Curl la Tourelle Head Architecture



Housing



Wayne Head

"I grew up on a council estate in Kent, a small one in the middle of a wealthy area. It was a social short-circuit: we were always conscious of being 'around the back'. The house itself was of poor quality—it had single-glazed windows and little insulation, which meant in the winter the condensation would form into ice on the glass. Despite that, there were some small touches that made a big difference. We had big pushchairs then, and there was a special place to store these under the stairs, and a zone for bins to be kept so they weren't left on the street. There were also different kinds of outdoor space—a small garden that was ours only, and shared common ground where we used to play with our friends. My mum once met the architect behind the estate, who said she'd had young families in mind when she designed it. Despite the poor construction, she did have some understanding of what it might be like to actually live there, and the social details she'd built into the design made all the difference to us.

As I grew up, living in many different kinds of accommodation when I moved to London, and spending time in both European and Asian cities, I began to see not only the huge discrepancies in housing design but also in how cities functioned: Copenhagen was a wonderful place to explore on foot with my young family, but Delhi was anything but a walkable city. I also began to see how good housing responded to big ideas about society and culture, environment and economy, how well-designed homes and communities could avoid monoculture in favour of a distinct yet diverse neighbourhood identity.

It is exactly this kind of responsible, thoughtful design that we aim to achieve at Curl la Tourelle Head. The best homes are a place of retreat from the city, but also reflect the urban context. By designing from both micro and macro perspectives, and giving our clients the information they need to make the right decisions and keep the project momentum, we can make a huge difference to the life and health of a citizen.

Amrit Seera

We saw how important the 'home' became during the pandemic; notonly as a place to relax, cook and sleep, it became a school, an office, a gym understood the importance of connection to outdoor space, the importance of community on a micro (next door neighbours) to macro (your local high street shops) scale, we developed more hybrid lifestyles understanding a need for balance in life. Understanding the different narratives, nuances, and microcosms of 'the home' is where housing design becomes exciting and challenging. In a time where housing is highly contentious, in particular the pace at which it is being delivered, the affordability,

and the quality of housing, it's important we are designing homes to last long after we are gone, with as minimal impact to it's environment as possible, and affordable to buy and maintain.
Having lived in a suburban neighbourhood most of my life I am fascinated in making the ordinary extraordinary, how do we bring the sublime to suburbia? Taking these concepts from an urban scale to a bedroom, or kitchen or bathroom scale, how do we take housing and make it extraordinary? Are we designing the extraordinary in the materials, in the comfort, in the detail, in the social value? We must always go back to thinking about the future residents and families that will take this space from being a 'house' to a home.

Esme Fieldhouse

As someone who lives on a housing estate in London, I feel fortunate to have first-hand experience of the strong sense of community and solidarity harnessed here: a special and organically evolved consequence of living in density among a diverse group of neighbours.
However, estates have become precarious places – vulnerable to significant regeneration and potential demolition, when not approached in the right way has seen the displacement of well-established communities across our cities. I believe in everyone having the right to home, regardless of an economically measured status.
Achieving a strong sense of home is in large part a design challenge. It requires vision and empathy: how to improve daily lives through a generosity of space, daylight and flexibility. Architects can and should be active advocates of the right to home.
As a champion of accessible and equitable public spaces, I also know the importance of understanding that home is not confined to inside the front door but equally about the quality of communal, shared space and allowing opportunities for residents to take agency over these together.
Well-designed housing should empower residents as individuals and a collective.

Marianne Christiansen

"I grew up in the outskirts of Odense, Denmark's third largest city. Most of the people I know there have a nice place to live regardless of their social or financial standing. And their homes have many features I've come to appreciate since living in the UK. They have good insulation and double- or triple-glazed windows. They have integrated storage, and built-in bin cupboards. They're designed with a strong awareness of light. The quality of these homes became more apparent as I grew older and much more obvious as I moved abroad.

Good design makes housing much more than just the sum of the bricks and mortar it's made from. Well-designed housing inspires people to take ownership and care better for it: it lasts longer and so people stay longer and their sense of belonging increases. Although we just don't spend enough on housing in the UK, I believe in an economy of means, where good design can help the money available to be spent where it matters the most.

I'm particularly fond of the Danish Taet-Lav (Dense-Low) housing movement, a social housing model that provides the same qualities and benefits as bigger houses. The design of the communal areas—indoor and outdoor—is very important, and that's something we should bring to social housing here.

Eleanor Hill

"Well-designed housing has an enduring effect on the occupant—the home is the backdrop to human experience. Access to good housing should be a fundamental right but too often our homes define what course our life takes, or how we value ourselves in society. My own background was very rural, so I had the privilege of having access to nature in both domestic and public settings. As a result, I've always recognised the value of green space to our personal wellbeing, and want to bring this connection to nature into every project.

My MA thesis looked at housing estate regeneration and the discrepancies between private and social housing in the UK, exploring the compartmentalisation of housing elements, and how these have evolved in social housing contexts. This academic experience has influenced my egalitarian values and approach to design now I'm working in practice. The main issue we have to tackle is a lack of high quality, affordable homes, but we also need to break down the barriers to small-scale development which have always discouraged individuals from building for themselves."

Empathise and engage

If there's one thing we've learned makes better buildings, it's empathy. Architecture never happens in isolation—and simply by being interested and engaged, we've found it's possible to open up the conversations that connect a scheme to its clients and community.

We ♥ constraints

We believe that the more constraints there are, the better the architecture. If there aren't any constraints, we create them. Challenging sites, existing buildings and complex briefs almost always present incredible opportunities for great design.

Social detail

If a site's constraints guide the bigger design decisions, then it's empathy that informs the smaller, social details. These details frame the human narratives that aren't included in the brief, anticipating specific moments in the users' lives.

Passive future

To limit our environmental impact, we start with what is already there. By manipulating the form and fabric of a building whether new or existing, we can work with the existing conditions of topography, light and orientation, and harness the natural energy sources offered by air, ground and water.

Mud on our boots

Good architecture is as much about what happens on the building site as it is about what's on the drawing board. By working alongside contractors as well as clients we can ring-fence the ideas and details that matter, championing the quality of the building throughout its construction.

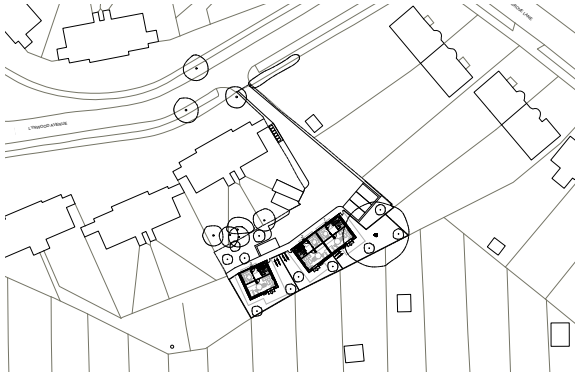
Curl la Tourelle Head

Sutton Social Housing Back to Front

This project was born out of a relationship with the London Borough of Sutton that has lasted several decades, and includes our design for the Sutton Life Centre (a multi-purpose community building), primary schools and refurbishments. Looking to use their land more effectively to meet an increased need for housing, and responding to Policy H2 in the London Plan recommending the use of small brownfield sites to reduce the impact on greenfield ones, Sutton had identified a number of opportunities for infill development. Often occupied by rundown garages, many of the sites were hidden in inhospitable places, but had a variety of interesting contextual conditions. Our brief—following a short competition—was to carry out a study to explore the potential of these 'blind spots' for development.

We visited nine very different sites during our research. Some were tucked behind high street shops or occupied an unbuilt gap in a residential row; others were interstitial areas on the edges of estates or unused plots backing onto neighbouring gardens. Rather than working remotely, we spent time at all of them, making sketches, talking to dog walkers and other passers-by, and looking in particular at the green amenities available.

Our study set out ideas for 44 new homes across the nine locations. We treated the projects as a family, developing a standardised palette of layouts and materials, and offered the potential for them to be constructed as a modular or panellised kit of parts offsite. The design principles were informed by the 'Good Quality Homes for All Londoners' supplementary planning guidance which sits alongside the London Plan. Most have the character of a traditional two-up, two-down and arebuilt in high quality handmade brick, with pitched roofs and recognisable chimneys. Throughout, we tried to hold on to the general amenity, the smallest moves that make the biggest difference to everyday lives. Stair cores have natural light, the large windows in the main living rooms are oriented for the best aspect at certain times of day, balconies are generous and hallways wide enough to bring the buggy in.



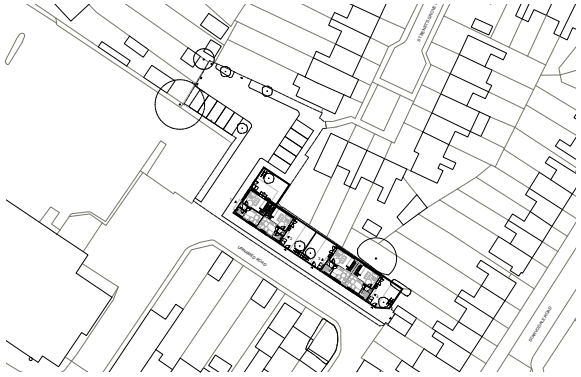






















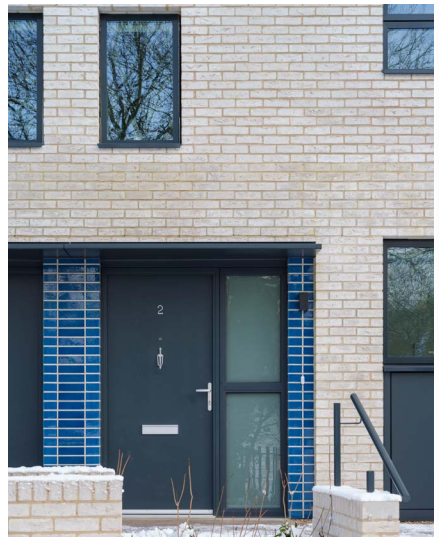
Early sections exploring the contextual conditions of specific sites, which varied greatly in size.

Ground floor plans in context with images showing their contextual conditions.



This environmental section shows our early intent to build with a cross-laminated timber (CLT) frame, giving a natural, almost Scandinavian, quality to the inside spaces. The distinctive chimneys respond to the suburban location and also assist with the passive ventilation of the homes.





There are common details and design features used across all of the sites. These elevations of the single family and multiple-unit housing have a familiar pitched-roof form.



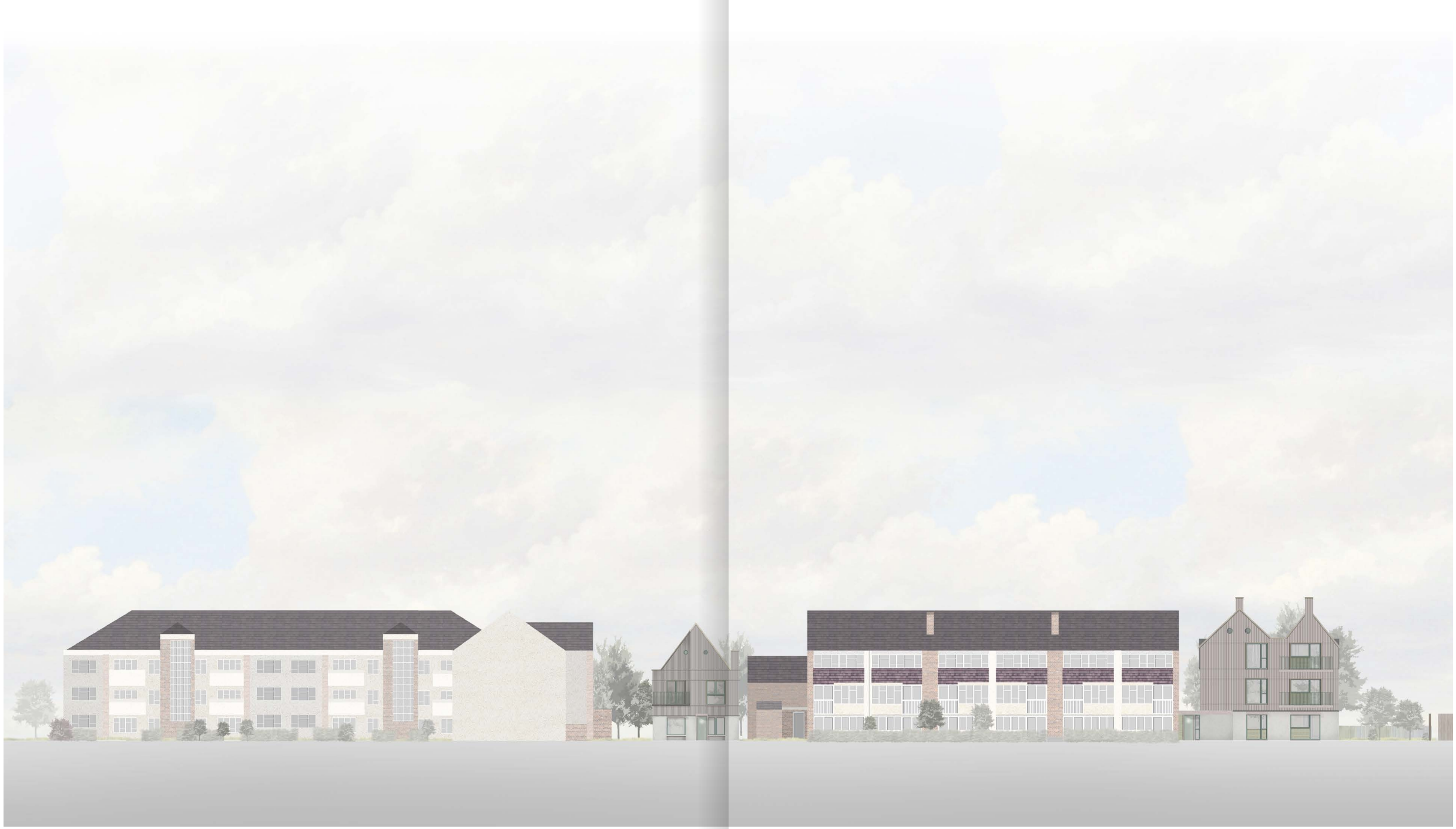
An aerial image of Bisham Close nestled in its suburban context.





The homes on Radcliffe Gardens are cranked away from one another to look out onto an existing tree, taking full advantage of the local landscape.

Radcliffe Gardens is on an elevated, former garage site in a residential area. We ensured that all homes are accessible and provide private and safe spaces for residents.



