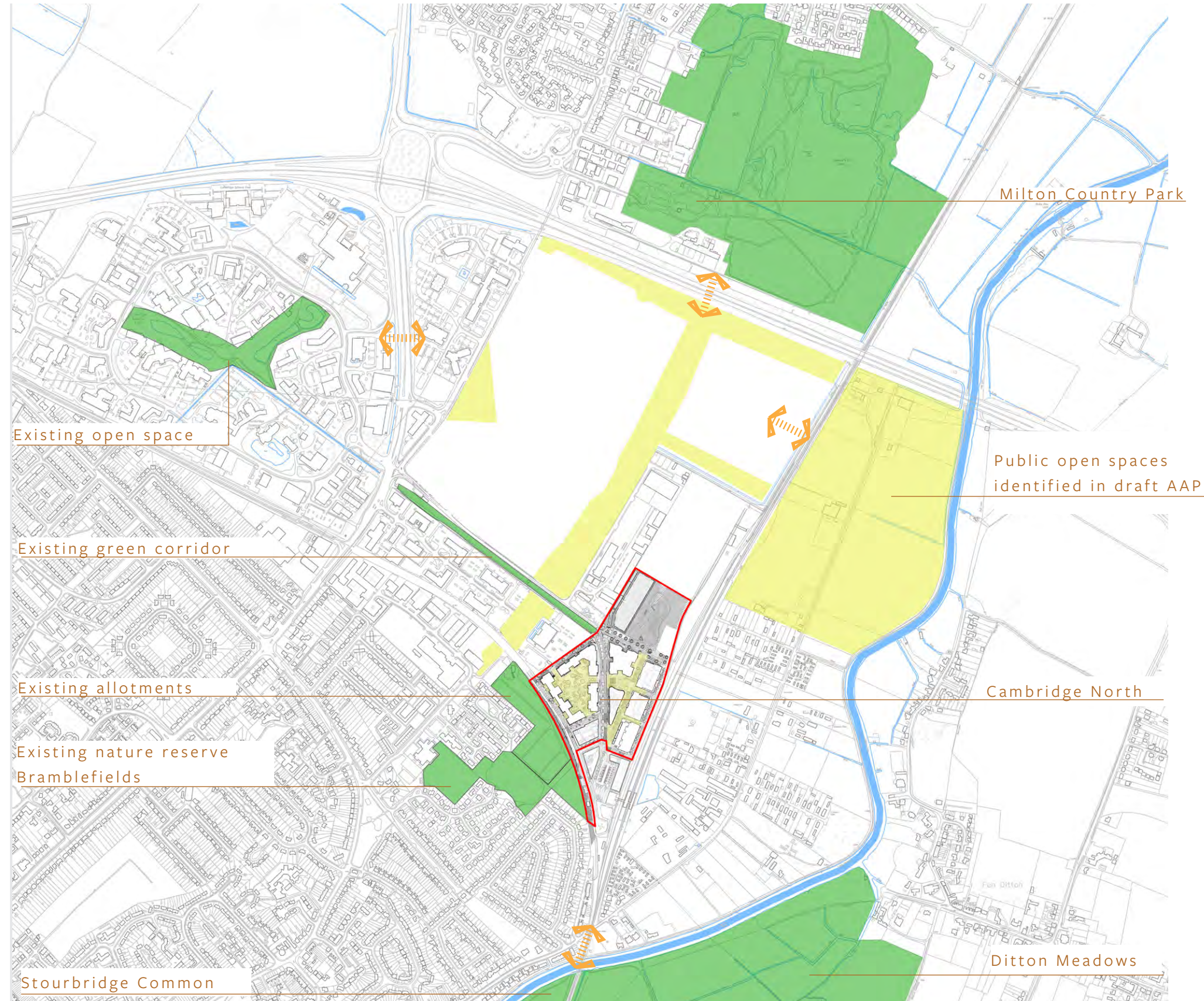






LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE CONTEXT

Cambridge North sits within a varied landscape context, between the Network Rail railway line to the east and the Bramblefields Local Nature Reserve, allotments and neighbourhoods to the west. Offices and business uses sit adjacent to the north; to the south are the recently constructed landscape enhancements associated with the Novotel Hotel and the public space at Cambridge Square.

Existing green infrastructure in the immediate context includes a green 'finger' associated with the First Drain along Cowley Road, and a linear tree belt along the Guided busway to the west, separating the site visually from the allotments.

