



Hicks Road Masterplan Updated June 2012

Rolfe Judd



This Masterplan forms part of the published evidence base to the Submission Core Strategy. It explains how Strategic Site Proposal SS2 Land at Hicks Road, Markyate will be delivered. It also expands upon the development principles for the site which are in the Core Strategy. The information in the master plan has been prepared by the agents for the landowners in collaboration with Dacorum Borough Council.

The Council intends to approve the master plan once the Core Strategy is adopted (anticipated early 2013). The masterplan will then provide a more detailed planning statement as a basis for further consultation and for progressing future development.

A planning application has been submitted to the Council in August 2011 on part of the land covered by the masterplan. This was for a mixed residential/commercial/community development, and has been recommended for approval subject to the completion of a legal agreement.

Details of the Core Strategy can be found on the Council's website (www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning) or by contacting:

Strategic Planning and Regeneration team
Planning, Development and Regeneration
Dacorum Borough Council
Civic Centre
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead HP1 1HH

e-mail: strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk

telephone: 01442 228660

Design team



Client
Zog Brownfield Ventures Ltd
56A South Molton Street, London W1K 5LL
Tel: 020 7529 6800
Contact: John West

ROLFE JUDD

Planning Consultants
Rolfe Judd
Old Church Court, Claylands Road
The Oval, London SW8 1NZ
Tel: 020 7556 1500
Contact: Jon Roshier

GML Architects

Architecture
GML Architects
1st Floor, 36-37 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8QZ
Tel: 020 7490 4299
Contact: Nick Makasis



Highways and Transport Environment / Sustainability
ENTRAN
Eden Lodge Studios, Eden Office Park, Chapel Pill Lane
Ham Green, Bristol BS20 0BX
Tel: 012 7537 5007
Contact: Richard Fitter



Landscape Consultants
Fabrik
38A High Street, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1BD
Tel: 014 2059 3250



Employment Consultants
Brasier Freeth
The Courtyard, 77-79 Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire, HP1 1LF
Tel: 01442 263033



GVA Grimley
Head Office, 10 Stratton Street, London W1J 8JR
Tel: 08449 02 03 04

Contents

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Hicks Road- Summary of opportunities and benefits
- 1.3 The Master plan approach
- 1.4 Implementation and delivery

2 Markyate Village Analysis

- 2.1 Location and history
- 2.2 Topography
- 2.3 Land cover
- 2.4 Local character and High Street

3 Hicks Road Site Analysis

- 3.1 Markyate Industrial Estate site
- 3.2 Existing Townscape analysis
- 3.3 Existing land use plan
- 3.4 Conservation area and listed buildings
- 3.5 Connections
- 3.6 Existing building heights
- 3.7 Landscape appraisal
- 3.8 Trees and vegetation
- 3.9 Visual appraisal
- 3.10 Open space and play analysis

4 Hicks Road Site Masterplan

- 4.1 An opportunity for regeneration
- 4.2 Constraints
- 4.3 Opportunities

5 Hicks Road Site Specific Issues

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Employment considerations and existing tenants
- 5.3 Developing a transport and movement strategy
- 5.4 Car parking strategy
- 5.5 Flood risk
- 5.6 Contaminated land
- 5.7 Ecology
- 5.8 Relocation of existing surgery

6 Proposed Materplan Solutions The Vision

- 6.1 Conceptual diagram
- 6.2 Townscape approach
- 6.3 Approach to open spaces
- 6.4 Example area 1: public square
- 6.5 Example area 2: homezone

7 Hicks Road Masterplan- Summary

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This Masterplan has been prepared, on behalf of Zog Brownfield Ventures Ltd (ZBV), to investigate the regeneration options for the Markyate Industrial Estate – situated to the north and south of Hicks Road, within the eastern section of Markyate.

Zog Brownfield Ventures Ltd is the majority landowner within the Industrial Estate and keen to drive forward the renewal/redevelopment of the site as a whole. This represents a key opportunity to deliver long-term regeneration for this important site, which in turn will generate significant benefits for the wider area.

In order to provide a comprehensive solution, the Masterplan area focuses on those areas of the estate falling within ZBV's ownership, but also includes neighbouring land/sites (including Hicks Road itself) where there are considered to be opportunities to secure area-wide improvements and a more comprehensive form of development.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to investigate potential regeneration objectives/options and to establish a development framework for the site identified as Proposal SS2 within the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy and set the blueprint for the future redevelopment of the site.

The November 2011 Masterplan has been updated, to reflect the additional sites which were identified as part of the Draft Core Strategy Consultation period (Nov/Dec 2010). The additional sites have been included within the Masterplan boundary as outlined in this document, however do not fall within ZBV land ownership.

1.2 Hicks Road – Summary of opportunities and benefits

The Hicks Road site is the only large-scale brownfield site within Markyate and benefits from being located close to the heart of the village. The existing buildings on-site are largely inefficient, with many in a poor state of repair. The future redevelopment of the site provides the opportunity to deliver significant benefits for the entire village – this will include:

- new homes (approximately 90) – including family housing and apartments to meet local housing needs;
- new affordable housing – including intermediate and rented accommodation;
- modern business accommodation – including new office space, alongside light industrial (Class B1) and storage units (Class B8) designed to reflect current market demands;
- the creation of a new public square centrally within the development – to create a new focal point for the village (with new active uses);
- small-scale retail uses (Classes A1/A2/A3 and A4) to add life and vibrancy to the new public spaces and to complement the role and function of the existing High Street;
- a new surgery/PCT unit – relocated from its current premises;
- the re-provision of the existing public car park (adjacent to the surgery) within the new development to cater for the parking needs of the village;
- a residential care-home.

Overall, the redevelopment of the Hicks Road site provides an exciting opportunity to create a new social and commercial focus for the village, consolidate existing employment opportunities, deliver new housing, improved healthcare facilities and other services to complement the High Street.

1.3 The Masterplan approach

This Masterplan is intended to explore the opportunities presented by the regeneration of the Hicks Road site and to establish the framework for the future redevelopment of the site. The Masterplan is also intended to form part of the evidence base in support of the proposed designation of Hicks Road as a 'Strategic Site' within Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy.

To-date, the preparation of the Masterplan has been informed by:

- Discussions with officers at Dacorum Borough Council;
- The Council's responses to comments received during the consultation period of the Draft Core Strategy Nov-Dec 2010;
- On-going technical work in support of a current planning application on ZBV land;
- Discussions with Markyate Surgery/PCT on the potential inclusion of an expanded surgery;
- Masterplanning and design development work by GML Architects and Fabrik;
- Advice from Rolfe Judd Planning on planning policy objectives;
- Discussions between RSK/ Entran and the Environment Agency in relation to flood risk and the River Ver (which runs beneath the site);
- Advice on market demand and supply for business/employment floorspace within Markyate (and the wider Borough) from GVA Grimley;
- Advice on highways & transport issues from Entran;
- Liaison with existing tenants from Brasier Freeth;
- Consideration of the Markyate Urban Design Assessment (January 2006).

1.4 Implementation and Delivery

The Masterplan is initially intended to assist Dacorum Borough Council formulate a fresh planning policy approach for the redevelopment of the site. The Masterplan will then be used as the template for the delivery of the future mixed-use development.

During the detailed formulation of the development proposals for the site, the developer will continue to closely liaise with all key stake-holders including the Environment Agency and decision makers.

The developer is also committed to continuing to work with existing tenants, neighbouring land owners and the Primary Healthcare Trust/Surgery to formulate comprehensive proposals which maximise the benefits to be delivered by the site.

The indicative programme for the delivery of a mixed-use development is as follows:







- Dacorum Borough Council – LDF Core Strategy (Consultation draft version) public consultation Nov-Dec 2010;
- Pre-application consultation to commence with key-stakeholders and decision makers – Nov-Dec 2010;
- Detailed development proposals for redevelopment of site to be formulated – Dec 2010-Jan 2011;
- Masterplan/Development Proposal Public Consultation – Jan 2011;
- Planning Application Submission for detailed development proposals – Sept 2011;
- First Phase Development to commence – 2012/2013;
- Completed Development – 2014/2015.

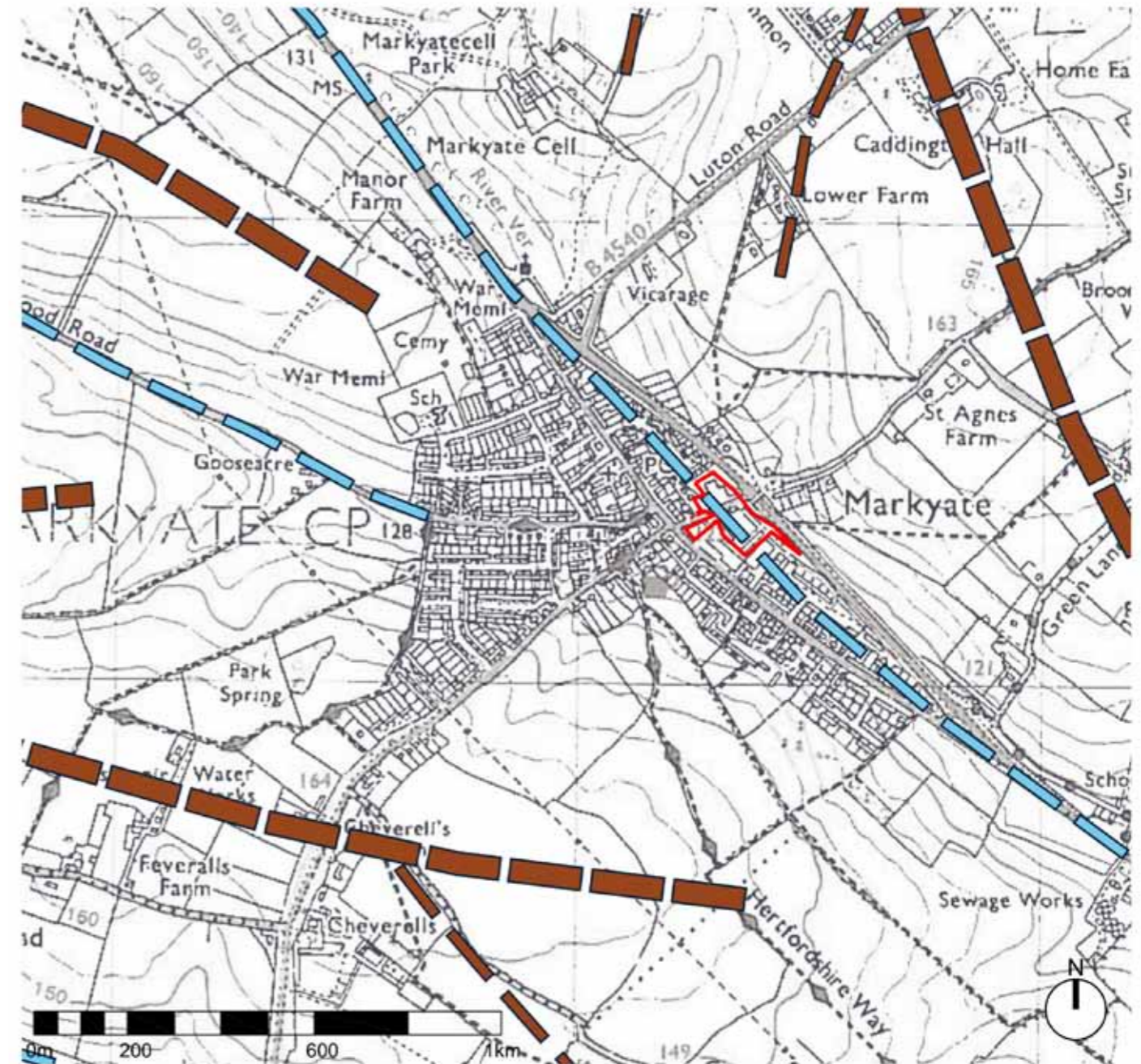
2. Markyate Village Analysis

2.2 Topography

The local topography setting for the study area is within a gently undulating landscape, with numerous localised ridgelines and valleys. The site itself lies within a localised valley and is enclosed by ridgelines to the north-east and south-west, rising from approximately 120-125m AOD at site level to 170m AOD along the ridgelines.

