



Angel Yard

ANGEL YARD PRESS STATEMENT

September 2023: New designs submitted for Angel Yard, Norwich's first cohousing community

Angel Yard Cohousing and developer TOWN have submitted revised designs for Norwich's first cohousing community to Norwich City Council. The revisions to the 34-home scheme respond to comments from heritage organisations and the planning authority seeking to accommodate this landmark project within the setting of the Norwich Northern Riverside Conservation Area, adjacent to the Grade II listed Great Hall.

Formed in 2008 and now with more than 40 members, Angel Yard Cohousing bought the site in St Augustine's, north of Norwich city centre, in 2015 with the aim of developing a diverse, multigenerational community founded on the principles of shared amenity, neighbourly support and environmental responsibility that are the bedrock of cohousing.

Residents will have their own self-contained homes and share facilities including:

- a Common House with kitchen and flexible common room where members can share meals and socialise;
- laundry facilities;
- guest rooms, which reduces the need for white goods and spare rooms in people's homes
- a 'library of things' including tools, equipment and everyday household items;
- sustainable transport options including a car pool and cargo bikes;
- a large communal garden to relax and play in, and an allotment nearby to grow food.

The proposed 34 homes range from one-bed apartments to three-bed houses and include two affordable homes for rent for adults with learning disabilities, utilising the supportive environment cohousing communities can offer people taking steps towards independent living.

The design aims to celebrate Norwich's built heritage, whilst also delivering a project for future living. Buildings are laid out in three blocks around the site

perimeter, reinstating the historic street edge and wrapping around the central shared garden, echoing the traditional 'yard' typology that is distinctive to Norwich and once occupied the site. From the garden, residents can access the Common House and other shared uses. A shared access walkway, balconies, and the roof terraces of a row of terraced houses look over the central garden.

Mellis Haward, Director of architects Archio said:

“Co-designing Angel Yard with the future residents of this intergenerational housing scheme has been a true privilege. The site is in an area of Norwich changing rapidly from industrial to residential led use and it will be of enormous benefit to the area to have a group of people with a long-term commitment to living here and a strong sense of community.

Our approach seeks to make the most of this prominent and sustainable brownfield site with a design that creates a superb cohousing environment while honouring and enhancing the local townscape. The input of Norwich Society, Historic England and the City Council has been invaluable as we have further developed the scheme and we think this will be a great addition to the city.”

TOWN were appointed development manager by Angel Yard Cohousing in 2018, following the success of Marmalade Lane Cohousing in Cambridge, and led a process with Angel Yard members and the design team to develop plans for a scheme which reflects members' vision for sustainable, neighbourly living. Taking a 'fabric first' approach the scheme aims to meet the Passivhaus Classic criteria, reducing energy demand. Renewable energy from air source heat pumps and solar photovoltaic panel will provide low carbon energy.

Neil Murphy, Director at TOWN said:

“Norwich City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and the Norwich Vision for 2040 sets out their aspirations for a liveable city that supports and promotes sustainable living. We envisage Angel Yard to be a significant project for the city, bringing forward a high-quality, low-energy scheme that responds to local people's demands for more sustainable housing options.

The project has all the ingredients to set a precedent for sustainable neighbourhood living. The brownfield site's close proximity to the city centre, means we can deliver a low-car, form-efficient urban courtyard block. At the heart of the project are the cohousing group, who have championed the sustainable ambitions of the scheme and will be living there to realise them.”

The mutually supportive environment will be a benefit to all, reducing feelings of loneliness and by encouraging interaction in everyday life and increasing people's wellbeing.

Owen Jarvis, CEO of UK Cohousing Network:

“We're delighted to see another cohousing scheme reach this significant milestone, adding to growing numbers across the UK. Angel Yard

Cohousing will be an exemplar scheme for cohousing groups nationwide, and unique in its urban setting. The project is a testament to the members' collective role in the design, development and ongoing stewardship of their future homes.]”.

