Chelmsford Policy Board

7 November 2024

Anglia Ruskin University – Strategic Masterplan Chelmsford Campus

Report by:
Director of Sustainable Communities

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Purpose

This report is asking the Policy Board to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the masterplan for the Rivermead Campus of Anglia Ruskin University.

Recommendations

1. The Policy Board recommend to Cabinet that the masterplan attached at Appendix 1 with any changes arising from the further recommendations be approved.

2. That the Policy Board delegate the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, to negotiate any final changes to the masterplan ahead of the consideration by Cabinet.

1. Background

1.1. The masterplan presented in this report relates to the Rivermead Campus of the Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). The formal determination of masterplans consists of two stages: consideration by Chelmsford Policy Board and then approval by Cabinet.

1.2. Policy DM22 of the Chelmsford Local Plan relates to Education Establishments. This states that the extension or expansion of existing educational facilities will be supported subject to their accordance with the criteria of other relevant policies within the Local Plan. The policy goes on to state that proposals for the expansion of Anglia Ruskin University and Writtle University College will be considered in the context of agreed masterplans.

1.3. The retention and improvement of education establishments is an important objective of the Local Plan. ARU is a key institution in the city and brings significant economic and social benefits. It has an important place in the local economy by providing employment, skills, education and research. ARU has ambitious plans to continue the development and upgrading of its Rivermead Campus, including the expansion of the medical school, which opened in 2019. The provision of a masterplan provides an understanding of the University's future intentions for the site.

2. The Journey to This Stage

2.1 ARU began working on the masterplan for this site in 2019 and have engaged with the City Council throughout its development.

2.2 The procedure for the submission and approval of the masterplan has been based on the general structure of the Council's Masterplanning Procedure for strategic sites. The Masterplan Procedure Advice Note (2019) sets out the specific sites requiring masterplans but does not list ARU as one of these. This is because the masterplan for the ARU is not related to a strategic growth site. The process for the ARU masterplan has therefore broadly followed the advice note but this has been simplified so that it proportionately reflects the much smaller scale and circumstances of the University. As part of this more streamlined process, it was concluded that it was not necessary for an independent Design Review to form part of the procedure.

2.3 The formal procedure includes four defined stages; Stage 0 – Initial discussions with Council Officers, Stage 1 – Technical Assessment, Stage 2 – Consultation and Stage 3 – Formal Approval.

2.4 The University carried out stage 0 over an extensive period from 2019 until 2022. The University held staff and student engagement sessions throughout this process and in March 2020 a public exhibition on the draft masterplan was held at the University. The University engaged with the City Council throughout this period as the draft masterplan evolved.

2.5 The technical and public consultations (Stages 1 and 2) ran in parallel. The masterplan was submitted to the City Council in July 2023 and public consultation was carried out from 9th August 2023 to the 4th September 2023 with site notices displayed around the perimeters of the site and consultations sent to key consultees. The public consultation resulted in initially negative feedback from Essex County Council Highway Authority and the masterplan evolved and responded to that feedback accordingly. After various iterations, a final agreed version of the masterplan was submitted to the City Council on 12th August 2024

and the highway authority have confirmed that they are now content with the document.

Member Presentation

2.6 Prior to the Chelmsford Policy Board meeting all members were invited to a briefing by the ARU staff and representatives on 15th October setting out the content of the final draft masterplan.

3. Overview of Masterplan Content

Purpose and Engagement

3.1. The first section of the masterplan document sets out the reasons behind the necessity of a masterplan. Its purpose is to communicate the values of the institution, create a sense of place and to facilitate change. The document seeks to facilitate change by setting out where new development parcels can be accommodated and where there are opportunities for change and improvement to existing spaces or routes. The masterplan is not intended to be a rigid and building focused document which could only facilitate change if it is followed exactly. Instead, the document is based on the three components of landscape, building and circulation.

3.2. As set out above, the University has engaged with their staff and students for feedback on existing challenges within the site and opportunities for change.

The Campus Today

3.3. The masterplan sets the scene on the development of the Rivermead Campus to date, from when it was first developed by Wilkinson Eyre in 2002. The historical context is examined and a context analysis recognises the nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets such as Bishops Hall Mill and Globe House/Durrant Court. This section also identifies the adjacent neighbours to the site, including the more sensitive residential properties in Henry Road to the southwestern corner.

3.4. The existing movement strategy through the site identifies that there are a series of clash points both on the approach to and within the campus site itself. The main pedestrian/cycle approach to the campus from the city centre is across a busy junction with no controlled pedestrian crossings. Similarly, the gateway space into the campus is identified as an undesirably vehicle dominated area that does not connect as well as it could. Slightly further into the site there is a second roundabout that again is designed to be optimised for vehicles rather than for pedestrian and cycle priority.

3.5. The landscape context identifies that there are no preserved trees (TPOs) on the site but that the open spaces are part of the identity of the campus and provide opportunities for enhancements. There are no flood risk issues within the masterplanned area.

Masterplan Development

3.6. The approach to the masterplan is to inform future decisions on the use and adaptation of the campus. It is not a response to an immediate spatial requirement. A challenge of the masterplan process was to ensure that the document remained flexible enough to respond to the rapidly changing (and unpredictable) higher education sector demands. The masterplan needs to be able to allow for development zones that can be brought forward independently in any sequence.

3.7. The document identifies those buildings that are suffering from poor environmental performance, dated and inflexible layouts. These are primarily to the south of the site and provide and opportunity for an improved gateway experience. The existing student village is also considered to be of relatively poor quality when compared with other competitors in higher education.

3.8. Section 3.5 of the document sets out the “residual development areas” – these are the parcels of land on the campus that are the suggested remaining areas for future development. They are identified as potential sites but do not denote building footprints as each parcel will come forward separately and will depend on the needs of the University at the time of that project. Development would be generally 3-5 storeys to reflect the scale of the existing buildings on the campus.

3.9. Opportunities are identified at 3.6 of the document and these include enhancing the sports facilities by potentially doubling the amount of hall space, expanding the medical school, a new focus teaching/research building to the south of the Marconi Building, a new front door to the campus by redesigning the public realm and civic space and a complete re-design of the on site residential accommodation.

3.10. The movement strategy seeks to enhance pedestrian and cycle priority and does not include any additional parking provision. Whilst parking is important on site for some staff and for example medical students who live on site and have to arrive and leave the campus at unsociable hours, the proposal is to keep parking to the peripheries of the site and to maintain active travel routes to the centre of the site. Off site mitigation measures for sustainable transport modes will depend on the scale and nature of the proposals but it is acknowledged in the document that these may be necessary in the future.

3.11. The masterplan identifies the potential removal of the internal roundabouts on the site as this is currently seen as an obstacle to pedestrian and cycle permeability. The highway authority have been involved in the development of the movement strategy of the document and have advised that any modifications to the junctions would require a detailed scheme to be prepared and agreed with them. The highway authority is however very supportive of improving the active travel routes and trying to remedy the current vehicle priority layout. ARU are committed to maintaining an up to date Travel Plan, which will support any future proposals on the site.

3.12. The existing bus route through the site provides an important public transport connection, which will be retained.

4. Public Consultation

4.1. The public consultation resulted in only two neighbour representations. The comments concern the likely impact of the re-development of the student village and how this might affect the amenities of the adjacent residential properties and the need for improved cycle routes to, from and through the site.

4.2. The masterplan is not intended to provide the detail on the form of the redevelopment of the student village. It is simply providing an intention for future opportunities on the site. The relationship of any new buildings with existing residential properties would be carefully considered at application stage and any new buildings to the south west of the site would need to comply with the privacy and proximity standards contained within Appendix B of the Local Plan.

4.3. The view of the resident regarding the need to improve cycle connectivity is shared and the masterplan seeks to encourage improvements in this respect.

4.4. The most critical feedback during the masterplan process was from the highway authority. The ARU have responded positively to this feedback and improvements/amendments made include the following:

- Recognition that alterations to the adopted highway would require a formal order for the highway rights to be removed
- A commitment to providing secure, covered and well overlooked cycle stores
- Priority to pedestrian and cycle movements
- Clarity that the bus route with remain through the site
-Acknowledgment that modifications to the internal junctions would require a detailed scheme and that this would be subject to agreement with the local highways authority
-Clarification that the existing barrier controlled access will remain
-Clarity that the existing arrangement to Alan Cherry Drive is not altered
- A commitment that there is an intention to reduce future need for car parking on site
- An acknowledgement that future developments may require contributions to off-site mitigation
- Acknowledgement that there is an existing Travel Plan
- Inclusion of specific references to the existing PRoW

4.5. City Council officers are content that the matters raised by the consultation have been addressed satisfactorily in the latest version of the masterplan and that the input from consultees has positively enhanced the development of the document.

5. Conclusion

5.1. The masterplan provides a framework for the future intentions of the site without restricting the fast-changing needs of the establishment. The University is an important institution and the City Council seeks to support its growth and development which will bring social and economic benefits to the City.

5.2. The masterplan takes account of the existing context and challenges and seeks to harness the opportunities available to allow the University to grow and prosper. The masterplan layout and other content provides a sound framework to guide successful placemaking and will support the planning application process as it should.

5.3. The masterplan is presented to Chelmsford Policy Board with recommendations that it be referred to Cabinet for approval.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Masterplan
Appendix 2 – Consultation responses from ECC Highways and The Environment Agency

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:
These are set out in the report.

Financial:
None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:
New buildings can have a negative impact on climate and environmental change issues. Planning Policies, Building Regulations and Environmental Legislation ensure that new buildings meet increasingly higher sustainability and environmental standards which will help mitigate this impact.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:
The future qualifying buildings on the site will be required to be built to at least BREEAM “Very Good”. The proposals also include provisions for EV charging, green roofs, gains in biodiversity and landscaping and a commitment to improved sustainable transport connections.

Personnel:
None

Risk Management:
None

Equality and Diversity:
None. An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Local Plan.

Health and Safety:
None

Digital:
None

Other:
None

Consultees:

ECC Highways

The Environment Agency

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

This report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Local Plan 2013-2036

Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, January 2020

Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Anglia Ruskin University

Strategic Masterplan

Chelmsford Campus

AUGUST 2024

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Foreword

ARU has been proudly part of the Chelmsford community for decades, with a strongly growing campus and a vibrant university community. As we pass the milestone of 10,000 students studying on our Chelmsford campus we look to the future with confidence and ambition.

I am therefore delighted to share our vision for the future of our Chelmsford campus, to guide further development when opportunities and needs arise. This will help ensure that we continue to deliver on our vision of transforming lives through innovative, inclusive, and entrepreneurial education and research.

We will engage widely with stakeholders to ensure that the agreed Masterplan is a shared vision for our campus, reflecting the ambitions of the City of Chelmsford and surrounding areas, and our ambition to create spaces and facilities of value to all in our community.

Our Masterplan will help us build upon the ambitious programme of development that we have followed over recent years. In 1995, Her Majesty The Queen opened the fittingly named Queen's building, which is home to the University Library. Since then we have added our eye-catching Lord Ashcroft building; the Sawyers Building with its remarkable SuperLabs; the Michael Salmon Building, which houses cutting-edge medical simulation suites; and Arise Chelmsford, which offers laboratory, workshop and office space to small businesses in the medical and advanced engineering sectors. The most recent major development is our School of Medicine, where we are training the region's future doctors in a purpose-built space featuring state-of-the-art facilities.

