to be reconfigured to respond to the needs of the development.

A new one way 'in' and 'out' arrangement for vehicles is to be introduced to provide safe access into the site from Hexham Road. The existing on-road parking bays will be re-configured to provide an improved and safer arrangement that improves visibility for drivers and pedestrians when entering and leaving the site.

The building level has been determined to address a number of constraints and requirements. These are to:

- Minimise impact on trees roots,
- Achieve level access to doors and thresholds around the building,
- Provide appropriate gradients along and across paths for less ambulant people, and

- Minimise the potential for flooding during periods of prolonged and intensive rainfall.

A Grade A tree at the front of the site is to be retained and protected. Existing ground levels around the tree and within the Root Protection Area (RPA) are to be broadly retained with the new entrance being constructed from the back of existing pavement levels, to rise up sharply using a no dig form of construction to tie into existing hard standing levels within the site.

Parking bays are to be provided near the main entrances to the building. They are to be surfaced with permeable block paving to ensure surface water is able to precolate towards and provide a valuable source of water for tree roots.

To provide power for the development, a new electric sub station is to be positioned by the new entrance. This will be visually mitigated using planting and a cladding to screen the equipment.

Cycle storage is to be provided around the development for staff, visitors and residents. These are to be located in areas that are convenient for users and enclosed to ensure they area secure. They are to be positioned so as to not obstruct views to main entrances, nor affect residents' visually amenity or amenity of members of the public passing by the development.

External bin storage areas are to be either screened behind fences or contained within enclosures that complement the architecture.

The building footprint has been arranged to enclose a space on three sides, allowing natural light to permeate into the site. This will provide a central space that will be overlooked from upper floors.

To address overlooking and the functional and emotional needs of the residents, the central space is to be divided by a wall to visually and physically separate the building uses to create a series of enclosed courtyards.

On the western side of the courtyard, ground floor

flats are to be provided with a small outdoor amenity area separated with a fence. Each flat is to be provided with a narrow planting bed for residents to utilise, a rotary arm washing line and small outdoor store.

On the eastern side of the courtyard, a hard surfaced space is to be provided for the users of the day service. A generous planting bed is to be planted with trees and shrubs to provide an attractive, intimate space for residents. The space is to be furnished with loose furniture such as tables, chairs and plant pots.

The species of trees to be planted within the courtyard have been selected to provide dappled light towards the building, offer shade without being overwhelming, and canopy cover to reduce overlooking from upper floors.

To the east of the building, an area has been designed to encourage residents to grow plants. This is to be fitted with raised planters, benches and planting beds filled with imported topsoil.

To the west along Northumberland Avenue existing trees and grass are to be retained and enhanced with additional trees and wildflowers. A low fence is to be introduced along the avenue to define the boundary and discourage access whilst providing visual amenity for passers-by. Although ground floor flats overlook the space, each flat is to be provided with a small patio enclosed by a fence for security.

Each flat is to be provided with a rotary arm washing line and small outdoor store.

To the south along Bede Walk, taller railings are to be introduced to define and provide a secure boundary. This will be supplemented with low maintenance wildlife friendly planting with seasonal interest, offering visual amenity for the public and residents. Planting will be maintained to allow light to flow into the spaces and to ensure Bede Walk and the external spaces benefit from 'natural surveillance'.



4.2 Soft landscape

In line with the Councils' Tree Strategy aims for new development (i.e., to provide a 30:20:10 split for species diversity and wildlife friendly), tree species have been selected to provide a diverse mix of trees. The use of Tilia and Prunus species has been avoided as they are considered to be over-represented by RBC in the Borough.

In line with Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands, individual trees and groups of trees are to be protected from damage (refer to Arboricultural Impact Assessment). Although a number of trees are to be removed, these are primarily of moderate quality in terms of arboricultural value and condition.

In line with Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change, the introduction of tree planting to supplement the existing trees to be retained will provide some shading of amenity areas and rooms within the building. The future tree cover will also help connect habitats around the site.

Sedum roofs on upper levels will introduce microclimates for insects and bird life which will be naturally protected from domestic animals, such as cats. These will also provide visual amenity for residents.

Greenery will help to reduce the amount of reflected heat into the building. It will also provide acoustic softening for users of the spaces, and draw nature into the development which will contribute to people's well being.

Plants have been selected for all year visual, seasonal and wildlife interest, evergreen structure, ease of maintenance, security and robustness to reflect the likely intensive use of the external spaces. Native plants have been introduced where practical.

Although tree canopy cover will unlikely exceed what existed on the site prior to development, tree planting is to be carried out within close proximity on Reading Borough Council owned and controlled land.

