

### 2.1 Urban Design and Landscape

The study area is built onto a hillside, which falls from Brandon Lane down to Lowland Road.

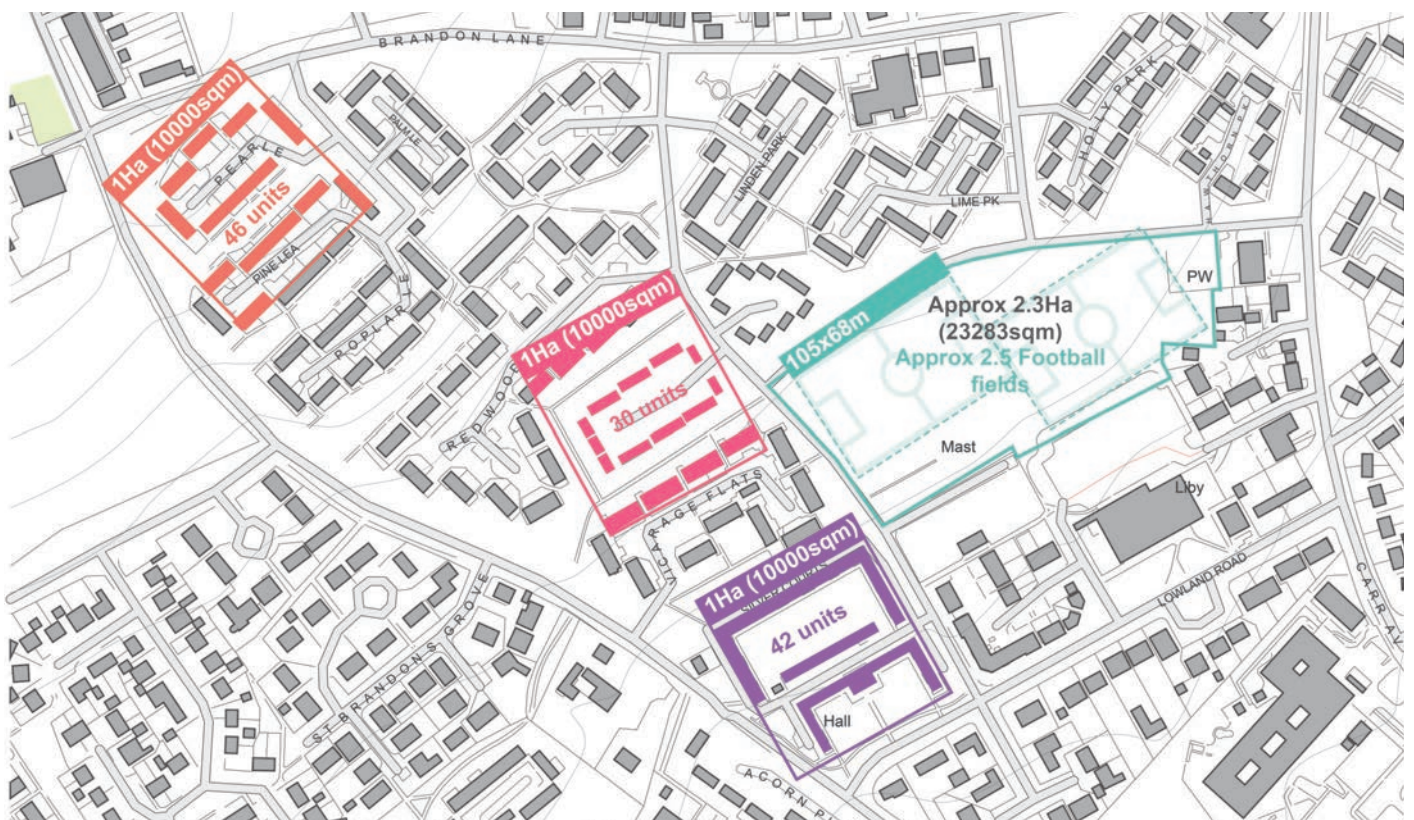
The area has a low population density, with each individual block ranging from approximately 30 units per hectare to 46 units per hectare, although this increases where houses have been converted to flats.

