

Cadoxton Residential Development

First Choice Housing Association

Design & Access Statement

November 2024

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Job no.	324037
Document no.	CDX-ASL-ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-00110
Suitability code	S2
Revision no.	P.02
Issue date	13.11.2024
Author / Check	TE/TS
Revision notes	Revised following planning office's comments

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1.0

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of First Choice Housing Association to accompany a full planning submission for the development of four homes on the site of the former Crown & Sceptre Inn Car Park on Main Road, Cadoxton, Neath.

The development will provide four semi-independent living apartments specifically designed for individuals with a range of physical disabilities and pan-disability needs.

This statement should be read in conjunction with all relevant application drawings and supporting information.

1.2 The Team

Client : First Choice Housing Association

Architecture : Austin-Smith:Lord

Landscape : Austin-Smith:Lord

Civils/Structural Engineering : Tulip Engineering Consultancy



1.3 Brief & Vision

The core objective of this project is to develop four semi-independent living apartments specifically designed for individuals with a range of physical disabilities and pan-disability needs. The overarching vision is to create a development that fosters a sense of community while prioritising the following key aspects:

Wellbeing of Residents:

The design will prioritise the physical and mental wellbeing of residents by creating a comfortable, supportive, and enabling environment. Careful consideration will be given to the layout, accessibility, and adaptability of the living spaces to ensure they cater to the unique needs of each resident.

Ease of Care:

The layout and features of the apartments will facilitate ease of care for the support staff, ensuring efficient and unobtrusive assistance for residents. This will include features such as wide corridors and doorways, accessible bathrooms, and appropriate assistive technologies.

Promotion of Independence:

The development will empower residents to live as independently as possible by incorporating design elements that enhance accessibility and facilitate daily living activities. Features such as adjustable kitchen worktops, accessible storage solutions, and smart home technologies will be considered to promote independence and enhance quality of life.

In essence, the project seeks to create a residential development that not only meets the physical needs of its residents but also promotes their overall quality of life, dignity, and independence. The design will carefully balance the need for accessibility with the desire to create a welcoming and aesthetically pleasing living environment.

Vision Statement

This project aims to create four semi-independent living apartments designed for individuals with diverse physical disabilities. The vision is to foster a thriving community within an environment that prioritises the wellbeing of residents, ensuring comfort, support, and a sense of belonging.

The design will facilitate ease of care for support staff, enabling efficient and respectful assistance.

The development will empower residents to live as independently as possible by incorporating accessible design elements and assistive technologies, promoting an enhanced quality of life with dignity and freedom.

2.0

Site Analysis

2.1 Site Context

Location:

The subject site, a 0.15-hectare parcel of land, is located in the village of Cadoxton, Neath Port Talbot. Situated approximately 0.7 km north of Neath town centre, the site is well-connected to local amenities and transport links.

Site Characteristics:

Currently, the site is an area of hardstanding used as a car park for the Crown and Sceptre Inn, a public house located approximately 25 meters north of the site, across Main Road. The site is predominantly flat and enclosed by timber fencing on three sides, with a low-level barrier fence along the site's boundary with Main Road.

Access:

Access to the site is gained directly from Main Road at the site's northern boundary.

Surroundings:

The site is embedded within a primarily residential area of Cadoxton. Residential dwellings surround the site to the east, south, and west. Main Road, running parallel to the northern boundary, separates the site from further residential properties to the north.



2.2 Site Links

Public Transport:

The site benefits from excellent public transport links. Bus stops located approximately 30 meters from the site are serviced by bus lines 58, 161, 164, 906, 907, and X8, providing convenient access to Neath Town centre and train station. This accessibility to public transport enhances the site’s connectivity to the wider region and reduces reliance on private vehicles.

Community Links:

The site’s location within the village of Cadoxton provides convenient access to a range of local amenities. The Crown and Sceptre Inn, a local pub, is within a short walking distance, offering a social hub for residents. The village of Cadoxton itself has additional amenities such as shops, a post office, and a church. These community links contribute to the site’s viability for residential development, providing future occupants with easy access to essential and social amenities.



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2.3 Existing Site

The site is a 0.15-hectare (approximately 0.38-acre) car park located on Main Road in Cadoxton. The site is relatively flat, facilitating accessible development. Access to the site is directly from Main Road, providing convenient connectivity for vehicles and pedestrians.

Currently, the site is entirely used as a car park serving the Crown and Sceptre Inn. However, the proposed development will utilise approximately 60% of the site for the construction of the four semi-independent living apartments. The remaining 40% will be retained as a reconfigured car park to serve the needs of the public house. This division ensures that adequate parking provision remains for the pub while enabling the development of much-needed accessible housing.

The site is currently devoid of any significant landscaping or natural features. The proposed development will introduce green infrastructure to the site, including a front garden and a shared rear garden, enhancing the biodiversity and visual appeal of the area.