Professor Roderick Watkins
Vice Chancellor

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4.0 Masterplan

Document Details

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Introduction


1


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5


6

Images:

1 - Medical School, 2 - Sawyers Building, 3 - Marconi Building, 4 - Ashcroft Building & Queens Building, 5 - Arise Building, 6 - William Harvey Building

This strategic masterplan is a response to the need identified in the ARU Strategy "Designing our Future 2017-2026" to:

"...deliver a new master plan for our Chelmsford campus, bringing together the existing developments and new ideas for maximum benefit."

The masterplan will help to shape strategic spatial decisions, and is directly related to the vision, values and strategy of the institution.

The masterplan has been prepared following an extensive analysis of the site together with a considered and meaningful engagement with various stakeholders including staff, students, officers from Chelmsford City Council.

This Masterplan should not be seen as a fixed "design" but instead can be considered as a narrative to aid the future storyline of the campus and the University - providing a forward vision that is flexible enough to change along the way. Elements within the Masterplan are designed to be independent and may come forward in any sequence in response to identified needs at that time.

The campus is a living entity that needs a healthy dialogue and relationship with the people who live work and visit it as well as with it's neighbours - we hope this document provides a useful conduit and guide to future discussions and decisions, helping to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that will reflect the ambitions of the University.

The masterplan also seeks to address the requirement of policy DM22 of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan (2020).
This states that:

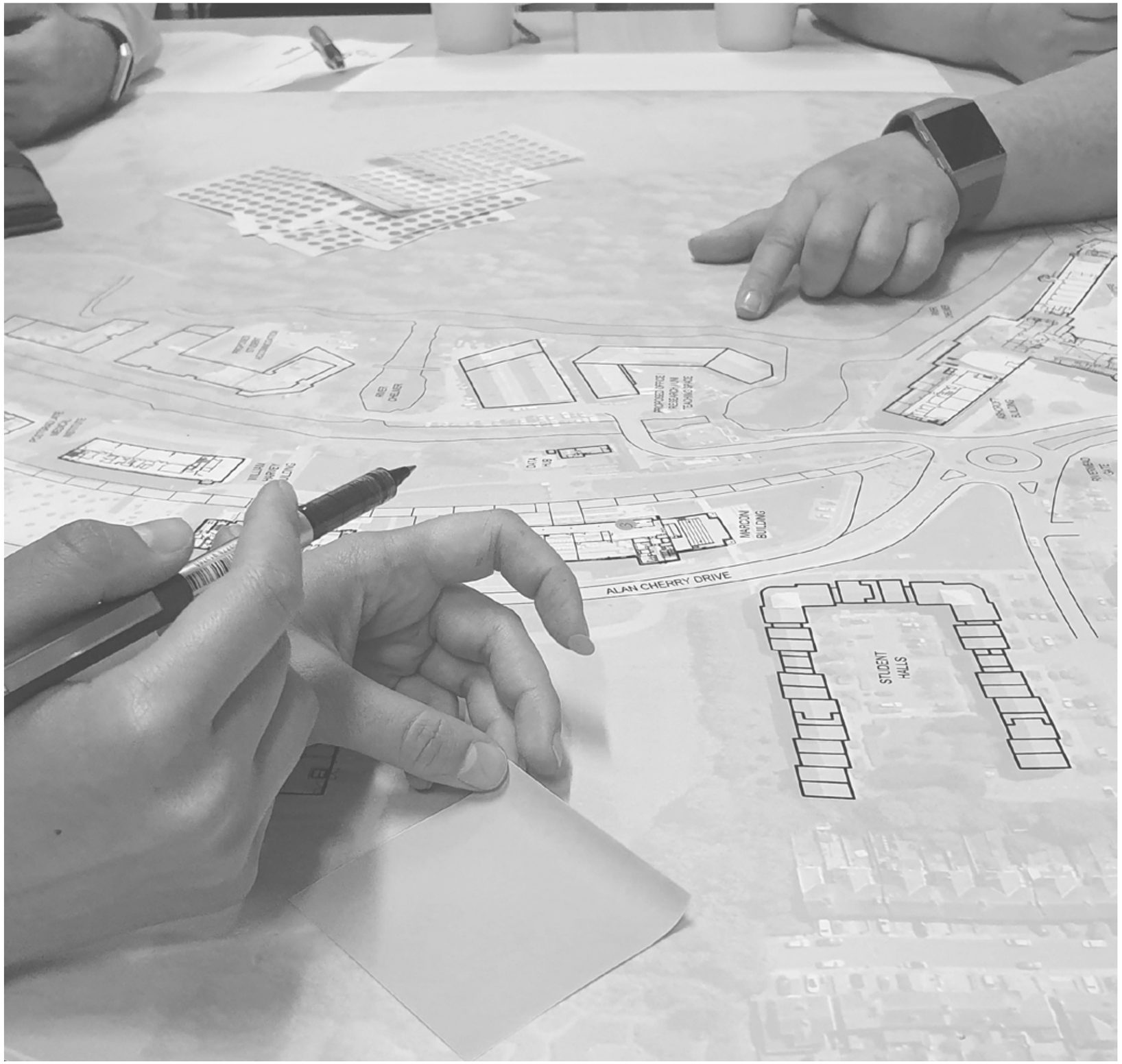
"The extension or expansion of existing educational facilities will be supported subject to their accordance with the criteria of other relevant policies within the Local Plan. Proposals for the expansion of Anglia Ruskin University ... will be considered in the context of agreed masterplans".

The requirement for an agreed masterplan within Policy DM22 was the direct result of effective liaison between Chelmsford City Council and ARU. The principle of a masterplan was to provide greater certainty for all parties. It not only reflects the support for such a document within ARU's own strategy but also provides the various stakeholders with a better understanding of the University's future intentions.

1.0 Overview

1.1 Purpose of the Campus Plan
1.2 The Vision
1.3 Engagement
1.4 Existing Campus Feedback

1.1 Purpose of the Campus Plan



A master plan can be defined as:

An organised set of decisions made by one person or a team of people about how to do something in the future.

To approach the master plan as just an architectural or development plan would be to miss a huge opportunity to really understand the nature and potential of the place and the people that make it work. Master plans are often presented from the viewpoint of an aircraft, with the ensuing design sketches developed from a similar scale and perspective. It could be argued that the original plan for the campus was a similar geometric exercise resulting in a curvilinear form that although pleasing on a plan (at 1:2000 scale) presents a series of problems and challenges at the human scale (which our early analysis has begun to explore)

1.2 The Vision

When considering a University campus plan it is important that we adopt three core principles in our approach to what the master plan should achieve. The campus masterplan should:

1. Communicate the values of the institution;
2. Create a sense of place; and
3. Facilitate change.

COMMUNICATING THE ARU VALUES AND MISSION

The values and mission of the University should be the underlying vision for the masterplan – we should first understand what it is and then respond through the plan. The masterplan is not therefore a disconnected stand-alone vision. Through reading the various published strategy reports we have developed a diagram that aids our understanding of the core ARU values from which the "Designing our Future" strategy emerges. We have then extracted keywords that we think can form the basis of our masterplan concept:

People – Place – Sustainability – Inclusivity - Innovation – Flexibility

This is a useful starting point in trying to focus our concepts on issues and principles that relate directly to the core values and mission of the institution.

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

It is now understood that place has an important role to play within memory. Whilst the nature and delivery of education is changing at a pace never before seen, we are all still bound by human nature and the need to share experience within a physical space. The campus is where memorable experiences are created and generates a shared sense of belonging to those that occupy it.

Creating (and enhancing) attractive, memorable and unique spaces on campus will create a unique identity within ARU Chelmsford – helping to set it apart from other institutions in this increasingly competitive education market.

FACILITATING CHANGE

Returning back to the definition of what a masterplan is, we should consider how it will facilitate change within the organisation and what the physical strategies behind this should be. A rigid and building-focused masterplan can only facility change if it is followed exactly. Instead we will focus on how the three basic physical form-giving elements contribute to the basis of any plan:

Landscape – Buildings – Circulation

The overlap and synergy of these components will support the core values and mission of the University.

1.3 Engagement

Public exhibition and engagement - March 2020

Staff / Student workshops - August 2019 - March 2020

This masterplan has been developed through a series of open dialogues and workshops with ARU staff and students.

Engagement is very different from consultation, the latter seeks to present a pre-conceived idea for approval rather than open up a discussion.

It has been through the various discussion, surveys and observations that a deeper understanding of the core issues has been developed, both positive and negative, from which a series of key opportunities has been identified.

List of engagement events/dates:

August 2019 - Appointment & Initial Surveys

September 2019 - Masterplan Steering Group

October 2019 - Travel Survey

October 2019 - Masterplan Steering Group

November 2019 - Masterplan Steering Group

November 2019 - Student's Union

December 2019 - Masterplan Steering Group

December 2019 - Sustainability Course Engagement

December 2019 - Student Engagement

December 2019 - Chelmsford City Council (Planning)

February 2020 - VC Town Hall Meeting

March 2020 - Draft Masterplan - Open Engagement

(the Covid-19 pandemic prevented further on-site engagement sessions in 2020 and 2021)

February 2022 - Chelmsford Planning Officers

November 2022 - Chelmsford Planning Officers

Public and key stakeholder consultation through 23/00001/MAS as publicised by Chelmsford City Council.

1.4 Existing Campus Feedback
Positive Aspects Raised by Staff & Students

Pleasant walking route in close proximity to the campus' main pedestrian path - needs to be promoted more

Campus is comprised of modern facilties

Vibrant atmosphere at the Tindal Building. The Student Union is in a convenient location, it is popular with students

The open space in the middle of the campus may provide an opportunity to create a central heart space?

Main pedestrian walkway is well-lit, and feels safe

Pleasant seating space which is popular during lunch times
Student accommodation is accessible and on campus

Parking is important - staff need to arrive efficiently and many of the students commute into the campus. Could underground parking be created?

Scenic walkway / cycle route

Abundance of trees and green space on campus - potential for more educational and communal use of this space

Some recreational activities integrated into the external spaces of the campus such as table tennis tables, trim trail and the labyrinth

Well used circular walk – well used by the community too. 'Bunny Walk' linking to town

Campus in close proximity to the river. Views from Lord Ashcroft Building over the river - peaceful environment

Library has good facilities

The pedestrianised entrance area has potential

1.4 Existing Campus Feedback
Negative Aspects Raised by Staff & Students

Building names do not indicate the building faculty / building use

Many comment the buildings look uninspiring and the campus looks like a business park

Lack of interest along main pedestrian route, and the Sports Centre is an uninspiring end to the journey. North side of the campus is quiet particularly in the evenings

The entrance is not defined, and people drive past unaware this is a University. Unable to turn right when driving out of the campus. No pedestrian access to the campus

There are issues with the location, visibility and facilities offered at the Student Union

Parking is limited - there is a demand for more spaces

Existing student accommodation is not fit for purpose – issues with management, lack of social spaces and privacy

Poor chaplaincy and multi faith rooms are poor and in the wrong location

The Rivermead Gate Building is visually unappealing.

