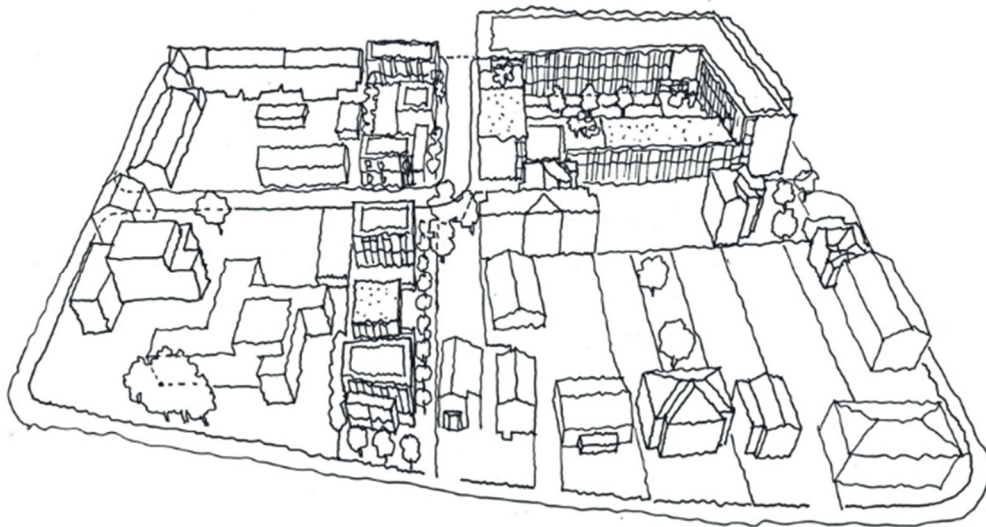


Reading - Battle Street

LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES



Prepared by: Property Services, HCC

Reference: E05077-HCC-XX-RP-L-01 Rev A Battle Street Landscape Principles

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to provide additional information to supplement the Design and Access Statement prepared by the Architects.
- 1.2. The document will outline planning policies relevant to landscape, address points raised the during pre-application consultation and by the Design Review Panel (DRP).
- 1.3. The document will describe how the scheme will:
 - deliver a high-quality public scheme within the surrounding context including its siting within the Conservation Area and close to Listed buildings Battle Street.
 - respond positively to Oxford Road providing a gateway into the scheme.
 - be welcoming and suitably greened to make a pleasant and safe space.
 - seek to maximise greening opportunities to accord with a range of Council's policies aimed to adapt to climate change.
 - present an opportunity to make effective use of an urban and highly sustainable site, providing a mix of housing, including that for vulnerable people.

1.4 The following information should be referred to in conjunction with this document. These illustrate the landscape scheme to be implemented:

- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-A-7000- Landscape GA Ground Floor Plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-A-7001- Landscape GA Roof Plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7101 Hard Surfaces Plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7201 Means of Enclosure and Furniture Plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7301 Tree and specimen shrub planting plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7302 Planting Plan
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7401 Detail Sections
- E05077-HCC-XX-DR-L-7501 Landscape Amenity and Private Space
- E05077-HCC-XX-RP-L-01 Rev A Battle Street Landscape Principles



