

North West Cambridge Phase 1: Local Centre

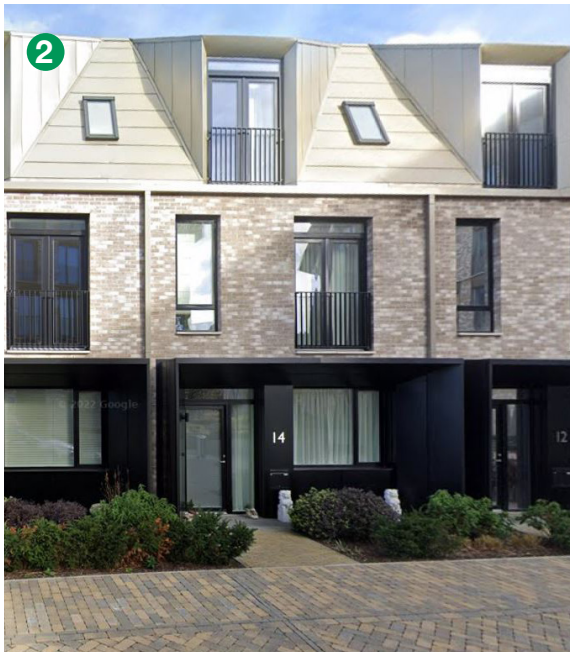
Phase 1 focused on delivering a place from scratch. And the success emerged from the early delivery of the Local Centre, emerging before the community was fully formed. Building and uses on Phase 1 include:

- 1 Storeys Field Community Centre
- 2 University of Cambridge Primary school
- 3 Local Squares
- 4 Equipped play areas
- 5 Supermarket
- 6 Urban furniture and local events
- 7 Post doc centre
- 8 Pedestrian and cycling movement



North West Cambridge
Phase 1:
Homes

A number of residential buildings of different types have been delivered as part of Phase 1 including student accommodation, flats and houses and a hotel.



1 Flats - Eddington Avenue

2 Terraced houses - Milne Avenue

3 Hotel - Eddington Avenue

4 Flats - Turing Way

5 Student housing - Turing Way

6 Flats - Turing Way

7 Flats - Turing Way

8 Flats - Turing Way

9 Flats - Burkitt Lane

10 Maisonettes - Burkitt Lane



North West Cambridge Phase 1: Landscape

Alongside the buildings and Local Centre, Phase 1 has delivered a wide range of public realm features establishing habitats and contributing to biodiversity, providing amenity for local residents and visitors, fostering active travel and connectivity throughout and beyond the site, creating points of interest and congregation through a public art strategy and generally supporting communities.

However, there have also been some lessons learnt. Most notably, the grass pitches delivered as part of the formal sports amenity provision have been under utilised. Having had the benefit of experience from Phase 1, it's become clear that better lit pitches that can be used for more hours in winter months would be more suitable to the community needs.

Another room for improvement from Phase 1 is the fragmentation of uses of the public realm. For example, there may be room for drainage systems to provide areas for play or community growing for more efficient use of the open spaces.

1 Fata Morgana Tea House

2 URS - waste system

3 Swales

4 Shared user path

5 Biodiverse planting

6 Natural play spaces

7 Local Centre

8 Pixel wall - public art

9 North West Cambridge Phase 1 Playground



North West Cambridge today

The Future Phases of North West Cambridge have the benefit to build from the success of Phase 1 and the strategies, features and communities that exist today on the site. The next chapter describes the strategies and illustrative design, establishing a coherent base from which future Reserved Matters Applications (RMAs) will be based on. This base emerges from the exemplar sustainable approach of Phase 1, delivering a biodiverse, nature-focused place. Twelve years on from the 2013 Outline Planning Permission, and a worldwide pandemic later, the future phases add a focus on social sustainability, alongside the health and well-being of the community.



Active travel

The Ridgeway is an important cycle highway through site



Storey's Field Centre



Horse Chestnut Avenue



Storey's Way



SSSI

Football pitches

UoC Primary School

Storey's Field Centre

Cricket pitch



Veteran Oak



Public art



Local Centre



Brook Leys

The lagoon serves a dual purpose of grey water collection and is a rich natural habitat