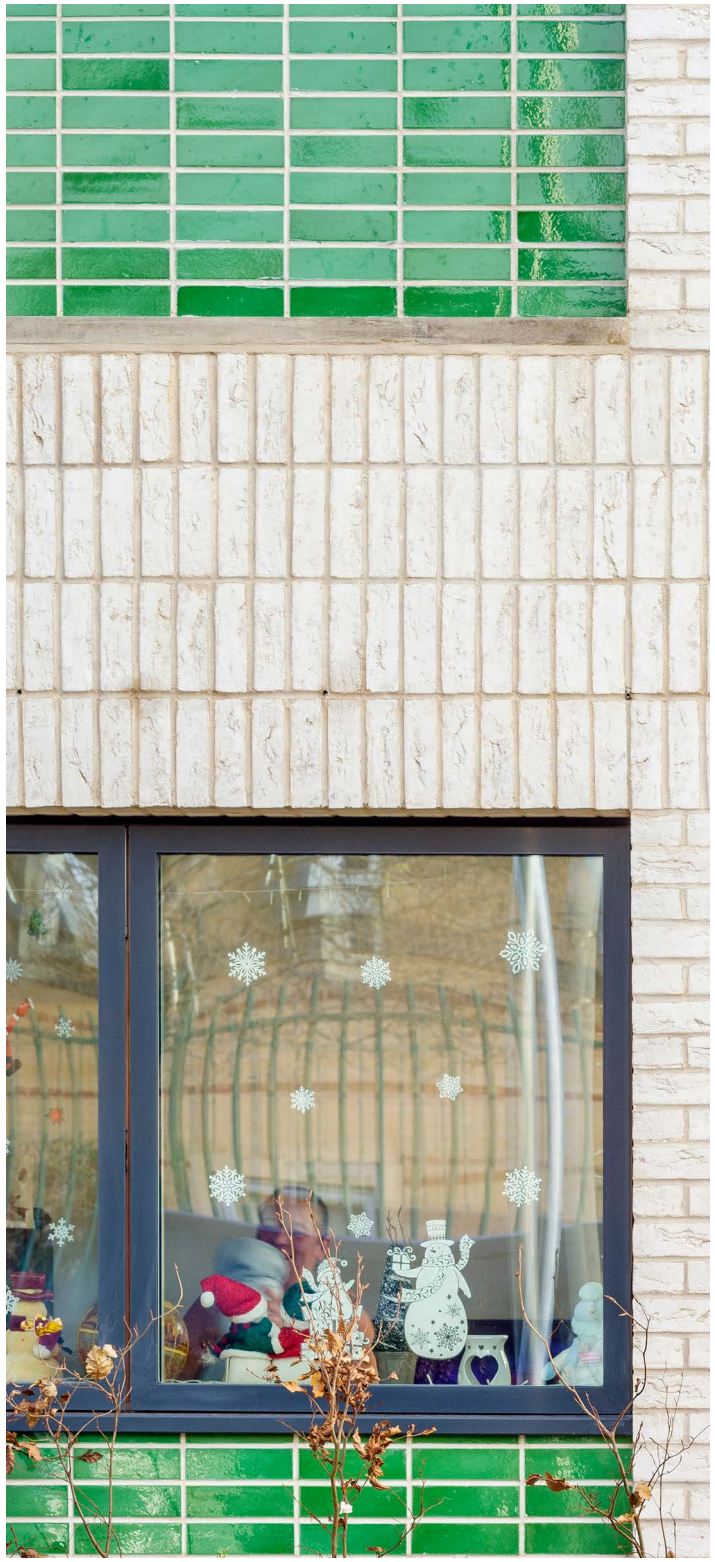
Guided by the idea of home
as a refuge, we took particular care in
detailing the arrival sequence, whatever
the scale, giving residents shelter as they
approach their front door.



←
Wellesley Court has active flank walls which provides double aspect to the living areas and passive surveillance.

Overleaf
Soldier course brickwork frames the openings.

The double aspect living areas in Wellesley Court.





Newport Wales Housing Retrofit Improving Modern Well-being

We are working with Newport on a major retrofit project of 318 social-rent homes across 10 sites in South Wales. The sites all have existing 'Easiform' housing stock constructed immediately after WWII with uninsulated load bearing concrete walls causing issues with thermal performance and internal condensation build up. We initiated the project with a retrofit first mindset, assessing each site on an individual basis and only proposing rebuild in a few instances where the condition of the block was not suitable for renovation.

The retrofit strategy targets improvements to resident's private amenity space, with the addition of large south facing balconies, which will also shelter the blocks from excessive solar gain. Landscaping around the blocks will be improved with clearer circulation routes and the definition between public and private spaces demarcated. As part of the landscape strategy, a wide scale sustainable drainage scheme is envisaged with swales, ponds and rainwater gardens all used to hold rainwater on the sites.

The exterior of the blocks will be insulated using natural insulation products, with the existing render removed and the blocks re-clad, windows will also be replaced with triple glazing and the existing attic space will be super-insulated, providing a high performing thermal envelope which benefits residents' well-being, health and heating bills. On the roof, photovoltaics will be fixed and heat generation will be supplemented through either ground or air source heat pumps.

Stepping inside the blocks, communal corridors will be updated, and refuse and cycling storage will be rationalised. The flats themselves will be altered to provide dual aspect living spaces, with the balconies providing a direct link to the improved landscape. Corridors connecting the living space to the front door will be added to improve the fire strategy and internal doors will be assessed for fire performance.

Our hope is that this tailored retrofit strategy will improve the lives of the residents, the local area and also the wider environment, whilst also preventing tons of unnecessary construction waste from filling up landfill sites.



Aerial view of Alway, Newport showing the proposed potential sites for the rebuild and retrofit of Easiform housing in the neighbourhood.

Site images showing areas for rebuild and retrofit.







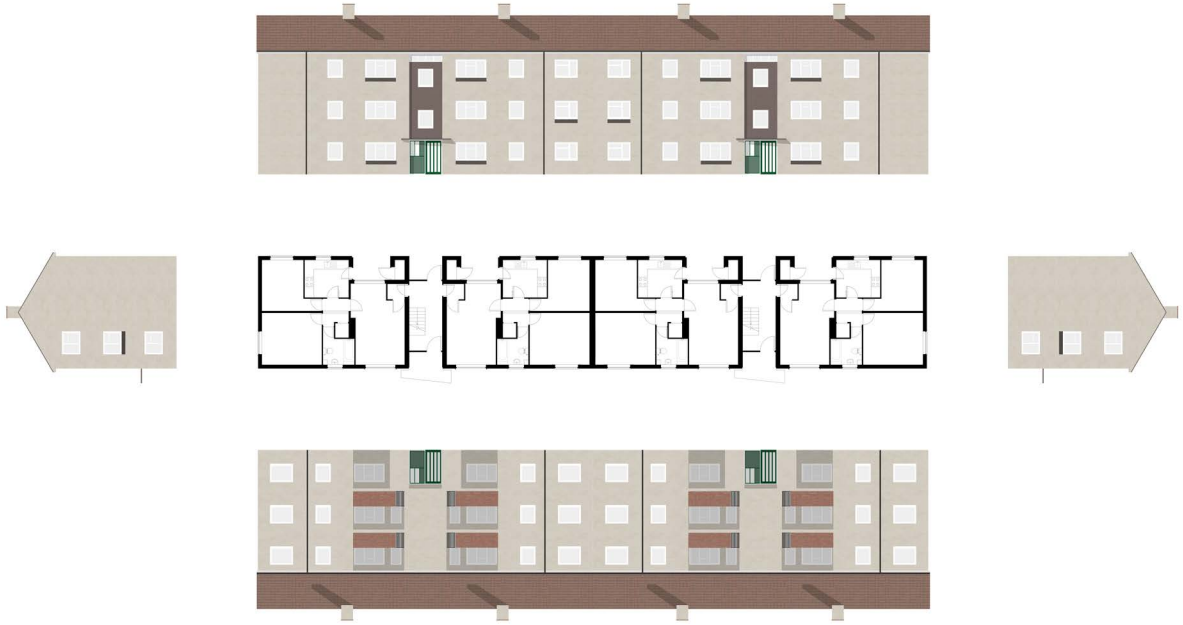


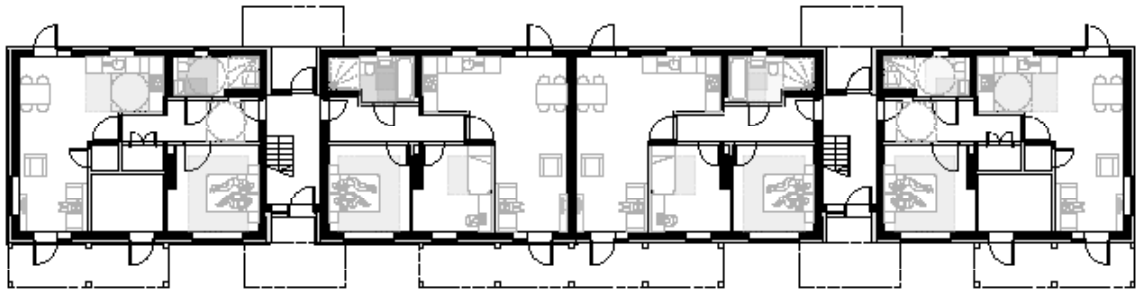






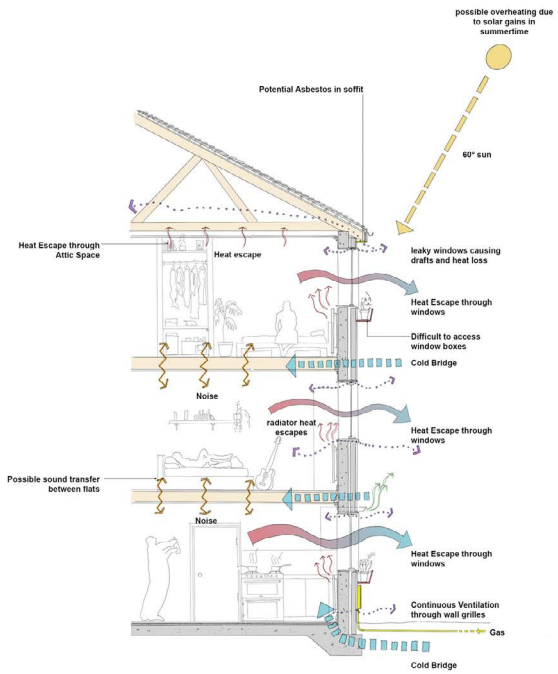




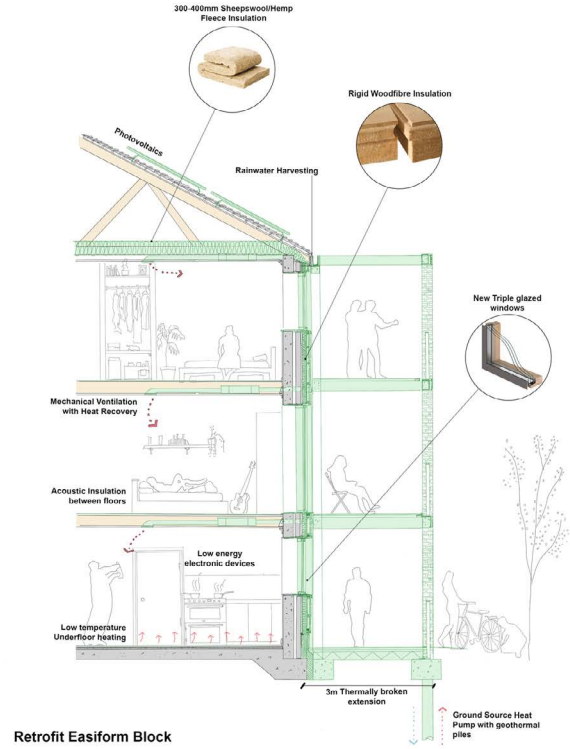


Foldout elevations and plan of existing Easiform housing.

Plan exploring ideas for retrofitting the existing homes.