Legend

-  Application boundary
-  Major ridgeline
-  Minor ridgeline
-  Minor valley
-  150m AOD contour line
-  125m AOD contour line



2. Markyate Village Analysis

2.3 Land Cover

Summary of landuse surrounding the site and settlement of Markyate:

Agriculture – Agricultural landscape surrounds the village. The agriculture uses are mixed with a dominance of arable crops in larger fields. Some smaller fields in closer proximity to the village are used for paddocks and grazing.

Historic and Cultural Landscape – The historic core of Markyate is designated as a Conservation Area and contains a number of listed buildings. Markyate Cell is designated as a park or garden of Special Historic Interest and is on the English Heritage list of registered Parks and Gardens. Some of the areas of woodland in the surrounding countryside and designated as Ancient and Semi-ancient Woodland.

Woodland/Vegetation Pattern – The local area is well treed, with small woodland blocks, tree belts and hedgerows within the urban areas, along road corridors, public rights of way and field boundaries. Markyate Cell has many parkland trees. The individual mature trees, together with the treebelts and woodland blocks are the key landscape features of the area providing a well treed setting to the settlement.

Settlement Pattern – The settlement pattern broadly follows the movement corridor from north-west to south-east and extends to the south-west. The settlement is bound on its northwest side by the A5 road and by rural uses to other edges.

Transport Links – The main transport corridor is the A5 running south-east to north-west, a primary trunk road from London to the north. The network of roads off this corridor is broadly arranged on a north to south alignment.

Public Rights of Way – A series of public rights of way lead out from Markyate centre to the wider countryside in all directions. The Hertfordshire Way routes through the village from the west and out to the south.

Public Open Space – There are three areas of designated open land, sports field and allotments in Markyate all within 10min walking distance of the site. These are reviewed in more detail in open space analysis.



2. Markyate Village Analysis

2.4 Local Character - High Street



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.1 Markyate Industrial Estate Site

The Hicks Road Industrial Estate (c.2.8 hectares) is located both to the north and south of Hicks Road, adjacent to the A5. The estate currently includes a mix of industrial units, warehouses, workshops, a depot and office space (providing c.11,500sq.m). Sharose Court, Richmond House and those buildings to the south of Hicks Road, currently fall within the ownership of Zog Brownfield Ventures Ltd, with the units positioned within the south eastern end of the site and north-west of the site falling in separate ownerships.

Whilst some buildings on-site are relatively new (including Sharose Court) others are poor quality, inefficient and lacking in modern services and amenities. As a result ZBV has been finding it increasingly difficult to let floor space within these buildings, despite continual marketing and proximity to A5 and village centre.

Although the estate occupies a prominent position within the village a number of the buildings on site are utilitarian / functional in appearance and hence visually detract from the wider village. Furthermore the arrangement of the buildings and the general aesthetics of the estate has created a somewhat unattractive street scene, which makes a relatively hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The majority of the site is currently hard landscaped with very few trees around the boundaries, mainly along the North-Eastern boundary with A5 road.

Currently River Ver passes through the site in culvert collecting surface water drainage from a number of Thames Water sewers (Pict. 8). However the culvert creates a number of potential problems including shallow flooding within the estate. In order to provide comprehensive approach the Masterplan also encompasses the existing surgery (no.1 Hicks Road). ZBV has been in discussions with neighbouring landowners and will consult with them during the preparation of the Masterplan.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.2 Existing Townscape Analysis

As noted within Dacorum's Urban Design Assessment for Markyate (June 2006), the townscape of Markyate is based around four distinctive character areas:

- Village Centre Zone – centred on the historic High Street and includes the remaining retail and commercial uses. The centre zone is also lined by tightly packed residential terraces, which provide a distinctive street-scene;
- Inner Zone – includes the predominately residential areas located to the north and south of the village centre, and is based around a mix of new cul-de-sacs and the original village through roads. Density varies between larger detached properties and tighter terraces of houses;
- Semi-Rural Zone – located at the outer extent of the village and consists primarily of terrace houses and semi detached properties (of a low to medium density);
- Industrial Zone – centred on the Masterplan site and located immediately to the east of the village centre. The zone includes a variety relatively old industrial buildings, storage areas and office buildings. The area is also interspersed with open areas – primarily used for parking and servicing. Despite its location within the heart of the village it is not well integrated or linked to the wider village.



3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

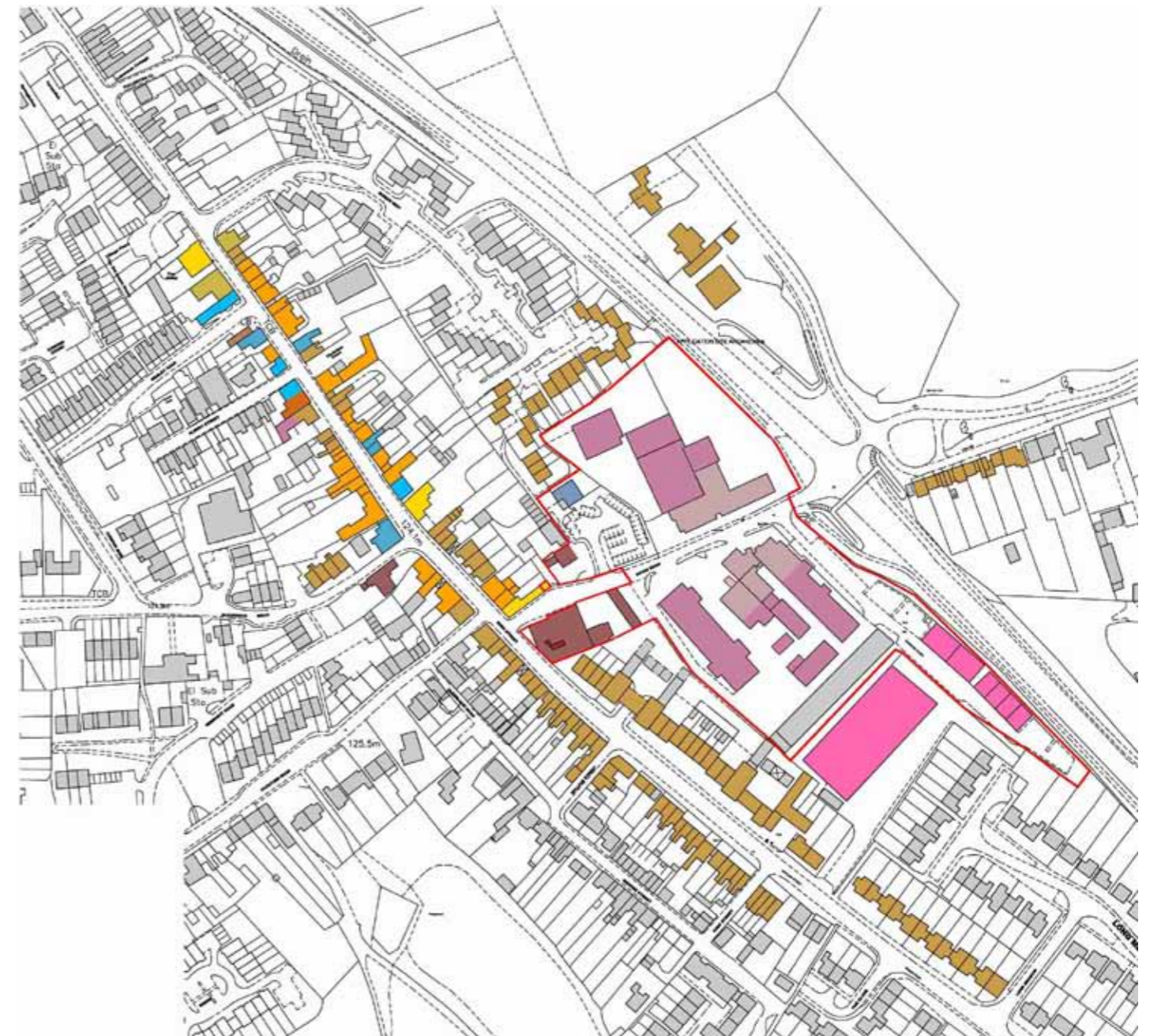
3.3 Existing Land Use Plan

The Hicks Road Industrial Estate provides the main focus for business and employment uses within the village and does benefit from good road links directly onto the A5.

The High Street provides the focus for the remaining retail and commercial uses within the village. However, despite the cohesive nature of the street pattern, there are only a small number of shops and pubs left within the village centre. Instead, the High Street is now dominated by residential accommodation interspersed with small-scale retail facilities.

There is currently no strong focal point for commercial/retail activity within the town and little space to promote community uses, evening economy and outdoor cafes.

Key	
	Masterplan boundary
	A1 shops
	A3 food and drink
	B1 business
	Part vacant B1 business
	C3 dwelling houses
	D1 – Doctor's surgery
	Sui Generis



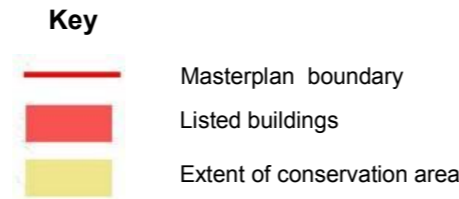
3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.4 Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

The Markyate Conservation Area is centred on the High Street area (the village centre zone) and includes a number of listed buildings (many of which reflect the village's historic association with the Holyhead turnpike – one of the principal stagecoach routes).

