

Gravel Hill

Gravel Hill is the eastern most part of North West Cambridge, separated from phase 1 by the green belt (Girton Gap) in the west, which also extends to the south and incorporates the Travellers Rest Pit SSSI. Gravel Hill is a mixed-use area with student accommodation, academic buildings and residential areas.

Design rationale

Gravel Hill

- 1

Residential neighbourhood

Homes and associated public realm organised around Horse Chestnut Avenue
- 2

Student accommodation

Residential student accommodation and an activity node at the junction of Horse Chestnut Avenue and Garrod Street
- 3

Academic Quarter

Faculty buildings on the southeastern most part of the site

Green and blue infrastructure

Gravel Hill is adjacent to and partially includes Storey's Field. Areas of green open space and woodland are retained, with habitat enhancements.

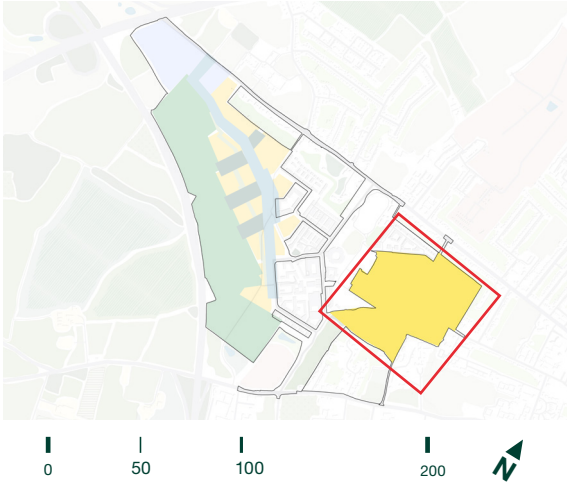
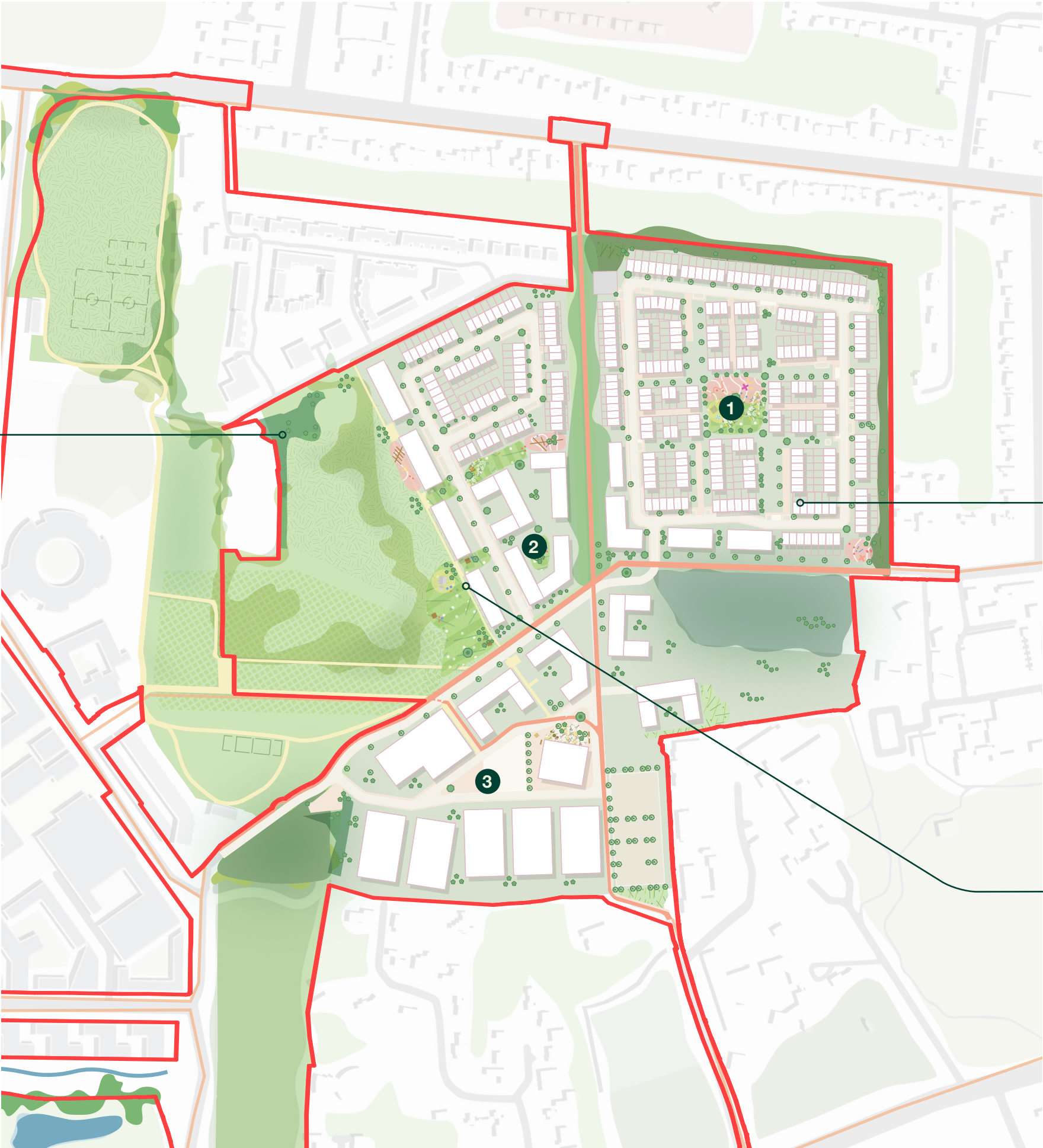
Traveller's Rest Pit SSSI and it's 10m buffer zone are respected with only strategic habitat management interventions.

