

UNIVERSAL DESIGN STATEMENT

LOCAL AUTHORITY OWNED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

UNDER SECTION 179A OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

for

Lands at Mooretown, Swords, Co. Dublin

May 2024



Fingal County Council
Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Universal Design Statement has been prepared on behalf of Fingal County Council in support of a Section 179a Proposal for a site of c.9.35 hectares at Mooretown, Swords.

Project Description: The proposed development is located on Lands at Mooretown, at the northwestern edge of the town of Swords, North County Dublin, approx. 2km from the town centre. The development constitutes the first phase of the Framework Plan for the Lands at Mooretown and proposes a development of 274 no. dwellings comprising terraced houses, own-door duplexes and apartments, and multi-storey apartment units, arranged in clusters varying in height from 2 to 5 storeys. It includes all associated road infrastructure with new Link Street, Local Access Roads and car parking as well as extensive pedestrian and cycling connections, with secure bicycle parking to all residential units, comprehensive landscaping of associated open spaces and natural amenities with hard and soft landscaping as well as play areas, connections to existing services and all ancillary / enabling site development works.

2.0 SUMMARY OF POLICY

As stated in “Fingal County Council Development Plan 2023-2029”, paragraph 14.4.3 (Ensuring Accessibility for All):

“In order to ensure that all new development is inclusive and accessible, the Council will have regard to the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland and Housing Options for our Ageing Population-Policy Statement and the National Disability Authority’s Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach 2012 and will seek best practice standards in terms of accessibility. Developers will be required to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations – Access and Use.”

Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 Objective SPQHO22 – Accessible Housing notes:

“Fingal County Council recognises the importance of social inclusion and aims to make 30% of social housing should be fully accessible and built with a universal design approach which will mean that the property will be flexible and changed as needed over the course of the occupant’s lifetime.”

As per Fingal County Development Plan Objective DMS037 at least 10% of the proposed units need to be age friendly. Fingal County Development Plan Policy SPQHP20 - Adaptable and Flexible Housing states:

“Promote all new housing to be designed and laid out in an adaptable and flexible manner to meet the needs of the homeowner as they age as set out in Section 5.2 Flexibility and Adaptability Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities 2007 published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.”

Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029, paragraph 14.11.2 (Age Friendly Housing) proposes the age friendly principles taken from the “Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home - June 2021” published by Age Friendly Ireland. These set out that an Age Friendly Home:

- is well-connected to local amenities;
- is easy to approach and enter;
- is connected to the outdoors;
- is easy to move about in;
- has accessible and adaptable toilets and bathrooms;
- has a guest bedroom,
- has easy to use fittings and fixtures;
- is energy and cost efficient;
- has good security system;
- has a good technology system.

3.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL AND COMPLIANCE

The proposal includes a total of 48no. Universal Design units of which 37no. are Age Friendly Units. Thus Age Friendly units comprise approximately 13.5% of the total dwelling provision, in compliance with the requirements outlined in Section 2 above. All of these are located in the 2no. 4/5 storey apartment blocks at the site entrance. 4no. additional UD apartments are also located in these blocks while the remaining 7no. UD apartments are located as ground floor apartments in the corner duplex/apartment blocks dispersed located along the main Link Road. All UD and AF units are accessed through Part M compliant access and stairs and lifts, or as own-door ground level units, and have internal layouts designed in accordance with the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. The specific design features are outlined in Section 4, demonstrating the design response achieve compliance with the qualitative criteria. The specific design features of the age friendly units are outlined in Section 5, Demonstrating the design response achieve compliance with the qualitative criteria.

The Age Friendly/Universal Design units include 2-bed 3 person, 2-bed 4 person and 3-bed 5 person units while the Universal Design only units as 1-bed 2 person units. The breakdown of the Age Friendly and Universal Design Units is summarised as follows:

GROUND FLOOR IN DUPLEXES			
H	1 bed apt GF (3S-corner unit) - UD	H-1B-2P-1S-UD	7
BLOCK 2A			
X1	1 bed apt UD	X1-1B-2P-UD	4
X2	2 bed apt UD/AF	X2-2B-4P-UD/AF	4
X3	2 bed apt UD/AF	X3-2B-4P-UD/AF	5
X4	2 bed apt UD/AF	X4-2B-4P-UD/AF	4
X5	3 bed apt UD/AF	X5-3B-5P-UD/AF	4
X6	3 bed apt UD/AF	X6-3B-5P-UD/AF	4
BLOCK 2B			
Y1	2 bed apt UD/AF	Y1-2B-3P-UD/AF	5
Y4	2 bed apt UD/AF	Y4-2B-4P-UD/AF	4
Y5	2 bed apt UD/AF	Y5-2B-4P-UD/AF	4
Y6	3 bed apt UD/AF	Y6-3B-5P-UD/AF	3
	TOTAL UD		48
	TOTAL UD/AF		37

UD and Age Friendly units are identified on the site plan and architectural floor plans overleaf:

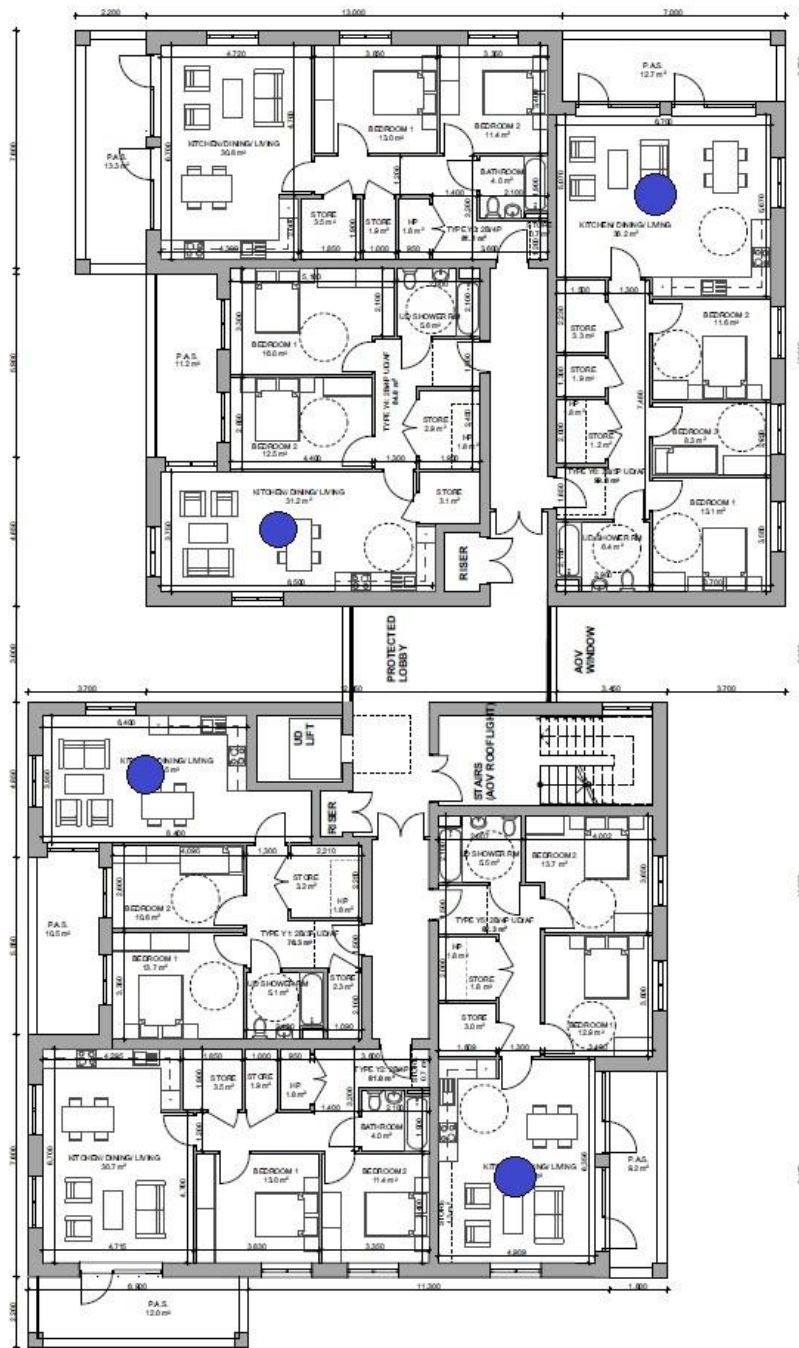
- UNIVERSAL DESIGN UNIT
- AGE FRIENDLY UNIT



