

Housing 21


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HOWSON TERRACE
DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2021

PLANNING

 @hunterslondon

 Hunters Architects & Building Consultants

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1. INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION & BRIEF

We have been instructed by our client Housing 21 to proceed with a planning application based on their preferred option to redevelop the site at Howson Terrace

Our brief is to provide a flagship new retirement Housing scheme that is able to supply contemporary accommodation for shared ownership and to reprovide the existing 24no. 1 bedroom flats for Affordable Rent

The flats should be a minimum size of 51 square metres for a 1b/2p apartment. Housing 21 welcome the inclusion of 10% 2b/3p apartments.

Consideration for external space and maximising light / views from the prominent location.

The internal communal space requirements of the new scheme are as follows:

- A small office for the Court Manager
- Entrance / Reception area including a seating area and discreet tea/coffee making facilities
- WC facility that can be used by wheelchair users
- A small cleaners store will be required.
- A laundry facility will not be required as all flats will have washing machine space allowed for.

HAPPI principles to be considered and adopted where possible in to the design proposal.

Conservation area consideration

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2. SITE CONTEXT



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The site is ¼ mile south of the Richmond-upon-Thames town centre, which provides shops, cinemas, restaurants and good public transport connections.

It is located within the Grade II listed Richmond Park and Gardens area on Richmond Hill overlooking the river Thames, which runs along the western edge of Richmond town centre and is easily accessible from the site.

Richmond Bridge 0.3 miles to the north-west of the site and provides a crossing point to the western side of the riverbank.



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is situated between Richmond Hill running uphill to the east and a private residential development downhill sited to the west of the site. The sole point of vehicle access is from Richmond Hill as indicated

To the north the 5-storey Bromwich House, immediately to the west on the lower ground is flats accommodation of 3-4 storeys with pitched roof construction

Terrace Gardens defines the southern edge of the site and provides direct pedestrian and cycling access to Petersham Meadows downhill.

The site area is 0.26 hectares (2600m²) and has a fall of approximately 7m from north to south (highest point in the north)

The redline boundary encompasses the site entrance and some shared hardstanding with adjacent buildings development will be confined to central portion of the area

There are a significant number of existing mature trees within the site area which form part of the Richmond Hill Conservation Area (CA5) setting

The site is within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding due to its elevated position above the river Thames

The existing buildings are arranged along a strong north-south axis, the topography is such that the western side of the site receives significantly higher levels of sunlight



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.3 AERIAL VIEWS

Viewed from the south west looking towards Richmond Hill.

The edge of Terrace Gardens is visible to the right of the image as is the dense screen of trees that separate the site from Richmond Hill.

NB Site boundary shown indicatively only



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.3 AERIAL VIEWS

Viewed from the south east this image demonstrates the site's sylvan character

NB Site boundary shown indicatively only



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.3 AERIAL VIEWS

Viewed from the west this image demonstrates the site's context with the registered park and garden

NB Site boundary shown indicatively only



2. SITE CONTEXT

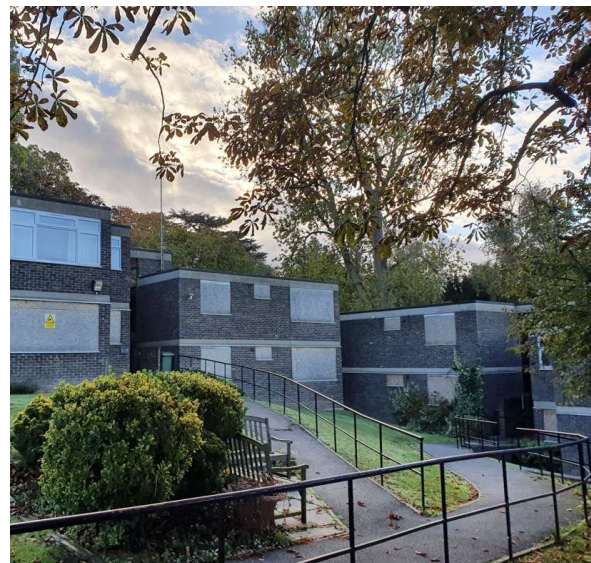
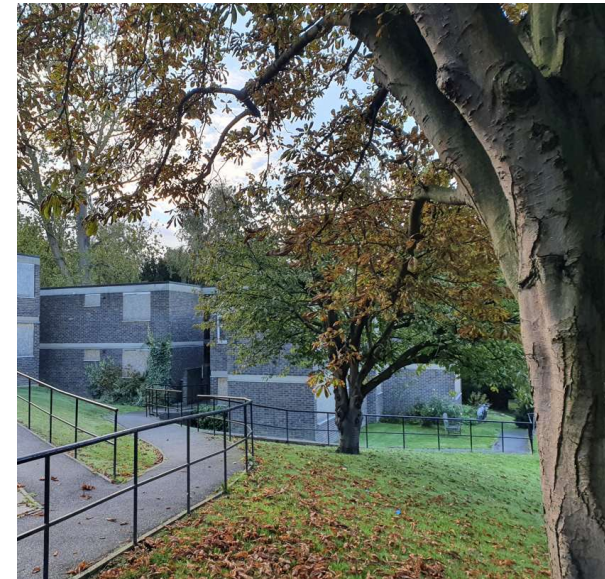
2.4 SITE PHOTOS EXISTING BUILDINGS

