

# Chapter 4.6

## One place, two neighbourhoods

- 6a **A connected place**
- 6b **The right mix of uses**
- 6c **Placemaking with a varied skyline**
- 6d **Approach to character**
- 6e **Old Oak Town Centre**
- 6f **Canalside Neighbourhood**

## A canalside neighbourhood and a major urban centre

The Framework adopts a holistic approach to development. Two distinct poles of intensity - the Canalside Neighbourhood and Old Oak Town Centre - are structured around coherent development and movement principles. These sitewide principles emphasise the different characteristics and qualities of the two urban centres in order to support diverse, characterful, inclusive places to live and work.

Old Oak is currently fragmented and disjointed, lacking connected centres for living, working, leisure and amenity. The Framework will create One place, two neighbourhoods through:

- 6.a A connected place
- 6.b The right mix of uses
- 6.c Placemaking with varied heights
- 6.d A new Town Centre for Old Oak
- 6.e A new Canalside Neighbourhood



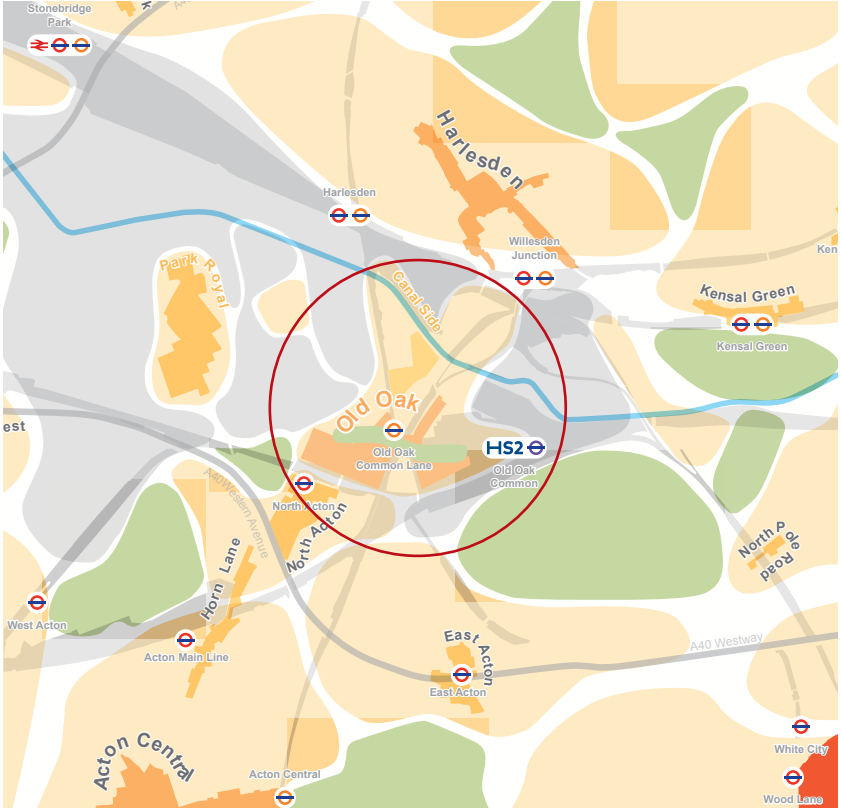
# Integrating with the surrounding fabric

The neighborhoods surrounding Old Oak each possess distinct identities: the multicultural centers of Harlesden and Willesden to the north, and Acton's diverse neighborhoods to the south. The area encompasses significant zones of growth and development, from North Acton to the historic heart of Acton Central, and extends to the southeast through Shepherd's Bush and White City. Alongside Wormwood Scrubs, these areas include some of the region's most significant open spaces.

The new neighborhoods at Old Oak will integrate into the existing urban and social fabric of the surrounding context. Drawing upon the distinctive character of Old Oak and Park Royal, the development will create inclusive, vibrant places for living and working. The regeneration of Old Oak will both reflect and serve the diverse communities that have shaped this area over time.



Existing condition: neighbourhoods divided by infrastructure



Future condition: stitching the gap

- Neighbourhood town centres
- District town centres
- Major town centres
- Metropolitan/ International town centres
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Industrial and Rail land



## 6a A connected place

Positive, human-centred and characterful placemaking at Old Oak will enable a modal shift away from reliance on cars, transforming roads into streets that are attractive and safe for all modes of active travel, and connecting people to parks, canals and key destinations.

This will be achieved through:

- 6a.1 Prioritising active travel
- 6a.2 Reimagining Secondary Streets
- 6a.3 Thriving Local Centre Streets
- 6a.4 Neighbourhood Local Streets





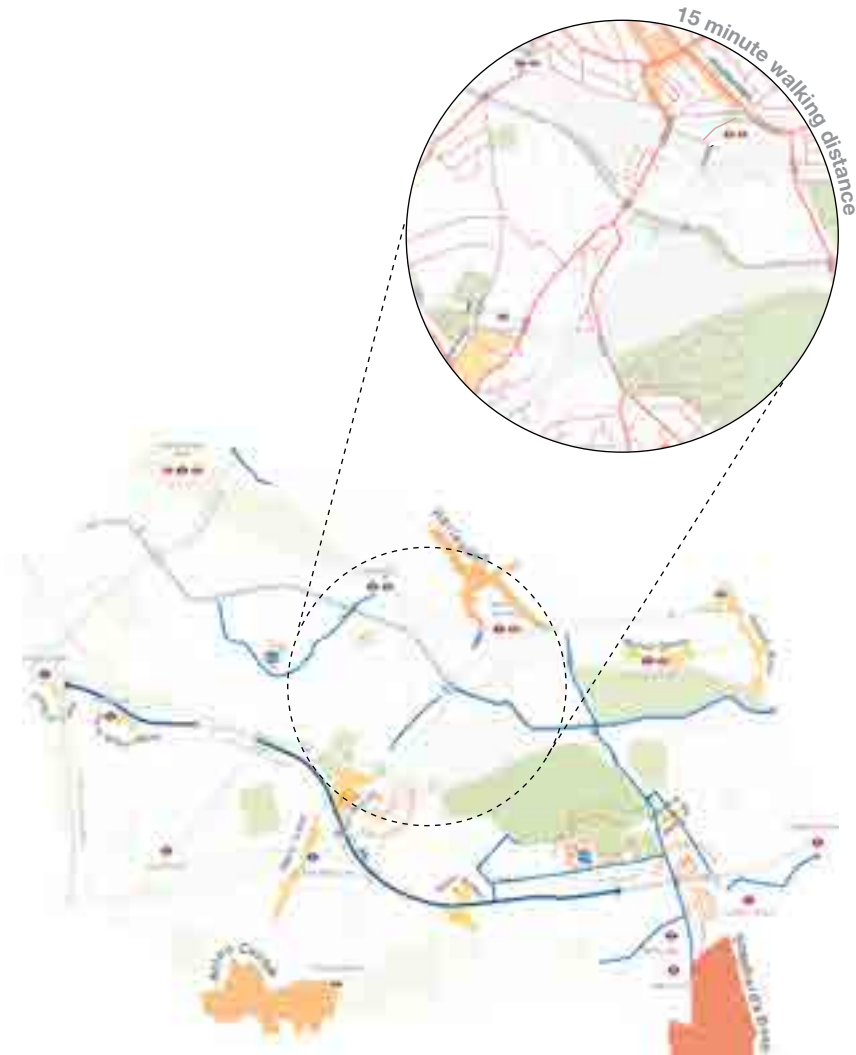
# Strengthening wider connectivity

Old Oak will weave a previously disconnected part of West London into the wider movement network, closing long-standing gaps with new east–west and north–south connections that strengthen links to White City, Shepherd’s Bush, Imperial College London, Acton Central, Park Royal, Kensal Green and Kensal Rise.

A coherent network of quieter leisure routes will build on paths through parks and open spaces, with the Grand Union Canal towpath offering a comfortable 30-minute cycle link to central London

Primary movement corridors should provide safe, well-lit and active routes day and night, supporting public life and clear wayfinding.

- 24h - Protected cycle routes
- advisory/ signed cycle routes
- off carriageway cycle routes
- strategic n-s/ e-w cycle routes
- primary pedestrian routes
- secondary pedestrian routes
- poorly-lit/ isolated pedestrian routes
- poor pedestrian/cycle provision/ industrial roads



Existing cycle network (15 min from Old Oak)



Future cycle network (15 min from Old Oak)

6a.1 Prioritising active travel

The movement network in Old Oak should allow for a modal shift away from reliance on cars by:

- providing an accessible and integrated walking, cycling and wheeling infrastructure network that is continuous, legible and connected.
- designing the East-West Bridge to accommodate pedestrians and dismounted cyclists.
- providing a co-ordinated approach to the pedestrian experience, including improving crossings and widening pavements where possible.
- linking into wider routes, bus networks and other public transport infrastructure.
- safeguarding for a new bridge across the canal at Channel Gate.
- designing with consideration and understanding of the principles of inclusive design to create an inclusive environment as much as possible within the constraints of existing topography. This is to create a network that can be comfortably and independently used by everyone regardless their age, ability or gender.



Diagram illustrating proposed pedestrian network

Pedestrian Priority Crossing Point	New pedestrian route
Existing pedestrian route	New active travel bridge
Enhanced Pedestrian route	Potential connection to towpath

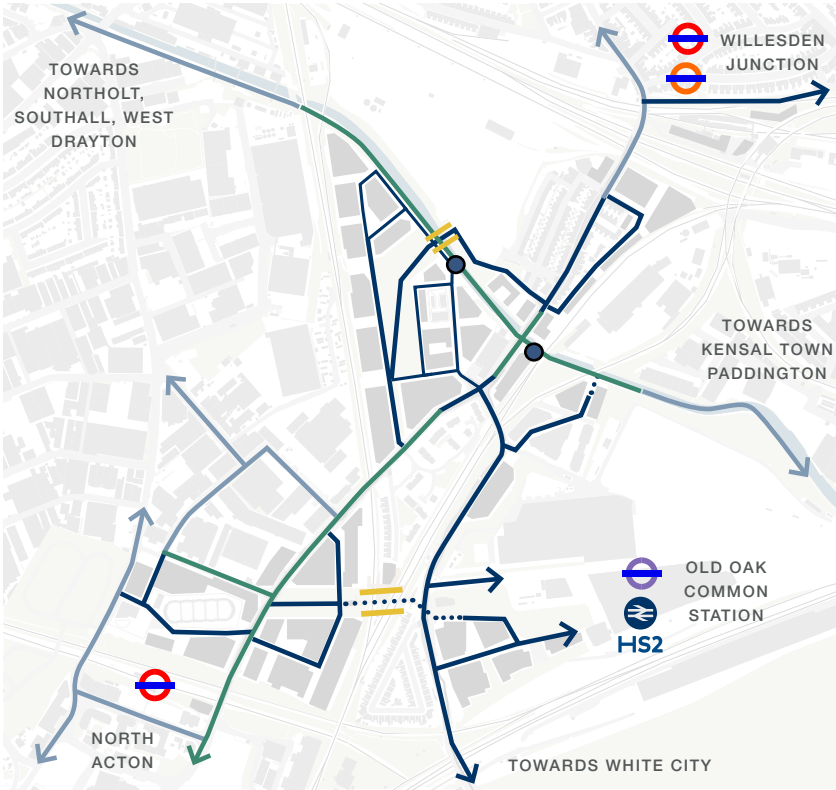


Diagram illustrating proposed cycling network

Existing cyclist route	New active travel bridge
Enhanced cyclist route	Potential ramp to cycle route
New cyclist route	Dismounted Cycle Route

Street hierarchy

The Masterplan Framework adopts a clear, sitewide street hierarchy aligned with OPDC planning policy. Existing north-south arteries (the Mile, the Cut and Chase Road) are Secondary Streets, supported by new Local Centre Streets and Local Streets serving development zones.

Vehicular network

The future vehicular network should enable access to new development zones without creating additional through-routes to neighbouring districts by:

- using local loops to provide vehicular access to plots efficiently and minimising the number of new vehicular routes.
- providing an integrated approach to car-free development considering car clubs, micromobility and inclusive cycle storage (including visitors).
- consolidating bus stops and improving interchange with new and existing stations.
- exploring a potential consolidation centre for logistics to minimise the impact of deliveries.

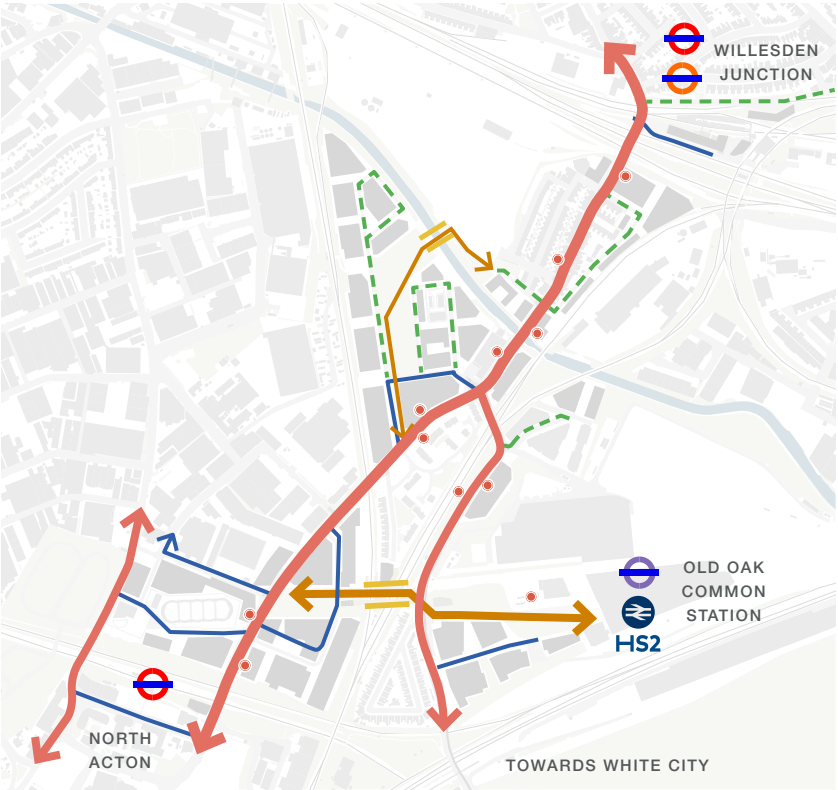


Diagram illustrating proposed street hierarchy

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| — Local Street                    | → Secondary Street         |
| → Key Pedestrian-Cycle Connection | ▭ New active travel bridge |
| → Local Centre Street             | • Bus Stop Location        |

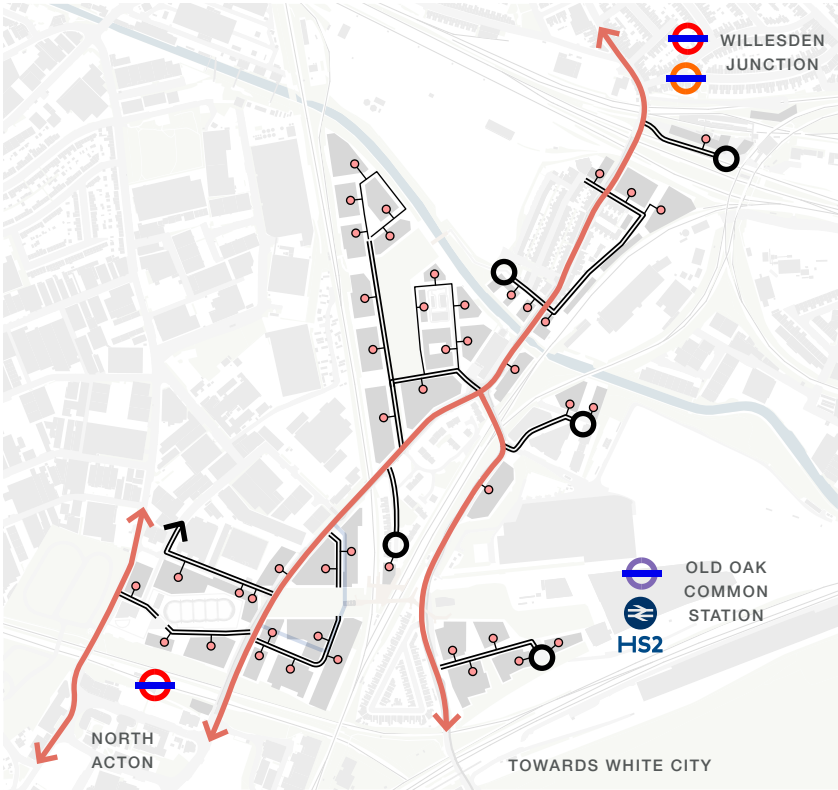


Diagram illustrating potential vehicular local loops

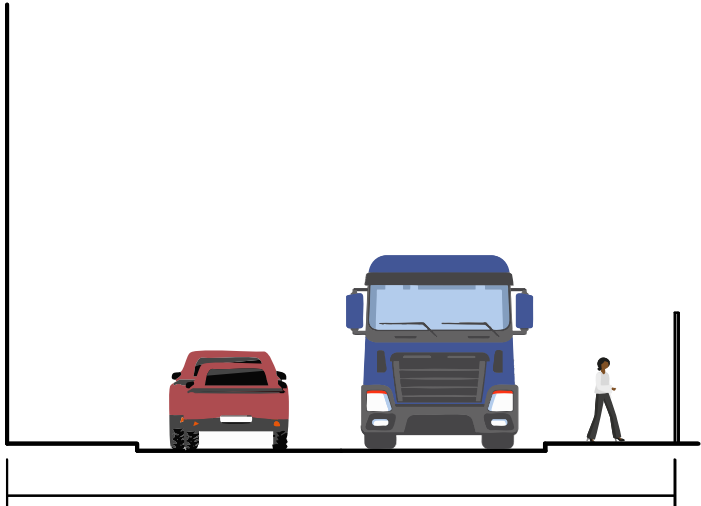
- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| — Vehicular Route         | → Secondary Street |
| — One-way Vehicular Route | • Vehicular access |
| ○ Turning Head            |                    |



6a.2 Reimagining Secondary Streets

Victoria Road, Old Oak Lane and Old Oak Common Lane, currently car-dominated routes, will be reimagined as vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and safe everyday streets.

