

MIDDLEWICH CANALSIDE LAND AT BROOKS LANE, MIDDLEWICH

Development Framework

-

November 2018

**BARTON
WILLMORE**



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1 INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of a study undertaken by Barton Willmore on behalf of Cheshire East Council, to provide a strategy for the redevelopment of land at Brooks Lane, Middlewich (the Site). The strategy proposed has been underpinned by a detailed site and contextual assessment, alongside engagement with a range of groups, including people who own property and work on the Site, the Council and other relevant stakeholders.

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the framework is to unlock the Site's regeneration benefits, whilst recognising that there are existing businesses that may wish to remain operating on the Site.

The brief is linked to the adopted Cheshire East Council Local Plan (2017), which has identified the Site as 'Strategic Location LPS 43: Brooks Lane, Middlewich' and addresses the expectation that its development will be achieved through a masterplan-led approach.

It provides guidance to inform the preparation of development proposals for the site, setting out key matters that proposals should address in order to achieve high quality new development that will significantly enhance the area and benefit the town as a whole.

1.2 THE STUDY

The study has been underpinned by an analysis into the Site and an assessment of Middlewich and its history. At an early stage, a workshop was held with people who own property and work on the Site, to understand their views on redevelopment. Their feedback, and the feedback of other stakeholders, helped to inform the preparation of a preferred masterplan option.

This engagement-led approach has directed the production of this report, which sets out our analysis of the Site and the local area, along with our engagement with the affected businesses and local people. It provides our recommendations for the future redevelopment of the Site, both in the shorter and longer term. In the shorter-term, it envisages the delivery of c.200 units (as identified within Strategic Location LPS 43), whilst retaining a significant amount of employment uses on the Site. In the longer-term, this could see a greater proportion of the Site redeveloped over the next 15-20 years or more, outside of the period covered by the Local Plan, providing further enhancements and benefitting the wider Middlewich area.

1.2.1. Document Structure

The document is structured as follows:

- » **Part 1:** Introduces the study and sets the most relevant planning context
- » **Part 2:** Sets out our baseline analysis of Middlewich and the Site.
- » **Part 3:** Presents our initial thoughts and initial masterplan options for the Site's redevelopment.
- » **Part 3:** Provides a review of the engagement process undertaken.
- » **Part 4:** Details the masterplan framework and illustrative proposals to help inform future design proposals.



Figure.1 Illustrative Masterplan

1.3 VISION

The Site provides an exciting opportunity to deliver an attractive mixed-use development comprising new homes, leisure and community facilities and a potential new train station,

The transformation from industrial uses to a new mixed-use community could regenerate the canal-side, enhance the vitality of the Town Centre and provide significant benefits to the Middlesbrough community.

Retained Bowling Green

Trent & Mersey Canal

Canal Boat Marina





Figure.2 Illustrative Birdseye Model

1.4 LOCAL PLANING POLICY CONTEXT

This section provides a summary of the local policies and guidance most relevant to the Sites redevelopment.

1.4.1. Cheshire East Local Plan (2017)

The adopted Local Plan Strategy (2017) identifies the Site as 'Strategic Location LPS 43: Brooks Lane, Middlewich', with the potential to include:

- » The delivery of around 200 homes;
- » The delivery of leisure and community facilities to the north of the Site;
- » The provision of appropriate retail facilities to meet local needs;
- » The incorporation of Green Infrastructure (Green Corridor and Open Space including an equipped children's play space);
- » The improvement of existing and provision of new pedestrian and cycle links to connect development to existing employment, residential areas, shops, schools health facilities, recreation and leisure opportunities and the town centre;
- » The potential provision of a Marina at the Trent and Mersey Canal; and
- » The provision of land for a new railway station including lineside infrastructure, access and forecourt parking.

1.4.2. Draft Middlewich Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) (2018)

The proposed redevelopment of the Site is promoted through the draft Middlewich NDP, which will become part of the statutory development plan, once adopted and is capable of being a material consideration ahead of that.

The Site is identified within the Middlewich NDP as 'Draft Policy OS2: Canal-side Development and Marina Opportunity Site', with the potential to include:

- » Canal marina of a size commensurate with the Town;
- » Mixed use development with an active and vibrant core to the waterway while preserving the intrinsic character of the canal-side;
- » High quality design incorporating historic features, public art and storyboards which celebrate the importance of the waterways;
- » Buildings to be orientated to optimise views of the water;
- » Provision of an integrated towpath and appropriate public access to the canal basin;
- » Enhance the ecology and biodiversity of the waterway and canal corridor; and
- » Provision of boaters' facilities.

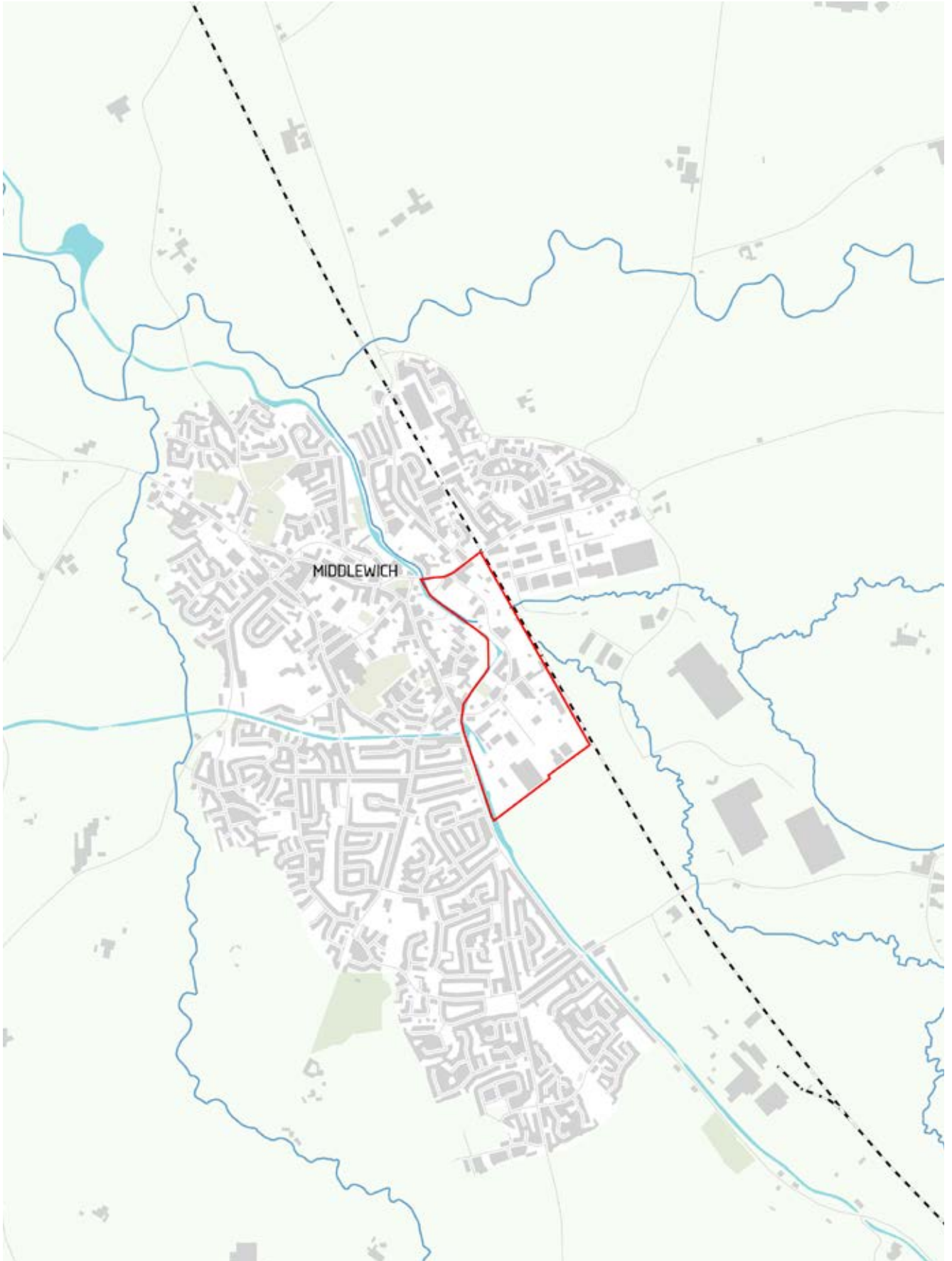


Figure.3 Strategic Location LPS 43: Brooks Lane, Middlewich (the Site)

2 ASSESSING THE CONTEXT

In developing a strategy for the Site, it is important to understand the unique nature of Middlewich and the Site. Accordingly, this chapter appraises the various contextual and site-specific elements that will influence and shape the future development of the Site.

2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Middlewich dates back to the medieval times. The Town's heritage is heavily influenced by salt production, the Industrial Revolution, and the canal network which underpinned its growth.

The maps opposite show the expanding built development across the Town and on the Site through the 19th and 20th Century. The 1898 Map is the oldest map to show development on the Site, with the Mid-Cheshire Works and the tramway being evident. Since 1898, the Town has witnessed several stages of predominately residential growth, encompassing the Site. The Present-day Map shows the Site situated between the railway and the canal, towards the edge of the settlement but also sitting close to the historic core.

2.1.1. Salt Manufacture

Production of salt has been a common thread throughout Middlewich's history. The Roman Army set up a settlement at Middlewich centred on salt production,

which included a Medieval Market that forms the historic core of today's Town Centre. By the early 20th century, there were nine industrial scale salt companies in Middlewich.

2.1.2. Canal Network

The need to export the salt deposits of Middlewich efficiently and economically was a driving force behind the construction of the canals during the 18th century. The Industrial Revolution saw the expansion of the canal network in Middlewich and today three canals converge in the Town; the Trent and Mersey Canal; the Shropshire Union Canal; and the Wardle Canal.

2.1.3. Railway

Railways were first introduced to the Middlewich area in 1867. In 1868 the line provided a passenger service and became a vital mode of transport for the Town. Train services ran from Crewe via Sandbach to Middlewich and Northwich. By 1922, nine services a day operated between Crewe and Northwich, and a

service to Manchester Oxford Road and London Euston operated on weekdays.

There was a drastic reduction in the number of train services serving Middlewich Station during World War II and the years that followed. Eventually, the Station was closed as part of the Beeching British Railways closure programme, and passenger trains ceased to use the station by early 1960. The Station buildings were subsequently demolished, and the railway line, whilst still active, is only used by freight trains today. A strategic outline business case to re-open the line to passenger traffic was formally requested by government earlier this year. This is being developed by the Council in-conjunction with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership.





Figure.4 1899



Figure.5 1954



Figure.6 1969



Figure.7 Present-day



2.2 MIDDLEWICH STRUCTURE

Throughout this section, we provide an overview of the structure and character of present-day Middlewich before identifying the changing context of the Town and analysing the Site.

2.2.1. Middlewich Today

The population of Middlewich was estimated at 14,200 people in mid-2016.

Salt still plays an important role in the economy, with British Salt, the UK's leading manufacturer of pure dried vacuum salt products, being located within the Town.

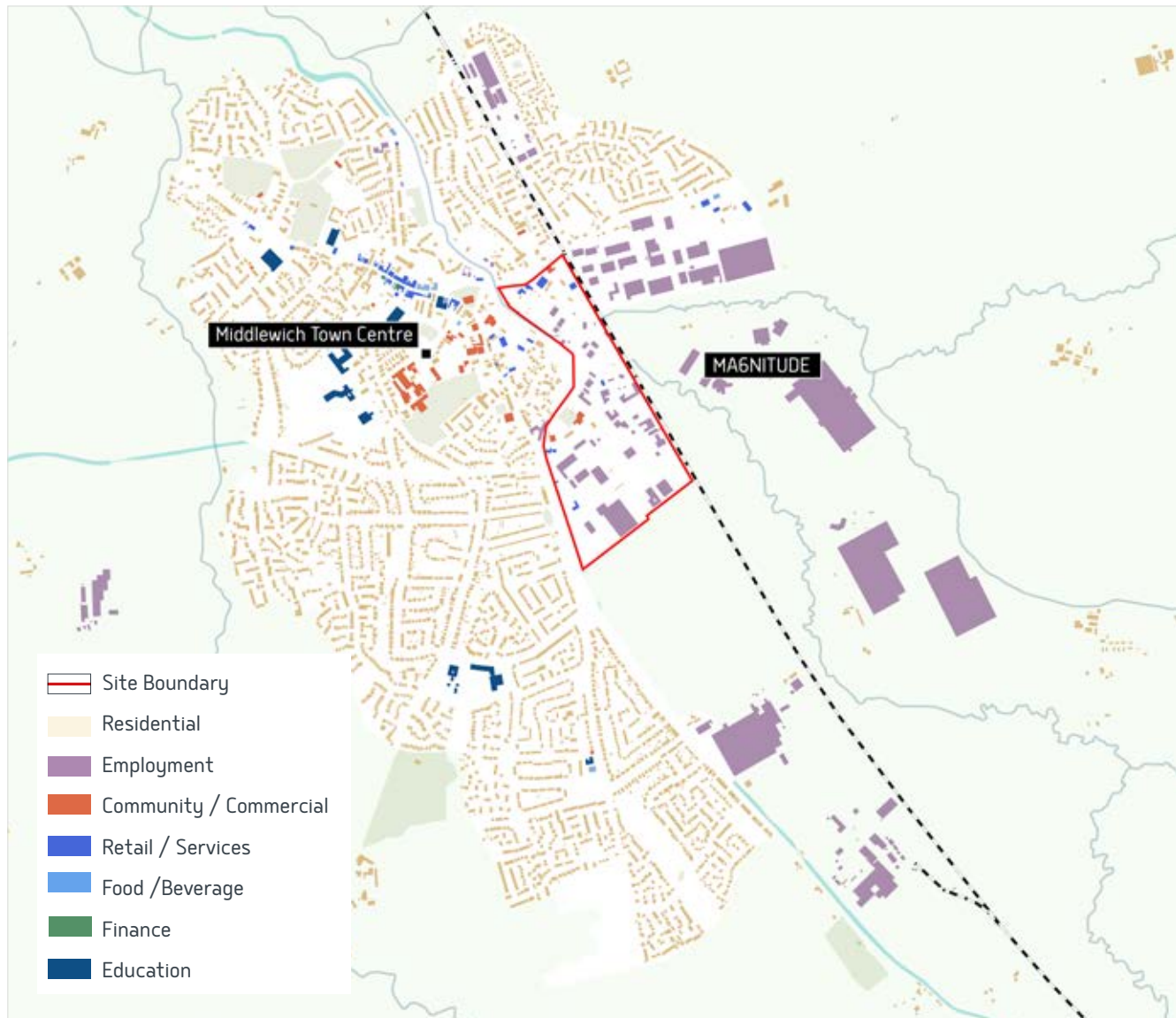
While the commercial use of the canals has reduced, they remain an important cultural asset and the leisure industry is a continued source of activity and investment, as is a renewed interest in the heritage value of the canal system.

The continued importance of the canals is signified by the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival. This annual event attracts over 400 canal boats and some 30,000 people to Middlewich to celebrate the culture and history of the UK's canal network.





Figure.8 Land Use Plan



2.2.2. Land Use

The Town comprises a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and community uses.