The existing buildings on site were constructed in 1971 and comprise 3 separate blocks of flats, with 8 flats per block, providing a total of 24 flats. All the buildings have flat roofs and external concrete staircases linking the flats via half landings.

The existing buildings are no longer fit for purpose in terms of space standards and would require significant upgrades to bring them into line with current building regulations if refurbished. Many of the flats have been boarded up since these photos were taken, the green areas around them are well maintained however.

As previously mentioned within the site and in adjacent areas are a number of large mature trees, the extents of the root protection zones and canopies govern the eventual site response.

It should be noted that where root protection areas coincide with existing buildings it is unlikely that there will be any roots beneath these structures.



2. SITE CONTEXT

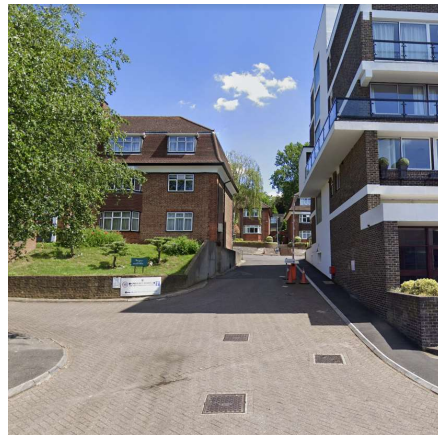
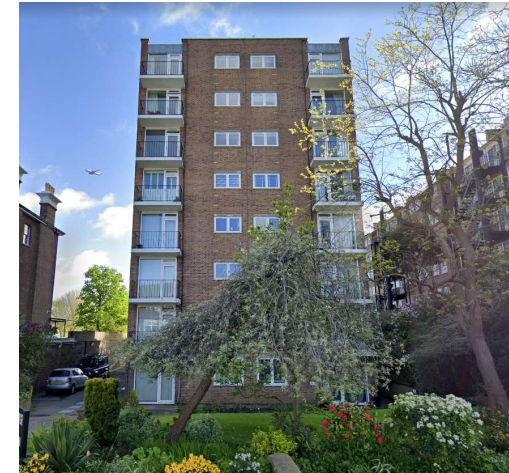
2.5 SITE PHOTOS SURROUNDING CONTEXT

With the exception of the buildings to the west and north the site is somewhat isolated in terms of built context.

The surrounding buildings are almost entirely residential and predominantly purpose-built flatted accommodation ranging in height from three to eight storeys. Brick is the most commonly-used facing material on both modern and traditionally styled structures

The site itself is largely concealed from sight from Richmond hill due to the gradient and the low lying building currently situated there. The 5 storey Bromwich house directly to the north of the site is visible from Richmond Hill albeit seen through a screen of mature trees (see image below).

The scale and massing of this building provides a basis on which to proceed in terms of design strategy



