

The background is a stylized illustration of a landscape. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of trees and a bird perched on a branch. A light blue river winds through the middle ground. In the background, a long bridge with many yellow arches spans across the landscape. Beyond the bridge are rolling hills and mountains under a light blue sky with white clouds. A small bird is flying in the top left corner.

The Works ACREFAIR

Design and Access Statement

December 2011

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1.0 Executive Summary



Purpose of this document

This document has been prepared to support the outline planning application for residential led, mixed-use development of land south of Llangollen Road, within the heart of the village of Acrefair, which in turn is part of the wider settlement cluster of Cefn Mawr.

The scope and content of this document sets out an organic and evolving design process, which works with the ‘grain’ of the landscape, using topography, existing vegetation, historical influences and the current surrounding uses to create a proposal which is grounded and seamlessly integrates into its setting.

The proposal seeks to deliver a residential led development of circa 200 homes, which includes some 50 to 60 affordable units. The mixed use element offers space for new commercial uses on approximately 1 hectare of the site, the precise mix and layout of which will be determined by demand and the needs of the local community.

The masterplan illustrates a layout which allows:

- Homes to become part of the environment into which they are placed,
- Residents and visitors to navigate their way around the development intuitively via the hierarchy of streets, lanes and spaces,
- Passive solar gain is maximised through the orientation of the layout and use of the topography
- Space for the community to ‘breathe’, through the development of paths and streets which provide direct access to open spaces, offering space to play, the discovery of nature and interaction with neighbours and the wider community.

Site

The site is located at the heart of the village with good access via Llangollen Road (A539) to the surrounding settlements which make up Cefn Mawr, as well as the wider local area including Llangollen, Ruabon and Wrexham. The site is within less than a minutes walk of 6 bus stops and 5 minutes of local shops and facilities.

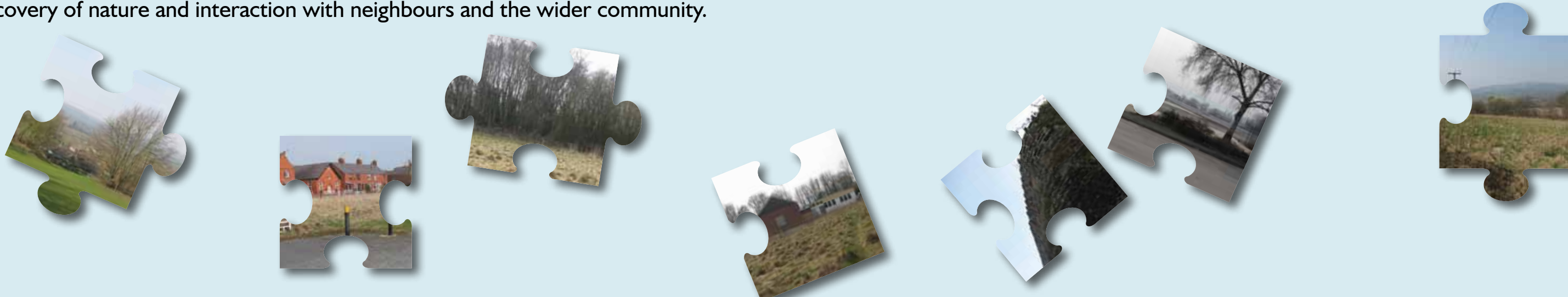
The site has direct access to a number of well established footpaths and cycleways, providing connections into the surrounding settlements and out to the countryside.

Due to the past industrial uses of the site the development plateaus have been created out of the former locations of the industrial buildings. These plateaus are bordered by self regenerated and planted woodlands which provide an instant setting for development.

Process

The design team has utilised the Development Brief produced by Wrexham County Borough Council, national and UK best practice guidance and their own considerable experience to evolve and develop a contextually responsive masterplan, which is site specific and unique in form and structure.

This statement details the contextual relationship of the site to its surroundings, the national, regional and local policy context and indeed the design process undertaken. That process establishes the development parameters leading to an illustrative masterplan and layout, demonstrating the housing numbers can be delivered in terms of the sites capacity, functionality and detail.





2.0 Physical Context

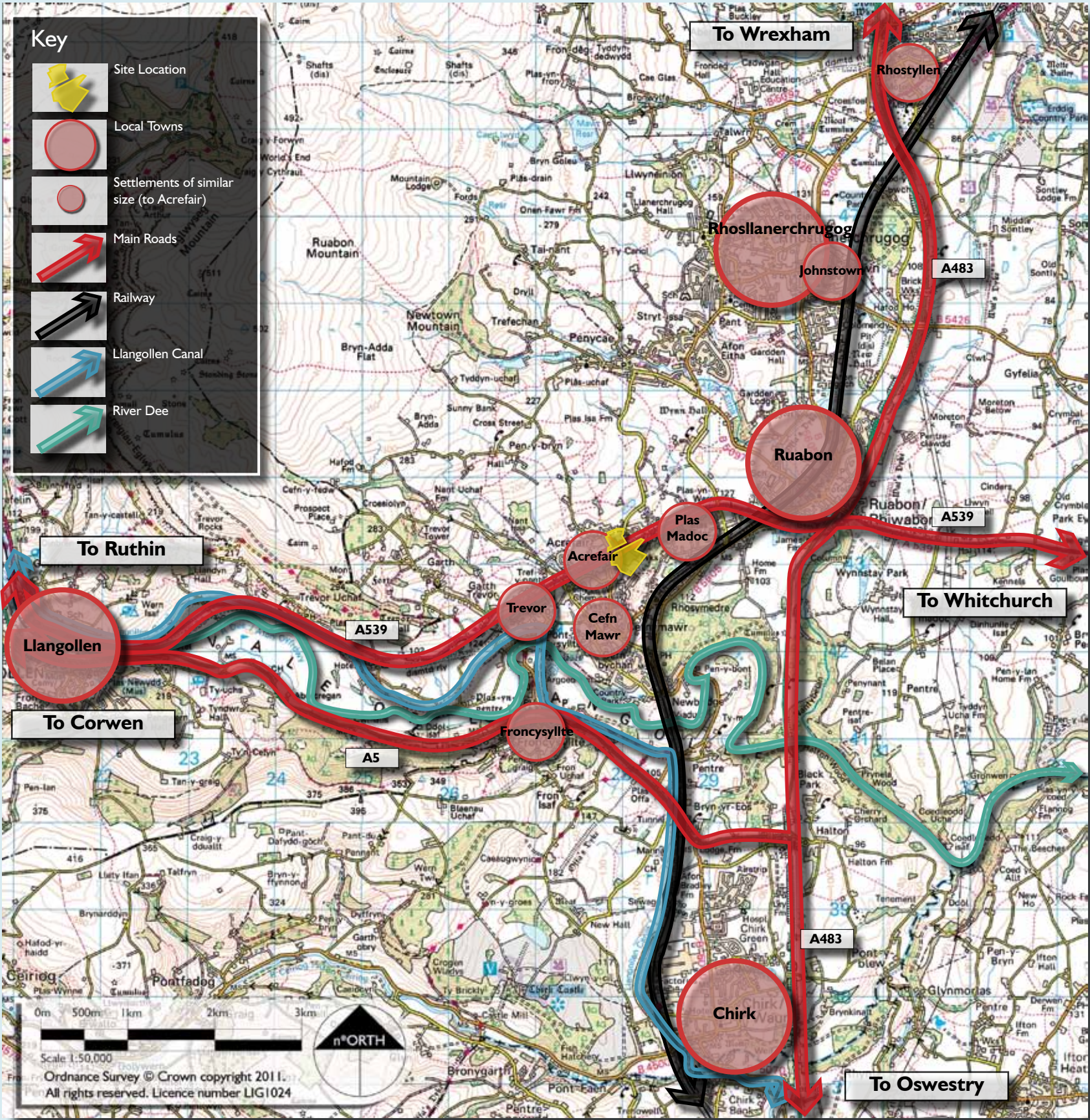


Figure 02/001: Sub-Regional Context

In order for us to understand Acrefair and how our site should interact with it, we must first appreciate the various levels of context which affect both the wider settlement or in this case settlements and indeed the site.

Sub-Regional Context

The village of Acrefair is located in the County Borough of Wrexham, North Wales. It sits close the border with the English counties of Cheshire and Shropshire.

The village straddles one of the key inland routes into North Wales, the A539, Llangollen Road and is just across the Dee Valley from the A5, the primary inland route into North Wales from the Wrexham/Cheshire/Shropshire sub-regions.

These main roads connect Acrefair and surrounding settlements with Llangollen, Ruabon, Chirk, Wrexham, Chester, Whitchurch, Oswestry and beyond into Snowdonia, the North Wales coast, the North West and Midlands of England.

Acrefair lies close to the heart of a group of traditional industrially focussed villages, which includes Cefn Mawr, Trevor and Rhosymedre.

This historic industrial relationship also means that the villages benefit from being close to the Pontcysyllte Aquaduct and the Llangollen branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, which gained Worlds Heritage Status in 2009.

This heritage and tourism theme continues generally within the Dee Valley, with the location of tourist destinations such as Llangollen, the Snowdonia National Park and various historic houses and castles, including the National Trust’s Chirk Castle, all within easy reach.

Settlement Context

Acrefair appears to have developed during the industrial revolution, initially as a mining and quarrying settlement, then iron working and finally moving over to gas and chemical manufacturing/equipment production during the 20th Century.

The site which is the subject of this study, as well as the other traditional industrial sites in and around the adjoining villages have either closed or contracted over the first decade of the 21st Century.

Acrefair and its neighbours are therefore in a phase of change and renewal, finding new purpose and a new role within North Wales.

These current contextual relationships are illustrated and described over the following pages...

Statutory Designations

Figure 02/002 below illustrates the local, national and indeed international statutory designations which affect the site.

As mentioned above the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal achieved World Heritage (WH) status in 2009, whilst The Works are not within the WH site, its southern

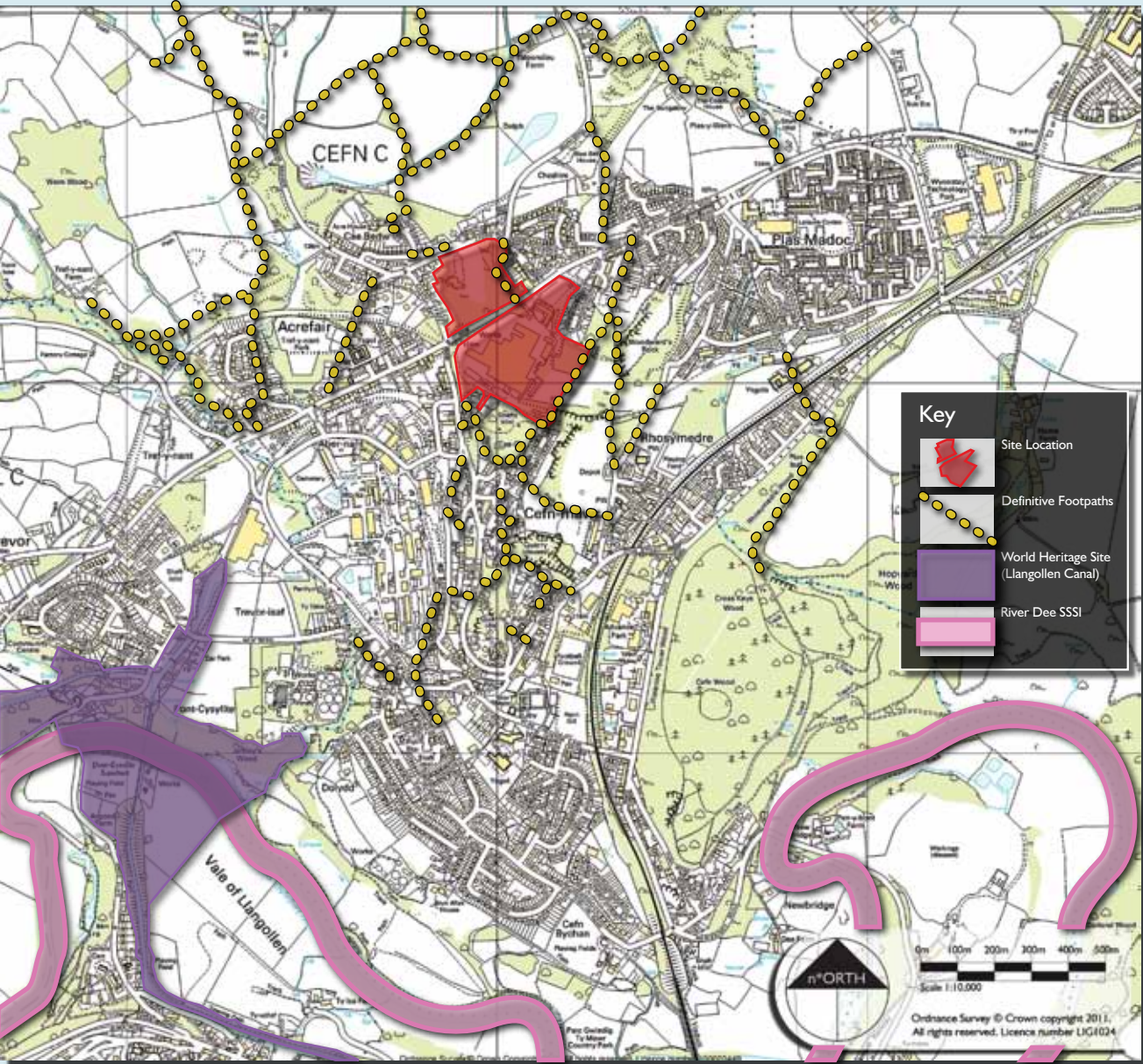


Figure 02/002: Local Context - Statutory Designations

boundary just touches the buffer zone, visually the two locations are not connected.

The River Dee is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with improving water quality over the last 20 to 30 years increasing the river's biodiversity.

Whilst not illustrated, the Snowdonia National Park boundary is 20 miles to the west, there are views to the foothills of Snowdonia from the higher points of the site and village.

Figure 02/002 also illustrates all the definitive footpaths which are in and around the village and specifically those which border or in part cross the site.

Movement

Figure 02/003 illustrates the road and public transport networks which currently service the site and surrounding villages.

As stated previously the A539, Llangollen Road is the main road which runs directly between the northern and southern parcels of the site, providing direct access onto the larger southern parcel. The northern parcel is accessed from the A539 via Bethania Road or Chapel Street which borders the northern parcel.

Generally Acrefair is well connected to the surrounding villages of Cefn Mawr, Trevor, Plas Madoc and Rhosymedre via a fine network of local streets and lanes. These also connect the village with Pontcysyllte, Froncysyllte and the A5 on the opposite slopes of the Vale of Llangollen.

The site is very well connected in terms of local bus services, having 6 bus stops directly on the edge of the site, connecting Acrefair with the surrounding villages and towns including Wrexham, Llangollen, Oswestry and Barmouth.

The main rail line between Chester and Shrewsbury runs to the south of the site and whilst there is no station at Acrefair, there is one at Ruabon providing an hourly service from Holyhead via Chester and Wrexham General and Shrewbury to either Birmingham International and Cardiff Central. The station at Ruabon has a reasonably large carpark.

