



FLINT TOWN CENTRE

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - NEW HOMES - DRAFT APRIL 2013

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Present day aerial view of Flint

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Flintshire County Council commissioned a DTZ led consortium to develop a regeneration led master plan for the development of Flint Town Centre. The Final Draft Flint Strategy and Master Plan 2021 (Flintshire County Council. February 2012)) proposed a range of detailed Action Plans that:

- Strengthen the identity and image of the Town
- Link together the town's key assets into an overall meaningful framework
- Improve gateways and sense of arrival
- Build on the town's great history and use that to help shape a new future
- Ensure that key public realm projects link together to bring greater impact
- Improve connectivity, legibility and access to and through the town, particularly for business and visitors.
- Bring a better housing offer into the heart of the town, and in doing so repair the damage caused from earlier planning and development work
- Link closely to the current initiatives such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

Central to the master plan for change is the demolition of the town's 200 plus maisonettes which since their construction in the early part of the 1970's, have dominated the town. Now failing and no longer fit for purpose the demolition is a once in a generation opportunity to re-imagine, plan and deliver a new town centre for the 21st century.

That chance for change is the subject of this Development Brief, which focuses directly on the residential led regeneration of the town.

Flint started life as a 'planned town', originally built to serve the castle built by Edward I in 1277 as part of his 'Ring of Iron'. The town was set out to the south of the castle in a grid, based around a central cruciform of streets linking to the castle gates and the coastal routes from Chester (a days march away) along the north Wales coast. The town did not have a wall, but a protective earthen and wooden palisade ditch. The outline of this remains visible in the pattern of streets, Duke, Chapel, Earl and Castle Dyke Street which can be traced directly back to the pattern seen in John Speed's 17th century map of the town. Later maps show a growing, changing town, still shaped by the original grid until the development of the railway in the 1840s severed the town from the castle. Then in the 1970's the development of the maisonette blocks and towers with their self-referential orientation, removed most of the original historic fabric.

In contrast to the earlier rebuilding of Flint, this opportunity will be based on ideas that are tried and tested. This new plan for change will be less one of experimentation, but rather one in favour of ideas that promote a real sense of place, history and community. Back into Flint will go proper streets, homes and spaces that make sense and have a clear feeling of purpose and intention. This will be a place that will feel and encourage a sense of belonging and neighbourhood. Both the original town centre master plan and the detailed layouts illustrated in this Brief have been subject to detailed and positive local consultation. The master plan process from initial analysis to on the ground proposals are the result of an ambitious and ground breaking council led process, in collaboration with the residents and businesses of the town.

The Purpose of the Development Briefs.

This brief sets out the design requirements and objectives for the new Flint. The aspirations are clear. To design and deliver new residential neighbourhoods in the heart of the town which meet the highest urban design quality.

There are three development areas, which together represent almost a quarter of the original fortified town. Each site has been master planned and 'coded' so that it is clear what the key design parameters are, defined through a series of simple clear diagrams to assist future designers and their clients.

There is also guidance on form, materials and detail, which point towards the right design approach in details for Flint. There are also illustrations, which provide a 'Look and Feel' of what is needed. This development brief sets out what needs to be done. Solutions which fail to meet the design quality objectives will not be acceptable. Emphasis is on what can be done rather than what can't be done. Solutions that exceed expectations and delight in Flint's urban story are required.



John Speed's original town map



Spatial Framework for Flint 2021

2.0 MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES

The core objectives of the Spatial Framework and Indicative Master Plan are set out in the Final Draft Flint Strategy and Master Plan 2021 (Flintshire County Council). It describes many of the key urban design and place making tactics that underpin this brief.

The Spatial Framework identifies the physical and spatial priorities for change across Flint. It highlights the sites with the potential to attract investment, set within a framework of improved connections and linkages. The central opportunity sites are the residential sites described in this brief and these, more than any other sites, have the greatest potential to transform the town.