Consultation and design evolution

Design evolution

2022 Early masterplan testing

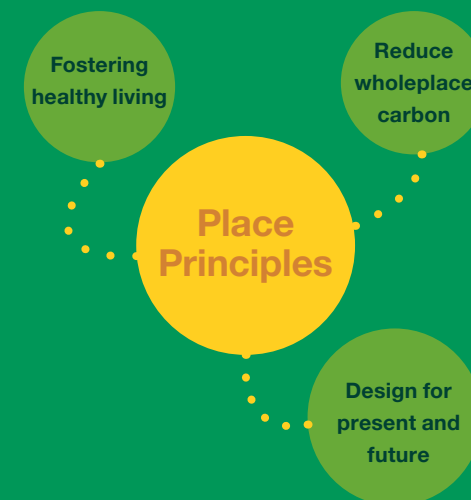
- A revision of the 2013 consented scheme reviewing the site capacity and deliverability of key infrastructure



Emerging vision - expanding from Phase 1



A sense of place



2024

September

Community event 1 Parkrun coffee morning

- The project team, in collaboration with local charity Break, attended Eddington's Parkrun with a coffee van and a series of exhibition boards that provided an overview of the vision for the North West Cambridge Future Phases.



September

Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) GCSPS, Design team

- An introductory session with Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) to reflect on key lessons learnt from 2013 Outline Consent, Phase 1 and the 2022 early masterplan testing, alongside defining the vision for the Future Phases of the site.
- Subsequent programme of meetings with the Quality Review Panel (QRP) and the Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) established.

September - October

Consultation round 1 Meet the design team

- Four drop in sessions were held to kick-off the public engagement with the emerging proposal.



October

PPA: Spatial layout + key approaches GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented the emerging vision for the site and initial landscaping and movement strategies.
- The initial workshop with officers garnered supportive feedback for the high-level vision and ambition for the future phases of development.
- Officers sought further assessment of potential changes to previously approved scale and massing.
- Further details on community needs and travel patterns were also requested to inform the proposed development and its connections.
- **Design team tested principles of the scheme across a neighbourhood.**

November

Quality Review Panel #1 QRP, JDCC, Design team

- An opportunity for the Design Team to present the principles of the places being designed and the vision for the emerging proposal.
- Panel feedback included advice on other developments to draw from, particularly in relation to street widths, overlooking, wind tunnels and noise mitigation from the M11.
- A mix of family homes, providing versatility to the market, prioritising individual front doors and having parking located away from homes were all suggestions for further exploration.
- Care over the design of the green space was raised with the suggestion that the community events be used to explore programming of space and what the existing community want to come forward.
- The Panel also suggested the need to further understand the needs of transient communities and how they could inform the design of the public realm.

Colour key

Community engagement

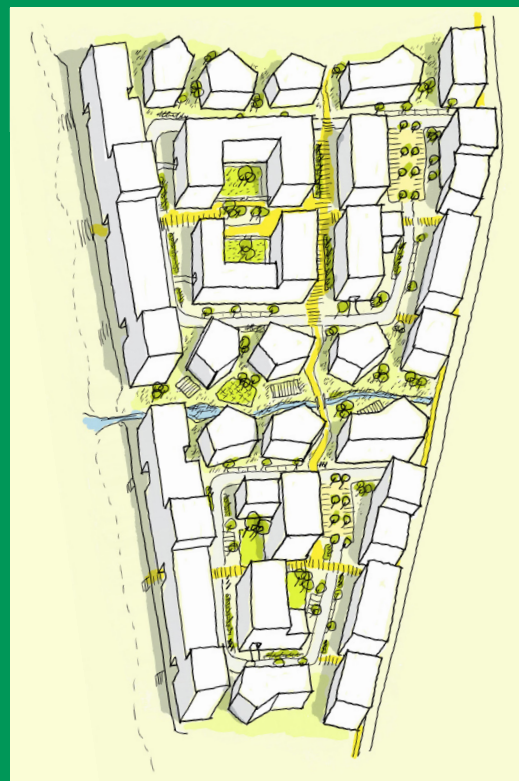
Local Planning Authority

Advisory panel

Evolution of place principles



An emerging neighbourhood



Streets and massing



2025

December

Consultation round 2 Emerging scheme

- Launched at the Eddington Winter Warmer event in Eddington Square.
- Four drop in sessions located in West Cambridge, UoC central Cambridge campus and Lion's Yard Shopping Centre and one online webinar hosted via Zoom.
- Early ideas for the Future Phases were communicated, to gather input from residents and local stakeholders about the kind of green spaces, sports pitches and outdoor amenities they would like to see within Eddington.
- Residents frequently emphasised the importance of preserving and improving green spaces and supporting nature, whilst creating more active travel routes and reducing motor traffic.



