

400 Longwater Avenue

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

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PLACE Design+Planning | RPP

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The site of 400 Longwater Avenue is framed by:

- the completed office development at 350 Longwater Avenue and its associated decked car park to the north,
- the central water feature of Longwater to the east,
- the undeveloped land area known as the lily pond site to the south,
- Longwater Avenue to the west

Along the site boundary to Longwater Avenue a 10m wide bund with associated planting has been formed in anticipation of a requirement to mitigate the visual impact of future deck car parking. On the eastern boundary the landscape infrastructure is well developed with both a perimeter winter footpath at 37.8mAOD to the plot margin and a summer footpath at a lower level offering access to the water margins and islands during the low water level regime seen in the summer months.

The site was filled in 1998 with inert fill as part of the civil engineering enabling works in preparation for development. The fill levels provide protection from flooding against a 1:200 flood event. Only part of the filled development platform, the site forming 350 Longwater Avenue, was developed. The landscape management of the vacant site has ensured that it has not become colonised by vegetation and it has been kept as far as possible devoid of ecological interest.

Design Brief

The landscape design is specifically concerned with the:

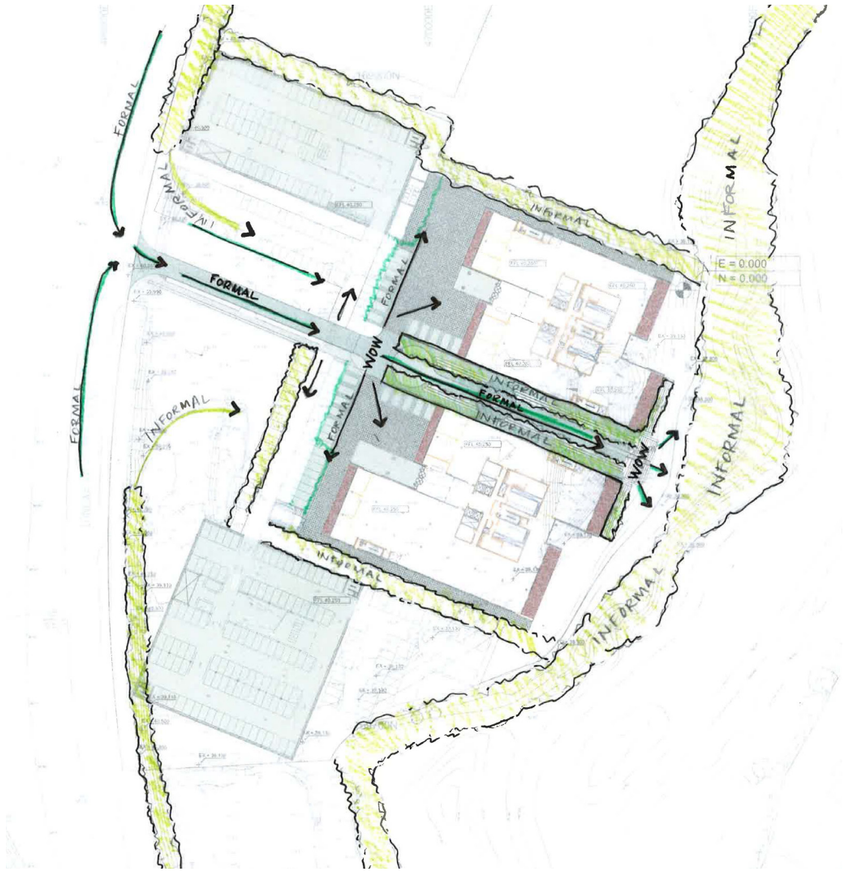
a) approach to the building
b) setting of the building and car parking
c) interface between on plot and infrastructure landscape
d) biodiversity and the management of the landscape


