

7.24. Sandpit Lane Open Space & Arrival

7.24.1. The northern part of the development functions as an attractive open space that creates the setting of the Proposed Development along Sandpit Lane. The design reflects the identity of the development, Oaklands Blossom, through carefully planned landmark features and seasonal planting. A large feature tree marks the main entrance, acting as a gateway element. From this point, avenues of trees extend along the primary active travel routes and the main road, connecting key spaces and reinforcing the character of the landscape. Species selection focuses on blossoming trees to ensure visual interest and continuity throughout the entire vegetation season.

7.24.2. The character of this zone is strongly influenced by sustainable drainage features, including swales, dry basin, and permanently wet retention basin, which create valuable habitats for a variety of species while managing stormwater effectively. Appropriate native plant species are used throughout to ensure long-term sustainability, biodiversity enhancement, and seasonal interest. An informal network of unsealed paths weaves through the landscape, encouraging users to engage with the surrounding natural environment, while strategically placed resting spots and subtle landscape features provide opportunities for pause and relaxation.

7.24.3. A wooden bridge with handrails over the dry SuDS basin provides an excellent viewing point over attractively designed areas of blooming bulbs and ornamental grasses. Above the dry SuDS, a sensory planting area promotes outdoor activities and participation in social life within a safe, overlooked environment. Scent and seasonal colour are used to enhance the public realm. Natural materials play features are proposed within a LAP to the west of the dry SuDS basin.

7.24.4. The permanently wet SuDS basin is a habitat rich zone designed with native species of plants appropriate for each of the depth zones. Wooden platforms crossing over the water body give an opportunity to enjoy closer contact with wildlife attracted to the pond. Circular paths on the slopes of the SuDS enable easy access to the bottom while strategically placed marginal defensible planting and handrails ensure safety of the users, preventing access to the water. The north-west slope of the SuDS will be designed as terraced surfaces that function as informal seating, while formal benches made of gabions and wood will be incorporated into the slopes on the sides of the SuDS, along the circular paths.

7.24.5. The design balances naturalistic planting with carefully integrated ornamental features, including structured tree avenues, ecological planting zones, and a dedicated seating area positioned near the wet SuDS basin. This approach creates a multifunctional and visually engaging setting that harmonises ecology, recreation, and accessibility.

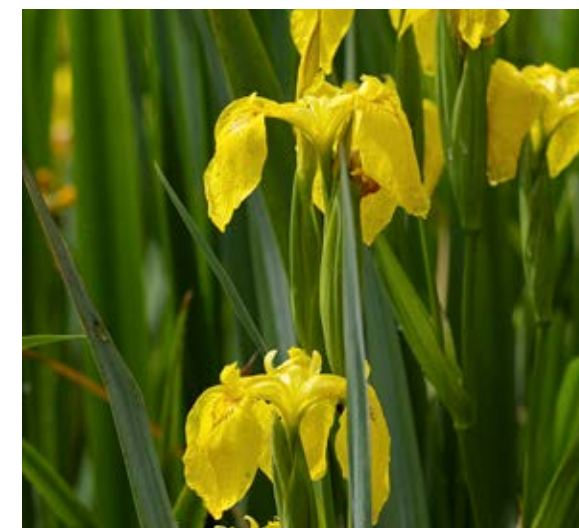
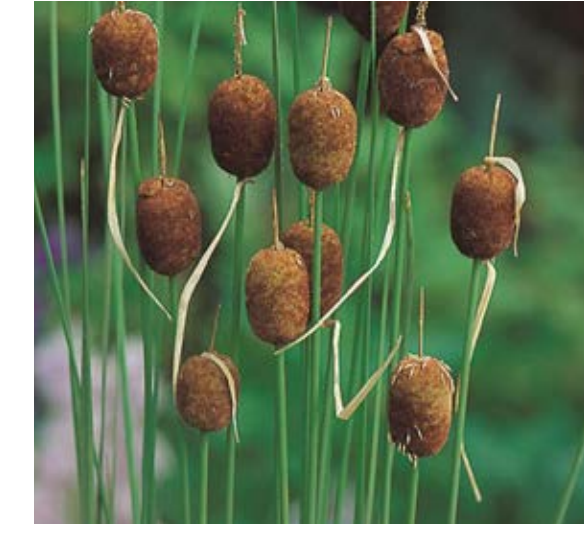


Figure 111. Northern Open Space and Site Gateway

7.24.6. A comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes ensures accessible and all weather movement across the Northern Open Space, and with connections to the wider development and beyond. These routes link the central open “Blossom” space, the habitat rich SuDS pond, and the semi-natural western habitat zone, while integrating with the east-west Active Travel Route. A dedicated pedestrian and cycle route wraps the northern edge of the development, passing through the Sandpit Lane Open Space, linking western Active Travel Link with North Drive. The path forks at the east end leading to an existing Sandpit Lane Crossing and Active Travel Route at North Drive. The path to the crossing includes a wooden bridge to accommodate level changes.