Site Plan showing location of apartment blocks and of ground floor 1-Bed UD units and the two 4/5 storey apartment blocks



Typical Floor Plan of Apartment Block 2A showing AF & UD apartments

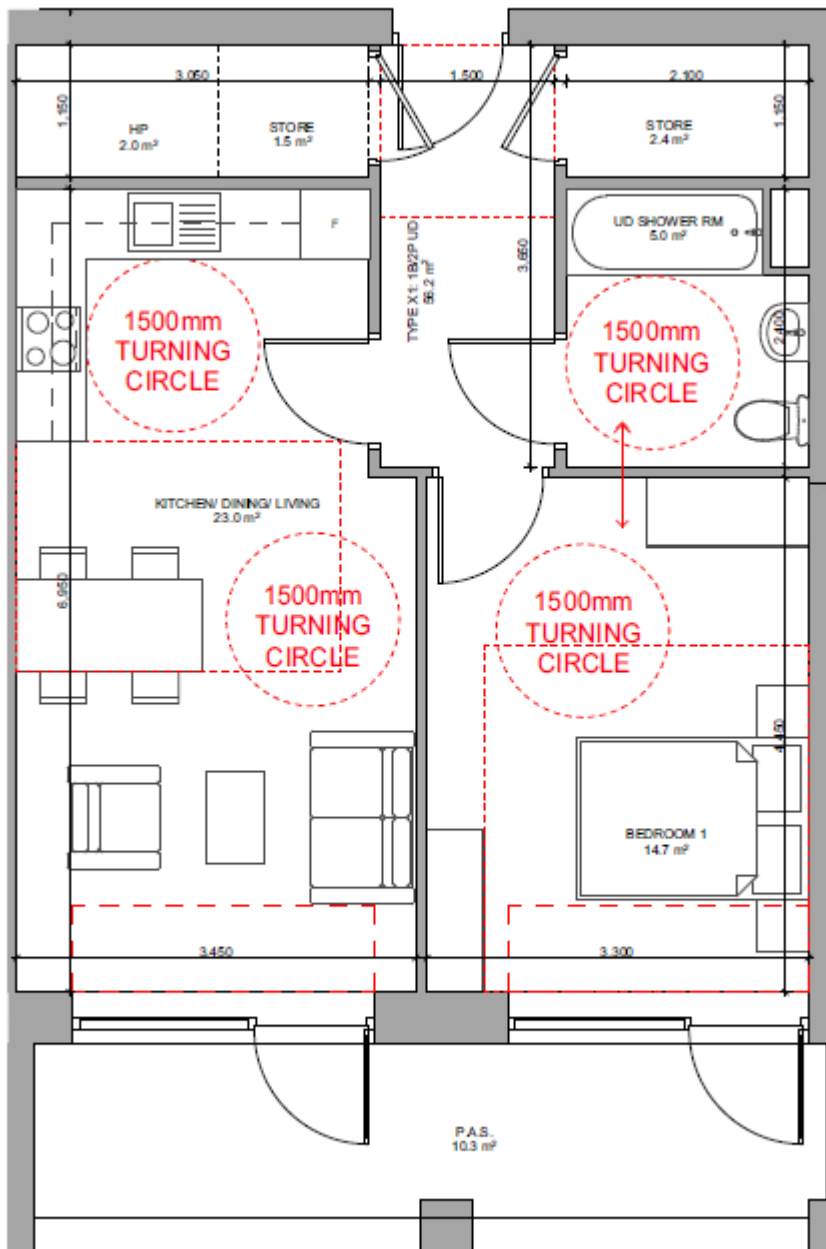


Typical Floor Plan of Apartment Block 2B showing AF apartments

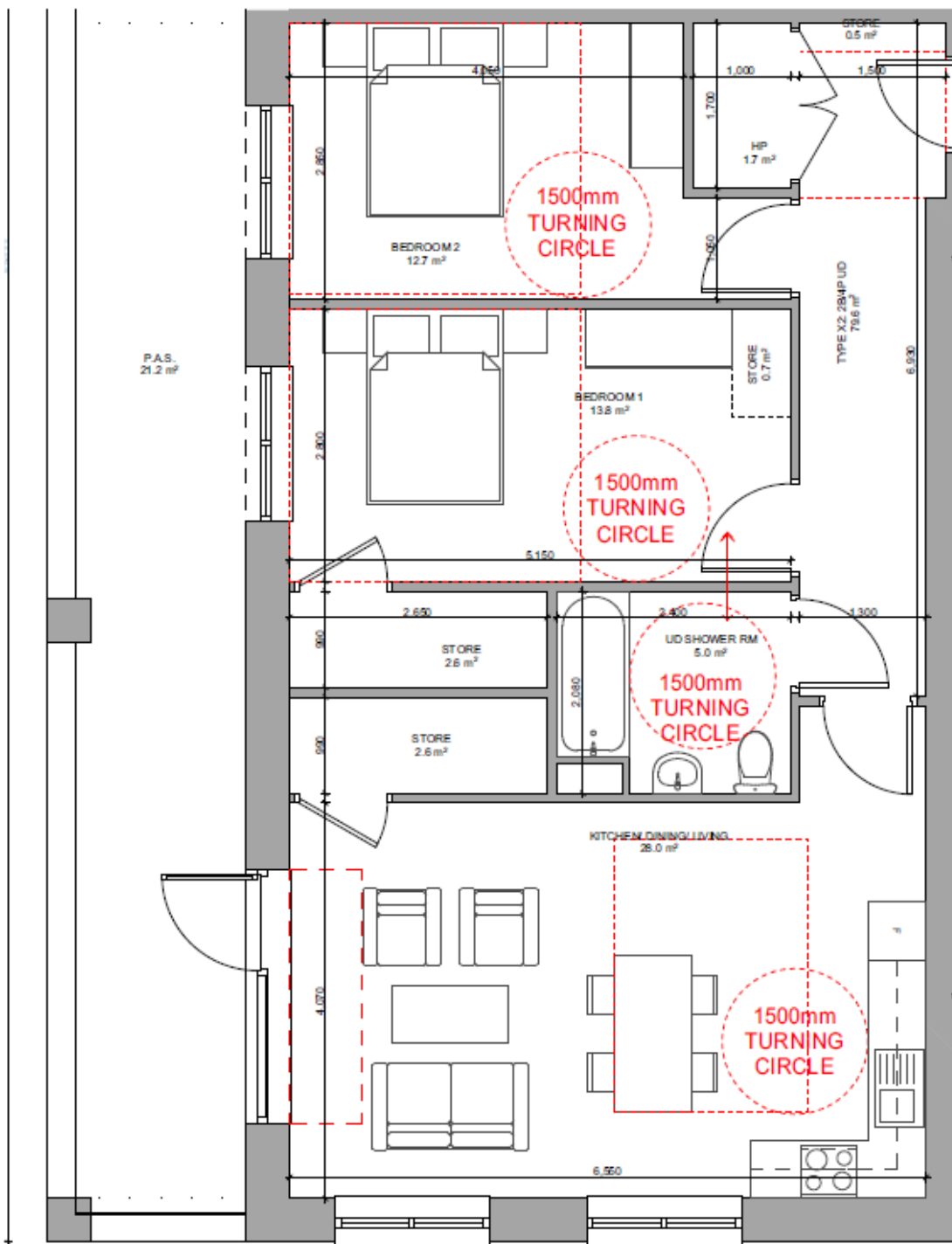
The entrance areas, stairs, lifts and corridors providing access to these units has been designed to provide easy access and movement. The stairs are Part M ambulant stairs, lifts are oversized to match dimensions outlined in the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. Corridors