



3.0 STRATEGIC APPROACH

3.1 WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

3.1.1 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Community engagement will play a vital role in the development of the Land at Smallford Works. A series of one-to-one meetings and events were organised to present the emerging proposal and seek views on the proposal and how it might positively contribute to the local area.

3.1.1.1 MEMBERS PRESENTATION

The team has sought to involve the Colney Heath Parish Council and its Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group in the development proposals. This has included two exploratory meetings to discuss the future re-development of the site. Representatives of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group attended the public exhibition. The team also met with the Ward Councillor to discuss the emerging proposal and public consultation. He reiterated his personal support for the re-use of brownfield land and commended the team on their approach to public consultation.

3.1.1.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In the preparation of the planning application, the team explored the benefits that may be generated by the proposed development including a reduction in vehicle movements generated by the site, replacement of industrial uses which give rise to nuisance in terms of noise, dust, etc.

This initial community engagement exercise was undertaken early in the design process with a Concept Masterplan presented to illustrate the potential development mix that could be delivered across the landholding. Significant feedback was received from the local community and its representatives with many issues raised taken on board in the development of the Masterplan, from the need to calm the existing traffic adjacent the site and positively impact traffic congestion, through to the need for greater connectivity with the wider path network to ensure that the new development will be seen as a fully integrated part of the Sleepshyde community.



Welcome

Welcome to our exhibition regarding emerging proposals for Smallford Works.

The information on these exhibition boards has been prepared to give you an insight into our thinking and the approach we have taken on this important site. Please do speak with a member of the team if you have any questions or queries and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

We are keen to hear the views of local residents, community groups and stakeholders early on in the process, so please do take the time to fill in one of the feedback forms available today.

All feedback received during the first phase of our public consultation will be considered by members of the project team as we continue to develop our proposals. We will be reconsulting the local community on more detailed plans later this year.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk



The Team

The project team is led by Stackbourne Limited who have owned the Smallford Works site since 1980.

The team includes a wider range of experts in many disciplines.

Stackbourne Limited
Stackbourne Ltd is a private property company based locally in Amersham, who have owned Smallford Works for nearly 40 years.

Turner (Masterplanning)
Turner was established in 2001 and comprises a team of 130 architects, urban designers, interior designers and graphic designers. With studios in London and Sydney, their portfolio is international in scope and includes a range of mixed-use, residential, commercial and masterplanning projects.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk



Meeting housing need in St Albans

St Albans City and District Council has identified the need to build over 14,000 homes across the district by 2036. To support this ambition, the Council has recognised the need to release Green Belt and greenfield land for development.

In seeking to deliver this much needed housing, Government has reiterated the need of local planning authorities to prioritise the delivery of previously developed land in advance of greenfield sites. Land at Smallford Works represents one of the few remaining developable and deliverable brownfield sites in the district.

Its redevelopment will provide much needed housing on land which would have a negligible impact on the purposes of the Green Belt, resulting in an ability to protect more valued greenfield land which may otherwise be required to meet housing need.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk



The site

Land at Smallford Works represents one of the few remaining developable and deliverable brownfield sites left within the district.

The Smallford Works site is in the south of St Albans district and comprises approximately 3.5ha of brownfield land currently in commercial use.

Smallford Works is an established employment site in a residential area, with its original use as a brickworks pre-dating the planning system introduced in 1948.

The sensitive redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity to transform brownfield land that is a 'bad neighbour' to create a development that would enhance the area for existing residents.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk



Site considerations

This board explains the range of opportunities and constraints that need to be considered as part of the preparation of the emerging masterplan.

We want to create a vibrant development that sensitively reconnects the site to the surrounding area and creates an excellent place which meets the aspirations and needs of the local community.

To help develop our proposals we are also undertaking detailed studies on:

- Ecology
- Landscape and views
- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Drainage and flood risk
- Traffic and transport
- Trees and hedgerows
- Noise
- Air quality
- Infrastructure (e.g. sewerage and power)
- Community facilities (e.g. schools, doctors, dentists)



Opportunities

- Transform brownfield land that is a 'bad neighbour' in a predominantly residential area.
- Re-use of brownfield land to deliver much needed new housing.
- No overlooking to adjacent houses and good visual site cover.
- Create new as well as improve existing pedestrian walking routes next to the site.

Constraints

- Proximity to the Green Belt.
- Existing community to the south-east.
- Existing employment uses on site.
- Existing trees and hedgerows around the site's edges.

www.smallfordworks.co.uk

3.1.1 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Smallford Works

Our Vision – New Homes

The redevelopment of Smallford Works presents the opportunity to transform brownfield land that is a 'bad neighbour' in a predominantly residential area.

We are looking at up to 100 homes across the site. These would be a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. At least 40% of the homes will be affordable, which is in-line with local requirements.

