

DESIGN STATEMENT



Development: Kilcross, Sandyford, Dublin 18
(RDF Architects Ref 24-001)

Client: Sonas

Date: 23rd February 2024

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1. Introduction.

RDF Architects & Planning Ltd were engaged by Sonas Domestic Violence Charity as per correspondence dated 4th January 2024. As part of the brief RDF Architects were asked to:

Prepare and submit a Section 179A application of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Sonas Domestic Violence Charity (Sonas) is a leading specialist provider of Domestic Violence Refuge Centres in Ireland. They provide safe, secure, and quality residential facilities for clients who have suffered domestic violence. They are committed to improving the lives of their clients by offering hope and support services to help people at their most vulnerable. Sonas intends to develop a high quality twelve-unit facility in Sandyford for the use of the victims and families of Domestic Violence.

2. Parties Involved.

Client-	-Sonas Domestic Violence Charity.
Architect-	-RDF Architects & Planning Ltd.
Engineer-	-AOCA Engineering Consultants Ltd.
Project Management-	-OCF Project & Commercial Management.

3. Project Overview & Description

The overall project will consist of twelve number emergency accommodation units along with staff and communal facilities. The overall site area is 0.20 hectare and is located within a green area on the Kilcross Rd. It is adjacent to a mixed tenure, residential neighbourhood. See Fig.3.1 & 3.2 which highlight the location and the extent of the site. The site is Zoned A 'To provide a residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting the existing residential amenities' in the current County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The site is 190m away from the bus stop number 6006 and 6007 with buses servicing the local area. The site is in close proximity to Sandyford village which is approximately 1km away. Sandyford provides a wide range of services such as shops, schools, sports clubs, and medical facilities. The site is predominately flat and without any landscaping.

It is proposed to construct a new Domestic Violence Refuge Centre along with staff and communal facilities and all associated site works. The development will consist of three blocks with a central courtyard consisting of the following:

- Block 1 to the north will consist of a two-storey building with 6 no. two-bedroom units (2 no. units designed to the Universal Design Guidelines) with photovoltaic panels on a pitched roof.
- Block 2 to the east will consist of a two-storey building with 6 no. one-bedroom units (2 no. units designed to the Universal Design Guidelines) with an intensive flat green roof

- Block 3 to the south will consist of a two-storey building with staff and communal facilities with an intensive flat green roof.

The overall ownership site area is 0.20 hectare and is located within a green area on the Kilcross Road. It is adjacent to a mixed tenure, residential neighbourhood. Vehicular and pedestrian access is provided for directly off Kilcross Road and provision of a turning head for larger vehicles outside of the centres boundary. The site is secured by 2m boundary walls with security fencing above consisting of rendered blockwork and composite panel boundary fence.

The development will provide 12 no. parking spaces, bicycle storage and a refuse storage area. The central enclosed courtyard will act as a communal area with hard and soft landscaping including a sensory garden, covered seating areas and social areas for tenants. The communal building is accessed off the central courtyard and the ground floor units via a covered walkway. The upper floor apartments will be accessed via an external staircase to a balcony walkway which surrounds the central courtyard.

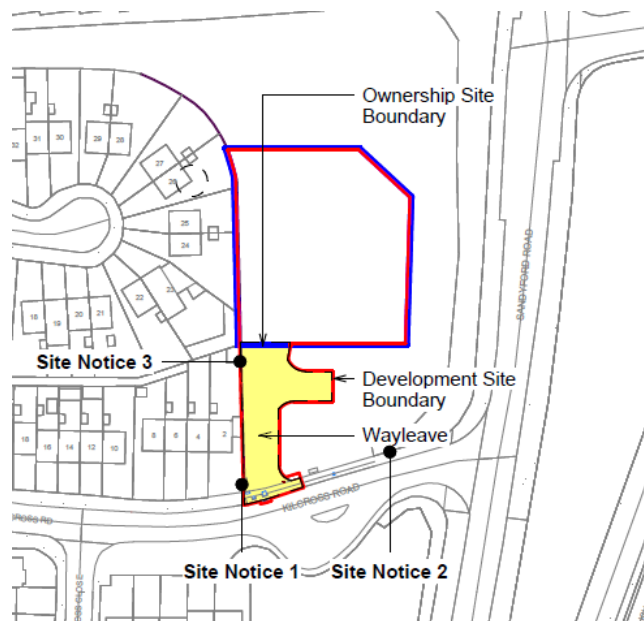


Fig. 3.1 Site Location Map



Fig. 3.2 Satellite View of the Site

4. Design Brief.

The development will provide twelve number units of emergency accommodation and is proposed as three blocks with a south-west orientation creating a central courtyard. The courtyard will act as a communal area with a sensory garden, covered seating areas and social areas as seen in Fig 4.1.

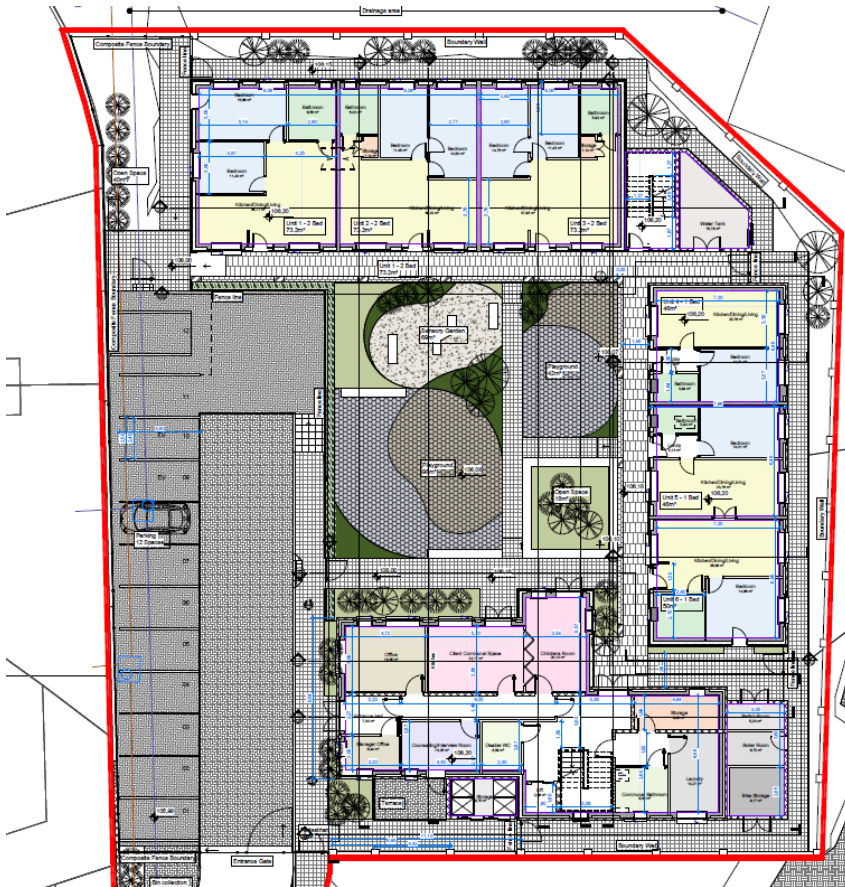


Fig 4.1 Site Layout Plan

The proposed twelve units will provide emergency accommodation for the use of victims and families of domestic violence and will consist of the following.

