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SIDCUP LIBRARY SITE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

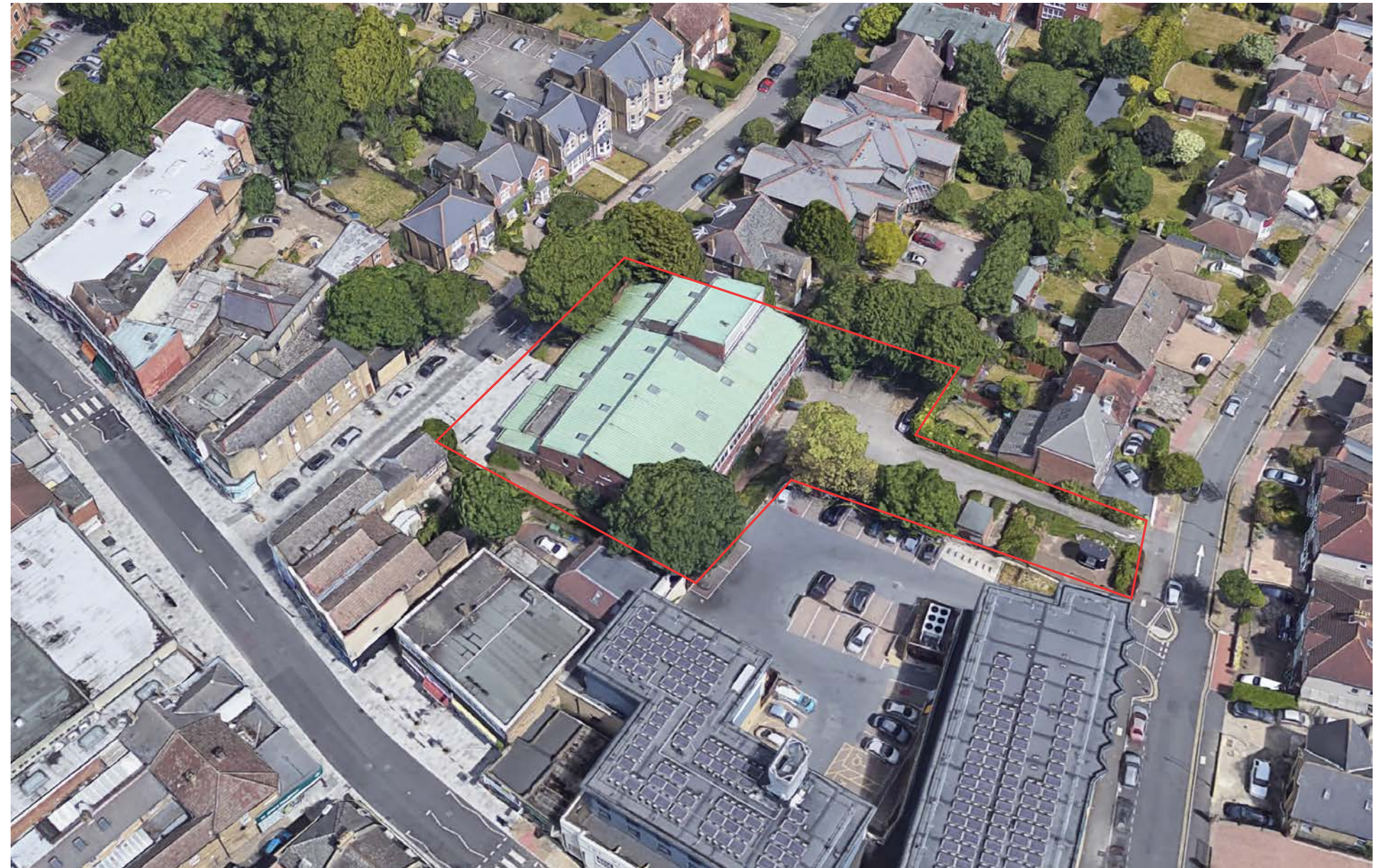
This Design and Access Statement is one of a number of documents supporting the submission by BexleyCo for a full planning application for the redevelopment of the Sidcup Library site at 2A Hadlow Road in Sidcup town centre. The existing library services and facilities are due to be relocated into the new library development currently underway.

The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site providing 32 residential homes in a new building of 3-4 storeys. 16 parking spaces are provided.

This document sets out the proposals in terms of townscape, use and amount, movement and access, and character and appearance.

The team has had one pre-application meeting with the local authority and formal advice has been received and considered in the evolution of the proposals.

The team has also met with the local community and Councillors over two online meetings which were well attended. Feedback from these important stakeholders has been considered in the design response which seeks to deliver a scheme is sensitive to neighbours and sits comfortably in its context, bringing high quality homes, activity and security to this town centre site.



Aerial photograph of the Sidcup Library site, Hadlow Road, LB Bexley

2. SITE AND CONTEXT

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The Sidcup Library site is located just off the High Street in Sidcup Town Centre.

The site is a 20 minute walk away from Sidcup Railway Station and is in close proximity to a number of bus stops and is in easy reach of local shops and services. It has a PTAL rating of 3.

To the south of the High Street is the open space of the Green which is part of a Conservation Area. North west of the site is the Christchurch Conservation Area which contains the earliest developments of the town dating from the 1890s with an clear Victorian character. These will not directly impact development on the site but can bring influence and a sense of identity to further new housing in the town centre.



Victorian Houses, Hamilton Road, Christchurch Conservation Area



Manor House, opposite the Green of the Green Conservation Area



Wider context of the Sidcup Library site

- Site boundary
- Retail frontages
- Conservation Areas

2. SITE AND CONTEXT

2.2 EXISTING SITE



View of the site from Hadlow Road, looking towards the High Street with the mature trees providing screening from the street.



