

Beckenham Car Park Housing

1.0 Introduction

Why do we want to build?

The London Borough of Bromley has an acute need for more housing, and is aiming to deliver new, genuinely affordable homes in line with its Housing Strategy.

This new generation of council-funded homes will provide high quality and sustainable homes for the borough's residents.

The new homes will set a benchmark for design quality, innovation and livability.

Why here?

Bromley Council is looking to develop areas of land within its existing estate. The area edged in red on this page has been identified as a site with high potential to be used for new homes.

Who are we?

A multi-disciplinary design team led by Rivington Street Studio and AECOM, has been appointed by the Council to develop design proposals for Planning consent.

Rivington Street Studio is an award-winning RIBA Chartered Architectural Practice, established for over 30 years and based in East London.

The company has a high-quality portfolio of built projects within the affordable homes sector, and successful recent experience of securing Planning approvals in Bromley, and across Greater London.



- 1 - Clock House station
- 2 - Beckenham Road
- 3 - shopping parade
- 4 - Bourne House/ The Registry

- 5 - the site: Lewis House, overflow car park
- 6 - Venue 28, Little Elms nursery
- 7 - The Spa at Beckenham
- 8 - (off page) Beckenham Library

Beckenham Car Park Housing

2.0 Location & Site

Location

The proposal site is located just off the north side of Beckenham Road, between Clock House station and central Beckenham, a district centre in Bromley.

The setting is a suburban high street, with varied land uses including small-scale retail, civic functions of a library and health centre, a church and housing.

The Elm Road Conservation Area ends at the site's southern edge.

Site description

The site is comprised of one part of a municipal overflow car park serving nearby civic buildings, and Lewis House, a small detached building with outbuildings.

In December 2023 the lease on Lewis House came to an end. The charity which had been based in Lewis House, Experts by Experience, are now based on North Street in Bromley town centre. The Council continues to offer an Occupational Therapy Service, more details of which can be found on the Bromley website: <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/help-adults/occupational-therapy-service>

The site is of irregular shape, and bounded to the northwest by railway lines, to the east by The Spa at Beckenham, to the west by Bourne House, and open car parking to the south. The site is accessed on foot or by vehicle across adjoining land, from Beckenham Road or Turners Meadow Way.

Surrounding buildings

The built context features buildings of a variety of ages, types and sizes reflecting their mix of uses. Principal neighbours are Venue 28, The Spa at Beckenham and Beckenham Library all having community / civic uses.

Bourne House was recently converted from offices to new homes, reinforcing an emerging pattern of residential use around the site.



The handsome Venue 28, originally Beckenham's Technical Institute, is Listed



Bourne House, or The Registry, a major presence on Beckenham Road, is undergoing conversion into new homes



The Spa at Beckenham replaced earlier municipal swimming baths on the same site



Beckenham Library completes the precinct of civic buildings around the site

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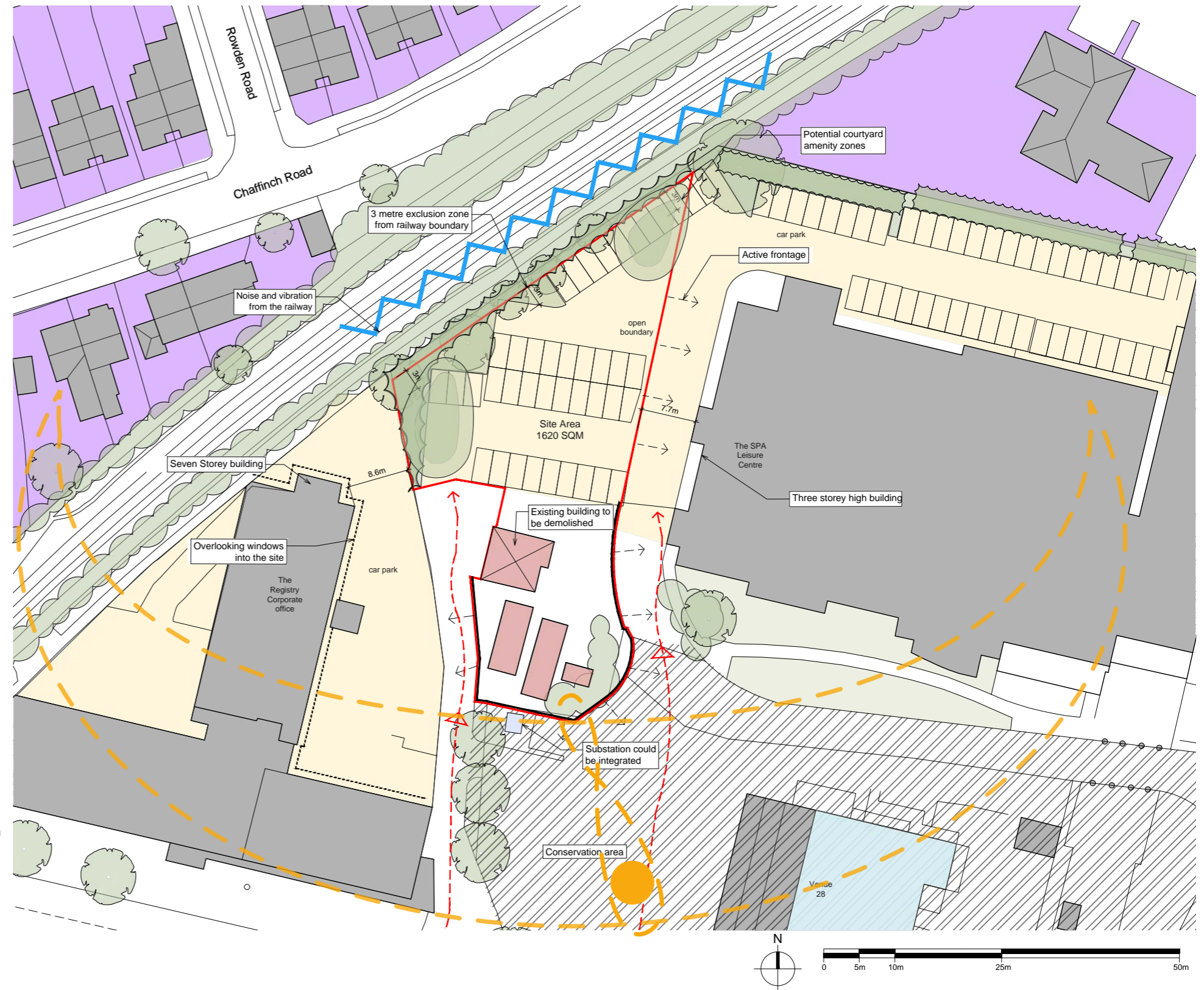
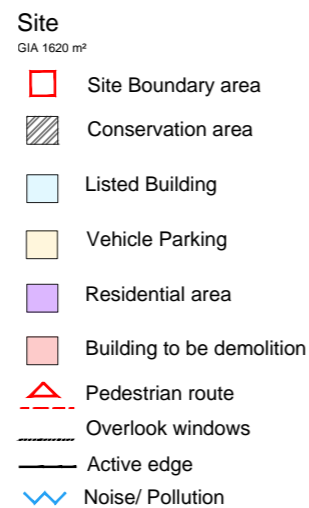
3.0 Opportunities & Constraints

