

Our Vision for

THE OLD POWER STATION

Vastern Road, Reading

Strategic Shared Cycle Footway

448.LAND.RP.001 RevA



Berkeley
Designed for life



1.1 Introduction

This document has been produced to explore the design of the cycle footway through the scheme. The document explores the rational behind decisions made, and shows the technical reasons and planing requirements that influenced the final design.

This document should be read as a supplement to the Design and Access Statement produced as part of planning application for 55 Vastern Road, 200188.

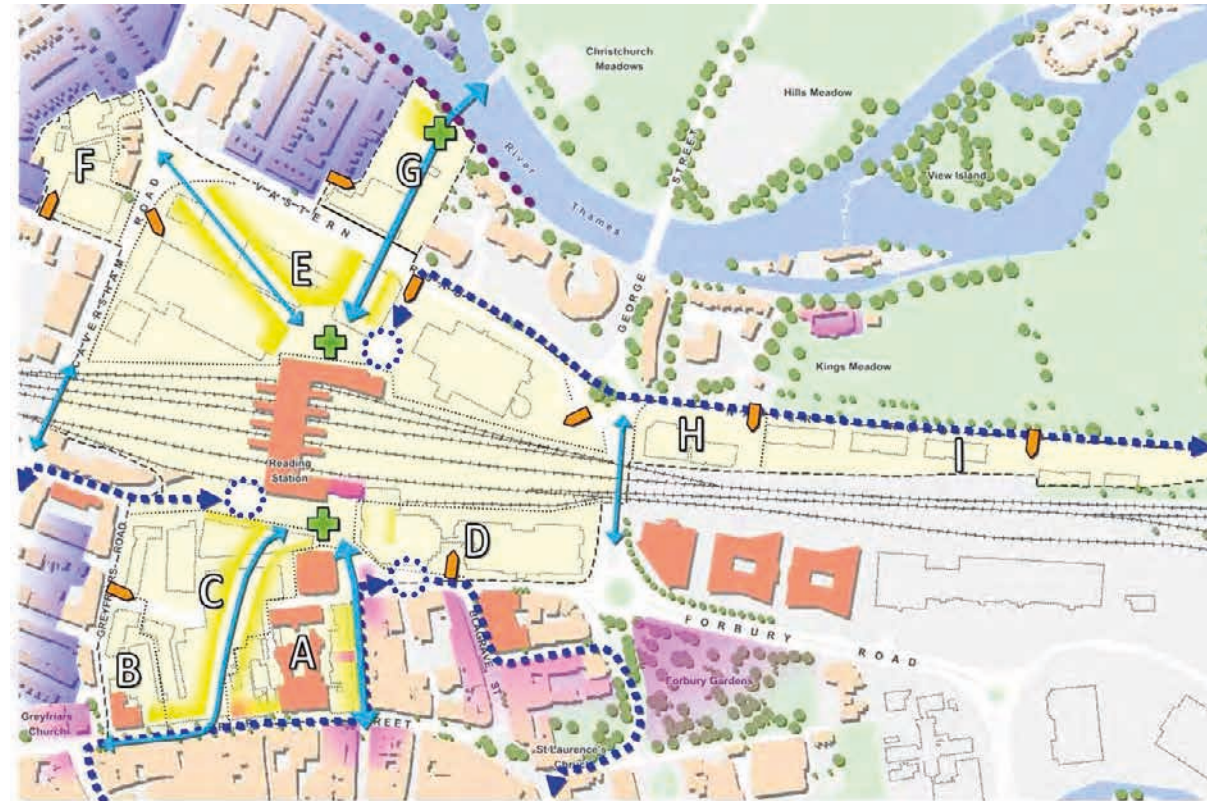
1.2 Planning Guidance

The former SSE Office site on Vastern Road is an allocated site within the Reading Borough Council Local Policy for redevelopment for residential use.

Key points within the allocation include:

- Maintain and enhance public access along and to the Thames;
- High quality green link from north of the station to the Christchurch Bridge;
- Potential for an area of open space at the river side;
- The main use should be residential;
- Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Our proposal will aim to respond to the key elements of the allocation as well as delivering our vision for the site.