2 Pre-Application Consultation

- 2.1. Pre-application report: 211802/PREAPP
- 2.2. The proposals were discussed with Reading Borough Council's planning department on 29th March 2022 and incorporated a range of amendments in response officer comments made on 22nd December 2021.
- 2.3. The scheme was presented to RBC's Design Review Panel and comments received on 11th March 2022. Following receipt of those comments, subsequent further discussion occurred with officers.
- 2.4. The points raised relating to landscape and ecology are summarised below.
- 2.5. The site sits within Abbey Ward which is a low tree canopy ward where tree planting is of great importance. RBC Local Planning Policy **CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change** aims to help bring the canopy cover of the ward up to 12% by 2030 to mitigate the effects of air quality being within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and to respond positively in terms of measures to adapt to climate change.
- 2.6. The Policy seeks to encourage development to include trees and other planting to:
 - Provide shading of amenity areas, buildings, and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and
 - Minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system
 - The Policy also seeks to encourage development to Include brown or green roofs and walls where space is limited.
- 2.7. The importance, in terms of planting, especially to the Bedford Road frontage to the prominence on this side was identified during consultation with the local planning authority. There was concern raised that there was no clear presented way of achieving meaningful landscaping to soften the appearance of the buildings.
- 2.8. A strategy to reduce the width of Bedford Road was considered, but this proved not to be feasible due to the level of services passing under the highway in that location.
- 2.9. It was noted the indicative landscaping proposals overall included a range of greening measures including green roofs, roof top planting other landscaping and tree planting throughout. It was considered important that further work was done to seek to achieve as much greening to the Bedford Road frontage as possible, as well as the wider site.
- 2.10. In terms of the Oxford Road frontage, which is within a Conservation Area it was considered that trees should be included within the front garden area and should fully utilise the canopy space available whilst not being unsuitable long term.
- 2.11. Regarding the public walkway from Oxford Road through the site, which retains an existing access arrangement, it was noted that this is clearly an important route and there was a need for this to be green, provide a positive public space, but there were practical difficulties of being able to achieve this due to conflict with dwellings.
- 2.12. It was stated that the ability for light to spill into the courtyard within the main 4-sided block, should be considered.
- 2.13. Other considerations to be considered were as follows:
 - Tree planting illustrated to the southern side of the main block around the courtyard needs to be mindful in terms of species and practicality of trees in terms of proximity to buildings.

- Tree species should be in line with the Council's Tree Strategy aims i.e., 30:20:10 split for species diversity, wildlife friendly and avoiding Tilia and Prunus species (which are considered to be over-represented by RBC in the Borough).
 - Landscaping should include a range of new planting of street and scrub that includes a high proportion of native species to increase biodiversity.
- 2.14. Although the DRP sought for the Mews area to be vehicle free it was noted it is required for fire vehicles, refuse vehicles, sub-station access and car parking. As this could not be used for access to Oxford Road, because of existing bollards on George Street, this approach was confirmed as acceptable by the Transport DC Manager.
- 2.15. There was discussion over whether this could be a shared surface, however, in light of the type of users expected on this site and the public nature of the route through, the Transport DC Manager clarified that there would need to be dedicated footways and reiterated the requirement for the road to be a minimum of 3.7m from edge of car parking space to edge of kerb (i.e. 5.7m width overall).
- 2.16. A pedestrian access through the site from Battle Street to Oxford Road was likely to be supported. Refuse lorries and fire engine vehicle tracking information would need to be provided to demonstrate safe movement along the one-way Mews which would link into the existing James Street.
- 2.17. Dimensions for the parking bays and forecourt depths would need to conform to the Council's Standards and Design SPD. In addition to a Transport Statement a Travel Plan, for the Old Persons' Day Centre, would be required.
- 2.18. **Response.**
- 2.19. To address the impact of climate change, (Policy EN 18: Flooding and Drainage) permeable surfaces are to be used throughout the development.
- 2.20. Surface water runoff is to be attenuated within the site and below ground before being discharged mechanically to existing storm water drains in the highway, at a rate agreed with the flood authority.
- 2.21. Where feasible, tree pits within the landscape are to be designed to act as attenuation features.
- 2.22. Green and/or brown roofs are to be introduced to contribute to biodiversity and create habitats that will contribute to the wider green infrastructure. These will integrate with SuDS and will improve the visual quality of the area and increase amenity value for residents.
- 2.23. Where green and brown roofs are to be provided, these have been designed to maximise opportunity for biodiversity. This will be achieved by introducing varied broken substrate, log piles, varying depths of soil and so on to create a patchwork of microclimate habitats.
- 2.24. Tree planting will be implemented to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings, and streets. Native plants will be included within the landscape.
- 2.25. **Policy H10** requires houses to be provided with private outdoor space, whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.
- 2.26. Private gardens to houses and flats along the passage and the Mews have been designed to have similar sized gardens to existing terraces along Battle Street. This was considered acceptable by RBC.
- 2.27. The amenity space for the flats comprises a mix of communal gardens, courtyard, balconies, and roof top amenity. These spaces will provide opportunities for outdoor living and enjoyment, and serve functional requirements, such as clothes drying. The overall distribution and amount were considered by RBC to meet the requirements of the policy.

