

Birch Hill Centre for Mental Health

Delivering excellence in mental healthcare



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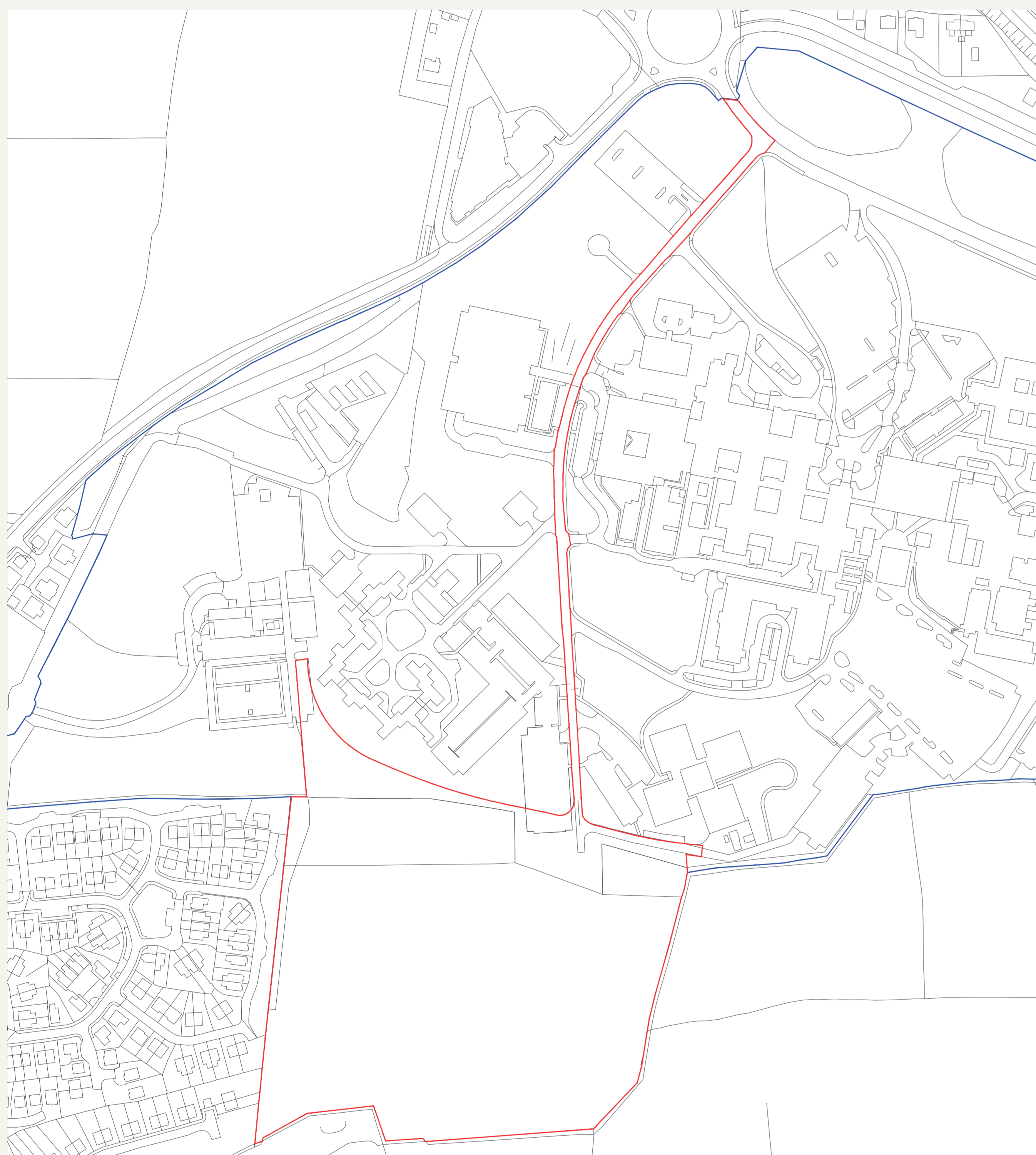


Artist's impression of the front entrance of the proposed Centre for Mental Health



Welcome

Welcome to our Public Information Event relating to proposals for a new Centre for Mental Health on lands south of Antrim Area Hospital.



