

# HILLSIDE PARK

## LOCATION & SITE CONTEXT



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### SITE CONTEXT

Hillside Park is a disused, brownfield sub-urban site that is located in Shinfield. It is owned by Wokingham Borough Council and lies between the rear gardens of St Barnabas Road and Westlands Avenue. The space was previously the location for eight static mobile units, which were used by the council as emergency accommodation. These units were removed from the site approximately three years ago and since this time the area has been vacant.

Given a combination of factors: the proximity of the site to local shops, facilities and public transport links, the local context of residential area and the relevant planning policy covering the area, it was decided that the space lends itself to residential use. This coincided with the interest from the public in terms of use for a mix of residential accommodation units encompassing learning disability flats and bungalows for the elderly.

The site is relatively flat, long and thin in nature, covering an area of approximately 0.32 hectares. There is an existing tarmac access road leading from Westlands Avenue that runs along the east boundary of the site. The space benefits from various existing services, including lampposts, both electricity and water supplies, foul and also surface water drainage. From the outset it was clear that the shape & physical constraints of the site would present difficulties and challenges in terms of layout.

### SITE LAYOUT & DESIGN

The Local Authority undertook an initial feasibility study into the development of Hillside Park. The study considered that the proximity of any new development to the existing houses on St Barnabas Road was critical, and this would form the basis for determining the developable space within the overall site boundaries. Reference was made to the guidance set out in the Wokingham Borough Council Residential Design Guide and the minimum separation distances for properties of two-storeys. This resulted in the decision to maintain the access road in the same position, terminating the road however, before the end of the site in order to maximise the soft landscaping to suit the generally spacious and landscaped character of the area.

The access road is to be widened to 4.8m for the first ten metres from the point of entry on Westlands Avenue, at the end of this widened access road, space for an inclusive, 2m wide footpath would be inserted to the south boundary. The additional width would be achieved by utilising the strip of land and part of the rear garden to the flats at numbers 20 & 21 Wavel Close. Once within the site, the footpaths and road are to be 'inclusive spaces' and not delineated with traditional kerbs and drops. This minimises the amount of hard landscaping whilst also appearing both visually more pleasing and negates any issues with levels and accessibility.

The parking is broken up into two distinct spaces, the main provision towards the centre of the site and a smaller area with two spaces separating the north and south learning disability flats. The main car parking area is positioned where the site is tightest in terms of proximity to the adjacent housing to the east, thus removing any built form and maintaining the open feel at the most constrained part of the site. Car parking numbers are calculated in line with the highways and planning parameters and can be kept to a relatively low level due to the user group of the flats who are not anticipated to run vehicles. This results in a smaller area of parking and thus minimising hard surfacing and maximising space for soft landscaping. The main car parking area is designed to allow for two disabled sized bays and is large enough to accommodate the manoeuvres of a refuse vehicle. The smaller area of parking has two spaces, both disabled sized parking bays, which are adjacent to the staff unit for ease of access and a route for emergency vehicles.

The position of the buildings within the site was determined by the desire to create lively, animated facades fronting on to the access road and paved areas, with the principle elevations and entrances. Wherever possible, each elevation has a window or interest, creating a vibrancy and dynamism around the perimeter of the buildings, with no distinct, front, rear or side elevations. The positioning of the flats also enabled the creation of two communal courtyard spaces to the learning disability flats, one with morning sun, the other with evening sun and both visible from the staff unit.

Volumetrically the mass on site is broken up through a number of different means: by the overall layout of the individual units, manipulating the roofscape and through the selection of wall material. The individual flats are designed as long thin units that enable the roof structure and thus the overall height of the buildings to be kept to a minimum. Each flat has a slate pitched roof which is more residential in feel, with the communal spaces utilising a low level flat metal roof to break up the roof lines of the blocks and provide interest whilst also minimising overall massing. The materials for the walls of the communal spaces are lightweight, ostensibly fully glazed spaces to break up the overall feel of the blocks in elevation.

The bungalows are designed as semi-detached units, however the roofline and overall plan is used to break up the volumes and create interest. The bungalows front on to the access road with small areas of front garden between the units and the road to soften the space and maintain the overall sub-urban character of the area.

### TREES

As there are a number of trees, particularly on the boundaries on the site, Wokingham Borough Council undertook an arboricultural survey that details the type, condition and implications for the design of the existing trees.

The trees to the south of the site are predominantly coppice Willow stools underplanted with Cotoneaster, a single Wild Cherry Tree and with several adventurous Ash and Sycamore having grown within this area. It is proposed that the Ash and Sycamore are removed as they are close to the boundaries and would, in time, cause damage to these structures. The area will be cleared with new planting, including trees following completion of the construction work.

The report found that the majority of the off-site trees are small specimens that have a limited impact on re-development of the site. The trees to the west boundary at the southern end of the site consist of a mixture of on and off site trees. There is a group of Lawson Cypress with a Silver Birch and an Ash tree that sits amongst the predominating Horse Chestnuts.

The Horse Chestnuts are planted in very close proximity to each other and the Ash, all having been pollarded in the past; however the arboriculturalist found that the pollard points are decaying and thus the trees would need to be re-pollarded to prevent the trees falling. The Horse Chestnut trees are also heavily infested with Caneraria (Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner), which disguises the appearance and causes the trees to drop their leaves early in the year. There are also signs of Pseudomonas syringae (bacterial canker) infection. The report found that a managed pollard cycle should be introduced to prevent failure of the trees although it is anticipated that due to the infection and infestation the health of the tree group will decline over time.

