

7.0 Scheme Proposals

7.1 SITE LAYOUT

The illustrative layout takes on board the principles established through various Pre-Application discussions with WHBC as well as feedback received from the Public Consultation. It is a scheme that tests the site, in order that appropriate levels of residential accommodation and public open space can be achieved.

The development proposes a total of 317 dwellings set within a high quality landscaped environment. It aims to transform its existing character and setting whilst maintaining key links to Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, the railway station and local facilities.

The proposals offer a range of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments with a range of tenures including private, shared ownership and rented accommodation.

The scheme promotes a clear street and movement network, a pedestrian square and high quality open space to strengthen its setting and promote a sense of place.

Key features of the layout are as follows:

- Public open space upon entering the development to offer a sense of arrival;
- Existing pedestrian routes will be formalised, enhanced and incorporated within landscaped spaces to provide attractive routes that will encourage active travel;
- Built form and active frontages to overlook enhanced landscaping and public open spaces allowing for a sense of security and ownership;
- Enhanced landscaping along boundary perimeter to act as a buffer, screening the development from surrounding residential and commercial properties as well as providing noise attenuation and visual screen from the adjacent railway line;

- The proposal offers 30% of affordable housing provision with 3no. M4(3) compliant units ensuring that dwellings are accessible and available to a variety of end users;
- Integrated car parking with a range of solutions from undercroft parking, courtyard spaces and sufficient visitor provision;
- Cycle parking exceeding policy requirements.

Detailed analysis plans form part of this planning application.



FIG 35 - PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR SITE LAYOUT

7.2 SCALE & MASSING

The blocks have been developed with due consideration to neighbouring properties and their impact on daylight and overshadowing. Proposals seek to deliver a development which is sensitive to the context in which it sits, responding to the immediate context while considering the wider Welwyn Garden City architectural heritage. Heights and architectural detailing of important marker buildings and primary frontages have been considered to add variation and hierarchy of procession through the site..

Primary façades and marker buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area have also been developed with mansard roofs. While outwardly these roofs reflect the WGC design principles, they are used on the scheme to screen plant from public view and /or adjacent blocks.



FIGS 36 - PROPOSED SITE SECTIONS

7.3 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

The principles of The Golden Ratio have been applied to elevation design, as per the recommendations of the WGC2120 Design Code. This ensures that the contemporary vision for the development of Campus East responds appropriately to the heritage status of the Garden City and its design principles.

The plinth level at ground floor has been developed to vary in height to suit the change in levels across the site and to ensure that stepped fenestration is avoided above this level. Blocks that sit immediately adjacent can maintain different ground floor/entrance FFLs but provide an upper floor horizontality with continuous facade lines.

Solid to void ratios are also reflective of the Welwyn Garden City design ethos. The practicality of appropriate opening sizes to meet current building regulations has been balanced against the need for substantial panels of brickwork as punctuation while avoiding inactive frontages or large sections of brickwork without relief.

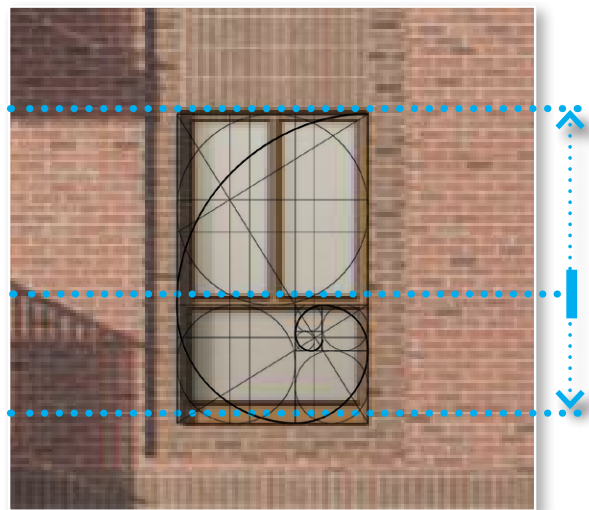


FIG 37 - GOLDEN RATIO PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO OPENINGS