Underpinning the Spatial Framework are a series of town building and place making tactics inspired and influenced by Flint's original historic structure prior to the development of maisonettes. These are:

1. The original urban grid.

Flint town centre is set out on a grid using a method little changed since the Romans. The Castle standing guard over the water is the marker from which the town was planned around two central streets set out as a cruciform. The central street is now Castle/Church Street aligned with the castle. The cross route (dividing the town into quarters),

is Chester Road, which marked the original road from Chester in the east. The quarters were then subdivided into smaller linear plots running in parallel with Church and Castle Street. This can still be seen traced out in Feather and Sydney Street.

2. Gateways in the town.

The cruciform centred grid layout defined 3 main entrances into the town, with the fourth one linking directly to the outer gates of the castle.

3. The original line of fortification.

John Speed's map clearly shows the line of defence around the town comprising two lines of earthworks and ditching. Whilst the exact location of these fortifications can no longer be seen, their original line can be traced through the location of Castle Dyke, Duke, Earl and Chapel Streets.

The development Areas.

These development briefs focus on three key areas of the town centre. The first two currently contain maisonette blocks which are being decanted and demolished. The first blocks on Earl Street have already been demolished, and so this will be the first phase of redevelopment.

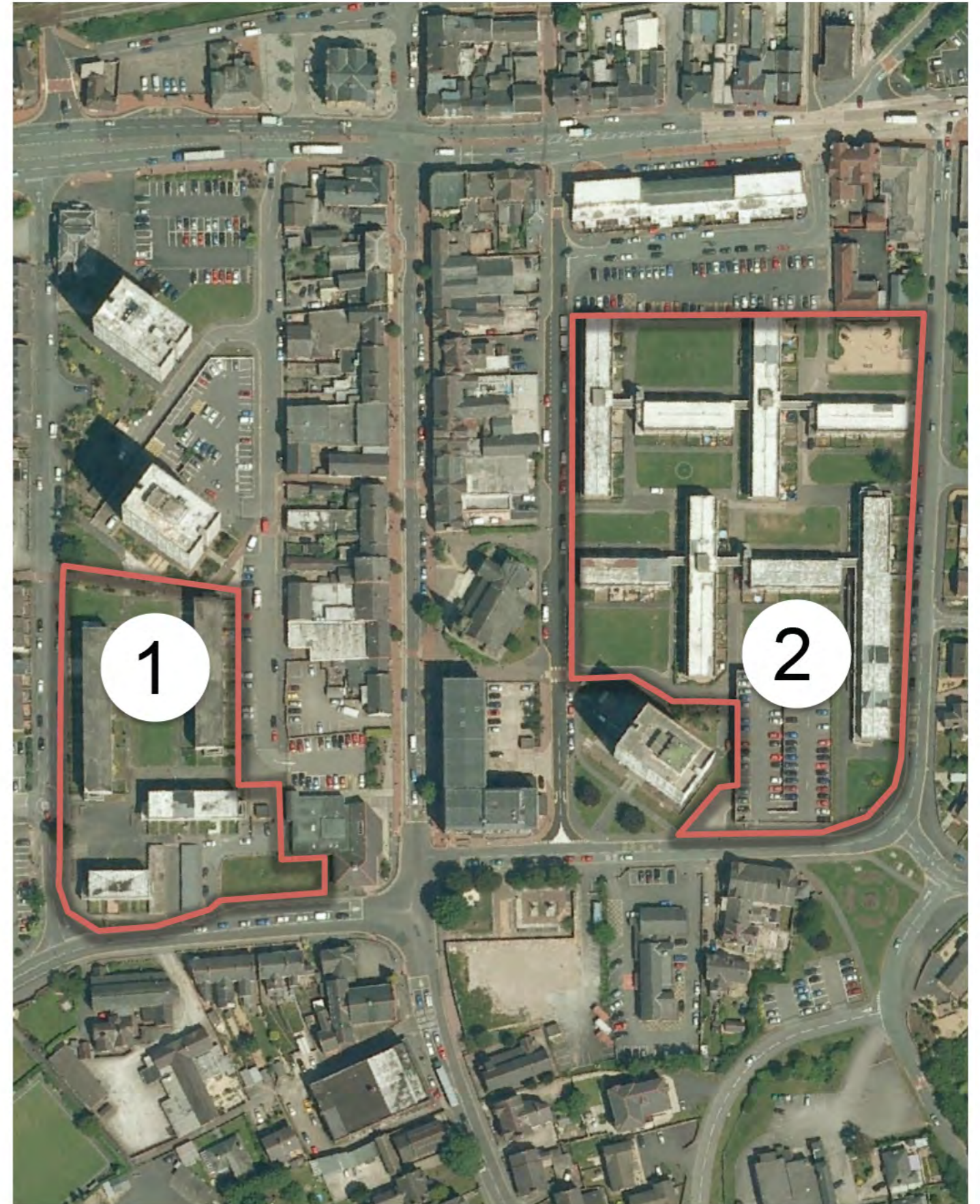
1. Earl Street (phase 1)
2. Duke Street



Area 1 (decanting now well underway)



Area 2