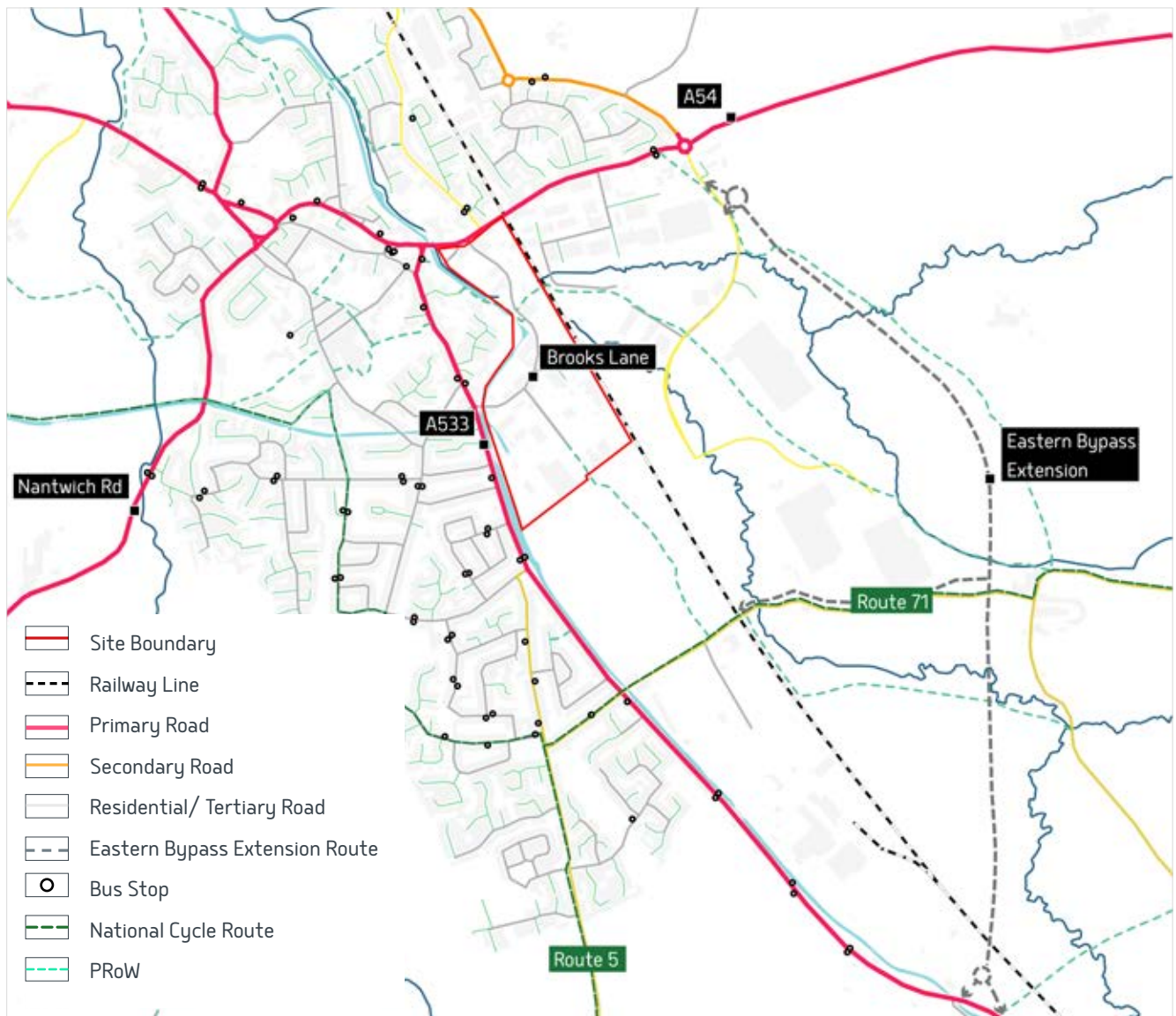
The Town Centre is located to the north of the Site and comprises the length of Wheelock Street, the Hightown and, to a lesser extent, Lewin Street. There are some smaller branch roads including Leadsmithy Street and Lady Anne Court. The Town Centre has several local shops, a public house, cafes and restaurants. There are also four supermarkets; Jacks, Lidl, a Tesco Express, and Morrisons.

The Town's industrial and employment uses have historically been focused around the Trent and Mersey Canal and the railway line. The Site, which is contained to the west and east by the canal and railway respectively, is predominately industrial in nature but does also include residential and community uses.

To the east of the Site, beyond the railway line, lies a significant business park known as Midpoint 18 (MAGNITUDE) which is planned for expansion within the Local Plan period.

The proposed redevelopment of the Site has the potential to deliver new homes and bring significant regeneration benefits to the wider settlement and Town Centre.

Figure.9 Connectivity Plan



2.2.3. Connectivity

The plan above shows the street hierarchy of Middlewich. The A533, A530, and the A54 meet at the Town Centre and the latter provides connectivity to Junction 18 of the M6, which is within 3.5km of the Site. Secondary roads provide through routes that link with the primary roads, beyond which is a network of tertiary roads and cul-de-sacs.

Permeability across the settlement is dictated by the canal network and the railway line. Reasonable connections are provided across the Shropshire Union

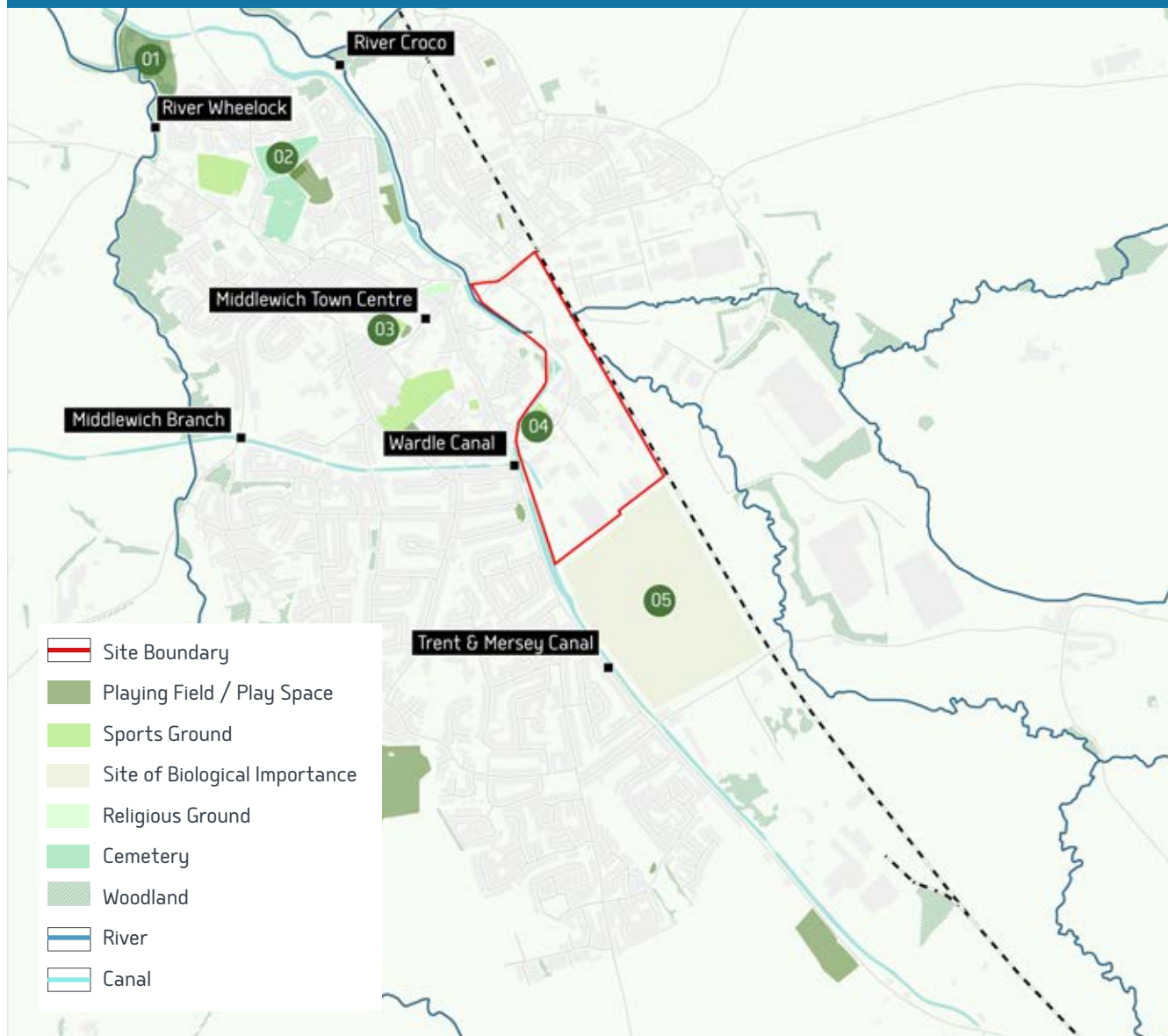
Canal, with four vehicle bridges. However, connections across the Trent and Mersey Canal are limited to only two vehicle crossing points, including the Brooks Lane Bridge which connects the Site with the A533. Vehicle movement across the railway is even more limited with only one vehicle crossing point. The combined effect is traffic congestion within the Town Centre and particularly at the junction of the A54 and A533.

The construction of the Middlewich Bypass, linking the A54 with the A533 to the south of the Town, will help alleviate congestion and the redevelopment of the

Site will help reduce the number of heavy vehicles crossing the railway into the Town Centre.

Middlewich is well served by national cycle routes and PRowS. This includes the Middlewich Waterside Trail which is a c.5km route connecting Town Wharf with the Shropshire Union Canal.

Figure.10 Landscape Plan



2.2.4. Landscape

Middlewich is a generally flat and open landscape at the confluence of three rivers, the Dane, the Croco and the Wheelock.

Industry and salt production have impaired the Town's wider landscape quality, which offers less aesthetic value and less mature vegetation cover than elsewhere across Cheshire.

Whilst Middlewich's rural hinterland is a predominately agricultural landscape, there is marked influence of industry

on the settlements urban fringe. The Site lies within a corridor of industrial infrastructure that runs between the A533, the Trent and Mersey Canal and the railway. Due to the relatively low landform and low vegetation cover, this industrial corridor is prominent from many views.

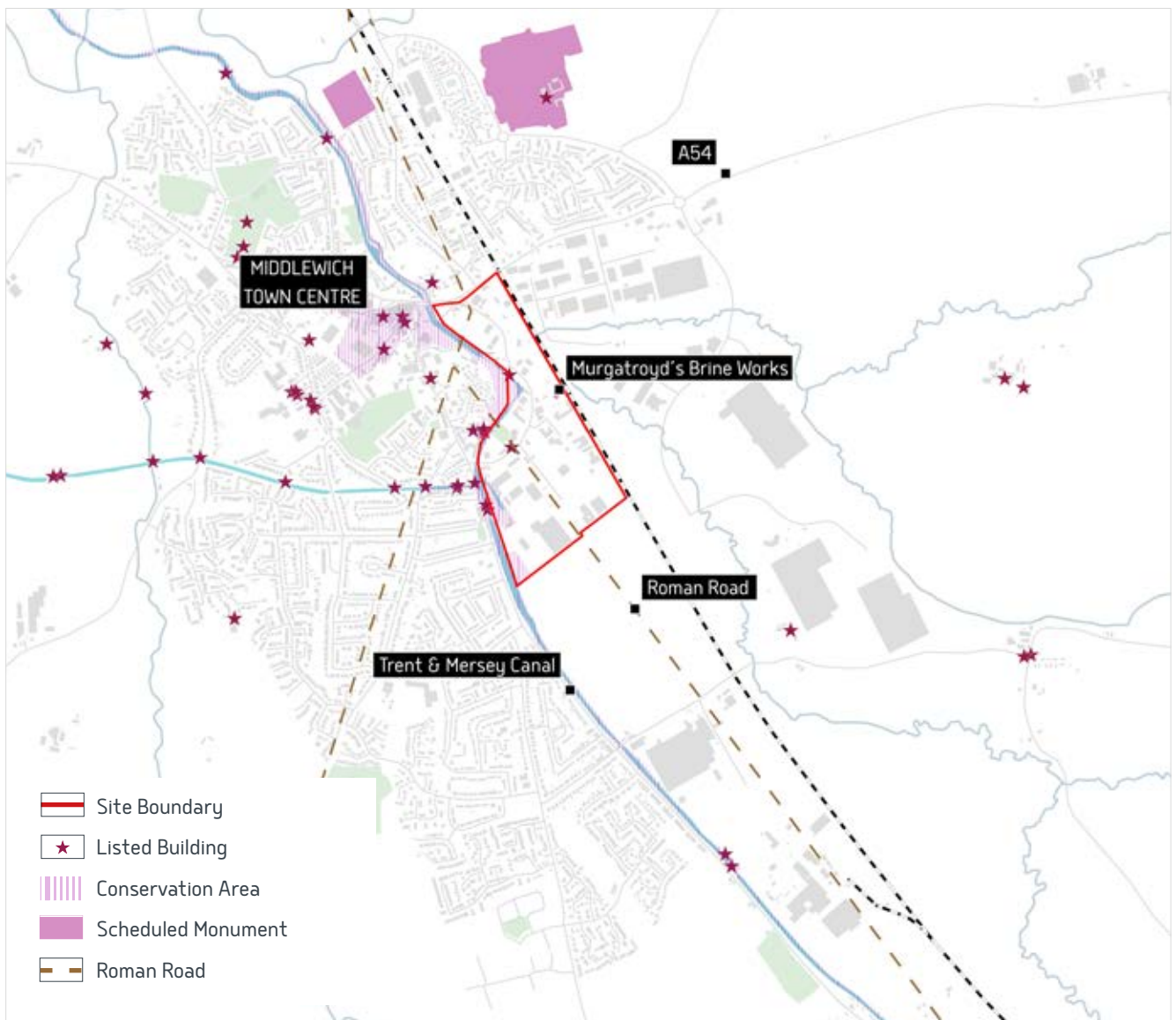
The proposed redevelopment of the Site has the potential to provide new landscape features, whilst also forging green connections with nearby areas of landscape quality. This includes the Cledford Lane Lime Beds Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which is located directly

to the south of the Site and contains lagoons and a diverse flora.

Notable recreation and landscape assets shown on the plan above, include but are not limited to:

1. Croxton Park;
2. Middlewich Cemetery;
3. Fountain Fields Park;
4. Bowling Green at Middlewich Church; and
5. Cledford Lane Lime Beds.

Figure.11 Heritage Plan



2.2.5. Heritage

Middlewich has 40 Listed Buildings. There are also 3 Scheduled Monuments, including the Murgatroyd's Brine Works which is located within the Site. There are 2 conservation areas in Middlewich; Middlewich Conservation Area which is focused around the historic core of the Town Centre, and The Trent and Mersey Canal and Wardle and Shropshire Union Canal Conservation Area which lies along the Site's eastern most boundary. There is also a network of historic Roman roads that potentially remain below the ground and run through Middlewich and the Site.

2.3 CHANGING CONTEXT

Cheshire East Council has an ambitious investment strategy for Middleswich, aimed at boosting economic growth and enhancing the vibrancy and attractiveness of the Town. The overarching objectives include the provision of new housing, enhancements to the Town Centre, new employment opportunities, enhancement of the built and natural environment, and improved infrastructure; road and rail.

To help Middleswich deliver these objectives, the Council has affirmed its commitment to securing several development proposals through the Local Plan. This includes new employment development at Midpoint 18 (MAGNITUDE), new housing at Glebe Farm and the completion of the Middleswich Eastern Bypass. In addition, the Brooks Lane Site has been identified to deliver attractive mixed-use development comprising new homes, leisure and community facilities and a potential new train station. This offers an exciting opportunity to regenerate the canal-side, whilst also enhancing the vitality of the Town Centre.

2.3.1. Middleswich Eastern Bypass

Cheshire East Council has identified the preferred route of the Middleswich Bypass, running to the east of Middleswich, between Pochin Way and the Salt-Cellar Roundabout and Booth Lane (A533). The Bypass, which will reduce traffic congestion in the Town Centre, and support the development potential of the Site, whilst also helping the wider settlement realise its full employment and housing growth potential.

