

3.0

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

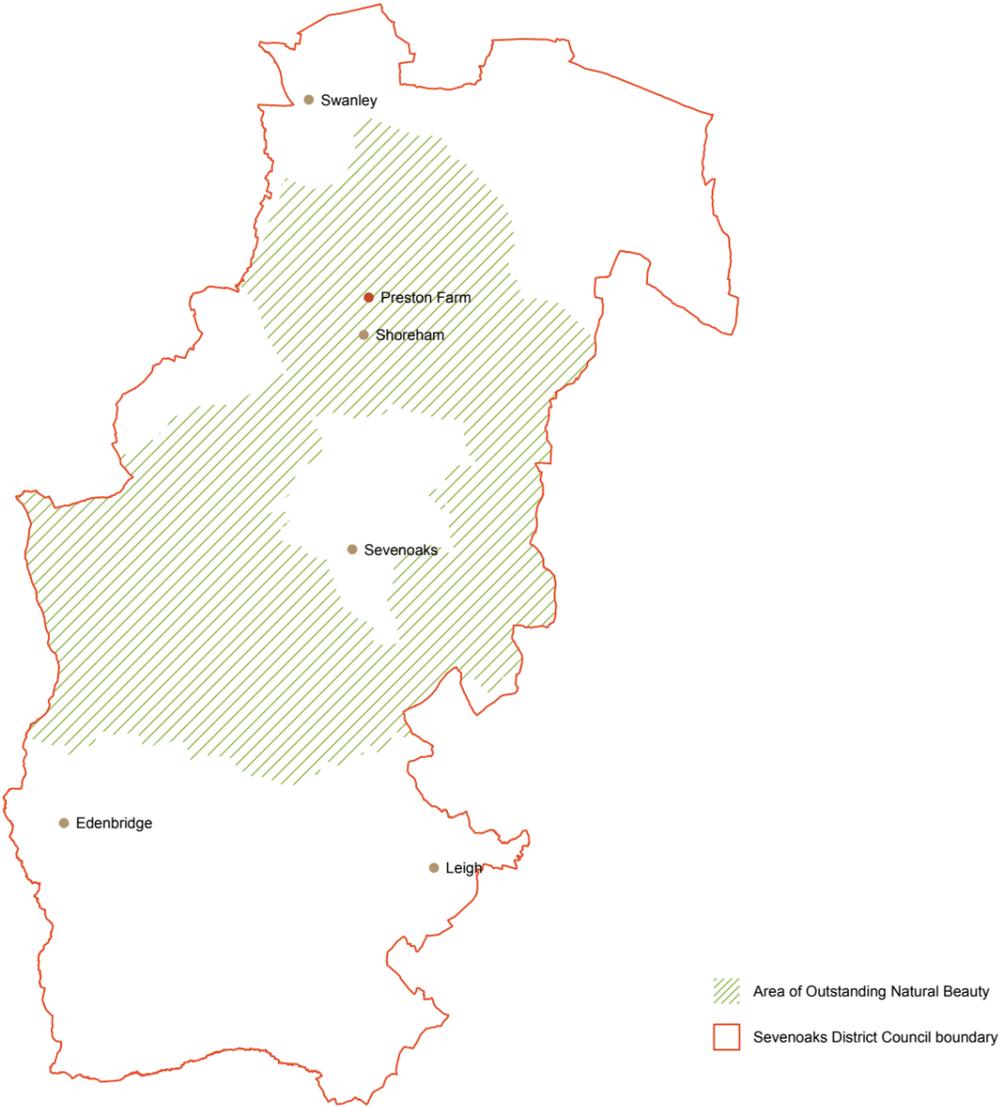
3.1 Site Designation

Sevenoaks District Council is the Local Planning Authority for the site. The area is covered by planning policy at both a National, Regional and Local level.

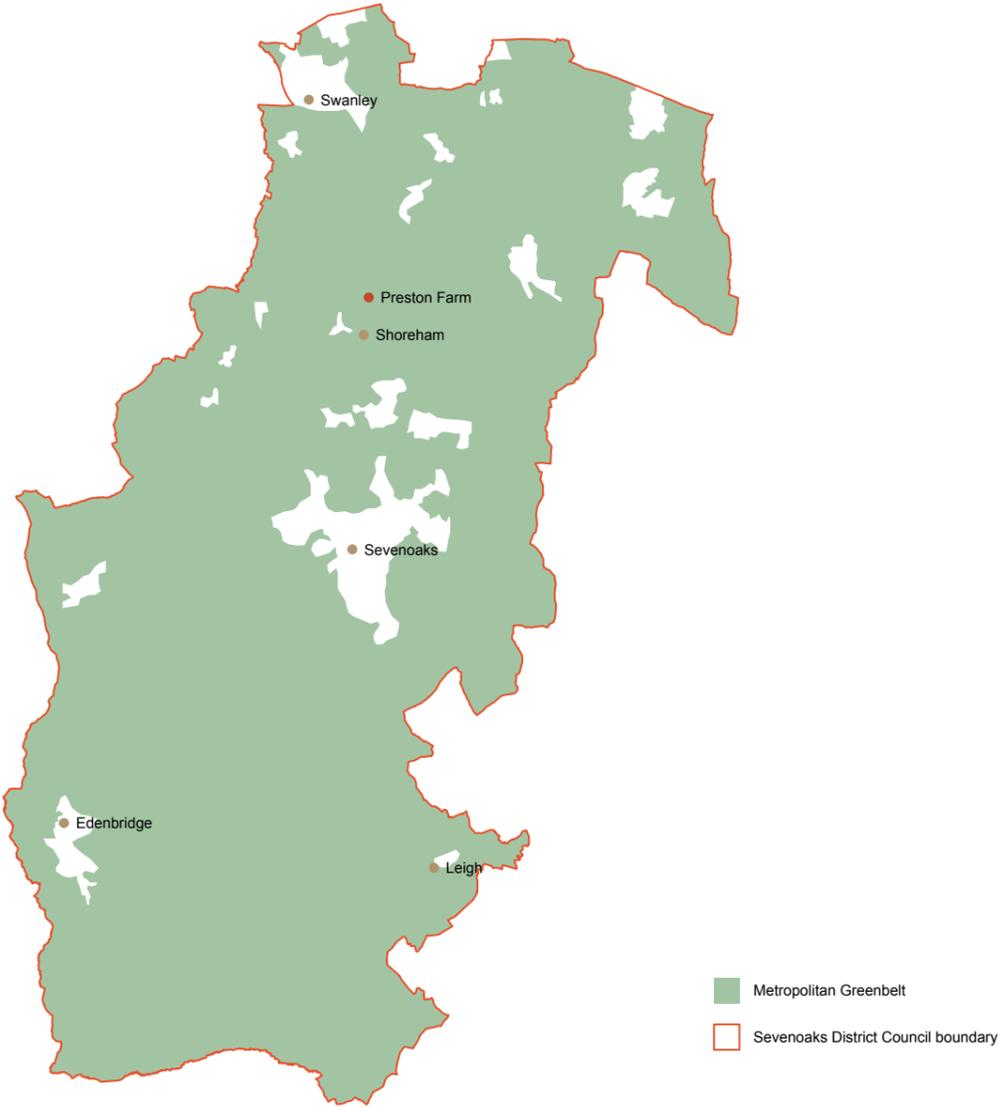
The planning statement by DHA outlines our approach to the relevant policies.

