



Affordable Residential Development
Cwrt Pentwmpath, Llay

Design and Access Statement

- Design and Access Statement
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Introduction

This design and access statement is an introduction to the proposed redevelopment of Cwrt Pentwmpath, Eighth Avenue, Llay. The proposals include the full demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of 25no. affordable residential dwellings, comprising of 17no 2P1B apartments within a three-storey building and 8no. 2P1B bungalows. The proposal includes landscaping and carparking for 26 cars.

Cwrt Pentwmpath is an existing retirement housing scheme owned by Wales and West Housing Association. The facility was built in 1975 and consists of 30no. flats plus a Wardens house and Guest Room. The scheme has very few residents remaining on site. As a company, the decision was made not to fill the vacant units as people moved away. The existing building has aged and does not meet the current requirements or regulations and has very high service charges compared to most of WWA housing stock. As such the units are not considered to be affordable. It is intended to demolish the building. Working with the local authority, WWA has identified the need and demand in the area to produce a modern scheme which will be significantly more energy efficient and meet design quality requirements.

The expected resident group to be accommodated in this facility will be people over the age of 55 who are relatively active and independent who may wish to downsize. The proposal will seek to make the best use of the site in the context of the setting while creating the most flexible, accessible and inclusive living environment for residents.

The strategic objectives of the project can be summarised as follows:

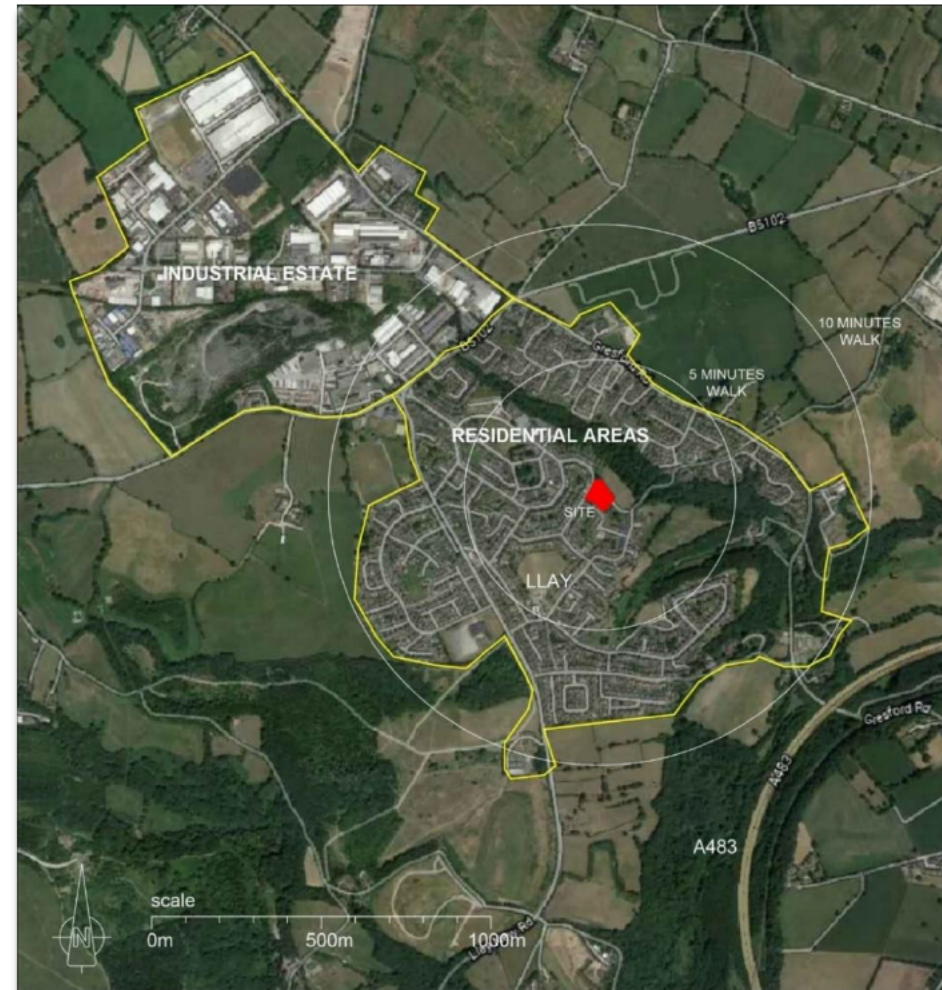
- A scheme of 100% affordable housing for social rent, identified to meet the local needs.
- The scheme is to be consistent with the local architectural style and complements the local vernacular.
- A sense of place – to meet Welsh Governments Placemaking Agenda and Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- To create sustainable patterns of development which link with existing settlements to encourage walking and cycling and improve access to public transport.
- A sustainable scheme that meets the required standards of DQR Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design.
- To create an attractive place that people respect and want to live in, which will create a sustainable and thriving community.

