

Map 2: Town centre boundary of the original masterplan superimposed onto aerial view today.

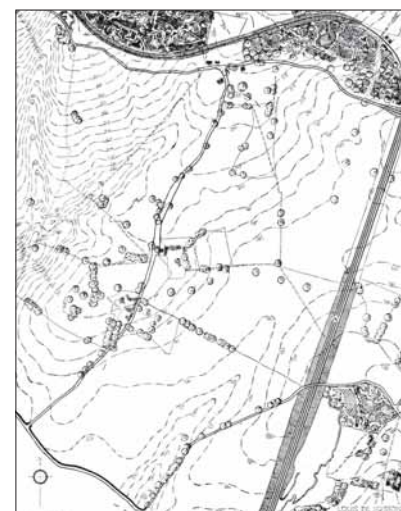
2.1 The evolution of the Site

Map 2 (opposite) superimposes the Louis de Soissons masterplan diagram from Map 1 (page 8) on a recent aerial view of Welwyn Garden City. The town, as built, is still recognizable from the original masterplan diagram with the railway intersecting the town and the curved east-west road that loops around the woods to the west.

Map 3 (below) shows the site on which Louis de Soissons imposed his masterplan. The trainline has been cut and the looping form of the east west road are already features.

Map 4 (below) shows the more detailed plan by Louis de Soissons. Here the great Beaux Arts composition is marked by the sequence of the town gate, rond-point, parkway, centre, leading to the station to the east. This formal layout also then combines Unwin's principles with a picturesque, residential layout of secondary streets and closes.

Map 5 (below) shows the executed plan of 1924 and the development of housing progressing while the town centre has yet to be established around the formal street pattern layout. Already the focus of development is the western side of the tracks. This evolutionary pattern shows the development of the original vision but also the relative lack of importance given to the development on the east side of the railway line.