Norwich City Council has been unable to grant planning permission to new residential development following Natural England's May 2022 advice on Nutrient Neutrality. We are pleased that Angel Yard has been identified as a priority site for the council through their Water Usage Retrofitting Mitigation scheme.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

TOWN	Gemma Holyoak Development Manager, TOWN	gemma@wearetown.co.uk
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Archio	Mellis Haward Director, Archio	

KEY FACTS

Location	70-72 Sussex Street
Local Authority	Norwich City Council
Application Number	22/00762/F
Application Site Area	0.27ha

PROJECT TEAM

Client	Sussex Street Cohousing CIC
Development Manager and Planning Consultant	TOWN
Architects	Archio
Mechanical and Electrical Engineering	Joel Gustafsson Consulting
Structural Engineering	Simple Works
Landscape Architect	Farrer Huxley
Quantity Surveying	Crowle Consultancy

Ecology	Hopkins Ecology
Fire Consultant	Design Fire Consultants
Principle Designer	Archio
CDM Client Adviser	Monaghans
Buliding Control	Socotech

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Proposed Development

- 34 new cohousing homes, compromising of 1,2 and 3 bed flats, and 3 bed houses.
- 2 homes to be made available for Social Rent to adults with learning disabilities.
- A 232m2 ancillary Common House (C3 Use) and ancillary spaces;
- A 763m2 shared garden for all residents, including access to a small workshop space;
- 9 car pool parking spaces, including 1 accessible space;
- 70 bicycle parking spaces provided on-site.

Site and history

The site is a 0.27ha brownfield site located north of Norwich City Centre, and owned by Sussex Street Cohousing CIC. The industrial buildings at 70-72 Sussex Street were demolished in 2013 and the majority of the site is mostly vacant, with the exception of small builder's merchant operating from there.

Sussex Street Cohousing CIC bought the site in 2015 with a previous planning permission, and appointed TOWN as Development Manager in 2019 to develop plans with the membership which responds to their brief.

Consultation

Angel Yard Cohousing members, and prospective residents, have been engaged in the scheme design from the outset, working up a Client Brief which TOWN, and the design team, have been working to develop proposals for a full planning application.

The codesign process took the form of online and in-person workshops over a 10 month period covering all design decisions including shared living, private amenity, communal circulation, dwelling layouts, elevation design and landscape proposals. The codesign process allowed for an iterative development of the design.

Angel Yard Cohousing organised a community exhibition over 3rd-4th December 2021 at St. Augustine's Church, supported by TOWN and Archio.

Angel Yard Cohousing

Angel Yard Cohousing first came together in 2015 with a shared vision for a sustainable cohousing community in Norwich.

TOWN is the appointed development manager of Angel Yard Cohousing, which comprises two organisations:

- Sussex Street Cohousing CIC (company number 09594665), which owns the land.
- Angel Yard Cohousing, an unincorporated association of future residents of the development.

TOWN started supporting the group in 2019 and were appointed in 2021 as Development Managers, and have been working in partnership to develop the proposals submitted in the planning application. The cohousing group have financed the project up to planning, with many members investing in the project at an early stage.

<https://www.angelyard.org.uk/>

Cohousing

Cohousing is a community-focused way of living, based on key principles:

- Each household has a self-contained home and private outdoor space;
- Each household benefits from a common house and shared garden;
- Future residents are involved in the design process and shaping of the homes and community;
- Residents manage their community, and look after the maintenance of the development post occupation;
- Cohousing groups are open to new members and often play an active role in their wider local communities.

TOWN

TOWN delivers homes and neighbourhoods that improve people's quality of life, enable more sustainable ways of living and improve the wider places they are part of. TOWN's first completed scheme, Marmalade Lane Cohousing in Cambridge, won numerous awards including the inaugural RICS award for Social Impact and the prestigious 2020 RTPI Silver Jubilee Cup, and is widely recognised as a pioneering example of community-led, developer-enabled placemaking.

Archio

Archio is an award-winning, London-based architectural practice, committed to collaborative partnerships and community engagement.

UK Cohousing Network

The UK Cohousing Network is a membership organisation with a mission to enable communities to create better places to live by reducing isolation and loneliness, and by sharing facilities and services reduce living costs. UKCN is a resource for members interested in Cohousing, enabling them to share information, advertise related services and connect to discuss shared issues and

learning. UKCN aims to on make cohousing more accessible, helping to shape policy and te public funding environment to make future schemes possible.