Location and Site Assessment

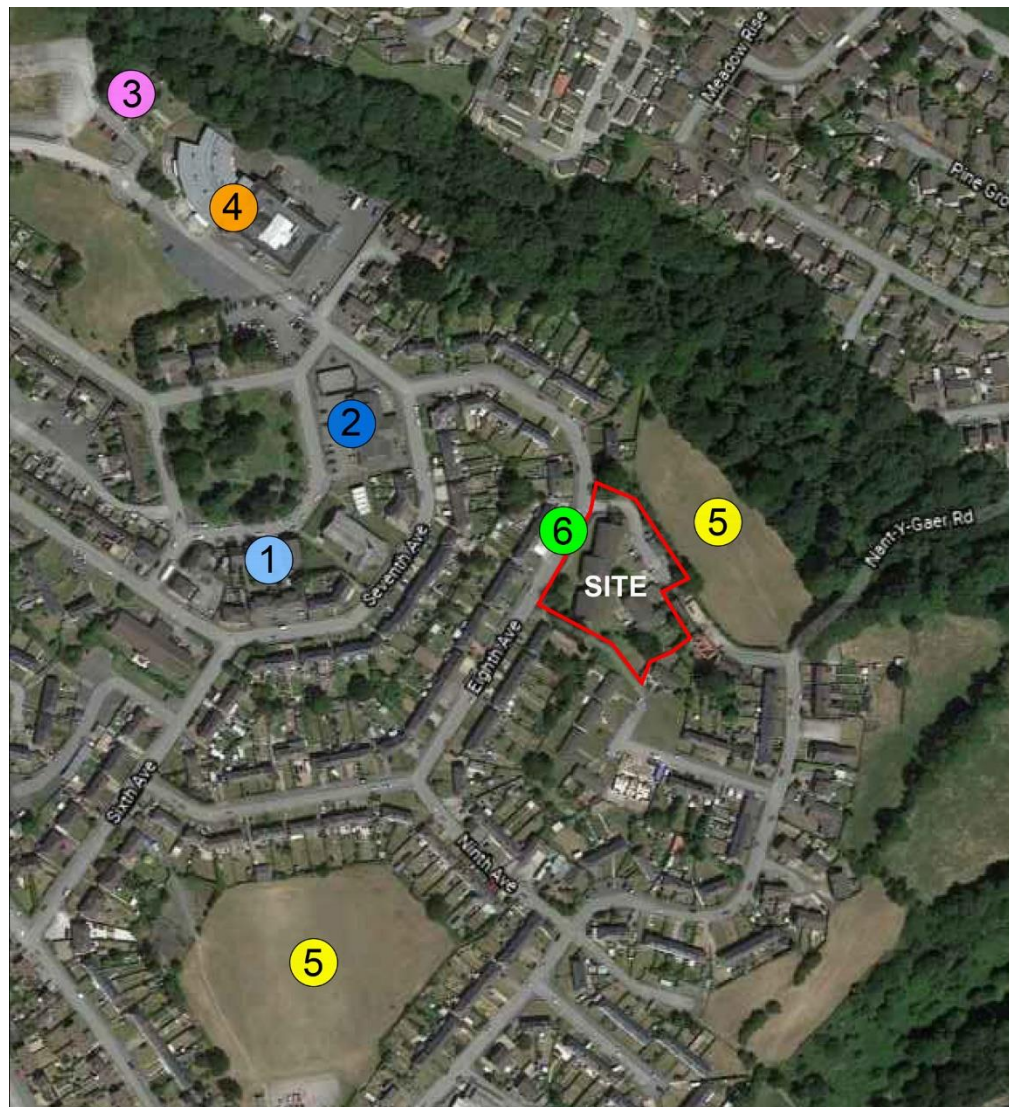
The site is located on the edge of a residential estate in the village of Llay. The village has a population of approximately 4800 and is linked to several other villages including Gwersyllt and Gresford. Llay is served by the A483 dual carriageway and is located 5 miles to the north of Wrexham town centre.

The site has an existing residential use. It is surrounded by other residential properties, semi-detached and terraced houses to the North and West, and bungalows to the South. The site is adjacent to a large area of public open space to the East, including a green corridor of trees which follows a small tributary of the River Alyn.

Llay has a large industrial estate to the north of the village providing the majority of local employment. The site is within walking distance of a convenience store, a church, the Llay Park Resource Community Centre, Doctors Surgery, sports pitches, and the Park Community Primary School. A bus stop is located adjacent to the site on Eighth Avenue, providing a public transport link to Wrexham Town Centre and beyond.



Site Context



- 1 SHOPS
- 2 COMMUNITY CENTRE
- 3 DOCTORS SURGERY
- 4 SCHOOL
- 5 POS / SPORTS / LEISURE FACILITY
- 6 BUS STOP

0 100 200
metres



Site Context



- **1930/40's terraced and semi-detached Local Authority family housing.**

Roughcast rendered walls, slate covered hipped roofs. Large gardens

- **1970's retirement flats and bedsits.**

Pale brick construction with shallow pitched roofs of interlocking concrete tiles. Generously sized glazing with feature spandrel panels between.