7.24.7. To maximise usable space, these connections follow the SuDS basin maintenance access paths. At the busiest junctions, paths are sealed to ensure durability and accessibility, while in quieter areas mown grass paths are introduced to create a softer, more natural character. Swales along the northern boundary are adopted for biodiverse, flow-resistant planting zones planted with native species, also acting as a migration corridor for small fauna.

7.24.8. The overall landscape strategy enhances biodiversity by creating a rich mosaic of habitats, including native canopy trees, understory shrubs, meadow planting, and wetland species. The integration of swales, retention basins, and ecologically rich planting areas establishes strong habitat connectivity, supporting pollinators, birds, and other wildlife while reinforcing the development’s environmental resilience. Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are sensitively embedded within the landscape, providing safe and accessible spaces for children while blending naturally into the wider green infrastructure.



7.25.Civic Square - Community Square

- 7.25.1. The Civic Square is designed as the focal point for community life, providing opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and cultural activities within an attractive and inclusive setting. Local businesses will benefit from the high-quality environment, encouraging activity and engagement throughout the day.
- 7.25.2. The Civic Square is strategically located between the Extra Care Home and the Local Centre, ensuring it is easily accessible from multiple directions via well-connected active travel routes, cycle paths, and pedestrian links, and in close proximity to a proposed bus route. This creates a natural meeting point for residents and visitors, enhancing the sense of community.
- 7.25.3. The fall from south to north creates opportunities to subtly subdivide the linear space and create a sequence of spaces to move through. Accessibility and inclusivity are key design principles. Level changes along the Extra Care Home's frontage are addressed through a gently falling path of at least 3m wide. Within the space, a series of level platforms are created to accommodate a range of uses, including cafe seating and events. These level areas are framed by ornamental planting beds that provide year round interest through colour and fragrance and textures. Seating walls define level changes and planting beds, offering opportunities for social interaction and rest. Steps are carefully arranged to support uninterrupted pedestrian flow and to maintain both north-south and east-west permeability across the site.
- 7.25.4. The public realm is paved with high-quality, durable materials that provide a smooth, level surface, minimising trip hazards while creating a visually cohesive and attractive environment accessible to all age groups and abilities. The materials palette reflects the materials used within the proposed College Square, to create a consistent public realm between Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands College.
- 7.25.5. Feature paving is used to demarcate the entrance into the Extra Care building and to create an attractive lane between the Local Centre buildings. The lane will be lined by climbers up a trellis to provide colour and texture within the space, and festoon lighting will create a human scale and attractive nightscape.
- 7.25.6. Green infrastructure plays an important role in shaping the character of the square. Street trees and planting areas provide shade, soften the built environment, and establish a calm, harmonious atmosphere, all while ensuring direct connections to surrounding open spaces are maintained. Trees and planting are concentrated along the eastern edge, to create a more intimate and sheltered environment adjacent to the Extra Care Home, with a more open and flexible arrangement adjacent to the Local Centre. Visual connectivity with the proposed primary school to the south is reinforced by tree planting that frames and emphasises key views.