The site falls into the following area designation:

- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- Area of Archaeological Potential



Map of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Map of Metropolitan Greenbelt

3.2 Site Constraints

A detailed analysis of the site has been undertaken and the key constraints are summarised below:

- Openness – The role and function of the green belt to be respected with no loss of openness nor features to detract from its core objectives.
- Landscape Views – New building massing to enhance the landscape setting and character from the key Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) views.
- Privacy – Careful mitigation of the impact to the privacy of neighbouring residential properties (Dairy House and Farmhouse).
- Utilities – Ensure the Thames Water pipework under the site is protected and access is not restricted. The site has a mains power supply, but there is no gas connection. The infrastructural capacity for foul water drainage have been incorporated within the design proposals.
- Existing Structures and Ground Surfaces – Consideration of a number of dilapidated and potentially contaminated existing structures and hardstanding surfaces. These are intended to be demolished to provide an opportunity for new high-quality buildings and a beautiful natural landscape.
- Flood Risk – The site is situated near the River Darent and is in Flood Zone Risk 1: Low probability of flooding. A very small section to the west of the site is within Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3.
- Trees – There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site, however a Tree survey has been included with the application.
- Ecology – Reports are included within the application and the ecological recommendations have also been taken into account within the development of the design proposals.
- Topography – There are significant changes in level across the site. Careful consideration of topography is required to provide buildings and environments that are inclusive and enjoyable.

- Potentially Contaminated Land
- Buildings In Disrepair and Temporary
- Buildings In Need of Refurbishment
- Flood Zone
- Residential Privacy
- Thames Water Sewer
- Key Views



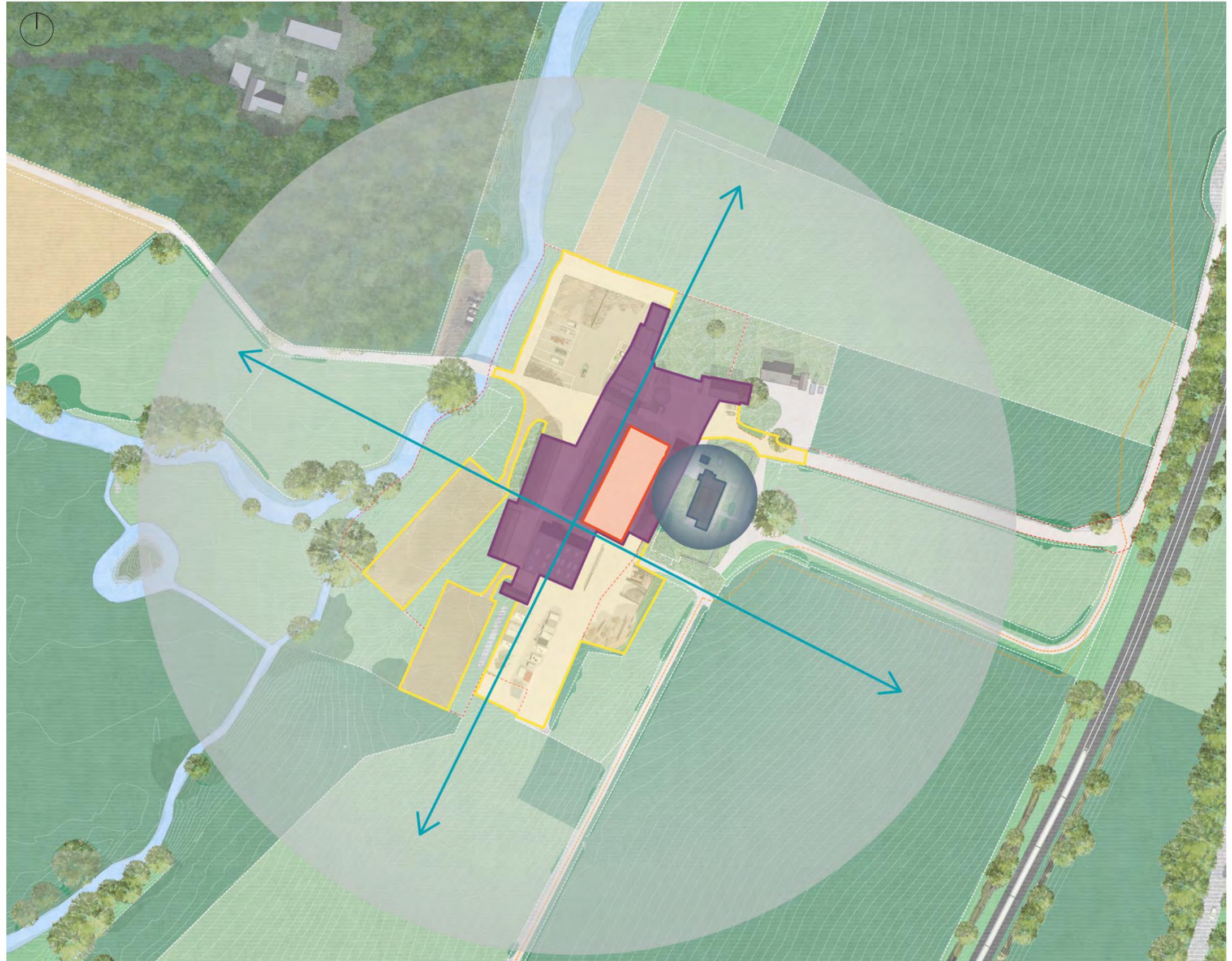
Site Constraints Diagram

3.3 Site Opportunities

A detailed analysis of the site has been undertaken and the key opportunities are summarised below:

- Farmstead Footprint – Cluster a number of small to medium volume buildings around a compact courtyard in order to reduce the overall built footprint and put exceptional landscape at the heart of the experience.
- Farmstead Openness – Increase the openness of the site through a restored arrangement of courtyard buildings that compose open views of the scenic landscape.
- Landscape Character – Engage with the experience and ecology of the River Darent and enhance the wider amenity and biodiversity of this distinctive natural landscape.
- Farmstead Character – Restore the historical 'loose courtyard' layout with high quality buildings inspired by the unique charm of the local farm vernacular.

- Replace Potentially Contaminated Land 
- Refurbish Buildings 
- Reduce Built Footprint 
- Increase Openness 
- Enhance Landscape Character 
- Improve Farmhouse Setting 



Site Opportunities Diagram

4.0

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Pre-Applications

Consultation has been key to the development of the design proposals. The team have engaged in two pre-application discussions with Sevenoaks District Council.

The key dates are summarised as follows:

- Pre-Application Meeting 01 – Feedback on the extent of development on 29th April 2019
- Pre-Application Meeting 02 – Feedback on the landscape and scale of proposals on 23rd July 2020

The scheme submitted at Pre-Application 01 proposed a new development that was exclusively for commercial use and without community facilities. The design featured a courtyard, framed by one refurbished building and four new buildings. The central courtyard providing space for car parking.

There was concern over the site's openness and the impact of the massing on key views. A more integrated landscape scheme throughout the site was sought.

Following the feedback from Pre-Application 01, the building massing and layout was developed in tandem with an enhanced landscape strategy and a rigorous analysis of the traditional farmstead layout that gave the place its unique character.

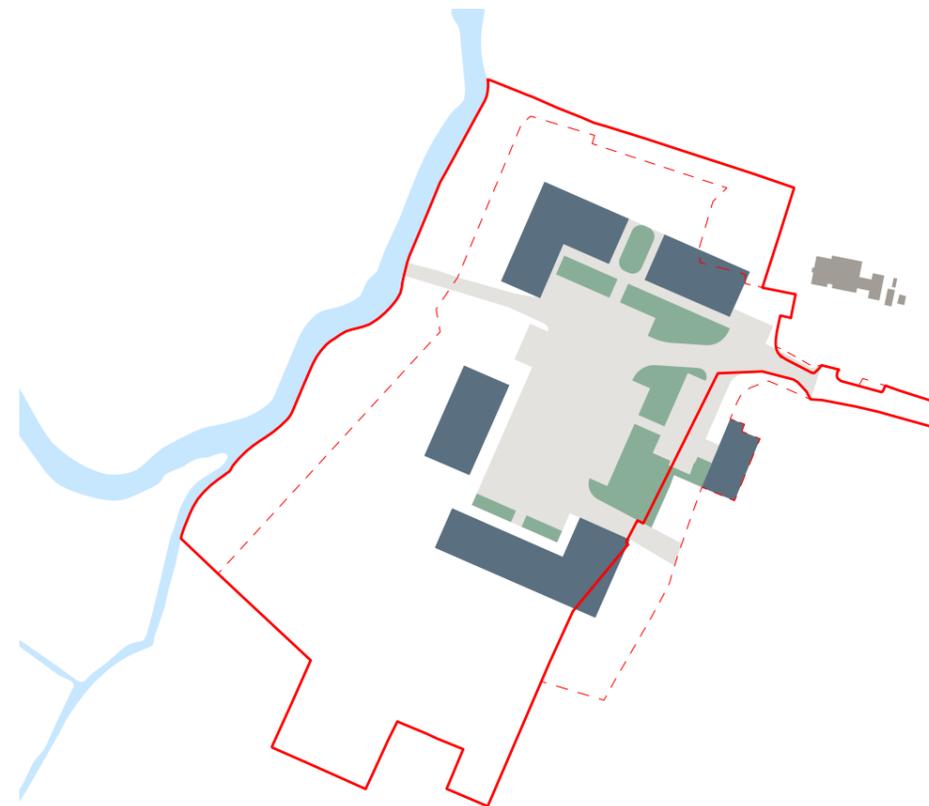
At Pre-Application 02, the principle of the courtyard was strengthened with a restored traditional 'loose courtyard' arrangement. A consolidated building massing of two refurbished building and three new buildings is strategically assembled around the central courtyard. This proposed strategy reduced the overall built footprint and increased the site openness.

The impact of vehicles was designed to be kept to a minimum. The carpark was repositioned to the most discreet location, in the lower north-west corner of the site, and incorporated screening from key views with new native trees and existing landscape.

This allowed for the central courtyard to be prioritised for people, not vehicles. It also provided an opportunity to create a landscape-led experience with enhanced biodiversity within the farmyard and a coherent landscape setting inside and outside the courtyard. The result is a place shared by wildlife and people where both enjoy all the benefits of being in nature. This reflects Hatchery's goal of being a healthy workplace where buildings, people and landscape co-exist in harmony.

The general response to Pre-Application 02 has been predominantly positive, the case officer citing good placemaking principles and a sympathetic building layout in relation to the wider landscape setting. Without further detail on architecture and massing at this stage, there was a desire to understand how the design would be high quality and consider sensitively the volume and height of the development.