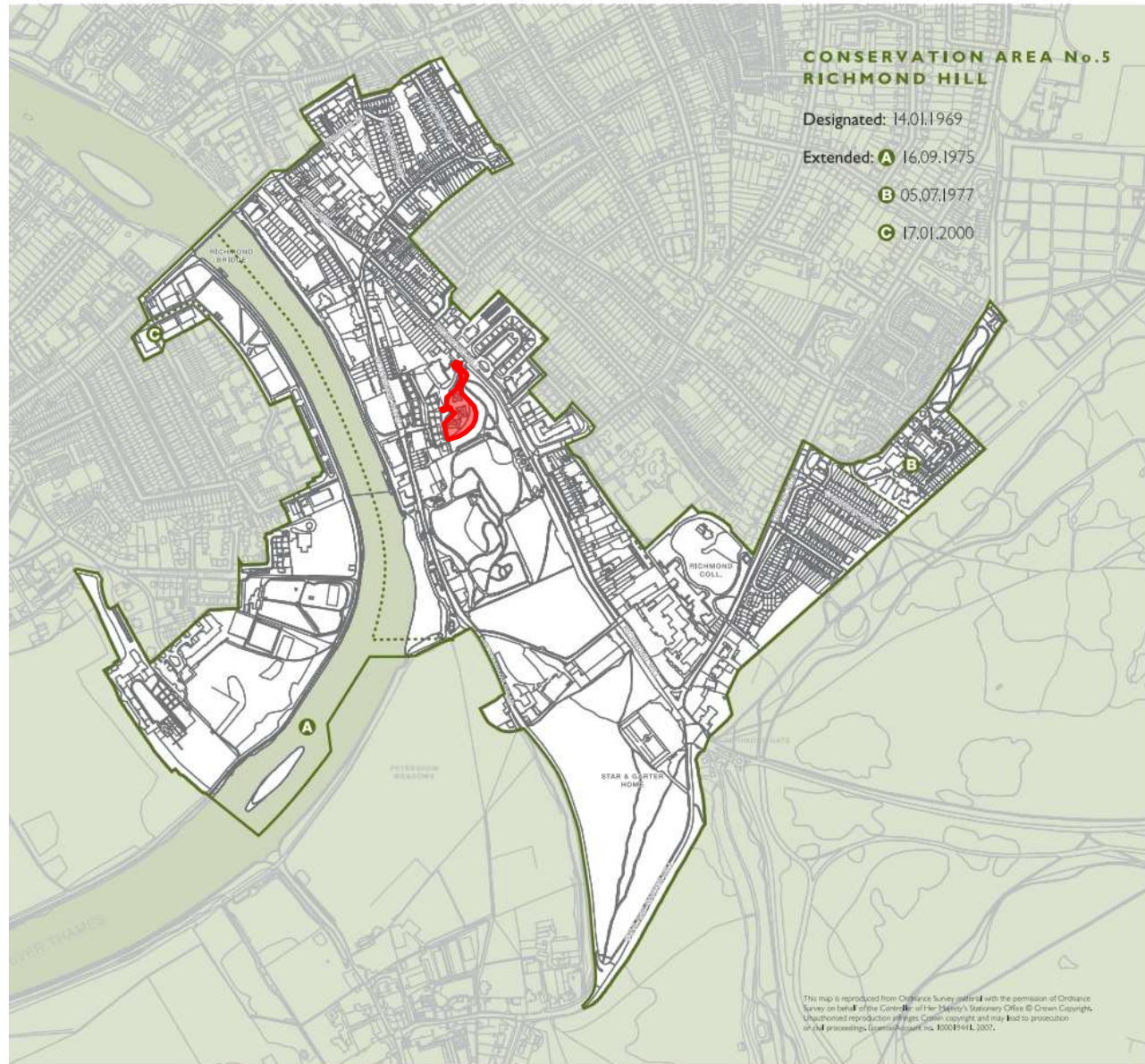
2. SITE CONTEXT

2.6 CONSERVATION AREA

The Richmond Hill area is characterised by the exceptional quality of its 18th century architecture, and its distinctive groups of fine later Regency and Victorian housing, historically overlooking the river landscape from the hillside above.

These buildings form a varied and distinctive landmark skyline in views from the river. The townscape is unified by the general use of face brickwork in a limited palette of colours.

The repetition of similar architectural features, fenestration and materials, and their scale and proportions, further draws the character of these buildings together. Traditional narrow colourful shopfronts characterise Hill Rise. Key buildings also include the lodges of Richmond Gate to Richmond Park.



2. SITE CONTEXT

2.7 ACCESSIBILITY

RAIL SERVICES

Richmond rail and underground station is 0.7 miles north of the site and can be reached on foot within 12 minutes. The station is served by SW Railway with connections to Reading and London Waterloo. The underground station is served by the District Line as well as the Overground connecting to Ealing Broadway/Upminster and Stratford.

