

SMALL PROJECTS PANEL



PALMER GARAGES

Design

The proposal consists of two four-storey blocks, accommodating four one-bed (2 person) and four two-bed (four person) flats respectively, that both address the street and look onto a shared communal garden. The massing and views avoid overlooking and rights of light issues while maximising the common amenity space.

The flats are generous (they exceed dimensions as set out in London Housing Design Guide and Lifetime Homes) and are logically arranged to reduce circulation while ensuring living spaces are well proportioned, eminently practical and flooded with light. Each flat is also provided with outside space - gardens to ground floor flats (suitable for wheelchairs), while access to upper floor residences occurs via a proper 'outside room' - generous spaces affording both privacy and light - rather than via a standard claustrophobic corridor.

The principal entry to the site and access to the garden is off a landscaped gated route through the site, connecting St John's Grove to Brookside Road. The spine of the building, along the western site boundary, contains vertical circulation and storage for residents at the back, while at the front the enclosed 'outdoor rooms' overlook the garden.

Sustainability

The scheme provides for a broad mixture of occupants, including young families and makes the best use of a tight site to create a scheme which is urban but with a very generous garden. The generous provision of both private and shared outside space would allow residents to grow food, dry their clothes outside and increase the biodiversity of the area.

The depth of the two blocks allows for natural cross ventilation, while generous floor to ceiling glazing brings maximum daylight into the principal rooms. The efficient flat layouts ensure the external envelope is kept to a minimum, ensuring the spatial, economic and sustainable efficiency of the scheme. The proposed principle material of brick has a high thermal mass, suitable for the occupancy of the building and would of course be insulated to the highest standards.

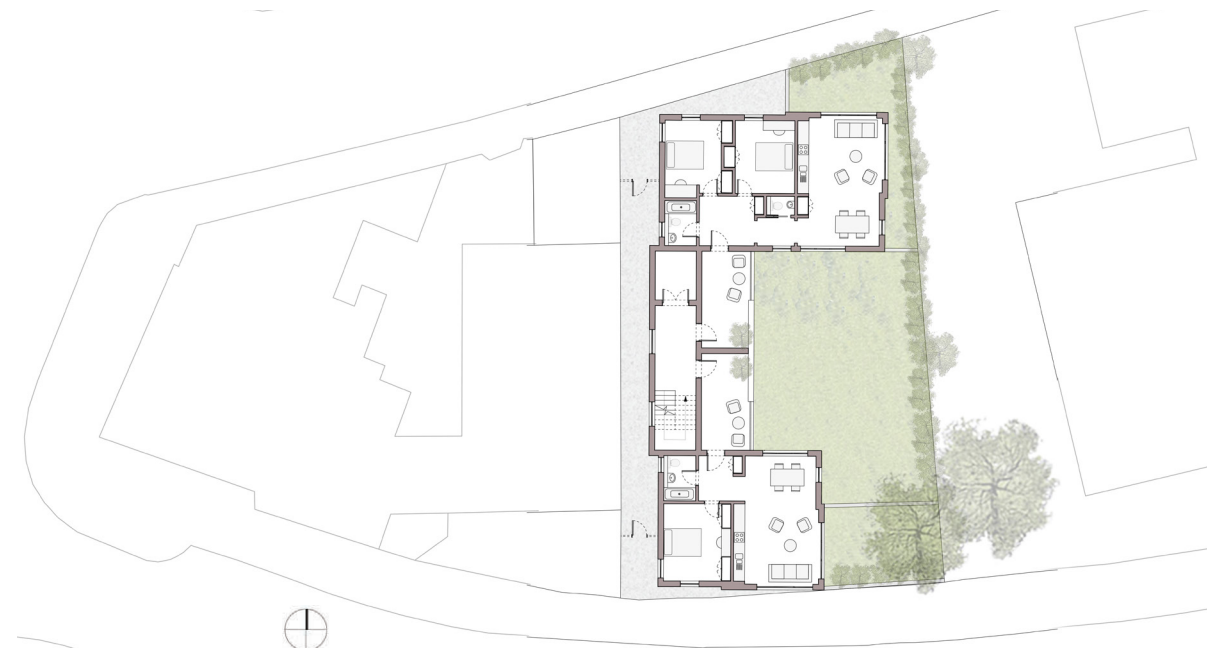
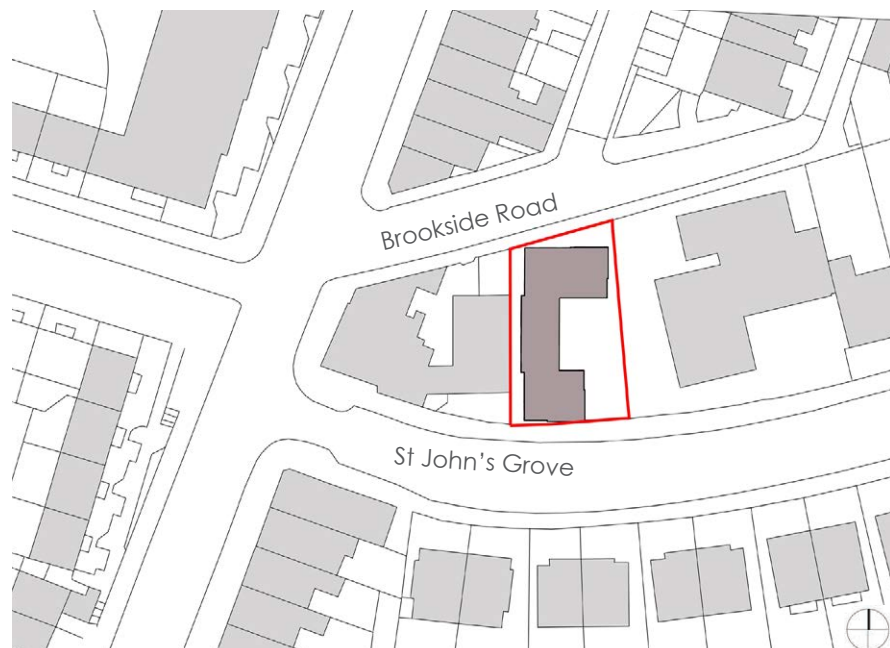
Services are considered across the site as a whole. Firstly the scheme's size makes it suitable for a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit, situated in the lower ground floor, which would be more efficient than individual boilers for flats. Grey water harvesting from the two housing blocks reduces water use and surface run off.