View of site looking west

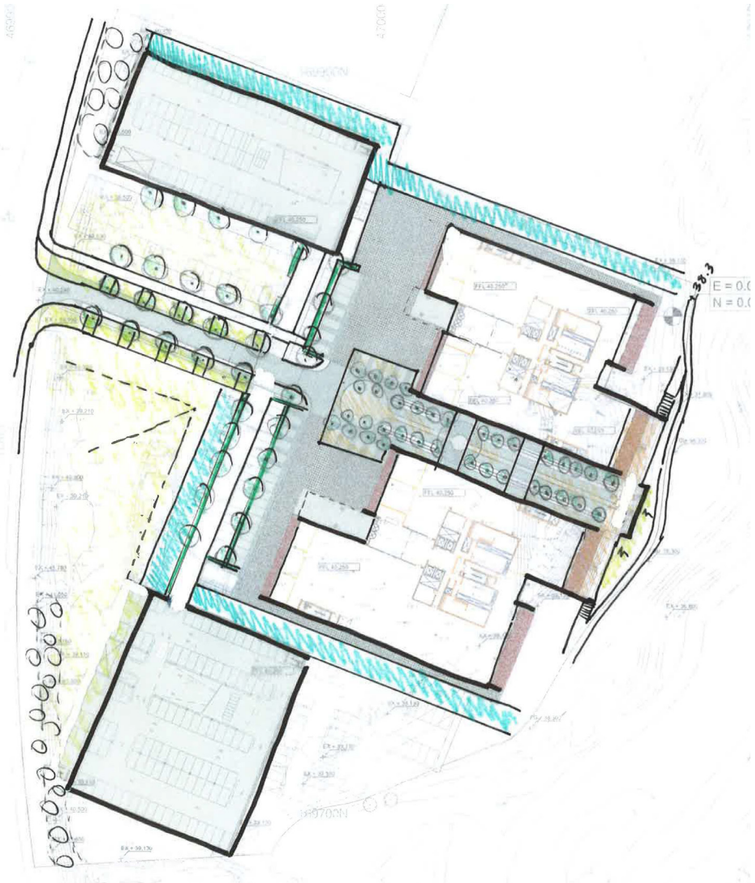

View looking east over site from Longwater Avenue


View of site looking north toward 350 Longwater Avenue

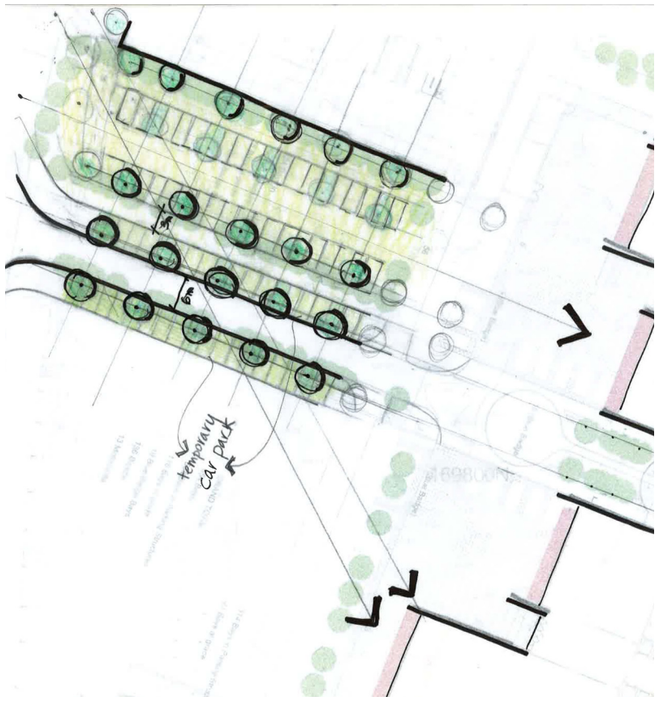

View from southern site boundary looking south



The informal boundary gives way to a formal entrance corridor

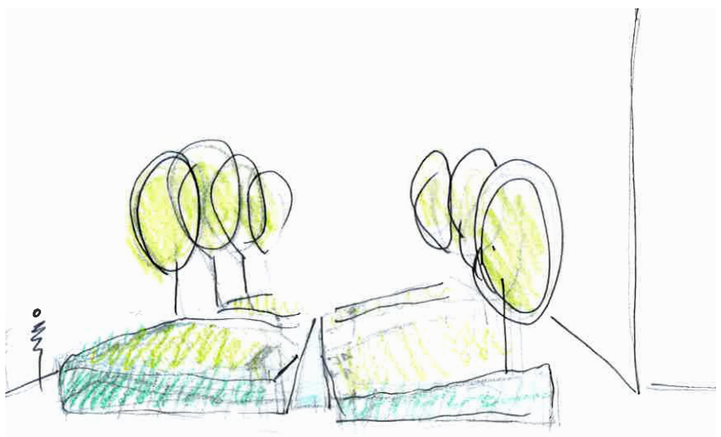


The sketch masterplan works on opening view corridors and place making

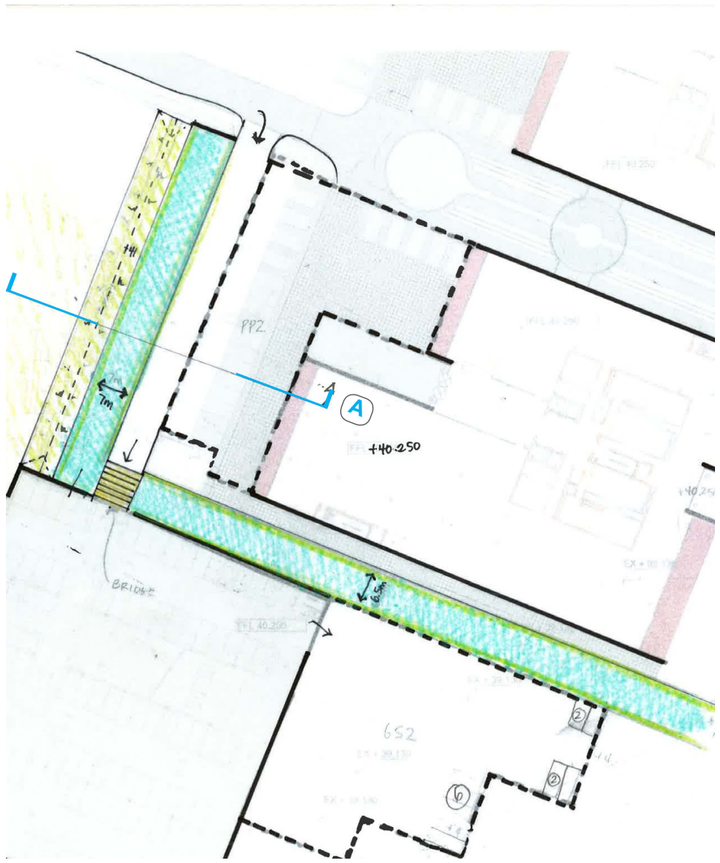


The entrance corridor is lined with trees guiding views inwards









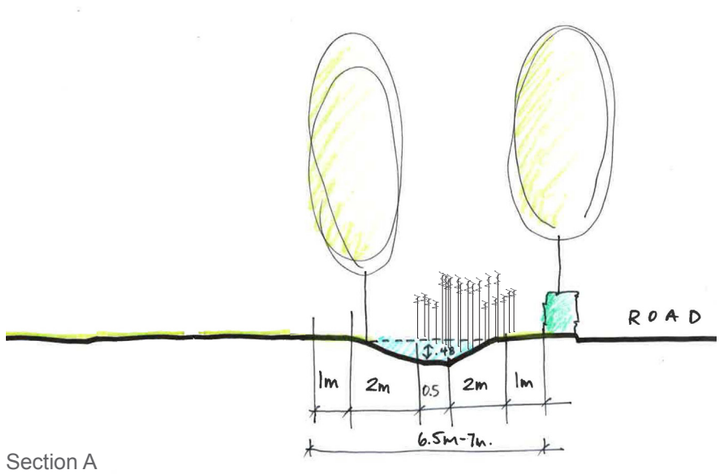
Swales are used both for drainage and aesthetic purposes



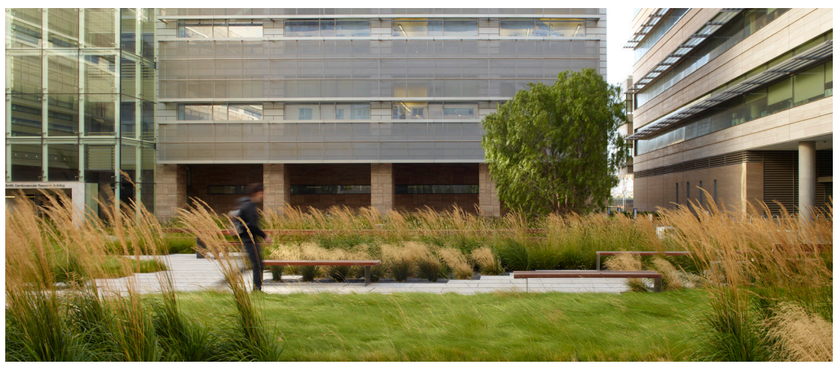
The space between the two buildings is defined by planted ‘garden rooms’



The vantage point at the end of the garden rooms will provide a scenic lookout over Longwater



Section A






Swale
Existing bund to mask car park
Multi-storey car park
Proposed bund to mask car park
At-grade car park
Entrance road
Proposed bund to mask car park
At-grade car park
Swale
Swale
Proposed bund to mask car park
Multi-storey car park
At-grade car park
Longwater Avenue
Swale
Entrance Plaza
Garden Rooms
Deck Platform
Viewing Platform
Deck Platform
Longwater
Winter Path
Summer Path

THE MASTERPLAN

The majority of car parking serving the two buildings is placed in decked car parks to the north and south of the site with at-grade parking on either side of the entrance road. This alignment frames the building's axial entrance and central garden rooms. As there is no merit in screening the view of the building entrances from views from Longwater Avenue it is proposed to partially remove some of the bunds' associated planting and remodel parts of the mounding, which would otherwise obscure the view from the front of the site.