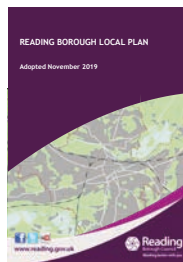
Key

- Sub-area boundary
- Major Opportunity Area
- Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area
- Existing building
- Recent building or building under construction
- Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential
- Nearby sensitive location—heritage assets

- New area of open space
- Vehicle access point
- Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)
- Location of transport interchange
- Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route
- Retained or new public access along waterways
- Activation of key routes and spaces with town centre uses

Sub-Areas

- A CR11a: Friar Street and Station Road
- B CR11b: Greyfriars Road Corner
- C CR11c: Station Hill and Friars Walk
- D CR11d: Brunel Arcade and Apex Plaza
- E CR11e: North of the Station
- F CR11f: West of Caversham Road
- G CR11g: Riverside
- H CR11h: Napier Road Corner
- I CR11i: Napier Court



Key Planning Documents
Reading Station Framework
Reading Borough Local Plan

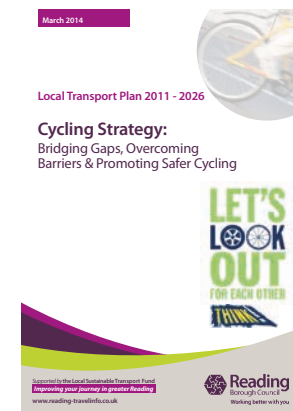
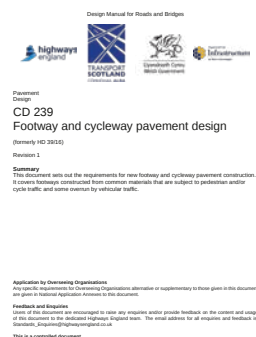
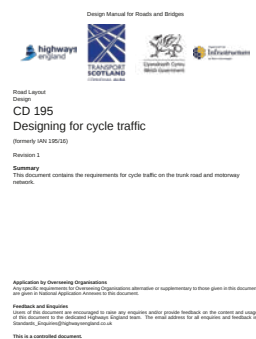
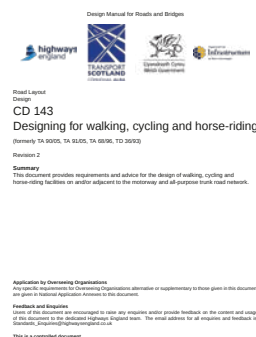
Major Opportunities Diagram extracted from Reading Borough Local Plan

1.3 Technical Design Guidance

The cycle footway required as part of the site allocation is regarded as a key movement corridor. As such, we must seek to achieve the following; not only to make the route functional and safe, but ensure we can integrate it with our design proposals and open space requirements.

- Route width of minimum 3m;
- Activate route through the scheme with active frontage such as front doors and residential entrances;
- Clear wayfinding strategy;
- Ensure the route is accessible to all user groups;
- Provide a shared space route;
- Provide a safe cycle environment through safe geometric design, ensuring the route maintains appropriate widths, minimal street furniture clutter and appropriate gradients (Max 5%);
- Appropriate surface finishes for combined cycle and pedestrian use;
- Cycle and pedestrian priority at vehicular junctions;
- Appropriate landscape treatments; Clear stem trees to remove low branches and compact shrub planting to reduce vegetation en-croaching onto route;
- Good visibility throughout the route, especially at junctions and corners; and
- Appropriate measures to naturally control cycle speeds to ensure a safe environment for all is provided.

We have been advised by Stantec, and their advice can be found within a separate document that should be read in conjunction with this one: *47500-TN003 Proposed Ramp Design Justification*



1.4 Design Overview

The scheme takes cues from the history of the site, with the original power station characterised by three differing areas.

The architecture and landscape will take inspiration from each of these zones knitted together with a Victorian theme of architecture, with a Power Station and Water influence to the River Thames frontage; storage and ancillary buildings within the middle; and a rail / sidings inspiration along Vastern Road.

The new cycle foot way that connects from Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road, passes through each of these character zones and as such is treated slightly differently as it passes through them.



