

GREAT DENHAM DISTRICT CENTRE MASTER PLAN

WEST OF BEDFORD
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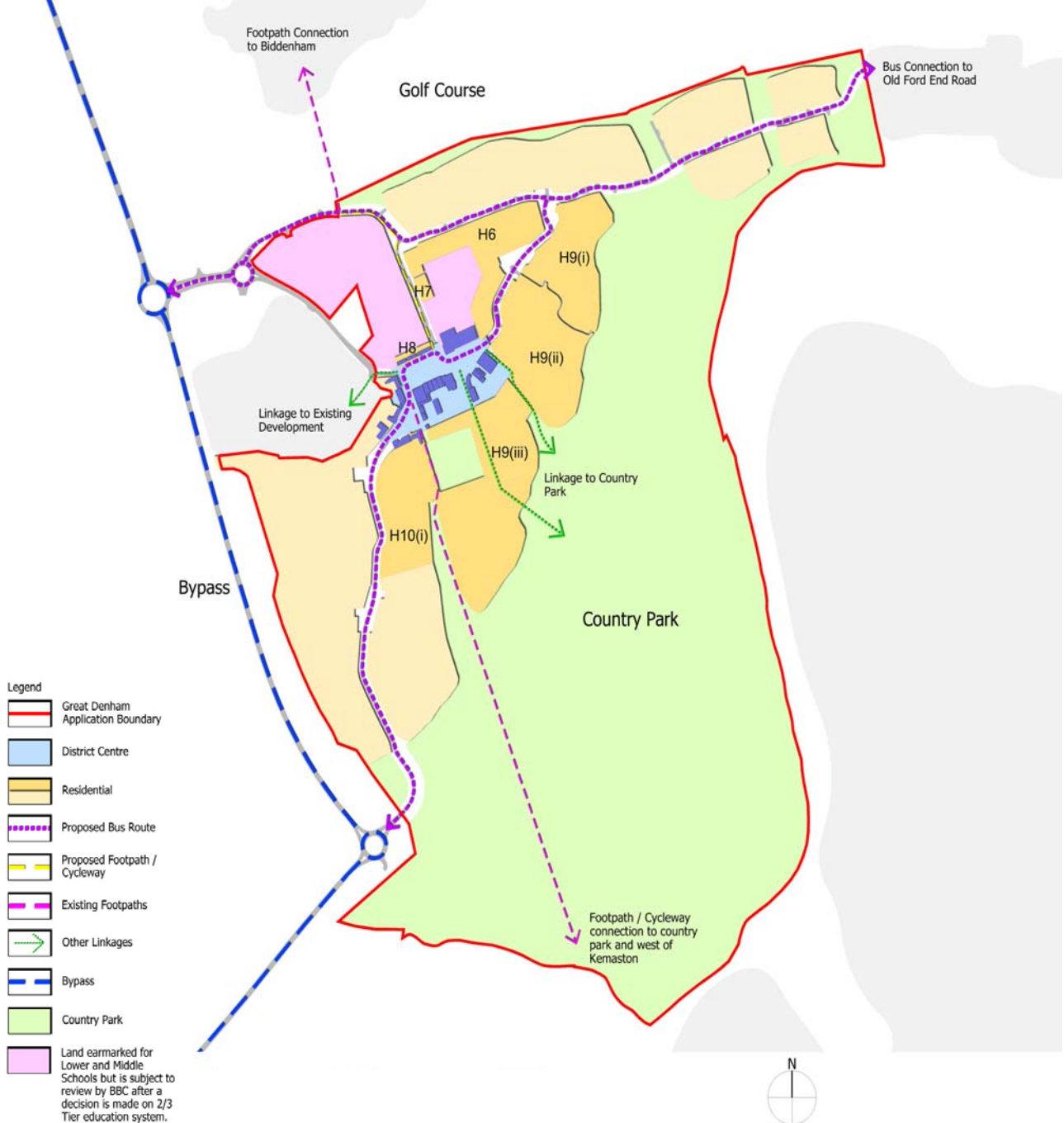
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INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the Great Denham District Centre Master Plan has been born out of the consented Master Plan attached to the Outline Planning Permission and the adopted Design Guide and Code for Great Denham. The consented Master Plan sets the overarching spatial framework for the location of the District Centre and, in conjunction with the S106 Agreement, identifies those uses and areas required. In recognition of the potentially significant contribution the centre can make to a vibrant, attractive and sustainable community at West of Bedford the adopted Design Guide and Code gives some initial expression to the form, character and spatial arrangement of uses in the District Centre with regard to the S106 requirements and Bedford Borough Council's parking standards.

Paragraph 4.5.1(i) of the S106 Agreement requires the preparation and approval of a District Centre Master Plan prior to the occupation of 100 dwellings at Great Denham. The developer, David Wilson Homes (DWH) have worked with the Borough Council in the preparation of the District Centre Master Plan which provides a more detailed framework indicating how the centre can be configured to reflect current design best practice, meeting commercial realities and the requirements of the S106 agreement.

This document represents the culmination of discussions between DWH and the planning authority and represents the formal submission discharging obligation 4.5.1(i) of the Section 106 Agreement. The following pages provide detailed information relating to land use, building heights, key buildings, parking, areas (including building footprints) and the design principles which underpin the best practice design approach.