### LAND CONTAMINATION

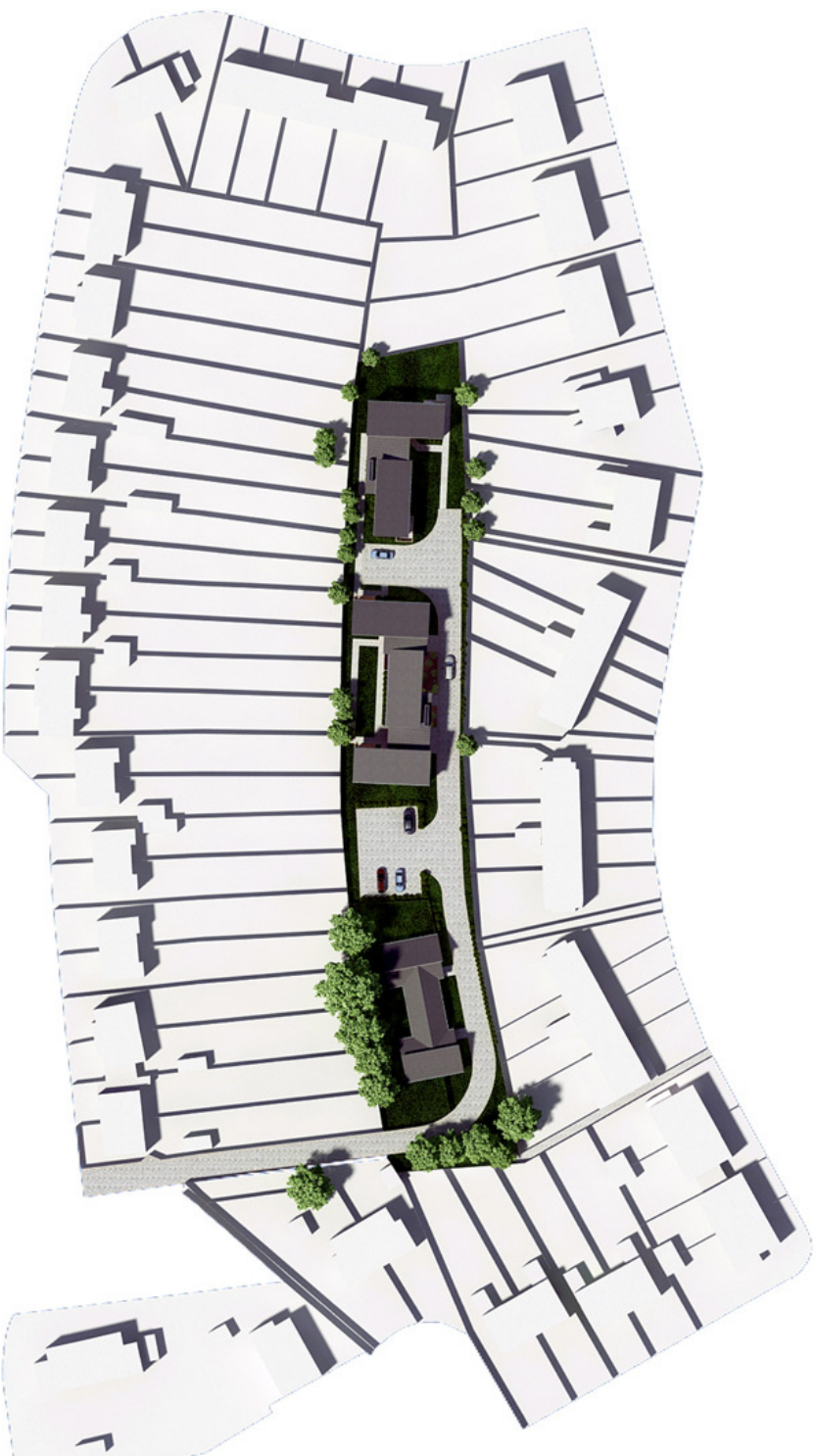
As the site is a brownfield area, previously used as accommodation, it is anticipated that a contamination report will be required as part of the detailed planning process and therefore it is anticipated that this will form one of the conditions of any application decision notice.

# HILLSIDE PARK

## SITE PLAN & SITE ELEVATION



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Site plan & elevations



# HILLSIDE PARK BRIEF



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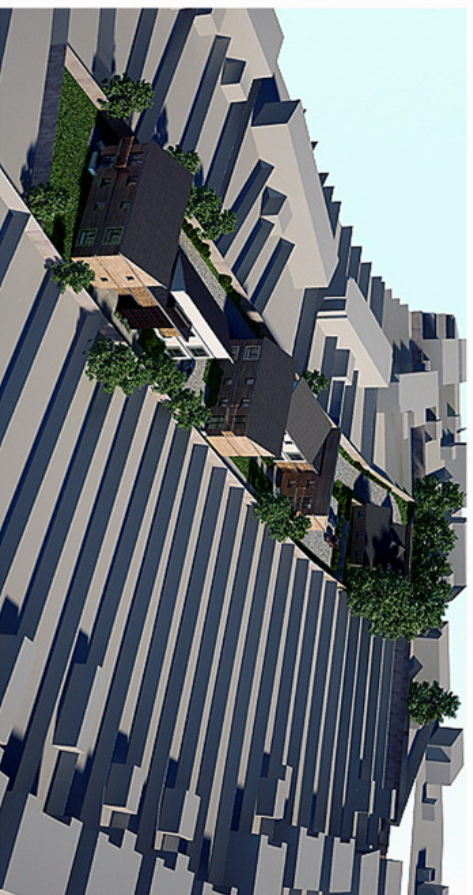
## BRIEF

The local community had highlighted a need for both bungalows that are suitable for older people and also the provision of more Extra Care housing for those with learning disability. The two types of housing provide a complementary mix for this quiet cul-de-sac site. Mixing the bungalows amongst the cluster of nine units for the learning disability group and within an established residential area assists with integrating the learning disability user group into the community, whilst also providing much needed single storey accommodation for the elderly in the area.