Key opportunities include -

- providing a significant number of affordable new homes to help fulfil Bromley's housing policy goals
- the site's location and transport connections make an ideal opportunity to provide viable car-free homes and support sustainable travel
- the site has good aspect with wide open views, especially to south, west and north, providing opportunity for high-quality accommodation
- a chance to improve and humanise a neglected pocket of townscape, with high-quality landscaping and benefits of 24-7 inhabitation and use
- improvement to street level environment will benefit the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area
- residential development that will reinforce the emerging pattern of land use with conversion of Bourne House adjacent, and improve visual amenity for residents of that development
- providing new flexible workspace accommodation within a large, purpose-built new unit to provide a much needed and accessible local facility, with low energy costs
- biodiversity improvements which will strengthen the "green corridor" of adjacent railway land

Key constraints include -

- a need to respect Conservation Area setting and nearby Listed Venue 28
- connections to Beckenham Road restricted by physical elements and existing access routes
- new residential windows in Bourne House
- noise from adjacent railway requires appropriate design response and specification
- loss of parking for adjacent facilities needs to be quantified
- Network Rail construction exclusion zone restrictions to development at the western edge
- Thames Water sewers crossing the site must be allowed for



Beckenham Car Park Housing

4.0 Design Development

Key objectives of Bromley Council's design brief include:

- optimising the site's potential to provide high-quality, affordable new homes
- improve public realm and enhancement of the adjacent Conservation Area
- development of a design which is sensitive to the site's heritage context and reflective of the character of its location

Design proposals have been developed through four key design stages, in discussion with Bromley Planning officers.

Initial design work was undertaken by AECOM Architecture, resulting in -

1 - initial volume studies

Two options proposed 42 and 46 new homes respectively in chamfered blocks of 7 storeys, while either retaining or re-providing the accommodation of Lewis House.

