



- A. Placemaking Framework
- B. Green Belt
- C. Green Infrastructure
- D. Land Use
- E. Transport
- F. Sustainability Framework

Spatial Framework

Establish the key design parameters and principles which together define the spatial framework and place-making aspirations for the Gilston Area

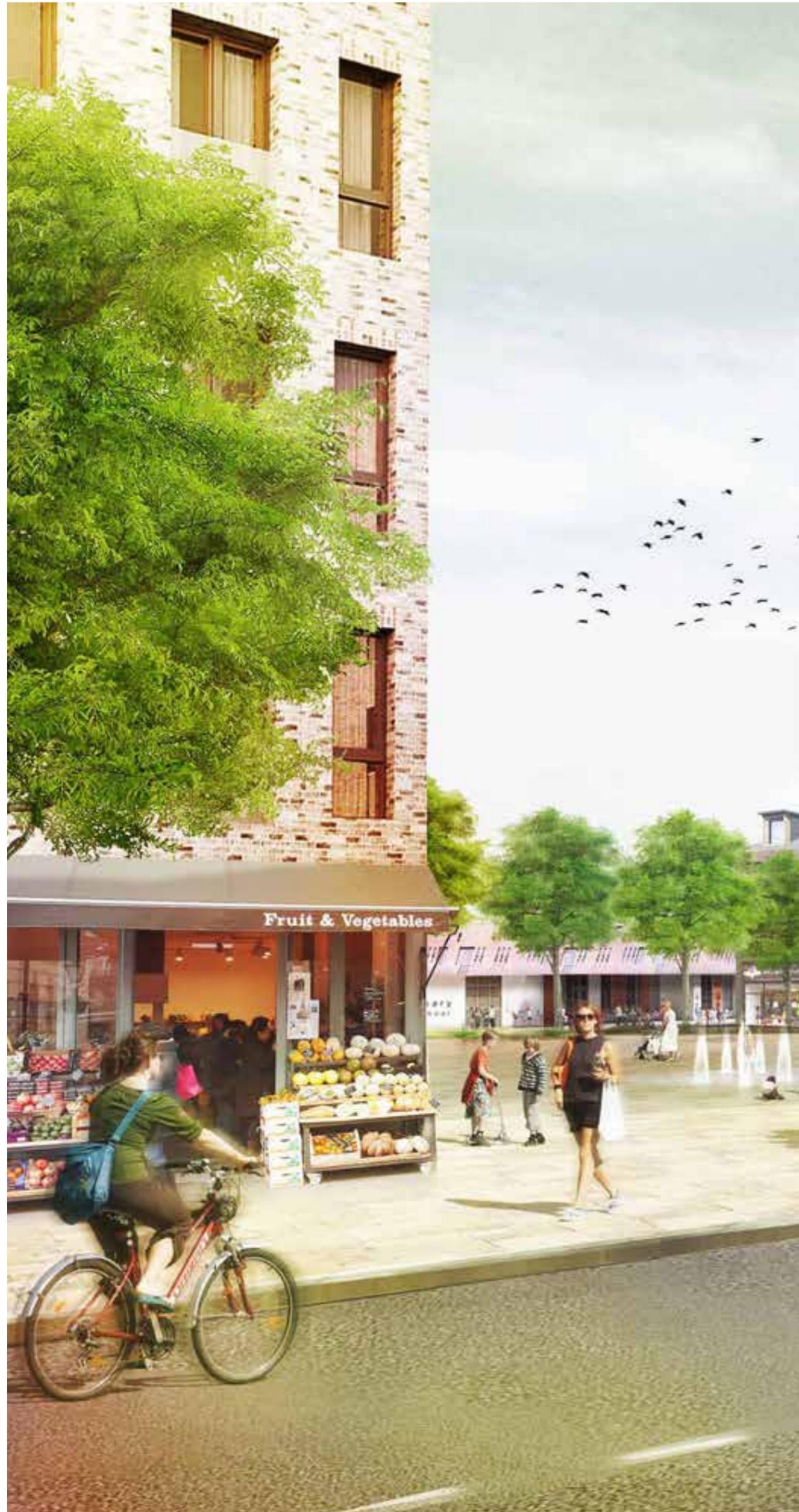
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SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

A. Placemaking Framework

INTRODUCTION

This section on the Placemaking Framework describes the key principles that are considered to be central to shaping the sense of place and the unique identity of the Gilston Area. It provides further information on the design, form and character of the proposed 7 villages which make up the Gilston Area. In particular it highlights principles relating to public realm within the context of bringing landscape, place, communities and the built environment in close harmony. The result is a multilayered proposal which draws on the character of the site and relates it to its surroundings.



