

BGY

Avonside

DESIGN NOTE 03-11-25

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Avonside

1.0 Introduction

Introduction

1.01 Purpose of Report

This Design Note has been prepared by Buckley Gray Yeoman, This is being submitted on behalf of the client, Create Real Estate. to accompany the Planning Application for Avonside, Melksham, Wiltshire.

This Design Note should be read in conjunction with:

- Completed application forms and Certificates
- Red Line Location Plan & Application Drawings - **Buckley Gray Yeoman**
- Planning Statement - **Turley**
- Flood Risk Assessment - **SLR Consulting**
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment - **Delva Patman Redler**
- Transport Assessment - **Connect Consultants**
- Noise Assessment - **Ion Acoustics**
- Contamination Assessment - **Tweedie Evans Consulting**

Introduction

Create Real Estate completed the phased acquisition of Avonside Enterprise Park (‘Avonside’) in August 2022 (having purchased the first two buildings in July 2019). It has brought the estate into single ownership. Create has worked with occupiers, undergone significant marketing and invested in improving the buildings and spaces on site. This has included re-decoration of external buildings facades, improved maintenance and alterations to commercial spaces to best suit existing and prospective new tenant occupiers at the site.

The investment made by Create Real Estate to date include:

- The redecoration of external facades to improve the appearance of the estate as a cohesive and attractive destination in Melksham.
- The refurbishment of a circa 3,000 sq ft space on the second floor of Block A to accommodate a cyber security business as a new occupier on the estate.
- The refurbishment of a circa 3,000 sq ft space on the first floor of Block A to secure occupation by a financial services business.

Refurbishment of building 3 – 6,000 sq ft

Avonside has a diverse range of active commercial and employment generating uses. These fall largely into Use Class E as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. They also include some falling into a class of their own (sui generis). The range of uses continues to evolve at the site, including in response to the investment by Create Real Estate. The active uses are predominantly focused on the ground floor level of the estate. The careful curation and investment by the owner to date has ensued a range of complementary, public facing independent businesses (falling into Use Class E) that adds diversity and amenity to this edge-of-centre site. Doubles – Coffee shop and pizza restaurant, Milk Town Brewery and tap room, Ten Hides Distillery and Mini Movers play café are notable success stories.

Create Real Estate has consulted with its occupiers, agents in the market and Melksham Town Council in the years since August 2022. It participated in the preparation of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. Feedback received during this consultation has reflected positively on the estate and its:

- Prominent edge-of-centre location of the site.
- Status as an important mixed-use destination in Melksham.
- Heritage significance of local importance associated with the buildings and stack fronting Bath Road.
- Contribution to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre and wider settlement.

The feedback highlighted the opportunity to build positively on this contribution through continued investment in the buildings and spaces at the estate. Stakeholders wanted to see the retention of the focus on commercial and employment generating uses at the heart of the estate. This focus should be complemented by a continued diversification in the mix of uses, particularly on upper floors. Residential uses that introduce greater activity at the site and improved footfall throughout the day in this edge-of-centre location between the town centre and railway station was actively supported.

A combination of this feedback and experience of the market in seeking (and successfully attracting) to attract new occupiers to the estate in recent years has informed the Create Real Estate vision for Avonside. The opportunity for the significant planned investment is balanced with pragmatism in the face of the market conditions. This balance has resulted in the plan for a phased implementation of the planned investment to deliver the vision in the coming years. Sequential investment on a priority basis will best build on the successful investments in improving the estate to date.

Introduction

The proposal and this sequential approach to investment will underpin the commercial and employment generating core of the estate. It will improve existing ground floor commercial spaces to better suit the needs of existing occupiers and maximise the prospects of attracting new entrants into the estate, and the town. The focus here is improved spaces, interaction with the external spaces and a high quality hard and soft landscaping scheme that will transform the attractiveness of the estate and its contribution to this important edge-of-centre destination.

The reality is that large areas of the upper floors of the estate are longstanding vacancy. It has not been viable to bring these spaces back into active occupation despite active marketing and investment by Create Real Estate since August 2022. These vacant upper floor spaces will continue to decline without a step change in investment and approach. In turn, this will undermine ongoing investment and planned activity across the wider estate. Ultimately, this position will limit the scope for investment and regeneration of the estate.

The vacant upper floor areas offer the opportunity for the major enhancement and regeneration of the estate without any loss in its core commercial and employment generating function. They are the opportunity for a step change in investment to deliver a greater diversification in the mixed-use site. The planned introduction of residential uses on upper floors will delivery this step change in a direction welcomed in the local feedback received to date and towards greater activity and footfall at the site and into the town centre throughout the day.

The phase of planned investment to introduce a mix of high-quality residential accommodation on upper floors will complement the core commercial and employment generating function. Parking provision will be rationalised to service the new mixed-use operation of the site. Obsolete buildings will be demolished and external elevations upgraded as part of a carefully considered design focus including new hard and soft landscaping to positively transform the appearance of the site.

The phased and pragmatic approach will regenerate Avonside in a resilient, carefully considered, and comprehensive manner. It will build on the enhancements already delivered in continuing the progress towards re-establishing Avonside as a landmark location for Melksham, its town centre and the local community. Avonside will become a hugely improved mixed use asset with a significantly enhanced public realm at an established and prominent destination in the heart of Melksham. The regenerated estate will make fantastic contribution to the town.

The proposals to achieve this phased regeneration are the subject of the following planning application being submitted for determination by Wiltshire Council:

- Planning application 1 – Change of use from sui generis to residential (Use Class C3).
- Planning application 2 – Prior approval for change of use from Class E to residential (Use Class C3).
- Planning application 3 – Full planning application for external alterations, including hard and soft landscaping works.
- Planning application 4 – Prior notification of demolition for proposed selective demolition on site.
- Advertisement consent application – new signage for the ground floor commercial units.

The applications should be read and considered together. This Design Note presents a detailed analysis of the proposed design, including in response to the constraints and opportunities of the site and its surrounding context.

Introduction

1.02 Consultant Team

	Client CREATE REAL ESTATE 60 CHARLOTTE STREET LONDON W1T 2NU		Daylight and Sunlight DELVA PATMAN REDLER 40 BERKELEY SQUARE BRISTOL BS8 1HP		Landscape Architects GREENHALGH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS 7 SYDNEY WHARF BATH, BA2 4EF
	Architect BUCKLEY GRAY YEOMAN 56 SHOREDITCH HIGH STREET LONDON E1 6JJ		Transport & Waste Consultant CONNECT CONSULTANTS 78 BROAD STREET, CHIPPING SODBURY, BRISTOL, BS37 6AG		Geotech TEC THE OLD CHAPEL, 35A SOUTHOVER WELLS, BA5 1UH
	Planning Consultant TURLEY 40 QUEEN SQUARE , BRISTOL BS1 4QP		Flood Risk Consultant SLR CONSULTING 3RD FLOOR, BREW HOUSE, JACOB STREET, TOWER HILL, BRISTOL, BS2 0EQ		Ion Acoustics ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT GEORGES HOUSE, 9-10 BATH STREET, REDCLIFFE BRISTOL, BS1 6HL
	Wildwood Ecology ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT SUITE 1, GROUND FLOOR, MILL, BUILDING BRIMSCOMBE MILL, BUSINESS PARK, BRIMSCOMBE, STROUD GL5 2QG				

Introduction

1.03 Vision & Brief

Our vision is closely aligned with the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out to make Melksham and Melksham Without great places to live, work, play, and visit – attractive, sustainable, and well-connected through walking, cycling, and public transport.

In the spirit of this vision, we aim to remodel and optimise Avonside to foster a sense of community, making the most of its prime riverside location beside the River Avon. It will be a space where residents and businesses can thrive together, contributing to the town's future while respecting its character.

Introduction



1.04 How we achieve this

- ❑ Deliver high-quality apartments with generous natural light, well-considered layouts, and compliance with NDSS as a minimum standard.
- ❑ Create a shared, sustainable external space that encourages community interaction, and enhances local biodiversity.
- ❑ Enhance and repurpose the existing building through sensitive design interventions and material choices that reflect Melksham's industrial heritage.
- ❑ Prioritise sustainability by retaining the existing structure, incorporating air source heat pumps, photovoltaics, and diverse planting strategies.
- ❑ Introduce valuable amenities such as cycle storage, communal outdoor areas, cafés, and flexible commercial units to support a range of businesses.
- ❑ Regenerate an underused site into a vibrant, inclusive, and future-proof mixed-use development that adds long-term value to the local area.

Avonside

2.0 **Project Context**

Project Context

2.01 Site Location

The site is located in the heart of the market town of Melksham, nestled in the picturesque countryside of Wiltshire. It boasts excellent public transport links to Chippenham, Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon, Devizes, Westbury, Bath, and Bristol.

