

PRP

Signature
delivering peace of mind

199-203 Henley Road & land to the rear of
205-207 Henley Road, Caversham RG4 6LJ

Design & Access Statement

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Client
Signature Senior Lifestyle
Grosvenor House
Horseshoe Crescent
Beaconsfield
Buckinghamshire
HP9 1LJ

Architects
PRP
Ferry Works
Summer Road
Thames Ditton
Surrey
KT7 0QJ

Planning
Gerald Eve
72 Welbeck Street
London
W1G 0AY

Highways
Peter Evans Partnership Ltd
21 Richmond Hill
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 1BA

Structural & Civil
Clark Smith Partnership
Whitechapel
Technology Centre
65 Whitechapel Road
London
E1 1DU

M&E
Harniss
3 Adams House
Northampton Science Park
Kings Park Road
Moulton Park
Northampton
NN3 6LG

Landscape
The Landscape Partnership
Greenwood House
15A St Cuthbert’s Street
Bedford
MK40 J3G

Site Address
199-207 Henley Road
Caversham
RG4 6LJ

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1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is provided in support of a detailed planning application for the demolition of nos 199 - 203 Henley Road and development of a new registered care home for Signature Senior Lifestyle. The application site includes the curtilage of 199 - 203 Henley Road and part of the rear gardens of 205 and 207 Henley Road.

The document is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning application drawings and a suite of other supporting documents dealing with the following matters:

- Landscape
- Town Planning
- Flood Risk
- Trees
- Transport
- Sustainability
- Air Quality

Signature is a privately owned company and one of the leading providers of quality care home accommodation in the UK. Its aim is to provide care facilities of the highest standard to meet the needs of frail elderly people, both now and in the future. It offers a fresh, positive sustainable and modern approach to living for people in their later years.

Residents are offered a range of high quality care bedroom accommodation which includes specialised nursing and dementia care. They have access to a range of communal facilities including restaurants, lounges, café, library, cinema, salon, spa bathing and therapy space.

The application includes for the construction of a new adopted road off Henley Road into the site and for associated parking and landscaped gardens for the use of the care home.

The site is bounded by Henley Road to the north, the curtilages of Ruskin Court and nos 32 - 34 Ruskin to the west, Berry Brook to the south and the curtilages of 203, 205 & 207 Henley Road to the east.

Pre-application discussions have taken place with Planning Officers at Reading Borough Council and comments from officers have been duly incorporated into the design. Residents in the local neighbourhood have also been consulted.

As both the developer and operator of its care homes, Signature has a long-term commitment to its sites and is dedicated to being a good neighbour and making a positive contribution to the local community. The majority of Signature residents and staff will come from the local area around the home, bringing benefits for the local economy and local housing supply as existing family homes are released back onto the market.

Each Signature home is registered with the Care Quality Commission and operates to the highest possible standards. Signature provides the highest standard of bespoke care tailored for the individual's specific needs. Care options in Signature homes can include day care, respite care and longer term care support, including for those with Alzheimer's and age-related dementia. A care plan is prepared for each resident after an initial assessment and evaluation. A constant dialogue with residents and their families ensures the level of care and support being provided evolves to meet the residents' changing needs.



Location plan

Site aerial view



About Signature Senior Lifestyle

Signature's aim is to provide accommodation and care of the highest standard to meet the needs of frail elderly people, both now and in the future. It offers a fresh, positive, sustainable and modern approach to living for people in their later years.



Signature Senior Lifestyle is a privately owned company and one of the leading providers of quality care home accommodation in the country. Signature Care Homes provide:

Approximately 120 new jobs in a range of roles, with staggered and flexible shifts on both a full-time and part-time basis to ensure staff do not arrive or depart at peak times.

A bespoke design that is sensitive to neighbouring properties, the area and local streetscape.

On-site car parking spaces for visitors and staff (very few residents have their own cars and Signature provides a free minibus for trips out).

Signature specialises in providing high quality care for its residents in a homely environment that delivers independence and companionship, and ensures that each resident feels at home from day one.

Signature's residents are typically frail, elderly and in need of regular assistance and support. Individual needs can vary greatly, so Signature provides flexible person-centred care that can adapt to the changing needs and circumstances of each resident. Currently there are 9 completed signature homes with further 6 under development signature employs over 1000 staff in the care sector.

The homes allow couples to stay together regardless of their differing care needs.

The Vision

Signature aims to develop and operate a select number of care homes in the UK in which it will provide a premium environment and service for those needing physical and emotional support in their senior years.

As both the developer and operator of its care homes, Signature has a long-term commitment to its sites and is dedicated to being a good neighbour and making a positive contribution to the local community and with the majority of Signature residents and staff coming from the local area around each home, there are benefits for the local economy and local housing supply, as existing family homes are released back onto the market.

The Need For Care

There is an urgent and growing need for more, high quality and specialist accommodation for elderly people in the UK.

Across the country, the number of people aged 80 or over is expected to nearly double within the next 25 years, and the number of people with dementia is expected to reach almost two million by 2050. Despite these statistics, there are still too few care home places available and not enough high quality accommodation is being delivered – a high proportion of homes are still not even providing en-suite bathrooms.

Signature is helping to address this quantitative and qualitative need, with all Signature suites featuring en-suites with shower, wash hand basin and WC.



Signature Range

Every Signature home is carefully designed to provide high quality accommodation for residents in a choice of en-suite studios and apartment-sized suites, catering for a range of different needs.