Each block was originally planned as a separate cul-de-sac or courtyard development, with only pathways linking these blocks. Many commented that this labyrinth of footpaths are poorly maintained, and also encourage crime - with several places to hide in bushes, and many poorly overlooked escape routes from the police.

Fronts and backs of houses are difficult to distinguish, and most houses do not have a privately enclosed rear garden - or the fence is too low for a sense of privacy.

A vast amount of underused public green space wraps each individual block, and there are large playing fields north of the co-operative car park. The landscape is predominantly grass, and low shrubs, with few trees - although saplings have recently been planted along the main roads.

Most of the green space has some passive surveillance in the form of overlooking windows, although weak corners to blocks create nooks without passive surveillance. Numerous narrow footpaths weave between buildings with little natural surveillance, and could become unsafe at night. The well-used alleyway leading to the shopping precinct from Silver Courts is enclosed in high fencing and has little passive surveillance, although the presence of the cafe has helped with activity along this route.

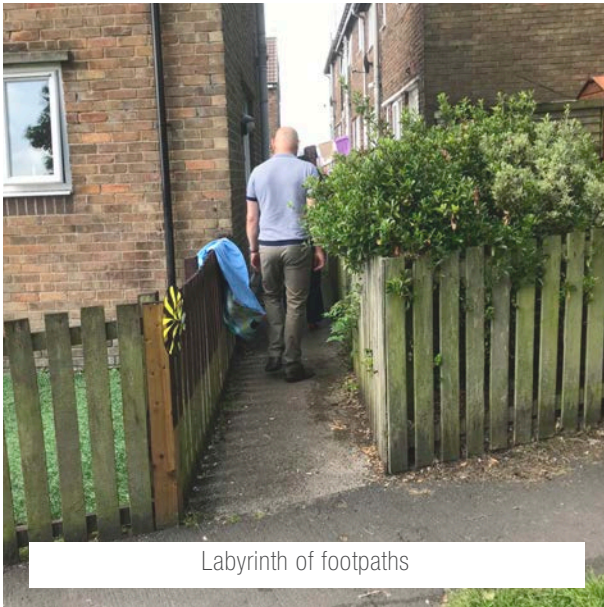




Interstitial green space between blocks



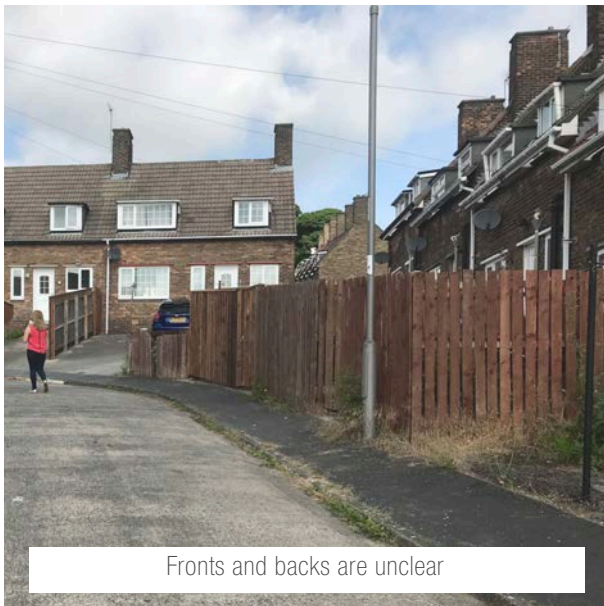
Large areas of grass



Labyrinth of footpaths



Footpaths weave between private homes



Fronts and backs are unclear



Fronts and backs are unclear

## 2.2 Access and Movement

Many people in the study area are reliant on public transport and walking. The 47, 49, and 49A buses provide a frequent bus service into Durham, whilst the 21 Angel runs half hourly to Newcastle upon Tyne.

There is no longer a train station in Brandon, but the old railway line has been converted into a walking and cycling route. Few people cycle within Brandon according to results of the questionnaires. The steepness of the topography and poorly connected street network may be a deterrent in the study area.

Car ownership averages at less than 95% for most of the estate (just under one car per household), and is under 50% within Redwood, Oakgreen and Vicarage Flats.

Car parking is largely facilitated on-street and many feel that there is not enough. Garage sites are dotted around the estate and may be opportunities for regeneration.

Since the construction of the north-south link road, cars can now dissect the estate between Brandon Lane and Lowland Road. An east-west route also unites Lime Park, Holly Park and Hawthorn Park with the rest of the estate. Several driving instructors and examiners use this area for driving tests.

At the consultation, people noted that areas at the top of the hill (Pine and Pear Lea) were very steep and difficult to navigate by foot or car in adverse weather conditions, and prone to annual flooding.





Garages and on-street parking



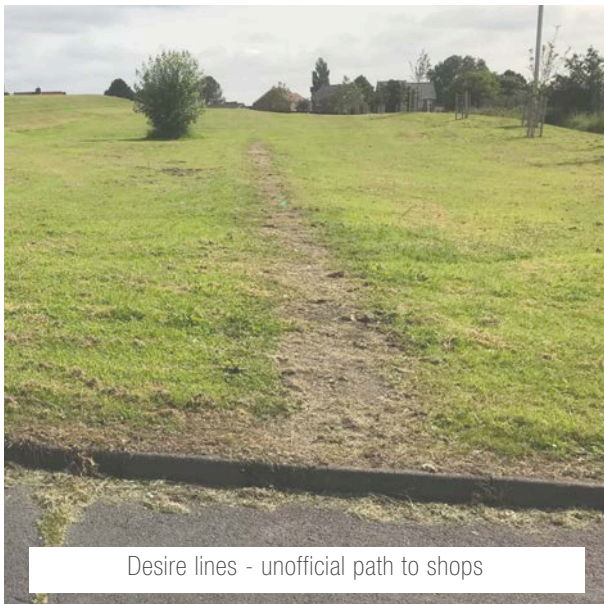
Unallocated parking on grass/ paths



Some road surfaces are in poor condition



Bus stops loop around edge of site



Desire lines - unofficial path to shops



Many footpaths - some poorly maintained

## 2.3 Facilities and Community

The area is predominantly residential and green space, although there are a good number of community facilities and retail units towards the east of the area. Many people would like a cheaper grocery shop in walking distance.

A variety of community groups meet at these facilities, including a youth club, a senior citizen's coffee club, Brandon & Meadowfield Residents Group, Brandon Community Association Durham, Brandon Table Tennis club, and the Scouts.

- Residential
- Nursing home
- School
- Shop or cafe/restaurant
- Community Facility

- A - Brandon Community Hall
- B - Rushyfields Residential and Nursing Home
- C - The New Wok Inn
- D - St Andrew's Methodist Church
- E - Brandon Carrside Youth & Community Project
- F - Brandon Library
- G - Lowland RD Shopping precinct (including Co-operative food store, hair dressers, gift shop, dentists etc)
- H - Bone Appetit cafe
- I - Silver Courts Community Room
- J - Brandon Primary School
- K - Brandon Sure Start Children's Centre





