



3

Urban Design Assessment



3.1.

Urban form



The plan to the left is a 'figure ground' plan of the Southall area. This shows that Southall is a distinct place, surrounded by open land and with the remains of the two village centres on the historic plans still recognisable on the plan. The plan is useful to explore three characteristics of the area's urban form:

The structure of development: The plan clearly shows the form of Southall and the way that it is separated from the surrounding settlements by distinct areas of open space. The more informal character of the original village centres shows up clearly particularly in Southall Green to the south of the station. Later housing development on either side of the Uxbridge Road and around Southall Green shows up as formal terraces while later suburban

development is visible because of its lower density built form and curving streets. The plan also shows up clearly the larger floorplate industrial and commercial uses along the railway.

The density of development: The plan highlights the density of building footprint and grain of development. This shows that the density of development is relatively even across the area. The centre is marginally denser as are the terraced streets. However the majority of the housing is relatively low density semi-detached housing. The grain of the area is varied in the older centre but is otherwise relatively homogeneous with large areas of housing that has clearly been developed at the same time and with little local distinctiveness.

The definition of space: Streets and public spaces that are well enclosed by buildings show up on the figure ground plan. The plans shows the importance of the Broadway and High Street through the centre of Southall as well as South Road and Lady Margaret Road. These streets are defined and enclosed by buildings which accounts for their urban character. This is also true of most of the residential development in Southall. This can be

seen by comparing the areas to the north and south of the site with the more recent suburban housing in the centre top of the plan. In the latter case it is not possible to identify the streets but in most of Southall, even the suburban housing to the south of the railway, the street network is clearly visible from the built form.

Overall Southall is a well defined urban settlement built to relatively low densities but with a consistent and well defined urban form. The Former Southall Gas Works site is a major slice cut out of Southall and dividing the Northold communities from the Glebe communities south of the railway. The development of the Former Southall Gasworks therefore has the potential to repair this tear in the urban fabric of Southall by creating a new high density focus.



3.2.

Permeability

Permeability refers to the ease with which people can move through an area by a variety of routes. Generally permeable areas are more lively and consequently safer and more able to support a range of uses. The plan to the right shows the street hierarchy of the area surrounding the site. The primary roads are shown in green with secondary streets in brown and cul-de-sacs in yellow.

At the local level the permeability of the area is reasonably good. There are relatively few yellow streets and those that exist are the result of the barriers described below rather than being designed as cul-de-sacs. Most of the local housing areas are based on an interconnected network of streets and therefore have high levels of permeability. There are however a series of significant barriers in the area particularly the railway and the canal. These barriers are only crossed by the main roads – there are only two road crossings over both the canal and railway. This means that all traffic must pass through these bottlenecks. It also creates a number of backwaters where there are no through routes particularly the western end of Beaconsfield Road, Springfield Road and the western end of Scotts Road. The Scotts Road area in particular is very cut off from local

facilities and the centre of Southall.

