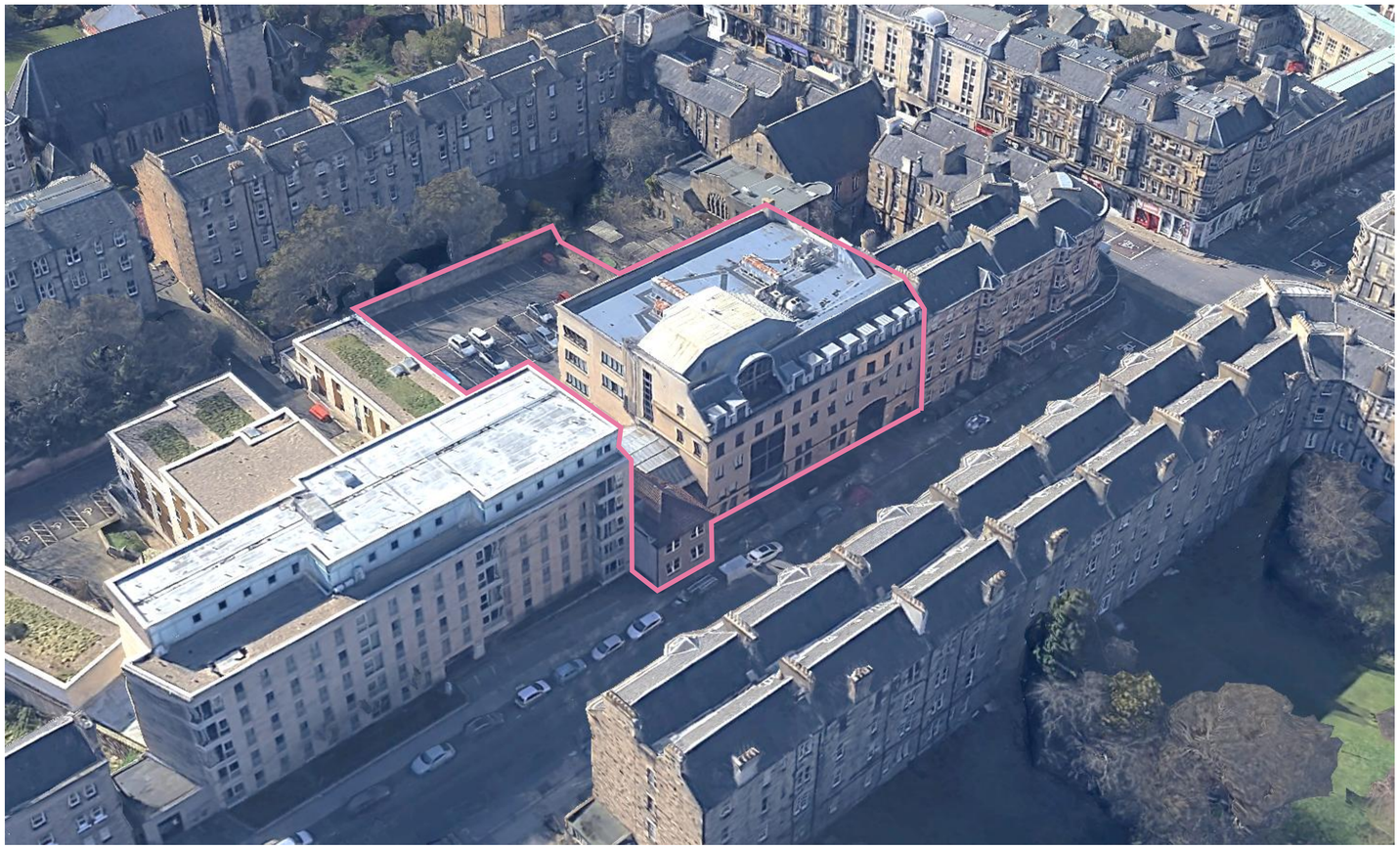
1. Welcome

Developed proposals for 16 Bernard Terrace

Thank you for attending our second public consultation event for the proposed redevelopment of 16 Bernard Terrace.

Since the first round of public consultation the design team has continued to develop the proposals, taking account of feedback received from the local community, stakeholders and technical specialists. This exhibition presents these developments and provides a further opportunity for members of the public to review the design, and to share your views prior to the submission of a full planning application.



About the project

The proposals seek to replace the existing library, archive and office building at Bernard Terrace with purpose-built student accommodation, alongside significant improvements to the surrounding public realm and environment.

The site has undergone several changes throughout its history, having previously accommodated a furniture depository constructed in the 1930s. Following the closure of the depository in the 1980s, the current building was completed in 1990 and has since been used for library, archive and associated office functions.

Occupying a highly accessible city-centre location within a diverse mixed-use neighbourhood, the site benefits from close proximity to higher education campuses, excellent public transport links and a wide range of local amenities.

The proposals respond to changing workplace requirements and evolving city-centre needs by bringing forward a sustainable new use for this previously developed site, making efficient use of urban land while contributing to the vitality and character of the local area. The design approach has been informed by the site's context and is shaped by four key urban design principles that establish a coherent building form, strengthen connections with the surrounding streetscape and deliver high-quality amenity for future residents.

Project team

HIFML-HBOS Investment Fund Managers	shp Scott Hobbs Planning	CDA	rankinfraser landscape architecture		MÒR
Client	Planning Consultant	Architect	Landscape Architect	Sustainability Consultant	Transport Consultant

Why we are here today?

The proposals seek to transform this previously developed city-centre site into high-quality purpose-built student accommodation, delivering a sustainable long-term use that responds to Edinburgh's growing student population and changing city-centre needs.

This consultation is an important part of the design process, helping to ensure that the final proposals respond positively to the site's context and make a valuable contribution to the local area, reflecting – where possible – the concerns of the local community.

We welcome your feedback on the updated scheme and encourage you to share your views as we continue to develop the proposals.

What this exhibition covers

This exhibition outlines the evolution of the proposals for the site and the key considerations that have informed the design. It includes:

- Feedback received during the first public consultation and how it has shaped the proposals
- Information about the existing building and the case for redevelopment
- The design development process and proposed building layout
- Architectural character, materials and appearance
- Landscape and biodiversity proposals
- Daylight, sustainability and environmental considerations
- The next steps and project timeline

We welcome your feedback on the updated proposals before a planning application is submitted.

2. What we heard

Feedback from the first event

Thank you to everyone who attended our first consultation or viewed the information online. The first event provided an opportunity for local residents, businesses and stakeholders to learn about the emerging proposals and share their feedback. We received a large range of comments and questions, which have helped shape the continued development of the project. The summary below highlights the main topics raised and how we have responded.

Comment: Why is purpose-built student accommodation proposed for this site?