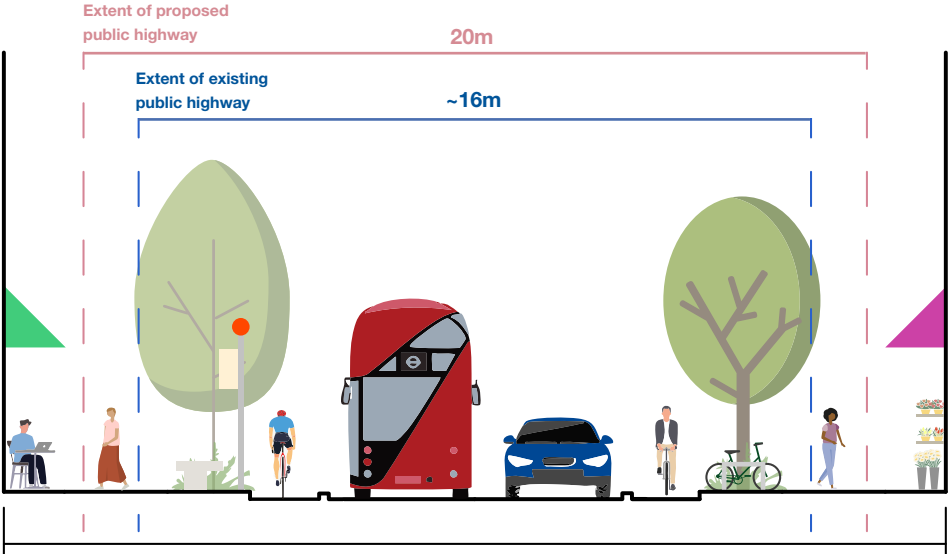
While these routes include a variety of existing widths and conditions, with several pinch points, typical street sections here show how, where space allows, today’s vehicle-led layout can evolve into multi-modal, human-scaled routes. Carriageway space will be rebalanced to prioritise walking, cycling, wheeling and green and blue infrastructure — creating comfortable, legible and climate-resilient streets that support active frontages, social life and safe movement for all.



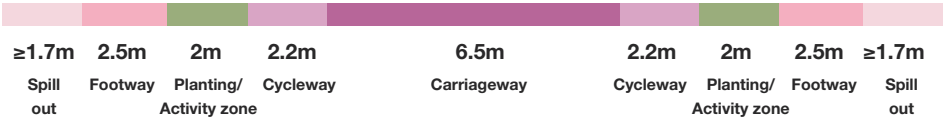
~ 12-16m



Existing typical street section



≥23.3m



Proposed typical street section

**An adaptable approach**

Transforming Secondary Streets across Old Oak requires an adaptable approach that responds to a range of local conditions and street widths. The following street design principles should achieve a high-quality, well-connected street:

- 1** reducing carriageway widths to calm traffic and give more space to walking, cycling, wheeling and planting.
- 2** providing segregated cycle lanes, aligned with the direction of traffic flow where possible, and connected at key junctions.
- 3** designing generous, uncluttered footways with comfortable spill-out spaces serving predominantly non-residential active frontages at ground and first floors. Where needed, set back buildings to enable this.
- 4** integrating SuDS and maximising tree-planting zones for green amenity and sustainable water management.
- 5** new or improved pedestrian priority crossings at key locations and traffic-calming measures to enhance safety.
- 6** introducing a coordinated architectural datum with articulation that introduces a human scale to the street.



Illustration showing how street components can be applied to a section of the Mile to create a flexible, well-connected Secondary Street

## 6a.3 Thriving Local Centre Streets

Local Centre Streets are new mixed-use routes within Old Oak's two neighbourhoods. They will link key destinations, and support local businesses and social life. This should be achieved by:

- 1** designing safe walking, cycling and wheeling conditions with compact lanes, low speeds and traffic calming measures.
- 2** providing wide footways with spill-out spaces for retail and social activity, with clear residential entrances and shop frontages adding life to the street.
- 3** integrating SuDS and maximising tree-planting zones for green amenity and sustainable water management.
- 4** creating pocket parks and small public spaces that provide for uses such as informal play, seating, markets or events.
- 5** maintaining a human scale through coherent building articulation at lower levels along mixed-use edges.
- 6** encouraging natural surveillance from homes and workplaces to keep streets safe by day and night.

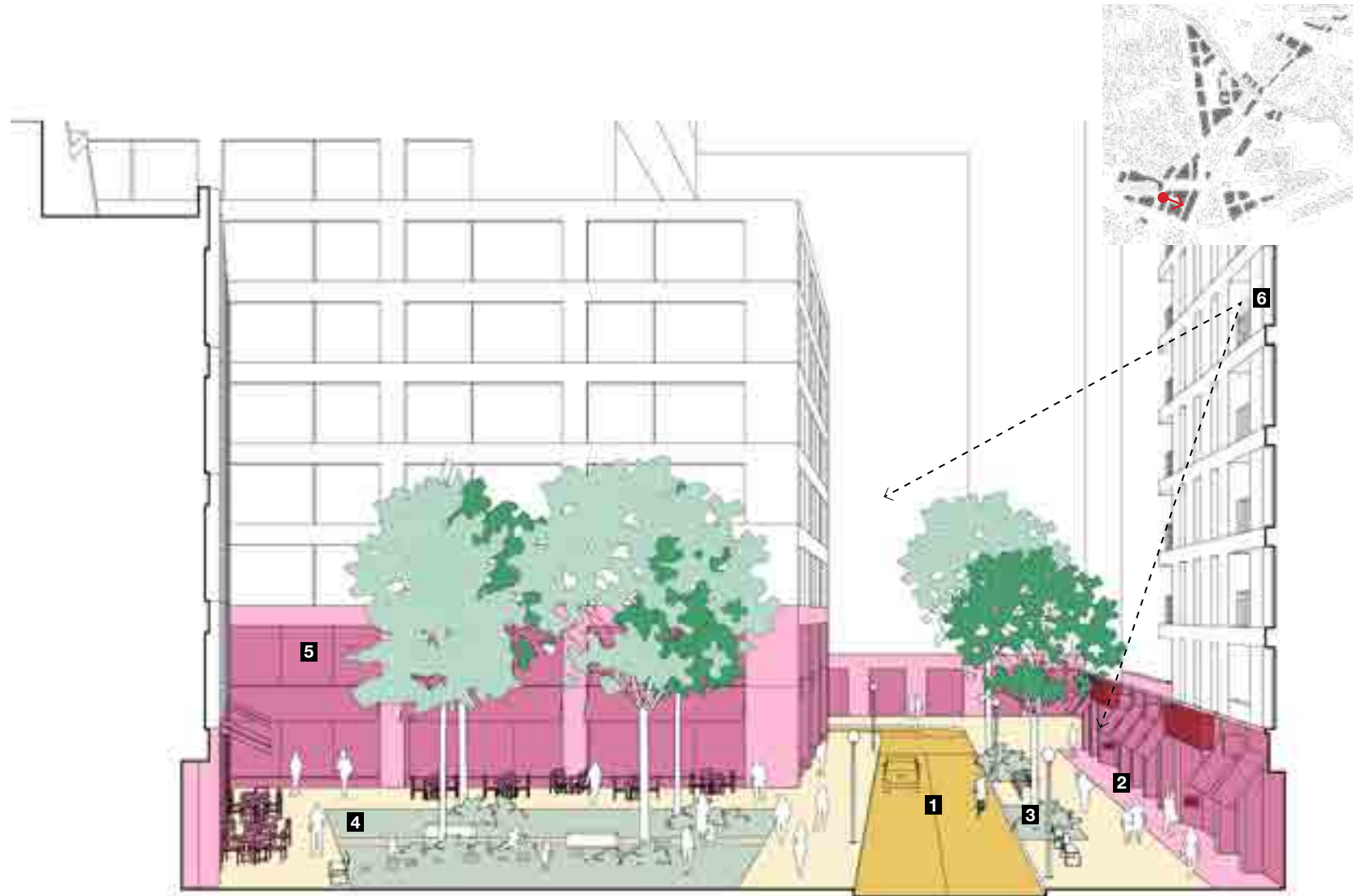


Illustration showing how street components can be applied to a key area of the Town Centre to create a vibrant, people-focused Local Centre Street



## 6a.4 Neighbourhood Local Streets

Local Streets will provide quieter, fine-grain residential routes that serve homes and small local uses. They prioritise active travel in a calm, low-traffic setting and create a residential address activated by front gardens. This should be achieved by:

- 1** designing for low speeds and pedestrian priority using traffic calming measures, raised crossings and shared-surface cues.
- 2** enhancing canal towpaths and green links in coordination with the Canal & River Trust where relevant, to provide safe, legible connections to surrounding streets and spaces.
- 3** integrating green spaces such as canal embankments, pocket parks, gardens and SuDS to shape intimate residential streets, support biodiversity and create opportunities for informal play, seating and social activity.
- 4** providing ground floor residential frontages with defensible space to balance privacy and life at the street edge.

- 5** creating characterful, distinct residential entrances to give each building a clear address and identity.
- 6** providing street and towpath lighting to improve safety and comfort at night.
- 7** breaking up long facades with varied massing and articulation to maintain a human scale.
- 8** promoting natural surveillance from windows and balconies to keep streets active and safe.

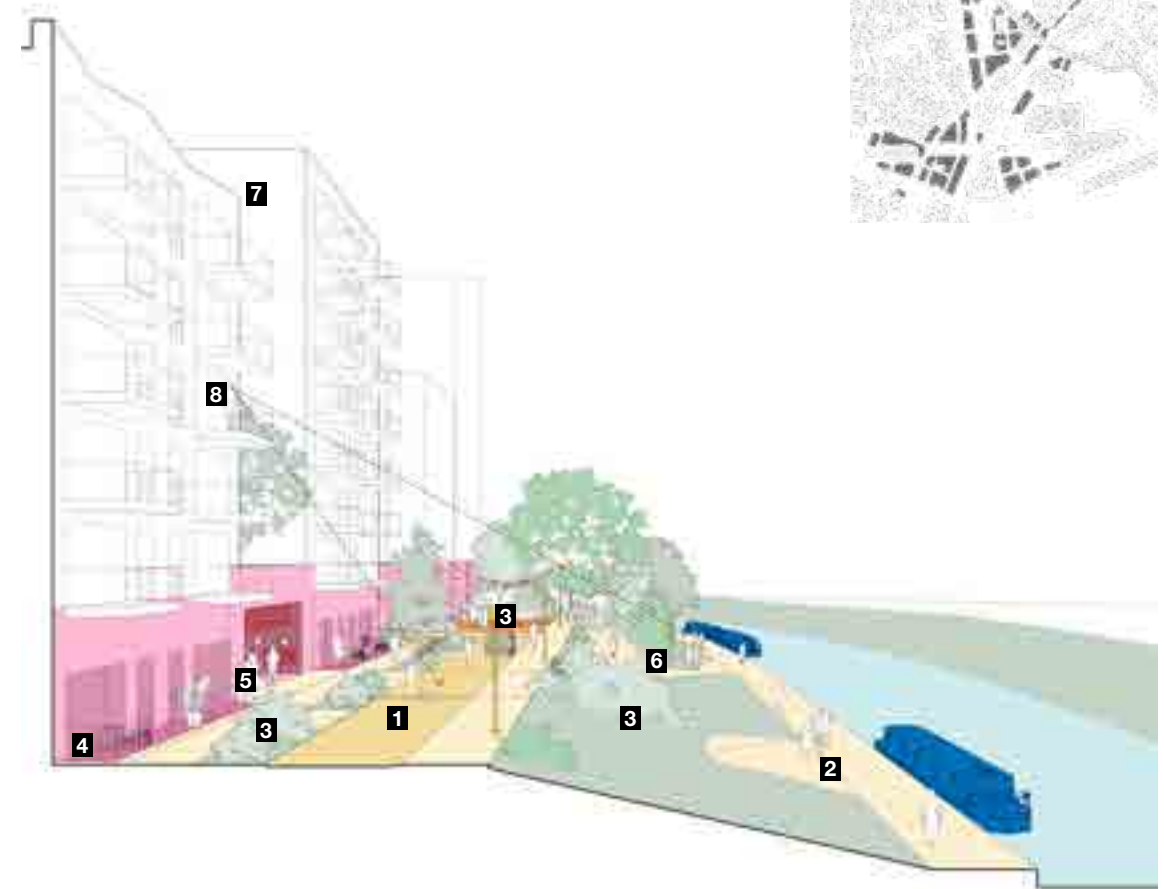


Illustration showing how street components can be applied to a residential area along the canal to create calm, green and walkable neighbourhood streets

## 6b The right mix of uses

**A comprehensive approach to delivering a good mix of uses across Old Oak will bring the two neighbourhoods together as an integrated place.**

To strengthen relationships with neighbouring areas and enhance existing character, there should be specificity and flexibility in how an ambitious mix of uses is delivered at Old Oak. This will be achieved through:

- 6b.1 A new Town Centre and Canalside Neighbourhood
- 6b.2 Living well at density
- 6b.3 Strategically locating active frontages
- 6b.4 A wide range of retail spaces
- 6b.5 Carefully locating social infrastructure
- 6b.6 Cultivating a social ecosystem

**Lewis Cubitt Square, King's Cross**

Photo © John Sturrock





# Stitching in

Old Oak is surrounded by a mosaic of areas, each with their own distinct urban grain. In Park Royal, industrial uses occupy a range of typologies from large-scale modern warehouses to a finer historic grain. Harlesden’s lively high street mixes retail, food and social uses. White City’s Innovation District and Imperial College London’s Hammersmith campus form part of the emerging WestTech London corridor, linking to North Acton.

Old Oak will stitch into existing areas, adding a critical mass of mixed uses that will complement and support the growth of its West London neighbours.



Existing uses around Old Oak



Old Oak’s mix of uses will integrate with and stitch together surrounding areas

- Businesses (retail, supermarkets, restaurants, etc)
- Residential use
- Social infrastructure (sport, libraries, schools, etc)
- Industrial uses
- Imperial College campuses
- Hospitals



## 6b.1 A new Town Centre and Canalside Neighbourhood

The Old Oak Masterplan will bring together existing and emerging places, weaving them into a continuous built fabric to create two new neighbourhoods – the Town Centre and the Canalside Neighbourhood. They will each have a distinct identity and connect with surrounding neighbourhoods, while providing amenities for use by surrounding communities. This Framework sets out a clear long-term vision while allowing spaces and uses to evolve as community needs change over time.

