

# **Southend on Sea SHLAA**

## **Victoria Avenue Design Study**

# Introduction

Victoria Avenue is located immediately north of Southend Town Centre. The Spatial Strategy for the Borough as set out in the adopted Core Strategy identifies the town centre and central area as the primary focus of regeneration in the Borough, and Victoria Avenue is included within this.

The area either side of the Avenue currently includes a large amount of office space, and the long term aim of the Council is to see a total remodelling of this area, with intensive high quality office accommodation moving to the Town Centre, and Victoria Avenue developing as a mixed use central urban neighbourhood.

The brief was to look at the potential for wholesale change in the area, specifically in relation to the site between Victoria Avenue and Baxter Avenue, taking a design-led approach. Previous work undertaken as part of the Southend Central Area Masterplan has begun to do this by setting out a possible layout for redevelopment of the whole area.

What is now needed is an updated view of how change can be accommodated in the area. This design study is therefore intended to take forward the masterplanning work, identifying an appropriate capacity for the site, and indicating how this can be designed in a way which is both aspirational and realistic in what can be achieved.



# Appraisal

The maps below provide an analysis of the site and its immediate context, focusing in particular on the elements and characteristics that need to be retained and enhanced, and issues which need to be addressed to improve the way the area looks and functions and transform it into a new mixed use neighbourhood.

In summary, key issues are:

- The brutal juxtaposition of scales in the area as established residential areas give way to imposing architecture, with buildings and layouts that are alienating in scale and as a result difficult to relate to.
- barriers to pedestrian movement created by Victoria Avenue itself, and the ring road to the south. The town centre turns in on itself reinforcing this barrier. Victoria Avenue has become a road dominated by traffic rather than a street which provides the focus of public life for the area.
- The site itself currently has no through-routes, constraining pedestrian permeability
- despite the dominance of employment use, and high pedestrian footfall at certain times, there is almost no active frontage onto Victoria Avenue.



## Character Areas



-  Traffic dominated area with blank frontage and poor sense of place.
-  Town centre - inward looking reinforces barrier of road. Poor relationships with areas to north.
-  Residential area. Largely 2 storey victorian with later additions in the south. Quiet streets, noisier close to ring road.
-  Town Centre uses (Office / Civic ) and busy road but isolated from centre. Poorly defined spaces and imposing buildings creates feeling of alienation and exposure.
-  Railway and employment uses beyond. Strong barrier to east / west movement

## Existing building heights



-  1 to 2 storeys. Mainly domestic scale but some civic.
-  3 to 6 storeys. Low rise buildings. Mainly civic and office scale.
-  7 to 10 storeys. Medium rise buildings. Mainly civic and office scale.
-  11 storeys and above. High rise buildings. Mainly civic and office scale.

## Townscape Appraisal



Wide busy roads dominated by vehicular traffic. Victoria Avenue acts as a barrier between offices to west and civic area to east. Ring Road acts as a barrier between the Town Centre and areas to the north. Seek to reduce traffic dominance.



Juxtaposition of tall, bulky office buildings with 2 storey domestic buildings creates an awkward transition in scale. Taller buildings are imposing and intrusive in the domestic environment. Large gaps in frontage also create a sense of a one-sided street.



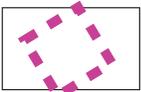
Noise generated by vehicular traffic - design needs to take account of this especially in relation to location and design of residential accommodation.



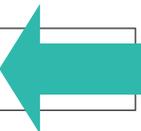
Mature trees lining Victoria Avenue enhance the streetscape and begin to create a 'boulevard' feel. Need to be retained and added to where appropriate, to enhance this boulevard character, and provide separation between buildings and traffic noise (albeit reduced).



No links or pedestrian connections through the site. Need to take opportunities to increase permeability which in turn will support new uses on Victoria Avenue.



Public space of merit. Grand civic space well defined by buildings. Hard landscaped. Take opportunities to create relationship with this space across the road.



Grand modernist civic buildings framing public space and addressing Victoria Avenue. Positive relationship to the street. New buildings across street should seek to define and enhance the street space.



Strong building line with few breaks (a somewhat brutal frontage). Buildings are high and bulky with almost no active frontage. Creates a feeling of imposing buildings, dominating space rather than framing it.