Sports facility is not visible from the other end of the pedestrian route. It's location feels out of the way and the facilities are limited and small

Mediterranean garden is unattractive, and a poor environment - wasted opportunity

Road through centre of campus

Lack of activity, and lack of initiatives to draw the community to the campus

Campus lacks a central heart space. - green space could be better utilised. Students tend to stay at their teaching buildings as opposed to interacting with students from other faculties in a centrally located hub space

The river, green elements and walks are hidden and feel removed from the campus

Barrier between buildings and public realm

General facilities could be more centrally located. Library feels too out of the way

The canteen has a linear layout - its not large enough and an improved layout could facilitate social interaction. Particularly when students bring their own lunch there is a lack of space

Lack of identity at campus entrance

Dangerous crossings at campus entrance

1.4 Existing Campus Feedback
Comments & Suggestions by Staff & Students

Park and Ride is not efficient and is costly therefore staff choose to drive

Develop sports astro-turf pitch and outside lighting

Campus needs a communal staff-room - good for well-being and information / knowledge exchange

Create connections between this side of the campus and the trails / bunny walks

Underused space

Tindal Building is in a central location which is good, however, there should be a better connection between the Mediterranean Garden and the adjacent green space

Extend to provide the space we need

Encourage pedestrian flow from Medical School to main route through campus

Underused space, perhaps bring more trees into here

Allotments - good intention but underused

Facade of Marconi is very prominent - use this for ARU signage / something unique / interesting to students

Only three disabled bays - but always full!

Student Halls are inward facing, they face car-parking and feel closed off from campus

Too much tarmac and traffic

Ideas for Rivermead Gate: student focussed co-operative shop, vegan cafe, health focussed food options

Screen the roundabout from Rivermead Gate with hedges and trees, Not a bad place to sit but for the vehicles

Students should have a way to modify / change / have an influence on the campus. It would help with student integration, they would feel part of a community, and the campus would be more personal

Need to get better building management systems - lighting, heating, air flows

Need better refreshment areas

Improve campus lighting

Need better access over the river for new student halls on the industrial estate

Create a central hub for students - take a space into the heart of campus and put what the students need in here: professional services, students services, student well-being, refreshments, social space

Promote a research community - space for PhD / MPhil research students - near to refreshments / food when working late

Students / members of the public speed down the pedestrian path on electric scooters

Make a feature of the Mill Pond Develop to be a tranquil and welcome space

I would like to see more quiet spaces to eat, for people who bring their own food with them. Not enough space at lunchtime

Need a shop selling student items e.g. ARU sweatshirts, stationary and minor refreshments

Parked buses obstruct the Park and Ride and create a congested space in front of the Lord Ashcroft Building

Pedestrian access to campus is difficult to navigate, especially when coming from the train station

2.0 The Campus Today

2.1 Existing Campus Layout
2.2 Location & Relationship to City
2.3 Historical Context & Assets
2.4 Boundaries & Neighbours
2.5 Existing Campus Movement
2.6 Existing Campus Parking
2.7 Trees / Landscape / Biodiversity
2.8 Flood Risk & Utilities

2.1 Existing Campus Layout

Wilkinson Eyre developed the Rivermead Campus Masterplan in 2002 following their design of the University's Ashcroft International Business School. The campus was set out in sweeping arcs to reflect the curve of the River Chelmer. A large pedestrian spine was created, allowing separation from vehicles and servicing, with strips of planted swales between buildings to protect against potential flooding.

Wilkinson Eyre went on to design phases A and B of the masterplan which included, a student centre (Tindal Building), a multi purpose sports centre (Mildmay Sports Centre) and a new School of Health (William Harvey Building). A landscaped area was located in the centre of the campus adjacent to the river (area to the south of William Harvey Building).

1995 Rivermead Gate
by The Charter Partnership

1998 Sawyers Buidling
by ECD Architects

2003 Lord Ashcroft Building
by Wilkinson Eyre Architects

2006 Mildmay Sports Centre
by Wilkinson Eyre Architects
Tindal Building
by Wilkinson Eyre Architects

2008 Marconi Building
by Rhp Architects

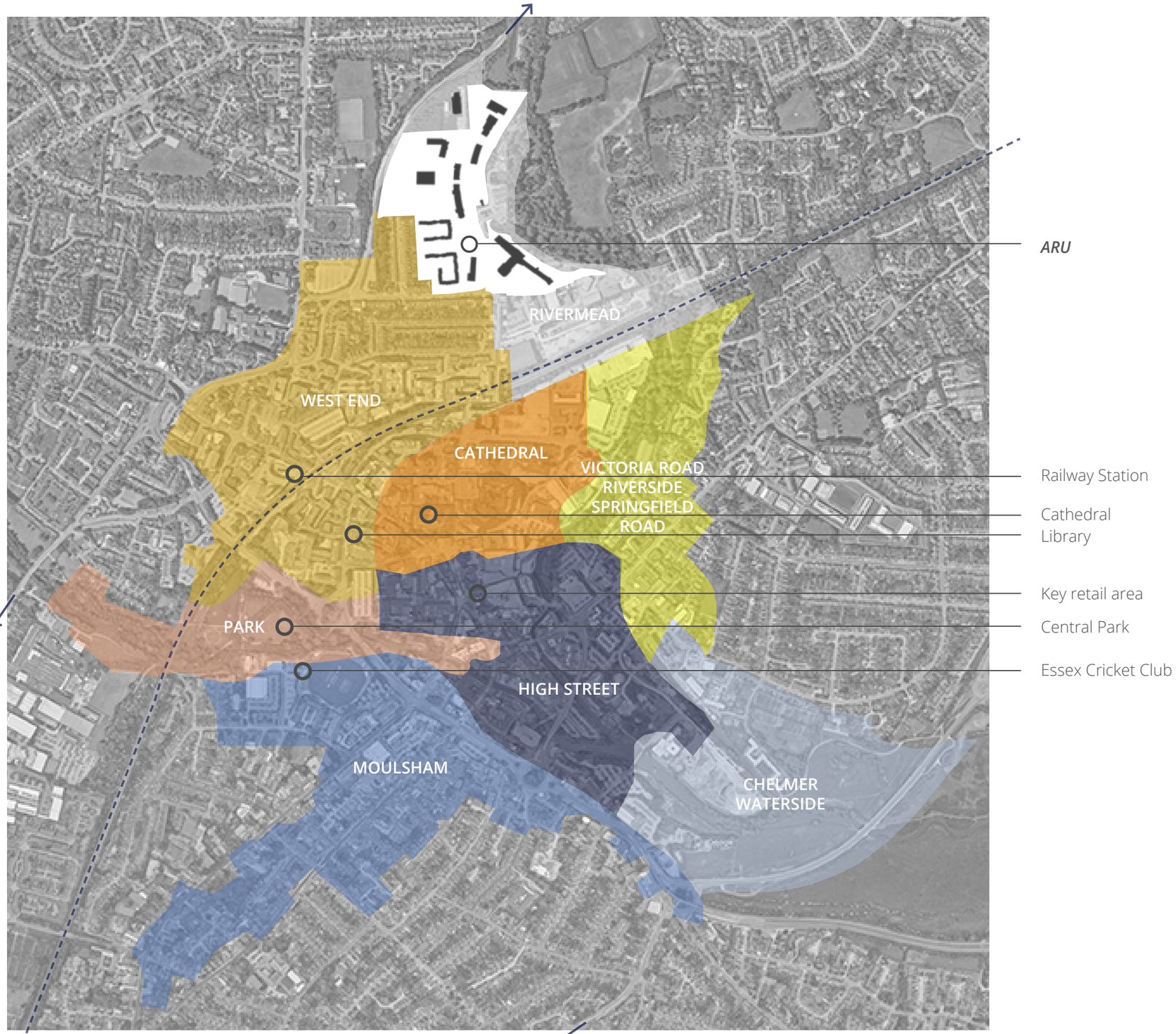
2010 William Harvey Building
by Ridge & Partners

2012 Michael Salmon Building
by Broadway Malayan

2014 Arise Building
by Emptage Architects

2018 Medical School
by Rivington Street Studio

Development time line of campus buildings



2.2 Location & Relationship to the City

ARU is situated only a short walk from the centre of Chelmsford. ARU has had a presence in the city since 1893 and moved to the current purpose-built campus in 1992.

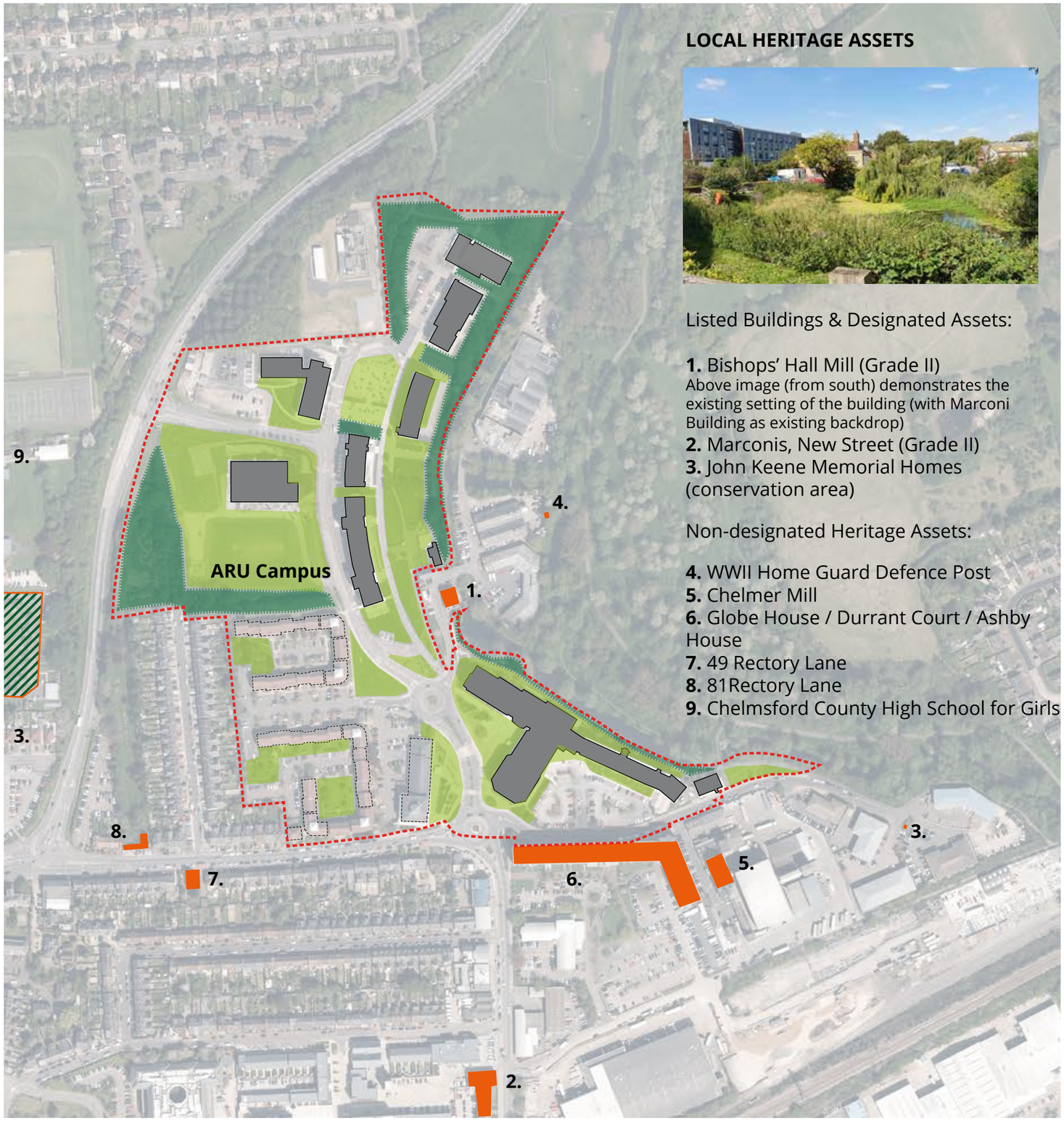
Chelmsford's (now adopted) Local Plan highlights the continued importance of the establishment to the City (through employment, skills, education and research) and policy DM22 supports the principle of expansion in the context of an agreed masterplan.

