

dee road, reading

Design & Access Statement

July 2022



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These chapters provide everything that is required by:

- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Section 9: "Design and access statements".
- National Planning Practice Guidance: Making an Application, paragraph 031 (2014): "Design and access statement".
- Building for a Healthy Life (2020) (BHL).

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introduction

Our Vision: “To reflect & transition”

It assists the creation of new communities to ensure that new development ties the existing fabric of the community together. Removing this impenetrable island and creating a reflective and transitional development will bring together the northern, southern, western and eastern parts of the community.



Bellway Homes is seeking Full Planning Permission, from Reading Borough Council, for a residential development of 63 homes located at Dee Road, Reading.

Redevelopment of former fire station to provide 63 dwellings, including affordable housing, together with associated access, parking and landscaping.

This application has been prepared by a comprehensive Professional Team across a range of disciplines, including the following contributors to this Design and Access Statement:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Urban Design & Architecture: | DHA Architecture |
| Landscape & Ecology: | Aspect |
| Planning: | Savills |
| Transport & Highways: | i-Transport |

In developing this site, Bellway Homes is seeking to create a new environment which enhances both the landscape and the built character of the neighbourhood, delivering sustainable development for Reading.

In the following chapters we illustrate our design principles and concepts for the new development: the memorable, legible masterplan, safe and accessible movement network, characterful landscaping, and distinctive, contextual architectural language and materials palette.

Bellway Homes is proud of these proposals and is committed to carrying out this exemplar development.

building for a healthy life & the national design guide

Building for a Healthy Life



Building for a Healthy Life is the latest edition of and new name for Building for Life 12. It is a Design Code to help people improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods, produced by Design for Homes in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement. It sets out 12 considerations to create successful places - from macro through to micro scale. These considerations are addressed within each chapter of this document:

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

- ☞ Natural connections
- ☞ Walking, cycling & public transport
- ☞ Facilities & services
- ☞ Homes for everyone

DISTINCTIVE PLACES

- ☞ Making the most of what's there
- ☞ A memorable character
- ☞ Well defined streets & spaces
- ☞ Easy to find your way around

STREETS FOR ALL

- ☞ Healthy streets
- ☞ Cycle & car parking
- ☞ Green & blue infrastructure
- ☞ Back of pavement, front of home



Building for a Healthy Life

A Design Code for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces



National Design Guide

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

The National Design Guide

The recently introduced National Design Guide seeks to outline and illustrate the Government's priorities for well-designed places, in the form of ten characteristics (opposite). It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and supports paragraph 130 which states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

The diagram overleaf together with the information within this Design and Access Statement demonstrate that these proposals for the Reading development will result in a well-designed, characterful place, which carefully considers and positively responds to these ten characteristics in a mutually supporting way.





dee road, reading

Includes places designed for socialising & informal activities for all ages. Will have a high quality public realm with good surveillance.

Has a variety of urban landscaped amenity pockets. Will reinforce the street landscape character of this evolving neighbourhood.

Contributes to the local legible, connected movement network through & beyond the development.

Is designed to contribute to this compact, accessible, walkable new neighbourhood. Has streets & spaces designed with trees & soft landscaping.

Attractive and distinctive
A coherent pattern of development

Accessible and easy to move around
Enhanced and optimised

Safe, social and inclusive
Public spaces

Movement

Built Form

Identity

response to contextual character & identity.

Is designed to contribute to this compact, accessible, walkable new neighbourhood. Has streets & spaces designed with trees & soft landscaping.





bringing our vision to life

We aspire to create a thriving, flourishing place, where residents can connect and engage, and are inspired to enjoy and sustain the high quality of their surroundings.

- ☛ To achieve a successful development the Bellway Homes team has sought to understand the site and how it relates to Dee Road and Spey Road, as well as the wider Norcot neighbourhood.
- ☛ Engagement has taken place with a number of key stakeholders, including the local planning authority and local residents to understand the needs and aspirations of the town in relation to its potential for growth.
- ☛ The new development seeks to create buildings and spaces which will enrich the character of Norcot and the wider area:
 - Strong perimeter blocks with defined public and private spaces - to match the strong character of the immediate area.
 - Dual aspect corner turning development response to the open public spaces.
 - Responding to adjacent build-lines, visual connections & pedestrian desire lines.
- ☛ Due to the drive to zero carbon homes standard, the development will deliver a minimum 35% reduction compared with Part L 2013 - at this stage our calculations achieve circa 55% reduction, through higher fabric standards and low carbon/renewable energy systems expected to comprise solar photovoltaic and air source heat pumps.
- ☛ The scheme has been prepared having regard to the requirements of Local Plan, specifically allocation WR3m, alongside the pre-application advice received from RBC. The redevelopment of the site presents an opportunity to deliver a high-quality development in an urban setting enabling the provision of affordable family housing accessible to the town centre.