Town centre development areas



Earl Street Proposed Layout

3.0 EARL STREET

Overall Intention.

The Earl Street development area is defined by Colehills Street to the west, Earl Street to the north, Church Street to the south and Feather Street to the east.

Masterplan Key:

1. Town Library
2. Improved pedestrian walk
3. Possible development site
4. Allocated parking for residents only.
5. Existing green space retained
6. Improved pavement access on Coleshill Street
7. Residents only internal parking court
8. Proposed Apartment block
9. New roadway from Earl Street
10. Feather Street closed to through traffic
11. Proposed homes
12. Existing pedestrian link extended and improved
13. New green boundary edge

Demolition of the existing maisonettes is already underway, meaning Earl Street will be the first phase of the town centre redevelopment. There are a number of neighbouring opportunities that will need to be taken into account during detailed design. These are:

Town Library.

The master plan incorporates the fenced off green space located between the library and Colehills Street and the small car parking area to the rear of the library.

Parking

There are two car parking areas fronting onto Church Street. Both have been incorporated into the wider master plan but are not subject to these Development Briefs. However, the Brief proposes maintaining and enhancing the key pedestrian route linking Church Street with Earl Street, the Pavilion and Retail Park beyond. Importantly, Feather Street is extended to link with Earl Street for pedestrians and cyclists but no through traffic. This proposal reconnects the original historic town centre grid in a manner similar to Sydney Street.

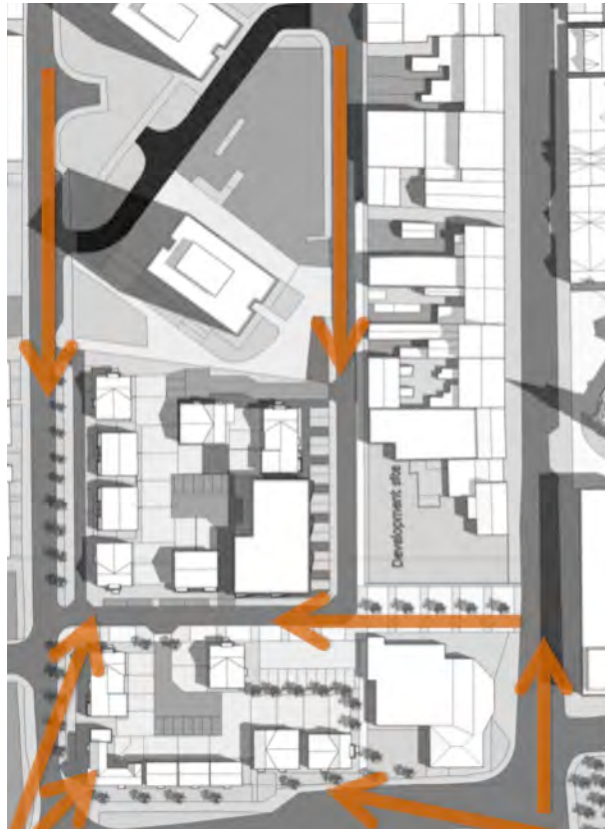
Residential Uses.