The Town Centre should:

- establish the civic and commercial heart of Old Oak, anchored by a new urban park.
- connect Old Oak Common Station with Park Royal and North Acton.
- deliver a commercially-vibrant, mixed-use hub that serves new residents, workspace users, and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The Canalside Neighbourhood should:

- be a new community centred on the Grand Union Canal and a two-hectare park.
- introduce a mix of housing typologies with active ground floors that support everyday community life.
- complement Harlesden by strengthening local links while offering a new residential character.

- Town Centre
- Canalside Neighbourhood
- Primarily Commercial Use
- Primarily Residential Use



Primary uses distributed through Old Oak

## 6b.2 Living well at density

A balanced housing mix across Old Oak will widen choice and support inclusive, diverse, well-functioning and healthy neighbourhoods. This should be achieved by:

- providing a diverse mix of dwelling sizes, tenures and typologies, accommodating single residents and sharers through to families and older residents.
  - delivering a range of block typologies, including high-rise blocks at key locations mixed amongst mid- and low-rise blocks, while offering varied layouts to suit different lifestyles and demographics including, young professionals, recent graduates, key workers and early-career families.
  - designing dwellings that maximise daylight and minimise overheating through considered orientation, well-designed and shaded openings, and dual-aspect layouts wherever possible, while adopting a fabric-first approach to lower operational energy use.
- creating a range of outdoor spaces from private to communal to public, from being intimate and enclosed to open and south-facing. This includes individual private amenity, defensible spaces, communal amenity in podiums or courtyards within blocks for residents, smaller pocket parks that may adjoin social infrastructure, and larger public green spaces open to everyone. Together, they form a connected network with clear thresholds and relationships that foster place identity and community in higher-density settings. Variety will provide resilience and long-term adaptability.
  - providing internal communal amenities as part of a network of social infrastructure - see Principle 6b.6.
  - integrating affordable housing within a 'tenure-blind' design approach.



A balanced housing mix will widen choice and support inclusive, healthy and intergenerational places



A network of outdoor spaces will bring together private amenity, shared amenity and public green spaces at different scales

### 6b.3 Strategically locating active frontages

Non-residential active frontages should be strategically located, where they are likely to be successful and contribute to the activation, animation and safety of the public realm. Ground floor uses should have the right mix to support daytime and night-time activity and provide passive surveillance along key routes.

Primary active frontages are those likely to include an intensity of retail, food and beverage uses. They are focused in the following locations:

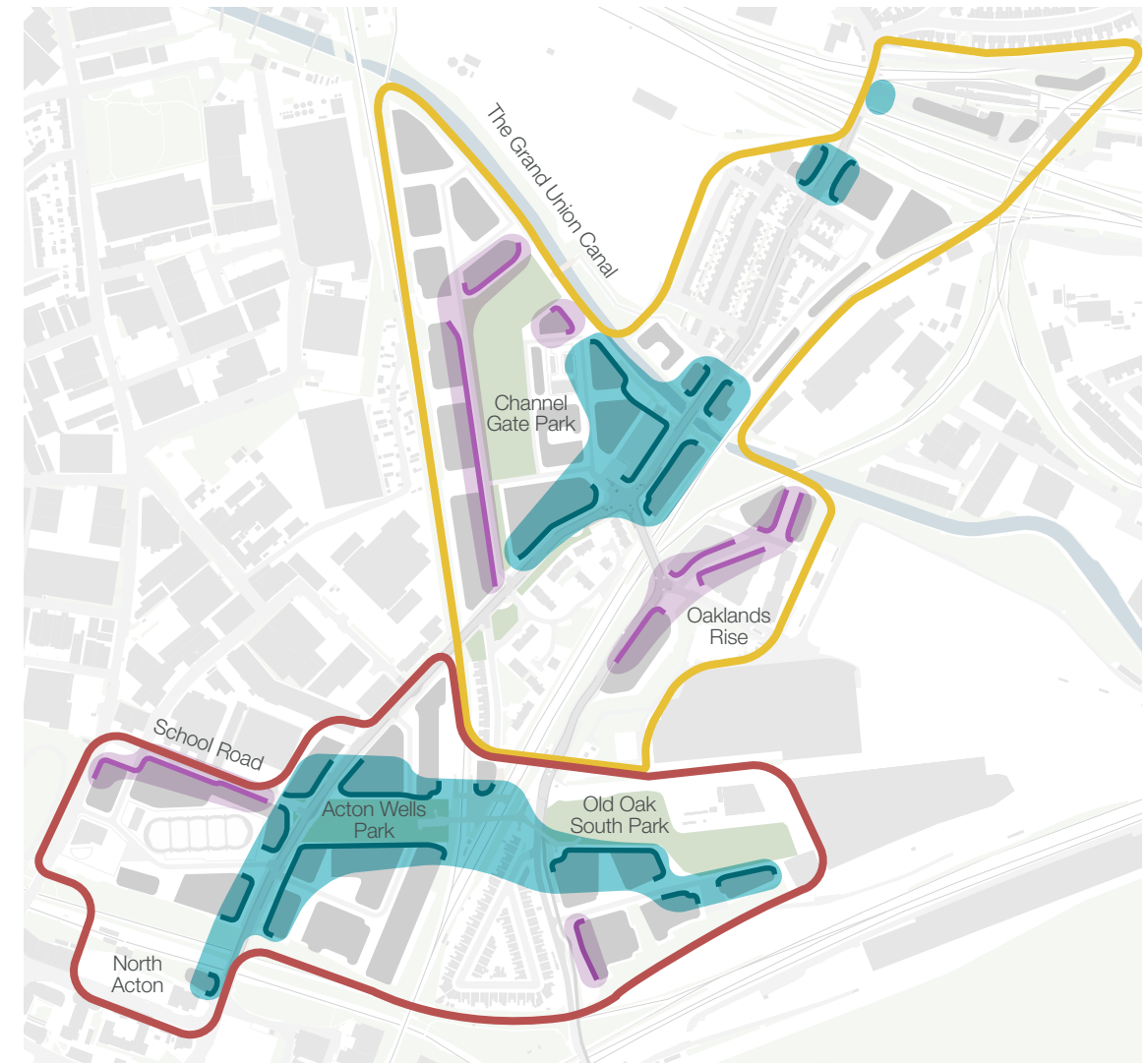
- along the Grand Union Canal.
- along the Old Oak Line (in particular the lengths facing the Old Oak South Park and Acton Wells Park).
- along the Old Oak Mile (at the Neighbourhood Centre and Town Centre).
- where Old Oak meets North Acton and Harlesden.

Secondary active frontages have a lesser intensity of retail provision and provide opportunities for more diverse ground floor uses that may include community space or workspace. They are focused in the following locations:

- around Oaklands Rise.
- along School Road.
- along Channel Gate Park.

Non-active frontages, such as servicing and blank facades, should be located away from priority streets and key public areas to preserve an active public realm.

- Town Centre
- Canalside Neighbourhood
- Primary Frontage
- Secondary Frontage



Illustrative diagram showing indicative locations of key frontages in Old Oak



## 6b.4 A wide range of retail spaces

To support an inclusive, resilient and successful local economy, an ecosystem of varied businesses will be promoted in Old Oak, as a sitewide approach. From small independents and local startups to larger, more established enterprises and brands. This should be achieved by:

- providing commercial and ground floor retail units with a wide range of types and sizes to accommodate a wide range of businesses.
- matching the type of retail with the immediate setting and location. For example the parks and the canal could provide a good location for food and beverage retail with the opportunity for outdoor seating while the Mile could provide a good location for everyday convenience such as groceries or barber shops.
- grouping together similar types of retail to help create unique clusters with a unique character and identity within different places in the masterplan.

- creating opportunities for types of businesses that cannot otherwise be accommodated in the surrounding existing fabric, for example by providing larger spaces for eateries and restaurants that could not be accommodated in the heritage buildings of Harlesden.



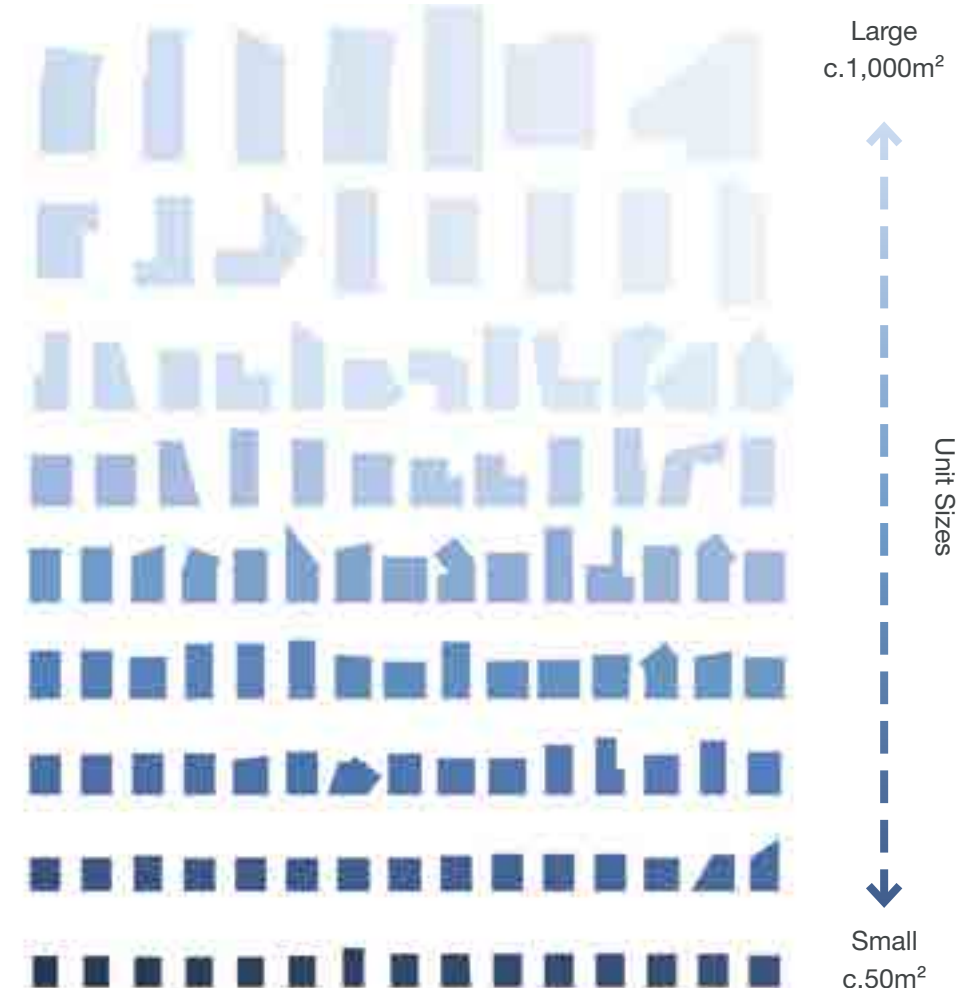
Photo © The Grocer



Different sizes and types of spaces will help promote an inclusive economy

Bronek & Nirvana Cafe, Park Royal

Photo © Zute Lightfoot











The Illustrative Masterplan includes a range of retail units of varying sizes

## 6b.5 Carefully locating social infrastructure

Social infrastructure uses will be informed by assessing the needs of the future community. These uses should be located so they are accessible for residents and workers, supporting community life. This should be achieved by:

- positioning a primary school at the heart of the Canalside Neighbourhood, with a clear presence in the Neighbourhood Centre and a generous frontage with direct access to Channel Gate Park.
- establishing a leisure centre as a key destination in a high footfall area at the heart of the Town Centre, fronting Acton Wells Park to serve a wide catchment of residents and workers, supporting the viability of such a facility.
- providing a health centre, with convenient access from North Acton, Park Royal and Harlesden, supporting the activity of the street.
- distributing nurseries across Old Oak at ground-floor level in accessible locations, each with adjacent sunlit outdoor play space (for example pocket parks or podium rooftops).
- providing flexible and active community spaces at central locations in the Neighbourhood Centre and Town Centre, animating ground floors through the day and evening and supporting all ages.
- providing informal social spaces at strategic 'decentralised' locations to enable local gathering and complement formal community facilities.
- providing residential amenity that is outward facing and potentially accessible to the public.

-  Primary school
-  Leisure centre
-  Formal community spaces
-  Informal social spaces
-  Nurseries
-  Health centre
-  Town Centre
-  Canalside Neighbourhood



Social infrastructure locations throughout Old Oak

## 6b.6 Cultivating a social ecosystem

A balanced network of formal and informal social spaces will foster belonging and everyday interaction. Together, these spaces create an ecosystem that supports community life, strengthens local identity, and encourages activity across Old Oak.

Formal community spaces should:

- host flexible spaces that serve a variety of functions for the local community, including spaces for enterprise, homework or after-school clubs, libraries, adult learning and hire-able rooms.
- present visible, welcoming 'social front doors' that invite opportunities for active and passive community participation.
- provide outward-facing informal places to meet, work, and create, supporting a circular shared economy.

Informal social spaces should:

- establish a dispersed network of micro-spaces that respond to local character and make use of underused or incidental locations, such as quieter spots in Atlas Village with a canal frontage.
- encourage adaptable uses such as pop-ups, shared work or maker spaces, and bookable community rooms that extend the reach of formal facilities.
- consider co-locating with everyday activity – retail, cafés, and shared residential ground floors – to borrow footfall and extend dwell time throughout the day and into the evening.



Informal community space can co-locate with retail at the ground floor of a residential building



Bakery, workspace and incubators for local enterprise at Central Parade



A homework club and a climbing wall at TNG Youth and Community Centre





## 6c Placemaking with a varied skyline

The ambition for a dense and compact place will be delivered through a variety of heights, from medium-rise to tall buildings. The Masterplan Framework defines clear roles for tall buildings so that they have a clear purpose and placemaking narrative. Strategically locating heights in different parts of the site is an integral part of the character and identity of different places.

The range of building heights and their location will balance the ambition for a new prominent district in West London and the importance of integrating with areas such as the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area and the Grand Union Canal:

- 6c.1 Complementary heights
- 6c.2 Allowing for plenty of sky
- 6c.3 Strategically locating height
- 6c.4 Adopting a marker strategy



## 6c.1 Complementary heights

The Masterplan Framework promotes both mid-rise and tall buildings to create a legible, well-defined and varied urban fabric.

Tall buildings (defined as being 15 storeys and above as per the OPDC Tall Buildings Statement) should:

- confidently mark the new Old Oak Common Station and the development within the skyline of West London.
- legibly mark the key approaches into the site, adding to the wider wayfinding from surrounding neighbourhoods.
- mark and anchor the major public spaces in the two neighbourhoods, enhancing wayfinding.
- create visual connections between public open spaces and along routes that are crossed by infrastructure barriers such as railways, adding to the definition of a single and unified place.
- positively define the edges of public spaces, particularly through careful design of the lower floors.
- be integrated within urban blocks of varying heights and a continuous active frontage.

Medium-rise buildings should:

- positively contribute to the definition of built edges of key public spaces and street enclosures while also introducing a 'shoulder height' of a human scale.
- confidently define the edges of the Old Oak South Park, Acton Wells Park, part of the Canalside and the canal, without overshadowing these spaces.
- addressing local views and vistas and define key corners to enhance legibility and local wayfinding.
- transition from taller buildings to the scale of existing heritage assets.