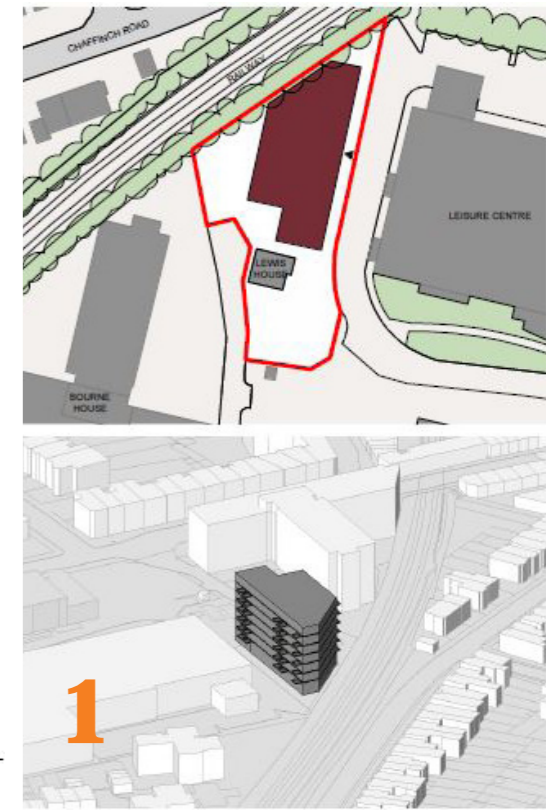
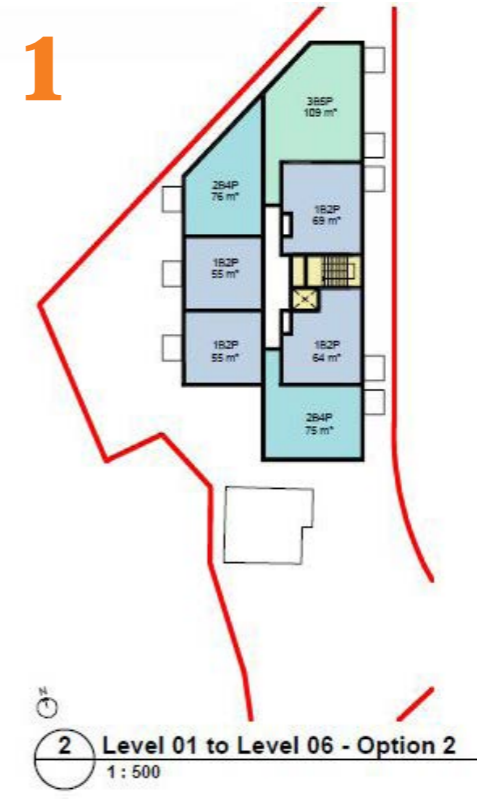
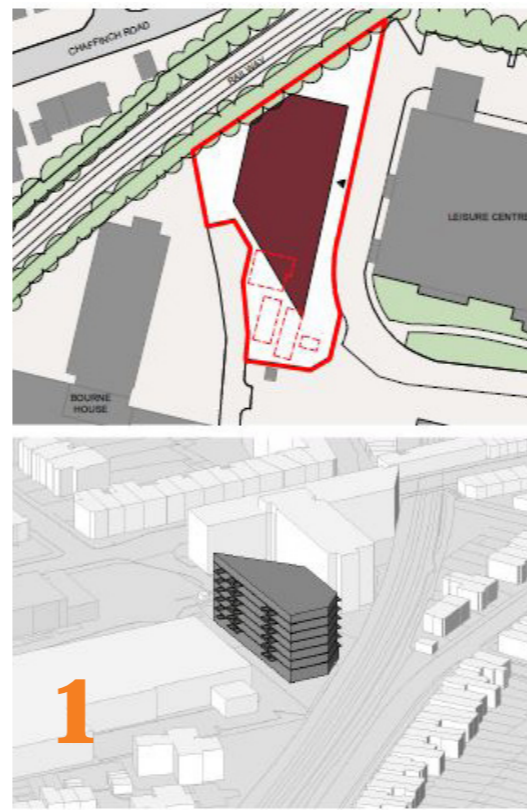
Planning feedback included concerns that these schemes were too dense, and would need scaling back to improve the quality of open spaces around the site.

2 - long block

Following Planning feedback the scheme with 46 homes and re-provided community space was developed further.

The building was re-shaped as a longer and more slender two-core slab block. It was located on the east portion of the site.

Height increased to 8 storeys, to accommodate the required volume in a reduced footprint.



Initial studies: options to replace or retain Lewis House



Long block: building re-shaped to improve surrounding spaces

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4.0 Design Development

During March 2022 Rivington Street Studio were appointed, to build upon AECOM's previous work and further develop the scheme, resulting in -

3 - stepped blocks

A revised design accommodating 41 homes was developed, incorporating new moves to strengthen the ideas in the AECOM scheme and respond more closely to Planning officers' feedback -

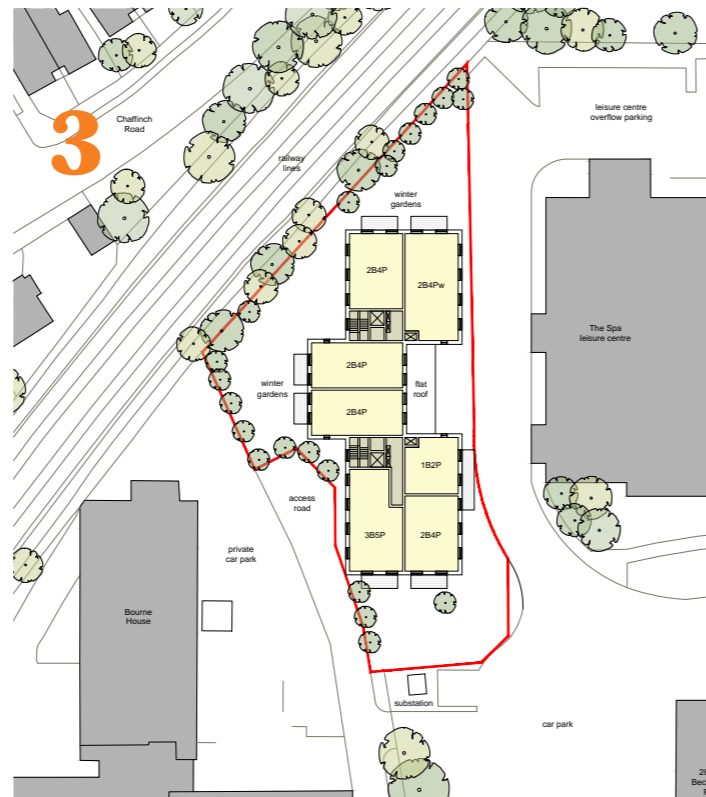
- the slab form was split into three smaller elements, stepping in plan and height, to more vigorously break up the building's apparent scale
- materials and facade design were developed to reinforce massing moves and respond more directly to the site's Heritage setting
- ground level reorganised, with pedestrian and vehicular access points brought together in more generous arrival space on the east side
- greater prominence given to workspace use with triple frontage
- internal reorganisation, with single generous, residential entrance connecting directly through to garden and children's play facilities
- upper floors reorganised to provide double and triple-aspect homes throughout