**The scheme aims to provide better health for all and support for vulnerable people.** Supported housing provides accommodation where adults with Learning Disability can receive the care and support needed to meet their individually assessed needs. For many people it can be a real alternative to traditional residential care, or to living with their parents or other carers. It allows residents to live their lives as independently as possible and supports their aspiration to lead fulfilling lives within their local community and to develop a range of activities and friendships.

In most cases, Supported Housing offers an enhanced lifestyle for residents and their families when compared to the traditional residential care model that is more costly to run and is not seen as favourable or preferred. **Feedback from the learning disability community highlighted that self-contained, one-bedroom flat type housing is exactly what many people are seeking and would enable people to enjoy maximum independence.**

There is currently a shortage of suitable supported accommodation in the Wokingham area. It is also anticipated that the overall requirement for Learning Disability accommodation is expected to rise as life expectancy amongst this group is increasing at a significantly faster rate than for the general population.



**Site Plan**  
**Aerial View**  
as seen from the north-west



**Site Plan**  
**Aerial View**  
as seen from the south-east

One of the key parameters for both the bungalows and flats was to create a 'home for life'. Accessibility was therefore paramount and Hillside Park enables all of the residents to have equal access. **The buildings are designed to accommodate the aging population and be flexible to adapt to their changing needs.** The learning disability accommodation is designed to allow for the future installation of platform lifts within the circulation spaces, so that should accessibility become an issue, a resident can remain in their own house and not make the often difficult transition to a new home. All of the properties are designed to allow for sufficient space for wheelchair access and hoists and achieving the criteria set out in the **Lifetimes Homes Standards.**

The brief for the scheme therefore developed with provision for nine learning disability flats forming a single 'cluster'. Also provided is a one-bedroom flat forming meeting accommodation and provision for on-site staff support around the clock. This unit has also been designed to be easily adapted to form a further learning disability flat if the need arose in the future. The flats are designed as two-storey accommodation thus maximising the potential footprint of the site, maintaining the external amenity space as shared space for residents.

The brief for the bungalows was to provide spacious semi-detached accommodation. Each house is afforded their own individual front and rear private gardens, two double sized bedrooms, living accommodation and plenty of storage space for those that are downsizing.

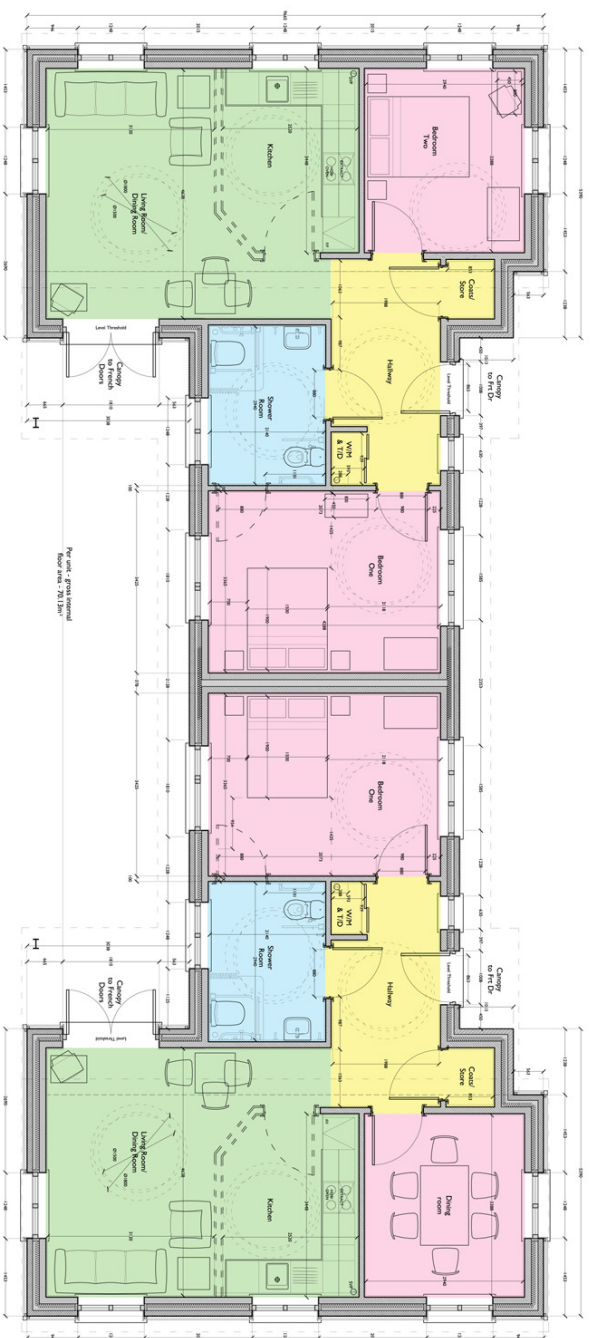
**The scheme aims to provide an excellent example of innovative design, quality and sustainability which offers a safe and secure environment which is flexible to meet the future needs and requirements of residents.**

# HILLSIDE PARK BUNGALOW ACCOMMODATION



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Bungalow Accommodation  
Ground Floor Plan



# HILLSIDE PARK DESIGN STANDARDS



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## DESIGN STANDARDS

Forming part of the brief and alongside the various planning policy and legislation such as the building regulations, the scheme has been designed to take into account various standards that are used as parameters for the design development and assessment of the scheme. These cover a range of areas from design and security to space requirements, ecological performance and accessibility.

