

Architect's Design Statement

Proposed Development: Proposed 4 No. Semi-detached units

Address: Cois Farrage, Blackrock, Co Louth

Client: Westdalk Rol Ltd

Revision 0

Date: 06/06/2025

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1 Introduction:

This design statement has been prepared by Denis Williams Design Services Ltd in support of a planning application for 4 Residential units at Cois Farraiige, Blackrock, Dundalk, Co. Louth, on Behalf of Westdalk.

This application is for the proposed amendment to a Strategic Housing Development, ABP ref 303253-18. This application was for 166 number residential units and a creche, which was reduced to 158 units in accordance with condition 2 of the grant of permission.

In compliance with condition 11 (b) an archaeologist was employed to monitor all site investigations and excavation works. This monitoring uncovered an extensive amount of archaeological material in close proximity to Haggardstown Old Graveyard. A revision to the original grant of permission was agreed with the Local Authority and National Monuments Service, which would allow for the retention insitu of all the archaeology found under compliance with condition 12 of the grant. The revisions included for:

1. Realignment of part of the road network and change in designation of that road into a Homezone
2. Omission of 4 houses and inclusion of a public open space (units 69-72)
3. Provision of gable windows for passive surveillance in unit 68
4. Modification of the permitted boundary treatment to the graveyard along the open space
5. Archaeological Heritage - Provision of features within the design to record the findings on site.

1.1 1.1 Proposed Development:

The proposed development is for the modification of an existing permitted development.

This proposal is to bring the development back in line with the granted permission by reinstating the omitted houses along the same road and relocating the open space, bringing the unit numbers and density back up to the levels granted under the original permission. This will require the introduction of one new house type, type K, the other 3 houses, type C and F, are the same as other approved units within the scheme.

This proposal takes into consideration and relies upon all the reports and design criteria from the original permission and given the proposed changes we would be of the opinion that this is a minor amendment or impact on some of these report/studies.

1.2 Technical Context:

The proposed scheme has been developed in line with the guidance set out in the following national and regional policies/guidance:

- Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (First revision 2025)
- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy – Eastern & Midland Regional (2019-2031);
- Sustainable Residential Development & Compact Settlement for Planning Authorities (2024)
- Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (2008) and the accompanying Best Practice Guidelines- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities;
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007);
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019);
- Smarter Travel – A New Transport Policy for Ireland (2009-2020);
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009).

2 Site & Context:

2.1 Site Location/wider context:

The site is located in close proximity to the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, only 4.5k to the south from centre of Dundalk and 1.0k to the North East from the coastal town of Blackrock.

Dundalk has been identified as a Regional Growth Centre by the National Planning Framework and would be envisaged to be the primary employment focus for the development. Drogheda has also been identified by the NPF as regional growth centre and only 25 minutes from the site.

