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FOR WALES
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DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Placemaking for an Ageing Population

4 November 2025

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dcfw.org



Placemaking



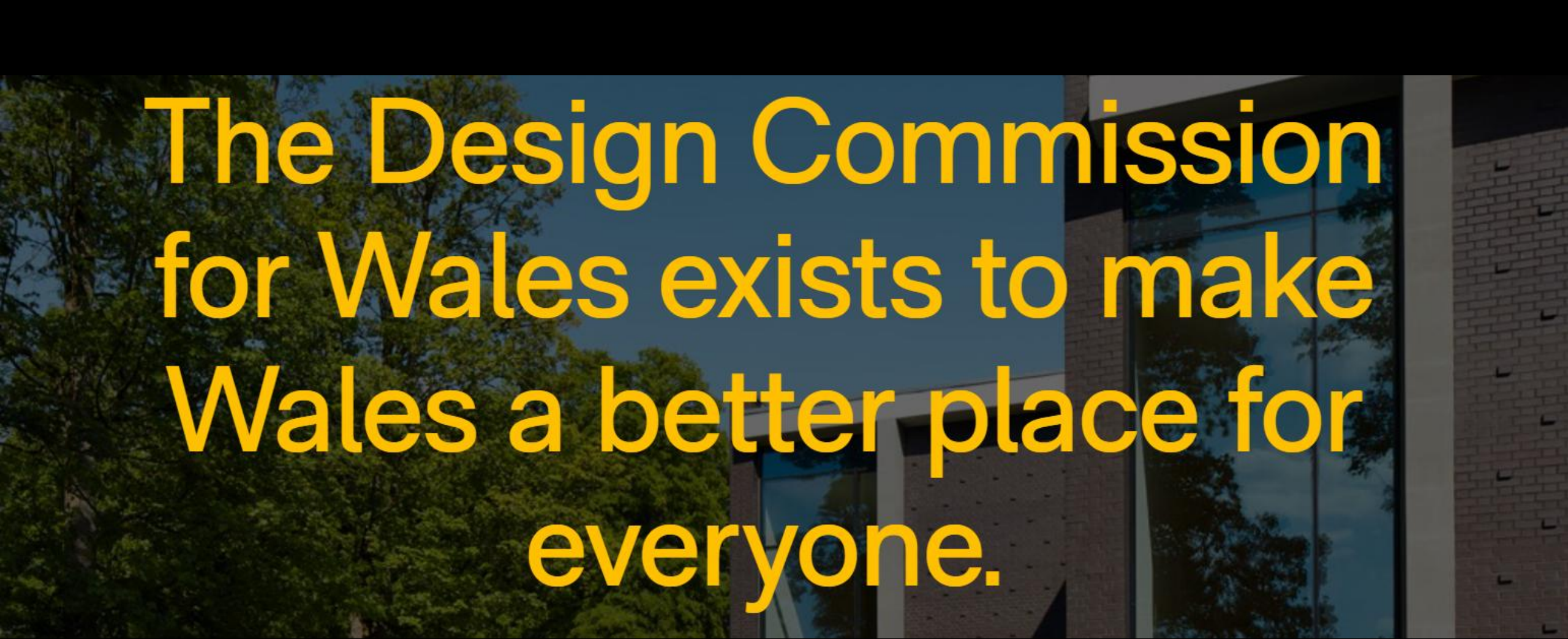






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The Design Commission
for Wales exists to make
Wales a better place for
everyone.

We are the national advisory body for the promotion of design excellence
across the built environment in Wales

Placemaking Charter



Placemaking Wales Charter

The Placemaking Wales Charter has been developed in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership which is made up of stakeholders representing a wide range of interests. The Charter reflects the collective and individual commitment of these organisations to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.

In signing the Placemaking Wales Charter I/my organisation agree to support placemaking in all relevant areas of my/our work and promote the following principles in the planning, design and management of new and existing places:

People and community

The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

Location

Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

Movement

Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

Mix of uses

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.

Public realm

Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

Identity

The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.



Signatories

The following organisations have signed up to the Charter.

