

A Place to Belong

Station Hill is an incredible opportunity to connect the station to the wider town. It will be both dramatic and intimate, social but with quiet; a place that leads you on to explore Reading itself, but that also softens the steps of increased footfall. A place that offers a real sense of Belonging - Reading's fifth B.

Our vision draws on the landscape to create a new, flexible gateway to the city. Station Hill will be distinctively of its place, a signpost for an emerging Reading, reflecting its rich history and huge future. If location is everything, then Station Hill has it all. Connecting the station to the wider town, this vibrant new neighbourhood brings the sociability and community feel of a village to the heart of bustling Reading.

Step out on the weekends to discover market stalls laden with local Thames Valley produce. In summer, classic film screenings, or pop-up events from table tennis to urban swings might enliven Friars Walk. As the weather turns chilly, a hot chocolate from the winter market will help to keep you warm.



4.1 LANDSCAPE

The Rivers of Reading

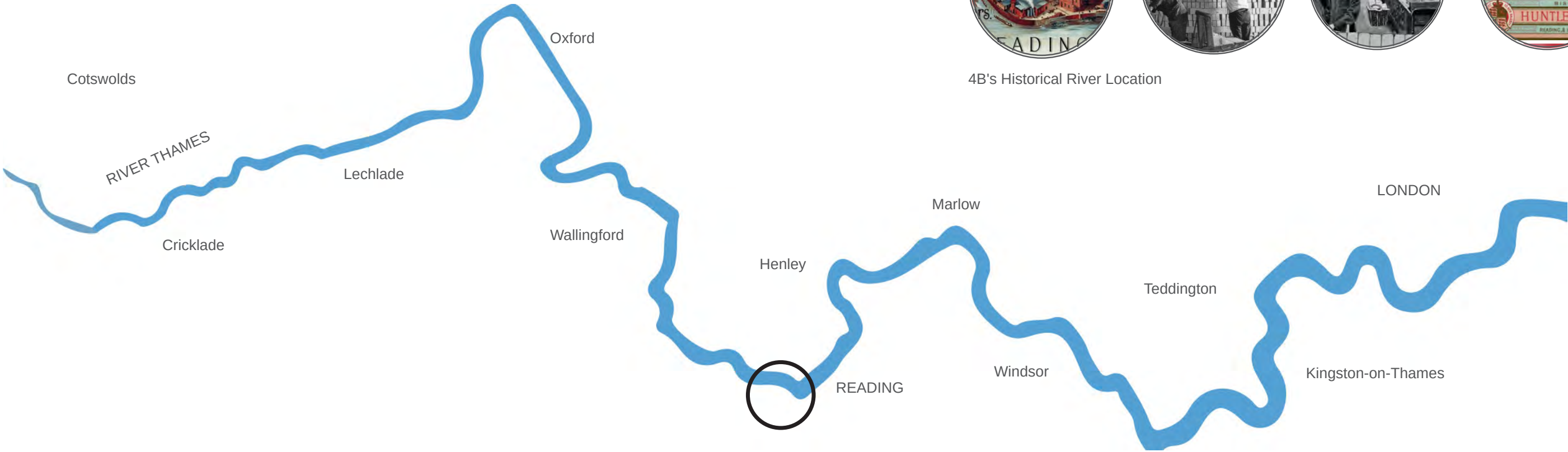
The River Thames and the River Kennet have shaped the growth of Reading. The location of Sutton Seeds, Simmonds Brewery, Huntley and Palmers, and S & E Collier near the river helped with distribution of goods. The river is both picturesque and ecologically important, but it was also a significant piece of mobility infrastructure that is still used and enjoyed today for recreation.



The Thames path near Reading



4B's Historical River Location



4.1 LANDSCAPE



Caversham Weir



Chalk Stream in the nearby Chilterns



The Thames



The Thames



Thames Walk near Reading



Caversham Lock

4.1 LANDSCAPE

Inspired by the Rivers

The River Thames flows through Reading to London and the North Sea. We have used the rivers and their characteristics as a starting point for the design of the public realm. The features of the river can be translated into urban form as shown in the diagrams. The river narrative also shapes the form of benches, as if they have been carved by the river, the flowing articulation of the paving and the literal connection with water through interactive water features.

Banks and Eddies

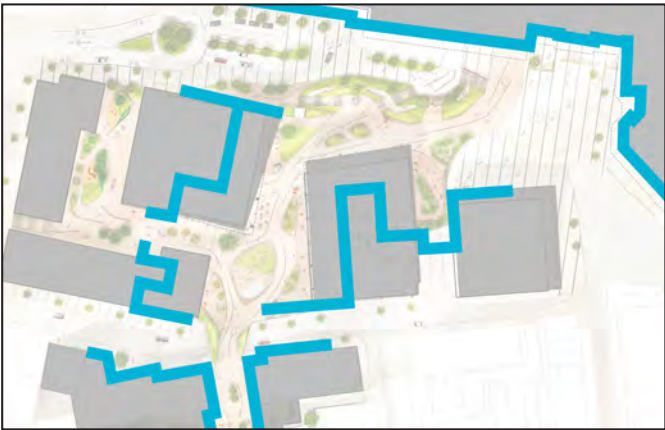
The 'banks' are defined as the back of the lobbies, the station facade and the active frontages that gives the spaces definition and direct the 'current' or the flows of people. The 'banks' are purposely shown as the internal lobbies of the buildings to emphasise the importance of an inside/outside connection between the external public realm and the internal lobby spaces.

The 'eddie's are the active frontages, the spill-out from cafés and other ground floor uses that sit between the currents and the banks. These activities are critical to the success of the public realm and the placemaking.

Currents

The 'currents' are the desire lines of people moving through the landscape and public realm to key entrances; the station, Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road. These desire lines need to be comfortable and natural so as not to block peoples journey from A to B. However, 'currents' should also feel like a sequence of enjoyable and intriguing experiences that slows the pace and encourages people to linger in the public realm.

BANKS



Containment and definition



Active frontages



EDDIES



Calm places off the current



Flexible spill-out areas



CURRENTS



Desire lines - where people want to go



Directional paving



Boulders

The ‘boulders’ will be the spaces that people occupy in the landscape and public realm for lunch, socialising, relaxing and people watching.