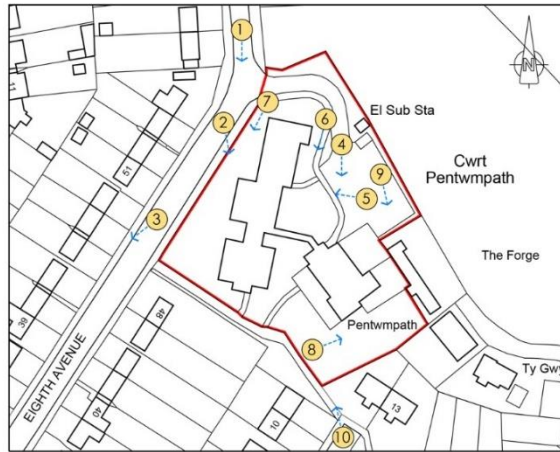
- **1970's retirement bungalows.**

Possibly prefabricated or system built modular buildings with shallow pitched, concrete roof tiles and spandrel panels to the fenestration.

- **2020's social housing.**

Smooth rendered finish to walls with feature cladding in vertically hung slate or possibly fibre cement tiles. Concrete roof tiles and roof windows to reduce the height of the first floor.

Site Photographs



KEY PLAN NOT TO SCALE



1. The site entrance and site viewed from Eighth Avenue



2. The site frontage facing Eighth Avenue.



3. Existing houses along Eighth Avenue, opposite the site.

Site Photographs



4. The existing building viewed from the car park



5. The existing building viewed from the car park



6. The existing building viewed from the car park



7. Change in level from Eighth Avenue into the site.

Site Photographs



8. Existing garden to the south of the site.



9. Neighbouring buildings adjoining the site boundary.



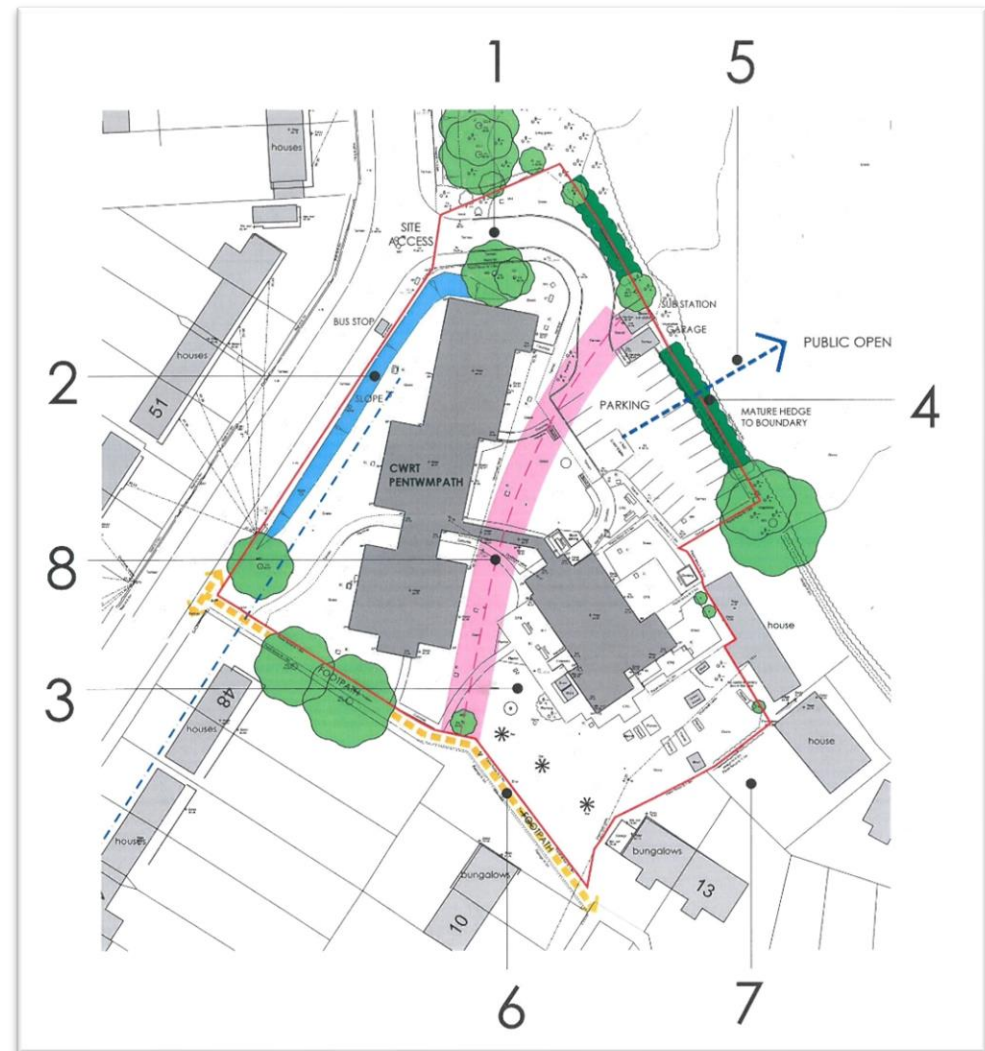
10. Existing bungalows to the south of the site



11. A recent residential development near to the site.

Topography and Site Constraints

1. Existing site access to be retained. Only option due to visibility and site levels.
2. Change in level / embankment sloping down into the site by approx. 1.5m. Reduces options for creating a street frontage.
3. Majority of site is generally flat and is ideal for redevelopment.
4. Mature hedge to the east boundary to be retained.
5. Views out of site towards POS and tree line beyond.
6. Public Footpath – Potential for pedestrian access into site or security issue?
7. Neighbouring dwellings with private gardens. Privacy to be respected.
8. Easement to underground electricity cable cannot be built over.