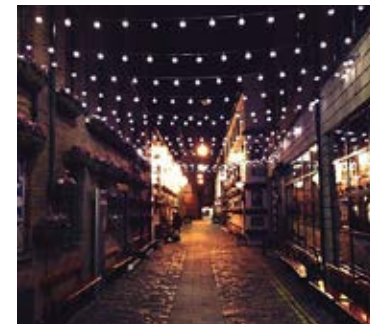
Concrete pavers with aggregate finish



Multifunctional zone for cafe seating or events



Green wall and



Sensory planting



Covered cycle parking

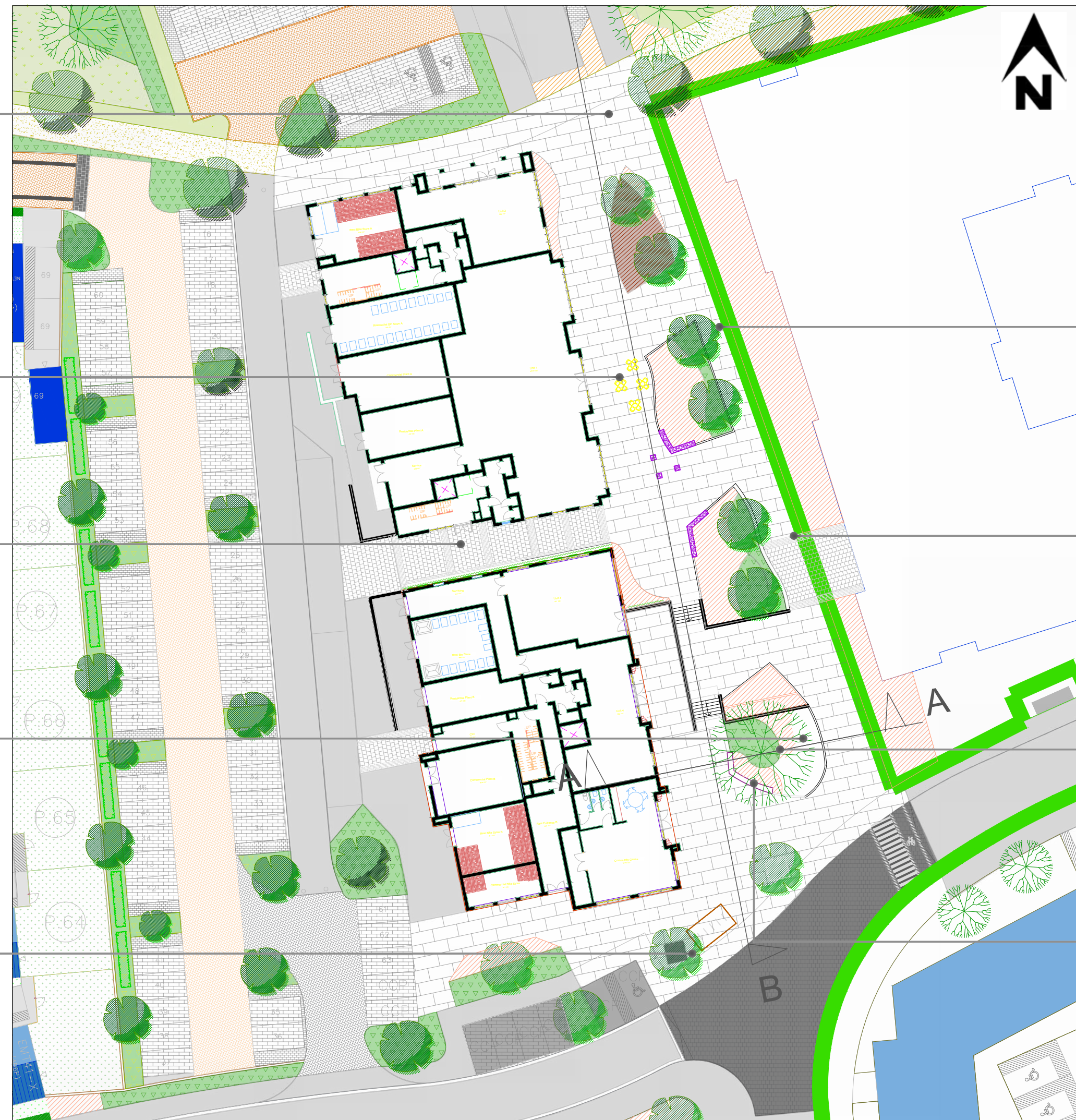
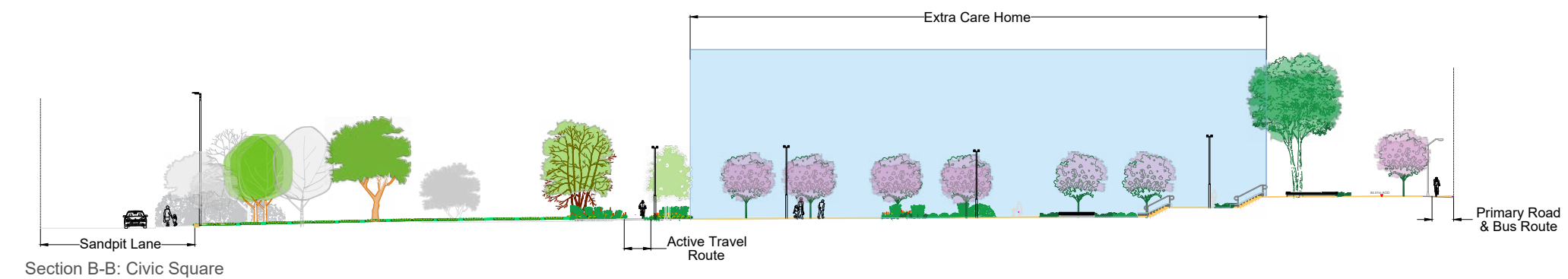