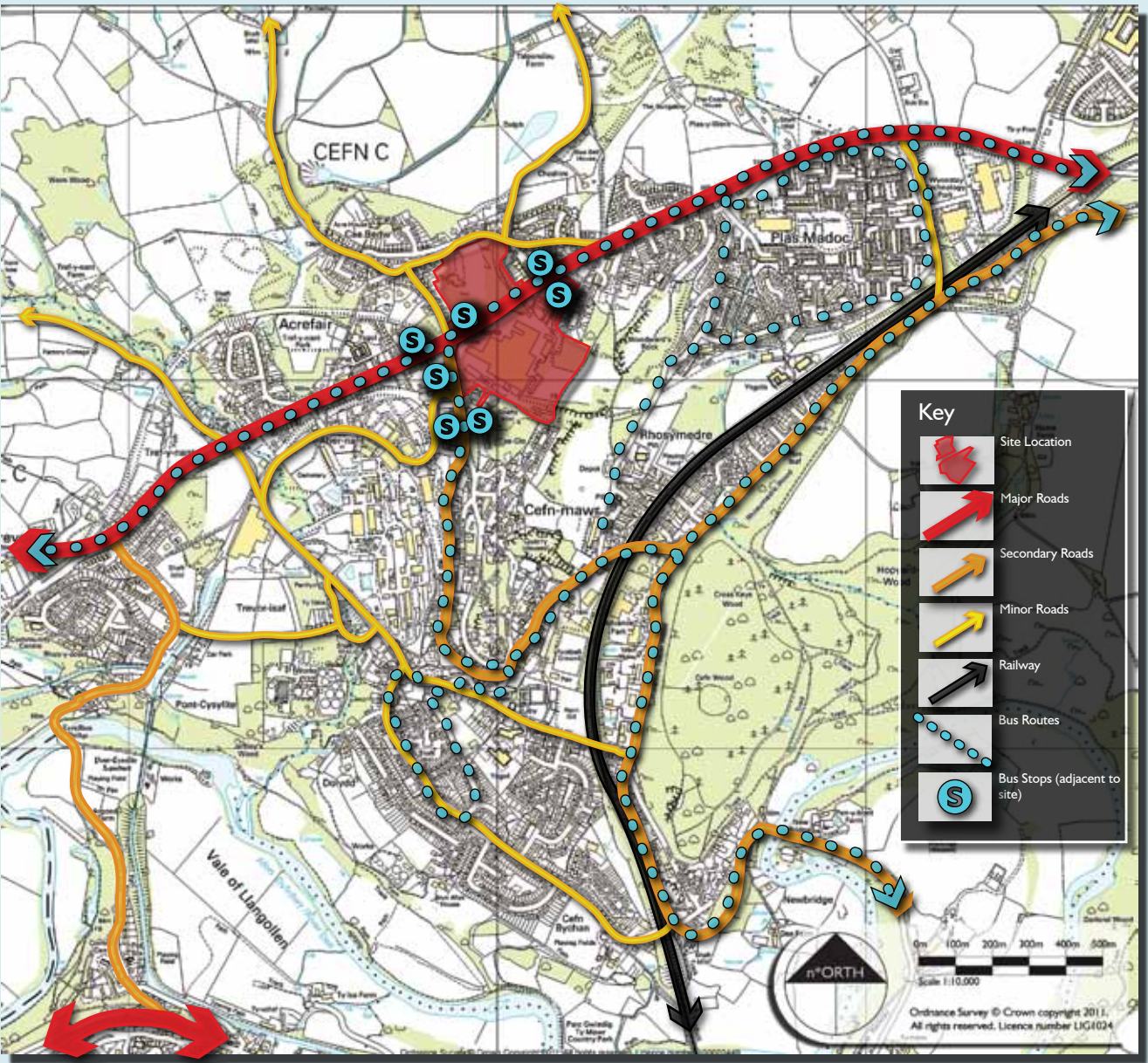


Figure 02/003: Local Context - Movement

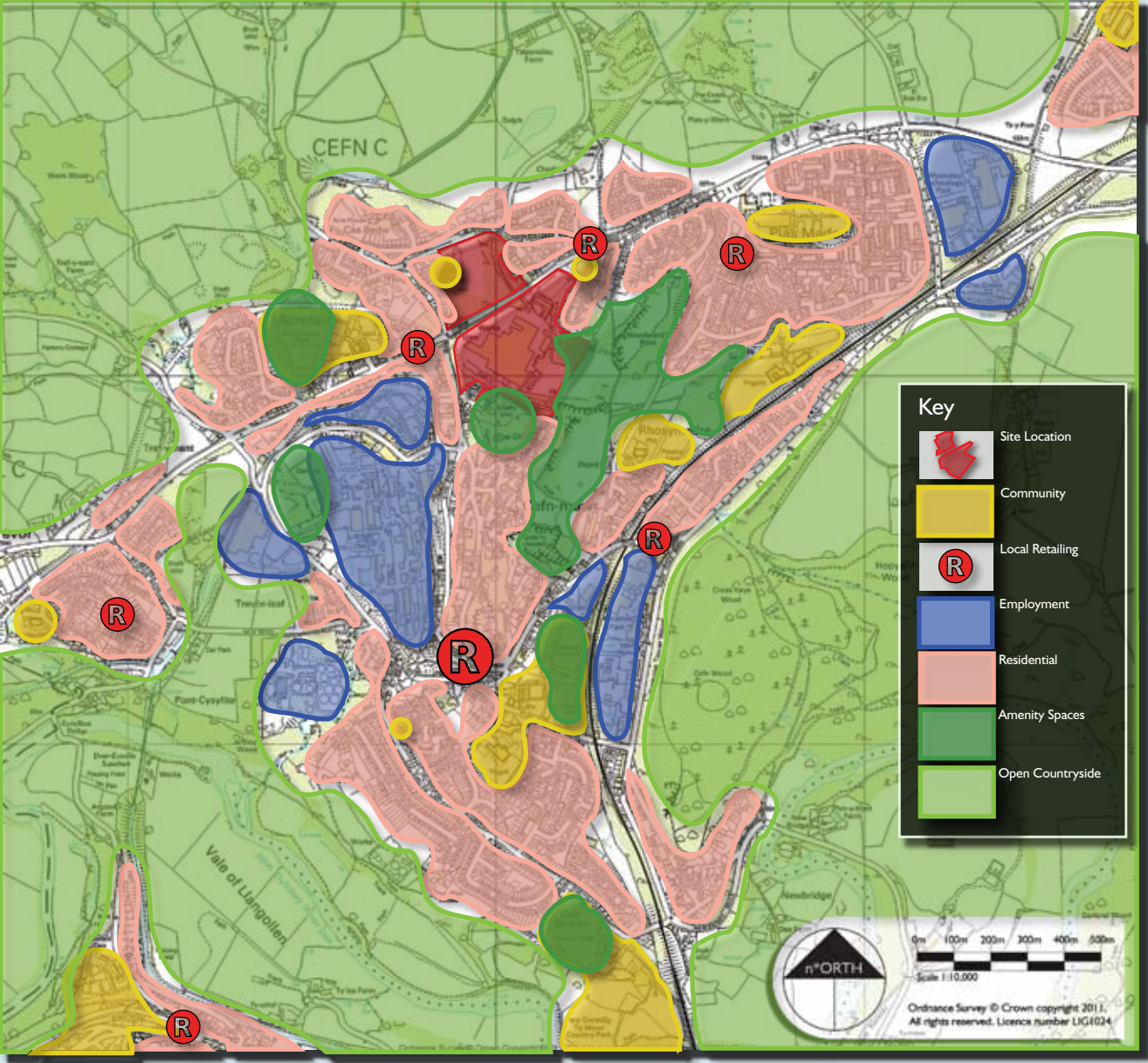


Figure 02/004: Local Context - Uses

Land Uses

The land uses in and around Acrefair are illustrated in Figure 02/004. It illustrates the current or recent uses and thus the industrial sites currently in a state of transition are illustrated solely as employment sites, their traditional status.

This land use patchwork is intricate and overlapping, as would be expected from settlements which have grown up over 3 centuries of industrial growth, change and decline.

The historic village centres still retain some community facilities, in the form of chapels, social clubs, schools, pubs and health clinics. These facilities also support local shops in the locations as illustrated above.

The main retail centre in the area is located within the village of Cefn Mawr, which, alongside the local shops also has a Co-Operative food store. A Tesco food store is currently being built immediately adjacent to the Co-Op.

The historical industrial areas are located on the lower slopes or valley bottom, where the industrial processing had easy access to water and the transport systems, such as the Canal and Railways.

The older housing is located on the valley slopes, following the contours and wrapping around the crests and ridges of the valley sides. Later and larger residential estates (primarily social housing circa 1950's) can be found on the valley bottom, to the south of the historical centre of Cefn Mawr and on the upper plateau, above Acrefair at Plas Madoc.

The villages are interlaced and surrounded with greenspace and open countryside. The greenspace within the villages appears, from historic maps to have been previously used by primarily the extractive industries; including coal mining and stone quarrying. The mines and quarries were connected via a series of mineral rail and tramways, which now provide footpath links, within green corridors between the these spaces, the countryside, the River Dee and Llangollen Canal.

Settlement Hierarchy

Figure 02/005 illustrates the inter-relationship of the settlements, of which Acrefair is part. At first glance the settlements appear contiguous with one another, but as one begins to get under the skin of the layers of the villages, as illustrated in this chapter, it becomes clear as to the nature of the villages, their general development over time, their size, individual character and communities in each.

Whilst the villages do have some commonality, they all have a particular focus and relationship to their physical setting, whether it was based on the natural topography of the villages location, of an historical industrial site which was served by the local population or connections to the canal or railway.

In terms of general size and location Cefn Mawr is the largest village with the settlement cluster, providing an historical high street, with a mix of community and business support services, as well as national food retailers.

Acrefair itself is second in the hierarchy, although the retailing is very different to Cefn Mawr, in terms of size and location, served by individual and small groups of local shops spread along the Llangollen Road. Plas Madoc is next, primarily because of the size of the residential area. It also contains the leisure centre and some local retail facilities.

Rhosymedre and Trevor are small villages which sit within the cluster and are probably the smallest of the settlements. Rhosymedre appears to have once had quite a strong retail centre, most of which is now closed or converted to houses. Whereas Trevor historically was focused around the canal basin at the northern end of the aqueduct, but is now subsumed by a larger residential area, which appears to have been built in the late 1950's, early 1960's.

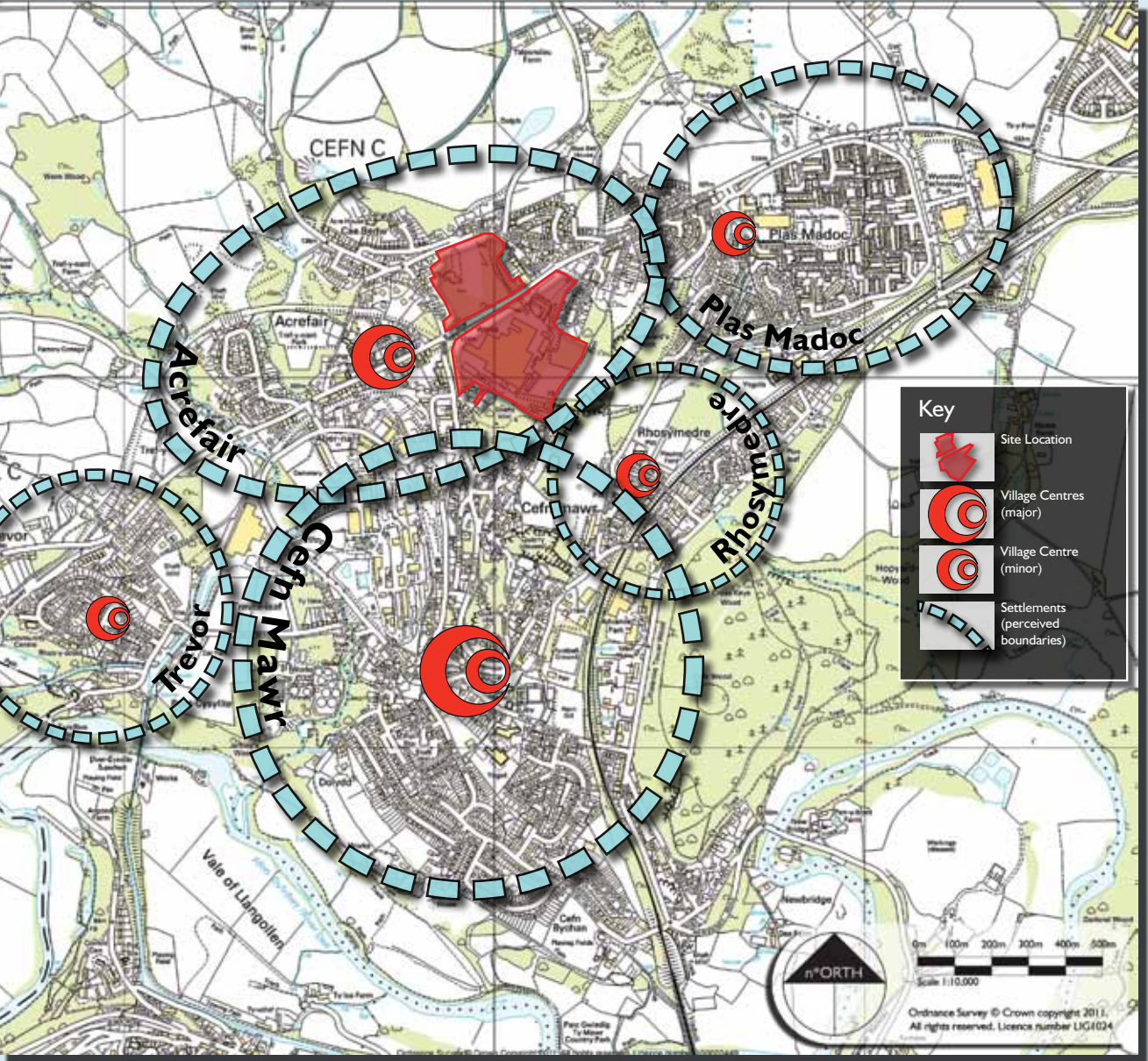


Figure 02/005: Local Context - Settlement Hierarchy

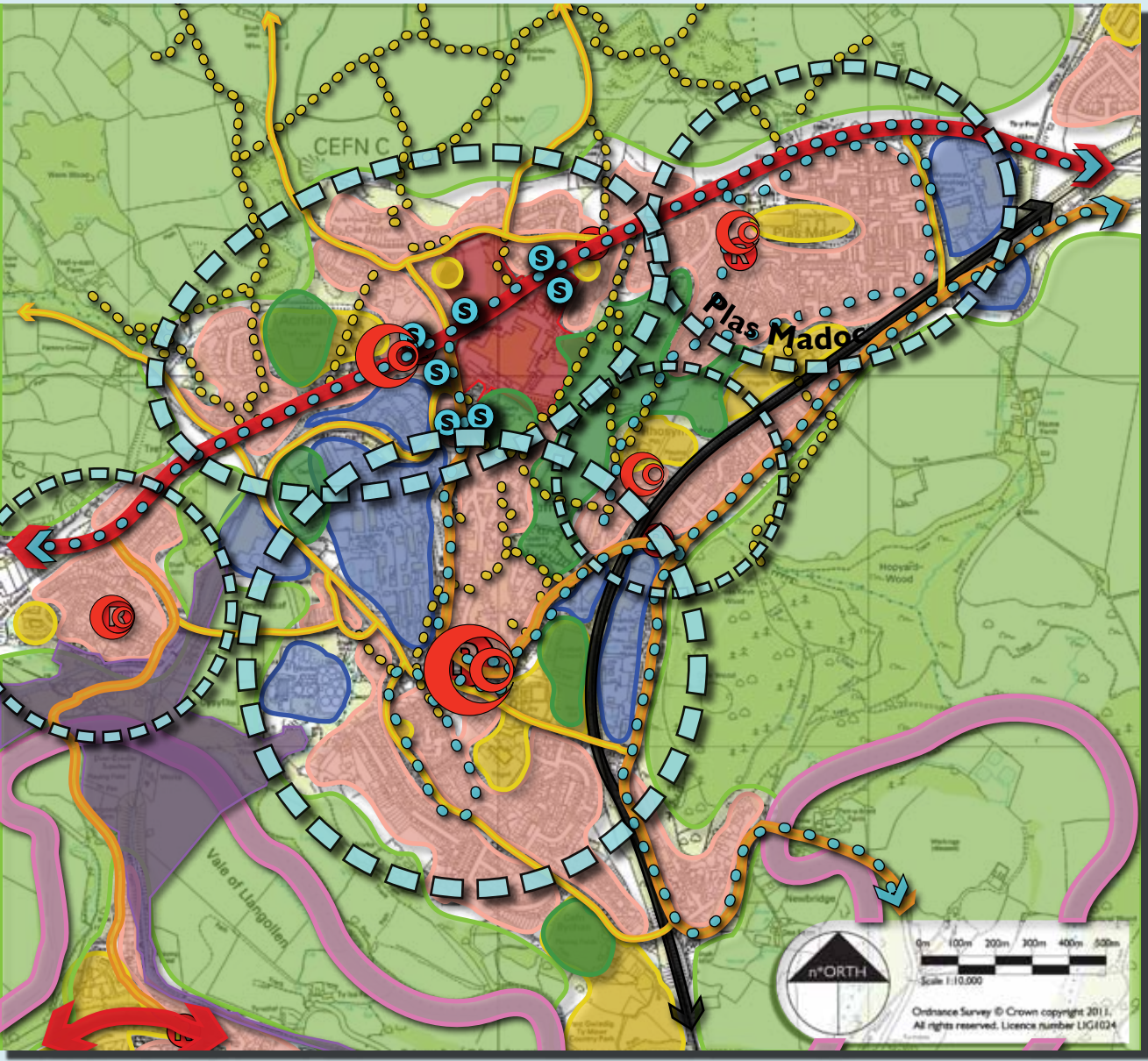


Figure 02/006: Local Context - An Intricate Villagescape

An Intricate Villagescape

The figure illustrated here (Figure 02/006) is a composite of all the individual drawings as described and illustrated previously. Whilst this drawing in itself is over complex, it graphically illustrates the multifaceted and intricate nature of settlement patterns in and around Acrefair.

