



Housing LIN

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## Case Study 173

# Regenerating the Aylesbury: In the mix - Harriet Hardy House. Building an urban extra care housing

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# Background

This case study focuses on a challenging intergenerational mix, made up of a variety of residential accommodation types which require progressive levels of privacy across shared spaces, and within a dense urban environment. Shortlisted for a number of awards, including the 2024 National Housing Design award, the 2024 CIH Development Award, an Inside Housing Award, a Housing Design Award and an NLA Award, it draws on work to regenerate the former Aylesbury Estate in Walworth, London Borough of Southwark, integrating Harriet Hardy House, an extra care housing scheme, into the redevelopment and pays particular attention to explaining how the risk of overheating in circulation spaces was mitigated without resorting to double loaded or mechanically vented corridors.

## About the regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate

The regeneration of the area currently known as the Aylesbury housing estate in Walworth, South London over the last 10+ years is one of the largest social housing programs ever undertaken in Europe. Block one, designed by Mæ, of Phase 1B (known as the First Development Site) comprises extra care housing, affordable social rented and shared ownership housing, several private maisonettes, and a community facility.

Originally commissioned by Notting Hill Housing Trust back in 2013 and completed in July 2023, Harriet Hardy House is now operated by Southwark Council. The urban mix acknowledges an ageing population and the architectural ambition to accommodate the extra care housing scheme alongside general needs housing, within a tenure blind block that offers a coherent and well-mannered façade.

The design has been developed and realised in close collaboration with London Borough of Southwark's commissioners and planners, and the then Notting Hill staff via a series of focused design workshops, community public consultation, and close collaboration with the construction team, The Hill Group. Planning was granted in 2015 and the scheme meets levels of need within the Borough, has a London Plan policy compliant sustainability strategy of Zero carbon with 35% reduction over Part L 2013, and has a community centre which achieves a BREEAM rating of Very Good.



# Urban extra care housing: challenges

The extra care housing scheme comprises 54 social rent apartments, plus a guest room, alongside a community facility, and general needs housing (made up of 41 social rent, 22 intermediate apartments and 2 private sale maisonettes), around a shared, enclosed courtyard which is open to the south to allow daylight and sunlight deep into its relatively narrow plot. It is part of wider estate redevelopment comprising 119 homes in total.

The block development mix of one, two, three and four bedroom apartments with different levels of provision and tenure (social rent, intermediate and private sale) is driven by an ambition to provide the most inclusive extra care offer possible for older people, whilst establishing a multi-generational, mixed community. It also helped the economic viability of the project and the aspiration of the then Notting Hill Housing Trust, which in turn helps to create a higher quality domestic environment. In demanding tenure blind housing, Notting Hill Housing Trust and London Borough of Southwark have ensured there is no compromise in architectural quality for 'less profitable' tenures.



From this quality objective, the challenge was to accommodate the requirements of the South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) wheelchair flat guidance<sup>1</sup> within a grid that worked with other general needs types in order to present an efficient structural set out and a continuous, coherent architectural expression.

*"It is clear that a major contribution to London's projected growth in population is increasing longevity: people are living longer and there will be more older people living here."<sup>2</sup>*

The report 'Ageing London', by the Mayor's Design Advisory Group, acknowledges the unsuitable nature of much of new London housing for older home buyers who are often looking for more space (both inside and outside of the dwelling) than the first time buyer. Termed 'last time buyers', older people have different priorities and can be marginalised by housing that is too frequently designed as much by economic viability as it is for the flexible needs of the unknown end user.

1 South East London Housing Partnership, "Wheelchair homes design guidelines" October 2011

2 Mayor's Design Advisory Group 'Ageing London' March 2016



The concept of inter-generational inclusion was driven by visits to a number of existing Notting Hill Housing Trust run extra care housing developments across London (many now transferred to Housing 21), the most successful and vibrant of which encouraged the residents to interact with children and younger adults. The least successful felt more institutional than domestic, with problems such as double loaded corridors and overheating in shared spaces. Much of the activity in any of the developments was focused around the main entrance as residents gathered to welcome visitors or just watch the coming and going.