On Site Tree Planting

Tree species have been selected to:

- Increase tree cover within the site.
- Provide shade and shelter for residents.
- Visually soften the built environment.
- Increase biodiversity

Refer to drawing: E05076-HCC-XX-DR-L-7301



Betula pubescens
Downy Birch



Alnus glutinosa Laciniate
Common Alder (cultivar)



Cupressus sempervirens Totem'
Totem Pole Cypress



Liquidambar styraciflua
'Slender Silhouette'
Sweet gum



Quercus Rubra
Red Oak



Cercidiphyllum japonicum
Katsura



Sorbus aria Lutescens
Whitebeam



Juglans Regia
Common Walnut



Amelanchier lamarckii 'Robin Hill'
Amelanchier



Acer campestre 'Louisa Redshine'
Field Maple



Sorbus "Joseph Rock"
Mountain ash 'Joseph Rock'

4.3 Hard Landscape

The use of macadam paving has been limited to vehicle routes only. Elsewhere, parking bays are to be surfaced using attractive permeable block paving, and paths are to be surfaced with combinations of attractive concrete block and flag paving. Permeable paving is to be used where appropriate, with surface water runoff from non porous surfaces directed towards soft landscape.

As stated previously, levels have been designed to minimise the impact on trees, achieve level access to doors and thresholds around the building, provide appropriate gradients along and across paths for less ambulant people, and minimise the potential for flooding during periods of prolonged and intensive rainfall.

Routes of new and existing underground services including drainage, power, lighting, communication cables, inspection chambers, and attenuation tanks have been coordinated to avoid existing RPA's and protected from new tree roots.

Means of enclosures and furniture, which include fences, walls, cycle stores, bollards, and so on are described and illustrated on drawings and within this report.

Hard landscape materials (paving) have been selected to:

- Complement materials used in the architecture.
- Minimise surface water runoff into the storm water drains and onto existing highways.
- Introduce sustainable forms of drainage.
- Maximise the opportunity to provide proposed trees with a source of water.

Refer to drawing: E05076-HCC-XX-DR-L-7101

Paving supplied by Tobermore Ltd



TYPE 1: Braemar Alto Silver:
300x200, 200x100 x80mm
Laid in bands



TYPE 3: Mayfair Flags Silver:
450x450x50mm
Laid stack bond



TYPE 2: Mayfair Flags Graphite:
450x450x50mm
Laid in bands



TYPE 4: Fusion silver: 208x173,
173x173 x60mm
Laid in bands

4.4 Means of Enclosure

Means of enclosure (walls and fences) have been selected to:

Complement materials used in the architecture.
Provide privacy and security.
Provide an attractive foreground or backdrop for the general public passing by or through the development.

Refer to drawing: E05076-HCC-XX-DR-L-7201

- 1. Metal fence: galvanised steel and ppc vertical bar railings 80x8mm flat bar with 25mm rods at 100mm centres and blunt top finials
- 2. Metal fence: galvanised steel and ppc vertical bar railings with flat top 80x8mm flats bars with 25mm rods at 100mm centres
- 3. Low wall seating/ planter wall (Bricks to match ground floor treatment of building)
- 4. Galvanised steel and ppc decorative screen panel to tie in with soffit height.Design to be confirmed.
- 5. Timber fence: 75mmx20mm slats with 25mm gap



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4.5 Furniture

Furniture has been selected to provide:

Spaces with a contemporary style
Unity with hard and soft materials used within the external areas
Complement the interior of the building uses.

Refer to drawing: E05076-HCC-XX-DR-L-7201

- 1. 'Keter Marvel+ 270L Garden Storage Box - Grey
- 2. 'Sheffield' style cycle stand
- 3. Seat Cylinder (urbastyle.com)
- 4. Fixed bench with back support and arm KANJI with brick base or equal www.escofet.com
- 5. Door barrier: www.barriersdirect.co.uk
- 6. Large pots available at www.iotagarden.com or www.escofet.com
- 7. Circular seat. CROWN or equal www.escofet.com
- 8. Proprietary cycle and bin store enclosure: Broxap galvanised steel PPC Cycle Shelter/Bin Store, cladd in fibre-cement panels with green roof
- 9. 'Richmond steel round table and four chair set by www.gardenesque.com



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4.6 Amenity

RBC’s planning policy states that the following amenity areas are required per flat:

- 1 Bed General Needs flat: 25m²
- 1 Bed Sheltered Flat: 20m²

Therefore :
6 x 25m² = 150m² is required to the general needs flats.
36 x 20m² = 720m² is required to the sheltered flats.