Illustrative view of Village 2 - based on the Illustrative Concept Masterplan



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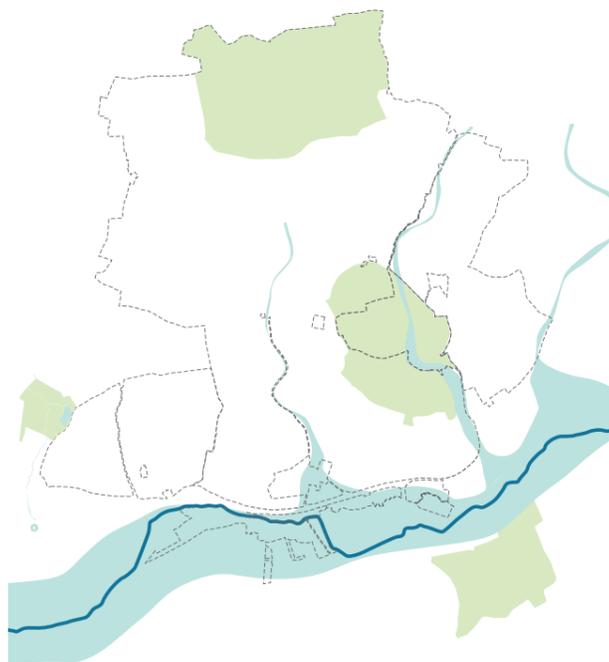
A LANDSCAPE LED APPROACH

The overall vision for the proposed development is in response to a series of design principles.

All significant heritage, landscape and ecological features will be retained or enhanced, where possible. Wherever opportunities arise, areas of ecological significance or potential will be integrated into the development through the creation of landscape features, such as woodland parks, playing fields, central parkland and riverside park. These key spaces reinforce the connectivity between the proposed development and its immediate natural surroundings.

This bottom-up design approach avoids the spatial constraints of formal block configuration and opens up possibilities based on resilience and site characteristics.

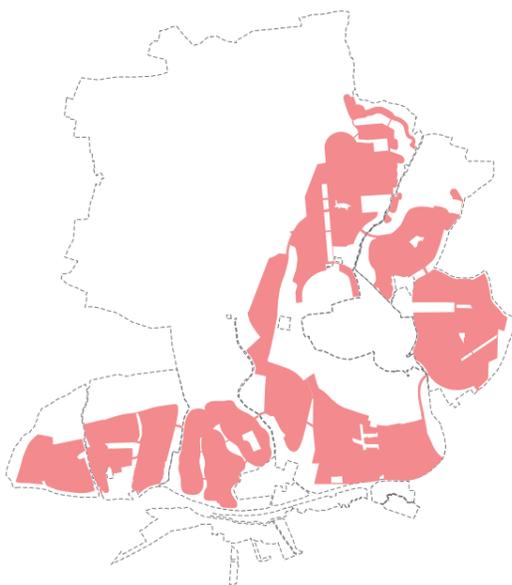
The demarcation of character areas comes naturally after understanding the site constraints. The outcome is the creation of seven typologically and topographically distinctive villages surrounding the historic Gilston Park, and the protection and enhancement of the most important existing assets on site eg Hunsdon airfield. The proposed character of each village is described on the pages that follow.