House size	
1 bed	8
2 bed	26
3 bed	56
4 bed	10

The proposed development offers the opportunity of homeownership for a wide spectrum of local people, delivering much needed affordable homes whilst generating additional income for the Council to improve infrastructure and community facilities in the local area.

The development will reflect local identity with building styles promoting an organic extension of Sleepshyde, with an appropriate scale and density.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk

Smallford Works

Our vision – Green Spaces

At the heart of our proposals we will seek to deliver high quality landscaping and usable public open spaces.

We are keen to ensure that our proposals for the Smallford Works site positively contribute to Smallford and the wider area. For example, the site could deliver new accessible amenity spaces as well as create links to existing amenity spaces and pedestrian routes next to the site.

As part of the planning application a full landscaping plan will be provided, setting out the soft and hard landscaping features across the site.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk

Smallford Works

Highways and access

Pell Frischmann has been commissioned to carry out a transport assessment of the site.

The assessment will consider both the existing operation of the site and the vehicle movements generated by the proposed development.

A formal pre-application request has been submitted to Hertfordshire County Council who are responsible for transport planning. The proposals will be discussed in detail with the Council including the proposed access arrangements, potential increases in traffic to and from the site and any impact on the surrounding highway network.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk

Smallford Works

Feedback and next steps

We will consider all the feedback that has been received from residents, businesses and stakeholders before preparing more detailed proposals for the site.

We will consult the local community and key stakeholders on our detailed proposals, and any changes which have been made. In the Autumn, our next phase of consultation will allow residents to provide further feedback prior to the application being finalised and submitted to St Albans City and District Council for their consideration.

Please feel free to complete your feedback form and hand it back to a member of the project team at today's event, or alternatively please send your feedback form via the Freepost address provided.



www.smallfordworks.co.uk



Images of Public Consultation and display boards

3.2 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 MASTERPLAN STRUCTURE

In developing the proposals for the site reference has been taken from the extensive background research carried out by the project team. This has enabled a Concept Masterplan to be prepared which, it is considered, will be seen to respond fully to the constraints on site yet allow for a fully integrated urban neighbourhood to come forward.

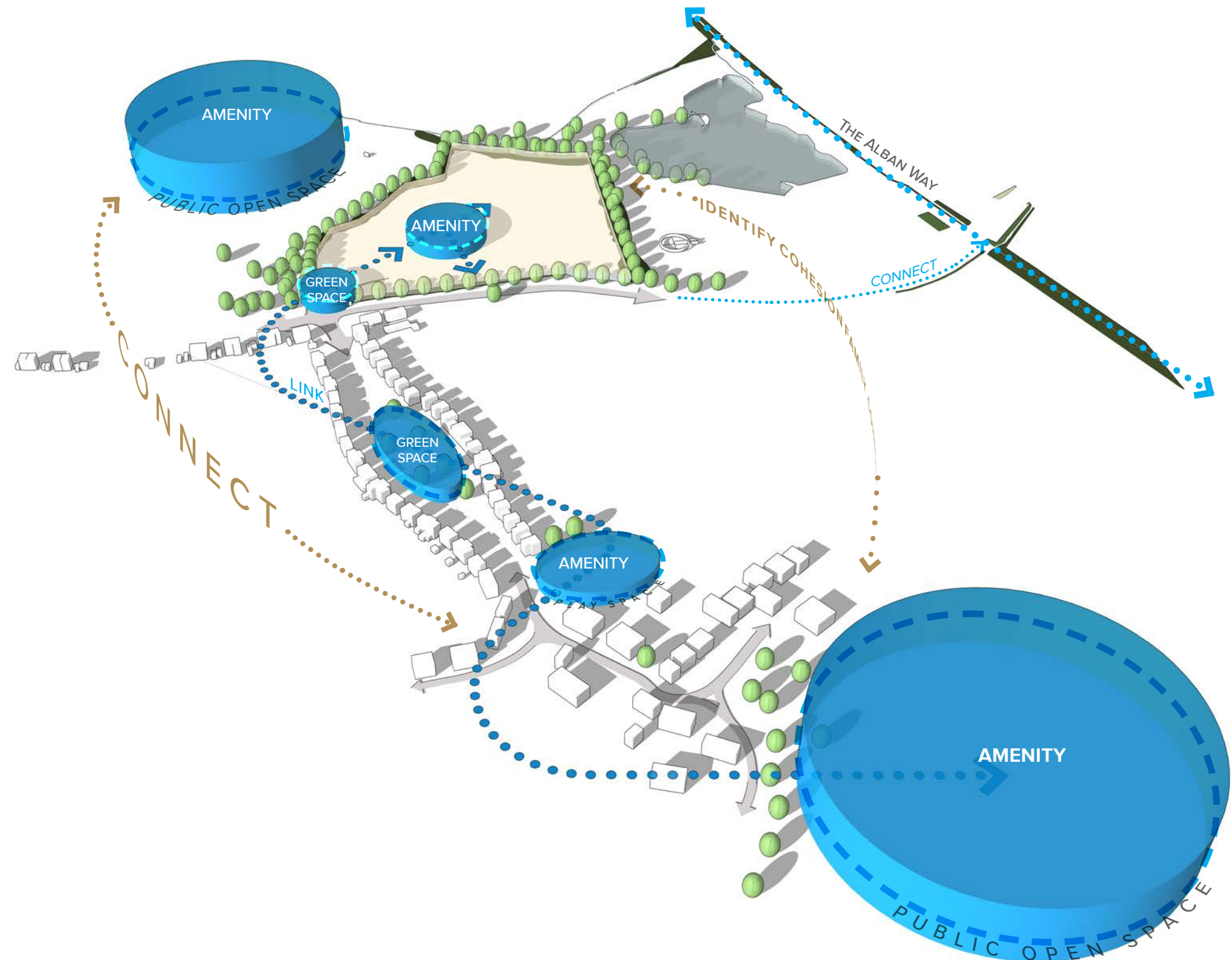
In taking reference from the urban context, as illustrated, it is considered that there is a real opportunity to deliver a new neighbourhood incorporating the key positive characteristics of the wider settlement form of Sleafshyde. The new neighbourhood will be planned to fit into the wider urban grain.

