

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (Including Statement of Community Involvement)

PROPOSED NEW CARE HOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Land at Graven Hill
Bicester
OX25 2BF.

LNT Care Developments
Helios 47
Leeds
LS25 2DY

July 2024

CONTENTS

- 1.0** Introduction
- 2.0** Design Policies
- 3.0** Site and Surroundings
- 4.0** Design Brief
- 5.0** Design and Access
- 6.0** Statement of Community Involvement
- 7.0** Conclusion

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement is submitted on behalf of LNT Care Developments (the Applicant) in support of the planning application for a care home for older people on Land at Graven Hill, Bicester, OX25 2BF (the site).
- 1.2 LNT Construction (the Agent) are the Applicant's sister company and will deliver the proposal with them.
- 1.3 LNT are a renowned care home developer that provide a high-quality, caring environment designed to provide an excellent quality of life. All the care homes are developed fit-for-purpose and future proofed for the wellbeing of residents.
- 1.4 LNT have developed over 230 care homes specifically for the care of older people across the country since 2005. Working with our partners, all operational sites are highly rated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 1.5 The proposed care home would be a purpose-built two-storey 66-bedroom residential care facility for older people with associated access, parking and landscaping. It will be of high-quality traditional construction incorporating ambitious sustainability/renewable energy objectives.
- 1.6 This Design & Access Statement will demonstrate how the site represents an excellent and important opportunity to deliver sustainable development and will take the form as follows: -
- Describes and analyses the Site and its context (**Section 2**).
 - Considers planning policies relevant to design matters (**Section 3**).
 - Defines the scheme brief and provides an overview of the proposals (**Section 4**).
 - Describes, evaluates and analyses the development proposals (**Section 5**).
 - Provides the Statement of Community Involvement (**Section 6**).
 - Concludes on the scheme design benefits (**Section 7**).

2.0 DESIGN POLICIES

- 2.1 Key planning policies and material considerations are considered in detail in the accompanying Planning Statement. The below planning policies are relevant to design and access.

National Planning Policy

- 2.2 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (published December 2023) sets out the Government's design policies.

- 2.3 It states that delivering high-quality, sustainable buildings is a key element of the planning and development process and achieving good design is a key aspect of delivering sustainable development (Paragraph 131).
- 2.4 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF sets out the design criteria that proposals and decisions should meet to deliver good, high-quality design. These principles are focused on the quality and amenity of an area; the attractiveness of architecture, layout and landscaping; the proposal’s integration with the surrounding area; and its effective functioning and delivery of an optimal use of land.
- 2.5 The NPPF also recognises the contribution trees and landscaping can make to the character and quality of places, to mitigate against climate change; and it seeks to ensure opportunities are taken to incorporate tree planting into development (Paragraph 136).
- 2.6 Chapter 12 ultimately seeks to ensure that proposals are well-designed and reflect the aims of local design policies and national guidance.

National Design Guidance

- 2.7 The National Model Design Code (NMDC) (July 2021) and National Design Guide (NDG) (January 2021) provides the basis upon which local design policies and guides should be developed going forwards.
- 2.8 The NDG outlines the components of good design. It involves paying careful attention to the context and landscaping and a complementary focus on layout, form and scale, appearance, materials and architectural detailing.
- 2.9 At a high level, both documents promote ten characteristics of well-designed places (Figure 1).

