Ladybarn House Street Block, M14 6ND

Design & Access Statement

BAL Architecture

27 August 2024



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Illustrative view of proposed main entrance

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement is being submitted on behalf of Bluesky Student Ladybarn House Ltd / Forge Development in support of the planning application for a new standalone student accommodation block within the existing student accommodation site at Ladybarn House, 301 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ND. The site is being operated and managed by Almero Student.

The proposals include the following;

- A new 3-storey, detached street block containing a total of 36 no. new student bed spaces.
- An internal arrangement of 6 no. individual cluster flats, each comprising 6 no. en-suite student bedrooms and a generous shared kitchen/lounge/ dining space.
- A site-wide enhanced landscape design comprising increased green space and biodiversity, improved pedestrian / cyclist connectivity, enhanced waste/ recycling management and reduced on-site car parking.

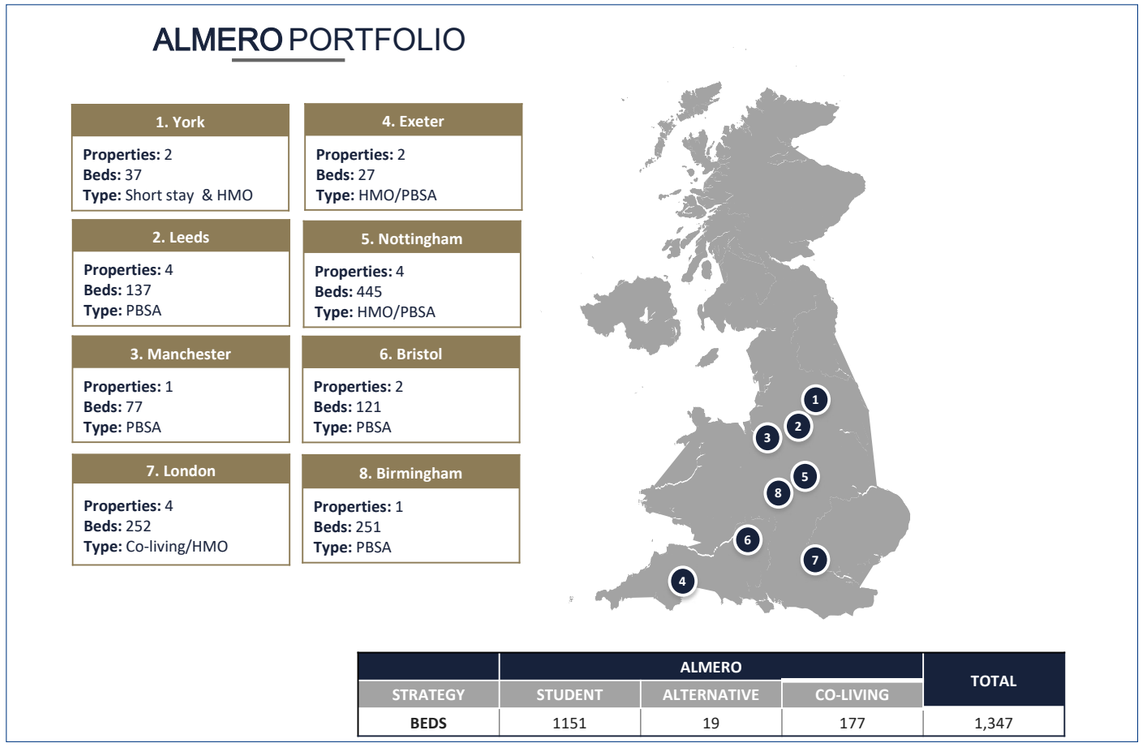
This document describes these proposals in more detail and should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings. Reference should also be made to any supplementary information produced by various specialist consultants and submitted under separate cover as part of the application.

Core project team

- **Client / Applicant:** Forge Development / Bluesky Student Ladybarn House Ltd
- **Student Operator / Manager:** Almero Student
- **Architect:** BAL Architecture
- **Landscape Architect:** UDAL Landscape Architecture
- **Town Planning Consultant:** THIS Planning

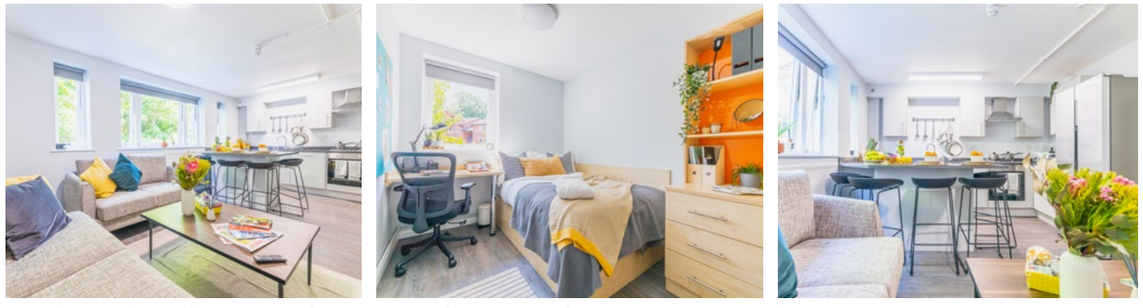
1.2. Student operator overview

Almero Student currently operate over 20 properties across the UK, housing a population of over 1,300 residents. They specialise in providing well-managed, clean and comfortable accommodation - that feels like a sophisticated ‘home from home’.
All accommodation is truly all inclusive - featuring utilities, TV Licence and WiFi as standard. A dedicated in-house management team, overseeing marketing, letting and maintenance aim to ensure all student’s have the best possible living experience.



	ALMERO			TOTAL
STRATEGY	STUDENT	ALTERNATIVE	CO-LIVING	
BEDS	1151	19	177	1,347

Map of existing Almero student sites across the UK



Example internal views from recently refurbished Almero Student Beech Gardens accommodation in Birmingham

1.3. Project objectives

Applicant mission statement

In 2023 the student accommodation site of Ladybarn House, 301 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ND was acquired by new ownership (the applicant).

The new owners established the following mission statement for the site;

- To improve the standard and quality of living for all students.
- To improve the property's appearance in the wider local community.
- To improve communal amenity space and enhance the sense of community on the site.

Interior refurbishment

Since purchasing the site last year the new ownership team have already started an extensive interior refurbishment of the entire building including new and improved communal amenity facilities for the students.

This work includes a complete renovation and improved activation of the primary corner retail frontages along Moseley Road, which had been vacant, shutterred and un-welcoming for years.

New opportunities

The new ownership team have also identified a unique opportunity to further enhance the site by utilising vacant car parking space to provide additional high quality student accommodation and landscaped garden space.



Existing front and rear views of the property

2. Site Analysis

2.1. Site location

Site location

Ladybarn House is located at 301 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6ND.

Site connectivity

Walking
The site is within a short walk of the University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus which features the Armitage Sports Centre, Firs Botanical Grounds and several university buildings and accommodation blocks. Wilmslow Road to the south and Wilbraham Road to the west feature and array of retail, supermarket, food/ beverage and healthcare facilities. The large open green space of Platts Field Park is a short walk to the west.

Cycling
The town centre is 15 minutes cycle ride away northwards along Wilmslow Road and Oxford Road.

Train
Levenshulme Railway Station is 20 min. walk east of the site and features regular trains to Manchester Piccadilly Station.

Bus
Numerous bus stops are located within a short walk from the site, with regular busses towards Manchester University buildings and the city centre.



Aerial view of the site in context

2.2. Site context

The site

The site comprises an ‘L’ shaped, four storey building, with a small element on the corner containing a fifth storey.

The building features purpose built student accommodation accessed from Mosely Road to the north, Wilmslow Road to the west and a relatively large car park space along Carrill Drive to the south. The east of the site features a private green space with mature trees.

The building features four ground floor commercial units with direct street access along Wilmslow Road and rear access from the car park.

Internally, the student accommodation comprises a mixture of four-bedroom flats, one-bedroom flats and self-contained studios, accessed via four separate stairwells.

The property was built circa. 1993 and features traditional masonry construction with fully glazed stairwells and concrete tiled pitched roofs.

For further information regarding the site’s townscape and heritage context please refer to the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Assessment report submitted as part of this application.



Aerial view of the existing site

2.3. Site opportunities

Existing car park

- There is currently an over provision of car parking spaces on the site.
- The existing car park has very low occupancy with many vacant spaces.
- The expanse of car parking results in poor pedestrian connectivity across the southern approach to the site and a lack of usable outdoor amenity space.
- There is currently no dedicated on-site secure cycle parking for students.
- There is currently no dedicated refuse/recycling waste management space, which results in an array of Euro bins in visually prominent locations along Carrill Drive.