The planned landscape led development will also enhance the landscape character of the site and have a positive impact when assessed against the established industrial activities on the subject site. The new planting and the creation of publically accessible open spaces would enhance the landscape character of the site and the surrounding Green Belt.

The initial concept establishes a layout divided onto quadrants that assist to organise a hierarchy of streets, mini-neighbourhood clusters and spaces while responding to the external constraints of the site.

The creation of a successful new development requires the attention to detail aspects of layout and movement. The proposed site takes into consideration the wider context and neighbourhood with good connections for both pedestrians, and vehicles within the site and to the wider local area.

The development attempts to capture the spirit of the Colney Heath parish, which has been achieved through creating variation, intimacy and surprise in spatial enclosure.



MASTERPLAN DESIGN CONCEPT

3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

All existing structures on the land holding will be removed as part of the proposed redevelopment.

Further to the site clearance of existing buildings and structures, it will present an open and relatively flat site with good tree cover to develop on. It comprises hard surfaces throughout.

The site benefits from a significant mature woodland structure which extends along much of the periphery of the site, providing a strong sense of containment to the development sectors within. As part of the development proposals, this valuable resource will be retained and where appropriate, enhanced with new native species based planting introduced to form a backdrop to the new building forms.



3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

Connectivity to the wider Sleapshyde community has remained a central factor in determining the shape and form of the Concept Masterplan.

In this respect, the existing access road from the Smallford Lane, to the south of the site, will be retained and re-purposed as a pedestrian/cycle friendly access to the site with, the junction upgraded as necessary to accommodate the residential development and existing bus shed.

In addition a new 'gateway' development will be created on the Smallford Lane, down the middle of the site, making for a safer connection to the flow of traffic on Smallford lane and reduce the pressures on the junction off Sleapshyde Lane.