Existing Easiform Block

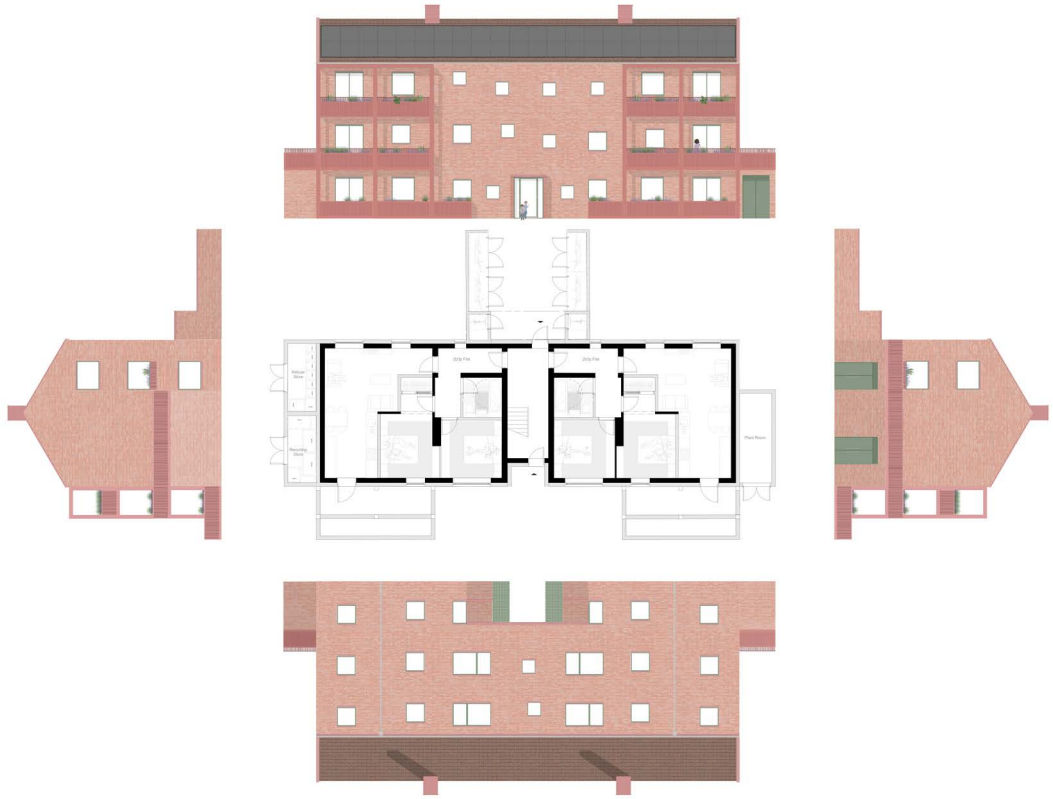


Retrofit Easiform Block

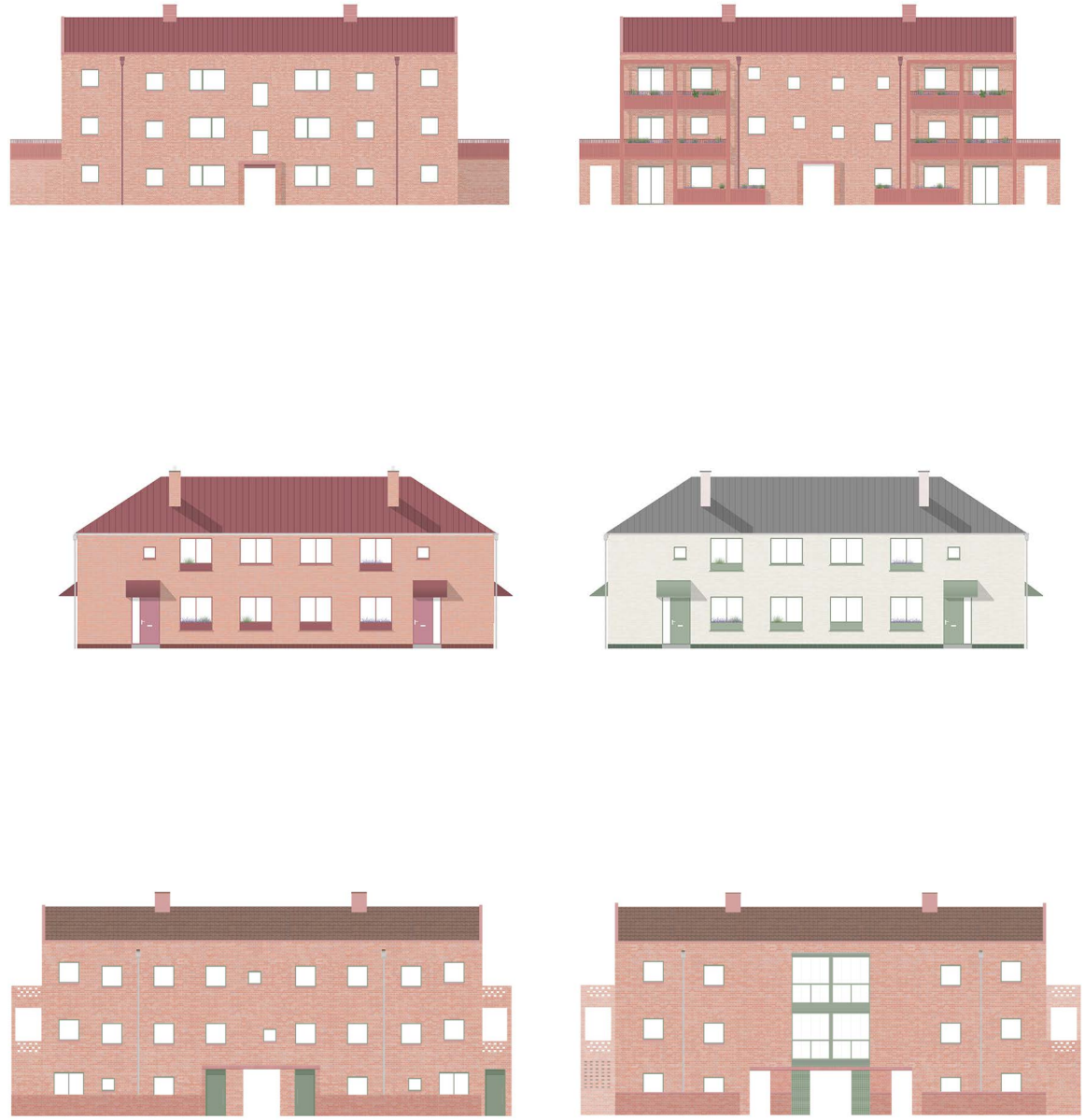


Surveying key opportunities and constraints with the existing 'Easiform' housing stock. We always approach with a retrofit first mindset.

All of the sites are existing 'Easiform' housing constructed after WWII. The walls are uninsulated, load bearing concrete which has presented issues including thermal performance and internal condensation build up.



Retrofit block type elevations and plans
for Easiform Block A on Aberthaw Road.



Newport Wales Housing Re-build Improving Modern Well-being

The proposed developments will deliver 40+ social rent homes across two sites in Newport, Wales. Both sites aim to utilise the steep topography that typifies the area to creating south facing sun-filled gardens and public spaces for neighbours to meet and the community to gather.

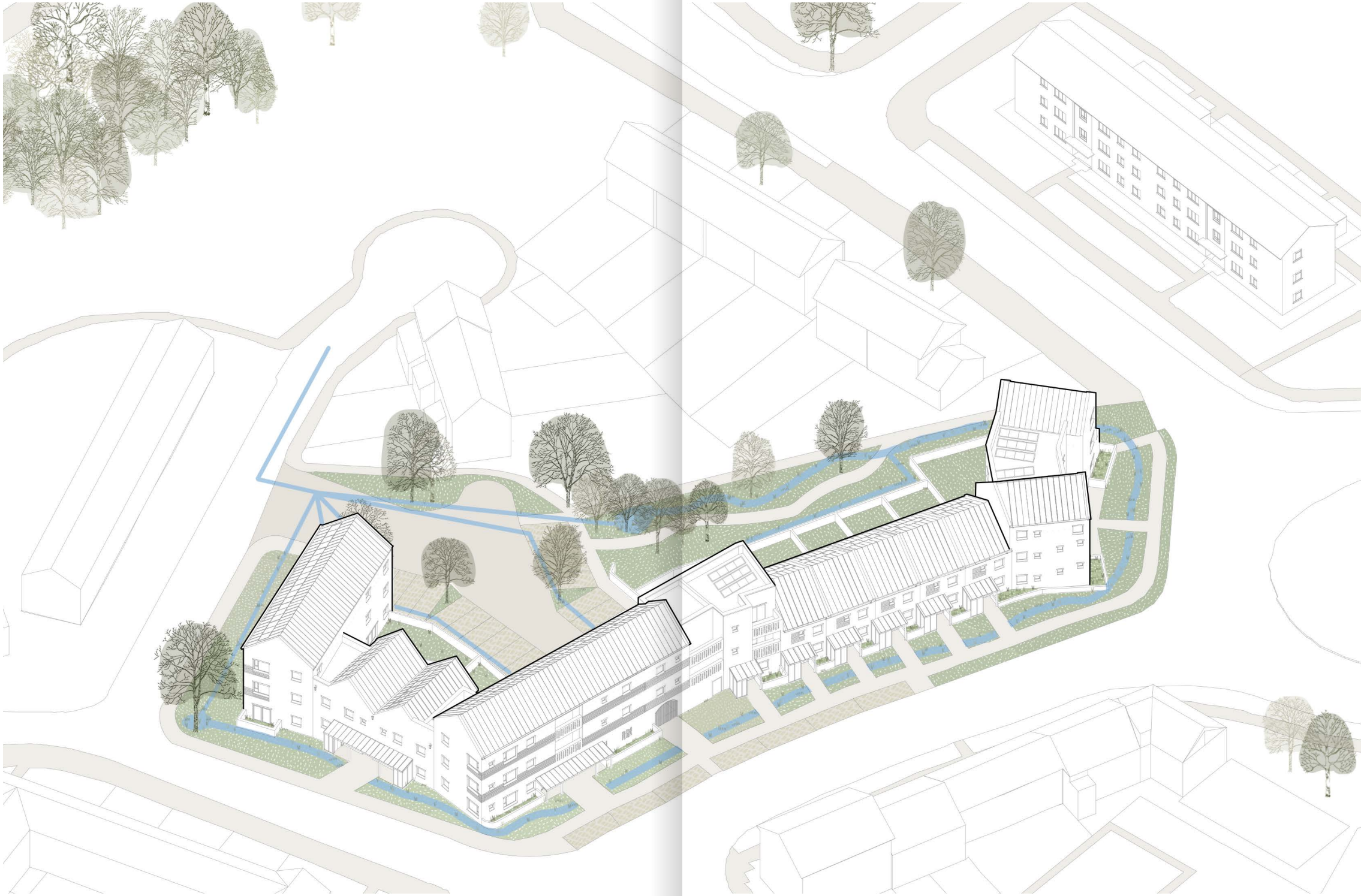
The design of the houses takes its cues from typical Welsh terraced housing, stepping familiar pitched house type forms up the hillside sites. Each of these houses and all ground floor flats are given their own front door and sheltered porch to create active streets and maximise social interaction, they are arranged to reflect the characteristics of the surrounding context with a mixture of two and three storey buildings arranged to face on to the street whilst creating a green centre to both sites.

The site's comprise of a mixture of family homes, smaller flats and wheelchair accessible flats to blend the community mix, with all flats given dual or triple aspect to maximise the amount of light entering the home. Care has been given to the central circulation areas of the flats through generous stair cores, with a central void to provide additional light and an important visual connection between the floors.

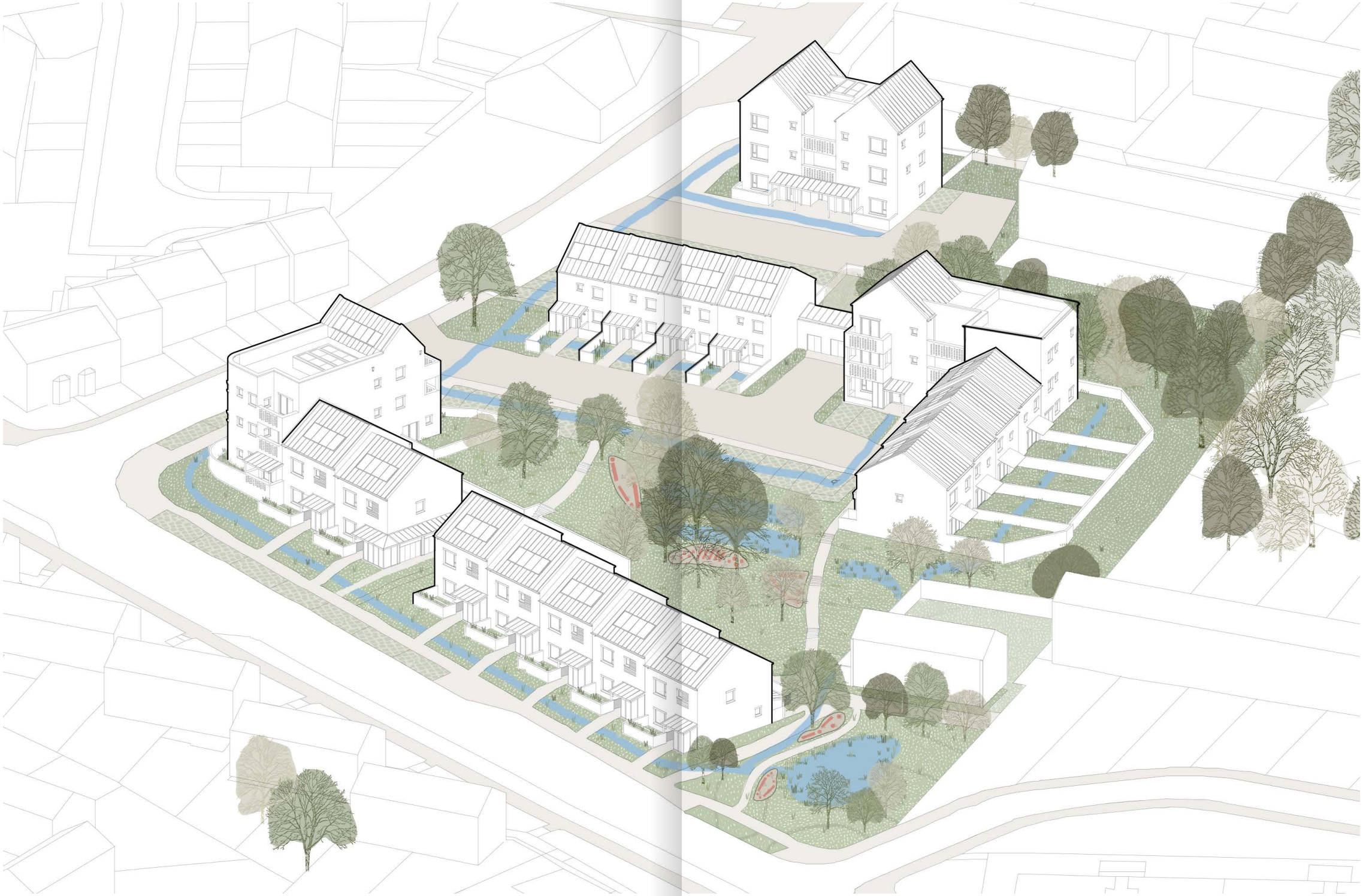
All new homes have been designed to minimise operational carbon emissions, with designs targeting EPC-A and Net-zero accreditation. This has been achieved through a fabric first strategy, minimising the form-factor of the proposals and maximising the amount of terraced south facing homes. A deep external wall build up is then provided to allow for high levels of insulation, with deep reveals around the triple glazed windows adding to the external solar shading strategy. On site renewables are also integral to the gas-free schemes, with all homes provided with an air source heat pump (ASHP) as their heating supply, and photovoltaic (PV) panels on the rooftops providing electricity.

All flats are also provided with mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) units to ensure continual fresh air ventilation whilst preventing the loss of heat already generated by the ASHPs.

The design's intention is that these interventions will improve the lives of the residents, the local area and also the wider environment. Providing homes which are warm, safe and bolster the community. Eliminating fuel poverty and providing much needed social rent homes.



Aberthaw Road Sustainable Drainage Systems proposal drawing.



Penkin Hill Sustainable Drainage Systems proposal drawing.





Penkin Hill East rebuild site elevation.

Aberthaw Road North rebuild site elevation.



Indicative section showing sustainability strategy.



Artistic immpression of Aberthaw Road looking West across the proposal.



Elevation study for Aberthaw Road showing recessed entrance.



Elevation study for Penkin Hill showing
recessed covered entrances.



Artistic immpression of Aberthaw road
looking West accross the proposal.

Teviot Avenue Social Housing Essex

We are currently working with Thurrock Council to deliver 48 new homes on Teviot Avenue, in South Ockendon, Essex. The scheme provides a mixture of housing and apartments, responding to local requirements. Ranging from 1-bedroom, 2-person flats all the way through to 4-bedroom, 6-person homes, creating a mixture of tenants with the aim of creating a thriving mixed community. The homes will be spacious and offer a careful balance between private and communal spaces, whilst providing value for money.

Our design principles were informed by the residential vernacular and our guiding sustainable values. Our response features socially active corners, views into sun-filled south facing gardens and the neighbouring woodlands. The design is inherently sociable with sheltered porches and communal corners for socialising and play.

As part of our sustainability strategy, we will work closely with the design team as the design develops to integrate improved biodiversity, sustainable drainage, air source heat pumps and using passive heating, ventilation, and cooling strategies such as large windows and shading on south facing facades. Rewilding the courtyard to increase biodiversity around the new homes to create healthy, joyful, and sociable external spaces.