The City has identified the need to make improved connections to the campus from the City Centre - including the upgrading of cycle routes.

Staff, students and visitors to ARU contribute to the local economy through retail, leisure and accommodation. Local facilities are also important to the wider functions of the University - such as sporting events held at Chelmsford's Sports and Athletics Centre, and graduation ceremonies held at the Cathedral.

Whilst the design scope of the masterplan is limited to the land occupied by ARU, it recognises that strategies should encourage and not prevent a greater and more integrated relationship with the city and it's inhabitants.

2.3 Historical Context & Assets



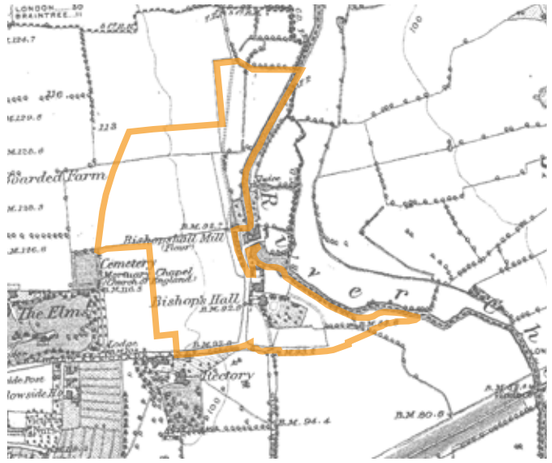
LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

Listed Buildings & Designated Assets:

1. Bishops' Hall Mill (Grade II)
Above image (from south) demonstrates the existing setting of the building (with Marconi Building as existing backdrop)
2. Marconis, New Street (Grade II)
3. John Keene Memorial Homes (conservation area)

Non-designated Heritage Assets:

4. WWII Home Guard Defence Post
5. Chelmer Mill
6. Globe House / Durrant Court / Ashby House
7. 49 Rectory Lane
8. 81Rectory Lane
9. Chelmsford County High School for Girls



1881 Ordnance Survey Map

1990 Ordnance Survey Map

Hoffman Ball Bearings Factory, 1923

Before suggesting any interventions or future strategies for a site it is important to gain a deeper understanding of not only the current characteristics but also the historical context. Often this can inform the design process, at the very least it makes more sense of decisions that may have been taken in the recent and distant past - decisions that still have a presence and impact today.

Although this area of Chelmsford is famous for the Marconi company (and the world's first commercial radio broadcast a short distance from campus) it was the Hoffman Ball Bearing factory that had the biggest human impact on the site. The firm was a key employer in the town up until its closure in the late 1980s - evident in the scale of the footprint it had expanded to by this stage.

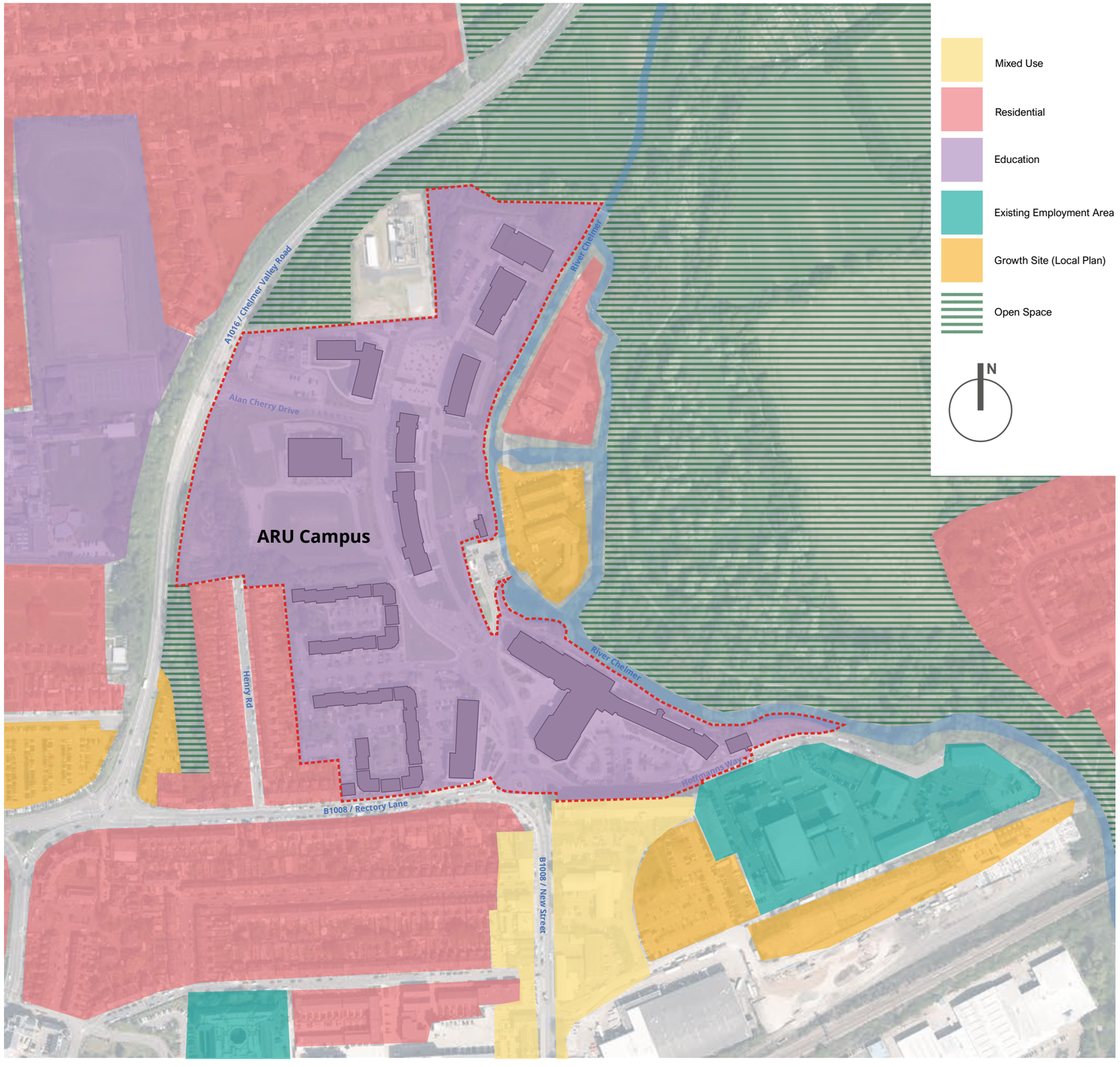
The Hoffman's factory was the location of the single greatest loss of life in the city during WWII - a V2 rocket exploded here in December 1944 (adjacent to Henry Rd).

Other significant observations from the historical mapping:

- the path of the River Chelmer has been generally consistent over the last 140 years of recorded plans.
- the consistency of open space to the east of the campus
- the previous alignment of Bishop Hall Lane possibly explains the positioning and orientation of Rivermead Gate

ARU acknowledge the importance of considering any relevant heritage assets in the wider context and would develop any future proposals in accordance with adopted policy.

2.4 Boundaries / Neighbours



The campus is bound to the east by the River Chelmer, with the Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve on the opposite bank. In between there are two “island” sites – the north is the site of a new student accommodation development, the south still contains light industrial and commercial units.

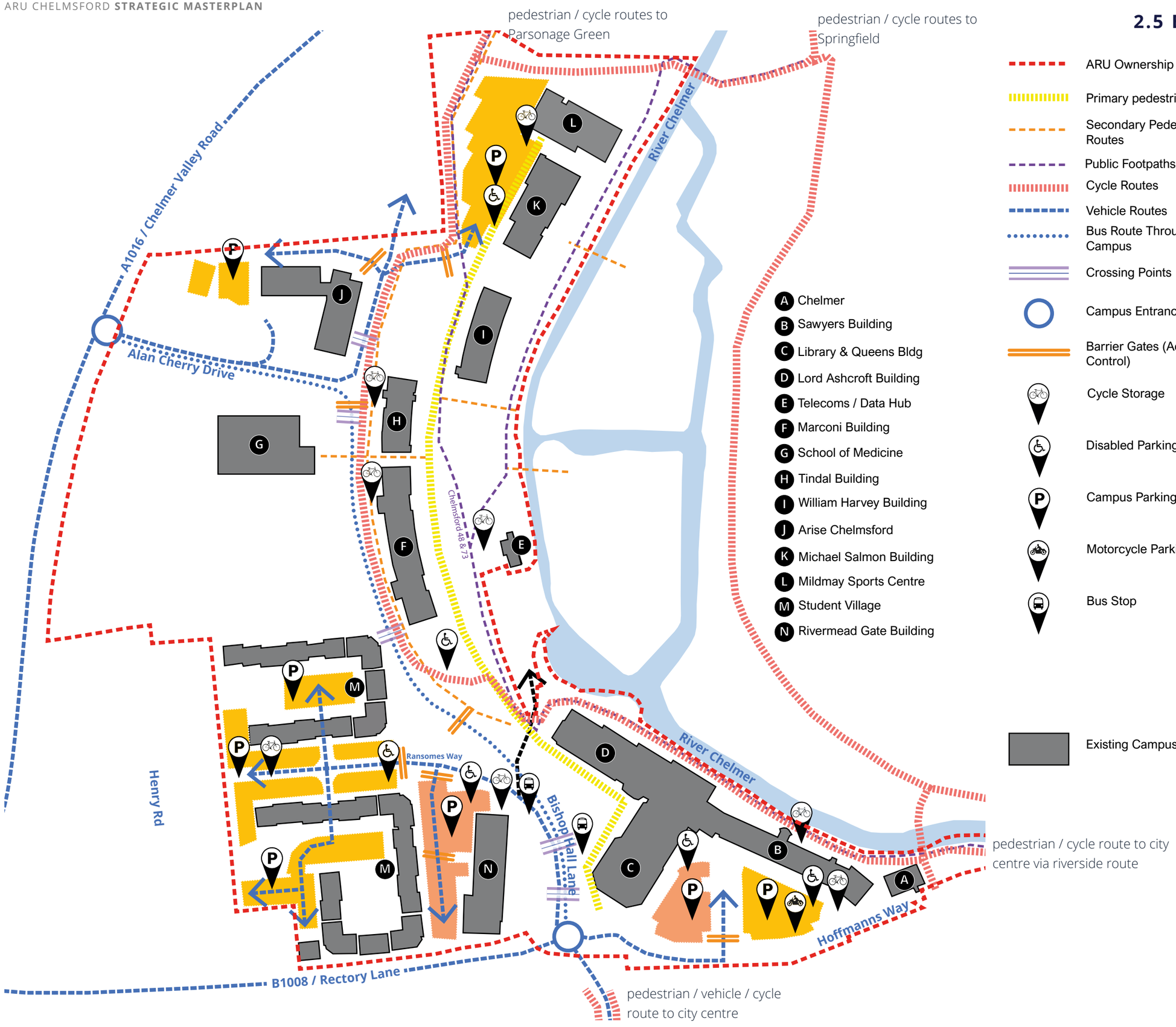
Across Hoffmans Way to the south west of the campus there are various industrial and commercial premises (including the Marriages Flour Mill), together with a mixed use conversion within Durrant Court (residential and commercial), Globe House and Ashby House.