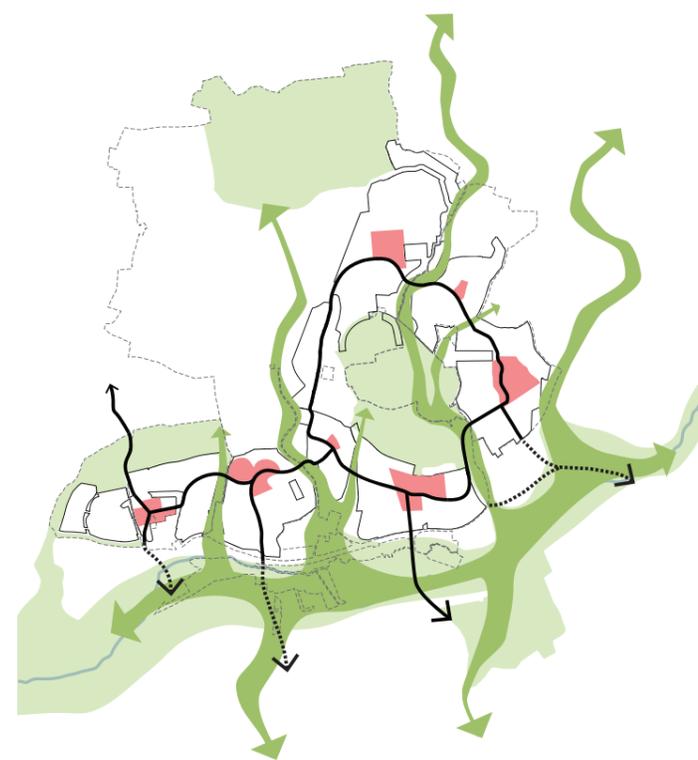
1. KEY LANDSCAPE FEATURES



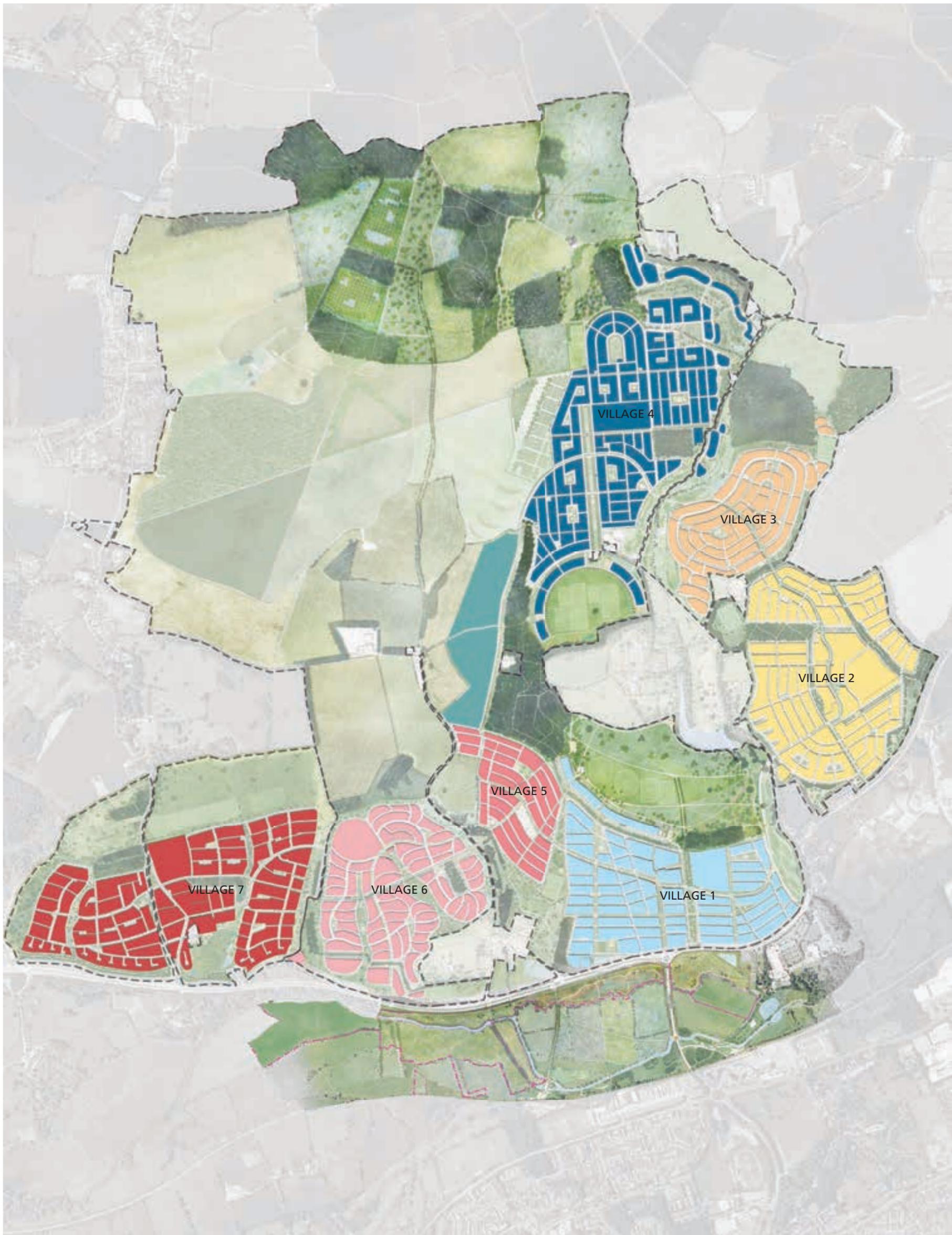
2. MAPPING CONSTRAINTS



3. A SERIES OF UNIQUE VILLAGES



4. STITCHING IT ALL TOGETHER



The 7 Villages of the Gilston Area - based on the Illustrative Concept Masterplan

VILLAGE CHARACTER



VILLAGE 5

Village 5 is characterised by south-west facing slopes facing the Eastwick Brook tributary valley. Even contoured slopes on a distinctive curve to the south of Home Wood preserve sightlines and access to Gilston Park. Built form to be set back by a landscape buffer to respect the setting of Eastwick Village and the tributary valley.