### CODE FOR SUSTAINABLE HOMES

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to reducing the impact of development, cutting carbon emissions, tackling climate change and fuel poverty and promoting sustainable and energy efficient buildings. The Code for Sustainable Homes provides an assessment that provides a standard for the key elements of design and construction that affect the sustainability of a new home. It is described as a means of driving continuous improvement, greater innovation and exemplary achievement in sustainable house building.

As part of the brief, the development at Hillside Park will achieve a minimum Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, this means that Hillside Park will form a building with outstanding ecological and sustainable credentials. The dwellings have been designed with high levels of insulation to minimise heat loss from the building fabric. Highly efficient lighting and white goods, combined with more passive measures such as building orientation and window size to maximise daylight will all work together to minimise energy consumption. The buildings are to be fitted with efficient heating systems that will be linked to renewable solar energy production from cells set within the roof. The learning disability flats will use centrally situated localised combined heat and power units to minimise energy consumption.

Water consumption will be kept to a minimum, using restricted flow, aerated fittings with water conserved through either a system of grey water recycling or more simplistic water butts. Provision for on-site composting and household refuse recycling are to be incorporated into the design with the overall landscaping design to enhance and protect the ecological features of the site.

It is envisaged that the materials will be sourced responsibly from sustainable sources and will be assessed on the basis of low embodied energy production. During construction materials will be monitored, streamed and recycled as part of various measures used to reduce the impact of construction. The Contractor will be required to be a member of the Considerate Contractor Scheme and as such will need to provide a service that is considerate, responsible, accountable, safe and clean.



### LIFETIME HOMES

Lifetime Homes sets out 16 criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. The scheme at Hillside Park has been designed to meet these criteria and incorporates key features such as accessible parking bays, level access in and around the site including level thresholds to all doors. Rooms, particularly bathrooms and corridors have been designed with sufficient space for those using mobility aids, bathrooms can be adapted to suit the mobility needs of the resident with walls suitable for grab rail installation. Knock out panels are designed to allow for direct access from the bedroom to the bathroom and the ceiling is designed so future hoists can be installed if required assisting mobility. Throughout the scheme the door widths are wider than standard to allow for wheelchair access, even at first floor level.

The staircases to the flats have been designed to have a shallower, gentle pitch, with wider treads and handrails to both sides, this forms "easy-going" staircases which incorporate landing spaces at intermediate levels. Both the main staircases to the south and north blocks of learning disability flats have been designed with space provision for the future installation of a platform lift should this be required to enable residents to remain within their home for life. Controls to windows, light switches and power sockets are all designed to be at a height suitable for use by any occupant of the building regardless of mobility. Windows to the bedrooms and living room areas are designed with low sill levels to ensure a view for those at sitting height.

Wokingham Borough Council are pleased to be providing housing with full disability access, so that all residents will have equal access.



### SECURE BY DESIGN

Secured by Design focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products. As part of the design process, the scheme is discussed with the local Crime Prevention Design Advisor and comments taken on board regarding the layout of the scheme in terms of roads, footpaths, routes through the site and seating. Also considered are the use of boundaries and gates, aesthetic barriers such as planting through to the design of entrances, lighting and down to the finer details such as the selection of the windows, doors and the locking mechanisms provided. The scheme at Hillside Park has been designed to provide well-designed safe spaces, with natural surveillance from the dwellings that are able to reduce and prevent crime.

### Site View

Showing the retirement bungalows as seen from the centre of the site.

### Site View

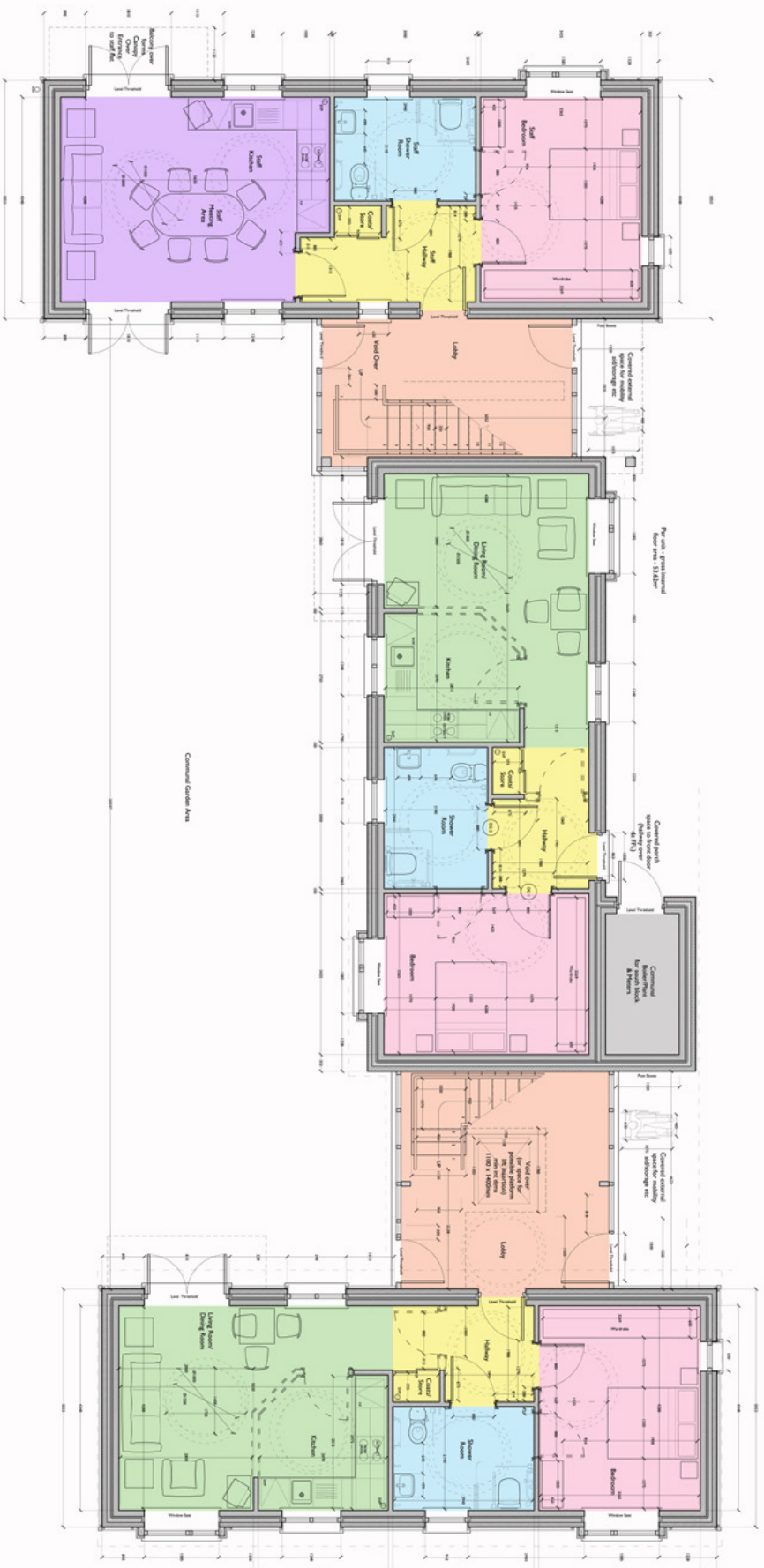
as seen from the south-east looking towards down the access road with bungalows in teh foreground