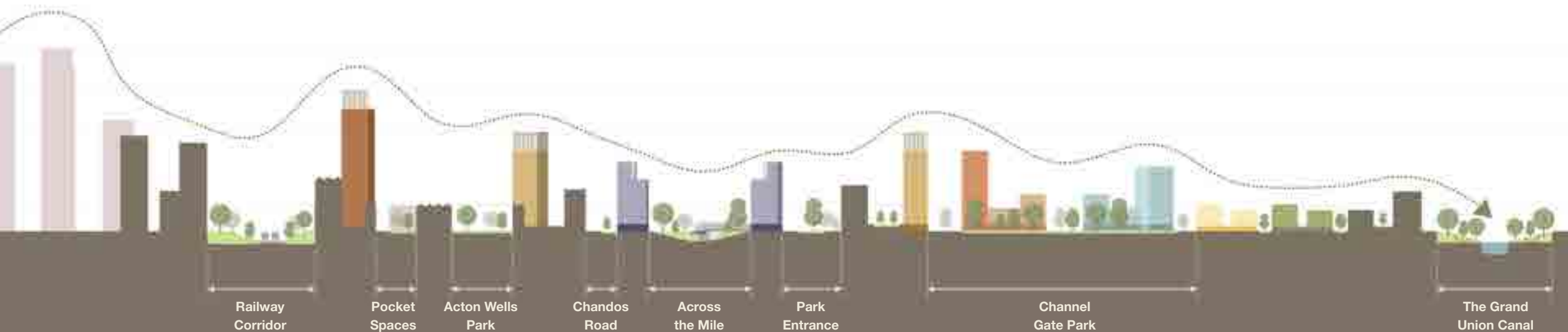


The framework includes a mix of low to medium-rise buildings (below 15 storeys - left) and taller buildings (15 storeys and above - right)

## 6c.2 Allowing for plenty of sky

The Masterplan Framework promotes the considered placement of tall buildings to maintain access to daylight, sunlight and generous views of the sky from the public realm. This should be achieved through:

- maintaining significant separation distances between tall buildings to avoid overshadowing and enable adequate daylight access within dwellings.
- balancing the height of tall buildings with adjacent lower buildings to create an undulating and balanced skyline with frequent views of the sky from the ground.
- carefully positioning the tall buildings to avoid persistent overshadowing of the major public open spaces and enable adequate access to sunlight.
- considering the relationship to adjacent tall building clusters in the surrounding neighbourhoods, in particular where tall buildings in the development transition down from the tallest buildings in North Acton.





### 6c.3 Strategically locating heights

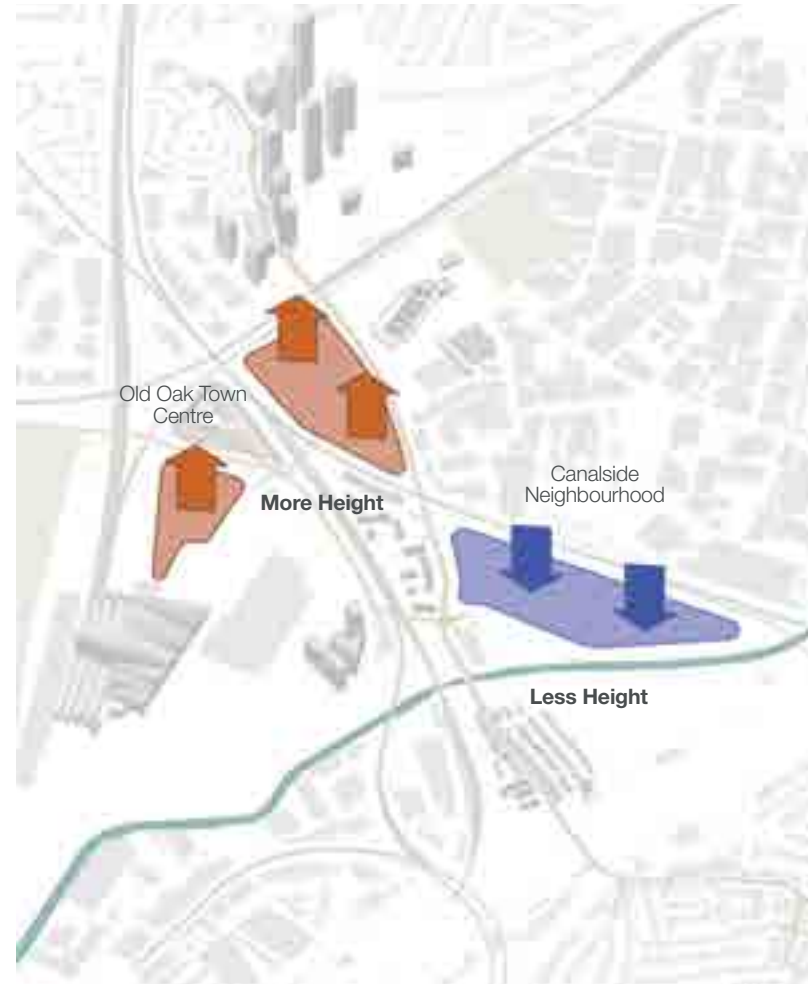
Six site-wide principles will organise building heights across the site at a strategic level. Taller buildings should be located in the most advantageous and least sensitive locations while lower buildings should be located in the more sensitive locations, for example next to heritage assets. The site-wide principles are:

#### A place-specific approach

- The tallest buildings will be located in the Town Centre to create a metropolitan character and take advantage of the new transport links.
- Less height should be located in the Canalside Neighbourhood to create a residential character.

#### Sunny parks

- Heights should be lowered along the southern and westerly edges of the three major park spaces to maximise access to sunlight and enhance the quality of these public spaces.



A place-specific approach



Sunny parks

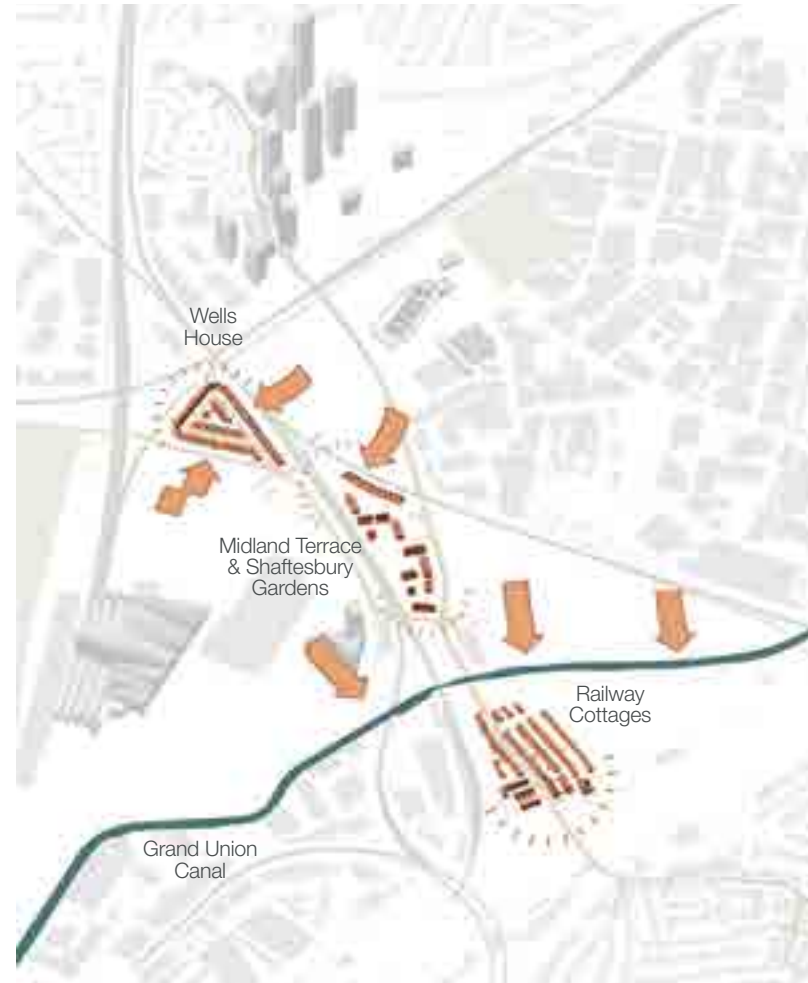
**Stepping down to heritage**

- Heights adjacent to existing residential clusters should step down to create an appropriate transition to the scale of these assets and minimise the impact on daylight access of existing homes.
- Heights adjacent to the heritage asset of the Grand Union Canal should step down to avoid overshadowing the canal and its mature habitat.

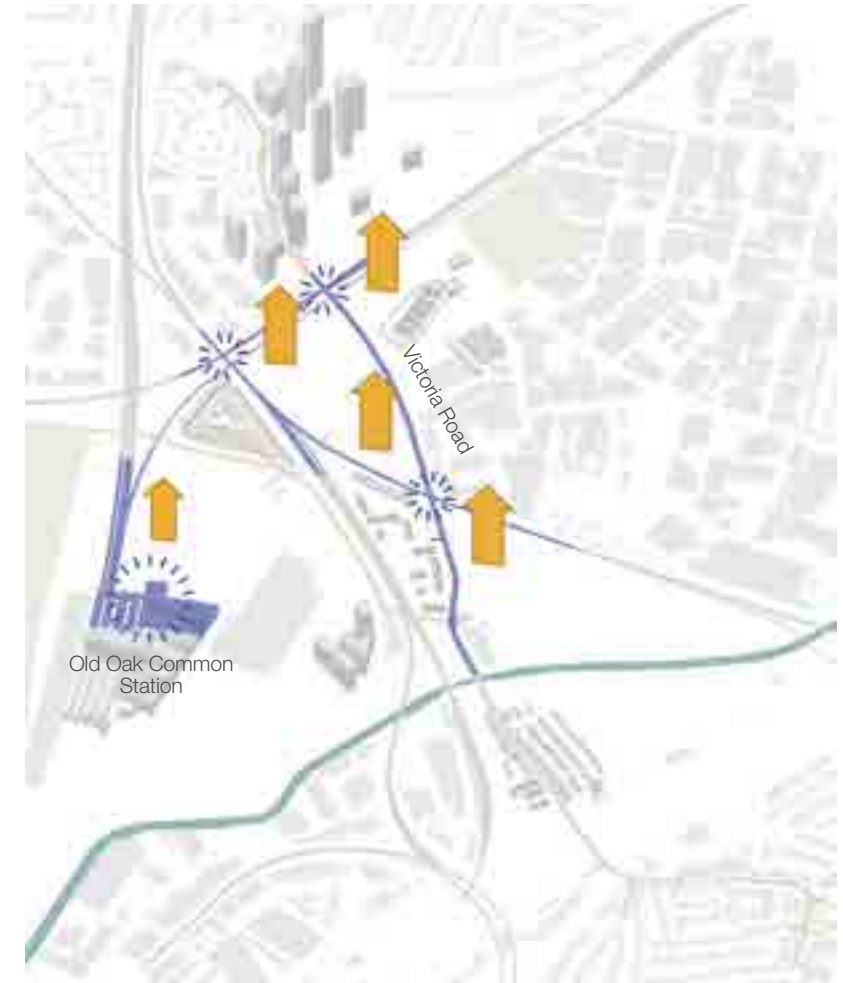
**Opportunities for height**

The development should take advantage of opportunities for increased heights in appropriate locations, including:

- intersections of key infrastructure routes to enhance legibility.
- in proximity to the railways with less sensitive context and next to Old Oak Common Station to take advantage of excellent transport accessibility.
- adjacent to the three major public open spaces to take advantage of the open views of these spaces and maximise the number of residents with immediate access to them.



Stepping down to heritage



Opportunities for height

**Three tall clusters**

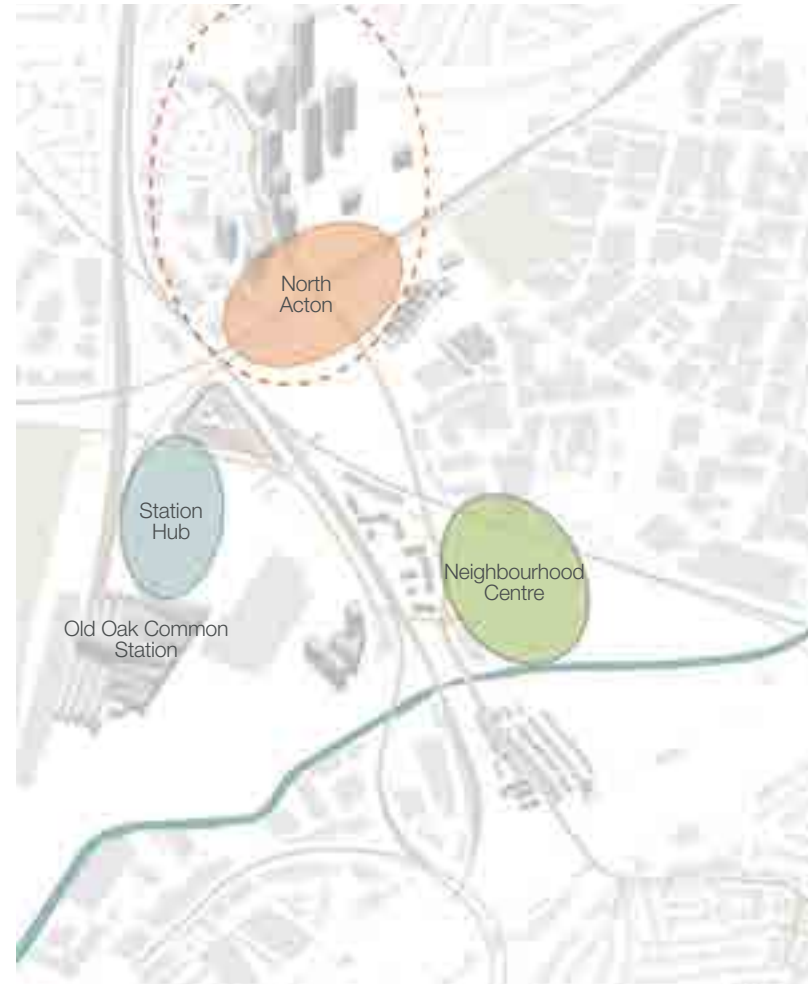
The tallest buildings will be located within coherent clusters of height so that they are always part of a group, or a family of buildings of varied heights as opposed to a single and isolated object. Three clusters are identified:

- the Station Hub in the immediate vicinity of Old Oak Common Station.
- an extension to the existing North Acton cluster but with lower heights.
- the proposed Neighbourhood Centre.

**Two mid-rise clusters**

Similarly, mid-rise buildings will be clustered together in response to the sensitive context and to achieve distinct characters. Two clusters are identified:

- Atlas Village adjacent to the Grand Union Canal.
- Lane Quarter next to the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area, complementing the character of the Railway Cottages.



Three tall clusters



Two mid-rise clusters



## 6c.4 Adopting a marker strategy

A number of key buildings play the role of markers and landmarks in four separate categories. This is to enhance the legibility and natural wayfinding within the development and along key approaches.

Buildings within each category should have clear common design elements that tie them together so that they function both as individual prominent markers that respond to their specific context and as a group, tying different parts of the site together.

Commonalities can vary from shared implicit principles such as scale, typology and interfaces with the public realm to more explicit common architectural elements, material palettes and elevation design.

The strategy defines eight tall buildings and nine mid-rise buildings as key markers. These markers include:

- **landmark towers**
- **park markers**
- **connecting towers**
- **local markers**

Although the strategy indicates the location of these markers, their exact position should be coordinated with each other at an urban level. The characteristics of each marker type are defined in the subsequent pages.