View from the apartment stairs of the shared communal garden space

Long elevation along teviot avenue
Elevation along the new street being created

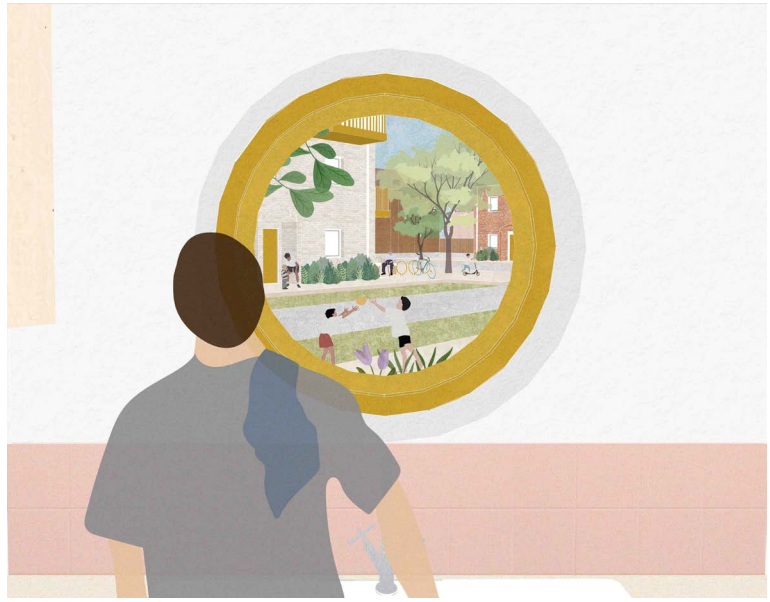


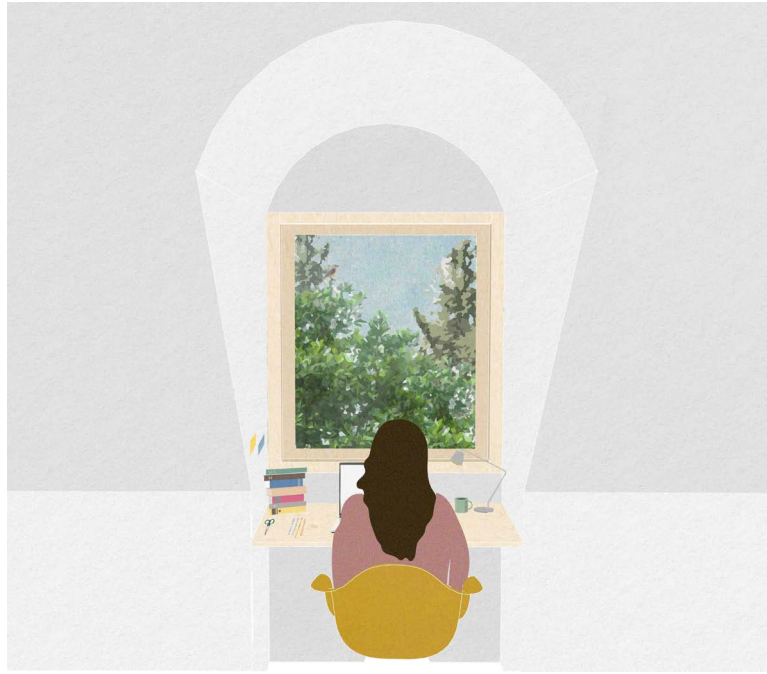


←
View along new street

→
Looking out over the round window above the sink, framing a view of the social corner

↘
View from the loft bedroom, looking at the tree line of the neighbouring golf course









←
Aerial View of the site showing a mixture of housing and apartments, responding to the local requirements

↙
1:100 model of apartment block

↓
1:50 model of the communal apartment 'yard' space



Housing for the Homeless Designing Quality Homes

This scheme consists of the redevelopment of a triangular parcel of land in central Dover which is currently in use as a car park. Dover District Council (DDC) are the freeholder of the site and have instructed Curl la Tourelle Head Architecture (CLTH) to develop proposals for high quality new affordable housing to meet the urgent need for new homes.

The site is located in a prominent and elevated position, overlooking Dover Town centre and a short walk to Dovery Priory Train Station. The site is accessed off Military Road and on the southern embankmanet to Folkestone road. The site is within the Dover settlement boundary and the Town Castle ward.

The client's Brief is to maximise the number of homes on site and to ensure that the proposals combat fuel poverty by adhering to the highest environmental standards through the adoption of The Future Homes Standard. This will ensure performance above the minimum required through Building Regulations alone.

Given the site's proximity to adjacent Conservation Areas and the Grade II listed Alma Hostel, DDC Housing Officers have also specified a building that will 'enhance the local vernacular' and offer a design that will 'provide inspiration to future occupiers', encouraging a sense of ownership and belonging in future occupiers.

The proposal is a linear apartment building placed close to the edge of the adjacent slope down to Folkestone Road, offering views across the town to the North. The length of the scheme is defined between retained trees to East and West of the proposed footprint. External walls are angled to allow for an increased depth in the plan form and to better protect the adjacent root protection areas.

Car parking is arranged to the SW corner of the site and accessed via a short ramp. The ramp also allows for the servicing of an existing substation in the NW corner of the site





Site axonometric highlighting the area for the housing development.

Historic etching of the site in 1837.







Angled facades add interest to the elevation and allows for extended three storey facades to this less sensitive side of the building.



East Elevation facing Worthington Street. The faceted profile turns with balconies extending past the tree line allowing views to and from this corner of the building.

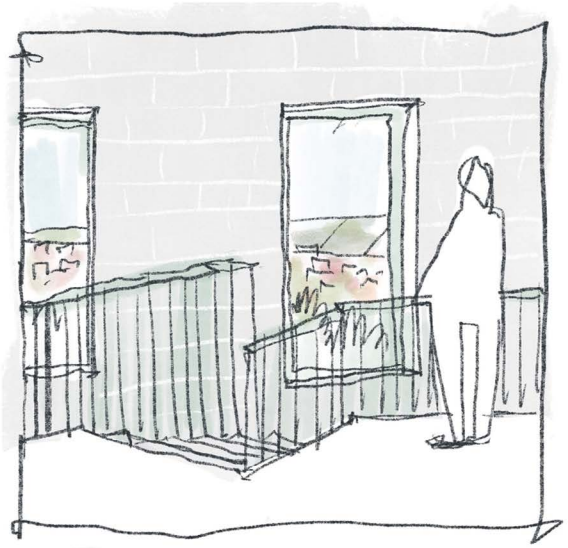


West Elevation, the West facing balconies capture the evening sun and limit enclosure over the path and communual entrance.



Through the balcony and up to Dover Castle.









Interior view of interiors showing landscape beyound through window views.

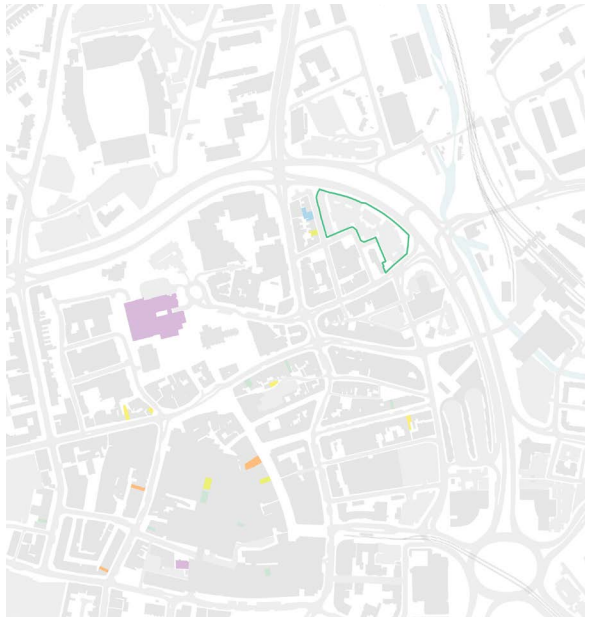
Wolverhampton Public Sector Hub Healthy High Street

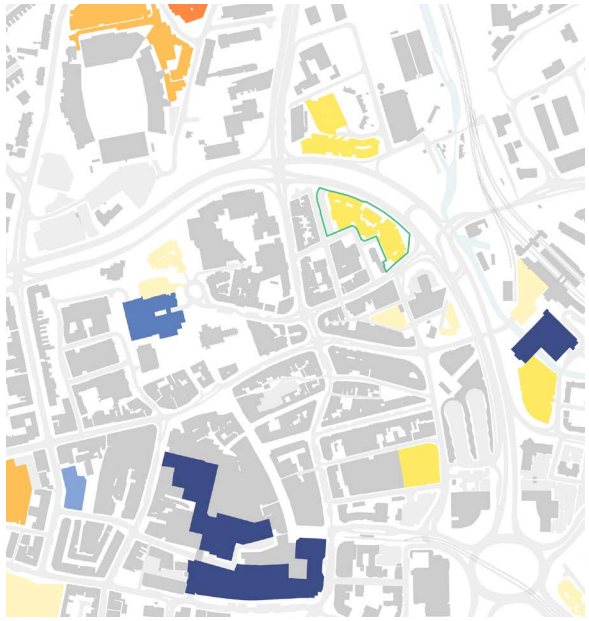
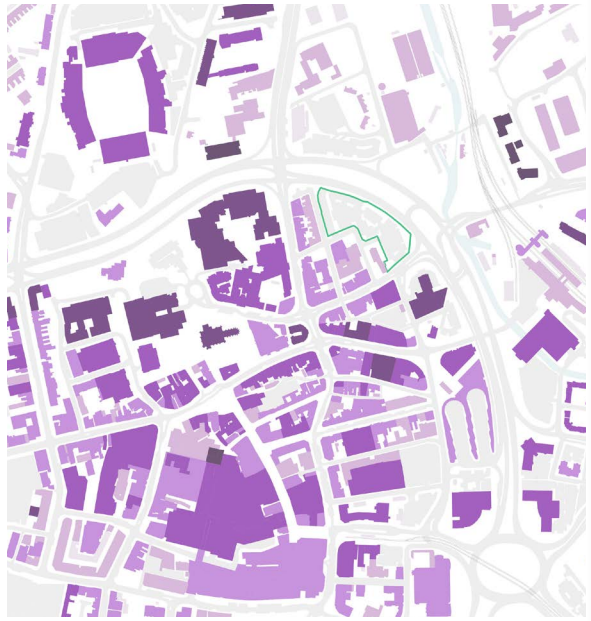
The brief for this project brought together two very different aspirations: the first to improve and rationalise the healthcare provision in the centre of Wolverhampton, and the second to bring new life to one of the city's main shopping streets. Like many across the UK, Wolverhampton's independent shops and high-street chains have struggled with competition from online retailers, leaving large gaps in activity at street level, a situation brought into even sharper focus with the recent health crisis.

To address this gradual decline, the local authority wanted to bring a new mix of uses back to anchor the far end of Broad Street, one of the main shopping thoroughfares running through the city centre. Rather than reinventing the retail offer, they instead decided to combine social housing with a cluster of community services, guaranteeing footfall by bringing residents back to the centre of town and consolidating a number of existing healthcare facilities.

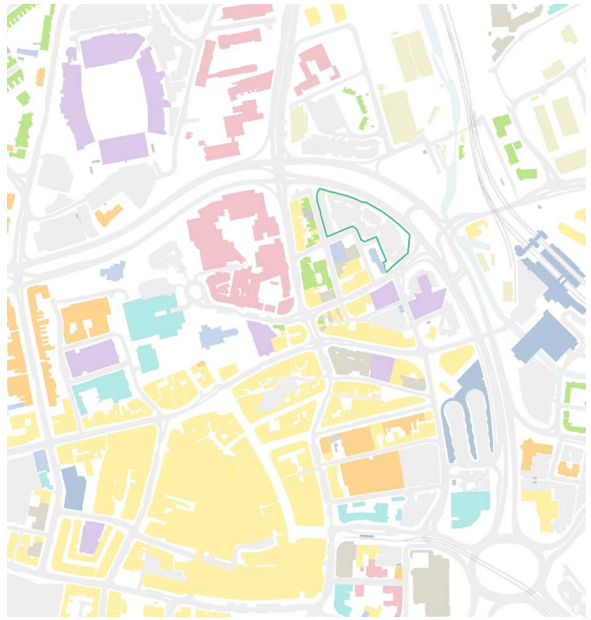
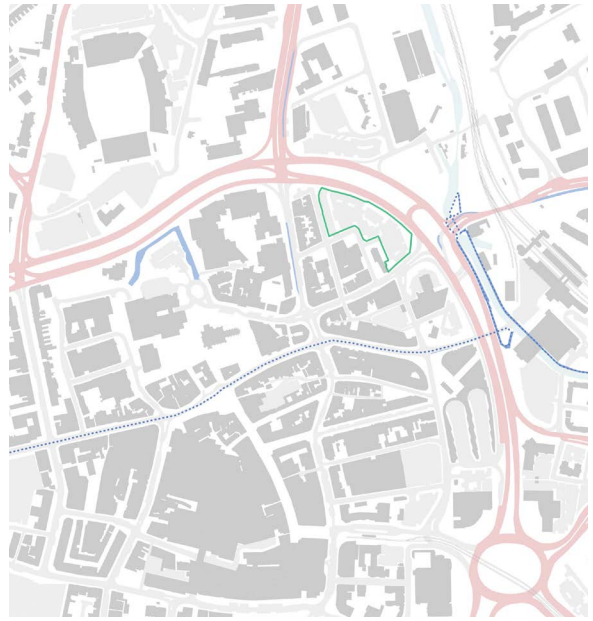
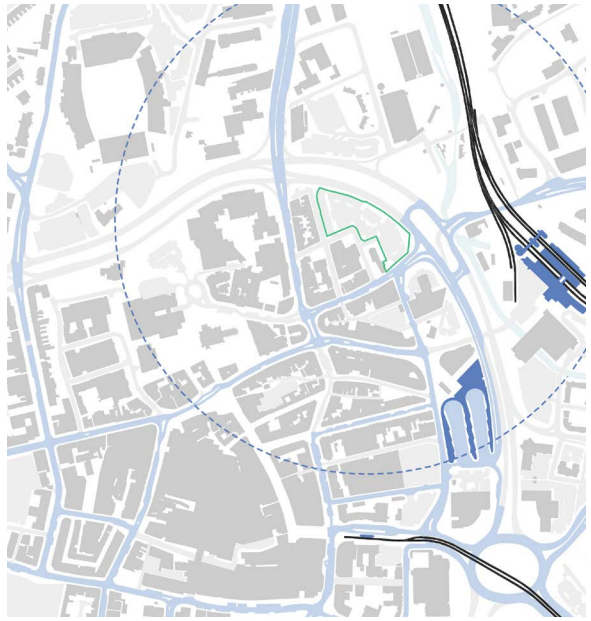
Like many Midlands cities, Wolverhampton was 'repaired' postwar with a new focus on the car, and the city is circled by an inner ring road that cuts off the old centre from the surrounding neighbourhoods. The site for the new hub sits next to this ring road and is currently occupied by a rather windswept car park. However, it is also in close proxmity to The Chubb Building, a listed Victorian lock factory now home to a cinema and several media companies. The robust redbrick factory, with its mill-like quality, provided inspiration for the form and materials we chose for our proposals.

We developed our study in collaboration with a complex client group, ranging from healthcare professionals through to the police, the university and the local council. We wanted to send a powerful message to those struggling that care was available, encouraging people to freely access the services offered by the centre. But it also had to be a good place to live, so rather than a solid block on the corner, we created a series of small, courtyarded gardens, protected from the ring road bythe taller residential volumes. These quiet, sun-filled spaces give a centre a green setting and offer the residents a high quality of life, despite the inner city location.



Our study involved an appraisal of the urban condition citywide, considering (top, left to right) healthcare uses, green space, landmark buildings and building use, as well as (bottom, left to right) parking provision, building height, cycling routes and public transport infrastructure.
The findings from this review were synthesised in our proposals, which bring together complementary briefs for urban renewal, new housing and improved healthcare facilities.

