



Design and Access Statement

Horncastle Care Centre
Sharpthorne

12.05.2025
Job no. A-1034





more

6 Progress Business Centre,
Whittle Parkway,
Bath Road,
Slough,
Berkshire.
SL1 6DQ

01628 665131
enquiries@carless-adams.co.uk

carless-adams.co.uk

Splendid Healthcare

Rev	Date	Description	By	Review	Approved
A	12.05.25	Issued for comments	MD	PK	

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1.0 Introduction

“With over sixty years’ proud history we are driven every day by our passion and determination to reimagine the future of care and supported living and promote independence, wellbeing and quality of life.”

Mel Magee, Carless + Adams.



Genuine + Open

At Carless + Adams, we understand that the provision of high-quality care has never mattered more.

We are dedicated to reimagining supported living and care accommodation communities, changing perceptions and enabling a move into these environments to be a positive and proactive one.

With an ageing population there is a growing requirement for supported living and care accommodation across all areas of the UK. At Carless + Adams, we recognise the importance of these environments within their local communities and we work collaboratively with our clients to assist in meeting this demand whilst respecting the needs of the neighbouring communities.

We believe that providing the correct accommodation can empower people and allow them to live a life filled with choice and dignity. With designs that promote interaction between different age groups, as we know this can help build solid, supportive communities whilst alleviating isolation, it is our ambition to champion intergenerational care.

We want to lead the sector to ensure the highest possible standards are consistently upheld whilst shaping the future of supported living and care in vibrant, attractive environments.

- + Residential Care & Nursing Homes
- + Assisted Living apartments, Cottages and Bungalows
- + Extra Care Housing
- + Design for Dementia
- + Day Care Centres
- + Elderly Person Housing
- + Learning Disability Homes
- + Healthcare

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Introduction

This design and access statement is prepared by Carless + Adams Ltd in support of a planning application submission on behalf of Splendid Healthcare who provides nursing and residential support in purpose-built facilities across Sussex.

The site, once operated as a care facility, now sits vacant since 2021. The Edwardian Manor (Horncastle House) suffered extensive fire damage beyond repair and was subsequently demolished in October 2024.

The other existing buildings in its current form pose significant challenges in meeting the quality standards set out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the expectations of residents and their families. Only a comprehensive redevelopment may give the site a chance to become a fit-for-purpose care facility.

This development will provide the highest standards of accommodation and excellent quality of care delivered by a dedicated team of experts for many years to come.

1.2 Site Location

The application site covers about 5.6 hectares. It sits within a predominantly rural area outside of the village of Sharpthorne, accessible from Plawhatch Lane.



Plawhatch Lane



Existing access to site - Plawhatch Lane



Access road looking east

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.1 Location, Context + Local Amenities

The site is located approximately 1 mile to the east of the village of Sharpthorne. There is no accessible public transport in the area, the site mainly depends on private car transport.

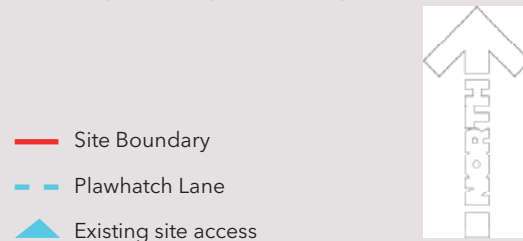
It is bordered as follows:

North: Plawhatch Lane, set behind a large expanse of woodland. There are three attached properties, known as Horncastle Cottages, to the immediate north-east of the site.

South: this aspect is more open, with the land sloping downwards, and the site boundary is framed by a row of mature trees, which blocks views from public vantage points.

East: the site is also well enclosed by mature woodland and hedgerows, effectively limiting visibility into the area.

West: large residential property known as Horncastle Place and two other residential properties (Deerkeepers Cottage and Woodpeckers).



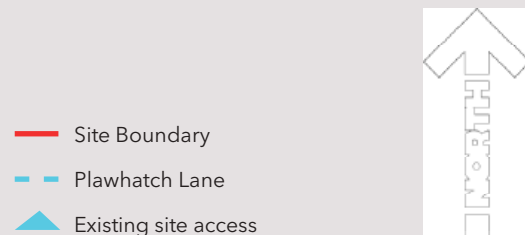
(source: google maps)

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.2 Existing Buildings

Existing and lost buildings include:

- ❶ **Horncastle House:** a part 2, part 3-storey period property which was damaged in a fire beyond repair, and demolished in October 2024.
- ❷ **Extension building:** a 17-bed single storey extension to Horncastle House.
- ❸ **Willow Lodge:** A one-and-half storey building, which in the past provided 10 nursing care bedrooms for people with an acquired brain injury (ABI). Upper floor provided on-site staff accommodation.
- ❹ **Maple Lodge:** A one-and-half storey building, which in the past provided 10 nursing care bedrooms for people with an acquired brain injury (ABI). Upper floor provided on-site staff accommodation.