Character Zone Diagram



Illustrative Masterplan

Access and Movement

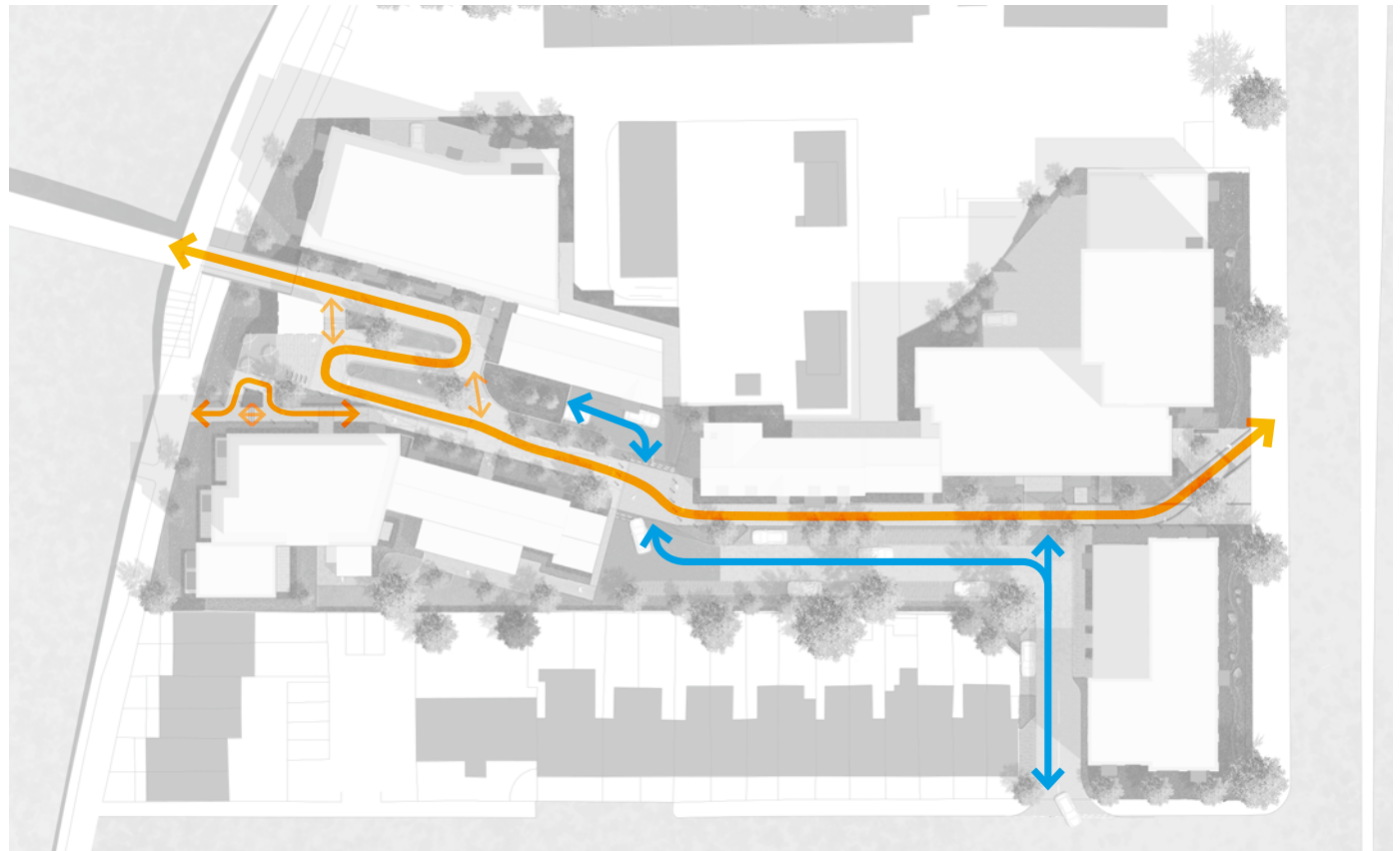
Through the central part of the site sits a dedicated 3m wide cycle footway, flanked by landscaped elements and tree planting. This route connects the town centre from Vastern Road, through to the Thames Towpath and Christchurch Bridge to the north.

