



Neighbourhood
Development
Framework

**Holt
Town**
Wood Town

 MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Holt Town

A new woodland town in the city

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Foreword

This NDF has been prepared to guide the future development of Holt Town to drive the delivery of up to 4,500 new homes with supporting public realm, highways and other community infrastructure that will seek to deliver a safe, accessible, sustainable, and pioneering mixed-use, residential-led neighbourhood.



With a diverse population of close to 586,000 people, the City of Manchester is located at the heart of Greater Manchester, the largest conurbation outside of London. Manchester City Centre's remarkable transformation over the past 30 years has made it an exemplar of modern, urban renewal and a vibrant place where people want to live, work and play. The foundations are in place for the city to deliver significant housing growth and accelerate its trajectory and competitiveness on a global level for talent and investment, jobs and opportunities for its residents.

Holt Town sits between two significant drivers of growth. At one end is the world class Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, which now includes an entertainment district with the opening of Co-op Live. At the other end is the expanding City Centre, New Islington and Ancoats, with the latter being named as one of the 'coolest neighbourhoods in the world'. Going from a once thriving industrial district in the 19th century to an area of high levels of crime and dereliction by the 1990s to a highly popular City Centre residential neighbourhood with a significant amount of new housing, along with supporting infrastructure.

Holt Town is the missing link not only between these two areas, but also to link together the existing neighbourhoods of Miles Platting and Beswick. Now is the time to bring this new town in the city forward, building on the momentum of the existing and future regeneration planned.

This document aims to become a material planning consideration for any development activity planned in the area. The NDF has been prepared and is brought forward in line with national and local planning policy, including the key tenets of Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012), Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone (2024) and other material considerations, such as the Eastlands Regeneration Framework (2017). It supersedes elements of the endorsed Eastlands Regeneration Framework (2017) where they pertain to Holt Town.

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Executive summary

A pioneering NDF for a pioneering city

This Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) sets out Manchester City Council's ambitious vision for Holt Town. It captures a timely opportunity to explore innovative approaches to place-shaping, building from the ground up. It helps create a neighbourhood that is diverse, inclusive, future-facing, and sets a pioneering benchmark for urban growth in Manchester.

For years, Holt Town has remained largely untouched by the waves of economic transformation and regeneration that have reshaped its neighbouring areas, including Ancoats, New Islington, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

As a result, it stands today as an intriguing mix of industry, homes, waterways and woodland, reflecting a slower pace of change that contrasts with its rapidly evolving surroundings.

Despite visible signs of dereliction, Holt Town is home to at least 90 businesses and fewer than 100 homes. Creative industries and social enterprises have emerged in and around the historic mill buildings that line the Ashton Canal. Nature has also found its place here, with the convergence of the Ashton Canal and River Medlock creating a picturesque natural setting at the edge of Sportcity and the Etihad campus.

Holt Town presents an extraordinary opportunity to expand the reach of Manchester's growth, bridging the gap between two tremendous drivers of change; the City Centre to the west, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus to the east.

This NDF outlines guiding parameters for a mixed-use, residential led, diverse, climate-resilient neighbourhood that builds upon the layers of character that make Holt Town special.

A new woodland town in the city.



Fig. 1. Aerial framework illustration

Objectives of the NDF

The following objectives have guided the approach to the vision and illustrative framework presented in this document:



A new neighbourhood, inclusive and diverse

Holt Town is an opportunity to bring forward a new town in the city and grow a community that is inclusive and invites a variety of people looking for a home close to the economic opportunities of the City Centre, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.



Mixed use and rooted in place

Holt Town could be a layered and mixed-use place that weaves a variety of uses and services amid its heritage, as well as cultural and environmental features that contribute to its character.



Creative and entrepreneurial, bridging growth drivers

Holt Town can nurture creativity and entrepreneurship, building on the Area's existing success to further enhance economic prosperity.



Climate-resilient and sustainable

Holt Town can be an exemplar low-carbon, sustainable neighbourhood with climate resilience and nature embedded in its design, contributing to the City's net zero carbon targets set out in the Manchester Climate Change Framework.



Data-informed and digitally-enabled

Holt Town could become a pilot for digitally informed design, governance and management. The Digital Twin could help safeguard the principles of the NDF, while helping ensure that the neighbourhood adapts to the evolving needs of residents and the environment.



Healthy, compact and pedestrian-first

Holt Town can be a compact neighbourhood that prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling and offers a setting that promotes health and wellbeing.





Fig. 2. Holt Town as a bridging opportunity



2 Approach to the NDF

2.1 Purpose and status

The Holt Town NDF has been prepared to guide the future development and regeneration of Holt Town, a new woodland town in the City. It sets out the vision and aspiration for the Area and is intended to drive the quality of up to 4,500 new homes, public realm, highways, and other community infrastructure that will be required to deliver this vision.

Following endorsement at Manchester City Council’s Executive Committee this NDF is a material planning consideration for any development activity planned in the Area.

This NDF has been prepared and is brought forward in line with local and national planning policy, including the key tenets of Manchester City Council’s Core Strategy (2012), Greater Manchester’s Places for Everyone (2024) and other material considerations, such as the Eastlands Regeneration Framework (2017), which is summarised in Appendix 1. It supersedes elements of the endorsed Eastlands Regeneration Framework (2017) where they pertain to Holt Town.

The NDF is supplemented by a Public Realm Strategy that expands upon the aspirations for a landscape-led, climate-resilient development at Holt Town.



Core documents



NDF Executive Summary



Holt Town Neighbourhood Development Framework



Holt Town Public Realm Strategy

2.2 Framework area definition

The specific Holt Town area that this NDF applies to is set out in Figure 3 and is hereafter referred to as 'the Area'.

The Area occupies circa 30 hectares of land east of Manchester City Centre and is bounded by the existing areas of Miles Platting, Sportcity and Etihad Campus, Beswick, the Lower Medlock Valley, and New Islington and Ancoats. It is almost wholly located within the Ancoats and Beswick Ward with a small part of the northern Area located in the Miles Platting and Newton Heath Ward.

-  Holt Town NDF boundary
-  Piccadilly Station
-  Railway tracks
-  Metrolink stations
-  Facilities of interest / social infrastructure

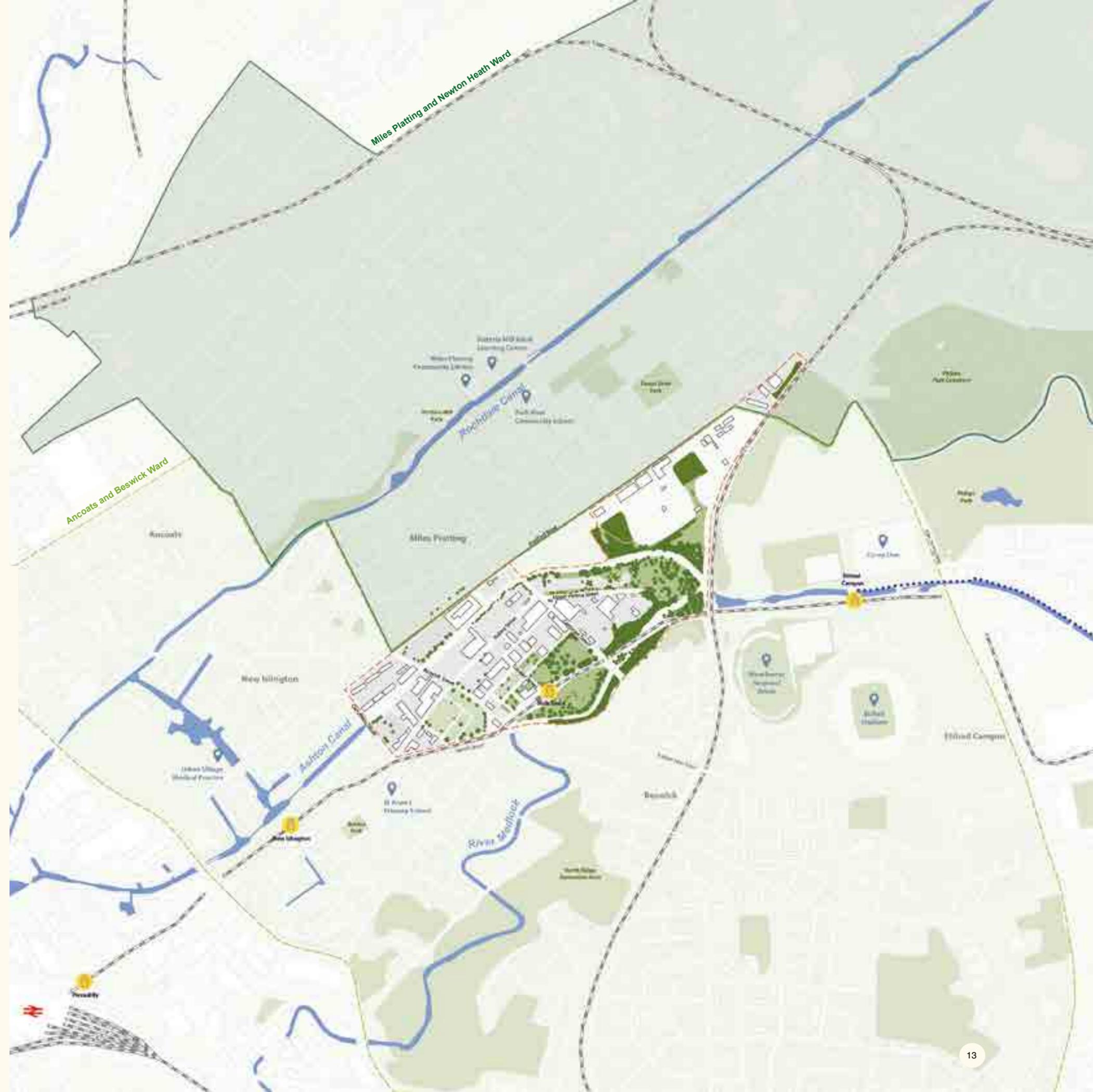


Fig. 3. Framework Area plan

2.3 Process

A pioneering NDF for a pioneering city

The preparation of this NDF has been iterative and transdisciplinary. It has been propelled by shared aspirations to deliver a framework that could enable pioneering change at Holt Town, building upon a supportive policy environment that prioritises residential and economic growth.

PREPARATION OF A DRAFT NDF



PUBLICATION OF A DRAFT NDF



24th JULY 2024 ENDORSEMENT OF THE DRAFT NDF

Endorsement of the draft NDF for public consultation by Manchester City Council Executive Committee

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT NDF



REVIEW OF FEEDBACK

Review of feedback received from the public and statutory stakeholder and revision of the NDF

REVIEW AND REFINEMENT OF THE NDF

Review and refinement of the NDF, considering comments received in public consultation, and from statutory and key stakeholders; and an iterative design process utilising the Holt Town Digital Twin.



SUBMISSION OF THE NDF

NDF submitted for endorsement by MCC's Executive Committee



22nd JAN 2025 FINAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE NDF

Final endorsement of the NDF by Manchester City Council Executive Committee

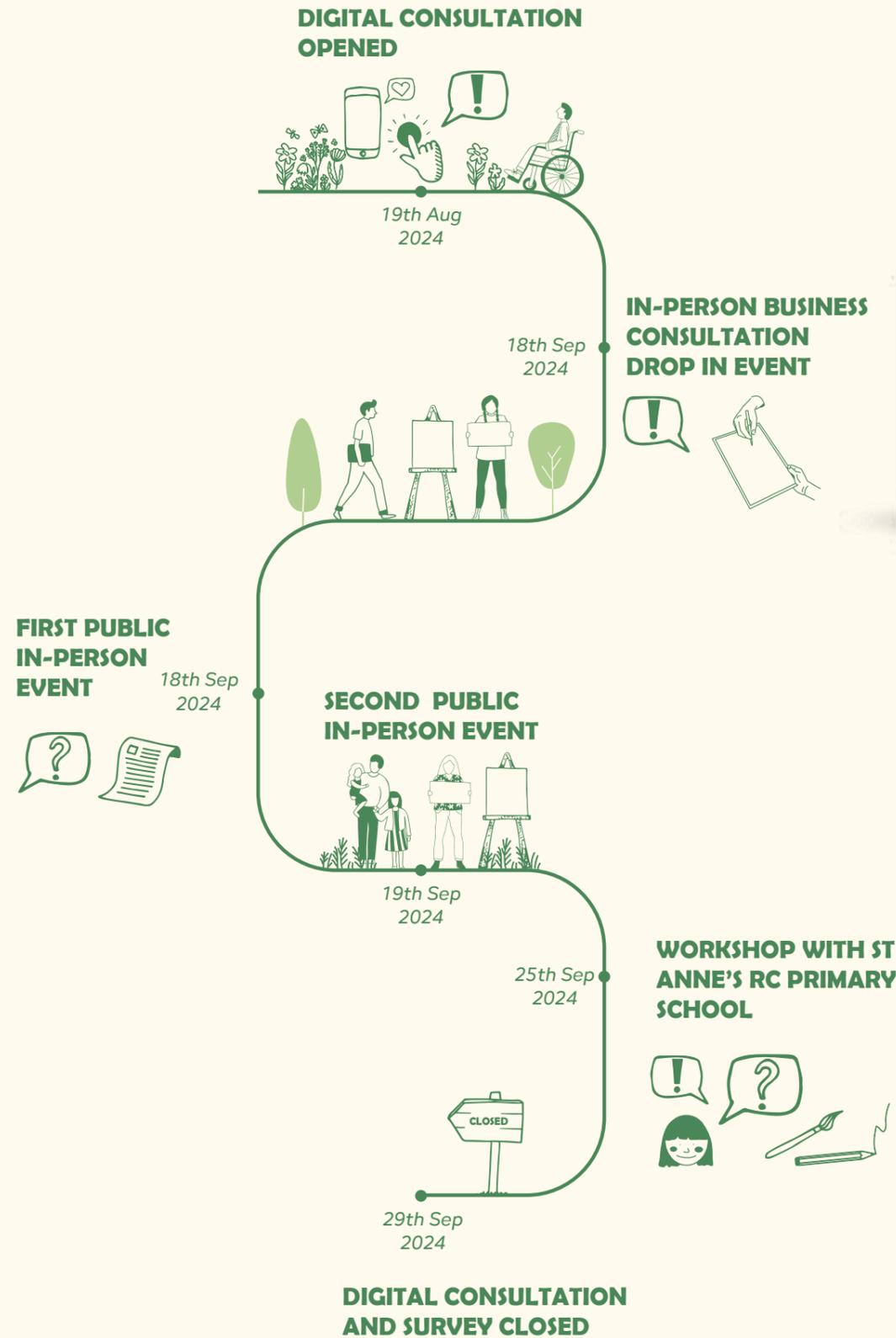
Digital engagement and public consultation: holttownwoodtown.com

This NDF has fully embraced the potential offered by digital engagement technology to reach a broad range of respondents, breaking down some of the typical barriers associated with more traditional consultation processes.

In order not to exclude people who are less comfortable with digital tools, the engagement approach has involved a combination of online outreach and in-person events.

Between August 19 and September 29 2024, the public and key stakeholders were invited to review the NDF and its associated illustrative proposals. The narrative for Holt Town Wood Town was hosted on a dedicated engagement platform, www.holttownwoodtown.com, which enabled visitors to navigate the framework and explore the objectives and design approach underpinning the Draft NDF.

The website directed viewers to an online survey which invited feedback on the main elements of the draft NDF, allowing for future decision making to be more focused. A general feedback section was also included in the survey, for people to provide broader responses.



Holt Town Wood Town

We want to hear your views
as part of Manchester City Council's consultation for the new Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) for Holt Town

Artist's sketch of how Holt Town could look

Holt Town is the area of East Manchester that sits between the economic drivers of the expanding City Centre, Sports City and the Etihad Campus. Alongside the diverse ecological setting of the Medlock Valley and the historic character of the Ashton Canal corridor, Holt Town can become a better rooted, layered and connected piece of the city. We want to transform this area of East Manchester into a new mixed-use neighbourhood. To regrow Holt Town like a woodland.

A new town in the city.

To learn more and give your views, please visit:
holttownwoodtown.com

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Scan to learn more

Snapshots of the Holt Town, Wood Town engagement website

Refer to Consultation Summary Report for more information.





Public Consultation Events

Two in-person consultation drop-in events were held at the Parish Church of the Apostles, Miles Platting, on the 18th & 19th September. Members of the local community were invited to view the consultation material across a number of presentation boards, with members of Manchester City Council and the consultant team on hand to address queries and questions.



Engaging with members of the community at Parish Church of the Apostles



Workshop with St Anne's RC Primary School

It was especially important for Manchester City Council to reach out to school children. An interactive workshop was held on 25 September at St Anne's RC Primary School to gather thoughts on the potential 'Play Link' and invite children to reflect on what makes a child-friendly city.



Engaging with school children at St Anne's Primary School, September 2024

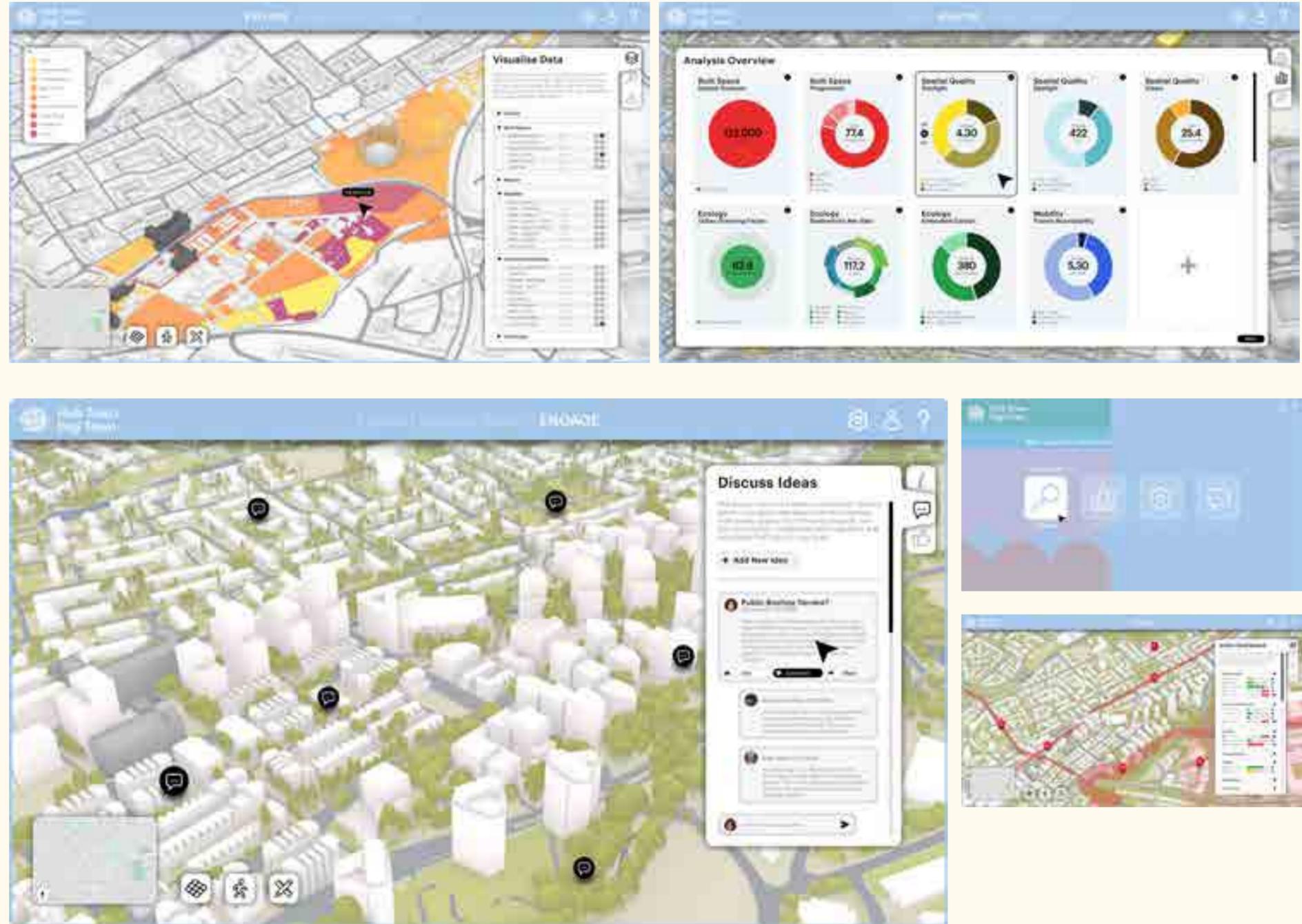
Harnessing technology with the Digital Twin

This pioneering NDF is one of the first planning documents in the United Kingdom to have been informed by the creation of a Digital Twin, a three-dimensional replica of Holt Town that has helped inform the design iterations that underpin the illustrative proposals.

The NDF is also accompanied by a Digital Placemaking report, authored by MVRDV NEXT, that explores ways in which the Digital Twin could be used in the future.

While the Digital Placemaking Report is not a material consideration, it sets out an innovative roadmap for what could be a first digital neighbourhood pilot for Manchester.

Holt Town has the potential to be an exemplar of a digitally-enabled neighbourhood. Innovative technologies, harnessed creatively and ethically, could better service the current and future needs of its communities. This will include the integration of smart technical infrastructure to enable the delivery of local digital solutions and services, created in collaboration with citizens.



Snapshots of the digital placemaking platform.

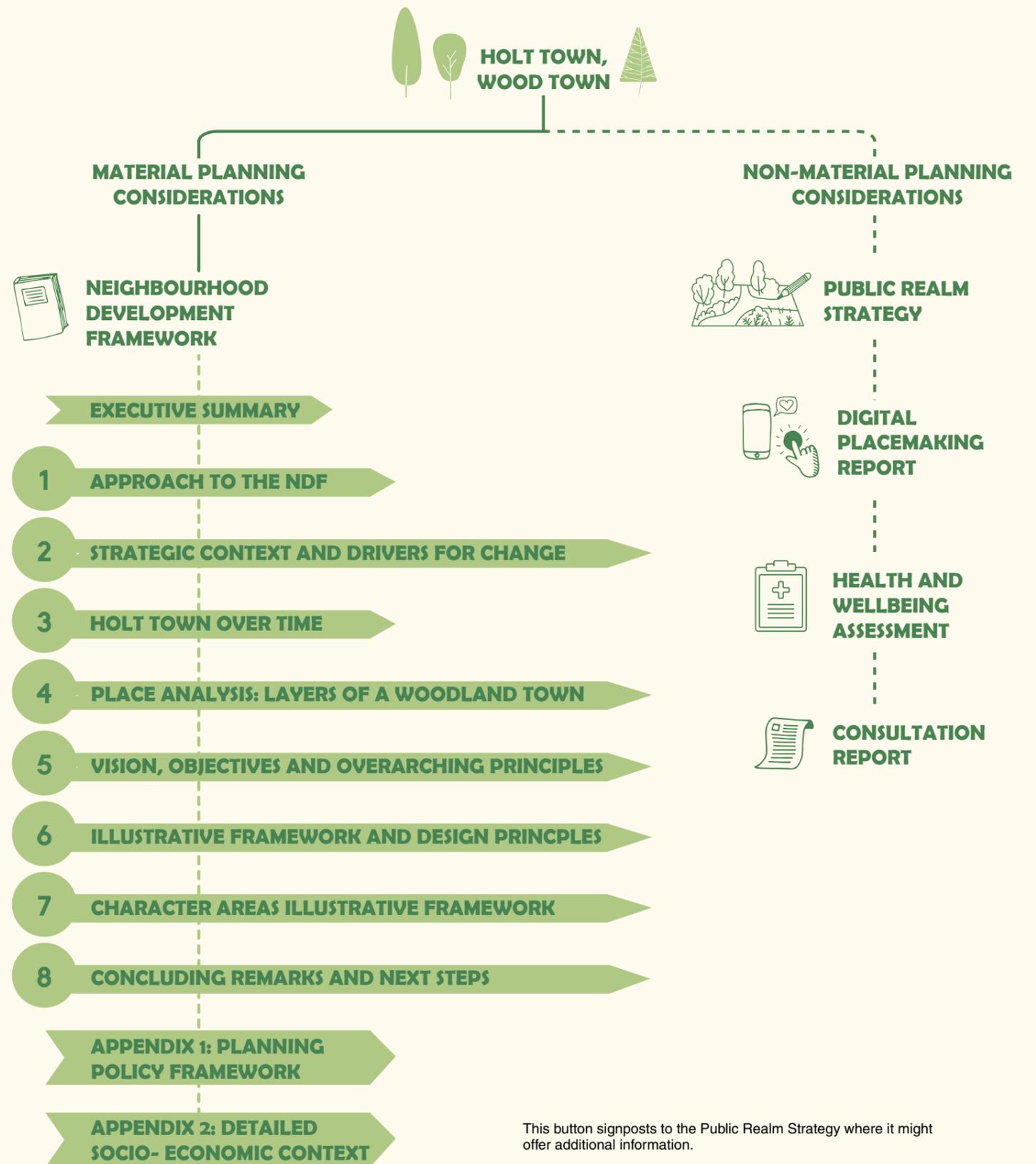
2.4 Document status and structure

This NDF has been drafted by Manchester City Council with support from Studio Egret West, Deloitte, MVRDV Next, Turley, Hilson Moran, Hatch, Deetu and AKTII.

The NDF is supplemented by a Public Realm Strategy that expands upon the aspirations for a landscape-led, climate-resilient development at Holt Town.

A Digital Placemaking Report has been prepared to inform the potential digital future of Holt Town as a pilot for smart neighbourhood design and management.

It is also informed by a Health and Wellbeing Assessment and a Consultation Report.





3 Strategic context and drivers for change

3.1 Strategic opportunity: the missing link,

Over the past 30 years, Manchester has grown to become an exemplar of urban transformation, particularly as the City Centre has become a large, established residential community in its own right. Today, it is a sought-after place to live, work, and play. It is home to an expanding population, at the heart of Greater Manchester, which encompasses circa 3 million inhabitants. It has strong foundations upon which to continue its trajectory to be a national and international exemplar for city living and economic dynamism.

Holt Town is fundamental to realising this growth trajectory.

While by no means a clean slate, Holt Town is an unprecedented opportunity for Manchester to test pioneering, future-facing approaches to neighbourhood creation, from the ground up. It is strategically positioned and occupies circa 30 hectares forming a threshold between two major drivers of growth and established residential communities.

To the east is the world-class Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, which now includes an entertainment district with Co-op Live playing a pivotal role in ambitions to continue developing the area as a source of community, employment, and economic opportunity for Manchester.

To the west is the expanding Manchester City Centre, which has seen the population living within one mile of Piccadilly Gardens growing from 11,000 in 1991 to 85,000 in 2021¹. The Ancoats and New Islington neighbourhoods sit on the immediate western Holt Town boundary with the City Centre and demonstrate Manchester's track record in tackling post-industrial decline, particularly through residential growth. Named one of the 'coolest neighbourhoods in the world'², Ancoats and New Islington has evolved over time, from a once thriving industrial district in the 19th century, to an area with high levels of crime and dereliction by the 1990s. It is now a highly popular City Centre residential neighbourhood with significant quantum of residential development and a wealth of amenity for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The regeneration of Ancoats and New Islington provides a positive context for Holt Town as a new place in the City.

To the south of Holt Town is the neighbourhood of Beswick and to the north is Miles Platting. Over the last decade, East Manchester, including these neighbourhoods, has seen significant residential development, with the transformation of a 264-acre housing estate into a vibrant urban village in Miles Platting; and the Grey Mare Lane Estate Regeneration Masterplan (2024) in Beswick set to deliver 1,000 new and refurbished homes. Holt Town provides an opportunity to further enhance housing choice, access to shops and services and employment opportunities for residents of its' neighbouring communities in Beswick and Miles Platting.

As part of building Holt Town from the ground up, we can implement future-facing digital infrastructure and technology that can be used to transform public services, remove friction from day to day lives and build a healthier and happier place to live and work.

¹ GMCA Research Census 2021, May 2023, accessed 23.05.24

² Time Out Magazine 2018 and 2021

Fig. 4. A missing link in Greater Manchester



3.2 An important role in Manchester's regeneration journey

Holt Town's regeneration has the potential to expand the reach of Manchester's growing housing, creative, digital, office and tourism and hospitality sectors which have in recent years been captured by the City Centre core and immediate surrounding neighbourhoods. Along the Medlock Valley, between the bustle of Ancoats and New Islington and the dynamism of Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, Holt Town is the key to bridging the gap between significant growth areas.

Expanding and diversifying the housing market

Holt Town presents an opportunity to diversify the housing offer near the City Centre. The Census indicates that Manchester's population has grown by about 9.7% between 2011 and 2021. Future growth forecasts suggest a continued rise in housing demand as more jobs are created and the economy continues to grow.

In recent years, new homes in the City Centre have responded to the needs of a younger demographic. Manchester's higher education institutions have played a considerable role in driving demand, not least as 51% of its graduates go on to live and work in the city (one of the highest graduate retention rates in the country). This demographic tends to drive the demand for high-quality well managed accommodation to rent, particularly in the City Centre.

Manchester's residential offer now needs to expand to include larger and family-oriented homes to complement the City Centre and support the growth of the population in the inner City, particularly in areas of opportunity to the north and east. This requires fresh approaches to family neighbourhoods and associated public realm alongside access to green space, transport, and local services.

An evolving office sector

There is an opportunity at Holt Town to bring forward commercial development that complements and expands the existing office offer. Manchester's office provision has averaged just over a million square feet per year since the Covid-19 health crisis, with between 300,000 sq. ft. (2014) and 2 million sq. ft. (2019) under construction in any given year. The market indicates that demand will continue to stay high as take up remains strong in locations such as the Central Retail Park site, NOMA, Circle Square, Embankment, and the Civic Quarter. Growth is anticipated in new strategic locations such as Mayfield, Electric Park and Sister Manchester.

Part of this business appeal is both the agglomeration benefits of the City through the co-location of like-minded businesses in addition to its regional, national, and international connectivity, driven by the City's investment in the Metrolink, bus corridors and rail linkages, alongside a well-connected international airport. Holt Town can build upon this success.

High-quality and affordable spaces are especially in demand to support the creative sector and support businesses' push to seek differentiation and offer competitive employee experiences. Holt Town could make the most of the opportunity for new smaller spaces for SMEs and smaller businesses, which have traditionally been limited.

Tourism and hospitality

Holt Town could also benefit and support the City's growing tourism and hospitality sector, not least given its proximity to Piccadilly Station and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. Since 2015, 33 hotels have been delivered across Manchester, amounting to 5,948 new hotel rooms. The City's recognition as a 'must-see' destination by leading travel publications continues to support the city's brand, rooted in its variety of cultural offerings, including football, live music, cultural events, museums, galleries, and an ever-improving food and drink scene.

A dynamic digital sector

Holt Town could grow a strong digitally-enabled identity that draws from Manchester's digital sector, which is widely regarded as one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing hubs in the UK. This vibrant ecosystem is characterised by a diverse mix of tech start-ups, scale-ups, established digital agencies, and global technology firms. With a robust infrastructure, skilled workforce, and strong support networks, Manchester is well-positioned to lead the development of digitally-enabled neighbourhoods such as Holt Town.

The city's digital economy has seen significant investment over recent years, including the development of MediaCityUK in nearby Salford, home to world-leading media and tech companies like the BBC and ITV. Beyond media, sectors such as e-commerce, fintech, health tech, and artificial intelligence are thriving, driven by Manchester's high-calibre talent pool and excellent transport connectivity to other UK tech hubs.



Aerial photograph of Holt Town, looking towards Manchester City Centre

3.3 East Manchester's regeneration journey

Areas in East Manchester, such as Miles Platting and Beswick that neighbour Holt Town, have benefitted from investment in residential development in the last 20 years since the Commonwealth Games. The 2006 Miles Platting Neighbourhood Plan transformed a 264-acre housing estate into a vibrant urban village with 2,500 new and refurbished properties, and the final phase began construction in 2023, accompanied by new parks, landscaped public spaces, and tree planting. The Grey Mare Lane Estate Regeneration Masterplan, south-east of the Holt Town area, aims to deliver 1,000 new and refurbished homes.

Ancoats and New Islington, once considered outside the City Centre, now sit within it following a boundary extension in 2016. 3,000 new homes have been built in Ancoats, with a further 1,500 planned in Phase 3. The Ancoats and New Islington NDF has guided regeneration to create an attractive residential-led neighbourhood with diverse uses.

The most comprehensive regeneration outside the City Centre has occurred at the Etihad Campus. The relocation of Manchester City Football Club post-Commonwealth Games, alongside investment in housing, sports, entertainment, and leisure facilities, has been transformative for the City and East Manchester. Successive Frameworks for the area, reinforce this transformation, highlighting employment-led developments around the Etihad Stadium and the future Sport and Innovation Zone adjacent to Holt Town.

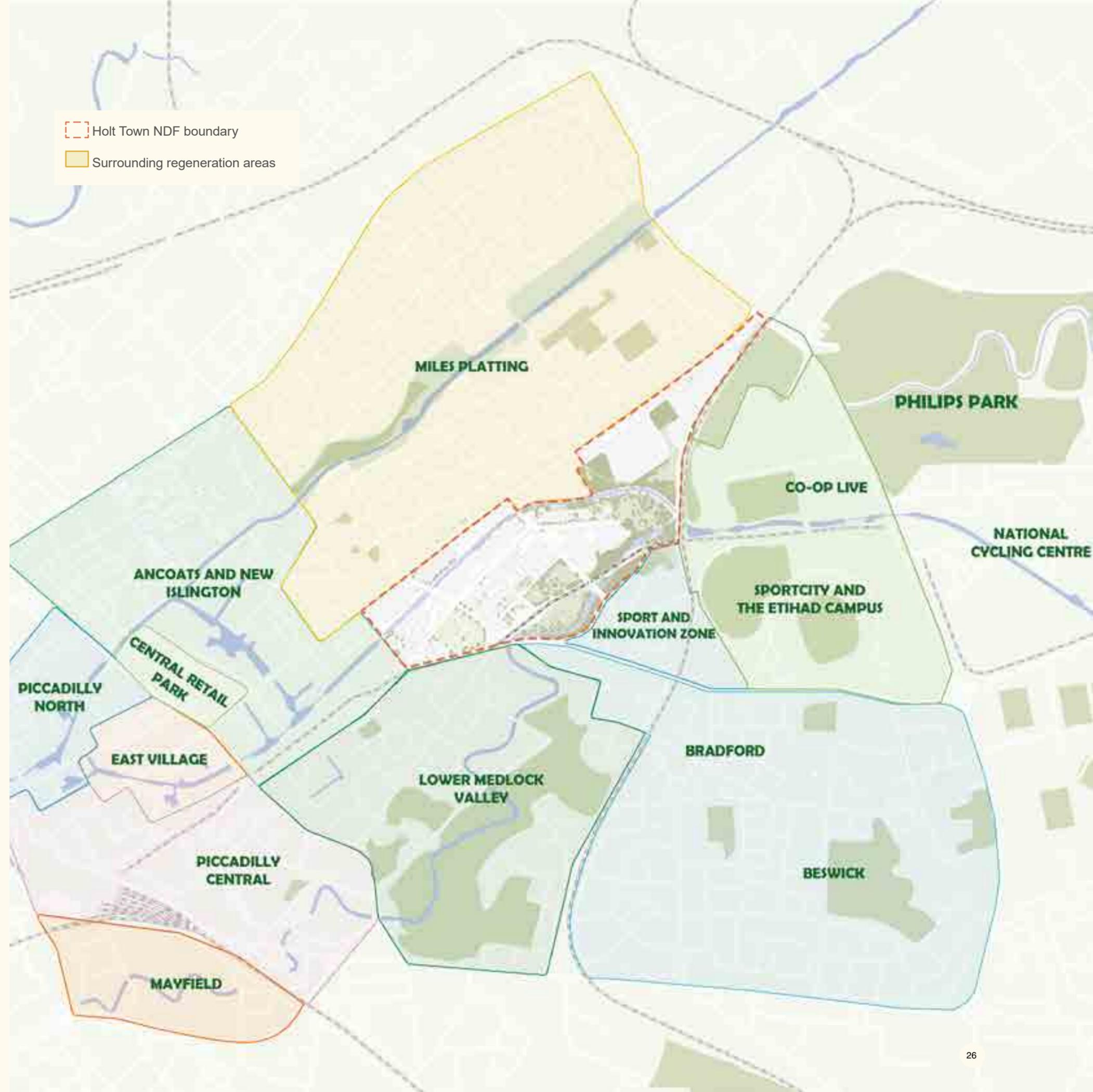


Fig. 6. Emerging context of Holt Town

Population

Manchester has a relatively young growing population, attracted by the many economic, educational, cultural and lifestyle opportunities that the City has to offer. A growing population creates a need for a choice of homes, with many households preferring to live close to the employment and amenities of the City Centre in locations such as Holt Town.

As the City's population grows, so too does the spending power of residents which in turn helps to support the City's thriving economy and 'anchor' new retail, food and beverage and creative businesses in the City Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. Holt Town is a neighbourhood that can become home to thousands of residents – providing an opportunity to capture spending power locally and provide shops and services as part of the mixed-use community.

Health and wellbeing

Health outcomes in Manchester are generally poorer in comparison with Greater Manchester as a whole and nationally. The NDF provides an opportunity to address this in Holt Town. The mixed-use framework will also promote the need for new health facilities for the new and existing community. As well as this, leisure, recreation and other health-related uses will be promoted to compliment residential uses.

Education and skills

East Manchester Academy is not reaching its full potential. This NDF can help to provide opportunities for young people by improving access to educational and employment opportunities, supported by a specific social value strategy for Holt Town.

Housing

There is great housing demand in Manchester particularly in the 'inner area of the City region' of the Core Growth Area as identified in Places for Everyone (2024) - the area within which Holt Town is located.

As a growing City, Manchester needs to provide for a range of different housing needs. This includes the need to provide different sizes and types of homes to continue to attract newly forming households; and to retain residents as their housing needs change over time, including the provision of family homes and opportunities for downsizing and later living.

Providing a choice of housing tenures and providing affordable homes is also important in ensuring that the City is inclusive and fair. Holt Town has a unique contribution to make to meeting housing needs, providing a choice of homes to suit a range of budgets within a sustainable new urban neighbourhood.

Business

Holt Town has an established business base with a notable creative industries sector. Holt Town has the potential to grow its business base, where it has strengths and where uses are compatible with a mixed-use neighbourhood.

Retail and leisure

The local neighbourhood retail and food and beverage offer is limited and this could be addressed through the NDF. There is potential for the local retail and food and beverage sectors in Holt Town to grow, drawing on the spending power of new residents as well as that associated with visitors and workers at Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

Arts and culture

Holt Town has an established arts and culture community that has the potential to grow further and to become a distinct feature of the new community.

Transport and connectivity

Local connectivity within the Area can be improved through the NDF. Whilst already benefitting from a Metrolink station within the Area and mainline train station access within walking distance, connectivity across the area through to neighbouring districts is weaker. The NDF aims to offer options for better routes within the Area and into these neighbouring districts.

Digital

As part of creating a new residential neighbourhood in Holt Town, excellent digital infrastructure, and the ethical and smart use of new digital technologies, can be used to transform public services, create new economic opportunities, and play a central role in the new neighbourhood's long term prosperity.

Climate change and sustainability

Holt Town has the opportunity to be transformed into a new residential neighbourhood. The approach to this should be aligned with Manchester's Climate Change Framework. Existing and new buildings, renewable energy and inter-related nature-based solutions could all be part of the approach to delivering new infrastructure.

Natural environment

Holt Town has many blue and green features, but these are not fully accessible to the community. The NDF could address how to make best use of these, as well as enhancing them.



4 Holt Town over time

Holt Town over time

From Holt Town's beginnings as Manchester's first 'factory colony' to this day, the history of Holt Town provides a valuable foundation for establishing future objectives.

This section captures the journey of Holt Town across four key periods dating from its earliest settlement:

Holt Town, Factory Town

The period of intense industrialisation in which Holt Town originated.

Holt Town, Ghost Town

Holt Town's experience as part of the broader picture of East Manchester industrial decline, up until the 1990s.

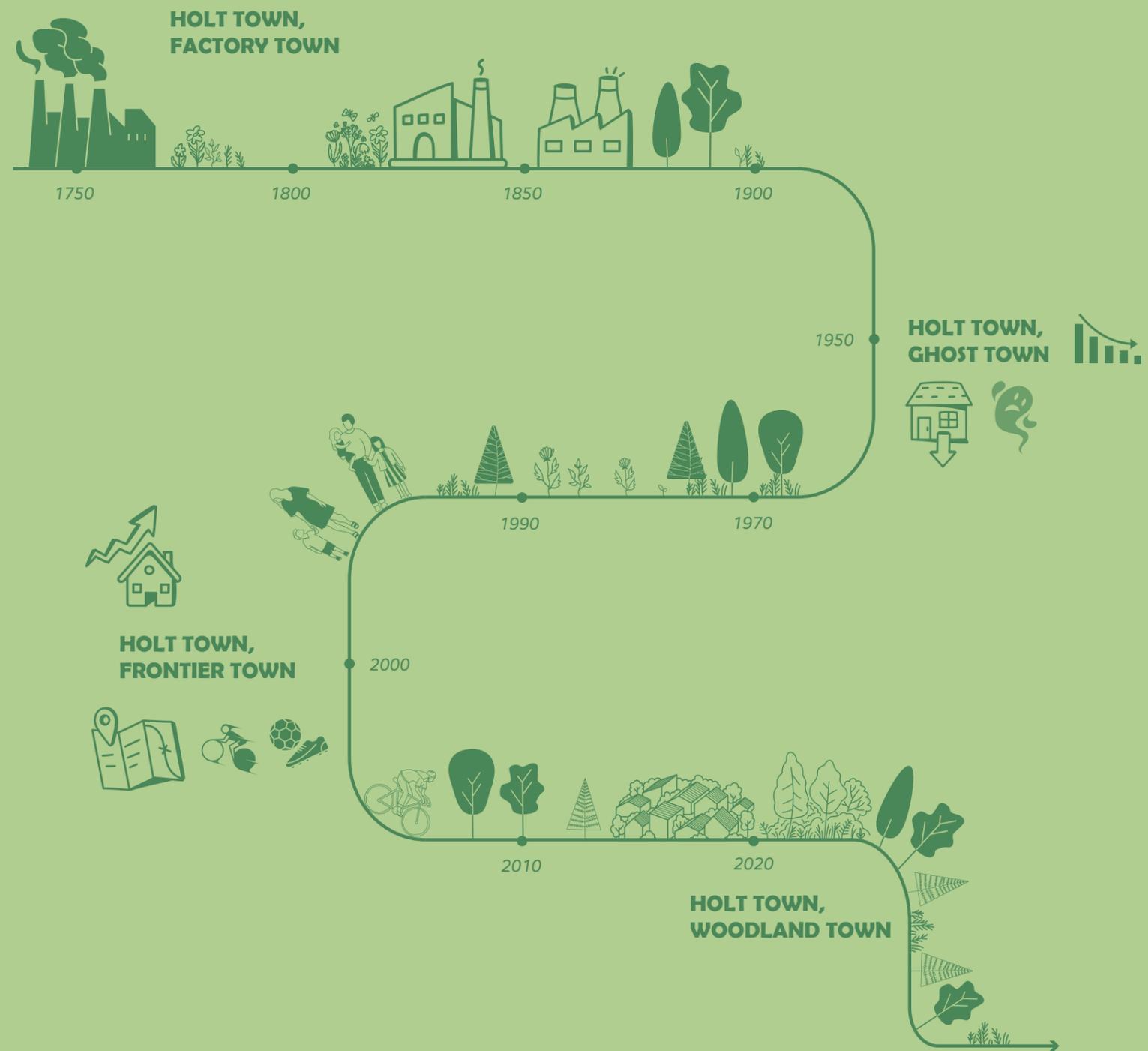
Holt Town, Frontier Town

Holt Town's position over the first two decades of this century. Surrounding areas are regenerated, but Holt Town remains untouched.

Holt Town, Woodland Town

Holt Town today, with a fabric of raw nature comprehensively embracing the Area.