3.0

Planning Context

3.1 Planning Policy

Development Plan

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, any planning determination must be made in line with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Cadoxton area comprises:

The National Development Framework for Wales (Future Wales: The National Plan 2040)
The adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales is the national strategic development plan. It supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales, including the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area where the subject site is located. This designation indicates support for employment, housing opportunities, and infrastructure investment in the area.

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026

The subject site is designated as 'white land' within the settlement boundary in the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026. This designation means the site is not allocated for a specific use and a range of development proposals will be considered, subject to compliance with other planning policies. The site also falls within the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area.

Relevant Policies

Key policies relevant to the proposed development include:

Policy SC 1 - Settlement Limits: This policy allows for development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the settlement's role and function.

Policy SP 3 - Sustainable Communities: This policy promotes sustainable, healthy, and cohesive communities within defined settlement limits.

Policy SP 5 - Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area: This policy promotes sustainable growth and development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area while protecting and enhancing its character and environment. It specifically encourages the provision of new residential development along the coastal corridor.

Policy SC 2 - Protection of Existing Community Facilities: This policy protects existing community facilities, allowing for their loss only when they are surplus to requirements or no longer viable.

Policy M2 - Surface Coal Operations: This policy restricts surface coal operations near settlements, including the subject site which falls within the 'Settlement Protection Zone.'

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 (February 2024)

PPW Edition 12 emphasises the importance of sustainable development and placemaking. It requires development proposals to promote sustainable development, support community well-being, and maximise social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits. The placemaking approach in PPW encourages the creation of high-quality development and public spaces that enhance people's well-being.

3.2 Planning History

The site has outline planning permission (ref. 2023/0386) for the erection of two detached dwellings and associated works, including a revised car parking layout to serve the Crown & Sceptre Inn.

While the proposed development differs from the approved scheme by providing four apartments instead of two detached houses, it is anticipated that the scale and massing of the proposed development will be similar to the previously approved scheme. This existing permission establishes the principle of residential development at the site and confirms the acceptability of the proposed access arrangements.



4.0

The Proposal

4.1 Layout

The Proposal

This project proposes the development of four semi-independent living apartments designed to meet the needs of individuals with pan-disabilities and a range of physical disabilities. The development will replace the existing car park, creating a new residential presence on Main Road that contributes positively to the streetscape.

Architectural Design and Accessibility

The building will feature a main street elevation facing Main Road, with each of the four flats accessed through its own front door. This design choice aims to create a sense of individual ownership and avoid the institutional feel often associated with multi-unit housing for people with disabilities. The flatted development is deliberately designed to have the appearance of terraced housing, ensuring it respects the prevailing massing and typologies of the surrounding residential context.

External Spaces and Landscaping

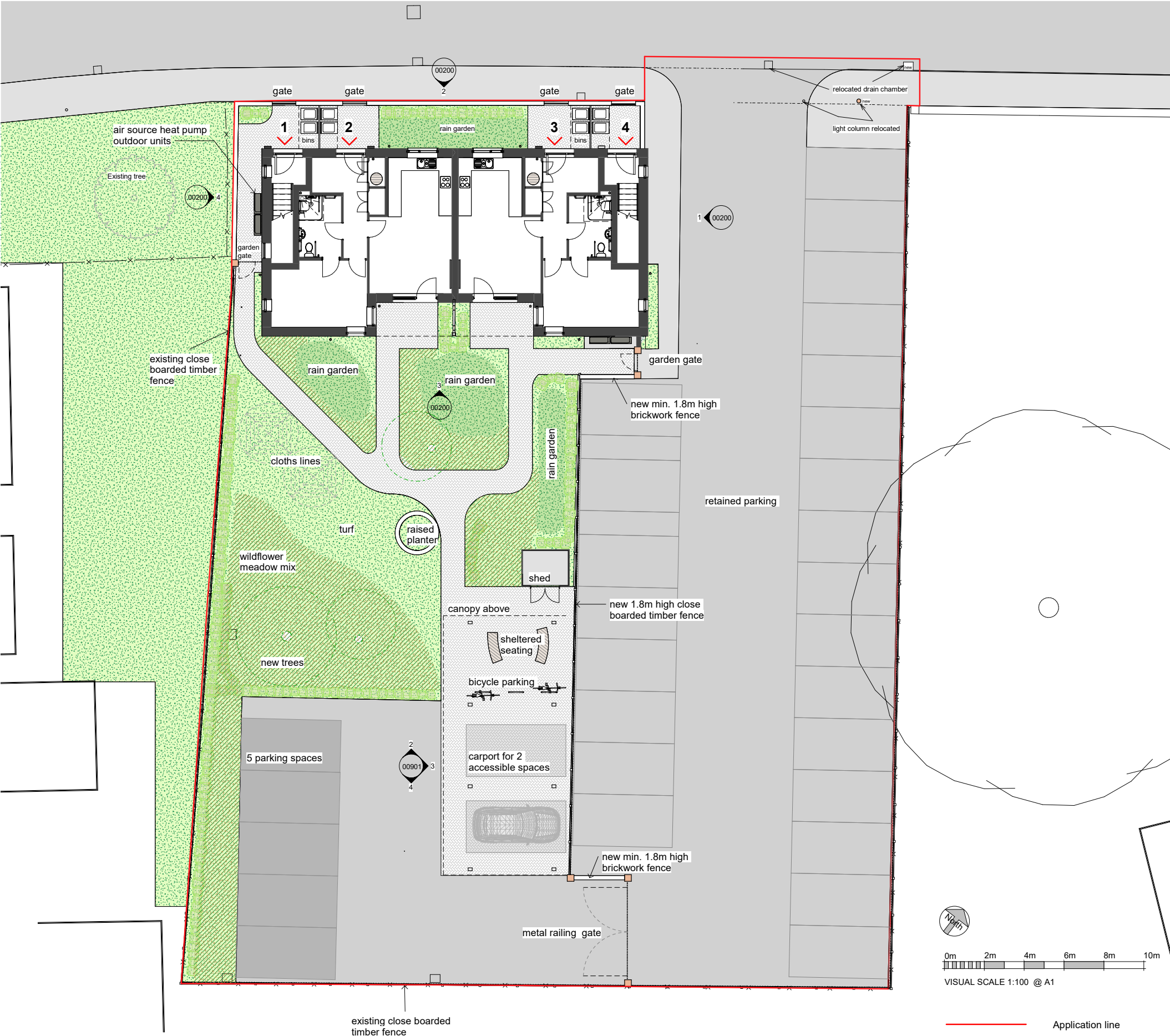
A small front garden, defined by a low brick wall, will run along the building's street frontage. This will delineate the private space of the development from the public realm, screen the refuse storage area from view, and contribute to the sustainable drainage strategy of the site.