In accordance with the landscape zoning principles of the park, the landscape to Longwater, which is set on screen bunding, is generally managed for amenity but with a lack of formality. The landscape to Longwater is more informal and robust, and based on native spaces able to adapt and thrive in a wetland landscape. Between these informal margins the site has a formality which responds to the geometry of the buildings and the at-grade parking.

The buildings have an orchard of tree planting at their doorstop which softens the at-grade car park. The landscape treatment proposed is formal grid of trees which defines the entrance for both cars and pedestrians. This proposal enables vtisitors to readily orientate themselves when approaching the buildings. Visitors will have the opportunity to park adjacent to the building's front entrance whilst occupiers will continue towards the building and enter the multi-storey car parks.

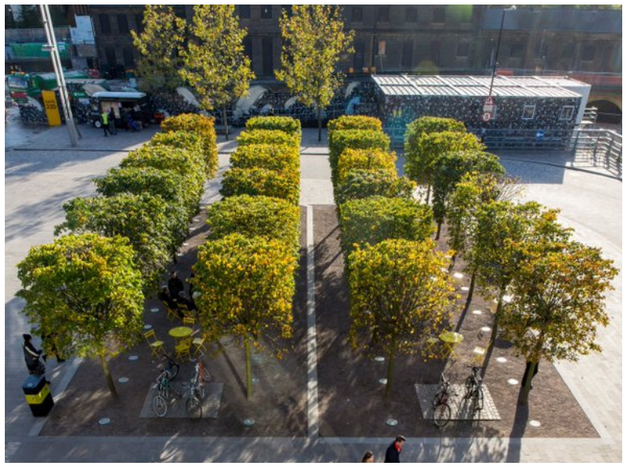
There is an urban character to the on plot landscape treatment which links the two building entrances. A linear landscape - the garden rooms - run from the front to the rear of the buildings. At its eastern end, the garden rooms dramatically open out to the wide expanse of the Longwater landscape with a wide view from a vantage point sitting proud of the adjoining perimeter footpath. The garden rooms, which are open to the air, encourage a gentle route for pedestrians to meander from west to east whilst also allowing equipment to access the facade for maintenance purposes.

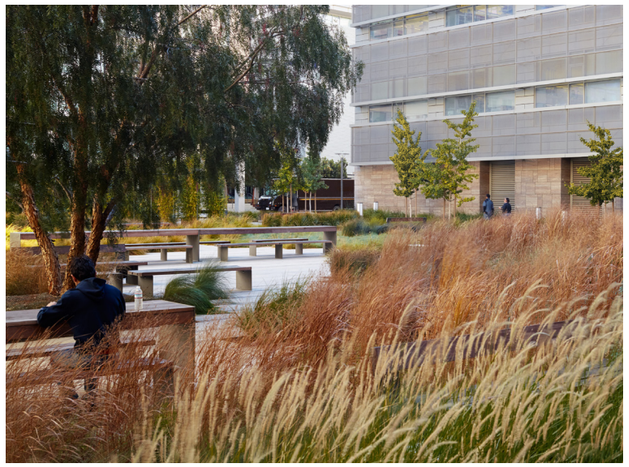
The termination of this viewpoint at Longwater is reinforced by a framing structure to emphasise this view. Access down to the perimeter winter footpath is from wings at either side of the raised deck extending in front of the buildings.

Additional planting will line the northern boundary which will also serve as a SUDS drainage provision in order to meet the on plot drainage requirements of the Environment Agency. This will link Longwater Avenue to Longwater and replicate the Salix fragilis (Crack Willow) lined ditches running east-west across the site and which are seen both north and south of the site.













04 - DETAILED AREAS - entrance landscape and swales

THE ENTRANCE LANDSCAPE and SWALES

The tree-lined entrance offers a formal avenue leading towards the 400 Longwater. Views from Longwater Avenue offer a planted landscape that includes at-grade parking. The entrance space is based on a formal grid of trees within which spaces are defined for pedestrians and parking - all softened by the planting.

Areas will be defined for meadow planting, supporting pollinating insects in the park which contributes to the park's award winning biodiversity plan. The formal layout of the entrance sequence will aid in orientating visitors and, by removing the screen bunding, open up views of the building and the view out towards the Longwater landscape.

The swales are designed to retain surface water in line with the EA requirements. The design makes uses of swales, arranged in relation to the buildings' and landscape's geometry in order to give an aesthetically, yet practical, layout.

The swales two-tier design will allow for both reeds (*Phragmites*) to grow from the depths of the swale and a feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis*) to sit at the swale's upper tier. The foreground landscape of feather reed grass will mask the lower levels of the reeds and therefore creating a ha-ha-like effect. The planting in the swales will reflect the character of the Longwater marginal planting on the site's eastern boundary.



ENTRANCE



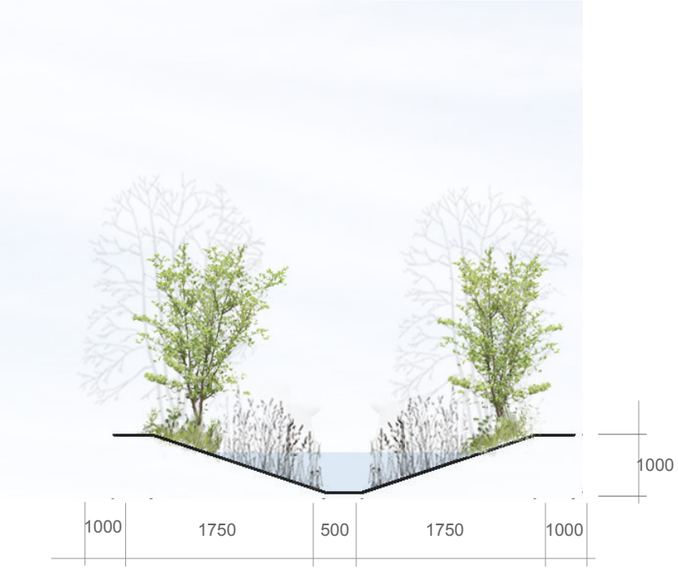




SWALES







Typical Swale Section

04 - DETAILED AREAS - entrance plaza and garden rooms

ENTRANCE PLAZA and GARDEN ROOMS

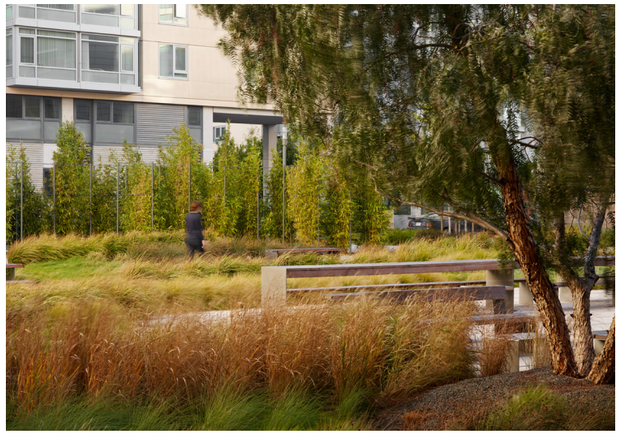
The tree-lined avenue gives way to an entrance plaza announcing the buildings' two entrances and central garden rooms. This on-plot treatment connects the two buildings together and provides an informal gathering space which is linked to the garden rooms and avenue through the formal sequence of on-grid trees. The garden rooms are designed so as to promote social nodal points as well as to provide a gentle route through space while allowing space to access the facade for maintenance purposes.

After the journey through the garden rooms, the linear promenade opens up to offer views over the Longwater landscape, complete with connections to the winter and summer footpaths. A framed terrace accentuates these views while terraced spaces to the north and south provide informal sitting areas to enjoy the morning sun.











Section A-A

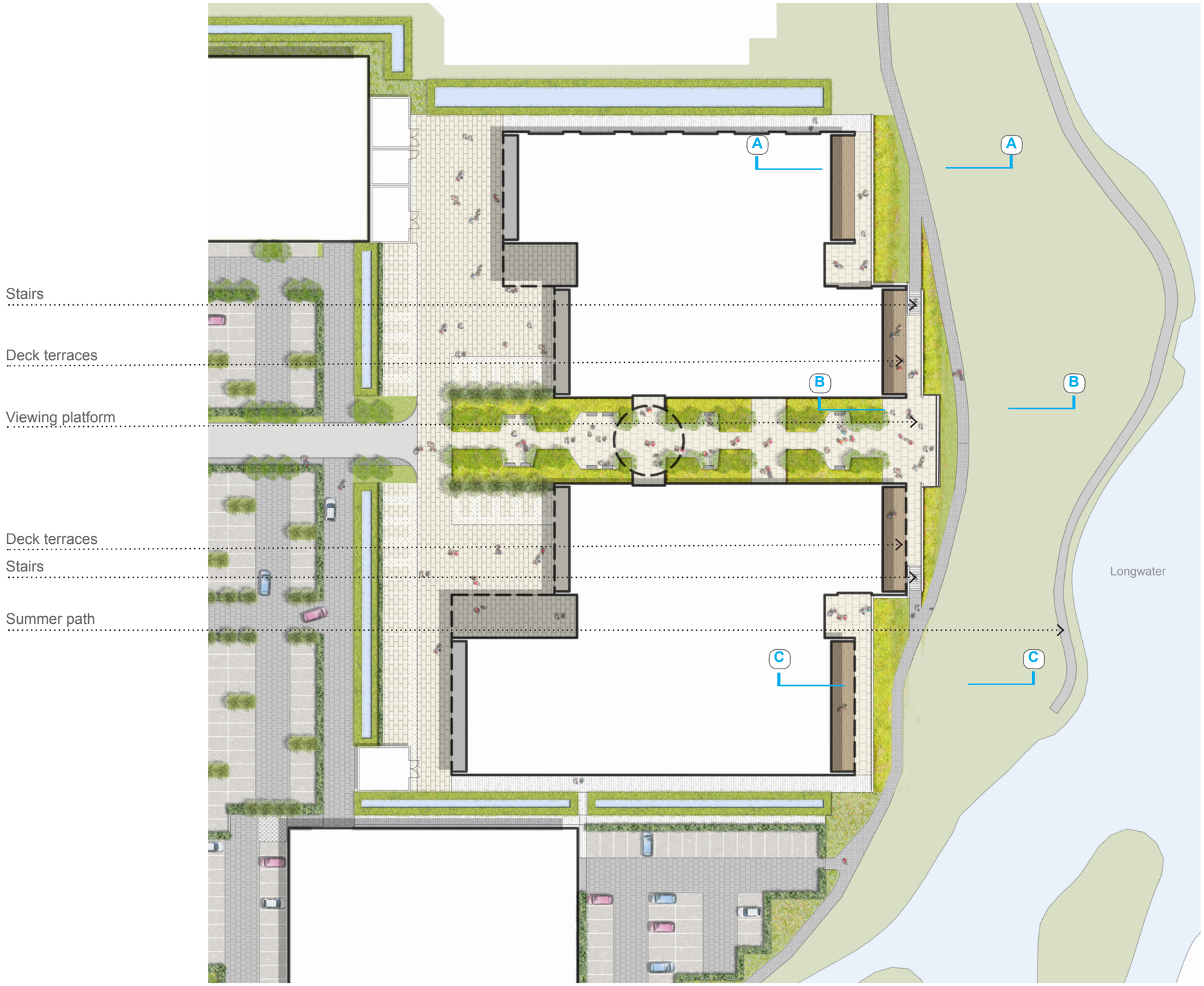
04 - DETAILED AREAS - viewing platform and decks

THE VIEWING PLATFORM AND DECKS

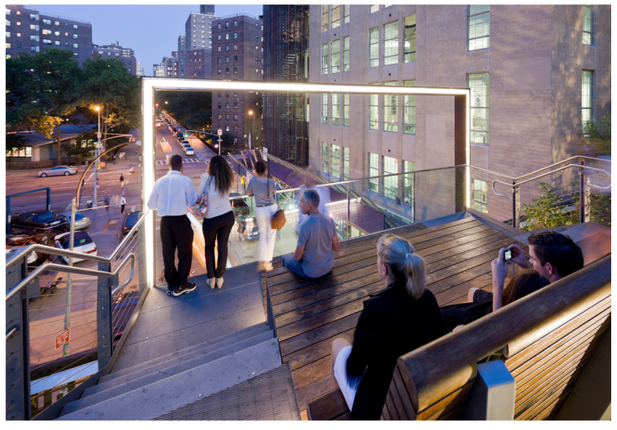
The termination of this viewpoint at Longwater is reinforced by a framing structure to emphasise views over Longwater and the surrounding Green Park landscape. The terraces also allow for casual meetings and amenity spaces for lunch breaks. The views over Green Park enhance this space greatly and, as an east-facing elevation, creates a perfect backdrop for morning breaks.

Access down to the perimeter winter footpath is from stairs along the wings at either side of the raised terrace. A sloped and planted landscape at the front of the terraces will soften the building and terraces as the land eases down towards the public footpaths which surround the perimeter of Longwater.