This patchwork of uses and movement, interspersed with natural and man made features creates a very strong character, of which the site is part.

This direct relationship of the site with it's immediate environs is explored in the following pages.

Local Context

Dropping down through the layers of contextual information provides a real insight into the physical nature and character of Acrefair itself and its relationship to the former Air Products site, referred to here as ‘The Works’.

Whilst the contextual analysis above has focused on strategic relationships and spatial awareness, the following appreciation is very much at a site based level and provides the basis for then going on to explore the site opportunities, leading into developing Urban Design Principles ,or as referred to in this document Design Parameters in Chapter 6.0.

The following illustrations cover some of the topics discussed above, but add a local and more focussed dimension to the narrative, whilst new layers of information are also added to provide greater depth and insight to aid development of the masterplan.

Local Movement and Accessibility

Figures 02/007 and 02/008 opposite illustrate the excellent connectivity between the site, surrounding roads and footpath network. Definitive footpaths skirt the site or pass through the site, as well as a number of leisure paths, which together connect the site to the surrounding residential areas, other greenspaces and the open countryside beyond.

One footpath passes through the northern parcel, following the line of an old mineral railway, which is at a lower level to the rest of the site. This path sits within a wooded valley and provides a high quality setting for the path, which should be retained and enhanced by the proposals coming forward as part of this development.

This strong connectivity, as stated previously extends to the public transport network also, with regular bus services around the local area and out to the major settlements such as Wrexham, Llangollen, Barmouth and Oswestry. All of the bus stops providing the services outlined above are within a 5 minute walk of the site, with good physical connections to the existing site access points.

Llangollen Road (A539) is the primary road link past the site, with two existing access points onto the southern parcel. King Street to the south west of the southern parcel also provides the opportunity for a pedestrian/cycle link to the site via The Haven,

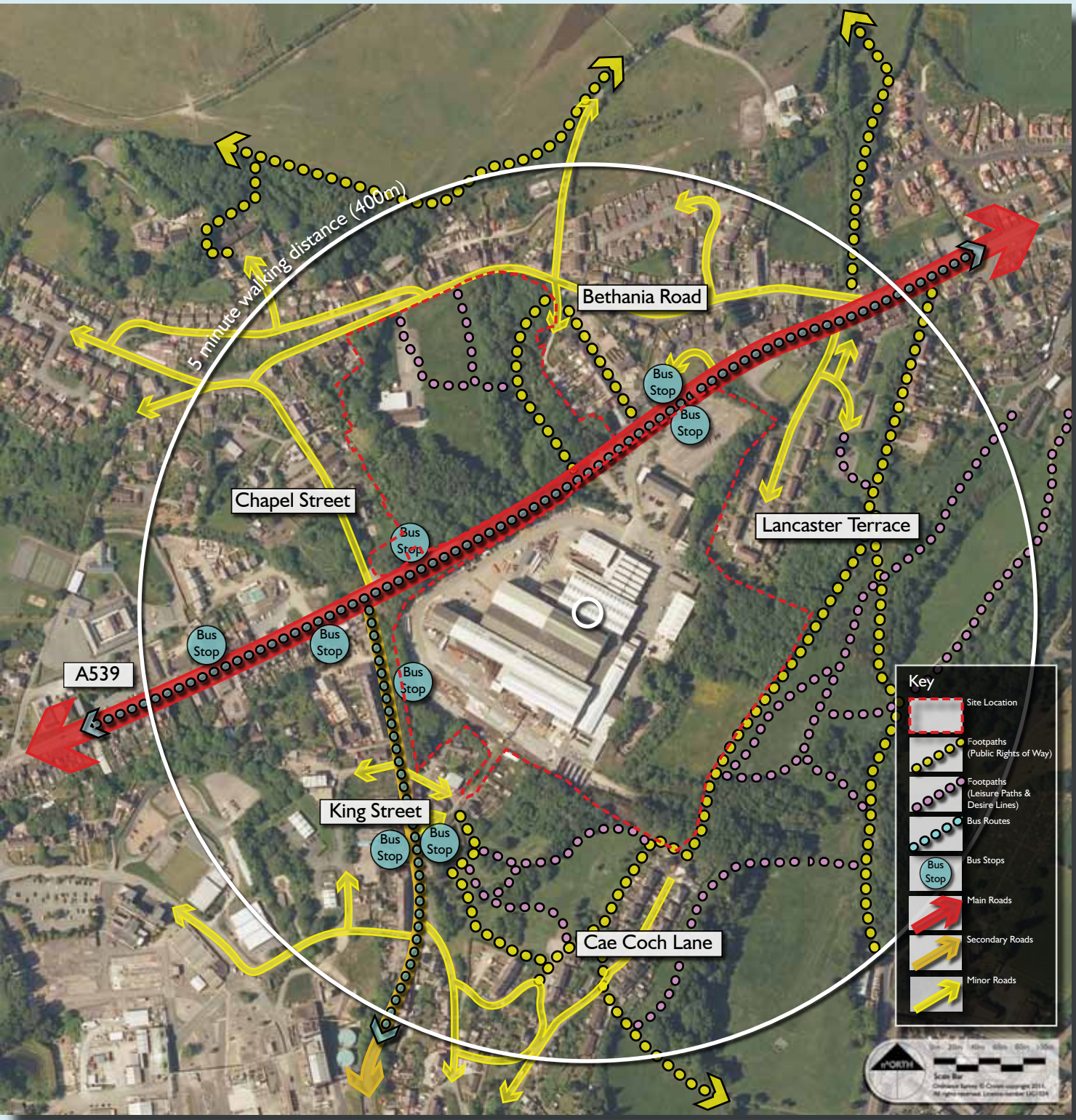


Figure 02/007: Site Context - Local Movement



Figure 02/008: Site Context - Site Access Points

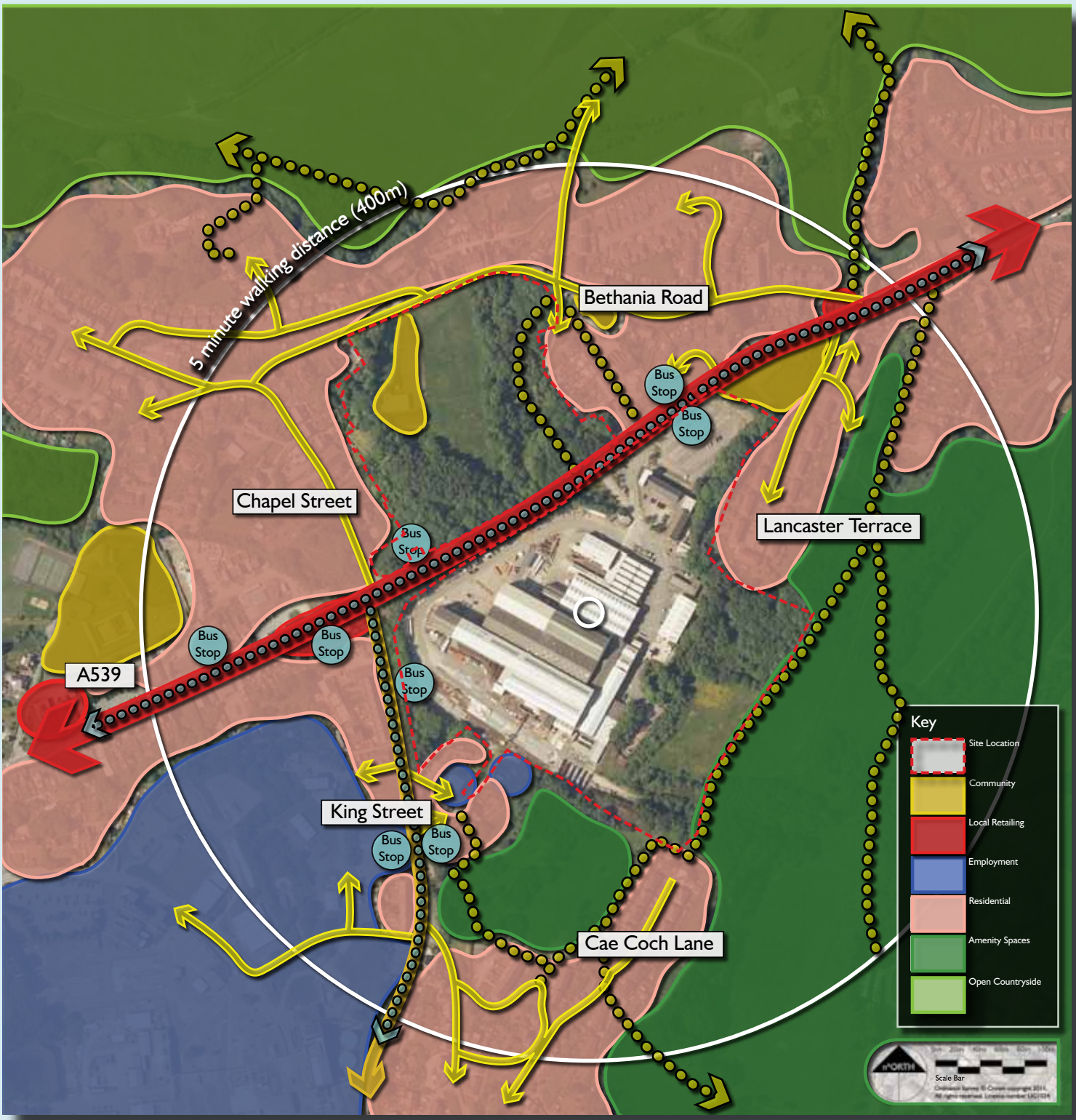


Figure 02/009: Site Context - Local Uses

an unmetalled road. The northern parcel which contains the existing Social Club is accessed off the Llangollen Road via either Bethania Road or Chapel Street and has only one primary access point currently.

Local Uses

As illustrated above in Figure 02/009, the diverse mix of uses around the fringes of the site is evident. Social clubs, a primary school, post office, shops and pubs are all within the 5 minute walking distance of the site.

Residential neighbourhoods are located to the north and south of the site, some of which are at a higher level (Lancaster Terrace and Cae Coch Lane) and overlook the site.

The historic employment sites can be seen to the south west with some local businesses on Station Road (Garage), north of King Street. Fingers of greenspace wrap around the site and continue along the site boundaries in the form of woodland belts, providing a mature setting and backdrop to the site.

Topography and Views

The site is located in a side valley to the main Dee Valley and is thus surrounded by, and is part of a rolling landscape. The topography has been further influenced and sculptured through quarrying and mining.

As illustrated in Figure 02/010 a flat plateau sits at the top of the northern site parcel, the slopes to this plateau drop down to the Llangollen Road and into a former railway cutting, the slopes are dominated by semi-mature native woodland.

The southern parcel is also dominated by a large and reasonably flat plateau, upon which the previous production facilities once stood. This plateau drops to Llangollen Road and King Street. The valley slopes rise above the plateau to the eastern ridge line, this area, formerly quarries, is now a mix of amenity space, rough grasslands and woodlands. The northern half of the southern parcel is enclosed on two sides by high stone retaining walls, above which sits a social club and the mature residential area of Lancaster Terrace.

Views are limited from and to the northern plateau due to the topography and semi-mature woodland which encloses the site on three sides.



Figure 02/010: Site Context - Topography & Views



Figure 02/011: Site Context - Historical Influences

Views into the southern parcel can be had from the north section of Llangollen Road, south across the plateau and from Lancaster Terrace down onto the plateau, as illustrated. There are local views from the southern plateau down on to King Street and the lower lying areas of Acrefair.

There are also long panoramic views from the eastern boundary of the site, west across Acrefair, the Vale of Llangollen and hills beyond. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct which lies in this direction cannot be seen from the site, due to the topography which lies between the two.

Historical Evolution

Figures 02/011 illustrates extracts of the 1912 Ordnance Survey mapping for the area onto a recent aerial photograph. This mapping clearly indicates how the historical uses of the site and local area have influenced the current settlement patterns and landscape.

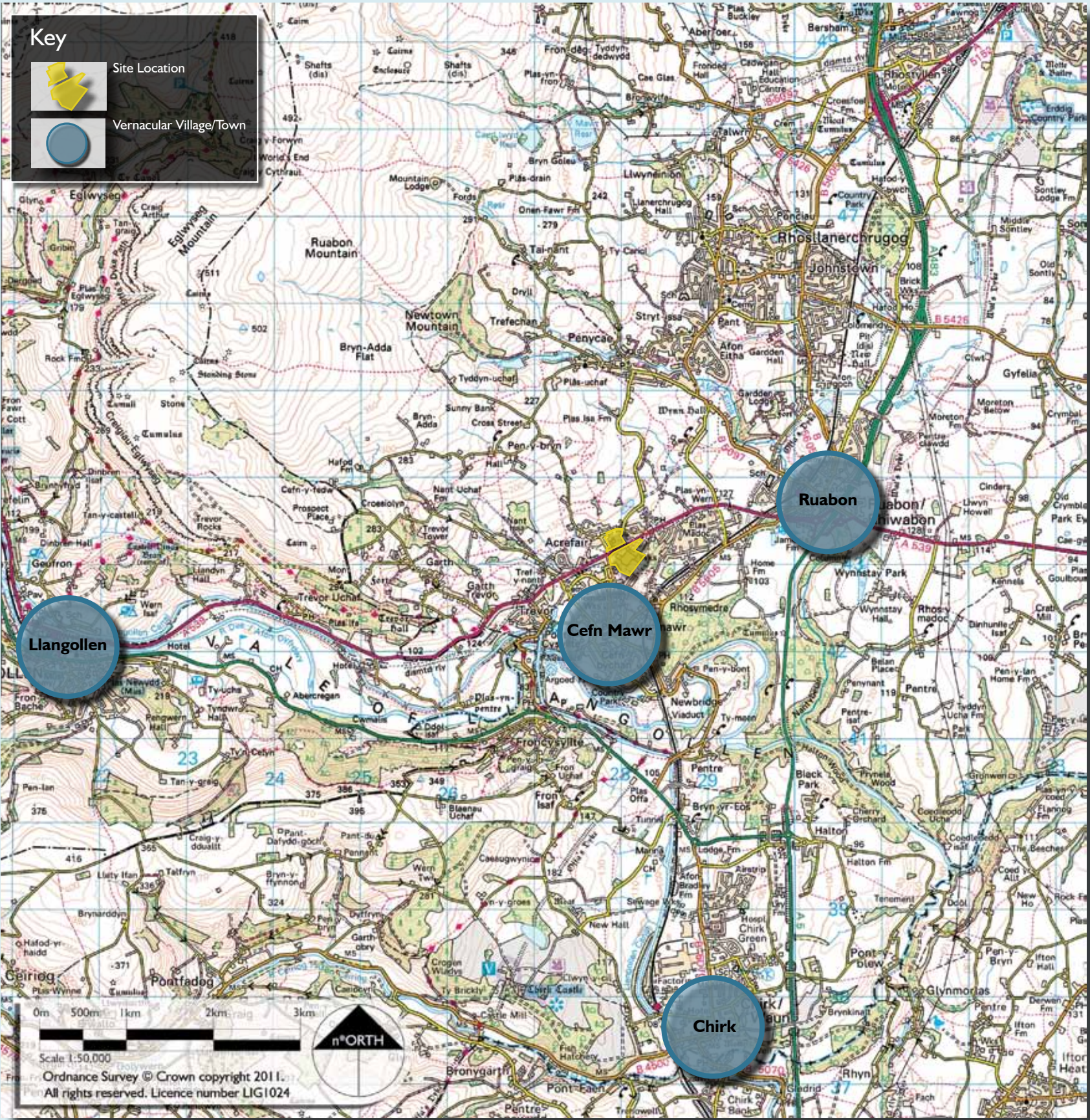
This exercise enables the team to appreciate surviving features, understand the villages ongoing development and identify potential archeological and historical features, which can be used to ‘ground’ the developing parameters and the subsequent masterplan.

Key elements of this historical layering have been highlighted and drawn out for use in developing a structure for the site (See Chapter 4 Constraints and Opportunities). This approach ensures that future development continues to reference the local history and add layers to the character and ongoing story of the village.

This chapter on context is further strengthened by the following chapter, which explores the local character and vernacular of the surrounding settlements, which can be drawn upon to further influence the design parameters and masterplan.



3.0 Vernacular Character



e*SCAPE have visited Acrefair and the surrounding towns and villages, getting to know the area and local character. This initial appreciation of Acrefair has been dealt with previously, whilst the surrounding towns and villages are discussed here as a series of ‘Worksheets’ exploring the vernacular character of four other local settlements including:

- Cefn Mawr
- Llangollen
- Ruabon
- Chirk

These settlements have a special ‘sense of place’, which the design team want to use to inform the design work, along with inputs from the Council and community. The Worksheets are illustrated overleaf:

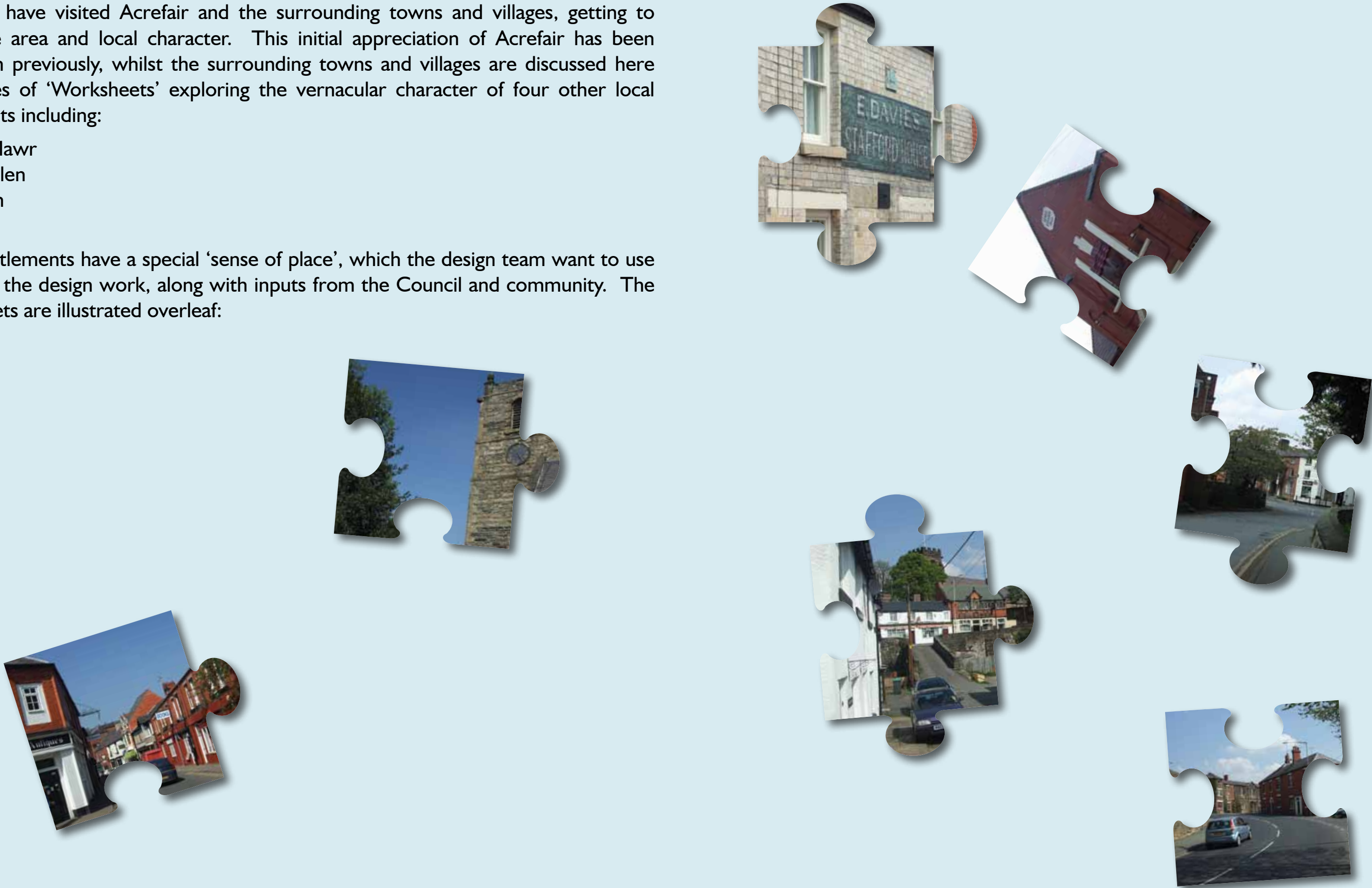


Figure 03/001: Vernacular Settlement Locations

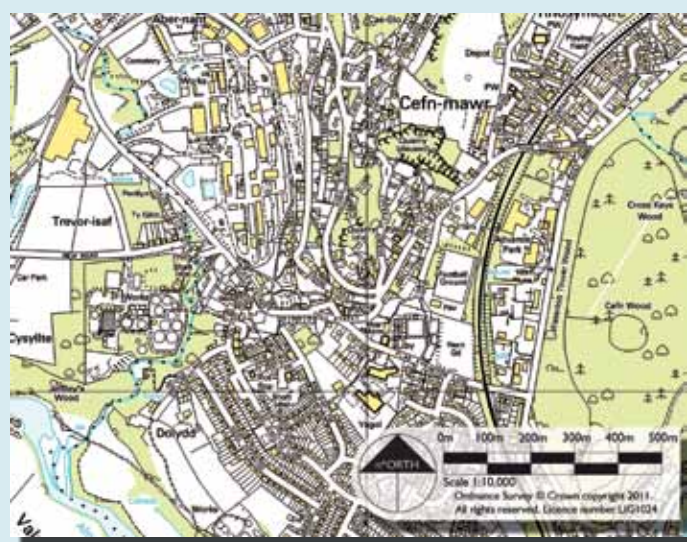


Figure 03/002: Cefn Mawr - Map

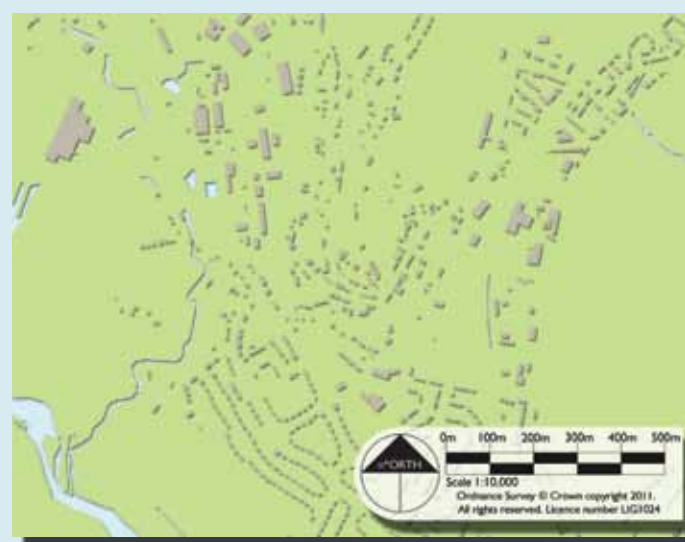


Figure 03/003: Cefn Mawr - Figure Ground



Figure 03/007: Rooftop Views



Figure 03/008: Narrow Streets & Active Frontages

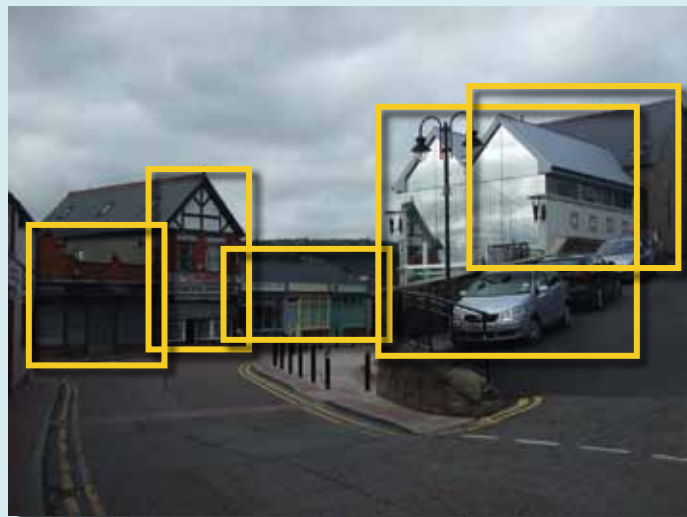


Figure 03/004: Architectural Variety



Figure 03/005: Sweeping High Street



Figure 03/006: Varied Archetypes



Figure 03/009: Historic and Modern Architecture



Figure 03/010: Defensible Space

Cefn Mawr's historic heart sits on the valley side overlooking the Vale of Llangollen and the River Dee. The main street, Crane Street is narrow and sweeps around a bluff, as illustrated in figure 03/005. This flow of the streets and lanes with the contours can clearly be seen in the Map and Figure Ground as illustrated in Figures 03/002 and 03/003.

Victorian architecture dominates the heart of the village, there are however a few examples of earlier cottages and farmsteads set within the back lanes and tracks behind Crane Street.

To the east Crane Street changes to Well Street, as it drops down the valley side towards Rhosymedre. The built form becomes less Victorian and more Edwardian in appearance (see Figures 03/006 and 03/008), thus simpler in form and ornamentation.

Whilst the architecture is dominated by one era, variety is found in the scale and massing of properties, as illustrated in Figure 03/004 where one, two and three storey properties can be found enclosing the streets and squares. The single storey buildings allow views from the main streets out to the surrounding hills.

Environmental and shop front restoration has recently been undertaken to properties on Crane Street, including those illustrated in Figure 03/011. All shops have large glazed frontages with a central doorway and accommodation at first floor. These frontages provide the opportunity for activity to the street, with good surveillance, as well as adding vibrancy and vitality directly to the streetscape (Figure 03/008).

The re-development of the former English Methodists Chapel on the junction of Crane Street, Well Street, High Street into the Ebenezer Centre illustrates how historic buildings can be integrated within a modern development (Figure 03/009).

The author only has one reservation with this building and that is the incorporation of mirrored glazing to the front elevation (Figure 03/004), as opposed to clear glazing, emulating the existing shop fronts and allowing the activities within the building to be seen as part of the surrounding streetscape.

Away from Crane Street the building line is broken and intermittent due to the topography. There are panoramic views from these lanes out across roof tops to the opposite side of the Valley, as illustrated in Figure 03/007.

Small businesses can still be found in the back streets, intermingling with residential properties, further adding to the intricate layering of the settlements, as described in Chapter 2.

Many of the houses in the back streets directly front onto the roads with no or only a small footpaths between the front door and the roadway. Other properties have a small front garden providing defensible spaces between it and the street as illustrated in Figure 03/010.

Cefn Mawr also provides variety in the form of the material used in the construction of buildings. The ridge upon which the village sits was extensively quarried in the 18th and 19th Century and about 50% of the buildings are made of either coursed or random rubble local honey coloured sandstone.

The bright red brick buildings of Cefn Mawr would most probably have used the local Ruabon bricks, again a reasonably local source of building materials. Roofs are primarily blue slate with red terracotta ridge tiles. The slate is assumed to have been shipped from slate quarries of Snowdonia. There are some buff coloured Edwardian buildings on Well Street, as illustrated in Figure 03/006 and 03/008 which add to the variety and offer some relief to the red brick buildings of Crane Street.

Whilst the historic heart of Cefn Mawr sits on the valley side, later residential development occurred in the valley alongside the historical industrial sites. Primarily circa 1950's Garden City style social housing estates, these neighbourhoods take little reference from their surroundings or use local materials in their construction. These estates are typical of many neighbourhoods of that era across the whole of the United Kingdom and they are of minimal use to this study.



Figure 03/011: Restored Victorian Shop Frontages

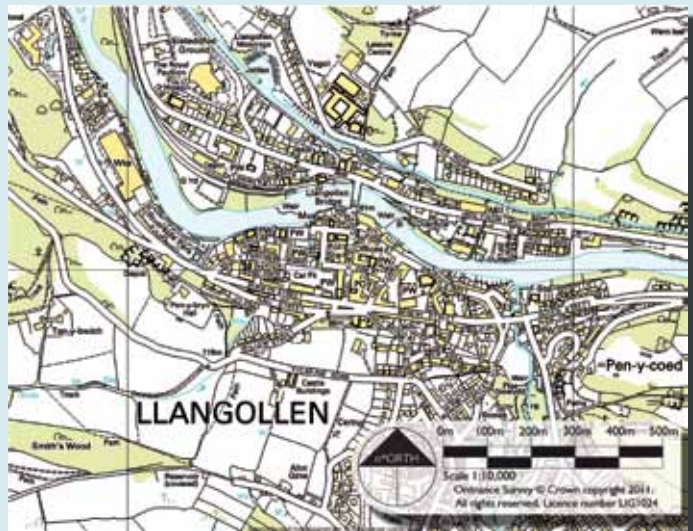


Figure 03/012: Llangollen Map

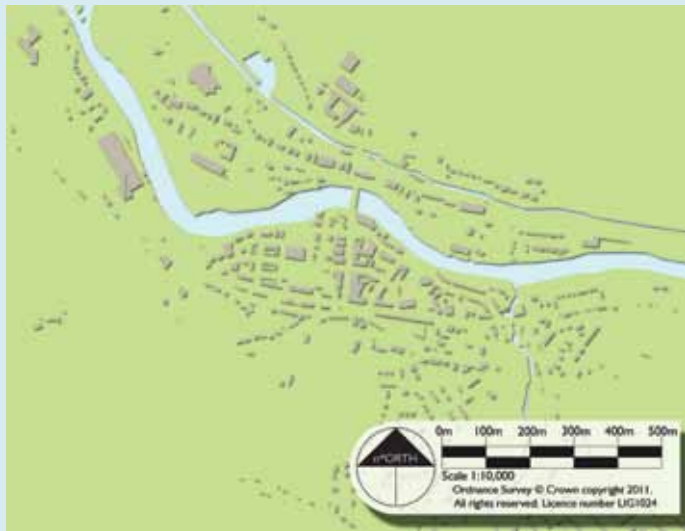


Figure 03/013: Llangollen Figure Ground



Figure 03/016: Roofscape & Skyline



Figure 03/017: Passive Surveillance



Figure 03/014: Curving Streets



Figure 03/015: Incidental Spaces



Figure 03/018: Header Building



Figure 03/019: Asymmetric Design



Figure 03/020: Hillside Homes

Llangollen is an ancient settlement which has direct links with the 6th Century monk, St Collen who founded a fortified church in the location of the present day town. The medieval origins of the settlement can be seen in the street patterns within the heart of the town, on the southern banks of the River Dee, especially around Church Street, Chapel Street and Bridge Street. It is assumed that an earlier crossing of the Dee, either a bridge or ford, would have been located in a similar position to the current bridge, taking advantage of the narrowed river, the exposed bedrock of the river bed and the bend in the river's course; as a naturally defensible location.

The town today appears to be primarily Victorian and Edwardian in architectural style, it's only when looking closer at the layout that the earlier mediaeval elements become apparent. The organic form, curving streets, tight blocks and the shape of the individual plots suggests the area around and to the east of Castle Street, as the name suggests, is the oldest part of the town. The area to the west of Castle Street appears more grid like in form and layout, giving the appearance of a later planned settlement.

Alongside the river a number of streets sweep and curve, following its course and the gently rising topography (Figure 03/014), The built form tightly encloses the street, building lines are consistent, then they step back, before returning to the street to create small intimate spaces (Figure 03/015). On other streets, whilst the properties have either been rebuilt or overlaid with the architectural style of the time, they still emulate the strong layout and enclosure principles as highlighted above. These streets have Victorian additions in the form of first floor bay windows, which provide an interesting architectural detail, as well as offering strong surveillance of the street below (Figure 03/021 & 03/022).