Design Evolution

- Consultation with residents identified requirement for a mix of 1 bed bungalows and apartments.
- Feasibility Layout proposed 9no. bungalows and 20no. apartments over two storeys.
- Bungalows are most suitable at the southern end of the site to avoid overlooking existing neighbours.
- Apartment building best located adjacent to Eighth Avenue to create a street scene and take advantage of the change in level at this point.
- External Scooter and cycle stores
- Existing site access to be retained
- Parking provision less than 1 space per dwelling.



Design Evolution 2

- Number of bungalows reduced to 8no. to ease congestion at site entrance and provide additional parking spaces.
- Plot 25 turned to face site entrance.
- Parking court revised to provide turning area for refuse vehicles and fire engines.

Two storey apartment building designed in detail:

- 24no. single aspect apartments served via an internal corridor. Apartments face onto Eighth Avenue or the Parking Court.
- A single main entrance identified by gable feature, accessed via the parking court
- Main stair and lift core located centrally with fire escape at each end of the building.
- Integral bin and cycle stores accessed via parking court for security and ease of residents.
- The wide floor plan results in a large pitched roof, providing an ideal platform for PV panels facing Southeast.
- Style and character of bungalows to be similar to the apartment building to tie the development together.



Pre-Application Consultation

The scheme for 32 affordable dwellings plus carparking and landscaping (illustrated on page 12) was submitted to Wrexham CBC in March 2022 to request pre-application advice. The response received (ref: ENQ/2022/0072) was generally positive, but the officer could not support the scheme in its current form without further work to address some of the concerns raised. The advice can be summarized as follows:

- Redevelopment of the site is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with relevant UDP policies.
- Separation distances between proposed apartments, bungalows and existing dwellings appears acceptable.
- Concerns regarding the impact of bungalow on existing dwelling “The Forge” which overlooks the site.
- No requirement for on-site public open space due to existing residential use and the proximity to existing POS.
- Arbocultural Impact Assessment required to demonstrate impact upon trees, on and surrounding the site.
- New tree planting should form part of any formal planning application.
- Bat Survey required.
- Proposals need to demonstrate that the development provides net benefit to biodiversity.
- The proposals are unlikely to give rise to a significant increase in traffic using the site access or to highway safety issues in the locality.
- Proposed parking provision appropriate for the development must be demonstrated via a supporting statement.
- Foul drainage - mitigation is likely to be needed to ensure that the proposals do not increase phosphorous levels in the SAC.
- Surface water drainage arrangements for the site require SAB approval before development commences on site.

Design Evolution 3

The layout of the apartment building is revised to include an open courtyard space at the main entrance to create an area for residents to meet, and to break up the mass of the building.

Number of apartments reduced to 20no.



Design Evolution 4

Complete redesign of the apartment building to incorporate double aspect apartments, accessed via covered external walkways and with private glazed balconies (winter gardens).

WWHA intend for residents to benefit from more natural light, natural cross ventilation, and improved social interaction with neighbours

A narrow floor plan provides space for a maximum of 8 apartments per floor, therefore the building height is increased to 3 storeys to provide 22no. apartments plus internal bin & cycle store and plant room.

Central stairwell breaks up the visual mass of the building and the shallow hipped roofs to either side of the stair help to minimise the height of building. The site levels are lower than Eighth Avenue and therefore the 3-storey building sits comfortably on the street scene.

External fire escape stairs to each end of the building.

A narrower building provides more space on site for soft landscaping and POS.



Design Evolution 5 – PAC Proposals

The following proposals were published for public viewing by Wales and West Housing, as part of the Pre-application Consultation exercise. The consultation sought comments on the proposals from neighbouring residents, the community, and statutory consultees.

The Further design evolution of the apartment building has reduced the depth of the apartments to further maximise the use of natural light and cross ventilation. The plan of each apartment is wider as a consequence and results in a maximum of 7no. apartments per floor.

The winter gardens are omitted from the scheme and the external walkways are moved to the southeast side of the building, overlooking the parking court. The walkways are 3.6 metres wide, providing an area of defensible space to each apartment, and providing an external space that residents can use and share.

Site Layout

1. Existing access to be retained. The width and radius have been checked using vehicle tracking simulation and is confirmed acceptable for cars, refuse collection vehicles and fire engines.
2. Existing hedge retained to enhance amenity and protect ecology.
3. Covered Cycle store to hold 14no. cycles.
4. Bungalows are proposed to the southern part of the site to protect the privacy of neighbouring dwellings, avoid overbearing and provide continuation to the scale of built form.



