

Proposed Retirement Living Development Design & Access Statement

March 2025

Three Trees, Silverdale, Willow Close & Birchwood,
Old Charlton Road,
Hitchin,
Hertfordshire,
SG5 2AJ

Produced on behalf of:

McCarthy Stone
Retirement living *your way*



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Prepared for
McCarthy Stone

Prepared by

Ridge and Partners LLP
Beaumont House
59 High Street
Theale
Reading
RG7 5AL
Tel: 0118 932 3088

Contact

Mike Skilton

mikeskilton@ridge.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The Brief

Ridge and Partners LLP has been appointed by McCarthy Stone to undertake architectural services relating to the proposed Retirement Living redevelopment on land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

The development seeks to provide:

- A high-quality townscape response which is sensitive to its context and optimises the potential of this previously developed site.
- Communal facilities including a club lounge, landscaped gardens, reception, office, mobility scooter store and guest suite.
- Self-contained Retirement Living apartments (C3 use class) and associated facilities designed for older persons, securely accessed and interlinked via heated corridors.
- 35no. apartments (17 no. 1-bedroom and 18 no. 2-bedroom).
- Level access at ground level provided to and from the building. All floors are easily accessible, with lift access provided.
- Appropriate scale and massing for the site which relates positively to its context and neighbouring buildings, as well as providing positive enclosure to the surrounding streets and spaces and helping to define an entrance into the town.
- Landscaped gardens, private areas & terrace.
- Appropriate Levels of parking to suit the needs of the development.
- Built to Lifetime Homes Standard.

The overall aim of the scheme is to provide retirement accommodation which is much needed in the local area, via a development which addresses the opportunities and constraints of the application site.

Introduction

This statement is prepared by Ridge and Partners LLP to accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin, currently occupied by 4 bungalows (no.'s 8,10,12 and 14).

This application proposes 35no. retirement living apartments with associated communal facilities, landscaping and parking. The site is approximately 0.31ha and currently contains 4 bungalows, 2 of which are detached and 2 semi-detached, which lies approximately 250m to the southwest of the Town Centre. The existing vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is via Old Charlton Road from the north.

The structure of this document sets out how the proposals are a suitable response to the site and brief, in accordance with the guidance set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), National Design Guide 2019, and local planning policy.

This document investigates the site, history and surrounding area to inform a suitable development regarding scale, appearance, location, access and maximising integration by mitigating and avoiding any potential negative impact.



Image courtesy of McCarthy and Stone Lifestyle magazine.

The Architect

Ridge and Partners is an award winning multi-disciplinary design practice with extensive experience in architecture, planning and property. Operating nationally we work on projects across the UK; which include retail, commercial, residential, hospitality and education. From the outset, the practice has established a reputation for exemplar design and consistently high standards of service.

Ridge understands the commercial realities that come with projects and our aim as Architects is to work within the project specific parameters to maximise value through high quality and innovative design solutions for both the client and end user.



Client

McCarthy Stone are Britain's leading retirement accommodation provider with over 40 years experience.

More than 45,000 buyers have chosen the lifestyle offered by McCarthy Stone developments. In addition to being Britain's leading private retirement provider, McCarthy Stone has gained a reputation as one of the premier house builders in the UK.

McCarthy Stone's vision is to create communities for their customers that nurture a sense of belonging, independence, and peace of mind. Flexibility within the services responds to individual needs, choice of ownership through mini-tenure options, and affordability of property prices, to ensure a broad appeal.



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SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

SITE LOCATION

Hitchin is a market town in Hertfordshire, which lies in the valley of the River Hiz, some 35 miles north of London.

The application site is located approximately 0.3km to the south-west of Hitchin High Street, on the western side of Old Charlton Road, with excellent pedestrian access to the Town Centre and all associated amenities.

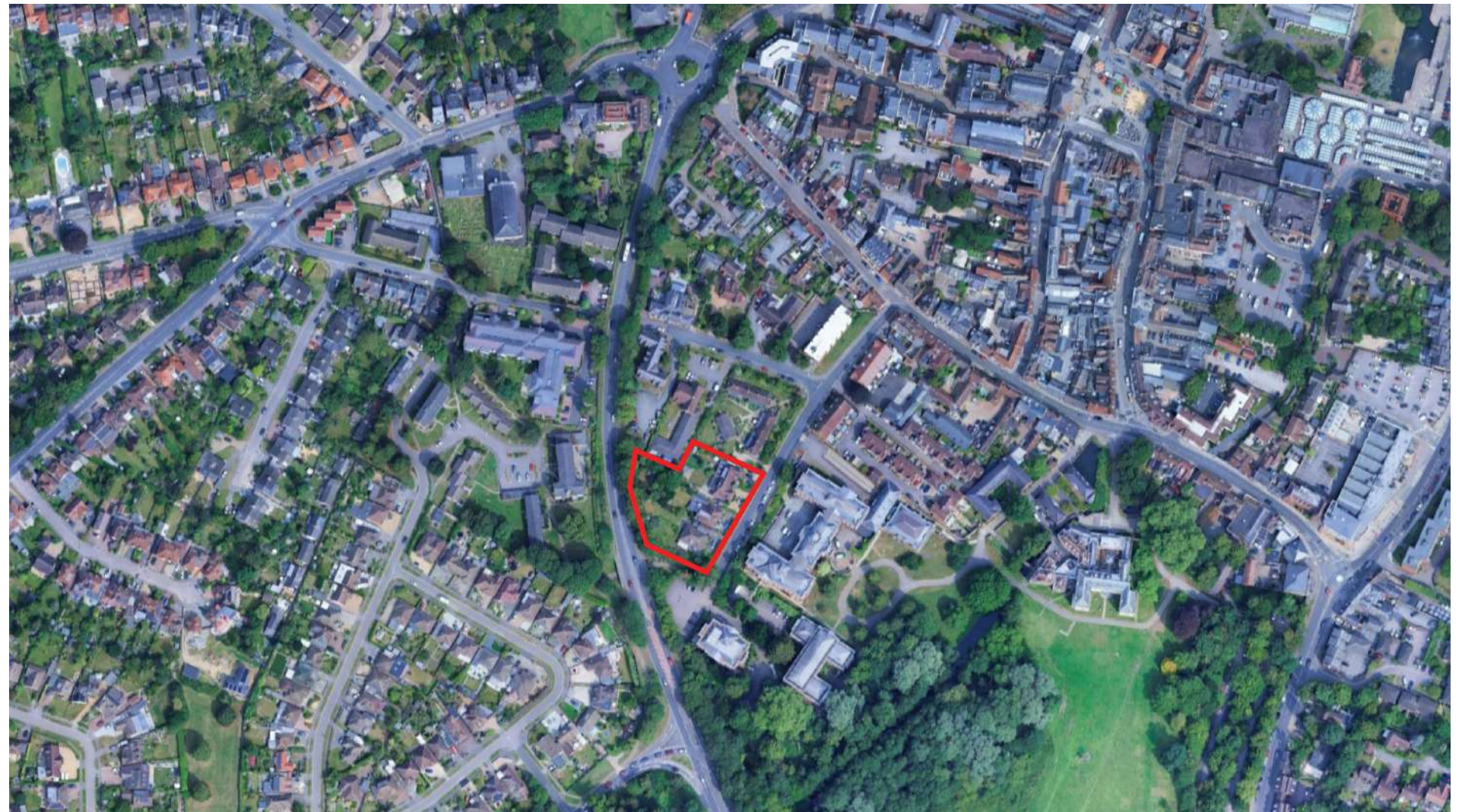
Old Charlton Road itself is a dead end for vehicles, only serving the current bungalows on the site and both office buildings of Radcliffe House and Keynes House and their associated parking. Short term on street parking is available as well as permit parking along the eastern edge of Old Charlton Road

The application site currently contains 4 bungalows, 'Three Trees', 'Silverdale', 'Willow Close' and 'Birchwood', each with their own vehicular access off Old Charlton Road.

To the east of the application site lies Radcliffe House and Keynes House, both of which are 3/4 storey office buildings, composed predominantly of brick, with generous floor to floor heights and pitched / mansard roofs with gable pediment features. These buildings dominate the immediate area and have substantive 2.7m high brick walls along their western boundaries with the footpath.

A significant residential area of the town to the west is connected to the Town Centre via an underpass beneath Park Way (A602), an elevated a-road that borders the western boundary of the site. This primary pedestrian route then runs past the southern boundary before connecting to Old Charlton Road on the opposite side to the site and into Town, approximately a 5-minute walk.

To the north of the site lies a series of single storey Almshouses along Old Charlton Road and the elevated area of Park Close with two further residential developments of varying height and scale. The nearest listed building to the site, The Wratten and Lucas House, is found to the north of Wratten Road East and elevated significantly above the site with limited views south due to the afore-mentioned Park Close developments and an existing tree screen on the site.



Site Location Plan



Images of the Town Centre environment

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS AND EXISTING CONTEXT

Photographs of the application site area set out below:



The site itself has a well-established tree line buffer to the west of the site along Park Way, and numerous other significant trees to the north and south of the site, which the proposed scheme will look to retain and integrate into the layout. The existing boundaries vary with a mixture of hedges and low-level brick walls facing Old Charlton Road and timber fences with varying degrees of dense foliage, concentrated to the south and west.

The existing topography of the site includes a 3.4m level change from the southern corner to the north-west corner and a c.600mm level rise from south to north along Old Charlton Road.

The well-enclosed rear gardens are primarily laid to lawn with numerous outbuildings and sheds dotted around the individual boundary conditions.

The single storey / storey-and-a-half primary frontages face Old Charlton Road, set back with parking to the frontages and are in-keeping with the scale of the adjacent almshouses, but are dwarfed by Radcliffe House which they face onto.