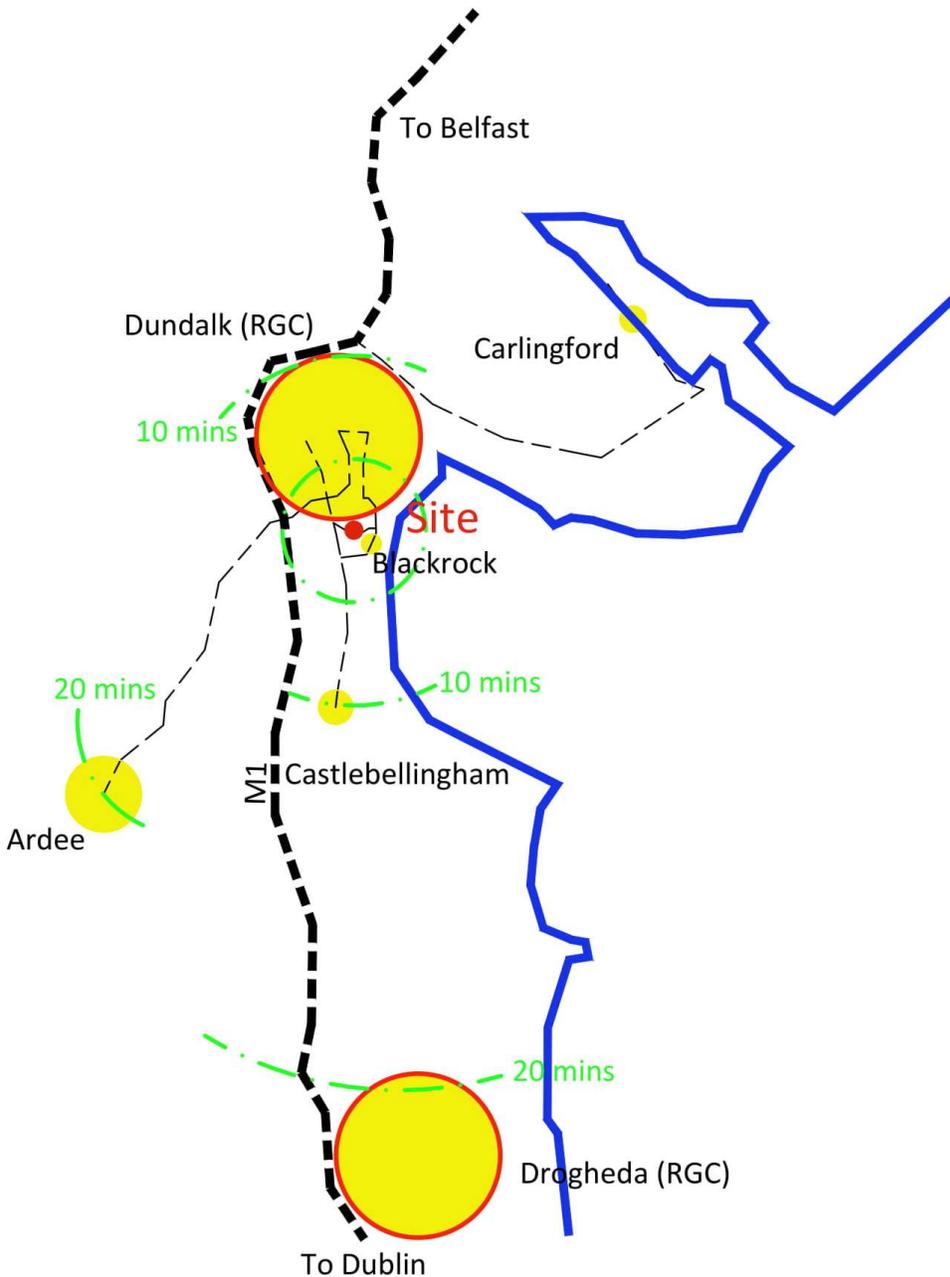


fig 1) Site - Wider Context

2.2 Local Context – Density:

The local density around the estate would be considered low compared to national guidelines, with a large quantity of one off housing present in the immediate vicinity.

Grey indicates a low density of 0-09 Units per HA

Light brown a medium density of between 10-29 Units per HA

Blue indicates a higher density 35+ Units per HA (please note the proposed development is the only site with this density)