It is intended that the vertical spine would contain a lower ground space with provision for bicycles, plant and storage for residents. Bicycle storage allows for more than the single bicycle per dwelling recommended under the London Housing Design Guide.

Innovation

The scheme includes a clear hierarchy of external space: private space in the 'outside rooms'; the overlooked communal garden provides semi-private space for all ages, allowing for supervision of young children; public space in the route connecting St John's Grove to Brookside Road. These layers ensure the space is suitable for all ages and Secure by Design.

Every opportunity to provide 'more than the minimum' is exploited - the massing affords a higher than average ceiling over the top floor living space, storage is included throughout the plan, and floor-to-ceiling windows to bring in as much daylight as possible



S M A L L P R O J E C T S P A N E L



HEMSTAL ROAD

Client: Origin Group Housing Association
 Cost: £1.6m
 Completion date: September 2008
 Gross internal area: 740sqm
 Procurement route: Design and Build

Design

This tight, brown-field site on the edge of Killburn Grange Park, was earmarked by Camden Housing Department for dwellings accommodating a number of large families, each with 6-8 members, to include one with wheelchair access throughout.

The challenging triangular configuration, and restrictions on overlooking adjacent properties defined the project's geometry.

The dwellings are informally clustered around a small series of landscaped courtyards. Accessible only to occupants, the courtyards provide safe communal play area, and secure access to front doors. In addition, each of the houses and one of the flats are provided with a private garden.

Internally, rooms are well proportioned and logically arranged, with circulation reduced to a minimum. Living areas are generous and exceptionally light. Storage is one of BWA's specialisms, provided throughout, to encourage clutter-free living.

The elevations are characteristic of BWA's elegant and timeless style, reflecting and reinforcing the local context, in a fresh and bold manner. Warm beige brick, and two-tone render were chosen as an appropriate expression of the neighbourhood's vernacular: the horizontal bands of colour harmonise with the rendered Sure Start nursery school opposite, and the strong, brick street-wall echoes the urban fabric of adjacent older housing stock.

A large existing tree, on the corner of the site, enhances the development, providing a centrepiece for the design.

Planning

Although the buildings are positioned very close to each other - due to the size of the site - the staggered fenestration, and the landscaping provide excellent light and views.

The buildings have been arranged so there are no windows directly facing adjoining residential properties, ensuring the privacy of neighbours. Likewise, massing has been arranged so as to avoid significant loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties.

The 'picturesque' courtyard creates a sense of community within the development. However, unlike many, similarly 'gated' developments, the scheme has been carefully designed to ensure the street is addressed in a meaningful way. Two of the units (including the wheelchair unit) have direct street access, and a generous provision of windows onto Hemstal Road and Linstead Street ensure that Secured by Design requirements are met.

The proposed development complies with Lifetime Homes Standards, Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards, the guidance set out in the National Housing Federation's 'Standards and quality in development', Camden's own Development Standards, and other relevant policies set out in the borough's Unitary Development Plan.

Sustainability

The scheme scored a 'Very Good' EcoHomes rating. Notable sustainable measures include the use of 'A' rated materials, except where prohibited by planning conditions; the specification of timber from FSC or PEFC certified sources; the use of non-polluting insulation; the installation of efficient, NOx Class 5, Vaillant ecoTEC 831 boilers; provision of clothes drying space to reduce the need for tumble dryers; the installation of 94% low energy lighting; and the installation of flow restrictors on showers.

Learning point

BWA was appointed to prepare and submit a planning application after a previously appointed architect had failed to obtain permission. The success of BWA's proposal shows that with careful design and attention to detail, the constraints of a small and awkwardly shaped site, overlooked by surrounding buildings, can be overcome, not only to provide a client's ideal number of dwellings, but also to provide a development of the highest quality.