With the changes in level between the site, towpath and Christchurch Bridge, gentle deviations are introduced to the routes to maintain a DDA-compliant route at 1:21 or less throughout the site. This is supplemented through the introduction of shorter and more direct, stepped pedestrian routes that provide a more convenient pedestrian journey. These more direct pedestrian routes, should also reduce the number of pedestrians using the cycle footway through the meandering section.

As the dedicated cycle footway runs through the centre of the scheme, we have introduced a switchback as a speed calming measure for cyclists. The switchbacks themselves widen to 4m to provide safe manoeuvring space for all users.

Vehicles access the site through Lynmouth Road.

-  3m wide Foot / Cycleway to / from Christchurch Bridge
-  Foot / Cycleway to / from the Thames Towpath
-  Additional stepped routes
-  Vehicular Route



Wayfinding

A strong wayfinding strategy is about delivering a combination of design moves and signage, to aid navigation through a space or scheme.

As Vastern Road provides a key non vehicular movement route as per the local policy guidance. It is key that this route is clearly defined and provides easy navigation through the scheme, connecting to the wider movement network.

The scheme is proposing to use a combination of wayfinding tools.

Landmark Sculpture

An iconic piece that will be recognised and becomes a landmark for users of the route

Signage

Simple signage that is used to aid users at decision making points.

Route Markers

Opportunity to use inlay studs and paving details to reinforce the key route through the site to aid navigation. The studs would be placed in the centre of the route to aid navigation.

Design Details

These are elements are part of the schemes design composition. For instance, using feature trees along a route; inclusion of details within the paving pattern; and the positing of buildings to frame and deflect views and movement.



Gateway Sculpture
Illustration of potential wayfinding sculpture



Signage Post
Low key posts marking locations and directions



- Landmark Sculpture
- Signage
- Route markers

1.5 Character Area Breakdown

Rail

Design Summary

The gateway into the site is located around a proposed feature London Plane tree, that echoes the existing plane trees planted along Vastern Road. The design of an open hard surfaced plaza creates a highly permeable gateway for cyclists and pedestrians. The paving detail picks up on the heritage of the railway sidings, providing a metal inlay detail that is also visualised through the street furniture.

Footway / Cycle Route Breakdown

- 3m width provides adequate space for route to be shared by cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users;
- Route is shared to reduce conflicts between user groups and risks of conflicts at front doors and building entrances;
- Raised tables used to give pedestrians and cyclists priority at crossings over vehicles;
- Distinct material change and road signs for vehicle users to signify change in priority and carriageway use;
- Textured paving inlay to provide directional guide to movement route; and
- Gateway sculpture positioned outside of the key 3m movement route.



Herbaceous planting supplemented with bulb planting providing seasonal colour



Soft frontage on to Vastern Road



Clear route legibility into and out of the site



Use of paving details that aid wayfinding and nod to the railway heritage



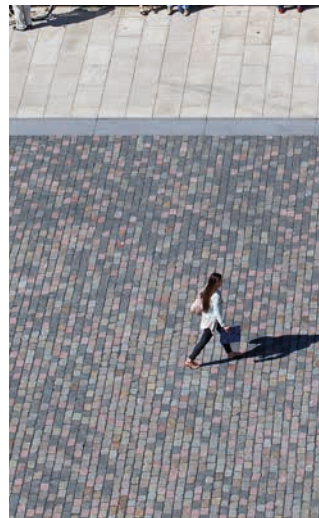
Storage

Design Summary

A single two way street provides vehicular access to the site. This vehicular route is tree lined and includes on street parking embedded within landscape beds to animate the street scene. A separate 3m wide shared cycle footway provides a safe non vehicular movement route through the site, connecting the river to the town centre.