Response: The site is well connected to public transport and the University. The development will provide purpose-built student accommodation, help reduce pressure on existing housing stock, support local businesses, create employment opportunities and introduce a more active street frontage along Bernard Terrace.

Comment: Can more be done to provide landscaping and green space?

Response: The landscape proposals have been developed further and include a high-quality landscaped courtyard at the heart of the development.

Comment: There is concern that additional student accommodation could affect the character and balance of the local community

Response: We have focused on creating a high-quality development that contributes positively to Newington, with active frontages, attractive public realm and well-managed accommodation that supports the wider neighbourhood.

Comment: The site has an important history and local identity that should not be lost

Response: Opportunities are being explored for the development to acknowledge the site's history and reflect its contribution to the character of the local area.

Comment: Residents are concerned about construction impacts, noise, access and day-to-day management

Response: Construction, servicing and operational management are being carefully considered as the proposals develop, with measures identified to minimise disruption and support positive neighbour relationships

Comment: What would the impact on parking and access for local residents?

Response: The proposed development is car free but with extensive cycle parking. Access, servicing and movement have been carefully considered as the proposals have evolved.

Comment: The proposed building should sit comfortably within its surroundings and not dominate the area

Response: The design has been further developed following feedback, with ongoing assessment of scale, massing and views to ensure the building responds appropriately to its context.

Comment: How will the development support Edinburgh's climate ambitions?

Response: As part of the submission additional sustainability statement will be undertaken, including consideration of whole-life carbon and operational energy performance, alongside opportunities for low-carbon technologies and sustainable design measures.

Comment: Why demolish the existing building rather than reuse it?

Response: We have undertaken further technical studies to understand the site's opportunities and constraints and to inform the development of the design.

3. Existing Building

Consideration of reuse of existing building

Site & Street Context

The unlisted building is constructed of steel framing, concrete floors and masonry walls.

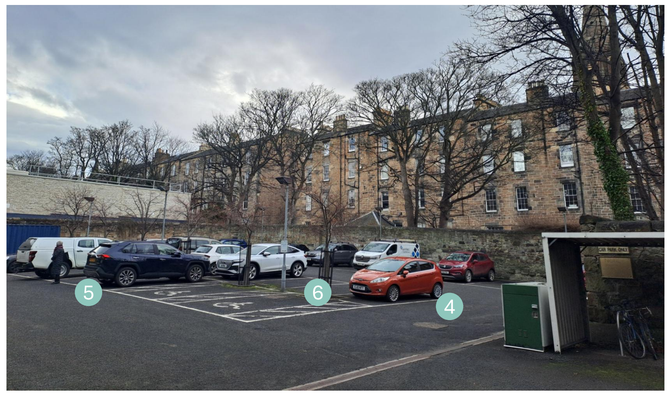
1. A projecting two-storey wing breaks the Bernard Street building line.
2. Raised ground floor restricts access
3. Limited relationship with the street with small windows and reduced active frontage



Existing Bernard Street elevation
Image licence payment to trove.scot pending

Rear courtyard: there is an existing car park to the rear of the building, accessed only from Bernard Terrace by a large pend

4. Hard landscaped car park
5. Limited biodiversity opportunities
6. Small trees within car parking spaces



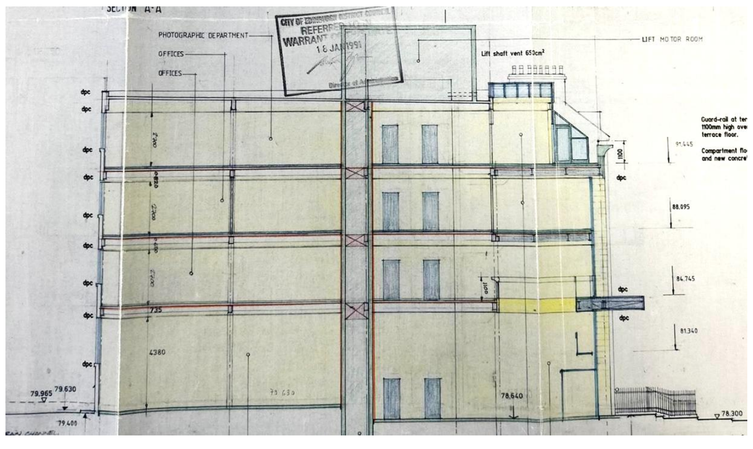
Built Form & Fabric

The four-storey form broadly matches the adjoining tenement eaves and ridge levels, while a large two-storey plant enclosure rises above the surrounding roofs.



Building Warrant drawing from CEC Building Standard Plan Store

Floor-to-floor heights. The archive use produced a ground-to-first floor height of approximately 5-6m, well above typical residential dimensions and difficult to sub-divide.



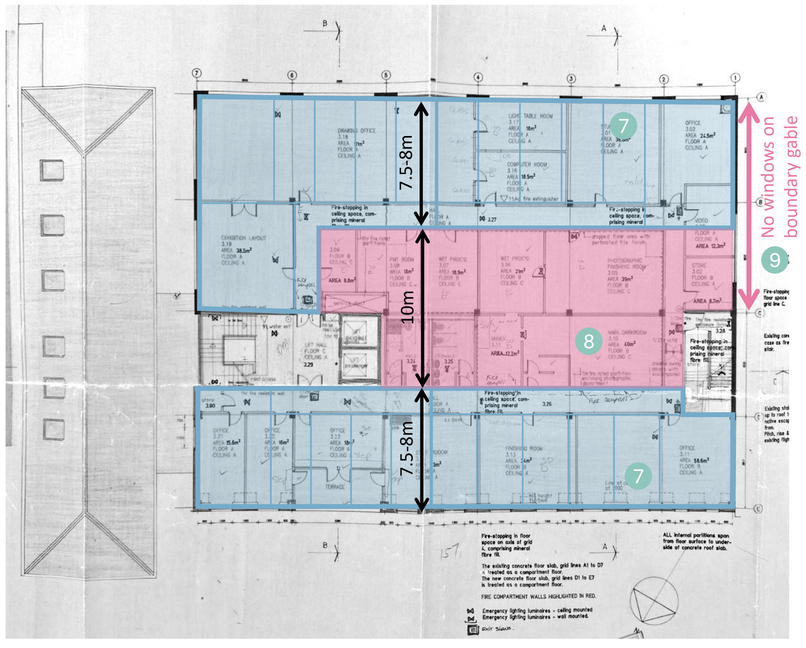
Building Warrant drawing from CEC Building Standard Plan Store

External wall fabric. Combustible cavity insulation is present within the external walls. Meeting current fire and thermal requirements, along with insurance qualifications, would require extensive removal and replacement of all the existing wall construction.

Building Reuse Testing

Converting the building into alternative uses has been explored. As the building was designed for accommodation that did not require daylight the building is very deep.