2.3.2. Glebe Farm

Glebe Farm is a large green field to the south of Middleswich covering approximately 17ha. It is expected that around 525 new homes will be delivered on this site, along with provision of pedestrian and cycle connections and enhanced green infrastructure. The site will provide contributions to the delivery of the Bypass and towards local facilities.

2.3.3. Midpoint 18

Midpoint 18 (MAGNITUDE) is a large strategic employment site with a total area of some 221.7ha. It comprises an area of existing employment development of 100.7ha and an undeveloped area of 121ha. It is expected that up to 70ha of the undeveloped area will come forward within the plan period, with the remainder in reserve for employment purposes when required. The site is strategically important due to its ability to deliver significant employment growth, whilst potentially helping to unlock the future redevelopment of the Brooks Lane site.

2.3.4. Brooks Lane, (the Site)

The Brooks Lane Site comprises an area of around 23ha of land that is largely used for employment purposes and includes under-used land. The Site is c.0.5km to the south of the Town Centre and as such it provides an exciting opportunity to regenerate the canal-side whilst also enhancing the vitality of the Town Centre.

The Site is well related to the existing urban area of Middleswich, with excellent access to services and facilities in the Town Centre and includes the Trent and Mersey Canal and associated conservation area within its boundary. The Site's central position makes it an ideal location for a new train station and a modern mixed-use community.

A detail assessment of the Site is provided throughout the following section.

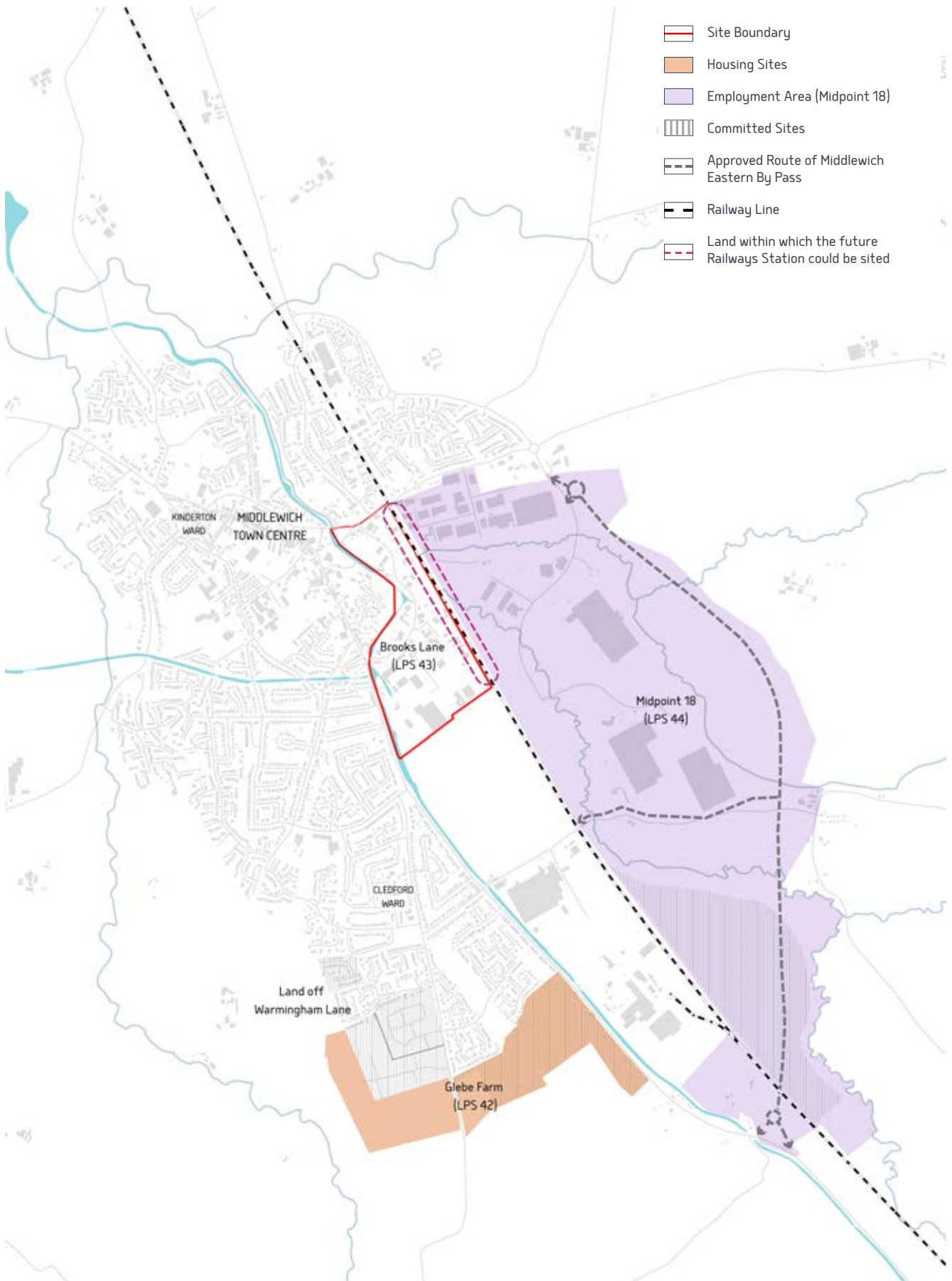


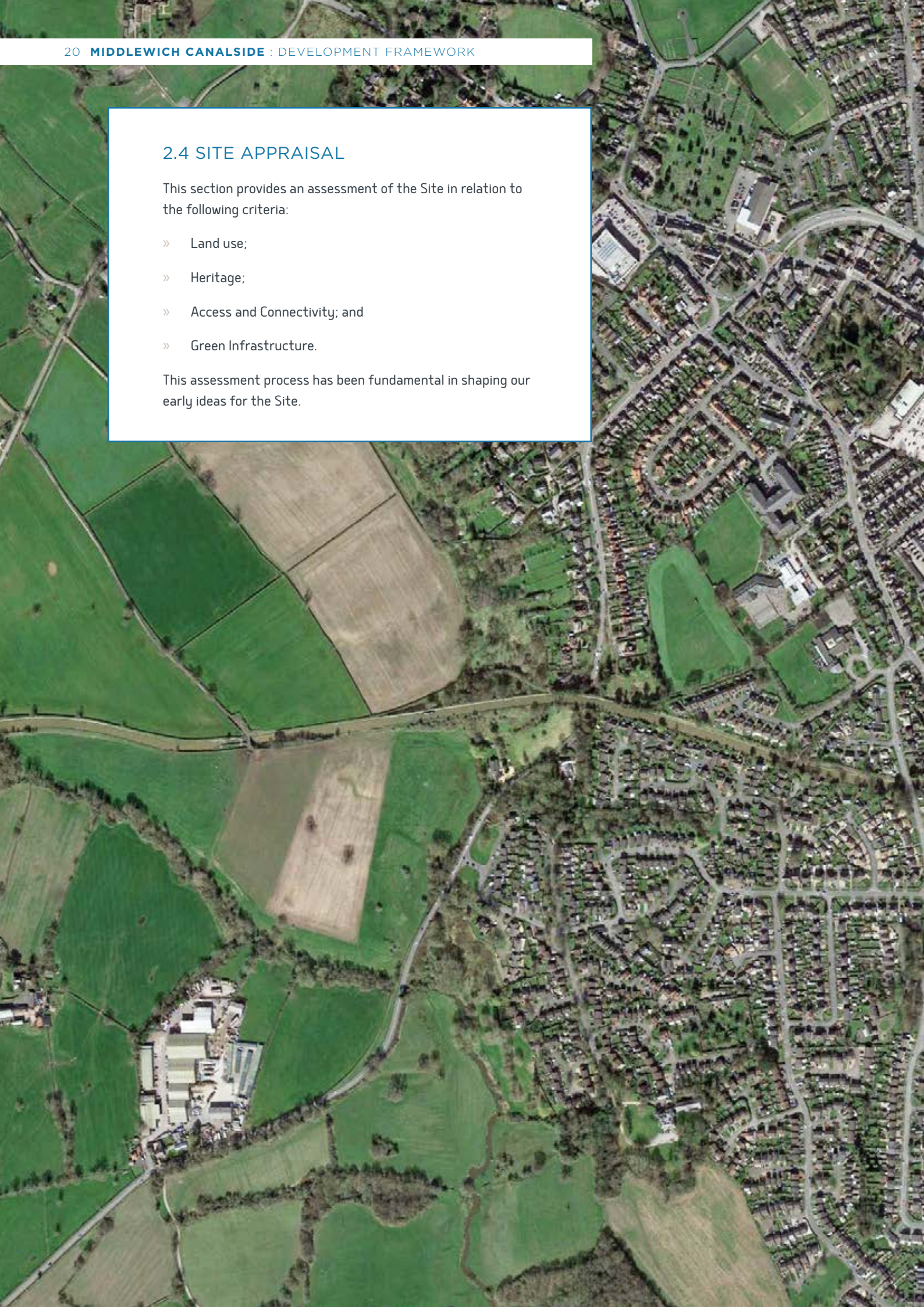
Figure.12 Changing Context Plan

2.4 SITE APPRAISAL

This section provides an assessment of the Site in relation to the following criteria:

- » Land use;
- » Heritage;
- » Access and Connectivity; and
- » Green Infrastructure.

This assessment process has been fundamental in shaping our early ideas for the Site.





A54 (Holmes Chapel Rd)

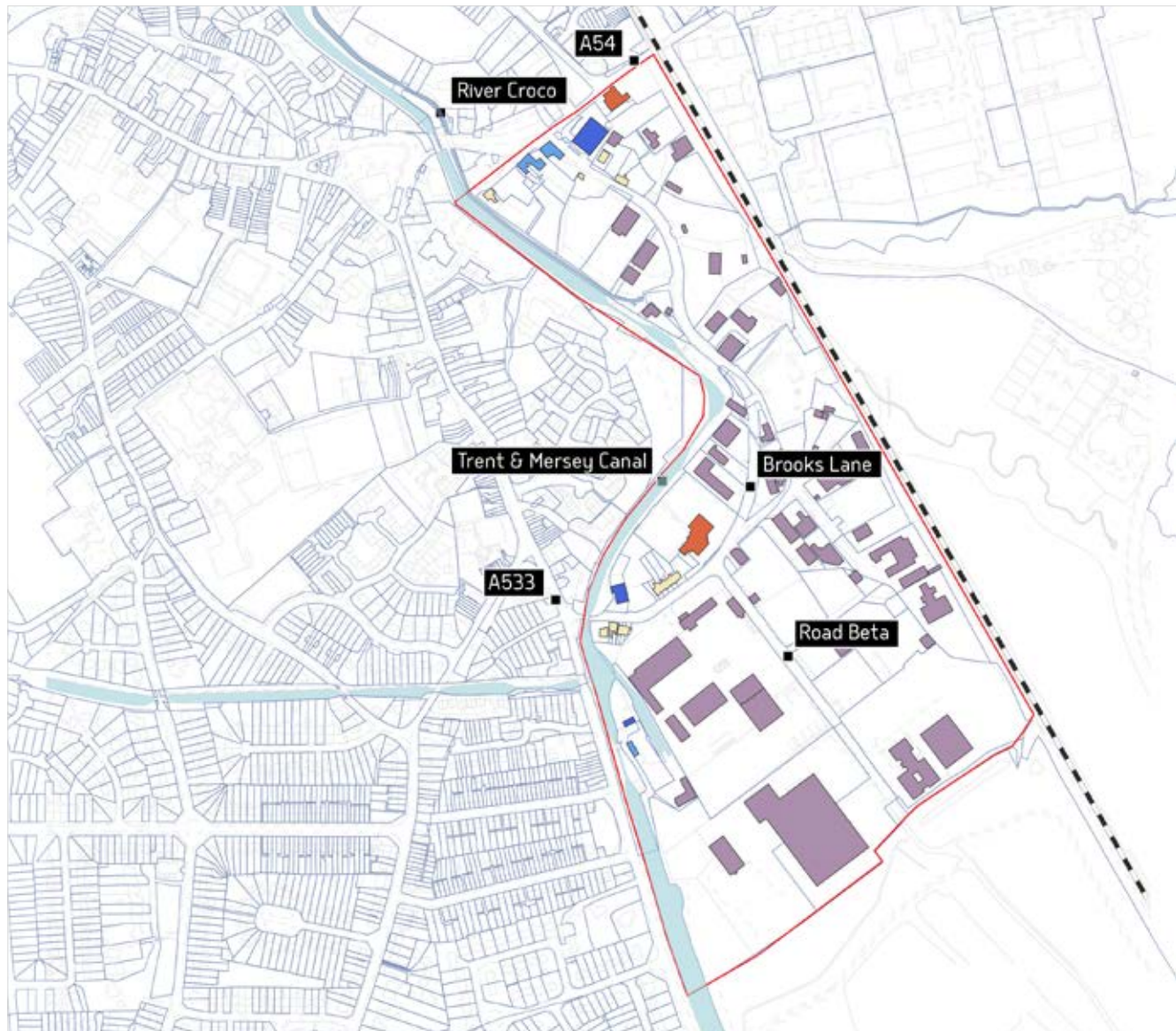
Brooks Lane

Road Beta

A533 (Booth Lane)

Trent & Mersey Canal

Figure.14 Land Use Site Analysis Plan



2.4.1. Land Use

The plan above shows the boundaries of over 60 businesses on the Site. These range from haulage and chemical manufacturing to smaller scale local employers.

Several residential properties are located within the Site. This includes four semi-detached properties and eight terrace properties, located adjacent to the Canal in the south western area of the Site, three houses located towards the northern part of the Site and two properties accessed via Seabank Road.

Existing commercial uses located within the Site include the Kings Lock Pub, the Boars Head Pub, the Kinderton House Hotel and Unique Fitness Gym.

Community/commercial uses include Middlewich Community Church, which is located at the centre of the Site, Middlewich Masonic Hall at the northern most edge of the Site, and the Rainbow Day Nursery.