The areas provided as part of this are shown in figure 52, as per the schedule below as follows:

Ground Floor - Day Service		Areas
Hard External Spaces		428m²
Soft External Spaces		338m²
General Needs Flats		
Gardens		271m²
Sheltered Flats		
Ground Floor Entrance Apron		173m²
Ground Floor Access to Sheltered Flats		204m²
Communal Garden		663m²

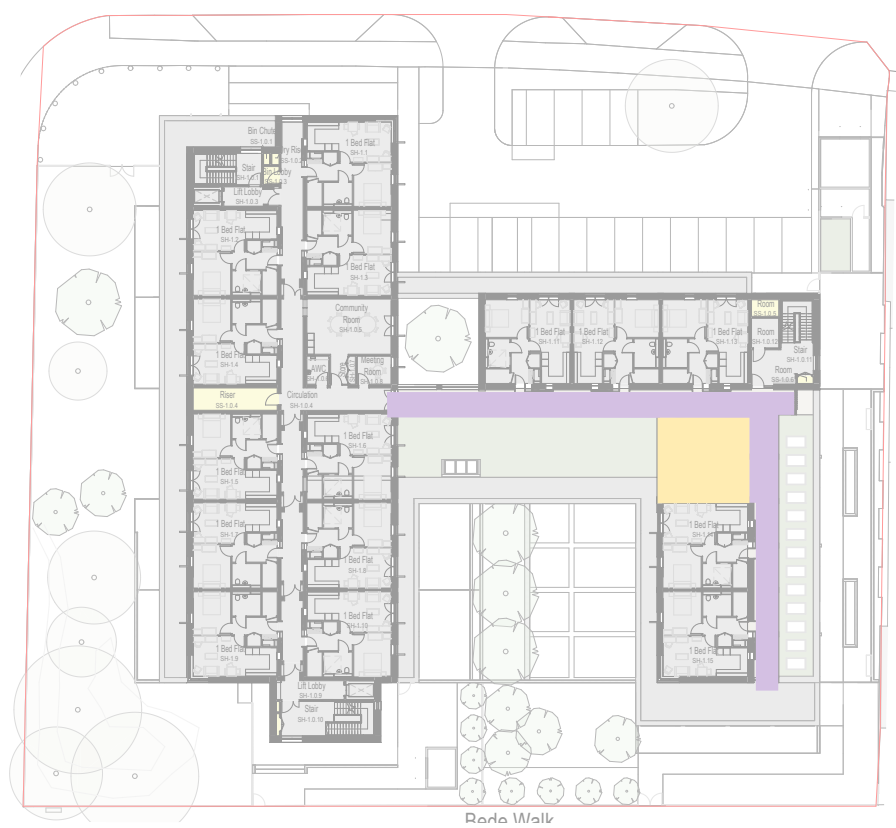


Figure 56. Ground Floor Plan with Amenity Areas shaded

Upper Floors

Sheltered Flats Amenity Areas

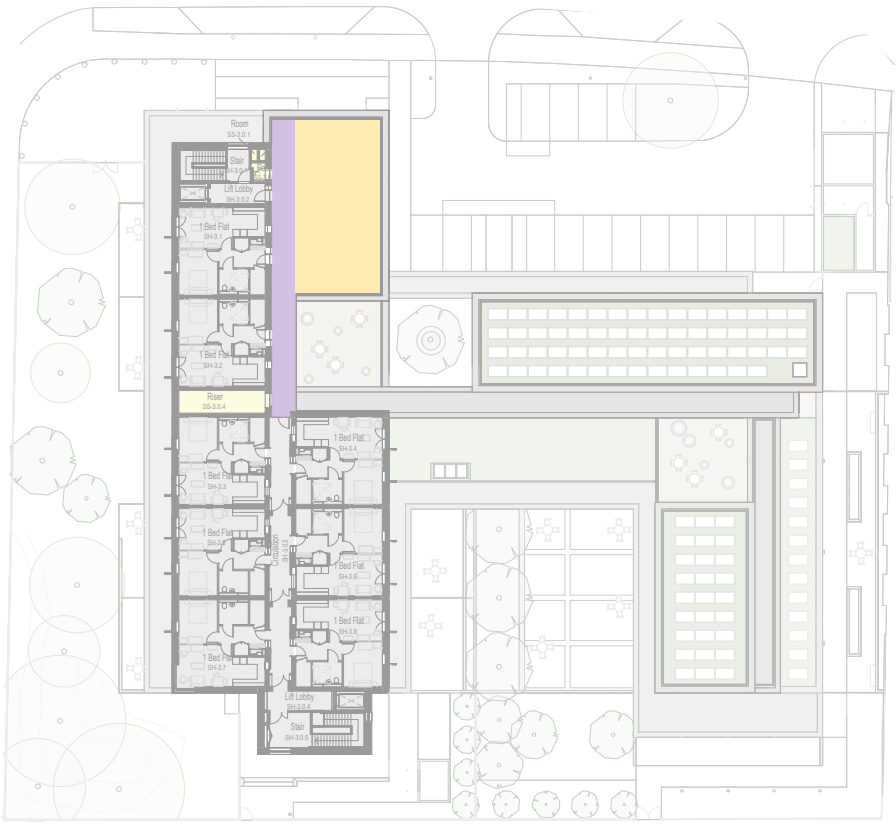
Areas



First Floor



Walkway 344m²
Communal Terrace 153m²



Third Floor

Zone	Area	Required	Difference
Day Service	766	N/A	N/A
General Needs Flats	271	150	121
Sheltered Flats	1507	150	787