Planning feedback on the stepped-block scheme included concern at the overall height of the building (8 storeys) and its proximity to the southern boundary.

4 - T-plan

In response a more compact plan form with 40 homes was developed. It was a storey lower and pulled 8m back from the site's southern boundary, reducing visual prominence and providing more generous public space.

A refinement of this scheme, reduced in height and scale including 35 homes was discussed and well received by the LB Bromley planning team in November 2023. Comments and responses to this 3rd pre-application meeting form the current proposal outlined over the following pages.



Stepped blocks: pulled back from southern boundary



T-plan: pulled back from southern boundary



Stepped blocks: scaled down towards the adjacent Conservation Area and Venue 28



Stepped blocks: comfortable fit into the existing skyline

Beckenham Car Park Housing

5.0 Site Layout

The site is organised with the following key elements -

1. **Building position** - as far north on the plot as possible while respecting Network Rail exclusion zone. This pulls the development away from 28 Beckenham Road and maximises area for the public / community garden on the site's south frontage
2. **East approach** - the principal connection to Beckenham Town Centre and adjacent civic facilities, uses existing pedestrian (orange line) and vehicular (green line) links past The Spa. New planting and paving remote from the main site will help show the route into the site
3. **South approach** - shorter, more direct pedestrian link (orange line) to Beckenham Road and Clock House Station, alongside the access drive to Bourne House. New paving will reinforce intuitive wayfinding along this route and give improved, step-free access
4. **Public/ community garden** - positioned at the "front" of the site, at the convergence of approach routes. Linked to the new flexible workspace facility and colonnaded residential access. Open perimeter to blend with and improve the surrounding public realm
5. **Residential entrance** - centralised lobby with generous arrival porch, linking to homes above and residents' garden beyond
6. **Shared garden with children's play** - accessed directly from the residential core, will provide a well-supervised and secure environment for natural play and social interaction
7. **Parking** - vehicles are kept to the site's edges, with parking grouped close to the sites main entrances.
8. **Affordable accommodation** - LB Bromley aims to provide 100% social rent flats within this scheme.



Beckenham Car Park Housing

6.0 Scale and Massing

The massing strategy has continued from the T-plan scheme, and responds by reducing the height proposed building height. This was developed further following the second and third pre-application meetings.

A key driver is to position the building northwards on the site as far as practicable, to minimise its prominence when viewed from within the adjacent Conservation Area.

It's compact T-shaped form follows the site outline, and gives good density and aspect within a small overall footprint.

The northern, western and southern wings of the plan are now set at six storeys, to further reduce prominence when viewed from the surrounding locations.

This is balanced against the need to be a visible and legible part of the street scene perceived from nearby Beckenham Road.

At ground level the new use flexible workspace is pulled forward from the main body of the building - improving its visibility and signifying the importance of the shared / communal uses within the scheme, and linking to the wider urban context.