Key features are:

- South and south-west facing slopes
- Wide horizon and views to west of Harlow and Eastwick
- Proximity to Eastwick Village and Eastwick Valley



VILLAGE 7

Characterised by gentle slopes to the south which offer wide views over Harlow and the Stort River Valley. At the centre of the village lies the existing ensemble of historic Brickhouse Farm buildings. Green, low density typologies to the south and west provide a softer edge.



VILLAGE 6

A series of curving valleys sloping north south towards the Stort Valley, with Eastwick valley to the east. The most undulating profile of the villages. This village features:

- Existing hedgerows
- Plantation woodland dominating horizon
- Proximity to Eastwick village and Eastwick Valley





VILLAGE 4

Gentle and generally even sloping terrain this village benefits from an elevated position with views west to the airfield and east to Golden Brook river valley.

Key features include:

- St Mary's church and associated structures
- Southern curved profile to Gilston Park
- Contrast of exposure and shelter, openness and intimacy
- Open horizons of the agricultural plateau
- Hedgerows



VILLAGE 3

Located south of Golden Brook tributary valley and bounded by Golden Grove woodland to the north, with the outer environs of Gilston Park to the south, on gradually rising terrain.

This village's key features include:

- Proximity to Golden Grove Woodland
- Riparian woodland and meadows of Golden Brook Valley



VILLAGE 2

Located to the east of Gilston Park on gently rising contours this village includes:

- Woodland block of Rectory Plantation
- Specimen Oaks including veteran trees within boundary hedges
- Ancient Holloway with Hornbeam and Spindle coppice
- Proximity to Gilston village



VILLAGE 1

Located on the south facing slopes fronting onto the Stort valley and rising to Gilston Park this village benefits from two major park frontages. Key historical features include: historic lime avenue, curved hedgeway and ditch, and moat within woodland block The Chase. This village is also in proximity to Gilston village.

STRATEGY FOR AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

Critical to the success of the Gilston Area has been the need to ensure that an appropriate response is created to its immediate context and its local and strategic heritage. From the provision of appropriate landscape buffers to specific layout variations, these responses vary in line with their context but work to achieve the singular aim of a development that merges and grows organically within its surroundings.

STRATEGY 1 - CREATING APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPE BUFFERS

PROTECTING LOCAL HERITAGE

The concept for the Gilston Area draws on the language of Sir Frederick Gibberd's designs for Harlow with green wedges providing defined landscape corridors between the villages. These broadly follow the alignment of the tributary valleys and existing landscape features, including historic hedges, micro-valleys, woods and rights of way. These defined green corridors also serve to provide a buffer to protect the character, immediate setting and identity of neighbouring villages of Eastwick and Gilston.

EASTWICK

Eastwick village, located at the bottom of the Pole Brook tributary is fairly compact in its arrangement with only Eastwick Manor positioned as a separate isolated structure to the east of the village. The setting for St Boltoph church which is a local landmark is retained and preserved.



To the east a landscape buffer is proposed and extends as far as the existing right of way running alongside the existing plantation woodland. This existing wood visually protects views of Village 1 located to the west of Eastwick and on the other side of the woods. The green buffer is delineated by the existing right of way that extends as far as Gilston Park and forms the green landscaped separation between Village 1 and Village 5. The existing tributary valley and landscape corridor is retained and enhanced with the incorporation of SUDS elements and associated planting and habitat. To the west a green buffer is provided between Eastwick and Village 6. A localised micro-valley within Village 6 retains long views up the valley from Eastwick as well as providing a framed view and connection to St Boltoph Church.