The High Street still retains much of its nineteenth century form and is characterised by small plot sizes which are tightly packed and orientated along the linear road network.

The Hicks Road Industrial Estate sits directly to the east of the Conservation Area (and several listed buildings) and it is apparent that the existing buildings within the estate fail to relate in scale or form to the character of the neighbouring Conservation Area.



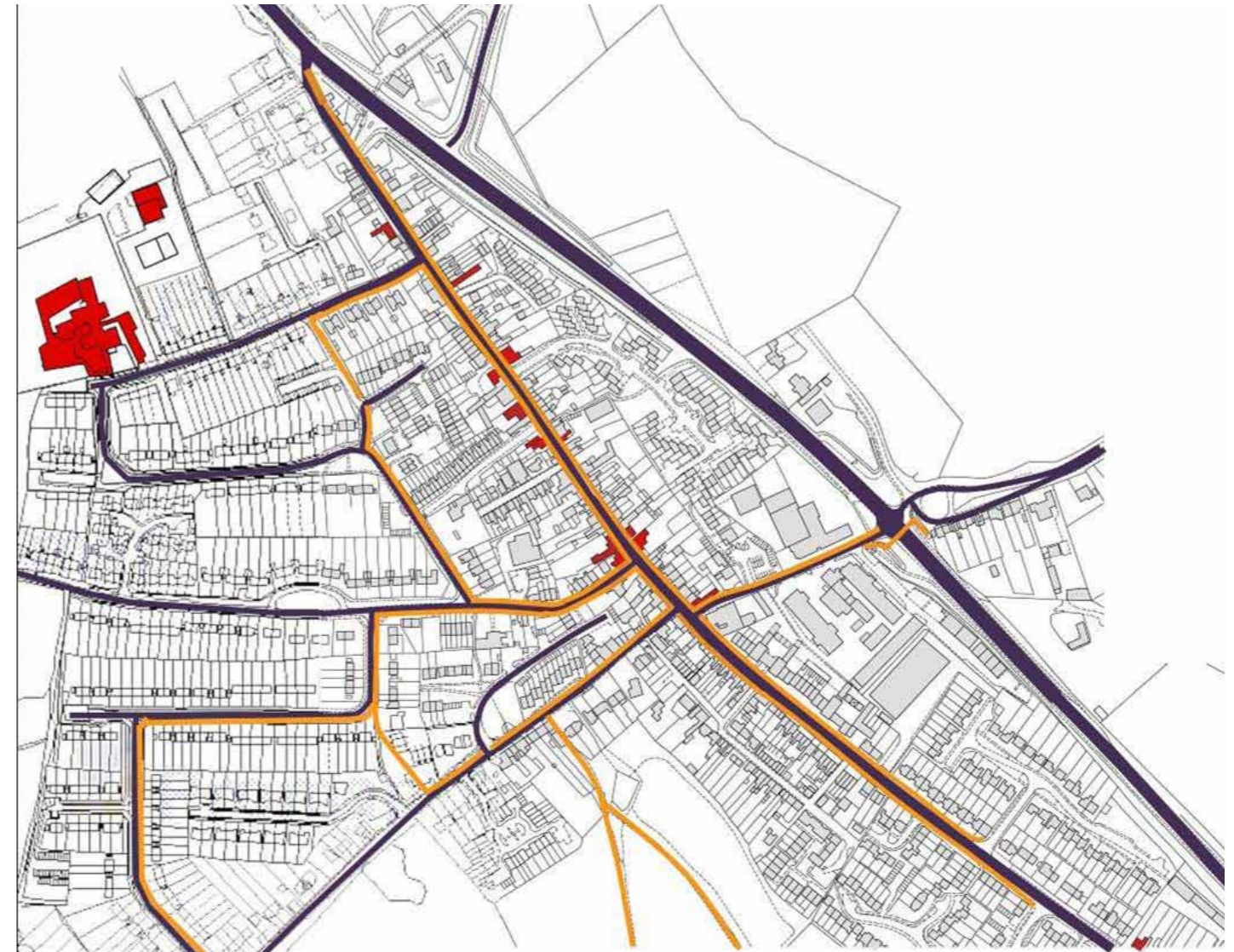
3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.5 Connections

The principal road links within Markyate include the High Street and the A5 (which by-passes the Village). The High Street currently suffers from congestion as a result of the number of vehicles passing through the village, the tight street pattern and the high incident of on-street car parking. By contrast, the A5 forms as part of the strategic road network and runs between the M1 (south of Luton), Milton Keynes and Rugby.

Hicks Road provides the central link between the High Street and A5. At present, Hicks Road suffers from a pinch point (close to the junction with the High Street), which can make it difficult for two vehicles to pass each other. Hicks Road also provides the main pedestrian link to the countryside to the east of the village (via the footbridge over the A5). However, the pedestrian environment through the industrial estate is generally poor and does little to attract through movement.

- Key**
-  Vehicle Routes
 -  Pedestrian Routes
 -  Places of interest
1. School
 2. Community Centre
 3. Restaurant
 4. Pub
 5. Post Office
 6. Supermarket
 7. Inn
 8. Café
 9. Hardware store
 10. Bed & Breakfast
 11. Store / News agent



3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.6 Existing Buildings Heights

The predominant building height throughout the Village is 2 storeys.

Buildings across the Hicks Road Industrial Estate range in height from 2 – 3.5 storeys. Whilst taller buildings may be appropriate for a commercial site they are out of scale with adjacent two storey residential areas.



3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.7 Landscape Appraisal

Topography: The site is predominantly flat with a general fall across the site from the northern corner, from approximately 127m AOD to the southern part of the site at approximately 121.5m AOD. The change in level is more prominent in the northern corner of the site where the site connects to the higher ground of the A5 set on an embankment. The site sits lower than its surrounding context due to its location in the River Ver valley corridor.

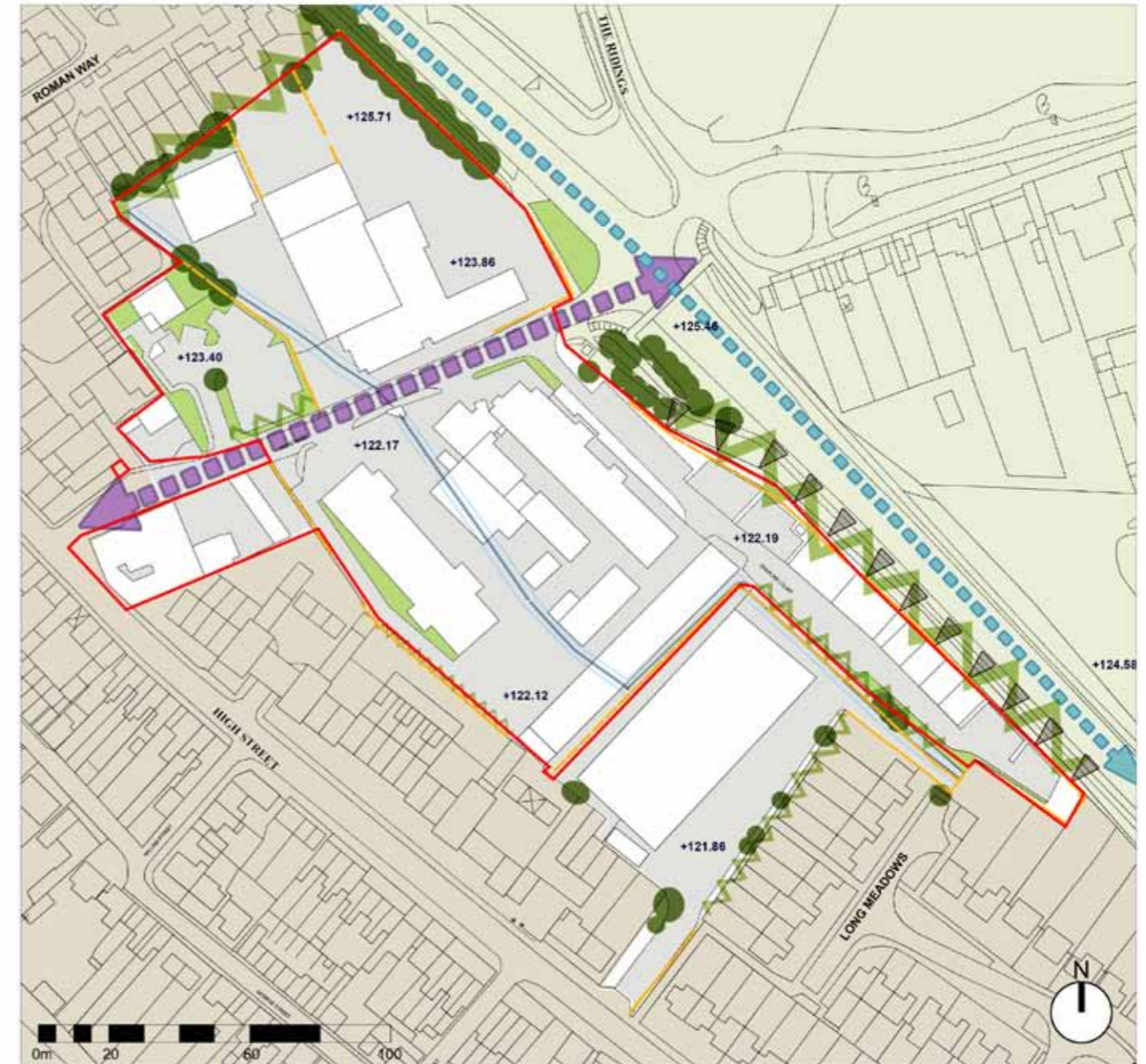
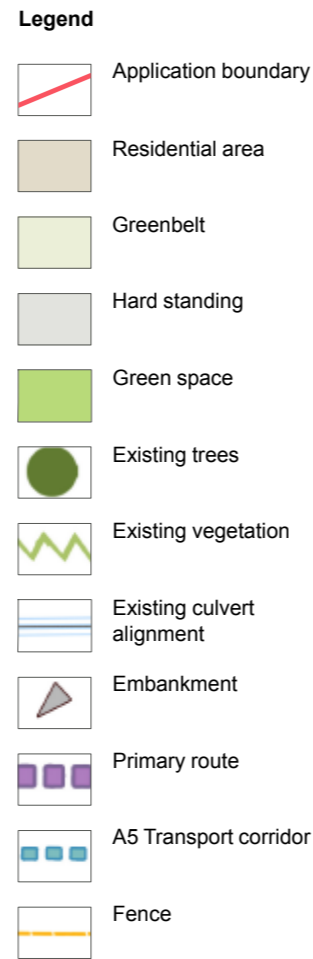
Land Use and Boundary Treatments:

The site is of mixed use with predominantly industrial use. There is limited green space on site and is not usable as recreational space. The site is bound by the A5 transport corridor on the western boundary and by the boundary treatments to residential properties to the south, west and north. Hicks Road transects the site. There are several internal boundaries defined by fence lines.