Seasonal planting will provide both an aesthetically pleasing landscape and also provide habitats and vegetation for Green Park's native wildlife.

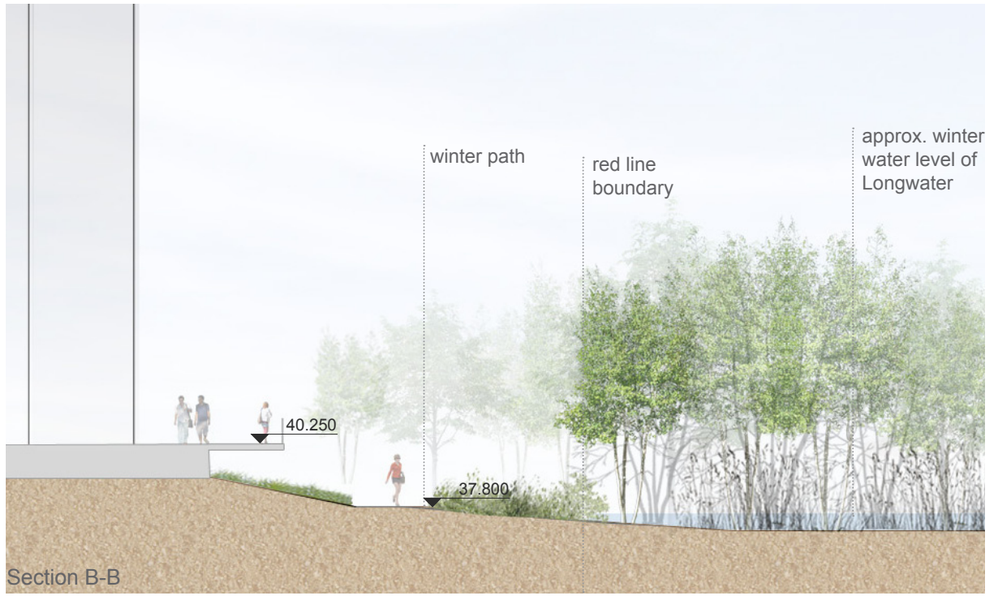


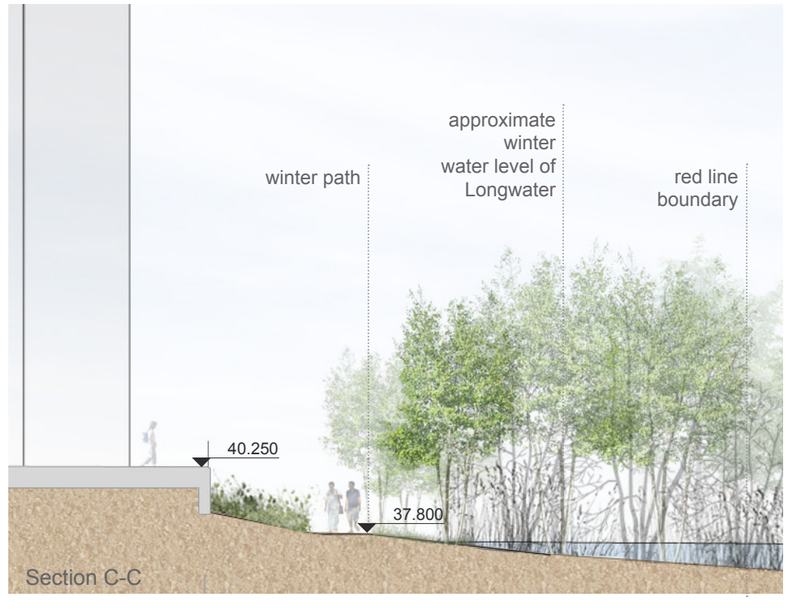







winter path
red line boundary
approximate winter water level of Longwater
40.250
37.800
Section A-A


winter path
red line boundary
approx. winter water level of Longwater
40.250
37.800
Section B-B


winter path
approximate winter water level of Longwater
red line boundary
40.250
37.800
Section C-C

