

**FIVES COURT,
MERE**

Landscape Strategy

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GREENHALGH

Landscape Architecture



Project Address: **Fives Court,**
Angel Lane, Mere,
Wiltshire

For and on
behalf of: **Wiltshire Council**

In collaboration
with:

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Arboriculturalist	Assured Trees
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Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Site Context	3
1.3 Site Photos	5
1.4 Designations	6
1.5 Landscape Character	7
2.0 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES	10
2.1 Site Analysis	11
2.2 Constraints & Opportunities	13
3.0 STRATEGY AND PROPOSALS	14
3.1 Proposed Development	15
3.2 Proposed Character Areas	16
3.3 Soft Landscape Palette	24
3.4 Hard Landscape Palette	25

1.1 Introduction

Introduction

Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture Ltd has been appointed by Wiltshire Council (the “Client”) to provide Landscape Architectural services as part of the detailed planning application for proposed development at the former residential home at Fives Court, Angel Lane, Mere (“the Site”). The planning application seeks permission for the redevelopment of the existing residential home building with improvements to associated access, parking, landscape and ecology (the “Proposed Development”).

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the Landscape Architectural aspects of the Proposed Development. Describing the design development is part of a coordinated approach and reference is also made to how landscape elements are allied to the work of other disciplines such as architecture, civil engineering or ecology so as to address site issues in a positive and holistic design response.

This report focusses on contextual analysis of the landscape/ townscape, explanation of the landscape design rationale and the landscape strategies which underpin it.

1.2 Site Context

Site location, land use and settlement

The Site is located close to the centre of the town on Mere, Wiltshire. It is situated off Angel Lane which links The Square in the town centre to Mere Cemetery and its southwards countryside environs.

The Site is currently a disused care home for elderly people, comprising the main residential building complex, access road, car park and ancillary circulation and green space.

It is closely bordered to the north, east, south and part of its western boundary by neighbouring dwellings and private gardens. These boundaries are formed variously by timber fences, freestanding stone walls, and the walls of buildings on the boundary line. Buildings to the north on Salisbury Street and Boar Street are also shops fronting the town centre. The western boundary partly fronts directly onto Angel Lane, separated by the Site’s low beech hedge.

The Site is close to the centre of Mere but also well contained and separate from it.

Access and communications

There is no formal public access within the Site.

The only vehicular access is off Angel Lane via a wide single-leaf gateway. There is also a separate pedestrian gate at this frontage. The Site can also be accessed by pedestrians via a narrow alley between private residential properties on Barnes Place leading to a gateway in the Site’s eastern boundary.

There are numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within and surrounding the town including elevated positions on Castle Hill close to the north. The promoted long-distance walking routes of Monarch’s Way and Mid Wilts Way converge in The Square.

Key:

 Site

 Scheduled Monument

 Conservation area

 Main road

 Public Right of Way

Listed Building:

 Grade I

 Grade II*

 Grade II



Figure 1. Site location and local context.

Topography and hydrology

The Site is relatively flat, generally sitting at approximately 105m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The only notable topographic feature on Site is a low retaining wall and embankment in the south and here the existing level reaches approximately 107m AOD at the southern boundary. Neighbouring properties adjoining the Site to the south are therefore slightly elevated above Site levels.

The existing building on Site is of varying roof form with an approximate average eaves level of 107.5m AOD and ridge heights that range approximately 110-114m AOD. Surrounding the Site to the north, east and west, the eaves of neighbouring properties are typically 109.1-110.5m AOD with a number of windows facing the Site. The closest neighbouring dwellings to the existing building are Nos 11 and 12 Barnes Place, a semi-detached building with a ridge height range of approximately 111.8-112.2m AOD, with west-facing upper storey windows. The neighbouring end-of-terrace dwelling at No 1 Angel Lane immediately south of the Site has an eaves level of 112.4m AOD.

There is little topographic variation across the centre of the town. By stark contrast the town sits immediately south of Castle Hill, a steep chalk ridge that reaches 163m AOD. From here there are views across town and it is recognised as a 'viewpoint' on OS 1:25,000 mapping. The hill is of historic significance, as noted below.

Heritage

The Site is located entirely within the Mere Conservation Area which is designated to cover the more historic built settlement but also the historic Castle Hill area. Castle Hill, also called Mere Castle, is the site of a former medieval fortification built by Richard, the Earl of Cornwall, in 1253. The castle was abandoned in the 14th century and only earthworks remain in the 21st century. It includes several Scheduled Monuments; Mere Castle and adjacent bowl barrows.

There is a concentration of listed buildings through the centre of the town, principally Grade II listed dwellings and shops following the B road (Castle Street and Salisbury Street), reflecting its more historic core which is legible and intact. There is a second grouping around Church Street and St Michael the Archangel's Church (itself Grade I listed) close to the west of the Site. There are no listed building within or bounding the Site. The closest listed buildings to the Site are a section of stone wall near the northern end of Angel Lane (Grade II) and Nos 4 & 5 Salisbury Street (Grade II) which back onto the northern edge of the Site.

Vegetation

There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) reference 2021/00003/IND within the Site. It relates to a large *Taxus baccata* (Yew) tree growing in the verge in the northern car parking area of the Site. The tree survey which accompanies this application notes this specimen as being of early mature age classification and of 'A1' categorisation in accordance with BS 5837:2012 i.e. high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years. Another TPO exists for a tree close to the south west of the Site off Angel Lane but it is expected that all works associated with the Proposed Development would not affect this off-site tree.

The western Site boundary along Angel Lane is formed by a *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) hedge. When the Site was in former operation this street frontage hedge was generally neatly clipped to a square profile approximately 1.5m high but it has become outgrown as a result of the Site's disuse. Similar sections of Beech hedge line the main access into Site. Small individual trees are found towards the western edge and within the central courtyard space and these are small specimens comprising *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan), *Prunus sp.* (ornamental Cherry) and a dwarf cultivar Lawson Cypress, all of which are surveyed as category 'C' and are of limited quality and value.

The southern edge of the Site comprises unkempt shrub masses, a small apple tree, a poorly managed *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree) and two *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly) trees. The holly trees provide screening benefit between the Site and close neighbours to the south and are judged in the tree survey to be category 'B'.

As well as the Yew tree in the north, the canopy of a large Eucalyptus tree located in the neighbouring garden to the west substantially overhangs the Site. The tree survey indicates that the canopy and Root Protection Area (RPA) for each of these trees is a considerable on-site constraint.