5. The existing dwelling (The Forge) does not impact on the privacy of proposed bungalows.
6. All bungalows have the benefit of a secure, private garden with rear access for bin storage.
7. Parking to be located on the level part of the site to provide a level approach and level access to all dwellings. Parking provision based on 1 space per dwelling plus 1 visitor space. Parking provision is below the maximum standard and this is considered acceptable in this sustainable location and for the expected resident group (over 55's). Refer to separate transport statement.
8. Parking area is to be secured from public footpath.
9. External bin store to serve the apartment building. Conveniently positioned for the residents to access via the footpath and for the refuse collection vehicle to turn within the parking court and access the store.
10. All trees to be retained if possible. The root protection zones to all off site trees are not affected by the development. Please refer to separate Arbocultural report.
11. Three storey apartments located at the front of the site, distant from existing bungalows, avoid overlooking neighbouring properties and maintain the street scene along Eighth Avenue.
12. The communal entrance to the apartments is located at the rear of the building to provide access via the parking court.
13. A strip of soft landscaping is to separate the apartment building from the parking area.



Aerial View from the South



Aerial View from the North

Pre-Application Consultation – Comments Received

The pre-application consultation exercise received a number of comments from the community and statutory consultees. The following is a summary of the relevant responses received, along with the resultant reply and action taken by the Design Team.

Wrexham County Borough Council - Planning Officer

It would be beneficial to see a street scene elevation and cross sections through the site to show the relative heights of the apartments and the dwellings opposite and to the south.

Concerns with the appearance of the front elevation. The mix of brick and cladding in itself is fine but having two identical blocks with relatively uniform front elevations strikes me as a little bland.

A minor concern I have is overlooking of the dwellings to the south from the external staircase, but this could easily be addressed with some screening.

Councillor Robert Walsh

At this precise moment in time I support the purpose of the plan in principle.

Only concern is the height of the main building. 3 storeys is high and I wouldn't want it to have a negative impact not only the visual amenities of the street but also on neighbouring properties. Personally, a 2-storey building would be better, especially if it is designed for older people.

Neighbouring Residents

Our back garden is adjacent to this site. We have a hedge boundary which belongs to us & the hedge must remain.

I also feel the apartment block should remain two storey as a three storey would have a negative impact on the adjacent houses along Eighth Avenue.

I do not agree with the straightening of the building and adding a third floor. A third floor and straightening will seriously impose on my own property. We won't have the privacy that we have now. The plans look very intruding and extremely large. From the look of the building, it looks like it will tower our homes. And affect the light and privacy of the current residents.

Please can I raise a few concerns regarding the proposed application at the rear of my property the Forge. Firstly my house on all of the plans is labeled as a single dwelling when in fact it is two story. Due to it being two story I have concerns on how close the rear garden of the nearest bungalow is and how this will impede on my daughters privacy as this window at the rear of the house will be easily looked into due to the different ground levels. This has also been noted as a concern in the plans but the proposed fence I believe will not be suitable.

Pre-Application Consultation – Designers Response

The pre-app consultation identified that the Parish Councillor and a number of neighbouring residents are concerned about the height and proximity and of the proposed three-storey apartment building adjacent to Eighth Avenue, and questioned why a three-storey building is required.

It should be noted that a two-storey apartment building was considered by the Design Team (refer to **Design Evolution** on pages 11 & 12) but these options were rejected because they required the use of **single** aspect apartments to both sides of a central corridor to achieve a viable number of apartments. This resulted in a very wide floor plan and an enormous roof

It is the applicant's aspiration that the apartments should be designed specifically for older people and that we adopt the "Happi" design principles*, which promote the use of natural light, natural ventilation, positive use of circulation space, balconies, and outdoor space. With this in mind, it was decided that the apartments should be **dual** aspect (i.e. windows to both sides of the floor plan) with communal external walkways serving every apartment. The dual aspect layout results in only 8no. apartments per floor and therefore a third storey of accommodation is required to provide a number of apartments that makes the scheme viable. The three-storey building is provided with a centrally located lift and buggy store, making it entirely appropriate for older people.

The height and position of this building have been carefully considered, taking into account the relative heights and locations of the houses opposite, the interface distance between buildings and the ground levels within the site. We have taken this opportunity to update the planning application drawings to better illustrate the relationship between the apartment building and the existing houses on Eighth Avenue. Please refer to the **Site Cross Sections** (drawings P106 rev C and P107 rev C) and the **Interface Distances** drawing (P109).