A Three Trees House frontage



B Silver Dale House frontage (Courtesy of Google Maps)



C Willow Close House frontage



D Birchwood House frontage (Courtesy of Google Maps)



E Silverdale House view from garden



F View of Three Trees House in the foreground & Radcliffe Development in background



G Birchwood House back garden view

CONTEXTUAL STUDY- PHYSICAL NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE AREA

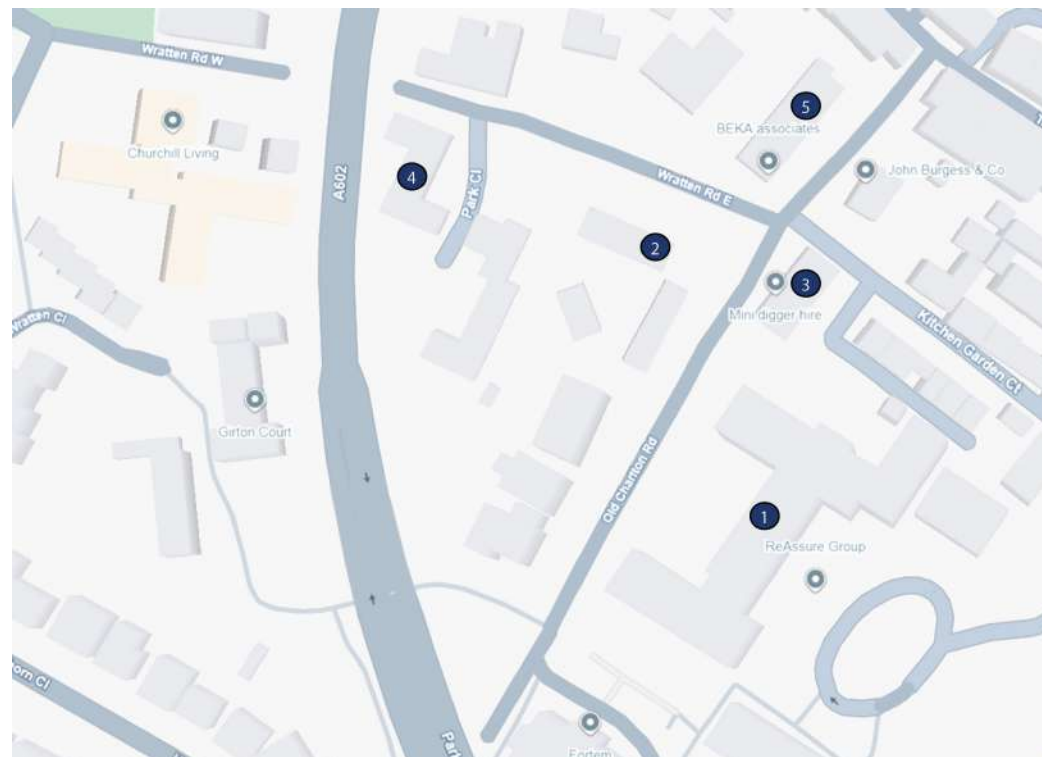
The Town is home to numerous architectural styles, including Georgian, Edwardian and numerous medieval timber framed buildings.

The immediate predominantly residential setting comprises an eclectic mix of buildings of a varied age, scale and architectural style, with varying mass introduced through larger residential blocks and office buildings adjacent to the site. This scale ranges from single storey to four storeys in height with a variety of roof forms, albeit predominantly pitched.

The scale of the buildings currently on the site and the contrasting generous storey heights of the three storey Radcliffe House and Keynes House directly opposite the site along Old Charlton Road, create an uncomfortable juxtaposition in the current street scene and a potential opportunity to add some controlled additional height as a gateway into the town centre along this key pedestrian route.

Most buildings within the local vicinity are elevated with a traditional palette of materials, consisting of stock brick, render and clay tiles.

The north boundary of the site adjoins with the Hitchin Conservation Area boundary, which also continues southwards on the opposite side of Old Charlton Road.



View Key



1. Radcliffe Development, Old Charlton Road : Currently office space soon to be converted to 49 residential apartments



2. William Brown Almshouses Charity, Old Charlton Road & Wratten Road East



3. No 1-5 Old Charlton Road Row Houses (Courtesy of Google Maps)

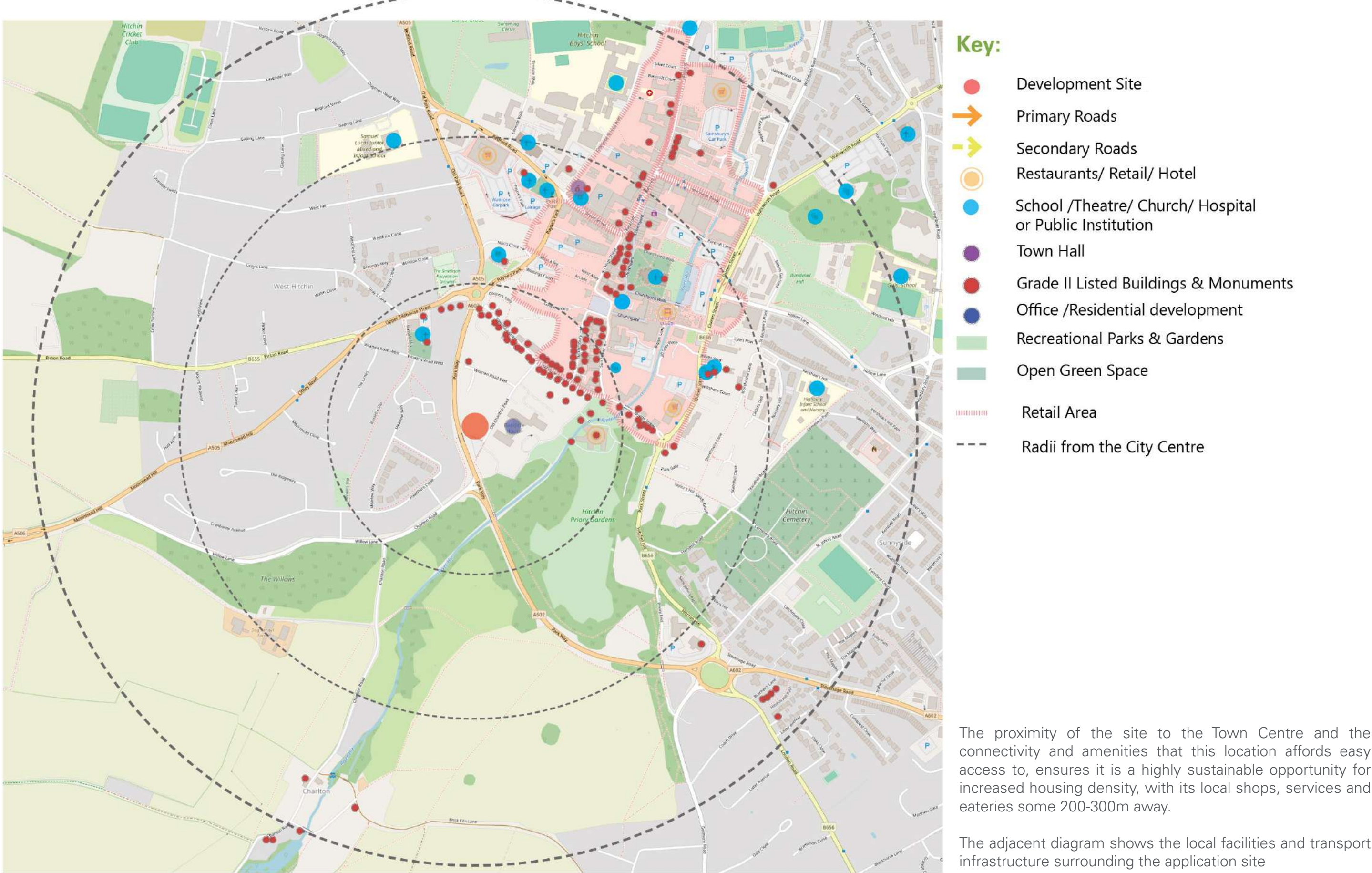


4. No. 1 Park Close Apartment Block



5. No.1 Wratten Road East office block

LOCAL AMENITIES



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EVALUATION

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities

- » The site presents an opportunity to improve the availability of retirement living accommodation, which there is a significant need for within the local area.
- » The site has been previously developed currently comprising 4 bungalows
- » The development will take advantage of the site's proximity to existing services, infrastructure and links.
- » Presenting an opportunity for retention of most existing mature trees and vegetation buffers on the site and further enhancement of the biodiversity of the site, offering landscaped gardens and additional planted boundaries.
- » Creating an attractive and well-suited addition to Hitchin and the Old Charlton Road street scene, introducing additional mass in a sympathetic manner to the adjoining and surrounding context.
- » Opportunity to utilise and improve existing access arrangements to the site.

Constraints

- » The varied nature of the surrounding built context and the sites undulating topography.
- » Potential overlooking from and to neighbouring residential properties located to the north of the site boundary.
- » Existing buildings located on the site to be demolished.

KEY:

●

Existing Trees

■

Single Storey Buildings

■

2 Storey Buildings

■

2.5 Storey Building

■

3 Storey Building

■

4 Storey Building

1

Existing Vehicular Access

2

Existing trees to be retained where possible

Existing Building to be Demolished

↔

Vehicular Movement

⋯→

Pedestrian Movement



THE NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

The proposed development aims to display good design and address fully the ten key characteristics set out in the National Design Guide – ensuring an efficient, suitable and sustainable development enhancing the local area.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

1. Context – The proposed design of the development relates to the existing buildings in the local area and replicates characteristics in materials, detailing and scale. Refer to pages 7-10 of this document for further details.

2. Identity – The proposal strives to draw from the identity and character of the surrounding area in order to inform a more sensitive development, incorporating relevant materials and details in order to produce a more attractive and appropriate development.

3. Built form – The scale of the development has been considered in detail taking on board the size of local existing buildings as well as aiming to respond to and mitigate impact on buildings in the immediate local vicinity. Refer to page 18 of this document for further details.

4. Movement – The proposals will seek to utilise all of the connections and movement opportunities highlighted, including access to the nearby town centre and amenities. Within the proposal the movement of residents should be considered in the design, with the inclusion of covered heated corridors between apartments and communal spaces and full accessibility to all parts of the development including step-free access.

5. Nature – The existing site contains Roseland, a 2-storey retirement living space which occupies the southern side of the site with associated parking and hard standing, and boundary trees and planting. The proposals seek to retain and enhance this boundary planting, as well as including landscaped communal gardens. The proposed trees and planting aims to maximise biodiversity on site while ensuring high quality amenity space for residents.

6. Public spaces – The proposal provides safe, social and inclusive spaces for future residents. Boundary planting will be retained and reinforced, providing further outdoor amenity to residents.

7. Uses – The proposal will provide much needed retirement accommodation to meet the current and projected demands of the area. The provision of retirement accommodation will enhance the diversity of developments in the area, while benefiting from the numerous local services and amenities. .

8. Homes and Buildings – The proposed building aims to provide functional, healthy and sustainable accommodation tailored to the needs of the site. The proposals use apartment types which have been designed with features drawn from schemes, which have proven to be well suited and popular for retirement accommodation. In addition communal areas include features that have a successful track record having been designed based on similar facilities implemented across similar projects.

9. Resources – he proposals will comply with all government criteria for a sustainable development across design, materials and in location. A holistic approach is taken towards sustainability, considering not only environmental but also social and economic sustainability. By being efficient and resilient, a truly sustainable development is ensured. Closeness to existing amenities are highlighted on page 10 which will contribute to the sustainability of the development location.