- Six single bedroom units which can accommodate families of up to four people (one parent and up to three children).
- Six two-bedroom units which can accommodate families of up to seven people (one parent and up to six children).

Accommodation capacity will be structured to provide flexibility for the needs of the various family sizes. Sleeping accommodation will be standard beds with the option of bunk beds and fold out beds to provide additional spaces if required. Provision has been made to enable two of the one-bed and two-bedroom apartments on the ground floor to be interlinked to provide additional space and offer accommodation consisting of four bedrooms for larger families if required. Space provision will be in accordance with the targets set out in Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities.

There will be administration and communal facilities within a separate block which will include the main entrance hall, reception facilities and waiting areas. Further facilities within this block will include meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, toilets, offices, storage, children play areas and rest rooms. There will also be a lift provided and designed in accordance universal design principals.

Given the nature of the services provided within the facility, site security is of utmost importance and requires particular emphasis on access control into the facility, boundary security, CCTV installations and internal door access and automation. Likewise, the sensitive nature of the services provided also require privacy for the residents through landscaped boundary treatments and set back from neighbouring residential areas to avoid outdoor areas from being overlooked.

5. DLR County Development Plan 2022-2028

Zoning Objective: Objective A

The site is Zoned A 'To provide a residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting the existing residential amenities' in the current County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2.10 Policy Objective PHP34:

Provision of Refuges: It is a policy objective to encourage and support, in conjunction with Túsła, the Child and Family Agency, and other relevant agencies, the provision of Domestic Violence Refuge in the County, which seek to provide appropriate Domestic Abuse Crisis Intervention Services including a crisis refuge service and wraparound services in DLR.

It is an objective of the Plan to support the facilitation of the provision of refuges and safe home accommodation for victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in the County, with the involvement and support of Túsła, the Child and Family Agency, the primary statutory agency for the provision of domestic violence related services and provision and other relevant agencies.

6. Pre-Submission Consultation with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

During the initial design phase Sonas had two meetings to discuss the design with with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. The following comments are taken from the second meeting from the council are highlighted in blue with actions taken outlined below.

Meeting - 2nd Nov 2023

Laneway entrance/parking:

- *Needs more space as the laneway looks tight for trucks etc to turn around.*

The turning circle has been relocated outside the courtyard to create more space internally. The initial design did not meet fire truck turning standards and also raised concerns about a children's playground being so close to a heavy vehicle turning circle. It was agreed to relocate the turning circle outside of the Sonas site as highlighted in Fig 5.1. Full auto tracking has been undertaken by AOCA to ensure that all required vehicles can now access the property.

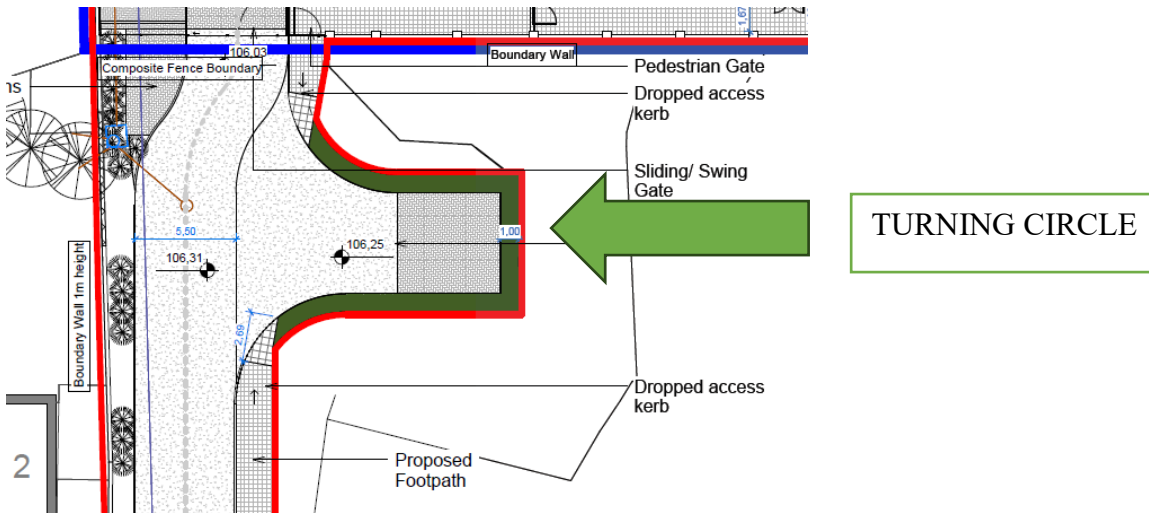


Fig 5.1 New Turning Head Location

- Check if there is space (3 meters) for parallel parking on the park side of the entrance to reduce parking onsite with the council .

Not possible.

- There will need to be a screen/barrier for parking with a child locked gate.

Design has been amended and all appropriate security and screening is now in place.

- Keep the courtyard open landscaped as we've limited courtyard space now with changes.

Courtyard has been redesigned as indicated in Fig 4.1.

Bin Storage:

- Need to find the most practical place for this. Women might be going to the bins with their kids.

Bins have been relocated close to front entrance as indicated in Fig 5.2.

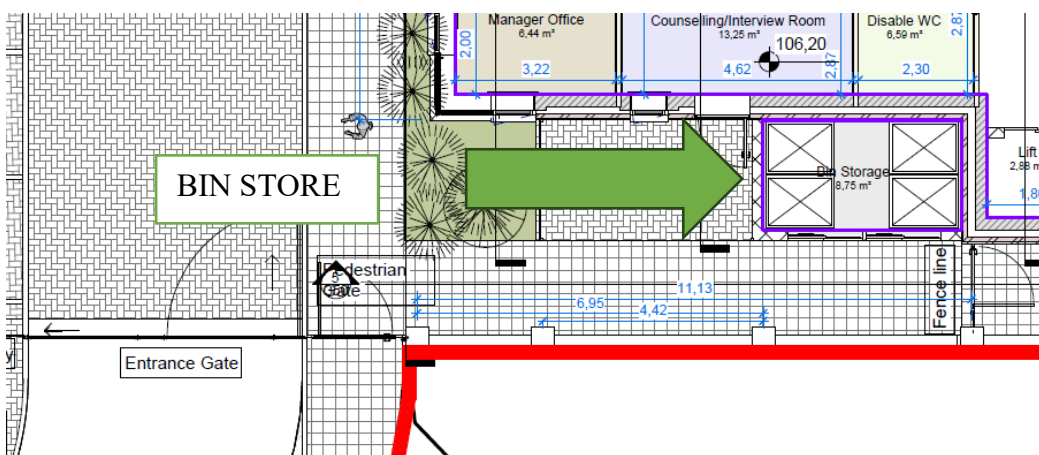


Fig 5.2 Bin Storage adjacent to Terrace near Front Entrance

External Play Area:

- *The play area has been moved to the central courtyard which is good but it will need a boundary fence around the play area.*

Design has been amended and all appropriate security and screening is now in place.

Internal Play Area:

- *Needs an internal play space that opens onto the external play space as per the Safe Ireland guidelines.*

Link to courtyard has now been incorporated to communal facilities.

