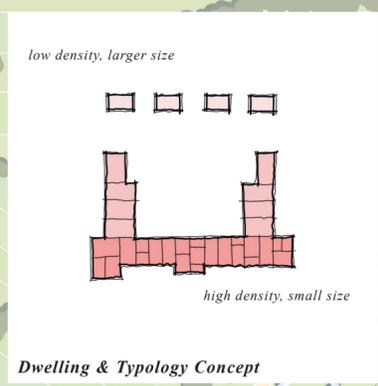
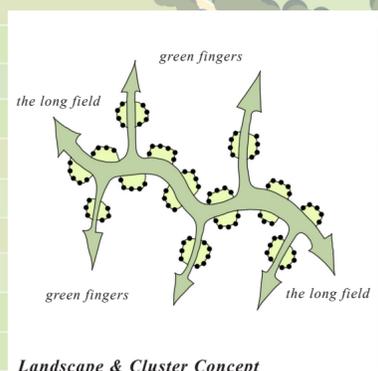
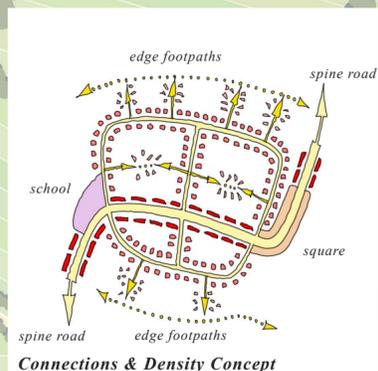


Proposed Masterplan



The original principles of the Garden City movement were described in a time very different to the conditions of today. The contemporary model of planning shows an alarming preference for uniform development densities, constrained by highway specifications and poorly managed landscape opportunities. Residents are increasingly isolated not only from employment uses, but more worryingly their local centres and even their immediate neighbours. The New Garden City movement will act as a framework for resolving these issues, capable of delivering mixed communities of varying typologies, sizes and styles that will encourage vital street level interactions. The proposed hierarchies of connectivity, landscape and massing will provide the opportunity for 'lifetime residents' who will be able to live, work and play locally at every stage of their lives.

Proposed Civic Space 'The Square'



"The effect of our public buildings is lost if they are scattered indiscriminately about the town; they are imperfectly seen in ordinary streets, and no totality of effect is produced such as may be obtained by grouping them in central places, or squares, or along river banks." - R. Unwin

Recognising the importance of the masterplan as the future northern gateway to Letchworth Garden City, it is proposed that The Square fully embodies the principles of the 21st Garden City movement. It will create a vibrant core to the masterplan that builds upon the finer formal traditions of Garden City placemaking, to be enhanced by the open landscape of The Long Field to create a green horizon that stretches beyond the confines of the built edge.

Careful connection to The Long Field will occur along the edge of the existing sports pitches, ensuring that existing and new communities are able to benefit from both the new civic space and enhanced green infrastructure. This junction of uses will create a naturally active place that will be augmented by the presence of retail, commercial farm shops, and community hall.

Wider connectivity will be a critical constraint on the masterplan, but reliance on the private motor vehicle will be actively discouraged. A transport interchange will create opportunities for public transport stops, pay-per-use electric vehicle rental, and a drop-off/collection hub to minimise the congestion caused by 'home delivery' vans.

With immediate access to the neighbourhood through-road and the public transport options that this will present, residential density is at its highest in delivering starter/older person co-housing units. As these will be comprised of smaller sized households (typically 1- or 2-bed low-cost apartments), it is therefore vital to ensure that a critical mass of residents is achieved to help grow a sense of wider community beyond the front door. Estimated densities will be around 65dph, forming the upper end of a hierarchy found across the wider masterplan.

The site, as existing, is arable farmland that is capable of providing the wider community benefit of locally produced food. It is proposed that the masterplan should not have a negative impact on this valuable commodity, and, by incorporating the principles of urban agriculture will provide an intensification that will make more efficient use of the available land.

The existing mature landscape infrastructure will form a key part of this concept, acting as the heart around which The Long Field is seeded. Existing biodiversity will be protected and sensitively enhanced by the creation of community orchards, ecological meadows and managed land for productive livestock. Locally produced goods will be sold within walking distance at the farm shops along the green edge of The Square, and Harvest will become a key time of the year in the community calendar.

The Long Field will be tended by suburban farmsteads along its periphery, proposed at a much lower density that offsets the denser grain of the urban core. Nonetheless the entire space will remain open to the public as an important landscape asset, encouraging local engagement and a sense of wider community stewardship.

Surface water drainage will be seen as an opportunity and indeed a critical part of the masterplan's proposed ecosystem. Landscaped swales will feed into a series of reed-filtered retention basins throughout The Long Field for agricultural use, with overflow attenuation and infiltration basins as appropriate further downstream.

Proposed Green Space 'The Long Field'



"The whole of the land remaining in one ownership, there is no difficulty in the common enjoyment of footpaths, greens, or other open spaces; hence he is able to consider the grouping of his buildings with much greater freedom." - R. Unwin



Starter Flats / Co-Housing Apartments

There is a local and national need for smaller homes to serve as both starter and downsizer accommodation. This typology presumes lower levels of private car ownership and increased reliance on public transport, served only by a lay-by for public transport pick-up/set-down. Apartments will be grouped within the blocks to provide up to 8 units per 'cluster' to help manage scales of community interaction. Amenity space is provided as communal balconies augmented by a central landscaped Courtyard Green that is shared with the Terraces.

Maker / Homeworker's Terrace

Small terraced homes cater for residents who have a need for increased accommodation eg. young families, home-workers with offices, makers with studios. The increase in size of these units creates an according reduction in their density, and the provision of a greater share of external space in the form of semi-private balconies and protected patio spaces. The concept of micro-farming is encouraged at cluster level by incorporating extensive window boxes and planters, enhanced by a community orchard within the Courtyard Green.



'The Long Field' Farmsteads

It is acknowledged that the scale of stewardship required to manage The Long Field is significant, and will rely on much local input to ensure an appropriate level of community benefit. Those who choose to undertake this responsibility are rewarded with a larger dwelling with a private rear garden, and benefit directly from the views and sense of open space associated with landscape of The Long Field. A much looser development density recognises the overall low need for this type, but also enables larger individual plots and reduced visual impact on the landscape character of The Long Field.



Key Worker's Home Lane

The need for more traditional housing typologies is acknowledged, and these are provided at a broadly average density of 25dph within the core of the cluster. Semi-detached dwellings with appropriately managed levels of on-plot parking are accessed from a private lane, intended for occupation by residents who make an active contribution to the community by being in local employment eg. teachers, civil servants, farmhands. These dwellings benefit from a share of a semi-private rear garden, that is sized accordingly to encourage a preference for using nearby public amenity space.