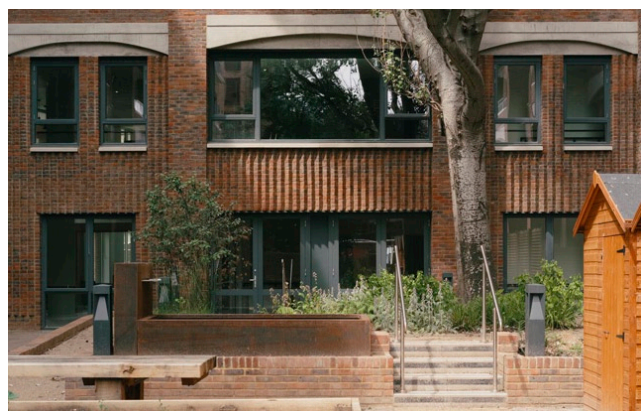
## A grand entrance

Making and maintaining a connection with the wider community became an important driver for the plan. Precedent studies showed entrances to facilities often located to the side or rear of the building, away from the street for ease of vehicular 'drop off' or to ensure ease of monitoring for those coming or going. At Aylesbury, by offering a generous and well-overlooked entrance onto a new public space, a vibrant place is created and neighbourhood wide social interaction encouraged.

The design of the entrance was given careful consideration and sits at the apex of two wings forming a loggia with the two main wings of the extra care housing block running to the east and the south, which minimizes travel distances to the core (see appendix 3 and 4). The courtyard garden and communal lounge is made immediately visible upon entry, offering the option of increased sociability or retreat to apartments.

The garden is shared between the community centre, extra care and general needs housing. Landscaping and planting defines different spaces for different users whilst ensuring security.

The design of the extra care communal areas and flats was developed in close collaboration with Southwark commissioners and Notting Hill Housing Trust via a series of focused workshops on all aspects of the design, including meeting levels of need within the Borough. The resultant interior layout is conceived as a 21st



century almshouse, planned around the idea of progressive privacy. In addition, all flats have been designed as 'care ready', with new technologies such as tele-care and assistive technology which enable each flat to be tailored to each resident's needs.

## Galleries

Residents' flats are accessed from indoor/outdoor decks with an aspect down to the communal garden; the generous width of the decks is designed to enable residents to meet, stop and chat and feel part of a smaller community group. Inside, individual flats have generous circulation and open-plan layouts for ease of movement of wheelchairs and other mobility aids or those unsteady on their feet. Communal circulation routes are at least 1.5m wide with regular spaces at least 1.8m wide for two wheelchairs to pass. There are also plenty of informal places to rest, gather or reflect, with views out from behind opening glazing.

Along the main galleries, front doors are paired in front of deeper sections of the walkway, which allow for a neighbourly level of interaction. A game of chess, or a place to sit and relax with year-round views through to the courtyard. Residents can take ownership of the area immediately adjacent to their front doors and add personal decorative touches to the communal space, which increases familiarization, comfort and domesticity. The open galleries eliminate any risk of overheating in these communal walkways, which offer a place to socialise with a more increased sense of privacy, compared to the ground floor communal areas.



# 'Designing out' overheating in circulation spaces

'Designing in' thermal comfort is an increasingly important area of design. Care Quality Commission guidance for extra care service users mentions that residents should be able to control the temperature of their environment, but does not set limits. At the time of designing new health care buildings, Health Technical Memorandum 03-01 (DH, 2007) (HTM03-01) states: "Calculations and thermal modelling should be undertaken to ensure that, during the summertime, internal temperatures in patient areas do not exceed 28 degrees centigrade for more than 50 hours per year".<sup>3</sup>

Another study by the University of Manchester<sup>4</sup> illuminates the often-unforeseen risk of overheating in elderly care residential design and management. The misconception that the elderly require warmer than usual environments can be harmful and is highlighted in the report as designing for an "imagined user".