This depth means that a typical room and corridor arrangement of approximately 9m to the front and rear of the building leaves a central zone of approximately 10m with no access to daylight, which is unusable internal space for residential conversion.



Building Warrant drawing from CEC Building Standard Plan Store

7. Perimeter rooms	Indicative depth of typical PBSA bedrooms, with shared living rooms occupying the corners.
8. 10m internal zone	A deep central area is unsuitable for usable accommodation as no access to daylight and is excessive for circulation or communal use.
9. Boundary constraints	Part of the elevation sits on the boundary with neighbouring buildings which restricts opportunities for new windows to gable walls.

Overall Assessment

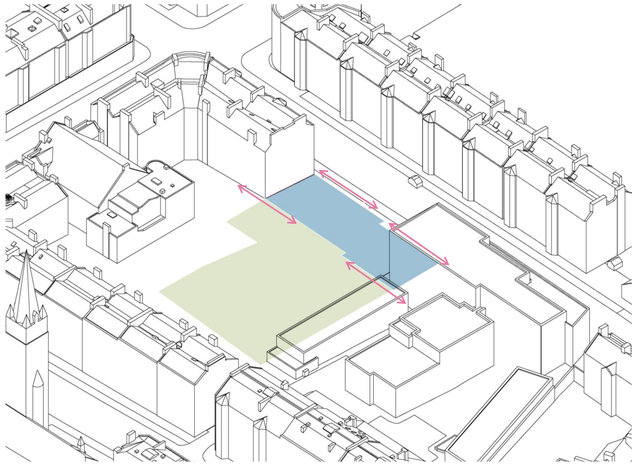
Reuse and adaptation were considered. The existing deep floorplate, unusual floor-to-floor heights and external wall consideration materially constrain opportunities for the delivery of high-quality accommodation and limit the building's ability to meet modern expectations for residential amenity, energy performance and accessibility.

4. Design Development

Responding to context, place and character

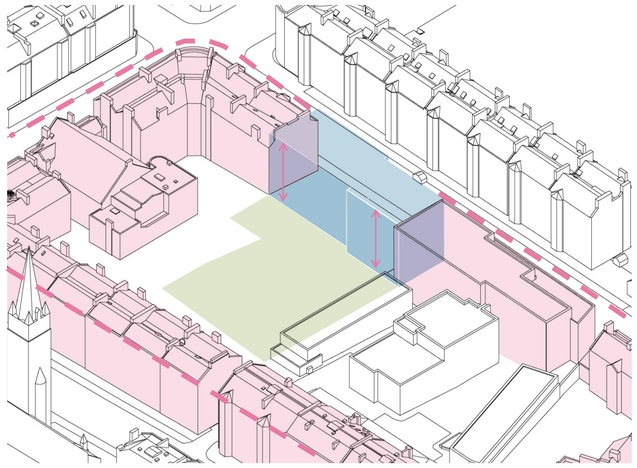
Respond to Existing Conditions

The front building footprint responds to the established urban grain by continuing the building line along Bernard Terrace and extending the prevailing depth of the surrounding tenement blocks. This helps establish a footprint that reflects the character and structure of the local area.



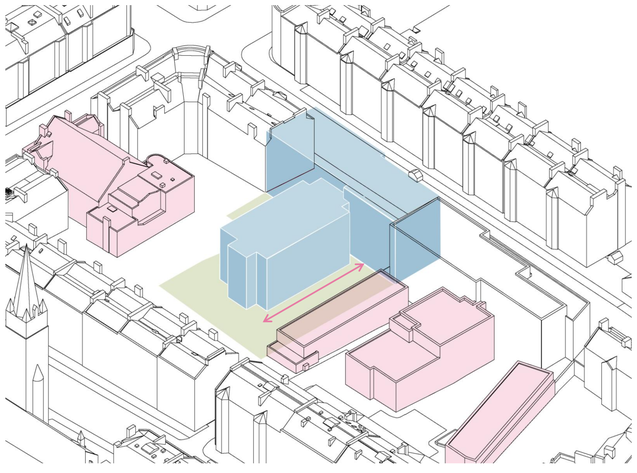
Complete the Urban Block

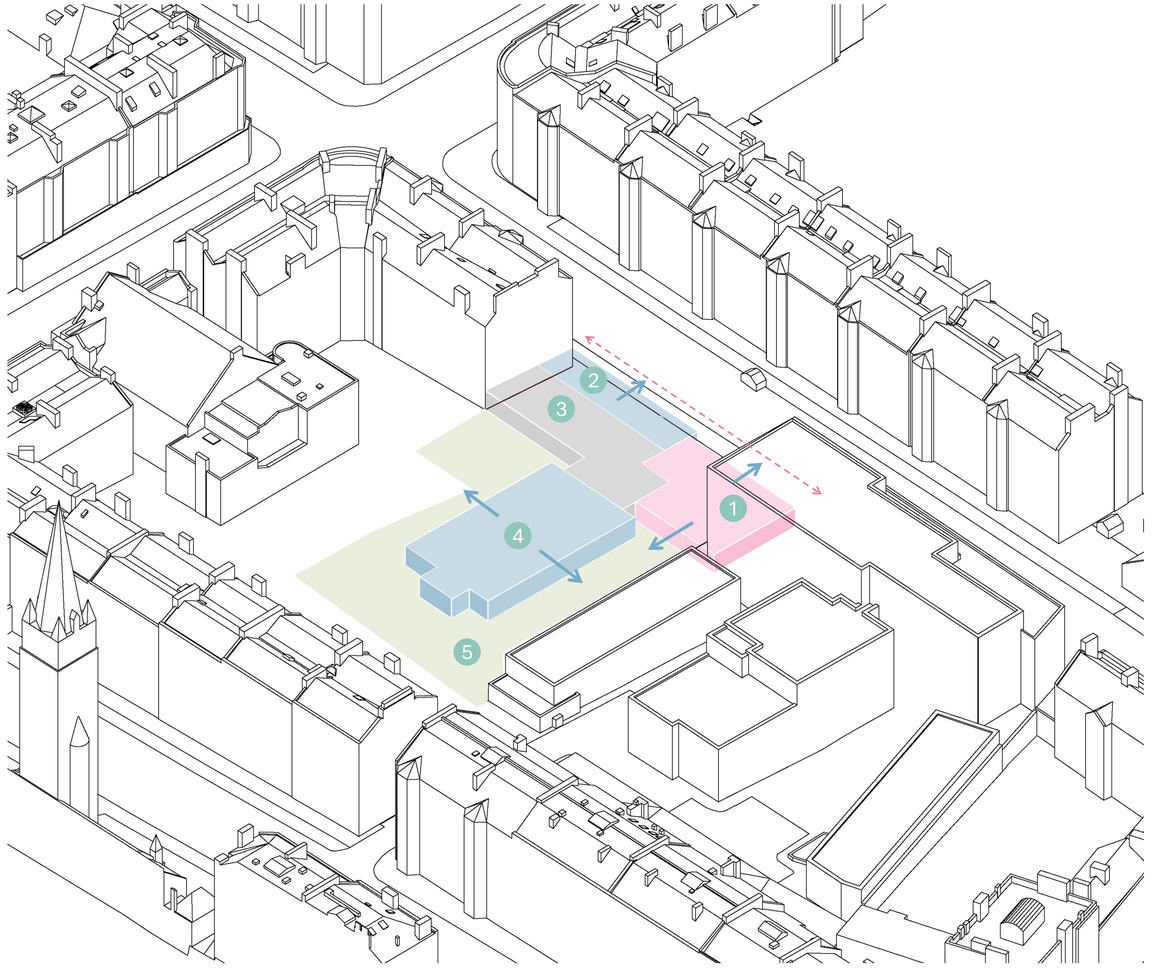
The proposed built form completes the urban block and creates a stronger sense of enclosure along the street. Building heights have been informed by the scale of neighbouring tenements, helping the scheme sit comfortably within the existing townscape.



