



# Greyfriars, Bedford

## Development Brief

and Design Code

June 2024

Tibbalds CampbellReith JV is a contractual joint venture formed between two like-minded companies to deliver a range of built environment projects through the Homes England Multidisciplinary Panel 2019-2023. The JV is supported by a comprehensive consultant team.

Further details are set out on our website at: [tibbaldscampbellreithjv.com](http://tibbaldscampbellreithjv.com)

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LUC



Urban Movement



Urban Flow



Aspinall Verdi



Gleeds

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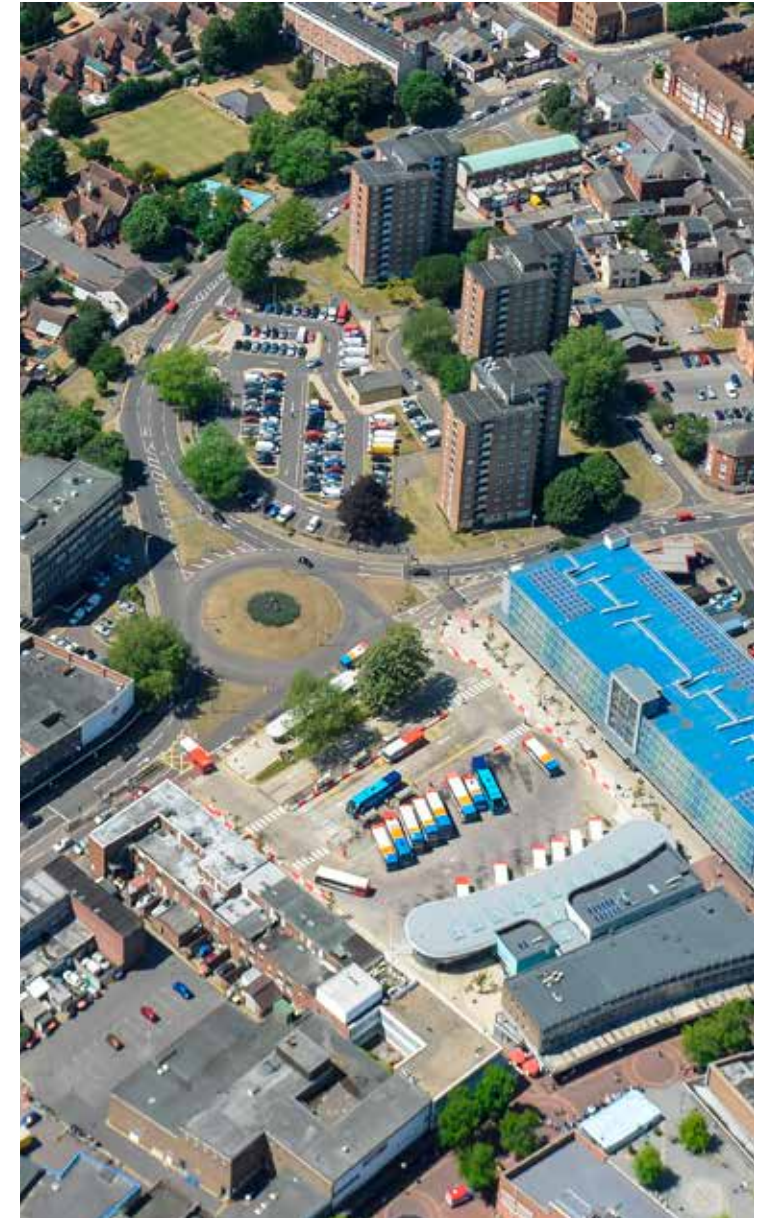
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### 1.3 Methodology

This document has been prepared by a masterplanning team, with specialist advice from heritage, viability, landscape and movement consultants in order to reduce risk and maximise site deliverability. Once the extent of the site had been identified, comprehensive analysis of the site was undertaken, including an assessment of constraints and opportunities. Community engagement followed, which then helped to determine the key development principles and local concerns and opportunities. A vision for the site was developed, and conceptual options appraised. Following this, further community consultation was undertaken to get thoughts on the preferred options. Each of these options was then tested for viability, before a preferred option was selected, and detailed in this SPD.



## 2 Policy Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the SPD provides an overview of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. With regard to local policy, the commentary summarises the adopted policy, but has due regard for emerging policy, which will have increased relevance during the lifetime of this SPD.

### 2.2 National Policy and Guidance

#### NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the ‘NPPF’) reflects primary legislation that states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. There is a general policy presumption in the NPPF in favour of sustainable development, although the development plan is the starting point for decision making.

The 2023 NPPF places great emphasis on the design of high-quality places, partly through strong wording on the use of design guides, codes and design review panels, and enables councils to refuse permission for any development that does not in effect prioritise design quality or ‘take the opportunities that are available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions’.

The NPPF also prioritises the ecological and landscape value of new developments and encourages opportunities for incorporating biodiversity improvements in and around developments, ‘especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity’.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (September 2023) covers the ‘Agent of Change’ principle, which places the emphasis on new development to provide suitable mitigation to reduce impacts on existing businesses or community facilities.

#### National design guidance

As part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance, the National Design Guide was first published in October 2019 (and updated January 2021). The National Design Guide, as revised, sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. Good design is explained in the Guide under 10 characteristics. These include (but are not limited to): context; built form; movement; nature; public spaces; resources (including a new direct reference to minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050); and lifespan. These characteristics encourage well-designed places that have compact forms of development that are walkable, contributing positively to wellbeing and placemaking. Well-designed neighbourhoods should include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand.

In parallel with the National Design Code, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the National Model Design Code in July 2021. This document provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide and sets out a methodology and potential content for the Design Code. The revised National Design Guide and the final version of the National Model Design Code and accompanying guidance are material considerations in planning decisions and have been given significant consideration within the preparation of the Development Brief.

## Planning Practice Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides planning guidance on a range of topics, for example Environmental Impact Assessments, Healthy and Safe Communities, and Planning Obligations. Whilst the PPG should be considered throughout the planning process, the PPG should be used as guidance, and not be seen as representing formal Government policy.

## 2.3 Local Policy

The adopted Development Plan for the SPD area consists of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (2020). This document is the overarching development plan document which outlines Bedford Borough's growth needs to 2030. The Local Plan primarily focusses on identifying the most sustainable sites to provide new housing to meet the needs of the community.

Relevant local policy for the Greyfriars masterplan includes:

- Development will be focussed towards brownfield sites, which will include minimising impacts on biodiversity and creating a robust green infrastructure network. These measures will help to improve the quality of life for residents, and combined with visitors to the area, will increase the borough's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit.
- The Greyfriars SPD area is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan (note the adjacent police station site is allocated for mixed use development (Policy 11)). However, Policy 3S outlines the spatial strategy for the borough, which makes clear that new retail, leisure and office development should be focussed in Bedford town centre, and that new areas for vibrant urban living should be created in Bedford's urban core.
- Policy 46S states that the Council will seek to maximise the delivery of development through the reuse of suitably located previously developed land.
- Other relevant adopted policies cover:
  - Non-residential uses (policies 69S; 74; 77S; and 98);
  - Policy 32 - The impact of development - disturbance and pollution impacts;
  - Policy 45 - Local Open Green Space;
  - Policy 58S - Affordable Housing;
  - Policy 59S - Housing Mix;
  - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (policies 35S, 38, 39, 42S and 43);
  - Energy and Sustainability (policies 51S, 54 and 55); and
  - Historic environment - Policy 41S.
- There are also several policies saved from the Local Plan 2013 which continue to apply:
  - Policy AD28 Provision of Open Space in Association with New Development;
  - Policy AD36 Pedestrian Routes;
  - Policy AD39 Cycling; and
  - Policy AD43 Urban Open Spaces and Gaps.



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## 2.4 Material Considerations and other policy

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### Emerging Local Plan

The Council is currently reviewing their local plan. They began by looking at issues and options, undertook a call for sites, and have now drafted the 'Local Plan 2040: Plan for Submission'. This was consulted upon in June and July 2022, and will undergo Examination in Public before adoption. As of January 2024, the draft Local Plan is going through Examination in Public, and is due to be adopted soon.

Draft Policy HOU1: Land at Greyfriars North covers this site, and proposes to allocate the site for residential and appropriate town centre uses (this includes a proposed Main Modification 6 submitted by Historic England, March 2023).

The policy requires:

*“A masterplan and design code to be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document prior to the submission of any planning application for the site. The preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document will be led by the Council in partnership with landowners / developers, stakeholders and the local community. It should pay particular regard to ensuring that the development is designed to reflect the site’s important location and to preserve the setting of heritage assets. In particular careful regard should be given to the siting, height, bulk, massing, interrelationship with surrounding buildings and the materials used in the development in order to conserve, or where appropriate enhance, the significance of heritage assets (noting that significance may be harmed by development within the setting of an asset. This includes the Bedford Conservation Area, listed buildings fronting Bromham Road and other taller heritage assets in the town centre”.*

Additionally the development should have due regard for: appropriate access; improved pedestrian/cycle connectivity; contributions to town centre highway infrastructure and secondary school provision; archaeological evaluation; and delivery of low carbon and environmentally resilient development.

Other notable draft policies specifically relevant to the SPD area include:

- Tall buildings (policy DM12);
- Environmental net gain (policy DM7);
- Residential space standards (policy DM6); and
- Non-designated heritage assets (policy DM10).

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### Bedford Borough Design Guide Settlements and Streets (March 2023).

The Council have recently adopted their borough-wide design guide. This provides general design advice for future development in the borough, offering a source-book of landscape and residential built environment qualities and characteristics that must inform early-stage design principles in new development. The 16 design principles have heavily influenced the layout, building form and details of the SPD (and analysed further in section 5).



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### Other SPDs

- Open Space SPD (2013);
- Sustainable Drainage System SPD (2018);
- Bedfordshire Community Safety Design Guide SPD (2005);
- Planning Obligations SPD (2013);
- Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities SPD (2014).

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### Other relevant plans and strategies

- **Bedford Town Centre Plan 2020-2023.** This outlines a series of initiatives to boost Bedford Town Centre's activity and reputation. This includes freezing parking charges; the redevelopment of the bus station; the announcement of a 'Town Centre Priority Fund'; Homelessness Reduction Initiatives; and the Townscape Heritage Initiative; among others.
- **Bedford Central Town Masterplan Plan Report (2018).** Bedford Borough Council commissioned the study to investigate how public assets could be used more effectively to benefit local people and deliver new homes. This formed part of the Local Plan evidence base, and provides a framework of short term environmental improvements, as well as opportunities for longer term residential development. The study focussed on the south and west of the town centre, and most notably for the Greyfriars SPD area includes the Police Station site and the site to the south of this, on the west side of Greyfriars road.
- **Bedford Borough Council's Declaration of the Climate Emergency (March 2019).**
- **Bedford Borough Local Transport Plan 2011-2021.** This document sets out the transport aims and ambitions for Bedford Borough and identifies the key strategies, schemes and initiatives necessary to deliver corporate and local outcomes.

- **Bedford Town Deal.** A series of economic and regeneration initiatives are currently being consulted on by BBC. These include the regeneration of the Station Quarter and Midland Road area, as well as improvements to local junctions and cycling and pedestrian infrastructure across the town centre. These adjacent improvements will also enhance the SPD area. It should be noted that the SPD proposals have been developed to tie in with the Bedford Town Deal improvements. However, the other improvements designed into the Greyfriars masterplan (this SPD) sit outside of the Bedford Town Deal junction improvements.

N.B. Whilst it is acknowledged that the main road is known as "Greyfriars", in the case of this document to avoid confusion, the term "Greyfriars" refers to the area, and "Greyfriars road" has been used to refer to the road.

## 3 Site Appraisal and development influences

Comprehensive analysis of the SPD area and wider context has been undertaken to inform the development drivers and acknowledge the site constraints. This section collates the site analysis carried out, drawing from various external references including surveys and evidence base documents, where relevant.

### 3.1 Context

3.1.1 Bedford is the largest settlement in the Borough of Bedford, and the second largest settlement in Bedfordshire, after Luton. Bedford Borough saw a population increase of 17.7% (from 157,500 to 185,300) between 2011 and 2021, which is the highest population increase in the East of England (which saw an average increase of 8.3%)(ONS, 2021).

3.1.2 The market town is located between the other notable settlements of Kempston, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, and Luton. Conveniently located between the A1 and M1 motorway, the town is also well connected via Bedford Railway Station, which sits on the main line from London St Pancras to the East Midlands. The town has a historic core, which is focussed around the High Street, on the northern side of the River Great Ouse. Other notable features include Bedford Park, Bedford Prison, and the Castle Mound.

3.1.3 More widely across the town, Bedford is forecast to undergo significant population growth, and there is demand for new infrastructure projects and redevelopment opportunities. Other regeneration projects have been identified, including work around the existing railway station, upgrades to Midland Road, and redevelopment of the (southern) Greyfriars site. When the East West Rail project is realised, Bedford will get a new direct link to Cambridge and Oxford, and passenger numbers are likely to increase significantly. Masterplans for Bedford Town Centre were produced as part of the One Public Estate programme, which is set to deliver an ambitious series of works focussed on

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E06000055/>

publicly owned assets to regenerate the town centre. The completion of the Riverside Bedford scheme has produced a new mixed use development that has successfully increased footfall through the centre.

### 3.2 SPD Area Location

3.2.1 The SPD area is situated on the fringes and to the west of the town centre of Bedford. It is bound by Bromham Road and Beckett Street to the north; Hassett Street to the east (including the bus station and shops); and Greyfriars road to the west. The SPD area focusses on land to the north of the existing roundabout, which is occupied by three residential blocks and a large surface car park. The residential blocks are the tallest buildings (approximately 12 storeys) in the immediate area, and are surrounded by open space. The SPD area also covers Beauchamp court (a six-storey linear apartment block) to the west, and the Allhallows Multistorey Car Park which fronts Bedford Bus Station.

### 3.3 Surrounding Development Proposals

3.3.1 The Bedford Central Town Masterplan identifies strategic long-term opportunities for development, as well as shorter term interventions to public realm, along Midland Road for example. There are medium to long-term plans to redevelop Bedford Railway Station, which would enhance connectivity to and from Bedford, making the links between the town centre and the station even more important.

3.3.2 Elements of the town centre masterplan which are relevant to the Greyfriars SPD area, and how the Greyfriars SPD area relates to these, include:

- Identification of signalised junction improvements at the existing Greyfriars roundabout. This piece of work is currently in the pipeline, and will be delivered by Bedford Borough Council as the Highways Authority, dramatically improving pedestrian safety, congestion, and the public realm around the bus station, SPD area, and the police station.
- Reduce the width of Midland Road and improve the public realm in order to make this a better pedestrian environment and improve access towards the railway station. Although there is less of a direct link to the SPD area, enhanced access to the station and town centre, and better pedestrian environments will also benefit the SPD area.
- The masterplan recommends heights of 2-8 storeys on the police station and adjacent site, with the taller elements suitable to the north on the police station site, lowering to 2 storeys to the respond to the residential nature of Priory Street. The proposed heights in this masterplan have informed the heights of the buildings proposed within the

masterplan area, demonstrating a transition in building height and density to signify a town centre location and “landmark” elements.

3.3.3 There are several significant developments taking place across Bedford, and there are two proposals for schemes in very close proximity to the SPD area which could have an impact on the character of the immediate and the wider area.

- 1 **Greyfriars Police Station.** An outline application (ref. 20/00140/MAO) was granted permission in April 2023 for the demolition of the vacant police station opposite the SPD area, and the construction of 105 residential dwellings, the realignment of the junction, and car parking. Though the application is at outline stage only, the parameters indicate a massing and height of between 2 and 9 storeys, peaking at the north eastern edge of the site on the new signalised junction, and stepping down towards Priory Street. This, the applicant argues, is to reflect the transition between the ‘urbanised’ character of Greyfriars and the ‘domestic’ character of Priory Street.
- 2 **Castle Cap Scheme.** There is also early conceptual work being undertaken on the site immediately south of the police station site, which is currently occupied by a three-storey retail parade along Greyfriars road, and turning the corner onto Midland Road. Early proposals suggest comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide Build to Rent accommodation and commercial uses within a high-density development.



Location of surrounding development proposals

3.3.4 These two proposals in immediate proximity to the SPD area suggest future regeneration of the area, which will provide new urban accommodation across Bedford town centre. The redevelopment of the SPD area, alongside these two proposals, is likely to change the character of this edge of town centre location.



### 3.4 Existing land uses

3.4.1 Bedford town centre has a wide range of employment, leisure, retail and cultural uses, and there is further change expected. Redevelopment opportunities have been focussed on brownfield sites in the town centre, in part through the One Public Estates Programme. BBC have an aspiration to introduce more town centre living, and enhance the visitor experience in the town.

3.4.2 The SPD area is on the fringe of the town centre, and therefore hosts a variety of uses, although the predominant use is residential. The eastern boundary marks the transition into the town centre, and alongside the bus station, is categorised by traditional high street uses including retail, office and commercial spaces. Similarly Midland Road is identified as a local centre with a number of retail and community uses, although there is also a large area of predominantly terraced housing. To the west of the site is further residential terraced housing, as well as the main railway station. North of the site is categorised by more historic residential uses, including the majority of the nearby heritage assets. The residential character is punctuated by a series of non-residential buildings including the Bedford Sixth Form College, former St Etheldreda's Children's Home, and Esquires Music Venue.

3.4.3 The SPD area therefore benefits from being in close proximity to a wide variety of land uses, with town centre activities within 5 minutes walk from the site.

3.4.4 The commercial floorspace currently on North Parade will be re-provided within the SPD area, and the Council will retain ownership of the new commercial units



Existing land uses

<span style="color: red;">—</span> Site boundary	<span style="background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Education	<span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Transport
<span style="background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Retail	<span style="background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Mixed/Use	<span style="background-color: darkred; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Prison
<span style="background-color: darkblue; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Commercial/Office	<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Residential	<span style="background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Multistorey Car Park
<span style="background-color: magenta; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Education/Use	<span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Places of Worship/Community Uses	<span style="background-color: grey; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Utilities



### 3.5 Community infrastructure

3.5.1 There are no dedicated community facilities within the SPD Area. However, within very close proximity there are several places of worship, including Bedford Pentecostal Church, which abuts the northern boundary of the area. There are also several places of worship to the west of the SPD area, which serve the immediate residential population, as well as residents from wider Bedford.

3.5.2 Priory Primary School sits at the western edge of the SPD area, which is a small primary school serving the surrounding community. Bedford Sixth Form College is situated to the north of the SPD area, attracting students from the town and wider catchment area. The college also now has use of the Church of the Holy Trinity, which was a formerly a listed building, but is now used as part of the school's kitchens and dining rooms.

3.5.3 Esquires Music Venue is a widely- known and much-respected independent music venue which has been an important local asset for over 30 years. Having hosted some of the UK's biggest artists, the venue was financially supported by a successful crowdfunding campaign when it was forced to close during the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. Any future proposals will need to consider and address noise and other constraints posed by the existing music venue under the 'Agent of Change' principle. Development in the SPD area should respect the location of the venue and must not undermine its viability by resulting in a risk of future noise complaints. Further assessment of this relationship should be undertaken at detailed design stage.

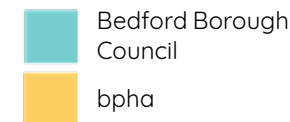
### 3.6 Tenures/ownership

3.6.1 The SPD area has mixed ownership, which is split between Bedford Borough Council, and bpha. bpha are a housing association, who own and manage the existing residential accommodation on site (including Beauchamp Court, Roise Court, Priory Court, and Beckett Court, but excluding the North Parade shops which is owned by the Council). Some of the homes have been bought, but the majority remain within the ownership of bpha.



Land ownership across SPD area

Key

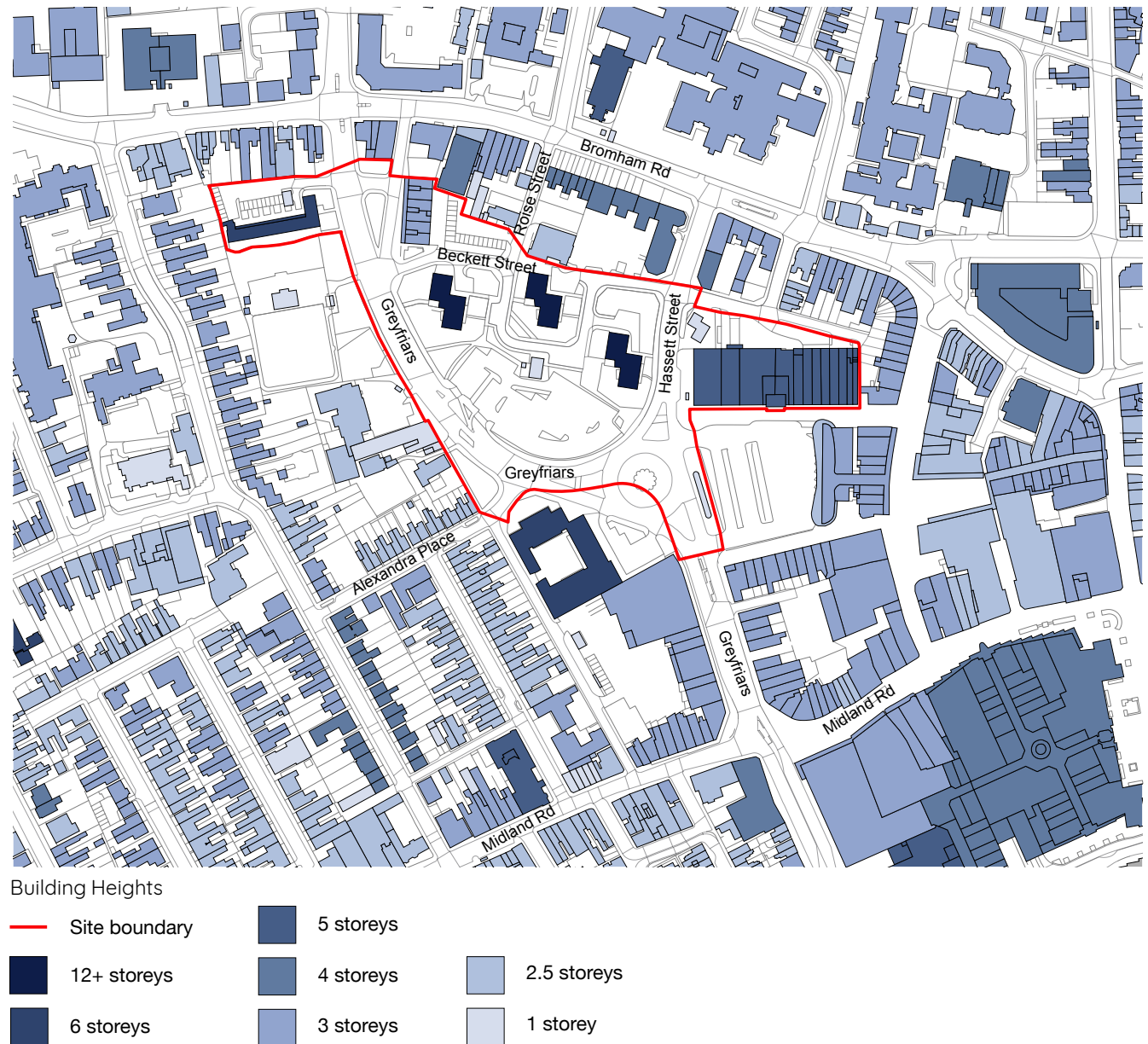


### 3.7 Building heights

3.7.1 Bedford is a relatively low-lying town, and most buildings do not exceed 3-4 storeys. Exceptions to this are found in the town centre, along Midland Road, and more widely fronting the river, where new recent development has been constructed with heights between 6-9 storeys. BBC are looking to focus new tall buildings in the town centre, but only if the height is justified and does not compromise important views including, but not necessarily limited to, the following heritage views identified in section 3.8.4. To this end BBC would expect any proposal to be informed by a robust and comprehensive assessment that identifies all views where there is potential for impact on the historic environment. BBC class tall buildings (depending on the context), as those which ‘break the skyline’ and are significantly taller than the prevailing heights of buildings in the area.

3.7.2 Draft Policy DM12 in the emerging Local Plan covers Tall Buildings, and states that these must be located in the urban area. New tall buildings must be of outstanding architectural quality. These considerations have informed the broad location of tall buildings on the site. Detailed design principles are set out in section 5.

3.7.3 The three existing residential blocks in the SPD area (Roise Court, Priory Court, and Beckett Court) are all 12 storeys, and therefore some of the tallest buildings in the town. The blocks are visible from other parts of the town, including south of the river, and hold an important role as landmarks for wayfinding. The SPD area also hosts other taller elements within the boundary, or immediately adjacent, including: Beauchamp Court (6 storeys); Allhallows Car Park (5 storeys); and the former Police Station (6 storeys).





### 3.8 Archaeology, heritage and views

3.8.1 The market town has an extensive history, and archaeological evidence suggests it is one of the earliest Saxon towns in the country. Set on the banks of the River Great Ouse, the settlement was initially established around a ford across the river, and became an important trading centre for the nearby hinterland.

The town remained a modest settlement until the end of C18, which saw increased industry and manufacturing processes lead to population growth. The arrival of the railway in C19 accelerated the growth, and the town expanded north west, resulting in suburban terraced streets and new estates for the middle classes and workers housing.

First development of the SPD area was terraced housing on the outskirts of the town centre. This housing was demolished in the 1950s, and the road re-aligned to install the Greyfriars roundabout and 5 new residential blocks (3 of which survive on the site today). In the early 2000s, as part of a wider plan for regeneration, two of the original blocks were demolished in anticipation of this redevelopment, however when the original plan stalled, the southern half of the SPD area was turned into a temporary surface car park.



1884: The Greyfriars SPD area is a densely built-up area with a close-grained network of residential streets tightly defined by buildings. It is sited on the west edge of Bedford. It lies south of an area of more generous Georgian terraces on Bromham Road and north-west of larger-scaled buildings with more generous forecourts associated with Harpur Schools around Midland Road.



