

central park

design brief document
january 2012



COMMERCIAL ESTATES GROUP





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design brief

PART

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the key objectives

1. To secure the development of a high quality sustainable and commercially successful mixed use development. This will add to the facilities, Image and economy of the Borough of Darlington.
2. Central Park should generate nationally recognised iconic images that creates awareness and improves perceptions of Central Park and Darlington.
3. To ensure that Central Park is complementary to and fully integrated with the continued regeneration of Darlington.
4. Flexibility should be built into the masterplan to enable the development to respond to emerging market opportunities.
5. Central Park should help create an inclusive and harmonious community of Darlington.

P1.1 _____ the vision

PRINCIPLE:

- Create a central linear park that is the heart of the development
- The landscape should provide a catalyst to resolving a truly interactive, sustainable and inspiring environment threaded together by common themes and principles
- Use these principles to integrate the existing surrounding urban framework of Darlington through physical and virtual desire lines
- Landscape and lighting, focal points and desire lines, site constraints, and sustainable design should provide the main driving forces behind the masterplan solution
- The linear park should provide the heart and lungs of Darlington and set a new precedent for how mixed use urban development should be planned in the future
- The interplay of architecture and landscape should provide an environment that engages workers, visitors and residents alike and at the same time provides an exciting and invigorating place to live, work and play





P1.2 understanding the place

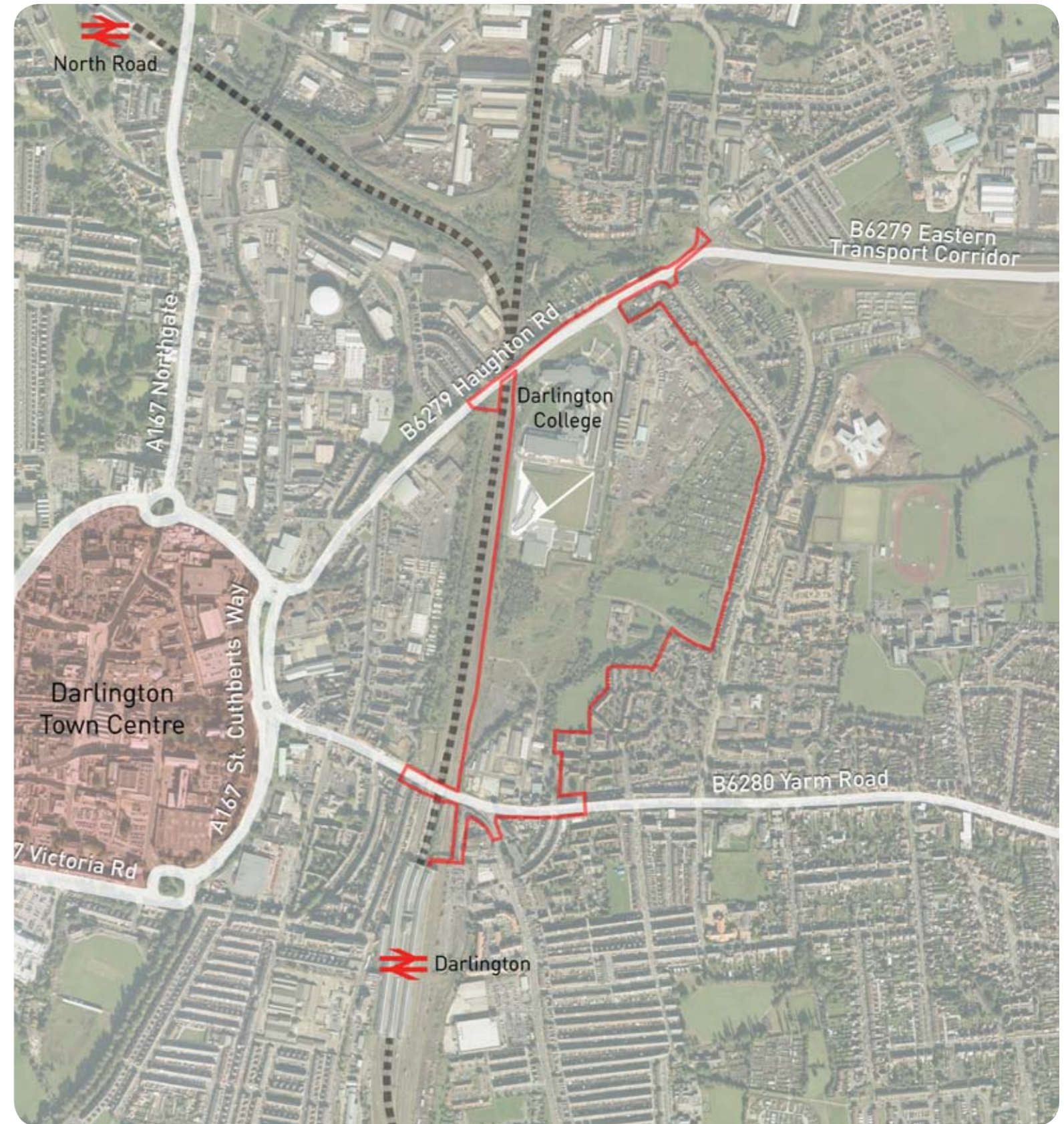
PRINCIPLE:

Central Park has been formed and shaped by the historic development of Darlington itself. The current site is in a phase of stagnation and dereliction, caused by the need for regeneration.