Responding to adjacent build-lines, visual connections & pedestrian desire lines

Respect existing natural gradients and design buildings which step down the slopes and avoid over-engineered relationships

Create secure back to back private garden relationships

Create dual aspect corner turning development response to the open public spaces

Apartment blocks designed into the natural slope and stepping down to 3 storey adjacent to existing dwellings

Wide streets with roadway, pedestrian connections, landscaping and private garden frontage

Houses set back from road edge, with paving and structure planting within the street frontage

Strong development build-line

Grid form of development to match the strong character of the immediate area - clearly defined perimeter blocks with delineated public and private realm

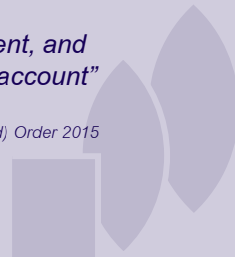


the context of the development



“The steps taken to appraise the context of the development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account”

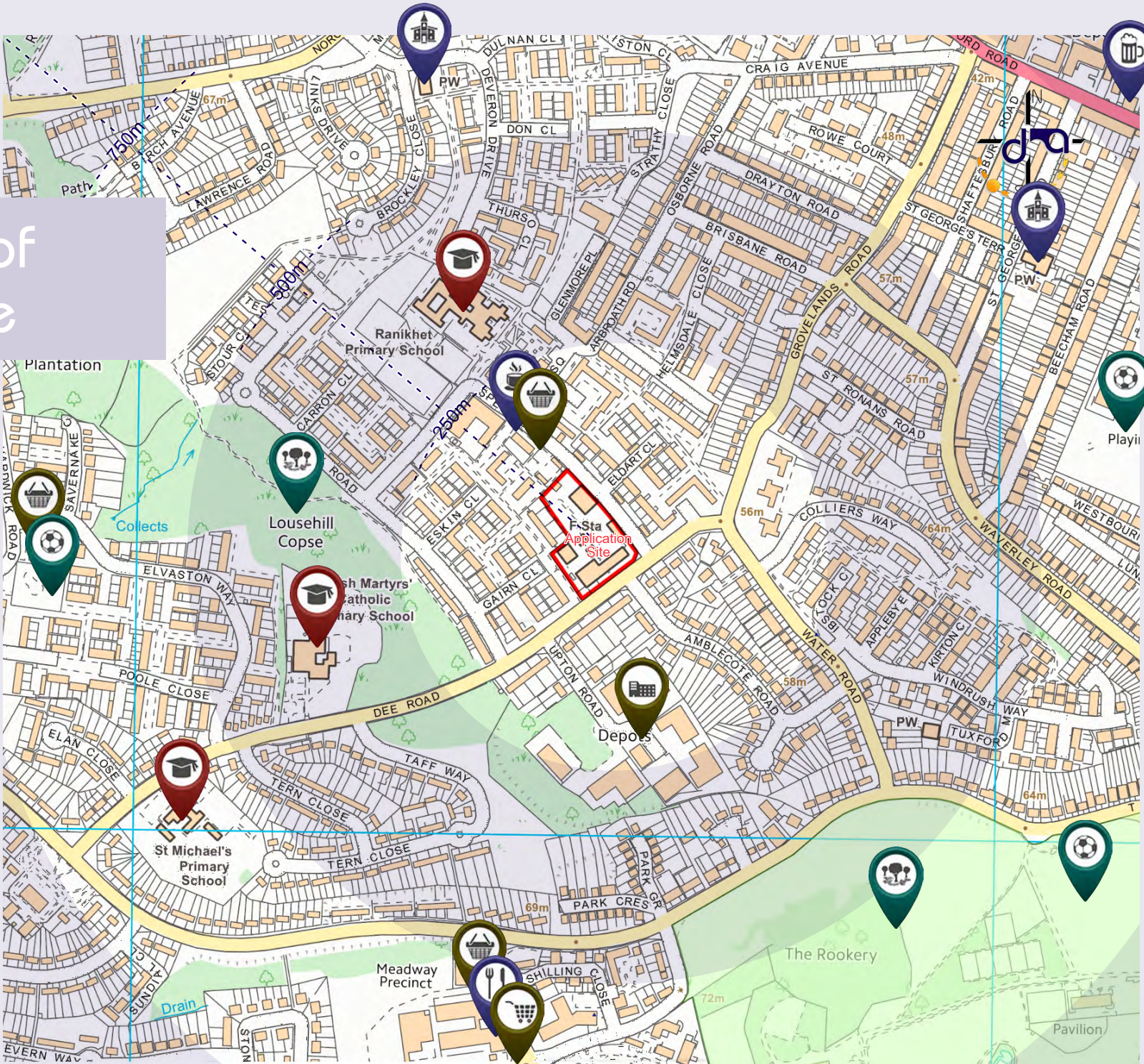
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015