Figure 112. Civic Square



Level direct route lined by blossoming trees



Natural stone setts as banding



Feature tree



Seating walls



7.26. Western Boundary and Links to Oaklands Grange

- 7.26.1. The western Boundary of the site is carefully designed to connect Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands Grange. It will act as a transition zone, blending existing mature vegetation with additional high-quality native shrub and tree planting to reinforce ecological value and age structure. These landscape interventions are intended to improve biodiversity, creating an enriched habitat for wildlife and facilitating their movement through a connected corridor, forming an essential part of the site's overall green infrastructure network.
- 7.26.2. The northern segment of the boundary benefits from a mature tree line on an embankment, reinforcing the green edge and providing visual and environmental continuity. In contrast, the southern section opens up to residential overlooks on both sides of the space.
- 7.26.3. A comprehensive wayfinding strategy will unify the wider Oaklands Community site, ensuring legibility and cohesion while highlighting design continuity across the areas.
- 7.26.4. The interface with the north-south Active Travel Route (ATR) will be clearly marked by native shrubs and species-rich meadow zones, creating a distinctive western edge. A minimum 1m landscaped buffer will separate visitor parking bays from the ATR link, contributing to both safety and aesthetics. The buffer planting will range from formal mixes near the northern entrance, shift to semi-natural planting near the central open space, and transition to naturalised schemes in the southern section.
- 7.26.5. Resting and seating opportunities are thoughtfully integrated along the ATR link, along with bins and "play on the way" features to support enjoyment and functionality for visitors of all ages. 2 LAPs, in the form of "play on the way" features, are planned along the ATR, encouraging playful pauses for children and families.
- 7.26.6. To the south, the Western Boundary accommodates a key foot and cycle route between Oaklands Grange and the Proposed Development, overlooked by homes along the eastern edge to promote safety through passive surveillance.
- 7.26.7. Strategic connections into Oaklands Grange are proposed to enhance permeability and contribute towards the creation of wider strategic links as identified by HCC. The links will also help to integrate the two residential neighbourhoods, foster social links between new and existing communities, delivering essential movement corridors that serve both local and wider networks. Taylor Wimpey, in engagement with local residents, will implement suitable landscape treatments to ensure privacy, accessibility, and legibility of these new routes.

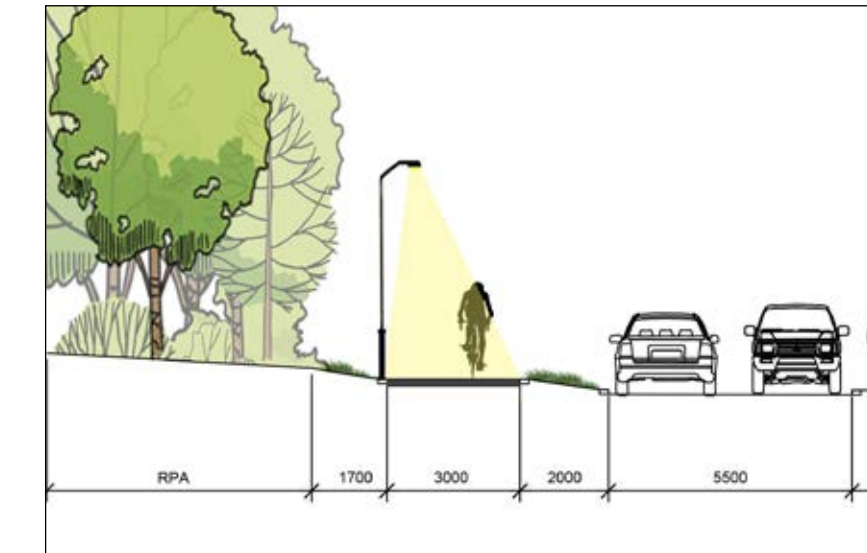


Figure 113. Western Boundary - North (Phase 1)

