

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

ALLENS CENTRE

**Hilton Road
Willenhall
West Midlands
WV12 5XB**

**Walsall Council
01/2023**

Prepared by: Rob Clarke-Jones

Reviewed by: Colin Pullan

Inspection Date: 31/01/2023

Report Issue Date: 31/01/2023

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with the Lambert Smith Hampton Quality Assurance procedures and authorised for release. If not signed off by a LSH Director in the Planning, Regeneration + Infrastructure (PR+I) division then this report should be treated as a draft, and as being Private and Confidential. It should not be for wider distribution without the sign-off and permission of Lambert Smith Hampton.

Signed: C.Pullan

.....

For and on behalf of Lambert Smith Hampton

Contents

1.0

Introduction

1

2.0

Context

2

3.0

Vision and Design Evolution

12

4.0

Illustrative Masterplan

17

5.0

Parameter Plan

26

6.0

Conclusion

27

7.0

Appendix 1

28

Project team

Client	Walsall Council
Planning	Lambert Smith Hampton
Urban design and masterplanning	Lambert Smith Hampton
Landscaping	ADAS
Transport and highways	RSK
Ecology	ADAS



1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) with a multidisciplinary team on behalf of Walsall Council to accompany an outline planning application at the Allen's Centre, Walsall. The proposals involve the erection of up to 59 homes, with associated access and landscaping.

The site lies to the north west of Walsall Town Centre, west of the M6, south of Essington and east of Ashmore. The site is a brownfield site which was previously developed as a school and community centre.

This DAS describes the proposals and how they have been resolved through an understanding of the context, access and movement, and landscape.

This document should be read alongside the other documents accompanying the planning application.

This DAS is structured as follows:

- Section 2 sets out the site and surrounding context;
- Section 3 sets out the vision for the development;
- Section 4 illustrates the design evolution of the scheme from design concept visioning, planning pre-application to proposed illustrative masterplan;
- Section 5 describes the design proposals, the elements of the scheme, associated landscape and infrastructure;
- Section 6 comprises of Parameter Plans for the application; and
- Section 7 concludes this document.
- Appendix 1: Design policy and guidance

2.0 Context

"38 An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion."

National Design Guide



Allen's Centre site with a view towards Hilton Road



Site location aerial plan: Source Google Earth

The Site

The site extends north from Hilton Road.

The eastern, western and northern boundary of the site are well contained by existing residential development. The southern part of the site is contained by Allen's Rough and Hilton Road.

The Figure right and following images provide an overview of the immediate site context.

Site Area

The application area is 1.32ha.

Access

Vehicular access and egress are from Hilton Road.

Pedestrians and cyclists can achieve access to and from the site from the northern boundary.

Allen's Rough

Allen's Rough is a mound of earthworks with vegetation and trees. Allen's Rough is currently inaccessible to the public.



Site plan



Entrance to the site from Hilton Road



View along Hilton Road from site entrance



Looking along Hilton Road towards the site entrance



Footway along site eastern boundary



Entrance into site from Hilton Road



Existing grounds of primary school car park looking towards southern boundary and Hilton Road



Existing residential overlooking the site on the northern boundary



View towards western boundary with existing residential backing onto site boundary



View towards northern boundary from southern boundary of site



Overgrown vegetation on site towards eastern boundary



View towards Allen's Rough from central area of site



Flank of existing residential dwellings on the northern boundary of site

Wider Context

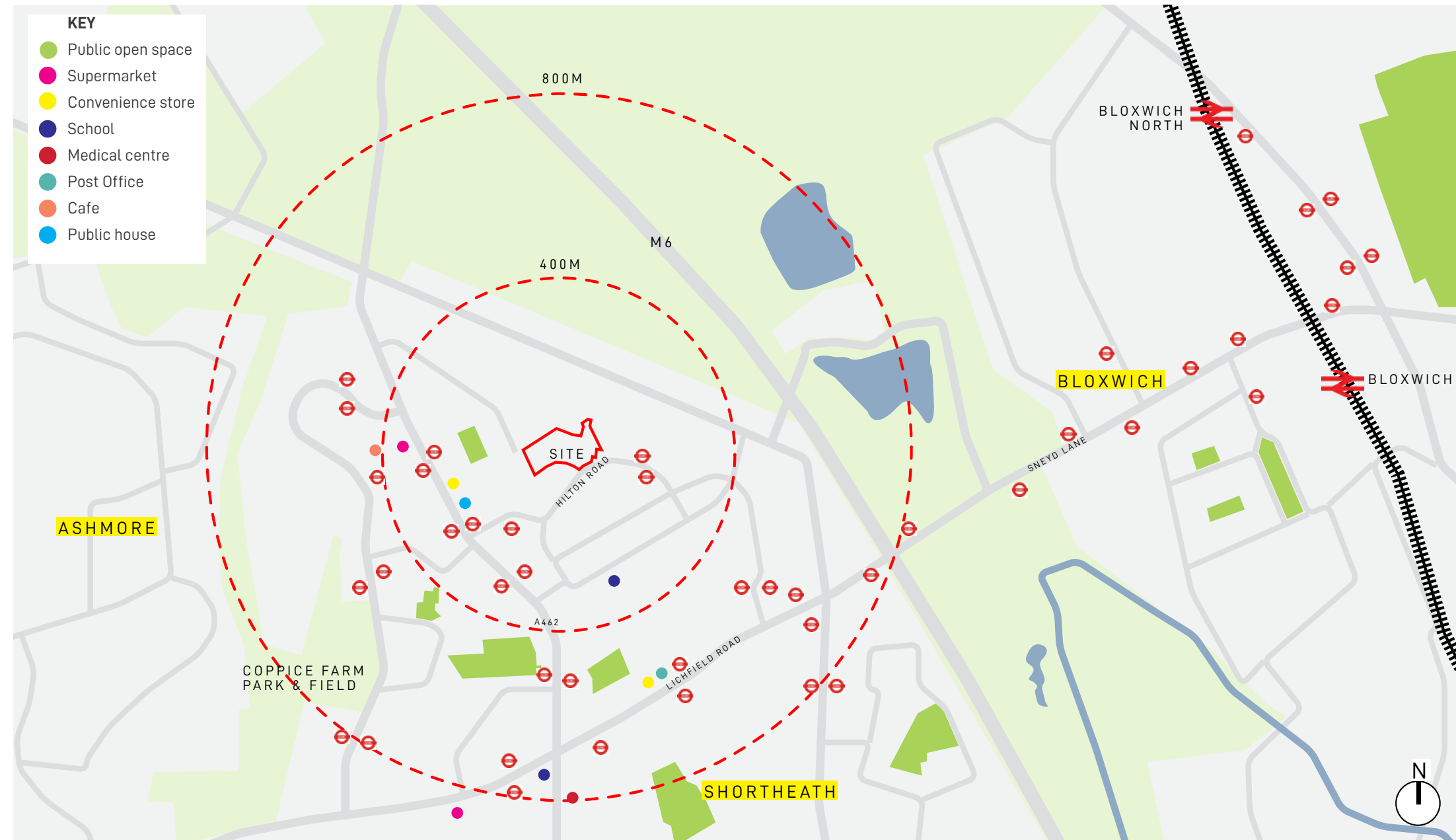
The site is within walking and cycling distance of local amenities in Willenhall: shops, supermarket, schools, post office, pub and cafe.