In the wider context Milton Country Park, Ditton Meadows and Stourbridge Common offer recreation and open space on a large scale. Future green spaces have also been proposed as part of strategic initiatives for the Northeast Cambridge Area Action Plan. Open space proposals for Cambridge North would form an entryway to these wider green spaces, creating links to an almost continuous green network for the benefit of Cambridge.



- LEGEND**
-  Future pedestrian / cycle link
 -  Existing open space
 -  Proposed open space
 -  The River Cam

NTS

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

LANDSCAPE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

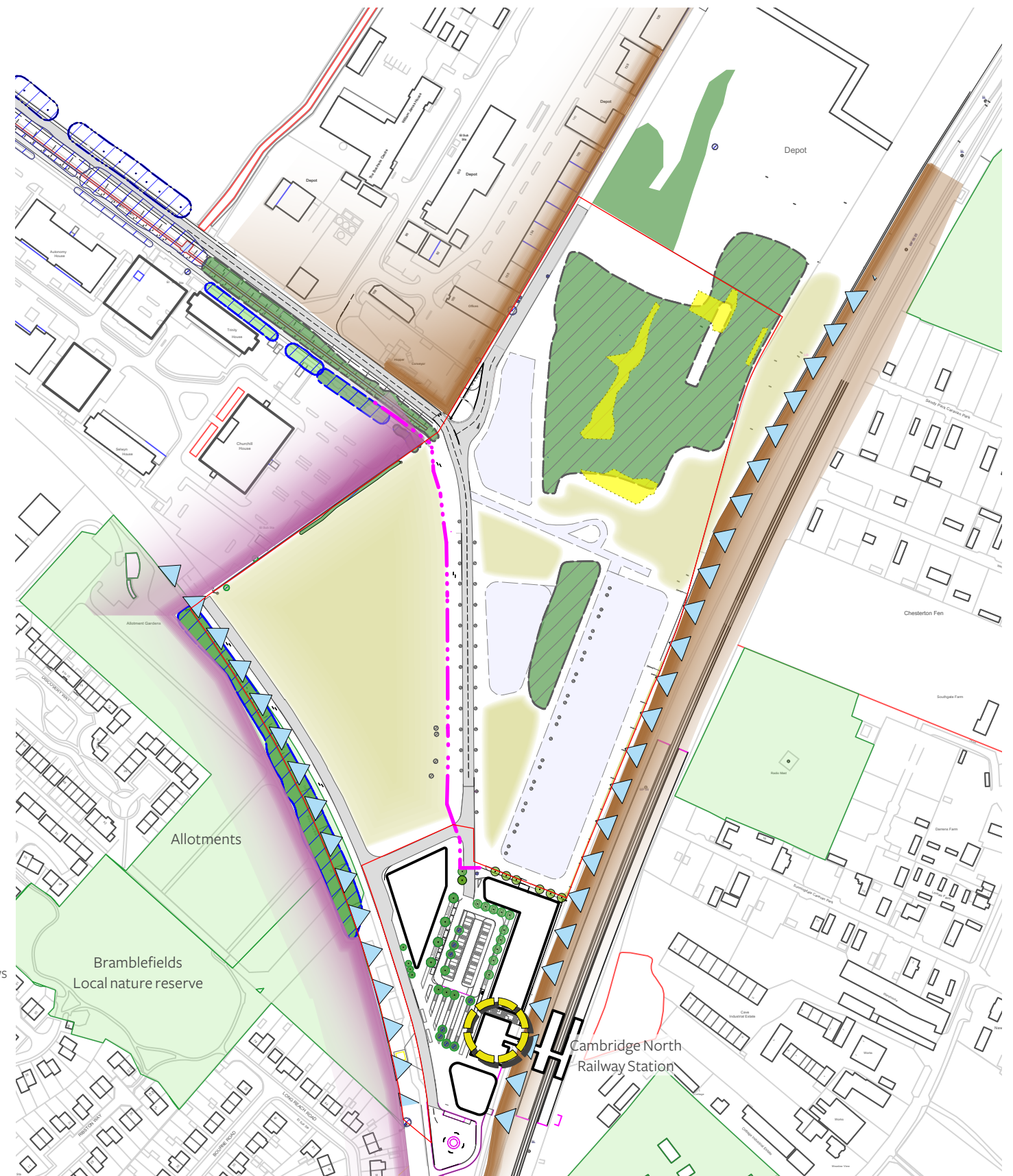
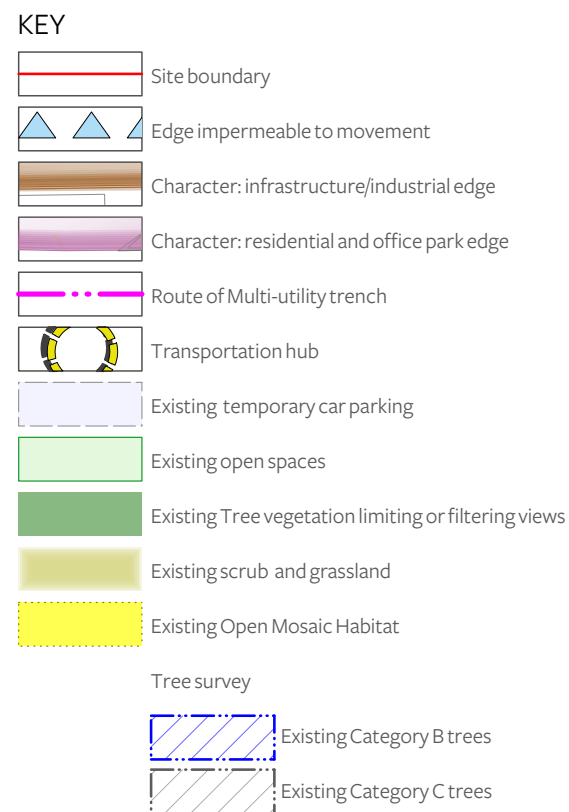
Key constraints for the site are related to its layout as former railway sidings, its surrounding infrastructure and the existing ecological features on site. The site's 'edges', funnelling movement south to the station, are generally impermeable to the east or west, and therefore the development is challenged with providing high quality public realm within a contained and limited space.