Creating a Backland Building

The rear extension builds upon an established pattern of backland development within the wider block. This approach allows additional accommodation while maintaining a coherent relationship with surrounding buildings and open spaces.





Ground floor accommodation

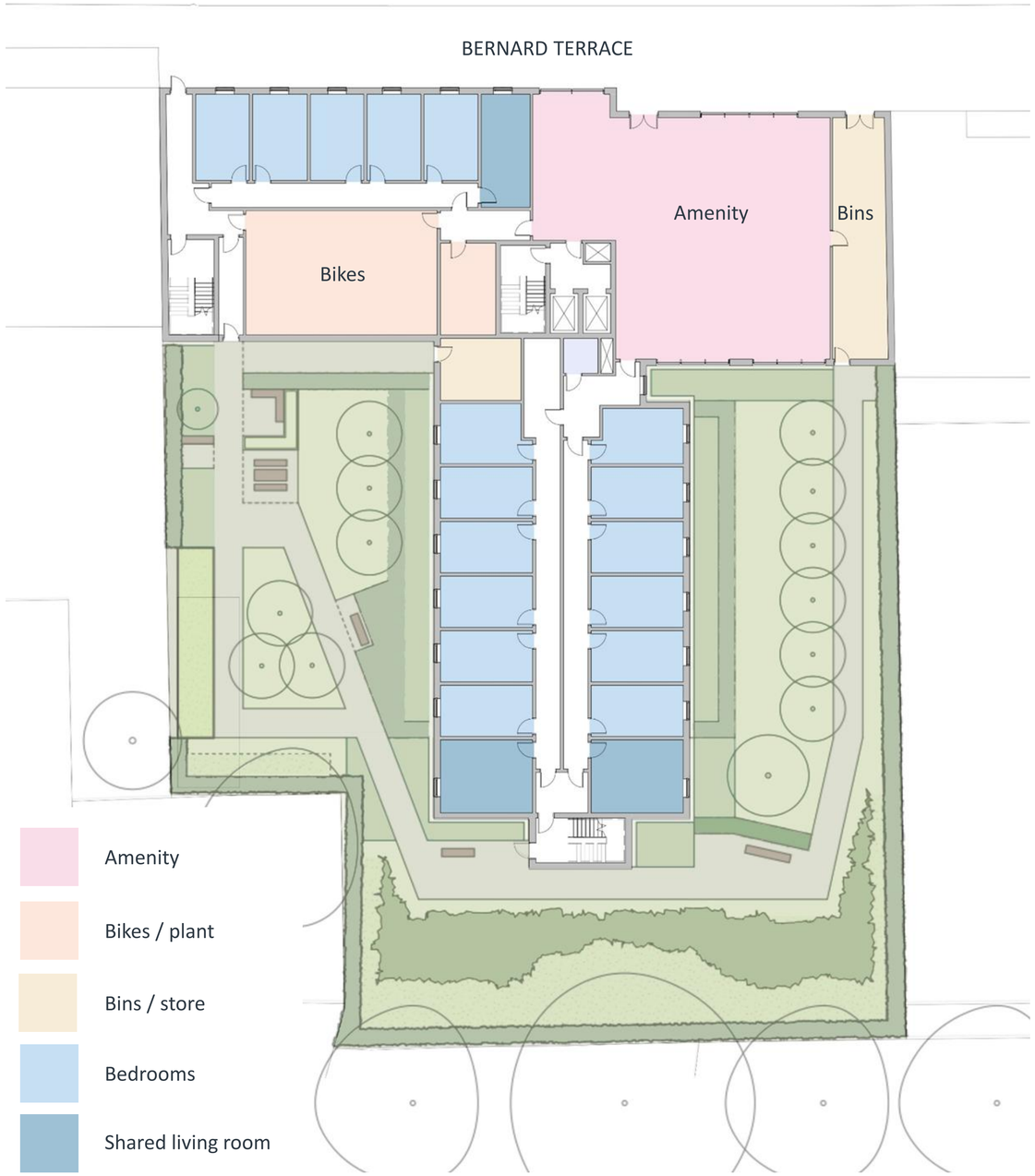
1. Communal amenity space fronts onto the street and rear landscape, providing active frontage.
2. Bedrooms face onto the street to provide passive surveillance and avoid ‘dead’ frontage
3. Back of house areas kept to the rear to limit impact on frontage
4. Bedrooms face onto the courtyard on both sides to provide passive surveillance
5. Landscaped communal outdoor space provides opportunities for relaxation, recreation and social interaction.

The design has evolved through a careful consideration of the site’s context, surrounding townscape and opportunities for sustainable redevelopment. Through a series of design moves, the proposals respond to established building lines, prevailing heights and historic patterns of development, creating a coherent building form that integrates with its surroundings while delivering high-quality amenity for future residents.