Rectory Lane to the south is predominantly two-storey residential. To the south west Henry Road is the closest residential neighbouring street to the campus – with rear gardens that back on to the current student village.

The western boundary of the campus is dominated by Chelmer Valley Road, with significant tree cover to both sides of the carriageway.

The only northern neighbour of the campus is the large electricity infrastructure site, adjacent to meadow (river flood plain).

Henry Road



2.5 Existing Campus Movement

ARU has a Travel Management Plan in order to reduce the environmental impacts of car travel to its campuses and to support its staff and students to make more sustainable travel choices.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the Travel Management Plan they carry out annual travel surveys amongst staff and students.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic attendance and working patterns have altered significantly, with the successful introduction of more "agile working" which has enabled more staff to be based on campus (in shared workspace). As these new patterns emerge the ongoing surveys will help to capture information and identify future trends that could impact on how the campus masterplan is developed further in response.

Traffic and detailed highways analysis is not within the scope of this masterplan study, however we have noted (and listened to the campus user feedback) that there are a series of "clash points" both on the approach to campus and within the site itself.

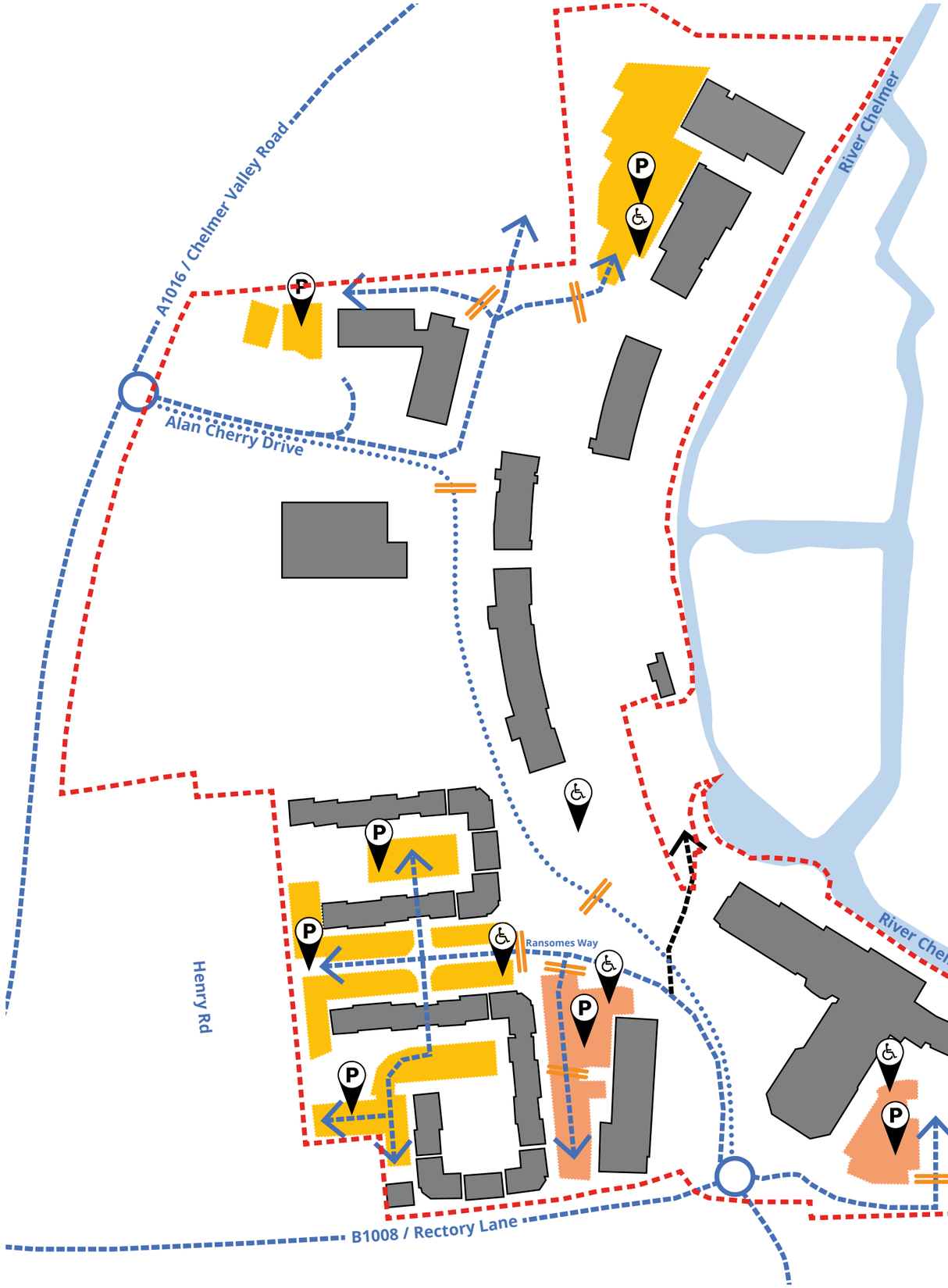
The main pedestrian/cycling approach to the campus (from the City to the south) is across a busy junction, with no controlled pedestrian crossings – a junction currently designed to prioritise vehicular road traffic over other road users.

The gateway space into the campus (between Rivermead Gate and the Library / LAB) has four lanes of traffic, and although there are some raised

2.5 Existing Campus Movement

(uncontrolled) crossing points, the space is a vehicle priority one that does not connect effectively.

A further key clash point is caused by the large roundabout that sits within the site (Ransomes Way / Bus Lane / Island site junction - see image left). The design of this has been optimised for vehicle speed and ease rather than pedestrian/cyclist safety and there are no controlled crossings that connect the gateway space to the main campus circulation spine.



2.6 Existing Campus Parking

Whilst cycle and accessible parking should be distributed across campus most general car parking is situated to the outer edge of the campus. The masterplan will seek to improve on this strategy whilst reducing the overall footprint given over to parking.

Existing parking arrangements are set out in the tables below:

Table 1: Car Parking

Car Park	Designation	Spaces (No.)	Disabled Spaces (No.)	Total Spaces
Student Village	Staff/Students/Visitors	150	9	159
Mildmay	Staff/Visitors	70	3	73
Rivermead: Shoppers car park	Short term customer parking for General public visiting Doctors surgery and shops	44	3	47
Rivermead: Tenant car park	Tenants of RMG and staff	22	1	23
Marconi	Disabled	0	3	3
Queens	Visitors	35	6	41
Sawyers	Staff/contractors	56	2	58
Med-BIC	Occupiers and Visitors of Med-BIC	51	3	54
Total (excluding Med-Bic)		**377**	**27**	**404**
Total (including Med-Bic)		**428**	**30**	**458**

Table 2: Motorbike Parking

Car Park	Total Spaces
Sawyers	11
Marconi (roundabout)	10
Total	**21**

Table 3: Cycle Parking

Location	Spaces (No.)
Sawyers	180
Telecomms	40
Mildmay	20
Salmon	8
School of Medicine	24
Tindal	22
Marconi (Spine)	10
Marconi (Roundabout)	12
Student Village	30
Rivermead	20
Med-BIC	40
Total *exluding Med-BIC)	**366**
Total (including Med-BIC)	**406**

2.7 Trees / Landscape / Biodiversity

Although the site sits adjacent to a nature reserve, there are limited existing high quality trees and habitat on the site itself. There are no trees subject to the TPO on the site, with only some examples at the eastern boundary (adjacent to the river).

Most of the remaining existing open space (outside of the main circulation spine) is a mixture of (low value for habitat) grassed areas and hardstanding.

2.8 Flood Risk & Existing Services / Utilities

Flood Zone 02

Flood Zone 03

Water

Power

Data

Existing drainage swale

The flood risk zones identified here only affect the periphery of the existing site, with topography of the campus generally falling from west to east from the highest point near Alan Cherry Drive.

Although not all buried services are shown here, the majority of significant utilities follow either the connecting north south road or the main pedestrian link.

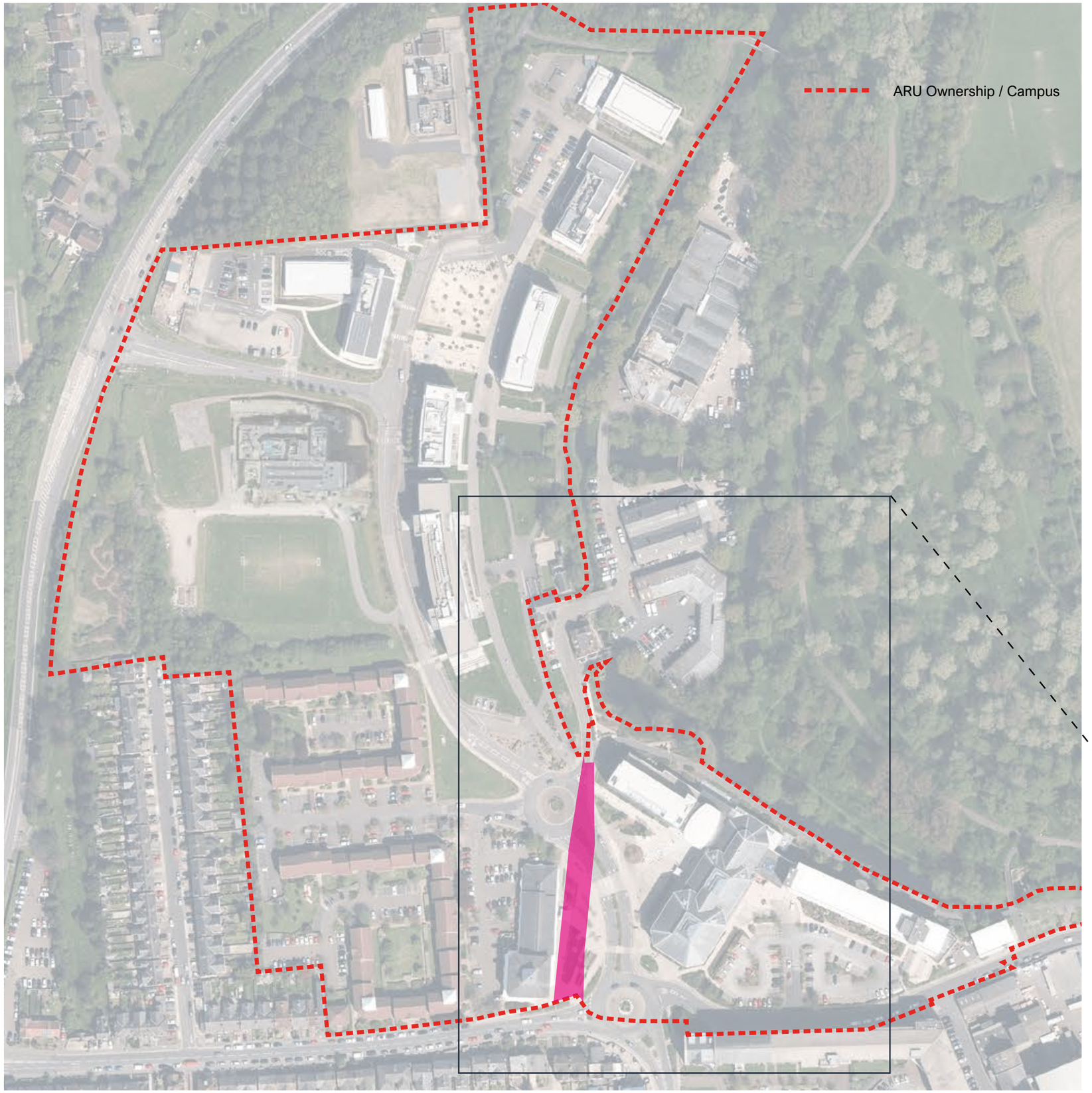
Example of existing swale (adjacent to Mildmay)

