



MARINA PARK PHASE 2

PART 8 REPORT



OKRA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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COLOPHON

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Cork City Council is proposing to upgrade and improve the Marina Park Phase 2 area, through a Part 8 Planning Consent Process.

The development of Marina Park has been a long-term ambition of Cork City Council. Following the adoption of the Marina Park Masterplan by Cork City Council in July 2013 (refer Appendix 06). The Masterplan describes the vision and ambition of the overall development. The project's objective is to transform the existing landscape into an iconic park landscape with several distinct park attractions.

The delivery of Marina Park as the main public open space in the South Docklands is seen as a key economic driver and catalyst towards the regeneration of the South Docklands area.

The proposed Phase 2 scheme aims to provide an 'eco-park' and an area of high-quality public realm and landscape, while protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and biodiversity of the area. The scheme aims to improve public accessibility and amenities through the site, with an enhanced maintenance schedule, restoration of the historical structures and enhance the biodiversity within the park. The application is covering an area of 13 ha when completed it will form part of the 32 ha Marina Park Master-plan.

Marina Park is located east of Cork City centre, with much of the site situated on reclaimed land along the southern shore of the river Lee. It adjoins the South Docklands, a former industrial area now scheduled for re-development for housing, retail, leisure, and offices. The proposed improvements works on Phase Two will extend from The Atlantic Pond to Church Avenue and will include the "Nature" zone of the park, accommodating picnic areas, adventure play areas, preserved marshland zone and several architectural heritage sites.

The works on the park will include a section of the southern stream approaching the Atlantic Pond and the area to the south of the GAA stadium. This area falls under the Part 8 approval for phase 1 but was not carried out at the time, due to budget constraints.

The objective of the public park works include:

- The creation of a world class regional Park at the heart of Cork City, to support the City commitment to develop sustainable communities and a sustainable way of living.
- Provide an 'eco-park' and an area of high-quality public realm and landscape, while protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and biodiversity of the area.
- The creation of a high quality sense of place which reflects the natural and historical setting and identity of the site, which connects all elements of the wider park and urban context - linking pedestrian, cycle, residential, community and recreation networks;
- To develop the park to its full potential and ambition established in the Park Masterplan 2013;
- Contributing and enabling Cork Docklands Development to fulfil its potential as one of the best places in Europe to live

and work.

- The creation of conditions to support increased active travel, recreation, sport, learning and social interaction to meet Cork City's target for the area.

This part of the Cork City Centre has a number of key strengths, opportunities and challenges. The proposed Phase 2 scheme seeks to provide a range of integrated and well-located interventions that will support and enhance this natural and historic area as a vibrant and restored 'eco-park' in the heart of Cork city.

Cork City Council appointed a multi-disciplinary team lead by OKRA landscape architects with OCSC Engineering consultant and HHC Architecture as conservation architect. The team brings expertise in the areas of planning, public realm, urban and landscape design, transportation, civil engineering, environmental design and conservation.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