Footway / Cycle Route Breakdown

- 3m width provides adequate space for route to be shared by cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users;
- 2.5m wide landscape verge provides safe separation between cycle footway and carriageway;
- Raised tables used to give pedestrians and cyclists priority at crossings over vehicles;
- Distinct material change and road signs for vehicle users to signify change in priority and carriageway use;
- 1.5m min spacing between bollards to allow easy passing for cycles;
- Clear visibility for both vehicles and cycles at crossing;
- Route is shared to reduce conflicts between user groups and risks of conflicts at front doors and building entrances;
- Landscape buffer along buildings to provide a threshold off of the main 3m movement corridor; and
- 0.5m paved edge to on street parking to reduce conflict between door opening of parked cars.
- Wide crossing point providing safe space for pedestrians and cyclists.



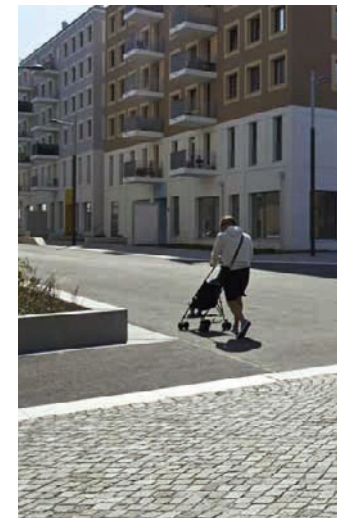
Distinct but complimentary material choices to define different user zones



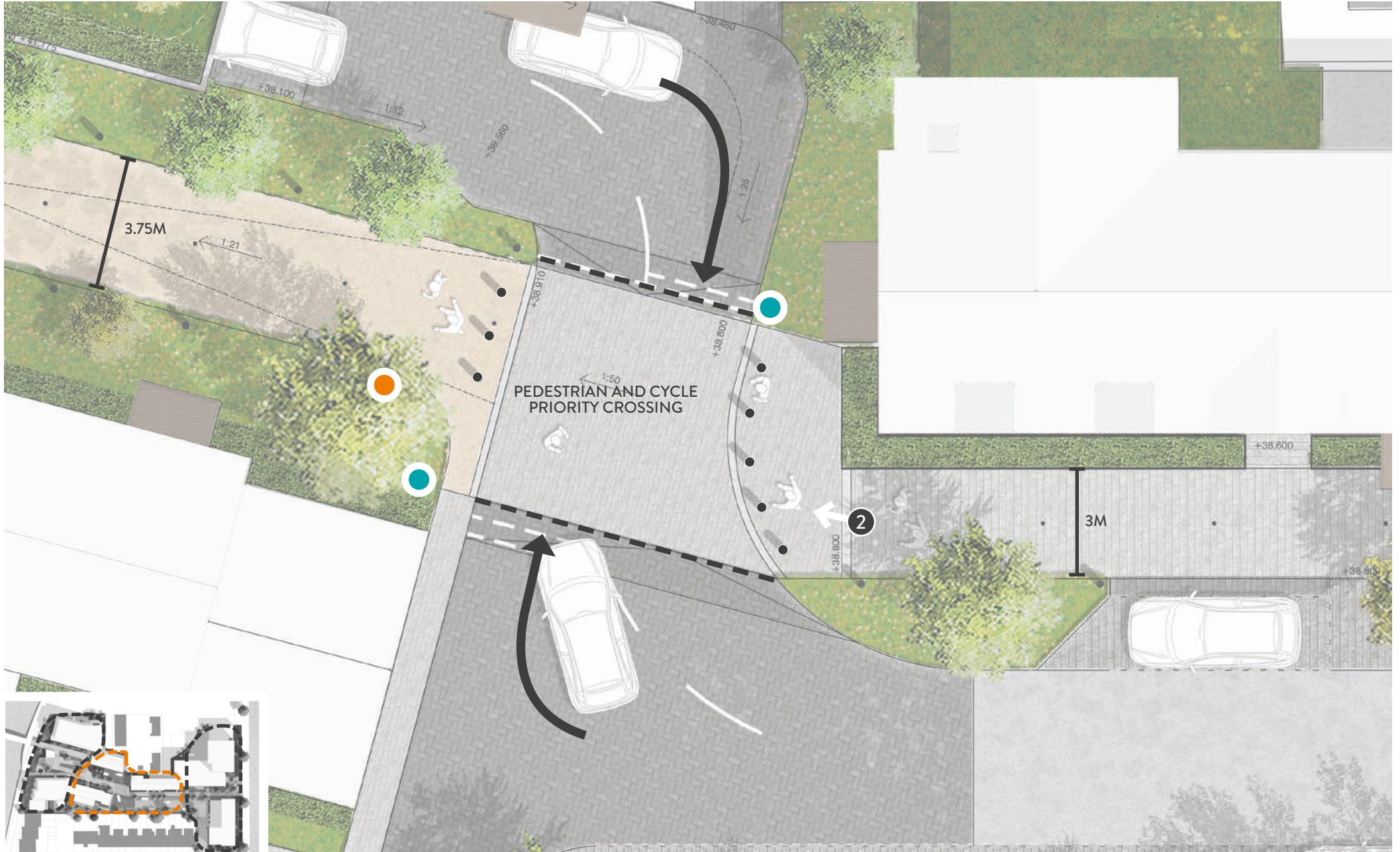
Use of weathered steel and dense planting beds