*For further information on Happi design principles, please refer to: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>



Interface Distances Plan

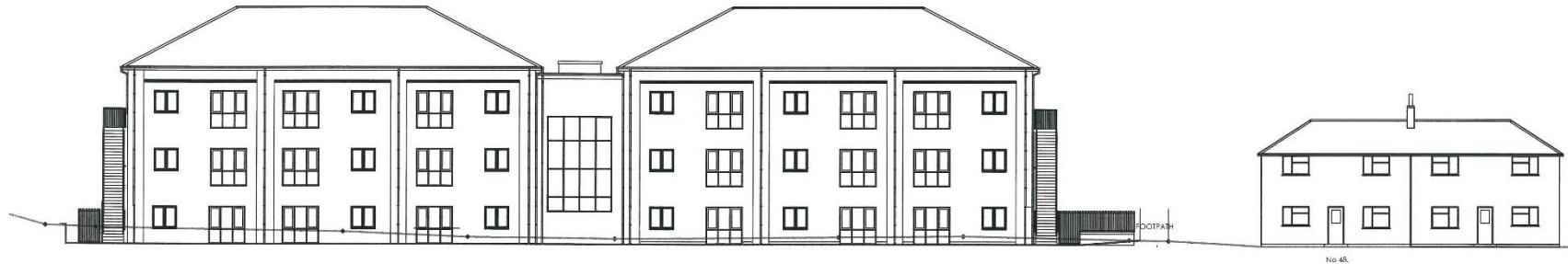
The Interface Distances drawing compares the proposed site layout with the existing site plan to illustrate the relationship of the buildings with the surroundings. Compared to the existing layout, the proposed apartment building is to be more parallel with the road, yet the interface distances with the houses opposite remain similar at between 30m and 33.5m. The proposed bungalows (plots 18-25) appear close to the site boundary, but avoid any problems of overlooking due to being single storey and provided with appropriate boundary fencing.



Cross Section through Eighth Avenue

Above is an extract from a Site Cross Section drawing. The section illustrates the distance and relative heights between the proposed apartment building and No. 53 Eighth Avenue on the opposite site of the road. It should be noted that the proposed apartment building will be situated **2 metres lower** than the road, and that the houses opposite are situated approximately **1 metre above** the road. Consequently, the windows to the second-floor apartments will be just 1m above the first-floor windows in the houses opposite. The facing distance between buildings is **31.25 metres**, whereas Wrexham CBC's "**LPG 21 – Space around Dwellings**" requires (for new housing) a minimum facing distance of just **22 metres** for houses that are on the same level, increasing by 2m for every 1m change in level. The proposed facing distance is well in excess of the minimum standards required. A distance of over 30 metres offers a good degree of privacy and amenity value to all.

In conclusion, we suggest that although the proposed three-storey building is taller than the existing houses and existing buildings at Cwrt Pentwmpath, the relative ground levels and the generous facing distance between properties means that the proposals are not a significant change from the existing situation, will not result in a loss of privacy or light due to the generous facing distance, and are fully in compliance with local planning policy guidance.