(source: google maps)

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.2 Existing Buildings



1. Horncastle House (main entrance)



2. Maple Lodge and Willow Lodge (looking east)



3. Entrance to the lodges cluster



4. Open countryside (looking south)

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.2 Existing Buildings



5. View of Horncastle House (looking west) from countryside behind residential block



6. Willow lodge (rear elevation)



7. View from lodges cluster towards the entrance

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.3 Historical Context



Aerial view



Courtyard entrance



Looking west from rear garden

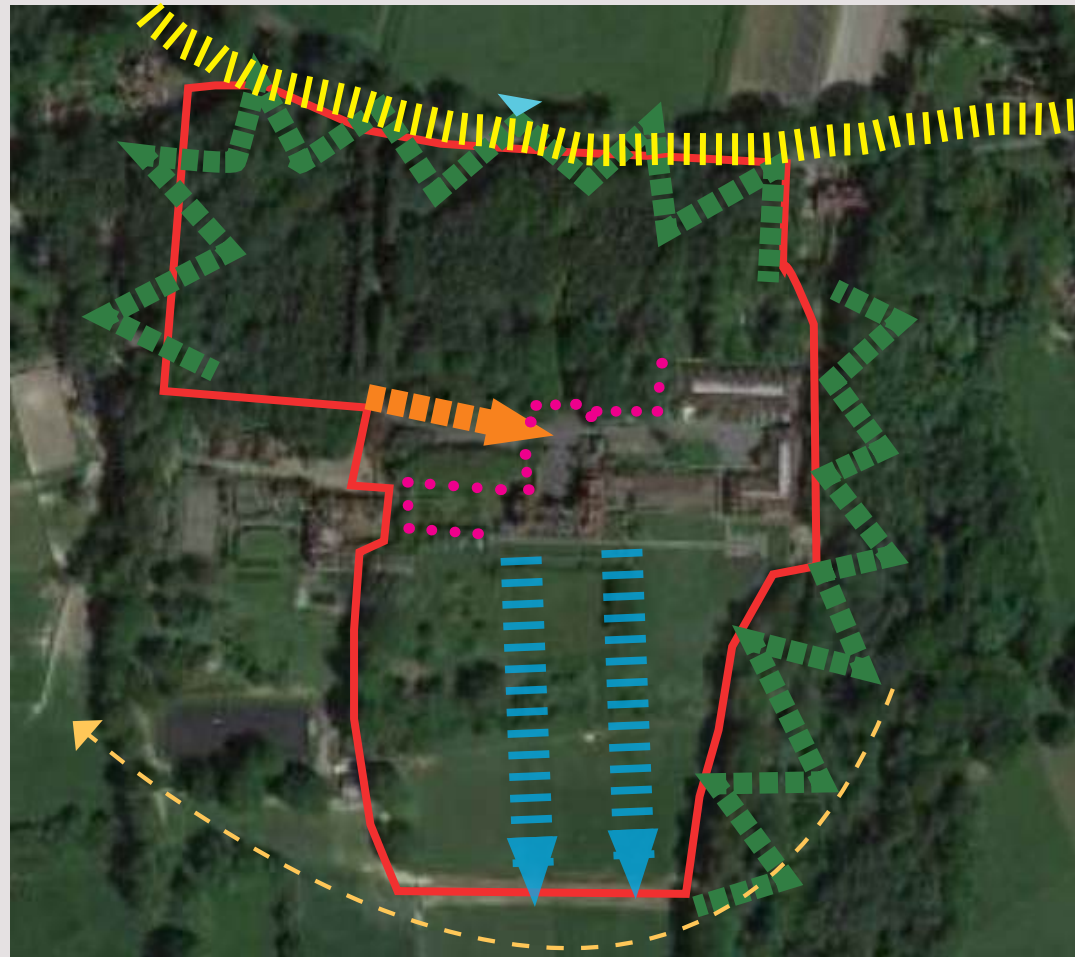


Southwest view

2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.4 Opportunities & Constraints