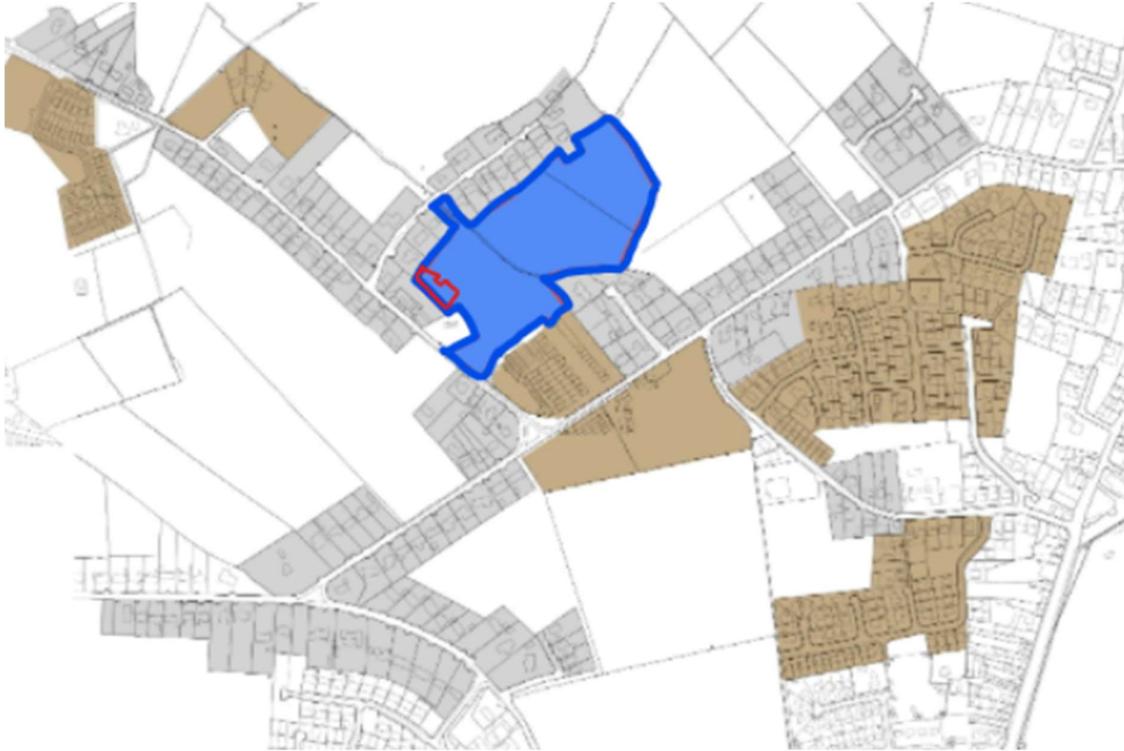


fig 2) Site location plan indicating local Densities

2.3 Local Context – Typology

The following pictures are indicative of the housing typology within the local Context. The majority of the houses in close proximity to the development are detached



fig 3) Semi-detached Units in Cois Ferraige



fig 4) Apartment block in Cois Ferraige



fig 5) Detached house on Tuite's Lane



fig 6) Detached house on Old Golf Links Road



fig 7) Detached house on Old Golf Links Road



fig 8) Detached house on Old Golf Links Road



fig 9) Bungalow & dormer on Rock Road



fig 10) Semi-Detached units for Gort Na Glaise

2.4 Local Context/Pedestrian Linkages:

The site is located in close proximity to a variety of local amenities. It is less than a 5 minute walk from a national school, community centre and park. It is a 10 minute walk from Blackrock village centre, the Coastline, Fairways Retail Centre, a hotel and Gym, another national school and football pitches.



Legend:

Green indicates walking distance from estate

Orange indicates local Amenity spaces/Focal points

Blue indicates coastal walk

Red indicates site extents

fig 11) Site location indicating travel distance local amenities

3 Site Analysis:

3.1 Ariel view of site



fig 12) Ariel view of the local context

The site is within the existing “Cois farrage” estate. This is a fully serviced site with roads and utilities within or adjacent to the site. There is a church and graveyard to the south/east boundary of the site.

Primary vehicular access to the site is off the Old Golf Links Road, however there is a pedestrian access route from Tuites lane.

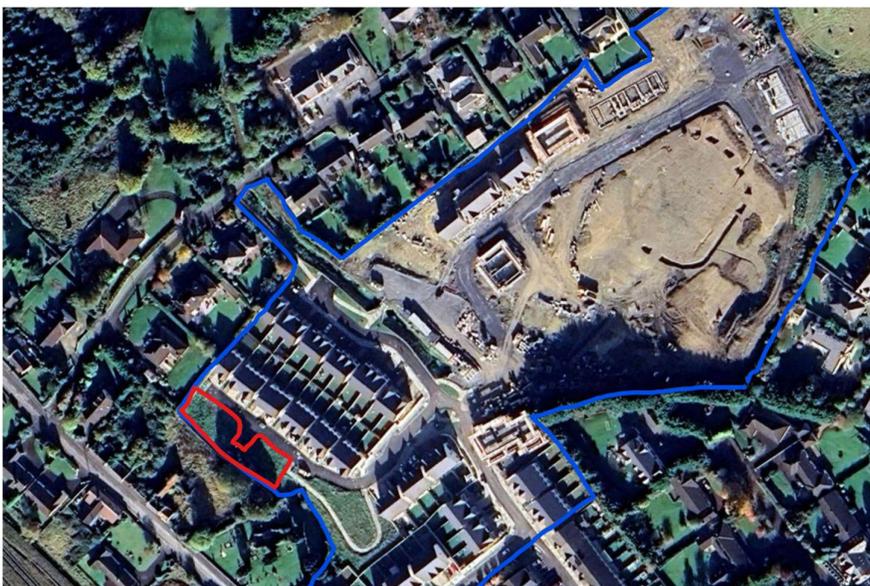
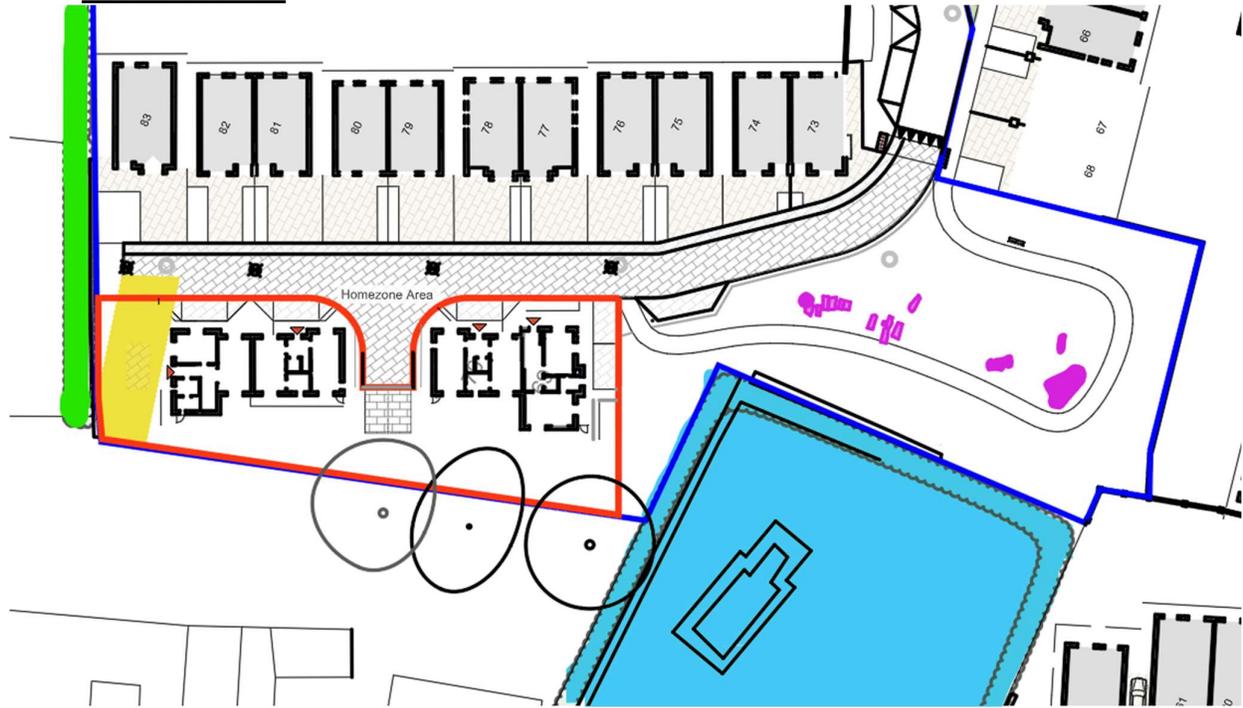