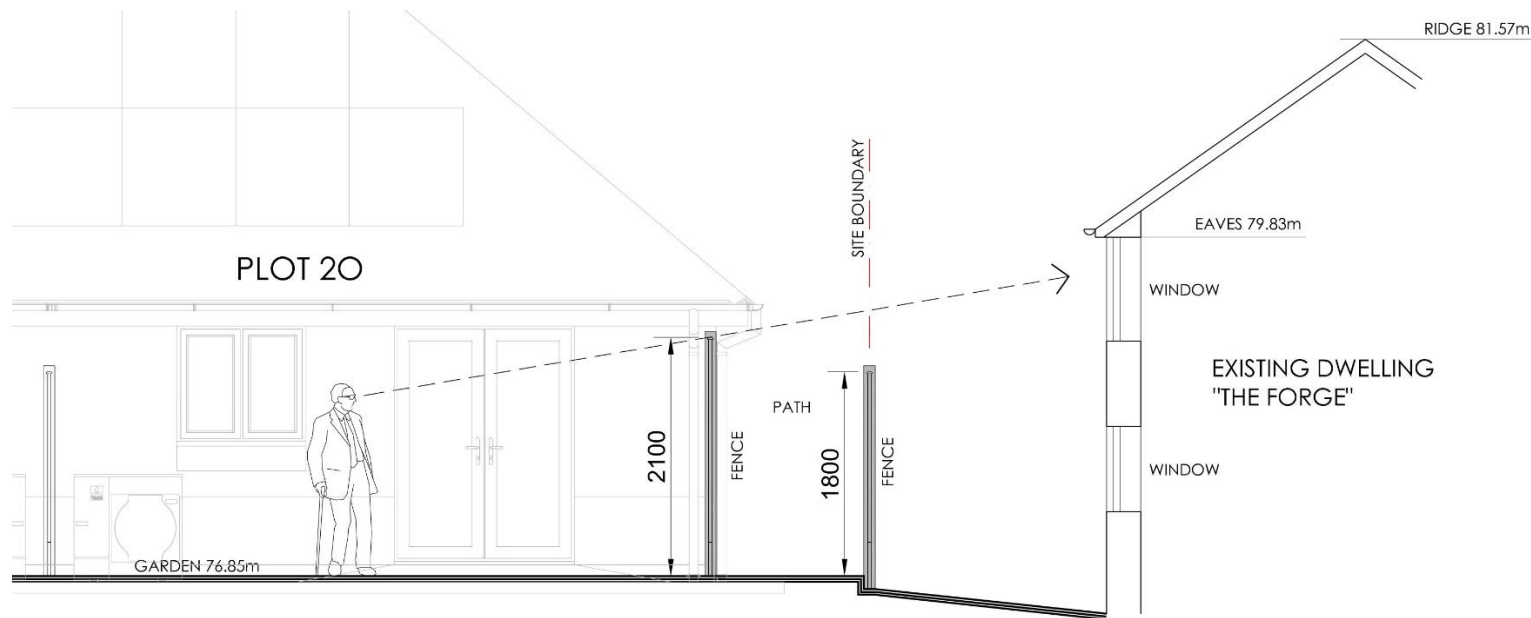
Street Scene along Eighth Avenue

Above is an extract from drawing **P106 rev C – Site Cross Sections**, illustrating the proposed street scene along Eighth Avenue. The drawing illustrates the relationship of the apartment building with the existing dwellings to the South, separated by the public footpath and garden.

Albeit three storeys high, the proposed apartment building adopts a similar built form to the adjacent houses. The building is bisected by the central stairwell, creating the appearance of two separate blocks, each with hipped roofs and divided into vertical bays in a similar manner to the existing terraced and semi-detached housing. The vertical bays correspond with the stack of apartments and this structure is expressed on both sides of the building, creating a simple and legible building. The principal elevations benefit from the simplicity and symmetry of the two identical blocks of accommodation, providing a modern appearance, but with a form, structure and materials that have similarities with the surrounding older buildings.

It should be noted that the external stairs on the ends of the apartment building are intended for emergency escape only, will not be in everyday use, and will not result in overlooking adjacent properties.

The proposed bungalow at Plot 20 is to be built adjacent to an existing dwelling known as “The Forge” which borders the site. The Forge has windows at ground and first floor level which currently overlook the garden of Cwrt Pentwmpath. The applicant intends to secure the site by erecting a 1.8 metre high fence along the boundary which will run in front of the ground floor window at a distance of X metres. The fence will obscure the view from the ground floor window, but will still allow light to enter the room. It is understood that this window is a secondary window to a room that has other windows on the opposite side of the building. The first-floor window will overlook the rear garden of Plot 20, and the owner of The Forge is concerned that their privacy will be affected by plot 20. It is therefore proposed that the side fence to plot 20 is at a height of 2.1 metres which will block the line of sight from the majority of the garden to plot 20. Please refer to the below extract from drawing **P107 rev C – Site Cross Sections** which illustrates a cross section through the garden of plot 20 and The Forge and demonstrates that the privacy of The Forge will be protected.



Character

Use

The site is located within a residential area and has had a residential use for the past 47 years since the existing bedsits and flats were built in 1975. The proposed redevelopment of the site intends to replace all of the buildings, but continue the use with a fully affordable residential scheme.

Amount and Density

The proposed scheme will reduce the number and density of residential dwellings from the existing 31 dwellings (30 flats and 1 house), to 25 dwellings (8 bungalows and 17 apartments).

The reduced density is due to increased space standards, the use of double aspect apartments, the use of bungalows, the addition of private rear gardens and a larger area devoted to parking and vehicle turning, when compared to the existing site layout.

It should be noted that the early feasibility studies and preliminary designs proposed a higher density of (single aspect) apartments, giving a maximum of 32no. dwellings on the site. However, it is WWHA's intention to promote the use of double aspect apartments at a lower density and provide more external space around the apartment building.

Site Layout and Scale

The proposals comprise of 8no. one-bedroom bungalows and 17no. one-bedroom apartments, clustered around a central parking court. The layout provides a semi-secure and private communal environment accessed via a single site entrance. The courtyard provides access to the bungalows and apartments main entrance, and is overlooked from all sides, providing natural surveillance and a sense of community.

The bungalows are positioned to the rear of the site and benefit from private rear gardens. The site is surrounded by existing bungalows to the east and south and therefore the addition of new bungalows in this location is entirely appropriate. The privacy of all dwellings and gardens will be respected and maintained. An existing dwelling (The Forge) has two windows that currently overlook the site along the eastern site boundary. This issue was identified during the pre-app discussions with the Local Authority as a potential loss of privacy to the end bungalow (plot 20). Through discussion between WWAHA and the Local Authority, it was agreed that the ground floor window would not impact on privacy due to the erection of a new boundary fence. Also, the other window at first floor level will overlook towards the gardens of plot 20, but the new boundary fence will prevent a direct line of sight and therefore privacy will be maintained.



The proposed apartment building is located adjacent to Eighth Avenue to maintain the street scene currently created by the existing building. A change in level between the street and the site means the building is set lower than the street and makes this an appropriate position for a taller building without dominating the street scene.

Appearance

The proposed architectural style and selection of materials for the development is to be modern, simple and robust, yet to be in-keeping with the surrounding buildings to retain the appearance and character of the area.

The design intent for the apartment building is for a simple, modern architectural style that has a form and uses materials that are in-keeping with the surrounding buildings. The internal layout of the building is a series of identical apartments, and so it was logical that the external appearance of the building expresses these regular structural bays on both principal elevations, and divides the elevations into the pattern of the stacked apartments.