LAND USE BUDGET

Use	GIA (m²)	GIA (Ft²)	GEA (m²)	GEA (Ft²)	Curtilage Ha	Ac	S106 Specification
Ground Floor							
Convenience Store*	642	6,910			0.1652	0.4082	A site for 1000m² net of food and convenience retail floorspace
Other Food and Convenience Retail**	573	6,598					
Public House	468	5,038			0.1070	0.2644	N/A
Commercial***	150	1,615			0.0659	0.1628	N/A
Recycling Centre			250	2690	0.0257	0.0635	Schedule K - Hard surfaced site not less than 250m²
Library	250	2,691			0.0731	0.1806	Schedule J - 250m² gross floorspace
Community Hall****	674	7,255			0.1165	0.2879	Schedule G - 674m² including 10% circulation space
Nursery*****	273	2,939			0.1890	0.4670	Curtilage of not more than 0.2ha. To serve at least 50 children
Ecumenical Centre	250	2,691			0.1000	0.2471	On land no more than 0.1ha
First Floor							
Public House	468	5,038			TBA	TBA	N/A
Commercial	450	5,274			TBA	TBA	N/A
Health and Fitness Centre†	452	4,865			TBA	TBA	N/A
Residential††	189	2,034			TBA	TBA	
Nursery†††	280	3,014			TBA	TBA	Curtilage of not more than 0.2ha. To serve at least 50 children
Second Floor							
Commercial‡	600	6,458			TBA	TBA	N/A

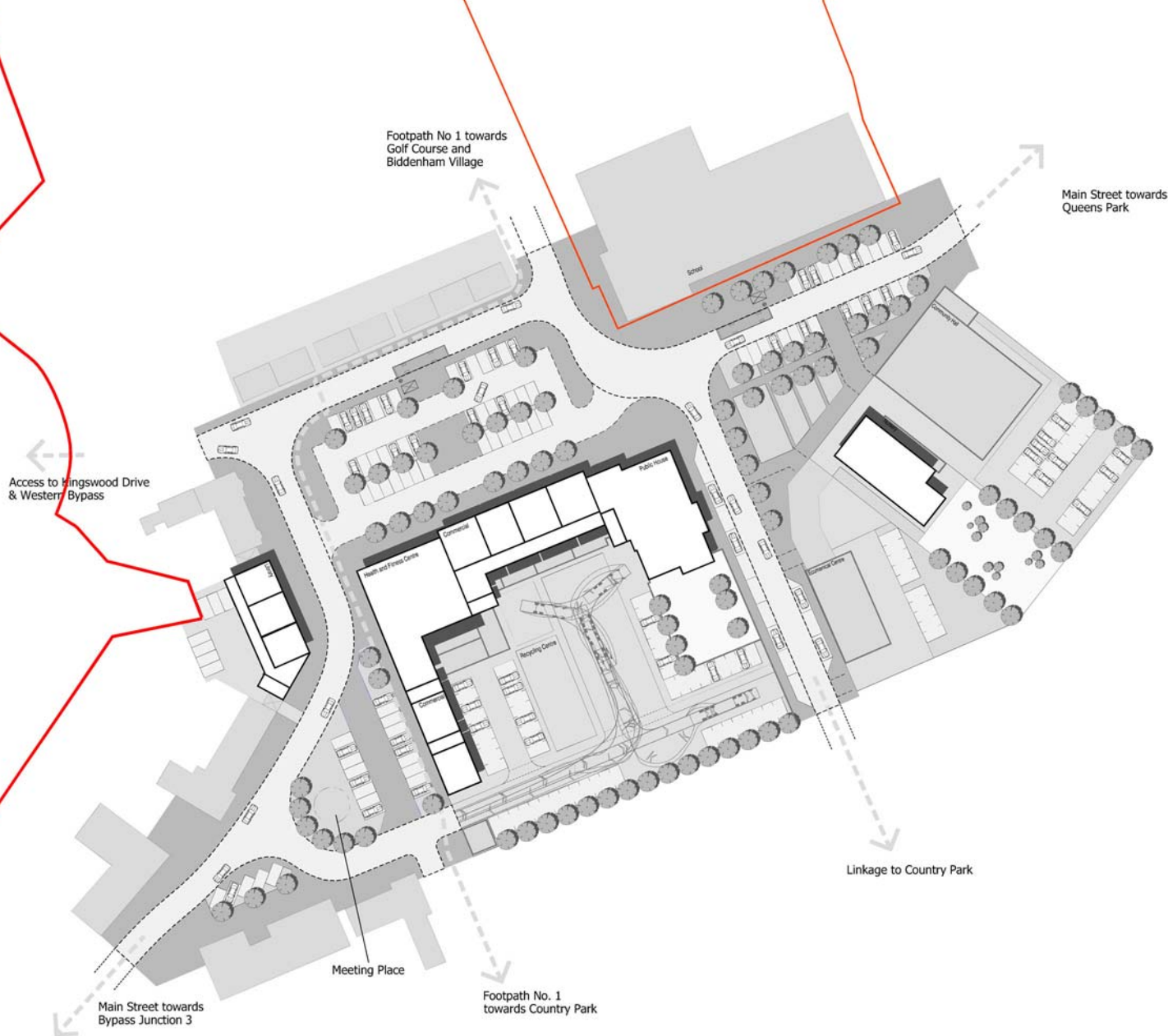
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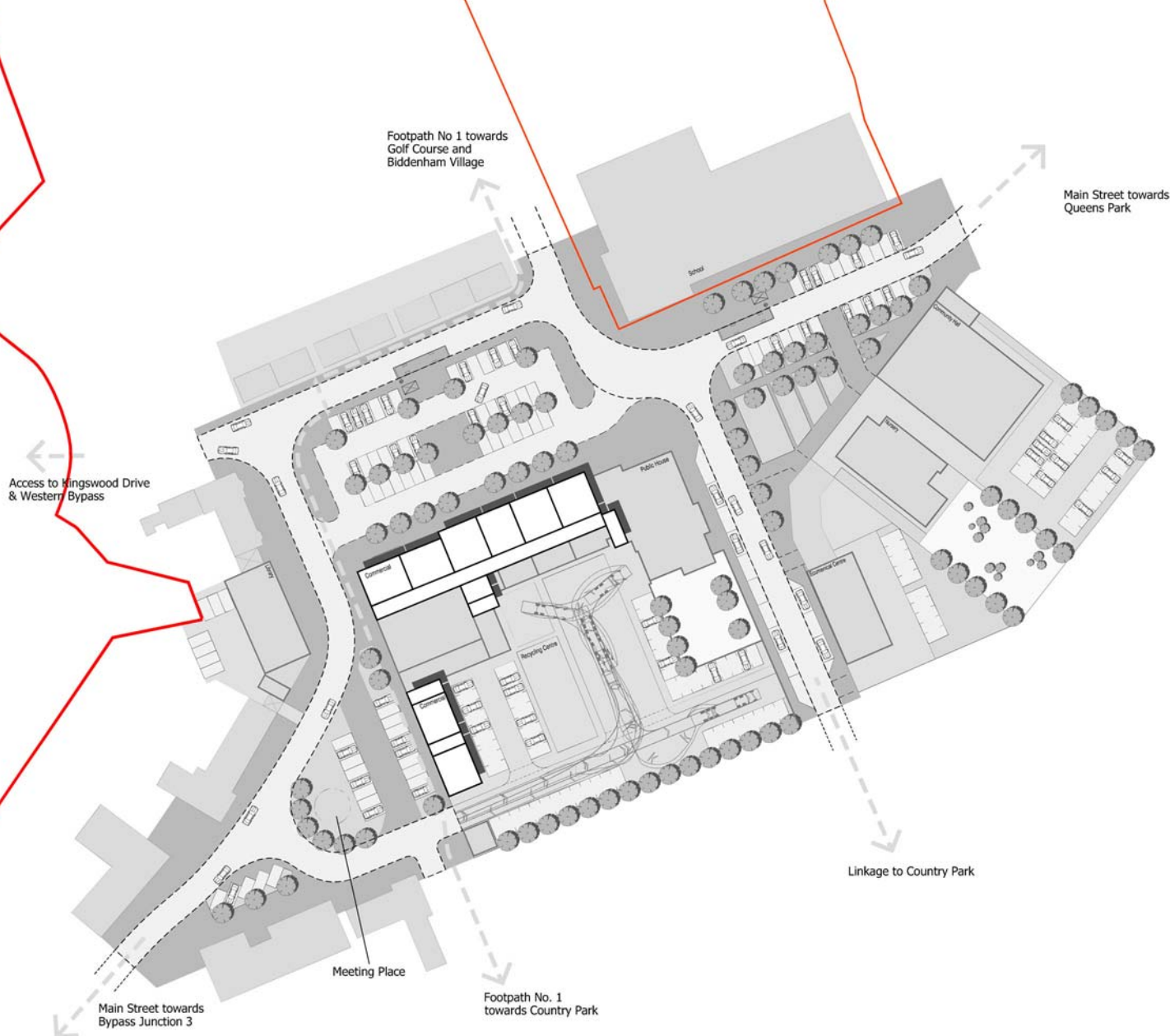
- * 500m² sales floorspace + 142m² storage/ ancillary space
- ** 500m² + 73m² storage/ ancillary space
- *** 150m² is based upon 2 units at 75m² each
- **** Some Community Hall accommodation could be located at the first floor
- ***** Nursery footprint indicative at this stage and subject to further testing to ensure provision for 50 children
- † 350m² 'activity' space + 102m² ancillary space
- †† Residential units are above Library and comprise of 3 units at 63m² each
- ††† Nursery footprint indicative at this stage and subject to further testing to ensure provision for 50 children
- ‡ 600m² is based upon 8 units at 75m² each