fig 13) Enlarged Ariel View of the site

3.2 Site Constraints:



Legend:

Red indicates site extents

Yellow indicates existing wayleaves to adjoining property owners / public utilities

Green indicates existing hedges to be retained

Blue indicates local amenity spaces/focal points

Magenta Indicates retained archaeological features

fig 14) Site plan indicating the site constraints

The key aspects/constraints identified within the site are as follows:

- This is a fully serviced site with roads and utilities within or adjacent to the site
- There is a church and graveyard along with mature trees to the southern boundary of the site
- The site boundary is strongly defined by existing hedging on northern and western boundaries.
- There is an existing Irish water wayleave crossing the site along the western boundary

3.3 Site photographs:



fig 15) View of wild flower garden



fig 16) View of boundary fence along the western site boundary



fig 17) View looking north-west



fig 18) View from wild flower garden looking north-west



fig 19) Existing units on/at main entrance road



fig 20) View from end of road looking South-east

3.4 **Key design/development considerations:**

The following are the key design/development considerations from the site analysis used to inform the brief and design and help set specific objectives for the scheme:

- Integration of the graveyard as the primary concept/approach for the estate
- Existing roads & services are capable of dealing with proposed development
- Existing estate entrance can be used
- passive security to be improved over the public open area (wild flower garden) and create an active street

4 **Design Statement & Methodology:**

The primary design considerations, taking on board the site analysis, site & technical constraints are set out below and reflect the criteria set out in the "*Urban Design Manual – A Best Practise Guide 2009*"

- 1) Context
- 2) Connections
- 3) Inclusivity
- 4) Variety
- 5) Efficiency
- 6) Distinctiveness
- 7) Layout
- 8) Public Realm
- 9) Adaptability
- 10) Privacy and amenity
- 11) Parking
- 12) Detailed Design

4.1 Context- How does the development respond to its surroundings?

Development strategy & Response to context:

The primary design concept for the development has been informed by the specific objectives as listed above, which were informed by the micro and macro context and site analysis.

Boundary treatments for the scheme respond to a range of conditions on site. Where existing natural mature boundaries exist with properties to the north-west and west, these will be retained and enhanced so as to provide a natural buffer with existing rear gardens.

The units along the existing road are orientated to improve passive security over public open space.

Maintaining density:

In response to the context and national policy the design provides for;

- Maintaining the current density of the existing estate
- Maintaining a similar typology (2 storey house with three bedrooms)

The existing character of the area is of predominantly medium density, consisting of own door housing and apartments accessed from communal areas.

