

The Project

Woodquay Park is a small secluded park, located close to the centre of the City and adjacent to the River Corrib. The area was originally made up of three islands, with an inlet extending between them. This was subsequently developed as a quayside, attracting commercial traffic down the river. Woodquay is believed to be one of the earliest inhabited parts of Galway.

The park was created in the twentieth century following the infill of the quayside. Today It is a small quiet, relatively unknown park, consisting of a fenced grassed area with many mature trees. It provides a green oasis, close to the centre and is valued by the local residents and neighbouring schools, who use it as a learning resource and natural play area.

The park has suffered in the past from anti-social behaviour, which creates disturbance to local residents. We want to unlock the potential of this park, enhance its amenity and biodiversity, putting forward a wide range of offerings to all ages and interest groups to encourage use by the public and local community.

The aims of the project:

- To develop Woodquay Park as a high-quality and sustainable public park to serve the local residents and visitors to Galway
- To develop aesthetically pleasing and functional spaces while protecting and enhancing heritage features, views and site characteristics in a manner that will facilitate sustainable maintenance.
- To strike a balance between the heritage, people and wildlife while also providing opportunities for active and passive recreation and better connecting the park with the Corrib.
- To ensure there is uniformity and legibility throughout the park with the use of appropriate park furniture, lighting, signage, etc.
- To provide safe and secure access to the park for pedestrians by the development of better access points and necessary upgrades on the surrounding roads and footpaths .
- To provide opportunities for informal and or formal play and entertainment

Project Timeline

- 2017 - The project was initiated by the Woodquay Residents Association. The group were keen to develop a project that would reignite community spirit and foster a common purpose through the creation of an open community space. Their mission was to create 'eyes on the street' to combat anti-social behaviour.
- 2018 - The group worked with garden designer Mary Reynolds to come up with an initial concept design for the park. The aim was to reconnect the river to the park and open up views. The design was inspired by the River Corrib.
- 2021 - Galway City Council became involved with the scheme. They reviewed the concept proposals and were responsible for a successful bid to Fáilte Ireland's 'Urban Animation Capital Investment Scheme'. The criteria of the funding states that projects should focus on provision of public art, installations and animation spaces.
- 2022 - Galway City Council undertook a competitive tender process to appoint a multi-disciplinary design team to deliver the proposals.
- 2023 - A team led by LUC were appointed. The concept proposals were reviewed and further technical survey and analysis undertaken to identify any constraints to implementation of the original design and other opportunities that could be explored. A meeting was held with local schools and childcare providers to understand how they used the park.
- 2024 - The concept design was developed further, taking on board Galway City Council's aspiration to unite the park with the surrounding streets.
- February 2024 - Engagement will be undertaken with the surrounding community and park users to understand what they think of the proposals. Feedback received will be fed back into the design process.
- Spring 2024 - A Part 10 planning submission will be made to An Bord Pleanála.
- Autumn 2024 - The project will be tendered to identify a suitable contractor to implement the works.
- Early 2025 - The project will start on site. Implementation will take around 10 months (Late 2025).

Project Team



Galway City Council is the client for the project. They are the landowners and are responsible for the park's management and maintenance. They have secured funding for the project and will be responsible for delivery of the project.



Fáilte Ireland are the primary source of funding for the project. The changes will be funded through their 'Urban Animation Capital Investment Scheme.' This is aimed at supporting sustainable tourism development through public realm and urban animation projects that have the potential to transform and re-imagine urban centres for visitors and communities.



LUC are acting as lead consultant and landscape architect for the project. Initial survey and analysis was undertaken in summer 2023. They are responsible for the developed design proposals, supported by other professionals.



MKO are providing planning and ecology services for the project. A baseline ecological survey was undertaken in Summer 2023.



PUNCH are providing civil, structural engineering and hydrological services for the project.



ACP are providing heritage services for the project. A baseline heritage survey was undertaken in Summer 2023.