At the heart of this tightly enclosed street pattern lies the Church and Church Yard which is an oasis of peace, directly behind the heart of the town. From the Church the surrounding hills can clearly be seen, as part of the town's skyline. The roofscape of the town has a lot of variety in terms of materials, heights, detailing and chimneys etc (see Figure 03/016). Indeed whilst the Church Yard is quiet and peaceful it is still well overlooked from surrounding



Figure 03/021: Typical Victorian Archetypes

properties as illustrated in Figure 03/017.

What appears to be a primarily Victorian part of Llangollen sits to the west of Castle Street, as highlighted above. This and the area to the north of the river have a very similar character in terms of architectural form and layout. Primarily rows of townhouses with small front gardens set within linear streets in the valley bottom and lower slopes, following the line of the primary roads, the A5 and the A539. Figure 03/018 illustrates the typical form of the streets in this area with simply detailed townhouses enclosing a street and a header building acting as a full stop and focus at the top of the road. The header building in this instance has an asymmetric form to its elevation as illustrated in Figure 03/019.

To the south, the town rises up the valley sides, with the lanes running at roughly 45 degrees to the slope. This can clearly be seen on the Maps and Figure Ground illustrations (Figures 03/012 and 03/013). The properties here rise out of the hillsides and are two and three storey in height.

Some properties which are on the northern side of the street (the downside of the slope) have their front doors and it is assumed habitable rooms at first floor level, with bedrooms at ground/basement level looking out onto their gardens.

Properties to the southern side of these streets have their front doors at ground floor, although this floor may be in effect a basement level, as the properties are usually set into the slope with gardens at first floor level above. Most three storey properties appear to be on this side of the street and successfully deal with the steep gradients and levels. These properties as described above can clearly be seen in Figure 03/020.



Figure 03/022: Bay Windows & Surveillance

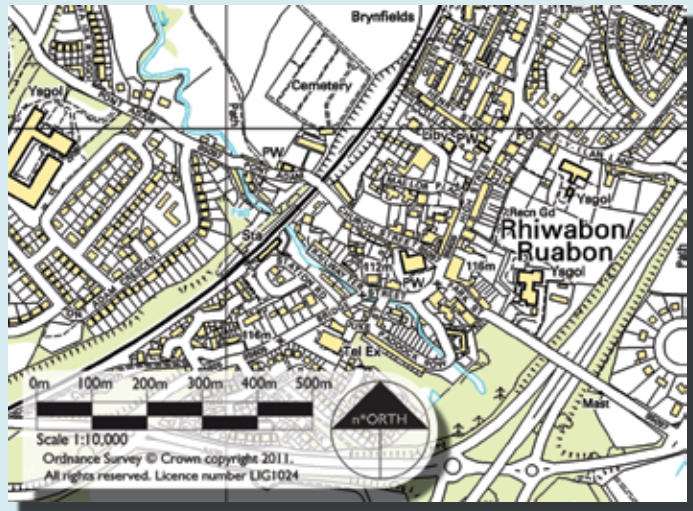


Figure 03/023: Ruabon Map

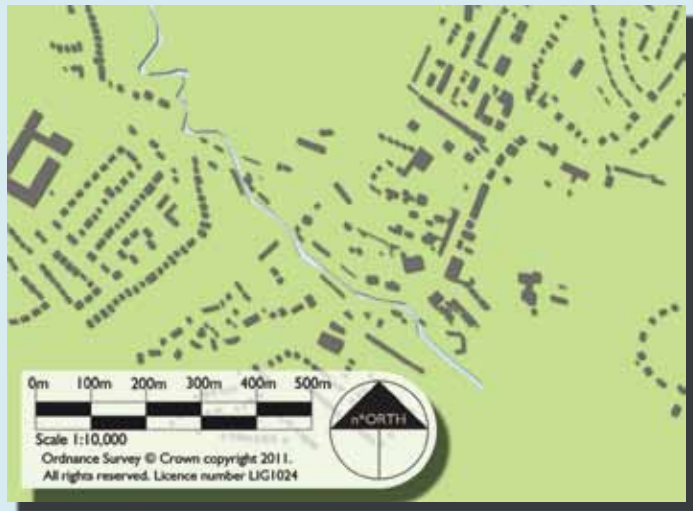


Figure 03/024: Ruabon Figure Ground



Figure 03/027: Pinch Point



Figure 03/028: Glimpse Views & Vistas



Figure 03/025: Wynnstay Hall Coach Drive Gateway

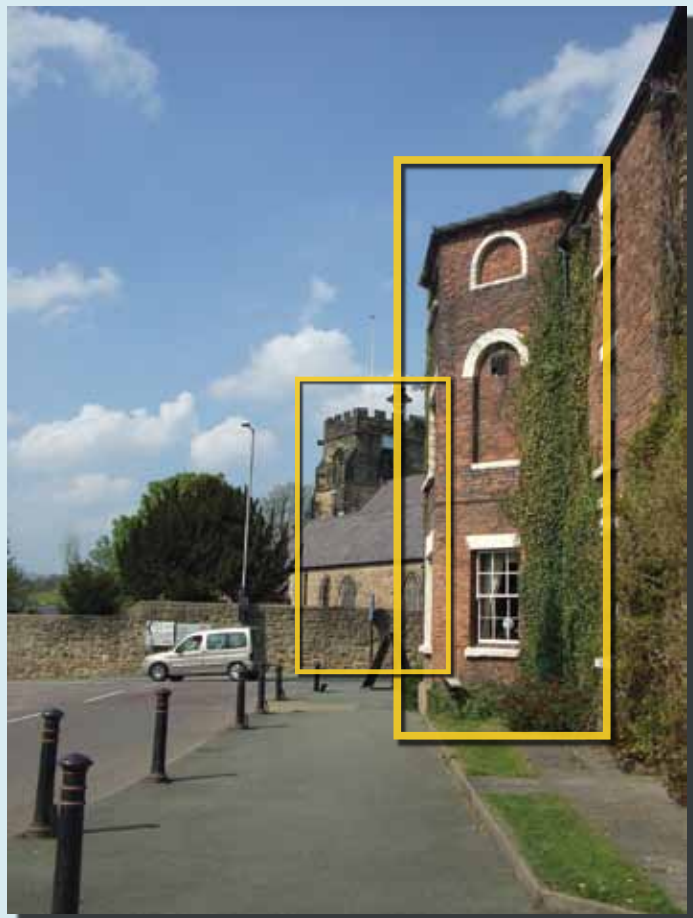


Figure 03/026: Villagescape landmarks



Figure 03/029: Edwardian Villa



Figure 03/030: Enclosed Public Realm



Figure 03/031: Railway Cottages

Ruabon, like Llangollen is an ancient settlement and like Llangollen appears to have been overlaid with later architectural styles. However unlike Llangollen, Ruabon's architypes range from some remnant Mediaeval cottages, through Georgian, Victorian and includes some interesting Edwardian villas and townhouses set into the villagescape.

The heart of the village appears to be around the Church (St Mary's) and Coaching Inn (Wynnstay Arms Hotel). The Church perches on the edge of a low escarpment, with the village straddling the hillside, part below and part behind the Church. The main coach drive from Wynnstay Hall also ran along an axis with the Church and Inn from the south east, it's main gate (Figure 03/025) positioned at the bottom of Park Street. The drive is now severed by the bypass. This gateway and the width of the space created and enclosed by the Inn and surrounding houses provides a strong space, with the church as the backdrop, as illustrated in Figure 03/030.

There are a number of landmark buildings in the centre of the village. The Church and Inn, as illustrated in Figure 03/026 and just to the north, on the corner of Church Street is the apparently Georgian building illustrated in Figure 03/032. As with many Georgian buildings, an earlier property appears to have been overlaid with Georgian styling. In most instances this involves a new skin of facing brick and larger window openings overlaying an earlier Tudor timber frame, here, the approach has been less subtle, with two storey's of a Georgian building apparently dropped onto the existing ground floor stonework of an earlier property. Whilst the approach is less than subtle, the building is of substance and creates a strong element in the streetscape on this corner.

Church Street generally has a variety of Architypes along its length. It also has the feel of a winding lane, with the built form varying is size and importance in an 'ad hoc' manner. Small townhouses, jostle with Edwardian Villas and cottages stand back from the lane in their own grounds. At one point, as illustrated in Figure 03/027 the street narrows to a single track with the surrounding properties stepping into the road, creating a strong pinch point and slowing traffic.

The Edwardian Villas as mentioned above create a clean fresh interlude in the streetscape, one of which is situated on Church Street and illustrated here in Figure 03/029. The symmetrical design, simple detailing, use of render and limited colour create a sharp contrast to the brick properties which surround it.

A number of narrow lanes connect various parts of the village, some traverse the escarpment, linking the upper part of the village with the Station. These lanes offer framed views and informal vistas across the village. In Figure 03/028 a glimpse view can be had back to Church Street with the Edwardian Villa acting as the focus to the informal vista created.

The lower part of the village has a stronger Victorian influence, than the centre around the Church. This appears to be due to the location of the railway station, which originally had extensive sidings and marshalling yards. Thus the built form in this area appears to have been developed to provide accommodation for railway workers.

The simple cottages illustrated in Figure 03/031 are typical of the area which surrounds the station.

Throughout the village there are a number of more modern infill sites, but the key areas of interest in terms of form, layout, architypes and materials are illustrated and described here.



Figure 03/032: An 'overlaid' Georgian architype

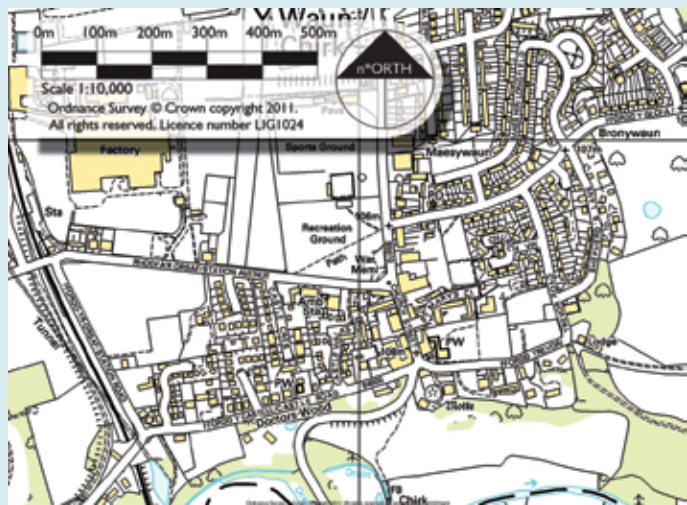


Figure 03/033: Chirk Map

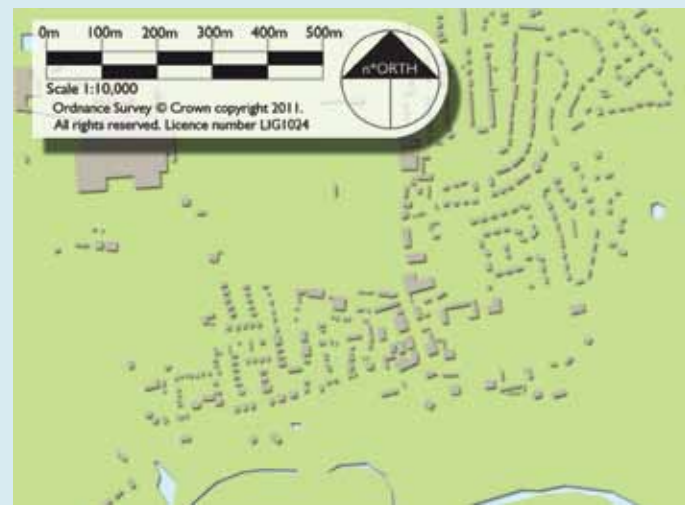


Figure 03/034: Chirk Figure Ground

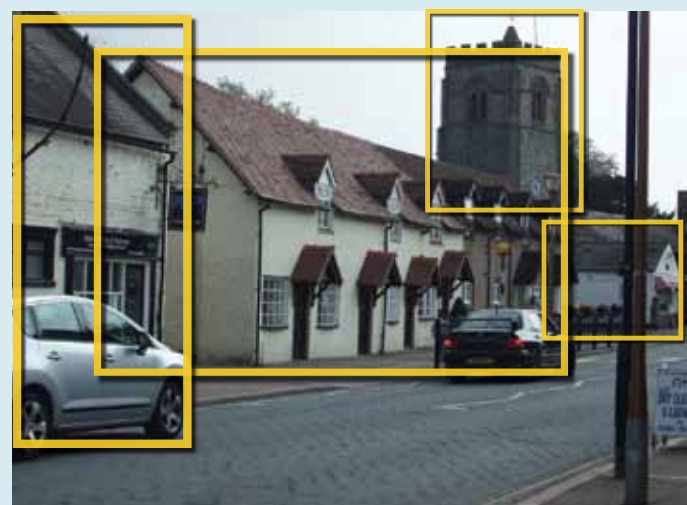


Figure 03/037: Varied Built Forms

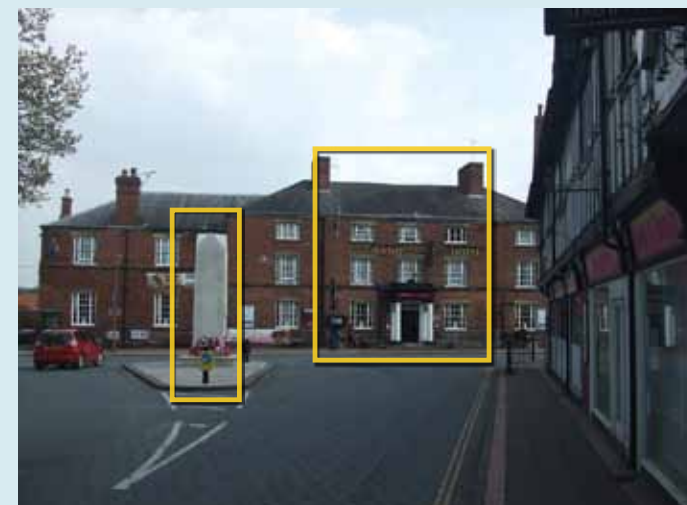


Figure 03/038: Landmarks



Figure 03/035: A Vibrant Village Heart & Focus



Figure 03/036: Simple Cottages



Figure 03/039: Lime Avenue



Figure 03/040: Georgian Variety

The current form of the town appears to have originated from its historic focus, the Motte and Bailey Castle at the southern end or head of the main street - Church Street as illustrated in Figure 03/033.

A number of side streets and lanes radiate out from Church Street and create structure on which the village is overlaid. The historic focus is still very much the heart of the village today, as illustrated in Figure 03/035. Situated as it is on a crossroads and fronted by the Church, the impressive Georgian Manor House as well as three storey town houses with shops at ground floor this location is still very active and vibrant.

Behind the Church on Trevor Road are a series of larger properties and farmsteads which are set within their own grounds and create a quiet green setting to this part of the village, just off the main street.

Church Street itself is a very active shopping street, surprisingly so for what is a reasonably small town. The street is strongly enclosed by the properties which front it and glimpse views can be had down the side lanes and ginnels to small courts behind, which contain a mixture of uses (residential, cafes, restaurants and storage etc).

The built form on Church Street is at its grandest around the Church with major Georgian influences, the built form drops in scale and massing along its length, with what looks like originally mediaeval one and half storey properties half way along the street, some of which are illustrated in Figure 03/036.

This varied massing and built form along Church Street, as well as with the rise in storey heights and change in architypes is also illustrated in Figure 03/037.

At the opposite end of Church Street to the Church is the Hand Hotel on the junction of Station Avenue. Again a Georgian building with a strong presence and massing to its form, which acts as a counterpoint to the Church and Mansion at the southern end of the street.

The Hand and War Memorial located at the junction combine to create a strong feature in the townscape, as illustrated in Figure 03/038.

Opposite the Inn, on Station Avenue, a vista is created along the road, back to the War Memorial. The vista is enclosed on one side by the built form of a Victorian

row of shops and on the other by a mature avenue of Lime trees. The trees provide enclosure to the street parallel to the road, whilst allowing clear views of the park beyond when viewed from the opposite side of the road. The avenue is illustrated in Figure 03/039.

As stated before, away from the main street there are a number of interesting features. On Castle Road for example, a Georgian terrace wraps the corner into the main street on the principle junction. Back from the junction the Georgian buildings illustrate both a consistency in their materials and detailing, whilst also varying in height and fenestration as illustrated in Figure 03/040.