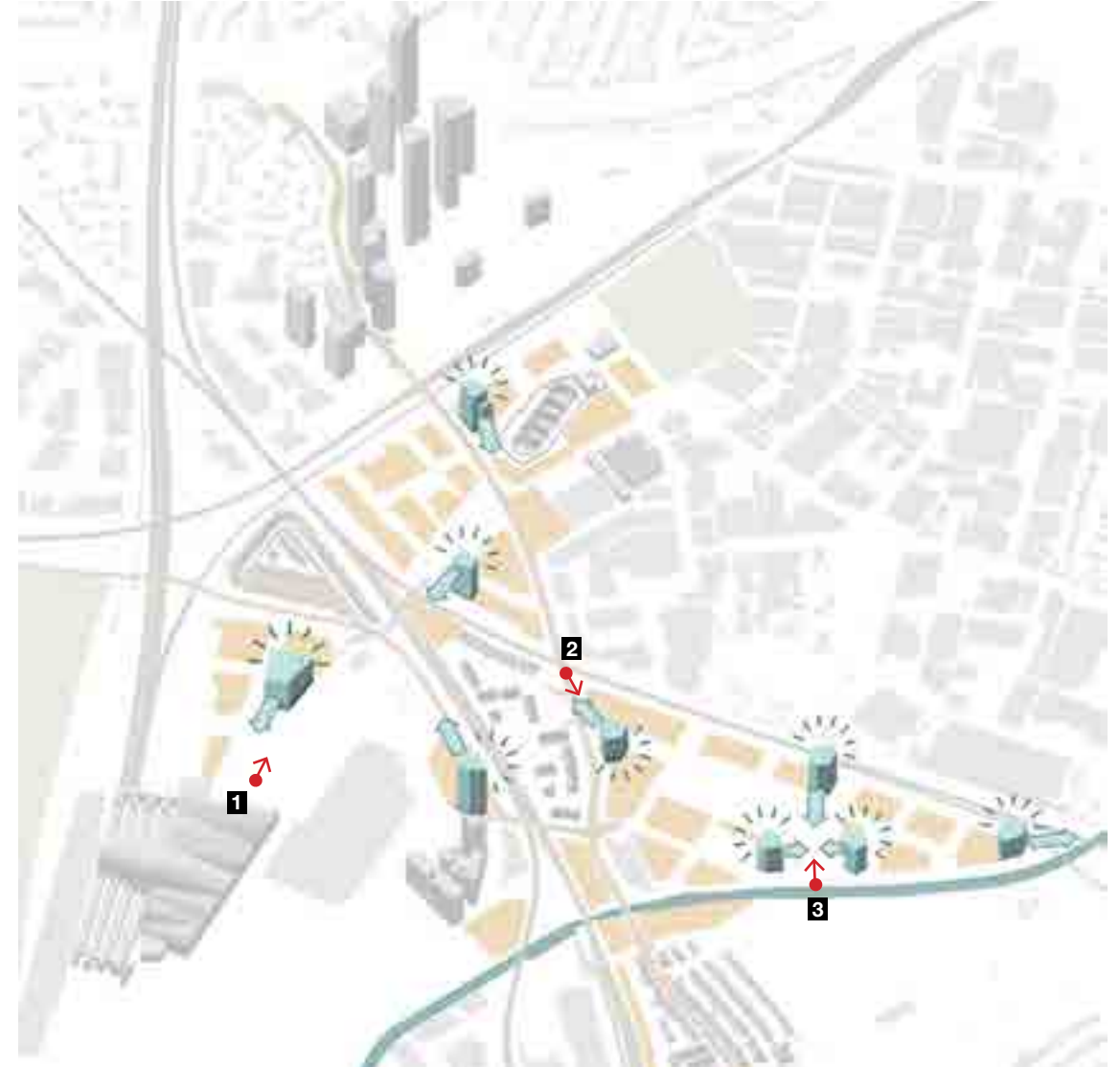


Key marker buildings across the Masterplan Framework

**Local markers**

Throughout the masterplan, local markers — whether alone or in conjunction with others — will define local moments, important corners and vistas to enhance wayfinding, legibility and character at a local scale. This should be achieved through:

- lone buildings addressing vistas and moments in the masterplan through their design to give them prominence.
- groups of buildings relating implicitly to each other through a shared approach to scale and typology, allowing them to be identifiable as distinct families.

**1** Station approach**2** Victoria Road**3** Canal side address

Local markers

**Connecting towers**

Positioned at the boundary between the two neighbourhoods, two connecting towers will define this threshold and ease the transition of height from the Town Centre to the Neighbourhood Centre. This should be achieved through:

- explicitly relating these buildings to each other in their design, whether through a shared material palette, elevational treatment or massing.

**1** Victoria Road**2** From North Acton**3** From Willesden Junction

Connecting towers



**Park markers**

The three park markers will identify the location of the three new parks across Old Oak and visually relate to them to each other. This should be achieved through:

- assisting with legibility and wayfinding to these landscaped spaces by addressing the space, while not inhibiting their access to sunlight.
- relating to each other, through the use of common architectural elements. An example of this could be the use of a colonnade to define the crown of the building.

**1** Visual relationships**2** Marking parks**3** Addressing the space

Park markers

**Arrival landmarks**

Three arrival landmarks will define points of arrival in the masterplan by defining medium and long distance views of Old Oak - from North Acton, Park Royal, Willesden Junction, and beyond. This should be achieved through:

- Introducing buildings which are among the highest design quality in the masterplan and relate to each other implicitly through shared design principles. An example of this could be a common lantern approach which defines the crowns of these buildings with a similar number of storeys.

**1** From Wormwood Scrubs**2** From North Acton**3** From Willesden Junction

Arrival landmarks

## 6d Approach to character

**At Old Oak, a coherent sense of place should be achieved by adopting a sitewide attitude to architectural and landscape design that enriches relationships with existing context to amplify the distinct character of diverse localities.**

High-quality design here means making an attractive urban environment and sustainable choices about materials. New buildings, landscaping and public realm improvements should engage positively and sensitively with their surroundings, guided by the following principles:

6f.1 Designing high-quality architecture

6f.2 Designing high-quality landscape

**Tour & Taxis housing, Brussels**

Sergison Bates, NOAA, AWG. Photo © Stijn Bollaert





## 6d.1 Designing high-quality architecture

Positive placemaking at Old Oak should be informed by the following considerations:

- An intentional and coordinated approach to the appearance of buildings, either through unifying different building types or parts of buildings with a common design, or through the use of different materials and architectural details to create variation and an informal character. Distinct characters should be achieved by striking a unique balance between visual consistency and variety in each local place.
- Draw inspiration from the character of existing and historical built heritage.
- Specify sustainable materials and make design decisions that maximise the longevity, robustness and circularity.
- Design resilient buildings that can adapt to a changing climate such as including external shading to mitigate overheating.
- High-quality and well considered architectural detailing with depth, layering and colour.
- Explore opportunities for well considered iconic design for key landmarks or local markers.

### Existing character



**OOL Conservation Area**

Photo © Zute Lightfoot



**North Acton Residential development**

Photo © Jack Hobhouse



**Park Royal warehouses**



**High Street Harlesden**

### Proposed character



**Different building types unified by materiality**

Keybridge House, Vauxhall

Photo © Rory Gardiner



**Coordinated differentiation**

Fish Island, Stratford

Photo © Fred Howarth



**High-quality detailing**

Photo © Jack Hobhouse



**Sustainability and climate resilience**

Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona

Photo © Adrià Goula

## 6d.2 Designing high-quality landscape

High-quality landscape that reinforces positive placemaking at Old Oak should be informed by the following side-wide considerations:

- Establish a cohesive landscape framework with a clear hierarchy of spaces, from civic squares to intimate courtyards, each contributing to a unified and distinctive identity.
- Draw upon the site's built and landscape character to inform planting, materials and detailing. Integrate robust, locally appropriate species and surface materials that reflect Old Oak's layered history while supporting biodiversity.
- Design high-performance open green spaces which are enduring, flexible and low-maintenance. Specify sustainable, resilient materials and planting strategies that can adapt to climate change, including flood-resilient planting, rain gardens, and drought-tolerant species.
- Embed sustainable water management as a visible and attractive part of the public realm. Use surface water features, permeable materials and planting to manage runoff while enriching the sensory and ecological quality of the landscape.

### Existing character



**Grand Union Canal**

Photo © Zute Lightfoot



**Towpath connection**

Photo © Zute Lightfoot



**Old Oak Lane**

Photo © Zute Lightfoot



**Wormwood Scrubs**

Photo © Zute Lightfoot

### Proposed character



**Interactive stormwater infrastructure with wetlands**

Molenwaterpark, Middelburg

© BoschSlabbers landscape and urban design. Photo © Jeroen Musch



**Everyday recreation in green space**

Elephant Park, Elephant and Castle

Photo © Lendlease



**Natural surveillance in play areas**

Normand Park, Fulham

Photo © Tim Soar, Mark Thomas



## 6e Old Oak Town Centre

**Old Oak Town Centre will be a new urban centre for West London, at the heart of WestTech London, with unrivalled connectivity.**

The Town Centre will stretch from Old Oak Common Station to Park Royal and North Acton to form a distinctive mixed-use district for industrial innovation, taking advantage of these adjacencies.

A mix of uses that complement commercial and industrial uses in Park Royal, amenities to support residential communities, and a new urban park will serve the development as well as Harlesden, North Acton and Park Royal.

The Town Centre will be defined, supported and characterised by the following:

- 6e.1 a distributed workplace district
- 6e.2 grounded by anchor uses
- 6e.3 an integrated leisure centre
- 6e.4 sunny banks at its southern edge
- 6e.5 a mixed-use park and pocket spaces
- 6e.6 leveraging of height for good placemaking
- 6e.7 a critical mass of employment space

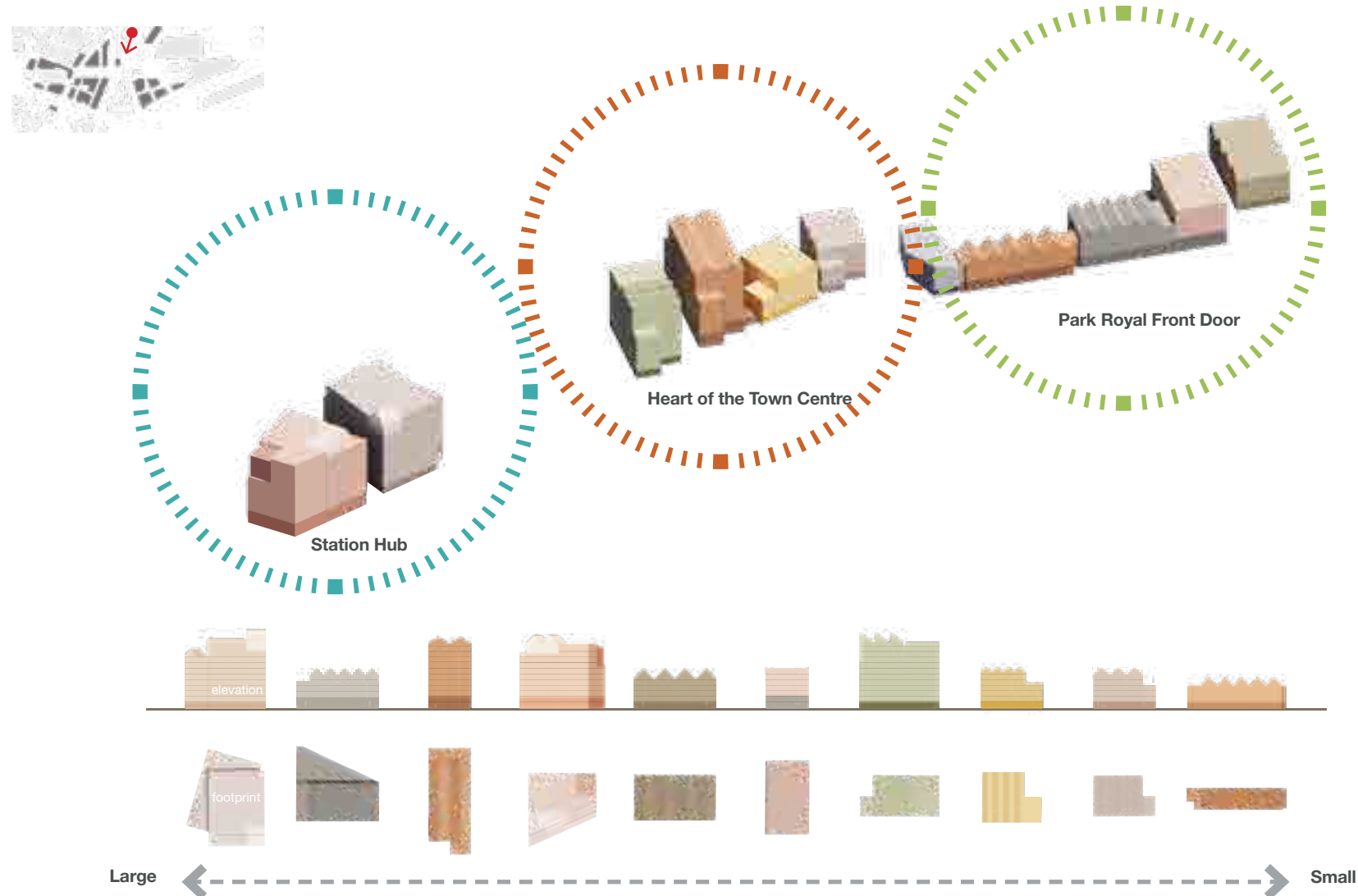




## 6e.1 A distributed workplace district

The Old Oak Town Centre will be a mixed use commercial district and a new workspace address for West London, to support the creation of distinct yet complementary business communities along the Old Oak Line. This will be achieved by:

- organising the workspace in three characterful clusters of buildings. This should range from more corporate buildings in the Station Hub to a more industrial character in School Road.
- responding in scale, character and architectural language to the surrounding context.
- providing a spine of workspace buildings along the Old Oak Line, to create a new workspace address, particularly along the souther edge of the spine.
- providing for a range of building sizes with generally larger floorplates and taller buildings in the Station Hub to smaller floorplates and medium to low-rise buildings in School Road. This is to attract a range of potential sectors and occupiers.

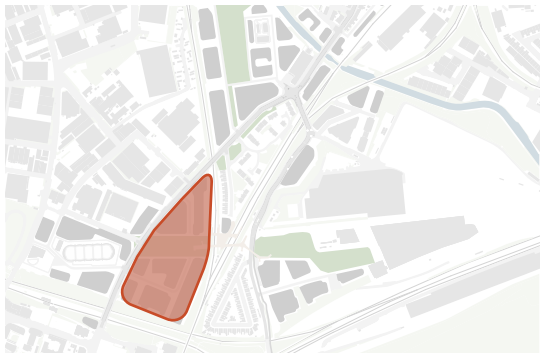


## 6e.2 Grounded by anchor uses

Attracting anchor uses within the Town Centre will help place Old Oak on the map of key destinations in London and position it at the centre of the West London economy.

This anchor use will act as a catalyst, enhance the Town Centre's commercial address and destination and attract businesses, visitors, students or innovators. In particular, Acton Wells East is a good location for this anchor use given its position at the heart of the Town Centre.

The Masterplan Framework will need to be flexible and responsive to anchor uses that positively contribute to Regeneration Objectives for Old Oak.



Preferred anchor use location in Acton Wells East

Potential anchor uses could include:

- Academic institutions, innovation hubs or Focused Research Organisation (FROs):** Building on the area's heritage of innovation, these would foster research, education, and the growth of new businesses and startups. Opportunities to collaborate with established institutions like Imperial College London and connect with the broader West Tech London should be explored.
- Cultural or entertainment venues:** Major cultural institutions, such as theatres, performance spaces, or a significant music venue, would boost the evening and night-time economy. They would also serve as a platform for local talent and community engagement, much like Sadler's Wells East at East Bank.
- Further Education and Technical Colleges:** These institutions would play a crucial role in upskilling the local workforce and attracting new talent, leveraging the proximity to Park Royal to create a skilled and productive workforce.



Institutions such as Imperial College London can help deliver space for world-class scientific research

Photo © James Newton Photography



Technical colleges like the South Bank Technical College offer space for professional and technical education



Diverse institutions such as the London College of Fashion can capitalise on the tradition of making

Photo © Simon Menges



Performance spaces such as Sadler's Wells East create space for the arts that can strengthen the local identity

Photo © O'Donnell + Tuomey

### 6e.3 An integrated leisure centre

A new public leisure centre will be a key placemaking anchor within Old Oak and provide a much-needed facility for the surrounding areas in Ealing, Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham. It should achieve this by:

- being located in a viable and prominent location in the Town Centre.
- being accessible to both workers and residents, from within the development as well as the existing surrounding neighbourhoods.
- being located in an area of high visibility, footfall and activity. For example, fronting onto Acton Wells Park within the 'Heart of the Town Centre'.
- being integrated with a workplace building to make best use of the available land.