The Earl Street master plan proposes 28 houses and 14 flats providing 42 homes.

All houses will be linked, semidetached, or limited to short terrace runs of three, to ensure efficient layouts. Each house requires a separate access route from back garden to street. Housing facing onto Chapel Street is double fronted to take advantage of the narrow plot width needed to maintain the pedestrian route to the Pavilion and Retail Park.

Non-residential uses

There are no non-residential uses proposed as part of the new build. However, attention needs to be paid to the setting and function of the library and the opportunity sites provided by the Church Street car parking and garden.



Important Views



Grid and structure



Frontage and enclosure



Key events

Grid and structure

The master plan envisages two distinct development parcels shaped by the re-connection of Feather Street and the pedestrian route. The intention is to bring to Flint proper houses, which overlook the street with careful planned boundaries, defensible space and a clear definition between public and public worlds. This grid, is deliberately urban and civic in character.

Movements and connections.

All roads will need to be designed to local adoptable standards, with a possibility of a 20mph speed limit. Street trees are required to close off views, and provide shelter and green amenity.

Important views.

There are a number of key views, which the master plan must respond to.

1. From Aber Street on arriving into Flint looking towards the junction of Colehills and Earl Streets.
2. Arriving into Flint from Northrop Road looking south along Colehills Street.
3. Looking west along Earl Street where new frontage needs to define the original fortified boundary of the town.
4. View from Church Street towards the Pavilion and Retail Park.

Parking.

Parking is allocated on a plot-by-plot basis. With no net increase in parking. All parking is at grade, divided between small internal

parking courts, on-plot drives and street parking. At present town centre parking is free and unrestricted. Consideration needs to be given to the wider town parking strategy (SK Transport) and whether parking in the new streets needs to be controlled and restricted to residents and visitors.

Green amenity.

As with Earl Street the outward facing development is situated behind a green linear area designed to reference the line of original town fortifications. An access lane is located behind the green edge on Earl Street. The current fenced off green area on Chapel Street is partially incorporated into the master plan leaving a smaller area adjacent to the library.

Waste collection.

A detailed strategy will be required to ensure refuse vehicles are accommodated across the new master plan. Every new home will require a secure access route between the rear garden and the street to enable bins and other equipment to be moved without passing through the interior of the home.



Indicative view of new housing on the junction of Earl and Coleshill Street



Indicative view of new homes on Earl Street showing new access lane and green (town wall) edge



Duke Street Proposed Layout

4.0 DUKE STREET

Overall Intention.

The Duke Street development area is defined by Sydney Street to the north, Chapel Street to the west, and Duke Street to the south and the existing town car park to the west located behind the existing shops on Chester Street.

The intention is to clear the entire site including the decked car park at the Chapel and Duke Street junction. Castle Heights is retained, and subject to possible refurbishment.

The wider Flint Town Centre Master Plan envisages dividing the development area into 4 large plots. A new central street is planned, 'New Swan Lane' named after the original street that once ran across this area, while a new cross street is envisaged connecting Duke Street to the new Market Square, Sydney and Church Street. This 'cruciform' street pattern is important as it brings to Flint something new and fit for purpose but also a link to its original historic street pattern.

Masterplan Key:

1. Church Gate. New lane with pedestrian and cycle link to Sydney Street
2. New Swan Street. New lane linking from Chapel Street
3. New green frontage
4. Castle Heights
5. Proposed new homes.
6. Proposed new apartment block
7. No vehicle access. Pedestrian and cycle access only.
8. Raised highway table at the crossing.
9. New secure play space approximately 500 sqm.
10. Residents only internal parking court
11. Existing town centre parking retained.
12. Shared parking for Castle Heights

Residential uses.

For the Duke Street area the current master plan proposes 84 houses and 15 apartments providing 99 homes. All houses will be linked semidetached, or limited to short terrace runs of three, to ensure efficient layouts. Each house requires a separate access route from back garden to street.