December

PPA: Neighbourhoods GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented the next iteration of the emerging proposal, discussing the realignment of Cartwright Avenue and initial approaches to massing for the neighbourhoods.
- Officers requested more detail on unit numbers and proposed mix of housing.
- Officers also requested key views be tested to refine the approach to massing.
- The northern area of the site was discussed as needing further layout testing with officers providing feedback on its need to connect to the wider scheme.
- **Design team engaged with LVIA consultant to establish views to be tested with officers. Massing views produced for discussion with officers.**

February

PPA: Streetscape and massing GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented streetscape principles and approach to parking within a typical neighbourhood.
- The Design Team also prepared a series of massing views, both internal and wider views informed by LVIA consultants.
- Officers requested to see more detail on parking options for neighbourhoods, and a desire to see alternative typologies proposed.
- Officers sought more detail on unit numbers and proposed densities for the housing.
- Officers proposed initial drafts of parameter plans and codes be produced to test how the principles of the shared gardens will be realised.
- **Design team produced a densities study and northern plot studies to enable discussion with officers.**

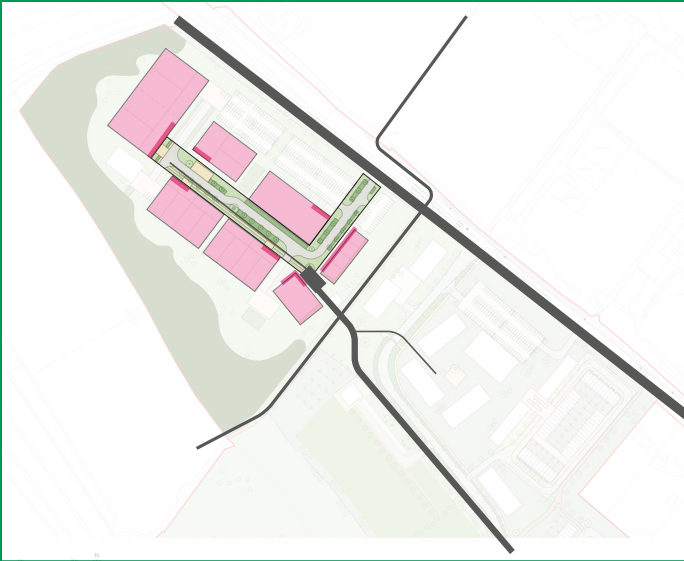
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Community engagement

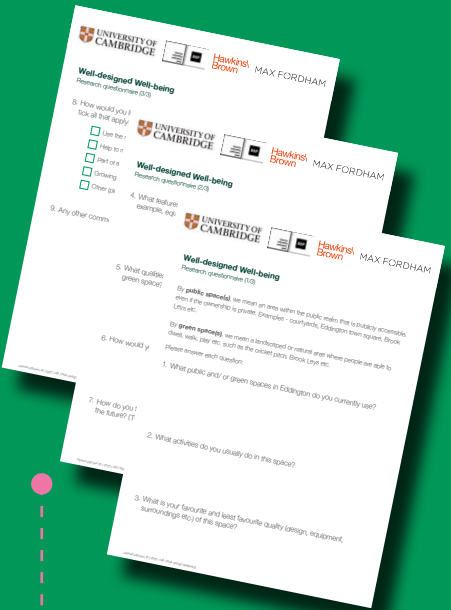
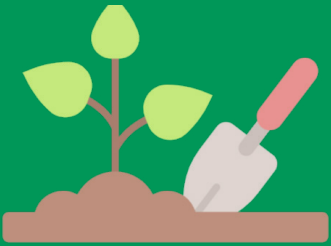
Local Planning Authority

Advisory panel

Evolution of northern plots, exploring density



Communicating the development



2025

March

PPA:
Densities
GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented the emerging sitewide residential unit numbers and how that looked as a density calculation across the site.
- Whilst overall principles of density and massing was supported, officers sought further analysis of the agreed LVIA views against the 2013 scheme.
- Officers requested that the northern plots be further tested and explored.