The movements of people flow around the ‘boulders’, so these are spaces to stop, linger and settle in the landscape and public realm. This also includes the Pocket Park overlooking the station and lower plaza, which will be a key green space for the new Station Hill community.

Pools

The ‘pools’ provide an opportunity for people to physically engage with the tactile quality of the water. The central interactive water feature will provide a day-to-day atmosphere and attraction into the heart of the development. The fountains can be turned off to allow the main space to host events, installations and cultural celebrations.

BOULDERS



Spaces of refuge



Spaces to occupy, relax and linger



POOLS



Protected by boulders



Physical connection to water



“The street is the river of life.”
William H. Whyte

4.1 LANDSCAPE

Shadow Studies - Summer

The diagrams opposite illustrate how the sun will fall in the space at key moments of the day during summer. The bullet points below begin to suggest how people might use these spaces or the activities that could take place to maximise the exposure to the sun.

Summer solstice (21 June) - morning to early afternoon



- 9am
- Good morning coffee location (coffee carts)
 - Seating to catch up on emails before a meeting
 - Breakfast on the go
 - Sitting in Pocket Park waiting for colleagues/friends to arrive at the station
 - Beautiful morning light cast onto the planting

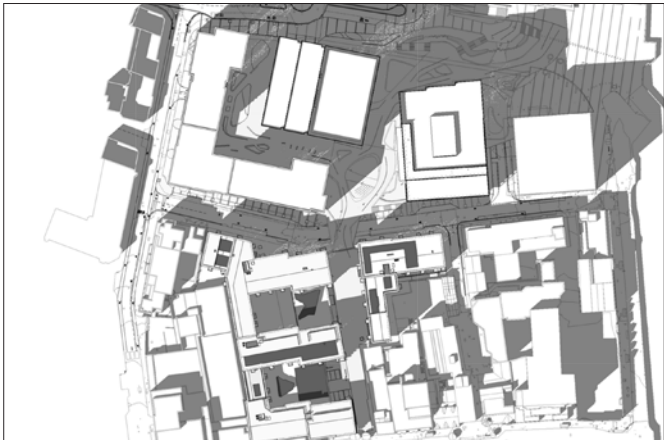


- 11am
- Incidental meeting outside of BLDG C
 - Families/residents and visitors enjoying the square
 - Early lunch fitness classes in the square
 - Catching up on emails away from desk
 - Interactive fountains in the sun



- 1pm
- Peak lunch crowd
 - All seats and occupiable space full to capacity
 - Deck chairs and umbrellas deployed
 - Entertainment/music/performances
 - Screens during the summer for sporting and cultural events
 - Interactive fountains in the sun
 - Residential open space in the sun

Summer solstice (21 June) - afternoon to late afternoon



- 2pm
- Good sun exposure for ground floor of One Station Hill
 - Afternoon working at the outdoor workstations at Garrard Street steps
 - Seating in the sun overlooking Station Hill Plaza
 - Water feature in the sun



- 3pm
- Afternoon working at the outdoor workstations at Garrard Street steps
 - Intimate seating set within planting on Garrard Street steps
 - After meeting drinks at the SW corner of One Station Hill
 - Socialising at the Three Guineas pub
 - Garrard Street frontage of One Station Hill getting good sun

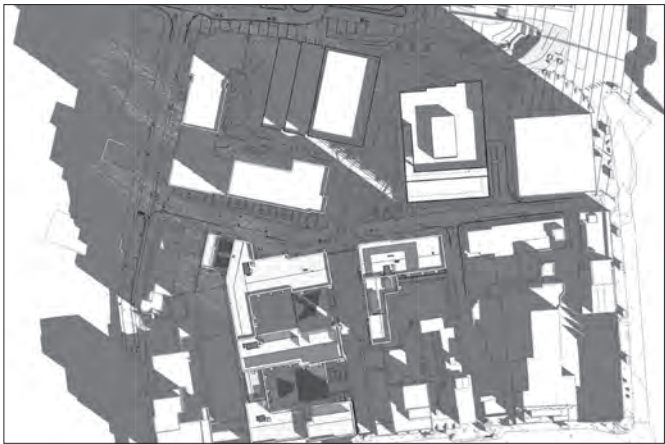


- 5pm
- Enjoying the afternoon sun in the Pocket Park
 - Socialising on the Pocket Park terraces
 - Sliver of sunlight in the Station Hill Plaza
 - Garrard Street west and frontage getting good sun

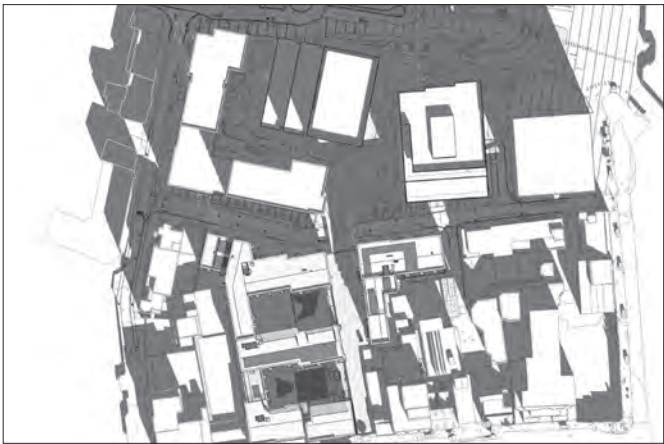
Shadow Studies - Spring

The diagrams opposite illustrate how the sun will fall in the space at key moments of the day during spring. The bullet points below begin to suggest how people might use these spaces or the activities that could take place to maximise the exposure to the sun.