# HILLSIDE PARK

## LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION



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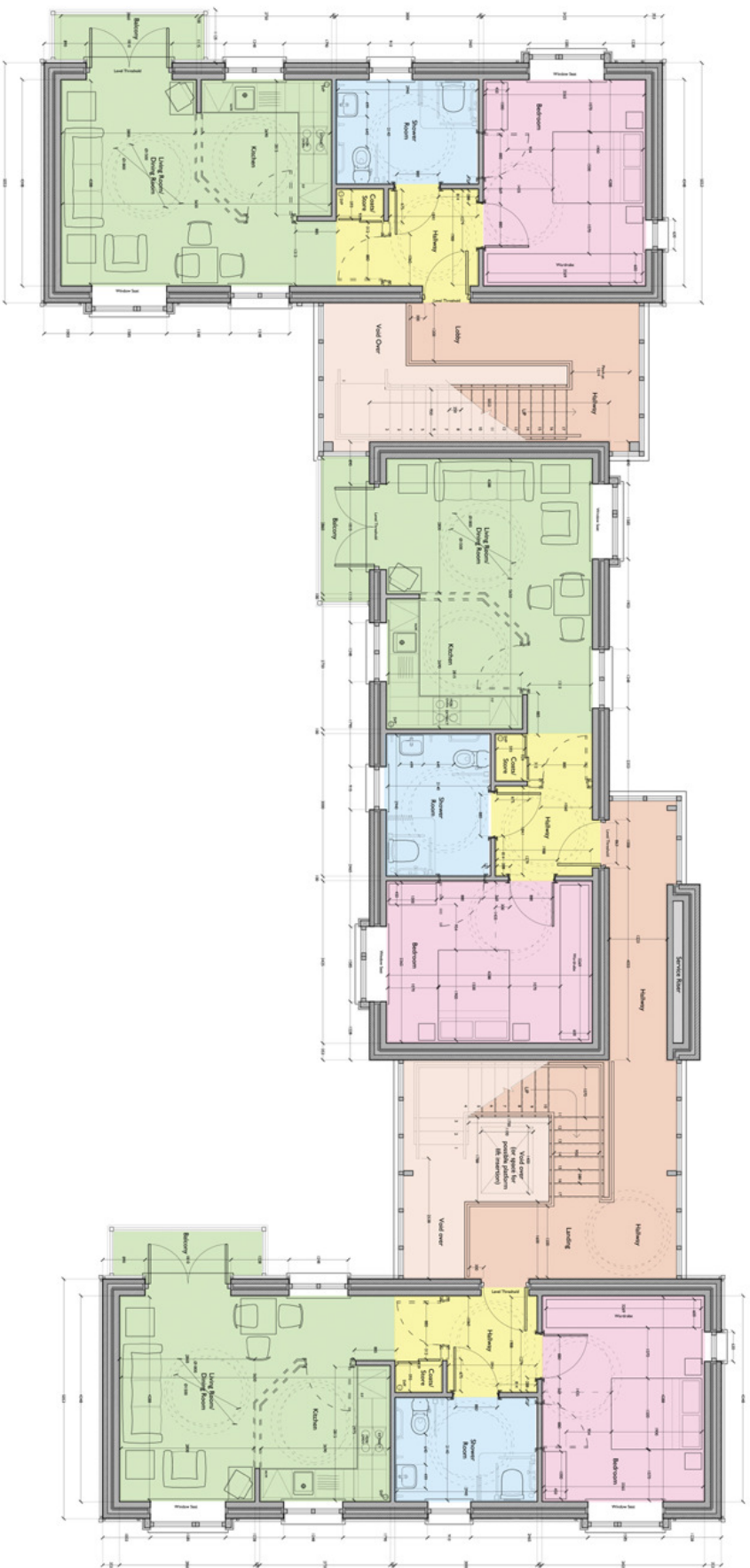


**Learning Disability Accommodation**  
**South Block**  
**Ground Floor Plan**

# HILLSIDE PARK LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION



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**Learning Disability Accommodation**  
**South Block**  
**First Floor Plan**