right: sitting comfortably between Bourne House and The Spa at Beckenham

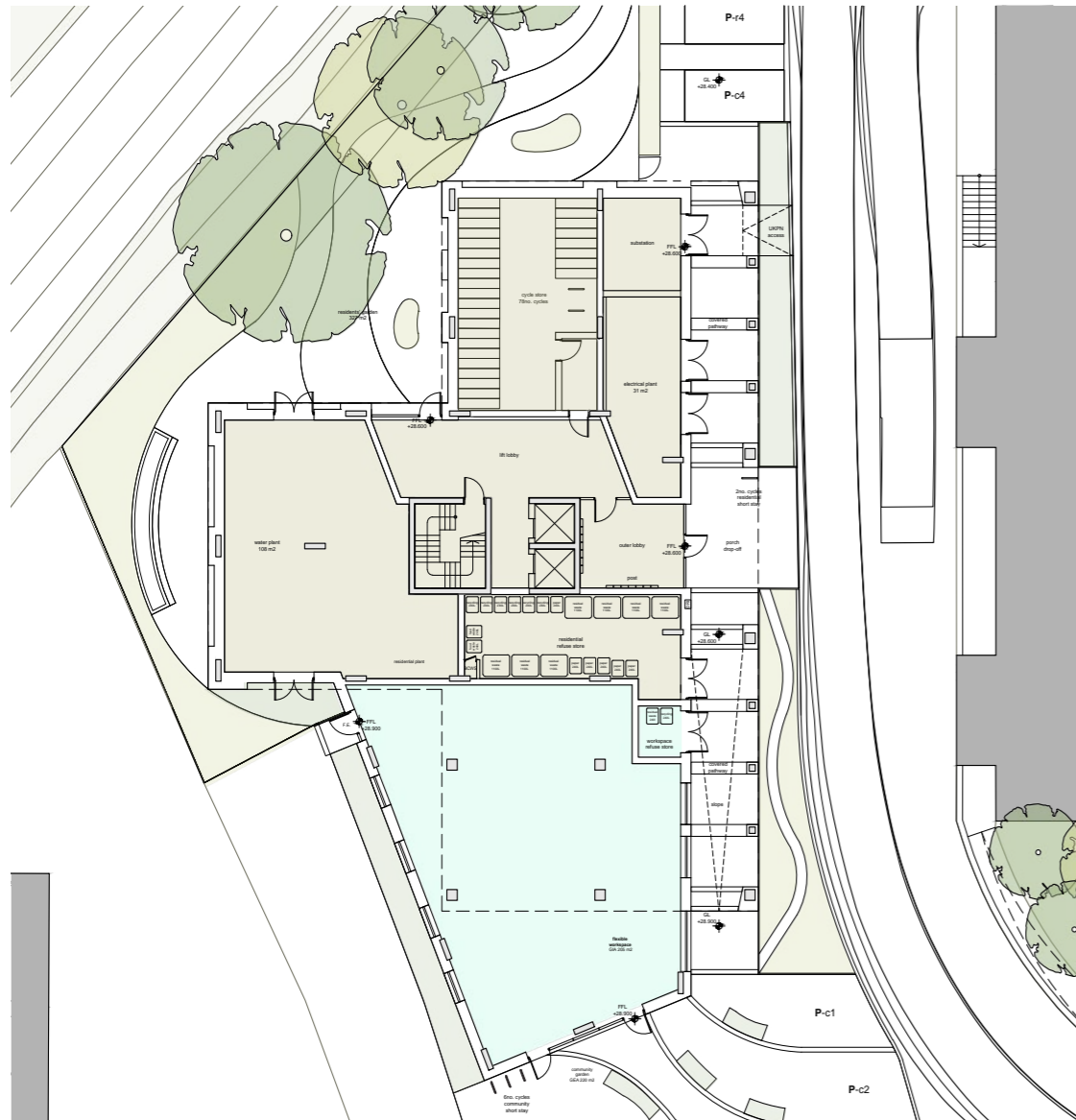


right: the new building will be visible and legible from Beckenham Road



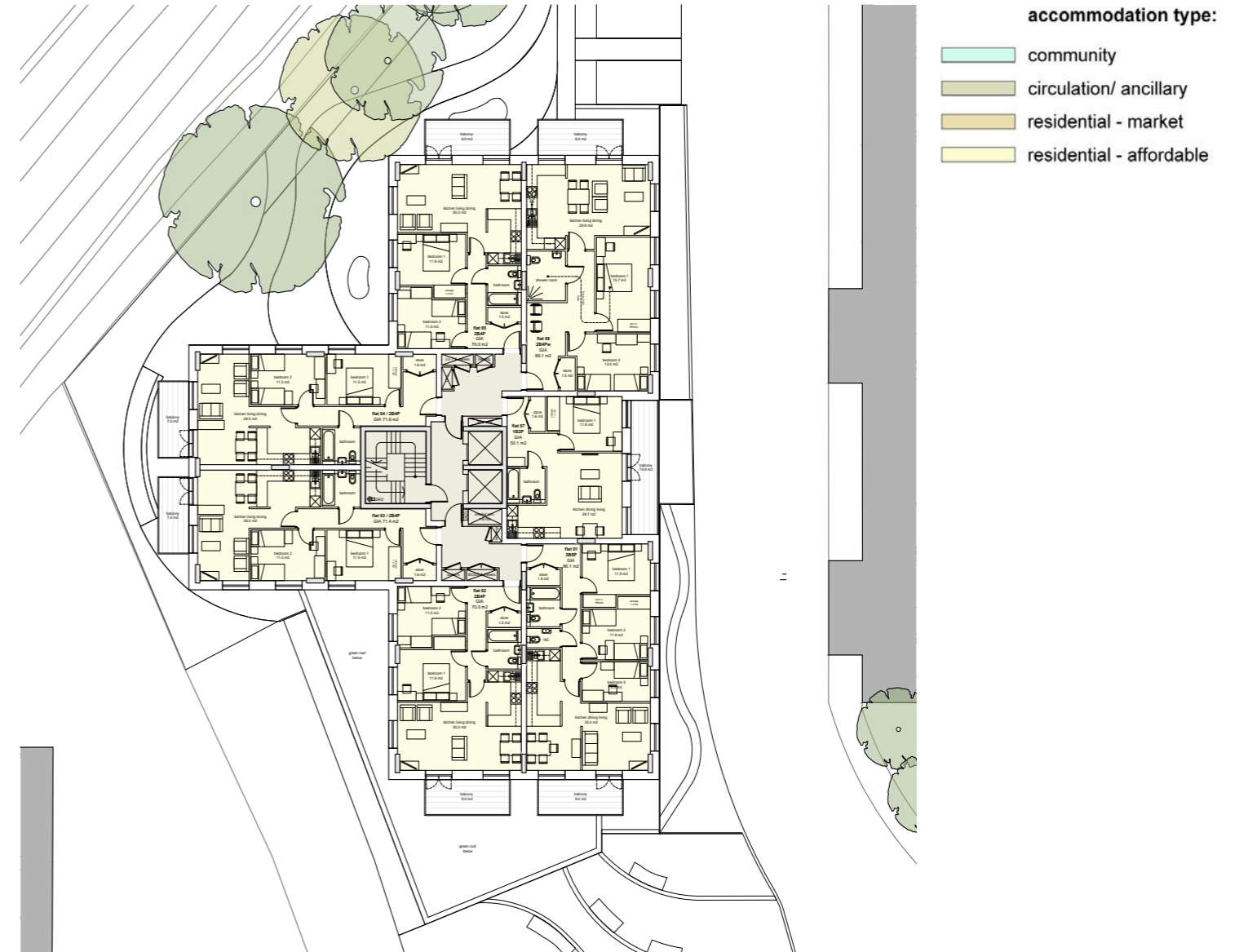
Beckenham Car Park Housing

7.0 Building Layout



Ground floor

- New green fringes and public spaces improve the ground level environment around the building
- New use flexible workspace pops out of the southern end of the plan to emphasise its importance, giving good sightlines on approach to the building
- Southern ground floor unit is surrounded by the public / community garden providing ground level active frontage
- Pedestrian pathway to the east side is sheltered under a slender and elegant colonnade
- A central and generous, residential lobby connects to homes above, and has clear view through to the shared residents' garden at the rear
- Direct, secure access to enclosed residents' garden gives a well-supervised environment for children's play
- Ancillary accommodation, including a secure shared cycle store, refuse and recycling store, and an electrical substation is integrated into the plan
- All layouts have been developed in consultation with Met Police Designing Out Crime Officers, to ensure shared areas are well supervised, feel safe and usable



Upper floors

- Upper levels are organised around a single firefighting circulation core, with twin-lift access to minimise wait times and generous lobby spaces
- The floor plates accommodate seven homes per storey, in a mix of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom types
- the development will provide 35 new homes
- 30 of the 35 will be double aspect, including all homes of two bedrooms or more.
- living spaces are positioned at the building corners to benefit from the best views and daylighting
- 10% of the homes are fully wheelchair-accessible
- All homes have private external balconies or terraces accessed from the home's main living space
- The design provides 100% affordable homes, taking the form of socially rented accommodation throughout.
- All common spaces, facilities and gardens are shared between all residents

Beckenham Car Park Housing

8.0 Context, Appearance & Materials

1. Response to context

The proposed building is intended to be a characterful design with its own integrity, which is of its time, and is appropriate to its use.

