

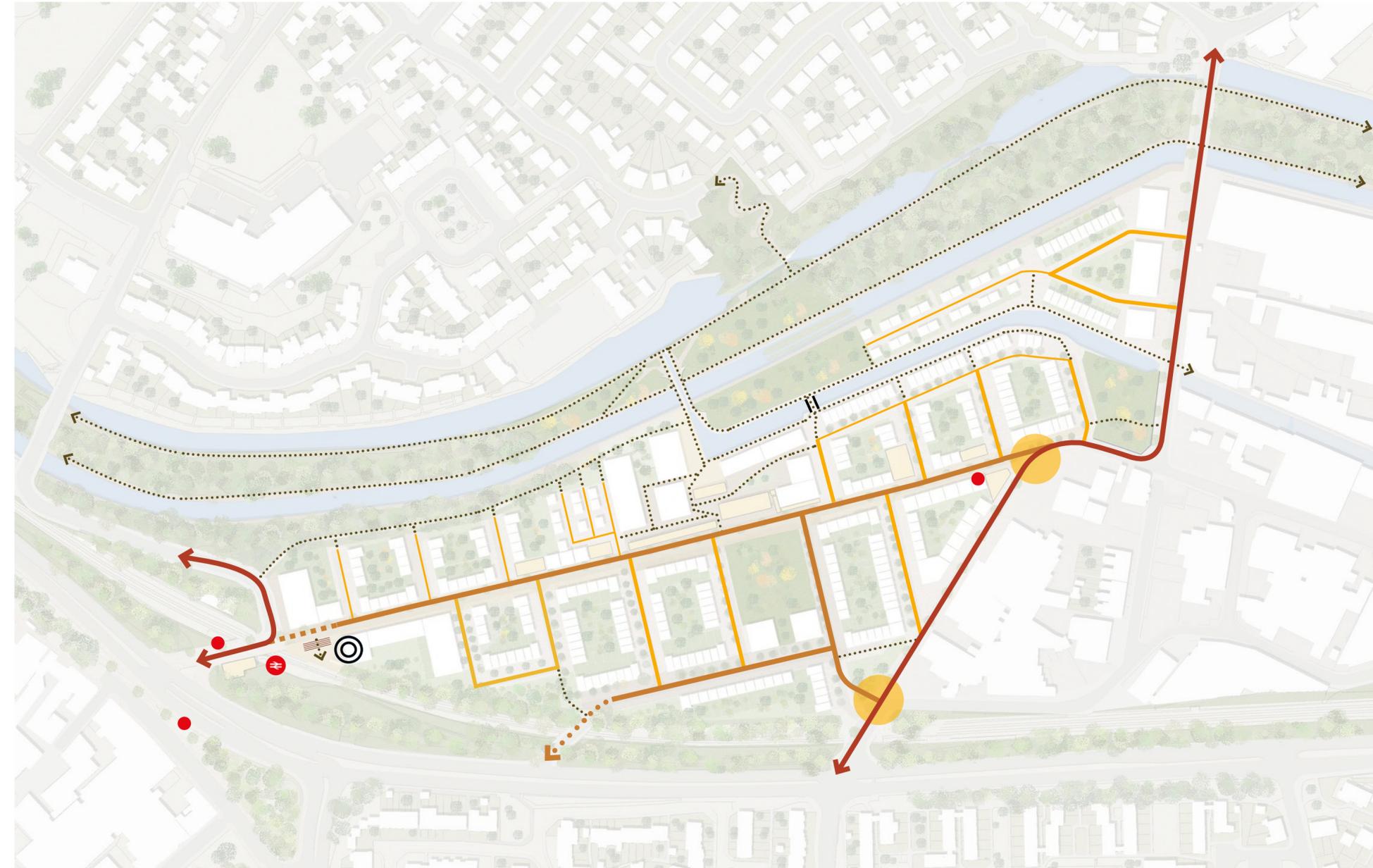
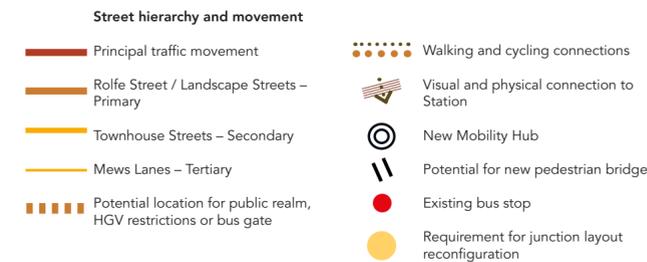
### 4.3 Street Hierarchy & Movement

A strong street hierarchy will provide legibility and assist in overcoming the challenge of the high vehicular movement across the site, creating quieter residential streets. Key to this is the transformation of Rolfe Street into a lower traffic environment with traffic encouraged to use New Street instead. This could be via street treatment and changes to junctions, or more defined restrictions.