1901: The Greyfriars area is largely unchanged. An area of more generous residential development now extends to the west of Greyfriars. The grain of development around Midland Road has started to increase.



1926: Relatively little change to the Greyfriars area or to its context



1967-68: Post-WW2, the Greyfriars area has been redeveloped, and the historic street network has been replaced with a pattern of roads designed primarily to accommodate vehicles. Bromham Road has lost the tight network of streets with dense built form of its historic context. The east-west alignment of Beckett Street is still just discernible immediately to the south, although with no buildings defining it, while the north-south streets have either been subsumed into larger roads or truncated either by new buildings or open space.

3.8.2 BBC's Heritage Appraisal (March 2022) of the site was undertaken to determine the archaeological significance and heritage features within the SPD area, and any impacts that future development may have on these.

With regard to archaeology of the SPD area, previous archaeological investigations have identified significant levels of modern truncation within the footprint of the existing blocks, and though remains could exist outside of these footprints, are likely to have been disturbed by modern services and infrastructure. Any archaeological features are likely to be of no more than local significance, and whilst this should not have significant constraint on development, potential remains and consideration of these should be further investigated during the planning process.

With regard to built heritage, the report confirms that: The Conservation Area derives its distinctiveness from (inter alia):

- The survival of the medieval street pattern.
- Its long term civic and educational role and the associated range of historic buildings and spaces.
- Building and tree framed views.
- The consistent quality of its Georgian and Victorian architecture and the presence of mature public space and tree planting.

*"The [SPD] site currently makes a negative contribution to the experience of the Conservation Area and the listed Buildings, though the effect is small".*

*"It is suggested that any new tall structures should maintain a similar distance from 22-48 Bromham Road. Smaller structures of 2-3.5 storeys could be built on the land between 22-48 Bromham Road and the 12-storey towers without having a significant impact on the Listed Buildings, if designed sensitively".*

The report identifies that the areas of particular significance in the Conservation Area (e.g. High Street, the Castle etc) are situated away from the SPD area and they pose no potential for the proposed development to impact them. The marginal negative impact on the Conservation Area arises from the visibility of the residential blocks (seen from the side streets of Bromham Road) and through the loss of the historic street pattern and urban form of Beckett Street and former north-south streets.

The impacts are mitigated by the distance between the existing blocks and the Conservation Area and its individual heritage assets, and by the gaps or spaces between tall buildings.

The report concludes that once detailed development proposals are drafted, a full settings assessment should be carried out to identify specific constraints and impacts on these heritage assets.

3.8.3 Heritage analysis supporting this Development Brief has also highlighted likely impacts that the masterplan may have on surrounding heritage assets.

#### Potential for increased harm:

- Height of proposed tall buildings were to be increased or proposed tall buildings were to become more prominent in views 1,2 or 3; or
- Proposed tall buildings were to be sited closer to heritage assets.

However, neither of these outcomes is the case for the masterplan area, as building heights have been reduced and tall buildings are located further away from heritage assets.

#### Potential for enhancement:

- Height or prominence of proposed tall buildings were to be reduced in views 1,2 or 3; or
- Appearance of existing or proposed buildings were to be better quality and/or more contextually designed in terms of form, massing, scale, materials etc;
- North-south streets running from Bromham Road into SPD area were reconnected;
- Tall buildings set further away from heritage assets; and
- Beckett Street were to be re-defined as an attractive urban street.

These potential enhancements have influenced the masterplan and are accommodated within it.



## Heritage views

3.8.4 As a result of the heritage assessment, three sensitive views of nearby heritage assets have been identified, as they may be impacted by future development in the SPD area. This includes regard to the scale, massing and materiality of the future development in the SPD area.

The views identified below must be tested and explored in any future planning application with a view to preserving or enhancing the significance

of heritage assets. The full visual effects should be demonstrated clearly by way of appropriate graphical representations such as wireframe diagrams and photomontages so that the extent of any harm can be assessed and understood.



Heritage assets and views



**View 1:** Listed buildings (no.s 22 and 24) on Bromham Road visible in the foreground of the residential blocks looking south down Roise Street from junction with The Crescent. This inter-visibility means there is potential for new development to improve this relationship



**View 2:** South from The Crescent, incorporating listed buildings no.s 2 to 14 The Crescent. This view (whilst partially obscured by foliage in summer months) towards the SPD area from this historic route is framed by important heritage assets, and is currently terminated by the existing residential blocks on the horizon



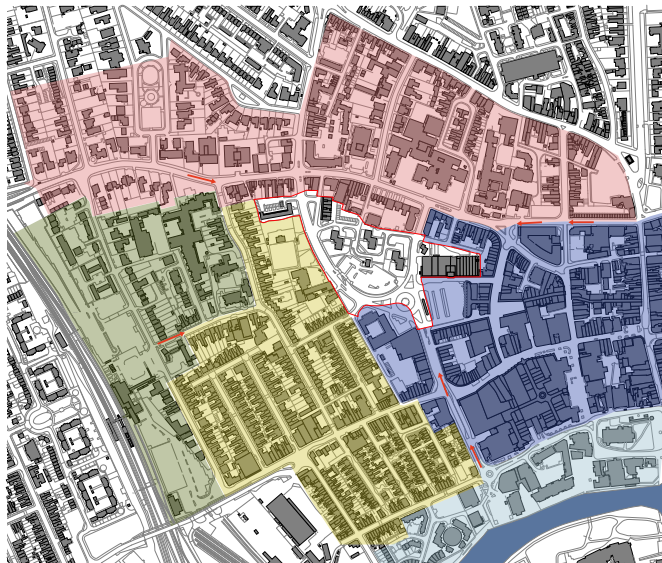
**View 3:** From the intersection of Bromham Road and Haslett Street, the existing Beckett Court is highly visible, and any future relationship will need to be carefully considered

### 3.9 Character Analysis

3.9.1 The SPD area sits at an intersection between townscape areas with varying characteristics. The design proposal therefore acknowledges its position at this junction, referencing these important townscape areas and sympathetically responding to them. These areas have been identified based on similar townscape features, including, but not limited to: building typology; street structure; plot size; building line; vernacular, boundary treatments; and landscaping.

3.9.2 The five townscape character areas are:

- Historic Quarter,
- Town Centre,
- Mixed Residential,
- Midland Road Neighbourhood (and Midland Road),
- Riverside.



### Wider townscape views

The relatively flat terrain of central Bedford, and the mid-rise built form of the town centre means that the existing blocks are obscured from particularly sensitive views (e.g. Bedford Town Bridge, or Bedford Castle Mound). Given that the height of the proposed buildings are not proposed to be taller than the existing, the impact on wider contextual townscape viewpoints is considered to be minimal.

The existing residential blocks are however visible from several approaches closer to the site. Notably, approaching from the River looking north; and from Woburn Road looking east. To terminate these viewpoints, enhance the pedestrian experience around the site, and provide wayfinding features in these more prominent locations, it is proposed to locate landmark elements here. Landmark elements could be marked by increased height, architectural articulation, or a change in materials (or a combination of all three). But this will only be acceptable where it is clearly demonstrated that it would preserve or enhance the significance of any heritage assets affected. Further details on tall buildings are outlined in section 5.5, and at planning application stage townscape views should be discussed and agreed with BBC.

- Historic Quarter
- Town Centre
- Mixed Residential
- Midland Road Neighbourhood
- Riverside
- ➔ Significant Townscape Views

There are also glimpsed views from Bromham Road looking south east; and Dame Alice Street looking west. Given that the proposed height of the new blocks is lower than the existing, it is unlikely that the new blocks will be visible from these locations.



View looking north towards the SPD area from the Riverside



View looking east towards the SPD area from Woburn Road



## Historic Quarter

This area is predominantly covered by Bedford Conservation Area (CA), which is characterised by:

- A well- preserved historic fabric in many areas (see The Crescent, Adelaide Square etc). However, modern interventions have also detracted from this coherent character (see modern additions to Bromham Road);
- The character of this area being dominated by the historic street pattern, consistent building frontages, large plots, and prominent landscaping boundary treatments and mature street trees; and
- A strong visual connection between this area and the SPD area, and important local wider townscape views.



View looking south to the SPD area from The Crescent



Group of listed buildings with prominent frontage onto Bromham Road

## Town Centre

The town centre abuts the eastern edge of the site, and marks a shift in land uses to retail, commercial and civic facilities. This area is characterised by:

- A range of building typologies and architectural styles, including modern development (such as the retail stores along Midland Road, Allhallows car park, and the bus station) as well as the more historic core to the east of Harpur Street;
- Important townscape views on approach to the site looking north from River Street. Beckett Court is highly visible from this approach and dominates the view northwards; and
- A more informal street layout, borne out of the historic urban fabric of Bedford as a market town. This has resulted in varied building frontages and building lines, with little consistency between neighbouring streets.



View looking north to the SPD area from the junction at Greyfriars road and Midland Road



Varied building typologies on the pedestrianised section of Midland Road

## Mixed Residential

This area covers land to the west of the site, mostly residential in nature, it includes buildings fronting Ashburnham Road, and notably Bedford Railway Station. This area is characterised by:

- Varied building typologies; including modern apartments, and more historic C19 detached housing. Building heights are predominantly 2-3 storeys, with some newer development of 4-5 storeys - the tallest building in this area is Ashburnham Court, sitting at six storeys on the corner of Ashburnham Road and Woburn Road;
- A range of building footprints and sizes, and an inconsistent building line across much of the area; and
- Views from Woburn Road towards the site, looking eastwards. The residential blocks on the Greyfriars site are visible above the terraced housing on Alexandra Road.



Modern infill development on Conduit Road



Consistent residential typology and strong building line on Conduit Road

## Midland Road Neighbourhood

Midland Road provides a key east-west spine through the area, before entering the threshold to the western town centre boundary at the junction with Greyfriars road. This route provides a key linkage from the railway station through to the town centre, and acts as a local centre for the residential neighbourhoods immediately north and south of Midland Road.

Important features of the residential area include:

- Consistent street structure, plot widths, and building lines;
- Consistent terraced typology and boundary treatments;
- Mostly on-street parking and traffic calming measures;
- Some street planting, including mature trees;
- Consistent building heights – predominantly 2.5 storeys, some with attic conversions and dormer extensions; and
- Predominantly residential uses.



Formal residential layout (and traffic calming measures) on Grafton Road



Strong building frontage onto road with minimal setback, and some street planting (Western Street)

## Midland Road

Characteristics include:

- A busy, linear, local centre primarily serving the immediate surrounding residential community as well as a focal point for fast-food outlets;
- A range of high street uses and non-residential uses, including churches, restaurants and leisure facilities. Midland Road is distinguished from the ‘town centre’ of Bedford by its retail offering (small independent shops), and building typologies (a range of C19 architecture);
- Mixed building heights and typologies. Predominantly 2-3 storeys in height, with a range of C19 terraced buildings, mixed with gable ends, and town-houses;
- Inconsistent building line and frontages to the street. Some original shops front the street directly, whilst some residential dwellings are set back from the street with small front gardens; and
- Its function as a key pedestrian (and vehicular) route from railway station through to the town centre.



Important pedestrian linkage through to the town centre



Varied land uses and local community facilities on Midland Road

## Riverside

The River Great Ouse is the most prominent natural feature in Bedford, flowing east-west through the town. The area fronting the river to the north has been identified as having distinctive character, and despite not being in direct proximity to the site, direct visual connections between this area and the existing residential blocks which can be viewed up River Street make this a relevant consideration. Key features include:

- Range of building typologies, including large multi-storey modern mixed-use developments, and also historical buildings (for example Bedford County Court); and
- Six-storey development at River’s edge.



Modern mixed use development at the river’s edge



View looking north to the SPD area from River Street



### 3.10 Landscape, Ecology and biodiversity

3.10.1 Bedford Borough is characterised by gently undulating topography, which has been used as an intensive arable landscape for centuries. Bedford's historical role as an agricultural market town has meant the landscape has always held an important role in Bedford's prominence as a town. To the south of Bedford town is the Forest of Marston Vale, which is a 61 sq. mile community forest, designated as a national priority area for environmentally-led regeneration of degraded and industrially scarred landscapes. Bedford Borough Council published their Green Infrastructure Plan in 2009, which outlines strategies to link and enhance the existing green infrastructure assets across the Borough, including Upper and Lower Great Ouse River Valley (including where the river runs through the town). The Plan outlines measures to enhance connections and access to the nearby countryside, as the immediate town centre itself does not have an abundance of readily accessible green open space. Bedford Park, Russell Park, and the River are all located within 20 minutes walk of the SPD area.

3.10.2 There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites in the Greyfriars SPD area. The nearest statutory site is the Hill Rise Local Nature Reserve located approximately 905m north of the site. The nearest non-statutory site is the River Great Ouse County Wildlife Site, approximately 225m south of the site. Due to the distance, and lack of connectivity to these designated sites, the potential for impacts is considered low.

3.10.3 The Priory Recreation Ground, which abuts the western boundary of the SPD area, is identified as an 'Urban Open Space' in the adopted Local Plan Policies Map. This space has been identified for having a particular importance in maintaining the function, character and identity of the urban area.

3.10.4 Ecological analysis reveals that the dominant habitats within the SPD area include hardstanding and buildings, with discrete areas of amenity grassland, mature trees, hedges and ornamental planting. These habitats in combination were considered to be of low ecological value.

3.10.5 The site overall was considered to have negligible suitability for commuting and/or foraging bats.

3.10.6 Although Greyfriars is predominantly hard landscaped, a good variety of healthy mature trees are evident across the site. These are clustered around the residential tower blocks and the western and eastern boundaries. This includes several Category A trees, which will be protected where possible.

3.10.7 Areas of amenity grassland with low environmental value are visible through parts of the site, principally around the residential buildings. Localised clusters of ornamental planting can be seen to the front of Priory Primary School and around Greyfriars road.

3.10.8 Overall, the site is dominated by road infrastructure and the surface car parking, however, there are opportunities to improve the quality and quantity of open space on site.



Legend:

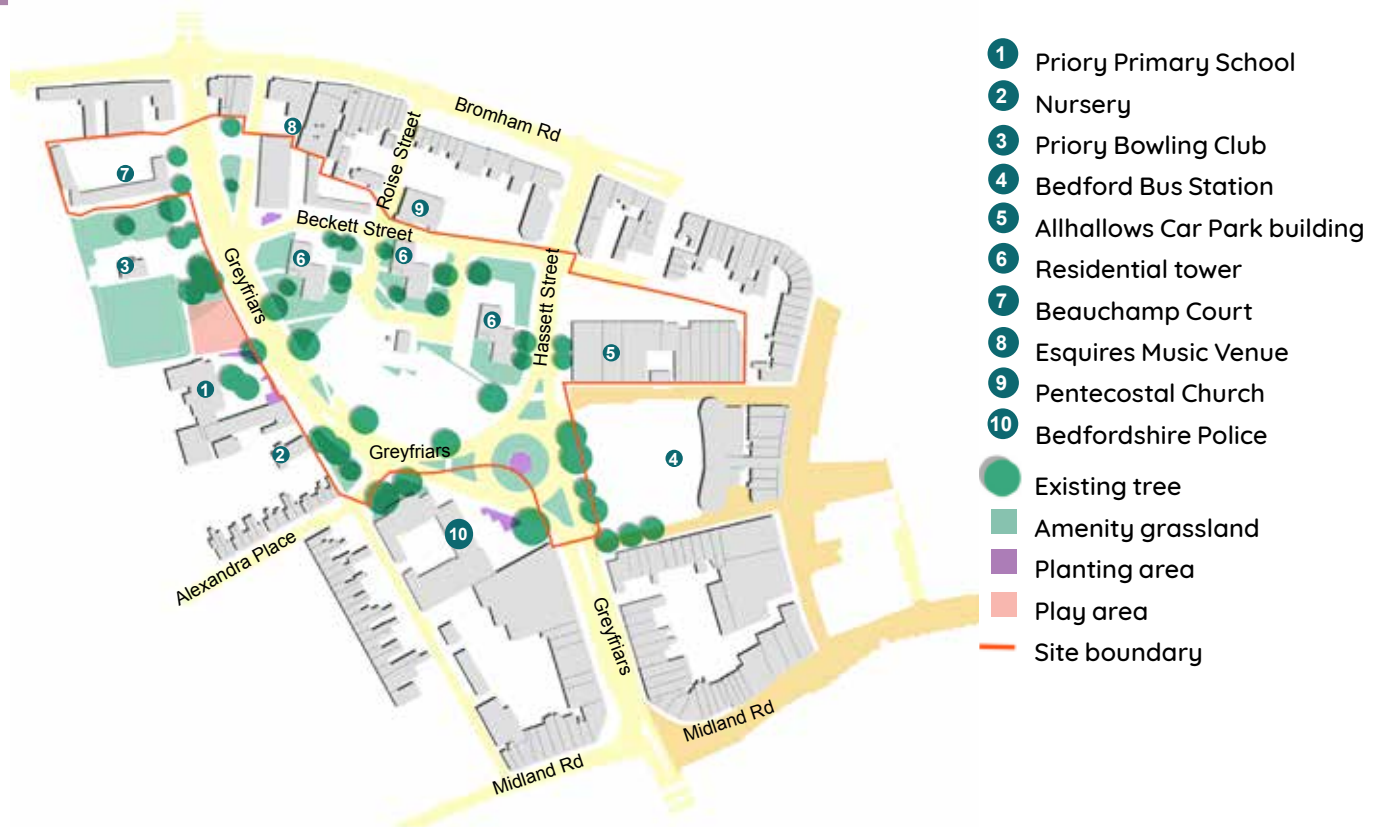
	Site Boundary
	Category A Trees (Stem and Canopy Spread)
	Category B Trees (Stem and Canopy Spread)
	Category C Trees (Stem and Canopy Spread)
	Category U Trees (Stem and Canopy Spread)
	Root Protection Area
	Existing Layout

Tree constraints plan (2022)

### 3.11 Public realm and private space

3.11.1 The SPD area is characterised by a combination of public and private spaces, the thresholds and boundaries of which are somewhat unclear. The three residential blocks are situated in open space, and there is a pedestrian footpath intersecting the blocks. Beauchamp Court has a courtyard (used predominantly for parking and servicing) which feels more semi-private for residents only. There is very little private amenity space for existing residents, though the existing residential blocks mostly have balconies, and some residents of Beauchamp Court have access to ground floor gardens (south side only).

3.11.2 The public open space around the base of the residential blocks is mostly amenity grassland, and poorly utilised. Anecdotally, the green space is often used for antisocial parking, and there are also antisocial behaviour issues that have been reported at the base of the blocks. The lack of space (the grassed areas are relatively small), and proximity to busy roads and car park are most likely the reasons that children do not play in these areas. The playground across the road at Priory Recreation Ground is more frequently used by parents and young children, particularly after school hours.



Existing landscaping across the SPD area



Priory recreation ground



Planting and low-level vegetation



Mature trees amongst existing residential blocks



### 3.12 Utilities

3.12.1 There are several utilities connections across, and underneath the SPD area. Most notably, there is an electricity substation on the site, which is currently located on the surface car park. A concentration of underground utility services can be found running east-west across the site. These are predominantly serving the existing tower blocks and form a considerable underground constraint for phased development. The sub-station requires 24-hour vehicle access.

### 3.13 Flooding

3.13.1 Any future development must be supported by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) to address all potential flood risks. Initial assessment assumes the following risks.

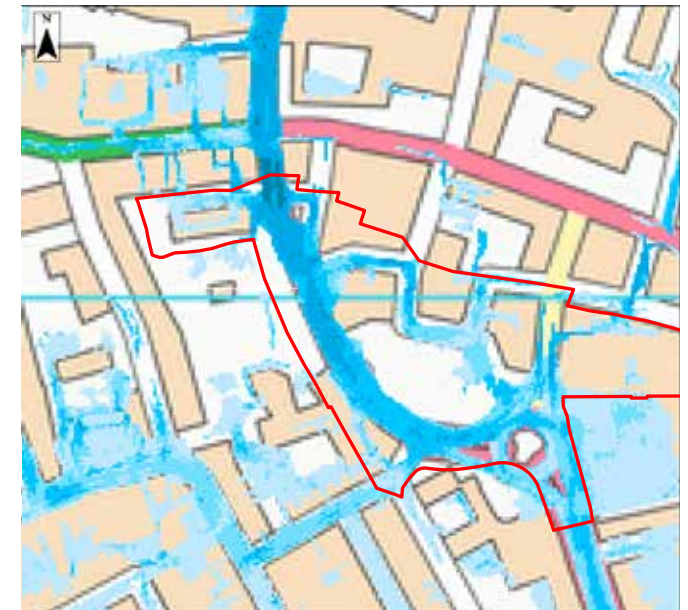
3.13.2 The Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning (River and Sea) indicate that the majority of the site is in Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk) with a 0.1% chance of flooding from rivers (fluvial flooding) in any given year. However, there is a small area in the south of the site which is classified as Flood Zone 2 (Medium Risk) with a chance of fluvial flooding between 1% and 0.1%.

3.13.3 Current surface water flood mapping shows that flooding is predicted to occur within the site along the route of Beckett Street during both the 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 year storm events, but it is not shown to extend beyond the site boundary, indicating that the source of the flooding is within the site itself. There is also predicted to be surface water flooding within Greyfriars road along the south-western boundary of the site and within the roundabout at the junction with Hassett Street.

3.13.4 The redevelopment of the site will involve the re-configuration of the site and the corresponding replacement of the surface water sewer system. As part of these works, the surface water run-off from the site will be attenuated to green field run-off rates thereby reducing the peak flows to the sewer system and any residual capacity issues will be addressed by on-site sewer replacement/ upgrades. Independent of the SPD development area, the Greyfriars road / Hassett Street junction is to be subject to

reconfiguration and this will involve corresponding alteration of the sewer system as part of which local capacity issues should be addressed.

3.13.5 The site is accessible from the south via Greyfriars road and also from the north via Roise Street and Hassett Street/ Beckett Street. Both these northern routes are unaffected by either fluvial flooding or surface water flooding and, hence, in the event that surface water flooding were to occur within Greyfriars road and/ or the Greyfriars road/ Hassett Street junction, two locations with safe access and egress to/ from the site will remain.



Map showing surface water flood risk  
*Bedford Borough Council Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*



### 3.14 Access and connectivity

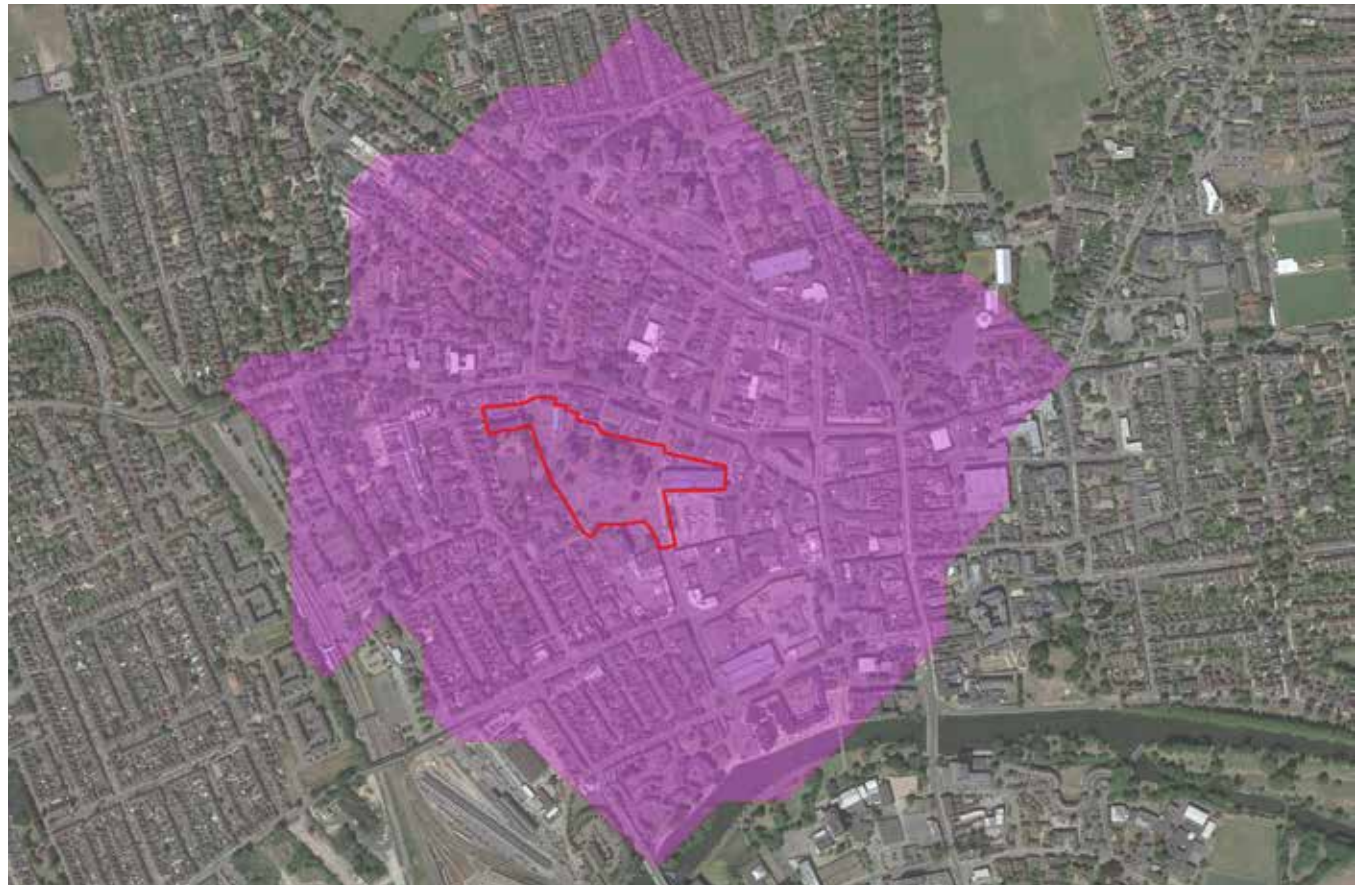
3.14.1 Greyfriars road forms a key part of the town centre vehicle movement network, accommodating two-way traffic travelling north and south. As the High Street only permits southbound movement, Greyfriars road is particularly important for northbound traffic. Greyfriars road then connects to Bromham Road (A4280), which is the largest east-west connector route across the town. Bedford Sixth Form College, Priory Primary School, Greyfriars surface car park, and Bedford Bus Station all result in a high number of vehicle movements and a very busy road network around the SPD area. The highway infrastructure currently prioritises vehicle movement over the movement of people to and from the town centre (although improved pedestrian crossings have been installed in recent years and a new junction to replace the roundabout will help active travel connectivity further).

