

Growing together_a productive Framework

Re-Imagining The Garden City

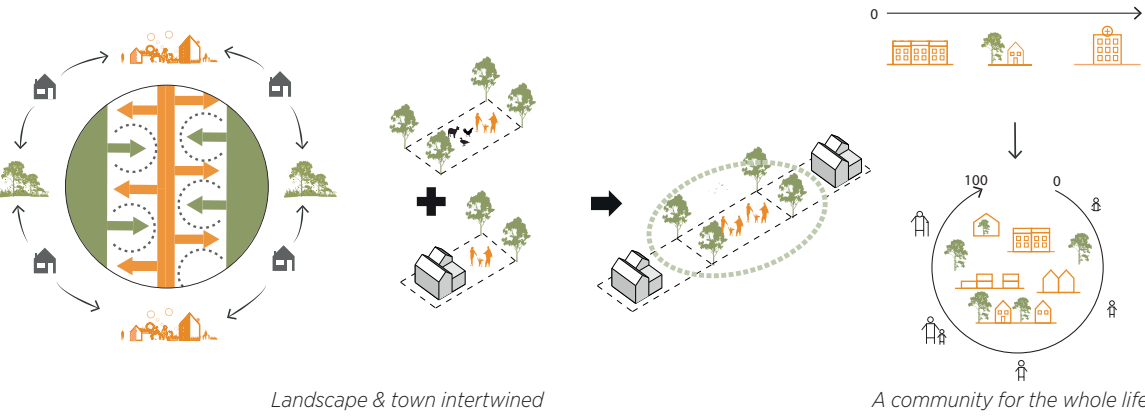
The Close Connection

In the spirit of the original Garden City our proposed masterplan hopes to plant the seed for the social interaction that creates a healthy and socially sustainable community where people care for one another and for the landscape. The vision is to create a framework which incentivises future residents towards an environmental and social way of life.

A neighbourhood or village should offer room for diversity, where the individual can live life in safety and in close connection with the landscape. We do not propose a neighbourhood which closes in on itself and becomes introverted, but a place which naturally fits into the environment and context in which it is situated, participating in and contributing to the life that already exists in the area and inviting it in.

The proposed framework will create an inclusive neighbourhood, which consists of a wide range of housing types and activities and programs for residents of all ages, incomes and states of health. The scheme aspires to a holistic living arrangement, where residents can stay and be the co-creator of a rich social life for all, coming together to create a binding, pleasurable and incentive driven community.

Recognising the human needs for community and sense of belonging, the masterplan is developed from the inside out; from the smallest residential scale to the larger hamlet scale, ensuring that local unity is always achieved.



The Social Connection

As humans we are concerned with our immediate surroundings – that our children are thriving, that we feel safe and that we have a sense of belonging. These key considerations were addressed by Unwin and Parker in the development of the original vision for the Garden City and are expressed in the idea of the hamlet.