5. Building Layout

Building layout and future adaptability

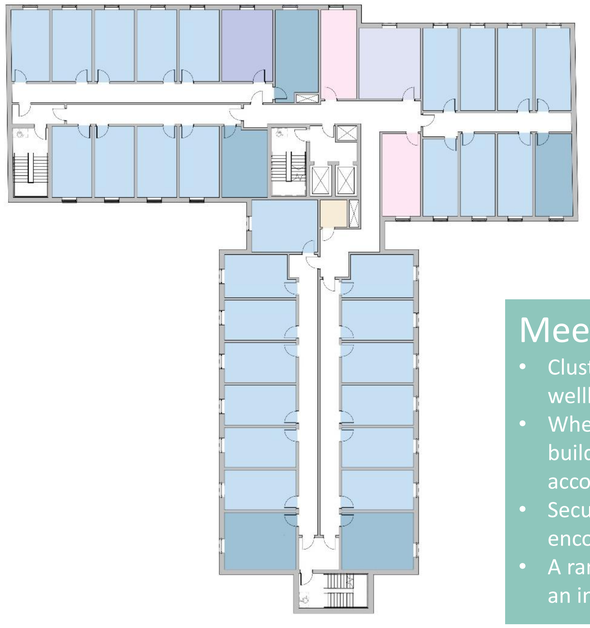
The proposed building layout has been carefully arranged to create a high-quality living environment while responding to the opportunities and constraints of the site. Resident amenity spaces, cycle storage and supporting facilities are located at ground floor level alongside a landscaped courtyard at the heart of the development. Upper floors provide a mix of accommodation types, organised around simple and efficient floorplates that maximise natural light, support resident wellbeing and create a strong relationship with the central outdoor spaces.



Top floor plan



Typical upper floor plan

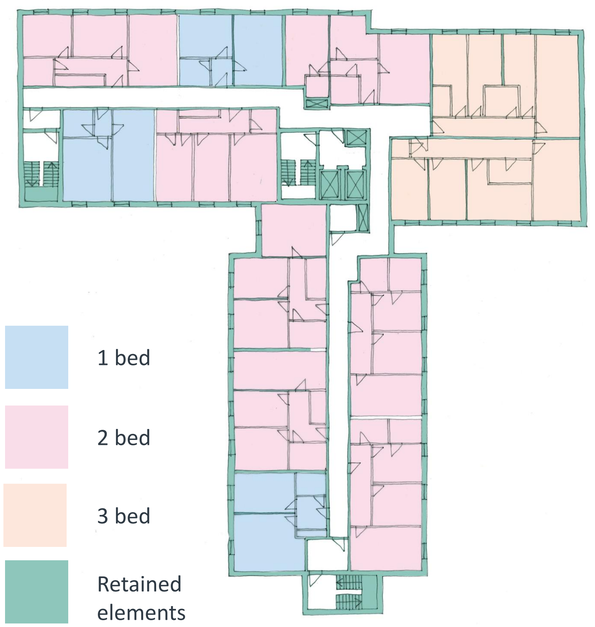


Bedrooms
Accessible bedroom
Shared living room
Studio
Accessible studio
Store / cleaner

Meeting Council Guidance

- Cluster flats are arranged in groups of 4-7 bedrooms, supporting wellbeing, social interaction and creating a strong sense of community.
- Wheelchair-accessible bedrooms are distributed throughout the building, meeting the Council requirements for accessible accommodation
- Secure cycle parking provided at a rate exceeding 0.5 spaces per bed, encouraging sustainable travel choices.
- A range of room types, shared facilities and amenity spaces help create an inclusive and high-quality living environment.

Typical upper floor plan



Designed for Long-Term Adaptability

In line with the City of Edinburgh Council guidance, the building has been designed so it can be adapted and reconfigured in the future to meet the needs of mainstream housing.

The regular structural grid, simple room arrangement and logical positioning of circulation cores provide flexibility for a range of alternative residential layouts while maintaining appropriate means of escape. Elements shown in teal opposite can be retained if the building is reconfigured.

The building's servicing strategy is also well suited to future conversion, with services distributed throughout the floorplates. Supporting facilities, including cycle storage, waste storage and resident amenity spaces, are provided at a scale comparable to mainstream residential development.

Together, these measures help ensure the building can respond to changing housing needs over time, supporting its long-term sustainability and resilience.

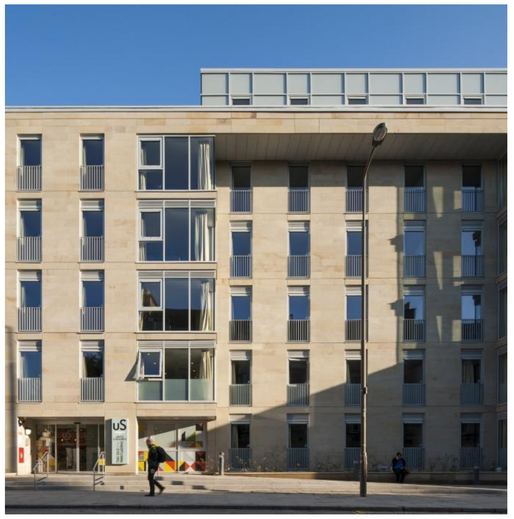
6. Materials & Character

Robust, high-quality traditional materials

The proposed material palette has been carefully developed in response to the character of Newington and the site's historic context. A simple and robust selection of high-quality materials, including natural stone, facing brick and dark grey cladding, is proposed to create a contemporary building that sits comfortably within its surroundings. The palette draws inspiration from the established materials of the Conservation Area, while reflecting the industrial heritage of the site and providing a durable, long-lasting architectural character.



Precedents



The Old Printworks - JM Architects



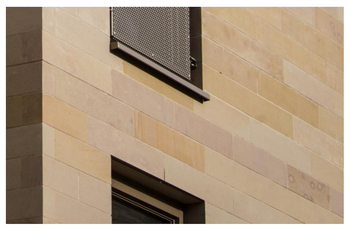
Horne Terrace – CDA



The Old Printworks – JM Architects



Westerlea Gardens – CDA



Buff Sandstone

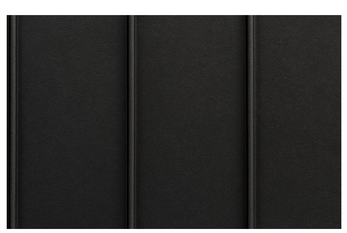
Buff sandstone cladding will be used on the principal elevation to Bernard Terrace.

Stone was selected as one of the defining materials of the surrounding area and is identified within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as an important element of local character. Its use helps ground the development within its context while providing a robust and high-quality architectural response.



Buff Facing Brick

Buff facing brick is proposed for the rear elevations facing the garden and external amenity area, providing a warm and durable material that complements the sandstone frontage. A varied blend of tones and textures will add depth and visual interest, while drawing inspiration from the site's industrial heritage, including the former brick furniture depositary.



Dark Grey Metal Cladding

The proposed top storey is an inhabited mansard roof, which will be clad in dark grey metal cladding with standing seams. This mansard defines the buildings roofscape, tying into the surrounding pitched tenement roofs.

The dark grey will also be used for window and door frames, helping to tie together the various compositional elements of the elevation.

