

Design & Access Statement
Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community

November 2020

agile
HOMES & PROPERTY



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1. Executive Summary

Principles

Everybody needs a safe, warm and affordable home. This core need must be met for people to live a dignified life, fulfil their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

This proposal by Emmaus Bristol not only meets that need, it exemplifies truly sustainable development in respect of use of land, community cohesion, socio-economic benefits and environmental responsibility.

The proposal is for 15 low carbon, high quality, modular roof-top homes set in landscaped, communal space. The location and design of the development will be beautiful, aspirational and uplifting, with great views of the city not found at street level.

All homes will be for rent, either as move on accommodation or private rented accommodation, and at least of 50% of these homes will be for rent at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. This meets the express needs of Emmaus Bristol's companions and the wider community. Companions are people that have previously been homeless or have suffered social exclusion, but are now provided with a home and meaningful work by Emmaus Bristol.

The aim of Emmaus is to turn charity on its head. It not only offers homeless people the opportunity to help themselves, but to help others – it is the latter which allows the rediscovery of a sense of purpose in life. This proposal complements, diversifies and expands Emmaus' offer in Bristol – giving companions and other people better life chances.

Details

The proposal is for a new roof-top community. The emphasis, from Emmaus Bristol and in planning policy, is on creating sustainable, integrated communities. In this case, each home has its own private space, but is well connected to shared, overlooked, landscaped community space – ensuring that all residents can better know their neighbours, can look after each other, are well connected to the wider Emmaus Bristol community, and are closely connected to their familiar, local community.

Consequently the proposal promotes a high quality, safe, healthy, attractive, usable development. It will be a well managed place, with high quality homes and multi-functional space. Its layout and design has been carefully considered to ensure the amenity of adjoining residents is protected. The homes and space will be managed by Emmaus Bristol, as part of their overall management of the building and the charity's business.

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This proposal has been supported by the Emmaus Bristol community and by the wider community, with 83% support shown in recent engagement events. It should be supported by the Council. It meets and exceeds the requirements of national and local planning policy, namely:

- It's in a very sustainable and accessible location, in the city centre;
- It will enhance the thriving, exciting Stokes Croft and St Pauls community;
- It makes efficient use of a scarce land resource: utilising air space, above an office, retail and warehouse building, in an innovative, bold and creative way;
- It delivers new homes, that meet national space standards, at pace utilising modern methods of construction;
- All those homes will be low carbon and energy efficient, with natural carbon capturing materials used in their construction;
- All homes will be high quality and affordable, particularly benefitting former companions and those in need of housing, where it is most needed. At least 50% of homes will be for affordable rent;
- It creates a healthy community, with independent living space connected by well designed, fit for purpose communal space and connected to the wider Emmaus community;
- It creates employment opportunities, it diversifies the Emmaus Bristol offer and will provide meaningful work experience, training and new skills for companions;
- As such, it will help to reduce health and wealth inequalities;
- It complements other rooftop developments locally, respects local development patterns, protects heritage assets and residential amenity.
- It will have significant social, economic and environmental impacts. A 2012 study showed that for every £1 invested in Emmaus, £11 is generated in social, environmental and economic return every year. This will not only benefit companions, Emmaus and the wider community, but also benefit Bristol City Council;

- It scores very well against the criteria set out in the Council's Urban Living SPD.

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2. Background - An International Charity

Emmaus began in Paris in 1949 when the first Emmaus community was founded by Father Henri-Antoine Grouès, better known as Abbé Pierre. He was an MP, Catholic priest and former member of the French Resistance who fought to provide homes for those who lived on the streets of Paris.

Emmaus International is made up of 410 member organisations in 41 different countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. There are currently 29 Emmaus communities located across the UK, supporting more than 850 formerly homeless people. There are also five Emmaus groups working to set up new communities. Emmaus Bristol has been supporting homeless people since 2002.

The aim of Emmaus is to turn charity on its head. It not only offers homeless people the opportunity to help themselves, but to help others – it is the latter which allows the rediscovery of a sense of purpose in life.

For many people who have experienced homelessness, losing their self-esteem can be the most damaging part of their experience. Being alone, with no support, can be soul destroying, leaving people feeling worthless. Finding a way out of that situation isn't easy, particularly when the only options available are temporary fixes, offering a bed for the night but little to occupy your days.

Emmaus supports people who have experienced homeless by providing them with a home and meaningful work, in a community setting, for as long as it is needed. "Companion" is how Emmaus refers to those who live in an Emmaus community and work in the social enterprise, where they support themselves and one another.

Work is an integral part of community life and of the support Emmaus offers to companions. This is key to restoring feelings of self-worth, showing these individuals that their actions make a real difference, both to their own life, and the lives of others. The social enterprise side of the community helps to generate the income that will ultimately make each Emmaus community self-sustaining, something every community is working toward

- Emmaus Bristol companions get a room of their own, food, clothing and a small weekly allowance. In return, Emmaus Bristol asks that:
 - companions work for up to 37.5 hours per week, or give as much time as they are able, in the community's social enterprise
 - they behave in a respectful way towards one another
 - no alcohol or illegal drugs are used on the premises
 - they sign off all benefits, with the exception of housing benefit



Image: Emmaus International

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Living in a community can offer the companionship and support that many people who have experienced homelessness have lost. This can be key to helping someone to stop, take stock, and start to regain a sense of control and stability in their lives. Moving on to independent living is often the next step for an Emmaus companion, but there are significant barriers to this in Bristol (as set out below).

A social return on investment (SROI) study carried out in 2012 by social and economic company Just Economics demonstrated the impact of Emmaus's work, both for individuals and for society. The research forecast that each year Emmaus communities generate £11 in social, environmental and economic return for every £1 invested.

The report concluded that Emmaus communities successfully provide a place for people in vulnerable housing situations to rebuild their lives by offering them meaningful work and support. The most significant benefits relate to substantial improvements in residents' physical and mental health, including reductions in substance misuse. Other important outcomes include gaining work experience, skills and training; reductions in offending and re-building relationships with family and friends.

Emmaus communities also generate significant savings to the taxpayer. For the 21 communities included in the research, the study forecast that the present value of savings to local and national government stands at almost £6 million per year. Key outcomes for government from Emmaus's work include fewer rough sleepers, fewer people claiming benefits, reduced substance misuse, reduced crime and fewer health problems.

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2.1 Background - Homelessness

Homelessness

Nationally

In December 2019, Shelter revealed that 280,000 people in England are homeless, with thousands more at risk. The report by Shelter ('This is England: a picture of homelessness in 2019') showed an increase of 23,000 since 2016 when the charity first published its landmark annual report.

Shelter's extensive analysis of official rough sleeping and temporary accommodation figures, along with social services records, shows that in one in every 200 people are without a home. Its review of government data has also exposed that close to 220,000 people in England were threatened with homelessness in the twelve months preceding the report.

The Government's own data (2019) shows:

the number of homeless families increased by 11% (22,700 to 25,130) in the first three months of 2019;

the number of over 60's falling into homelessness increased by 39% over the last 5 years;

One homeless person dies every 19 hours.

The cost of housing homeless families in temporary accommodation has risen by 78% in the last 5 years, to almost £1.1bn (Guardian, 14 November 2019). £344M was spent on rooms in emergency B & Bs which are among the most expensive yet least comfortable, particularly for families. The Observer newspaper found that firms providing temporary accommodation in England's top 50 homelessness black-spots received an average of £10,000 of public money for each booking.

¹ http://news.bristol.gov.uk/annual_rough_sleeping_count_figure_revealed

² <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/number-rough-sleepers-bristol-revealed-916343>

³ Shelter. *Far from Alone, Homelessness in Britain in 2017*, November 2017

During the pandemic:

In early November 2020, the Guardian reported that tens of thousands of people have been made homeless since the start of the pandemic despite a ban on evictions, with charities warning that younger people are falling through the gaps. Since April this year at least 90,063 people in the UK have been threatened with homelessness – and more than half of these have already lost their accommodation.