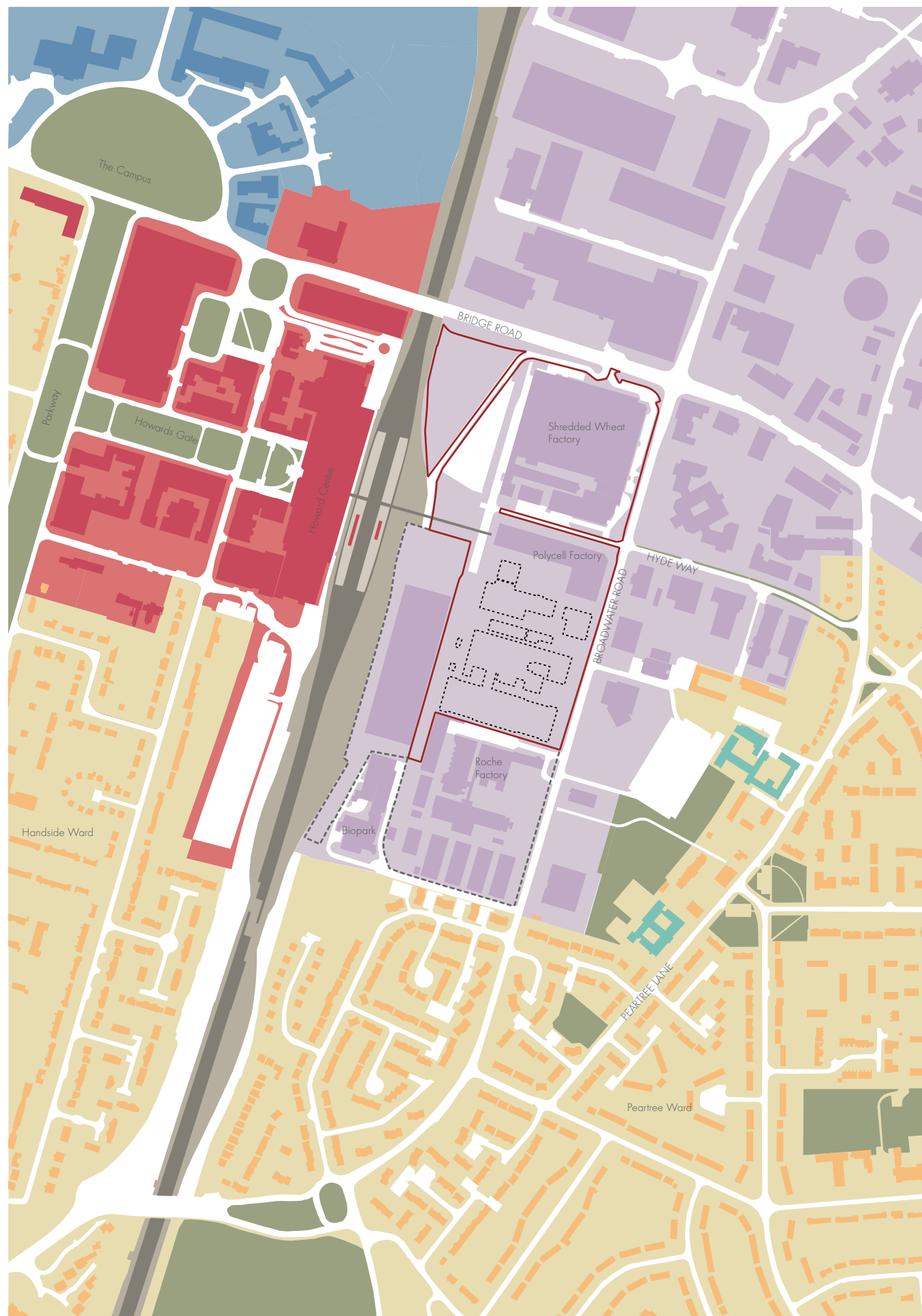
Map 3: The initial site



Map 4: The plan by Louis de Soissons



Map 5: The executed plan in 1924



Existing land use plan

2.0 Context

2.2 Broadwater Road West site today

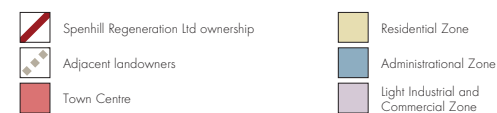
The land use plan shows the context of the Site today. Light industrial buildings or offices still largely occupy the area planned by Louis de Soissons in the 1920s.