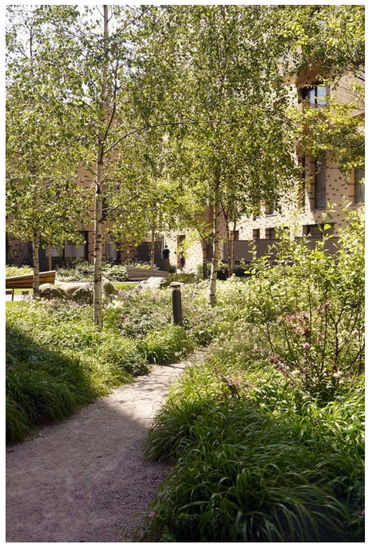
7. Landscape

An inviting communal greenspace

The proposed landscape design aims to:

- Create a high-quality communal amenity space for resident's use.
- Enhance biodiversity.
- Create an area of urban greenspace for benefit of both resident's and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Precedent Images



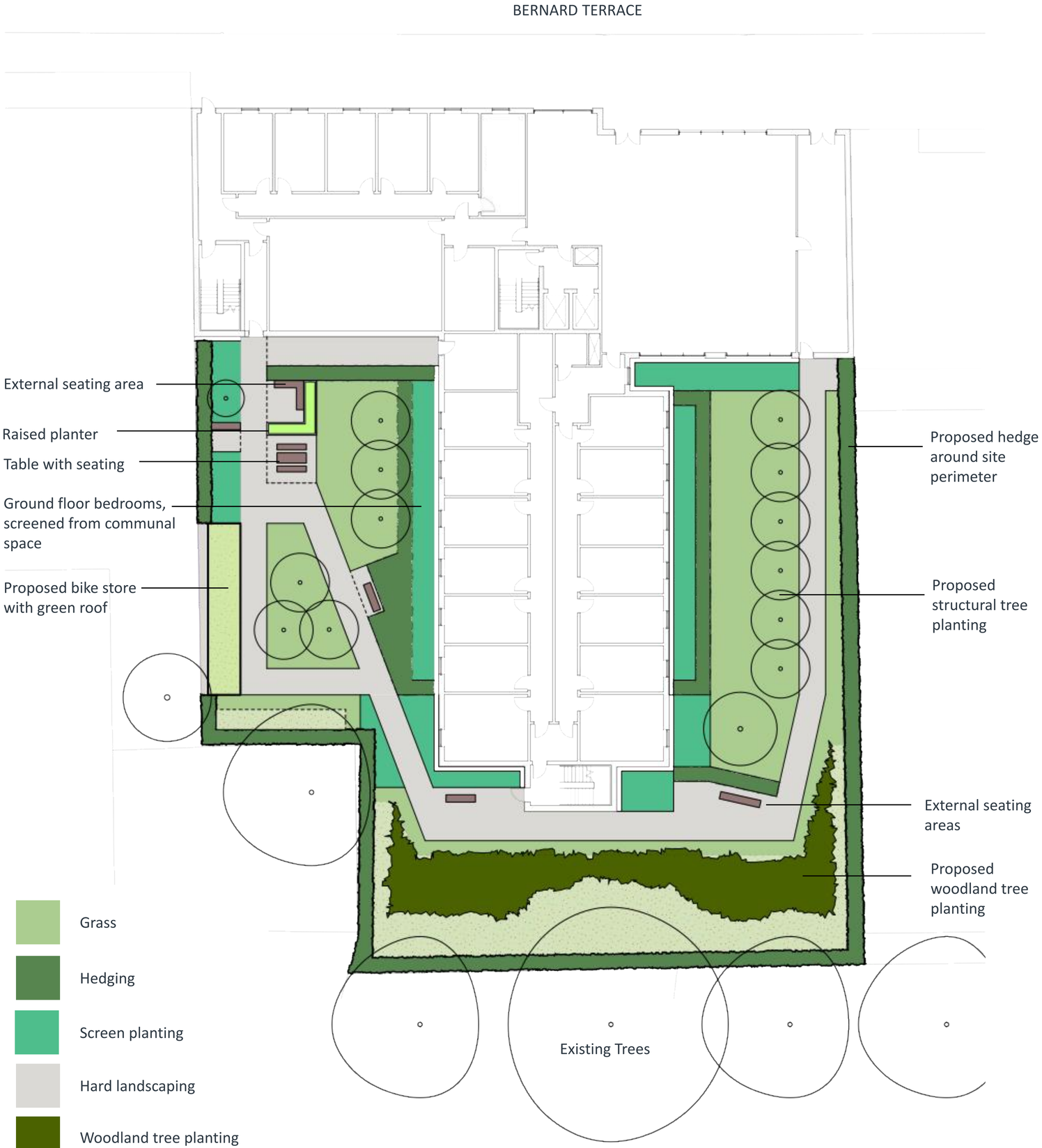
Courtyard garden; St. Andrews
Townshend Landscape Architects