10. Lifespan – The proposed development and its facilities will be made to last. The buildings will be easily and well managed and maintained due to a sense of ownership, which is created in order to benefit future residents and prolong the life and use of the development. By emphasising this at the design stage, care will be taken to produce a communal and inclusive space which is both aesthetically pleasing and functional, ensuring maintenance and use for many years.



The 10 characteristics of a well designed place [National Design Guide]

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DESIGN EVOLUTION AND PROPOSAL

DESIGN EVOLUTION

Planning History of the Site

None – Other than householder applications for three of the four dwellings on the site, which are not relevant.

Pre-Application Meeting

8-14 Old Charlton Road, Hitchin

Re-development of the site to provide 38 one- and two-bedroom units for Senior Living with associated parking, landscaping and communal facilities (C3 use class).

Principle of Development

The pre-application proposal was for a three/four storey building containing 38 one- and two-bedroom units for senior living, following the demolition of the existing bungalows on site. Local Plan Policy SP2 supports the development of housing within the settlement boundary. and thus, the development of the site for C3 retirement living housing is therefore deemed to be acceptable in principle under Policy SP2.

Design and Character

The pre-application proposal sought to demolish the existing properties, which are not listed or in a conservation area and replace them with a new 3/4 storey managed block of retirement living flats with associated communal facilities and parking.

Whilst the overall detailed building design was supported along with the palette of materials proposed and low-level boundary treatments to Old Charlton Road, concerns were raised regarding the height, scale and massing of the building being too excessive in relation to its surroundings, with a preferred maximum height of three storeys being suggested.

This feedback, along with more extensive comments and public consultation feedback have been appraised and taken on board with the current application scheme to enhance the proposals.

Public Consultation

The public were invited to provide feedback through a public consultation exercise that involved an in person and virtual exhibition as well as leaflet drops to the local area. The main feedback was that residents' positively engaged with elements of the proposal, especially the provision of specialist housing for older people but had some concerns, chiefly related to parking and noise concerns for residents. Please see the Statement of Community Involvement for full details.



Pre-App Site Plan- Courtesy of ON Architecture



Pre-App South-east Elevation - Courtesy of ON Architecture

DESIGN STRATEGY & APPROACH

Extensive analysis of the site, its setting and local characteristics, along with liaison with the local authority during the pre-application process has led to a design which has sought to meet both the high standards and requirements of the brief but also enhances the setting of the local area in a sustainable design approach.

The proposed layout on the site follows the principles established by the opportunities and constraints appraisal along with the feedback provided at the pre-application meeting. It is proposed that the existing buildings are removed, and the site is to be redeveloped to provide a 35-unit retirement living apartment building over 2/3 storeys, with the building reducing in scale at either end to respect adjacencies with neighbouring properties.

The layout is purposefully orientated to respond to the relationship to the adjacent residential properties, enhancing the building line along Old Charlton Road and creating a more harmonious relationship with Radcliffe House opposite as an entry way into the Town Centre. The relationship between the proposed scheme and the surrounding buildings has been considered from the outset and enhanced as the design has developed. Distances to neighbours are kept to an optimum and overlooking reduced to a minimum with windows purposefully positioned at upper floors along with retained tree screening to mitigate this further.

Adjustments have been made along the designs development to reduce the overall footprint of the building, pulling it further away from the mature tree to the southern corner of the site, with projections moved along the elevations to create a more successful relationship between building form and the natural surrounding context here.

The massing of the development is broken down into well-proportioned elements through variation in facade materials such as brick and render with additional brick and stone detailing accenting the local character and enhancing the overall appearance.

The siting of the building has been carefully considered to ensure the RPA's of the surrounding trees that are being retained are not affected by the proposals. Although these trees are not TPO'd or in a conservation area, every effort has been taken to retain them and protect their biodiversity benefits, with the car park layout working with the current levels of the site to ensure the mature trees to the north of the site can be retained. Thus, ensuring natural screening of the development from buildings of local interest further north is provided as well as a general green buffer to the surrounding roads and properties.

The existing vehicular access points off Old Charlton Rd will be stopped up, with a new access created close to the current Birchwood driveway for both vehicles and pedestrians, assisting in creating a landscaped buffer between the proposed scheme and existing Almshouses.

Pedestrian access will be achieved via an extended area of hardstanding along the western edge of the roadside, leading to a new pedestrian crossing point to the existing footpath to the east of Old Charlton Rd, subject to agreement with the local authority. A car parking court is proposed along the north-eastern edge of the application site, this extends the buffer between the proposed building and neighbouring residential properties to the east and north.



DESIGN STRATEGY & APPROACH

The proposed building is designed as a 'L' shaped development, with the primary elevations facing Old Charlton Road to the east and the footpath to the south. The main frontage of the building is set back from the street, with a low-level boundary treatment and landscaped buffer presented to Old Charlton Road, in keeping with the current context and that of other properties along the road.

The location of the car park also enables overshadowing, privacy and sunlight/daylight concerns to be alleviated, with most of the car parking to be screened from Old Charlton Road. This car parking provision will ensure any impact on surrounding roads and parking areas is mitigated.

A communal club lounge is proposed with access to a terrace area, as well as communal landscaped gardens to the north of the site carefully integrated into the rising topography, providing key external amenity to cater for the needs of residents and enhance the available landscaped features of the development.

It is proposed that the existing tree and vegetation buffer along the western site boundary is maintained and improved, enhancing the existing buffer between the apartments and the elevated Park Way. An acoustic fence will also be introduced along this boundary to further mitigate any acoustic concerns.

All apartments and balconies are designed to mitigate issues of overlooking and privacy to neighbours, whilst maximising the views over the communal gardens, where possible. Julietts are introduced in locations where privacy maybe a concern or overshadowing to apartments beneath would be a detriment to natural light levels.

An accompanying BRE compliant Sunlight/Daylight report has been submitted as part of the application. The considerations around the relationships between the proposed buildings and the residential properties of Old Charlton Rd, Woodcroft, Wratten Rd East and Hawthorne Close have been considered throughout the design development to mitigate issues of overshadowing and privacy. The Site sections on the following page demonstrate some of the key relationships of the proposals to the existing surrounding context. The buildings form and scale have been reduced at either end, where relationships to neighbouring properties are more sensitive, with the introduction of dormers to reduce scale and control overlooking concerns.

The location of the substation will be carefully screened by landscaped planting, whilst providing the necessary access required for maintenance. Its proximity to adjacent properties presents no safety concerns or issues of disturbance.



SCALE AND RELATIONSHIPS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES



Section 1- North-south



Section 2- East-west

SCALE AND RELATIONSHIPS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES



Indicative view 1- Along Old Charlton road looking South



Indicative view 2- From Old Charlton road looking towards the primary elevation



indicative view 3- Along Old Charlton road looking North



Indicative view 4- From within the courtyard parking area looking towards the main entrance

SCALE AND RELATIONSHIPS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES



Indicative view 5- From within the courtyard parking area looking south



Indicative view 6- From the western side of Park Way looking east



Indicative view 7 (Existing)- From the front of the Grade II Listed Wrattan House looking south



Indicative view 7 (Proposed)- From the front of the Grade II Listed Wrattan House looking south

LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

A landscape proposal has been produced by New Leaf Studio on behalf of McCarthy Stone, to accompany this application. An extract of the proposed landscape strategy is shown adjacent, alongside some text provided below by New Leaf Studio to describe the landscape proposal.

The Landscape Proposals as illustrated on drawing LSE-2983-03-LA-MCS791-Drg 01 and submitted with the planning application shows the intended layout and general character for the landscape that will surround the proposed new building. Entrance points, arrangement of parking, paths and terraces together with types of paved surfacing and planned boundary treatments are described within the key or annotated in detail, with the layout and extent of proposed planting or lawns clearly shown and tree species specified. Both existing and proposed site levels are shown to demonstrate planned changes.

The landscape proposals broadly aim to provide a setting for the new building, helping to visually integrate it into the site and its surroundings, whilst providing an attractive environment and outlook for the enjoyment of the residents who will live here. Even the more practical spaces such as the main carpark have been softened using trees and planting to support this approach. Consideration has also been given as to views of the development from the neighbouring residential properties as well as from the street frontage and how proposals may change and contribute to local visual amenity.



Landscape Strategy Diagram

LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

Whilst the proposals on the drawing are clear, we would summarise some aspects of the landscape design as follows,

Boundaries and Associated Landscape

Along Old Charlton Road the frontage will be defined by a low brick faced retaining wall broken into sections between a series of brick piers, with a tile creasing and brick on edge capping detail to echo the character of boundary walls to the neighbouring William Brown Almshouses. Along the top of this wall will run 1.0m high black vertical bar railings, similarly in keeping with local vernacular details found within the neighbouring conservation area. Existing vegetation will be removed from in front of this wall line and areas made good to form a consistent wide grass verge.

Toward its southwestern end the front boundary wall steps down in level and will be created by re-using part of an existing retaining wall along this boundary line, minimising excavations and potential impact upon the existing large Sycamore tree (No 28).

Slightly larger brick piers are to be used to frame the vehicle entrance and form a gateway into the site, flanked by a pair of Field Maple’s that will in time make a strong contribution to the street scene and local visual amenity. A little southwest of this entrance will be a pedestrian gateway, enabling bins to be moved from the refuse store to the street for collection whilst doubling up as a means of access for maintenance.

From the northeast corner of site on Old Charlton Road and running to the northwest, between the new development and gardens of The William Brown Almshouses is a timber close board fence, 1.55m high nearest the road but stepping up to 1.88m. This fence will be retained and repaired or sections replaced where required, minimising disturbance to the neighbouring property. Trellis panels will be added to the inside face of this fence in support to a series of climbing plants that in time will help to green up this boundary and provide some compensation to loss of existing vegetation currently adjacent.

Further northwest and at the back of a proposed substation, the boundary alignment changes to run southwest behind bungalows within Woodcroft, the existing 1.8m timber close board fence along here being similarly retained and repaired, with climbing plants grown across trellis panels to soften the boundary line. North of tree No 25 retained as part of the development, the boundary with Woodcroft turns again to now run in a north-westerly direction. Defined here by a combination of timber close board and panel fencing, with sections of trellis along top to average height of 1.8m, parts of this boundary are fairly dilapidated. The plan subject to agreement with the neighbour is therefore to replace this with a new timber close board fence 1.8m high, including concrete posts and gravel boards. It’s worth highlighting that just inside the development site a section of conifer hedge is to be removed and

a row of four large Hazel will be coppiced, letting in more light to both the garden spaces within the proposed development and the gardens of Woodcroft next door.