Access Design Solutions	Cwmpas	Linc Cymru	Surveyors (RICS)*
AHR Architects	Cymunedoli Cyf	Lovell Partnerships Ltd	Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW)*
Ainsley Gommon Architects	Dallas-Pierce-Quintero	Loyn + Co Architects	Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)*
Amdani	Dandara West Ltd	Mace Group	Saer Architects
Analog Architecture	Design Commission for Wales	Maindee Unlimited	SaveTheHighStreet.org
Arcadis	Dow Jones Architects	Medrwn Mon	Situated Studio Ltd
Arden Kitt Associates Ltd	Down to Earth Project	Melin Homes	SLR
Arup	Edenstone Group	Merthyr Valleys Homes	Spring Design Consultancy Limited
Austin-Smith:Lord	Element Urbanism	MGMA Architects	St. Modwen Developments Ltd
Barton Willmore	Fenton+Reece	Midas Group Ltd	Starki Limited
BDP	First Choice Housing Association Ltd	Miller Research (UK) Ltd	Stiwdio Owens
BE Group	Future Generations	Monmouthshire County Council	Stride Treglown
Benham Architects	Commissioner for Wales' Office*	Mott MacDonald Ltd	Studio Response
Benjamin Hale Architects	Federation of Master Builders (FMB)*	Nash Partnership	Studio Walmsley Architects
Benthyg Cymru	FOR Cardiff	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)*	Sustrans*
Benthyg Penarth	Fraser Strategic Land	National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICfW)*	
Bridgend County Borough Council		Neath Port Talbot Council	

Bron Afon Housing Association	Gaunt Francis Architects	Newport City Homes	Swansea Council
Building with Nature*	George and Co	Newydd Housing Association	Swansea Co-Housing
C2J Architects and Town Planners	Good Homes Alliance	Noel Isherwood Architects	Tir Collective Landscape
Cadw*	GRIMSHAW Architects	Norman Rourke Pryme	Architects
Cadwyn Housing Association	Grŵp Cynefin	One Newport PSB	Tirion Homes
Caerphilly County Borough	Hammond Architectural Ltd	OPEN (Optimised Environments	The Architectural Heritage Fund
Council / Cyngor Bwrdeistref	Heartflood	Ltd)	The Environmental Dimension
Sirol Caerffili	Highlight Planning	Owen Davies Consulting Ltd	Partnership (EDP)
Candleston Homes	HILLS + CO	Oxford Architects	The Means
Cardiff Community Housing	HLN Ltd	Penarth Civic Society	The Open Spaces Society
Association	Holder Mathias Architects	Penarth Living Streets	The Three National Parks of
Cardiff University*	Home Builders Federation (HBF)*	Pentan Architects	Wales
Caredig	Housing Learning and	PER Consulting Ltd	The Urbanists
Carmarthenshire County Council	Improvement Network (LIN)	Persimmon Homes East Wales	Torfaen County Borough Council
CFW Architects	Hughes Architects	Persimmon Homes West Wales	Transport for Wales*
Chamberlain Moss King	Hughes:O'Hanlon Architects	Phil Jones Associates	United Welsh
Architecture	Huw Griffiths Architects	Planning Aid Wales*	Unit3 Design Studio Ltd
Chartered Institute of Housing	IBI Group	Planning Officers Society for	Urban Foundry
(CIH)*	Incremental	Wales (POSW)*	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Chartered Institution of Highways	Institute of Highways Engineers*	Play Wales*	Valleys to Coast
& Transportation (CIHT)*	Institution of Civil Engineers	PLPlanning	Wates Residential

Childs Sulzmann Architects	Jackson Concepts	Ramblers Cymru	Welsh Local Government
Chris Jones	John McCall Architects	Red River Archaeology	Association*
Clwyd Alyn	JPS Civil and Structural Engineers	Redrow Homes Limited	Welsh Government*
Coastal Housing Group	KJG Architects	Rhondda Cynon Taf County	West Coast Arboriculture & Land
Cogitamus Ltd	Knight Architects	Borough Council	Planning Ltd
Commonplace	Landscape Institute (IL)*	Rhondda Housing Association	Wrexham County Borough
Community Housing Cymru	Land Studio Ltd	Richards Moorehead and Laing	Council
(CHC)*	Lawray Architects	Ltd	
Cowbridge with Llanblethian	LDA Consulting Ltd	Ritchie*Studio	*Members of the Placemaking
Town Council	Lichfields	Roberts Limbrick	Wales Partnership
Creu Architecture	Lightwood Planning	Royal Institute of Chartered	

Join us - dcfw.org/placemaking

Placemaking Principles

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RIGHTSIZING Monmouthshire

Units:	4 houses, 4 bungalows
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	GARAGE SITES
Building typology:	COURTYARD BUNGALOW TERRACE
Architect:	Welsh School of Architecture
Developer:	Monmouthshire Housing Association

These two pilot study housing schemes were tailored to the needs of two specific demographics – under 35s 'start ups' and over 55s 'downsizers' – where there was an identified gap in the market in Monmouthshire. The innovative homes were built on redundant garage sites through a collaboration between the Welsh School of Architecture and Monmouthshire Housing Association. The energy efficient one bed mews-style terraces and courtyard bungalows are designed to be repeatable across a variety of sites.