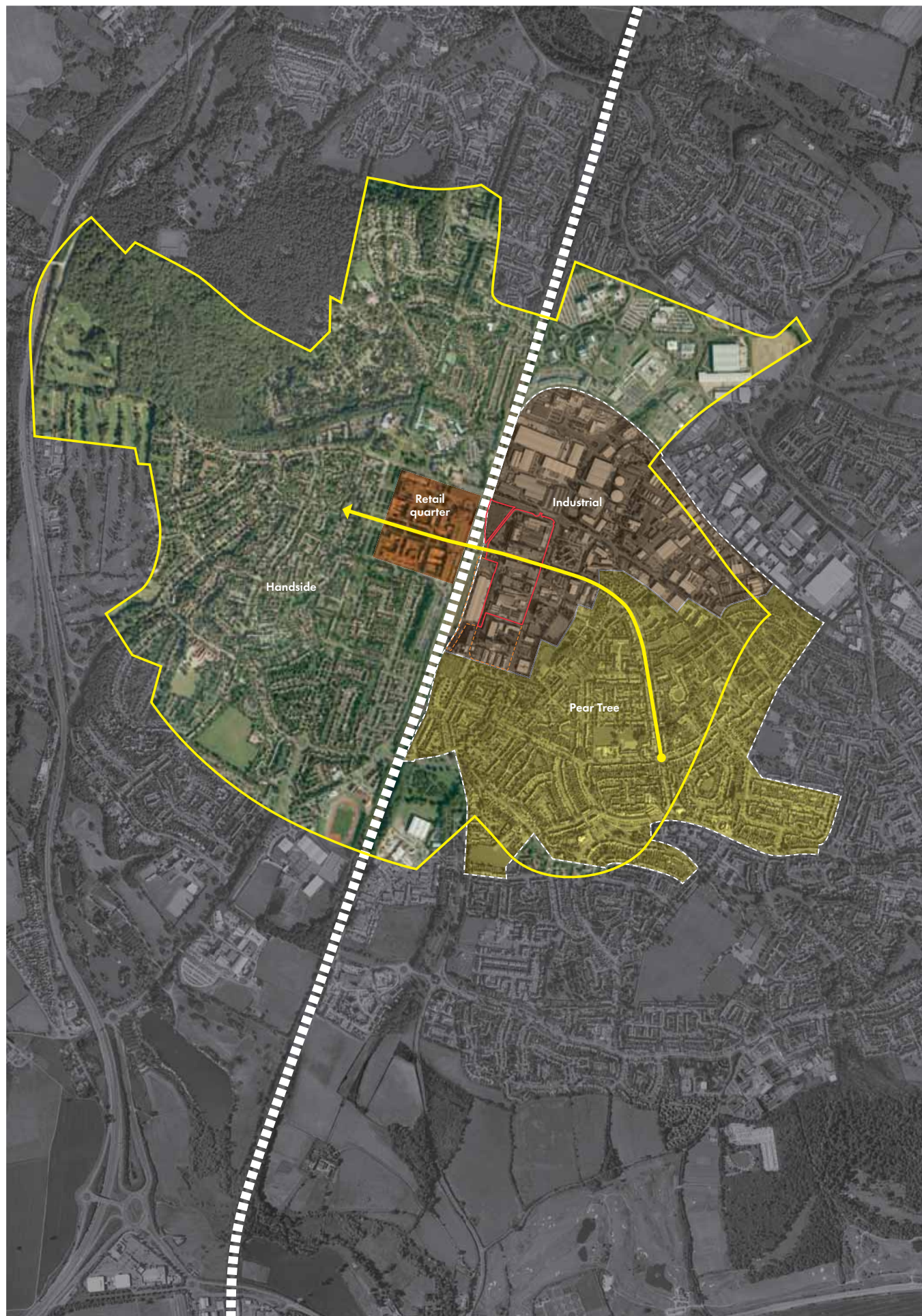
However, the economic trend has been for businesses to relocate to the outskirts of the town and many of these sites are either underused, or vacant. The largest of these are the former Shredded Wheat and Polycell sites (now owned by SRL) adjacent to the town centre.

The photo below shows the Site today. Many original buildings have been demolished and those that remain are derelict.



View of the site from the roof car park of the Howard Centre





Location of Peartree Ward within the towncentre boundary of Louis de Soisson

2.3 Peartree Ward

The Site is situated within the Peartree Ward. Peartree is one of the most deprived wards in the Borough, where there is both a higher than average level of unemployment and a high level of child education deprivation, when compared with other ward areas within the East of England. The ward is in need of investment and regeneration.

There is also a higher than average number of households in rented Council housing, shared ownership and housing association homes, compared with the rest of the Borough. Therefore the introduction of housing for private sale will be essential in ensuring a balanced supply.

The quantity of derelict and empty industrial facilities between the residential area of the Ward and town centre has created a physical barrier, dislocating the Ward from the town centre. The Site presents the opportunity to reinstate this lost link.



Existing housing on Broadwater Road within Peartree Ward



Existing shops on Peartree Lane

-  Spenhill Regeneration Ltd landownership
-  Louis de Soisson masterplan boundary
-  new link from Peartree Ward to towncentre
-  Existing retail area of towncentre



Photograph of the original 1920s buildings of the Shredded Wheat Factory from the south

2.4 Existing buildings on the Site

There are only two building groups left on the Site today. These are the remaining buildings of the Polycell Factory to the south of Hyde Way, and the Shredded Wheat Factory buildings to the north.