Vegetation: There is a limited amount of vegetation within the site. There are several individual trees within the existing car park. A mature treebelt with a dense vegetation understory runs along the site boundary with the A5. Buffer vegetation occurs where the site adjoins rear gardens of properties.

Landscape Features: Due to the extent of existing development on the site the most significant features are at the site boundary, these include mature vegetation boundary along the A5. The River Ver runs through the site in a culvert but is not visible.

Immediate setting: The site is bound by 1, 1.5 and 2 storey residential development to the north, south and west: Roman Way to the north, Long Meadow to the south and High Street to the west. To the east are properties on higher land along The Ridings, separated from the site by the A5. The site is therefore bound and influenced by the residential scale buildings. The A5 transport corridor physically separates the site from the open countryside to the east.







3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.8 Trees and Vegetation

A tree survey in accordance with BS 5837 (2005) 'Trees in relation to construction' has been carried out to provide an informed approach to proposed development. In general, the tree stock assessed is middle-aged and primarily of mixed broadleaved species of varying form and quality. A total of 37 trees, groups and hedgerows were assessed within the tree survey schedule which includes category 'B', category 'C' and category 'R' trees, groups and hedgerows. To the north-west boundary selected trees within the site are subject to Tree Preservation Order 328 of 1998 administered by Dacorum Borough Council.

The principle arboricultural feature within the local and wider landscape is formed by the off-site linear group of lime trees located adjacent to Watling Street (A5). These trees form a verdant backdrop to the site and contribute positively to the street scene. They are therefore considered to be of high public visual amenity. Other off-site trees include linear groups of cypress located to the east, south and west boundaries within residential gardens which provide screening at a local level to the industrial estate.

Within the site, tree cover is limited given the extensive areas of hard standing and buildings associated with the existing site use. Generally, these are of domestic scale or of poor form with the principle trees located to the west corner of the site and a linear mixed broadleaved hedgerow to the east of Hick Lane along the north boundary. Trees located within the site have been subject to a constrained rooting environment and are therefore likely to display an asymmetrical root morphology biased to soft ground areas. Careful consideration must therefore be given to tree retention where demolition is to occur within close proximity.

-  Application boundary
-  Category 'B' tree
-  Category 'C' tree
-  Category 'R' tree





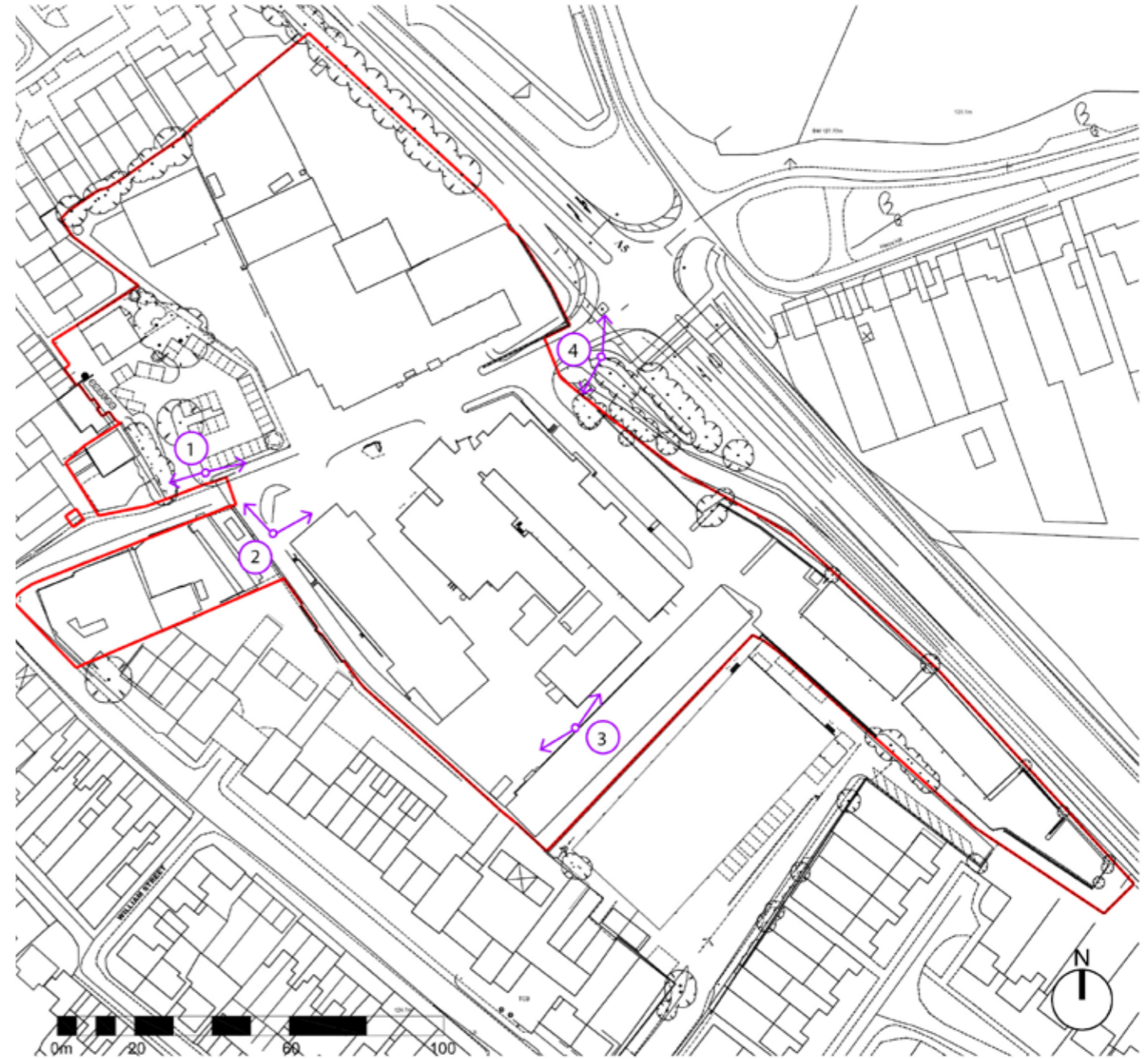
3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.9 Visual Appraisal

The plan opposite illustrates the location of the photo location points within the site. The photographs 1-4 on the following pages then describe each of these views.

Legend

-  Application boundary
-  Location of photographic viewpoint



3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.9 Visual Appraisal



Photograph – Viewpoint 1

View looking south into the site from east to west along Hicks Road. Open views of the central and southern part of the site that occur from this location. To the east along the vista of Hicks Lane partial views look out to the A5 and open countryside on higher ground, views are limited by existing built form and boundary vegetation. To the west, there are partial views of built form along Markyate High Street and site entrance. Extensive views in all directions are limited by the existing built form within and surrounding the site.



Photograph – Viewpoint 2

View looking north into site and east along Hicks Road to open countryside/Green Belt land. Views to the north are limited by existing built form and vegetation along boundaries. Properties along Roman Way are not visible. Views to the east are restricted by existing built form and vegetation. Distant views out are contained by the local ridgeline and site setting within a valley.

3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.9 Visual Appraisal



Photograph – Viewpoint 3

View looking west to east into the site from the southern boundary. Roofs of properties along the High Street are visible, views are restricted by close board fencing and vegetation along the property boundary. Views out of the site are restricted by existing built form and vegetation along the site boundary. The site is set lower than its surroundings in this location.



Photograph – Viewpoint 4

View looking west from the site entrance at Hicks Road/A5 junction. From this viewpoint on higher ground, looking down into the site and towards the village of Markyate, views through to the High Street are apparent. Views of the village of Markyate are restricted by existing built form on site. Views east to The Ridings and open countryside are limited by landform. The Chilterns AONB is apparent in distant views beyond the settlement of Markyate.

3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.9 Visual Appraisal

The extent to which the Hicks Road Site is visible from the surrounding landscape is based on grading the degrees of visibility. It is determined from a visual appraisal of the site and its context from roads, public rights of way and properties. The adjacent plan is the visual summary of the existing site from the immediate surroundings. Seasonal change in existing evergreen and deciduous plant material will affect the available views.

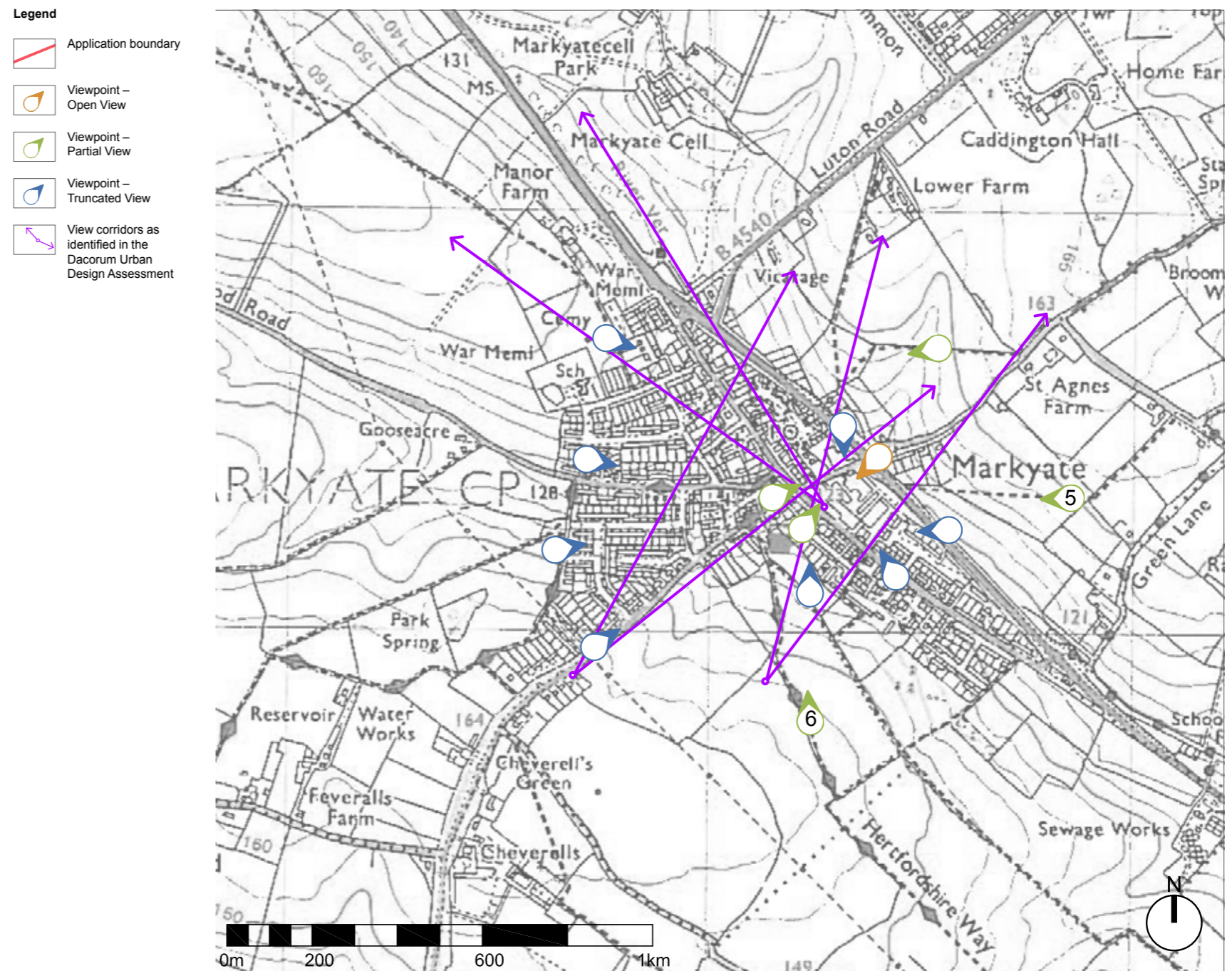
The extent of visibility of the site is limited to the locality of the site and Markyate, open views are contained due to a combination of vegetation, the existing built form and the topography both outside and within the site. From view points where the site is visible, it is sighted within the context of the village.