IMPROVED SITE ACCESS

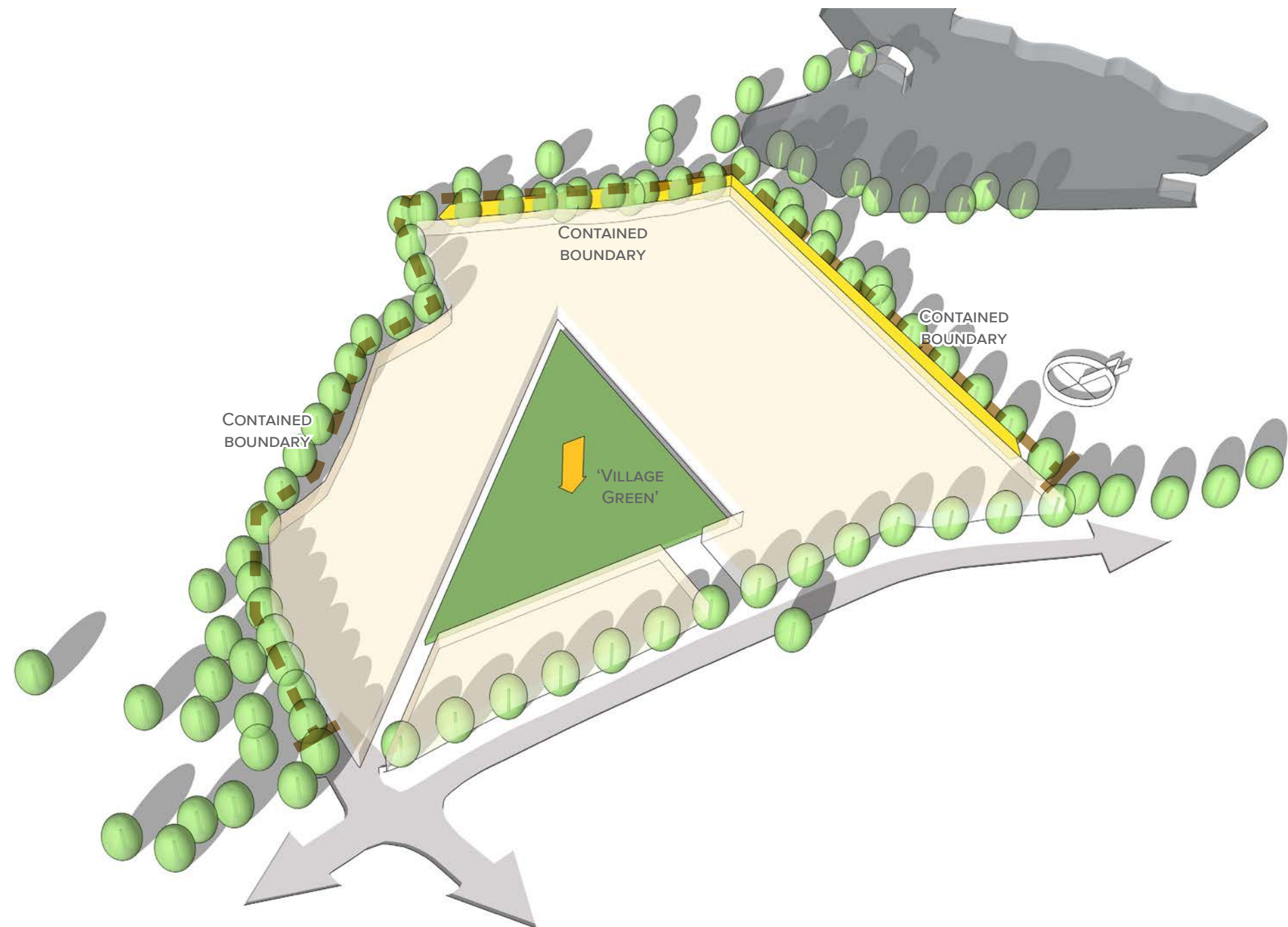
3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

As part of the design process, all the key opportunities and constraints have been identified across the site with key features incorporated into the Concept Masterplan. Mature woodland belts have been retained to set the context to both the existing and proposed development form whilst new green infrastructure links will be created to form the setting to a range of leisure and conservation activities.

The deep plan of the site presents the opportunity to introduce a 'village green' to link the amenity spaces from the wider context with the site and provide usable open green space for the development.

This grassed amenity space will be at the heart of the proposal and improve on the ecological quality of a site currently occupied by hardstanding throughout.

This inward-looking characteristic has been an important factor in determining how the Concept Masterplan has evolved with the new-build element laid out to have a clear central focus around which the residential area have been planned. This new neighbourhood green will form the focus to the new development, with 'fingers' of green infrastructure extending out from this location to connect to the various edges of the site.