South east campus buildings adjacent to the River Chelmer

3.0 Masterplan Development

3.0 Approach to Masterplan
3.1 Building Retention / Redevelopment
3.2 Sustainability, Biodiversity & Drainage
3.3 Retention / Enhancement Open Space
3.4 Landscape Design Aspiration
3.5 Residual Development Area
3.6 Opportunities
3.7 Movement Strategy - Principles
3.8 Highways & Parking Strategy
3.9 Movement Strategy

3.0 Approach to the Masterplan



This masterplan is intended to inform future decisions on the use and adaptation of the campus - it is not a response to an immediate spatial requirement.

Using the site analysis and results of the engagement process we will demonstrate the process used in the next pages as follows:

Retain and Enhance the "Riverside" Campus

- Retain and enhance opportunities for biodiversity on and around the site and maintain the visual connection to the river and natural landscape beyond

A Spacious Campus

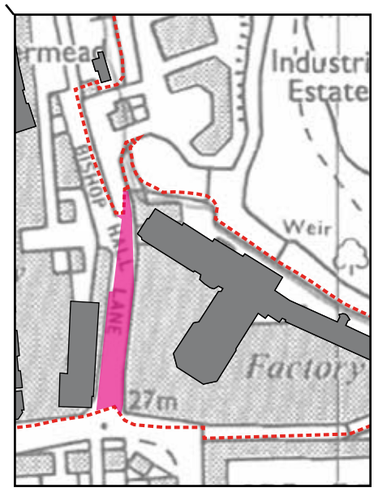
- Retain the key open spaces, and enhance to make more usable pedestrian priority landscape: the space between buildings is as important as any other development consideration

A Flexible Campus

- Creation of residual development zones that can be brought forward independently in any sequence: an essential part of the ARU brief that reflects the rapidly changing (and unpredictable) higher education sector demands.

A Connected Campus

- Restrict cars, parking and vehicle traffic to the periphery of the campus, giving full priority to pedestrian and cycle movement.
- Suggest future collaborative projects with external partners (eg Highways, Chelmsford City Council) with a shared goal of increased sustainable modes of transport and safer physical routes to and from campus to the City and wider region



1990 OS Map with current campus and adopted highway overlay.

When the campus was initially developed it was anticipated that the extent of the highway adoption would have been adjusted to reflect the newly aligned entrance road. As a consequence, the land immediately to the front of the Rivermead Gate building (highlighted pink) is still classified as adopted highway – it would be preferable if this situation is resolved to reflect the original intention.

3.1 Building Retention/Redevelopment

ARU have been developing new buildings and enhancing their existing campus buildings as a rolling programme of estate management. This masterplan recognises that some of the oldest buildings will become obsolete and no longer fit for purpose in a shorter time-frame - and irrespective of curricular demands.

Rivermead Gate currently functions as office space, medical surgery and commercial/retail units. It was one of the first buildings used by ARU. It is inflexible and dated, suffering from poor environmental performance. It also occupies the most prominent entry point to campus.

Redeveloping this plot would allow the creation of new and much improved gateway to the campus.

The existing student village does not deliver the current or future needs of the University. It is dated and of relatively poor quality, especially when compared with the offer from other competitors in Higher Education.

As well as increased expectations the changing demographic of students has and will continue to place considerable pressure on availability of on-campus accommodation. This can be a key recruitment factor for many courses - the ability to at least offer a first year place within on-campus accommodation. This is vitally important, together with the ability to offer returning (2nd and 3rd year) and international students on campus accommodation.

3.2 Sustainability, Biodiversity & Drainage

Renewable energy sources to be encourages on all new buildings and retro-fitted to existing stock, again where appropriate and feasible (during planned refurbishment)

Use of **green/wild-flower roofing systems** to new buildings where appropriate - benefits include bio-diversity, rainwater retention, reduction in heat sink effect, atmospheric improvements

Site **improvement of biodiversity**: for example new and connecting hedgerows & habitat corridors

Shift towards predominant **EV parking and charging**. Shifting vehicles to edge of campus - bicycles and pedestrians given full priority

Health and Wellbeing - Reconnecting people with nature should be a major goal of any new work, either viewed from a window or in the journeys between buildings around campus.

SUDS - flood mitigation through soft-engineering and green infrastructure improvements.

Hard-wearing and **sustainably sourced materials** to be used in all new buildings (preferably from local sources).

3.3 Retention & Enhancement: Open Space

This diagram shows how retention and enhancement of existing open space should be considered as a key priority for any future campus development. These are shown as broad areas of new and enhanced open space, together with opportunities to add to and enhance the green space on campus, that should be designed to improve the biodiversity of the site but also as a core part of how the campus can help improve the health and well-being of staff, students and visitors. The open nature of the campus was one of the key positive aspects identified by the stakeholders – the masterplan has approached the space in between buildings as equally important to the buildings themselves.

Development of the landscape architecture of the campus should have high aspirations and look to maximise opportunities and increase the design quality of the public realm alongside the future development and improvement of the building stock. The following pages demonstrate some of this thinking and how it could be applied.

3.4 Landscape Design Aspiration

Social space to allow students to gather and promote a sense of identity.

Civilised street: Shared space to reduce dominance of vehicles near the social space.

Any potential new cycle hubs should be located close to university buildings and facilities. New cycle stores will be secure, covered, and well overlooked

3.4 Landscape Design Aspiration

Trees and low level planting separate pedestrian and residential spaces from vehicular route.

Opportunities for social spaces along the way within a natural setting.

Green buffers frame routes to entrances of residential spaces

Repeated planting beds mimic repetition of buildings while softening views.

Green space extended to be used as spill-out space draw students towards existing natural surroundings.

3.5 Residual Development Areas

This diagram shows the parcels of land on campus that are the suggested remaining areas for future development once the other factors (described in the previous pages) have been taken into account.

It is noted that these areas are identified as potential sites, and do not necessarily denote building footprints. Each development project would need to be considered on its own merits but should consider how the design can integrate with the wider aspects of the masterplan and existing campus and respond accordingly to the local site constraints which will vary across the campus.

Developments within these zones would be generally be 3-5 storeys in height to reflect the scale of the existing buildings on campus and any taller buildings proposed would need to be considered against provisions of Local Plan Policy DM28 (or successor documents).

The masterplan is a long term vision for the ARU campus, as such there may be appropriate shorter term uses for development sites that could be considered, especially if proposals would not detract from the longer term vision.

One example of this is the external sports area (a MUGA) on part of the land to the west of the William Harvey Building. This provides a valuable ARU and community resource whilst redevelopment of the Mildmay Sports building (and surrounding context) is being considered. This MUGA would be relatively easy to relocate to another location and not preclude future development in the same way that a built structure might.

3.6 Opportunities

1 SPORTS & FITNESS

Enhancing the provision of the existing Mildmay Sports Centre - potential to double the amount of hall space, together with an outdoor multi-use games area.

2 COLLEGIATE SPACE

Replacing the Mediterranean Garden with more contained landscaped square - a place to become a "collegiate" focus for the existing buildings fronting onto it, together with a new teaching/research building.

3 NORTH WEST GATEWAY

Potential to expand the Medical School and other potential education buildings to meet the growing demand for specialised teaching and lecture space. Consolidation of (non-disabled) staff parking to new parking zone, keeping most of the traffic away from pedestrian and cycle zones.

4 INTERSECTION

Potential to create a new focus building to the south of Marconi - recognising the future importance of routes to the east and west. This teaching/research building could help to consolidate departmental space within Marconi by freeing up shared space.

5 UNIVERSITY SQUARE

This is the "front door" to the campus and through redesigning the public realm and highway the future campus could have a new civic space that enhances the outward facing functions in this zone. Redevelopment of Rivermead Gate would help to enclose this space, but also provide a gateway building to the campus - connecting to the city beyond.