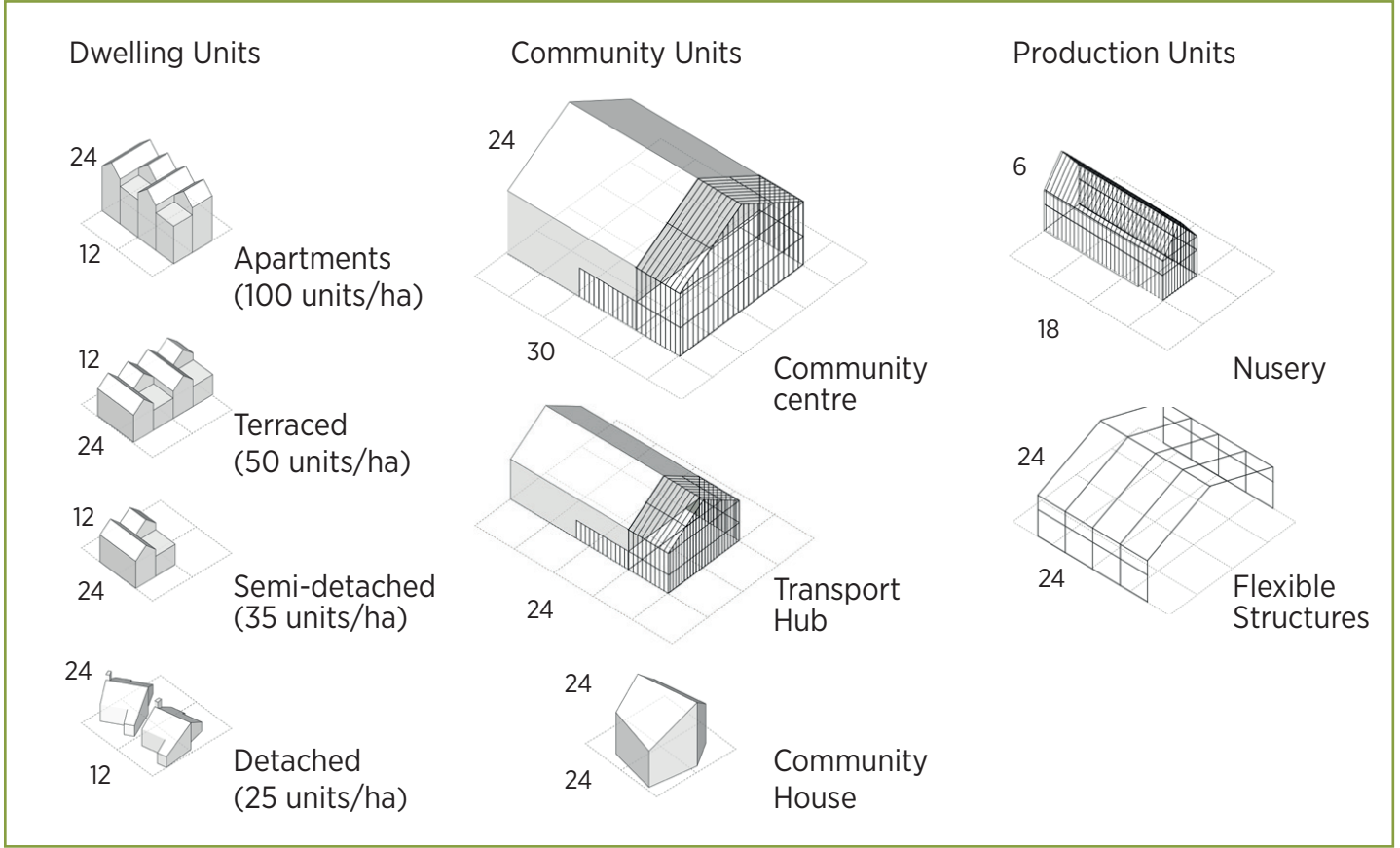


Landscape as the Catalyst

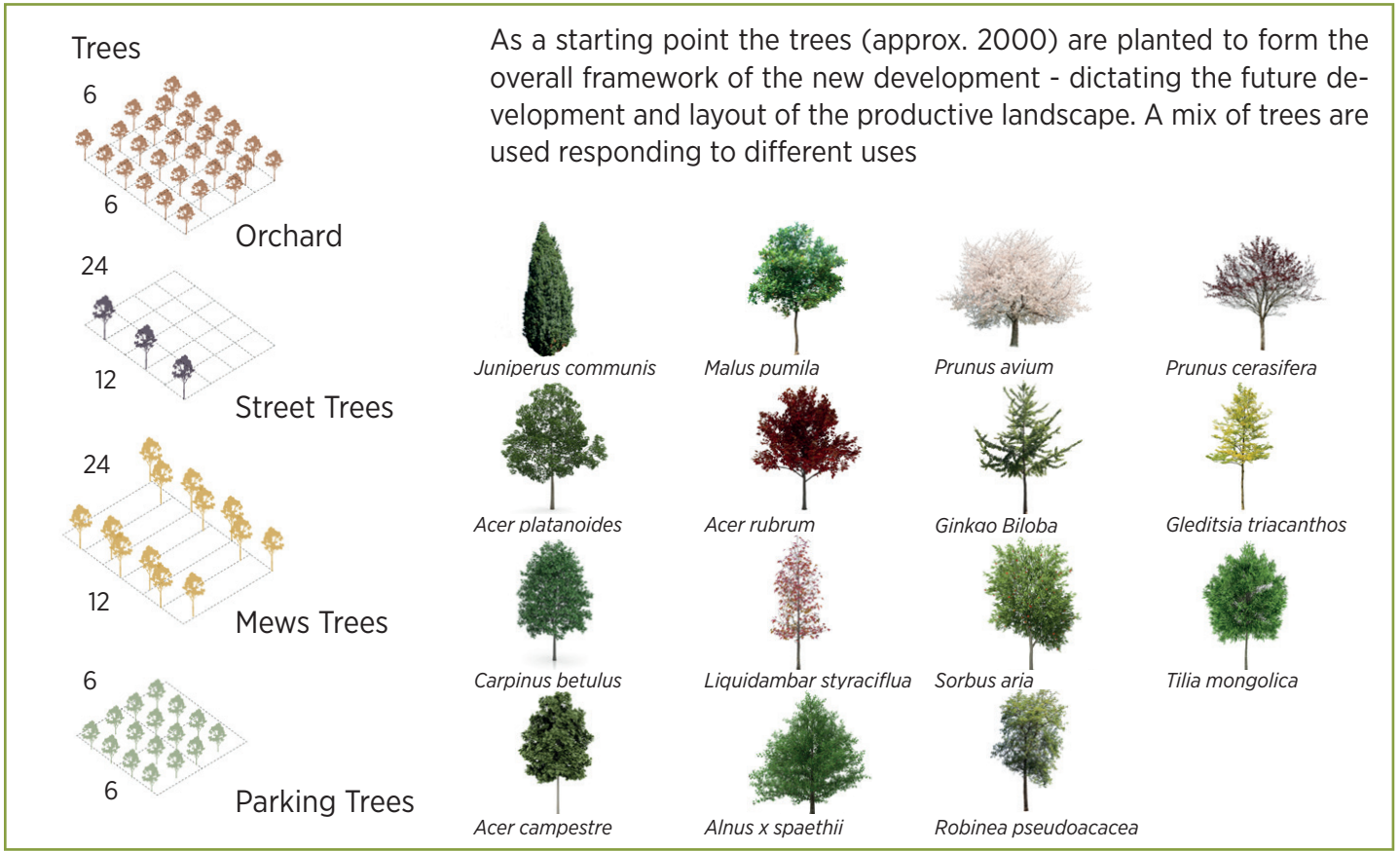
Landscape is a key catalyst for the masterplan and has informed all strategic design decisions. The vision is to create a framework based on the landscape (existing & new) which will allow a strong community to grow together over time.

Each hamlet has an individual identity underlined by the strong character of the local landscape. At the centre of each hamlet is a communal garden (common) based on an agroforestry system with a focus on urban food production. This acknowledges the importance - for children especially - of access to high-quality open and green space - for exploring, play, physical activity and contact with nature.