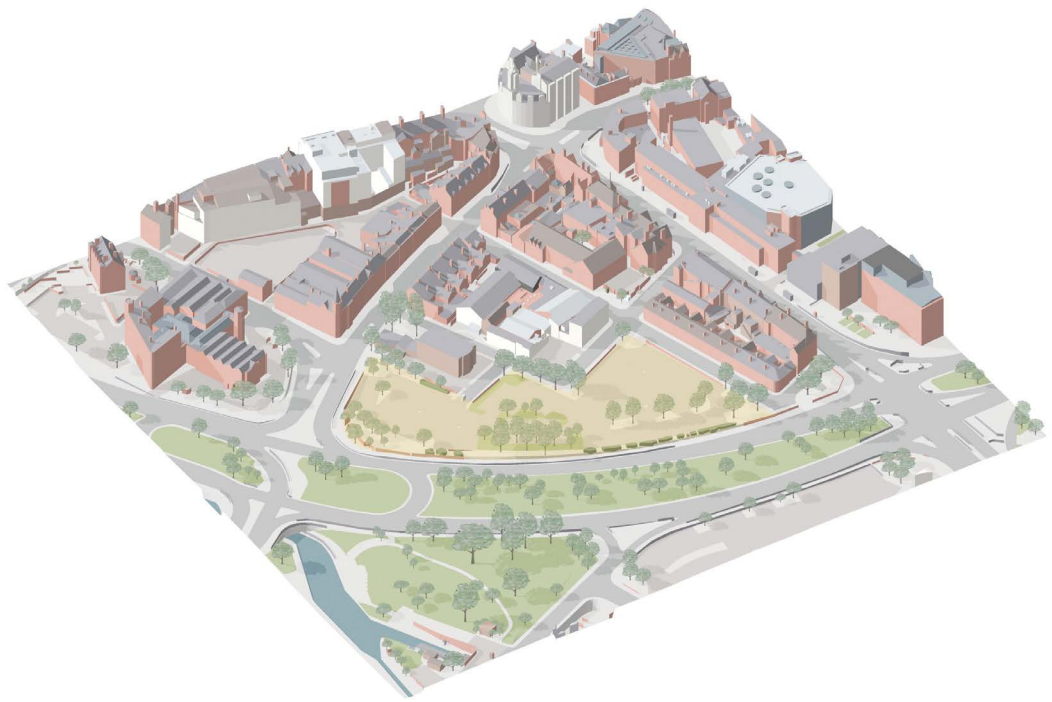


Drawn as part of our urban appraisal, this figure ground plan examines the conservation areas and heritage buildings in Wolverhampton's city centre. Our site offered great potential due to its proximity to the re-inhabited Chubb Building.

The scheme forms an anchor at the bottom of one of the main routes through the city centre.

Although currently occupied by a car park, the site (shown as a beige area) sits close to Wolverhampton's distinctive red brick buildings. The material palette for our proposed scheme draws from this palette.





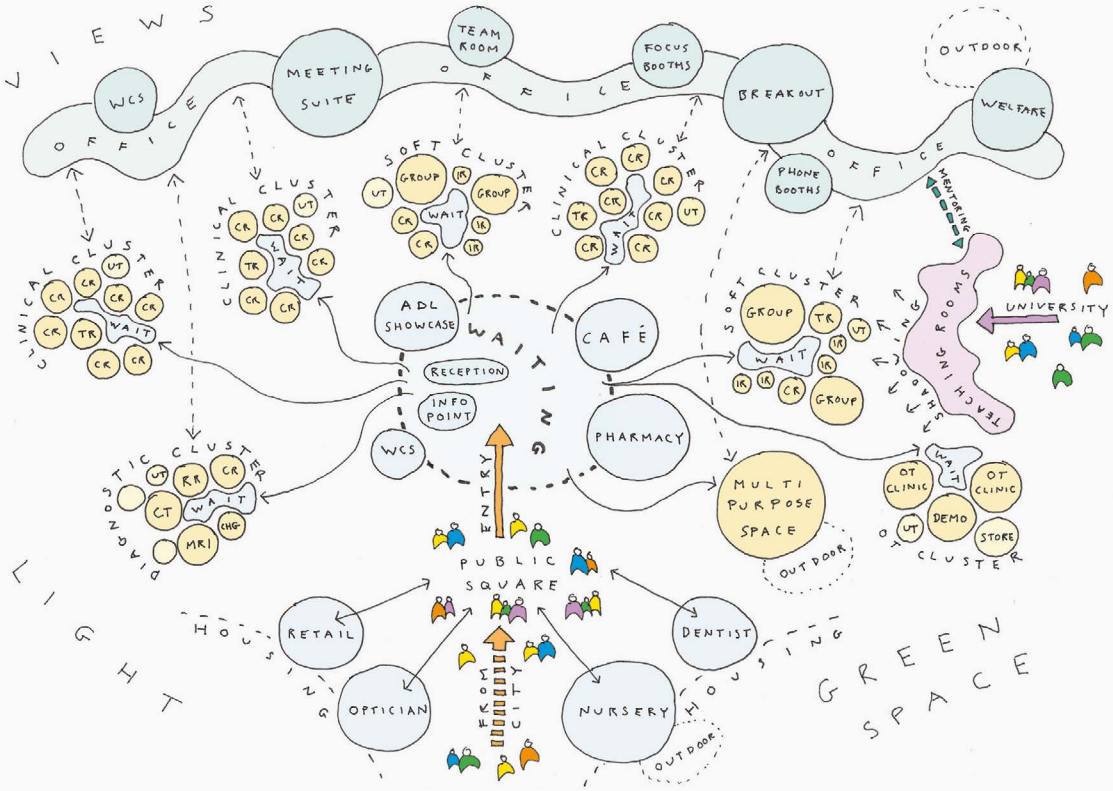
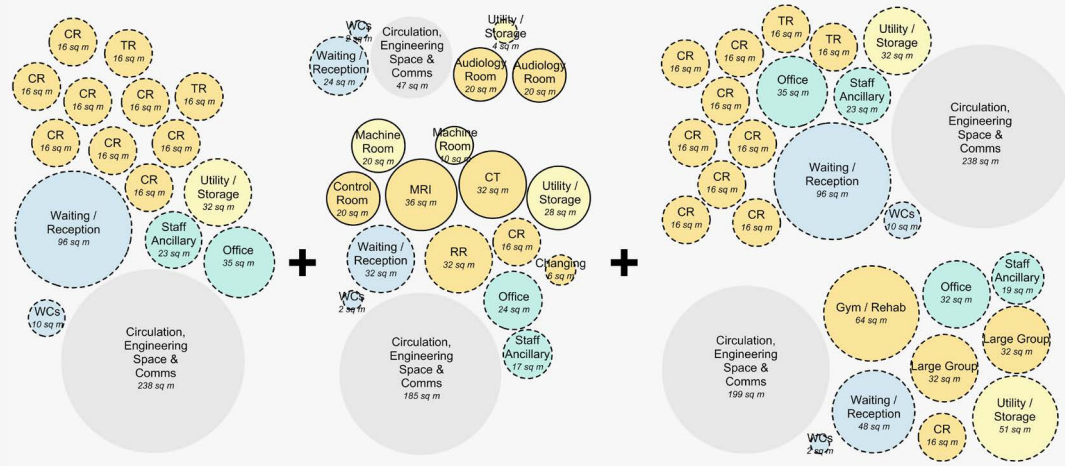


Diagram developed during our briefing sessions with the various stakeholders involved in the project, illustrating their collected services coming together in clusters under a single roof.

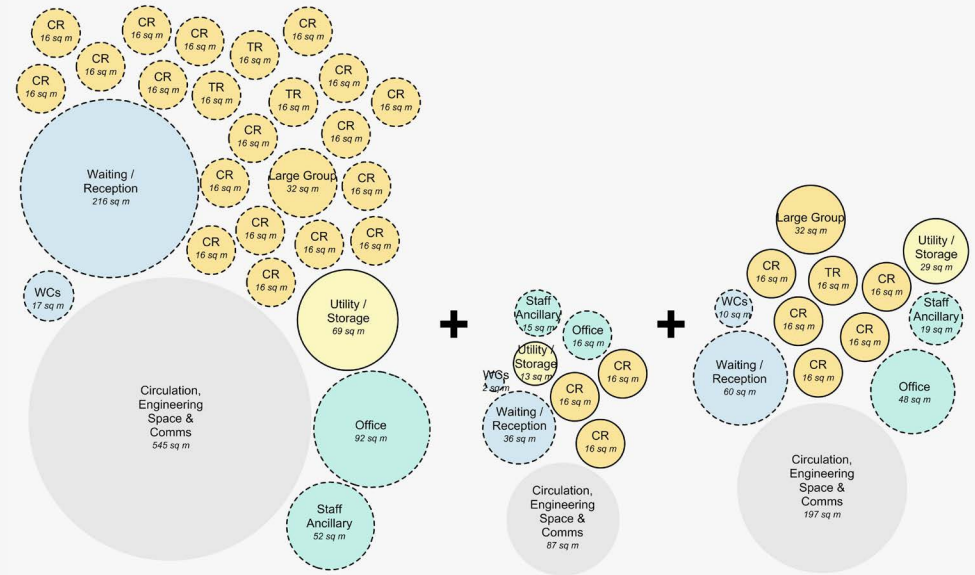
Diagrams exploring the accommodation needs for the different stakeholder groups, and investigating how much space can be shared between clusters. Our original brief was for a medical research centre, housing, offices and a community healthcare hub.



Minimum 600 sq m
Outpatients 600 sq m
(inc. Community Clinic)

Medium 1190 sq m
+Diagnostics 470 sq m
+Audiology 120 sq m

Maximum 2290 sq m
+Amputee/Wheelchair Rehab 500 sq m
+Additional Outpatients 600 sq m
(Rehab space requirements not provided)

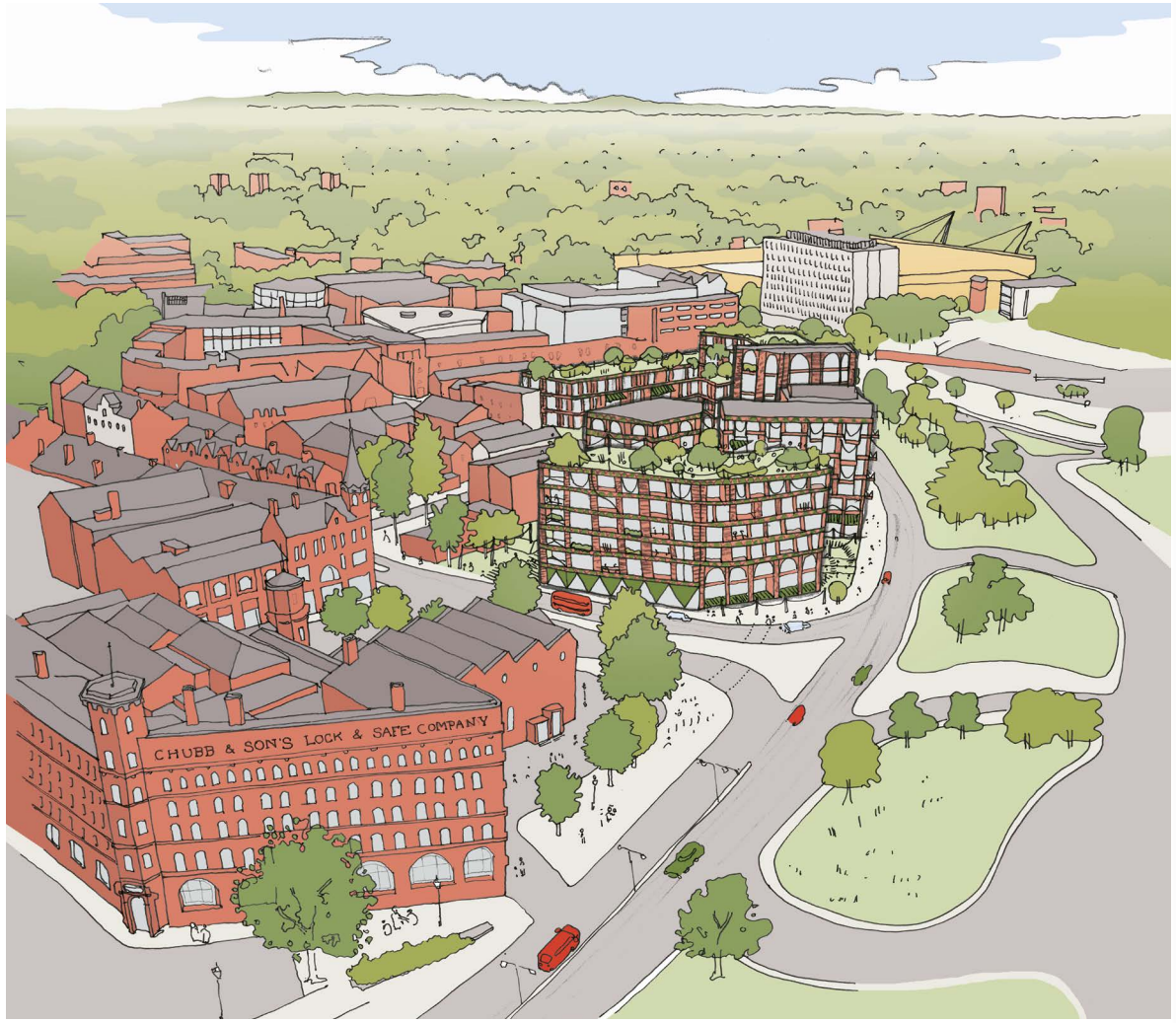


Minimum 1360 sq m
GP 1
(+50% expansion allowance)

Medium 1580 sq m
+GP 2 220 sq m
(space requirements not provided)

Maximum 2070 sq m
+GP 3 490 sq m
(space requirements not provided)

Clinical Space
Support Space
Staff Space
Public Space
Space Allowance
Dedicated Space
Shared Space
CR Consulting Room
TR Treatment Room
IR Interview/Counselling Room
RR Recovery Room



Sketch showing the new hub in relation to surrounding factory, warehouse and civic buildings, and picking up on the mill-like quality of some of these earlier red brick structures.





Vignette showing the view from one of the residential apartments. The scheme is intended to stem the flow of people moving to the suburbs, bringing residential use back to the inner city.

Sketch showing the new development at the end of Broad Street, a key route out of the city centre.

Estate Regeneration Highway code

Working with a long-standing local authority client, we developed strategic proposals for this large and unusual site in early 2020. The 16-hectare area is defined by its uncomfortably close proximity to an eight-lane highway and around 250 semi-detached or semi-terraced 1930s houses. Constructed from pre-fabricated concrete panels, much of the housing is now in a bad condition, sitting in various states of extension and dilapidation.

For the local authority, the neighbourhood had become something of a blind spot and so, with an ever-increasing need for social housing, they asked us to carry out a study into how it could be redeveloped. Despite our hopes that pollution and noise from the busy road will lessen in the future as we adopt greener modes of transport, the central move in our proposal was to set the housing back so that it was cushioned from the traffic by a 30-40 metre-wide linear park. This 'bio bund' would act as a highway for walkers, cyclists and skateboarders, linking to a bridge over the North Circular into the Brent River Park.

The new park acts as a breathing wall for the housing. We arranged this in higher-density, courtyarded blocks which are more urban in character than the existing semis, and could potentially provide up to 2,000 new homes. They would climb in height from four to eight storeys in places, according to the immediate context, with the taller structures bordering the linear park and lower-rise blocks facing south. There is a varied mix of accommodation, from sheltered accommodation through to one- to five-bedroom apartments of varying tenures.