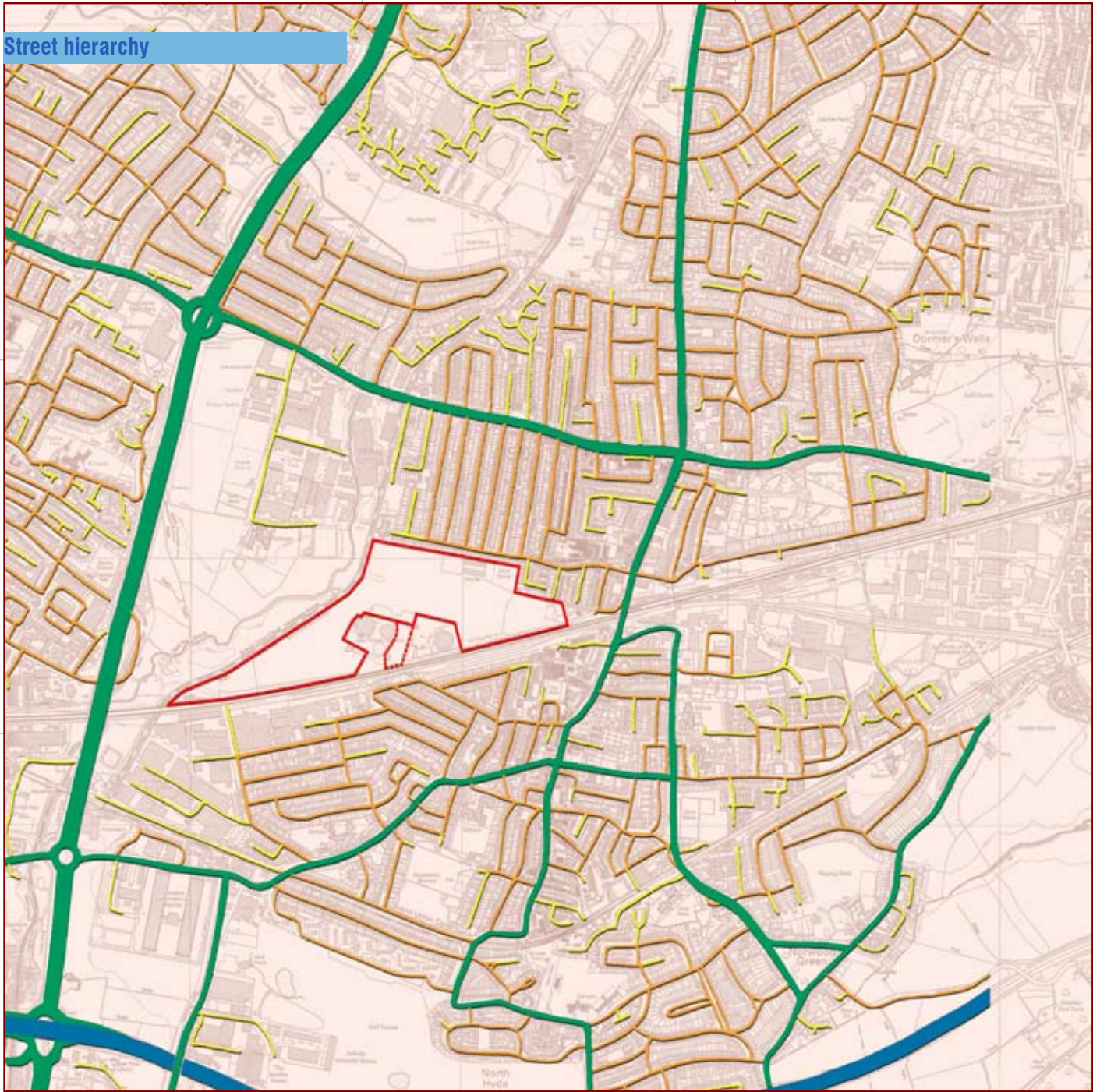
The Former Gas Works site lies between these isolated neighbourhoods and therefore has the potential to reconnect these areas and increase their permeability.