BUS SERVICE

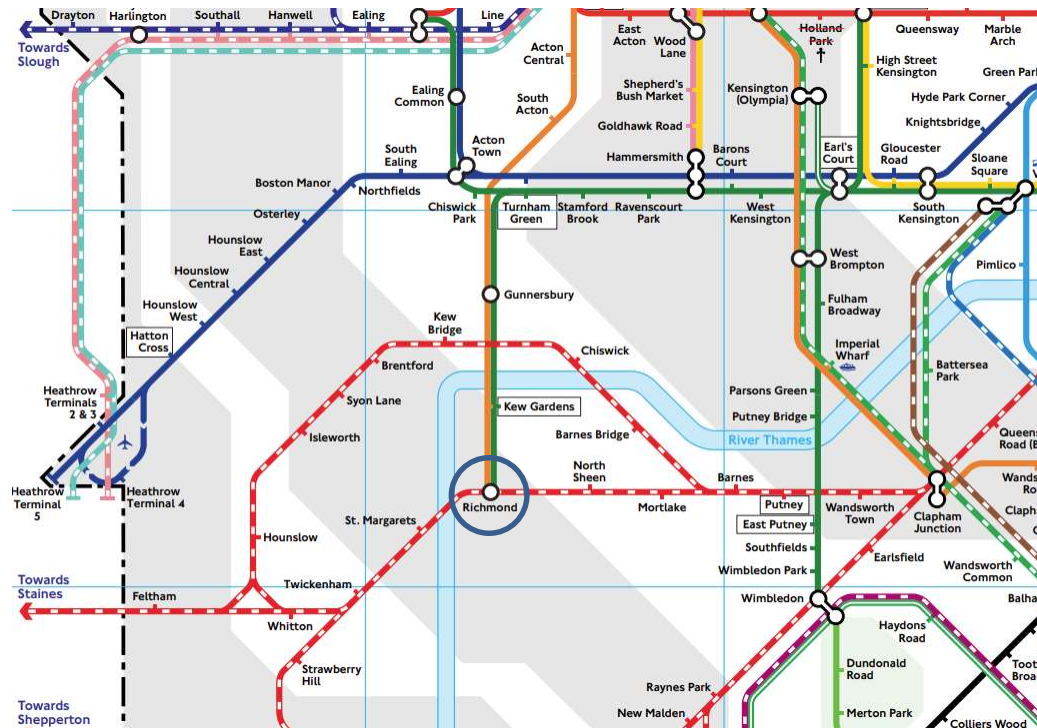
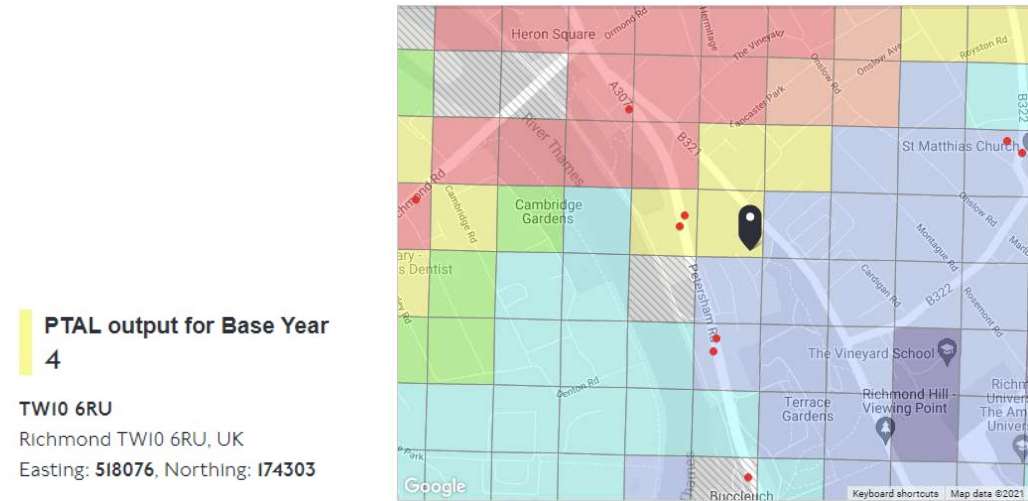
Bus 65 and night bus N65 to Ealing Broadway have a bus stop just 0.2 miles away from the site and are running every 10 minutes during peak hours. Richmond Bus station is located 0.3 miles away and can be reached on foot within 6 minutes. The Bus station is served by buses 33, 65, 371, 490, 493, 969, H22, H37, R68 and R70 as well as night busses N22, N33, N65 providing connection with Fulwell, Hampton, Hounslow, Heathrow Airport and Kingston as well as a number of other destinations.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE LINKS

A number of pedestrian and cycle routes run close by the site. The main one is running along the river Thames.

SUMMARY

The site has a Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) score of 4 which represents a good accessibility to the site via public transport although this drops sharply further along Richmond Hill as the PTAL maps shows



