

Chapter 4: Spatial Framework Concept Historic precedents

“People live in houses, but where do houses live if they are homeless, then all we are left with is the typical, endless, featureless suburbia” - Gordon Cullen, Maryculter Report

Introducing housing into such a sensitive historic context requires careful consideration. It is important that new housing in this location is designed specifically for this important site. It should eschew the standardised characteristics of the normal ‘volume housing’ product and look to historic precedents within the Scottish borders region.

With their protective thick stone wall enclosures, Sheilings and Stells (historic housing farms) offer an interesting model for defining boundaries of residential clusters. These not only provide a useful and contextual model for the physical enclosure of ‘domesticated’ space within a landscape setting, but will also help to anchor the new housing into the immediate vernacular form of enclosing stone ‘village walls’. Examples of these kind of enclosures can be found within the immediate vicinity of the Lowood Estate and also within the historic townscape of Melrose. The historic Bastle houses also serve as a possible precedent for clearly defined residential built form, originally constructed as ‘defensive’ homes within a ‘lawless’ environment. They offer clues to how new dwelling typologies could be designed as simple and robust forms defined by ‘uniting’ base wall with living accommodating resting above.

Similarly the rigid (orthogonal) warp and weft weave of the traditional estate tweed fabrics offers clues for the organization of housing clusters and the patterns which could be expressed in the material treatment of public realm - by varying the use of materials belonging to the same palette each cluster could be given a unified

but distinctive character. This should be the subject of future more detailed studies and should be developed as part of a ‘Design Code’, which could be used to develop a ‘narrative of place’ and help to guide the future design of residential clusters within the Spatial Framework.

Sheep stells - a traditional drystone enclosures with a turf cope provided shelter during spells of winter weather in the Borders. Circular stells or ‘rounds’ as they were sometimes termed are believed to have been introduced to the southern Uplands after severe storms in 1620, though there is no firm evidence of their existence until after 1750. ‘Stell’ was also used to refer to a plantation shelter (wooded stell).

Bastle houses are a type of construction found along the Anglo-Scottish border in the areas formerly plagued by border Reivers. They are fortified farmhouses, characterised by security measures against raids. The name is said to derive from the French word “bastille”.

The characteristics of the classic bastle house are extremely thick stone walls (about 1 metre thick), with the ground floor devoted to stable space for the most valuable animals, and a vaulted stone or flat timber floor between it and the first floor with the only access being a stairway or ladder. The family’s living quarters were on the floor above the ground, and during the times before the suppression of the Reivers, were only reachable by a ladder which was pulled up from the inside at night. The windows were small or even only arrow slits. Bastle houses share characteristics with military blockhouses - the main difference is that a bastle house was intended primarily as a family dwelling rather than a pure fortification. Some of the most well known and well preserved bastle houses are Thropton Pele, Hole Bastle, Woodhouses Bastle and Black Middens Bastle.



Hole bastle



Woodhouses bastle



Black Middens Bastle



Sheiling stells



Local tradition of fabrics - Estate Tweeds

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Priorwood walled garden, Melrose



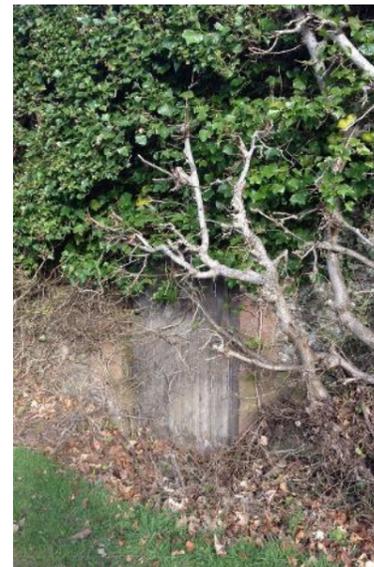
Stone walls around Priorwood garden, Melrose



The 19th C Lowood Estate



An existing stone wall along the Lowood estate road



Gates/ doors in the existing stone wall along the Lowood estate road



Door in the existing stone wall along the Lowood estate road



An existing stone wall along the Lowood estate road



Looking East towards an existing stone wall/ mature trees along the Lowood estate road