Adjacent to the northernmost Hazel and forming a boundary alongside a communal space at the end of Park Close is an existing close board timber panel fence with concrete posts, stepping with the slope of ground to the southwest and then changing direction to run parallel with Park Way. Given the proximity to the main road it is proposed that this boundary will be replaced by a 2.0m high timber acoustic fencing, helping to reduce traffic noise within the main garden spaces associated with the new apartment block. The appearance of this high fence will be softened by planting a mixed native and ornamental hedge or groupings of large ornamental shrubs on the garden side. The acoustic fence will continue alongside Park Way and then return part way along the southwestern boundary of the site, at which point the treatment will change to a standard 1.8m high timber close board fence, with concrete posts and gravel board to the base, replacing an equivalent but dilapidated fence.

Car Parking and Access to the Building

Proposed parking within this site wraps around two sides of the building and accommodates up to 23 vehicles, including two accessible spaces. Where hidden to the rear of the building the layout of spaces has been kept as compact as possible, whereas on the northern side where seen from Old Charlton Road, views of parked cars will be partly hidden by trees and shrubs, planted both within island beds and a wide strip alongside the building. The trees and larger specimen shrubs will in time contribute to local visual amenity and planting as a whole in this area will also help to partly hide the new substation tucked into the corner of the carpark.

Access into the site will be gained from Old Charlton Road by way of a single wide gateway, framed by brick piers and wide enough to allow cars to pass or larger vehicles to enter in case of emergency. This gateway will also form the primary pedestrian access into and out of the development, with a new footpath being proposed alongside Old Charlton Road to give a safe pedestrian route to and from the town centre, via a new crossing point.

Running up toward the main entrance, the carpark will be elevated above ground floor level, in part to work with existing levels along site boundaries but also to ensure that paved surfaces within the root zones of trees 24 and 25 can be constructed using a no-dig approach. As a result of this change in levels, access for pedestrians to and from the main building entrance and for users of mobility scooters to and from the adjacent store will be possible by using a short flight of steps and gentle ramped pathway, all in compliance with building regulations to ensure full accessibility.



Driveway and parking bays - Interlocking permeable block paving, laid in 45 degree laying pattern



Contrast rumble strips at entrance to site or to highlight pathways - laid in staggered pattern.



Asphalt concrete surface to new footpath and form new access from Old Charlton Road. Exact specification to follow standards from local highway authority.



Terraces and paths – Light coloured slabs laid in staggered pattern.



Path surfaces - Compacted hoggins/self binding gravel or similar.

Garden Spaces and Amenity

The landscape proposals have been designed to provide an attractive outlook from the apartments and to create garden spaces around the planned building that can be enjoyed by all the residents. Most of the ground floor apartments will be provided with a small private terrace large enough for a table and chairs and where this is not possible due to site levels, ground floor balconies have been added to provide this outside space.

Where ground floor apartments face out onto the carpark or where separation from adjacent communal space is required, the terraces are partly sunken below parking level and/or enclosed by evergreen hedges and other planting to help reduce potential headlight glare and give some privacy.

Outside of apartments 04 to 06 and facing toward Old Charlton Road, private terraces at ground floor level are separated from the road by vertical bar railings with the wide grass verge beyond and from each other by blocks of shrub and herbaceous planting, albeit that they are still connected by way of a narrow hoggin path for maintenance access. The planned planting here will not only create an attractive outlook from windows and setting for residents who may be sitting outside but will also make a colourful contribution to the street scene, helping to soften the base of the new building. Climbing plants growing up the front of the building will also help with this whilst helping to increase biodiversity within the site.

Around to the southwestern side of the building external levels will be lower than the ground floor. Being a sunken space between building and site boundary, access for use by residents will be more difficult and so the approach taken here is to provide abundant areas planting that will attractive in views looking out and down into this space. New trees are proposed here where space allows, to add additional form and colour whilst helping to provide some separation between the apartments and public footpath just beyond the fence line. It is envisaged that the strip of existing shrubby vegetation running along the outside of the site boundary will be allowed to grow to a height of around 3 metres, equally helping to create some screening and separation.

To the northwestern end of the building will be a series of linked garden spaces for general use and enjoyment of the residents, separated from the carpark by a 1.4m high evergreen hedge and fence. Central to this area will be a communal terrace providing an extension to the shared homeowner lounge and large enough to accommodate at least six large tables with chairs. This terrace is bounded on two sides by a low brick faced retaining wall with blocks of shrubs and herbaceous planting behind and then enclosed by a simple pergola screen, that will in time be covered by climbing plants and roses.

From the northwest side of the communal terrace a pathway extends up a few steps, taking you through planting up to an allotment garden, enclosed by a yew hedge approximately 1.2m in height. Accommodating a large communal tool shed with butts to collect rainwater together with a series of raised timber planting beds, this space will enable residents to grow their own vegetables, cut flowers and other plants of their choice.

Connecting to the allotment garden, a linking path takes you out onto a gently sloping raised lawn, raised up above the communal terrace below and enclosed by beds of mixed shrubs and herbaceous planting. During summer months

this should be a sunny spot in which to sit on a lazy afternoon.

Planting throughout the development will be generous, being detailed to provide year round colour, texture and interest for residents to enjoy, whilst at the same time being fairly easy to manage and maintain by gardening staff. Most areas will be planted with larger plant stock to give impact and impression of maturity from day one, reinforced by use of larger specimen shrubs in key locations. Species will be selected where possible to attract wildlife to the site, providing food or shelter to insects, birds and small mammals, all working toward the strengthening of local biodiversity.

Accessibility and Lighting

The proposed retirement living block proposed has a main entrance easily reached from parking areas and fully accessible to all including disabled and elderly, being compliant with part M(1) of the building regulations. The planned garden spaces and other areas around the building have also been designed to be as accessible as possible, including flush thresholds at all external doorways and shallow gradients throughout to avoid where possible the need for steps. Materials for the hard landscape throughout the site have been carefully chosen with the elderly and disabled in mind, being slip resistant and suitable for wheelchairs access.

External lighting around the proposed building will be designed to be functional but as low key as possible, using low energy LED fittings, shielded to direct light down and reduce both glare and light pollution, whilst at the same time providing enough light for safety. Lighting bollards and discrete wall mounted bulkhead units will be used as appropriate to illuminate entrance spaces, the

Images below/adjacent are courtesy of McCarthy and Stone Lifestyle magazine.



AMOUNT- UNIT MIX- GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The proposals create 35 purpose-built retirement living apartments across three floors of accommodation with 17 x 1 bed units and 18 x 2 bed units all of which exceed Nationally Space Standards as demonstrated in the adjacent schedule.

The following floor plans also demonstrate the mix per floor and relationships of units to each other, arranged around the I-shaped circulation spine of the building.

GROUND FLOOR		
Plot No	Type	Apt Area (m ²)
1	2 Bed	79.83
2	1 Bed	51.94
3	1 Bed	51.94
4	1 Bed	51.94
5	2 Bed	72.08
6	2 Bed	72.08
7	2 Bed	73.43
8	1 Bed	51.94
9	1 Bed	51.94
10	2 Bed	72.08
10		629.20
Circulation Area (Corridors and stairs)		136.40

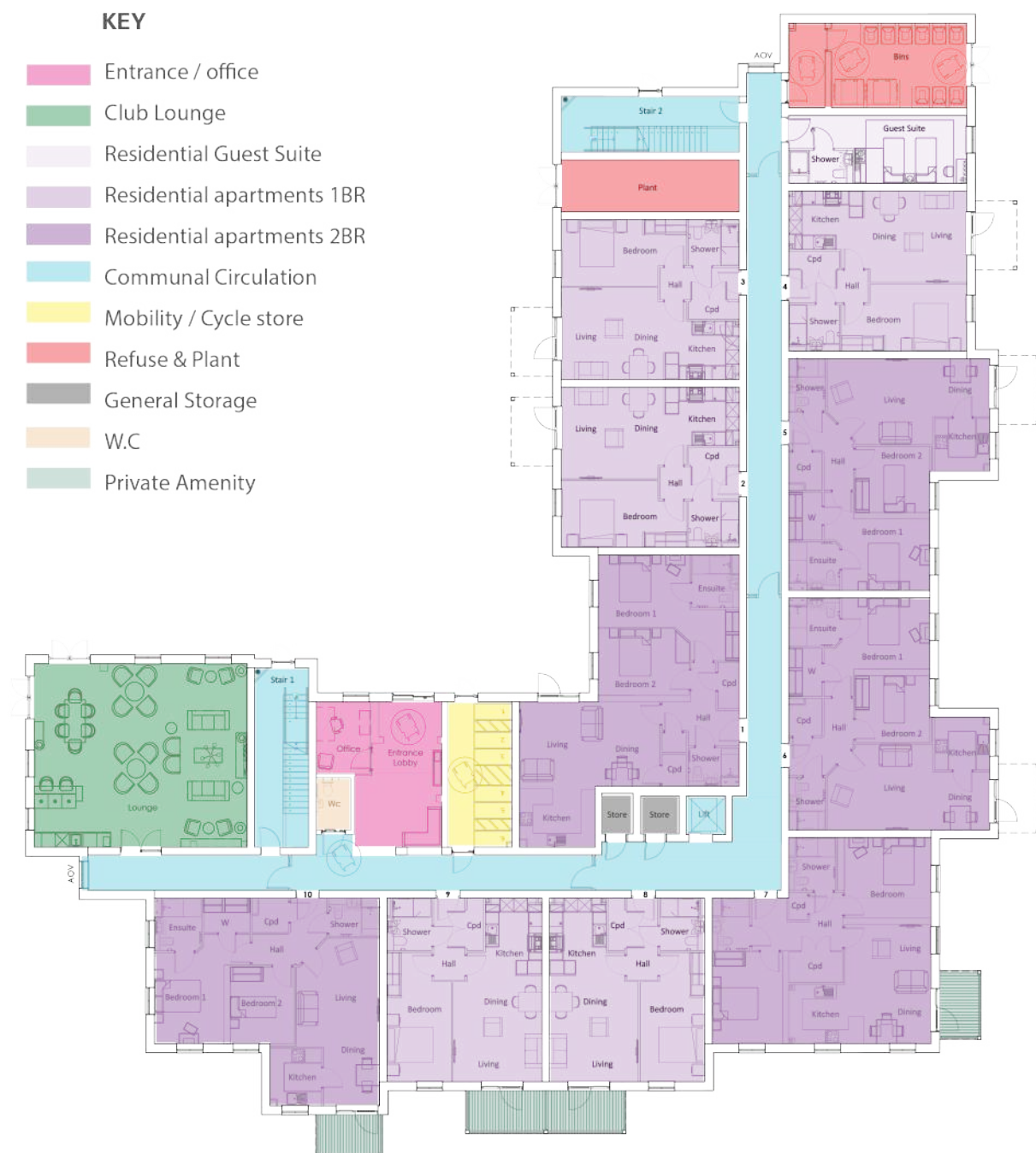
FIRST FLOOR		
Plot No	Type	Apt Area (m ²)
11	2 Bed	79.83
12	1 Bed	51.94
13	1 Bed	71.27
14	1 Bed	51.94
15	2 Bed	51.94
16	2 Bed	72.08
17	2 Bed	72.08
18	1 Bed	73.43
19	1 Bed	51.94
20	2 Bed	51.94
21	2 Bed	72.08
22	2 bed	71.27
23	1 Bed	52.04
13		823.78
Circulation Area (Corridors and stairs)		130.00

