

NEWS + INSIGHT



**FEB
2023**

OLDER PERSONS HOUSING IN TOWN CENTRE LOCATIONS

WWA has developed a concept to create highly sustainable and appealing homes to reinvigorate the UK's neglected town centres.

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NOTHING IS 'BLACK AND WHITE' IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

WWA secured planning permission for seven rural business units in Stoke Mandeville on behalf of a private client.

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

For our monthly showcase, our Planning and Design Team recently sat down to discuss design and the Town and Country Planning GPDO.

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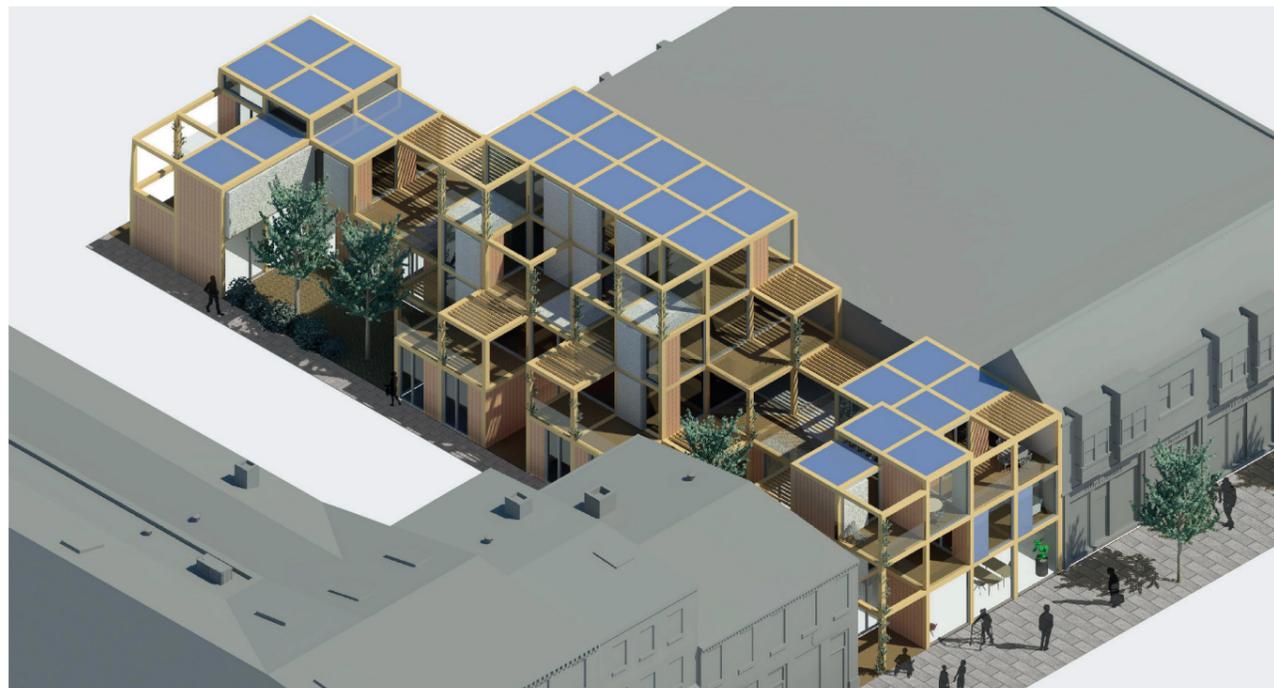


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OLDER PERSONS HOUSING: THE SOLUTION TO TOWN CENTRES IN DECLINE

Footfall is declining in town centres with a drop of 17% over the last 10 Years in certain areas . The trend of out-of-town retailing and online shopping has seen many businesses either close or scale back their high-street presence. This was accelerated through the pandemic and has left our town centres and high streets feeling like ghost towns.