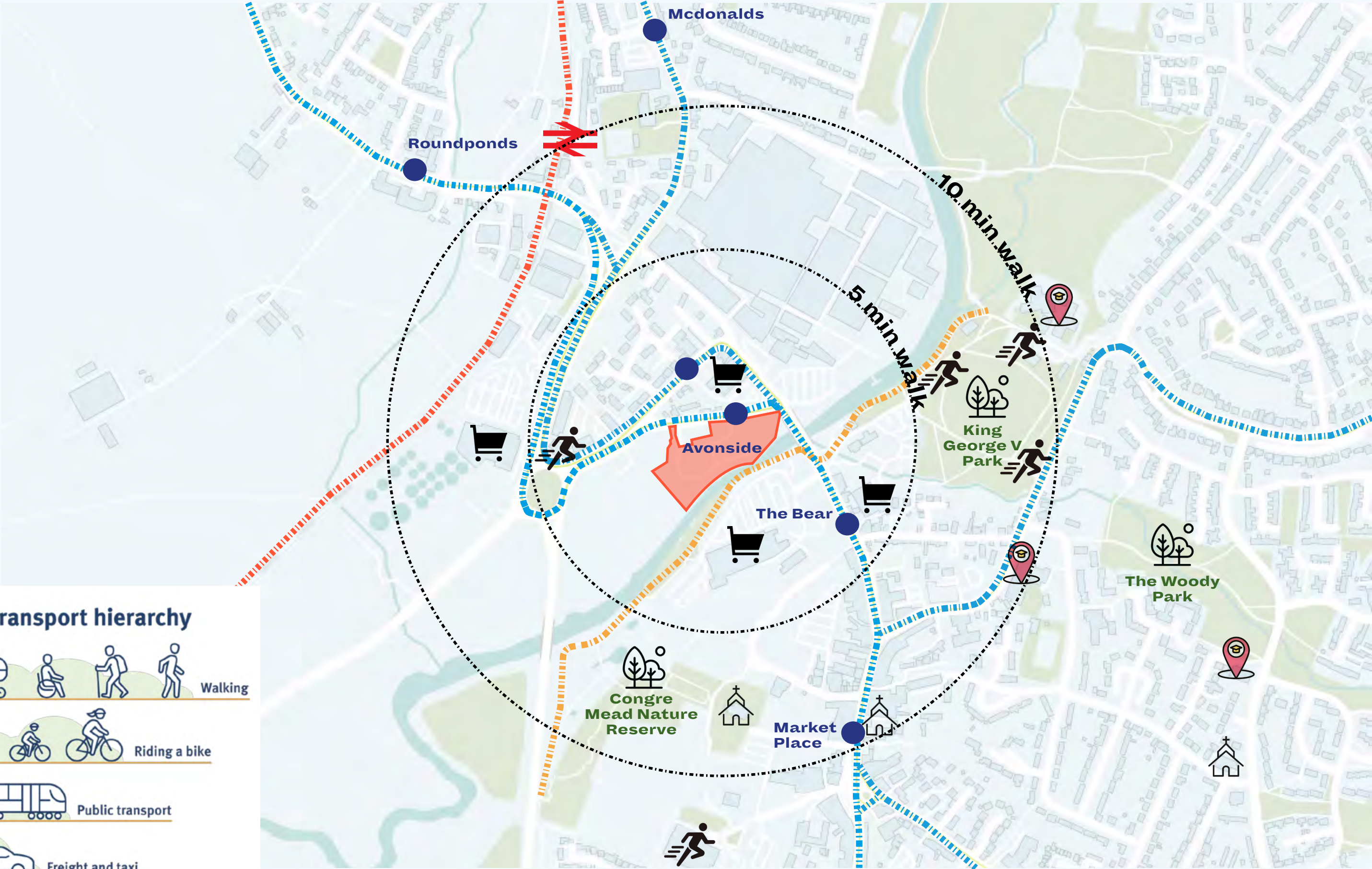
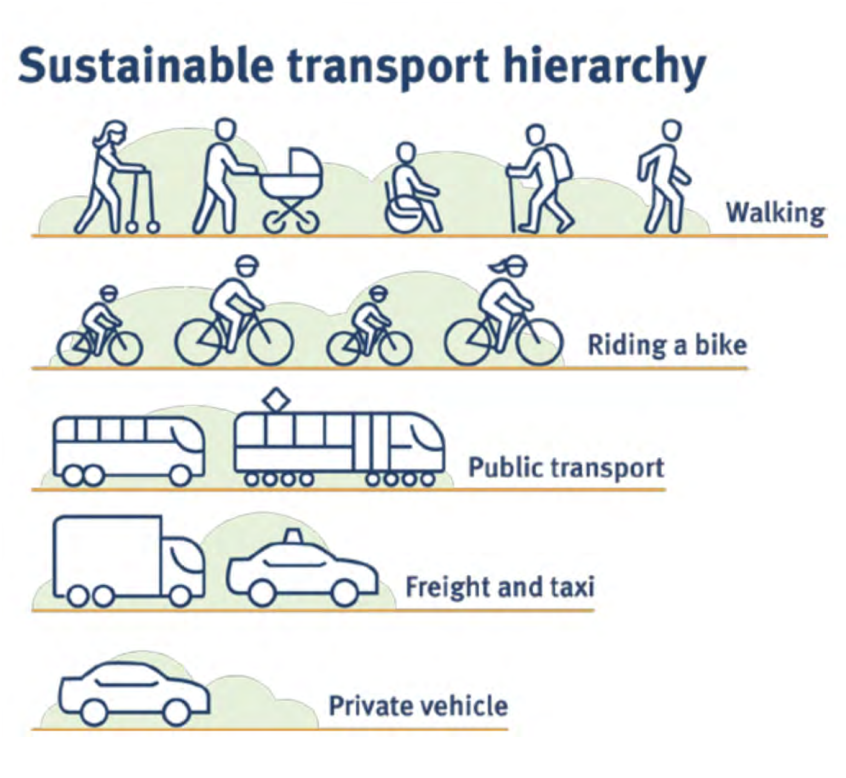


Project Context

2.02 Connectivity

The Melksham Neighbourhood Plan places strong emphasis on reducing car dependency within the town. Avonside is perfectly positioned to support this goal, located beside two bus stops, just a ten-minute walk from the train station, and with all key amenities close by. By making sustainable, accessible living a priority, Avonside aims to carry forward the ethos of Melksham and contribute to a more connected, people-focused town.

- Key:**
- Schools
 - Religious Building
 - Sports Amenity
 - Supermarket
 - Public Green Space
 - Bus Stops
 - X76 Bus Route
 - Melksham Train station
 - Train Route



(Joint Melksham Naighbourhood Plan, 2020-2026)

Project Context

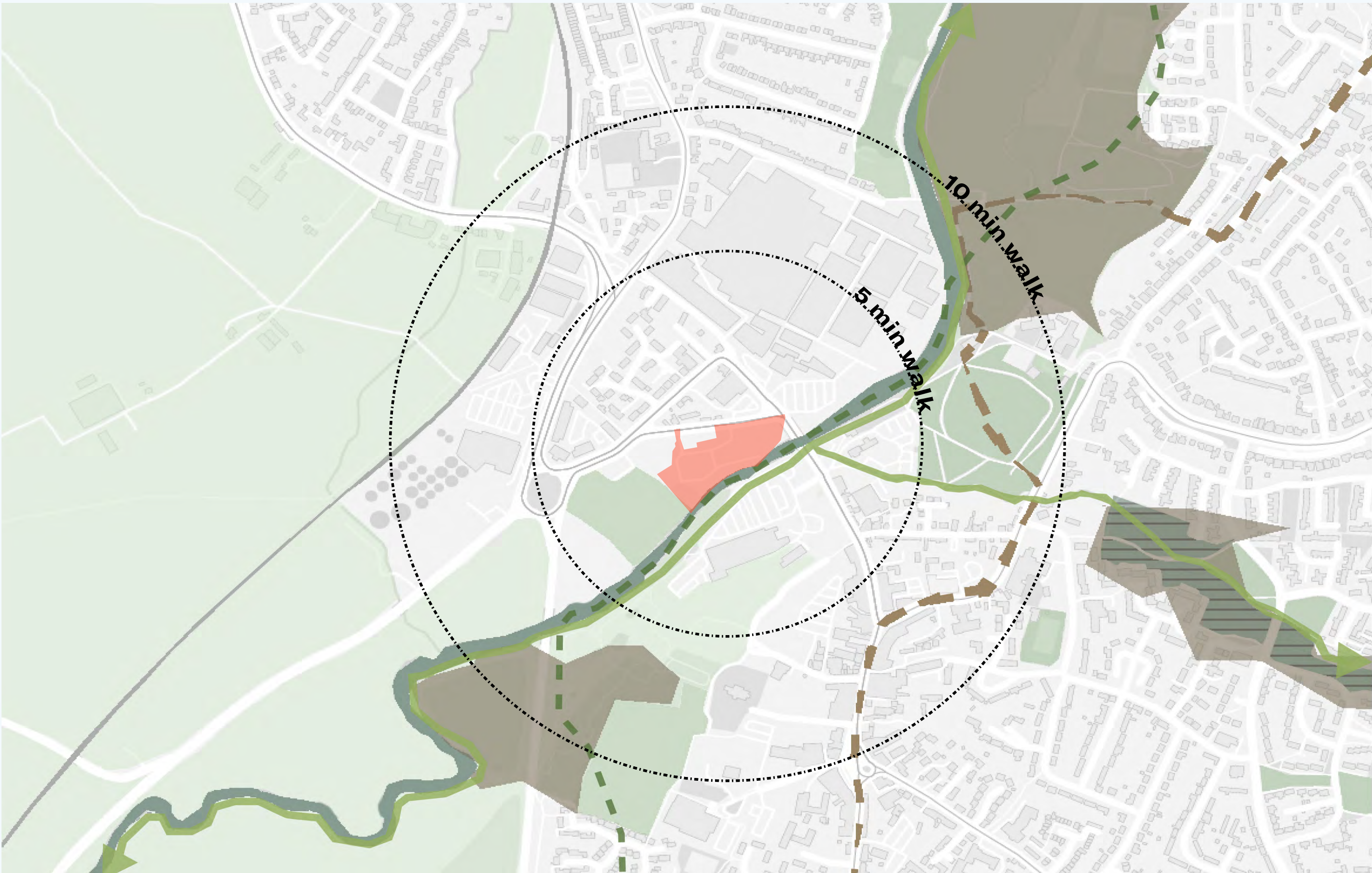
2.03 Green Spaces

Melksham’s location close to the Wiltshire countryside gives Avonside easy access to green spaces, with the River Avon, woodlands, and designated open areas all within a 5-10 minute walk. This strong connection to nature benefits future occupants’ wellbeing and forms a key part of the site’s identity.

A priority of the development is to respect, enhance, and add to this existing green infrastructure. Additionally, the planned canal project link alongside the site will further improve access to natural spaces and leisure opportunities.

Key:

- Farmland
- Green amenity
- River Avon
- Woodland
- Green infrastructure corridor
- Melksham Canal Project Link
- Tree Planting conservation areas
- National Cycle Route 403

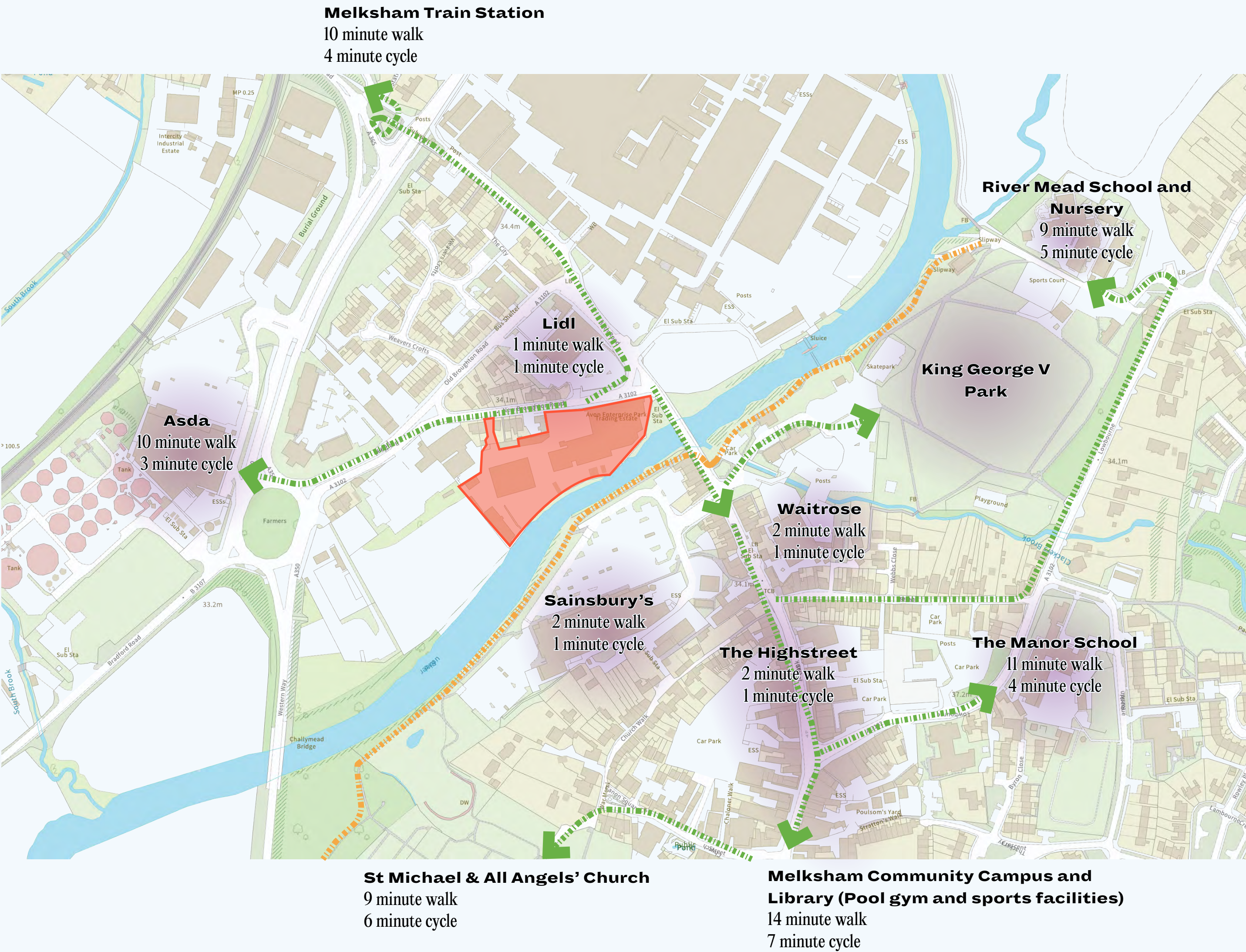


Project Context

2.04 Walkways and Cycle Access to Amenities

Avonside’s location is ideal for modern living, with supermarkets, schools, parks, the train station, and the high street all within a 10-minute walk.

Beyond its convenience for residents, the project also offers an exciting opportunity to refurbish, upgrade and enhance the existing flexible commercial space, extending the high street across the river. This will help create a vibrant destination for both work and leisure, strengthening connections and bringing new life to this part of Melksham.



Project Context

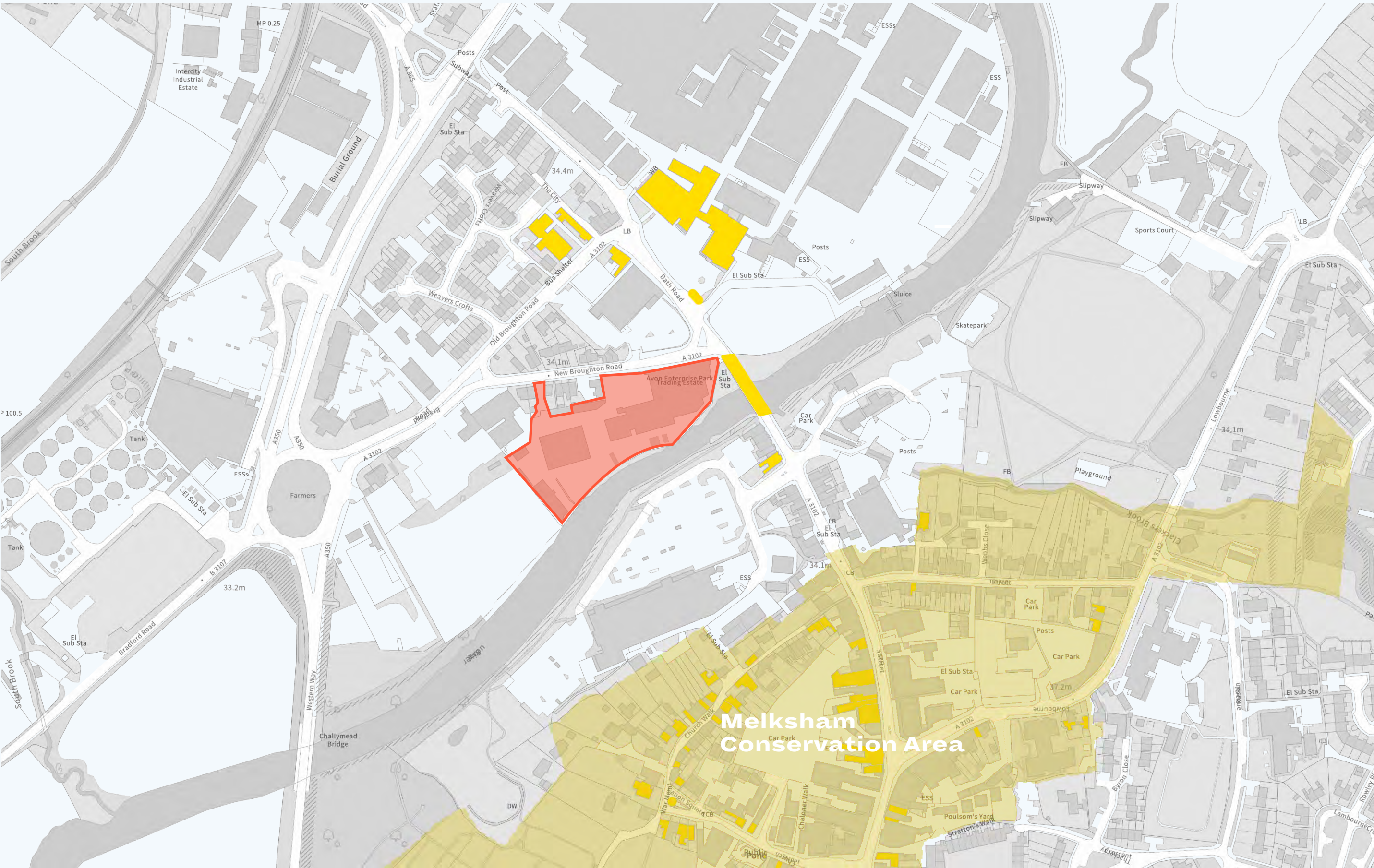
2.05 Heritage Assets

Melksham is a historic market town with a strong sense of identity, shaped by its Conservation Area and rich collection of listed buildings. These historic landmarks give the town its character and connect the community to its story. Protecting this heritage is key to keeping Melksham’s charm alive while supporting a vibrant, modern future. Avonside shares this spirit, aiming to breathe new life into the old dairy by creating something fresh that respects the town’s past and adds to its evolving identity.

Key:

- Listed Buildings

- Conservation area

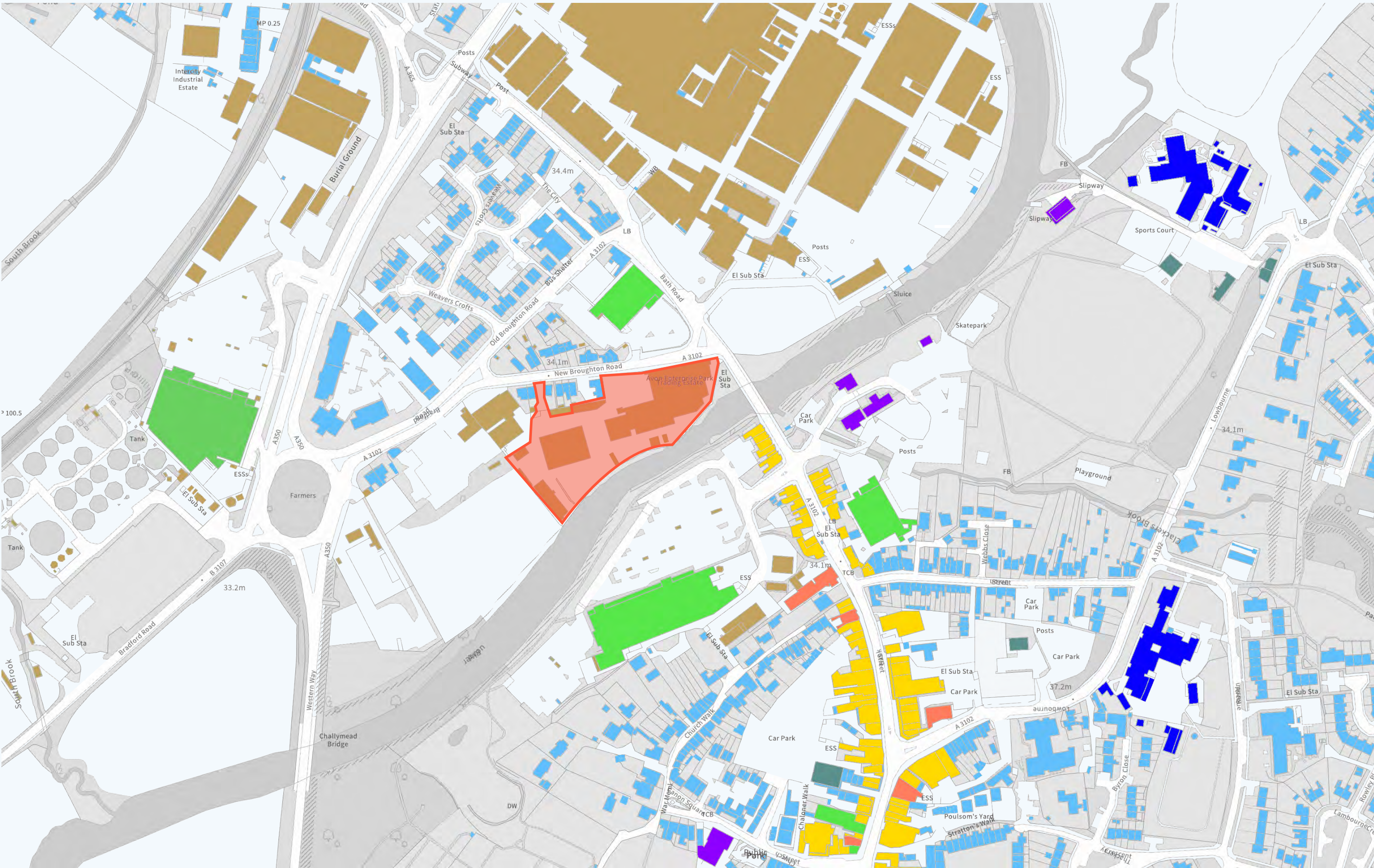


Project Context

2.06 Urban Grain

There's a noticeable transition between districts on either side of the river. While the high street defines the south, the north side is dominated by light industrial use. As Melksham evolves beyond this, flexible, adaptable units and spaces will help respond to the shifting economic landscape, creating opportunities for a vibrant, modern job market north of the river. Additionally, refreshing the current office space will help retain existing jobs and attract new businesses, strengthening the town's employment base.

- Key:**
- Light Industrial
 - Residential
 - High Street
 - Public House
 - Schools
 - Office
 - Supermarket



Avonside

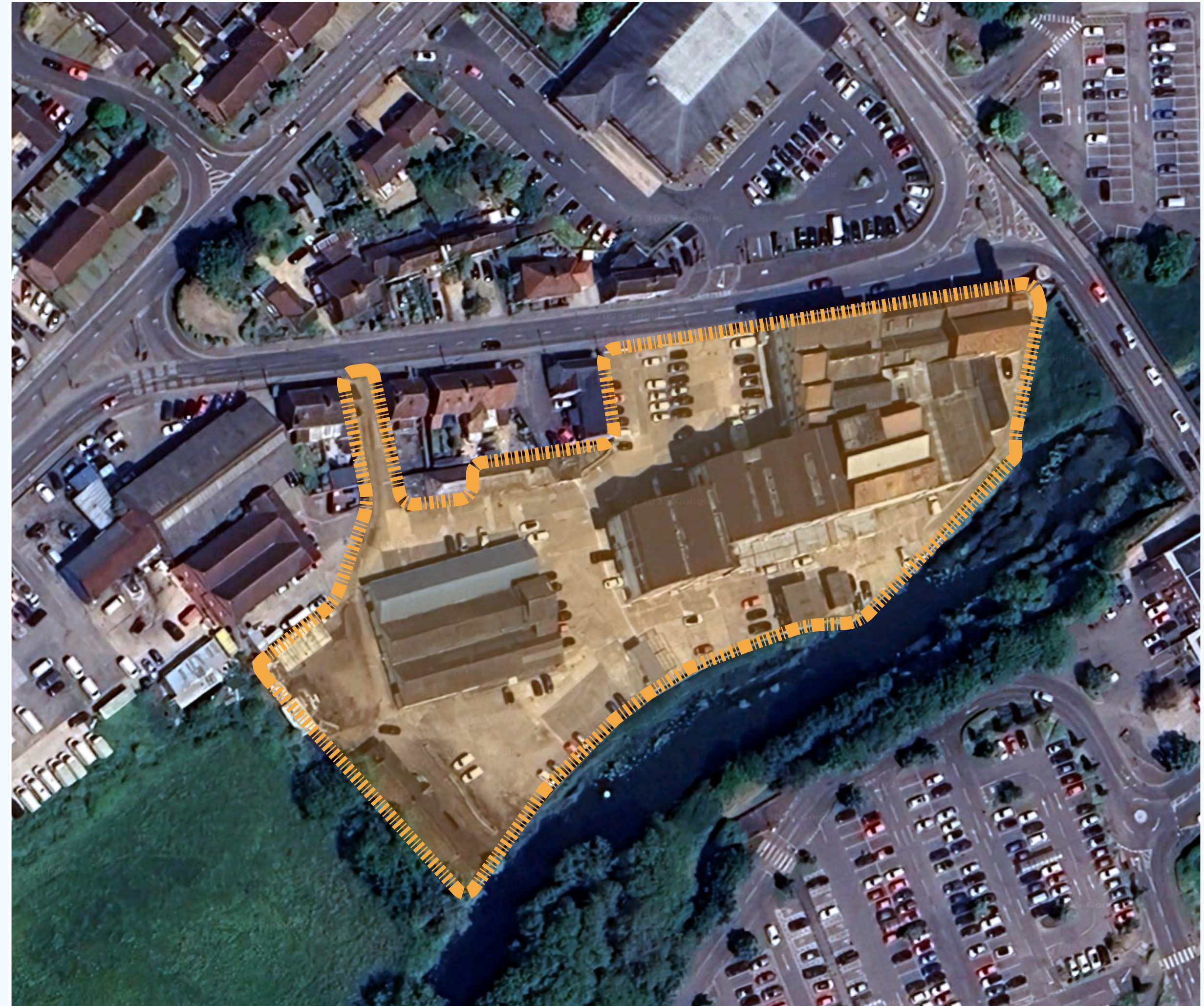
3.0
Existing Site

Existing Site

3.01 Aerial of Site

Today, Avonside is a largely commercial site with a range of occupants. While the refurbishment of Block A marks positive progress, the wider site remains underused.

Its prime riverside location, rich industrial heritage, and easy access to amenities give it huge untapped potential. With the right vision – combining public spaces, flexible workspaces, and riverside leisure – Avonside could transform into a thriving, mixed-use destination that reconnects with Melksham, drawing people from both the town and beyond. It's time to unlock this landmark's future.



Existing Site

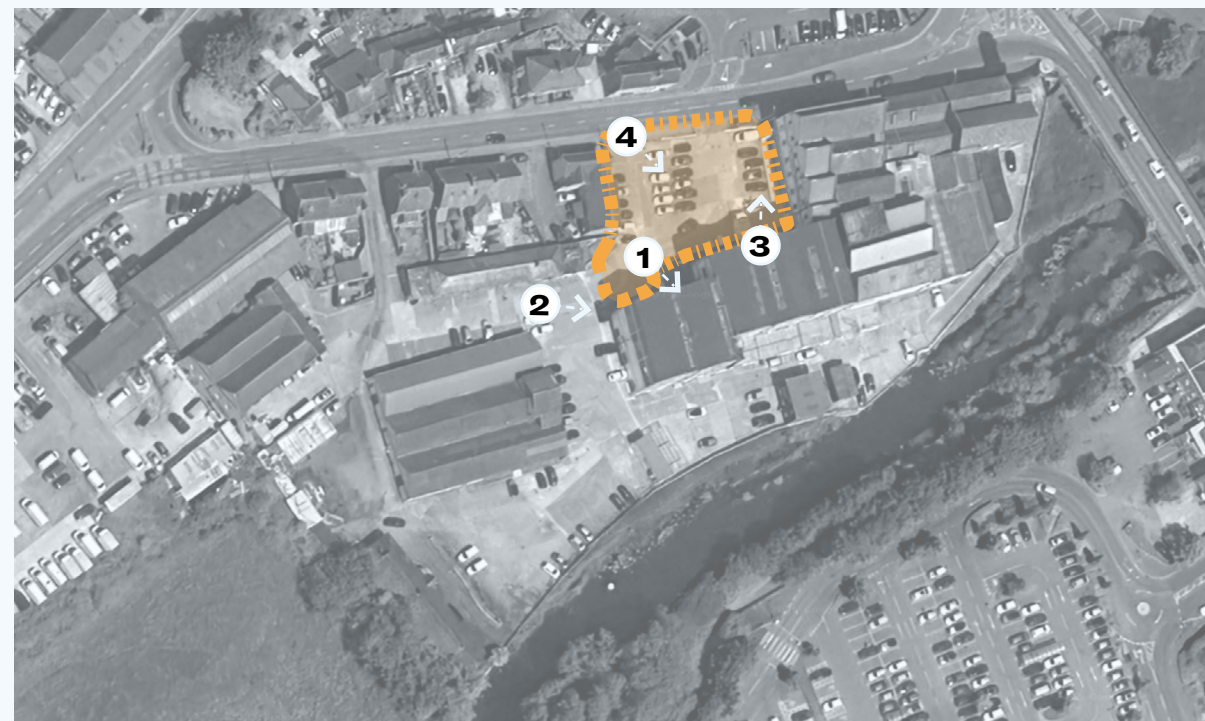
3.02 Entrance

Opportunities:

- Strong structural grid providing good flexibility for potential layouts and future use.
- Recent paintwork and redecorated windows have already helped boost interest in the building. Driving an increase in new tenants.

Constraints:

- Car Focused — vehicles parked up to the building's façade make the entrances unclear.
- Limited Green infrastructure — with scope to introduce planting to soften the appearance and enhance site character.



Existing Site

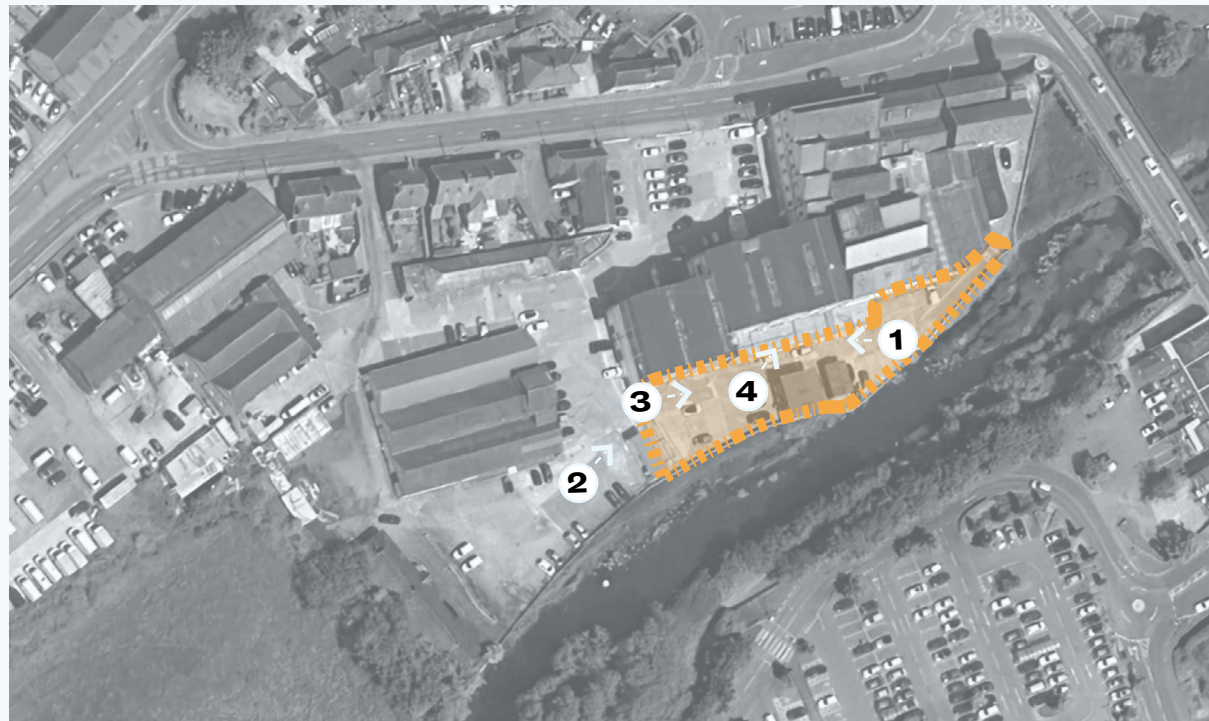
3.03 Riverside

Opportunities:

- Great riverside location with views of the River Avon.
- New businesses like the pizzeria and brewery increasing public use of the site.

Constraints:

- Dark ground floor spaces due to single-storey sections extending the depth of the Block B and C ground floor plan.
- Limited windows in Block C and upper floors.
- Site dominated by cars, impacting overall feel.



Existing Site

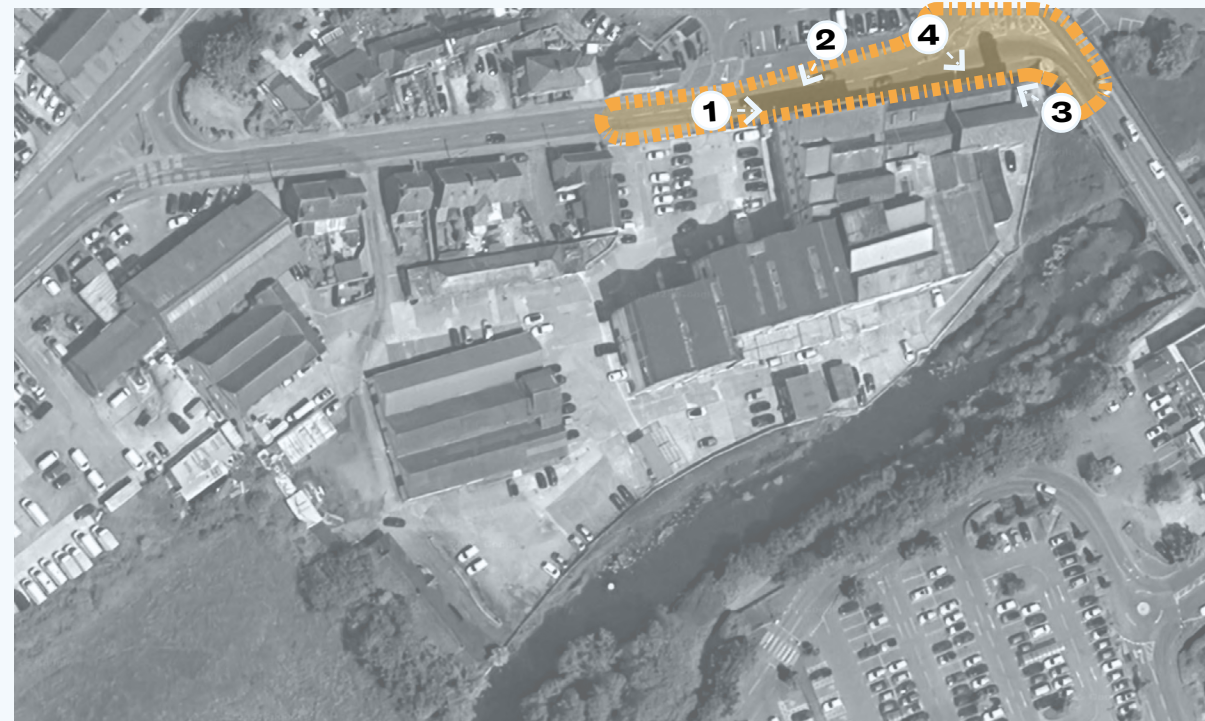
3.04 New Broughton Road

Opportunities:

- Iconic site identity with a strong structural grid and distinctive chimney.
- Blocks F and E are actively used, helping to draw people to the site.

Constraints:

- Close proximity to the road
- Narrow pavement with bus stop in close proximity to site entrance.
- Aerials and a shortened chimney reduce the site's visual impact and connection to its historic character.



Existing Site

3.05 Building 3, 7-11

Opportunities:

- Large, flexible industrial units offering adaptable internal spaces.
- Smaller independent buildings help break down the overall scale of the site.
- Scotts gym (image 01) vacant + has fallen into stage of disrepair, offering opportunity to open up SW corner of site.

Constraints:

- No pedestrian routes – the site functions as one large car park, with poor walkability.
- Building 3 has a dated exterior, and all units are currently vacant.
- Limited connection to the rest of the site, making it feel isolated and disjointed.



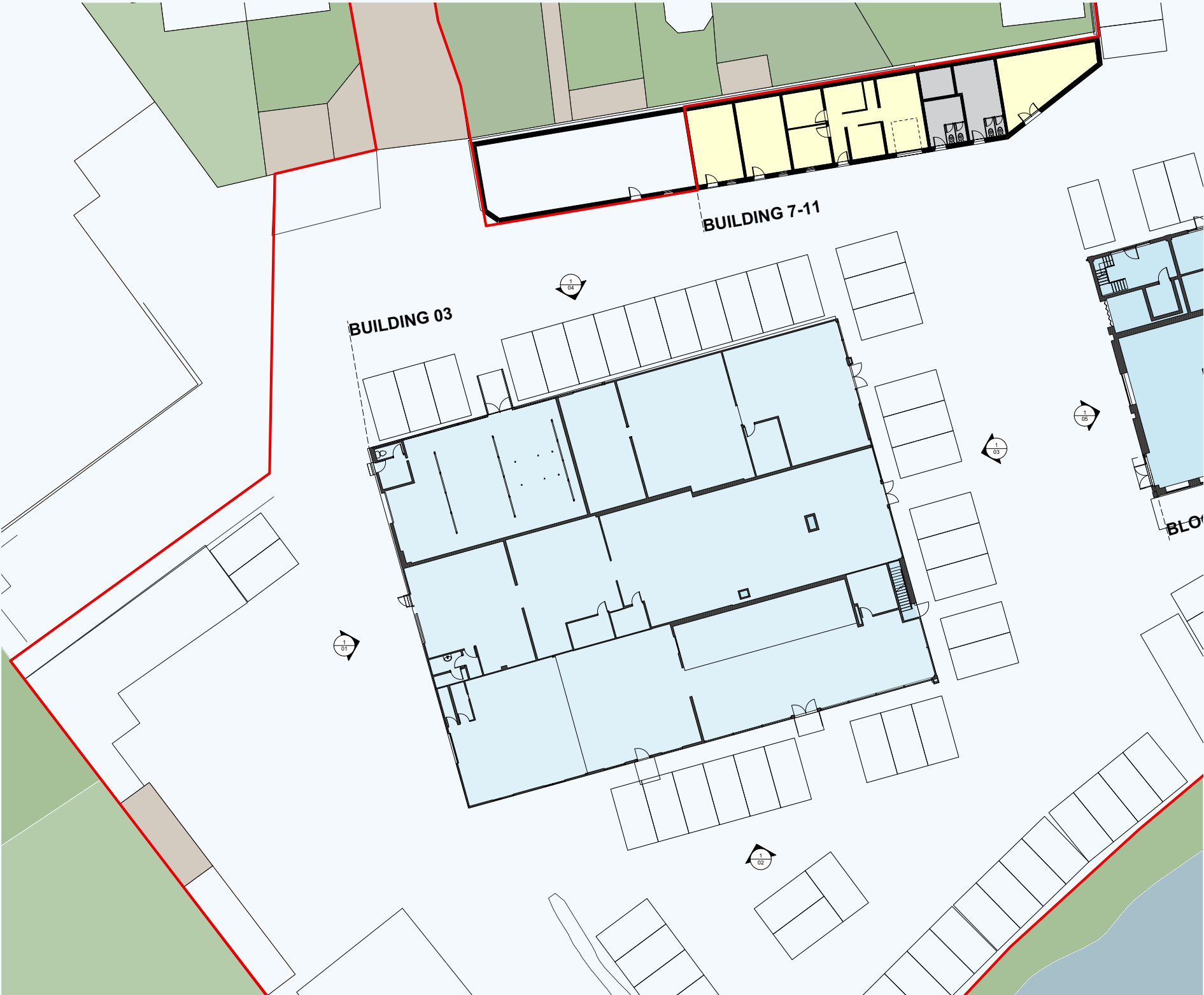
Existing Site

3.06 Existing Site plan

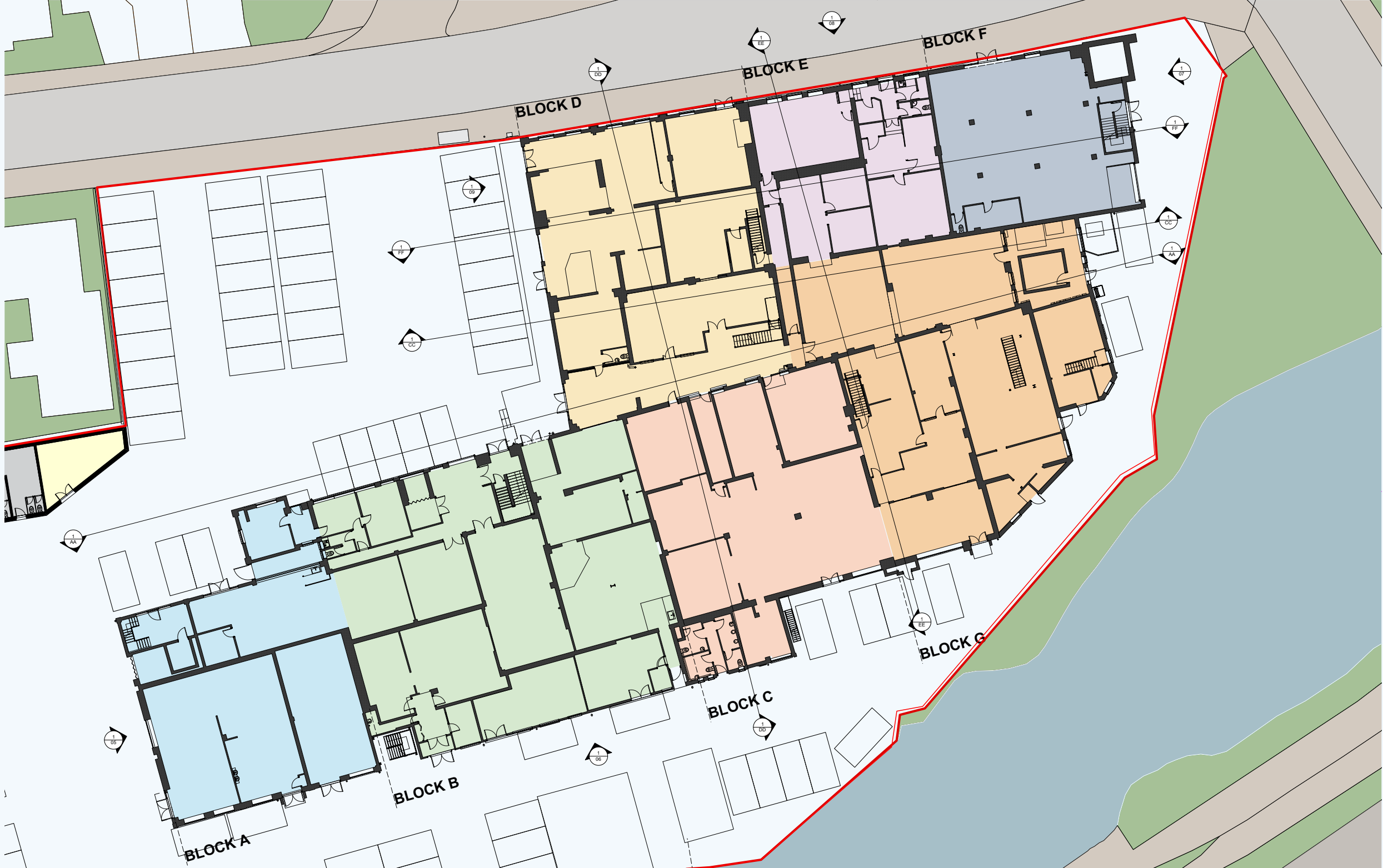


Existing Site

3.07 Existing Ground Floor Plan



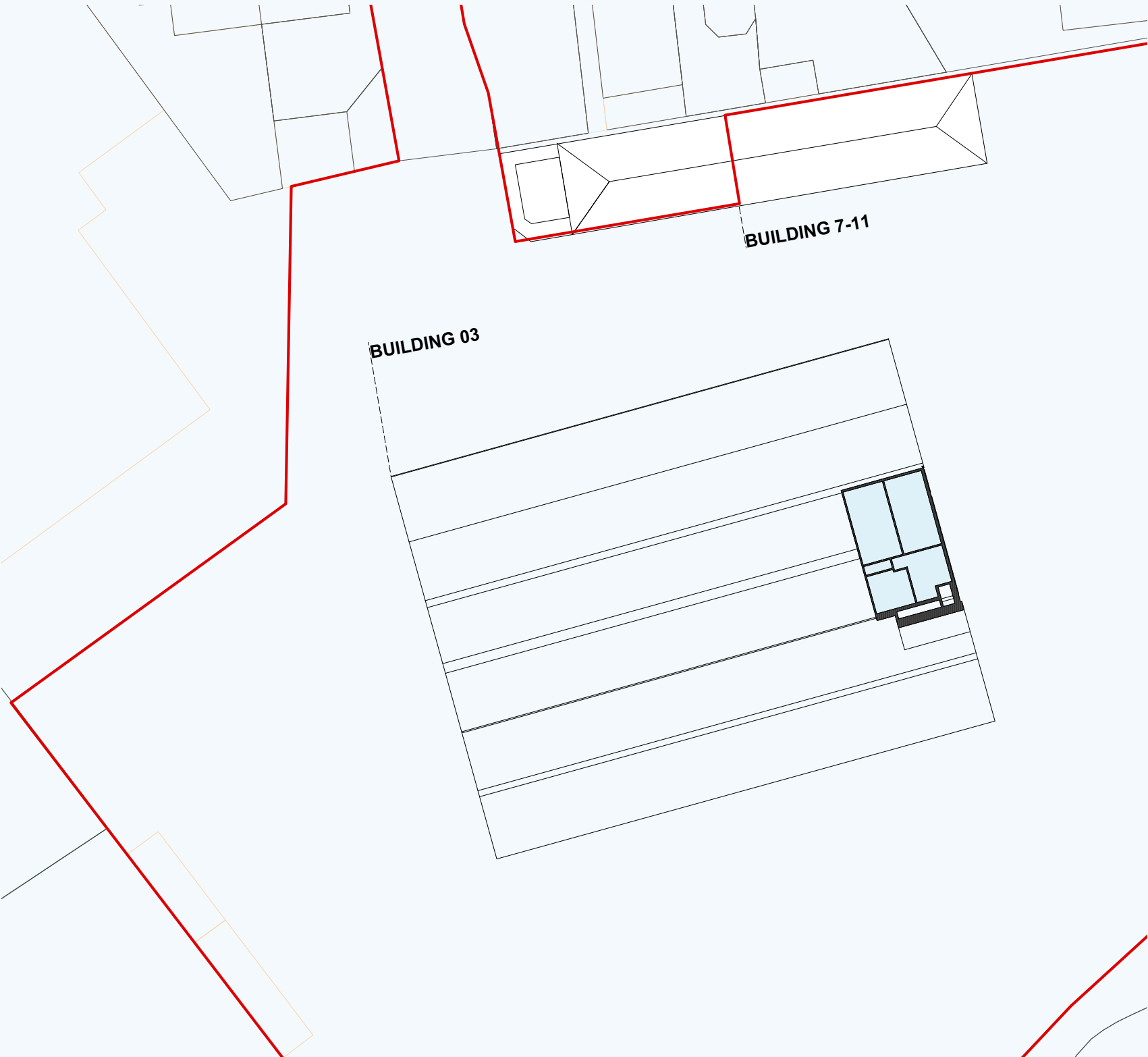
Building 3, 7-11



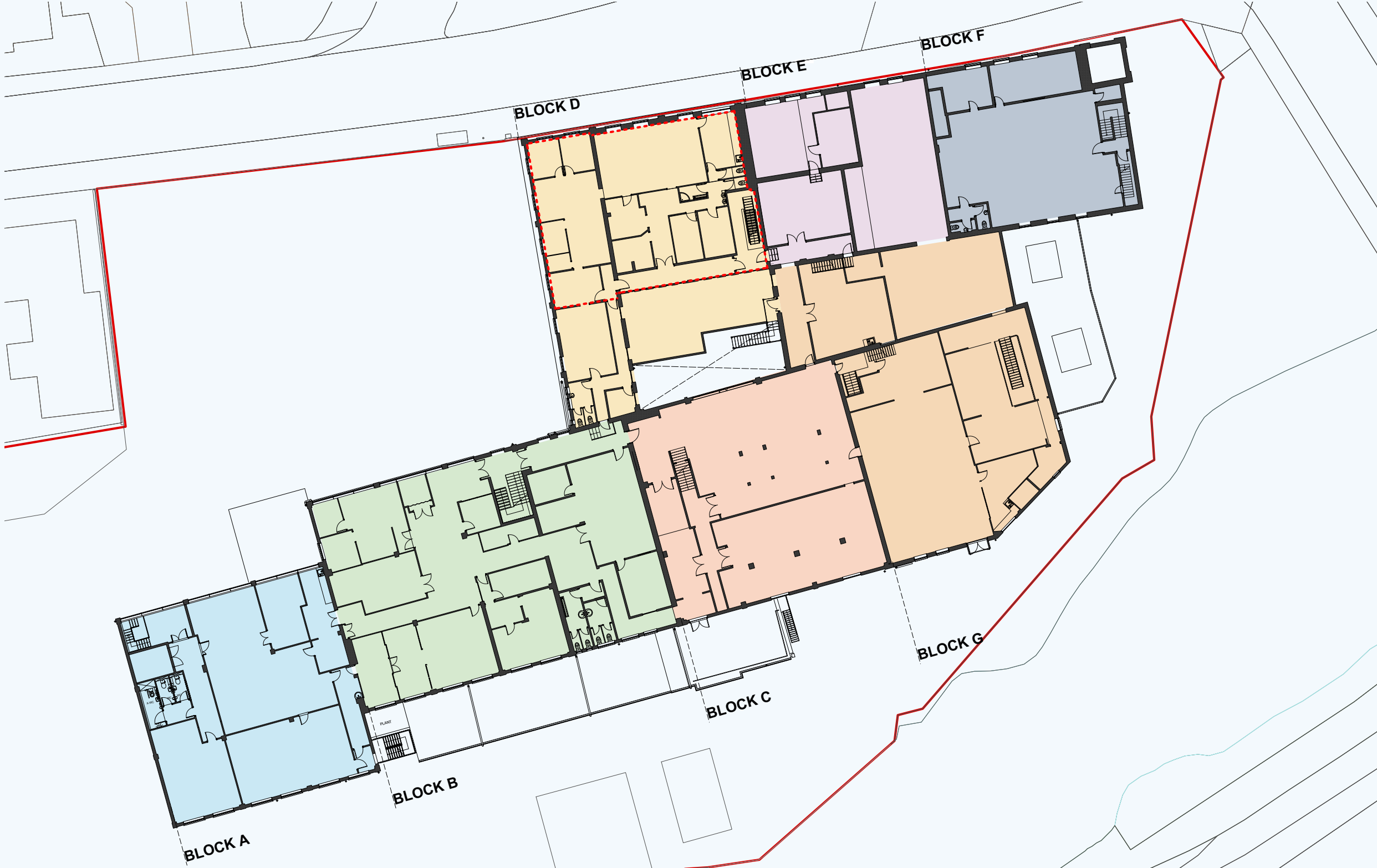
Block A-G

Existing Site

3.08 Existing First Floor plan



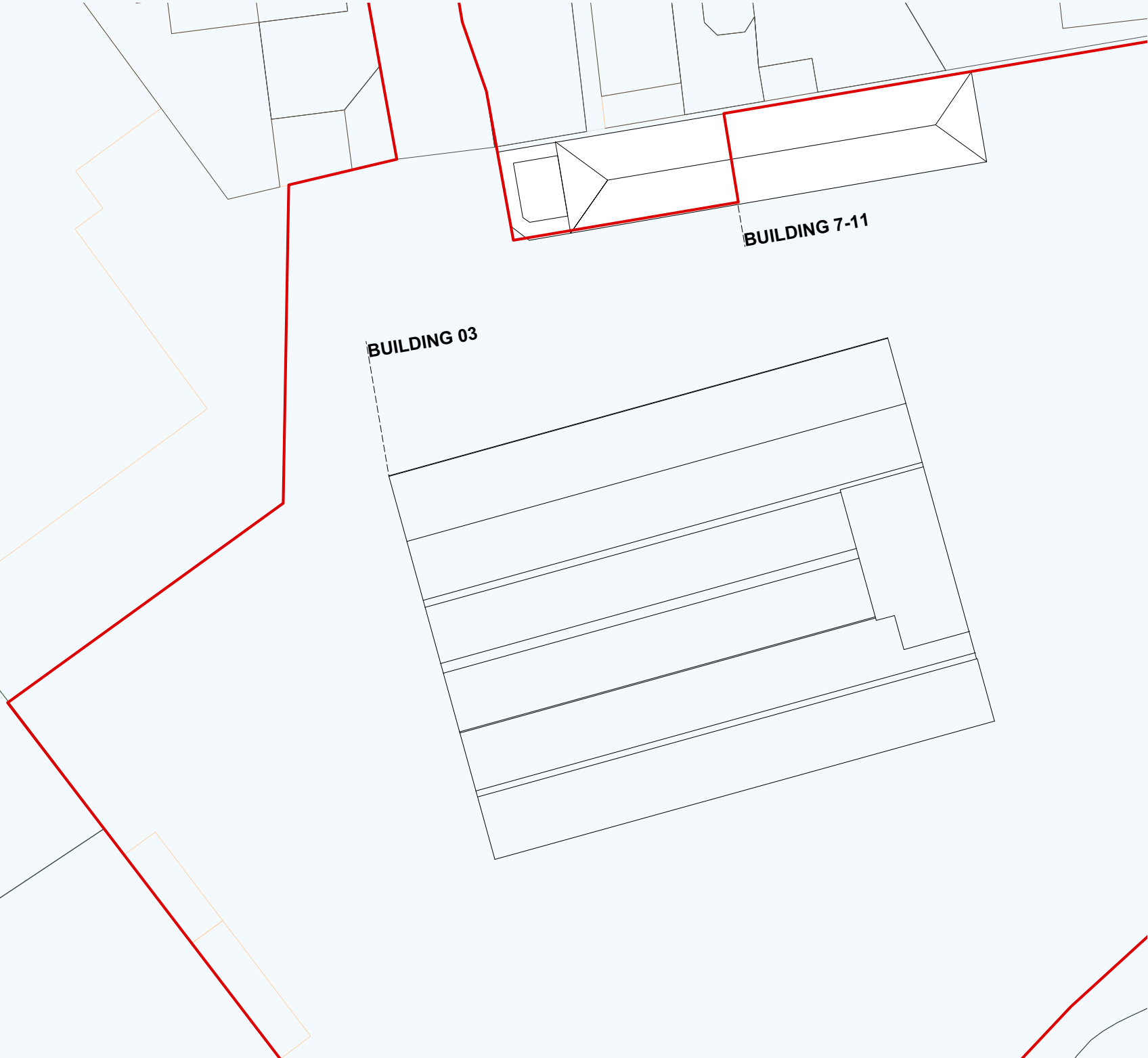
Building 3, 7-11



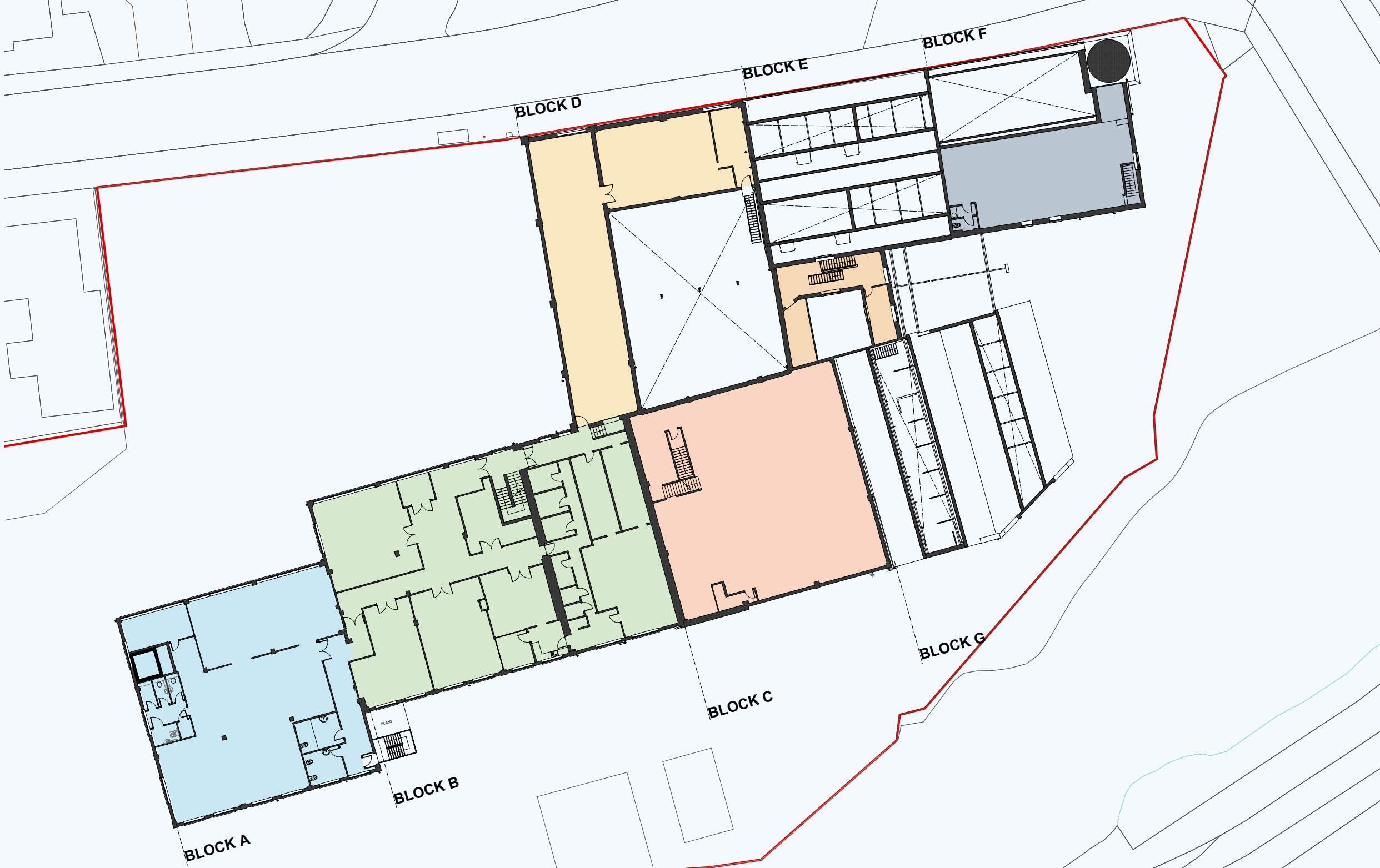
Block A-G

Existing Site

3.09 Existing Second Floor Plan



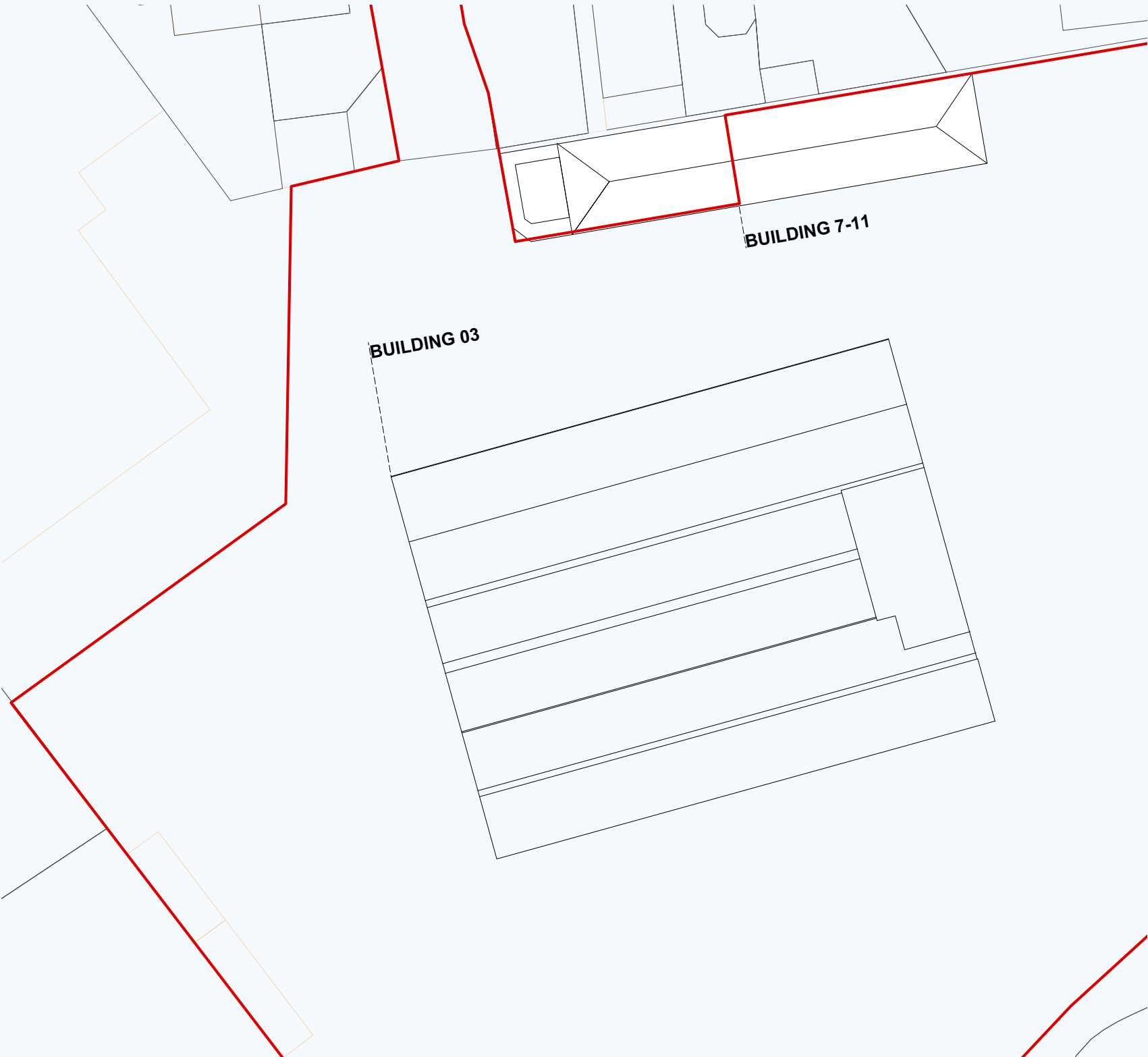
Building 3, 7-11



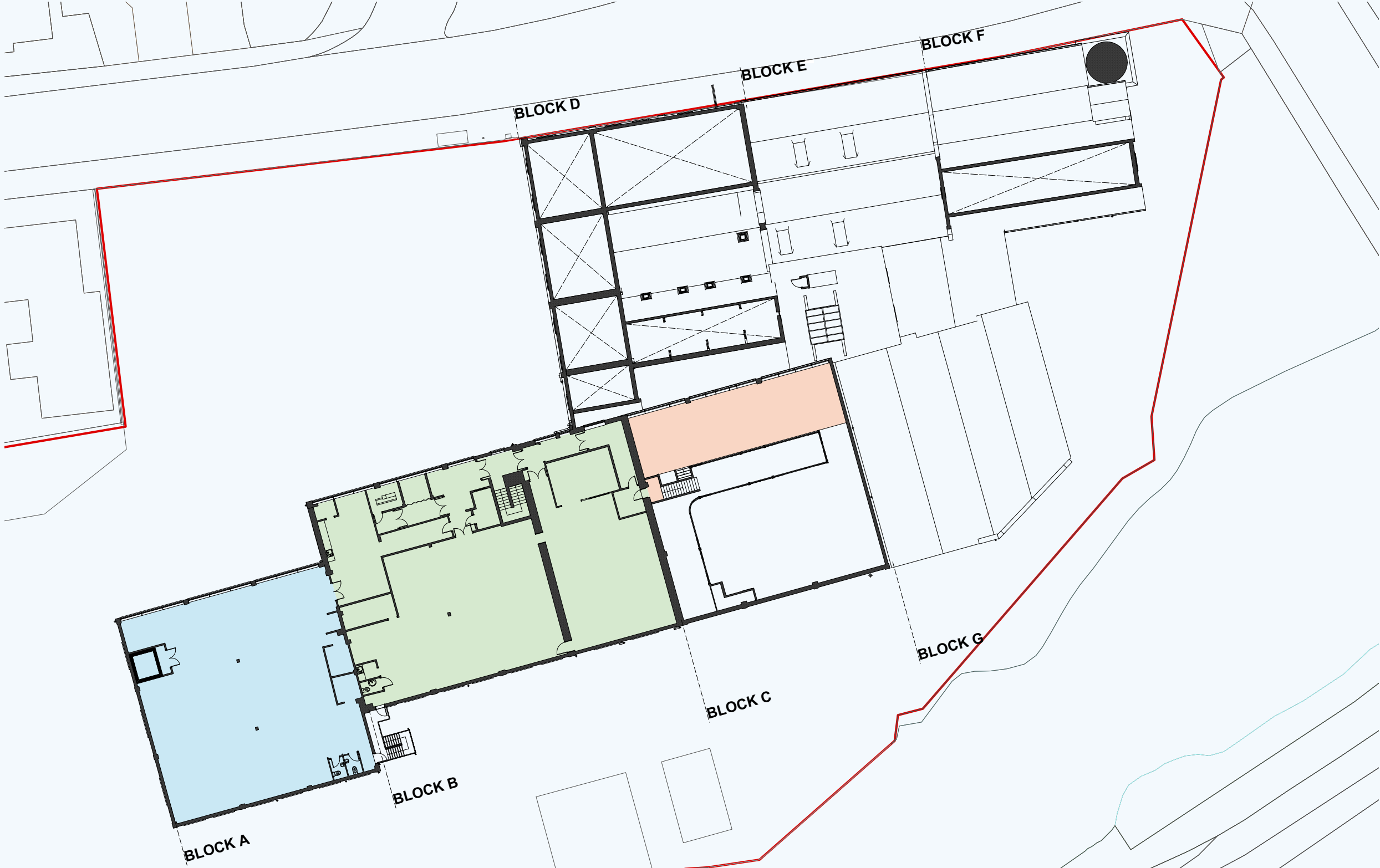
Block A-G

Existing Site

3.10 Existing Third Floor Plan



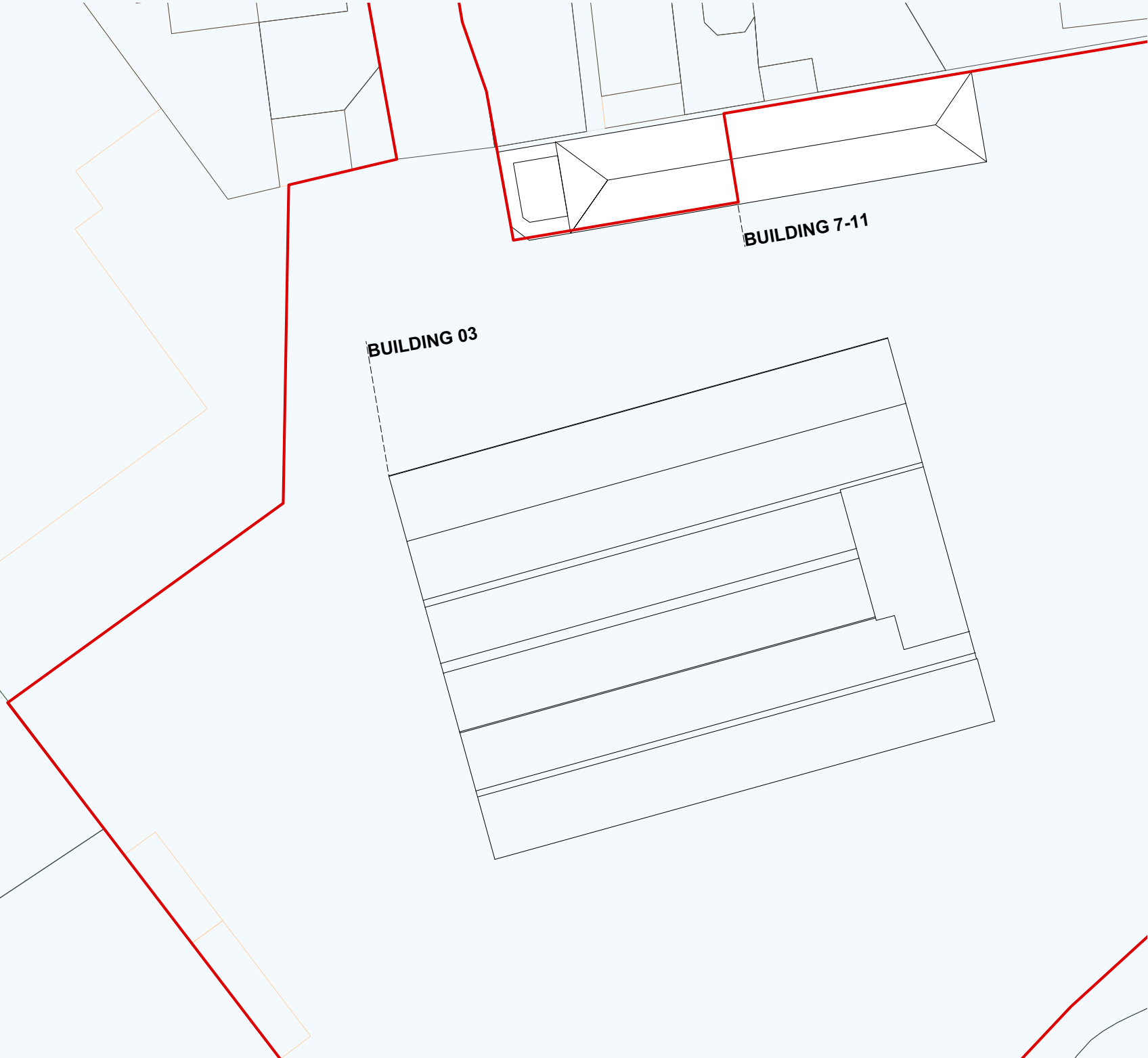
Building 3, 7-11



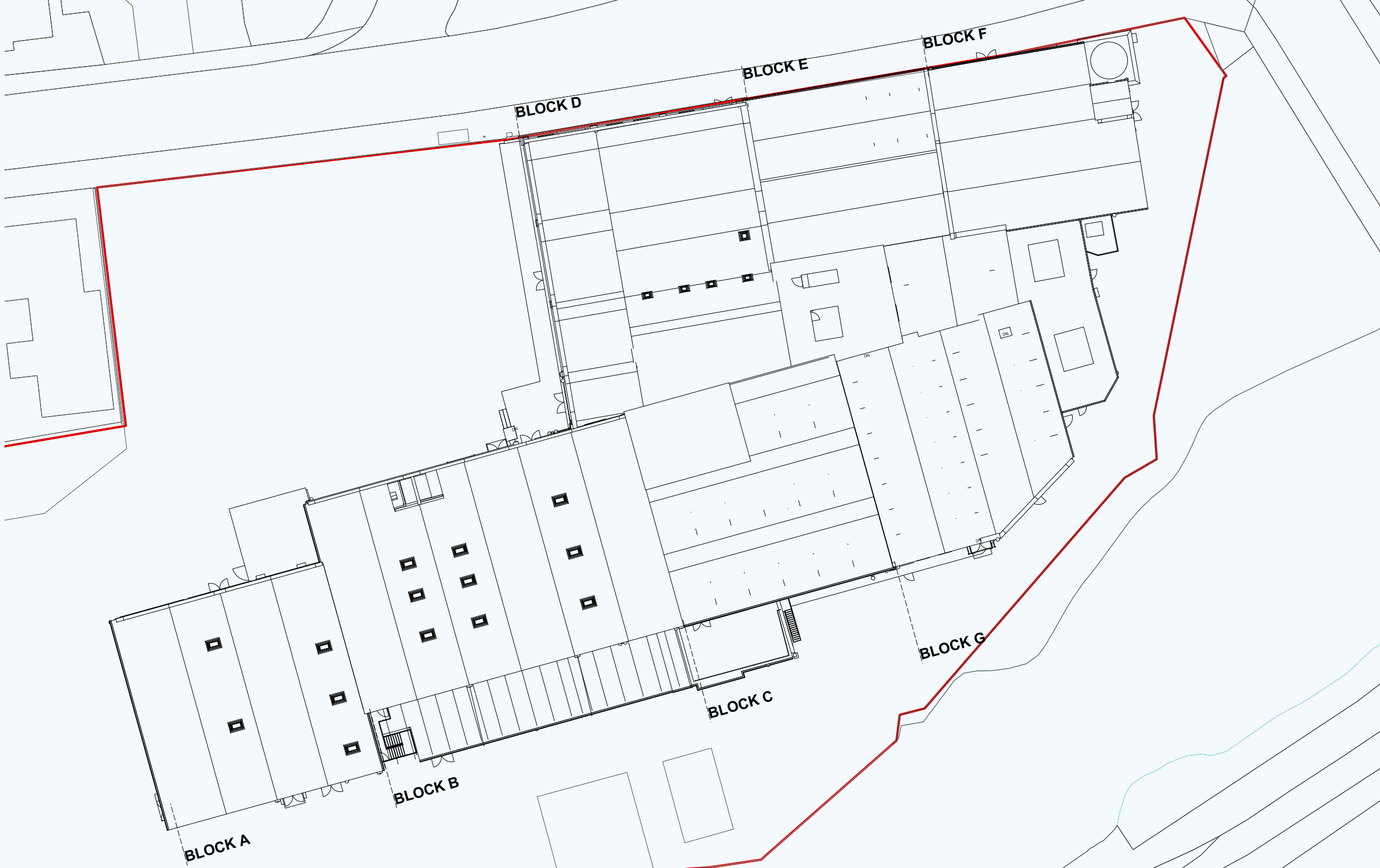
Block A-G

Existing Site

3.11 Existing Roof Plan



Building 3, 7-11



Block A-G

Avonside

4.0 **Site History**

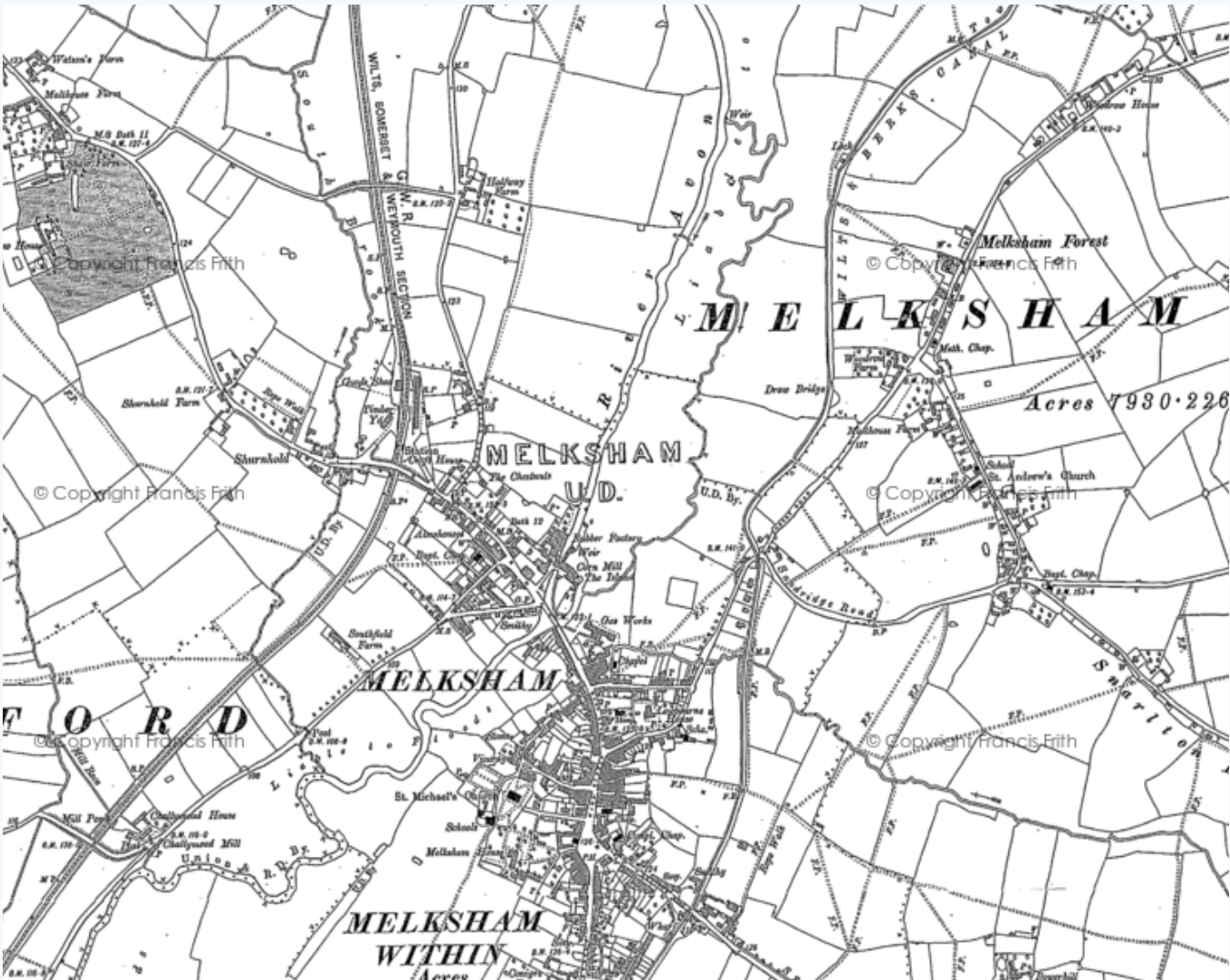
Site History

4.01 Melksham Over Time

Melksham’s urban fabric has undergone significant transformation from the late 19th century through the 20th century. In the 1898 map, the town appears as a modest market settlement with a rural character, centered around the River Avon and reliant on local agriculture and textile milling.

By 1919, Melksham had begun expanding its infrastructure, with increased rail connectivity and industrial facilities, reflecting the broader impacts of the Industrial Revolution and post-Edwardian economic shifts.

The 1940 map illustrates a more structured urban footprint, with growing residential development, enhanced road networks, and further integration into regional trade routes—evidence of interwar urban planning and the need for housing and services. This period marked the transition from a traditional town to a more connected and industrially engaged settlement.



1898 Melksham



1940 Melksham



1919 Melksham



Post 1950 Melksham