3.14.2 There are numerous vehicle access points for service areas and parking, which leads to convoluted road design, and excessive hardstanding.

3.14.3 The north side of Beckett Street is fronted by a number of “backs” of buildings which front onto Bromham Road. Car parks, service areas, and garages all create inactive semi-private edges to this street, creating an unsuccessful and illegible pedestrian environment.

3.14.4 Cycle routes, and cycle infrastructure across the town is disconnected. Cycle infrastructure includes a mixture of on-road cycling, shared pathways, and bus lanes. There is a lack of formal separation for cyclists, both at junctions, and on the carriageway (though there are two bike shops within immediate proximity to the SPD area).

3.14.5 The railway station and town centre are within 10-minutes walking distance of the SPD area. However, pedestrian permeability and legibility from the station, across the SPD area and to the town centre are not very clear. There are clear opportunities to improve existing connections, by installing new crossing points, particularly to serve Priory Primary School, the town centre, and the route through to the railway station.



Areas accessible within 10 minutes walk from the SPD area

3.14.6 The site is extremely well located, in immediate proximity to Bedford town centre and the bus station, and within a 10-minute walk to the railway station. The location has very high access to public transport, town centre services and amenities and local employment opportunities. This provides an opportunity to create a place focussed around walking, cycling, public transport use and public life.

3.14.7 Greyfriars road and Hassett Street are key streets passing through the site. Planned changes to the street network include the Greyfriars road/Hassett Street junction, which will be transformed from a large un-signalised roundabout, to a more space-efficient signalised T-junction with new formal crossing points for people walking, and segregated cycle facilities. Hassett Street and Greyfriars road (south of the junction) will also be upgraded to provide new segregated cycle tracks.

3.14.8 Greyfriars road (north) is currently wider than necessary, and lacks formal crossing points, good quality footways and cycle infrastructure. The area around Priory Primary School is particularly important to improve for children. There is an opportunity to upgrade Greyfriars road to better tie in with the walking and cycling network, and proposals for Hassett Street.

3.14.9 Alexandra Place is a local residential street, however exhibits high levels of rat-running traffic during peak times. Similarly, Gwyn Street and Brace Street provide a rat-run for drivers seeking to avoid the signalised junction at Hassett Street/Bromham Road.

3.14.10 BBC have identified that a 'business as usual' approach is not going to deliver sustainable growth, and therefore their transport strategy will: support the delivery of low carbon transport; promote connectivity and accessibility in new development, linking to existing communities; and support opportunities for active travel and green infrastructure. The Council have already taken the first step to develop design proposals that will transform the roundabout junction at Greyfriars road / Hassett Street into a more space-efficient signalised T-junction with segregated cycle facilities, helping to encourage sustainable travel and reduce the dominance of the junction, and unlock development opportunities. (Note all proposals plans within this document show the new committed junction arrangement.)

### 3.15 Parking

3.15.1 There are numerous parking options for visitors arriving in Bedford by car. Within proximity of the SPD area there are eight car parks, resulting in an abundance of parking options, and as the parking survey data outlines, are rarely fully utilised. As part of the evidence base to this document, parking stress surveys were undertaken by Urban Flow. These revealed that weekday utilisation across all car parks combined was just 42%, but there were significant variations in usage between different locations. Allhallows car park (428 spaces) measured just 17% utilisation, whereas Bedford station measured 89% utilisation, when spot checks were undertaken mid-week. Greyfriars surface car park (143 spaces) measured 49% utilisation.

3.15.2 Within the SPD area, there are 53 on-street parking spaces, which are either for use of residents, or pay-and-display. Across the SPD area as a whole, daytime utilisation was surveyed to be 72%, which could be expected to be higher in the evening/overnight. There is also a degree of private non-residential parking that takes place (usually in an ad-hoc manner), associated with deliveries/servicing.

3.15.3 Therefore, there are clearly opportunities to rationalise the parking options within the SPD area. There are also plans to upgrade the MSCP with improved lighting/entranceway to make this a more convenient and attractive parking option.

3.15.4 It is assumed that going forward the site itself will be car-free, apart from blue-badge parking. Existing residents' spaces will be re-provided within the MSCP.



Allhallows MSCP



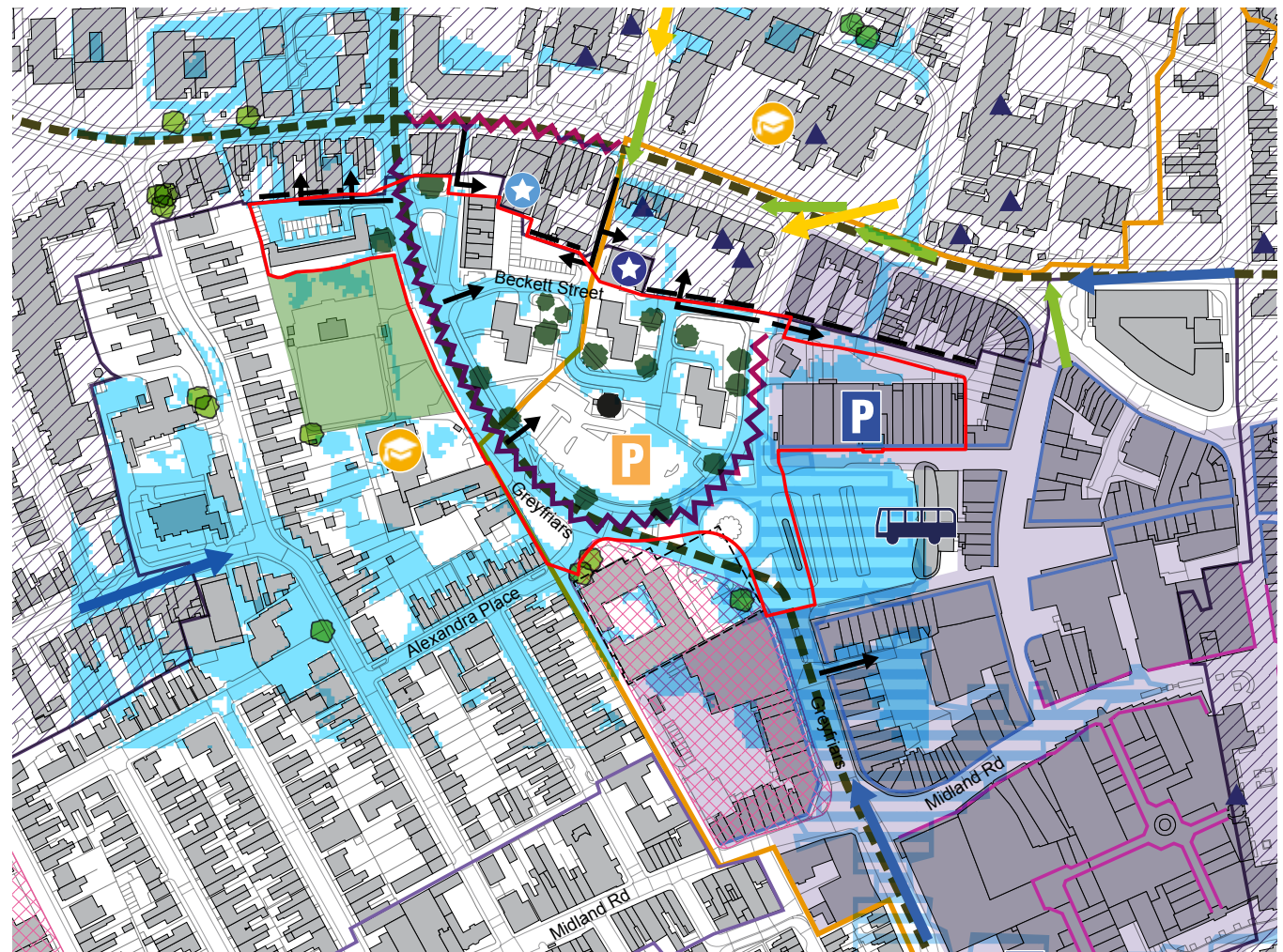
### 3.16 Summary of site Constraints

Key constraints include:

- Electricity substation on Greyfriars surface car park, and the requirement to retain this in-situ;
- Direct and indirect impact on the Bedford Conservation Area and subsequent restrictions on height of development to the northern area of the site;
- Esquires Music Venue – potential impact from new residential development due to noise complaints if development is not sufficiently distant and carefully designed;
- The Bedford Conservation Area and several listed buildings in close proximity to the site (potential impact with regard to setting and views); and
- Several mature (class A) trees on-site.

#### Key

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Pedestrian-only routes | Mature trees onsite  |
| River Great Ouse       | Access points  |
| Cycle network          | Backs of adjacent properties   |
| Main vehicular route   | Electricity substation   |
| Bus station            | New junction   |
| Multi-storey car park  | Noise / barrier to movement  |
| Surface car park       | Flood zone 2   |
| School                 | Important townscape views  |
| Music venue            | Key viewpoint (as identified in the Bedford Conservation Area Appraisal) |
| Church                 | Important view affecting heritage asset                                  |
| Conservation Area      | Tree Protection Orders   |
| Town Centre boundary   | Archaeological Interest Sites  |
| Listed buildings       | Secondary Shopping Frontage  |
| Primary Shopping Area  | Primary Shopping Frontage  |



Summary constraints plan

- |                  |  |                  |
|------------------|--|------------------|
| Local Centre     | Housing Allocation   | Railway line     |
| Urban Open Space | Police Station application (currently under consideration) | Railway station  |
|                  |  | Surface flooding |



### 3.17 Summary of site Opportunities

Key opportunities include:

- The gateway opportunity that Greyfriars provides, in its location on the edge of the town centre;
- The opportunity to create active frontages along Greyfriars road, and improve connections/crossings across it;
- Opportunities to rationalise the layout of the site and improve the urban environment;
- Opportunities to improve views and inter-visibility with Bedford Conservation Area (and nearby listed buildings); and
- Opportunities for providing green open space and retaining existing mature trees.

Key

- Site boundary
- - - Pedestrian-only routes
- - - Cycle routes
- Bus station
- Retail area
- School
- Music venue
- Urban open space
- Active frontage opportunity
- \* Opportunity for landmark building
- Gateway opportunity
- ↔ Opportunity to improve connection / crossing
- ➡ Opportunity for connection through site
- Housing allocation
- Primary Shopping Area
- Local Centre
- New junction



Summary opportunities plan

- Opportunity for green open space
- Opportunity for open space improvement / potential development
- Opportunity for green open space improvement
- Potential redevelopment opportunities
- Police Station application (currently under consideration)
- ➡ Connection to the River Great Ouse
- ➡ Connection to the Bedford Park
- ➡ Connection to Bedford railway station
- ➡ Connection to town centre retail
- ★ Church
- ||| Railway line
- ➡ Railway station
- ➡ River Great Ouse
- ➡ Mature trees on site

## 4 Vision and Objectives

This section outlines the vision for new development at Greyfriars, and summarises input from early community engagement sessions.

### 4.1 Greyfriars - a vibrant new urban quarter

*Greyfriars area will become a new lively mixed-use quarter well integrated into the town centre. It will be a place where people choose to be now and into the future and become a sustainable, healthy, and attractive place to live with a range of housing typologies and tenures. It will be well connected and safe, and people will choose to walk and cycle between the centre, the station, and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Open space for the residents as well as attractive, landscaped streets and spaces will add to the quality of the wider area.*

Guiding principles assisting in the delivery of the vision and providing a framework for the option assessments. Greyfriars will:

- **Be delivered through working in partnership** with existing residents, landowners, other stakeholders, and the wider community.
- **Make the best use of the Partnerships' assets.**
- **Be well-connected and safe.** The site's central location presents the opportunity to enhance safe sustainable travel to the town centre and nearby facilities.
- **Be a sustainable new neighbourhood.** Public land ownership means the site offers an opportunity to demonstrate sustainable design, and target net zero carbon development.
- **Be diverse.** The redevelopment offers the opportunity for new housing types and tenures appropriate for meeting the existing residents' needs as well as new demand to create a mixed and balanced community.
- **Be a green place.** The outside space will be an integral part of the new neighbourhood and street scenes, and incorporate lessons learned from living in the pandemic.

### 4.2 The brief and development assumptions

4.2.1 The above site analysis, technical constraints, vision and objectives have informed the development brief and underlying assumptions for the masterplan, including a commitment at the time of writing the SPD:

- to only move tenants once, and provide them with new homes within the scheme in order to facilitate new development. This requires a minimum of 254 replacement homes; a phased approach and the need to retain the existing sub-station until the last tower block is demolished.
- all new and re-provided homes will meet national space standards where required;
- to provide a mixture of tenures and dwelling sizes to create a more mixed community and address some of the existing issues resulting from a concentration of small units and residents with particular needs;
- to meet the Council's objective of establishing a new housing market in the town to act as a catalyst for change and regeneration,
- to retain as many mature trees as possible to enhance the sense of place and help meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements; and
- to respond to and enhance positive elements of the townscape.



Development should create strong frontages along Greyfriars road and clear definition of communal space



Development presents the opportunity to mix uses, which should have active entrances and uses at ground floor, and residential above



Private and communal amenity create high quality living environment



New Ground Cohousing by Pollard  
Thomas Edwards © Galit Seigmann



Defensible space is used to provide privacy and improve the greenery of the streetscene



Combination of terrace housing with taller buildings provides variety in scale and a distinct character



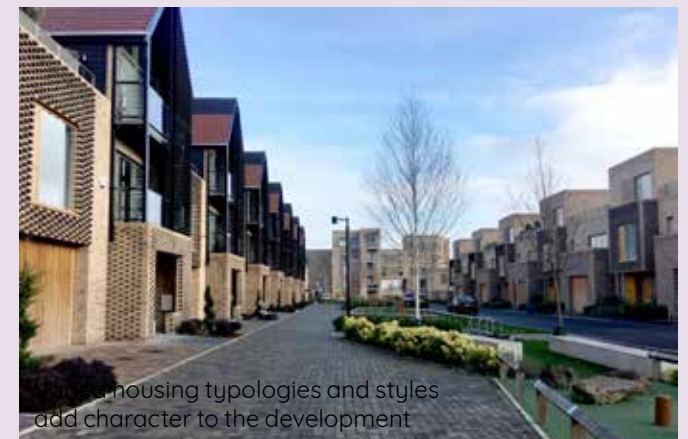
Greening and pedestrian enhancements could make Greyfriars road a much nicer environment to move through



Sustainable buildings should include on-site renewable energy generation such as PV panels



Green infrastructure should be multifunctional, accessible and should add character to the area



Varied housing typologies and styles add character to the development



### 4.3 Stakeholder and Community engagement

4.3.1 Wide-reaching engagement was undertaken across several days (both in-person and online) and at several stages of this project, to understand how residents and the wider community feel about their homes and the area as a whole. Two engagement periods were undertaken: the first in June 2022 focussed on the residents' thoughts, concerns and aspirations for the site; and the second event in January 2023 sought feedback on our early site analysis.

4.3.2 These sessions were advertised for all residents of Bedford and with particular focus on existing residents of the tower blocks and occupiers of existing commercial premises.

4.3.3 We asked people a number of questions at these sessions and also ran online surveys of them, hosted both by the bpha platform The Place and the BBC website.

4.3.4 Key outcomes from the first session included:

- Existing open space is poorly designed, and there are poor boundary treatments at ground floor. Public/private space should be better defined;
- Antisocial behaviour at the base of the residential blocks is an issue;
- Increased and improved facilities for play for children and teenagers are desirable;
- Internal amenity issues: noise insulation between apartments is poor; individual heaters are expensive to run;
- Congestion and pollution on Greyfriars road are an issue;
- The existing mature trees are really valued;
- New green spaces, planting and accessible play areas would be welcome;
- A mixture of houses and flats, a mixture of tenures, and appropriate disabled access are desired; and
- Individual private amenity space (balconies) are really valued by existing residents.
- Conversations with visitors passing through the site confirmed that the site provides an important short cut towards the town centre.

4.3.5 Key outcomes from the second engagement session:

- Eastern side of site (on junction of Greyfriars road and entrance to town centre) is a more popular location for potential tall buildings;
- Strong support for ensuring the environmental sustainability of new homes, with the orientation of flats, solar panels, good insulation, green roofs, and SuDS all seen as very important;
- Maintenance and management of new green spaces essential;
- Communal resident courtyards were popular ideas, as well as community gardens;
- Mixed response on buildings higher than 11 storeys.
- The need for appropriately maintained lifts;
- Support for more pedestrianised areas, secure cycle parking, and new cycle lanes;
- The existing mature trees should be retained and celebrated
- Planting on the streets, blue badge parking spaces, and safe crossing points on Greyfriars road and Hassett Street;
- Community gardens and allotments were mentioned several times; and
- Generally positive response to the idea of resident parking in the Allhallows multistorey car park (though some concern about developing on the surface car park as this is a popular place to park), although this would need to come with safety improvements, better lighting, and increased electric vehicle charging points

## What you said:

We received detailed responses on a range of issues and potential solutions, as well as important considerations for any future development. Residents really like:

Proximity to shops, facilities and the town centre

Balconies and private amenity space

Esquires music venue as an important community asset

The following features were identified by residents as important in any new development:

A range of green spaces that are landscaped and well-lit

Private amenity space for all residents

Busy and active ground floor uses, which could include community uses (and activities for young people)



Local residents and the community thought that the following areas could be improved:

Sense of safety (particularly at night)

Built environment and services feel neglected and poorly maintained

Sense of community has been lost

Anti-social behaviour at the base of residential blocks

Improved pedestrian connections, and crossings across the roads

Sound insulation (and general insulation) in the existing buildings is poor

Car parking needs to be better managed to avoid town centre shoppers parking in residents' spaces

Enhanced green spaces, play areas (for children and teenagers), and planting

# 5 Development Principles

## 5.1 Development principles

5.1.1 Based on engagement and current policy aspirations, the following principles have guided the development of the Greyfriars masterplan.

### Connections and routes.

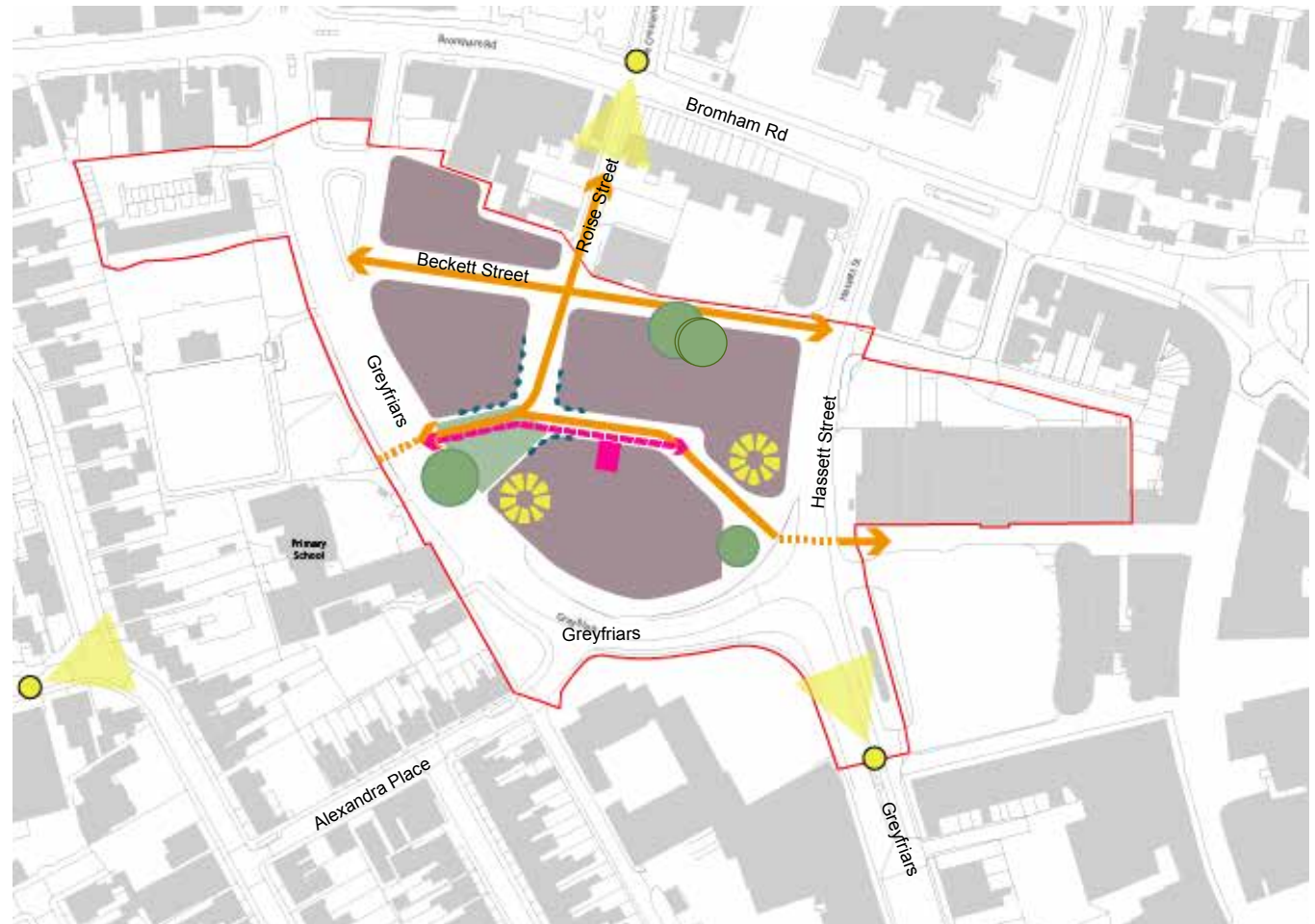
- Retain permeability across the site, connecting key nodes of activity and respecting existing desire lines;
- Reinstall established and historic north-south, and east-west routes across the site, which make reference to the historic residential street pattern visible in the late C19 and early C20. The north-south route linking The Crescent to Alexandra Place partly follows the route formerly known as Greyfriars Walk, and the route from the bus station east-west into the centre of the site follows the layout of a road once known as Greenhill Street; and
- Retain direct link to the bus station and town centre.

### Landscape, character and biodiversity net gain

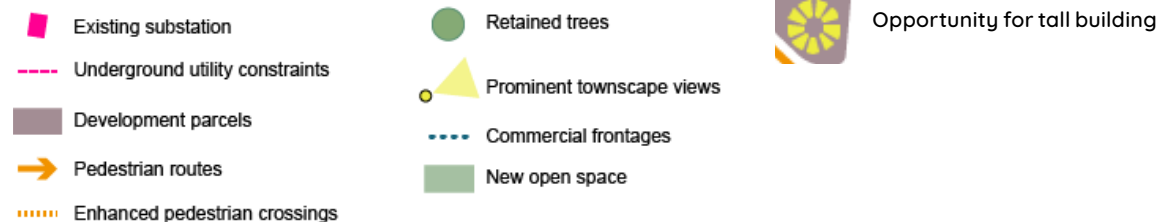
- Retention of Category A trees where possible.
- Increase the quality, quantum, and usability of open space,
- Built development to better respond to the context of the wider townscape in terms of layout, scale, form, massing, urban grain, materials and design.

### Perimeter block layout

- A range of typologies will be used to create perimeter blocks, which allow for the enclosure and creation of safe communal spaces such as resident courtyards.
- Open space to be robustly defined as private, communal (for residents only) or public with a clear purpose and ownership.



Spatial Concept Summary





5.1.2 Taking influence from the analysis, engagement, and vision, the following section establishes a coordinated masterplan for the development of the SPD area. All future planning applications and projects are expected to accord with these principles in relation to the following:

- Access and movement principles;
- Land use principles;
- Building heights;
- Character area principles; and
- Open space, landscape and public realm.

5.1.3 The masterplan has been developed through options appraisals, capacity studies and associated cost and viability assessments. Below this section sets out the design principles that will guide any future development proposals.

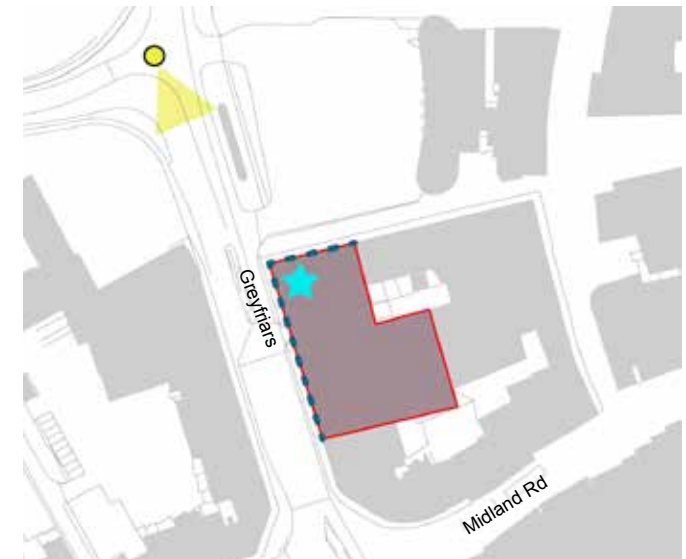
5.1.4 The SPD area is currently occupied by 254 dwellings, which will be re-provided on-site like-for-like. The minimum capacity to be achieved is 254 homes + uplift of private units to enable redevelopment and creation of mixed community. High-level options and viability assessments have demonstrated a feasible capacity of around 344 homes.