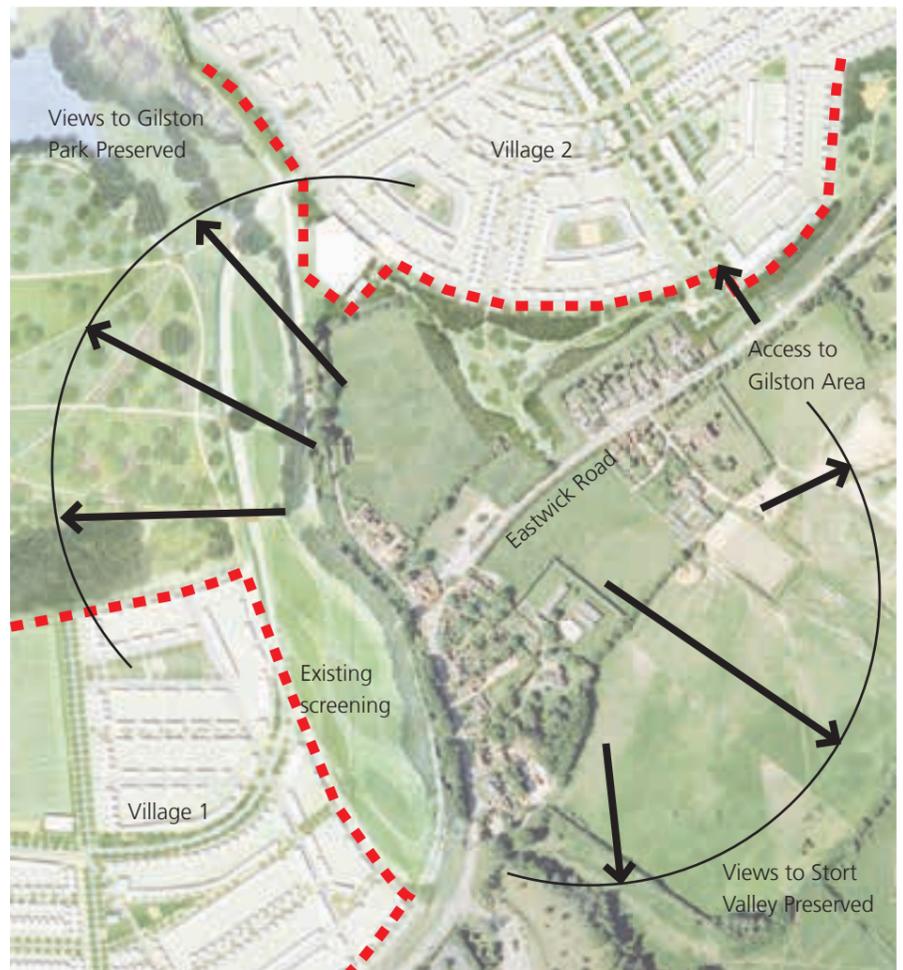
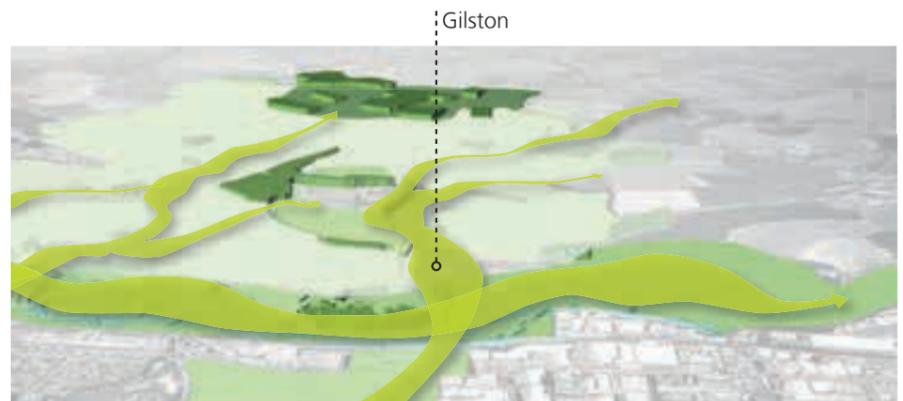
The green buffer around Eastwick provides an overall green buffer as indicated on the adjacent plan.

GILSTON

Gilston is a linear village that runs primarily along the Eastwick Road. The village is situated at the end of Fiddlers Brook tributary before it is culverted as it passes under Pye Corner and connects to the River Stort. Along the eastern edge of the village running along Fiddlers Brook strong and defined natural screening is afforded by dense woodland which follows the valley. Beyond this and occupying the 1 in 1000 year flood plain a further green buffer is provided.

Open views to Gilston Park to the north east and to the Stort Valley to the west are retained maintaining the village character and identity. A separate grouping of houses are located further along the Eastwick Road - split by a green space. This space is retained and to the rear of the houses located on the north side of Eastwick Road a green buffer is proposed between the dwellings and the development.

For further information on the movement response please refer to the transport strategy.