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3. PLANNING CONTEXT



3. PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING CONTEXT

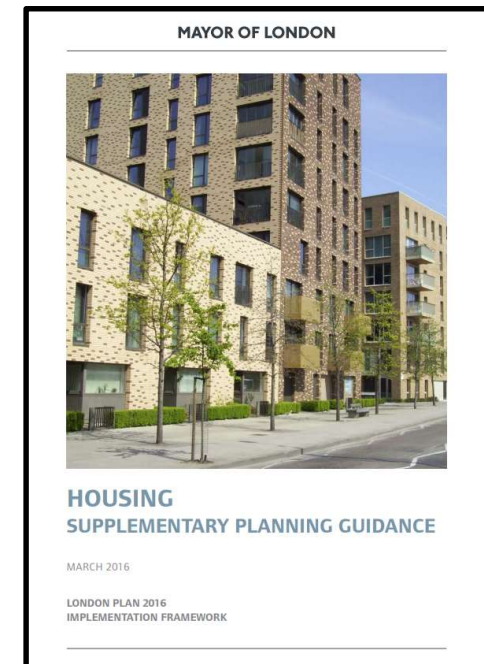
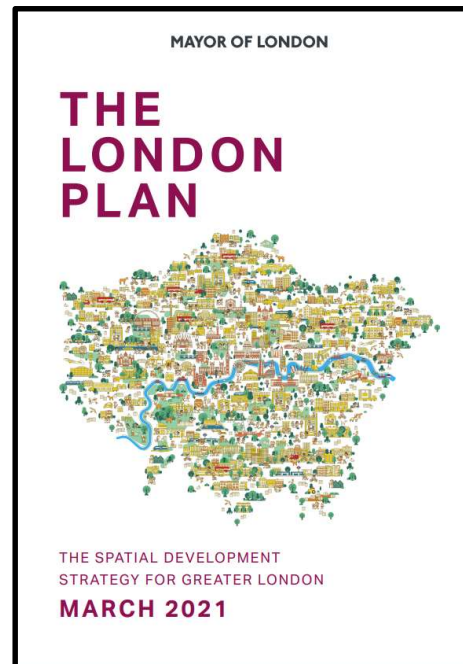
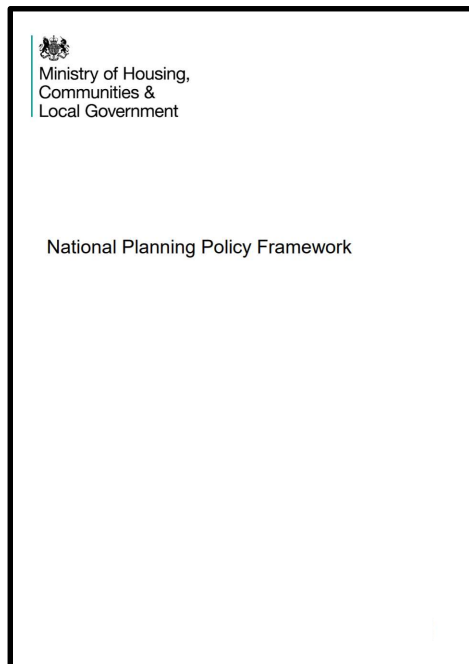
While we do not intend to provide an exhaustive list of policies the documents shown below will form the basis of a proposal that will promote good design, sustainability and inclusivity for all users and visitors.

Please note the Nationally Described Space Standards are incorporated into Housing SPG

These are to be read in conjunction with policies of the LB of Richmond Upon Thames Adopted Local Plan

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Buildings of Townscape Merit (2015)
- Residential Development Standards (2010)
- Affordable Housing (2014)
- Sustainable Construction Checklist Guidance Document (2016)
- Design Quality (2006)
- Transport (2020)
- Refuse and Recycling Storage Requirements (2015)
- Small and Medium Housing Sites (2006)
- Planning Obligations SPD (2020)
- Air Quality (2020)
- Development Control for Noise Generating and Noise Sensitive Development (2018)
- Richmond and Richmond Hill Village Plan (2016)



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4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 PRE-APPLICATION - JANUARY 2017

The initial scheme tabled at the pre-application meeting in January 2017 comprised 40 apartments arranged over 6 storeys with a basement for car parking, refuse and cycle storage

Key Design considerations included:

- Massing broken down into a series of terraces of different height to avoid overpowering the neighbouring properties.
- To address the proximity of Richmond Park and the sloping of the site, the proposal is a landscaped building with trees in both private balconies and flat roofs.
- Large glazed areas to the front of the building to maximize views and break massing further down.

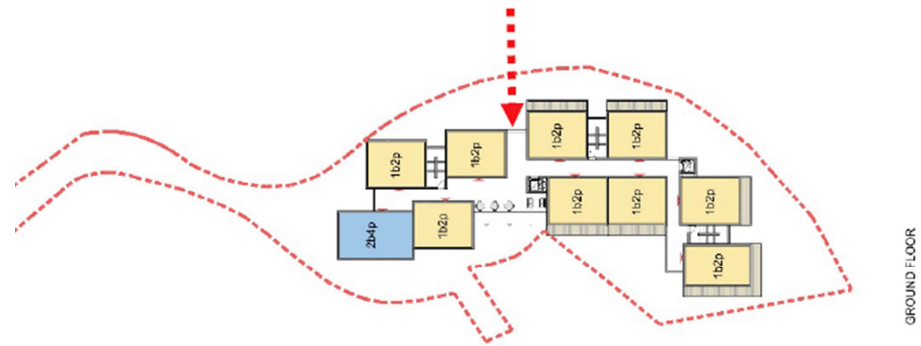
Feedback from the pre-app demonstrated that the principle of the development was acceptable as well as the modern approach to the architecture.