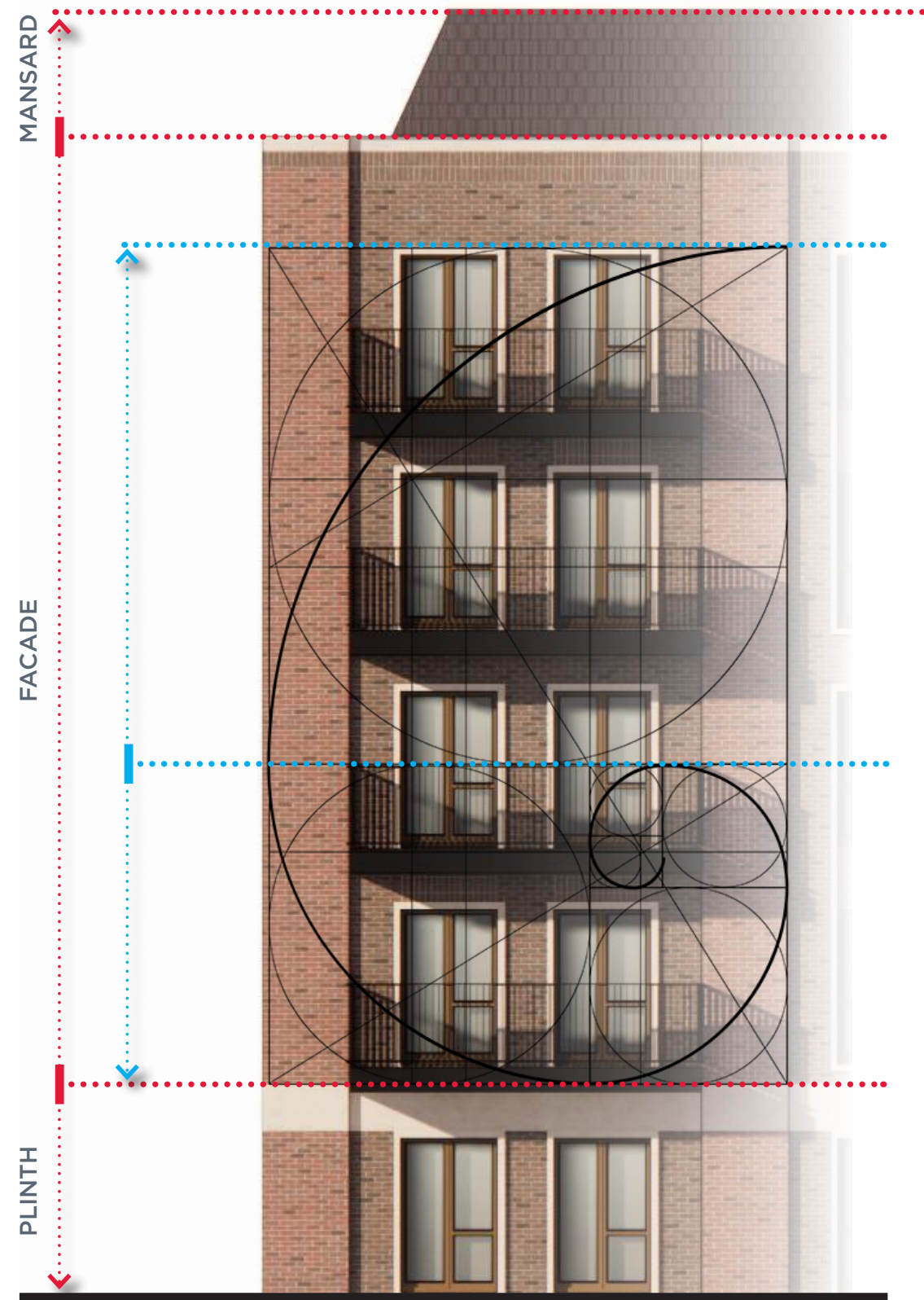
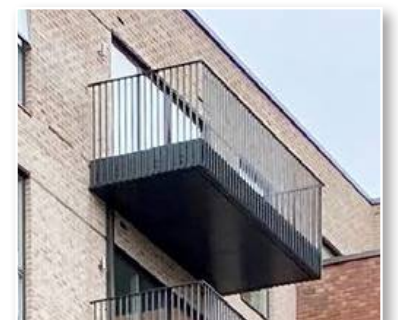