- 2.28. The frontage to Oxford Road will have a building which responds positively to its context and creates a gateway into the scheme and a public route through the site to Battle Street. This route will be welcoming, active and suitably greened to make a pleasant and safe space.
- 2.29. For further information, refer Section 4 Landscape Principles together with the Design and Access Statement prepared by the Architects.

3 Planning Policy and Guidance

- 3.1. RBC's November 2021 Edition of their 'Validation Requirements for Planning Applications' checklist, sets out guidance that landscape principles should address.
- 3.2. This guidance is shown below, and how the landscape responds is described in sections that follow.
- 3.3. Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands states,

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS

Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.

New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.

- 3.4. Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change states,

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The following measures shall be incorporated into development:

- *Wherever possible, new buildings shall be orientated to maximise the opportunities for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements;*
- *Proposals involving both new and existing buildings shall demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change for example by including measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation of the building and appropriately coloured materials in areas exposed to direct sunlight, green and brown roofs, green walls, etc;*
- *Use of trees and other planting, where appropriate as part of a landscape scheme, to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions; and*
- *All development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system, and where possible incorporate mitigation and resilience measures for any increases in river flooding levels as a result of climate change*

- 3.5. Landscape Guidance states the following:

Guidance

Landscape principles should demonstrate to the council that a high quality and wildlife friendly landscaping scheme can be provided within the context of the development and that proposals will be in line with the aims of the Tree Strategy and BAP. As such the council will require details of existing and proposed planting to be submitted with the application. The details required will depend on the nature of the application but as a minimum the applicant should provide outline details of the proposed landscaping scheme. Particular consideration should be given to the following:

- (a) proposed finished ground levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, structures and ancillary objects (refuse bins, lighting columns etc);
- (b) proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (e.g drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines etc. indicating lines, manholes etc.);
- (c) predominantly native and or wildlife friendly species, including large canopy trees species likely to be resilient to the effects of climate change and a diversity of planting (trees ideally to the 30:20:10 ratio -no more than 30% of any one family; 20% of any one genus and 10% of any one species);
- (d) the integration of sustainable drainage systems and landscaping e.g. SUDs tree pits or surface water to irrigate new landscaping;
- (e) boundary treatments to ensure that hedgehogs and other wildlife can traverse the site.

Landscape principles should seek to retain existing trees and other vegetation, where practicable. Plans should clearly show which trees or landscape features are proposed to be retained and which are to go and should demonstrate a net gain in tree number, providing alternative greening where site constraints do not allow tree planting. The location of tree planting should avoid immediate and future conflicts, e.g. with service routes, lighting, archaeologically sensitive areas. Where planting on land with identified remediation requirements (relating to contamination), landscape details should include any mitigation measures recommended.

Policy

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)
Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

4 Response to Planning Policy

- 4.1.1. The site covers an area of approximately 5480m².
- 4.1.2. Currently the existing tree canopy covers an area of approximately 135m², which equates to less than 3% of the site. Furthermore, there is no existing discernible green space.
- 4.1.3. The western part of the site is currently used as a car park and cut through for pedestrians who wish to access Battle Street (to the north), Oxford Road (to the south) and St James (to the west).



View into the western part of the site from Oxford Road looking north.

- 4.1.4. The remain part of the site has been levelled and enclosed by temporary site hoarding.



View of the site from within the site hoarding looking east.

4.1.5. Currently there are 6nr existing trees on site, five of which are categorised 'C', and one (a Hornbeam) categorised as 'B'.



View looking north from the centre of the site opposite James Street.



View towards James Street.

4.1.6. Due to the quality of trees and the scale, nature and layout of the development, all trees within the site are to be removed

4.1.7. To compensate for the loss of trees, a large number of trees are to be planted within the development.

- 4.1.8. In addition to tree planting, the development will provide areas of soft landscape, including pollinating plants, species rich grass, and sedum roofs. This will increase the area of 'green' on the site from virtually zero, to over 800m².
- 4.1.9. Upon completion of the development, the amount of tree canopy cover could be reasonably expected to exceed 360m² (once the trees have matured) which is more than double the amount that currently exists. This will contribute towards RBC's goals to increase tree cover within the area.