SECOND FLOOR		
Plot No	Type	Apt Area (m ²)
24	2 Bed	79.83
25	1 Bed	51.94
26	1 Bed	61.18
27	1 Bed	90.47
28	2 Bed	72.08
29	2 Bed	72.08
30	2 Bed	73.43
31	1 Bed	51.94
32	1 Bed	51.94
33	2 Bed	72.08
34	1 Bed	61.18
35	2 bed	52.04
12		790.19
Circulation Area (Corridors and stairs)		130.00

TOTAL ACCOMMODATION (GIA) M2	2630
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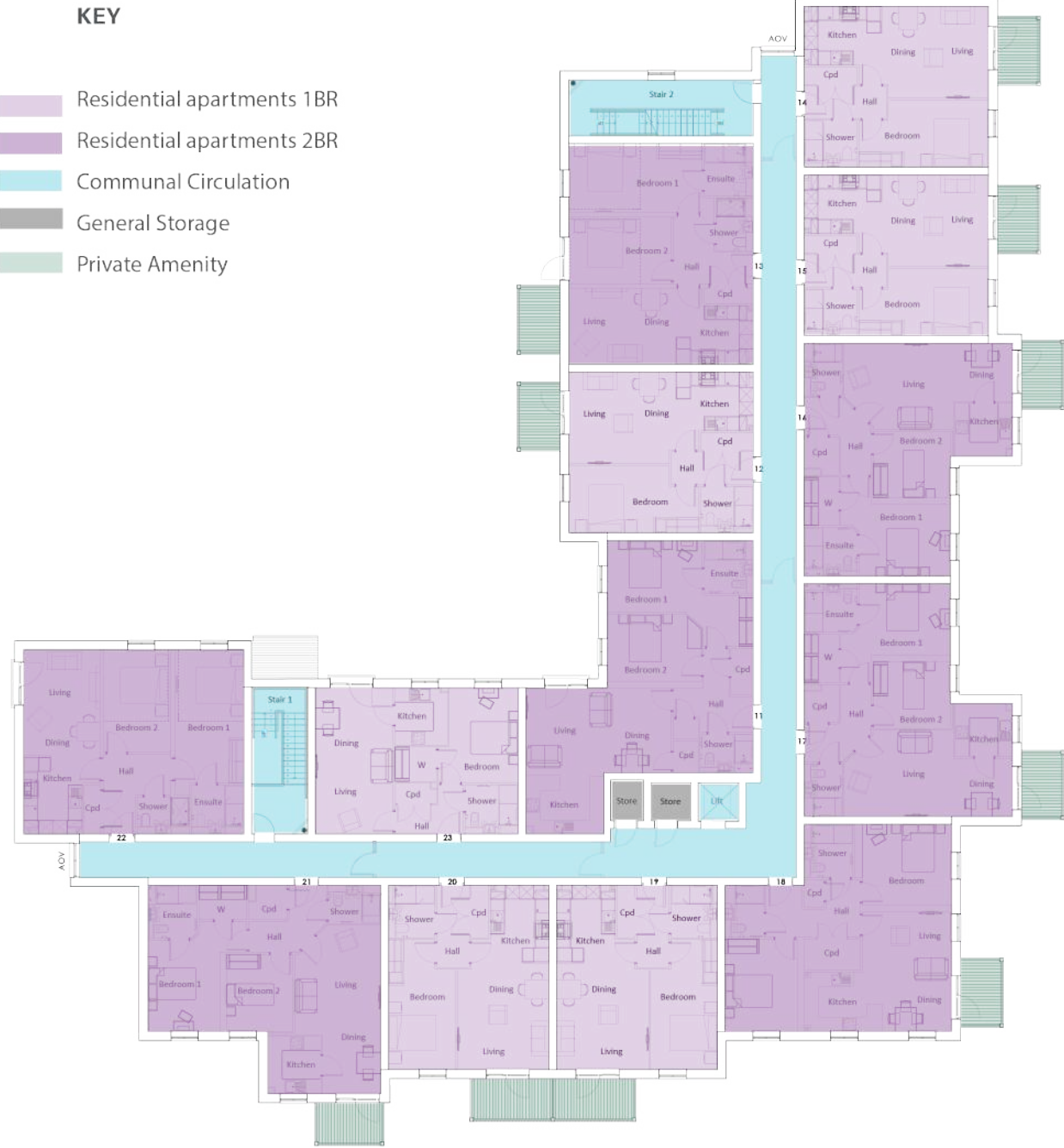
UNIT SPLIT	
Total 1 Bed Units	17
Total 2 Bed Units	18
Total Units	35

BUILDING GIA	
Ground Floor	1038.5
First Floor	1034.7
Second Floor	992.4
TOTAL BUILDING GIA	3065.6

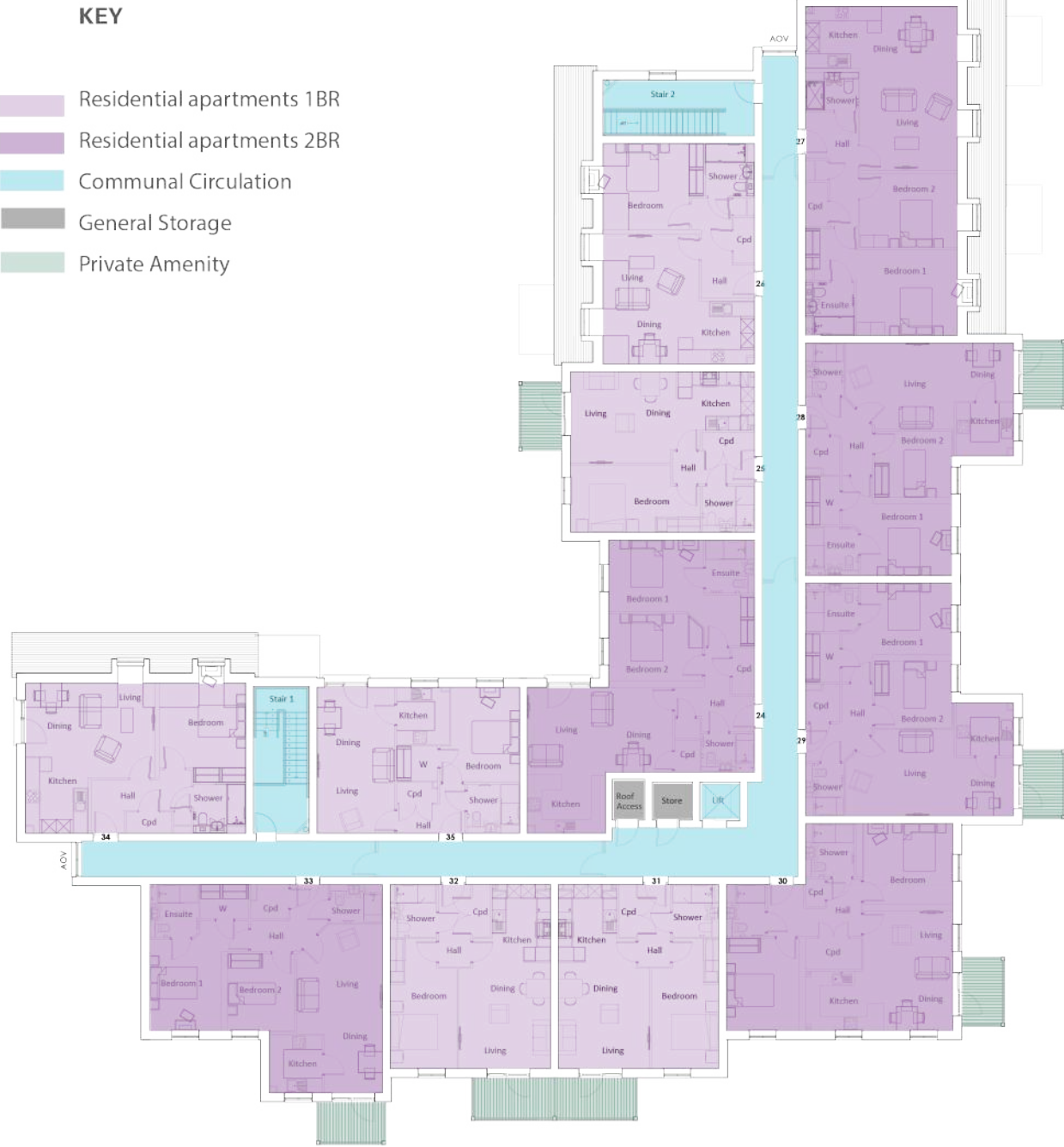


Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Not to Scale

AMOUNT- UNIT MIX- FIRST FLOOR PLAN & SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Proposed First Floor Plan
Not to Scale



Proposed Second Floor Plan
Not to Scale

APPEARANCE- ELEVATIONS

The **south-east** elevation is the primary elevation of the building and fronts Old Charlton Road. The siting and scale of the building is carefully controlled in its relationship to the adjacent single storey Almshouses. The entranceway naturally creates space between the buildings where the two and a half storey dormer arrangement reduces the mass of the proposals, bringing the eaves line down to a more domestic height and scale. The hipped roof arrangement again emphasises this scale change.

The projecting gable end features, accentuated in a contrasting white render, break up the primarily brick elevations and create a natural step change in the building's height, reaching a maximum of three storeys. Subtle stone string courses and soldier course detailing to the façade further break up the mass of the building.

A low-level brick wall with piers and railings between creates a consistent boundary treatment along this edge, in keeping with the scale of boundary conditions along the western edge of Old Charlton Road. New tree planting assist in softening the elevation and projecting balconies adding interest and natural surveillance. These balconies provide key private external amenity at the upper floors, with external terraces at the ground floor, enclosed by low level planting.