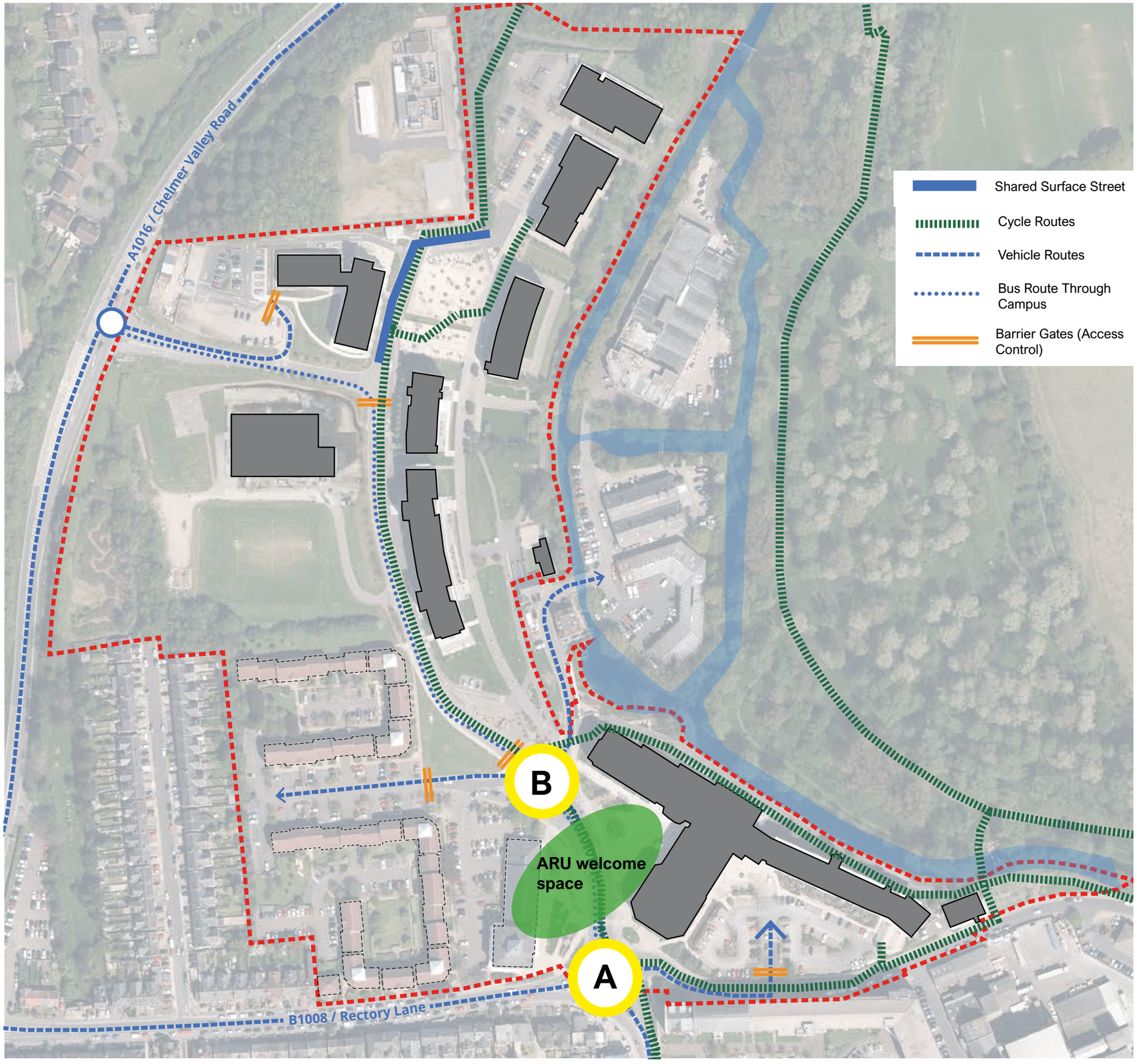
6 RESIDENTIAL ZONE

Complete redesign of the on site residences to not only increase the scale of provision but to provide a much higher standard of accommodation. The spaces between blocks would open to the campus to connect them and provide shared high quality landscaped spaces to enhance the campus experience.

7 ESTATES FACILITIES HUB

Consolidation/co-location of key campus servicing facilities.

ELEMENTS IN THE MASTERPLAN ARE INDEPENDENT AND MAY COME FORWARD IN ANY SEQUENCE IN RESPONSE TO IDENTIFIED NEEDS AT THAT TIME



3.7 Movement Strategy - Principles

Key Principles of the future Movement Strategy:

Enhancing Pedestrian & Cycling Priority

- The proposed movement strategy will enhance pedestrian priority on campus, keeping vehicular access to a minimum.
- Cycling and wheeled transport will also be placed above car travel in terms of priority, and consideration should be given to reducing speed limits in all areas.
  Any future parking strategy should recognise the advantages of keeping any parking to the north and south of the campus, freeing up the interior for pedestrian and cycle movement.
  ARU will continue to promote opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity across the campus.
  Whether any future development proposals will be associated with off-site mitigation measures for sustainable transport modes will depend on the scale and nature of the proposals, as well as the contextual circumstances at the time of determination.

Addressing Clash Points

This masterplan highlights the potential removal or adaptation of the roundabouts on site. The current road design is considered the biggest obstacle to pedestrian and cyclist safety within the campus where cars have priority over other users.

However, the delivery of this aspiration will depend on numerous factors, including third party access, cost and the ability to develop an acceptable alternative junction design. The opportunity can therefore be considered aspirational as opposed to a commitment.

It is noted that any modifications to junctions **A** and **B** would require a detailed scheme to be prepared and be subject to agreement with the local highways authority.

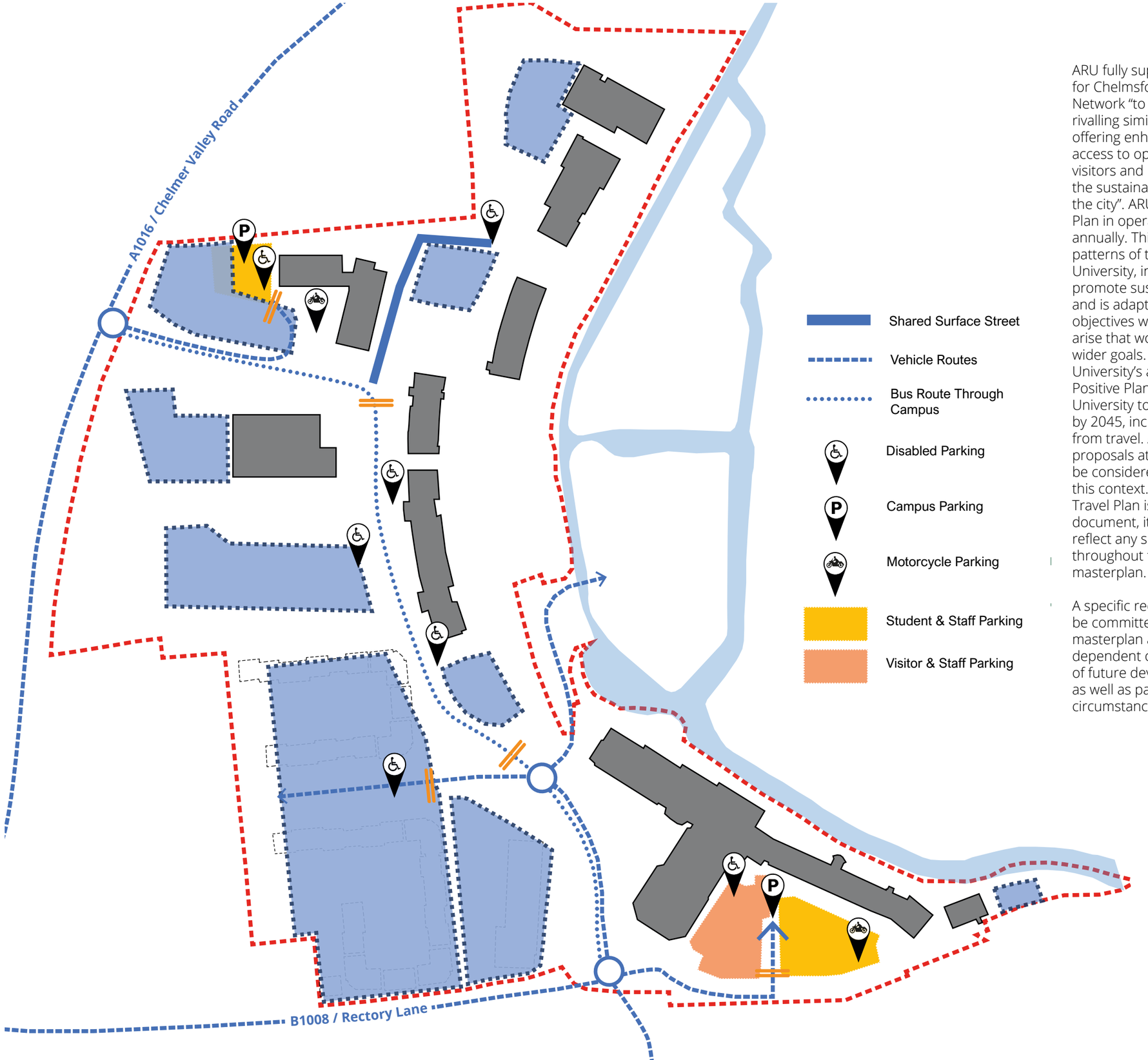
Enhancing Public Realm

- The space outside Queens and Lord Ashcroft Building is seen as the key welcome space for the campus. The future ambition within the masterplan is to visually and physically connect across the bisecting road, creating a “University Square” that will act as a front door to the University but also a connection to the City beyond. Any improvements to the highway should reference this ambition.

Travel Plan

ARU already operates a Travel Plan to help promote sustainable modes of travel and monitor means and mode of travel for both staff and students. Depending on the scale of any future scheme(s) and policy requirements at the time of determination, the Travel Plan would be updated to incorporate new development.