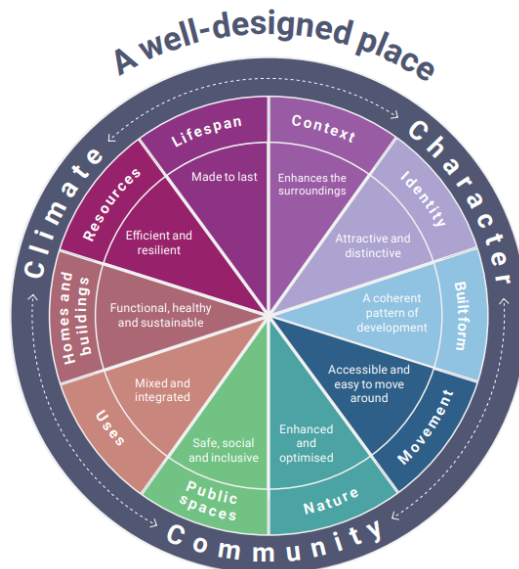


FIGURE 1: Ten Characteristics of Well-Designed Places

Local Policy

- 2.10 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2015) incorporates design policies which stipulate specifications for new development. The Graven Hill Design Code (2018) has also been considered within the proposals.
- 2.11 Policy ESD 1 outlines that measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development within the district on climate change. As part of these efforts' development proposals will be expected to demonstrate sustainable qualities such as sustainable energy features and the minimisation of pollution. The inclusion of on-site renewable energy is also noted as a desirable feature for prospective development.
- 2.12 Policy ESD 15 details the importance of successful design proposals taking into account the areas existing built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards.
- 2.13 The above has been considered through the design's development. **Section 4** demonstrates how the proposal meets local design expectations.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The site will be accessed from the recently constructed road to the south of the site connecting the plot with Anniversary Avenue. The site leads to the A41 which acts as the main road connection between the site and its wider area.
- 3.2 The site is situated within the Graven Hill development in Bicester. The subject sites planning history is limited to the wider outline application for Graven Hill and more recently a full planning application for a Medical Centre which was withdrawn. The site is currently a vacant greenfield plot.

Site and Surrounding Area



FIGURE 2: Site Location

- 3.3 The site is located in close proximity to an array of amenities which would be utilised by staff and visitors of the proposed care home. Bicester Village is located 1.5km away from the proposed development which offers a variety of restaurants and retail outlets. The proposed care home would neighbour residential properties throughout the Graven Hill development giving the care home a real residential and community feel. This is highly desirable for a prospective care home development.
- 3.4 The residential dwellings to the immediate south comprises a 3-storey apartment block with a flat roof. This is neighboured by a coffee shop alongside other small retail stores. Towards the far east of the site lies a number of dwellings, predominantly detached which fall within the self-build initiative. These homes are all varied including diverse brick and render colours with differing architectural styles.

Local Distinctiveness

- 3.5 Development within the immediate area is variable in terms of its scale, massing and design as highlighted within Figures 3 and 4. To the south are a number of modern apartment blocks which incorporate red brick, white render and dark grey cladding. Within the wider site there are a number of self-build plots which have used a diverse

material palette and design in line with the principles established for the Graven Hill Development. The variety of homes gives the area a unique but vibrant built environment.

- 3.6 The residential apartment blocks to the south are 3-storey in height and predominantly have flat rooflines. Within the wider site there is a vast variety in terms of scale and massing of buildings. This variety is in keeping with the principles established within the Outline Graven Hill application.



FIGURE 3: Residential Properties off Anniversary Avenue & Graven Hill

- 3.7 The materials palette discussed above contributes to the character of the local area and has helped to distinguish local design quality when designing new development. The brick type and design of the proposed care home will be suitable for the amenity of the local area. This will ensure the proposed development is in keeping with the existing built environment.
- 3.8 The above context and characteristics, have been considered through the design development stage (as discussed below).

4.0 DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Scheme Vision

- 4.1 The design brief for the site is to accommodate a new contemporary and innovative care home, that exceeds the minimum applicable standards and makes a lasting positive impact on the local environment; whilst being compliant with current policies, guidance and legislation.

- 4.2 In this respect, LNT’s main objectives are to provide accommodation that facilitates a higher quality of life for residents than most conventionally designed facilities, within a building that is respectful of the character and appearance of the Site and surrounding area.

Legislative Requirements

- 4.3 The Care Standards Act 2000, although now rescinded, provides relevant legislation that stipulates appropriate room sizes and sets standards for the physical characteristics of care premises. It is still referred to in the design process of the Applicant’s care homes, particularly as no subsequent document has been produced that provides appropriate design guidance.
- 4.4 The Health and Social Care Act 2008 is the current legislation. Whilst it does not set out the specific design parameters, it refers to CQC requirements, which involves providing single-room accommodation with en-suite facilities and a generous ratio of communal/recreational space to residents.
- 4.5 Of our operational sites, all are rated good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission. This means that the homes are built and operated in a way that meets and exceeds the CQC’s stringent expectations.