- 4.1.10. To comply with Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland, a number and variety of trees are to be planted throughout the site. These have been selected in line with the Council's Tree Strategy aims i.e., 30:20:10 split for species diversity, wildlife friendly and avoid Lime and Cherry species. Species to be planted are shown on detail planting plan.
- 4.1.11. The new development will provide tree planting adjacent to Oxford Road, Bedford Road and Battle Street, as well as trees within the development which accords with Policy EN14.
- 4.1.12. With regard to Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change, the landscape accords with the policy by including green and brown roofs, tree and shrub planting to provide shading and shelter of amenity areas, buildings and streets, and helps to connect/create habitats within the development.

5 Landscape Principles: Response to Guidance

5.1. Oxford Road – Passage.

- 5.1.1. An existing pedestrian route from Oxford Road to Battle Street is to be retained offering an attractive passage for pedestrians passing through the development.
- 5.1.2. Buildings are to be set back from Oxford Road to respect the existing building line providing an opportunity to introduce tree and soft landscape to contribute to visual amenity for the public and the wider streetscape. The public and private realms include a combination of low walls and railings to ensure security is provided to the ground floor flat facing Oxford Road while ensure passive surveillance of the passage is ensured.
- 5.1.3. Direct access onto the passage is to be provided from front doors and from side gates off private gardens.
- 5.1.4. To ensure the passage feels safe and welcoming, the hard landscape will be surfaced with attractive paving materials. The passage will be constructed to provide level access to building entrances and private gardens. Paving will be laid to shallow gradients not exceeding 1:21 to ensure all areas are fully accessible.
- 5.1.5. Walls are to be introduced to define the boundaries between private gardens and public realm. Low walls and low growing planting is to be included to provide a 'defensible' space in front of some buildings.
- 5.1.6. Trees are to be planting along the passage to contribute to the Council's Tree Strategy. These will provide visual amenity for residents, and wildlife interest. Species have been selected to ensure a correct balance is achieved between tree cover and a feeling of safety.
- 5.1.7. Attractive, robust lighting is to be included along the passage and continue north into the Mews.

5.2. Mews.

- 5.2.1. At the northern end of the passage, the space will open out into the Mews.
- 5.2.2. Buildings are to front onto and overlook the Mews providing the space with natural surveillance.
- 5.2.3. The streetscape of the Mews is to be a hard paved area, shared between pedestrians and vehicles. Vehicle access is required for fire tenders, refuse vehicles, sub-station access and car parking. On-street parking is to be provided for 2 family houses facing Battle Street; 4 spaces allocated for the Old Persons' Day Centre; 1 accessible space for the wheelchair accessible flat, and 3 spaces for the Supported Living Mental Health Flats. Each space is to be provided with electric vehicle charging points.
- 5.2.4. The streetscape will be surfaced with concrete block paving and contrasting units to differentiate between footway and road. To visually soften the space, and discourage vehicles overrunning or parking on the footways, trees, planting beds, and street furniture is to be incorporated into the design.
- 5.2.5. On-road parallel parking bays are to be designed to meet RBC's parking requirements (i.e., 6m long x 2.2m wide), with a minimum road width of 5.7m. The road will be one-way with vehicles entering from Battle Street before turning into James Street.
- 5.2.6. To maintain design consistency within the development, boundary walls are to be introduced to define the edge between private gardens and public realm with low walls and low planting to the front of the buildings to provide a 'defensible' space.

5.3. **Battle Street.**

- 5.3.1. The existing access off Battle Street is to be relocated to the east to provide access into the Mews. 2no. parking spaces are to be re-allocated to provide a drop off bay and loading/servicing bay and is to include one parking bay.
- 5.3.2. In line with Policy TR5, parking spaces are to be served with an electric vehicle charging point.
- 5.3.3. The main building line is to be set back from the pavement to provide a 'defensible' margin. This will be defined by a low wall and supplemented with a planting bed.