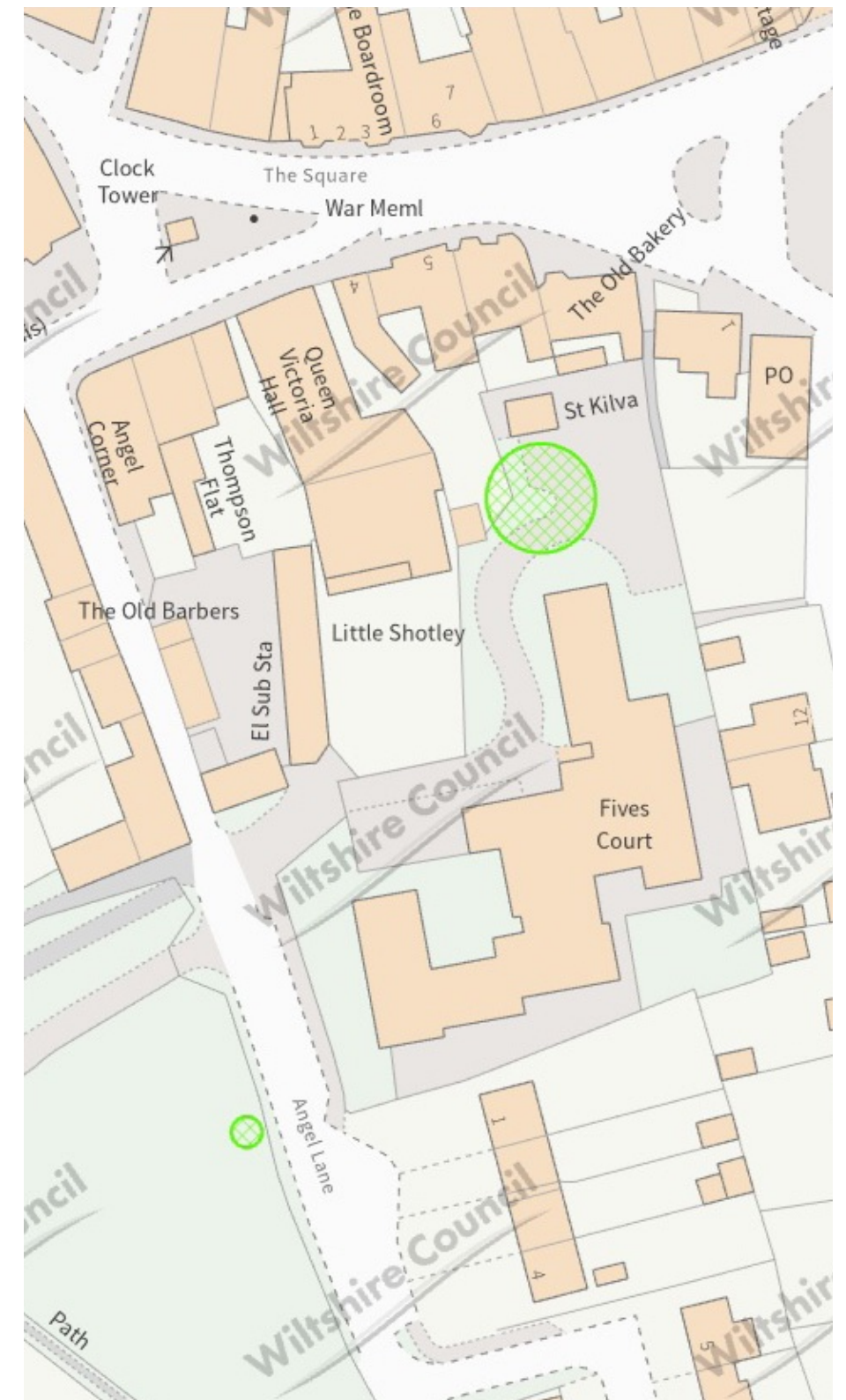


Figure 2. Tree Preservation Orders

0 20m



1.3 Site Photos



Photo 1- The grass area south of the building faces a steep upward slope and is enclosed by a post-and-rail fence.



Photo 2- The hardstanding area opposite the grassed bank is enclosed by the building and the steep slope.



Photo 3- The lawn to the west of the building is contained by frontage hedgerows facing onto Angel Lane.



Photo 4- The vehicular route to the north is bordered by variable timber fencing and shrub vegetation.



Photo 5- The existing courtyard garden lies is surrounded by buildings on three sides and links through to various building entrances.



Photo 6- The hardstanding area to the east of the building is enclosed by stone walls and scrubby vegetation at the Site's eastern edge. Neighbouring residents on Barnes Place closely border the Site with a degree of overlooking.

1.4 Designations

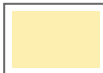
The Site lies within Mere Conservation Area as illustrated on Figure 1.

There is a TPO tree within the Site as shown in Figure 2.

The Site lies entirely outside of the Cotswolds National Landscape which lies approximately 570m north of the Site at its closest point, immediately north of the A303 and covering the agricultural landscape to the north.

The Site lies entirely within a Special Landscape Area. It is a landscape of County importance, a non-statutory designation protected through County Structure Plan and Local Plan policy. The County-level designation recognises important landscapes which are outside of National Landscapes.

Key:

-  Site
-  Cotswolds National Landscape
-  Special Landscape Area

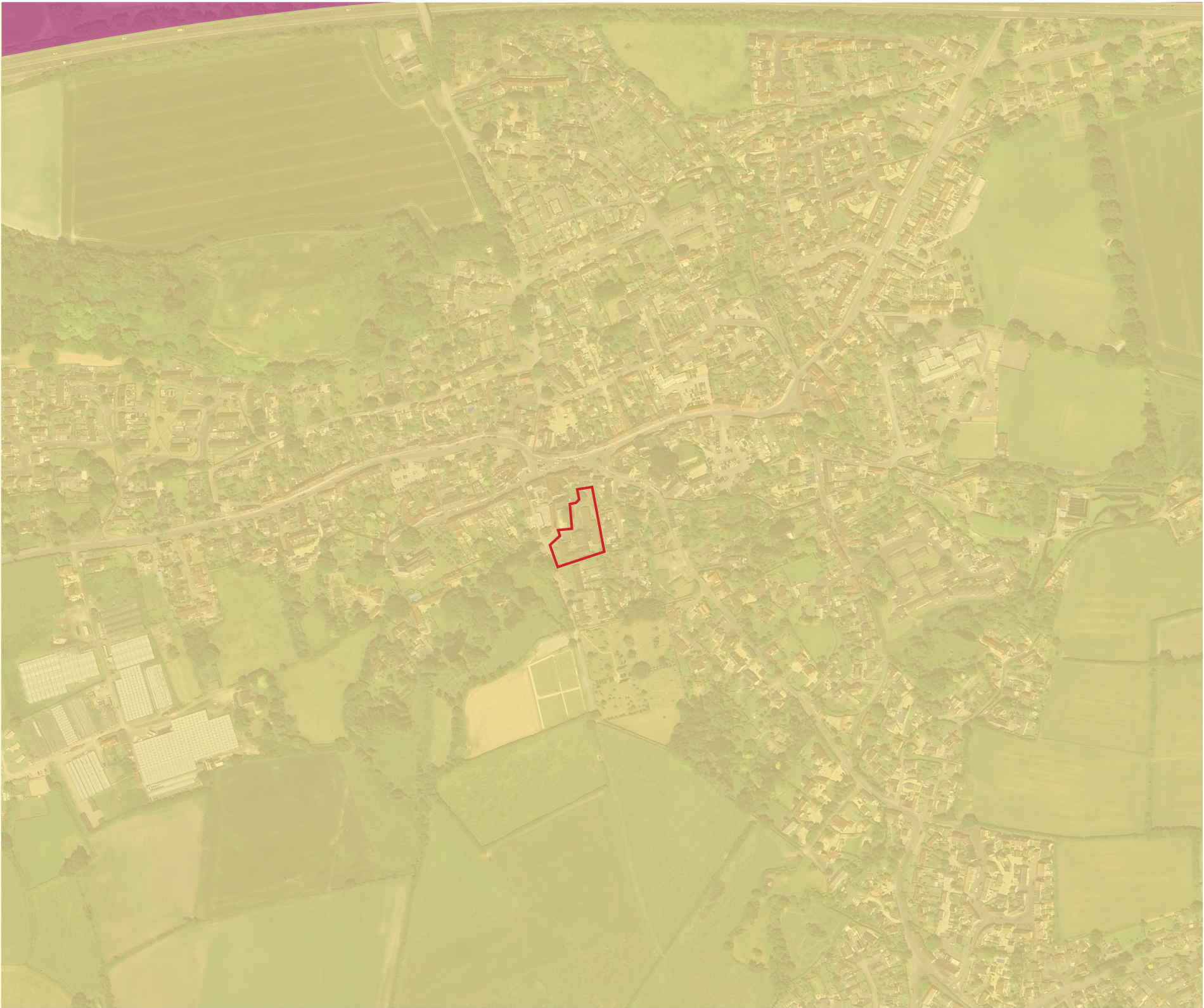


Figure 3. Designations

1.5 Landscape Character

Published Landscape Character



Key:

Site

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)

LCA 13A: The Vale of Wardour

LCA 6B: Kilmington Terrace

Figure 4. Relevant Landscape Character Areas from 'Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)'

Published Landscape Character Assessment

Wiltshire Council published the ‘Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment’ (2005). Landscape character assessment is a technique that has been developed to facilitate systematic analysis, description and classification of the landscape. It involves identification of those features or combinations of elements that contribute to the character of the landscape, thereby enabling the special character and qualities of a particular area to be understood. This information allows reasoned consideration of those issues affecting the landscape, which can be used as a basis for the development of appropriate recommendations for future landscape conservation and management.

In accordance with the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, the Site lies wholly within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 13B- The Vale of Wardour. This LCA coordinates with the Salisbury District Council (abolished in 2009 and taken over by the Wiltshire unitary authority) ‘Salisbury District Landscape Character Assessment’ (February 2008), entitled LCA I1 ‘Vale of Wardour Rolling Clay Vale’. Key characteristics of the wider LCA are as follows:

- *Varied landform character - a deep and narrow valley to the east widening to form a wide and open vale in the west;*
- *The River Nadder and its tributary the Sem wind their way across the floodplain;*
- *A varied underlying geology with Clay, Gault, Portland and Purbeck Stone predominating;*
- *Soils varying from loamy to calcareous reflecting changes in underlying geology;*
- *A mixed agricultural landscape comprising improved pastures and arable cropping.*
- *Strong wooded character with broad leaf and mixed woodland (some of ancient origin) scattered across the vale;*
- *A sense of enclosure provided by the surrounding landscape of the Fovant Greensand Hills (LCA H2);*
- *A settled landscape containing the relatively large settlement of Tisbury;*
- *Nationally important geological (fossil beds) and biological (bat roosting) SSSIs;*

- *Visible historic components displaying evidence for past settlement and agriculture.*

Summary of Visual Character

‘This Landscape Character Area encompasses a rolling clay valley defined by mix of pastures and arable crops – distinctly different from the chalk landscapes which dominate other parts of the District.

Contained between the greensand hills to the north and south, it is a settled landscape of farms, hamlets and villages that sit within the folds of the valley bottom. The River Nadder and its tributary, the Sem, flow west to east seemingly contradicting the shape of the vale which appears to mature (and widen) in the opposite direction. The changing landform from deep valley to wide open vale provides a variety of viewing experiences but the repetition of key features across the landscape provides a unified character.’

However, the Site and its immediate setting are of an urban context and the characteristics identified in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment are mainly not relevant or representative of this. A study of local landscape character in the townscape context is provided on the following page.

Local Landscape Character From Observation



Photo 7- Mere is a historic market town bisected by the main road (B3092/ B3095), with a village core that retains a strong sense of architectural integrity. The main street is lined with buildings from various historical periods and a high concentration of listed buildings. This creates a well-preserved and legible character typical of a market town with deep historical roots.



Photo 8- Mature trees punctuate the built environment of Mere, creating moments of visual interest within the village and contributing to the layered character of the settlement. *Photo shows mature yew tree in the northern part of the site which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).*



Photo 9- The village is largely contained to the south by surrounding agricultural fields which define its rural setting and historical boundaries. *(Photo shows the view along the Public Right of Way to the south of the Site near Mere Cemetery.)*



Traditional materials and boundary treatments are a defining feature of Mere, contributing to the cohesive historic character of the conservation area. Stone walls are particularly prevalent, such as those along the northern site boundary adjacent to the listed building (Photo 10) and the listed wall on Angel Lane (Photo 11). The village’s lanes are defined by mature hedgerows and rubble stone walls, with the surrounding built form retaining traditional styles (Photos 11 & 12), reflecting the conservation area’s strong sense of place.