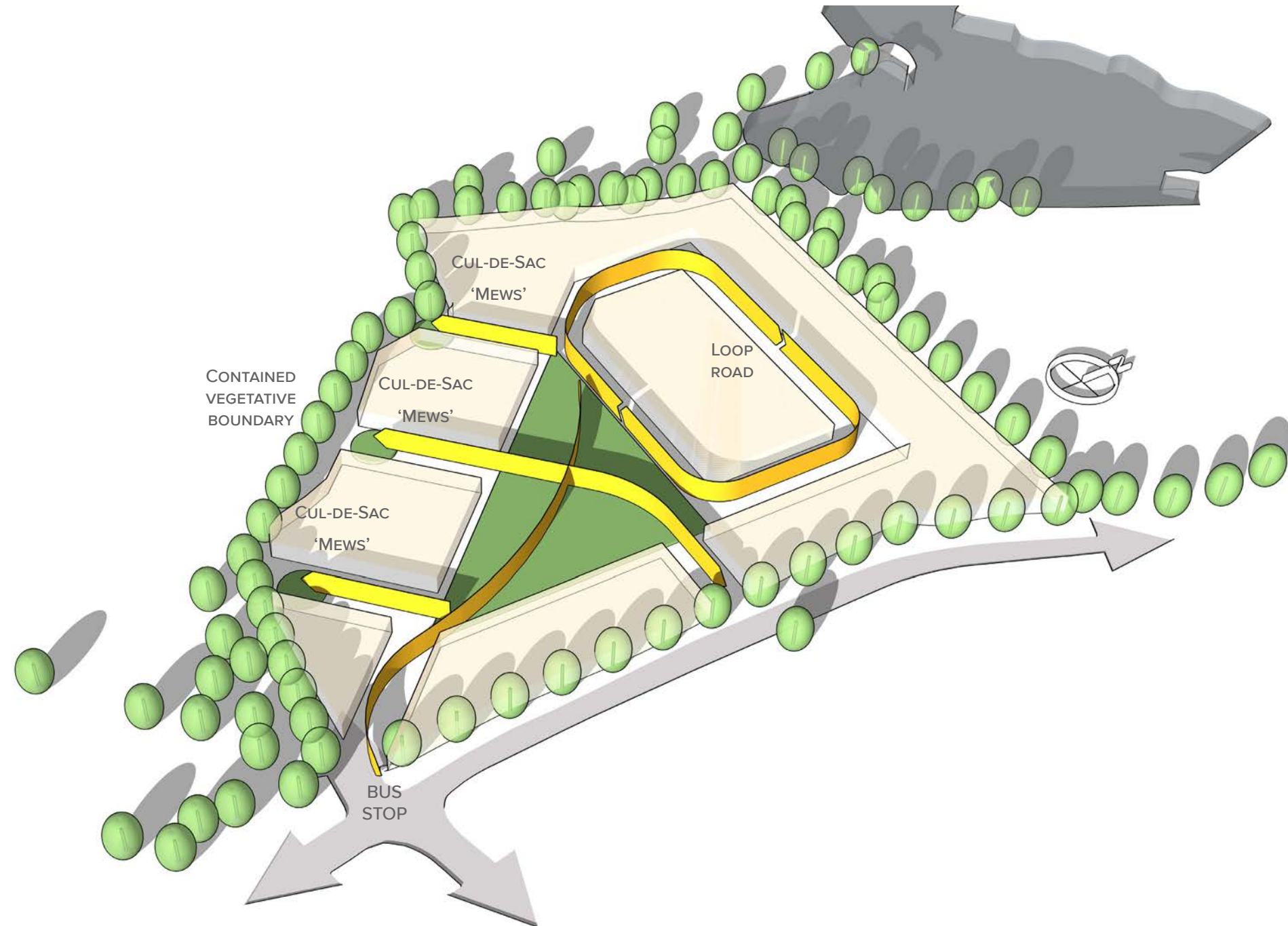
3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

The site is currently in private use, however with the delivery of the Concept Masterplan, it is intended that parts of the site will be opened up for public access, with improved connections to existing strategic and local footpaths to and from the site.

Pedestrian connectivity throughout the site is a major design driver. This is achieved by through-links