An existing stone wall along the Lowood estate road

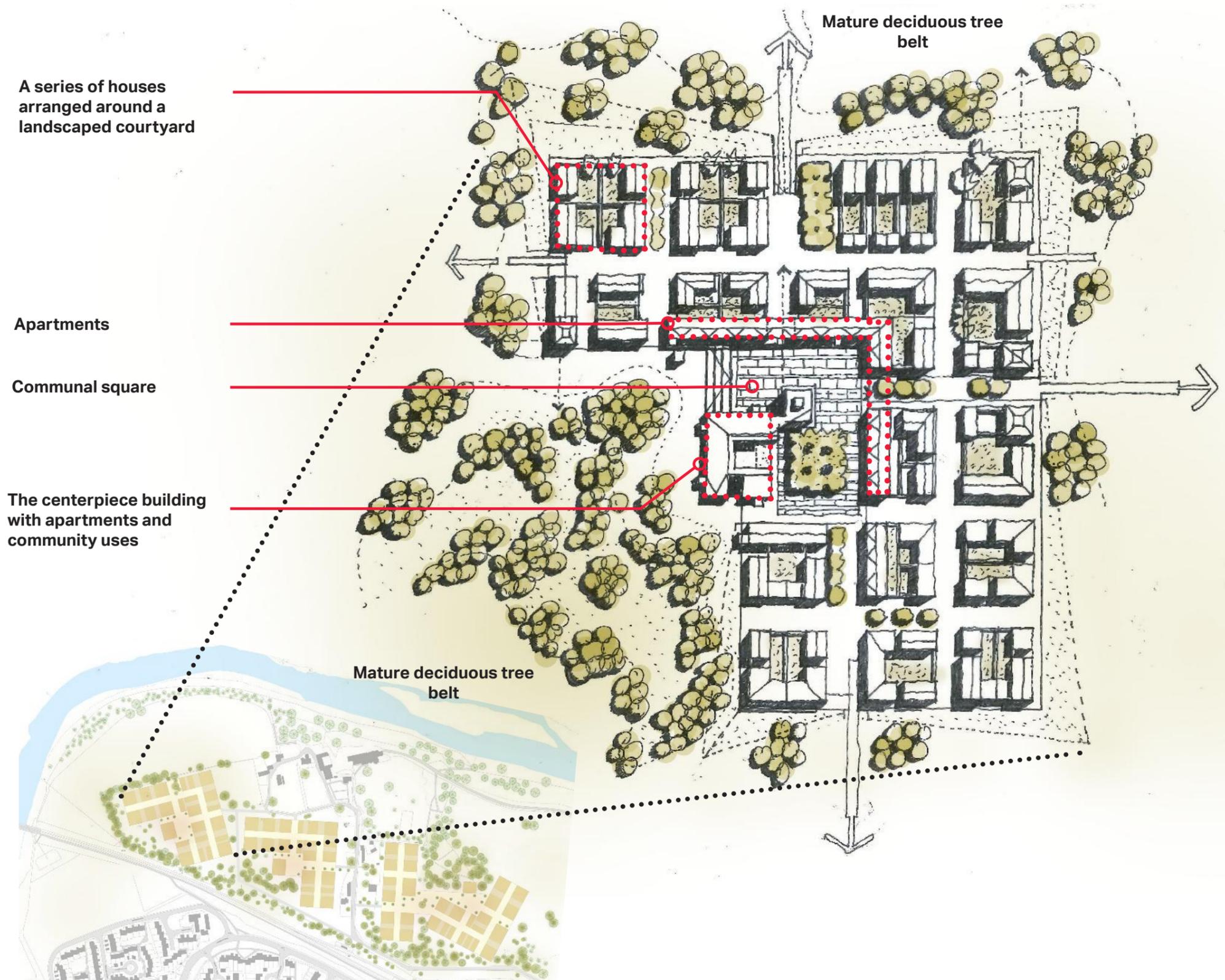
Chapter 4: Spatial Framework Concept Concept sketch

The concept sketch/ cartoon illustrated here explores the idea of a series of houses organized around landscaped courtyards arranged on a rigid orthogonal grid within the confines of an existing mature deciduous tree belt. At the heart of each cluster is a neighbourhood public square with a centerpiece building (perhaps a taller apartment block with community uses or workshops below). A series of townscape markers (either taller houses or distinctive architectural elements) aid navigation between and within each distinctive residential cluster.