2.1 Site Analysis

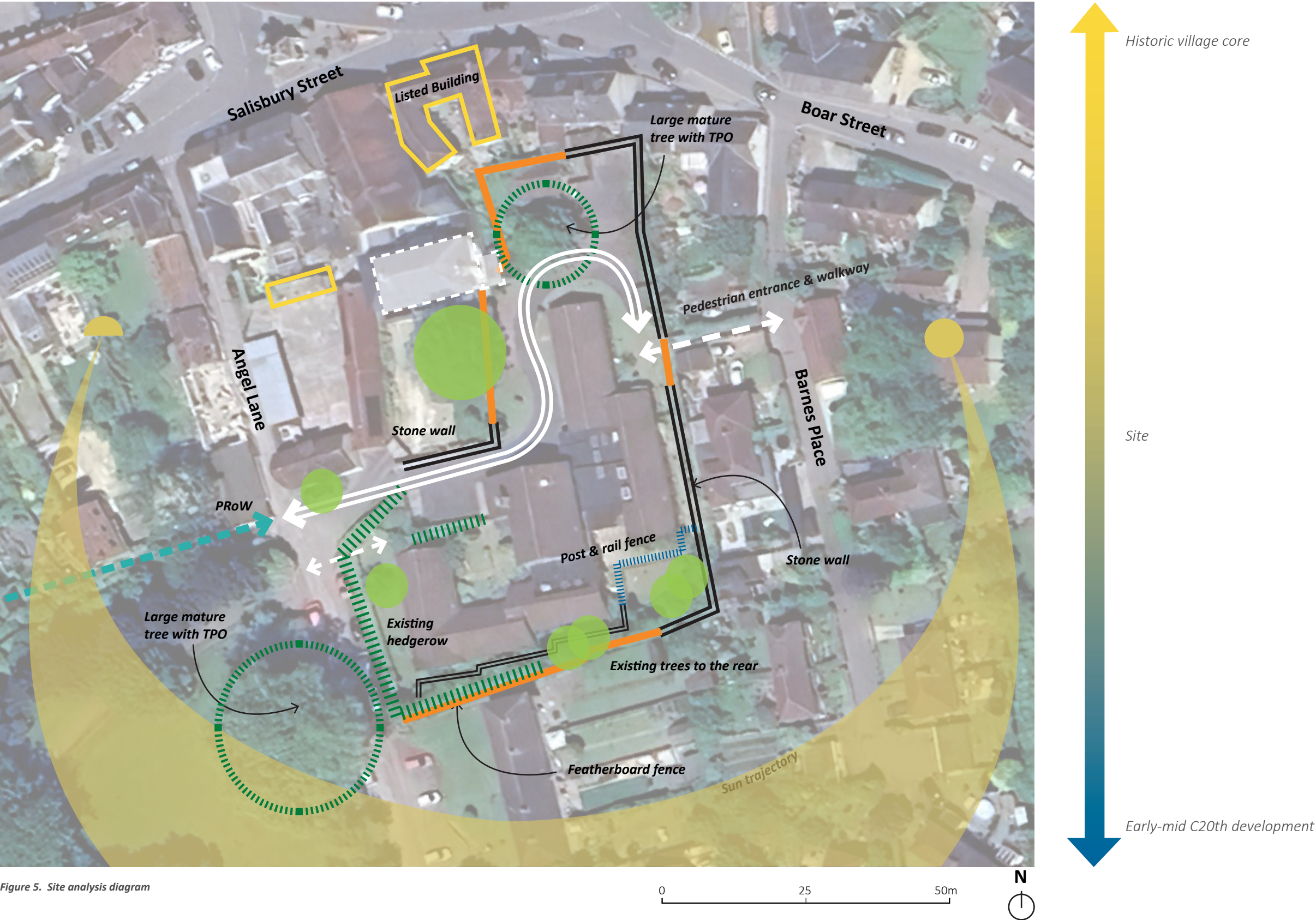


Figure 5. Site analysis diagram



2.2 Constraints & Opportunities

In considering future residential development of the Site, the following constraints and opportunities should be reviewed:

1. Boundary Enhancements. Existing boundaries, including stone walls, hedgerows, and timber fences, present opportunities for enhancement. The proposed development can reinforce the local character by retaining some elements and creating a visually cohesive boundary to the site.

2. Frontage to Angel Lane. The hedgerow along Angel Lane should be preserved as an important feature of the Site within the conservation area. The proposed development can minimise visual impact by aligning with the existing streetscape and respecting the local heritage and nearby listed buildings.

3. Access. There is potential to retain and improve the existing pedestrian entrance. The Site also presents an opportunity to create a permissive footpath connecting Barnes Place to Angel Lane, linking existing Public Rights of Way and pedestrian paths. Clear separation between public and private access routes will need to be considered.

4. Communal Areas. The proposed development can establish distinct communal spaces. Zone 4A, adjacent to the entrance, could serve as a transitional courtyard open to visitors, while Zone 4B can function as a private shared courtyard, providing a communal space for residents.

5. Vegetation. Existing mature trees provide a valuable asset and should be retained where possible. They contribute positively to the local character while presenting an opportunity to help moderate the proposed increase in height of the buildings and thereby assisting in integrating them into the surrounding setting.

6. Neighbours. There are a number of closely proximate neighbouring properties with aspects towards the Site. Whilst these neighbours have existing views of the Site and building, the increase in height and positioning of new windows will need careful consideration to avoid undue overlooking.

General. There are clear opportunities within the proposed development to reflect the architectural style and detailing which define historic Mere, together with contextually appropriate boundary treatments and materials. Existing trees both on and bounding the Site are a design constraint which will need to be understood and protected as appropriate.



Figure 6. Constraints and opportunities diagram

3.1 Proposed Development

Key:

1. Existing site access retained.
2. Improved pedestrian entrance from Angel Lane.
3. Main communal entrance to building.
4. Shared surface area with new accessible parking bay and loading/emergency bay.
5. Bin store.
6. Central courtyard for residents and visitors.
7. Private courtyard for residents with raised growing beds and opportunities.
8. Existing hedgerows to be retained as a sensitive boundary to the streetscape in the context of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings.
9. Expanded car park.
10. Eastern pedestrian access retained for residents and neighbours to access between Angel Lane and Barnes Place through the site.
11. Residents garden space/ thoroughfare.
12. Existing boundary stone walls to be retained for privacy with neighbours and to maintain local character.
13. Existing vegetation to be retained and enhanced in the south to improve relationship to neighbours.
14. New gated accesses to neighbouring back gardens if required.
15. Existing trees to be retained with proposals sensitive to root protection areas. Larger specimens will help to moderate the increased building height with its surrounding environment.



Figure 7. Illustrative landscape masterplan

3.2 Proposed Character Areas

The following character areas are defined within the proposed development and these are explored over the next few pages:

A- Angel Lane frontage.

B- Main entrance and central courtyard.

C- Shared surface drive.

D- Car park.

E- Linear garden.

F- Residents' courtyard.

G- Southern edge.



Figure 8. Designed character areas

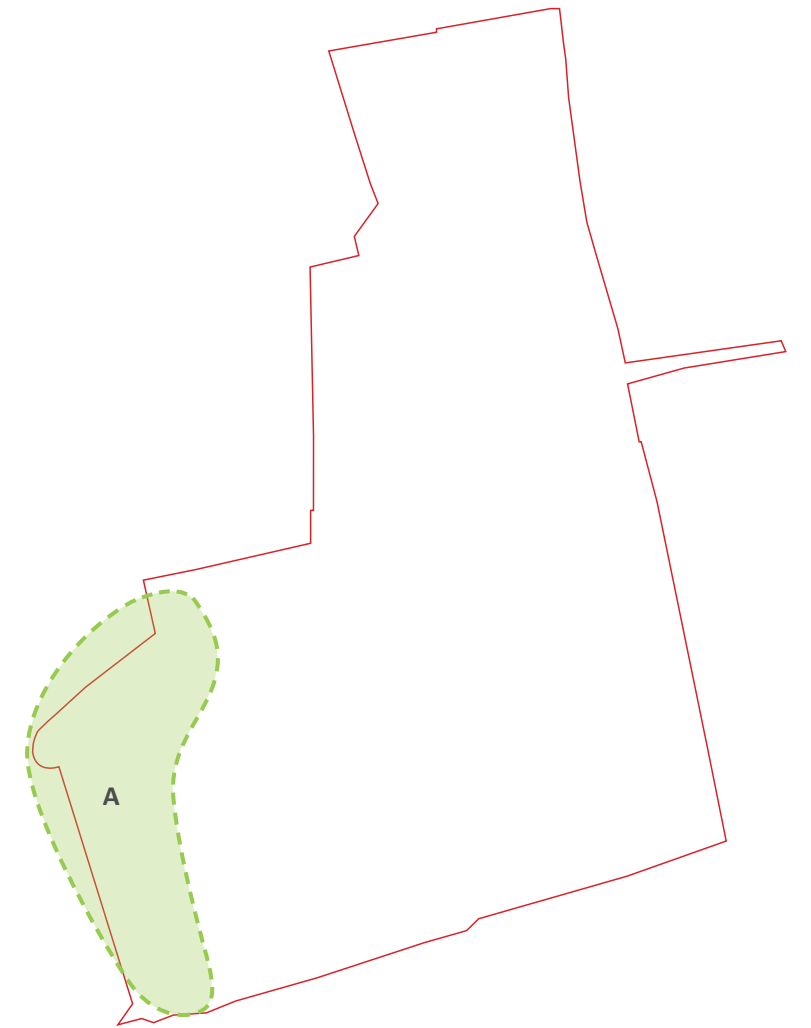
A - Angel Lane frontage

Designed character:

- Neat clipped beech hedge forming the main boundary. Existing hedge to be retained and brought back into regular maintenance.
- Improved pedestrian gateway through the existing hedge with improved legibility from Angel Lane.
- Western build line would be in essentially the same position and extent as the existing, albeit a storey higher. Therefore the setback from Angel Lane and response to grain would be sensitively achieved. The introduction of additional tree planting would help moderate the building height increase.



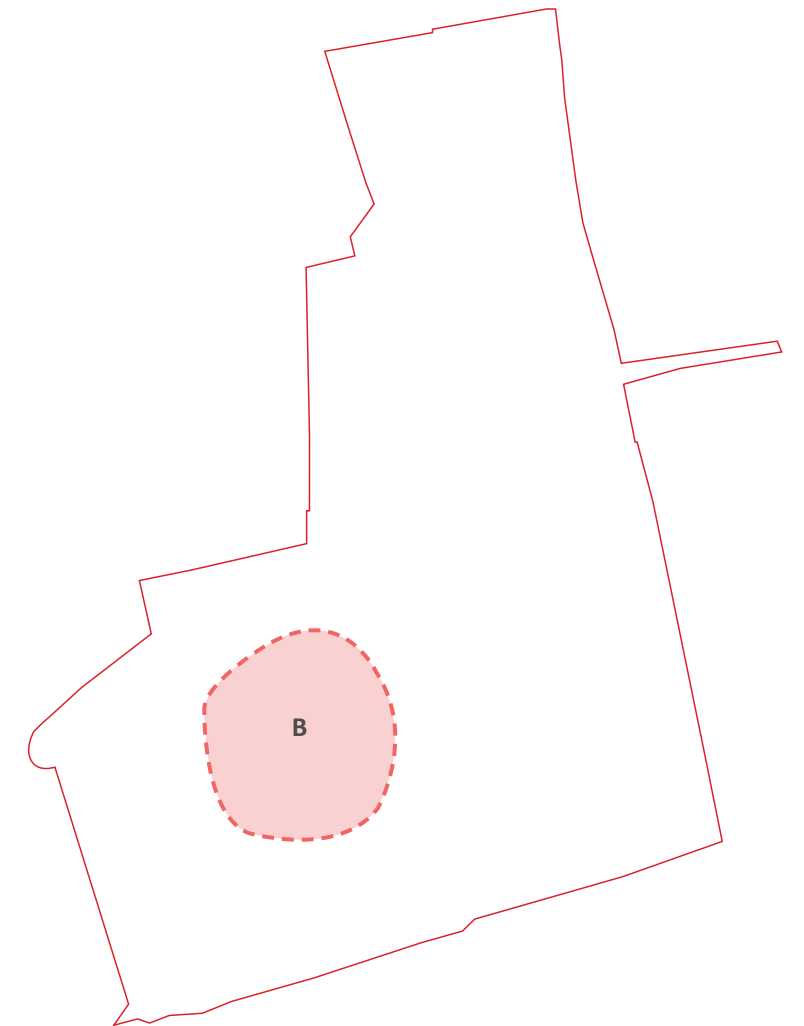
Figure 9. Historic streetview image of Angel Lane frontage circa 2009 with the Site in operation in its former use and the boundary hedge neatly clipped to approximately 1.2m high.



B - Main entrance and central courtyard

Designed character:

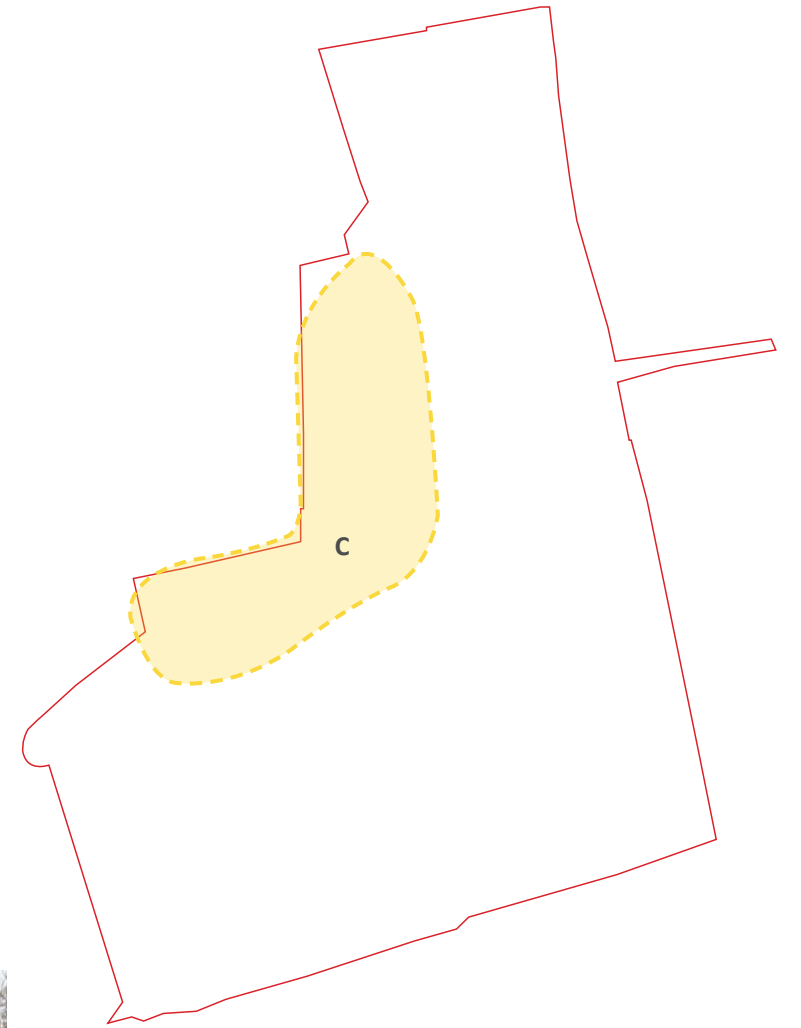
- Centrally located space for rest and socialisation, close to the main communal entrance of the building. Opportunities for seating or thoroughfare.
- Focal tree planting and ornamental beds to complement the surrounding building form.
- Cloistered building typology surrounding the space with paths across it relating to the wider ground floor circulation and access.