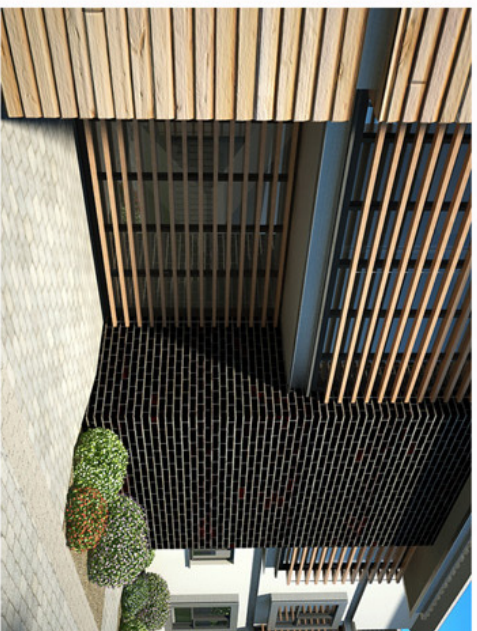
# HILLSIDE PARK VISUALS



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**Site View**  
showing south block of learning disability accommodation  
as seen from the edge of the northern courtyard



**South Block Entrance**  
as seen from the access road



**South Block Courtyard**  
Southern learning disability block  
as seen from within the courtyard  
looking northwards



# HILLSIDE PARK DESIGN LAYOUTS



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## DESIGN LAYOUTS

### LEARNING DISABILITY FLATS

The flats are designed as two distinct blocks with the bungalows forming the block to the most southerly end of the site. The flats have no distinct front or back gardens and are designed to be permeable for the residents to move in and around the spaces, however the blocks are set to the north end of the site further away from passing pedestrians or traffic.

Due to the long thin shape and constraints of the site and the nature of the user group, the aim was to provide the learning disability accommodation without distinct external barriers, with communal gardens for all residents providing amenity spaces. To ensure that these were safe spaces the buildings try to avoid any blank facades instead creating build forms with windows where the residents provide natural surveillance to the site to enhance the feeling of safety and security for these potentially more vulnerable members of society.

The staff flat sits in the middle of the learning disability cluster, within reasonably close reach for all of the residents. It also assists with the creation of two courtyard spaces: the most northerly receiving morning and afternoon sun and the most southerly receiving late afternoon and evening sun, and with both of the courtyards capable of being overlooked from the staff area.

The communal circulation spaces are designed to overhang and wrap around the building to create covered entrances and form external spaces for the storage of mobility equipment whilst also providing interest to the building.

The flats are designed as a similar universal layout, however they can each be different and individually tailored to suit the needs, requirements and tastes of the resident. The flats provide variety through their individual orientation on the site, the position of the front door and even their individual internal configuration. For example, two of the flats have their front doors opening directly to the external spaces, there is an individual canopy to the front door to provide shelter to the front door space, but these units would perhaps suit a more private individual. More social occupants would perhaps share a communal entrance hallway, which is generous enough to provide a 'neutral' space and provide opportunity for interaction between residents. The internal configuration allows for a more traditional segregated configuration or an open plan arrangement, it also allows the plan to be adapted to suit the accessibility needs of the resident, with bedrooms opening on to bathrooms and provision for hoisting between space for those with more accessible needs.

As well as being provided with access to the semi-public communal areas of the courtyards, each of the flats whether at ground or first floor have their own private space with double doors for access from the living room spaces. The first floor flats have balconies and each of the ground floor flats have a terraced area that is indicated as private through the expression of the external materials and planting.

Each of the flats is also provided with window seats internally, always to the bedroom spaces and occasionally to the living spaces. These are expressed externally as oriel window boxes projecting from the elevations to provide interest to the elevations and provide the resident with a more private prospect.



**Site View**  
as seen from the north-east corner of the site within the northern courtyard to the learning disability accommodation

### BUNGALOWS FOR THE ELDERLY

The bungalows are designed with similar principles to the learning disability flats, the overall designs and material selection are the similar to the flats. The bungalows have their own individual car parking space and paths that lead to a canopied entrance door. Each dwelling has double doors and a covered external terrace within their own private garden that sit to both the rear and side of the bungalows. These back gardens are enclosed with close boarded fencing to emphasise the privacy of these spaces. To the front they also have small private gardens, which soften the view from the access road.

Internally there is the same flexibility of space provided with the flats, with the opportunity to create an opening between the master bedroom and bathroom for hoisting should the user require. There is also the same opportunity for the homes to be tailored to either an open plan configuration of living room/dining room/kitchen area or a more segregated option. It is anticipated that the kitchen, dining area and living room all benefit from the high ceilings reflecting the external roof profile, creating an interesting and airy feel. As it is envisaged that the occupants would be downsizing from larger houses, lots of storage space is provided, with a cupboard in the hallway for coats and boots and a separate cupboard which provides space for a washing machine/tumble dryer adjacent to the drainage of the bathroom.