The Shredded Wheat Factory buildings are Grade II listed iconic post industrial structures that are the most recognizable feature of the Site.

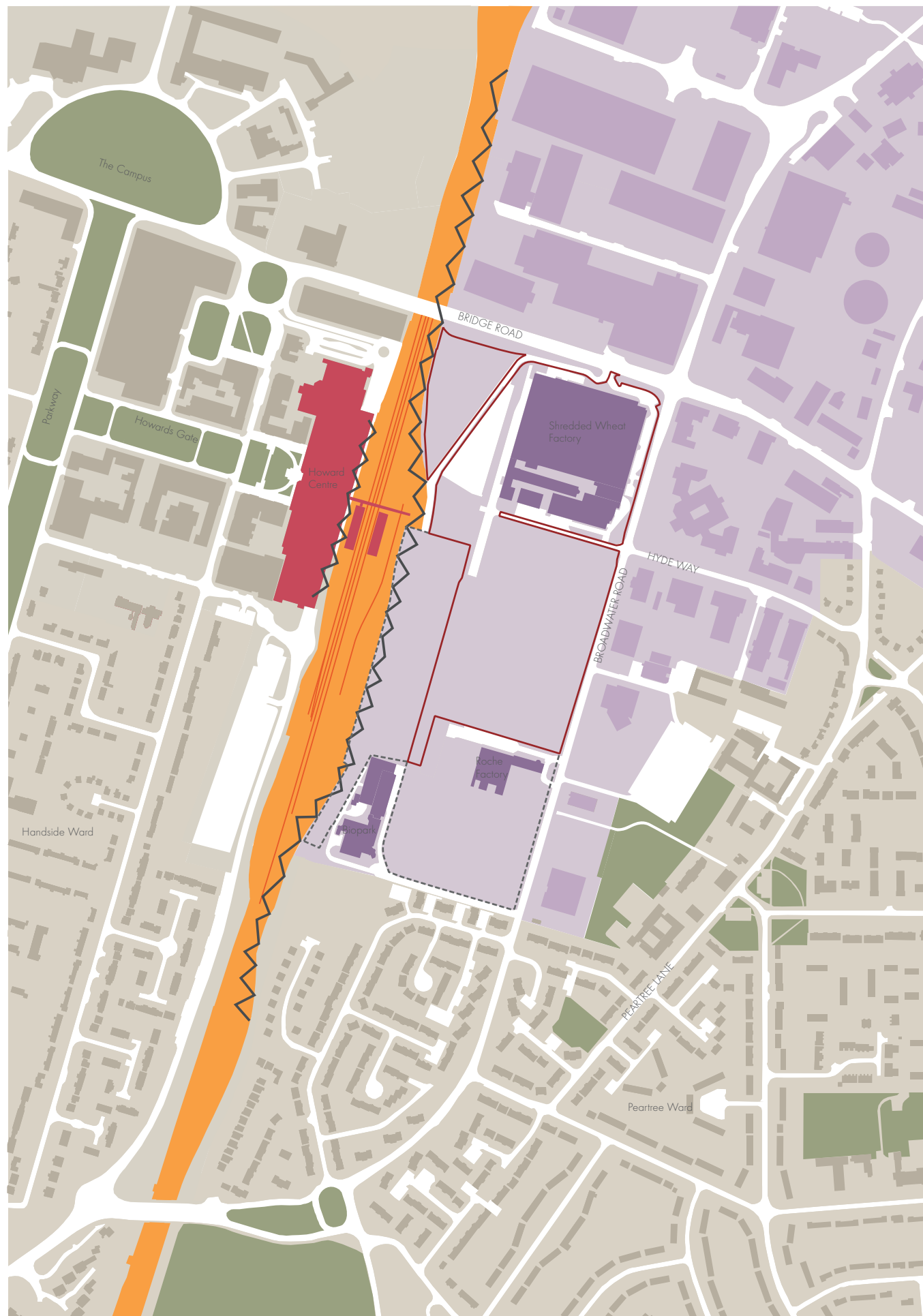
The Redevelopment seeks to demolish the unexceptional Polycell buildings and to retain, restore and find new uses for the more significant elements of the Shredded Wheat Factory structures, including the silos.