Aerial view before: Start ups



Aerial view after: Start ups

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Creating repeatable house types
- Addressing identified gaps in housing market

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Both the terrace of one-bed houses for under 35 'start ups' and the courtyard bungalows for over 55 'downsizers' are designed as pilot projects for repeatable, scalable house types which could be used across a variety of identified sites. The homes were planned in response to extensive research and consultation which identified how the needs of the two demographic groups could best be met. The 'start up' houses include a mezzanine office area, overlooking a large open plan living and dining room. The 'downsizer' bungalows offer two separate layouts with either one bedroom with a separate kitchen or two bedrooms with an open plan living area depending on household need. There was a desire to create an aspirational house type to encourage older people to downsize and free up larger family homes.

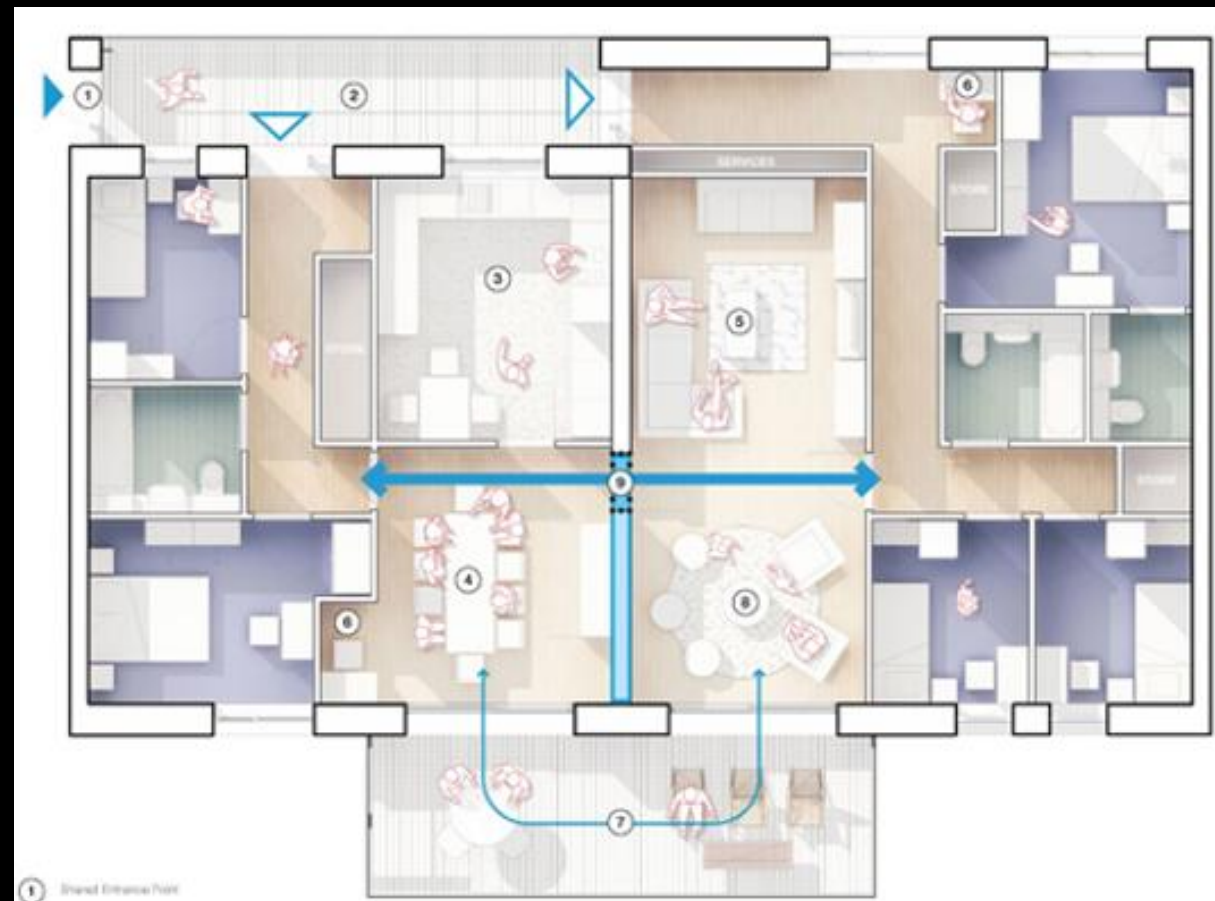
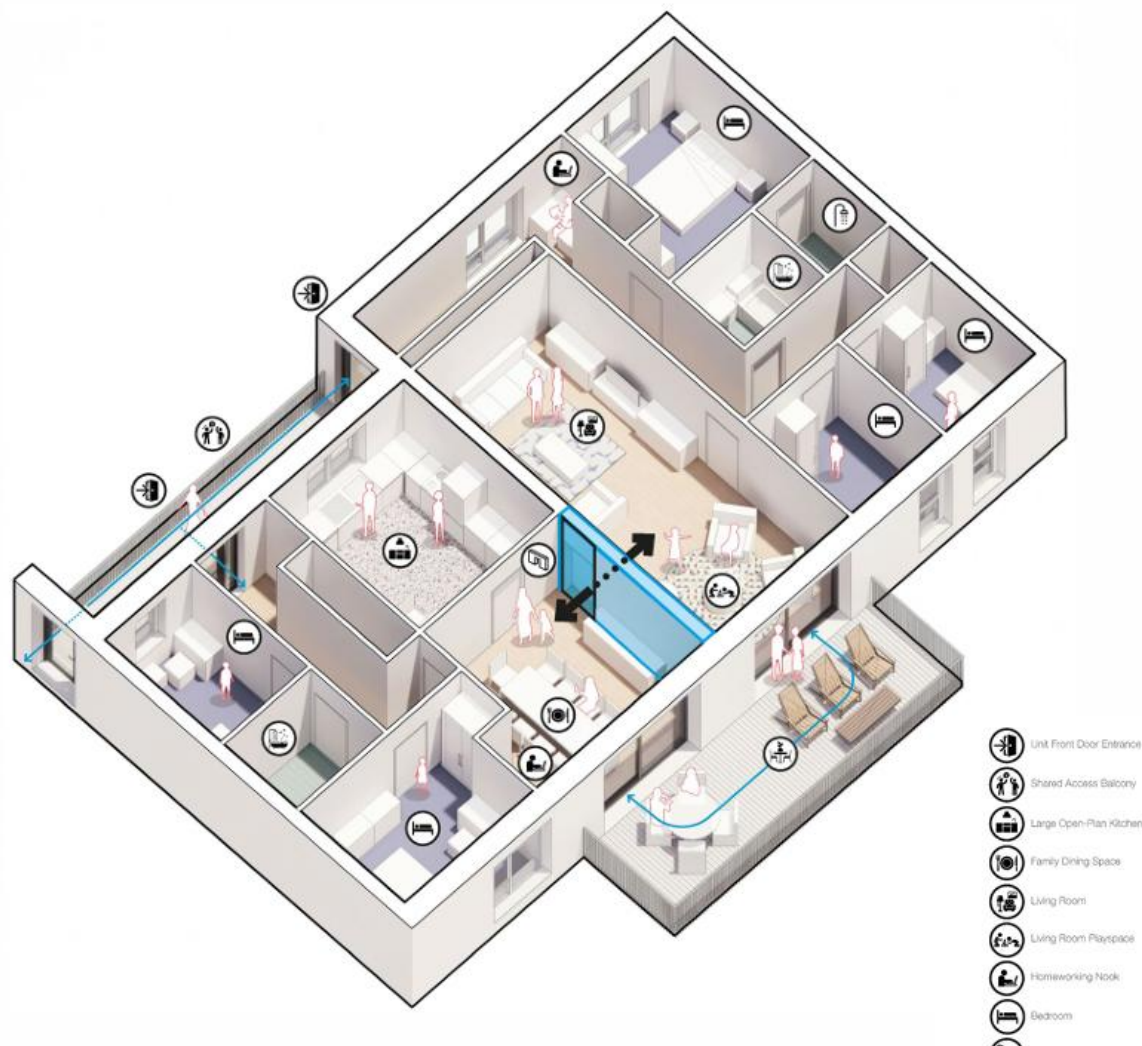
DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The pilot schemes are built on underused garage sites within existing residential areas. Making use of these spaces for new housing contributes to a more vibrant and diverse neighbourhood. Although the units are designed to be repeatable, they are arranged and orientated to address site conditions such as views, sunlight, privacy and surveillance of streets and public spaces