are wider than minimum at 1.8m, and with adequate daylighting and artificial lighting.

Internal layouts are also designed in line with the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland, with wider doors, wider corridors, a more generous space on arrival, larger WCs with accessible showers, soft spots between the main bedroom and WC to allow for potential fitting of a ceiling mounted hoist, and additional space around beds, furniture and kitchens to allow movement for residents with reduced mobility.

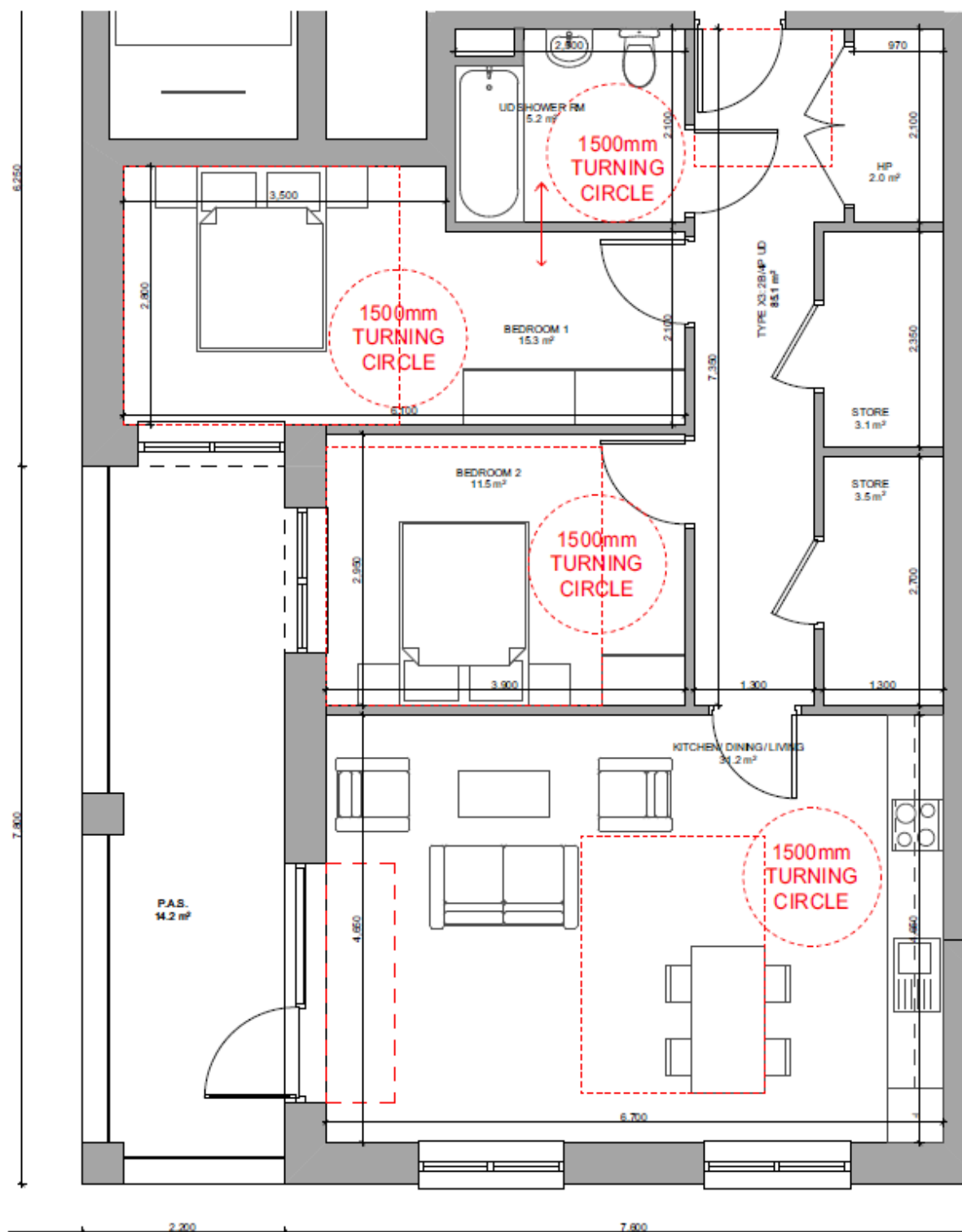
The plans of the relevant apartments are shown below.



