

SOUTHERN GAS NETWORK BELVEDERE HOLDERS, YARNTON WAY, DA17 6JP
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
12.10.23



stockwood

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	2	6	Architectural character	27	9	Selected context views	56
1.1	Table of contents	2	6.1	Building typology and disposition	27	9.1	Looking west along Yarnton Way	56
1.2	Purpose of document	3	6.2	Brick and material strategy	28	9.2	Looking west from Sutherland Road	57
2	Site analysis	4	6.3	Architectural facade rationale	30	9.3	Looking south-west across the park	58
2.1	Site overview	4	6.4	Architectural facade precedents	32	9.4	Looking west from Maida Road	59
2.2	Existing condition - around the site	4	6.5	Building A	33			
2.3	Existing condition - within the site	5	6.6	Building B	34	10	Scheme analysis	60
2.4	Historical context & land use	6	6.7	Building C	35	10.1	Proposed housing mix	60
2.5	Constraints	7	6.8	Building D	36	10.2	Residential quality	61
2.6	Opportunities	8	6.9	building E	37	10.3	Accommodation and affordable housing strategy	62
2.7	Design objectives & initial Framework diagram	9	6.10	Building F	38	10.4	Access Statement	63
		10				10.5	Disposition of accessible and adaptable dwellings	64
3	Design development summary	11	7	Scheme views	39	10.6	Accessible dwellings - typical apartment layout	65
3.1	Pre-application meeting no.1 - 29.01.20	11	7.1	Aerial view from the south-east	39	10.7	Adaptable dwellings - typical apartment layout	66
3.2	Pre-application meeting no.2 - 22.07.21	12	7.2	Aerial view from the north-west	40	10.8	Amenity	67
3.3	GLA Presentation - 30.11.21	13	7.3	The site entrance from Yarnton way, looking south	41	10.9	Parking & access	68
3.4	Pre-application meeting no.3 - 23.02.22	14	7.4	The site entrance looking south-west	42	10.10	Cycle Parking	69
3.5	Design Review Panel and subsequent option analysis	15	7.5	Looking west along Sutherland Road	43	10.11	Refuse strategy	71
3.6	Pre-application meeting no.4 - 13.09.22	16	7.6	Looking south-west across the park space	44	10.12	Entrances & Pedestrian Strategy	73
3.7	Interim meeting with L.B Bexley - 03.02.23	17	7.7	Looking north across the park	45	10.13	Fire Strategy	75
3.8	Pre-application meeting no.5 - 13.09.22	18	7.8	Looking east towards the E buildings	46	10.14	Non-residential space	76
3.9	Statutory & public consultation	19	7.9	Looking east towards E buildings	47	10.15	Energy & Sustainability	77
		20	7.10	Looking north to the courtyard of Building B	48	10.16	Potential to accommodate future BRT route	78
		21	7.11	Looking south-east towards the E Buildings	49	10.17	Flood risk mitigation measures	79
4	Site strategy	22	7.12	Looking east towards block E from Maida Road	50	10.18	Response to L.B Bexley's local plan	80
4.1	Permeability & connectivity	20						
4.2	Building typology disposition	21	8	Key plans	51	11	Conclusion	81
4.3	Summary overview	22	8.1	Ground floor	51	11.1	Scheme summary and response to the key issues	81
5	Landscape	23	8.2	First floor	52	11.2	Scheme view looking east towards Maida Road	82
5.1	Masterplan	23	8.3	Second floor	53			
5.2	Character areas - Bosque Park	24	8.4	Third floor	54			
5.3	Character areas - Spine	25	8.5	Fourth floor	55			
5.4	Character areas - Green skirt	26						

1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document describes the planning submission proposals for the SGN Belvedere site on Yarnton Way in Belvedere. The site, which previously housed gas infrastructure works including two large gas-holders, is now redundant and is being redeveloped as a joint venture between SGN and Bellway Homes. At the time of writing one gasholder remains on site and a separate application will be submitted for its removal.

The proposals have been the subject of extensive discussions between the development design team and L.B Bexley, their design review panel (D:SE), The GLA and other local stakeholders. The current scheme is a reflection of this process and specifically represents a progression of the scheme presented at the last L.B Bexley Pre-application meeting no. 5 held on 27.07.23.