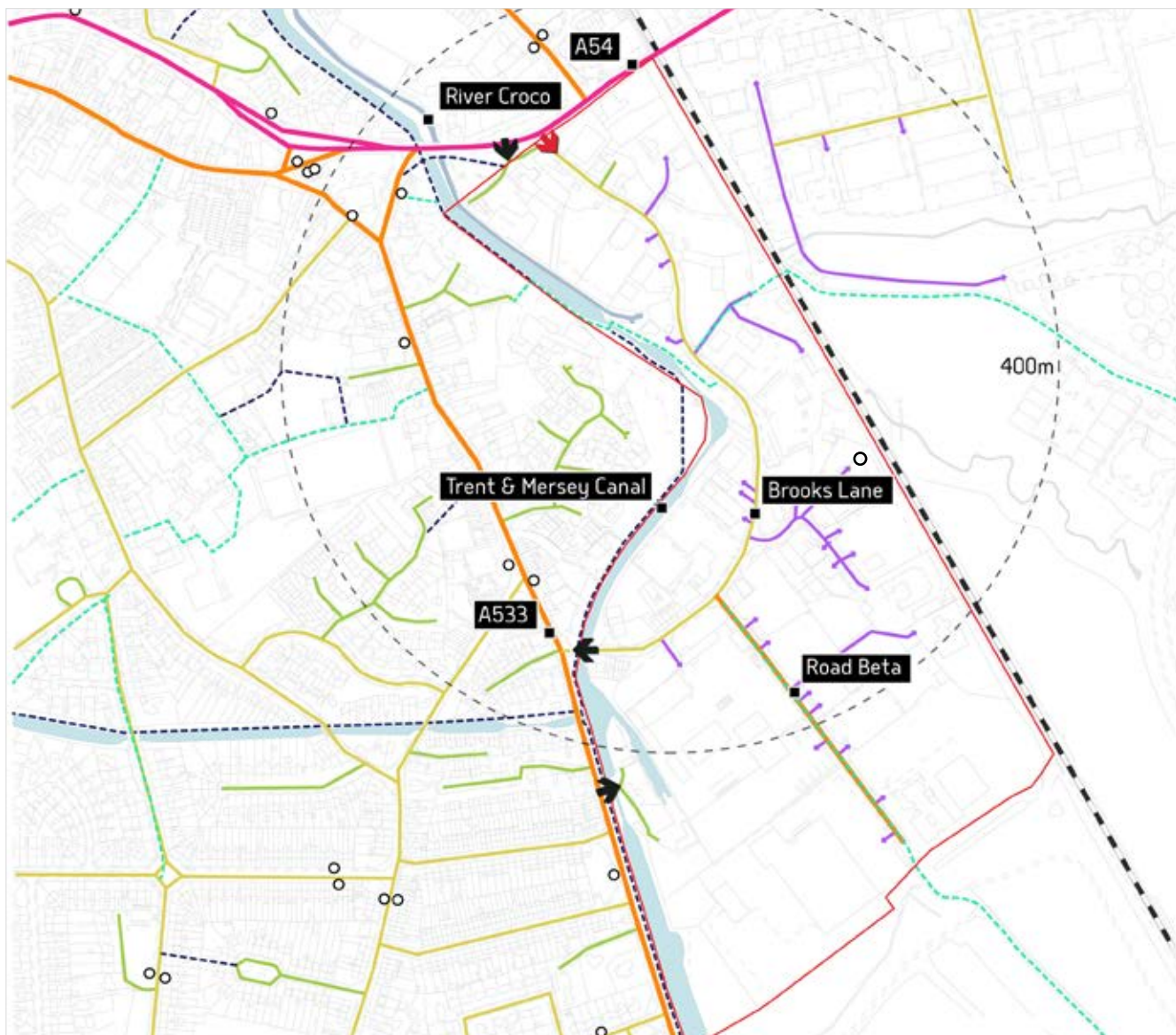
-  Site Boundary
-  Land Ownership Boundary
-  Residential
-  Employment / Industrial
-  Community/ Commercial
-  Commercial
-  Food /Beverage



Figure.16 Access and Connectivity Plan



2.4.2. Access & Connectivity

Vehicle access into the Site is via the Brooks Lane and Kinderton Street junction and via the Brooks Lane Bridge. The latter provides a one-way crossing point over the Trent and Mersey Canal.

A third point of vehicle access enters the Site adjacent to the Kings Lock Inn. However, existing land uses prevent traffic moving through the Site from this location.

Brooks Lane is the primary road traversing the Site and connects with Road Beta, which runs south of Brooks

Lane and provides a connection to the southern part of the Site.

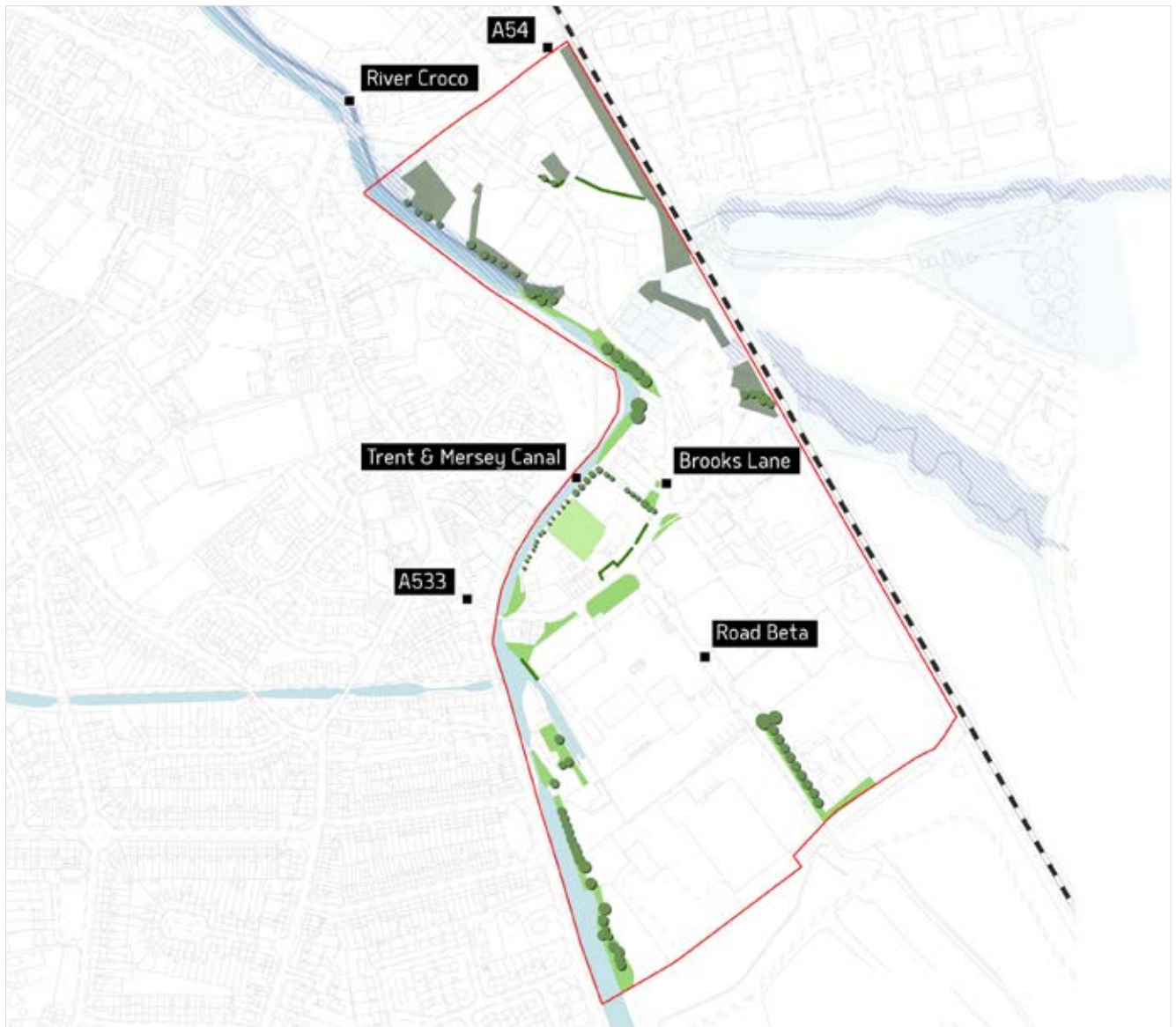
The existing railway line runs along the eastern edge of the Site.

The closest bus stops to the Site are located along the A533 with services that run to Northwich, Congleton and Winsford.

The Site is within a 400m walking distance of the Town Centre and an existing PRoW connects the Site to the Town Centre and runs east beyond the railway line. A second PRoW runs south from the Site towards the Cledford Lane Lime Beds SBI.

- Site Boundary
- Primary Vehicle Access
- Secondary Vehicle Access
- Railway Line
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road
- Residential Cul-de-Sac
- Employment Access Road
- PRoW
- Pedestrian / Cycle Path
- Bus Stop

Figure.18 Landscape Analysis Plan



2.4.3. Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Trent and Mersey Canal runs along the western edge of the Site. The canal splits and forms Carillon Dock, a mooring point and dry dock.

The River Croco runs within the Site, following the Trent and Mersey Canal, before running in a culvert towards the railway. This watercourse includes a flood risk area within the Site, however, restoring the waters natural flow may alleviate this issue.

Green infrastructure across the Site is limited due to its industrial nature. Features include a bowling green, semi-natural green space, existing mature trees running adjacent to the Canal in the south-western edge of the Site, areas of green space and scrub planting along Brooks Lane, scrubland along the edge of the railway and an area of scrubland located adjacent to the culverted sections of the River Croco. The Site also includes the occasional mature tree and hedgerow.

As documented, the Cledford Lane Lime Beds SBI sit adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site.











-  Site Boundary
-  Bowling Green
-  Informal Green Space
-  Shrubland
-  Hedgerows
-  Trees
-  River
-  Canal
-  Flood Zone 3
-  Flood Zone 2

Figure.20 Heritage Analysis Plan



2.4.4. Heritage

Brunner Mond Middlewich War Memorial is a Grade II listed WWI memorial, erected in 1921 and is located along Brooks Lane.

There are several Grade II listed structures that form part of the Trent and Mersey Canal including the King’s Lock, several listed mileposts and a bridge over the Trent and Mersey Canal.

Murgatroyd’s Brine Pump is a Scheduled Monument and is the last remaining part of Murgatroyd’s Salt Works, located within the central area of the Site. It is not currently accessible to visitors and can only be accessed by private arrangement.

A historical Roman road is believed to run through the Site adjacent to Road Beta.

Notable heritage features on Site, include but are not limited to:

- 1. Brunner Mond Middlewich War Memorial; and
- 2. Murgatroyd’s Brine Pump.

Site Boundary

Conservation Area

Listed Building

Scheduled Monument

Roman Road Location



Murgatroyd's Brine Pump



Brunner Mond Middlewich War Memorial

Trent & Mersey Canal



3 TOWARDS A CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The assessment process summarised through the previous chapter informed the production of two initial options for the redevelopment of the Site, showing both short and longer term redevelopment options. These options formed the basis of engagement with the people who live and work on the Site.

3.5 INITIAL OPTION 1 – SHORTER-TERM CHANGE

The shorter-term option showed redevelopment focused on a relatively small number of larger plots that currently accommodate medium to large businesses.

Advantages

- » Potential to deliver c.200 new homes, to meet the Local Plan requirement.
- » Environmental enhancements and improved public access to the canal frontage.
- » Retention of canal-side businesses.
- » Potential to provide a separate access for residential and construction vehicle access.

Disadvantages

- » Market perception of a residential development located within a employment area.
- » Potential conflict between residential and business uses.
- » Conflict between employment and residential traffic.
- » Canal boat marina is not shown.
- » No community, leisure or retail facilities shown.

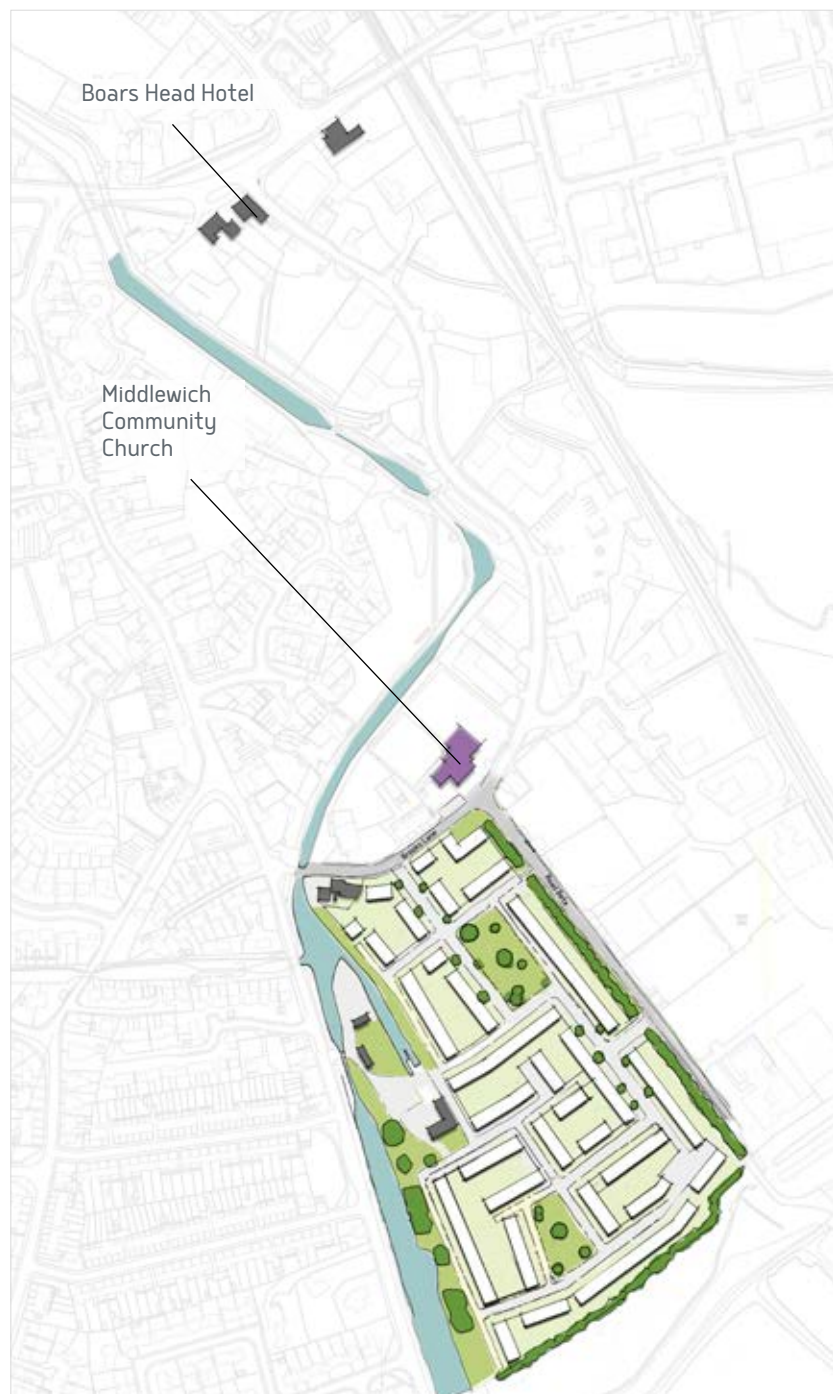


Figure.22 Initial Shorter Term Option

3.6 INITIAL OPTION 2 -LONGER-TERM CHANGE

The longer-term option showed redevelopment opportunities more extensively across the Site.

Advantages

- » Considerable regeneration benefits to the Town Centre and canal-side.
- » Potential to deliver c.450 new homes.
- » Potential for the phased delivery of development across the Site over the course of the next 15-20 years.
- » Opportunity to provide a new train station.
- » Extensive environmental enhancements.
- » Retention of canal-side businesses.
- » Potential to provide new planting along Brooks Lane and Road Beta.
- » Opportunity to provide community/ retail uses close to the Town Centre.
- » Potential to restore Murgatroyd's Brine Works.

Disadvantages

- » Potential conflict between residential uses and existing businesses.
- » Conflict between employment and residential traffic.
- » Canal boat marina is not shown



Figure.24 Initial Longer Term Option

4 ENGAGEMENT-LED APPROACH

This chapter provides a summary of the engagement process, including a summary of discussions with the people who own property, live and work on the Site, the Local Planning Authority, relevant stakeholders and the local community.

4.7 INVOLVEMENT

4.7.1. Project Team Meetings

Throughout the course of the project, several project team meetings have been held between representatives from the Council and from Barton Willmore. Whilst these meetings have focused on the management of the project, discussions have also provided clarity on policy and technical matters.

4.7.2. 1st Stage Landowner and Business Workshop

On 11th April 2018, a workshop was held at the Middlewich Community Church from 10am until 3pm. Letters were sent from the Council, inviting people to attend one of three workshop sessions.

The purpose of this event was to seek views on the proposed redevelopment of the Site.

The event included several exhibition banners and large plans which introduced issues and opportunities before presenting the masterplan options presented in the previous chapter.

The workshop was well attended and of the comments received, 13.3% favoured the short-term proposal only, 13.3% favoured the longer-term proposal only, 60% preferred both options and 13.3% did not support the redevelopment plans.