Non-residential uses.

It is envisaged that a community meeting space and café is provided at the junction of Sydney Street and New Church Gate. This needs to overlook the new market square and be visible from Church Street. Other related projects include the refurbishment and adaptation of Castle Heights into an Extra Care Facility. This is likely to include external transformation of the tower and the introduction of community facilities at ground level with a new entrance on Chapel Street.

Grid and structure

The master plan envisages 4 distinct development plots resulting in a legible, simple street layout lined with homes. The intention is to bring to Flint proper houses, which overlook the street with careful planned boundaries, defensible space and a clear definition between public and public worlds.

Movements and connections.

There are two primary streets planned with limited vehicle access, New Swan Street and Church Gate, which form a 'cross' in the heart of the new community. There is



Important Views



Grid and structure



Frontage and enclosure



Key events

a secondary lane planned to serve a new terrace at the eastern end of the layout. The intention is to develop a series of people oriented residential streets, limited to 20mph. A 'raised speed table' is to be provided at the cross. The junctions will also need to be designed to deter through routes and speed. The existing route to the east of Castle Heights is to be retained but subject to redesign to down grade its use to link in with the proposed Castle Heights remodeling. All roads will need to be designed to local adoptable standards. Street trees are required to close off views, and provide shelter and green amenity.

Important views.

There are a number of key views, which the master plan must respond to.

1. Church Gate, which is planned to provide an important cross route but also a view from Duke Street to the east façade of St Mary Flint.
2. The view along Duke Street where new development is designed to mark the edge of the historic town and provide a gateway into the town centre.
3. The junction of Chapel and Duke Streets where a new three storey residential apartment building is proposed to help mark the edge of the original fortified town.
4. From Church Street across the

square towards Sydney Street where new three storey residential blocks help define and enclose the southern side of a refurbished market square.

Parking.

Parking is allocated on a plot-by-plot basis. With no net increase on parking. All parking is at grade, divided between small internal parking courts, on-plot drives and street parking. At present town centre parking is free and unrestricted. Consideration needs to be given to the wider town parking strategy (SK Transport) and whether parking in the new street needs to be controlled and restricted to residents and visitors.

Green amenity.

A new linear green landscape element is planned along Duke Street behind which a new access lane is proposed to serve homes fronting onto the existing street. This green landscape element is designed to reference the original line of the town's fortification. It is envisaged that both New Church Gate and New Swan Street will be tree lined where possible. Every house will have a private secure garden.

Waste collection.

A detailed strategy will be required to ensure refuse vehicles are accommodated across the new master plan. Every new home will require a secure access route between the rear garden and the street to enable bins and other equipment to be moved without passing through the interior of the home.

A purpose designed play area is envisaged at the North – western end of New Swan Street. This space, approximately 500sqm needs to be provided in line with the town’s wider play space needs and policies, and as part of a wider strategy, which includes improvements to Swinchaired Walk green space. The new play area will be a ‘LEAP’ (a local equipped area for play). A secure wall of appropriate height and construction will be required where gardens abutt the play space.

‘Natural policing’ via overlooking will be required from New Swan Street, and surrounding homes. The play space design and content is to be developed in collaboration with Flintshire Leisure Services



Indicative view of new housing on Duke Street showing entrance to the new Church Gate Street, linking to Market Square



Inspiration images for the new town wall green edge



Indicative view of new apartment building on the corner of Chapel and Duke Street



Indicative view of Church Gate looking towards St Mary's Flint



Indicative view of market square, showing new cafe and entrance into Church Gate



Indicative view of new play space (secure railings removed)

5.0 BUILT FORM AND MATERIALS

Flint House Typologies.

Having established the spatial and physical requirements this section looks at house design in terms of form and materials. It is important that all new homes look, feel and acknowledge Flint and its history. As with the master plan layout, emphasis here is on simplicity, clarity, material quality and attention to detail.