Clearly defined movement route for cycles and pedestrians



Distinct paving materials showing change of use and priority



Power and Water

Design Evolution

All parts of the cycle footway have been continually developed throughout the planning process. Taking on board resident and council officer feedback, and seeking to improve both the functional and aesthetic nature of the route.

The next few images capture the development of this more technical part of the scheme, where the route navigates multiple uses such as residential entrances, public amenity space, commercial space and a level change.



September 2019

1. 3m wide route throughout cause potential conflicts at corners and residential entrances.
2. Sharp bends that were impracticable for cycles.
3. No distinction in paving could cause confusion and hinder navigation.
4. Awkward landscape spaces with no real use.
5. No ramped access to tow-path from within the scheme.
6. Direct pedestrian route via steps to reduce traffic using switchback.



November 2019

1. 4m wide route at key points such as corners and residential entrances. 3m wide route elsewhere.
2. Curved bends incorporated to ease cycle use, but radii were still felt to be too sharp.
3. Introduction of wayfinding items such as studs to mark the cycle foot way. Still a lack of distinction between used on the route.
4. Larger usable landscape spaces, but too vegetated. Worries that forward visibility could be hindered on the cycle footway.
5. No ramped access to tow-path from within the scheme.
6. Direct pedestrian route via steps to reduce traffic using switchback.



May 2020

1. 4m wide route at key points such as corners and residential entrances. 3m wide route elsewhere.
2. Bends are now designed to accommodate cycles and pedestrians comfortably, as well as occasional cycles with trailers.
3. Additional paving materials and paving bands used to define spaces and ease navigation within the space.
4. Landscape areas are now open usable areas of amenity grass, protected by a kerb to deter short cutting.
5. Ramp integrated with steps to provide an accessible route directly to the tow-path from within the scheme.
6. 3m wide stepped access routes to guide able foot traffic off of the main cycle footway

Design Summary

The space provides a safe cycle footway environment that meanders from the bridge level into the site. The meandering route allows front door access from all proposed buildings to ensure the route is animated.

The route weaves through pockets of grass slopes and terraces that provide resting points and small areas of informal recreation.

Footway / Cycle Route Breakdown

- 3m width provides adequate space for route to be shared by cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users;
- Route gradient is 4.76% (1:21) which is shallower than the recommended maximum cycle gradient outlined within *CD 195: Designing for Cycle Traffic*;
- 3m wide stepped sections are provided to create spacious direct routes for pedestrians;
- Wide stepped route reduces number of pedestrians using ramped sections;
- Lengths of ramped sections are also below the recommended maximum lengths of 30m;
- Ramped sections are supplemented by minimum 5m length flat sections to ease use and naturally reduce cycle speeds creating a safe environment for all users;
- Route width widens at corners to reduce conflicts between users and ease cycle manoeuvring; and
- Route is shared to reduce conflicts between user groups and risks of conflicts at front doors and building entrances.



