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Design Statement

5.1	Overview.....	50
5.2	Landscape Proposal	52
5.3	Site Layout	53
5.4	Accommodation Schedule	56
5.5	Massing, Form, Density	57
5.6	Pavilions in a Landscape	59
5.7	Materials and Palette	61
5.8	Contextual Relationships	63

Ambition: The intention of the project is not to simply replace an old building with a new, but to re-imagine the site as a Place within Portslade, positively enhancing the area whilst providing new affordable homes and a community hub.



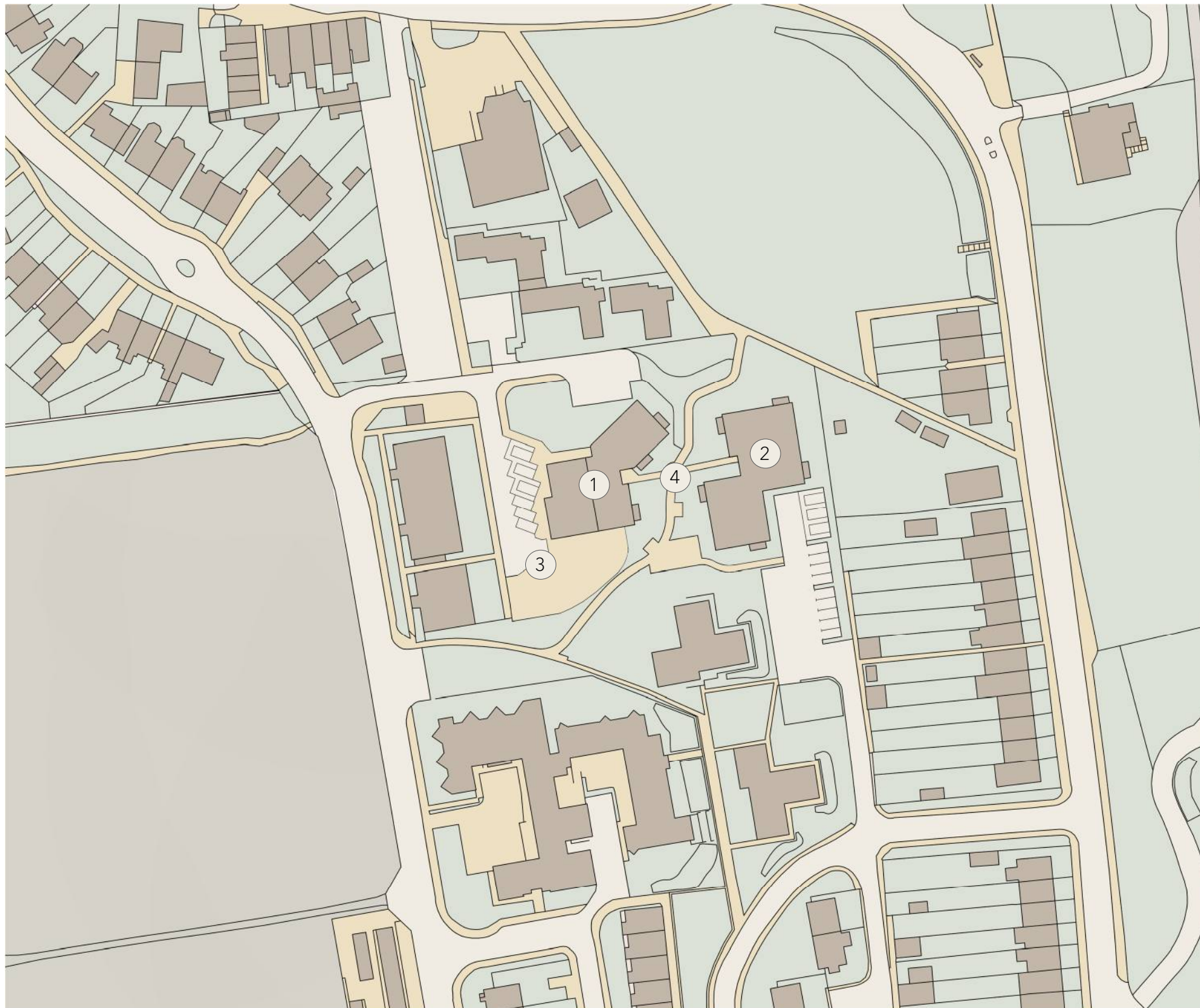
5.0 Design Statement

5.1 Overview

Given that the proposed development is centred upon a site which inherently suffers from poor accessibility, a lack of connectivity, is under-utilised, and yet forms a pivotal node within the local community and character of Portslade, it is appropriate that the design strategy was founded on a landscape-led premise. The overarching intention has been to redevelop this urban infill site, improving the community function and open space, and make the site work much harder. The scheme will ensure that the buildings, open space, landscape, and sense of place is enhanced and woven into the wider urban / village fabric, complementing the overall character and function associated with the setting.

To address the complexities of the site, and realise this ambition, the initial design team was formed around a landscape architect, architect, and civil engineers. The overall directive was underpinned by the sustainability agenda, which was based upon RIBA Climate Challenge targets, and developed as a collaborative document between the wider design team and sustainability consultant.