The team have continued to develop the scheme. Our focus has been to further reduce the built footprint and develop a high quality contemporary architectural identity and massing that is sympathetic to and enhances the unique landscape setting. The primary goal is to bring new life and purpose to a long-neglected farm.



Pre-Application 01 Masterplan



Pre-Application 02 Masterplan

4.2 Public Consultation

Throughout the planning and design process the project team has made extensive efforts to consult with our neighbours, local residents and a variety of other stakeholders, including Parish, District and County Councils; business groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and FSB; and special interest groups such as the Kent Downs AONB Unit, Darent Valley Landscape Partnership and Locate in Kent.

The majority of feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive and supportive of our plans and direction of design. The consultation process has therefore done more to clarify and reinforce our vision, rather than prompt any significant changes in direction or design amendments.

There are a number of themes that have come out of the consultation process, for example:

- **Health and wellbeing** – We have identified a very strong demand locally for spaces and amenities that support health and wellbeing, such as gyms, yoga studios and personal training. We have considered this in our plans and have initially allocated a maker space unit of approx. 1,000 sq ft as a fitness studio. We have also allocated an external area of the site as a potential space for outdoor workouts.
- **Cafe Food and drink provision** – Another amenity we have identified very strong demand for is a cafe. Our Hub building has been designed to include a small kitchen and a large open-plan room, to serve as a multifunctional area, suitable for dining, as well as for events, break-out space and informal meetings
- **Presentation of existing site** – The consensus of local residents is that the existing site is an ‘eyesore’, particularly when viewed from public footpaths to the south and west, from which direction the current horsebox parking area and riding areas are clearly visible. We have positioned all car parking in our masterplan to the north of the site, where it will sit lower in the landscape and will be screened from the most sensitive views. We will return riding arenas and areas of hardstanding to green landscape as part of the redevelopment.
- **Building design** should reflect a modern interpretation of local agricultural vernacular and should be in keeping with surrounding rural landscape.

A Statement of Community Involvement has been submitted as part of the application.

Welcome to our public consultation website for Preston Farm, Shoreham

Please complete the form below and click 'Submit' to send us your feedback.

Name *

First Name Last Name

Email *

Property address (optional)

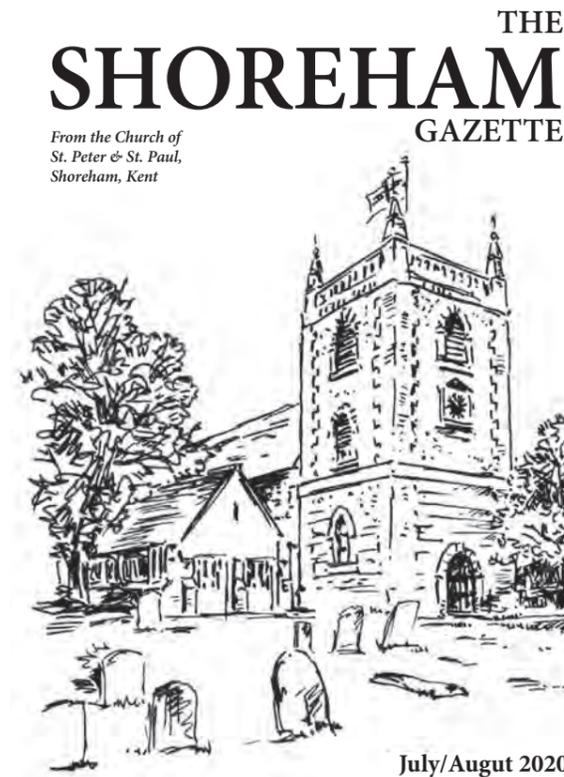
Age *
Under 18

Why is this project of interest to you? *
Please select all that apply

I live locally
 I work locally
 I run a local business
 Other

Would you support our proposal to develop the old farm buildings at Preston Farm into a 'work hub'?

Public Consultation Website



The Shoreham Gazette July/August 2020

A NEW FUTURE FOR PRESTON FARM

In autumn last year, I moved to Preston Farm in the Darent Valley, just north-east of Shoreham. I feel incredibly lucky to now call it home, along with my wife, Jesse, and our three kids, Tabitha, Eliza and Bo.

It's been a busy first 9 months for us here at the farm... We have refurbished Dairy House, and are now tackling the much bigger project of the old Farmhouse. We have welcomed some new family members - Luna the dog and two colonies of honey bees - and we've been investing in our passion for the environment and conservation, working with The Woodland Trust, the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership and Kent Wildlife Trust on a number of projects that we hope will turn Preston Farm into a haven for wildlife.

Over the past few months, I have been working with a small team of consultants to explore the potential to develop our old farmyard into a 'work hub' to support small businesses and provide local people with an alternative to working from home, or commuting into the City. I would like to invite you all to consider this idea and to provide your feedback on our emerging plans.

We had hoped to organise and invite you to a drop-in session at Shoreham Village Hall to discuss our proposal with you in person, but due to lockdown restrictions and not wanting to put anyone at unnecessary risk, doing this 'virtually' felt like the most sensible option. An outline of our proposal and some early-stage thinking on designs can be found at www.prestonfarmshoreham.co.uk, which will be available to access from approximately 24 June until 31 July. We would be very grateful if you would take the time to visit our website, consider our ideas and provide us with comments using the form at the bottom of the webpage.