Concerns were raised in relation to the height of the proposal which would punctuate the treeline and be visually intrusive to surroundings and fears that the overall footprint could result in a continuous block which would read as being of substantial mass

The proposals specific view cutting through the site from Richmond Hill towards Asgill House to the north west providing views of the river and the listed structures of Richmond and Twickenham Bridges

The idea of glazed linkages was seen to have merit but would depend on the execution and how this can be demonstrated to limit the appearance of bulk/mass and its impact on the Conservation Area and Historic Park setting.

At this stage facing materials had yet to be finalised



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.2 PRE-APPLICATION – JULY 2017

The developed design comprised 41 no units split into 37x 1-bed and 4x 2-bed units with 18x associated car parking spaces and cycle storage. The scheme extends over six floors in total, including lower ground and ground floor with an overall GIA of 4221m² plus 559m² underground car parking.

The building has been re-sited to reduce impact on mature trees and the ramp to the basement car park has been relocated away from the principal site access at the site entrance

Feedback from the pre-app reiterates the previous concerns on height and massing which remain essentially unchanged. It is noted that Bromwich House to the north must not be viewed as a precedent in this respect

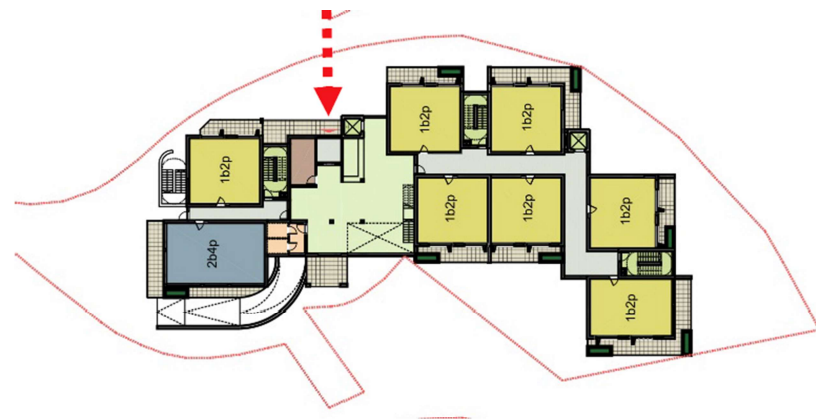
Once again the landscaped balconies were not viewed favourably

Neighbour amenity in terms of visual amenity and daylighting requires careful consideration particularly to the south of the site at Robins Court

Analysis of the site's inclusion within the Historic Park and Garden designation was requested in order to confirm that the proposals would not cause harm to the heritage asset.

The undertaking of community engagement was also strongly recommended

No comment was made on the use of brick as a facing material



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

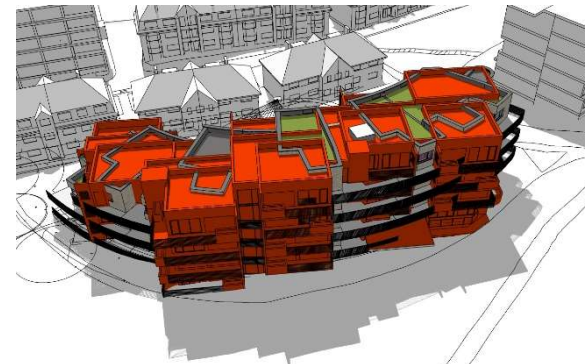
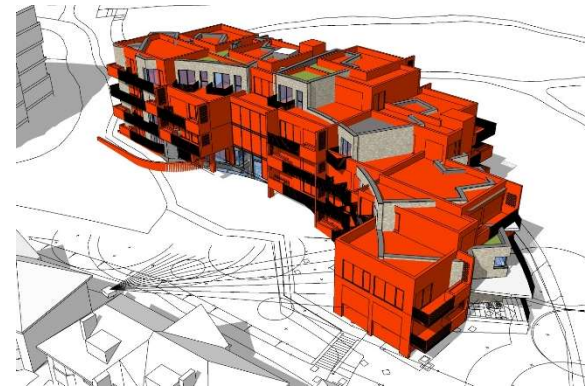
4.3 REVISED DESIGN - CONCEPT

In reviewing the comments of the two pre-app meetings it was clear an alternative approach would need to be considered reducing the impact on existing trees / landscape, neighbour amenity and key views across the site. A reduction in the number of units was the obvious starting point

Our key considerations:

- Organic design reflecting the natural curve of the site and the use of facing material both in-keeping with the surroundings and able to adapt to the context
- Given the poor outlook to the west into the hillside and onto a densely wooded area it made sense to orientate all units to face towards the river and the lower ground to the east.
- To achieve a more comfortable relationship with the existing neighbouring buildings and in particular to provide a less aggressive site response than the previous proposal.
- Omit the basement of the previous scheme to reduce the impact on surrounding trees and vegetation.
- Simplify circulation across a long and narrow developable area
- Standardised unit types providing the opportunity for pre-fabricated / podded units / Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). This could be extended to whole units or simply to bathrooms and service cupboards which are the same throughout the scheme. In this way site waste can be reduced and possibly construction programme can be accelerated