The typical resident profile living in a Signature home will include people who are relatively independent and those who need residential care, nursing care and dementia care

Signature therefore provides a range of accommodation and care levels similar to a Continuing Care Retirement Community or Retirement Village but all in one building in an urban setting.

Signature also share many of the same principles as Extra Care housing, such as having one's own front door and care delivered to individual suites, but provided via a rental model.

Residents' private rooms form part of a wider complex of communal facilities and services which support and enhance the daily lives of our residents. Facilities can vary from site to site but typically include:

- Activity rooms, where daily events and activities are based
- Sun terraces and landscaped gardens, including a sensory area for dementia residents
- Health and spa rooms, for relaxation and treatments
- Restaurant and Signature café serving residents and their visitors
- Cinema room
- Lounges and quiet rooms
- A hair salon and therapy room
- Specialist dementia communities within each home, supported by their own dedicated and secure facilities.

Signature care

Signature provides the highest standard of bespoke care tailored for the individual's specific needs. Care options in Signature homes can include day care, respite care and longer term care support, including for those with Alzheimer's and age-related dementia.

A care plan is prepared for each resident after an initial assessment and evaluation. A constant dialogue with residents and their families ensures the level of care and support being provided evolves to meet the residents' changing needs.

Each Signature home is registered with the Care Quality Commission and operates to the highest possible standards.

Signature people

Signature's dedicated and professional staff are passionate about providing the best possible care for residents and strive to make a positive difference in their lives.

Well-trained staff are on hand to assist with everyday activities, such as mobility, washing, dressing or eating; while qualified and experienced nurses are available around the clock to provide support for more specific or complex care needs.

Each Signature care home employs 120 individuals in a range of roles, including resident care, activities, housekeeping, laundry, restaurant and kitchen, administration and building maintenance. Signature is committed to delivering high quality care in well-designed buildings and to being a good neighbour in the local community.

Transport and parking

Care homes for the elderly are acknowledged to be low traffic generators. Residents tend not to own their own cars and we provide a free minibus for trips out, while staff shifts are staggered to start and finish outside of local peak times. Visitors are welcome at any time and therefore tend to visit outside of peak hours, or combine a visit with dropping the children at school or doing the weekly shop.

Signature is committed to adopting a Travel Plan for each of its homes to encourage staff and visitors to walk, cycle, use public transport and car share, with a member of staff designated the Travel Plan Co-ordinator. To encourage means of travel other than the car, each of our homes includes secure cycle parking, showers, up-to-date public transport information and a car-share scheme.

Design and landscaping

All Signature homes are carefully designed to fit in with local architectural styles and to respect their surroundings-there is no 'house style' and no two Signature homes will look the same.

The homes are set within high quality landscape and existing mature trees are always retained where possible.

Sustainable development

The principles of sustainable development are at the heart of all Signature homes. As well as excellent insulation and build quality, they aim to incorporate 'green technologies' within all their new buildings to support climate change reduction initiatives and to minimise energy loss.

These will vary depending upon the home but tend to include rainwater harvesting, renewable technologies, recycling facilities and low energy lighting.

Construction

Signature only employs contractors who are signed up to the Considerate Constructors Scheme. Every effort is made to liaise with our neighbours during construction and we aim to keep disruption to a minimum.

2. Site context

Site context

The application site is on the B4155 Henley Road which links Reading to the southwest and Henley to the northeast. The site is within Reading Borough Council. It has an area of 0.96ha and comprises the house and gardens of nos 199 - 203 Henley Road and part of the rear gardens of 203 - 205 Henley Road.

Henley Road is predominantly residential in character with the original form of development comprising large detached properties with long back gardens. Recent developments have involved building on the rear gardens of the properties in the vicinity of the site. In particular the site is adjacent to a large development at Ruskin Court which extends from Henley Road into the rear of the site.

The site is well located for access to facilities and services in the local area as well as for public transport access into Reading Town Centre.

The southern part of the site lies within Flood Zone 2 due to its proximity to Berry Brook which runs along its southern boundary.



Aerial close-up of the site



Rear of 199 Henley Road



Rear of 203 Henley Road



View of Berry Brook



View along Henley Road



View of 205 and 207 Henley Road



View along Henley Road



View of 201 Henley Road



View of Rusking Court

3. Design development

Design development

Consultation

Signature's consultation approach was to ensure that all stakeholders with an interest in the site's future should have the opportunity to engage with the project team to discuss the proposals in advance of both the submission of a formal planning application and the Council's subsequent 21-day statutory consultation. In particular it was felt to be essential to reach out to those residents on Ruskin and Henley Road living immediately adjacent to the site. Key local Ward Councillors were also approached.

The site has a lengthy planning history and the applicant carried out an exhaustive review of comments relating to previous schemes which also helped to shape the proposals during the development of the design.

An extensive door knock in the immediate local vicinity of the site was conducted backed up by a letter introducing Signature Senior Lifestyle and their emerging proposals. The scheme proposals carefully respond to issues raised through consultation. Refer to separate Statement of Community Involvement which accompanies the application.

A pre-application meeting was held with Reading Borough Council on 3rd October 2018. In response to verbal comments made at the meeting a revised design was submitted on 19th October 2018. A formal written response was then received by the applicant on 4th December 2018. An extract of the response letter relating to Proposed Layout / Appearance and Residential Amenity is incorporated into this document opposite.