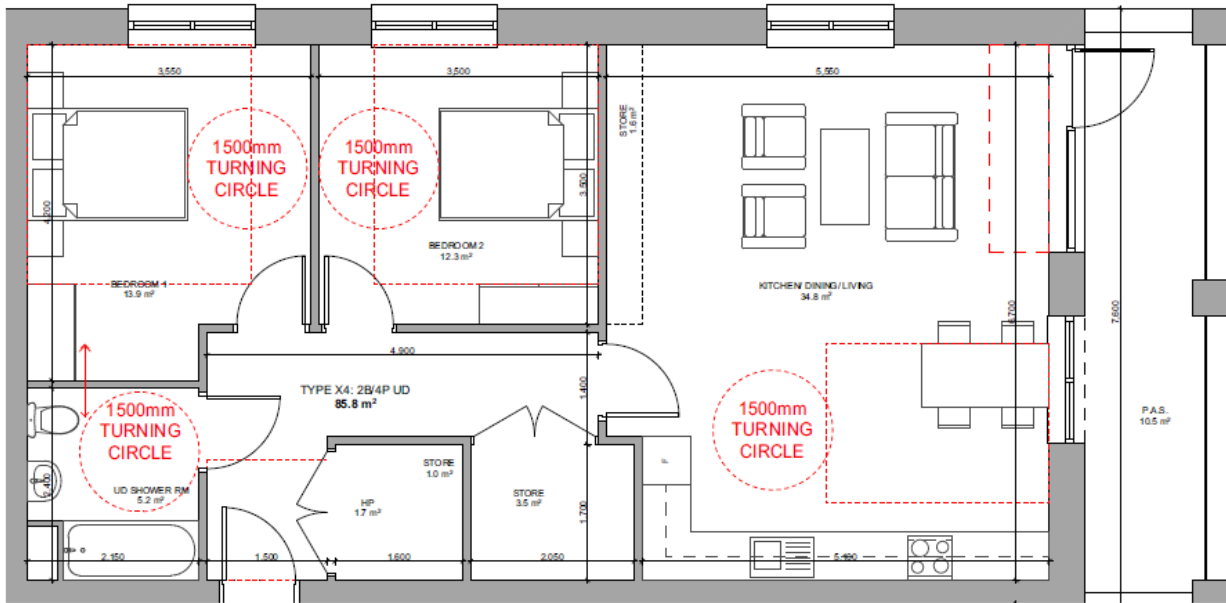
Plan layout - Unit X1 in Block 2A – 1 bed 2 person UD apartment



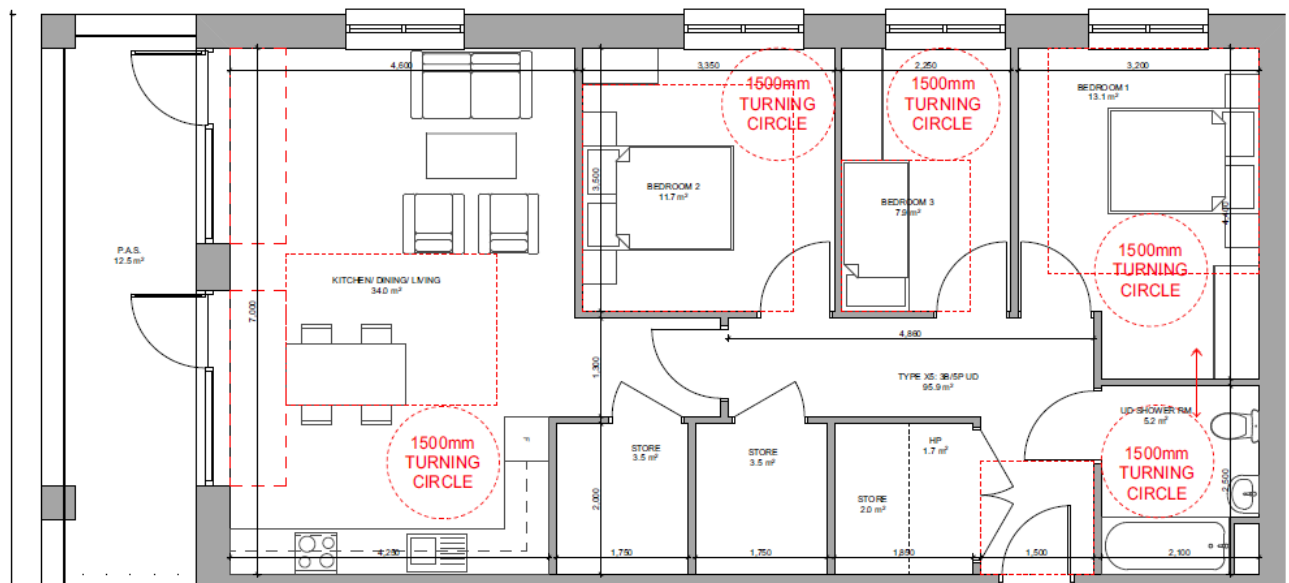
Plan layout - Unit X2 in Block 2A – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



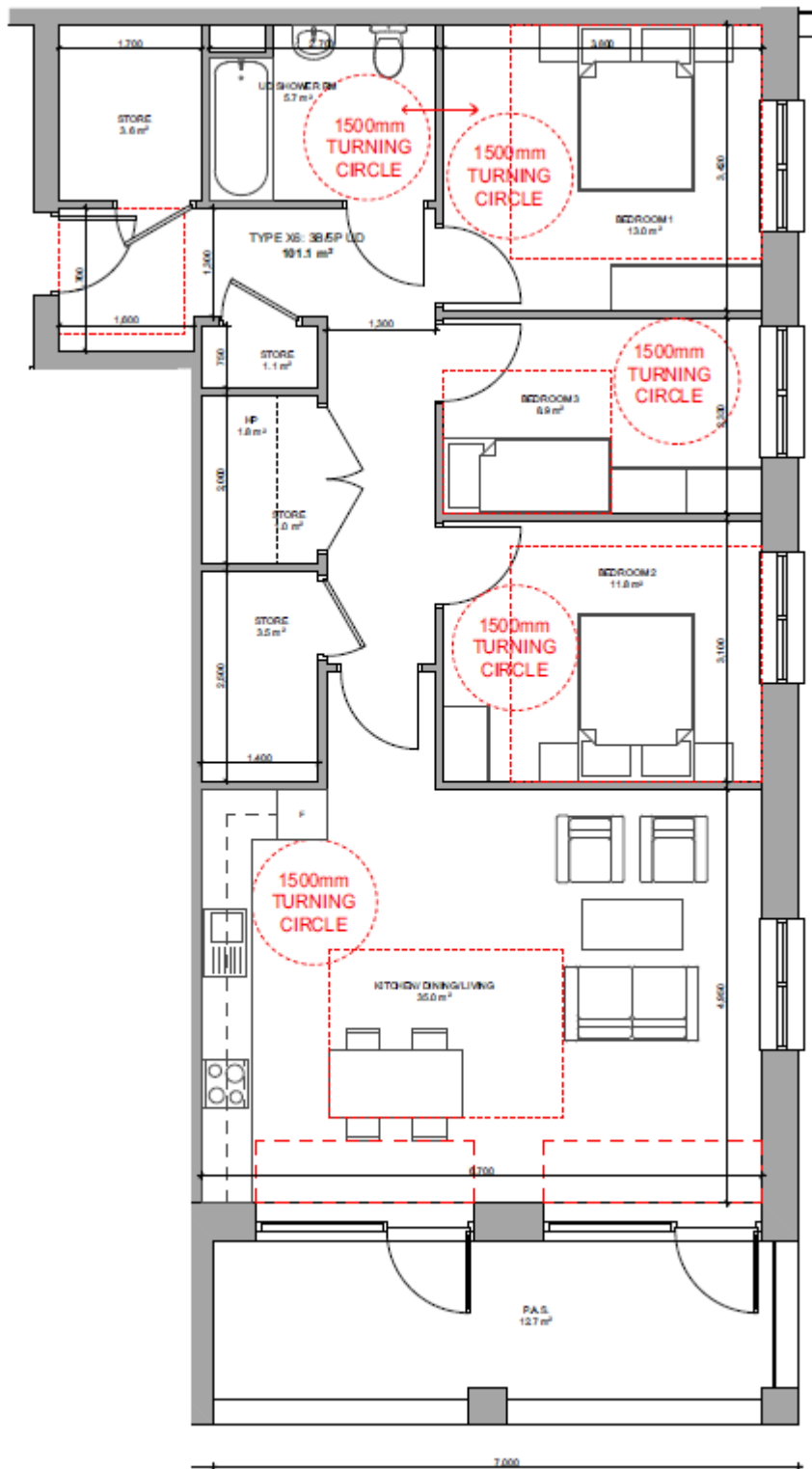
Plan layout - Unit X3 in Block 2A – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



