

06

Character Areas

Overview

The proposed development contains five distinct character areas, to suit the lifestyles of all residents and to reflect the varied built and natural features throughout the Site. Each character area holds its own varying density, scale, landscape treatments, and other subtle design variations, reflecting the wide array of spaces and experiences to be found within the masterplan.

The character of the proposed development and open space will be evident at various scales. It will be closely connected to the surrounding area, with homes organised into neighbourhood clusters, each featuring its own distinct character and centred around parks or open spaces. The architecture, infrastructure, and landscape design will reflect both the local character and contemporary design.

The five character areas are outlined below and described in more detail on the following pages of this document.

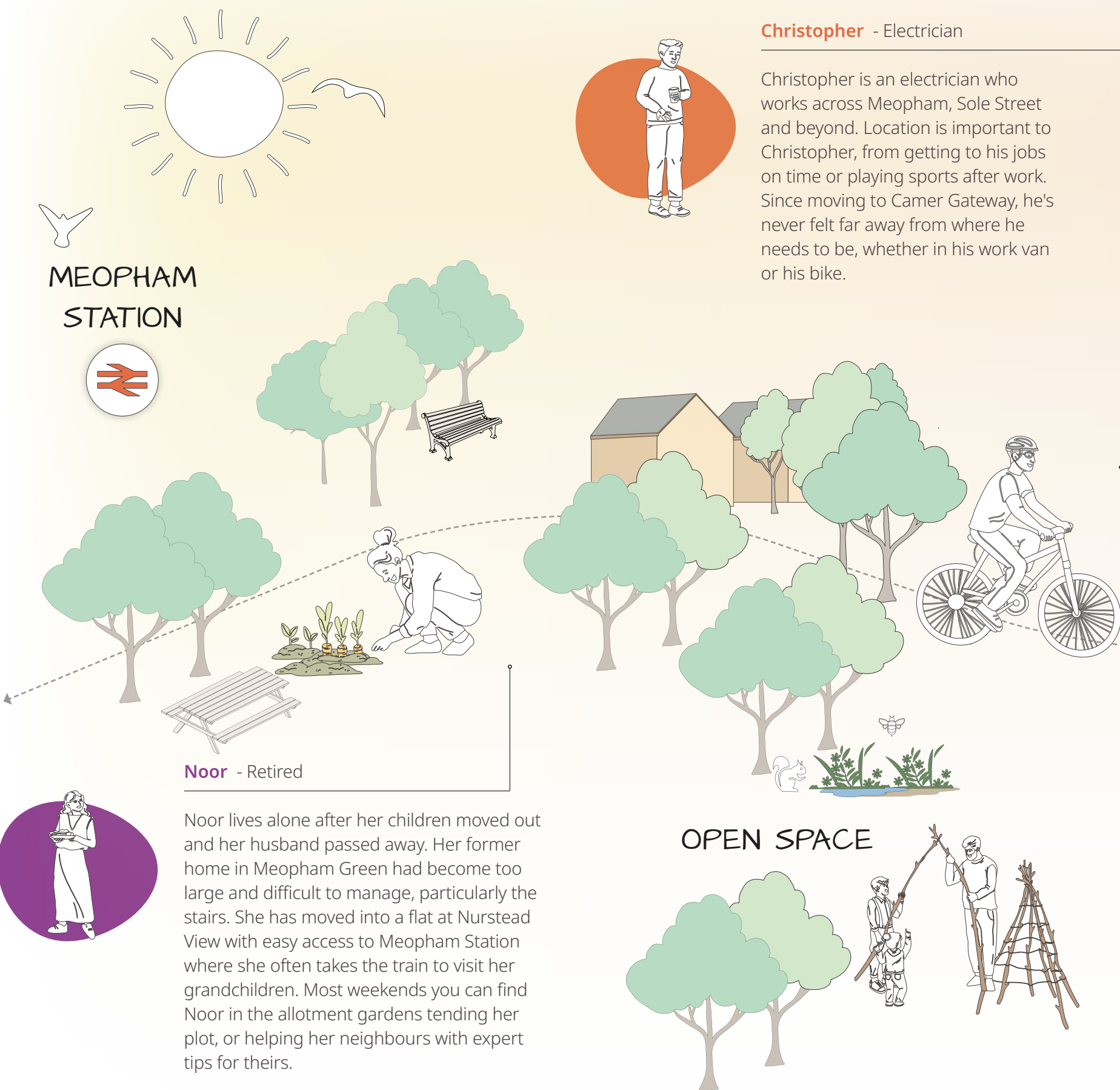
- **Camer Gate**
- **Norwood Place**
- **Nurstead View**
- **Norwood Gardens**
- **Skylark Fields**

Fig. 6.1. Proposed Character Areas



A Day in the Life

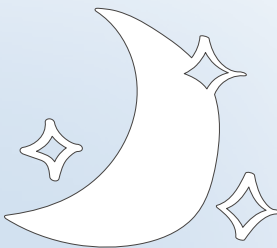
No one day is alike - from work, to leisure, sun up to sunset, people from a wide range of backgrounds will use the spaces in the masterplan differently. The following sample user profiles were established as a tool to test the Character Areas and ensure proposals are designed with community building in mind.



Amir and Emma - Students



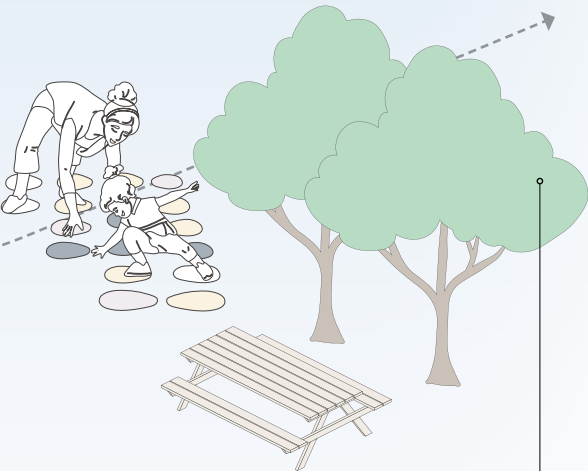
Amir and Emma are part of the first class of students at the new Primary School. Everything to them is new and exciting and they often go round to the different green spaces and play areas around their home.



SOLE STREET STATION



SPORTS AND PLAY



Jenna and Oliver - Parent

Jenna and Oliver chose to move to Camer Gate as their family grows, with a third child on the way. Being close to the school and local centre made day-to-day life easier, and the walkable, cycle-friendly layout has allowed them to sell one of their cars. Most local trips are now made by family cargo bike. The children spend more time outdoors, and Oliver feels healthier and more active as cycling has become part of everyday life.



PRIMARY SCHOOL



CORNER SHOP

Marcus - Small Business Owner

Everyone in Norwood Place knows Marcus, he's the smiling face at the corner shop. From sandwiches to stationery, Marcus is a valuable member of the community whose shop everyone can depend on.