In response to comments from the council:

- Heights remain as agreed with officers and the 1.5 storey link is set a sufficient distance from boundary
- Extensive landscaping and new trees combined with existing planting and trees create strong vegetation screen
- The relative floor and roof level of the link block are illustrated on page 29

Comments from planning officers

“ Proposed Layout / Appearance

These comments are in response to the plans submitted on 19th October 2018. The proposed layout seeks to retain the access road alignment as permitted, with the care home sited on the footprint of the flatted block on the site frontage, with an additional 1½ storey element linking to the permitted footprint of the central units to the rear of the site. Surface parking is provided adjacent to the main entrance with the remainder of the car parking provided at basement level.

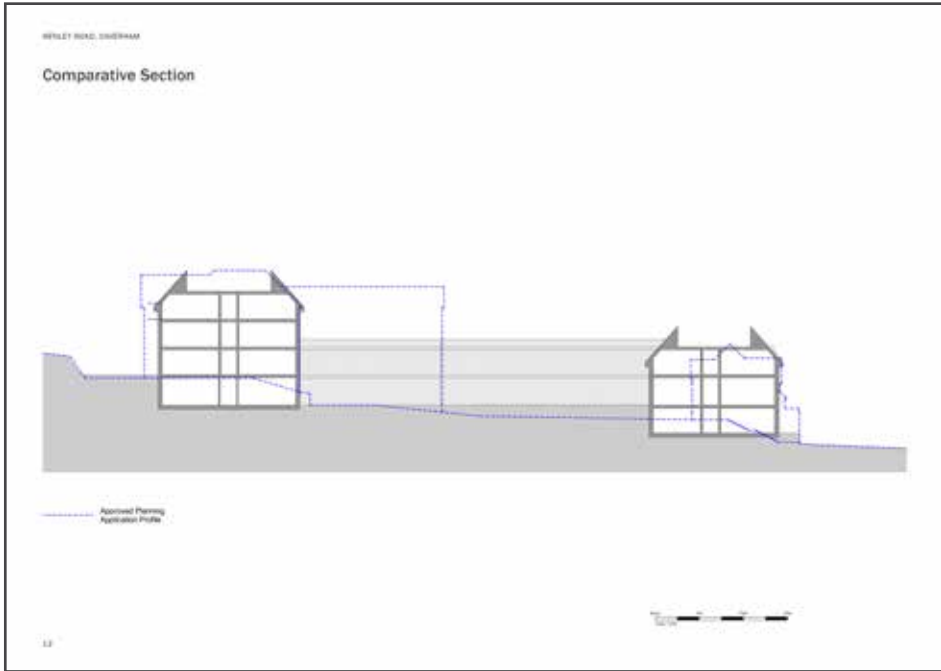
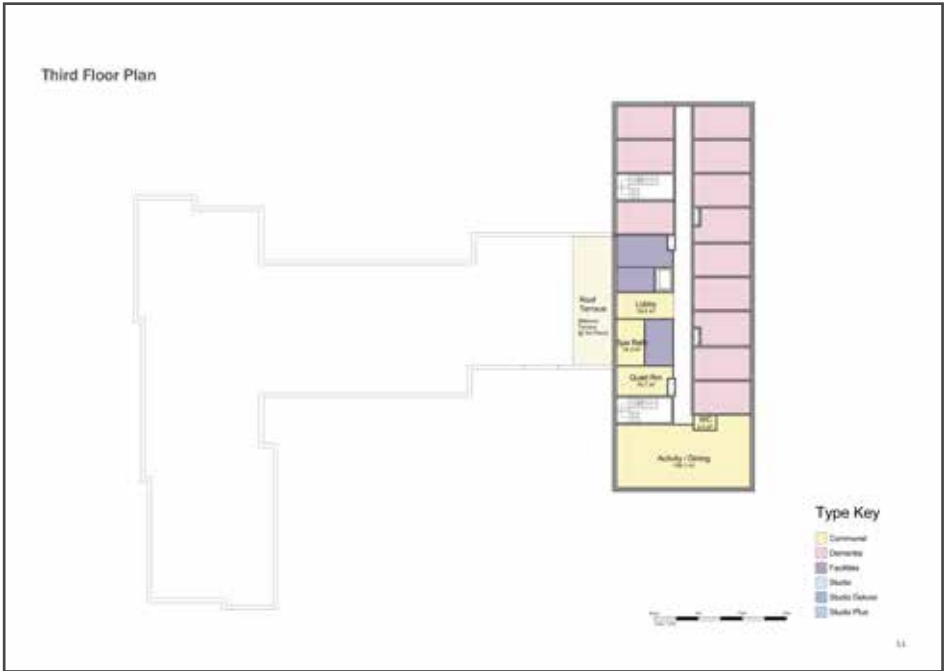
This layout is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to the detailed height and design of the building; in particular the link element. In relation to the indicative height and bulk of the building as shown on the Henley Road elevation Section A-A, this is in keeping with the adjacent Ruskin development and the pitched roof appearance is in keeping with the adjacent dwelling to be retained. The proposed wing to the rear of the site is indicated at the same height of as the permitted units and provides a greater separation to the boundary. As discussed the link element would create new built form not previously permitted, however at 1½ storeys and set a sufficient distance from the boundary, is likely to be considered acceptable, subject to confirmation of land levels in relation to the adjacent site.

The impact of any built form should be mitigated by appropriate landscaping, which has been increased from the initial submitted scheme and will need to provide a visual separation to existing and proposed development adjacent to the site.