Amenity Areas Table

The area analysis shown on this and the preceding page demonstrate that the amenity areas associated with the development exceed RBC's planning policy guidelines.

Figures 57 and 58 illustrate sketch views of the sheltered flats communal terrace areas which are spread around upper areas of the development, allowing residents to choose which area to occupy based on proximity, sunlight or shade.



Figure 57. Sketch view of walkway



Figure 58. Sketch view of upper communal terrace

5.0 Strategy

- 5.1 Environmental Strategy
- 5.2 Building Impact Study
- 5.3 Accessibility Strategy
- 5.4 Designing Out Crime
- 5.5 Building Services and Maintenance
- 5.6 Building for Life

5.0 Strategy

5.1 Environmental Strategy

Sustainable Design

We are designing to Passivhaus principles with a minimum 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate in 2013 building regulations. This will reduce energy demand with high levels of insulation, air-tight construction, triple glazed windows and air source heat pumps for heating, cooling, ventilation and hot water.

We are designing an all-electric solution to enable net zero carbon in use/ operation.

The layout of the fenestration and external shading has been optimised and to reduce overheating and maintain daylight levels.

Three EV charging points will be provided along Hexham Road and within the car park with 11 locations with the potential to expand to all spaces in the future.

The scheme has been designed for long life using robust materials, being fit for the future with a one size fits all plan to allow changes for users with different requirements.

Green Roofs

We are providing green roofs to visible roofs to help reduce urban warming, increase biodiversity, control water run-off and provide visual amenity space

Sustainable Drainage

Green roofs, planting and permeable paving will help to control water run-off. Sustainable urban drainage will be provided in the courtyard and under the car park which stores water underground and releasing in a controlled rate into the sewer system.

Water is being conserved by water efficient fittings. The area is within the lowest level of flood risk (zone 1)

Waste Management

Storage will be provided for recycling waste in centralised bin stores and utilizing bin chutes.