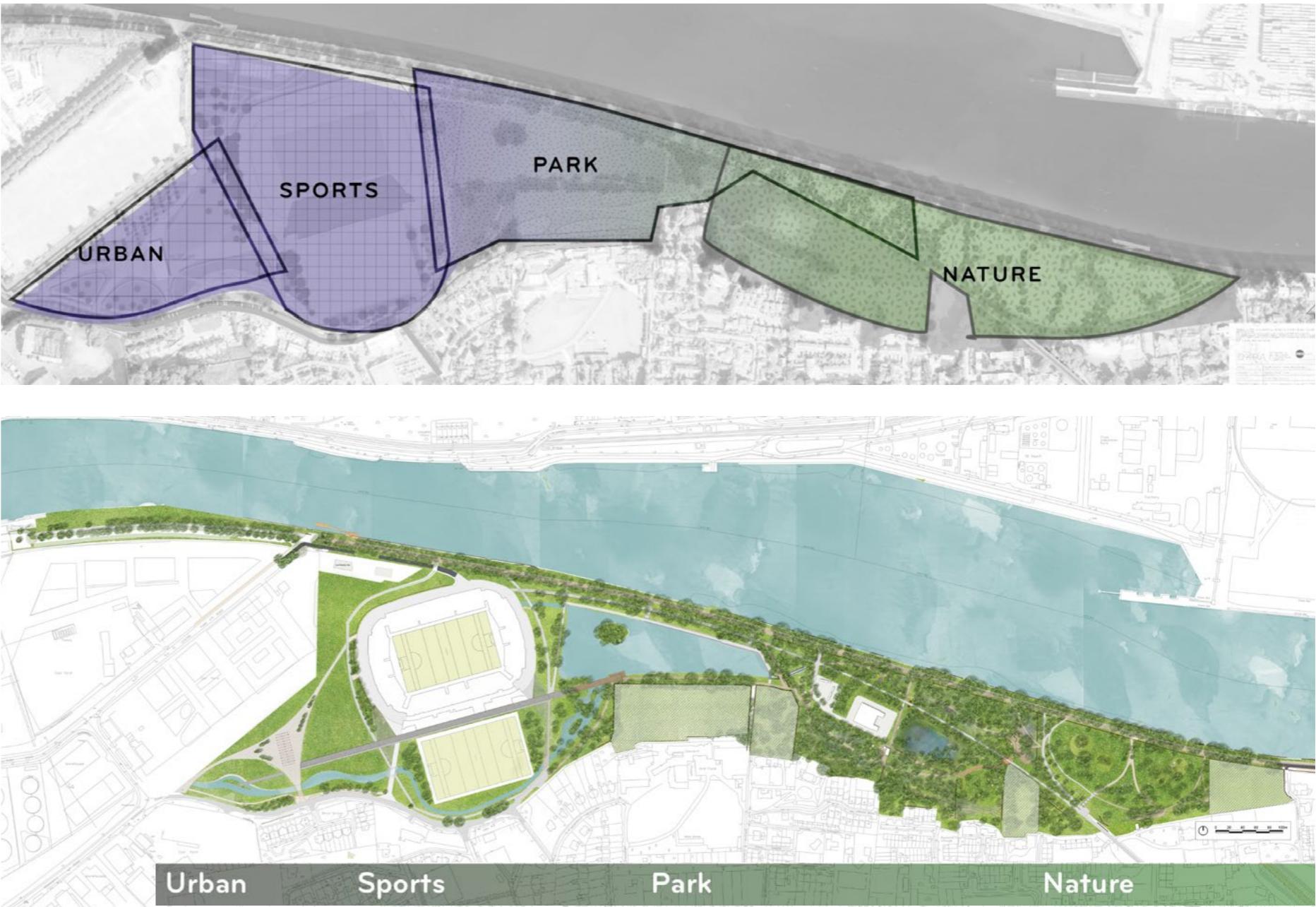
1.2 THE VISION FOR THE PARK PHASE 2

The Marina Park Phase 2 is located along the River Lee at the East of the City centre. This historic Park area of the City is in the 'park' and 'nature' zone defined in the Marina Park Masterplan. It has several architectonic heritage structures: Barrington Folly, the slipway, boat house, the old quay wall and boundary walls and the existing natural assets of the site, the Atlantic Pond, the marsh, woodland, and open meadow areas. Each unique piece of the site proposal aims to strengthen these assets through the park development and create an iconic 'eco-park', with a strong identity and connection to the local nature and history. The park design will provide an enhanced, biodiverse, active, safe, and durable park which integrates the existing and proposed park and urban environments.

Phase 2 of the park aims to implement the Masterplan objective to 'transform the existing landscape into an iconic park landscape with several distinct park attractions. The idea is to create a green framework, a water framework and a framework of infrastructure that creates a strong identity for the park, whilst being flexible enough to offer opportunities to add activities and special places within this overall framework'.

The design is developed around the themes: The accessibility, the active, the ecological (green and blue) and the cultural, that have been defined in the masterplan. The goal of the Phase 2 park scheme is to create a high-quality sense of place which reflects the natural and historical settings of the site which will be expressed in the design of the park elements: pathways, fixtures, play, learning, sports and leisure.

'Respect for Nature', is an important principle taken into the design of the park, it is made to preserve the natural resources and promote quality of life people and animals around it. It uses existing native plants and geographic features to be more efficient, while also enjoyable and creating an 'eco-park'.



Diagrams showing the thematic zones in the masterplan concept



Site pictures



2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 SITE CONTEXT

Located along the south banks of the River Lee, the Part 8 application area includes ca. 13 hectares, located within the larger 32 hectares Marina Park Masterplan.

The site of Phase 2 of the park, coincides in general with Area B as described in the master plan, extending from Pairc Uí Chaoimh to the west to Church Avenue on the east. To the North it is bordered by the Marina Promenade and River Lee and on the south the convent gardens and private residential properties. The recently constructed greenway runs through the area on the path of the former railway line and extending at the east of the site towards the river creating additional access and play area (snakes and ladders).

The area includes the Atlantic Pond, its surrounding and related outfall zone to the east. It was originally designed to drain the reclaimed land and is now a popular amenity facility and home to a local flora and fauna.

Further to the east the pump station compound is located along the railway embankment. The compound is operated by Irish Water, is fenced and not accessible to the public. The woodland, grassland and scrub area to the north and south appears to be remnants of woodlands associated with the old railway line and Dundonion Castle. Species recorded include Sycamore, Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastnum*), Sessile Oak, Wych Elm, Beech, Ash and Holly. The scrub is largely composed of bramble, Willow species (*Salix* spp.) and have encroached in several areas but are predominantly found in the wetter ground of the woodland. This grassland habitat is wild and unmanaged. It is composed largely of coarse grass species and ruderals but is more species rich than the amenity grassland found elsewhere on site.

The marsh is described in the book 'Wildflowers of Cork City and County' as "remnant, impounded brackish marsh which is home to dense clonal stands of Sea Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus maritimus*) and Greater Reedmace (*Typha latifolia*), together with scattered plants of the local halophyte Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*). Some luxuriant plants of Short-styled Field-rose (*Rosa stylosa*) adorn its margins, while the formerly bare embankments are rapidly



Map showing the main features of the site

being colonised by a range of plants, including the naturalised Butterflybush (*Buddleja davidii*) and the ubiquitous pest of Mediterranean origin, Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*).

The far east of the site is predominantly open green field named 'Holland Park' bordered by the embankment and Dundonion Castle to the south. The tree survey indicates interesting tree species planted around in the open field and looks like an arboretum that started around 30 years ago but not developed any further. This grassland habitat is wild and unmanaged. It is composed largely of coarse grass species and ruderals but is more species rich than the amenity grassland found elsewhere on site. This habitat

is dominated by grasses such as False oatgrass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Other species occurring within this habitat are Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*).

The works on the park will include a section of the southern stream approaching the Atlantic Pond and south to the GAA Stadium. This area falls under the Part 8 approval for phase 1 but was not carried out at the time, due to budget constraints.

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 SITE CONTEXT

URBAN CONTEXT

The creation of Marina Park Masterplan (an additional 32 hectares) is central to the redevelopment of the South Docks area. The regeneration of the Cork Docklands area is a key part of the strategy for growth in the wider region to meet the objectives of social, economic, and environmental sustainability as advocated in the Cork Docklands Development Strategy 2001 (CDDS).

The Park will also benefit the wider city through the development of connecting links to the city, the greenway, west of Shandon Boat Club and eastwards to Blackrock Village and Blackrock Castle and the Mahon walkway.