5.1.5 This development brief does not stipulate a maximum or minimum number of homes. The exact number of homes will depend on the phasing and detailed housing mix requirements, as well as the nature of the constraints the site faces. The brief, however, sets the maximum height and development envelope in conjunction with a set of design principles and mandatory requirements to ensure the appropriate quality is achieved. Future proposals will be assessed against these principles and the design code in section 6.

#### 5.1.6 Greyfriars East development principles

Whilst within the SPD area, Greyfriars East has not been developed with the same level of detail as the Greyfriars masterplan. Greyfriars East has much more of a “high street” context compared to the Greyfriars masterplan site, with ground floor shops and bus station activities making it a lively pedestrian route. The following design principles should be followed when this site comes forward:

- Mixed use development with ground floor active frontage on to Greyfriars road and bus station,
- Continuous strong building edge fronting Greyfriars road and the bus station,
- Mark the corner with notable articulation, height or material change,
- Residential uses are suitable above ground floor,
- Contribute to an improved Greyfriars road public realm and street greening.



Spatial Concept Summary

- Development Site Boundary
- ★ Building marking focal point, defined by an increase in height or special architectural treatment and materials
- Development parcels
- ▲ Prominent townscape view
- - - Commercial frontage

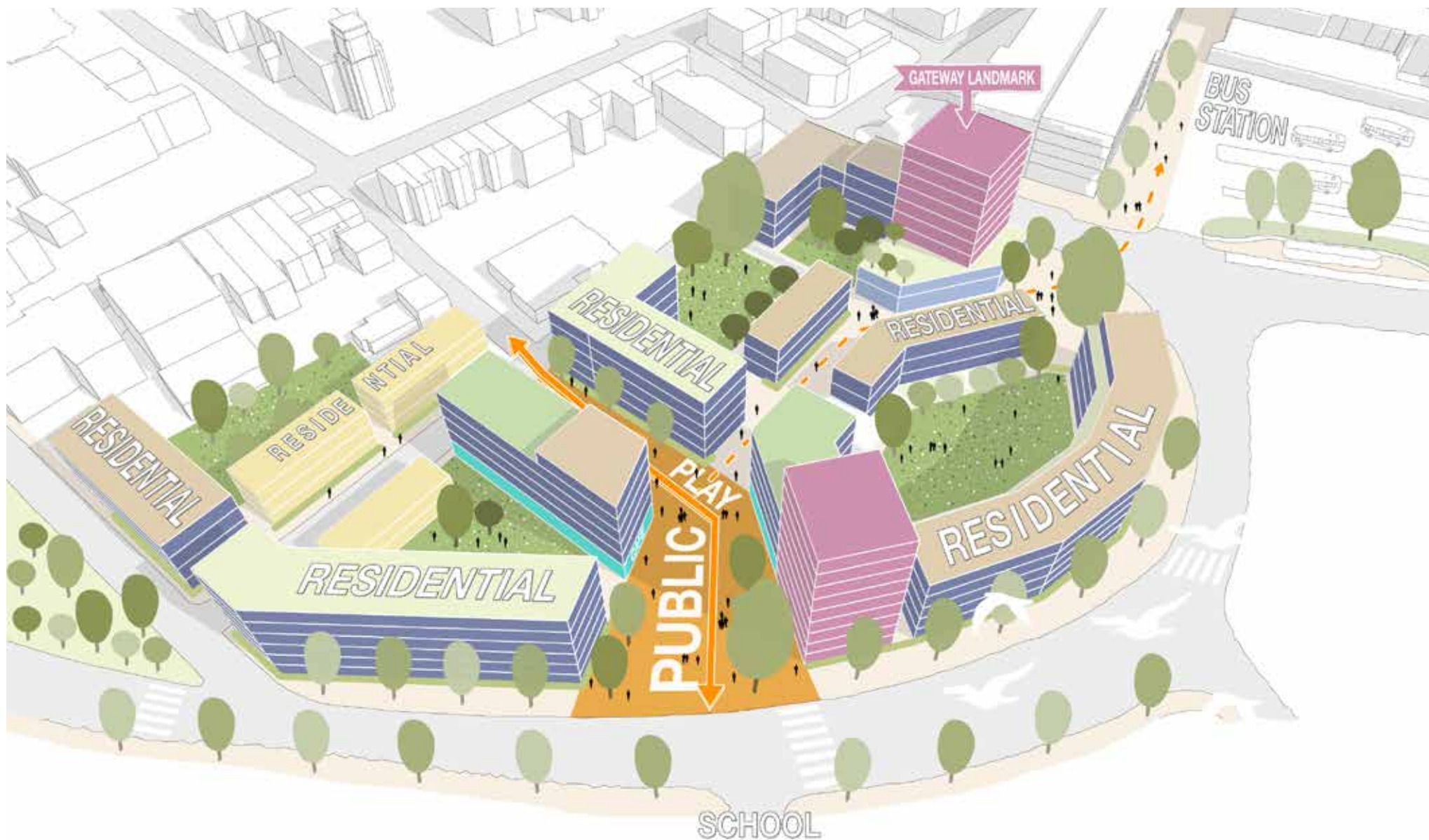
## 5.2 The illustrative masterplan

5.2.1 The illustrative masterplan shows one way in which the principles and development requirements could be met.



Illustrative masterplan





Illustrative 3D view of masterplan



### 5.3 Access and movement

5.3.1 The priority for the SPD area is the creation of a people-friendly environment. The masterplan has focussed on creating a permeable, legible layout that encourages pedestrian priority across the site.

5.3.2 Manual for Streets (MfS), Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2), and Historic England 2018 Streets for All should be used to inform the design of the streets and junctions that comprise the development. Unlike Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which is produced primarily for application to the trunk road network, these documents have been produced specifically for use in urban environments.

5.3.3 Access from Beckett Street to the existing properties, car parking areas and service areas outside the site boundary will be retained and accommodated in any future development.

5.3.4 The routes have been informed by the historic north-south, and east-west routes which were once visible in the C19 and early C20 layout of the area. The primary pedestrian routes will therefore direct pedestrians from the town centre into the site, and also north-south to Bromham Road and The Crescent. Notwithstanding this, Greyfriars road will also remain an important route of connection, and the street will be enhanced to improve the pedestrian environment with planting, street furniture, and cycle lanes.

5.3.5 In addition to the planned street improvements at Hassett Street/Greyfriars road (southern section), masterplan proposals should include the projects set out below.

#### Greyfriars 'avenue'

5.3.6 Improvements to Greyfriars road (northern section) will create a people-friendly avenue supporting walking, wheeling and cycling, and enhancing biodiversity. Greyfriars road improvements will narrow the carriageway, introduce segregated with-flow cycle tracks (tying in with the Greyfriars road/Hassett Street junction), widen footways and introduce street trees and in-ground planting (such as rain gardens). New crossing points are introduced at Priory Primary School and opposite Beckett Street to align with desire lines through the re-developed area of the masterplan.

#### Alexandra Place modal filter and pocket park

5.3.7 The Alexandra Place modal filter at the junction with Greyfriars road will prevent rat-running and traffic around the junction at peak times, and enhance the safety, comfort and attractiveness of the street environment, particularly for school children and parents. The scheme will also create opportunities for improved public realm such as a pocket park, creating a more attractive, green and biodiverse space supporting the high numbers of people walking and cycling to and from school, the town centre and train station. Vehicle access to Alexandra Place will therefore be from Midland Road and Ashburnham Road.

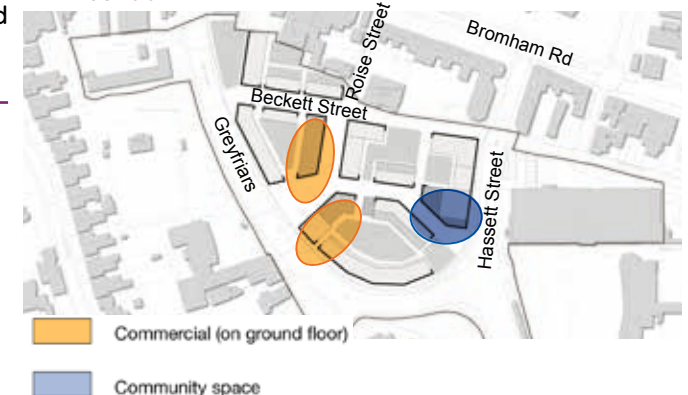
#### Gwyn Street modal filter

5.3.8 The introduction of a modal filter at the Gwyn Street/Bromham Road junction will prevent rat-running between Bromham Road and Hassett Street (i.e. drivers seeking to avoid the signalised junction). This could be further enhanced as a public space incorporating greening and links with local businesses.

### 5.4 Land use principles

5.4.1 The Council's ambition is to regenerate the SPD area as a residential neighbourhood complemented by non-residential uses:

- **Commercial space:** Given the proximity to the town centre, the opportunity for a significant mix of uses is limited to avoid competing with the town centre. Existing commercial space of around 470sqm will be re-provided within the masterplan, located on the groundfloor of a mixed use building in a prominent and central location.
- **Community space:** A new community facility will enhance the sense of community and activate the new neighbourhood. This should be positioned at the base of one of the residential buildings (ideally with access to private open space either in the form of a roof terrace or as part of a communal courtyard).
- **Education space:** Early years educational provision should be provided on site. This should:
  - Include space for 2 forms at early years and KS1;
  - Include suitable outdoor space and additional amenities;
  - Meet the DfE BB103 Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools; and
  - Be located in buildings closest to the existing school.



Illustrative land use strategy

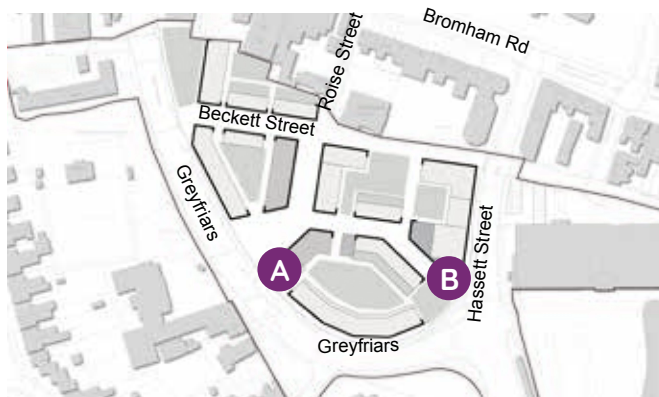
## 5.5 Building height strategy

5.5.1 The three existing 12-storey blocks are prominent features within the surrounding townscape area, and are visible from several streets nearby. The scale of the proposed development has been shaped to respond to views from the Conservation Area, potential impact on listed buildings, and contextual and immediate townscape views, whilst balancing the delivery of new homes.

5.5.2 The diagrams opposite indicate that the overall height of the proposed massing is lower than the existing condition. Initial testing suggests that this improves the visual relationship between the proposed development and the town context, and reduces the impact on the nearby heritage assets.

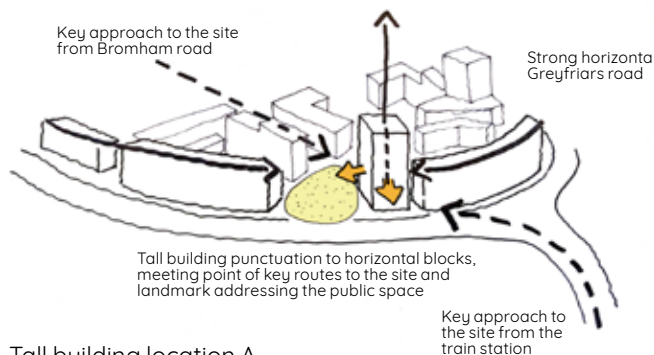
5.5.3 The proposed height strategy includes buildings potentially ranging from 3-9 storeys. In summary:

- The height of development reduces in scale to four storeys along the northern edge to reduce the impact on the heritage assets and Conservation Area to the north;



Tall building locations

- The main frontage onto Greyfriars road is consistent in height and up to 5 storeys. This is balancing the need to respond to the width and importance of this road, terraced housing further towards the south-west, as well as emerging proposals on the police station site.
- Two potential locations have been identified for taller buildings up to a maximum of 30m (9 storeys). These are:
  - **Location A:** Marks the arrival to the town centre from the railway station. This is also sufficiently separated from the lower-rise and historic development to the north.
  - **Location B:** At the Greyfriars road junction, there is an opportunity to locate a taller building as a landmark, with a long-range visual connection with the Riverfront.
- The acceptable height and location of these tall buildings will need to be tested before an application is made and any formal proposals must be supported by a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment that clearly demonstrates the likely visual effects.



Tall building location A

### Existing

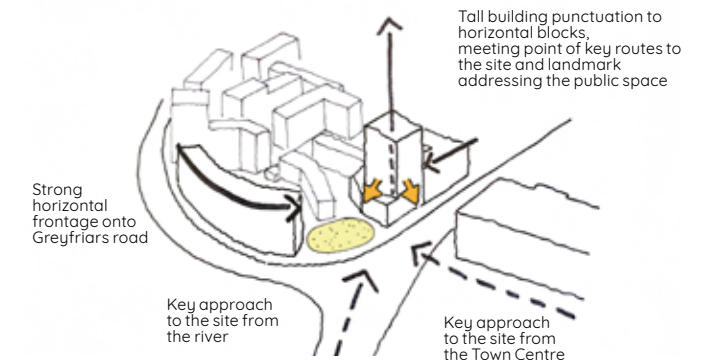


Skyline view from the south towards Greyfriars shows existing 12 storey residential blocks

### Proposed



Skyline view of proposed massing showing two indicative landmark elements



Tall building location B

## 5.6 Character area principles

5.6.1 The masterplan seeks to repair the urban fabric and create a rich urban environment with a mix of building types. It establishes a clear urban pattern of development that integrates the site with the wider area. The urban grain of the proposals reflects the transitional quality of the site, responding to the lower-rise residential area to the west, the tighter grain found in the historic area to the north, as well as the larger development scale of the MSCP, the police station and development along the southern sections of Greyfriars road. The urban grain within the SPD area also responds to the context of the site - demonstrating a tighter narrower grain to the northern edge of the site to reflect the historic buildings in the conservation area, and a looser larger grain to the south.

5.6.2 The masterplan sets out a number of character areas, that are related to specific edge conditions (see paragraph 6.8.10 for further details), heritage sensitivity and the building types that are expected. As a result, a richer character will be created leading to attractive and varied streets and space.



Character area plan



## How the existing character of Bedford has influenced the design of the masterplan

### Context

As previously identified, Bedford is predominantly a low-medium rise town, characterised by mostly terraced residential streets relating back to its historic expansion at the turn of C20. Exceptions to this include non-residential uses such as schools, places of worship, larger post-war development of the town centre, and modern infill development.

These more modern interventions include the post-war development of Greyfriars (the SPD area) itself, which, alongside the roundabout and dominant road infrastructure, is largely seen as out of context, character, and scale with the rest of the town. As identified in the heritage appraisal, the existing residential blocks do result in a negative impact (albeit minor) on the Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets. This is coupled with issues around the layout of blocks, maintenance of blocks, and antisocial behaviour recorded by residents.

BBC and bpha have aspirations to improve the quality of accommodation for existing residents, and bring in new residents by creating a high quality sustainable neighbourhood. As well as re-providing existing homes, there is an opportunity to rationalise the layout of the site, provide new open space, introduce a mixture of building typologies, and create a safe environment. In line with BBC's policy aspirations to increase urban living within Bedford's town centre (especially in areas of good public transport accessibility), and the need to deliver new homes in the borough, the site needs to deliver a certain quantum of development to make a viable scheme.

Any future proposals must deliver high quality new development that is design-led and responds to the sensitive character of Bedford, whilst also ensuring its deliverability. The proposals respond to Bedford's character through the following design evolution:

### Layout and urban grain

The proposals aim to part reinstate the historic terraced street layout that existed before the current blocks were built on the Greyfriars SPD area. This re-establishes a built form based around a hierarchy of streets and spaces, with development fronting these edges rather than blocks floating in open space. The grain of development responds to the tighter plots of the historic context to the north, and introduces townhouses into Beckett Street. This grain loosens to the south east corner where a transition to the town centre results in larger block footprint around the community centre, and Greyfriars road frontage.

### Scale and density

The proposals aim to respond appropriately to the scale, bulk and massing of surrounding development, respecting the lower rise historic context to the north by limiting heights in the northern part of the SPD area whilst reinstating frontage development of a suitable scale and mass. The western boundary along Greyfriars road is less sensitive, as adjacent users include commercial uses, Priory Primary School, open space and larger built form including the Police Station, where increased height and density is likely to have less impact on the amenity of residential uses (with regard to overlooking, sunlight/daylight etc). To the south, the Greyfriars road frontage aims to respond to

the dominance of the existing road, providing a strong development edge away from heritage assets to the north, and helping to define the new neighbourhood (infilling the urban "gap" left by the existing surface car park). A range of building heights, densities and scales that sensitively responds to the wider area brings variety to the SPD area, and allows a range of homes and spaces to be delivered.

### Taller elements

Two taller elements have been included in locations potentially least likely to have impact on neighbouring occupiers, nearby heritage assets, and environmental impacts on the SPD area. These two locations provide an opportunity for landmarks to define the development, and wayfinding points to assist with legibility to and from the town centre. The heights of these taller buildings will be subject to testing prior to the application stage.

### Articulation and style

The detailed design of buildings will be undertaken at planning application stage, and as well as having due regard for the design code elements in section 6.8, should demonstrate how the positive character elements of existing Bedford have influenced the design. This might include the use of gable ends in townhouses as seen successfully in Conduit Road, or positive brick motifs seen on The Crescent.

### Materials

Material choice also has a significant impact on how buildings reflect their context. As well as the requirements set out in section 6.8.10, future detailed design should include comprehensive studies into the use of materials and successful vernacular across Bedford.

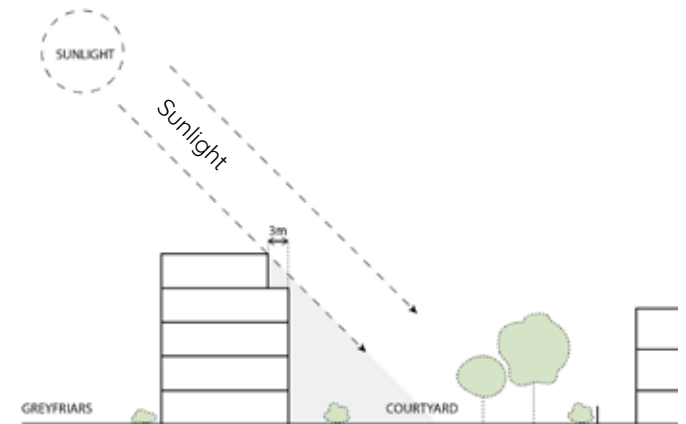
## Greyfriars

5.6.3 The objective is to transform the character and environment of this road, reducing the dominance of the vehicular traffic and highway, creating a greener, safer environment for people, as well as a more positive approach to Bedford town centre. There is a need for a phased and collaborative approach between the developer, the highway authority and BBC. In order to create the desired frontage and tree planting, the existing road space will need to be reallocated. The masterplan proposes to set back the development by 3m from the existing boundary line (back of pavement). Additional space utilised through the reallocation of the road space will enable the desired outcome.

See also section 6.7 for further detail on the Greyfriars road transformation.

5.6.4 The following development principles apply:

- Create a high degree of enclosure with a clearly defined development frontage and long linear blocks along Greyfriars road with a continuous frontage and no breaks.
- Break down this linearity and consistency in building line and height with a vertical rhythm and articulation to the façade to reflect historic characteristics.
- Create a consistent roofscape. Dormers, terraces and bay windows may break the consistent eaves height.
- Upper-storey to have a setback of at least 3m to the rear (inside of the block), to allow improved sunlight / daylight into the courtyard.
- Provide glimpsed views through gateways or entrance halls to the gardens beyond.
- Set back frontages by at least 3 m from edges of kerb line to enable landscape and front gardens to create privacy for groundfloor homes.



The southern-most linear block, fronting Greyfriars road, must have an upper storey set back, to allow improved sunlight / daylight into the courtyard



Strong consistent frontage with harmonious roofline



Regular residential entrances onto the street



## Beckett Street

5.6.5 Development will improve the quality of this route and introduce new frontages responding positively to the existing “backs” of development. The street is to be lined by town houses or maisonettes to create the finer grain and lower building heights responding to the proximity to the heritage assets and Conservation Area. This lower scale also improves daylight / sunlight levels into Beckett Street, and improves opportunities for eyes on the street (passive surveillance).

The following development principles apply:

- Introduce a “finer” development grain with a mixture of house types - predominantly townhouses.
  - Maximise opportunities for overlooking and activation of this route, through groundfloor entrances and bay windows on ground floors.
  - Create a vertical rhythm, distinguishing each individual house. Roof and eaves heights should be consistent, but may be broken by contemporary interpretations of bay windows and gables, taking design inspiration from nearby Victorian terraces.
  - Vary materials between houses to create a diversity similar to the surrounding Victorian streets.
- Provide private outdoor space, within gardens, patios and/ or upper floor terraces. Upper level terraces can either be accommodated with a set back of the upper level or through the stepping of the roofscape to create terraces in between units.
  - At the eastern end, appropriately respond to the scale, mass, bulk and form of the surrounding built environment, including the Conservation Area and Priory Terrace to the north.
  - Provide front entrances directly onto the street and not through communal courtyards.
  - Where garages are integrated on the groundfloor, generous entrance halls with a window must be provided and upper floor windows should be large to secure some element of overlooking.
  - A particularly sensitive approach to massing and building design should be taken in this character area to respond to the heritage considerations of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings.
  - Careful design of buildings to respond to the sensitivity of Music Venue. Bespoke design might include enhanced separation distances to the northern boundary, fewer window openings, internal layouts, and appropriate noise insulation / acoustic barrier.



Townhouse typology



A consistent building line is used to define the street edge on The Avenue



Horsted Park, Kent by Proctor and Matthews Architects

Townhouse typology



## Roise Street extension

5.6.6 This route will create a new street which partly aligns with the historic route once on the site. It will be a pedestrian priority street forming the central point of street activity. The following development principles apply:

- Create a public place - the street deliberately widens at this point to mark its importance as a north-south route. The southern extent will be pedestrian and cycle movement only, and the northern extent will be designed to encourage pedestrian priority, allowing activities to spill out of commercial groundfloor units.
- The community garden will sit at the intersection of several routes, and will host a variety of functions - including play facilities and an events space - be densely planted, and a convivial public space.
- Create active frontages to define the edges of this space.
- Create commercial frontages of a minimum of 4m floor to ceiling heights on the ground floor of mixed use buildings and allow space for uses to spill out into the public realm.
- Avoid long stretches of monotonous roofscape and reflect the combination of shorter blocks - variations in building heights and roof shape will enrich the skyline in this central location and allow modelling to ensure good sun / daylight into the space and communal courtyards. This should be balanced against sustainability criteria (see section 6).



Varying Heights and Articulated Roof Forms  
(Photo - Kings Crescent Karakusevic Carson Architects  
© Peter Landers)



Seating areas facing open space



Equipped play space



Active groundfloors

## Lower Beckett

5.6.7 This key pedestrian and cycle connection borrows development characteristics from Victorian Bedford. The lower height of the buildings provides a change in scale and character compared to other parts of the SPD area. By reducing building height, and by locating front doors and residential entrances at the edge of the street, this helps create a more intimate pedestrian environment. Importantly, the reduction of building height in the centre of the site reduces the impacts of overshadowing, allowing more sunlight and daylight into the courtyard to the north. Further testing of daylight/sunlight should be undertaken at detailed design stage.



Well-proportioned low-rise blocks with regular entrances onto the street.

5.6.8 The following development principles apply:

- Create an intimate street lined with buildings of no more than three storeys.
- Align the route with the desire line towards the town centre.
- Design the street with pedestrian priority and without formal pavement.
- Ensure views are terminated by buildings creating a sense of enclosure. Buildings should also try to help screen east-west views to the existing MSCP.
- Enable glimpsed views through to landscaped communal courtyards.
- The building typology should relate to the Short Block form as outlined in section 6.8. This block form could comprise of flats, and could also include maisonettes at ground/first floor.
- Create residential entrances onto the street, and provide appropriate defensible space.
- Provide private outdoor space, within gardens at ground floor and terraces/balconies at upper floors. Terraces can either be accommodated with a set back of the upper level, or through the stepping of the roofscape to create terraces in between units. (Refer to section 6.8.13 for further details).
- Allow a distance of at least 1m from the side of the substation, but retain the same line facing the public realm to avoid any recesses in built form.



A deck access typology can also ensure that all dwellings are dual aspect



The roofscape could be used to create terraces for upper floor flats



## 5.7 Landscape and public realm strategies

5.7.1 The Greyfriars masterplan landscape and public realm proposals should maximise opportunities to strengthen Bedford's green infrastructure and biodiversity resilience, helping address both climate and health challenges. The following public realm and landscape objectives are incorporated into the masterplan:

- **Greyfriars road:** Respond to the wider landscape context by reinforcing a green corridor from Bedford Park in the north, to River Great Ouse in the south. Reduce the dominance and scale of Greyfriars road by replacing superfluous carriageway and parking with places for soft landscaping and public realm. The road should link new amenity spaces that would humanise this imposing piece of infrastructure and bring value to the local community.
- **Existing Trees:** Retention where possible of existing trees of good quality and high amenity value.
- **Edge Conditions:** Improve the thresholds to Priory Primary School and nursery, with a welcoming arrival space and enhanced pedestrian connections across Greyfriars road. Harmonise the interface to existing buildings on the northern boundary through a cohesive public realm design and potential rationalisation of adjacent site access.
- **Public Open Space:** Create meaningful areas of new public open space. The masterplan proposes two new public spaces including Community Gardens - co-located with the proposed commercial uses; and Hassett Street Plaza which acts as the bridging point into Bedford town centre. These spaces have been orientated to face south to benefit from solar gain. The purpose is to create an outstandingly attractive amenity for residents and visitors, gifting high quality public outdoor space to the wider community.
- **Private Communal Amenity Space:** Within the body of the site, private courtyards provide more usable amenity space for residents. These offer opportunities for play, growing and passive recreation to enhance the living environment. (Note: some amenity spaces may need to respond to extra constraints e.g. noise from Greyfriars road, Esquires Music Venue, which could include e.g. an acoustic buffer).
- **Biodiversity Enhancement:** Landscape proposals should be underpinned by a richly diverse range of habitats, bringing nature to people's front door. This should include incorporating living roofs to all buildings.
- **Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS):** Water will be managed sustainably across the landscape via swales, rain gardens and permeable paving. Soft landscaping should be maximised to encourage natural infiltration.