At the rear, a generous, south-facing garden will provide a valuable amenity space for residents. The garden will be designed with the well-being of residents in mind, offering a variety of areas for relaxation, social interaction, and therapeutic activities.

Parking and Access

Vehicular access and car parking will be located at the southernmost portion of the site, as per the previous planning application. Two accessible parking spaces will be provided under a carport shelter, offering protection from the elements and ensuring comfortable access for wheelchair users. The carport canopy will extend into the garden area to create a sheltered seating area and cycle parking.

This combination of accessible internal and external spaces, carefully considered landscaping, and appropriate parking provision aims to create a living environment that is not only functional but also promotes a sense of community, well-being, and independence for all residents.



4.2 Amount

Two wheelchair-accessible apartments will be located on the ground floor, designed to meet the **M4(3)** standard of the part M Building Regulations (England) and the **Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR)**. These apartments will offer fully accessible living spaces, promoting independence and ease of use for residents with mobility impairments.

The first floor will accommodate two additional one-bedroom flats, each accessed via its own front door and a dedicated set of stairs.

The living spaces in all flats are oriented to face the garden, maximising natural light and views while creating a strong connection between the indoors and outdoors.

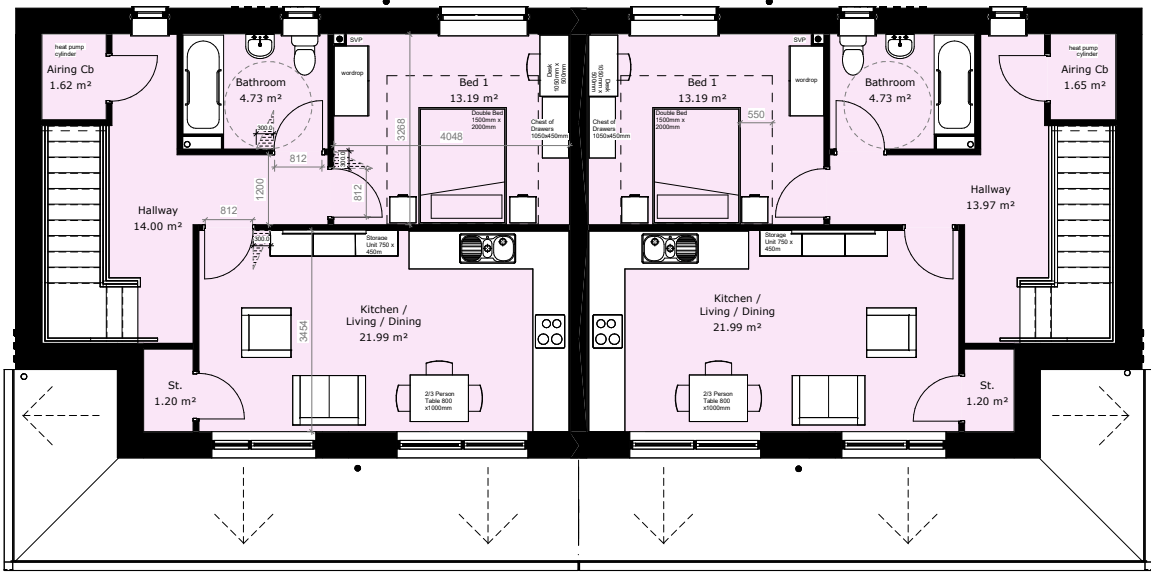
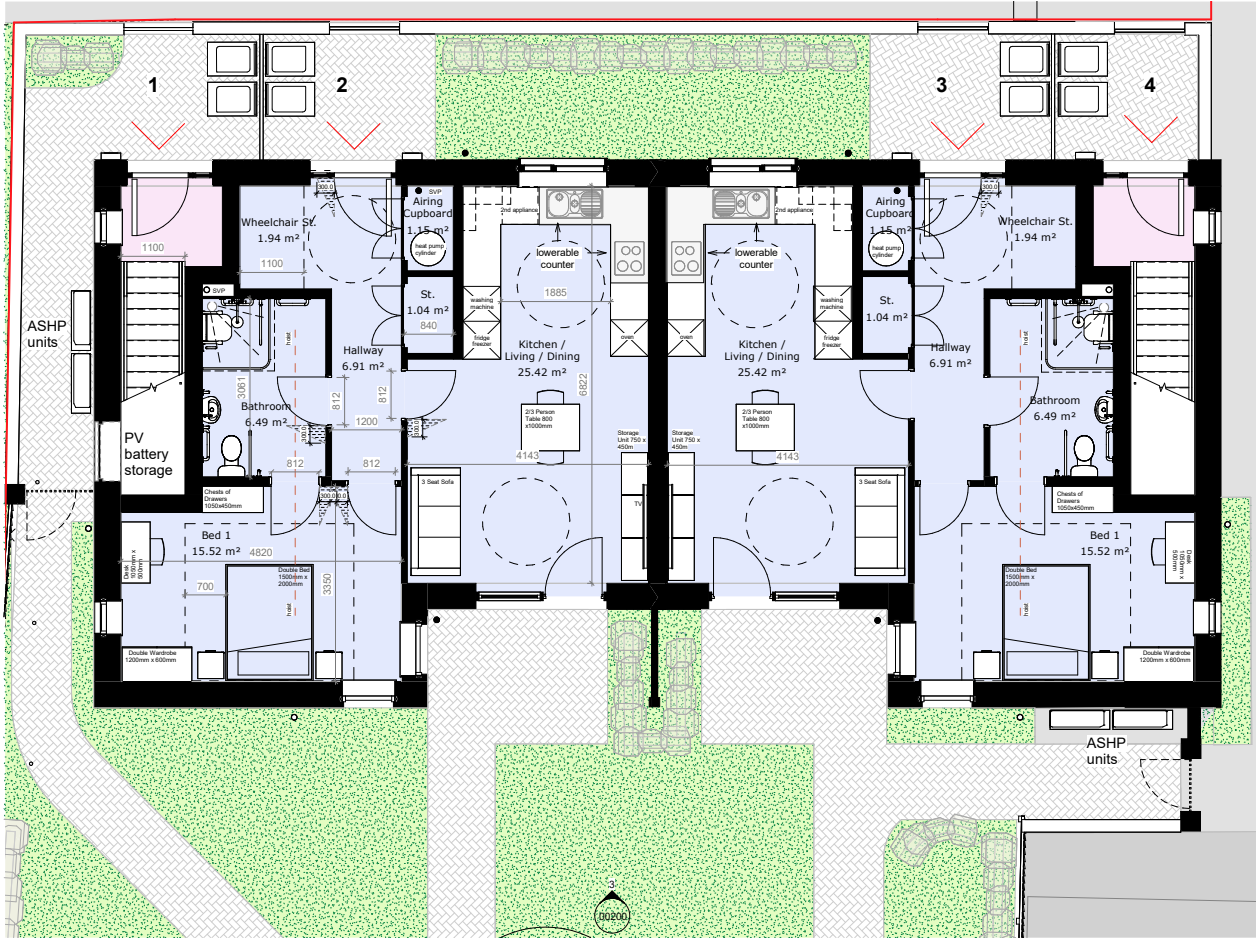
The apartments are designed in accordance with the **Lifetime Homes** standard, a set of design principles that promote accessibility and adaptability for people of all ages and abilities. This means that the apartments will not only be accessible to wheelchair users but will also incorporate features that make them easier to live in for people with a wide range of disabilities, including sensory and cognitive impairments.