4.1 Holt Town, Factory Town

The inception of Holt Town as a settlement was the idea of David Holt, an industrialist and entrepreneur who set his mind to establish Manchester's first factory colony in 1785. It comprised a mill complex and twenty-seven homes for workers and managers.

At the time, Holt Town was very much isolated from Manchester's core. Early maps depict it amidst open land, with a reservoir and brick fields. A small number of villas were built to house executives, including David Holt himself. These include Medlock Hall, Gleden Hall, and Medlock Bank.

Holt's venture proved unsuccessful, and his business was bankrupt by 1794. By the mid-19th century, the villas had been demolished as affluent property owners moved away from the increasingly industrialised area. Holt Town was soon absorbed by Manchester's expanding industrial core.

While Holt Town's early street pattern persisted, the surrounding area adopted a grid-like layout, dominated by mills and industrial buildings with some terraced homes. Parts of the original Holt Town survived into the mid-20th century but were eventually demolished, leaving no remaining structures today.



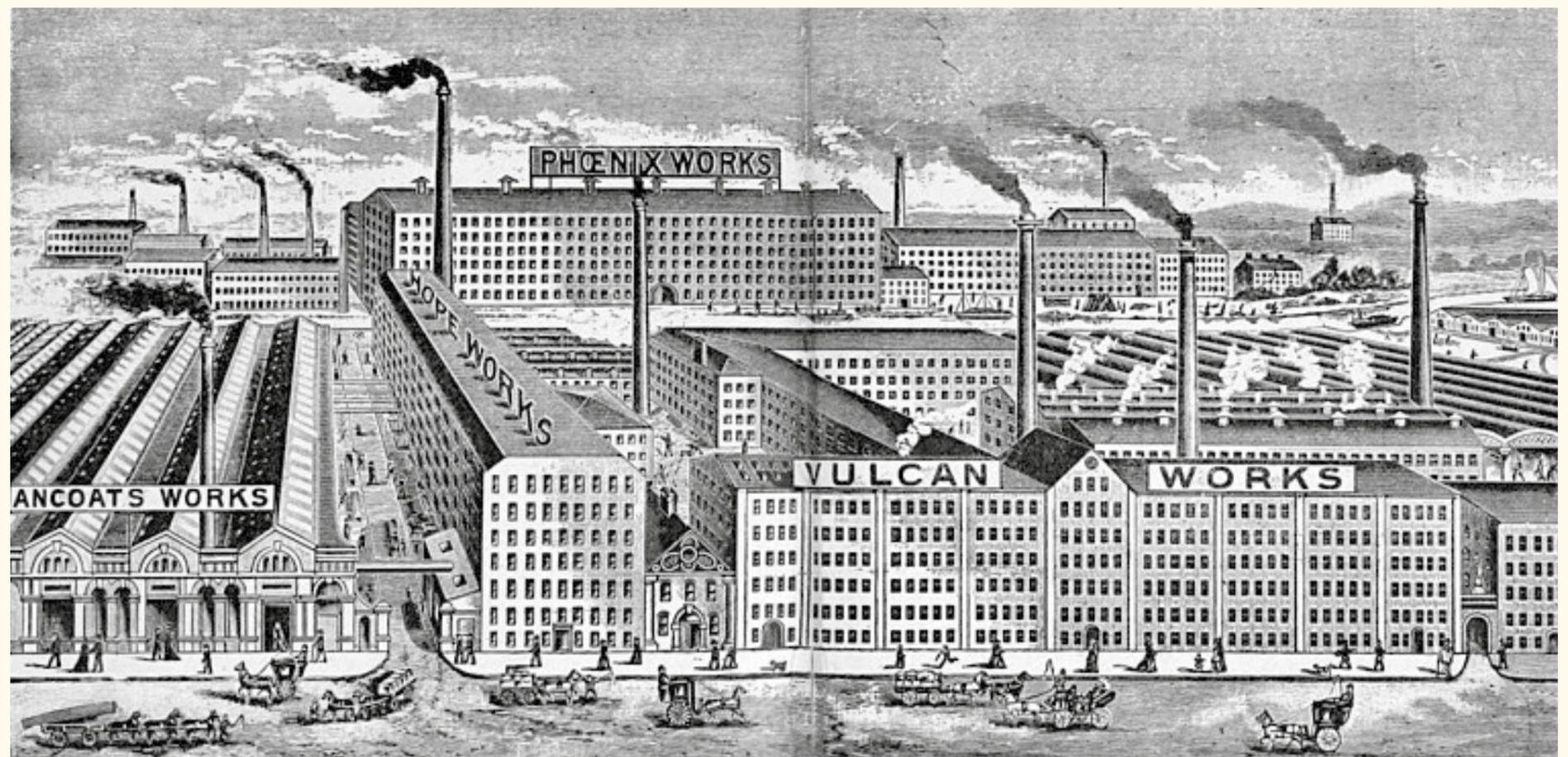
Holt Town Reservoir 1860



Holt Town 1888-1915



River Medlock, Holt Town Bridge 1906



John Hetherington & Sons' textile machinery works on Pollard Street, Ancoats, 1896



Ancoats Works

Hope Mill

Spectator Mill

Wellington Mill

Brunswick Mill

Bengal Mill

Ashton Canal

Bradford Road Gas Works

Holt Town aerial photograph, 1946

4.2 Holt Town, Ghost Town

With post-industrial decline, underinvestment, and dereliction, Holt Town became a disjointed area with pockets of life and nature, searching for an identity, particularly from the 1970's onwards. The looming silhouette of the Saxon Street gasworks came to symbolise the area's barren industrial landscape in popular culture. Amid the decay of the street infrastructure and apparent lack of maintenance of the public realm, pockets of vegetation and tree groupings seem to have found a way to reclaim this part of Manchester. This contrasting urban landscape, blending industrial and woodland character, sets the stage for future efforts to regrow Holt Town.



View from Upper Cyrus Street towards the former gas holder



View from Cambrian Street towards Brunswick Mill



Pockets of significant dereliction by Upper Helena Street



Ashton Canal and Hope Mill



View from Cambrian Street towards the former gas holder



View towards the former gas holder



CityLink and Metrolink tracks



Pockets of greenery



River Medlock





Pockets of woodlands

Pockets of open areas

Fragmented historic urban grain

Light industrial uses

Aerial photograph looking towards Upper Helena Street

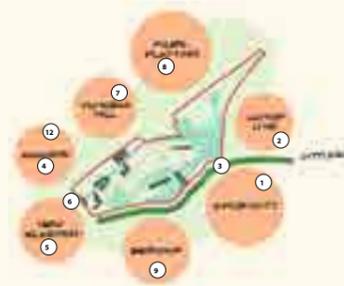
4.3 Holt Town, Frontier Town

For years, Holt Town has remained largely untouched by the waves of economic transformation and regeneration that have reshaped its neighbouring areas, including Ancoats, New Islington, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

As a result, it stands today as an intriguing mix of industry, homes, waterways and woodland, reflecting a slower pace of change that contrasts with its rapidly evolving surroundings. To the west, Ancoats and New Islington have welcomed new homes along a revitalised canal setting. To the east, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus are establishing a global benchmark for sport, health, performance, and live events. Large-scale investment has been injected in communities to the north and south including Miles Platting and Beswick.

Holt Town represents a missing link in the series of neighbourhoods and communities that have grown along the Ashton Canal, and provides an opportunity to regrow this missing place.

Beyond physical change and spatial connectivity, Holt Town also is an area of priority for digital connectivity and presents an opportunity to harness digital enhancements for growth and inclusion.



Sportcity and the Etihad Campus



Co-op Live



CityLink



Ancoats



New Islington



New Islington, housing by the Ashton Canal



Victoria Mill in Miles Platting



Miles Platting



Beswick



Sportcity and the Etihad Campus

Beswick

Lower Medlock Valley

Aerial photograph looking towards Sportcity and the Etihad Campus

4.4 Holt Town, Woodland Town

Perhaps the most noticeable change over the past 20 years has been the pervasive presence of nature at Holt Town. Amid the patchwork of streets, buildings, and structures that characterise the place today, pockets of vegetation have reclaimed parts of the site, laying the foundation for a new concept 'Woodland Town,' that is at the heart of the approach to this NDF.

Today, amongst the beginnings of this woodland, Holt Town features a small number of residential properties alongside remnants of its industrial past. Converted mills along the Ashton Canal have taken on a new life and purpose as incubators of creative and cultural industries. A variety of light industrial and warehousing businesses are all present.

Light industrial uses have spilled out into the public realm with the streetscape being dominated by vehicles and materials associated to the businesses located within the site. Pockets of significant dereliction and disrepair are prominent in more isolated areas of the site. The historic urban grain feels fragmented with areas of activity isolated by open and expansive areas lacking programmed purpose or use.

This landscape has inspired an approach to the NDF that seeks to build upon this variety, enhancing existing nature while allowing a community to grow around it.



Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information.



1
Amenity grass



2
Broadleaf woodland and specimen trees



3
Semi mature park trees - mixed



4
Brownfield ecology - predominantly vegetated



5
Brownfield ecology - predominantly hardstanding



6
Self-seeded deciduous woodland - river corridor



7
Mature deciduous riparian woodland



8
Self-seeded pioneer trees



9
Meadow within floodplain



View along the River Medlock



5 Place Analysis: Layers of a Woodland Town

5.1 Heritage as a rooting anchor

Heritage has inspired a careful approach to celebrating the traces of Holt Town’s function over time. This section highlights some of the key framework-defining historic features and place memories.

The Ashton Canal

The Canal as a whole can be considered a non-designated heritage asset. The Ashton Canal was established in 1792 for the transport of coal from Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne to Manchester. It played a vital role in Manchester’s Industrial Revolution by facilitating the transport of heavy loads and raw materials. The canal’s banks became lined with mills, a prominent feature in historical maps and still evident along the towpath today.

The Mill buildings and other historic assets

Several designated and non-designated heritage assets remain that contribute to the Area’s distinctive character. Brunswick Mill (Grade II listed), dating back to 1839, exemplifies the area’s industrial heritage and the evolution of mill architecture. Its transition to electric power in 1908 highlights a forward-thinking approach to energy. The former Co-operative building on Bradford Road, constructed in the early 20th century, speaks to the social and economic movements of the time. Several Grade II listed bridges over the canal reflect the industrial area’s relationship with transport links for shipping goods. Adjacent to Bridge 5 are Bridge 5 Mill and Spectator Mill (Grade II listed), sitting to the northeast of Hope Mill (Grade II*) that was an old cotton spinning mill and is now home to Hope Mill Theatre.

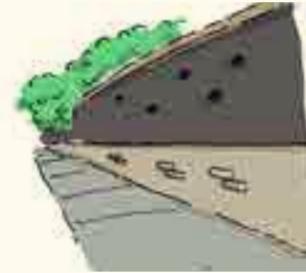
Other remnants of the industrial era include Wellington Mill; Ancoats Works; viaduct structures along Cambrian Street and New Viaduct Street; as well as retaining walls in and around the River Medlock

The Holt Town Reservoir

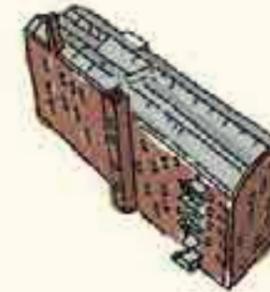
The Holt Town Reservoir was constructed in the 19th century to support Manchester’s booming industrial activities. It played a crucial role in providing water for various manufacturing processes and although it has now been filled in, the level change and retaining wall of its southern edge remain visible.

Memory of the gasworks

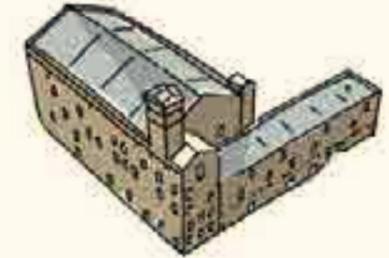
The sites of the former gas holders in Holt Town represent a pivotal era in the development of urban infrastructure and the area’s long history of energy production, complementing the legacy of the now-vanished Bradford Road Colliery. These striking towering structures were essential to the storage of coal gas. The latticework that characterised them is a testament to Victorian engineering and innovation. Contamination remains in the ground and constrains the nature of development in this location.



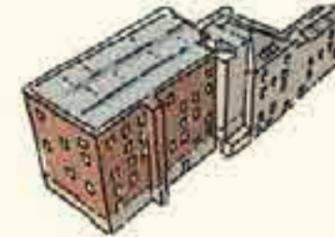
1 Former reservoir retaining wall



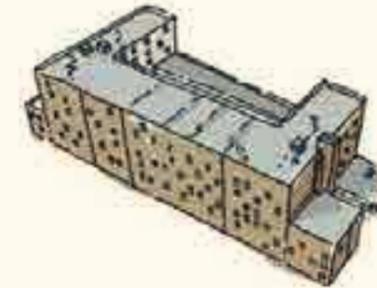
2 Hope Mill (Grade II*)



3 Wellington Mill



4 Spectator Mill (Grade II) & Bridge 5 Mill



5 Brunswick Mill (Grade II)



6 Phoenix Mill



7 17-33 Ancoats Works façade



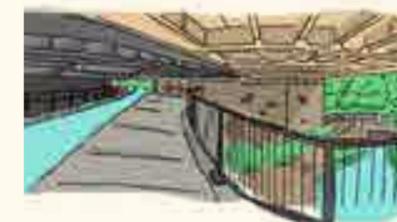
8 Bridge 4 over Ashton Canal (Grade II)



9 Bridge 5 over Ashton Canal (Grade II)



10 Viaduct Structures Cambrian Street



11 Viaduct Structures New Viaduct Street (Confluence point)

-  Holt Town NDF boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Metrolink stations
-  Facilities of interest / social infrastructure
-  Listed building or structure
-  Non-designated heritage assets
-  Retaining walls
-  Former Holt Town Reservoir
-  Water bodies - non-designated heritage assets
- ① Holt Town Reservoir Retaining Wall
- ② Hope Mill (Grade II*)
- ③ Wellington Mill
- ④ Spectator Mill (Grade II)
- ⑤ Brunswick Mill (Grade II)
- ⑥ Phoenix Mill
- ⑦ Ancoats Works
- ⑧ Bridge Number 4 (Grade II)
- ⑨ Bridge Number 5 (Grade II)
- ⑩ Viaduct Structures Cambrian Street
- ⑪ Viaduct Structures New Viaduct Street
- ⑫ Former gas holder site



Fig. 7. Existing heritage assets

5.2 Two waterbodies and a confluence of characters

Water plays a fundamental role in Holt Town's history and character, though its value is diminished by the poor quality of the river and canal settings. Both serve as key ecological corridors extending well beyond Holt Town.

The River Medlock

Holt Town's location along the River Medlock places it on one of Manchester's most picturesque ecological corridors. Flowing south of the Area, the Medlock runs alongside the Metrolink tracks before joining the Ashton Canal at New Viaduct Street. It connects a broader ecological network from Strinesdale Reservoirs in the Pennine moors to the River Irwell in Castlefield, covering about 10 miles.

The Ashton Canal

The Ashton Canal, lined by historic mill buildings, holds both ecological and heritage value. Its towpath offers a key walking and cycling route linking the City Centre, Sportcity, and beyond. Improved connectivity, such as pedestrian and cycle bridges, could enhance north-south links.

Traditional drainage systems, such as roadside gullies, dominate the streets, but there is potential to introduce sustainable drainage solutions that improve rainwater capture and enhance the character of the streetscape.

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the blue infrastructure.



Fig. 8. Existing blue infrastructure

5.3 Woodland patches and a mosaic of habitats

Over time, the decline of Holt Town as an industrial force and economic driver has led to dereliction, allowing nature to reclaim parts of the landscape. Disused industrial sites now support a varied ecology of self-seeded species and open mosaic habitats. The banks of the River Medlock feature mixed and broadleaved woodland, scrub, modified grasslands, and neutral grassland within the floodplain. Tree lines throughout the area provide a fragmented but valuable sequence of canopy corridors.

This interplay of natural and industrial landscapes has informed a landscape-led approach to retain, enhance, and connect these ecological elements wherever possible.



Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the green infrastructure.

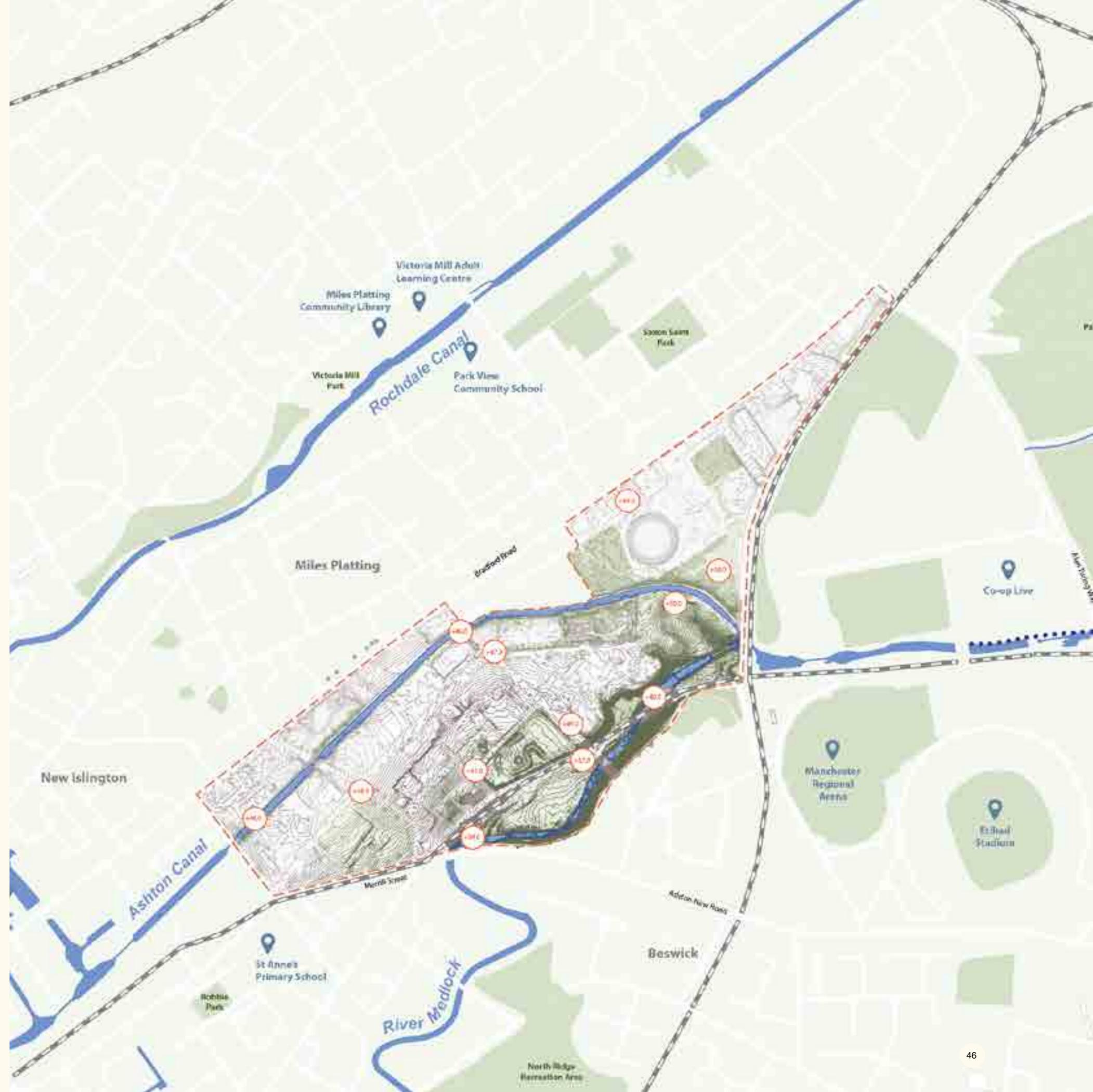


Fig. 9. Existing green infrastructure

5.4 Topography

Holt Town exhibits a layered topography that transitions from a relatively flat northern area to the Lower Medlock Valley. This transition includes a ridge-like setting along the Ashton Canal, and a steep terracing landscape leading to the Metrolink station. Remnants of the Holt Town Reservoir form a singular embankment overlooking the valley. This varied topography not only adds visual interest but also influences the Area's layout and the potential for redevelopment that responds to the historical and geographical significance of the site

-  Holt Town NDF boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Facilities of interest / social infrastructure
-  Contour lines



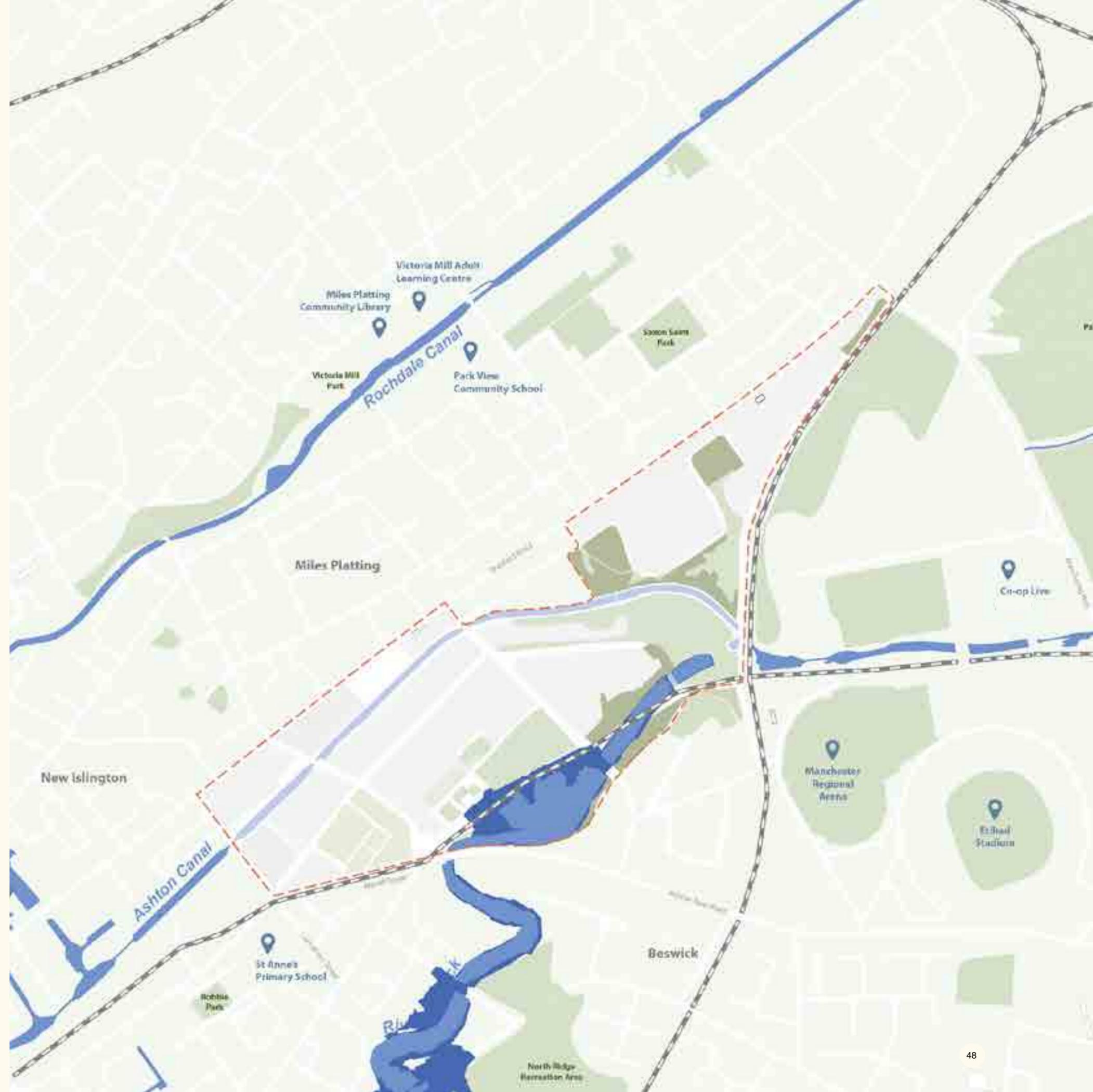
Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the topography.

Fig. 10. Existing topography

5.6 Flood risk

The River Medlock floodplain forms a distinct ecological corridor along the southern boundary of the Area. Flood Risk Zones 2, 3a, and 3b (Figure 5) constrain development of the area located south of the Metrolink Tracks. The need for appropriate flood mitigation offers an opportunity for a significant upgrade of the riverbank landscape, including a range of measures to support functional as well as recreational landscapes.

-  Holt Town NDF boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Facilities of interest / social infrastructure
-  Flood Zone 2
-  Flood Zone 3



Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the flood risk.

Fig. 12. Flood zone map

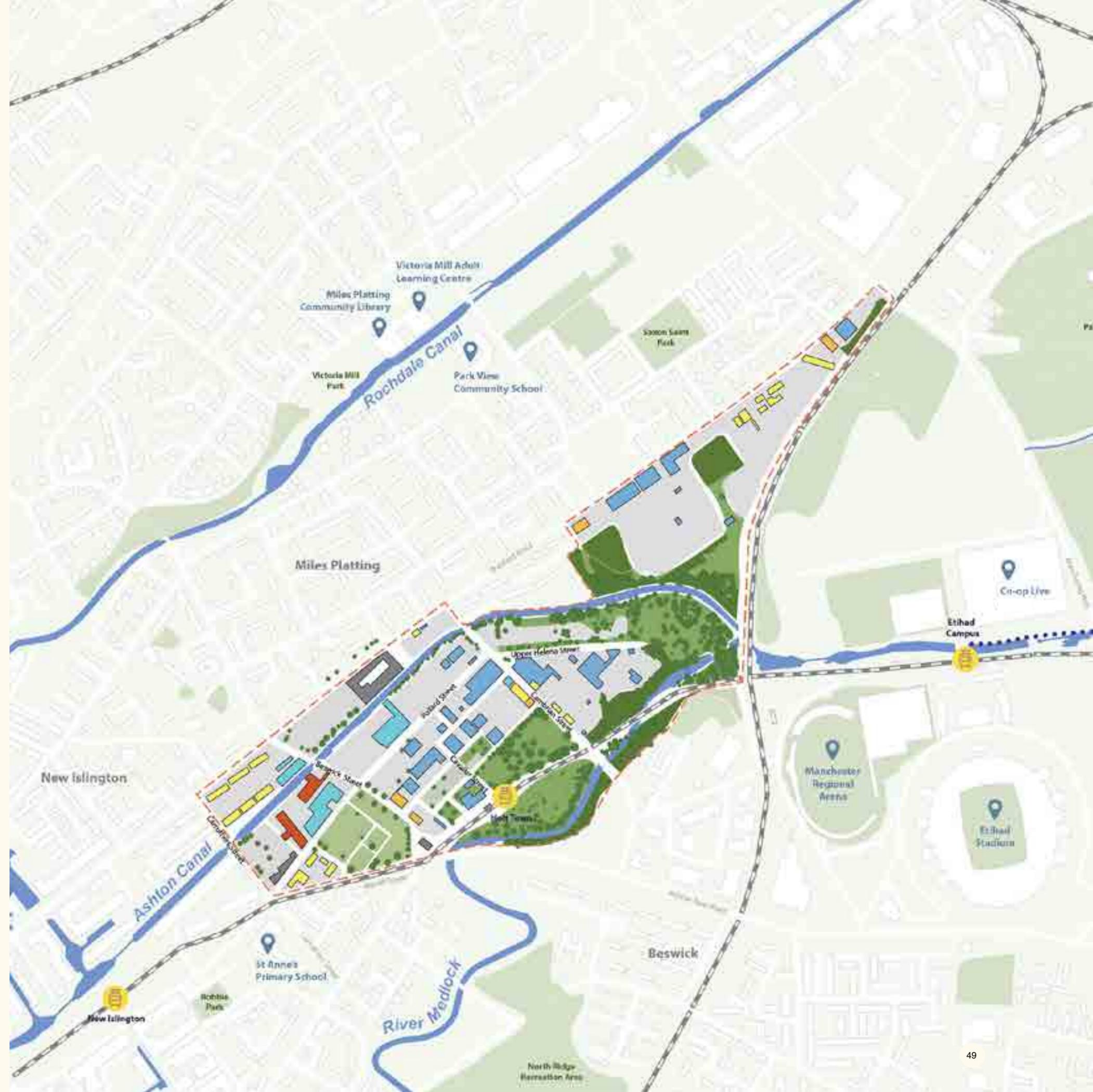
5.7 Building use

Holt Town's historic mills along the Ashton Canal have become a hub for creative and cultural enterprises, providing a foundation for social and emerging businesses to thrive. Amidst a 'ghost town' feel, a residential population of around one hundred people, along with pockets of nature, woodland, and creativity, have emerged, supported by at least 90 businesses and organisations in the area.

The area also hosts a mix of industrial businesses such as scrap metal facilities, car repair workshops, and storage units. While these businesses contribute to the local economy, their operations may not always align with the evolving vision for Holt Town as a vibrant and inclusive residential and mixed-use neighbourhood. As part of the regeneration effort, collaboration with existing businesses will be key, supporting those who wish to remain and thrive in the area to ensure a balanced and sensitive transition that reflects the community's aspirations.



Fig. 13. Existing building uses



5.8 Connectivity and linkages

Pedestrian and cycle network

Pedestrian and cycle routes are another vital element of Holt Town's transport ecosystem. The Area's 15-minute walking distance from the City Centre, coupled with the network of local streets and footpaths, make it highly walkable, though many people are discouraged from this due to safety concerns.

The Ashton Canal towpath serves as a more scenic route for both pedestrians and cyclists however this and the River Medlock currently act as physical barriers. Enhancing these waterways and improving connections via existing bridges, having regard to water safety considerations, could create a more cohesive and accessible network.

CityLink, a 25-minute walking route from Manchester Piccadilly Station to Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, also runs through the Area. This route was first created as part of the 2002 Commonwealth Games and has recently been upgraded following the opening of Co-op Live, including artwork and safety enhancements. There are opportunities for this route to be more utilised on non-event days and it is a clear benefit for the Area not only for future residents, but also for management of event day crowds.

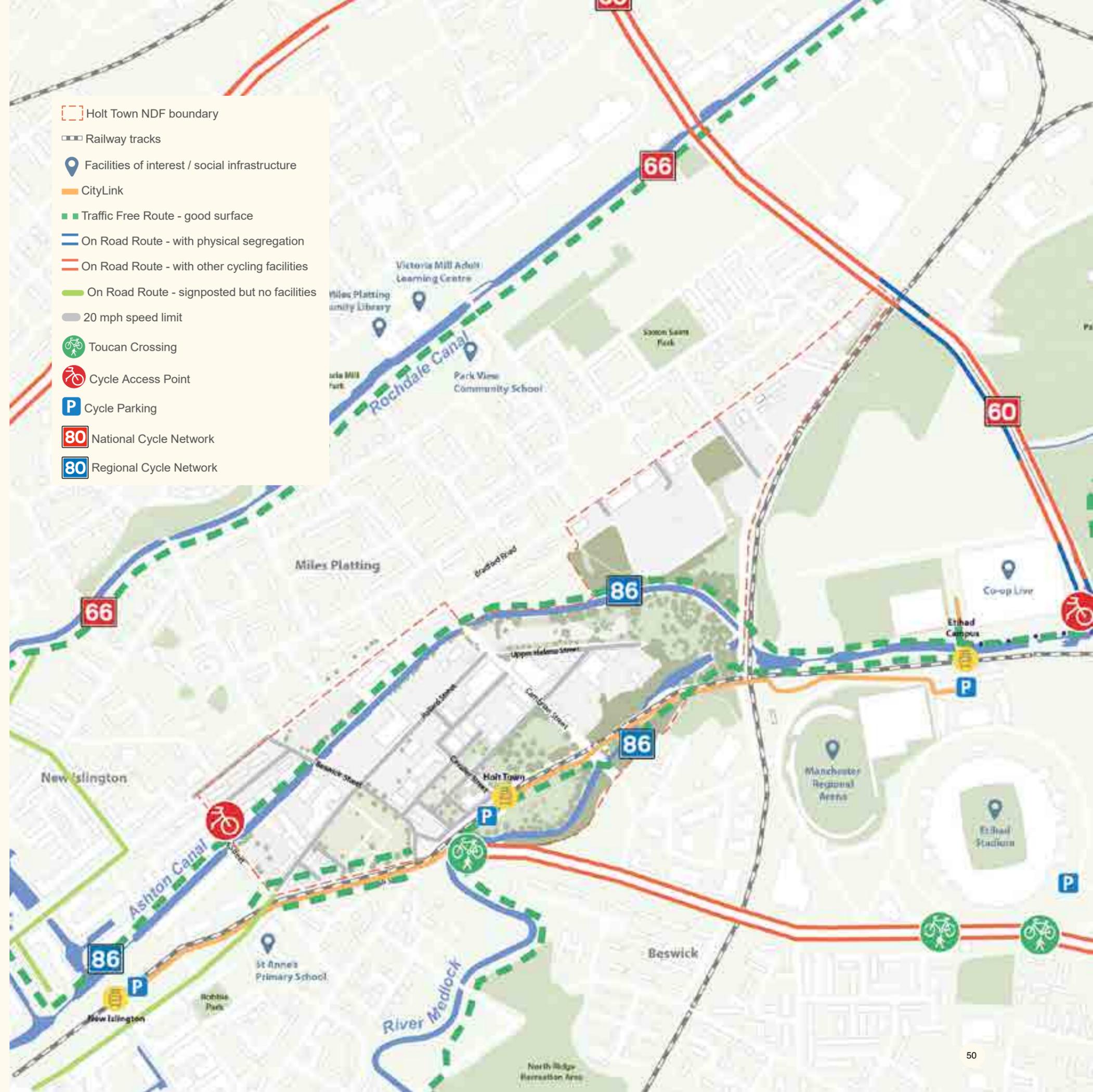


Fig. 14. Existing pedestrian and cycle network

Public transport

Public transport is a critical component of this vision. The Holt Town Metrolink station and local bus services already provide strong connections across Greater Manchester and to Manchester Piccadilly Station for regional and national rail connections. Additionally, local bus services offer frequent routes connecting Holt Town to neighbouring districts. Two primary bus corridors traverse the site: one along Bradford Road to the north and the other along Merrill Street and Ashton New Road to the south. Both routes feature multiple bus stops within a convenient distance of 300 meters from each other. These corridors are serviced by buses running at least every 10 minutes, facilitating efficient transit into and out of Manchester. Enhancements to the existing network of streets and movement infrastructure could seek to further improve access to these services.



Fig. 15. Existing public transport network

Road network

The Area is accessed via several key routes: Ashton New Road (A662) provides direct access to the east, connecting Holt Town to central Manchester and beyond. Alan Turing Way (A6010) runs southwards, linking the Area to Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

The area is bordered by Bradford Road, Carruthers Street, Merrill Street, the River Medlock, and the railway line, with a 20mph internal road network promoting safety. While private vehicles remain part of the transport mix, Holt Town NDF aims to shift towards sustainable alternatives while recognising the needs of some residents and visitors.

The Eastlands Resident Parking Scheme, covering the Area, replaced the previous Etihad scheme near Manchester City Stadium. The update was required due to the new 23,500-capacity Co-op Live venue. Operating daily from midday to 11 pm, the scheme ensures residents and visitors can park near their properties while allowing short-stay parking (up to 90 minutes) for local shops and businesses. A Parking Strategy will align with this scheme but may explore alternatives to formal schemes, integrating parking into placemaking to minimise its visual impact on the neighbourhood.



Fig. 16. Existing road network

5.9 Threshold and interfaces

Holt Town's proximity to major venues such as Co-op Live, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus brings high footfall to surrounding streets during events and match days. The primary spectator route from the City Centre runs along Merrill Street/Ashton New Road, bordering the site's southern edge, requiring careful planning to manage increased foot traffic.

Spectators from Ancoats, New Islington, and Manchester Victoria Station often use Cambrian Street and Beswick Street, routes not originally designed for such use, highlighting the need to address their integration with Holt Town's streets in the masterplan. The Ashton Canal towpath, a direct but underutilised route from the City Centre, could be enhanced to promote active travel options like walking or cycling. With recent CityLink upgrades connecting Holt Town Metrolink station to eastern venues, public realm proposals should prioritise improved connections to this pathway, ensuring efficient and accessible movement throughout the area.

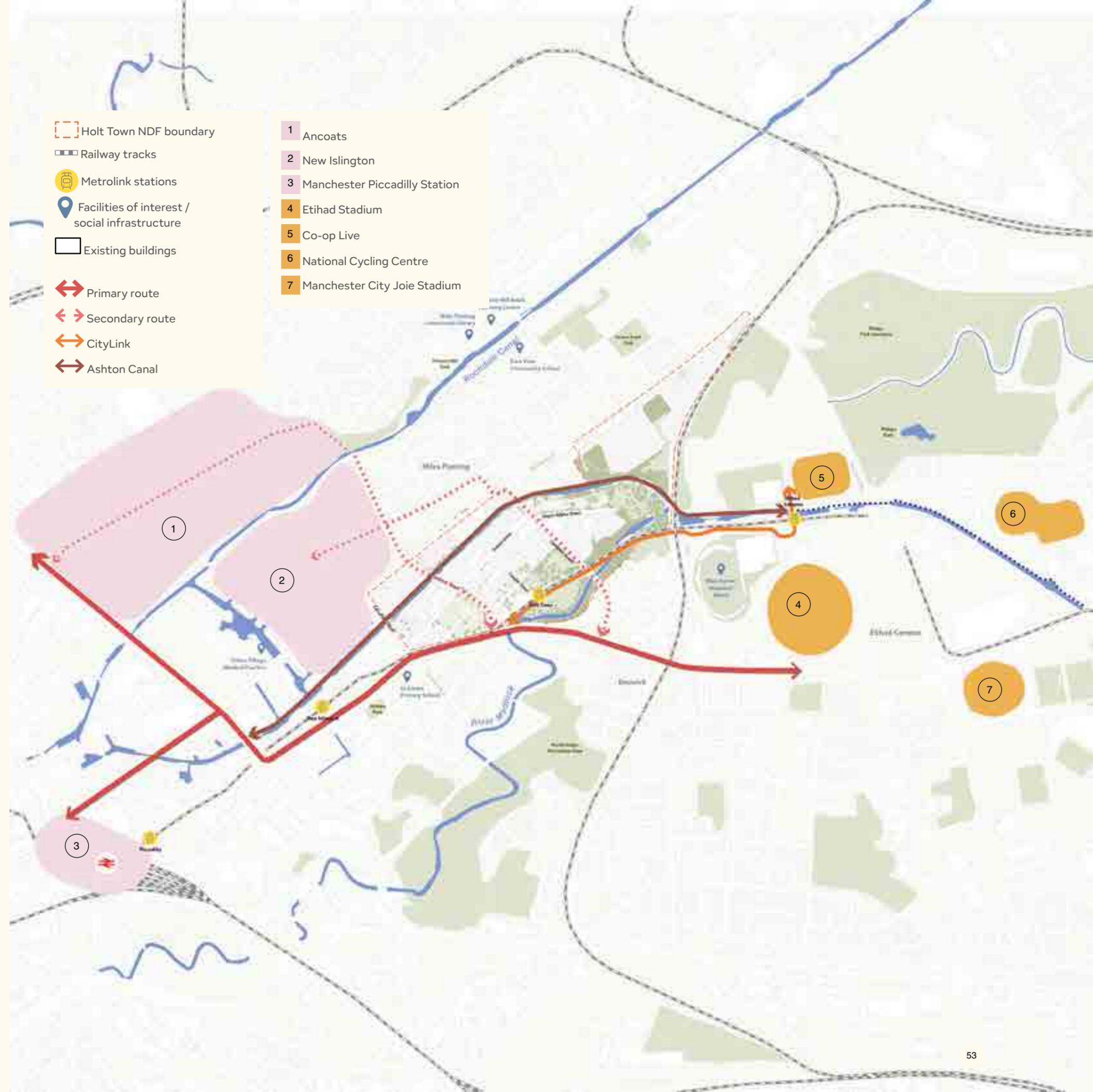


Fig. 17. Existing movement on match and event days



6 Vision, Objectives and Overarching Principles

6.1 Vision: Holt Town, Woodland Town

This NDF champions a vision of Holt Town as a Woodland Town, a new, vibrant urban district that embraces innovative approaches to shaping a neighbourhood that is diverse, inclusive, future-facing, and sets a pioneering benchmark for urban growth in Manchester.

Holt Town presents an extraordinary opportunity to expand the reach of Manchester's growth, bridging the gap between two tremendous drivers of change; the City Centre to the west, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus to the east.

This NDF outlines guiding parameters for a mixed-use, diverse, climate-resilient neighbourhood of up to 4,500 homes, that builds upon the layers of character that make Holt Town special, to bring forward an innovative residential-led neighbourhood. This NDF builds upon the fabric, history, entrepreneurship, and ecology of Holt Town to establish the foundations for economic transformation and inclusive growth, deeply rooted in place.

At the heart of this regenerative approach is a commitment to social, physical, and digital connectivity and the modern, flexible infrastructure that is required to support this. Amenity and social provision will be prioritised, alongside a network of new and existing routes transforming Holt Town to be a safe, accessible place for residents, businesses, and visitors.

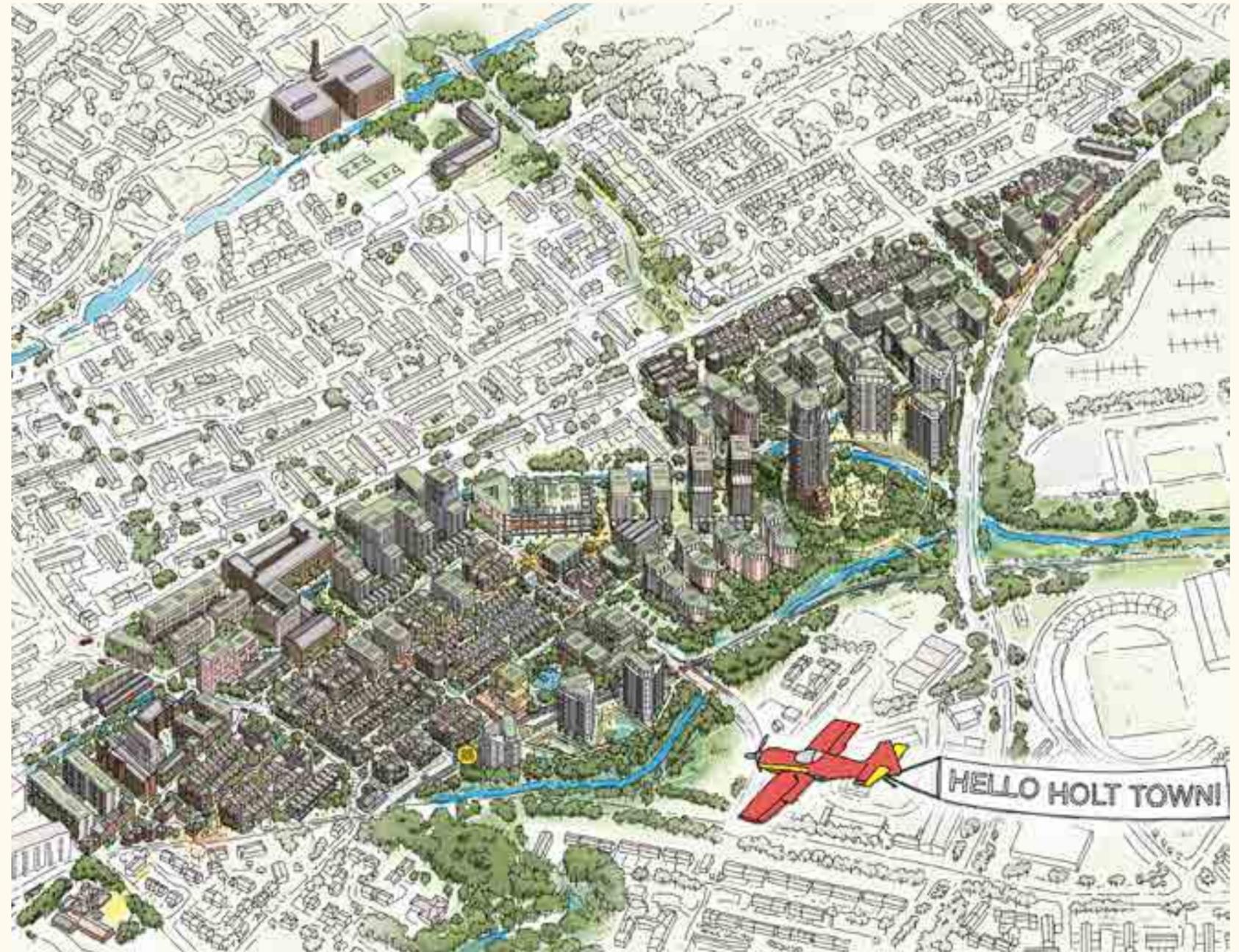


Fig. 18. Aerial framework illustration

6.2 A layered approach

Inspired by the anatomy of a woodland

The Holt Town vision is underpinned by the site analysis and engagement process and has informed the aspiration to ‘regrow the community like a woodland.’ Inspired by the vertical layers of the woodland anatomy, the woodland analogy captures the layered approach to the framework, from roots to canopy and beyond and frames the overarching design principles.