Photograph of the later additions of the 1930s and 1950s of the Shredded Wheat Factory from Broadwater Road/Bridge Road junction



Photograph of the Polycell Factory from Hyde Way



Constraints diagram

2.5 Constraints

The Site comes with a series of constraints within which both the BRW SPD and the Redevelopment work towards a new definition for the Site:

- Broadwater Road is a main road connecting the town centre and the A1 trunk road to the north.
- The listed buildings to the north-east corner of the Site
- The Railway lines to the western edge segregate the Site and the eastern Peartree Ward from the town centre
- The bridge connection is not accessible to all
- The Network Rail access road cuts across available land to the north-west corner
- Only two access road points are available to connect new developments to Broadwater Road

- Spenhill Regeneration Ltd ownership
- Adjacent landowners
- Howard Centre
- Station and railway lines
- Light Industrial and Commercial Zone



View looking down from Bridge Road to the railway lines



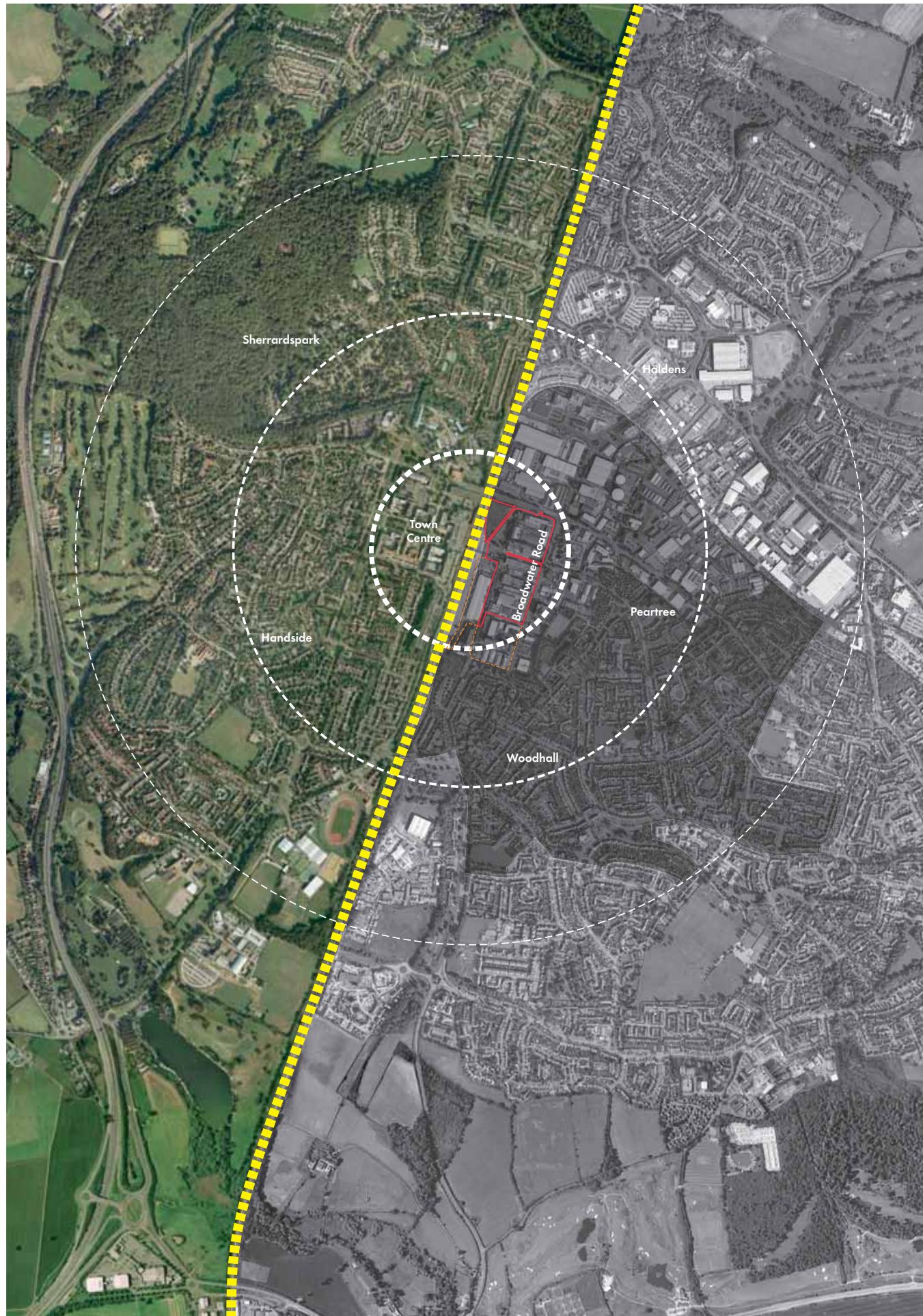
Existing bridge and Howard Centre in the background