- Wider doorways and hallways:** Allowing for easy movement of wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- Level access:** Eliminating steps and changes in level to both front and garden access for the ground floor flats.
- Accessible bathrooms:** Including features such as level-access showers, grab rails, and slip-resistant flooring.
- Flexible spaces:** Designing rooms that can be easily adapted to meet changing needs, such as bedrooms that can accommodate a hoist to the bathrooms, generous living rooms allowing for flexible furniture arrangements.
- Accessible kitchen design:** Incorporating features such as adjustable worktops and accessible storage solutions.

By adhering to the Lifetime Homes standard, the development ensures that the apartments are not only accessible but also adaptable to the changing needs of residents over time. This promotes greater independence and quality of life for occupants, reducing the need for future adaptations and supporting ageing in place.

1B2P Wheelchair Apartment	
Airing Cupboard	1.15 m²
Bathroom	6.49 m²
Bed 1	15.52 m²
Hallway	6.91 m²
Kitchen / Living / Dining	25.42 m²
St.	1.04 m²
Wheelchair St.	1.94 m²
Net	58.48 m²
Gross Internal Area	61 m²

1B2P Apartment	
Airing Cb	1.65 m²
Bathroom	4.73 m²
Bed 1	13.19 m²
Hallway	13.97 m²
Hallway	2.41 m²
Kitchen / Living / Dining	21.99 m²
St.	1.20 m²
Net	59.14 m²
Gross Internal Area	62.5m²



4.3 Character - Placemaking

The proposed development is strongly aligned with the principles of Placemaking in Wales, as outlined in the **Placemaking Charter Wales**. As signatories to this charter, Austin-Smith:Lord are committed to creating places that are:

Distinctive:

The design responds to the local context, respecting the character of Cadoxton and integrating seamlessly with the surrounding built environment. The development reflects the prevailing massing and scale of nearby buildings while also responding to the unique Main Road aesthetic of distinctive light-coloured gable ends, as seen in the Pub and its neighbouring buildings. The development's terraced housing aesthetic ensures it complements the existing streetscape.

Safe and accessible:

The proposal prioritises accessibility for all residents, with features such as level access, accessible parking, and adaptable living spaces. The design also incorporates **Secure by Design** recommendations, weaving in crime prevention principles from the outset. The design also considers community safety by providing clear sightlines and well-lit external spaces.



4.3 Character - Placemaking (continued)

Well connected: The site benefits from excellent public transport links, with bus stops located close by. The development also encourages active travel through the provision of cycle parking.

Environmentally sustainable: The proposal incorporates sustainable design principles, including a sustainable drainage strategy and the use of energy-efficient materials and technologies. The design adopts a fabric-first approach with the aim of achieving an **EPC A rating** for all homes. Energy sourcing will be fossil fuel free, utilising photovoltaics and air source heat pump heating (**ASHP**). The overall building form is designed with efficiency in mind, and the robust and simple external material palette is dominated by brickwork chosen for its longevity.

Adaptable: The Lifetime Homes standard ensures that the apartments can be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of residents over time.

Healthy: The development promotes resident well-being through the provision of generous communal gardens, access to natural light, and connection to the outdoors.

By adhering to these placemaking principles, the development aims to create a high-quality living environment that fosters a sense of community, promotes well-being, and enhances the lives of its residents. The proposal contributes to the creation of a thriving and inclusive neighbourhood in Cadoxton.



4.4 Character - Materials

The development's external material palette is carefully chosen to complement the surrounding context while creating a visually appealing and contemporary aesthetic. The primary material will be buff brickwork, providing a warm and textured backdrop for the building. Protruding detailing in dark grey brick will add depth and visual interest to the facade.

This dark grey brickwork will be echoed in other elements of the design, creating a sense of cohesion and visual continuity. The front patio wall, sections of the garden fence, and brick courses at ground level will all feature this dark grey brick. Metal rail gates, matching the colour of the dark grey window frames, will provide access to the front and rear gardens.

The roof will be finished with grey tiles, with integrated photovoltaic panels discreetly incorporated into the south-facing slope. Rainwater goods will also be finished in dark grey to match the window frames, creating a consistent and harmonious aesthetic.

The canopy sheltered front doors will be a lighter grey colour, standing out against the darker frames and the buff brickwork. This contrast will create a welcoming entrance and add visual interest to the street elevation.

This carefully considered material palette will ensure that the development integrates well with its surroundings while creating a distinctive and contemporary identity. The use of robust and durable materials, such as brickwork, will also ensure the longevity of the building and minimise future maintenance requirements.



4.5 Precedents

Hargood Close, Colchester by Proctor & Matthews Architects: This scheme provides accessible housing for people with learning disabilities. It features a traditional terraced housing form with a contemporary twist, using brickwork and gabled roofs to create a familiar and welcoming aesthetic. This precedent demonstrates how accessible housing can be integrated seamlessly into a residential context while providing high-quality living spaces.