The proposed development will maintain the density and mix of housing typology to that of the existing estate and does not impact the amenity of adjoining residential areas.

4.2 Connections - How well connected is the new neighbourhood?:

The proposed development is located within the existing estate of Cois Ferraige which is well connected by both vehicular and pedestrian access routes.

Pedestrian permeability connects directly to the existing public footpath network along Old Golf Links Road and Tuite's lane.

Integration within the Local Context:

Access in, through and out of the site was given careful consideration during the SHD application. The concept for the scheme looks at integration of existing development within the local context & an internal estate strategy to compliment this integration by providing the following:

- The design provides for active streets and frontages providing high levels of passive security over existing public area (wild flower garden)
- Traffic is controlled by Horizontal speed control measures as opposed to vertical measures (ramps)
- Public amenity space is supervised by residents to encourage ownership of those spaces
- The layout takes into account existing strongly defined boundaries, retains them and incorporates the mature hedging/trees as boundaries for the proposed housing



Legend:

Green indicates homezone area

Red indicates site extents

Pink indicates existing pedestrian access route

Orange Passive surveillance over street/public open space

fig 21) Site plan indicating connectivity of the site

4.3 Inclusivity – How easily can people use and access the development

Unit Typology & Tenure Strategy

The proposed design will reuse the house types (Type F & Type C) from the existing estate and will introduce a new type K.

Housing- accommodation schedule		
Type	Type description	unit nos
C4	3 Bed/5P Semi-D	1
F	3 Bed/5P Semi-D	2
K	3 Bed/5P Semi-D	1
TOTAL		4

The typology & tenure of units is linked to the existing and proposed demographic for the area and incorporates the following:

- Design and layout enable easy access by all.
- There are a variety of house types (3 no unit types), designed to meet the needs of a wide range of people and households.
 - The unit types are intended to provide for a wider variety from what is provided for within the area.
 - All units are own door access and have their own private rear gardens
- The design will incorporate for a mixed tenure approach, not restricting one demographic to a particular area of the site
- Corner Unit (Type C4) is designed to provide for passive surveillance to the front and side, overlooking the public open space.

Amenity spaces

The scheme is located adjacent to an existing public open area (wild flower garden)

The proposed scheme will increase the public open space area from 1200m² which was granted as part of the original planning application (ABP-303253-18) to 1350m².

The public open space will be privately managed and accessible to all residents of the estate. There will be no barriers to the amenities areas. The public spaces are clearly connected & integrated with the main pedestrian connection routes/linkages, encouraging Pedestrian access/use.

The building form/layout creates a strong yet simple form to create a clear distinction between the public/private domains.

4.4 Variety - How does the development promote a good mix?

The development is well connected to a good range of facilities within walking distance of the site including:

- stream side walk,
- crèche,
- the playground

Housing types and tenure

The proposed development intends to reuse the unit types from the existing development, however it is intended to introduce variety by introducing a new unit type (type K) and combining the unit types i.e (Type F and Type C to make Type FC4) which is not used in the existing development.

Projecting bays are located on the front elevation of type C4 and a mixture of material used from one unit type to another, to also give a variety to the streetscape.

4.5 Efficiency - How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?

The proposed development makes efficient use of the area to comfortably fit 4 units and allow for car parking space, private amenity area and circulation area for taking out bins.

All rear gardens will enjoy sufficient daylight and sunlight provisions throughout the day.

Whilst the public open spaces are all overlooked by residential accommodation, the set back of the units from the spaces, along with their location/orientation will ensure that these spaces enjoy optimum sunlight provision.

For units with private rear amenity space they will have space to accommodate general waste, food waste and dry recycling bins.

4.6 **Distinctiveness - How do the proposals create a sense of place?:**

The estate within which the proposed site is located is currently under construction, however the units adjacent and around the proposed site are complete and occupied by residents.

The proposal will comply with the following statements from the original SHD application:

“The main characteristics that define the site are ... the adjoining the graveyard. These take advantage of and incorporate them as the main focal points for the scheme.”

“The proposed design incorporates ... a visual link/vista to the graveyard along a new street is created by the housing/built form. The ... open space provides an attractive buffer to the graveyard.”

The proposed development has been designed to keep the visual link/vista of the graveyard/church by maintaining a buffer.