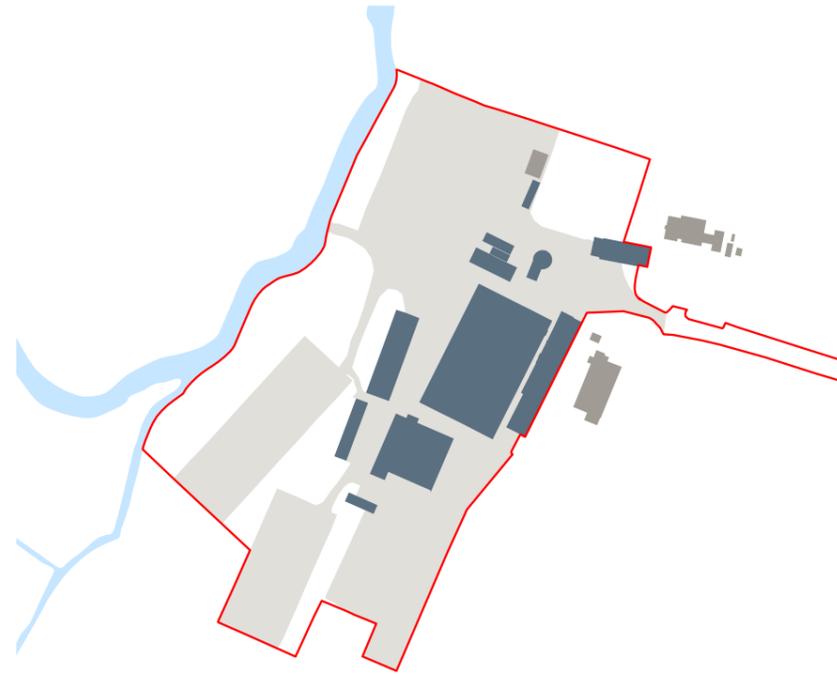
I hope you are all keeping safe and well, and I look forward to seeing you in and around Shoreham in the near future.

Will Bax

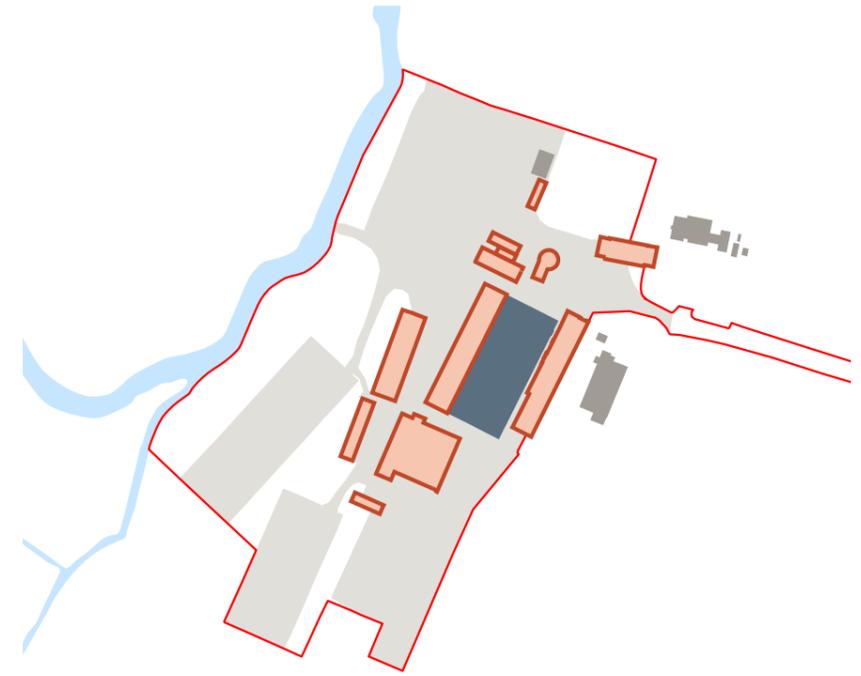
4.3 Design Approach

The following diagrams describe the team's design approach and the key proposals are outlined below:

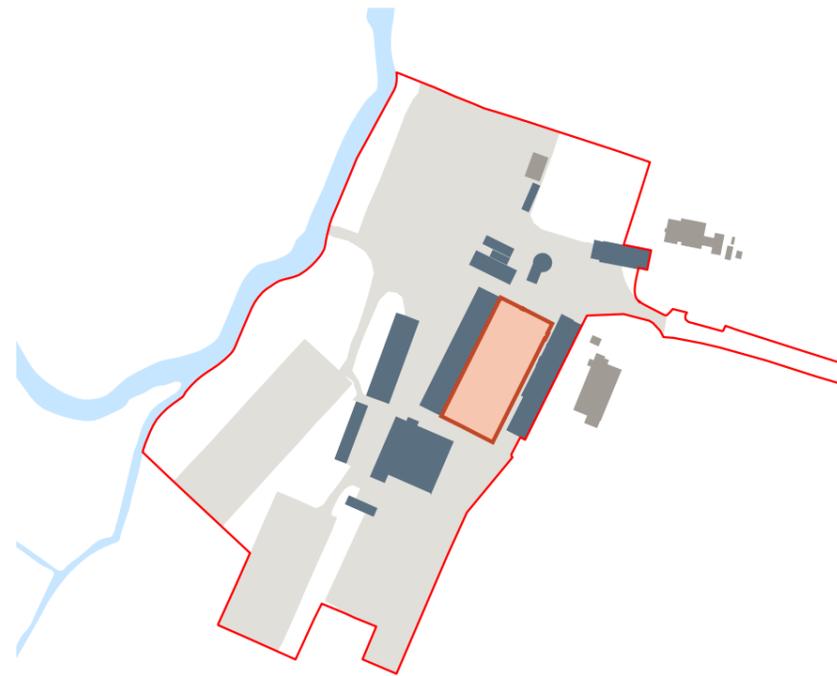
- Cluster buildings around a compact 'loose courtyard' – Demolish existing agricultural and commercial outbuildings in a state of disrepair and temporary to maximise the development opportunity within a more compact massing and smaller built footprint. Reinststate the openness of the original 'loose courtyard' farmstead arrangement, with new buildings that creates a landscaped 'heart' for people, nature and wildlife.
- A wellbeing hub for people and nature – Creating a hub that local residents, businesses and groups can use during and outside office hours. Facilities including a coworking space, events and meeting areas and a kitchen will be spread across indoor and outdoor areas to connect people with nature at all times. This landscape-led experience will improve the wellbeing of workers and visitors while enhancing the biodiversity and ecology of the distinctive natural location.
- Enhancing the landscape character – New building massing is carefully positioned within the steeply sloped site to minimise the visual impact of the scheme from key landscape views and contribute to the openness of the 'loose courtyard' layout.
- High-quality buildings inspired by the local farm vernacular – Modern interpretations of local pitched roof farm building forms reflect the area's agricultural heritage while giving the development a distinct character and visual appeal in harmony with its location.