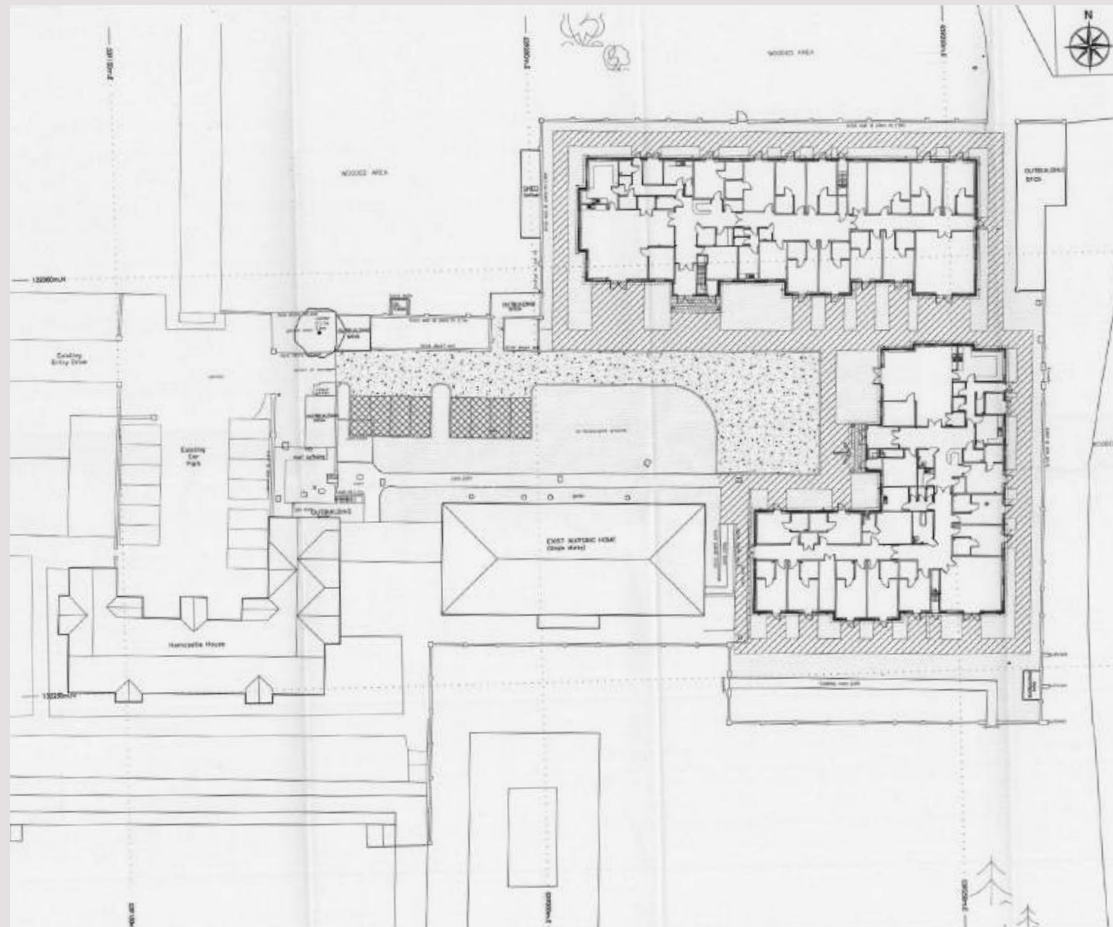
-  Site boundary
-  Existing site access / egress
-  Source of noise
-  Strong green barrier
-  Prominent views into the site / Key gateway
-  Historic garden walls
-  Open landscape views
-  Sun path



3.0 Planning

3.1 Planning History

- + In 1983, permission was granted for the change of use (HO/034/83).
- + In 1987, permission was granted for removal of prefabricated building and erection of a single storey wing and extension to dining room (HO/006/87) (HO/006/87)
- + In 1995, permission was granted for an outline application: 11 bedroom two-storey care home extension to existing nursing home with new access (HO/042/95)
- + In 2000, permission was granted for change of use from nursing home to single residential dwelling house (00/00645/COU).
- + In 2007 permission was granted for additions to an existing care facility to provide two, ten bed special care units with essential staff accommodation (07/00006/FUL).



Extract from Approved Drawings under 07/00006/FUL

3.0 Planning

3.2 Pre Application

In July 2024 a pre application was lodged with Mid Sussex Council (ref DM/24/1685). A meeting with the planners was held on 19th September 2024 and a written response was subsequently received.