Meanwhile, the UK has an ageing population with an astronomical 38% growth predicted in people aged 65+ in the next 20 years and a lack of age-appropriate housing to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of this cohort. The lack of appropriate housing and consumer choice is making a significant contribution to the wider housing crisis.

When an older person's housing offer is combined with a town centre location, a unique opportunity is created to solve two problems at once. As a result of positioning an attractive, lifestyle-oriented older persons housing offer, town centres can be sustainably revitalized, and aspirational retirement housing can be delivered.

WWA has developed a concept to create highly sustainable, attractive homes to reflect the expectations of the market. There would be varying sizes of accommodation that could adapt to the changing needs of the individual, as well

as integrated communal gardens and outdoor space. To actively contribute to the town centre, the street-facing ground floor would be public-facing communal areas. The accommodation can be tailored to the size of the plot to provide an integrated retirement community or retirement housing while also reusing brownfield land in a sustainable manner.

The town centre has numerous advantages, the most important of which are as follows:

- » Reuse of redundant sites contributing to a revitalised town centre.
- » Creation of high-quality, distinctive homes with flexible communal spaces depending on the needs of the local area.
- » Release of equity from residents who have downsized will increase economic activity in the town centre.

There are numerous positive effects on the provision of age-appropriate

housing, including:

- » Fantastic transport links and access to services for residents.
- » Helps to prevent social isolation and loneliness through having a community hub in town centres.
- » Majority of people move from within 3 miles and therefore this would also release larger family homes to the wider housing market.
- » A town centre location is more commercially viable for operators as the on-site service provision can be reduced owing to the town centre offer.

We are convinced that this concept represents a fantastic commercial opportunity, with the potential to help solve the chronic shortage of age-appropriate housing and breathe new life into town centres and high streets.

For further information please contact [Mark Slater](#) at our London Office on Tel: 0208 941 5161.

NEW INDEPENDENCE FOR ADULTS AT THE FORMER NIGHTINGALE CARE HOME

WWA Studios is ecstatic to be a part of the team that will transform the former Nightingale Care Home in Ware into a fully assisted residence, allowing adults with brain injuries to regain their independence.

WWA has been commissioned by The Disabilities Trust, working in partnership with the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board, to design and transform the building and associated landscaping into a state-of-the-art 15-person residence.

The Nightingale Care Home will be transformed into a fully assisted residence and will enable individuals to enjoy independence whilst optimising well-being through innovative service provision. The homes will provide a combination of rehabilitation and care and include bedrooms and self-contained living spaces.

WWA will be working alongside accessible designers Motionspot with Irene Sobowale, Chief Executive at The Disabilities Trust, commenting: "We are delighted to be working with pioneers of this concept, accessible design specialists, WWA and Motion Spot, to



Image Credit: The Disabilities Trust

develop a space that will influence the wellbeing and progress of the residents, whilst supporting the Government's agenda for increased independent living that decreases reliance on the NHS."

The property will be reimaged to look and feel like a home, by placing the emotional and psychological requirements of the residents first

as well as drawing on the latest research into psychologically informed environments. Mark Slater, our Design Director says: "We are delighted to be part of the team delivering this state-of-the-art residence for The Disabilities Trust. We are looking forward to creating homes to aid rehabilitation and recovery whilst making the most of the character of the current property on site."

APPLICATION SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF HOUSING 21

We are delighted to have submitted the application for a new extra care scheme and living well hub at Bulmer House, Petersfield on behalf of Housing 21. The design, which has been completed in close collaboration with Hampshire County Council, will provide much-needed age-appropriate housing and a community hub for older people within Petersfield. The highly sustainable design draws references from local buildings in Petersfield and is designed around a series of courtyard gardens that provide 'green lungs' to the building.

Massive thanks to the consultant team including The terra firma Consultancy



Ltd, Blewburton Ltd, mode transport planning, DFL-UK, Tulley De'Ath, Broad Oak Tree Consultants Ltd, Urban Edge Environmental Consulting Ltd, Technics, RF Environmental and Risk Management. As you can tell from the

length of this list a huge team effort was required to collate all the information for the application!