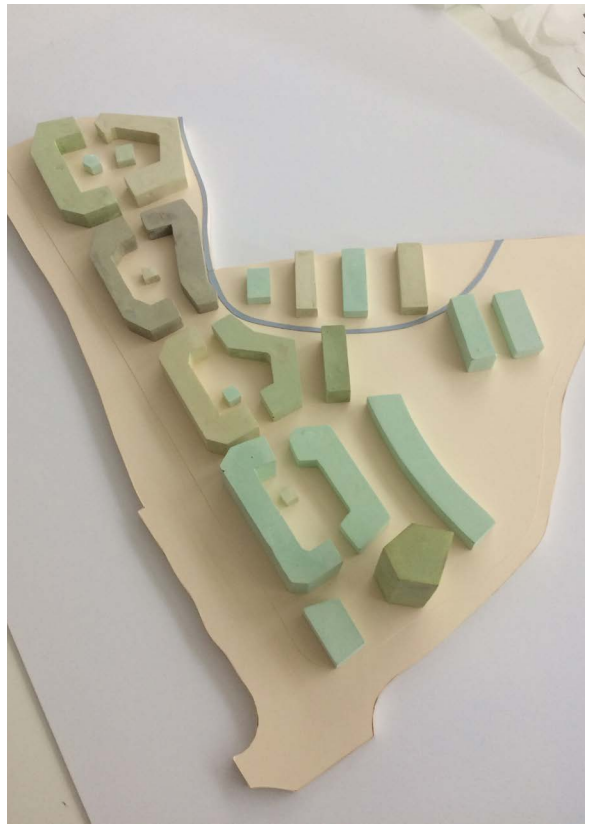
In the design coding we have prioritised amenity for the residents, arranging the blocks to bring as much light as possible into the apartments and the central courtyards. They also anticipate the likely scenario post-COVID in which more people will work from home, providing a more pleasant living and working environment with better connections to outside space, and also ensuring residents felt ownership of this space. Recognising that the ground plane needs to be active, the masterplan sets out areas for small shops and affordable workspaces, and we also looked at integrating a vertical school onto the back of one of the descending blocks.



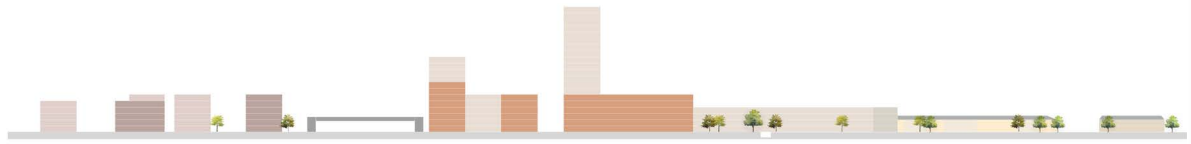


Options for the scheme: the first (left) placing the urban blocks closer to the main road, and the second (right) setting them back behind a linear park. Our client preferred the second proposal, which was less dense, high quality housing.

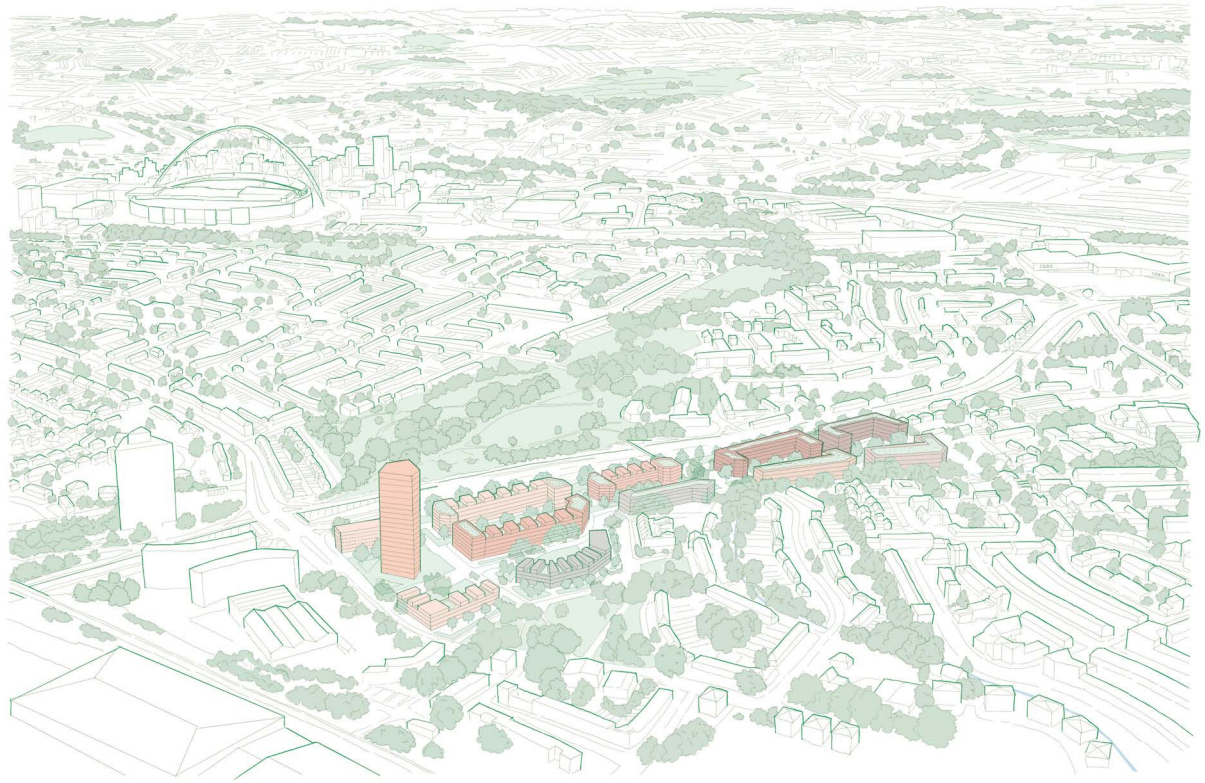








The two options as a bird's eye view. The preferred version, with a linear park along the main highway, is once again shown on the right.







The form of the blocks slopes towards
the south to invite in
the sun, They wrap around extensively
planted, sheltered outside courtyards for
growing, relaxing and playing.



The courtyards are surprisingly large,
offering space for greenhouses and
vegetable plots.



The new linear landscape to the north of the urban blocks is part of a green network linking residents to a large park on the other side of the busy road. To this side of the block, outside space is limited to small balconies to mitigate against traffic noise. Our study also proposed that an underground river be uncovered, marking the southern edge of the regeneration area and giving further screening to the new homes.

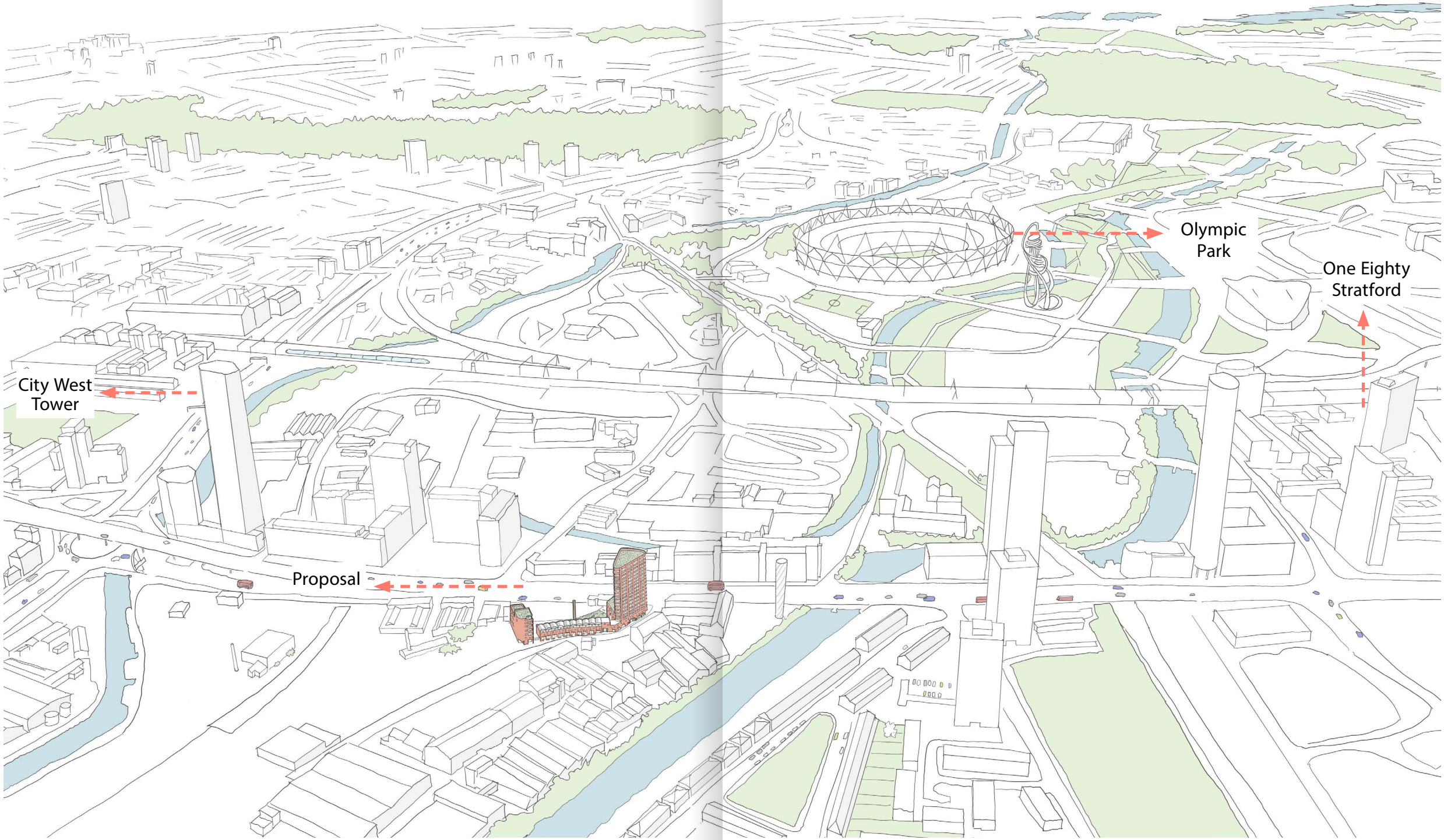
Stratford High Street Designing people centred homes

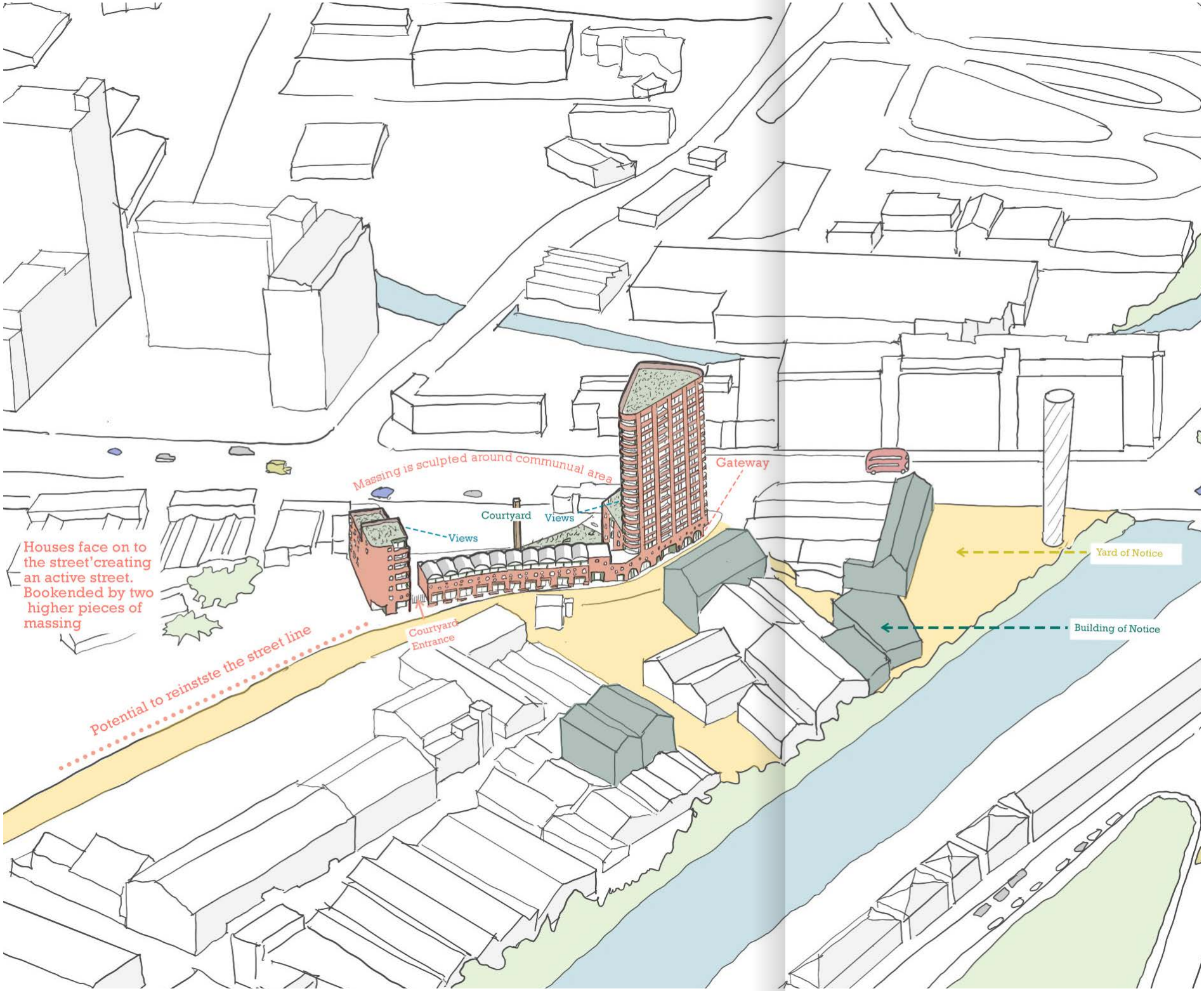
We proposed the development of a medium-density, mixed-use building providing around 100 new homes including apartments of up to five bedrooms as well as open spaces, play areas, an improved public realm and local retail spaces focused on the northern and southern part of the site. The design takes inspiration from the Flat Iron (New York) and local terraced townhouses. The proposal includes the design of a new all movement junction which will enable access to the area and its surrounding context.

The scheme is focused around a central courtyard with parking and communal external amenity space. This is enclosed by 3 storey terrace housing running down Sugar House Lane, rising up to an 8 storey building at the south end and an 18 storey taller building at the north end.

The site is located within the conservation area of Sugar House Lane leading to High Street Stratford. A 10 mins walk from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to the Northwest and a 15 mins walk North from the main shopping centre in Stratford Town Centre.