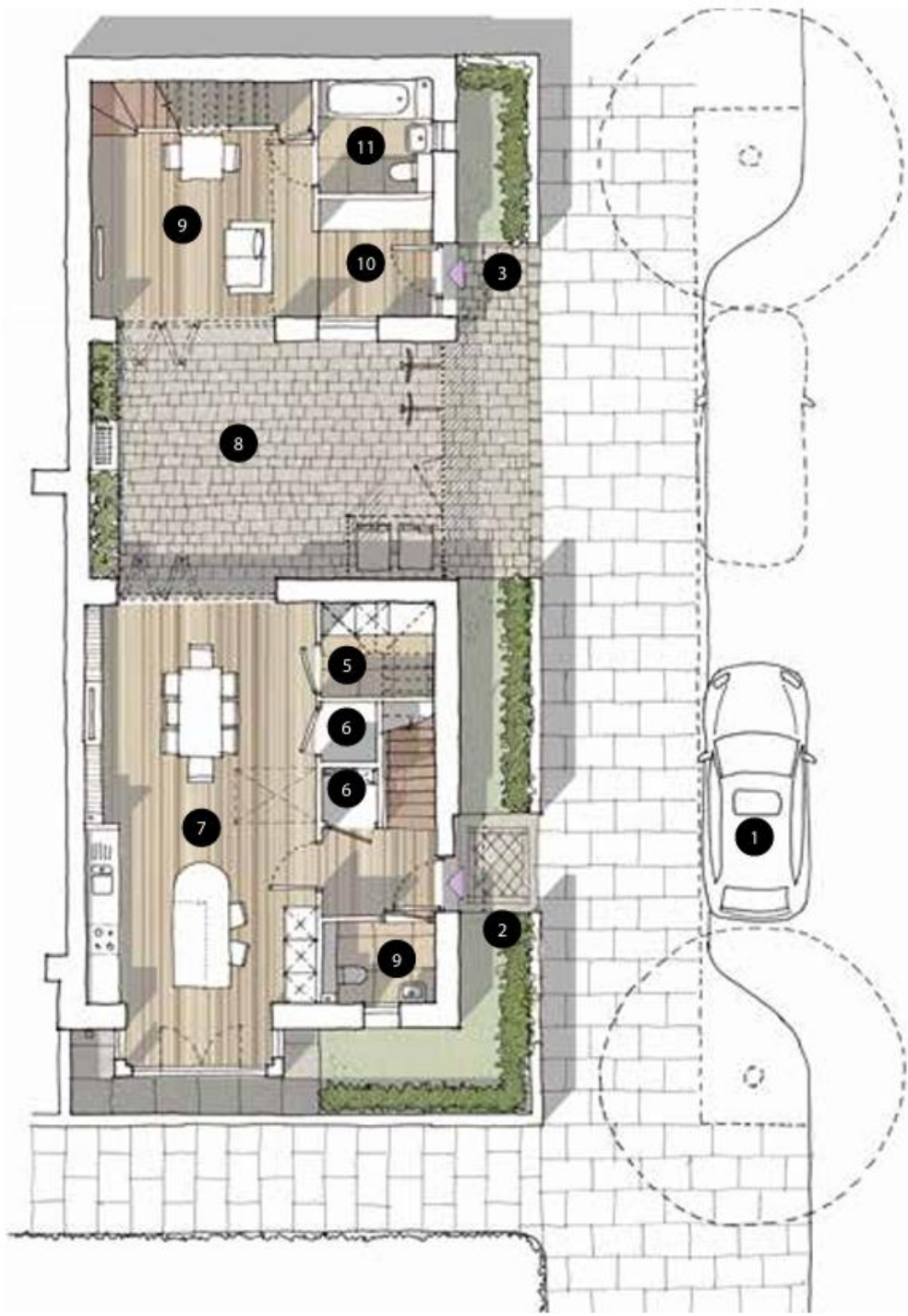
Aerial view before: Downsizers



Aerial view after: Downsizers









Marmalade Lane's housing mix reflects the community it was built for: an intergenerational group, consisting of growing families, singles, couples, and downsizers.