Public Realm

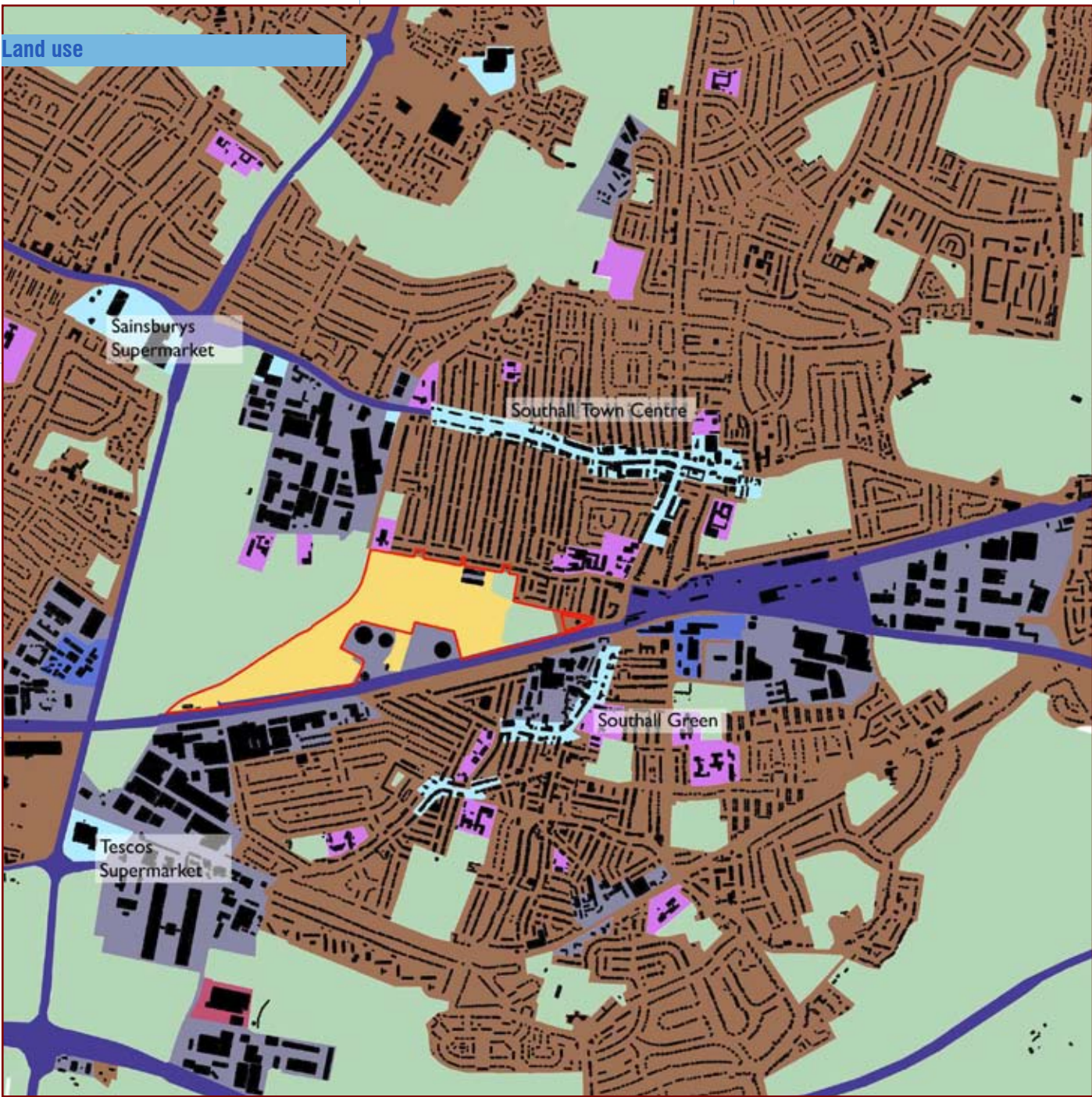
The public realm of an area is the space where the community interact. In successful urban areas there tends to be a clear distinction between public and private areas and the public realm is enclosed by well proportioned buildings. Our public realm analysis of Southall has shown that there is generally a very good distinction between public and private space because of the era in which the area was developed. Most of the housing is built on street-based, perimeter block

layouts with housing facing onto the public realm with private gardens to the rear. The exceptions to this are the industrial areas.

The quality of the public realm is however more variable. As described in the character studies, the public realm of Broadway and the High Street is well defined with a high level of urban enclosure. South Road is less well enclosed and the form breaks down around the station. The quality of the public realm is also poor in the western part of Broadway and through the Springfield Road and Hayes Bypass area. The residential areas have a reasonably coherent and well proportioned public realm. However the size of the streets and the lack of off street parking means that much of the public realm is cluttered with parked cars.



3.3. Land use



The area surrounding the site is predominantly residential in character. This is characteristic of the development pattern of much of suburban London. Retailing and public facilities are concentrated in the original village centres surrounded by residential development. The centres include extensive shopping together with leisure facilities such as a cinema, pubs and restaurants as well as office space and public facilities.