Spring equinox (21 march) - morning to early afternoon



- 9am
- Good morning coffee location (coffee carts)
 - Seating to catch up on emails before a meeting at the stool height work stations with USB and Wi-Fi



- 11am
- Sliver of light in the Station Hill Plaza
 - Sitting on the bridge looking down a sun-lit Friars Walk
 - Pocket of sun to the west of One Station Hill so opportunity for seating area

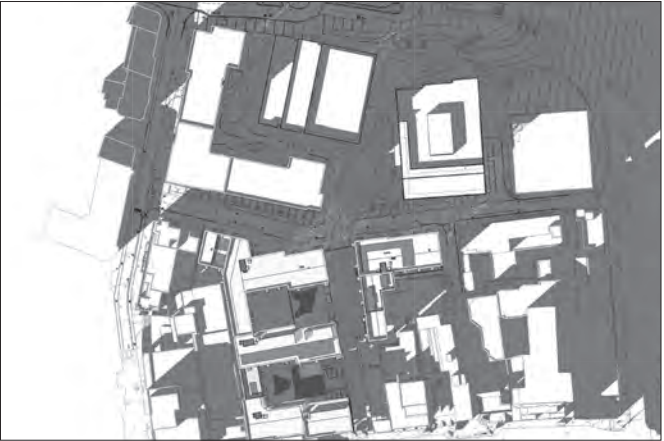


- 1pm
- Peak lunch crowd so adequate seating needed in Station Hill Plaza
 - Lunch on the terrace seats in the Pocket Park
 - Part of the water feature in the sun
 - Screens during the summer for sporting and cultural events
 - Interactive fountains in the sun

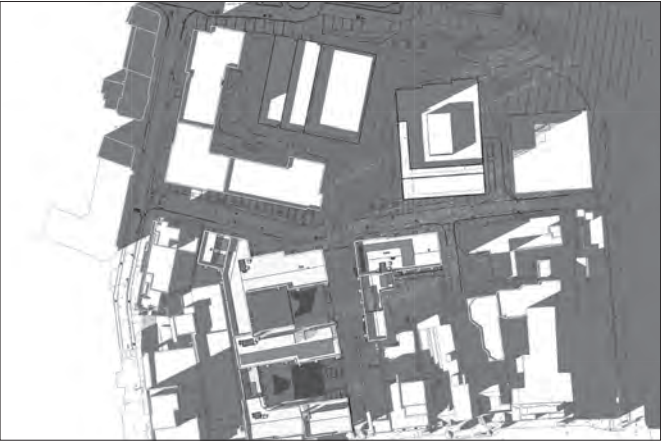
Spring equinox (21 march) - afternoon to late afternoon



- 2pm
- Good sun exposure for ground floor of One Station Hill
 - Afternoon working at the outdoor workstations at Garrard Street steps
 - Seating in the sun overlooking the square
 - Water feature in the sun



- 3pm
- Afternoon working at the outdoor workstations at Garrard Street steps
 - Intimate seating set within planting on Garrard Street steps
 - After meeting drinks at the SW corner of One Station Hill
 - Socialising at the Three Guineas pub



- 5pm
- Enjoying the afternoon sun in the Pocket Park
 - Socialising on the Pocket Park terraces
 - Evening rush of commuter traffic through Station Hill Plaza
 - Sliver of sunlight in Station Hill Plaza
 - Garrard Street west and frontage getting good sun

4.1 LANDSCAPE

4.1.3 PHASE 2 DETAILED APPLICATION

The Landscape Layout

The design of the public realm has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- Ensuring the new development becomes an integral part of the city.
- Improving connections into and through the development.
- Defining a strong, identifiable entrance plaza and new public square that complements the existing spaces in the city centre.
- Creating a place where residents, workers, neighbours and visitors can spend time and feel they belong.
- Providing a variety of spaces with different qualities and characters to suit all needs and desires - from quiet intimate spaces to have some time on your own, to bustling social spaces to meet your friends.
- Building in flexibility for future development adjacent to the site without compromising the current scheme.
- Providing an accessible, safe and secure community in the heart of the city.
- Designing a beautiful, green and sustainable landscape to be enjoyed by all.



Character Areas - Site Wide

Through the design and appearance of the paving, materials, lighting, planting and furniture, the public realm will be experienced as one cohesive landscape from the Station through to Friar Street. Within this cohesive design, there will be spaces of distinct and different character. These spaces will differ by the uses taking place within them - for example an active Main Square with fountains and installations, a green and playful pocket park, and quieter areas such as The Rest with more trees and planting.

It is vitally important that there is a variety of scale, character and opportunities to interact with the landscape so that everyone can feel a sense of belonging, comfort and well being.

The below character areas are outlined in detail across the following pages.

- Key
- 1

Station Square
- 2

Pocket Park
- 3

The Rest
- 4

Station Hill Plaza
- 5

Station Hill
- 6

Garrard Street
- Planning Application Boundary



4.1 LANDSCAPE

4.1.4 AREAS - PHASE 2

Station Square - The New Front Door to Reading

The existing Station Square between the station and Thames Tower is to be extended to the west, leading intuitively into the new public realm. The design is careful to respect the existing pedestrian routes across the space, while also providing a clear view and legible new route from the station entrance into the development. As the new front door to Reading this space is important, and is the first view visitors arriving by train will have of Reading. With new trees, seating, and the planted sloping 'pocket park' down to Station Hill, the initial impression will be of a welcoming, civic, people-friendly green space.

When leaving a station travellers often need to pause for a moment to figure out where to go next. Overlooking the retained steps next to the station entrance a ledge provides a place to orientate yourself, have a seat, and if required re-charge phones and connect to Wi-Fi (3). Nearby, seating under trees provide another opportunity to pause for a moment before proceeding on your journey (5).

- Key
- 1

Station entrance
- 2

Directional paving at Station entrance
- 3

Workstation ledge with power, Wi-Fi and seating
- 4

Existing steps retained
- 5

Raised planter to garden area
- 6

Seating edge overlooking Pocket Park
- 7

Existing outdoor seating to 3 Guineas pub
- 8

Existing bollards retained
- 9

Benches, lights and paving retained
- 10

Existing subway under Station

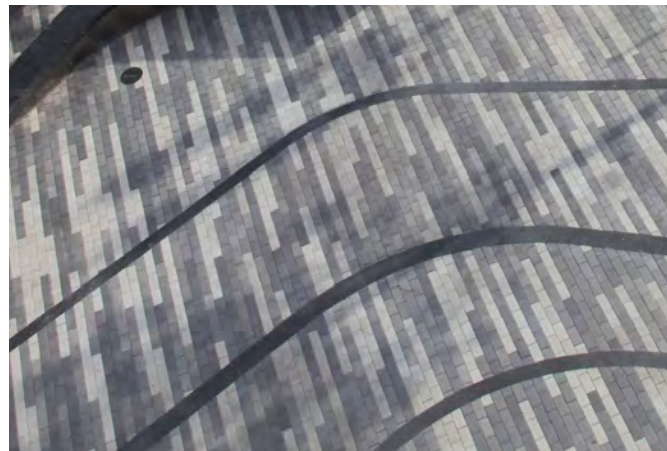
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Work Station



Feature trees with seating



Directional Banding



Illustrative Plan, Station Square



Illustrative View, Station Square

4.1 LANDSCAPE

Pocket Park

The station entrance and the new public realm that extends around into the development is four metres higher than the entrance to the subway under the station. This level difference is used to create a dramatic sloping green park in front of the station, and will be one of the first views of Reading when arriving by train.

Part of the existing steps down to the subway and entrance are to be retained, and two new sets of steps provide access up into the development. Between these steps the slopes will be planted with grasses, wildflowers and small flowering trees, with seating terraces at different levels to provide places to sit and relax.

To add a playful twist to the pocket park a slide provides a faster way of descending. By the side of the slide a scrambling slope provides a playful route back to the top.

Key

- ① Tunnel entrance from Station
- ② South facing lawn with feature tree
- ③ Public Art
- ④ Raised planters with trees and seating
- ⑤ Existing steps and ramps retained
- ⑥ Scramble play bank
- ⑦ Proposed steps leading to seating areas
- ⑧ Slope planted with grasses and wild flowers
- ⑨ Seating areas within pocket park
- ⑩ Slide
- ⑪ Lift for step free access
- ⑫ Trees and planting

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Scramble play bank



Banked Meadow Planting



Trees and planting between steps and terraces



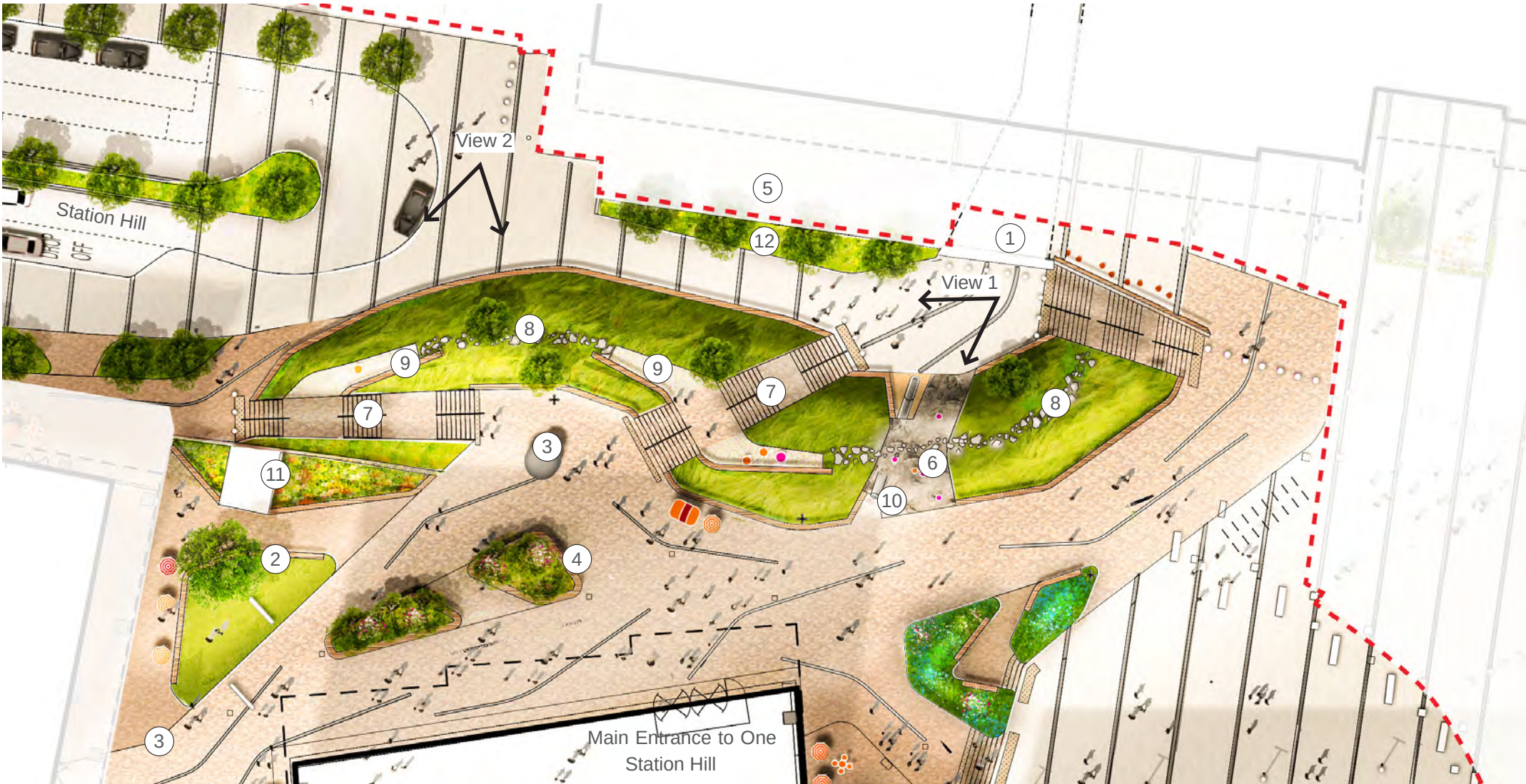