Residential Amenity

Due to the relative siting and separation distance of the proposal to the adjacent flatted block within Ruskin, these existing dwellings are not considered to be detrimentally affected by the proposed development. In relation to No 32 and 33 Ruskin these two existing units have their rear aspect towards the development site. The ground level within the site was proposed to be set at a higher level than ground level within Ruskin, therefore the relative floor and roof level of the proposed link will need to be demonstrated. The location of proposed side facing windows and rear facing dormer windows, in the central link element, will have to be carefully considered to prevent overlooking. Adequate screening should be provided to the existing dwellings at 205, 207, 209 Henley Road. There is also the potential for future development to the rear of these units, however adequate separation distance is shown to this boundary in the current layout, with the deletion of proposed car parking to the rear of the site. ”





Comparison to extant planning consent

The current proposals make reference to the extant residential consent for the site, planning reference: 170959, by taking a similar approach in terms of the new access road and the massing across the site, making certain modifications to take account of the care home usage requiring to be contained within a single building. The comparison between the extant scheme and the new proposals are illustrated opposite.

This massing approach was discussed with the Council at the Pre-application Meeting in October 2018. Written comments on design were received from the Council in December 2018 and are reproduced in this document, along with an illustrated commentary on how the comments have been addressed in this submission.



Proposed Site Plan



4. Design Proposals

Design proposals

It is proposed to demolish nos 199 - 203 Henley Road and reduce the length of gardens behind nos 205 - 207 Henley Road in order to create a development site of 0.96ha. The proposal is for an 86 - bedroom care home with parking for 40 vehicles and extensive landscaped gardens. A new access road off Henley Road will also be constructed to serve the development.

There is a considerable fall across the site, falling away from Henley Road to the north, amounting to approximately 11m at the southern boundary. The proposed care home use requires a single building and level floorplates to make it operationally viable, therefore the way the building relates to the site topography has been carefully considered. Where the building is dug in to the site it is used to our advantage to conceal car parking and ancillary areas such as plantrooms and storage.

The proposed building massing comprises three main elements: a rectangular four-storey wing facing Henley Road which aligns with a building line set up by the existing Ruskin Court, an apartment block to the west, and the existing houses extending to the east; a single storey link building with rooms in the roof space at 90deg to the front wing; a rectangular three-storey bedroom wing forming the southern end of the building.

Because of the sloping topography the north wing is partially dug in to the site with its lower floor being a semi-basement accommodating a car park. The southern wing is also partially dug in to the site with its lower floor being a semi-basement. Cut and fill will be used to form a level plateau between the north and south wings which allows the creation of a generous, level entrance courtyard. This is illustrated by the site section on page 27 of the document.

The north wing contains parking at the lower level then three floors of care communities above, with each floor having a mix of bedrooms and communal space. The ground floor of the link block contains the main central shared communal facilities such as lounges, dining and activity space. The roof-space above here contains care bedrooms. The south wing contains care bedrooms with the main ancillary accommodation at the lower floor level where the building is dug in to the slope of the site.

External Amenity

The street frontage is set back to respond to the building line either side of the site and to create a good sized space for a landscaped garden area. This is an improvement on the parking forecourt of the existing houses on the site. Existing trees will be kept on the frontage.

There is space for a green verge on the western side of the new access road and for a new mature tree at the bottom of the ramp as the road curves to the east.

The lovely green and tree'd southern part of the site leading down to the brook will be maintained and enhanced with a sympathetic landscape scheme wrapping around the western and eastern ends of the south wing. This is an improvement on the consented scheme where housing plots extended right up to the west and east boundaries. In particular the view towards the south as one walks or drives down into the site will be opened up towards the landscaped area to the south and the brook. The landscaped area along the western edge of the site will be unbroken by any intervening housing plots and more of the existing trees along the boundary can be retained in addition to the protected trees.

The north wing has generous, south-facing, inset balconies leading off the communal spaces at each floor level and there are private patios and balconies to a number of bedrooms on the southern façade of the south wing. There is a generous shared patio garden on the east elevation leading off the main communal lounge at ground level.

Materials and appearance

The overall appearance of the scheme is traditional in terms of the use of pitched roofs and gabled bays to break the eaves lines and provide articulation to the elevations. The balconied southern elevation of the south wing provides interest, light and shade.

Generally the material palette comprises a well balanced mix of a good quality orange/red facing brick and red rustic plain tiles. The pitched and gabled ends of both the north and south wings are tile-hung to mark the entrance into the site to the north and to add interest to the view of the building as one walks or drives down into the site - this part of the south wing can also be glimpsed at a distance from Henley Road.

Relationship to neighbouring properties

The site drawing on page 31 indicates distances to neighbouring properties and boundaries which are within the Councils guidelines. The site section on page 30 also demonstrates that the new building is of a similar height to those on Ruskin and the situation is improved compared to the consented scheme by being further from the boundary. The relationship to properties in Ruskin is also improved by taking away the four-storey element that projects southwards from the front block in the consented scheme.