Hill Street and Buttress way should be transformed into Landscape Streets defining a residential grid to the south of the site. Minor residential streets should lead north and south off Rolfe Street. In combination, this will provide short, legible, deliverable and low traffic residential streets suitable for family housing.



High quality street environment – Dujardin Mews, Enfield

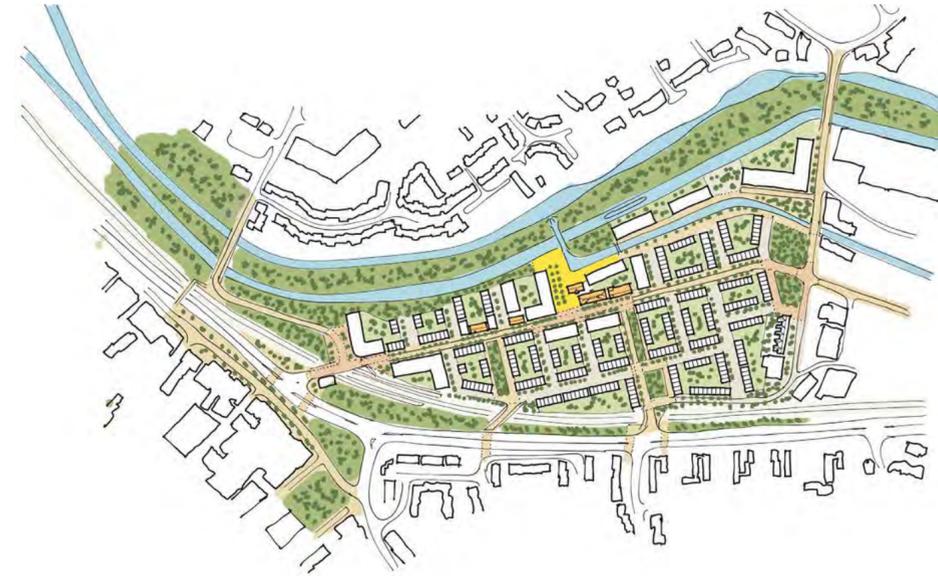


Street hierarchy and movement

#### 4.4 Height, Density & Typology

Viability and local demand indicate a requirement for a mixture of family homes and apartments at Rolfe Street. A starting point for density should be policy HOU2 of the Black Country Core Strategy, which indicates up to 60 dwellings per hectare in accessible locations. This is in line with the delivery of Port Loop, with family homes in a townhouse format being successfully delivered at 65 dwellings per hectare. Apartments will typically be at a higher density, and this is especially appropriate adjacent to Rolfe Street Station which has excellent connections to areas of employment.

Overall, given the excellent public transport connections at Rolfe Street, a density in excess 60 dwellings per hectare may be appropriate, subject to the careful design of new homes. Maximum heights should respect the existing heritage buildings on site, e.g. the four to five storey Fire Station. More height may be appropriate adjacent to Rolfe Street Station, subject to design.



Two approaches to typology that were tested – higher density, apartment led approach (top) or urban house led (bottom)



Indicative height, density and typology strategy

# 5.0 Character Areas

## 5.1 Character Areas

To guide development and create a sense of place, four character areas have been defined. Each of these is described in detail, with strategies proposed for development that will, in combination, create a high quality residential community, with strong links to Rolfe Street's history.



Corporation Yard



Hill Street



Station Gateway



Engine Wharves



Character Areas

## 5.2 Station Gateway

Rolfe Street Station will be the primary gateway to the new community at Rolfe Street, providing connectivity across the West Midlands by rail and bus. The former Baths Site is key, owned by Smethwick Council and providing a direct link to the station. The site is suitable for a higher density development of apartments in this highly accessible location.

Alongside this, a Mobility Hub should be provided, following the model proposed by Transport for the West Midlands, integrating rail and bus with cycle storage, West Midlands Cycle Hire and e-mobility, to provide a 'last mile' solution. This is a key part of the West Midlands' Combined Authority's WM 2041 Plan, setting a pathway to Net Zero for the West Midlands.