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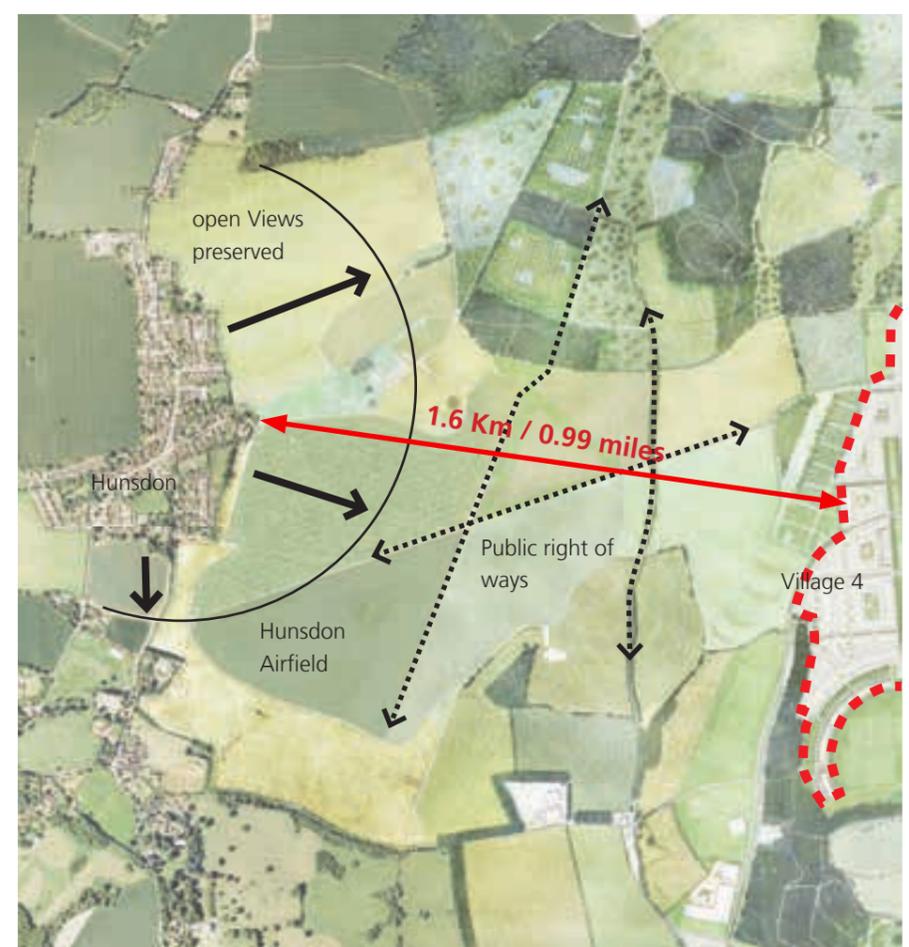
STRATEGY 2 - MINIMISING VISUAL IMPACT

The inherent nature of the Hertfordshire countryside is of long views that extend across rolling hills often with villages nestled within their folds.

Given that the countryside to the north of the site and along the plateau embodies this inherent image of Hertfordshire, it has been critical to ensure that any visual impact within these long views from existing settlements is minimised. This is particularly significant from Hunsdon given its location to the west of the plateau and the flat land of the airfield.

HUNSDON

Located adjacent to the Hunsdon Airfield, Hunsdon borders the northwestern part of the Gilston Area site. The village is surrounded by agricultural land, with public rights of ways to the east through the airfield. These are regularly used by residents for recreation and leisure. The closest development will be in excess of 1.6km away from Hunsdon. The area between Hunsdon and the western extent of Villages 4 and 5 is to be retained as Parkland and managed under the governance arrangements proposed. Therefore the impact of the development on Hunsdon is unlikely to be significantly adverse.



Hunsdon House



HUNSDON HOUSE

Hunsdon House is a Grade I listed historic house located to the north of Village 7.

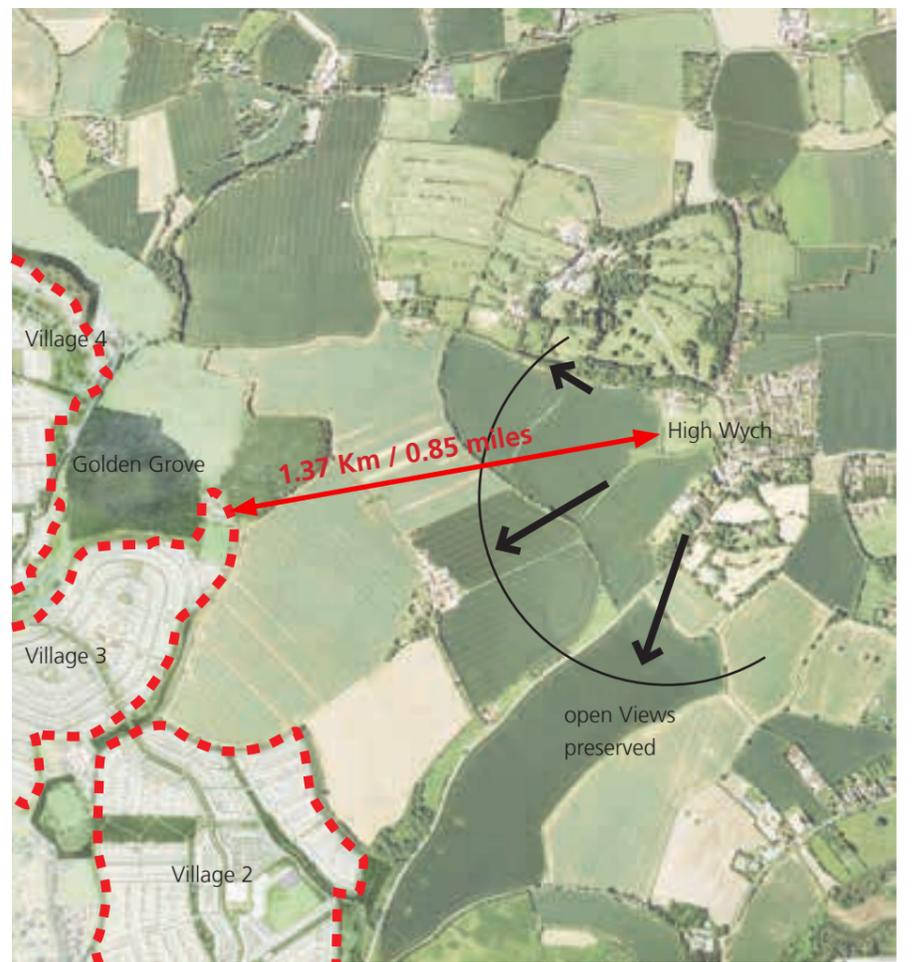
The proposed 'Pylon Park' forms a landscape buffer between Hunsdon House and Village 7, which preserves the open views from and towards the listed building. The majority of new housing within the development is located on the Eastwick slopes falling towards Harlow, which further minimises the visual impact on the wider views towards and from Hunsdon House.