Busy pedestrian route - office buildings generate high levels of pedestrian traffic but for limited periods during the day. This provides the beginnings of street life.



# Design Concept

The overall concept for the Victoria Avenue area is to create a new mixed use neighbourhood appropriate to a central area; an area with a more human scale that is primarily residential but with a strong cultural and community feel, providing a range of uses including some smaller scale employment.



Transitional area. This area can accommodate uses compatible with a town centre periphery. It needs to look towards both the town centre and the residential neighbourhood to the north.



New neighbourhood. Low to medium rise with primarily residential use and supporting retail, employment, community and cultural uses as appropriate. To include houses and a range of apartments of different sizes to suit families as well as couples and singles.



A series of public spaces of different sizes and types for different activities. From small hard landscaped spaces for street cafes to larger formal and informal green spaces.



Formal public space to make a relation to and make a visual connection to the existing public space across Victoria Avenue, helping to break down the barrier created by traffic.



Street trees to retain and enhance feel of a spacious boulevard.



Continuous frontage to be provided to create a stronger feel of a two-sided street. Heights to be reduced to mainly 3/4 storeys, balancing the townscape with buildings opposite.



Building frontage to face onto ring road with entrances to provide some active frontage where possible. Begin to create some sense of place here.



Create less brutal frontage. Active frontages, building entrances and street openings. Heights limited to 6 stories except in the transitional area to the south. Retail, cultural and employment uses to be focused on this street to increase activity and enhance sense of place.



Create connections through the site.



Victoria Avenue to be transformed into a street. Reduce barrier effect through increased crossings, visual connections, and public transport routes. Consider reducing space provided for traffic. Active ground floor uses primarily to support local residents and enhance street life.



# Indicative layout

The indicative layout opposite represents a design solution that takes forward the Design Concept and principles set out above and delivers a substantial number of new dwellings (883 in total).



New buildings including individual houses (north west corner) and a range of apartments from 1 to 4 bedroom.



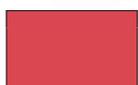
Gardens, including private gardens of individual houses and communal gardens within apartment blocks.



Public green spaces



Street trees



Hard landscaped public spaces



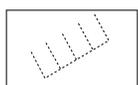
Pavements (including a wide area set aside along Victoria Avenue which could accommodate enhanced public transport / light rail services in future).



Streets laid out as shared spaces



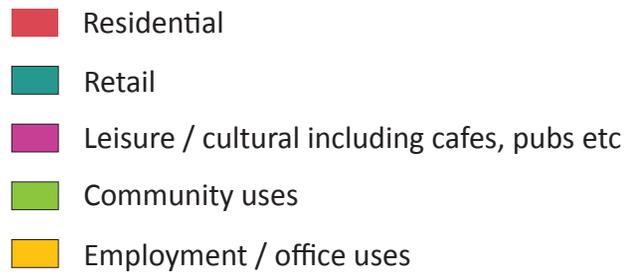
Streets with separate carriageways defined for traffic



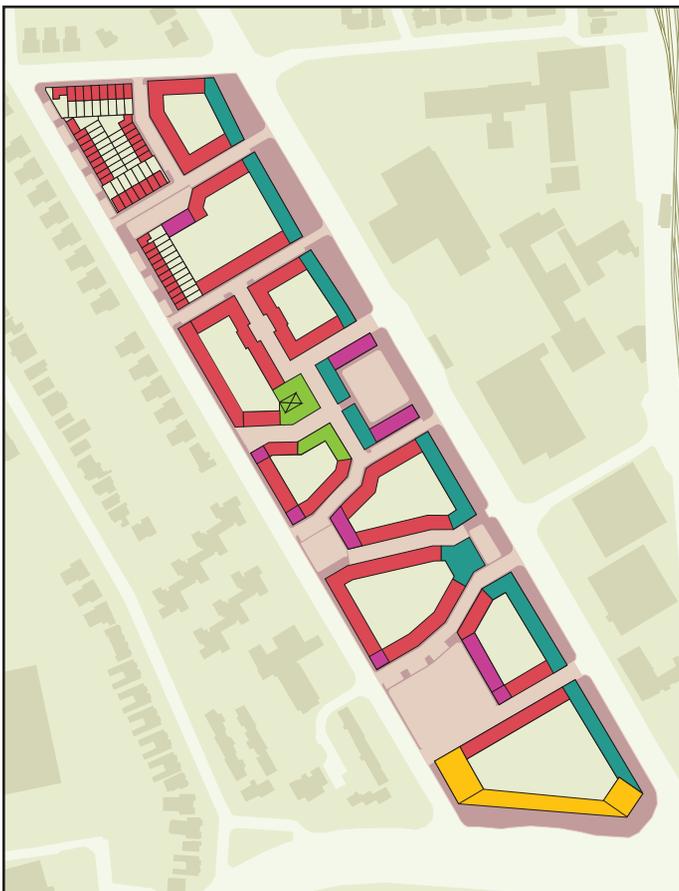
Surface level parking spaces - priority for individual houses and elsewhere for disabled drivers and short stay. Most residential parking to be provided undercroft.