The **south-west** elevation, facing the pedestrian subway connection leading to/from the west of the site, wraps the three-storey scale around the building, establishing a presence onto the footpath, again improving natural surveillance. The retained tree to the southern corner of the site and low-level vegetation of the subway embankment help bed the scheme into the surrounding context here as the topography falls away to the subway, further enhanced by additional landscape planting, within the proposals. Rendered gable projections again, break up the rhythm of the building form and materiality.



APPEARANCE- ELEVATIONS

The **north-east** elevation, facing the residential properties of the adjacent almshouses, reduces the scale at this projecting end of the building which aids the proposals relationship to the street scene on approach along Old Charlton Road. Consideration has also been given to this elevation, and the overall mass and siting of the building to ensure its impact on views from the nearby listed building on Wratten Road East, ensuring its visibility is kept to a minimum, as indicated in the indicative model views.

The eaves levels are dropped at several points along the facade, with dormers introduced to the second floor apartments at either end of the I-shaped arrangement. A gable feature is introduced, with render to accentuate the main building entrance, via the carp park. The topography of the site is highlighted in the foreground section, indicating the sloped car park, working with current levels.



The **north-west** elevation introduces render to sections of the facade to contrast the brickwork and accentuate projecting features, whilst breaking up the perceived mass of the building. Strategically located dormers and Juliet balconies assist with privacy controls to neighbouring properties and gardens.

This elevation limits openings facing Park Way, to mitigate any potential noise impacts to the site, whilst the ground floor level opens to the rear landscaped courtyard.

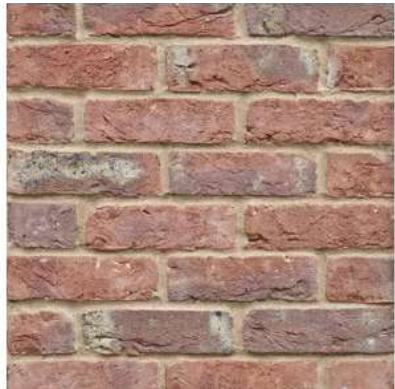


These contextual elevations are placed within official z-mapping surrounding 3-dimensional modelling to demonstrate the proposals siting within the adjacent building and topographical context.

APPEARANCE- MATERIALS AND FEATURES



Calderdale Roof Tile



Red Multi Brick



Mock Brick Windows



White Render



Steel Ballustrades



Red Brick Soldier Course



Steel Ballustraded Balconies



UPVC Windows



Stone String Course



Stone Angled Header

The proposed materials and features pick up on architectural influences of the surrounding context and the local character of the area, to blend the scheme in with its surroundings. Whilst also creating a striking and elegant purpose-built development that will provide a high-end living environment for its residents through its built form, amenity led focus and complimentary landscaping that enhances the surrounding context.



Dormers



White Soffit/Fascia

HIGHWAYS AND TRACKING

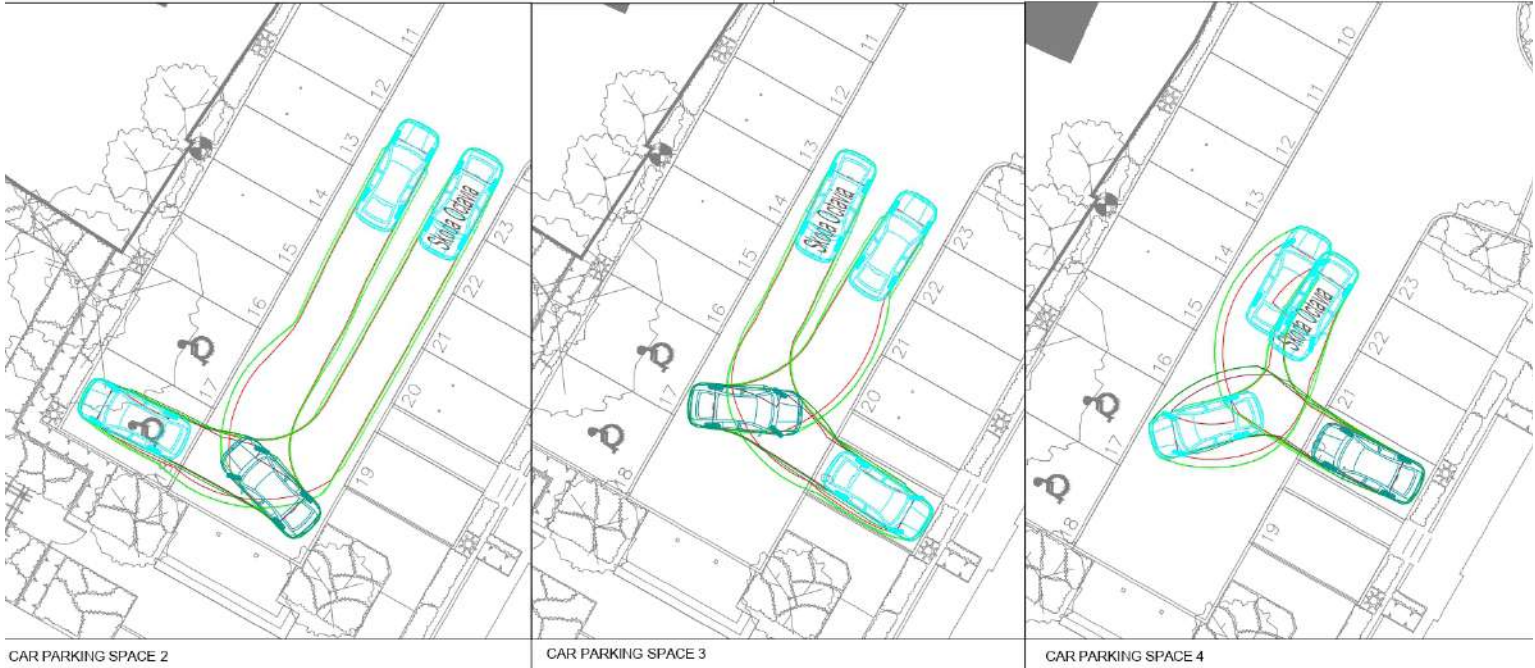
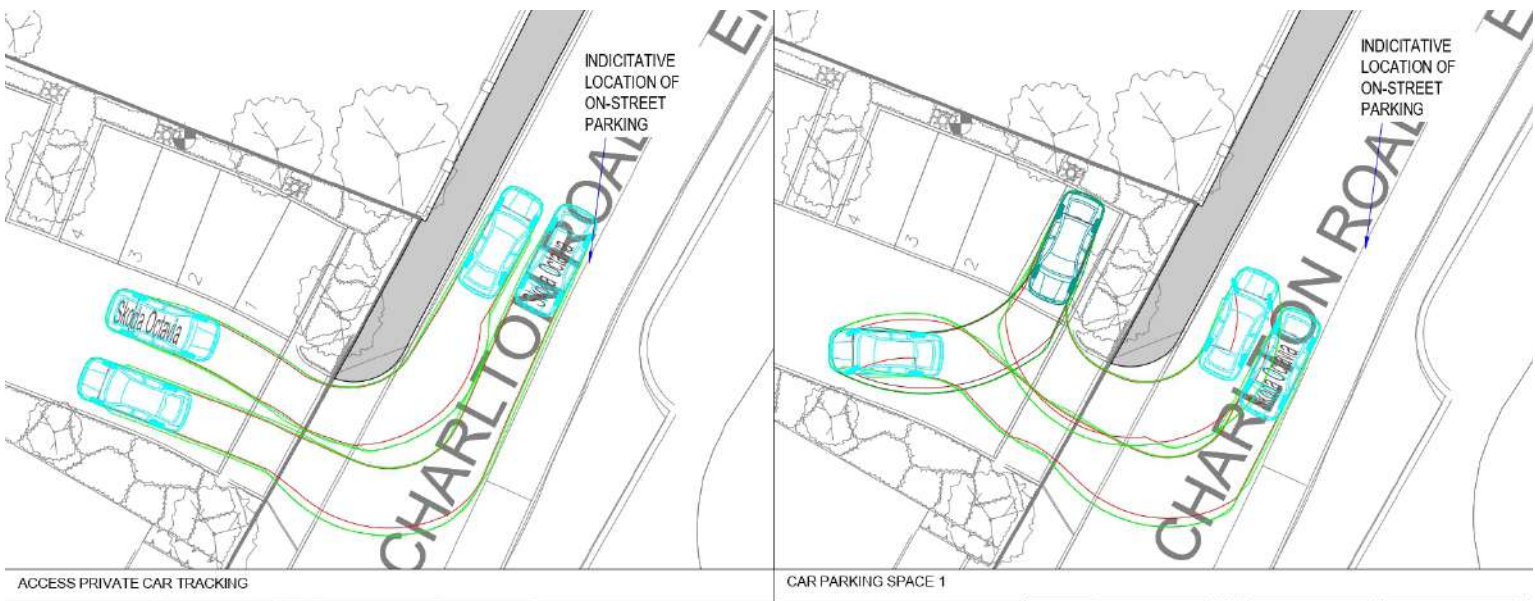
A transport statement and tracking drawings have been produced by Paul Basham Associates on behalf of McCarthy Stone, and accompanies this application.

In this report, it was found that the proposals are acceptable to accommodate access by private cars and fire tenders. Refuse collection is proposed to occur on-street from Old Charlton Road as per the existing arrangement for the 4 bungalows. The refuse vehicle is able to get within 10m of the refuse store based on Manual for Streets (MfS) guidelines. This arrangement is considered to be acceptable as it reflects the existing situation for both the existing bungalows on the site, and the neighbouring residential dwellings as well.

A fire tender is able to enter the site, turn and leave in a forward gear whilst getting within 45m of all parts of the building in line with Building Regulations (Document B). Swept path analysis has been undertaken as part of a Transport Statement to demonstrate this.



Fire Tender Tracking



Vehicle Tracking



Visibility Splay Assessment- Vehicles



Visibility Splay Assessment- Pedestrians

ACCESS AND PARKING STRATEGY

Access

The proposed development will be accessed via a newly formed vehicle crossover onto Old Charlton Road, measuring 5.5m wide, leading into a 6m wide internal access road. This access is capable of supporting two private cars passing simultaneously, or supporting a fire tender accessing and existing the site.

Pedestrian and cycles can access the site from the aforementioned access via a new dedicated footway measuring 2m wide extending for approximately 30m. This new footway will be located on the western side of Old Charlton Road immediately north of the proposed access and will connect with the existing footway on the eastern side of the carriageway via a dropped kerb crossing with tactile paving.

Residents' Car Parking

Sufficient parking is provided on site in order to meet all of the projected needs of the residents of the development, mitigating any impact on surrounding parking spaces and roads. The proposal also contains accessible spaces with associated larger access, located close to the main entrance for the residential units.