The strength of the design strategy lies in the concept of connectivity. The new pedestrian link is defined by a diagonal desire line, bridging the open amenity grass area off Windlesham Close to the Village Green. This not only benefits the future residents of the proposed development, but functions as a wider ambition to improve the permeability and public realm offer for the greater community. The link will provide ease of access to the Village Green, public transport network, and greater access to the St Nicolas Church, the twitten, and Easthill Park. Taking cues from the historic sweeping paths and roads in the historic village, the new pedestrian link forms a meandering path providing a narrative of events. Entering from Windlesham Close, with visual links to the Allotments and distant views of the South Downs, the route is curated by tree planting, wild meadows and small areas for recreation and food growing. The proposed green infrastructure continues through the site, merging with the established trees and shrubs of the Village Green.



5.0 Design Statement

5.1 Overview

With a site landscape strategy in-place, the location of the buildings emerged. Each acts as a pavilion within the landscape and were developed alongside the evolving landscape design. This process ensured fluidity in the relationship of internal and external spaces, whilst determining a balance between the differing levels of intimacy, from private and public functions.

The central pedestrian spine provides an active public realm, which meanders directly through the site. This sense of public belonging is reinforced by various landscape features, nodes and focal points, and the layouts and access points for the residential pavilions. Whilst this central path acts as the main throughfare, each pavilion has been designed to respond to the context of each elevation, so that every aspect is key and considered.

Site Overview

1. West Pavilion: Mixed-used building comprising of an entirely spatially separated lower ground floor community centre, excavated into the sloping landscape. As the topography rises west to east, the ground floor of the building is accessed from the central pedestrian frontage, providing 13 flats over 3 storeys.
2. East Pavilion: Accessed on the same level surface as the West Pavilion, the east building comprises of 15 flats over 3 storeys.
3. Lower ground floor level providing internal and external accommodation to the proposed community centre.
4. Ground Floor active residential frontage connecting to the central pedestrian footpath, providing a fully accessible and "equality act" compliant link between Windlesham Close and the Village Green.



Landscape Masterplan by Ramsay and Co.

5.0 Design Statement

5.2 Landscape Proposal

The landscape proposal is integral to the redevelopment of the site and has been informed by the site-wide landscape led strategy. This determined the appropriate use of the existing landscape, gave priority and protection to existing site features such as the impressive Alder tree and existing hedgerows, determined the overall planting strategy and the placement, forms and function of the buildings. To achieve this, the proposal is underpinned by the following objectives;

- Prioritise retention and celebrate the existing landscape features.
- Enhance biodiversity, with an emphasis on species rich wildflower and grassland areas, woodland edge habitats and native species planting.
- Develop a strong sense of place
- Improve the connectivity and public realm.
- Prioritise inclusivity and accessibility.
- Enhance the quality of open space.

Great emphasis has been placed on developing a landscape that ties into the wider ecosystem and area identity, with the proposal offering many new additions and enhancements. Features have been designed to encourage interaction and community integration, increase passive surveillance to the site and surrounding area, provide informal play spaces, incorporate seating areas for personal or social space, and provide communal planting areas to encourage food growth and allow residents a sense of ownership. To further this, the planting scheme allows the existing green infrastructure to thrive, with features that both encourage biodiversity and provide natural screening for private amenity and defensible spaces. The layout and planting at both ends of the new pedestrian pathway encourages both people and nature back into the site, allowing for a rich, healthy habitat and community.

Further details can be found within the Landscape Strategy, Plan and Precedent documentation.