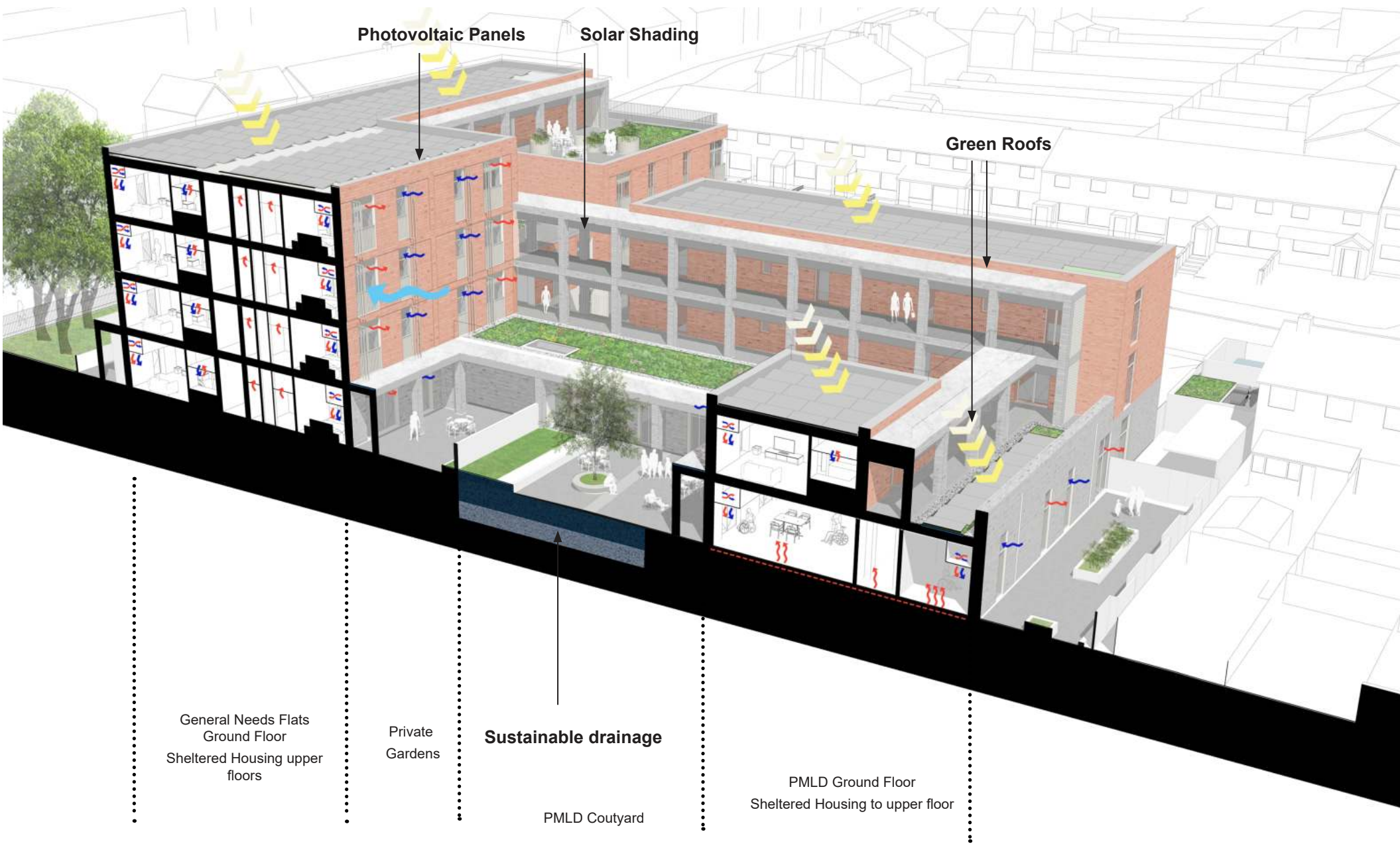


Figure 59. Environmental Strategy Drawing

Land Condition

The site is not in a designated contaminated land area however we have carried out detailed investigations to ascertain the condition. As the site has an element of over-lain made up ground, initial testing suggests slightly elevated gas levels so we are in the process of carrying out further testing to determine the detailed solution to the ground floor slabs.

Ecology

The existing site was previously used as a dementia care home with a perimeter garden area. Due to the urban setting, there was limited biodiversity. After closure the site became derelict, increasing the biodiversity levels of the site. We have carried out a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the scheme design and have achieved an approximately 5% net gain on the site from a base

level take whilst the site was derelict. A further 6% gain is achieved with the off site tree planting.

Refer also to:
Sustainability Statement
Energy Efficiency Statement.
Ecology Report
Arboricultural Impact Statement

5.2 Building Impact Study

Daylight, Sunlight Impact Assessment

The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to provide future occupants with adequate daylight and sunlight levels throughout the year, with attention to not impact negatively on the natural daylight received by the neighbouring buildings. A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment has been prepared and submitted as part of the application. This assessment demonstrates that the impact of the proposed development on the existing properties is negligible.

In addition, we have carried out shadow analysis of the proposals, illustrated in Figure 50.

Part of the feedback from RBC’s Design Review Panel suggested that we review the shadow projections to ensure that sufficient light meets the courtyard spaces. The detailed daylight report concludes that sufficient light reaches the ground floor living spaces, however we have also altered the position of the Southern stair core, stepping it back from the East facing elevation, allowing more direct light into the courtyard.

Refer to separate Daylight report for further details.



Figure 60. Shading Assessment Study

5.3 **Accessibility Strategy**

The development is designed to be safe and accessible for all. All flats will be fit for purpose for the intended users and provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone. The proposed street network, public realm and site access points have been carefully considered to provide accessible, welcoming, safe, robust and legible routes across the site and to the front door.

Approach to the Site

The main vehicle and pedestrian approach to the site is along Hexham Road with further pedestrian access from the corner of Northumberland Avenue. The project also includes improvements to Bede walk, a pedestrian route which runs past the southern edge of the site connecting Northumberland Avenue with housing to the East.

Vehicle and Pedestrian Access

The proposal creates a one-way vehicular route through the site car park. This will allow for the drop off for the PMLD day care service, deliveries, refuse collection & fire tender access. There will be 16 car parking spaces within the site and 3 to Hexham road. Within the car park, 3 will be for disabled users with associated space for access each side with a contrasting surface and drop kerbs to the main footpath routes. All pedestrian paths on the site and leading from the boundary will be between 1.8 and 2.0m wide.

A proposed external lighting plan has been included as part of the planning submission.