It is important that the threshold between built form (the neighbourhood clusters) and the surrounding landscape is clearly defined. The historic Stells and Sheilings offer a precedent for this clearly defined 'tamed' and 'untamed' landscape.

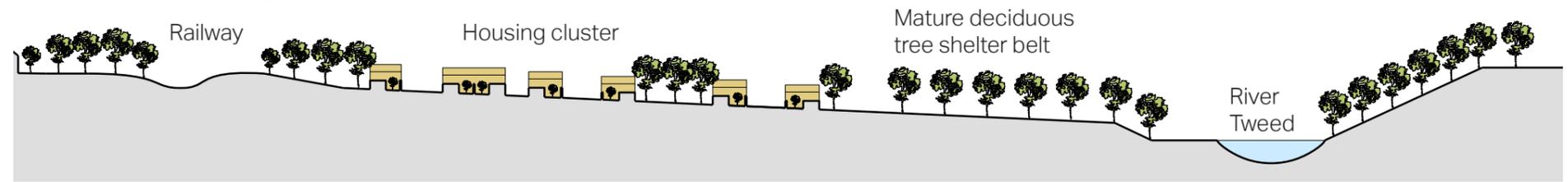


Chapter 4: Spatial Framework Concept Design development



Chapter 4: Spatial Framework Concept Design development

New proposed clusters of dwellings are located on the 'second' flood plain 'shelf' (see section). Together with the reinforced deciduous shelter belts the distinctive topography is exploited to minimize views of the new neighbourhood from the riverside walk.



Indicative conceptual North - South section through Lowood Site



Chapter 4: Spatial Framework Concept Development density

To meet the target number of dwellings and to use land effectively, the proposal at the Lowood Settlement has a medium density of around 40-50 dwellings per hectare. This density allows the residential accommodation to be concentrated and confined to the existing tree plantations to the west preserving existing views of the natural and parkland landscape to the east and mitigating the visual impact of the new neighbourhood.