7.27. Central Open Space

- 7.27.1. The Central Open Space serves as the primary open space at the heart of the Site, providing a vibrant link between the eastern and western boundaries while delivering a focal setting for active travel, play and informal recreation. The design within the Phase 1 boundary integrates play provision, a cohesive planting strategy and a communal growing area with raised planters, while ensuring accessible connectivity.
- 7.27.2. Inclusivity is at the heart of the Central Open Space, with opportunities crafted for all ages and abilities, including thoughtfully placed accessible benches for disabled users. Planting throughout the area establishes a clear structure, connecting residential zones to open spaces, and reinforcing the functional links between key site areas.
- 7.27.3. Biodiversity is championed through blocks of wildflower meadow and low-maintenance grassland, ensuring seasonal interest and supporting pollinators. The retained central tree belt is enhanced by sensitive management—selective openings create connectivity and uninterrupted sightlines, while lower-level vegetation is cleared to optimise visibility and promote safe surveillance.
- 7.27.4. A diverse network of mown and natural paths weaves through the meadows and planting beds, encouraging exploratory movement and gentle activity across the space.
- 7.27.5. Lighting columns line the sealed paths to ensure safe passage after dark. Various seating options—including shaded benches, picnic tables, timber logs, stone seating, and child-friendly choices—are distributed throughout the Open Space, enhancing comfort for diverse user needs.
- 7.27.6. Expanses of open amenity grass support informal activities such as group games, family picnics, and community gatherings. To guarantee visibility and maintain a tidy road edge, the design provides a minimum 1.5m wide verge of amenity grass along the perimeter.
- 7.27.7. Wildflower and Shrub Planting creates a visually pleasing, pollinator-friendly open space that maintains the grassland character, offering relaxation and walking opportunities for users.



7.28. Play Areas

7.27.8. Within the Detail Phase of the application LEAP and LAP provision is proposed within the Central Open Space and within the Northern and Western Boundaries.

7.27.9. The Local Area for Play (LAP) is designed as a small, informal play space intended for young children aged 0 to 6 years. There are two LAPs within the Phase 1 - one in the north-centre space adjacent to the sensory garden, the other is a Play-On-The-Way spread along the western boundary.

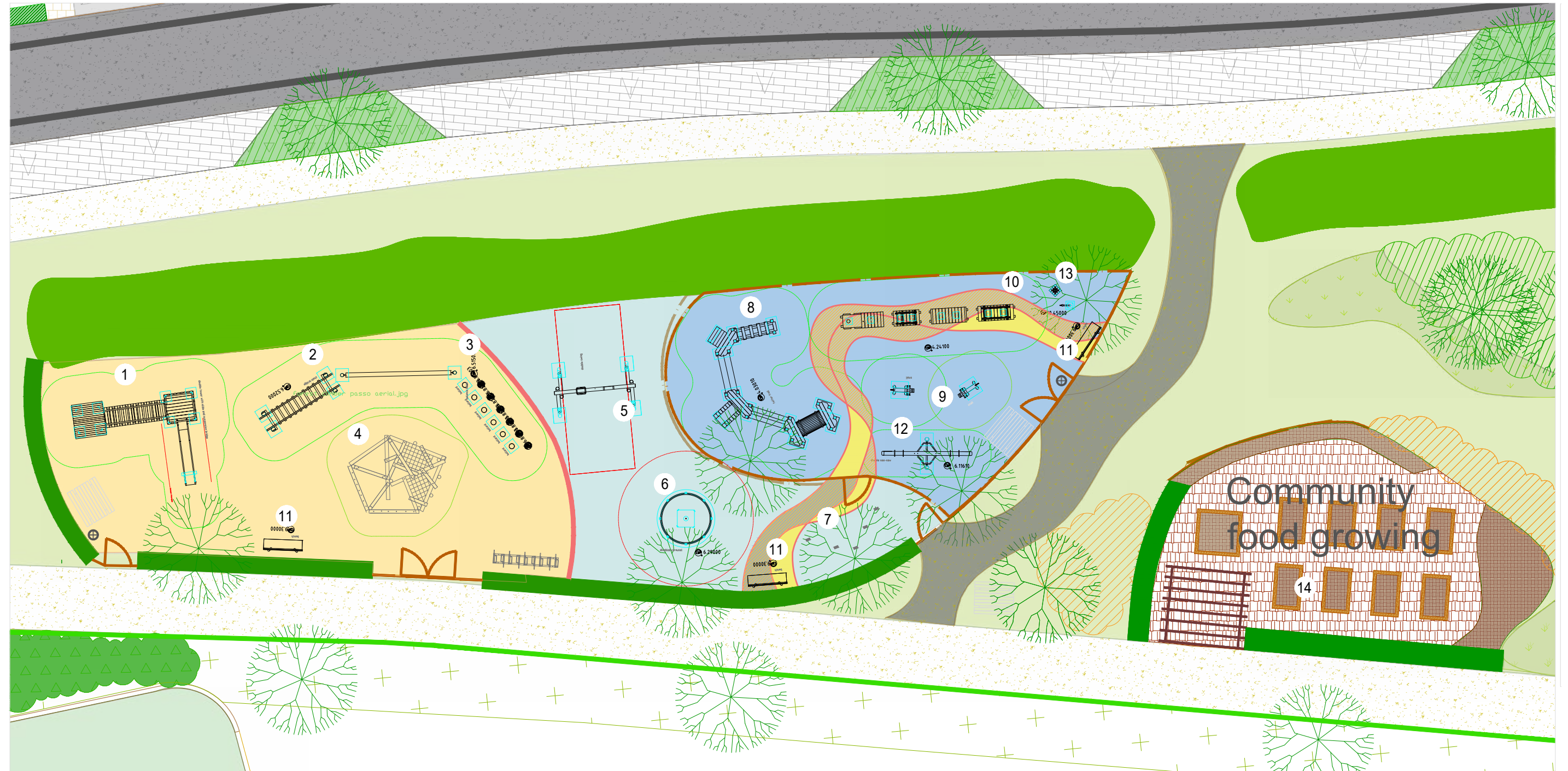
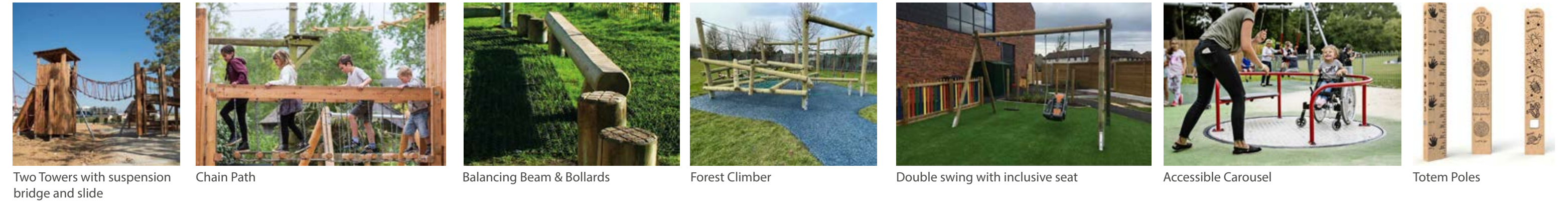
7.27.10. LAPs incorporate natural materials and features such as logs, boulders, sand pits, and soft landscaping to encourage exploratory and sensory play. The design harmonises with the surrounding landscape to create an inviting, safe, and child-friendly environment, fostering early physical, cognitive, and social development. Access paths are level and wide enough for stroller and wheelchair users, ensuring inclusivity. The spaces are designed to be low maintenance, with natural drainage and robust materials selected to maximize durability and reduce ongoing upkeep.

7.27.11. Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)

7.27.12. The Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) on the western end of the Central Open Space serves children aged 4 to 8 years and represents a larger and more structured play environment compared to the LAPs, encompassing activity zone of approximately 500 square meters. It is conveniently located within short walking distance from homes and connected through active travel links to encourage independent access.

7.27.13. The LEAP features a combination of natural landscaping elements—such as mounds and boulders—and designated play equipment made of natural materials, including climbing frames, swings, slides, and balancing structures. This blend supports a broad range of physical activities and imaginative play while promoting engagement with nature. Accessibility considerations include well-drained paths, seating for caregivers, and safe surfacing under equipment to comply with safety standards. The design integrates amenity needs such as signage and bins and ensures minimal impact on adjacent properties through appropriate fencing and buffer zones.

7.27.14. Both LAP and LEAP areas are thoughtfully designed to support healthy childhood development, foster community interaction, and enhance local green infrastructure, aligning with contemporary play space standards and environmental sustainability goals.



7.29. Streetscape and boundary treatment

- 7.29.1. The strongest landscape character is concentrated along the primary route, featuring ornamental planting on the northern side and rain gardens integrated along the main road loop. These rain gardens play a dual role by capturing and filtering stormwater, enhancing water quality, and adding natural greenery to the streetscape.
- 7.29.2. Blossoming trees, which enhance the sense of arrival, continue along these rain gardens at key primary connections. A continuous line of blooming trees is provided along these links, creating distinctive, tree-lined corridors that serve as landmarks and support wayfinding throughout the development. These flowering tree sequences also reflect the development's name, reinforcing a strong identity.
- 7.29.3. The proposed streetscape design enhances the pedestrian environment by integrating a balanced combination of hard and soft landscaping elements to create a welcoming, functional, and ecologically sustainable public realm. Street trees of native species are strategically placed along the sidewalks to provide ample shade, reduce urban heat, and soften the streetscape's visual impact. Low-maintenance shrubs and perennial plantings are incorporated where space allows, adding seasonal interest and promoting biodiversity.
- 7.29.4. Hardscape materials, selected to complement the surrounding architecture, include permeable paving to facilitate effective stormwater drainage and reduce runoff through infiltration.
- 7.29.5. Residential plot boundaries along the primary route are defined by ornamental hedges complemented by occasional blooming tree planting, adding visual interest and softness to the streetscape. In secondary residential zones, boundaries are marked by different hedge species or ornamental planting beds, providing diversity and enhancing the character of the streetscape.
- 7.29.6. Boundaries at the front of units along secondary roads are proposed as a low ornamental hedge with mix of evergreen plants and species with ornamental leaves.
- 7.29.7. Tertiary roads adjacent to the western boundary feature the least formal edges, characterized by low planting beds that open out onto the western green buffer. Occasional tree planting within front gardens further complements this green edge, reinforcing a natural and less structured boundary condition.
- 7.29.8. Back gardens are generally enclosed with 1.8-meter-high timber close-board fencing to ensure privacy. Where gardens back onto public spaces, masonry walls are introduced to create a more robust and durable boundary. To soften the interface between private back gardens and the public realm, climbing plants are proposed along these boundaries.



7.29.9. To address views from Sandpit Lane towards the Local Centre's parking court, a low brick wall with railings is proposed. This creates a semi-continuation of the railing strategy already used to separate the emergency access road from the parking court, while also maintaining visibility through the boundary.

7.29.10. Within the Local Centre, 1.1m-high metal railings are proposed along the edge of the parking spaces. Openings between areas of green space are incorporated to provide permeability and allow residents easy access to their respective cores.

7.29.11. Along the long stretch of boundary between the Children's Home and plots 64-69, where there is a 1:20 fall, a different approach has been adopted. Here, a combination of low brick wall and close-boarded fencing is proposed, ensuring a minimum height of 1.8m from private amenity areas to the parking court. This treatment softens the visual impact of the boundary while providing appropriate screening and security.

7.29.12. Opposite are examples of the possible treatments described above, illustrating how the combination of walls, railings, and fencing could be applied in practice to balance visibility, permeability, and privacy across different site conditions.



Figure 115. Example of low brick wall with railings



Figure 116. 1100mm Metal railings













Figure 117. Example of low concrete wall with close boarded fence in road incline

7.30. Materials & Appearance

- 7.30.1. The proposed palette of materials and finishes has been carefully selected to balance individuality among dwellings while ensuring visual cohesion throughout the development. A variety of materials, including contrasting brick panels and a mix of flat and lean-to canopies, have been used to create interest and variation within the streetscape.
- 7.30.2. Dwellings along the primary street have been given particular attention, as they define the entrance to the site. A combination of gable and pitched roofs, along with strategically placed brick façade details, introduces variety and avoids a regimented built form. Key buildings considered as corner-turning dwellings incorporate hanging tiles, reflecting the materiality of the surrounding context. Architectural details such as dentil courses on gable façades, window sills and headers, and carefully composed window symmetry further enhance the character of the development.
- 7.30.3. The materials palette embraces a contemporary interpretation of the local vernacular, combining complementary brickwork tones with traditional elements like hanging tiles.
- 7.30.4. Brick is the predominant material, with red-multi brick providing contrast against buff, adding a distinctive character to the scheme. A limited palette of weatherboarding is also proposed, each chosen to reflect and connect with the surrounding context. Along the western boundary, a light green weatherboard will provide continuity with the neighbouring Oaklands Grange development, while the southern portion of the site, facing the college, black weatherboarding will be introduced to reference materials already present within the college buildings.
- 7.30.5. The site incorporates three distinct material styles, outlined on the following pages, explaining their development and the proposed materials selected to ensure integration with the existing context.