Landscape strategy plan

- Public open space (1 Hassett Street Plaza, 2 - Community Gardens)
- Enhanced public realm - new streets and open spaces
- Enhanced public realm - greening and rationalisation of space to existing courtyards and spaces
- Greyfriars Road enhancements
- Existing trees of good quality and high amenity value
- ◇ Improved edge conditions and interface with public realm



## 6 Design Code

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### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The key purpose of the Design Code is to establish design requirements for the development. It provides a set of rules and parameters ensuring consistency and quality in the design and delivery of any future development on the site. Together with the earlier sections the code will be used to assess design proposals as part of the Council's development management process. Therefore, developers and their design teams must take regard of these requirements.

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### 6.2 How to use the Code

6.2.1 The code has been prepared with the needs of designers and officers in mind, so that it is practical and sets out clear requirements. It includes mandatory and discretionary elements. The words 'must' and 'will' indicate mandatory elements. 'May' and 'should' indicate advisory / discretionary elements.

6.2.2 For avoidance of doubt all coding should be construed as mandatory unless specifically marked advisory / discretionary.

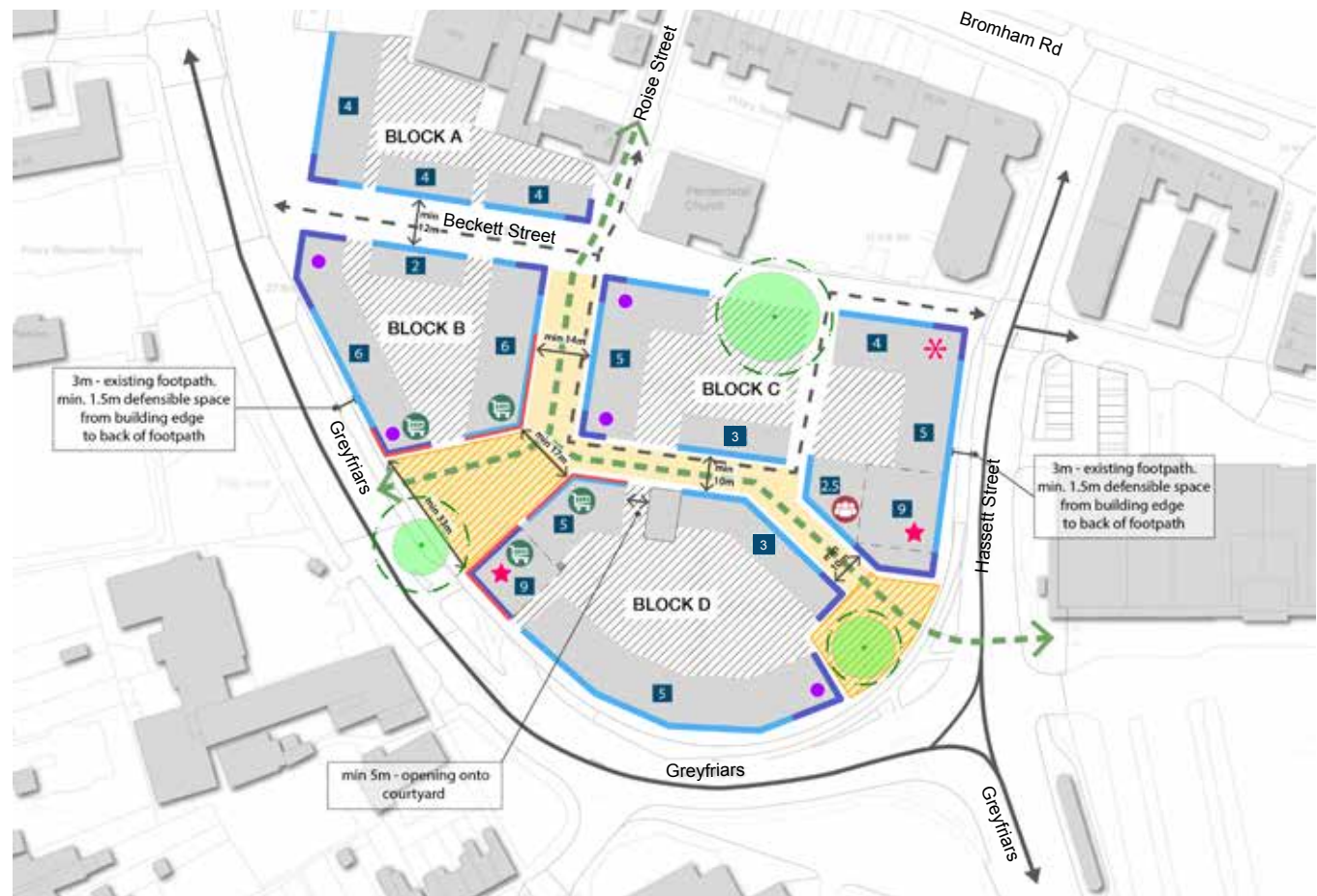
6.2.3 There are several sections within the code which provide design parameters for the whole site, but where coded elements only apply to one character area, these have been highlighted.

### 6.3 Regulatory Plan

6.3.1 This is the key parameter plan that sets out the spatial principles of the site, which future detailed designs must demonstrate compliance with. This includes parameters such as key movement routes, development parcels, development height, and frontages.

6.3.2 It defines the urban blocks, routes and spaces. In order to facilitate good design and accommodate innovation at detailed design stages, the plan incorporates the following level of flexibility:

- Frontages have been set to create realistic and efficient development blocks while maximising the opportunity for good quality communal space within the blocks. Frontage locations remain indicative and may vary by 3+/-\_m provided all other parameters are met.
- Routes have been set to accommodate existing desire lines, constraints and movement / service requirements. Their location may vary within the identified spaces.
- Spaces and streets are identified with their minimum width. Larger public realm is desirable provided it is clearly defined, has a distinct purpose and does not undermine the quality of the communal courtyards or internal layout of homes.



### Regulatory Plan

#### Key

- Prominent corner
- Positive occupied frontages
- Active frontages
- Residential streets and vehicle access route
- Primary pedestrian / cycle route

- Indicative building footprint / development zone
- Public space
- Resident courtyard
- Pedestrian priority zone
- Existing tree area boundary protected
- Building marking focal point, defined by an increase in height or use of architectural articulation / materials

- Landmark / tall building
- Any building on corner must not exceed 4 storeys
- Commercial ground floor use
- Community ground floor use
- Maximum building height (storey)

## 6.4 Movement

### Access

6.4.1 Hassett Street, Greyfriars road and Bromham Road provide the key vehicle, public transport, walking and cycling routes through and around the site. Vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access points to the site include:

- Roise Street;
- Greyfriars road (existing junction with old Greyfriars);
- Hassett Street (existing junction with Beckett Street);
- Old Greyfriars.

6.4.2 Additionally, pedestrian and cycle access points include:

- Greyfriars road/Hassett Street junction, providing a direct link between the core residential area of the site and the bus station and town centre.
- Opposite Priory Primary School, off Greyfriars road.
- South of the old Greyfriars junction with Greyfriars road.

6.4.3 A pedestrian-only access point must be provided north of the Priory Primary School access point.



### Access plan

#### Key

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Site boundary                               |  Pedestrian and cycle access points |
|  Development blocks                          |  Pedestrian access points           |
|  Vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access points |  |

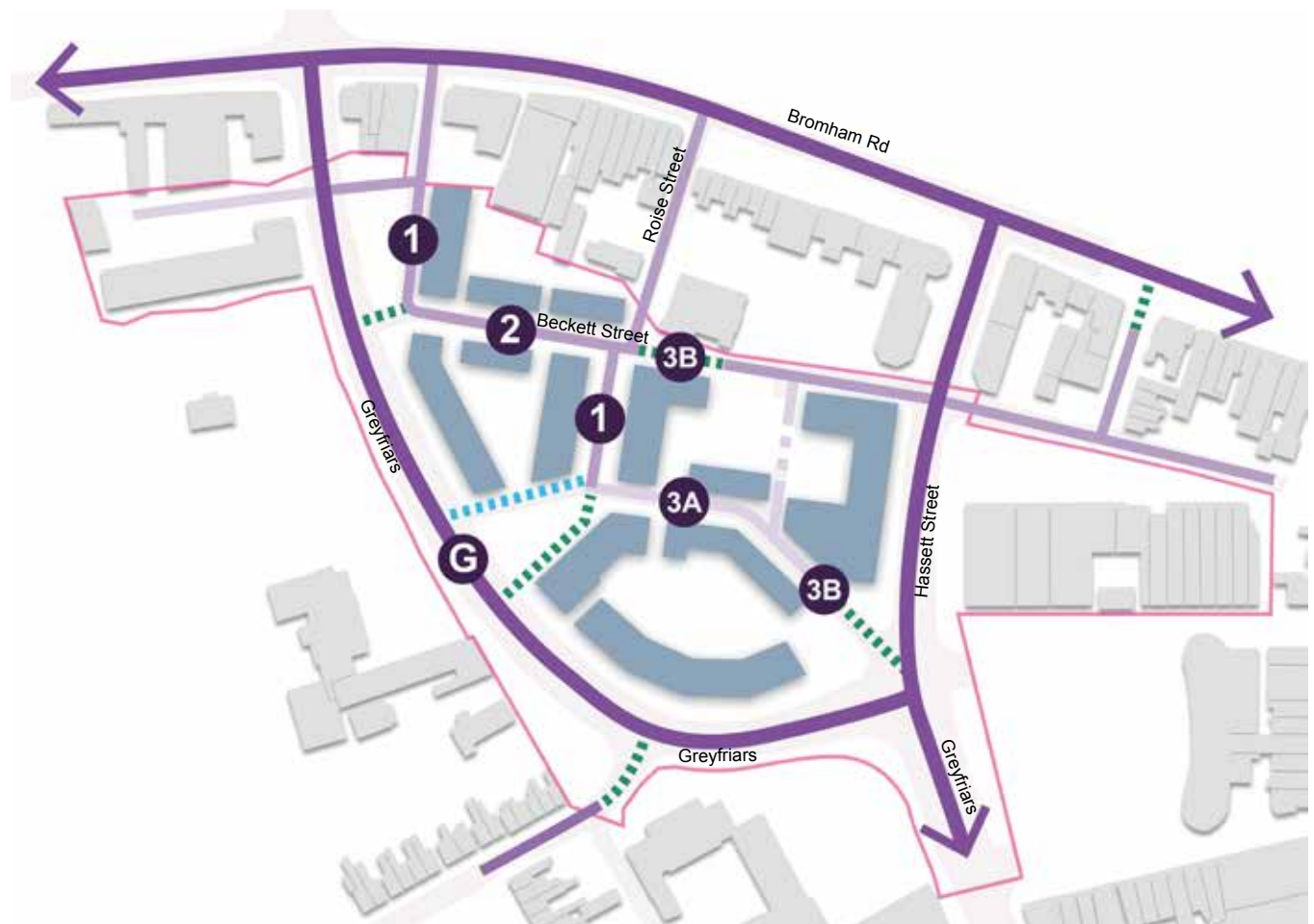


## Street hierarchy

6.4.4 The plan shows the street hierarchy within the site. The network should integrate with the existing strategic streets, including Greyfriars and Hassett Street, as well as working with the historic street network including Roise Street and Beckett Street.

6.4.5 The redeveloped area of the site is made up of neighbourhood streets providing access to homes and businesses, and local streets within the core of the site which provide access only to a small number of homes.

- Several vehicle-restricted streets and paths should also be provided to limit vehicle permeability, reducing the risk of creating rat-runs; and maximise walking and cycling permeability and access to encourage the use of these modes.
- Links to key places such as Priory Primary School and Bedford Bus Station should be walking and cycling only routes to enhance the quality of these streets and routes.
- Modal filters should also be introduced at Alexandra Place and Gwyn Street to reduce traffic, prevent rat-running and create better quality public spaces for people, particularly children accessing Lower Priory School.
- See further information on street typologies in Section 6.7.



Street Hierarchy plan

Key

	Site boundary
	Development blocks
	Key street
	Neighbourhood street
	Local street

	Walking and cycling only
	Walking only
	Walking, cycling and service vehicles only

	Greyfriars Street Type
	Neighbourhood Street Type 1
	Neighbourhood Street Type 2
	Local Street Type 3A
	Local Street Type 3B

## Walking and cycling

6.4.6 The plan shows the walking and cycling network, including controlled crossing points and segregated cycle tracks.

- Hassett Street and Greyfriars road are key movement corridors for walking and cycling, providing access to the town centre, bus station and wider destinations. These streets must be upgraded to provide segregated cycling infrastructure, improved footways, street greening and formal crossing points.
- 3 standalone controlled crossing points should be provided on Greyfriars road between the Hassett Street and Bromham Road junctions, aiding crossing for school children as well as those accessing the town centre, and the local Greyfriars community. (The junction with Greyfriars road and Hassett Street is proposed to be transformed into a signalised T-junction with segregated cycle provision).

6.4.7 Alexandra Place also provides an important walking and cycling route for local movement to and from the town centre. A modal filter and formal crossing point should be provided in this location to reduce traffic and improve access to the town centre for active modes.

6.4.8 Within the redeveloped area of the site, the walking and cycling network follows the proposed street network, with additional links where vehicle traffic is not permitted (such as the pedestrian route taking people from the Hassett Street/Greyfriars road junction into the heart of the site). As there are no vehicle through-routes across the site, traffic volumes are expected to be very low. Combined with the street design to reduce vehicle speeds, it is considered that cyclists and vehicles may share the carriageway space without the need for segregated provision.



### Walking and cycling plan

Key

- Site boundary
- Development blocks
- Walking and cycling routes
- Segregated cycle tracks

- Walking-only routes
- Walking and cycling crossings
- Walking only crossings

## Parking

6.4.9 To maximise space for pedestrians, and provide appropriate public realm and play space, parking on-site has been minimised. Due to the SPD area's central location, it is intended that the site will be car-free, however parking will be provided for:

- Blue badge spaces on-site;
- Existing resident parking spaces will be re-provided in the Allhallows MSCP (allocated via permits).

6.4.10 Bedford's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities SPD does not set a specific requirement for the quantum of blue badge spaces for residential development. Given this, an appropriate level of quantum based on requirements elsewhere would be between 5-10% of the total number of units. These should be provided on-street, in appropriately designed bays, and in select cases within the residential courtyard.

6.4.11 Accommodation for electric vehicle charging, car club spaces, and e-mobility should be provided in line with Local Plan Policy 89.

## Drop-off/loading

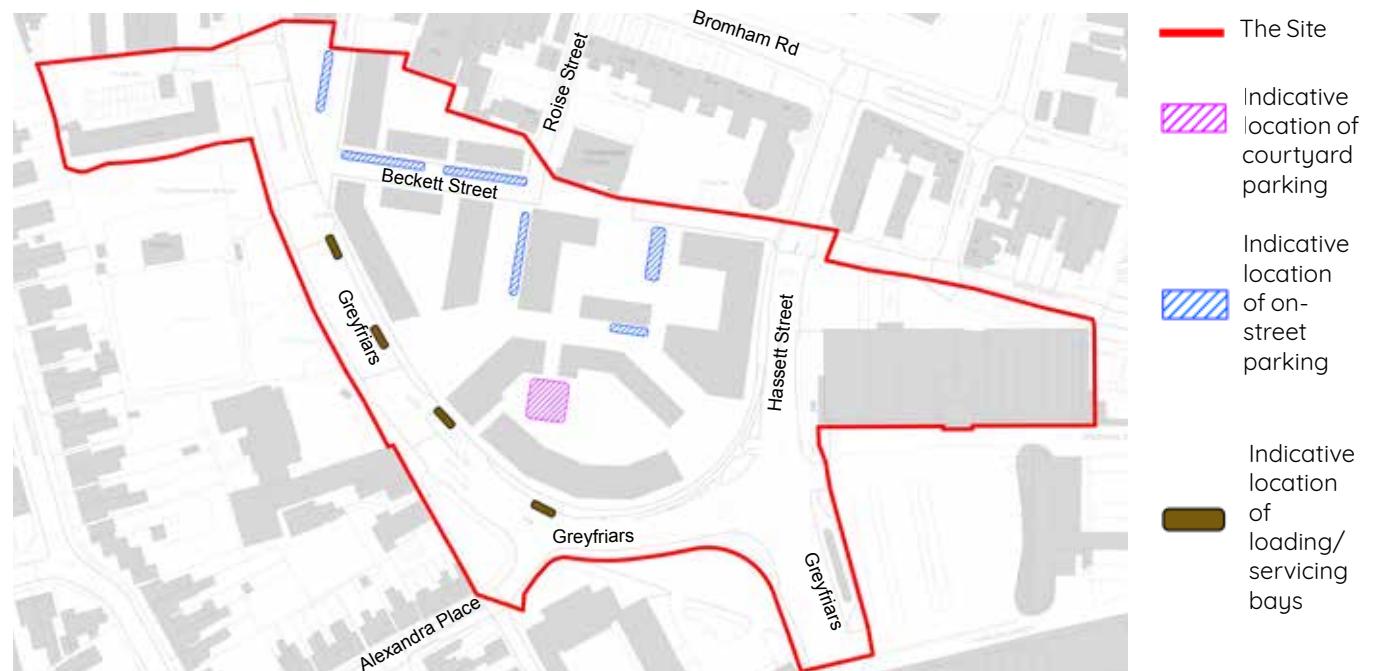
6.4.12 The drop-off/loading spaces have been distributed to accord with the non-residential uses across the site. These should be controlled through enforcement so that residents cannot park in these bays. If space permits, some of the spaces should be enlarged to accommodate larger vehicles (e.g. delivery vans).

## Enhancements to Allhallows Multi-storey Car Park

6.4.13 The Allhallows car park has already benefited from improvements made in 2014. In order to make the MSCP a safe and attractive option for residents to park, further upgrades are proposed as part of the redevelopment of Greyfriars, such as:

- Use clear signage to encourage drivers to use the less busy top levels rather than circulate around the busier, lower levels
- Use 'light guidance parking' (red/green lights above bays) to clearly highlight empty spaces
- Clearly mark pedestrian access and exit routes, including painted paths in contrasting colours

- Introduce additional electric vehicle charging
- Use / follow 'Park Mark' criteria to reduce both crime and the fear of crime
- Proactively respond to personal safety / crime incidents and ensure regular engagement with the operator and police force
- Ensure all areas of the car park (including lifts, lobbies and payment areas) are well lit both day and night
- Clean litter daily and remove graffiti quickly to deter further damage. Treat vulnerable areas with anti-graffiti coatings / finishes



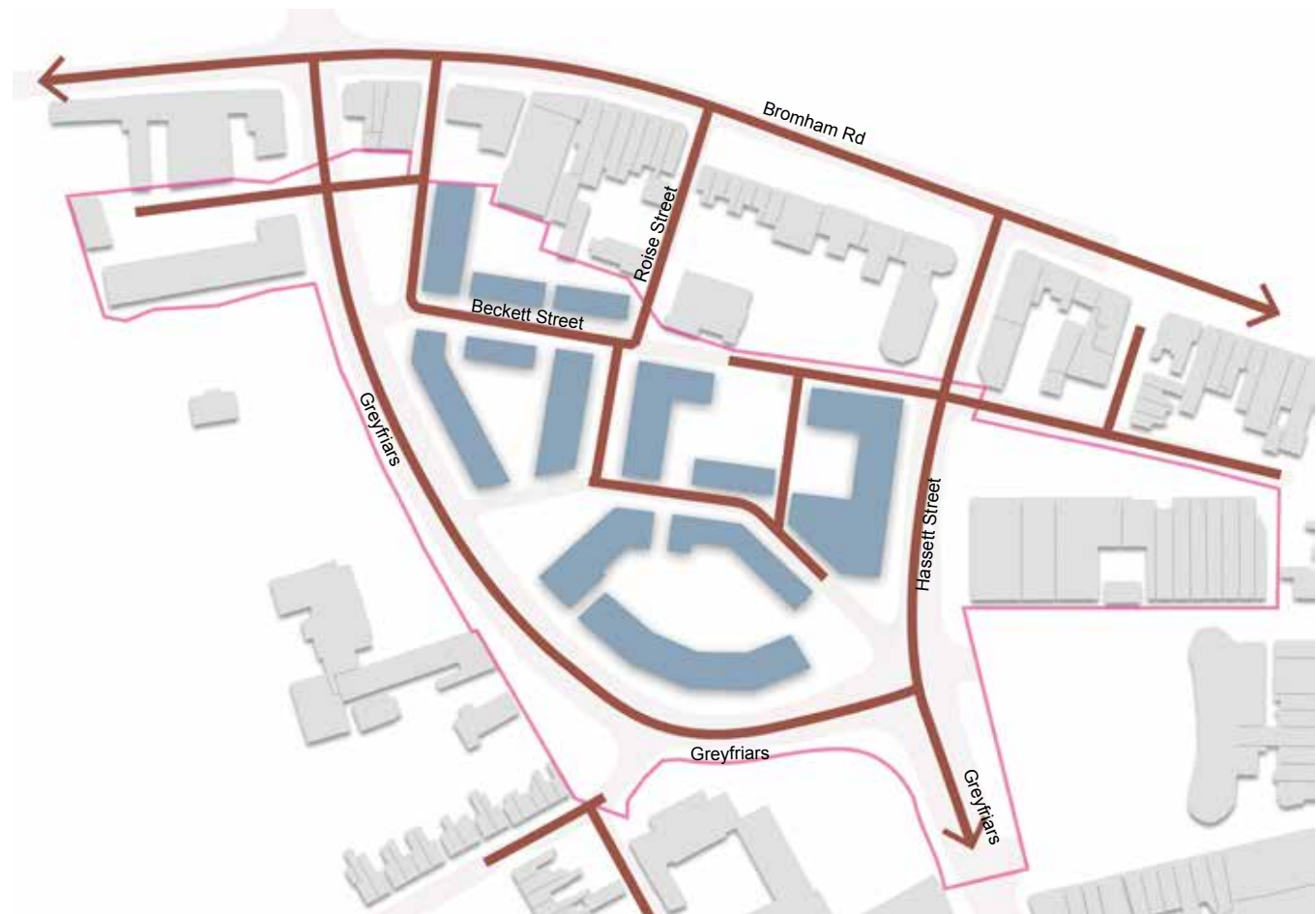
Indicative parking plan



## Servicing

6.4.14 The plan adjacent shows the routes for refuse collection vehicles, which should adhere with local policies and guidance including Technical guidance: waste and recycling in new developments (Bedford Borough Council, March 2021):

- Residents should not be required to carry their waste further than 30 metres from their home to a bin storage area.
- Refuse collection vehicles must not be expected to reverse a distance in excess of 15 metres, including travel within turning heads.
- Bedford Borough Council's collection crews will pull bins a maximum of 15 metres from storage areas to collection vehicles.



Servicing plan

- Site boundary
- Development blocks
- Servicing routes

## 6.5 Landscape

### Trees and Planting

6.5.1 Planting must be based on a palette of robust plant species, including native species that are already present on site.

6.5.2 The proposals must achieve 10% biodiversity net gain and be supported by a sustainable, robust programme of landscape management.

- Planting should be used to create identities for different streets and neighbourhoods and assist with wayfinding.
- Planting should be designed for biodiversity and wildlife value and deliver visual and seasonal interest. This should include a consideration of flowering times, scent, autumn colour, winter bark, fruit and berries as well as wildflower habitat and food sources. Nectar rich flowering plants should be prioritised where native planting is considered unsuitable, with planting utilising species from the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' guide.
- Existing retained mature trees should be made a feature of an open space or access route wherever possible.
- To mitigate against the effects of possible future pathogens, a range of trees should be used rather than relying on one species of street or avenue tree.
- Trees should be selected and set-out in proportion to the street widths and building heights. Trees and shrubs should be planted at a spacing and density that allows them to take on their natural form without requiring regular pruning, and taking account of visibility splays, light fittings and signage.

- In paved areas or in areas where the rooting zone is restricted, trees must be planted using rootcell systems and linked linear trenches to ensure sufficient long-term rooting volumes. Tree planting must be planned to ensure they can achieve their optimum form.
- Underground servicing should be considered at an early stage to ensure service runs are organised around tree planting zones. Root protection areas for existing trees should be kept clear of any underground services.
- Other biodiversity interventions must be incorporated including green roofs and green walls utilising climbing plants. Living roofs (green or brown) should be seeded, with suitable substrate to support them.



Mixed avenue



Planned tree planting zones



Diverse nectar rich planting



Biodiverse roof



Trees planting principles plan

- Avenue tree planting within planted verges to Greyfriars road
- ||||| Columnar shaped street tree planting to one side
- Existing trees of value to be retained
- Public spaces to include marker or broader canopied tree species.
- Courtyard tree planting to include edible fruiting varieties.



## Ecology and Habitat

### 6.5.3 Biodiversity features must be incorporated across the development to provide for wildlife.

- Bat roosting features should be provided on buildings located close to or bordering areas of green space. They should comprise “bat tubes” or an equivalent bat roosting feature, incorporated into the external wall of buildings and existing trees if present. The positioning of bat roosting features must consider lighting to ensure that light spillage onto roosting features and habitat corridors is minimised.
- Bird nesting features should be distributed throughout the development site. Features should be predominantly provided on buildings close to or bordering areas of green space. They should comprise of both integrated nest boxes to buildings and those fixed to existing trees if present.
- In addition to bat and bird boxes, standalone biodiversity features such as bug hotels or integrated features must be provided within communal courtyard spaces.



Bat boxes and bug hotels within landscaped spaces



## Drainage and SuDS

### 6.5.4 Water must be managed sustainably across the development and support habitat creation and planting objectives. Designs should seek to emulate natural processes and draw on the site's context with River Great Ouse.