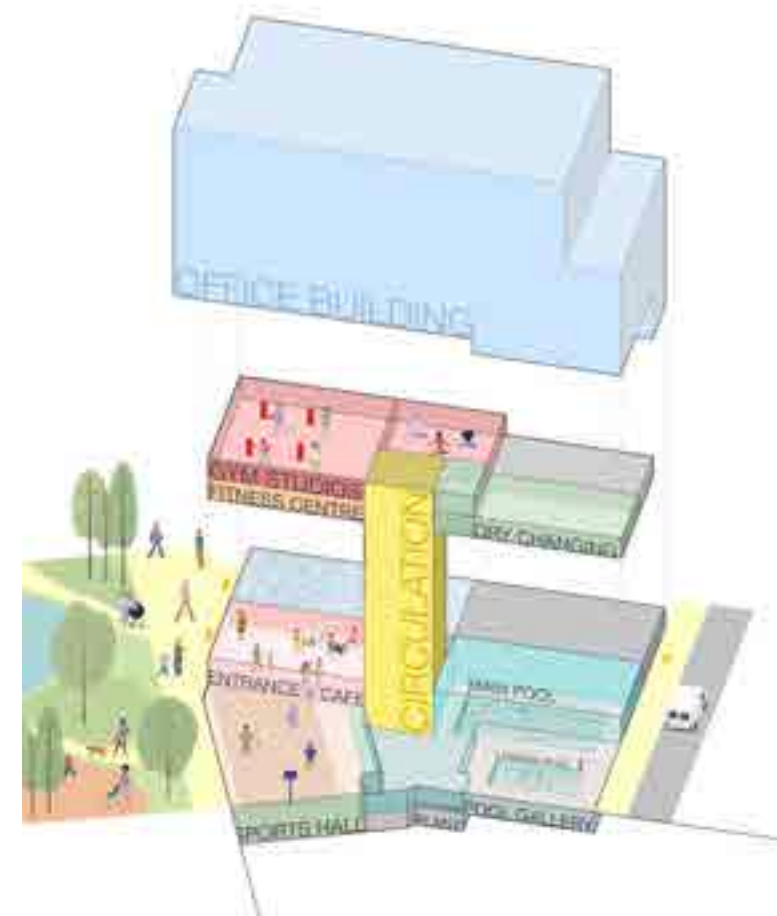


Photo © Jack Hobhouse



The Dock Shed Leisure Centre in Canada Water stacks an office floor above a new public leisure centre comprising a swimming pool and sports hall

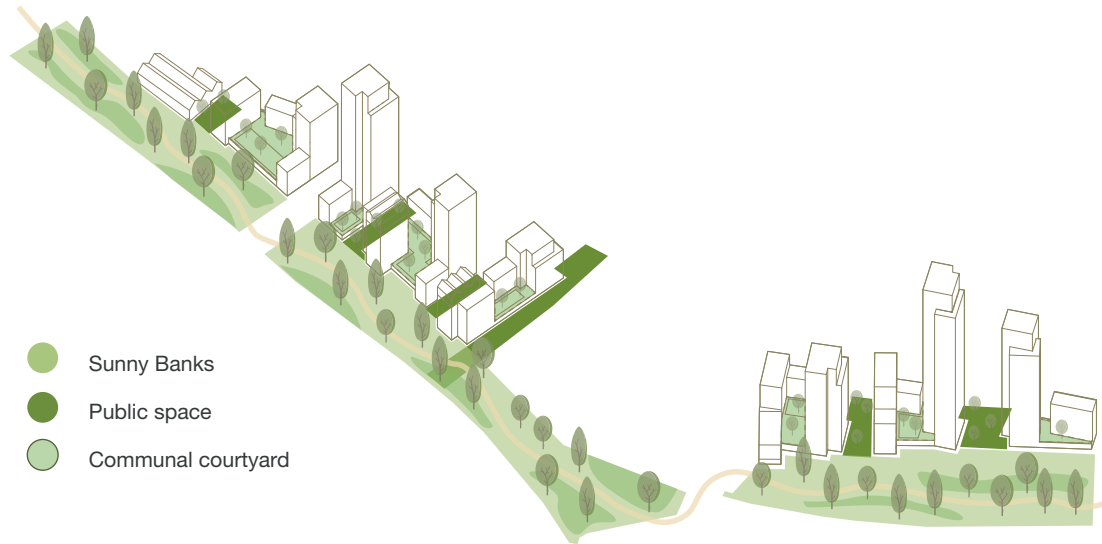
Photo © Jack Hobhouse



A mixed-use building, with a leisure centre stacked vertically and an interlinking office above which both have active frontages and entrances onto the park



## 6e.4 Sunny Banks at its southern edge

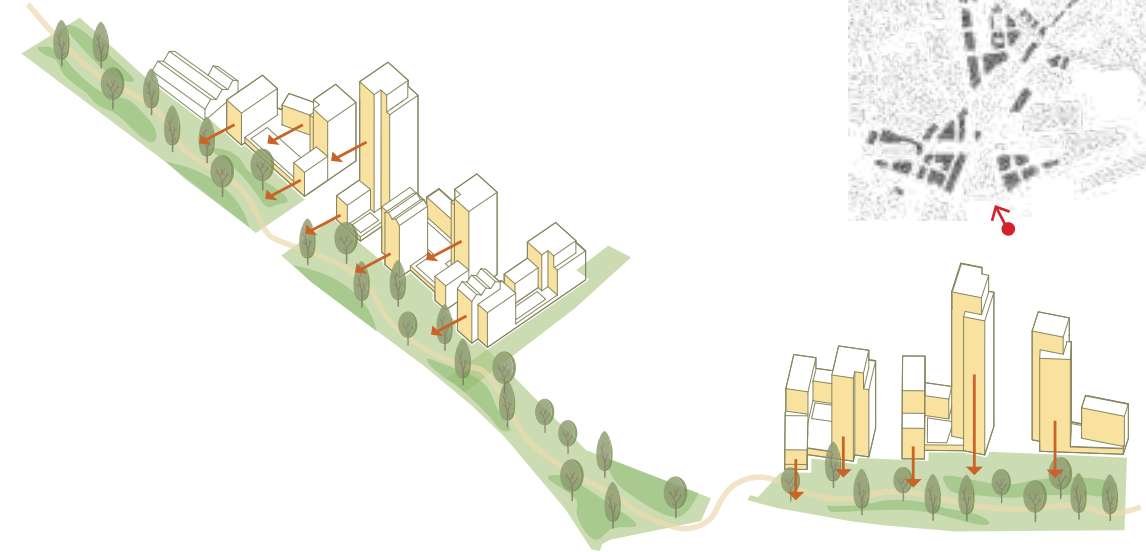


The Town Centre should create a high quality residential address by:

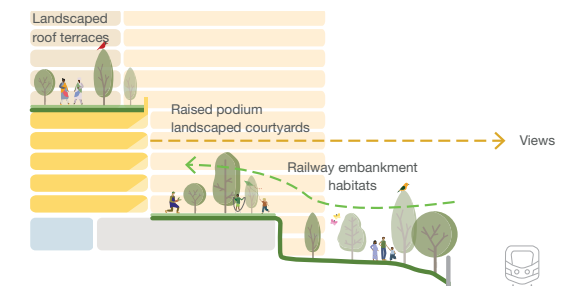
- introducing residential buildings along the sunny banks with south-facing open courtyards to maximise sunlight access while providing dwellings with views to the mature habitats along the railway.
- integrating homes with the mature habitats of the railway embankments by introducing public green fingers at ground between the residential

buildings to provide additional pocket spaces to dwell and for play. In addition, providing private landscaped podiums for residents to look onto the Sunny Banks and extend the green edge.

- provide a variety of heights to produce a varied skyline and take advantage of long, uninterrupted views, particularly across Wormwood Scrubs and towards central London.



Sunny Banks, green fingers and private podium courtyards

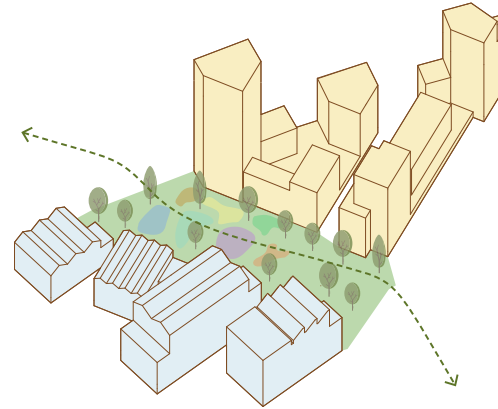


Residential buildings engaging with the natural habitats at various levels

## 6e.5 A mixed-use park and pocket spaces

The Town Centre will include both residential and commercial buildings. The public open space should help manage the transition between these uses by:

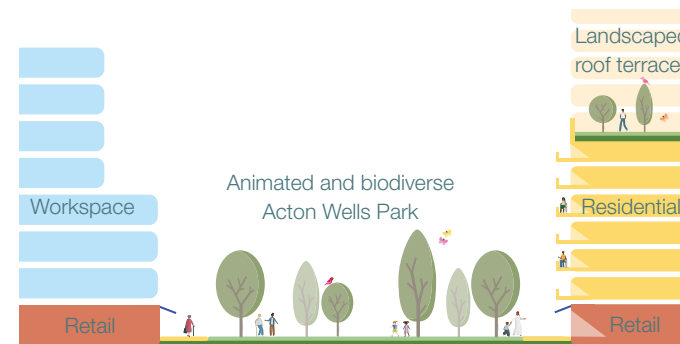
- introducing residential development on the north side of Acton Wells Park to help animate the park throughout the day and week.
- using pocket parks and green streets to buffer and transition between commercial and residential uses while also affording the residential uses direct views and access to Acton Wells Park and Old Oak South Park.



Mixed-use surrounding Acton Wells Park with residential to the north



Pocket parks and green streets connecting to Acton Wells Park and Old Oak South Park



The mixed-use development surrounding Acton Wells Park will provide activity and a sense of safety during day and night

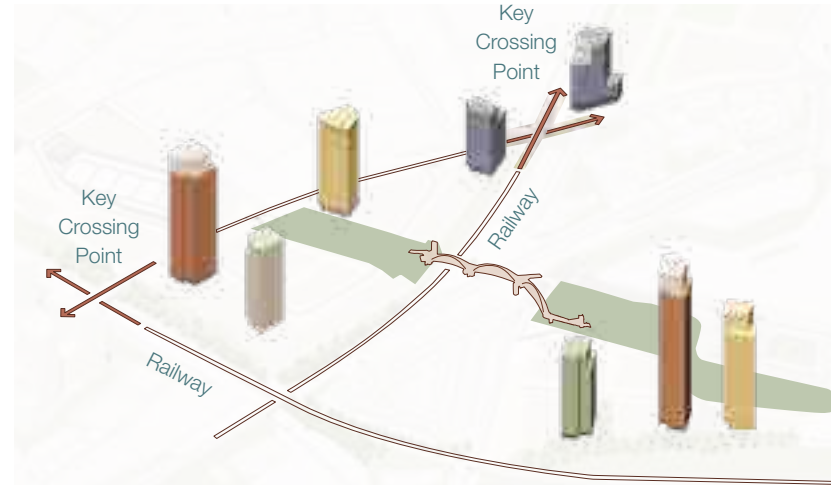


Dwellings along the Sunny Banks will also enjoy framed views of Old Oak South Park

## 6e.6 Leveraging height for good placemaking

Building on the sitewide approach to height and massing, the Old Oak Town Centre should leverage height to support good placemaking by:

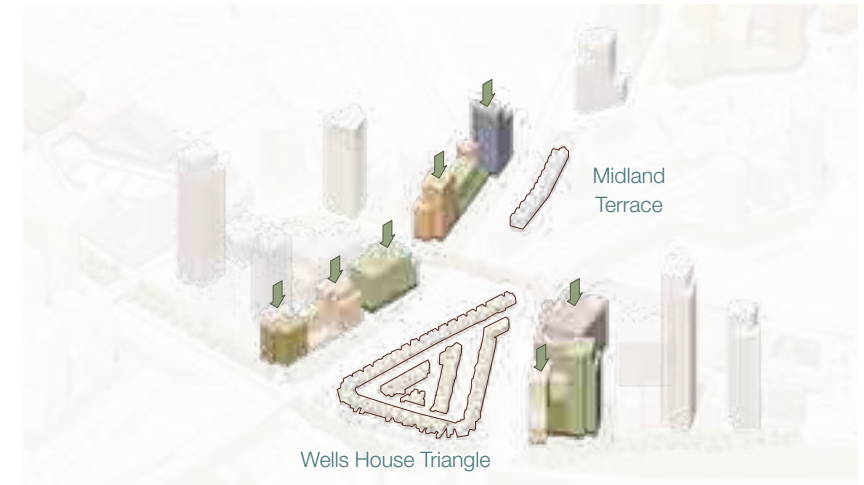
- having a limited number of tall buildings along the railways and at key crossing points, with each building performing a role of mid and long distance markers.
- lowering heights along the southern edges of the parks and positioning taller buildings away from the park edges to maintain sunny parks.
- reducing heights adjacent to Wells House Triangle and Midland Terrace to minimise their impact on existing dwellings.
- defining a strong enclosure to the parks, in particular the single-sided Old Oak South Park which should be defined by confident volume and bulk of workspace buildings along its southern edge.
- providing a prominent façade for the workspace building closest to the station to greet passengers leaving the station.



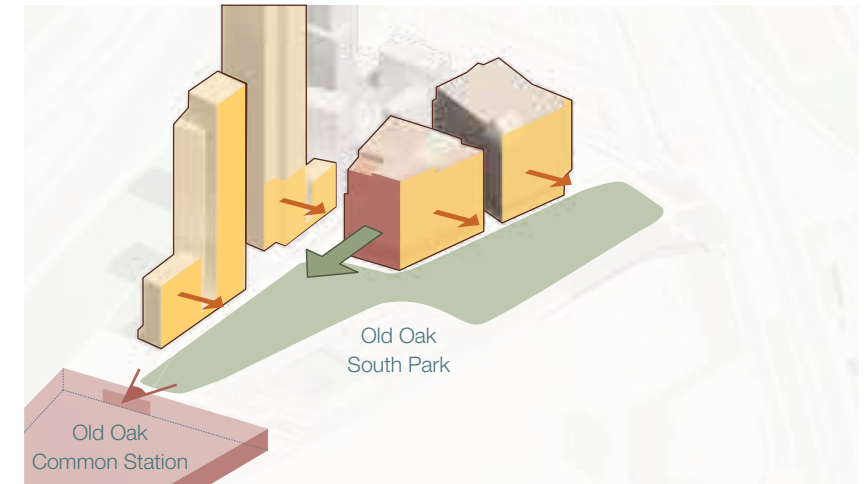
Tall buildings located along the railways and key crossing points



Southerly building heights reduced to maintain sunny parks



Lower heights adjacent to Wells House Triangle and Midland Terrace



Buildings defining the single-sided Old Oak South Park and providing a prominent facade



## 6e.7 A critical mass of employment space

The Masterplan Framework has an inherent flexibility to balance residential development with a critical mass of commercial development.

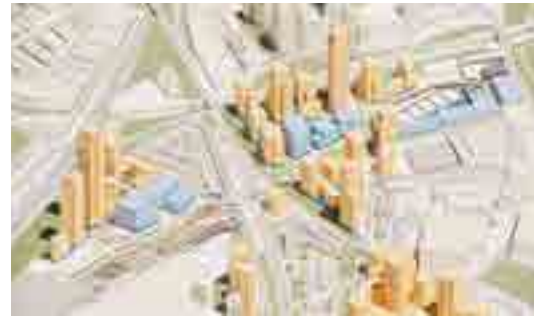
Maximum residential and maximum employment variants have been tested to ensure that a resilient range of quantum can be provided in the Town Centre whilst meeting the overarching place vision for 'Inclusive Growth, with a Global Reach', as set out in Chapter 2. The Development Parameters in Chapter 5 include a Predominant Use plan with 'swing' plots that can be residential or employment. Proposals in the Town Centre should:

- generate a critical mass of employment to support the character and amenity of the Town Centre and create a viable cluster of businesses that attract a diverse range of businesses/occupiers.
- as a whole the employment quantum should reach an entirety of mass, but within each cluster they should also provide enough critical mass of their own.
- maintain a commercial spine, as

less employment  
more residential



more employment  
less residential



Maximum residential



Central



Maximum employment

described in the Old Oak Line Spatial Principle, from the ASD site, beside the Old Oak Common Station, across Acton Wells East to Acton Wells West connecting to Park Royal. Creating three unique business communities. Provide a mix of uses surrounding Acton Wells Park with 24/7 activity aiding in the safety of the park itself.

- daylight/sunlight access to Acton

Wells Park should be protected and prioritised through appropriate massing and articulation to not affect enjoyment of the park and the success of its planting.