PPA:
Design evolution, massing and
northern plots
GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented principles for the northern plots, establishing a street based approach to laying out massing.
- Other updates presented included, eastern plots design development, massing updates and an initial draft of parameter plans and example design codes.
- Officers requested more details on how the scheme would maintain its quality and ambition as set out in Phase 1.
- Officers sought to review the key sitewide technical strategies such as energy, transport, and drainage.
- **Design team produced a draft set of parameter plans to test heights, whilst developing further proposals for the northern plots.**

March - April

Consultation round 3
Preferred scheme

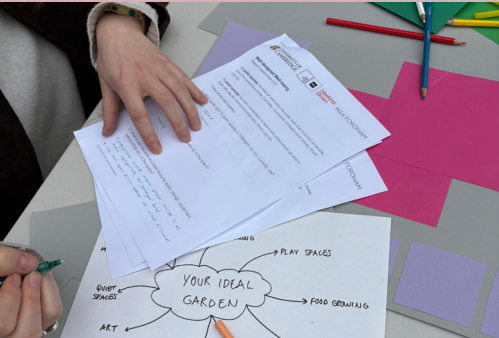


- Residents were consulted about the preferred scheme. A physical model was produced to aid discussions with the community.
- Conversations with residents saw an understanding of the massing strategies and acceptance of taller buildings in appropriate locations.
- Many residents supported the need for Future Phases to have spaces for sports and activities, echoing feedback in previous rounds.

- There were questions about road traffic and calls to increase the frequency and routes of the U Buses.
- Sustainability is a popular element of living in Eddington and consultation demonstrated residents' desire for this to continue.

Community event 2
Community Gardening Day

- The community gardening day was an opportunity to understand how people in the existing communities use green space and their perception of what makes a successful green space.
- This research has helped the design team in better understanding the needs of transient communities in the use of green spaces.
- A collation of residents comments and opinions on green spaces are listed on the following pages.



Colour key

Community engagement

Local Planning Authority

Advisory panel

A holistic focus on health and wellbeing



Sports and play



Setting Parameters



2025

April

Quality Review Panel #2
QRP, JDCC, Design team

- The panel suggested reviewing the “hubs” indicating that the Common could use some activation through the use of social programming.
- The panel queried the amount of hardscape and noted that it would be desirable to see the amount of parking reduced.
- Learning from Phase 1 was highlighted as being important for sustainability and climate resilient proposals of future homes. The water and district heating systems of Phase 1 were discussed. It was suggested that more explanation be provided as to why these systems are changing in future phases.
- It was noted that Cartwright Avenue could be more of a place and suggested to use the role of mobility hubs to help create that sense of place.
- **The design team reviewed the placement of “hubs” in the Parameter Plans and have included Design Codes to address QRP comments.**

May

PPA:
Amenity and Sport
GCSPS, Landscape Architect

- The Design Team presented the site wide landscape strategy including trees, hard & soft landscape, open spaces and public realm.
- Positive feedback from Officers relating to the integration of landscape and built form.
- Discussion around incorporation of large scale trees with sufficient space between buildings.
- Landscape Officer raised the need to ensure tree planting locations are informed by the LVIA process.

May

PPA:
LVIA views
GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented key views that will form the LVIA.
- It was clarified that the 2013 maximum parameters were not inclusive of plant and parapets so will appear lower overall.

PPA:
Parameter Plans
GCSPS, Design team

- Draft Parameter plans were presented by the Design Team.
- Officers were supportive of initial draft and welcomed the inclusion of an urban design plan.
- Discussion was had as to how best to fix the open space between development plots which take the form of Shared Gardens.
- The maximum heights plan was clarified as to include storey heights so as to limit height where level changes provide more flexibility in a fixed AOD.
- Officers advised that seeing drafts of the Design Codes will enable them to see if there is outstanding areas that need described across the Parameter Plans and Codes.
- **The Design Team drafted Design Codes, chaptered by “place” for review with officers and made amendments to the Parameter Plans addressing officer comments.**

Colour key

Community engagement

Local Planning Authority

Advisory panel



September

Application Submission

Outline Planning Application

2025

June

PPA: Northern Quarter GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team presented the revised illustrative proposals for the northern quarter.
- Positive feedback from Officers with previous concerns having largely been addressed.
- Discussion around how the Design Codes will strengthen and ensure this area is delivered reflective of discussions.
- The Design Code and LVIA will need to establish clear parameters for the development of this area to balance commercial requirements with urban design and landscape considerations.