Intimate terraces with planted slopes



Steps and handrail



Grass terraces and slopes



Illustrative Plan, Pocket Park



Illustrative View, Pocket Park View 1

4.1 LANDSCAPE

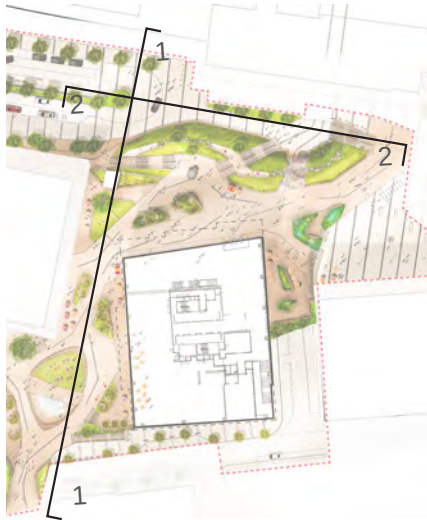


Illustrative View of Pocket Park View 2

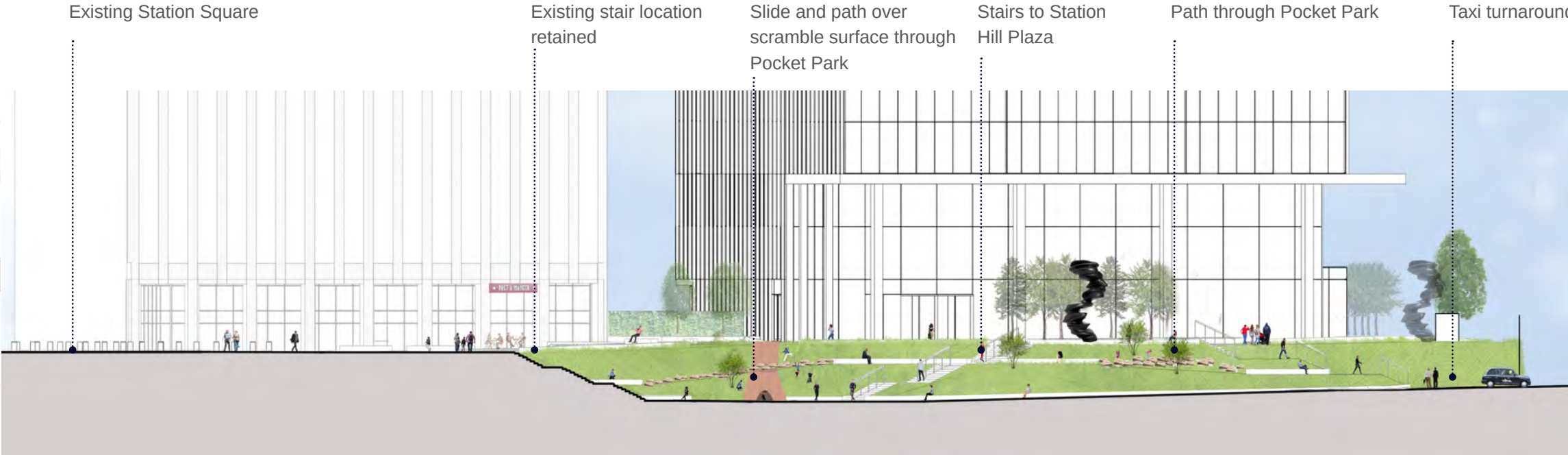
4.1 LANDSCAPE



Section 1

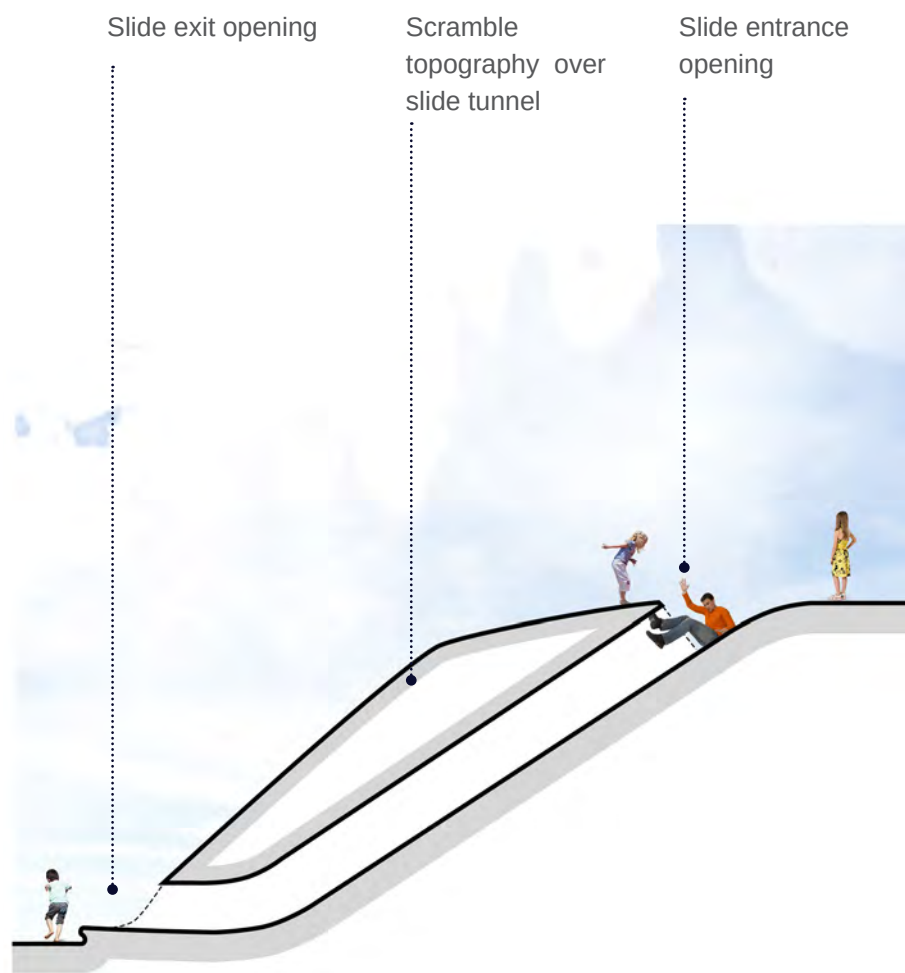


Location Plan

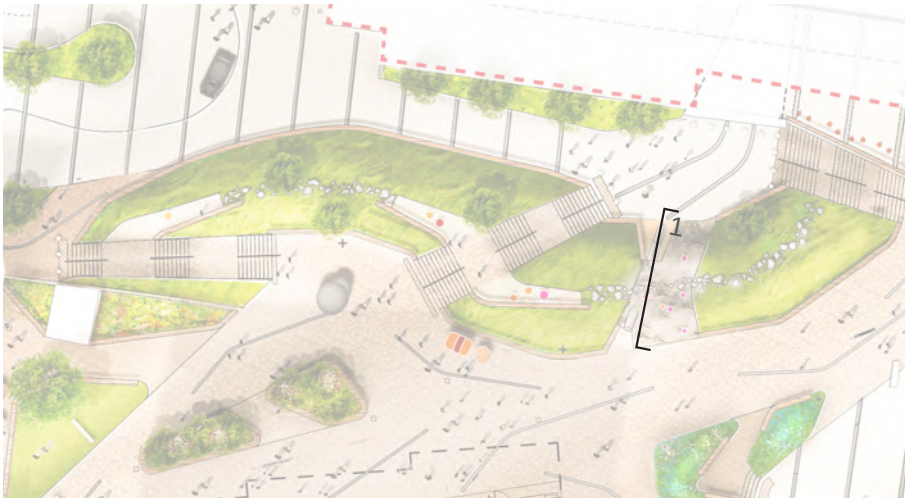


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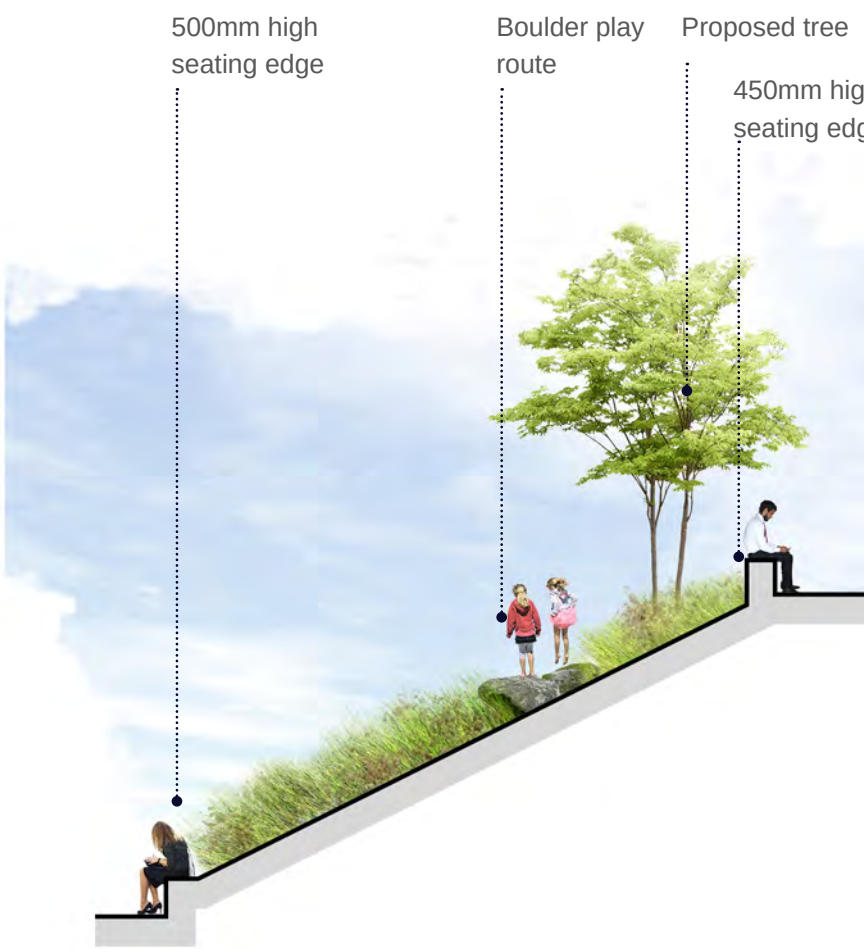
4.1 LANDSCAPE