Planting: Holyrood North
HarrisonStevens



Seating & Planters: Rowanbank Gardens
rankinfraser landscape architects



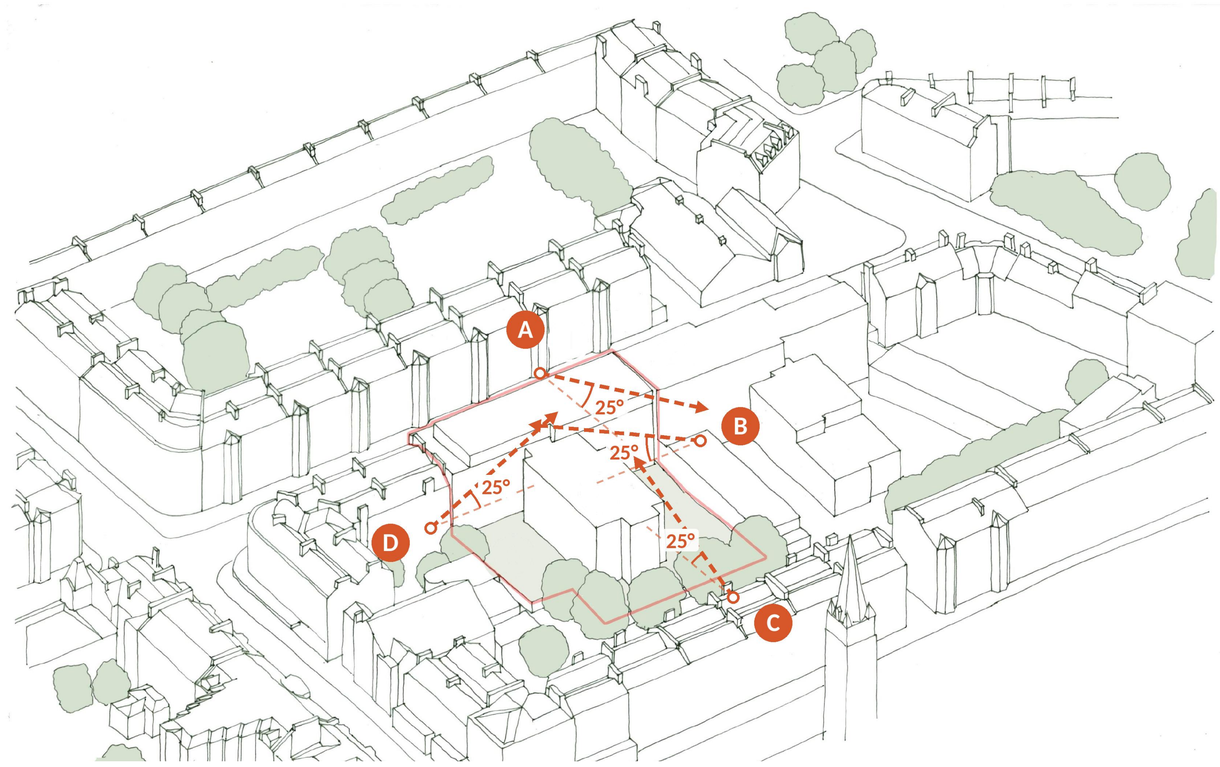
8. Daylight & Sunlight

Protecting light to neighbouring homes and gardens

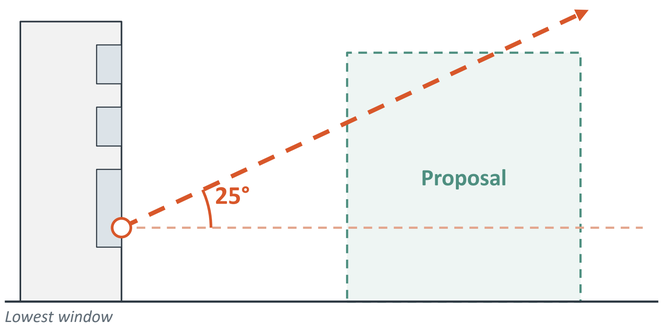
The daylight and sunlight assessment will follow the **Edinburgh Design Guidance**. A 3D model of the proposal and its surroundings will be analysed, assessing light to neighbouring homes and gardens, as well as within the new accommodation development.

The 25° test – daylight to neighbouring windows

A line is drawn at 25° in section from the centre of the lowest window of each neighbouring building facing the site. Where the proposal rises above this line, daylight may be affected and the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) is tested for those windows.



Indicative 25° test lines from the lowest window of each neighbouring building facing the site (A–D). Exact positions will be confirmed in the 3D analysis.



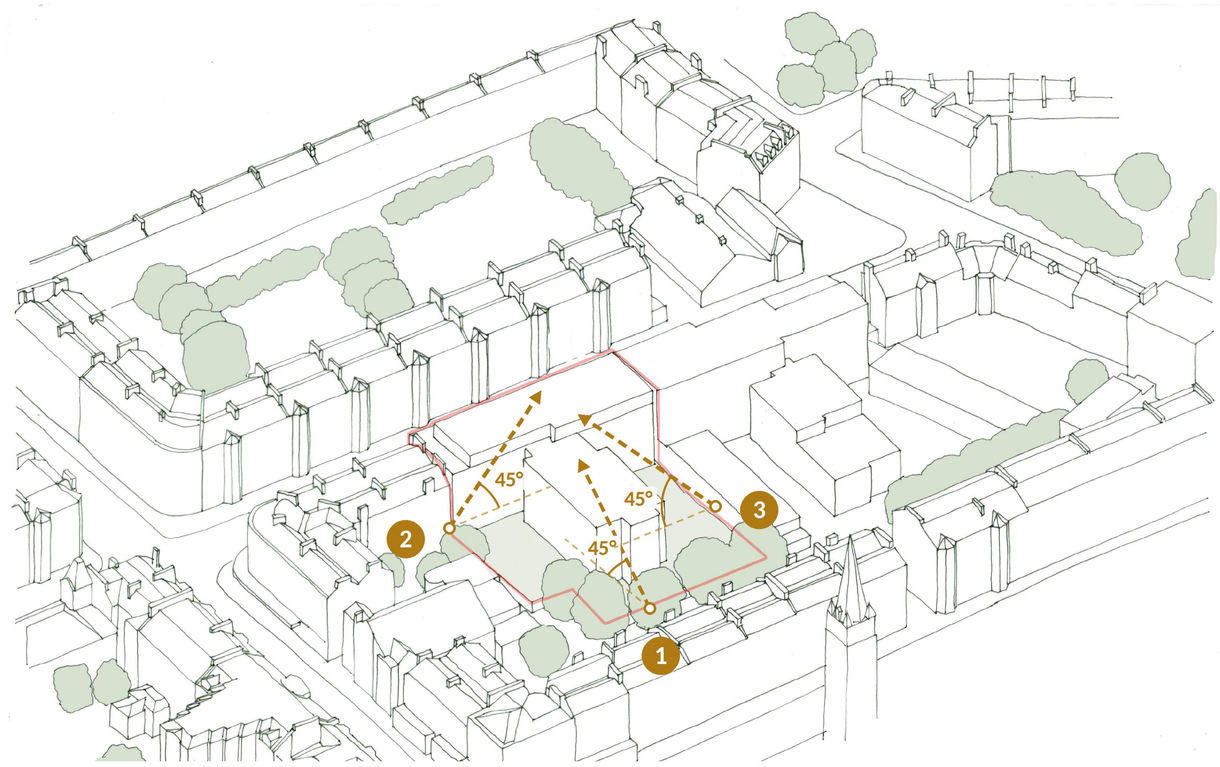
Lowest window

Neighbouring buildings tested

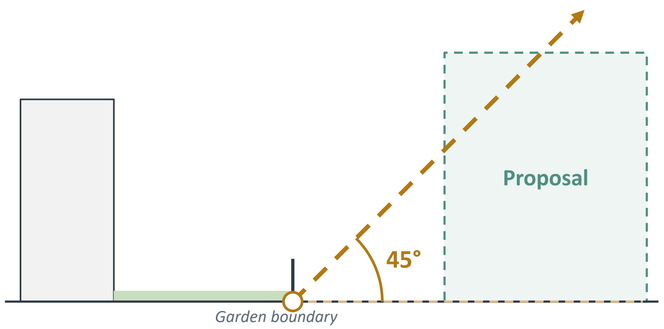
- **A** Terrace opposite the street frontage
- **B** Neighbouring building beside the courtyard
- **C** Rear elevations backing onto the site
- **D** Neighbouring properties beside the amenity space

The 45° test – sunlight to neighbouring gardens

A line is drawn at 45° in section from ground level at the boundary of each neighbouring garden. Where the proposal rises above this line, the garden is tested to check at least half of it still receives two hours of sun on 21 March.



Indicative 45° test lines from the boundary of each neighbouring garden next to the site (1–3). Exact positions will be confirmed in the 3D analysis.