The council was generally supportive of the proposal, with the redevelopment and enlargement of the existing care home acceptable in principle. The following additional comments were also received:

Integration of Upper Floors and Gardens

Improve connectivity between upper floors and outdoor areas by:

- + Creating direct access from the first floor to secure gardens via fire escape staircases.
- + Separating public and private spaces to enhance independent movement for residents.

Landscape and Layout Expectations

- + Present a 3D design and detailed landscape proposals.
- + Ensure the site and building layouts align with the aspiration to create a normalised environment that prioritises residents' safety and quality of life.

Design and Layout Recommendations

- + Consider redesigning the scheme into a collection of smaller buildings rather than a single large structure.
- + Explore creating a built environment that differs from traditional institutional nursing homes.
- + Adapt the site design to maximise the opportunity presented by the demolition of existing buildings.

Internal Circulation Improvements

Address reliance on the main lobby for people flow and improve wayfinding by:

- + Repositioning internal servicing cores to open up views.
- + Minimising the visual impact of fire doors by embedding them into walls or using glazed fire doors.
- + Widening corridor ends connected to the main lobby and adding floor-to-ceiling glass panels adjacent to fire doors.
- + Avoid long, monotonous corridors to reduce the institutional feel and better accommodate residents' needs, such as wandering and roaming.

The council also recommended the scheme to be considered through a Design Review process.



Pre Application scheme north elevation

3.0 Planning

3.3 Design Review Panel

The pre application stage comments were reviewed and incorporated into the design wherever possible, and a revised scheme was presented to the council's Design Review Panel on the 22nd January 2025.

The Panel commended the scheme for being a respectful yet modern and simplified interpretation of the attractive original building, adding the following comments:

Internal Layout

- + Layout: Commended for being well-lit, user-friendly, with resting areas and no dead ends.
- + Enhancements: Suggested adding roof lights over the central corridor and stairs to further improve the internal environment.

External Design

- + Materials: Support for brick, slate, and stone. Render was considered less suitable.
- + Windows: Suggested using grey frames in non-rendered areas and lighter colours in rendered parts to prevent a "punched-in" appearance.

Form and Roofscape

- + Building Form: Encouraged greater visual interest.
- + Roof: Seen as too monolithic—suggested lowering eaves on the southern wing and introducing varied-height or asymmetric gables.
- + Lift Overruns: Considered unresolved—recommending increasing the height of the central core to better integrate lift shafts, stairs, and plant areas, which could also reduce noise/vibration.

Façade Articulation

- + Visual Interest: Central section would benefit from more articulation, such as bay windows, to improve visual appeal.

Sustainability

- + Approach: Panel questioned whether a fabric-first strategy had been applied.
- + Renewable: Recommended exploring photovoltaic panels on south-facing and flat roof areas and requested more detail on heat pump integration.

Kitchen Gardens

- + Visual Impact: Concern over the length and dominance of the separating balustrade. Suggested resolving this through terracing or detailed treatment of finishes.



DRP scheme north elevation

3.0 Planning

3.4 Public Consultation

The client commissioned and put forward a website specifically for the proposal as part of the consultation with the community:

<https://horncastle.your-feedback.co.uk>

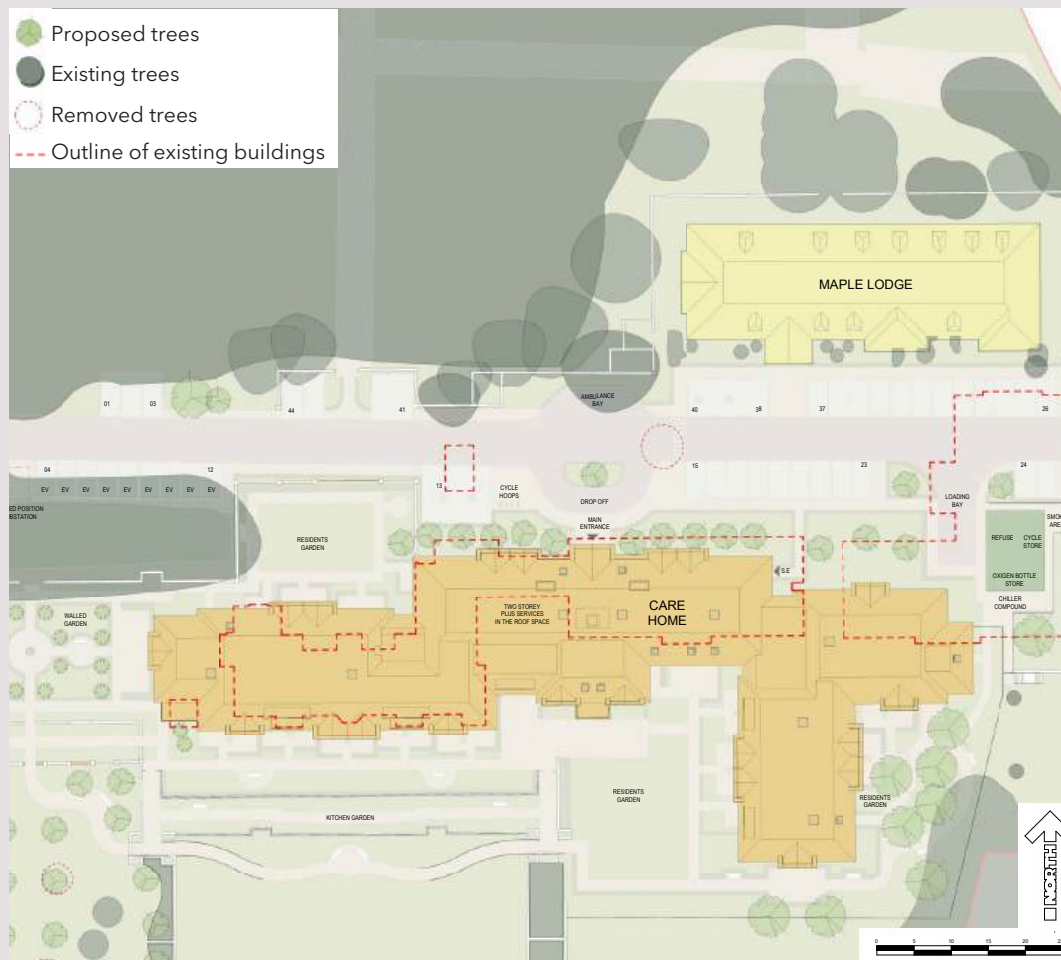
Letters were sent to the immediate settlements along the access road (Sharpthorne, West Hoathly and Wych Cross) and a meeting was held with members of the Sharpthorne Parish Council on 8th April 2025.

The face-to-face Public Consultation was held at Sharpthorne Church Hall on the afternoon of 10th April 2025, and it was attended by the architects, planning and development consultants.



Public consultation (10th April 2025)

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



Proposed Site Layout

4.1 Scheme Development

When considering the new design Carless + Adams sought to seamlessly integrate the building into its surroundings, create an appealing development that respects the local environment, provide stimulating and safe landscape spaces, and adhere to principles of inclusive design.

The proposal features a new 80-bed care home, designed with the following principles:

- + Demolition of the fire-damaged Horncastle House and erection of a care building, surrounded by landscaping that respects its landscape setting
- + Visually, the new building is to adapt and incorporate the most recognisable features of Horncastle House
- + The main core of the proposed building is to retain a visual importance within the structure, with the wings being visibly subservient.
- + Preservation of trees and hedges that contribute to the local character
- + Use of materials and architectural styles compatible with the local area
- + Provision of sizable amenity spaces for use by local residents, mitigating the overall impact of development.
- + Retention of the original Maple Lodge with 10 ABI (Acquired Brain Injury) units and 8 staff units.

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.1 Scheme Development



4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.1 Scheme Development



Existing scheme



Proposed scheme

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.2 Response to DRP Comments

More natural light: roof lights added to stairwells and first floor corridors

Lifts: relocated to the front of the building and away from the rear's roof valley. They now read as chimneys at the front of the building.

Windows: frame colour changed to a lighter shade of grey to reduce contrast, especially with light render

Fabric-first Approach: Photovoltaic panels indicated on south and west facing roofs.

Roof: side wings' eaves dropped down to emphasise the central building's importance.



More natural light: roof lights added to stairwells and first floor corridors

Roof: height and design changed to break up the overall form.

Roof design in different heights to form a more varied roof scape.

Roof: height and design changed at the rear of the central core section roof to break up the overall form.

Differentiation: Central core building facade is differentiated from side wings with more detailing around doors and windows, horizontal bands, and differentiated material palette that includes light coloured render.

Roof: side wings' eaves dropped down to emphasise the central building's importance.

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.3 Design Inspiration

When considering the elevation design, Carless + Adams sought to utilize the local vernacular and the historical significance of the former Horncastle House, both in terms of materials used as well as building elements.