The housing was built partly as commuter housing. However it also grew up around suburban industry that can be seen clearly on the figure ground plan. This industry is concentrated around the edge of Southall in three main clusters; around the junction of the Grand Union Canal and the Paddington Branch, along Springfield Road and to the east of

Southall Town Centre. The pattern in Hayes is very similar with retailing and public facilities in the traditional village centre surrounded by more suburban housing and peripheral industrial estates.

Between Southall and Hayes and indeed to the north, south and east of Southall lie areas of open space, often metropolitan greenbelt. Very little of the development in the area is mixed use. In the centre of Southall and Hayes some property has residential and offices on the upper floors but this is limited in its scope. Nevertheless the density and mix of uses in the centre of Southall creates a sense of vitality and activity that is an important part of its character.

Southall and Hayes therefore retain their distinct identities as relatively self contained settlements. However there has been a growth of out-of-town retailing in these gaps. Most notably the Sainsbury's supermarket and associated retail park next to the Ossie Garvin Roundabout, the Tesco's supermarket south of the Bulls Bridge Roundabout and the retail units on Pump Lane.

3.4.

Townscape and heritage



A townscape and built heritage assessment of the area surrounding the site has been undertaken as illustrated on the plan to the right.

This illustrates that the built form of the area is predominantly 2 storey. Taller buildings are confined to the industrial areas and to the Southall Town Centre. Because development is relatively low, tall buildings stand out as skyline features - most notably the ridged gas holder on the site that can be seen from miles around. The new Sikh temple on Havelock Road is also a major skyline feature and, because of its gold dome, is also an important landmark.

The red stars on the plan indicate the main landmarks in the area. These include most of the skyline features but also prominent buildings such as the Himalaya Cinema, the Water Tower, the Town Hall and Library. None however create a really strong landmark for the area.

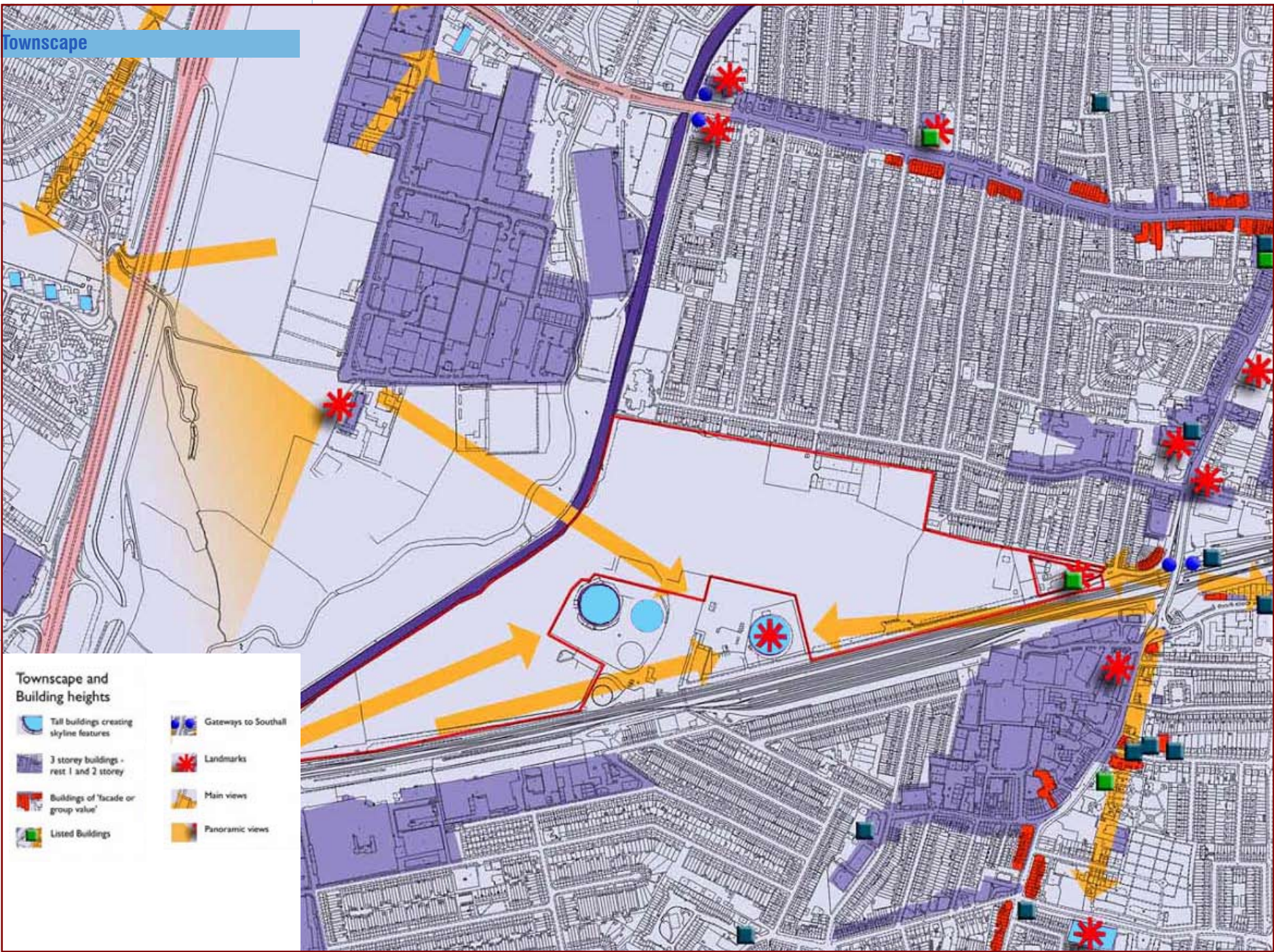
The plan also shows a series of views that exist through the area to these landmarks as well as the panoramic vista over the Minet Site. The Ealing UDP identifies the views from Southall Station bridge as being of local importance particularly the view of the temple and the water tower.