We will keep you up to date with progress.

NOTHING IS 'BLACK AND WHITE' IN THE PLANNING PROCESS!

To address the multitude of challenges faced by new development and the potential resulting impacts, the planning system has grown increasingly complex. Satisfying policy requirements is often a nuanced exercise involving interpretation, negotiation and a balanced planning judgement.



In 2020, the client approached WWA for planning advice for the redevelopment of redundant agricultural land and buildings that had been previously used for a commercial chicken farm. Considering the site's complex planning history (9 planning applications refused/withdrawn and 1 Appeal dismissed), it was conceived that any new commercial development in this semi-rural location would have 'in-principle' planning objections and would likely be refused. A legal opinion from a KC also confirmed the same. However, in considering the site's existing condition, there was a strong planning argument that if permission were not forthcoming for

future development, the site would remain an eyesore for the foreseeable future.

WWA considered that the significant planning benefits (including much-needed rural employment floorspace, highway improvement, biodiversity net gain and landscape improvements) were important material planning considerations overriding the general presumptions against the resistance of new development in this semi-rural location.

After months of negotiations with the Officers, WWA successfully secured

an outline planning permission (all matters reserved except access) for the erection of seven rural business units for light industry (Class E(g) (iii)) with 38 parking spaces and associated landscaping. WWA is currently working on the submission of a Reserved Matter Application and discharging all pre-commencement conditions. The landscape-led design approach for the proposed development will significantly enhance the character and appearance of the area while positively addressing the economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainability.



WWA SPONSOR WISH'S CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

WWA was honoured to sponsor a raffle prize in Women in Social Housing London Christmas event, supporting the essential work at Shelter. The Christmas event was a great success with 100 tickets sold over a week before the event. Guest speaker Polly Neate Chief Executive of Shelter shared her journey and experiences. The event raised over £600 for charity, thanks to everyone's support.

Kathryn Gundry, Design Associate and Co-Chair of London WISH, celebrated the year with everyone – focusing on the positives of 2022 before looking forward to 2023.



MAKING RETIREMENT LIVING AFFORDABLE

The APPG on Housing and Care for Older People published a report in January 2023. The report was based on an inquiry into: 'Making retirement living affordable: the role of shared ownership housing'.

The 'middle market' for older persons' housing has long been a sleeping giant in terms of demand. WWA wholeheartedly support the findings of the; Making retirement living affordable: the role of shared ownership housing for older people APPG report launched on 16th January and believes it puts forward some great recommendations to increase affordability for people.

In terms of planning and design several recommendations are made and one key message is that there needs to be an identified need for older people's housing to help all types of older persons' housing delivery. This dovetails with the current consultation on the NPPF which focuses on improving housing options in this sector and is very timely. With an ageing population, the need should not be difficult to find

and older persons' housing should form an essential part of the housing strategy in Local Plans. This also needs to include a range of options in terms of development and tenure type including models which make appropriate housing affordable for those who cannot afford to purchase outright or do not meet the requirements that would allow them to rent from a Housing Association as per the report.

As well as looking at the supply of shared ownership homes for older people, a key factor mentioned in the report is a lack of awareness of the product and of retirement housing and integrated retirement communities in general. This is not just relevant to the consumer, but our experience is that many local authority planning officers are not aware of the different older



persons' housing products, let alone the vast benefits. Planning officers require assistance and education from the sector to help them to understand to create an asset in increasing the variety of older person housing and not a hindrance as is currently viewed.

It is vital that affordable older person housing models are developed at scale to avoid a potential housing, health and social care disaster which is the lack of appropriate homes for the UK's ageing population.