These elements are represented by the use of red brick and stone detailing to some of the windows and doors.

The entrance arch pays homage to similar features found in the local area, including at the neighbouring Horncastle Place which, at some point, was part of the same estate as Horncastle House.

Single and double gables have been re-interpreted and shown throughout the building, helping to break the horizontality and create interest to the facades.



Neighbouring Horncastle Place ca. 2017 (Photo by Ian S, from geograph.org.uk, via Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0. Image cropped from original.)



Southwest view ca. 2008 (Photo by Richard Croft, from geograph.org.uk, via Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0. Image cropped from original.)



East view ca. 1984 (Photo by Richard Croft, from geograph.org.uk, via Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0. Image cropped from original.)

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

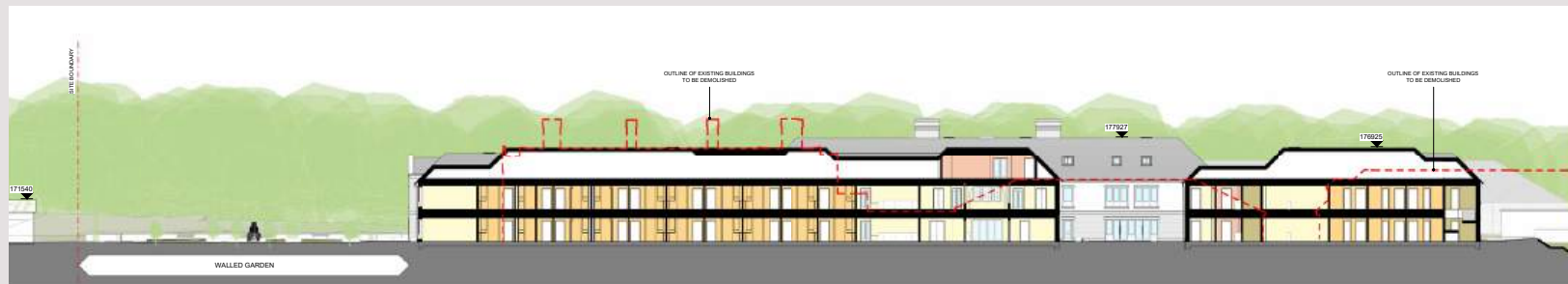
4.4 Site Relationship

The new care home will be situated on the same location of the former Horncastle House, the extension building and Willow Lodge, on an east-west direction. The central portion of the building is the more prominent part of the care home, housing the main entrance, and flanked by the east and west wings.

The west wing's sitting on the site pays homage to the original Horncastle House by maintaining the central relationship with the south lower garden area and, to the north, with the existing entrance courtyard, which has been transformed into a residents' private garden. To the west, the residents' lounge has been positioned to take advantage of the views to the walled garden.

The east wing is laid out on a 'T' configuration, distributed southwards to help break and shorten the length of the main elevation to the north.

The proposed building is oriented to maximise countryside views to the south.



East-West site section



North-South site section

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.5 Proposed Floor Plans

Ground Floor:

- + 40no. Bedrooms
- + Welcoming Hub
- + Communal / Activity Spaces
- + Access to Private Gardens

The central part of the proposed building houses the heart of the home, comprising of an elegant foyer, a cafe, private dining room and a library/ quiet lounge. To each side of the core there is a wing of 20 bedrooms.

Each wing is served by a dining room and a lounge, with various destination areas distributed throughout, creating sitting spaces and way-finding feature points throughout the corridors. Communal areas and most bedrooms on the ground floor have direct access to the outside terraces and the residents' private gardens, connected with paths and green spaces.



Ground Floor Plan

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.5 Proposed Floor Plans

First Floor:

- + 40no. Bedrooms
- + Communal / Activity Spaces
- + Access to External Terrace

The core on the first floor offers informal sitting areas, a cinema/activity room, a hair salon and quiet lounge. The wings extending from each side of the core repeat the ground floor layout.

The first floor is provided with an outside terrace, accessed directly from the cinema/activity room.