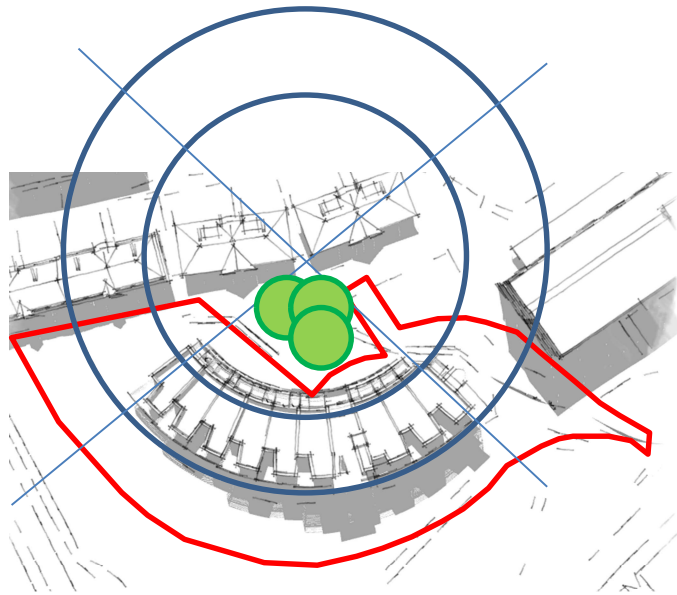
The concept sketches shown here demonstrate the initial form we explored relative to the previous massing highlighted in red



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.4 REVISED DESIGN - PLAN

The key to the revised design started from revisiting the standard unit types. In view of the fact we needed the building to fit the organic shape of the site we looked at a flat type tapered on plan which when arranged in sequence would form a curved building set out on a radius that aligned with the existing trees



In order to simplify internal circulation and account for potentially long travel distances a deck access scheme was proposed. This provided a basis for internal planning of the flat types which could now be dual aspect throughout with every unit facing the more favourable outlook to the west

Private amenity space to westerly aspect and river views

Kitchen / dining living room exceeds Part M4(3) space standards

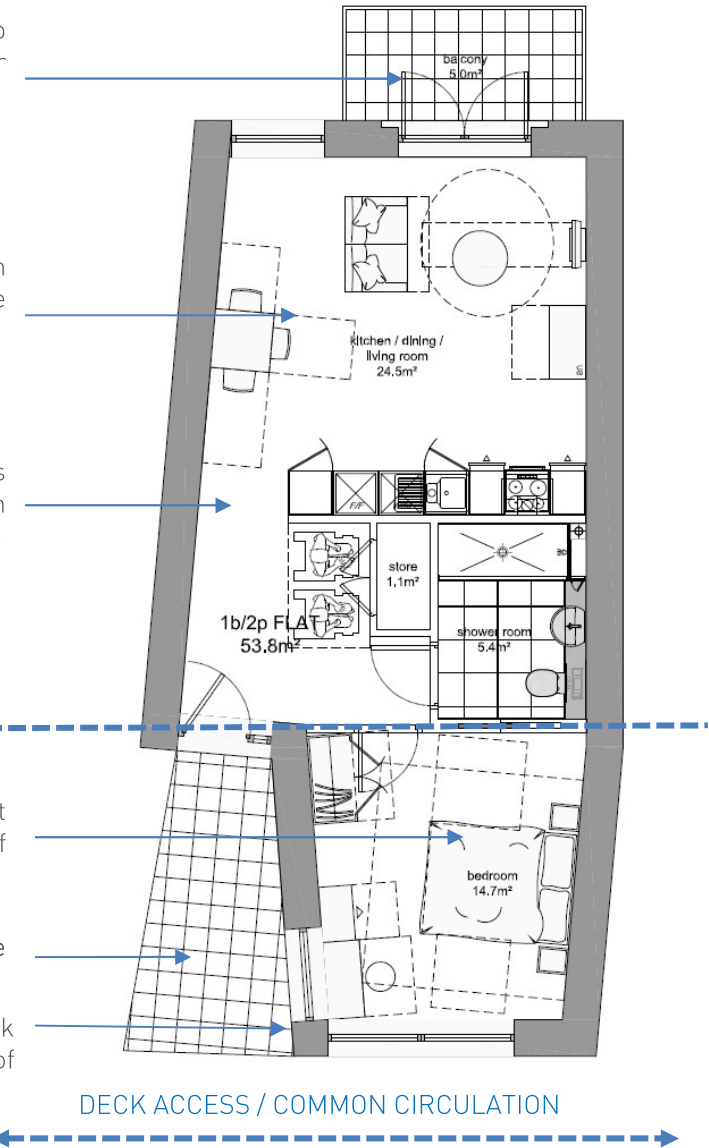
Open plan layout means less space lost to circulation as with a traditional hallway.