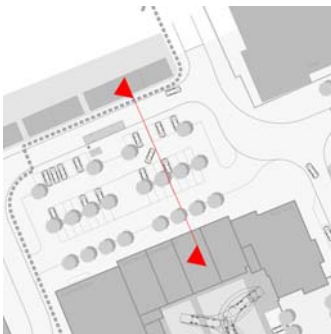
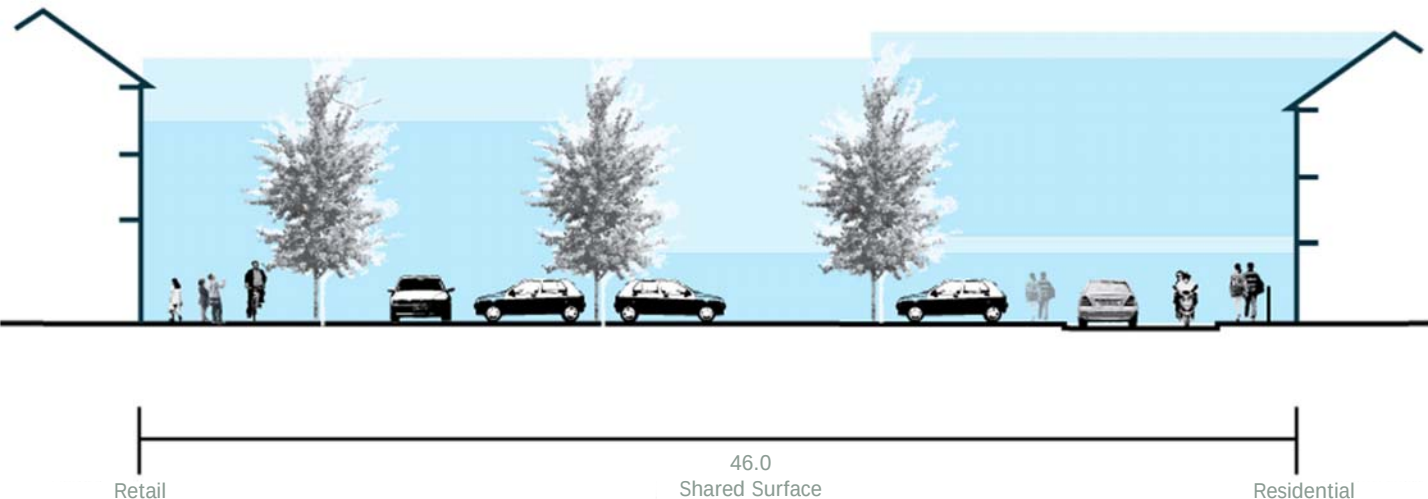


Note:

The area to the rear of shops shall be well lit and managed. Adjoining buildings, building entrances, fenestration and perhaps the garden to the public house shall be configured to provide passive oversight of this area.







DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The principles set out below provide an overview of how the District Centre Master Plan proposals accord with best practice design principles, with reference to the Urban Design Objectives as identified in By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System.

CHARACTER

The District Centre Master Plan is responsive to the character of the adjacent development, providing for a high level of integration with adjoining streets and spaces, increasing connectivity and permeability with the wider area. This includes a series of radiating routes from the District Centre to: Biddenham Village via the Golf Course to the north on the diverted Footpath No. 1; the Country Park and Kempston beyond to the south via an upgraded footpath (and cycleway south of the District Centre) along the alignment of Footpath No. 1; Queens Park to the east and junctions 2 and 3 of the Bypass to the north west and south east via the Main Street through the site. The District Centre is also well connected with the existing development immediately to the west and provides good connectivity to a LEAP and NEAP immediately to the south. The high level of permeability provides safe, convenient and direct routes to destinations people want to go to and encourages travel by non car modes. Considerable care was given to producing the local character analysis for the Design Guide and Code in a way which accurately represented the best of local distinctiveness in Bedford. The key principles from this study have been carried through into the District Centre Master Plan to ensure, among others, spatial relationships between uses, parking typologies and building heights will reinforce the *genus loci*, the sense of place, in a positive way.

The basic urban design parameters set out in the Master Plan will facilitate the delivery of detailed layouts which will have further opportunity to reinforce local building forms through responsive and sensitive elevational treatments. In keeping with the design approach for the surrounding new development at Great Denham, it is expected that the local centre will reflect the Bedford vernacular, bringing forward forms and architectural elevations which encapsulate the traditional townscape character.

CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

Traditional townscapes are characterised by a series of dynamic (linear and corridor like) and static (square like) spaces. These provide a changing series of spatial experiences and greatly enrich the character and legibility of the urban form. Frontage typologies, in conjunction with building heights, have a significant role to play in shaping these dynamic and static spaces. The Great Denham District Centre consists of a series of linked spaces as the urban focal point for the development, each of a different shape, character and use.

Urban design best practice promotes the positive enclosure and clear definition of public open spaces through the positioning of buildings, boundary treatments and soft landscaping. Emphasis is placed on visual continuity of route by minimising breaks in the built frontage but with a variety of spaces along its length to create variety and interest. The proposals for the District Centre have worked hard to create a high degree of enclosure through continuity of frontage and building height, integrating different uses as part of a cohesive townscape.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

The strategy for the public realm design is to enhance the built form providing a legible and vibrant social space for everyday use by the public.

Robust, high quality hard landscape materials will be specified to reflect the quality of the built form and assist in the adaptability of the space over time. This will be complimented by a palette of street furniture specified to create a distinct character to the area, setting it apart from other formal squares within the development.

Tree planting will be formally arranged within the District Centre (examples of which are shown in the images opposite), particularly within the main space, reflecting the importance of this square within Great Denham and providing a high degree of legibility and interest. The rectilinear configuration of trees shown on the Master Plan is illustrative only and other configurations may be appropriate at the detailed design stage, subject to meeting the following principles:

- formal configurations will be fully integrated with the parking design and movement function of the square
- configurations shall facilitate the flexible use of space and enhance the usability and attractiveness of the square to pedestrians
- trees, when fully mature, shall have a clear trunk to a minimum of 1.8 metres high to facilitate unimpeded pedestrian movement and allow views and surveillance across the square