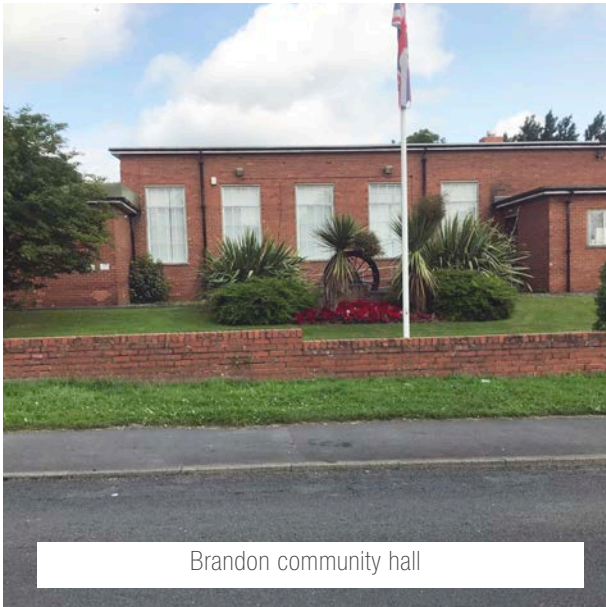
Silver Courts community room



St Andrew's Methodist church



Youth centre



Brandon community hall



Lowland Road shopping precinct



Bone Appetit cafe

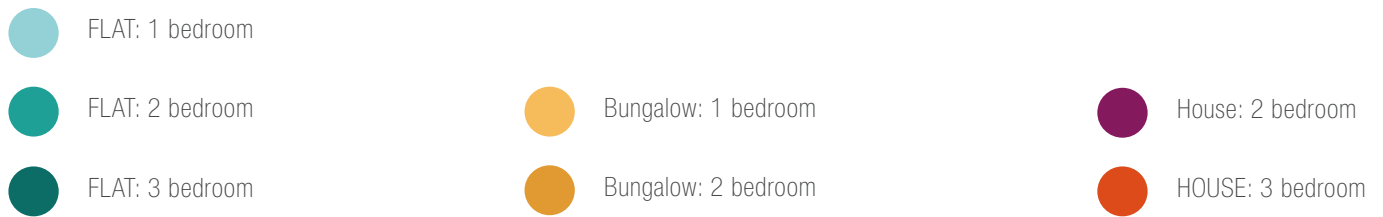
## 2.4 Housing

The area contains a mix of one, two and three bedroom properties which are one or two storeys high.

The majority of homes are semi-detached, terraced or courtyard blocks, although there are a number of small detached bungalows around Rowan Lea and Red Firs, and some flats on Vicarage Flats, Redwood Flats and Oakgreen Flats.

The homes are constructed from a combination of brick, render and pebble dash, with tiled roofs and chimneys.

The upper floor of several of the older houses around Linden Park, Poplar Lea, Pine Lea, and Pear Lea are built into the roofspace, with dormer windows, which look to be minimally insulated.





Courtyard bungalows



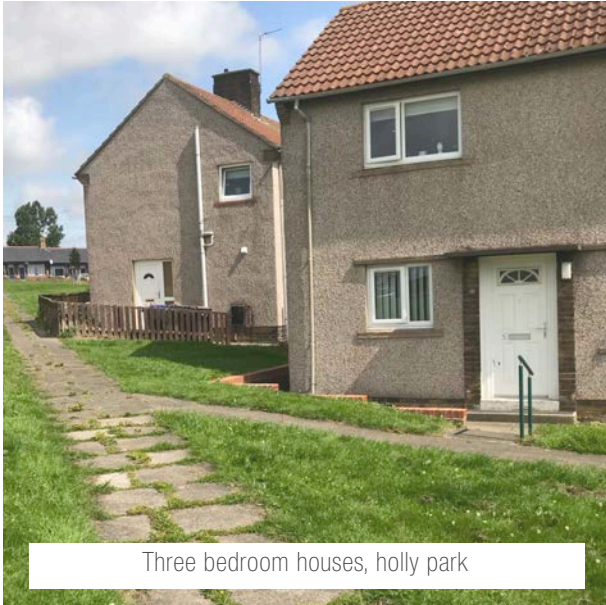
Detached and semi-detached bungalows



Flats on Vicarage Flats



Original homes with upper storey in loft



Three bedroom houses, holly park






Privately owned houses, hawthorn park



## 2.5 Ownership

The majority of the study area is social housing managed by believe housing. There is a much higher rate of ownership in the older houses on closes nearer Brandon Lane, including the Leas and the Parks. Properties in private ownership can be distinguished by features such as conservatories and extensions, more defined garden fences, window alterations and solar panels.

Most of the roads, pathways and green spaces are owned by Durham County Council.

-  Masterplan Red line boundary
-  Estate boundaries (areas managed by believe housing)
-  Private ownership (generally right to buy)
-  Land retained by Durham County Council (generally public open space/ adopted highways & footpaths)