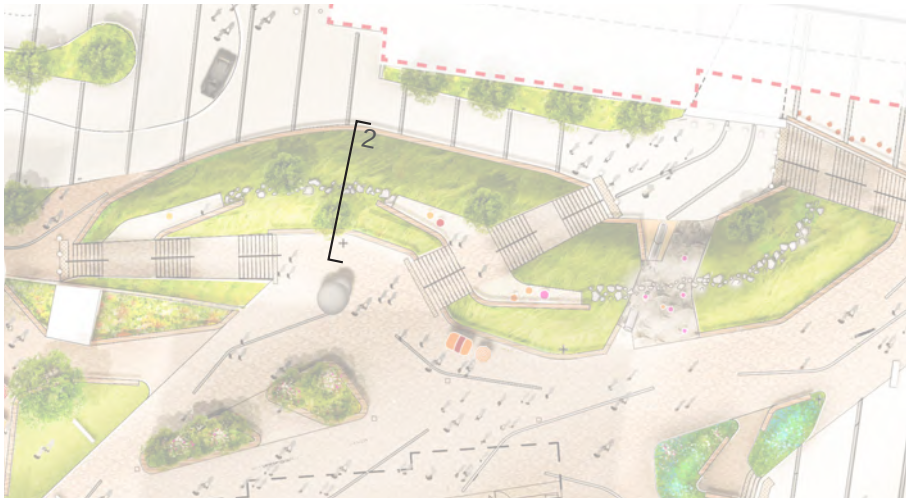
Section 1



Location Plan

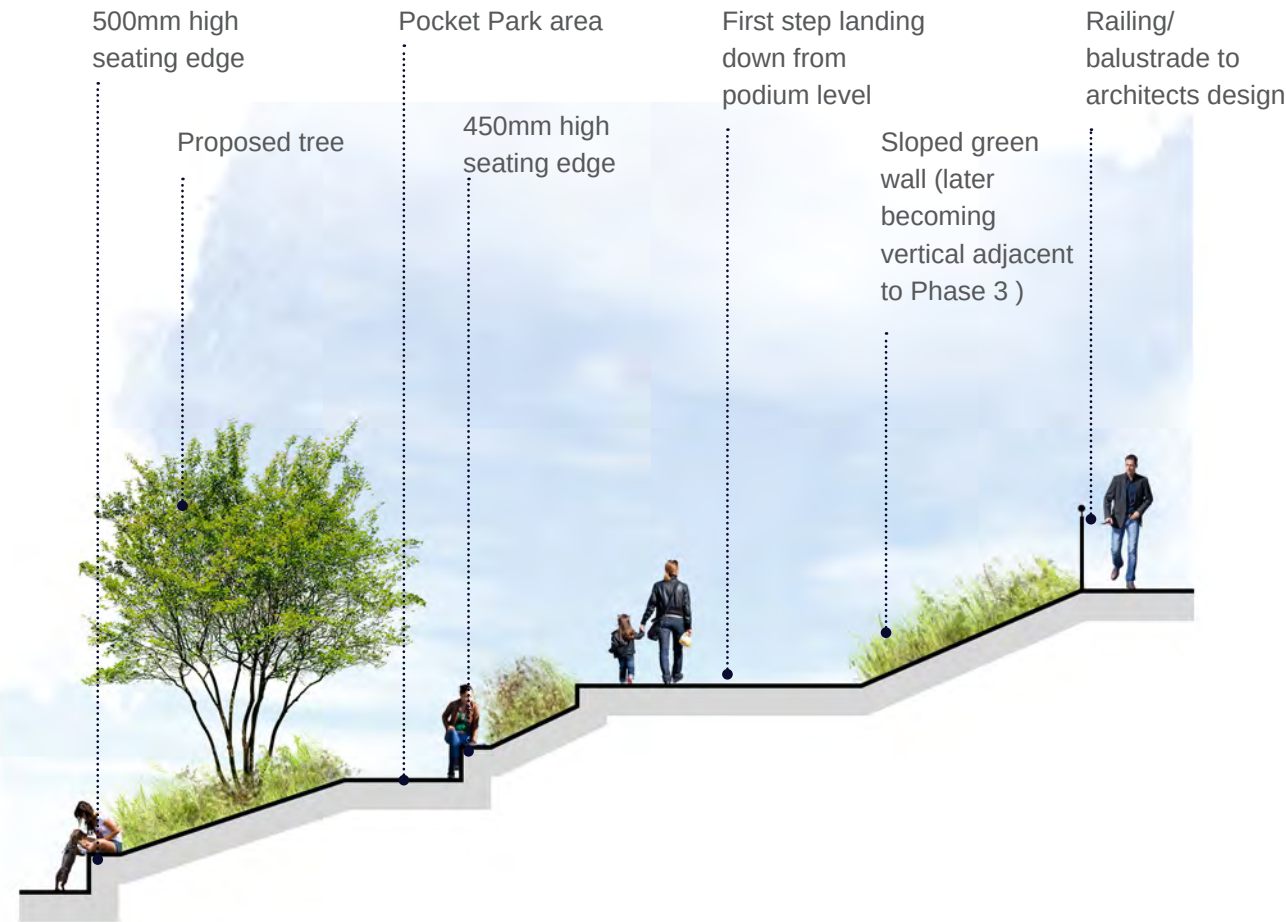


Section 2

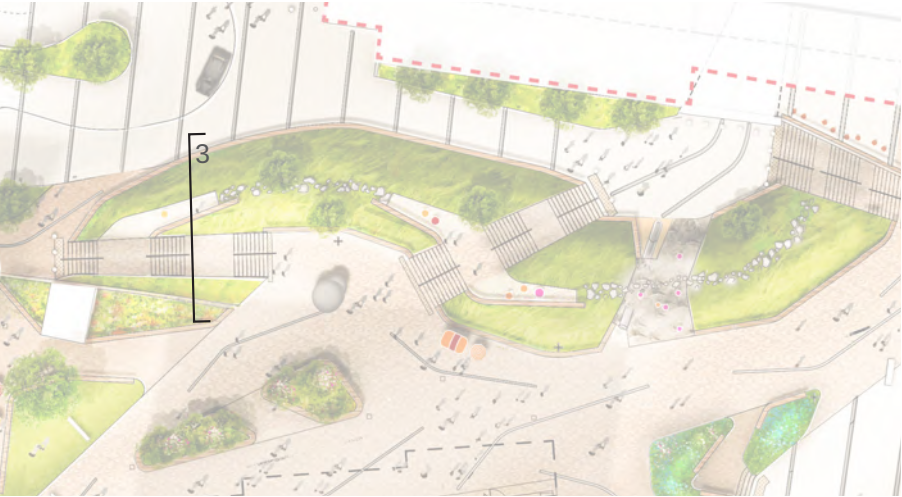


Location Plan

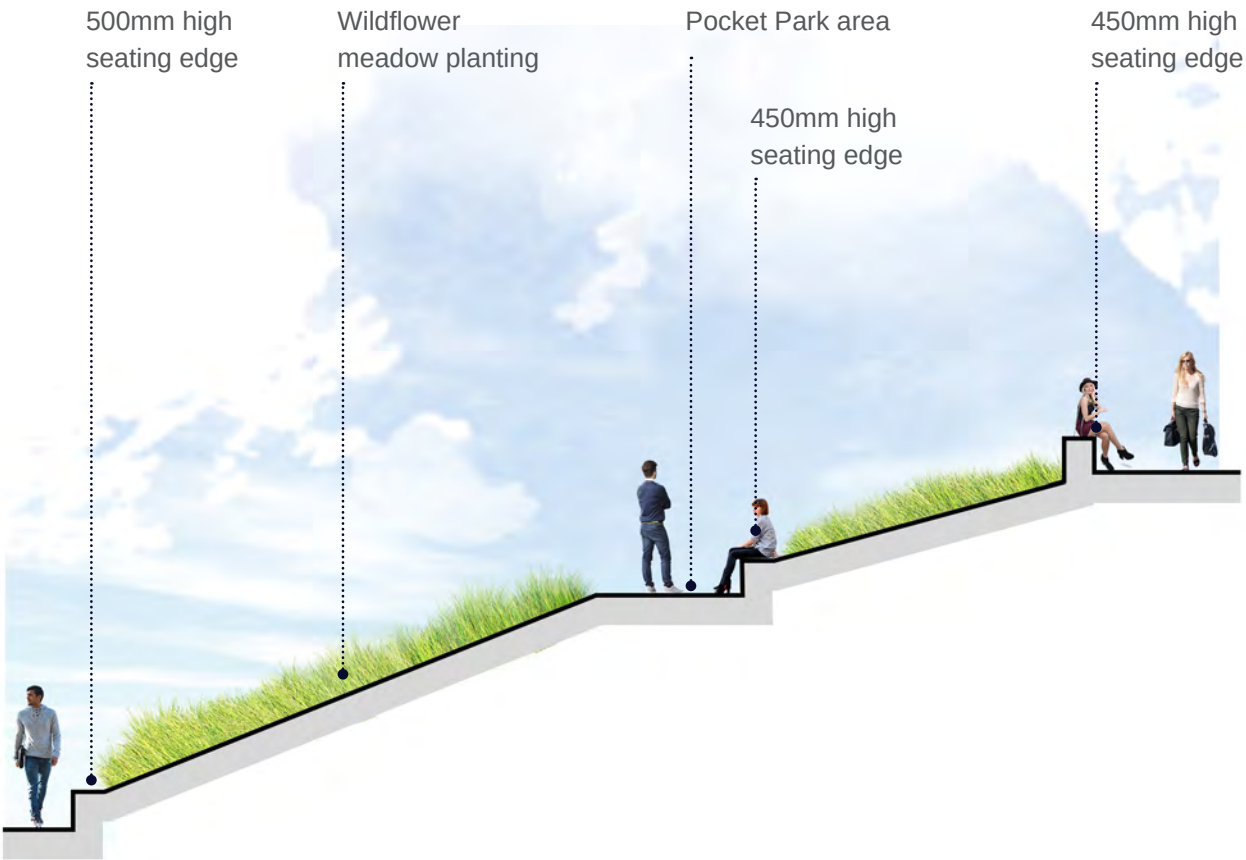
4.1 LANDSCAPE



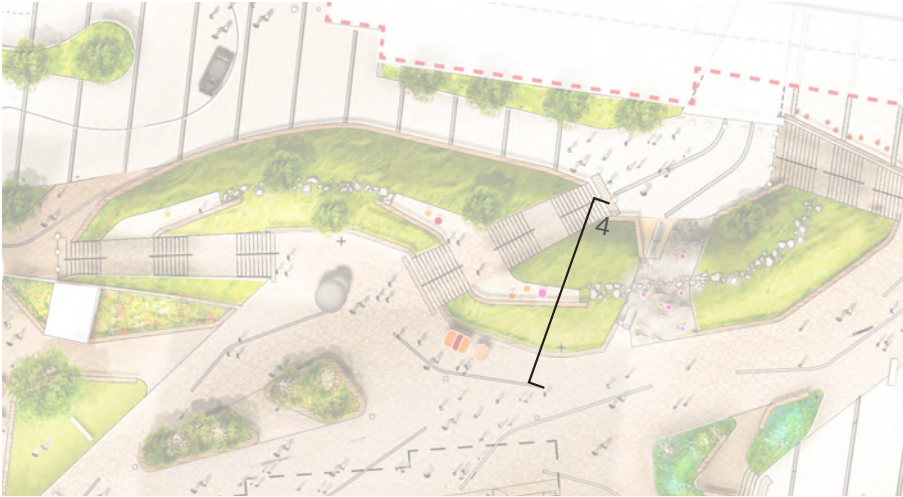
Section 3



Location Plan



Section 4



Location Plan

4.1 LANDSCAPE

The Rest

The Rest is intended to be a quiet green courtyard garden away from the hustle and bustle of Station Square. Curved raised planters will create a more intimate atmosphere where you can sit quietly. Adjacent to Pret a Manger in Thames Tower, the space provides a spill-out space for those having coffee. Other benefits the space offers are a planted green view from within One Station Hill, and a green wall above the vehicle entrance when looking up from Garrard Street.

Key

- ① Garden room
- ② Steps down to Thames Tower entrances
- ③ Spill-out space with moveable tables and chairs
- ④ Seating edge to raised planter
- ⑤ One Station Hill

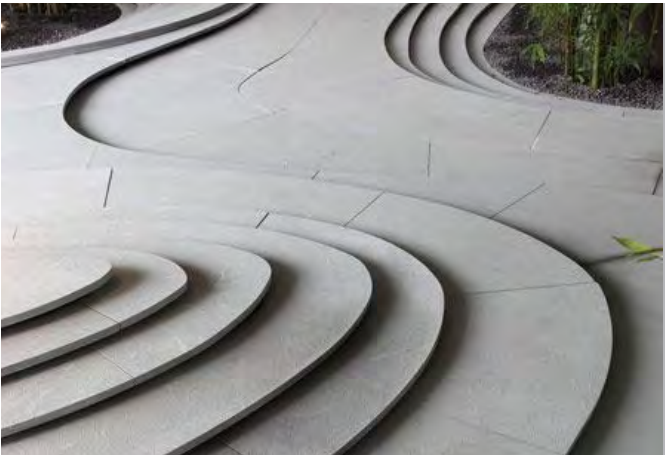
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Illustrative Plan, The Rest



Intimate seating



Curved steps



Garden room



Illustrative View, The Rest

4.1 LANDSCAPE

Station Hill Plaza

Station Hill Plaza is the heart of the development and the space is designed as the main destination from both the Station to the north, and Friar Street to the south. The aspiration is to provide the north-south route through the space, at the same time as slowing down the pedestrian flow and encouraging people to linger and spend time – to create a place and not just a through route. To achieve this aim, the central area gently re-directs pedestrian flows to the perimeter of the square and the flexible outdoor seating areas with trees and planting, and active frontages of the adjacent buildings.

- Key
- ① Feature tree in planter
 - ② Movable tables and chairs under trees
 - ③ Lounging lawn
 - ④ Sculpted seating edge
 - ⑤ Trees in planters
 - ⑥ Splash pad
 - ⑦ Work Station
 - ⑧ Raised planting to bridge with seating edge
 - ⑨ Raised planer adjacent to art wall and climbers
- ↗ Direction of view on following pages



Illustrative Plan, Station Hill Plaza



Splash pad



Feature Tree



Lounging Lawn