Proposal Overview

- 4.6 The proposal involves the development of the site and the construction of a purpose-built 66-bed residential care facility for older people, with associated infrastructure, access, parking and landscaping.
- 4.7 The proposed care home will be a local community care facility, intended to be occupied and staffed by local people, or people with a local connection. The scheme is developed to enable the operational care home to provide two types of care, general and dementia care.
- 4.8 The scheme is designed to be fully compliant with the Care Standards Act 2000 and key provisions include:
- A two-storey, purpose-built building with red brick and stone detailing, finished with a flat roof, totalling 3,400 sqm GIA.
 - Single room accommodation with en-suite wetroom facilities.
 - Highly quality facilities, including cafes/dining rooms, quiet lounges/family rooms, a library, garden room, cinema and hairdressers.
 - State-of-the-art back of house / catering facilities, including staff showers and changing rooms.
 - Wide corridors, with level/amenable access throughout.
 - 25 parking spaces (including 3 accessible bays and 6 EVCP bays); 8 cycle spaces and an ambulance/taxi drop off area.

- 4.9 The design of the care home has been developed to ensure that it is both functional and attractive from both operational and aesthetic perspectives. LNT are unique in their position as developers and operators of care homes in the UK. The experience and feedback from our partners in terms of an operational point of view is utilised to good effect in the design and layout of all LNT care facilities.
- 4.10 This experience tends to make LNT Care Homes particularly efficient and effective in their operation and as amenable as is possible from all resident and staff perspectives. This approach fosters an environment of continuous improvement ensuring the delivery of high-quality care developments that are tailored to the needs of residents and most suitable from an operational and management perspective for the staff running the home.

5.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 5.1 A detailed design analysis of the proposal is set out below, and is based on the above context, planning policies and development brief.
- 5.2 The use, planned site layout and design; scale, massing and external appearance of the building; layout and landscaping of external areas are all design matters that have a visual impact and physical effect on the site and surroundings; the character and amenity of the area, as well as the quality of living environment for future residents.
- 5.3 Access matters also impact on the functionality of the proposed development and the surrounding area, movements associated with it and the relationship between the proposal and its context.
- 5.4 As is recognised in national policy, achieving good design (and access) and creating well-designed places are key aspects of successfully delivering sustainable development.
- 5.5 The proposals achieve this, taking all opportunities to improve the character, quality and function of the local area.

Use

- 5.6 The proposed use is a Care Home (Use Class C2), which is highly suitable for this location given the surrounding existing amenities, residential uses and sustainable and accessible location. It has been designed to specifically accommodate this use to comply with the Care Standards Act to provide the best possible standards for future residents. It is designed to be suitable for and cater to the changing needs of its future elderly residents; to be accessible and user friendly for people with ranging capacities, abilities and mobility levels.

- 5.7 The site will provide a much-needed health and social care/community service, whilst generating significant and important new employment opportunities locally.
- 5.8 The internal layout and arrangement allows the home to be split into the separate care requirements – general care and dementia care. The internal and external spaces are designed to enable comfortable/easy movement through (and use of) the facilities. The internal décor is specifically chosen to be high quality, and to provide familiar and homely settings.
- 5.9 Residents will benefit from a range of amenity choices that reflect modern day-to-day amenities to provide entertainment, encourage socialising and help provide and maintain good wellbeing.
- 5.10 Wide corridors primarily allow for ease of movement and an open and social environment throughout, but they also have interesting features to provide visual diversity which helps residents with wayfinding by easily being able to identify the different parts of the building.
- 5.11 The whole development is easily navigable, with key recreational/communal facilities clearly signposted and located in central areas to foster socialisation and inclusion to create a sense of community within the care home.
- 5.12 The proposed care home alongside the existing local uses, will promote and maximise the potential of the locality to encourage diversity and sustainable living.