the wider setting of the application site

A thorough analysis of the physical context of the Norcot neighbourhood of Reading and the residential and landscape setting for the application site has been undertaken by the consultant team:

- Norcot is an established urban area with various local facilities within walking distance. It is c.1 mile from Reading West station and c.1.6 miles from the town centre.
- The neighbourhood is evolving with recent residential developments in close proximity to the application site.



ref.4: The wider context of northern Reading showing the application site in relation to local facilities and services.

Walking, Cycling & Public Transport

The proposed development will seek to dovetail with the transport infrastructure which is in place in the neighbourhood - so that short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or by bicycle, helping to improve public health and air quality, whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| | Sports and play facilities | | Places of worship |
| | Public greenspaces | | Public houses |
| | Schools & colleges | | Restaurants/takeaways |
| | Supermarkets | | Commercial/trade retail premises |
| | Local retail centres | | |



ref.6 Taking Inspiration
from the Local
Townscape Context

ref.7

ref.8

Application
Site

ref.9

The Inspiring Townscape Context

The Bellway team has sought inspiration and stimulus from this part of Reading, in order to deliver a design solution for this development which reflects and responds to what is particularly characterful and recognisable about this neighbourhood.





ref.7 Spey Road Redevelopment

The Inspiration: Bold contemporary residential architecture & strong continuous frontages

Urban Form: Located to the north of the proposed development, the higher-density core of this regeneration development includes apartments of 4 and 5 storeys and 3-storey townhouses, as well as a local centre. Street frontages are linear and unbroken, with streetscape parking.

Design & Materials: The architecture relies on steps in the building forms - both horizontal steps creating deep shadowed reveals in the frontages, and eavescape steps creating a regular rhythm of vertical projections, a contemporised take on traditional gabled streets. Upper storey windows are full height and symmetrical, and there is occasional use of render and coloured panels to punctuate entrances or balconies.

Landscape & Open Space: Urban street trees set in tree pits are set along most of the streets; some houses have small landscaped front gardens.

Design Conclusions: This neighbourhood is evolving with new connected streets, modern dwellings, tree-lined streets and contemporary architecture; as well as a new local centre. The proposed Bellway development should dovetail with this evolution in its design and planning.

ref.8 Leven Street Redevelopment

The Inspiration: More domestic-scale contemporary residential architecture & strong continuous frontages

Urban Form: This is part of the same redevelopment referred to above, but is one of the smaller-scale more domestic streets within the neighbourhood, comprising 2-storey terraced houses. This street addresses the development site which will provide its “second side” - it is similar to Rannock Street which is a 2-sided street, with perpendicular parking only along one side.

Design & Materials: The materials and architectural language are a more restrained, less impactful variation on the core buildings, with more traditional gabled roofscapes. Windows are generally smaller, apart from a deep first-floor window on the gabled dwellings, which are also punctuated by a lighter brick.

Landscape & Open Space: Parking is broken up by street trees and ground level planting; houses have small fenced front gardens.

Design Conclusions: As noted above, the proposed Bellway development should dovetail with this evolving neighbourhood in its design and planning - in this case, responding to this more restrained architectural language for the domestic parts of the proposed development.





ref.9 Dee Road Villas

The Inspiration: Regular pairs of characteristic inter-war semi-detached villas

Urban Form: Strong repetition of matching inter-war villas, extending along the street scene with a common build line. They address Dee Road with a deep verged setback and are opposite the application site's southern boundary.

Design & Materials: Slightly different to the commonly seen semis of this era, the shallow 2-storey gabled bays, shallowly projecting brick door surrounds and rendered "stripe" above cill level give these dwellings a more linear character along the street, and the fall along the street with the houses stepping down the slope is made more visually evident by the rendered sections. The hipped roofs and spaces between the buildings (used for garaging) make for a fairly open character to the streetscape.