Floor plans

Lower ground floor plan



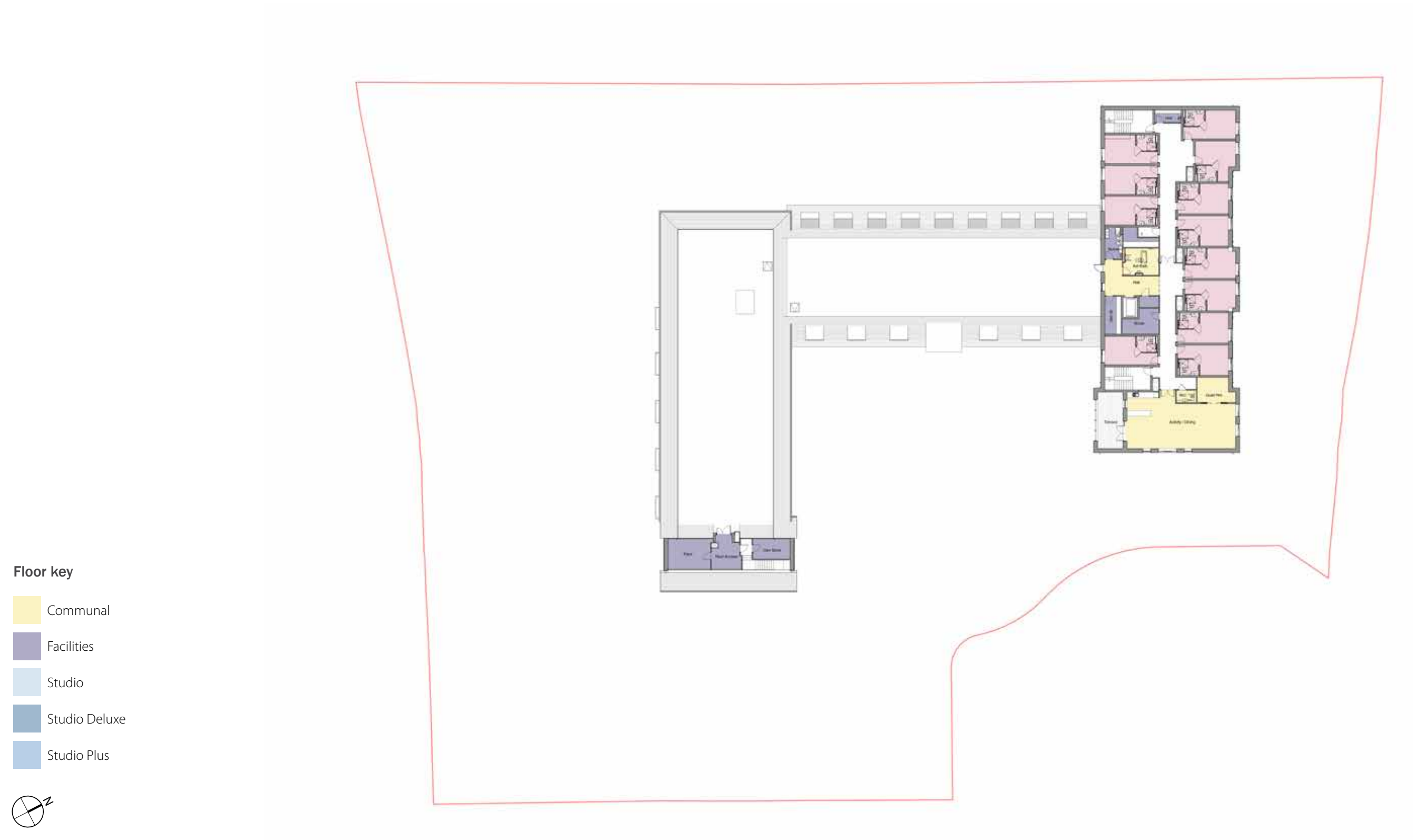
Ground floor plan



First floor plan



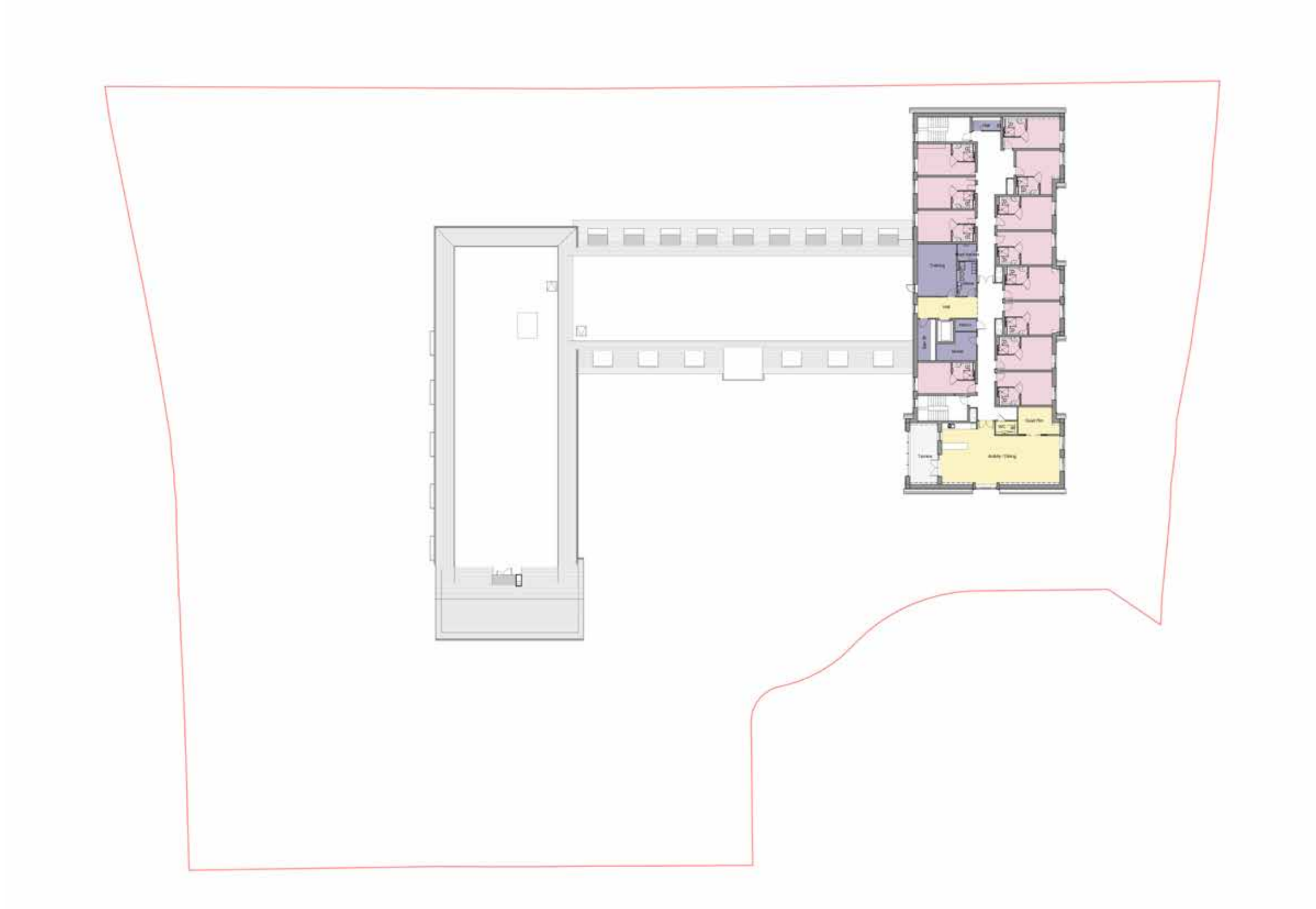
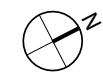
Second floor plan