Scale & Massing

- 5.13 The 66-bed residential care facility will total 3,400 sqm GIA and will be split over two-storeys with a building height of c. 7.9m (to the highest parapet). It should be detailed that the lower parapet height will be marginally lower in height at 7.5m. Within the building footprint, there is servicing, plant and back-of-house space. In addition to the main building there is also an ancillary meter house/garden store, bin store, cycle store and battery housing for the solar panels.
- 5.14 The design and scale of the development ensures the building is suited to the character of its surroundings (**Figure 5 below**). Within the Site boundary the surrounding space will be landscaped and used as secure outdoor amenity space for residents to use to help them to feel more connected with the local community and surroundings while ensuring that they are safe at all times. This approach reflects the community nature of the proposal and maximises opportunities to create an attractive and distinctive setting.
- 5.15 The scale of the development proposed allows for an appropriate level of amenity space, both external and internal, and ensures adequate parking spaces are provided for a care home of this size.



FIGURE 5: Visual of Proposal

5.16 With regard to the internal amenity space the care home is designed to meet the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000, the former and most relevant legislation to outline room sizes. Below is a comparison of the Care Standards Act requirements and the proposed care home provisions:

| | Care Standards | Proposed Scheme |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Single Bedrooms</i> | 12m ² (excluding en-suite) | 14.4 m ² (minimum excluding en-suite) |
| <i>Communal Space (Siting, Dining and Recreational)</i> | 4.1 m ² per resident | 10.2 m ² per resident |

5.17 The total area of external amenity space proposed amounts to 7,197 sqm (1.77 acres) which equates to a ratio of 109.04 sqm per resident; internal amenity space for residents totals 677.3 sqm. The proposal will deliver more than sufficient external and internal amenity space. The overall building area (over two floors) will be 3,574 sqm and this will be appropriately set within high quality external amenity space and landscaped gardens.

5.18 The scale of development is appropriate for its context and will ensure the building sits comfortably within its setting whilst integrating well with the surrounding development.

Layout

5.19 The Site’s layout (**Figure 6**), building form and siting has been developed with regard to the Site’s character and that of the surrounding area. Critically, it is also designed to effectively and efficiently meet the operational needs of the care home.



FIGURE 6: Proposed Site Layout and Indicative Landscaping

- 5.20 The configuration of the proposed care home has been designed to create a building of a suitable and reflective scale to the local setting and neighbouring development. The building provides an attractive frontage from Anniversary Avenue and will provide development on a current greenfield site.
- 5.21 The layout provides a central hub, that is easily accessible from all areas of the care home. The building is positioned to allow communal areas to maximise the views of the surrounding landscape, whilst benefiting from good privacy and amenity. The care home will benefit from high quality landscaping at the front and rear of the development, providing an attractive setting surrounding the development.
- 5.22 All bedrooms will enjoy views of the surrounding gardens and ground floor rooms facing onto the courtyards or residents garden will have direct access to the garden/courtyard respectively. Bedrooms will enjoy views into the rear gardens (framed by attractive landscaping) alongside views onto the wider Graven Hill development.
- 5.23 The main entrance is situated facing south east with ancillary parking located to the south of the site. This enables a contained and private garden space to the sites southern boundary. The building will provide an attractive frontage from Anniversary Avenue with in-keeping design and material palette.

- 5.24 Internally, the reception and café will provide a welcoming space for residents and visitors; whilst enabling natural surveillance of the car park and site access.
- 5.25 The proposed development enables safe vehicular access to the private parking area and drop-off/deliveries point, this will be overlooked by the proposed building to increase safety and the positioning allows easy and convenient access to the main entrance.
- 5.26 The central social/communal areas on the ground floor will also have doors that open into the garden, which will encourage full use and enjoyment of the landscaped gardens and maintain an important connection to the outdoors.
- 5.27 The building's form and orientation will integrate well with its surroundings, whilst having regard for the character and appearance of the local area, to enhance its distinctiveness. This effect will be further enhanced through the building's siting within a high-quality landscaped setting.

Scale

- 5.28 This scale is in-keeping with the surrounding residential which will establish a strong visual relationship with the surrounding context (which will be further enhanced by the proposed landscaping, materials and architectural details).
- 5.29 The building has been specifically designed to provide generous and appropriate living, amenity and operational space, whilst accommodating the required plant / infrastructure within the fabric of the building, all to appropriate scales.
- 5.30 The proposed scale, in conjunction with the layout/ground coverage, makes best use of the site and enables the provision of a highly appropriate scale of development.