Drawing from the historical use, planning of the site and industrial context, the proposal aims to reinstate the street frontage while providing a clear landmark which will better define the entry point of Sugar House Lane. Solar chimneys providing natural stack ventilation to the terraces echo the sites industrial context and provide rhythm to the streetscape with photovoltaics also providing on site renewables.


City West
Tower
Proposal
Olympic
Park
One Eighty
Stratford





View 1 - Looking West on Stratford High St.



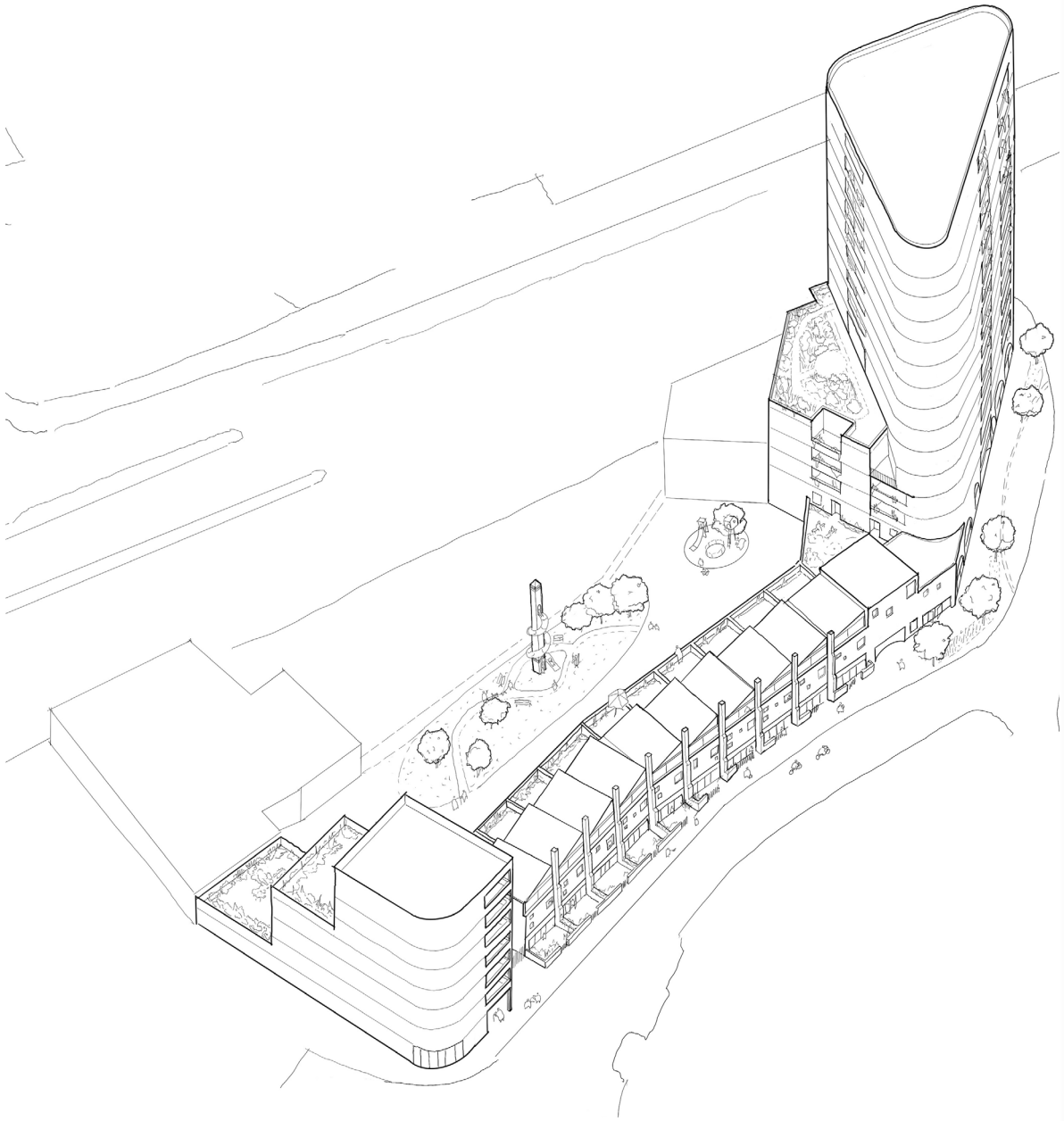
View 2 - 117-121 Stratford High St.



View 3 - Yard and Chimney of No.10 Sugar House Lane

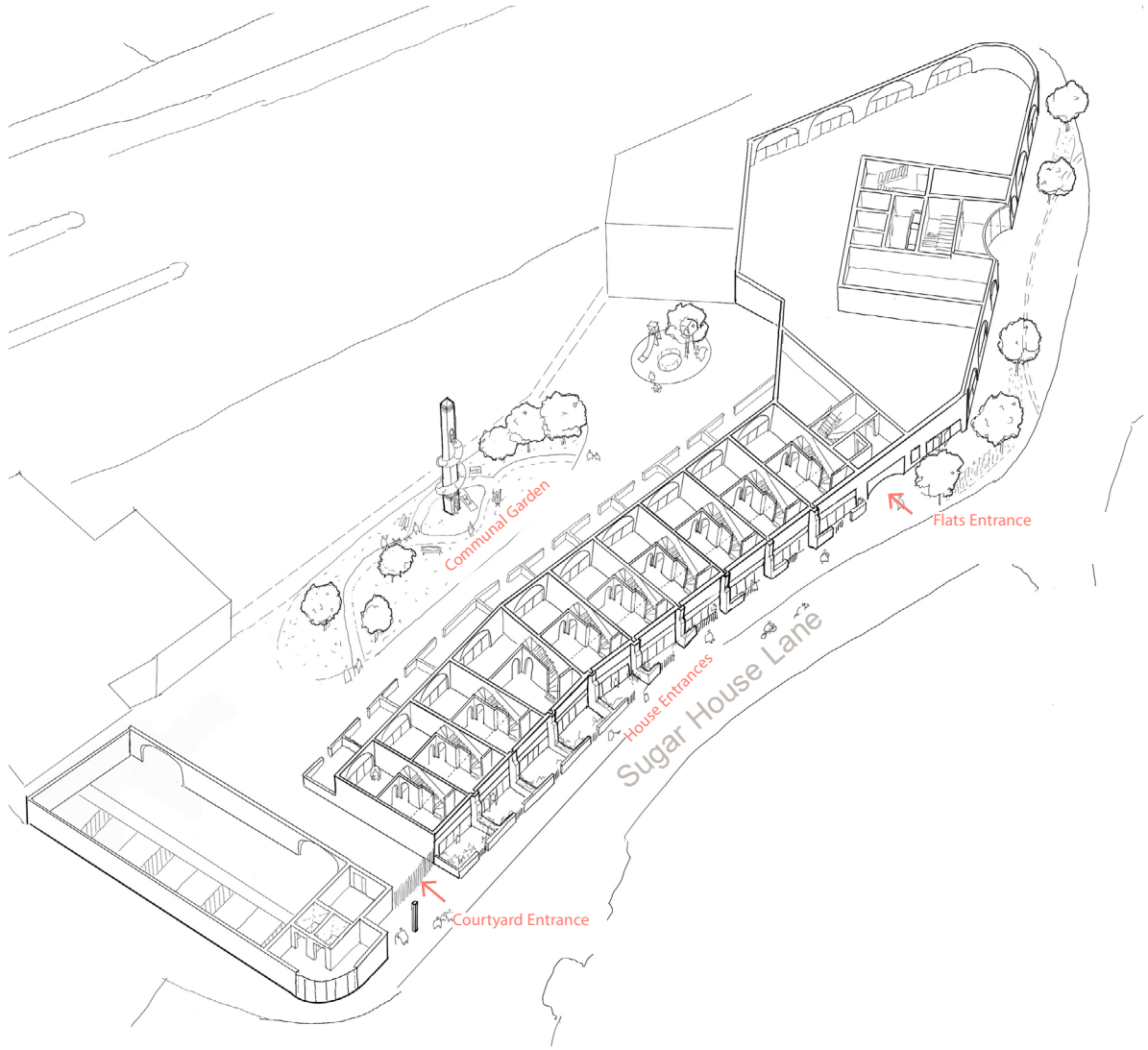


View 4 - Looking East on Stratford High Street



Aerial view of Ground Floor Plan illustrating how the design proposes to re-activate the street frontage.

Axonometric drawing showing the communual central courtyard enclosed by the 3 storey housing terrace running down Sugar House Lane, a mixed use 8 storey house building at the south end and 18 storey housing block at the north end





Artistic impression showing approach
from the West on Stratford High Street.



The massing on the end of Sugar House Lane aims to re-instate the historic line while simultaneously adding height on the corner of the street where it meets Stratford High Street.

Kennington Road Uniquely designed homes

Kennington is an historic neighbourhood located within the London Borough of Lambeth with a significant Georgian housing stock. Our housing scheme is sited on Kennington Road and is within close proximity to Lambeth Walk Open Space and the Georgian developments of the Grade II listed Chester Terrace and Cleaver Square.

Currently, the site separates medium from high rise buildings, with a potential to mediate the difference in scale comparison. This project will see the construction of either 19 housing units over 8 storeys or 22 units over 9 storeys on the site of a former nursery on the Kennington Road. The site is neighboured by high-rise buildings ranging from 5 to 22 storeys, therefore, a height of 8 to 9 storeys was thought to be appropriate.

The frontage will be activated by affordable maisonettes at street level. Additionally, the façade is set back to create a green public realm around the entrance. All units will have access to a private balcony, a communal rooftop garden and a workspace pavilion with views across London.

The material treatment is sympathetic to the classical architecture of the listed terraced housing across the street, with a heavier brickwork forming the base.



Showing Site area in context

Contextual analysis of building character around Kennington Road.



1 - Chester Terrace
4 Storey Georgian terraced housing in London Stock brick with white details.



2 - Cleaver Square
Rear facade of 5 storey housing with curved bay windows.



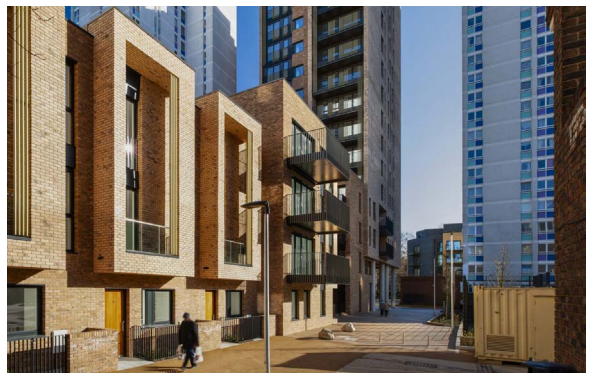
3 - Denny Crescent
2 storey 1930s houses looking onto a semi-circular garden.



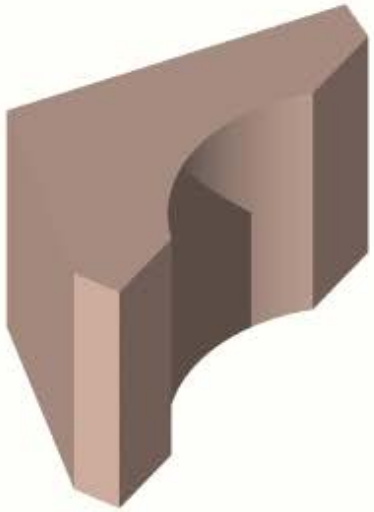
4 - Kerrin Point, Pritchard House & N216
Early 2000s apartments rising between 4 and 9 storeys.



5 - Ethelred Estate
60s/70s public housing in dark brown brick and arranged in stacked maisonettes with 3 point blocks over 20 storeys.

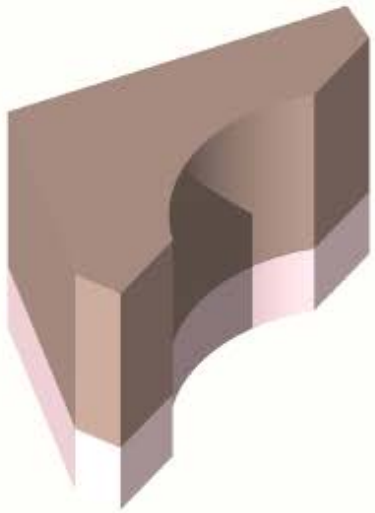


6 - Lollard Street Development
2019 infill housing around earlier point blocks in yellow stock brick with integral nursery, between four and sixteen storeys.



Height

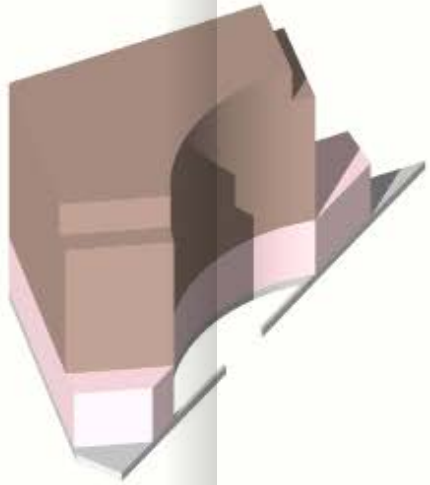
Responding to the buildings around it ranging from 22 storeys to 5 storeys, a base height of 8 storeys is considered appropriate



Base

Maisonettes meet the street allowing bedrooms and amenity space at first floor.

A different material treatment also corresponds to the classical architectural language of the adjacent listed terrace.

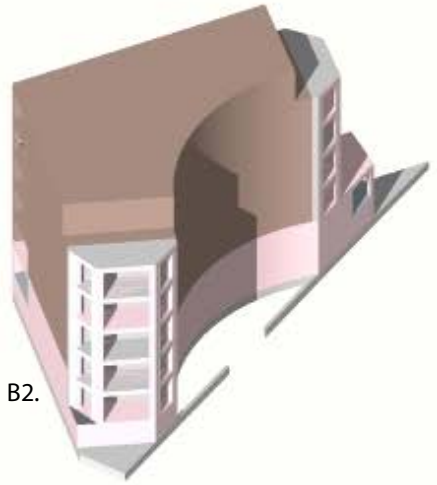


Set-backs

The 'Base of the building is set back at either end of the site to improve the public realm relationship and a stone/pre-cast planter forms defensible space

The upper levels set back further and the top storey is recessed again.

B3.

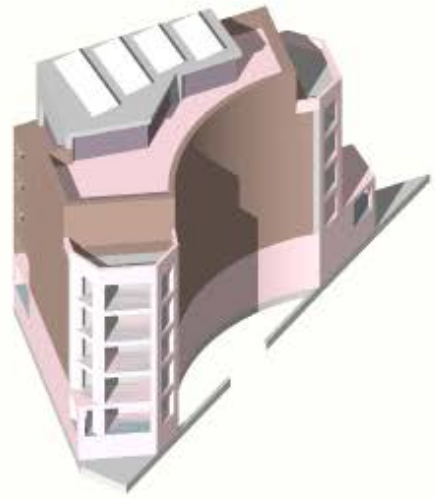


B2.

Balconies

Amenity is positioned off the primary frontage at the corners of the site.

This also give dual and triple aspect and increases sun exposure



Rooftop Terrace

A communal garden and workspace pavilion with views over London are significantly recessed back from the street edge



Axonometric of proposal in context.