The adjacent diagram illustrates the distribution of regular and accessible car parking spaces for residents'. A total of 23no. car parking spaces for residents are provided within the application site, which includes 2no. accessible residents' car parking spaces.

Key:

- 1 Vehicular Access
- Residents' Car Parking Spaces
- Residents' Accessible Car Parking Spaces
- Proposed Vehicular Access Into Site
- Proposed Pedestrian Access
- Proposed Cycle / Mobility Store Access
- Proposed Refuse Store Access



LIFETIME HOMES

McCarthy Stone apply the philosophy of providing good quality, spacious interiors that allow the occupant a degree of flexibility in the way they want to occupy their home. One important factor to the design of these dwellings is the room proportions and the ease of movement into and around them.

These factors allow the dwellings to cater for the accessibility needs of any future occupant whether that is from the outset of occupation, or as people’s needs change as life evolves. These are the principles of the housing that evolves with the occupant allowing them to stay in the home and neighbourhood that they reside in.

The proposed dwellings will comply with what was the 16 points of the Lifetime Homes criteria.

01

PARKING (WIDTH OR WIDENING CAPABILITY)

For communal or shared parking, a minimum of one space should be provided (3300mm wide and 4800 deep) close to the block entrance or lift core. This is addition to any provision made for ‘wheelchair housing’. Where possible, additional such spaces should be included and/or opportunities should be left for spaces to be widened in the future if necessary. The access route from the parking spaces to the communal entrance should be a minimum clear width of 1200mm.

02

APPROACH TO DWELLING FROM PARKING (DISTANCE, GRADIENTS AND WIDTHS)

The distance from the car parking space allocated to meet the minimum LTH as above, to the building entrance should be kept to a minimum and be level or gently sloping. The distance from visitors parking to entrances should be as short as is possible and also on a level or gently sloping.

03

APPROACH TO ALL ENTRANCES

The approach to all entrances should preferably be level or gently sloping and in accordance with the specifications (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

04

ENTRANCES

All entrances should be illuminated, have level access over the threshold and effective clear opening widths and nibs as specified (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk) In addition, main entrances should have adequate weather protection and a level external landing.

05

COMMUNAL STAIRS AND LIFTS

Principal access stairs should provide easy access in accordance with the following specifications regardless of whether or not a lift is provided:

Uniform rise not exceeding 170mm – uniform going not less than 250mm – Handrails that extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom – Handrails height 900mm from each nosing – step nosings distinguishable through contrasting brightness risers which are not open.

Where a dwelling is reached by a lift, it should be fully accessible in accordance with the specifications below:

Have minimum internal dimensions of 1100mm x 1400mm – Have clear landings adjacent to the lift entrance of 1500mm x 1500mm Have lift controls at a height between 900mm and 1200mm from the floor and 400mm from the lift’s internal front wall.

06

INTERNAL DOORWAYS AND HALLWAYS

Movement in hallways and through doors should be convenient to the widest range of people, including those using mobility aids and wheelchairs. In principle, narrower hallways will need wider doorways in their side walls. The width of doorways and hallways should conform to the specifications laid out. (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk).



The design allows for the width of a number of parking bays to be increased in the future to meet the minimum LTH requirements of 3.3m. As parking is communal two of the spaces will comply with LTH standards and the access route to the building will be maintained at a minimum clear width of 1.2m.



The distance from parking to the building is kept to a minimum at both the front, main entrance, and secondary access points at the side and rear of the development, especially in relation to those spaces that comply with the LTH standards specified above. A level or gently sloping approach will be provided at a minimum 1.2m wide.



The approach to all entrances will be level or gently sloping. Approaches will be a minimum of 1.2m wide.



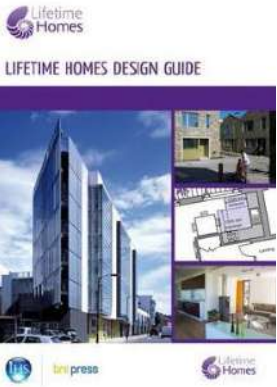
Entrances will be well illuminated and have level access over the threshold. They will also have clear opening widths and nibs, with adequate weather protection.



The proposed building will feature communal stairs and two lifts, all of which will provide easy access in accordance with the LTH specifications.



The design will allow for ease of access for all users in relation to internal doorways and hallways, including those using mobility aids and wheelchairs.





- 07

Circulation Spaces

There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and basic circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere.
- 08

Entrance Level Living Space

A living room / living space should be provided on the entrance level of every dwelling.
- 09

Potential for Entrance Level Bed – Space

In dwellings with two or more storeys, with no permanent bedroom on the entrance level, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient temporary bed-space.
- 10

Entrance Level WC and Shower Drainage

Where an accessible bathroom, in accordance with Criterion 14, is not provided on the entrance level of a dwelling, the entrance level should have an accessible WC compartment, with potential for a shower to be installed – as detailed in the specification below
- 11

WC and Bathroom walls

Walls in all bathrooms and WC compartments should be capable of firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails.
- 12

Stair and Potential through Floor Lifts

The design within a dwelling of two or more storeys should incorporate the potential for stair lift installation and possess a suitable identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the entrance level to a storey containing a main bedroom and a bathroom satisfying Criterion 14.
- 13

Potential for Future Fitting of Hoists and Bedroom/Bathroom Relationship

Structure above a main bedroom and bathroom ceilings should be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and the design should provide a reasonable route between this bedroom and the bathroom.
- 14

Bathrooms

An accessible bathroom, providing ease of access in accordance with the specification, should be provided in every dwelling on the same storey as a main bedroom.
- 15

Glazing and Window Handle Heights.

Windows in the principal living space (typically the living room), should allow people to see out when seated. In addition, at least one opening light in each habitable room should be approachable and usable by a wide range of people – including those with restricted movement and reach.
- 16

The Location of Service Controls

Service controls should be within a height band of 450mm to 1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

- The proposed apartments are well-proportioned spaces that allow ease of access. They will be designed to provide a good level of accessibility for disabled users as defined under Part M of the Building Regulations.
- All dwellings have entrance level living space in accordance with LTH standards as an apartment scheme is proposed.
- All dwellings have entrance level bed-space in accordance with LTH standards as an apartment scheme is proposed.
- All dwellings have entrance level WCs and shower drainage in accordance with LTH standards.
- The walls in the apartments are generally stud with plasterboard, reinforced to allow the future fixing of grab rails and sanitary fittings.
- This is not deemed relevant to the proposed site as all of the dwellings are single storey apartments. A communal lift provision is included in the design in compliance with LTH specifications.
- Direct connection between bathroom and a bedroom is possible in all dwellings, adaptation to allow for ceiling hoists will be allowed for in the construction specification.
- Bathrooms are provided to LTH standards, along with direct access from a bedroom.
- Proposed windows meet the low-level window sill height and handle height requirements.
- Switches and sockets will be provided at accessible heights to meet the requirements of LTH and the Building Regulations Part M.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

North Herts Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document

The overarching principle of the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP), adopted in November 2022, is to achieve sustainable communities. This is to be achieved through high-quality sustainable design, ensuring appropriate locations for housing and employment.

The SPD sets three standards of sustainability: bronze, silver and gold where bronze is the baseline, representing current policy and building regulations compliance. These checklists work together across themes and will be assessed alongside each other to ensure a holistic approach to sustainability is being considered. McCarthy Stone seeks to achieve compliance with the Bronze target as a minimum, with Silver to be achieved where possible.

This application is supported by a Sustainability and Energy Statement from Focus Consultants, which sets out several elements of the North Herts Council Sustainability SPD that are targeted by the proposed scheme and the basis for how the parameters for these criteria are met, including.

- Optimising Passive Design and Fabric Performance.
- Achieving Low Carbon Energy.
- Minimising Carbon Footprint.
- Conserving Water.

This statement focuses in particular on

- Healthy placemaking

Where the design approach of the building, landscaping and sustainalble location have been explored to ensure the proposals strive for the highest standard possible.

The NHS’s ‘Putting Health into Place’ sets out principles for designing, delivering, and managing healthy places. The devleopment itself seeks to create an inclusive compact community, whilst affording ready walkable access to wider society via its town centre location and nearby green spaces. The proposals provide an attractive, maintained and managed setting with internal and external communal amenity facilities to promote social interaction and activity.

HEALTHY PLACEMAKING	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Green and Blue Infrastructure and NHS Health into Place Principles	Ensure compliance with Policy requirements and open space standards	All schemes must submit a landscaping strategy.	In addition to silver level requirements
		Ensure all schemes propose play, community amenity and food production opportunities. Fields in Trust distances should be followed for play spaces and locations mapped with walking isochrones.	Locations of play areas, amenity and food growing areas should be mapped, and character areas defined. Strategies should be included for play / food / active frontages.
		Green Infrastructure design should follow Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles	Ensure any Green Infrastructure provision links to strategic Green Infrastructure to compliment the Nature Recovery Network (where appropriate).
		Ensure all schemes embed key aspects of healthy placemaking as outlined in the NHS Putting Health into Place guidance.	Ensure schemes embed key aspects of healthy placemaking as outlined in the NHS Putting Health into Place guidance.
		Ensure 50% of all flat roofs are green or blue roofs.	Ensure 100% of flat roofs are green or blue roofs
		Ensure that an air quality assessment is undertaken to achieve air quality neutral (AQN) or provide justification of why AQN not possible.	Ensure that the air quality assessment demonstrates air quality positive
		Undertake an overheating risk assessment to assess residential dwellings against CIBSE TM59 and Part O ensuring compliance at planning stage - prioritising passive measures	
		Undertake an acoustic assessment to confirm performance against the Part O acoustic criteria for the overheating assessment.	
		All domestic units to meet Part M4(1)	
		Ensure the development scheme includes community allotments.	
		Ensure the development scheme includes community allotments.	

Criteria from the North Herts Sustainable Supplementary Planning Document on Healthy Placemaking

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION CONT.

McCarthy Stone take a holistic approach to sustainability, considering not only environmental but also social and economic sustainability. This approach is taken in both corporate governance and strategy plans in the design of its main product – extra care developments for older persons.

The Planning Statement in support of the detailed application will set out how the proposed development meets the three dimensions to Sustainable Development at Paragraph 7 NPPF; economic, social and environmental as well as identify and achieve the resilience, sustainability and health characteristics outlined in the National Design Guide.

An energy and sustainability statement prepared by Focus Consultants has been submitted supports the planning application.

Sustainability Reputation:

In light of the increasing urgency to address climate change, the depletion of non-renewable fossil fuels and material resources, McCarthy Stone have set up a ‘Sustainability Committee’ first established in 2001, which has a remit to look beyond the pure environmental issues and a responsibility to integrate holistic sustainable strategies into the business decision-making.