The site is within walking distance to a variety of public open spaces, including Coppice Farm Park & Field.

The site has good access to public transport. Bloxwich train station is approximately 2.4km to the east of the site. The station has services to London, Birmingham, Rugeley (with connections leading to Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe) and Trent Valley.

Public transport links

- Bloxwich train station (8 minute cycle, 30 minute walk)
- Bloxwich North train station (7 minute cycle, 28 minute walk)
- Number 9 bus from Lichfield Road to Bloxwich North station (25 minutes)
- Number 326 bus from New Invention Square to Bloxwich station (14 minutes)
- Number 69 bus to Walsall town centre from Beacon Road (37 minutes)
- Number 69 bus to Wolverhampton train station from Beacon Road (41 minutes)
- Bloxwich train station to Birmingham New Street train station (27 minutes)



Wider context



ALDI supermarket on the A462



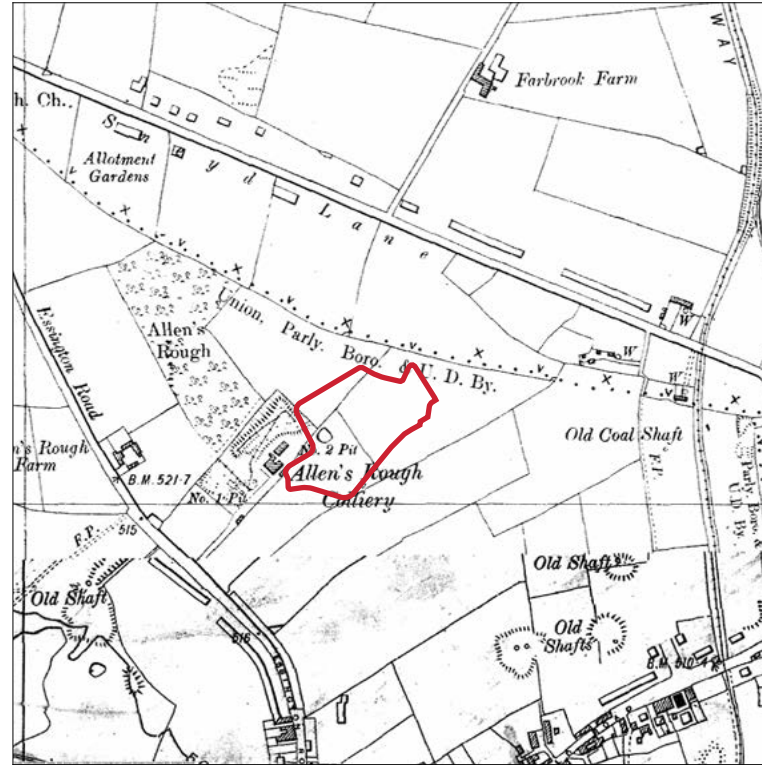
Convenience store in close proximity to the site