07
06
05
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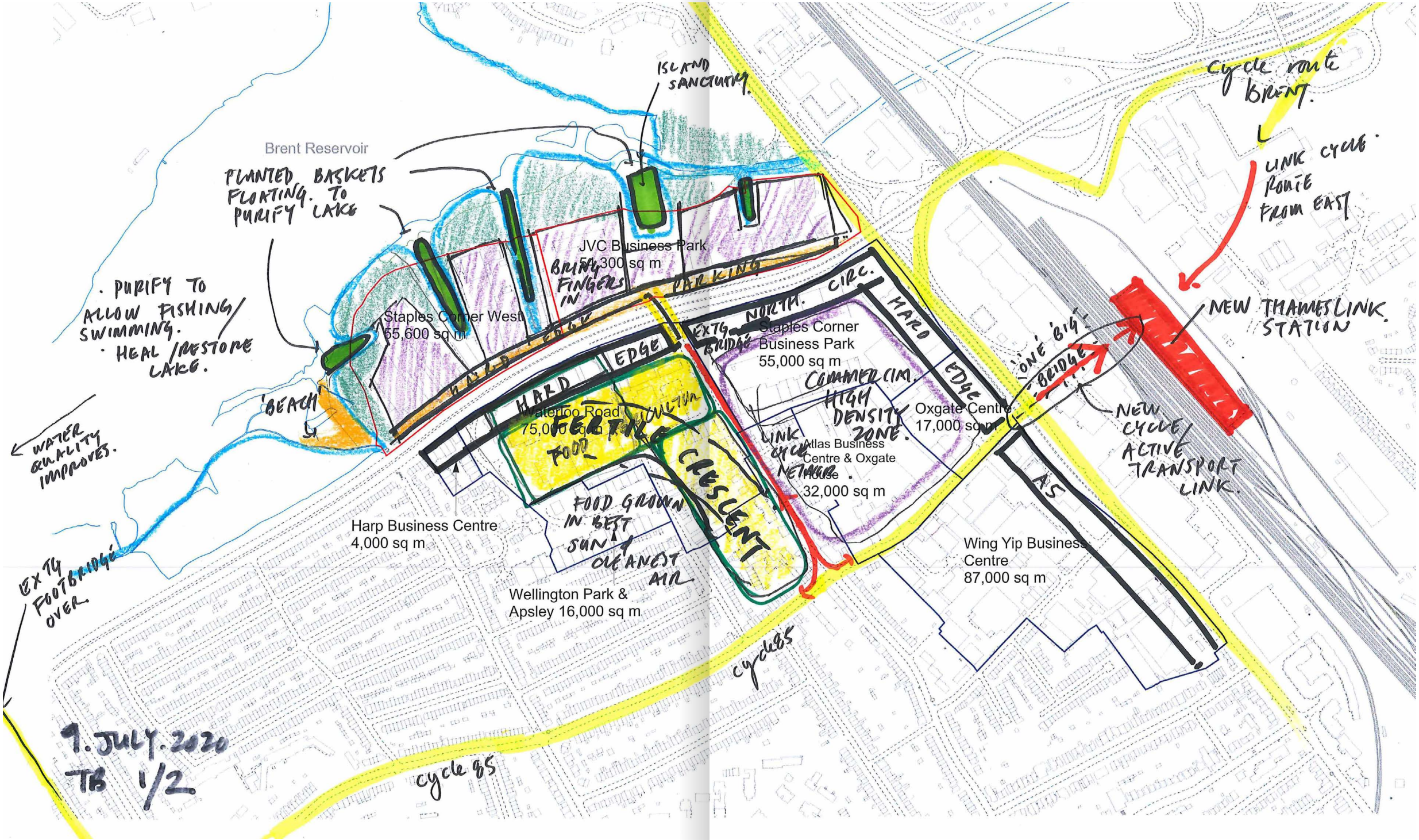
Brent Urban Farm and Liveable Space Home grown

The area around Staples Corner in north-west London, where the North Circular meets the M1 motorway, is a particularly Bollardian landscape of flyovers and industrial sheds. Straddling the main road, the cluster of sheds—many of them now redundant—blocks access to the Welsh Harp (or Brent) Reservoir from a large grid of interwar suburbs to the south. We were approached by the London Borough of Brent to produce a study into how the area could be redeveloped. As Strategic Industrial Land (SIL), the industrial base had to be retained, but their aim was to reinvigorate it in a more sustainable way, as well as introducing new housing and improved connections across the neighbourhood.

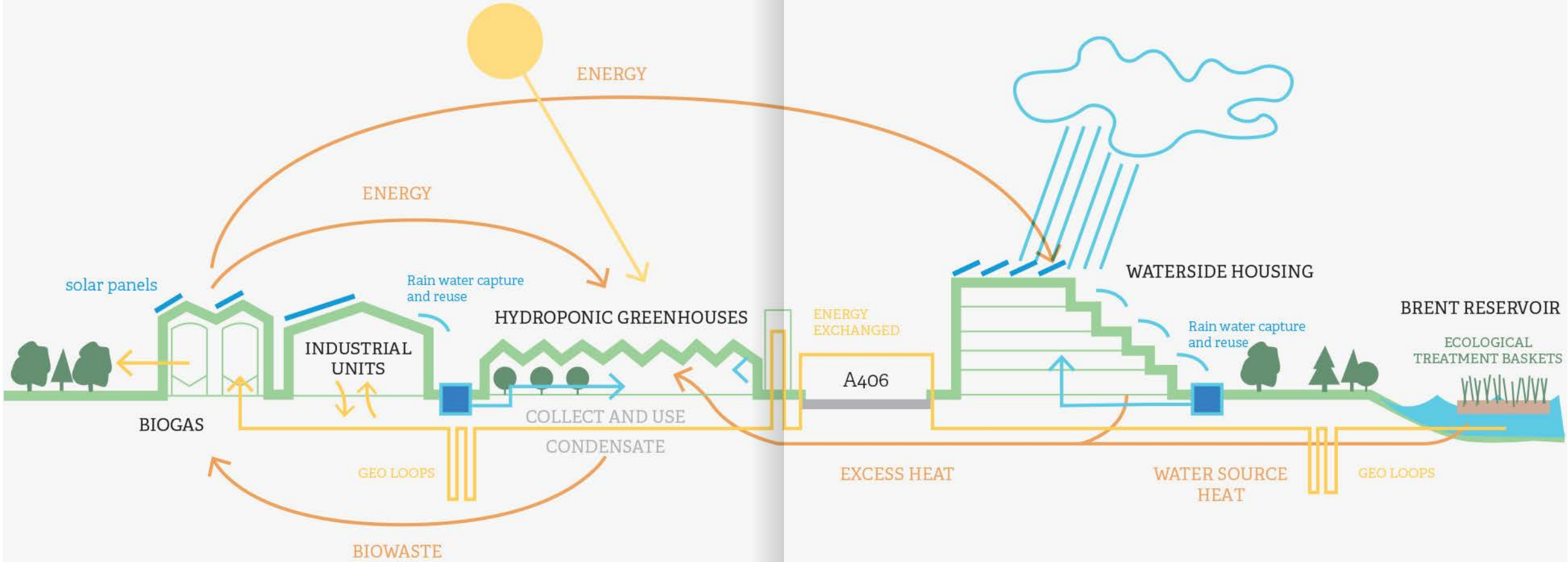
We began by looking at the economic activity that had historically taken place in the area. Much of this was food production, increasingly targeted towards the aviation industry at nearby Heathrow. In an attempt to decarbonise the site and reallocate it to green industry, we worked with The Ecoponics Group, experts in aquaponics, to look at how more environmentally friendly food growing businesses could be located here. As a result, our masterplan proposes an urban farm that could become the UK's first major centre for hydroponic and aquaponic farming, our projections showing that potentially all of Brent's residents could be fed each day with fresh vegetables grown within the borough. Hydroponics would colonise the site on a large scale, the buildings taking an industrial greenhouse aesthetic, accompanied by a centre for agricultural training.

The residential elements of the scheme take full advantage of the benefits offered by waterside living on the fringe of the reservoir, new bridge connections removing the focus from the busy roads that currently fragment the neighbourhood. Our design code suggests the residential blocks would be clad with brick to give a more domestic feel, and—in line with the scheme's environmental ambition—have a cross-laminated timber structure. They would have passive environmental systems, sharing an energy recovery system with the greenhouses and aquaponics facilities.

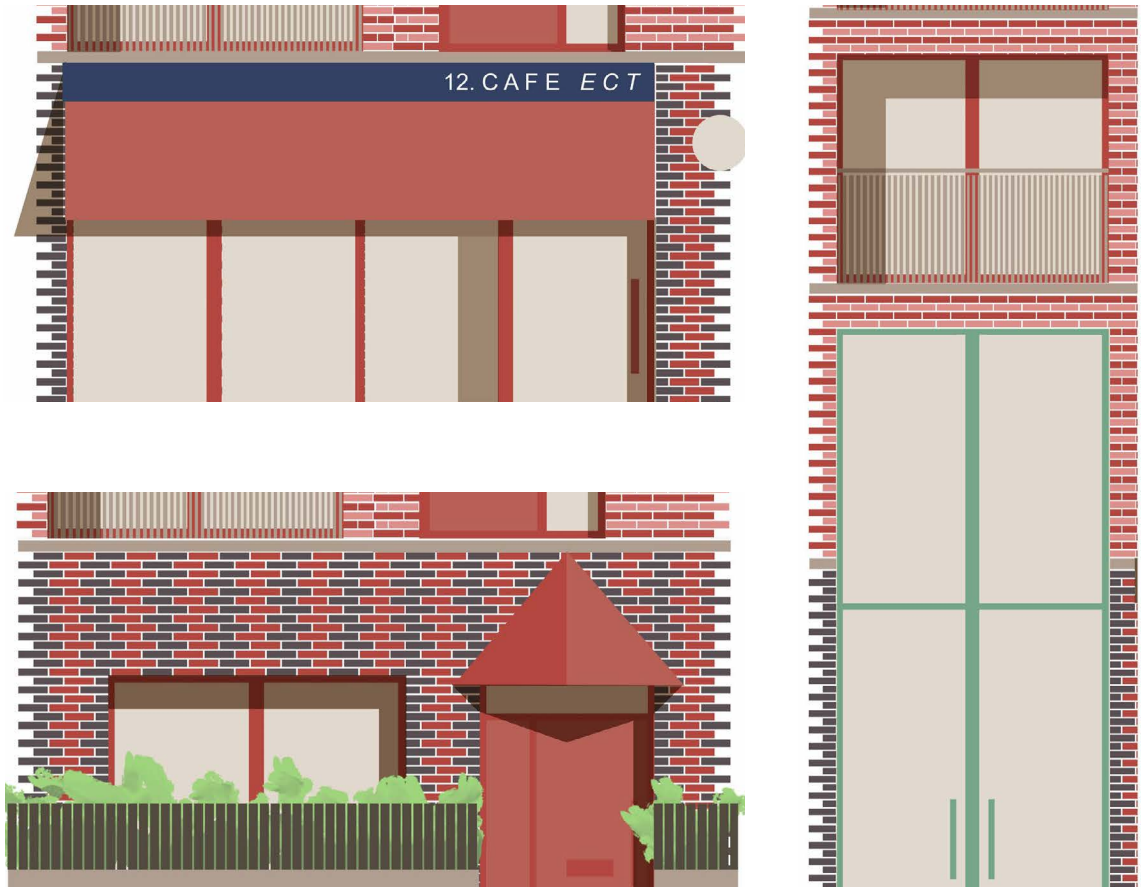
The scheme shows how civic values—of wellness, sustainability, education and work—can be applied to urban development, all criteria in the project's successful shortlisting for the NLA Awards in 2020. It marks a shift away from automotive priority to a better pedestrian experience, with the restoration and improvement of public realm central to the masterplan.



First sketch to exploring the contextual opportunities and constraints offered by the site.



Environmental section developed in collaboration with Professor Trevor Butler, a specialist in sustainability, water systems and hydro-ponics. Industrial units, hydroponic greenhouses, waterside housing and natural resources are harnessed into an energy and food system with minimal waste and optimum efficiency.



Entrances to the various residential and agricultural spaces alternate with small shops and food outlets at street level.



Elevation overlooking lock, showing greenhouses placed on the rooftops of the lower-rise residential blocks to mix in different uses and materials.



Facades



Birds eye view, showing the interface of residential blocks with the reservoir.



Water is pulled from the reservoir into new basins between the residential buildings, draining and cleaning the water naturally through a mixture of unpaved surfaces.



Elmview Court
London Borough
of Ealing

A block of 18 flats for shared ownership overlooking Norwood Green, completed in 1999 and sitting in a large landscaped garden.

The architecture, in the style of Voysey and the arts and crafts movement, helps to mediate between two listed Georgian houses adjacent to the site, and the many 1930s semi-detached homes surrounding it.

Due to the quality of the scheme, the apartments sold quickly in a tough market, and it became a flagship development for the housing association client.



Elmgrove Road
London Borough
of Harrow

A high-density development of 49 homes, all affordable, on a former industrial site close to good transport links and a local shopping centre.

As a 100% 'no car' scheme, residents are offered an integrated travel package linked to car club membership.



Leconfield Road Housing
London Borough
of Islington

A terrace of 25 new-build townhouses, each of around 80 square metres, built in 1994 and reflecting the practice's long-term commitment to designing high quality social housing.

The scheme demonstrates how, with thoughtful design, well-detailed architecture can be built on a small budget.

The design takes a familiar London condition—the Victorian terrace, with its repeating module of homes—and reconstructs it as social housing.



Isleden House
London Borough
of Islington

Study to add three apartments to a courtyarded postwar estate of retirement and sheltered accommodation, built as alms-style cottages and larger blocks with external walkways.

A careful, strategic approach was needed to minimise disruption to the residents, who—despite the need for more flats—valued the quietness of the estate.

The new units were designed to comply with London Housing Design Guide standards, and high energy efficiency targets.

The existing buildings were loaded with sociable details, such as places to sit in the sun, rose gardens, and cottage-style environments, and our architecture aimed to reflect these thoughtful conditions.



Windsor Estate
London Borough
of Hackney

Feasibility study for the redevelopment of a postwar housing estate, removing existing buildings in disrepair and adding new-build accommodation in a complex series of phases.

The study tackled a series of challenging constraints: the site was very tight, sitting next to a Conservation Area and a local park, and the project had to be delivered within strict budgetary guidelines.

Our design recognised the park setting, adding balconies and bays which helped extend the park into the new buildings.



Teviot Avenue
Borough
Of Thurrock

Proposals for a development of up to 51 affordable homes through the regeneration of the site, decanting and demolition of existing housing block and rebuild of newHomes that are practical and suited to the local needs.

The design tackles various constraints: proximity to Belhus Woodlands, close to major access routes and highways so consideration of access and provision against noise. The number of homes have to be met and should be complaint with the future home standards.

The housing blocks have been design to have a central communual couthyard which provides the much needed public realm / community spaces. The bigger housing blocks have been located towards the woodland in order to avoid obstruction of view as well as provision of balconies looking towards the woodland

Awards

PLANNING
AWARDS 2020

NEW LONDON
AWARDS 2020

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