A member of the company’s executive board chairs McCarthy Stone’s Sustainability Committee. The committee is continuously reviewing and strengthening the company’s sustainability performance and credibility through strong corporate governance and the incorporation of sustainable strategies in company policies. In addition to its initial remit, this committee has now evolved into the Research and Development Committee. This committee is very active in reviewing and developing efficient ways of achieving best practice in accordance with the national sustainability agenda.

McCarthy Stone has been acknowledged by the WWF as one of UK’s top leading house builders who not only recognise the importance of sustainability issues, but have gone a long way to ensure that this is reflected in their governance, management resources, policies and operational performance.

19% improvement in the Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) over the Target Emission Rate (TER) (as per the Approach to Energy Efficiency policy) and SBEM Compliance can be achieved through the use of a robust, high performing fabric specification, MVHR and a PV array generating no less than 34,571.72 kWh / yr.

Sustainability Strategy for the Development

Impact on the Environment:

Building construction and the use of buildings, especially their space heating, is one of the main contributors to CO2 emissions in the UK. Energy conservation, introduction of sustainable transport strategies and incorporation of energy efficient strategies can be one way to play a part in reaching CO2 emission reductions while reducing other adverse impacts on the environment.

Sustainability Strategies in Land Procurement:

McCarthy Stone has an exemplary land procurement strategy. The company’s land department select sites which, by the very nature of their location, encourage social inclusion and cohesion, social mobility and participation of the future residents of a potential development in the local community.

Site Location and Amenities:

The site location is highly sustainable for this kind of development, with good access to a wide network of roads and footways to the surrounding area. The proximity to the M1 and A1 allows for easy access to nearby towns and cities, as well as London to the east.

The town centre of Hitchin is some 300m away with its many services and amenities, local shops, cafes, restaurants etc within walking distance.

Transportation:

Due to the site's proximity to the town centre there is ready access to primary public transport links to the nearby and wider area.

The proximity of McCarthy Stone developments to local amenities (and the demographic profile of a typical residents) has the important benefit of contributing to the reduction of car dependency.

There is a dedicated internal mobility/cycle store area provided within the building at ground floor level, adjacent to the main entrance; this also provides a safe and secure place to store and charge electricity mobility scooters (our preferred method of green travel). There are also a number of amenities within walking distance of the site

Energy Efficiency:

Each separate habitable room within the apartments will be designed with independent thermal controls as standard.

Communal lighting will be linked to daylight and/or movement sensors. All the spaces within each flat will be lit by low energy light fittings, including all the external lighting.

Ensuring daylight access to kitchens where feasible reduces the internal lighting load within individual flats.

Good thermal performance will be further achieved by the use of Low-e solar control double-glazing with enhanced thermal insulation.

Installed electrical appliances will be A-rated and advice on the use of these white goods will be passed onto the homeowners in a handover pack.

An energy saving advice leaflet will also be passed onto the homeowners. Thermal insulation and ventilation will be designed into the building envelope using a specification to achieve a good SAP rating in compliance with Part L of the Buildings Regulations. Combined with a good standard of ventilation and air tightness, this will help to conserve the fuel used to power the building.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION CONT

Compact Form and Embodied Energy:

The general use of single aspect apartments will help to make efficient use of space. This will effectively reduce the embodied energy, the non-renewable energy consumed in the acquisition of raw materials, their processing, manufacture, transportation to site and the construction process, due to the reduction in materials used as compared to the single sided alternative.

The proposed configuration of apartments linked by a central corridor reduces the surface area to floor ratio with a corresponding reduction in the space heating energy usage. Furthermore there is a reduction in the effective area over which the building would lose this heat through its fabric as compared to the single sided corridor alternative.

As a result of the compact form of building, maintenance costs are also reduced particularly if there is a comparison with an equivalent number of bed spaces provided in conventional housing.

In conclusion the compact form will increase the whole life value and reduce the life cycle energy use of the proposed scheme.

HCFC (Hydro-Chloro-Fluoro Carbon) Emissions:

HCFC's (ozone depleting substances) within the building will be reduced and where possible will not be included in the specification. The standard specification already includes zero ozone depleting insulation types such as Kingspan insulation for external walls, Catnic for window lintels, Rockwool mineral fibre for roofs, Kingspan rigid insulation for floors and foundations and Armaflex for the pipe work.

Water Economy:

Dual flush 3-6 litre WCs are specified in each apartment. The individual hot water storage units are located as close as possible to taps so as to minimise the amount of water (and energy) wasted through running the hot tap before hot water is available. Showers reduce water consumption and taps incorporate restrictors to reduce flow rates.

Materials:

Most of the materials to be used will be manufactured in the UK and supplied direct or through builder's merchants. These materials will be sourced locally where feasible. All timber to be used in the construction will be sourced from renewable sources with FSC certificates.

Nearest-cut lengths will be specified for timber so as to minimise waste. The following building elements will be constructed off-site; structural metal stud insulated panels, composite hollow rib floor slabs with reinforced concrete topping, stairs from composite metal with reinforced concrete topping to treads, roof trusses.

Durability and Flexibility:

The internal space within the apartments is adaptable i.e. studwork partitions can be easily demounted should future needs change.

Disability Access:

The proposal is designed to allow for ease of access and movement for people with disabilities.

Layout, Orientation, Form and Micro-Climatic Factors:

Due to the constraints and opportunities of the site (topography, orientation and existing landscaping), the use of French doors to the sitting areas has been maximised, thereby providing benefits from solar gains and natural daylight.

The apartment design also helps to reduce the extent of circulation space required per apartment, thus optimising development potential and avoiding profligate use of space and building resources.

Waste Management & Recycling:

The proposed development will include communal refuse and recycling facilities within the building. This provision includes,

- 2no. 1100lt bins.
- 6no. 360lt recycle bins.
- 3no. 240lt bins for food waste.

Based upon an occupancy rate of 1.1 persons per one bed / 1.4 persons per 2 bed.

Providing 63lts of waste per apartment, 62lts of recycling per apartment / 20.5lts of food waste per apartment.

In addition, McCarthy Stone encourages suppliers to reduce surplus packaging for materials, fixtures and fittings and seek to minimise the number and effect of deliveries.

Wherever feasible, natural raw materials and products will be used in the construction process. Any packaging such as MDF, wood or plastic wrapping will be reused to protect fragile building elements during the building process such as metallic sinks, porcelain products etc.

Social Needs and Crime Prevention:

A handover pack will be provided for the future residents, providing information about their new home including the Green Transport Plan, advice on the energy efficient appliances installed in their homes, addresses and telephone numbers for essential local services, clubs and organisations benefiting the new resident.

Retirement Living offers a safe environment for older people to live in. In addition the presence of an assisted living development increases passive surveillance within the locality of the site, benefiting the wider community as well.

The building will be designed to comply with Part Q of the Building Regulations and reasonable provision will be made to resist unauthorised access to any part of the building from which access can be gained to an apartment. Each apartment has its own lockable front door that opens into a communal corridor space.

The internal circulation space can only be accessed via the main entrance which requires a security code to be entered each time you pass through. Visitors are required to wait for the concierge or a resident to let them in. All windows are fitted with locks as are French doors / patio doors. Exit from stairwells is through a self closing door which locks on closing. Access and exit to the refuse store and mobility scooter storage areas is via a coded security door.

Lighting Assessment:

In external areas low level bollard lighting angles light down to where it is most usefully needed, to avoid light pollution. Building lighting is PIR controlled and set to come on from dusk until dawn, providing added security when it is needed, and reducing unnecessary energy usage. All external lighting uses low energy fittings.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

McCarthy Stone aims to be a good neighbour during the construction process and have a Considerate Construction Policy. This involves minimising noise at unsociable hours and a constant focus on site presentation. The site manager, Banksman and the contracts manager for McCarthy Stone will be in liaison with the neighbours to ensure that any issues during the construction phase are addressed.

By focusing on both sustainability in design, community engagement and construction process, the characteristics for good sustainable design outlined in the National Design Guide are taken further to every process of the development of the scheme.

Site operatives will be given a health and safety induction before starting construction on site and all of McCarthy Stone’s site operatives have gone through the health and safety course to obtain their CSCS cards which is a card to certify Health & Safety competence to enter building sites.

McCarthy Stone has a Health and Safety Policy that ensures that issues are addressed on a regular basis at all levels, and have signed up to The Home Builders Federation (HBF) newly established Health & Safety Charter which promotes industry wide improvement. Health and Safety issues are on the agenda at all Board meetings.

To promote greater management accountability and year on year improvement in health and safety performance, a management system has been introduced on all of McCarthy Stone construction sites.



Environmental Sustainability:

Pre-fabricated concrete products and, most probably, mortar silos, will be used to further reduce on site water use. Fuel use will be minimised during construction.

McCarthy Stone will issue Best Practice Guidelines to site staff on minimising and managing waste together with a system for assessing our waste contractors to emphasise environmental issues as well as regulatory, performance and cost aspects.

Economic Sustainability:

The emphasis on local sourcing of effective contractors and sub-contractors who can deliver their services to the construction site on time provides an opportunity for McCarthy Stone to contribute to the economic viability of the local and surrounding areas.

Conclusion

The two key aims have been met which were set out in the Energy and Sustainability statement: Undertake an analysis of the scheme to determine the performance in relation to energy and carbon efficiency.

Therefore, the Energy and Sustainability statement is deemed to have provided a satisfactory response and evaluation as required under Policy CS22 of the planning submission requirements.

The Energy and Sustainability statement provides a satisfactory response and evaluation of the sustainability credentials of the development, consistent with the NPPF, National Design Guide and building regulations.

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CONCLUSION

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Conclusion

This Design and Access Document relates to the proposed development of 35 Retirement Living Units (1 and 2 bedroom apartments), with associated parking, drainage and landscaping to redevelop land at Old Charlton Road, Hitchin.

The proposals have been carefully developed and evolved through contextual analysis, with careful consideration of scale, appearance and materials that relate to the surrounding character and context, incorporating feedback received from the pre-application responses.

The proposals outlined in this document represent a considered response to the opportunities and constraints identified on the site. We believe that the proposals provide sensitively designed, high quality retirement living units, that are appropriate to meet local needs and contribute to the identified housing requirement in the local area. These are set around extensive and high quality outdoor communal areas which are accessible and inclusive for all future residents.

This document aims to demonstrate that the proposals are fully acceptable in design terms and will contribute positively towards the character of the area through a thorough, thoughtful and considered proposal. The design and landscaping are proposed to the highest quality and suitability to the area for existing and future residents alike.



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