Balcony:

- *The balcony is an additional risk with kids. It's recommended deck access in the back is removed. Internal makes it closer to the lift too.*

Balconies have been removed from the design due to safety concerns.

Management Office/Communal Space:

- *There is a lot of dead space that could be used better on the ground floor.*
- *The corridor make it difficult to access. Needs to be simplified.*
- *Put all communal spaces facing the courtyard and management spaces to the back of the building.*

The communal building has had a full redesign internally to take both the council's comments and clients requirements on board.

Apartments:

- *Ensuite has been removed which is good.*
- *Make it an open plan kitchen dining space so light is brought through the north facing apartments. Put the kitchens facing towards the courtyard instead so clients can watch their kids in the courtyard while in the kitchen.*

Apartments have been redesigned internally to take both the council's comments and clients requirements on board. Kitchen/dining is now open plan and facing the courtyard to allow for passive supervision from the parents over the courtyard.

- *Recommends 25-30% of units are interconnected.*

Four units are now interconnected. 33% of the total number of units.

Baths

- *Could be an idea to put a bath into the communal shower room in case of a special needs family. This room is beside management.*

Communal building now has a bath for families to access.

Plant Room

- *Keep the plant room off the internal footprint of building and make it an outdoor plant room or on the roof.*

Plant room has now been relocated taking both take both the council's comments and clients requirements on board as seen in Fig 5.3.

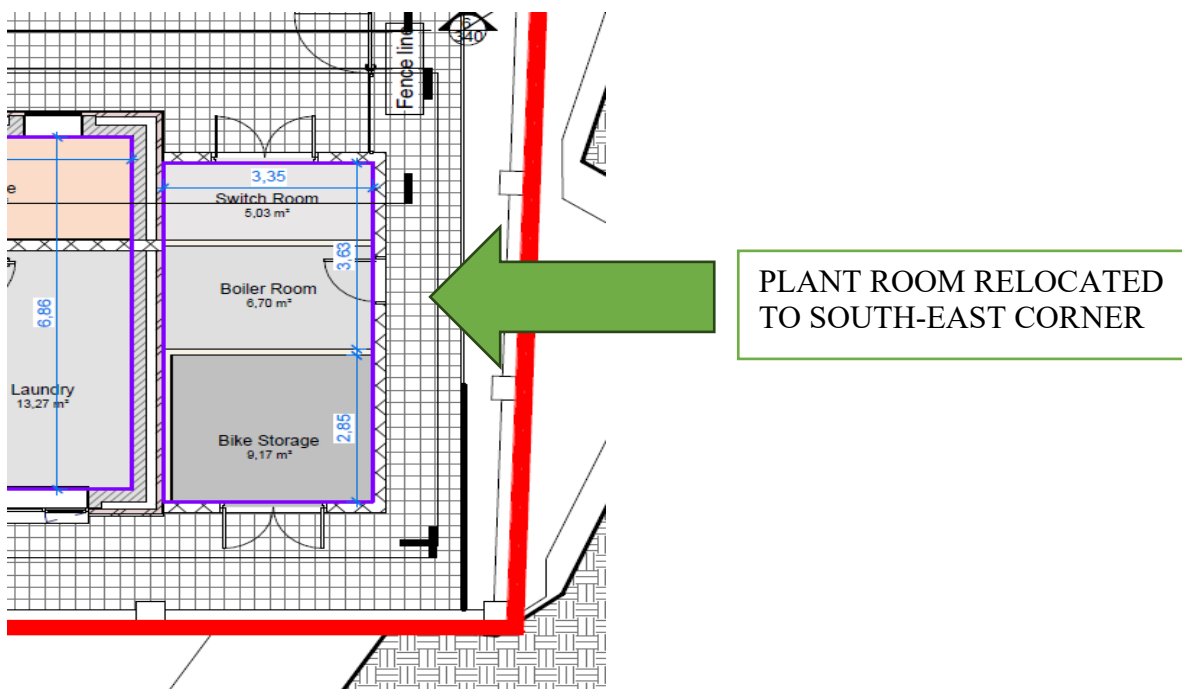


Fig 5.3 Plant Room Location

Free Standing Stairwell:

- The free standing stairwell has been attached to one of the buildings now which is good but it needs to be flipped longitudinally to close off that space. Plant room could go into this dead space then.

This stairwell orientation has been flipped as requested and the additional space has been used as storage for water tanks as seen in Fig 5.4.

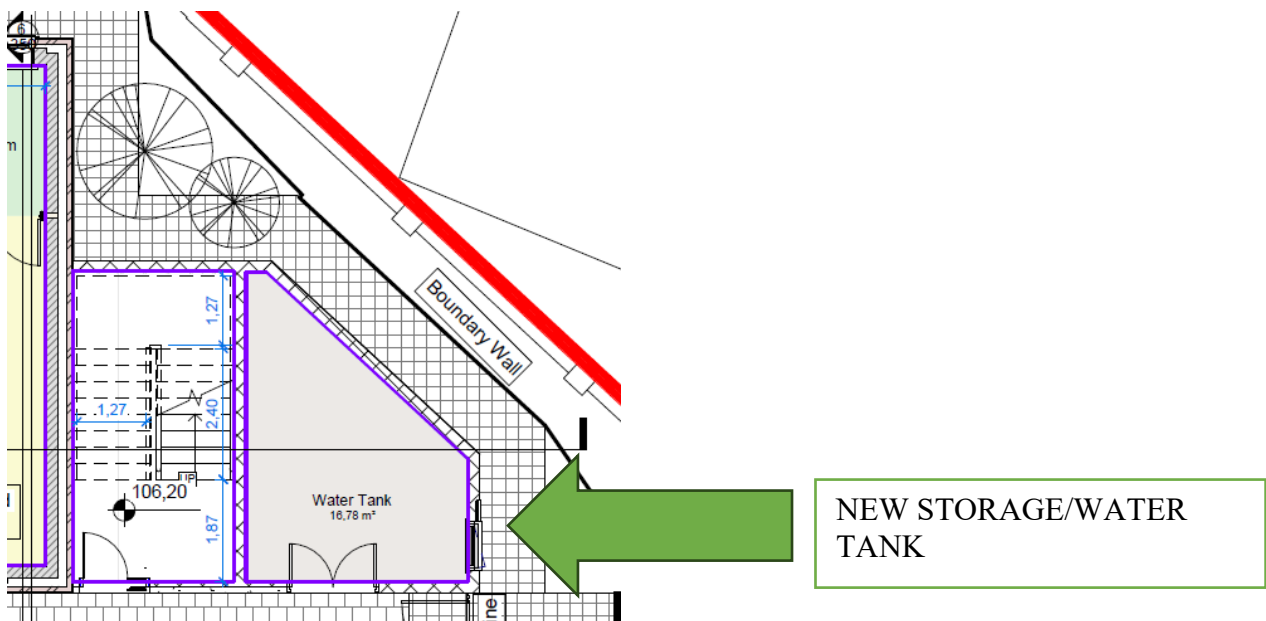


Fig 5.4 New Orientation of Stairs and Water Tank

Since RDF Architects have become involved, we have had numerous online meetings with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council to discuss design approach in order to meet all the relevant requirements of the local development act.

