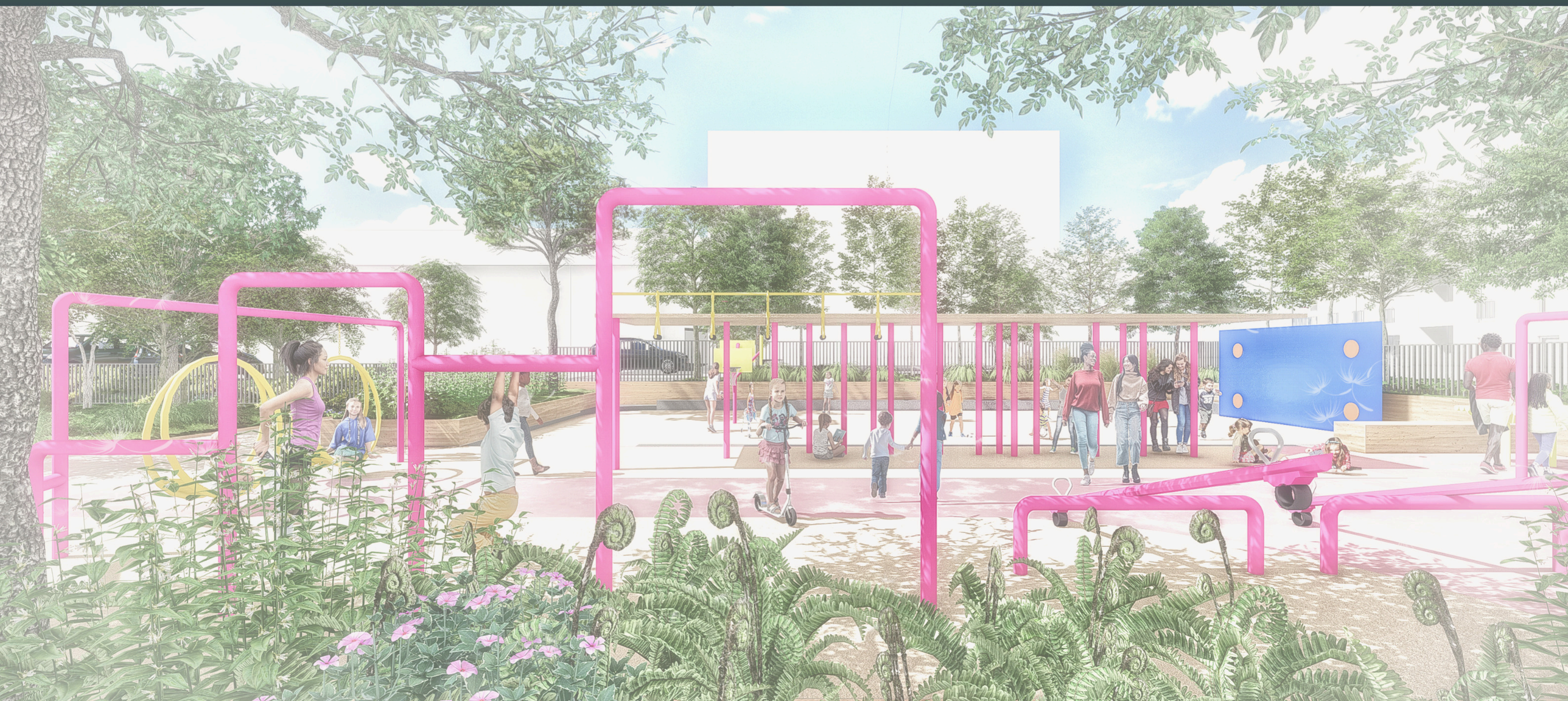
# Dee Park Open Space: Design & Access Statement

Presented by
HTA Design LLP

November
2024



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1.0

# The Site & Project Brief

# 1.1
# Introduction & Project Brief

An upgraded play area for the Dee Park neighbourhood is proposed as part of the Dee Park masterplan. Re-development of this area has been taking place over a number of years, with phase 3 of the masterplan ongoing.

The number of homes in the area has increased as a result of the redevelopment and the upgraded play area will provide an essential resource for both existing and new residents to the area.

As part of the proposals the existing play area and ball court will be removed and a new play space with equipment aimed at 0-11 year olds installed.

The local school has a multi-use games area (MUGA) that can be used out of school hours by the local community, which has meant that the play space in this location can be enlarged and upgraded.

It is intended that the play space will have a strong relationship with the new community centre and will become the social heart of this community, with space and facilities for people of all ages to enjoy.



*Artist's impression of the proposed play area with the community centre in the background*

# 1.2
# Wider site context

The site sits at the heart of the Dee Park redevelopment and is an integral part of the plans. The image on the right shows the phases that are now complete, along with the proposed phase 3 plans.



Dee park illustrative plan

# 1.3
# Site context

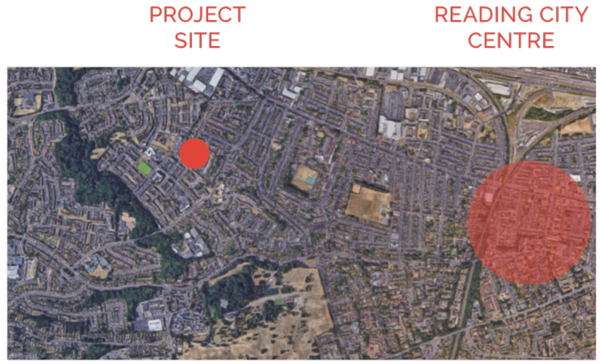
The site is located at the heart of a residential community, surrounded by flats to the north, south, and east, with a new community centre to the west. Additional residential accommodation is proposed to the southwest, which will further enhance oversight of the site.

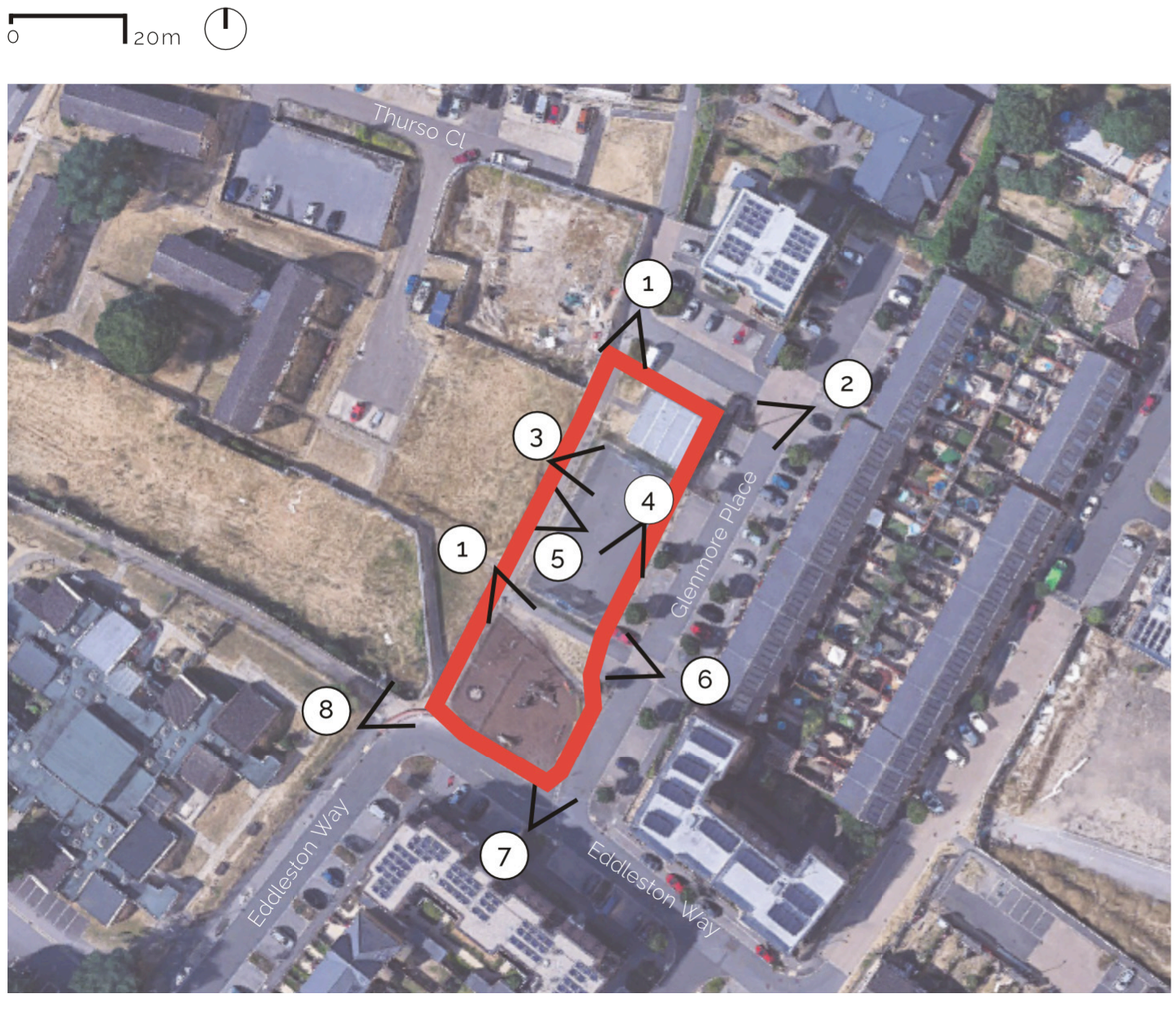


# 1.4
# Existing site photos

This page illustrates the existing site, which primarily consists of hard surfaces with minimal vegetation. A tarmac ball court is located at the centre of the space, with a fenced play area at the southern end.