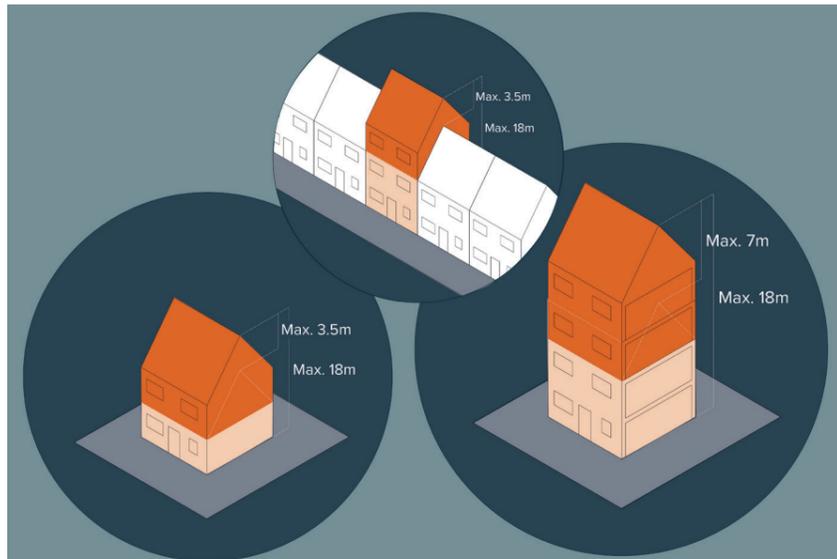
The full report can be found here: [APPG Report](#)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: DESIGN AND PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS?

Our Planning and Design Team recently sat down at our monthly showcase to discuss design and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The GPDO provides several opportunities for landowners to undertake development without having to secure expressed consent by making a planning application to the Local Planning Authority.

The GPDO has been subject to its fair share of controversy over the years as the Government seeks to balance state control with the perceived extent of the potential impact arising from a proposed development. The recent introduction of allowing landowners to develop upwards in the airspace above existing properties has been no exception with many vocal opponents to the new powers. Allowing landowners to maximise development potential in the airspace above existing properties chimes with the objectives of Section 11 of the NPPF which seeks to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. In parallel, achieving high-quality design has been thrust up the Government agenda in recent years with paragraph 126 of the NPPF confirming that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

There is then, an enviable dichotomy that policy and those implementing it must balance, the aspirations of achieving high-quality design (the beauty) and allowing landowners to use land efficiently, by taking advantage of permitted development rights in the GPDO (the beast). It is this balance that decision-makers have been grappling with since the introduction of these



powerful upwards extensions. Our planning team have been researching the impact on decision-making for prior approval applications for upwards extensions of existing properties, you can see our analysis of this controversial permitted development right [here](#).

In summary, contextually responsive design still matters, what does that mean for you and your lofty aspirations to extend your property? Well, it is important to note that simply satisfying the prescribed parameters set out in the GPDO will not be enough to secure consent. Critically, consideration of

the impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the prevailing character in the surrounding locality must be factored in.

Demonstrating an understanding of the local context of your intended development and designing appropriately is essential. Having a professional team on board who can advise on design and an appropriate planning strategy can save time and cost in the planning process. Please get in touch if you have a development project that requires professional design and planning assistance.

Our team are highly experienced in navigating projects through the complex UK planning system and championing our client's cause, from multi-acre, mixed-use development sites, to smaller and more personal projects. At WWA we offer expert advice, untangle the red tape, decipher any jargon and provide you with a clear and well-laid-out approach. For a free initial consultation please [get in touch](#).

FLEXIBLE REFURBISHMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS

WWA is delighted to have been appointed by Beard Construction to consolidate and refurbish modern, flexible office and collaboration space for Bristol's Office for Students.



The Office for Students (OfS) was established in April 2018 as England's principal regulator for higher education. Its primary aim is to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. To better accommodate the needs of its staff the OfS is currently

consolidating its formal office space needs in Bristol and has appointed Beard Construction to lead on PCSA and D&B implementation works of this project.