The forecourt and street paving on Hadlow Road provides a high quality environment for pedestrians. The paving should be re-used to maintain this streetscape quality



The forecourt and street paving on Hadlow Road provides a high quality environment for pedestrians. The paving should be re-used to maintain this streetscape quality



The vehicular entrance to the site is from St John's Road with the driveway leading to the rear carpark.



The existing carpark provides a large area for future parking for residential use



The site is very close to the High Street and has a distinct town centre character

2. SITE AND CONTEXT

2.3 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Building heights

Prevailing building heights in the area are two-four storeys with a mix of houses and 3 or 4 storey apartment buildings to the north of the site on Hadlow Road and neighbouring streets.

In the High Street context, the Travelodge building to the southeast of the site, with frontage to High Street and St John's Road, is four storeys.

The existing building on the site has a stepped roof line up to the height of 3 storeys. The houses immediately to the north are 2 storeys with a generous pitched roof.

Trees

There are a number of mature trees along the boundary with Hadlow Road, the residential gardens to the north, and along the perimeter of the Travelodge car park. The quality and status of these trees requires them to be protected in the redevelopment of the site.

Existing WC and substation

There is a public WC to the south of the site which will need to be retained. This presents a constraint in terms of possible misuse of the facility and anti-social behaviour. If it is possible to relocate the WC and bring this land into the development this area could offer additional parking or landscaping.

The existing substation is to be retained and access to it provided via an easement as shown in the diagram.

Proximity to neighbours

New development will need to ensure that the privacy and amenity of neighbouring homes and properties are not compromised. The diagram shows the minimum distance of 18m to safeguard privacy for these properties.



Existing site opportunities and constraints

3. DESIGN EVOLUTION

Early proposals for the site included options that spread the development across the wider site, proposing accommodation on pockets of land alongside the access route. These options were discounted as existing trees on neighbouring boundaries would have been compromised and new buildings right on the boundary would have been overbearing for neighbours. We therefore moved to contain the development in a single building with a similar footprint to the existing library.



Early studies of site layout options including ancillary buildings

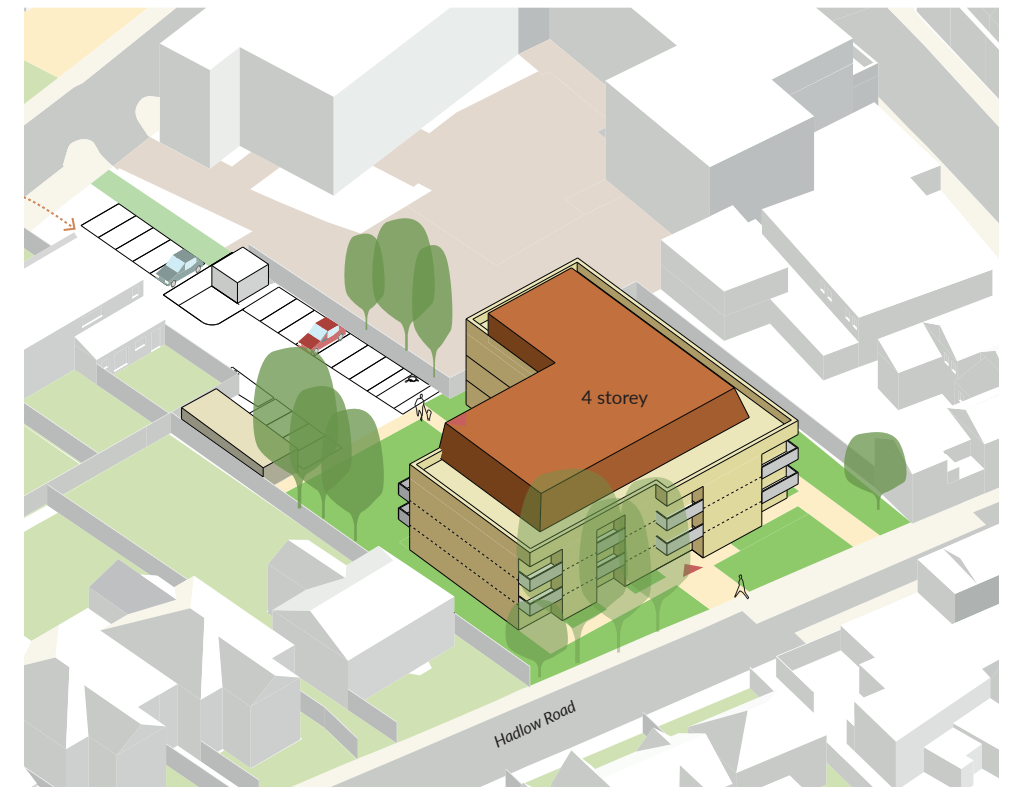
The design of the single building was then explored and the option below was presented at the pre-application meeting. The overall layout, scale and mass of the scheme was considered broadly appropriate although the design of the fourth floor/roof needed further consideration. Officers questioned how the roof design fits in with the local character and advised that neither a mansard nor a gable roof would be likely to be acceptable.

The next steps in response to this feedback were to re-assess the form and articulation of the building. We decided that a finer grain was required, to emulate the character of the street, where there are few examples of long and low 3 storey buildings with a mansard roof expression.

As shown in the proposals the next step was to split the building into an expression of 2 blocks introducing a more vertical rhythm.

Consultation with the local community and councillors also generated feedback about the brick palette and the balustrade treatments, both of which have been addressed in the proposals.

A full account of the community consultation and feedback is recorded in the Statement of Community Involvement submitted with this application.



Aerial view of the building with mansard roof



Elevation study of the proposed 3 storey building with accommodating within a mansard roof expression

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.1 VISION AND APPROACH

The vision for the site is to bring high quality new homes into the town centre, set within the existing green backdrop of the existing mature trees lining Hadlow Road.