Although well-used, the facilities are in need of an upgrade.





















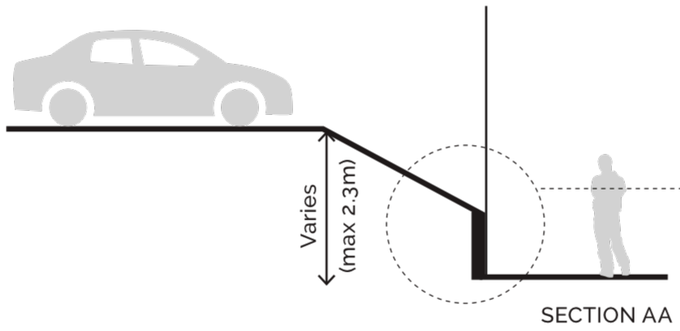






# 1.5
# Levels

A retaining wall currently follows the site boundary along the northern and eastern sides. The level change varies, with a maximum difference of 2.3 meters at the northeastern corner.





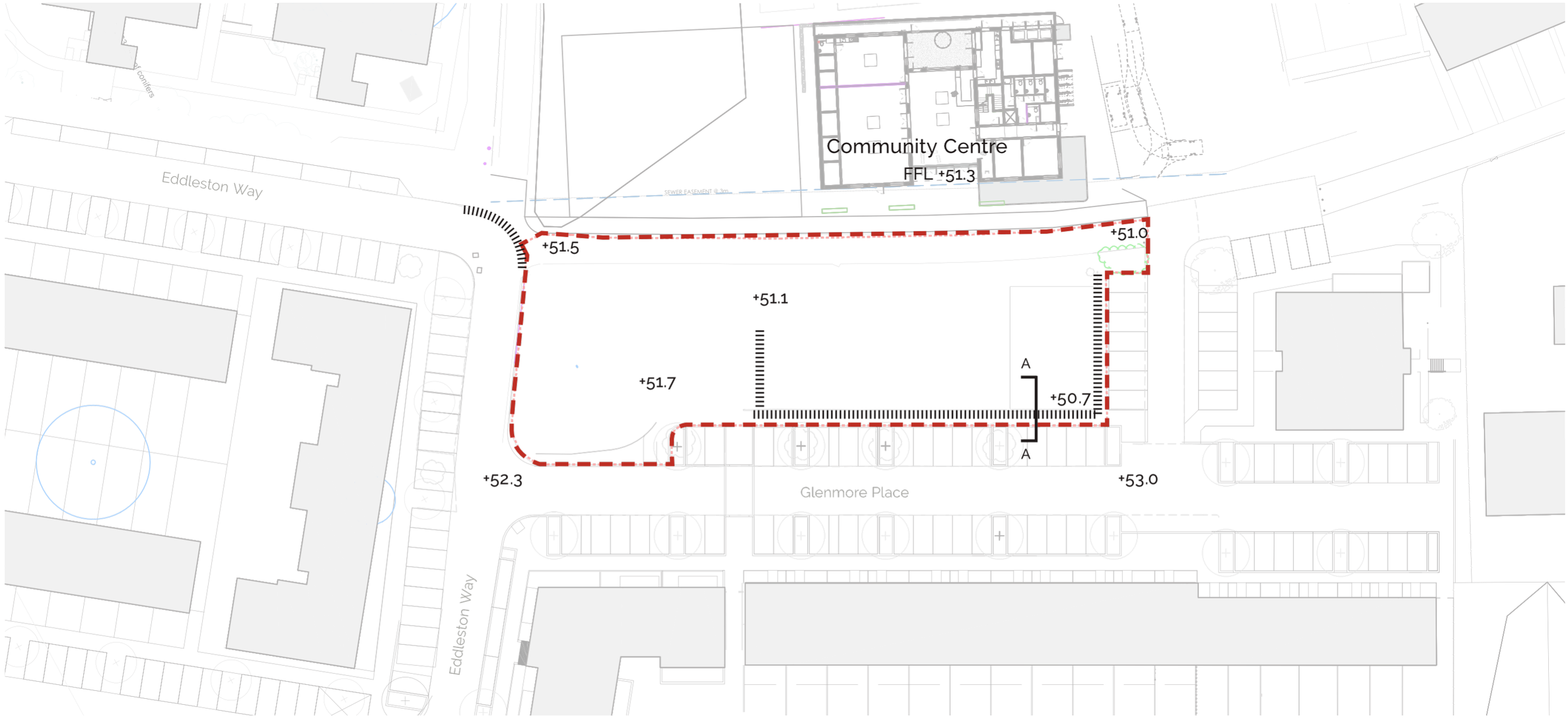

**KEY**

Site Boundary

+51.0 Existing Level

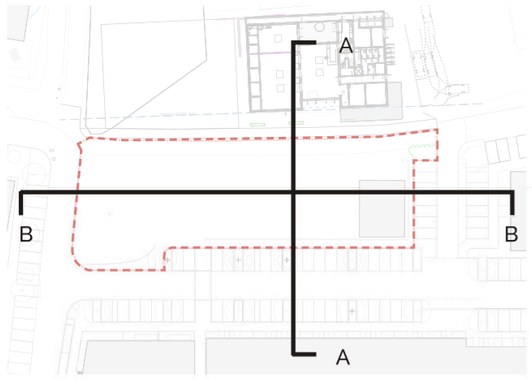
Existing retention

0 10m

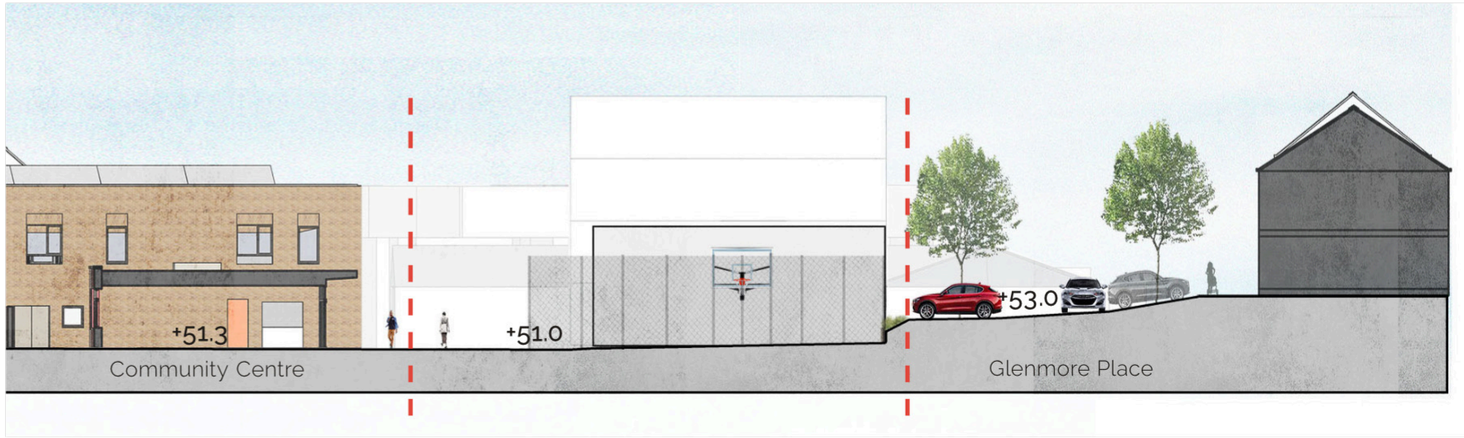


# 1.6
# Existing site sections

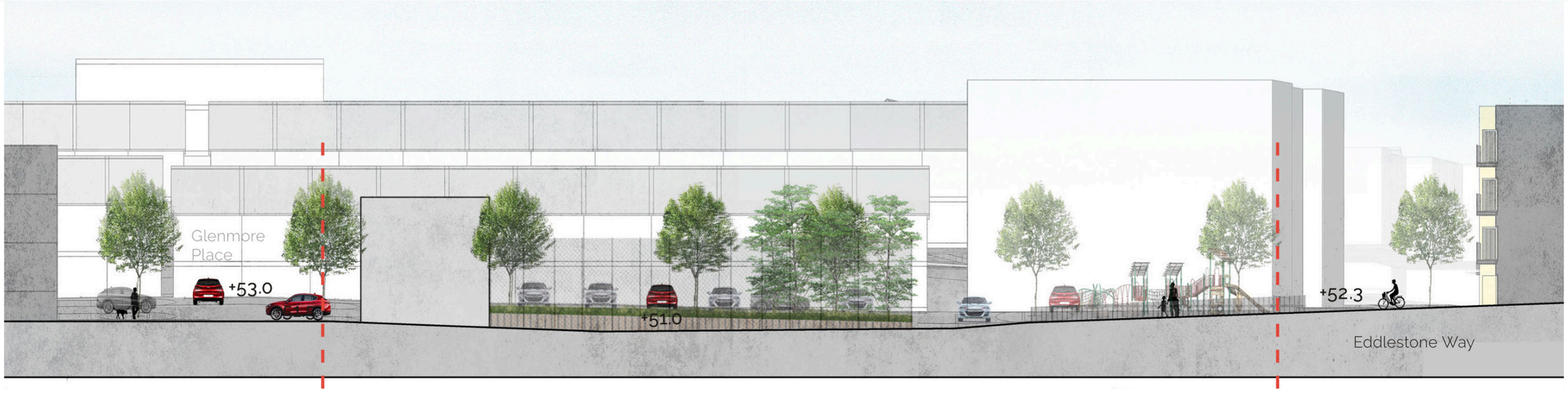
The sections here illustrate the level changes across the site, with the retaining wall along the eastern boundary.




SECTION AA




SECTION BB



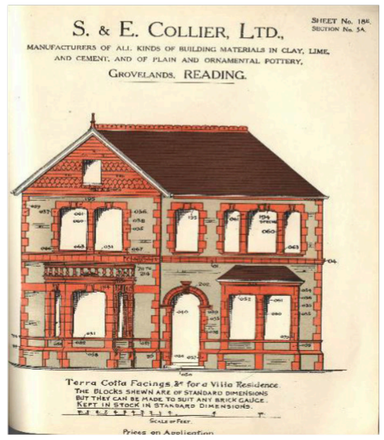
# 1.7
# Historic research

Bricks and tiles have been made in Reading since the medieval period. In 2001, a medieval tile kiln was discovered at Jubilee Square, Silver Street. The name Tilehurst, derived from Old English, means "a wooded hill where tiles were made," indicating the area's early industrial activity.

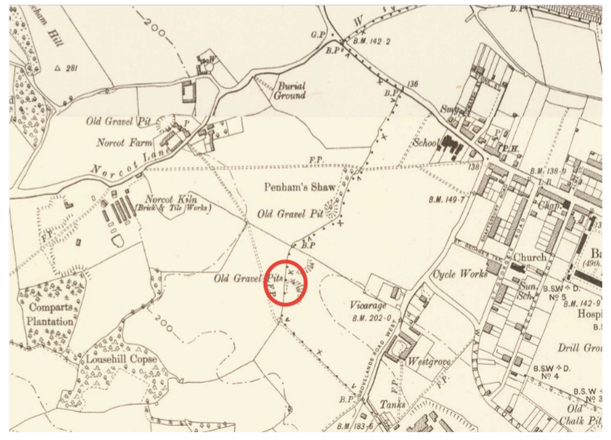