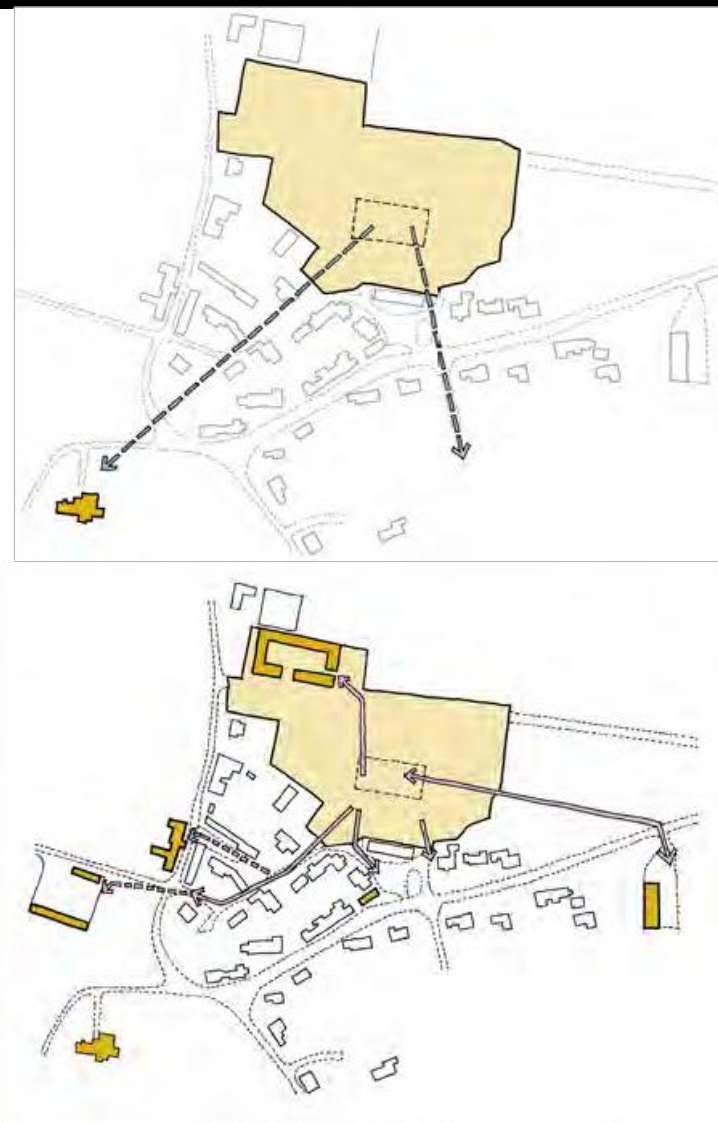
Intergenerational Housing.

Laid out in a series of terraces are houses that range in size from 79m² to 125m², interspersed with a number of 'Tyneside' flats (terraces divided laterally into an upper and lower apartment, each with its own front door to the street). Separately, an apartment building houses ten generously-sized two-bedroom apartments that are accessed via the main door of the common house, and via an external deck access. These benefit from lift access and are designed following HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) principles – making them especially well-suited to older residents.

Placemaking Principles

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Worth Roundabout

Jasper Vincent Solicitors

Manor Court

Roches Chartered Accountants

Agile ICT

Barchester - Florence Court Care Home

TGI Fridays - Fareham
Book Online Now -
Book Your Table Tod...

Segensworth Rd

Manor Ct

Witherbed Ln

Wither

Premier Inn
Fareham hotel
4.1 (806)

Image Source: Google Maps





Image Source: Cardiff Council

HARVEY GARDENS Greenwich, London

Units:	4 houses, 6 apartments, community day room
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	GARAGE SITE
Building typology:	MEWS/COURTYARD
Architect:	Peter Barber Architects
Developer:	Greenwich Council

This infill development provides four houses, six apartments and a shared community day room for over 60s on a compact garage site next to a railway in Greenwich.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Maximising small constrained site
- Meeting the social and physical needs of over 60s

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Previously the site of garages for the adjacent housing development, this constrained site has been thoughtfully planned to maximise the number of units without compromising on quality and delight. The scheme is extremely dense in comparison to the neighbouring housing, yet each home benefits from its own outdoor space in the form of a courtyard garden or roof terrace. The housing is designed specifically for the over 60s. Three of the homes are wheelchair accessible, and all residents share the use of a community day room. Each home has its own front door facing onto the small, leafy mews street to encourage social interaction amongst neighbours. These details support the physical and social needs of the target demographic who often experience loneliness.



DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The bespoke designs for each home, the pale red brick used throughout the scheme and the careful positioning of windows, doors and gardens creates a joyful and vibrant place to live. Residents have planted their individual garden spaces, creating a sense of identity and belonging.



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Arterial approach to historic market town 'upgraded' and funded by developer contributions on either side of the road.



Same street designed as a public space with higher density mixed-use frontage development and accommodating other modes of transport.