A welcoming area of public realm, Station Square, should be provided to tie together the Baths Site, Mobility Hub and Rolfe Street, linking across to Smethwick High Street through crossing and pavement enhancements.



Illustrative Masterplan – Station Gateway



Station Square and the former Baths Site



Rolfe Street station building



Concept for the TfWM Hub, West Midlands Combined Authority



Mews Streets form a higher density transition to family housing



Challenging pedestrian environment at Rolfe Street Station

### 5.3 Corporation Yard

At the heart of the Rolfe Street masterplan, the Enterprise Centre should be transformed into a new community, Corporation Yard.

Celebrating the importance of the site in the history of the industrial revolution, there is opportunity for higher density mix of apartments, duplexes and mews houses. Built form should respect the height, scale and materiality of the retained buildings from the former Corporation Yard including Block 300. Streets and spaces should be tight and urban, reflecting the former industrial use of the site.

Access should be provided over the Aqueduct onto the Old and New Main Lines, tying Rolfe Street into the green corridor of the Canal. The listed reinforced concrete wall to the Yard should be preserved and celebrated as part of the Yard's landscape strategy.



Illustrative Masterplan – Corporation Yard



A potential redeveloped Corporation Yard from the Old Main Line



Corporation Yard – Vision

### 5.4 Corporation Yard – Heritage Retention

Key to the success of Corporation Yard is the extent of retention. Maximising the number of retained buildings will provide a stronger sense of place. However, it is important that any retained buildings find a viable and sustainable use, potential uses include residential conversion, workspace and maker space.

Taking into account the heritage significance of each building, and the spatial potential and cost of conversion, two scenarios are suggested for retention. In the first, the most high to medium significance buildings are retained, this is preferred. A second option sees only Rolfe House and Block 300 retained, with potential for the demolition of Block 300 if residential conversion or alternative use is not viable.

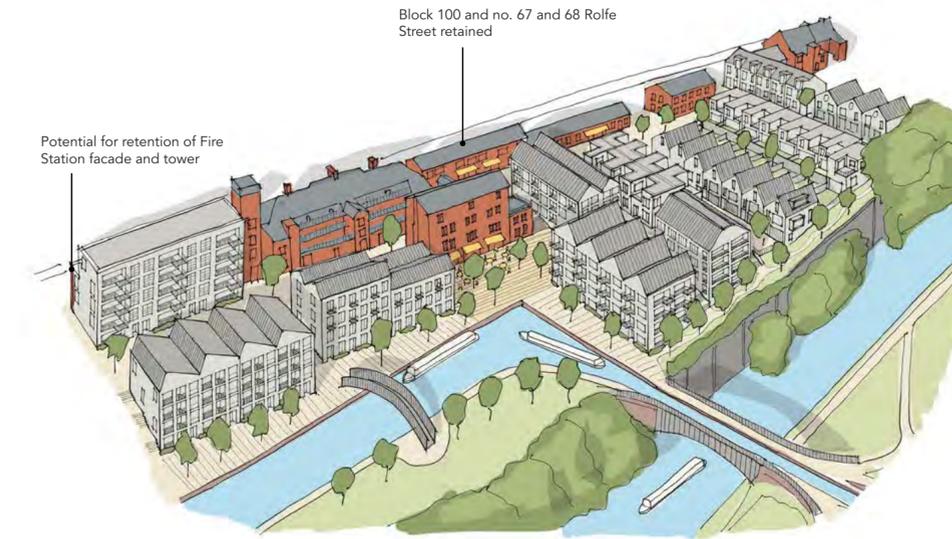


The benefits of retention of the Rolfe Street Elevation: historic streetscape and strong sense of place