Additional woodland pasture tree planting is proposed around the two existing woodlands to the west of Church Lane, which will enhance the natural tree buffer present in this area.



HIGH WYCH

Located approximately 1.5km to the north-east of the Gilston Area along the Eastwick Road continuing onto High Wych Road is the village of High Wych. Existing woodland blocks Sayes Coppice and Golden Grove located to the north of golden brook valley corridor and 1.3 km to the west of High Wych provide natural visual screening to Villages 3 and 4. The edge of Village 2 and Village 3 is positioned in excess of 1.2 km away from High Wych therefore is considered to have low visual impact.



STRATEGY 3 - LEARNING FROM HARLOW

Harlow was once regarded as an exemplar of modern architecture and town planning. Developed by visionary Architect, Sir Frederick Gibberd, the town has its origins in the original Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn and was developed on landscape principles that sought to bring together aspects of town and country. There are four main built clusters on high ground, separated by open land in the valleys. The green wedges between the clusters carry the main roads into the town centre, and accommodate secondary schools, playing fields, the town park in the north, and a golf course in the north-west.

Many of the guiding principles from Gibberd's pioneering masterplan remain relevant today. Gilston Area offers an opportunity to capture the ethos of the original vision, to meet contemporary demands whilst rooting the design in the locality. This connection is essential to integrating Gilston Area in its context, and informing Harlow's own long-term regeneration. Mutual benefits are envisaged - not least helping to create more sustainable travel to work patterns for the major employment locations in the town.

The Gilston Area builds on Gibberd's vision for Harlow by considering:

- Creation of green wedges - ensuring clear separation between each neighbourhood and walkable access to open spaces for all
- Builds on Gibberd's original vision by providing frontage to landscape
- Series of village centres to ensure each neighbourhood is sustainable and has the infrastructure and services it needs close by to support the community
- Strong cultural and public art strategy accessible to all

The Gilston Area provides the opportunity to learn from Gibberd's positive legacy, including the Garden City principles and green wedges, whilst recognising the aspects of the town which have over time, not been able to respond to changing needs such as the lack of housing choice, congestion and road layouts - and to use growth to the north of the town to support investment into its essential infrastructure and its sustainable regeneration.



Local amenity spaces described as 'outdoor rooms' by Gibberd offer places to stop, play and interact



Neighbourhood Centre



Public Art



Creating green wedges and links across the town



The original Harlow Town Master plan

SCALE AND MASSING

The scale of development within the villages of the Gilston Area has a strong functional rationale informed by the existing topography and landscape character. Careful consideration has been given to sensitively integrate the Gilston Area with its immediate surroundings and to create a high quality and distinctive living environment. It is proposed that building heights be utilised to perform specific functions such as the creation of defined building edges, provision of appropriate street frontage and sense of enclosure to key urban spaces.

The scale of the buildings is considered especially significant in the creation of the edges to the development where they respond directly to the surrounding landscape. These vary across the boundary of the site, some of the more significant ones are -

STORT VALLEY

Along the southern boundary of the development, facing the A414, new frontage and taller buildings (4-5 stories) are proposed in Villages 1 and 6 to improve the relationship with the Stort Valley. Its value as a significant amenity and ecological attraction is enhanced and a relationship with Harlow is established. As this edge forms the lowest area of the site a series of SUDS bodies are anticipated that provide a landscape buffer along parts of the A414, which creates a softer green edge including towards the south-western boundary of the development in Village 7 .