Utilising key opportunities

The site provides opportunities to create a sense of place by utilising existing site opportunities such as

- Habitat and Biodiversity Value
- Landscape mitigation to minimise loss and improve the developments biodiverse potential
- Maximising landscaping, existing and proposed, against critical development mass will be a key consideration of the overall masterplan



Above: Site location plan in context

Left: Central Park - Habitat Priority Map



P1.3 _____ the constraints

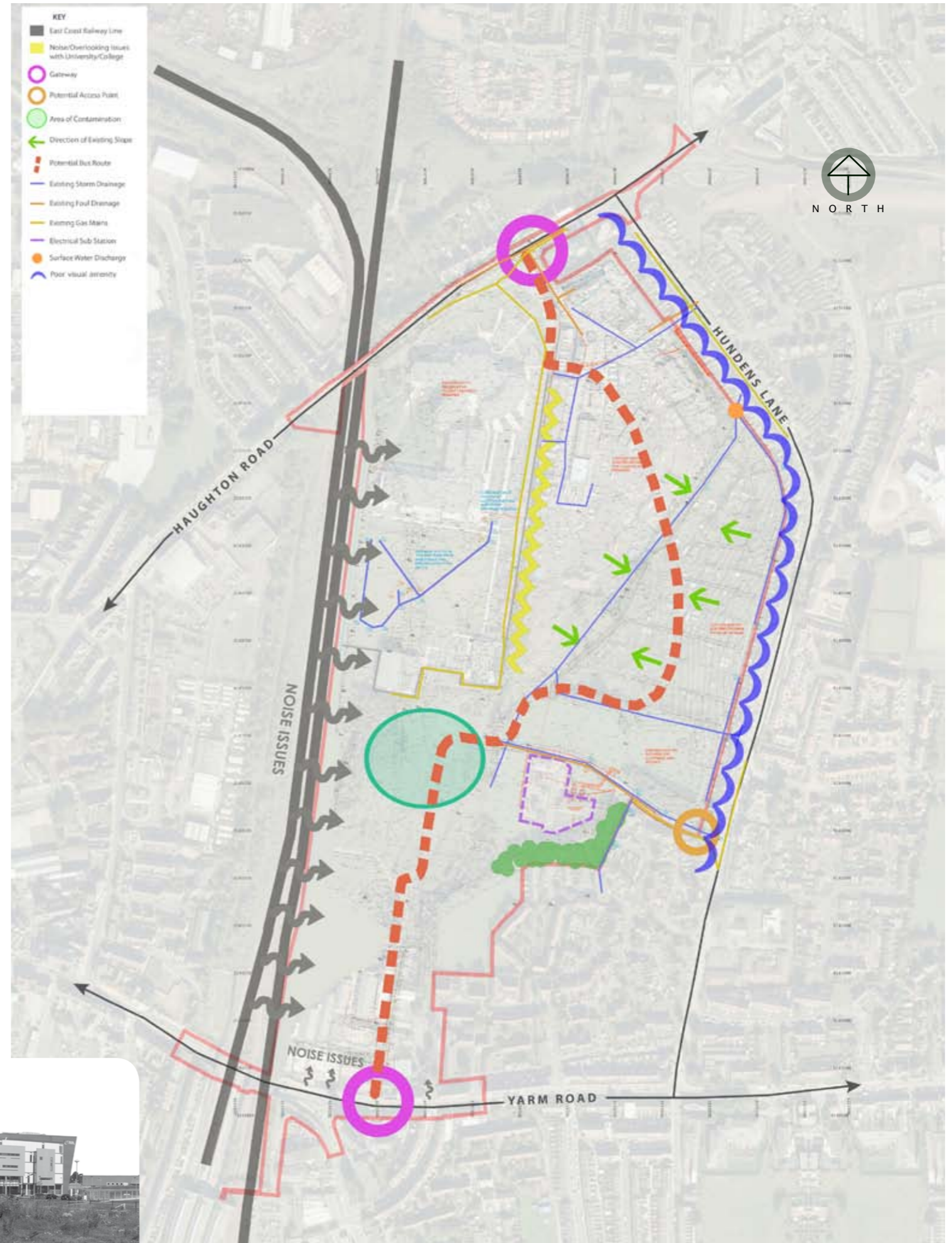
PRINCIPLE:

The site constraints will help configure the development cells and provide the development with a unique sense of place.

Working with existing constraints

The diagram adjacent clearly identifies and characterises all the site constraints which will need to be addressed in order for the development to proceed. These include:

- Existing Slope Topography
- Potential access and phasing issues
- Existing Utilities
- Noise issues
- Ground Conditions
- All land ownerships and acquisitions within the masterplan are a key requirement to delivering the overall Central Park development