Horse Chestnut Avenue is a line of Horse Chestnut trees running north-south through Gravel Hill. It is retained as a valuable amenity asset and strong green armature.

Existing woodland at Storeys Wood, Cricket Pitch wood and individual trees of significance (e.g. a Category A Oak tree) are retained, with additional woodland planting and appropriate breathing space given to woodland fringes and standalone trees.

To the site perimeter, a 20m buffer no-build zone from existing private garden boundaries is respected.

Landscape and built form proposals respect and seek to enhance the valuable existing green infrastructure elements of Gravel Hill.



Movement

Loop system road network to encourage active travel towards Phase 1 and to the wider Cambridge network.



Built form

Buildings define the edge onto Storey's Field. A mix of building types and land uses provide a range of scales in built form. The academic areas are arranged around a central quad and open space with existing Cat A trees.

Strategies

Gravel Hill

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Planting and drainage

- Forest-scale tree

Landmark tree

Specimen tree

Street tree

Fruiting/flowering tree

Junction tree

Woodland group

Boundary planting

Surface SuDS e.g. rain gardens

Below ground connection



A framework of existing trees, woodland and open grassland provides an immediate mature setting for new homes and academic buildings. Proposed tree planting adds a new layer of structure and legibility to the streets and open spaces of the new development. Native species hedgerow are used as lines of definition and new wildlife corridors linking existing habitats.

Rain gardens and permeable paving are proposed to capture and direct local surface water runoff within streets and neighbourhood green spaces. Where space allows, swales provide low level spatial definition. Grassland habitats with enhancements to boost biodiversity run through development zones, wrapping built form and neighbourhood green spaces.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Community and amenity

- Informal open space

Growing/ productive area

Play area



Storey's Field, and Traveller's Rest Pit SSSI within it, provides an expansive open green setting to Gravel Hill.

Neighbourhood green spaces are welcoming informal gardens incorporating playable space and growing opportunities close to people's homes.

Open spaces and streets make the most of easy connections to existing open spaces on the doorstep, and quick access to walking and cycling routes along Storeys Way and Horse Chestnut Avenue.

Movement

- Primary pedestrian/ cycle route

Community Lane

Green informal pathways
- Secondary routes

Roads

Existing active travel routes



Vehicle loop concept for neighbourhoods continued in residential areas.

Relationship to the car made more challenging to encourage healthy choices and active travel modes.

Connections to the wider Cambridge cycling and walking network.

Built Form

- Building

Public realm

Main frontage



Academic and student accommodation are organised defining the edge of Storey's Field. Key corners are expressed to assist in wayfinding and define the central "hub" in which a transition of uses occurs.



Living streets promote active travel and pedestrianised spaces to encourage communities coming together.