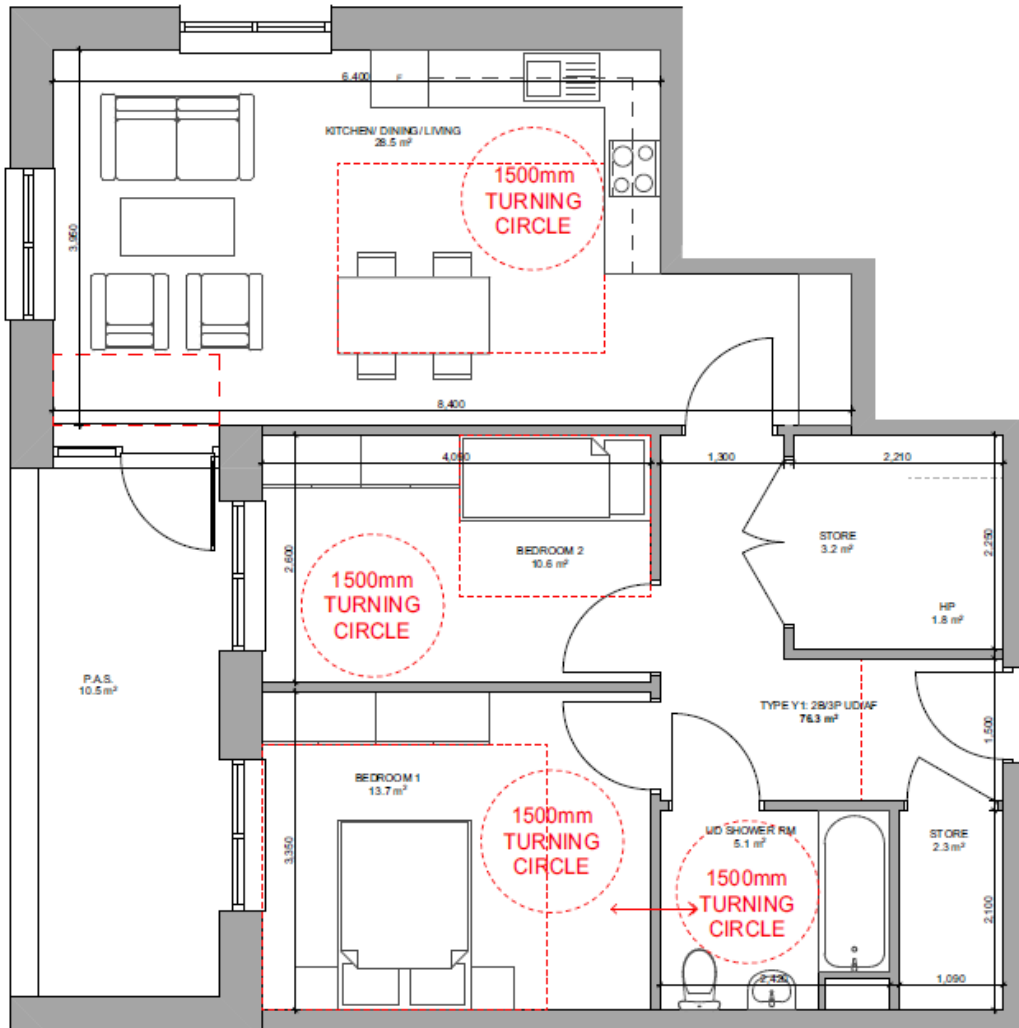
Plan layout - Unit X4 in Block 2A – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



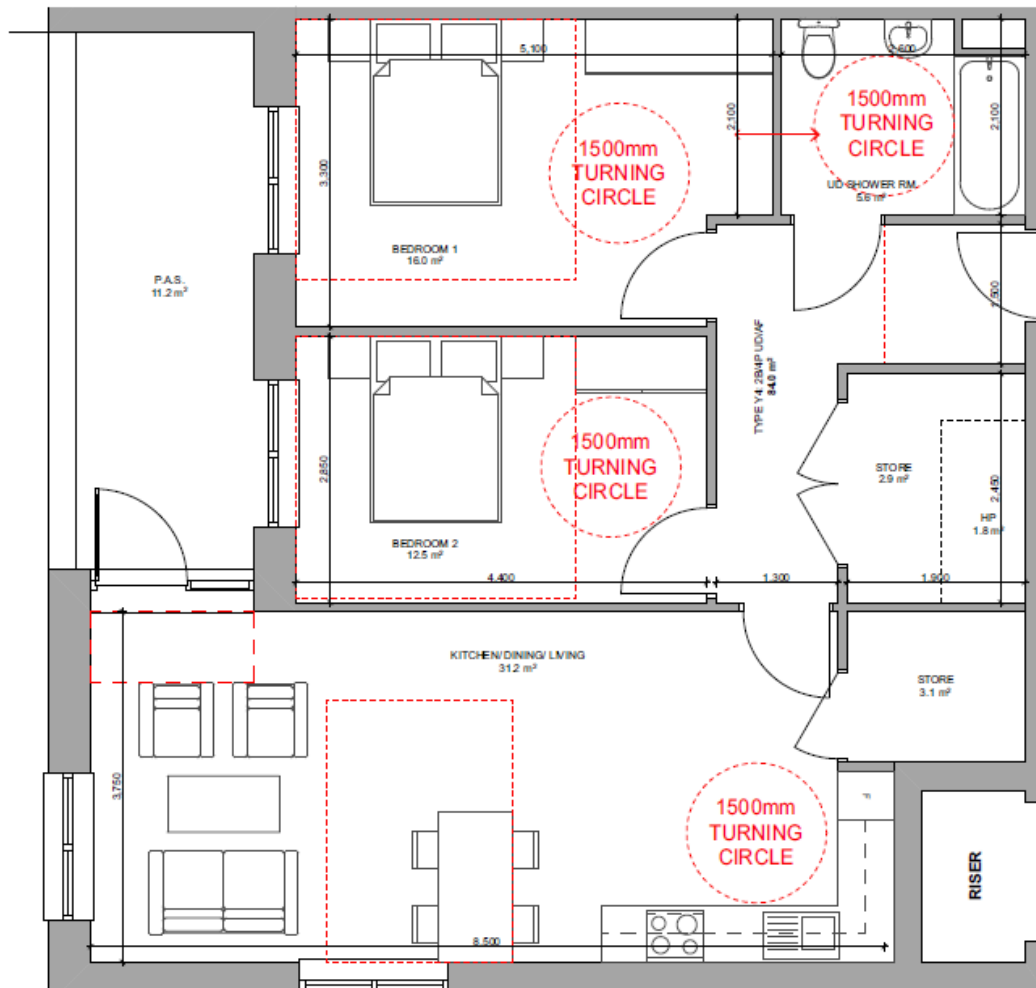
Plan layout - Unit X5 in Block 2A – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