Suds have played a key part in the change of design approach to this development. Initially the roof design had three pitched roof structures, one on each block. This has now changed to two flat green roofs and a single low pitch roof which will accommodate PV solar panels as indicated on Fig 5.5. This will meet the requirements of the local development plan which states that a minimum of 50% of the roofs must be extensive green roof build up.

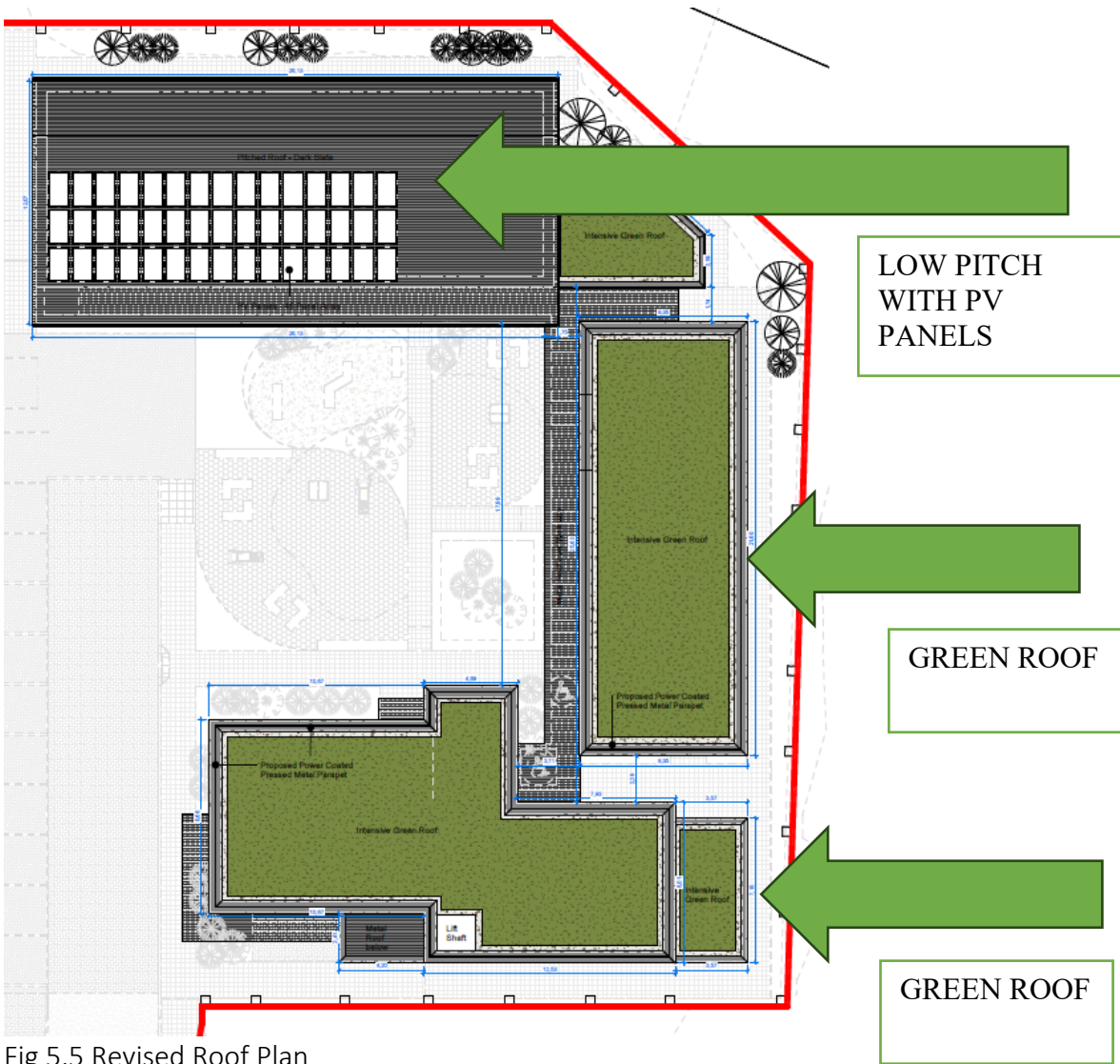


Fig 5.5 Revised Roof Plan

7. Design Principles

During the design phase we were directed to two publications to be used as guidance when designing the development.

- Domestic Violence Refuge (DVR) Accommodation – Project Brief Guidelines.
- SAFE PLACE Designing Centres for Domestic Violence Prevention and Response.

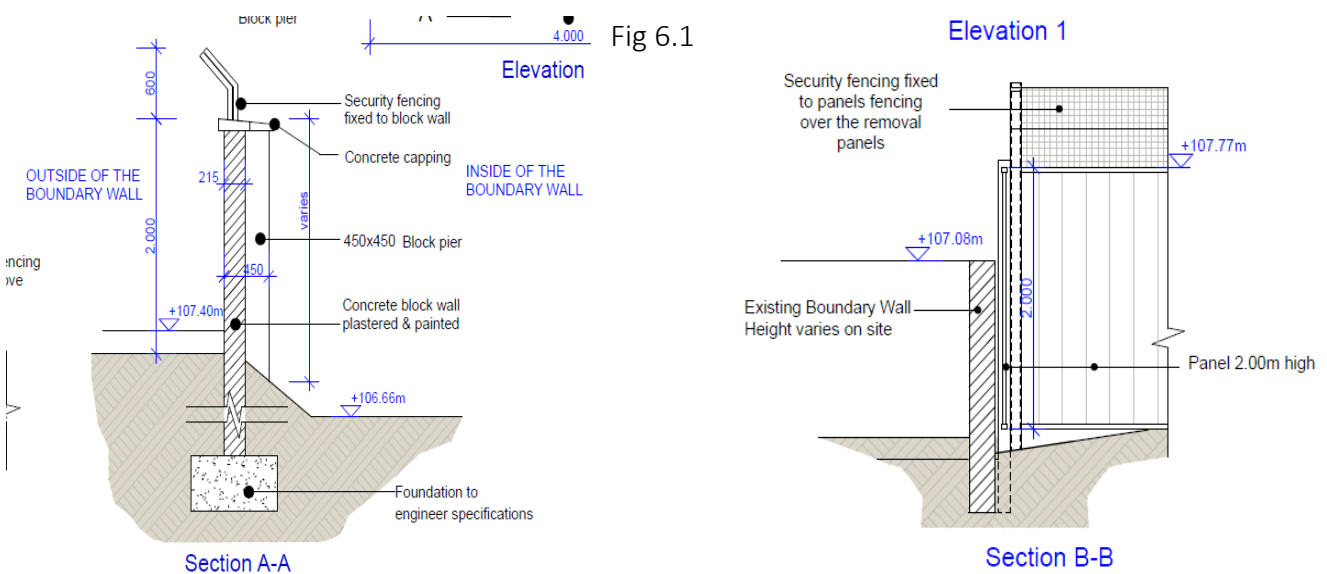
These documents along with feedback from our client formed the basis of our design. We have used the ten principles from *SAFE PLACE Designing Centres for Domestic Violence Prevention and Response* as a design reference as outlined below.

Principle 1: Safety and security.

