

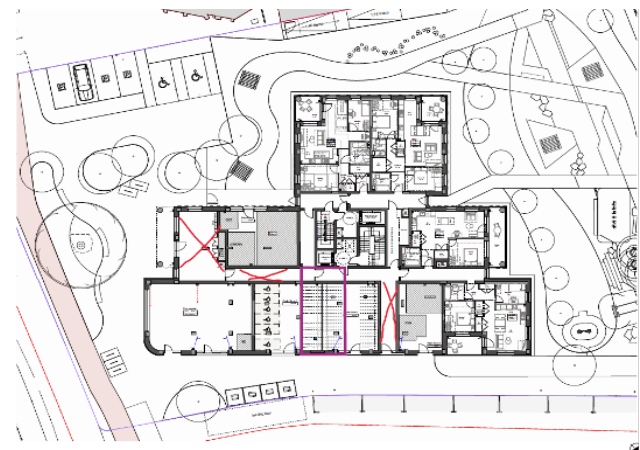
Angel Way - Response to Design Comments

Job: 1393-GSA-DGZ-XX-RP-A-0001
date: 14/11/2025
Rev: P02



Urban Design Officers' Comments	Design Team Response
1 Potential efficiency measures to help improve viability	
1.1 <u>Circulation</u> – the ground floor circulation of the proposed blocks takes up more space than is necessary - reviewing this strategy could help slightly increase the number of units/habitable rooms delivered. See ‘Ground floor circulation’ comments below for more detail.	See comments in 2.1 and 2.2 below
1.2 Block A potential addition units – at 8 storeys Block A is only slightly over the threshold for an additional stair core, therefore this is likely to negatively impact viability. Some limited increase in height in areas of the block set away from the Trinity Methodist Church could be explored to review if this could improve viability and allow some affordable housing to be delivered. For example, an additional storey or two on the eastern side of the block (units A-03, A-04, A-05 and A-06) is likely to be acceptable in townscape terms.	Adding height to Block A would take the overall height above 30m and warrant referral to the GLA. This would both extend the consultation process and require the production of significant extra reports and information required by the GLA at considerable cost and time expense. It would also further significantly delay the decision making process and redevelopment of the site. Adding additional storeys also incurs significant extra design and build cost - including second stair cores which would require re-design of the block. The view of MLH and its viability and design advisors are that any increases in sales floorspace and value would likely be offset in the main by increased build, financing and design costs as to make limited impact. The has taken the view that the increase of additional homes / floorspace and value that could be achieved is not justified due to increased design, build and financing costs as well as likely requirement for further planning consultancy reports further prolonging the application process.
1.3 <u>Balconies</u> – inset balconies facing the street and directly onto neighbouring blocks are valuable to increase privacy for residents. It is also acknowledged inset balconies contribute positively to the architectural coherence of the scheme. However, it is suggested that inset balconies to the central garden area are not essential – projecting balconies in these locations may help to improve the efficiency of the scheme to some extent.	Whilst the introduction of projecting balconies on the elevations fronting onto the central garden could free up more internal area for accommodation, the additional area would not be sufficient to provide additional units or habitable rooms. Instead it would result in oversized flats that would add pressure on the development's viability. In addition to this, projecting balconies would, in parts, encroach into the culvert maintenance zone, something that the Environment Agency has previously advised against.
1.4 <u>Ornamentation</u> – the ground floor articulated brickwork and ornamental band between ground and first floors positively contribute to the appearance of the buildings. While this approach is recommended on more conspicuous frontages to streets, principal public spaces, and around entrances, there may be potential to simplify façade design on less prominent locations.	The east elevation of Block B which fronts onto the service yard and flank wall of the adjacent development could be simplified. All other elevations are considered to be more prominent and any cost savings in simplifiing the brickwork details is considered to be neglibile.
2 Ground Floor Circulation	
2.1 The proposed lobby to Block B is over-sized and not in sufficiently convenient location to be well used. While the QRP report raised some concerns about the previous Block B entrance at the centre of the block, this was more in regard to the landscape approach to the entrance (rather than the location of the entrance). The relocation of the lobby is not a successful response to this comment and it is recommended this strategy is revisited. A smaller, centralised entrance lobby to Block B can be reinstated if minor adjustments to the landscape and parking strategy in the area linking Block B to the street are made. This could then free up space for an additional (or enlarged) unit on the south east corner of Block B.	The south east corner of Block B is not considered a good location for ground floor residential given how prominent this corner is and the challenges this brings in terms of privacy and the quality of external private amenity through the noise environment and activity along Angel Way south and east, allied to the need to create a refuse servicing area, relocate existing residential parking and provide WC parking. Further, a lobby access in the centre would adversely effect the amenity of the unit immediately adjacent, likely requiring reconfiguration of that dwelling. It also faces challenges over firstly, providing level access, with internal level changes (as can be seen from the need for stairs from the ground floor to the emergency exit) and secondly, the relationship of pedestrian access and keeping the area clear for vehicle access to the substation and deliveries. In addition to this, opportunities to reconfiguring the parking and landscape strategy on the east side of Block B are limited by vehicle access and manoeuvring requirements.