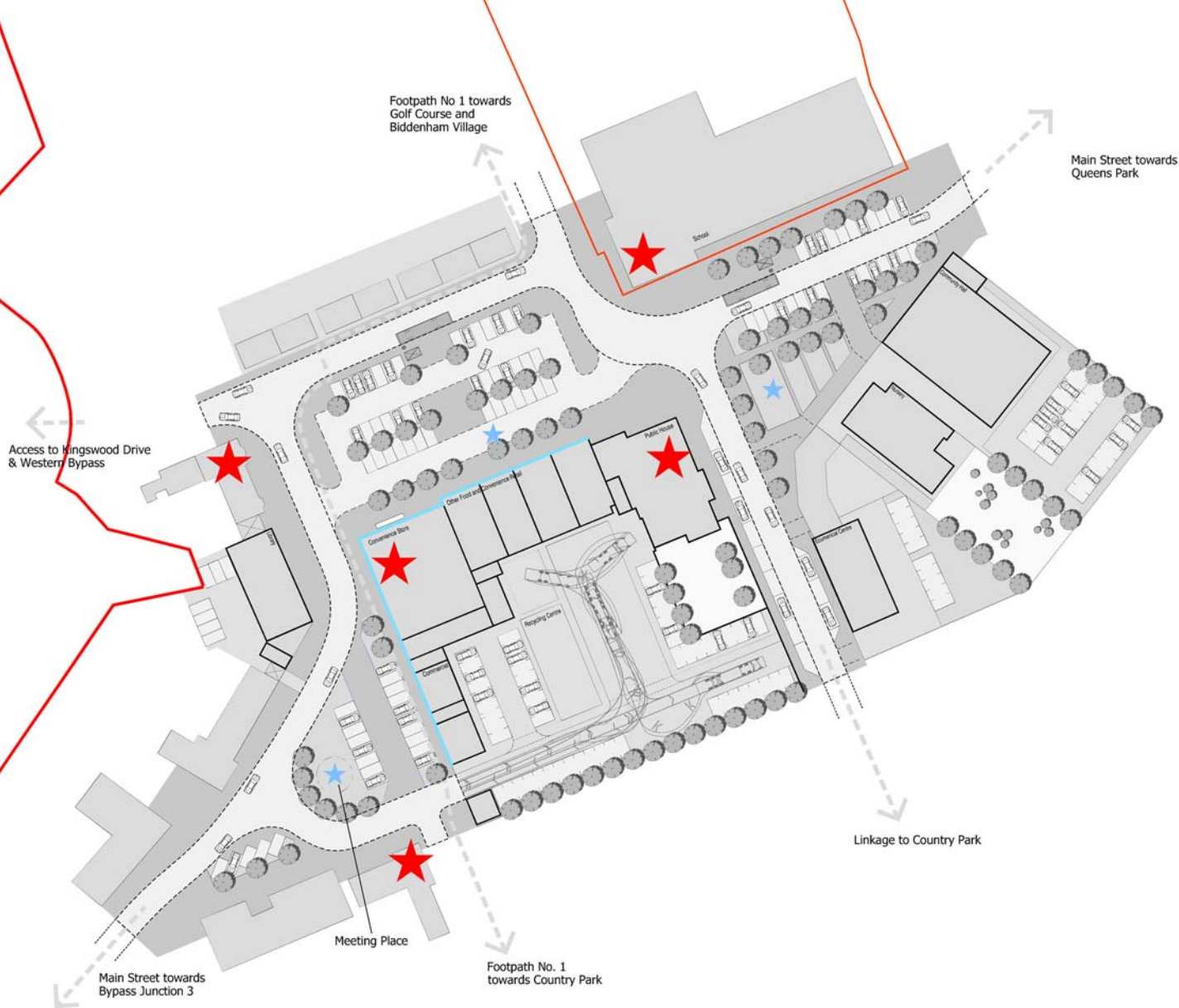
- tree species shall be selected that are appropriate to the scale of the space when fully mature, are compatible with the maintenance regime and are not prone to leaf drop or sap which might compromise the safety or attractiveness of the space.

Pockets of soft landscaping will be incorporated within the District Centre to soften the street scene and create a distinct character to the area. Planting will be designed to create gateways into the space and compliment the built form. A limited palette of high quality, low growing shrubs will be specified, with species suitably robust for the urban setting.

Grass will be restricted to the larger meeting places and open spaces, providing purposeful soft areas and minimising smaller areas of grass which will be difficult to maintain. Grassed areas will be formal in design in keeping with the urban setting and aim to provide users of the District Centre with areas to relax and socialise.

The area to the rear of the shops is also a public space and the quality of the public realm shall be given equal consideration to the main spaces. Adjoining buildings, building entrances, fenestration and perhaps the garden to the public house shall be configured to provide passive oversight of this area.





Legend



Landmark buildings should be designed so that they are distinct from the surrounding buildings by either their scale, architectural style, detailing or materials or combination thereof.



Key non residential frontages will contribute to the activity and surveillance of the public realm. Windows shall not be obscured on these frontages. A retail advertising strategy will be agreed with the Borough Council to ensure a coordinated approach to displays which influence the quality of the public realm.



Opportunities for public art

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Great Denham District Centre Master Plan
West of Bedford | January 2010