At ground level some of the properties have a stone plinth upon which the building sits. Door and window openings have been modified over time, including the infill of what appears to be an archway into a courtyard. This has been bricked up and replaced with a front door into the property.

The brick used is predominately consistent, as is a stone banded detail which runs at first floor level, just below the first floor windows, this also doubles as the sills to the windows. Some properties in the terrace are two storey and the others three, creating interest and variety to the streetscene.



Cefn Mawr Design Cues:

- The Village wraps around the ridge and slopes of the valley
- The streets traverse along the contours
- Buildings step up the hill and utilise the changes in level, in terms of entrances at first or second floor
- Built form strongly encloses the primary streets
- Framed views down roads or across rooftops out to opposite side of Dee Valley
- Local stone and brick are equally used in the buildings
- Highly active frontages onto streets and public realm
- Narrow streets and lanes slow traffic
- Properties directly front streets with small areas of defensible space in the form of forecourts or front gardens
- Real variety in terms of storey heights and massing in the townscape



Llangollen Design Cues:

- Hierarchy of streets, lanes and paths in historic heart of town
- Creative use of topography
- Curving streets and lanes provide unfolding views
- Brick and Render appear to be main building materials
- Use of bay windows at first floor
- Forecourt spaces create incidental Public Realm
- Strong enclosure of streets
- Quiet greenspaces in heart of town
- Good passive surveillance throughout streets, lanes and openspaces
- Strong skyline with views out to surrounding hills



Ruabon Design Cues:

- Settlement radiates out from church which sits on escarpment
- Streets run and curve with contours
- Buildings cluster in small groupings
- Good variety of architectural styles and use of different materials
- Good enclosure of streets and spaces
- Manorial gateway frames views into settlement
- Pinch points reduce traffic speeds
- Glimpse views of higher quality architecture
- Simplicity of lanes and the houses along them



Chirk Design Cues:

- Village sits on high ground above water course
- Church dominates town centre
- Primary junction in village is heart of settlement
- Varied architectural styles creates character
- Main street and buildings focus/radiate from the location of a Motte & Bailey Castle at the head of Church Street
- One and a half storey cottages have pleasant human scale feel
- Varied building height and massing adds interest to townscape and roofscape
- The Church Yard adds greenspace to heart of village
- Entrances to buildings and memorials create a series of focal points
- Lime Avenue creates strong formal edge to the park and town centre





The above assessments of the character and local vernacular which surrounds Acrefair will be distilled and used to influence the general form and layout of the development. It shall also assist with developing the guidance for the hierarchy of streets, lanes and spaces and inform thoughts on the architectural forms within the masterplan.

A character or vernacular study is not about creating a pastiche, but using the qualities of the local area to influence modern design, ensuring places are unique, complimentary to their setting and are identifiable as a locally responsive solution, rather being 'anywhere places'.

The key design cues from the four settlements are distilled here:



Summary Design Cues:

- The focal point of settlements sit on high ground overlooking the valley
- Settlements wraps around the ridge and slopes of the valley
- The streets traverse along the contours
- Primary junction/square at heart of settlement
- Streets and Lanes radiate out from centre
- Narrow streets and lanes slow traffic
- Hierarchy of streets, lanes and paths in historic heart of settlement
- Curving streets and lanes provide unfolding views
- Forecourt spaces create incidental Public Realm
- Landmarks create reference points in the settlement centres
- Peaceful greenspaces at heart of settlements
- Tree'd avenues create strong visual green network
- Good passive surveillance of streets, lanes and openspaces
- Buildings step up the hill and utilise the changes in level, in terms of entrances at first or second floor
- Use of bay windows at first floor
- Highly active frontages onto streets and public realm
- Properties directly front streets with small areas of defensible space in the form of forecourts or front gardens
- Varied architectural styles creates character
- Varied heights and massing to buildings create and frame views and add interest to townscape
- Glimpse views of higher quality architecture
- Simplicity of lanes and the houses along them

A decorative horizontal band of white, fluffy clouds against a light blue background, spanning the width of the slide.

4.0 Constraints & Opportunities



Figure 04/001: The Site & Topography

The previous three chapters provide the background appreciation and understanding of where and how Acrefair developed and its current relationship with adjoining settlements and wider sub-region. Chapter 3.0 examined the local character and how the surrounding settlements have grown and developed over time, giving them the specific and unique characters they have today.

Chapter 4.0 therefore is an exploration of the site today, it examines the key constraints and how they can be turned into opportunities, the historical influences on the current townscape and how all of this can be brought to play in developing robust and grounded design parameters as setout in Chapter 6.0.

Topography

The aerial photograph opposite (Figure 04/001) illustrates the site location in relationship to the surrounding built form, greenspaces and general topography, all of which has been described in some detail in the previous chapters.

The southern parcel has now been cleared of buildings, the concrete floor bases are all that is left to indicate the previous uses. This parcel as stated and illustrated previously is predominantly flat (rising just 4 metres from south to north across its 350 metre length) and cleared for development. The eastern part of this site rises up the valley side towards the ridge and offers views across Acrefair towards the foothills of Snowdonia. The difference between the top and bottom of the slope within the site is approximately 15 metres, at a gradient of 1:7.

The northern parcel contains the sites former sports and recreation club. The club sits on an upper plateau, which also previously accommodated grassed sports pitches. The plateau drops steeply away to Llangollen Road (A539) to the south east and into a former railway cutting to the west, at gradients of 1:2 to 1:5. The slopes have been colonised by native woodland species, the former railway line is also a public right of way and with some management can be a great asset to the site and wider community.



Photo: Southern Parcel from back of Cae Coch Lane



Photo: Southern Parcel main access point



Photo: View west toward Social Club from eastern edge of plateau



Figure 04/002: Constraints

Site Constraints

Figure 04/002 illustrated here sets out the constraints identified within the site. As stated previously the site has a mature backdrop in the form of woodland tree belts, along its boundaries and on the more inaccessible slopes. The woodland contains predominately native species.

Due to the nature of the topography and especially the location of the high retaining walls, the site is overlooked from the south east by properties on Lancaster Terrace. Care must be taken in locating new properties within 15 to 25 metres of this boundary to ensure privacy and amenity is maintained.

There are two areas of waterlogging on the former railway lines, one is within the northern parcel at the boundary of the site, adjacent to Bethania Road and the other is in the south eastern corner of the southern parcel within the former railway cutting.

Figure 04/001 illustrates in some detail the topographical character of the site, the main slopes and retaining walls (some of which are 8 metres in height) are again illustrated here, which represent the main topographical constraints on development.

In terms of archeology, a kiln and a coke ovens position is highlighted in figure 04/002, both of which are located within the woodland belts, close to the site boundaries. The kiln especially should make an interesting physical feature and focal point within the site. Both should be interpreted as part of the sites history.

A low voltage power line runs across the south eastern quadrant of the southern parcel and will require diversion or under grounding as part of any proposals.

As part of the ecological assessment of the site a badger sett has been identified and is indicated on the drawing. An additional assessment is taking place to ascertain it's importance and use. Once its nature is verified the sett's future shall be discussed with the ecologists at Wrexham Council and the Countryside Council for Wales.

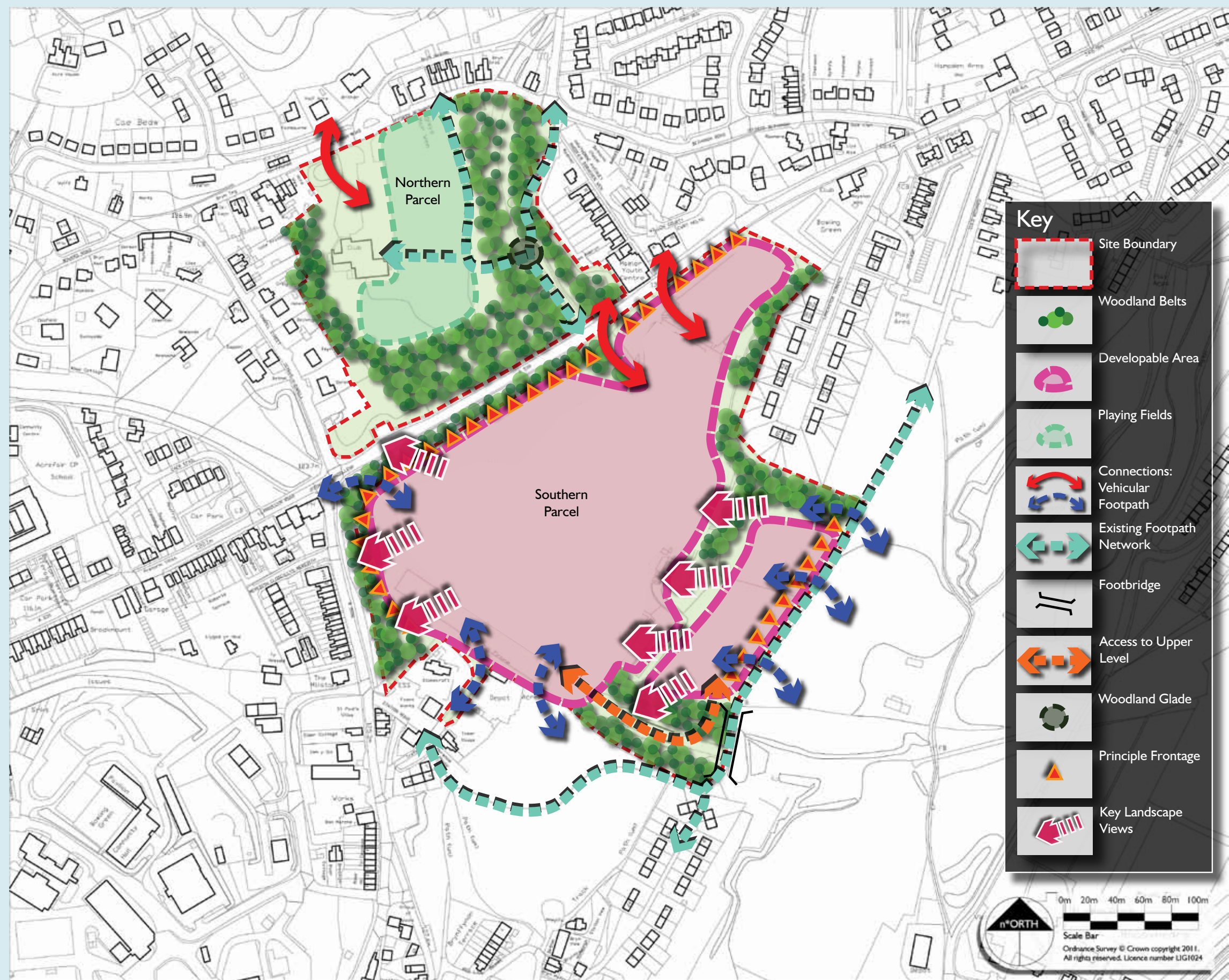


Figure 04/003: Opportunities

Site Opportunities

Constraints and opportunities have a habit of overlapping, one persons constraints are anothers opportunities. Figure 04/003 sets out the opportunities the site currently has to offer, this illustration should be read in conjunction with the constraints above, as both will be used to develop robust design parameters.

As illustrated previously the mature and semi-mature native woodlands create a strong framework and much of it should be retained as part of any developing proposals.

The existing vehicular access points are located appropriately for ease of ingress and egress and shall be used as the future access points. The maintenance access off The Haven, to the south of the southern parcel shall be used as a pedestrian/cycle and emergency access link to King Street, as it is currently narrow and used only as local access to properties in that area. Other pedestrian/cycle access points into and out of the site shall link to the footpaths in the area and aid the permeability and connectivity of the site to the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The site boundary runs to the back of footpath on Llangollen Road, to the southern parcels northern boundary for about 100 metres. This frontage enables the site to interact with the road and wider settlement and will require a welcoming and active frontage. This area should also create a strong and positive gateway for the wider settlement and indeed a gateway to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, just 1 mile to the south west.

As stated on the previous page, the former railway line and now public right of way through part of the northern parcel runs through one of these woodlands, it contains a very pleasant glade, about half way along it's length, this feature should be retained in any proposals.

Finally the panoramic views from the southern parcel, as described previously should be retained, enhanced and maximised within any developing proposals for the site.



5.0 Design Evolution & Evaluation

A Developing Design

Design should be an evolutionary process. If a masterplan is developed for any form of development that proceeds along a straight line between points 'A' and 'B', then the process is invalid and has not been undertaken in a considered and comprehensive manner.

The approach to The Works has been steady and measured. The early design parameters explored the form and structure of the site, based on the constraints information and character studies undertaken, these initial parameters were developed as layered sketches prior to being drawn up, as illustrated in Figure 05/001.

This was reviewed by the whole consultant team and client against additional constraints and opportunities work which was underway at the time. e*SCAPE further developed the parameters plans, one of which is illustrated here in Figure 05/002. These plans were developed using the principles of organic masterplanning, as described previously.

This early work was the subject of a design workshop with Wrexham County Borough Council's Planning, Housing, Environment, Design and Transport teams. Feedback from this early pre-application meeting further influenced not only the design solution, but also the supporting studies.

Refining the Design

It was at this stage that a presentation was made to the The Design Commission for Wales in Cardiff with regard to the site and its opportunities. Whilst the members of the Peer Review Group had not personally seen the site or the local context in which it was located, there were a number of constructive comments which have been taken on board in the further development of the Design Parameters and indeed the Masterplan itself.

This evolution of the parameters can clearly be seen in Figure 05/003 and generally encapsulated in the figures and accompanying narrative in Chapter 6 of this statement.

The Draft Masterplan - Figure 05/004 illustrated over page was the focus of a more detailed community and stakeholder engagement process. A Statement of Consultation has been prepared as part of the application pack. A summary of the overall consultation process undertaken is set out below, along with a description of how the scheme has evolved in response to comments received.

The engagement programme for The Works has been managed in the following ways;

Pre-application meetings – Regular correspondence have been held between Wrexham County Borough Council and the consultant team. The purpose of the discussions has been to ensure that any issues have been dealt with early so the planning submission reflects the best scheme for the site and for the community.

Community Event – A community event was also held for stakeholders and local residents. The community event gave everyone the opportunity to view the draft scheme proposals and provide comments and alternative suggestions. The team have received over 30 completed questionnaires, which have been analysed and used to influence the final illustrative masterplan.

Press Releases – There have been several press releases issued by both BNP Paribas and Wrexham County Borough Council in terms of informing the community on progress - both in terms of the councils' own Development Brief and the subsequent development of the masterplan by e*SCAPE.