The plan also explores built

heritage. The only conservation area that affects the site is the linear area along the canal. There are also relatively few listed buildings in Southall. The most significant listed building with regard to the site is the Water Tower. The Himalaya Cinema is also listed as is the former manor house in Southall Green and two other buildings on the high street. The locks and bridges on the Grand Union Canal are also listed but the nearest to the site is Bull's Bridge and its associated cottages.

There are also a number of 'locally' listed buildings including the station and a number of buildings in Southall Green and Southall centre. The UDP also includes a designation of buildings of 'facade or group value'. This includes large parts of Broadway through the centre of Southall and King Street in Southall Green. However of greatest significance to the site is the designation of the housing on the Crescent.

Overall the townscape of the Southall area is relatively undistinguished. It should neither be a major constraint on development nor does it provide a strong starting point for the masterplanning of the site.



3.5.

Character areas



As part of the urban design analysis, character studies of the areas that surround the site have been undertaken. The following sections describe the conclusions of these studies.

Beaconsfield Road

This area is made up of a series of long terraces running south from The Broadway that terminate at Beaconsfield Road. Beaconsfield Road has a continuous frontage backing onto the Former Gas Works site. The north/south streets are 500m with no east-west links, severely limiting permeability. The character of the area is homogenous with two-storey terraced housing. There are a few small shops on Beaconsfield Road along with two schools and a college.

Margate Road

This area north of the Broadway is more recent than Beaconsfield Road area with early 20th century housing on parallel streets interspersed with cul-de-sacs. From the canal eastwards the area is entirely residential comprising terrace and semi-detached housing with two schools and a recent Temple. There is limited local public open space to serve the resident community.

West Broadway

This is the central commercial and transport spine along Uxbridge Road. Two and three storey development faces the main road. The only exception is the single-storey McDonalds together with its car park on the north side of the street. The urban character does not extend westwards of the TA Centre and Temple that form a gateway to the area. To the east the street has a continuous retail frontage, to the west two-storey housing predominates - to the north this is set back behind a frontage road. The southern side of the street is dominated by retail and industrial uses.