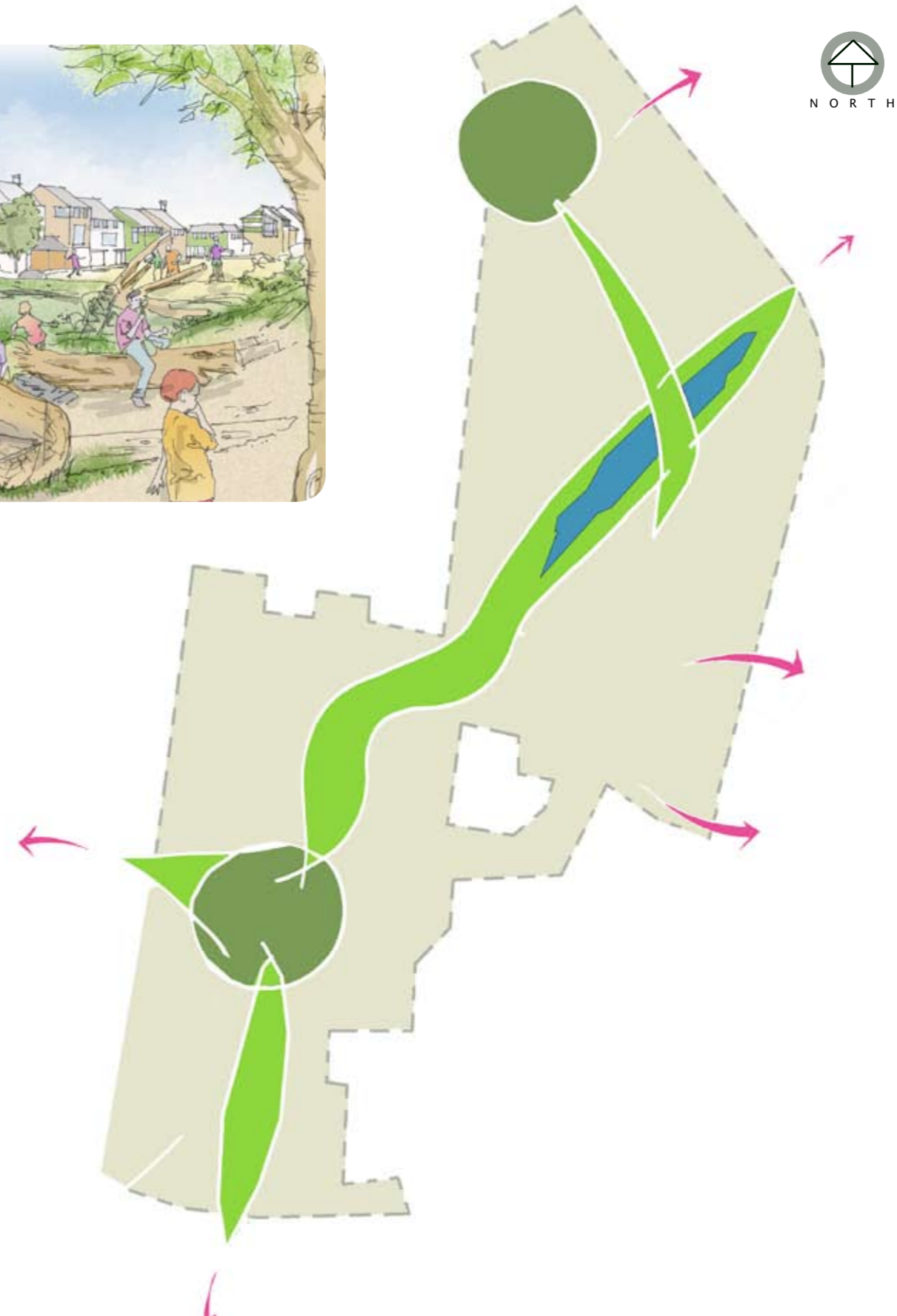


P1.4 _____ the concept

A Linear Park forms the central unifying feature which runs right through the development from north to south.

On either side of the Linear Park development cells are situated, defined by their site constraints.

The Linear Park provides a sequence of spaces and character areas which inform and define each development cell.





P1.5 _____ the masterplan

PRINCIPLE:

The masterplan ethos should be all about movement patterns and legibility underpinned by a linear central park which is based on desire lines to home, work or study.

Postcards of Darlington

The movement framework created by the Linear Park will allow the proposed development to link to the existing community and Darlington Town Centre. The overall green framework will define Central Park by:

- 'Sequences of Spaces'
- Landmark Buildings
- Delivering the required backdrop for the residential and commercial buildings
- Providing important marketing images that capture an aspirational 'Postcards of Darlington' setting



- KEY**
- Proposed Site Boundary
 - Proposed Development Cells
 - Cell A - Residential
 - Cell B - Residential
 - Cell C - Residential
 - Cell D - Residential
 - Cell E - Residential / Enterprise Zone 1 / Local Ctr
 - Cell F - Residential / Depot Location
 - Cell G - Residential incl. potential 3 storey adjacent to sports hall / Enterprise Zone 2
 - Cell H - Residential
 - Proposed Commercial Area
 - Cell 1 - Commercial / MSCP
 - Cell 2 - Commercial / Enterprise Zone 3
 - Cell 3 - Commercial / Network Rail Ownership
 - Cell 4 - Live / Work Units
 - Proposed Bus Route
 - Gateway
 - Temporary Secondary Vehicular Access Point
 - Potential Local Centre
 - Proposed Bus Gate
 - Linear Park
 - Proposed / Enhanced Pedestrian / Cycle Access Point
 - East Coast Main Railway Line
 - Potential ped/cycle bridge into Town Centre Fringe
 - Potential ped/cycle bridge over Yarm Road





P1.6 _____ the linear park

PRINCIPLE:

The various phases of development will be accessed, linked and unified by a linear park which runs north/south through the scheme to promote green bio-diverse desire lines to the Town, University and Station.