Emergent

Holt Town is aiming for an appropriate density and scale. Higher density developments will be sensitively placed in areas where a greater density of accommodation could lead to a more generous contribution to public realm and/or the renewal of heritage assets.

Canopy

A creative approach to roofscapes that embraces the full potential for amenity, energy production and rainwater management. Holt Town will celebrate its roof lines, creating views and vistas through careful distribution of scale, density and built form.

Understorey

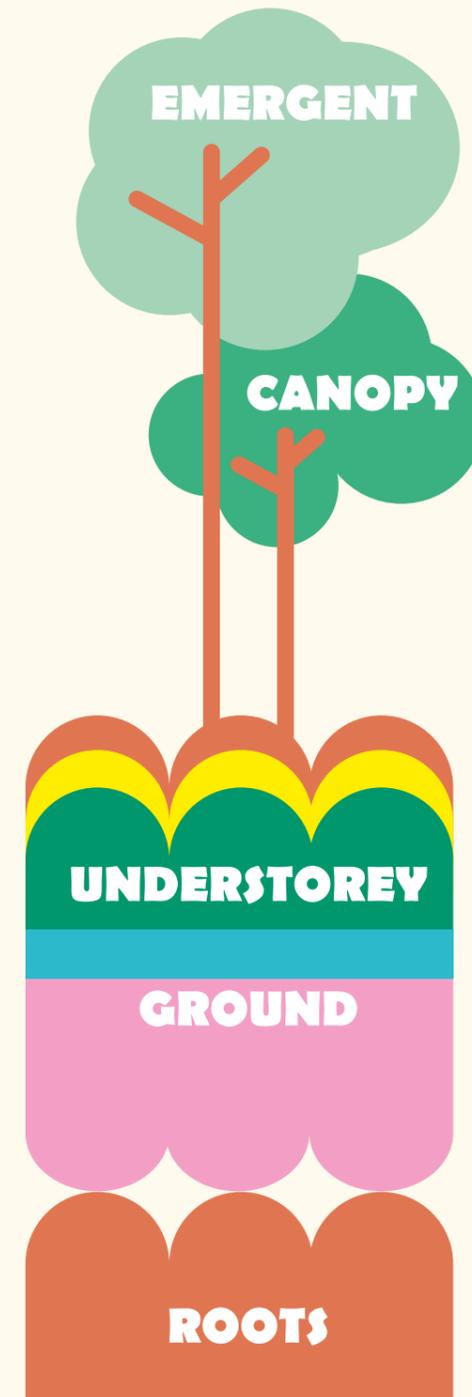
A low-carbon town which includes a diverse range of lower-rise homes. It will promote economic growth with homes of varied tenure and lower density family homes, supported by social infrastructure.

Ground

Holt Town will create sustainable public spaces with enhanced biodiversity and infrastructure. It will promote low car usage, prioritise pedestrians, and integrate community and culture.

Roots

Holt Town’s regeneration will reconnect this part of Manchester, bridging key areas. It will embed social value, retain heritage assets where possible, and aim to meet net zero targets.



6.3 Objectives of the NDF

This vision includes the following Objectives



A new neighbourhood, inclusive and diverse

Holt Town is an opportunity to bring forward a new town in the city and grow a community that is inclusive and invites a variety of people looking for a home close to the economic opportunities of the City Centre, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. The new neighbourhood at Holt Town could include:

- Circa 4,500 new homes.
- 20% affordable homes, including social housing.
- A mix of tenure, accessibility and price to support a mixed-income and inclusive community.
- A variety of housing types and density, including houses, terraces, apartments and duplexes.
- Excellent digital infrastructure and digital services that will improve the quality of life and prosperity of Holt Town residents.



Mixed use and rooted in place

Holt Town could be a layered and mixed-use place that weaves a variety of uses and services amid its heritage, as well as cultural and environmental features that contribute to its character. This can include its evocative listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets, natural and industrial-borne waterways, woodlands and open spaces, and topography. In the future, Holt Town could include:

- Leisure and cultural uses, including a 300-capacity flexible cultural and community hub and Lido.
- Retail service uses, a convenience food offer, and food and beverage provision to support the new residents and occupiers.
- A 'Mobility Mill', a mobility hub wrapped in affordable workspace and providing neighbourhood services.
- Social infrastructure, including healthcare, education, and community spaces, to support the growing population and enhance quality of life.



Creative and entrepreneurial, bridging growth drivers

The regeneration of Holt Town can nurture creativity and entrepreneurship, building on the Area's existing success to further enhance economic prosperity. Holt Town can complement the growing commercial offer in the City Centre and the opportunities in Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, and the Sport and Innovation Zone. To achieve its economic growth ambitions, Holt Town could include:

- Up to 30,000 sq. m. of commercial space generating circa 1,500 full-time jobs.
- A varied workspace ecosystem that includes ground floor active frontages, live-work spaces, and smaller office floorspace.
- Spaces for embryonic businesses to encourage clusters of economic activity.
- Opportunities for existing businesses who want to remain in the area, particularly high-quality manufacturing and creative and social enterprises.
- Support for growth in tech and innovation-led sectors, creating new employment opportunities for local residents.



Healthy, compact and pedestrian-first

Holt Town can be a compact neighbourhood that prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling and offers a setting that promotes health and wellbeing. This NDF establishes an urban layout that creates a low-car neighbourhood, harnessing Holt Town's proximity to public transport and the City Centre. The new neighbourhood at Holt Town will:

- Create vibrant, inclusive spaces that prioritise children's needs, encourage play, and promote physical and mental wellbeing through features such as the Play Link.
- Develop safe active travel streets while reducing car use through initiatives like a centralised 'Mobility Mill.'
- Celebrate creativity, culture, and nature with social and green spaces that strengthen community connections and overall wellbeing.
- Enhance access to affordable, healthy food and essential services to support a healthy, thriving community.



Climate-resilient and sustainable

Holt Town can be an exemplar low-carbon, sustainable neighbourhood with climate resilience and nature embedded in its design, contributing to the City's net zero carbon targets set out in the Manchester Climate Change Framework. To achieve this objective, the NDF champions:

- The creation of at least 6 hectares of new and enhanced public space.
- A sustainable approach to street design that integrates cutting-edge water capture features.
- Enhancements to the canal and river setting, and biodiversity.
- Typologies of green spaces that promote the retention of tree groupings wherever possible.
- Sustainable building materials and material reuse and circularity in the landscape and built environment.
- Innovative approaches to home delivery, including co-housing, self and custom build, to support eco-conscious and affordable housing models.



Data-informed and digitally-enabled

Holt Town could become a pilot for digitally informed design, governance and management. The Digital Twin could help safeguard the principles of the NDF, while helping ensure that the neighbourhood adapts to the evolving needs of residents and the environment.

A Digital Twin can:

- Be a platform for people to engage with the development as it progresses, logging feedback to help shape it over time.
- Integrate data and digital technology, from planning and design through to construction and maintenance.
- Showcase and visualise information in a way that is accessible and easily understood by residents and businesses as well as other stakeholders.
- Help monitor the environmental performance of Holt Town.
- Serve as a support for collaborative management and maintenance.

Potential economic impact of the NDF

- New residents could generate c. £70 million in additional household spending power annually in the area and a considerable proportion of this should be captured locally. This could be vital to sustaining a local based retail amenity offering that serves the local community continually, not just trading on event days.
- Generate over £100 million Gross Value Added (GVA) annually within Greater Manchester.
- A total of £230 million net additional GVA over an estimated 15-year construction period
- Support an average of 210 new additional full-time jobs annually in Greater Manchester, taking in to account direct and indirect impacts.

6.4 Principles of place

Roots: Connecting Holt Town and establishing a sense of place



Stitch the neighbourhood into its context

An opportunity to weave this part of Manchester back into the fabric of the City, celebrating its role as a confluence of neighbourhoods. An opportunity to connect the cultural and sporting assets east of the Area with the City Centre, but also to ensure that Holt Town is attractive as a family-friendly neighbourhood.



Embed social value and social infrastructure

Building stronger physical, social, and economic links within Holt Town and with neighbouring communities can give access to additional facilities and opportunities, such as new cultural and play facilities and employment opportunities.

Opportunities to harness the potential of public realm and technology in fostering social value can be explored.



Celebrate Holt Town's character and heritage through retention and reuse

To create a sustainable and authentic place, opportunities to retain, reuse and recycle all elements of the current built and natural form can be considered. The historic and architectural significance of all impacted buildings could be established as part of any development proposals that are brought forward. This applies to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Any proposals could seek to preserve or enhance this significance or demonstrate why public benefits generated by the proposed development will outweigh any harm to significance, including demonstration that a proposal is the optimum viable use for a site³.

Net zero and sustainability requirements of Places for Everyone Policy JP-S2 also encourages the reuse and retrofitting of buildings in order to meet net zero policy targets. This approach could also assist in rooting any future development proposals in the history of Holt Town.

³ Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2 and National Planning Policy Framework.

Ground: towards a sustainable town that embraces the full spectrum of infrastructure



Deliver an outstanding public realm and blue-green network

Located at the confluence of man-made and natural waterways, Holt Town's notable areas of dense and sparse vegetation, and its singular topography, provide an opportunity to create a bespoke public realm strategy that works with existing features to put nature first.

The abundance of blue and green infrastructure in Holt Town can also be nurtured through expansion and significant enhancement particularly of trees and natural landscapes.



Nurture biodiversity

In line with national policy and guidance, all new development proposals (unless exempt) are required to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on site and satisfy trading rules associated with biodiversity. If this is not possible within application boundaries, off-site compensation will be required and aim to be delivered within a local registered off-site habitat bank.

There may be an opportunity to dedicate some areas of the NDF area as registered habitat banks in consultation with the relevant authorities to create any off-site improvements as local as possible to development proposals.



Strategic infrastructure

The key elements of strategic infrastructure anticipated for Holt Town include parking, public realm, digital infrastructure, energy infrastructure and utility infrastructure.

Phasing will be important to ensure this appropriately supports development but is cost effective.



Community activation and cultural programming

Early opportunity for meanwhile uses and events, such as incubator spaces and neighbourhood management. Meanwhile uses can focus on early activation of future public spaces, rather than development plots; and neighbourhood management can focus on creating a welcoming environment for early phases of residential development, such as managed fly tipping.

Long term, the integration of cultural anchors of all scales could be critical to the socio-economic impact and integration of Holt Town, for example a new cultural hub adjacent to Holt Town station and the expanded provision for artists' and makers studios.

Understorey: towards a liveable low carbon town and a variety of low-rise homes and mix of uses



Build homes for all

Holt Town has the potential to deliver circa 4,500 homes across a variety of tenures and typologies. Through a blend of scales, from town houses to apartment living, the NDF can create a place that invites all demographics to live near the City Centre, including a range of lifestyles and household sizes.

This would need to be supported by the social infrastructure required to attract diverse groups to locate to the area, such as varied typologies and tenures, play spaces, education provision, health provision, and other neighbourhood services.



Support a mix of uses and commercial co-location

Provision of new commercial space could accommodate a variety of businesses and seek to enable the retention of successful manufacturing and social enterprises. There is a strong opportunity to nurture the creative and entrepreneurial economy through mixed-use hubs.

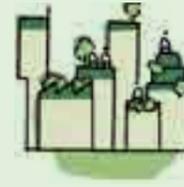


Champion a tight-knit grain and human-scale datum

While heights and typologies will vary across the Area, development at Holt Town could adopt a clear human-scale datum of 3 to 5 storeys in the central terraced area before stepping up to canal and river corridors.

A coherent approach to height could be taken along key routes to foster a cohesive and animated streetscape.

Canopy: a robust approach to taller buildings that embraces roofscapes and solarscapes



Harness the roofline and maximise rooftops

There is an opportunity to celebrate the terraced nature of the site. The roofline of particular areas within Holt Town could be considered a landscape character creating a myriad of different views and vistas through careful management of scale, density and built form.

Opportunities to harness the full potential of the roof could be taken for amenity, energy production and water management.

Emergent: deliver density that contributes community, sustainability, and employment benefits



Achieve appropriate density and scale

Achieving efficient yet appropriate development densities across the Area is crucial for establishing a sustainable urban area that responds to the local context and characteristics.

The definition of a tall building is always contextual and whilst development density can vary throughout the Area, ensuring scale is suitable to its respective location, context, accessibility, and landscape is crucial. There are opportunities at Holt Town not only to bring forward development, but also to craft a differentiated skyline that reflects individual character areas and establishes a transition across Holt Town between the City Centre, and neighbourhoods further east. It will therefore be important to demonstrate articulation and variation across the Area and within individual Character areas as development proposals are brought forward.

A greater density of accommodation in targeted locations can help deliver wider public benefits and can lead to a more generous contribution to public realm and/or the renewal of heritage assets, in line with aspirations set out in the Local Plan.



7 Illustrative Framework and Design Principles

7.1 Sitewide illustrative framework

The Illustrative Framework and Design Principles present a guide for future development at Holt Town. They are a set of sitewide principles and character area-specific principles that reflect the variety of uses, typologies, and landscape characters envisaged in this part of East Manchester.

These principles will lay the groundwork for healthy living to create a liveable, connected, digitally-enabled, and sustainable neighbourhood for future generations of Mancunians to thrive.

The illustrative framework weaves together the vertical layers of the place inspired by the woodland, and the horizontal features of the site, which have informed its characterisation into areas that share commonalities of purpose and scale.

This section outlines the following guiding design principles which come together to provide an illustrative framework plan.

Character – Holt Town, **Diverse Town**

Movement and connections – Holt Town, **Connected Town**

Public realm and ecology – Holt Town, **Woodland Town**

Play and recreation – Holt Town, **Play Town**

Water management – Holt Town, **Sponge Town**

Land uses and social infrastructure – Holt Town, **Rooted Town**

Scale, density and built form – Holt Town, **Layered Town**

Stewardship and management – Holt Town, **Stewardship Town**

Smart infrastructure – Holt Town, **Digital Town**

Experimentation and new housing models – Holt Town, **Pioneering Town**

Sitewide illustrative framework

The sitewide illustrative framework shows how the framework parameters may be delivered as a comprehensive development within Holt Town.

It represents an illustrative arrangement of the framework into a sustainable, residential-led neighbourhood.

- ① Holt Town Metrolink station
- ② Confluence Park
- ③ Pollard Street
- ④ Cambrian Street
- ⑤ Hope Mill
- ⑥ Wellington Mill
- ⑦ Brunswick Mill
- ⑧ Former gas holder site
- ⑨ New Viaduct Street
- ⑩ Broxton Street

Fig. 19. Sitewide illustrative framework



7.2 Character

Holt Town, Diverse Town

Holt Town will be a varied place, composed of distinct areas and characters informed by the site's man-made and natural features.

■ Plateau

The northern edge transitions between Bradford Road and the Ashton Canal with low-rise development opportunities, nurturing a harmonious relationship with Miles Platting's existing townscape. A mixture of townhouses, maisonettes and apartments will accommodate families amongst a diverse range of residents. The residential development will be broken-up by pockets of neighbourhood parks and play areas.

■ Ridge

A connective spine between Ancoats, New Islington, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, this area features canal-side mid-rise buildings blending heritage preservation and modern design. Enhancements to the towpath further emphasise connectivity and engagement with the waterfront.

■ Terraces

Defined by steep topography and urban grain, this area envisions compact, low-rise townhouses blending living and workspaces, promoting family living near the City Centre and supporting sustainable, timber-led construction wherever possible. A car-free spine, to be known as the Play Link, creates a safe east-west route through Holt Town. This route will be complimented by communal greenspaces and private gardens, giving all residents easy access to open space.

■ Embankment

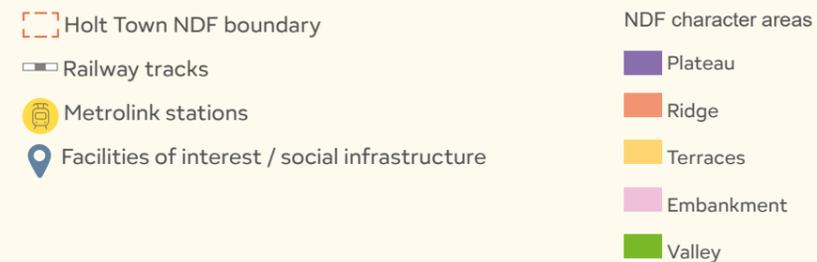
The Embankment occupies the site of the former Holt Town Reservoir and defines a notable and singular transition between the Valley and the Terraces. Its proximity to Holt Town Metrolink station creates an opportunity for a potential cultural hub and mid- to high-rise development stepping towards Confluence Park, integrating open spaces with a dynamic urban edge.

■ Valley

The Valley forms a unique opportunity to enhance and reinvent the landscape adjoining the River Medlock and deliver a significant ecological and recreational link between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. It can balance floodplain-sensitive tall buildings with enhanced biodiversity and play spaces. Confluence Park serves as a key destination, anchored by a landmark tower and a vibrant park setting.



Fig. 20. Illustrative framework character areas





Metrolink line and CityLink approaching Holt Town station



Ashton Canal Park



Former building frontage, Pollard Street East



Cyrus Street



Wellington Mill

7.3 Movement and connections

Holt Town, Connected Town

Development in Holt Town has the potential to create a legible and accessible network of routes that sustain a compact, tight-knit, walkable grain while establishing much-needed connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and managing the heavy movement between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. Proximity to the City Centre and the availability and accessibility of sustainable means of transport support aspirations for a low-car neighbourhood with minimal levels of on-street parking. Key opportunities include:

- Develop a network of safe, functional green spaces and low-traffic or car-free cycle and walking routes.
- Enhance connections to schools, social infrastructure, and amenities through safer routes and upgraded paths, including improved links to Ashton Canal and Confluence Park.
- Create new north-south streets linking Miles Platting and Beswick and improve east-west connections between Ancoats, New Islington, Sportcity, and the Etihad Campus.
- Develop a parking strategy that integrates well with placemaking, minimises visual impact, and includes electric vehicle provisions to support a low-carbon neighbourhood.
- Establish a Mobility Hub at the former Bengal Mill site, incorporating flexible design for evolving mobility patterns and integrating car-sharing and future transportation technologies.
- Minimise on-street parking aligned to the Eastlands Resident Parking scheme; provide integrated parking solutions for taller buildings; and enable on-plot or rear parking for lower-density housing.
- Ensure all parking and cycle facilities are

connected by safe, convenient, and clearly marked routes with natural surveillance for user safety.

The movement strategy leverages opportunities to enhance site permeability, with a focus on sustainable travel. Ashton Canal and the CityLink support northeast/southwest boundary movements, while a central pedestrian play street (the Play Link) fills the gap for internal northeast/southwest movement. This car-free route will create a high-quality public realm for interaction and connectivity. To support perpendicular links between these routes, green connections aligned with Cavalier and Cowan Streets will promote sustainable travel within Holt Town and to nearby areas, including Holt Town station.

Motor vehicle access will also be accommodated, with Beswick and Cambrian Streets retained as primary routes connecting Holt Town to Bradford Road and the A662, while Pollard Street will serve as a primary route and Cyrus Street as a secondary internal route. The design ensures motor vehicle facilities coexist with sustainable modes through a balanced approach. For instance, the Play Link prioritises walking and cycling, while secondary routes support motor vehicles without compromising sustainable travel. Primary routes will support pedestrian and cycle movements appropriately alongside vehicular traffic.



Fig. 21. Illustrative framework street hierarchy





Cambrian Street



Pollard Street East



Branson Street



Branson Street



Cavalier Street

7.4 Public realm and ecology

Holt Town, Woodland Town

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.

Holt Town is an opportunity to enhance two waterways and connect them with a high-quality network of landscaped streets that prioritise people, sustainable movement, and sustainable drainage. This will provide an exceptional setting for a new residential-led community.

A site-specific planting approach that celebrates the setting of Holt Town

The creation and restoration of natural ecosystems and habitats such as meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, and wetlands can be achieved through horticultural planting. This approach focuses on enhancing biodiversity by using native species, promoting sustainability through low-maintenance plants, and providing essential ecosystem services like soil health improvement, water retention, and carbon sequestration.

The public realm could include a range of planting characters. It will be important to protect, and retain existing trees where possible, while supplementing them with new groups, clusters and arrangements of mixed evergreen and broadleaved tree species, as set out here:

Woodland
Existing woods will be largely retained, with opportunities to improve biodiversity and the woodland character through careful management and enhanced understorey. Recreational and educational connections can also be improved.

Woodland pockets
Often located at key arrival points, these areas can retain and enhance existing tree groupings. They provide natural retreats for the community and soften the visual impact of the main road.

Resilient Meadow
Meadows, both naturalistic and designed, will be introduced to suit the site's varied conditions and microclimates, enhancing the River Medlock corridor. These meadows will range from large floodplain enhancements to smaller scale greens and drought-tolerant meadows.

Confluence Park
It will transform an underused green space into a vibrant, accessible public park with diverse play and exercise features, while managing existing trees and woodlands.

Spinney/Lido
The former Holt Town Reservoir, with its dense trees and undergrowth, preserves existing ecology and enhances biodiversity. Its unique sunken landscape could be reimagined as a community lido or natural swimming pool, adding value to this historically significant site.

Canalside glade
Partially wooded grassy areas between plots along the Ridge and Plateau provide sunlit spaces for community events and educational programmes, punctuating development rhythm.

Rain garden meadows
Key to Sponge Town, these links combine linear tree groupings, shrubs, and ground flora to create habitats supporting wildlife and intercepting surface water.



Fig. 22. Illustrative framework public realm



Opportunities to enhance the setting of waterways

Upgrades to the riverbank environment of the Lower Medlock Valley can enhance biodiversity and invite a renewed enjoyment of the river landscape. Similarly, improvements to the setting of the Ashton Canal can help make the towpath more enjoyable. A canal square is proposed to invite a more generous experience of the canal front.

A public realm offer complemented by a variety of private outdoor spaces

In addition to the public realm, development plots will include private outdoor amenity for residents, from private and communal gardens to balconies and roof terraces, these spaces. This provision will be typology-specific and contribute to high levels of health and wellbeing while supporting biodiversity at Holt Town.



Fig. 23. Sketch of the Play Link showing rooftop amenity space

7.5 Play and recreation

Holt Town, Play Town

Play is a key design principle for Holt Town to foster a family-friendly and intergenerational public realm that prioritises people-first, safe, and accessible routes through the Area and to neighbouring communities, amenities, and schools. Key opportunities include the following initiatives.

The Play Link

A one kilometre long, car-free, pedestrian-friendly connection through Holt Town along Lind Street, connecting St Anne's Primary School and Park View Community School complementing links between the City Centre, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, and neighbouring communities. The Play Link has potential for a safe, inviting space for pedestrians, free from vehicle traffic, featuring play equipment, benches, and green spaces. It could foster community interaction, hosting events like street festivals and block parties, while improving urban quality of life by reducing noise, air pollution, and promoting physical activity. Additionally, it could connect two local schools to Confluence Park, enhancing safety and community cohesion.

The Confluence Park and Playground

Ashton Canal Park transformed into Confluence Park. The crossing of the Medlock River and the Ashton Canal could be celebrated by an amplified landscape that is the centrepiece of the neighbourhood. At its heart, an indoor sport and play venue spilling into the outdoors to offer a range of recreational activities for all ages. The purpose of this anchor is to deliver a meaningful amenity for new and existing communities, and to complement Sportcity and the Etihad Campus that lies beyond.



Fig. 24. Illustrative water management network

- Holt Town NDF boundary
- Railway tracks
- Metrolink stations
- Facilities of interest / social infrastructure
- Play Link
- Indoor Play
- Adventure Trail
- Neighbourhood Play Facilities

7.6 Water management

Holt Town, Sponge Town

A 'Sponge City' approach to Holt Town could use sustainable urban form and innovative water management techniques that mimic natural hydrological processes and help mitigate the flood risk, while also complementing and enhancing the quality of ecological habitats.

A robust approach to water management will need to integrate the potential for water to contribute meaningfully to positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Key opportunities for water-centric interventions include:

- Utilising Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) along key routes for climate resilience.
- Integrating green infrastructure such as permeable surfaces, green roofs, and vegetated swales to enhance rainwater retention and reduce runoff.
- Tailoring the Sponge Town approach to the varying contamination levels across the Area. As a result, some locations may not be suitable for soak-away or infiltration, but could present opportunities to attenuate, retain and filter water through nature-based systems before slowly releasing excess water back into the system in reduced volumes.

- Implementing water storage and reuse systems like rainwater harvesting and retention basins to manage stormwater effectively and supplement a sustainable landscape management strategy.
- Using natural water filtration through constructed wetlands and bioretention areas to filter and clean stormwater.
- Harness the potential of community engagement to promote public awareness and participation in sustainable practices and urban biodiversity enhancement.

Overall, a sponge town approach can create urban areas that are more resilient to flooding, conserve water, protect the environment, and enhance the quality of life for residents, making Holt Town better equipped to adapt to climate change and other environmental challenges.



Fig. 25. Illustrative water management network

- Holt Town NDF boundary
- Railway tracks
- Metrolink stations
- Facilities of interest / social infrastructure
- Cascading rain gardens
- Rain gardens
- Retention zones
- Retention ponds

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on water management.



Sponge streets at Holt Town

A key aspect of water management at Holt Town will be the use of SuDS along key routes, embedding elements of rainwater capture with features that are playable, visually appealing, and functional.

The sectional CGIs presented in this page and the next offer a flavour of what this transformation could look like at Cavalier Street, Cyrus Street and Pollard Street.



Fig. 26. Vision for future Cavalier Cascade



Fig. 27. Vision for future Cyrus Street

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on this approach.





Fig. 28. Vision for future Pollard Street

7.7 Land Uses and social Infrastructure

Holt Town, Rooted Town

While Holt Town is a residential-led framework aiming to bring forward up to 4,500 homes, a variety of non-residential uses has the potential to thrive in this location to amplify and complement the Area's existing ecosystem of businesses and its network of creative and social enterprises.

Across the framework, predominantly residential-led upper floors could bring forward a mix of residential tenures and typologies, to attract a variety of households and lifestyles. The provision of townhouses, maisonettes and larger apartments will be paramount to attracting families to Holt Town.

Plateau - the Plateau will prioritise residential-led development that integrates with the largely residential area of Miles Platting to the north. Non-residential ground-floor uses will provide opportunities for activation through community services and retail.

Ridge - the Ridge has an important role to play in extending the commercial reach of the City Centre eastward along the Canal, building upon the existing employment-led character of this area. Commercial spaces could vary from flexible small-scale units to larger higher-grade office space. Further east to the north of the canal, mixed-use plots will support the residential neighbourhood and activate the public realm.

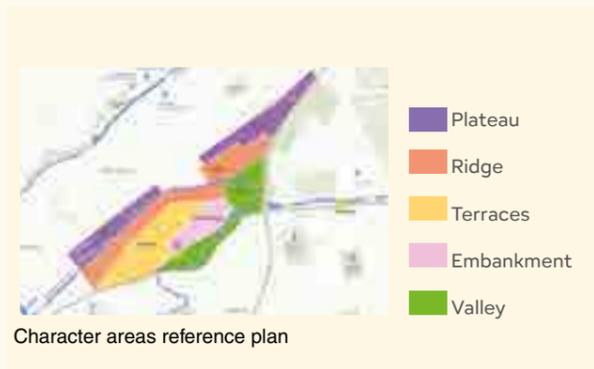
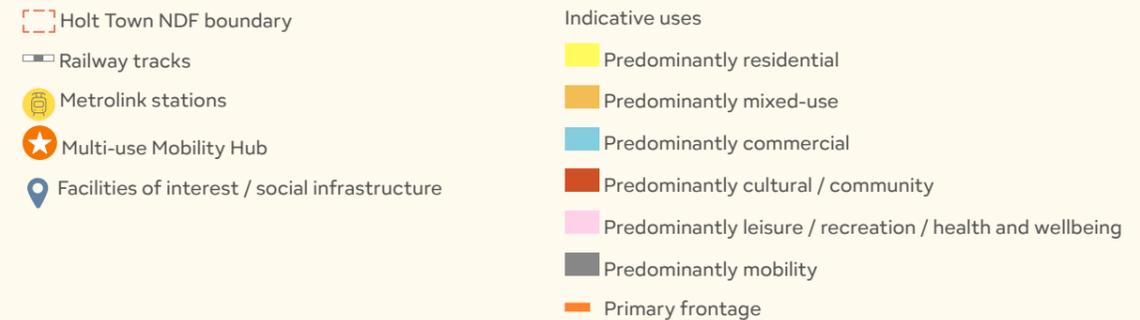
Terraces - The Terraces are a predominantly residential area, with active ground floor uses along Pollard Street allowing for an active interface with the Ridge. These could combine commercial uses and residential amenity. The grain of the Terraces lends itself to townhouse and maisonette typologies that foster a family-friendly and compact environment.

Embankment - The Embankment's location by the Metrolink station invites some level of mixed use with a potential cultural and community anchor that could be accompanied by a leisure destination in the form of lido/natural swimming pool in this location.

Valley - the Valley seeks to achieve a synergy between ground floor activation and the generosity of green public space along the river. Leisure and recreation uses come together at Confluence Park and along the canal edge to cluster a health and wellbeing offer in this part of the framework.



Fig. 29. Illustrative framework ground floor uses



Social and neighbourhood infrastructure

To meet the needs of Holt Town over time and ensure that it becomes a welcoming and attractive place for a range of inhabitants and users, a varied social infrastructure will need to be brought forward.

Withing the scope of this NDF, a number of key uses have been identified as potential drivers for inclusion and communal life. These are elaborated upon in section 8 of this document.

1) **The Mobility Mill** is envisaged as an enhanced mobility hub wrapped in community uses and affordable workspaces that nurture embryonic businesses. The hub could include a multi-storey carpark alongside a range of facilities intended to support active transport modes (including fleets of e-bikes and scooters).

2) **A Cultural Hub** opposite the Metrolink station could form a community focal point and cultural destination at Holt Town. It could include a flexible makeup of spaces to support organic community and creative uses, and could, if need be, welcome a larger operator.

3) In the location of the former Holt Town reservoir, a **Lido/natural swimming pool** could be an inviting new community leisure use that complements the Cultural Hub and complements the playful offering at the Play Link and Confluence Park.

4) Mixed-use plots could offer opportunities to deliver a range of **neighbourhood facilities** that could include a nursery, independent shops, bars, cafes, public toilets, sports facilities, local food shops, GPs, dentist, a pharmacy, a post office, a library, among others.



1. Mobility Mill at the Ridge



2. Cultural Hub in the Embankment



3. Lido / natural swimming pool in the Embankment



Fig. 30. Illustrative framework upper floor uses



7.8 Scale, density and built form

Holt Town, Layered Town

The built form, density and scale is strongly influenced by physical considerations, particularly the location of taller elements. The key drivers are as follows.

Edge conditions and residential adjacencies

These inform opportunities to establish a sensitive and considered interface with adjacent neighbourhoods, matching the datums of new development to the built form of existing areas.

Proximity to transport and connections

The scale and density of development could maximise the Area's proximity to transport links, and strong connectivity to other parts of Manchester via pedestrian and cycle routes. The presence within the Area of the Holt Town Metrolink stop offers an opportunity to optimise density in this location.

Contamination - The location and type of residential accommodation is also determined by the varying levels of contamination across the Area. By placing the most sensitive land uses (e.g. residential use at ground level) in less contaminated areas, the remediation costs and waste materials required to be removed from site can be reduced. Conversely in other areas non-residential uses may be prioritised at ground level, affecting form and scale across the Area.

Ecology - A range of ecological habitats are present that may form developable sites, as shown on the illustrative masterplan. Where possible, opportunities for new development to preserve and enhance areas of mature vegetation and ecological value, with regard to achieving 10% biodiversity net gain on site, should be prioritised in line with the NPPF. Where this uplift on site is demonstrated as being not possible, a locally registered off-site habitat bank should be identified.

Flood Risk - Development should not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b where the development classification falls under 'highly vulnerable'; 'more vulnerable'; or 'less vulnerable' development. For sites in Flood Zones 2 and 3a, a sequential approach should be undertaken to ensure development is located in areas at the lowest flood risk in the first instance now or in the future. Development proposals for sites located in these areas will need to accurately model the flood risk and agree any necessary flood compensation measures with statutory bodies and be brought forward in line with 'Annex 3: Flood risk vulnerability classification' of the NPPF and the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Topography - The distinct and varied topography of Holt Town presents opportunities to modulate the skyline and make the most of distant views to the Lower Medlock Valley, Sportcity, and beyond. The layered topographic character of the site, which transitions from a plateau along Bradford Road, to terraces stepping steeply down to the River Medlock valley, informs a careful response to scale that makes the most of the characteristics of the terrain.

Townscape and key views - This will inform the height and orientation of buildings and taller elements. Heritage assets influence a considered approach to the datum, materiality, and character of new development, with opportunities to complement and enhance the setting of buildings of historic value.

Microclimate - Microclimate considerations should be accounted for in considering the scale and location of buildings, seeking to minimise negative impacts on the public realm and adjacent homes.



Fig. 31. Illustrative framework maximum heights

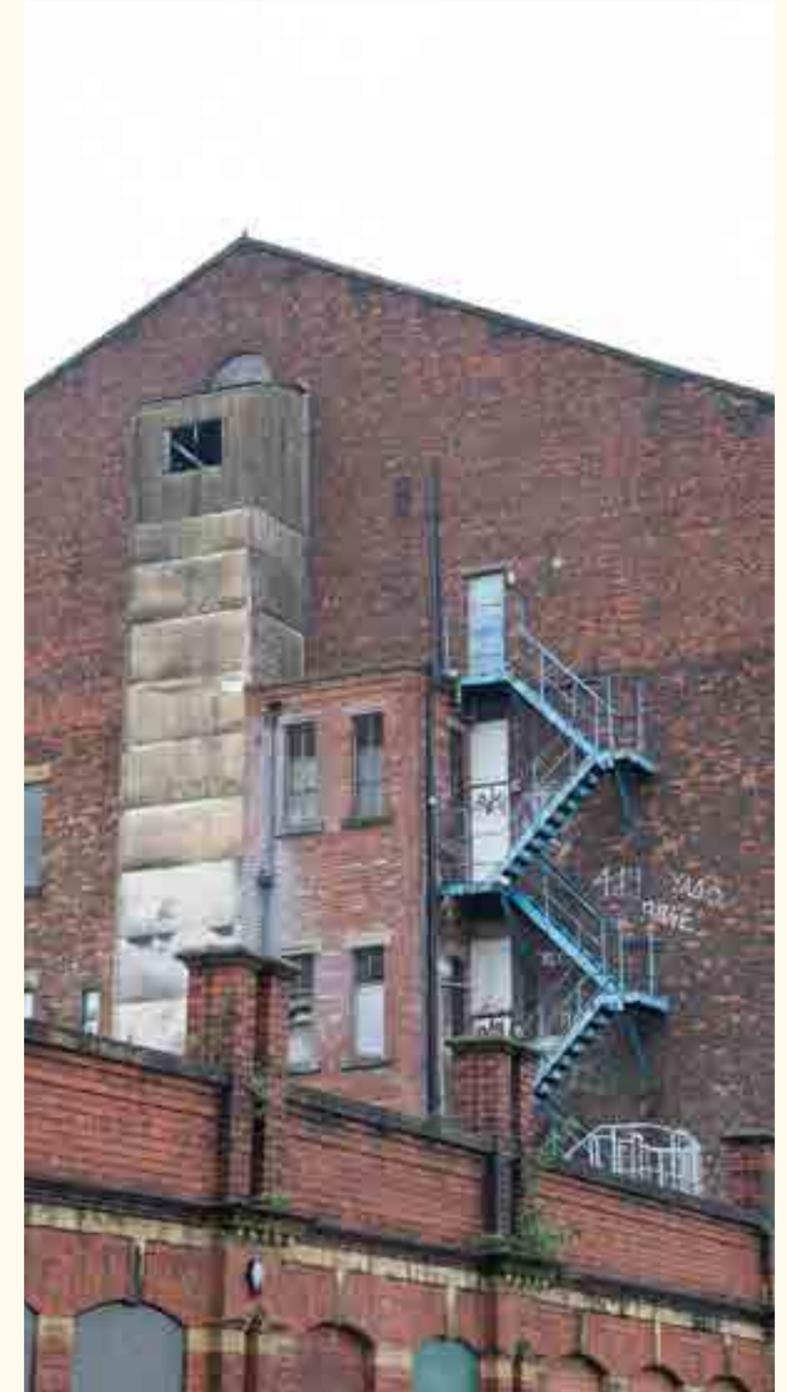




Co-op Live



Spectator Mill



Wellington Mill

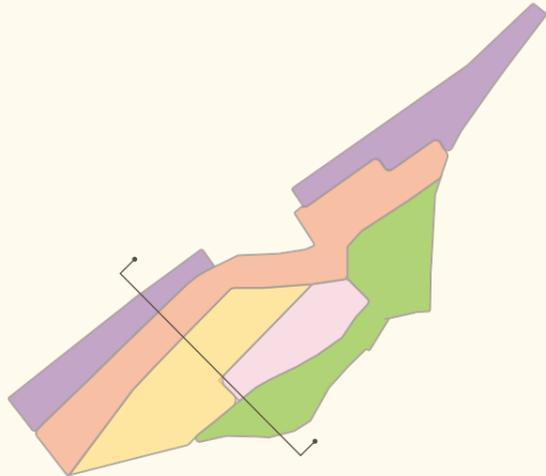


Weston Street



Junction of Beswick Street and Pollard Street East

Approach to scale and massing from river to canal



Development along Pollard St

Development along Pollard Street could reflect the height of existing mills, such as Brunswick Mill, before stepping down towards the Terraces. The Pollard Street interface, a mix of townhouses and maisonettes could enhance street interaction and add visual interest to the streetscape.

Development could step up towards the canal to form a varied skyline, in tandem with the renewal of historic fabric and the contribution to new public spaces.

Play Link

A one-kilometre car-free, pedestrian-friendly street connecting St Anne's Primary School and Park View Community School while linking the City Centre, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, and nearby communities. The Play Link will feature play equipment, exercise areas, benches, and green spaces, creating a safe, inviting space for community interaction, events, and improved urban and intergenerational living.