## Suggested building heights



## Ground floor uses



## First floor uses



## Accommodation schedule

The accommodation schedule below sets out that amount of floorspace that could be provided on the site within the specified layout and building heights. The first table sets out floorspace for different uses, and the second table breaks this down to look at different types and sizes of residential accommodation. Upper level uses are identical to first floor uses except in block E where community uses on the first three floors give way to office space above.

Block	Residential	Retail	Leisure / cultural (inc' A3/4)	Community	Office	Totals
A	3,610					3,610
B	5,174	398				5,572
C	6,660	532	173		2,128	9,493
D	5,838	467			2,335	8,640
E	7,189			1,716	2,288	11,193
F	5,205	498	543			6,246
G	6,179		153	323		6,655
H	7,732	598	224		2,990	11,544
I	9,236	456	80		3,192	12,964
J	6,580	624	407		3,744	11,355
K	4,634				17,931	22,565
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,8037</b>	<b>3,573</b>	<b>1,580</b>	<b>2,039</b>	<b>34,608</b>	<b>109,837</b>

### Residential floorspace

Apart-ments	Apt' size (sq me-tres)	Number	total floorspace
studio	40	50	2,000
1 bed	50	108	5,400
2 bed	65	316	20,540
3 bed	95	315	29,925
4 bed	110	50	5,500
<b>total</b>		<b>839</b>	<b>63,365</b>
<b>Houses</b>			
2/3 bed		26	
3 bed		1	
4 bed		17	
<b>total</b>		<b>44</b>	
<b>Total dwellings</b>		<b>883</b>	



# **Southend on Sea SHLAA**

**Sutton Road  
Design Study**

# Introduction

Sutton Road is located immediately north of Southend Town Centre. The area under consideration lies between Sutton Road in the east and Victoria Station in the West. The Spatial Strategy for the Borough as set out in the adopted Core Strategy identifies the town centre and central area as the primary focus of regeneration in the Borough. It also identifies the need to reinforce the role of Sutton Road as an employment area.

The Sutton Road area contains a diverse mix of uses including residential, employment and retail areas. The Council supports the idea of housing-led regeneration in the area, which will allow retention and consolidation of the employment function, whilst raising the quality of the neighbourhood.

The brief was to look at the potential for change across a series of sites in the area (see map on page 19), improving the appearance of the area generally, and taking into the account the need to improve the way that existing and new residential and commercial development relate to each other.