Focus on native species of planting boosting biodiversity



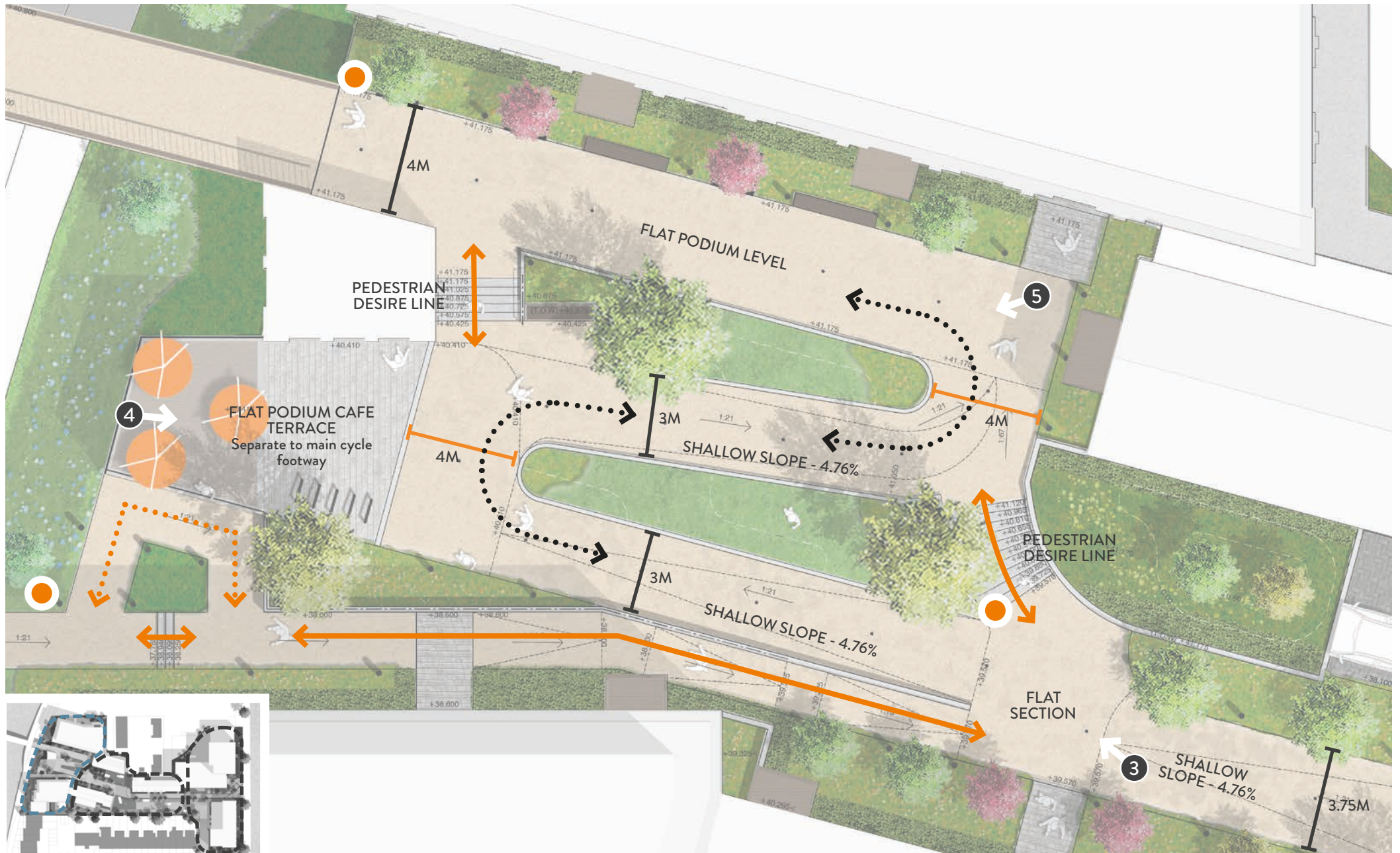
Native riparian species along the river edge, using well spaced fastigiate trees



Clearly legible routes via steps and ramps



Soft planting along grass banks running from the buildings down to the towpath







Conclusion

The proposed scheme addresses key points raised within the sites allocation.

The scheme provides a high quality green link between Christchurch Bridge and Vastern Road. The spaces provide open space appropriate for a residential setting. The scheme enhances access to the River Thames through accessible safe movement routes.



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