Landscape & Open Space: Although many of the front gardens are now used for parking, hedgerows and frontage landscaping are still evident, with a much less consistent character along the street than the buildings they serve.

Design Conclusions: These buildings lie opposite the southern boundary of the proposed development, and the street scene should have a transitional character - which has resonance with these semi-detached villas, but also takes consideration of the contemporary development further north.



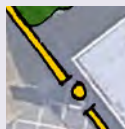
the particular characteristics
of the application site



{subsequent plans shown rotated for clarity}



Retain and reinforce the strong build-lines and road avenues



Using the natural levels to create interest and building articulation



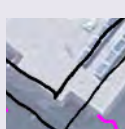
Using the natural levels to locate specific building heights to maximise opportunities



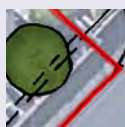
Using the shape of the site to influence the internal layout



Using the surrounding densities building typologies and scale and massing to inform the development opportunities



Using the significant amount of primary frontage around the perimeter to create outward looking buildings which police and overlook the public streets



Use the existing access locations already established and provide improved access arrangements within the proposals



ref.10 Making the Most of What's There

The site is well connected to local facilities and services



Dee Road is a primary route through Norcot and part of the public transport network



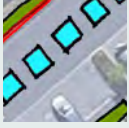
The new development will be well connected to local commercial retail and public services along the nearby Oxford and Portman Roads...



...and will be served by a number of footways within wide landscaped corridors which feel safe, useable and well overlooked



The new development will benefit from the local routes and connections being straight, direct and legible





ref.11 Natural Connections

Pedestrian pathways to the perimeter of the development aligned to highways



Cycle routes on road along Dee Road and Spey Road



Vehicular routes to 2 sides of the development with Dee Road being the primary wider carriageway, Spey Road being the secondary route – less trafficked, connecting more recent development



Public transport accessible along Dee Road with a number of bus stops within walking distance





how the design takes this context into account

The site's shape fits within a distinctive grid pattern of streets and therefore has regular straight boundaries. Its shape and size are such that it provides the ideal dimensions for an optimum layout, achieving appropriate street and parking frontage, back-to-back garden sizes and separation.

The influencing factions of the existing built form can be replicated into this development through applying similar densities, spatial relationships and urban design qualities.

Repetition of pairs of semi-detached houses with hipped roof forms

Development responding to natural levels by development running along natural contours in terraces – or stepping down the slope in the form of stepped terraces or regular semi-detached houses

Replication of strong building blocks with private/communal spaces between

Wider streets with common build-line

Containing parking on street, in public places which are well overlooked



Making the Most of What's There

- ☞ A shared vision that makes use of the topography and other existing assets on and beyond the site - and integrating existing site features into the place.
- ☞ Drawing all these considerations together to get the street, block and open space structure right from the start.
- ☞ Identifying opportunities to integrate and reuse existing features of value: both natural and manmade, on or beyond the site.

Dwellings arranged and orientated to take advantage of natural levels and avoid over-engineering



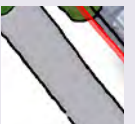
Limited number of trees on adjacent land to be respected



Proposed dwellings addressing the western boundary adjacent to proposed rear gardens - located to create a secure and protected private relationship



Allow the continued opportunity for existing residents to have their refuse collection through the development site



Sensitive boundary relationships with existing dwellings respected





Natural Connections

- Understanding the wider context - and creating a place that is well integrated into the site and the wider natural and built surroundings - a connected place that is easy to move through and around.
- Connecting to places, facilities and services, into and through the site - creating a strong and direct street, path and open space network.
- Responding to how water flows and nature moves across the site and the wider surroundings.