breaking up the urban edge and massing, providing safe, convenient and attractive environments for an enhanced pedestrian experience.

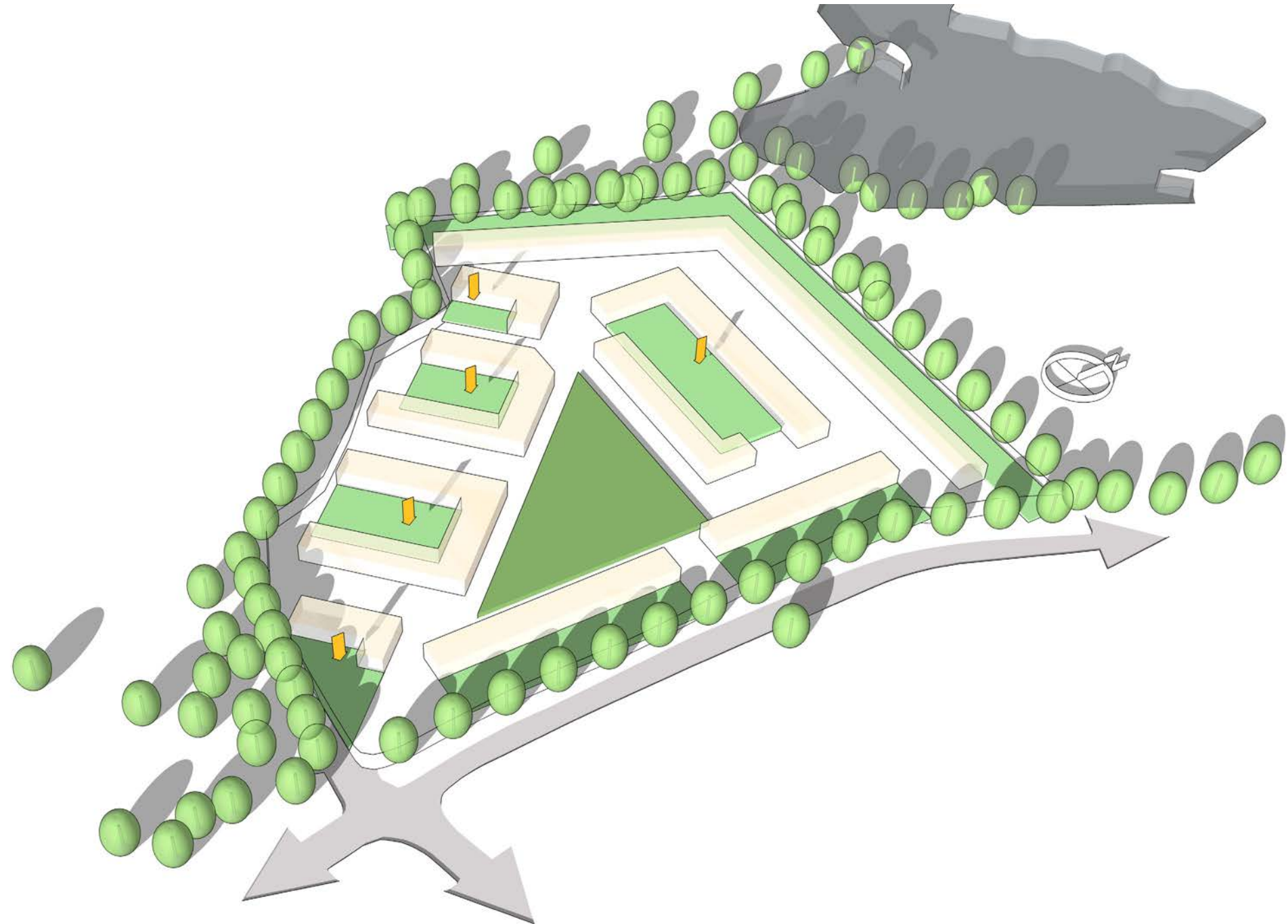
These links will be in the form of a well-planned network of traffic calmed streets supplemented by a network of paths and cycleways which will be designed to connect to the strategic path network near the site where possible, as well as existing public transport facilities by agreement.