In Bristol:

Emmaus Bristol has reported that the number of homeless people in Bristol is on the rise. In December 2017, there were 86 rough sleepers in Bristol¹, a rise of 14% from the previous year. That rough sleeping figure was reported² to be just the tip of the iceberg, with many other people sofa surfing or sleeping in unsafe buildings not counted. 1 in 170 people in Bristol are homeless³.

As a wealthy city where most people sleep easy, Bristol once bucked the trend for the rising tide of homelessness across the country. However, in the last few years charities have seen a sharp rise in the number of people sleeping rough. Despite making some welcome plans for tackling homelessness in Bristol, Council budgets are being squeezed, often meaning less support for people when they need it most.

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2.2 Emmaus Bristol – The Reasons Behind the Proposal

Clearing the way
A house clearance service with a difference

Still operating through lockdown

emmaus Bristol

When you are faced with the prospect of sorting and clearing the treasures and gallimaufry of a loved one's life, it can seem like a daunting task.

Our house clearance service has been developed in response to customer's requirements, from those managing a bereavement, to those downsizing.

Our experienced and friendly crew will pack up and load all those once-loved items into our vans before carefully sorting them to ensure that reusable items find a new home via one of our retail outlets, giving another family the chance to enjoy them.

Some items may need a little TLC, so our team will upcycle them to their Sunday best. Where items are beyond reuse or upcycling, we strip and sort component parts for recycling to reduce the quantity and size of product going to landfill. In this way, we help to make the most out of all the goods collected.

Making a difference

The income we generate, through both the house clearance service and the sale of collected items, is used to provide accommodation, food, work experience, and mentoring for individuals who have experienced homelessness. All our enterprises, including the house clearance service, are operated by and for our residents. Having a meaningful job to do gives vital purpose to adults who have often lost confidence and pride in themselves.

So if you, or someone you know, may require a house clearance service, call Emmaus Bristol for a quote on 0117 954 0886, Option 1.

"The entire process was efficient and professional at all times. The team were incredibly empathetic - recognising the emotion and difficulty that comes with clearing a deceased relative's property. With huge thanks and delighted to be supporting such a worthwhile cause as a result of using Emmaus Bristol!"

Jessica Hodge, Chief Executive Emmaus Bristol, provided an insight into Emmaus Bristol's proposals for its rooftop development at Backfields House in a recent interview for Bristol Housing Festival's Virtual Expo.

She outlined the need for the charity to be self-sustaining. In order to do that the charity needs to diversify the way in which it provides a home, support and work experience for companions – diversification that complements the other activities of the charity. Those other activities include, for example, providing 'pay what you can afford' furniture to people that otherwise couldn't afford it, vintage furniture to those that can and business incubation space.

She advised of the clear need for move on accommodation. Companions have a home for as long as they need it, in Emmaus' community buildings. But a lot of

companions want their own home, their own independence. Yet there is nowhere for them to move on to, because of a lack of affordable social housing and significant barriers to private rented accommodation such as cost, competition, credit ratings and references. In Bristol (during 2015) the average rent for a new tenancy rose from £767 to £904, an increase of 18%. Yet, according to agents, there were at least five people competing for every rental home⁴. Some companions have been evicted from private rental properties in the past, and are not prepared to take that risk again. There is no chance of finding social housing as Companions applying to HomeChoice Bristol are routinely found to be Band 4 – no housing need.

Companions have struggled when moving on out of Bristol to where housing is affordable, but where they have no social connections and few employment opportunities. Individual stories provide a stark reminder of why community-led housing, within Bristol, and within the supportive Emmaus Bristol community is so important.

Jessica made it clear that homes on the rooftop of Backfields House is a great solution. The 'air space' belongs to Emmaus – it's free. Other options would require purchase of property, which is prohibitively expensive. Most importantly, having a connected community is vital, especially when people are recovering from the impacts of homelessness. Covid-19 has shown the importance of having your own front door, behind which you feel safe, but which also gives you access to a wider, caring community.

Homes on the roof will allow former companions to live independently, but still be very connected to and supported by the Emmaus community. Companions will be able to leave community accommodation and move in to their own home on the roof, which will be part of a community connected by communal space. Companions themselves have said that it is really important that individual homes are within a community, rather than HMO style accommodation, especially those companions in their 40s, 50s and 60s who do not want to be going into a shared house. They want independence.

Jessica's measure of a healthy community is knowing your neighbour. The inclusion of communal courtyards and growing space, shared walkways, space for people to meet and to 'occupy' is crucial to knowing your neighbours and to a healthy, sustainable community. At Emmaus, where people already live and work together, it

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/jan/12/brighton-and-bristol-hit-hardest-as-rents-raised-by-an-average-of-18-in-2015>

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is important that – even with independent living space - there is a continued sense of community.

Jessica underlined the importance of environmentally conscious development, the need to do much better than a standard development. That's also important for companions, as the proposed energy efficient buildings will ensure they are much more affordable for people to live in.

She also set out the need to ensure the shop premises, a core part of Emmaus' revenue and providing work experience for companions, remains open during the construction process. So the method of construction is important. The use of panels manufactured off site, craned into place and assembled on the roof is both innovative and practical – allowing the shop to remain open.

Jessica acknowledged that, whilst there is development going on all around Backfields House (some of it at roof level), rooftop development is much harder than traditional development. Viability is more difficult to achieve, on this project, and public funding from Homes England for example is vital. Community funding may also be essential. She wants to be able to share experiences of rooftop development, so that others can do the same.



Images: Emmaus Bristol

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3. Community Engagement

Engagement with companions, throughout the design process, has been essential. In 2017, at the concept and feasibility stage of this proposal, there was consultation with companions as to what kind of accommodation was needed.

There were 22 companion responses to a consultation, setting out a clear case for what they would want when moving on to independent accommodation.

Critically, move on housing gained 13 votes compared to 6 for additional companion rooms and 3 votes for satellite housing.

Respondents also compiled a wish list, as follows, which has guided the design of the development:

- Own space
- Own toilet/ bathroom
- Own space, when we choose to do so
- The choice to be on your own or join in with the community
- Security (removal of stress in relation to renting on a minimum wage job)
- Stability
- Sense of having a home not just somewhere I'm staying
- Location – being central allows you to do other things outside of Emmaus, opportunities in the city
- Good state of mind, not isolated
- Living in a town or city, not just Emmaus
- It's like a family – dysfunctional! – don't get that in hostels
- Tranquillity

- Outside space (though it was acknowledged that this could come from neighbourhood green space)

- Some accessible rooms

- Room for visitors

Ongoing discussions between support workers and companions highlighted the need to be in the city centre for BAME and LGBTQ+ companions who have experienced aggression and abuse elsewhere and feel more comfortable in a diverse area.

In 2019, Agile engaged further with companions to take feedback on the emerging designs. That feedback has allowed the designs to be refined and improved, better meeting the needs of companions.

In March 2020, Agile and Emmaus Bristol held a workshop with various construction professionals. This was a high-level exploration of constructive options for improving the viability. The companions' representative also attended, so that companions' views were heard and their needs not diluted.

Between 6 – 22 November 2020 there was wider community engagement, including 400 consultation leaflets delivered to residents and businesses in neighbouring streets (Upper York Street; Cumberland Street; Wilder Street; Backfields; Backfields Lane; Brunswick Street; Cave Street and City Road.

The community was asked for its views on the purpose of the scheme to provide affordable homes, the impact of the proposal on St Pauls and the benefits of the development to the community.

In addition, there has been on-line coverage to a much wider audience. Emmaus Bristol invited people to respond through LinkedIn, FB and Twitter and its own web site.

There was also coverage in the Bristol Post: <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/plansbuild-15-new-homes-4689329>

The response to this wider community engagement was extremely positive, with 83% of respondents supporting the proposal.