View of the 1920's buildings of Shredded Wheat factory



View looking down the Network Rail access road



Proposed town centre area of influence

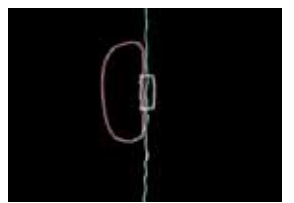
2.6 Opportunities

The most simple interpretation of the opportunity made available by the potential development of the Site can be demonstrated as follows:

- Welwyn Garden City centre is located on the west side of the railway line
- The railway station serves both sides of the track
- New development can fill a void on the east side of the track
- There is the potential for the railway station to provide new links and connections across the town
- Within the large scale of the Redevelopment new neighbourhoods may emerge
- Through the integration of the Redevelopment with the needs of the town centre, a new centre will be established to benefit the town as a whole



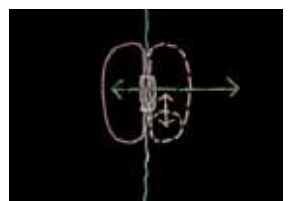
1 Existing Town Centre



2 Railway Station



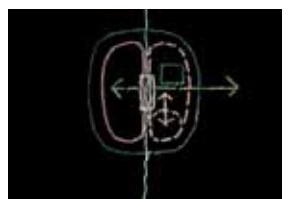
3 New Development



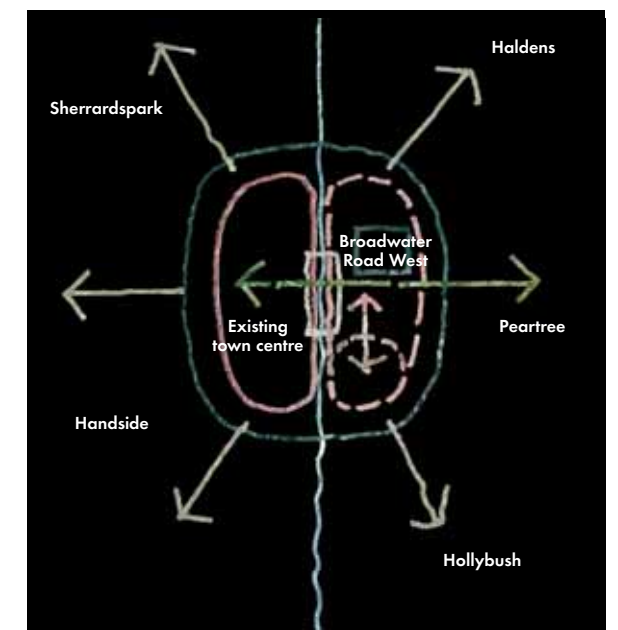
4 Links and connections



5 Neighbourhoods

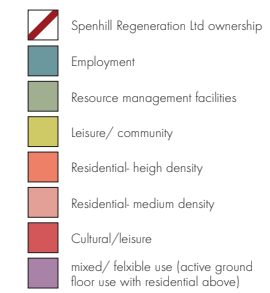


6 New Town



7 Benefit to Town as a whole

2.7 Planning Policy and Supplementary Planning Document



The BRW Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is in line with Local Plan Policy EMP3. The Site has therefore been identified for major mixed use development comprising primarily residential, employment, cultural and leisure uses.