**The Town Centre will capitalise on the excellent transport connectivity offered by Old Oak Common Station and provide new amenities and work opportunities for the surrounding neighbourhoods.**





## 6f Canalside Neighbourhood

**The Canalside Neighbourhood will create a new community focused around the Grand Union Canal and a new two hectare park at Channel Gate.**

New development will complement and enhance existing residential areas, engaging positively with the recent built context and sensitively with heritage, guided by the following neighbourhood-specific principles:

- 6e.1 Six local places that stitch new and existing areas together
- 6e.2 Activating the Neighbourhood Centre
- 6e.3 Forming a high street
- 6e.4 High street character along the Mile
- 6e.5 Character of the park frontage
- 6e.6 A parkside address
- 6e.7 A series of waterfront attitudes
- 6e.8 A canalside address
- 6e.9 A primary school fronting onto the park
- 6e.10 Safeguarding Channel Gate Bridge
- 6e.11 Forming a cohesive new quarter with the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area

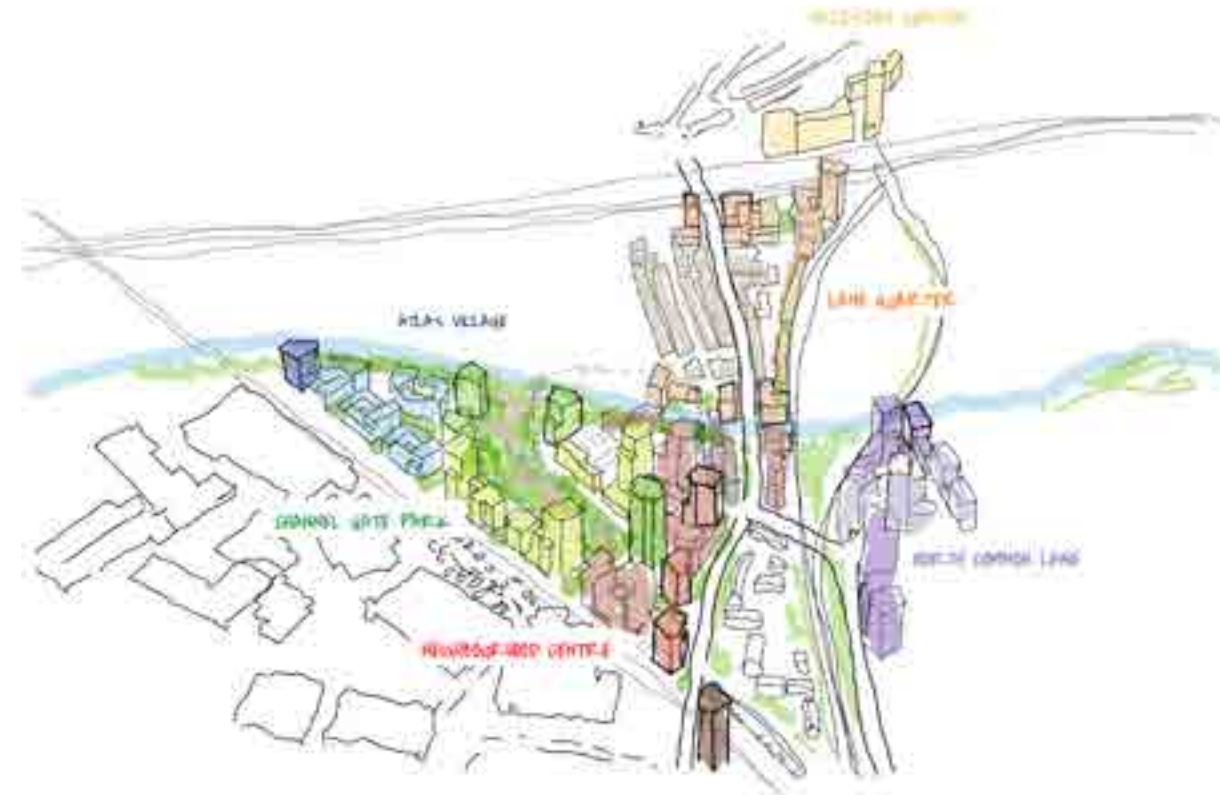




## 6f.1 Six local places that stitch new and existing areas together

Most existing residents in Old Oak live in Canalside Neighbourhood. New development in the neighbourhood will stitch previously isolated and fragmented areas together, to create a cohesive whole comprising six local places with distinct character. They will be defined by the following approaches:

- Six local places: the Neighbourhood Centre, Channel Gate Park, Atlas Village, North Common Lane, Lane Quarter and Willesden Junction.
- Leveraging height and massing to define character in a manner consistent with 'placemaking with varied heights', with generally lower shoulders across the neighbourhood.
- A critical mass of activity and intensity of development at the Neighbourhood Centre.
- Maximising a high-density, diverse residential provision that makes the most of frontages towards Channel Gate Park and the Grand Union Canal.
- A residential quarter of efficient, predominantly low-rise typologies at Atlas Village with a finer urban grain.
- Enhancing relationships with recent existing development at the Collective and Oaklands Rise.



A new Canalside Neighbourhood comprising six local places with distinct character

## 6f.2 Activating the Neighbourhood Centre

While buildings will be predominantly residential, ground floors in the Neighbourhood Centre should accommodate a wide range of public uses, forming the thriving community-focused heart of the Canalside Neighbourhood. To support everyday life and an inclusive economy, a complementary mix and critical mass of ground floor uses that attract footfall to this local centre should be achieved by:

- lining available frontages of the Old Oak Mile, entrances to Channel Gate Park and routes to and along the Grand Union Canal with a variety of commercial units to complement social infrastructure anchors.
- maximising a high street parade and high-quality public realm from Atlas Junction to the Old Oak Lane bridge over the canal as the only section of the Mile in the Neighbourhood Centre where activation on both sides of the street is achievable.
- careful coordination of the ground floor offering with the existing Collective and integrating public realm improvements to Old Oak Lane and Atlas Road.
- reinforcing Atlas Junction as a point of arrival with active ground floor uses in new developments on two sides of the junction.
- vertically stacking mixed uses, including consideration of non-residential uses at first floor level as a positive approach for achieving high density and to support activation of the public realm.
- adopting a balanced and optimised approach to maximising housing provision.



A complementary mix and critical mass of ground floor uses with commercial units of varied sizes



Key corner signalling the entrance to Channel Gate Park from the Mile

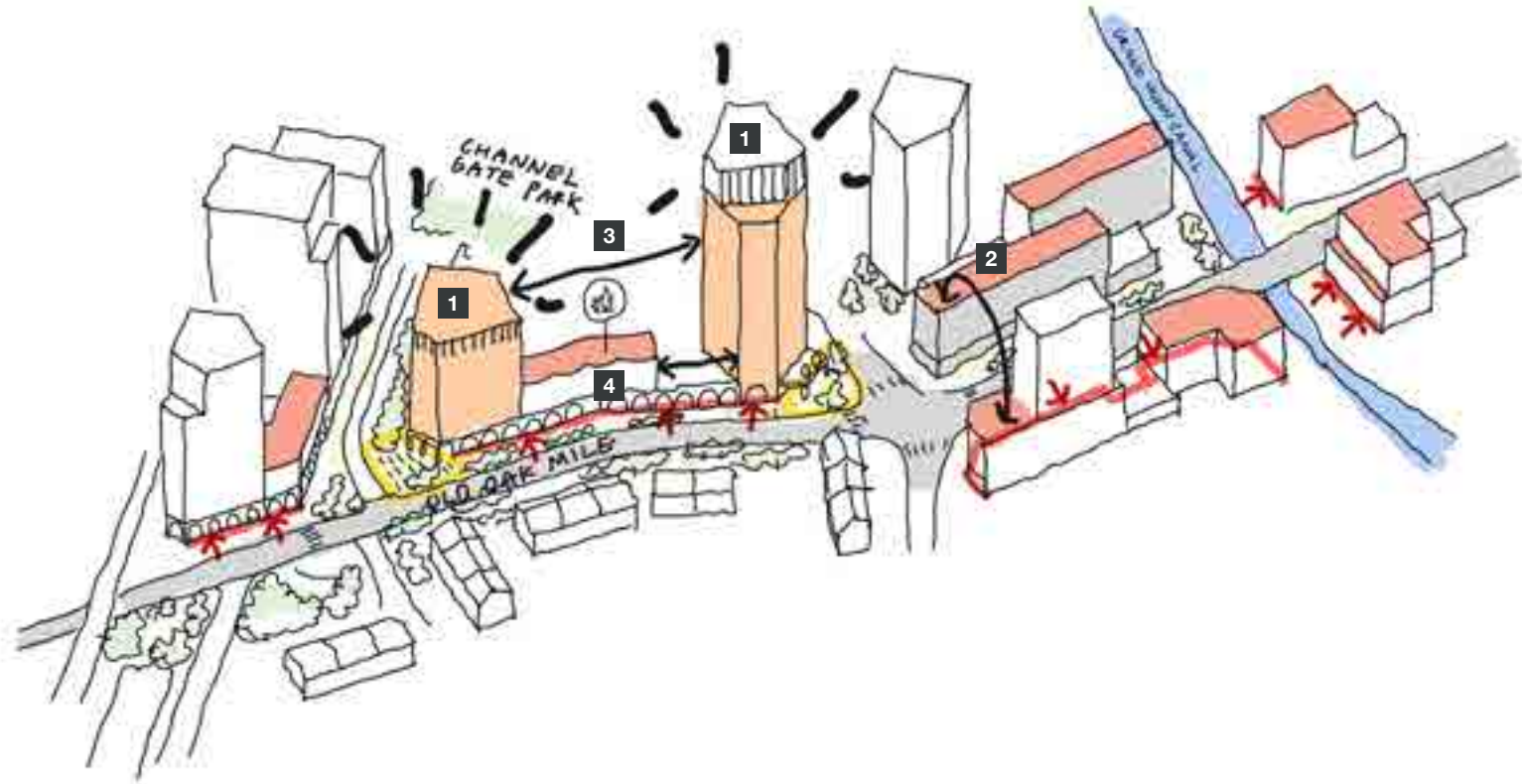


An essential two-sided high street parade between Atlas Junction and the canal

### 6f.3 Forming a high street

The Mile will be the primary urban spine of the Neighbourhood Centre, bringing together varied uses within a clear and legible townscape. Its built form should establish a strong sense of place by:

- 1** choreographing a sequence of markers and corners to define the Mile and create key moments of arrival.
- 2** setting a consistent low-rise shoulder to give clarity to the street and purpose to taller elements.
- 3** maximising the gap between towers, especially opposite Shaftesbury and Cerebos Gardens to mitigate overshadowing impacts on existing housing and the street.
- 4** setting buildings back to allow a generous public realm along the Mile, supporting spill-out spaces and street life.



The built form and public realm should work together to create a legible and coherent high street in Neighbourhood Centre



## 6f.4 High street character along the Mile

The Neighbourhood Centre will define a distinctive high street character along the Mile through three key places:

**Park Entrance** - Forming a convivial green neighbourhood by:

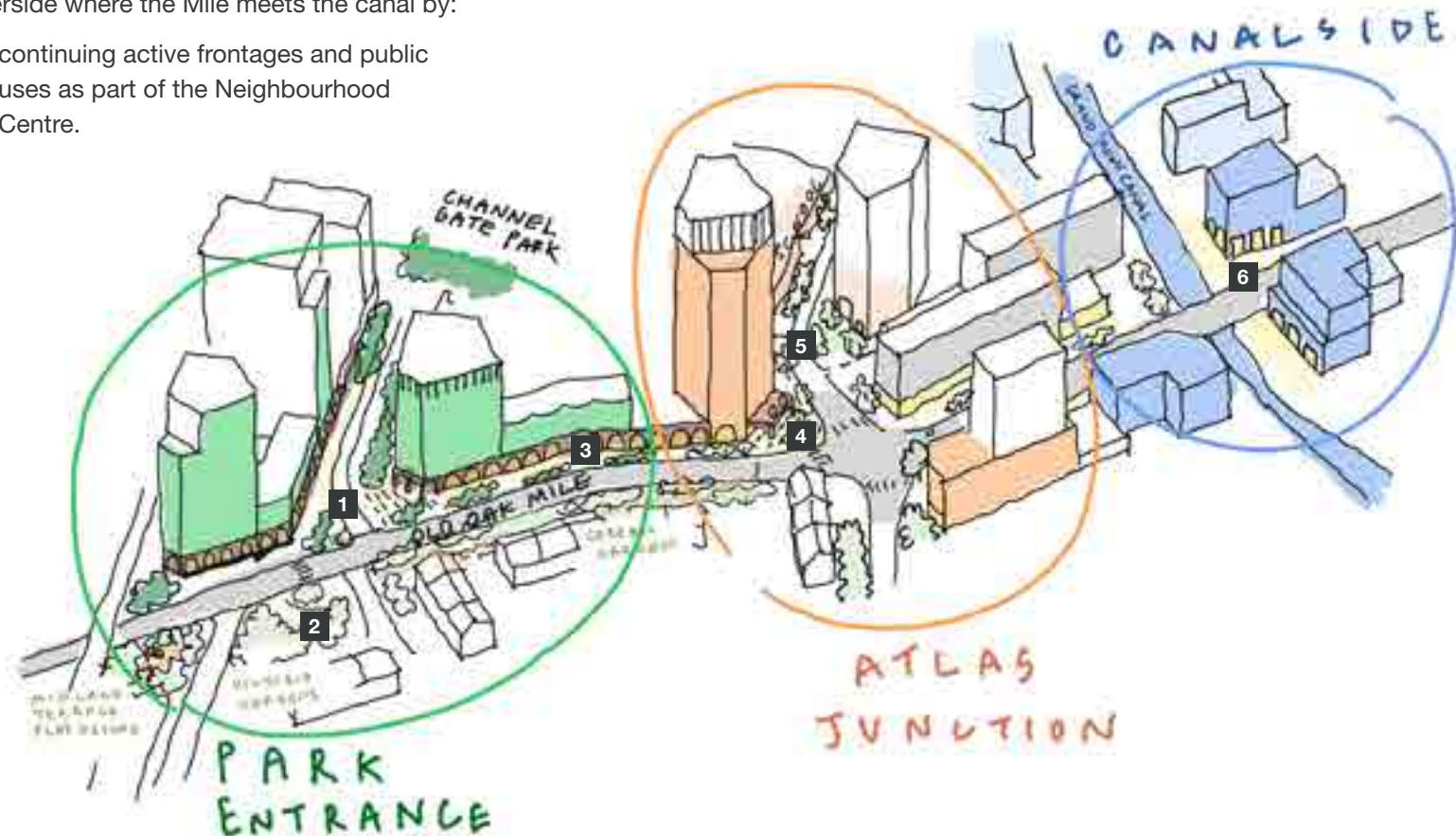
- 1** extending Channel Gate Park to Victoria Road to create a green, welcoming entrance.
- 2** weaving existing public spaces such as Midland Terrace Playground, Victoria Gardens and Cerebos Garden.
- 3** animating the Mile's one-sided edge with public-facing frontages, everyday shops, cafés and community uses supported by greenery, seating and spill-out activity.

**Atlas Junction** – creating a key arrival where the Mile meets the Cut by:

- 4** focusing community and social infrastructure with generous public realm for social activity.
- 5** exploring opportunities to optimise the Atlas Road and Victoria Road interface for active travel and improved public realm, such as potential modal filtering.

**Canalside** – shaping a relaxed urban waterside where the Mile meets the canal by:

- 6** continuing active frontages and public uses as part of the Neighbourhood Centre.



Establishing the character of a bustling high street along the Mile

- 1** maximising daylight access by pulling moments of taller height towards corners of the park to create a generous gap to the sky. This will allow surrounding buildings to be lower, minimising the number of tall buildings without a loss in quantum, while mitigating overshadowing impacts on the neighbouring Bashley Road Traveller Site.
- 2** maintaining a predominantly 8-storey shoulder with a horizontal emphasis to manage a height transition from low and mid-rise Atlas Village to the more intense Neighbourhood Centre.
- 3** marking where the park meets the heart of the Neighbourhood Centre at the tallest tower in the Canalside Neighbourhood, coordinating with other landmark towers to provide orientation from across Old Oak.