Abode at Great Kneighton, Proctor and Matthews Architects: This award-winning housing development showcases a variety of contemporary architectural styles, with a strong emphasis on brickwork and the use of grey tones in facades and detailing. This precedent can provide inspiration for how to effectively combine brickwork with other materials to create a modern and visually appealing aesthetic.



4.6 Access & Movement

The proposed development prioritises accessibility and ease of movement for all residents and visitors. The design incorporates a range of features to ensure that the site is accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, while also promoting sustainable transport choices.

Vehicular Access and Parking

Vehicular access to the site will be retained from Main Road, as approved in the previous outline planning permission. The development will provide a total of seven car parking spaces, exceeding the minimum requirement for the development. Five standard spaces will be available, plus two sheltered accessible spaces specifically designed for wheelchair users. All parking spaces will be future-proofed with the provision of electric vehicle charging buried services ducting running along the edge of the parking, supporting the transition to cleaner transport options.

A significant portion of the existing car park will be retained to serve the Crown and Sceptre Inn, providing approximately 24 parking spaces for pub patrons. This ensures the continued viability of the pub and minimises any potential impact on its operation.

Cycle Parking

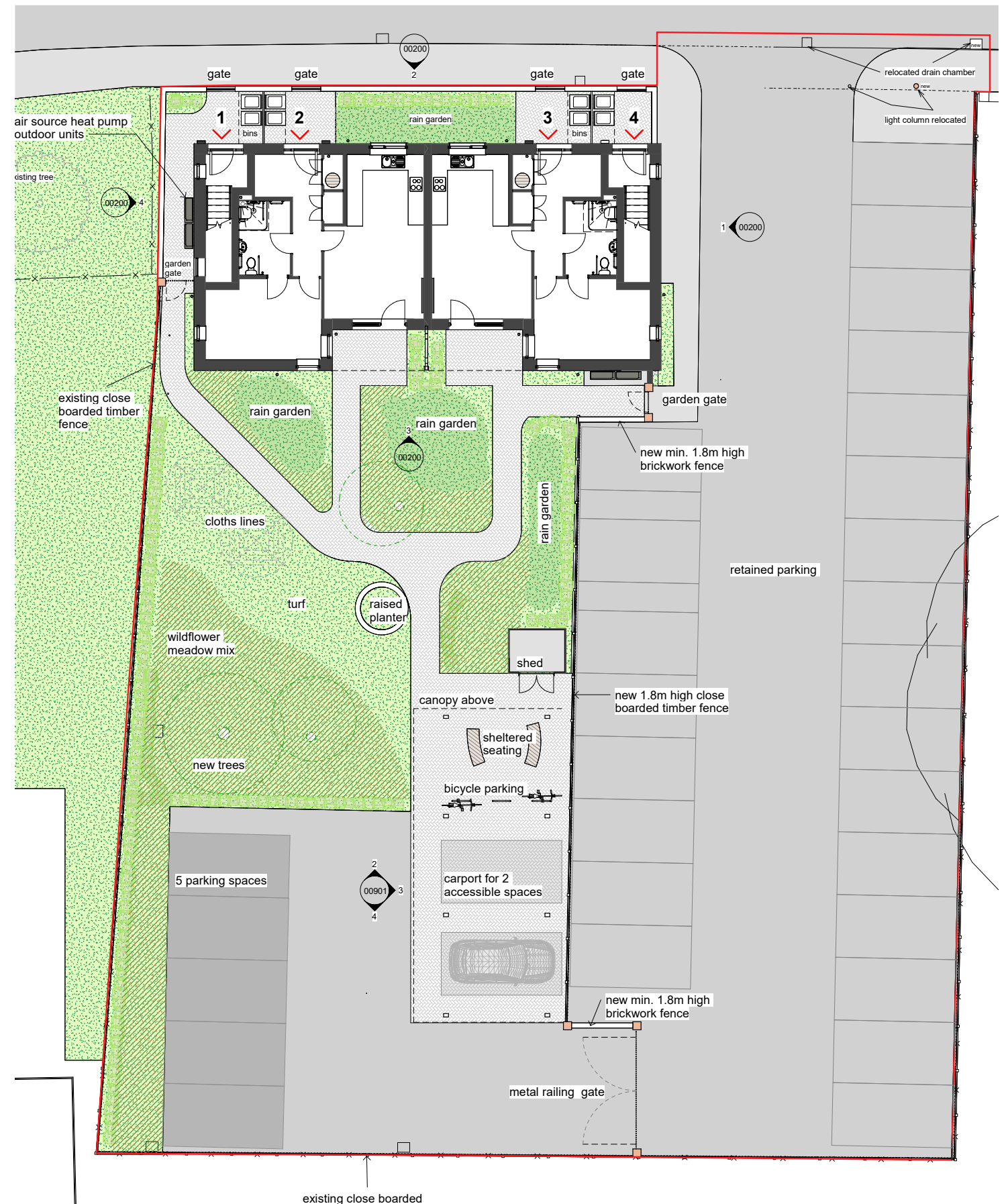
Secure and sheltered cycle parking will be provided within the carport canopy, accommodating up to six bicycles. This provision encourages residents and visitors to choose active travel modes, promoting health and well-being while reducing reliance on private cars.