5.0 Design Statement

5.3 Site Layout

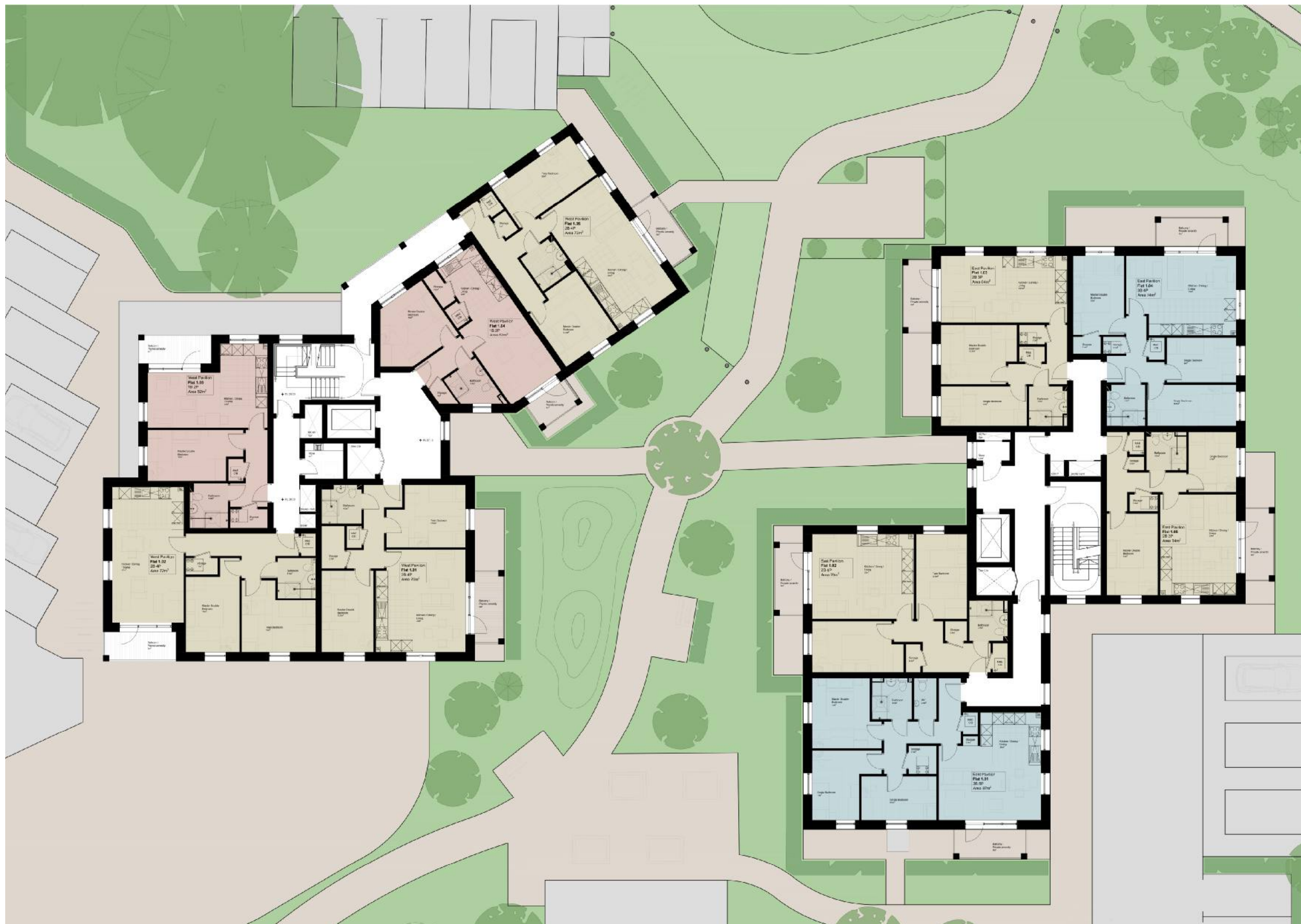


- 1 Bedroom Flat
- 2 Bedroom Flat
- 3 Bedroom Flat
- Wheelchair Accessible Flat
- Accessible Parking (Residential)
- Long Stay Bicycle Hub
- Short Stay Bicycle Stands
- B Bin Store
- Private Access
- Communal Access

Ground Floor

5.0 Design Statement

5.3 Site Layout



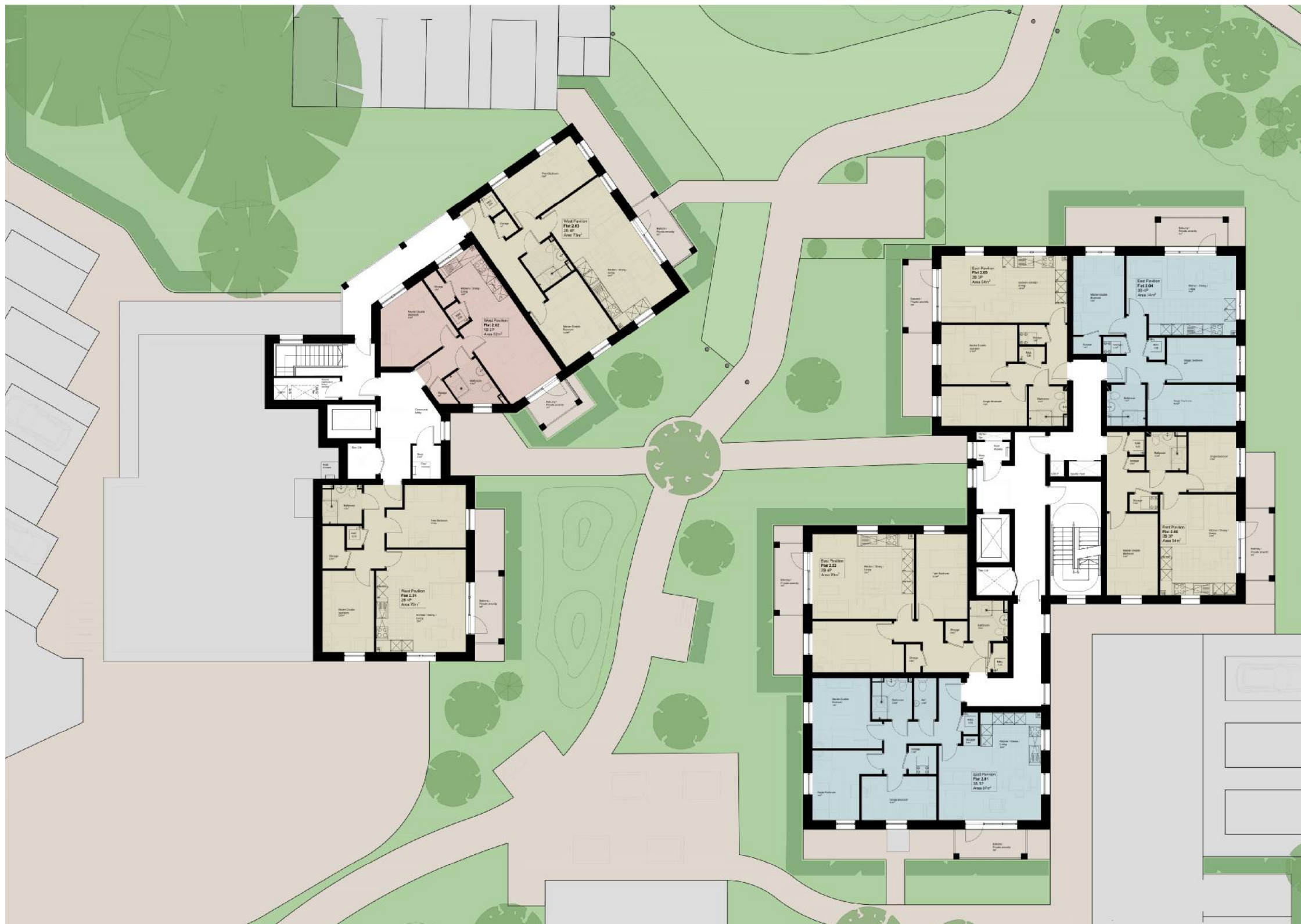
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First Floor