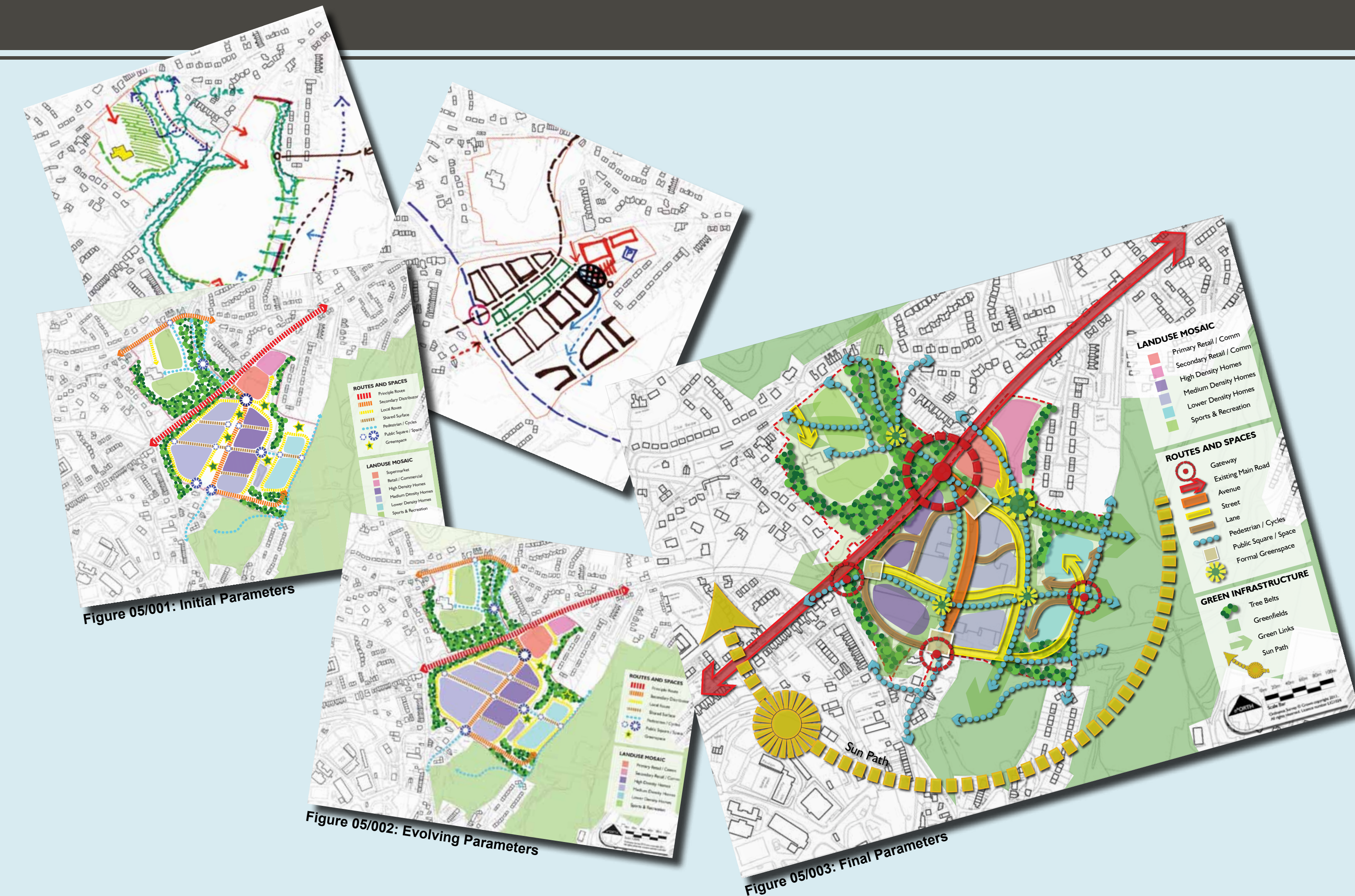




Figure 05/004: Draft Masterplan



Figure 05/005: Final Masterplan

Finalising the Content

In summary, the design of the scheme has responded to the comments and concerns raised by the local community and stakeholders in the following ways:

Connectivity – the ‘stitching’ of the development site into the settlement was a key concern of various stakeholders and has been highlighted as a key consideration within the design parameters and illustrated in the masterplan. The site for the first time since industrialisation is now open, permeable and connected for use by the entire community.

The Central Avenue – is a key link within the site and also between King Street and Llangollen Road. It generally follows the line of a former tramway, re-emphasising a past connection and provides a structural element of the sites’ Green Infrastructure, as well as accommodating surface water collection and storage in the form of a swale and balancing pond which are also used as landscape features within the avenue (see Outline Drainage Strategy).

Density – from the Design Review the location and distribution of uses has changed, so that the higher density areas front the length of Llangollen Road and not just the primary gateway from it.

Sport and Open Spaces - Incidental, naturalistic and formal play opportunities have been incorporated into the masterplan. The officers at Wrexham County Borough Council have indicated that the use of the whole of the northern parcel, coupled with the Park at the foot of the listed furnace; at the Gateway to the southern parcel and the other general areas of Public Realm, Woodland and incidental open space will be more than ample for the development, when considered in the context of the wider public open space network. In addition to their comment the community also suggested a more low-key approach to the sports provision adjacent to the existing Sports and Social Club, creating a grassed kick about area, play areas and general amenity open space; as opposed to artificially surfaced sports pitches.

For further information relating to the programme of consultation please refer to the Consultation Report.

Developing the Masterplan

Figure 06/005 illustrates the final Masterplan which also doubles up as the Indicative Layout that has developed from the above process.

The design evolution did not stop at the parameters stage. As can be seen in the masterplan, the route hierarchy and block structure evolved and developed further as the drawings became more ‘real’ in terms of using building footprints and refining street widths and overlooking distances etc.

The evolution of this masterplan was by no means straight forward, but the final proposals benefitted greatly from the process.

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6.0 Design Parameters

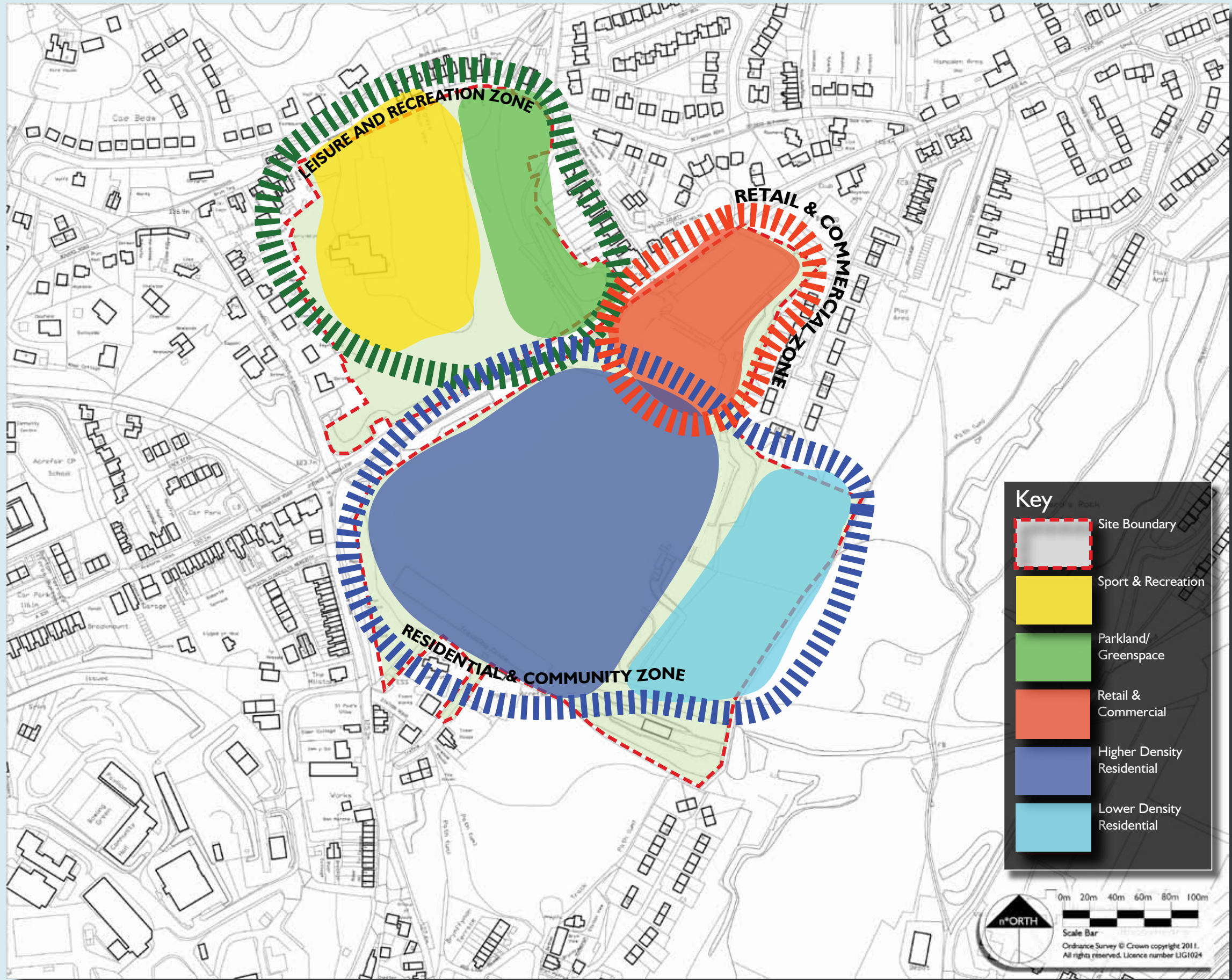


Figure 06/001: Character

Over Arching Parameters

This section is designed to provide the specific parameters required when preparing a Design and Access Statement. Previous chapters have demonstrated how this proposal has been the subject of a robust and comprehensive design process, considering the specific characteristics of this site and its immediate surroundings. The five diagrams shown in this section graphically demonstrate the parameters outlined here. These diagrams combine a number of the parameters to demonstrate a logical progression towards creating a series of site specific principles

It should be stressed that this is only an outline application and therefore the parameters are more focused on establishing the strategic design objectives for the site, a reserved matters application shall then take this work forward adding layers of detail. The Council have provided a clear Development Brief (Published November 2011) for the site and these parameters are designed to directly respond to the design framework proposed in that document. Where relevant the parameters below directly reference sections of the Brief to demonstrate compliance.

The final illustrative masterplan that is shown in the following chapter is a response to all of the parameters detailed within this chapter. It is shown for indicative purposes only and is simply one way in which these parameters may be interpreted. These parameters are designed to provide flexibility, whilst ensuring that the scheme will retain a high quality of urban and landscape design.

Use and Quantum

There are two distinct ‘use’ elements to this outline planning application. This application is specifically for the area identified as the ‘Southern parcel’ within the Council’s Development Brief and therefore focuses on the delivery of the residential and commercial / retail components of a wider scheme for the former Air Products site. This site is 8.28 hectares in size. The area identified as the ‘northern parcel’ is linked to this application by way of a planning obligation and will provide the relevant open space and recreation for this scheme, details of which will be submitted separately.

The over arching character or use is shown on the Character Zones plan (Figure 06/001). The retail and commercial component is designed to occupy a portion of land to the northern end of the site. This has a frontage to Llangollen Road and

was formerly used as the Air Products car park. At this stage the exact size of this element is undetermined but it is anticipated that it would account for no more than 1 hectare of the site depending on the final range of uses proposed at reserved matters stage.

The Development Brief outlines a number of suitable uses (in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of that document) which include Retail (A1 Use Class) development of no more than 300m/sq as well any number of other leisure and commercial uses. These may include Hotel (C1), Pub / Restaurant (A3), Small Office units (B1, B1a) and a series of community and leisure uses (D1 and D2 uses). An extra care facility (Use Class C2) may also be acceptable as part of this mix of uses. This application applies for permission for all of these uses.

The residential character zone is split into two categories - the main former works site and a smaller area of rough grassland which sits above the site fronting the open space. Collectively these will provide approximately 200 dwellings. (Use class C3) offering an overall density of around 30 dwellings per hectare. Of this number the Council’s policy requires 25% affordable housing to be delivered and therefore this will include somewhere between 45 - 55 units depending on final numbers provided at the reserved matters stage - these are likely to be a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed units.

The main site is designed to be a higher density development offering densities between 30 - 40 dwellings per hectare delivering approximately 180 - 190 of the homes. This area should comprise of a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom starter and family homes. A variation of density is shown on the Design Parameters Plan showing a higher density surrounding the central avenue in the vary centre of the site offering a core and aid to legibility. The community consultation has highlighted a requirement for 1 and 2 bedroomed apartments and these may be acceptable in a limited amount subject to market demand.

The upper site will be designed to a lower density which may be as low as 20 - 25 dwellings per hectare. This are will comprise of larger homes of 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms delivering the remainder of the housing (circa. 20 - 30 homes). This lesser density and the lower numbers mean that there is more space for the landscape setting thus integrating it with the open space / parkland beyond.



Figure 06/002: Site Structure

Layout and Movement

The layout has emerged from two overarching key drivers that are demonstrated in the Design Parameters plan. The diagram in Figure 06/002 illustrates how the historical remnants, specifically the tramway and the railway line, are able to provide a starting point for developing a layout for this site. Coupled with this is the desire to create a landscape-led design approach, linking the surrounding greenspaces, recreational areas and countryside as well as protecting the matured trees on the site. The key green links are shown on the Site Structure Plan. Further details are provided within the landscape section.

These drivers have been used to establish a tiered route hierarchy that forms the basis of the design of this site. The main element is a central boulevard which should accommodate street trees, Sustainable Urban Drainage and link public and green spaces. This should be aligned with the former tramway and include a cycle route. The housing should provide a clearly defined street frontage based around 2.5 to 3 storey residential units. Running from this there are a number of Streets and Lanes which form the vehicle network which should be based around shared surface and mews type development. Where these routes join; short raised tables, public squares or landscape features should be introduced to aid legibility. The location of these are shown on the Design Parameters Plan (Figure 06/005).

The layout is also designed to ensure pedestrian and cycle permeability. Currently the site is a barrier to movement from the surroundings so there are clear opportunities to link into surrounding footpaths, open spaces and other routes thus ensuring that maximum permeability and integration is achieved. The 'Re-stitching' plan (Figure 06/003) demonstrates where new cycle and footpaths connections should be sought. Within the site these should be linked with the appropriate route typology and designs at reserved matters will need to ensure that these linking points are reinforced. The key access points are set out in the Access section.

Care will need to be taken to ensure that cycle and disabled access is provided through the site, as there are some significant changes in levels and one or two routes should be identified as accessible routes. However, it should not be necessary to ensure that all routes are fully accessible as it will not always be possible to achieve this given the topographical restraints. Overall the layout established follows guidance in Manual for Streets as requested by the Development Brief (Paragraph 4.1 bullet 3).

The retail and commercial component occupies the most prominent area of site frontage onto Llangollen Road. The layout establishes this as a principle active frontage and any reserved matters application should ensure that this is delivered. The site also has identified an archeological significant Lime Kiln which sits at the centre of the site between the retail and housing components. This is accommodated within a hard and soft landscaped space which forms the link between the two components and offers a vibrant heart for the development.

Collectively this approach demonstrates a response to both the local context and features, as well as reflecting the framework identified within the vernacular study summarised in Chapter 3 of this document.



Figure 06/003: Re-Stitching



Figure 06/004: Route & Space Hierarchy

Scale and Mass

At this outline planning application stage the specific scale and mass of the buildings is not yet determined. This will be a matter for determination at the later reserved matters stage. However, the character of the neighbourhood that is to be created lends itself principally to 2 storey (approx 7m to eaves) development based on the local vernacular. Care should be taken to ensure that appropriate increases in scale are delivered at principle junctions (shown on the Design Parameters Plan as purple circles) and around the green spaces to aid legibility and ensure enclosure.

The vernacular assessment has also highlighted that 2.5 - 3 storey buildings would also be appropriate, but this should be limited to the higher density locations and applications for reserved matters would have to demonstrate how this was contributing the overall design and structure of the development. Development of more than 2 storeys would not be appropriate on the upper site. Here the response to the open / green space beyond needs to be fully taken into account and 1.5 storeys using the roofspace and 2 storey homes would be an appropriate response. There are clear vernacular typologies that advocated this scale.

These parameters are designed to reflect the human scale of built form found in the surrounding architecture and acknowledged as part of the vernacular assessment.

The commercial development will depend on the exact use (or a use) that is proposed. It is unlikely that any of the building(s) will propose a use that is greater than 3 or 4 storeys or equivalent (approx 10m to eaves). Reserved matters applications will have to demonstrate how the scale of the buildings responds appropriately to the surrounding spaces and creates a strong frontage to Llangollen Road. However, given the retaining wall to the rear and north of the site there are no issues of overshadowing or loss of nearby residential amenity and therefore this is a less sensitive design issue.

Appearance and Detailing

As this is an outline planning application and therefore details of materials and appearance are reserved for subsequent approval. Much will depend on the final design of the scheme and the archetypes used. The vernacular study (Chapter 3) has provided details of the local architectural styles, features and materials and it is anticipated that new development will make reference to these elements. The

design parameters do not recommend a pastiche design as the design features highlighted are able to be articulated in a modern style. The Development Brief requests this study as part of the planning application and this should form the starting point for developing the built form for this site.

The principle local materials are red brick with a slate roof; however render and stone detailing are present on a number of the local buildings. Render is usually used as a landmark or on a special building and should be used carefully in the designs to ensure that it does not dominant the street scene. White and pastel shades are most common. All the buildings have a vertical rather than a horizontal emphasis and this should be retained as the architecture for this site develops. Built features should include some gables to the street, bay and oriels windows and quoins where appropriate. Half-timbering and porches are not prevalent in the local vernacular and should be avoided or used sparingly.

Landscape and Trees

In developing design parameters for this site the landscape has played a particularly important role. There are three key landscape elements for which parameters have been set at this outline application stage. A full landscape scheme detailing the hard and soft landscape features will need to be submitted alongside a reserved matters application and reflect the principles / parameters set out below.