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There were 30 formal responses, of which 50% from people with a BS2 postcode.

Of the 17% of respondents who did not support the proposal, most comments related to the principle of development (e.g. area too crowded already; too much development). There is nothing we can do to amend the scheme that will satisfy these concerns. Other more specific issues, such as residential amenity, have been addressed in the design.

Details of responses to consultation can be seen in Appendix 3: Community Feedback.

Backfields House Roof

Roof top plan level 1

Homes on the Roof

There are 15 homes overall, made up of:
 11 one bedroom two storey homes
 3 two bedroom single storey homes
 1 one bedroom single storey home

They share a terrace landscape and access through Backfields House.

Homes shaded blue are two storey tall.

Roof top plan level 0

View from Backfields

View from Upper York Street

Introduction
 Backfields House is located in the heart of St Pauls and is the home of Emmaus Bristol.

The need for affordable homes, particularly in the city centre, is higher than it has ever been and the opportunity to deliver them is getting harder to do. This innovative development address has been hidden in plain sight on the roof of Backfields House. This approach allows Emmaus Bristol to transform how it can support people in housing need.

Affordable Homes
 This is a community-led affordable homes project and is Emmaus Bristol's response to Competition's need for more on homes within a community setting. The project is supported by Homes England and creates an exemplar for appropriate affordable housing development in the city centre. It will complement and extend the existing Emmaus community, providing people ready to move on from supported housing with their own home. Some homes will be available to rent to local people not from Emmaus.

Design
 The scheme is made up of 15 individual homes built out on an engineered timber flat space over the existing roof structure. Rather than implement an apartment type development with long internal and small corridors, the homes frame a rooftop landscape. This approach creates the opportunity for a shared community space where neighbours can meet and relax in the sun all overlooking the back courtyard garden. Access to the roof is secure and through the existing Backfields House, ensuring that any residents and invited guests are able to enter.

In a Post COVID-19 world, the ability for people to have access to green, outside space, is essential to their health and well being. The courtyard gardens are laid out to include accessible, micro-alignment gardens that provide places to sit or stand, or to gather safely with friends and neighbours. Residents will have places and spaces where they can celebrate flowers, fruit and vegetables as well as have the opportunity to sit and read in the sun. The scheme as a whole creates a dynamic and vibrant rooftop that maintains and enhances the character of this part of St Pauls.

The homes themselves are spacious, light, airy, safe and secure. Each home has access into the courtyard spaces as well as over the city and beyond. Corridors with people, shared spaces and the outdoor courtyard are both intimate and expansive, providing people with a place to live that not only meets their housing need, but also nurtures their sense of community.

Sustainability
 The homes are located in a high-gain, high-light and super-insulated. Their design features, heating, lighting and ventilation systems is a minimum. The risk of people falling into fuel poverty is mitigated and CO₂ emissions are minimised. The homes are made using Modern Methods of Construction and are prefabricated using natural and renewable carbon capturing materials. Prefabricated panels will be stored onto the roof and each home assembled on the roof. Consequently the development has a very low carbon footprint, both in terms of embodied carbon as well as operational CO₂ emissions. The natural and renewable materials used to create the homes have captured the equivalent of 239 tonnes of atmospheric CO₂. The courtyard gardens will provide a city centre oasis and will help re-establish and increase biodiversity.

The development is car-free and secure cycle racks are provided both at ground level and on the roof. The shared Car-Club parking space is nearby, reduced car dependency is a long-term objective for the project.

Home of a One Bedroom home

One Bedroom home

17 tonnes of CO₂

100% Carbonated and Stored for 1 Year

Built using natural and renewable carbon capturing materials.

4. Planning Policy

Decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan in this instance comprises the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations & Development Management Local Plan and the Bristol Central Area Plan. Work on the new local plan continues. In the meantime, significant weight should be attached to these existing plans.

The Development Plan is supported by a range of Supplementary Planning Documents, practice notes and guidance, including:

City Centre Framework

Planning Obligations SPD

St Pauls

Urban Living SPD (Making successful places at higher densities)

Affordable Housing

Climate Change and sustainability

Waste and recycling

Cycle parking provision

We have assessed the performance of the proposed development against relevant policies in the Development Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents, practice notes and guidance. That assessment is included as Appendices 1 and 2, attached to this Statement. We have, in particular, sought to meet the requirements – where relevant – of the Urban Living SPD. The way in which the proposed development performs, when assessed against the SPD, is included in Appendix 2.

The purpose of the planning system, as set out at a national level, is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives, relating to the economy, society and the environment. Those objectives are defined by local planning policies.

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We believe this proposal meets and exceeds these headline objectives of national and local planning policy, namely:

- It's in a very sustainable and accessible location, in the city centre;
- It will enhance the thriving, exciting Stokes Croft and St Pauls community;
- It makes efficient use of a scarce land resource: utilising air space, above an office, retail and warehouse building, in an innovative, bold and creative way;
- It delivers new homes, that meet national space standards, at pace utilising modern methods of construction;
- All those homes will be low carbon and energy efficient, with natural carbon capturing materials used in their construction;
- All homes will be high quality and affordable, particularly benefitting former companions and those in need of housing, where it is most needed. At least 50% of homes will be for affordable rent;
- It creates a healthy community, with independent living space connected by well designed, fit for purpose communal space and connected to the wider Emmaus community;
- It creates employment opportunities, it diversifies the Emmaus Bristol offer and will provide work experience, training and new skills for companions;
- As such, it will help to reduce health and wealth inequalities;
- It complements other rooftop developments locally, respects local development patterns, protects heritage assets and residential amenity.
- It will have significant social, economic and environmental impacts. A 2012 study⁵ showed that for every £1 invested in Emmaus, £11 is generated in social, environmental and economic return every year. This will not only benefit companions, Emmaus and the wider community, but also benefit Bristol City Council;

- It scores very well against the criteria set out in the Council's Urban Living SPD and other policy documents.

The proposal also performs extremely well when measured against the detail of policies, practice notes and guidance for sustainable development in Bristol.

⁵ <https://emmaus.org.uk/what-we-do/research/making-an-impact/>

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The proposal also performs extremely well when measured against the detail of policies, practice notes and guidance for sustainable development in Bristol.

The proposal helps to meet Bristol's housing need. It delivers homes by making very efficient use of space – air space above Emmaus's office and warehouse. This represents an imaginative and practical solution to the lack of affordable homes for the Emmaus Bristol community and its companions. It utilises air / roof space and modern methods of construction – with off-site manufacture and on-site assembly – to deliver new homes. The density of the development is 115 homes per hectare / 161.5 bed spaces per hectare (on the basis of 0.13 ha's site / usable roof area), significantly above the 50 dwelling per hectare minimum requirement. The design of all homes meets national described space standards and the Council's Urban Living SPD.

It supports the use of public transport, walking and cycling; it will help reduce car usage. It will help meet the Council's climate emergency targets, through a range of means including energy efficiency in the proposed homes and the use of natural materials in their construction.

The main materials used in construction are wood and straw. These are natural, photosynthetic materials which have sequestered huge amounts of CO₂ during their lifecycle. Carbon capturing materials such as this are the future of the construction industry. They demonstrate how we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help combat the climate crisis. A one bedroom Agile home (a Tam) typically captures or banks 27 tonnes of carbon.

The homes are all designed using low carbon principles, with high u-values, air tightness and low thermal bridging. This means that there will be very low energy demand and associated running costs. All homes have a minimum EPC rating of C, moving to a rating of A with the installation of solar PV on 7 homes. The use of MVHR in each home will ensure no over-heating. Furthermore the acoustic quality of the building, coupled with high performance glazing, environmentally friendly paints and internal finishes, creates a healthy, safe and peaceful environment for any occupiers and low maintenance costs.

It is a rooftop development and, as such, it cannot be expected to connect directly with other spaces. However, it is very accessible (for residents and visitors) from the street, which itself connects with the local centre and city centre. Each home has its own private space, but is well connected to shared, overlooked, landscaped community space – ensuring that all residents can better know their neighbours, can look after each other, and are well connected to the wider Emmaus community.