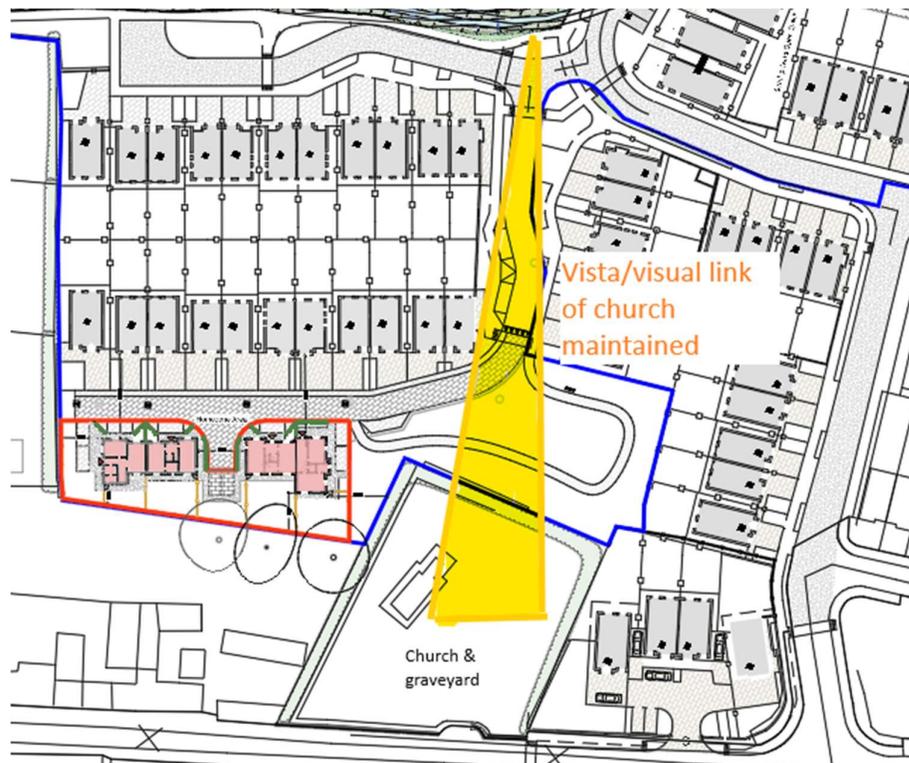


fig 22)

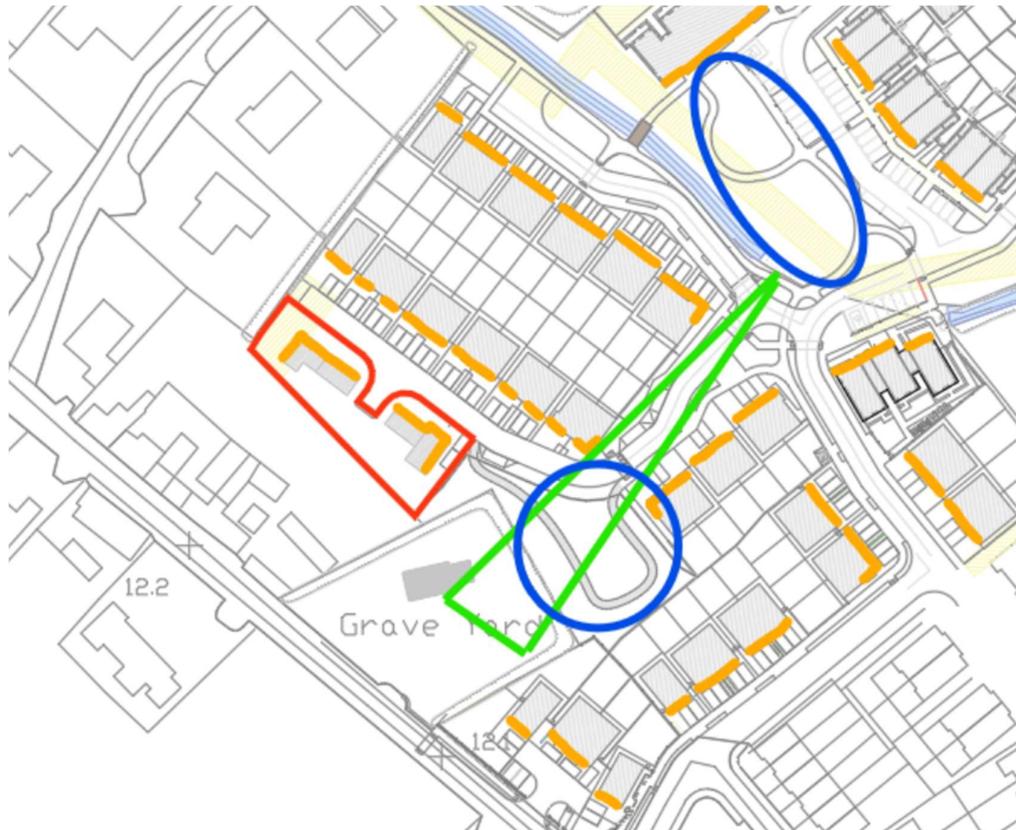
4.7 **Layout - How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces?**

The primary open space was set as the main spine for the development, strategically positioned off the main desire lines and off which there are clear routes to navigate through the site.