To indicate the degree of visibility of the site from any location, including from roads, public rights of way and properties, three categories have been used:

- a) Truncated View:
No view of the site or the site is difficult to perceive;
- b) Partial View:
A view of part of the site, or a filtered view of the site, or a distant view where the site is perceived as a small part of the view;
- c) Open View:
A clear view of a significant proportion of the site within the wider landscape.

The Dacorum Urban Design Statement for Markyate (January 2006) identifies critical views within and out of Markyate. The visual appraisal has considered the views in relation to the site and its context to the village of Markyate.

Where the site is visible from the identified view corridors, the site sits within the context of the village of Markyate. In close proximity and within the site, Hicks Road provides a vista out to Green Belt land to the north east and beyond the village of Markyate to the Chilterns AONB.



Location Plan showing Visual Summary from local area

3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.9 Visual Appraisal



Photograph – Viewpoint 5

View from public footpath in Green Belt land looking west towards the site, to the settlement of Markyate and AONB land beyond. Visibility of the site is obscured by vegetation along the A5 transport corridor. The site is viewed within the village of Markyate.



Photograph – Viewpoint 6

View from Hertfordshire Way within the AONB looking north towards the site and the settlement of Markyate and the Green Belt. Views of the site are obscured due to the topography and by vegetation. Roof lines of buildings within the site are visible.

3. Hicks Road Site Analysis

3.10 Open Space and Play Analysis



Plan illustrating the existing open space, play and links

4. Hicks Road Site Masterplan

4.1 An Opportunity for Regeneration

The Hicks Road site is the only large-scale brownfield site within Markyate and benefits from being located close to the heart of the village. The existing buildings on-site are largely inefficient, with many in a poor state of repair. The future redevelopment of the site provides an exciting opportunity to replace the existing industrial estate with a sustainable form of development which will be capable of delivering significant benefits for the entire village – this will include:

- the provision of new homes (approximately 90) to meet local housing needs within the village and wider Borough – including new family housing with gardens and 1 and 2 bedroom apartments;
- the provision of modern business accommodation – including new office space, light industrial space (Class B1) and storage units (Class B8), designed to meet current and long-term demand/market requirements for new business space within Markyate and the wider Borough;
- the creation of a new public square (centred on Hicks Road) to provide a new focal point for the development and the wider village. The new square will also encourage café and restaurant uses and provide useable space for the village community;
- the creation of a vibrant and integrated mixed-use quarter (centred around the public square) – integrating the new residential, retail, commercial and community floorspace to create vibrancy/activity within the heart of the development;
- the inclusion of affordable housing as part of the new residential component – including intermediate and rented accommodation. Again designed to meet local housing needs;
- the provision of small-scale retail uses (Classes A1/A2/A3 and A4) to add life and vibrancy to the new public spaces and to complement the role and function of the existing High Street;
- the potential to replace the existing surgery (from Hicks Road) with a new and expanded surgery/PCT unit within the development – reflecting local aspirations to improve local healthcare facilities;
- the re-provision of the existing public car park (currently adjacent to the surgery) within the new development - to ensure that future parking needs can be catered for within the village;
- the provision of a residential care-home – as part of the mix of residential accommodation to be provided on-site;
- the opportunity to improve Hicks Road both as a important vehicle link between the High Street and A5, but also to improve the pedestrian environment and to improve links to the surrounding countryside;
- to mitigate the existing flood risk issues at the site and investigate the options for partially de-culverting the River Ver;
- to remove the existing utilitarian buildings from site and remediate existing on-site contamination (resulting from the site's longstanding industrial use);
- options for improving accessibility in the area to better integrate the future land uses with accessibility and local public transport facilities – to improve access by non-car modes and reduce the prospect of inward/outward commuter trips from the wider village;
- options for achieving a more sustainable pattern of development – i.e. reducing car uses, providing support facilities (i.e. café/shops) for the estate and wider community, considering estate wide waste management plans; target achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 (or higher if required by national policy) for all new residential uses; potentially incorporating measures targeted at improving energy efficiency, reducing CO2 and promoting renewable energy technologies.

The overarching objective for the Masterplan is to create a sustainable community, which will be an interesting place for people to live, work and visit. Furthermore, the intention of the Masterplan is to also achieve a number of wider benefits for the local Markyate community offering a genuinely inclusive development opportunity.

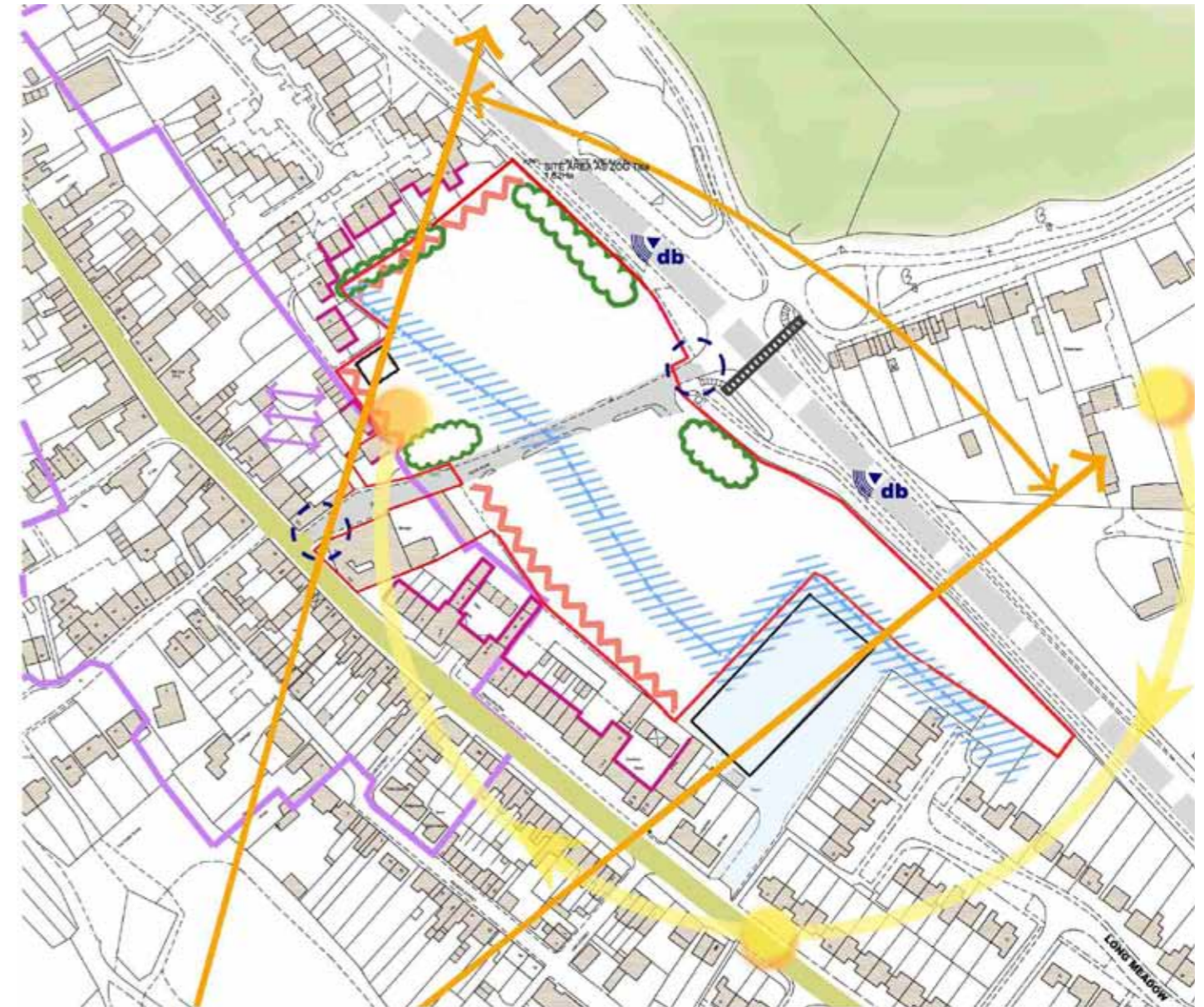


4. Hicks Road Site Masterplan









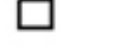



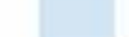


4.2 Constraints

The existing estate and Masterplan area suffers from a number of constraints/deficiencies:

- the internal layouts of a number of the existing estate buildings are inefficient and provide only very basic facilities/amenities. Furthermore, many of the buildings are in a poor state of repair and are now at a point where they need to be replaced;
- the majority of the buildings are utilitarian in appearance and detract from the local streetscene and wider views of the site;
- some buildings contain asbestos and there contamination arising from the previous industrial activities;
- due to the shortcomings of the existing site, employment levels within the estate are low;
- the site arrangement is currently very inefficient, with large areas of hardstanding provided throughout the estate, much of which is under used or utilised for open storage (which has the potential to impact upon neighbours);
- there is little soft landscaping within the estate and along Hicks Road;
- the River Ver culvert runs centrally beneath the site and parts of the site have previously suffered from flooding (and are indicated on the Environment Agency Flood Maps as being in an area of flood risk);
- the junction between Hicks Road and the A5 is poor;
- the junction between Hicks Road High Street suffers from a 'pinch point' which restricts the flow of traffic;
- the arrangement of the site has created a poor urban environment;
- the estate makes little contribution to the character of the adjoining conservation area and setting of the nearby listed buildings;
- permeability and pedestrian links along Hicks Road and through the existing estate are currently poor;
- the A5 corridor has the potential to give rise to bad neighbour impacts – such as noise and air quality concerns;
- the Masterplan area is bounded by a number of residential properties – with the existing buildings and estate is poorly related to a number of properties (which has the potential to give rise to amenity concerns);
- the existing estate is poorly related to the wider urban setting – particularly in terms of the wider views of the estate from the west;