Third floor plan

Floor key

- Communal
- Facilities
- Studio
- Studio Deluxe
- Studio Plus



Elevations



Henley Road - North Elevation



East Elevation - Access



South Elevation



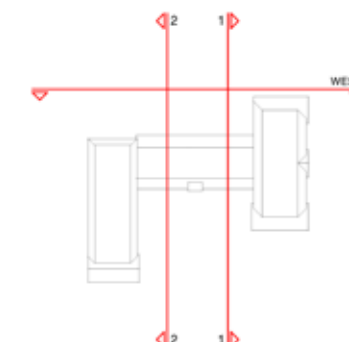
West Elevation



Site Section 1



Site Section 2



Key

Street Elevations



Henley Road Elevation

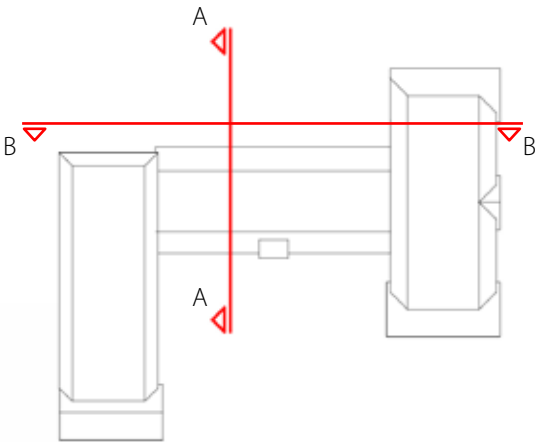


West Boundary Elevation

Site sections showing relationship to neighbours



Section A-A



Comparative section



Section B-B

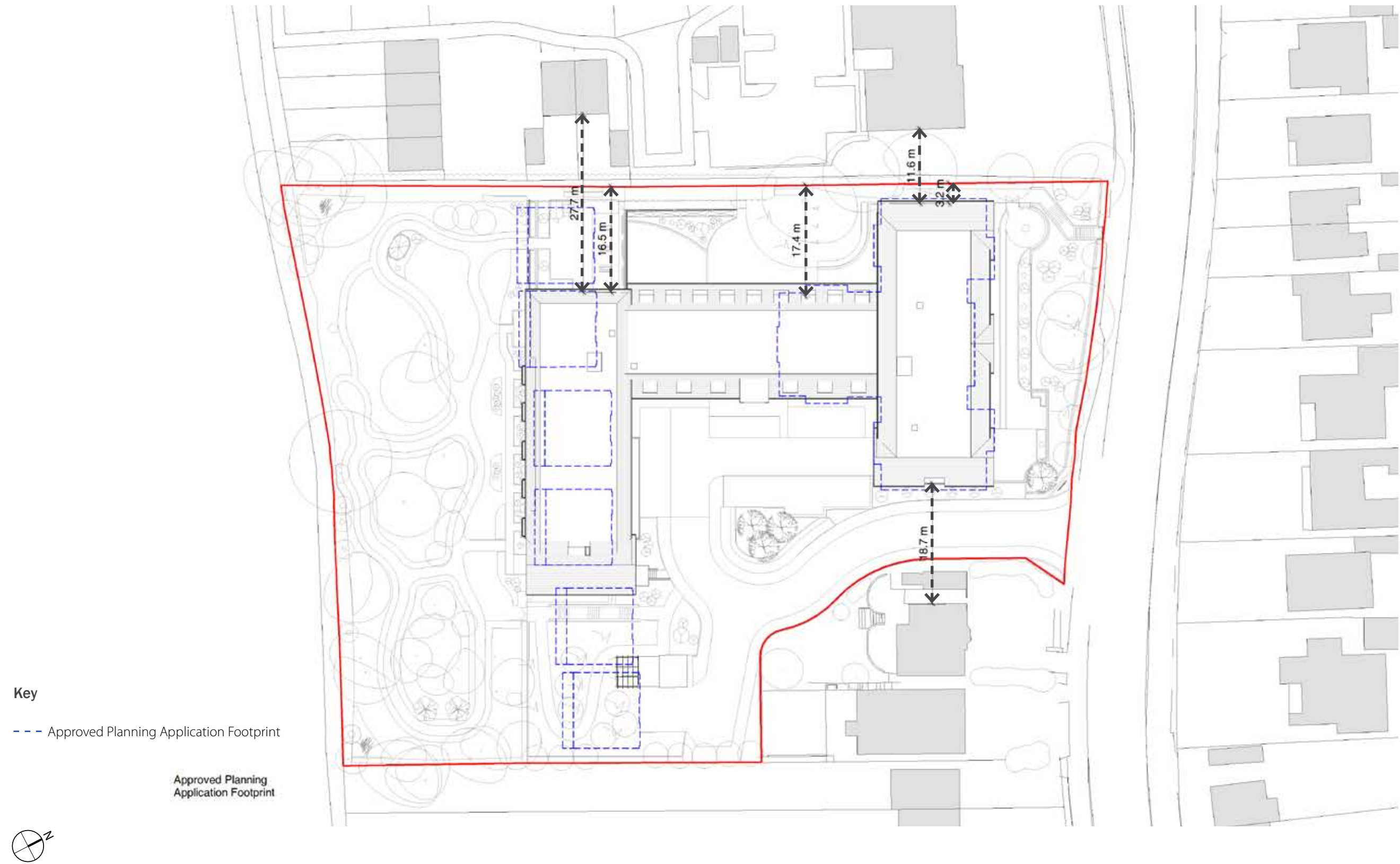
- - - Outline of approved planning application profile