East Broadway

The form of West Broadway continues in a similar vein east of McDonalds up to and beyond the junction with South Road beyond which Broadway becomes High Street. The eastern part of Broadway has more three storey buildings and wider pavements accommodating more intensive street level activity, with a fresh fruit and vegetable market, trinket stalls and many restaurants and cafes. This area is a successful, lively high street made livelier by the presence of traffic.



South Road

Running south from the Broadway / High Street junction, South Road has a quite different character. The buildings are more varied in height and the street is wider creating a more open character. The street is lined with shops and restaurants along with the Himalaya Palace cinema built in a Chinese style. Other notable buildings include the Library and college. However generally the quality of the buildings is poorer and the street lacks the bustle of Broadway.

Southall Park (to the east of the plan)

South of High Street is Southall Park. This is a mature landscape enclosed by large detached houses to the east. To the south the park is bordered by back gardens and to the west by Hamborough school and is an attractive green space.

Southall Station

The station is built over the tracks with the main entrance on the South Road Bridge. Extensive sidings and warehouses create a buffer between the station and the housing on both sides. The Glassy Junction pub, civic buildings and Temple create some street activity but the area lacks urban form and a focal point.

Havelock Road

To the south of the station, South Road becomes The Green with a small cluster of short streets in what was Southall Green village centre which includes Havelock Cemetery, the War Memorial and Hospital. A parade of shops faces the Green and the housing is mostly terraced. To the west is the Featherstone industrial estate including warehouses and food processing in a triangle between the railway and the Scotts Road housing. The area includes three places of worship including the new Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Temple - the largest in Europe.

Scotts Rd and Brent Park Estate

The area between the railway and Western Road is laid out in an irregular pattern with streets of terraced and semi-detached houses. A number of industrial units back onto the railway line which link up with the Brent Park Industrial Estate to the west. The area has little intrinsic character.

Springfield Road Estate

A series of commercial and industrial premises south of Uxbridge Road and backing onto the canal. The Minet Country Park lies to the west with the Guru Nanak Sikh college and the

Yeading football club. This area is something of a backwater and has little character.

Canal

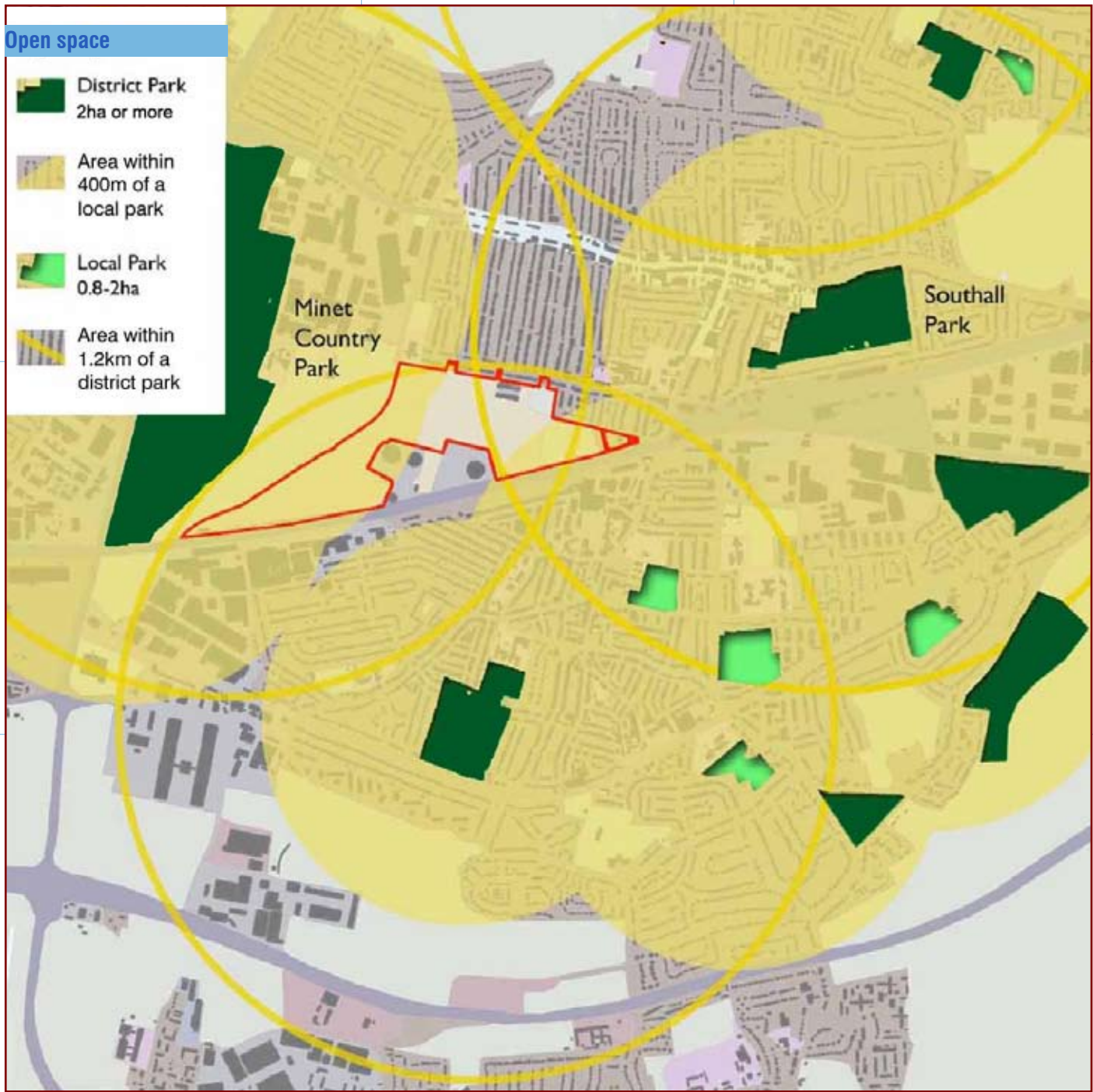
The canal has a continuous tow-path on the south side with mature vegetation. The canal has very little of the built heritage that one might expect along an urban canal.