# Appraisal

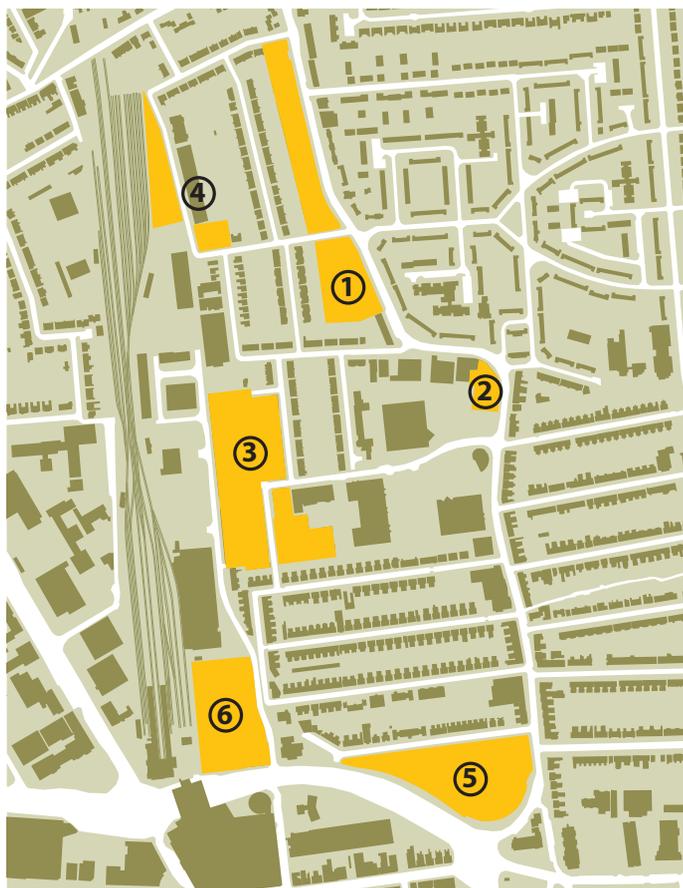
The maps below provide an analysis of the site and its immediate context, focusing in particular on the elements and characteristics that need to be retained and enhanced, and issues which need to be addressed to improve the way the area looks and functions, continuing to accommodate a range of uses but in a way which enables the area to feel more like a single neighbourhood, rather than a series of different areas which do not sit easily together.

In summary, key issues are:

- The area feels schizophrenic - It contains a mix of uses which do not gel together in any coherent way. Employment and retail uses relate poorly to residential streets, and often feel alien in scale and appearance.
- The townscape is in need of repair - The age of employment buildings, together with a series of blank and poorly kept frontages creates a run-down feel to the area
- the ring road creates a physical and psychological barrier and leaves the southern part of the site exposed and open with a poor sense of place.
- There are remnants of quality townscape in both residential and employment areas; new development could complement these and help knit the area together to create something that feels more like a neighbourhood.



## Opportunity sites



- Area 1. A series of sites currently in employment use, fronting onto Sutton Road. Coming to the end of their natural life.
- Area 2. Ageing single storey buildings adjacent to sites currently being redeveloped to the west.
- Area 3. Remnant small scale industrial area with potential for refurbishment (see character areas below).
- Area 4. Employment site and vacant brownfield site with potential to improve townscape.
- Area 5. Local authority high rise housing. Council is considering re-development in the longer term.
- Area 6. Former B&Q site, currently the subject of pre-application discussions to redevelop for a supermarket, with housing, car parking and replacement of youth centre.

## Character Areas



- Juxtaposition of residential and older employment sites creates slightly run-down feel and a need for coherence in street form and character.
- Residential streets. Mainly C19 and early C20 streets with rhythm and uniformity. Several east/west streets with a run-down feel due to poor frontages.
- Remnant small scale industrial area - quite distinctive with good sense of place quality townscape. Could be refurbished.
- To west, marginal employment areas, poor sense of place. To east, large floorplate, low density retail. Both feel intrusive and relate poorly to residential environment.
- Area dominated by ring road. Large scale buildings poorly related to each other and the road. Potential to improve transition between town centre and neighbourhood
- Thriving secondary shopping street.

## Townscape Appraisal



Mature trees



The ring road is dominated by several lanes of traffic with few crossing points (pedestrian bridges) creating a barrier to pedestrian movement as well as a visual and psychological barrier.



The town centre turns in on itself reinforcing this barrier, and creating a road with few active frontages and a poor sense of place. This leaves the southern part of the site as a transition area unable to relate to either the town centre or the neighbourhood beyond.



Noise from the ring road is intrusive in the southern part of the site.



Areas where space is poorly defined and enclosed by buildings, giving a sense of 'space leak' where the space feels too open and exposed with no real focus.



Well used route through the site, passes through areas with blank and poor quality frontage (some narrow paths) - pedestrian environment could be improved.



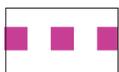
Retail frontage onto main roads, attracting pedestrian movement and creating a sense of vitality.



Open area where buildings relate poorly to streets. Includes missing frontages, back yards facing onto streets and an area where two roads run adjacent, but separated by railings. Noise from the ring road is also intrusive. This area feels very run down and lacks any focus.



Single sided street with a new apartment block to east, facing onto vacant / derelict land adjacent to railway sidings. Need to look for opportunities to create two sided street with a use complementary to residential.



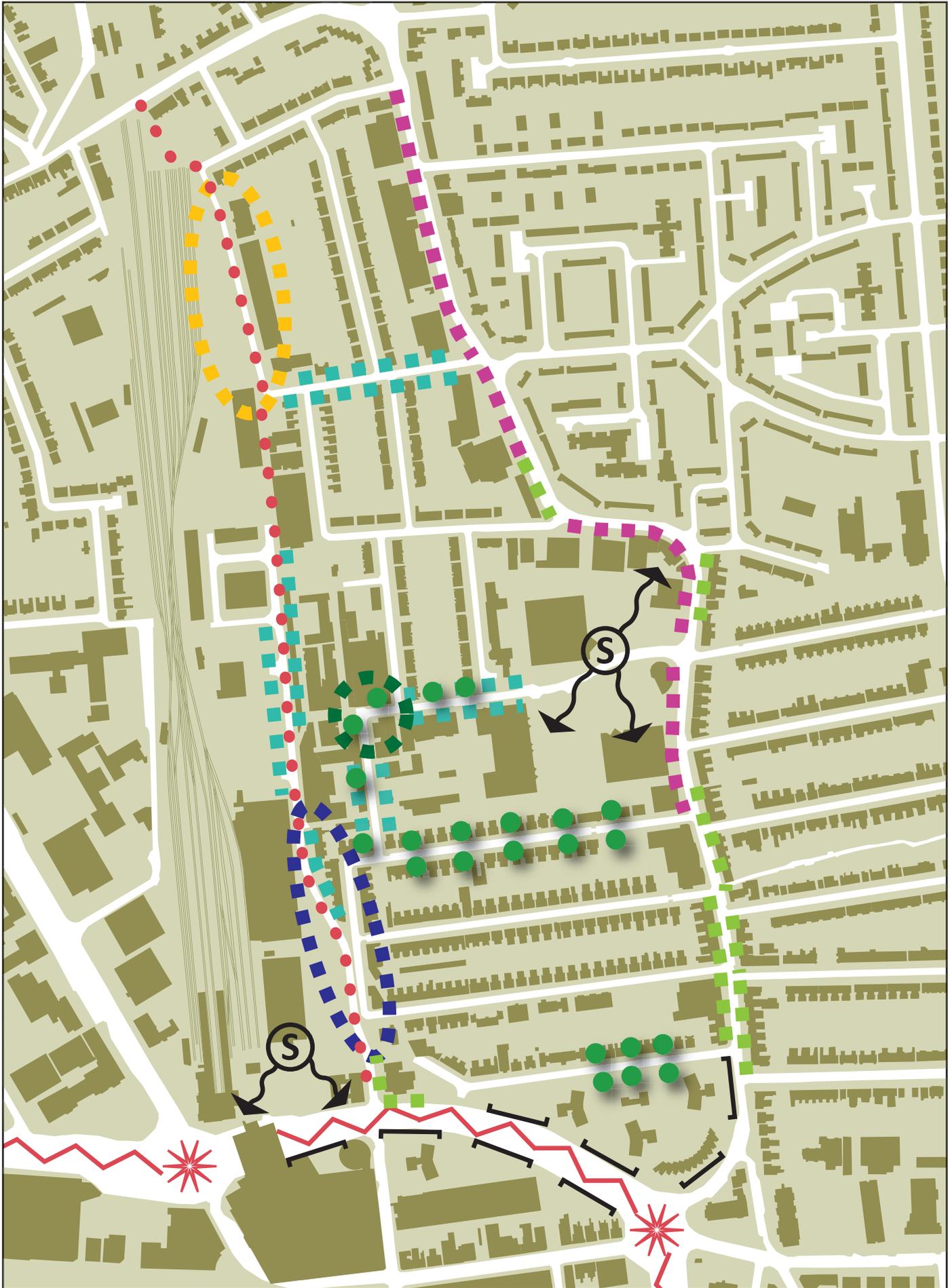
Employment and retail frontage. Opportunity to repair streetscape by replacing buildings which are coming to the end of their natural life.