Cafe and other shops adjacent to the ALDI supermarket

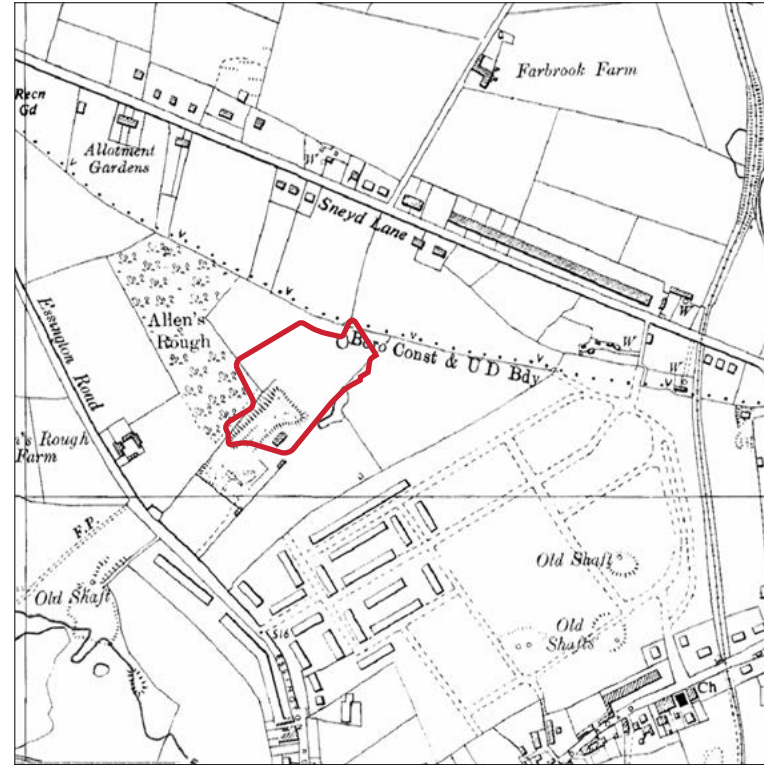
Site History

With reference to the historic Ordnance Survey mapping, the site and adjacent ownership, were until the late 1970's / early 1980's primarily open fields and 'Allen's Rough' area. By the 1980's a school was constructed on site, which later became a community centre with NHS facilities. The school / community centre building was demolished approximately 2015/2016.



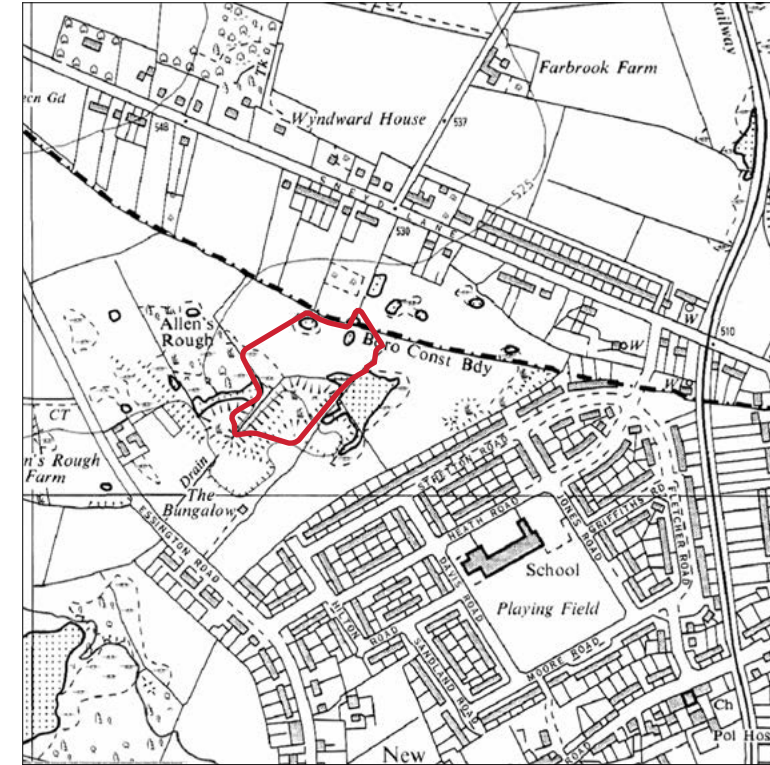
1938

The site and surrounding context is mainly rural with small residential settlements and the fragmented location of individual buildings.



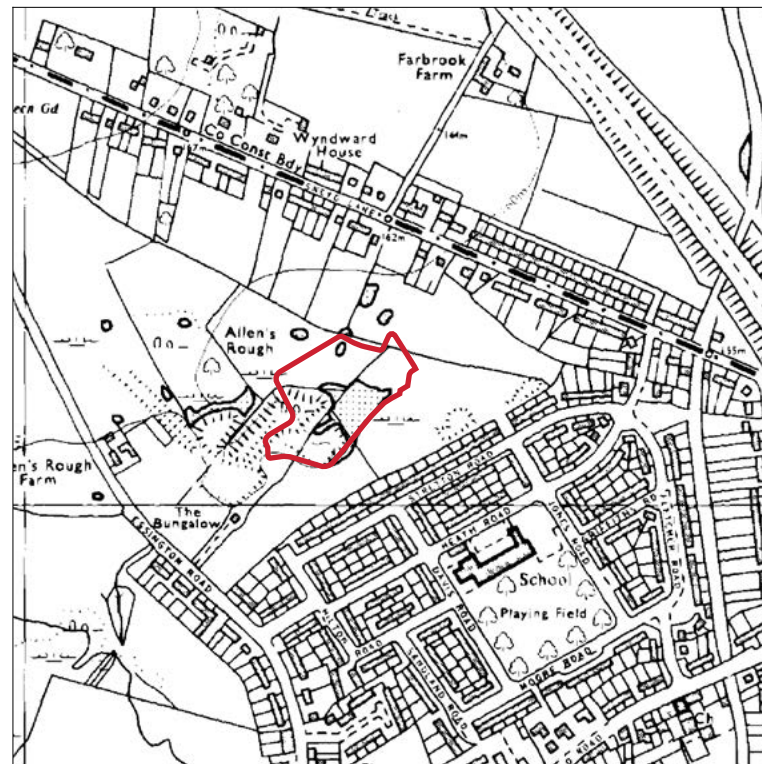
1955

The site is still rural fields. Allen's Rough Colliery buildings have been demolished. First signs of residential estate development taking place to the south.



1966

The site and Allen's Rough still remain unchanged. Further residential development has taken place to the south of the site including the addition of the Beacon Primary School.