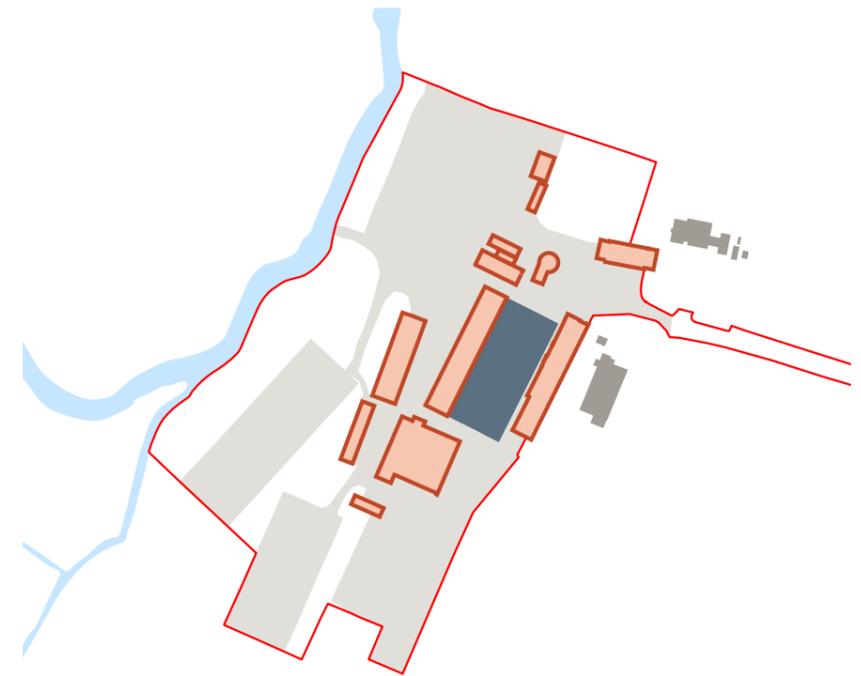
1. Existing buildings and extent of hard surfaces



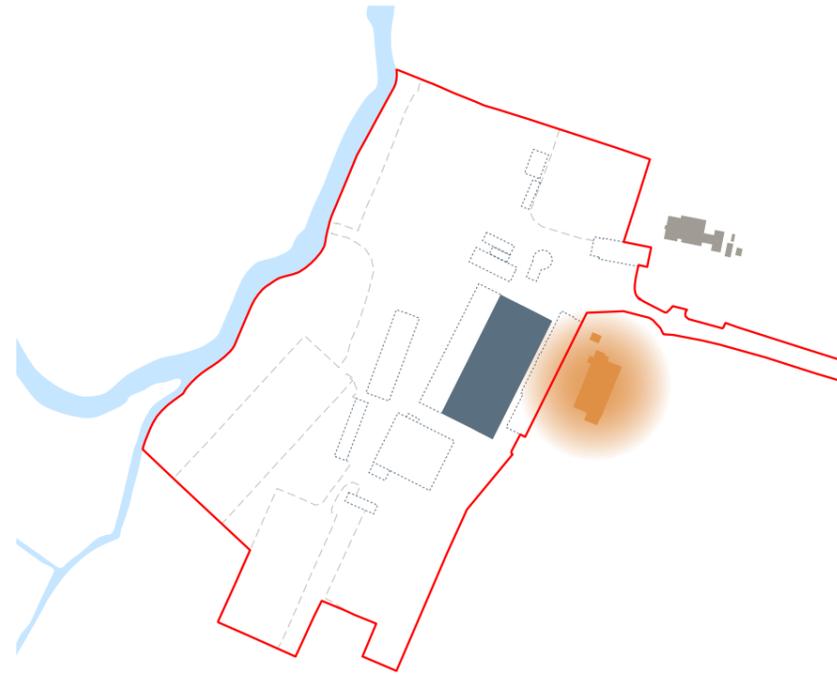
2. Existing buildings of poor quality, in disrepair and temporary



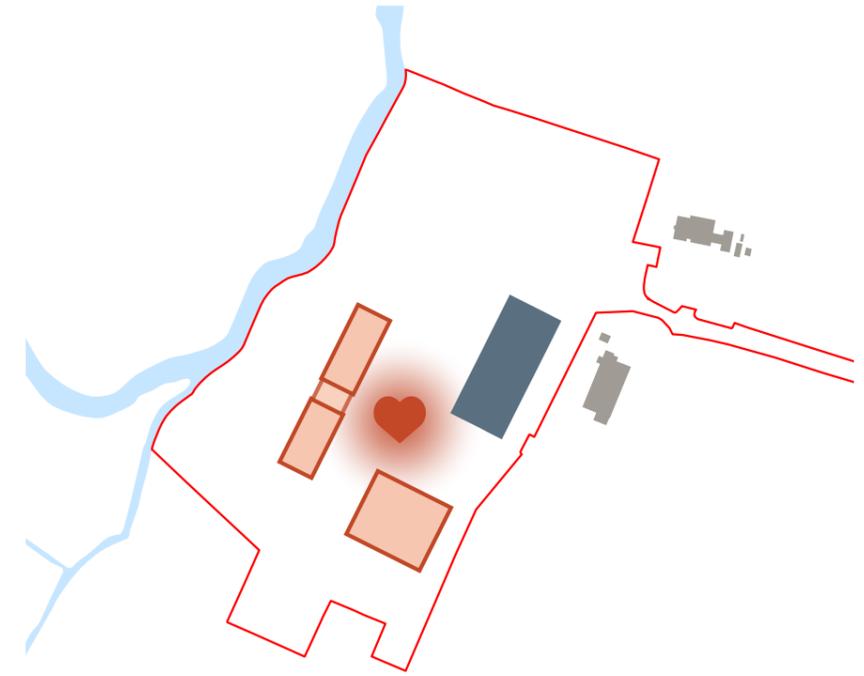
3. Sensitive refurbishment of existing livery building