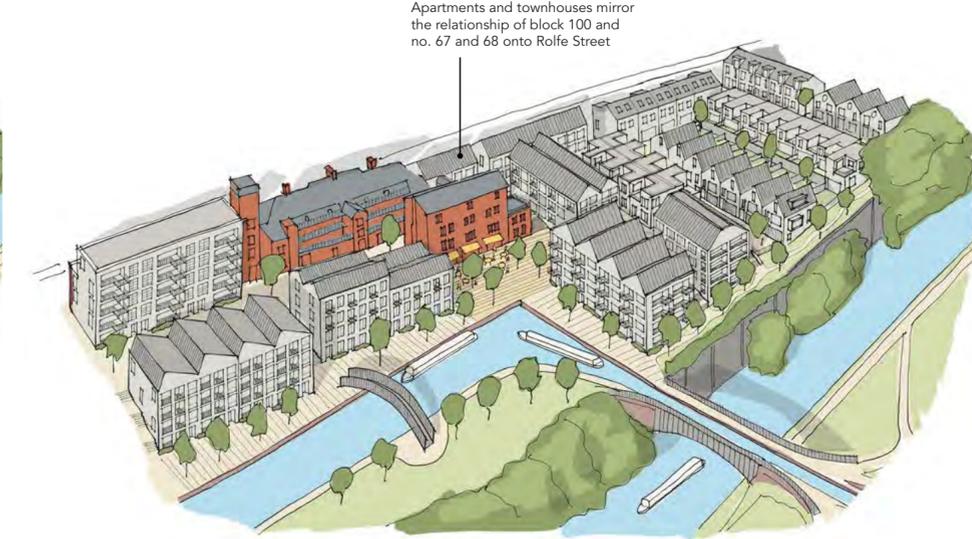


Potential for integration of maker spaces into block 100

- Heritage Significance**
- High to Medium
  - Low
  - Little or no
  - Detracting



Retention Option 1 – Blocks 100, 300, 67–68 Rolfe Street and Rolfe House



Retention Option 2 – Block 300 and Rolfe House only



Corporation Yard – Heritage Significance (Insalls, November 2022)



Existing elevation of no 67 and 68 and Block 100 to Rolfe Street

### 5.5 Corporation Yard – Block 300

Block 300 is of prime importance to the sense of place at Rolfe Street, tying the potential future residential community back into the canal based history of the site. Block 300 should be the highest priority for retention in any development at Corporation Yard.

Residential conversion is spatially possible, including into up to 8 apartments. Viability and detailed design of the conversion should be assessed as part of any detailed application for the site. Conversion to community, workspace and maker space should also be considered, if viable.



Block 300 – residential conversion options



Block 300



Glimpsed view of Block 300 from Rolfe Street



Potential for Block 300 to be converted to residential, within a new Fire Station Courtyard



Desire line opened up from Rolfe St toward Block 300

## 5.6 Hill Street

The area around Hill Street was formerly residential, with tight streets providing housing for local industrial employers. At the heart of the masterplan, Hill Street should become a high quality residential community, around central public open space. A townhouse led approach, as at Port Loop, would provide the density needed to make a community on the site viable and not feel isolated.

High quality architecture and streetscape is essential to successful residential delivery. As demonstrated at Port Loop, Kelham in Sheffield and Salford Central, a design led approach can deliver an aspirational place that the community are proud of, a place where people really want to live. Materiality and form should draw upon the historic architecture, whilst feeling completely new.



Hill Street – illustrative masterplan



Hill Street – high quality family streets, parking carefully managed, heritage celebrated



Materiality – Rolfe Street



High quality family homes – Salford Central, Port Loop



High quality family homes and streetscape – Dujardin Mews, Enfield

## 5.7 Engine Wharves

Either side of the Engine Arm, a new community will have a close relationship with the canal. The existing elevations of warehouses along the south side of the canal have been identified as having high heritage significance. There is potential to retain these elevations within any development, and to maintain the relationship with the water on the south side of the canal in any new development. Historic canal features such as the towpath bridge on the Engine Peninsula should be retained.

The Engine Peninsula provides a challenge to development due to a long thin site area. Apartment development is possible and would reflect the historic form. Alternatively, residential development of high quality townhouses, relating to the canal, would provide much needed family homes.