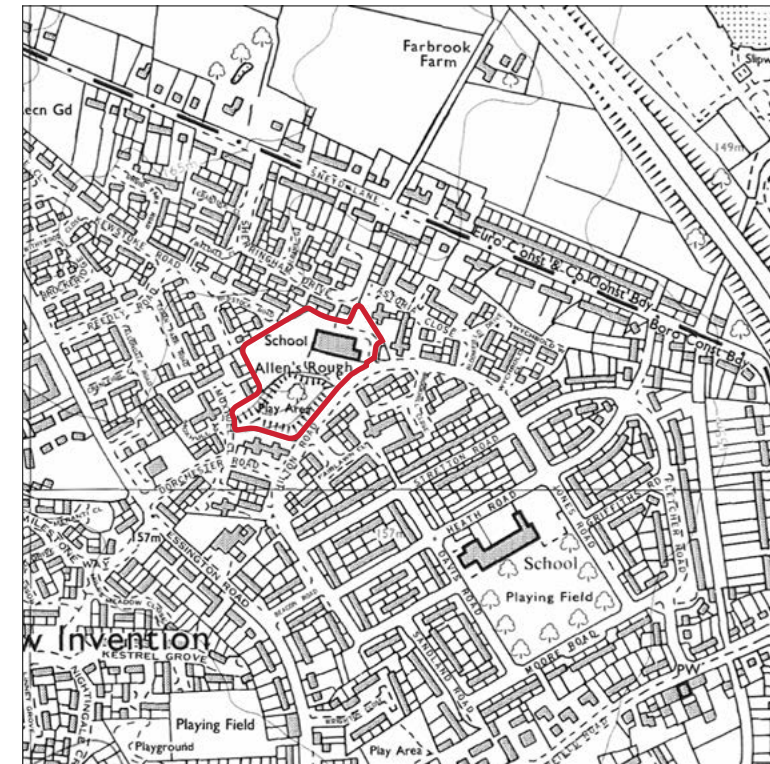
1973

The major change since 1966 is the construction of the M6 to the north east of the site. The remainder of the area is mostly unchanged.



1982

Residential growth has continue since 1973, with the site now in use as a school. Residential development surrounds the site.



1991

No significant change on or around the site, remains as the same uses from 1982. The major change is the development of residential dwellings to the west and south west of the site off Essington Road.

Local Character and Built Form

The surrounding context comprises predominantly residential development and areas of open space. A large area of the southern boundary is enclosed by dense woodland at Allen's Rough.

The area is characterised by a variety of housing typologies, typically estate development 'of its time' with few local characteristics.

The western and northern site boundaries are overlooked by 2 storey houses backs or flank walls. To the south, on Hilton Road there is a row of terraced houses with a frontage towards the site.

The follow characteristics can inform the design principles and proposals:

Pattern and grain:

With reference to the historic mapping, to the south there is a structure of development with linear streets, cross roads and perimeter blocks that define the public street streets and enclose backs.

Towards the site the development is more structured upon a hierarchical approach with cul-de-sacs providing the framework for clusters of dwellings.

Built form:

Generally plain dwellings with simple elevation and plan form.

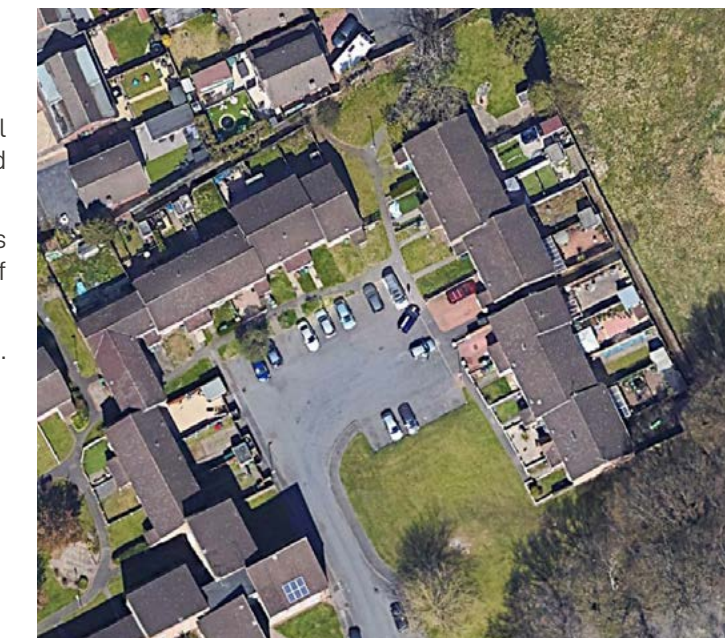
Prominent roof forms include hipped and gabled with principal ridgelines parallel to the street. Generally plain and flat faced elevations.

Facing materials: predominantly a 'buff' light coloured brick is used throughout, generally applied to the entire elevation. Roof tiles are predominantly brown.

There are minimal 'decorative' features or architectural detailing.



Local built form, pattern and grain



Terrace block with front of plot parking layout



Staggered terrace block fronting open space and flank buildings



Varying heights with a mix of 2 and 3 storey buildings



2 storey dwellings in close proximity to the site



Row of terraced housing adjacent to the site boundary



Garage to front of plot reducing the active frontage to the street



Staggered terraced housing working with the layout of the street



Front of plot parking to a row of terraced housing



Flank building on Hilton Road adjacent from the site's southern boundary



Derelict home immediately adjacent to site access - presumed to be the school caretaker's home



3 storey flat blocks in close proximity to site



3 storey flat blocks in a + shape layout with a central core access



Walk under through to green space around the flat block layout



Existing flat blocks set in landscape and do not create street frontage

Opportunities and Constraints

The following constraints and opportunities have been identified and inform the development proposals.

Constraints

Vehicular access /Links

Access should be taken from Hilton Road. There is potential for additional links (footpaths) into the adjacent estates but this is subject to third party ownership.

Overlooking

A number of the boundaries are addressed by back gardens and overlooked from adjacent dwellings.

Containment

The site is relatively contained within its setting and address only Hilton Road.

Sewer and easement

There is sewer and easement at 10m that runs through the site.

Trees

The existing tree's have been plotted on using aerial mapping as a base, please take the location's and size as approximate.

Opportunities

Active frontages

Opportunity to create active frontage to Hilton Road, providing a visual connection to the site and a relationship with the existing built form.

Developable area

To provide a residential development that responds to the boundaries of the site (fronts and backs). Given Allen's Rough is not publicly accessible at the present the layout could allow for future access if appropriate. Development should overlook / address this space.

Pedestrian links

Retain and enhance pedestrian link through the site, connecting Hilton Road and Sherringham Drive.

Amenity space

An amenity space corridor on the proposed footpath link.

Built form, massing and height

To reflect the prevalent forms, buildings could be up to three storeys in height.



3.0 Vision and Design Evolution

To create a development of new homes, which benefits form pedestrian and cycle links to the surrounding context and public transport.

The Vision

The vision for the site is to create an inclusive community, which responds to its context and has regard to the local character.

The new community will be knitted into Willenhall via connections from Hilton Road and the footpath connecting through to and from Sherringham Drive.

Existing trees and hedgerow will be retained and enhanced for biodiversity net gain within Allen's Rough in the wider site ownership.

Good practice urban design principles will be employed to create: a legible and permeable public realm; active street frontages that promote passive surveillance; and a public realm which encourages sustainable lifestyles, health and well-being.

Urban Design Principles

Informed by the National Model Design Code, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Walsall Design SPD, the urban design principles have been used to create the development and achieve the proposed vision for the site.

Objective 1: Design Quality - Delivering high quality housing

The development will create and support a high quality place. It will achieve this by responding to and integrating with the surroundings and context. It will provide mix of housing, which will aid in creating a diversely mixed community within the site.



Objective 2: Low Impact - having regard to the environment

The development will provide private amenity space that reaches policy requirements from the Walsall Unitary Plan.

Existing tree's on site will be retained where possible, providing buffers to the existing boundaries.

Objective 3: Local Distinctiveness - Responding to local character

A legible environment with buildings and spaces that can add to the character of the area.

The scheme will provide attractive and active streets and frontages through strong building lines, active frontages and variation in built form.

Objective 5: Quality of Life - Ensuring quality of place

Any successful place will need to have a strong sense of identity and cohesion. The scheme proposes to develop a mix of homes that will meet the varying needs of the community, as well as supporting a range of household sizes and types with a mix of apartments and houses.

The scheme is in a sustainable location in close proximity to local services.

Objective 6: Accessibility - addressing transport and movement

The scheme will be well-connected to the existing urban fabric of the area, linking into Hilton Road and re-introducing the pedestrian link from Sherringham Road to Hilton Road.

Objective 7: A Safe Community

There are many attributes to making a place safe, with several of them already mentioned in the previous objectives.

These attributes are:

Access and movement, structure, surveillance, ownership, physical protection, activity and management and maintenance.

Objective 8: A Sustainable Development

The NPPF sets out how sustainable development should be delivered, which have guided the design objectives. Such as; promoting sustainable transport, delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, promoting healthy communities.

Initial Design Concept

Having regard to the requirements of the Designing Walsall SPD the design has taken into consideration the policies from chapter 5.

To create a development that provides an opportunity for a mixed and balanced community.

To create a legible site that utilises the existing pedestrian link, allow pedestrian and cyclist movement through the site.

To create a positive relationship with the existing dwellings facing the site on Hilton Road through active frontages.

To create sensible back to back and flank to flank relationships with the existing built form on the western and northern boundary.

To create a pattern of development, which responds to the surrounding context.



Design principles

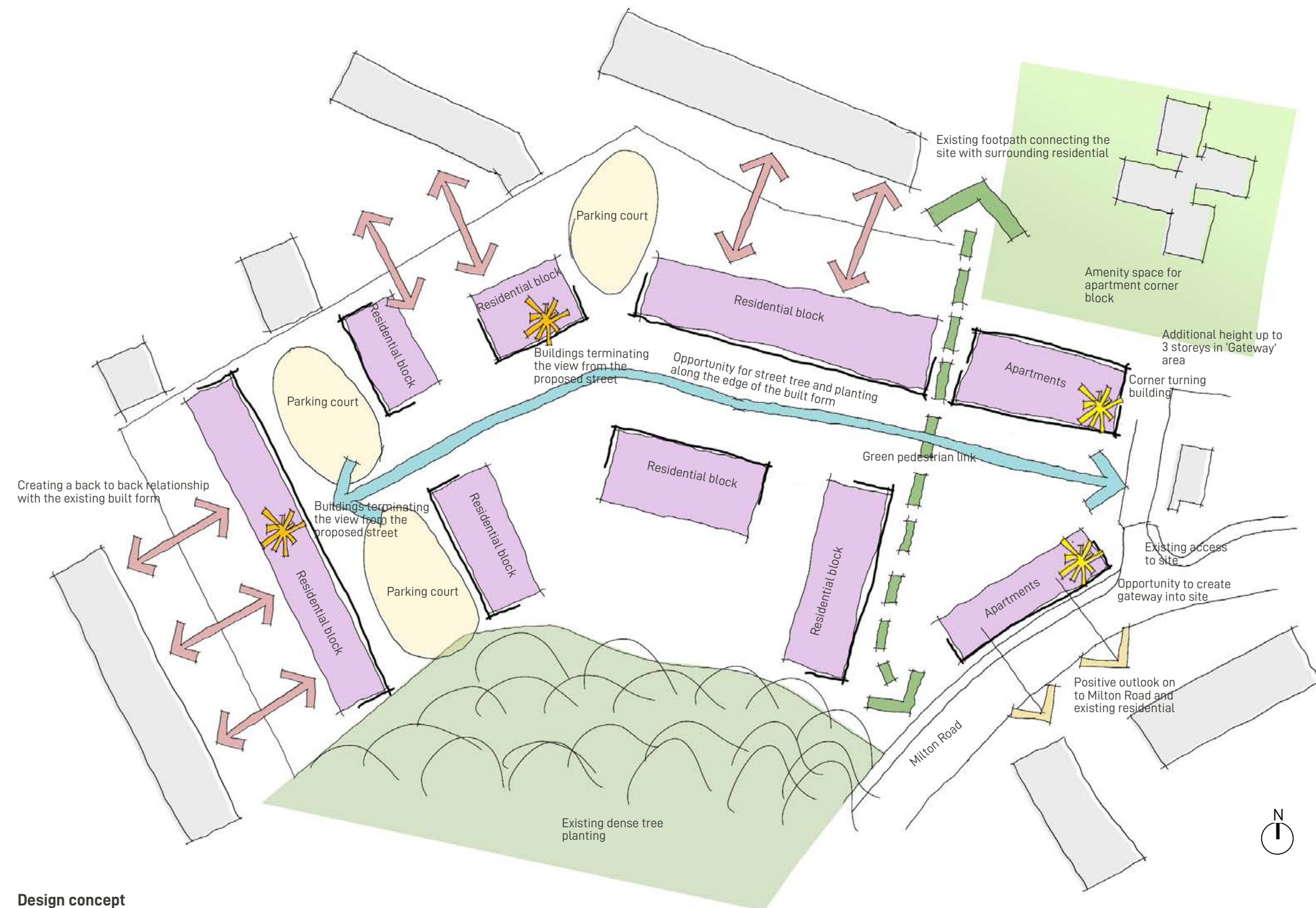
Design Concept Development

The access road, the footpath and the boundaries define the general structure for the developable areas with active frontages to the principal street.

A pedestrian link from the northern boundary back through the site supports a legible and permeable space.

The proposed building heights will range from 2 to 3 storeys. The 3 storey apartment blocks have a relationship with Hilton Road, creating a 'gateway' entrance to the development.

At this stage the constraints of the sewer and easement were not available to inform the indicative layout.



Design concept

Pre-Planning Application Illustrative Masterplan

The illustrative masterplan that was submitted to Pre-Planning Application at Walsall Council proposed to provide a total of 59 dwellings, a mix of x16 apartments and x43 houses. Ranging from 1 to 3 bed dwellings.

The layout utilises the use of terraced housing which is a predominant typology in the existing context and creates a strong frontage to the principal street on site.

Parking was arranged in front of plot / on street as well as parking courts, again utilising what is previously used and considered successful in the surrounding context.