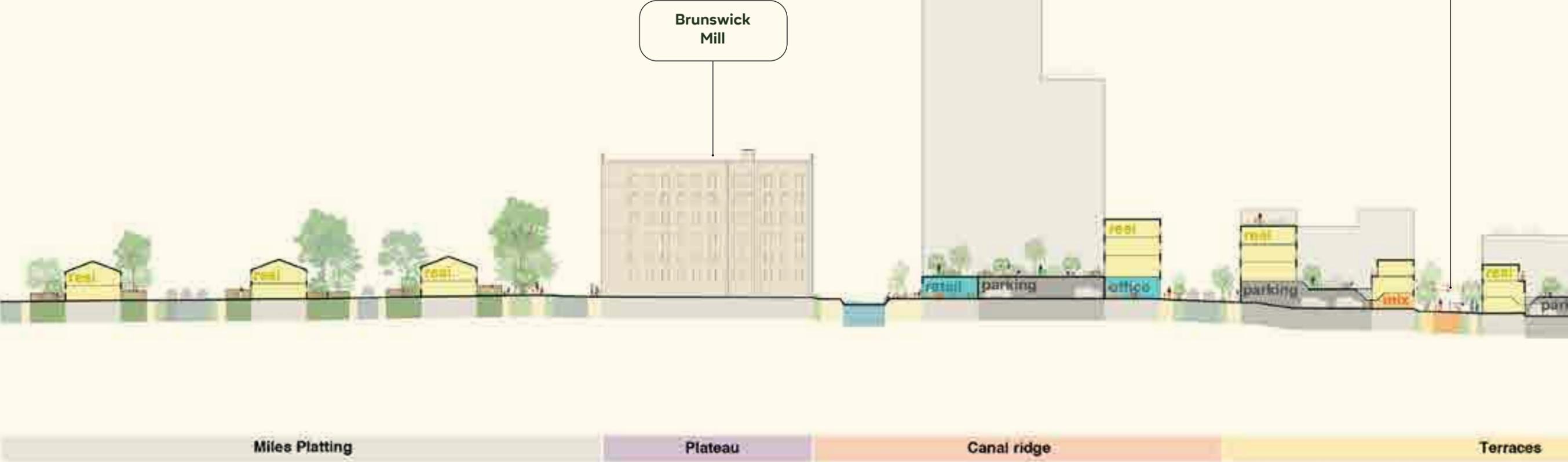
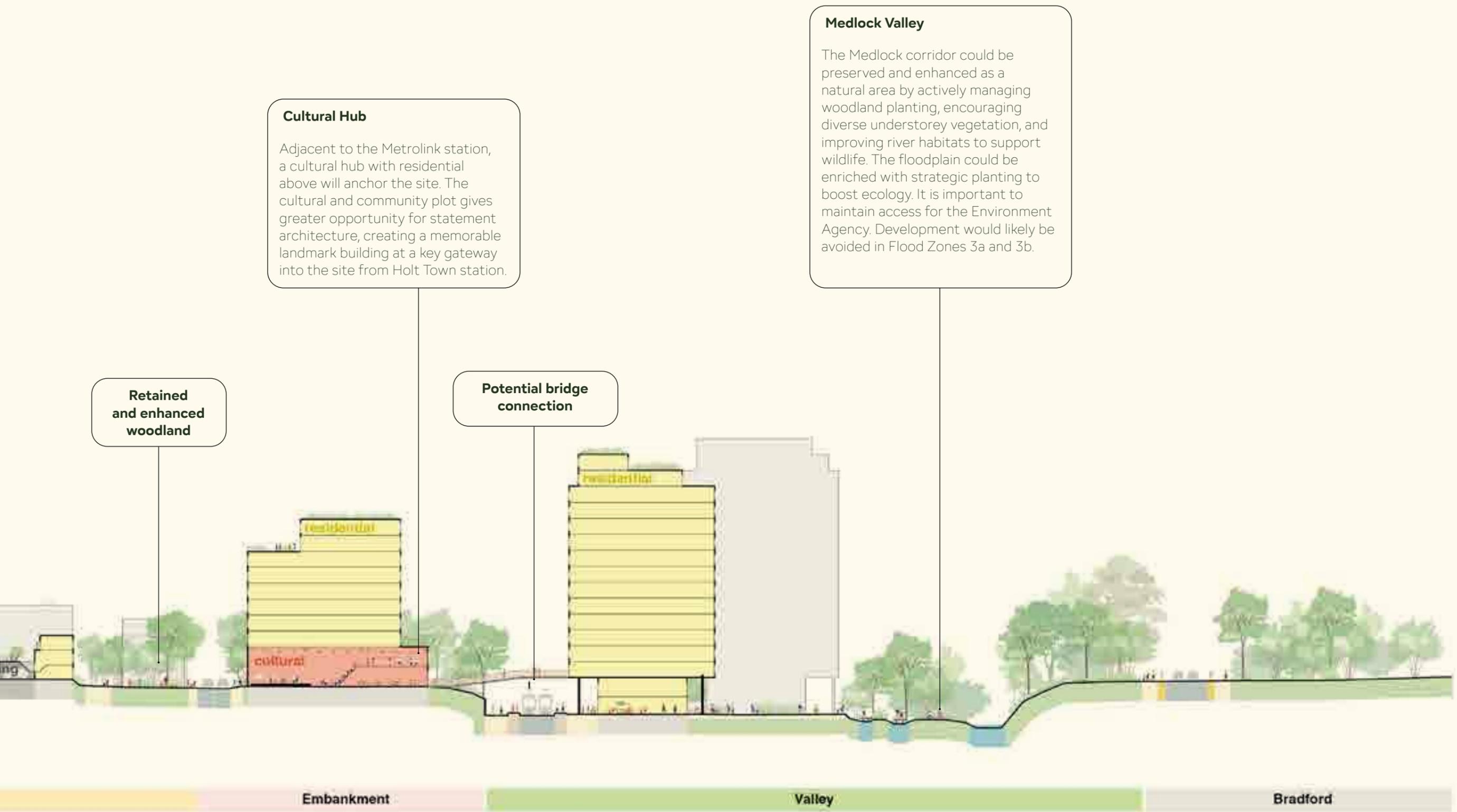
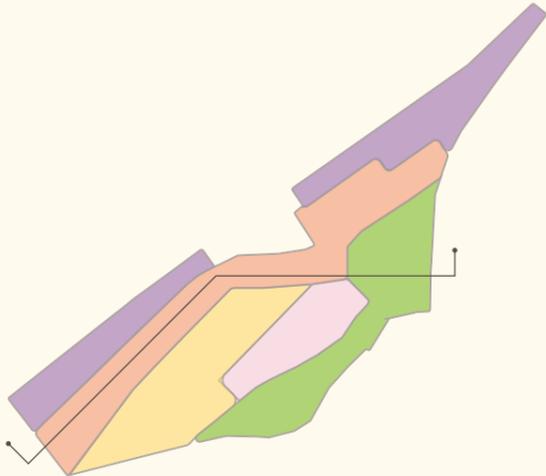


Fig. 32. Illustrative site section AA'



Approach to scale and massing from east to west

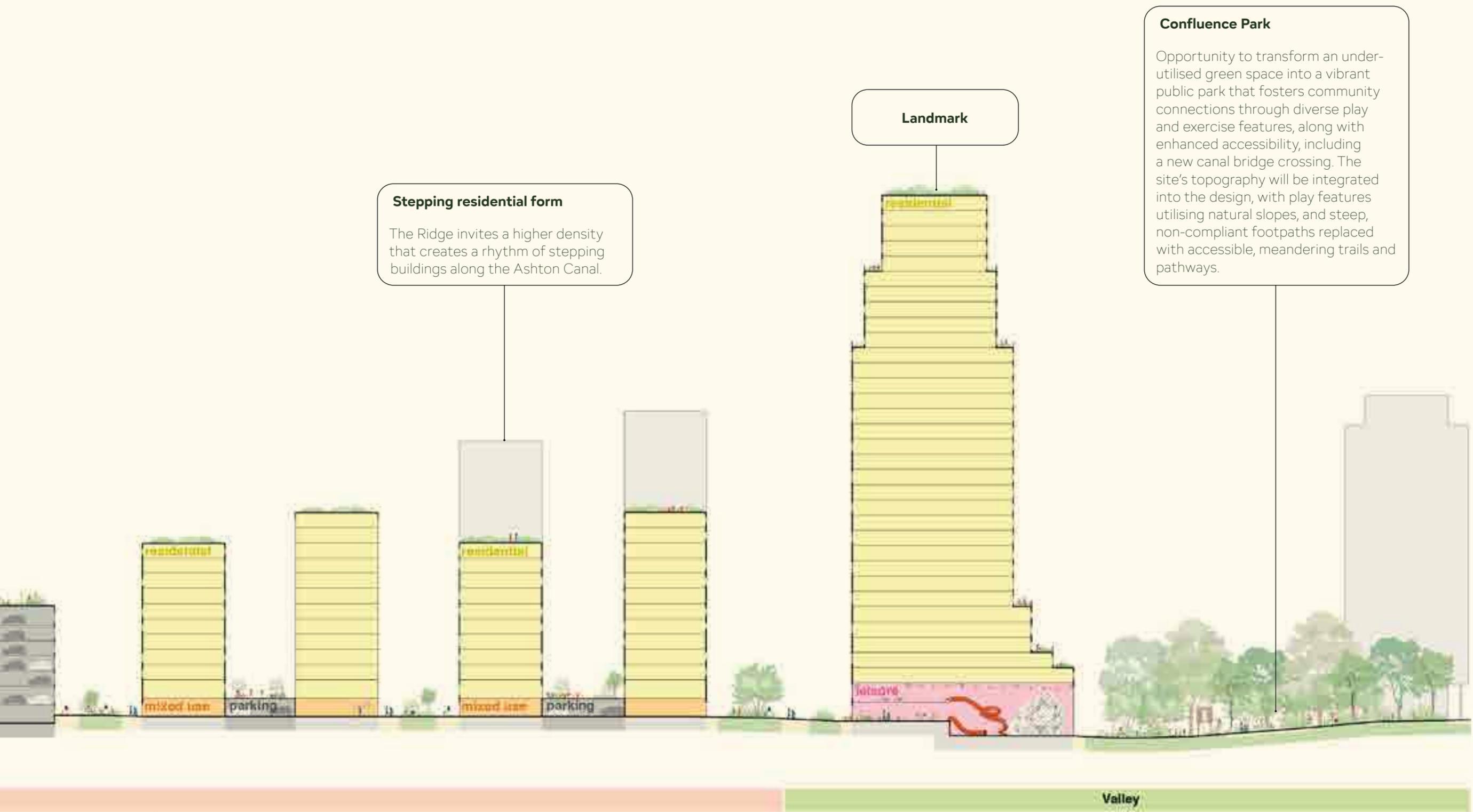


Residential buildings in the Ridge
 The residential buildings will transition from mid to high-rise to low-rise residential with workspaces at the street front, maintaining a consistent, human-scale street presence.

Mobility Mill
 The Mobility Mill will combine car parking, EV charging and cycle rental, in order to minimise car use in the neighbourhood. Wrapped in affordable workspace, fostering local business growth.



Fig. 33. Illustrative site section BB'

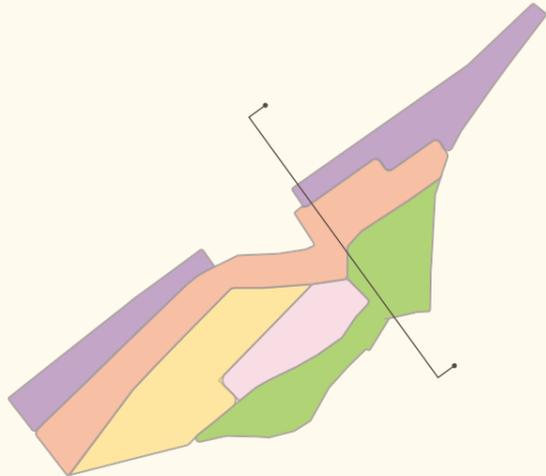


Stepping residential form
 The Ridge invites a higher density that creates a rhythm of stepping buildings along the Ashton Canal.

Landmark

Confluence Park
 Opportunity to transform an under-utilised green space into a vibrant public park that fosters community connections through diverse play and exercise features, along with enhanced accessibility, including a new canal bridge crossing. The site's topography will be integrated into the design, with play features utilising natural slopes, and steep, non-compliant footpaths replaced with accessible, meandering trails and pathways.

Approach to scale and massing, from Plateau to Valley



Life in the Plateau

The streetscape along Bradford Road negotiates a subtle transition in scale with Miles Platting through a mix of townhouses, duplexes, and maisonettes. Ranging from 3 to 5 storeys in height. Medium-rise apartment accommodation could help frame key routes along the edge of the character area.

Possible location of a new bridge across the Ashton Canal



Fig. 34. Illustrative site section CC'

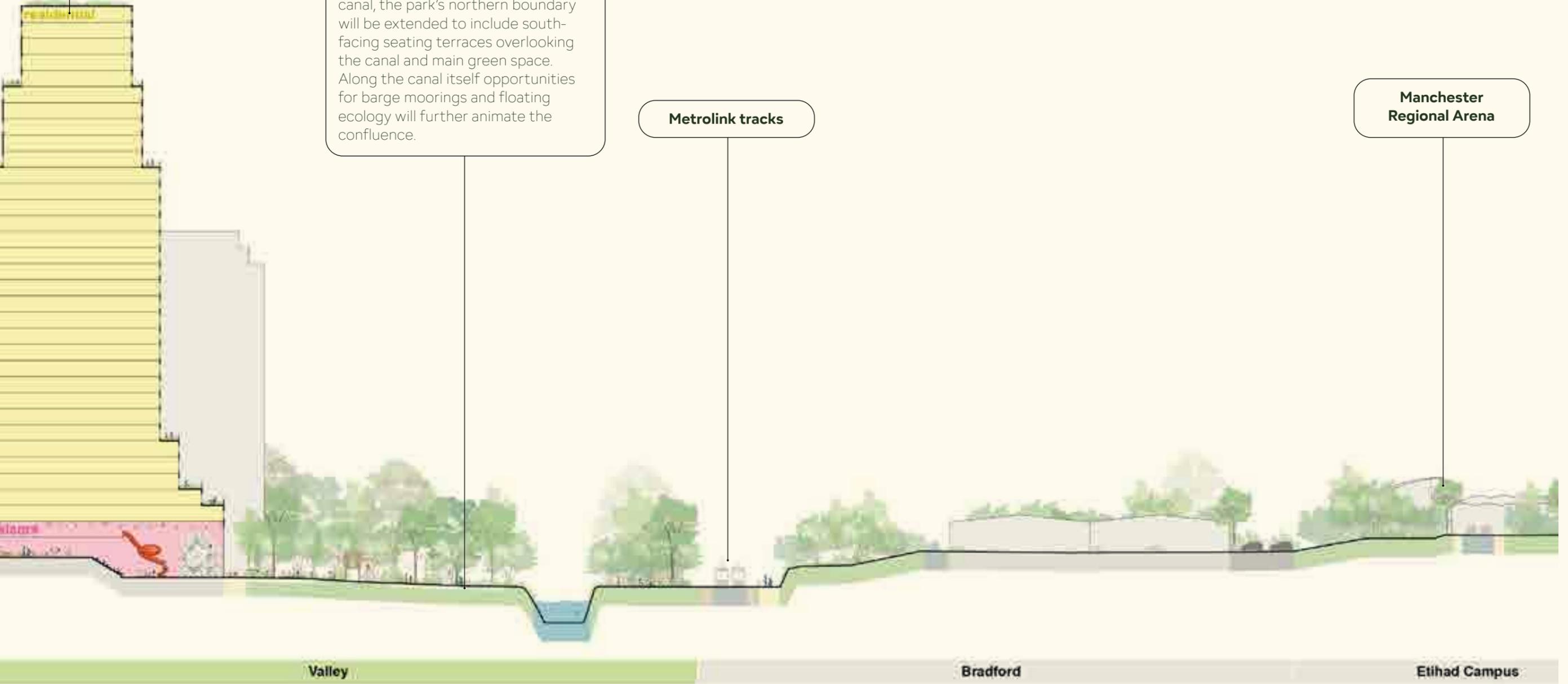
Confluence Park

Existing trees and woodland areas will be managed to promote longevity and ecological diversity. This will include selective thinning of overgrown, gridded tree plantings to enhance the woodland's structure and encourage a richer Understorey habitat. To unify both sides of the canal, the park's northern boundary will be extended to include south-facing seating terraces overlooking the canal and main green space. Along the canal itself opportunities for barge moorings and floating ecology will further animate the confluence.

Landmark

Metrolink tracks

Manchester Regional Arena



7.9 Sustainable building practices

Holt Town, Exemplar Town

Sustainable building practices have an opportunity to be explored in Holt Town, particularly in the lower rise elements of the scheme where timber construction could be more easily utilised and reduce embodied carbon through a 'fabric-first' approach.

Reuse of materials on individual sites could provide further opportunities to reduce embodied carbon, particularly in the public realm, as well as add to a distinctive character and sense of place. All new residential development will be expected to align with the Future Homes Standard. Consideration could be given to the opportunities for a neighbourhood-wide low or zero carbon energy network, where feasible and viable to do so.



Energy centre - Greenwich Peninsula (© Mark Hadden)



Modular and modern methods of construction (© Messe München GmbH)



Green building façade - The Eden (© Simon Buckley)



CLT and timber forms of construction on lower rise buildings - Dalston Lane (© Daniel Shearing)



District heating network - Eddington, Cambridge

7.10 Experimentation and new housing models

Holt Town, Pioneering Town

The NDF aims to deliver a pioneering and innovative new neighbourhood for Manchester, the success of which must allow the fluidity for development to explore opportunities to adopt new models and experiment. This requires the framework to give flexibility for alternative design approaches to be adopted within the overarching principles of design.

The NDF aims to champion and enable elements of self-build and design flexibility whilst being coherent with the overall character structure of the framework. This can encourage new and innovative ways for these principles to be met. This flexibility may be adopted in many forms such as allowing flexibility in façade design, customizable dwellings or individual control on materiality

Adhering to the city principles of 'doing things differently' this will increase the diversity in form, appearance and typologies across the framework, and specifically support opportunities for co-housing / self and custom build / community led housing.

This could be delivered through defining a series of plot parameters across the character areas, with fixes on maximum plot width, height and depth, as well as cohesive elements such as one primary façade material. Variation can then be applied through detailing materiality, and accent colouring amongst other more nuanced details.



Fig. 35. A custom-build opportunity at Holt town

7.11 Stewardship and management

Holt Town, Stewardship Town



Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on stewardship and management.

Progressive management is paramount to the success of this NDF and opportunities could be explored for collaborative approaches to maintenance at Holt Town. Opportunities include:

Formal Organisation Structure

The creation of a formal organisation, such as a stewardship trust, which could be known as the 'Holt Town Trust,' with a mandate to achieve a sustainable, well-maintained, and vibrant public realm through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder maintenance and stewardship approach that includes local government, private landowners, community groups, local businesses, charities, and environmental organisations.

Comprehensive Plan

A maintenance and stewardship plan might involve a comprehensive survey of assets, implementing eco-friendly practices, and developing collaborative maintenance agreements with landowners. Sustainable practices such as using organic fertilisers, water-efficient irrigation, and promoting native plants and habitat management can be prioritised.

Community Involvement

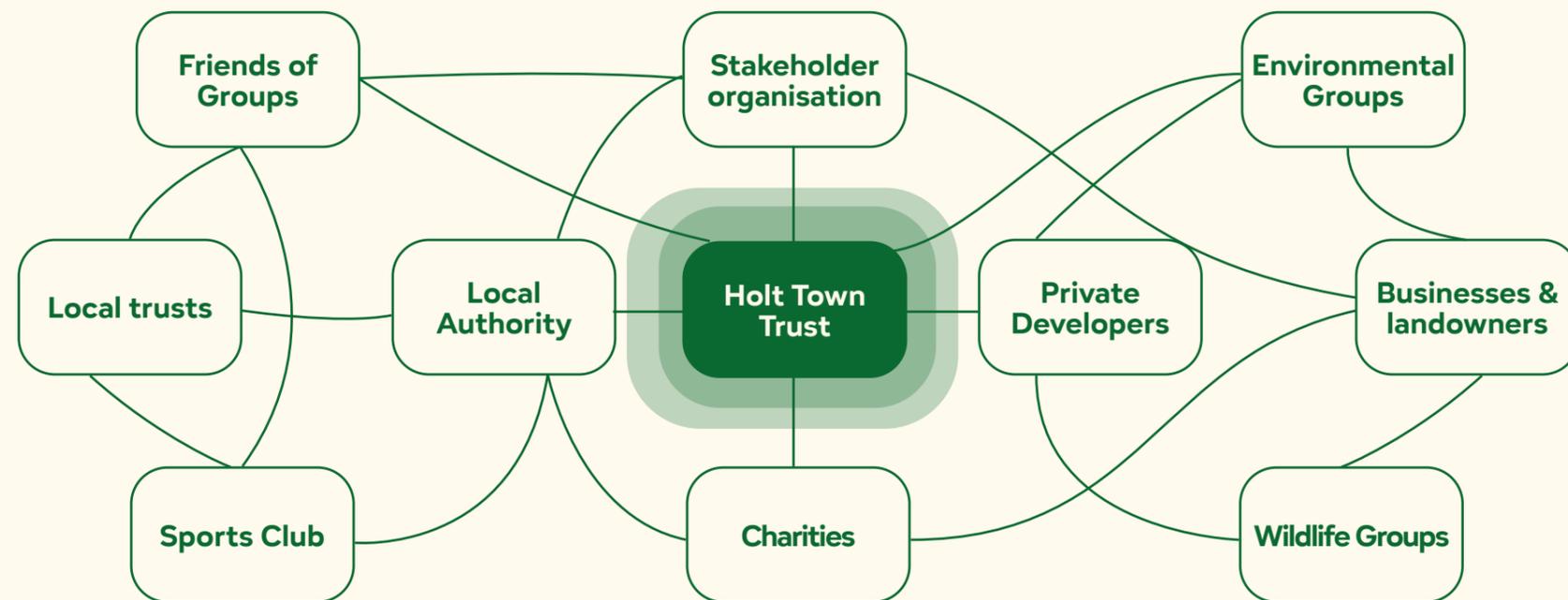
Community involvement could be fostered through volunteer events, educational programs, and the creation of a 'Friends of Holt Town' group to engage residents in ongoing stewardship activities.

Technology

Technology can be used to enhance the quality of place, the efficiency of the development, and the delivery of public services and the wider amenity offer. Co-creating approaches with residents – alongside regular monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting – will help secure public trust and ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

Holistic Funding

Funding could be secured through private sector contributions, grants, donations, and sponsorships. The creation of a maintenance endowment fund could be explored.



7.12 Smart infrastructure

Holt Town, Digital Town

As part of building Holt Town from the ground up, there is an opportunity to co-create and implement future-facing digital infrastructure and technology that can be used to transform public services, remove friction from day-to-day lives and build a modern, healthier and happier place to live and work.

As it is increasingly evident that digital space cannot be regarded as separate from physical space, Holt Town can become an exemplary pilot for the responsible integration of digital strategies. From traffic or waste management to environmental simulations or participatory community platforms - digital communication and planning devices are already silently shaping large parts of our cities today. Through digital placemaking, the NDF can harness technology throughout all phases of development: from planning and design to construction and management. This offers an opportunity for Holt Town to become a digitally enabled neighbourhood, where residents, businesses, and visitors can leverage technology to enhance their experiences and quality of life.

The Holt Town Digital Town strategy ranges from open, accessible information to virtual simulations for design evaluation as well as protocols for urban transformation and maintenance. The strategy envisions the creation of a digital counterpart to Holt Town, allowing the neighbourhood to grow in sync with evolving technologies. As the regeneration advances from NDF towards design and construction, Digital Town can mature from concept design to operational platform. It could guide development through testing of design or policy proposals in virtual environments and create feedback mechanisms between detailed design work and the overarching NDF objectives and design principles.

Open urban data

Open urban data forms the foundation of a digital twin and fosters an innovative environment for the development of data-informed design practices, strategies and digital tools beyond the initial purpose within the digital twin.

Accessible information

Urban data could not only be open but also easily accessible to various stakeholders involved in planning, design, and construction to support smart decision-making through the use of data. To achieve this, the digital twin can be developed towards an online platform that allows for the search and visualisation of publicly available urban information alongside community workshops to foster data literacy, thus enabling everyone, professional or not, to learn about Holt Town.

Data-informed design

Public data can empower architects, developers and other stakeholders to integrate it into their design processes, creating solutions that exceed regulatory standards and result in more sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and aesthetically pleasing spaces. A digital twin can facilitate this by incorporating an evaluation framework to assess the performance of designs against the specific objectives for Holt Town.

Digital governance

The use of data and digital tools can enhance the speed, efficiency, transparency, and inclusivity of governance processes—from timely waste collection and optimised energy use to

automated permit processing or maintenance scheduling. As part of Holt Town's digital infrastructure, the Digital Twin could enable monitoring and management of the planning, construction, and maintenance through live dashboards, while providing the public with insights into the how and why.

Public services

New digital technologies could be used to co-create and deliver public services in more effective ways based around the needs of local residents.

Economic opportunities

Excellent digital connectivity, and modern workspaces, will allow residents to develop careers in innovation and technology led sectors.

Digital infrastructure

There is an opportunity for Holt Town to be a digitally enabled neighbourhood where the community of residents, businesses and visitors can leverage technology to improve quality of life and enhance the experiences of its residents and users. Digital technology will be part of transforming public services and Holt Town presents enormous opportunities to roll out approaches in parallel with development phases. Given the low level of occupation across the Area there is a clear opportunity to ensure smart technology is built into the neighbourhood from the start. Digital infrastructure, connected to smart devices and sensors, could positively impact Holt Town in the following areas:

Transport

Real-time monitoring and management of traffic flows through sensors and smart traffic lights to reduce congestion and improve commuting efficiency. Live monitoring of public transport occupancy for increased reliability and efficiency

Energy grid

A smart energy grid could enable real-time load balancing to minimise outages and maximise the efficiency of renewable energy such as wind and solar. Smart systems for building climate control could optimise heating, cooling, and lighting based on occupancy to reduce energy consumption and costs

Environment

Smart monitoring and health and safety alerts could inform residents of environmental risks including air quality, risk of flooding and heatwaves.

Water

Smart water systems and real-time monitoring technologies can ensure efficient management and optimisation of water resources e.g. collect, manage and use rainwater effectively for non-potable uses including landscape irrigation and upkeep.

Lighting

Adaptive street lighting using sensors to adjust street lighting based on pedestrian and vehicular traffic, enhancing citizen safety whilst reducing energy use.

Smart communities

Digital technology paves the way for greater inclusiveness and citizen participation in ongoing urban development, while also strengthening community bonds and fostering a sense of belonging. A digital twin offers an intuitive digital platform where Holt Town residents can organise events, share ideas, submit reports, and practice collective decision-making and governance, among other activities, to foster a close-knit urban community.

University of Manchester x Holt Town

Manchester City Council and the University of Manchester (UoM) have partnered to drive the Holt Town development by leveraging UoM's innovation expertise and commitment to regional impact. The collaboration aims to accelerate Manchester's growth as a leading European innovation hub and promote a more inclusive development model.

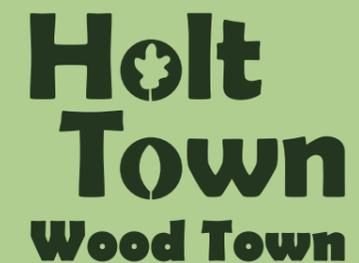
The partnership, enabled by the Unit M team, aims to realise Holt Town's vision as the first digitally-driven, citizen-designed community, collaborating with Studio Egret West, MVRDV NEXT, and other key partners. This initiative seeks to create a future-focused urban space that leverages digital technologies to improve public services and quality of life while prototyping innovative models of living for broader regional and national benefit.



The University of Manchester

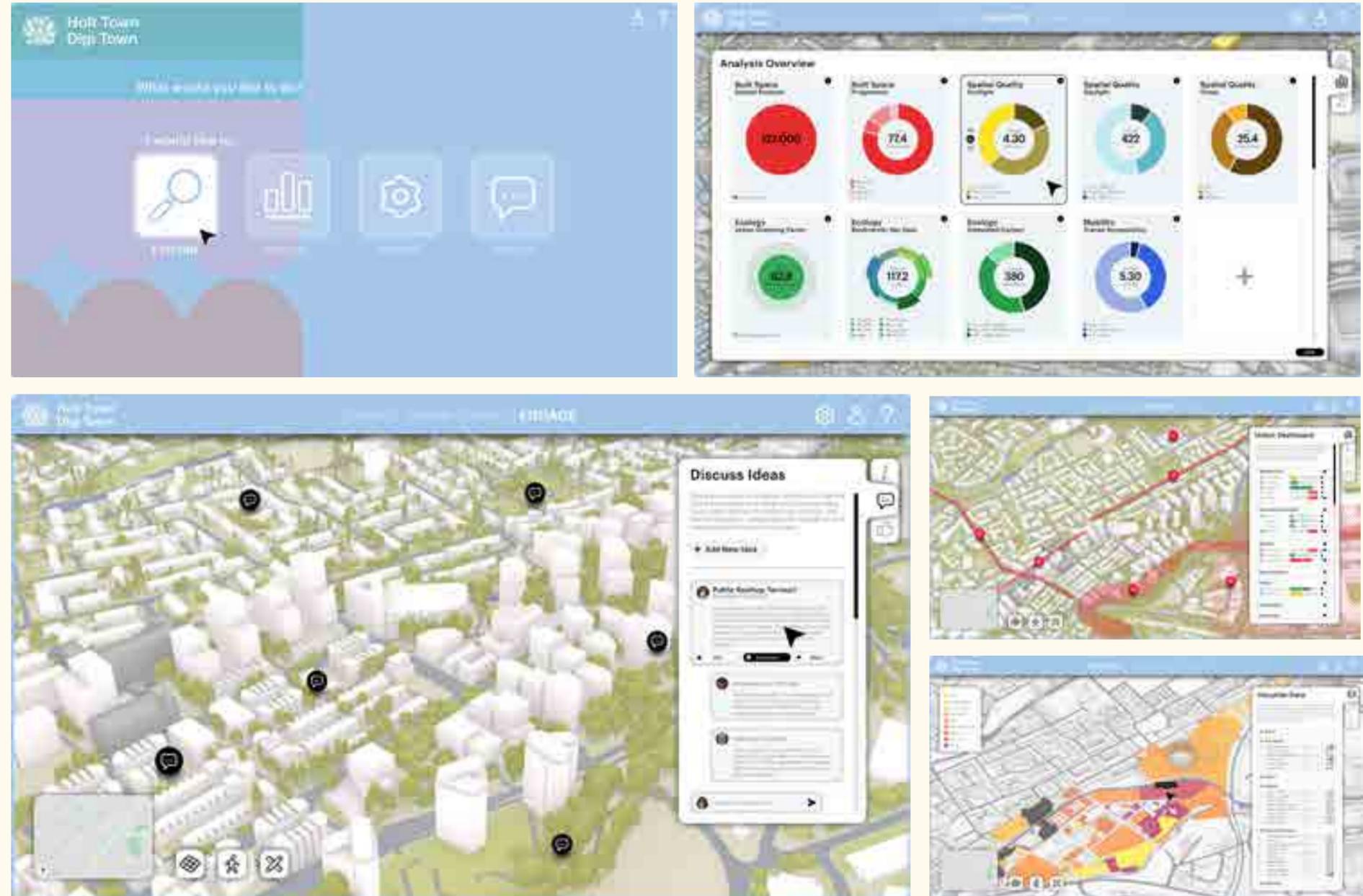


X



In summary, Holt Town has the potential to be an exemplar of a digitally-enabled neighbourhood. Through the relevant and creative application of innovative technologies, Holt Town will better service the current and future needs of its communities.

This could include the integration of smart technical infrastructure to enable the delivery of local digital solutions and services, created in collaboration with citizens. Holt Town's ambitious digital strategy will deliver a smarter, happier, more prosperous and safer environment for all of its residents, businesses and visitors, whilst also delivering future placemaking best practice learning for MCC, GM and beyond. Holt Town presents the opportunity to build the UK's first truly digitally enabled, citizen centric town.



Snapshots of a potential digital platform for Holt Town



8 Character Areas Illustrative Framework

8.1 Holt Town character areas

Plateau

The northern edge transitions between Bradford Road and the Ashton Canal with low-rise development opportunities, nurturing a harmonious relationship with Miles Platting's existing townscape.

Ridge

A connective spine between Ancoats, New Islington, and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, this area features canal-side mid-rise buildings blending heritage preservation and modern design. Enhancements to the towpath and a car-free "Play Link" further emphasise connectivity and engagement with the waterfront.

Terraces

Defined by steep topography and urban grain, this area envisions compact, low-rise townhouses blending residential and workspaces, promoting family living near the City Centre and supporting sustainable, timber-led construction.

Embankment

A focal point for arrival, this area capitalises on its proximity to Holt Town Metrolink station with a potential cultural hub and mid- to high-rise development stepping towards Confluence Park, integrating open spaces with a dynamic urban edge.

Valley

A unique ecological and recreational corridor along the River Medlock, balancing floodplain-sensitive tall buildings with enhanced biodiversity and play spaces. Confluence Park serves as a key destination, anchored by a landmark tower and a vibrant park setting.

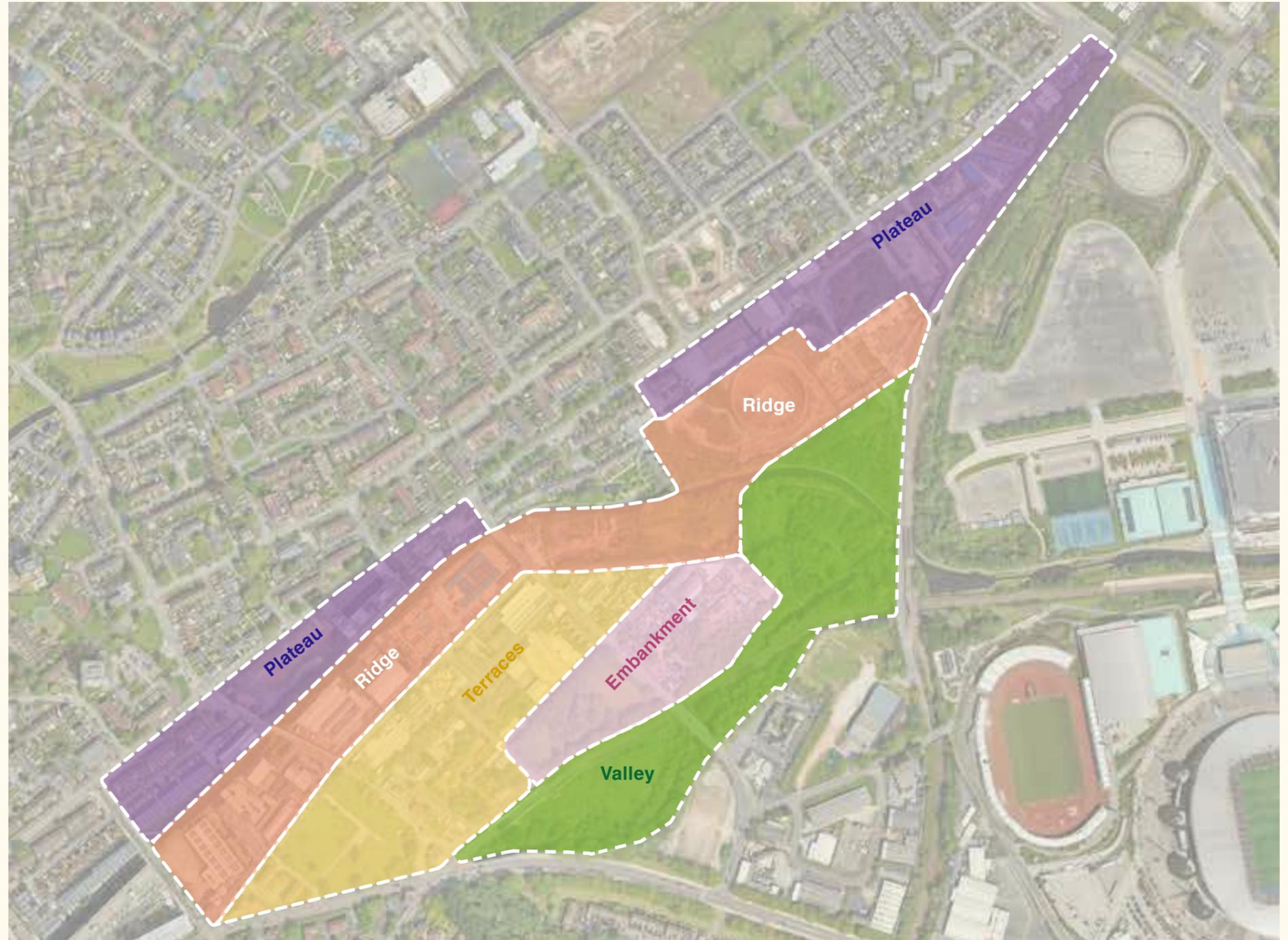


Fig. 36. Illustrative character areas map



Fig. 37. Illustrative framework

8.2 Plateau

The Plateau forms the northern edge of the Area and defines the transitional character of the strip of land nestled between Bradford Road and the Ashton Canal. It has the potential to invite a sequence of lower-rise buildings that enhance the relationship with Miles Platting and nurture a harmonious interface along Bradford Road and Miles Platting.

The Plateau is punctuated by important arrival moments, at key road junctions, which establish gateways between Miles Platting and the Area.

Mid-rise buildings seek to minimise overshadowing. Where appropriate, the upper storeys of buildings could be set back to allow sky views and daylight to penetrate to lower storeys.

Moderate height variation could create visual interest along Bradford Road and address the proximity to existing structures to the north.

Building typologies could focus on providing a defined street frontage along Bradford Road, ensuring an appropriate density on the Area's edge while maintaining a human scale in the context of Miles Platting. This could include townhouses, duplexes, and maisonettes, facilitating a transition to Miles Platting while offering efficient medium-density housing solutions. Apartments, houses and maisonettes of varied size and tenure will accommodate a diverse group of users, allowing families through to single occupiers to make this area home.

Plateau - Illustrative framework

The Plateau creates a gateway between Miles Platting and the Area. Building typologies, including townhouses, duplexes, and maisonettes will define street frontages, ensuring appropriate edge density while maintaining a human scale and facilitating a smooth transition to Miles Platting.

 Plateau Boundary

-  Existing residential
-  Planning application site
-  Brunswick Mill
-  Bradford Inn
-  Low-rise residential
-  Mid-rise residential
-  Predominantly commercial plot

Fig. 38. Plateau - illustrative framework



Existing conditions

- The Plateau delineates the northern edge of the Site along Bradford Road. It forms a residential-led strip of development that seeks to enhance the relationship between Holt Town and Miles Platting.
- The Plateau is punctuated by important arrival moments, at key road junctions, which establish gateways between Miles Platting and the Area.
- Mid-rise buildings seek to minimise overshadowing. Where appropriate, the upper storeys of buildings could be set back to allow sky views and daylight to penetrate to lower storeys.
- Moderate height variation could create visual interest along Bradford Road and address the proximity to existing structures to the north.
- Building typologies could focus on providing a defined street frontage along Bradford Road, ensuring an appropriate density on the Area's edge while maintaining a human scale in the context of Miles Platting. This could include townhouses, duplexes, and maisonettes, facilitating a transition to Miles Platting while offering efficient medium-density housing solutions.

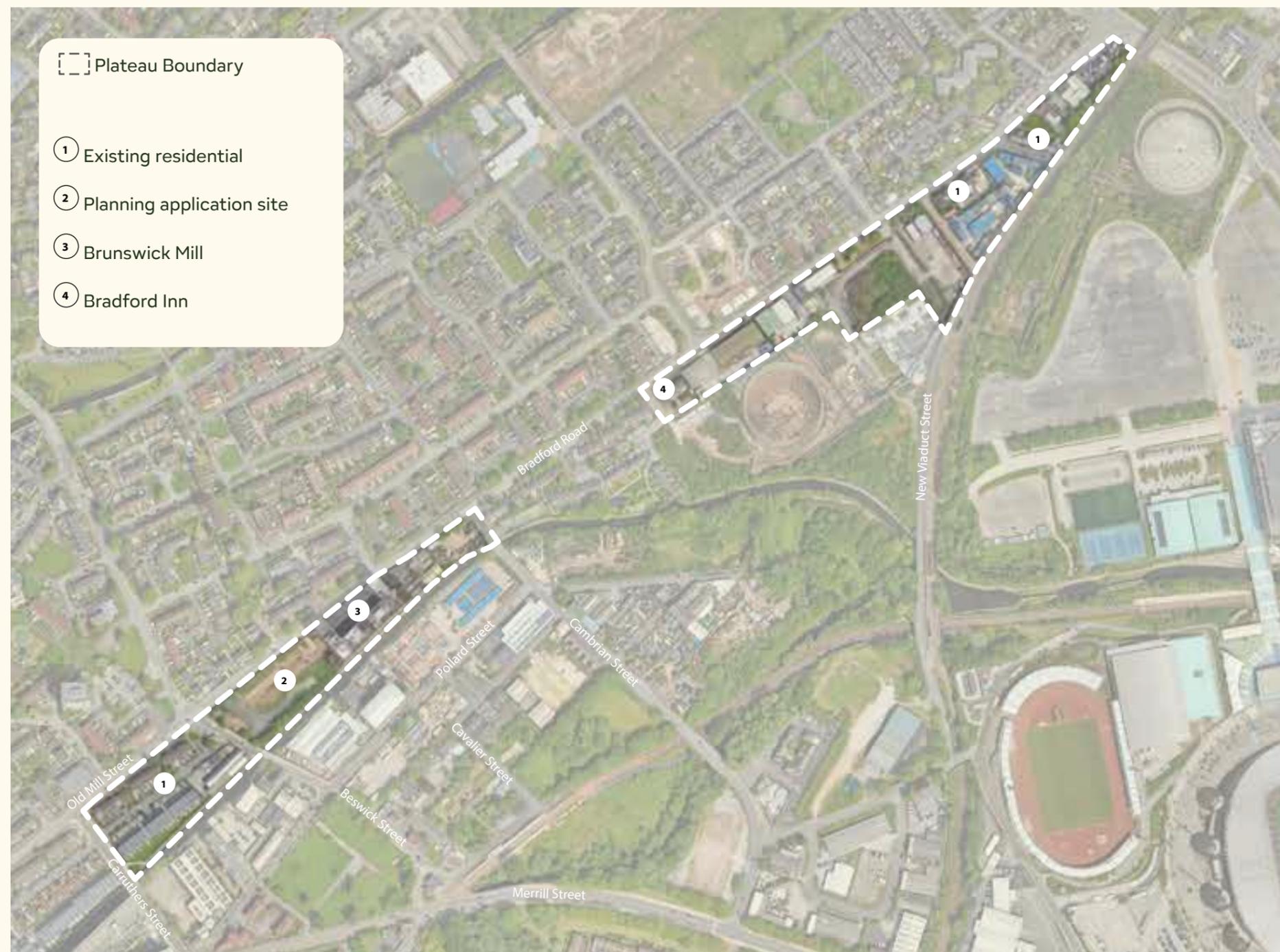


Fig. 39. Plateau - existing site context



Bradford Road

Open spaces and biodiversity framework

The open space framework aims to create landscape connections into the neighbourhood from Miles Platting. These routes enhance connectivity and permeability across the Area, allowing existing residents to have better access to the canal and river.

The Play Link gateway will begin the 1km route through the heart of the site.

-  Plateau boundary
-  Existing buildings
-  Ashton Canal Towpath
-  Play Link
-  Resilient Meadow
-  Enhancement of canalside planting
-  Woodland pockets

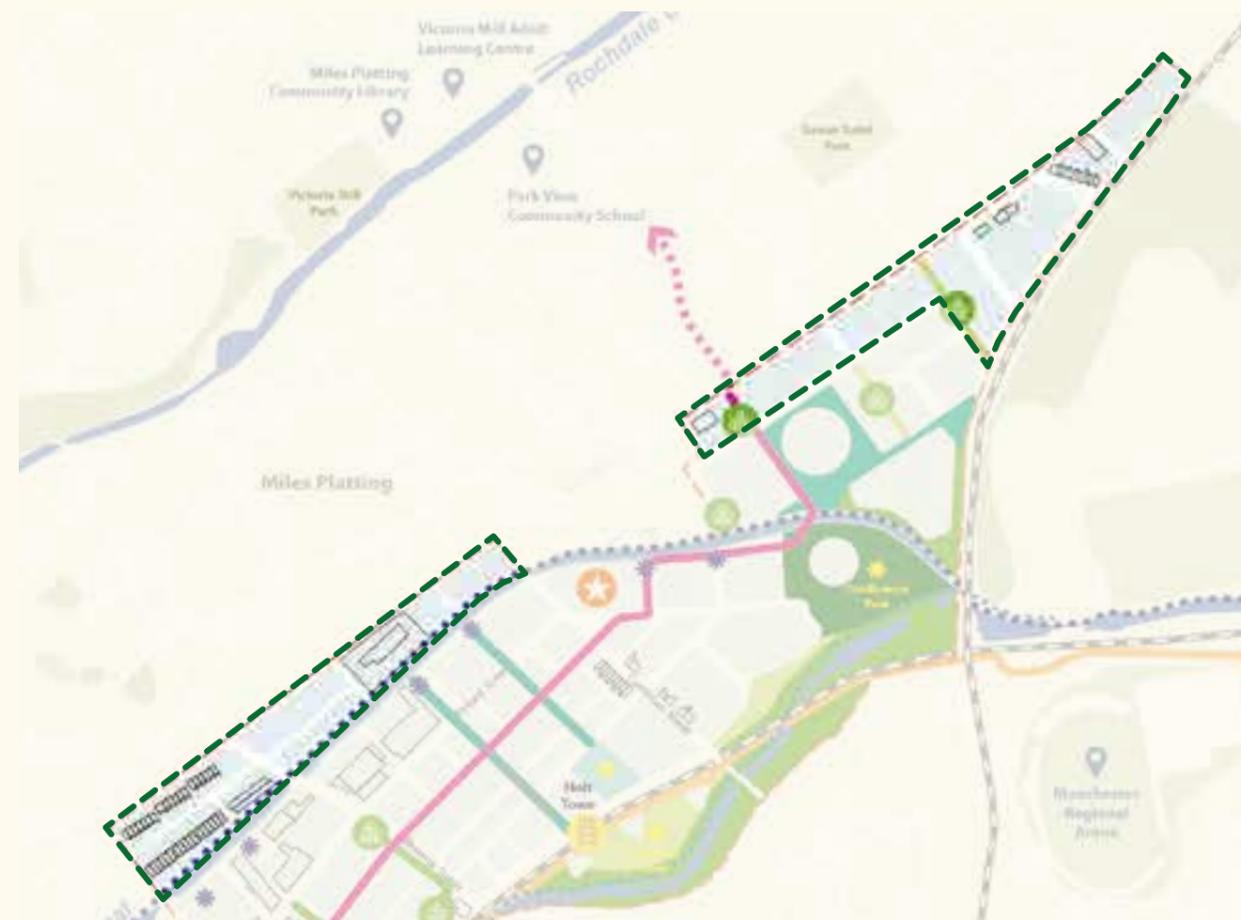


Fig. 40. Plateau - illustrative public realm

Movement and connections framework

North-south people-friendly streets will seek to discourage vehicles from moving across the neighbourhood. Bradford Road will continue to be the main vehicular route running along the interface of the Area.

A number of streets running across the Plateau could adopt a low-traffic approach to support a green and people-friendly environment.

-  Plateau boundary
-  Existing buildings
-  Play Link (car-free)
-  Pedestrian green link
-  Primary vehicular route
-  Secondary vehicular route



Fig. 41. Plateau - illustrative street hierarchy

Ground floor land use framework

The predominant land use within the character area will prioritise residential led development, integrating with the largely residential area of Miles Platting to the north.

Dispersed plots of mixed use will be adopted on some ground floors to provide opportunities for neighbourhood facilities and infrastructure.

-  Plateau boundary
-  Existing buildings

Indicative ground floor uses

-  Predominantly residential
-  Predominantly mixed-use
-  Predominantly commercial
-  Primary frontage



Fig. 42. Plateau - illustrative ground floor uses

Upper floor use framework

The upper floor framework for this area will be residential, representing one of the core residential zones of the overall framework. This land use will create an appropriate edge condition with residential areas north of Bradford Road.

A commercial plot is located at the eastern edge of the study area creating a bridge to the Briscoe Lane industrial area.