Blank and poorly maintained frontages. Includes high blank walls and unattractive fences (often in poor condition)



Grainger employment area entrance. Sharp corner with street well enclosed by buildings of some interest and mature trees. Currently a little run-down but the basic structure of the townscape has potential if retained and enhanced through refurbishment.



# Design Concept

The overall concept for the Sutton Road area is to repair, unify and knit together the townscape to create a neighbourhood that retains a variety in mix of uses, but where these uses relate better to each other, avoiding the sense that buildings or uses are intrusive to their neighbours.



Main employment spine. This should be retained as an employment area, but relationships with adjacent residential uses need to be improved by creating frontage onto the main street where possible. Any new buildings should avoid heavy massing which creates an intrusive effect in the townscape. In the south, the 'double road' divided by railings should be removed, and a single route provided and designed to accommodate and calm traffic as appropriate in a residential area.



Redevelopment of these sites would provide an opportunity to repair the townscape, creating two sided streets, well enclosed and defined by buildings.



This area includes a series of small-scale employment units. These could be refurbished to create a new hub for arts, design, media and cultural uses. It could also include an element of residential accommodation, or live / work units and studios. Opportunities should be taken to open up the site and ensure that it creates more active frontage, particularly to the west.



Use opportunity sites along Sutton Road to repair townscape and re-instate residential use so that this area relates better to the buildings opposite. Pockets of retail frontage will continue the established pattern on the street. The building line should reflect that of the houses opposite



Queensway (ring road). Opportunity sites should be re-developed to create a frontage to face onto the road and begin to create a street, as well as a relationship with the Town Centre to the south. (Any future changes within the town centre should mirror this to create a two sided street that functions as a place, not simply a traffic route). Frontage could be both retail and residential, with the areas to the rear more domestic in scale.



# Indicative layout

The indicative layouts opposite represent design solutions that take forward the Design Concept and principles set out above for Areas 1 - 4. Areas 5 and 6 already have notional figures for housing potential identified in the main SHLAA report, and therefore designs have not been prepared for these.



New buildings including individual houses and apartments with 2 - 3 bedrooms.



Gardens, including private gardens of individual houses and communal gardens within apartment blocks.



Street trees.



Refurbished employment area - a home for arts and creative industry.



Pavements.



Streets laid out as shared spaces.



Streets with separate carriageways defined for traffic.