Pedestrian Access

The development will fully comply with Lifetime Homes principles in relation to access. All entrances to the apartments will be level access, eliminating any steps or changes in level that could present obstacles for wheelchair users or people with mobility impairments. Paths and walkways throughout the development will meet the required width dimensions to ensure comfortable and unobstructed movement for all.

Public Transport

The site benefits from excellent public transport connections, with bus stops located approximately 30 metres away on Main Road. These bus stops are served by multiple routes, providing convenient access to Neath town centre and the wider region. The proximity of public transport options further reduces the need for private car use, promoting sustainable travel choices for residents and visitors.



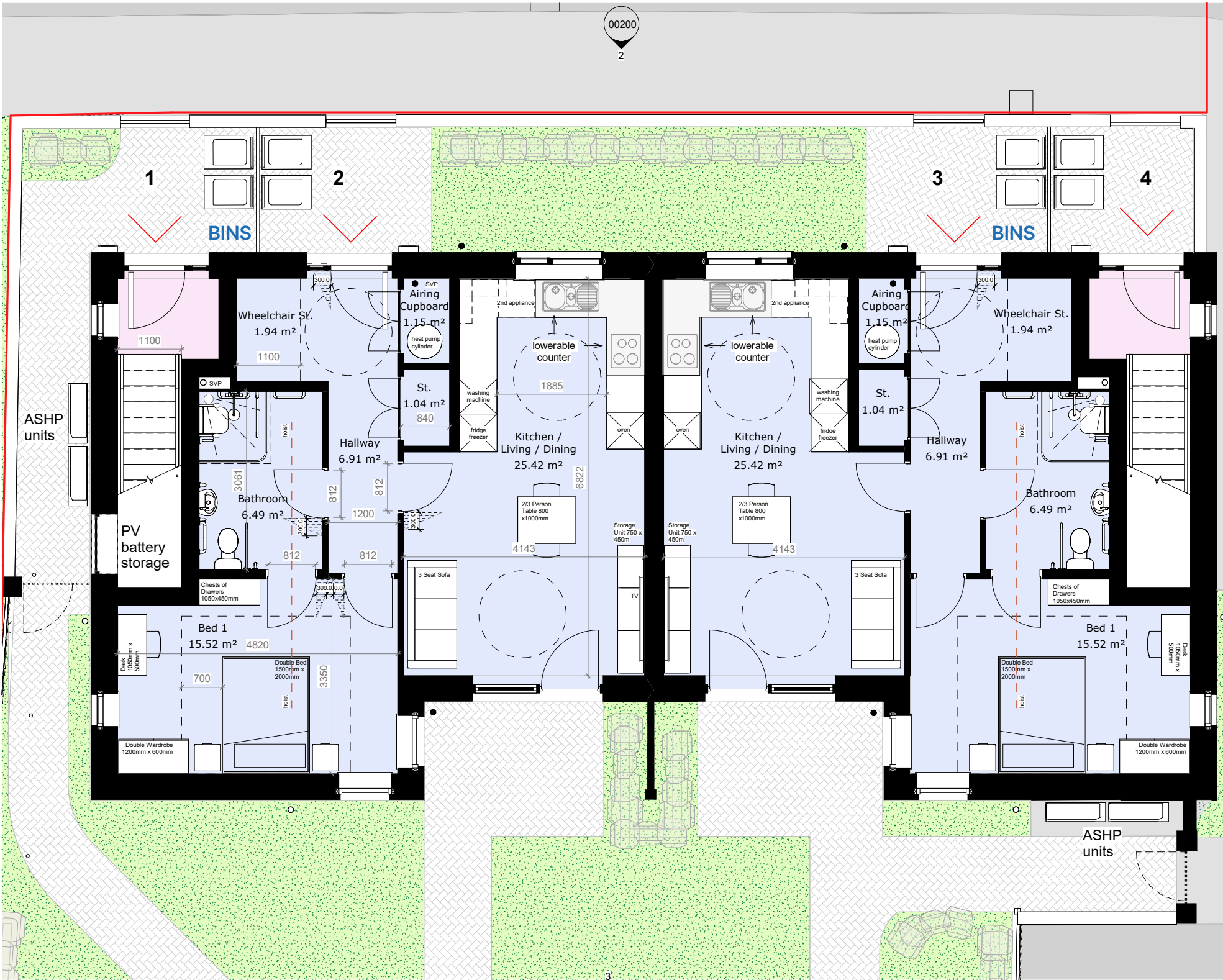
4.7 Refuse Strategy

The development incorporates a dedicated and discreet refuse strategy to ensure convenient waste disposal for residents while maintaining the visual amenity of the street scene.