-  Plateau boundary
-  Existing buildings

Indicative upper floor uses

-  Predominantly residential
-  Predominantly commercial

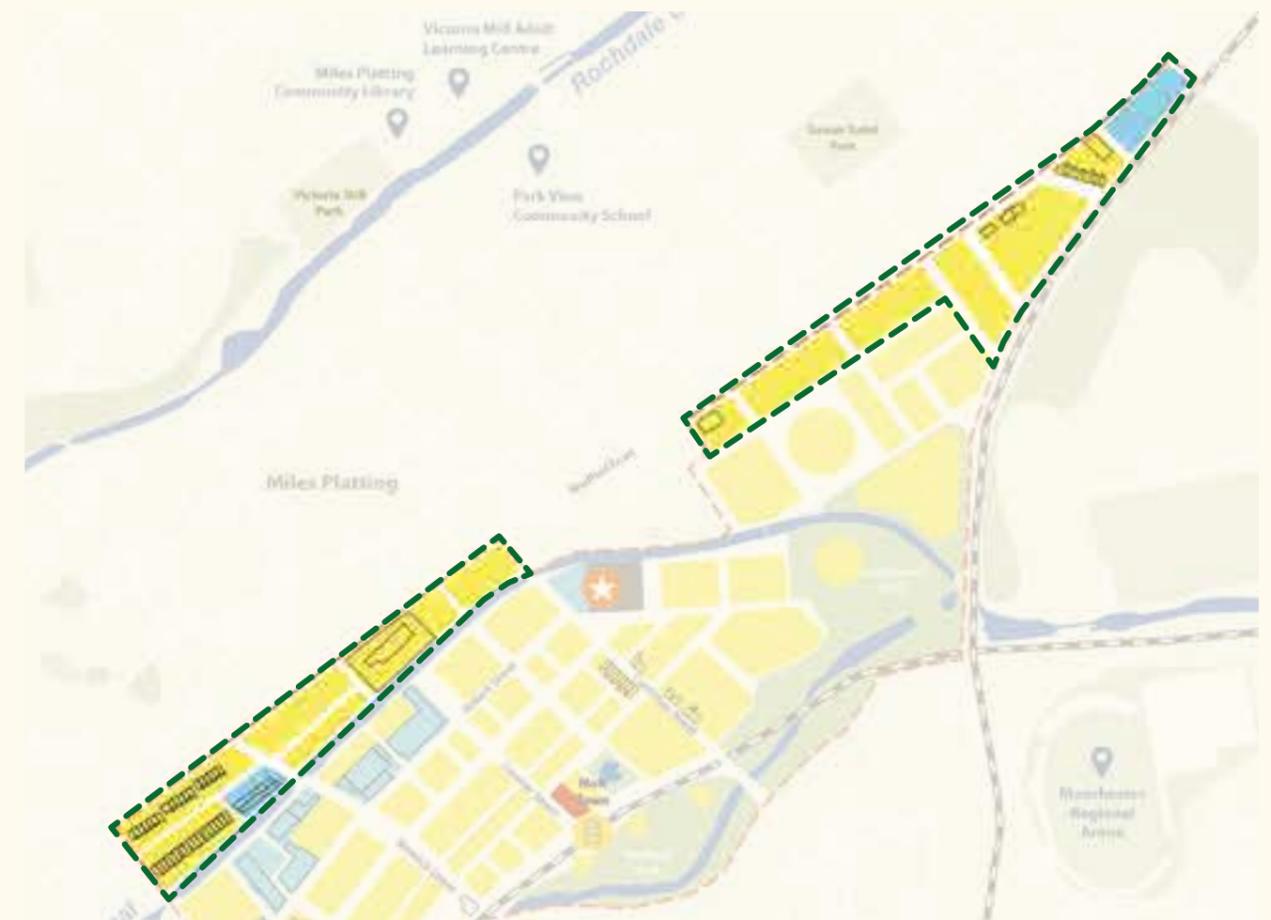


Fig. 43. Plateau - illustrative upper floor uses

Illustrative scale and massing

The Plateau character area invites a lower density-built form that mainly includes townhouses and maisonettes, inviting families to live and work near the City Centre.

Building heights ranging from 3 to 5 storeys predominantly define this zone. Built form variety could be achieved through slight modulations and accents. Medium-rise apartment ranging from 5-8 storeys could help frame key routes along the edge of the character area.

Development plots along Bradford Road could encourage the adoption of typologies that increase frontage to the route, adding activation and helping to complete the setting of the street with Miles Platting.

Towards the southern end of Bradford Road, where development plots are closer to the City Centre, height may increase to reference the existing height of Brunswick Mill.

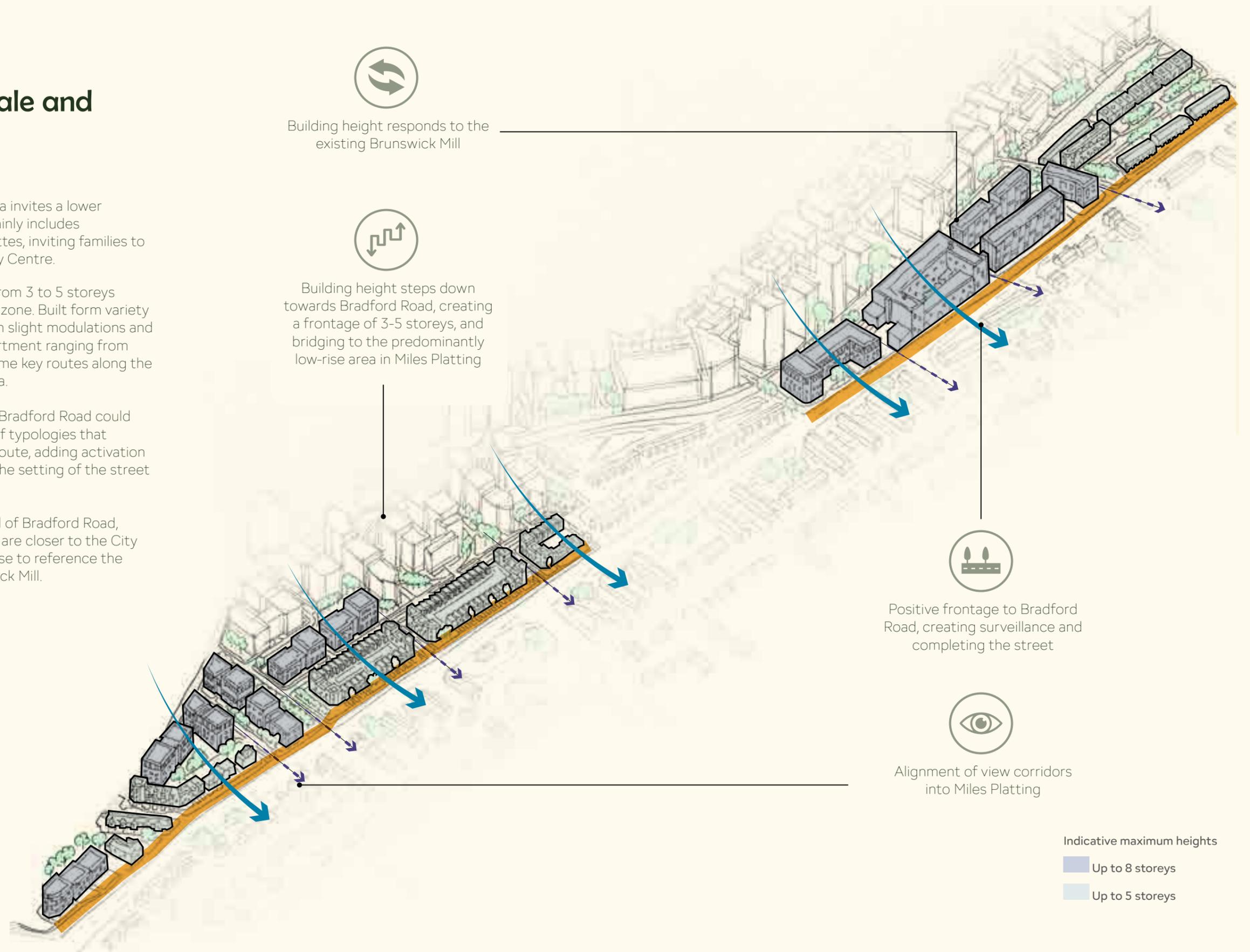


Fig. 44. Plateau - illustrative scale and massing

Illustrative landscape and open space

The plateau invites green connections and gateways across Bradford Road from Miles Platting to the north of the site.

Breaks within development plots provide permeability into the Holt Town framework area and create new connections for the surrounding community to move across the area and access the canal and river corridors.

These connections could aim to align with the existing street structure where possible, particularly around key routes, creating seamless integration with the existing context.

Lower-scale development and townhouses fronting Bradford Road aim to enhance the setting of this corridor with elements of street greening along this interface encouraged.

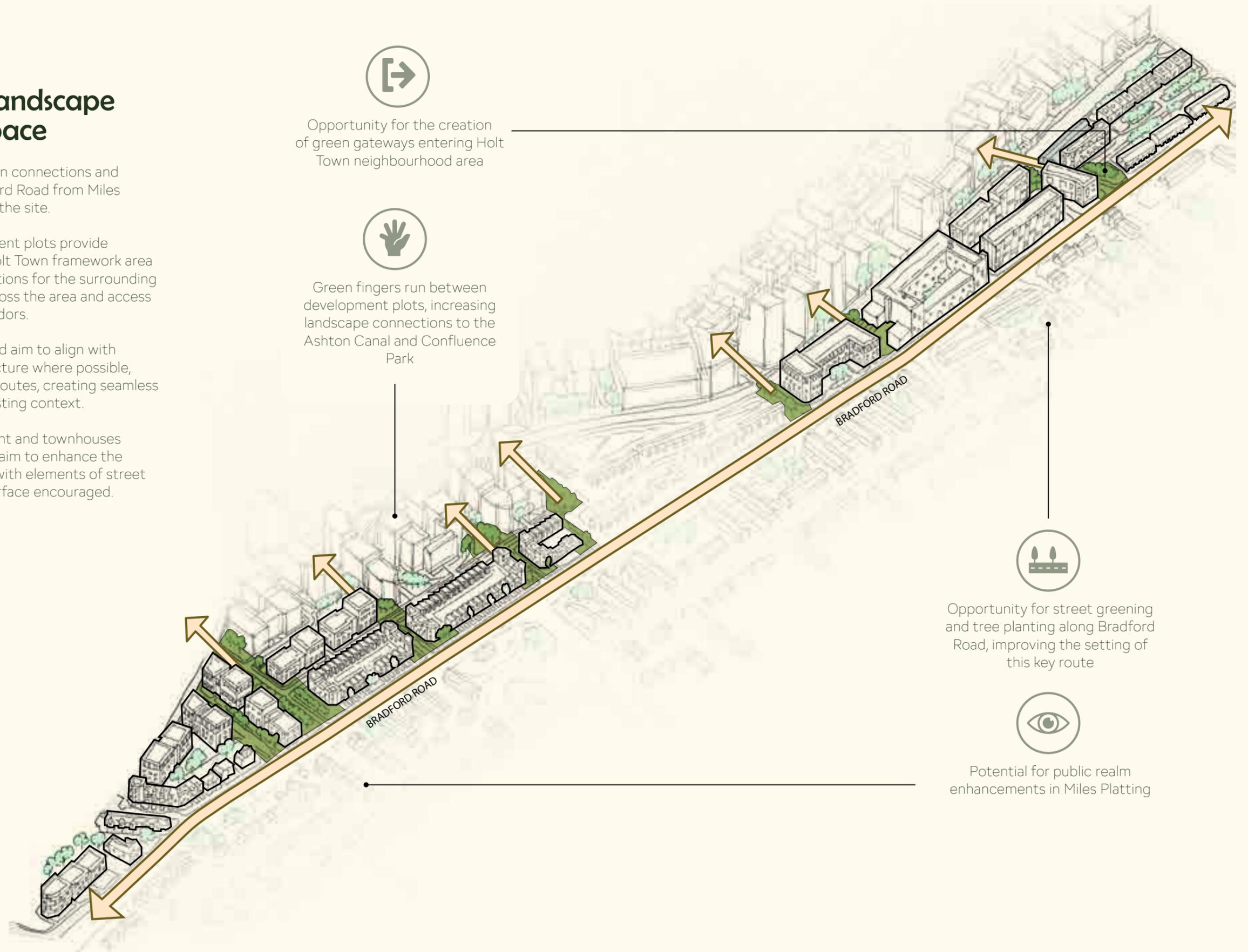


Fig. 45. Plateau - illustrative landscape and open space

Illustrative urban form and typologies

Typologies in this character area could adopt a human-scale approach, focussing on creating spaces that prioritise the proportions, and experiences of people moving into the framework area.

Streets could not have overly generous offsets, allowing for frontage, defensible space and landscaping to create pleasant environments for people moving through the area. More intimate scale streets and a pedestrian-friendly environment encourage neighbourly interaction and a sense of belonging.

Front doors and building lobbies could interface with the street encouraging activity, movement and passive surveillance along these routes.

Materiality and form could vary bringing diversity to the street scene, whilst having a uniform overarching appearance such as brick, stone or wood. Other materials, like buff brick, create a warm and timeless aesthetic that harmonises with the local context.

Slight variations in height to step up around key corners gives opportunity for more architectural expression, whilst remaining in-keeping with the overall aesthetic of the character area.



Entrance lobbies - Caudale, Camden (© Tim Crocker)



Mews homes with in-curtilage parking - Accordia, Cambridge (© John Lord)



Architecturally expressed corners - Caudale, Camden (© Tim Crocker)



Pedestrian-friendly streets with positive frontage - East Wick, London (© SEW)



Material variation, wood cladding and buff brickwork - Bruyn's Court, Essex (© Bell Phillips)

Fig. 46. Plateau - Bradford Road looking east



8.3 Ridge

The Ridge is an important economic bridge between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. It is the heart of businesses, creativity and entrepreneurship at Holt Town.

Enhancements to the canal towpath and improved access to the waterfront create opportunities for residents and visitors to re-engage with the water. The benefits derived from this significant improvement to the aspect of the canal could form the basis for occasional taller buildings along this edge.

The southern edge of the Ridge is composed of the Play Link, a potential one-kilometre car-free route that safely connects St Anne's Primary School and Parkview Community School, establishing a clear and inviting connection to Miles Platting.

The Ridge occupies the highest topographic point of the Site and forms a physical and land use bridge between Ancoats and New Islington and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

This location is an opportunity to deliver high-density commercially led uses that build upon the existing character of the southern side of the Ashton Canal.

The Ridge addresses the canal positively and celebrates its role as a piece of green and blue infrastructure. Enhancements to the towpath and canal frontage between the City Centre and Sportcity will be paramount to supporting the creation of a safer and more enjoyable waterfront route.

Pockets of open space and public realm could help enhance the setting of the canal and invite a new experience of the waterfront.

The reuse and refurbishment of historic mill building could be complemented by the stacked industry and commercially led development.

A mix of apartment dwellings could be provided along the Ridge to complement the ecosystem of non-residential uses and support a vibrant neighbourhood life throughout the day and

week. Apartments of varied size and tenure will accommodate a diverse group of users, allowing families through to single occupiers to make this area home.

The Ashton Canal corridor area follows a pattern of higher-density development that frames the canal, extending out from the City Centre, as well as creating a strong urban edge overlooking the blue corridor.

Existing mill buildings set a precedent datum for development along the canal.

Active street frontages could support street life and social interaction energised by other compatible uses and linked landscape at ground level. This is critical around smaller areas of the public realm and the threshold along Pollard Street and the interface with the Terraces character areas.

The benefits of roofscapes along the ridge could be harnessed in a variety of ways, including the possibility of a higher-level route connecting buildings and enabling a bridging moment over Confluence Park across New Viaduct Street to repair the severance.

Ridge - Illustrative framework

The Ridge bridges Ancoats, New Islington, Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, offering potential for high-density, commercially led development that complements the Ashton Canal's character. Enhancing the towpath, canal frontage, and public realm will create a safer, vibrant waterfront, with historic mill refurbishments and stacked industry enriching the area. Residential development with active street frontages, and innovative roofscapes will support a lively, mixed-use neighbourhood.

 Ridge Boundary

- ① Ancoats Works
- ② Hope Mill
- ③ Spectator Mill & Bridge 5 Mill
- ④ Wellington Mill
- ⑤ Mobility Mill
- ⑥ Predominantly commercial plot
- ⑦ Predominantly mixed-use plot
- ⑧ Predominantly residential plot

Fig. 47. Ridge - illustrative framework



Existing conditions

The Ridge character area runs from Carruthers Street in the south east of the study area, along the Ashton Canal Corridor, and into the centre of the former gas holder site to the north east.

There are two key interfaces, Pollard Street / Pollard Street East along the southern edge and the Ashton Canal along the northern edge. Pollard Street acts as the main east-west connection across the area, and currently accommodates high levels of on street parking for the existing commercial units.

Between the intersections of Beswick Street and Cowan Street are a number of heritage buildings of varying condition and use, including the listed Spectator Mill and Hope Mill. Between these mills are a number of smaller lower-scale industrial units that house predominantly light-industrial and manufacturing businesses.

Access to the canal is restricted to the north side towpath and access can only be made currently by using bridges on Carruthers, Beswick and Cambrian Street. Further east are a combination of industrial uses and vacant land that do not currently have any built form, and used for the purpose of storage and various works activities.

Stepping across the canal are areas of dense vegetation and tree planting which extends into the former gas holder site which is not accessible to the public. It should be noted that the gas holder present in the aerial image has been removed and is no longer present on the site.



Fig. 48. Ridge - existing site context



Cowan Street towards Brunswick Mill

Open spaces and biodiversity framework

The Ridge will prioritise the Ashton Canal Corridor as a key area of open space, running the length of the character area and encouraging areas of canalside planting. Smaller open spaces will open to the canal edge, giving new areas to enjoy the enhanced setting of the canal corridor.

Gas Holders Green and Canal Spur Park to the east of the area will aim to celebrate the heritage of the area.

- Ridge boundary
- Existing buildings
- ★ Multi-use Mobility Mill
- Enhancement of canalside planting
- Resilient Meadow
- Gas Holders Green
- Play Link
- Rain garden meadows
- Ashton Canal Towpath
- Woodland/nature trail
- ✱ Canalside glade
- Woodland pockets



Fig. 49. Ridge - illustrative public realm

Movement and connections framework

The canal corridor will be the predominant car-free route through this character area and given direct access from Holt Town towards the City Centre. Linear car-free routes will aim to increase permeability through development plots and give greater access to the canal.

Pollard Street and Pollard Street East will continue as a key east-west movement corridor, facilitating vehicle movement as well as cycle infrastructure.

- Ridge boundary
- Existing buildings
- Play Link
- Pedestrian green link
- Primary vehicular route
- Secondary vehicular route

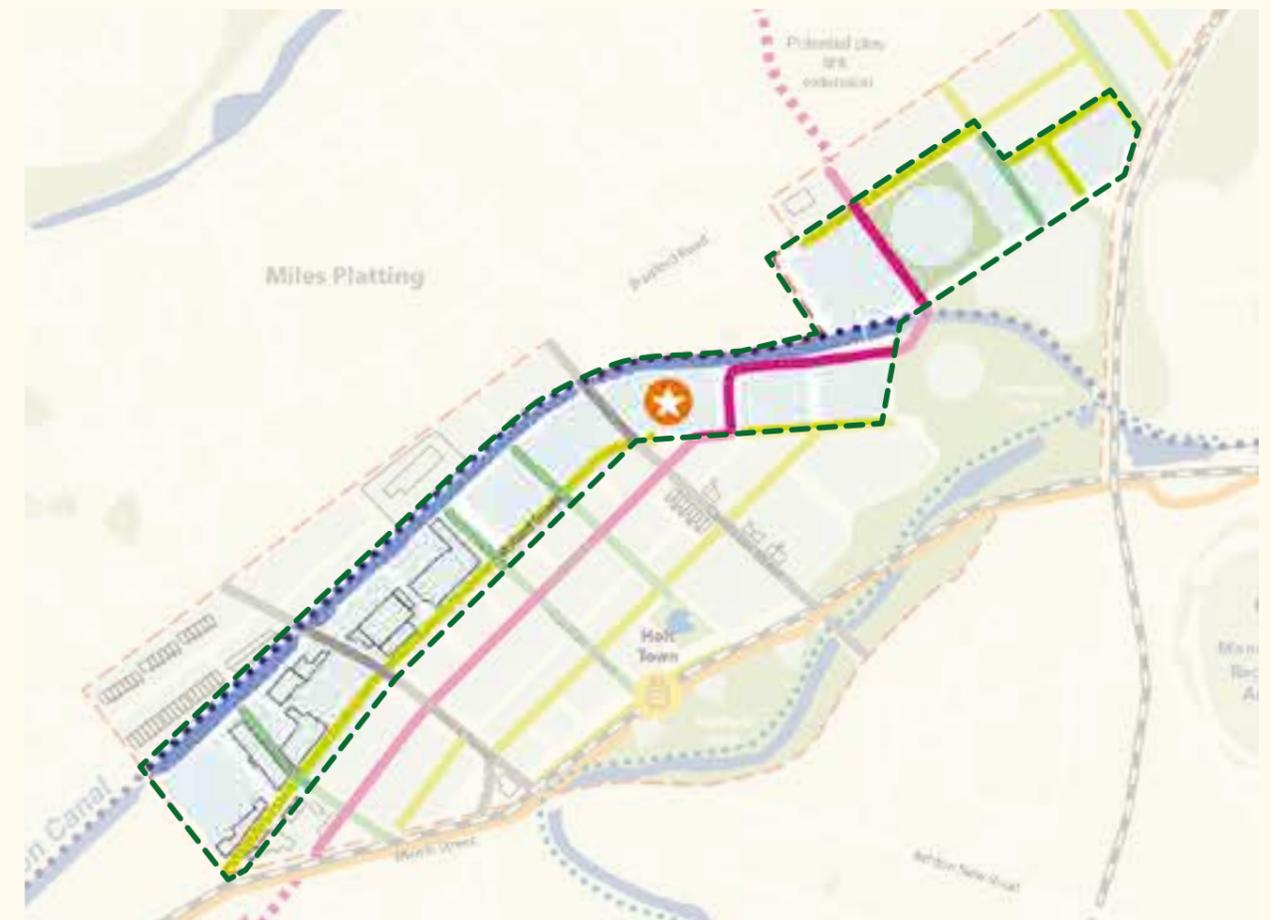


Fig. 50. Ridge - illustrative street hierarchy

Ground floor land use

The Ridge is an important economic bridge eastward from the City Centre along the canal corridor and as such it features a predominantly commercial-led offer south of the Ashton Canal. These commercial spaces could accommodate small-scale units all the way up to larger higher-grade office space.

North of the Ashton Canal, a cluster of mixed-use plots will support this residential-led area, with neighbourhood facilities to include a range of shops, facilities, and health services.

-  Ridge boundary
-  Existing buildings
-  Multi-use Mobility Mill
-  Predominantly residential
-  Predominantly mixed-use
-  Predominantly commercial
-  Predominantly leisure / recreation / health & wellbeing
-  Predominantly mobility
-  Primary frontage



Fig. 51. Ridge - illustrative ground floor uses

Upper floor use

The upper floor land use strategy will adopt a mixture of commercial and residential, with existing mill buildings and structures giving opportunity for refurbishment or continuation of commercial space. Residential use in other plots will support this commercial space.

At the corner of Cambrian Street and Pollard Street, the multi-use Mobility Mill could invite a mix of workspace, car parking, and a hub of facilities for active travel. The Mobility Mill could also host community and health services.

-  Ridge boundary
 -  Existing buildings
 -  Multi-use Mobility Hub
- Indicative upper floor uses
-  Predominantly residential
 -  Predominantly commercial

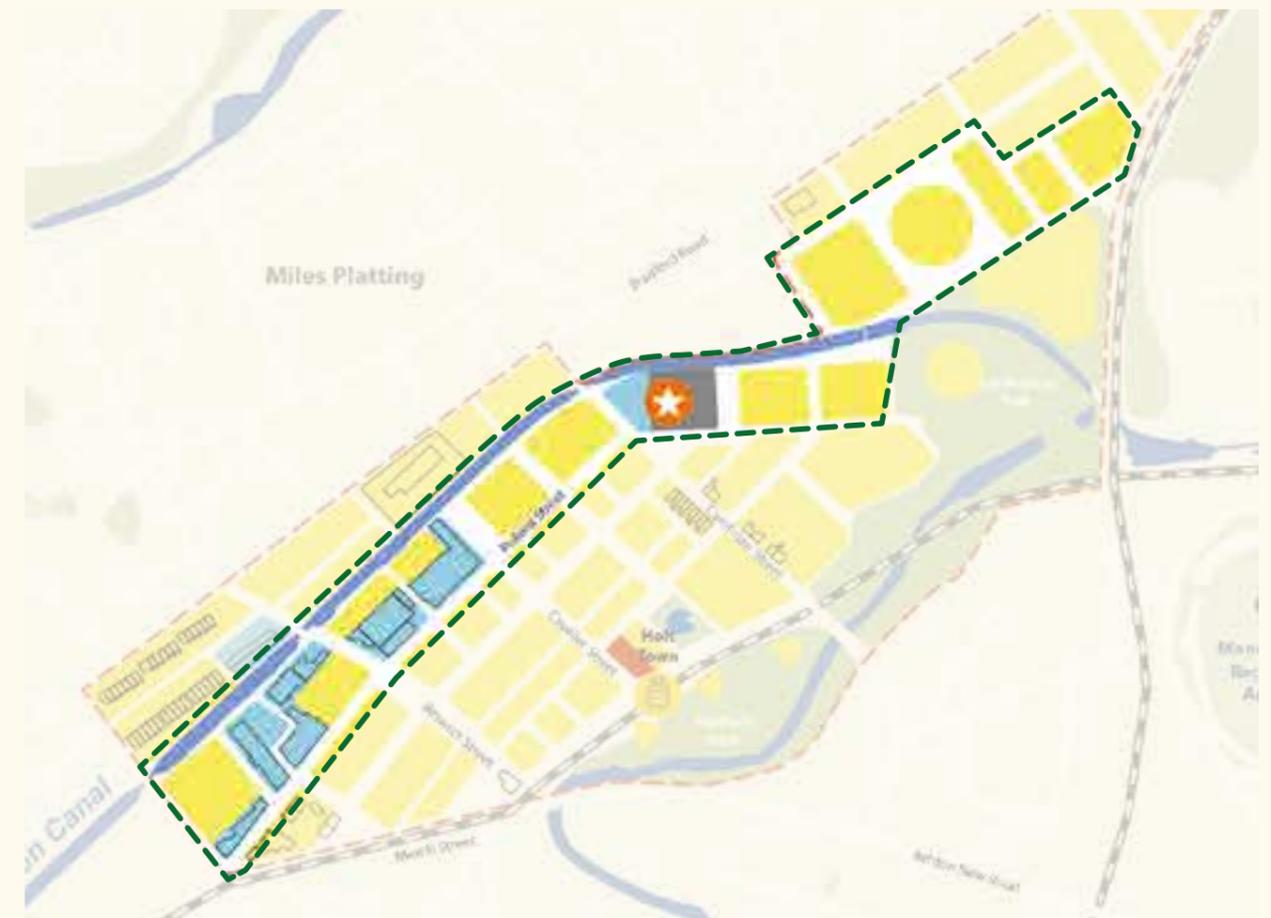


Fig. 52. Ridge - illustrative upper floor uses

Illustrative scale and massing

The Ridge character area invites a higher density built form, that creates a rhythm of stepping height along the canal, culminating at the edge of Confluence Park.

Development along Pollard Street could reference the height of existing buildings such as Wellington Mill, before increasing along Pollard Street East.

Plots will maximise views over the Ashton Canal, increasing activation and passive surveillance of this route.

Breaks between development plots will align with view corridors through the development, increasing the value of the canal corridor within the character of the area.

Whilst height could step up along the canal interface, height along the Pollard Street interface could decrease, providing a more human scale streetscape as you move along this route.

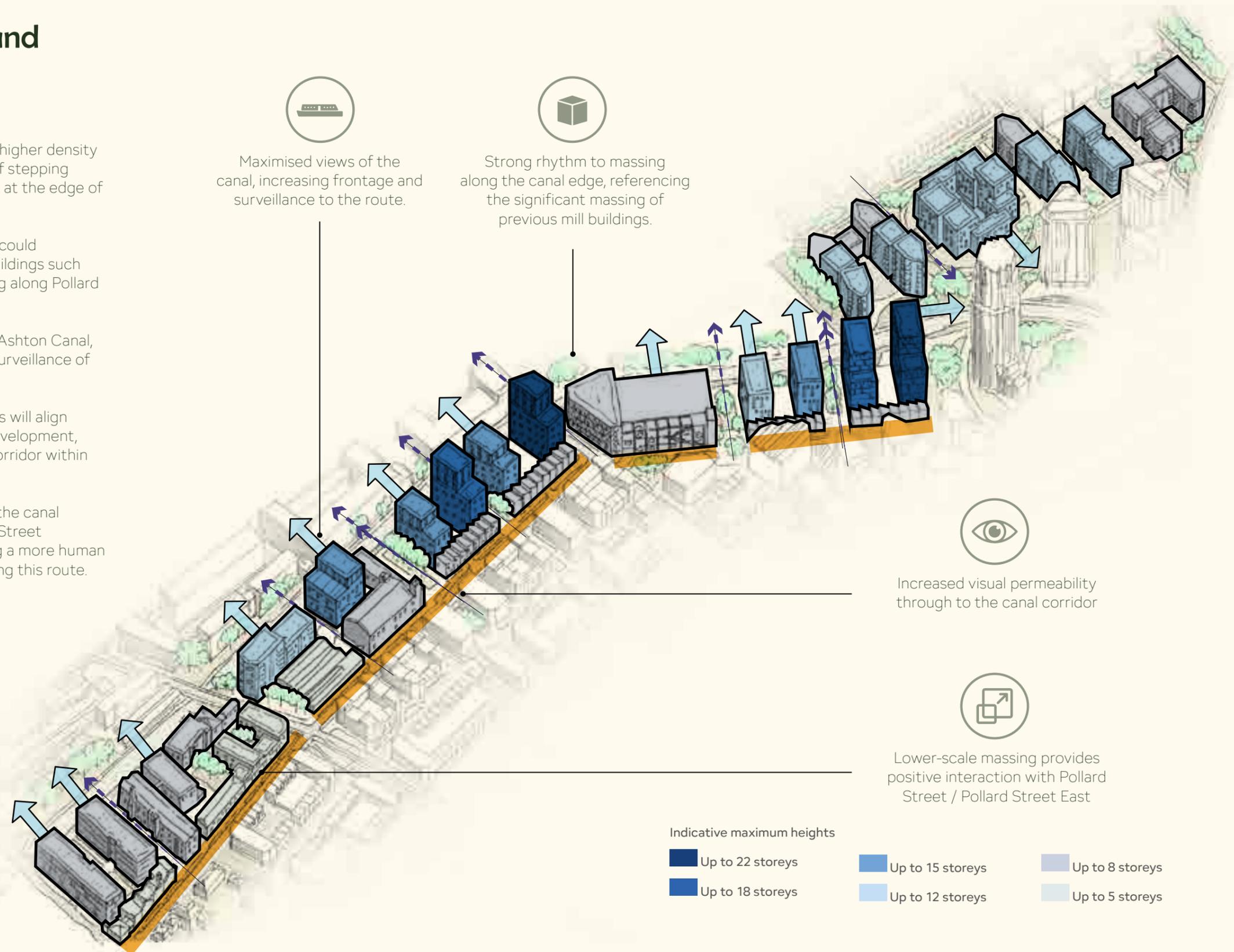


Fig. 53. Ridge - illustrative scale and massing

Illustrative landscape and open space

The enhancement of the Ashton Canal corridor will anchor the open space through the character area. A number of open spaces between development plots will create spaces that both celebrate heritage assets such as Wellington Mill, as well as creating enhanced greenery along the canal corridor.

These spaces will soften the currently hard and industrial nature of Pollard Street / Pollard Street East, allowing greater access and revealing the watercourse which is currently not visible and largely inaccessible from within Holt Town.

In between public spaces, development plots could have landscaped courtyards and green podiums, giving residents access to door-step open space and nature.

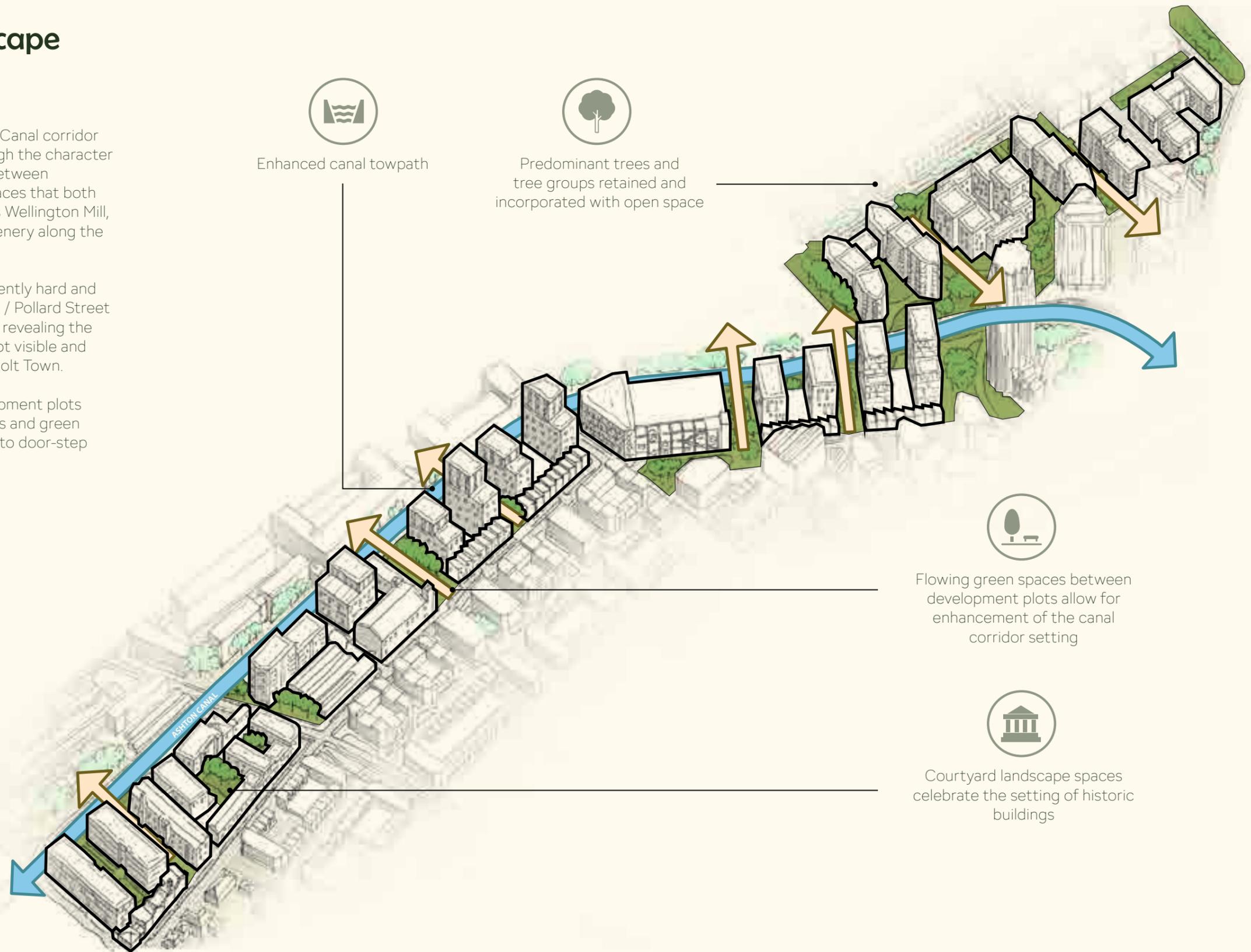


Fig. 54. Ridge - illustrative landscape and open space

Illustrative urban form and typologies

The Ridge character area invites a higher density built form, that creates a rhythm of stepping height along the canal, culminating at the edge of Confluence Park.

Urban form within the Ridge could encourage references to the historic setting of the canal and the mill buildings contained within.

Materiality that references the traditional red brick of the mill structures could be encouraged creating an urban environment which is cohesive with existing and retained structures. Further to this the use of metal materials and industrial inspired architectural design could also be encouraged.

The stepping down of development within plots along the Pollard Street interface could adopt a differing typology from that along the canal edge. Typologies here could look to adopt a combination of townhouses and maisonettes, creating maximum interaction with the street, and visual interest to the streetscape.

The Mobility Mill could encourage an active façade, being wrapped in commercial space that brings interest to the exterior appearance.



Industrial style architectural details - Lokdepot, Berlin (© Werner Huthmacher)



External workspace wrapping internal structure - The Gantry, Here East (© Rory Gardiner)



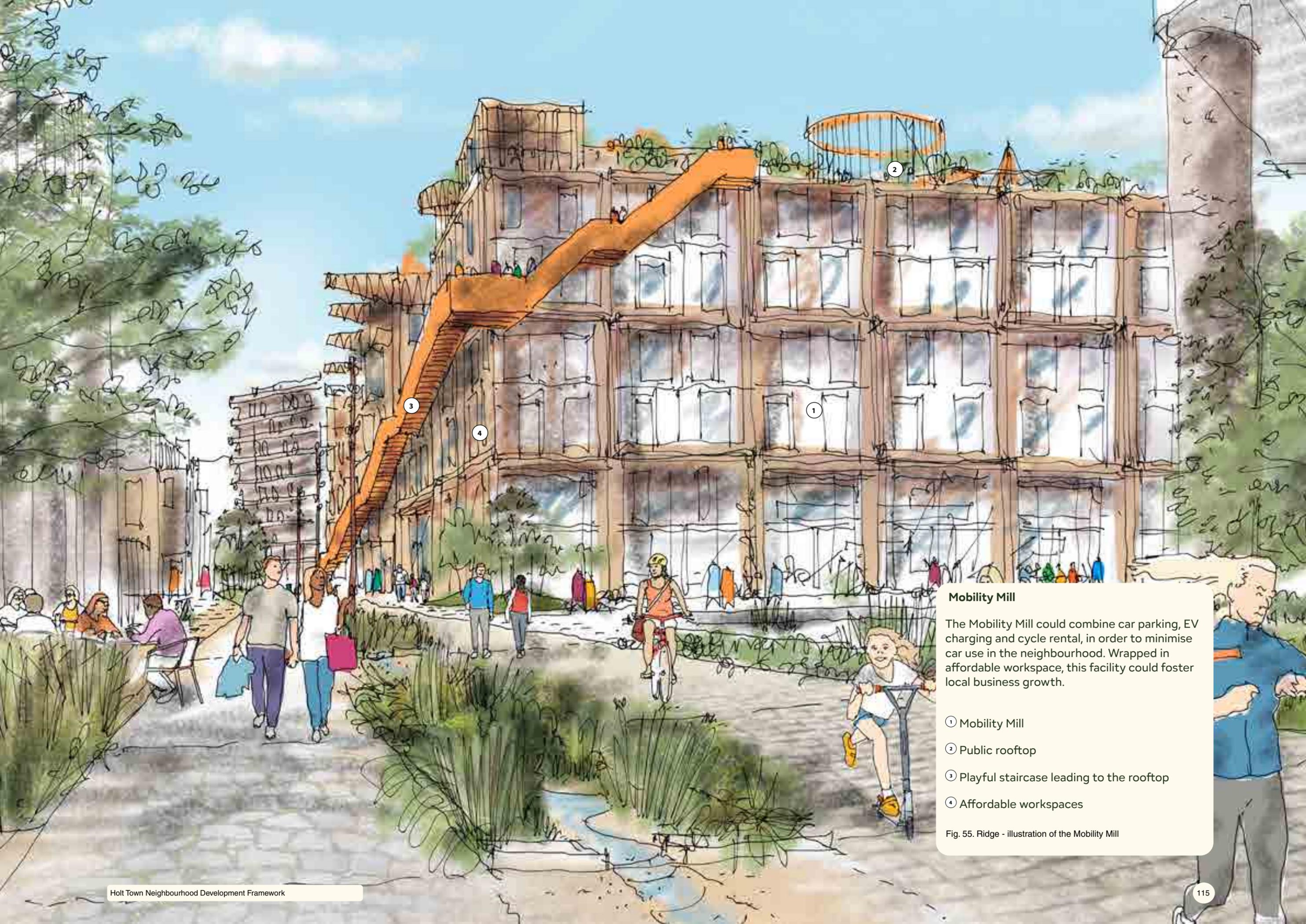
Steeping down in height to street interface - Goodluck Hope (© Allies and Morrison)



Lower height building positively contributing to the streetscape - Goodluck Hope CGI



Characterful street referencing heritage materials - Faraday Works (CGI by © SEW)



Mobility Mill

The Mobility Mill could combine car parking, EV charging and cycle rental, in order to minimise car use in the neighbourhood. Wrapped in affordable workspace, this facility could foster local business growth.

- ① Mobility Mill
- ② Public rooftop
- ③ Playful staircase leading to the rooftop
- ④ Affordable workspaces

Fig. 55. Ridge - illustration of the Mobility Mill

Illustrative public realm and open space

Key public realm spaces within the Ridge will be inspired by the setting of the Ashton Canal, creating spaces to dwell and enjoy the watercourse, as well as increasing biodiversity and ecological value.

Water based planting can increase the aesthetic value of the canal whilst also creating new habitats for wildlife that call the watercourse home. The planting approach here could aim to retain non invasive habitats to maintain the ecological corridor. This could include waterside trees and shrubs.

Lighting fixtures along the Ashton Canal could be positioned exclusively on the northern side, adjacent to the towpath, to prevent light pollution from affecting habitats on the southern side. This approach safeguards the ecological corridor, maintaining a safe and accessible environment for both people and wildlife.

Opportunities for the enhancement of heritage features around the canal, such as the canal locks and bridges should be encouraged.

Courtyard spaces between development plots and around heritage buildings where green landscaping is not achievable, raised planters could be used to green hardscaped spaces.



Steps to access the watercourse



Varied and layered planting strategy (© Richard Bloom / SEW)



Former industrial features retained and celebrated



Green space for informal leisure activity



Floating planting beds

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.