Perspective view of entrance court

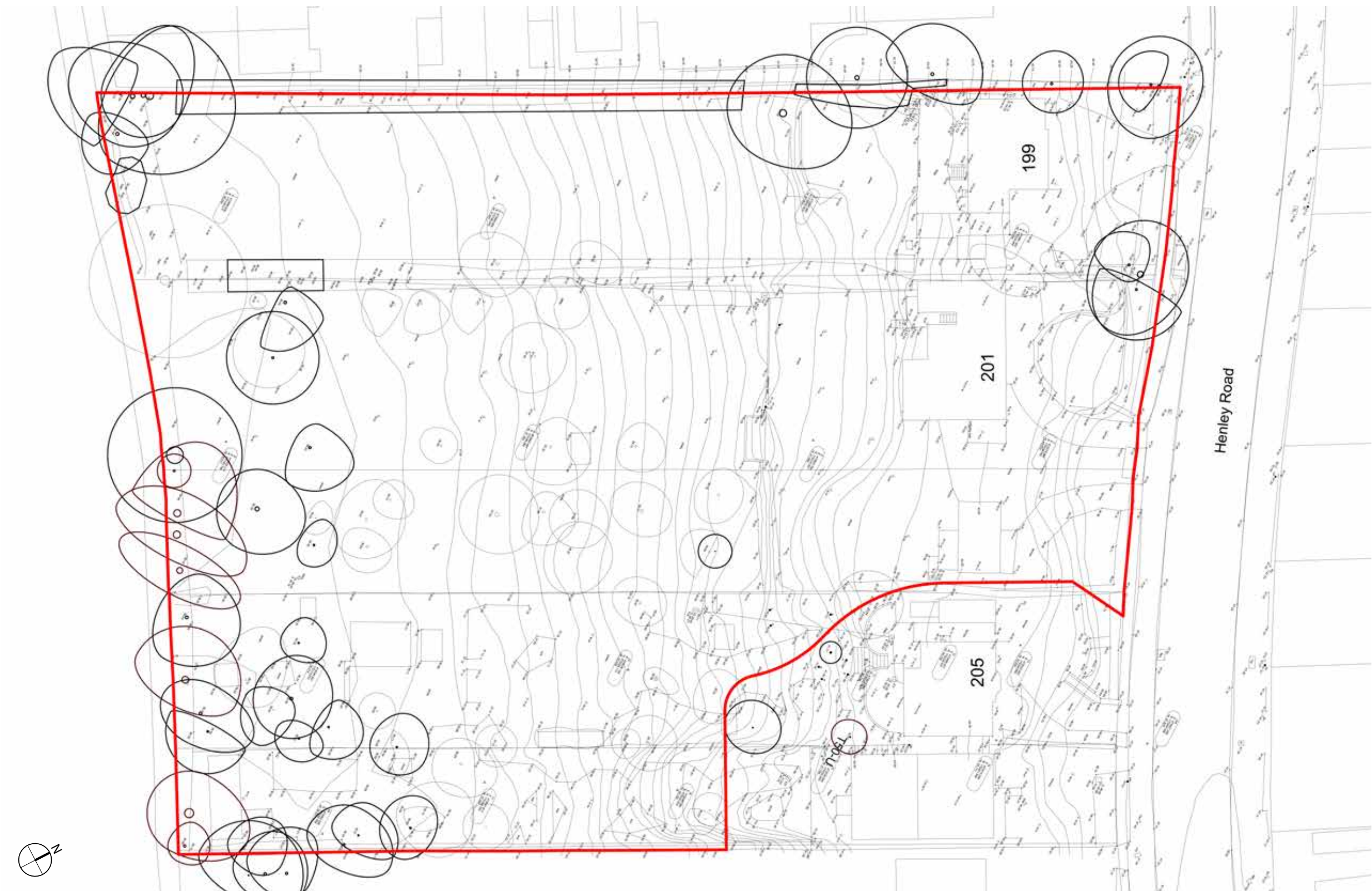




Site plan with distances to neighbours



Existing topographical survey



5. Landscape

Landscape Strategy

Existing landscape features including trees, perimeter vegetation, the brook, and the sloping nature of the site have been used to create a landscape setting for the development with an established and screened framework.