C - Shared surface drive

Designed character:

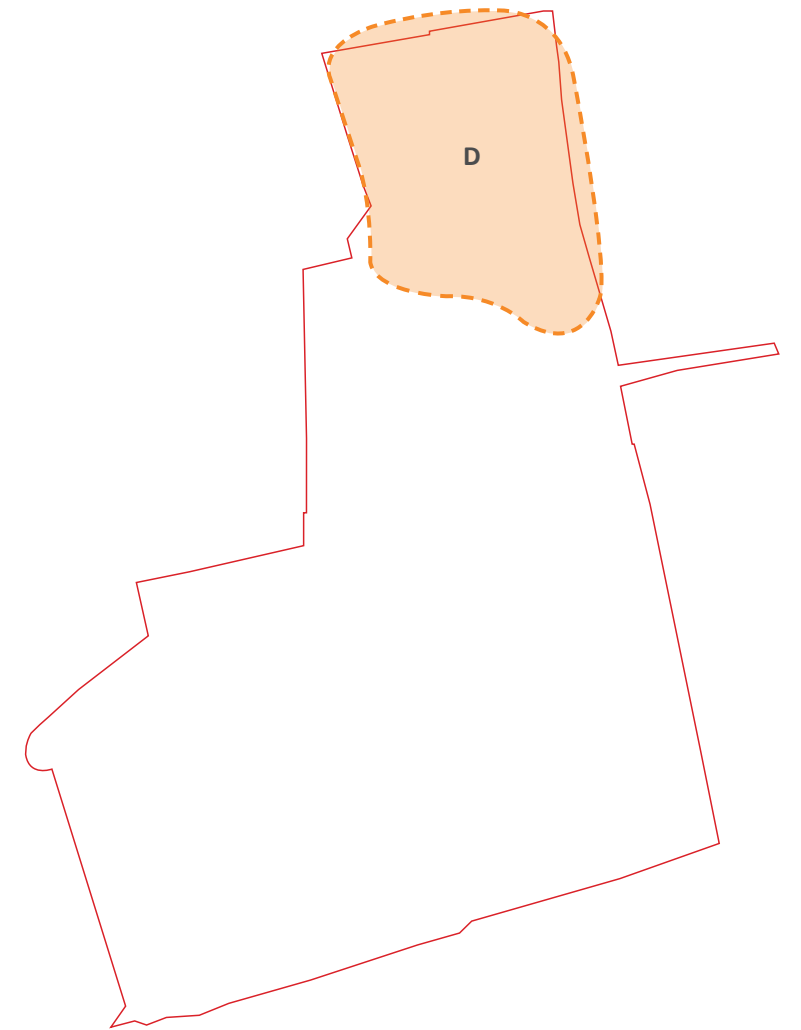
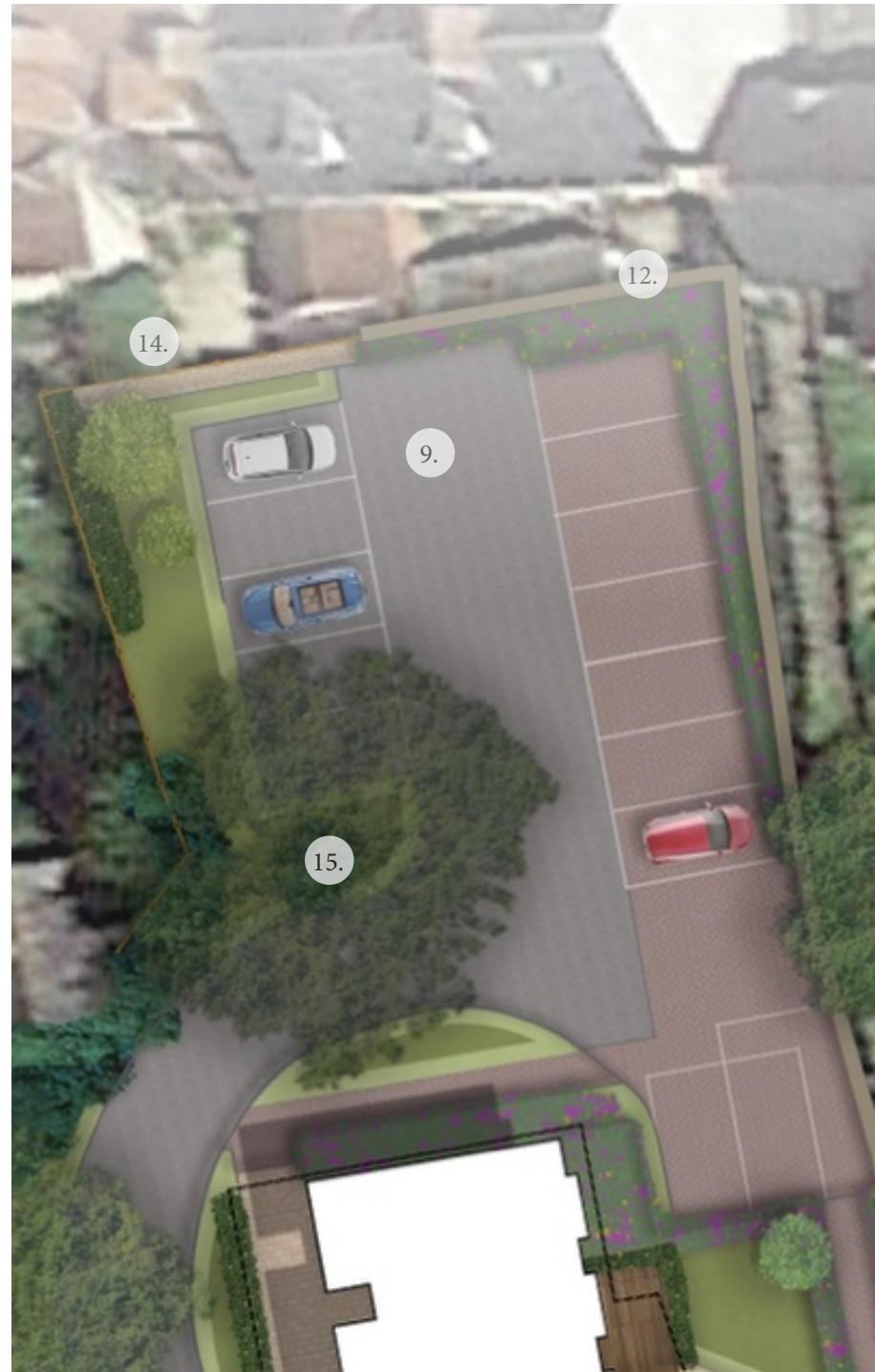
- Shared pedestrian and vehicle thoroughfare linking between Angel Lane and the Site's car park. A change in surface material to block paving would highlight the shared space in contrast to the standard asphalt of Angel Lane.
- Gated access towards the main communal entrance of the building with good visibility towards the entrance.
- Provision of accessible parking and loading/ emergency bay.
- Area bordered by new native hedging and existing natural stone wall.



