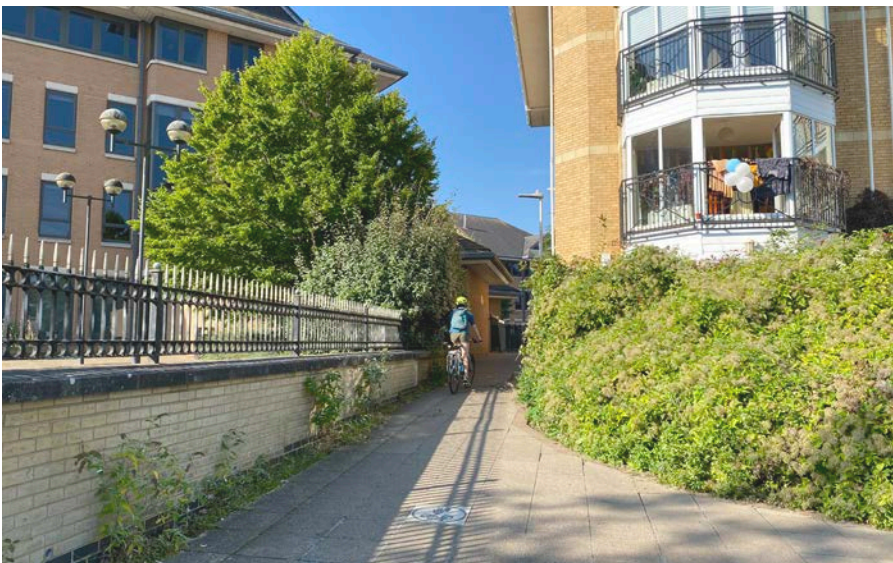


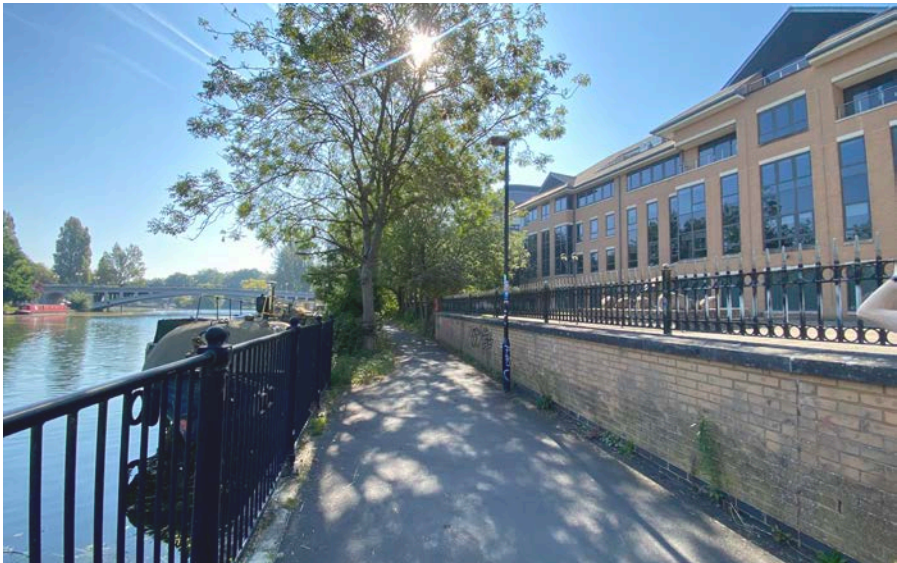
5.4 Site photos



View 1 - View of northern courtyard and existing trees along the north eastern boundary



View 2 - View looking south over the Public Right of Way



View 3 - View looking east along the Thames River path



View 4 - View from Christchurch Meadows looking towards the site



View 5 - View from Reading Bridge looking towards the site



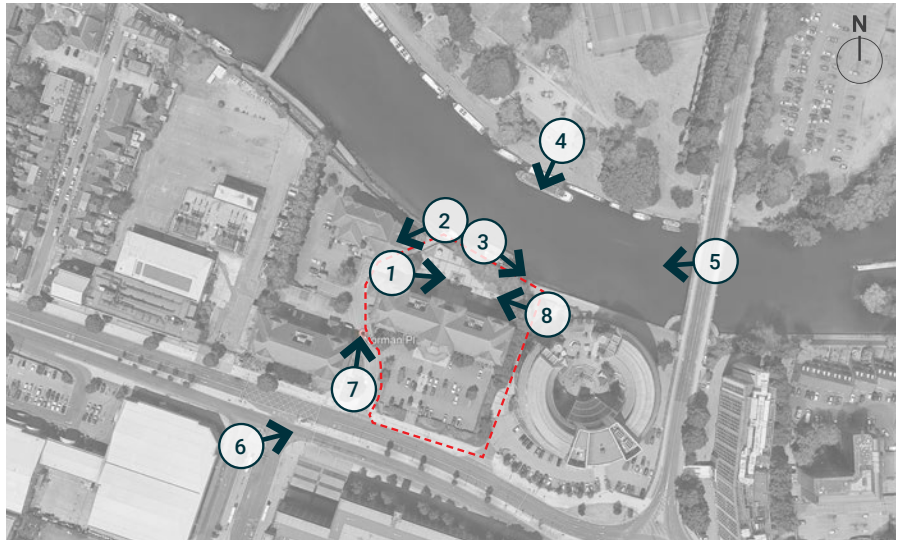
View 6 - View towards the site from Vastern Road



View 7 - View along the western boundary of the site



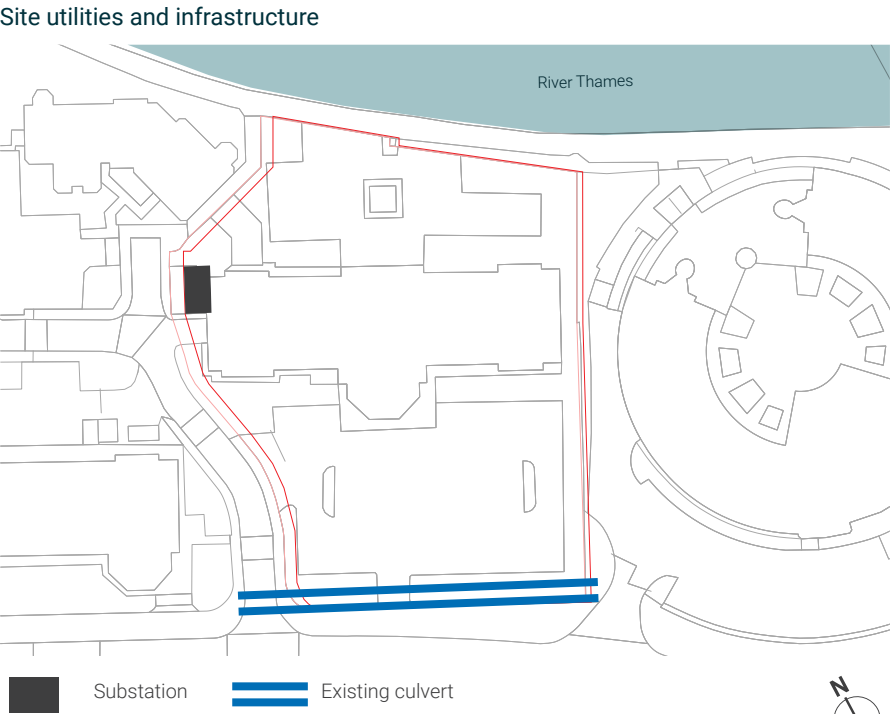
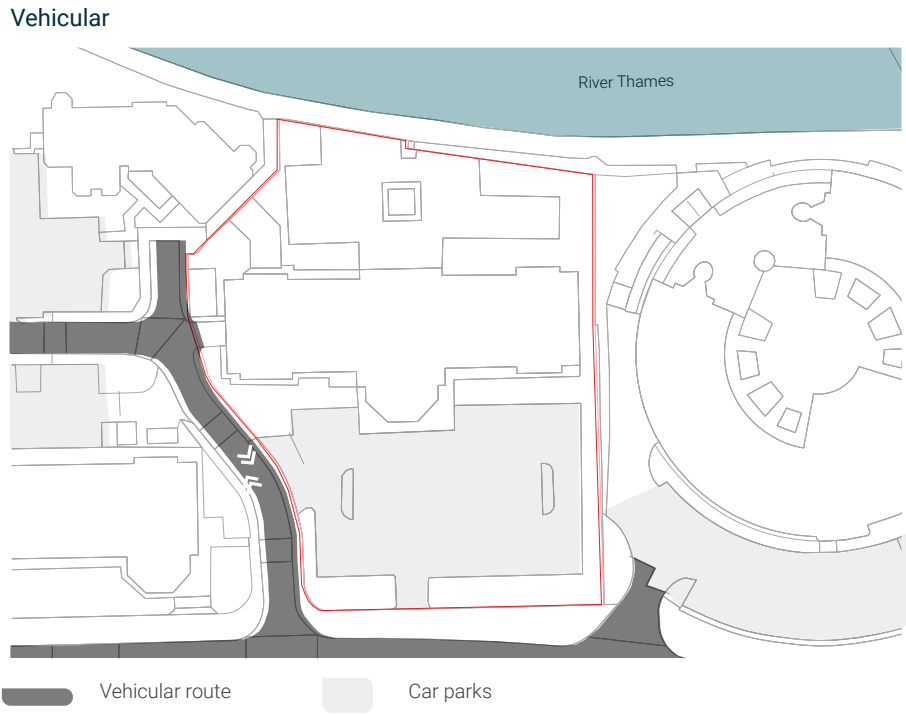
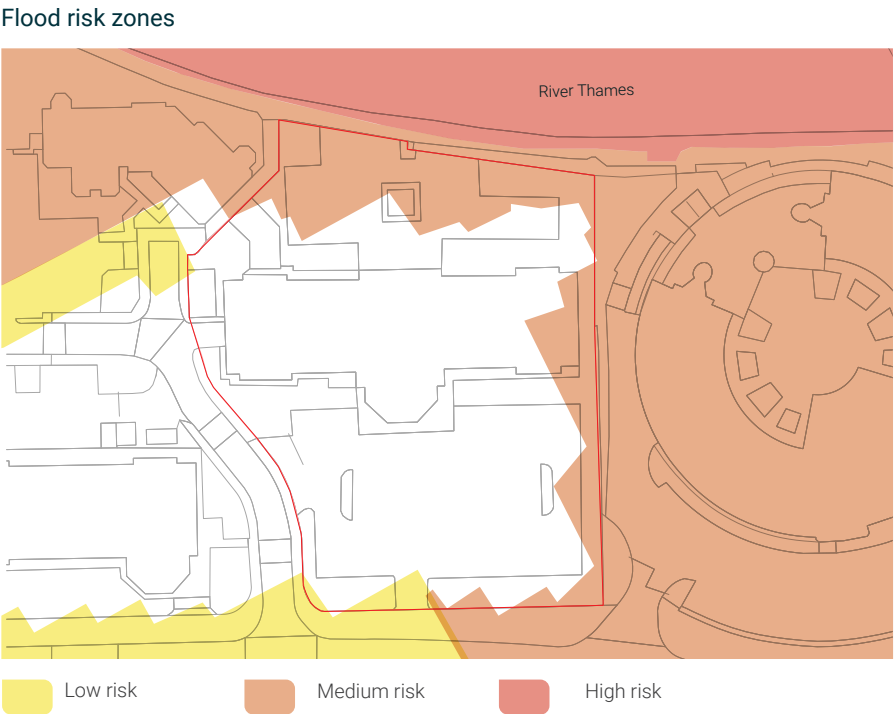
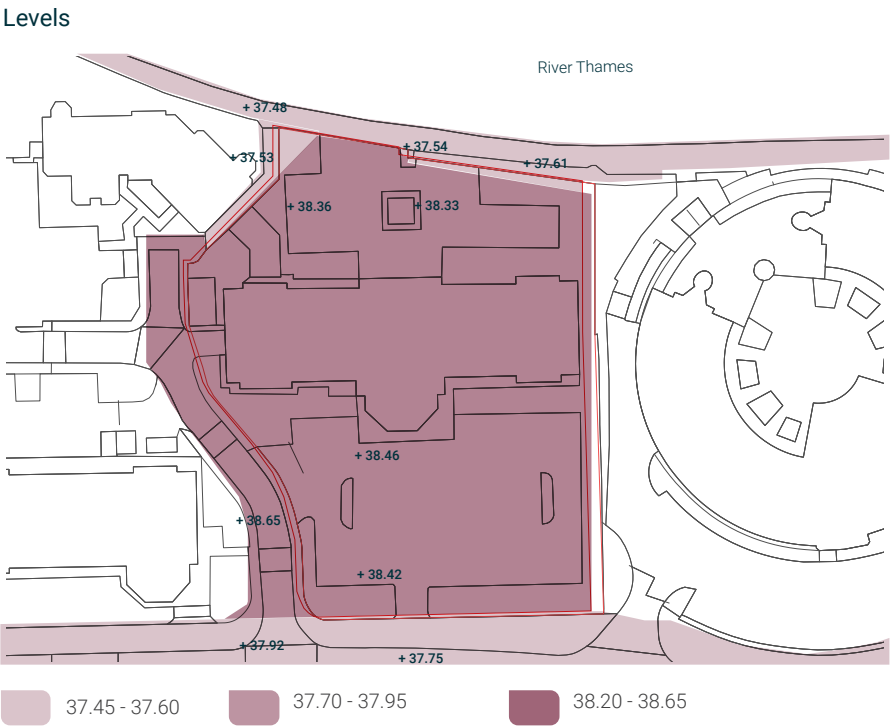
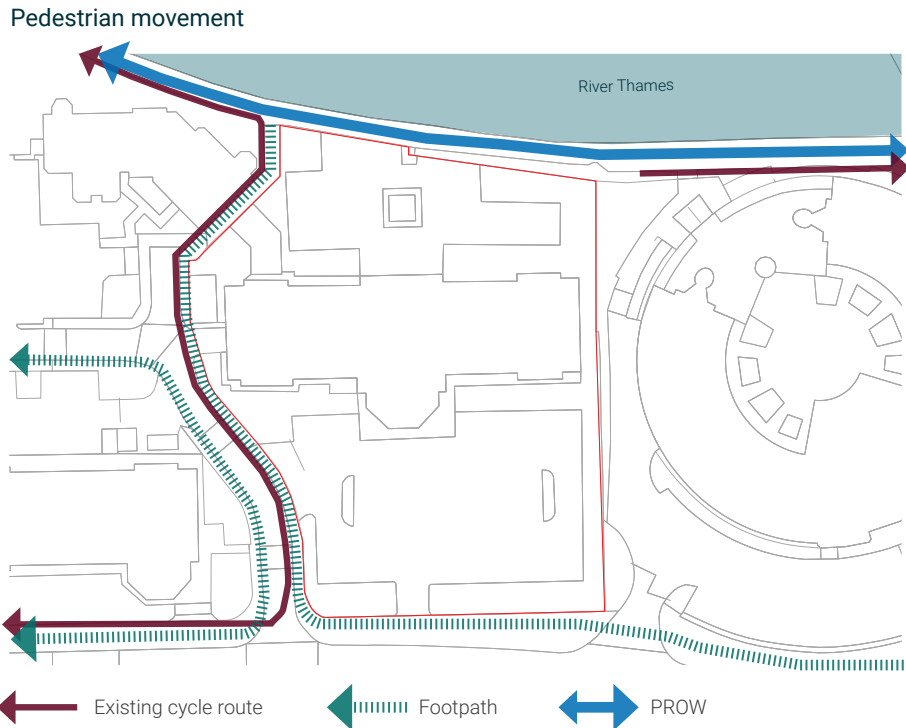
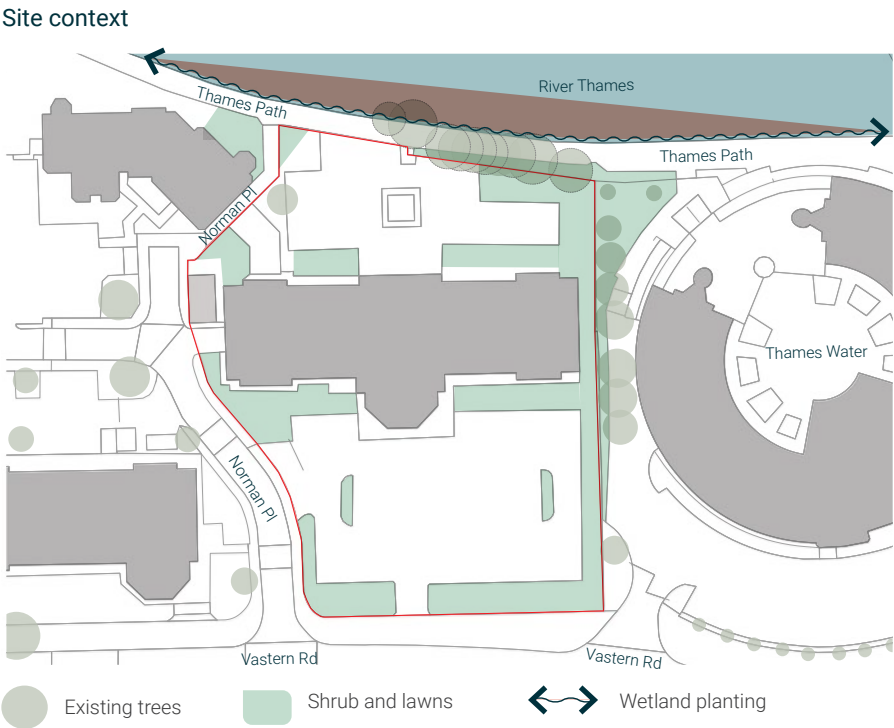
View 8 - View across the northern courtyard facing west



Key plan

5.5 Constraints

The diagrams below illustrate existing site wide constraints that have been considered through the emergence and evolution of the landscape and public realm proposals.



5.6 Can we improve the riverside public realm?

To understand whether the provision of a public square along the waterfront is a suitable idea a wider public realm analysis along the southern bank of the Thames Path was undertaken.

The study considers a 2km stretch of footpath along the southern bank of Thames, in both east and west directions from the site. The study concluded that the existing route is dominated by hard standing (1) with lack of navigation (4) and very few places to sit and rest along the 2km stretch.

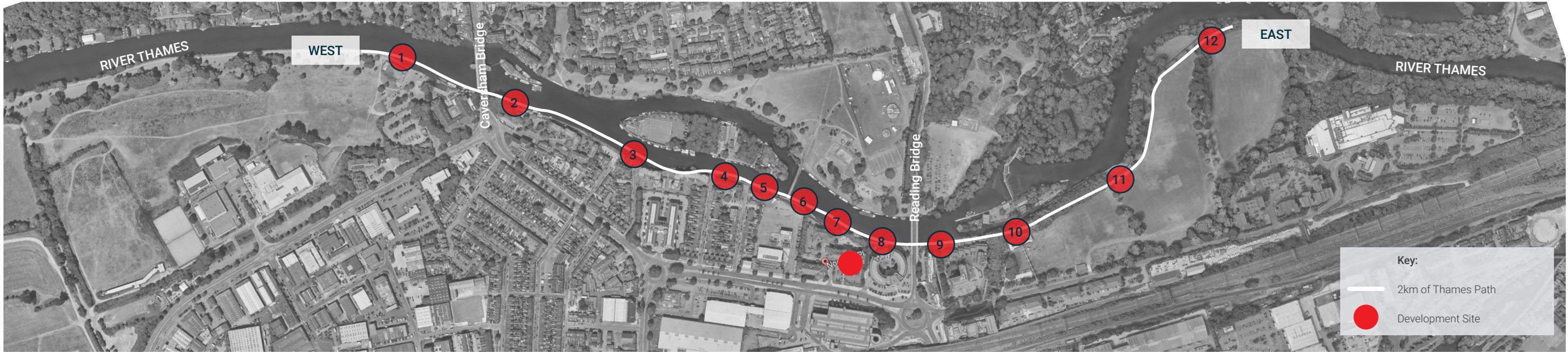
The route itself lacks any meaningful public open space, lacking opportunity for people to congregate on the southern banks.

A section of the path is dominated by boundary brick walls (7) with private gardens facing onto the river. In these location the footpath narrows making it difficult for specific user groups such as cyclists, wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc. to bypass each other.

Fronting the site, the footpath narrows further (8) and cyclists are encouraged to dismount and pedestrian movement is prioritised.

A large section of the study area between (2) and (8) lacks any significant green infrastructure which is a stark contrast to the northern banks and the western edge of the study area - this is partly driven by the urban sprawl of the town centre towards the river edge. However, the far west and east becomes soft and green as soon as you pass Reading Bridge and Caversham Bridge.

Our conclusion is that an area of public open space fronting the river could enhance the pedestrian experience by improving green infrastructure, enhancing habitat, creating a space for people to meet and hold small scaled events, a new café space for refreshments and improve natural wayfinding.



5.7 BIG opportunities

The proposals provide an exciting opportunity to provide a variety of spaces that serve the local and wider community. The adjacent diagram provides an overview of how the public spaces surrounding the development could be used to benefit the local and wider community.

Following stakeholder engagement and public consultation a new public square in the waterfront was developed further as part of this application. The key aspirations for the square include;

- Re-purposing the existing private open space to create an attractive public square
- Integrate level change with places to sit, stop and dwell
- A meeting space which is safe, accessible, inclusive and welcoming
- Flexible and adaptable space for events and gatherings
- Nature based SUDS and play features
- Connections with nature, increase green infrastructure and enhance biodiversity
- Integrated play for young children

The proposals go beyond a Waterfront Square to include new public realm enhancements on all four aspects of the proposed building and includes communal open space for residents on the roof gardens.



5.8 Design principles

The adjacent diagram illustrates the opportunities presented:

- Creating a stronger link from Reading station to the river front.
- Welcoming, safe and accessible spaces for pedestrians and cyclists along the Thames path
- Clear and strong views looking towards River Thames and Christchurch meadow
- Enhancing the river experience for residents and visitors
- Easy access to playground via the pedestrian bridge
- Protect and enhancing biodiversity along the river - considering flood resilience

Key:

Enhancing streetscape

Opportunity for public square

Enhance shared pedestrian / cycle route

Maximise views to the river and Christchurch Meadows

Improve connections and wayfinding between Vastern Road and the riverfront

Create a new shared pedestrian / cycle route

Retaining existing soft landscape and TPO as buffer

Wayfinding markers

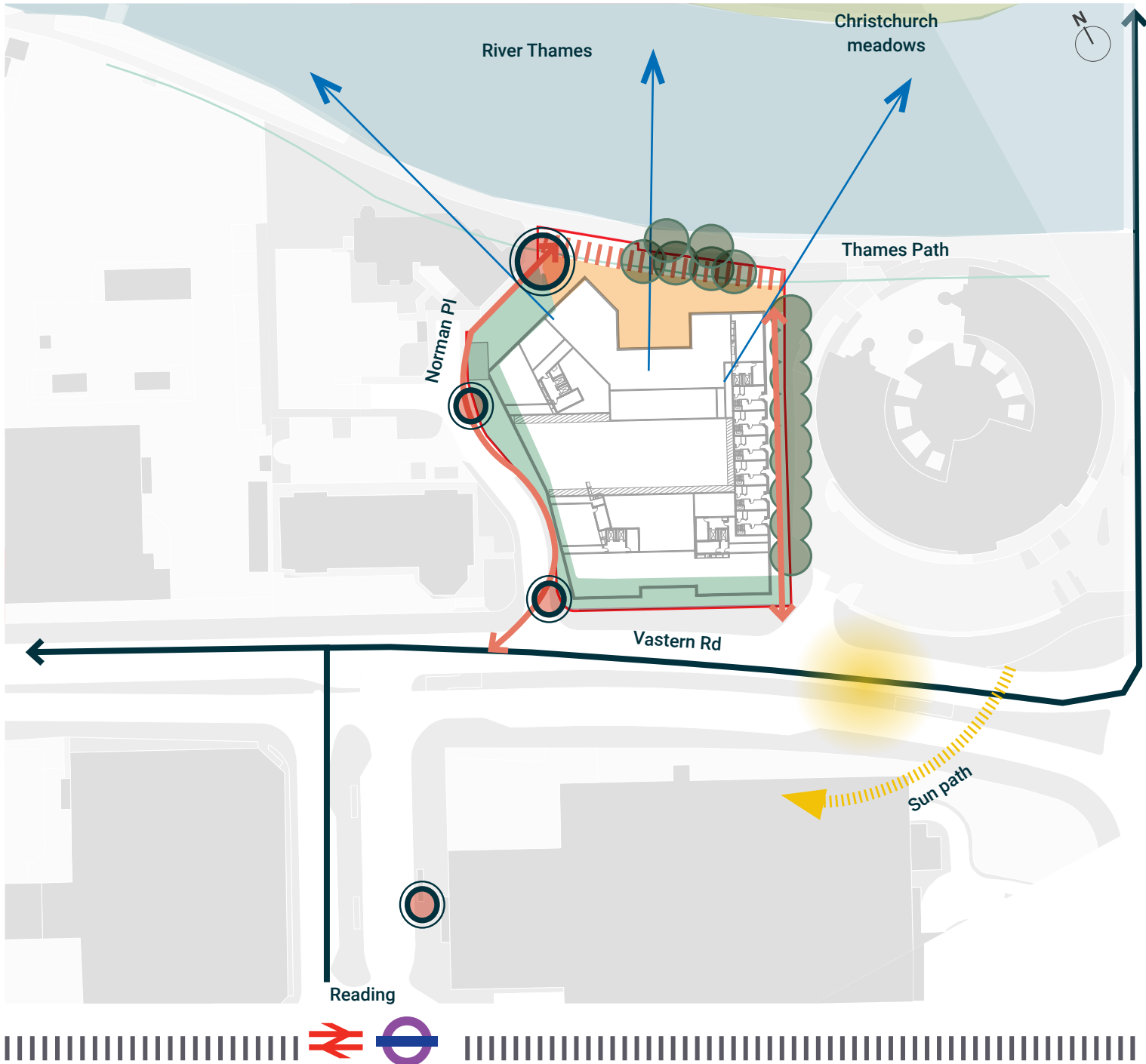
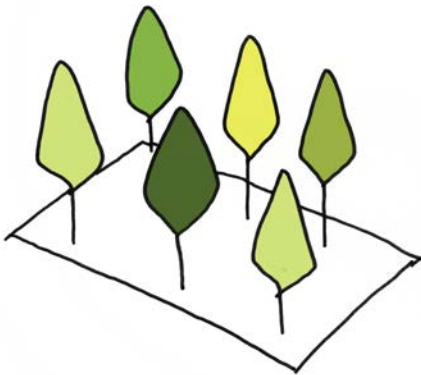
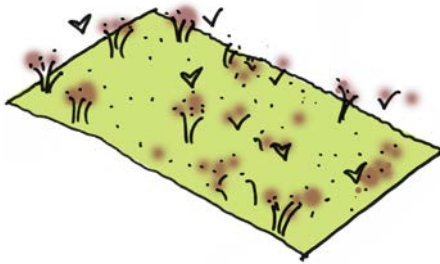


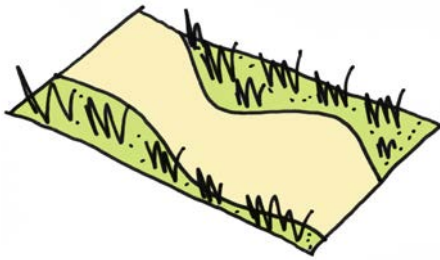
Diagram highlighting opportunities presented by the site



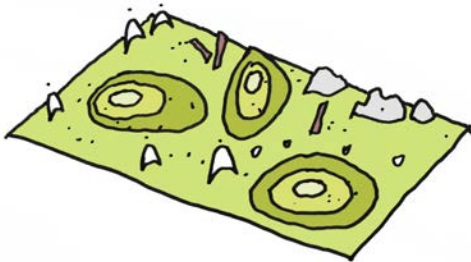
1. Increase tree coverage and native species



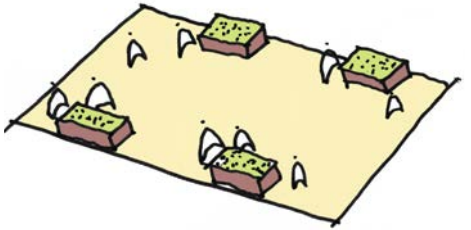
2. Enhance and increase biodiversity



3. Integrate connections with landscape

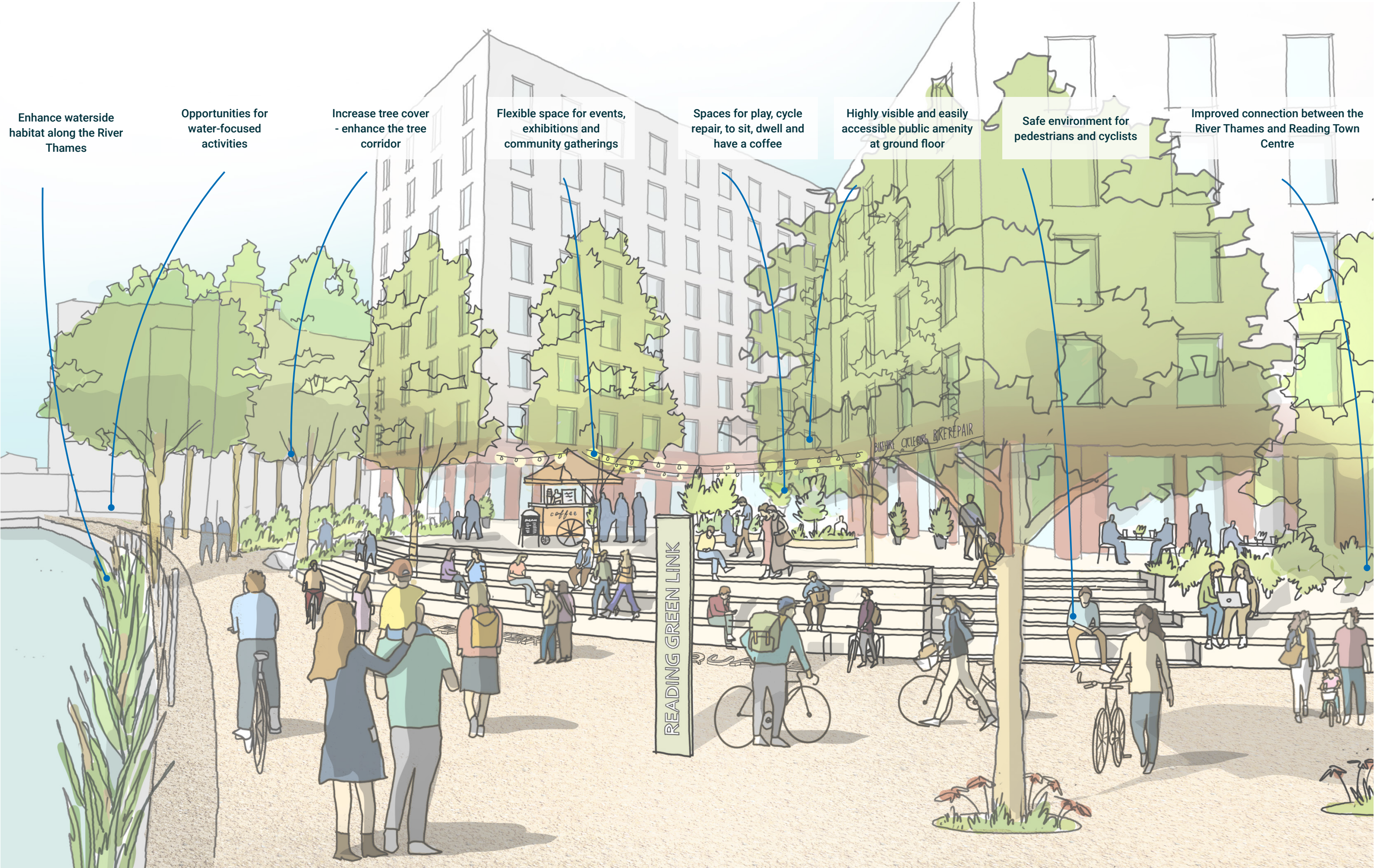


4. Create a playful landscape



5. Provide a variety of amenities for residents

5.9 A riverside community



Concept sketch image of Paintworks Square

5.10 Landscape character areas

The emerging scheme provides an excellent opportunity to create a publicly accessible landscape at ground floor whilst also creating private external space for residents. Located on the southern bank of the River Thames, the proposals provide some unique character areas which should be celebrated.

The emerging proposals create three key character areas within the public realm which include a new publicly accessible square which overlooks the river, a residential street along the eastern boundary and new active frontage with streetscape enhancements along Vastern Road.

There are also two amenity gardens for residents. Each of the spaces has a different character which is driven by elevation, sunlight and overshadowing, privacy and use. Further detail is provided on the following pages.

Key:

Vastern Road

MEWS Street

Waterfront Square

Podium garden

Kitchen garden

Biodiverse green roofs

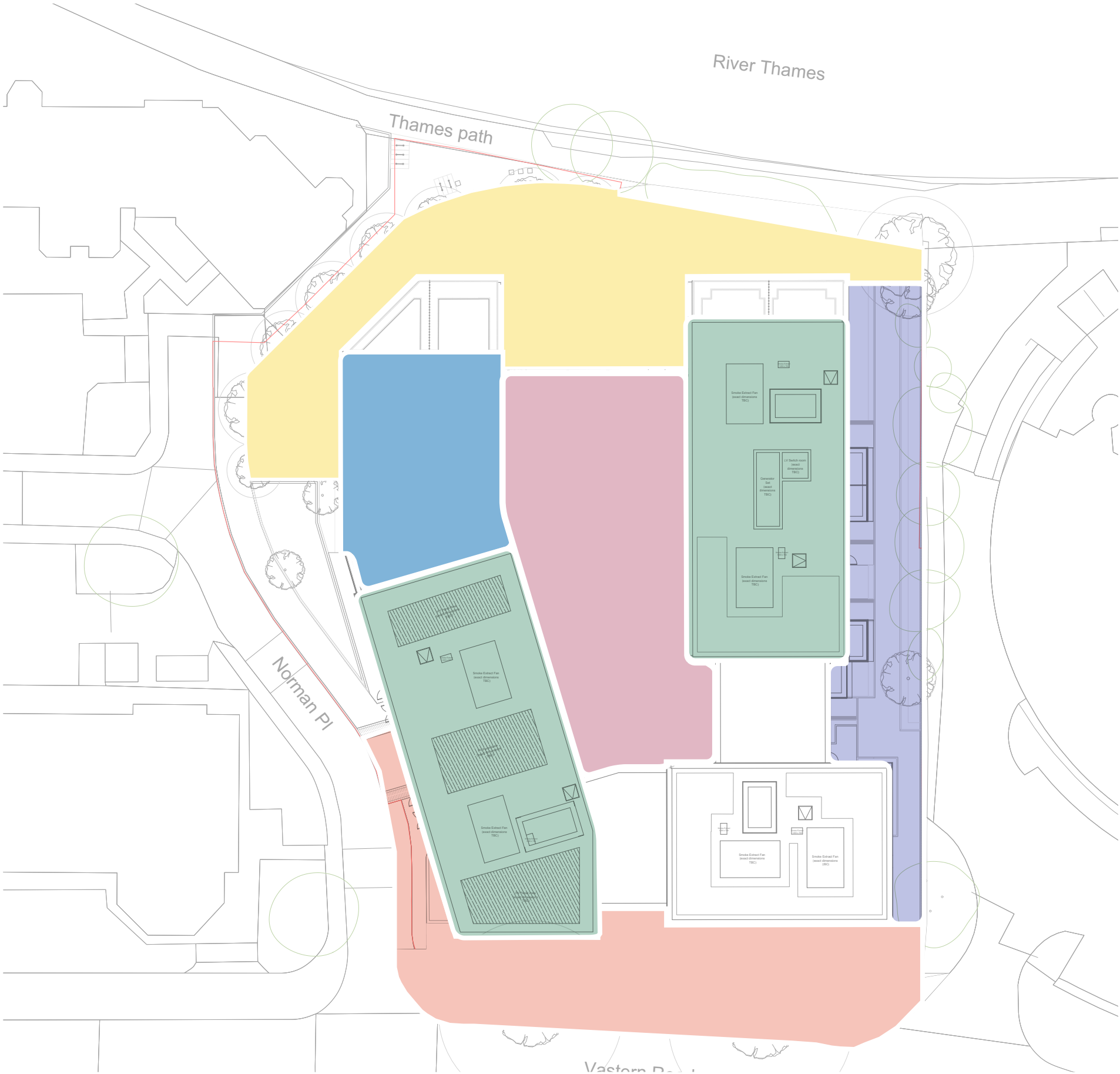


Diagram illustrating the landscape character spatial arrangement