5.0 Design Statement

5.3 Site Layout



- 1 Bedroom Flat
- 2 Bedroom Flat
- 3 Bedroom Flat
- Wheelchair Accessible Flat
- Accessible Parking (Residential)
- Long Stay Bicycle Hub
- Short Stay Bicycle Stands
- Bin Store
- Private Access
- Communal Access

Second Floor



Community Centre Accommodation Schedule

Room	Area
Circulation	42m ²
Office	50m ²
Main Hall	100m ²
Small Hall	57m ²
Kitchen	24m ²
Toilets	23m ²
Hygiene Room	15m ²
Sensory Room	16m ²
Meeting Room	11.5m ²
Stores	16.5m ²
Plant	14m ²
GIFA	397m²

5.0 Design Statement

5.4 Accommodation Schedule

The proposed development combines 28 new residential units over two Pavilion Blocks, and a new Community Centre with a total GIFA of 397m². Combined, the entire development amasses to 2810m² Gross Internal Floor area.

In addition to the internal floor space, the proposal benefits from ample private amenity space for all flats, with ground floor units having gardens and all upper floors having balconies, a large external place space for the Community Centre, and a site-wide landscape proposal which shares space with existing developments and includes new public realm for all to benefit from.

Residential Accommodation Schedule

		Ground Floor	First Floor	Second Floor	Total /s
West Pavilion	1 beds	2	2	1	
	2 beds	3	3	2	
	3 beds				
GIFA		405m ²	405m ²	246m ²	
East Pavilion	1 beds	1			
	2 beds	2	3	3	
	3 beds	2	2	2	
GIFA		447m ²	455m ²	455m ²	
Combined	1 beds	3	2	1	6
	2 beds	5	6	5	16
	3 beds	2	2	2	6
Total Units					28
Total GIFA					2413m ²

GIFA Summary	
West Pavilion (Resi)	1056m ²
West Pavilion (Comm)	397m ²
East Pavilion	1357m ²
Combined Total	2810m²



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5.5 Massing, Form, Density

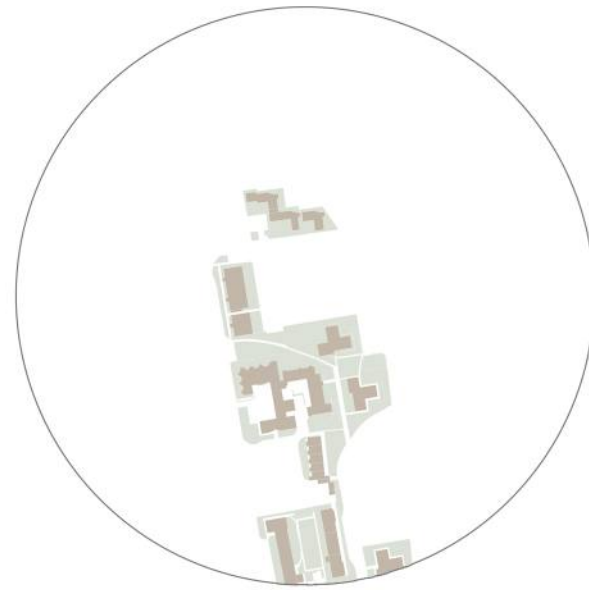
Most of the proposal has been formed over 3 storeys, responding to the scale of the neighbouring low-rise blocks. The only exception to this on the west pavilion is where there is a step in the building and inclusion of a lower ground floor community centre. Enabling a higher ceiling height within the main hall, the western half of the building is raised by 900mm, and subsequently only 2 storeys of residential levels sit above. The rest of the west Pavilion shares a centre ground floor with the eastern pavilion, with 3 storeys of residential units.