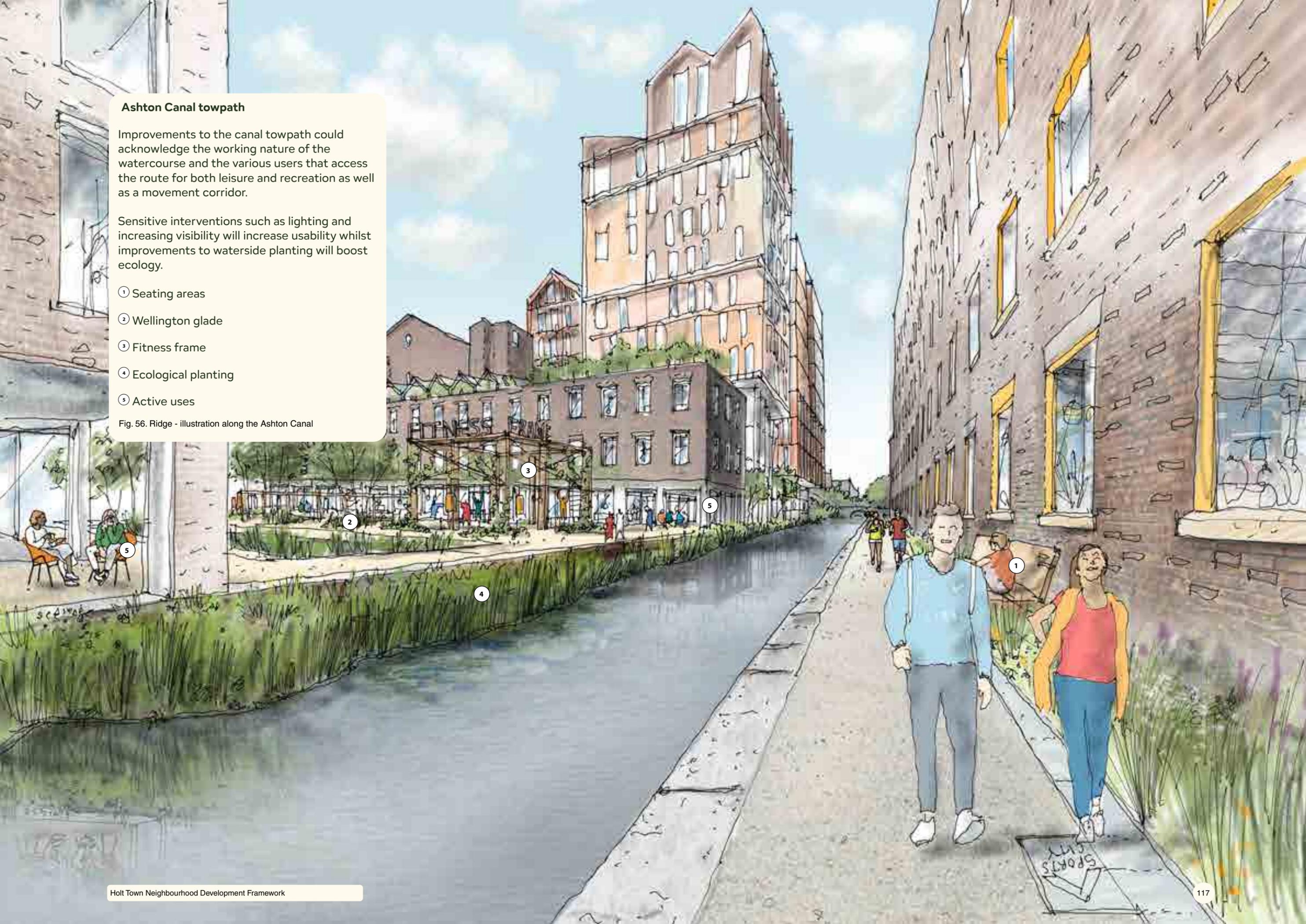
Ashton Canal towpath

Improvements to the canal towpath could acknowledge the working nature of the watercourse and the various users that access the route for both leisure and recreation as well as a movement corridor.

Sensitive interventions such as lighting and increasing visibility will increase usability whilst improvements to waterside planting will boost ecology.

- ① Seating areas
- ② Wellington glade
- ③ Fitness frame
- ④ Ecological planting
- ⑤ Active uses

Fig. 56. Ridge - illustration along the Ashton Canal



8.4 Terraces

The Terraces emerge from the steep level change that characterises the transition between the Lower Medlock Valley and the Ashton Canal Corridor. This area establishes an opportunity to deliver a compact, tight-knit fabric of low-rise typologies that blend living and working and address the need for family housing in proximity to the City Centre. The low-rise scale of buildings in the Terraces encourages the exploration of innovative construction methods and material, including timber-led construction, to support a low carbon neighbourhood.

The Terraces are illustrated as a low-density area that celebrates the steep level change that connects the valley corridor and the Canal ridge.

The street network establishes a tight and compact grain and public realm network that harnesses the natural topography and offers views over the Lower Medlock Valley towards Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

The historic grid layout informs a pattern of east-west and north-south connectivity across the Framework Area and beyond. Streets could adopt a low-traffic approach to support a green and people-friendly environment.

A central Play Link, one kilometre in length, connects St Anne's Primary School and Park View Community School. It forms a core feature of this area. The illustrative framework aims to create a car-free, pedestrian-friendly connection through Holt Town along Lind Street, enhancing links between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. It is intended as a safe space for pedestrians, free from vehicle traffic, featuring playgrounds, benches, and green spaces.

A series of smaller parks and green spaces could complement these linear routes, providing attractive sheltered green spaces for residents.

This location invites a lower density-built form that includes townhouses and maisonettes with associated workspace and private amenity areas, inviting families to live and work near the City Centre.

Building heights ranging from 3 to 5 storeys define this zone. Built form variety could be achieved through slight modulations and accents. Medium-rise apartment accommodation could help frame key routes along the edge of the character area.

Terraces - Illustrative framework

The Terraces are illustrated as a low-density area that celebrates the steep level change that connects the valley corridor and the Canal ridge.

The street network establishes a tight and compact grain and public realm network that harnesses the natural topography and offers views over the Lower Medlock Valley towards the Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

① Terraces Boundary

② Play Link Gateway

③ Play Link

④ Green Links

Fig. 57. Terraces - illustrative framework



Existing conditions

The Terraces character area, extends from the convergence of Carruthers Street / Merrill Street / Pollard Street in the west of the site through to Upper Helena Street / Upper Cyrus Street in the east.

The area accommodates the predominant light industrial use in the Holt Town area, with manufacturing and low-scale warehouses covering the majority of plots along Cavalier Street, Lind Street and Cowan Street.

The area also includes a number of residential properties, most notably the site to the west of the site operated by registered provider, The Salvation Army as well as private residential properties along Cambrian Street. These residential properties along Cambrian street are typical of the historic red brick terrace typology that previously extended across the site.

Between Beswick Street and Little Holme Street is an example of where more recent development typologies have been cleared and is now undeveloped land.

The Ashton-under-Lyne branch of the Metrolink runs along the southern interface of the site, where the Holt Town station is located.



Fig. 58. Terraces - existing site context



Cambrian Street

Open spaces and biodiversity framework

The framework for the character area aims to maximise landscape connections and movement, with the predominant landscape spaces being the Play Link and Cavalier Cascade.

The Play Link connects through the heart of the Terraces, giving a dedicated car-free playful route to move through the site. Cavalier Cascade is the key east-west corridor, another car-free route moving people from Holt Town station to the commercial areas with the Ridge.

-  Terraces boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Holt Town Station
-  Existing buildings
-  Play Link
-  Rain garden meadows
-  Woodland
-  Woodland pockets



Fig. 59. Terraces - illustrative public realm

Movement and connections framework

The movement framework for the Terraces aims to reference the historic street grain and utilise the existing grid structure. Vehicles and cycle infrastructure will be accommodated along Pollard Street and Cyrus Street when moving east - west and Beswick Street and Cambrian street moving east - west.

The Play Link and Corridor Cascade will be car-free movement routes for pedestrians.

-  Terraces boundary
-  Existing buildings
-  Pedestrian Play Link
-  Pedestrian green link
-  Primary vehicular route
-  Secondary vehicular route



Fig. 60. Terraces - illustrative street hierarchy

Ground floor land use framework

To the north of the character area where the zone interfaces with the Ridge, there will be an edge condition of mixed use plots, bridging to the commercial focus of the Ridge and offering residential amenities.

At the core of the area will be solely residential use at ground floor, relating to the focus on townhouse and maisonette typologies

-  Terraces boundary
-  Existing buildings

- Indicative ground floor uses
-  Predominantly residential
 -  Predominantly mixed-use
 -  Primary frontage



Fig. 61. Terraces - illustrative ground floor uses

Upper floor use land use framework

Whilst variety in land use will be adopted along the edge conditions at the ground plane, the upper floors will be of residential use.

This strategy will be in-keeping with the Terraces being the residential core to the neighbourhood.

-  Terraces boundary
-  Existing buildings

- Indicative upper floor uses
-  Predominantly residential



Fig. 62. Terraces - illustrative upper floor uses

Illustrative scale and massing

This location invites a lower density-built form that mainly includes townhouses and maisonettes with associated workspace, inviting families to live and work near the City Centre.

Building heights ranging from 3 to 5 storeys define this zone. Built form variety could be achieved through slight modulations and accents.

Medium-rise apartment accommodation could help frame key routes along the edge of the character area.

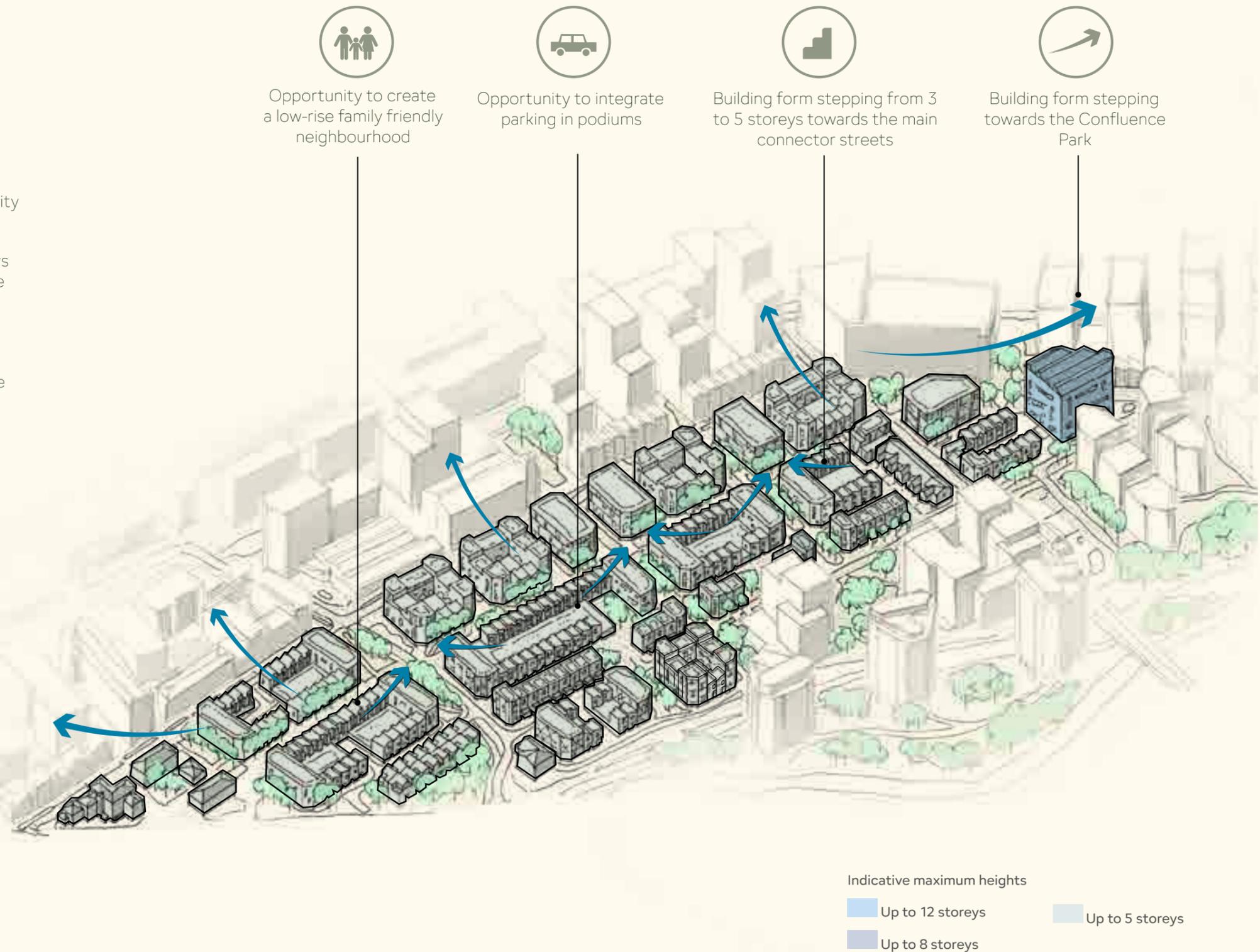


Fig. 63. Terraces - illustrative scale and massing

Illustrative landscape and open space

The illustrative approach to landscape and open space in the Terraces focuses on green connections and car-free routes, creating an environment where pedestrians and cyclists can move around freely and conveniently.

3 green links running north-south between Pollard Street / Pollard Street East and the Metrolink line adopt existing tree lines to create verdant connections to move across the site.

The Play Link will be the central axis of the neighbourhood, becoming a main movement corridor for residents and surrounding communities to move through the site from Confluence Park to City Centre.



A one kilometre long, car-free, pedestrian-friendly route connecting St Anne's Primary School and Park View Community School



Opportunity for a key pedestrian corridor connecting Holt Town Metrolink station and Wellington Mill



A significant belt of trees running along Beswick Street, creating a woodland green route that runs east-west across the site

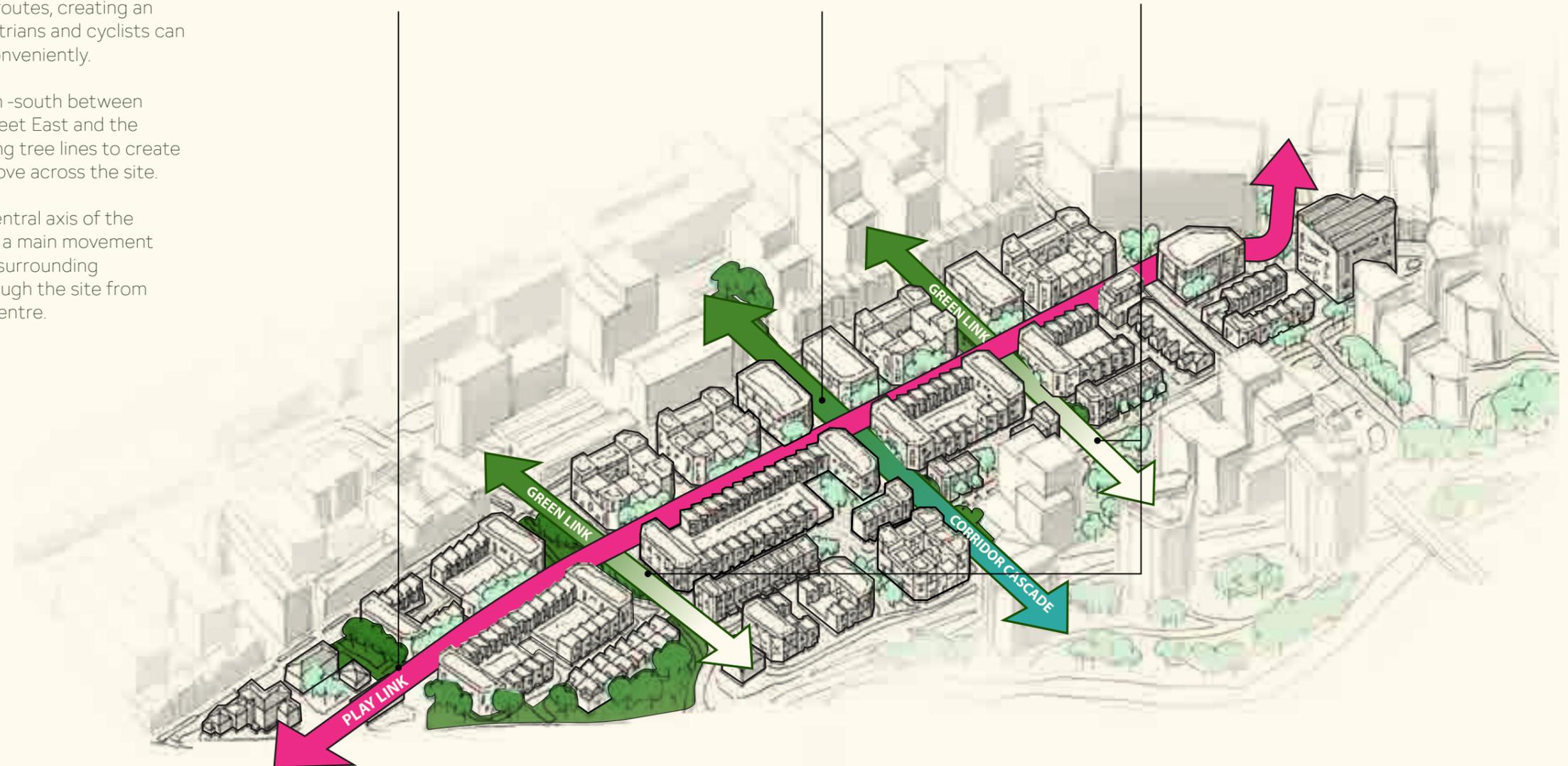


Fig. 64. Terraces - illustrative landscape and open space

Urban form and typologies

The built form in the Terraces is envisioned as a low-rise residential area, shaped by the area's steep topography and urban grain. This compact neighbourhood will feature a mix of low-rise townhouses, blending residential and workspaces to promote family living near the City Centre.

The design encourages individuality, with the potential for self-built homes that allow residents to create spaces tailored to their personal needs and lifestyles. This approach offers a powerful route to home-ownership, enabling people to craft homes that reflect their personalities. The variety of materials and textures, including the potential for timber-led construction, will contribute to a sustainable and vibrant community. Timber construction supports a low-carbon future, while the combination of self-building and diverse architectural styles will create a dynamic, yet cohesive, urban fabric.



Low-rise individuality and human scale - Nieuwe Leyden



Pedestrian residential street - Nieuwe Leyden



Personality and variation - Buiksloterham, Amsterdam



Playful and vibrant - Wisselspoor, Utrecht



Varied materiality - Buiksloterham, Amsterdam

Compact form

This area features a tightly-knit network of low-rise townhouses, ranging from 3 to 5 storeys, designed to blend living and working spaces while addressing the demand for family housing near the City Centre. The scale encourages sustainable construction methods, such as timber-led designs, fostering a low-carbon, environmentally conscious neighbourhood. Subtle modulations and architectural accents add variety to the built form, creating a vibrant yet cohesive urban fabric.

- ① Pedestrianised street
- ② Defensible space
- ③ Low-rise townhouses

Fig. 65. Terraces - illustration of a typical street



Key public realm

The Play Link is the main pedestrian route running through the centre of the site, serving as an inclusive, community-focused pathway that connects St Anne's Primary School to the west with Park View Community School to the north.

Designed as a welcoming and accessible space, the Play Link prioritises pedestrians. With minimal vehicle traffic, it offers a safe environment for people of all ages to navigate.

Primarily residential in character, the street's generous width accommodates multi-generational spaces, ideal for gathering, play, and daily activities. It will provide a safe space for children and young people to play, making it a destination for both local residents and children from the surrounding area.

As the Play Link follows the canal route, it creates a spatial connection between key heritage features on the site and the proposed Mobility Mill building. In this section, the scale of the Play Link will become more expansive, allowing for spill-out spaces from adjacent buildings to activate the edge of Ashton Canal. The spill-out zones, play areas, materials, and planting will be designed to enhance the post-industrial character of the canal and surrounding heritage assets.



Child-friendly play area with natural materials for exploration - Kids City Christianshavn (© Cobe)



Sculpted play zones and open green space - Drapers Way, London (© Adrian Taylor)



Playful paving surfaces - Superkilen, Copenhagen (© Naotake Murayama)



Lively pedestrian street with outdoor seating and community atmosphere (© Kotomi_)



Shared pedestrian zone with playful design and seating - Kings Crescent Estate, London

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.





Play Link

The Play Link could be a safe, inviting space for pedestrians, free from vehicle traffic, featuring play equipment, benches, and green spaces. It could foster community interaction, hosting events like street festivals and block parties, while improving urban quality of life by reducing noise, air pollution, and promoting physical activity.

- ① Catenary street lighting
- ② Defensible space
- ③ Stepping play
- ④ Table tennis tables

Fig. 66. Terraces - illustration of the Play Link

8.5 Embankment

The Embankment occupies the site of the former Holt Town Reservoir and defines a notable and singular transition between the Valley and the Terraces. There is an opportunity to craft a memorable and inviting arrival moment opposite the Holt Town Metrolink station, with the possibility to site a new cultural hub and establish an enhanced area of open space which could potentially be home to a community lido. Further east, a sequence of mid- to higher rise buildings could step up towards Confluence Park.

The Embankment occupies a raised section of the Area, on the site of the former Holt Town Reservoir. The unusual site history and associated ground conditions create an opportunity for a community lido/natural swimming pool.

The Embankment could form a transition between the setting of the Medlock Valley and the Terraces and play a vital role in establishing a new hub for community, culture and leisure uses.

The built form could be located to retain existing trees. The north-south orientation to blocks could allow for generous daylighting between buildings.

Buildings could maximise the southern aspect and views towards Sportcity and the Etihad Campus.

The Embankment will adopt a mixture of tenures and typologies, helping to create a stock of homes that allows a broad spectrum of residents from individuals to larger households.

Embankment - Illustrative framework

The Embankment occupies a raised section of the Area, on the site of the former Holt Town Reservoir, now a scrubland area with pockets of dense trees.

It could form a transition between the setting of the Medlock Valley and the Terraces and play a vital role in establishing a new hub of community culture and leisure uses.

 Embankment Boundary

- ① Holt Town Arrival Space
- ② Cultural Hub
- ③ Cyrus Spinney and public lido
- ④ Stepping residential buildings
- ⑤ Opportunity for a bridge connection

Fig. 67. Embankment - illustrative framework



Existing conditions

The Embankment character area is principally defined by its topographical context on the site, being set above the River Medlock Valley by the natural sloping landscape and retaining wall.

The retaining wall is a historical feature of the site, as the Holt Town reservoir previously sat behind its location. The large reservoir would have stretched across the Cyrus Street area and provided water for the workers living in the area.

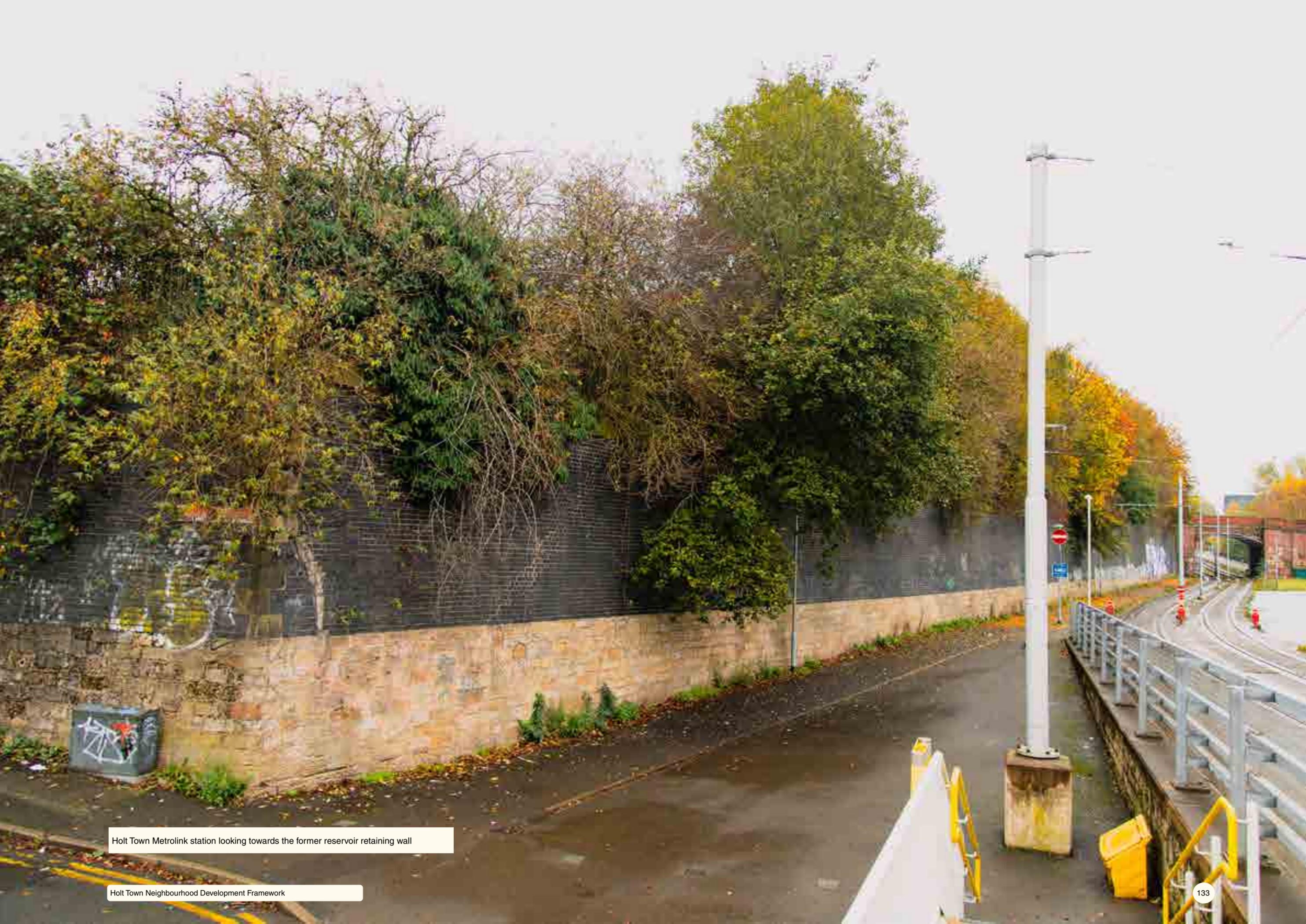
The area today however is split into two zones by Cambrian Street, with the area to the west predominantly vegetation with a cluster of trees around the perimeter and centre. To the east a number of residential properties front the street, whilst a number of scrap yards extend along Upper Cyrus Street, with several industrial units at the junction with Upper Helena Street.

The retaining wall creates an elevated area of land 5-7m above the Metrolink route and river valley. Tree planting gives a green and vegetated edge to this character area, with most of the industrial uses within hidden from view at street level.

Cambrian Street that intersects the site is a key vehicle route running through the site connecting Bradford Road to Ashton New Road.



Fig. 68. Embankment - existing site context



Holt Town Metrolink station looking towards the former reservoir retaining wall

Open space and biodiversity framework

The framework focuses on the enhancement of two key areas of open space enhancement, Cyrus Street Spinney/Lido and the Medlock Woodland Corridor.

The Medlock woodland corridor, hugs the course of the Medlock River, retaining the areas of dense tree coverage that gives this valley it's woodland character. The former reservoir area, has led to an unusual sunken landscape which could be re-imagined as a community lido/natural swimming pool.

-  Embankment boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Holt Town Station
-  Existing buildings
-  Woodland
-  Resilient Meadow
-  Spinney/ Lido
-  Rain garden meadows
-  Woodland/nature trail
-  New Park / significant open space



Fig. 69. Embankment - illustrative public realm

Movement and connections framework

The movement framework centres around Cambrian Street as the main axis moving across the area, with Cyrus Street acting as a low-traffic green route moving east-west and connecting people down towards Holt Town Station.

The retaining wall and elevated nature of the Embankment site meaning additional connections along side Cambrian Street would be challenging.

-  Embankment boundary
-  Railway tracks
-  Holt Town Station
-  Existing buildings
-  Pedestrian green link
-  Primary vehicular route
-  Secondary vehicular route
-  Woodland/nature trail

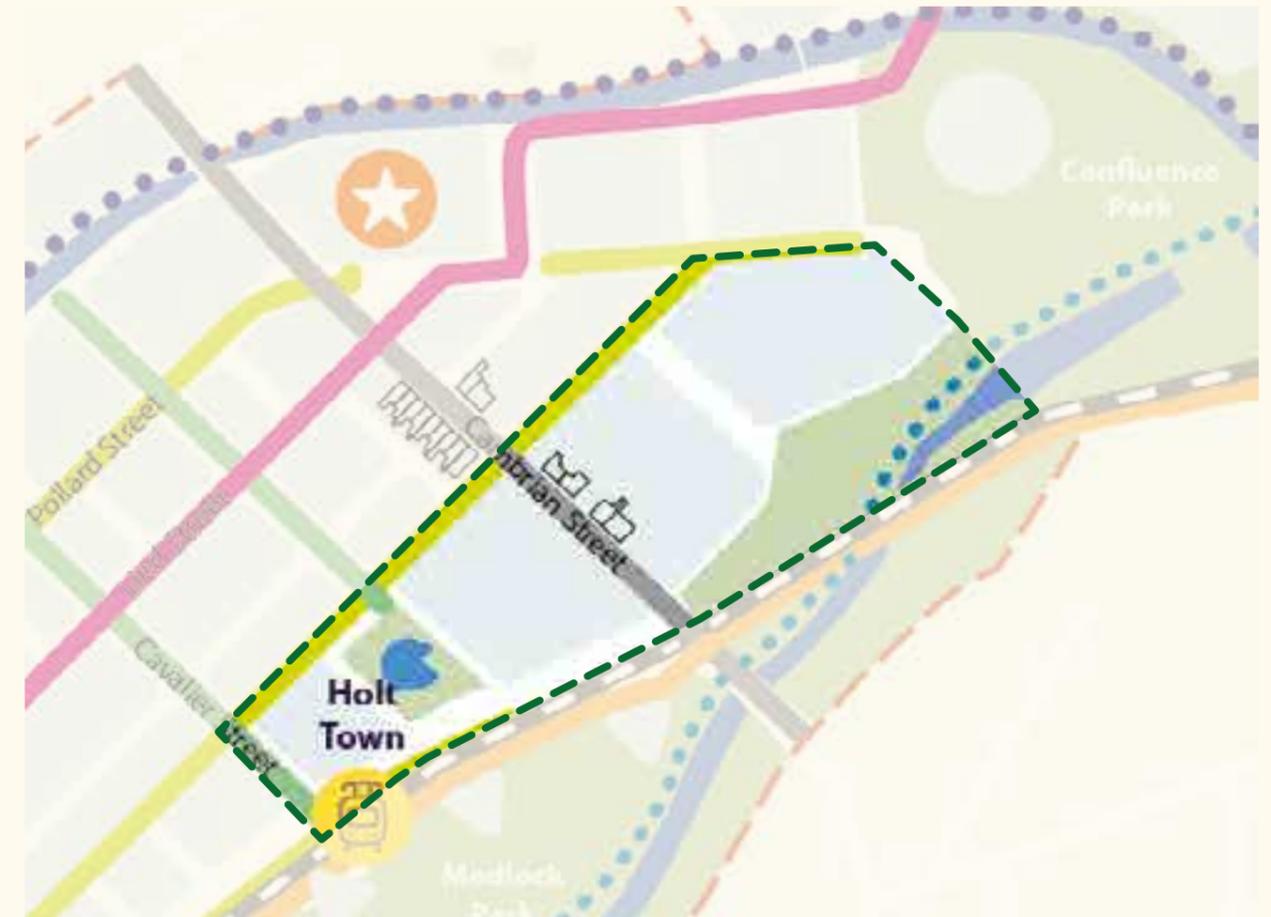


Fig. 70. Embankment - illustrative street hierarchy

Ground floor land use framework

The ground floor distribution for the embankment is split across the eastern and western extents of the area.

To the western end of Cyrus Street, closer to Holt Town Metrolink station will be a plot dedicated to cultural and community use, with the adjacent plot accommodating supporting mixed-uses. East of Cambrian Street plots will focus on residential uses to ground.

-  Embankment boundary
 -  Railway tracks
 -  Holt Town Station
 -  Existing buildings
- Indicative ground floor uses
-  Predominantly residential
 -  Predominantly mixed-use
 -  Predominantly cultural / community
 -  Primary frontage



Fig. 71. Embankment - illustrative ground floor uses

Upper floor land use framework

Like many of the surrounding character areas, the upper floor land use strategy will predominantly feature residential uses.

The plot closest to Holt Town station will give the opportunity for expanded cultural and community uses to extend above the ground floor.

-  Embankment boundary
 -  Railway tracks
 -  Holt Town Station
 -  Existing buildings
- Indicative upper floor uses
-  Predominantly residential
 -  Predominantly cultural / community



Fig. 72. Embankment - illustrative upper floor uses

Illustrative scale and massing

The heights strategy for the Embankment will look to step up density from the neighbouring Terraces character area, whilst keeping generous spaces and dimensions between buildings.

In the same way the topography of the embankment steps up towards Confluence Park, so to will the building heights within the plots.

Stepping building forms will help to maximise views of the valley and woodland pockets in between.

Development plots could adopt lower building heights on the southern edge of plots, allowing for best daylight and micro-climate conditions within blocks.

A stepping heights approach could be adopted across proposed building blocks as well as plots as a whole, ensuring massing responds to the context of the Terraces along the northern and western interfaces.



Fig. 73. Embankment - illustrative scale and massing

Illustrative landscape and open space

The landscape and open space within the illustrative masterplan works to enhance the naturalistic character to the Medlock Valley. It also works to create a positive interface with the entry point to the site from Holt Town station, and the bottom of Cavalier Cascade.

The centre of the area of the historic reservoir gives rise to an opportunity for the creation of either a woodland space for the community or a lido/natural swimming pool.

This space will help anchor development in this location, and help give access to existing open space which is currently inaccessible. It could form a very desirable health and wellbeing focus that supports the growing community.

The valley corridor and the dense tree planting within it shall be retained, with interventions taking a sensitive approach in this area. Pathways and trails will gently weave through the area, giving access to the River Medlock watercourse, as well as Confluence Park.



Fig. 74. Embankment - illustrative landscape and open space

Illustrative urban form and typologies

Form and typology within the Embankment character area could focus on creating synergies between buildings and nature, encouraging development where massing integrates with the surrounding landscape conditions.

Stepping form and softening to the building articulation could be encouraged, reducing dominance and overbearing massing to landscape spaces.

Materiality could adopt soft textures, such as wood or buff brick and greening across roofs and terraces could be encouraged.

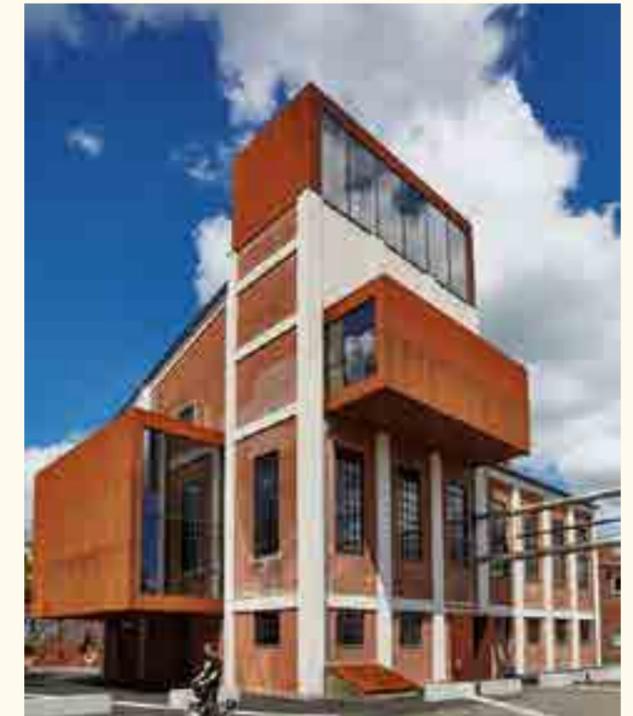
The cultural and community plot gives greater opportunity for statement architecture, creating a memorable landmark building at a key gateway into the site from Holt Town station. The form for this building can extrude and step, providing greater visual interest for the townscape.

Plots could however not detract or be overbearing from the setting of the former reservoir retaining wall.

Activation at the ground plane, creating positive frontage to Cyrus Street is a key objective of the plots.



Stepping building form integrated with the landscape - Southbank Bratislava (CGI by SEW / Snohetta)



Bold cultural hub with brick and modern accents - The Boiler Central, Vejle (© Steffen Stamp)



Residential forms blending natural materials with greenery - Southbank Bratislava (CGI by SEW / Snohetta)



Adaptive reuse of brick with modern extensions, Halle, St Peters (© stephenson hamilton risley STUDIO)

Cultural Hub

The proximity to Holt Town Metrolink station presents a unique opportunity to establish a dynamic cultural hub that serves as a gateway to the area. By integrating this hub with residential spaces above, the site can become a vibrant, multi-functional destination, enriching the arrival experience for visitors and locals alike. The design sensitively incorporates the existing mature trees, shaping the building form to preserve and highlight this natural asset, creating a harmonious blend of architecture and landscape.

- ① Holt Town Arrival Space
- ② Cultural Hub
- ③ Cavalier Cascade

Fig. 75. Embankment - illustration of a potential cultural hub



Illustrative public realm and open space

The Cavalier Cascade serves as a vital pedestrian connection as the main east-west link between Wellington Mill and Holt Town Metrolink. It will adhere to Sponge Town principles, and provide sustainable drainage and water retention solutions.

The site of the former Holt Town reservoir presents a unique opportunity to introduce a lido. This outdoor swimming facility would provide an exceptional experience for residents and visitors, as no comparable amenity currently exists in the vicinity.

Additionally, placing the lido at this location ties directly to the site's historical connection to water, as it sits on the former Holt Town reservoir. The lido's design could echo the footprint of the old reservoir, highlighting the integration of the site's history into its contemporary public realm. This approach would transform the overgrown landscape into an exciting new amenity for the neighbourhood.



Fig. 76. Embankment - illustrative public realm

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.





Cyrus Spinney & Lido

The proximity to Holt Town Metrolink station presents a unique opportunity to establish a dynamic cultural hub that serves as a gateway to the area. By integrating this hub with residential spaces above, the site can become a vibrant, multi-functional destination, enriching the arrival experience for visitors and locals alike. The design sensitively incorporates the existing mature trees, shaping the building form to preserve and highlight this natural asset, creating a harmonious blend of architecture and landscape.

- ① Retained mature trees
- ② New footpaths to active ground floors
- ③ Opportunity for a public lido
- ④ Retained existing heritage boundary wall
- ⑤ Renewed Understorey planting

Fig. 77. Embankment - Cyrus Spinney and Cyrus Street

1

5

2

3

4

Cyrus Lido

Cyrus Lido presents an opportunity to provide leisure and well-being uses at the heart of the neighbourhood. In addition to the recreational use of the lido itself, complimenting uses within a cafe or commercial unit, as well as associated health and well-being facilities could be provided for the new and existing community.

Carefully planned pathways, seating areas, and strategic planting around the lido would enhance the space by adding depth and variety. Presently, the area feels somewhat enclosed and disconnected from the broader Cyrus Street environment.

By opening up these boundaries, the design will seamlessly merge the lido with the surrounding area, creating safer and more connected public spaces.



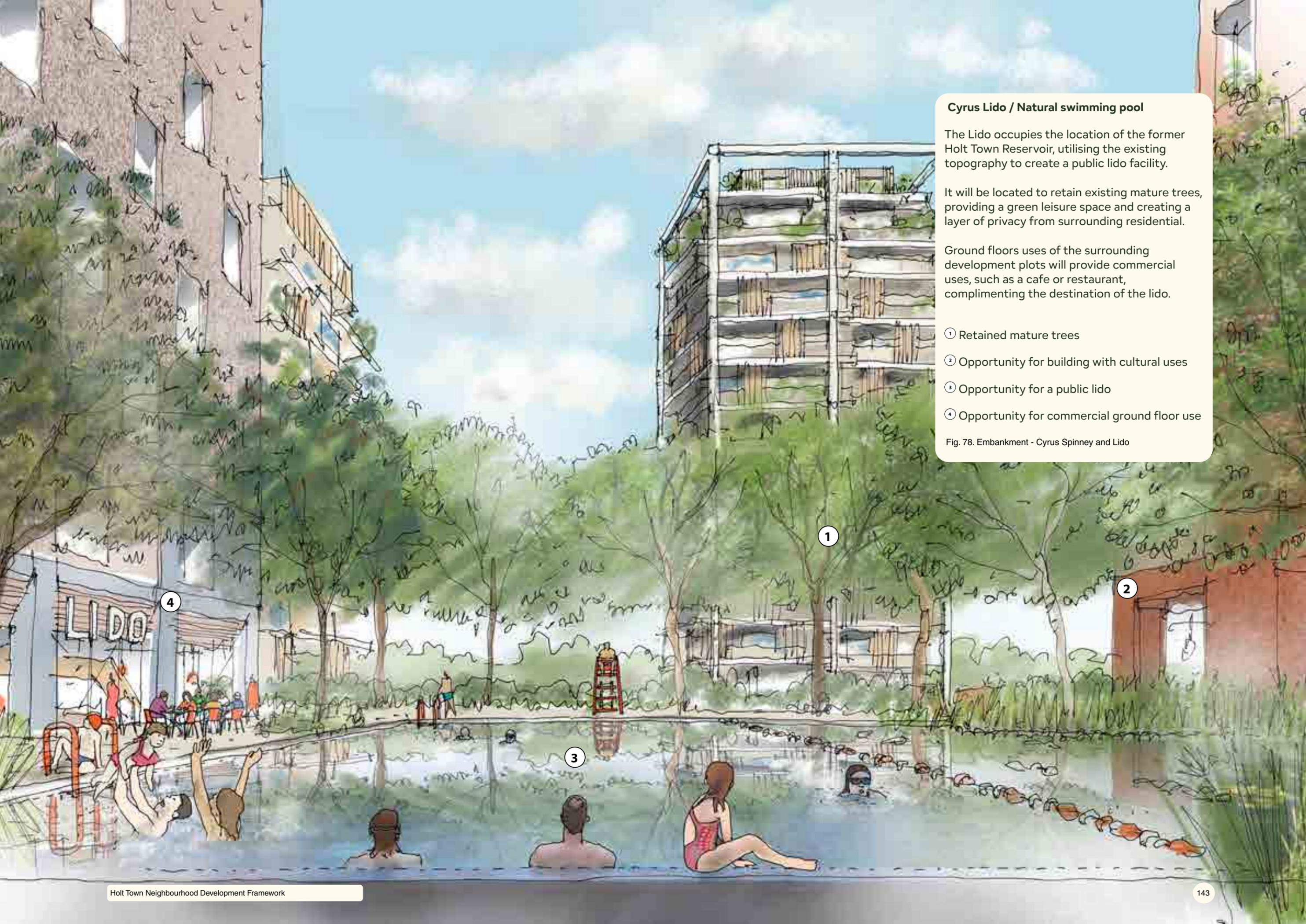
London Fields Lido (© Peter Smith)



Kings Cross temporary lido, London

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.





Cyrus Lido / Natural swimming pool

The Lido occupies the location of the former Holt Town Reservoir, utilising the existing topography to create a public lido facility.

It will be located to retain existing mature trees, providing a green leisure space and creating a layer of privacy from surrounding residential.

Ground floors uses of the surrounding development plots will provide commercial uses, such as a cafe or restaurant, complimenting the destination of the lido.

- ① Retained mature trees
- ② Opportunity for building with cultural uses
- ③ Opportunity for a public lido
- ④ Opportunity for commercial ground floor use

Fig. 78. Embankment - Cyrus Spinney and Lido

8.6 Valley

The Valley forms a unique opportunity to enhance and reinvent the riparian landscape of the River Medlock and deliver a significant ecological and recreational link between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus. The constraints set by the floodplain invite an ingenious and considered response to the footprint and scale of development in this area, balancing clusters of tall buildings with significant upgrades to the river corridor in terms of biodiversity, recreation, and play. The culmination of this area at Confluence Park could see the enhanced park setting forming the justification for a single landmark tower of up to thirty-five storeys, with an adventurous play and recreation space at its base.

The Valley presents an opportunity to enhance the riparian landscape of the Lower Medlock Valley along the southern edge of Holt Town.

The unique topography and floodplain setting constrain the amount of developable land along the river and inform the aspiration to address the risk of flooding through considered flood mitigation measures.

This, combined with the proximity to the Holt Town Metrolink station, creates a unique justification for higher density development in this location. This area will adopt a mixture of tenures and typologies, helping to create a stock of homes that allows a broad spectrum of residents from individuals to larger households.

The restoration of the River Medlock and the creation of a wetland environment within the floodplain could create a high-quality corridor for recreation and ecology, culminating at an enhanced Ashton Canal Park (Confluence Park) that celebrates the confluence of Canal and River, and establishes a hub for indoor play that spills into the outdoors.

A wetland meadow could be delivered working with the Environment Agency and flood risk categories. This would create a floodable landscape responding to the riparian nature of the Medlock Valley corridor.

Medlock Nature Park could be re-imagined as a high-quality river corridor that balances recreational and ecological needs within a riverside park.

The public realm around Holt Town Metrolink could be enhanced as one of the key gateways to the Holt Town neighbourhood.

A cluster of taller buildings near the station could help to establish a gateway for the site and enhance the sense of arrival. The slim footprint of these three towers perched in the landscape could be sensitively arranged to aid the creation of a wetland environment in line with the flood risk zones, the tallest of which could bookmark the eastern threshold of Holt Town, creating a rising townscape towards Sportcity and the Etihad campus.

An elevated board walk between buildings could help address level change between Cambrian Street, the Valley, and the Embankment.