However, a key design goal is for the development to fit comfortably into and contribute positively to its surroundings.

It will do this by containing visual echoes of forms, colours and motifs found in other buildings around the site. This will help it harmonise with the existing, unique character of the Clock House area.

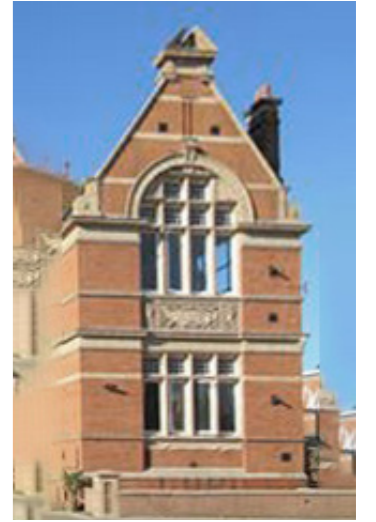
Neighbouring buildings are varied in period, style and size. However there is some consistency of colour, with red brick and terracotta tones appearing frequently.

Particular importance is granted to Venue 28, as it is a Heritage asset, and the proposed development will form part of its setting. Attributes of this building include:

- asymmetrical composition with emphasised projecting blocks at corners
- facings of red brick with buff-coloured moulded terracotta details
- stacked fenestration with tall openings, vertically-proportioned panes and double order to principal windows
- decorative details including string courses and ornamented spandrels

Red brick facings, tall-proportioned window openings and string course detailing also appear in many other buildings in the surrounding Conservation Area.

Memories and echoes of these features appear in the proposed design.



the proposed design echoes materials, proportions and motifs of Venue 28 and other surrounding buildings



Beckenham Car Park Housing

8.0 Context, Appearance & Materials

2. Appearance

The building uses clear simple forms and formal composition, enriched with articulation and patterning in key areas.

Contemporary interpretations of forms, motifs and details derived from surrounding buildings noted during our original site analysis, include:

- a strong composition with emphasised corner blocks
- formally composed facades with stacked fenestration and tall-proportioned openings
- substantial masonry envelope with carefully considered solid-to-void ratio, emphasised with deep-reveal openings and piers
- facades enriched with decorative details including string courses and fenestration surrounds
- double-order windows with decorative spandrels

The interpretation of this has been explored in key areas, as shown in the typical bay study and balcony balustrade detail as shown to the right.