Initial Landscape Sketch

Following site surveys (arboricultural, ecology and landscape) the landscape proposals have been developed in consultation with the design team and client with an initial sketch illustrating the Landscape Strategy.



Caversham Care Home - Landscape Masterplan

The Landscape Masterplan as Illustrated overleaf has been developed from the initial sketch. Existing trees and vegetation on the boundaries of the site are retained and utilised to provide an established landscape setting to the proposed care accommodation. A proposed beech hedge to the frontage will provide a continuous landscape feature along Henley Road, reflective of other hedges in the immediate vicinity. The existing western hedgerow is retained and strengthened with additional evergreen planting to enhance the visual separation from adjacent development on Ruskin. The vegetation associated with the brook provides an established parkland garden to the south. The entrance to the site is highlighted with proposed feature trees.

A variety of outdoor spaces immediately associated with the northern and western elevations of the Care Accommodation are provided on a series of levels, taking into account the sloping profile of the site. The areas accommodate existing trees and their root protection areas and allow for relaxation and therapeutic activities such as gardening. Definition to the spaces is provided by railings, retaining walls, existing vegetation and a row of pleached trees, which reinforces the existing screening.

The parkland garden is developed with meandering paths, providing residents with a variety of walks and experiences. The garden incorporates ornamental parkland and fruiting trees, lawns, areas of bulbs and meadows and one of the existing ponds, providing both visual stimulation and biodiversity opportunities. Seating opportunities are provided including a gazebo and a viewing area of the stream. The existing trees are to be managed in accordance with arboricultural recommendations, including pollarding, with potential sculptural features made from standing trunks.

Access from the garden and maintenance is provided via a ramped access and series of steps, which provides additional tree planting opportunities.



Landscape Masterplan

The Landscape Masterplan provides a landscape with visual, therapeutic and biodiversity benefits.



Indicative Planting Schedule

A variety of planting is proposed to provide structure and sensory stimulation through touch, smell and sight with winter interest provided by colourful stems

Herbaceous Plants - Including Sensory planting		
Name	Root	Cntr
Alchemilla mollis	C	2L
Crocsmia masoniorum	C	2L
Echinacea purpurea	C	1.5-2L
Echinacea ‘White Swan’	C	1.5-2L
Geranium ‘Johnson’s Blue’	C	3-4L
Geranium macrorrhizum	C	3L
Hosta ‘Francee’	C	3L
Iris germanica	C	1L
Kniphofia ‘Royal Standard’ (S)	C	3-4L
Nepeta ‘Six Hills Giant’	C	3L
Pennisetum alopecuroides ‘Hameln’	C	3-4L
Pennisetum villosum ‘Cream Falls’	C	2L
Perovskia atriplicifolia	C	1.5-2L
Salvia officinalis ‘Purpurescens’	C	3L
Stachys byzantina	C	1L
Stipa gigantea	C	3-4L
Verbena bonariensis	C	2L

Individual Specimen Shrubs		
Name	Root	Cntr
Amelanchier lamarckii	RB	-
Choisya ternata	C	10-12L
Fatsia japonica	C	10-12L
Mahonia x media ‘Charity’	C	10-12L
Photinia x fraserii ‘Red Robin’	C	15L

Low formal Hedgerow		
Latin Name	Root	Cntr
Ilex crenata	C	5L

Infill Hedgerow Mix		
Latin Name	Root	Cntr
Ilex aquifolium	C	10L
Taxus baccata	C	10L

Shrub Planting (Low/Medium HT)		
Name	Root	Cntr
Buxus sempervirens	C	5-7.5L
Ceanothus thyrsiflorus ‘Repens’	C	3L
Cornus alba ‘Sibirica’	C	3L
Cornus sanguinea ‘Mid-Winter Fire’	C	3L
Cytisus praecox ‘Allgold’	C	3L
Hebe franciscana ‘Blue Gem’	C	5-7.5L
Hedera helix ‘Hibernica’	C	3L
Hydrangea anomala petiolaris	C	3L
Lavandula angustifolia ‘Ashdown Forest’	C	3L
Lavandula ‘Vera’	C	3L
Lonicera japonica ‘Halliana’	C	2L
Lonicera nitada ‘maigreen’	C	3L
Prunus laurocerasus ‘Zabelliana’	C	5-7.5L
Rosa canina	C	3L
Rosa ‘Kent’	C	2L
Rosmarinus officinalis ‘Severn Sea’	C	3L
Symphoricarpos doorenbosii ‘White Hedge’	C	3L
Viburnum tinus ‘Eve Price’	C	5-7.5L
Vinca minor	C	1.5-2L

Individual Trees		
Name	Form	Root
Acer campestre (site frontage and eastern boundary)	Standard (extra-heavy)	C
Betula pendula (eastern and southern boundary)	Standard (Heavy)	C
Betula utilis jacquemontii (Parkland)		C
Juglans regia (Feature tree/Parkland)	Standard (extra-heavy)	C
Prunus serrula (Feature tree Car Park entrance)	Multi-stem	C
Pyrus calleryana ‘Chanticleer’ (Ramp area)	Standard (Heavy)	C