FIG38 - TYPICAL BAY ELEVATION BLOCKS A & B

Local Development



Proposed Detailing



Block & Site Character

The site isn't large enough to create a traditional variation of character between blocks, instead the provision of a harmonious and united development is more appropriate. However, there is a natural change in block characters, graduated from the very public-facing entrance blocks to the rearmost blocks adjacent to Gresley Close.

By reflecting this slight change in character through the variation of massing, detailing and material between blocks, the scheme is able to add interest to the façades and procession through the site.

Block forms, features and orientation therefore respond to their location within the site with a mixture of block storey heights and roof form further distinguishing between blocks and highlighting key markers and way-finding cues.

The informal character areas opposite have been identified and block development aligned with its hierarchy. In tandem, focal buildings that form the key markers for junctions, changes in direction or the termination of views, have also been established to ensure appropriate detailing and massing to these sections of facade.



FIG 39 - CHARACTER STRATEGY KEY PLAN

DEVELOPMENT EDGE

Blocks A and B

Blocks A and B to the western edge of the site have been embellished with a higher level of detailing, marking arrival onto the site. Also defined by established trees within a belt to the site frontage, this edge is public facing and sits wholly within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Massing is used to create a marked change in the elevational character and the scale of the corner-turning sections adjacent to the site's entrance also create a gateway to the site.

Regular use of repeating features and symmetry of these two blocks create a robust built form edge to the development at a scale similar to the neighbouring College site to the north.

Dormer window typologies have been added to Block A to further enhance this edge's interest through variation and reference to WGC buildings locally.



KEY PLAN



FIG 40 - SITE ENTRANCE, COLLEGE WAY



FIG 41 - LOCAL MARKER BUILDINGS INCLUDING WHBC OFFICE

GATEWAY EDGE BLOCKS

Blocks A and B

The public-facing blocks contain a higher level of detailing in response to their location within the Town Centre Conservation Area and their facade composition more traditional in form than the blocks interior to the site.

The increased massing, roof form and overall heights are reflective of their pre-eminence on the site and visibility in Welwyn Garden City townscape terms, albeit glimpsed views from The Campus. The introduction of dormer windows to distinct parts of Block A also act as an enhancement to this hierarchy, seamlessly acting with the adjacent mansard screening to raise appropriate corners and edges of façades.

Their scale, height and massing have been developed to create a sense of development edge, marking a definite character change as users begin movement through the site.



KEY PLAN

Mansard dormers added to accentuate vertical hierarchy

Larger balconies to define corner of blocks

Recesses add rhythm to principal façades

Ground Floor plinth responding to the human scale, reflective of the WGC centre typology