First Floor Plan

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.5 Proposed Floor Plans

Second Floor / Roof Space:

- + Commercial Kitchen
- + Laundry
- + Staff Facilities
- + Plant

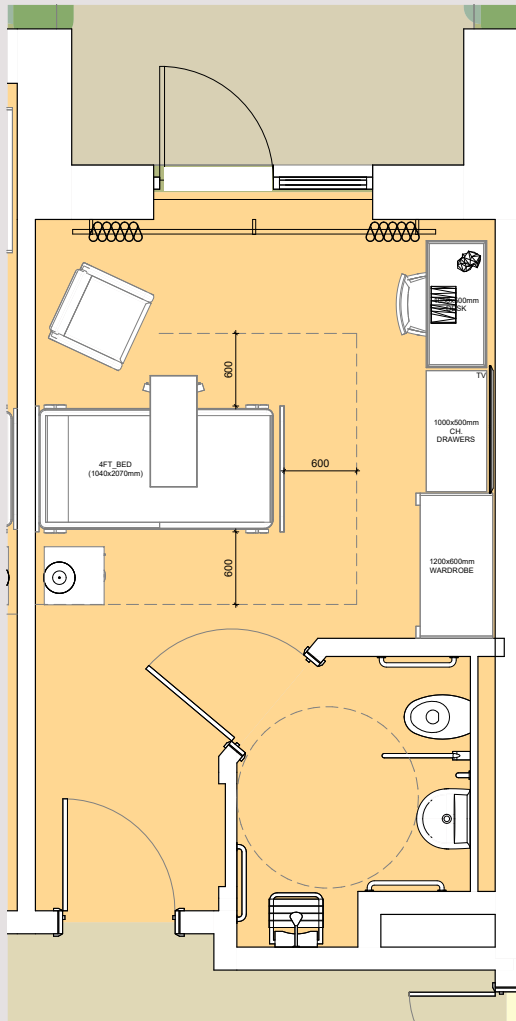
The care home's main service wing is located on the second floor/roof space, where kitchen, laundry, staff facilities, plant room and storage are located. These services are linked by corridors and three lifts, giving vertical access to the entire home with segregated clean/dirty circulation that avoids the main reception area on the ground floor.

	Beds	GIA (m ²)
Ground Floor	40	2,055
First Floor	40	2,045
Second Floor (Service Wing)		410
Total	80	4,510



Second Floor Plan

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

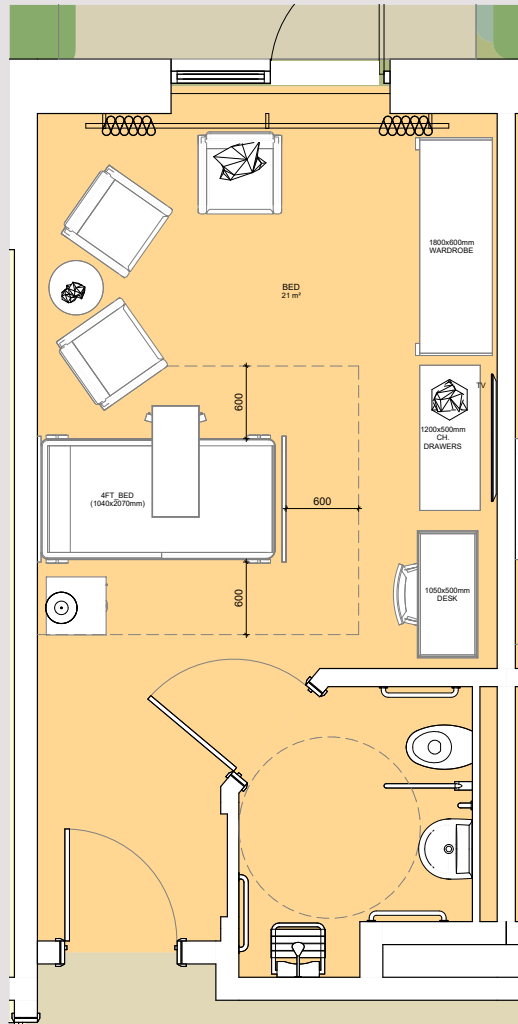


4.6 Bedroom Types

Standard Bedroom

- + 16m² standard bedroom with 4m² ensuite
- + 4 Foot Bariatric bed (1040x2070mm) visible from the corridor
- + Double wardrobe (1200mm wide)
- + 1000mm wide chest of drawers
- + Standard writing desk (1050mm wide)
- + 1no. armchair

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



4.6 Bedroom Types

Premium Bedroom

- + 21m² standard bedroom with 4m² ensuite
- + 4 Foot Bariatric bed (1040x2070mm) visible from the corridor
- + Triple wardrobe (1800mm wide)
- + 1200mm wide chest of drawers
- + Standard writing desk (1050mm wide)
- + Sitting area with 3no. armchairs

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.7 Proposed Elevations

The significance of the Horncastle House has been recognised and the new structure has been carefully designed to provide an appropriate replacement.