**Site View**  
northern block as seen from the centre of the site

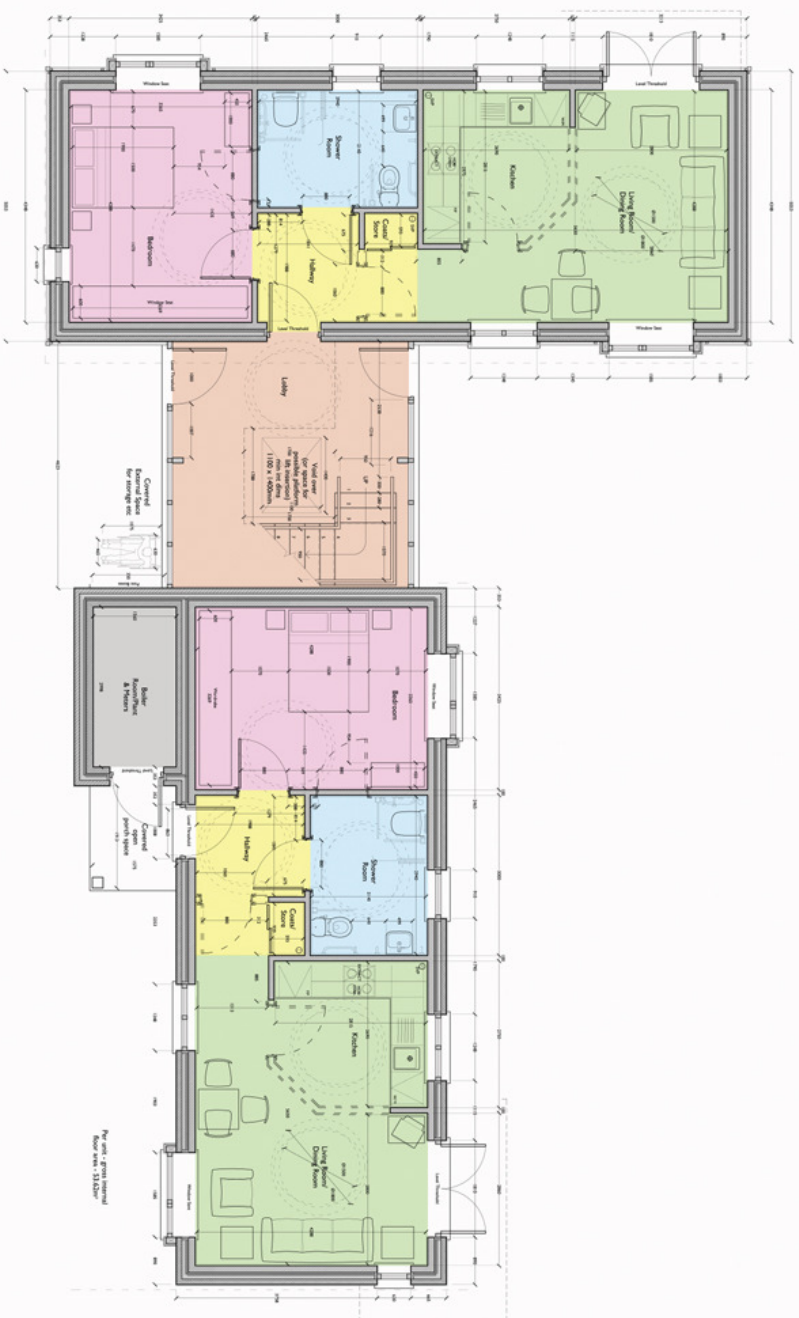
# HILLSIDE PARK

## LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION



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Learning Disability Accommodation  
North Block  
Ground Floor Plan



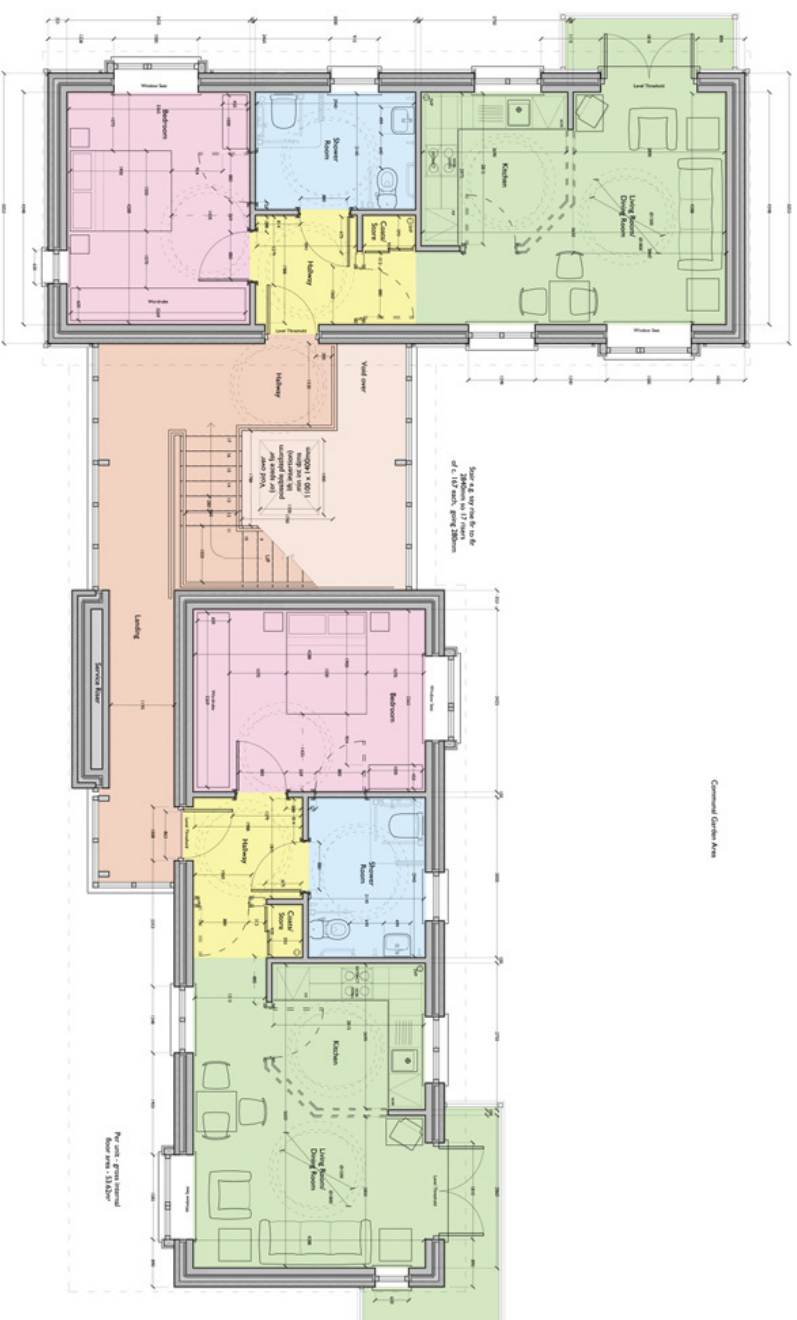
# HILLSIDE PARK

## LEARNING DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION



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Learning Disability Accommodation  
North Block  
First Floor Plan