5.4. **Bedford Road.**

- 5.4.1. Due to prominence of the building on Bedford Road, the frontage has been set back from the pavement to allow space for trees. This will provide privacy to ground floor flats and visual amenity for passers-by, whilst contributing to the wider public realm
- 5.4.2. To discourage access towards the ground floor flats, pedestrian deterrent paving is to be introduced under tree planting.
- 5.4.3. A strategy to reduce the width of Bedford Road was considered, but this proved not to be feasible due to the level of services passing under the highway in that location.
- 5.4.4. Balconies are to be provided for individual flats overlooking Bedford Road.

5.5. **Main Courtyard.**

- 5.5.1. Central to the scheme is a mixed-use building providing accommodation for various groups with specific needs. Ground floor accommodation consists of,
 - an Old Persons' Day Centre which fronts onto Battle Street with access into a central courtyard,
 - Supported Living flats which occupies the southern wing of the building, and
- 5.5.2. The courtyard will be enclosed on all four sides and overlooked from general needs flats above. It will be accessed at ground level via an under-croft leading from the Mews and from communal spaces associated with the Old Person's Day Centre .
- 5.5.3. Access to the courtyard is required for fire escape and to service plant rooms located at ground floor in the eastern wing.
- 5.5.4. All entrances are to have level thresholds and the courtyard is to be laid flat to ensure it is fully accessible.
- 5.5.5. The space has been designed using a simple palette of materials, combining quality hard, robust furniture, raised planters, and tree and simple planting.
- 5.5.6. Beneath the ground a large storm water attenuation tank will store surface water runoff from roofs and hard surfaces. Numerous underground services will be concentrated to the northern section of the courtyard and coordinated to avoid storm and foul water drains and tree positions.
- 5.5.7. To ensure trees can reach maturity, large planting pockets of soil are to be incorporated under the surface.

5.6. **Supported Living.**

- 5.6.1. A small communal courtyard is to be provided for people inhabiting supported living flats. This will be accessed along a corridor within the building.
- 5.6.2. Occasionally, residents may wish to use the main courtyard, so doors are to be provided, with level access into the space.
- 5.6.3. Each flat is to be provided with a small private patio to the south. These will be furnished with planters and loose furniture.

5.7. **Private Gardens.**

- 5.7.1. To accord with RBC Planning policy H10, individual dwellings are to be provided with private gardens and flats with communal outdoor space and/ or private balconies. These are to respect the size and character of similar spaces in the vicinity.
- 5.7.2. To the west of the Mews and buildings aligning the passage, residents are to be provided with private outdoor space. Other than the two private houses facing Battle Street, the gardens will be managed and maintained by RBC.
- 5.7.3. These will be provided with a small patio and lawn and defined by close board fencing.
- 5.7.4. Where feasible and appropriate, trees will be introduced into gardens to contribute towards Abbey Ward's tree cover.

5.8. **Sheltered Housing flats.**

- 5.8.1. Set above ground floor a number of sheltered flats are to be provided. These are to be accessed internally off Battle Street.
- 5.8.2. To provide amenity space for those residents, roof terraces are to be provided to serve each wing. These are to be laid out with simple quality paving and furniture.
- 5.8.3. 'Green' roofs will provide visual amenity for residents whilst increasing biodiversity on the site.

6 Materials

6.1. Hard Surfaces Plan

- 6.1.1. Other than around the electric substation, the use of macadam surfaces has been avoided to ensure a high-quality streetscape is provided.
- 6.1.2. Within the Mews, courtyard and along the passageway, the streetscape is to be surfaced with small unit concrete paving with contrasting units and/or patterns to define pedestrian routes separate from trafficked areas.
- 6.1.3. Kerbs and edgings are to be laid flush to maximise accessibility for non-ambulant people, people with visual impairment and other special needs.
- 6.1.4. Within private gardens and other amenity areas, hard surfaces include small unit paving, and concrete flag paving.
- 6.1.5. Where amenity space is to be provided above ground, concrete slab paving is to be used.
- 6.1.6. Materials 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 trees with a source of water.