The character of Southall is that of an urban village with medium density housing around the urban centre. However few of the areas have a strong character of their own and there is real potential for the former Southall Gas Works site to create a new and distinctive identity for the area.



3.6.

Open space



The plan to the left show open spaces within reach of the Site. Despite the proximity of large areas of open space in the Yeading Valley, the area is generally poorly served by open space and facilities for recreation. The Ealing UDP sets out a hierarchy of open space the following elements of which are relevant to the Former Southall Gas Works site:

Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt: The Minet Country Park falls into this category and while it is in Hillingdon, the Ealing UDP sees it as playing a role in addressing the open space deficiency of the Southall area and to this end seeks a link to the country park from the former Southall Gas Works site.

Local and district parks: Park areas of more than 2ha. District parks such as Southall Park, are to be within 1.2km of every home and local parks within 400m. The Ealing UDP also designates the recreation ground next to Featherstone School as a local park and also accepts that the Minet Country Park will play local and district park functions.

Small Local Parks: These are to be within 400m of every home. The nearest local park to the site is the 'Green' in the centre of Southall Green.

The plan to the left shows that all of the site falls within 1.2km of a district park. However the central part of the site is currently more than 400m from a park and therefore outside the UDP guidelines. As a result both the site and much of the housing area to the north and south falls within an area of deficiency for local parks. The UDP makes reference to the inclusion of a local park in the Former Southall Gas Works site. The UDP also indicates a link through the former Southall Gas Works site to connect the residential areas south of the railway to the Minet Country Park so overcoming their district plan deficiency. The UDP also includes:

Green corridors: The designation of a series of corridors link together open spaces for both people and wildlife. Both the railway line and the canal are designated as green

corridors.

Community open space: The areas around the site have very little local open space. The only local play areas are at the end of Dudley Road south of the railway line, and on The Crescent. In addition to the requirements for proximity to parks, the UDP sets out NPFA standards for open space. This indicates 0.2ha per 1,000 people for play grounds, and 0.4 - 0.6 ha per 1,000 people for informal play.