Section 2.0 of this document describes the site and its context whilst Section 3.0 details the design and consultation process that has led to the final scheme proposals, which are described from Section 4.0 onwards.

This document accompanies a full set of drawings that detail the proposals, alongside a comprehensive series of supporting documents that assess the scheme and its physical, social and environmental impacts on the existing locality and the wider context.



2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 SITE OVERVIEW

The SGN Belvedere site extends to 3.48 hectares (34,604m²) and was formerly used for gas storage. Whilst some gas infrastructure remains the two column guided gas-holders that characterise the site are now redundant with the eastern one having recently been demolished. The site is managed by SGN who has a statutory commitment with Ofgem to dismantle the gas-holders by 2029. Ongoing management and maintenance is required at the site to inspect and maintain the gas pipes that will be retained following demolition and redevelopment.

The site is located in the London Borough of Bexley (LBB), and lies south of the River Thames, east of Abbey Wood and Thamesmead, west of Erith, and north of Bexleyheath and the boundary of the Belvedere District Centre. The site is subject to a PTAL rating of 3 (moderate) indicating a good level of public transport accessibility. The nearest train station is Belvedere approximately 0.2m to the south-east of the site, with a 30 minute journey time into central London (London Bridge).

The site is accessed from the north of Yarnton Way, a dual carriageway with a secondary, gated access available from Sutherland Road to the east. To the south, the site is bounded by the existing railway line linking Belvedere and Abbey Wood stations. There is an area of terraced and semi-detached two storey housing along Sutherland Road and Maida Road to the east and to the north east, along Waterfield Close, the building form rises to three storey flatted buildings. Existing commercial and industrial premises, which are used for storage and distribution lie to the West of the site.

With the exception of the remaining gas-holder the site is largely vacant. Historically, the gas-holders have been significantly taller than the surrounding buildings and are visible from adjacent side-streets. The gas-holders are not statutory or locally listed, and the site does not fall within a conservation area.

The site is subject to routine maintenance, and cleared of vegetation in order to maintain the above ground gas equipment and to also ensure that in an emergency the mains can be excavated and repaired.



1. AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST - NOTE: THE GAS-HOLDER ON THE RIGHT OF THE IMAGE HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN DEMOLISHED

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.2 EXISTING CONDITION - AROUND THE SITE



1. THE SITE FROM THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE AT BELVEDERE STATION



2. TWO & THREE STOREY HOUSING ON SUTHERLAND ROAD



3. YARNTON WAY LOOKING EAST



4. THE SITE WITH WATERFIELD CLOSE IN THE FOREGROUND



5. FERNDALE FOODS, NORTH OF YARNTON WAY



6. WAREHOUSES CENTRED AROUND CENTURION WAY

Note: At the time of writing the eastern gas-holder seen in the foreground of images 1, 2 & 3 has been demolished with only the western gas-holder remaining