Identified opportunities

1. Utilise the vacant car park for new accommodation
2. Increase amount of green amenity space
3. Improve pedestrian routes across the site
4. Improve cycle and waste facilities



Aerial view of the existing site







Existing views of vast array of empty car parking spaces and lack of secure cycle parking and usable outdoor amenity space

2.3. Site opportunities

Existing green space

- The existing outdoor green space offers poor quality amenity space and is currently underused by the students.
- The existing space does not currently positively contribute to the wider community.
- The streetscene along Carrill Drive and Mosely Road could be enhanced by higher quality, better utilised outdoor amenity space.

Identified opportunities

1. Increase functionality of the green space to provide high quality amenity space
2. Utilise the space where possible to engage with and benefit the wider community
3. Increase biodiversity on the site
4. Improve the streetscene along Carill Drive and Moseley Road



Aerial view of the existing site







Existing views of underused and poor quality outdoor green space

2.4. Aerial views

Existing aerial views



Existing aerial view from the north west



Existing aerial view from the north east



Existing aerial view from the south east



Existing aerial view from the south west

3. Planning History

3.1. Previous owners' applications

Application submitted in 2015

- Outline planning application submitted in 2015 and dismissed at appeal in 2016, for a 4 storey building to form a total of 28 student flats with associated reorganisation of car park to provide a 13 space and 7 space car park.

- Planning Inspector commented: *"appear as an incongruous feature within the street scene and, consequently, would not represent a high standard of design."*

- Planning Inspector commented: *"I find that the balance of the evidence indicates that there is a need for the accommodation proposed. The proposal would meet the relevant requirements of Core Strategy Policies SP1, DM1, and H12 which seek to provide high quality and diverse housing around district centres which meet local needs and provide better accommodation for students in appropriate locations."*



Illustrative proposed massing image submitted as part of a previous owner's 2015 planning application

Application submitted in 2018

- Full planning application submitted in 2018, for a 3 storey building to form a total of 44 student bed spaces with associated reorganisation of car park.

- Planning application withdrawn in November 2019.



Illustrative proposed massing image submitted as part of a previous owner's 2018 planning application

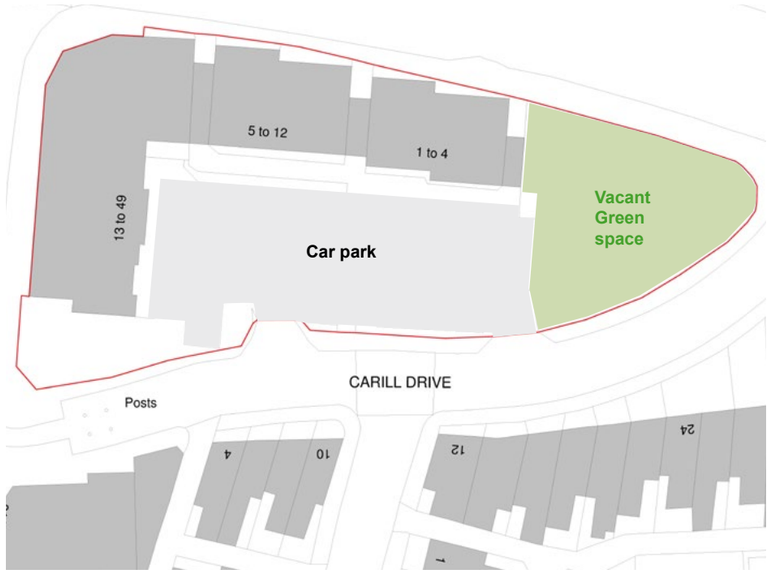
4. Design Proposals

4.1. Overview of the proposals

The proposals seek to enhance the site and create new, high quality student accommodation and external landscaping. The proposals have been established in the following 3 steps:

1. Appraising the existing site opportunities

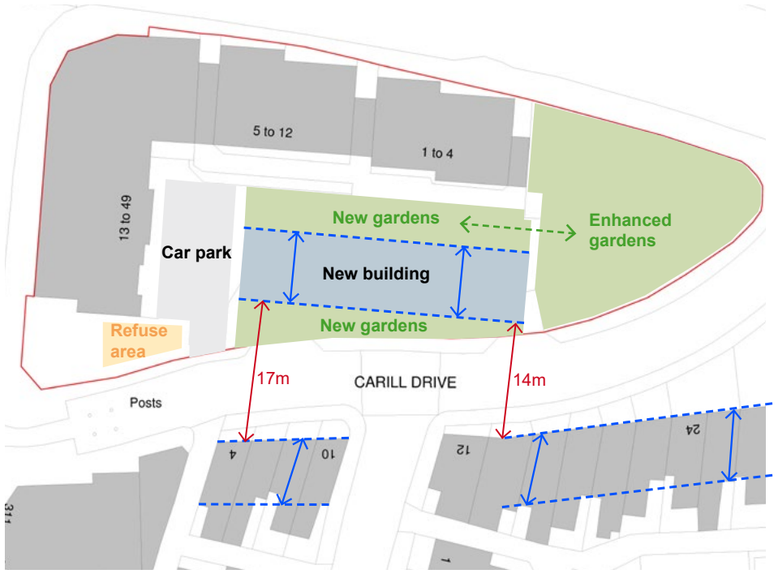
- Expanse of vacant car parking space on the site.
- Poor pedestrian connectivity and lack of usable outdoor amenity space.
- No dedicated on-site secure cycle parking for students.
- Poorly managed and highly visible refuse/recycling waste storage
- Poor quality and underused green space to the east of the site.



Plan diagram showing existing site

2. Locating a new street block of reasonable scale

- Scale and depth of proposed new block follows the principles of the existing terraced houses on the opposite side of Carill Drive.
- Proposed building located over 14m north of existing Carill Drive houses opposite, resulting in a typical and reasonable residential street experience for the area, with no unreasonable impacts on daylight/sunlight or privacy.
- Proposed building is set-back from the street to create reasonable front garden space as well as generous new rear garden space linking to an enhanced garden space to the east.
- Proposed car park reduced in size to an appropriate scale for the required use with new refuse/recycling storage area located out of sight from Carill Drive.



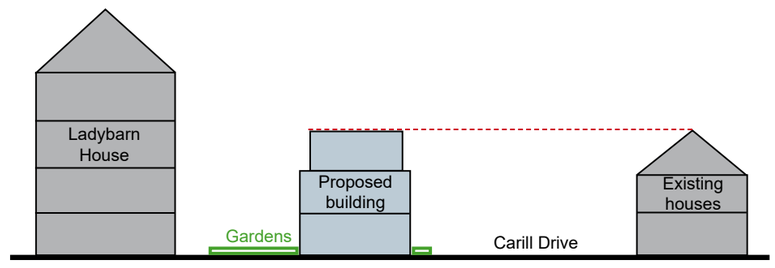
Plan diagram showing proposed new block proportions established to match the terraced housing depths opposite

3. Refining the massing proportions and overall height

- Refined massing proportions and proposed facade recesses respond to the typical widths of the existing terraced houses on the opposite side of Carill Drive.
- Facade recesses help to break down the overall scale of the proposed block and remain in keeping with the rhythm and scale of the houses opposite.
- Height of proposed building set to match the Carill Drive houses opposite.
- Two primary building storeys plus one additional set-back roof storey proposed to remain in keeping with the scale and proportions of the houses opposite.



Plan diagram showing proposed facade recesses created to break down the scale of the massing block in line with the terraced housing proportions opposite



Section AA diagram showing proposed new building with set-back roof storey to remain lower in height than the opposite terraced houses

4.2. Layout

Each floor level of the proposed three storey building comprises two separate cluster flats arranged on either side of a central circulation space.

Each cluster flat contains 6 no. en-suite bedrooms and a generous communal kitchen/lounge/dining space at the end of a short corridor.

At ground floor level there is a direct through-route linking the front entrance to the rear communal gardens. Two of the ground floor en-suite bedrooms are designed for wheelchair accessibility.

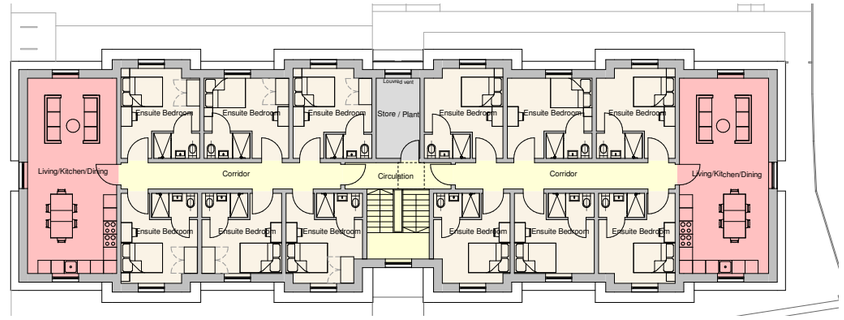
The uppermost storey is reduced in floor area to create the effect of a ‘loft’ floor, in keeping with the scale and massing of the surrounding properties.