The key elements of the SPD are:

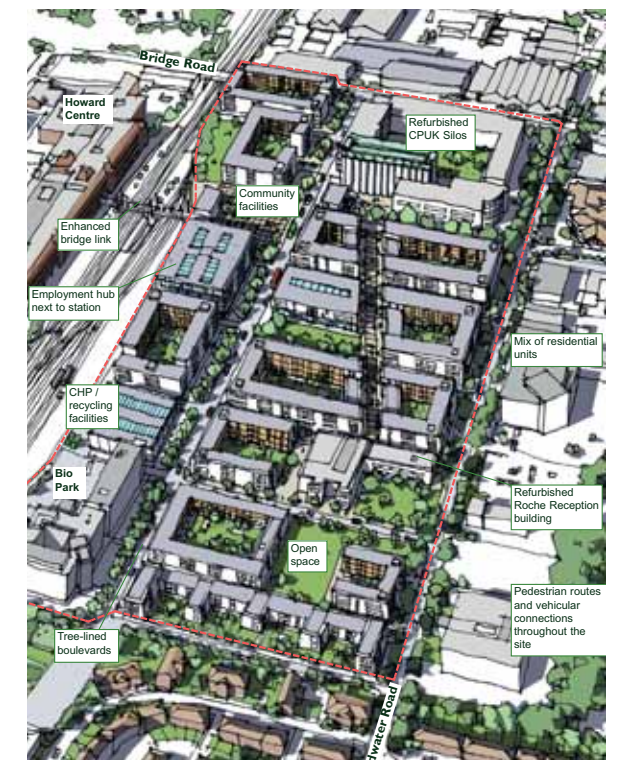
- Broad land use arrangement:
 - Mixed use blocks
 - New residential community
 - Employment hub next to station
- Permeable block layout promoting:
 - Grid form
 - Hierarchy of routes
- Provision for local community:
 - Affordable housing
 - Leisure opportunities
 - Community facilities
- Retain and refurbish listed structures:
 - Former Roche Building
 - CPUK silos & block structures
- Enhance links to/from the site:
 - New bridge link to town centre
 - Encourage east-west links
- Provide open space and landscape:
 - Tree-lined avenues
 - Public green space
 - Community parks
 - Young people's play
- Establish sustainable resource management:
 - Promote a site-wide CHP
 - Provide an on-site recycling centre
- Be in keeping with Garden City design by considering:
 - Industrial heritage
 - Spirit of the Garden City
 - Eco-city ideas
- Achieve sustainable design
 - Aim for Code Level 4
 - Maximise energy efficiency
 - Promote water efficiency measures and SUDS
 - Balanced approach to car parking recognising site's close proximity to the station and town centre

The quantum and distribution of uses considered within the SPD are:

- Approx. 83,000 sqm of residential use (or 900 homes)
- 19,000 sqm of employment use
- 9,000 sqm of leisure use
- 8,000 sqm of flexible use (ie. creche and/or nursery, YMCA)
- 890 sqm of cultural use
- 2,000 sqm energy centre

The proposed Redevelopment works closely with those key elements of the SPD and is explained in more detail in the following chapters.

The major missed opportunity in the SPD is the failure to consider the future of the east side of Broadwater Road in the context of its failure to survive as an industrial area and the need to regenerate the area and connect the town centre to the Peartree Ward.



Illustrative view of the BRW SPD scheme