When designing the Aylesbury extra care circulation, fully glazed corridors were modelled and tested against predicted (higher) temperatures in fifty years' time as well as highest currently recorded London summer temperatures. Under current conditions, temperatures in south facing glazed corridors would have regularly exceeded 30°C and occasionally passed 35°C. An approach was therefore developed to only partially enclose the galleries. This offers an increased layer of sociability and connection to the rest of the scheme, compared to the private retreat of the dwelling. In addition, the open decks facilitate cross ventilation within the flats.

## Conclusion

For the Aylesbury extra care block, Mæ has sought to create a building that weaves seamlessly into the existing and emerging urban grain of the area. Whilst the extra care sits within the same urban block as multi-generational housing, they have been conceived of as one building. Care and consideration has been given to the layout of the dwellings so that they promote independent living, as well as have adaptable features such as future fitting of ceiling hoists. However, Mæ have equally focused on how dwellings relate to each other and how circulation, common spaces and shared amenity can enable a sense of community, much like in the manner of the traditional almshouses and successful neighbourhoods. In addition, Mæ have addressed concerns about thermal comfort and energy efficiency.

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3 What Standards to Expect from the Regulation of your Care Home, CQC

4 Lewis A & Brand R (2015) *Providing thermal comfort for an imagined user: the design of energy-efficient extra-care housing*, University of Manchester



## Summary

- Inter-generational and thoroughly inclusive mix makes happier and more active residents.
- London is an ageing city that needs to provide inclusive housing that accommodates the needs of elderly residents.
- Overheating is a significant health and safety risk and highly recorded factor contributing to discomfort of residents in extra care.
- Entrance sequences and communal areas with controlled and varied levels of privacy are imperative to a successful scheme.

## Key facts

Location	Walworth, London
Date Commenced	27th June 2013
Planning approved	23rd April 2015
Date Completed	July 2023
Key Consultation events	5 stage process (4 pre application) over a period of 12 months
Contract Value:	£26m
Cost per sq.m	£2,300/sqm (GIA)
Client Consultant team	Notting Hill Housing Trust and later London Borough of Southwark
Project Manager	Arcadis
Structural Engineer	Price & Myers LLP
Services Engineer	WSP UK Ltd.
Sustainability	WSP UK Ltd.
Landscape Architect	HTA
Quantity Surveyor	Arcadis
Site Area hectares	0.4 hectares
GEA	12,612 sqm
Number of Dwellings	119 plus a guest room
Tenure Mix	Extra care 54 social rent plus 1 guest room / general needs housing (41 social rent, 22 intermediate apartments and 2 private sale maisonettes)
Social Rent percentage	80%
Shared ownership	19%
Private sale/ rental	1%
Dwelling per hectare dph	189
Habitable rooms per hectare	618
Design Standards met	Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 (now obsolete) BREEAM Very Good (community facility) 10% of the extra care flats to South East London Housing Partnership (SELHP) Space Requirement. 90% follow LIN guidance

# Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## Image credits

Photography © Tim Crocker.

## About Mæ

Mæ are award-winning architects, urban designers and researchers. Led by Alex Ely, former Head of Sustainable Communities at CABE, Mæ design buildings that seek to address today's urban, social and environmental challenges. Their aim is always to create buildings and places that enrich culture and society. They thrive on collaboration. Working on regeneration projects for public and private sector clients, they talk – and listen – to colleagues and communities. Their design solutions match their client's brief with the varied day-to-day needs of the building's users. With a generalist approach they understand specialist needs. Whether it's health centres or care homes, they design to meet specific requirements. Through creativity they plan delightful healthcare environments, avoiding an institutional feel, convinced that everything benefits from good design and that good design has a positive impact on our health.

## About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 20,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England, Wales and Scotland to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'ideas lab' on specialist/supported housing, our online and regional networked activities, and consultancy services:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing that enables older and disabled people to live independently in a home of their choice
- provide insight and intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice to support sector learning and improvement
- showcase what's best in specialist/supported housing and feature innovative projects and services that demonstrate how lives of people have been transformed, and
- support commissioners and providers to review their existing provision and develop, test out and deliver solutions so that they are best placed to respond to their customers' changing needs and aspirations.



Access a selection of related resources on the Housing LIN's dedicated intergenerational housing pages at:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Housing/HousingforOlderPeople/intergenerational-housing/>

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