Illustrative masterplan

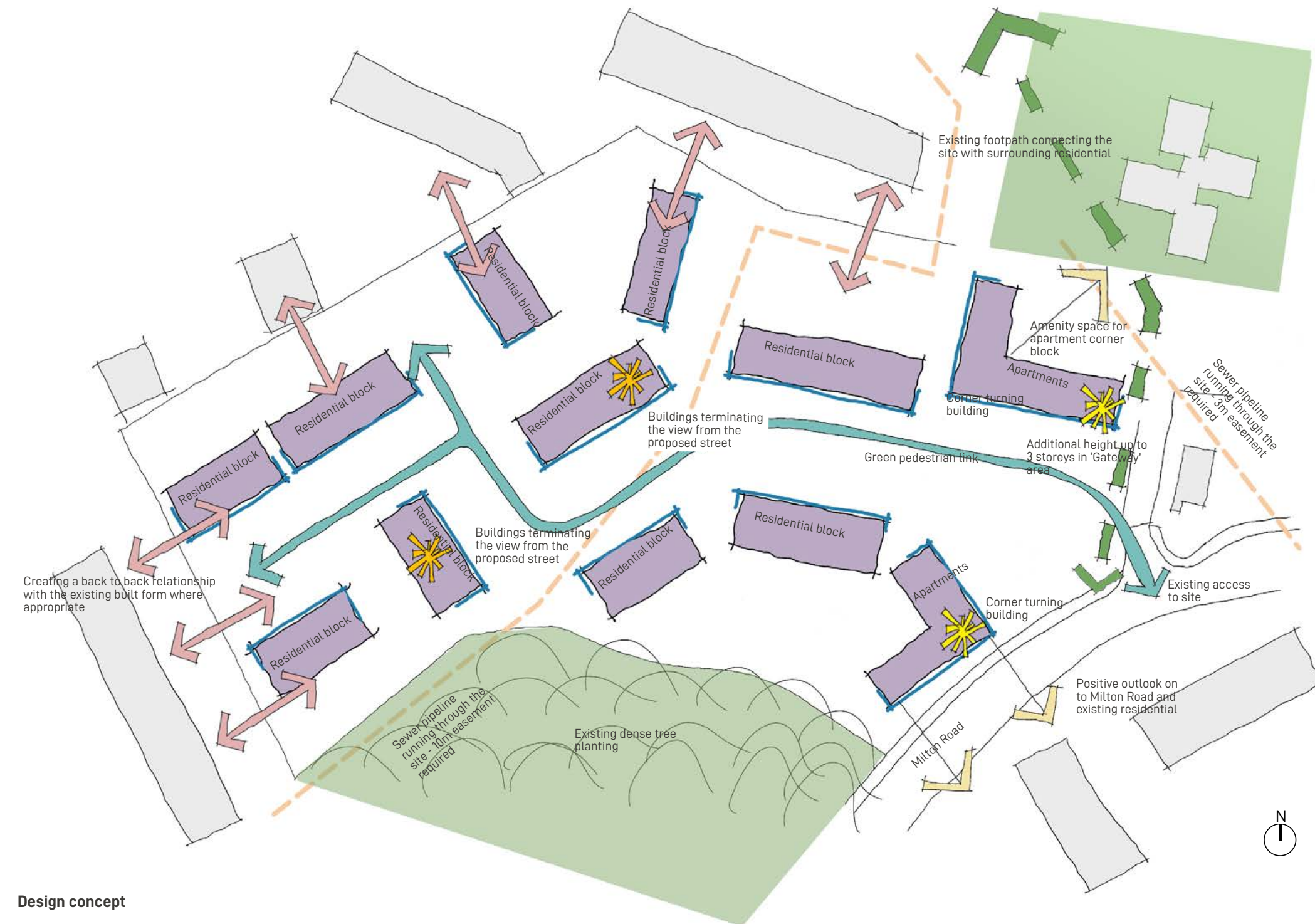
Updated Design Concept

Through further site surveys, both a foul sewer and surface water sewer were lately identified on the site.

This impacted the Pre-Planning Application illustrative masterplan and informed to the updated design concept drawing to the right.

The key concepts illustrated are still in line with the initial principles of the Pre-Planning Application design concept, which, had a focus on creating a sustainable place that achieves an appropriate relationship to the existing context of the site.

Sewer easement accommodated under carriageways and parking court so that it can be accessed.



Design concept

4.0 Illustrative Masterplan

The following section describes the illustrative masterplan that has been based from the site context, pre-planning application process and advice and the design evolution.



Illustrative Masterplan



Illustrative Masterplan

Accommodation Schedule

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Total
Block A	5	9		14
Block B	7	3		10
Block C		2	2	4
Block D		3		3
Block E		2	1	3
Block F		2	1	3
Block G		2	1	3
Block H		2	2	4
Block I		2	2	4
Block J			3	3
Block K			3	3
Block L		2	3	5
				59
Red Line Area			1.32 ha	



Illustrative Masterplan

Land Uses and Areas

Buildings - 0.27 ha

Private gardens - 0.35 ha

Private shared amenity space - 0.09 ha

Open space - 0.06ha

Infrastructure - 0.54 ha

Buffer - 0.01ha

Total site area: 1.32ha



Layout

The illustrative masterplan and development pattern addresses the principal proposed street, the existing Hilton Road and front buildings and edges of the site boundaries.

The pattern and layout of buildings has been designed to work with the sewer easement requirements, and has been laid out to create a principal street and provide active frontages throughout.

The northern apartment building can be a 'set piece' building within the landscape, that is framed in vista's across the site.

New planting within the proposed green spaces will help integrate the landscape framework with the existing.

Views, Key Edges and Keynote Buildings

The block structure of the layout provides where possible active edges and primary frontages to the proposed street, and key edges on the site boundary. The street layout provides visual interest with evolving views.

Views shape the blocks to aid legibility throughout the built form, with routes which lead pedestrian and cyclist movement towards Hilton Road and Sherringham Drive.

Views within the development area also connect the site with the existing landscape and built form.

Keynote buildings will add interest and character to the streetscene and landscape.

The eastern edge of the development addresses the existing flat block and creates a relationship with the building through similar height and massing.



Movement

Vehicular access and egress into the site is from the existing junction with Hilton Road. Pedestrians and cyclists can gain access and egress from the existing access on Hilton Road as well as the proposed pedestrian link to and from Sherringham Drive. New routes connect people to where they will want to be and where they will want to go. Street spaces are direct and overlooked. Open spaces and routes are overlooked.

Parking

The proposals will be able to meet the parking requirements for private / visitor cars and cycles of the highway authority.

Residents parking is at the ratio of 1 space for 1 bedroom dwellings and 2 spaces for 2+ bedroom dwellings. There is an additional 7 visitor parking spaces throughout the site.

Soft landscaping will break up the areas of parking and semi permeable paving will assist with drainage.



Landscape and Open Space

All private gardens meet the minimum requirement of 68sqm.

Both apartment blocks have a private shared amenity space around both buildings, with the southern apartment block having views towards Allen's Rough.

The shared amenity space has been designed in accordance with the requirements for open space policy OS4 in the Walsall Urban Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The proposed pedestrian link can provide an opportunity to create a linear amenity space / play trail afforded to existing and future residents. The amenity space will be appropriately landscape to protect the existing house to the south and the apartments either side.



Height, Scale and Massing

The built form will respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.

Consistent with the prevalent heights within the surrounding areas, the proposed apartment blocks are at 3 storeys. Terraced housing will be 2 storeys.



Indicative 3D Massing

Indicative view looking north of the illustrative proposed heights and massing in the context of the existing urban fabric of the immediate context.



Indicative 3D model

5.0 Parameter Plan

Extent of the Built Development

The area in yellow denotes the maximum extent of built development within the site for the uses described below. This area primarily denotes the location for residential use.

The exact requirements will be agreed at the time of the preparation of the detailed application.

There are sewer pipelines that require a 3m and 10m easement on site.

Outside of this area and within the planning application site boundary, 'development' that may take place within the open land can include:

- footpaths
- landscaping and planting
- lighting
- roads/junctions
- infrastructure above/below ground
- fencing
- parking

Access / Egress

Point A is where the existing site access from Hilton Road will be retained and enhanced, creating the primary access for both pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

Between points A and B there is a pedestrian link between Hilton Road and Sherringham Drive.