A designated bin area is provided to the front of each apartment's front door. This location offers convenient access for residents and is also conveniently located for kerbside collection. The bin area measures just over 2 square metres, providing sufficient space to accommodate three 240-litre wheelie bins or the equivalent capacity in the form of refuse bags and recycling boxes, as specified by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

The height of the front patio wall has been carefully considered to screen standard-sized wheelie bins from view, maintaining a tidy and attractive street frontage.

While the local authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documentation lacks specific guidance on refuse storage capacity requirements, the provision made in this development is based on the requirements of other local authorities in South Wales. This provision will be further confirmed and adjusted, if necessary, in consultation with Neath Port Talbot Council to ensure full compliance with their waste management strategy.



4.8 Environmental Sustainability

The proposed development is committed to achieving a high level of environmental sustainability, minimising its impact on the planet and contributing to a more sustainable future. The design incorporates a range of measures to reduce energy consumption, promote renewable energy sources, and enhance the ecological value of the site.

Fabric First Approach

The development will adopt a ‘fabric first’ approach to construction, prioritising the thermal performance and airtightness of the building envelope. This involves using high-quality insulation materials and construction techniques to minimise heat loss and reduce the need for heating and cooling. The aim is to achieve an EPC A rating for all homes, demonstrating a high level of energy efficiency.

Renewable Energy and Heating

Energy sourcing for the development will be fossil fuel free. Photovoltaic panels will be integrated into the roof, generating renewable electricity on-site. Heating will be provided by air source heat pumps, which extract heat from the outside air to provide efficient and low-carbon heating and hot water.

Sustainable Transport

The development encourages sustainable transport choices by future-proofing for electric vehicle charging by providing buried services infrastructure to the parking area. This will support residents in adopting electric vehicles, reducing carbon emissions from transport. Additionally, the provision of secure cycle parking encourages residents and visitors to utilise active travel modes, further promoting sustainable transport options.

Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

The development will incorporate a sustainable drainage strategy to manage surface water runoff from the site. This will involve using green infrastructure, such as the front garden and permeable paving, to attenuate and filter rainwater, reducing the burden on the public drainage system and minimising flood risk.

Biodiversity and Ecology

The development will enhance the ecological value of the site by introducing new green spaces, including the front garden and the shared rear garden. These spaces will be landscaped with native planting, providing habitats for wildlife and increasing biodiversity in the area.

Material Choice

The development will prioritise the use of durable and long-lasting materials, such as brickwork, to minimize the need for future maintenance and replacement. This approach reduces the environmental impact of the building over its lifespan.

4.9 Community Safety

The proposed development prioritises community safety, aiming to create a secure and welcoming environment for all residents. The design incorporates principles from the **Secure by Design Home Guide 2024**, a national initiative that seeks to reduce crime through design and planning.

Key Security Features:

Clear boundaries:

The front garden walls provide a clear demarcation between public and private space, enhancing natural surveillance and deterring unauthorised access.

Secure perimeter: The fences surrounding the rear garden and parking area will be a minimum of 1.8 metres high, providing a robust physical barrier to prevent intrusion.

Robust doors and windows: All external doors and windows will be specified to comply with Secured by Design requirements, incorporating features such as multi-point locking systems and reinforced frames to resist forced entry.

Well-lit spaces: External areas, including walkways, parking areas, and entrances, will be well-lit to enhance visibility and deter anti-social behaviour.

Natural surveillance: The layout of the development promotes natural surveillance, with windows overlooking key areas such as the street, the parking area and access points.

By incorporating these security measures, the development aims to create a safe and secure environment for residents, reducing the risk of crime and promoting a sense of well-being. The design also considers the wider community, ensuring that the development does not contribute to any potential crime hotspots and integrates seamlessly with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Conclusion

This Design & Access Statement has demonstrated how the proposed development of four semi-independent living apartments in Cadoxton carefully considers the local context, the needs of future residents, and wider community benefits. The design prioritises accessibility, well-being, and environmental sustainability, creating a high-quality living environment that fosters a sense of community and promotes independence.

The proposal responds to the Placemaking Charter Wales by creating a distinctive, safe, accessible, well-connected, environmentally sustainable, adaptable, and healthy place. It also adheres to relevant planning policies and guidance, including the Secure by Design Home Guide and Lifetime Homes standards.

By replacing a portion of the existing car park with much-needed accessible housing, the development makes efficient use of land within the settlement boundary while retaining adequate parking provision for the adjacent public house. The proposal will enhance the visual amenity of the site through considered landscaping and a carefully chosen material palette.

This development represents a valuable opportunity to provide high-quality, accessible homes that cater to the specific needs of individuals with pan-disabilities and a range of physical disabilities. The proposal will contribute positively to the local community, promoting social inclusion and enhancing the lives of its future residents.



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