Site location plan

About the Northern Trust

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust provides a range of health and social care services to a population of approximately 479,000 people across a geographical area of 1,733 square miles (2,773 square km) making it geographically the largest health trust in Northern Ireland.

Why Hold this Event?

The purpose of this event is to share our proposals as part of a formal pre-application community consultation process, prior to the submission of a full planning application to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Feedback

We want to hear from you and would welcome your views on the proposals. We will use your feedback to shape our proposals and inform the future planning application. All comments and feedback will be summarised and responded to in a Pre-application Community Consultation Report. This report will be submitted alongside the planning application.

For more information or to provide feedback on our plans, please contact:



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Artist's impression of the central courtyard from the air



Site Description

The proposed Centre for Mental Health is to be developed on agricultural land, located to the south of the existing Antrim Area Hospital buildings and car parks. The land is generally flat and is slightly lower than the rest of the hospital estate.



Artist's impression of a patient bedroom

Our Proposals

The new Centre for Mental Health will centralise Trust Mental Health Inpatient Services in modern, purpose-built accommodation comprising 134 single bedrooms, clinical support accommodation and public / visitor accessible areas. The design focuses on providing outdoor space, links to nature and countryside views to support patient recovery.

A low-rise building solution will provide ground floor accommodation for all patients, ensuring direct access to safe outdoor space and facilitating ease of movement between departments. The limited first floor area will be designated as 'staff only'. The scale of the proposals is appropriate for the surrounding context and sensitive to residential neighbours.

As far as possible existing hedgerows and woodland will be retained to preserve the landscape character of the site. New landscaping will provide separation and privacy along site boundaries. New boundaries have already been provided on site earlier this year.

Renewable energy is integral to the success of the scheme. We are committed to implementing sustainable principles and will strive to deliver the high standards of sustainability on this project.

The Need

Northern Ireland has the highest prevalence of mental health problems in the UK, stemming from both the legacy of the Troubles and a range of wider socio-economic factors (Department of Health, Northern Ireland Mental Health Strategy 2021-31).

The new Centre for Mental Health at Antrim Area Hospital will be one of three new-build projects set out by this strategy across Northern Ireland. By providing new, purpose-built accommodation, we will be able to build a world-class service to benefit people right across the Trust and the wider region.

Existing Trust Mental Health provision at Holywell Hospital and Causeway Hospital (Ross Thomson Unit) have served the Trust well. However, these buildings no longer support the delivery of excellent mental health care and in order to enhance patient care their services will be relocated.



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HSC Northern Health
and Social Care Trust



Plan showing areas to which patients will have access (dark shaded area will have no patient access).

The Design

A Place for Recovery

Our design team drew on international best practice in developing the Birch Hill Centre for Mental Health. Based on the village concept, the buildings are designed to support the personal journey of the patient towards recovery.

Considerate of our neighbours

The proposals have been designed to be considerate and respectful of neighbouring properties. Measures include extensive boundary landscaping, limiting bedrooms facing the western boundary, positioning all car-parking to the front of the building and limiting external lighting on the western boundary.

Safeguarding Independence and Personal Dignity

Each patient will have their own private bedroom and ensuite, arranged along internal corridors, with views towards the ward garden. The design minimises overlooking between patient bedrooms and aids patient orientation.

Secure by Design

The design maximises patient and staff safety, through measures such as the elimination of hiding spaces and blind corners and restricted access to landscaped areas around the ward perimeter to the west. Primary access into the existing hospital site is also an important feature of the design.

Encouraging Healthy Social Interaction

Facilities near the entrance such as the café and family friendly visiting areas with gardens can be used by patients to meet relatives and friends, which can be an important part of the recovery journey.