Visitors to the site will be drawn towards the centre of the development with the new neighbourhood green acting as focal points to future community activities. Linkages will then extend out across the development to provide connections into the various development sectors located across the site.



3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

Generous private amenity in the form of gardens will be provided within the urban blocks to further improve the ground conditions and provide the necessary social infrastructure for such a development.



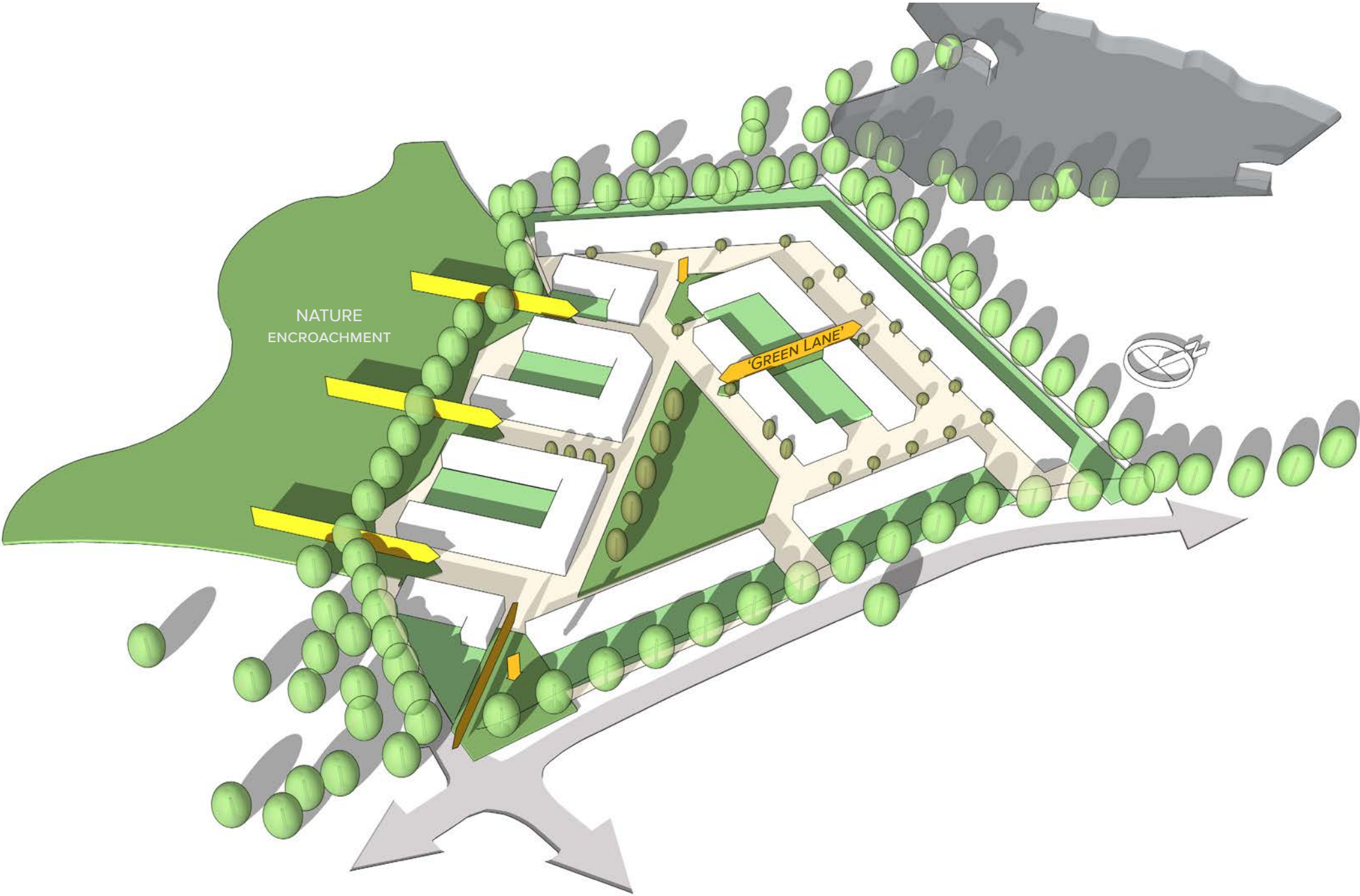
SOFTER GREENER LANDSCAPE

3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

Pockets of open green space are provided, dotted around the site, including a pedestrian ‘green lane’ between the island block to the north of the site used to connect the residents at the northern boundary with the village green.

The addition of hedges, trees and permeable street materials supports the embedding of the scheme to its local context.

The guidance contained in Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 has been carefully adopted in the approaches taken.



3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

The Concept Masterplan envisages a new neighbourhood being created around a clear hierarchy of streets and landscapes. There will be a coherent and logical structure to the new development form.

Building forms and configurations have been carefully devised to support a new permeable public realm and, at the same time, provide a domestic scale to both the development as a whole, and within individual clusters.

Built form and landscape treatment is used to emphasise the hierarchy of movement patterns across the site. Full consideration has been given to the need for legibility in the townscape with the creation of a distinctive street scene. Building lines will be set out to frame and define the street scene and a clear hierarchy of roads will be set out to ensure movement throughout the new development is appropriately controlled.



3.2.2 MASTERPLAN CONCEPT

Marker buildings are provided in locations that will assist the legibility of the development and wayfinding. Building frontages will be designed to assist in defining the built form around the public spaces they serve. As a result, the treatment of these buildings will be of a bespoke nature - be it a subtle variation in scale, different materials palette or individual arrangement - to emphasise their prominence to the site.



3.2.3 PRECEDENT

3.2.3.1 CONTEXTUAL PRECEDENT RURAL CHARACTER

For initial inspiration, we looked closely at the immediate context to develop the language and character of the proposal. The village of Sleepshyde is full of character and urban design qualities we intend to integrate into the proposal including the pocket amenity, tree lines streets and building materiality.



MODERN CHARACTER

St Albans has also seen the rise of new residential developments and Harperbury Park in Radlett is an example of developing sensibly on Previously Developed Land within the green belt.



3.2.3.2 ARCHITECTURAL PRECEDENT

The buildings at Sleepshyde Farm retain a wealth of character that embodies the essence of the area and architectural quality worth replicating in the proposed development. The farmstead arrangement can be emulated on the proposed site where the 'farm buildings' are arranged around a yard.

An exemplar recently built development which captures the essence of the farmstead is The Avenue, situated in Saffron Walden. It cleverly uses vernacular materials to provide identity and variation within the development, embedding it into its context, while the use of contemporary design ideas produces a coherent neighbourhood.