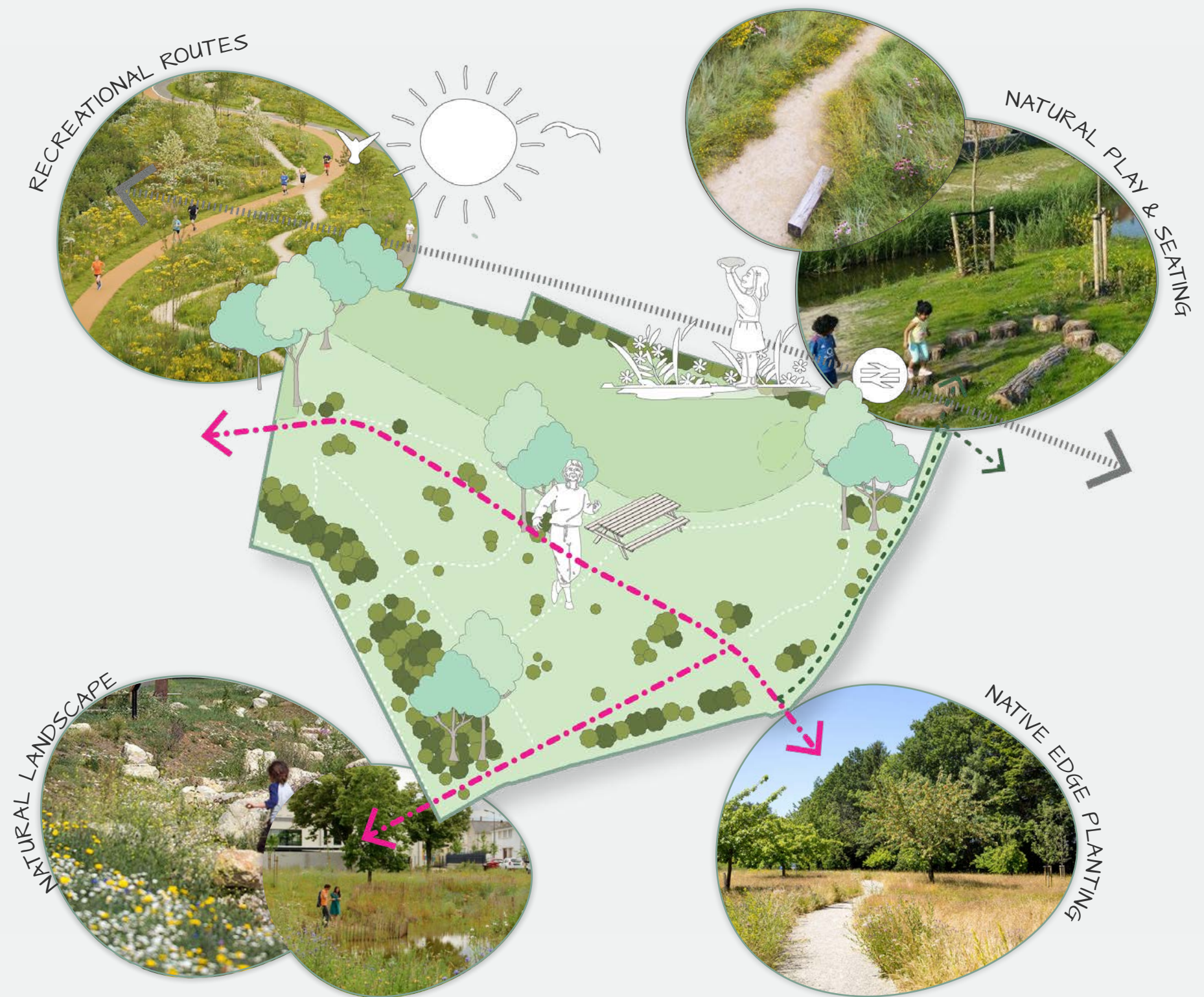


Skylark Fields

The Skylark Fields character area forms the eastern landscape setting of the masterplan and establishes a generous green buffer adjoining Camer Country Park and the wider countryside. A strong hedgerow boundary is retained along the northern edge, reinforcing the existing railway vegetation belt and providing effective visual containment. Characterised by open grassland, meadows, woodland edges and informal recreational routes, Skylark Fields supports biodiversity and offers accessible, naturalistic spaces for walking, nature appreciation and outdoor play.

Remaining free from built development, this area creates a sensitive transition towards the Kent Downs National Landscape and maintains a calm, parkland quality. New and existing woodland blocks are connected through enhanced planting and a network of pedestrian routes, establishing both ecological and recreational continuity between the woodland to the north of the Site and the woodland structure within Camer Country Park to the south. Mature trees, filtered views and interconnected green spaces define the landscape character, ensuring Skylark Fields functions as a key component of the wider green infrastructure network, linking recreational routes across the Site from north to south.

Close to the proposed new homes, a new play area will serve as an additional destination, further enriching the recreational offer westward into the Site. Nearby, Sole Street Railway Station and the Railway Inn pub act as local destinations linked to Skylark Fields.





Oliver uses his free time to dedicate himself to competitive running. He uses Skylark Fields as a perfect training ground as he finds that he can complete a long run without even crossing Camer Road **1**. Footpaths and trails are perfectly suited for running and the character of the landscape makes no run ever dull. On weekends, Oliver sometimes crosses into Camer Country Park **2** where he takes in the beauty of the Kent Downs one mile at a time. He needs groceries so he takes the cargo bike to The Camer Parade stopping by the school to pick up the kids on the way.

Norwood Gardens

Norwood Gardens takes its character from the historic shaw defining this part of the Site. The character area weaves a series of green and blue corridors through the residential neighbourhoods, creating a distinctive landscape-led setting. A key feature is the sports and play hub positioned in the northwest, providing a recreational focus for the community.

Norwood Gardens is a central landscape character area that reinforces and extends the Site's established woodland structure, including the retention and prominent role of Blundells Shaw. Acting as a strong green finger running through the heart of the Site, it enhances the experience of the existing public footpath by creating a landscape corridor that is varied, biodiverse and visually engaging. This character area provides access to a range of recreational and environmental features including sports fields, amenity grassland, a dog park, SuDS basins, and woodland edges. It also forms an important green gateway at the main vehicular entrance, allowing a clear vista northwards, towards existing woodland blocks.

The sports and play hub enriches the local amenity offer, while the integrated active travel connections provide direct, accessible links from surrounding homes to this community destination.

Norwood Gardens' landscape identity is defined by shaws, wetlands, and extensive tree planting, creating a diverse and legible environment. By forming shared boundaries with all four other neighbourhoods, it delivers a series of frontages overlooking green spaces and promoting a strong visual and physical relationship between homes, nature, and recreation.





Noor found it hard in the past to stay active but since moving in she has taken full advantage of all the leisure routes **1**. She has also joined the weekly bridge club at the clubhouse **2** which is a good fun way to meet some of the neighbours.



Marcus meets friends every week for a game of five a side by the playing fields **3**. It is a short walk from his shop at the local centre **4**. Today, a friend has come over from Gillingham by train and Marcus decides to walk her back to Sole Street Station **5**.

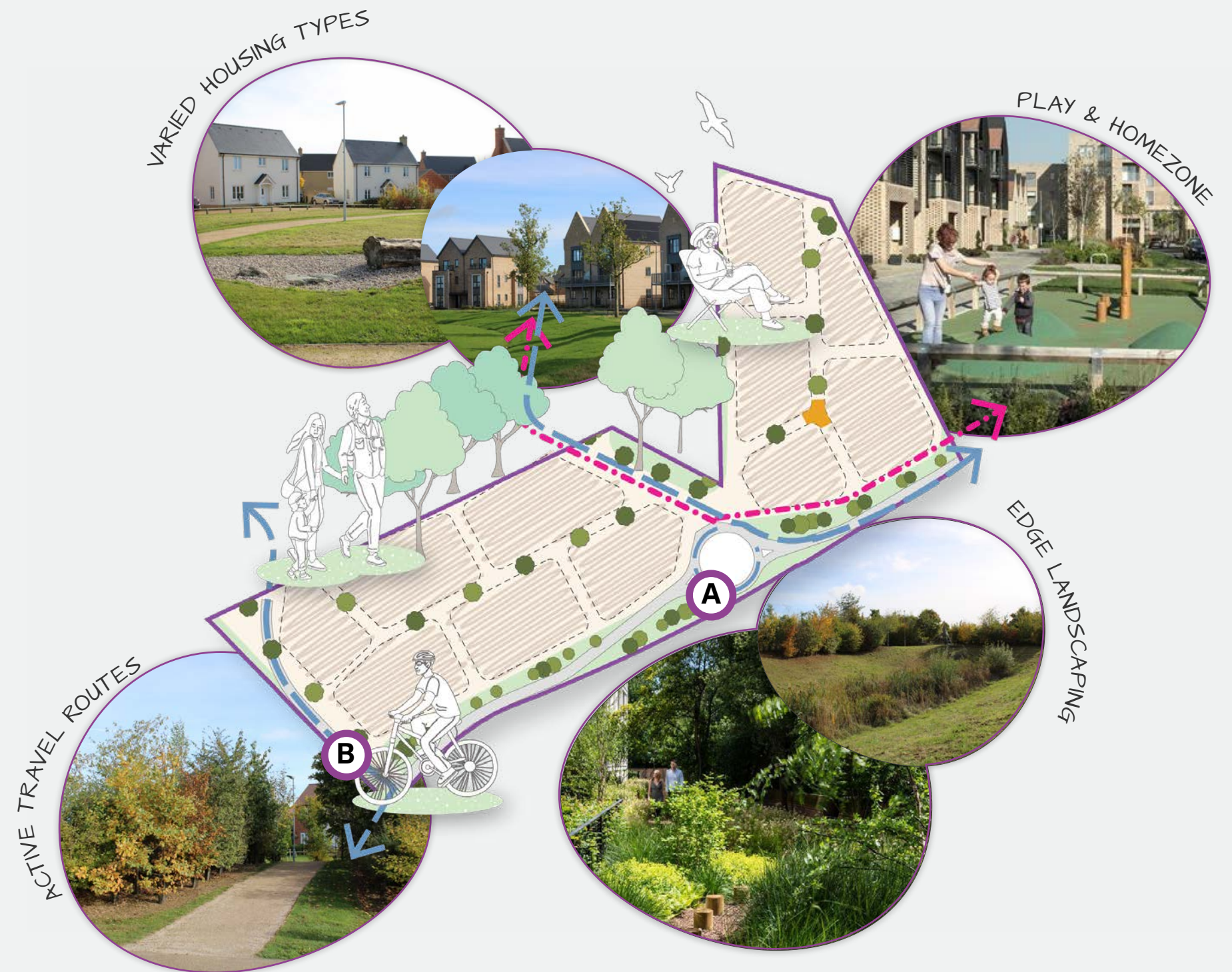
Camer Gate

Camer Gate is located on the southern side of the Site and forms the main entrance to the development. It introduces a green and landscape-led arrival experience before opening into a clearly framed and distinctive streetscene framed by houses.

Houses are lower on the edges of the character area, along Camer Road and facing Skylark Gardens, and gently step up to 2.5 storeys towards the core of the Site.

The Site's principal movement routes pass through Camer Gate, with active travel corridors and bus services providing efficient connections in and out of the Site, via the main roundabout **A**, and Norwood Lane **B**.

Houses will have stronger characteristics on the edge of parcels, interfacing with the green open space and surrounding landscape. Edge lanes and residential frontages will ensure key spaces are overlooked and feel safe and welcoming.





While he still relies on his van for work, **Christopher** has been cycling more and more since moving to the community. He is hoping to get more jobs locally allowing him to travel by bicycle. Today he finishes work early and takes the bike to meet a few of his friends for dinner in Hook Green **1**. After returning home he takes his impatient dog out for a short walk around the neighbourhood **2**.

Norwood Place

Norwood Place forms the beating heart of the Masterplan. Located at the centre of the development, this character area is anchored by the primary school and proposed local centre that will provide a lively community hub.

The school **A** fronts onto the primary bus loop and overlooks the local centre **B**, which includes the local bus stop and has the potential to support uses such as a corner shop, café, or play facilities. This central space also connects directly to the open space network leading towards the sports and play hub, reinforcing Norwood Place's role as a key movement and activity node. The primary bus loop around the character area creates a more defined spatial structure, that aids orientation and contributes to place identity.

Norwood Place accommodates buildings ranging from 2 to 3 storeys. Height along Norwood Lane is lower to respond to the character of existing housing along the road and to create a soft edge to the development. Development height sits higher around the local centre to frame the space and create visual markers.

The local centre includes a small number of low-rise flats, which reinforce wayfinding and introduce greater levels of activity and natural surveillance around the school and central spaces.





Marcus does not live in the development but his commute is really simple with the bus stop just across the street **2**. He loves being the smiling face of the community and is often found chatting with residents at the local centre **3**. Once a week he hops on the bus into Gravesend where he meets his friends at the pub.



Amir and **Emma** can finally feel independent and safely walk to school by themselves **4**. Their family moved into the area recently **5** and they have loved getting to know their new school and neighbourhood. Each day after school they go to the local playground near their home **6**. It offers informal play that lets the kids' imagination run wild, while also providing comfortable and shaded seating for their parents as they mingle over coffees.



Nurstead View

Nurstead View occupies the northwest of the development. Bounded by the railway line to the north, its character is shaped by its relationship with the adjacent sports and play hub and the extensive open space network of wetlands, meadows, allotments and orchard, play areas, and a key active travel link connecting to Norwood Lane.

Nurstead View retains a strong hedgerow boundary that reinforces the vegetated edge and respects the existing landscape structure. This area incorporates three SuDS ponds and surrounding routes, which will create visual interest and provide safe, attractive pedestrian movement through the community open space. A group of community allotment gardens and an orchard are also integrated into this character area, offering opportunities for local food growing and social interaction. The character of Nurstead View balances a community-focused garden identity with accessible open spaces, and natural play elements. It benefits from direct links to Norwood Gardens, ensuring convenient access to wider recreational facilities, ecological corridors and the broader green infrastructure network.

This character area transitions from two storeys along the southern part up to three along the northern boundary. This transition is driven by the surrounding community at Hook Green, the interface with the railway and the sports and play hub. A strong building line defines the primary street frontage, while a more open and varied layout emerges where development meets the landscape edge.





Jenna works in London and commutes twice a week. She loves the convenience of her morning journey and sometimes takes the bike to the station when she is running late **1**. On the way back home, Jenna stops by the clubhouse to see the kids football practice and to catch up with some of the other parents **2**.



Noor frequently meets her neighbours for walks **3** and she enjoys the social and active community around her. Every morning she goes to the community allotment and shares tips and helping hands on some of the neighbours gardens **4**.

07

Delivering Change

Indicative Phasing

An Indicative Phasing Plan has been prepared to show the anticipated sequence for delivering homes, infrastructure, and amenities across the Site. This plan is indicative, and is intended as a basis for discussion and will continue to evolve through the next stages of the design process.

Construction is envisaged to progress broadly from the southeast to northwest. A key principle of the phasing strategy is that each phase should be largely self-sufficient, with the necessary infrastructure and amenities provided alongside new homes. The school site would be delivered during Phase 2, including the provision of access points and all necessary connections. Importantly, landscape and tree planting will be brought forward as early as possible. This approach will allow vegetation time to establish and mature, while also helping to create a natural visual buffer to screen construction activity as development moves across the Site.

As new plots and public spaces are delivered, small-scale interventions will be introduced to encourage movement through the neighbourhood and foster opportunities for social interaction. These might include seating areas, play features, or informal gathering spaces, that help stitch phases together as the community grows.

The first homes are proposed to form the gateway for the Site at Camer Road, aligning with the delivery of supporting infrastructure and complementing the pattern of existing surrounding development.

Fig. 7.1. Phasing Plan



Staged Placemaking & Meanwhile Uses

Achieving the right balance between delivering new homes and providing supporting infrastructure is fundamental to creating a thriving and resilient community.

A staged placemaking strategy ensures that essential facilities, spaces, and connections are introduced in tandem with housing, so that residents at every stage of the development have access to what they need to live well, feel connected, and establish a sense of belonging in their new neighbourhood.

This phased approach is not only about meeting immediate needs but also about embedding long-term values. By prioritising infrastructure that supports sustainable travel, active lifestyles, and opportunities for social interaction, the strategy helps to nurture positive habits and behaviours from the outset. Over time, these elements play a crucial role in shaping a healthy, inclusive, and vibrant community.

Within this framework, several priority interventions stand out as being particularly important for setting the tone and identity of the place:

- A distinctive entrance: Strong landscaping, quality buildings, and carefully designed public realm to create a clear gateway, instilling pride and a strong first impression of the neighbourhood.
- Active travel connections: Safe, direct walking and cycling routes linking to Meopham and the railway stations, encouraging residents to choose sustainable travel modes over private car use.
- The Sports and Play Hub: Positioned within green space as a focal point for play, sport, and casual interaction, strengthening the role of public space as a community hub.

- Recreational routes and play opportunities: Trails and natural play features integrated into the landscape, fostering engagement with nature and informal social encounters along the way.
- Early landscape planting: Introducing greenery from the outset to provide structure, character, and environmental benefits, while immediately improving the visual quality of the area.
- The school and local centre: Acting as the social heart of the neighbourhood, providing space for socialising and shared activities that build cohesion.
- Meanwhile uses and events: Creative interventions and programmed activities to enhance identity and reinforce a sense of belonging.

Where the delivery of these interventions is limited by financial constraints, construction timelines or regulatory delays, the introduction of temporary infrastructure and meanwhile uses should be explored. These interim solutions can provide early opportunities for community activity, activate underused land, and test ideas that may later be developed into permanent features.



Fig. 7.2. On Site tree nursery, residents can choose a tree for their garden



Fig. 7.3. Natural Play Area



Fig. 7.4. Sports and Play



Fig. 7.5. Meanwhile Use and Events

Conclusions

Following a comprehensive review of the Site, it has been demonstrated that, based on the design, policy, and technical work completed to date, the Site has the capacity to deliver approximately 730 new homes to meet the needs of the local area.

The Site benefits from single ownership, is readily accessible, and can be serviced without the need for abnormal infrastructure provision. It is free from significant constraints, and where minor challenges exist, these can be effectively addressed through thoughtful design, appropriate mitigation, and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

The proposed design and layout have been carefully shaped through the expertise of the applicant's professional consultant team. Full regard has been given to the Site's existing character, its relationship with the surrounding area, and the opportunities available to deliver a sustainable new community. The scheme aspires not only to respond sensitively to its setting but also to contribute positively to the vitality and distinctiveness of Meopham, Kent, and the wider region.

This Design and Access Statement sets out how the Site can be developed into a high-quality residential scheme that delivers much-needed new homes, a new primary school and local centre, creates attractive public open space, and aligns with local planning policy.

In summary, the Site offers the opportunity to deliver a well-connected, integrated, and sustainable neighbourhood, providing a diverse range of quality housing in Meopham, helping to shape a thriving and resilient community for the future.



Fig. 7.6. A well connected and sustainable neighbourhood

Land North of Camer Road
Meopham

Design and Access Statement
January 2026