Externally the proposed design results in new cycle parking stands, an improved location of refuse and recycling store and more efficient quantity of car parking spaces, allowing for 2 no. wheelchair accessible car parking spaces. For further information please refer to the Landscape Architect and Transport consultant’s reports submitted as part of this application.

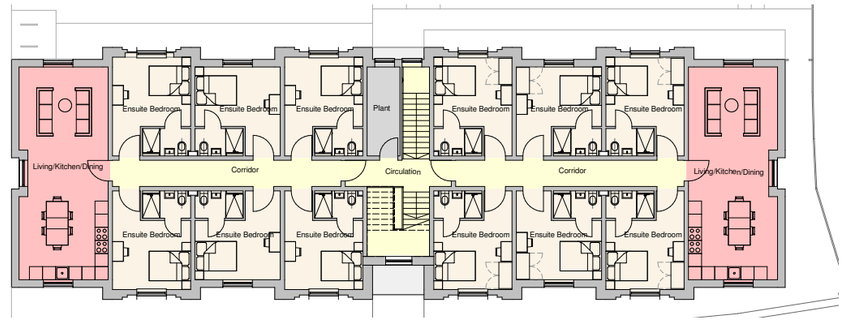
Residential design quality

All proposed interior spaces have been designed to offer a high quality living environment for the students. The bedrooms are all generous in size (ranging between 14-16m^2) and feature en-suite bathrooms and large windows to receive good daylight. The open-plan communal kitchen/lounge/dining spaces are spacious (ranging between 36-39m^2) and located at the ends of the building to benefit from daylight from three windows facing multiple aspects. The rooms are all sufficiently set-back from Carill Drive, with lounge spaces facing the rear to maintain privacy.

The proposed building’s main entrances and vertical circulation spaces all receive natural light and are located centrally for clear legibility and short travel distances. The rear entrance at ground floor level allows direct access to the communal garden spaces and to the wider student facilities on the site, such as the laundry and communal amenity spaces (lounges, games and study spaces etc) which are all located at ground floor level in the main Ladybarn House building.



Proposed level 2 plan



Proposed level 1 plan



Proposed ground floor plan

4.3. Scale

The scale of the proposed building has been refined in response to its surroundings with its depth and height matching the row of terraced houses along Carill drive opposite the site.

The proposed building footprint allows for a sufficient amount of car parking to be retained on the site whilst creating new landscaped outdoor amenity space and much improved pedestrian connectivity across the site.

The proposed uppermost storey (level 2) is reduced in mass and designed with the appearance of a set-back ‘loft’ level, in a similar way to the existing roofscapes of the terraced housing along Carill Drive.

The proposed flat roof is designed to accommodate, and visually conceal, a large array of solar PV panels, to benefit the building’s sustainability and energy credentials. For further information please refer to the Energy and Sustainability reports submitted by specialist consultants as part of this application.

For further information regarding the proprosal’s impacts on the streetscene and townscape context please refer to the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Assessment report submitted as part of this application.



Illustrative proposed street view from Carill Drive (east)

4.4. Appearance

The proposed facade design draws upon the materiality and rhythm of the site's unique surrounding context, resulting in a high quality new building that enhances its setting.

A series of projecting and recessed brick bays are proposed, with framing corbel detailing, as a contemporary reference to the traditional bay window projections of the Carill Drive houses opposite.

A subtle variation of brick tones and textures is proposed to create a natural rhythm to the elevation, breaking down the scale of the building and remaining in keeping with the existing streetscene.

The predominant facade material is proposed to be red brick, to provide a visual and emotive link to Manchester's industrial heritage and to complement the surrounding terraced houses.

The recessed, uppermost roofscape storey is proposed to be clad in dark grey shingled Zinc as a modern interpretation of the traditional slate tiled roofs seen throughout the area. The material of Zinc is proposed due to its durability and unique surface quality which naturally weathers well over time.