2 SITE ANALYSIS
2.3 EXISTING CONDITION - WITHIN THE SITE



1. THE TWO GAS-HOLDERS SEEN THROUGH DENSE UNDERGROWTH



2. THE EXISTING ENTRANCE ON YARNTON WAY



3. ADJACENT WAREHOUSES SEEN THROUGH WESTERN BOUNDARY FENCE



4. AREAS FOR GAS WORKING ARE CLEAR AND MAINTAINED



5. THE GAS GOVERNOR AND EASTERN ACCESS POINT FROM SUTHERLAND ROAD



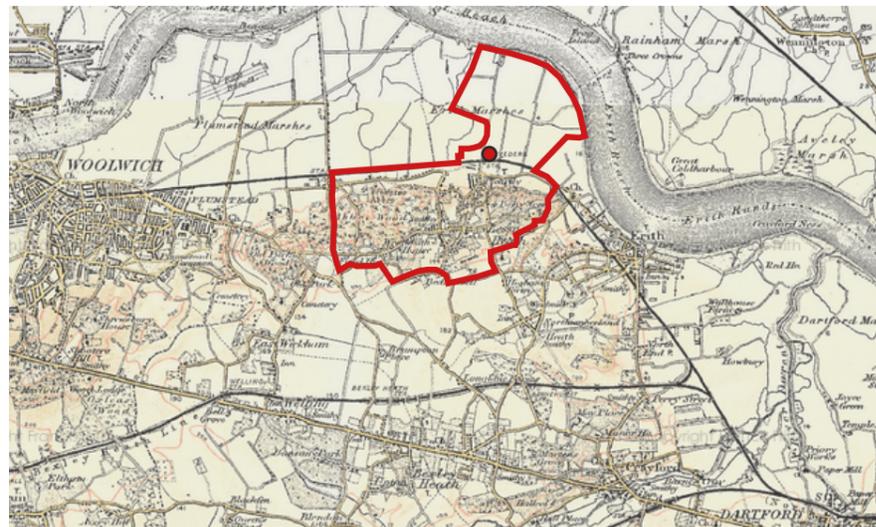
6. LOOKING SOUTH-EAST TOWARDS THE HOUSING ON MAIDA ROAD

Note: At the time of writing the eastern gas-holder seen on the right in image 1 and again in image 4 has been demolished with only the western gas-holder remaining

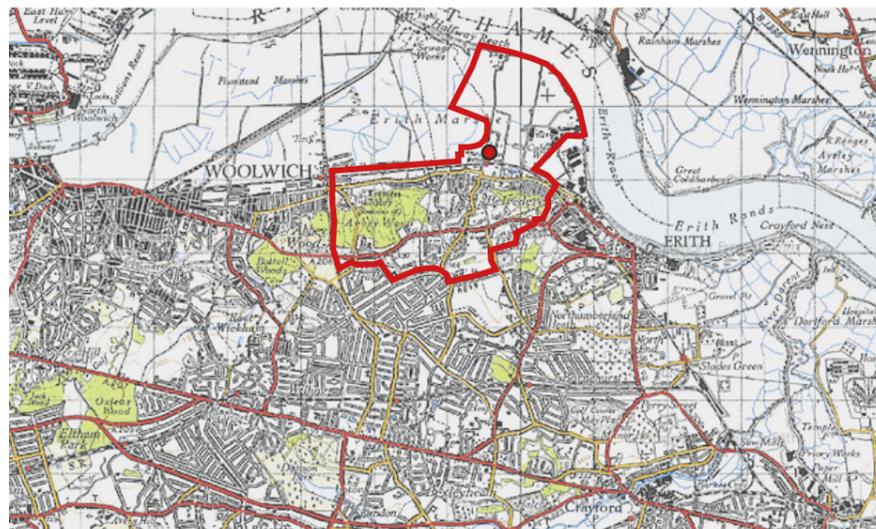
2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT & LAND USE