3

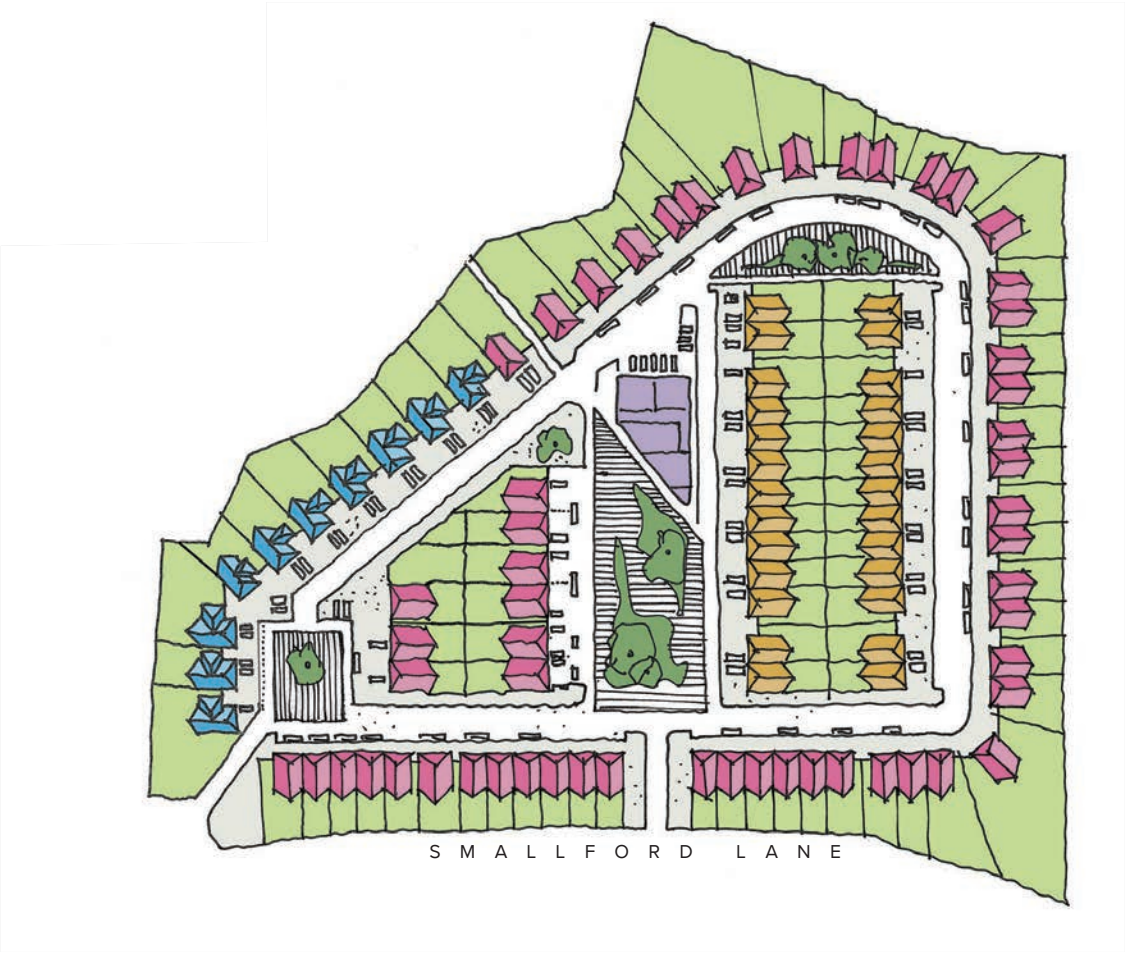


4

1. Sleepshyde, Colney Heath
2. Harperbury Park, Radlett
3. Sleepshyde Farm, Colney Heath
4. The Avenue, Saffron Walden

3.2.4 DESIGN EVOLUTION

3.2.4.1 PREVIOUS PROPOSALS



The initial proposal for the site was developed as part of a Call For Sites application and sought to address the loose brief presented by such an application. The principles of a residential development on the site was shown to be feasible but required further design development to establish the spatial and infrastructural requirements of such a development.

- Principle: Loop Road with amenity in the middle and dwellings offset.
- Units: **100**
- Mix:
- 8nos 1 Bed Unit
 - 26nos. 2 Bed Unit
 - 56nos. 3 Bed Unit
 - 10nos. 4 bed Unit



An updated layout, building on the principles of the initial sketch was developed to demonstrate an application of the unit types brief set by the client.

The primary emphasis within the proposal appeared to be around vehicular movement within the site and would result in a scheme which will be dominated the by car.

The pedestrian connectivity highlighted in the aspirations of the concept masterplan were tentative, at best, broken up by building blocks or roads.

Further investigations into the policy requirements for such a residential development meant that the arrangement illustrated above would have to alter in order to accommodate the required parking and amenity provision.

Principle: Loop Road with amenity in the middle and dwellings offset.

- Mix:
- 8 nos. 1 Bed flat
 - 26 nos. 2 Bed house
 - 56 nos. 3 Bed house
 - 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with ext. garage)
 - 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with int. garage)

3.2.4 DESIGN EVOLUTION

3.2.4.2 PREVIOUS OPTIONS



A variation on the layout in order to accommodate the required amenity and parking provision on the site. It builds on the principles of the loop road and integrates the pedestrian egress to the heart of the site via a linear park weaving behind the proposed dwellings in the central segment. It provides a contiguous open space within the heart of the development.

Concerns over security, privacy and overlooking resulted in this option being revised.

Principle: Windy loop road with linear park weaving behind dwellings, connecting the pedestrian access at the south to the heart of the scheme.

Mix:

- 8 nos. 1 Bed flat
- 26 nos. 2 Bed house
- 56 nos. 3 Bed house
- 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with ext. garage)
- 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with int. garage)



While similar to the previous option, this option presented a less contentious pedestrian route through the site via a linear park. The linear park proposed is disjointed and may result in poor overlooking and passive surveillance on the site.

Principle: Windy loop road with linear park weaving in front of dwellings.

Mix:

- 8 nos. 1 Bed flat
- 26 nos. 2 Bed house
- 56 nos. 3 Bed house
- 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with ext. garage)
- 5 nos. 4 Bed house (with int. garage)