The linkages will create a permeable interconnected development, within which there are activities to encourage people into the site, limiting the risk of under-used spaces. Navigations around the site is clearly defined by the buildings around it and they provide for passive security over all pedestrian routes. Vehicular access within the site is more restricted, again promoting pedestrian permeability around/through the development. Vehicular access into the site is from 1 location, while there are multiple pedestrian access points. Traffic is controlled by design and horizontal alignment through road geometry and chicanes where possible rather than speed bumps helping to keep the streets as places not solely for vehicular use.

The layout for the scheme focuses on creating active streets along these main desire lines/pedestrian route and public open spaces. All front doors of dwellings face and interact with the streets. There are no unnecessary physical or visual barriers to the public domain (no front railing along the public path- where a hedge is provided it is to be low), but the distinction between the public and private is retained through a material distinction.

There are no blank side walls facing the public domain. Corner units are designed to be dual aspect. The corner unit is either accessed from the side or there are gable windows or bay window which overlooks the wild flower area to provide passive security around the corner.



Legend:

Blue indicates primary open / amenity space along the existing stream

Green indicates primary vista from church and graveyard

Orange primary aspect of the dwellings

fig 23) Site plan indicating the passive security over the main circulation routes & amenity spaces

Roads, blocks and public open space are designed to provide a clear distinction between the public and private spaces, and all units are provided with private amenity or defensible space to the public domain. All public spaces, (roads, pedestrian paths, amenity spaces) are well overlooked so as not to invite anti-social behaviour.

4.8 Public Realm - How safe, secure, and enjoyable are the public areas?

The strategy for the public realm/open space for the SHD application was centred on the provision of a number of high-quality integrated spaces that are heavily passively supervised, all of which have a distinct function/use linked to the demographic of the estate.

The layout/structure of the built form along with the orientation of the dwellings was designed to clearly define the distinction between the public and private domains and has been considered here. Other measures like the use of boundary treatments, hard and soft landscaping and different material finishes are used to enhance this and create a hierarchy of space.

There are a number of subsidiary open space areas throughout the existing development, including the recently completed wild flower area to the rear of the graveyard and south-east of this site, which is overlooked by the corner unit within this application.