FIG 42 - FEATURE CORNER, BLOCK A



FIGS 43 - LOCAL FEATURE CORNERS, WGC TOWN CENTRE

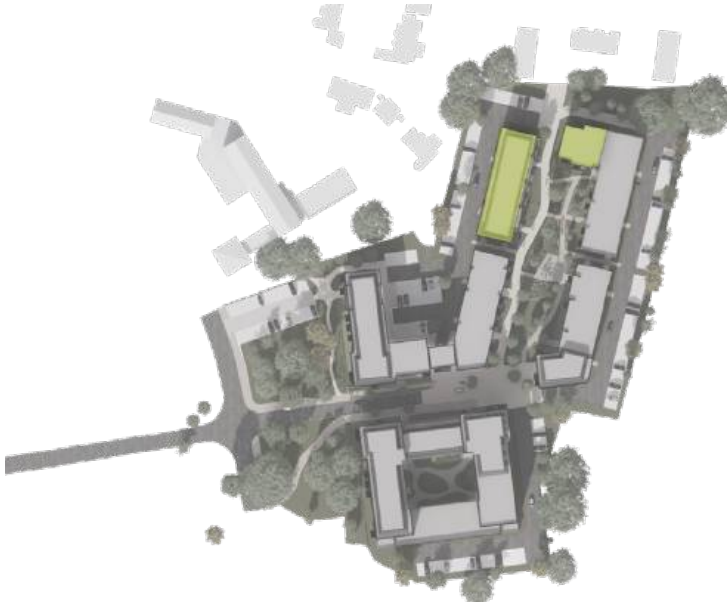
GREEN SPINE: 3-4 STOREYS

Blocks C and D

Blocks C and D enclose the central Green Spine amenity space and have been developed with ground floor level detailing including protruding bricks and stone surrounds to block entrances, providing interest at a human scale adjacent to pedestrian routes through the site. Recessed brick bays add additional relief and depth to the facade, particularly from oblique views.

The blocks have been designed with a mansard roof screen to obscure any view of roof-top plant from either adjacent, taller blocks or views from outside of the site.

Entrances have been expressed to be identifiable from pedestrian and cycle approaches from the Green Spine.



KEY PLAN



FIG 44 - ENTRANCE BLOCK C



FIGS 45 - WGC TOWN CENTRE MATERIAL & WINDOW PRECEDENT

GREEN SPINE: 5 STOREYS

Blocks B4, E, F and G

The ground floor detailing to these taller blocks has been applied in a similar manor to Blocks C and D, creating a unified facade at this level, facing the central green spaces.

The taller blocks have been design with parapet roofs to limit the perceived height, still accommodating roof-top plant but without possible views available.

Entrances have been expressed to be identifiable from pedestrian and cycle approaches from the Green Spine, together with the repeated tactile brickwork relief as per blocks opposite.



KEY PLAN

Balcony locations used to add interest to façades when viewing from Green Spine

Recessed bays accentuating verticality and forming facade rhythm

Recessed entrance aiding way-finding and recognisable from oblique views



FIG 46 - ENTRANCE BLOCK G



FIG 47- WGC TOWN CENTRE BRICK DETAILING EXAMPLES

7.4 MATERIALS & DETAILING

The proposed materiality reflects the predominance in the immediate surrounding context for red brick neo-Georgian style buildings in Welwyn Garden City centre, generally with mansard roofs.. The scheme proposes a limited material palette of red brick with a contrasting stone to articulate delineation between plinth and upper floors on key building sections, reflective of Welwyn Garden City detailing on larger format buildings.

The façades are further enhanced with a range of brick detailing embellishment in key locations to define key features. Brickwork will generally be laid stretcher bond with recessed soldier and double soldier courses used to accentuate parapets and stacked openings on key sections.

A range of additional brick details have been used to provide visual interest and add richness to the elevations. Recesses have been designed to add rhythm to principal façades, adding depth and emphasising block entrances. Entrances are further articulated by projecting surrounds in white-painted masonry framing recesses, adding shadow and aiding identification from oblique views.

Grey clay tile mansard roof screen set behind parapets have been used on some key blocks, emphasising marker buildings and screening roof-top services and plant, creating a unifying roofline.

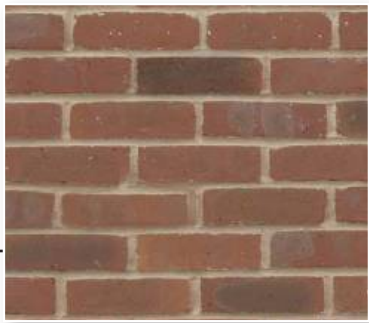
Balconies are proposed as traditional metalwork, reflecting this common and important aesthetic of the Welwyn Garden City vernacular.