This form has been developed to respond to the sloping topography of the site, with the lower ground floor community facility benefitting from lower levels gained towards the western site boundary. Stepping up the landscape, the pavilions read as 3 storeys, with flat roofs to minimise the overall height. The parapets have been designed to form slopes which echo the stepping roofline of the valley landscape.

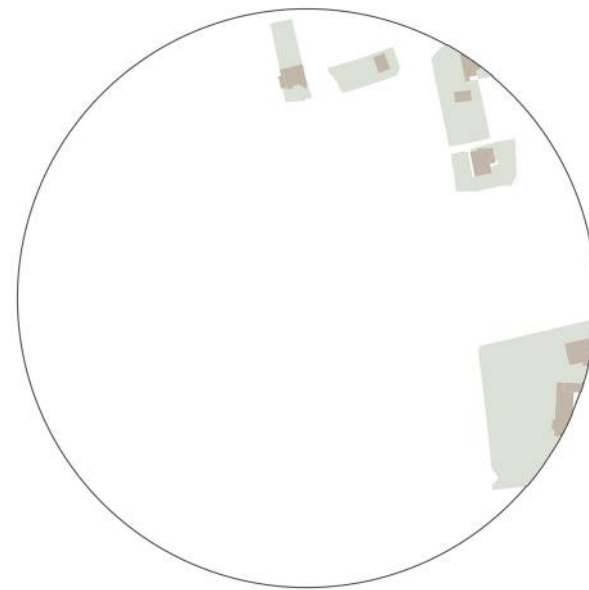
Between the two pavilions, the development includes 28 new homes, and just short of 400m² of dedicated community centre space.



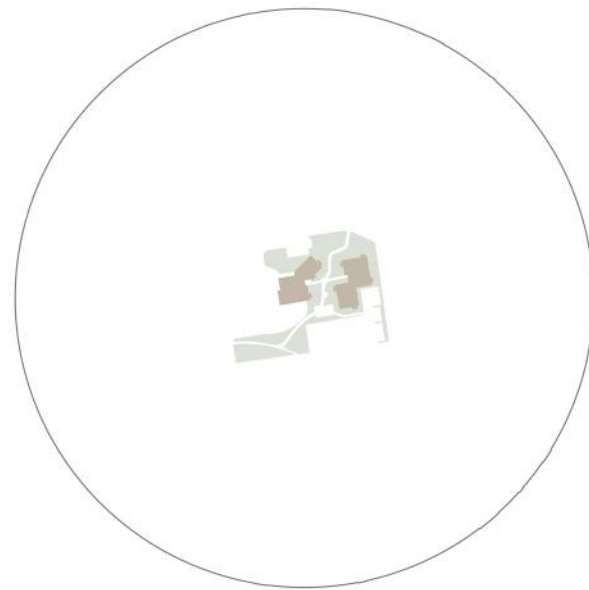
Terrace Housing



Low-rise Flats



Large Villas



Proposed Development

5.0 Design Statement

5.5 Massing, Form, Density

The proposal finds an appropriate balance in Massing, Form and Density, based upon the characteristics of the local area and neighbourhood. Within this vicinity, there are predominantly three housing types, being terraces, historic villas, and low-rise flats. The scaled illustrations (left) identify these typologies as massing, along with the associated land, being either private gardens or communal lawns. Looking at the relationship in this way demonstrates how the proposal responds to the density evident within the area. At the same time, the development includes a community centre and extensive landscaping, with shared public realm for all to use. Whilst this wider site boundary reduces the housing density, the benefit ensures that the development can successfully weave into the wider urban fabric, enhancing the quality and accessibility of open space and public realm.



5.0 Design Statement

5.6 Pavilions in a Landscape



North Elevation

Prominent role overlooking the Village Green which contributes to the setting of the conservation area and its assets.

Whilst presently, hardstanding runs hard up against this boundary, and the existing elevations are back of house, the proposal looks to allow the green infrastructure of the Village Green to permeate through into the site, with the proposed building stepped-back to allow a woodland buffer area with new trees and understorey woodland planting. The space also allows for greater public amenity, featuring amenity grass, natural sculptures and a place for children to break-out and play.

The design also inherits concepts from the historic character of the local area and assets. These features are then continued on through the rest of the design, to ensure the scheme as a whole is coherent, and a character of place is established.



East Elevation

The east elevation sits parallel to the rear of the properties on Locks Hill, and so it was imperative to find a balance between respecting these existing dwellings by minimising potential overlooking without denying amenity, natural light, views and solar gain for residents of the proposed development.

For this reason the internal layouts, fenestration and elevation treatment have been duly developed in response to the landscape and existing context, whilst maintaining a coherent rhythm and order with the rest of the development. This process ensures that the elevation didn't simply become a rear elevation, but stands up in its own right, with the same level of composition, features and detail as any other elevation.



5.0 Design Statement

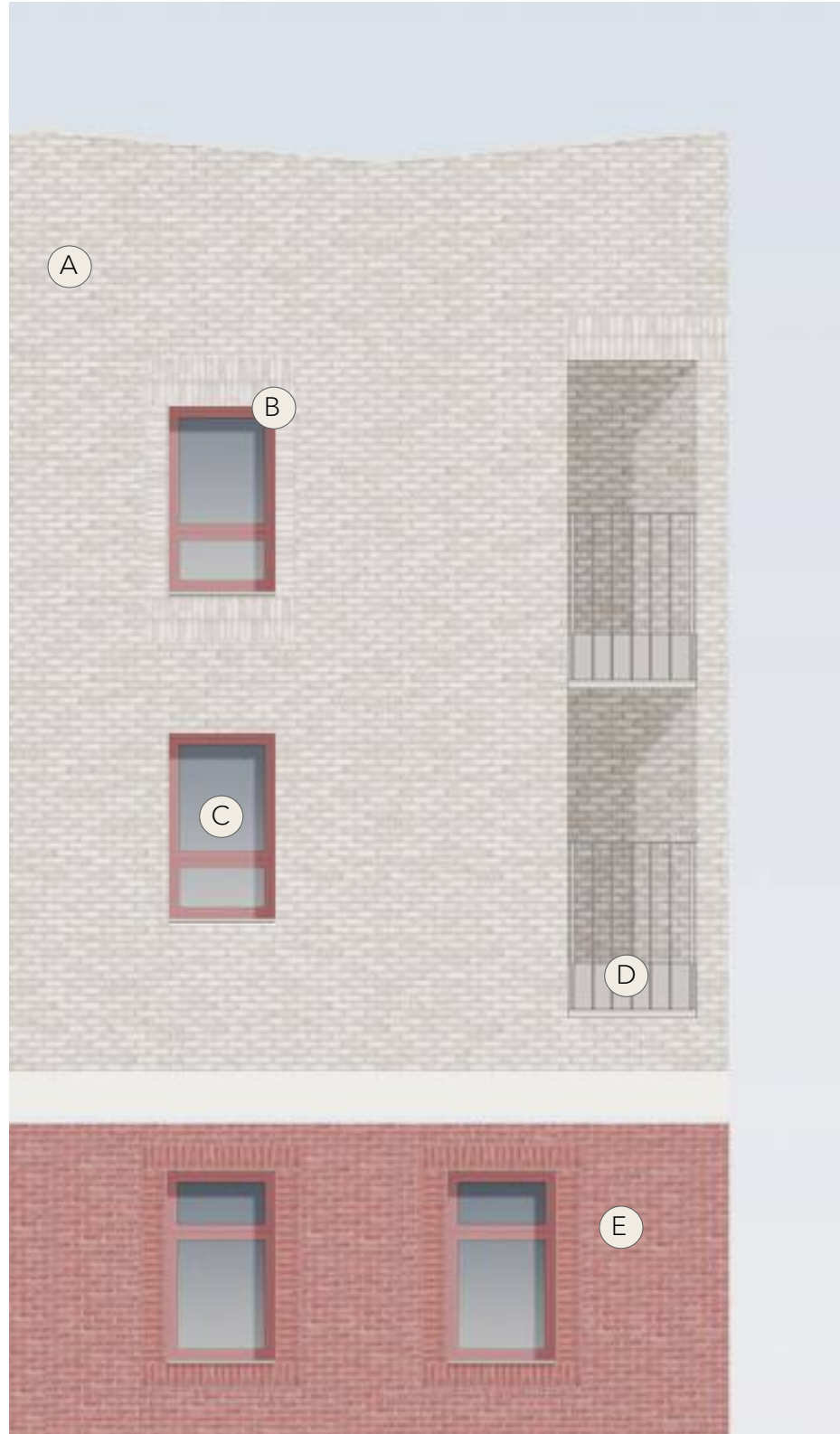
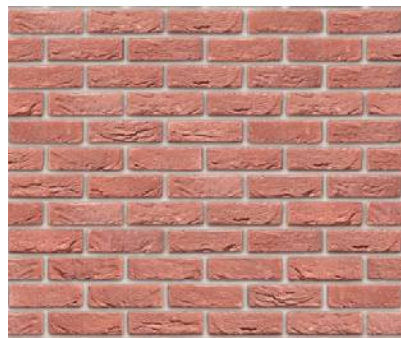
5.6 Pavilions in a Landscape

Central Residential Frontage & Public Realm

As the pedestrian link weaves through the site, running between both Pavilions, it was important that the landscape, along with each block and facing elevations respond to this active public frontage. In the middle of each pavilion are the communal entrances, serving as the primary residential destination and access. These two points are intended to encourage interactions and develop a sense of community, and as such the landscape binds both together with a central node (a). Here a feature ornamental tree provides a visual marker and reference point, a place where residents who are busy coming and going can make chance encounters, or act as an organised landmark for social meetings.

A spacious bicycle hub (b) is nestled into the south boundary, offering a convenient arrival point for cyclists. This is set amidst a community planting area (c), which brings residents together, and thus contributing to the feel and sense of place.

With plenty of private amenity space facing into this central spine, the site benefits from passive surveillance, with both visual and physical communal links to the public realm, and an active frontage. Each private garden features a hedge boundary treatment (d) to offer residents with private defensible space. This natural green border also softens the building footprint, helping the pavilions rest comfortably within the green landscape.



Historic local precedents

Contemporary reinterpretations

Material Palette Bay Study

5.0 Design Statement

5.7 Materials and Palette

The chosen material strategy provides a contemporary reinterpretation of the prevailing materials, which are best demonstrated within the conservation area in the heart of Portslade Village. As illustrated, these constitute of flint, sandstone, and brick, with underlying light buff hues, ranging from beige, tints of yellow, and light grey. This is frequently mixed with a contrast of ochreous red tone. Since many of the later developments and surrounding residential houses and blocks adopt similar tones in brickwork, it seems fitting to capture the best of those materials and tones for the proposed development.

It was key to the success of the design that the Pavilions belonged, both to the landscape in which they sat, and to the existing character of the area. The development of this material strategy continued to evolve alongside the landscape proposal, assuming a simplified palette that wouldn't compete with the rich tapestry of the landscape. A light buff brick colour was chosen as the predominant facing material, acting as a muted backdrop to the various shades of green undulating through the site. However, even whilst the Pavilions assume a simple palette, small details were incorporated into the design which nod to both the historical aesthetic of Portslade Village and the hardstanding dotted through the landscape.

The only variation to this aesthetic has been introduced to the lower sunken base of the West Pavilion, wrapped in a red brick wall offering a visual marker to the location and use of the Community Centre.

- A. Light buff brick taking cues from the flint walls and sandstone
- B. Detail around upper storey windows, framing openings
- C. Coloured window frames, framing openings and tie-in local red brick and details
- D. Powder coated aluminium, coloured to blend with brickwork
- E. Red brick, distinctive of the proposed Community Centre



Relationship with Lindfield (north)



Relationship with Kemps Court (south)

5.0 Design Statement

5.7 Materials and Palette

Elevational studies with several surrounding buildings demonstrate how a subtle material consistency permeates through the area. However at the same time, these comparative studies highlight the variety of tones and details from one building to the next.

The 2-storey property of Lindfield, which is located adjacent to the north boundary clearly absorbs character from some of the traditional cottages within the conservation area, both in its form and material palette. Whilst the predominate brick seems unusually dark by comparison to most building within the area, old and new, the use of red brick to detail quoins, lintels and banding, is a common feature throughout the older parts of the Village.

Alternatively, Kemps court, which is a 3-storey low rise residential block is much simpler, and uses a light yellow / buff multi-brick, that more closely resembles the shades and hues of the old flint and sandstone walls.

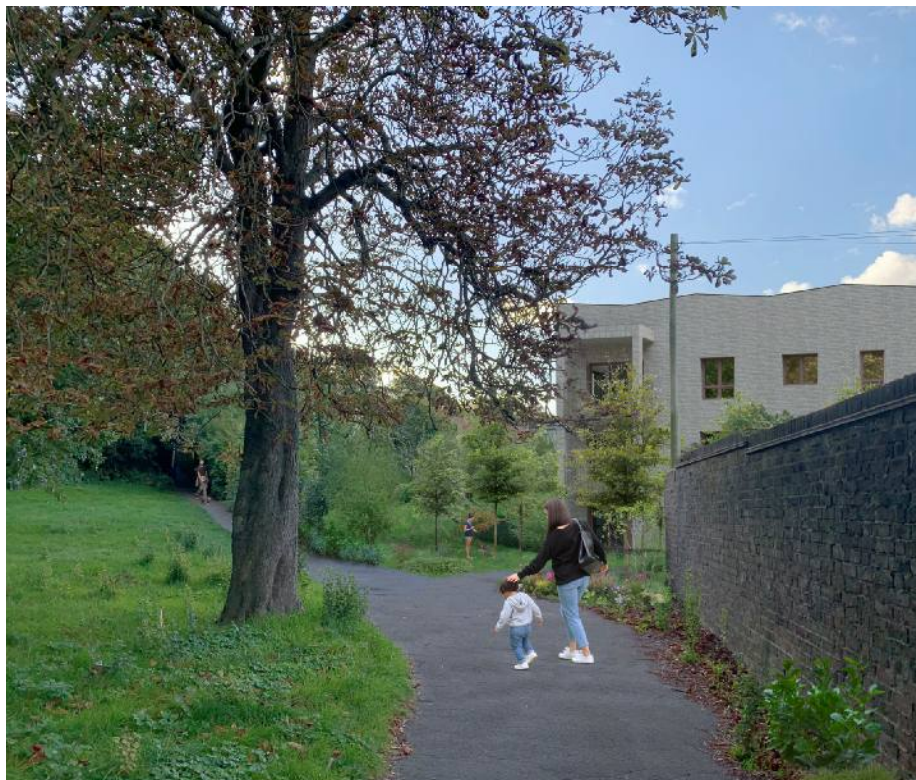
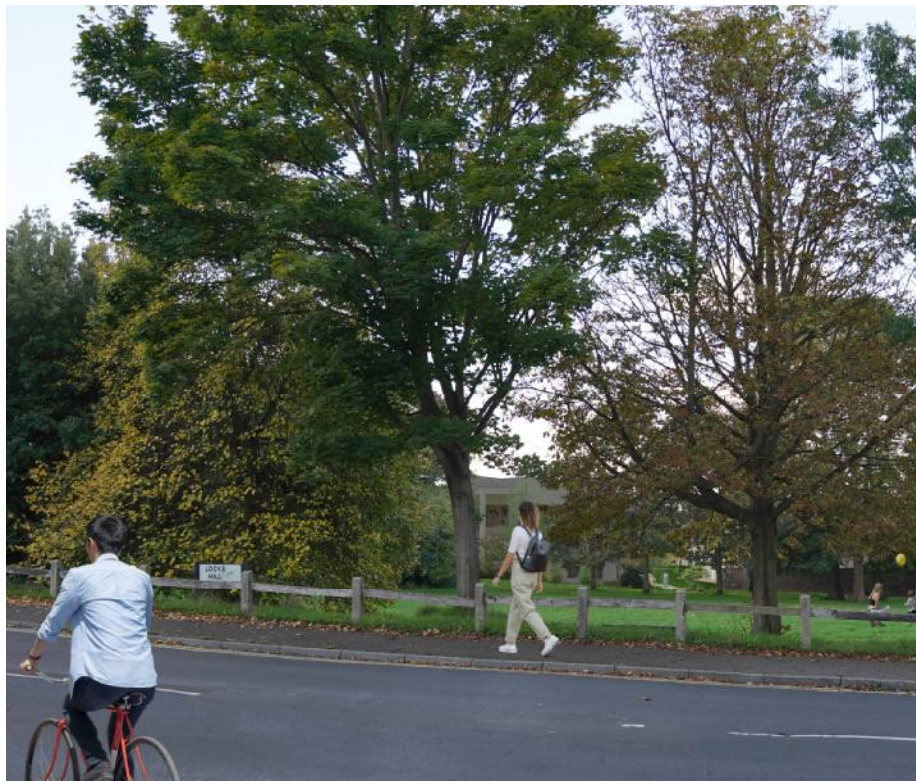
These comparisons help to reinforce the selection, use and detailing of the proposed development, and whilst these buildings are not the most distinctive, the language of the proposed development, and quality can sit comfortably amongst this architectural landscape, contribute positively to become a precedent for future developments.