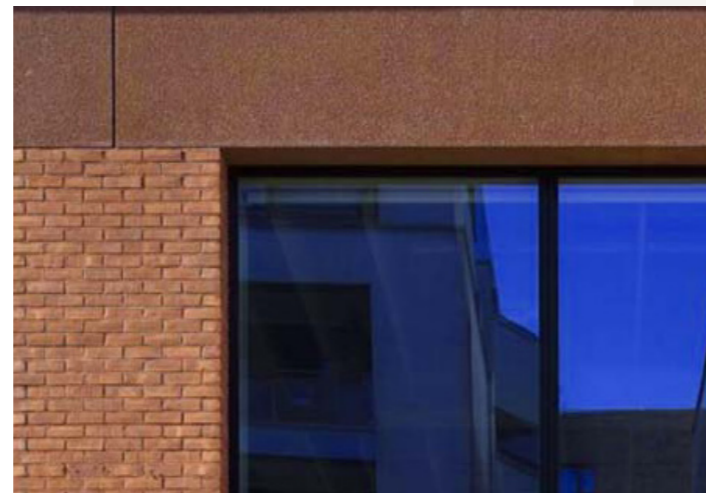
3. Materials

A simple palette of robust “lifetime” materials requiring little or no maintenance is proposed, which will emphasise the building’s key elements and create a coherent colour scheme.

They have been chosen to harmonise with materials and colours found on surrounding buildings:

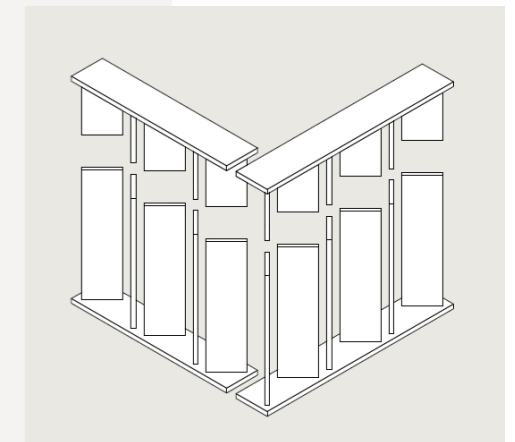
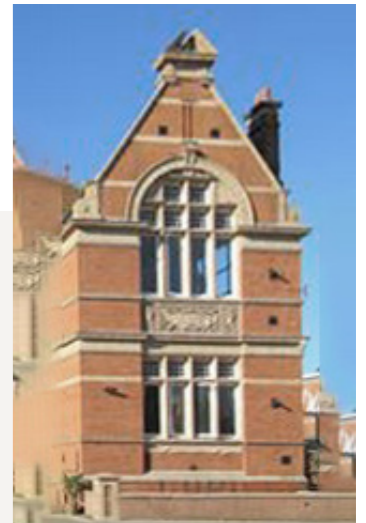
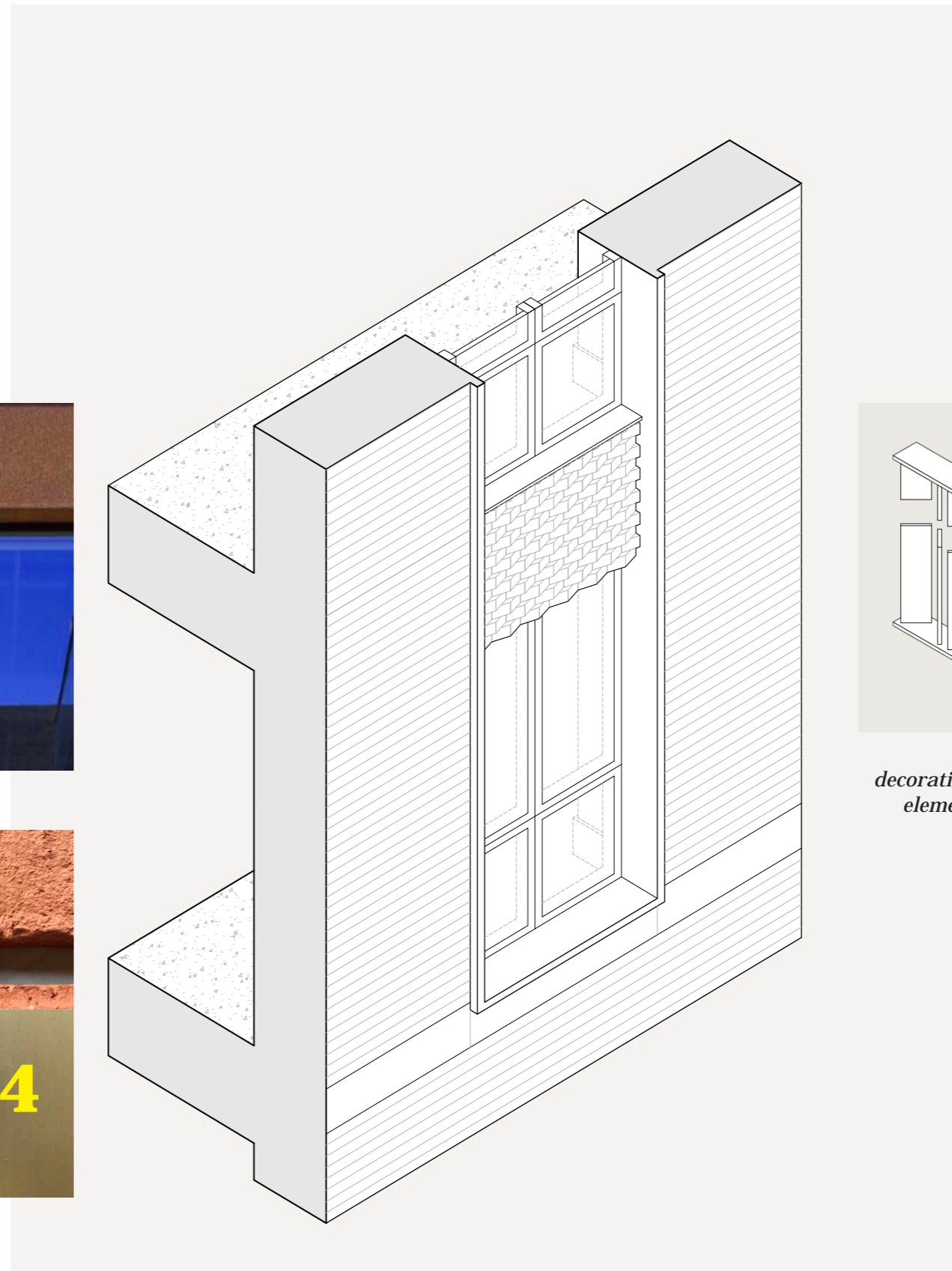
1. walls faced in red brick
2. brown pigmented concrete features
3. brown mortar tonally matched to brick
4. windows and balustrades in pale gold