2.2 The proposed Block A ground floor has excessive circulation and should be rationalised – for example, a centralised lobby opening on to Angel Way could free up ground floor area – see sketch below. NB this could be rationalised further by creating individual front doors to ground floor units rather than accessing from a central corridor.



Of the five ground floor flats, only one flat (A-00-04) could have direct access from the public highway to an individual front door. The other 4 flats could only be accessed via the private communal garden, making access for visitors and deliveries more challenging and potentially compromise the security of the communal garden. The introduction of individual front doors would mean entering a ground floor dwelling directly into the main living area, which would compromise the efficiency of the internal layout.

What is shown on the adjacent mark up of the ground floor plan would remove the generous communal lobby to the west and the secondary access from Angel Way south. This would result in having just a narrow corridor leading from the street to the stair and lift core. This would result in a low-grade entrance experience and overall feel of a low level, low value development.

Having a pleasant and relatively generous entrance helps create a good ambience for the development and adds value, as increasingly, new developments are required to deliver resident spaces for meeting, sitting, working, socialising.

The removal of the entrance lobby and a secondary access may create more space but not sufficient for a new dwelling. The space would end up being given over to ancillary storage/plant room and result in a lower quality entrance experience and development overall.

Romford Civic Society Comments

3.1 We concur with observations in the application that the positioning of some of the buildings seems to create largely accidental spaces around them, which will result in a streetscene of poor legibility and resultant poor quality as it will be difficult to maintain

The location of the culvert running across the site and the required easement zone either side of this culvert has been a significant factor in defining what parts of the site can support development. Extensive analysis has been undertaken and presented to support the approach to site layout.

Allied to this, the site has significant other challenges to layout and siting, including the retained sub-station and its easement and access requirements, underground utilities, proximity and orientation of other buildings, access requirements for the Church etc. The scheme is working very hard to respond to all these issues and also meet all necessary design standards, respond to noise, overheating, daylight and sunlight requirements.

We do not agree that there is poor legibility of the streetscene or maintenance difficulties as we have removed any small, ancillary landscape spaces and now have significant landscape planting beds to the east, south and west which create defensible space buffers between the public and private realms which delineate different ownerships. These are significant areas and the whole development will be managed by a management company.

The SPC commented that the public realm element of the proposals was excellent.

3.2 We are cautious of the excessive use of red brick in the application, which taken together with other contemporary red brick developments in the area, could create a garish effect

Numerous material studies were undertaken as part of the design process, including testing different brick colours and combinations. These are summarised in the Design and Access Statement (pages 72-74).

These studies were presented at Havering's Strategic Planning Committee and it was generally agreed that the use of red brick (a clear preference over grey or pale brick) was the best approach to achieve a cohesive architectural language, with richness then added through embellishments to the brickwork.

3.3 Insofar as the Angel Way frontage of Block A is concerned, we note that late nineteenth century development of the site had narrow plots here and feel strongly that it would be beneficial to reference this in the new development.

Small, narrow plots would indicate traditional houses. This would not deliver the scale or quantum of new dwellings the Masterplan has previously set out in this town centre site. We feel the development proposal is an appropriate response in height, scale, form and massing to its current context.