In the 19th century, clay pits and kilns could be found in Katesgrove, Coley, Caversham, Calcot, and Tilehurst. Thomas Hardy re-christened Reading as "Aldbrickham," meaning "the old brick town," in Jude the Obscure due to the extensive use of locally produced brick, tile, and terracotta in Reading's Georgian and Victorian buildings. The Town Hall and Queen Victoria Street are notable examples.



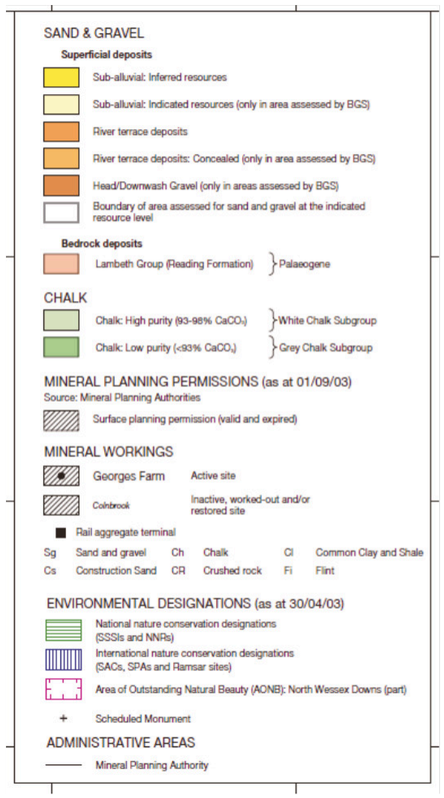
Reading Town Hall

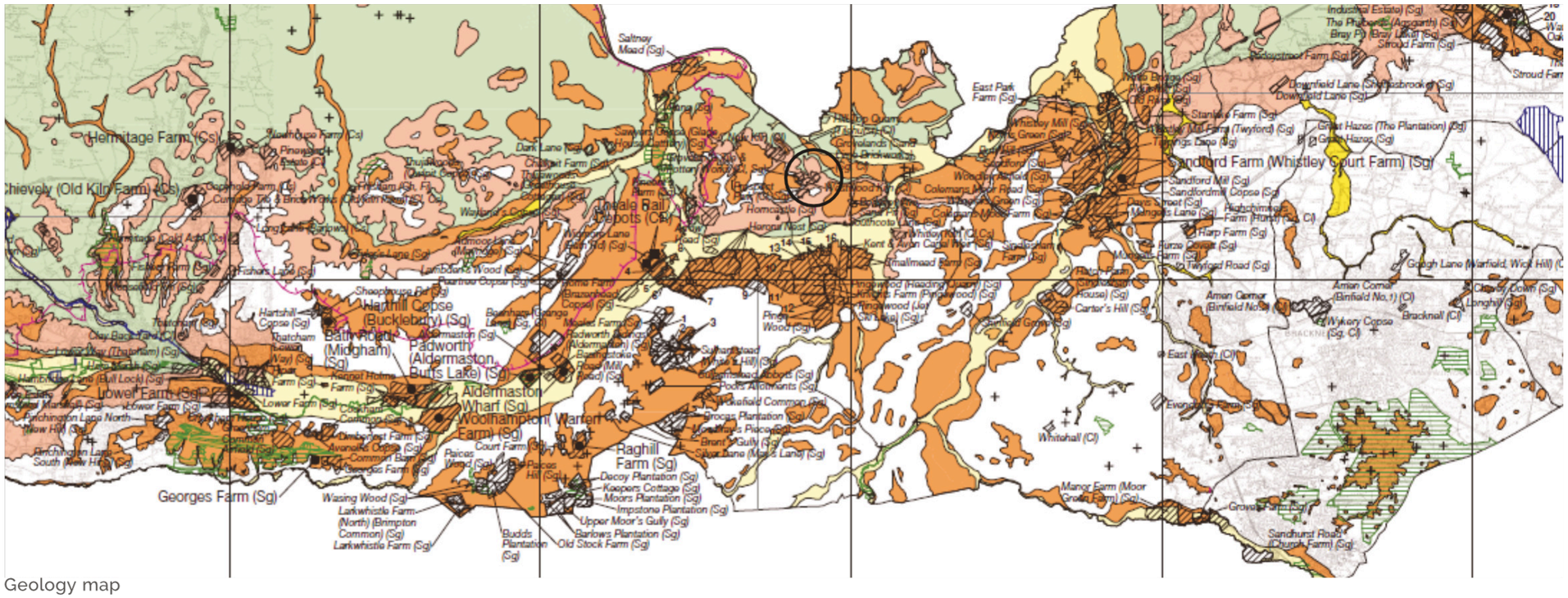



S. & E. Collier catalogue, early 20th century




OS Six Inch 1888-1913




Geology map

# 1.8
# Public art ideas

The site is located near what was once Lyons Square, which featured public art referencing Reading's history as the "Biscuit Town" — including biscuit-shaped seats and a decorative arch.

The arch has been preserved and is currently in storage. The plan is to sandblast the arch, carry out any necessary repairs, and re-spray it for use as a feature in the new play area.

Raised planters, seating or surface designs could incorporate biscuit tin patterns, offering a playful nod to Reading's history as part of the proposed enhancements.



*Lyon square arch and 'biscuit seats'*




*Lyon square 'biscuit seats'*




*Huntley and Palmers biscuit tins (photos from the Reading Museum)*



*Lyon square arch and 'biscuit seats'*



*Lyon square arch*




*Huntley and Palmers biscuit tins (photos from the Reading Museum)*



# 1.9 Consultation

As part of the design process, we have consulted with RBCs Highways and Parks departments, as well as ROSPA. We have also undertaken two rounds of public consultation.

Public Consultation
The public were invited to a consultation event at Strathy Close Day Centre in March 2023.

The proposals were well received by residents, with the general consensus being 'how soon can it be built?'

A number of comments were received and have been addressed as part of the current proposals. Some of the comments are outlined below:

*Q: In summary, what do you think of what you have seen today?*
*A: Looks very nice & tranquil.*

*Q: What did you like most about what you have seen?*
*A: Opportunity for all age groups to have a safe open space.*

*Q: Is there anything specific you would like to see?*
*A: Any covered seating as shelter from rain like we have in the parks nearby.*

*Public consultation comments*

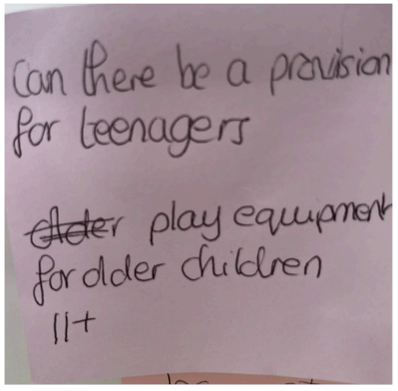


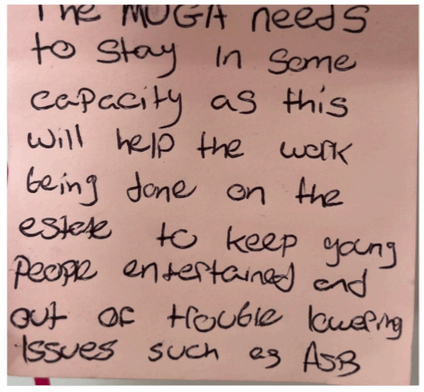

*Public consultation boards*

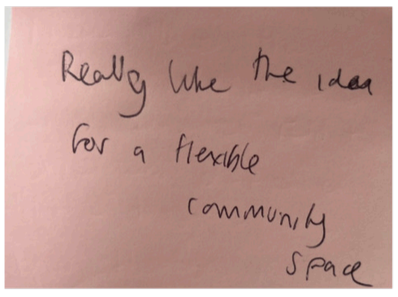
# 1.9
# Consultation

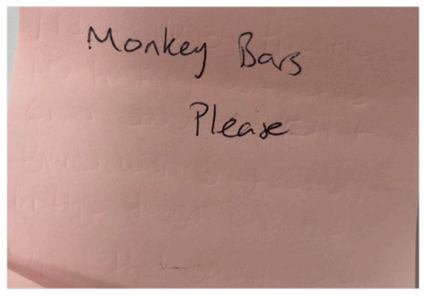
Our second public consultation took place in July 2024 at Dee Park Community Centre. The consultation gathered valuable feedback on the park upgrades.

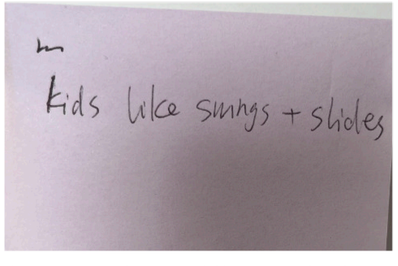
Key comments included the need for play equipment for older children and dedicated spaces for teenagers to keep them entertained. A flexible community space was also well received by the public.