Key points raised included:

- » One landowner supported both options and has already submitted an outline planning application for the redevelopment of their land.
- » Concerns raised over the viability of the proposals.
- » The importance of providing alternative employment locations near to the Site. Several respondents stated a preference to be near Midpoint 18 (MA6NITUDE).
- » Canal-related employment uses would prefer to stay operating on the Site.
- » Concerns were raised over the potential conflict between employment and residential development.
- » The future role of Middlewich Community Church was noted.
- » One landowner/ business stated they would find it challenging to relocate and made a number of suggestions, including that sufficient distance should be retained between their site and any new residential development and new railway station, and that the number of new homes on the site should be limited to 200 with safeguards in place to protect businesses and residential amenity.



4.7.3. Town and Parish Council Meeting

On 11th April 2018, following the Workshop, a meeting was held with representatives of Middlewich Town Council to discuss the masterplan options. The main themes of the comments are summarised as follows:

- » The importance of the Site's employment and economic role was reaffirmed.
- » Design quality was discussed, and Members stressed the need for a high-quality design proposal that meets the requirements of the Cheshire East Design Guide.
- » Members stressed the importance of providing a marina of a size commensurate with the size of the Town.

4.7.4. Council Technical Meeting

A technical meeting with Council Officers was held on 5th June 2018 to discuss the masterplan options and the outcomes of the 1st Stage Workshop. The main themes of the comments are summarised as follows:

- » Highways Officers noted that vehicle access to serve the Site is potentially achievable via the Brooks Lane Canal Bridge and the Brooks Lane/ Kinderton Street junction, however, highway improvements at these points would be necessary. It was acknowledged that further

works would be required to develop appropriate access arrangements and improvements.

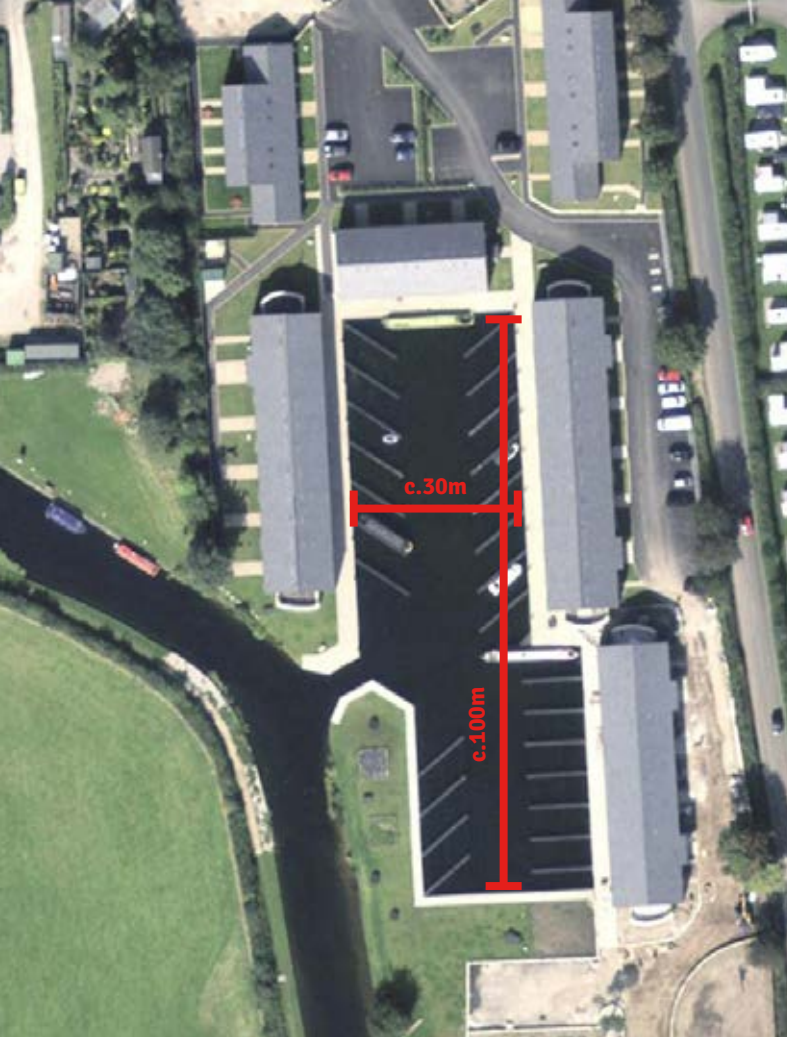
- » The value of the canal boat marina was acknowledged, and Officers confirmed this should be included within the masterplan.
- » Officers confirmed that the Site has the potential to accommodate variation in scale, ranging between 2 and 3 story, and densities could be higher than a standard house-builder approach of 30dph.

4.7.5. Canal and Rivers Trust Meeting

Given the importance placed on the delivery of a canal boat marina by the Council and Town Council, a one-on-one meeting was held with the Canal and River Trust. Representatives from the Trust provided advice on the most likely suitable location for the marina.

Following this meeting an investigation into canal boat marinas was undertaken, including an analysis of the size required to accommodate up to 50 boats. Precedent images of UK based marinas are shown opposite.

An analysis of UK based canal boat marinas was undertaken to understand the preferred design and size requirements. Precedent images and dimensions are shown opposite.



c.50 Berth Leisure Marina in Carnforth, Lancaster



c.60 Berth Rural Marina, near Northampton



c.14 Berth Residential Marina in Edinburgh



c.50 Berth Urban Marina, Worcester

4.7.6. 2nd Stage Landowner and Business Workshop

Following on from the 1st Stage Workshop and the individual meetings, an Illustrative masterplan was developed for the entire Site, identifying projects for regeneration (both in the shorter and longer term). This masterplan and the supported design and assessment process was presented at a further workshop on Thursday 23rd August 2018.

The Council publicised the event by sending over 150 letters focussed on landowners and those living/working on the Site.

The consultation was facilitated by members of Barton Willmore's consultant team and Council Officers. In total six staff were on hand to listen to people's views and assist in explaining the illustrative masterplan.

The main themes raised can be summarised as:

- » Support for the principle and identified location of the train station;
- » Concern over infrastructure provision on the Site;
- » Concern over the co-location of housing and employment / commercial uses. Particularly the impact of Heavy Good Vehicles running through the Site and also staying overnight;
- » Concern over residual highway impacts on the Site, both in terms of highway access and capacity;
- » The acknowledgment that there will be businesses that wish to remain on the Site, where the cost of moving is prohibitive;
- » Other businesses on the Site expressed an interest in moving from the Site, in the right circumstances and with additional support;
- » The marina was supported and should be a priority to support activity into the Town;
- » Some participants expressed concern over the size and location of the Marina in terms of operation point of view but also its size in viability terms;
- » A view was expressed that the whole Site should be redeveloped for housing;
- » Concern from existing commercial sites that restrictions would be placed upon their existing operations;
- » Concern over the proposed access arrangements for Road Beta and whether access to residential uses should also be identified on the masterplan, rather than construction traffic / emergency access;
- » Support for the retained employment area. The industrial buffer was also welcomed but buffer planting should not include trees or shrubbery;
- » Concern over how the draft framework should be taken forward and the future status afforded to it; and
- » Acknowledgment that some of the processes attached to existing operations of canal workings may not be conducive to a residential environment.

4.7.7. Key Changes

Following the two workshops and technical meetings, a number of key changes and design developments have been included in the final masterplan presented in Chapter 6:

- » Provision of a marina (initial 50 berths but reduced to 20 berths)
- » The location of a potential railway station was revised with additional car parking identified to the east of the railway line;
- » A visitor information centre was identified alongside support for the restoration of the Muratroyd Brine Pump;
- » The area of retained employment land was expanded in the illustrative masterplan;
- » Highway improvements were identified as being required at the Brooks Lane Bridge and the Junction of Brooks Lane and Kinderton Street;
- » Middlewich Community Church was proposed as being retained;
- » The illustrative masterplan was updated to reflect the requirements of the Cheshire East Design Guide Supplementary Planning document;
- » Additional buffer planning was included along Road Beta and Brooks Lane to support the separation of residential and employment uses.



Figure.26 Illustrative Masterplan Presented at the 2nd Workshop

5 EVALUATION

This chapter takes account of the assessment and involvement stages set out previously to provide a concise summary of the Site's constraints and opportunities.

5.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

5.1.1. Considerations

- » Multiple landownership's on the Site.
- » The Books Lane and Kinderton Street (A54) junction provides the primary means of vehicle access to the Site and will require improvements to support redevelopment.
- » The Brooks Lane Canal Bridge provides a one-way vehicle route from the Site to Booth Lane (A533). Improvements and the potential signalisation of the Bridge junction need to be explored to support the redevelopment.
- » Existing residential properties on the Site.
- » Enabling of businesses which wish to remain operating on the Site.
- » The railway line running along the Site's eastern boundary and its associated no-development easement.
- » Existing public rights of way (PRoW).
- » Existing landscape features.
- » Existing culverted watercourse and associated Flood Zone 2.
- » Potential land contamination.
- » Site levels adjacent to the Canal.

5.1.2. Opportunities

- » The restoration of the Grade II listed scheduled monument (Murgatroyd's Brine Pump) and the provision of a visitor information centre.
- » Provision of new homes across the short-term phase, subject to securing an acceptable relationship between employment and residential uses.
- » Potential to deliver longer-term, more extensive, redevelopment proposals, capable of delivering more new homes and considerable canal-side enhancements.
- » Potential provision of a canal boat marina.
- » Potential new railway station and associated line-side infrastructure.
- » Potential to provide new pedestrian/ cycle routes through the Site, including new canal-side footpaths.
- » Opportunity to restore the culverted watercourse running through the Site and potential to remove any flood risk from the Site.
- » Potential to intensify the community use of Middlewich Community Church or provide for residential use.
- » Retention of the existing Bowling Green
- » Enhancements to the existing pedestrian subway connecting the Site with Midpoint 18.

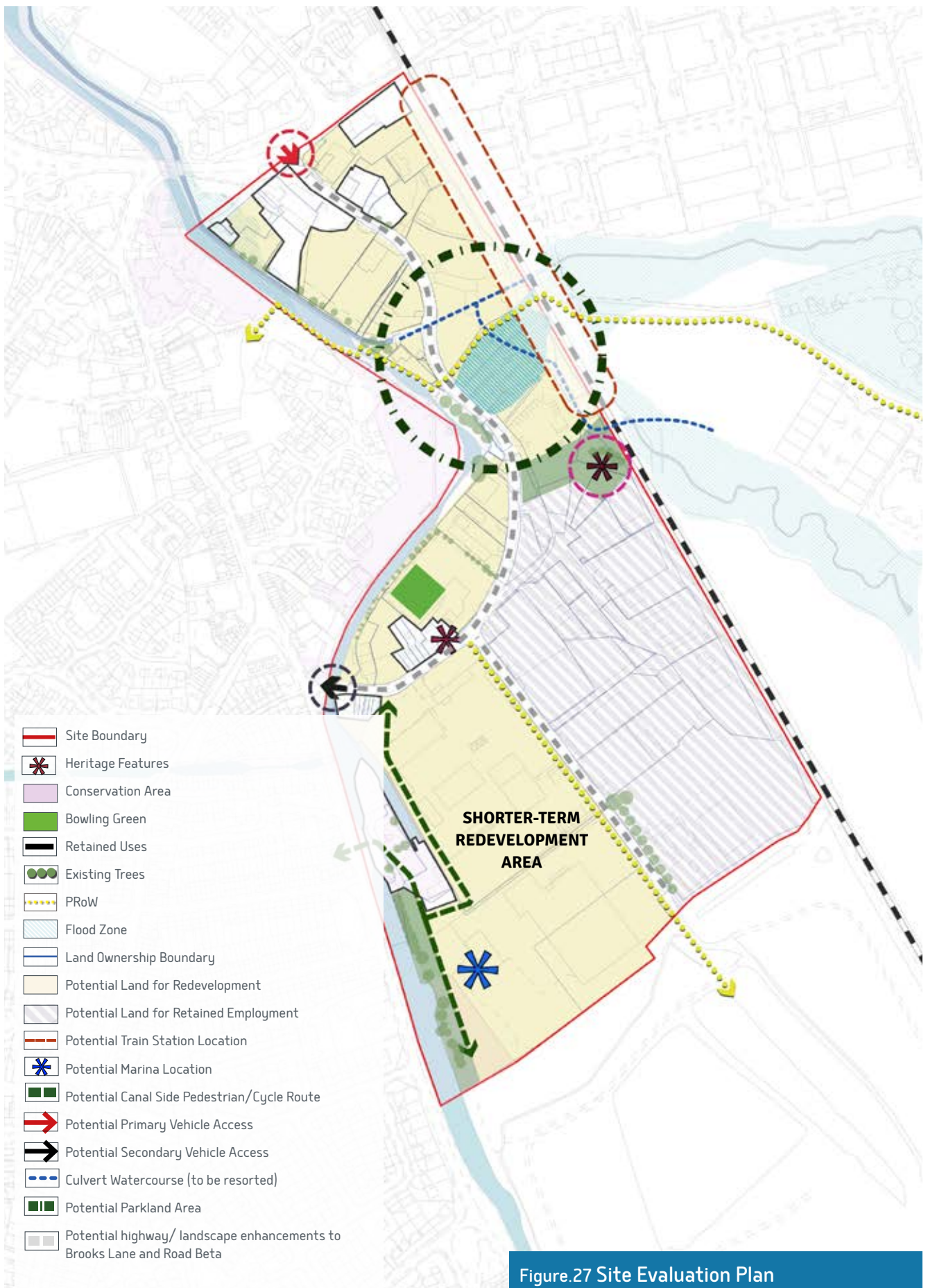


Figure.27 Site Evaluation Plan

6 DESIGN

This Chapter details the Masterplan Framework and illustrative proposals to help inform future design proposals.

6.1 MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

The Masterplan Framework, shown opposite, represents an amalgamation of the engagement process and the considerations and opportunities set out in the previous section.

The Masterplan Framework illustrates the broad structure that future design stages should follow. The following pages provide a description of the Masterplan Framework in terms of the following layers:

- » Land Use;
- » Access and Movement; and
- » Green Infrastructure.

6.1.1. Core elements of the Masterplan Framework

- 1 Highway enhancements to the Brooks Lane Canal Bridge.
- 2 Highway enhancement to the Brooks Lane and Kinderton Street Junction.
- 3 Redevelopment of the Site in the shorter-term (Phase 1). Subject to securing an acceptable relationship between employment and residential uses.
- 4 Redevelopment of the wider Site in the longer-term.
- 5 Opportunity to provide a train station (x2 potential locations shown).
- 6 Potential delivery of a 20-berth canal boat marina (indicative location shown).
- 7 Enhancements to the pedestrian subway.
- 8 Provision of a Train Station Car Park to the east of the railway line and outside the Site boundary. This land is subject to an approved planning application for employment development. As such, further investigation would be required.
- 9 Area of retained/ enhanced employment use.
- 10 Middlewich Community Church retained for commercial/ community use or provided for residential use.
- 11 Potential residential development with ground floor retail adjacent to the Town Centre.
- 12 Enhancements to Murgatroyd's Brine Works.
- 13 Reinstate culvert watercourse.