‘Safety and security are important for all women and children who will access the refuge, and also for staff, and for visitors. Women must be able to trust that they are safe and secure, otherwise they may avoid seeking support or leave the refuge’

Security is a key element for our client. The development will be secured by means of a two-meter boundary wall to North, South and East boundaries with anti-climbing security fencing to the top of the wall as indicated in Fig 6.1. The existing wall to the west boundary will have a two-meter timber screen added to prevent overlooking and access to the neighbouring properties. The main access to the development will be by a two-meter secure gate with a secondary secure gate to access the apartments and courtyard within the complex.

The front door will be secured and monitored by staff at all times. A buzzer system will be in operation for visitors to access the communal building and CCTV is in operation at all times throughout the development. All apartments are orientated so that the kitchen/living/dining faces the courtyard. The central courtyard will allow parents to passively supervise their children while they play from their apartments. Staff rooms are located facing the courtyard so that they will also have views of the courtyard while the work. The children’s room within the communal building opens onto the courtyard which will allow for supervision at all times.



Section Through Boundary Wall

Fig 6.2 Section Through West Boundary Proposal

Principle 2: Privacy and social support.

‘Privacy is a key factor in providing a sense of safety, security and refuge. For women leaving DSGBV relationships, privacy is one of the most abused aspects of their daily lives. Personal space, the ability to think quietly, rest, and parent effectively are often violated as a method of control. Providing respite, sanctuary and refuge in private spaces for residents is integral to healing from trauma, regaining autonomy, and being able to care for children’

The site is set back from the main road. With the boundary wall and landscaping it will provide privacy for the residents. The apartment layout will allow people the ability to choose how accessible they wish to be to their neighbours with each apartment will have blinds for privacy. The central courtyard will be laid out thoughtfully to allow for smaller spaces allowing people to converse in private. The construction of the development will comply with all acoustic standards to allow privacy from one apartment to the next.

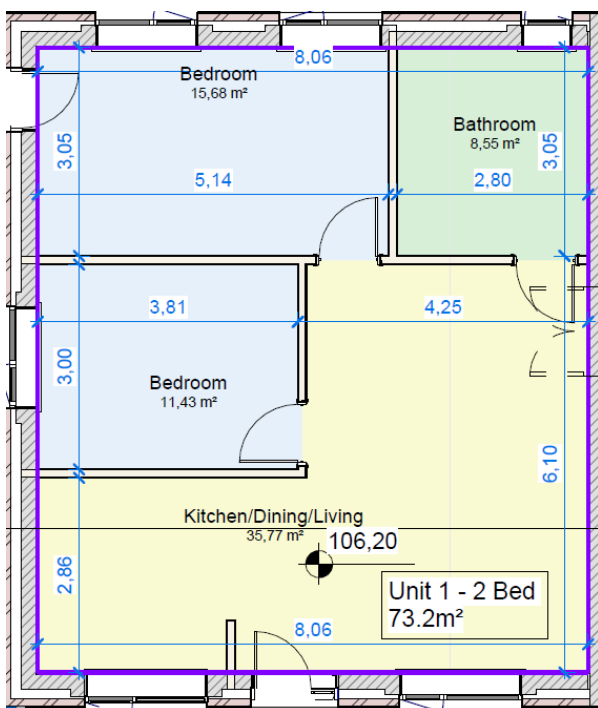


Fig 6.3 Typical Apartment Layout

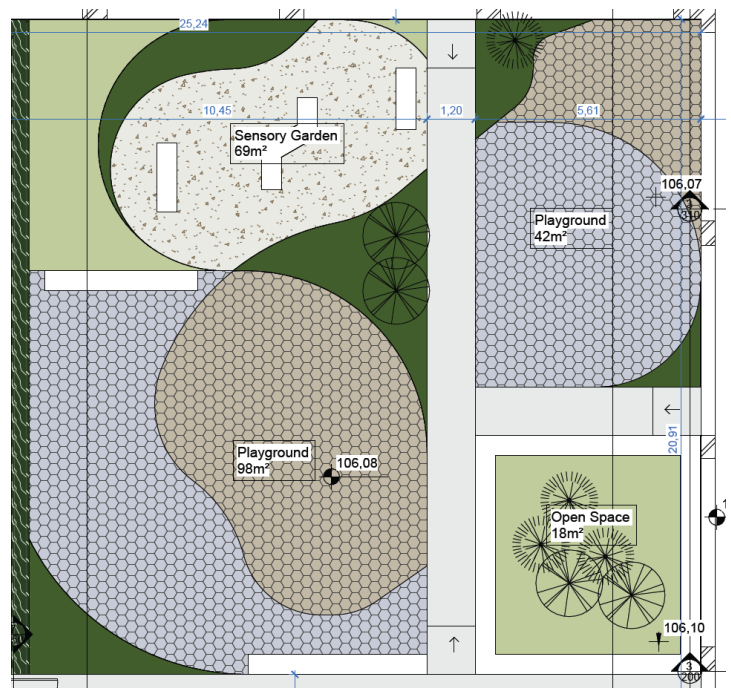


Fig 6.4 Courtyard with Separate Privacy Spaces

Principle 3: Dignity and self-determination.

‘To enable the development of a sense of self-worth, self-esteem, self-appreciation and self-confidence by providing considered, beautiful and healthy spaces within the refuge’

When liaising with the client the ambition was to create a homelike atmosphere for the residents. With appropriate landscaping, courtyard design and building layouts creating a safe and secure environment. All apartments pass the lighting standards and will have appropriate ventilation systems in place. Once complete the building will be furnished with colourful artwork and colour schemes to create a homelike and safe environment. Lastly designated storage spaces will be available for resident’s belongings which can kept securely while they avail of the service.



- Fig 6.5 Sample décor from Domestic Violence Refuge (DVR) Accommodation – Project Brief Guidelines.

Principle 4: Flexibility.

‘To ensure that the building provides sufficient spatial flexibility so that it can accommodate a diverse range of women and children, it is also important to ensure that the building can easily adapt to changes in policy, in approaches to DSGBV service provision, and possibly to changes in use, over time.’

The proposed twelve units will provide emergency accommodation for the use of victims and families of domestic violence and will consist of the following.

- Six single bedroom units which can accommodate families of up to four people (one parent and up to three children).
- Six two-bedroom units which can accommodate families of up to seven people (one parent and up to six children).

Eight of these units will be interconnected allowing the development to cater for larger families.

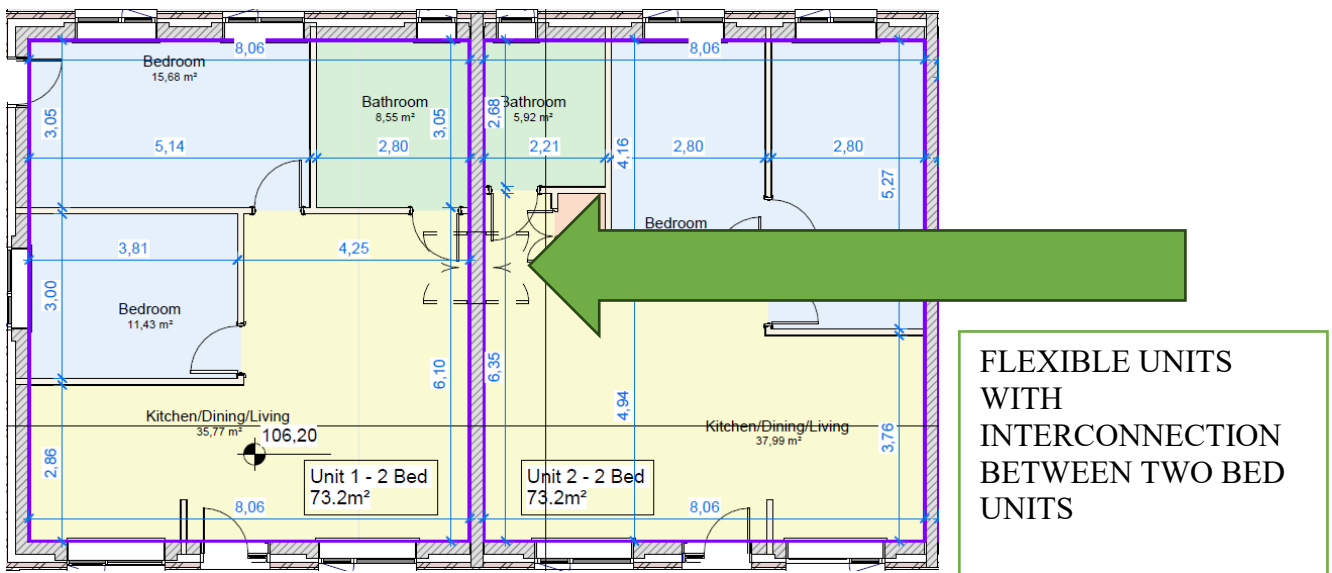


Fig 6.6 Two Bed Interconnection Units.

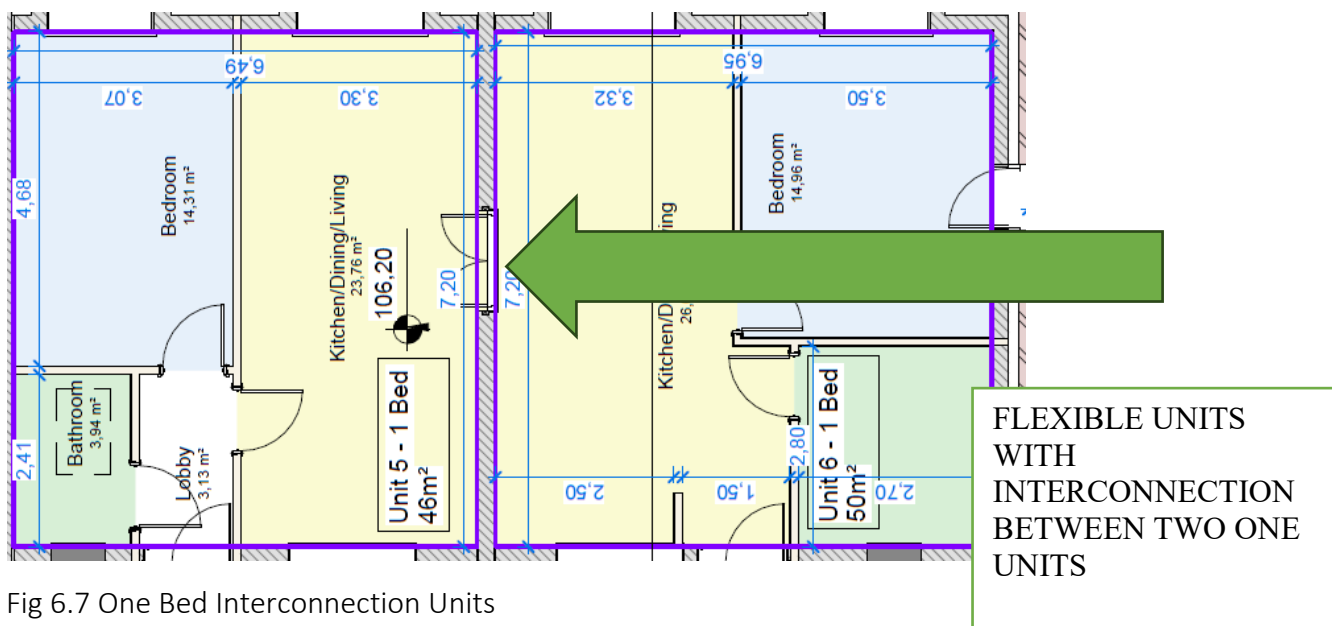


Fig 6.7 One Bed Interconnection Units

Principle 5: Reducing barriers and cultural considerations.

‘To provide a DV refuge service that ensures full and equal access to a diverse range of physical, cultural, social and spiritual needs and promotes dignity and respect, and to encourage a positive relationship between the refuge and the community in which it is located.’

The development has been designed to universal design standards with two apartments fully wheelchair accessible. The development will apply for a DAC certificate once planning approval is received. The communal building will allow for rearranging of furniture and layouts depending on cultural considerations required.

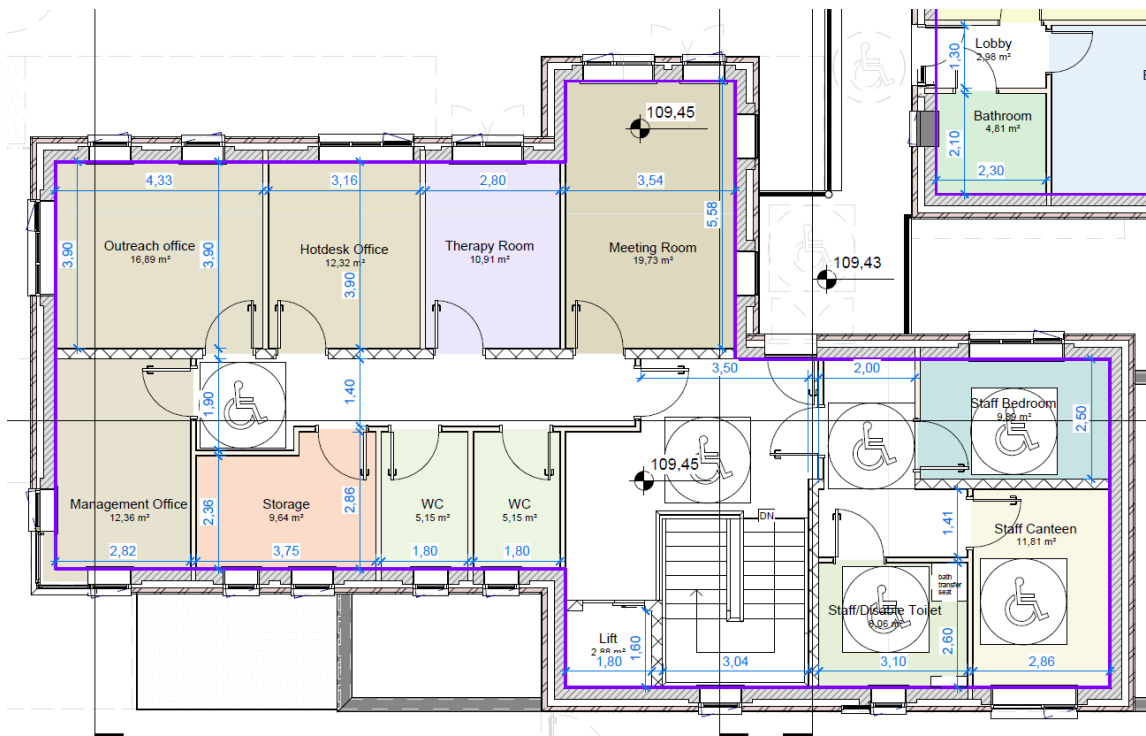


Fig 6.8 Communal Building designed to Universal Standards

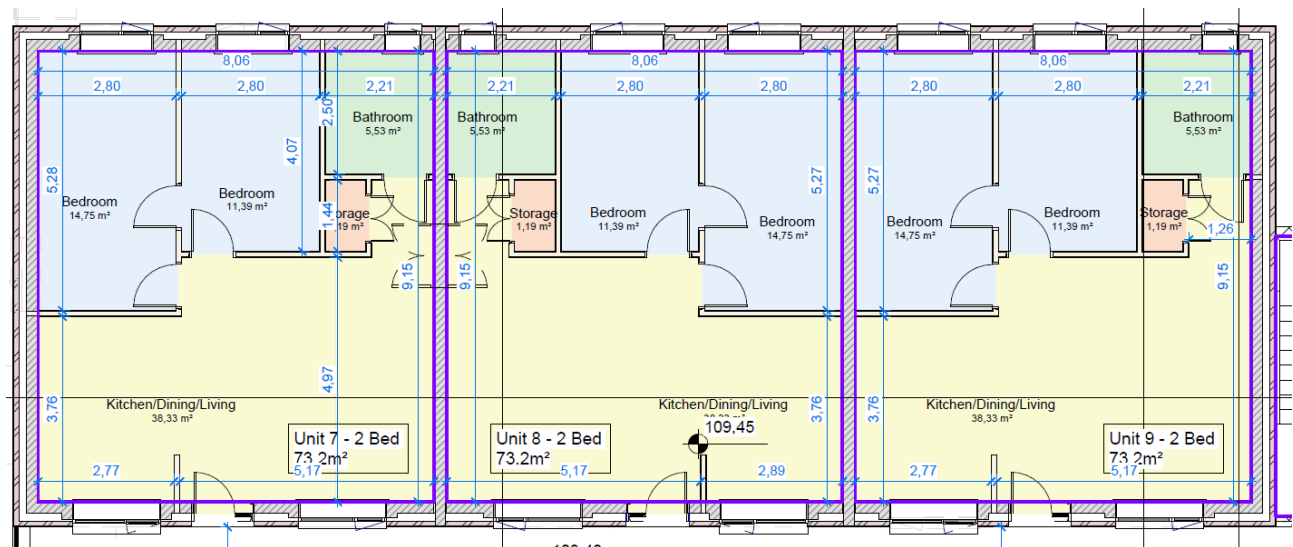


Fig 6.9 Apartments Designed to Universal Standards.

Principle 6: Designing for children and parenting.

‘To focus on the diverse needs and spatial requirements of children in order to provide supportive and healthy spaces for healing and recovery.’

Due to the nature of the courtyard design the sight lines within the refuge and its environs facilitate supervision of children. The refuge includes a variety of well-designed outdoor play spaces for children. A children’s room has been provided to the communal building along with access to a bath if required. There is a visual connection from staff offices to the courtyard to allow for supervision.

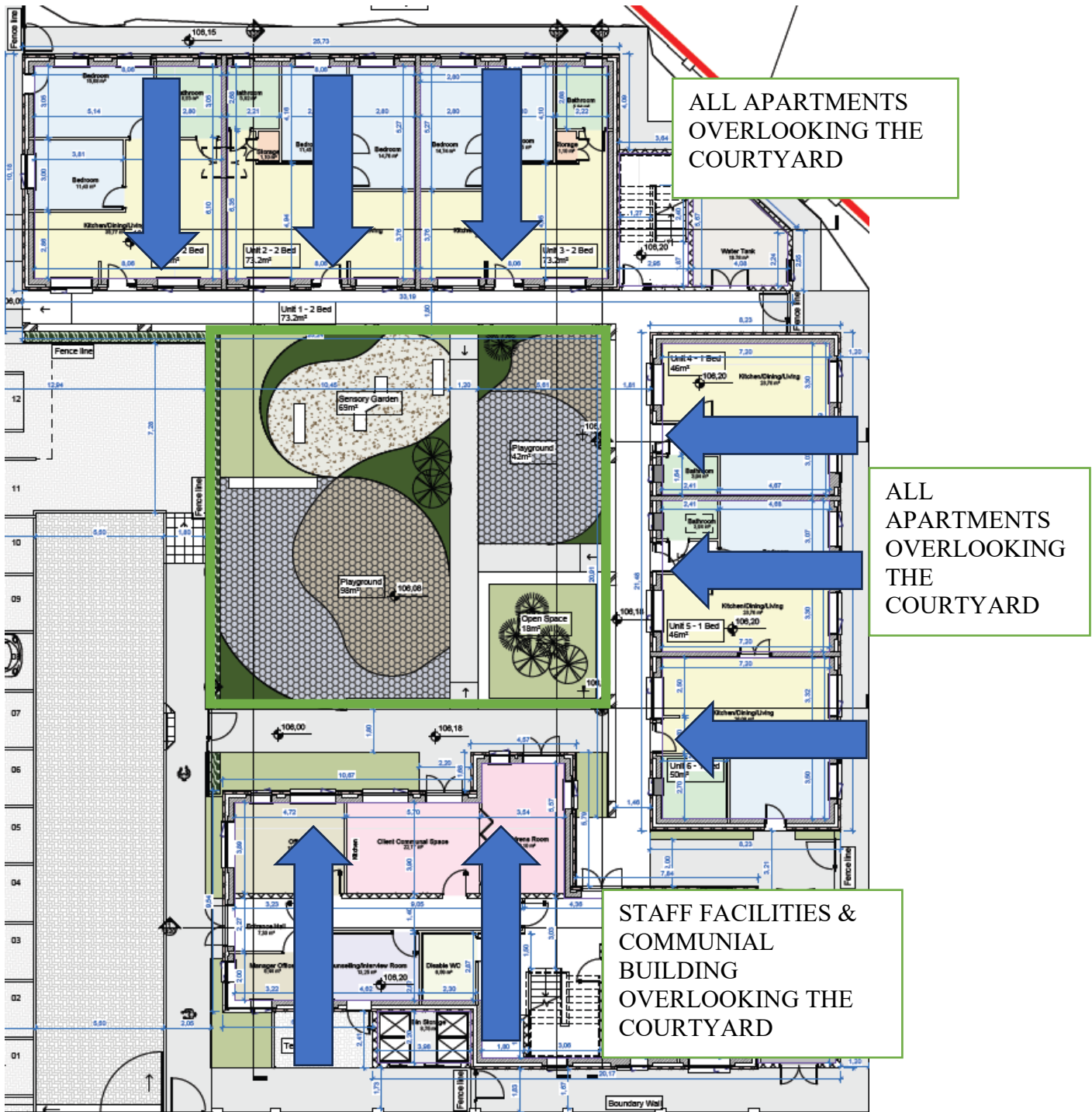
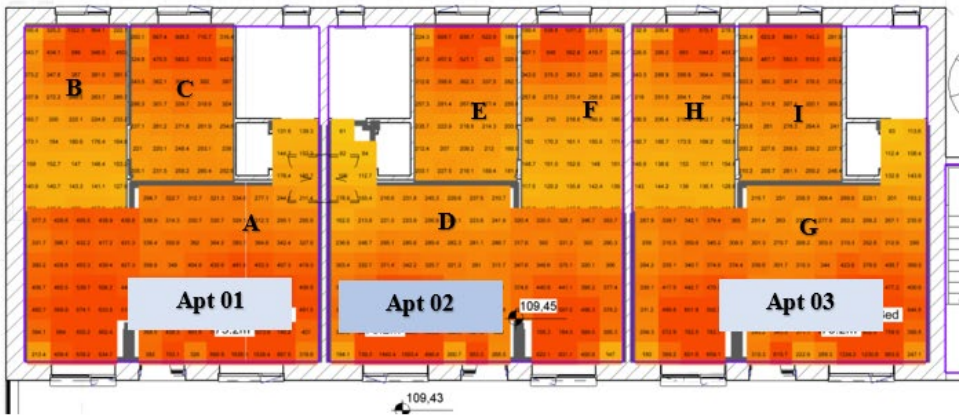


Fig 6.10 All buildings on the site are orientated towards the central courtyard/play area

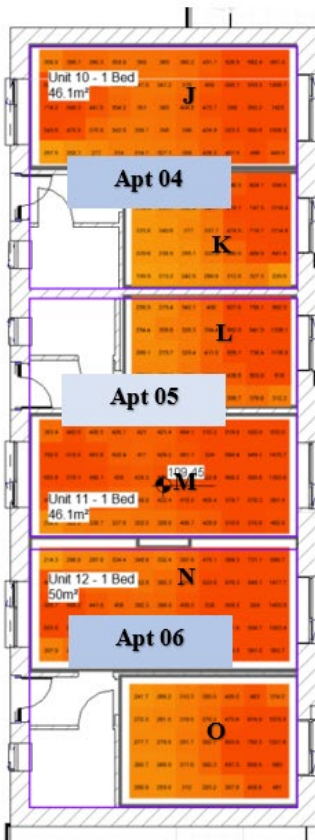
Principle 7: Creating a healthy, durable environment.

‘To provide well-designed spaces that respond positively to environmental conditions, in order to maintain comfort and increase the sense of well-being for users.’

All three blocks in the development have access to natural daylight and ventilation and are thermally efficient. The development will be constructed NZEB standards. The central courtyard creates an attractive outdoor space to extend living area potential for all users and improve sense of well-being and mental health.



Block 1 - FF



Block 2 - FF



Key Plan

First Floor Plans

Fig 6.11 Daylight Analysis Report

Principle 8: Therapeutic – social support, trauma-informed design.

‘To provide a series of spaces that promote consistency, predictability, healthy relationships and personal control so as to support the delivery of therapeutic care.’

The development has been designed so that there a good balance between private and social spaces. Both the landscaping and lighting design has been considered in terms of creating a warm supportive environment for the residents. The communal building allows the staff and residents interact in a social setting while smaller rooms allow for privacy and counselling spaces if required.



Sensory courtyard garden in an existing refuge.

Fig 6.12 Example of landscaping design from SAFE PLACE Designing Centres for Domestic Violence Prevention and Response.

Principle 9: Homelike environment.

‘The aim should be to create a homelike environment that is comforting and peaceful. Women and children accessing these services are arriving from traumatic circumstances, having left their home quickly. This concept is therefore important for clients, but also valuable for staff members who work in these spaces on a longer-term basis.’

Each apartment has been designed to Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities standards. This allows for adequate storage and gives the residents a private dwelling space of their own while they avail of the services. The development has been designed to create child-friendly spaces and play areas.

Principle 10: Staff spaces

‘To ensure that DSGBV professionals have the space and facilities they require to work in an efficient sustainable way.’

The staff space requirements have been tailored to the clients needs. The following has been provided, staff canteen, staff bedroom, staff changing facilities, and numerous offices and multifunctional rooms.

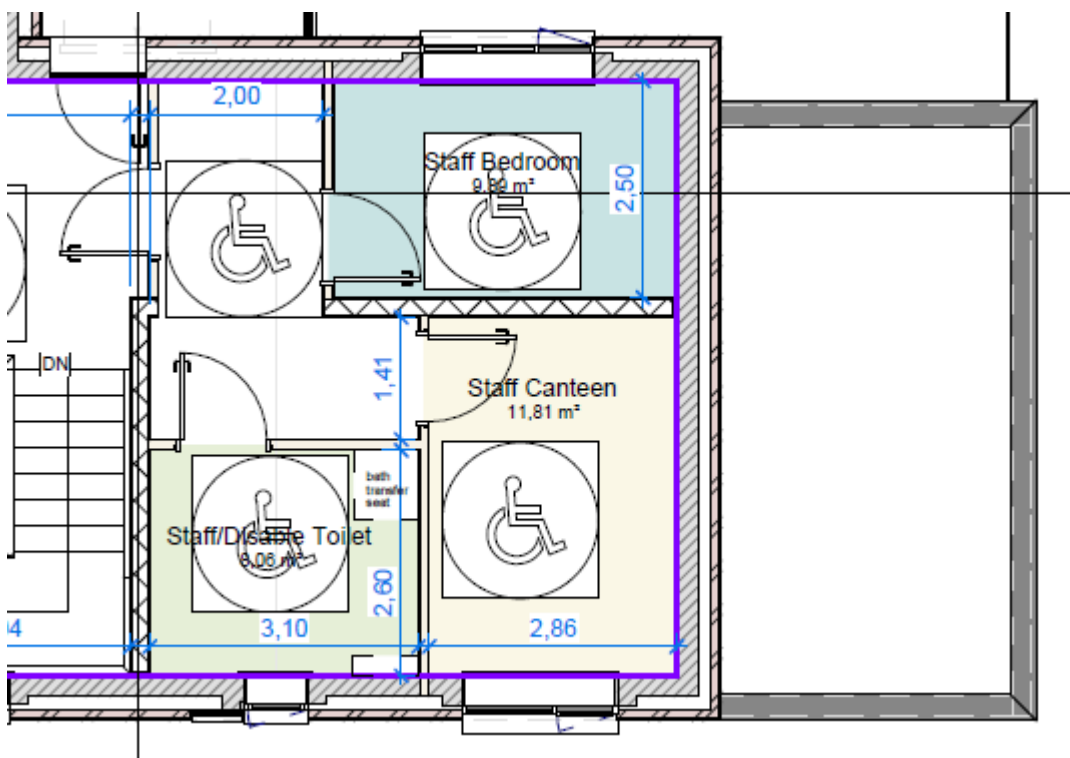


Fig 6.13 Staff facilities to communal building.

8. Appropriate Assessment (Aa) Screening

Please refer to AA Screening report prepared by Enviroguide.

'Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. Proposed Refuge Development at Kilcross, Sandyford, Dublin 18'

9. Environmental Impact Assessment (Eia) Screening

Please refer to EIA report prepared by Enviroguide.

'EIA Screening Report: Proposed Refuge Development at Kilcross, Sandyford, Dublin 18'

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