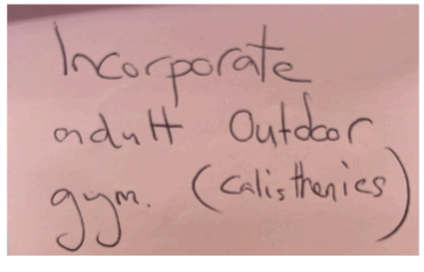


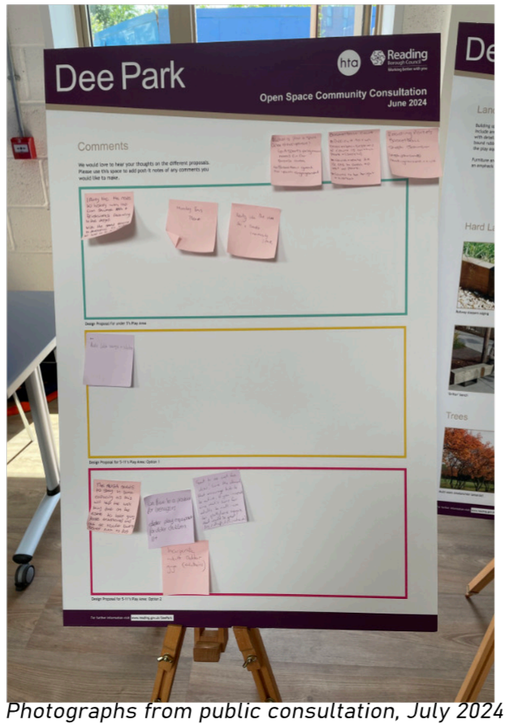



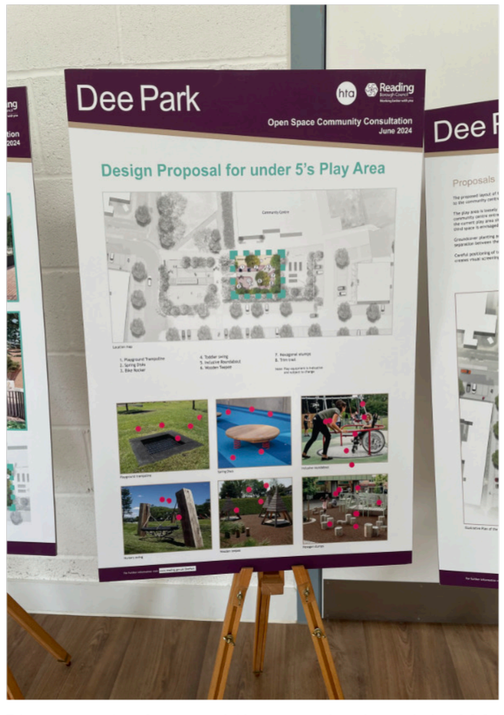




*Comments from public consultation*




*Photographs from public consultation, July 2024*



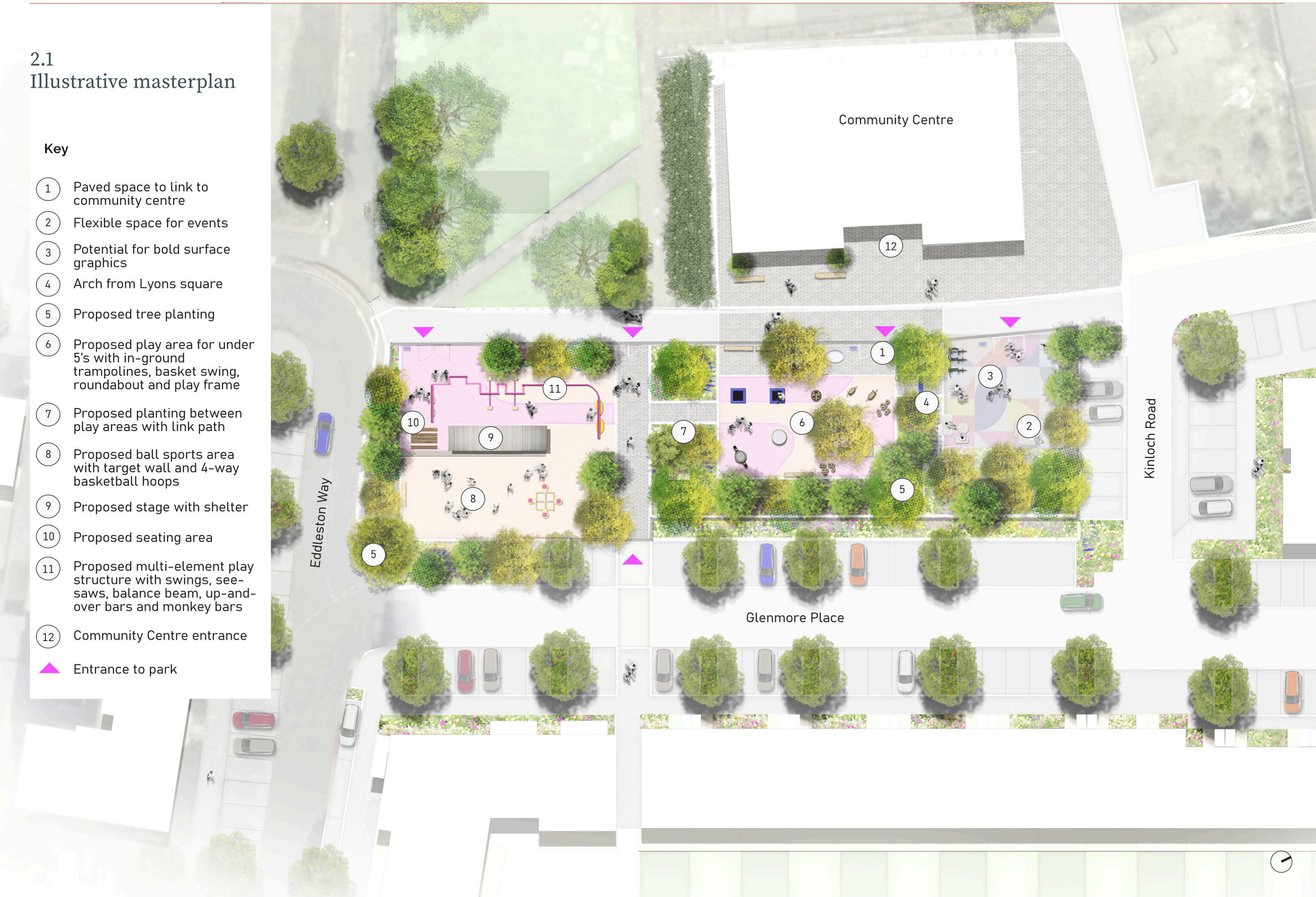

*Photographs from public consultation, July 2024*



2.0

# Design Proposal

# 2.1
# Illustrative masterplan




## Key

1. Paved space to link to community centre
2. Flexible space for events
3. Potential for bold surface graphics
4. Arch from Lyons square
5. Proposed tree planting
6. Proposed play area for under 5's with in-ground trampolines, basket swing, roundabout and play frame
7. Proposed planting between play areas with link path
8. Proposed ball sports area with target wall and 4-way basketball hoops
9. Proposed stage with shelter
10. Proposed seating area
11. Proposed multi-element play structure with swings, see-saws, balance beam, up-and-over bars and monkey bars
12. Community Centre entrance

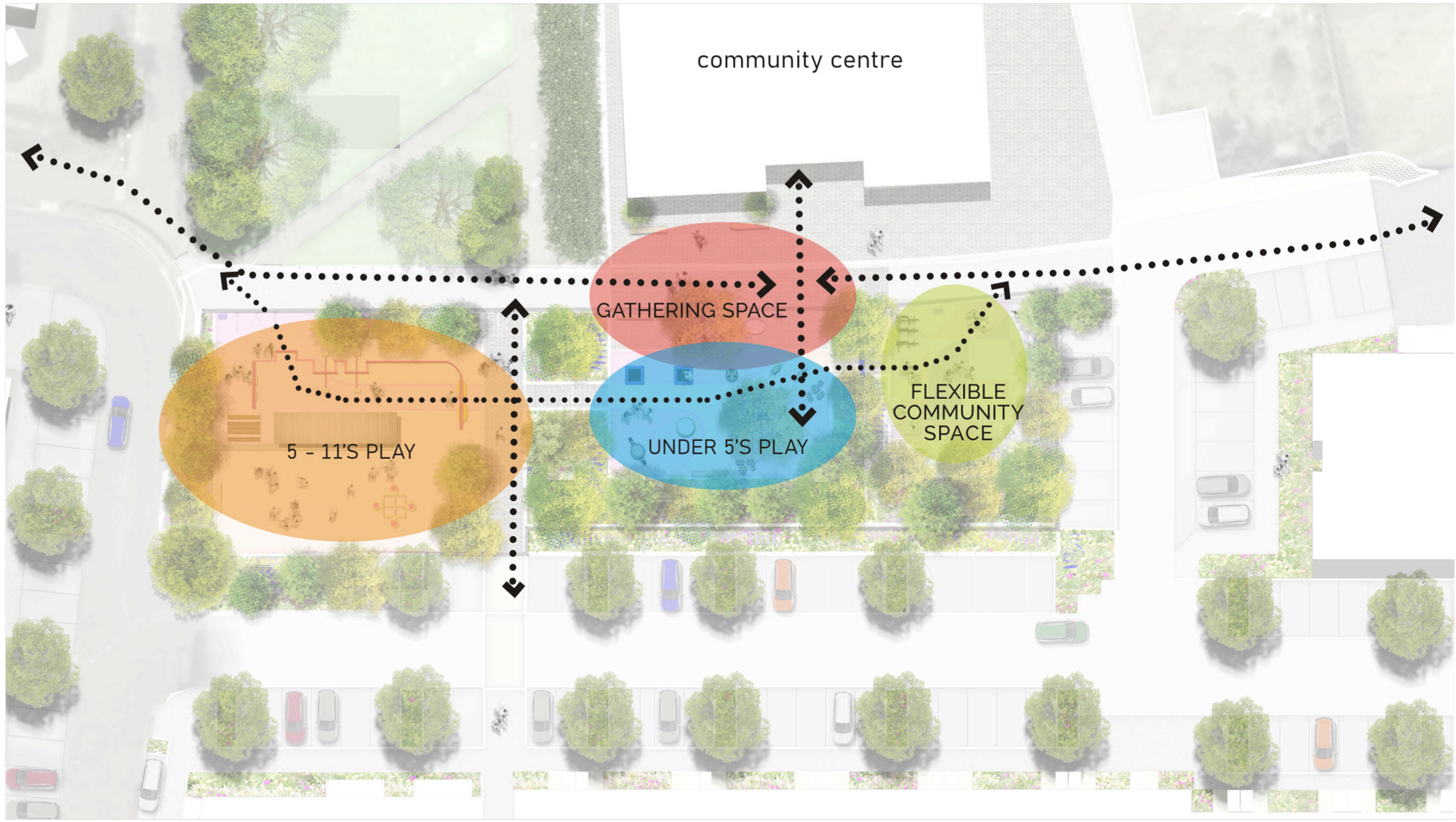
▲ Entrance to park

## 2.2
## Spatial strategy

The current layout of the park caters to all age groups, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility throughout. For older individuals, there is a flexible community space equipped with seating, strategically positioned near the facilities of the community centre. This setup facilitates social interaction and relaxation for seniors while providing easy access to amenities.

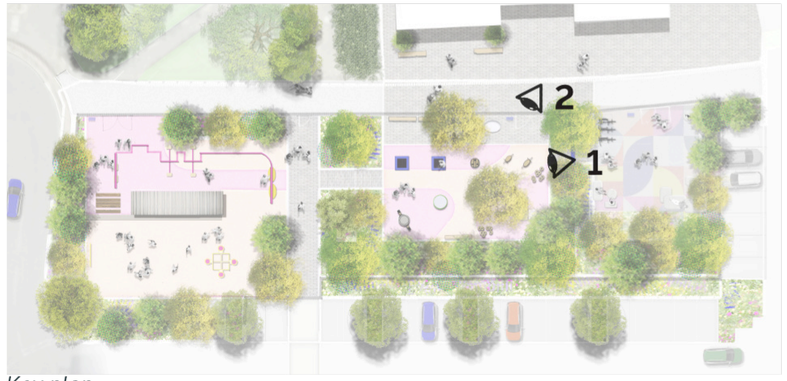
For younger children under the age of five, the play area is located opposite the community centre and further away from the road. This deliberate placement enhances safety by minimizing the risk of accidents and ensures secure movement for young children within the park.

By incorporating an informal ball sports area and a designated play space designed according to the "Make Space for Girls" principles, Dee Park would evolve into an exceptional space for all age groups. These additions would enhance the park's appeal by offering recreational opportunities tailored to the diverse needs and preferences of its visitors. From young children to seniors, everyone would find something enjoyable and engaging, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity within the park's vibrant atmosphere.




*Spatial strategy diagram*

# 2.3
# Artist's Impressions - Under 5's play




*Key plan*



*1) Illustrative view of the LAP looking south towards the LEAP)*



*2) Illustrative view of the entrance into the play area from the community centre*

# 2.3
# Artist's Impressions - 5-11's play




*Key plan*



*1) Illustrative view of the LEAP looking north towards the LAP*



*2) Illustrative view of the LEAP looking east*

# 2.3
# Artist's Impressions - Flexible community space




*Key plan*

The concept for this space is inspired by Reading's history of biscuit production and pays homage to the bisuit seats that were formerly situated within Lyon's Sqaure. The concept is based on the idea of 'stacked' bisuit tins in various forms. These 'biscuit tins' would be positioned around the edge of the space to provide informal seating and a setting for activities such as parkour or skating.