Engine Wharves – illustrative masterplan



Engine Wharves – vision



Existing warehouse elevations onto the Engine Arm



Existing canalfront relationship onto Engine Arm, including bridge



Existing water tower



Homes with a strong canal relationship: Port Loop



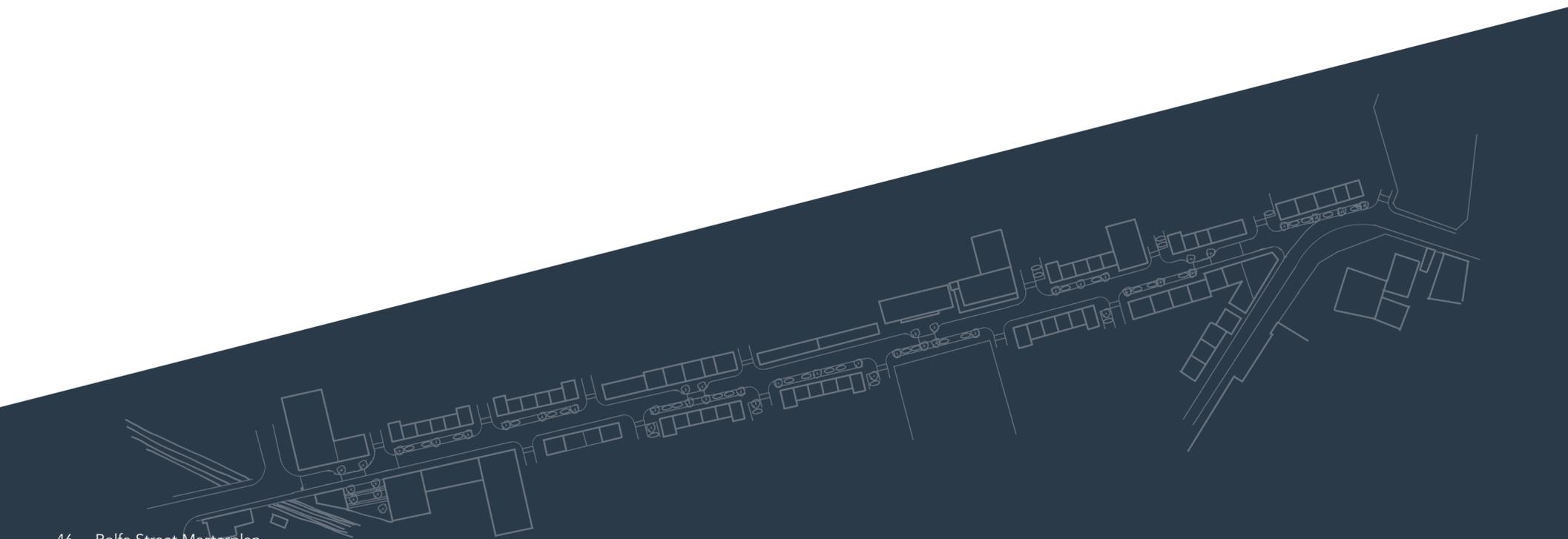
Localised heritage retention – Nordhavn, Copenhagen

# 6.0 Streets & Design Coding

## 6.1 Design Coding

This design code establishes the detailed principles development should follow at Rolfe Street.

The design code illustrates how current planning policy, locally adopted policy, and national and local good practice guidance can be combined with a respect for the history of the area to create a unique sense of place at Rolfe Street.