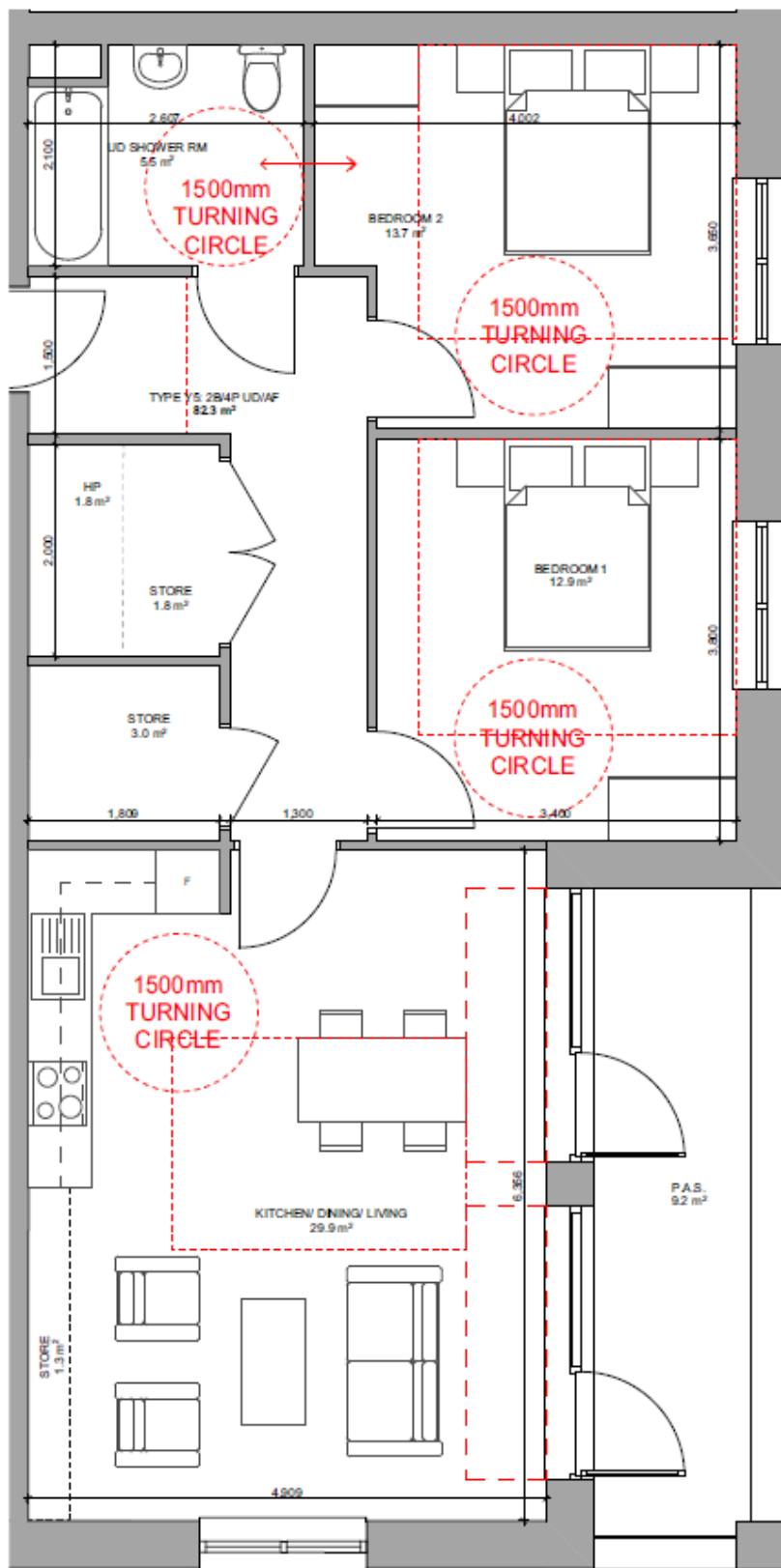
Plan layout - Unit X6 in Block 2A – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



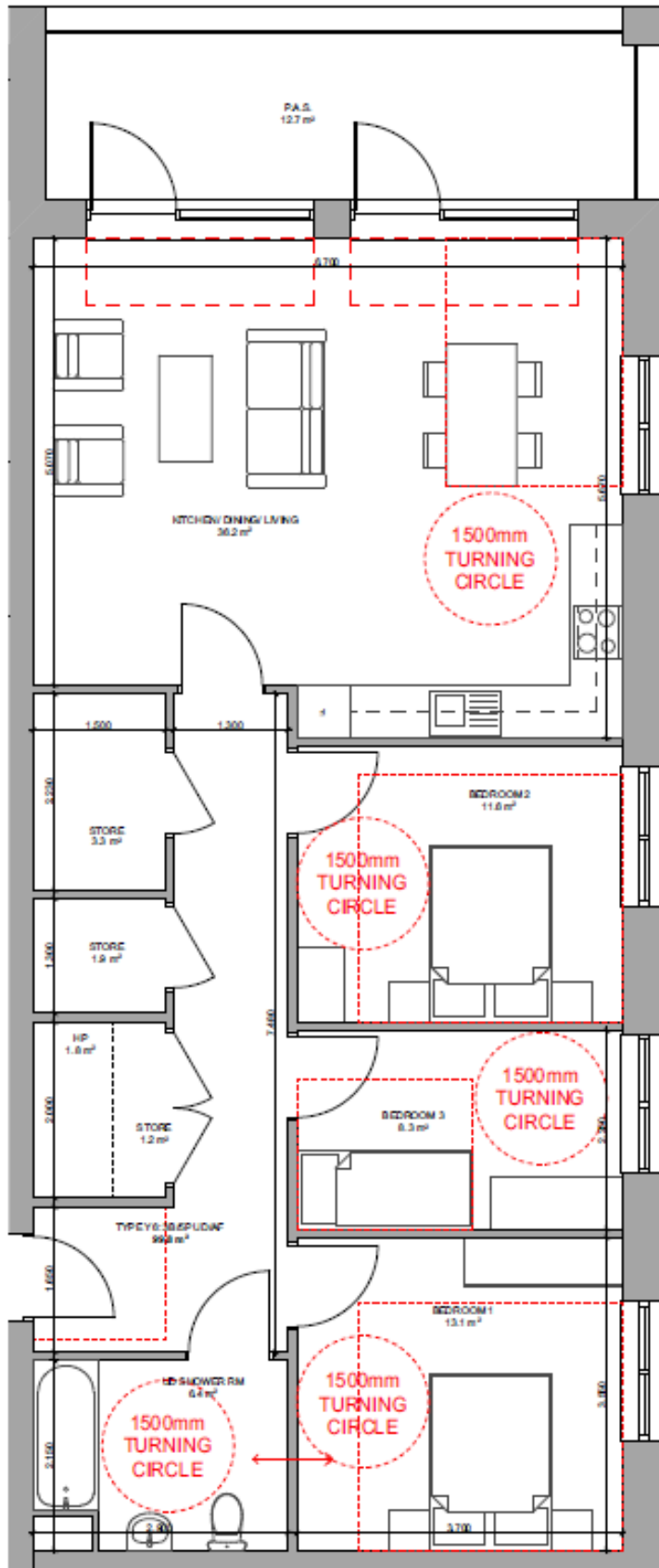
Plan layout - Unit Y1 in Block 2B – 2 bed 3 person UD + AF apartment