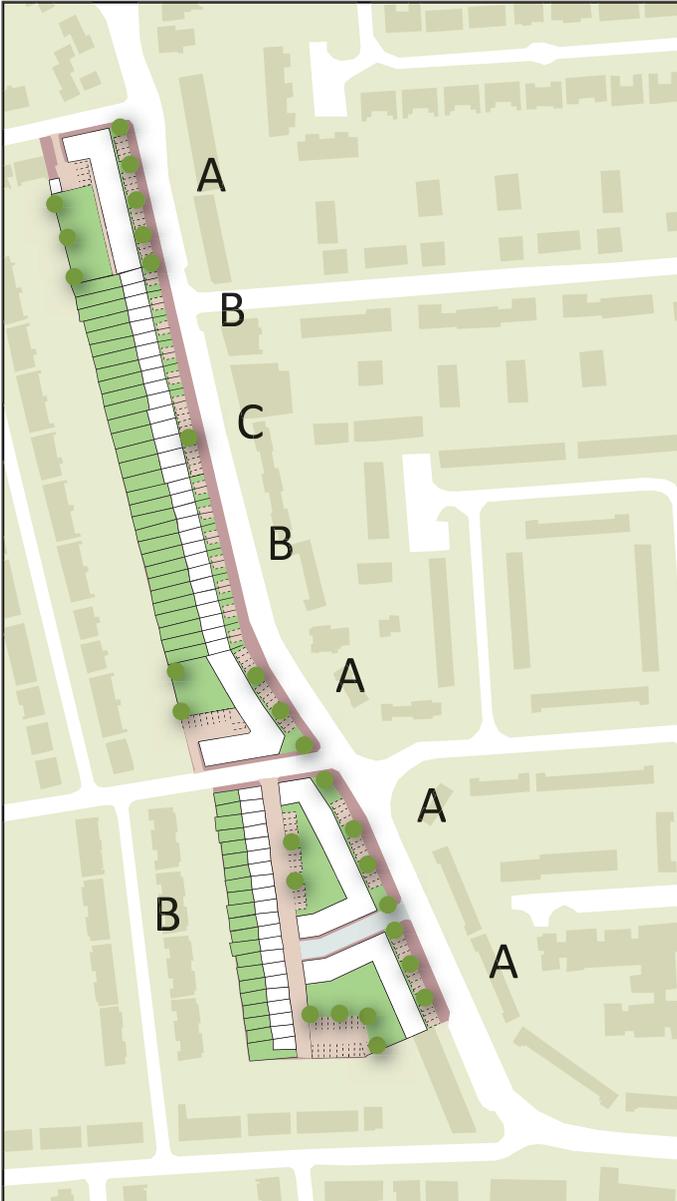


Surface level parking spaces. Residential parking provided at 1 space per dwelling.

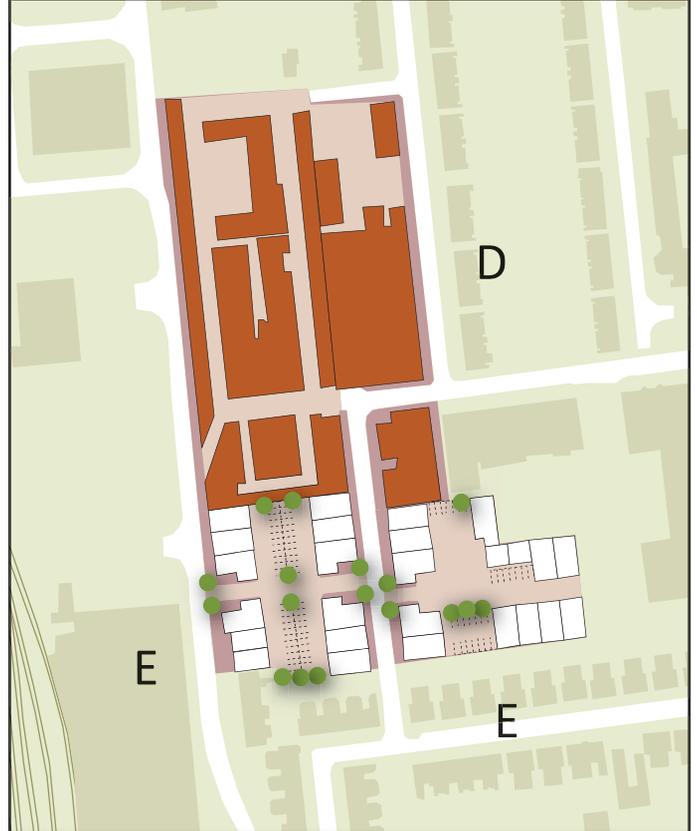


Letters relate to the accommodation schedule and denote types of dwelling.