Massing and character

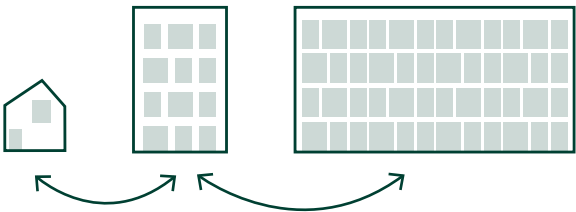
Gravel Hill



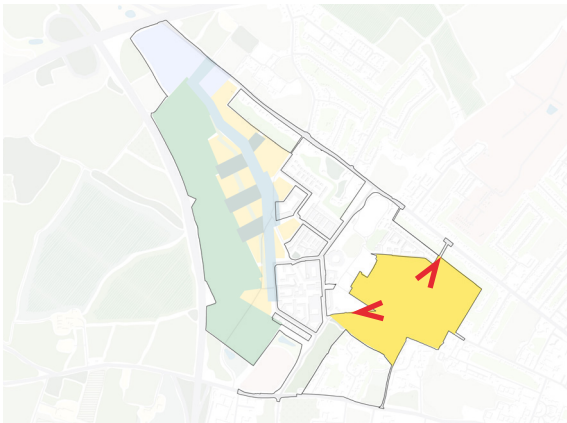
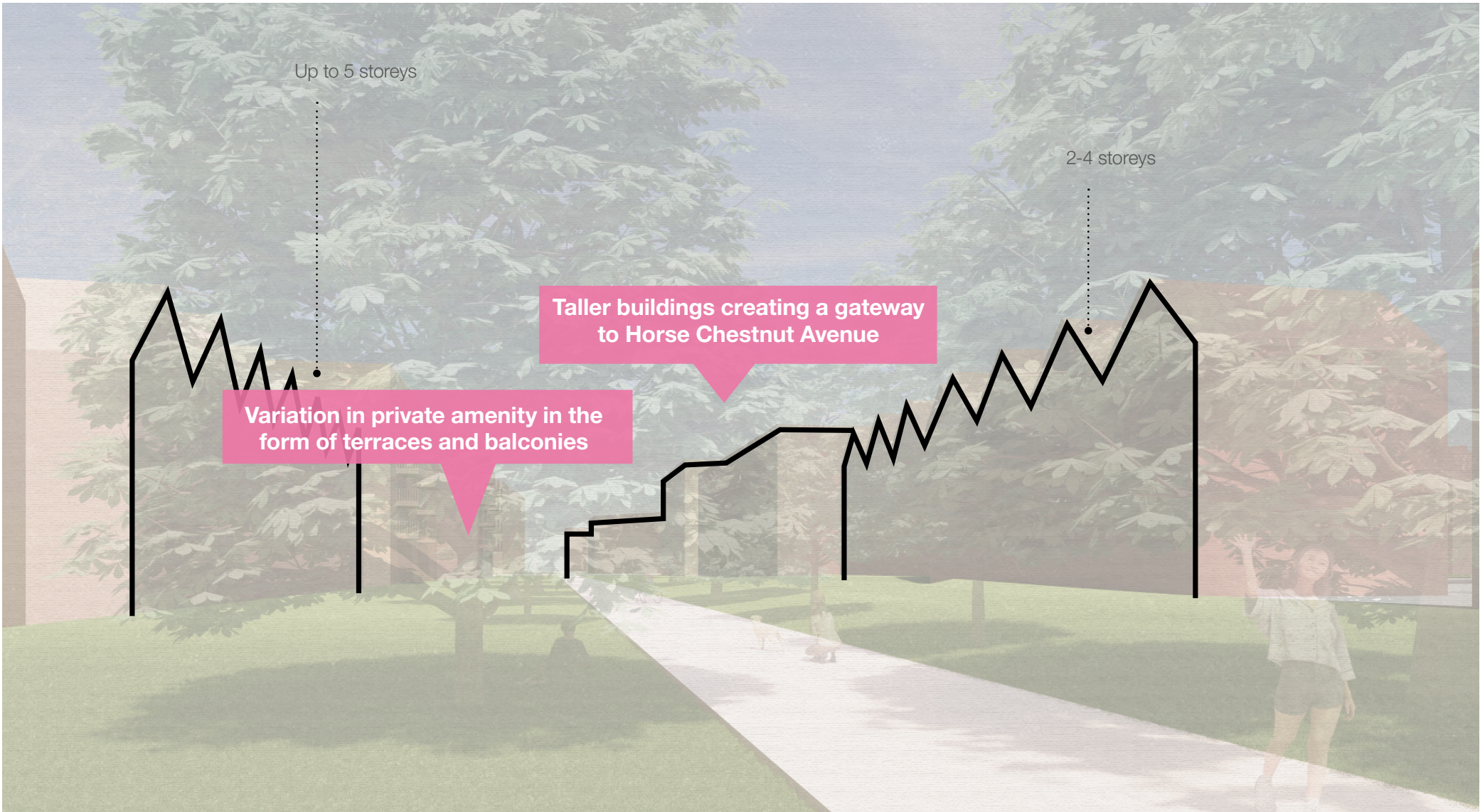
Residential buildings address green spaces, providing passive surveillance. Varied roof forms to create interest on the skyline



Massing steps down towards the edges of the site, including a 20 metres no-build zone - Refer to the Parameter Plan and Design Codes.



A common character between houses and flats to academic buildings create a gentle transition of scale and composition of materials and elevation treatment.



Health and wellbeing
Gravel Hill



Nature on your doorstep

Storey's Field, Horse Chestnut Avenue and other nearby green assets offer a wide diversity of open spaces for people to interact with nature.



Walking and cycling

A car-free street invites people to more active lifestyles, less stress and less carbon footprint.



Regen ethos

Planting and trees, embodying the regenerative ethos tied into the design.



Cartwright Avenue & The Common

Cartwright Avenue is the key primary road through the Future Phases providing access to the new neighbourhood via cycle, foot and car. The Avenue will be a generous route lined with large growing trees.

Cyclists and pedestrians will be provided with generous paths and vehicle speeds will be controlled through the highways design. Cartwright Avenue opens out into the Common which is a larger public open space with tree planting providing spaces to sit.