The proposed master plan envisages a number of distinct house forms required to meet key urban design and place making criteria. It is important that these typologies are followed.

1. Old Town Boundary

These homes need to be designed to establish the line of the original old town boundary. This is an important part of the new Flint, which through new development establishes its original identity as an ancient fortified town. These homes are semi-detached (seen as villas) which visually connect together through an arched side alley route, giving secure access to the rear gardens and bin stores.

The ground floor has a projecting bay (which could become an external terrace) and together these form a repetitive pattern and

strong frontage to the old town boundary. Ridge Lines are continuous. Houses can project forward or back from each other but not to an excessive extent and as long as the side gateways still connect.

2. Gate House.

These larger three storey homes are located only at key entrances and gateways to help establish a sense of threshold into the new quarter. Ideally each corner should comprise two houses linked, again to form a semi-detached unit. These homes contain garages so that they can be positioned closer to the pavements and not set behind a private driveway.

3. Cross Roads.

These houses are designed to reinforce the character where key streets cross. Importantly the entrances to these houses are located on the return side so that they face onto the crossroads. Blank facades that face onto public streets will not be acceptable.

4. Terrace ends.

These houses place a strong gable front towards the street. They are specifically required to add emphasis to secondary entrances, some linear views and in particular to end a run of continuous terrace.



Boundary houses



Gatehouse



Form and materials.

From the Mid 19th Century Welsh vernacular housing design was heavily influenced by English house styles, as the railway extended into North Wales. These houses featured simple forms with contrasting brick banding some featuring polychromatic brickwork. The overall brick colour of these houses is a deep orange/ red with yellow brick features. Other materials include render panels and exposed lintels. It is 19th century Flintshire that provides the basis of the design palette for the new domestic architecture.



Cross Roads



Terrace ends



In summary new homes should reference the following:

1. Houses are rectangular in form with simple gabled roofs with ridges running parallel to the road

2. Return gables to the frontage have a purpose, either to emphasise the important rooms, end a terrace or bring a sense of importance to a junction or street corner.

3. Vertical emphasis is created by rectangular window shape and vertical alignment of windows.

4. Single storey bays are used to address the street and bring repetition and rhythm to key frontages.

5. The primary material is brick, and is generally an orange red terracotta colour with contrasting buff-yellow detail. (see palette opposite)