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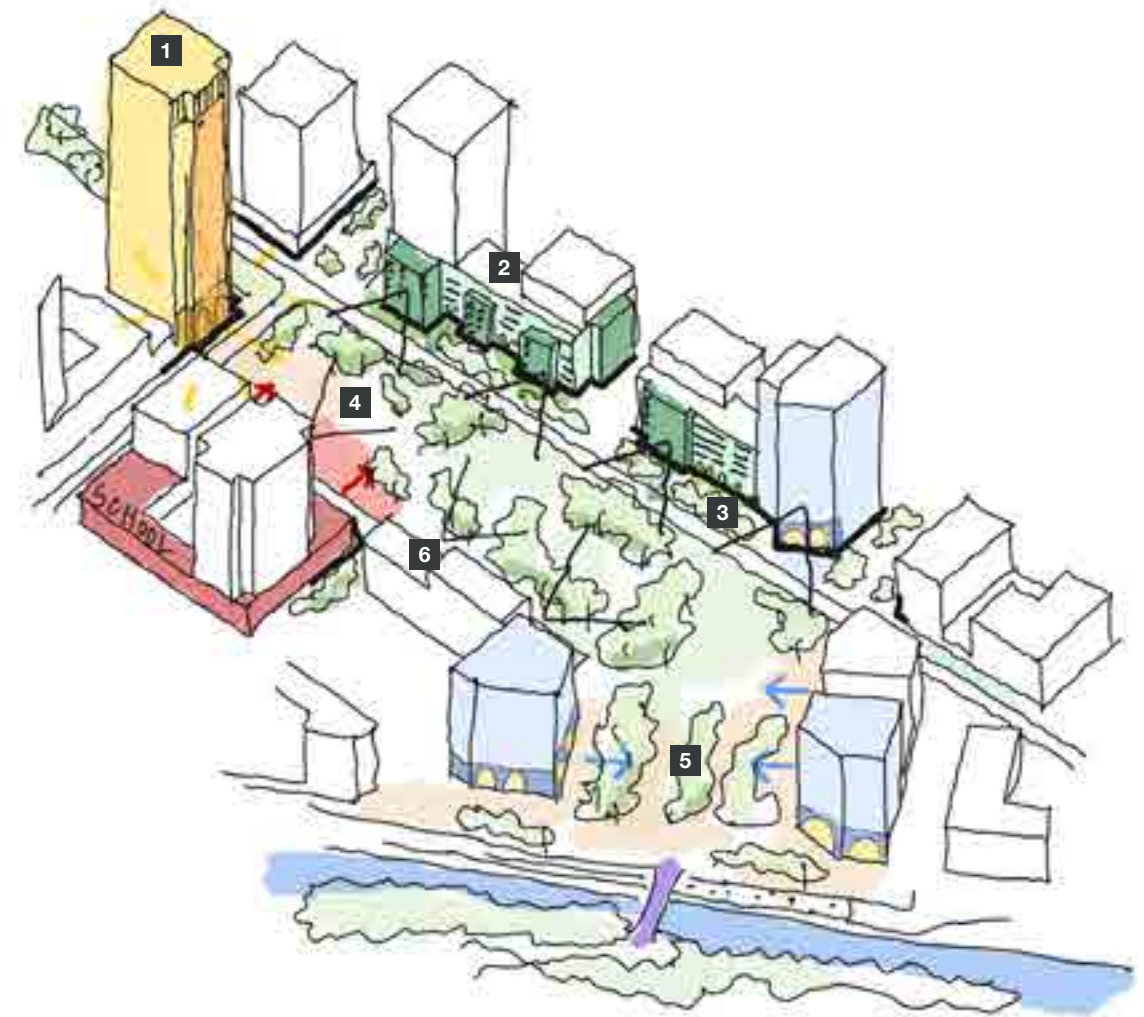


## 6f.6 Character of the park frontage

The following approaches define the character of the park frontage and should help make it into an attractive, inclusive, active and safe urban living room:

- 1** a distinctive architectural treatment to the park-facing facade of the landmark tower as a focal point to a key public space.
- 2** breaking up long façades with staggered footprints and varied massing, reducing monotony and adding rhythm to the built edge.
- 3** allowing public realm landscaping to spill across the street, softening the park edge and blurring the transition between built form and green space.
- 4** coordinating ground floor activation on all sides of the park to help provide specificity to programming the landscape.
- 5** creating an opportunity to activate the public realm with desirable park and canal-facing commercial units.

- 6** optimising the provision of homes with views towards the park to offer residents an attractive outlook while providing overlooking and a positive sense of enclosure.



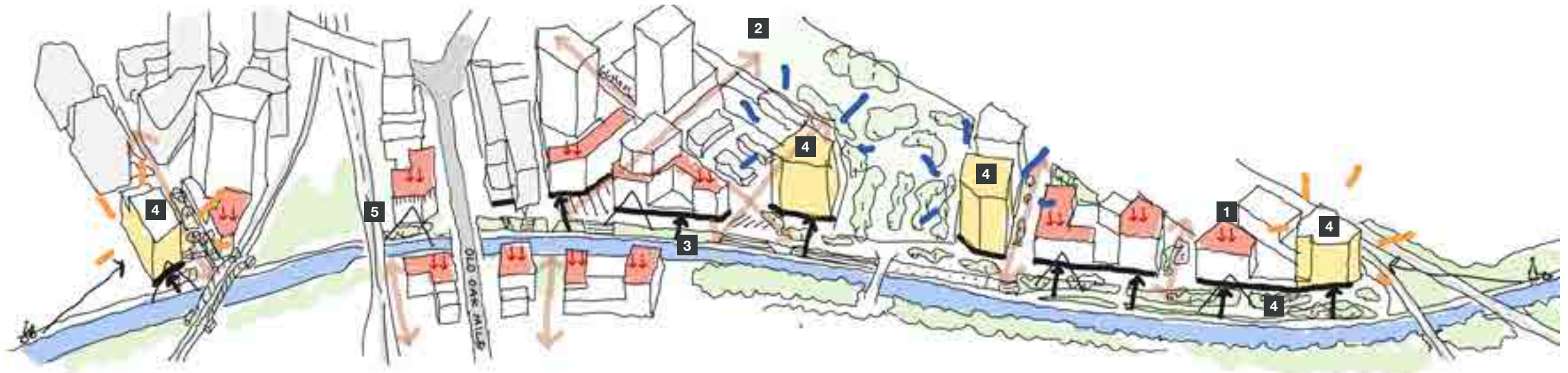
The built form should dissolve and activate the landscape edge to give the park frontage distinctive character



## 6f.7 A canalside address

A one kilometre stretch of the Grand Union Canal flows across distinct places in Old Oak from Atlas Village in the east, through the Neighbourhood Centre, to North Common Lane in the west. The public realm and built form should weave together these places and create a vibrant and coherent address across the canal by:

- 1** keeping massing low with a 6–8 storey datum, and setting taller buildings back to form a composed skyline.
- 2** maintaining permeability with frequent gaps in massing as moments of relief.
- 3** setting buildings back for landscaped transitions, towpath spill-out, and buffer spaces.
- 4** bookending the bridge landing and canal entrance to Channel Gate Park with mid-rise markers, celebrating a key moment along the canal.
- 5** marking the eastern and western thresholds of the neighbourhood, improving safety and legibility with clear points of arrival — a potential future Bulls Bridge crossing to the east and the transition to Park Royal to the west.
- 6** maximising canal views to and from homes for passive surveillance of the towpath.



Creating a vibrant, legible and coherent canal frontage weaving four local places together

## 6f.8 A series of waterfront attitudes

While a coordinated approach to the canal frontage will create a coherent address, a series of attitudes define distinctive character as the waterfront passes through local places in the neighbourhood:

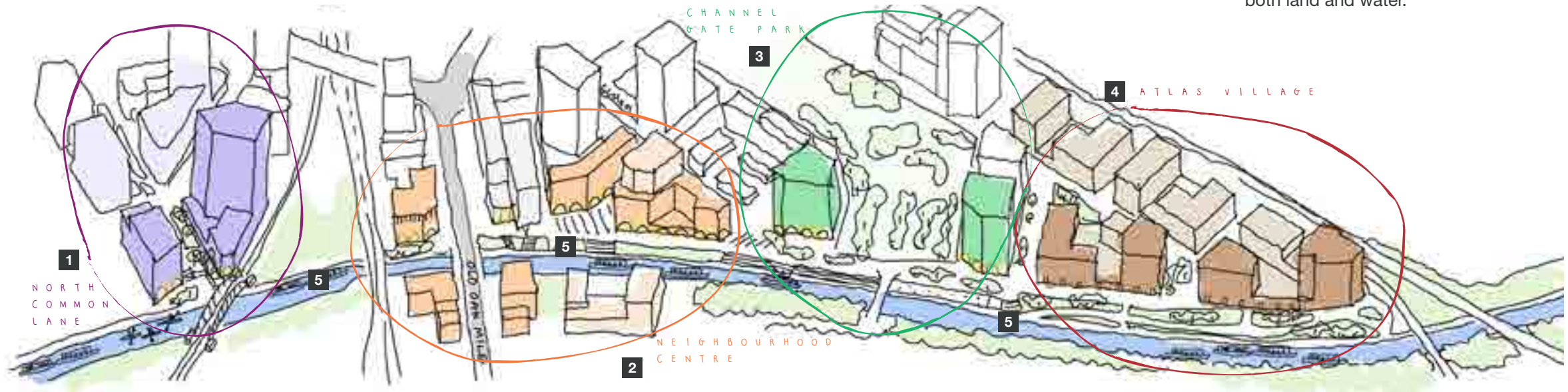
**1 North Common Lane:** activate towpath edges through an intimate but characterful pocket of public realm that reinforces waterside activity. This space should be coordinated with Oaklands Rise and linked to the Cut as part of a wider network.

**2 Neighbourhood Centre:** an opportunity to activate both sides of the canal. At the intersection of the Mile and canal, coordinate building corners, frontages, and public realm on all sides, including the Collective, to create a welcoming, animated place that draws activity to the canal. Both sides should be enlivened with eateries and generous spill-out spaces.

**3 Canal entrance to Channel Gate Park:** reinforce the idea of playable public realm through integrated landscape design, creating a major destination along the canal for the wider neighbourhood. At the canal entrance to Channel Gate Park – playable public realm that uses level changes to create opportunities for activity and engagement.

**4 Atlas Village:** establish a cluster of lower-rise buildings with fine urban grain to create a communal and intimate residential setting. Design low-traffic streets, enable safe sociable spaces, and strengthen permeability to the canal to activate the water's edge.

**5 Towpath moorings:** amplify local character and activity with opportunities for further activation on both land and water.



A series of attitudes to ground floor activation define distinctive character for each of four local places



## 6f.9 A primary school fronting onto the park

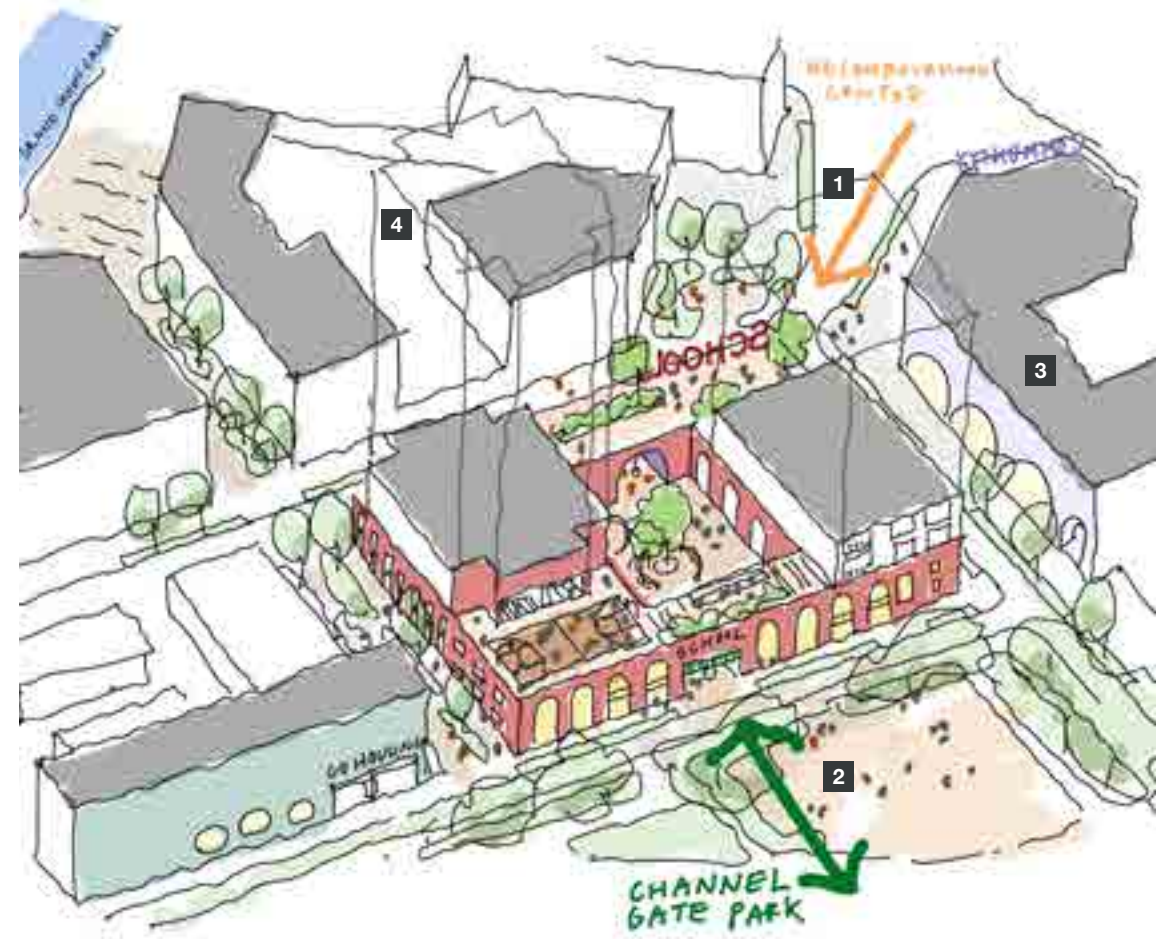
A new primary school will be a social infrastructure anchor in the heart of the Canalside Neighbourhood. Key features defining this important amenity serving both new and existing families in the local vicinity include:

- 1** an accessible location, ideally in the Neighbourhood Centre, easily reached from surrounding areas by active travel and public transport.
- 2** a generous frontage to Channel Gate Park, benefiting from integration with park landscaping and facilities.
- 3** considering programming outside of school hours for complementary uses to maximise activation and economic potential, taking advantage of adjacencies with community amenities in the Neighbourhood Centre.
- 4** integration with residential uses above as part of a hybrid plot to make the most of the park-facing opportunity. A standalone school in another location may be considered if stacking of uses is not viable.



A high-density hybrid residential development with a primary school at its base facing London's Hackney Downs (Hawkins\Brown)

Tiger Way, Hackney  
Photo © Jack Hobhouse



The primary school takes advantage of both park and Atlas Road frontages in an efficient courtyard arrangement



## 6f.10 Safeguarding Channel Gate Bridge

A future bridge crossing the canal at Channel Gate is safeguarded as an important infrastructural link to create a more connected Old Oak. Safeguarding this location should provide key connectivity, placemaking, development and sustainability benefits by:

- 1** creating a focal point for ground floor and landscape activation at the canalside entrance to Channel Gate Park.
- 2** enhancing pedestrian/cycle connectivity as part of a car-free movement network.
- 3** providing access to Channel Gate Park and associated amenities for new and existing residents in the Railway Cottages of Lane Quarter and Harlesden north of the canal.
- 4** enabling access to any future development in the neighbourhood along the north bank of the canal.
- 5** reusing abutments for an existing HS2 construction bridge, which brings potential cost and embodied carbon benefits.



The new bridge will provide key connectivity, placemaking, development and sustainability benefits

## 6f.11 Forming a cohesive new quarter with the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area

Lane Quarter will sensitively manage the edge of the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area. A coherent public realm strategy and strategic use of height and massing should overcome severance while stepping up to taller areas north and south. Development on the north bank of the canal should also unlock access to the waterfront. Together, the following moves should give this much-loved area a confident new identity:


- 1** maintain a consistent four-storey shoulder facing the conservation area, integrating innovative terraced house and maisonette typologies.
- 2** locate taller massing along the railway edge, with the tallest element positioned furthest away to relate to future development at Willesden Junction while minimising impact on conservation area character.
- 3** consider a secondary moment of mid-rise height to terminate the eastward vista from Old Oak Lane, aligned with Goodhall Street to form a small pocket of public realm.

- 4** repair the severance created by Old Oak Lane, which dissects the conservation area, through coordinated development on both sides that strengthens the relationship with the railway cottages and reinforces a local loop connecting the neighbourhood.
- 5** introduce a new public space at the southern end of Goodhall Street, providing a direct connection from the conservation area to the waterfront.
- 6** sensitively form thresholds at both ends of the conservation area with pairs of mid-rise buildings to create points of arrival and transition along the Mile.



New development will give a much-loved existing area a confident new identity





A neighbourhood unifying new and existing residential areas, focused around the Grand Union Canal and Channel Gate Park.