A Green Framework

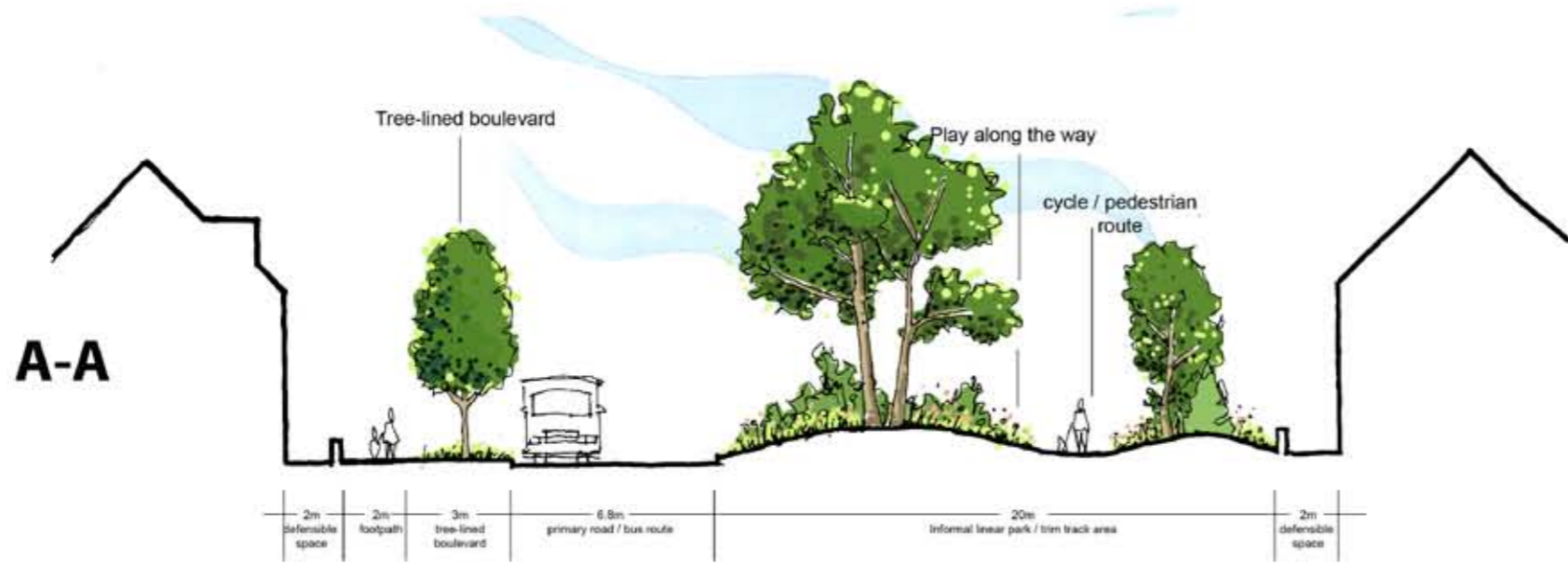
The Linear Park will form the 'Spine' of the development, providing a high quality 'Sequences of Spaces' that act as an effective skeleton for the ensuing development cells which occur on either side of this landscaped movement corridor.

The Linear Park shall be large enough to be attractive, well managed and maintained and functional, whilst at the same time, not in-balancing the relationship between net and gross developable land.

Key requirements include:

- Character Areas
- Width of Green Space
- Configuration, and;
- Landscape Elements therein
- Acknowledge existing Habitat and Biodiversity Value

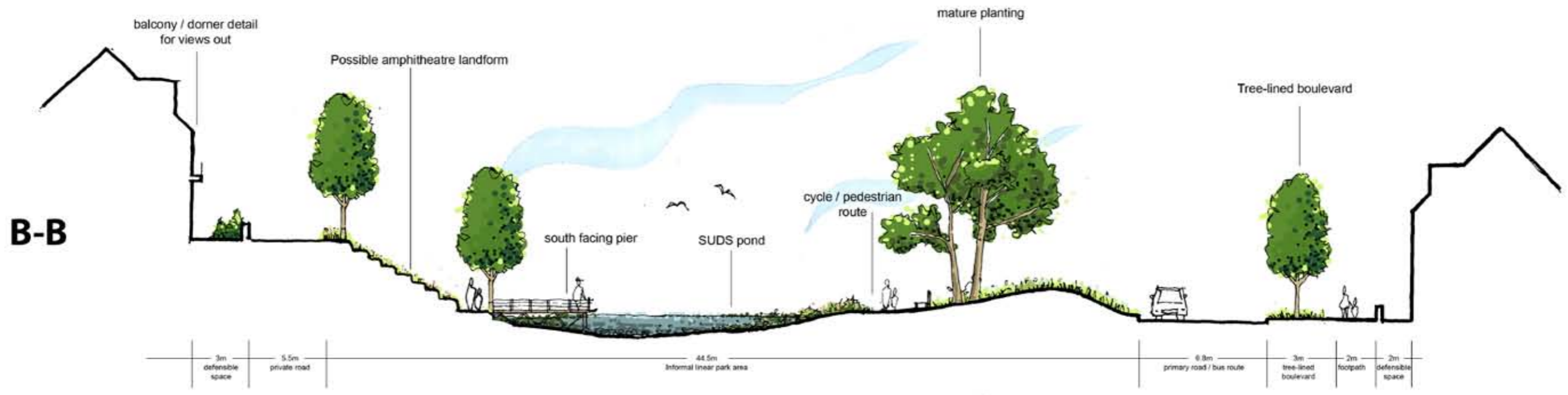




Informal Linear Park and Trim Track - Woodland Area

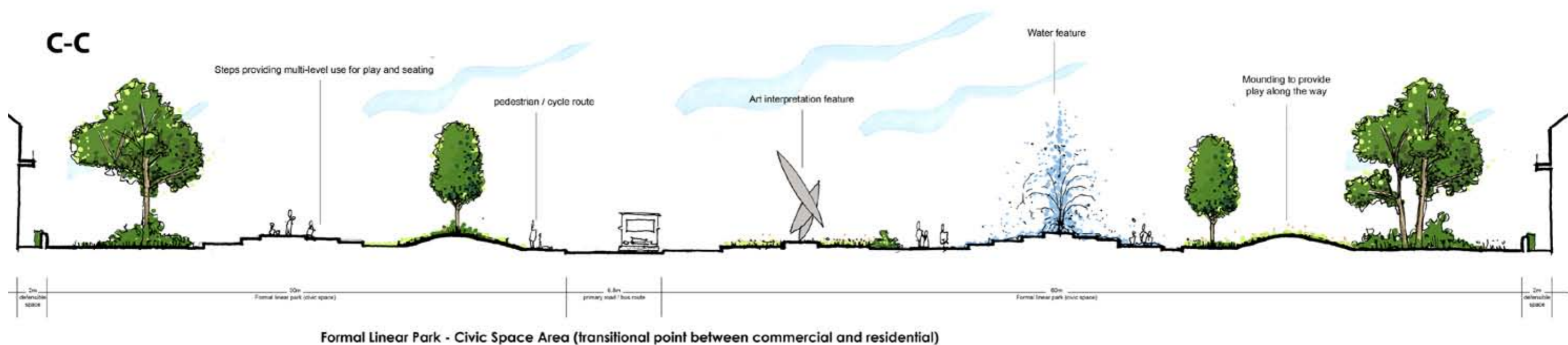


Location Plan



Informal Linear Park - Lakeside

Images help illustrate the scale and spatial quality required for the Central Park and are for illustrative purposes only.