Maximising the Area's Natural Benefits

The low-rise building design and siting of bedrooms will ensure that patients have scenic views to enjoy. Similarly, areas outside the building perimeter have been identified to allow patients to walk outside and feel closer to nature, which can encourage recovery. Patients will have no access to the western area of the site.

ARCADIS

**KENNEDY
FITZGERALD**
ARCHITECTS LLP

Tt TETRA TECH

ph Park Hood
Creative Landscape Architects

AECOM

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View towards the Centre for Mental Health from beyond the Western Boundary in Summer 2027



View towards the Centre for Mental Health from beyond the Western Boundary in Winter 2027

Planning Process and Timescales

A Phased Planning Process

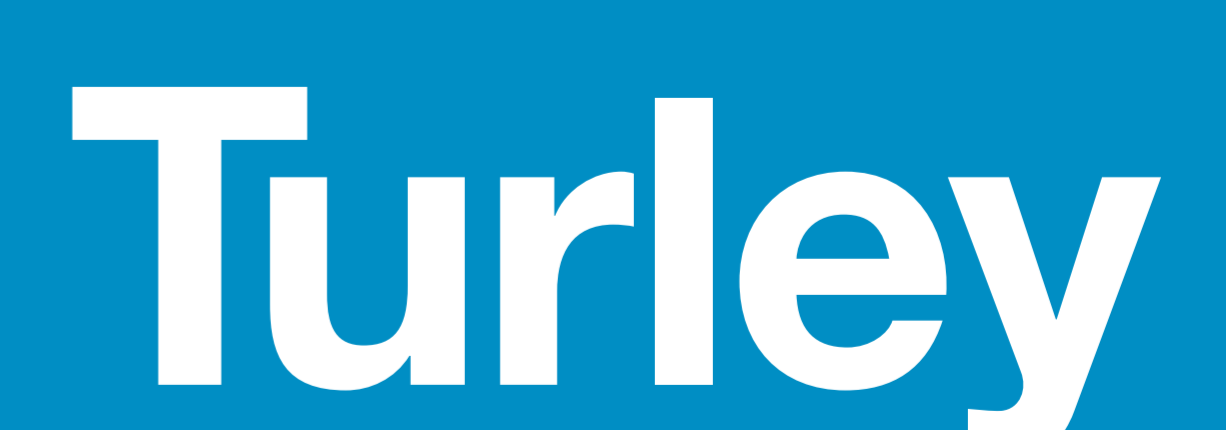
To ensure that important supporting infrastructure for the project is in place in time to support the construction and operation of the new Centre for Mental Health, the following actions have been undertaken by the Trust in advance of the submission of this planning application

- Local Application 1 - Fence and Planting**
 A planning application for the removal of existing fences and hedgerows to be replaced by new planting and fences was granted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in November 2022 (application reference LA03/2022/0695/F) and has since been implemented.
- Local Application 2 - Fence and Planting extension**
 Following a request from our neighbours, we submitted a subsequent application to extend the fence and planting. This was granted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in September 2023 (application reference LA03/2023/0604/F)
- Local Application 3 - Temporary Access Road**
 A planning application for a temporary access road was submitted to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in September 2023. The new road will be used for construction and blue-light traffic only.



Artist's impression of the proposed main atrium

Timescales



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Artist's impression of patient central courtyard

Application Details

To ensure that our plans are as well-informed as possible, we have commissioned a team of consultants to undertake technical studies within a range of disciplines. These studies include:



Traffic and Access

Our Transport Consultants Kevin McShane Ltd have undertaken a full transport assessment, demonstrating sufficient capacity on existing roads and junctions and feeding into the design of the access arrangements.



Construction and Environment

As part of our application, we will be submitting a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, designed to minimise impact from the development during the construction process.



Landscaping

A full landscape plan has been prepared by Park Hood, based on a considered design that will provide comfort and privacy for patients, staff and neighbours.



Archaeology

Archaeological test trenches are due to be undertaken in early November to ensure that any potential archaeological value is identified and recorded prior to works commencing.



Aerial view of the new Centre for Mental Health



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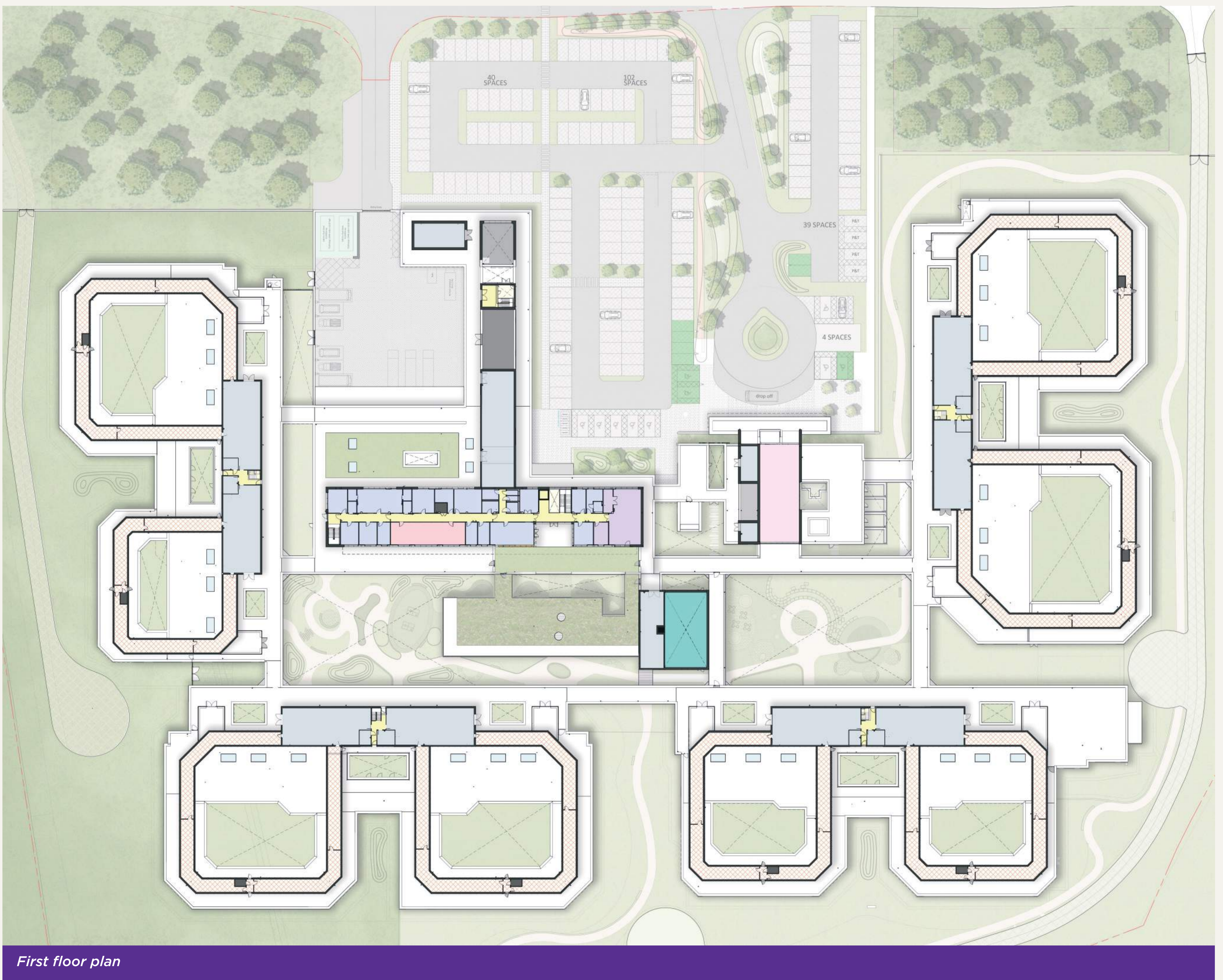
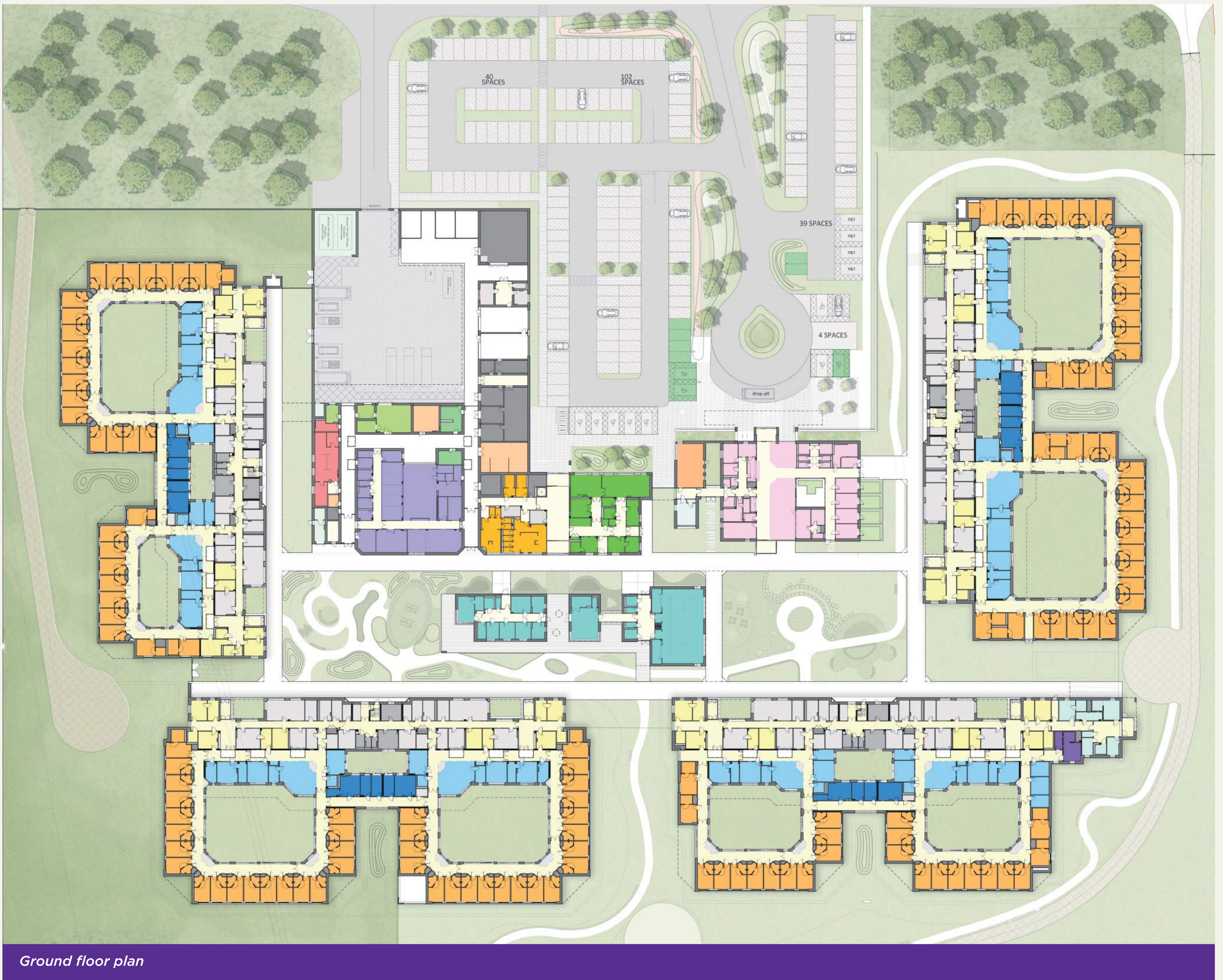
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Proposed Floorplans



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