The communal space includes space for local food growing – a roof top allotment for both communal and private use of residents. The landscaping includes sedum roofs. Consequently the proposal promotes a high quality, safe, healthy, attractive, biodiverse, usable and will be well managed place, with high quality homes and multi-functional space. Its layout and design has been carefully considered to ensure the amenity of adjoining residents is protected.

Covid-19 has shown the importance of having your own front door, behind which you feel safe, but which also gives you access to a wider, caring community. The inclusion of communal courtyards and growing space, shared walkways, space for people to meet and to 'occupy' is crucial to knowing your neighbours and to a healthy, sustainable community. At Emmaus Bristol, where people already live and work together, it is important that – even with independent living space - there is a continued sense of community.

The proposed development, which is innovative in design and construction, reflects the "unorthodox and individual character of Stokes Croft" and the distinctive cultural identity of St Paul's. It will add value, in many ways, to the wider community.

Planning policy and the Urban Living SPD seek to promote excellence in design. The proposal scores extremely well on the traffic light system used in the SPD: It includes 13 'green lights', showing that the innovative, imaginative and ambitious scheme responds positively to a huge range of design criteria. It includes 1 'amber light' showing those assessment criteria where there is clear evidence of local constraints on the scheme, beyond the control of the design team, prevent it from achieving a green. There are no 'red lights'.

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The proposed development is community-led, bold and innovative. It is an ambitious and excellent design solution.

We believe that the proposal performs extremely well against local planning policy, practice notes and guidance. It accords with the Development Plan and should, as such, be approved.

Additionally, the proposal delivers a truly sustainable development, meeting the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The practical outcome, for Emmaus and its companions, is that the proposal meets their needs now, quickly, and – because flexibility, community and low running costs are designed into the scheme - it will continue to meet their needs in the future.

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6. Existing Land Use and Operation

Street level and Ground - Backfield House

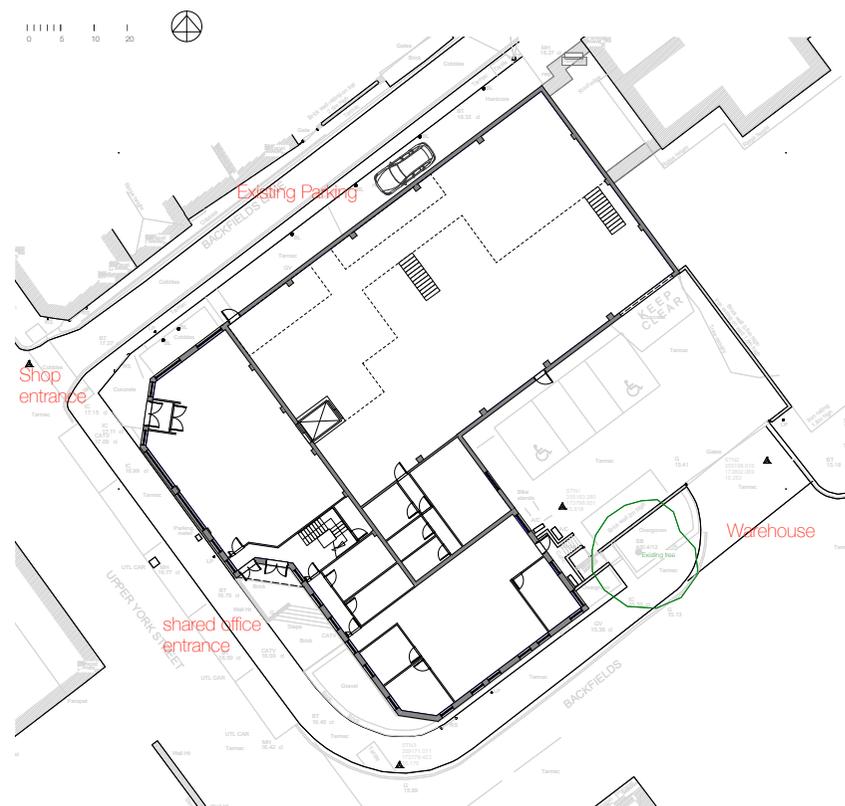


The two storey Backfields House is a mixed use building, including retail, office and warehouse space.

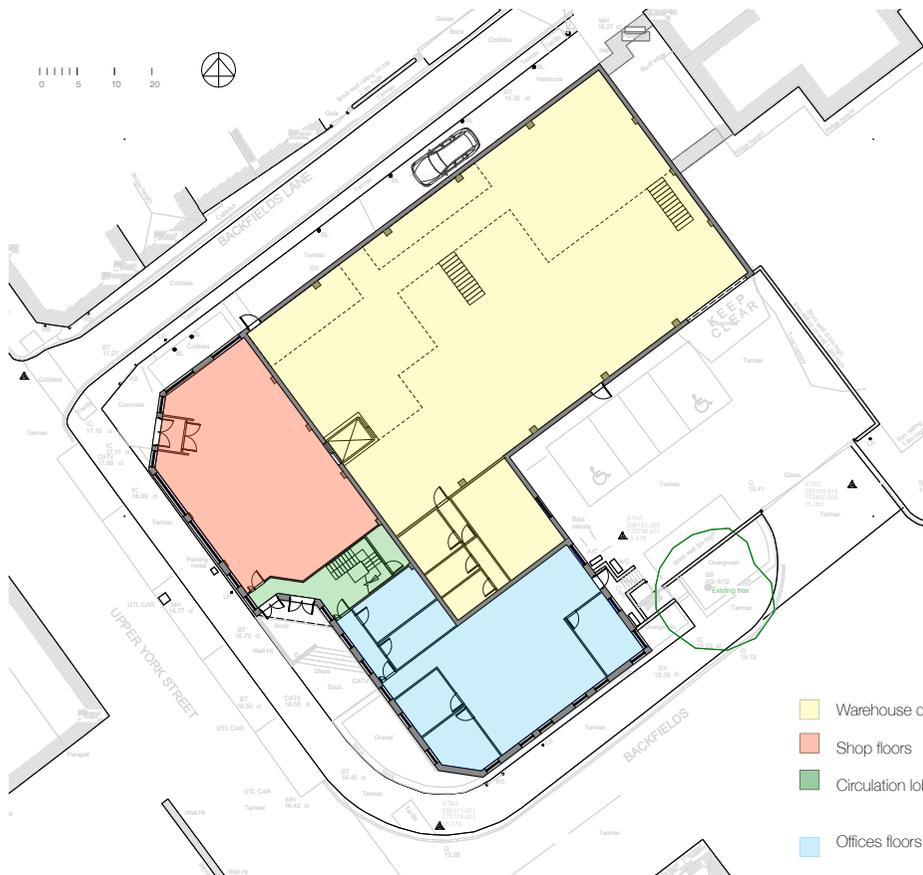
The office and retail functions each have a separate access points, but both spaces are linked and operated by Emmaus Bristol. The entrance to the shop is located on the prominent North West corner of the building, while the office entrance is accessed from Upper York Street.

The warehouse to the North East is predominantly single storey and is accessed from a private service yard, off Backfields (a cul-de-sac). The service yard includes some parking and commercial refuse storage.

Emmaus Bristol has access to currently five car parking spaces on Backfields Lane, but this exceeds their requirements. There is cycle parking provision at the entrance to the Emmaus shop is for customers, and cycle parking in the yard for staff.

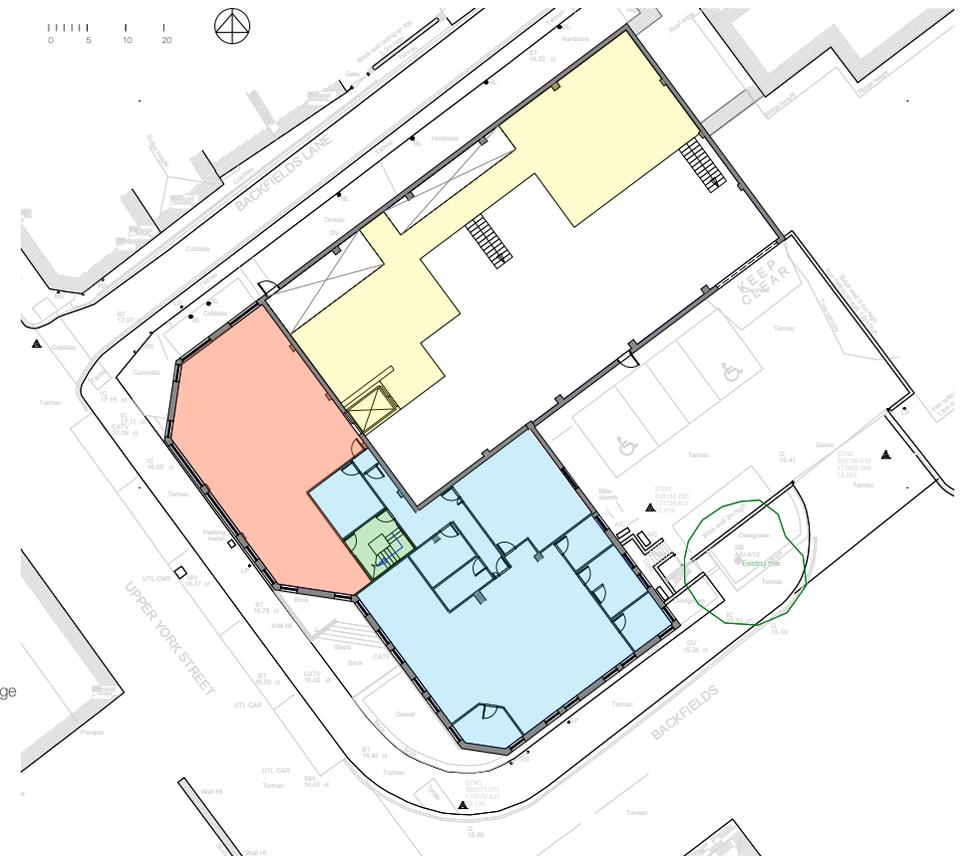


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Ground floor

The ground floor of Backfields House is sub-divided into three main and connected uses, all operated by Emmaus Bristol: Retail, office space and warehouse space.



First floor

The first floor includes ancillary shop space and offices, connected by a shared circulation area / staircase. There is a goods lift, with the warehouse, that serves the ancillary shop space.

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7. Location

Backfields House is located within the distinctive and diverse melting pot that is Stokes Croft and St Pauls.

It is distinctive because of the rich culture of artists, artisans and activists that is prevalent locally. The area has seen a degree of stagnation, with a history of long landownership disputes hampering development of the area. That has contributed to the rich 'creative dissent' that residents of the area have used to keep Stokes Croft vibrant.

The proposal will, in its design and innovation, complement the distinctness and culture of the Stokes Croft area, but also offers the opportunity of regeneration to the area and social mobility for companions.

Emmaus Bristol is a key part of the fabric of this area. Emmaus Bristol and Agile have been working together, as well as with partners and companions, to explore whether a development of homes can be deployed on the roof of Backfields House, to support Emmaus Bristol's viability and diversification, to better support companions and to enhance the wider community.

The central location is important to Emmaus Bristol and its companions. It is a location in which Emmaus Bristol has space – on the roof – and does not require the purchase of additional land. As importantly, it is very well connected to existing services and support provided by Emmaus Bristol and within the City generally. Companions have said that, in moving to independent accommodation they do not want to be isolated, distant from key support services and other wrap around services. This is particularly important during Covid 19 and in the recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

The site is close to the city centre, bus routes, pedestrian routes and local amenities. The site is 2 mins walk from Stokes Croft local amenities and 5 mins walk to major bus links and Cabot Circus.

The development will be within 2-7 minute walk from local green spaces such as Portland, Brunswick Square and St Pauls Park. It will be a 4 minute bike ride from Castl Park.



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8. Local Character & Existing Materials

Backfields House is in a mixed use area, with a range of different styles of building form and an eclectic mix of materials – all of which reflect the unorthodox and individual character of Stokes Croft and the distinctive cultural identity of St Paul's. Bristol has a strong history of residents taking ownership of their local aesthetic. This is an approach we continue to explore on some of the elevations of the proposed development.

There is a wide range of age of buildings, with examples from Victorian to post war including Backfields House itself.

The area has witnessed some refurbishment and new build, since the 1980's, to create more homes. These provide a more contemporary feel to the area, with use of modern materials such as on the neighbouring Ducrow Court with its mix of pastel renders, timber clad, standing seam metal and brick.

The majority of buildings around Backfields Lane and Upper York Street have a traditional masonry style finish to reflect the heritage and history: either a common brick, stone or render. The principle examples of this being, the properties around the Stokes Croft beer garden and the City Road Baptist Church. In addition, there are examples of frontages that are unique to each building that reflect the creative nature of the area, such as the murals on Lakota nightclub and to the elevations of properties on City Road.



9. Site Services and Ground constraints



Constraints

We have surveyed existing services around the site to determine their precise locations, specifically with regard to the proposed piling and use of columns to support the rooftop platform. We have also investigated ground conditions, supported by borehole data, to ensure the proposed structural work is feasible.

This assessment of site constraints and conditions has resulted in the proposed 'table design' and columns supporting the plenum deck of the roof top scheme.

The proposed columns will be relatively shallow and anchored with mini screw piles. There will no significant impact on the Coal Resource Area.

Services Proposal

All existing services are located in an underground plant facility, serving Backfields House. This works favourably for, and supports, the proposed development. Our initial feasibility work completed on the proposal with our M&E consultant has indicated that a minimum of a 400mm cavity would be required within the proposed structural deck to achieve the relevant falls required for B-regs especially for any storm or foul discharge. This has been employed on the design proposed therefore we are confident that our proposal has sufficient flexibility for future service interventions during and after the construction phase.

Electric

New 3 phase system to power all 15 dwellings. Separately metered per dwelling

Water

Installation of a cold-water storage tank (and booster set) in the plant room should be sufficient based on current flow rates on site. However if this is not feasible, a mains connection can be taken from the DNO supply connection in the plant space. Water meters would be installed to Bristol Water's requirements per dwelling

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Roof Ventilation

Proposed that existing fans are removed and replaced with a roof-mounted ducted system. The existing ducts will connect into a new fan and discharge via grills and combined where appropriate to reduce the number of terminations on the proposed deck.

Drainage and SUDs

Existing drainage infiltration rates on the roof will be improved by the addition of lightweight Sedum roofs on 60% of the proposed roof areas. This should improve average water attenuation rates by up- to 40% compared to the existing situation at Backfields House.



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10. Options appraisal

The option of air space above Backfields House was selected, for several reasons:

The 'air space' belongs to Emmaus Bristol – it's free.

Other options were prohibitively expensive.

A connected community is vital, especially when people are recovering from the impacts of homelessness.

The options for delivery of homes, and associated amenity space, on the roof of Backfields House have been informed and influenced by working closely with Emmaus Bristol, companions and other partners.

The needs of Emmaus Bristol and the needs of its companions for move on accommodation, particularly in relation to creating a sustainable, integrated and connected community, have driven much of the design process. Liaison with construction professions has ensured the proposal is structurally sound. Our understanding of the urban context, the height and use of adjoining buildings, and of pre-fabricated building with natural materials has ensured a sympathetic but exciting proposal.

- A range of design solutions have been explored and tested. This has included:
- A small number of homes / lower density, only on the roof of the office and retail buildings;
- A larger development, utilising the roof of the warehouse;
- Single storey homes only, and
- A mix of space compliant and non-space compliant homes (only available to those companions who chose /wanted smaller living spaces as move on accommodation).

Higher density solutions on the whole roof space were preferred, better meeting housing needs and Emmaus Bristol's requirements, also ensuring viability of the proposal.

The Emmaus Bristol and Agile teams have met and worked with Bristol City Council's senior planners. Two main options were presented, at pre-application stage, to Bristol City Council. The useful feedback from those discussions has resulted in changes to the proposals. For example, the scheme now includes space compliant two storey homes and has a slightly lower density - allowing more room for communal landscaped space.

Agile and Emmaus Bristol have worked very hard to get the right balance of unit types, private and shared amenity space for residents and to ensure that density and height of the roof top development does not have a material and detrimental impact on residential amenity of existing or future residents. That balance has been achieved in the proposed development. For example, a single home is proposed for that part of the roof space closest to Ducrow Court. This ensures that there is no material loss of light or over-shadowing to residents of Ducrow Court. It also ensures that the single storey home acts as a barrier to any noise from residents in the communal space on the roof top.

Significant work has gone in to the design, location and orientation of each home, to ensure that the needs of occupiers are met in the delivery of internal and external space. The design of amenity space, for example, reflects the need for private space, but with easy access to communal space and neighbours when required. The design of internal space is best exemplified by the 1 bed, two storey home, which meets the site requirements of a compact footprint, the opportunity to build upwards on a rooftop and the needs of occupiers in terms of space compliance, natural light and flexibility.

This has led to the final design evolution that delivers a unique proposal to a unique part of Bristol.

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11. Proposal and Accommodation scope

Principal design proposal

The principal design proposal is for a roof top community, comprising 15 homes, shared and private amenity space.

These 15 homes will be made up of modular, low carbon, single and two storey homes. The homes are clustered around four interlinked courtyards, each providing space for socialising, relaxing and growing plants.

Proposed homes

A variety of homes is proposed:

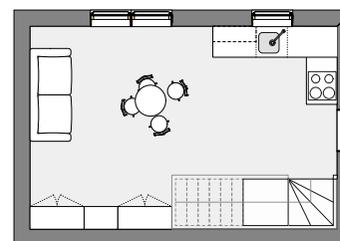
3no. 61m², providing 2 bed, 3 person accommodation

11no. 47.2m², within a two storey duplex home providing 1 bed, 1 person accommodation.

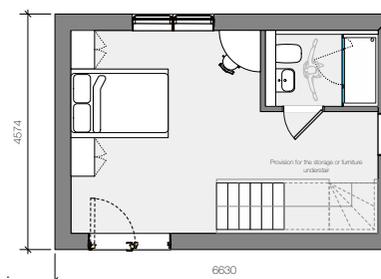
1no. 37m², providing a single storey, 1 bed (with ensuite), 1 person accommodation.

15no. Total number homes

The size of each home complies with national described space standards, meeting the Council's policy requirements.



1st Floor 23.6m²

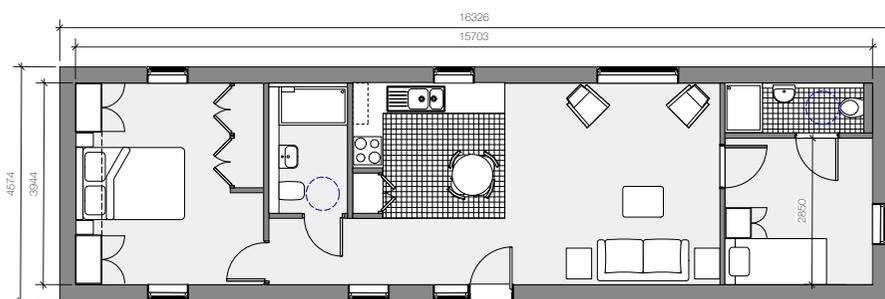


2 storey Compact Unit + stair 1bed 1person GIA 47.2m²

Space compliant provision:

Single Bedroom: 20 m² open plan
Built-in Storage: min 1.5 m²

notes:
-All internal layout and Fenestration based on Orientation
-clear openings and circulation clearances to be amended for Part M Cat 2 compliance

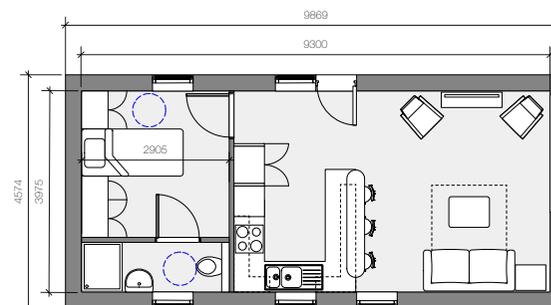


2bed 3person GIA 61m² (Part M cat1)

Space compliant provision:

Main Bedroom: 12.8 m²
Single Bedroom: 8.3 m²
Built-in Storage: 2.35 m²

notes:
-clear openings and circulation clearances to be amended for Part M Cat 2 compliance
-All Fenestration and escape windows based on Orientation



1bed 1person GIA 37m² (Part M Cat1)

Space compliant provision:

Single Bedroom: 8.3 m²
Built-in Storage: 1.2 m²

notes:
-All Fenestration based on Orientation

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Proposed deck

A 'table' structure will be constructed to support the roof top community. This is an over-arching structural deck, which reinforces the existing structure containing office and retail space and provides an independent structural table to warehouse. The structural deck will contain services, such as power, drainage / SUDS and water supply.

The deck will include all necessary fire protection measures to limit spread of flame between the existing building and proposed homes.

The existing shared access / egress point will be improved from street level to the rooftop, to include all necessary fire protection measures, including compartmentalisation.



Upper York Street (SW) Elevation

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Deck Level 1

Amenity space

The proposal includes 127m² of communal space and private space. This exceeds policy requirements.

The communal space on the roof includes areas for play, growing / allotment space, areas that promote interaction between neighbours and quiet areas for relaxation.



Deck Level 2

Further detail is provided in section 14, on landscaping.

Where appropriate, homes have private amenity space in the form of private balconies and decks.

Refuse facilities

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The development will include, at street level, new residential refuse stores in accordance with BCC refuse and recycling guidance for developers and occupiers.

These will be located away from any commercial refuse facility on site and include:

- 1no.** 1100ltr Mix recycle bin store
- 1no.** 1100ltr General waste bin
- 1no.** Food recycle bin

All bins will be contained in a secure, lockable timber clad bin stores to match the finish of the proposed homes.

The development will included 10 new Sheffield Stands, in addition to existing, to provide 20 spaces for new residents. This will include new level hardstanding and soft landscaping, to reduce the visual impact. The full design and location are shown in the street amenities site plan and elevations.



Cycle storage provision

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12. Massing, Form & Density

The existing building is two storeys in height, lower than many of the surrounding buildings. Adding one to two storeys in height to the building respects the rise in ground levels and overall building heights from south east to north west in the vicinity of the site, from Portland Square towards Hamilton House and other similar buildings on the A38.

The proposed scheme has been informed by a good understanding of the site, of the street scene, views of the site and views from the site. We have reviewed recent approvals for development and building work currently underway in the vicinity of the site, including Upper York Street in particular. This has demonstrated a clear precedent for a medium/high density residential proposal. The proposed homes, private and communal spaces will have views out over the city, which will be uplifting and ensure residents feel part of the city. The proposal will not have any negative impacts on views of the site or the skyline.



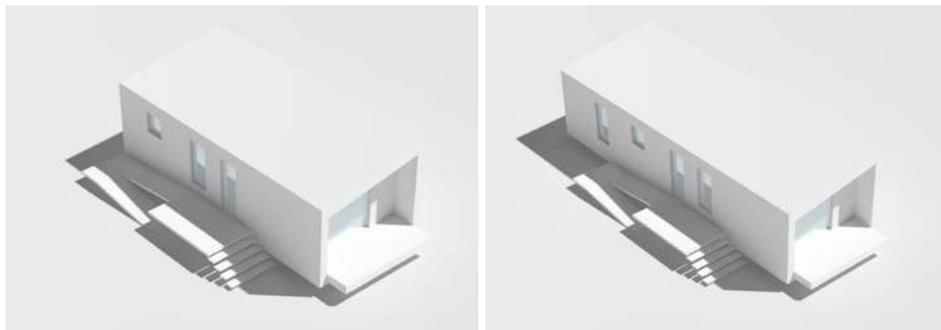
Backfields (SE) Elevation



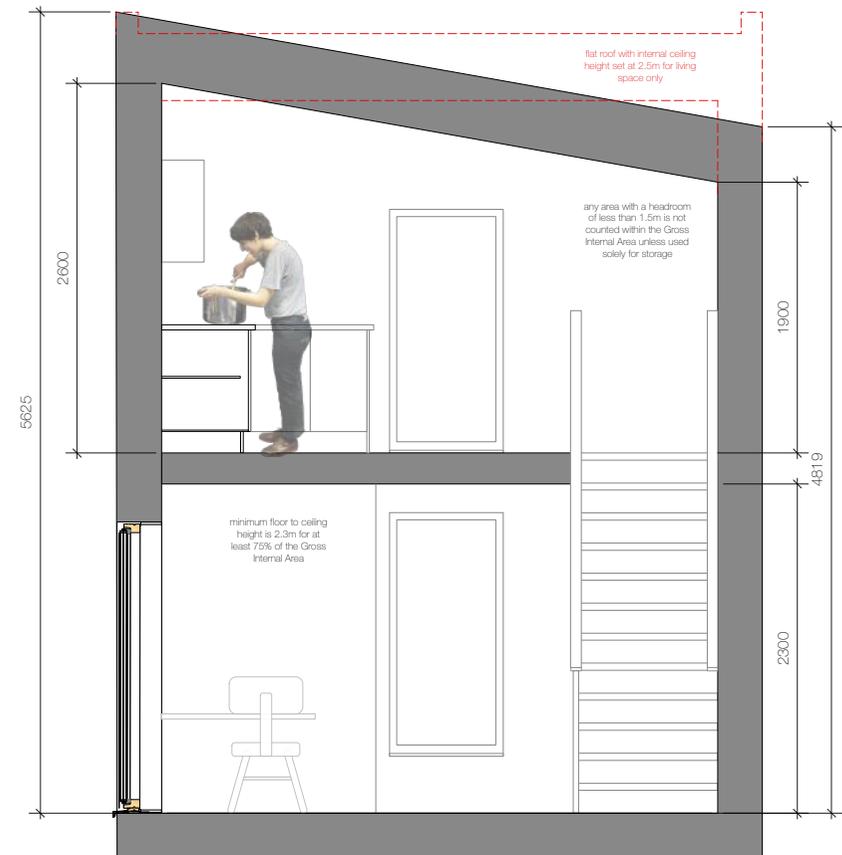
Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community .v1.0

The design of the development has been a very collaborative process, as set out in this Statement. There have been a number of key factors that have driven consideration of massing, form and density:

- The need to create a rooftop community, comprising high quality homes and amenity space
- Provision of a range of sizes and layout of homes, to meet housing need;
- The limited size of the roof space and the need to optimise use of space;
- The need to ensure that density and height of the roof top development does not have a material and detrimental impact on residential amenity of existing or future residents or on the skyline;
- The need to keep office and retail space open during construction.



All homes are based on Agile's low carbon, off site manufactured panels and homes that are designed to be national space standard compliant. Our panel system allows flexibility in design. On this site, that flexibility has promoted the use of three different homes – one bed single storey, two bed single storey and one bed two storey home. The one bed homes have a maximum roof height of 3.8m; the two storey homes have a maximum height of 5.9m.



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We have carefully positioned homes to meet the five criteria set out above. In areas where overlooking or overshadowing may have been an issue we have designed the development to minimise /negate any impact. The solutions we have used include:

A single storey home to protect the amenities currently enjoyed by residents in

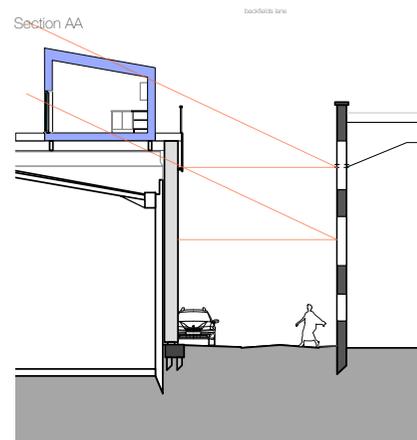
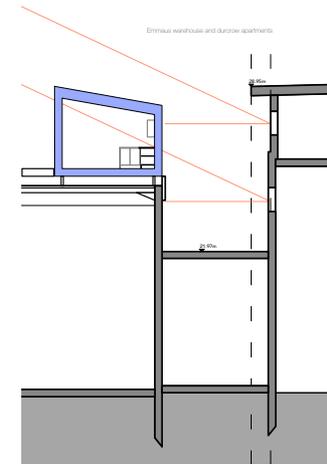
Ducrow Court

Keeping eaves levels are low as possible;

Providing attractive finishes such as sedum roofs help mitigate visual impact;

Offset fenestration placements to ensure no direct overlooking.

The new homes will, for the most part, be located to the edge of the roof space, allowing courtyard space to be designed and delivered in the central, sheltered parts of the roof.



Section BB



Right to light - diagrams

Design & Access Statement

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We have varied the roof forms based on the nature and scale of surrounding / neighbouring buildings. Additionally, although we have sought to reinforce the building lines and footprint of the existing building, we have drawn back from the building line where appropriate to soften the impact of the development and to allow private amenity space and landscape features to break up the external facing elevations. This ensures the external facing elevations are well articulated and interesting, adding value to the streetscene and character of the area.

This approach also allows the provision of 'pockets' or courtyards within the development, which will be overlooked and sheltered. These courtyards, and their future use, are vital to the success of the development and its ability to create a mutually supportive, sustainable community.

We have sought to reduce the impact of the platform – the table – by keeping the columns as slender as possible and as tight to the existing building as possible.



Image: Air tight VR

Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community.v1.0

The proposal represents very efficient use of space and at a density of 115 homes per hectare / 161.5 bed spaces per hectare. The scheme promotes a very high quality, community-led and community focused development, with significant social and economic impacts. This density meets the policy requirements of SPD10 (St Pauls), but is less than the threshold suggested in the Core Strategy. However, a lower density (than the Core Strategy requires) is essential in this location to ensure each home has its own private space and is well connected to shared, overlooked, landscaped community space – meaning that all residents can better know their neighbours, can look after each other, are connected to the Emmaus and fully meets the needs of residents. Consequently the proposal promotes a high quality, safe, healthy, attractive, usable and well managed place, with high quality homes and multi-functional space.



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13. Amenity space, landscaping and biodiversity

Amenity space

The success of this development is not reliant solely on the quality of indoor space. It is also reliant on the quality, functionality, flexibility and popularity of its outdoor spaces.

The proposal includes 127m² of communal space and private space, significantly exceeding policy requirements in a location that may not be expected to provide this quantum of space.

The development will include 'outdoor rooms'. The layout of the proposal ensures each home is well connected to shared, overlooked, landscaped community space. This means that all residents can better know their neighbours, can look after each other and are connected to the wider Emmaus Bristol community.

The inclusion of communal courtyards and growing space, shared walkways, space for people to meet and to 'occupy' is crucial to knowing your neighbours and to a healthy, sustainable community.

Covid-19 has not only shown the importance of having your own front door, behind which you feel safe, but also the importance of access to amenity space and to a wider, caring community.

The need to create safe, private spaces for residents aspiring to live independently has been key to Emmaus Bristol's aspirations. The scheme therefore provides private decked facilities for some homes of varying sizes dependent on orientation.

Images: Air tight VR



Emmaus Bristol Roof Top Community.v1.0

Key principles in the detailed design of communal spaces are as follows:

Circulation areas - non slip, non-combustible surfaces that allow for drainage run off to SUDs

Planting - mixture of loose pot planting; areas of raised beds for growing; use of native species and species to promote biodiversity.

Decking - either fire resistant or composite dependent on location and fire risk

Furniture - up-cycled and built in as part of break out spaces for residents

Landscaping

These communal courtyards will include furniture made or upcycled by companions; the courtyards will be sheltered from the prevailing wind, sunny and warm; they will be landscaped and include opportunity for rooftop allotments.

Trees are included in new rooftop planting, to provide shade to communal and private space.

Biodiversity

Creating a pleasant and healthy rooftop environment, through carefully designed landscaping, will improve biodiversity within Bristol City Centre. That will be further enhanced through the use of sedum roofs and selected soft planting, using native species.

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14. Materials

External Material finishes.

A UK sourced, timber larch cladding is the preferred option where it is feasible to achieve necessary to achieve fire performance and long-term maintenance requirements. For a variation in colour we have chosen a dark anthracite stained finish, which will enhance the soft landscaping and green roofs.

- We will continue to explore cladding options to provide the most fit-for-purpose solution. The key considerations are:
- Frequency of ongoing maintenance and accessibility where walls are close to neighbour's boundary;
- Fire combustibility performance requirements for all roofs and any walls within 1m of the boundary.
- Embodied carbon along with cradle-to-cradle principles, where the chosen solution is either biodegradable or 100% recycled and recyclable.
- Initial material costs and associated longer-term maintenance costs

Roof

For roof slopes that are visible from outside the development, we will use light weight wildflower roofs or sedum mats. This not only improves the visual impact of the development, but will improve biodiversity and SUDs performance. Light weight solutions are needed in this location.

Where the roof pitch surfaces are not visible from outside the development, we propose to use a single ply membrane waterproof finish with some selective roof areas (7 no.) used for solar PV arrays subject to detailed M&E design.

All roof surfaces will be Buildings Regulation compliant for spread flame.



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Fenestration

Windows and doors shall be Velfac composite triple-glazed, with timber internal and aluminium external finish coloured to match anthracite grey finish or similar.

Triple glazing will not only improve energy efficiency, but will reduce the impact on residents of noise from outside the development.



Facias, soffits and steel

The selective staining of the larch cladding elements in a anthracite grey to offset the soft landscaping features is continued by using the same finishing colour to all architectural ironmongery including balustrading, facias and steel columns treatments.

15. Access

Enhanced street amenities for cycle and bin storage will be employed for new residential provision as detailed Accommodation scope chapter. Bin stores for residents will only be accessible via key code to residents. Whilst site management will be responsible to ensure that bins are accessible to refuse collection operatives on the days that they required.

The proposal maintains and enhances (by new landscaping, lighting and a new canopy) the main entrance to Backfields House, off Upper York Street, which is legible and accessible. It will continue to be used by the public (to access retail space) and will be used by residents to access the rooftop development. Consequently additional security measures will also be implemented, to ensure there is no unauthorised entry into the building, especially on the 1st floor and to roof deck which will have independent access control systems.

Improvements will also be undertaken to the main staircase, including new fire protection lobbies and refuge zones, to ensure there is secure and unobstructed entry / exit to each floor.

Once residents on are the open air deck level, they will be able access homes using the protected access and escape routes which will be illuminated for low light use.

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16. Transport - Parking, Cycling and Servicing

Transport

Backfields House is extremely well located in relation to key transport links and local amenities.

The site is close to the city centre, bus routes, pedestrian routes and local amenities. The site is 2 mins walk from Stokes Croft local amenities and 5 mins walk to major bus links and Cabot Circus.

The development will be within 2-7 minute walk from local green spaces such as Portland, Brunswick Square and St Pauls Park. It will be a 4 minute bike ride from Castle Park.

The proposed development is within walking, cycling and public transport distance from Cabot Circus, Temple Meads, Bristol Harbourside and Bristol Airport.

This proposal does not seek to improve on car parking facilities, indeed it will result in the loss of two car parking spaces (to make room for cycle parking and refuse stores). The development will promote sustainable transport given its proximity to the city centre and public transport, and given the additional bike storage being provided as part of the development.

Serving and visitor parking

The proposal ensures retention of access for commercial vehicles, serving the whole site. It also retains short stay parking spaces and staff car parking on Backfields Lane (3 spaces easily meets the needs of local staff).

Cycle storage

The proposal includes adequate and safe cycle parking facilities, namely 10 no. Sheffield Stands, in addition to existing, to provide for 20 no. spaces for new residents. This includes new level hardstanding and soft landscaping to improve visual impact and a natural guarding/barrier on areas of increasing level changes.



17. Construction Strategy & Adding Social Value



All our homes are constructed using prefabricated panels. These are manufactured off site. This has significant benefits in the construction process, including reduction in construction time, reduced waste and improved built quality.

Agile Homes has a contract with HM Prison & Probation Service, for the manufacture of pre-fabricated panels by prisoners in the workshop at HMP Leyhill, Gloucestershire. In addition, Agile ensures that prisoners released on temporary licence secure work experience on the assembly of homes on sites.

The purpose of the contract between Agile Homes and HM Prison & Probation Service is to address a number of interconnected challenges:

- To deliver low carbon, affordable, modular homes at pace for communities and people in need;
- To meet climate emergency targets;
- To respond to the socio-economic challenges of COVID-19;
- To establish a model for scaling up delivery of low carbon, affordable, modular homes through a distributed network of prison workshops across the country.
- To provide prisoners with meaningful activity, a fair wage, modern construction skills and a qualification while serving their sentences; part of the wages earned by prisoners will go to victim support;
- To help prison leavers find a home and a job, with a role and purpose that adds value to them as people; meaning that ex-offenders can contribute to society and the economy with dignity and are far less likely to re-offend or to be homeless.

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It's worth noting that prisoners leave prison with £46 and the clothes they arrived in. They don't have skills to get work, they often don't have a home to go to, many will become homeless and / or re-offend. They end up back in prison. That revolving door of re-offending is costing the public purse more than £18 Billion every year. That's not sustainable and is the basis of Agile's contract with HM Prison & Probation Service.

It is intended that panels for homes on the roof of Backfields House will be manufactured in HMP Leyhill. They will then be transported to site where, under the supervision of an appointed construction contractor, Emmaus companions and prisoners on ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) will support the assembly of homes on site. This will provide work experience, modern method of construction skills and training for people, better equipping them for employment.

As such, by including prisoners in the manufacture and assembly process, there will be significantly greater socio-economic benefits as a result of this development than would otherwise be the case.

Not with standing this additional value added, the proposal will create new jobs and job opportunities.

According to Homes England research, every £1M spent on housing construction equates to 7 FTEs per annum. This proposal has an estimated construction cost of £3M and should be built within a year. Consequently, according to Homes England research, this proposal is likely to have a direct employment impact of 21 FTEs. Research by Professor Michael Ball, on behalf of HBF & Construction Skills (2005), showed that 1.5 FTEs per home could be created, equating to 22.5 FTEs for this proposed development. As such, it can be concluded, that this proposal will result in a direct employment impact of 21 – 22.5 FTEs.

In 2013, CEBR research on behalf of the National Housing Federation, concluded that – for indirect employment from housebuilding – there is a multiplier of 2.51 i.e. for every 1 construction job there would be 1.51 jobs created indirectly. Consequently, for this proposal, that results in indirect economic benefit of 32 – 34 jobs.

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I. Appendix - Planning Policy Review

See separate attached document in planning issue pack

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II. Appendix - Assessment of performance of the proposed development against the Urban Design SPD

See separate attached document in planning issue pack

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III. Appendix - Feedback to Community Engagement

See separate attached document in planning issue pack