Images help illustrate the scale and spatial quality required for the Central Park and are for illustrative purposes only.



P1.7 character threads

PRINCIPLE:

The Linear Park which runs north to south generates a distinct sense of place. Over this, the character threads define a series of key spaces which will make a significant contribution to the character of the development as follows:

1. Local Centre

Character

An area that defines the North Houghton Gateway to the development and provides a strong visual link between the Local Centre and Houghton Road itself. This area may also accommodate some first floor offices above retail units.

Design Principles

- North Houghton Gateway
- A community hub area that responds to soft and hard landscaping elements to incorporate car parking areas
- Must respond to the relationship with College building adjacent
- Must be visually connected to Houghton Road to help maximise the retail offer with 'customer footfall'

2. Woodland Area

Character

A woodland planted area that provides areas for informal recreational activities whilst accommodating pedestrian and cycle movement patterns and also provides a visual and acoustic buffer to the depot area until such time this area becomes available for development.

Design Principles

- A substantial woodland/planting amenity space
- Woodland area to provide a visual buffer to the Depot area
- Woodland buffer subsequently becomes the margin/boundary of a further landscaped development area once the Depot has been relocated

- Opportunities for informal 'play along the way'
- Accommodates pedestrian and cycle desire lines

3. Lakeside

Character

An informal, rural area that consists of an incidental body of water that provides a significant destination for the overall Linear Park, whilst enhancing biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Design Principles

- Inclusion of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) to provide significant water feature and accommodate the change in level
- A pond area that enhances biodiversity
- Provide an informal/rural habitat with areas of seating, play and way finders
- The space should be overlooked by development cells to provide passive surveillance of all public amenity spaces

4. Civic Space

Character

An area that provides a transitional point between the commercial quarter and the residential cells. In effect a civic space which responds to both hard and soft landscaping and encapsulates all rural and urban qualities within the development.

Design Principles

- An interface between commercial and residential
- A formal space with hard and soft landscaping features
- An interpretation of both rural qualities in the north and urban qualities in the south which allow workers and residents to inhabit the space all times of the day and night
- Opportunities for a more formal play provision
- Clear and legible routes to the University and station are to be provided

5. Lime Tree Avenue

Character

An area that provides a formal linear boulevard space within the heart of the commercial quarter that enables desire lines to the station and University.