The informal arrangement is in line with 'Make Space for Girls' principles, with flexibility for a range of uses - such as a stage for events and social gathering.

The images on the right are indicative and describe the concept of a community space with furniture that is designed to reference Reading's biscuit making heritage and a space that can be used flexibly for pop up events. The details and materiality of this space will be refined during the next design stage. The 'biscuit tins' could be imprinted with bold abstract patterns that pay homage to the bisuit tin graphics. An alternative could be the use of graphics applied to the floor to create playful routes for skating etc. These could be in colours to match or complement the play structure within the older children's play area.

The precedents shown below illustrate some Huntley & Palmers biscuit tins, and the biscuit seats from Lyons Square.




*Biscuit seats from Lyons Square*




*Huntley & Palmers biscuit tins*



*1) Illustrative view of the flexible community space from above*



*2) Illustrative view of the flexible community space*

## 2.4
# Proposed play Equipment - for under 5's

Play equipment, largely constructed from timber, has been selected to reinforce the woodland character that is envisaged for the space. A range of pieces cater for the main kinetic actions of climbing, balancing, swinging, spinning and jumping.

The items shown in blue are aimed at children aged under 5. These items are described and specified as 'or similar', the final design and specification may be subject to minor changes as a result of future coordination, subject to client approval. For example, the playground trampoline is subject to confirmation of suitable ground conditions.

The design of the play area aims to be inclusive to all, with smooth surfaces and level access, pieces that allow use by wheelchair users, quiet corners for those who want to avoid the busier spaces and perhaps sit and talk, and equipment to engage all genders.

The playground design has been assessed by ROSPA and meets with the requirements of the applicable standards and presents a tolerably low risk to users. It has also been reviewed by RBC's play officer.



*1.Cantilever Play Frame*



*Cantilever Play Frame*



*2.Nursery swing*



*3.Playground trampoline*



*4. Spring Disks*



*5. Roundabout*



*6.Bike rocker*



*7.Hexagon stumps*




*Equipment location plan*

# 2.4
# Proposed play Equipment - For age 5-11

The play area for children age 5-11 has been informed by guidance from Make Space for Girls, a charity that advocates for parks and public spaces to be designed for young women and girls, not just boys and young men.

The space is effectively split into two zones - one informal ball sports area with a target wall and a 4-way basketball hoop, and the other with a bespoke metal play structure containing swings, two see-saws, balance beam, and up-and-over bars.

A stage with shelter, and a picnic table join the two spaces.

The play area has been designed in conjunction with Play Equip and relevant checks in relation to fall zones etc. have been carried out.

These play items are described and specified as 'or similar; the final design and specification may be subject to minor changes as a result of future coordination, subject to client approval.

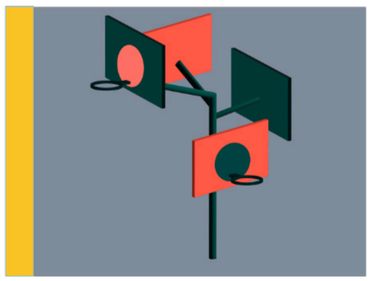
The playground design has been assessed by ROSPA and meets with the requirements of the applicable standards and presents a tolerably low risk to users.  It has also been reviewed by RBC's play officer.



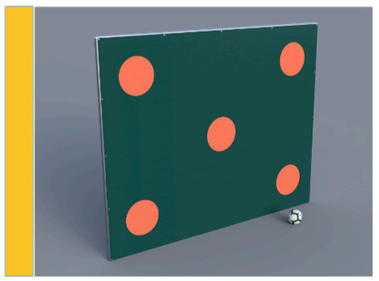
*8. Bespoke play structure*



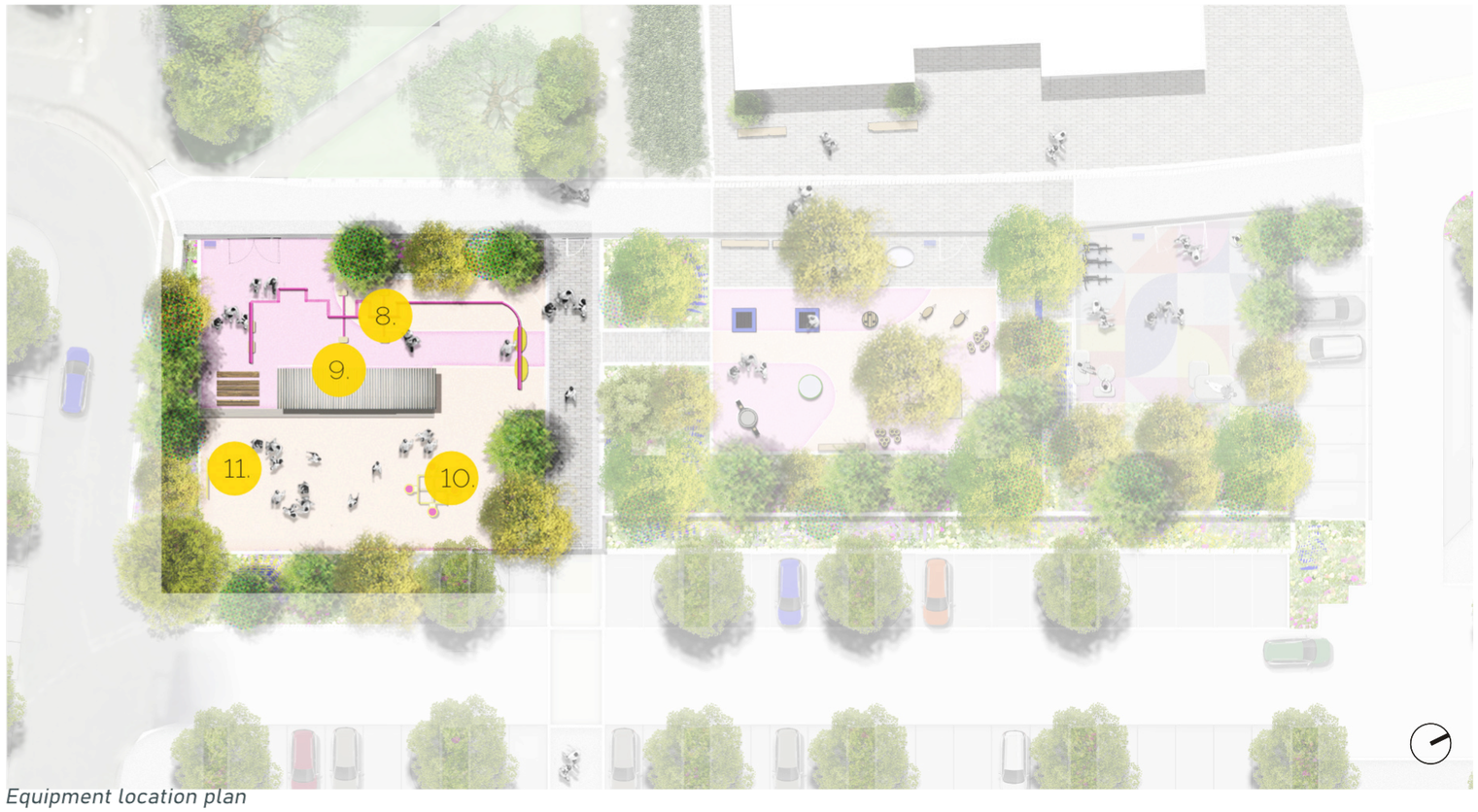
*9. Bespoke shelter with stage*



*10. Numuga basketball hoops*



*11.. Numuga target wall*




*Equipment location plan*

# 2.5
# Landscape materials palette -surfaces & furniture

A restrained palette of natural materials creates a warm and welcoming environment for play.

Inspired by a woodland glade, the design incorporates timber to evoke a sense of place. Timber sleeper retaining walls frame the play areas, providing opportunities for informal seating. Robust, chunky timber benches complement the sleeper walls, while sculptural pebble seats add visual interest.

A tubular metal play structure is proposed to be powder-coated in a vibrant colour, creating a playful and eye-catching feature within the 5-11 play area. The colours will be carefully chosen to ensure they harmonize with the other materials.

Permeable tar and chip surfacing, or permeable asphalt with bold, colourful graphic patterns applied, is proposed to the flexible space. The patterns and colours would be carefully considered to make reference to Reading's heritage, and complement the rest of the proposals.

Permeable brick pavers, matching the existing paving in front of the community centre, have a homely aesthetic and create a welcoming entrance to the play space. These pavers, which reference Reading's brick heritage, will also be used on the main routes through the play area.

These items are described and specified as 'or similar', the final design and specification may be subject to minor changes as a result of future coordination, subject to client approval. Materials will be specified to ensure future maintenance compatibility for RBCs highway department.