PPA: Design Codes GCSPS, Design team

- The Design Team had sent across the draft Design Codes for comment.
- Officers produced a tracker of comments for the Design Team to consider.
- Discussion was had as to consolidate more of the codes within the Site Wide Chapter so as to be as consistent as possible across the site.
- More detail as to "why" the codes were necessary to assist designers in the future to understand the context of the codes.
- **The Design Team utilised the tracker and made updates to the structure of the codes and provided more context for future designers.**

Colour key

Community engagement

Local Planning Authority

Advisory panel

Talking to the community gardening event



As part of health and wellbeing research informing the design proposal, a series of interviews with local residents gathered information about the way people feel about the public realm: their needs, preferences and will to get involved, in particular those who may stay for the short- to mid-term. The interviews took place at a community growing engagement event organised by the University of Cambridge

What spaces would you like to see?
More spaces to walk

What qualities are important?
Community engaging spaces

How would you be involved?
Part of 'friends of'

Priya *
Charity sector
India
25-34 y/o
Children - Yes

What qualities do you think are important?
A beautiful garden full of green and nature

How would the ideal public realm be?
Cozy and pretty

How would the ideal public realm be?
Rough nature, meadow like

How could green spaces support your community?
Activity and gardening, ideally organised by the community

How would you be involved?
Help maintain or manage the space, Growing Plants

What features would you like to see?
Playgrounds and seating areas together

How would the ideal public realm be?
Free to wander, maybe some seating

How could green spaces support your community?
Shared responsibility

Meher *
Software engineer
Pakistan
25-34 y/o
Children - Yes

Bas *
Scientist
Netherlands
25-34 y/o

What spaces would you like to see?
Enclosed space, spaces for people to cook and eat

How could green spaces support your community?
A library of things

How would you be involved?
Part of 'friends of', Help maintain or manage the space, Growing Plants. Management will depend on champions

Nitesh *
Entrepreneur
Indian
45-54 y/o
Children - Yes

Nabila *
Education
Pakistan
35-44 y/o
Children - Yes

What spaces would you like to see?
Wooden, nature-looking play areas

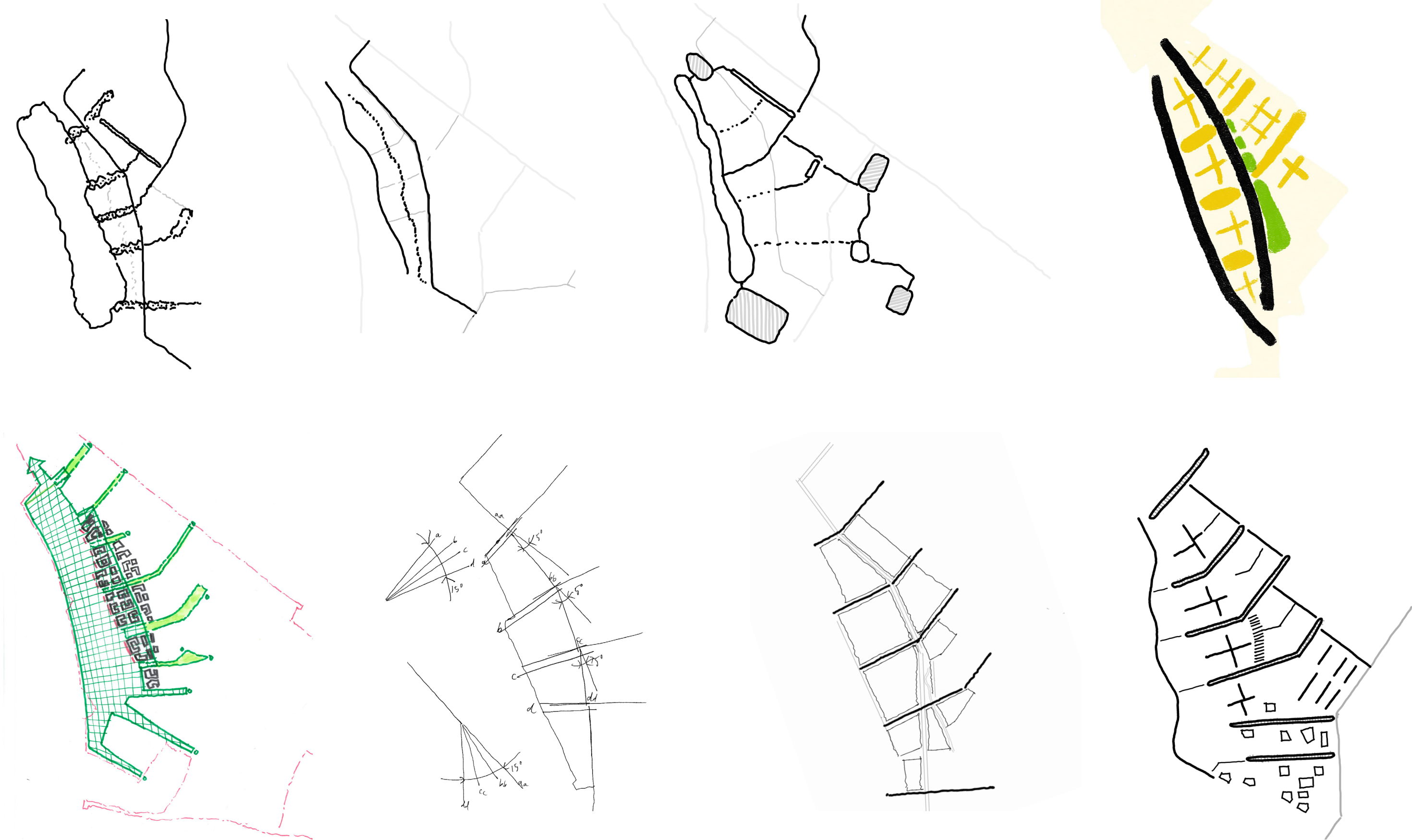
How could green spaces support your community?
Activities, events