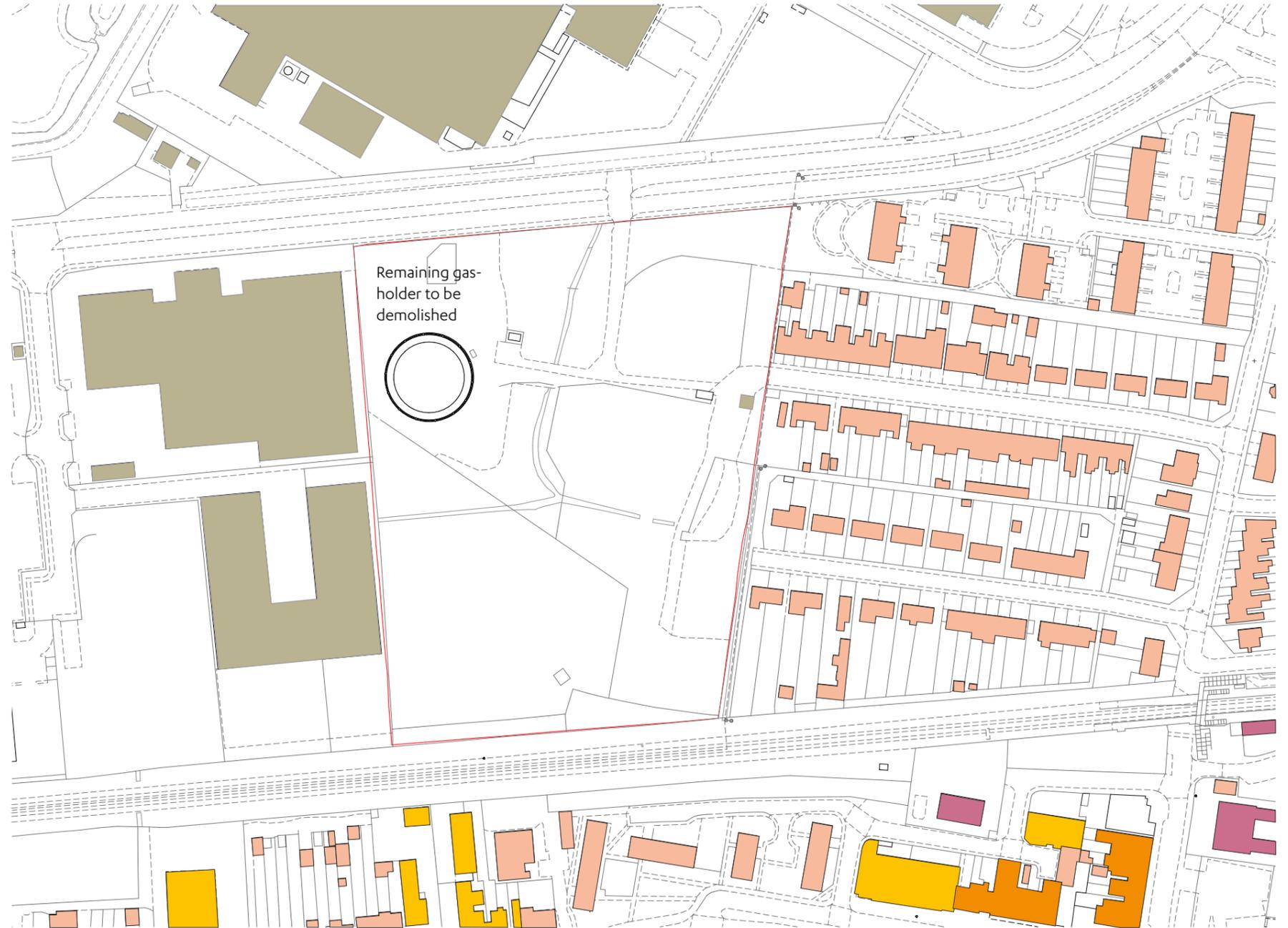
The area which is today known as Belvedere was for centuries part of Lessness Heath. Development commenced in 1847 and intensified in the following years with the arrival of Belvedere Station in 1859, transforming what had historically been undivided woodland or uninhabited marshland into a primarily residential area. The area south of the railway line was developed first as Belvedere Village and then Upper Belvedere, characterised by Victorian villas and public buildings. Lower Belvedere - the area immediately south of the railway line followed during the Edwardian period. As can be seen in the maps below, the area north of the railway line to the Thames - know as Erith Marshes, remained undeveloped until after WWII.



1897 MAP SHOWING BELEVDERE TOWN BOUNDARY AND THE SITE'S POSITION



1946 MAP SHOWING BELEVDERE TOWN BOUNDARY AND THE SITE'S POSITION



KEY	
 Residential	 Industrial
 Commercial	 Other
 Commercial with residential above	

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.5 CONSTRAINTS

GAS INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing gas-holders will be removed as part of SGN's statutory requirements and the site remediated prior to vacant possession. Some gas pipework will need to be retained alongside a gas governor facility on the eastern side of the site. The easement boundary constrains new built form limiting development to paving and soft landscaping only in these areas

FLOOD RISK

The Environment Agency (EA) mapping shows the site is located within Flood Zone 3, which is tidally influenced by the River Thames, however the site is shown to benefit from flood defences. The EA on-line flood maps identify that there is a low risk of surface water flooding associated with low lying areas to the north-west and south-west corners of the site and also the ditches evident on the site.

RETAINED TELECOMS EQUIPMENT

Gas-holder no. 1 has Cellnex telecom equipment mounted at high-level on the external frame which will require replacing within the new development.

NOISE

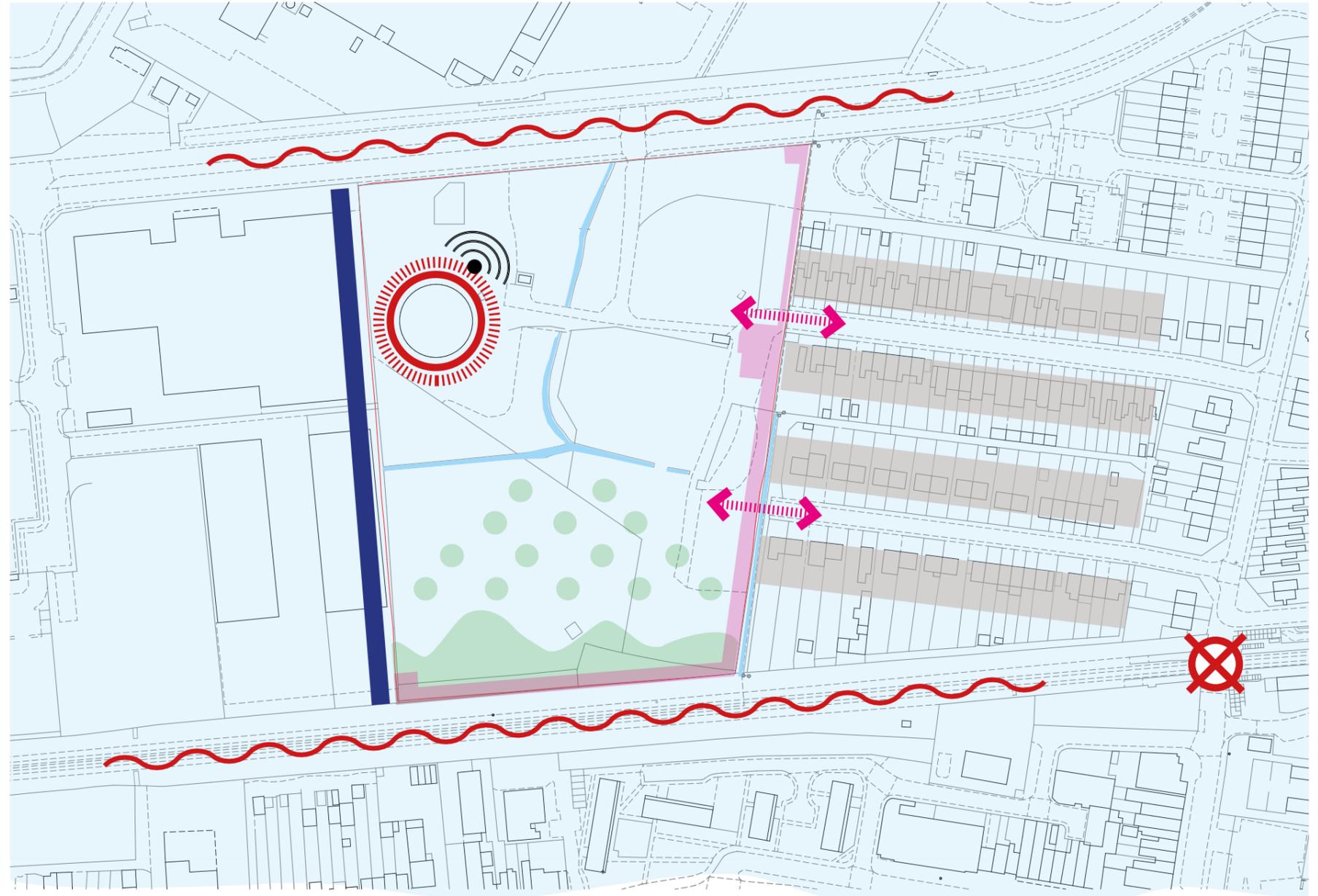
Noise impacts on the site come from numerous sources, including; traffic noise from Yarnton Way, plant and Vehicle movements associated with the industrial uses to the north and west and the railway line to the south of the site.

FUTURE TRANSPORT LINKS

Bexley's Local Plan was adopted in April 2023 with Belvedere Yarnton Way site identified as Site Allocation BEL 05. Section 2.d of the Site Allocation requires that development of the site should:

'not preclude a public transport route through the site by establishing a street alignment that will enable a future bus-based connection, connecting Yarnton Way with Maida Road'

The indicative Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route shown in Figure 23 of the Site Allocation is indicated in Section 10.16 of this document



-  Remaining gasholder to be removed with localised contamination.
-  Potential noise impacts from road, railway and industrial uses immediately adjacent to the site.
-  Retained underground gas pipework at site perimeter
-  Existing crossovers to the east will need to be re-established/formalised involving local consultation
-  Existing water-courses on site in the form of semi-culverted ditches
-  No permeability along western boundary to adjacent sites.
-  Site is within flood zone 3 with specific risk from a breach in the Thames barrier
-  Context to the east is characterised by small-scale residential development
-  Existing site is overgrown with established 'green corridor' along railway
-  Telecom equipment mounted on gasholder requires relocating within the new development.

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.6 OPPORTUNITIES

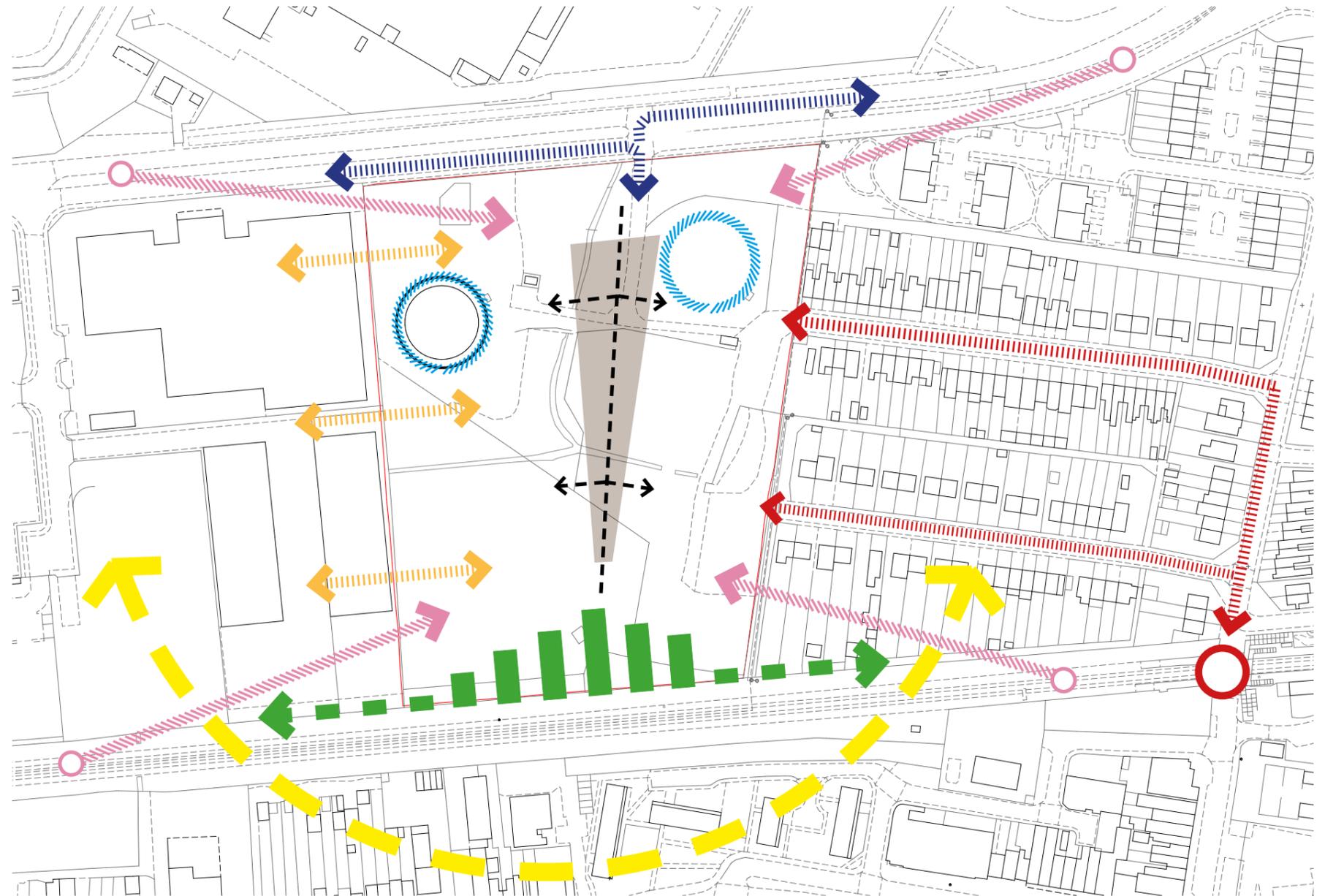
GENERALLY

The site extends to 3.48 hectares and is broadly square in shape with straight boundaries, ranging in length from 138m across the southern frontage to 219m along the western edge. The size and regular shape allows for flexibility in the layout of buildings. Whilst the context is generally two and three storey, the historic presence of the gas holders establishes a scale in parts of the site, roughly equivalent to seven residential storeys. The relatively low scale of the context means the site benefits fully from the sun-path across east, west and southerly aspects, and allows for views south towards Upper Belvedere.

The existing green corridor along the southern boundary creates a natural buffer to the railway, helping to mitigate noise and visual impacts.

CONNECTIVITY