05 - STRATEGIES - trees retained, removed and proposed

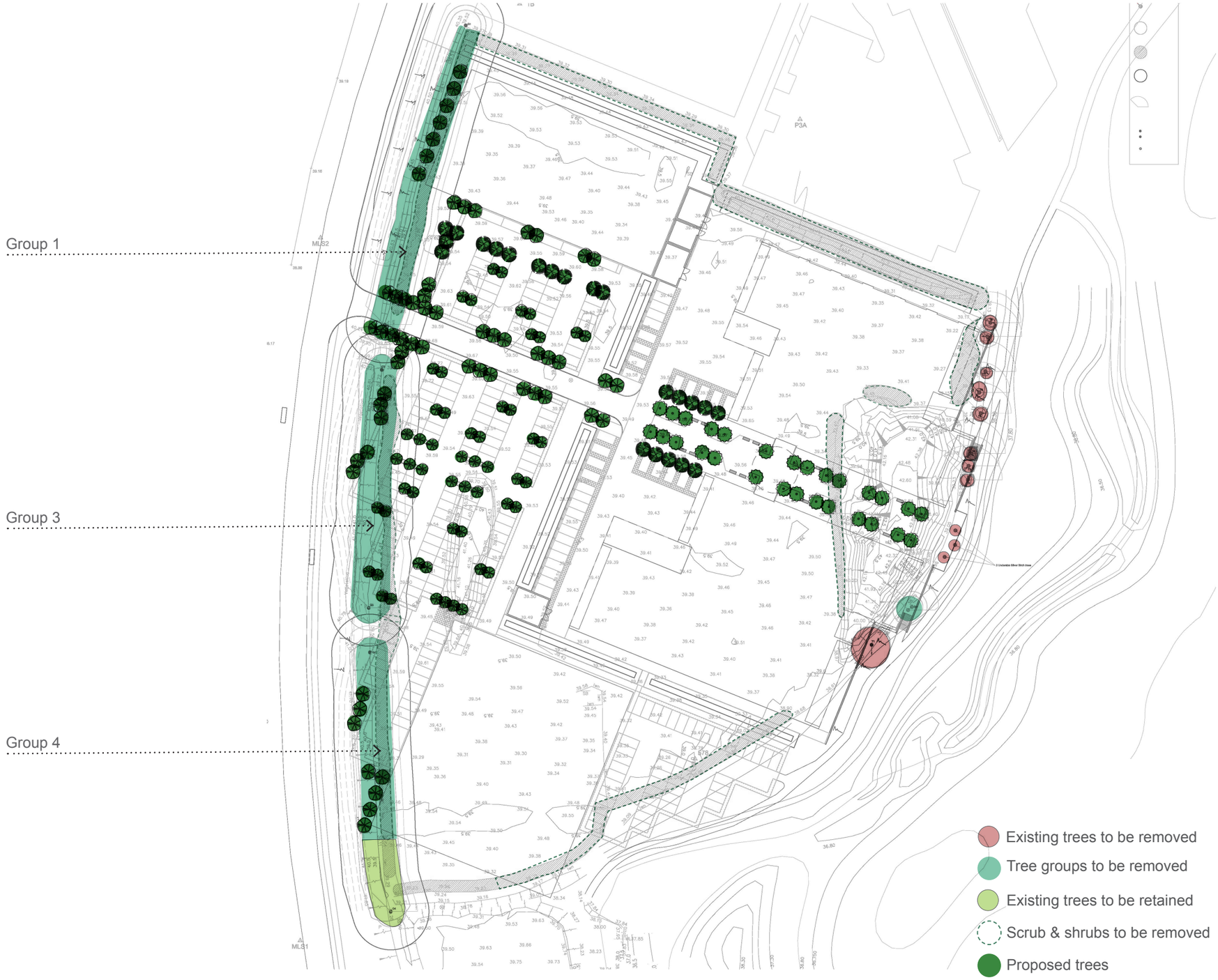
TREES

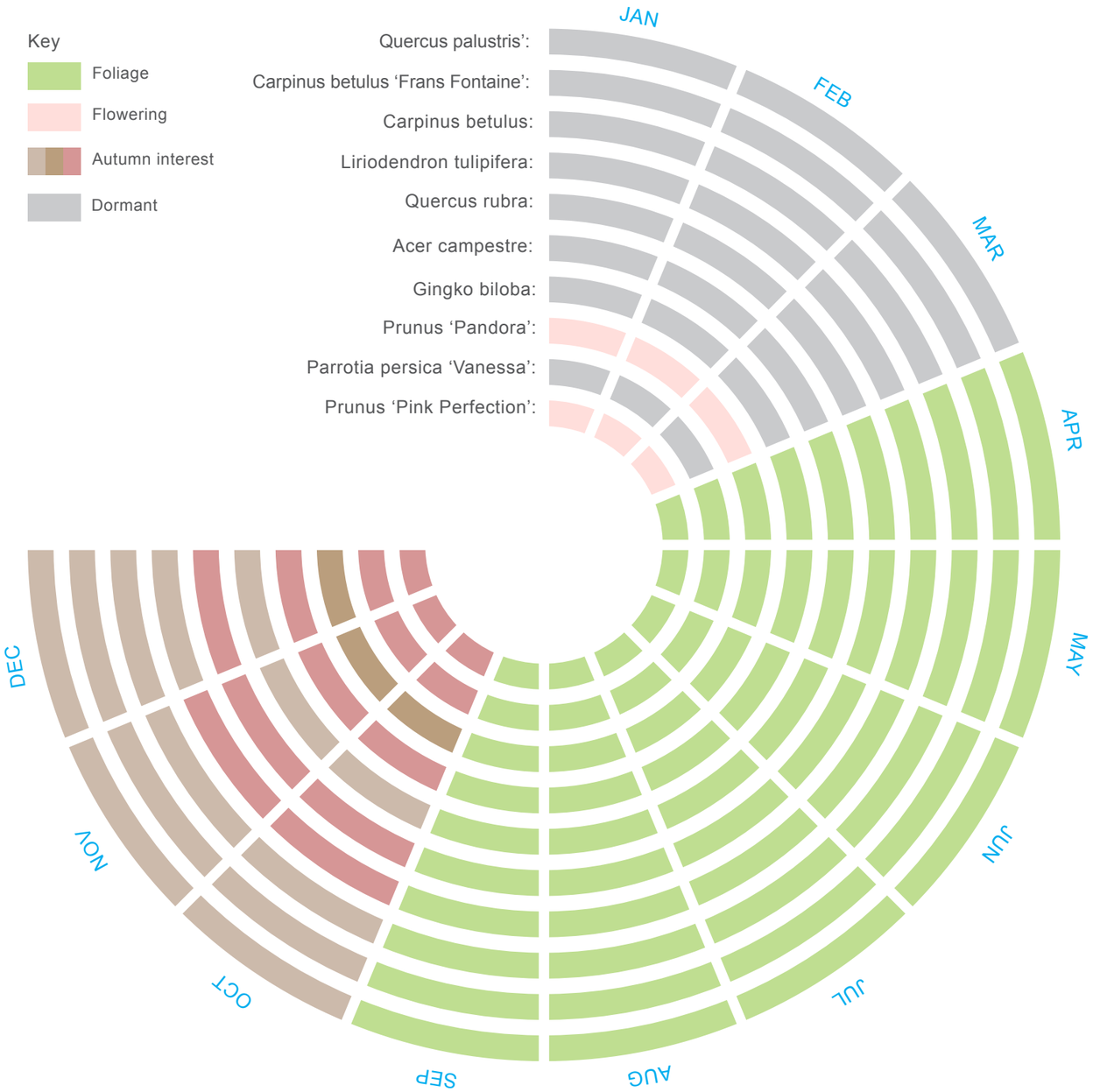
Nine existing individual trees and the groups of mixed, small trees and shrubs located in Group 1, Group 3 and part of Group 4 of will be removed to accommodate the new buildings and development. Most of these trees are insignificant, colonised specimens including C-grade silver birch and willow; the groups include small trees and shrubs including willow, lime and laurel. At the northern and southern end of the site low level scrub and shrubs will be removed.

The tree strategy seeks to enhance and integrate the built form into the landscape, whilst providing accents and focal points to the key nodal spaces.

The inclusion of 150+ new trees, including a variety of natives, have been proposed to enhance the landscaped-character of the site. Species are chosen for their attractive seasonal qualities in autumn and spring to provide all-year-around interest; they have also been selected specifically for semi-urban planting with narrower crowns. The trees will create a hierarchical structure: from street trees to central amenity nodes to communal gardens.

Columnar and small canopy trees would be most appropriate for the avenue and garden rooms with light canopies so light is able to penetrate the canopies and therefore the gardens don't become dense shade and facades are easy to maintain.





The tree planting strategy is divided into five categories: avenue trees, entrance plaza trees, waterside trees, garden room trees, buffer trees and ornamental trees for the car park.

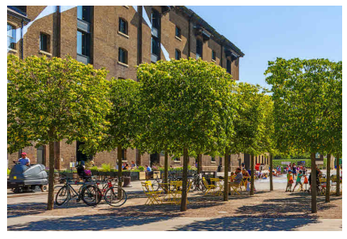
Each category responds to the site in a different way, from avenue tree species creating colourful entrances and exits from the site entrance, to narrow-canopied entrance trees to announce the entrance space. Species have been chosen for their particular shape, form, height and seasonal interest.