6.2. Planting Plan

- 6.2.1. Soft landscape is to be introduced throughout the development.
- 6.2.2. Private gardens are to be turfed and supplemented with occasional tree and shrub planting.
- 6.2.3. Trees, shrubs, and ornamental planting have been selected to accord with RBC's Policy for tree planting and include a high proportion of pollinating plants for insects.
- 6.2.4. Plants for areas fronting the passage and the Mews have been selected for their low maintenance characteristics, robustness, and all year interest.
- 6.2.5. Trees within the Mews and passage have been selected for their resilience within an urban setting, provide an upright form to ensure the spaces do not become overshadowed and dark and offer attractive seasonal interest.
- 6.2.6. Where trees are to be planted within hard paved areas, large planting pockets of soil are to be incorporated under the surface as shown on detail drawings.

6.3. Site Furniture

- 6.3.1. High quality, robust street furniture is to be introduced throughout the development.
- 6.3.2. An existing water trough, currently situated on Bedford Road is to be repositioned within the site.
- 6.3.3. Contemporary street lighting is to be incorporated along the passage and Mews to provide a safe environment for people passing through the development.
- 6.3.4. To ensure cars do not encroach onto path, bollards are to be positioned to direct traffic.
- 6.3.5. Cycle stands are to be provided within the Mews.

- 6.3.6. Electric Vehicle charging points are to be provided where indicated on drawings.
- 6.3.7. Simple timber sheds to house bicycles and general gardening equipment are to be included within private gardens.
- 6.3.8. Within the courtyards, communal areas, and managed accommodation external spaces, raised planters and loose furniture are to be included.
- 6.3.9. Bin stores are to be integrated as part of the development so bins can be stored out of sight from the public when not being collected.

6.4. **Means of Enclosure**

- 6.4.1. A combination of low and tall walls, railings, balustrades, and fences are to be provided to define public, semi-public, semi-private and private space.
- 6.4.2. Low walls are to be introduced along the frontage of buildings facing the passage, the Mews, Bedford Road, and Battle Street. These will serve to provide a 'defensible' margin to those buildings, whilst allowing planting to be introduced to provide visual interest for visitors and residents passing along or through the spaces.
- 6.4.3. Tall garden walls are to be introduced to provide privacy to gardens. Within the gardens, close-boarded fences are to be provided to define individual plots and provide privacy. Lockable gates are to be included to provide access into rear gardens to avoid the need to walk garden waste through buildings.

7 Amenity Space: Area schedule

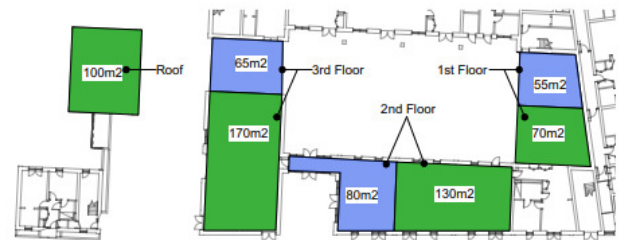


Amenity space

- 992m² Public realm (Mews and Passageway)
- 228m² Sheltered housing (Roof Terraces)
- 389m² Supported Living (Gardens and Courtyard)
- 583m² Old persons day centre (Courtyard)
- 395m² Public fronting defensible space and green margins (planters, paving and railings)

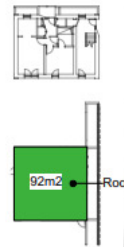
Private space

- 139m² Family Houses (Gardens and Patios)
- 420m² General Needs (Gardens and Balconies)
- Side passages and private access (Pathways)



Amenity space above ground level

- 562m² Green roofs (visual amenity)
- 200m² Sheltered housing (Roof Terraces)



8 Illustrations



Bedford Road



Sheltered housing: roof terrace



Sheltered housing: roof terrace



Battle Street



Supported living courtyard



Main courtyard



The Mews



The Passage from Oxford Road



The Passage from the Mews

9 Conclusion

9.1 This document describes how the scheme will:

- deliver a high-quality public scheme within the surrounding context including its siting within the Conservation Area and close to Listed buildings Battle Street.
- respond positively to Oxford Road providing a gateway into the scheme.
- be welcoming and suitably greened to make a pleasant and safe space.
- seek to maximise greening opportunities to accord with a range of Council's policies aimed to adapt to climate change.
- present an opportunity to make effective use of an urban and highly sustainable site, providing a mix of housing, including that for vulnerable people.

9.2 The landscape to be implemented will deliver a high-quality development by providing usable and generous amenity and private space for local residents and visitors to enjoy.