RIVER TRIBUTARIES

These valleys are ecologically sensitive and the building frontages respond to this. Lower heights, green roofs, and integrated built form that would typically be proposed to follow the existing contours.

PARK FRONTAGES

Strong and defined frontages shape the edges of the parks to benefit their amenity value and their delineation. This affords and benefits from greater height in proposed building scale and continuity.

OPEN LANDSCAPE

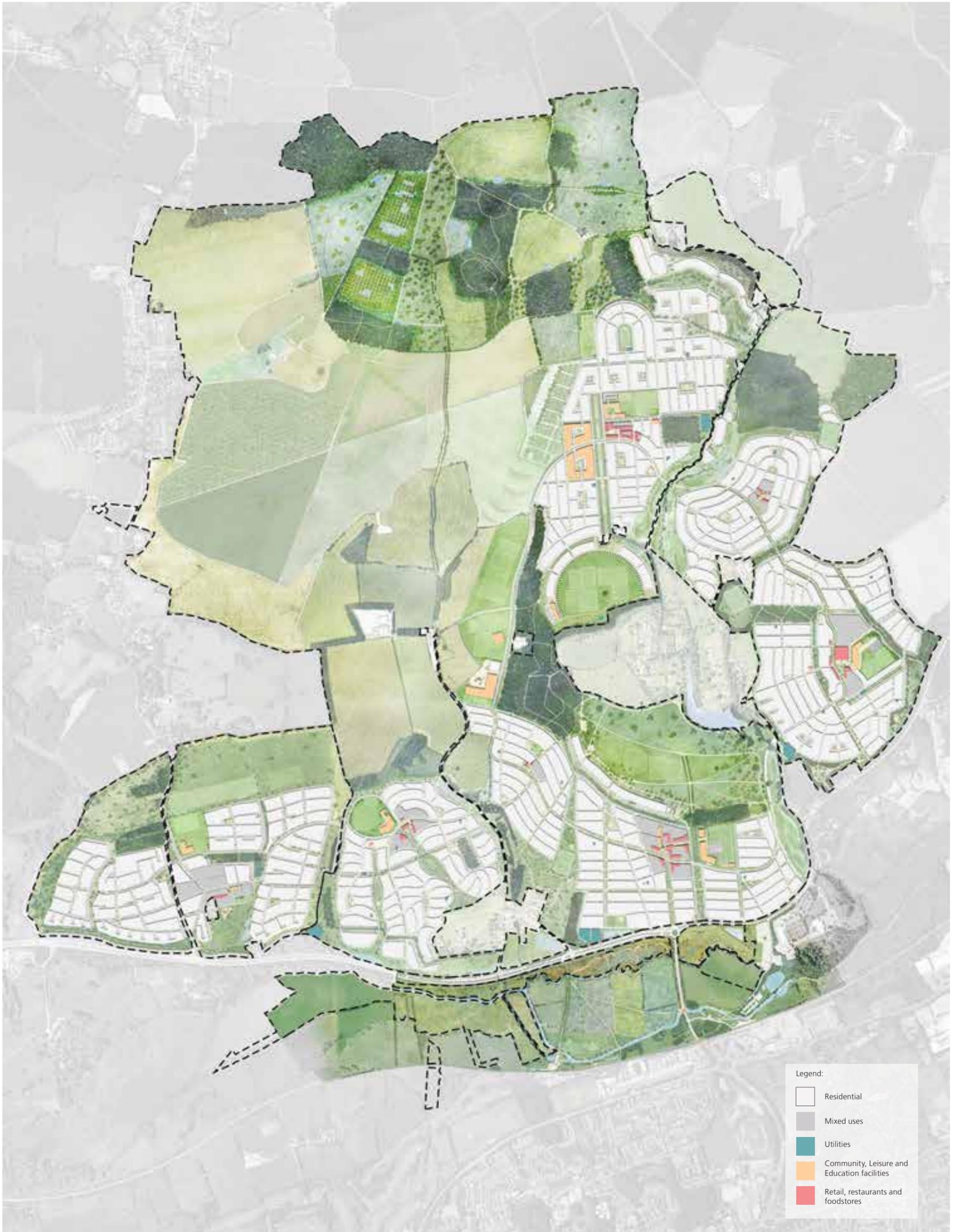
The edges to the open landscape allow the residential neighbourhoods alongside to benefit from their proximity to this natural amenity and open space. These green spaces create a natural and open foreground to the frontages and access streets. This environment is tranquil and surrounded by gardens and nature. Lower density and massing is therefore proposed to provide a sensitive response.



Frontage to the landscape in Village 3 - based on the Illustrative Concept Masterplan



Frontage to the landscape in Village 4 - based on the Illustrative Concept Masterplan



Illustrative Concept Masterplan