Image Source: Mikhail Riches



Placemaking Principles

Mix of uses

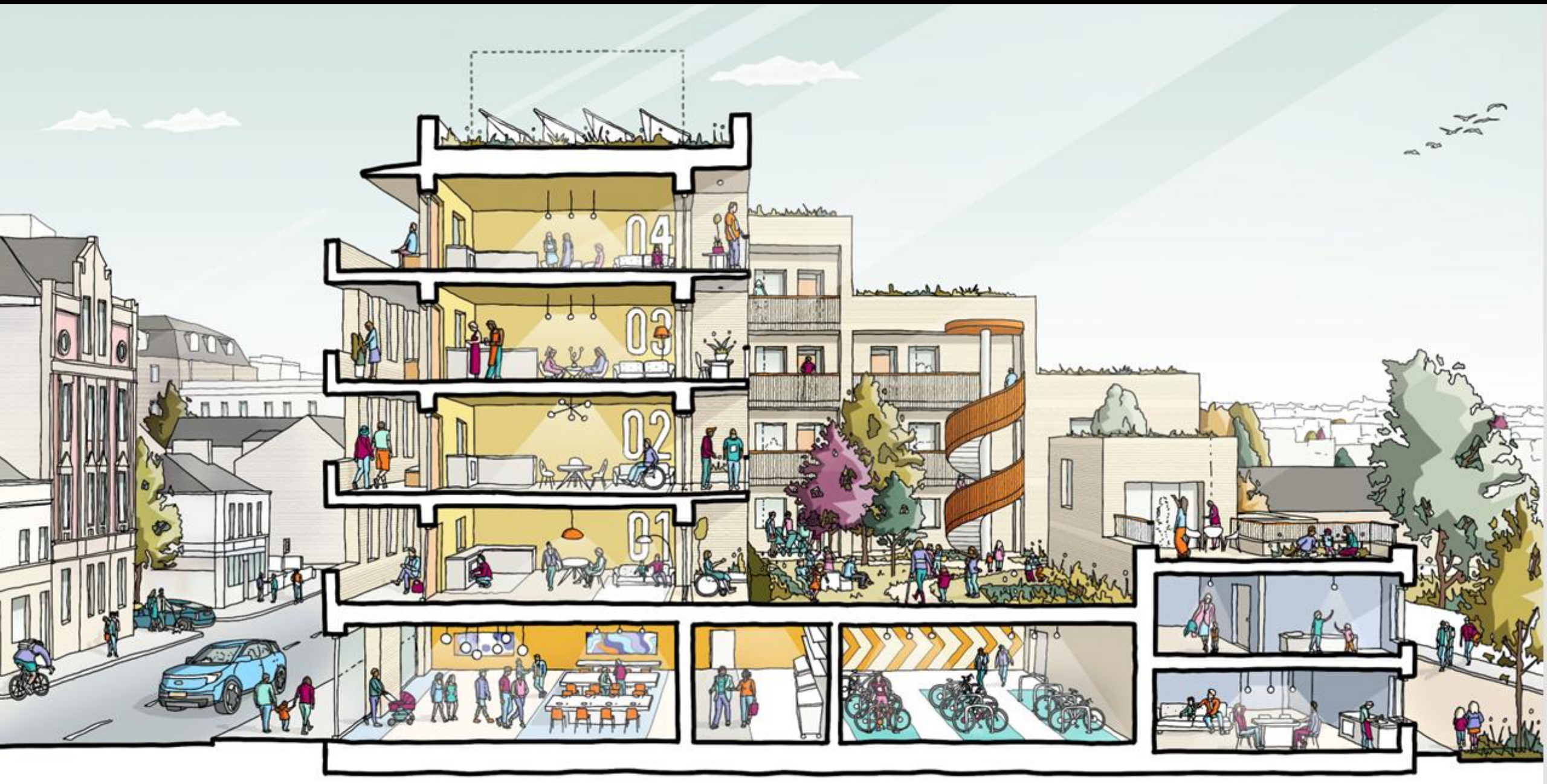
Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.



**Mix of uses = greater social
connections = greater wellbeing**









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Distinct



A distinct environment includes features that are unambiguous, varied, and interesting. People living with dementia rely on distinctive spaces and landmarks as visual cues for wayfinding.

Familiar



Familiar environments help people living with dementia recognize where they are and find where they want to go by designing features that people have seen before and can easily recognize. Familiar neighbourhoods support independence and wayfinding.



Image Source: Places for Life, DCFW



Who are these homes designed for?

How does it meet their needs?

Is this an efficient use of land?

Is it distinctive?