In the close proximity to the Phase 2 area, the development of Pairc Ui Chaoimh, the completion of phase 1 and Greenway, the proposed scheme for the Marina Promenade and Blackrock village, create a network of high quality public amenities that form the Marina Park Masterplan and beyond.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The South Docks Drainage Strategy (Levels Strategy Stage 2)

Cork Docklands Development Strategy 2001 (CDDS)

South Docks Local Area Plan, 2008

Cork City Docks Issues Paper 2017

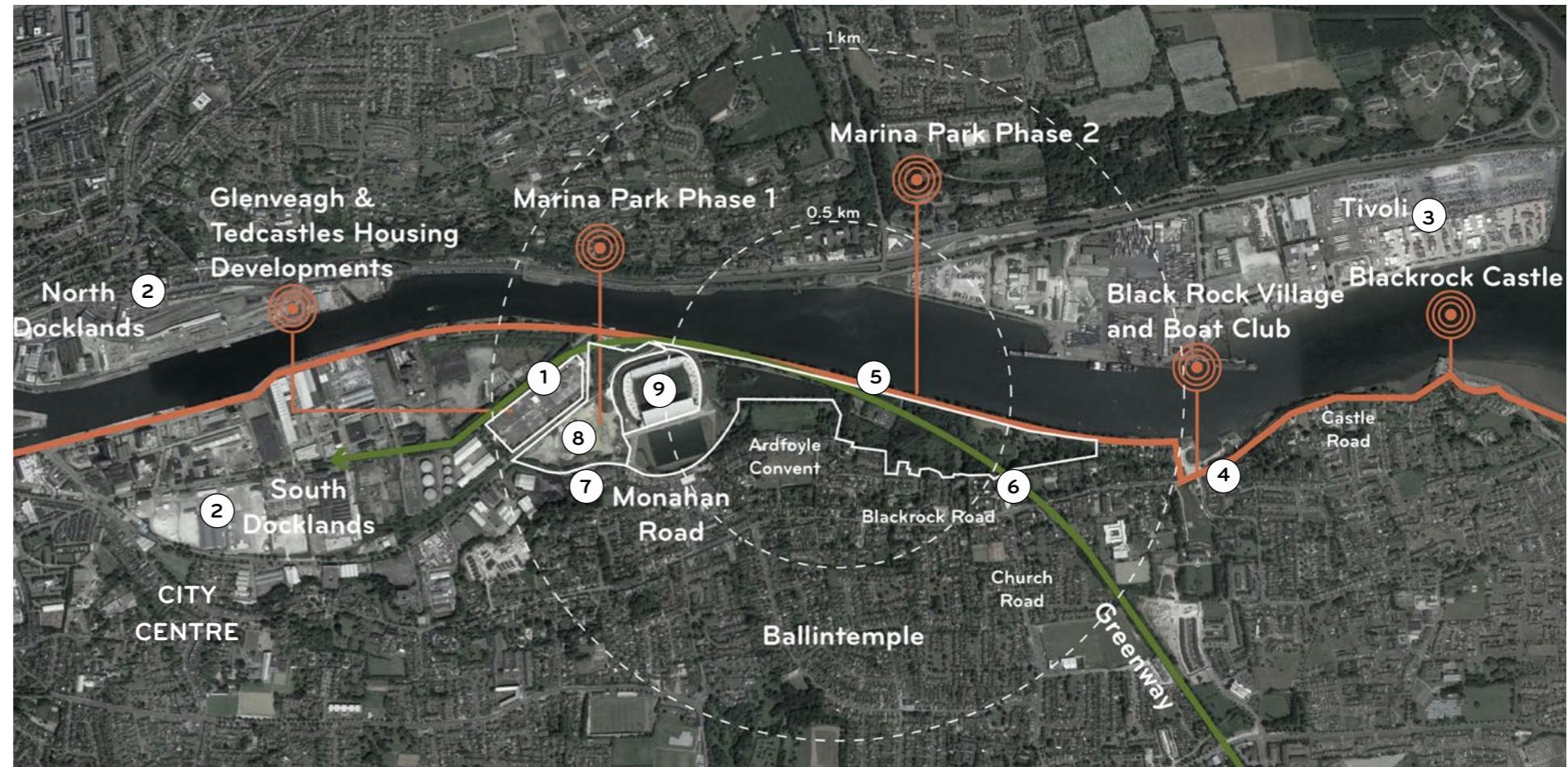
Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022-2028

Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS)

South Docks Drainage Strategy (Levels Strategy Stage 2)

Marina Park Phase 1 Part 8



1. Glenveagh & Tedcastles Housing Development

2. Docklands

3. Tivoli Docks

4. Black Rock Village and Boat Club

5. Marina Promenade

6. Monahan Road

7. Passage Railway Greenway

8. Marina Park Phase 1

9. Pairc Ui Chaoimh

2.0 CONTEXT

2.2 SITE HISTORY

Marina park is located at the base of an escarpment following the Old Blackrock Road westwards from the city, within the suburb of Ballintemple. Lining the road is a procession of large villas with extensive gardens, constructed by the wealthy citizens of Cork during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most of these houses remain largely intact, sitting along the ridge behind the park, however, many of the original gardens have been subdivided into plots to accommodate later residential development in the form of smaller houses and housing estates.

The Navigation Wall was built in the 1760's and is an impressive feat of early civil engineering constructed to prevent the south channel of the River Lee from silting up close to the mouth of the harbour. It is a stone quay wall nearly three kilometres in length that led to the reclamation of a large area of land along the river that was initially used as a city park, then a racecourse and is now the phase one of the park. The eastern half, that includes Phase 2 of the park, was reclaimed later, with the extension of the quay walls and the introduction of the railway line serving Cork, Blackrock and Passage West. The eastern side of the reclaimed land continues to be used for recreation; with the green areas lining the Marina road, the former railway line and the Atlantic Pond combining to create a pleasant urban amenity. However, outside these areas the park is ill-defined and overgrown, and much of the built heritage is difficult to access and at risk due to neglect.

The protected structure within the Phase two site boundary include Barrington's Folly, further there are several structure of historic significance including: the Slipway, boat house, old Quay wall and boundary walls. These reflect the historical development and use of the area, they are all to be retained, conserved, and made accessible as part of the proposed master plan for the park and be a key identity of the new park. (Dundanion Castle is on private property and outside of the project scope).

For additional and more extended historical background of the site refer to the Appendix 05: Heritage Screening Report.



Band Stand, The Marina, c.1890 (source: Cork City Through Time by Kieran McCarthy & Dan Breen)



Barrington's Folly



2.0 CONTEXT

2.3 EXISTING PARK ASSETS



View of the existing Atlantic Pond

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.1 'ECO PARK' CONCEPT

ECOLOGICAL PARK PRINCIPLES

An 'eco' park is a park that's made to preserve natural resources and promote quality of life for the people around it. It uses existing native plants and geographic features to be more efficient, while also enjoyable.