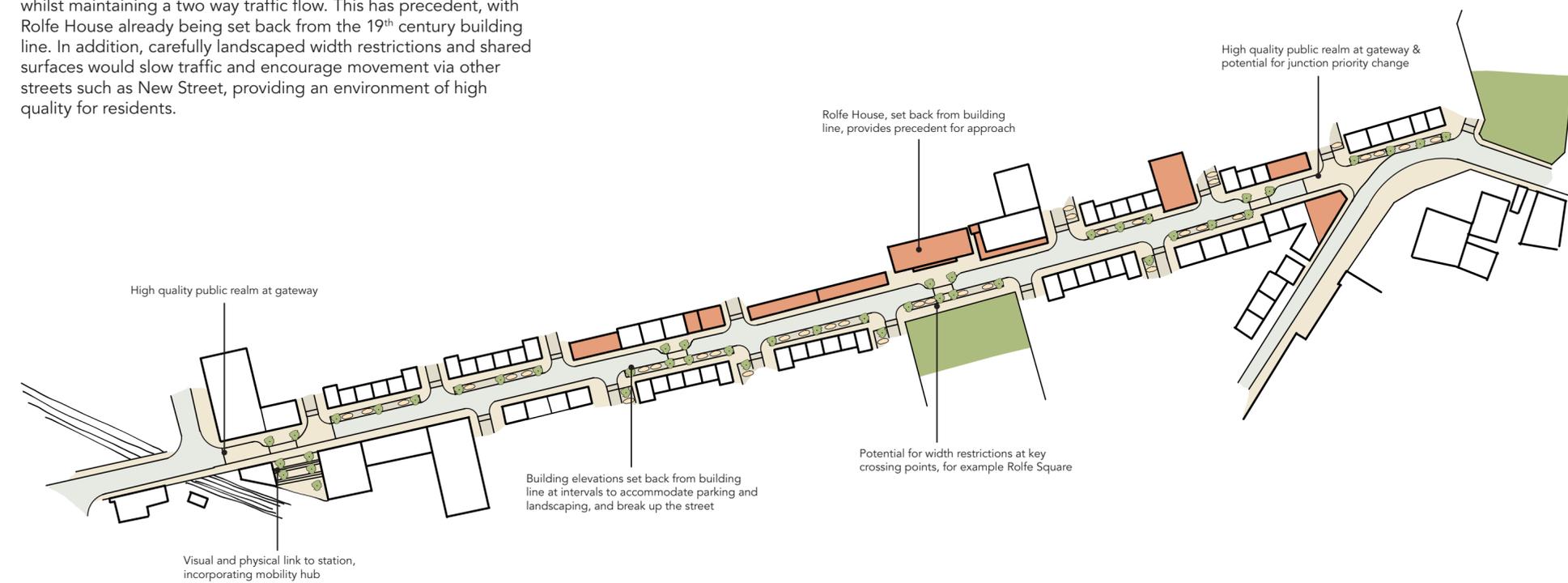
Design Code areas

## 6.2 Rolfe Street

Rolfe Street is currently very narrow. There is much informal and fly parking including across the full width of pavements making streets feel hostile and inaccessible. The welcome at Rolfe Street Station is underwhelming with an environment hostile to pedestrians.

In order to provide an environment suitable for a new residential community, Rolfe Street needs to be reconfigured to resolve these issues. Potential solutions are illustrated adjacent.

By setting some new development back from the existing building line, parking and landscaping can be provided within Rolfe Street whilst maintaining a two way traffic flow. This has precedent, with Rolfe House already being set back from the 19<sup>th</sup> century building line. In addition, carefully landscaped width restrictions and shared surfaces would slow traffic and encourage movement via other streets such as New Street, providing an environment of high quality for residents.



Rolfe Street – strategies in detail

- 1 Parallel parking to one side of street
- 2 Landscape between parking spaces
- 3 New alignments still have strong relationship to old
- 4 New buildings mostly 3–4 storeys
- 5 Opportunity for localised width restrictions to provide landscaped crossing points



Rolfe Street – design coding

### 6.3 New Street

New Street is also narrow, suffering from many of the same issues as Rolfe Street. The masterplan envisages New Street becoming the principal highway route between Bridge Street North and Tollhouse Way, strategically more important and attractive to traffic than Rolfe Street. To achieve this, building lines should be set back, with formal parking provided, alongside landscaping.

Building form should be carefully considered, arranged at an angle to New Street where appropriate to avoid directly facing it. The use of dual aspect apartments and houses with service space (kitchens, bathrooms) facing New Street would also be an appropriate approach.

On Bridge Street North, the existing wall to the Smethwick Engine site should be retained, and the archway reopened to provide access to Engine Park, providing a buffer to the traffic at this busy junction.