D - Car park

Designed character:

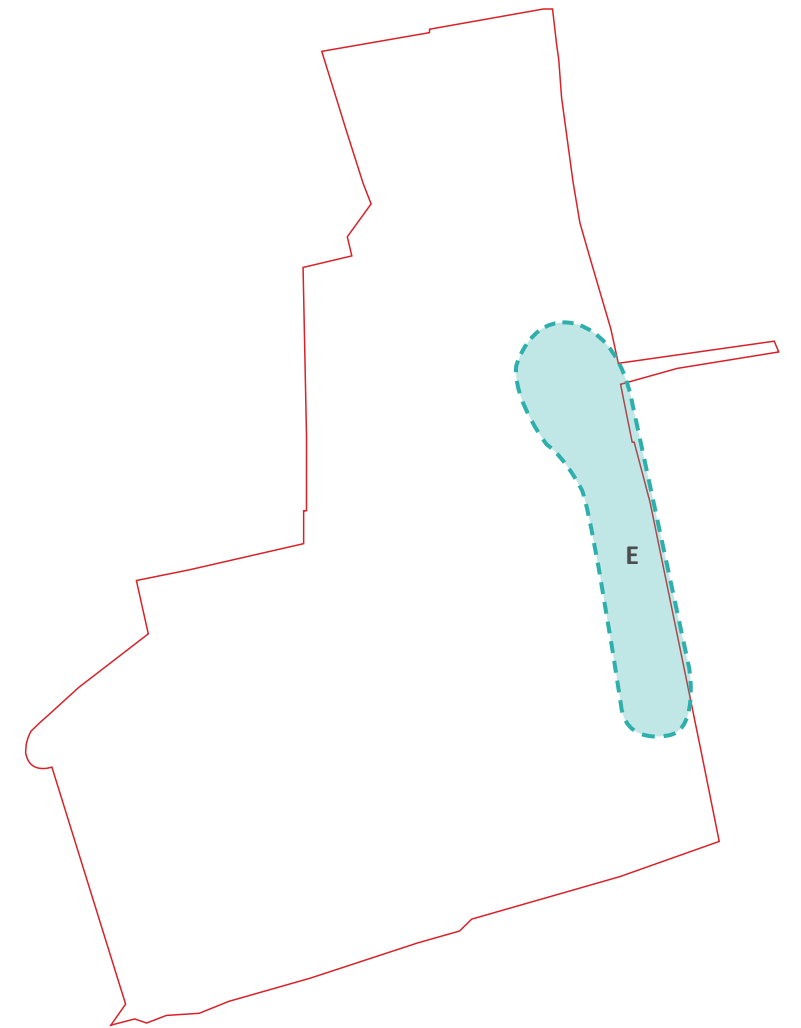
- Well organised car parking separated from the main pedestrian routes with the exception of a new accessible bay.
- Sensitive re-use of existing surfaces in the vicinity of significant trees, particularly to safeguard the large focal Yew tree which is protected by a TPO. Removal of an excess area of existing surfacing to improve the condition beneath the Yew tree.
- Natural stone boundary walls retained as character features at the curtilages of neighbouring listed buildings and other buildings of local heritage interest. Timber fencing retained or renewed as necessary.
- Removal of the ancillary garage built in reconstituted stone and the timber fenced bin store structure.



E - Linear garden

Designed character:

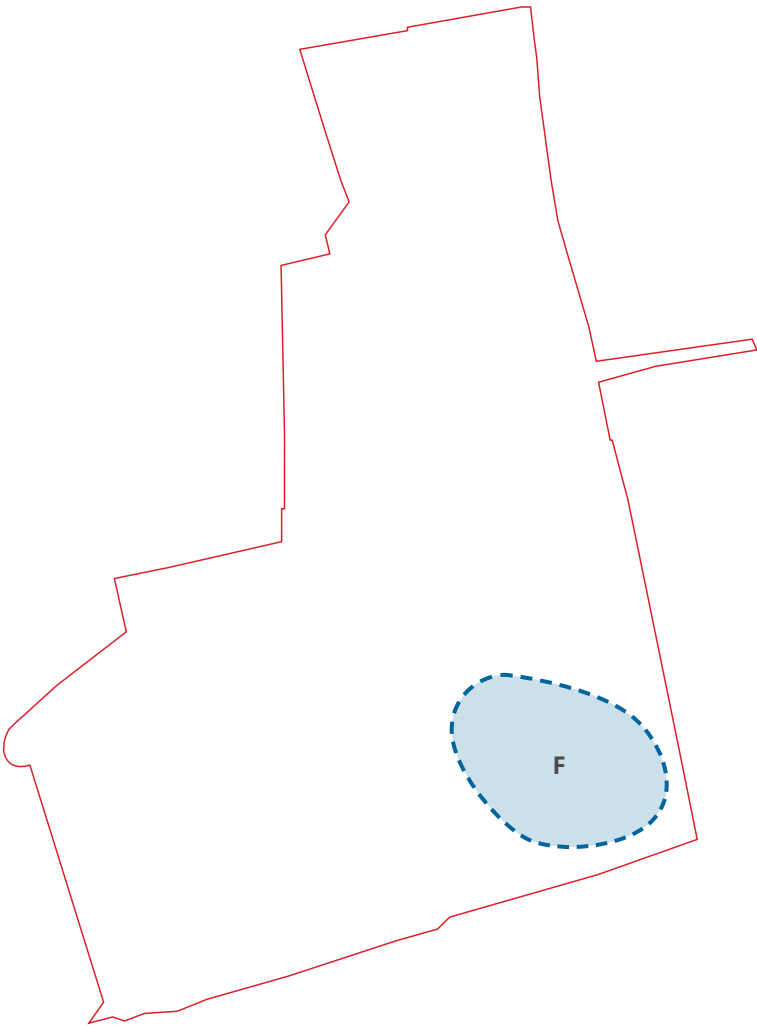
- Private garden space for the shared use of residents. Containing a variety of ornamental planting including sensory planting; colour, texture and scent. Opportunities for seating or thoroughfare.
- Pedestrian link between the car park and the residents' courtyard, with gated access for use by residents. The private nature of the space, in proximity to public use of the Barnes Close alleyway, is reinforced by the change in surface material, railing and gates at the entrance, dense planting and the meandering path which prevents legibility of the destination. It is also closely overlooked by a number of flats at ground and first floors.
- The planting gives the opportunity to screen and separate the building from adjacent neighbours, including by new tree planting. The high boundary wall would be retained at the eastern boundary.