Garden boundary

Neighbouring gardens tested

- **1** Rear gardens backing onto the site
- **2** Garden ground beside the amenity space
- **3** Neighbouring courtyard garden

9. Sustainability

A fabric first, zero direct emissions, low carbon building

The design follows the energy hierarchy: first reduce the energy the building needs, then supply it efficiently from zero direct emissions sources, while minimising the carbon built into the building itself. This approach supports NPF4 Policy 2 (climate mitigation and adaptation) and the City of Edinburgh's ambition to be a net zero city by 2030.

STEP 1

Fabric first

Reduce the energy the building needs

The most sustainable energy is the energy we don't use. A high-performance envelope keeps heat in during winter, limits unwanted heat gain in summer and keeps running costs low for residents.

- Highly insulated walls, roof and floors, targeting performance beyond current Scottish Building Standards
- High-performance glazing and well-sealed window frames
- Airtight construction, tested on completion
- Junctions carefully detailed to minimise thermal bridging
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), providing fresh, filtered air while recovering heat
- Window sizes balanced for daylight, solar gain and overheating

Building Standards, Section 6

STEP 2

Zero direct emissions heating & hot water

Supply energy efficiently, with no combustion on site

All electric heating and hot water will be provided in lieu of fossil fuels. Highly efficient heat pumps will typically deliver around three units of heat for every unit of electricity used.

- No gas connection or fossil-fuel energy source
- All-electric heating and hot water using heat pump technology
- Efficient hot water storage and distribution to minimise losses
- Smart controls and metering to help residents manage energy use
- Rooftop solar PV to generate renewable electricity, where feasible
- No on-site combustion, helping to improve local air quality

New Build Heat Standard (2024) · NPF4 Policy 2

STEP 3

Low carbon materials

Minimise the carbon built into the building

As operational energy falls, the carbon in materials and construction becomes a larger share of a building's lifetime emissions. A whole life carbon assessment will guide design and materiality decisions from the outset.

- Whole life carbon assessment to RICS Professional Standard (2nd edition) and BS EN 15978
- Structural and façade options compared for embodied carbon
- Lower-carbon concrete mixes, recycled content and responsibly sourced timber
- Durable, long-life materials that are easy to maintain and repair
- Designed for future adaptability and disassembly
- Salvage and recycling of materials from the existing building where practicable
- Local sourcing where possible to reduce transport emissions

RICS WLCA (2nd ed.) · BS EN 15978 · NPF4 Policy 2

Wider sustainability

Brownfield city-centre site

Makes efficient use of previously developed land, reducing pressure on greenfield sites

Landscape & biodiversity

New planting and green courtyard space, with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement

Sustainable transport

Walking distance to university campuses, public transport and secure cycle parking

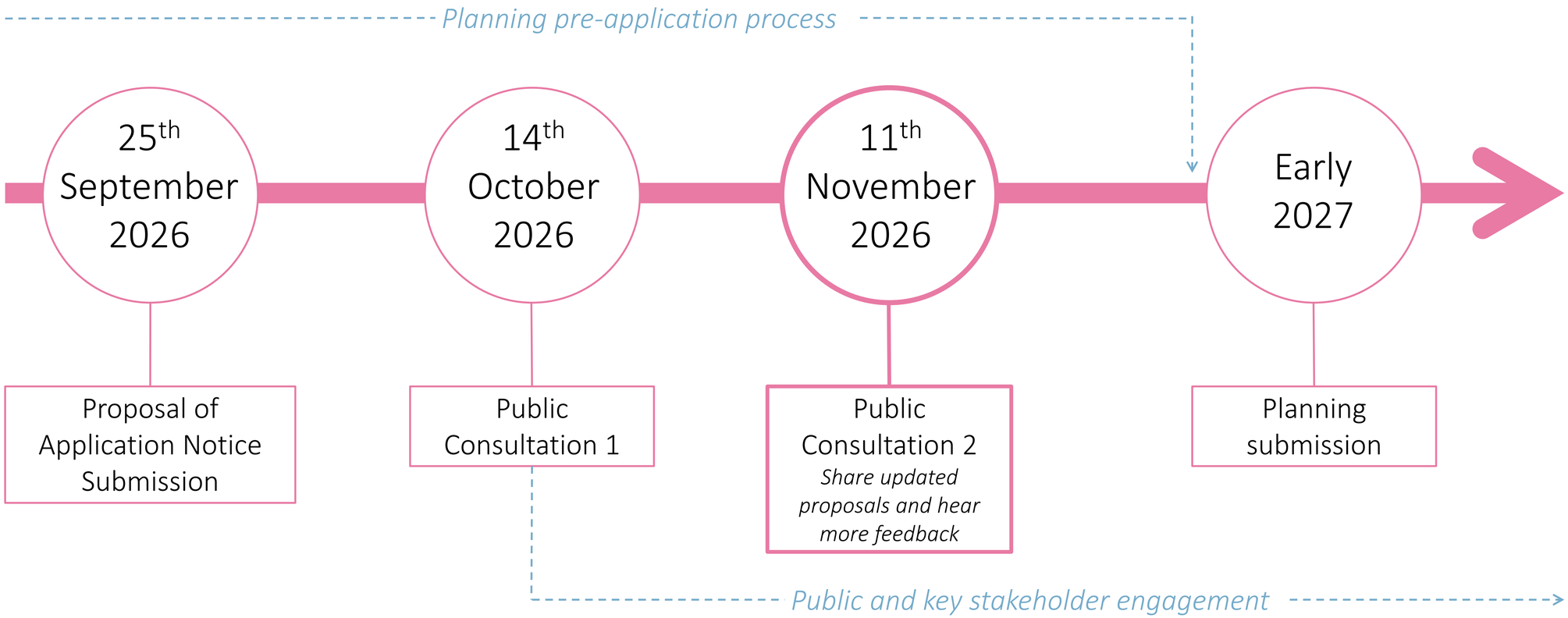
Climate resilience

Designed for warmer summers and heavier rainfall, with sustainable drainage and overheating mitigation

10. What happens next?

Your feedback helps shape the next steps

This consultation forms the second stage of engagement on the emerging proposals for 16 Bernard Terrace. Since the first consultation event, the design has been refined in response to feedback from local residents, stakeholders and technical consultees. We welcome your views on the developed proposals, which will help inform the final design ahead of submission of a planning application to the City of Edinburgh Council.



Please take the time to complete our feedback forms

Or comments can be made via email to consultation@scotthobbsplanning.com with the subject “Bernard Terrace”.

Comments should be received by Wednesday 25th November 2026

Information will be available at: www.16bernardterrace.com

What’s next

You will also have the opportunity to make formal representation to the City of Edinburgh Council as planning authority once the application has been submitted.