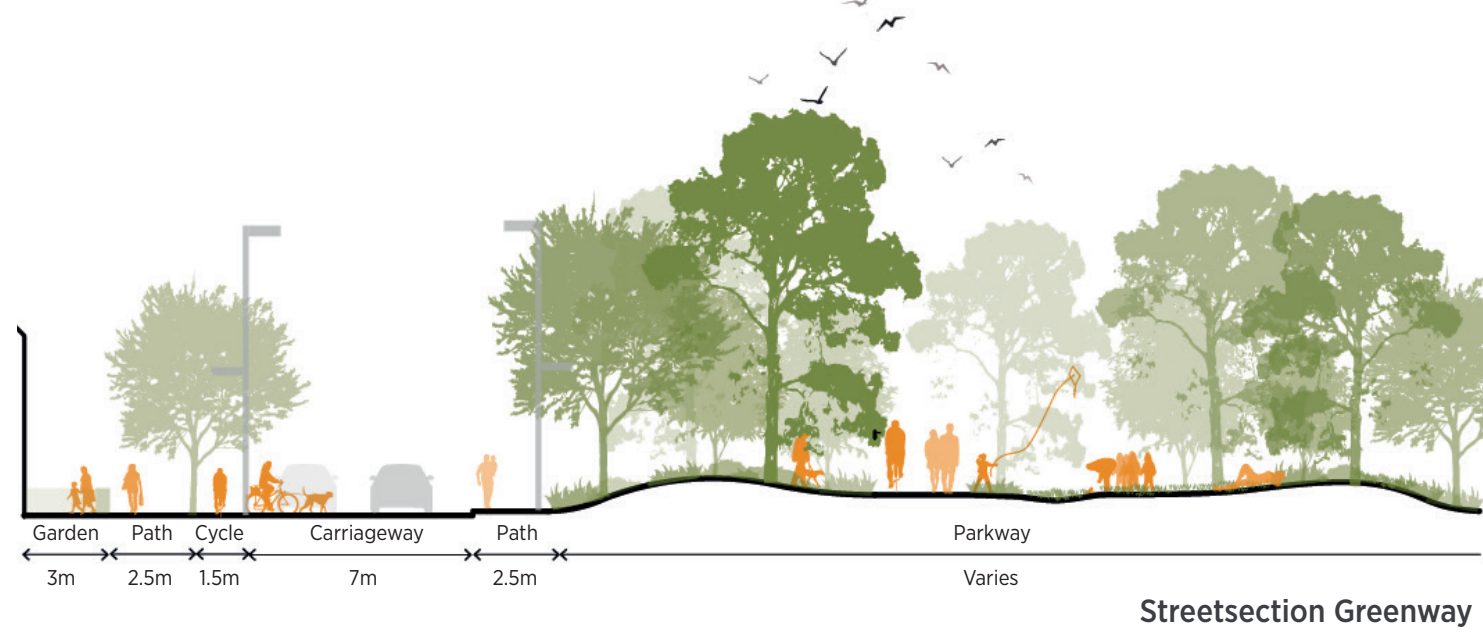
A wild landscape surrounds the masterplan, providing shelter from noise and wind whilst enhancing the sense of enclosure and biodiversity. The new parkway takes advantage of the existing hedgerows and connects the site to Letchworth Garden City, providing different activities along the way.



The Framework - Elements



The Framework - The New Trees



Growing a neighbourhood

Structure & Delivery model

Plot based Masterplanning

We are intrigued by the word 'plot', that can refer to an allotment or to a site to build a house. The dual meaning of the word goes back to the very origins of villages and towns as structures of agricultural plots incorporated into the structure of a settlement. Our masterplan seeks to replicate this process. The idea is to create a plot structure across the whole site and to allow the neighbourhood to grow within this frame. The structure of the masterplan is based on a series of hamlets laid out along an avenue with densities rising towards the avenue and decreasing towards the edge of the site. Each hamlet will have a different character, both in terms of its materials and design and also the form and species of planting. Each hamlet is made up of three fields and these are further divided into plots that will initially be used for food production. The paths between the fields will be lined with fruit trees and will eventually become streets.

A grid is based on multiples of 6m with the standard plot dimension as 12m wide by 24m deep. Fields will be two to four plots deep and three fields will form a hamlet. As the development advances it will do so at four different densities:

- Detached (25 units/ha)
- Semi-detached (35 units/ha)
- Terraced (50 units/ha)
- Apartments (100 units/ha)

Each plot within a hamlet would be subject to a simple plot passport. This will set out what can be built on the plot and what it can be used for. It will include the position and height of the home, parking arrangements and future use.

Delivery Model

This plot-based approach is not predicated on self-build, but is appropriate for all forms of housing development such that some plots would be developed by individuals, via custom build. Others would involve small scale developers and housing associations and yet more could involve a volume house builder. This would include 40% of the plots that would be delivered as social housing. All plots would be required to work within the plot structure and follow the plot passport rules.

The development will be coordinated by a master builder. This could be the Letchworth Trust or a private master developer. The master developer would be responsible for laying-out the initial grid, for putting in services and roads, planting the trees and managing the agricultural use. The cost of this would be recouped from plot sales. The freehold would be retained and passed on to a community trust which would become responsible for the long term management of the area and the control of future development.