Access from the Street

All entrances to the ground floor flats, PMLD day centre and Sheltered flats entrance cores will be level access directly from a level footpath. There will be level access from Hexham Road and Bede walk. There is a level difference from Bede walk down into the site. The southern entrance core is accessed via three steps or a gentle paved slope. Street lighting throughout the site will ensure a safe approach for all residents to their front door. A secure mobility scooter store for scooters is provided for Sheltered residents. A secure cycle store for 21 is provided for residents and staff and is divided in two cycle stores accessible from Bede Walk and Hexham Road. An area for cycles will be available within the scooter store to offer electric bikes an area to be stored and charged.

Internal Circulation

A minimum of 1.5m wide corridors are provided to all flat circulation spaces and 1.8m wide corridors to the PMLD day service to allow easy wheelchair manoeuvrability. All corridor doors will be on hold open devices to allow unrestricted access. All stairs clear widths will be 1100mm and all primary stair cores will have fire evacuation lifts for ease of access to all floors.

Inside the Flats

All the flats have been designed to meet the minimum requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). To ensure ease of access and future adaptability to meet the changing needs and mobility requirements of residents, the principles have been followed;

Limit circulation areas in favour of maximising habitable room sizes and make them 1500mm wide for wheelchair access.

All Flats have level bathroom with level access shower off the main hallway.

All flats have a variety of storage solutions, to meet minimum areas in the NDSS.

Doors to all habitable rooms, WCs, and bathrooms have a minimum of 775mm clear opening width

All wheelchair accessible dwellings are accessed at ground floor and have been designed to be part M4, category 3 and exceed NDSS.

All habitable rooms have been designed to ensure adequate free space around furniture is provided to allow easier movement.

Communal Areas

All the communal areas will be accessible including all roof terraces for use by Sheltered flat residents. Disabled WC's are located adjacent to the first floor communal areas.

Refer to Access Strategy for further details.

5.4 Designing Out Crime

Safety and security are of great importance and the principles of 'Secured by Design' have been incorporated into the design.

The process of developing the design has been guided in part by the Secured by Design principles that seek to achieve natural surveillance in active neighbourhoods through the design of the layout, the mix of dwelling types and connections to established movement networks.

Routes through and around the site are well defined, overlooked and busy. The continuity and enclosure that contributes to the character of the development also assists in reducing crime and the fear of crime.

The followings measures have been incorporated into the design to help ensure the safety and security of all residents:

- Rear access routes to provide access to the southern stair core, cycle store and bin stores, have been carefully designed to ensure that they are as short as possible and only have a single point of entry. Only residents and Reading Borough Council staff will be able to access these routes via secure entry gates.
- The inner courtyard space has been designed to provide private gardens for the ground floor flats as well as a secure external space visually and physically connected through from the PMLD day service. The courtyard will be secure by fences and walls.
- The communal entrances to the flats have been designed to include an 'airlock' entry system to provide two means of defence before entering communal corridors.
- The flats have stair and lift cores to access the upper floor flats. Residents would only have access to the lobbies that provide access to their own front door.
- Lighting to communal areas would be provided both internally and externally. External lighting would also be located at all of the front doors, including the communal entrance doors.
- The intention is to design out vulnerable spaces to avoid recesses where possible. Consideration will be given to the installation of appropriate CCTV in certain areas. The proposed landscaping has been carefully considered, with a combination of low level planting to be maintained at 1m or less and tree canopies to be at least 2.4m from the ground, in order to maintain clear sight lines and natural surveillance.
- Perimeter treatment around the corner of Hexham Road and Northumberland Avenue, including planting and bollards have been intentionally selected to prevent vehicles encroaching onto pavements.

The principles of the security features are listed below:

- Communal doors will have proper certification and be tested with the preferred locking system. Lighting for car park will meet BS5489:
- Rear gardens will be is secured with fencing defining the private space:
- PAS24 doors to all accessible doors.
- Laminated glazing BSEN356 level P1A:
- All bin and bike stores to be secure and follow SBD guidance.

5.5 Building Services and Maintenance

The building services and maintenance have been considered at planning stage to ensure they are incorporated successfully within the design proposal, without impacting on the day-to-day life, safety and security of residents. The following design features have been incorporated:

All Electric

An all-electric solution is to be provided to avoid the need for Gas boilers.

Ventilation, heating and hot water

The strategy for ventilation is mixed mode. Each flat will be provided with mechanical supply and extract heat recovery ventilation (MVHR) via a combined heating and hot water heat pump/MVHR unit and openable windows for additional natural ventilation in warmer weather. Users/ occupants will be provided with a wall mounted controller. Remote access to the controller via a smart phone app is also available.

Communal areas will utilize separate MVHR units.

The flats and landlord areas have been assessed using CIBSE TM 59 and 52 respectively using 2030 weather data. The individual MVHR/heat pumps are also capable of providing cooling during excessive hot weather.