The east-west division of the site by Milton Avenue presents an opportunity to compartmentalise the commercial and residential spaces. Extensive tree planting, lawn, and intimate spaces in residential gardens contrast with the more urban square and its structured forms. Linking these spaces through visual legibility and a common language of materiality would form a cohesive development, bringing green infrastructure and its benefits within a short distance of the Cambridge North Station.

In terms of public use, the immediate link to the Cambridge North Station offers a huge potential to provide vibrant, accessible and beneficial spaces for commuters as well as the office and lab staff and residents that will occupy the site. Cyclists and pedestrians will pass through daily, and an engaging public realm can provide socialisation, relaxation, and healthy work and residential external environments.

The site contains an ecologically rich species mix that has arisen from the infertile gravelly substrate of the former sidings. This mix, referred to as 'Open Mosaic Habitat' (OMH) is diverse and nectar rich, but is also easily lost to encroachment of scrub vegetation. There is an opportunity to permanently retain the OMH, through selective clearance of volunteer vegetation, through translocation of the OMH seedbed to new roof surfaces, and through a 'mimic' planting of similar species throughout the site.

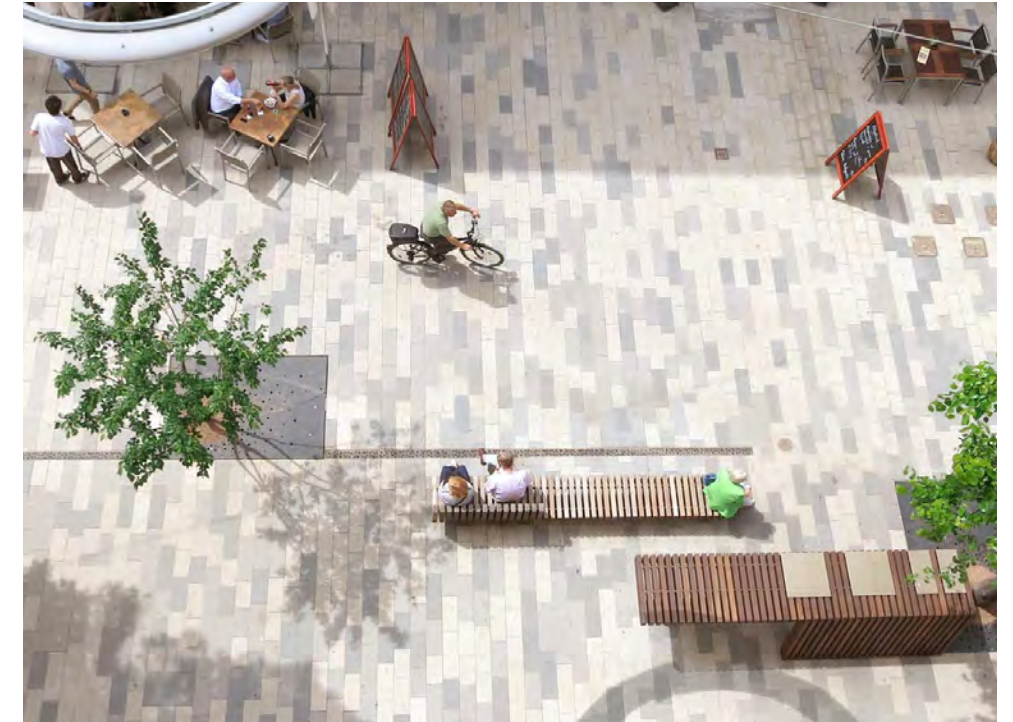
These constraints and opportunities influence the development of design principals and strategies for Cambridge North.



LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE VISION

LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES:

- A well considered arrangement of buildings set within a network of external spaces of different scales and characters;
- Green space at the heart of the development, that creates a unified amenity for residents and office workers alike;
- Legible link to the railway station for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians
- Roof spaces should be intelligently used, creating biodiverse green roof systems integrated with residential amenity and working spaces.
- A low speed environment with legible surfaces and a high quality pedestrian realm; and
- Vistas using built form and planting to assist in place-making and orientation.



ART & PLAY:

- Create opportunities for public art settings, on both large and small scale. Potential focal points include the axis running between the residential quarter and Chesterton Square, Cowley Circus and the 'wilder areas': the Wild Park and the swale of Station Row;
- Integrate play with social spaces, so that there is informal play 'as you go' strategy. Equipped play area contain plenty of seating for carers and parents;
- Natural play - stones, logs and 'found' pieces - is part of the residential garden 'scene' and is easily assimilated for seating for young people and adults.



LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE MATERIALITY AND FURNITURE

MATERIALS AND DETAILING

- A simple palette of robust materials;
- Low maintenance public spaces;
- Distinctiveness and sense of place, through material references to historic use as railway sidings, including rough-edged and characterful textures, such as timber and corten steel;
- In places, a 'mosaic' of soft paving colours variation, evoking the mosaic seedbed of the site's biodiversity;
- Paving choices, pattern and colour used to aid legibility; and
- Overall a high quality and welcoming public realm.



STREET FURNITURE

- High quality street furniture set at frequent intervals within public spaces, often integrated with planting beds;
- Furniture to compliment the language of the hard landscape materiality: corten and timber, stone and textured or polished concrete;
- Simple forms, often linear and horizontal, reminiscent of lines of train wagons or sidings;
- Frequent additions of backrests and armrests;
- Chunky timbers for pergolas and platforms in the residential gardens; and
- Kerbs 'grow' out of raised kerbs to become low perching places.



LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECOLOGY

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANTING DESIGN

- Large growing species selected wherever space allows, including avenue trees such as London Plane;
- Tree arrangement and species choices to reflect the character of each space;
- In the primary square, trees used as structural elements;
- In the residential garden, trees combine with low planting and earth mounds to provide some areas of semi-enclosure;
- Hedging used to create 'defensible' ground floor private external space;
- Planting selections that considers climate change, water use and plant health;
- An Open Mosaic 'mimic' approach, through the use of grasses and naturalistic matrix planting, set amongst a network of trees and elegant shrubs; and
- SUDs strategies integrated with the planting scheme.



ECOLOGY

- Retain Open Mosaic Habitat seed bed through translocation onto biodiverse roofs, or in the Wild Park as part of an ecological and educational strategy. This involves removal of existing scrub and volunteer woodland to maintain open areas for expanded colonisation of OMH;
- Create integrated ecological features into the residential and commercial public spaces, such as swale planting and rain gardens;
- Use naturalistic matrix planting with a great diversity of species, using a planting palette that mimics or improves upon the invertebrate friendly and floriferous qualities of OMH species; and
- Add deadwood piles, gleaned from site, to create habitats.