Landscaping

- 5.31 Secure landscaped garden areas will provide excellent usable amenity space for residents and will help them maintain good wellbeing; whilst also providing a green and attractive visual amenity for surrounding development and passers-by.
- 5.32 The ground floor layout of the building provides easy access for staff and residents to the landscaped gardens. This relationship between indoor and outdoor space is a key element of the proposal, as the connection between indoor and outdoor amenity spaces increases the quality of the environment which is important for the wellbeing of residents.
- 5.33 A high-quality landscaping scheme will ensure the site contributes to biodiversity throughout its lifetime. New planting will provide trees and vegetation that support and enhance local habitats and wildlife connectivity. This approach also ensures that the site

and landscaping arrangements are beneficial to the needs and quality of life of future residents.

- 5.34 Secured landscaped areas around the buildings will have direct access from ground floor bedrooms. These spaces will be used by residents and will provide space for planting that will enhance the wider area’s character and amenity.
- 5.35 Soft landscaping will comprise of trees, shrubs, flowerbeds, including raised planters and lawn (using native/indigenous and sensory species where appropriate). Hard landscaping will also be provided to allow level surfaced pathways around the building so residents of different mobilities can use them easily and safely. Overall, the landscaping will establish an attractive and welcoming setting.

Appearance

- 5.36 The residential properties through Graven Hill vary in terms of their type, design and overall appearance. This creates a vibrant built environment with contrasting bricks, render colours and overall design. Dominant materials include an array of red brick types, white coloured render with grey cladding alongside both flat and gable rooflines. The materials are used in different combinations throughout the existing built environment which creates an interesting and visually diverse environment (outlined in Section 3).
- 5.37 Key material features from the surrounding residential development have been reflected in the care home design (Figure 7). This mix of treatments provides appropriate visual interest and articulation, that contributes to and enhances the visual quality of the area. While respecting the local character through the sensitive choice of materials.



FIGURE 7: Façade Details

- 5.38 The nature of the use requires a uniform window pattern; however, this reflects the character of residential development in the wider area and emphasises the generous

- glazing features central to the building's elevations. Windows will be dark framed, recessed and large to complete the attractive and coordinated façade and enable a large amount of natural light infiltration.
- 5.39 The roof will be flat which will integrate well with the general character of the area. The nature of the flat roof will also reduce the scale and massing of the proposal.
- 5.40 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels are proposed on the roof of the care home. The solar panels are mounted into the roof and will provide sustainable energy for the propose care home.
- 5.41 The overall façade treatments provide a high-quality, visually interesting façade, that is suited to the surrounding area's character whilst being distinctive in its own right (therefore being easily recognisable); overall this will strengthen and enhance the area's sense of place.
- 5.42 In addition to the care home there are also ancillary buildings comprising of the bin store, meter house/garden store, cycle store and battery housing for the PV panels. These are placed in the most appropriate location for them on the site and will be housed in materials that complement the main building design.

Access

- 5.43 The proposed layout and building configuration allows the creation of a distinctive area for car parking that is clearly associated with the care home. This distinction helps to improve safety for pedestrians navigating the site. The parking area would be surrounded by appropriate landscaping to create a green setting.
- 5.44 A total of 25 car parking spaces are proposed, as well as an ambulance/delivery/drop-off area, 3 accessible spaces, and 6 EVCPs. A secure bike store will also be provided for residents and visitors to use (8 spaces).
- 5.45 Accessible bays are provided closest to the building as standard, and a taxi/delivery/drop-off/ambulance bay is also located in close proximity to the main entrance.
- 5.46 The parking layout and pedestrian access arrangements will connect to existing road infrastructure, will have good legibility and will prioritise pedestrian access (particularly for staff and local visitors travelling by public transport).
- 5.47 The siting of the building and main entrance will create a logical and clear relationship with the existing road / pedestrian network, to establish good natural surveillance and visual permeability.
- 5.48 In terms of inclusive accessibility externally, direct and level access will be possible from the car parking area and the outdoor amenity space will be suitably landscaped to avoid unnecessary level changes, so it is suitable for residents with a range of mobility.

Internally, access to the upper floor is gained via two central lifts for residents, and wide corridors and doors are suitable for wheelchair and mobility chair access.