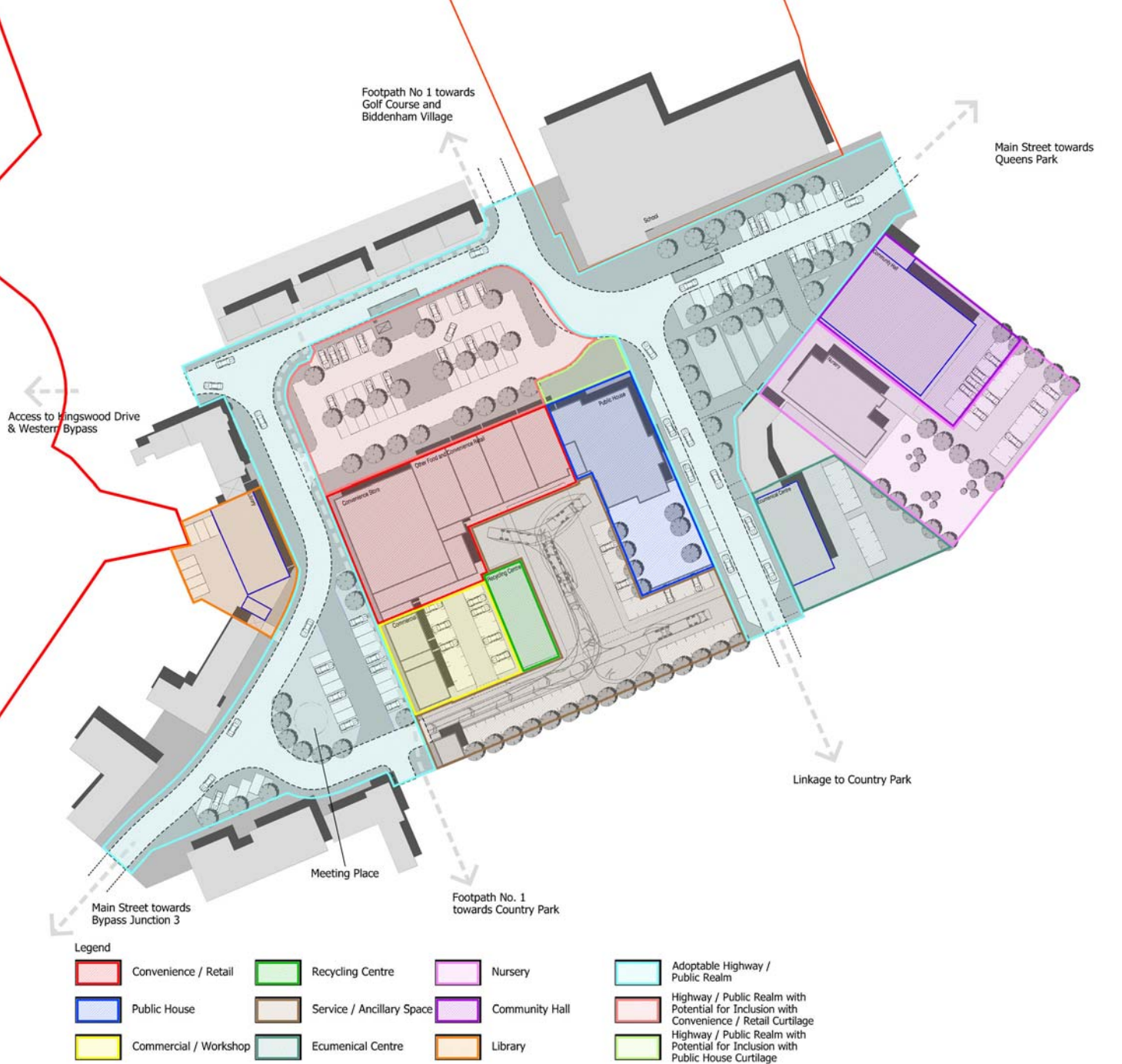
ILLUSTRATIVE LANDMARKS/KEY CORNERS PLAN



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Streets and public spaces that are overlooked allow natural surveillance of the public realm and contribute to making places safer and feel safer. This key tenet of good urban design is inherent in the Master Plan approach. The District Centre provides for a range of different uses at the ground floor which positively address, and have their front doors to, the street. These uses, in conjunction with residential uses, will generate activity at different times of the day and on different days during the week. An active and well used public realm will make a significant contribution to the feel and quality of the public realm as well as a sustainable community. Non residential units will be expected to contribute to the activity and surveillance of the public realm in all public facing elevations. Where windows are used to activate elevations, these shall not be obscured such that views into and out of the building are compromised during operational hours. A retail advertising strategy will be agreed with the Borough Council to ensure a coordinated approach to displays which influence the quality of the public realm on key frontages (see Illustrative Landmark and Key Frontages Plan).

The public realm will be designed principally as a pedestrian environment to provide the users of the space the opportunity for occasional public events or markets; however highways and parking will be adequately provided and defined to avoid potential conflicts and secure ease of use.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

EASE OF MOVEMENT

The delivery of attractive, safe and well designed streets is central to the Manual for Streets ethos and is encapsulated in the Design Guide and Code. The design for the District Centre embraces this approach, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport through the promotion of high quality shared surfaces and encouraging low vehicular speeds through design.

The design of the District Centre recognises that there is a balance to be achieved between the degree of connectivity that is appropriate and the need to respond to community safety issues. As such, the design of the Centre makes key connections between places to facilitate a permeable layout whilst not undermining the defensible space of the neighbourhood.

LEGIBILITY

The District Centre will have a high degree of legibility which will announce its role as the geographical and functional heart of Great Denham. In part, this is a product of its central location within Great Denham at the confluence of a network of streets and spaces. In part, this will also stem from the character of the spaces themselves and the buildings that enclose them. The floorscape will strengthen the legibility and identity of the District Centre in one or more of the following ways: the application of a hierarchy of materials that responds to and reinforces the function of the Centre, particularly with regard to pedestrian priority and creating adaptable, multi-functional spaces; a floorscape which may be treated as public art; patternation of the floorscape distinct from other squares within Great Denham; visual attractiveness, durability and quality of materials reflecting the District Centres role as the centrepiece of Great Denham; and introduction of native planting appropriate to the most urban location within the site. The Community Hall, Ecumenical Centre and Library are just a few of the uses that have the potential to be highly distinctive architecturally and functionally. Other buildings within the centre by virtue of their location and height will form natural landmarks in the street scene, signposting arrival at the mixed use hub of the community.

The design for buildings which relate positively to the public realm and have their principle point of access from the street provide opportunities for the uses and functions to be clearly displayed. Continuity of frontage and buildings which turn the corner of streets signal a higher density, more urban area which will provide a pleasing contrast to some of the other streets and edges within Great Denham.



Legend

 Convenience / Retail	 Recycling Centre	 Community Hall	 Residential
 Public House	 Ecumenical Centre	 Library	
 Commercial	 Nursery	 School	

ILLUSTRATIVE SIMPLIFIED MASTER PLAN



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

ADAPTABILITY

The public realm has been designed to have an inherent degree of flexibility. It is able to accommodate different uses at different times of the day and times of the week to serve the community. This will be achieved by the delivery of shared surfaces and a materials palette which will, for example, allow spaces to be used for events or informal meetings/ social occasions when the motor vehicle is not present. Similarly, the public realm will have a simplicity of design and judicious use of street furniture to allow use of spaces in different ways without requiring significant or any modification. Durability, quality and visual attractiveness of materials will also be important in facilitating adaptability. The multi-functional nature of these spaces allows the District Centre to evolve and respond to changing needs over time. As such the design is robust over the longer term and is a key part of delivering a sustainable community at West of Bedford.

The building typologies have been designed with adaptability in mind. The convenience retail provision for example is capable of becoming a single space or can be subdivided into a series of smaller units as demand requires. The commercial and workshop units on the first and second floors within the centre are capable of reverting to residential use if the market has no demand for such spaces without significant alteration. Flexibility and adaptability of this nature gives the District Centre the best possible chance of meeting the needs of the area it serves on completion, and for the longer term.