- The principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be applied to the surface water drainage for the development. The term SuDS incorporates best management practice and drainage processes to ensure that there is no detrimental effect to the development from surface water rainfall on the site.
- Rain gardens and localised swales should be used to capture water run-off from streets. Such features should be utilised as opportunities for biodiverse planting which contribute to the ecology and habitat principles. Opportunities for recreation trails should be explored.
- Drainage features such as gully's and linear drains must be considered from the outset to ensure their successful integration into the public realm design.
- Drainage runs must avoid the root protection areas of all retained trees.



Rain garden with stepping stone recreation trail

## Materials

### 6.5.5 There must be a consistent and restrained handling of hard landscape materials within the public realm to create a cohesive sense of place.

- Paths should be made from a firm, even no slip surface.
- Tactile paving should be used to convey information to the visually impaired, usually to identify a potential hazard and it is essential that the right type of paving is used in the right situation.
- Kerbs (raised and flush) must be high quality across all streets, and in parking courts pre-cast concrete would be acceptable.



Tactile paving to crossing points



Cohesive paving palette



Integrated drainage solutions



High quality kerb detailing



## Street Furniture

**6.5.6** A coordinated approach must be taken to street furniture, with contemporary styled furniture favoured. The replication or reinterpretation of some distinctive examples of Bedford's existing historic street furniture may also be appropriate. The integration of street furniture within the public realm should be carefully considered to avoid clutter.

- Incidental seating areas should be provided within open areas and at larger street intersections. This will create a focus and meeting place for residents and encourage a sense of identity and ownership of their immediate surrounds.
- Benches should include some armrests and seat backs to assist people with restricted mobility and discourage antisocial behaviour. Seating should be functional and vandal resistant. Handrails, seating, retaining walls and steps must all incorporate anti-skateboarding devices.
- Larger structures such as bike and bin stores should incorporate green roofs.
- Bins and bollards should be plain powder-coated steel. A consistent colour scheme should be chosen to align with other furniture and architectural language.
- Tree surrounds in paving should be flush precast stone units. No grills or metal tree gates should be used.
- Manhole covers in paved areas must be recessed to create a flush surface that does not impede mobility.

- Signage should be located to minimise clutter and be placed on buildings where possible.
- Visitor cycle parking must be provided in the public realm but should not obstruct pathways.



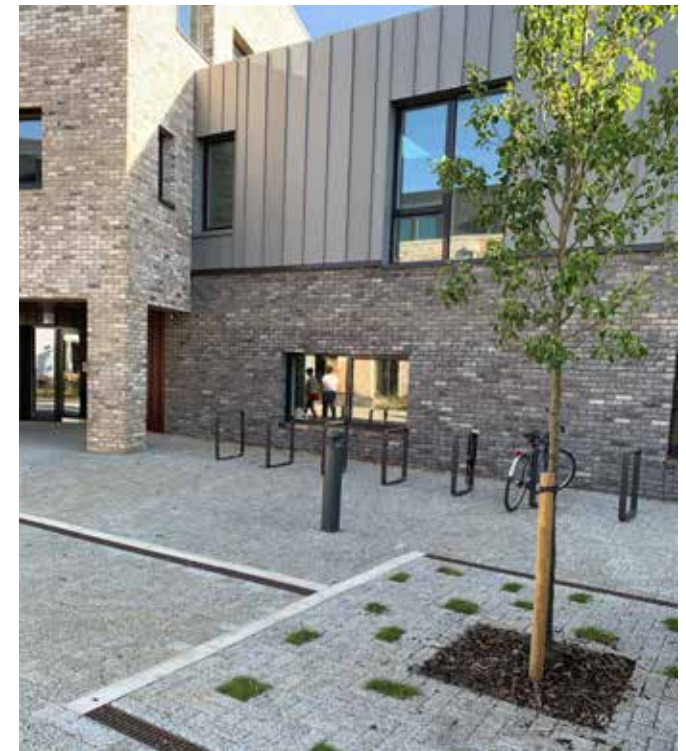
Contemporary seating



Anti-skating devices



Visitor cycle hoops adjacent to pathways

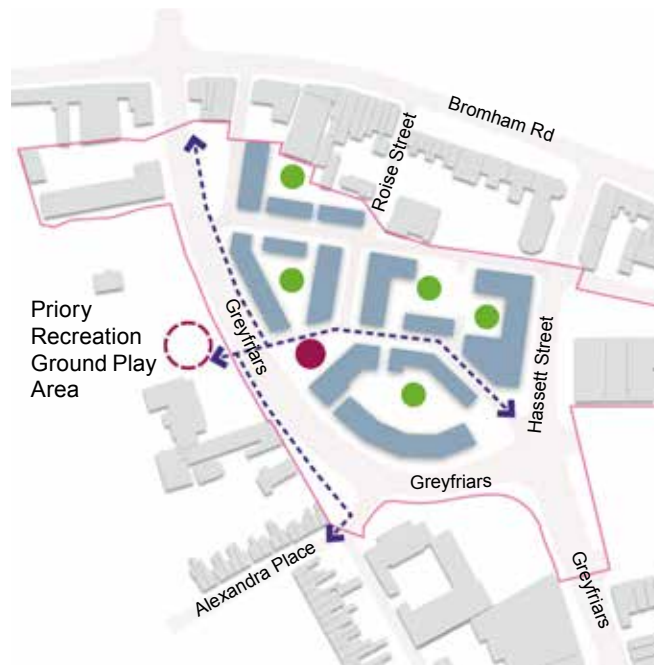


Cycle parking integrated into the public realm

## Play and Recreation

**6.5.7 Opportunities for play and informal recreation must be provided to promote healthy lifestyles for all residents. Equipped and informal play space must be provided to help achieve this aim.**

- The design of the public open spaces should be multi-functional incorporating imaginative, versatile elements in which children and young people of all ages can play and interact. Active areas will be balanced with passive, quiet spaces that children also require for play and social development. Play opportunities should feature a range of challenging (mental and physical) opportunities, in a fully accessible and inclusive environment.
- Play area designs should incorporate themes reflective of the cultural heritage of the site and wider area.
- The concept of playable streets should be integrated. Grass verges and incidental hard landscaping should be utilised creatively with features providing localised trim trails, linking to green space within site, and off-site areas such as Priory Recreation Ground.
- The play surfacing must be of a “wet pour” type of safety surface - as seen on the existing Priory Recreation Play Area - not a loose surfacing like woodchip.
- Play provision on-site must be based on policy AD28 Open Space Standards and the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document. Play space will be provided within the public open spaces and courtyards, and with enhancements to Greyfriars road (including reducing the carriageway width and new pedestrian crossings) the existing play facility in Priory Recreation Ground can also be used.



Play principles plan

- Equipped play space (minimum 200m<sup>2</sup>)
- Door step play space (minimum 100m<sup>2</sup>)
- ↔ Opportunities for play on the way



Integrated play space



Play trails in planted verges





## 6.6 Amenity Space

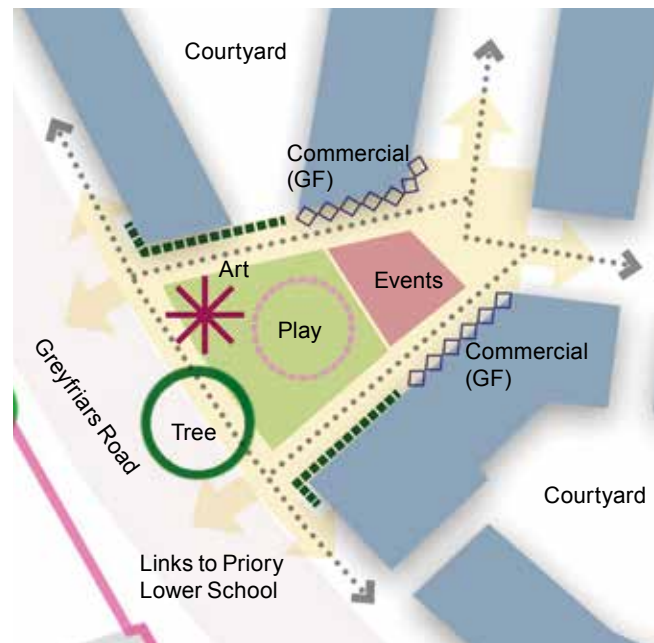
### Public Open Space

#### Community Gardens:

**6.6.1** The masterplan must provide a public place at the confluence of key routes for shared community activity.

The community gardens design should include:

- The provision of hard landscaped space for organised events / community day. This could also act as a breakout/seating space related to ground floor commercial uses.
- A play space for residents, possibly aimed at older children. The space should be no smaller than 200m<sup>2</sup>.
- An outdoor gym to cater for older residents and teenagers.
- Tree planting to soften the area, create wildlife habitats and provide urban shading.
- Generous areas of soft landscaping. Planting should be textured and characterised to reference River Great Ouse and the wider greening of Greyfriars road.
- Opportunities for community driven public art should be explored and embedded into features within the public realm.



Community Gardens principles plan

- The site should part comply with policy AD28 Open Space Standards and the Open Space Supplementary Planning Document. The site should accommodate the full requirement for informal and amenity green space on site, the proposals are not expected to include provision for outdoor sports space, accessible natural greenspace, parks and gardens, or allotments on site. Areas of informal and amenity green space can include enhanced spaces along Greyfriars road.

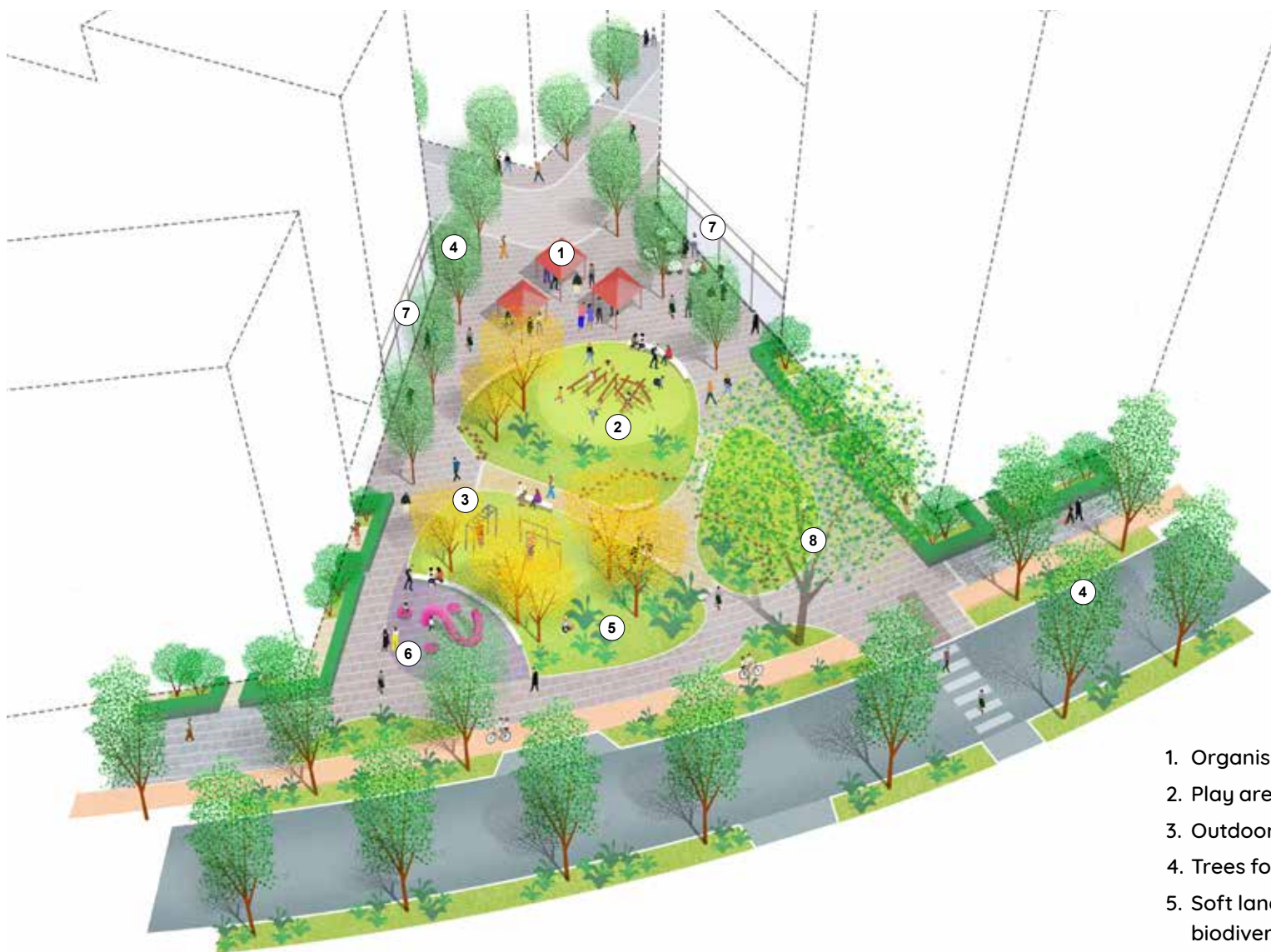


Areas for events and commercial uses



Community Gardens - Typical section





1. Organised events / community day area
2. Play area
3. Outdoors gym
4. Trees for biodiversity and urban shading
5. Soft landscaping for greening and biodiversity
6. Community driven public art
7. Active frontage
8. Existing high quality tree

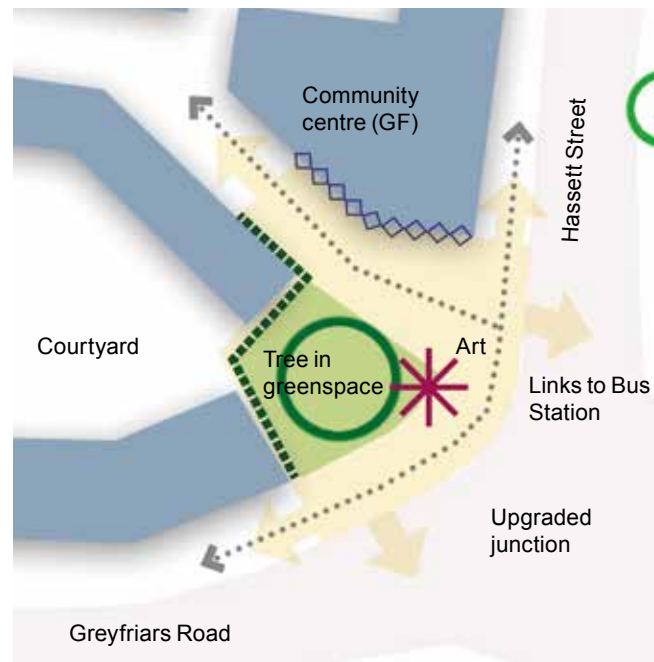
Illustrative view of the Community Garden

## Hassett Street Plaza

6.6.2 A gateway plaza space must be provided on Hassett Street to act as an arrival space opposite the bus station.

Hassett Street Plaza design should include:

- A harder landscape character, with formalised planters incorporating existing trees of good quality.
- Tree planting to promote connections and provide urban shading.
- Incidental seating to provide a resting point (while not promoting this as a place to dwell for longer periods). As the main pedestrian route through the site, and nearby residential entrances, there will be a good level of passive surveillance which should help design out crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Seating should incorporate anti-skateboarding measures.
- Opportunities for community driven public art should be explored and embedded into features within the public realm.



Hassett Street Plaza principles plan



Gateway space



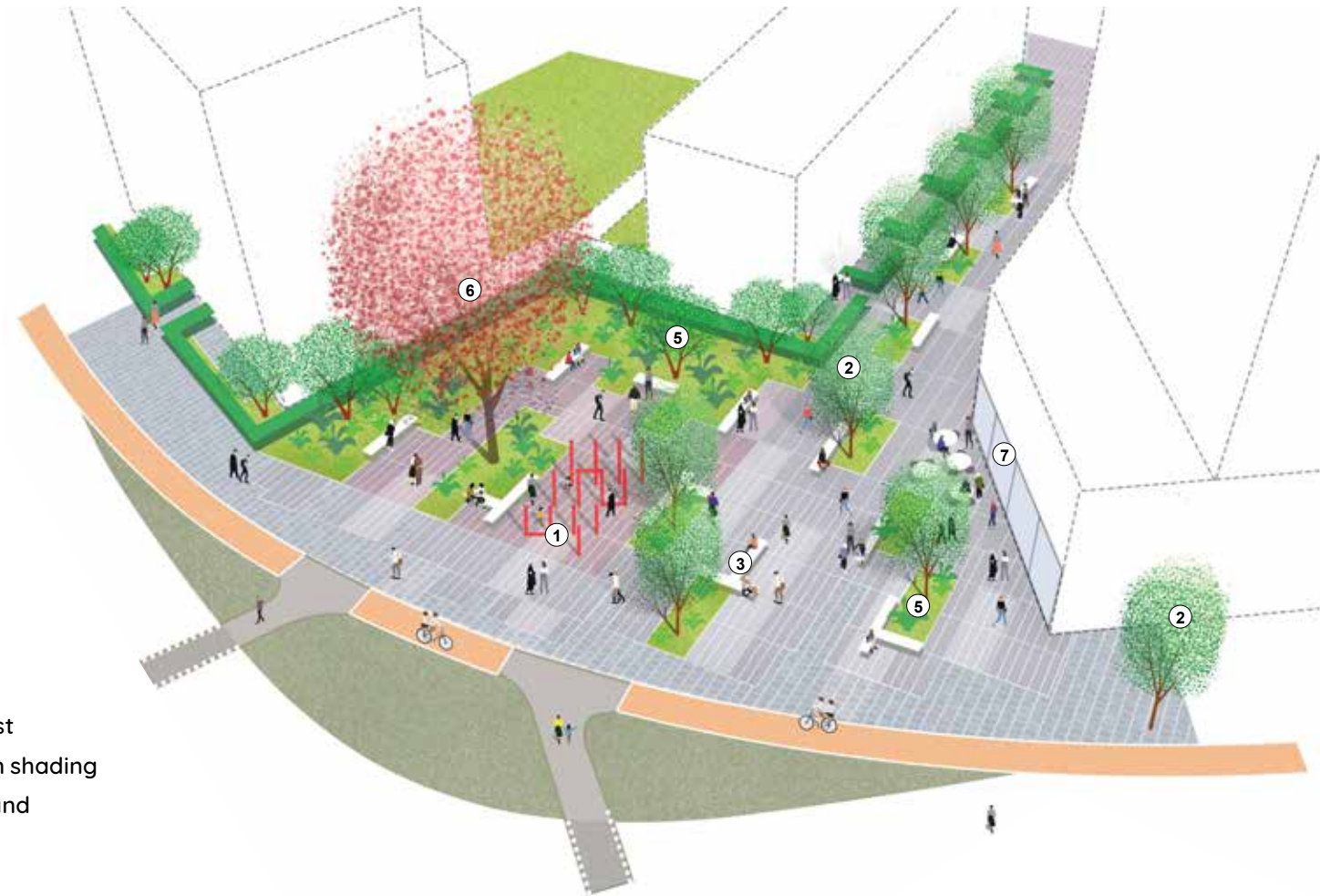
Planting beds orientated to delineate movement



Integrated public art solutions



1. Integrated public art
2. Tree for urban shading
3. Incidental seating to provide rest
4. Trees for biodiversity and urban shading
5. Soft landscaping for greening and biodiversity
6. Existing high quality tree
7. Active frontage



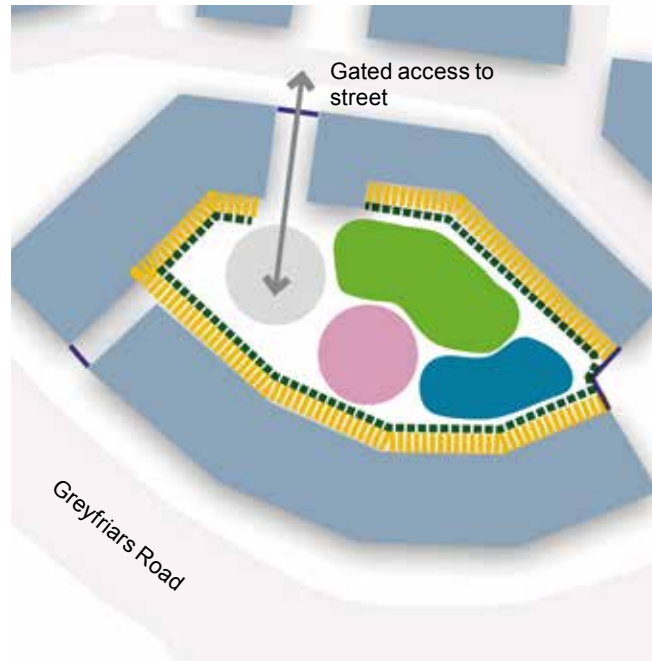
Illustrative view of the Hassett Street Plaza



## Communal Courtyards

**6.6.3 Each residential block must have access to a communal courtyard garden.**

- Courtyards must include high quality shared space for residents of adjoining homes. This must be secure and not accessible by members of the public.
- Private terraces must be provided to the periphery where they are linked to ground floor homes facing the courtyard. Space could be in accordance with amenity provision guidance and be a minimum depth of 3m. Direct access from terraces into the courtyard should be encouraged. Boundaries to terraces must be no higher than 1m to maintain the openness of the courtyard.
- The garden must include planting and grassed areas, seating spaces, door-step play and places for communal gardening. Courtyards must be designed to screen external noise and pollution.
- Each courtyard must include a minimum of 100m<sup>2</sup> of play space targeted at under 5s. Designs should look to encourage imaginative and creative play linked to the natural landscape.
- Planting should include edible varieties including fruiting trees and herbs.
- Facilities within the courtyard should be suitably positioned to maximise available light to encourage use through the day.
- Parking areas are discouraged but where required for the provision of blue badge bays, the parking area should make up no more than 25% of the area within the courtyard. Parking should be located in the shadiest part of the courtyard, and be suitably screened so as to minimise impact on amenity space.



Indicative communal courtyard

- 3m zone for terraces related to ground floor homes
- Planting buffer to terraces and gardens
- Potential access for blue badge parking
- Potential condensed blue badge parking. No other parking permitted
- Play space
- Growing spaces and informal recreation
- Orchard tree planting and seating spaces.
- Secure boundaries



Hedges used to separate private and communal open spaces



### Integrated play features and planting



Spaces for community growing and gardening



## Maintenance and management

6.6.4 For the long-term success and enjoyment of the landscaping, public realm, and play space, a robust management and maintenance plan must be appended to any future planning application. This plan should detail who is responsible for maintenance and management of the landscaped areas, vegetation, street furniture and play areas, and for what duration (e.g. 10 years, or the lifetime of the development). It is expected that bpha will be responsible for the long-term maintenance and management of these features, unless they are adopted by the Council.

6.6.5 The plan might include details covering: upkeep; weeding and invasive species control; litter control; maintenance and repair; and responsibility for drainage and infiltration. This plan will help ensure the long-term health of trees, vegetation and habitats on site, and ensure that these spaces can be enjoyed by residents.



Street furniture is well maintained and clean



Public realm and landscaping has long-term maintenance and management arrangements in place





## 6.7 Street Typologies

### Greyfriars road enhancements (Key Street G)

#### 6.7.1 Proposals for Greyfriars should create a greener pedestrian and cycle friendly environment.

- Proposals should reduce the scale of Greyfriars road by replacing superfluous carriageway or parking space, with places for soft landscape, pedestrians, and cyclists. This should integrate with the junction works proposed opposite the Bus Station.
- Opportunities to remove the vehicle link to Alexandra Place should be explored to create a new pocket park.
- New tree avenues should be planted, intermixed with retained trees of value.
- Improved pedestrian crossing points should be provided to align with key routes within the masterplan. These should encourage safe passage to Priory Recreation Ground, Priory Primary School and pedestrian routes along Alexandra Place.
- Planted green verges must be provided and opportunities should be explored for integrating SuDS features such as rain gardens and swales.
- Benches should be provided at suitable intervals (minimum 50m) to provide rest points along the street.