In the phase 2 of the Marina Park the ecology and landscape characters will be the main framework of the park. All the park layers of Ecology, Heritage, Leisure, Play and Sport will have a strong relation to the landscape creating the iconic and specific character of the 'eco park'. For example play and sport facilities will relate to the woodland and will be formed along a woodland trail, or play connected to a low tree walk for children. Also the material selection will be of natural character to compliment the natural surrounding. Also creating pockets of activities by seasonal maintenance of the meadow, as shown in the following visual impression of the eastern meadow.



Concept diagram showing the different ecological types on site



ECOLOGY (GREEN & BLUE)

The identity and character of the different landscape habitats will be the main framework for the park.



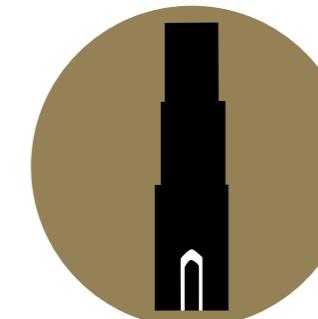
LEISURE & PLAY

All the leisure and play activities in the park will relate to the natural surrounding. That includes discovery trails, rest points to appreciate and learn from nature.



SPORT

All the sport activities in the park will relate to the natural surrounding. That includes active routes through the park which will promote active travel. Selecting material suitable for the natural environment and type of activity that fits the landscape.



HERITAGE

The relation between the heritage structures and nature that exist in the park will be maintained as a guiding principle in restoring these structures.

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.2 HERITAGE STRATEGY

CULTURAL HERITAGE STRATEGY

The cultural strategy will focus on the conservation of park's-built heritage making it the focal and identity drive for the new park. We aim to rediscover the history of the site and reinterpretate the cultural heritage of the area; open the park to its hidden structures for various activities. We recognize several main historical remains on the site:

1. Barington Folly
2. Dundanion Slip way
3. Boat House
4. Convent Garden wall
5. Boundary walls
6. Quay wall

A new path will follow the original line of the old Quay wall, leading visitors to the Barington's Folly and the visible remains of the Quay wall along the marsh. Additional natural trails will lead to the slipway and boathouse, creating together the park heritage trail.

As part of the Marina Park Masterplan, an architectural and heritage report (Howley Hayes, 2012) was prepared for the existing buildings in the Marina Park.

A Heritage Screening Report, Appendix 05,describes in more detail the historical structures on site and its close sorounding and sets several recommendations.



3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.3 ECOLOGICAL STRATEGY

GREEN AND BLUE FRAMEWORK

The main strategy for Phase 2 of the park, is to build on the existing green and blue qualities of the site and to retain and enhance the ecological habitats. We aim to retain as many trees as possible and establish an ecologically driven maintenance principle, to increase the biodiversity and strengthen the flora and fauna. As part of the green framework, we propose to strengthen, diversify, and improve much of the tree and under-story layer according to the natural ecological gradients, while considering the local conditions and ecological potential. To illustrate the design and maintenance for the park we have defined principles based on 'Natural Concession' guidelines for the specific landscape habitats.

There are four main landscape typologies in the park:

- The Pond
- The Woodland
- The Marshland
- The Meadow

The diagram above shows the green framework of the park consisting of the different topographical conditions, soil and planting. Together with the existing routes and urban context it forms the basis of the park pathways and activities; establishing the quiet zones in the park for nature exploration and the more active open and accessible areas.