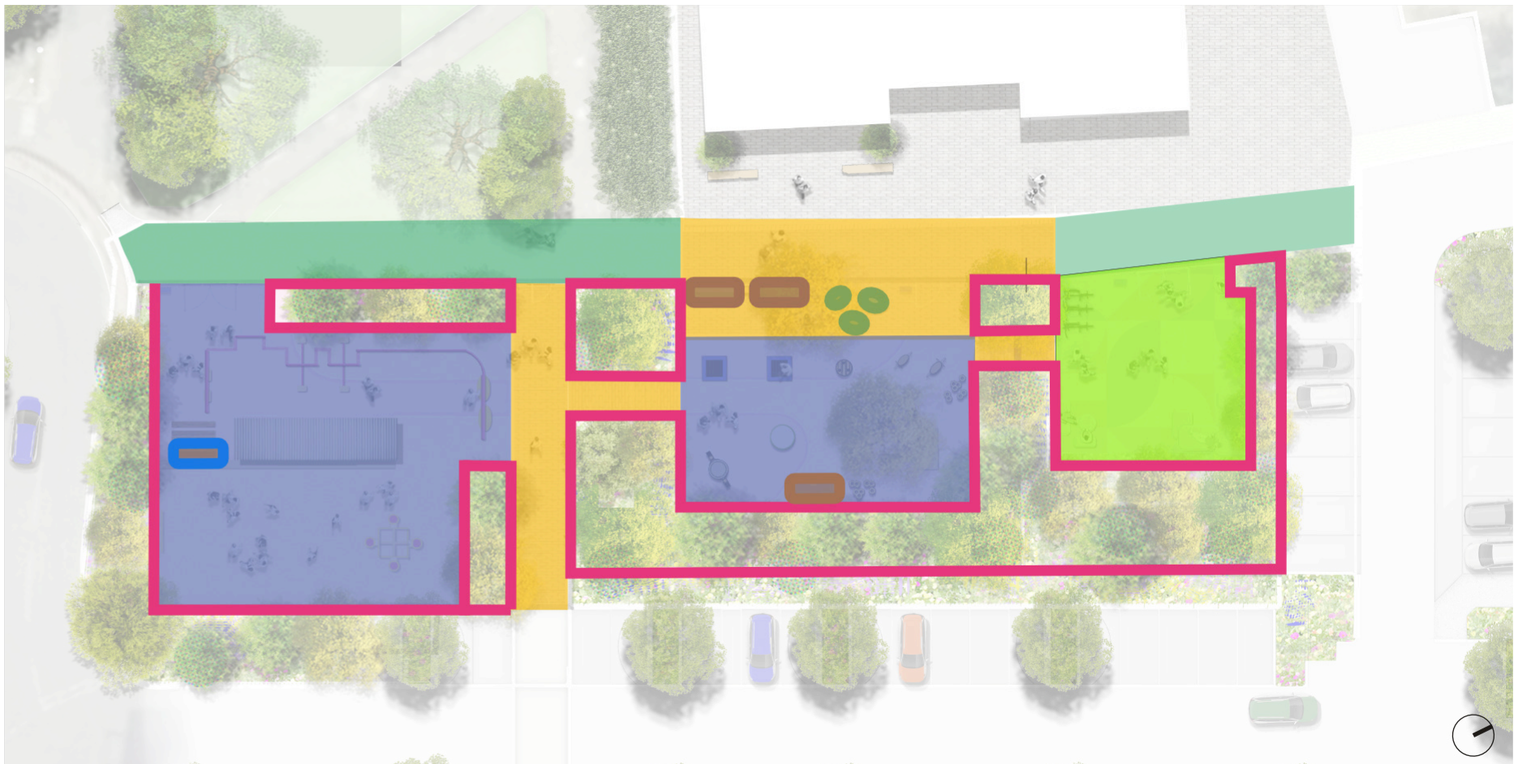






**Key**

- Wet pour/ tigermulch surface (permeable)
- Permeable brick pavers
- Permeable tar & chip surface
- Asphalt surface
- Picnic set
- Pebble seats
- Bench
- Timber sleeper retaining walls



*Landscape material and furniture location plan*

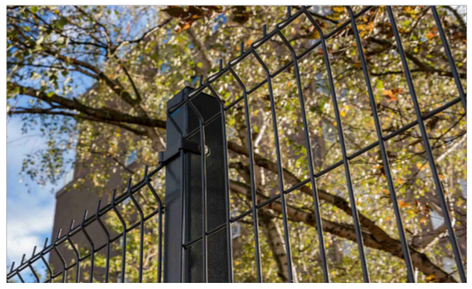
# 2.6
# Landscape materials palette- Fencing, gates & railings

Steel flat bar railings create a fuss-free boundary treatment that will be further softened by perimeter planting. Railings will be 1100mm high and comply with EN 1176.

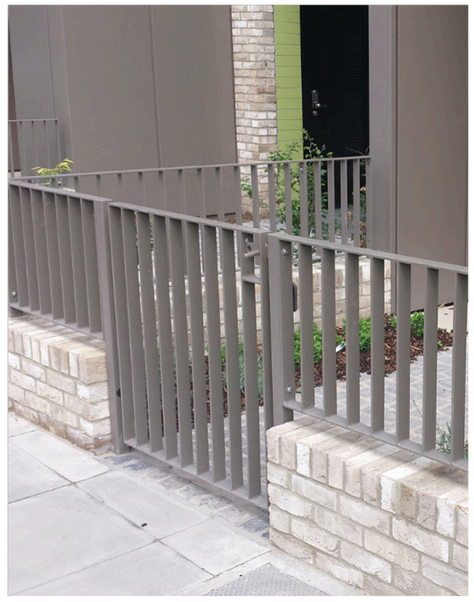
A rebound mesh fence is proposed around the ball sports area. The height will be 2m from the playing surface level.

The existing metal railings that run behind the parking bays on Kinloch Road are proposed to be retained and made good following construction if required.