Using the existing building form and mass as a guide, the proposed building is located to provide an elegant and active frontage onto Hadlow Road and ensure that the relationship with neighbours is positive. The building is at least 18m away from the rear elevations of 17-21A High Street and where this elevation is closer to the building, the internal layouts of the apartments have been designed to avoid any direct overlooking.

The building is set back from the street to maintain the existing building line and retain the existing trees.

The resulting L-shaped building footprint provides an efficient floorplate to deliver a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedroom apartments, with one of the larger homes benefitting from a roof terrace. The primary residential entrance is from Hadlow Road with a secondary entrance from the south through the parking court and garden.

The proposal provides generous private amenity space for ground level apartments and prevents any public access from the front of the site through to the rear.

A small communal garden at the rear of the building provides a space to pause and chat with neighbours, providing a green setting for the building as viewed from the proposed car park accessed from St John's Road.



Concept diagram showing the location of the building and site arrangement principles



Proposed site plan showing the green setting of the new building.

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.2 ACCOMMODATION

- A total of 32 apartments is proposed, including 6 family sized 3 bedroom homes.
- 8 apartments (25%) will be provided as shared ownership homes located on the ground and first floor, as shown in the schedule of accommodation and plans below.
- 10% of the homes meet Building Regulation requirement M4(3) ‘wheelchair user dwellings’. and all the other homes meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’.
- There are no north facing single aspect homes and the scheme has 20 dual aspect homes (63%).
- The layout and access to the building are safe and secure and have been designed with consideration of Secure by Design principles.

	1 bed 2 person	1 bed 2 person WCH	2 bed 3 person	2 bed 3 person WCH	2 bed 4 person	3 bed 4 person	3 bed 5 person	Total
Ground								
Private								0
Shared Ownership	1	1		2		1	1	6
1st								
Private	2		1		3	1		7
Shared Ownership	2							2
2nd								
Private	4		1		3	1		9
3rd								
Private	3		1		2	1	1	8
Total	12	1	3	2	8	4	2	32
	40.6%			40.6%		18.8%		100.0%



Ground floor plan

SO = Shared Ownership



First floor plan



Second floor plan



Third floor plan

- 1b2p
- 1b2p WCH
- 2b3p
- 2b3p WCH
- 2b4p
- 3b4p
- 3b5p

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.3 HOUSING QUALITY

The homes have been designed in accordance with London Plan design standards (Policy D6) ensuring they have adequately sized rooms with sufficient light, outlook, privacy and storage.

The typical floor plan on this page illustrates the quality of the homes and their private amenity space, with each home benefiting from a well proportioned balcony, large enough to accommodate a table and chairs.

Each home has a separate utility cupboard and generous storage space. The rooms are designed to allow easy arrangements of furniture for flexible living arrangements.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.4 TOWNSCAPE, SCALE AND MASSING

The proposed building injects new life into the town centre with a smart and elegant frontage framing the route to the High Street along Hadlow Road. It replaces the library building with a confident facade that sits comfortably behind the existing mature trees.

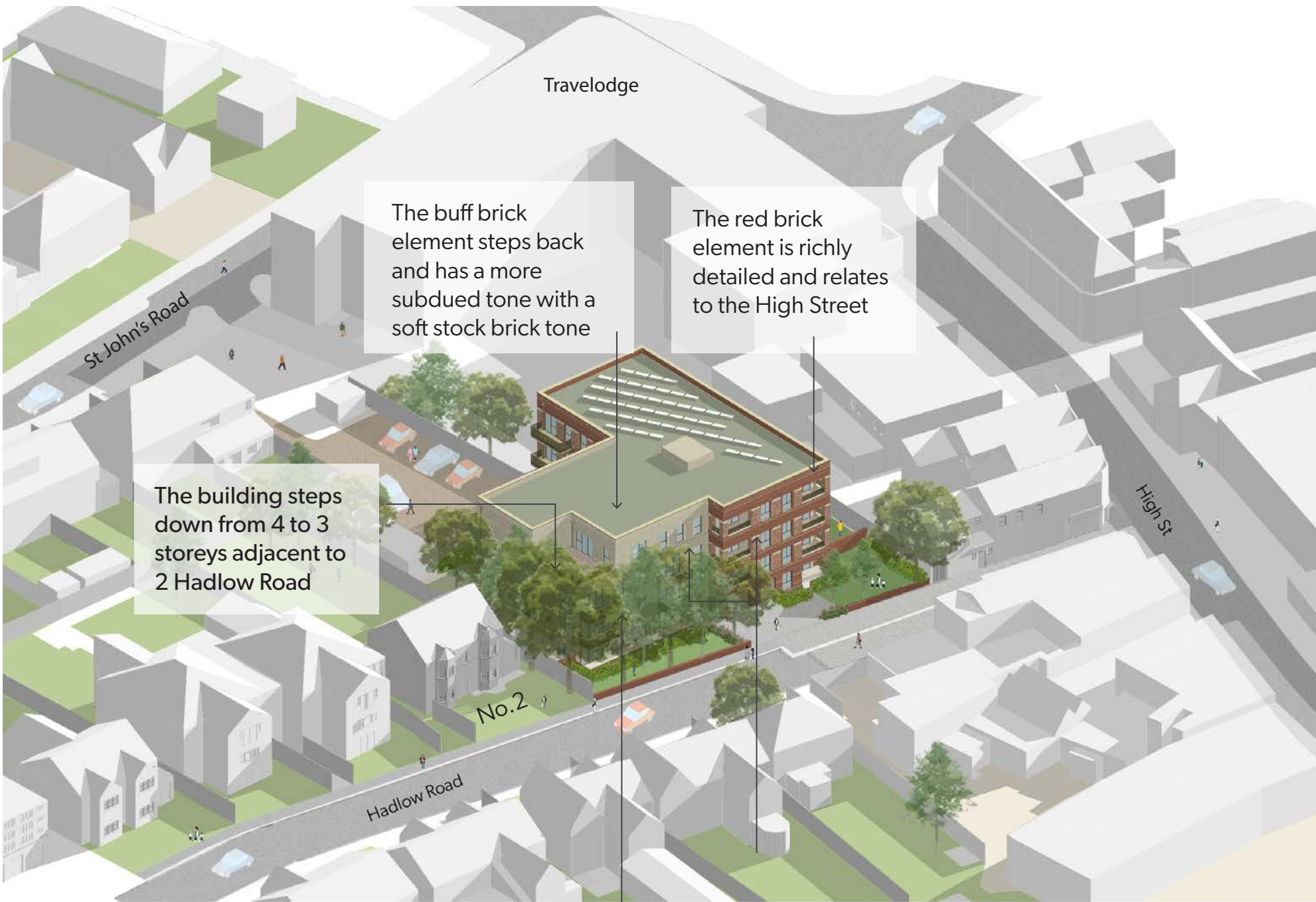
The building is expressed in two distinct parts that front onto the street, with one part set back to articulate the form. This element is further articulated with a cut-out corner forming a roof terrace for the family size apartment on the top floor.