Digital tools included to discover and learn from nature



Thematic plan showing the different ecological typologies identified on site



Woodland



Forest under-story



Meadow/grassland



Marshland

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

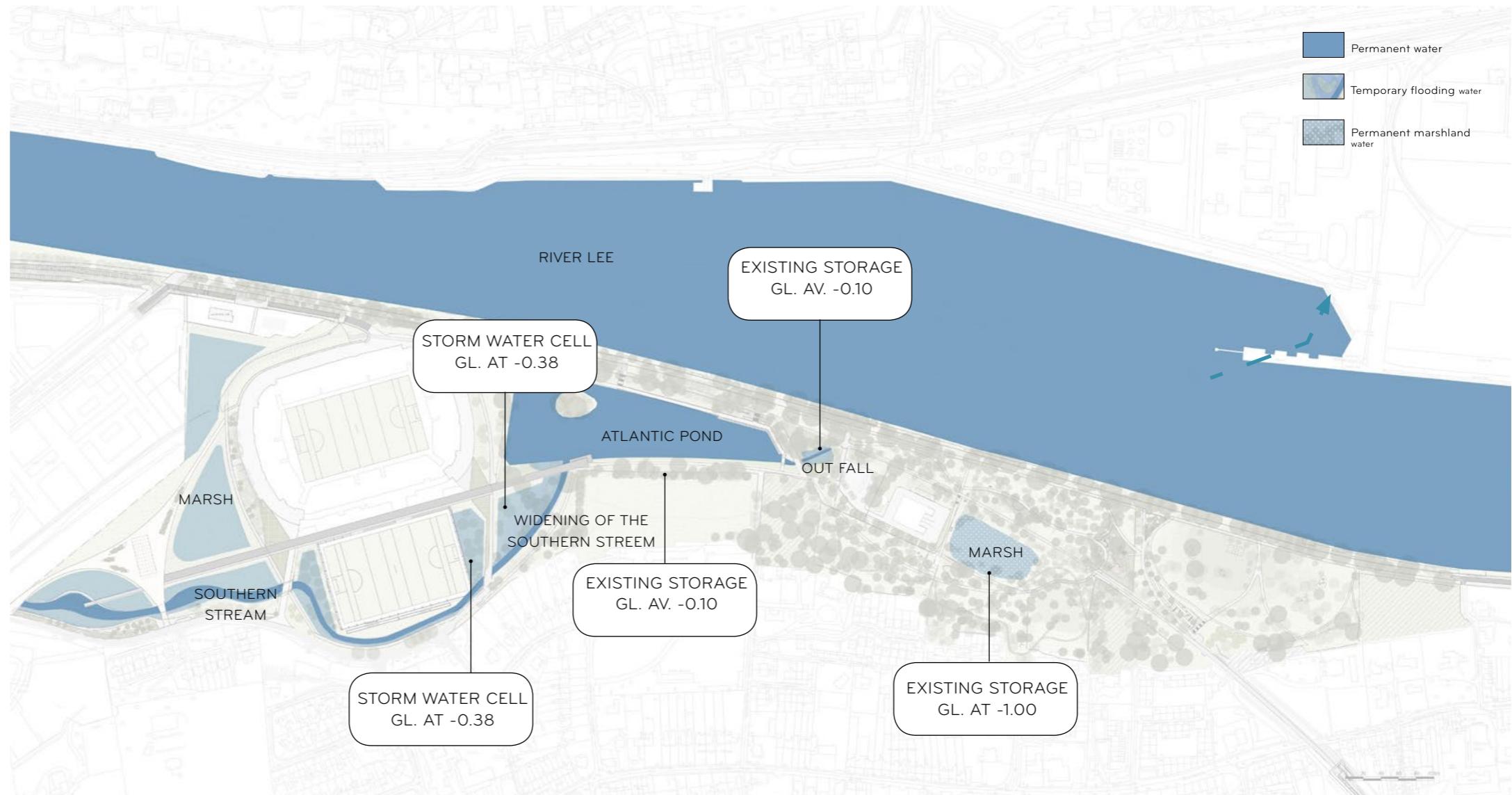
3.4 BLUE STRATEGY

BLUE FRAMEWORK

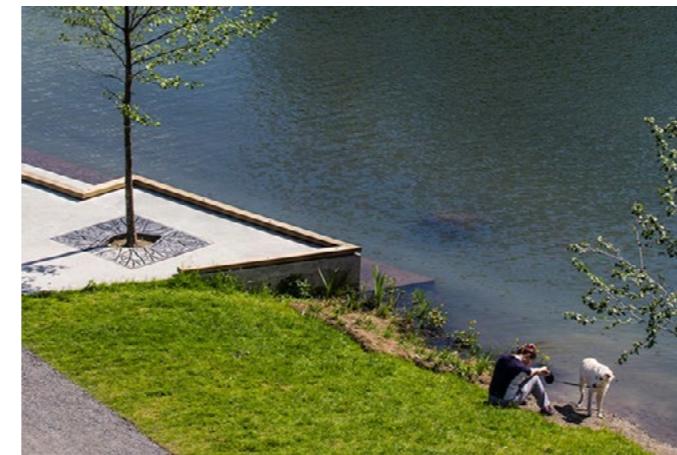
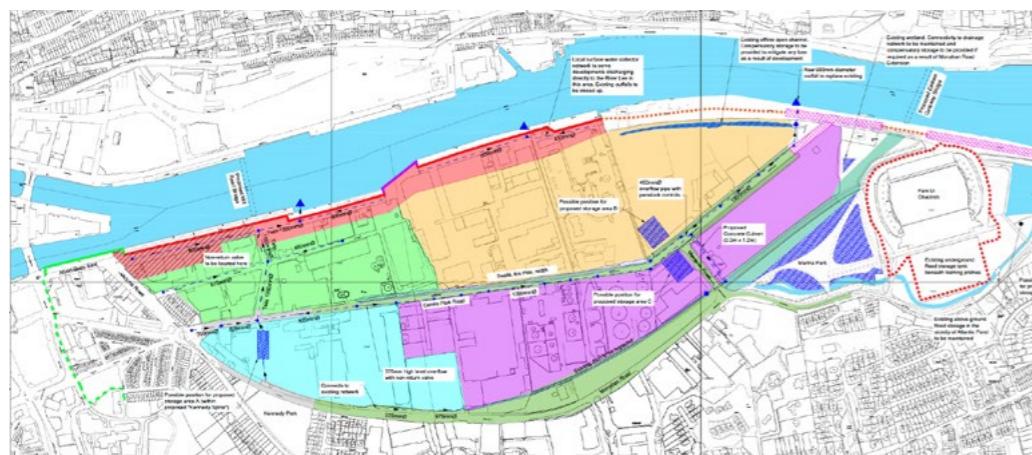
The presence of water in the Park lies at the heart of its identity. The park formerly formed part of the Lee's floodplain and washed along the escarpment at Dundanion castle and Barrington's Folly. We propose to rediscover this identity and enhance the network of water features throughout phase 2, to create a unique experience for the park visitors.

DRAINAGE & STORM WATER STORAGE

Marina Park is located within a flood risk zone and forms the drainage valve for the South Docks area. As such it is a basic functional drainage requirement and is the last resort in terms of flood attenuation. The park therefore plays an essential role in the flood risk management of the South Docks area. A significant proportion of the future surface water storage requirements will be provided by Atlantic Pond, the GAA All Weather Pitch area and the Marina Park Phase 1. The storage capacity will be further coordinated with the South Docks Drainage Strategy (Levels Strategy Stage 2), that informs the drainage and flood mitigation measures.



Thematic plan showing the extent of the water network on site



3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.5 ECOLOGY MANAGEMENT

WORKING WITH NATURE PROCESS

The park design will be cognisant of the ecological value of the habitats within and immediately adjacent to the plan boundary with emphasis on the value of these habitats in an urban context.

The ecology assessment identifies main habitats on site, including:

- **The Pond**
- **The Marsh**
- **The Woodland and Scrub**
- **Dry Meadow and Grass**
- **Wet Grassland**
- **Tree Line**
- **Stone Walls**

An important aspect in the park design is to maintain the ecological network and the free movement throughout the park area for

all park users including wildlife i.e maintaining the connectivity between habitats within the park area and also to habitats in the surrounding area. Any barrier effect between areas within the park is to be avoided as it may result in discouraging free movement of species between areas and as a result discourage colonisation of new areas within the park thereby preventing wildlife ranges from expanding.