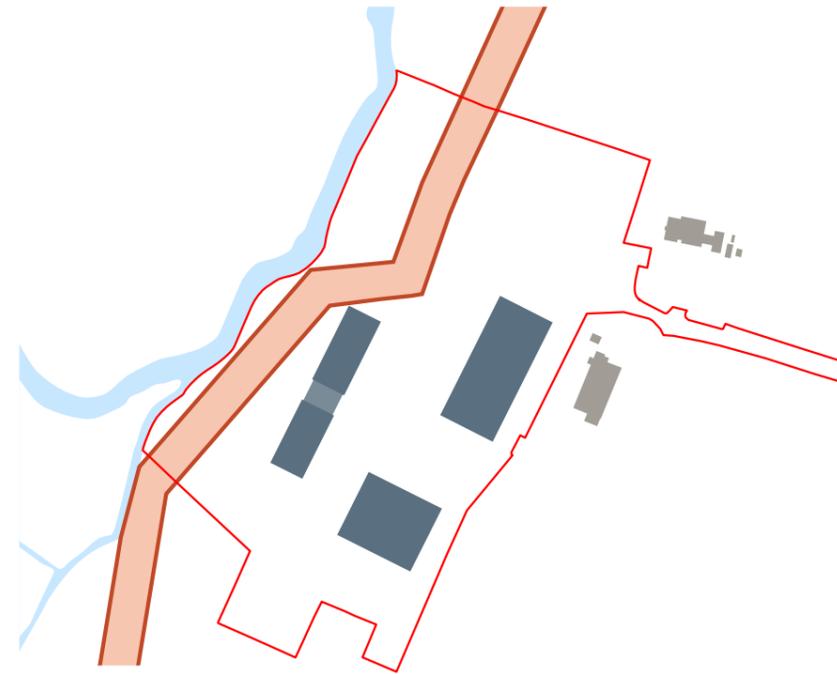
4. Poor quality buildings to be removed



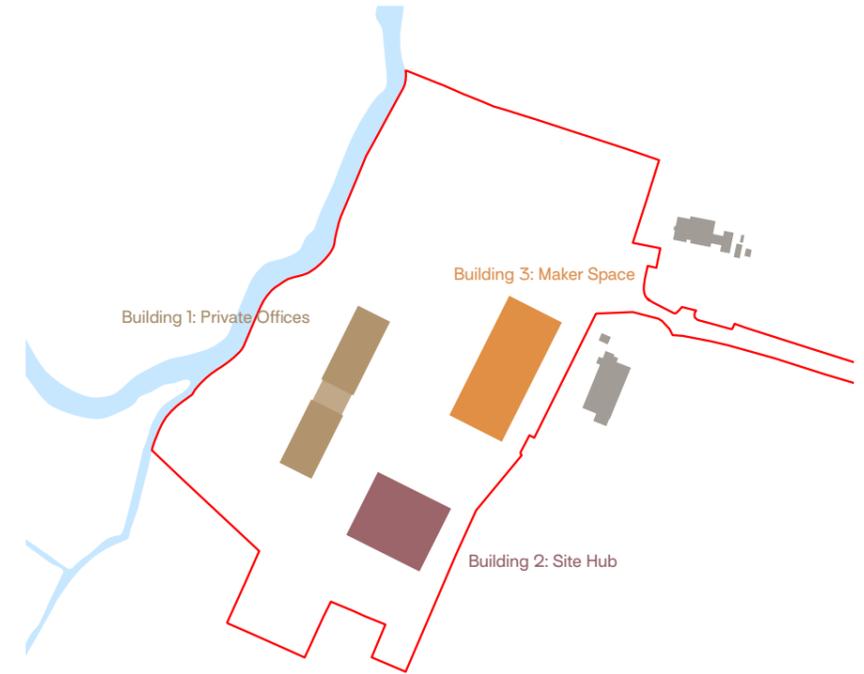
5. Improvement of the traditional farmhouse setting



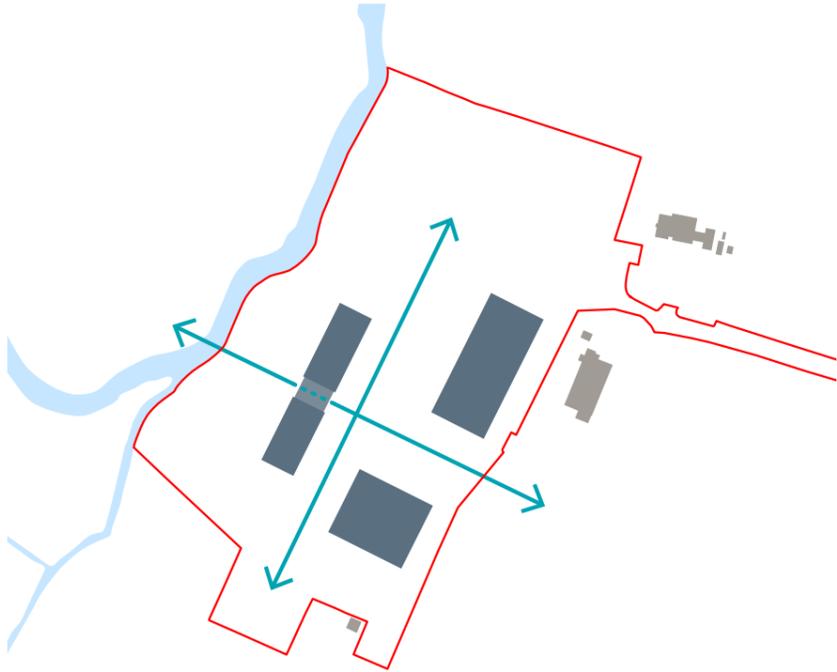
6. New buildings to frame a reinstated courtyard and 'heart' to the farm