DIVERSITY

The District Centre provides a framework for the creation of a diverse place. A complementary mix of uses and tenures will facilitate a balanced mix of activities and people crucial to an attractive and vibrant community in which people want to live.

Scenario 1: AM Weekday Peak

Use	Activity	Implication
School	Parents dropping off and staff arriving	Overspill parking may occur in central square, particularly if parents combine trip to use other facilities.
Nursery	Parents dropping off and staff arriving	
Ecumenical Centre	Closed	
Community Hall	Closed	
Public House	Closed	Staff parking accommodated primarily within curtilage of uses leave central and eastern squares able to accommodate light school, nursery, convenience and Health and Fitness Centre demand.
Convenience Store	Moderate trade	
Other Retail	Just opening	
Commercial/Workshops	Just opening	
Health and Fitness Centre	Early morning members leaving. Off peak member arriving.	
Library	Just opening	
Recycling Centre		

Scenario 3: Early Evening Peak

Use	Activity	Implication
School	Occasional Visitor	Parking for community classes primarily accommodated within curtilage. Demand from nursery and ecumenical centre mean eastern square is full and central square is used as overflow.
Nursery	Moderate pick up demand	
Ecumenical Centre	Evening Service	
Community Hall	Community Class ongoing	
Public House	Evening trade	Central square and western square operating at or close to capacity, particularly because of the eastern square overflow.
Convenience Store	After work trade	
Other Retail	Takeaway trade increasing	
Commercial/Workshops	Open	
Health and Fitness Centre	After work trade	
Library	Closed	
Recycling Centre		

Scenario 2: Noon Weekday Peak

Use	Activity	Implication
School	Occasional Visitor	Parking for community classes primarily accommodated within curtilage. Demand from nursery, ecumenical centre and school provided for within the eastern square.
Nursery	Moderate pick up and drop off demand	
Ecumenical Centre	Occasional Activity	
Community Hall	Community Classes ongoing	
Public House	Lunchtime trade	Lunchtime trade for the public house and convenience store mean space is at a premium within the central square and the western square is acting as an overflow for demand.
Convenience Store	Moderate trade	
Other Retail	Moderate trade	
Commercial/Workshops	Open	
Health and Fitness Centre	Moderate trade	
Library	Moderate trade	
Recycling Centre		

Scenario 4: Sunday Mid Morning Peak

Use	Activity	Implication
School	Closed	Community function and morning service attracting large numbers of people.
Nursery	Closed	
Ecumenical Centre	Morning Service	
Community Hall	Community Function	Parking at a premium in eastern and central squares.
Public House	Lunchtime trade starting	Moderate trade to Health and Fitness Centre and Convenience Store accommodated within western square.
Convenience Store	Moderate trade	
Other Retail	Closed	
Commercial/Workshops	Closed	
Health and Fitness Centre	Moderate trade	
Library	Closed	
Recycling Centre		

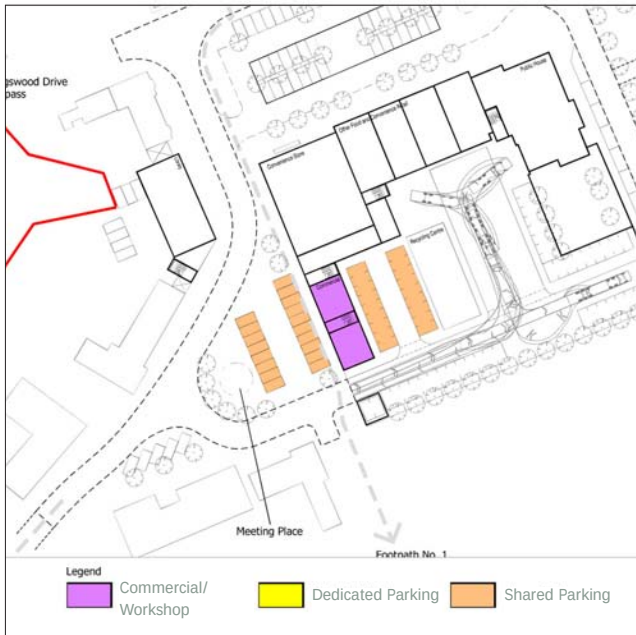
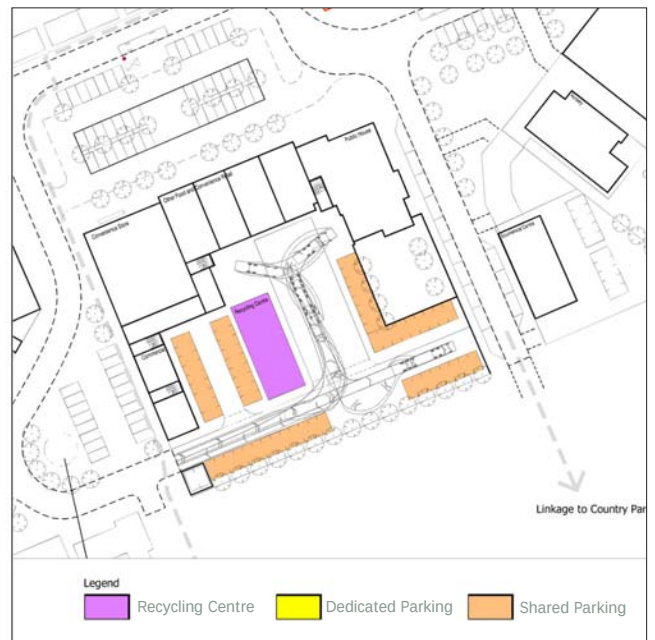
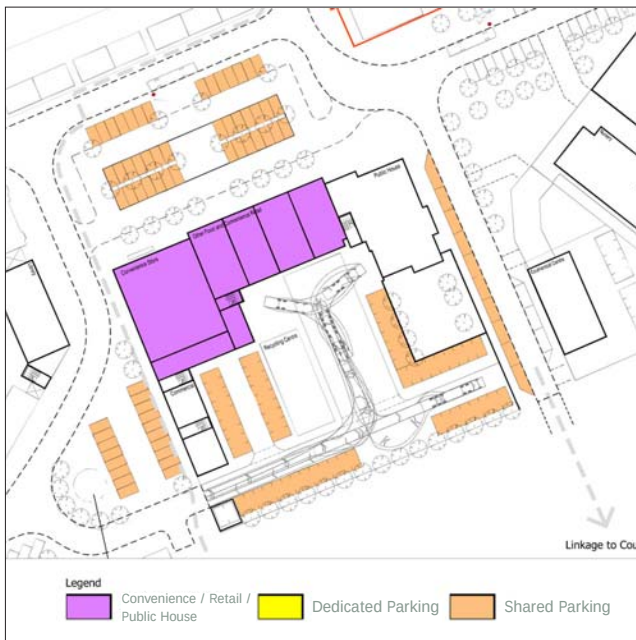
CAR PARKING RATIONALE