Apartment Front Elevation Facing Eighth Avenue

The building is bisected by the central stair and lift core and this is expressed externally by large glazed areas to the stairwell and a section of flat roof which divides the building. The roofline is further divided by the hipped roofs to each block of accommodation, which serve to break up the visual mass of the building, whilst the shallow pitch of the roof helps to reduce the overall height.

Facing brick and coloured render are predominant materials in the surrounding area, and therefore it is proposed to emphasize the structural bays using brickwork piers, infilled with colours of smooth render and fibre cement cladding, creating a simple, smart appearance.

All of the apartment bedrooms and lounges will face onto Eighth Avenue (North West Elevation). The lounges will benefit from large, full height windows to maximise the use of natural light and ventilation. It is proposed that this simple, stylish elevation will complement the street scene along Eighth Avenue.



Apartment Rear Elevation facing the Parking Court

The brick structural bays are continued on the rear elevation and form the structure of the external walkways. The external walls of the apartments are to be in smooth coloured render to create contrast and a bright external environment. Photovoltaic panels are to be fixed to the Southeast facing roof which faces the parking court and will not be visible from Eighth Avenue.

The proposed bungalows are a traditional style but with modern detailing, comprising of a brick plinth below cill height, with smooth, rendered walls above and a tiled pitched roof with overhanging eaves and a projecting gable feature over the front doors. Large windows with low cills are intended to maximise natural light and provide a view out from a seated position. The fenestration, facias and gutters are to be grey to give a modern appearance. The large roof provides an ideal platform for photovoltaic panels to the southeast facing slope.



Bungalow Front Elevation

Accessibility / Movement to and from the Development

The site is located within a residential area and can be accessed via adopted roads with public footpaths providing safe and convenient access to local shops, services and public open space. In addition, a bus stop is located adjacent to the site entrance on Eighth Avenue providing a public transport link to Wrexham Town Centre.

The existing vehicle and pedestrian access off Eighth Avenue is to be retained and reused, providing good visibility in both directions for vehicles leaving the site.

The site access leads directly to a communal parking area, providing 26No. parking spaces including 2No. spaces for wheelchair users. The parking provision is based on 1 space per bedroom plus 1No. visitor space, which is deemed to be sufficient for this type of development for the over 55's. Please refer to the separate supporting statement by Focus Transport Planning.

The parking court gradients will comply with the requirements of Lifetime Homes, providing a level approach route from the parking spaces to the entrance doors of the apartment building and all the bungalows.

Covered cycle shelters are to be provided adjacent to the parking court providing space for 14no. cycles. The shelters are to be covered from the rain and will be overlooked by the dwellings for added security. In addition, each bungalow has an external garden store, which could also be used for cycle storage.

Community Safety

The proposed scheme is to meet with the requirements of the Welsh Governments Development Quality Requirements, and as such is required to comply with the principals of Secured by Design and be awarded the SBD Gold award. The scheme will be developed in consultation with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer to ensure that the proposals comply with the principals of Secured by Design and thereby achieving the SBD gold award.

The site layout incorporates the fundamental principles of secured by design in order to reduce crime risk.

- Only one site entrance / exit to prevent the site being used as a cut-through and to minimise escape routes for criminals.
- The majority of the site is to enclosed with a 1.8m high fence or a thick hedge.
- The site boundary along Eighth Avenue will not have a high fence, but this boundary is well overlooked, will not be used as private space and does not have doors within the NW elevation.
- The parking court is overlooked by all dwellings, providing a high degree of natural surveillance.
- The parking court, cycle stores and bin stores will be lit to the SBD standard.
- The physical security of the dwellings will be to a high SBD standard. All doors and windows will be sourced from a manufacturer whose products have been tested and certified to SBD standards for security.

Environmental Sustainability

The development site is currently occupied by existing buildings and is therefore classed as brownfield development. The existing buildings are no longer fit for purpose, they do not meet current space standards and have very poor energy efficiency and high running costs due to the age and form of construction.

The proposed new buildings will be designed to exceed current building regulations with regard to energy efficiency and conservation of fuel and power. Wales and West Housing Association's standard building specification applies the following standards:

- Construction to adopt a fabric first approach to U-value of construction elements.
- Each dwelling to achieve an EPC A rating.
- Where possible, local materials and manufacturers should be used.
- Timber frame construction is preferred for all schemes where possible.
- The use of Welsh timber within any part of the construction process is desirable.
- Buildings to be designed to achieve an airtightness of 1 - 2 m³/hr/m².
- All buildings to use mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) systems.
- Heating and hot water to be provide using an air source heat pump or ground source heat pump. (For this site, the bungalows are likely to use individual ASHP's and the apartment building will use a communal GSHP).
- Photovoltaic panels with battery storage to be used where possible.
- All homes should be designed to exceed acoustic building regulations by 5dB.

Accommodation Schedule

	Existing	Proposed
1 Bed Apartments	30	17
1 Bed Bungalows	0	8
2 Bed Houses	1	0
Total No. of Dwellings	31	25
Gross Internal Floor Area	1737m²	1481m²
Total No. of Parking Spaces	21	26