This vertical expression is an improvement on the pre-app design proposal which presented a more horizontal expression with a mansard roof, which felt out of place in the local context.

The massing concept also draws from several examples of freestanding 3 and 4 storey apartment blocks in the local neighbourhood that sit comfortably alongside the more domestic scale of family houses.



Examples of 4 storey apartment buildings in the neighbouring streets



The buff brick element steps back and has a more subdued tone with a soft stock brick tone

The red brick element is richly detailed and relates to the High Street

The building steps down from 4 to 3 storeys adjacent to 2 Hadlow Road

The existing street trees provide a substantial screen between the proposal and 2 Hadlow Road

The building is expressed as two separate elements facing the street

Aerial view showing the massing of the proposal in context

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.4 TOWNSCAPE, SCALE AND MASSING

These elevations show the proposed building in the context of neighbouring buildings with the scale mediating between the Travelodge building and the adjacent residential homes.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.5 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

The site is well located to a range of bus services, as well as being within 15 minutes walking distance of Sidcup Railway Station. The site has a PTAL score of 3.

Parking

The scheme provides 16 off street parking bays, which is in compliance with the London Plan. Four parking spaces have active charging facilities, with passive provision for all remaining spaces.

One of the spaces is a designated disabled persons parking bay.

Cycle storage

Bicycle parking is provided in accordance with London Plan minimum standard with storage space for 58 bikes designed and laid out in accordance with guidance. The communal bike store is in a secure store within the building and conveniently located with access from the rear courtyard.