LIVING
SLEEPING

Sleeping accommodation at rear of the site in excess of Part M4(3) space standards

Semi-private external space

Modulated elevation to break up the massing at the rear of the site and provide interest



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.4 REVISED DESIGN - PLAN

Working with the design concept and unit types described above we arrived at the layout presented at the 3rd pre-app meeting (right)

Further design development of the flat layouts saw the semi-private space at the entrance to each flat accommodating electric buggy charging and refuse storage and the adoption of a standardised Motionspot bathroom layout.

Voids are located in front of bedroom windows to provide a buffer from the communal circulation route

By employing deck access all units are now dual aspect with sleeping accommodation at the east of the site where daylight and outlook are less favourable. Living spaces are located to the west with views across to the river Thames.

Unlike in the upper floors the circulation of the lower ground floor is at the front of the building to ensure the proposals fall outside tree root protection zones as far as possible.

By locating the car park at ground floor it eliminates the need for a basement while achieving a similar amount of parking (11 surface car parking spaces are to be provided)

A single point of entry to the building for residents and visitors improves security. Communal and staff facilities are located at the ground floor level in close proximity to the entrance so everyone who enters the building will pass through making them lively sociable spaces.

The building sets back along its south elevation reducing the block of the massing and ensuring that a maximum of 8 units are served by the stair core on each level

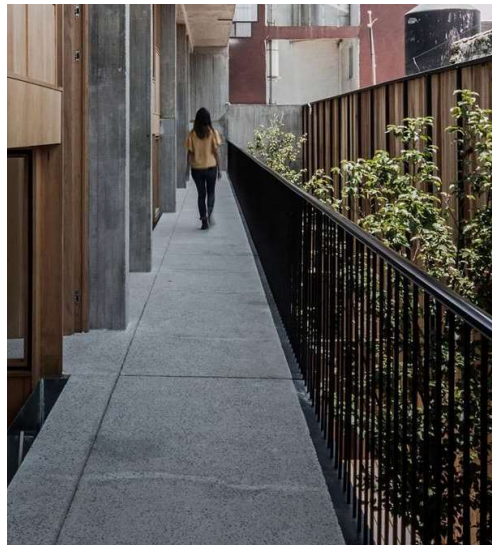
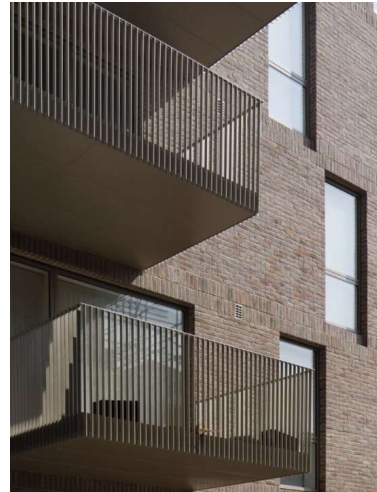


4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.5 REVISED DESIGN - PRECEDENTS

DESIGN PRECEDENTS

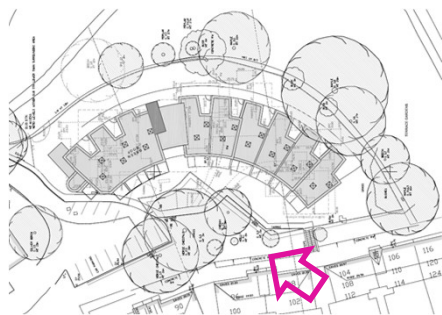
We took inspiration from a number of different sources to inform our proposals on materiality, geometry, layout and detailing. The images shown here are just a few of the projects that helped provide a direction for the design



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.6 REVISED DESIGN - MASSING

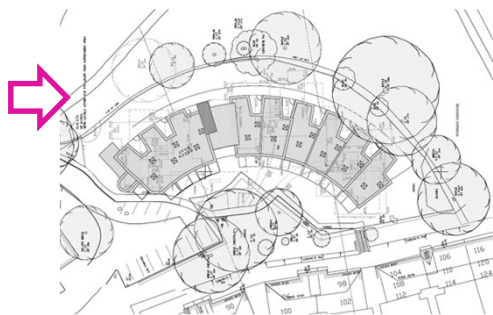
The resultant massing from the new unit types and site response is as per these images. For clarity we have shown the proposals without the existing trees / landscaping



4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.6 REVISED DESIGN - MASSING

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