

> Design Approach

Sited on a backland plot in Aldgate East, behind Whitechapel High Street, and on the edge of London's 'city fringe' the proposal investigates the idea of 'growing old within the city centre'. The design looks at the possibility of creating sheltered housing within the voids left over at the centre of existing city blocks. Within these urban sites the urban block provides a 'protective jacket' and allows its inhabitants with reduced mobility to remain living within walking distance of the vibrant High Street and its amenities, whilst providing a quiet, sheltered and protected community. The project aims to create spaces that encourage 'informal networks of care' to develop amongst its residents and the local community through a series of intersecting public and private routes across the site. The communal courtyard gardens and community cafe form an essential part of the proposal as places to encourage intergenerational interaction and provide a spatial link to the high street and an informal opportunity to meet new people in a warm peaceful environment.

The housing is built at grade level with neighbouring flats sharing a porch area, creating a shared space which helps to encourage informal networks of care to develop. Neighbouring flats also interlock, one being single level to cater for less mobile residents, the other set over two storeys to house families or younger residents, their second storey sitting above the single storey flat.

At the centre of the complex is a chapel/gallery space which provides a semi public place for gathering, curating changing exhibitions/activities and inviting the surrounding community in. The chapel also provides a link to a heated open plan undercroft which is connected to the existing basement of the neighbouring school. This shared resource space provides an area within the complex for activities such as computer classes, reading and library time and offers the possibility for inter generational exchange and activities to take place between the school children and residents.