6. Render is used for contrasting infill panels and sometimes for the upper floor elevations.

7. Roofs are steeply pitched and generally clad in slate or darker tile.

8. Houses are set into semi-detached villas allowing private side access.

9. Window heads/lintels are expressed with contrasting material

10. Where the opportunity exists, extra space in the roof is to be encouraged with simple dormer projections

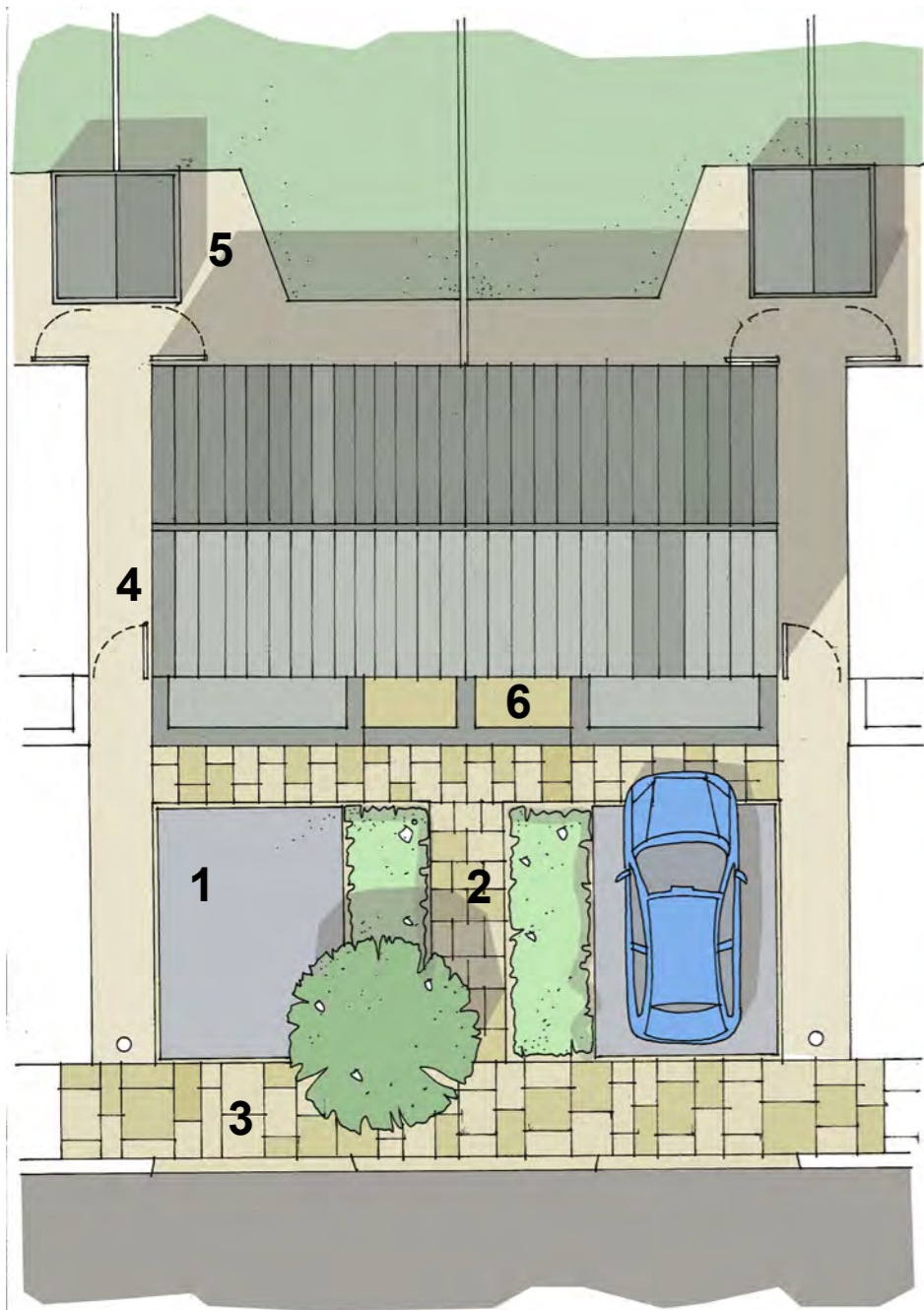




Brickwork will be the principal material, supplemented with render panels contrasting brick banding, and where appropriate polychromatic brickwork particularly on gables. Flintshire is historically the home of Buckley bricks which range from deep purples and reds to warm yellow facings, very similar to London stock.

To create variety across the town, the basic material palette featured here can be swapped and recomposed. So for example, render and brick panels can alternate on the same house type, and with the right polychromatic details and banding, new character can be created based on the same strong overall theme..

- Buckley Flintshire Castle Red
- Buckley Jacobean Purple mix
- Offwhite render framed in panels
- Buckley Flintshire White
- Dark grey aluminium PVF coated windows
- Dark slate roof or similar