3.8 Highways & Parking Strategy

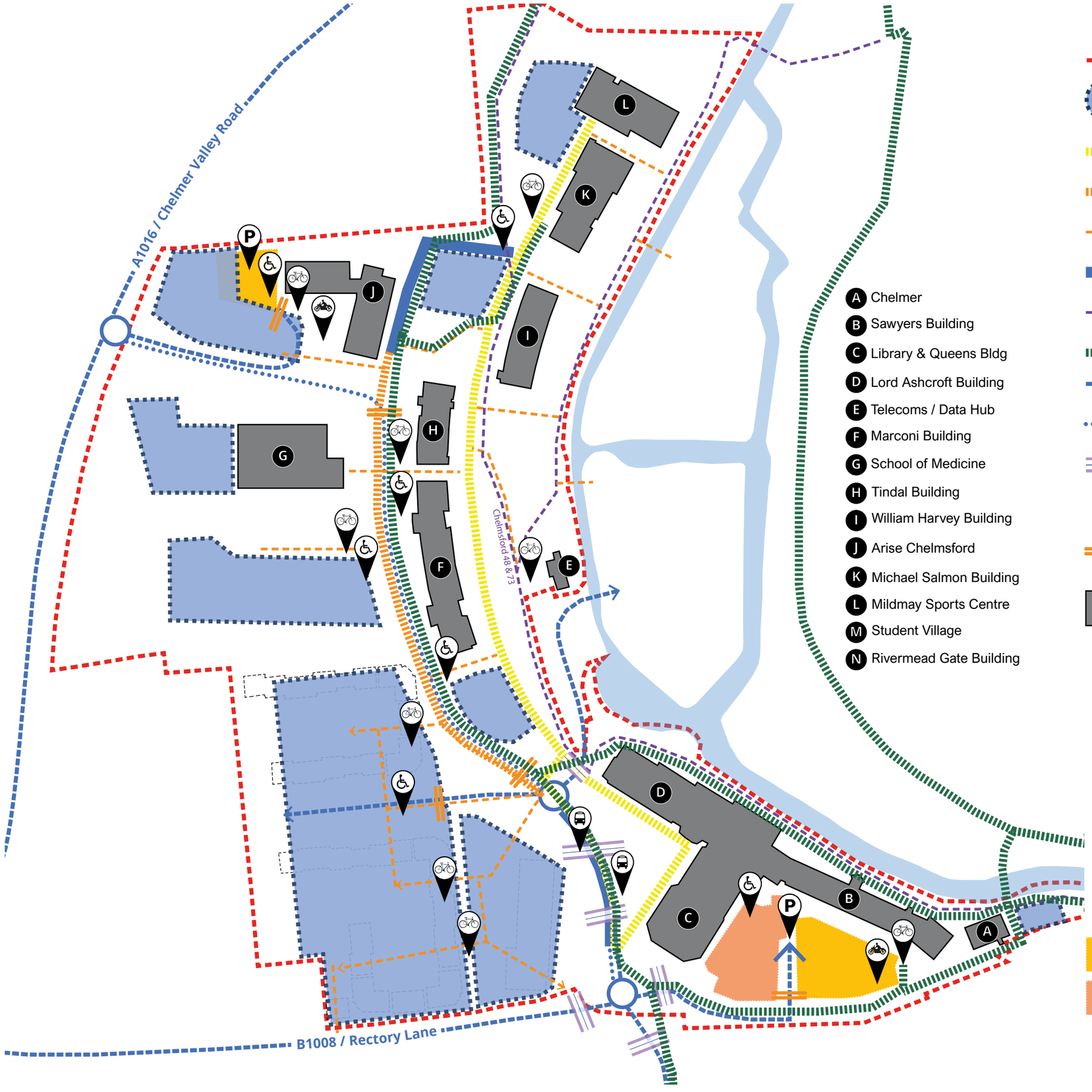


ARU fully supports the 2036 vision for Chelmsford's Future Transport Network "to become 'best in class' rivalling similar cities across the UK offering enhanced connectivity, and access to opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses to support the sustainable economic growth of the city". ARU already has a Travel Plan in operation and it is updated annually. This monitors existing patterns of travel to and from the University, includes commitments to promote sustainable modes of travel and is adapted with new Action Plan objectives wherever opportunities arise that would help support its wider goals. This aligns with the University's ambitious 'ARU Climate Positive Plan' which aims for the University to become zero carbon by 2045, including indirect emissions from travel. Any future development proposals at the campus would be considered and designed in this context. Furthermore, as the Travel Plan is an intuitive and fluid document, it can be updated to reflect any specific opportunities throughout the lifespan of the masterplan.

A specific reduction in parking cannot be committed to within this strategic masterplan as it will be heavily dependent on the scale and nature of future development proposals, as well as particular University circumstances. For instance, ARU find on-site parking for medical/nursing/paramedic students that do late night placements is imperative for their safety and wellbeing. ARU will want to ensure their future aspirations not only serve their sustainability goals but also consider the broader needs of their staff and students, which are expected to change over the lifespan of the masterplan. However, this masterplan commits to the overall promotion and support for sustainable transport modes and an overall reduction in car parks on site is expected in the medium to long term.

The Masterplan looks to enhance further the current approach to placement of car parking – by keeping clusters to the perimeter of the campus, giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movement to and within the area. Where possible in future ARU would look to replace certain surface car parks with public space and appropriate development. This could be achieved by providing undercroft parking and/or parking over more than one storey which could lead to an overall reduction in the percentage of the campus footprint being used for parking. Visitor parking could remain to the south of the campus, with appropriate provision for accessible parking distributed across campus to be close to key buildings.

3.9 Movement Strategy



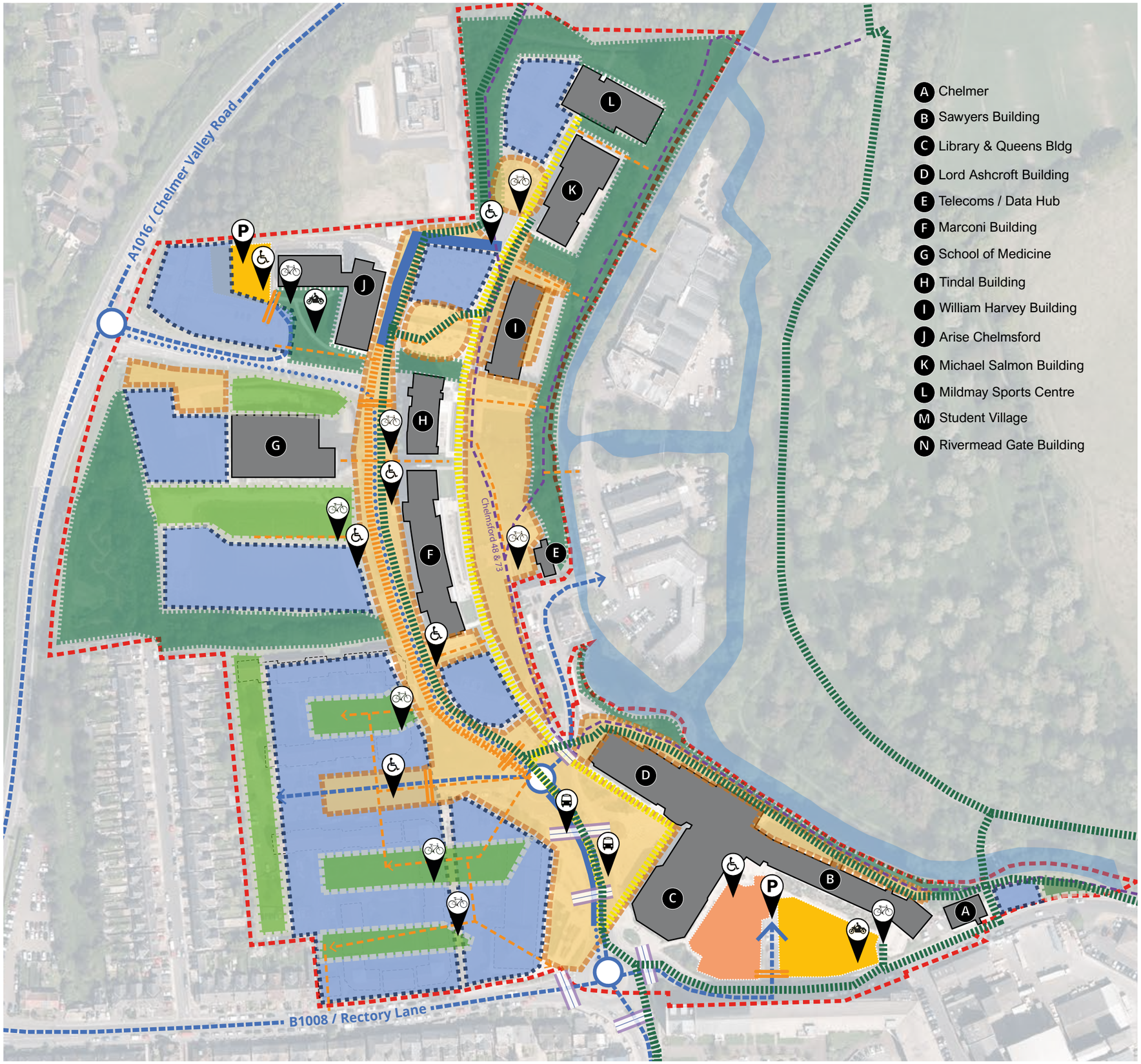
The proposed movement strategy looks to build on the desire for a pedestrian priority campus that keeps vehicular access to a minimum (the retained bus route through the campus, servicing and disabled parking/access and for those staff/ students with a justified need).

The current primary pedestrian route to the east of the main building spine is retained and enhanced, the route to the west of this spine should be enhanced – allowing for future improved connections to both the Medical School and the main areas of potential development.

Any potential new cycle hubs should be located close to university buildings and facilities. New cycle stores will be secure, covered, and well overlooked.

4.0 The Strategic Masterplan

4.0 Masterplan



Potential Development Zones

Enhanced Landscape

Enhanced Public Realm

Primary pedestrian route

Enhanced pedestrian route

Secondary Pedestrian Routes

Shared Surface Street

Public Footpaths & PRoWs

Cycle Routes

Vehicle Routes

Bus Route Through Campus

Crossing Points

Campus Entrance

Barrier Gates (Access Control)

Existing Campus Buildings

Cycle Storage

Disabled Parking

Campus Parking

Motorcycle Parking

Bus Stop

Student & Staff Parking

Visitor & Staff Parking

elliswilliams ARCHITECTS

bcal

savills

Appendix 2 – Consultation responses

Essex County Council Highway Authority

The Highway Authority have reviewed the revised masterplan document for Anglia Ruskin University, Titled - Strategic Masterplan, revision - 5.19, dated August 2024. The document sets out high level principles for the site, including related highways aspects.

The document has a section regarding the principles of the future movement strategy. The future movement strategy refers to enhancing pedestrian and cycling priority within the ARU site and off-site highway improvements for sustainable travel. The strategy also seeks to promote active and sustainable travel to the site and will continue to implement a site travel plan (students and staff), which is supported. No further vehicular parking provision is proposed on-site and new well-location and secure cycle parking is proposed.

The suggestion of alterations to the highway within the campus (in the area between the two roundabouts) will require detailed assessment and associated design work considering all highway users and should take into account any future schemes proposed by ECC, or others, in this area. Any proposed scheme, or highway alterations, would be subject to ECC agreement.

Future applications on site will likely require a transport assessment to be submitted to identify and mitigate the highway impact of the proposal.

To conclude, the Highway Authority have no adverse comments to make on the masterplan, from a highways and transportation perspective.

The Environment Agency

Flood Risk

Our map shows the site lies within fluvial Flood Zone 3, defined by the ‘Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change’ as having a high probability of flooding. To comply with national policy any future application will therefore need to pass the Sequential Test and Exception Test and be supported by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment.

We would recommend that all built development is placed outside of the Flood Zone and Flood Storage compensation is considered if any landscaping will decrease flood storage capacity.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development which aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than beforehand. It is recognised as a powerful way to deliver wider outcomes that benefit the environment, wildlife and people. BNG offers considerable scope to help create resilience places, through maximising opportunities to improve the water environment, manage flood risk and addressing climate risks.

We would like to encourage ambitious targets for Biodiversity net gain for new developments as the government target is 10% positive. We would welcome more active consideration to biodiversity and these development targets to be included in this document. We would also recommend that any new planting onsite is done using native species of local provenance to deliver the best habitat for wildlife.

Water quality and resources

Water Pollution

We suggest a policy that encourages the use of SuDS in Urban areas because water pollution can be exacerbated by run-off from urban areas. SuDS should be designed to deliver multiple environmental benefits such as flood risk and water quality management, biodiversity and landscape enhancement, and improve amenity, access and open space. Any SuDS designs will need to be in line with requirements of Ciria C753 and the SuDS Manual. This would be in line with the NPPF paragraph 174 section E and the inclusion of a policy around the use of SuDS will help protect the environment and ensure that uses of the water (such as a source of drinking water, or for amenity) can continue.

We would strongly encourage that measures be put in place to see water quality and habitats are protected for wildlife.

Water Resources and Groundwater Pressures

We encourage water efficiency measures and SuDS and consideration should be given to the stressed groundwater resources within the area. SuDS are also an effective measure with regards to Water resourcing issues. A policy should consider rainwater harvesting and infiltration should be used to aid aquifer recharge. Any policy to support this should encourage the review of groundwater quality as well as the potential river pollution.

Climate Change

We not that this is a high level document, however we would like to see reference to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. Measure should be implemented to ensure that the development will be fit for purpose for its lifetime in line with Future projections of hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters and increased storminess. This could include details such as increasing the thermal mass of building to decrease temperature sensitivity, consideration of drought resistant planting and Green/Brown Roofs.