Initially, WWA is working on the design development of strategies for flexible meeting space, open plan offices, new

shower and changing room facilities as well as large-scale formal conference areas and reconfigured car parking and support services. The practice will then be responsible for delivering the project's technical design and coordination function throughout the construction phase, as well as completing the principal designer duties for the client under The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The works to Westward House are due for completion at the end of May 2023.

As companies seek to find an equilibrium for how they collaborate and get together on a new hybrid working basis, the need for truly flexible in-office workspaces has never been in more demand. At WWA we are adept at balancing the competing needs for quiet online meeting spaces and more conventional face-to-face areas for collaboration and teamwork to ensure a trip to the office is beneficial for all.

If you are considering how to address these challenges for your business or workspace, why not [get in touch](#) to see how we could help you.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LOAN



A key challenge currently faced by our clients in creating net-zero housing is often funding, given the recent rises in construction and financing costs.

The good news is there are green loans available and one example of these is the Atelier Carbonlite Challenge which has been developed with the RIBA. The finance deal provides a rebate on full repayment of the loan subject to the housing achieving targets in relation to operational energy, embodied carbon

and potable water use in line with RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 targets. The amount of rebate is dependent on the Carbon & Sustainability Score which is monitored throughout the design and construction process. There are of course some conditions that need to be met so this might not be for everyone, but it is great there is sustainable finance available.

For further information please see the [Product Guide](#)

RIBA 2030 CLIMATE CHALLENGE SIGNATORY



WWA are signatories to the RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 so please don't hesitate to [contact us](#) if you need assistance in hitting the performance criteria.

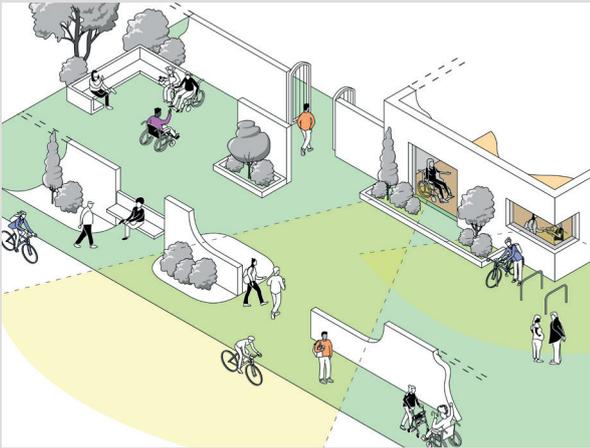
BULLETIN

UP + COMING

WWA's 'Trauma Informed Design' research is about to be published. The aim is to create a trauma informed design framework for Learning Disabilities Environments which is a tool for designing both purpose built and existing housing.

Combining the disciplines of psychology and architecture, this cross-disciplinary piece describes architectural interventions that have been psychologically informed in order to reduce environmental triggers and improve healing and safety opportunities for people who have experienced trauma.

If you want to be notified when this work is published and invited to the seminar, please email enquiries@wwa-studios.com to join our mailing list.



REFLECTING ON OUR FESTIVE FUN!

Our annual Christmas Carols event was held on Friday 9th December at Exeter College, Oxford. With a performance from the award-winning Oxford Pro Musica Singers, guests and staff all sang along to some of the most-loved carols and had a fun-filled evening. It was a wonderful way to start the festive season.

A big thank you to everyone who could make it to this year's event, we hope you all enjoyed it as much as we did.

If you missed out on this year's fun and would like to [join us next year](#), please let us know and we will gladly extend an invitation to our next event.



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ABOUT

West Waddy Archadia are a multi-disciplinary practice creating outstanding people-centric places that care for our heritage. Our research-led approach underpins our design philosophy meaning our clients know their projects will be based on the latest thinking in the sector.

Our team are highly experienced in navigating projects through the complex UK planning system and championing our client's cause, from multi-acre, mixed-use development sites, to smaller and more personal projects. At WWA we offer expert advice, untangle the red tape, decipher any jargon and provide you with a clear and well-laid-out approach.

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