Key

- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Conservation area |  | Existing 2 storey frontages |  | High Street |
|  | View corridor from Pickford Road |  | Ver valley countryside |  | Pedestrian links |
|  | Proximity of neighbouring building |  | River Ver culvert and easement |  | Existing doctor's surgery |
|  | Existing tree line |  | Village gateway |  | Existing pedestrian footbridge |
|  | White land |  | A5 transit road / potential noise |  | Masterplan boundary |

4. Hicks Road Site Masterplan

4.3 Opportunities

The proposed Masterplan is focused on providing a development solution which addresses the existing deficiencies/constraints associated with the estate and creates a built form which positively responds to the local context. Our initial analysis has identified the following opportunities which can be delivered by new development:

- the opportunity to remove the existing utilitarian buildings and the creation of a new built form which responds to the local context, and the wider setting and character of the village;
- the opportunity to create a new focal point within the village – through the provision of new public open spaces/public realm (including a public square). Thereby providing useable public space close to the centre of the village;
- the opportunity to deliver a genuine mix of uses - including new residential, commercial, business and community floorspace, targeted at providing a better relationship with the neighbouring uses; improving vibrancy and creating a more contextual street pattern;
- the opportunity to deliver substantial new private and affordable residential accommodation – to assist in meeting local housing needs and to reduce pressure on the potential release of ‘green belt’ sites;
- the opportunity to achieve a better arrangement/layout within a new development – focusing the commercial/business uses towards the A5 corridor and the residential uses towards the existing boundaries with neighbouring residential properties, thereby reducing the prospect of bad neighbour impacts;
- the opportunity to improve Hicks Road as a through route – by assessing options to improve access onto the A5 and improve the junction between Hicks Road and High Street;
- the opportunity for mitigating flood risk and de-culverting part of the River Ver within the site;
- the opportunity to develop a comprehensive urban design strategy for the future redevelopment of the estate and recognising the opportunity to deliver a development which recognises that the site sits at an important gateway within the village;
- the creation of clear, safe and legible pedestrian routes and new areas of public realm throughout the estate and strengthening links both with the village and the surrounding countryside (to the east of the A5);
- the opportunity to integrate the Hicks Road site into the village centre zone – by providing/enhancing pedestrian links, delivering new public spaces, providing more active uses, and achieving a more domestic scale of development;



Key

	Improved views from site		Landscaped river Ver corridor Green amenity
	Improved views into the site		River Ver re-routed and opened up
	Ver Valley countryside		Existing river Ver corridor
	Improved boundaries		Prime and secondary visual gateway buildings
	Improved tree screening		New public square
	Retained and expanded B1 and B8 use		Improved junction
			Improved Hicks Road
			Improved pedestrian links

5. Hicks Road Site Specific Issues

5.1 Introduction

As noted within our earlier analysis, there are a number of 'site specific' issues which will need to be addressed by the future development. Each of these issues is likely to affect the final design, layout and content of the future development. This will include:

- Employment considerations and the existing tenants;
- Developing a Transport and Movement Strategy;
- Car Parking Strategy;
- Flood Risk;
- Contaminated Land;
- Ecology;
- Relocation of the existing surgery.

5.2 Employment Considerations and Existing Tenants

The redevelopment of the site offers the opportunity to regenerate and strengthen the current employment opportunities presented by the site. GVA Grimley previously completed a review of the existing Masterplan area and the wider demand/supply of business/employment floorspace within the Borough, their analysis has fed into the formulation of the Masterplan proposals. They advised that:

- the building stock within the estate is dated and not fit for purpose - with the exception of Sharose Court and the relatively large building to the south east of the Masterplan site, which are in good conditions;
- employment density is very low at the site with currently only c.40 people employed from Markyate and the surrounding areas. Approximately half of the employment currently within Sharose Court, leaving relatively few employees on the majority of the site;
- the appropriateness of such a large industrial site just behind the High Street is questionable and gives rise to potential conflict with neighbouring residential uses;
- manufacturing employment and employment in distribution (which are the main occupiers of industrial sites) has seen a long term decline, which is projected to continue;
- office based employment has been steadily increasing and is forecasted to further grow;
- the site has the potential to replace the existing failing estate with a local employment offer which is in line with projected economic trends;
- there is benefit in retaining the existing Sharose Court buildings and providing additional light industrial buildings (within this part of the site) to extend this offer;

- the provision of small, flexible office/business units within a wider mixed-use scheme would give opportunity for local employment – and could compensate for the loss of jobs from the existing site uses;
- employment within any retail element and possibly care-home would add additional employment opportunities to the local economy;
- new business space can be managed and located to ensure that it does not create amenity concerns for existing and proposed residential uses. The will also provide the opportunity to improve conditions for residents who adjoin the site;
- a mixed use development on the site would contribute to meeting local housing need within the Borough, whilst providing employment in line with future economic trends and local demand.

Whilst the existing estate is considered to provide poor quality business accommodation (with a number of the current buildings currently vacant), it is recognised that there are existing businesses located at the site. ZBV and their agents (Brasier Freeth) are continuing to engage with the existing tenants at the site to ascertain their future needs and options for accommodating these requirements within the redevelopment (where possible).



5. Hicks Road Site Specific Issues

5.3 Developing a Transport and Movement Strategy

A transport and movement strategy for the Masterplan site will be developed in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council (as highway authority) and Dacorum Borough Council as local planning authority. The transport and movement strategy will focus not only on means of access to the site but also the movement of people and goods to, from and within the development. The overarching objectives for the strategy will be:

- to implement a Travel Plan Framework (TPF), which will seek to influence travel behaviour with the aim of reducing the need to travel, especially by private car and encourage future tenants, residents and businesses to use more sustainable forms of transport;
- to promote the use of public transport, walking and cycling but will also be realistic about car use, promoting car-share where necessary and also investigating the viability of a Car Club for Markyate;
- to assess the functioning of any local junctions in terms of operational capacity and highway safety - including Markyate's three junctions onto the A5 as well as the junction between Hicks Road and the High Street;
- to develop a comprehensive site wide access strategy – initially the Masterplanning team considered options for severing Hicks Road in order to provide a pedestrian only central public square. Further assessment work has now suggested that the redistribution of traffic may not be acceptable on Watling Street and the High Street, so the Masterplan now proposes to retain Hicks Road as a through route, albeit via a central shared space where traffic speeds will be reduced to allow pedestrians and cars to move safely and efficiently alongside one another;

- to incorporate best practice and Home Zone principles within the development to give equal priority to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers;
- to look at options to direct all service vehicles (which visit the future development) to enter and leave the Masterplan site via the A5 to reduce any impact on the High Street and wider village;
- to strengthen pedestrian links between the site and the High Street in order that the new facilities will be fully integrated into the village for local residents.



5.4 Car Parking Strategy

The Masterplan will include a comprehensive car parking strategy. At this stage, the intention is also to incorporate the existing public car park adjacent to the surgery (which provides 37 parking spaces).

The future parking strategy will provide new public car parking within the development – at very least equivalent to the current parking provision, but with an aspiration to increase publically available spaces. Furthermore, parking will also be provided for the individual uses (within the development) in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's and Dacorum Borough Council's current parking standards.

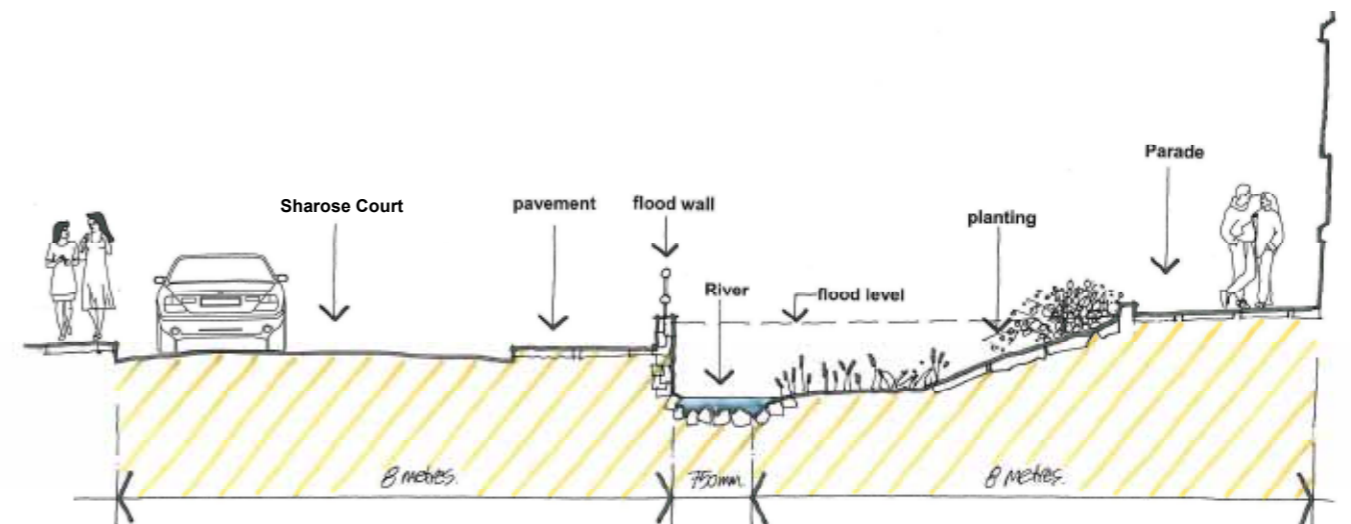
Census data for the Watling ward shows that, even allowing for growth since 2001, average car ownership in Markyate is currently around 1.78 vehicles per household including 11% of households with no vehicle. If dedicated parking spaces are allocated to every unit then there may be unused spaces in some locations and an under-provision elsewhere. The residential parking strategy therefore includes a mix of communal parking areas and dedicated off-street parking provision, appropriate for the size and tenure of the dwellings. Additional on-street informal parking will be available for visitors and designed in to the highway layout.

5.5 Flood Risk

The existing Markyate Industrial Estate is shown on the Environment Agency's indicative flood map to be located partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the River Ver. However, the flood map does not take the upstream flood storage area (at Markyate Cell) into account, which is known to protect Markyate from flooding up to at least the 200 year event. Therefore, the site would not flood for events below 1 in 200 years, unless the upstream flood storage failed or the flood bund was breached; the Markyate flood defences are currently considered to be in 'good' condition.