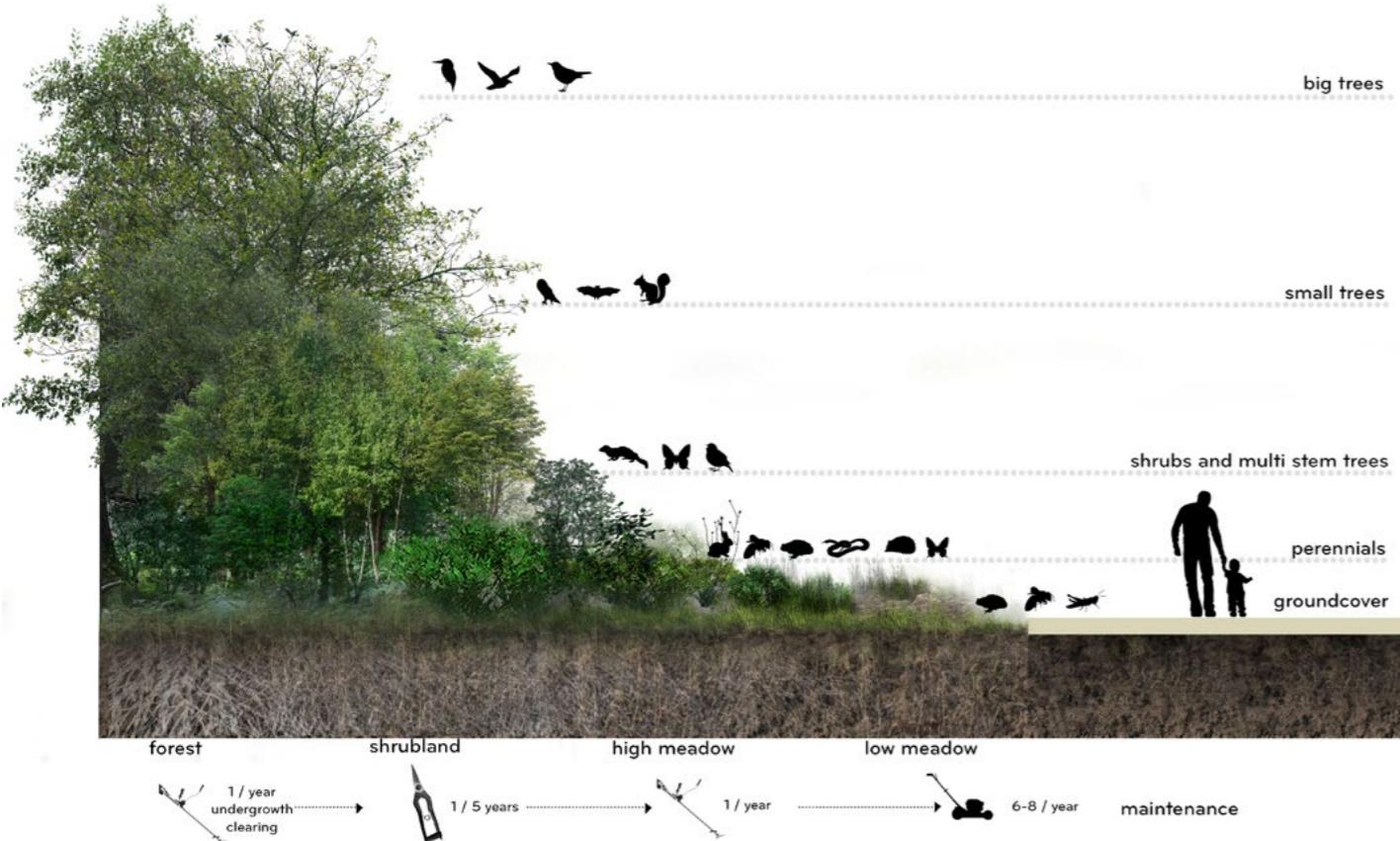
Educational use of the park in the ecological context, will be encouraged, involving schools and wildlife groups to utilise the park for educational purposes. Local community and wildlife groups will be consulted and form a core part of the park natural habitat design.

Ecological orientated habitat management plan will be developed

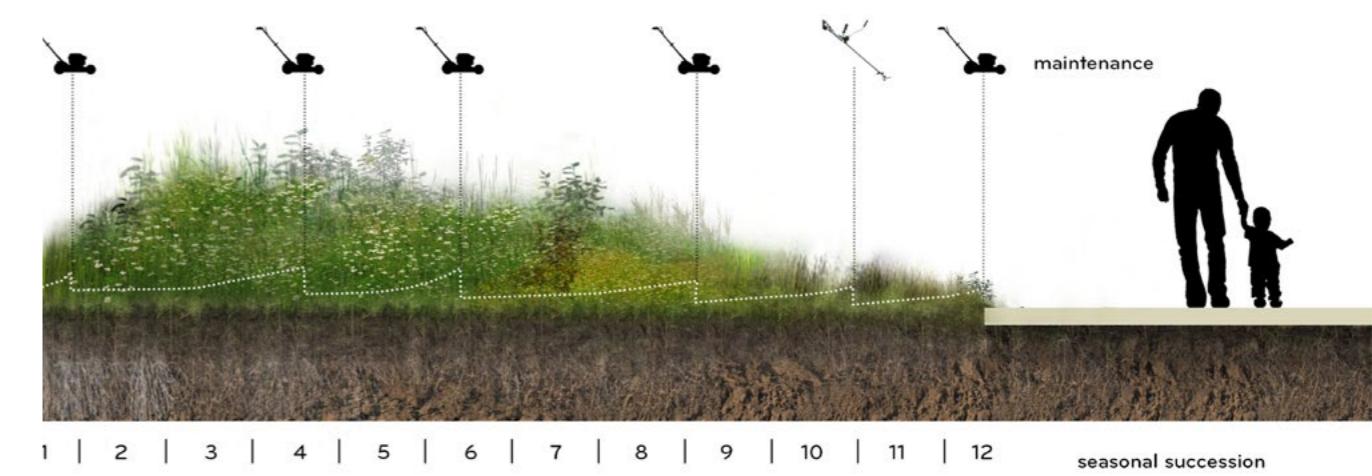
further, with specific management prescriptions for individual habitats, to achieve increased biodiversity in habitats within the park area.