Former gateway on Bridge Street North, to be opened up into Engine Park



New Street – existing informal parking and width challenges



Triplex corner apartments with own front door: Goldsmith Street, Norwich

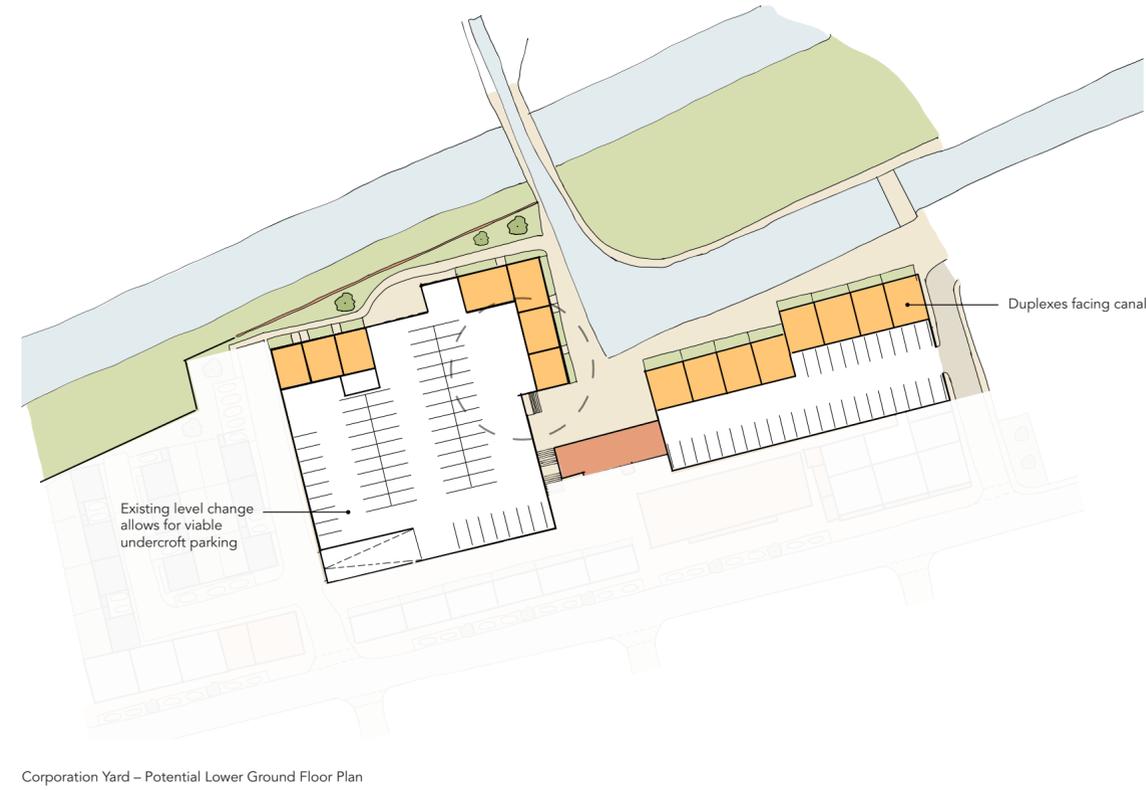


## 6.4 Corporation Yard

Proving for logical movement from Rolfe Street through to the Aqueduct towpath is key to the successful development of Corporation Yard, alongside heritage retention where appropriate. The changes in level present a challenge and an opportunity.

A potential approach is to use the change in level to provide undercroft parking, which will allow a much higher density to be achieved above, reflective of the density and building forms of the former yard.

Duplex apartments would allow direct access onto the canal and activate ground floor frontages. Where housing is proposed, consideration should be given to the introduction of special typologies reflecting the tighter grain of the former yard, such as mews houses.



Corporation Yard – Potential Lower Ground Floor Plan



Corporation Yard – Potential Upper Ground Floor Plan

1. Allocated parallel parking to one side of street
2. Car port parking within mews to other side
3. Integrated bin and bike stores
4. Potential for back to back mews houses with overlooking carefully controlled
5. Defensible space to back of pavement

### 6.5 Residential Streets & Parking

High quality architecture and streetscape is essential to successful residential delivery, ensuring the creation of a place people want to live. At Rolfe Street, residential streets should create a strong sense of place, whilst meeting requirements for parking, servicing, safety and privacy. Sandwell Council's **Residential Design Guide** sets out principles for the design of residential streets. Illustrated adjacent are two potential approaches to streets, at high and medium densities, demonstrating an approach to meeting the principles of the Guide in a way appropriate to Rolfe Street.

Careful management of parking is key to high quality residential streetscapes. With Rolfe Streets high public transport and active travel connectivity, a lower parking ratio than that set out in the guide may be appropriate at Rolfe Street, in accordance with the transport analysis undertaken as part of this Masterplan, by Stantec. The adjacent diagrams assume 1 allocated space per dwelling, plus 0.25 visitor or unallocated spaces per dwelling.



Mews Street: design coding

1. Plotfront parking to one side of street
2. Allocated parallel parking to other side
3. Visitor parking and allowance for limited second cars at end of street – approx 0.25 per dwelling
4. Integrated bin and bike stores
5. Control of 3 storey overlooking (e.g. velux windows)
6. Reduced gable to gable: no overlooking, urban environment
7. Defensible space to back of pavement