The central section of the new building adapts and incorporates the most recognisable features of Horncastle House: stone door surround and stone quoins. It also incorporates render finish to the first floor to increase contrast with the surrounding materials as well as the side wing buildings.

The proposed wings have lowered eaves and a more restricted palette of materials, in comparison with the central building, to emphasise the importance of the central part of the building

Although the wings will be two storeys in height, with large roofs to hide a service wing, they will incorporate simpler detailing and therefore will be perceived to be more compact and humble.

Restricting the height of the proposed extensions to two storeys appears logical in minimising visual impact and ensuring that the central section of the building remains the dominant built form.



North elevation



Red brick



Ornamental hung tiles



Slate roof tiles



Off-white render



Stone masonry

4.0 Design Approach + Concept

4.7 Proposed Elevations



North elevation



South elevation

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



Site approach view

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



Main entrance view

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



Walled garden view

4.0 Design Approach + Concept



Rear view

5.0 Sustainability

5.0 Sustainability

The client is committed to incorporating sustainable measures where viable. To achieve this objective the applicant will explore the feasibility of using the following:

- + Permeable paving / SUDs
- + Combined heat and power systems
- + Consideration and review of sustainable source materials

5.1 Waste and Recycling

The refuse store is located in an ancillary building located on the northeast of the care home, conveniently close to the service / staff entrance of the building and rubbish truck turning head and parking area.

The store has the capacity for 10 no. 1100 litre wheelie bins, including a space for segregated recycling and medical waste bins.



6.0 Accessibility

6.1 Means of Access

Access to the site will continue to be via Plawhatch Lane. A detailed construction methodology with regards to construction stage access and delivery times will be produced in order to minimise any disruptions to the neighbours.

- ➔ Main entrance points
- ➔ Common areas access points
- ➔ Access from private terraces

6.2 External Access

The building will be accessible to people with all levels of disabilities and will be designed in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations and in line with BS 8300.

Step-free pedestrian access to the building will be provided at the main entrance as well as from the communal areas and bedrooms on the ground floor. Two disabled parking spaces are provided adjacent to the main entrance.

6.3 Internal Access

Level thresholds and doors that can be opened by the residents without further assistance are to be provided throughout. Equitable access for wheelchair users is also included in the design of all areas, including reception and toilet facilities.

Corridors, lifts and stairs support access for all, complying with the regulation in place at the time of the design agreement.



Ground Floor Plan

6.0 Accessibility

6.4 Safety and Security

The proposed building is designed to ensure the well-being, protection and comfort of residents, staff and visitors.

Both the main entrance for the public and the service entrance are controlled by staff or by key card access.

The site perimeter has security fencing to prevent unauthorized access and ensure the safety and privacy of residents around the surrounding private gardens.

— Secure fences



Ground floor plan in context

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed development demonstrates a commitment to providing exemplary care and support for its residents. With a focus on a continuing care pathway, residents will be able to receive comprehensive support as their needs evolve, ensuring a comfortable and secure living environment. The inclusion of facilities such as full en-suite bathrooms in all bedrooms, 24-hour on-site care provision, spacious communal areas, landscaped gardens, and dedicated parking reflects a dedication to exceeding regulatory standards and providing residents with a high quality of life.

Moreover, the design of the care home reflects careful consideration of its integration into its surroundings, respecting the existing rural character and amenity interests. By following design principles that prioritize the retention of existing greenery, the concealment of car parking, and the use of materials compatible with the local area, the proposed buildings aim to harmonise with its environment and contribute positively to the site.

To respect the history of the site, the proposed care home has been carefully designed to provide an appropriate replacement, incorporating the most recognisable features of the original Horncastle House, to keep the memories of the fire-damaged building last.

Overall, the proposed development not only addresses the critical need for specialised care but also strives to enhance the well-being and quality of life for both residents and carers. With its comprehensive care offerings, thoughtful design, and commitment to preserving the integrity of its surroundings, the proposed care home stands as a positive contribution to the local area, promising a high-quality living environment for its future residents.

CARLESS + ADAMS

more

6 Progress Business Centre,
Whittle Parkway,
Bath Road,
Slough,
Berkshire.
SL1 6DQ

01628 665131
enquiries@carless-adams.co.uk

carless-adams.co.uk



Design the best,
to live the best