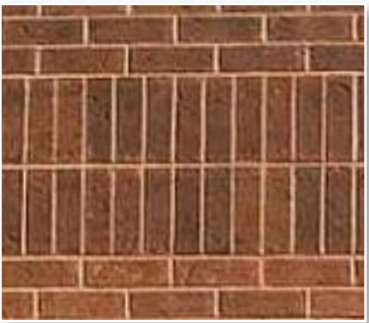
Green Spine Blocks



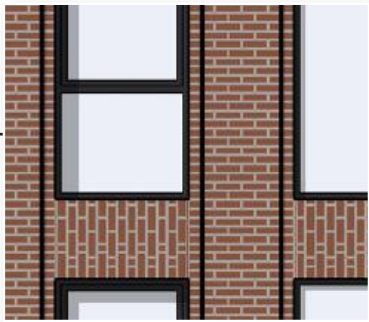
Marker Buildings & Entrance Blocks



Brickwork



Roof



Detailing & Decoration



Contrasting Details



FIGS 48 - MATERIALS & DETAILS PALETTE

7.5 BALCONY TYPOLOGIES

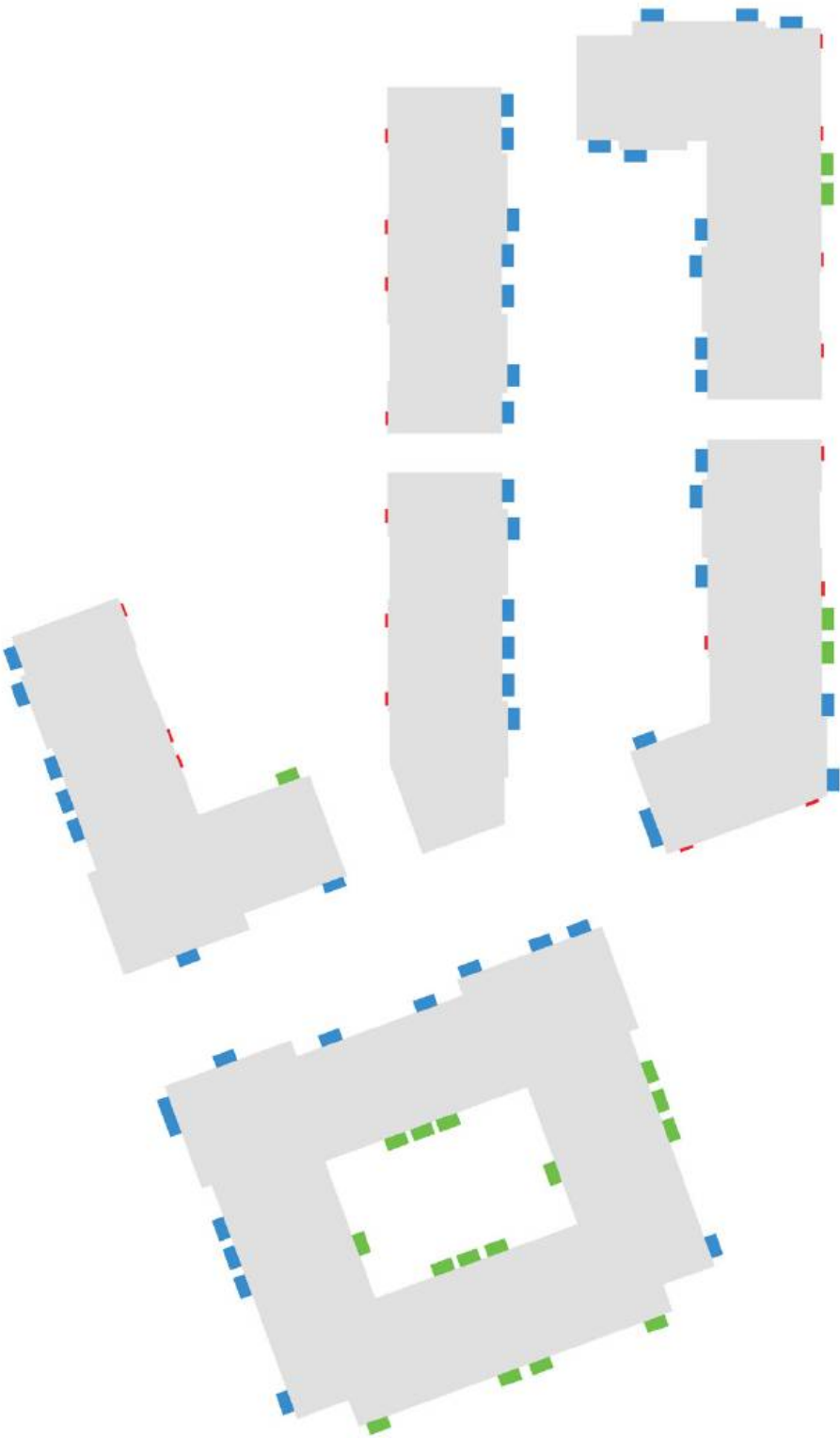
Balconies have been used throughout the scheme to provide private amenity space to upper floor apartments that are immediately accessible from each lounge. Ground floor units have been provided with defensible space accessed in the same location from the KLD. This has been replicated on units that face into the courtyard of Block A.