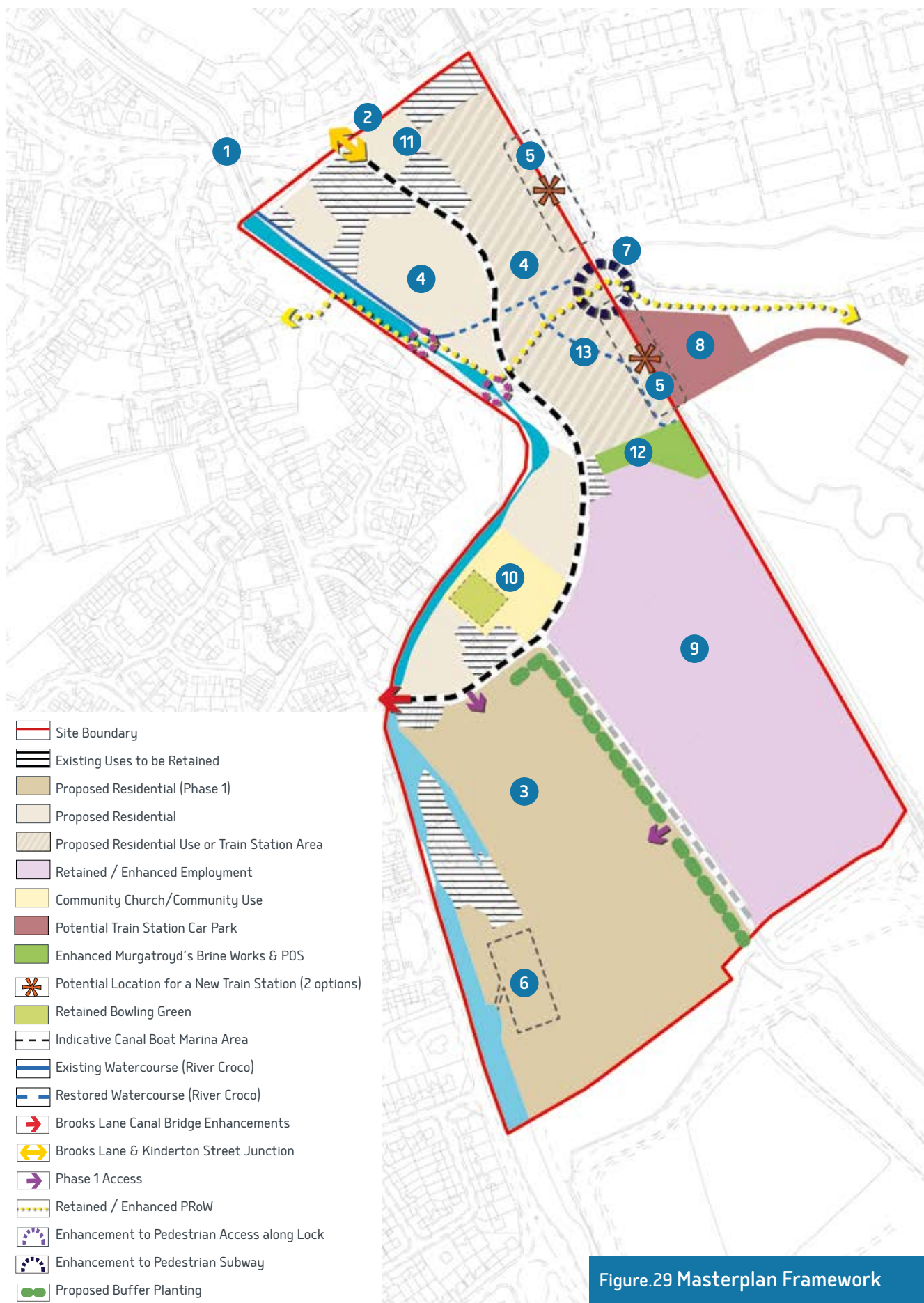


Figure.29 Masterplan Framework

6.1.2. Use Amount and Density

Residential

Shorter Term: Approximately 6.2ha of land has been identified to deliver residential development in the shorter-term. Subject to securing an acceptable relationship between employment and residential uses, this land can provide c.200+ dwellings which addresses the Local Plan requirements. The average net development density of 200 dwellings is approximately 40 dph. Densities higher than 40dph may also be considered.

Longer Term: Up to 5.6ha of land has been identified to deliver residential development in the longer-term. This land could deliver c.250+ new homes over the next 20 years or more (beyond the Plan period), subject to securing an acceptable relationship between employment and residential uses.

Canal Boat Marina

An approximate location has been identified for the provision of a 20 berth canal boat marina, subject to viability.

Housing Mix

To provide a balanced community, the development should provide a wide variety and mix of new homes, comprising apartments, older person housing and a range of family house types and sizes.

Affordable Housing

The development should provide affordable homes including those available for a mixture of tenures. In line with the Local Plan.

Train Station

Two locations have been identified as having the potential to accommodate a new train station. Whilst the exact position of the train station will be subject to a further technical assessment, the following design requirements should be considered:

- » Platform length and its relationship with the culvert watercourse and pedestrian subway crossing the railway line;
- » Connectivity with the Town Centre and Midpoint 18;
- » Relationship with Murgatroyd's Brine Works and the potential to combine train station infrastructure with a visitor information center; and
- » The provision of line-side infrastructure, including a bus stop, taxi rank, drop-off point and car parking.

Train Station Car Park

An approximate area of land, extending to some 0.6ha, has been identified to accommodate a car park for the train station. The land is located outside the Site boundary and subject to an approved planning application for employment development. As such, further investigation would be required.

Middlewich Community Church

The Middlewich Community Church site should be provided for community/

commercial use or residential development. The Bowling Green should be retained for community use.

Commercial Uses

An area of land, adjacent to the Town Centre and extending to 0.2ha, has been provided for residential development and commercial uses i.e. community or town centre uses.

Additional small-scale leisure or commercial uses could be provided adjacent to the marina e.g. a local café. However, this would be subject to a further assessment to ensure provision does not detract from the vitality of the Town Centre.

Employment

An area of land extending to c7.7ha has been provided for retained/ enhanced for employment provision.

Murgatroyd's Brine Works.

Murgatroyd's Brine Works should be restored with enhanced public access (including the potential provision of a visitor information centre). Public space and new landscaping should be provided adjacent to the Brine Works. This will improve the setting of the Monument whilst helping to separate retained employment uses and new development.

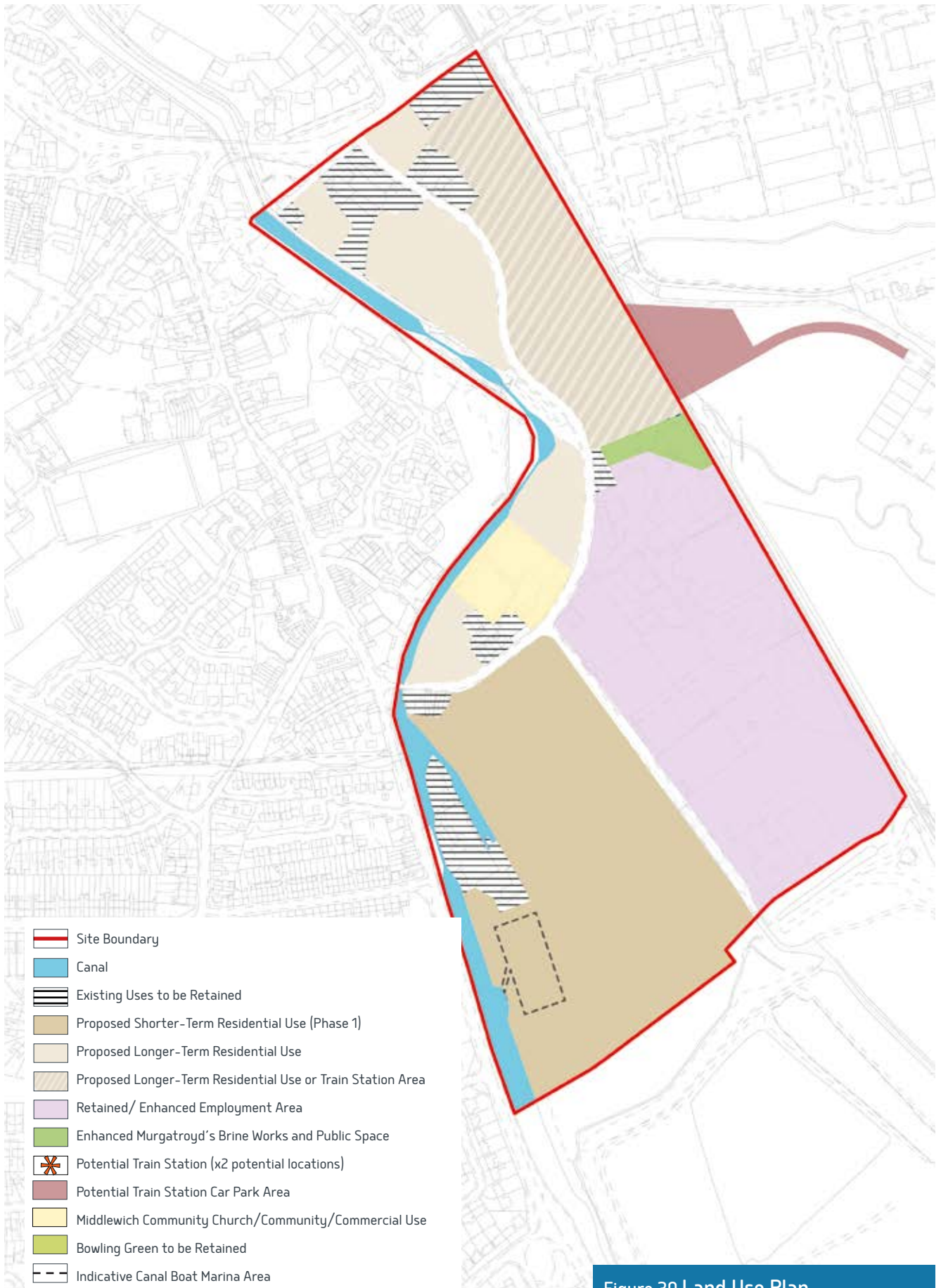


Figure.30 Land Use Plan

6.1.3. Access

Vehicle Access

The future redevelopment of the Site should include highways enhancements to the Brooks Lane/ Kinderton Street junction.

The future redevelopment of the Site should be supported by highways enhancements and the potential signalisation of the Brooks Lane Canal Bridge.

Brooks Lane

Brooks Lane should accommodate both employment and vehicle traffic.

Road Beta

In the longer-term, Road Beta should accommodate employment traffic only. Emergency residential vehicle traffic will also be permitted.

Phase 1 Vehicle Access

Residential vehicle access to the shorter-term development opportunity (Phase 1) should ultimately be provided from Brooks Lane as opposed to Road Beta. Notwithstanding, a residential access from Road Beta may also be necessary in the shorter-term to serve Phase 1. The aim will be to change this to an emergency access when the opportunity arises.

A construction vehicle access to Phase 1 should be provided from Road Beta.

Train Station Access

The train station should be dual aspect with connections to the Site and Midpoint 18.

The provision of line-side infrastructure, including a bus stop, taxi rank, drop-off point and car parking should be provided on the Site and, potentially, Midpoint 18.

Street Hierarchy

The proposed development should include a hierarchy of street types designed in accordance with the Cheshire East Design Guide.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

Pedestrian access to the Site should be provided from:

- » Brooks Lane Canal Bridge;
- » Brooks Lane/ Kinderton Road junction;
- » The two locks crossing the Canal;
- » The canal bridge located adjacent to the Kings Lock Pub; and
- » The subway crossing the railway line.

Each of these pedestrian connection points should be enhanced to improve user safety.

Permeability

The proposed development should include a permeable network of routes to provide easy access throughout the Site.

Residential Car Parking

Car parking provision should be provided in accordance with the Local Plan and the Cheshire East Design Guide. The general approach should be to provide streets which are attractive and functional places for pedestrians, cyclists and cars.

Public Rights of Way

Existing public rights of way should be retained and where possible accommodated in new areas of public open space.

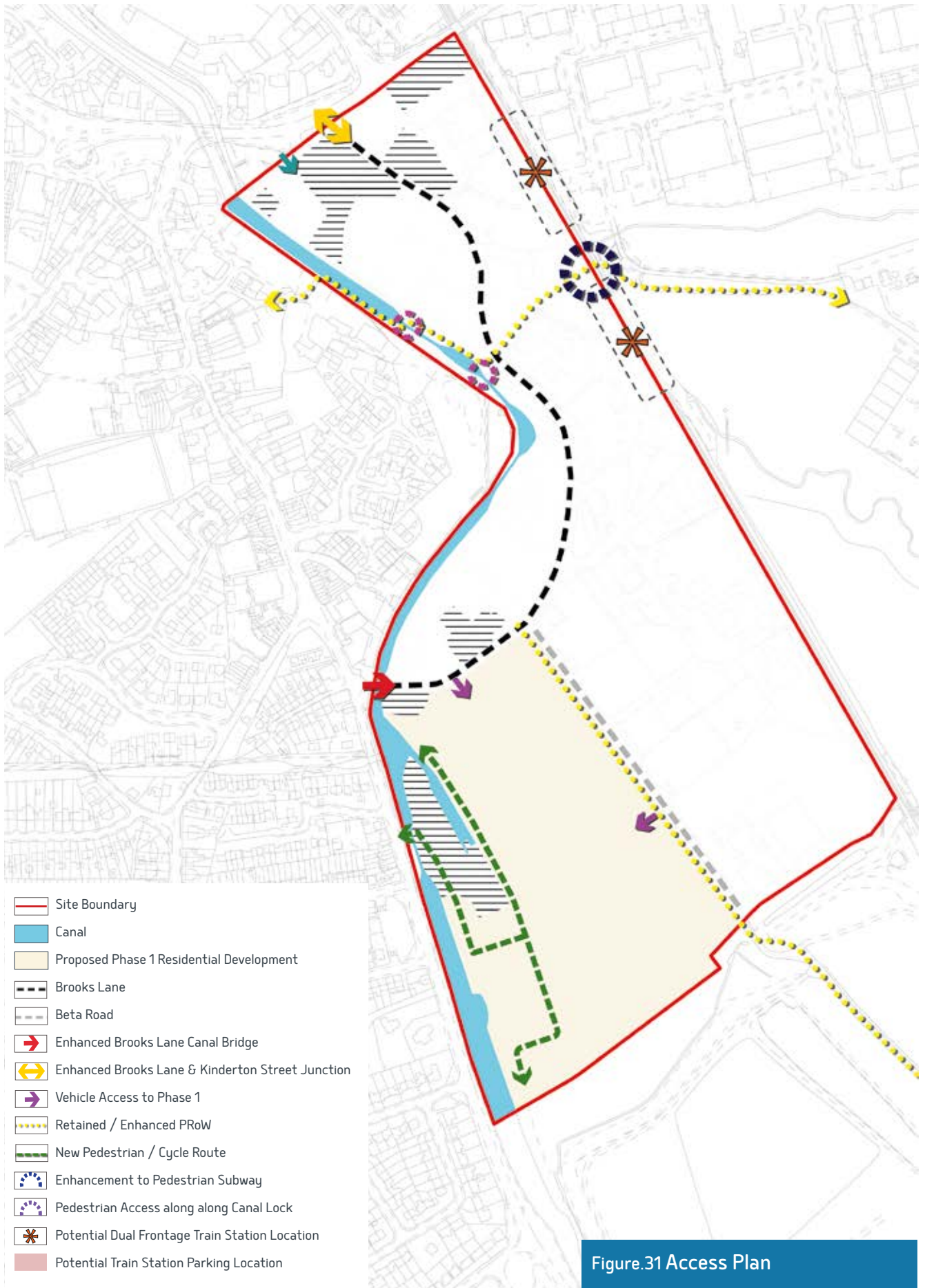


Figure.31 Access Plan

6.1.4. Green Infrastructure

Landscape Enhancements to Brooks Lane and Road Beta

The redevelopment of the Site should include new landscape planting and environmental enhancements along Brooks Lane and Road Beta. This will improve the appearance of the street-scene and help soften the relationship between new residential development and retained employment uses.