Pedestrian network through and beyond the site



Major neighbourhood routes around the development boundary



Vehicular entrance into the body of the site



Shared surface street

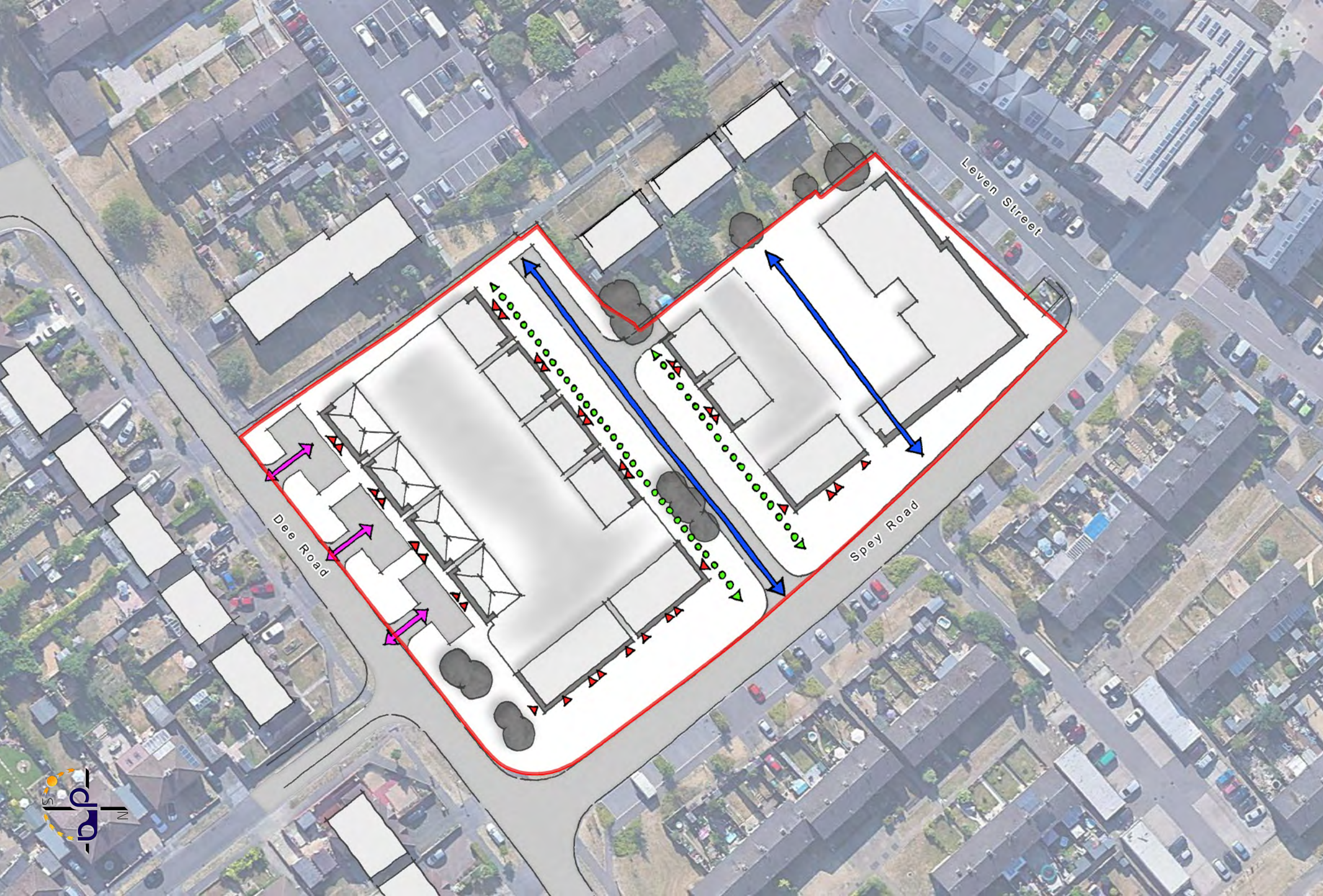


Vehicular entrance beneath the apartment building to the communal parking



Vehicular entrance to the grouped parking for the Dee Road houses





Walking, Cycling & Public Transport

- Ensuring access for all and helping make walking feel like an instinctive choice for everyone undertaking short journeys.
- Streets and paths that connect people to places and public transport services in the most direct way, making car-free travel more attractive, safe and convenient.
- Making sure that all streets and routes pass in front of people's homes – for a well overlooked public realm.

Good pedestrian & cycle connections between recent and proposed phases of the regeneration of the neighbourhood



Minimum road width for vehicles provided - allowing for fair sharing of the street space width for pedestrian and cyclist movement



View of the building frontages from the public realm



Direct & straight street typology allowing ease of movement through the proposed development





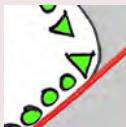
Facilities & Services

Providing open space in the right location to encourage opportunities for social interaction and helping to improve public health through physical activity and involving those affected by loneliness and isolation.

Active frontages with habitable room windows overlooking the public realm and primary pedestrian routes through the development



Important nodal pedestrian connectivity points



Proposed areas of incidental open space



Existing pedestrian route towards local amenities to the east



Connections to areas of public open space for amenity & play