However, there have been recent incidents of flooding on Hicks Road and these are understood to be a result of the Thames Water sewers becoming surcharged. In order to assist in resolving this, in consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water. The new development will reduce levels of surface water runoff.

In preliminary correspondence with the Environment Agency, the partial deculverting of the River Ver has been discussed and is considered to provide flood risk, biodiversity and visual benefits to the area. These measures could be combined with the creation of a water feature within the proposed area of public open space on the northern side of Hicks Road, to significantly improve the extent and quality of open water in the area.



5. Hicks Road Site Specific Issues

5.6 Contaminated Land

A preliminary assessment of ground conditions in the form of a desk study is currently being prepared. Review of historical data for the site and a site reconnaissance visit has already been undertaken.

The site is utilised for generally commercial and industrial purposes although many of the units present appear to be vacant and falling into some disrepair.

The River Ver runs culverted through the centre of the site. The site is recorded as being located on the chalk, a principal aquifer. Superficial alluvial deposits are also recorded as being present. This is in conjunction with the general area being largely residential in nature suggests that the site is of some environmental sensitivity.

Historical mapping indicates that the general current layout of the site appears to have been in place by the 1950's prior to which much of the land appears to have been mainly utilised for agricultural purposes. From the time of development the site is indicated to be occupied mainly by engineering works although a garage is also present. The site reconnaissance undertaken indicates that these historical land uses continue to today. Potentially contaminative land uses are present across the site, which include hot metal treatment, vehicle repair (including oil and lubricant handling), aluminium and uPVC window and door fabrication, and precision metal fabrication. Both underground and above ground storage tanks are known to be present on site.

There is widespread evidence of localised spillages of petroleum hydrocarbons on the site in the form of staining on hardstanding. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some localised pollution of the River Ver has recently occurred and that process waste, potentially cyanide bearing, may have been historically buried on site.

Therefore, based upon the above information gathered to date it is considered probable that current and historic site activities have resulted in at least localised contamination of ground materials. Furthermore, it cannot be discounted that more significant contamination may also be present. The proposed development will therefore offer significant benefits in terms of land remediation which would result in significant betterment of the overall ground conditions within the general area.

5.7 Ecology

The site entirely comprises of buildings and hardstanding, with only small remnant patches of amenity grassland which is of negligible ecological value. Although the River Ver passes through the site, this is culverted and buried beneath concrete with only a small opening at the side of Hicks Road, which often contains no water and no aquatic vegetation. A number of young trees form the boundaries of the site.

The majority of the buildings on site have no enclosed roof spaces or cavities that could support roosting bats, with buildings being of flat roof construction or containing pitched corrugated roofing.

An ecological assessment of the site is currently being carried out and it is anticipated that the findings from this will identify that there are not any significant ecological constraints associated with the site.



5.8 Relocation of Existing Surgery

The Markyate Surgery is located to the north of Hicks Road, and is included within the Masterplan area.

Preliminary discussions have been held with the Surgery and the regeneration of Hicks Road presents the opportunity to create an enlarged Community Health Centre as part of the future redevelopment. This would be a major benefit to the entire village community.



6. Proposed Masterplan Solution The Vision

6.1 Conceptual Diagram

Based on the opportunities and constraints associated with the site, the following conceptual diagram has been developed to identify the broad objectives for a new development. The conceptual diagram is based on:

- developing a new public square at the heart of the site, this will become the focus for activity within the future development and provide the opportunity to develop an outdoor café culture. The square is also located to be visible from the High Street so as to form a logical link with the village central zone;
- providing a mix of uses around the central square – including retail, commercial space and residential uses to stimulate activity and vibrancy, and to create a destination to encourage people to visit and stay;
- to develop new residential zones (based on the Home Zone concept i.e. shared spaces to reduce the prominence/use of the car) to the north and south of Hicks Road, which sit adjacent to the existing residential areas which adjoin the site;
- to locate the new community health facility close to the new central square to ensure it is accessible to all;
- retain the existing industrial units along Sharose Court (adjacent to the A5) and make this the focus for employment activity – but also provide smaller business units within the mixed-use areas of the scheme to meet local business requirements;
- to partially de-culvert the River Ver to the south of Hicks Road (to be progressed in consultation with the Environment Agency);
- to retain Hicks Road in its current location, but introduce traffic calming measures adjacent to the public square to ensure the space is useable by all.



6. Proposed Masterplan Solution The Vision

6.2 Townscape Approach

The overarching objective is to develop a distinctive development which is well related to the local context, but which creates new interesting spaces and buildings which will add to character of Markyate. From our analysis, the core townscape objectives for the Masterplan area will be:

- to create a strong central square within the heart of the development, surrounded by active uses to animate the space – and thereby extend the village central zone into the new development;
- to provide a higher density of built form around the central square (i.e. buildings including retail/commercial uses at ground floor with residential uses above);
- to recognise the opportunity to provide more prominent development at the junction of Hicks Road and the A5 – to identify one of the principal gateways into the centre of Markyate;
- to provide a more domestic urban form to the north and south of Hicks Road, reflecting the form/nature of the adjacent residential properties – integrating the wider development into the inner zone with the village;
- to locate the more industrial type of development towards the A5 corridor.

Key

- Masterplan Boundary
- Opportunity for Landmark buildings
- Higher density to 'frame' public space
- Medium density uses and buildings
- Lower density and more domestic scale



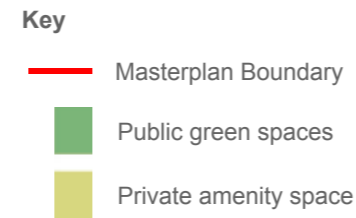
6. Proposed Masterplan Solution The Vision

6.3 Approach to Open Spaces

The proposed redevelopment offers the opportunity to create new open spaces and areas of public realm for use by the future occupants of the development and the wider village community. This will include a mix of public, communal and private spaces – including:

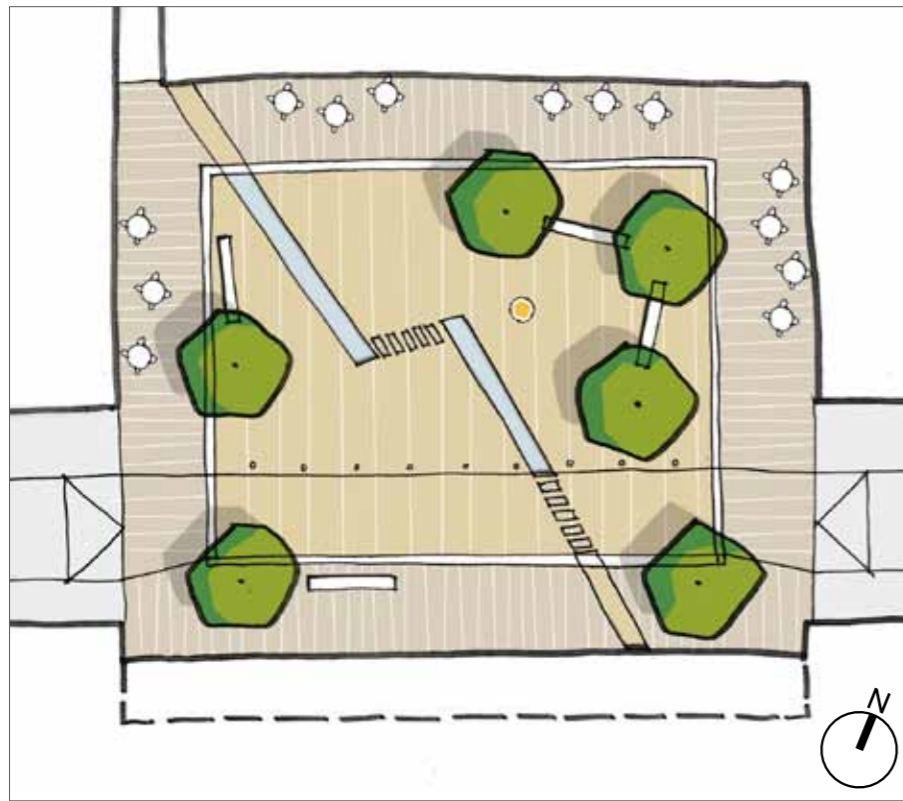
- a strong central square – incorporating a mix of hard and soft landscape and intended to become a focus of community activity;
- new green spaces within the proposed residential areas – to provide recreation and play opportunities;
- the River Ver corridor – the partial de-culverting of the River Ver will provide the opportunity to create new space around the river;
- the provision of private gardens for use by future residents.

In addition to the above, the future development will also be focused on improving connectivity across the site to the open spaces (including the Markyate Cell) located to the east of the A5.