The illustrative diagrams below, shows the principle for the maintenance of the woodland and scrub area adjacent to the pathway and the meadow area, working with nature succession and ecological sensitive principles, the zone adjacent to the path will be maintained to regenerate the soil and enhance the biodiversity. Further to this zone the maintenance will be minimal.

These ecological maintenance principles will be developed further with the establishment of the plant community and reviewed in the life cycle of the woodland. A selection of native Irish species will be introduced to support the woodland and grassland habitats.



Ecological maintenance principle for the woodland will help to restore native species, enhance soil quality, increase biodiversity and provide safe access routes.



Ecological maintenance principle for the meadow will help to restore native species, enhance soil, increase biodiversity and provide informal play and leisure areas.

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.5 ECOLOGY MANAGEMENT



View of the existing woodland

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.6 PARK PROGRAM

ACTIVITIES IN THE PARK

The ambition is to design a park that attracts many users from different age groups. The activities will be distributed throughout the park in relation to the landscape conditions, accessibility, and safety.

The Park zone surrounding the Atlantic Pond will be the green and blue amenity zone, used for meetings, walks and better access to the water. The nature area to the east retains more space and quiet for ecological development and history, being a green world full of hidden follies and interesting ecological habitats, to explore wildlife in.

The play and sports facilities will be well distributed through the park, in the more active zones that are better accessible, as the northern woodland and the open meadow.

The diagram above shows the distribution of facilities around the site and the relation to the natural surroundings. This is further detailed in the Park design chapter of the report.

It is important to program activities in the park all year round and fit them to the relevant user groups. Further consultation is required with the public and interest groups to refine the program for the park.



Thematic plan showing the main attractions of the site



Digital tools included to discover activities in the park



Running trails and fitness stations



Yoga classes



Playgrounds in the woods



Resting areas

3.0 PARK STRATEGIES

3.7 ACCESSIBILITY

The proposed Phase 2 will be well connected to the existing network of routes in the surrounding with several new entrances, pathways and trails. Together they will form a varied network of pathways and trails.

The diagram above shows the existing routes in the park area, including: The central axis that connects phase 1 of the park with the Atlantic pond, the refurbished greenway and the pedestrianised Marina Promenade. The proposed new pathways, trails and entrances will connect to this network and create together an extensive network for the park visitors to explore the park.

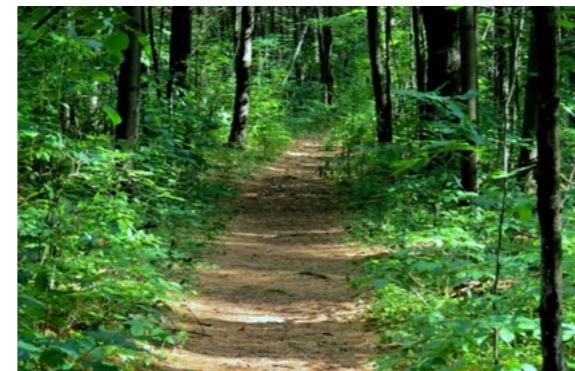
Bicycle stands are proposed at the park entrances, to encourage park visitors to arrive by bike and walk to the park. All the main pathways will be made accessible to all, so all the main features of the park can be accessed. The pathways material and scale will fit the natural character of the park and its landscape surroundings.