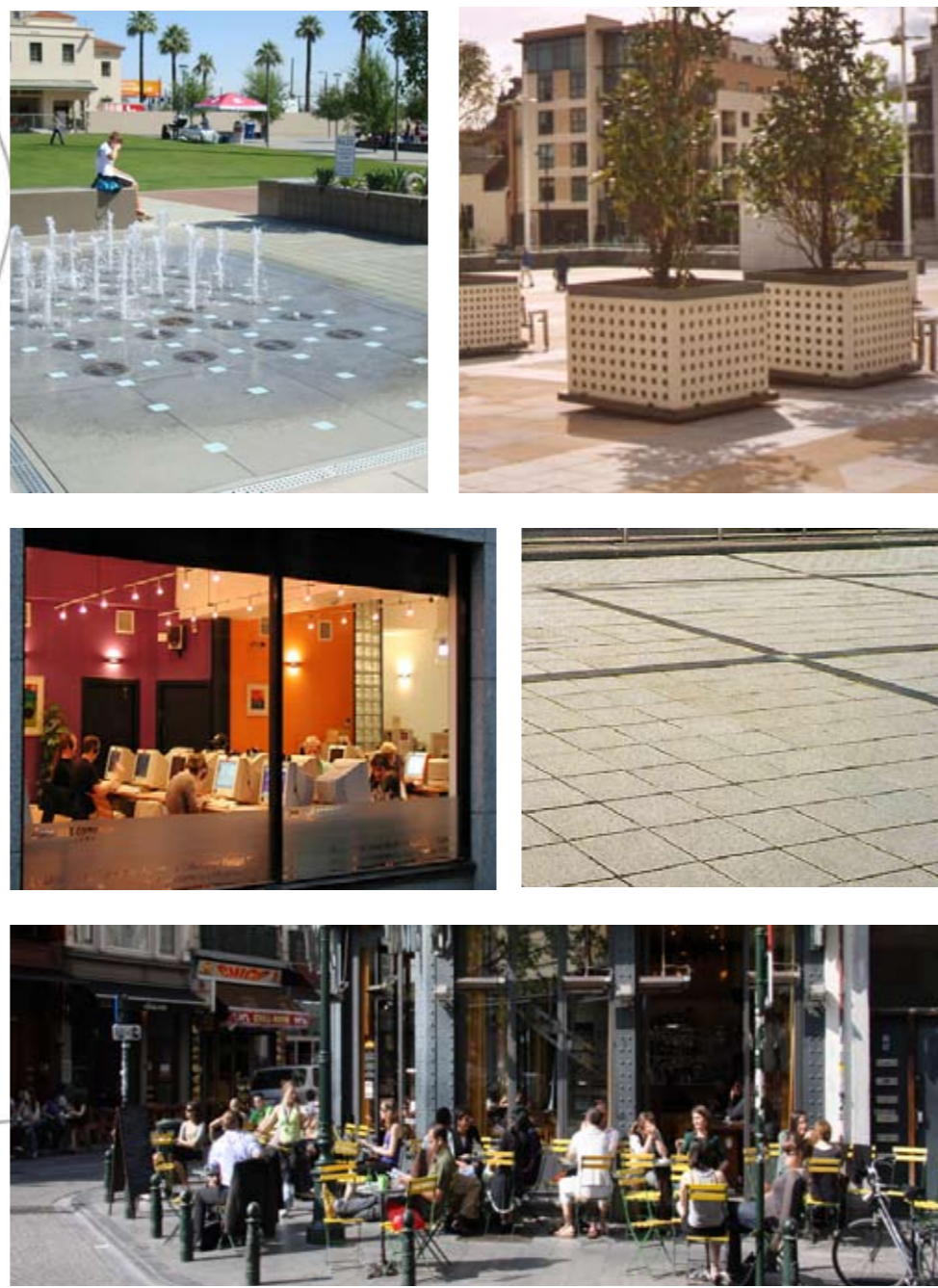
Design Principles

- An urban edge that responds to the southern Yarm Road gateway
- A tree-lined boulevard
- Hard and soft landscaping should provide a formal character
- Bus pick up and drop off point to be provided
- Clear and legible routes to the University and station are to be provided

All the above ideas and concepts should be explored and expanded upon through the masterplanning process.



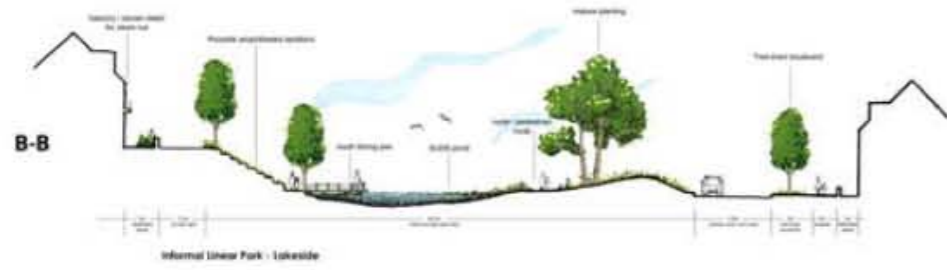
1. Local Centre



2. Woodland Area



3. Lakeside



4. Civic Space



5. Lime Tree Avenue





P1.8 the development cells

PRINCIPLE:

The masterplan should clearly establish the boundaries of the development cells. Development cells and the overall development area should be calculated, and cross-referenced with the project viability/business plan.

Establishing realistic phasing of cells

Development cells must be clearly established with regard to realistic phasing, so that the scheme is robust and flexible enough to accommodate a number of scenarios within the delivery programme, as shown in the table below and still maintain existing timescales.

| Indicative Development Cells |
|--|
| Cell A - Residential Cell B - Residential Cell C - Residential Cell D - Residential Cell E - Residential / Enterprise Zone 1 / Local Centre Cell F - Residential / Depot Location Cell G - Residential / possibly incl. 3st building / Enterprise Zone 2 Cell H - Residential |
| Indicative Commercial Area |
| Cell 1 - Commercial / Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) Cell 2 - Commercial / Enterprise Zone 3 / Hotel Cell 3 - Commercial Cell 4 - Live/Work Units |

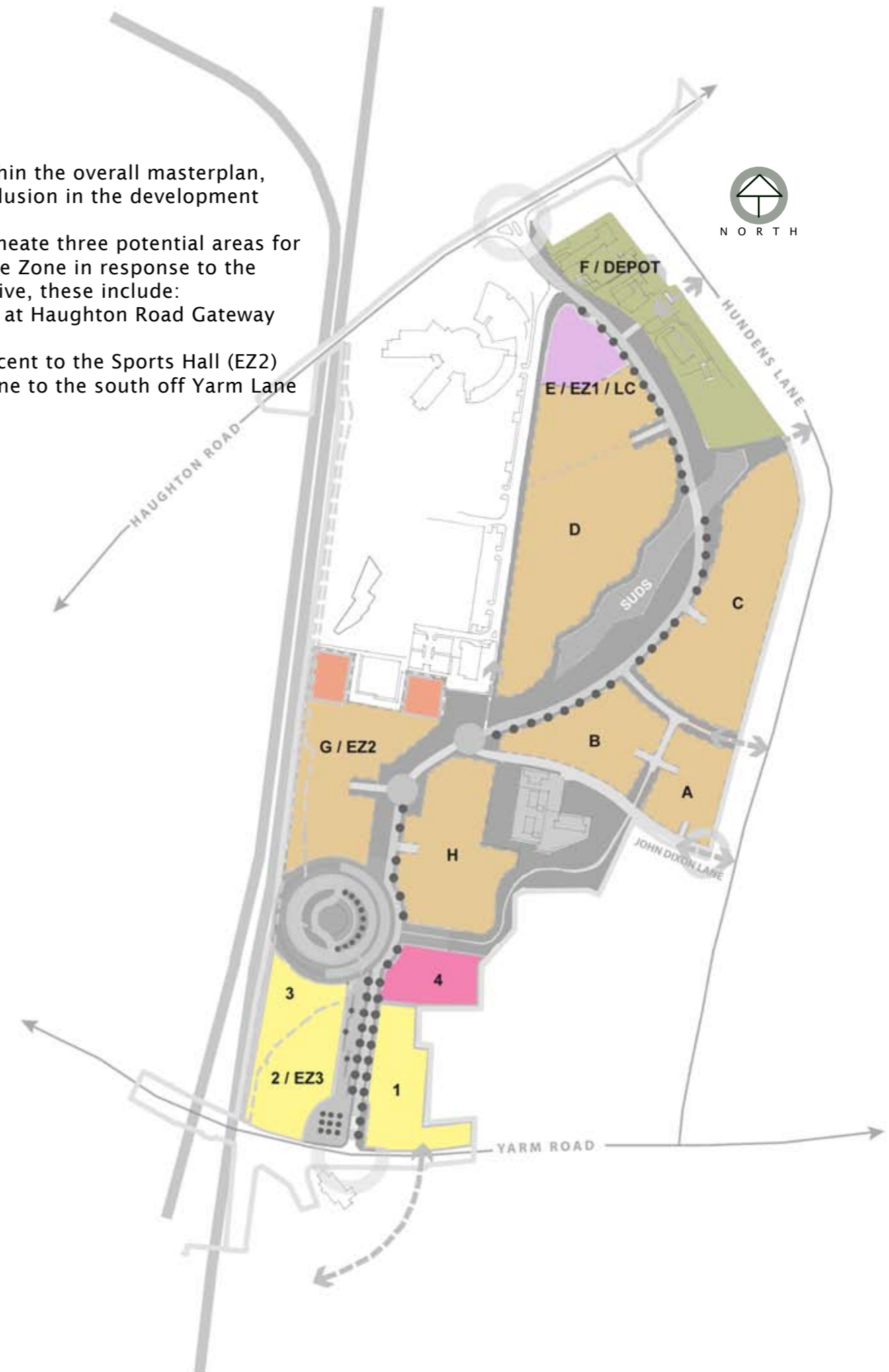
The main scenarios include:

- The potential for rationalising the existing Depot facilities (DEPOT) within the existing site to free up development land at an early stage for the Local Centre is to be fully explored, and the eventual functional and attractive proposals for the staged withdrawal of Depot facilities from the site
- Network Rail land ownership (Cell 3/G) must be included

as a development cell within the overall masterplan, with a programme for inclusion in the development

The masterplan shall delineate three potential areas for the Central Park Enterprise Zone in response to the recent Government Initiative, these include:

- The top end of site at Houghton Road Gateway (EZ1)
- The mid point adjacent to the Sports Hall (EZ2)
- The commercial zone to the south off Yarm Lane (EZ3)





P1.9 numbers and densities

PRINCIPLE:

The housing numbers and commercial and retail outputs must be safeguarded to maintain commercial viability.

Housing Numbers / Development Capacity

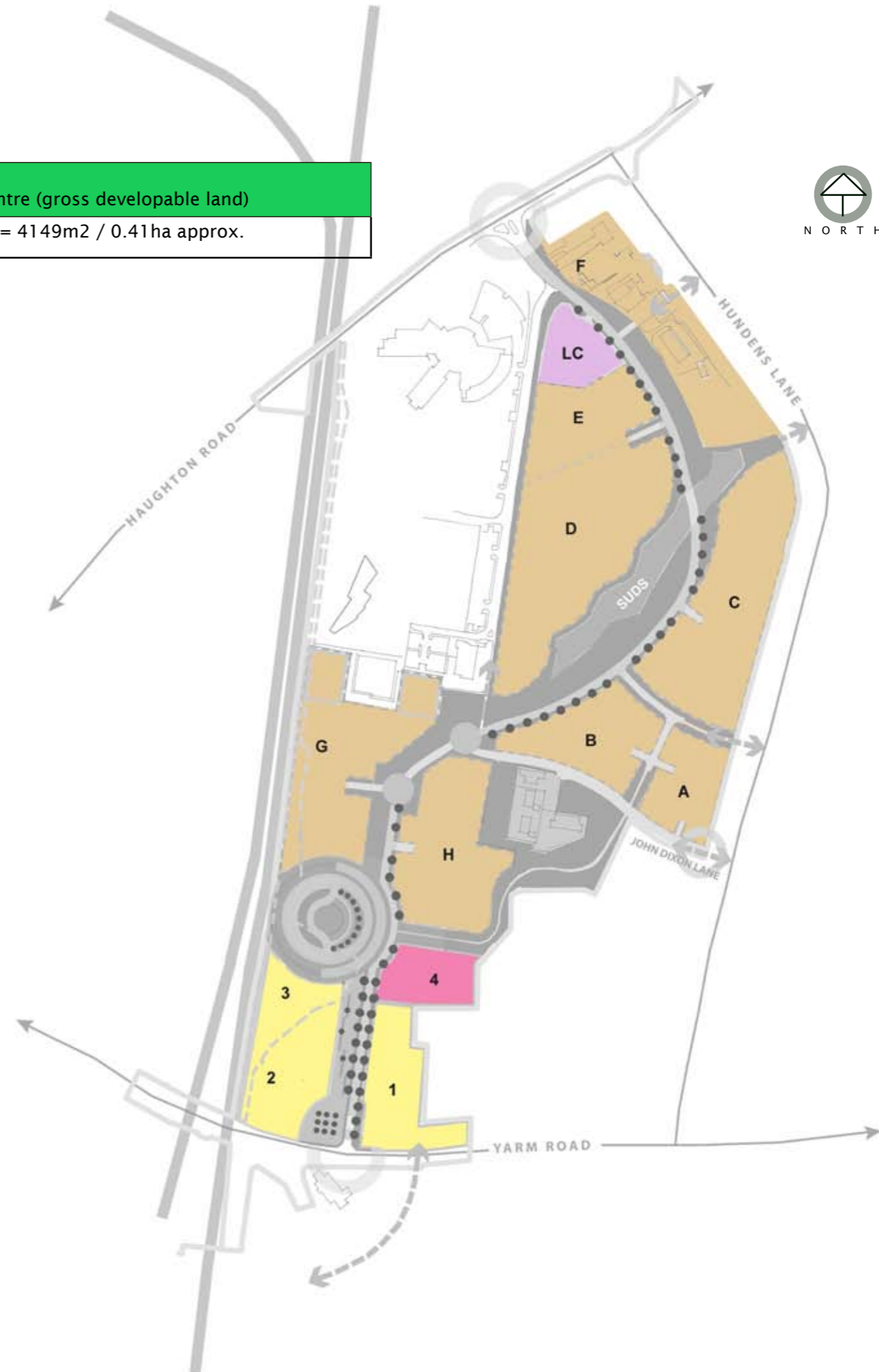
Development cells (A-H) in the diagram adjacent highlight the critical mass required to deliver no fewer than 450 residential units. The limitations and thresholds for retail development are as follows:

1. Local Centre (LC): 1x400sqm food retail, upto 3x100sqm other A1 retail plus A3 and A4 uses
2. Overall scheme: No more than 1,000sqm retail throughout (with limit of 100sqm per unit with exception on the food retail unit identified above)
3. A1, A3 and A4 uses should not exceed 1,700sqm throughout the development, although there is more flexibility surrounding the A3 and A4 uses especially in terms of individual unit size

The table below highlights approximate assumptions of numbers and areas of each of the development cells.

| Indicative Residential Cells (assuming all cells below are residential) |
|--|
| Cell A - 25 units @ 40dph Cell B - 38 units @ 40dph Cell C - 70 units @ 35dph Cell D - 77 units @ 35 dph Cell E - 33 units @ 40 dph Cell F - 53 units @ 40 dph Cell G - 113 units (incl. 48no. 3 storey element) @ 40 dph Cell H - 41 units @ 40 units Total = 450 units |
| Indicative Commercial Area (gross developable land) |
| Cell 1 - 8245m ² / 0.82ha Cell 2 - 7223m ² / 0.72ha Cell 3 - 6947m ² / 0.69ha Cell 4 - Live/Work Area - 3789m ² / 0.37ha Total Commercial Area (excl. Live/Work) = 2.23ha approx. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Potential Local Centre (gross developable land) |
| | Local Centre Area = 4149m ² / 0.41ha approx. |





P1.10 addressing other design issues

PRINCIPLE:

The masterplan should seek to address further design issues so that exemplar design quality is maximised within the realms of deliverability.

The Aspirations for Central Park

- A dynamic new gateway to the south with signature buildings to maximise its exceptional main line location
- A new street with an urban feel, threading the site to introduce an active spine and stimulate travel on foot and bike throughout
- An aspiration to have two new footbridges encouraging movement to the station, college and Town Centre fringe
- High density around the commercial area with principle squares having active frontages at ground level
- An integrated mix of uses including premium office space, a hotel with conference facilities, homes including apartments, affordable housing, terraced, semi-detached and detached housing
- Public art of real distinction
- Create a new area of the town centre and nationally iconic public realm
- Achieve a carefully considered balance of uses that delivers employment, housing and leisure in appropriate phases
- Maintain and respond to views of Darlington town centre's signature towers and spires
- Capitalise on the excellent location next to the town centre and main line station
- Creation of buildings with high standards of design and environmental sustainability

- Respect the suburban boundaries to the east, the urban character of the college to the north and the town centre feel to the south
- Provide significant and sustainable formal/informal green open space
- Offer a commercially robust and deliverable solution
- Provide landmark and significant buildings throughout the scheme to acknowledge gateways, vistas and nodal points (see diagram adjacent)





1. The interface with University and College

- Access to the overall development will not be possible through College grounds/College road and access way
- An appropriate boundary between the College and development area needs to be developed, that prevents student 'fly parking' whilst creating a high quality visual perimeter to the College
- The boundary needs to be substantial and of quality, creating an appropriate transition from College Campus to an attractive and secure housing community

2. Land adjacent to College Leisure Building

The proximity of the large scale college gym building is an issue and could be addressed by a number of possible scenarios which include:

- Increasing the distance between the new development and existing leisure building
- Introducing buildings of similar scale in close proximity
- Provide accommodation for live/work units or potential live/work units with some employment usage
- Accommodate apartment blocks in a 3 storey format with communal areas and access facing the large scale leisure building

3. Secure By Design and Pedestrian Movement

- There shall not be a pedestrian connection between the development area and the College car park area running east to west
- Pedestrian access should be provided running north to south towards the College and railway station and careful design mitigation is required in this area
- Minimise conflicts with student car parking within the residential area and address all Secure By Design principles
- Maximising pedestrian links north and south between university building and railway station is a key priority for the scheme (3a on plan)

- A bus gate should be provided within the development which prevents a through route for cars but will provide direct access north and south for buses, pedestrians and cyclists (3b on plan)
- A long term aspiration to provide a pedestrian/cycle bridge over Yarm Road to the station and bridge connecting into Town Centre fringe (3c on plan)

4. Car Parking and Access

The provision of cost effective and plentiful car parking is key to the delivery of a marketable commercial scheme. Proposals should include:

- Surface car parking for Commercial area in short term
- Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) provision in the longer term is to be illustrated within the masterplan
- MSCP's proximity to railway station provides an opportunity for commuters to reach the station and this issue needs to be clearly illustrated within the masterplan
- Enhancement of pedestrian access to railway station from Central Park
- Provision of a functional and attractive public transport 'drop off and pick up' point should be a key consideration to the success of the Commercial area
- Car parking and access issues relate to the entire site and need to be addressed on a cell by cell basis

5. Addressing Design Quality Standards

- All commercial development should be delivered to BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum
- Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 should be the baseline standard for all dwellings
- Incorporate Lifetime Homes principles into the design and construction of the dwellings
- Possible Combined Heat and Power (CHP) solutions should be considered with possible options to retro-fit within the linear park when commercially viable

20% on-site renewables is required through the Core Strategy