Crime Prevention

- 5.49 The issue of crime prevention and Secured by Design guidance has been considered and incorporated into the scheme.
- 5.50 The orientation and configuration of the building is designed to provide natural surveillance from all areas.
- 5.51 The main office (ground floor) will be manned 24/7 and is located next to the main entrance and overlooking the car park. The outward facing communal areas will also overlook key areas throughout the day and evening.
- 5.52 Appropriate and safe lighting is an integral element in designing out crime and a lighting scheme will be designed to deter intruders and reduce the fear of crime, following the granting of planning permission. The focus for lighting is to the main site access, car parking areas and all footpaths and associated areas to the care home building; these will be designed and specified with respect to this, ecology and amenity considerations.
- 5.53 Secure railings will enclose the main garden area for the residents and create a defensible space around the care home / landscaped gardens (north, east and west). The railings to the north, east and south will enclose the rear garden for security reasons, the railings will be 1.8m in height.
- 5.54 The front of the Site will also feature new hedgerows/low level planting to establish a natural setting around the building and landscaped grounds that also prevent unauthorised alternative access, whilst maintaining an open feel. This will suitably deter criminal and anti-social behaviour.

Sustainability

- 5.55 The building's design, construction and operations have been considered and designed to respond to important sustainability considerations and policy/legislative requirements.
- 5.56 The accompanying Sustainability Statement demonstrates how these elements have been addressed and will implement key sustainable design and construction principles and ensure that the building will be resilient and energy efficient over its long lifetime.

Health

- 5.57 The health and wellbeing of residents is central to the design and operation of our care homes; we aim to ensure that the health and wellbeing of residents are safeguarded.

- 5.58 The proposed care home will provide residents with accessible, high-quality amenity/recreational space (including sensory landscaping and opportunities to garden). Day-to-day care will also involve activities and events to encourage activity in the spaces.
- 5.59 Engagement between residents, staff and visitors is also a key part of the home's operations, to ensure that all residents can feel like they are part of the community and live in an inclusive and friendly environment.
- 5.60 These design measures, and the management of the home, will provide the best quality of life, health and wellbeing for future residents.

6.0 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 Applicants and their agents are generally encouraged to carry out pre-application consultation that is tailored to reflect the nature and scale of the proposed development. LNT Construction recognises and implements the below approach in all of our schemes.
- 6.2 During the early stages of preparing the planning application LNT Care Developments had meetings with the Graven Hill team regarding a proposal for a care home development. This proposed use was positively received by those involved.
- 6.3 Letters have been sent to local ward councillors and neighbours to advise them of the forthcoming planning application. The letters invite comments and dialogue with us, so that these individuals can query or comment on the proposals at the earliest stage.
- 6.4 LNT intend to maintain availability and open dialogue with the local community throughout the planning process and beyond.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal for a new purpose-built care home will have a positive impact upon the area by developing the site for a beneficial use that fulfils a need and will establish a high quality and respectful built form and appearance.
- 7.2 The development would bring economic benefits by creating more employment and economic activity, both during construction and in the long-term operation of the home. This is discussed further in the Planning Statement.
- 7.3 The proposed care home is positioned and laid out to maximise the quality of internal and external environments, and resident's quality of life and wellbeing. It also ensures the development and landscape positively impacts the wider area's visual amenity.

- 7.4 It will be of a scale that will integrate well with its surroundings, without any resultant harm to the character or amenity of the area or nearby residents.
- 7.5 The site’s landscaping will ensure the proposed building is positioned in an attractive setting that contributes to and integrates with the surrounding environment. Enhancements will be provided with native planting (trees and vegetation) that will provide natural longevity, screening and visual interest, that is highly appropriate for local biodiversity.
- 7.6 There will be generous amounts of landscape amenity space around the care home, with elevations looking directly over these spaces, and the positioning of windows / openings creating strong relationships with external areas and the street-scene. Level and permeable access around all areas of the Site ensure suitable, comfortable and easy accessibility for all users.
- 7.7 Overall, the proposals comprise a high-quality design with appropriate access, and will positively enhance the character and quality of the site and surrounding area.
- 7.8 The proposal meets the principles of good design and therefore accords with local and national policy objectives.