Illustrative proposed front view from Carill Drive

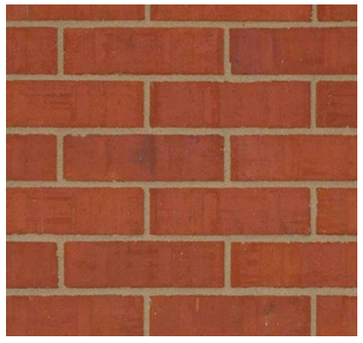
Existing Carill Drive Houses





Projecting and recessed bays - Mixture of smooth and textured red brick with dark grey slate tiled roofs

Proposed Materials



Primary 'projecting' bays - Light, smooth manchester red brick with flush mortar (e.g. Weinerberger Chester Red)



Secondary 'recessed' bays - Dark, textured red brick with recessed horizontal mortar joints (e.g. Weinerberger Ashington Red Multi)



Roof 'set-back' storey - Dark grey tiled / shingled Zinc (e.g. VM Zinc ADEKA, Anthra Zinc)

4.4. Appearance



Illustrative proposed front view from Carill Drive (west)

4.5. Landscaping, cycle parking and waste management

A detailed site-wide landscape proposal has been developed by Udal Landscape Architecture featuring a range of high-quality hard and soft landscaping enhancements designed to rejuvenate the site and boost student well-being.

The proposals sensitively mediate the existing topographic level changes across the site by integrating sloping paths, grass banks and steps to provide new pedestrian connections and garden space.

The proposed landscaping enhances biodiversity across the site and creates an improved outdoor environment for the student community.

A total of 9 no. sheffield style cycle stands are proposed at easily accessible locations across the site to provide secure parking for 18 no. cycles.

An area to the south-west corner of the site, which is currently vacant, is proposed to contain a new consolidated waste and recycling storage area. A timber screen with access gate is proposed facing the car park and the perimeter hedges behind the boundary railings are proposed to be retained to visually conceal the bins from the rest of the site and the surroundings streets.

For further information on the landscaping design, including proposed materiality and planting species, please refer to the landscape, ecology and arboricultural drawings and reports submitted by specialist consultants as part of this application.



Proposed site-wide landscape plan by Udal Landscape Architecture

5. Access Statement

5.1. Access strategy overview

Access

The proposed scheme has been designed to meet the accessibility needs of a diverse range of users, including disabled people.

The main entrance is located centrally within the building with direct and level access from the existing pavement along Carill Drive. The rear gardens are accessed via sloping wheelchair-accessible pathways as well as steps, which are required to mitigate the existing topographic level changes across the site leading to the existing entrances of the main Ladybarn House building to the north.

All entrances are proposed at grade, with flush thresholds, and all entrance doors will be detailed with the minimum clear openings, pull forces and handle heights as recommended by the latest Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. All entrances and external gardens are to be adequately illuminated at night.