Whilst isolated in its present condition, the site has potential for the excellent level of connectivity required for a large-scale residential development. Yarnton Way, immediately to the north of the site is a dual carriageway which connects Belvedere with Abbey Wood to the west and forms a loop connection to Eastern Way (A2016) further north. Belvedere Station lies approximately 0.2m to the south-east of the site, with a 30 minute journey time into central London (London Bridge). The site has a high PTAL value of 2 & 3 which indicates a good public transport accessibility rating. Sutherland Road and Maida Road to the east offer a good opportunity to improve connectivity to Belvedere Station and further wider links made possible by the redevelopment of the site.



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Historic presence of gasholders establish principle of height
- 

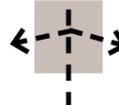
Existing crossover provides access to yarnton way
- 

Opportunity to extend and enhance the green corridor adjacent the railway line
- 

Opportunity for longer local views into the site
- 

Opportunity for potential future links to the adjacent site should it come forward for development
- 

South-facing aspect across railway line
- 

Opportunity to establish new pedestrian links to the site bringing belvedere station within 5 minutes walk.
- 

Conflicting urban grids can be resolved within layout of new development

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.7 DESIGN OBJECTIVES & INITIAL FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

1 - INCORPORATE AND EXTEND THE TWO DISTINCT GRIDS

- We have represented the grids across the wider context and will embrace the streetscape formed by their meeting by creating a defined central route through the site.
- Grid A – Finer grain residential streets of Sutherland and Maida Roads to the east
- Grid B – Strong east west geometry of the railway, Yarnton Way and the wider street patterning including the industrial sites to the west

2 - ACKNOWLEDGE AND REINFORCE THE CONNECTIONS

- We will improve the connections with Sutherland and Maida Road, introducing new pedestrian & cycle routes through the site, complimenting the main vehicular access from Yarnton Way.
- We will introduce additional access points where possible to further connectivity within the wider context.
- Whilst established industrial land, we will not precluded long-term connectivity to the adjacent sites to the western boundary.

3 - PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY AND VARIED PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE

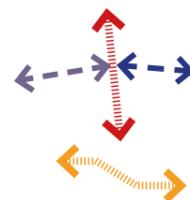
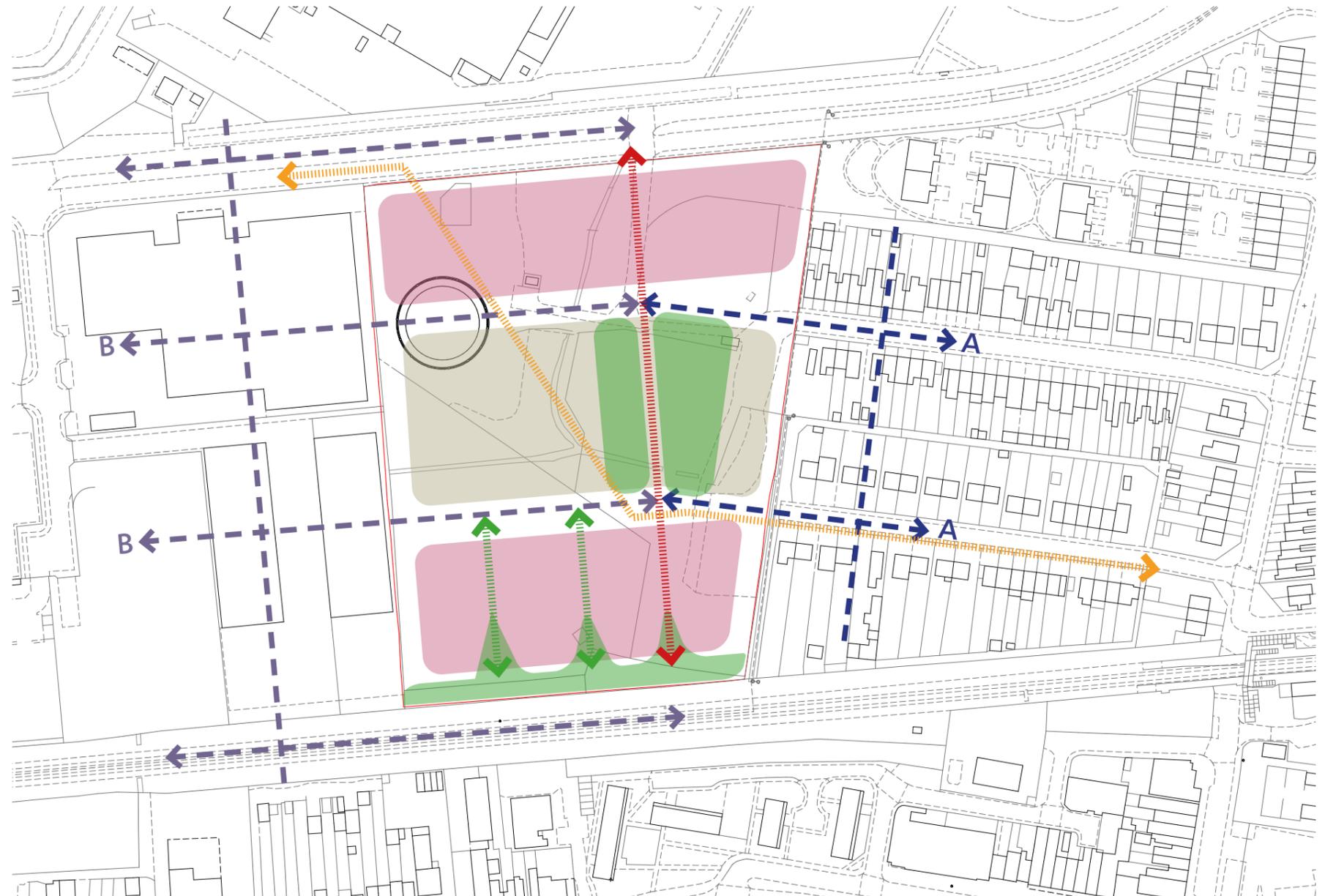
- This is the glue that unites the new townscape. We will create a sequence of new public spaces, spearheaded by a new park which will form the heart of the development, benefiting new and old residents alike.

4 - DEVELOP A DIVERSE RANGE OF NEW HOMES

- The homes will have diverse block and unit typologies within a tenure blind built form that maximises dual aspect homes.
- We will create a street based urban form and ensure that the ground level is active and animated with non-residential uses, clearly defined shared block entrances and individual front doors.
- Development will be appropriate to its position on site, with taller building to the north and south facing Yarnton Way and the railway line and smaller-scale development at the centre of the site, responding to the existing residential streets to the east

5 - ENHANCE THE GREEN CORRIDOR

- We will enhance this corridor along the railway, creating visual connectivity to this area whilst preserving the biodiversity of this unique environment by limiting public access to the southern part of the site.



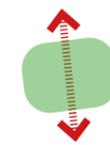
Two distinct grids reconciled around a central route through the site



Enhance local connectivity



Retain 'green corridor' along railway line, establishing this as an area protected as wildlife habitat whilst creating visual links to it.



Create a central amenity space which can act as focal point for the development, and a local park for new and established residents



Develop a hierarchy of development as an appropriate response to the specific contexts