The site Design Parameters are based around a strong Green Infrastructure network. The Green Infrastructure elements are shown on a number of parameters plans and comprise of a series of green links (that may manifest themselves as avenues or landscape strips), the existing trees on the site and a series of pocket parks, incidental play areas and public squares. The indicative position of all of these elements is shown on the design parameters plans. The Green Infrastructure network that would be created is designed to ensure that green links are provided between the surrounding open space and countryside and link effectively with the surrounding neighbourhoods. These links work alongside the route network linking together the surrounding vegetation providing ecological corridors and biodiversity networks.

The site is surrounded by a series of mature tree'd banks, some of which are in the control of the applicant, others are within land owned by the highways authority (especially those fronting Llangollen Road.). The ecology studies undertaken have

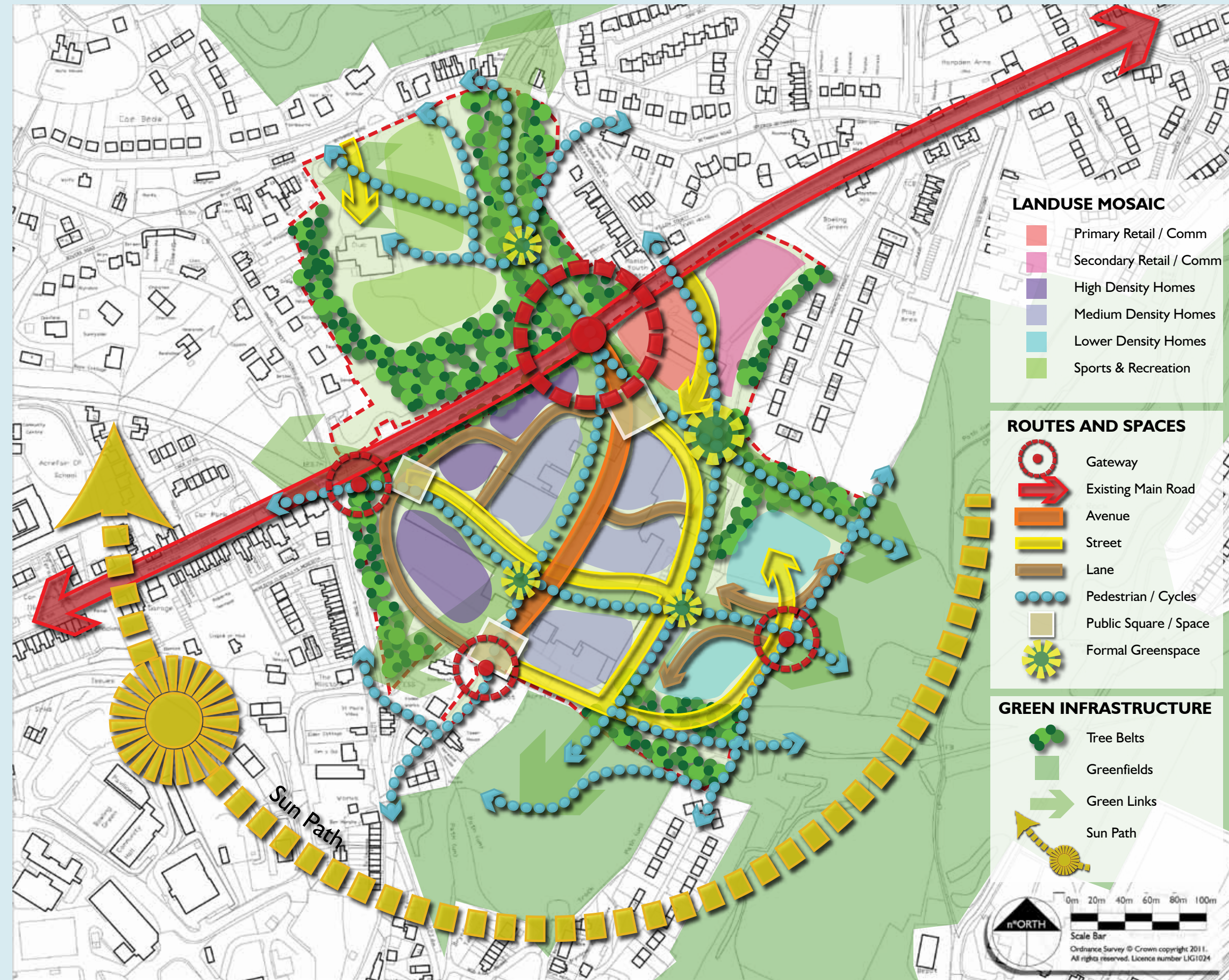


Figure 06/005: Design Parameters

identified these as important habitats and therefore the parameters are designed to retain all of these trees. The proposals recommend some management and maintenance of the trees within the application site boundary, specifically clearing and managing the understory, some limited crown lifting and removal of poor quality or overcrowded trees to maintain the health of these tree banks. Full details of this should be submitted with the reserved matters application.

The opportunities provided by the topography allow for a series of views and vistas across and out to the wider landscape to be delivered. The tramway avenue is a key example of this and should be enhanced through appropriate landscape details at the reserved matters stage, as it provides a key view in the direction of the World Heritage Site. Other opportunities are provide from the upper site where the lower density housing is proposed. Dwellings should ensure that they maximise the opportunities provided to look out over the hills to the west.

The site will also be required to deliver a comprehensive Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme. The Flood Risk Assessment has identified that Swales and collection ponds should be used as the basis for this system. The final landscape design should seek to integrate the landscape features with this system to ensure that both are delivered. There is adequate space within the green incidental spaces, broad avenues and streets to ensure that this can be successfully achieved.

Access and Parking

There two proposed access points to the site. The main access point which will service the residential component will enter from Llangollen Road in broadly the same location as the existing principle site access as illustrated in Figure 06/004. A secondary access to serve parking and servicing for the retail commercial component is proposed from Llangollen Road to the north of the existing access. This should be provided approximately midway between the northern site boundary and the existing access (similar position to the existing car park access). An emergency access point is proposed from Station Road but the restrictions on this road (size and scale) mean that it is not able to be delivered as a further vehicle access point.

Pedestrian and cycle access points are provided in a number of locations around the site to ensure permeability and legibility. These are designed to reflect the 're-stitching' parameters as outlined previously but also to ensure that safe and off-road

cycle and pedestrian connections are provided to nearby recreation areas (including the proposed new recreation assets on the northern parcel) as well as links to the bus routes along the A539 and the B5096. The key pedestrian and cycle routes following the central avenue following roughly the line of the historic tram route as a key access element and is designed to provide the main route through the site and should be accessible to all ages and abilities. This link is in conformity with the Development Brief paragraph 5.6.

The following footpath and cycleway access points should be delivered as part of this application:

- A pedestrian only link between Llangollen Road and the site near to the junction with Kings Street to allow access to the local facilities in that area;
- A pedestrian and cycle link to King Street via Station Road - and associated emergency access;
- A pedestrian and cycle link from the upper site to the footpaths and cycleway to the east;
- A footpath and cycle link through to the northern parcel and its recreation areas - this will need to include safe crossing facilities across the A539.

It is proposed that parking for this site is a mixture of on-street, on-plot and within parking courts, in line with guidance in the Development Brief. The Indicative Masterplan demonstrates how all three forms can be accommodated on the site. It is envisaged that parking courts will be used in the higher density areas and around the central avenue, as there is a requirement to provide a strong building frontage. Parking should be limited in front of the buildings where on-plot is provided, as this erodes the street scene and does not reflect the local vernacular.

The Final Design Parameters

Figure 06/005 illustrates the composite Design Parameters which have developed out of the work illustrated here and in the previous chapters.

These Design Parameters or Urban Design Principles are the first stage of the design process and creates the structure on which the masterplan can thus evolve...



7.0 The Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 07/001: Illustrative Masterplan/Indicative Layout

The Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 07/001) and the accompanying cross-sections (Figure 07/002, 003 and 004) are designed to demonstrate how the Design Parameters outlined in Chapter 6 can be translated into a physical layout for the site and its immediate context. It should be stressed that this is not a final design and that other interpretations of the parameters are possible, however, this demonstrates the soundness of the proposals prepared.

In order to illustrate the strength of the Illustrative Masterplan as a design we have subjected it to the principles of good design as set out in the Design Commission for Wales publication “No Place Like Home”. The following paragraphs demonstrate how, even at the outline stage, this application and indicative masterplan is able to respond to the five principles of Character and Context, Movement, Public Realm, Built Form and Materials and Details.

Character and Context - The density and urbanity of the site is totally appropriate for this location. The character is based on that of the surrounding vernacular, as set out in Chapter 3, and responds to the surrounding landscape context, the topography and the views and vistas. This has allowed the Illustrative Masterplan to demonstrate a unique sense of place or identity without detracting from the overall urban form or looking incongruous.

The scheme is carefully designed around a strong Green Infrastructure network utilising the existing assets on the site such as the tree banks and responds to the nearby parks and recreation spaces. Open spaces have been created within the development which are either of a naturalistic setting or are more formal hard landscape or play spaces.

Movement - The development is designed around inclusivity creating new connections to existing assets and services as well as providing new local facilities and recreation elements - the scheme improves the areas permeability considerably. The clear tiered hierarchy of streets and spaces mean that there is an intuitive legibility running from the main tree lined boulevard which highlights the key cycle and pedestrian route through the site. All the routes are well enclosed and overlooked by active frontage.

Considering sustainable transport modes, the site is able to improve access to public transport for new and existing residents and new streets and connections

to the bus routes on King Street and Llangollen Road are included and clearly visible. Furthermore, the roads and spaces are designed as shared surfaces in the main, taking a lead from Manual for Streets which allows the neighbourhood to be comfortable for those walking and cycling.

Public Realm - At this outline stage there are few details regarding the design of the scheme, however a range of types and sizes of spaces are proposed as part of the outline application. These include small scale naturalistic areas, parks, naturalistic play areas, as well as the improved recreation facilities on the northern parcel. The strong green network and different typologies of space from harder public squares to local parks are shown clearly, pepper-potted throughout the neighbourhood.

Detailed landscape designs will be submitted at the reserved matters stage, but the principles of what should be included is shown in the illustrative masterplan, including the Sustainable Urban Drainage elements and appropriate parking arrangements based around parking courts, on-plot and on-street solutions.

Built Form - The layout of the illustrative masterplan demonstrate a strong sense of enclosure around the defined route network. The avenue / boulevard down the centre of the site along the tramway is clearly defined by strong building lines offering good surveillance over this important route. The definition of public and private spaces is delivered through the use of strong urban blocks and the use of corner turning archetypes. The commercial and retail component offers a mixture of use offering activity and vibrancy.

The overall form of the neighbourhood maximise solar gain with many of the properties having a southern or south-eastern rear aspect which allows for the use of outdoor private space. Many of the properties also include opportunities for extension, alteration and conservatories as there are large gardens provided on many of the larger family-size properties.

Materials and Details - The outline application does not provide details of the materials to be use or the details on the buildings. The vernacular study contained in the Chapter 3 and the appearance parameters give some guidance as to how the 2D masterplan might be translated into physical buildings. At this stage flexibility is retained in order to ensure that the site can be successfully delivered by a range of possible developers.



Figure 07/002: Illustrative Cross Section 1



Cross Section Location Plan

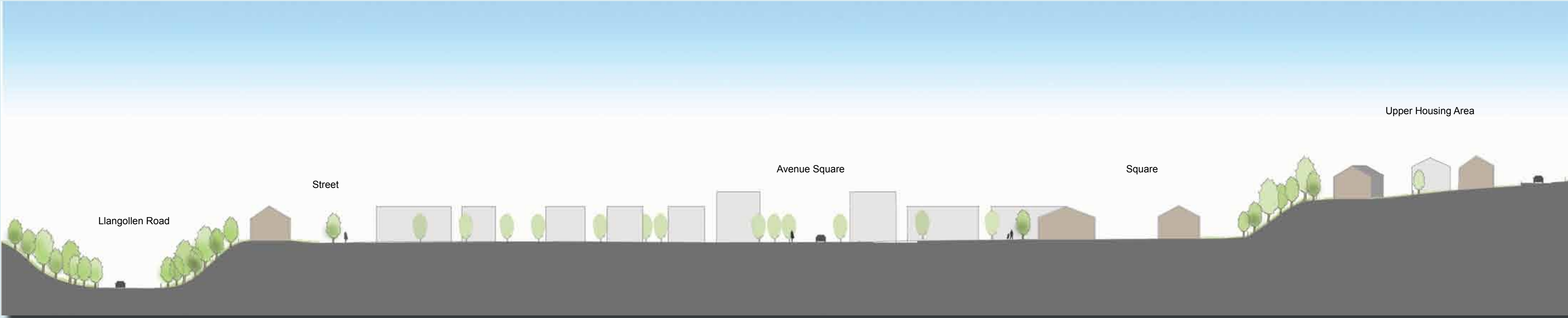


Figure 07/003: Illustrative Cross Section 2



Figure 07/004: Illustrative Cross Section 3

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8.0 Sustainability



The masterplan as described previously incorporates sustainability into the structure and layout; dealing with orientation, accessibility, connections and use of passive solar gain etc. However in this chapter we can generally set out the approach to detailed design which will form part of the latter stages of design development, after the determination of this outline application. Any new development should be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency, creating flexibility in the use of property, public spaces and service infrastructure and introducing new approaches to transportation, traffic management and parking. Developments should be flexible to accommodate changes of use and circumstances through changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Sustainable building techniques

Where appropriate, sustainable building construction techniques will be used in line with current building regulations. Sustainable construction measures typically comprise a combination of the following:

- Improved energy efficiency through siting, design and orientation.
- Water conservation measures;
- An element of renewable energy production;
- Use of building materials capable of being recycled; and
- An element of construction waste reduction or recycling.

The Code for Sustainable Homes assesses the ability of a development to achieve sustainability through a package of measures. These measures relate to the whole house and have been strongly informed by the Building Research Establishment Method (BREEAM) EcoHomes standard. The code covers the following elements:

- Energy Efficiency and carbon emissions;
- Water consumption;
- Use and resourcing of materials;
- Surface water run off and flood risk
- Waste management and recycling;
- Minimising/reducing pollution;
- Health and well being;
- Management, including security and construction; and
- Ecological protection and enhancement.

The development proposes a minimum 33% reduction in CO² emissions across all plots will be achieved. This will be delivered through the Government endorsed hierarchy of improved fabric efficiencies and services with any surplus requirement provided by appropriate renewable/low carbon technology.

To ensure minimum environmental impact the site works will also be subject to a number of associated environmental criteria:-

1. Production of a site waste management plan;
2. The development will be subject to ethical performance considerations;
3. Where possible, products and materials which generate the least environmental impact will be used;
4. Water saving measures will also be taken into account as part of our sanitary design; and
5. Proposals will be subject to further evaluation as part of detailed design.

Sustainable Transport

The location of the site provides good access to local transport such that the need for car based travel will be reduced. Footpaths and cycleways form an important part of the infrastructure within the development and there are a range of local facilities within walking distance. Each home will be equipped with a bike store in the garden area to encourage cycling and reduce reliance on car usage.

Summary

Our proposals for this proposed development will contribute to the already well established local community, allowing more people to live in a sustainable way and offering individual flexibility in terms of their lifestyle choices. Where possible we aim to mitigate the impact of climate change over the longer term.

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9.0 Conclusions



This Design and Access Statement, the Illustrative Masterplan/Indicative Layout and the supporting documents submitted as part of this outline application offers a comprehensive approach to the development.

“The masterplan has evolved out of the sites own opportunities, as well as taking account of the communities, stakeholders and local authorities own ideas and comments.”

The complex nature of the masterplan in terms of the streets, squares and spaces, as well as the use of the site topography and landscape setting enables this scheme to have an immediate sense of place with various character areas and densities of development. It therefore allows potential residents to have a variety of choices in terms of what they want or need from a property, as well as where they’d like to live. The choice ranges from townhouses at the gateway and frontage of the development, to detached villas living on the woodland edge or in an elevated position overlooking the valley.

“The proposals are in every sense unique to the site and offers Acrefair the opportunity to have something very different to the generic developments of past decades.”

Whilst physical development cannot make a cohesive community in itself, it can offer the framework in which a community can develop, thrive and become vibrant.

This masterplan does just that and will create a neighbourhood which is outward looking, part of the wider townscape, integrated into Acrefairs existing fabric and be something the settlement can be proud of in terms of new development and a gateway to the wider area.

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