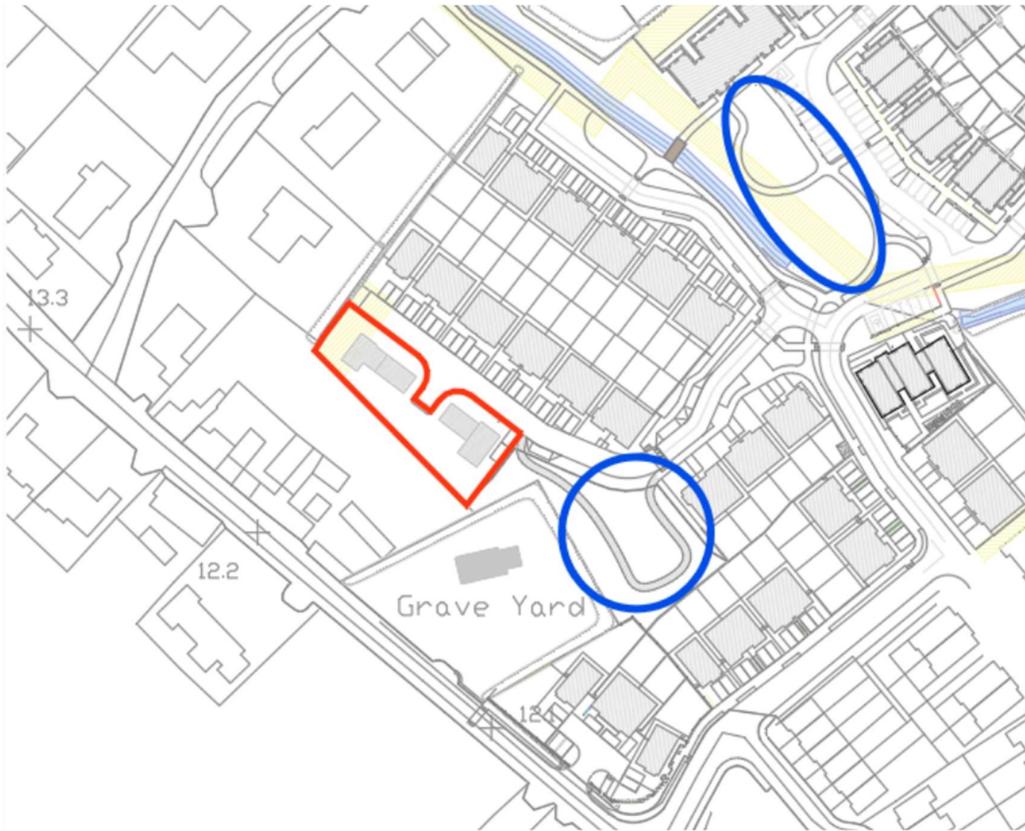


fig 24) Site plan indicating amenity spaces circled in blue

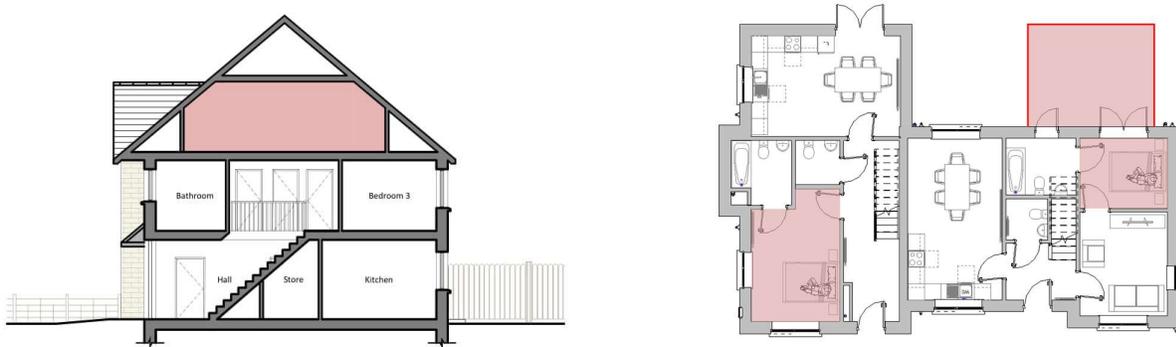
4.9 **Adaptability - How will the buildings cope with change?**

Housing accommodation:

The layout of the Housing units have been designed to be adaptable into the future from 2 perspectives:

- The structure and pitch of the roof will allow for future attic conversion to a habitable room.
- There are specific Housing units which are targeting Universal design & lifetime homes guidelines and allow for ease of internal alteration to provide for a Ground floor bedroom and bathroom (units type C4, & F).

These adaptations could be carried out without affecting the character of the relevant house type and without the requirement of any future planning applications.



Red indicates potential areas for extension / alteration marked thus.

fig 25) Indicative location for potential extension/alterations of houses

Energy Efficiency:

All Units are designed to be energy efficient to a level that is in excess of the current building regulations and NZEB compliant. Renewable technologies including Heat pumps have been used through the development and the intention is to continue with this approach. The external envelope is a suitable depth to accommodate necessary insulation to comply with current standards. The design has considered principles set out by the passive house institute and DEAP to enable the units to achieve this standard.

4.10 Privacy and Amenity - How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity?

Privacy & Amenity:

All units have access to useable private amenity space in excess of minimum standards. All of the amenity spaces are south or south west facing to maximise the quality of sunlight within. The design provides for all homes to be dual aspect accommodation throughout again to maximise quality of sunlight and potential for cross ventilation within the units.

Storage

The storage provision within the units is in compliance with the standards set out in "Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities".

4.11 Parking – How will the parking be secure and attractive?

Car parking

The parking will be within the curtilage of the dwelling and easy reach of their front door. The parking will be still open to the public domain with no physical boundaries.

All parking has been integrated into the hard and soft landscape design and the materials used for the parking are similar to the rest of the estate and of a high quality with life expectancy and life cycle maintenance considered in its selection. The parking is to be a cobble lock finish, to distinguish it from the public path/road and add to the material & colour palette for the hard landscaping.

Bicycle storage

There is sufficient space in the rear amenity space to accommodate bicycle storage.

4.12 Detailed Design – How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

The design and selection of all the external materials have been done to complement the existing environment/context housing estate. The stone cladding intended is to be the same as the rest of the development, but the extent and location of it varies depending on the unit type. The design of the building envelope incorporates materials that are durable, have a long life expectancy with reduced maintenance requirements.

One of the main focuses of the landscape design and amenity spaces is to ensure that access and use of those spaces is facilitated for as broad a demographic as possible from within and outside of the estate. The spaces are easily accessed off the main pedestrian desire lines/routes into and out of the estate with no steep slopes or access routes.