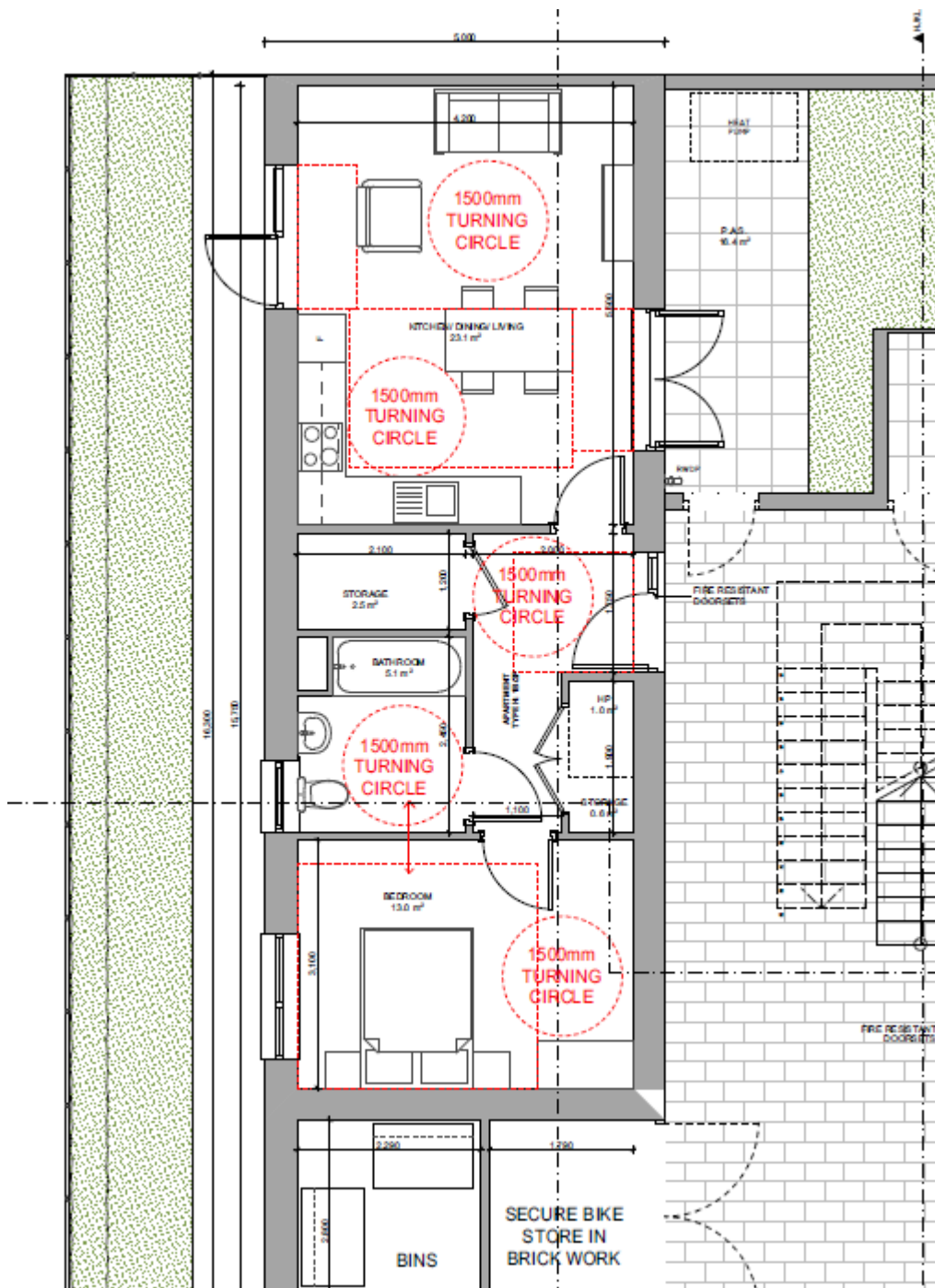
Plan layout - Unit Y4 in Block 2B – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



Plan layout - Unit Y5 in Block 2B – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



Plan layout - Unit Y6 in Block 2B – 2 bed 4 person UD + AF apartment



Plan layout - Unit H in Corner Duplex Units – 1 bed 2 person UD apartment

4.0 UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The design of the proposed development addresses each Principle of Universal Design and meets the requirements set out in “Fingal County Council Development Plan 2023-2029”. Each Principle has been addressed below and references the Technical Guidance Documents Part M - Access and Use. The 7 Principles of Universal Design, as reported below, are being used as guidelines by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) established by the National Disability Authority (NDA) in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005.

4.1 Equitable Use

Requirement:

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.

1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.

1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.

1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

Design Response:

- The site is of a rolling terrain. Site level adjustments will level the site in places. All pedestrian access from the site entrance is either level (<1:50) or gently sloped (< 25 including level landings). No steps or ramp are proposed. Hence the development the development is accessible by all users.
- Access design to residential units is consistent throughout the scheme.
- All universal design dwellings are designed to provide Part M compliant access either with ground floor own door access or with lift access and ambulant stairs.
- All dwellings have open spaces nearby.
- Lower level amenity spaces around the riparian zones have been designed in order to appeal to all users and are accessible on gently sloping pathways

4.2 Flexibility in Use

Requirement:

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

2a. Provide choice in methods of use.

2b. Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.

2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.

2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Design Response:

- Each of the unit types are compliant with the Building Regulations, in particular TGD Part M Access and Use and TGD Part D Materials and Workmanship.
- Internal spatial design is such as to provide adequate space for wheelchair turning and all units have an accessible bathroom.
- All 2-bed and 3-bed UD/AF apartment units accommodate a carer in a single or double bedroom along with the residents' main bedroom.
- Other units in the scheme are a mix of 1-bed and 2-bed apartments, 2- and 3- bed duplexes and 2-,3- & 4-bed houses providing a large range of individual preferences and facilitating relocation within the one area for different end-users (families, young couples, single person, older people etc.).

4.3 Simple and Intuitive Use

Requirement:

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.

3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.

3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.

3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.