How would you be involved?
Part of 'friends of', Help maintain or manage the space, Growing Plants

* Names have been changed for anonymity

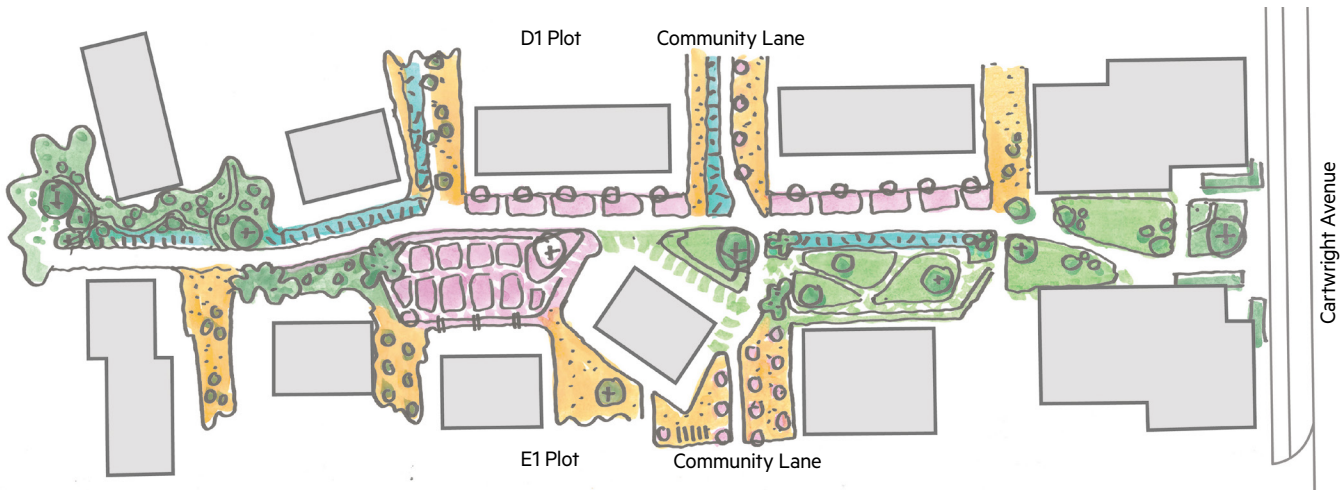
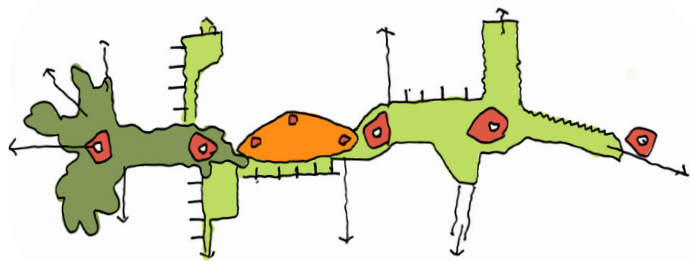
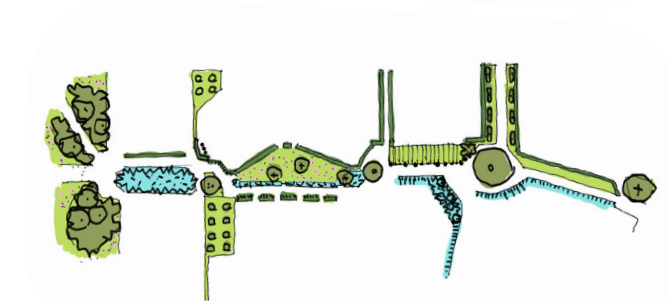
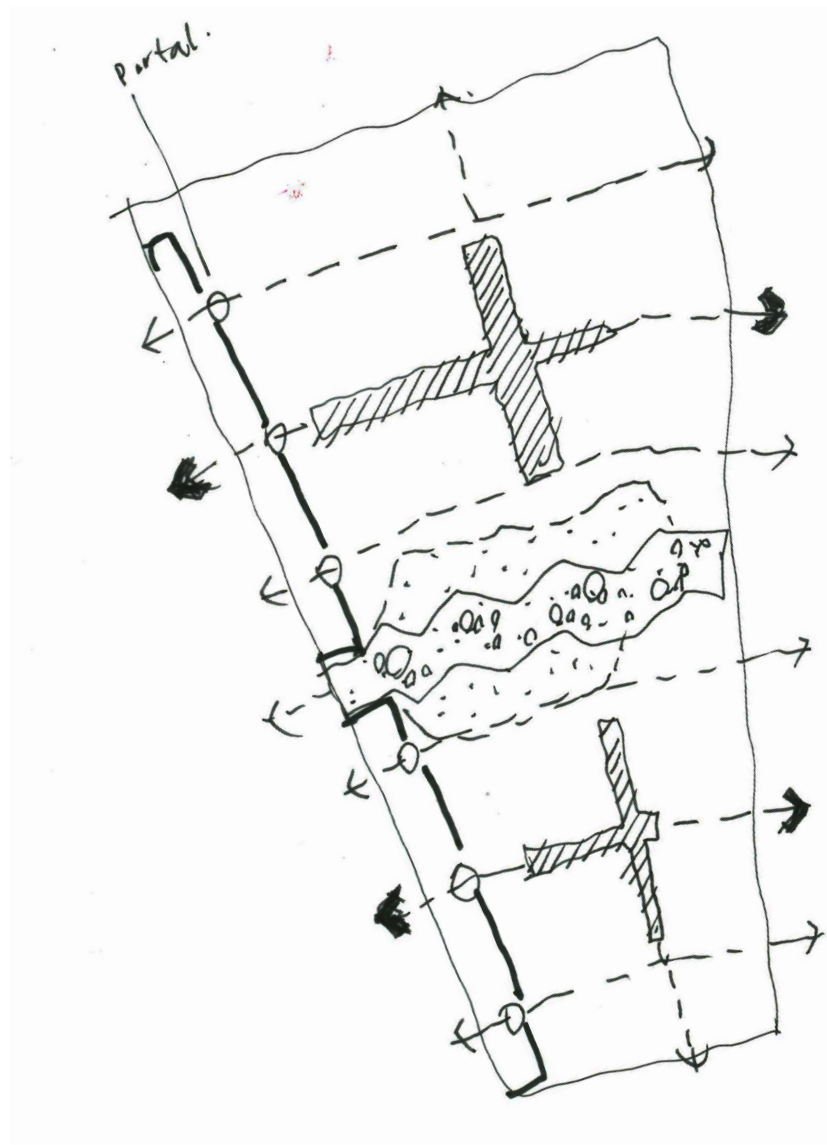
Sketches