Height

To assist with the integration into the surrounding context and consistent with the wider context and development pattern, all proposed buildings should be no greater than three storeys in height (@ circa 12m in height).

Exact building heights and variation from the indicative figures will be agreed with the Planning Authority.



Parameter plan

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed development will create an exciting infill residential development. It will reconcile the constraints and opportunities presented and offer a solution that can be seen to optimise the potential for the site.

The design approach will provide a high-quality environment, a sustainable development and a place that is attractive to live in.

The built form complements the surrounding context and draws upon the existing pattern of development and connections.

Ultimately the development will become an integrated part of the wider community and built environment in Willenhall.



7.0Appendix 1

Planning Policy



There is a range of relevant supplementary planning policy and guidance at both national and local level which will need to be taken into consideration for the development of the site.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Overarching the best practice guidance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development in England. The key elements of the NPPF relevant to the proposals are summarised below:

- Achieving sustainable development;
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes;
- Promoting healthy communities; and
- Requiring good design.

Paragraph 126: Which requires development to make the efficient use of land.

Paragraph 127: Area based character assessments and design guides can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.

Paragraph 128: Which underlines that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Paragraph 132: Which sets six qualitative design criteria.

Paragraph 133: Which states that new streets should be tree lined unless there are clear justifiable and compelling reasons why this would be inappropriate; that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments and that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Paragraph 134: Which states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.

Paragraph 136: Which states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design. Significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design and/or development that helps raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

National Design Guide (NDG)

The National Design Guide sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places which contribute towards the themes for good design set out in the NPPF and illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The Design Guide lends some objectivity to the inherently subjective issue of 'good design'.

It is confirmed in paragraph 16 that well-designed places and buildings come about when there is a clearly expressed story for the design concept and how it has evolved into a design proposal. In paragraph 21 it is noted that a well-designed place comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including: layout; form and scale; appearance; landscape; materials and detailing. As described earlier, the appeal scheme has responded to engagement and evolved through an iterative process.

The NDG at paragraph 52 states that development should respond to existing local character and identity which can be defined as follows:

"52 Local identity is made up of typical characteristics such as the pattern of housing, and special features that are distinct from their surroundings. These special features can be distinguished by their uses and activity, their social and cultural importance, and/or their physical form and design. Most places have some positive elements of character, particularly for their users. These can help to inform the character of a new development."

At paragraph 53 the NDG states that well-designed new development is influenced by:

"an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents; the characteristics of the existing built form – see Built form; the elements of a place or local places that make it distinctive; and other features of the context that are particular to the area – see Context . This includes considering: the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;"

And with regard to placemaking and character, at paragraphs 55, 57 and 58, the NDG states:

"55 Well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness..."

57 Design decisions at all levels and scales shape the character of a new place or building. Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks. It continues to be created by the form, scale, design, materials and details of buildings and landscape. In this way, it creates a coherent identity that everyone can identify with, including all residents and local communities."

Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

- ENV14 (Development of Derelict and Previously Developed Sites) – This policy sets out that the Council will encourage the reclamation and development of derelict and previously developed land wherever this is technically feasible and in accordance with other policies of the Plan. Site investigations should be undertaken where the site or adjoining land is found to have been occupied or underlain by uses/activities which may have contaminated the site or affected the stability of the site.
- T11 (Access for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Wheelchair users) – This policy sets out that residential development should be within easy walking / cycling distance of a range of facilities which meet local needs and provide convenient, safe pedestrian access points.
- Policy H1: Renewal of Existing Residential Areas (a) The Council will promote and encourage the renewal of existing residential areas. Wherever possible, environmental improvements and other urban renewal initiatives will be designed to complement improvement works to the dwelling stock.

Designing Walsall SPD (2013)

- This SPD builds upon policies in the BCCS and UDP aimed at promoting a high quality environment and high standards of urban and landscape design. The SPD offers guidance on how to design buildings and places that will relate well to Walsall and which build on local distinctiveness and sense of place. The SPD acts as the initial point of reference for design advice for all scale and type of development in urban, suburban and rural environments.
- The SPD summarises the existing character of Willenhall, which is helpful in understanding the history and context of the place.
- It also outlines the opportunities and further design guidance that should be taken into consideration when designing within the area. These were taken into consideration when working on the illustrative masterplan.
- Chapter 5 of the document outlines the relevant policies that design work should adhere to and specifically for the Willenhall area those were:
 1. DW1: Sustainability;
 2. DW2: Safe and welcoming places;
 3. DW3: Character;
 4. DW4: Continuity;
 5. DW5: Ease of Movement;
 6. DW6: Legibility;
 7. DW7: Diversity;
 8. DW8: Adaptability;
 9. DW9: High Quality Public Realm;
 10. DW10: Well Designed Sustainable Buildings.

Guidance

Relevant best practice guidance includes:

1. National Model Design Code (2021)
2. National Design Guide (2019)
3. Building for a Healthy Life (2020)
4. Living with Beauty (2020) BBBBC
5. Active Design Sport England (2015)
6. Secured by Design
7. The Setting of Heritage Assets 2nd edition
8. Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 (2007/10)
9. A Sense of Place: design guidelines for development near high voltage overhead lines
10. NPPG
11. Designing Walsall SPD (2013)
12. Urban Open Space SPD (2006)
13. Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)
14. Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
15. Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD)

Dr Steve Norris
National Head of Planning, Regeneration + Infrastructure
+44(0)20 7198 2242
snorris@lsh.co.uk

Colin Pullan
Head of Masterplanning and Urban Design
+44(0)20 7107 0016
cpullan@lsh.co.uk

lsh.co.uk
lshinvestmentsales.co.uk