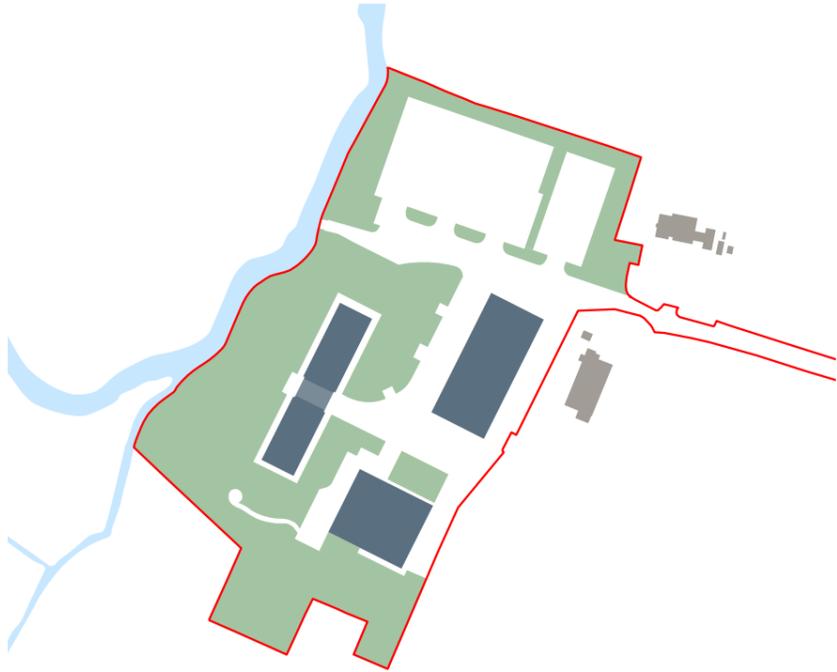
7. New buildings to avoid Thames Water pipework



8. Building functions to suit site context



9. Open corners to restore the 'loose courtyard' farm layout and provide exceptional open views



10. Maximise green space



11. Courtyard for people and landscape



12. Pockets of vehicle parking carefully distributed and development screened with landscape



- 1. Building 1: Private Offices
- 2. Building 2: Site Hub
- 3. Building 3: Maker Space

Proposed Buildings Key Plan

5.0 TOPOGRAPHY

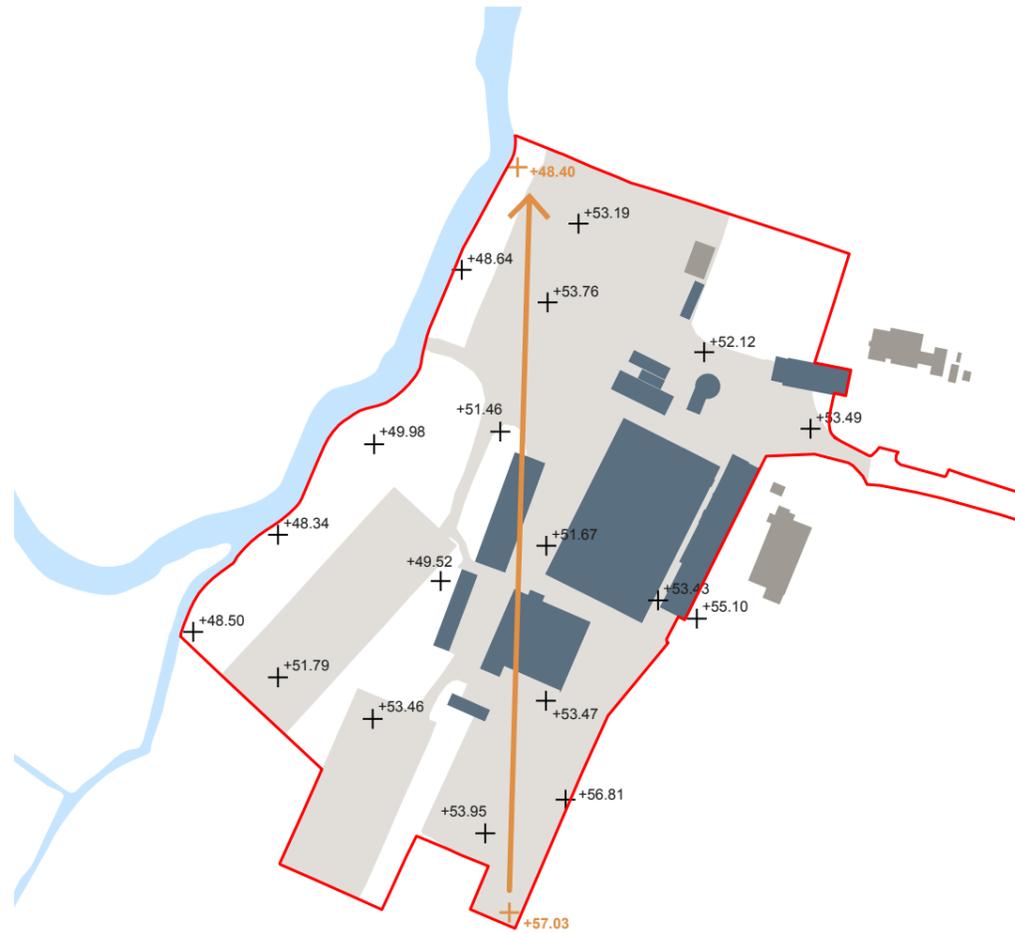
5.1 Balanced cut and fill

A topographical survey was completed for the site and surrounding area. Within the site, the general terrain rises steeply from the north west (circa. 48.4m) to south east (circa. 57.0m).

The topography requires careful consideration to determine the ideal location for the buildings, in order to minimise the visual impact of the scheme and resulting earthworks.

Buildings are positioned in locally flattened areas and/or in elevation to give a balanced cut and fill where possible. As a result, the buildings respond positively to the natural landform of the site and sit in harmony with the wider landscape setting. The amount of earthwork is reduced and consequently the environmental and economic costs associated with the transport of earthen materials.

Car parking, access and servicing were also considered alongside the site terrain. The proposed development is designed to be as inclusive as possible within the constraints of the site. Step-free access to all buildings is achieved via a generous pedestrian path into the courtyard from the car park. There are minimal adjustments to the existing levels. The existing maneges and hardstanding have just been cut into the slopes creating artificial flat areas. These will be re-graded and the landform further softened through contouring. This means the land appears as natural as possible and creates space for native planting and trees or outdoor spaces around the buildings for working and relaxing.



Existing Site Level Diagram



Proposed Site Level Diagram

Ground Cut + Building Removed 
Ground Fill 