Road Beta Buffer Planting

Buffer planting and land-forming should be provided between Phase 1 and Road Beta. This will help to separate residential development provided within Phase 1 from the retained/enhanced employment area. The aim of which will be to secure the amenity of future residents whilst supporting the continuation of existing business operations.

Culvert Watercourse

The culvert watercourse running through the Site should be restored and improvements should be made to the flow of the watercourse to remove any flood risk from the Site.

Parkland

An area of parkland should be provided to accommodate the restored watercourse, an existing PRoW and Murgatroyd's Brine Works (the extent of the parkland area on the plan opposite is shown indicatively).

Existing Landscape Features

Existing landscape features of value, including hedgerows and trees should be retained and incorporated into a green infrastructure network.

Drainage

The future redevelopment of the Site will be expected to provide a Sustainable urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS).

Ecology

The proposed development should conserve and enhance any ecological assets identified on the Site and new development should be designed to provide ecological enhancements.

Retained Bowling Green.

The Bowling Green should be retained and provided for community use.

Trent and Mersey Canal

Future development of the Site should include environmental enhancements and improved public access to the Trent and Mersey Canal.

Landscape Framework

The proposed development should provide a connected network of landscaped streets and open spaces of varying sizes, to cater for a range of uses.

Canal-side Park

The proposed development should include a canal-side park, separating new development from retained canal-based employment uses including the existing dry dock (the extent of the park is shown indicatively on the plan opposite).

Pedestrian & Cycle Connections

The proposed development should provide pedestrian and cycle connections across the Site to link up proposed green infrastructure and connect with the surrounding pedestrian & cycle network.



Figure.32 Green Infrastructure Plan



6.2. LAYOUT AND APPEARANCE

This section provides guidance on how the layout and the appearance of the proposed development could be progressed at the more detailed design stages.

6.2.1. Illustrative Masterplan

The purpose of the Illustrative Masterplan is to demonstrate how the Masterplan Framework can be combined with best practice urban design standards and the Cheshire East Design Guide to provide a varied and attractive development comprising of both residential and employment uses, alongside community infrastructure and a rich green infrastructure framework. Alternative approaches to the Illustrative Masterplan may be considered provided they offer suitable design justification and pay due regard to the underlining Masterplan Framework.

Key components of the Illustrative Masterplan:

- 1 Middlewich Community Church retained and intensified for community / housing use.
- 2 Retained and enhanced employment area.
- 3 Provision of c.200 new homes (c.40dph) across the shorter-term phase to meet the Local Plan requirement, subject to securing an acceptable relationship between employment and residential uses.
- 4 Provision of a 20-berth Marina.
- 5 Provision of a new railway station, drop-off point within the Site and car parking to the east of the railway line.
- 6 Restoration of Murgatroyd's Brine Works and potential provision of visitor information centre.
- 7 New pedestrian/ cycle routes through the Site, including new canal-side footpaths.
- 8 Retention of existing landscape features and provision of new landscape and public spaces.
- 9 Buffer planting along Brooks Lane and Road Beta.
- 10 Retail and community facilities close to the Town Centre.
- 11 Older persons housing.
- 12 Restored watercourse.



Figure.33 Illustrative Masterplan

6.2.2. Urban Form Principles

The Illustrative Masterplan has a distinctive urban form and structure, strongly influenced by the Site's context, proposed infrastructure such as the train station, and the marina, and best practice urban design principles. The urban form principles are described through this section.

Brooks Lane Frontage

In general, new residential development has been orientated to avoid directly facing Brooks Lane. This approach, alongside the provision of new landscape features, will help soften the impact of employment traffic on future residential properties. Gables that front onto Brooks Lane should be animated with windows and architectural details.

Where new residential development is orientated to overlook Brooks Lane, additional landscape features and public open space has been provided.

Train Station Arrival

An area of parkland accommodating larger blocks of 3 storey residential development has been provided adjacent to the proposed train station. The use of scale, massing and landscape should help accentuate this area as an important gateway to Middlewich.

Canal Boat Marina

Residential development overlooking the marina comprises a continuous building line with buildings varying in height, from 2 storey to 3 storey. A range of parking typologies are provided, alongside street trees and a shared public realm.

The marina and its immediate context should cater to the needs of boat users, future residents and visitors. Conflict between these users should be minimised through careful design, including:

- » Positioning the marina to maximise its physical and visual connections with the Canal.
- » Provision of an adequate separation between the marina and residential development
- » Integration of tree planting to filter views and help maintain amenity.

Canal Frontage

New housing positioned adjacent to the Canal comprises a range of housetypes with building heights ranging from 2-3 story.

Dry-dock Interface

Residential development has been set-back from the dry-dock and the proposed buildings have been orientated to avoid directly overlooking the business operations.

Key Buildings

Key buildings have been used to emphasise spaces and routes throughout the Site and assist with legibility.

Key Spaces

A sequence of spaces has been provided throughout the development to provide variation in character, promote traffic calming, and assist with legible movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

Corner Elevations

Generally, corner elevations will have windows, avoiding long sections of blank walls.

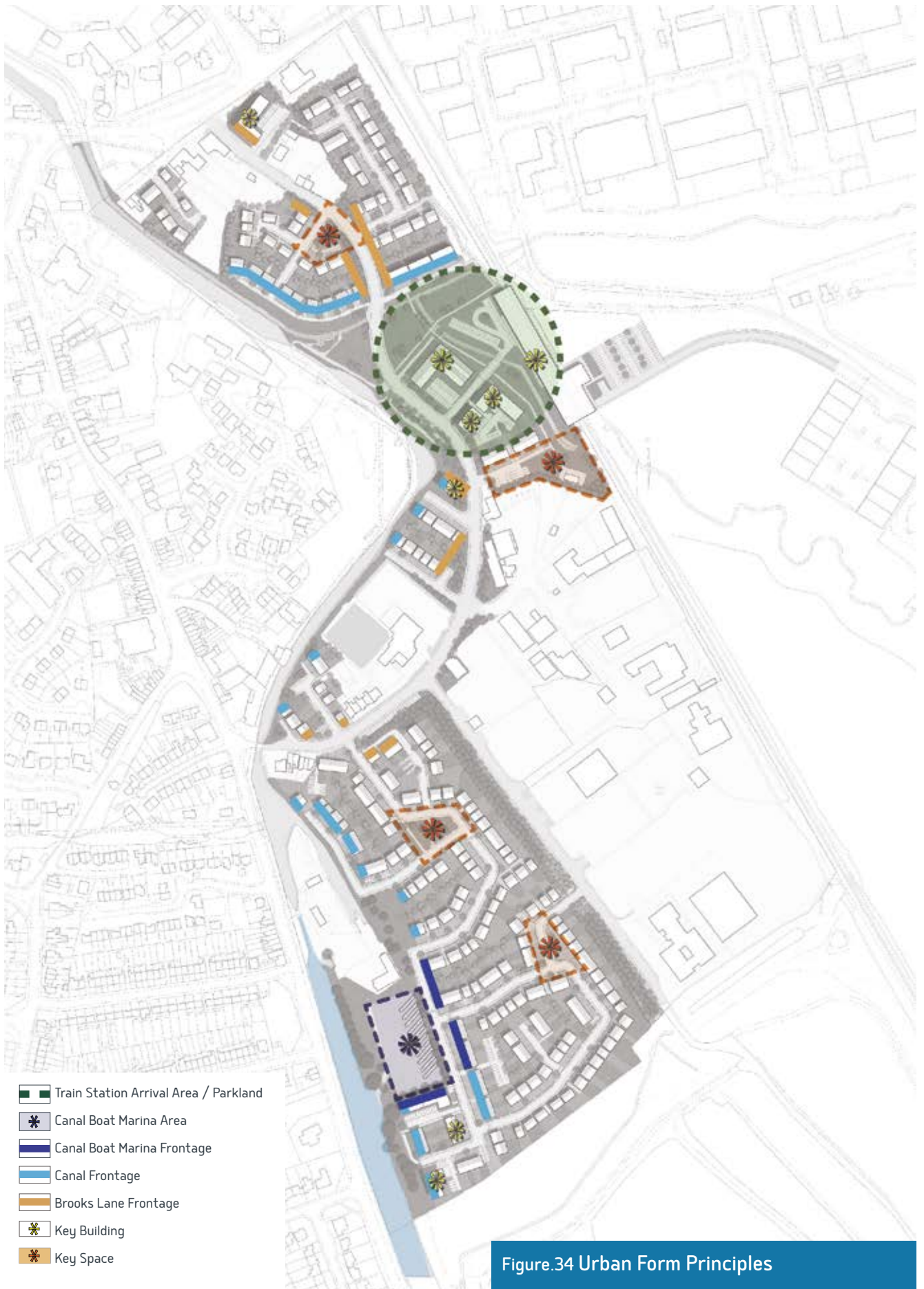


Figure.34 Urban Form Principles

6.2.3. Street Hierarchy

The principles for the design of streets set out over the following pages have been prepared to be in accordance with 'Manual for Streets' and the Cheshire East Design guide. The streets create a legible and permeable network and the identity of the street types will assist in developing a sense of place as well as enhancing legibility.

In preparing the Illustrative Masterplan, the following design principles have been applied:

- » The creation of a grid of connected streets to facilitate a 'walkable neighbourhood'
- » A network of quiet shared streets will be provided.
- » The design of streets will be integrated with the character area they are within and the built form enclosing them. It may be appropriate for the character of streets to change along their length.
- » Measures such as shared surfaces, changes in surface materials, horizontal alignment, lighting and the design of the street should be used as appropriate to encourage slow speeds.

Street Types

The development has five types of street hierarchy as follows:

- » Brooks Lane and Road Beta;
- » Primary Residential Street;
- » Secondary/ Shared Residential Street; and
- » Private Drive.

The location of each street type is shown on plan opposite (Figure 35) and an indicative cross section of each street type is shown on the following page (see Figures 36-39).