Thematic plan showing the pathway system



Woodland pathway



Woodland trails



Paved pathway in meadow area



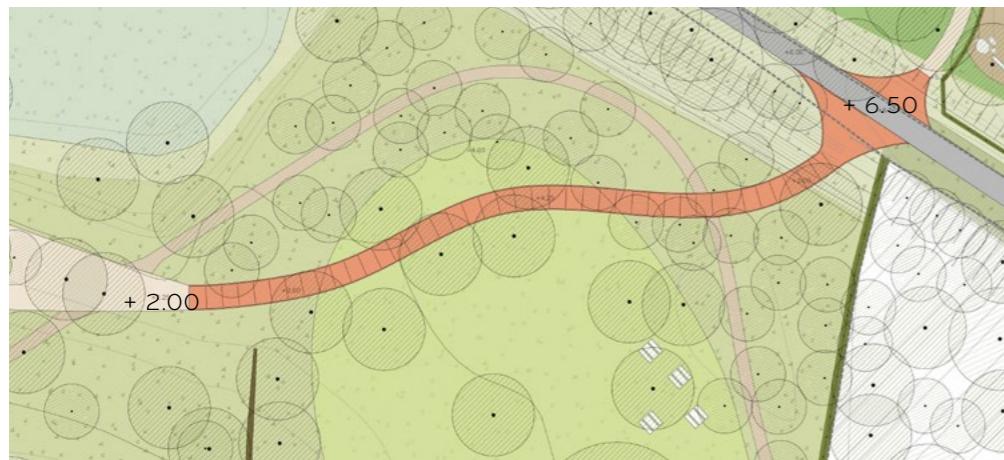
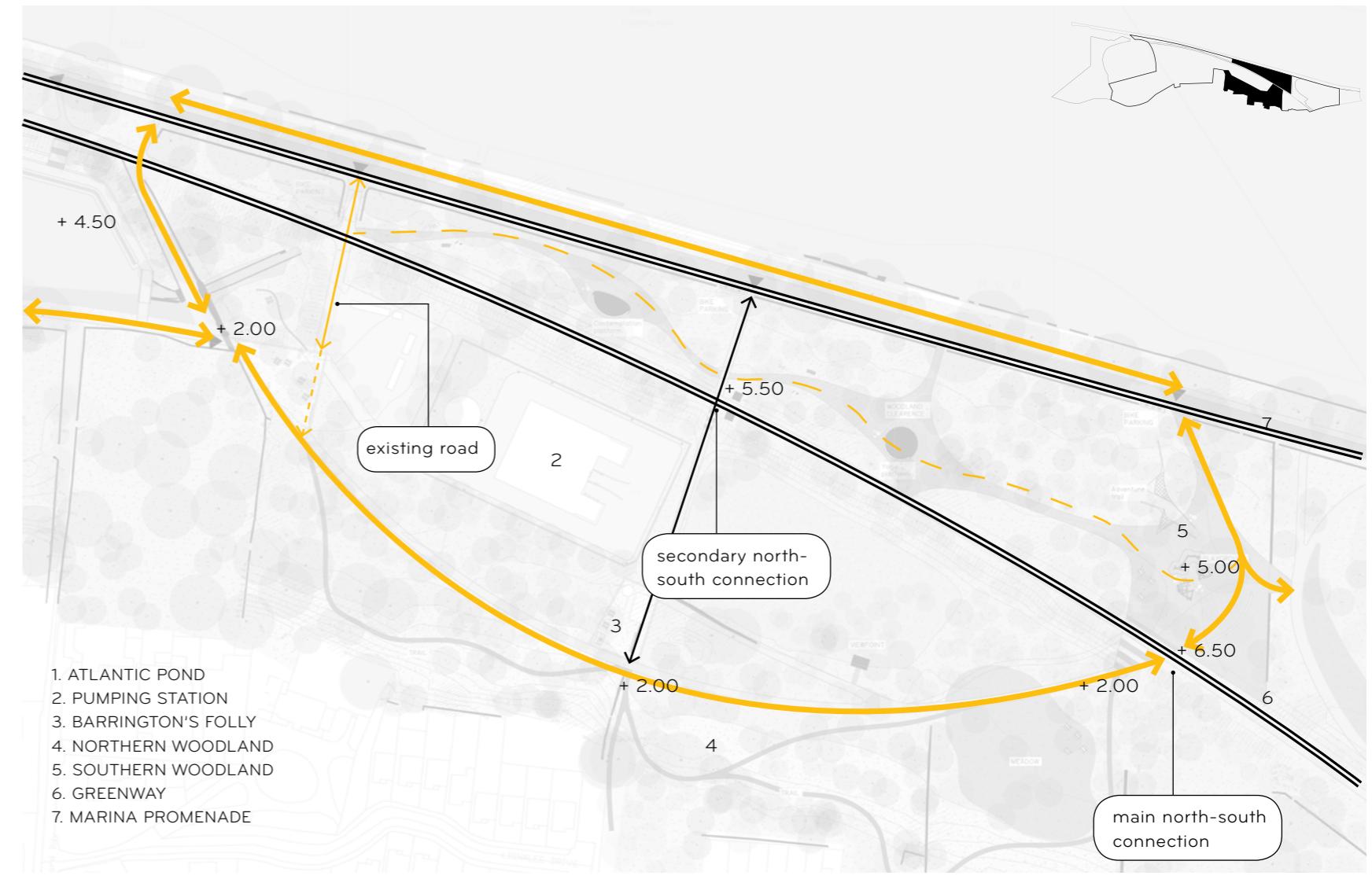
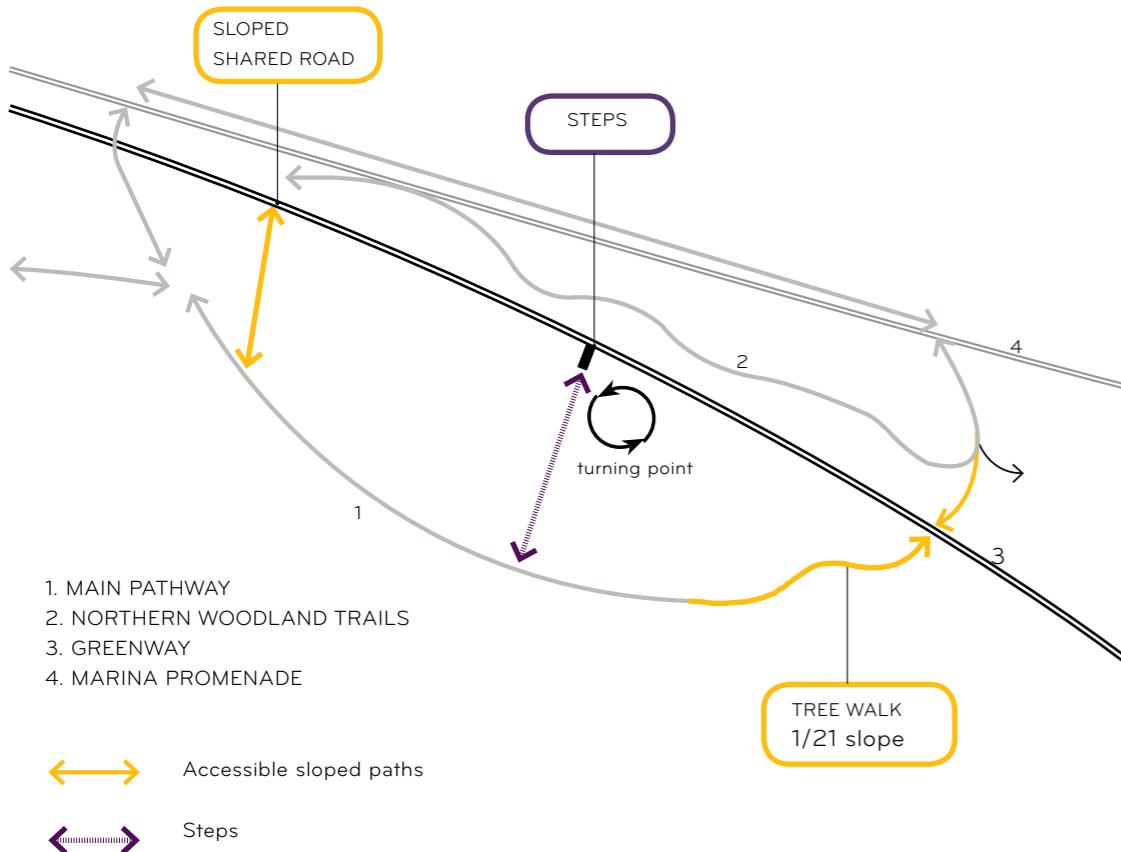
Informal paths in meadow

3.0 PARK DESIGN STRATEGY

3.7 ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

In order to provide access to all the main areas of the park it is important to provide level access, sufficient path width and good surface. A study of the critical levels is shown in the diagram on the right. Below, a diagram of the proposed design solution.



Plan of the Tree Walk connecting southern and northern woodland



Computer generated model of the Tree Walk



Design reference for the Tree Walk