6.7.2 These improvements will need to be approved by the highway authority and undertaken in tandem with BBC.



Greyfriars road improvements principles plan

- Opportunities for SuDS creation, planting, seating and play on the way.
- Opportunities for Avenue trees within planted verges
- Existing trees of value to be retained
- Improved pedestrian crossing points
- ↔ Localised access points retained
- Loading bays integrated into verge
- Defensive planting to ground floor homes





Planted swales with seating areas



Rain gardens with integrated play trails



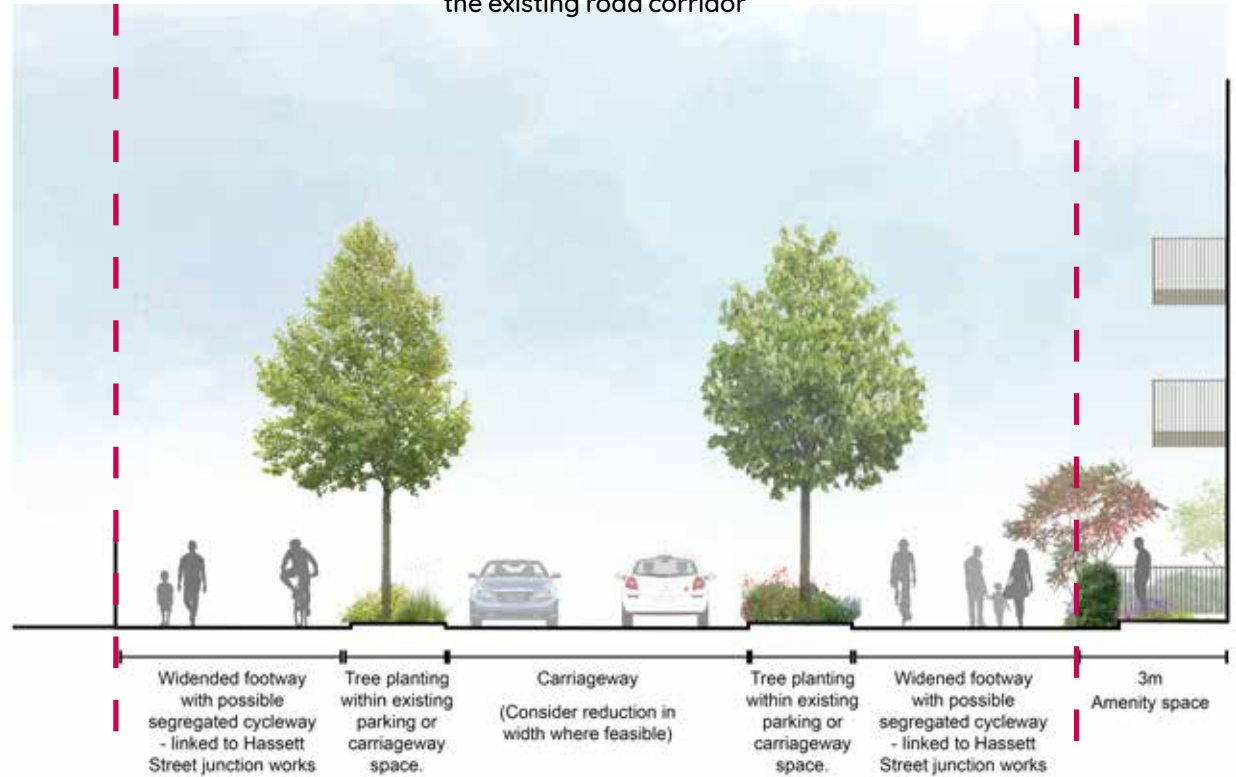
Green frontages and avenue trees within planted verges

## Greyfriars road

Limit of carriageway extent

These changes to be done within the existing road corridor

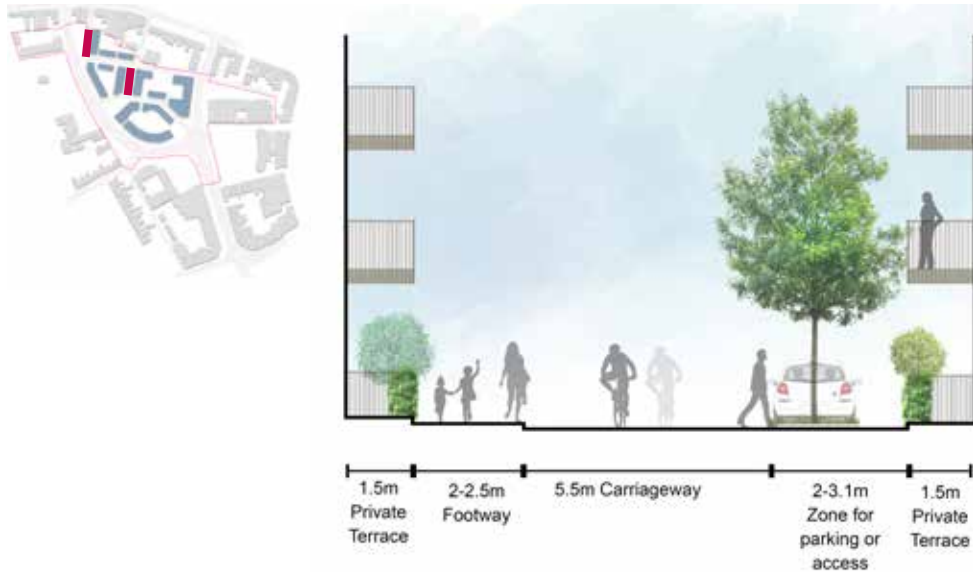
SPD site boundary/ carriageway extent



Illustrative Greyfriars road section - proposed design intent. Upgrades to the road must be undertaken by BBC highways, and must be undertaken within the carriageway extent shown above.

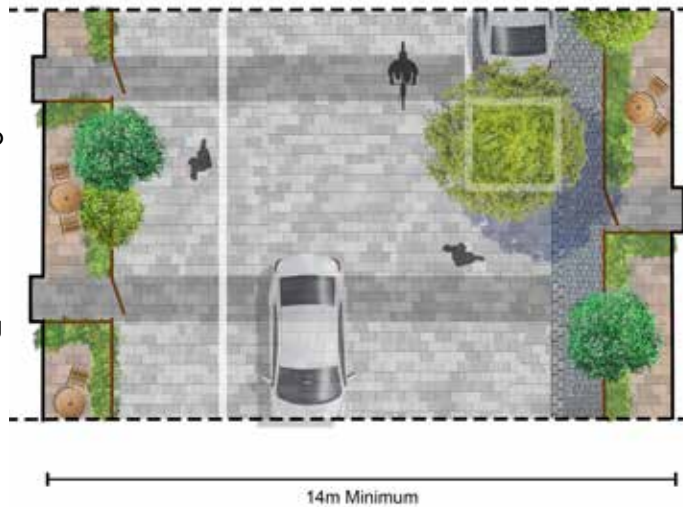


## Neighbourhood Street Type 1

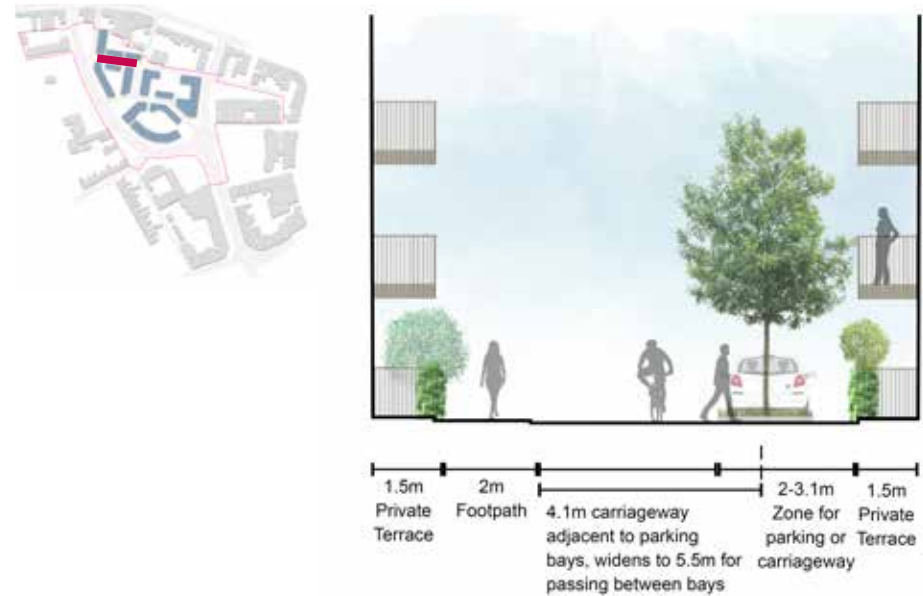


### Key Principles

- Defined vehicle carriageway wide enough for vehicles to pass
- Defined pedestrian route to at least one side
- Zone for tree planting and parking
- Private space adjacent to ground floor homes



## Neighbourhood Street Type 2



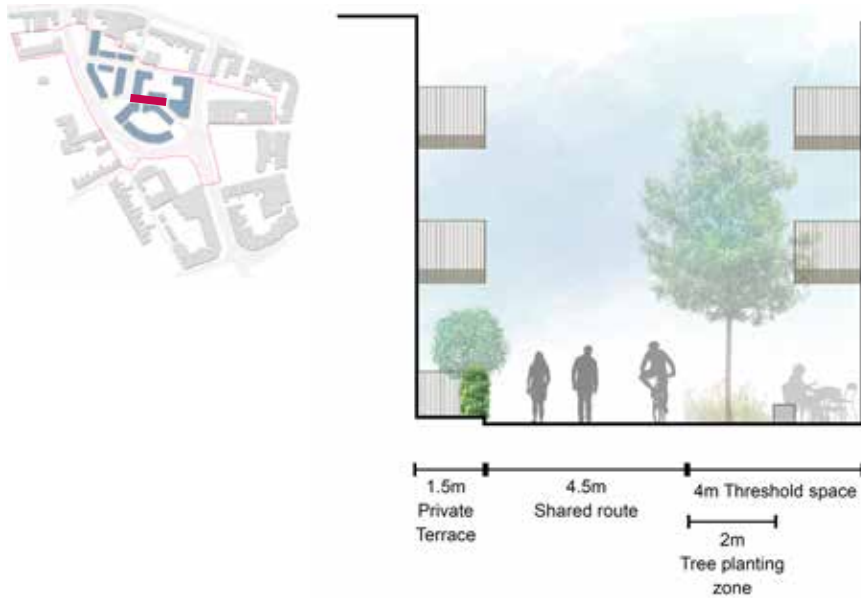
### Key Principles

- Defined vehicle carriageway narrowed with passing places
- Defined pedestrian route to at least one side
- Zone for tree planting and parking
- Private space adjacent to ground floor homes





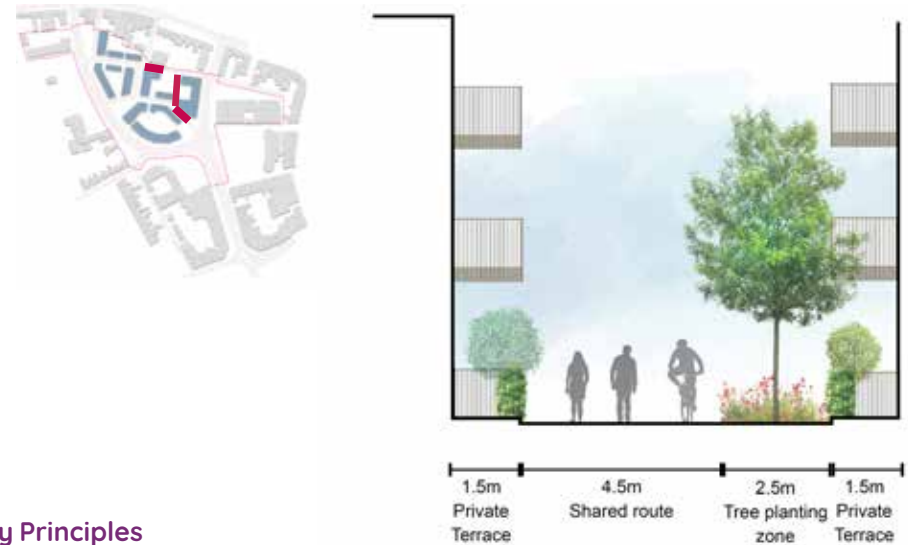
## Local Street Type 3A



### Key Principles

- Limited or no vehicle access
- Shared pedestrian priority route (Minimum 4.5m wide)
- Integrated tree planting

## Street Type 3B - Community Centre Frontage



### Key Principles

- Limited or no vehicle access
- Shared pedestrian priority route (Minimum 4.5m wide)
- Integrated tree planting within planted verge
- Paved threshold to community centre
- Where street is adjacent to resident courtyard, railings and low planting should be used to retain visual connection and allow passive surveillance

## 6.8 Built form

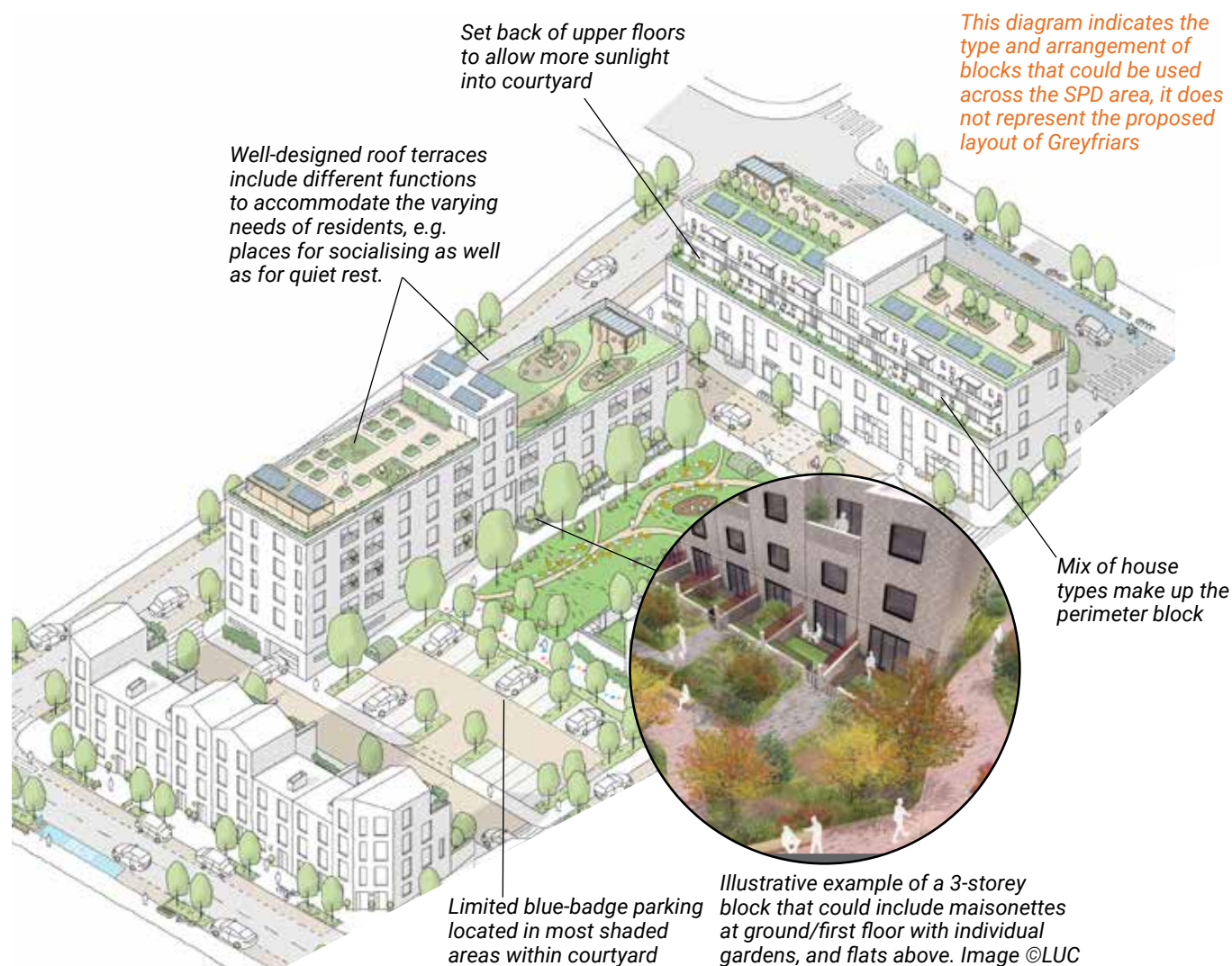
6.8.1 The masterplan establishes an urban pattern of clearly defined and permeable routes comprising of suitably sized blocks. This section provides further requirements for the design and articulation of the built form and massing to ensure the Greyfriars development is of distinct identity while drawing on the characteristics of the wider Bedford context.

### Perimeter Blocks

6.8.2 The objective of creating perimeter blocks must be achieved by assembling a variety of block types across the SPD area. The indicative types suggested below help create streets with differing character across the site, responding to the “key moves” based around movement, open space, phasing, and existing site constraints.

6.8.3 The specific locations of these are indicative and will need to be confirmed in the detailed design.

- **Short block** – to respond to the permeable routes created through the site
- **Long linear block** – to create strong continuous edge onto Greyfriars road
- **Tall building** – as landmark buildings
- **Townhouses** – respond to the existing grain and scale on the edge of the site



Illustrative diagrams of use of perimeter blocks to inform the Greyfriars layout, alongside important spatial principles that must be considered.



6.8.4 The use of perimeter block typology has been driven by community feedback and the need to address anti-social behaviour issues in the area, by creating a clear definition of public / private space, create safe and secure outdoor space, and provide a clear purpose for any public realm. This is a response to the current development layout and existing issues.

6.8.5 Common design code requirements for all perimeter blocks are:

- Blocks must be assembled by a series of building types. The important design consideration is that they are harmonious as individual elements and when viewed as a collective.
- Development blocks must be arranged to create a usable communal amenity space wherever possible.
- Residential entrances to ground floor homes and communal stair cores must be accessible directly from the street / public realm.
- Blocks could contain different apartment types, including stacked maisonettes. Façade design and fenestration should articulate the different typology.
- The blocks must accommodate steps in massing and height change must also be reflected in an appropriate elevational treatment.

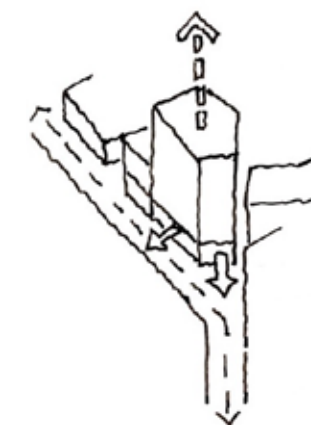
### Tall Buildings

6.8.6 In July 2023, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities outlined that the government would soon require all residential buildings above 18m to include a second staircase as a means of escape during a fire. All buildings above 18m within the SPD area must be designed to include two staircases.

6.8.7 With regard to design, the following requirements align with Draft Policy DM12.

- The design must achieve exceptionally high architectural quality in terms of design, materials and details (which includes sustainable design and construction practices) to do justice to its prominence.
- The design must be clearly articulated in terms of a bottom, middle and top.
- Tall Buildings must provide a positive contribution to the skyline, when perceived from all angles during both the day and night. The visual impact of tall buildings must be considered from long-range views (in particular the top of the building); mid-range views (particular attention should be paid to the form, scale and proportion from this view); and immediate views from the surrounding streets which focusses on the human scale and particular attention should be paid to the ground floor relationship with the street and public realm.
- During detailed design stage, rigorous assessment of the impact of the masterplan - in particular the tall buildings - on the nearby heritage assets (including Bedford Conservation Area and listed buildings) must be undertaken.

- The internal layout and design of circulation space and egress points must ensure the safety of all occupants.
- Detailed design of tall buildings must be tested to ensure that the local micro-climate, wind levels, sunlight, and daylight will not be adversely affected, and will not have detrimental impacts to the amenity of adjacent buildings.
- Tall buildings must provide high quality and usable private and communal amenity space and ensure an innovative approach to the provision of open space.



Opportunity at the end of the block or Greyfriars junction to create a marker at the corner by accentuating the height and addressing the two routes at ground level

## Building Lines

6.8.8 The position of buildings in relation to the street space establishes a building line for the street. The set-back is the distance between the building and the street edge. The building line and the set-back from the edge of the street should be designed in relation to the street as a whole.

- Across the Greyfriars masterplan area, the building line should generally be consistent to avoid any setbacks and opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
- There must be a consistent building line on the Greyfriars road frontage, to give a strong street presence.
- Consistent building lines must be combined with defensible space to create positive occupied frontages.
- A new development must have well-defined frontage with the building line set back behind front gardens of a depth of min. 1m and max. 2m. With the exception of Greyfriars Road where front gardens can be up to 3m.

## Roofscape

6.8.9 Roof forms should respond to the surrounding context, local architectural styles, and the degree of prominence and hierarchy a building has within the streetscene. Across the Greyfriars masterplan, the design of roof form should consider:

- Symmetry and continuity can create positive rooflines, but the important design consideration is that they are harmonious as individual elements and when viewed as a collective.
- Buildings should have a consistent and simple roofline.
- Roofs should be designed to accommodate sustainable elements wherever possible and they should be integrated into the roof as a whole. This includes ensuring the correct orientation and pitch for PV panels and solar hot water systems, as well as water management and collection.
- Where buildings are sited within important townscape views or heritage views, or on prominent corners, the design of the roof will be particularly important.
- Roof forms must take inspiration from local character and reflect the character guidance in section 5.6.
- Setbacks, dormers and mansard should enable the creation of terraces and green roofs.



Varied roof forms and gable-style ends are used to add variety to this development off Conduit Road and relate to the roof form of the existing street.



## Frontages and Edges

6.8.10 Whilst the building types across the site will vary, the frontage and edge conditions must have some common characteristics. The frontage types, defined on the regulatory plans must adhere to the following requirements:

### Active frontages

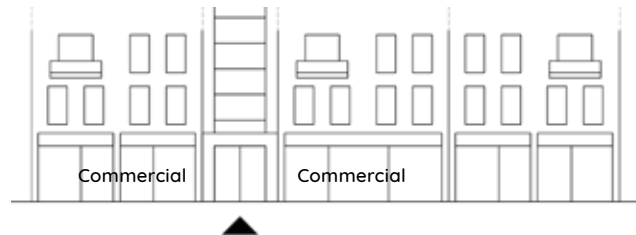
- The ground floor of the buildings along these frontages will predominately comprise non-residential uses, including commercial space and the community centre which will help animate the frontages and, in some cases, spill out into the public realm.
- These must include active ground floors, windows, and doors for at least 50% of the frontage. Floor to ceiling heights must be at least 4m to allow appropriate space for commercial uses and future flexibility.
- Commercial units must be interspersed with entrances to residential on upper floors. Entrances to residential must be clearly identifiable and prominent.

### Positive occupied frontages

- These frontages will accommodate regular entrances to residential dwellings, and have an important role to play in defining and overlooking all the routes and spaces. This can be achieved by integrating townhouses, and for residential blocks providing individual front doors onto street level.

## Corners

- These are landmark buildings and prominent focal corners that need particular attention in regard to design detail and materiality.
  - Buildings must turn and articulate corners positively.
  - On the ground floor buildings must create well defined frontages onto the public realm and should have active frontages or positive frontages on both sides.



Clearly articulated residential entrance

Commercial uses and a clearly articulated entrance to residential



Commercial frontage has a strong active street presence, with materiality used to denote a change in use



Poor example: Commercial units should have a strong active frontage and street presence. Signage should be proportionate and complementary to the façade design.

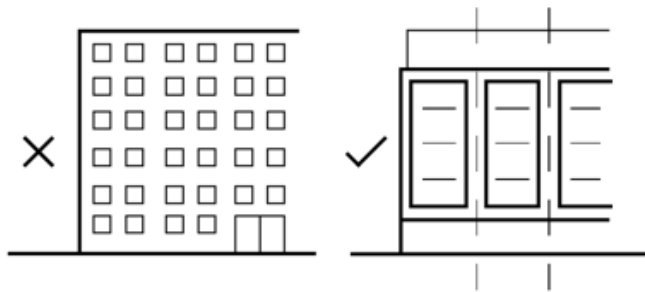
### Active frontages (commercial)

6.8.11 Commercial shop fronts should form a continuous frontage onto the central space. The ground floor design of the building should be designed to provide a unifying framework that commercial shop fronts will sit within. Each shop front should reflect its function and own identity, but it should also relate to the design and proportion of the ground floor of the building, as well as create a sense of harmony within the vertical rhythm and architectural character of the whole frontage (especially upper levels). Proposals should achieve this by:

- Ensuring that permanent features of the shop fronts (e.g. doors and windows including frames, fascias, stall risers, and signage) are of simple design and subtle colours, ideally incorporating a natural material (glass, timber, metal).
- Coordinating signs and hoardings, in scale and design, using materials or colours that match or complement the building.
- Ensuring any security features, such as grilles or shutters, are designed as integral to the shop front and ideally fitted internally. They must not be solid.
- Shop windows must not become blank, blacked out or blocked by full signage. They should have a strong sense of transparency and present active edges; and ensuring that shop front design / proportions relate to the façade above.
- Canopies and blinds, protecting goods and sheltering shopper, should be retractable and be made of canvas or a similar non-reflective material. They must be designed in scale and integrated into the ground floor of the building they serve.

### Façade Design

- Monolithic façades must be avoided. Breaking down the façade helps to reduce the scale and to integrate them within the development.
- Façades should clearly articulate their use and non-residential buildings should be articulated differently from residential buildings.
- Residential blocks must have a regular pattern of accommodation expressed externally to provide a vertical rhythm to the street scene and break down the horizontality of the block. This sets apart the new residential buildings from the heritage area and non-residential uses in the core of the town centre.



Monolithic façades with 'hole in wall' fenestration must be avoided

Regular vertical bays break down the building mass and provide rhythm. Clearly defined base and top of building.



The façade is broken up to delineate uses, and create a vertical rhythm - Bedford Riverside development.



## Apertures and Fenestration

- For mixed use buildings, elevations should create a subtle distinction between ground and upper level uses.
- Variety should be achieved in the façade by subtle shifts in proportions or detailing, rather than in change of material (with the exception of Beckett Street where changes in material are welcome).
- Fenestration design should maximise daylight for proposed internal use and to create subtle variation in the façade.
- Windows must be generally in subdued colours - selected use of colour may be acceptable with appropriate justification.
- UPVC windows must not be used on any frontage to primary or secondary street, and their use has been unsympathetic in the nearby conservation area.
- Window reveals should generally be at least a full brick deep (unless fully flush with the façade) to bring depth and definition to the façade.
- Deeper window reveals should be used, particularly on south facing elevations to provide solar shading and reduce cooling demands.
- Windows should have simple and discrete profiles (without stuck on glazing bars) to avoid adding unnecessary complexity to the façade design. Sash windows are commonplace within the conservation area to the north - whilst modern interpretations can be used, they must be faithful replications.
- The finish of windows should be carefully considered to compliment other secondary materials such as railings and balustrades.

- Near noise-sensitive receptors such as Esquires Music Venue, new development must address these noise impacts through careful consideration of the location and design of proposed apertures.



Simple profile's windows with window reveals



Symmetry and hierarchy have been used to great effect in the fenestration design of this development on The Crescent

## Private Open Space

6.8.12 Connection to nature and clean air is important for mental and physical health. An enclosed space for children to play is also important, especially in family-sized homes. Residents should have access to private and communal external amenity space.

6.8.13 Private open space for flats can include ground floor gardens, balconies (including 'winter gardens', where balconies can become fully enclosed) and roof terraces. Private open space must:

- be clearly defined and enclosed by boundaries (where located on ground floor). Fences must not be used to define gardens, instead railings and low vegetation (of no higher than 1.4m) must be used to retain an inter-visibility between private open space and the public realm.
- sized at a minimum rate of 5sqm for 2P + 1sqm for each additional person, with a minimum depth of 1.5m.
- where possible, be directly accessible from a living area (e.g. lounge or dining area).
- have views which include nature, e.g. planting/green roofs, and/or distant views to landscape, town- or cityscape.
- The design, spacing and depth of balcony should be designed related to internal accommodation to maximise daylight to balconies whilst maintaining privacy.
- Recessed balconies should be used to create a buffer between living spaces and the street as well as directing views obliquely along the street.