Enclosed the space

Narrower road

Courtyard with
parking

Space for residents

SuDS pond integrated

More homes



Original

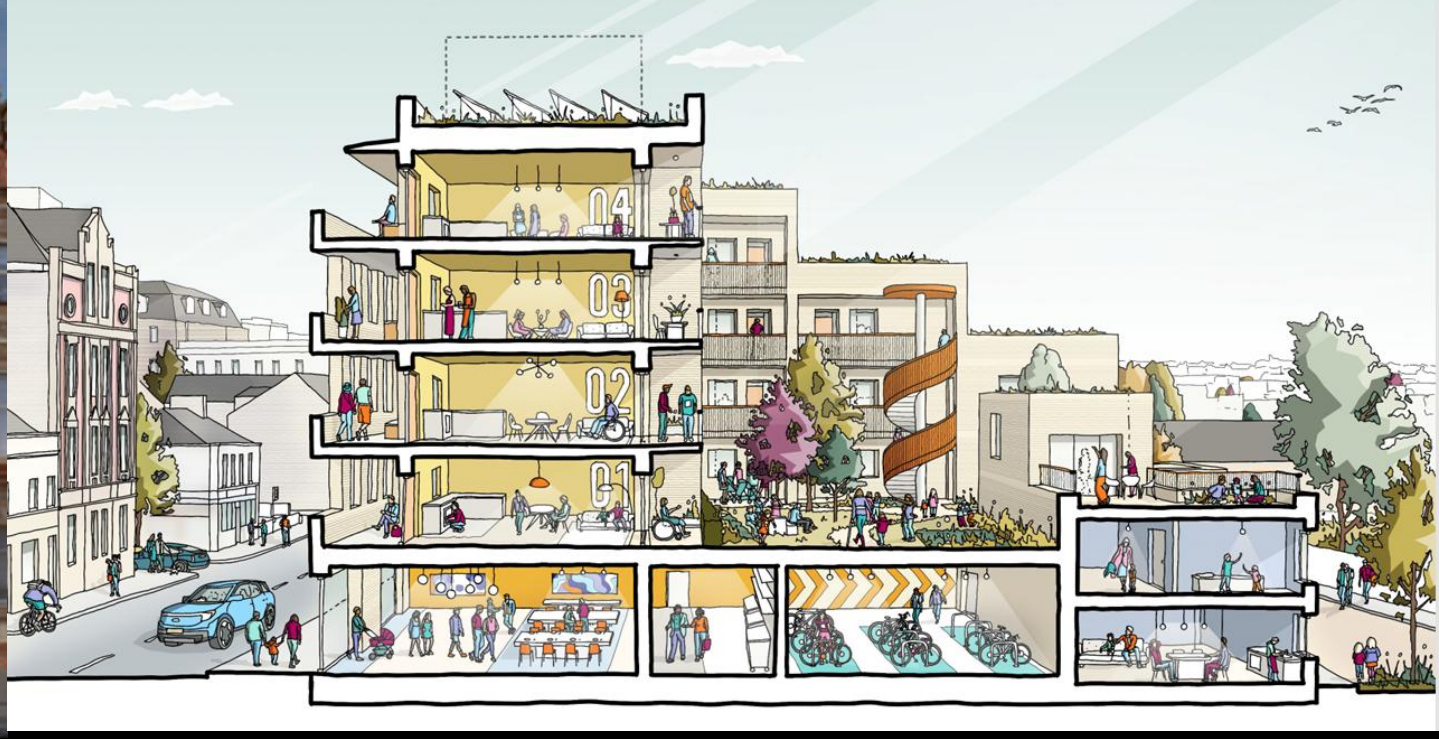


Revised



Every flat should be designed to provide high quality homes for the people living there.

The development should be designed to meet the particular needs of the older people who will be living there.



Create spaces within the building to encourage social interaction.

Opportunity to create a socially mixed community with mix of families and older people.

Potential for conflict needs understanding and careful design.



Avoid north-facing dwellings.

Focus on the quality of the indoor spaces that are being created.

Optimise daylight and wellbeing in the orientation and façade design.

How we can support you

Client Support

Design Review

Training

Resources

How to engage with us

Visit dcfw.org

Sign up to the Placemaking Charter

Subscribe to our newsletter

Follow us on LinkedIn

E-mail me at max.hampton@dcfw.org

Q&A

What are your key reflections?

Any questions about signing up to the Placemaking Charter?

How are you already taking a placemaking approach?

How else could you embrace placemaking?

How can DCFW best support you?

Any other questions?