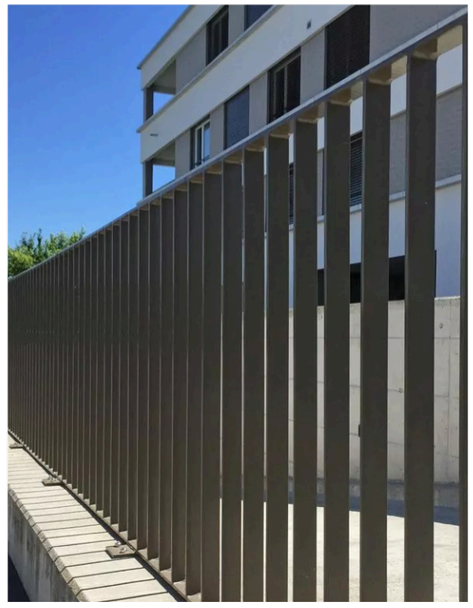




*Rebound mesh fence*



*Flat bar railings*



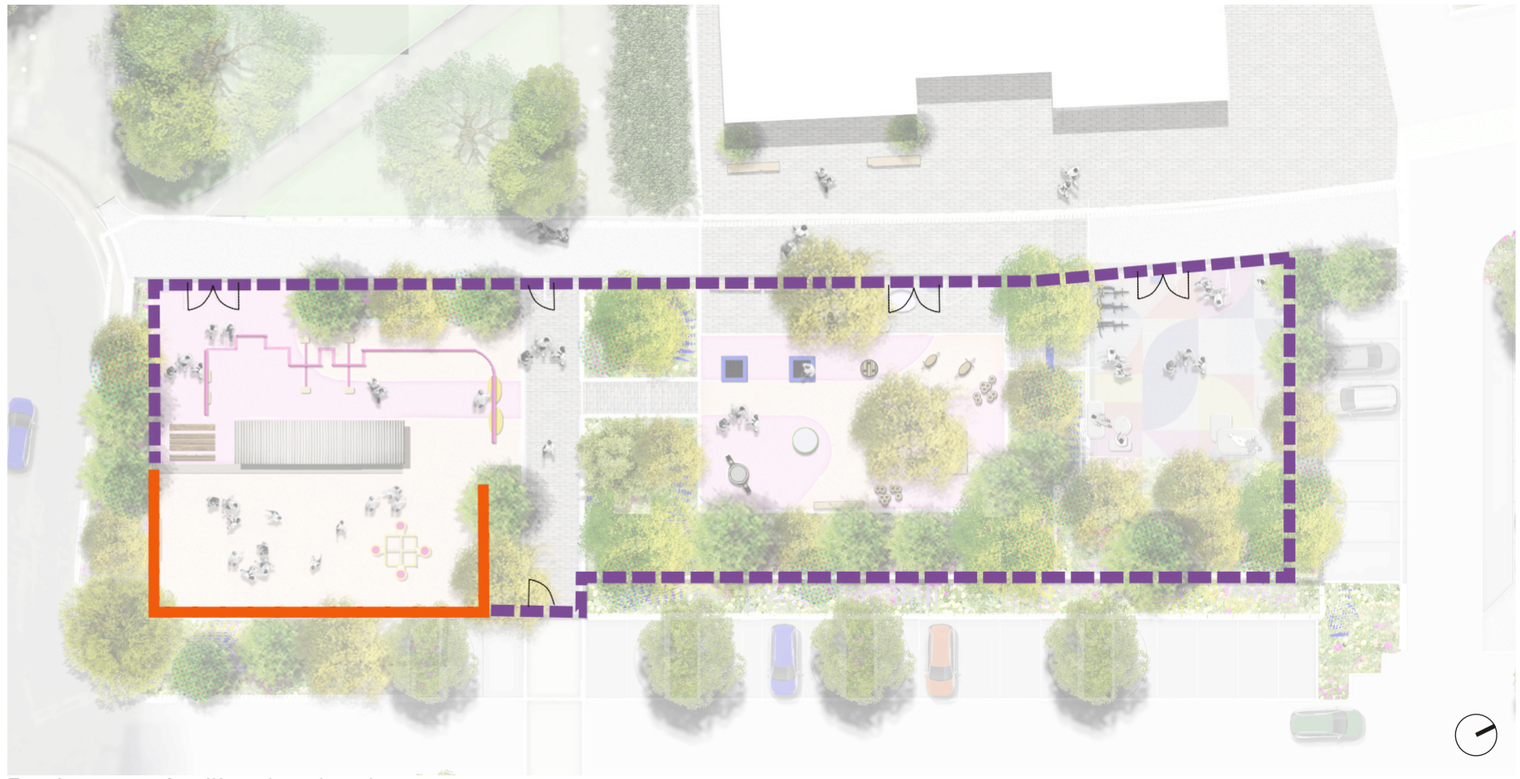
**Key**

Proposed flat bar railings 1.1m high

Proposed ball stop fence 2m high

Proposed double gate (to open inwards)

Proposed single gate (to open inwards)



*Fencing, gates & railings location plan*

# 2.7
# Tree strategy

Trees chosen for the site are either native to the UK or, if non-native, provide value for wildlife and interest throughout the year. Multistem forms (MS) create a woodland atmosphere, while larger feature standard form (SF) trees, such as Pinus sylvestris (Scots Pine) and Liquidambar styraciflua 'Worplesdon' (Sweet Gum), add scent and provide shade throughout the space. Trees will have a 2-meter clear stem (or raised stems on the multistem forms) to ensure visibility across the play area.

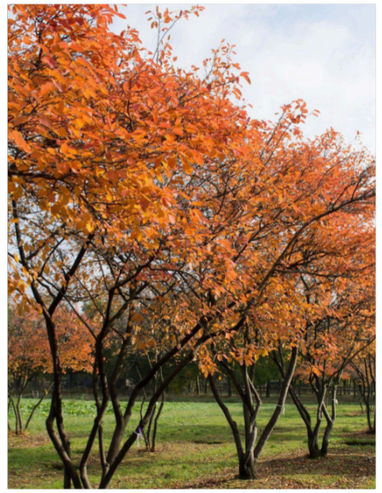
The mix of tree species has been designed to ensure that there are no more than 30% of trees from one family, no more than 10% of trees from one genus, and no more than 10% of one species, as per Reading Borough Council's guidance.



Crataegus monogyna (MS)



Acer campestre (MS)



Amelanchier lamarckii (MS)



Corylus avellana (MS)

Parrotia persica 'Bella' (MS)

Cercis canadensis(MS)

Quercus castaneifolia 'Green Spire'(SF)

Cornus kousa var. chinensis (MS)

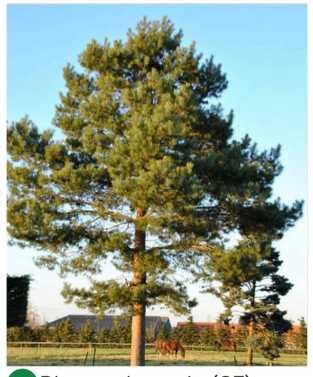
Arbutus unedo (MS)



Malus 'Evereste' (MS)



Sorbus aucuparia (MS)



Pinus sylvestris (SF)



Liquidambar styraciflua (SF)



*Tree location plan*

# 2.8
# Planting strategy

The proposed planting scheme embraces a woodland character, complementing the chosen tree selection. Low-maintenance groundcover plants will be prioritized to create a green 'carpet' beneath the trees. Hardy evergreen plants, such as Pachysandra terminalis, will ensure year-round coverage, while bulbs like native daffodils, snowdrops, and grape hyacinths will provide seasonal interest and colour.

Around the flexible community space, the planting will include edible perennials such as herbs, strawberries, currants, and gooseberries.

## Groundcover understorey planting


Lamium naculatum 'White Nancy'


Asarum europaeum


Pachysandra terminalius


Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'


Blechnum spicant


Ajuga reptans

## Bulbs


Anemone 'Wild Swan'


Fritillaria meleagris


Hyacinthoides non-scripta

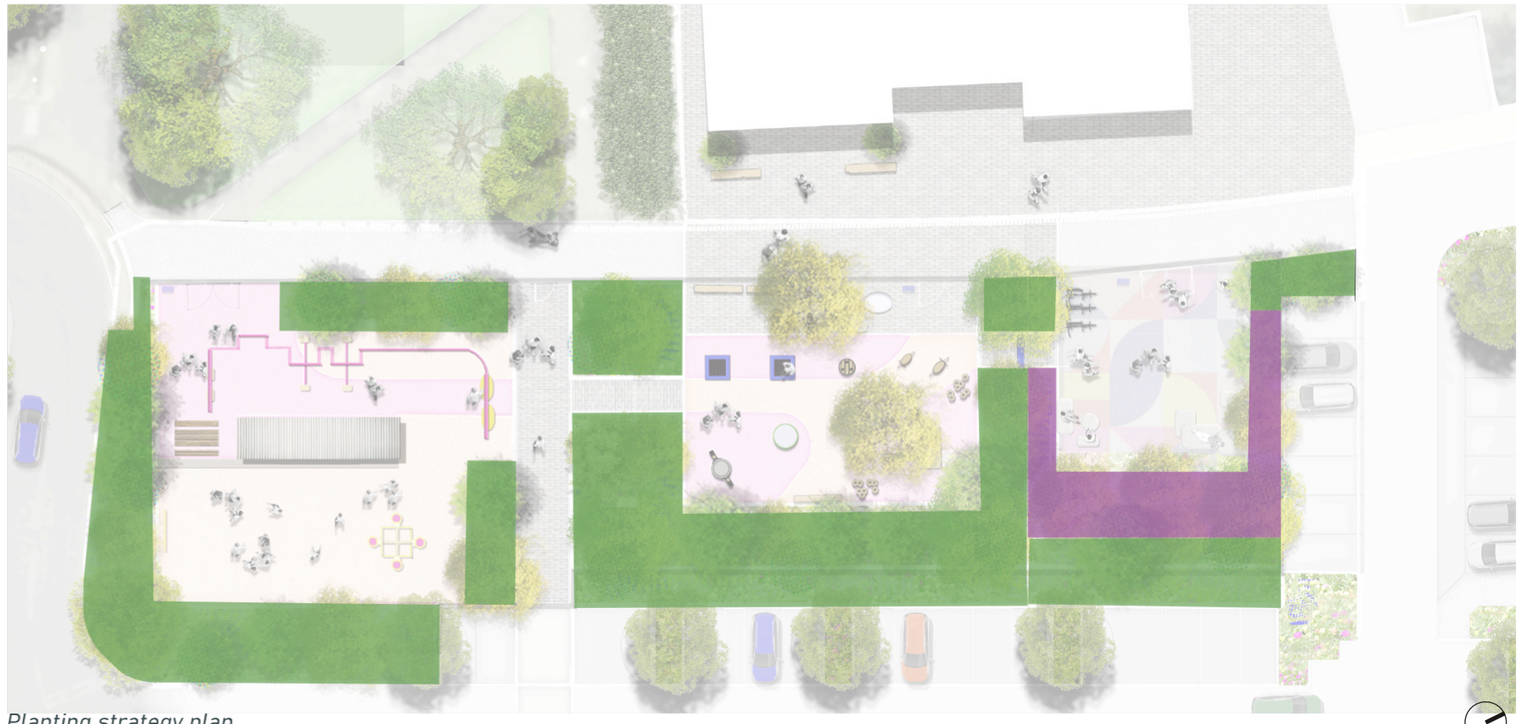

Narcissus pseudonarcissus


Galanthus nivalis


Muscari armeniacum

Understorey planting, bulbs

Edible perennial planting


*Planting strategy plan*

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