Avenue Trees:



Quercus palustris

Entrance Plaza Trees:



Carpinus betulus



Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'

Waterside Trees:



Liriodendron tulipifera

Buffer Trees:

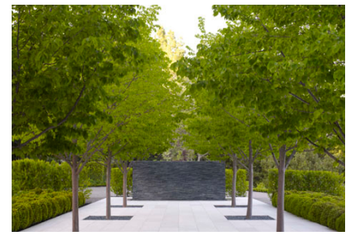


Quercus rubra



Acer campestre

Garden Room Trees:



Gingko biloba

Car Park Trees:



Prunus 'Pandora'

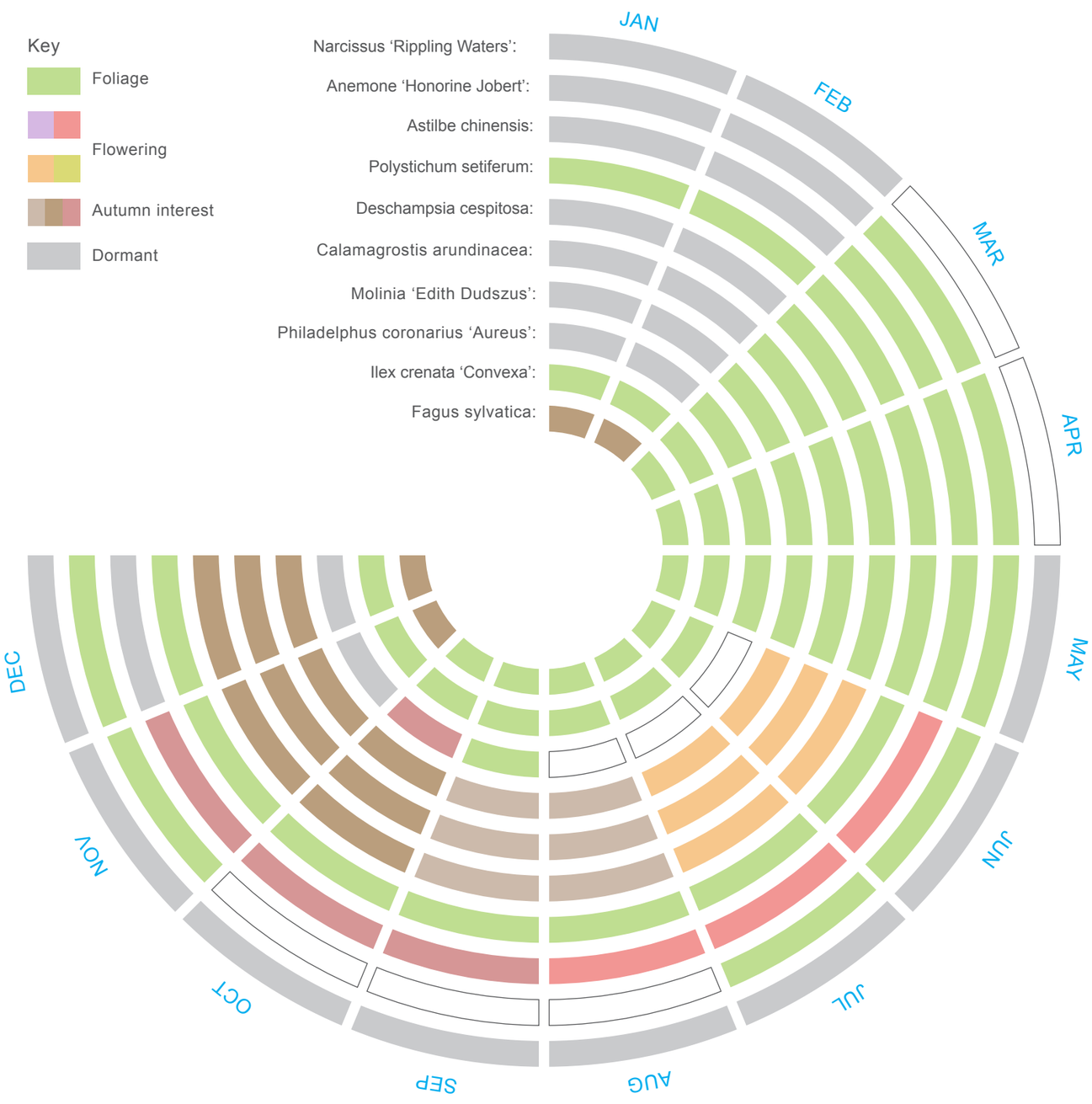


Parrotia persica 'Vanessa'



Prunus 'Pink Perfection'

05 - STRATEGIES - softscape



The planting strategy for the garden rooms is a combination of evergreen structural plants with ornamental grasses to provide all-year-around interest and colourful herbaceous perennials to provide seasonal variation.

The evergreen planting creates a green backdrop as the grasses turn from green through to shades of brown in the autumn / winter months. Herbaceous perennials create splashes of colour from spring through to late summer and naturalised spring bulbs will add a dappled backdrop.

Bulbs:



Narcisuss ‘Paper White’

Perennials



Anemone
‘Honorine Jobert’



Astilbe chinensis



Polystichum setiferum

Ornamental Grasses:



Deschampsia cespitosa
‘Goldschleier’



Calamagrostis arundinacea



Molinia ‘Edith Dudszus’

Shrubs:

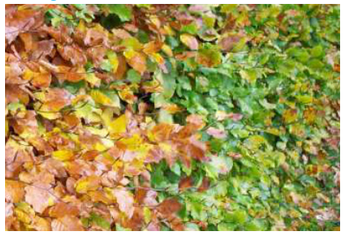


Philadelphus coronarius ‘Aureus’



Ilex crenata ‘Convexa’

Hedges:



Fagus sylvatica

Furniture



Galvanised steel and wood table and bench



Galvanised steel and wood bench with back

Inspired by Green Park where muted tones set off the lush green surroundings, this materials palette is presented as tones of subtle greys to provide a framework from which to showcase 400 Longwater and Green Park's textured green backdrop. The front entrance will be a celebratory selection of granite material, the car park roads a clustering of block paving supporting gravel, at-grade parking bays while the viewing decks will be a combination of granite and decking materials, demarcating passive and active zones.

The street furniture will complement this aesthetic in tones of grey and natural wood products.

Materials



Granite paving slabs and setts



Grey paving blocks



Glass balustrades



Cellular webs filled with grey gravel

Lighting



Extruded aluminium lighting bollard

06 - Biodiversity and the Management of the Landscape

Green Park has had a bio-diversity plan since 2005 which has informed management and working practices. This management reflects the zoning principles of the landscape.

The original park landscape is based on 5 zones which have their own aesthetic and management requirements.