F - Residents' courtyard

Designed character:

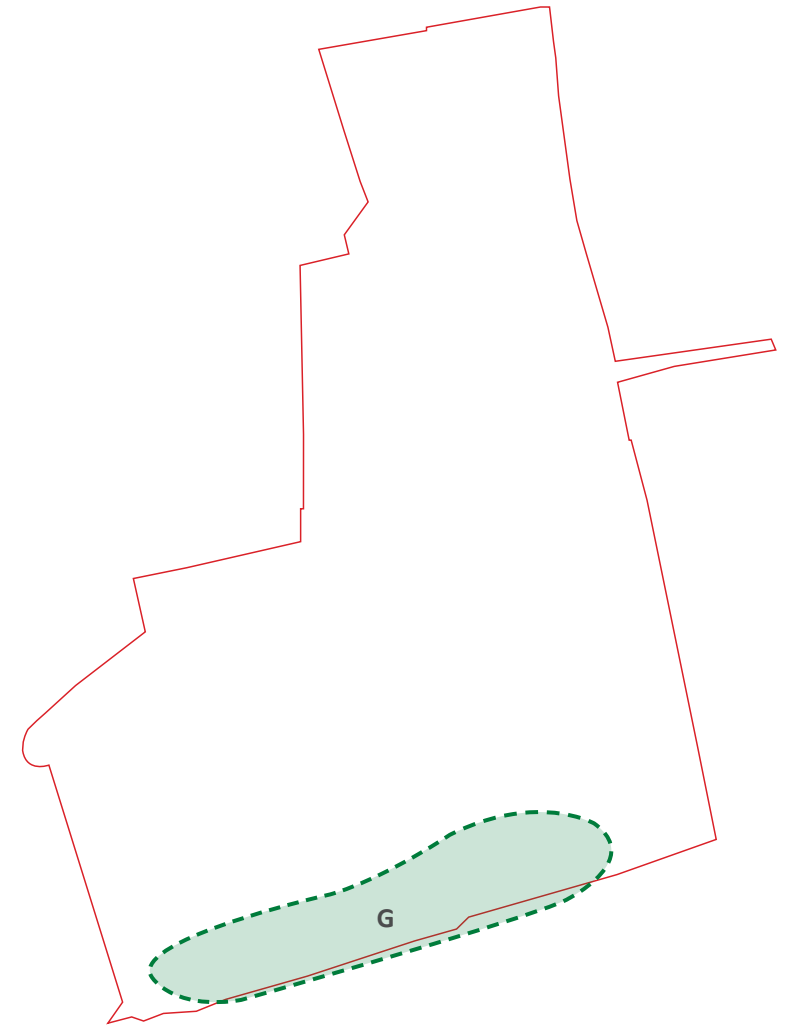
- Hard landscape area with flexible uses, accommodating social interaction, orientation and access to several key building entrances.
- No permanent furniture in the main area to allow for moveable tables and chairs.
- Raised growing beds, to help frame the space and give shared activity and interest. The beds would encourage residents to use the space and to linger and socialise.
- Low gabion retaining structure with opportunity to reuse site-won material in the backfill.
- Retention of existing shrubs and trees at the south eastern boundary to enhance residents' outlook, and to screen and contain the space.



G - Southern edge

Designed character:

- strongly vegetated buffer to the southern edge with closely proximate neighbours, utilising the existing established shrubby edge.
- retention of established evergreen trees on the boundary for reinforce separation and visual screening.



3.3 Soft Landscape Palette



	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
	8	9	10

Photograph 1. Silver birch (*Betula pendula*)
Photograph 2. Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
Photograph 3. Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)
Photograph 4. Columnar form Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine')
Photograph 5. *Crataegus monogyna*
Photograph 6. *Malus sylvestris*
Photograph 7. Mixed native hedge
Photograph 8. Ornamental planting - sunny mix
Photograph 9. Ornamental planting - shady mix
Photograph 10. Species-rich flowering grassland



3.4 Hard Landscape Palette

Surfacing

Impermeable roads, car park and footways



Standard asphalt (new or existing with new wearing course)

Shared surface and permeable parking bays



Permeable PCC block paving - Tobermore 'Hydropave Pedesta', 100 x 200mm units, herringbone bond, colour Bracken, or equal and approved.

Covered pedestrian routes



PCC block paving - Tobermore 'Braemar', 300 x 200mm units, stretcher bond, finish ground textured, colour Jura Grey, or equal and approved.

Private ground floor terraces and edges



Loose gravel - Golden flint gravel, 20mm, or equal and approved.

Private ground floor terraces and paths



Permeable flag paving - Tobermore 'Hydropave Textured Slabs', 400x400mm units, stack bond, finish textured, colour Natural, or equal and approved.

Central courtyard and eastern footpath



Resin bound gravel - 2No. colours each buffs/ light browns.

Courtyards and main entrance paths



Permeable PCC block paving - Tobermore 'Hydropave Braemar', 300 x 200mm units, stretcher bond, finish ground textured, colour Jura Grey, or equal and approved.

Private ground floor terraces



Composite decking - finish slip resistant, colour mid-brown.

Boundaries

Various existing boundaries



Existing local stone boundary walls to be retained.

Existing low retaining wall (southern edge)



Existing concrete retaining wall to be retained, to be cleaned, vegetation cut back and coping re-set as necessary.

Low retaining wall in private courtyard



Proposed gabion retaining wall - galvanised steel mesh gabion cages, approx. 0.7m high, backfilled with site-won material.

Eastern gateway and other repaired fences



Proposed timber closeboard fencing - 1.8m high, pressure treated softwood, with matching gates.

Pedestrian accesses and boundaries



Estate railing and gates - 1.2m high, 5-bar design, galvanised mild steel, painted colour black.

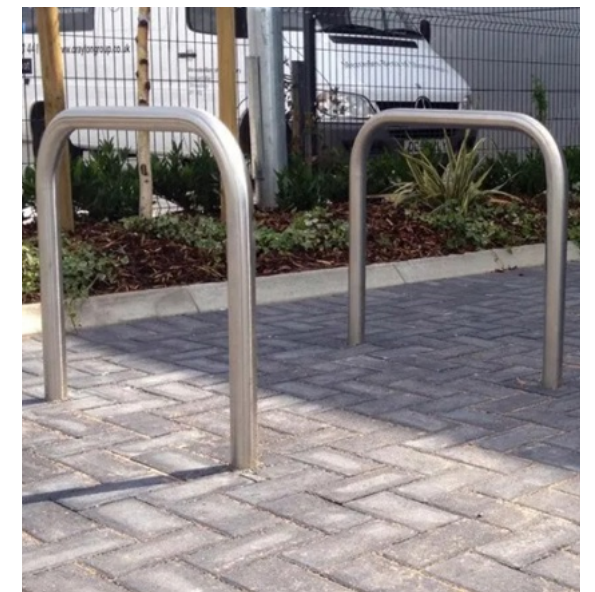
Furniture and other features



Seat with backrest and arms - 1.5m long, to be Falco 'FalcoRelax Seat' with armrests and backrest, or similar and approved.



Raised timber planter - To be 100 x 200mm section oak sleepers laid horizontally to approx. 750mm high. Backfilled with suitable topsoil.



Cycle stands, 2No. to provide 4No. spaces - 800mm high x 715mm long, to be Broxap 'Sheffield Cycle Stand', galvanised mild steel, or equal and approved.

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