**Mountfield Park
Canterbury
29 dph
220 dwellings**



**Polnoon
Eglesham
21 dph
160 dwellings**



**Proposed
Lowood
Settlement
40-50 dph
303 dwellings**

**Great Kneighton
Cambridge
40-50 dph
308 dwellings**



**Ridgeway Village
Cambridge
35-65 dph
148 dwellings**



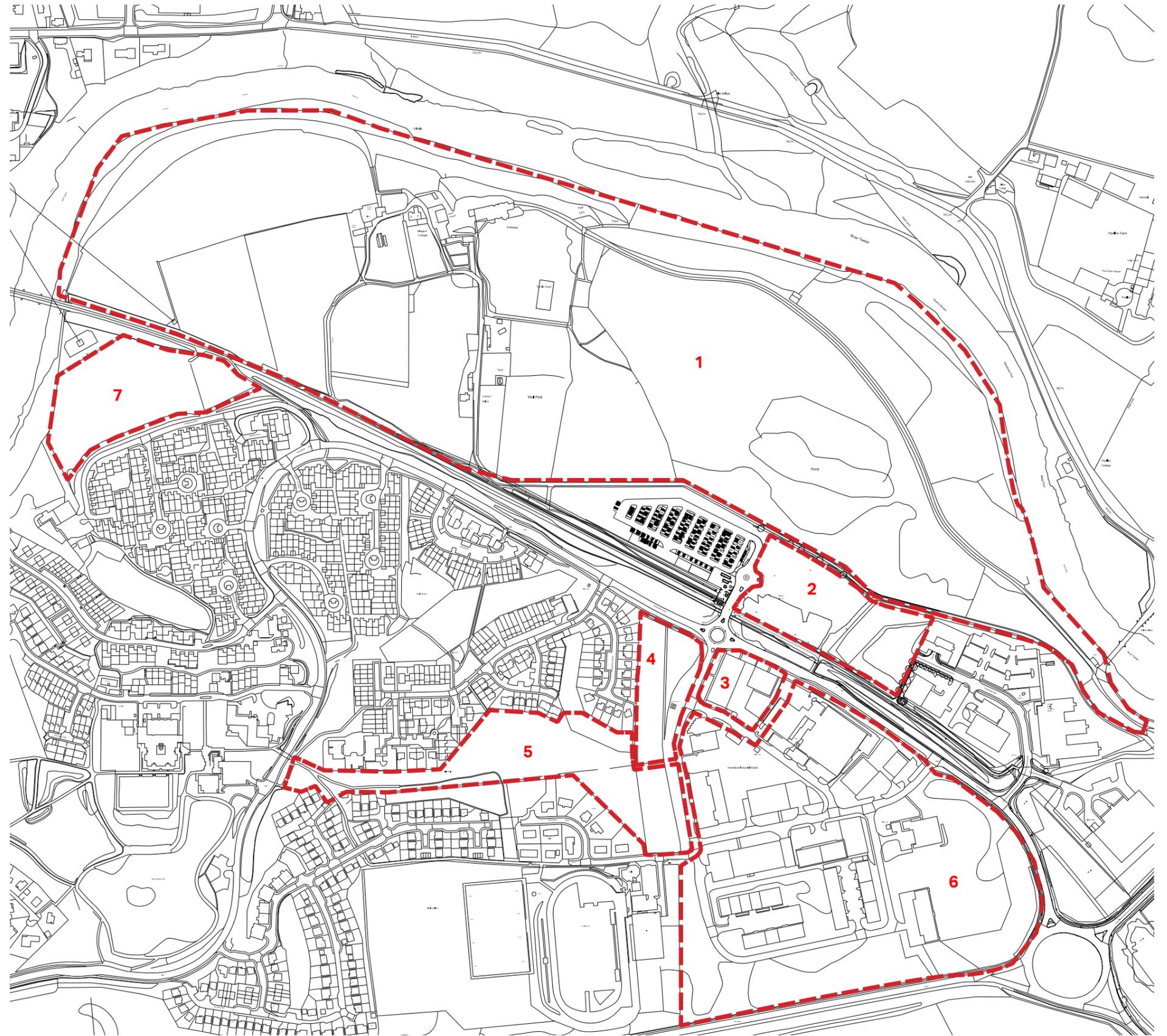
Chapter 5: Spatial Framework



Chapter 5: Spatial Framework Overview

The proposed Spatial Framework aims to rethink the use of seven distinctive land plots in Tweedbank:

- 1 Lowood Site
- 2 Quarry Site
- 3 Eildon Mill Site
- 4 Tapestry Site
- 5 Killie Holes
- 6 Existing industrial estate site
- 7 Informal recreational grounds