Townhouse Street: design coding

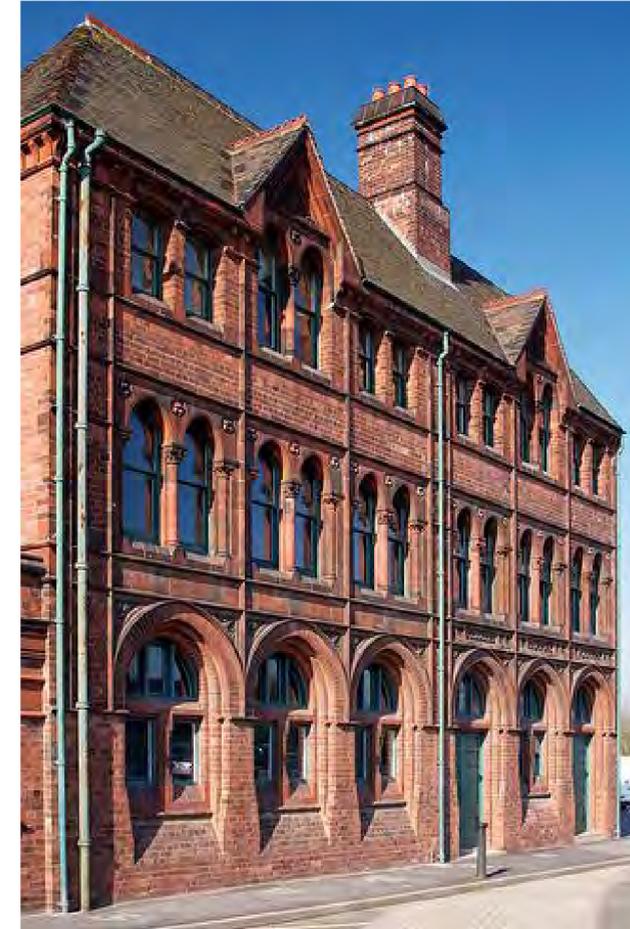
## 6.6 Materiality

Materiality is key to defining a strong sense of place. Existing buildings at Rolfe Street echo the historic materials of the Black Country, with red stock brick and blue Staffordshire brick being prevalent across the historic buildings on site. In addition, granite kerbs and setts were present across the area historically, with some still in evidence. Roofs were historically slate, or clay tile, with a precedent for metal roofs and detailing to industrial buildings.

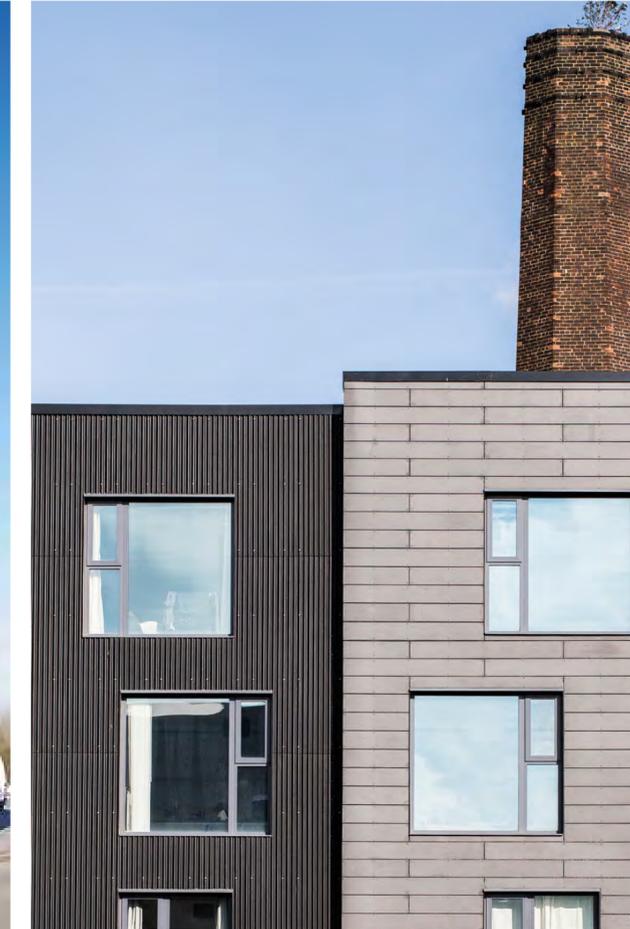
Materiality should draw upon the historic architecture and industrial aesthetic, whilst feeling completely new. This does not mean the universal use of brick, rather, metal and other industrial materials may be appropriate to provide variety, as demonstrated on exemplar projects such as Port Loop and Kelham in Sheffield.



Rolfe Street – core materiality



Materiality of the former Rolfe Street Baths – brick and terracotta



Materiality at Kelham, Sheffield



Materiality at Port Loop, Birmingham



Historic Black Country materials – Birmingham Back to Backs