Valley - Illustrative framework

The Valley presents a chance to enhance the River Medlock's landscape, creating a vital ecological and recreational link between the City Centre and Sportcity. With thoughtful development, including a potential landmark tower at Confluence Park, the area can balance tall buildings with improved biodiversity and community spaces.

[] Valley Boundary

- ① Holt Town Metrolink arrival
- ② A cluster of three slim towers
- ③ Enhanced wetland meadow with an elevated board walk
- ④ Enhanced River Medlock Valley
- ⑤ Landmark Tower
- ⑥ Confluence Park
- ⑦ Enhanced Ashton Canal towpath
- ⑧ New bridge over Ashton Canal

Fig. 79. Valley - illustrative framework



Existing conditions

The Valley character area extends along the River Medlock Valley from the point it emerges beneath Ashton New Road, moving across Cambrian Street, extending into the gas holder site.

The area encompasses the existing Ashton Canal Park as well as the River Medlock, the Ashton Canal including the confluence point where they intersect at differing levels. For some locals this is colloquially known as the *'Seven Wonders'* describing the convergence of River, canal, road, rail and waterfall.

In the lower section of the Valley, the area extends from the metrolink line and Holt Town station, down to the southern bank of the watercourse. No built development is contained within this area of the Holt Town boundary.

Running through the centre of the character area is the CityLink, a recently completed pedestrian connection to Co-op Live and Sportcity and the Etihad Stadium. It is designed to carry high levels of footfall on event days.

At the northern section, Ashton Canal Park is bounded by both water courses, the most significant open space within the existing condition. It contains some seating areas and pockets of mature tree planting, however is currently in poor condition and lacks animation and surveillance.

The area north of the canal is currently privately owned land and inaccessible, it is a mixture of self-seeded trees, vegetation and previously developed land.



Fig. 80. Valley - existing site context



View from Cambrian Street viaduct towards the Holt Town Station and Medlock Valley.

Open space and biodiversity framework

The Valleys open space and biodiversity strategy focuses on the enhancement of few key spaces: the Resilient Meadow, the Medlock Woodland Corridor and Confluence Park, as well as parts of Gas Holder Green.

These spaces build upon the existing valley and canal park, aiming to increase biodiversity, function and accessibility of these spaces.



Fig. 81. Valley - illustrative public realm

Movement and connection framework

The movement framework is anchored by three key corridors, the Ashton Canal towpath, the metrolink line and the CityLink. These three routes are the most significant across the area.

These key routes will facilitate direct movement across the site to surrounding assets. Additional slow routes such as a woodland trails and a fitness loop could wrap the valley corridor and confluence park.

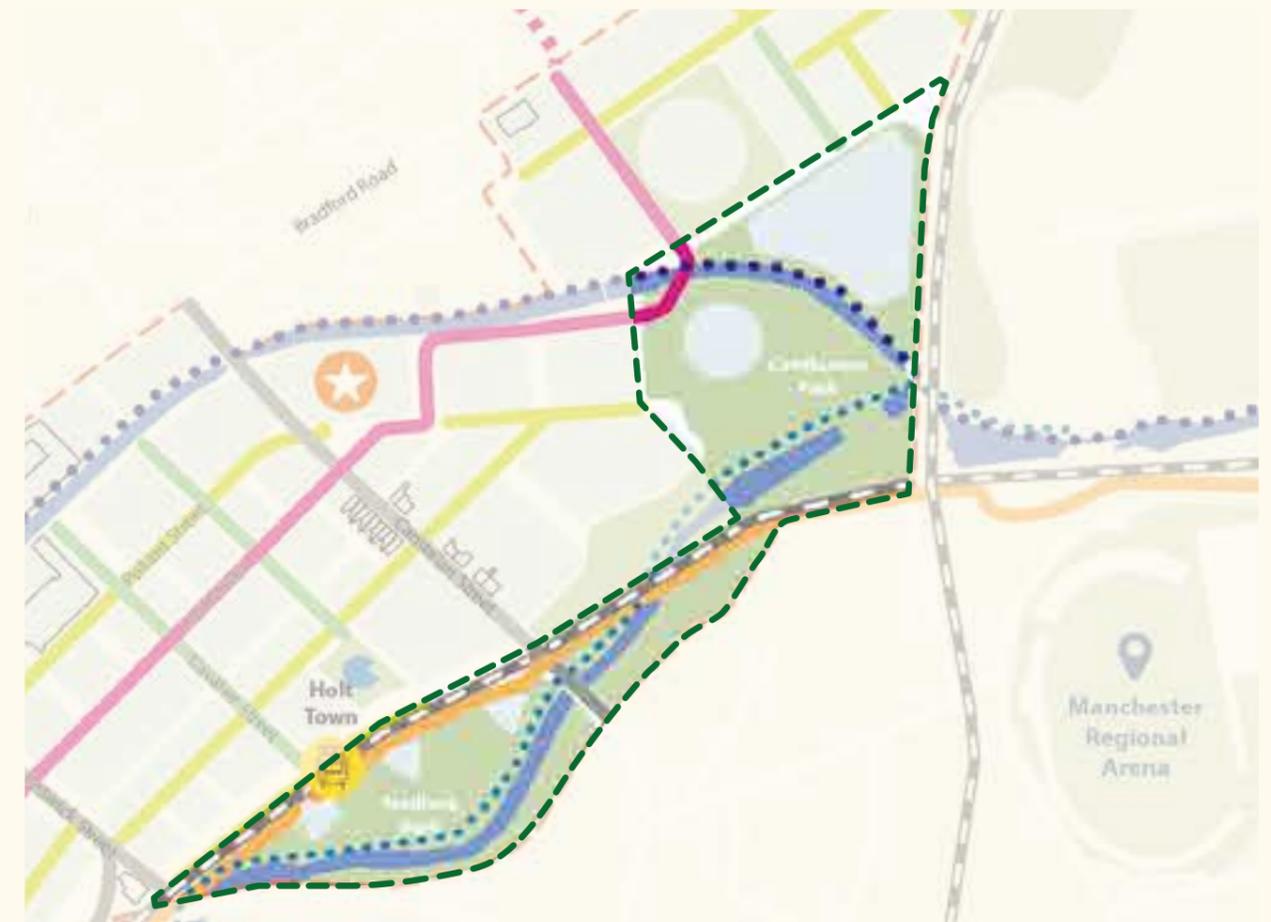


Fig. 82. Valley - illustrative street hierarchy

Ground floor land use framework

The ground floor strategy for the Valley focuses on having complimentary uses to activate and interact with key areas of open space.

This is demonstrated within Confluence Park and the canal edge where predominantly leisure uses are adopted to interact with outdoor activity spaces. To the southern end, residential uses in the form lobby spaces will animate the interface with the metrolink.



Fig. 83. Valley - illustrative ground floor uses

Upper floor land use framework

The upper floor land use strategy priorities residential uses above ground contributing to the residential-led nature of this mixed-use neighbourhood.

Homes in this location put people closer to nature and will maximise the benefit of the landscape setting for these development plots.

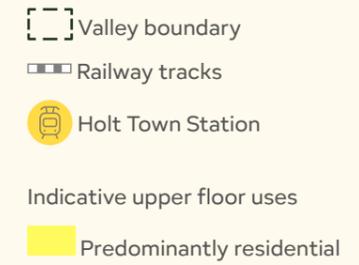


Fig. 84. Valley - illustrative upper floor uses

Illustrative scale and massing

The heights strategy in this location aims to step with the change in topography of the river valley. A series of slim tower elements along the valley edge will step in height provide views along and down the valley.

View corridors down from the Terraces will be maintained creating a visual connection from the centre of the neighbourhoods. Building height from both the east and the west will gradually increase, setting the context and opportunity for a landmark tower at the centre of the area and on the edge of Confluence Park.

A further series of slim tower elements will step height down moving east, integrating the character area with the mid-rise area of the Ridge.

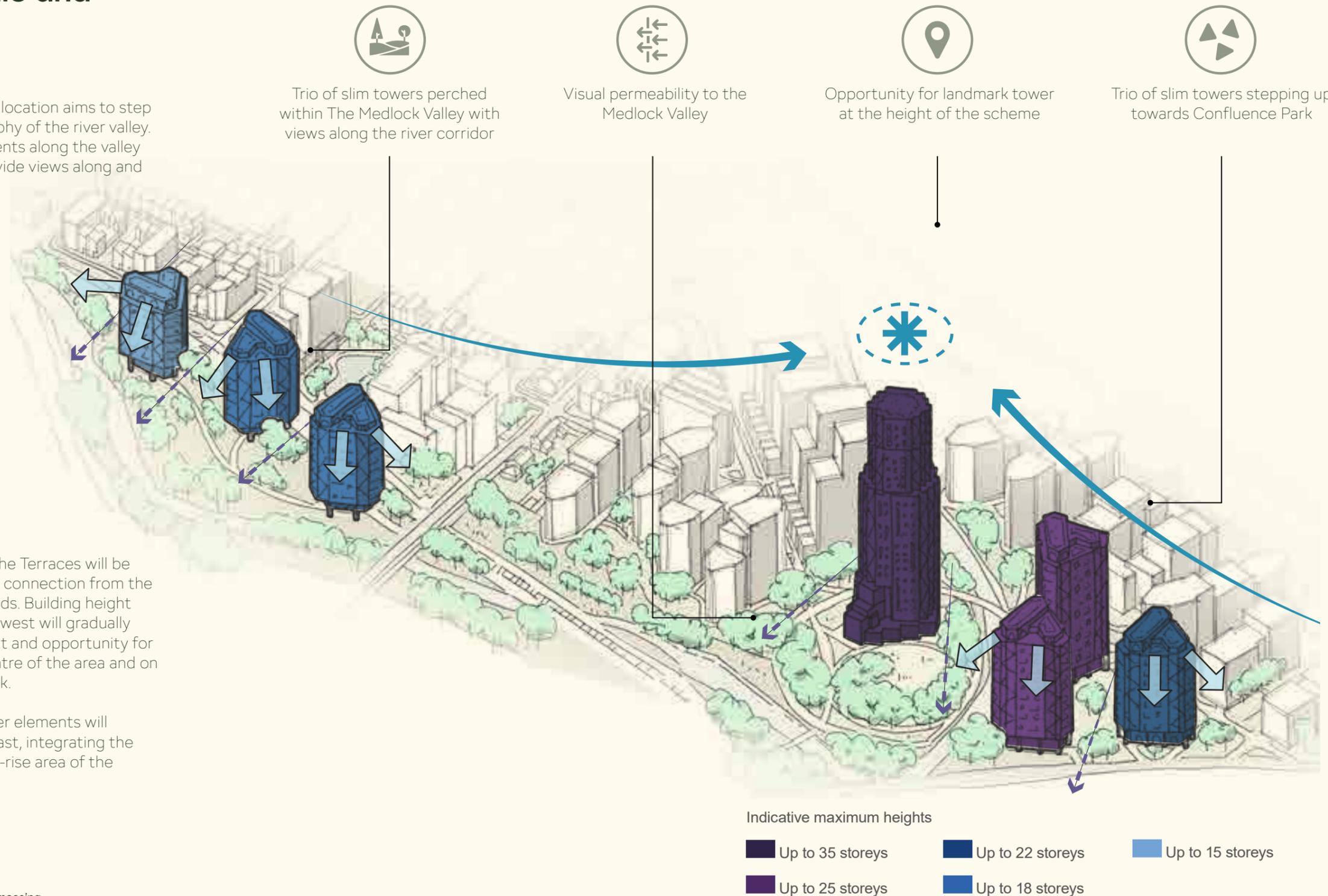


Fig. 85. Valley - illustrative scale and massing

Illustrative open space and public realm

The approach to open space within the Valley, is that buildings should be perched within the landscape, allowing nature to flow through the character area.



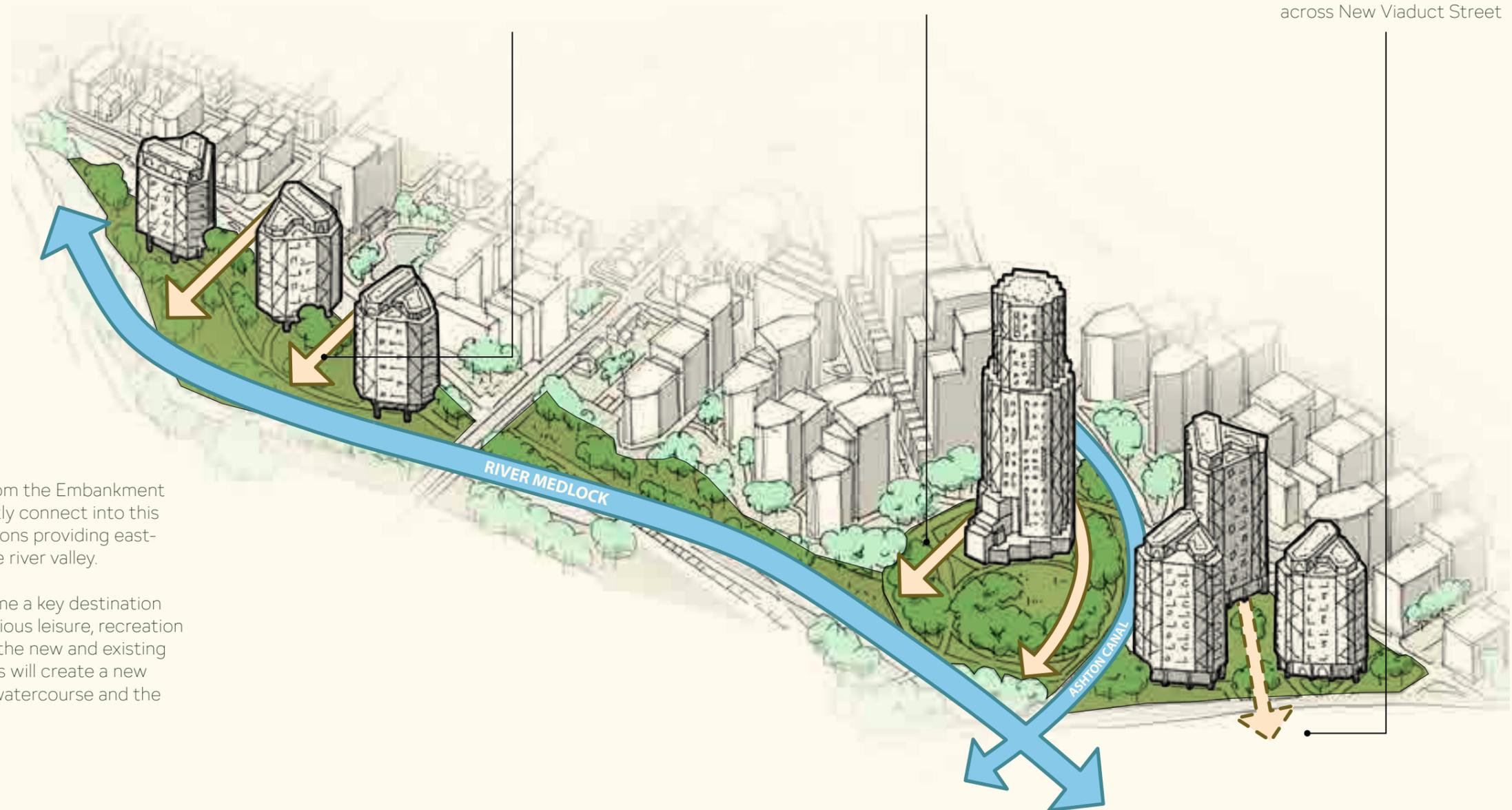
Permeability to blocks increasing accessibility to Resilient Meadow



Confluence Park opens up and creates positive influences with Ashton Canal & Medlock Valley



Podium gardens address level change and create opportunity for potential future connection across New Viaduct Street



Key linear public spaces from the Embankment and the Terraces will directly connect into this setting, with new connections providing east-west movement across the river valley.

Confluence Park will become a key destination space, accommodating various leisure, recreation and play facilities for both the new and existing communities. These spaces will create a new relationship between the watercourse and the surrounding landscape.

Fig. 86. Valley - illustrative landscape and open space

Illustrative urban form and typologies

The Valley character area gives opportunity for taller elements within the masterplan framework. It is encouraged that this increase in height, is accompanied by high-quality building design and innovation in façade design and building form. Architectural materiality within the clusters of towers could communicate and create a cohesive character.

Taller building distribution could focus on making a positive contribution to the townscape and legibility of the Valley, celebrating key arrival spaces, gateways and open spaces. Taller buildings could help to define spaces with appropriate scale and containment of the spaces. They could also work to assist in orientation, drawing people from key gateways to destination areas such as Confluence Park.

Designers must consider the overall proportion of buildings when viewed in the context of their block arrangements and adjacent block arrangements. The taller elements could generally reduce in footprint the taller the building gets. Tall buildings could reduce in overall massing as they get taller.

The relationship between tall buildings and lower rise massing must be carefully considered. Gaps and setbacks are encouraged between tall and lower rise elements, however designers might explore changes in façade material, fenestration or other façade treatments as to extenuate tall and elegant proportions in contrast to lower, human scale elements.



Stepping massing to ground - The Rockery at the Hyde, London (CGI by © SEW)



Expressed entrances - Axel Towers, Copenhagen (© Rasmus Hjortshøj)



Stepped form - Brink Tower, Amsterdam (© Mecanoo)



Building massing varied and stepped at lower levels - Orion, London (CGI by © SEW)

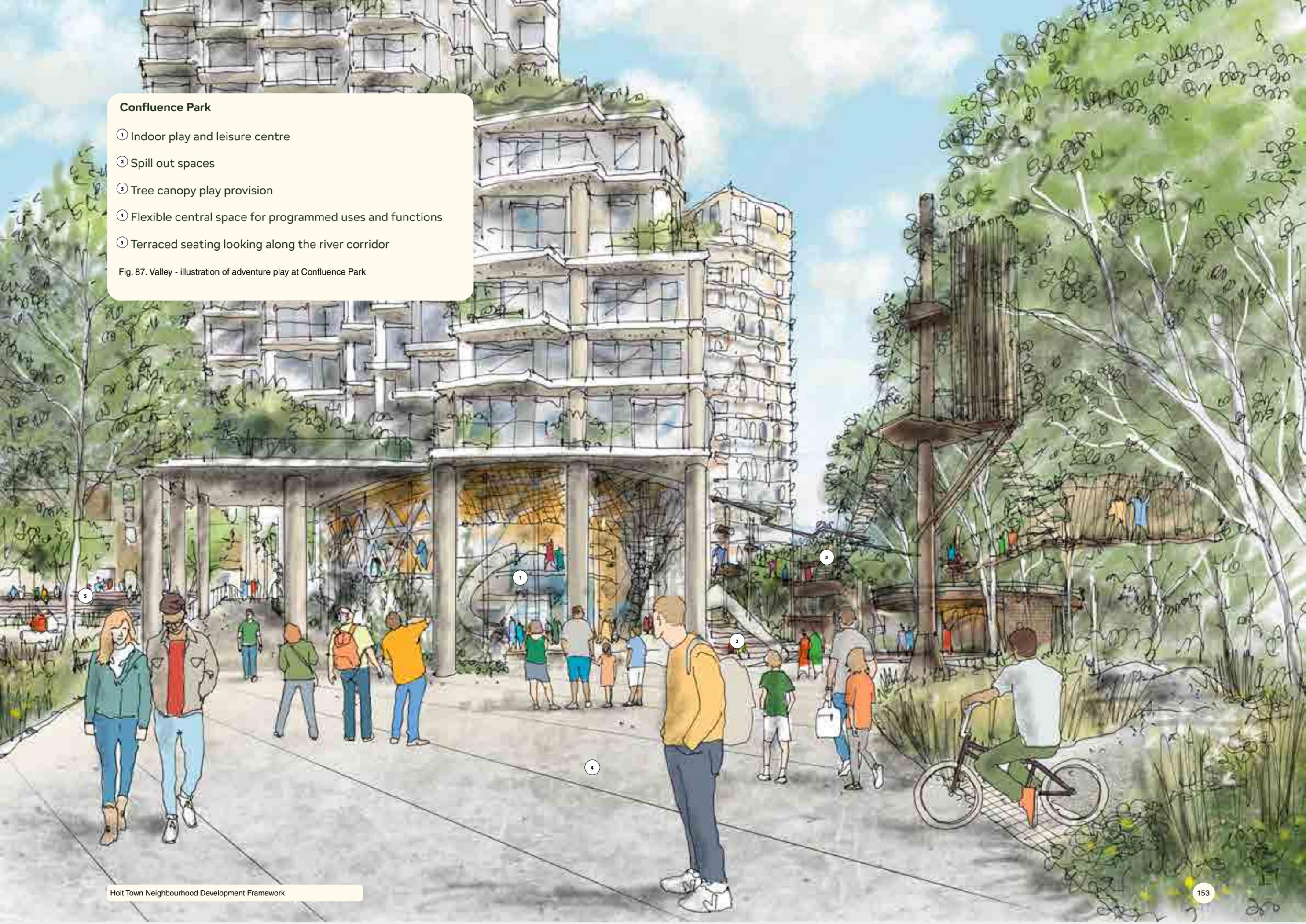


A variety of materiality and architecture - Southbank Bratislava (CGI by © SEW / Snøhetta)

Confluence Park

- ① Indoor play and leisure centre
- ② Spill out spaces
- ③ Tree canopy play provision
- ④ Flexible central space for programmed uses and functions
- ⑤ Terraced seating looking along the river corridor

Fig. 87. Valley - illustration of adventure play at Confluence Park



Resilient Meadow

The Resilient Meadow sits between Holt Town Metrolink station and the River Medlock. It creates a key arrival gateway to celebrate the natural context of the new neighbourhood, as well as a key interface between urban development and a historic watercourse.

Elevated walkways will allow people to explore this environment, whilst allowing the natural eb and flow of the watercourse to fluctuate with weather patterns and seasons.

A new wetland habitat will help create a foothold for nature to flourish.



Fig. 88. Valley - illustrative public realm and Resilient Meadow

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.





Resilient Meadow

- ① Boardwalk allowing safe access to the floodplain
- ② Improved floodable meadow
- ③ Seating edge interface with the meadow
- ④ CityLink connection and activation of archway
- ⑤ Potential high level connection
- ⑥ Existing riverside ecology to remain wildlife-focused

Fig. 89. Valley - illustration of the Resilient Meadow

Ashton Canal & Confluence Park

The culmination of this area at Confluence Park could see the enhanced park setting forming the justification for a single landmark tower of up to thirty-five storeys, with adventurous play and recreation space at its base.

At its heart, an indoor sport and play venue spilling into the outdoors to offer a range of recreational activities for all ages. The purpose of this anchor is to deliver a meaningful amenity for new and existing communities, and to complement Sportcity and the Etihad Campus that lies beyond.

A new pedestrian and cycle bridge connection over the Ashton Canal corridor, allowing movement between the north and southern areas of Holt town to be connected as well as bringing surrounding communities into the heart of Confluence Park.

A destination play area in the base of the landmark building will provide adventure play for all ages, becoming an exciting asset for the local community as well as a destination for families further afield.

A flexible space will accommodate seasonally programmed events in collaboration with local stakeholders.



Fig. 90. Valley - Illustrative public realm - Confluence Park

Refer to Public Realm Strategy for more information on the public realm & planting characters.





Ashton Canal / Confluence Park

- ① Connected ecology encouraged along the Southern bank of the Ashton Canal
- ② Mooring points to activate the canal corridor
- ③ Existing tow path resurfaced where required
- ④ South facing seating steps
- ⑤ Opportunity to play in the tree top & Understorey

Fig. 91. Valley - illustration of Ashton Canal / Confluence Park





Confluence point of Ashton Canal and the River Medlock

The confluence point of the Ashton Canal and River Medlock offers a significant opportunity to enhance the area's waterfront, creating a dynamic junction between two important waterways. This location could serve as a focal point for ecological and recreational activities, providing a vibrant public space that celebrates the merging of these two natural features while offering opportunities for biodiversity, leisure, and community engagement.

Fig. 92. Valley - illustration of the confluence point



9 Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

9.1 Concluding remarks

This NDF and its supporting suite of documents have been produced in line with Manchester City Council's ambitious brief from October 2023.

The vision demanded a plan to not only refine and articulate this new vision but advocate, make plausible and transform potential opportunities into a built new city centre neighbourhood.

The journey towards the new Holt Town as set out in this document now requires deliverable investment, continuing collaboration with the private sector and central government with Manchester City Council leading, facilitating and enabling investment, development and inclusive growth.

Creating a high-quality environment for the benefit of all current and future residents and employees will require progressive delivery models, management, and governance structures that are rooted in the vision and overarching principles set out in this NDF.

The NDF has been prepared in order to support the comprehensive redevelopment of the area as a whole, and to provide a framework of development principles that can form a basis for collaboration between landowners and developers. The feasibility of development proposals should factor in an appreciation of the Area's planning position and objectives of this NDF. These are set out within this framework and other planning documents endorsed and adopted by the City Council, including the Local Development Plan.



9.2 An innovative and creative phasing approach

The immediate next steps will include a phased approach to development which is both innovative and creative, symbolising the pioneering spirit of the place and the unique blend of partners involved.

The phasing approach capitalises on the huge benefits of the area's existing transport infrastructure and its strategic location. Holt Town is surrounded by established successful developments and key transport nodes such as New Islington, Holt Town, and the Etihad Campus Metrolink stops.

Traditional regeneration methods often start from a single edge of a place, generally where it connects into existing development and gradually work inwards. However, Holt Town's approach turns this model on its head responding to the unique locational advantages.

By using the existing transport infrastructure and neighbouring areas as "multiple entrances" to the new Holt Town, initial activity can be catalysed in three key areas simultaneously, creating a ripple effect of development and vibrancy. This aims to help achieve outcomes quicker, provide more opportunities to participate and mitigate delivery risk.

Through identifying three distinct areas for early delivery, momentum will be created that will resonate throughout Holt Town, encouraging further development. This evolving approach allows the character of the area to flourish within the overarching framework of the NDF, without imposing rigid phasing for later areas that might deter rapid progress or not be responsive to opportunities.

Holt Town has evolved for over 200 years and will continue this free spirited journey in the future. The ability to organically reinvent and merge forms is the essence of Holt Town's character. A traditional rigid phasing approach would not capture the true potential of this unique area. Instead, allowing flexibility and freedom for long-term phasing to evolve, while curating targeted injections of early momentum, aligns perfectly with Holt Town's spirit and the ideas set out in this NDF.

The initial areas identified for early delivery are shown on the next page, with arrows conveying the broader anticipated delivery momentum that can be catalysed.



Entrance 1 - New Islington Metrolink Stop

From the west, the city centre entrance is framed by the New Islington Metrolink stop. Building on the success of Ancoats and New Islington, which have flourished over the last decade, this early phase will seamlessly integrate Holt Town into this broader neighbourhood.

This area already contains existing buildings, and some plots with recent planning consents, setting the stage for immediate progress.

Entrance 3 - Etihad Campus Metrolink Stop

Further east, towards Sportcity and the Etihad Campus, lies an exciting opportunity to interface with world-class sports, leisure, and health venues. Recent developments, including Co op Live, the Etihad north stand expansion and additional hotel development continue to catalyse significant momentum.

Holt Town can draw on this momentum, offering unique opportunities that blend local community history and culture with proximity to top-tier sporting and entertainment facilities.

Entrance 2 - Holt Town Metrolink Stop

Moving to the heart of Holt Town, the Holt Town Metrolink stop area presents both challenges and opportunities. Currently often quiet, even at key times of the day, this area will be transformed into a vibrant and welcoming hub.

By focusing development around the Metrolink stop, we enhance connectivity and improve safety, creating a lively entrance to Holt Town. The proximity to the River Medlock offers additional opportunities for natural enhancements and improved access to rivers and canals.



Complementing the "CityLink" walking route

The proposed phasing approach to regeneration in Holt Town also complements the existing walking route from the city to the Etohad Camous and Co-op Live, known as the "City Link." This route connects through the heart of Holt Town, taking in all three of the identified early phase development areas and the Metrolink stops.

By focusing on development that reinforces key nodes on this walking route, the regeneration plan enhances the connectivity and usability of the "CityLink." This not only encourages pedestrian movement and promotes a healthier lifestyle but also supports local businesses by increasing footfall and creating a more vibrant street-level experience.

Public Realm

Establishing the public realm envisioned by the NDF and the wider public realm strategy will be an iterative process.

As development progresses, proposals brought forward will need to align with the NDF framework, considering both individual plot features and the broader public realm aspects. These include key features such as the Play Link, the Confluence Park and ideas for integrating flood mitigation and enhanced landscapes for healthy lifestyles.

Council involvement

Manchester City Council holds significant land in Holt Town. The Council is committed to supporting landowners and playing an active role in development through its own landholdings.

Recognising the value of early high-quality delivery, the Council is keen to partner with and support those driving forward key projects in Holt Town. Land owner collaboration and relationships established through the development of the NDF are strong and the Council intends to continue to support its "convening role" in working with landowners and partners to bring forwards appropriate development. When bringing forward development proposals, the City Council will engage with current residents at the appropriate time.

Public and private investment is critical to deliver a new Holt Town. Manchester City Council with its key partners in Government will consider the following key investment themes:

- Resources to support land assembly.
- Transport, active travel and infrastructure renewal.
- Brownfield land remediation.
- Partnerships to address viability and exemplar development.
- Sustainable building practises
- Innovative housing delivery such as self-build alongside partnerships to deliver affordable homes.

Delivery will involve a range of public and private sector partners. Delivery of early critical infrastructure will require a level of forward funding and numerous public and private sector funding streams will be considered.

There are also opportunities for meanwhile and temporary interventions to provide early activation in Holt Town, helping to create a sense of place and coalesce a community.

Fig. 93. Indicative delivery map

9.3 Meanwhile use opportunities

The comprehensive redevelopment of Holt Town will take many years to complete. The strategy for delivery will focus on early phases to create immediate momentum and confidence through building partnerships and collaborating with investors and developers. Manchester City Council will lead with an enabling role to deliver inclusive growth in line with the NDF vision.

The City Council recognise that good meanwhile and interim uses can bring meaningful employment, social and cultural activity and animation of post-industrial landscapes such as Holt Town. Such uses can also bring greater connectivity, security and environmental benefits to regeneration areas in transition with opportunities for phased environmental improvements and public realm. Improving walking and cycling routes and linkages across Holt Town is also a high priority. The City Council will expect tangible socio-economic and physical environmental benefits from any meanwhile proposals that improve the quality of life and wider beneficial outcomes for residents neighbouring Holt Town within adjoining communities.

Creative temporary structures are already part of the character of Holt Town in a small part, and some heritage buildings act as incubators for enterprise and maker spaces that cannot be accommodated in other parts of the city.

In Holt Town, the City Council will collaborate and encourage such uses where there is a demonstrable value to the wider regeneration area, Manchester residents and where such uses are in line with the vision and aspiration set out in this framework. Within the NDF, there are proposals for a new cultural hub, affordable workspace, and neighbourhood services along with a comprehensive public realm strategy. Further business engagement and demand assessments will be undertaken in 2025 as part of the post-NDF implementation work to take these ideas forward. Fostering partnerships to strengthen meanwhile uses will be a high priority.

As part of this the City Council are seeking to establish strong links between meanwhile uses and long-term aspirations to ensure continuity in vision, skills and delivery. By integrating these interim uses with our long-term goals, we aim to create a seamless transition that supports the overall redevelopment strategy and fosters sustainable growth.

Uses that do not align with the vision and aspirations of the NDF, or those that could potentially disrupt the community or hinder the long-term goals, will not be encouraged. For example, activities that generate excessive noise, pollution, or traffic congestion may negatively impact the quality of life for the community and the overall environment. Additionally, uses that do not contribute to the social, cultural, or economic fabric of Holt Town in a way that is aligned with the NDF vision may be deemed unsuitable.



Regents Park Open Air Theatre



Temporary community pavilion - Fuggerei Pavilion - (© Eckhart Matthus / MVRDV)



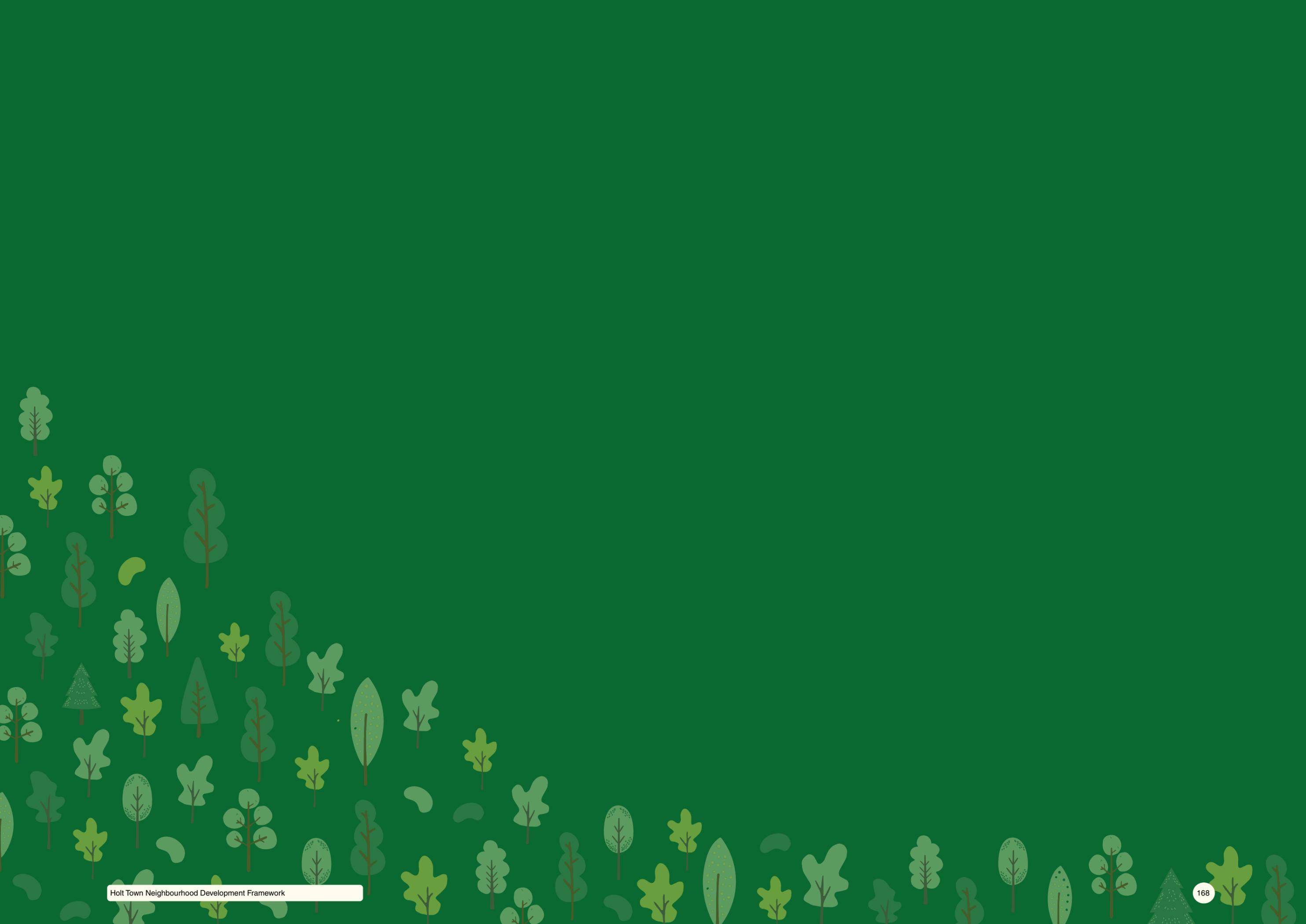
Temporary installation - Rooftop Walk Rotterdam (© Pavlos Ventouris / MVRDV)



Meanwhile affordable workspaces/ maker spaces - Amsterdam Science Park



Temporary Lido - Kings Cross, London



Appendix 1: Planning Policy Framework

Development Plan

The Local Development Plan for Manchester City Council comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy (2012);
- Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP), 2006; and,
- The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (2024).

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

The Core Strategy (2012), sets out the City Council's vision for Manchester to 2026 alongside planning policies that provide the framework to deliver that vision.

Whilst it comprises the main planning policy document for the Local Authority and Local Development Plan, the plan period runs through to 2027 and a new Draft Local Plan is in the process of being prepared. The policies that are to be set out in the upcoming Local Plan will be broadly consistent, albeit more specific, with those set out in the Places for Everyone Plan (2024). In advance of updating the Local Plan, several Core Strategy (CS) policies have been partially replaced by Places for Everyone (PfE) policies. Any part of the policy that is not replaced remains part of Manchester's Core Strategy.

Within the current Core Strategy, Holt Town is defined as part of the Regional Centre (Policy EC3) and within East Manchester (Policy EC5). Additional Core Strategy policies of particular relevance to Holt Town include:

- Policy SP1 Spatial Principles
- Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester
- Policy EC3 The Regional Centre
- Policy EC5 East Manchester:
- Policy H1 Overall Housing Provision
- Policy H2 Strategic Housing Location
- Policy H4 East Manchester

- Policy H8 Affordable Housing¹
- Policy C4 East Manchester District Centres
- Policy T1 Sustainable Transport
- Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN2 Tall Buildings
- Policy EN3 Heritage
- Policy EN4 Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development
- Policy EN6 CO2 reductions
- Policy EN8 Adaptation to Climate Change
- Policy EN9 Green Infrastructure:
- Policy EN14 Flood Risk
- Policy EN15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Policy PA1 Developer Contributions
- Policy DM1 Development Management

Saved Policies of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2009)

Saved Policies within the 2004 UDP that may be of particular relevance to Holt Town include:

- DC19 Listed Buildings
- DC20 Archaeology
- DC26 Development and Noise
- E3.3 Environmental Improvement and Protection

Places for Everyone Plan (2024)

Places for Everyone is a joint development plan of the Greater Manchester districts (excluding Stockport) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth.

¹ This policy also applies to social housing. It states that new residential developments will contribute to a city-wide target of 20% affordable housing (with developers expected to use the 20% target as a starting point for calculating provision), including social housing, subject to viability and specific circumstances.

It has been published by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of the nine districts.

The Places for Everyone Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine authorities on March 21, 2024. The Plan:

- Sets out how the nine boroughs could develop, up until 2039;
- Identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across the nine districts, in terms of housing, offices, and industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused;
- Supports the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities;
- Protects important environmental assets across the city region;
- Allocates sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area; and
- Defines a new Green Belt boundary for Greater Manchester.

Holt Town is located within an area identified as the Core Growth Area, which covers Manchester City Centre and Salford Quays and extends eastwards to include Central Park and Sporticity and the Etihad Campus, and westwards through Trafford Park. This spatial area contains a large agglomeration of economic activity and future potential to deliver inclusive growth. It is described as follows:

“The Economic Heartbeat of GM. Rapid Growth in all four frontier sectors which supports and accelerates growth across the city-region. Landmark new neighbourhoods driving population growth”

Policy JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area states:

“The economic role of the Core Growth

Area will be protected and enhanced, with sustainable development supporting major growth in the number of jobs provided across the area providing opportunities to create jobs for local communities. Complementary to, but not at the expense of, its economic function it will see a significant increase in the number and range of homes in areas with good connections to employment, training and education facilities. Infrastructure provision will support the growth and continued capacity of the Core Growth Area.”

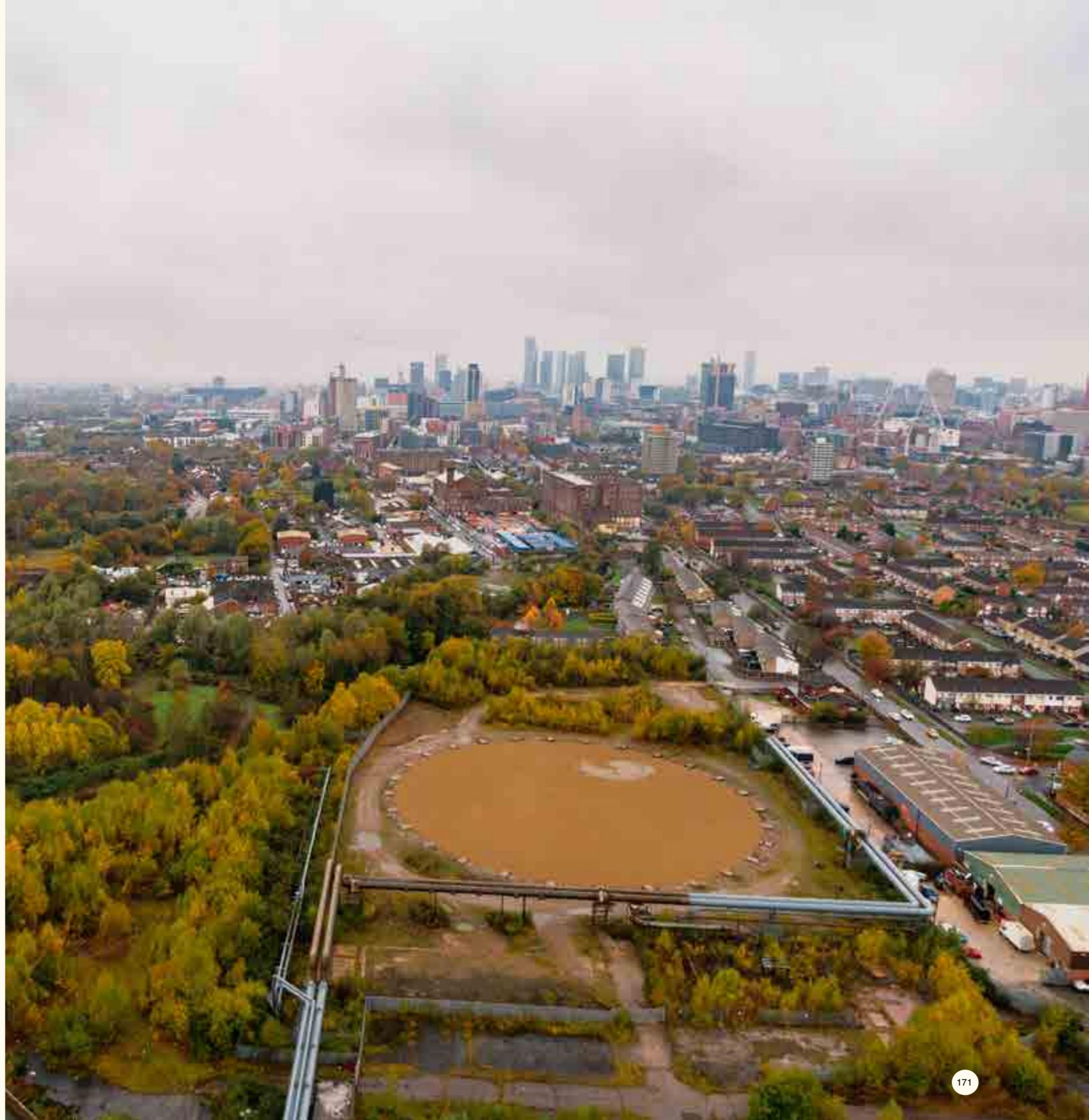
Specifically Holt Town is within the ‘inner area of the city region’ of the Core Growth Area, with Policy JP-Strat5: Inner Areas directly applicable:

The continued regeneration of the inner areas will be promoted and will be linked to reducing levels of deprivation and poverty and supporting the improved health and wellbeing of the communities. High levels of new development will be accommodated in this highly accessible and sustainable location. New development will be predominantly residential and will be integrated with existing communities, enhancing the quality of places and their local character. Infrastructure provision will facilitate the growth and continued capacity of the Inner Area, including high quality open spaces and improved access to the wider green infrastructure network.

Over the period 2022-2039 land to accommodate around 175,000 sqm of office, around 86,500 sqm of industry and warehousing and around 35,000 new dwellings has been identified within the inner areas. Residential development is expected to deliver a broad range of dwelling types and an increase in the supply of affordable housing.