1)	High intensity landscapes.	Entrance areas and courtyards
2)	Medium intensity	Car parks and areas between building
3)	Floodplain	Swales
4)	Woodland	Existing and future woodland

These separate zones are now maturing in a more cohesive aesthetic where the divisions are blurred. The fundamental structure remains the same for specific reasons.

1> Building Zone - is those areas immediately associated with the building entrance where various treatments of formality and plant diversity are appropriate. As these zones are often hard landscape areas leading occupiers and visitors to the building entrance the quantity of soft landscape can be limited.

2> Car Park Zone - is a variable area depending upon the site planning of individual plots. As car parking is mainly at the front of plots, the landscape treatment is associated with the screening and immediate boundaries of car park areas.

3> Swale Zones - Both conveyance and storage swales are required on site. Hedges and other forms of landscape treatments are not permitted within this area and its treatment accommodates wide fluctuations of water level from a base summer level of 36.8m AOD up to a minimum development platform level of 40.25m AOD. The perimeter path around the lake is at approximately 37.8m AOD which approximately defines the legal edge boundary of plots. Elsewhere in the park the path has been raised to 38.3m AOD in the light of experience of the first 10 years of the park to avoid too frequent inundation of the path in high water conditions. Tree choices are dominated by species such willow, poplar and alder which thrive in the sometimes waterlogged conditions

4> Woodland Perimeter Zone - Management, in some cases controlled by TPO constraints, maintains copses and woodland as non-developable land with a number of biodiversity benefits as the woodland provides shelter to a wide range of species.

The bio-diversity plan is kept under review and is revised and updated as required. Under the 2013 review, proposals are being implemented for additional areas of wild flower meadows to be established on a number of grassland areas. This is to provide areas of benefit for pollinating insects. It is proposed that opportunities will be taken on the plot margin for diverse meadow species to be established where appropriate. Species diversity is increasing on the park as site records demonstrate and the landscape design on the plot will continue to support diversity. It is proposed that planting on the Longwater boundary of the plot, and on the north and south boundaries will complement the adjoining infrastructure planting by implementing planting of primarily native species.



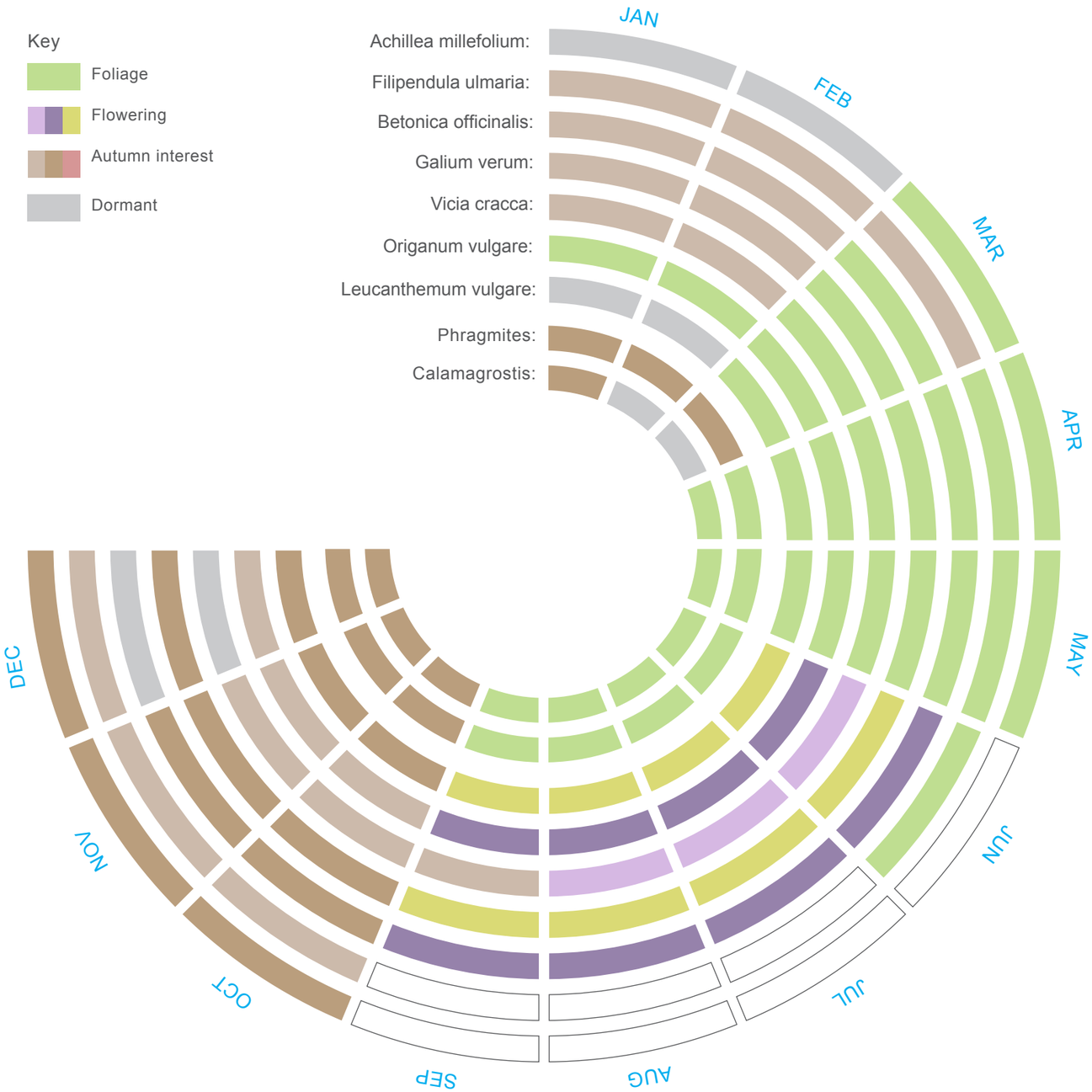


Images showing some of the many native species habitats found in Green Park





An onsite grounds team was set up in 2005 with the sole responsibility for delivering Green Park's Biodiversity strategy



The meadow mixture selected for this site will contains a very wide range of species. It may be used to create a diverse sward where conditions vary across a site. The meadow planting will be a complete mix composed of 20% native wild flowers and 80% slow growing grasses (by weight) and will allow for a species-rich palette that will attract wildlife to the 400 Longwater site.

The swale planting will absorb some of the rainwater runoff while also cleansing the water.

Meadow Mixtures:


Achillea millefolium

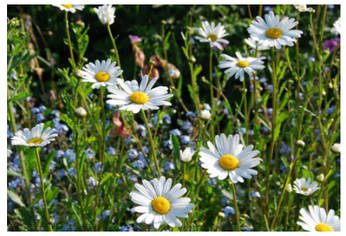

Filipendula ulmaria


Betonica officinalis


Galium verum


Vicia cracca


Origanum vulgare


Leucanthemum vulgare

Swale Planting


Phragmites


Calamagrostis