Metering strategy

Each flat will be separately metered with energy end of use. Landlord areas will be sub metered in accordance Building Regulations Part L/ CIBSE TM34

Electrical Substation

The existing substation which is local to the site does not have capacity for the new development, so there will a new electrical substation built within the site.

Sprinkler System

A sprinkler system is proposed to the whole development to provide life and asset protection.

Rainwater Outlets

Rainwater outlets on the building will be a combination of internal and external outlets and will be predominantly maintained from the roof.

Lighting

Lighting to the entrances and rear gardens will be low energy with carefully selected luminaires.

Dry Risers

Dry riser inlet will be integrated within the primary entrances to the three stair cores to each corner of the building.

Door Access

Intercom and door fob access systems will be integrated throughout the communal circulation to the flats. Only residents and Reading Borough Council staff will have access to the main entrance lobby and core, and residents will only have fob access to the lobby servicing their home.

Communal Bin Store

A centralised bin store and chute system will be provided to enable residents from upper floor flats to dispose of their own rubbish from each floor and will be able to segregate recycling from general waste. A secondary bin storage is also provided to the south to serve the ground floor flats.

Risers

Lockable risers cupboards are located on to each floor in the corridors for maintenance.

Windows

All windows are designed to meet Part K of the building regulations and all flat windows will be able to be cleaned internally. Communal windows where internal opening is not possible will be able to be cleaned via pole system.

Roof Terraces

Accessible roof terraces will be provided to each floor for the sheltered flat residents to use. There will also be green roofs and Photovoltaic panels. Easy access is provided from each floor with water taps for maintenance and watering with a minimum 1100mm parapet.

Photovoltaics

Arrays of photovoltaics will be provided on all roofs. Roof access hatches and water taps will be provided for maintenance with a minimum 900mm handrail. Where a handrail is not possible a fall restraint system will be provided.

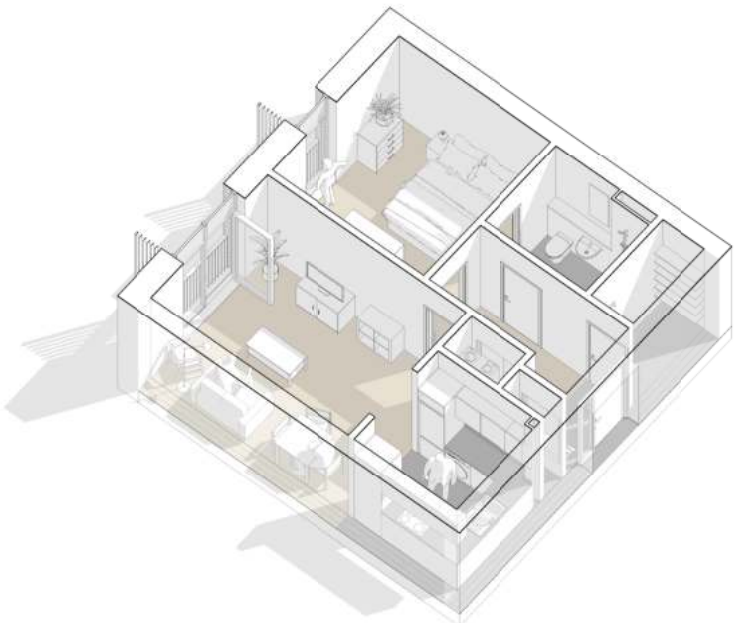


Figure 61. Flat Axonometric - typical sheltered flat



Figure 62. Flat Axonometric - typical wheelchair accessible general needs flat

5.6 Building for Life

Building for Life 12 is a national standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods This section demonstrates how this proposal meets the twelve Building for Life (2015) criteria of what new housing developments should be: attractive, functional and sustainable places.

1. Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones; whilst also respecting existing buildings and land uses along the boundaries of the development site?
Improved existing pedestrian and vehicular routes both within the site and around the site.

2. Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas or cafes?
Development is adjacent to Northumberland Avenue with local shops, schools and medical facilities. Reading town centre is easily accessible with good public transport links.

3. Public Transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?
Adjacent Northumberland Avenue and Hexham road which has a 24 hour bus route into central Reading and out to wider suburbs.

4. Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?
There is a mix of Sheltered, and General needs flats meeting the housing need in the immediate area. It also includes two accessible flats which also meets the housing needs in the immediate area.

5. Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?
Utilizes traditional brick typology, identified throughout Reading. The proposed buildings are simple yet of high quality design, with a carefully considered materials palette

6. Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?
Proposed buildings are situated to prevent any increased overshadowing of the existing spaces. Natural, biodiverse habitats are encouraged through the proposal of soft landscaped gardens and green roofs, hedges and planting. The proposal responds to the existing tree line and levels.

7. Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?
Creates a new street frontage along Northumberland Avenue. The buildings are set back from the boundary in line with the existing housing to enable trees and planting defensible space. A new public space is proposed to the corner to Hexham Road and Northumberland Avenue.

8. Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?
Front entrances clearly identifiable from the street, with integrated signage and lighting. Existing pedestrian routes past the site have been enhanced to retain legibility within the neighbourhood context.

9. Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?
The newly proposed one-way vehicular access through the site reduces the need for vehicles within the site to reverse. Vehicular routes are clearly defined and separate from pedestrian access routes.

10. Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?
The reduced car parking numbers proposed is in line RBC’s low carbon sustainability policy, encouraging use of public transport links and walking.

11. Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?
There is clear definition between public and private realms, with clear boundary treatments. The flats are situated to ensure that public spaces are overlooked and provide passive surveillance. Private gardens are secure and defined.

12. External storage and amenity space

The sheltered flats have access to external terraces as well as a communal room which has a kitchenette, WC and a small meeting room adjacent. The Sheltered flats have access to a mobility scooter store which will also have space to store electric bikes. The Sheltered flats also have access to a separate external bike store to the south of the site. The General needs flats have access to the cycle store as well as having private gardens accessed directly from their flats. Refuse/recycling is integrated within the building through the use of a bin chute system from the upper floors into a ground floor bin area at the front of the building for easy access from the road. A separate store is located at both the north and south of the site for General Needs flats.

6.0 Conclusion

6.0 Conclusion

The scheme will provide a much needed improved PMLD day service and 42 1-bed flats including 36 specialist units aimed at people typically over 55 (sheltered housing) and 6 units for general needs. It is intended that 100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent. It will create a better integrated site within the surrounding sub-urban fabric as well as improving the physical environment and facilities for both the new and existing residents.

Collaborative Design Process

Regular consultation meetings as part of the pre-application planning process with Council Members, Planning Officers, The Reading Design Review Panel and public consultations have ensured that the proposal responds to the wider needs within Reading.

Respecting Existing Neighbours

The proposed layout has been developed and refined to ensure that it does not negatively impact on the existing residents living in the surrounding area. The distance between the proposed and the existing buildings as well as the locations of windows has been carefully considered to prevent overlooking into any existing property. Careful consideration to massing means that there is no increased overshadowing to existing homes and flats.

High Quality Social Care and Affordable Housing

The scheme will provide 42 1-bed flats, split between 6 General Needs Housing and 36 units aimed at people typically over 55, (sheltered housing), it is intended that 100% of the units will be affordable at affordable rent, together with a PMLD day Service. These have been designed to provide well proportioned living spaces with lots of natural daylight and generous private amenity space, meeting both National Described Space Standards and planning policy requirements.

The existing outdated Sheltered and PMLD day services will be relocated from other sites around Reading onto one site close to the centre of Reading.

PMLD Day Service (Class E (f))	
36	Nr. 1 bed Sheltered Flats (Class C3, Cat 1)
6	Nr. 1 bed General Need Flats (Class C3, Cat 1&3)

42	Nr. Dwellings in total
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Sustainable Living

Reading Borough Council have declared a climate emergency and the Hexham Road proposal is an opportunity to demonstrate the type of sustainable development that could be delivered in Reading. The proposal has been designed to enable Net Zero Carbon in use, using Passivhaus principles incorporating features such as air source heat pumps, PV panels, increased wall thickness allowing for increased insulation, improved air tightness and triple glazed windows. The approach to sustainability is not limited to energy performance, the integration of cycle stores for every dwelling along with improved cycle and pedestrian routes supports active lifestyles and reduces reliance on car use. Easily accessible recycling facilities are intended to encourage waste recycling, whilst enhanced tree planting and vegetation will help improve air quality, health and well-being.

Enhancing the Quality of the Site

Up until October 2022 the site was occupied by a closed down residential care home that was vacant for 2-3 years, which has subsequently been demolished. The site is currently unused and presents a void in the suburban fabric of this part of Reading when viewed from both Hexham Road and Northumberland Avenue.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development has a positive impact for the community and character of the area. The enhancement of the suburban grain of the surrounding roads, and the creation of a new public entrance to the site provided by opening up the front of the site to the north and north east, with new pedestrian routes into the site from Northumberland Avenue, Hexham Road and Bede Walk provides rejuvenation of the site and animation of the streetscape.

The building development has been designed to sit comfortably within the environment. It takes cues from existing building heights, types and existing trees with its setting, massing and materiality to create a scheme that is respectful, confident, orderly and built with high quality materials related to it’s context.

The scheme provides a long term economically sustainable use for the site which enables Reading Borough Council to offer much needed Housing and Adult day services in an area where it is most required.