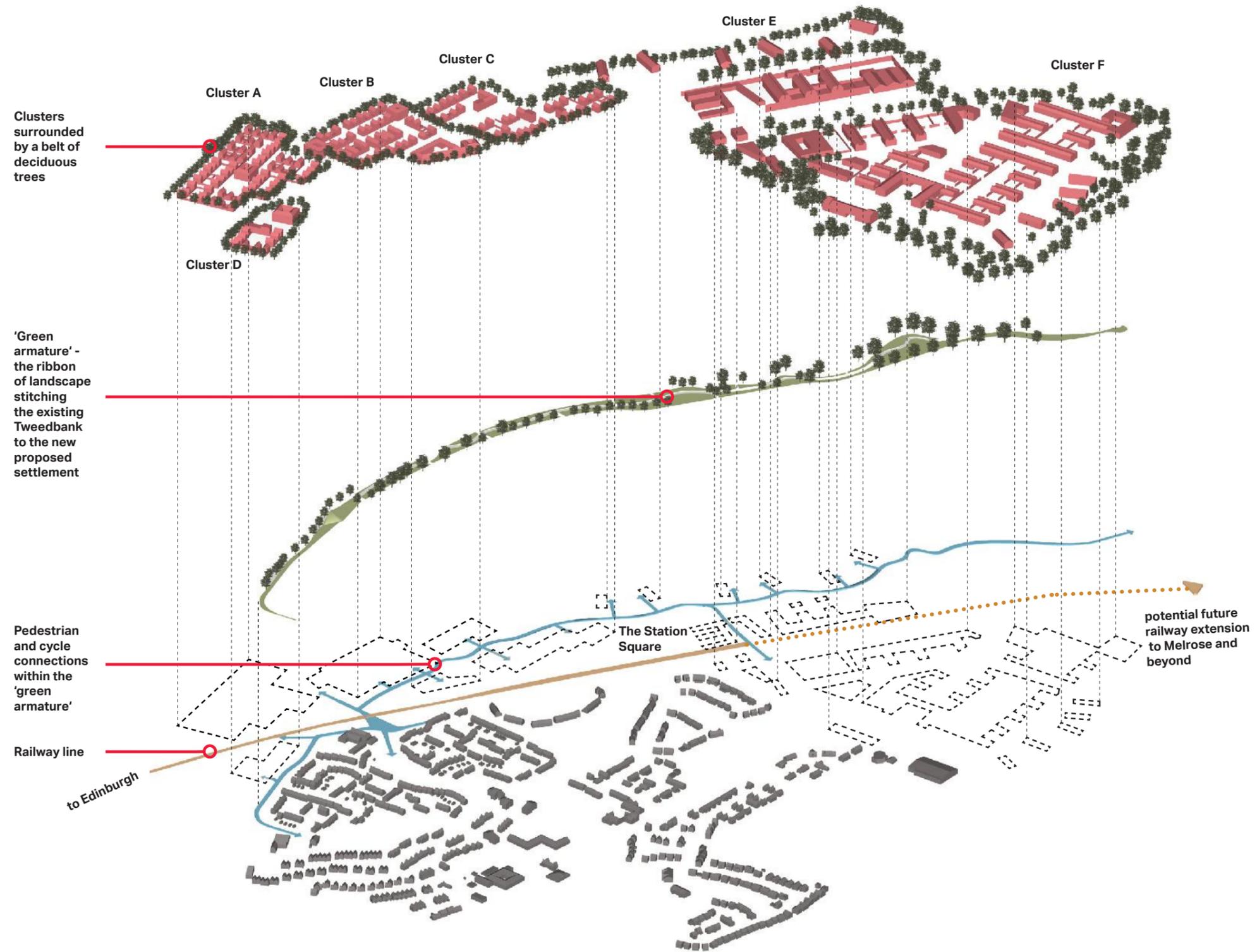


Chapter 5: Spatial Framework Overview + Green Armature

The proposed Spatial Framework is composed of 6 residential and mixed-use clusters:

- **Cluster A** - Approx. 130 Homes with potential community facilities, studio/workshops,
- **Cluster B** - Approx. 115 Homes with potential community facilities,
- **Cluster C** - Approx. 60 Homes with potential community facilities and office space,
- **Cluster D** - Approx. 40 Homes with potential community facilities. The cluster sits to the north west part of Tweedbank and is proposed in order to diminish the distinction between the original Tweedbank to the south and the proposed development on the Lowood site to the north. The intention here is to improve the integration of the two parts of Tweedbank (the existing settlement and the Tweedbank expansion) otherwise disconnected by the railway line and the existing topography. Half of the site is allocated to reconfigured playing field whilst the existing community allotments have been preserved.
- **Cluster E** - office/ light industrial space with potential community/ leisure/ retail space and approx. 35 Homes (or a hotel) around the northern part of the station square,
- **Cluster F** - mixed use (office/ light manufacturing/ hospitality) around the southern part of the station square and 36 homes at the eastern end of Killie Holes.

The Spatial Framework aims to connect the existing settlement of Tweedbank in the South to the new clusters to the north and north east of the newly reinstated railway. A 'green armature' – a ribbon of landscape following the line of the existing ancient river bed escarpment on the edge of the River Tweed is proposed. This is rediscovered and developed as a pedestrian route and cycleway connecting the proposed business quarter in the north east, across the railway lines, to the existing community heart in the south west. This also connects new proposed residential hamlets which are carefully integrated within the mature parkland landscape of the historic Lowood Estate located to the north. The following diagrams analyse the proposed Spatial Framework and its potential phasing.



Chapter 5: Spatial Framework Phase 1 - Defining the east side and southern section of the station arrival square



Note: Components toned in red signify potential townscape marker buildings and way-finding elements