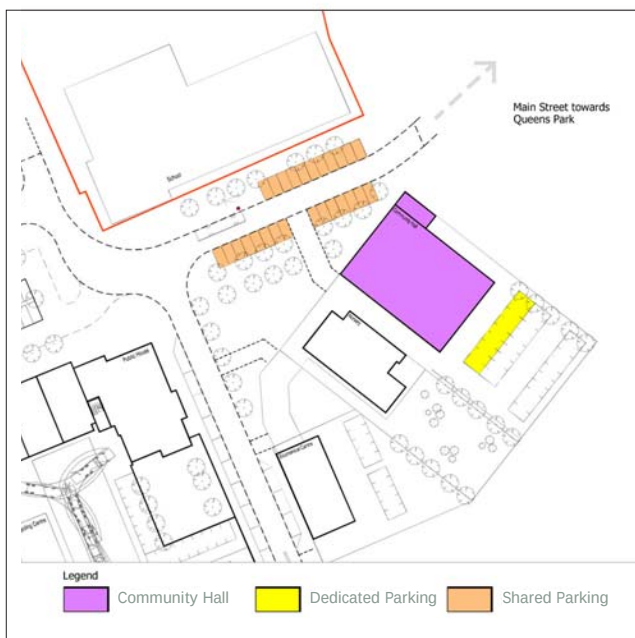
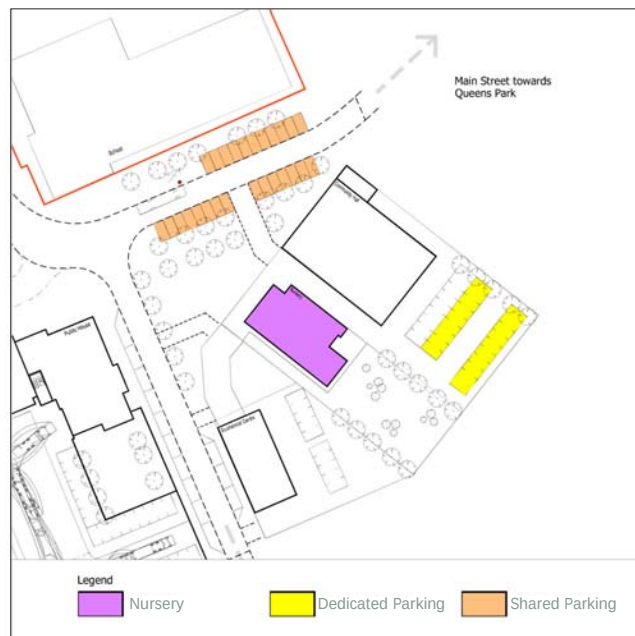
The quantum, disposition and configuration of parking within the District Centre was subject to extensive discussion and consultation with the Borough Council (and then County Council) officers. It was acknowledged by all parties that if the sum of the maximum number of parking spaces for each use was applied to the District Centre, then the District Centre would be car dominated and that the quality of place would suffer as result. Similarly, given the primary purpose of the Centre is to serve a local need and the emphasis placed in the Design Guide and Code on ensuring a safe, direct and attractive network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists as part of creating a sustainable community for the future, it was recognised that the application of maximum standards would be inappropriate. Furthermore, by utilising the traditional approach of shared space within the public realm, which can accommodate parking for a variety of different uses, the total number of spaces could be reduced, particularly when operational 'peaks' occur at different times of the day.

The culmination of this process was a 'fix' on the number of parking spaces within the Great Denham Design Guide and Code. This sets out the requirement to provide 184 spaces, with 151 of these spaces provided within the public realm and a further 33 spaces within the curtilage of non residential uses. This level of provision struck a balance between commercial viability, place-making and reflecting the requirements of adopted standards. Moreover, the agreed level of provision reflected a pragmatic view, namely, that however much parking is provided, there will always be a coincidence of events where demand exceeds capacity.

In the process of producing the District Centre Master Plan, the proposals have evolved in two important ways. First, the Borough Council expressed a preference for the Centre to be concentrated around the 3 squares. Second, a commercial analysis of potential uses within the District Centre indicated that a Health and Fitness Centre could be a viable use and this was supported by the Borough Council as another use which would contribute to the viability and attractiveness of the centre.

Responding to the introduction of a new use (Health and Fitness Centre) into the Centre, the overall quantum of provision has been increased by 23 spaces to 207 spaces, with 162 spaces within the public realm and 45 within the curtilages of non residential uses.





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