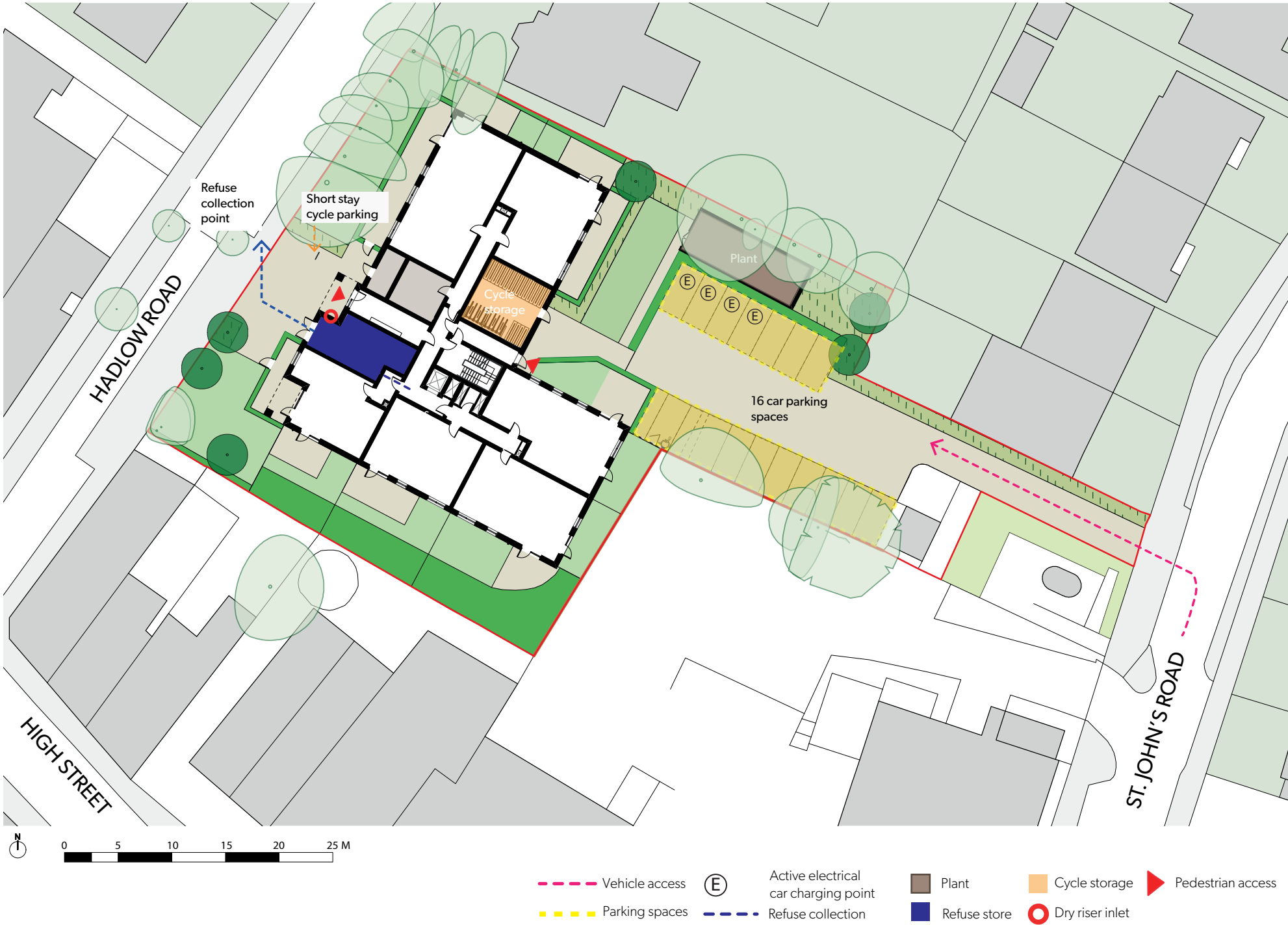
Refuse storage

A communal bin store is located on the Hadlow Road frontage where it is easily collected from the street. The entrance to the bin store is recessed into the facade, but close enough to be convenient for residents storing their refuse on their way out. The recycling and waste arrangements therefore work effectively for residents and collection services. The bins store provides space for 4 general waste euro bins, 4 recycling euro bins and a 240ltr resident food waste bin.

In response to pre-app feedback the entrance foyer has been made larger with a glazed entrance door and sidelight. The bin store door is no longer directly adjacent to the entrance door and their separation improves the entrance experience, as illustrated in the elevation studies that follow in the next section.

Fire strategy

A fire main is provided, with an outlet on each apartment storey, to facilitate effective firefighting. The dry riser inlet will be on the Hadlow Road elevation. Two external hydrants are within approx. 60m of the dry riser inlet.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

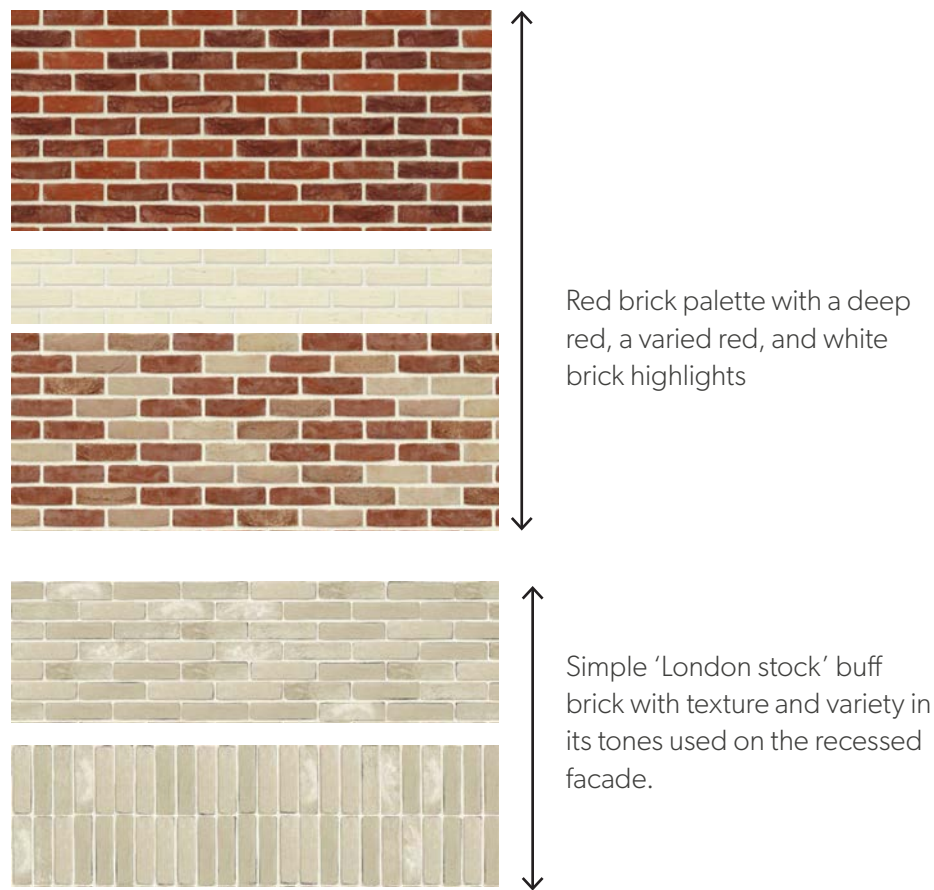
4.6 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The scale of the proposed building demands a high level of detail and variation in the facade design. With the introduction of two brick palettes expressing two 'parts' of the building, the scheme brings variety and richness to the streetscape.

The views and elevation studies that follow illustrate the detailing on the facades to bring a distinctive and elegant character to the street scene.

Materials palette

To achieve the desired richness in the facades a palette of 4 brick tones has been devised, combined with a single colour for all window frames and balustrades. This combination of bricks provides opportunities for variety within a limited palette as illustrated in the elevation studies.



Street view looking up Hadlow Road, showing how the two building forms read as smaller distinct elements framing the street. The stepping back of the buff brick facade helps to reduce the perceived impact of scale on the street.

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.6 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The design of the scheme has moved away from the horizontal expression of a single building with a set back roof to a more finely grained approach of two forms alongside each other.

The elevation illustrated here shows how these elements frame the street and the step down to the 3 storeys alongside No 2 Hadlow Road creates a sensitive interface combined with the screening effect of the existing trees.

Ground floor homes open out onto private amenity spaces, activating the street, and the homes fronting onto Hadlow Road have garden gates leading into the amenity space.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.6 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The red brick building includes the entrance to the block and has more detail and variation bringing a distinctive character to this part of the street as it meets the High Street.

The 'buff' brick part of the building is more subdued in its tone, with a single 'London Stock' character of brick and a recessed facade sitting behind the trees. This facade benefits from interesting brick patterns with a more subtle effect.

The entrance to the building is celebrated with a generous glazed doorway with sidelights and a wide lobby which will include post boxes. The wall adjacent to the entrance door is an opportunity to display the building name with attractive signage.