Figure.35 Street Hierarchy

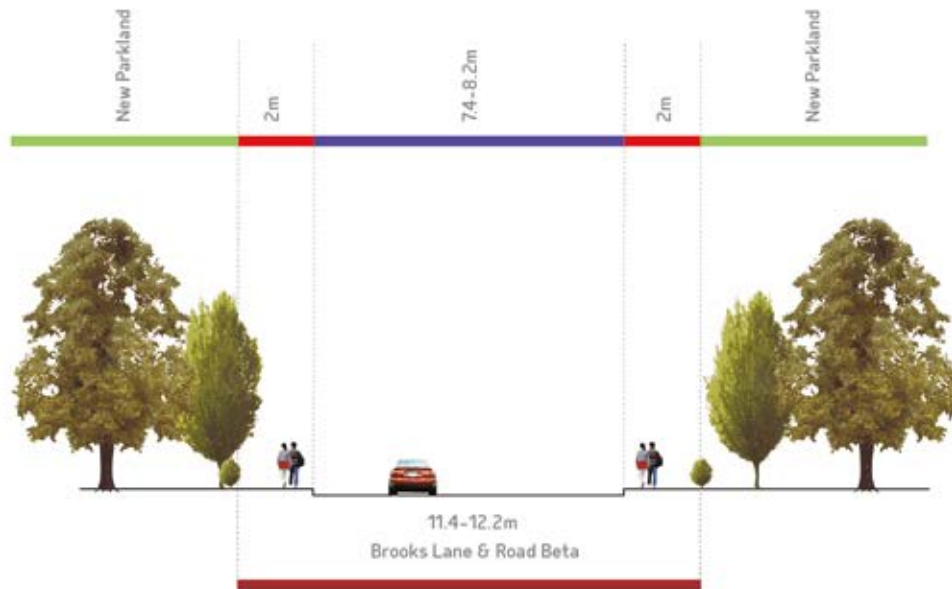


Figure.36 Brooks Lane/ Road Beta

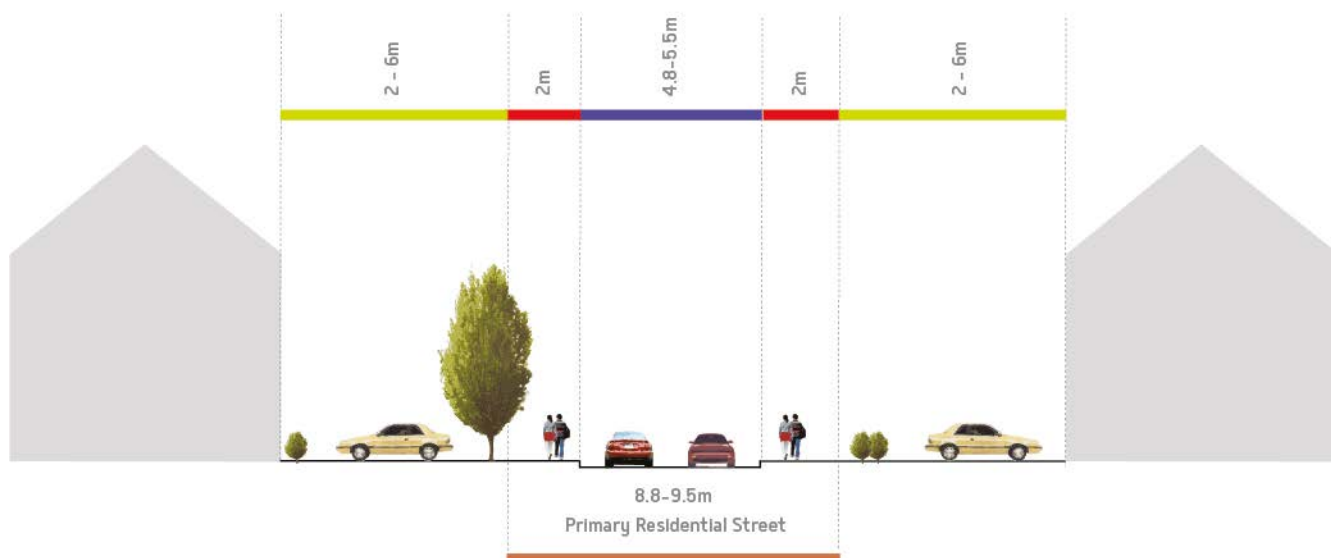


Figure.37 Primary Street

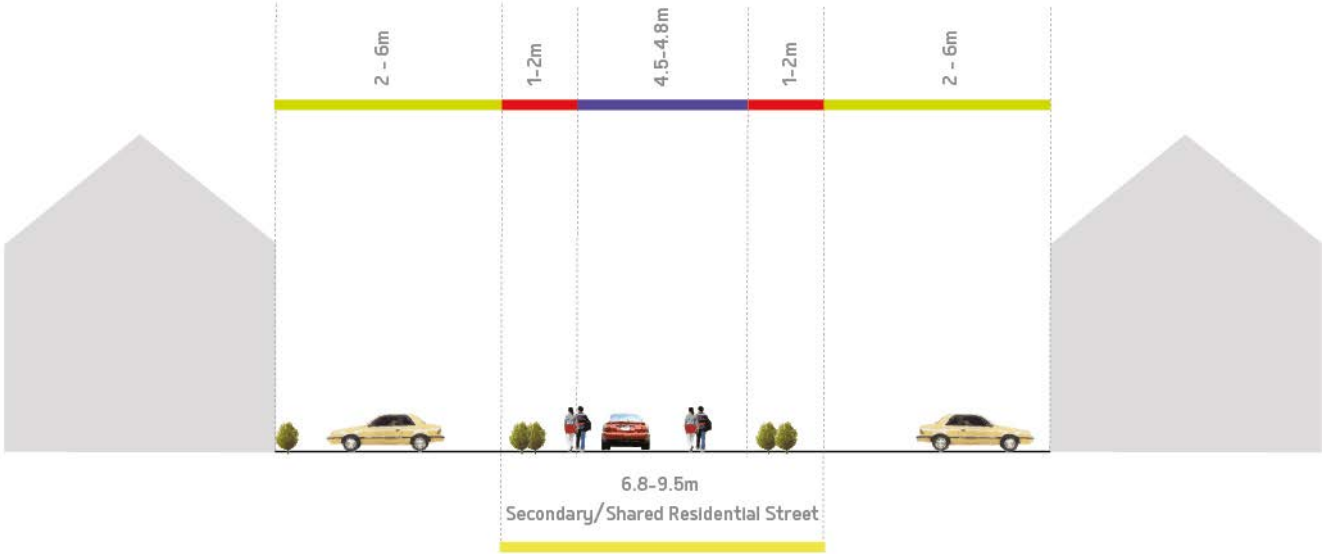


Figure.38 Shared Street

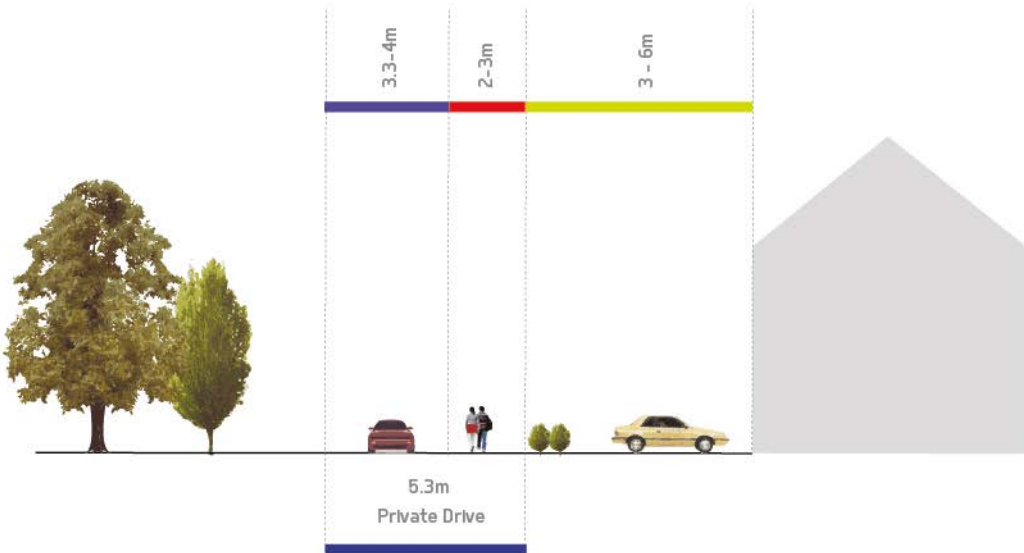


Figure.39 Private Drive

6.2.4. Character Areas

The purpose of this section is to provide an illustration and description of the different character areas that could be provided across the proposed development.





- Town Centre Gateway
- Train Station Gateway
- Canal Side Village
- Marina Village

Figure.40 Character Areas

6.2.5. Town Centre Gateway Village

The Town Centre Gateway will provide a gateway to the Site from Middleswich Town Centre. The Brooks Lane junction with Kinderton Street will be defined by a 3-story residential apartment block with ground floor commercial space. A range of house types will be provided throughout the character area, including a high proportion of family homes. Development overlooking the Canal will comprise larger family homes, with a subtle variation in building heights. The parkland that sits to the south of the character area will be defined by 3 story apartment blocks.

The following characteristics define the character area:

Layout and Built Form

- » Existing residential development is retained.
- » Provision of a 3 storey apartment block with ground floor commercial uses at the Brooks Lane and Kinderton Street junction.
- » A range of family homes.
- » Heights ranging from 2-3 storeys.
- » Larger family homes adjacent to the Canal.
- » Higher densities and 3 story apartment blocks to define an area of urban parkland.
- » Development softened by areas of parkland and planting.
- » Residential development has been orientated so gables of new dwellings facing Brooks Lane.

Landscape

- » Informal planting along Brooks Lane including buffer planting.
- » Scattered tree planting to property frontages and public open space. Native hedgerow planting to front of properties. Tree and hedgerow species palettes to be native / informal in character.
- » Provision of a landscape space adjacent to the Canal, accommodating the existing watercourse.
- » Incidental open spaces provided throughout.





6.2.6. Train Station Village

The Train Station Gateway will provide an important gateway to the Site and Middleswich Town Centre. The train station will be a defining feature and the provision of 3 storey residential development will help signify a sense of arrival. An area of urban parkland surrounding the 3 storey development and accommodating the restored watercourse and Murgatroyd's Brine Pump, will help to create an attractive and welcoming gateway to Middleswich.

The following characteristics define the character area:

Layout and Built Form

- » Train station as the defining feature.
- » Provision of higher density residential development.
- » 3 storey apartment blocks to provide a sense of arrival adjacent to the railway.
- » Provision of a 3 storey older person apartment block.
- » 2.5 storey town houses overlooking Murgatroyd's Brine Pump

Landscape

- » Parkland area to accommodate new planting, restored watercourse, Murgatroyd's Brine Pump, short stay car park, bus stop and taxi rank, pedestrian and cycle links and childrens play.
- » Landscape enhancements adjacent to the Canal.
- » Enhancements to pedestrian and cycle connections across two locks.





6.2.7. Canal-side Village

The Canal-side Village will provide an area of mixed residential development comprising a range of house types. The character area will also feature existing residential development and Middlewich Community Church. The interface between new residential development, retained canal-side businesses and retained employment uses to the east are key structural elements underpinning the design of the Illustrative Masterplan.

The following characteristics define the character area:

Layout and Built Form

- » Medium density family homes.
- » Streets to provide improved connections to the Canal.
- » Middlewich Community Church intensified for community use.
- » Continuous frontages.
- » Development set-back from the working dry-dock.
- » Variation in building heights, ranging from 2 storey to 3 storey.
- » Formal parking provided adjacent to Brooks Lane.
- » Retention of Brunner Mond Middlewich War Memorial.

Landscape

- » Planting along Brooks Lane.
- » Buffer planting and land-forming, along the eastern edge of the Character Area, to provide separation between new residential development and the retained/enhanced employment.
- » Scattered tree planting to property frontages and public open space. Native hedgerow planting to front of properties. Tree and hedgerow species palettes to be native / informal in character.
- » Provision of parkland to separate the dry-dock from new residential development.
- » Incidental open spaces provided throughout.





6.2.8. Marina Village

The character of the Marina Village will be heavily influenced by the provision of a new 20-berth canal boat marina. New development positioned immediately adjacent to the marina will comprise a range of house types including 2.5 storey town houses and 3 storey apartment blocks. The marina will become an important focal point for the redeveloped Site and a destination for Middleswich. Its importance will be emphasised through the provision of a high-quality public realm and landscaping, alongside the potential for the occasional commercial use i.e. a small café with outdoor seating. The marina is positioned with its longest edge adjacent to the Canal as this will ensure maximum physical and visual connectivity with the waterway, which will be favoured by canal boat users. The amenity standards for both canal boat users and the residents of new housing will be protected through the provision of adequate separation distances and well considered landscape design.

The following characteristics define the the character area:

Layout and Built Form

- » 20-berth marina.
- » Ensure adequate boat access arrangements are provided for the marina (to be agreed with the Canal Trust).
- » Residential dwellings to be provided with parking in accordance with the Local Plan.
- » Marina to provide the focus with higher densities and variation in scale.
- » Residential development orientated to avoid directly overlooking the dry dock
- » Provision of a car parking for canal users.
- » Residential streets designed in accordance with the Cheshire East Design guide and to provide a range of house types
- » Development density at c.40dph.
- » Variation in scale from 2-3 story.

Landscape

- » High-quality public realm adjacent to the marina.
- » Buffer planting and land-forming, along the eastern edge of the Character Area, to provide separation between new residential development and the retained/enhanced employment.
- » Retention of existing landscape features, including mature trees between the marina and the canal.
- » Scattered tree planting to property frontages and public open space. Native hedgerow planting to front of properties. Tree and hedgerow species palettes to be native / informal in character.



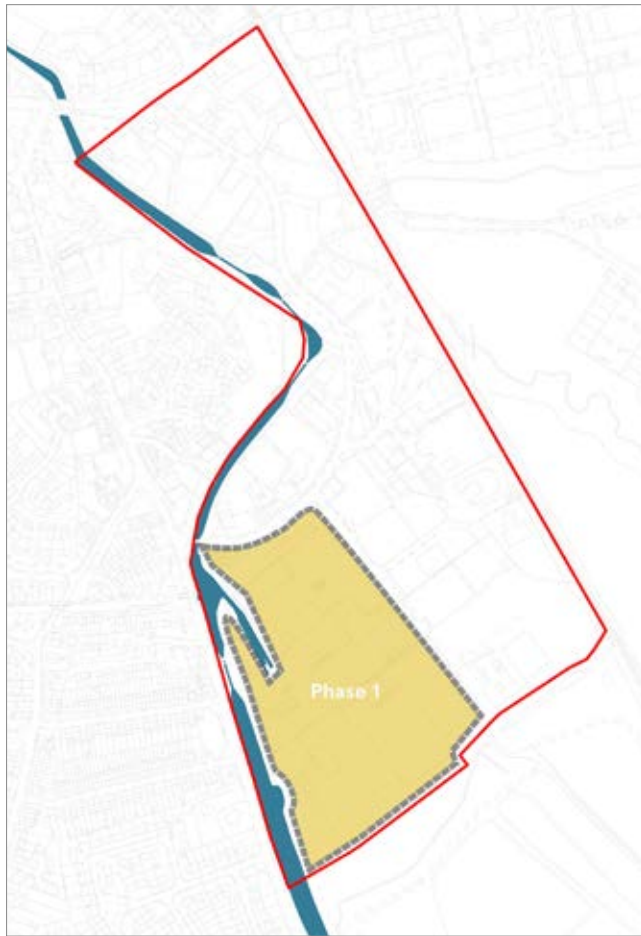


Figure.41 Phase 1



Figure.42 Phase 2

6.3. PHASING STRATEGY

The redevelopment of the Site needs to be considered alongside the wish for existing businesses to remain operating in the area. This reality may see part of the Site redeveloped in the shorter-term to deliver new homes in accordance with the Local Plan requirements, whilst the rest of the Site remains in employment use. However, a more significant regeneration proposal could see more of the Site coming forward for redevelopment in the longer-term extending beyond 2030, the end of the current Local Plan period.

The plans above show a potential phasing strategy for the Site. Phase 1 shows an area of the Site that could deliver homes in the shorter-term, meeting the Local Plan requirements. We could perhaps then see development moving clock-wise around the Site, over the course of the next 15-20 or more years, with businesses remaining in operation during this period.

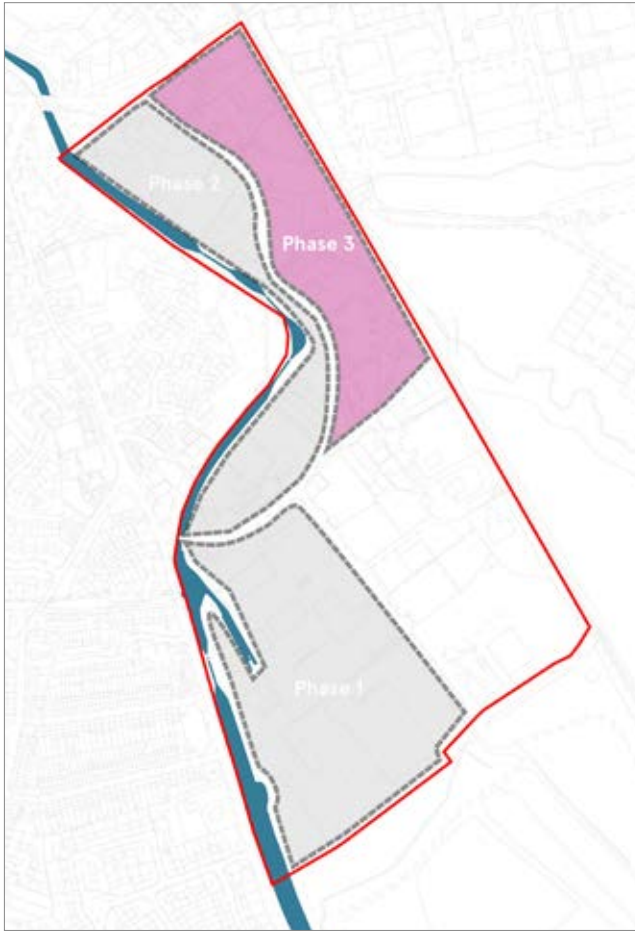


Figure.43 Phase 3

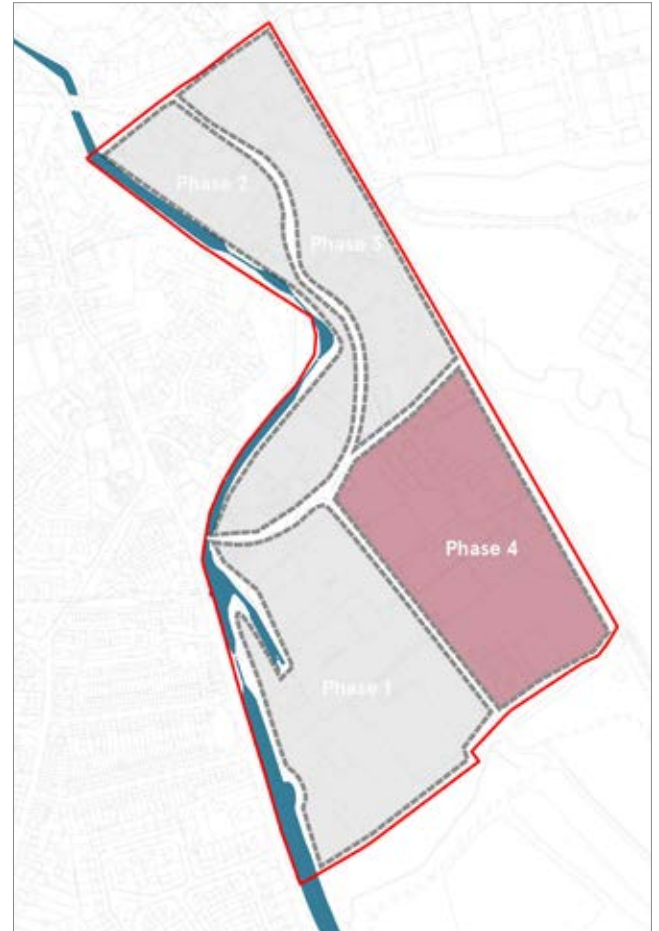


Figure.44 Phase 4

7 CONCLUSION

This report articulates our proposals for the redevelopment of the Brooks Lane Site, demonstrating a rigorous design process based on Assessment, Consultation, Evaluation and Design. The design process has been strongly informed by the businesses wishing to remain operating on the Site, alongside the delivery of key opportunities as outline within the Local Plan.

Summary of Proposal

- » Provision of c.200+ homes in the shorter term (Phase 1) to meet the Local Plan requirements.
- » Redevelopment of the wider site in the longer term, with the potential to deliver a further c.250+ new homes, comprising a range of house types, including family homes, starter homes and older persons accommodation.
- » Potential provision of a train station, including line-side infrastructure.
- » Provision of a c.20 boat marina.
- » Provision of commercial uses close to the Town centre.
- » Highways enhancements.
- » Environmental enhancements and the provision of public open space.



Figure.45 Shorter-Term and Longer-Term Plan

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