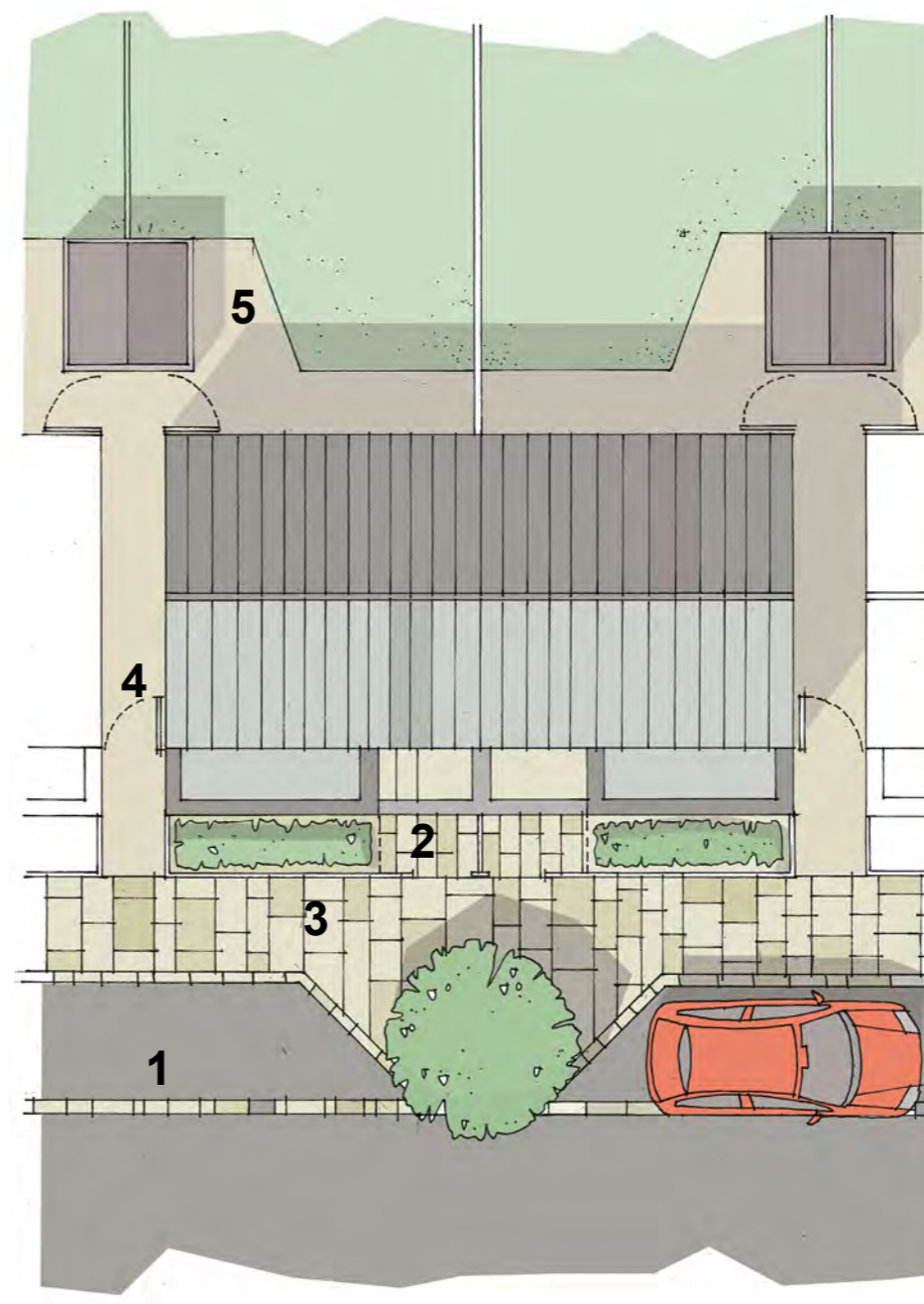
Street Frontages

Different types of house frontages are envisaged. The intention is to provide secure parking either on dedicated drives, small parking courts or on street. Discussion is underway regarding residents parking permits for the streets inside each development area.

Homes facing directly onto the street will have a 1m buffer zone defined by a 1.2m railings.

Street Frontage 1

- 1. Dedicated parking drive
- 2. Pedestrian entrance and planting
- 3. Pedestrian pavement
- 4. Shared private alleyway to gardens
- 5. Bin store and private gardens



Street Frontage 2.

- 1. On-street parking area
- 2. Entrance to houses and 1m secure buffer
- 3. Pedestrian pavement
- 4. Shared private alleyway to gardens
- 5. Bin store and private gardens



Indicative view of New Swan Street



Indicative Street Frontage - Duke Street



Indicative Street Frontage - Earl Street