# HILLSIDE PARK ELEVATIONS



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**North Block**  
South Elevation



**North Block**  
North Elevation



**North Block**  
East Elevation



**North Block**  
West Elevation



**South Block**  
South Elevation



**South Block**  
North Elevation



**South Block**  
East Elevation



**South Block**  
West Elevation



**Bungalow**  
South Elevation



**Bungalow**  
North Elevation



**Bungalow**  
East Elevation



**Bungalow**  
West Elevation

# HILLSIDE PARK MATERIALS & EXTERNALS



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## EXTERNALS

### MATERIALS

The materials selected for each of the volumes reflects the nature of the space they enclose, with the proposed materials for the dwellings themselves being taken from the domestic vernacular, utilising traditional materials to ensure a residential feel. The communal spaces are more lightweight with glass walls and metal roofing to create as open a feel between the blocks as possible. It is proposed that the materials are used in a contemporary way with sharp, modern detailing. The same limited palette of materials and details are used for both the bungalows and the flats to ensure that the scheme reads as a single development and that they sit well within their context.

The roofs are slate, predominantly using low mono-pitches in order to keep the overall volume of the two-storey elements as low as possible and provide space in the attic for services. The walls are a mixture of materials, render and timber that are designed to demark the dwelling areas from the communal circulation spaces. Dark grey, aluminium windows are used with a mixture of clear and opaque glass. The cool pallet continues with dark grey channels running around the flats like a ribbon, tying the dwellings to the circulation spaces and demarking the storeys whilst also forming the structure and visually accentuating the horizontal feel of the development. Deep, charcoal brick forms panels that are set against the crisp white rendered walls of the dwellings and to complement this, warm timber boarding is used. As with the channels, the timber is again laid horizontally to give emphasis to the low-scale nature of the scheme. Timber is also used as louvers, both wrapping around the balconies and to the communal circulation spaces. This provides dual purposes; visually it again highlights the horizontality of the scheme and practically it both breaks up the glazing to prevent overlooking, both into and out of the circulation spaces, whilst also providing solar shading to prevent overheating in summer.



**Site View**  
as seen from the south-east corner of the site looking along the access road towards the learning disability accommodation

### LANDSCAPING

It is anticipated that wherever possible hard landscaping will be kept to a minimum and soft landscaping will predominate. The access road will form an inclusive surface, which will be beneficial to the user groups in terms of accessible and also be visually more pleasing. It is proposed that the surface treatment to the inclusive areas will be residential in terms of materials, natural materials softening the overall appearance. The surface treatment will be used to delineate car-parking bays, pathways and private spaces to the flats and bungalows, so that there is a clear visual message that separates the public from the private spaces. This message will also be reinforced with the lighting design.

The design of the light fittings will dictate the difference between public, semi-public and private spaces. The public areas that end at the south side of the site will have larger level lighting, high level and more akin to general street lighting. This will also serve to light the pedestrian routes through the site connecting Westlands Avenue to St Barnabas Road. In contrast, the semi-public spaces around the flats will use bollard style lighting. This not only serves to define the space, discouraging the public from entering this area but also prevents any direct illumination of the adjacent housing, which can cause a nuisance. The private areas to each of the flats will have very low level, recessed lighting forming isolated pools of light to the private space areas only.

The planting scheme is also key to the success of the overall scheme. It is envisaged that the boundaries to the site will be planted to soften the appearance of the existing close-boarded fencing, with planting also used as a means of tempering and screening the main car parking area. Planting beds are included to the areas adjacent to and around both the flats and the bungalows to soften the development. In some areas, climbing plants will be used to the gable ends, to create a lightweight vertical green element. To further demark the private from semi-private spaces, cables suspended from one side of the balconies above will create the structure for lightweight climbing plants which form natural screening, reinforcing the private nature of the external spaces.

**Site View**  
Southern learning disability block as seen from the centre of the site on the eastern boundary

# HILLSIDE PARK FEEDBACK



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Your feedback is essential to the design process. We very much welcome your comments on the information you have seen and heard today and we therefore would ask that you complete one of our feedback forms. These can either be completed now and put into the post box or completed in your leisure and mailed back to us using one of the pre-paid envelopes provided.

## FOOTPATHS - GIVE US YOUR OPINION

There are a number of footpaths leading from St Barnabas Road through to Hillside Park. Three of the four current footpaths are overgrown and it is therefore presumed that these are not in use. It is envisaged that following the development, only one footpath will be maintained in the future, the others will be closed off from pedestrian use. We would like your opinion on which footpath should be maintained. Below is a site plan with the footpaths indicated with the letters, A, B, C & D. Please use your feedback form to let us know which of these you would like to see kept open and maintained to provide a through route from St Barnabas Road to Westlands Avenue.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you feel you need any further information, please do either speak to one of the representatives from the Local Authority or the Architects ARK, who are present today to assist, or if you prefer to contact by other means, please contact:

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Site View

northern block as seen from the staff entrance