Key Legend

	Red Brick		Red Roof Tiles
	Buff Brick		Grey Roof Tiles
	Red & Buff Brick		Pantile Roof
	Weatherboard		Flat Roof
	Contrasting Brick Detail		
	Proposed Emergency Access		

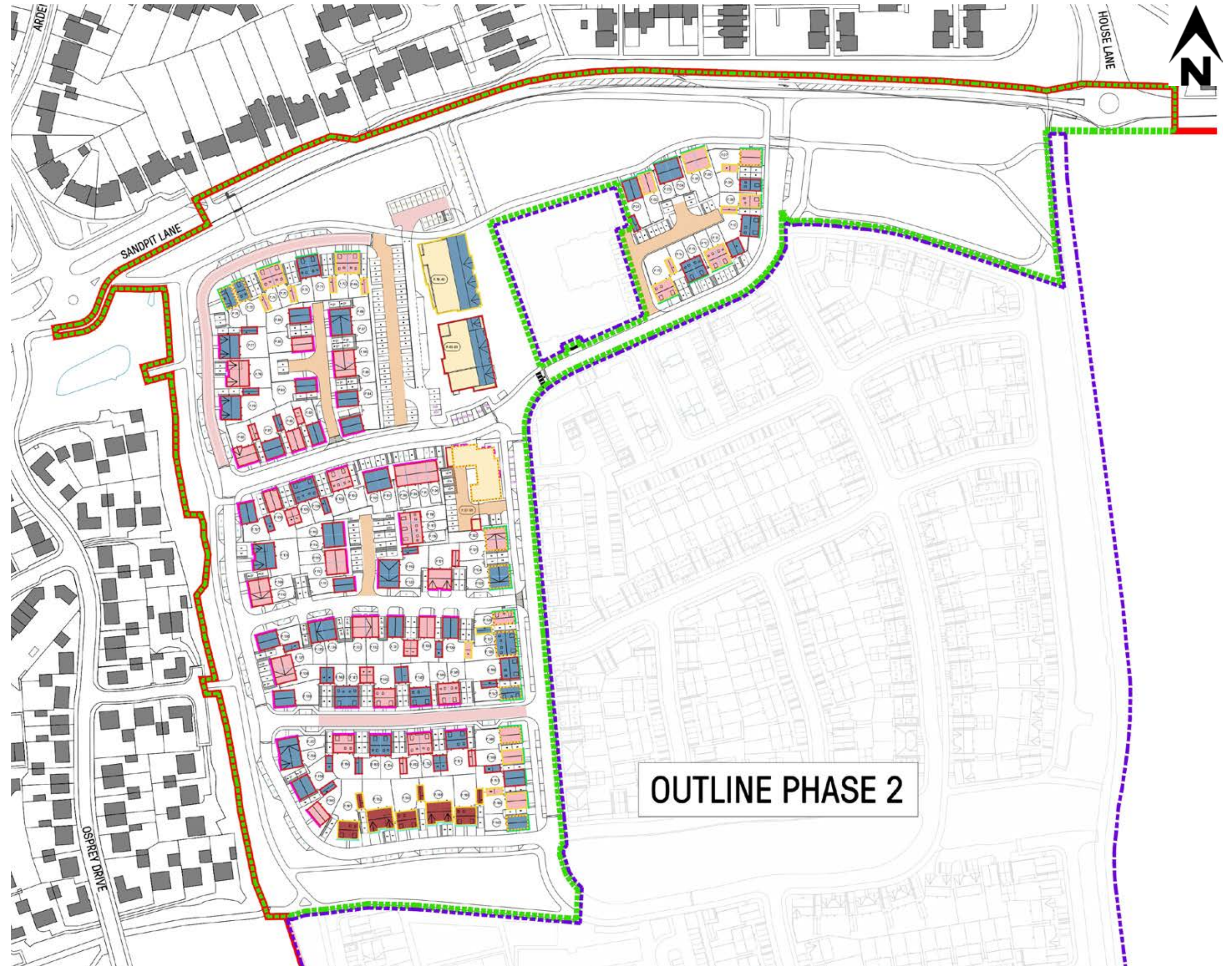


Figure 118. Materials & Appearance