The following PfE policies may also have particular relevance for Holt Town:

- Policy JP-Strat13 Strategic Green Infrastructure
- Policy JP-Strat14 A Sustainable and Integrated Transport Network
- Policy JP-S1 Sustainable Development
- Policy JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
- Policy JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- Policy JP-S6 Resource Efficiency
- Policy JP-J1 Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth.
- Policy JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
- Policy JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing
- Policy JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing
- Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing
- Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network
- Policy JP-G3 River Valleys and Waterways
- Policy JP-G6 Urban Green Space
- Policy JP-G7 Trees and Woodland
- Policy JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-P2 Heritage
- Policy JP-P6 Health
- Policy JP-C1 An Integrated Network
- Policy JP-C2 Digital Connectivity
- Policy JP-C5 Streets for All
- Policy JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
- Policy JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development



Material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') is a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications. The original NPPF in 2012 introduced a 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development and supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up-to-date Development Plan. At the heart of the NPPF, sustainable development is promoted and relates to positive growth that supports economic, environmental, and social progress for existing and future generations.

National Design Guide (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process could achieve. The National Design Guide, and the National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes for Design Codes, illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring, and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2007) and Technical Guidance

The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD reflects and provides guidance on the importance of creating attractive, well designed, and well-maintained neighbourhoods. It includes a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers, and residents to the sort of development which is anticipated in Manchester.

The SPD is supplemented by three Technical Guidance Documents: GD03 Environmental

Protection (2015); GD04 Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments (2017); and GD05 Planning and Noise (2022).

Providing for Housing Choice SPD (2008)

In 2008, the Providing for Housing Choice SPD was endorsed to provide planning guidance about the mix of new housing provision required in Manchester to meet the requirements of the City's planning policies and government guidance about planning policies for housing provision.

Manchester Residential Quality Planning Guidance (2017)

The Manchester Residential Quality Guidance document was endorsed by the City Council with the aim of ensuring that high-quality, sustainable housing is built that meets the needs of the City and its communities.

The document outlines several components of residential quality that could be followed, including:

- Reflecting the character and quality of the different parts of the City in the design.
- Encouraging a sense of community and neighbourhood.
- Animating streets and spaces to create safe and inviting places.
- Ensuring well-connected developments.
- Enhancing the connection with landscape and nature.
- Anticipating the impacts of climate change.
- Providing sufficient space and natural light for people to settle and flourish.
- Ensuring that residential schemes are viable and deliverable.
- New residential developments must demonstrate how they will deliver the highest quality to meet design and

environmental objectives.

Proposals that do not comply with this guidance must provide a compelling justification, based on evidence and options analysis, to avoid refusal.

This approach is embedded in policy and underpins the Council's goal to encourage the delivery of high-quality residential development, contributing to sustainable growth and establishing Manchester as a world-class City.

Strategic Frameworks

Holt Town sits within the Eastlands Regeneration Framework and adjacent to the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework area. As these are endorsed Frameworks, they are a material consideration.

Eastlands Regeneration Framework (updated 2017)

Eastlands has been the focus of a consistent, long-term strategy for regeneration over the last 30 years, supported by successive Frameworks. At the heart of the renaissance of East Manchester has been the Etihad Stadium and the complex of sporting assets within Sportcity that were developed for the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The Stadium has acted, and still acts, as the beacon of the economic transformation of East Manchester; a symbol of change and improvement of the area. This catalysed the expansion of the Metrolink to this part of the City and through to Ashton-under-Lyne, and areas of Holt Town were also modified as part of the Commonwealth Games, including the Ashton Canal Park.

Over the last ten years, significant new investment has continued to transform Sportcity and the Etihad Campus into a major leisure, competitive sport and recreation offer, with significant benefits in terms of job creation and

health outcomes. At the same time, progress is being made at the other end of the Eastlands Framework Area with planning received for an office campus at Pollard Street, around New Islington Metrolink stop, and an SRF endorsed in 2023 for the Former Central Retail Park to create a high-quality sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre.

Six sub-areas were identified in the 2017 Eastlands Framework:

- Etihad Campus Higher Education Sports Campus
- Etihad Campus Commercial
- Holt Town
- Lower Medlock Valley
- Beswick
- The Croft Street Triangle

The vision set out in the 2017 Framework focussed on the Etihad Campus and Holt Town. This vision for the Etihad Campus was to develop a place that can successfully host a leading higher education presence that can drive forward the development of a globally competitive sport, leisure and recreation economic cluster. Looking beyond the Etihad Campus to the west along the Ashton Canal Corridor it was identified that there was an opportunity to create residential and commercial development in new neighbourhoods of choice to encourage the increasing Manchester population to live and work in the area and to capture the benefits of new growth in and around the Etihad Campus.

The Framework provides 'Design Directions' for specific sub-areas. Holt Town is envisaged as a mixed-use neighbourhood of higher density residential including family homes, employment space for a wide variety of businesses from makers to tech, and a cultural and entertainment cluster. Local retail and services are anticipated

to be included to support the wider area, with maximum use to be made of the proximity to Holt Town Metrolink stop. Although this Holt Town NDF 2024/5 has been drafted in accordance with the overall vision, objectives and key principles of the 2017 Eastlands SRF, it does supersede all elements of the 2017 Eastlands SRF as they pertain to the Area.

It is also relevant to note that an updated Eastlands Framework was presented to the Council's Executive Committee in March 2019 for consultation. Whilst consultation took place in July 2019, with the Executive resolving to endorse the document subject to certain matters being addressed, the document has not, however, been endorsed by the City Council and has no status as policy. Nevertheless, the 2019 draft Framework provides some key principles for consideration. In particular, in relation to employment growth, broadening the housing offer and capitalising on the growth of the leisure sector in East Manchester. These drivers have the capacity to re-shape and deepen the commercial and residential prospects of the area not only between the Etihad Stadium and Great Ancoats Street but also further eastwards beyond the Etihad Stadium.

The 2019 draft Framework makes reference to Holt Town, reinforcing it as an area of opportunity and citing the principles of the 2017 Framework. The draft Framework seeks to leverage the wider benefits associated with the growth of the conurbation core and the Etihad Campus within Holt Town through commercial and residential development. It also notes that a 14-acre extension of the Etihad Campus westward is being assembled to create a 'Sport and Innovation Zone', including the Edwin Road Industrial Estate.

Ancoats and New Islington

Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) Update (2016)

In 2016 Manchester City Council's Executive Committee endorsed an updated Neighbourhood Development Framework to help guide the regeneration of the Ancoats and New Islington area, which is to the west of the Holt Town area. It identified the capacity for residential-led opportunities including a wide mix of uses, for instance, office, workspace, retail, leisure, and community uses.

The Ancoats and New Islington NDF aims to guide the positive regeneration of the area comprehensively and to deliver an attractive and successful residential-led neighbourhood with opportunities for a wider mix of complementary uses where increasing numbers of people would choose to live, work and spend leisure time.

In 2020 an additional NDF was endorsed for the Poland Street Zone within the Ancoats and New Islington framework area. It provided a more detailed vision for the area building on the significant progress that had been made since 2016. It set out a comprehensive strategy for the area in order to guide its positive regeneration and deliver an attractive and successful neighbourhood of choice, with capacity for up to 1,500 new homes, where increasing numbers of people would choose to live, work and invest.

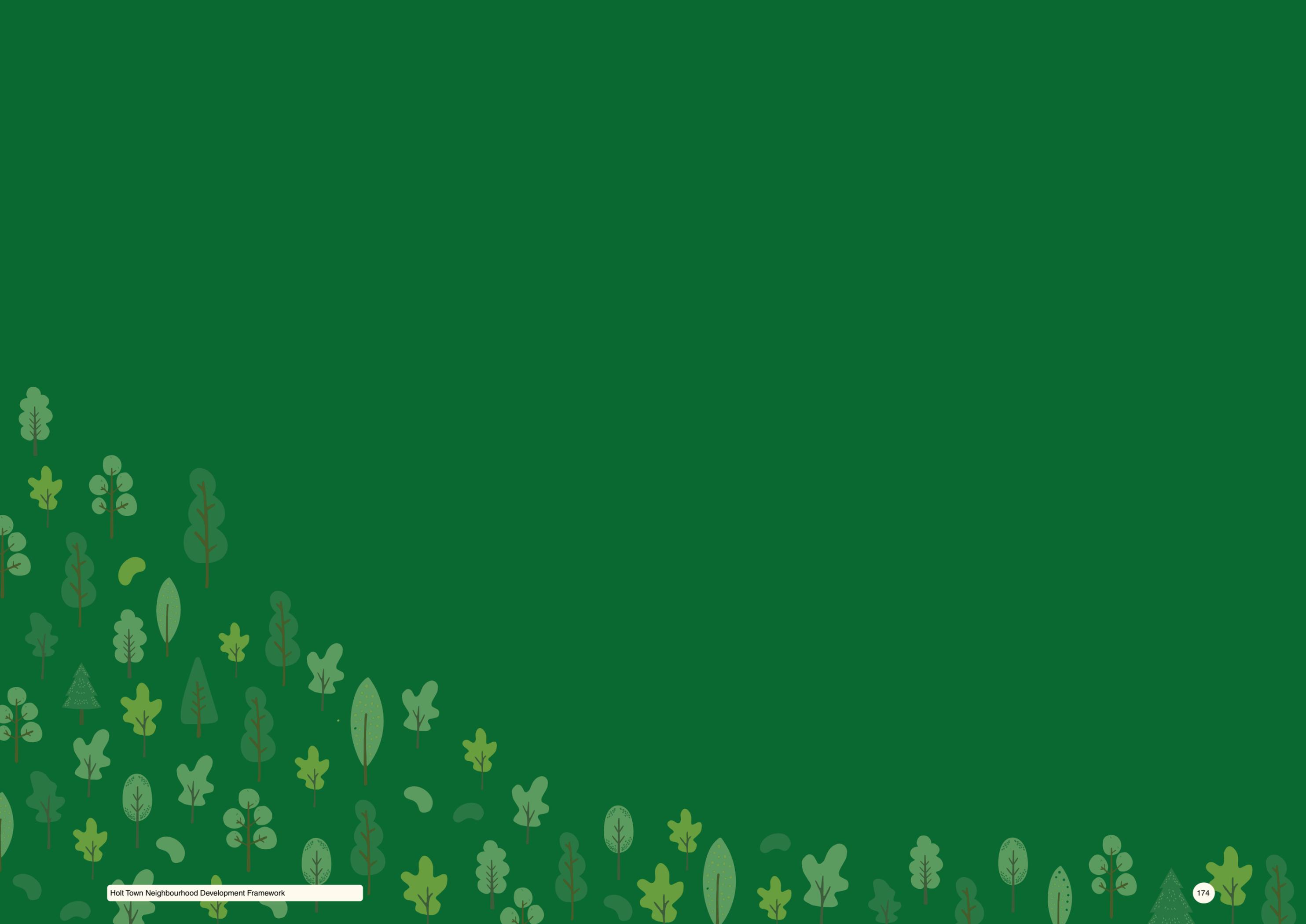
The City Centre Strategic Plan 2015-

2018 (2016)

In 2016, Manchester City Council endorsed the City Centre Strategic Plan that extended the formal boundary of Manchester City Centre to reflect the level of development activity that has taken place in areas around the edge of the City Centre.

In summary, the expansion of Manchester's economy and population has led to significant mixed-use developments in areas like Ancoats, New Islington, the Green Quarter, NOMA, Castlefield, and St George's. These locations have become increasingly popular for living, working, and leisure activities, contributing to additional residential, commercial, and leisure facilities.

The Strategic Plan expanded the identified City Centre boundary, including Ancoats and New Islington, Corridor Manchester and the Lower Irk Valley and Collyhurst (Victoria North) for example. Including these areas within the City Centre boundary has boosted the population and enhanced the City's economy. Importantly, adjusting the boundary of the City Centre eastward to reflect this increase in density and economic activity toward Holt Town reinforces the importance of bridging the gap between the City Centre and Sportcity and the Etihad Campus through regeneration initiatives.



Appendix 2: Socio-Economic Context

Socio Economic Drivers for Change

A comprehensive assessment of the social and economic drivers for change is critical to understanding the context of Holt Town, the challenges, and opportunities it faces and to ensure that these are reflected in the NDF.

Population Health and Wellbeing

Population

With a current estimated population of 586,000¹, Manchester has experienced an exceptional increase in its population since the late 1990s and is the leading example in both Europe and the UK of a major urban centre reversing long-term population decline. The City Centre population has grown from under 10,000 to over 60,000 in this period and is projected to grow to over 100,000 within the next decade.

This growth has been particularly evident in a younger 20-24- and 25-39-years demographic, attracted to Manchester's lifestyle, cultural offer and increasing employment opportunities and then further economic growth and enhanced productivity.

This trend is reflecting in the Local Impact Area (LIA) relevant to Holt Town Figure 1², which experienced a dramatic 59% population growth between 2011 and 2021.

Over 27,000 people now live within the LIA, with 64% of the population aged thirty-four and under, reflecting a young demographic. This comparatively young demographic presents an opportunity for future development to meet the



Figure 1. Holt Town in relation to the LIA

needs of a younger population but also to provide a range of homes that will enable households to remain within the area as their housing needs change. Additionally, while less ethnically diverse than Manchester, the LIA is more diverse than Greater Manchester, the North West, and England averages. The study area also has a significant LGBTQ+ representation.

However, employment rates in the LIA are below the Manchester average, and the locality around Holt Town faces economic challenges, with high deprivation levels and a spatial divide in residents' access to opportunities. Additionally, the area experiences challenges related to family food support, socio-economic barriers, e-commerce access, and fuel poverty, with distinct geographic distributions.

Health and Wellbeing

The 'North Manchester Social Benefit Framework' sets out that improving the health of people living in Manchester is a key priority. It has been estimated that health inequalities across Manchester give rise to at least £300-£320 million in economic losses and £53 million in costs to the NHS per year.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Public Health Outcomes Framework³ data highlights a complex health and socio-economic landscape in Manchester, with both positive and concerning indicators across various health and wellbeing metrics. Examples of concerning data and key areas of focus relate to child obesity and air pollution in particular.

This NDF provides an opportunity to provide a progressive strategy to directly impact positively and change these outcomes.

Health outcomes in Manchester are generally poorer in comparison with Greater Manchester as a whole and nationally. Whilst life expectancy in Manchester is lower than the national average and Greater Manchester, the City has a lower proportion of overweight adults compared to the national and regional averages. However, childhood obesity rates are higher in Manchester than the national and regional averages, with a considerable proportion of children living in low-income families. Additionally, the fraction of mortality attributable to air pollution is higher in Manchester than both Greater Manchester and the national average.

Data analysis indicates that across all GP surgeries within a two-mile walking distance of Holt Town, there is an indicative spare capacity of c. 17,800 patients. However, when applying a recommended FTE GP ratio⁴ it indicates that further capacity will be required to accommodate the demand that is likely to be generated by the development of Holt Town. Whilst it is not possible to quantitatively assess supply of dental services based on publicly available data, the identified provision in the immediate locality indicates that some level of dental services could be available for future residents, but again this may need to be expanded. There is therefore a need to embed provision of social infrastructure as a key principle within this NDF.

The 'Making Manchester Fairer: Tackling Inequalities in Manchester 2022-2027' Plan was launched in 2022 as Manchester City Council's five-year action plan to address health inequalities in the City. The main 'social determinants of health' recognised by the plan are as the following:

- Poverty, income, and debt
- Early years, children, and young people
- Work and employment.
- Homes and housing
- Systemic and structural racism and discrimination
- Places, transport, and climate change
- Communities and power

Recognising the impact of the above determinants in the residents' lives, the plan identified eight key actions to deliver with a focus

¹ Manchester City Council Forecasting Model (2022), Manchester's population, ethnicity and migration | Population | Manchester City Council

² Holt Town has a limited number of residential properties within the Framework area, so in order to capture the demographics more broadly, a wider catchment area has been established, referred to as the Local Impact Area (LIA) to provide contextual analysis, identified in Figure 1.

³ Office for Health Improvement and Disparity (2024) Public Health Outcomes Framework: Manchester. To note that the framework does not provide data at LSOA level, so data at district level has been considered for the baseline.

⁴ London Healthy Urban Development Unit benchmark of 1,800 patients per GP

on improving health equity for all the residents:

- Giving children and young people the best start in life
- Lifting low-income households out of poverty and debt
- Cutting unemployment and creating good jobs
- Preventing illness and early death through killers like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and cancer
- Improving housing and creating safe, warm, and affordable homes
- Improving our surroundings, the environment where we live, transport, and tackling climate change.
- Fighting systemic and structural discrimination and racism
- Community power and social connections

‘Our Healthier Manchester Locality Plan 2019-2020 Refresh’ sets out the ambition to improve health and care outcomes for the people of Manchester within a financially sustainable health and social care system.

Education and Skills

Manchester boasts a rich talent pool, underpinned by its world-class educational institutions and a commitment to lifelong learning. The City’s residents are more highly qualified than ever, with 45% holding a degree. This is a testament to the City’s strong emphasis on education, skills development, and its ability to attract and retain talent. The City’s universities, renowned for their research strengths, play a pivotal role in fostering a skilled and adaptable

workforce. To continue this trajectory, Manchester is committed to enhancing higher education participation, upskilling existing residents, and creating an environment where acquired skills are effectively utilised.

Whilst Manchester’s tertiary education is competing at a global level, and university graduates are underpinning the broad, based highly skilled economy, there are some clear challenges and opportunities foreducation and skills in East Manchester. East Manchester Academy currently falls behind other local schools, as well as the regional and national average across key measures. Additionally, Manchester has a high proportion of NEETs,⁵ at 3.4%, compared to the national average of 2.8%, and a low proportion of 16–17-year-olds undertaking apprenticeships, at just 4.7%, compared to 6.5% across the North West.

There are, however, twenty-four primary schools located within the statutory 2-mile maximum walking distance of Holt Town, and ten secondary schools within the statutory 3-mile maximum walking distance, along with ten nurseries within a 2-mile radius. At both primary and secondary level there is limited capacity to cater for the housing growth opportunity in Holt Town. This suggests that consideration should be given

to opportunities for making primary school provision within the NDF area as part of the neighbourhood infrastructure as it grows, along with consideration of alternatives such as accommodating additional demand through the expansion of existing primary schools.

⁵ not in education, employment, or training

As Holt Town currently has an exceedingly small resident population, to compile local skills baseline a local geographical area, which is smaller than the LIA and encompassing the Holt Town boundary, has been defined and considered⁶. Within this statistical area, 46% of the working age population hold a degree or a higher degree level qualification (Level 4+), significantly

higher than the Manchester (38%) and national (34%) averages. However, 23% of working age residents have no formal qualifications in this geography, notably higher than the Manchester (20%) and national average (18%). This reveals a concentration of skills towards the lowest end of the scale, with 30% of working age residents having no qualifications, ‘other’ or Level 1, compared to 30% in Manchester and 31% nationally. These challenges underscore the need for strategic interventions to address educational disparities and skill gaps in the area.

The Greater Manchester Children and Young People’s Plan (2019-2022) was launched in 2019 reflecting the ambition for inclusive growth, quality of place and life chances for the future and illustrating the opportunities to ensure that all children and the best start in life and young people grow up inspired to exceed expectations.

A review of the Plan⁷ was launched in 2021, recognising the changes in the national and local

⁶ This area is made up of five LSOAs (061B, 061C, 062A, 062B, 062D). Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) are statistically defined geographies designed for the reporting of data relating to small areas. LSOAs comprise between 400 and 1,200 households and a resident population between 1,000 and 3,000 persons. It should be noted that the LSOAs that make up the Ancoats and Beswick ward are distinct in terms of their socio-economic and labour market characteristics. Therefore, the aggregation of data for this ward conceals known disparities.

⁷ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (n.d.). A review of the 2019-2022 Greater Manchester Children and Young People’s Plan. Available at: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/7017/24723_children-and-young-peoplesreport-v6m.pdf

context brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that the following priorities will form part of the next iteration of the plan:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Family help including family hubs.
- Speech, language, and communication
- Long-term conditions including asthma and healthy weight.
- Support for adolescents.
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Children in care sufficiency
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Investing in Success⁸ is the economic strategy for Manchester with a twin focus on growing the economy and making it more inclusive. The strategy contains measures to develop world class talent and to include more residents in economic opportunity, including the city’s young people. Investing in Success builds upon the knowledge of the type of skills that are needed for occupations in science, technology and the green economy, as well as foundational sectors such as healthcare, teaching and business management. These skills are identified in the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Investing in Success also highlights the importance of focusing on higher education participation, upskilling of residents, and creating an environment where the skills acquired are effectively utilised, contributing to the overall productivity of the city.

⁸ Manchester City Council. Investing in Success - An Economic Strategy for Manchester.

The current Work and Skills Strategy 2022-2027⁹ for the City has a strong focus on economic inclusion and creating a more demand-led skills system that meets the needs for all businesses and enables residents from all backgrounds to obtain the skills and attributes employers require.

The strategy reports on the consistency of high-growth sectors in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) over recent years, with these being:

- Business, financial, and professional services
- Cultural, creative, and digital
- Wholesale and retail

Housing

Manchester's ongoing economic and population growth continues to drive the need for new high-quality residential accommodation across a range of tenures. Since the start of the Manchester Housing Strategy period in April 2022, nearly 5,000 new homes have been completed and with c. 14,000 currently under construction¹⁰, the residential market continues to address the chronic levels of undersupply experienced between 2009 and 2014. However more is needed to continue to provide opportunities for population growth, particularly in the 'inner area of the City region' of the Core Growth Area as

⁹ Manchester City Council. Work and Skills Strategy 2022-2027 (2022)

¹⁰ Manchester City Council Residential Development Tracker

identified in Places for Everyone (2024) to ensure a diverse range of housing options are being delivered.

The Manchester Housing Strategy 2022-2032¹¹ considers the role of housing in the context of the 'Our Manchester Strategy'¹², its contribution to the economic recovery of the City, and the Council's ambitions to transition towards zero-carbon.

As documented within the strategy, there are currently 68,000 social rented homes in the City – the fewest for 40 years. Owner-occupation has declined to levels seen in the early 1980s, and the private rented sector is now the dominant tenure in Manchester at 39% of all of the City's housing stock. The Housing Strategy acknowledges the demand for affordable housing, including social housing.

The strategy sets out a long-term vision built around the following four principles¹³:

- Increase affordable housing supply and build more new homes for all residents.
- Work to end homelessness and ensure housing is affordable and accessible to all.
- Address inequalities and create neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- Address the sustainability and zero-carbon challenges in new and existing housing.

Building on this, the strategy includes the following ambitions¹⁴:

- Deliver 36,000 new homes by 2032, including 10,000 affordable homes (representing 28% of total delivery)

¹¹ Manchester City Council. Manchester Housing Strategy 2022-2032

¹² Manchester City Council. Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025

¹³ Manchester City Council. Manchester Housing Strategy 2022-2032, page 4.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 8.

- Of the 10,000 new affordable homes by 2032, 3,000 will be built in the City Centre
- Increase the number of owner-occupiers in Manchester by 15,000 by 2032
- Ensure at least 80% of all homes built by 2032 are on brownfield sites close to public transport.

The Strategy recognises that the City Centre is a growing and evolving market and the location and potential scale of development in Holt Town means that it is well placed to exploit gaps in supply and meet the Housing Strategy objectives.

The existing housing offer in the City Centre has not yet responded to the growing number of families and older residents in the area with 1 and 2 properties accounting for 94% of city centre homes and the supply of larger properties remaining limited. Holt Town therefore presents the opportunity to lead the diversification of delivery matched to emerging patterns of demand in an area with many of the key credentials attractive to families – including access to schools and open space.

New homes in the City Centre continue to overwhelmingly enter the rental market through new Build to Rent products and Open Market Sale homes purchased by investors. There is an opportunity in Holt Town to address this through delivery of homes more attractive to owner occupiers – in particular in relation to families. Rising house prices mean that prospective owner occupiers are having to save larger deposits to get on the property ladder. It is therefore expected that an important element of delivering options for owner occupation in Holt Town will be the supply of affordable home ownership products. This not only has the potential to

address the deposit barrier but can also offer lower monthly payments at all but the lowest purchase shares given current high interest rates.

Building on existing provision at nearby Victoria Square and Mayes Gardens, there may be the potential to deliver affordable accommodation (including some supported provision for residents with less complex needs). This could help to ensure that the growing number of older residents in the city have housing options at various stages of their life.

In addition, Investing in Success – Manchester's Economic Strategy (2023) identifies housing as a pivotal enabler of growth, playing a crucial role in Manchester's journey towards overall prosperity. It does on to state that *"As well as being a structural necessity, it is also a dynamic component that influences the City's ability to attract and retain people, fostering diverse and vibrant communities. A well-balanced housing*

market, characterised by affordability and availability, acts as a catalyst for economic activity. It fosters an environment conducive to investment and innovation and supports the City's ambition to create sustainable living environments that are well-connected to employment hubs, complemented by essential amenities and services."

As part of the Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031 the GMCA is currently working on the first phase of a Growth Locations Programme. Holt Town is within the Central Growth Cluster (location), where 58,000 homes are identified to be built on brownfield land. The housing created in the central area (around Victoria North, North Campus, the Eastern Gateway, and Salford Crescent) will maximise the proximity of the planned developments to the public transport networks. Holt Town is specifically identified as

an “Enabler” – a key factor in the development of the Growth Location that will underpin growth. Enablers provide the core ingredients for successful places – such as housing, skills and supporting infrastructure.

Business

Manchester, the heart of the Greater Manchester region, is a vibrant economic powerhouse and the largest office market outside London. It is a hub of innovation, home to world-class universities, leading healthcare institutions, and burgeoning sectors like cyber security and life sciences. With its well-connected airport and dynamic City Centre, Manchester offers a wealth of opportunities for businesses. Despite its already impressive scale, the City holds significant potential for further growth, making it an attractive and promising destination for investment and enterprise.

Holt Town includes an established base of businesses with analysis indicating that there are between 70 and 90 businesses operating in Holt Town, with circa 1,000 people working within the Area. Major employers include BooHoo Man and PrettyLittleThing HQ, which together represent a significant share of these jobs.

In terms of business numbers, the wholesale, retailer, and repair of motor vehicles sectors show the highest count of businesses, reflecting the historical legacy of the Area and the profile of commercial premises currently. This sector is noted as including a broad range of businesses. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector is also comparatively well represented within Holt Town. It is recognised that this again includes a broad spectrum of types of businesses within the ‘creative industries’ sector, noting concentrations of business tenants in this sector within Pollard Yard, Hope Mill, Brunswick Mill and Wellington House for example.

The existing business and employment base of Holt Town provide points of distinction and specialism which provide an important foundation from which to encourage and strengthen a further cluster of businesses. This needs to recognise other proximate areas and parallel evidence of business clustering between the City Centre and the growing leisure and cultural offer around Sport City and the Etihad Campus. It must also take account of Manchester’s growth ambitions and potential. In considering this, the following strategies provide important context.

Investing in Success – Manchester’s Economic Strategy (2023) sets an ambitious vision for Manchester’s economy to function as a “net-contributor to UK GDP and provide the best possible opportunities for our residents.” It sets out five priorities to achieve the vision including the following, with relevance to Holt Town highlighted:

- Priority 1: Use investment and development to drive inclusive growth, focusing on guiding development through Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and Neighbourhood Development Frameworks for areas like Holt Town, contributing to the City Centre’s growth and agglomeration benefits.
- Priority 2: Nurture thriving, productive, and innovative sectors, with a commitment to growing the City’s tech and creative industries ecosystem, providing quality and affordable work and production space, and supporting investment in defined Growth Areas.
- Priority 3: Develop world-class infrastructure, places, and talent, ensuring new development includes the right social, transport, energy, and digital infrastructure, and investing in culture, sport, and green spaces to improve the City’s vibrancy and liveability.

- Priority 4: Transition to a zero carbon and resilient economy, developing a Manchester standard for net zero construction via the Local Plan and creating a climate change risk and vulnerability assessment and Manchester Adaptation Plan.
- Priority 5: Include more people in economic activity, creating Community Economic Development Plans in neighbourhoods affected by large-scale regeneration and development, maximising the social value of large-scale development projects, and committing to excellent quality employment and paying the Real Living Wage.

The Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031 sets an ambitious vision for “...a place where everyone can live a good life, growing up, getting on and growing old in a greener, fairer, more prosperous City region.” The strategy provides a ten-year route map to achieve this vision. Under the theme of a “more prosperous Greater Manchester” it sets out a small number of sector-based strengths that will be capitalised upon and they include:

- Health innovation
- Advanced materials and manufacturing
- Digital, creative and media
- Clean growth

The significance of these “frontier” sector strengths for Holt Town is that the area already contains a concentration of digital, creative, and media-based businesses. The Greater Manchester Strategy includes a series of shared commitments, many of which are relevant to the development of Holt Town’s employment and business offer, including:

- Supporting the creation of better jobs and good employment that has a purpose beyond growing shareholder value, utilising

the opportunity to make a positive difference to our communities.

- Driving investment into growth locations and using that to create opportunities in adjacent town and local areas.
- Enabling resilient, safe, and vibrant communities where everyone has access to essential services, with local centres and high streets which are successful and reflective of their populations, and access to high quality leisure spaces.

The emerging GMCA Growth Locations Programme is developing a consistent and holistic vision for growth across Greater Manchester and which in turn will:

- Identify key sectors and industries that currently drive growth and can be accelerated through investment to boost productivity.
- Build a narrative for each growth location based on industry strengths that can be presented to the market.
- Identify the catalyst projects and programmes for each growth location.

The emerging work on Growth Locations highlights the importance of leveraging the economic core of Manchester to drive growth for the whole conurbation. In line with the Greater Manchester Strategy, there is also a focus on accelerating growth of frontier sectors within each Growth Location to drive productivity and prosperity.

Holt Town is within the Central Growth Cluster (location). The following frontier sectors are identified as prominent in this Cluster: Advanced Manufacturing; Digital and Creative; Net Zero and Health Innovation. Foundational sectors are also present and make a significant contribution to prosperity and they include: Business Finance, Professional Services; Sport and Culture;

Information Security, Technology and Cyber.

There is an opportunity for Holt Town to support and contribute to the economic output of the Central Growth Cluster, particularly through supporting and maximising the opportunity presented by the proposed Sports Innovation Zone to the east of Holt Town.

Retail and Leisure

Manchester's retail and leisure industry has been a key driver in the City's growth, establishing it as a vibrant visitor destination and one of the UK's top tourism spots. With a thriving retail scene that generates over £900 million in annual sales and a rapidly expanding hotel market, Manchester caters to a diverse range of visitors.

The City's rich cultural offerings and high-profile events further enhance its appeal. Prior to the pandemic, Manchester welcomed ten million 'staying visitors' and 120 million 'day visitors', making it one of Europe's fastest growing and most visited cities¹⁵.

The City Centre has seen a growth in the leisure sector over the last 5 years and has a higher rate of floorspace in leisure uses than the UK average. This is feeding the need for additional hotel accommodation. There are currently around 150 hotels and 13,000 rooms in the City and the current pipeline of development will see this grow to around 166 hotels and 14,800 rooms¹⁶. This robust retail and leisure industry supported by a growing hotel accommodation market continues to fuel Manchester's growth and its reputation as a leading destination for tourism.

Holt Town is immediately adjacent to world-class recognised leisure destinations. Directly to the North East is Sport City and the Etihad Campus,

¹⁵ CITYCO, Manchester Membership (2023)

¹⁶ Hotel Performance Monitor, Manchester (2023)

which now includes a growing entertainment district with the opening of the Co-op Live Arena in 2024. This is predicted to attract 1.3 million visitors per year. To the South West is Ancoats and New Islington, a major food and beverage destination for the City region and beyond with good linkages into the rest of the City Centre. The main cluster of commercial uses in the NDF can be found in Wellington House / Pollard Yard to the north, which mostly accommodate small businesses, which make use of the affordable studio / workshop spaces provided within the former factory buildings and shipping containers at Wellington Mill and Pollard Yard, respectively. The area is also home to the Hope Mill Theatre / Recording Studios within the Grade II* Listed Hope Mill warehouse on Pollard Street which also accommodates a number of creative arts studios which host drama studios, photography and arts classes and a stained-glass studio, amongst others.

The Area is located approximately 1 km to the east of the Primary Shopping Area of Manchester City Centre and about six hundred metres to the west of the boundary of Eastlands District Centre (the retail cluster on the corner of Alan Turing Way and Ashton New Road). The Area itself currently has limited convenience goods provision, with small convenience stores, a post office, and newsagents, as well as a range of small takeaways and a public house. However, there is no representation from major food store retailers within the area. The main convenience destination serving the east side of Manchester is the ASDA superstore at Eastlands District Centre, approximately six hundred metres to the east of the Area.

The opportunity for new residents at Holt Town could generate approximately £70 million additional household spending power annually based on the capacity of the area. While some of this spending will support shops and services

across a wider area of Greater Manchester, there is the opportunity to capture a considerable proportion of this locally within Holt Town. Initial estimates of the potential to capture expenditure locally suggest that approximately 3,000 sq. m. (gross) retail /leisure floorspace could be supported within Holt Town. This could include convenience goods floorspace; smaller comparison shopping; food and beverage; and retail service uses (such as hairdressers, barbers, dry cleaners, nails bars and post offices).

Arts and Culture

Manchester's reputation as a global hub for arts and culture is growing fast. It has become an international flagship for British music and creativity, and a national centre for the UK's recent boom in spoken word and live literature¹⁷.

Manchester is home to internationally celebrated anchor institutions from The Hallé, one of Europe's most admired orchestras, to Manchester International Festival, the Royal Exchange, Manchester Art Gallery, and the Factory. But the City also has a strong history of grassroots, community, and underground arts and culture organisations from Band on The Wall, one of Manchester's oldest music venues, to Hope Mill Theatre.

Manchester City Council has made significant investment in support of the art and cultural sector, with the Council investing a total of £19.2 million in arts and culture in 2022/23, through grants, contracts, and operational budgets for Manchester Libraries and Manchester Art Gallery. The Council's ongoing investment in culture has enabled the sector to leverage investment from other public and private funders, such as Arts Council England whose investment in Manchester

¹⁷ British Council, Manchester Arts Tour

in 2022/23 exceeded £31.6 million.¹⁸

Such investment has helped to support the sector and contribute to its continued success across Manchester. In 2022, the creative, arts, entertainment, and cultural activities sector contributed £185 million in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the Manchester economy.¹⁹

Across Manchester, there are 590 registered active businesses in the arts and cultural sector, of which around 15% (90 businesses) are located within the LIA and seven are in the Holt Town neighbourhood area. Of those registered art and cultural businesses in the LIA, most are concentrated in the west of the area, in particular, in Ancoats and New Islington.

Within the Holt Town neighbourhood area and the LIA, there is a broad range of artistic, creative, and musical businesses, charities, and organisations. There is a particular concentration of artistic studios and workspaces, including Wellington Studios, New Dawn Pottery, Sheba Arts, and Brink Studio, as well as music production, including Hope Mill Recording Studio, White Bear Studios, Pinhole Sound Studio, and The Hit Stop. The cultural ecosystem here is supported by the warehouse-style spaces and often comparatively more affordable leases, compared to City Centre areas, contributing to a unique ecosystem of creatives and makers.

Sport businesses are also particularly prevalent in the area, given the proximity of the neighbourhood to Sport City, which includes the Manchester Regional Arena, National Squash Centre, National Cycling Centre, and the Etihad Campus.

Arts and culture are a priority across both Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

¹⁸ Manchester City Council (2024) Annual Report on Culture to the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

¹⁹ ONS (2024) Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions.

and Manchester local authority. GMCA's Grown in Manchester, Known Around the World Strategy²⁰ (2018) outlines an ambition for further developing Greater Manchester's cultural offer, ensuring it reflects the diversity of the authority's people, with individuals feeling empowered to share their stories with the world, improving their wellbeing and increasing the prosperity of businesses

and attractiveness of our places.

Always, Everywhere: Manchester's Cultural Ambition 2024-2034²¹ in part supersedes Manchester's Cultural Ambition Strategy 2016-2026²² and outlines Manchester's strategic framework for culture, arts, and creativity over the next decade. It emphasises the importance of culture in driving the City's economic growth, social cohesion, and international reputation. The document sets out three strategic pillars: 'Everyone', 'Everything', and 'Everywhere'. 'Everyone' focuses on widening access to culture for all, recognising the people that make culture happen, and creating a 'cultural welcome' to the City. 'Everything' rethinks the scope of culture to include everyday Mancunian cultural and creative life and ensure culture connects with the issues that matter. 'Everywhere' aims to create more spaces and places where culture happens, delivering a distributed and equitable cultural life for everyone, everywhere.

Transport and Connectivity

Strategic investments in transport infrastructure over the past decade have significantly contributed to Manchester's growth and economic prosperity. Key projects such as the

²⁰ Greater Manchester (2018) Grown in Manchester. Known Around the World. Greater Manchester's Strategy for Culture and Creativity.

²¹ Appendix 1 for Cultural Strategy - 1 Always Everywhere Manchester Cultural Ambition 2024-2034

²² Manchester City Council (2016) Manchester's Cultural Ambition Strategy

Second City Metrolink Crossing, the cross-City bus package, and the Ordsall Chord have enhanced public transport capacity and reliability, improved the City's environment, and bolstered rail connectivity. These initiatives have led to a decrease in car usage and an increase in the number of people accessing the City Centre via sustainable modes of transport, underscoring the importance of transport infrastructure investments in promoting sustainable urban growth²³.

According to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, which was most recently updated in 2021, a key vision for Greater Manchester is to have 'World class connections that support long-term, sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all.' This vision is further bolstered by four key elements comprising the following principles:

- Supporting sustainable economic growth
- Protecting our environment.
- Improving quality of life for all.
- Developing an innovative City-region.

In terms of achieving the above four elements, Greater Manchester's transport system has been identified as an area of improvement, with the aim being that by 2040, 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester are made by public transport or active travel, which supports a reduction of car use to no greater than 50% of daily trips. This is referred to as the transport 'Right Mix,' and will result in a healthier, greener, and more productive region as the result of one million more sustainable journeys on a daily basis.

Holt Town benefits from proximity to several key pieces of transport infrastructure that support its connectivity and development potential.

²³ Manchester City Centre Transport Strategy (2021)

Understanding and leveraging these assets is crucial for aligning with the Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy, which aims to create a sustainable, integrated, and user-friendly transport network.

Metrolink: Holt Town is served by the Metrolink tram system, specifically the Ashton-under-Lyne line. This line provides frequent and reliable services, connecting Holt Town to the City Centre and other key destinations across Greater Manchester. The Metrolink's convenience encourages public transport use, reducing reliance on private vehicles and ensures Holt Town can adopt the 'Right Mix' approach.

Ashton New Road: This major road serves as a vital public transport route, accommodating multiple bus services that link Holt Town with central Manchester and surrounding areas. The road's strategic importance is amplified by its potential future role as a cycle route, promoting sustainable transport options.

The Transport Strategy also identifies spatial themes, which are structured around five types of trips. They have been designed to address points for improvement in different regions of Greater Manchester and can be identified as the following:

- Connected neighbourhoods.
- Travel across the wider City Centre.
- Travel to and within our regional centre.
- Delivering better City-to-City links.
- Global connectivity.

There is emphasis on collaborating with partners including DfT, Network Rail, and Transport for the North to address the points above.

In order to measure success, the Transport Strategy has several 'key performance indicators' in place, which aim to be improved upon annually

and are reported in the annual update of Greater Manchester's Delivery Plan. Greater Manchester recognises that this Transport Strategy is ambitious, but also has enough flexibility in place to accommodate any changes in priorities, including the location of new development and, most notably, funding from central government. Greater Manchester would welcome additional devolved transport responsibilities to 'create and efficiently manage a cleaner, more efficient and integrated transport network.'

Manchester's Our Active Travel Strategy (2024) aims to create a healthier, greener, and more accessible City by prioritising walking, cycling, and other forms of active transportation. The strategy focuses on developing safe and convenient infrastructure, such as dedicated cycle lanes and pedestrian-friendly streets, to encourage more people to choose active travel over car use. It also emphasises the importance of connectivity, ensuring that active travel routes seamlessly integrate with public transport. By promoting active travel, the strategy seeks to reduce congestion, lower emissions, and improve the overall quality of life for residents and visitors in Manchester.

Development at Holt Town has the potential to deliver on these strategic aspirations, helping to reduce car dependency, encourage public transport and active travel options, and ensure inclusive access throughout the area.

Digital

The digital sector in Manchester is lively and flourishing, and it is becoming increasingly crucial to the City's success by offering prospects to its inhabitants and drawing in investments that promote lasting development. The digital ecosystem of Manchester is composed of a robust community of individuals and

organisations who work closely together. This network includes support systems for start-ups and scale-ups led by Manchester Digital.

This ecosystem is vital to the City's economic prosperity and its recovery from the pandemic, ensuring an inclusive approach to growth. It is complemented by the strength of Manchester's innovation and creative networks and activities focusing on ethics, diversity, and equalities. Manchester's digital strengths impact many other sectors as well, being at the forefront of innovation for advanced manufacturing, construction, retail, and product and service design sectors.

The Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-2026 aims to support and grow the City's digital ecosystem, contributing to the objectives of the Our Manchester Strategy. The Digital Strategy has four themes:

- Smart People
- Digital Places
- Future Prosperity
- Sustainable Resilience

Of particular relevance to Holt Town is Digital Places, which aims to:

- Ensure that Manchester has excellent and accessible digital infrastructure everywhere.
- Ensure that all public services are delivered digitally and are made more successful through the better use of data.
- Ensure that we grow Manchester's wider digital ecosystem and connect it to the City's wider economic and cultural networks.
- Ensure that we use data to drive innovation and create new opportunities for growth that are linked to tackling the City's challenges and building on its strengths.

Climate Change and Sustainability

MCC declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and has subsequently committed to an ambitious science-based target of becoming a net-zero City by 2038. The Council's ambition is to ensure that all of Manchester's residents are protected from the impact of climate change, while ensuring that the social impacts of this transition are considered alongside the environmental impact, protecting the most vulnerable in society.

The Manchester Climate Change Framework and Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 sets out the strategy for making Manchester a thriving, zero-carbon, climate-resilient City. Seven areas for action are identified, most relevant to Holt Town are:

- Buildings (existing and new): Adapt the City's buildings to the changing climate and increase the climate resilience of residents and organisations.
- Renewable energy: Establish an inclusive, zero-carbon, and climate-resilient economy where everyone can play an active role in adapting the City to the changing climate
- Green infrastructure and nature-based solutions: Contribute to the City's initiatives to limit its carbon budget.

Manchester's Local Area Energy Plan (October 2021) identifies the most effective routes to reach net zero by 2038. This place-based approach enables the City to understand retrofit needs, determine where to place future energy assets, and supports network operators to plan interventions based on an informed regional position.

Creating a sustainable City is more than just reducing carbon emissions; development must serve a purpose for cities in the future, maintain positive levels of population growth, support job creation, and induce expenditure in the local economy through residents, workers, and tourists. Increasing population density in sustainable locations will be critical to the City's response to climate change.

Natural Environment

Manchester was the first City in England to sign the Edinburgh Declaration – a global pledge registering its concern about biodiversity loss and signalling its commitment to tackling the twin challenges of the biodiversity and climate crises. Since 2015, more than £80 million has been invested in green infrastructure-related projects in the City.

Manchester's Great Outdoors: A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester 2015-25 recognises that parks, river valleys, gardens, street trees, green roofs, and canals are an essential part of creating a successful, liveable City. The 2025 vision is that high-quality, well-maintained green and blue spaces will be an integral part of all neighbourhoods, with access for communities and workers, and stimulating business investment.

The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-30 – the City of Manchester's Nature Recovery seeks to champion the role that nature plays in addressing many of the challenges faced by wildlife and residents, including climate change, poor health and wellbeing, pandemics, and air quality. The Plan seeks to protect and recover habitats throughout the city, increase the

understanding, connection, and love for nature, and encourage everyone to recognise their role in Manchester's nature recovery. Encourage everyone to recognise their role in Manchester's nature recovery.

Our Rivers, Our City Strategy (2021) focuses on improving the quality and functioning of river valleys, sustainable drainage, accessibility, and flood management. The Medlock Valley has been earmarked for its great heritage value and potential for a series of parks and open spaces. In turn, this could contribute to East Manchester's community and sports-led regeneration.