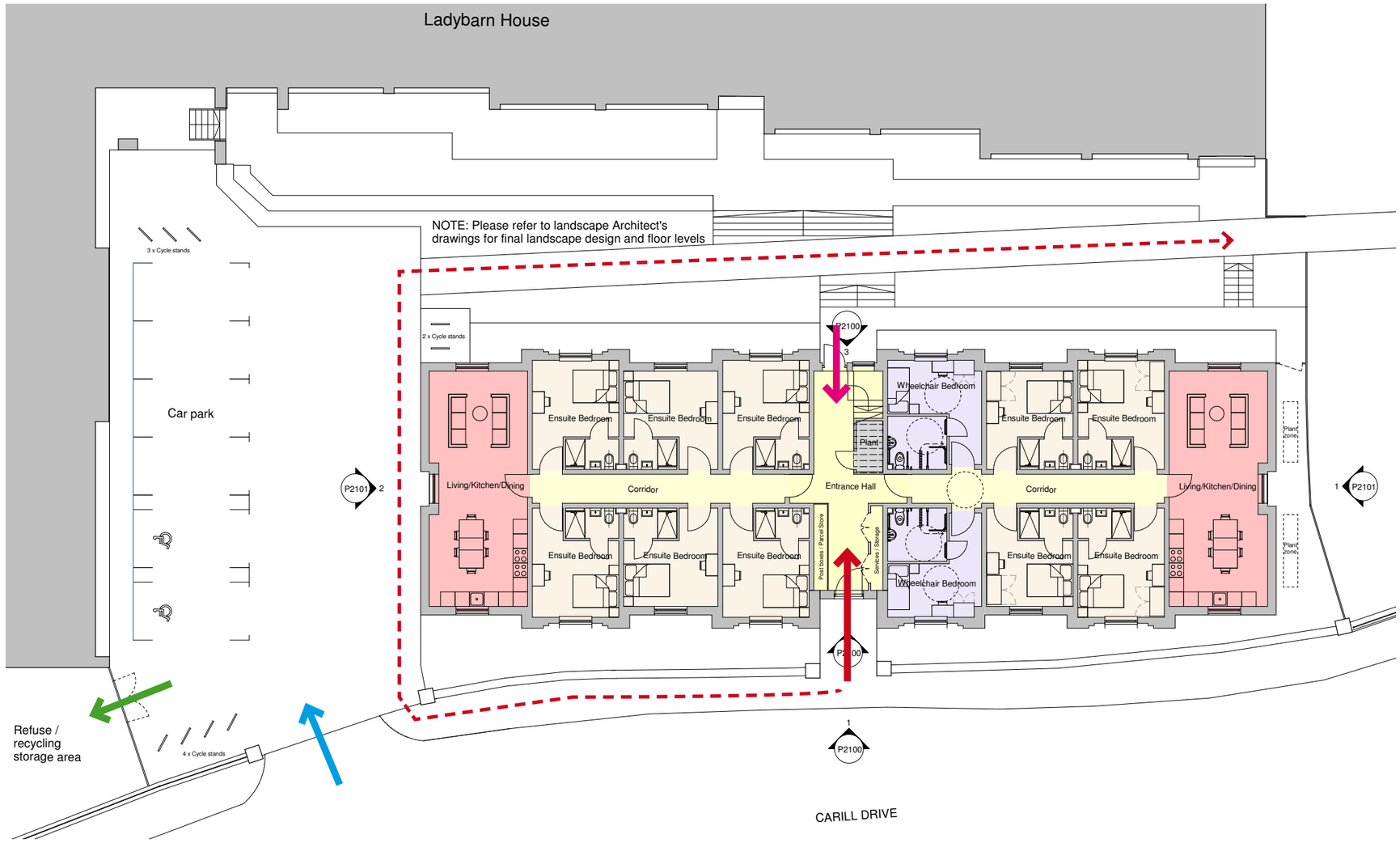
The vehicular access to the site is to be altered from the existing condition of two separate dropped kerb access points, into one new dropped kerb access point further west. The proposed car park contains a total of six vehicle spaces, two of which are designed for disabled users. A proposed consolidated waste and recycling storage area is conveniently located for both residents and refuse collection vehicles to access.

For more detailed information and analysis regarding transport and landscape design please refer to the specialist Transport and Landscape consultants' reports submitted as part of this application.

Student residential accommodation

Provision has been made for two designated wheelchair accessible bedrooms, and associated communal kitchen/living/dining spaces, located at the ground floor with level access from the main entrance.

All of the interior spaces would be designed in detail prior to construction to meet the relevant guidance within the Building Regulations Approved Document M. This would need to include adequate clear widths in doorways, ciculation spaces and maoevre space between all items of furniture.



Proposed ground floor plan

Proposed access key

- Main pedestrian access from Carill Drive
- Wheelchair accessible route to rear gardens and existing building
- Rear pedestrian access from existing building / gardens
- Vehicular and cycle access from Carill Drive
- Refuse/recycling store access from new car park area

6. Proposal Benefits Summary

6.1. Proposal Benefits Summary

Proposal benefits summary

1. **Providing a safe and attractive place for students to live** – the development will provide bespoke, high quality accommodation including on-site security and social/amenity spaces in a liveable environment conducive to supporting students in their studies and promoting a sense of community.

2. **Sustainable development** - the scheme will allow for the effective and efficient utilisation of a sustainably located brownfield site and provision of uses for which there is an acute need. The development will meet industry-leading environmental sustainability standards and effectively be car-free.

3. **Supporting the creation of sustainable communities** – the proposals will help release existing rented homes in the city centre and family housing in suburbs close to the universities to the general housing market by attracting students (including returning students) through increased and improved dedicated accommodation provision.

4. **Streetscape improvements** - The proposals will complement the refurbishment and modernisation of the existing student accommodation, to improve the enjoyment and living quality of all student residents and improve the townscape character of Carill Drive and the wider Fallowfield area.



Illustrative proposed street view from Carill Drive

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