5.0 Design Statement

5.8 Contextual Relationships

The wider contextual elevations demonstrate how the design has developed to be integrated into the landscape, rising from West to East across the site: responding to the valley landscape vernacular of the area. As is evident, the material palette comprises mostly of brick, however there is a real variety of shades and tones ranging between buff and red, which the proposal finds a compromise between. The landscape can be seen to respond to the existing green infrastructure, creating a green corridor through the site to link habitats and public realm.





Approach from Locks Hill and the Village Green



5.0 Design Statement

5.8 Contextual Relationships

From the Village Green and associated conservation area, views into the site are limited and very well screened by the existing developments and coverage of mature trees and shrubs within and around the Green. These natural features provide layers and depth to the existing green infrastructure and serve as an important habitat and local feature. The proposal looks to build-upon this, by extending this natural layering through the site, introducing a woodland buffer to the boundary, allowing the existing habitat to reach into the site. This urban greening extends all the way through the site to Windlesham Close, forming a green corridor and public link.

As the artist impressions demonstrate, the North façade of the East Pavilion faces onto the Village Green, where an informed relationship can be established. To achieve that, the landscape, elevation, and internal layouts have been collectively designed and arranged to respond to the area character, whilst taking the opportunity to provide the benefit of passive surveillance. This aspect is especially important, since this corner of Green is presently disjointed, obscured, and infrequently used. This is especially apparent in evenings and nights when the space can become dark, isolated, making it feel unsafe, intimidating and somewhere to avoid. However, by introducing a pedestrian link through the site, and a considered elevation with windows, balconies and private gardens facing this corner, there is increased surveillance and opportunities for greater public use, and / or interactions to occur. Similar consideration has been given to the material choice, which, as previously noted responds to the fabric of the historic village. The soft multi buff brick, is light enough to feel inviting and offer a textured backdrop without dominating views in and around this area.



Windlesham Close Approach

5.0 Design Statement

5.8 Contextual Relationships

The approach from Windlesham Close is very much centred upon the existing treescape. Both the Alder tree (right) within the site and the adjacent tree within Lindfield act as gateway, drawing views inwards. Beyond, the former access road gives away to grass and the woodland buffer, linking to the Village Green. The Pavilions are set-back from Windlesham Close, with only passing glimpses available between the 1970s low-rise residential blocks. By losing an old, disused brick enclosed air-drying space, arrival to the proposed Community Centre opens to Lindfield, and wraps around the impressive alder tree, celebrated as a visual anchor for arrival.



Community Centre Arrival



View North Through the Site Towards the Village Green

5.0 Design Statement
5.8 Contextual Relationships



Windlesham Close View / Approach along Green Corridor

5.0 Design Statement

5.8 Contextual Relationships



Long Distant East View across the Valley from the junction between High Close and High Street



View West from Locks Hill between houses parallel to the site