6.8.14 For townhouses and maisonettes, a minimum of 20 sq.m of space must be provided for 2-persons (+5 sq.m per extra person). This can be provided in the form of rear gardens, patios and roof terraces. It must be clearly defined with robust boundaries.



Outdoor space must relate to internal rooms and be usable and practical

Hanging balconies with adequate space for outside dining table (Brentford Lock West, London).



Mixture of private and communal space. (The Malings, Ouseburn. Ash Sakula Architects, photograph © Jill Tate)





## Balustrades and Railings

- Balustrades and railings must be generally specified in subdued colours - selected use of colour may be acceptable with appropriate justification.
- Balustrades and railings must be an integral part of the façade design, and the finish and colour of architectural metalwork should be selected to compliment the primary façade material and be considered alongside finishes of windows and other elements of the façade.
- The railings must be designed to ensure appropriate privacy for the balcony spaces. For projecting balconies, this means one side (or 50%) must include a solid balustrade for an adequate sense of privacy and shelter.



Decorative gates and railings can be used to create identity and retain visual permeability

## Façade Materials

6.8.15 Materials and detailing have a significant influence on people's perceptions of the quality of a place. Generally, quality can more easily be achieved through simple clearly articulated building forms, with limited decoration, but well-proportioned elevations and high-quality materials and detailing, rather than overly complex forms with decorative features, but lesser quality materials or less careful design and detailing. The embodied carbon of any facade materials should also be considered and minimised at detailed design stage (see paragraph 6.8.41 for further details).

6.8.16 The Bedford Town Centre Conservation Area is characterised by the scale, form, and materials seen in the C18 and C19 dwellings to the north of the site. Around Bromham Road, the predominant historic building materials are red and soft yellow-grey stock bricks, which are punctuated with some examples of stuccoed and painted façades on more historic buildings. Slate remains the dominant roofing material. Brick and masonry should be the predominant primary materials to create a positive contribution to the historical area.

- Variations of red brick and soft yellow-grey brick found in the surrounding area must be used as primary material.
- Changes in material must relate to the form and articulation of the building - for instance to a setback or projection - and should have some other clearly identifiable role in the design.
- A simple and restrained palette of primary materials should be employed - each building /

house must be restricted to one primary material. Some limited colour contrast may be appropriate.

- Render should be used sparingly and in exceptional circumstances, and only on buildings where the long-term maintenance can be ensured.
- Lighter and more reflective materials such as glazed and lighter bricks should be used in narrower passages, yards, and courts to maximise the quality of daylight at lower levels and within the public realm.

6.8.17 The community building is exempt from these rules, and colour and a distinct architectural approach is appropriate to highlight its importance and use.

6.8.18 Future development proposals must demonstrate how the local character and identity has been acknowledge and reflected in the design proposals.



Mix / contrast colours of brickwork



High quality brickwork and subtle use of colour





## Community Centre Design

6.8.19 The community centre sits at an important junction in the masterplan, animating the base of the taller residential block. The community space:

- Must be designed with the floor to ceiling height of minimum 3.5 – 4.5m. This will provide flexibility to allow the uses to change in future.
- Must locate active internal uses (for example reception area or meeting rooms) so that they animate the edges and the public realm. It will need to balance active frontages and daylight with adequate privacy and practical internal arrangements.
- Should utilise the roof either as a roof terrace, or planted as a green roof.
- Should be double fronted onto yard or courtyard spaces, particularly where these spaces are proposed to be visible and/or accessible to the public, provided there is no conflict with the quality of environment for upper floor uses, in particular for residents.



Indicative ground floor activity - principle of the community centre terminating the end of the vista



Attractive living environment for older people.  
(RCKa, photograph © Jakob Priestersbach)



© Rachel Brain, Leathermarket Community Benefit Society  
Communal roof terrace



Southwark Heritage Centre, London

## Residential Design standards

6.8.20 Where necessary, all homes must meet Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) inclusive of:

- Living areas that are:
  - minimum 14m<sup>2</sup> for 2P + 1.5m<sup>2</sup> per additional 1P to allow space for play
  - minimum 3m wide in a home for 2P, or minimum 3.5m wide in a home for 3P+
- A second separate living area and bathroom or shower room for 6P+ homes
- At least one built-in floor-to-ceiling storage cupboard accessible from internal circulation space that is minimum 0.8m wide and clear of any fixed services of equipment

6.8.21 Where any home is single-aspect, because development constraints mean it would be impossible or undesirable to deliver dual-aspect, they must not be north-facing.

6.8.22 Internal layout and configuration of buildings should respond to extra constraints (such as noise from Esquires Music Venue), and might include e.g. arranging non-habitable rooms in closest proximity to noise generating activities.

6.8.23 In line with Approved Document M, a proportion of homes should meet accessibility standards, in line with the latest policy requirements. Under current policy, on the Greyfriars site 49% of all new homes should meet M4(2) requirements (accessible and adaptable dwellings); and a minimum of 5% of all market housing and 7% of affordable housing should meet M4(3) requirements (wheelchair user dwellings).

### Access through courtyards

6.8.24 Views from the street into the courtyards should be allowed to create glimpsed views into landscaped areas and create open, safe and welcoming entrance situations.

- While primary entrances should be from the street, flats must use the courtyard as an integral part of the entry sequence to residential units to ensure a strong connection to the courtyard for all residents;
- Primary access routes into courtyard spaces for all users must be a minimum of 6m in width to create a generous, welcoming and safe access point.
- Gates must be located on the edge of the building to avoid recesses in the public realm.
- Gates must be designed to allow visual permeability, so it could provide surveillance and activity at street level.
- Entrance lobbies should be located adjacent to court access to provide passive surveillance and activated covered areas.



Entrances with visual permeability

### Residential Lobbies

6.8.25 Entrance lobbies into apartment blocks are important threshold zones into private residential areas. It is important that they are safe, functional, and welcoming.

- Entrance lobbies must be located on the street.
- Entrance lobbies must be generous and legible and create a strong sense of arrival.
- The design of entrances must be tenure blind with no change in appearance or specification between tenures internally and externally.
- The scale of entrance lobbies must relate to the number of units served. Where greater numbers of units are served lobbies must be distinctive and grand, where fewer units are served entrances must be more discreet and modest.
- Entrance lobbies should provide some communal amenity for residents, such as seating, planting, or artwork/installation.
- Entrance lobbies (for flats) must provide two-stage entry for security - firstly into an area for mail/deliveries, and a secondary entry point into the building circulation space
- Post-boxes, intercoms, lighting, signage and all other elements of communal entrances must be integrated into the overall entrance design to maintain clarity and coherence in the ground floor façade.



Residential entrances marked by recesses and a material change



## External Gallery Access

6.8.26 Gallery access or “deck” access, can create bright, convivial communal entrances to residential blocks. This access type should be considered in the linear long blocks and short block typologies. The gallery access provides good ventilation and circulation of air to flats, and also allows dual-aspect units to be created.

- Gallery access must only be proposed fronting into residential courtyards and not onto the streets.
- Where external access galleries are employed, buffers between public and private must be carefully designed, particularly where habitable rooms face gallery areas.
- The design of fenestration onto access galleries must achieve an appropriate balance between maximising daylight and ensuring adequate privacy for residential units.



Gallery access areas in new build, award-winning, Bourne Estate

## Entrances to houses and ground floor flats

6.8.27 In addition to providing activity and passive surveillance onto streets and surrounding spaces, a building's entrance must feel safe for its user/s at all times.

- Entrances and front doors (including for ground floor flats) must be accessible and visible from the public realm and be clearly identifiable as entrances, well-lit, and secure.
- Sufficient defensible space at entrances should be provided to allow opportunities for residents to create an appropriate interface between public and private. This can be done with planters, or different surface materials to delineate semi-private space.



A well-defined entrance marked by a material change. Cambridge



Poor example: Residential entrances should be visible and accessible from the street. Boundary treatments should not be high railings or fences

## Environmental testing

6.8.28 The masterplan proposes to introduce new development and additional residents to the urban area of Bedford. Through this process, it is imperative that the amenity of existing neighbours is protected, as well as providing the highest quality of amenity for new residents.

6.8.29 As future planning applications progress, further environmental testing must be undertaken to ensure that the detailed design of buildings and public spaces are safe and comfortable for inhabitants, in line with policy requirements and building regulations. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Daylight/sunlight assessments (internal and neighbouring)
- Noise impact assessments (particularly where buildings are, or are in proximity to, noise-sensitive receptors (for example Esquires Music Venue))
- Wind and microclimate assessments (particular focus should be paid to the comfort of the proposed public spaces)
- Other environmental testing, including vibration, smell, harmful emissions, impact on water quality, light glare, or the effects of pollution, where relevant.

## Front gardens

6.8.30 Consistent boundary treatments across the SPD area play an important role in creating character. Whilst individual personalisation is encouraged, and overarching consistent street presence is important. Boundary treatments in the local area vary from 3-4m front gardens, to front doors opening straight onto the street. Where feasible, a setback to the pavement is encouraged to help define public and private spaces. Front gardens should:

- create a safe and secure transition zone and provide privacy for ground floor habitable rooms;
- contribute to an attractive street scene;
- provide planting opportunities; and
- provide storage opportunities for bins and cycles (and other outdoor items), where there is space, or clear access to these areas.

6.8.31 Specific requirements include:

- Where homes are accessed directly from the street, there must be a minimum setback of 1.5m between building and the back of pavement (see character areas for further guidance).
- Where habitable rooms are located on the ground floor, there must be a minimum 1.5m setback between building and front edge of plot. Additional space can be achieved through localised step backs.
- Where front gardens are less than 2m, bin and/or cycle storage must be shared between households or integrated within the front of the building with direct access from the front of the building or located to the side or rear of properties where direct and convenient external access allows.

- Defensible space must be demarcated with planters, low vegetation, wild pockets of landscaping or railings with inter-visibility between the street and ground level unit. For each unit, defensible space must incorporate an element of soft landscape to improve street greening and biodiversity.

- Where front doors (ground floor) flats and stacked maisonettes provided onto the street. The defensible space must be provided with consistent treatment along the length of the street.
- On more intimate streets, where trees may not be appropriate, climbing plant species should be used to introduce greening to the façades. The exposure and facing direction of the unit must be considered in species choice.



Uniform front gardens contribute to the streetscene



## Waste Storage

6.8.32 Developments must positively integrate waste and recycling collection into the streetscape so that bins and the movement of refuse vehicles do not undermine the quality of development, or obstruct footways. Bins must be located in easily accessible locations for both residents and collection services.

- Public waste and recycling bins must be located within high activity areas, such as Lower Beckett, public open spaces or near local amenities, such as shops, and community facilities.

6.8.33 Shared or individual bin store shelters must be integrated well as part of an overall design using similar materials and design language. They must:

- Provide separate waste storage for residents and commercial tenants.
- Provide level and full clear access to ensure items can be stored and replaced easily by a sole person.
- Be enclosed and screened from public view whilst being well-overlooked.
- Be designed and built of robust materials similar to the building/s it serves.
- Be well-lit (particularly for shared facilities).
- Provide good ventilation and convenient access for its users.
- Bin store shelters must allow sufficient clearance to allow the full opening of the container lid, 150mm clear space between and around containers, and designed so each bin can be serviced without having to move another container.
- Green roofs on top of storage shelters provide an opportunity for biodiversity.

### For flats

6.8.34 Communal bin storage for refuse, recycling and compost can be provided internally or externally of the building envelope.

6.8.35 In all cases, communal bin storage for flat buildings must:

- Be secure and lockable;
- Provide space for the number of two-wheeled bins/ communal bin containers required by local waste guidance;
- Where provided externally of the building envelope, provide a robustly constructed enclosure and use materials consistent with the architectural and material strategy of the building itself. An enclosure of close boarded fencing or similar is not permitted; and
- Where provided within the building envelope, must be located in a discreet yet conveniently accessible location, without impact on visual or air quality for residents.

### For houses

6.8.36 The following design requirements apply depending on the chosen bin strategy:

6.8.37 In curtilage of the house where high-quality and discreet bin stores are designed into the fabric of the building. These must:

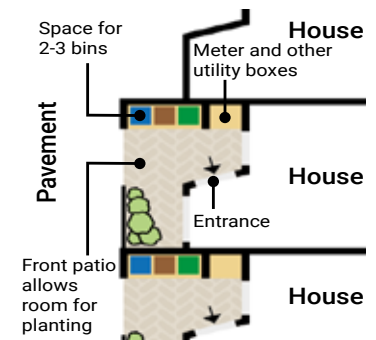
- Have space for the required number of bins (refer local guidance);
- Be enclosed by masonry of the same material as the main building, or
- Have a justified and consistent design material strategy; and
- Be covered from rain.

6.8.38 Shared bin stores (for private houses) can be a space-efficient way to accommodate waste and recycling bins. Trials in other UK cities have demonstrated that this can work well. These must be:

- An integral part of the overall design and material strategy;
- Located in a discreet, yet overlooked location;
- Shared by no more than 6 homes; and
- Secure and weatherproof.

6.8.39 Individual bin stores located in front gardens must:

- Not obscure the view from the house to the street; and
- Be enclosed and screened from the public realm.



Bin stores should be integrated into the layout of development, as seen in this example in a front garden with built-in green roof

## Cycle parking

6.8.39 Providing secure and easily accessible cycle storage is fundamental to promoting active travel and making cycle ownership feasible. Storage for other outdoor items (e.g. buggies, mobility aids, cargo bikes, etc) must also be accommodated. Cycle parking must be designed in accordance with the BBC Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities SPD (2014), as amended or updated. The following requirements apply:

- Resident parking requires one cycle parking space per bedroom.
- Cycle storage must be secure, ventilated; provide convenient, clear and level access from the street.
- Electric charging facilities should be provided, which must demonstrate how safe charging and storage has been considered.

6.8.40 Depending on the tenure, cycle storage design must also meet either of the following requirements:

### For flats

- Communally indoors as part of the flat building on the ground floor, with secure access for residents only;
- Communally outdoors within a separate structure, with secure access for residents only;
- Communal cycle storage must be well-lit and maintained to provide a safe environment, and ensure that parking is easy to use for people of all ages and abilities with at least 50% to avoid lifting a cycle, e.g. less than 50% ramped or two-tier stands and all cycles being able to be accessed and moved easily without moving another.

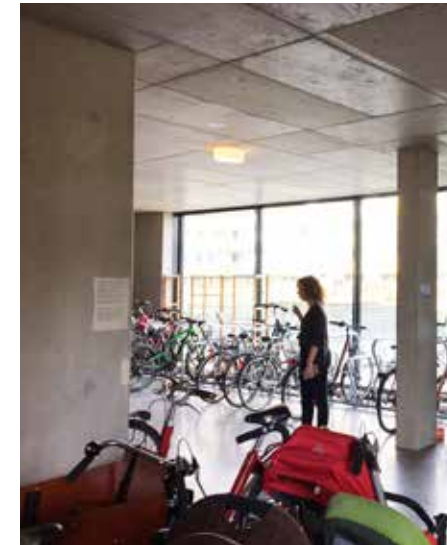
- Cycles must be able to be locked by their frame.
- Where communal storage is provided indoors, cycles should be visible from the public realm, set behind glazing or screened (e.g. using perforated metal sheeting or timber battens) to animate and provide activity at street level.
- Where cycle storage is provided in a separate structure, bikes must be protected from the weather and the structure must be robust, lockable, clearly signposted and located in well-overlooked, highly visible locations.

### For houses

- Within an adjoining or separate structure in the front garden, where space allows;
- Integrated into the front of houses within the building envelope, accessed by min. 0.9m wide door;
- Communal outdoor storage shared by a number of houses, with secure within a separate structure, with secure access for residents only; or
- Within an integrated garage

### For other cycle parking

- Short-stay cycle parking must be provided at a minimum of one space per dwelling in clusters within visually prominent locations (e.g. corners, by entrances, near crossings points, etc).
- Near the commercial units and the Community Centre, the quantity of short- and long-stay spaces must be provided in accordance with BBC parking standards as a minimum, with long-stay parking provided under cover and in highly visible and well-lit locations.



Communal indoor parking for flats includes natural light and space for cargo bikes and other alternative cycles



Short-stay cycle parking located close to the building entrance

Decorative metalwork to screen ancillary areas



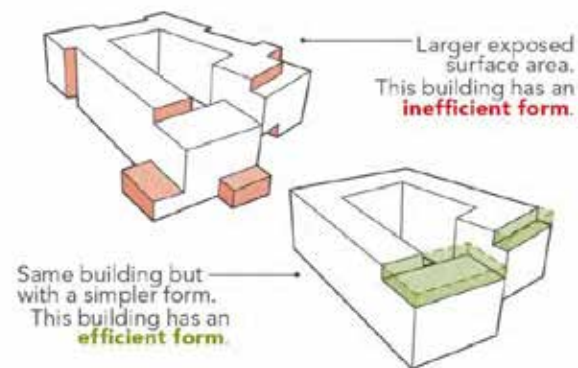


## Sustainability and Energy

6.8.41 Within the masterplan area, and across development in Bedford as a whole, the sustainability and energy efficiency of new development is of utmost importance. Sustainable construction assists with reducing embodied carbon and responding to the climate crisis, and creating energy efficient homes reduces the operational carbon emissions and also helps to reduce running costs for the occupier.

6.8.42 UK Building Regulations and the Future Homes standard address these issues, and the following requirements are in addition to those set out elsewhere. Development must:

- Adopt a fabric-first approach and demonstrate how this is achieved by providing a Sustainability Statement.
- Include rainwater harvesting systems for external use, such as for watering gardens as a minimum, and consider domestic rainwater harvesting greywater recycling.
- Specify LED-compatible light fixtures only, considering sensor-activated lighting in appropriate locations, including within streets and open spaces.
- Prevent overheating of homes through orientation, window locations and appropriate detailing and shading features.
- Use on-site renewable energy, e.g. such as Air-Source Heat Pumps or PV panels.



Designing the building to have an efficient form



Extensive PV array hidden by parapet edge



Integrated green roof

## Temporary Initiatives

6.8.43 Temporary meanwhile uses could be brought forward on the site whilst it is being developed. These have been shown to improve social cohesion, which can then be formalised in the final development e.g. community gardening. Small scale initiatives such as a pop-up coffee shop or hoarding that hosts public art could also be used to attract interest in the site. The most suitable locations for these initiatives are at the base of Beckett Court.

6.8.44 Priory Primary School currently use a small community planting area at the base of Beckett Court, with agreement from bpha. The location of this planting area within the redeveloped SPD area must be considered.

## 7 Phasing and delivery

7.1.1 Phased development is critical to the delivery of the site. Phasing has been considered from the outset, and is one of the determining development principles critical to being able to achieve one of the Council's key requirements of making sure that all existing residents can remain on-site during the redevelopment; and existing residents only needing to relocate once.

7.1.2 The following indicative phasing strategy:

- Keeps the major underground utilities and substation in-situ;
- Allows Phase 1 to be delivered on the existing surface car park. The car park spaces will be re-located to the adjacent Allhallows MSCP; and
- Facilitates the retention of all existing residents on-site during the redevelopment. By building on the surface car park first, residents can move into Phase 1, enabling the demolition of Beckett Court and the building of Phase 2, and so forth.

7.1.3 The Council and bpha as the majority landowner will need to work together to facilitate the redevelopment of the Greyfriars site. Common objectives as identified in this Development Brief will need to guide future decisions in terms of phasing, delivery strategy, development capacity and detailed design.



# Appendix

# Consultation Statement

## Purpose of the statement

The preparation of this document conforms with Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It sets out the details of whom the Council consulted in preparation of the draft Greyfriars, Bedford Development Brief (SPD).

## Public and stakeholder engagement

The SPD has been prepared to support the delivery of the Greyfriars site, which is identified within the draft Local Plan 2040 under housing allocation HOU1. The development brief has been developed by a consultant team, on behalf of Bedford Borough Council (BBC), in partnership with bpha and Homes England.

The process has been developed around key engagement sessions, where the input from local residents, stakeholders, and the wider public has been sought. This engagement has ensured that a wide range of voices have informed the design process, and resulting site layout and illustrative masterplan.

Public engagement was held as “drop-in” events in various locations, to encourage as many participants as possible. This ranged from the existing site, to the Howard Shopping Centre. Two rounds of engagement were undertaken: the first focussed on analysis of the site; and the second introduced emerging design principles.

The first engagement session focussed on gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the site is currently used. Both existing residents, visitors, and the wider public were invited to give their viewpoints. Residents were formally invited to join the drop-in sessions via letter; and the events were also advertised via posters, and the bpha and Council website. The first and second sessions were undertaken in-person at the base of Beckett Court on Tuesday 21 June 2022 5-9pm, and Saturday 25 June 2022 9am-1pm. We encouraged participants to provide their thoughts on the day, but we also made surveys available to take

home and return via post, and an online version of the survey which was hosted on the bpha and Council website (with downloadable versions of the boards). A phone number and email address was made available if people had any further queries or comments. The online survey was kept open for two weeks after the last in-person event. Both days were well attended (Saturday morning had more responses), and a summary of the viewpoints are recorded adjacent.

The next session was held on Wednesday 29 June 2022 10am-3pm in the Howard Centre, where the wider community was invited to give their viewpoints on the site and surrounding area. Responses were recorded on the day, and the same online survey was also made available. This event was held in tandem with Bedford Borough Council’s event on the draft 2040 Local Plan, and the location meant that residents, visitors, and local business owners were all able to give their opinions.

Six months later, having reviewed and consolidated the first round of comments, emerging principles were then discussed with residents. The second round of engagement was undertaken in January 2023, and held at the Bedford Priory Bowls Club (adjacent to the site). Two sessions were held: on 11 January 4-6:30pm; and 14 January 10am-12:30pm. These events were advertised via flyers, and posters in the local area.

The engagement and findings have been instrumental in the production of the SPD.

Key outcomes from the first sessions (June 2022) included:

- Existing open space is poorly designed, and there are poor boundary treatments at ground floor. Public/private space should be better defined;
- Antisocial behaviour at the base of the residential blocks is an issue;
- Increased and improved facilities for play for children and teenagers are desirable;
- Internal amenity issues: noise insulation between apartments is poor; individual heaters are expensive to run;
- Congestion and pollution on Greyfriars road are an issue;
- The existing mature trees are really valued;
- New green spaces, planting and accessible play areas would be welcome;
- A mixture of houses and flats, a mixture of tenures, and appropriate disabled access are desired; and
- Individual private amenity space (balconies) are really valued by existing residents.
- Conversations with visitors passing through the site confirmed that the site provides an important short cut towards the town centre.

Key outcomes from the second engagement sessions (January 2023):

- Eastern side of site (on junction of Greyfriars and entrance to town centre) is a more popular location for potential tall buildings;
- Strong support for ensuring the environmental sustainability of new homes, with the orientation of flats, solar panels, good insulation, green roofs, and SuDS all seen as very important;
- Maintenance and management of new green spaces essential;
- Communal resident courtyards were popular ideas, as well as community gardens;
- Mixed response on buildings higher than 11 storeys;
- The need for appropriately maintained lifts;
- Support for more pedestrianised areas, secure cycle parking, and new cycle lanes;
- The existing mature trees should be retained and celebrated;
- Planting on the streets, blue badge parking spaces, and safe crossing points on Greyfriars road and Hassett Street;
- Community gardens and allotments were mentioned several times; and
- Generally positive response to the idea of resident parking in the Allhallows multistorey car park (though some concern about developing on the surface car park as this is a popular place to park), although this would need to come with safety improvements, better lighting, and increased electric vehicle charging points.





### Internal engagement

BBC have also consulted internally with various departments, including Development Management, Transport Officers, Highways Development Control, Environment Officers, Economic Growth and Development Officers, Urban Design Officers, and Energy and Water Technical Officers. Each officer raised comments which have been responded to in this document.

### Formal consultation (November 2023 and April 2024)

A statutory six-week consultation on the draft SPD was undertaken between November and December 2023, and closed on 19 December 2023.

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2019) makes clear that, to reduce expenditure, as much consultation as possible is carried out electronically. During the consultation period, the Council's website was therefore the primary means of providing information about the SPD, and a dedicated webpage was set up to provide information about the SPD and how people may comment upon the document. Alongside this, BBC also publicised the document on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. All contacts on the Council's planning policy consultation database were contacted.

The following documents were made available to view on the Council's website accessed from the Planning Policy pages:

- Draft Greyfriars, Bedford Development Brief SPD;
- Pre-consultation Statement; and
- Details of how to respond.

The neighbouring Local Authorities were also advised by email, which comprise: Central Bedfordshire Council, Milton Keynes Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, East Northamptonshire Council and Borough Council of Wellingborough.

While not a requirement of policy or legislation, it is also common for the Council to run an exhibition or workshop to enable people to discuss the consultation

document with officers. In this case, two further in-person engagement sessions were held in Bedford Priory Bowls Club on 22 and 25 November 2023. One weekend and one weekday session were held to try and maximise the opportunities for residents to attend. The sessions were advertised two weeks in advance, via posters and flyers to residents.

During these sessions, boards summarising the draft SPD were displayed, and opportunities for people to respond to each section. Full printed versions of the document were also available. The consultant team, bpha and BBC officers were available to answer any questions during each session.

There was general support for the SPD and the masterplanning work from those who attended. Other comments included:

- Some concern there would be too much public access - spaces need to be clearly defined;
- Parking should be allocated for residents in the Allhallows Car Park; and
- There should be good recycling facilities, cycle storage, mobility charging stations, and good disabled access.

Following the November consultation further amendments were made to the draft SPD, after which a further four week consultation took place between April and May 2024, and closed on 8 May 2024.

Following conclusion of the consultations, all responses have been collated, and amendments to the SPD made where necessary.