The introduction of balconies in appropriate locations also adds visual interest to the elevations and follows the principles of vertical hierarchy. Articulation of the elevations in tandem with the fenestration for each block provides relief from the otherwise strict building lines enclosing the central Green Spine and softening the interface between building and landscaping.

The variation of balcony typologies across this scheme allows their use as differing functions, from performing purely functional amenity to denoting the importance of marker buildings and terminations of views. Balconies have also been used successfully to respond to corner-turning block locations, continuing the provision of active frontage.

There are three main balcony typologies; **juliet balconies** are used to add embellishment to façades that otherwise would be perceived as visually uninteresting; **cantilevered balconies** provide private amenity space for apartments and minimise the interruption of views when viewed obliquely; and **supported balconies** have been used on secondary elevations that are not viewed from the public realm or main routes through the scheme providing a purely practical purpose and response to their location.

As balconies have been used in a stacked formation, responding appropriately to the WGC context, this impacted on both daylighting and heating considerations. In some locations the shading by balconies on units below has caused unacceptably reduced levels of daylighting amenity. This in turn has necessitated larger openings to the walkouts onto balconies and therefore heating/cooling specification considerations which have been accommodated.



- Juliette Balcony
- Cantilevered Balcony
- Supported Balcony

FIGS 49 - BALCONY TYPOLOGIES

7.6 LANDSCAPING & AMENITY

Design Aspiration

The goal of the masterplan is to encourage a diverse Welwyn population to interact with nature, improve their physical and mental health and create new social connections with spaces that foster social cohesion.

The design has been influenced by a series of healthy design principles:

- Enhancing general level of activities amongst residents;
- Create flexible spaces for health and well-being;
- Develop infrastructure to support active and ageing population; and
- Enhance green infrastructure and ensure citizens have equal access to green space.

Design Principles

The objectives of the landscape strategy are to integrate the scheme within its setting whilst creating new amenity space for the residents and an attractive public realm.

Key public realm and landscape masterplan objectives include:

- Tie into the Welwyn Garden City design principles;
- Designing a public realm that is accessible and connected for all;
- Creating a location for people of all backgrounds to live and gather;
- Developing spaces that reflect the Garden City core values;
- Foster healthy, active living using healthy design principles;
- Increasing biodiversity and urban green factor on site to combat the climate emergency; and
- Creation of tree-lined streetscapes.



FIG 50 - PROPOSED LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

Healthy Streets

The site seeks to create many spaces for enhanced levels of activities for residents. In various areas within the site, there will be features to help support mental, social and physical health through green links and typologies which include the following:

- Meadow gardens to increase interaction with Nature;
- Reduce Nature Deficit Disorders;
- Spaces to meditate;
- Healthy sensory spaces for children to explore, touch, smell, see for all abilities;
- Social Health;
- Areas of open space to meet neighbours and host community events;
- Encouraging walking/running for leisure; and
- Street trees, meadows, and ornamental planting at ground level can help to improve air quality and surface water attenuation.

A Landscape Statement and Landscape Masterplan form part of this application submission.



Areas of shared surface and dedicated crossing points for pedestrians



Accessible footpaths provide connectivity through lush landscaped gardens



Provision of usable open space for social cohesion and communal activity



Green infrastructure combats climate emergency and improves living conditions



Meadow planting would provide benefits for bio-diversity and creates a playful landscape



Buffer planting to site boundaries provides lush screening and enhanced security

FIGS 51 - LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES