

marsden island

purpose → place

design & access statement

for full planning permission september 2025

CITU

introduction

This document provides design and access information to support the proposed development in the Cellars Clough Wool Mill site in Marsden.

Citu's proposal for the site is to turn the vacant and previously developed/brownfield land within the green belt into a thriving sustainable residential development consisting of 75 homes, 206 cycle spaces and 116 car parking spaces.

The proposed housing will consist of 2, 3, and 4-bedroom homes built, using Citu's offsite timber frame system that delivers fabric first houses with low-embodied carbon. The scheme focusses on fostering a distinctive sense of place, with a landscape led plan that reduces the dominance of cars on the street scenes.

The proposal follows extensive pre-application discussions and submissions of planning pre-application documentation followed by subsequent dicussions and meetings with Kirklees council.

"If you make streets better for cars you get more traffic. If you make more bicycle infrastructure you get more bicycles. If you invite people to walk more and use public spaces more, you get more life in the city. You get what you invite."

Jan Gehl

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citu vision

Tackling climate change and enhancing human well-being are central to the 21st-century agenda, and as often highlighted by the United Nations, cities and towns have a crucial role to play in addressing these pressing challenges. Along with our developments in Leeds and Sheffield, Marsden Island offers a unique opportunity to lead this change in the UK.

Marsden Island will play a pivotal role in Kirklees' journey toward becoming a low-carbon town, acting as a catalyst for sustainable development throughout the Yorkshire region. Citu's vision for Marsden is to create one of the most impactful communities on the planet, with the development grounded in established principles of sustainability. The project will prioritise fostering positive behaviours in key areas such as transport, energy, housing, and biodiversity to create a truly sustainable community.

To deliver industry leading places, we must be bold in our thinking, creative in our design, and committed to delivering quality, sustainable homes and spaces. People are at the heart of what we do and we aspire to create a long-term community.

A car-free streets with a strong emphasis on walking and cycling has been a key focus for this development, which is conveniently located within walking distance of the town centre, main bus and train stations. The new bridge will further enhance community connections and accessibility. Improving the public right of ways will also strengthen these links, making the area even more accessible and encouraging seamless movement throughout the community.

The site will be powered by renewable energy, while high-performance, timber-framed homes address both embodied and operational carbon. The sustainable urban drainage system, native landscaping, green roofs, and PV panels contribute to reducing the risk of flooding and enhancing the area's climate resilience. The site presents a unique opportunity for small-scale regeneration, complementing the ongoing regeneration efforts in Kirklees. The development will also introduce a new type of contemporary living to Marsden's housing market, catering to different needs and lifestyles.

Kirklees Council has a clear vision for Marsden, aiming to transform it into a more sustainable and thriving community. This vision is encapsulated in the Marsden Blueprint, a strategic plan focused on reducing traffic, improving air quality, creating local employment opportunities, and boosting economic growth. These initiatives align with the council's broader sustainability goals, which include fostering a sustainable economy, enhancing green spaces, and improving the overall quality of life for residents. The council's aspirations for Marsden reflect its commitment to sustainable economic development and clean and green principles, as outlined in its wider Environment Strategy.

The plan for Marsden is designed to create a healthier, more vibrant town that supports both environmental sustainability and community well-being, ultimately making it a model for sustainable development within the Kirklees district.

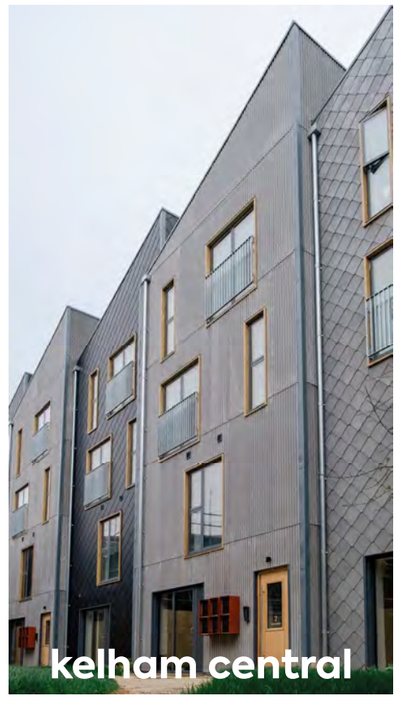
Our 'Little Kelham' and 'Kelham Central' projects in Sheffield successfully acted as catalysts for the incredible transformation of this area from derelict industrial sites into a thriving creative hub. In 2018, the Academy of Urbanism recognized it as the 'Greatest Neighbourhood in the UK,' with the judges noting our restoration projects as a key factor in the area's transformation.

Marsden Island's scale offers the potential to replicate the success we've seen in Kelham Island, unlocking even greater opportunities for transformation in Kirklees and beyond.



































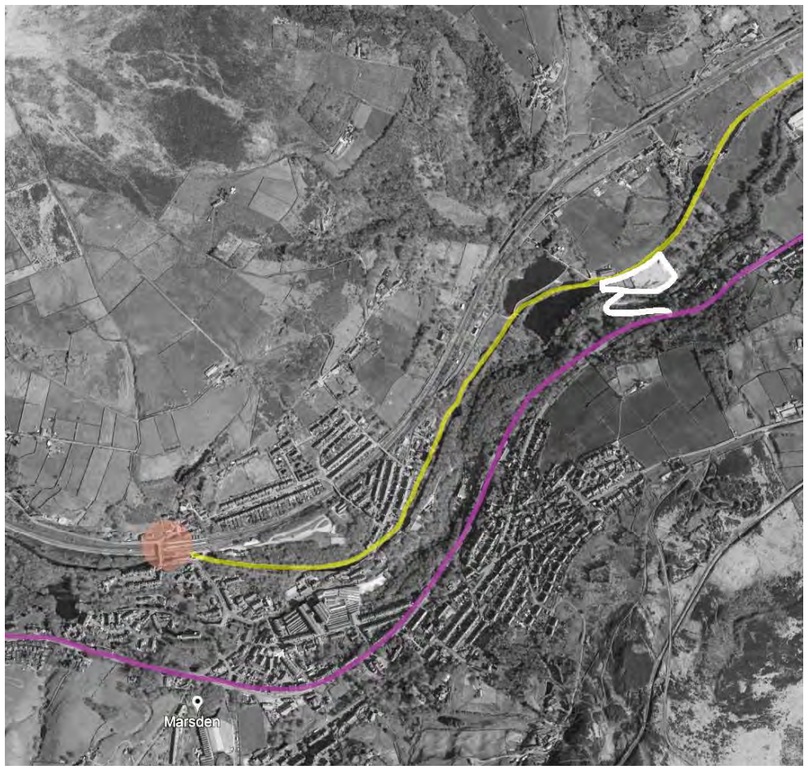


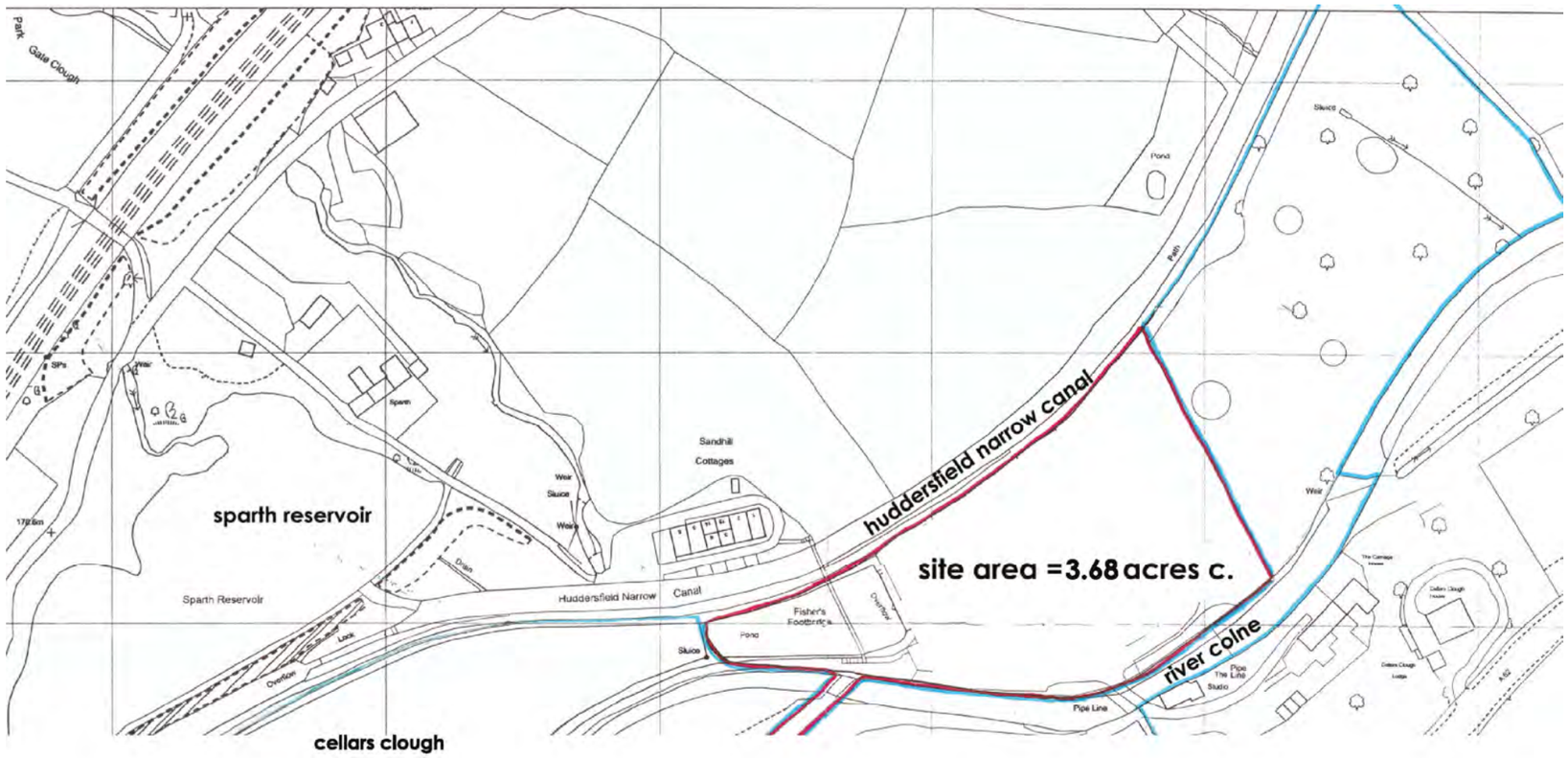
marsden island

CITU

site location

The site is located off an access road from the A62, between Slaithwaite and Marsden, approximately five miles west of Huddersfield town centre. It is within walking and cycling distance of Marsden town centre and train station, and just 500 metres from a bus stop on the A62, providing excellent connectivity to public transport. The surrounding area offers a range of immediate amenities, including a café, ponds, the river, canal, and spectacular views of the valley, making it a well-connected and scenic location for landscape led sustainable development.



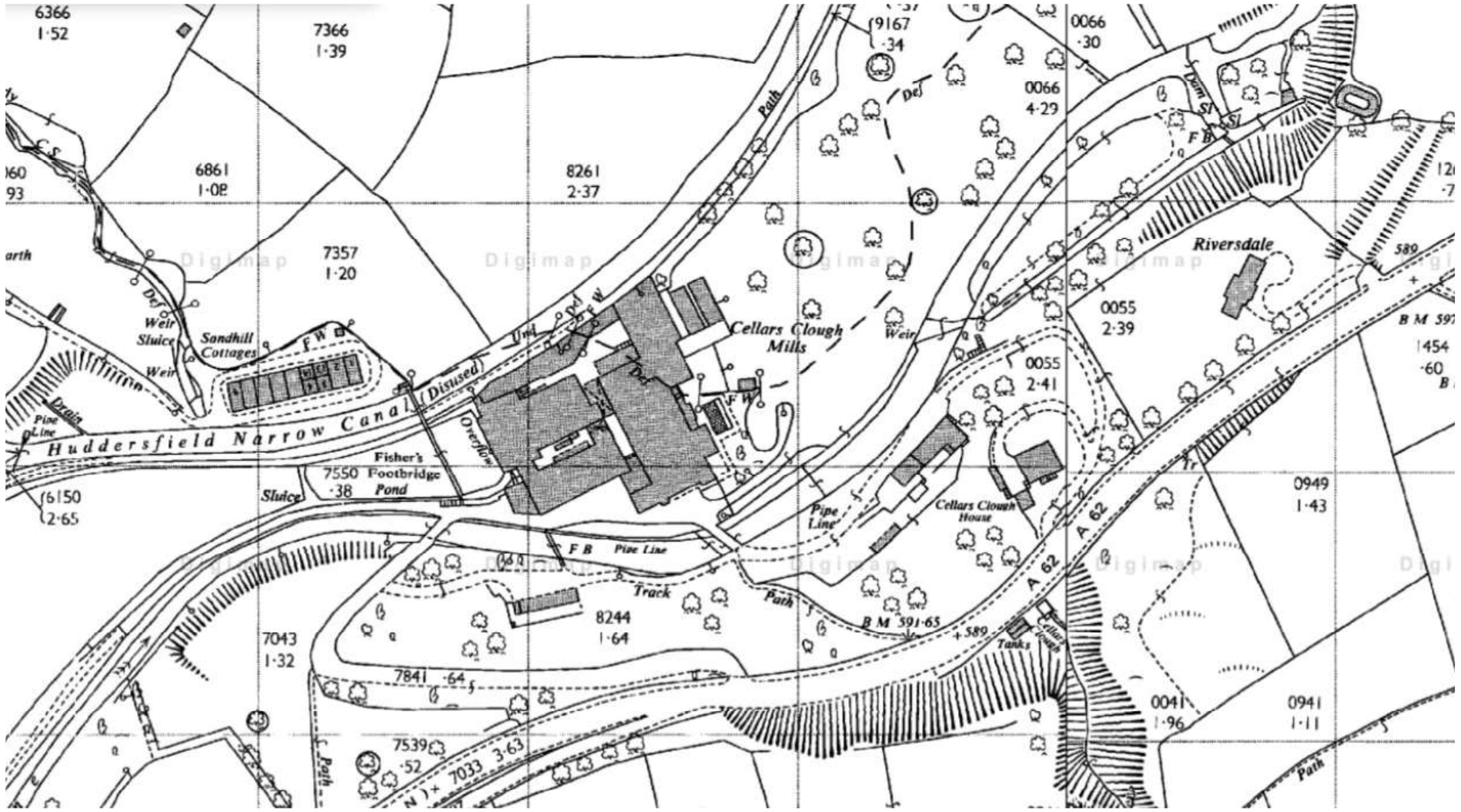


historical context

Cellars Clough Mill, located in Marsden, West Yorkshire, was established in 1888 by Samuel Firth of Gatehead. Firth was also the proprietor of Holme Mill in the same area. The mill primarily functioned as a woollen mill, contributing to the region's rich textile industry.

By the 1960s, ownership had transitioned to Fisher, Firth & Co. In 1981, the mill was rebranded as Cellars Clough Woollen Mills Ltd, managed by a member of the Firth family. However, the mill ceased operations in 1982 and subsequently fell into disrepair.

Situated adjacent to the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, the mill's pond became a favoured spot for fishing enthusiasts. Over the years, various redevelopment proposals were put forward, including plans to convert the mill into residential units with amenities such as a gym and pool. However, the structure continued to stand derelict for many years, before the mill buildings were finally demolished as part of a scheme that was granted permission in 2016. This marked the end of the mill era for the site, however, the site now deserves a proposal that creates a new distinctive place.



maps 1960s









planning history

The site has a long planning history, with multiple applications over the years seeking to regenerate the former Cellars Clough Wool Mill. The most recent approved scheme was for 55 dwellings, which has been implemented. Earlier proposals focused on apartment conversions and mixed-use schemes, some of which were withdrawn or modified due to feasibility and design considerations.

1. **2016/62/91573/W – Approved and Implemented**

Proposal: Demolition of existing redundant mill buildings and erection of 55 dwellings with associated parking and access from Manchester Road.
Status: Approved and implemented

2. **2013/62/90037/W – Withdrawn**

Proposal: Alterations to the existing mill and erection of an extension to form 133 apartments, formation of associated parking for 190 cars, part demolition of the existing complex, and construction of a new access road with improvements to the site access off Manchester Road.
Status: Withdrawn

3. **2011/62/91795/W – Granted (Extension to Time Limit)**

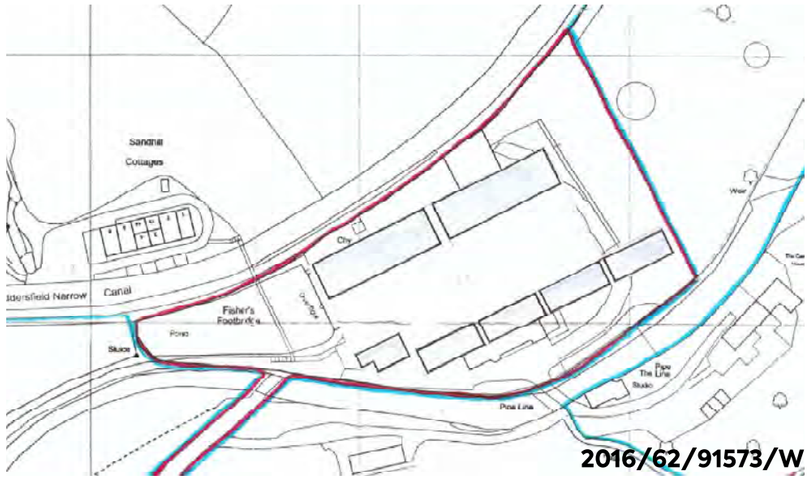
Proposal: Extension to the time limit for previously approved planning permission (2007/62/93456/W1).
Status: Time extension granted

4. **2007/62/93456/W1 – Approved**

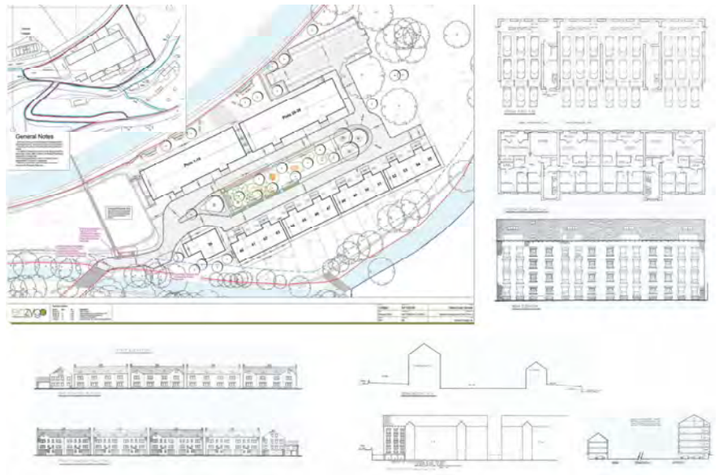
Proposal: Conversion of Mills 1, 2, 3 & 4 and former offices into 101 dwelling units, 9 live/work units, a residents' gym, pool, shop, meeting room, and bike store. The proposal also included the demolition of other buildings, car parking, and landscaping improvements to the access road.
Status: Approved

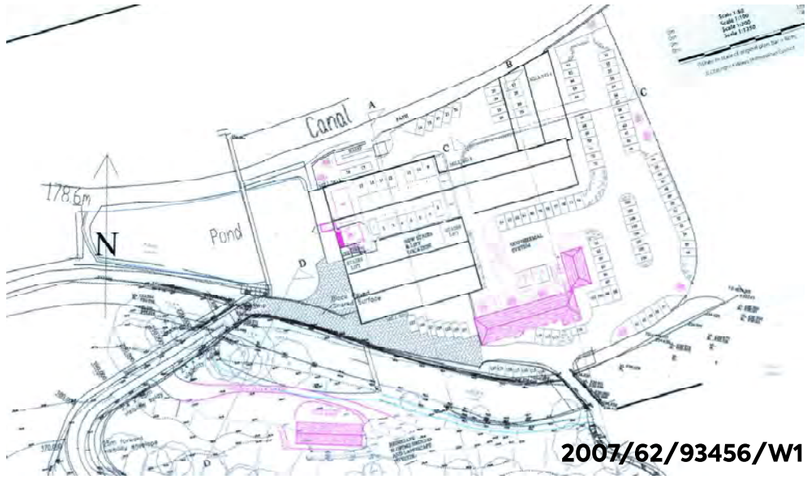
5. **2006/62/92095/W1 – Withdrawn**

Proposal: Conversion of Mills 1, 2 & 3 to apartments, demolition of Mill 4 and erection of a new apartment block, demolition of other one- and two-storey buildings, and erection of a new apartment and car parking block. The proposal also included surface car parking, landscaping, and access road improvements to accommodate 168 apartments in total.
Status: Withdrawn.



2016/62/91573/W





2007/62/93456/W1



2006/62/92095/W1

site & context

The site is surrounded by a rich blend of natural and man-made features that contribute to the overall character and potential of the development.

- To the south of the site runs the River Colne, providing a natural boundary with water levels typically 3-4m below the bank. The river is further contained by an existing stone wall on the bank top.

- To the north of the site is the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, with Sparth Reservoir lying beyond the canal. The reservoir, owned by the Canal Trust, acts as a feeder for the canal.

- To the east is open pasture land, contributing to the rural character of the area, with scenic views across the valley and surrounding landscape. This open space adds a tranquil, natural element to the environment.

- The site is well-connected to these surrounding features, creating an opportunity to integrate the development seamlessly with the local landscape and natural resources. This proximity to water, greenery, and open land will contribute to the creation of a sustainable, community-focused environment that encourages outdoor activities, leisure, and interaction with nature.

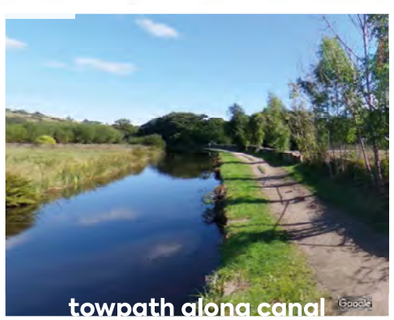
- The site's topography incorporates numerous features shaped by its surroundings. Access is provided via a road off the A62/ Manchester Road to the south. Additionally, a stepped public right of way through the woods connects the site to the A62 for pedestrians. A disused bridge over the mill pond can be reached via steps from both the towpath and the access road. The southern riverfront is bordered by an existing retaining wall and lined with several mature trees, while the northern boundary features a low brick wall, a remnant of the former mill buildings.



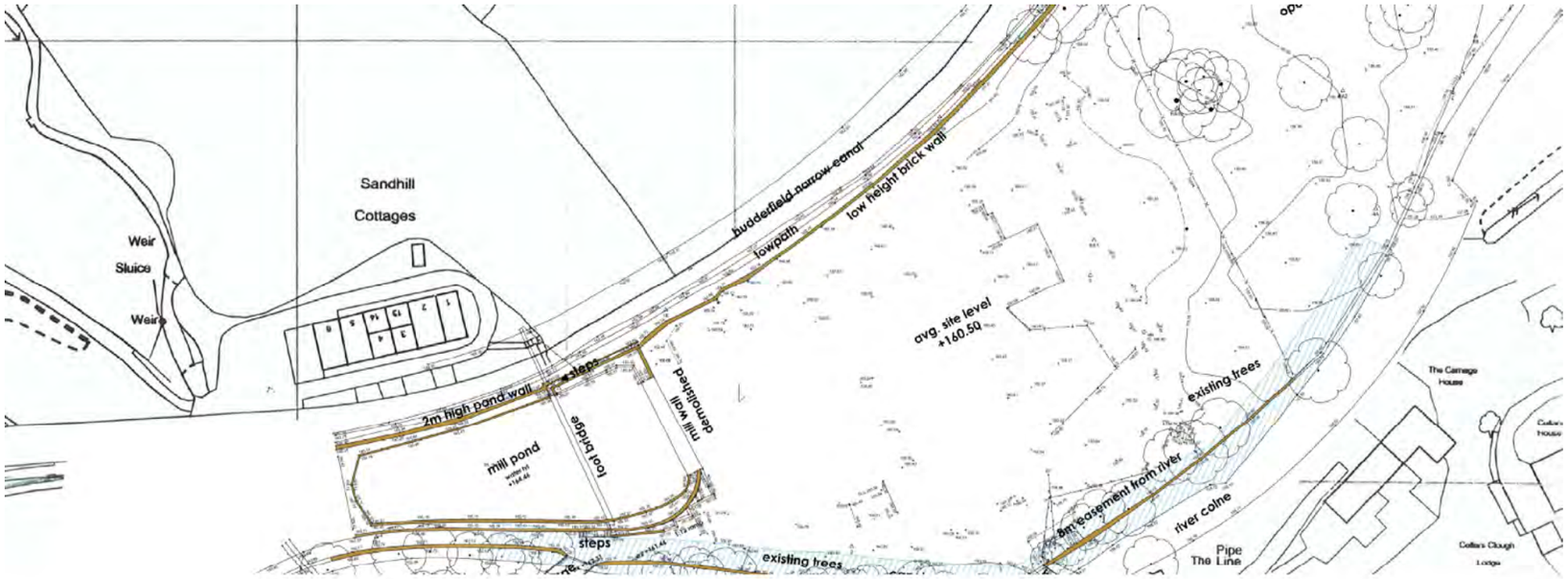








site & context



existing site plan













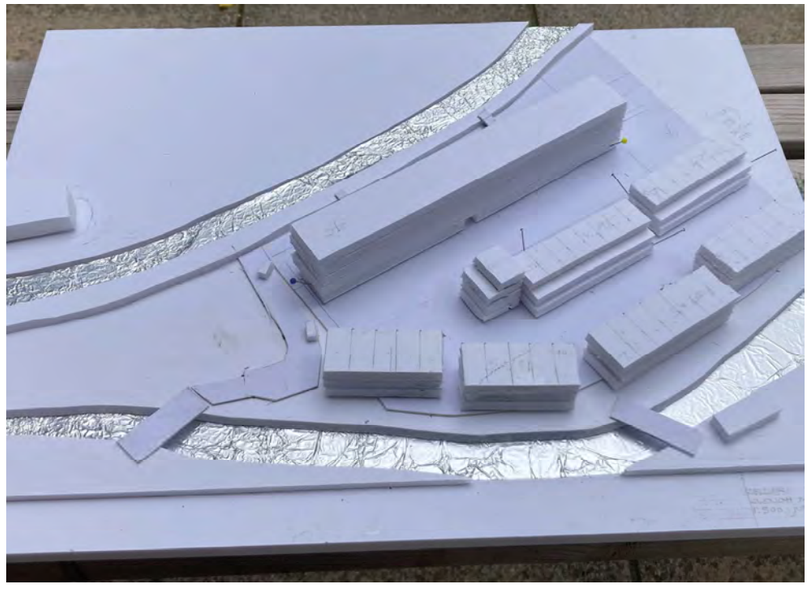




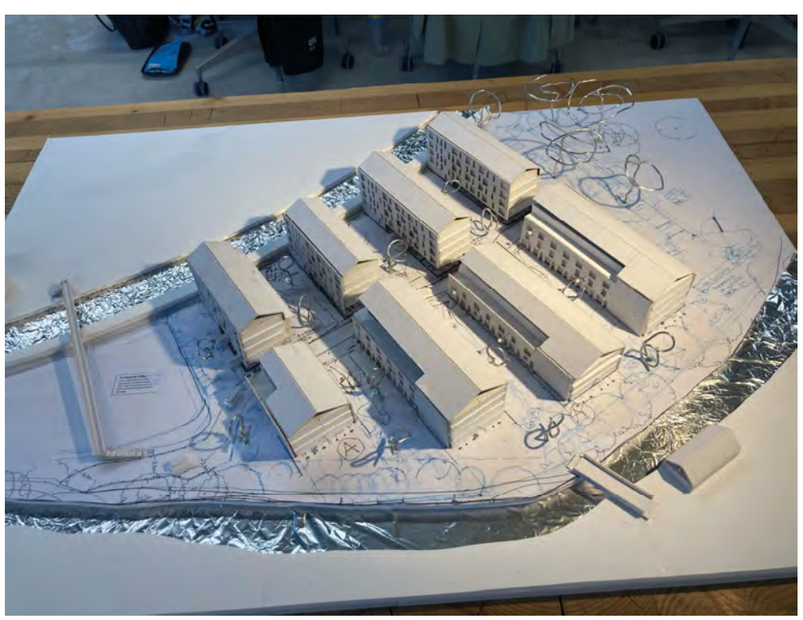
design development

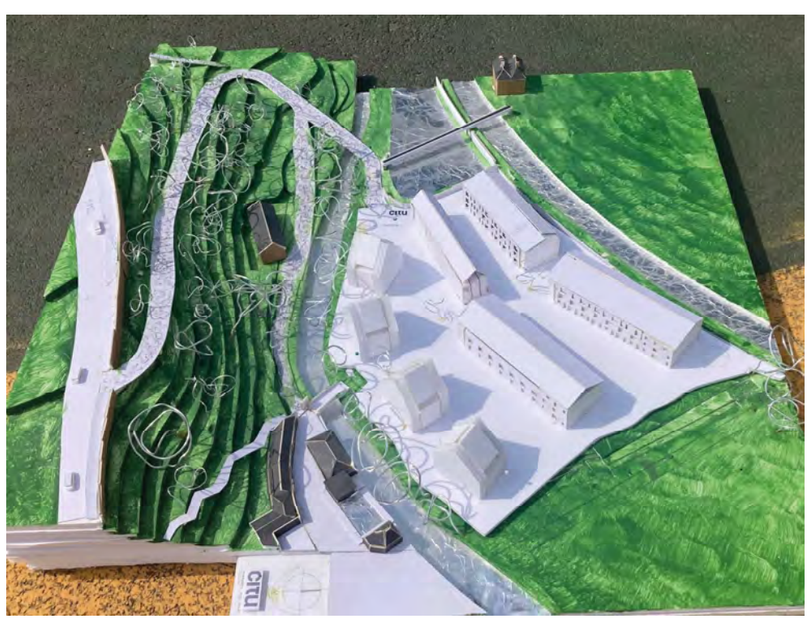
he proposal follows extensive pre-application discussions and submissions of planning pre-application documentation followed by subsequent discussions and meetings with Kirklees Council. The design development of the Marsden site layout has been an iterative process, shaped by continuous engagement with planning officers, local stakeholders, and design consultants to ensure that the scheme responds sensitively to the site's context and character. This iterative process was carried out through rigorous testing of the design against key design principles, with various physical models developed and assessed to refine the layout and ensure a high-quality outcome.













proposal



Permeability and Connectivity

- Create a permeable site layout to provide clear views through the development and beyond, maintaining visual connections to the Colne Valley and surrounding landscape.
- Seamlessly integrate the development with the surrounding landscape and infrastructure.
- Retain and enhance existing public rights of way and Introduce new internal routes to improve connectivity within the site.

Landscape-Led Design

- Prioritise landscaped, car-free spaces between terraces to create welcoming public realms.
- Use landscape to define spaces, guide movement, and create a strong sense of place, while fostering social interaction, supporting biodiversity and providing flexible, safe, and welcoming environments for the community.
- Preserve mature trees where practicable and integrate the site into the wider natural landscape over time.

Sustainable and Low-Impact Design

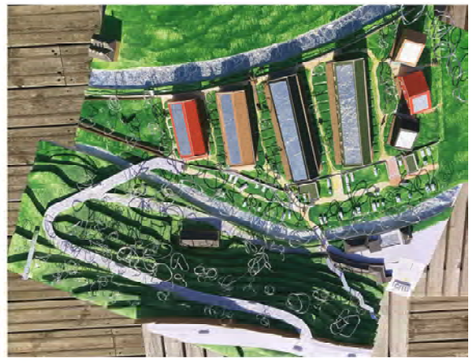
- Orient buildings on the site to maximise solar gain and natural daylight t each home.
- Design the site layout to respond to sustainable drainage, manage floo risk, and maximise opportunities for biodiversity by making use of existing natural features.

Community and Social Interaction

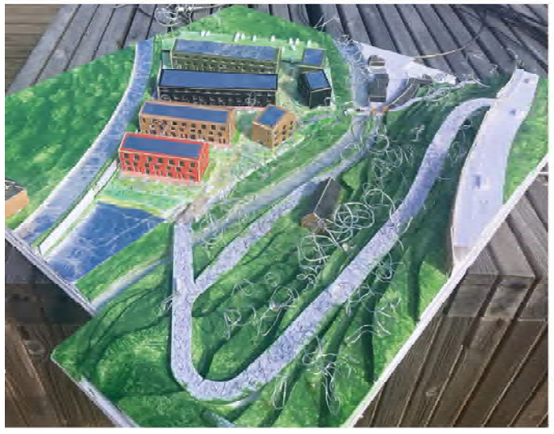
- Foster a strong sense of community by providing communal gardens, green spaces, growing areas, and play areas that encourage interacti and engagement across all ages.
- Create new links to connect the new development with surrounding communities and local amenities, enhancing social integration and accessibility.

Visual Identity

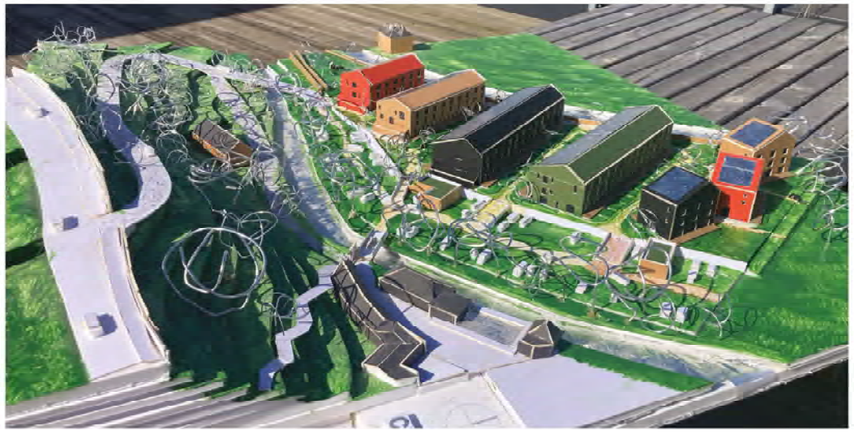
- Create a bold, cohesive architectural presence with three-storey terrac that define the site and reinforce Marsden's sense of place, using colou inspired by local buildings and landscape.
- Maintain consistent materials, colors, and roof forms to provide a unifie and recognizable visual identity.











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design principles and concept

Layout and Connectivity

A core principle of the design is permeability - ensuring the site integrates with the surrounding landscape and existing infrastructure. The overall form and massing have been influenced by the local site context. The development forms new connections, strengthening accessibility and movement for pedestrians and cyclists. Existing connections and public rights of way within the site boundary are retained and enhanced to ensuring the development remains an integral part of the wider Marsden area.

New routes open up the development, providing wider connectivity to the canal, valley, and nearby amenities. A revitalised pedestrian connection to the Wild Café and Coach House Wellbeing Centre strengthens links to local businesses and community spaces, reinforcing Marsden's identity. Between the terraces, car-free landscaped gardens and pathways create a welcoming environment for all ages.

The layout prioritises east/west roof forms for maximum PV generation. The strong linear three-storey pitched-roof structures sit perpendicular to the canal and river, offering through-views to the hill and Manchester Road (to the south) and to the Colne Valley (to the north). These connections further reinforce the development's integration with its natural surroundings and wider community.

Scale and Massing

The development is designed with a strong architectural form influenced by Marsden's historic industrial buildings. The scale of the buildings reflects the industrial heritage of the site. The three-storey terraces feature a mix of two and three bedroom homes, each with private patios set within communal gardens. The gabled forms of the houses create a cohesive and striking composition along the canal, referencing the site's industrial past and local vernacular architecture in a modern way.

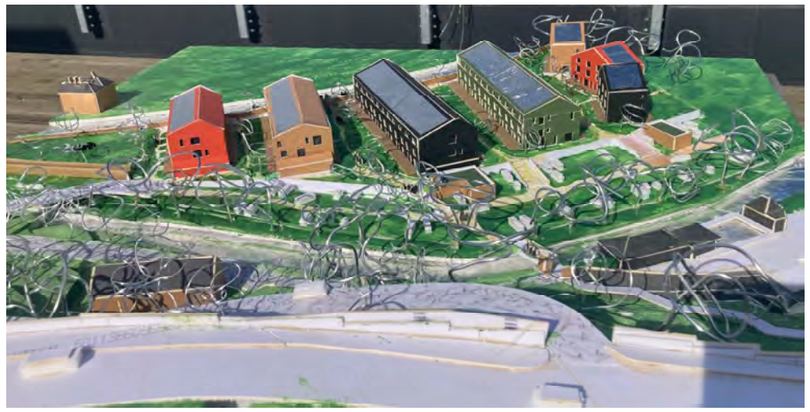
This bold and unified architectural presence will contribute to a distinct visual identity for the development. These forms will attract attention from various vantage points, including from the railway routes between Manchester and Leeds, enhancing the site's visibility and connection to the wider region.

Materials and Appearance

The material palette is bold, yet rooted in the natural colors of the site, reflecting the brick tones of mill buildings and the surrounding landscape. Sustainable, high-performance materials ensure longevity, durability, and minimal environmental impact. These materials are consistent with the overall form and massing of the project, providing a modern take on the site's industrial heritage.

The four-bedroom homes, located on the east of the site maintain the color and material palette of the terraces, providing a cohesive design.







design principles and concept



view from parkgate road and railway line - existing



view from parkgate road and railway line - proposed

building orientation

As Marsden precedents indicate, perpendicular orientation offers distinct advantages in this particular context. This arrangement enhances permeability through the site, opens up key views, and improves connectivity - a critical factor in unlocking the full potential of the site.

It's important to note that neither the site nor the former mill buildings are listed. These buildings were demolished several years ago. In addition, the surrounding canal-side context displays a varied palette of materials - including brick, render, and stone and an equally diverse set of relationships between buildings and the canal edge. This clearly illustrates that there is no single, fixed precedent dictating that all new development must adhere too rigid or purely traditional form.

Our approach seeks to treat this site as a fresh opportunity: a chance to respond to its unique qualities with a high-quality design that is both contemporary and contextual. We believe our concept achieves this, and we respectfully urge the Council to consider the design on its merits - not only in terms of materiality and layout, but also in terms of the wider place-making benefits it can bring.

Previous applications for this site, despite receiving approval, did not demonstrate a rigorous analysis of context there were no site models, contextual drawings, view studies, or detailed assessments of surrounding heights and relationships. By contrast, our proposal is deeply rooted in site analysis and a holistic understanding of setting, movement, and scale.

Our proposal is a serious, site-specific and thoughtful response that delivers on the aims of the Local Plan, including LP24, while also meeting the broader aspirations of the NPPF for high-quality and well-designed places.

kirklees council supplementrary planning guidance

In Kirklees Council's own Supplementary Planning Guidance, reference is made to the Citu developments in Leeds and Sheffield as benchmark schemes for future developments. Notably, within the Character, Distinctiveness and Materials Detailing section, precedent images from the Climate Innovation District are included as examples of best practice.

This signals a recognition by the Council of the value of contemporary, innovative approaches to design.
It is therefore important that planning policy is applied with a degree of flexibility and in a way that embraces such innovation - particularly when it can deliver distinctive, sustainable, and contextually sensitive outcomes, without being restricted solely to traditional aesthetics.



Combining industrial heritage and modern construction methods to create low carbon homes at Little Kelham, Sheffield (image: Flickr/Academy of Urbanism)



Clockwise from top left: stone roofs commonly found in Kirklees, stone terrace with slate roof at Thornhill, ashlar stone in Dewsbury, contemporary modular housing (image:Citu), red brick housing at Whitley Lower, coursed rubble at Denby Dale and contemporary stone buildings at Slaithwaite.



An example of energy efficient homes that are built off-site at the Climate Innovation District, Leeds (Image: Citu))

placemaking precedents





mvrdv - koningsweg housing masterplan, arnhem, netherlands



barefoot architects - car free co-housing project, bridport, dorset



citu - design principles

CITU

proposal

total homes = 75

2 beds = 29
3 beds = 36
4 beds = 10



proposal

total homes = 75

mix
2 beds = 29
3 beds = 36
4 beds = 10

car parking = 116
bike spaces = 206



citu

proposal



north west elevation to canal



south-east elevation - to river

south east elevation to river

CITU

proposal



south west elevation volume 3 to main access



north east elevation volume 2 to main access

CITU

community and placemaking

Strengthening Community Connections

The development is designed to enhance the social fabric of Marsden, with areas that foster interaction, shared ownership, and community participation. This is done by providing; communal gardens, green spaces, growing spaces, play areas and revitalised links to the Wild Café and Coach House Wellbeing Centre.

A new link will be created through the site (from the towpath to the Wild Cafe/ Coach House Wellbeing Centre). This will ensure the development is accessible and connected to its local surroundings.

The towpath wall will be lowered to create access into the site and a new footpath from the towpath will be also included to reinforce the routes into the site.

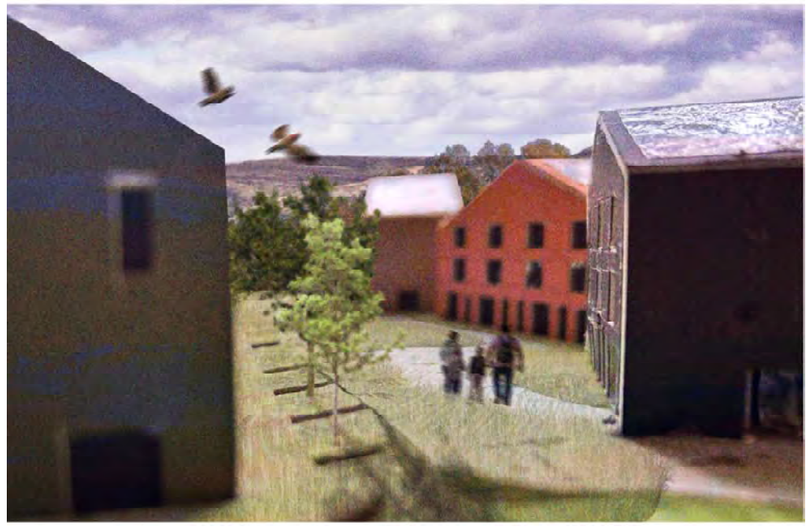
The development will be managed by a Community Interest Company (CIC), ensuring that residents have control over decision-making and investment in their neighborhood. This resident-led approach fosters a sense of ownership, sustainability, and long-term stewardship.

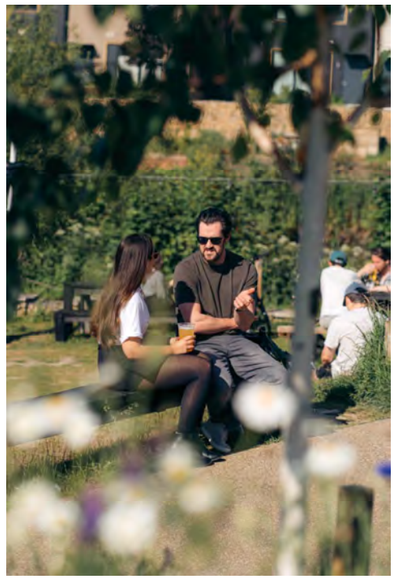
Retaining Existing Features

Existing connections and public rights of way within the site boundary will be preserved and improved. The current access bridge over the River Colne will be repaired and upgraded to accommodate vehicular access.

Healthy existing trees will be preserved where practicable along the river, open pasture and canal.





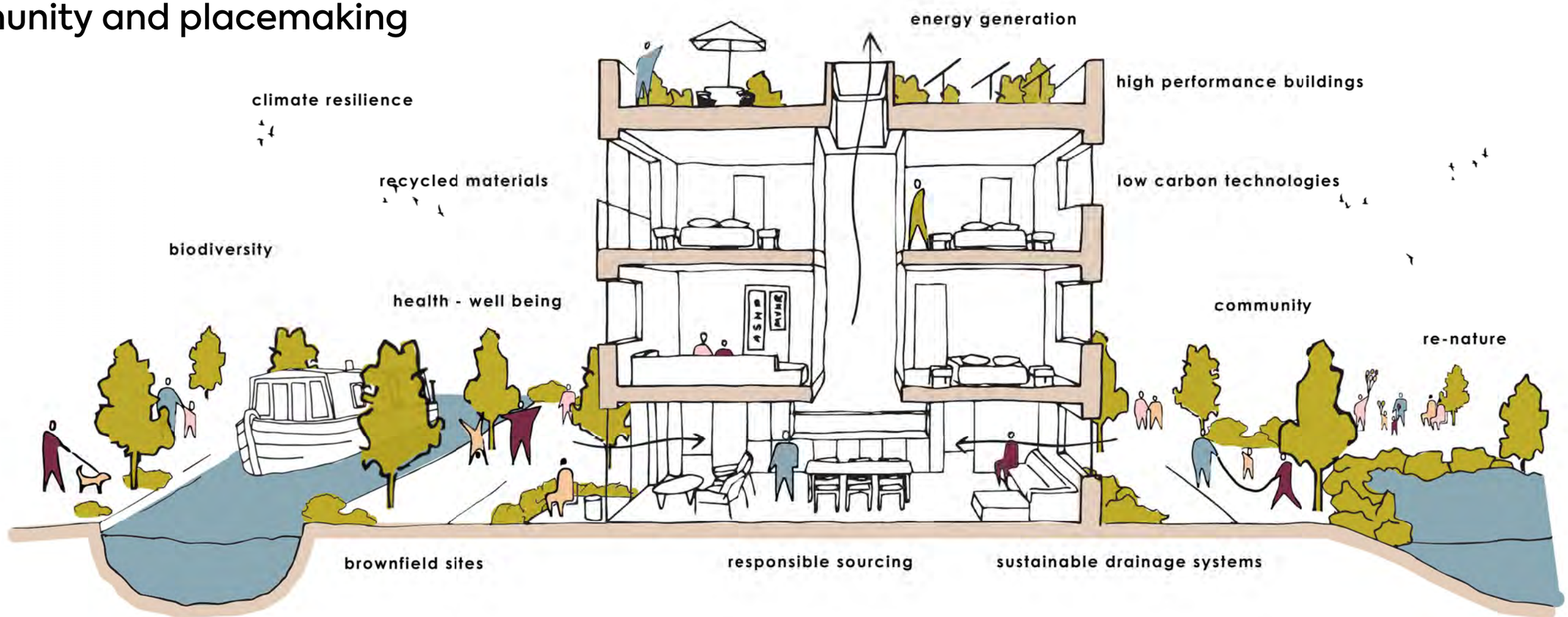








community and placemaking



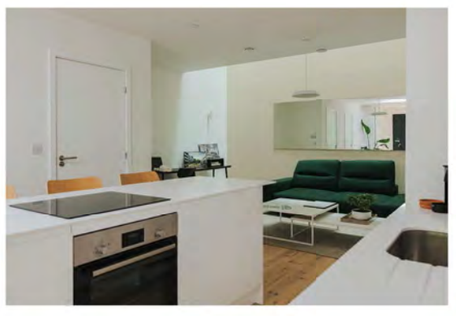




outdoor living





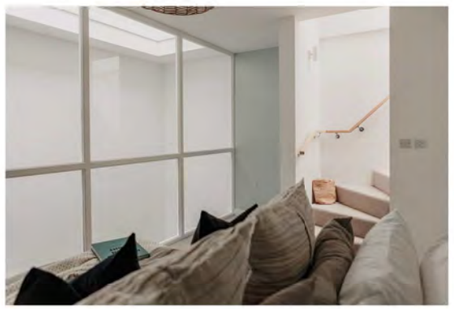




citu living spaces

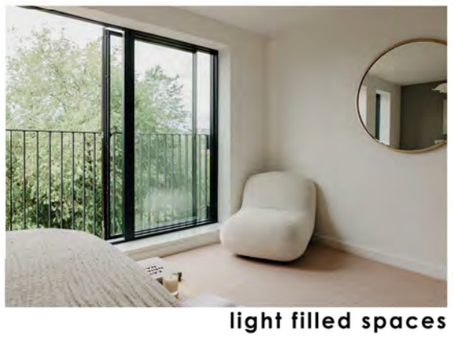


central void with rooflight

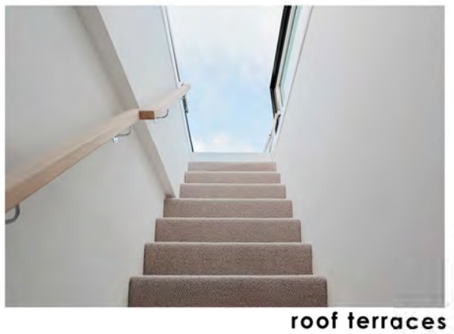




playful spaces



light filled spaces



roof terraces



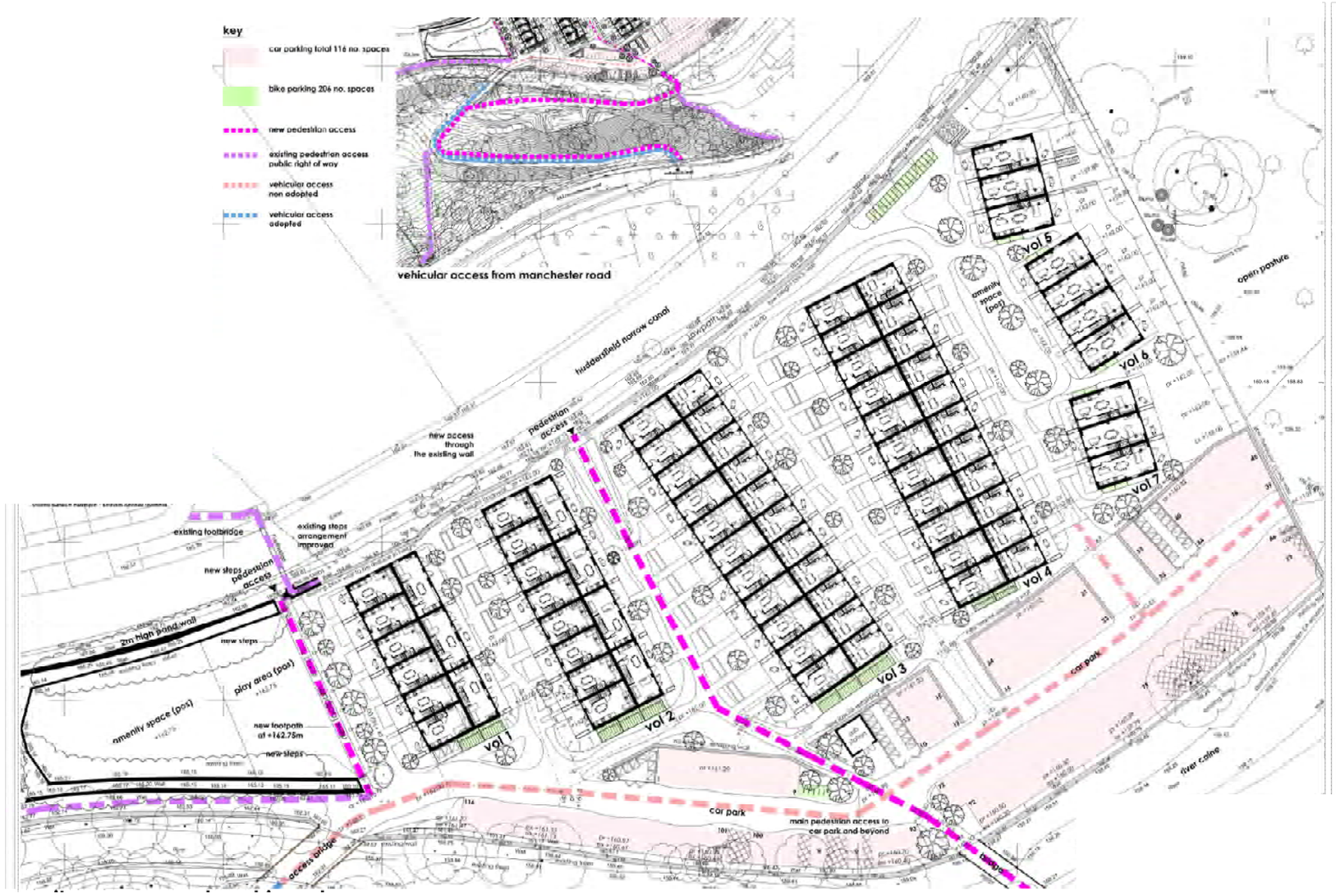
access and inclusivity

Transport and Sustainable Mobility
The development will promote sustainable transport solutions while understanding that the location of the site will require some occasional use of a car. The scheme will prioritise cycling and walking with the new proposed footpath and access to the tow path. 206 secure bicycle spaces will be provided for the community alongside 116 EV car parking spaces to support the uptake in EV car ownership. Keeping regular vehicle routes to the periphery of the site creates streets that can be used for a range of activities and play for all ages.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access
Walking routes for residents and dog walkers will be supported through the new connections to the canal towpath, river, and the wider landscape. The enhanced route between the canal and Wild Café and Coach House Wellbeing Centre will also support local businesses. The proposal is to not "ban" the car, but to make walking and cycling more convenient.

Accessibility for All
The landscaping will be designed to support everyone move freely through and around the site. The site prioritises community spaces that promote meeting of neighbours and community events.

Service access
The site can be accessed by vehicle via the access road off of the A62/Manchester Road. Within the site, vehicle access is provided through the reinforced gravel and grass surfaces (grass used on routes used sporadically). While there are routes between the terrace this is primarily for emergency vehicles and not for everyday use. Communal parking is situated on the southern, river side of the site alongside the main access route. Communal bin storage is easily accessible by both residents and refuse vehicles at the end of the terraces and will be incorporated as part of the landscaping proposal.



sustainablity & landscape

landscape materials key

- gravel reinforced ystem
- resin bound system
- grass reinforced system
- grass lawn
- ornamental planting (grass & shrub)
- wildflower planting
- native hedgerow (low height)
- community growing space
- decking
- concrete slab
- new trees - native british
- new retaining walls (gabion)
- existing canal & river walls



grass lawn
gravel system
ornamental planting



ornamental planting
gravel system
decking



community growing



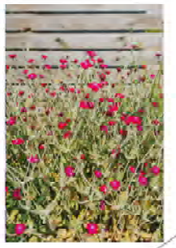
seating
ornamental planting



retaining wall (gabion)
ornamental planting



retaining wall (gabion)
grass lawn
gravel system
ornamental planting
new trees



wildflower planting

CITU

sustainablity & landscape

Sustainability is at the core of this development. Citu's approach integrates cutting-edge environmental design, delivering homes that dramatically reduce operational and embodied carbon.

Key sustainability measures include:

Highly insulated, airtight homes, up to 13 times more airtight than standard UK regulations.

Off-site manufactured homes, built using BOPAS-accredited system, ensuring precision, quality, and efficiency.

Solar gain optimisation, reducing reliance on artificial heating.
Smart energy systems, including photovoltiac panels, renewable energy sources, and electric car charging points.

Sustainable drainage solutions, mitigating flood risk while enhancing biodiversity. Community gardens and green spaces, designed to support native plant species and encourage local wildlife.

The landscape will consist of a mixture of hard and soft surfaces propose a visually interesting street scene rather than traditional tarmac surfaces. Citu will use reclaimed materials from the site where possible, such as brick faced gabion baskets, to help embed the proposed design.

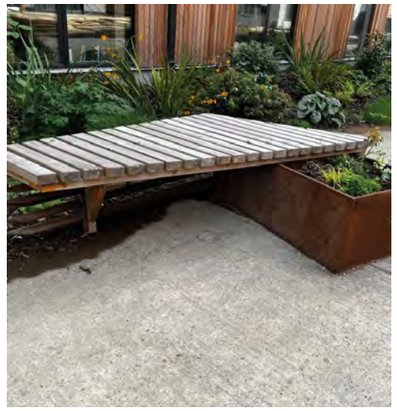
The largest proposed vehicles on the site and fire tenders and refuse vehicles. The combitionation of reinforced grass and gravel surfaces will soften the edges of hard surfaces and reduced the visual impact of any necessary roads. Reinforced gravel paths will form natural meandering pedestian routes through the site.

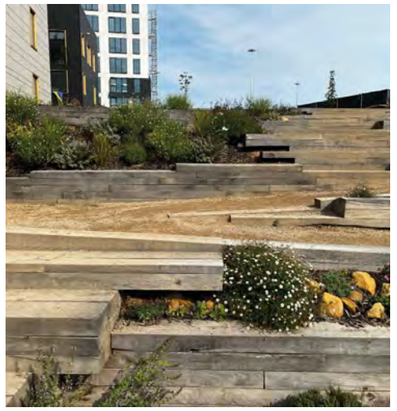
The proposed landscaping should not just look visually interesting upon completion but enhance and embed the site into the surrounding landscape over time. It should also increase biodiveristy, creating habitats and championing native species.



















marsden island

purpose → place