3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Design Response:

- The scheme is clearly legible and is highly permeable.
- Orientation is very clear by reference to the spine road, the pedestrian perimeter route around each block and the central spine road in each block. Pedestrian routes throughout the development provide direct connectivity between destination points on desire lines.
- A clear road layout provides a consistent appreciation of place and way finding, all roads and footpaths are DMURS compliant.
- Entrance locations to apartment blocks are clearly legible being located between the two main volumes.
- Each unit is designed in such a way as to eliminate unnecessary complexity. Typical layouts are designed in order to promote easy access to each unit and intuitive navigation within. Corridors are straight and daylight where possible. Stairwells are central, with minimal travel distances to apartments, and also daylight.

4.4 Perceptible InformationRequirement:

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.

4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.

4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.

4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).

4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

Design Response:

- Variation in materials, architectural expressions and colours assist in providing legibility between the different character areas and the common / private areas.
- Clear signage will assist in way finding and be provided in compliance with TGD Part M.
- Daylighting to the central common areas with borrowed light and artificial light to the hallways serving 3 apartments each.

4.5 Tolerance for ErrorRequirement:

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.

5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.

5c. Provide fail safe features.

5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

Design Response:

- The roads have been designed in accordance with DMURS to aid in traffic calming and to increase pedestrian priority within the development. Features include elevated road crossings and elevated tables.
- Zones have been provided in the generous footpath widths to allow for placement of EV charging, lamp posts and other service elements in a coordinated fashion avoiding encroachment on the principal pedestrian route.
- Several pedestrian paths cross open spaces creating safer routes segregated from the streets.

4.6 Low Physical EffortRequirement:

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.

6b. Use reasonable operating forces.

6c. Minimize repetitive actions.

6d. Minimize sustained physical effort.

Design Response:

- Pedestrian routes have been designed to minimise gradients.
- Several sitting areas have been placed in the open spaces for resting.
- All the pedestrian and cycle routes are provided with a gradient of less than 1:20 to provide ease of accessibility

and to reduce fatigue.

- Most units have parking provided nearby to allow for easy access to the unit, including accessible parking spaces.
- The apartments are designed with Part M ambulant compliant stairs and a UD sized lift, to minimise sustained physical effort while accessing the units.
- Further features will be incorporated at detail design stage such as assisted door opening and hold open doors in the apartment circulation areas.

4.7 Size and Space Approach and Use

Requirement:

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.

7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.

7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.

7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

Design Response:

Each unit has been designed in accordance with TGD Part M and allow for easy access and use both internally and externally.

All open spaces will be provided with public seating to guarantee resting areas for the users.

5.0 AGE FRIENDLY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The document “Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home - June 2021” published by Age Friendly Ireland sets out the 10 design features that an age friendly home must have. An Age Friendly Home is a dwelling that is suitable for use across the life course for people of all ages. It is particularly suitable for older people whose needs often change as they age.

01. An Age Friendly Home is well-connected to local amenities

The site is well connected to existing community and social infrastructure within Swords Main Street (c. 1.8km) and smaller clusters of services further north of the site including Millers Glen (c. 550m) and Applewood (c. 870m) that future residents can avail of. There are approximately 20 no. community facilities within a 2km catchment area, with 5 no. services within 1km from the subject site (25% of community facilities). The nearby neighbourhood centres mentioned above (Applewood and Miller’s Glen) offer a wide range of community and social infrastructure including healthcare facilities and creches, as set out below, which are easily accessed on foot or by cycle links. Within 2km from the subject site there are 2 no. community centres, Applewood Community Centre (1) and the River Valley and Rathingle Community Centre (12) and provides sports, leisure, community development services and educational and recreational activities. The Broadmeadow Community Garden (8) aims to provide a communal growing space for local residents, schools and groups and is a project fully supported by Fingal County Council.

02. An Age Friendly Home is easy to approach and enter

The proposed age friendly units have the parking spaces located nearby in communal parking areas including accessible parking spaces. The buildings are easily recognizable and have clear entrances between the volumes with signage to identify the entrance. They have an accessible approach route to the apartment building entrance, with a level or gentle gradient. The common area entrance door is level access with a clear width greater than 850mm and a wide entrance hallway. Common area corridors are 1800mm wide and entrance doors to apartments are greater than 850mm clear width. Elevators are sized in compliance with UD guidance.

03. An Age Friendly Home is connected to the outdoors

The proposed apartments have a patio or balcony directly connected to the living area. In addition to this the apartments have a communal garden to facilitate interaction with neighbours. Window sills in habitable rooms are floor to ceiling, for unobstructed views.

04. An Age Friendly Home is easy to move about in

The proposed age friendly units provide an internal corridor width of 1200mm or greater, unobstructed doors width of 850mm, clear routes in between and around furniture of at least 750 / 800 mm and minimum 1500mm of turning circle in every room. They also provide large internal and external storage space for mobility aids and other items. Bulky item storage is provided in common rooms at ground floor level near the common entrance area.

05. An Age Friendly Home has accessible and adaptable toilets and bathrooms

The proposed age friendly units have accessible bathrooms adjacent or close to the main bedrooms, and they can be accessed from the hallway and from the bedroom. These bathrooms have internal dimensions greater than 2100mm x 2400mm and can host a 1500mm turning circle. The layout of the bathroom accommodates a soft spot, to facilitate direct access from the bedroom in the future if required.

06. An Age Friendly Home has a guest bedroom

All Age Friendly units have one or more bedrooms in addition to the master bedroom.

07. An Age Friendly Home has easy to use fittings and fixtures

The detail design will focus on ensuring that all fixtures and fittings such as lever door handles and lever taps are Age Friendly and easy to use and that controls (for example, heating system) are accessible. Visual contrast, signage and labelling make also easier for the residents to understand and interact with their living space.

08. An Age Friendly Home is energy and cost efficient

The apartments are designed to reduce energy requirements and be energy and cost efficient. Heating systems will be low maintenance and reliable with simple instructions and accessible controls.

09/10. An Age Friendly Home has good technology/security systems

The design will include good natural surveillance, good lighting, community interaction, public/private space definition and good physical security. Technology and security features such as video door entry, alarm, community alarm/panic button, remote management of heating system and broadband have been considered for incorporation as required. The homes are also capable of adopting further assistive technology in future. Electrical points will be located adjacent to internal doors and will include two-way or three-way switching for lighting as necessary throughout the home. All outlets, switches, sockets and controls will be clearly visible and easy to reach and operate using one hand.

6.0 SUMMARY

The proposed development has been designed so that it can be accessed, understood and used by the widest possible extent of people, regardless of their age, size and ability. This includes building common areas, apartments, roads, footpath, pedestrian and cycle routes and open spaces.

As per Fingal County Council Development Plan Objective DMS037 at least 10% of the proposed units need to be age friendly. We are proposing 37 no. of units that are age friendly representing 13.5% of the total dwellings to be provided. In addition to this a further 11 no. apartments that have been designed in accordance with the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland. A minority of the dwellings will be social dwellings. Fingal County Council will ensure that the percentage of these dwellings that are Universal Design will meet or exceed the Development Plan requirement of 30% of the total number of social units as per Objective SPQH022.