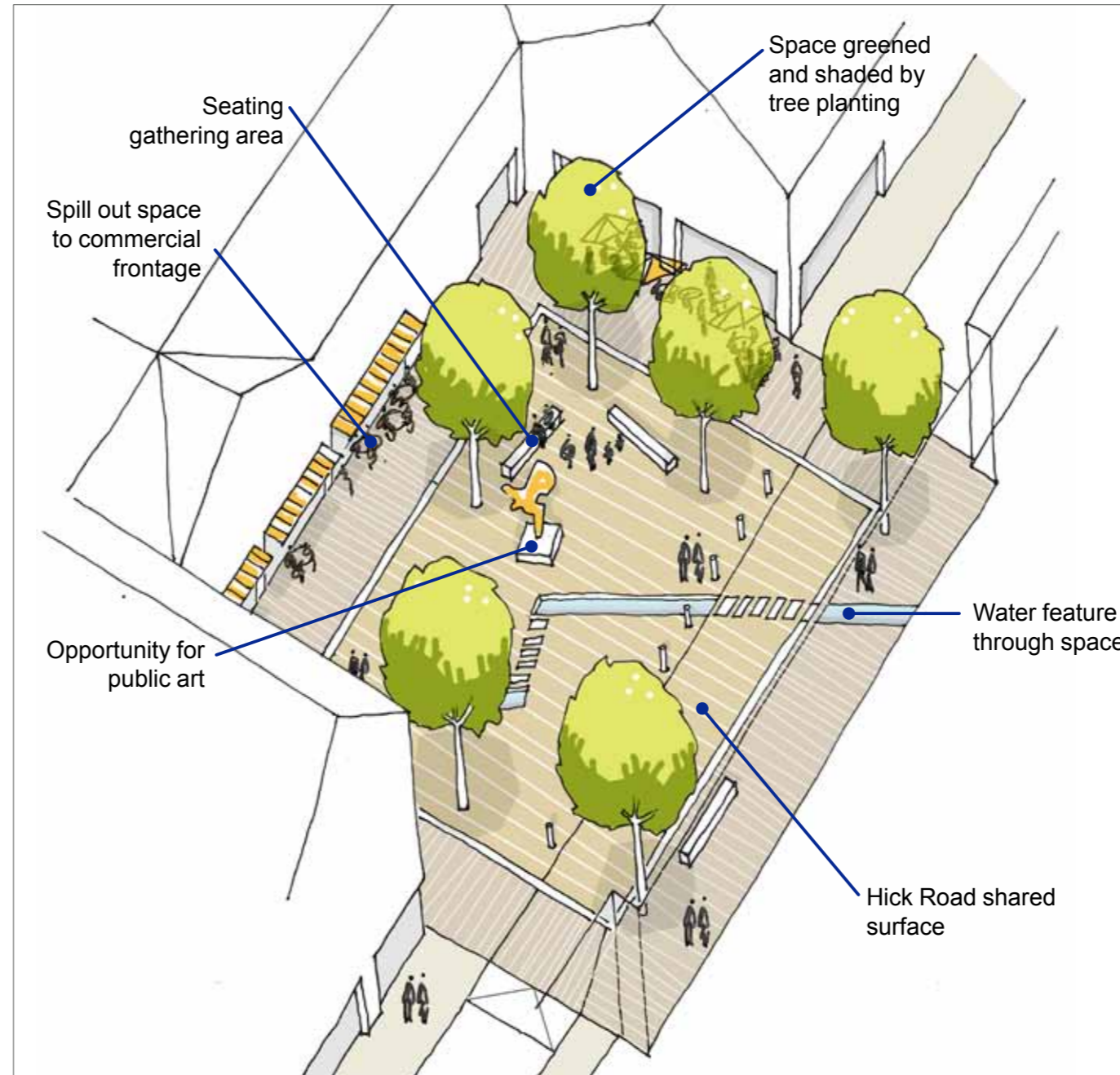


6. Proposed Masterplan Solution The Vision

6.4 Example Area 1: Public Square



Sketch Plan



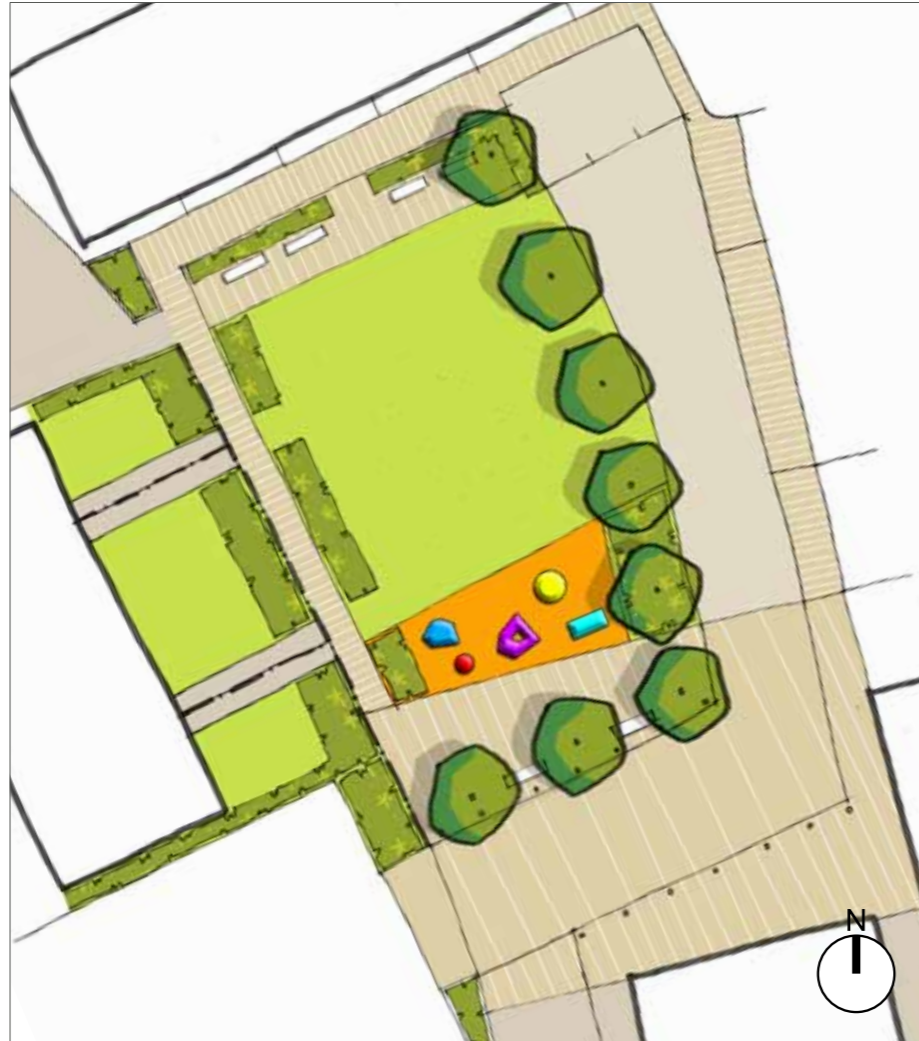
Illustrative View



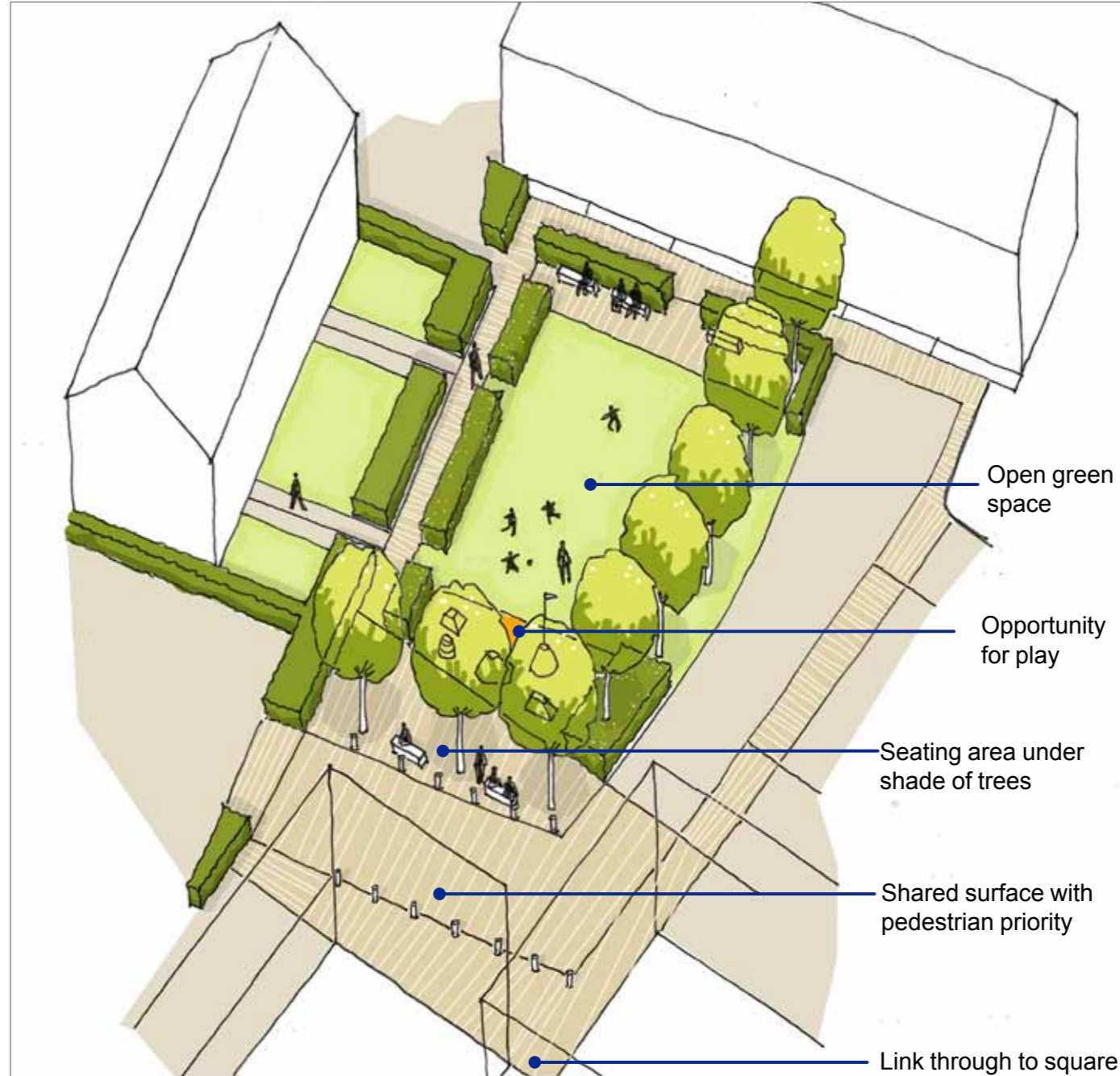
Precedent Images

6. Proposed Masterplan Solution The Vision

6.5 Example Area 2: Homezone



Sketch Plan



Illustrative View



Precedent Images

7. Summary

7.1 Hicks Road Masterplan - Summary

The Hicks Road site is the only large-scale brownfield site within Markyate and benefits from being located close to the heart of the village. The existing buildings on-site are largely inefficient, with many in a poor state of repair. The future redevelopment of the site provides an exciting opportunity to replace the existing industrial estate with a sustainable form of development which will be capable of delivering significant benefits for the entire village – this will include:

- the provision of new homes (approximately 90) to meet local housing needs within the village and wider Borough;
- the provision of modern business accommodation – including new office space, light industrial space (Class B1) and storage units (Class B8);
- the creation of a new public square (centred on Hicks Road) to provide a new focal point for the development and the wider village;
- the creation of a vibrant and integrated mixed-use quarter (centred around the public square) – integrating new the residential, retail, commercial and community floorspace;
- the inclusion of affordable housing as part of the new residential component – including intermediate and rented accommodation;
- the provision of small-scale retail uses (Classes A1/A2/A3 and A4) to add life and vibrancy to the new public spaces and to complement the role and function of the existing High Street;
- the potential to replace the existing surgery (from Hicks Road) with a new and expanded surgery/PCT unit within the development;
- the re-provision of the existing public car parking (currently adjacent to the surgery) within the new development;
- the provision of a residential care-home as part of the mix of residential accommodation to be provided on-site;
- to mitigate the existing flood risk issues at the site and investigate options for partially de-culverting the River Ver;
- to remove the existing utilitarian buildings from site and remediate existing on-site contamination (resulting the site's longstanding industrial use);
- the opportunity to improve accessibility and access to sustainable transport modes;
- the opportunity to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development.

The overarching objective for the Masterplan is to create a sustainable community, which will be an interesting place for people to live, work and visit. Furthermore, the intention of the Masterplan is to also achieve a number of wider benefits for the local Markyate community offering a genuinely inclusive development opportunity.