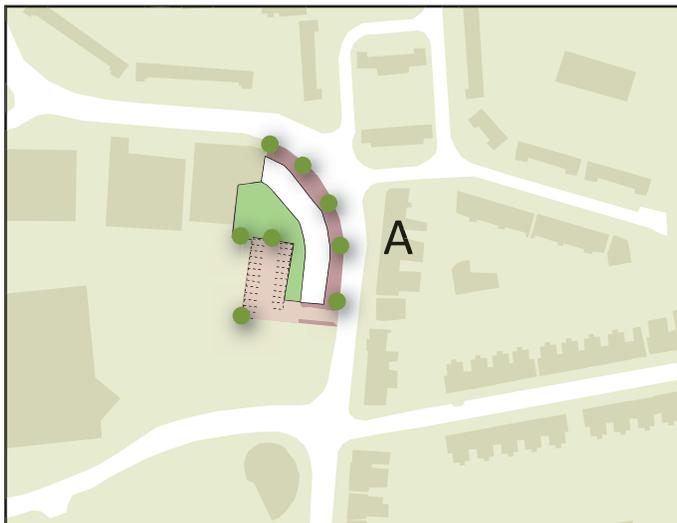
**Area 1.**



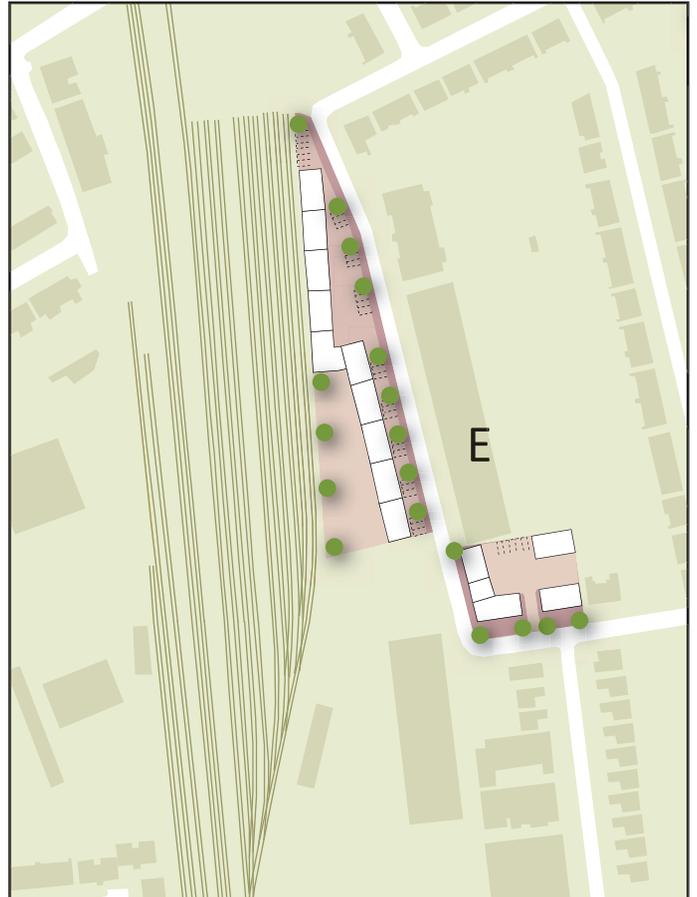
**Area 3.**



**Area 2.**



**Area 4.**



## Accommodation schedule

The accommodation schedule below sets out the number of dwellings, heights of buildings and the amount of employment and retail floorspace that could be provided on the site within the specified layout. It also sets out the number of car parking spaces that could be accommodated within each scheme. It is assumed that these will all be surface level.

### Area 1.

Type	Description	Size (no. of rooms)	Stories	No. of dwellings	No. of Car parking spaces	Retail space (sq metres)
A	Apartment in block	2	3	60	60	
A	Apartment in block	3	3	45	45	
B	Apartment above retail	2	3	10	10	300 (5 units)
C	Townhouse	3	3	46	46 (garaged)	
<b>Total dwellings</b>				<b>161 - 35*</b> <b>126</b>	<b>161</b>	

\* part of this area (319 to 321 Sutton Road) is included as a site within the SHLAA. It is included within the design study in order to show a comprehensive approach to redevelopment of the site and adjacent land. a figure of 35 dwellings needs to be removed from the above total, to avoid double counting.

### Area 2.

Type	Description	Size (no. of rooms)	Stories	No. of dwellings	No. of car parking spaces
A	Apartment in block	2	4	36	24 *
<b>Total dwellings</b>				<b>36</b>	

\* It is assumed that some car parking will need to be accommodated within the retail park to the south overnight.

### Area 3.

Type	Description	No. of dwellings / units	Total Employment floorspace (sq metres)	Car parking spaces
D	Refurbishment	unknown	11,021	unknown
D	Apartments in refurbished emp area	25		25
E	New units	26	3,758	74
<b>Total floorspace</b>			<b>14,779</b>	

### Area 4.

Type	Description	No. of units	Total Employment floorspace (sq metres)	Car parking spaces
E	New units	15	2,184	37

### Totals

Area	Houses	Apartments	Dwellings	Employment (sq m)	Retail (sq m)
1	46	80	126		300
2		36	36		
3		25	25	14,779	
4				2,184	
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>16,963</b>	<b>300</b>