A mix of inset and projecting balconies is used, with a roof terrace provided for the family home on the top floor. The railing design is bespoke to the scheme, balancing privacy with light.

The balustrades have solid flat bars with small spaces between, and a solid plate at the lower part of the balustrade to add further privacy. These design features allow the balconies to be enjoyed by residents with a reasonable degree of privacy without depriving the living space of light into the home.



Detailed bay study of the red brick entrance facade showing the celebrated entrance to the block and the combined use of red and varied red brick tones with white brick highlights

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.6 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

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The balustrades have solid flat bars with small spaces between, and a solid plate at the lower part of the balustrade to add further privacy. These design features allow the balconies to be enjoyed by residents with a reasonable degree of privacy without depriving the living space of light into the home.



Detailed elevation study of the 'buff' / stock brick facade showing brick details and textures

4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.6 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The rear of the building is treated with the same palette as the red brick and buff brick expressions are wrapped around the building. They meet at the rear entrance to the building and create a characterful communal courtyard area overlooked with living room windows and balconies.

The small communal garden provides an intimate space well screened from the ground floor homes, and a quiet space to sit.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.7 LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY

The open space plan shows how the site is used to provide a green setting for the development while accounting for the management and maintenance of the various spaces.

As much garden area as possible has been dedicated to the ground floor homes with screen walls securing these spaces and preventing any pedestrian movement around the building, which is a considerable improvement on the current condition which has pathways that are not safe or well overlooked.

The private gardens will be screened with railings and hedges providing suitable defensible space for these homes.

A small communal garden is provided for residents. This space has been kept to a minimum to avoid encouraging large gatherings and noise disturbance for residents. It does however provide a small 'breathing space' and doorstep amenity for under 5's.

The remaining area is dedicated to communal planting areas that maximise the biodiversity on the site and provide a rich green setting. This includes the area under the trees along Hadlow Road which would be difficult to assign to ground floor homes without creating an untidy entrance experience.

The existing paving in front of the existing library will be reused to maintain the continuity between the building entrance and the paved streetscape at this end of Hadlow Road.

These areas will be privately maintained by the building's management company. Similarly the access road and parking areas will be privately managed.



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.8 PLANTING STRATEGY

Existing shrub plants to be maintained where possible, with the exception of Cotoneaster horizontalis, Symphoricarpus sp. , Buddeliea davidii which are to be removed, with roots ground out.

Proposed Trees

Size 14-16cm clear stem, container grown

T01 Betula pendula	Silver Birch
T02 Sorbus aucuparia	Mountain Ash

Hedges

Size 1+1, container grown

Species mix:

Lingustrum vulgare	Wild Privet	20%
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	10%
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	20%
Corylus avellana	Hazel	10%
Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose	15%
Rosa arvensis	Field Rose	10%
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	15%
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle where fence	

Size 3L, container grown.

Underplant:

Ranunculus ficaria	Lesser celandine
Luzula sylvatica	Greater woodrush
Anemone nemorosa	Wood anemone

Size 2L, container grown.

Existing grassland

Plant with naturalizing Narcissus sp. (daffodils) allow grass sward to develop and later summer/early autumn cut.

Proposed new grass area

Emorsgate EL1 – Flowering Lawn Mixture or similar

Wild flowers 20%

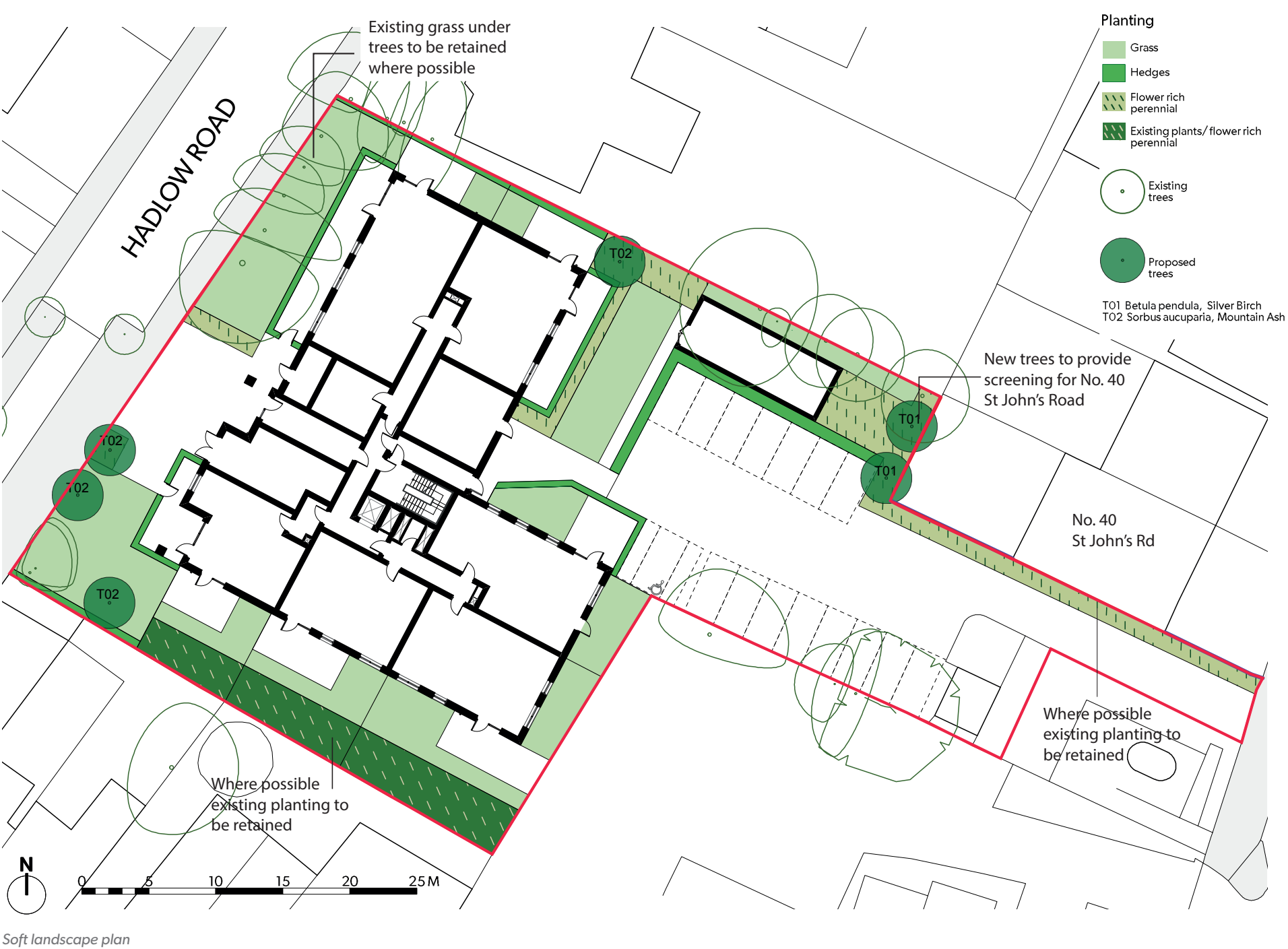
Grasses 80%

Flower rich perennials

Size 3L, container grown.

Sarcococca hookeriana	Sweet box
Fuchsia magellanica	Fuchsia
Choisya ternata	Mexican Orange Blossom
Mahonia aquifolium	Mahonia
Hebe ‘Sapphire’	Hebe
Lavandula x Chaytoiriae Sawyers	Lavender

Refer to tree report for full details of the arboricultural strategy



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.9 HARD SURFACES

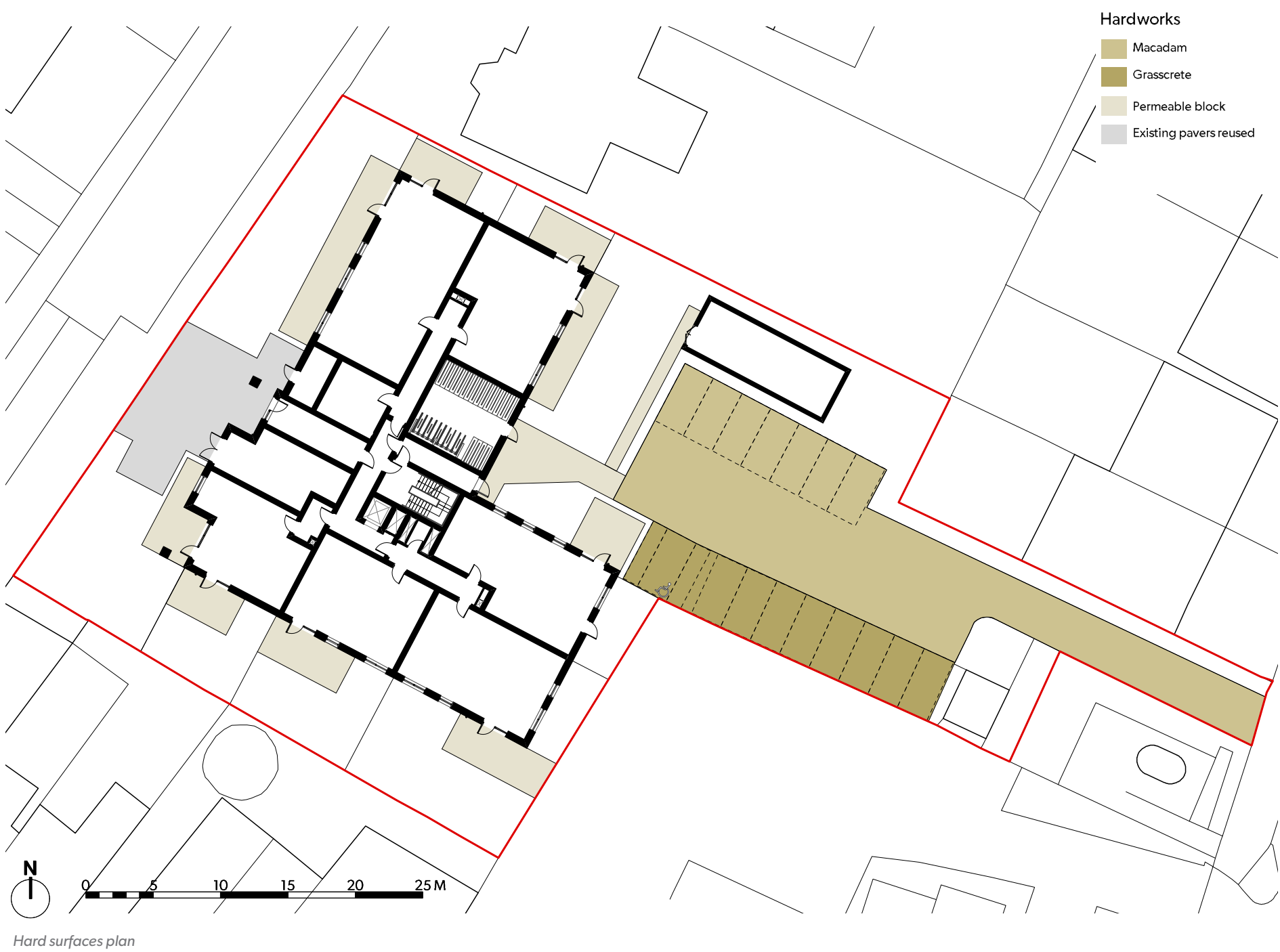
The existing paving in front of the existing library will be reused to maintain the continuity between the building entrance and the paved streetscape at this end of Hadlow Road.

All gardens are private gardens are given an area of permeable paving.

For the rear parking court where possible the existing macadam should be reused and given a decorative top coat



Existing paving along the Hadlow Road frontage to be retained a reused



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.10 BOUNDARY CONDITIONS



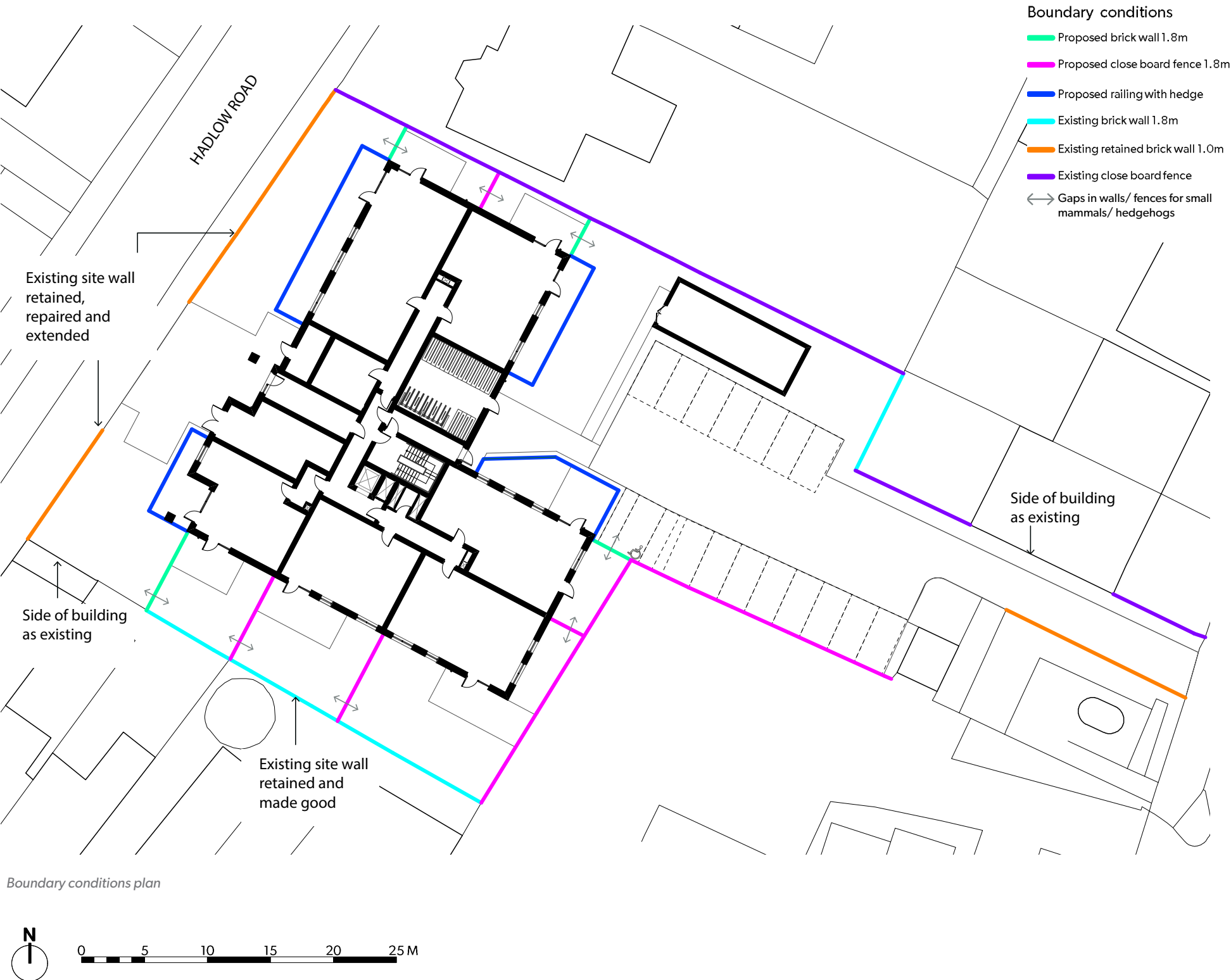
Front gardens for ground floor apartments are given a metal railing with hedge in front for privacy



Close board fencing between gardens and along site perimeter. Gaps to be made to allow passage for small mammals and hedgehogs.



Existing brick walls along Hadlow Road retained and extended



4. DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.11 URBAN GREENING FACTOR

Hill-Wood & Co (Kent) Ltd have been appointed by Stitch Architects & Urban Designers to carry out the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) Calculation for Sidcup Library, Sidcup.

The London Plan Guidance for Urban Greening Factor (pre consultation draft, March 2021) has been reviewed to support the completion of this document. Policy G5 of the London Plan requires an Urban Greening Factor assessment to be undertaken. The Mayor requires a target score of 0.4 for residential proposals, which the Urban green factor calculations drawing number 0449/21/B/1 (prepared by Hill-Wood & Co (Kent) Ltd) achieves as demonstrated in Table 1.0 below.

Total site area: 2358.8908 m2

Surface Cover Type	Factor	Area (m2)	UGF
		0	
Semi-natural vegetation (e.g. trees, woodland, species-rich grassland) maintained or established on site.	1	427.2566	427.2566
Standard trees planted in connected tree pits with a minimum soil volume equivalent to at least two thirds of the projected canopy area of the mature tree.	0.8	548.1541	438.52328
Flower-rich perennial planting.	0.7	131.9625	92.37375
Hedges (line of mature shrubs one or two shrubs wide).	0.6	171.1458	102.68748
Amenity grassland (species-poor*, regularly mown lawn).	0.4	365.1141	146.04564
Permeable paving.	0.1	343.5053	34.35053
TOTAL			1241.23728
Urban Greening Factor			0.53

*please note, we have used the calculation factor of a species poor grassland, however the specified mix is Emorsgate EL1 which is species rich whilst remaining tolerant of regular mowing.