Sketches and concepts during the design evolution of the proposal.



Sketches

Sketches and concepts during the design evolution of the proposal.



Sketches

Sketches and concepts during the design evolution of the proposal.



Sitewide strategies

Place principles

The mission for the Future Phases of North West Cambridge is to:



Foster healthy living together

Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of social sustainability. The design of the public realm reflects a post-pandemic understanding of the vital role outdoor spaces play in supporting individual wellbeing and community cohesion. The proposals create places that are close to nature, encourage people to linger and connect, support walking, cycling, and active lifestyles, stimulate the mind, promote healthy diets, and offer a welcome respite from the pervasiveness of digital life.



Reduce whole place carbon

While much of the carbon impact will be determined in later design stages—through material choices and detailing—the proposal sets an early commitment to carbon reduction. In response to the climate emergency and the University’s sustainability goals, the design incorporates efficient building envelopes, mid-rise forms (4–6 storeys), reducing earthworks, nature-based solutions, above-ground parking, and a strong emphasis on active travel.



Design for present and future

The proposals embrace a regenerative ethos, creating biodiverse, low-maintenance landscapes that work with the natural topography and water run offs. It integrates adaptable energy and water systems that can evolve with technological advancements, ensuring long-term resilience and sustainability.

Understanding how to design for health

A literature review research focused on the relationship between health, wellbeing and design. The research has been carried out by the Behaviour and Building Performance Group from the University of Cambridge, for the Future Phases of North West Cambridge. This page shows extracts from the research, Design for Flourinshing report.

