

Our responses to your questions

Castle Road Estate

Theme	Questions/ Comments	Response
 <p>Height & Massing</p>	Proposed homes should be low-rise, with a preference for a three-storey block	The proposed design steps up from two- to four-storeys. The elements closer to neighbouring homes are lower at two- to three-storeys, and the four-storey elements have been placed to carefully consider neighbouring homes and have been informed by daylight/sunlight assessments. Including some elements at four-storeys allows us to build much-needed homes for social rent and help local people off the housing waiting list.
	Concerns about potential impact of proposed homes on daylight/sunlight	The proposed design carefully considers daylight and sunlight for neighbouring homes. A full daylight/sunlight report will be made available as part of the planning application.
	Concerns about overlooking and privacy	The proposed design carefully considers overlooking and privacy for neighbouring homes. Distances between existing buildings and the proposed homes reflect those in the local area, and where the back of the proposals faces Heybridge, careful design choices help maintain privacy for both new and existing neighbours. Blank walls and facades are animated with a proposed mural, soft planting and design detailing.
 <p>Tenure of homes</p>	Proposed homes should be affordable, and provide many for social rent	In November 2024, the proposals were to be a mix of homes for both social rent and intermediate rent. However, as they have developed, we are now aiming to deliver all proposed homes as social rent.
	Will there be a local lettings plan for these proposals?	If planning permission is granted, we are aiming to implement a local lettings plan for these homes. This would mean that eligible council tenants in housing need on the estate would have priority to move into the new homes, before they go to the wider housing waiting list.
 <p>Materials & architecture</p>	The proposed homes should all have front doors onto Hadley Street	Since November 2024, a stair and lift core has been added to the proposals, with a communal entrance on Hadley Street. This entrance serves the upper floors of the proposed building, and the homes on the ground floor continue to have front doors onto Hadley Street.
	The proposed homes should be designed to fit into Hadley Street, with a preference for houses over flats	Since November 2024, the proposals have been updated to enable more homes to be built. Proposed homes are now a mix of flats and maisonettes. The design team has ensured that the proposals continue to reflect the character of the local area with a considered approach to window sizes, the colour and detailing of the brickwork, landscape and boundary treatment, and ensuring front entrances to the street are provided for ground floor homes.

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 <p>Materials & architecture</p>	The view for residents in Heybridge must be carefully considered	The design team has responded to this feedback by proposing new landscaping in the courtyard between Heybridge and the proposed homes. This includes playspace and green space. The design also proposes a mural at the Lewis Street end of the proposed homes to add visual interest for residents in Heybridge. The upper level of the Castle Road homes is set back from Heybridge windows with the top floor roof orientated to face Castle Road and the courtyard.
	Materials should reflect the local area, with use of brick	Various shades of pink and brown brick are proposed for the materials, giving the new homes their own sense of identity whilst respecting the local area.
 <p>Estate facilities</p>	Will there be secure bin stores and bike stores?	Secure bin and bike stores are provided to address the needs of new residents.
	A new, accessible Tenants & Residents Association space should be provided	Since 2024 there has been a change to the proposed TRA space. The TRA would now retain their existing room on the estate and be offered two storage areas in the Heybridge undercroft. These spaces would open onto the new courtyard, which the TRA could use for gatherings. This decision would also make it easier for the TRA to manage their spaces on the estate. On Castle Road where a TRA room was previously proposed, we are now proposing to build a new home for social rent.
 <p>Landscape & improvements</p>	Providing safe, secure green space and play space is a priority	The proposals include a new courtyard with playspace and hard and soft planting. Access to the courtyard would be for estate residents only, through new secure entrances on Hadley Street, Lewis Street or from the existing Heybridge passageway.
	Landscape improvements should focus on supporting gardening on the estate	Proposals include new resident planters and landscape improvements for the estate's gardening club.
	Covered social spaces should be avoided	The proposals do not include any covered outdoor social spaces.

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 <p>Landscape & improvements</p>	<p>Security should be improved, with better lighting and safety</p>	<p>The proposals have been reviewed by a Secure by Design officer, who has provided advice on how to ensure the designs promote safety and security. The new entrance to the estate would be secured with fobbed access, and the proposals would include new lighting to entrances, courtyards and the undercroft.</p>
	<p>Proposals should improve connections in the area and on the estate</p>	<p>The proposed designs include a new entrance to the estate on Lewis Street, and would also provide access from the existing Heybridge passageway to the proposed courtyard and play space.</p>
 <p>Environment</p>	<p>The proposed design should include sustainable features</p>	<p>The proposals include a range of sustainability features, such as solar panels, energy efficient materials, air-source heat pumps for each home, and increased biodiversity and urban greening across the estate.</p>
 <p>Construction</p>	<p>Concerns about disruption caused by demolition and construction</p>	<p>The demolition of the car park was completed successfully in 2024. If planning permission is granted, the team will consult with residents again on a Construction Management Plan, which would outline the construction method and describe the ways a contractor would need to minimise noise, dust, and other disruption where possible. This would need to be approved as part of the discharge of planning conditions before the development could commence.</p>