These materials will weather and age gracefully over time, further helping the building to soften into its surroundings.



warm colour palette is coherent and will harmonise with surrounding buildings

typical bay detail shows how articulation and patterning will be used to enrich the building’s simple forms



decorative balustrading with angled elements will screen balconies for shelter and privacy

Beckenham Car Park Housing

9.0 Landscape, Public & Shared Space

Improving the ground level experience around the site is a key objective of the project, and is being developed by specialists AECOM Landscape Design.

Their design includes these key areas -

1 - public / community garden

The “front” of the site is designed as a small public plaza for people to pass through, meet and interact, with benches, ornamental trees and decorative paving. It will have open edges, and paving and planting will reach out of the site to link into surrounding spaces.



2 - pathway and rain gardens

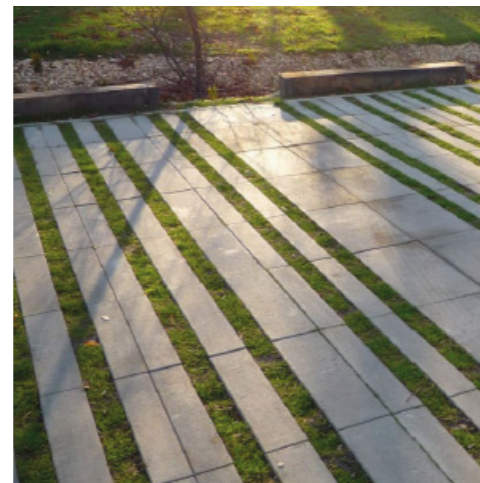
The sheltered pedestrian access to the residential entrance will be lined with rain-garden planting and a meandering walk, natural swales will give the site a soft green fringe and help regulate run-off.



3 - shared residents' garden

Enclosed and accessed from within the building, the residents' garden will provide a well-supervised environment accommodating formal children's play facilities.

A line of retained existing mature trees will be reinforced with a new planted strip, forming a green buffer to this edge of the site.



4 - biodiversity & green roofs

Largely unseen, the building's roofs will play a vital role in boosting biodiversity on a site which is currently largely barren.

They will be planted with intensive green roofs featuring a mix of species to attract birds and pollinators.



Beckenham Car Park Housing

10.0 Quantum & Affordable Housing

The accommodation schedule to the right shows the number of proposed homes, their mix and the 100% affordable scheme tenure.

The ambition of the scheme is to provide 100% affordable homes. The aspiration is to provide these as social rental accommodation to ensure the development assists LB Bromley in meeting the needs of its residents across the borough as a whole.

The housing type mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats is reflective of Bromley Council's design brief, which is in turn based on the Borough's housing waiting list and Housing Department priorities.

1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes and wheelchair accessible/ adaptable homes are evenly spread across the scheme, to reflect both LB Bromley and London Plan housing policy guidelines.

type	min GIA, m2	quantity affordable	quantity market	hab rooms /home	hab rooms total
1B2P	50	5	0	2	10
2B3P	61	0	0	3	0
2B4P	70	20	0	3	60
2B4Pw*	86	4	0	3	12
3B5P	86	6	0	5	30
flexible wrkspce	210				
circ core	na				
plant & stores	na				
total		35	0	-	112

density

site area	1,695 m2 (main site area)
site area	0.17 ha
density	661 hab rooms/ ha
redline area	3,664 m2 (including road & pathway approaches)

mix	%age	number affordable	number market	number total
1-bed homes	14	5	0	5
2-bed homes	69	24	0	24
3-bed homes	17	6	0	6
4-bed+ homes	0	0	0	0
total new homes		35	0	35
including accessible homes		4	0	4

parking

car spaces	4 accessible - residential
	2 accessible - flexible workspace
cycle parking	68 + 2 short stay at flats entrance (requ)