Spatial complexity

Spatial complexity refers to the degree of diversity and novelty within an environment's physical layout. This **complexity challenges the brain to process new spatial information and adapt to varying conditions, which is believed to stimulate neural plasticity**. Although much of our foundational knowledge comes from controlled studies in rodents (Fares et al., 2013; Funabashi et al., 2023; Khalil, 2024c), the ultimate goal is to translate these findings into human contexts. Humans also experience hippocampal plasticity across the lifespan. Urban-Wojcik et al. (2021) found that greater diversity in daily activities, which often reflects exposure to varied spatial environments, is associated with larger hippocampal volumes in humans.

Spaces to dwell

Research has highlighted the role of urban gardens as a valuable element in creating more sustainable cities (Veen, Bock, Van den Berg, Visser, & Wiskerke, 2016). In research that examined the role of community gardens in fostering social cohesion and place attachment, Veen et al. (2016) found that **community gardens serve as important meeting places, bring diverse groups together, and contribute to the development of social cohesion** and connectivity within the community.

Meeting places

A study of the impact of community-driven public space improvements in Portland, Oregon, found that participatory neighbourhood projects (including public art installations and community gardens) significantly enhanced social capital, a sense of community, and health outcomes

Walking and cycling

Providing urban environments that facilitate flexible and diverse walking practices, help to create resilient, highly walkable neighbourhoods that service a range of functions (Pentenrieder, 2025). In analyzing walking affordances in urban contexts, Niitamo (2023) explores how pedestrian mobility exemplifies the communicative city concept. The ability to engage in unrestricted public space encounters and unlimited pedestrian movement throughout cities represents a crucial indicator of healthy urban communication and more equitable urban spaces (McQuire & Wei, 2020).

Enhanced sports and amenity

Recent **research has revealed that walking as a simple everyday activity can trigger important biological processes in the brain** (de Melo Coelho et al., 2013; Khalil, 2025a), and also increase the human brain volume (Cerin et al., 2018; Domingos et al. 2021; Khalil, 2025b), similar to the effect of exercise (Firth et al. 2018). When the design of a city or residential community naturally encourages walking, it has the potential to enhance neurogenesis (the growth of new neurons), improve brain health, and stimulate the production of growth factors essential for neuroplasticity (Khalil, 2024a). Incorporating walkability into master plans is not just an aesthetic choice; it is a strategic public health intervention.

Regen ethos

Research suggests that **living in proximity to urban green space encourages increased physical activity, promotes healthier behaviours, and improved health outcomes** (Gascon et al., 2016; Giles-Corti & Donovan, 2002; Guzman, Garrido-Cumbrera, Braçe, Hewlett, & Foley, 2021; Kaczynski & Henderson, 2008; Pérez-del-Pulgar et al., 2021). Equitable, easily accessible, and safe access to a range of outdoor spaces, is important in supporting healthy, active communities.

Nature on your doorstep

Studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG) have documented **decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex when subjects view natural scenes, indicating reduced cognitive load and mental fatigue** (Bratman et al., 2015; Aspinall et al., 2015). This neural response pattern suggests that nature provides a unique form of mental restoration unavailable in purely built environments.

Active urbanism

Experiments demonstrated that loads 2-5 times a subject's bodyweight can be reached by jumping or stepping down from a 385 mm step. **The potential effect of urban design on bone health, risks of fracture and osteoporosis can potentially be delayed by 10 to 20 years through urban design interventions**. Walking on stepping stones imitation versus a plain surface increased oxygen consumption by 24% and heart rate by 11.25% when compared to a conventional treadmill at the same speed. 60% of participants reached the moderate exercise threshold. In addition to increased heart rate and oxygen consumption, studies demonstrated co-activation of a larger group of muscles compared to conventional walking at the same speed.

Play on the way

Supporting play, and active engagement within urban spaces is an important aspect in supporting healthy, connected, vibrant communities (Akpınar, 2019; Bao, Gao, Luo, & Zhou, 2022; Sanchez-Valdivia et al., 2022).

Illustrative masterplan

An Illustrative scheme has been developed as part of the proposal, distilling a series of sitewide strategies and defining the character of the different places conforming it. This chapter describes the sitewide strategies setting out a development framework.



Exemplar environmental sustainability

North West Cambridge Phase 1 of has been designed and delivered as a exemplary sustainable development.



Adding the social sustainability layer

The post-pandemic world begun to learn the importance of social sustainability and its impact on health and wellbeing. Hence the focus of the Future Phases of North West Cambridge on healthy living together that builds from the sustainable approach of Phase 1.