Tobar are providing archaeological services for the project. A baseline archaeological survey was undertaken in Summer 2023.

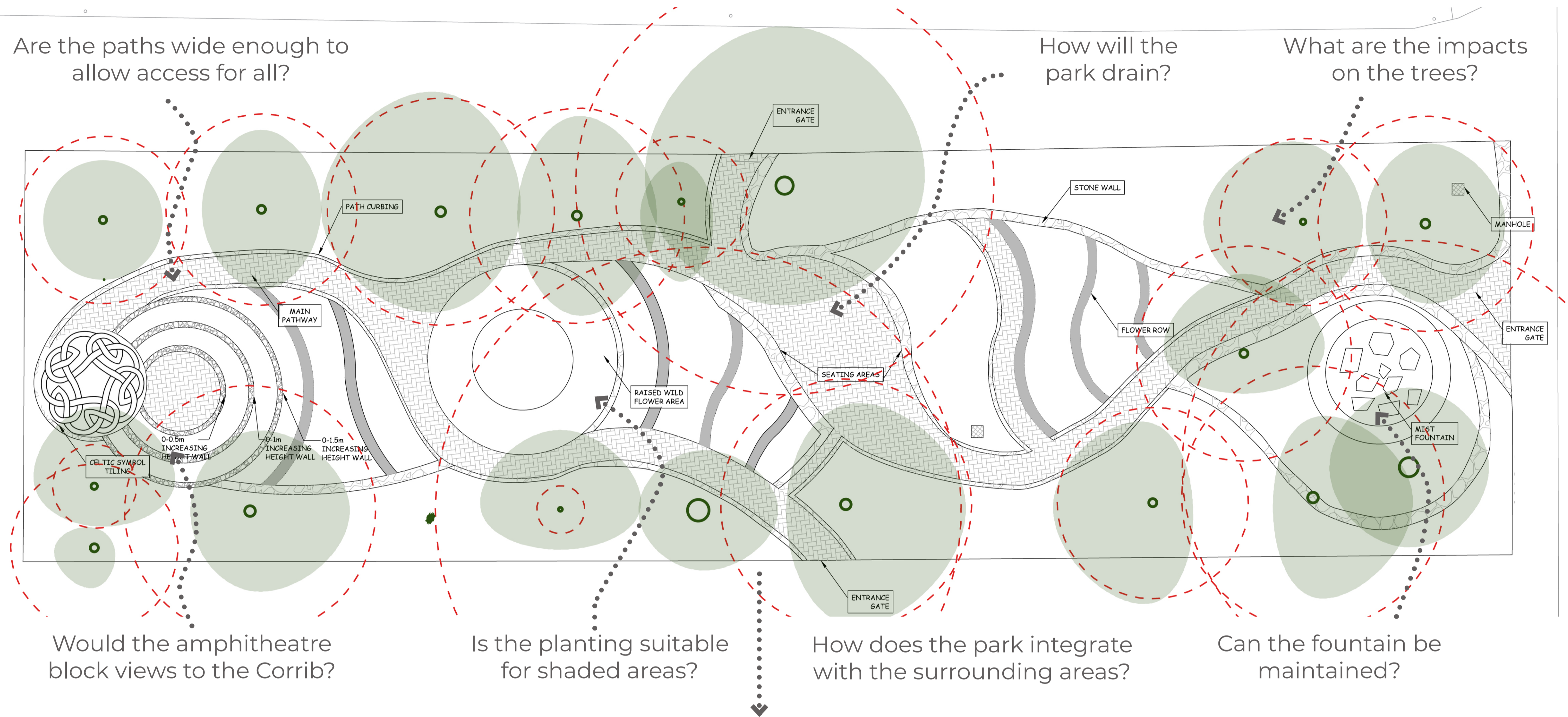


Edward Cotter Partnership are providing quantity surveying services for the project

Project Site



Original concept plan (initiated by the Woodquay Residents Association)



Key themes

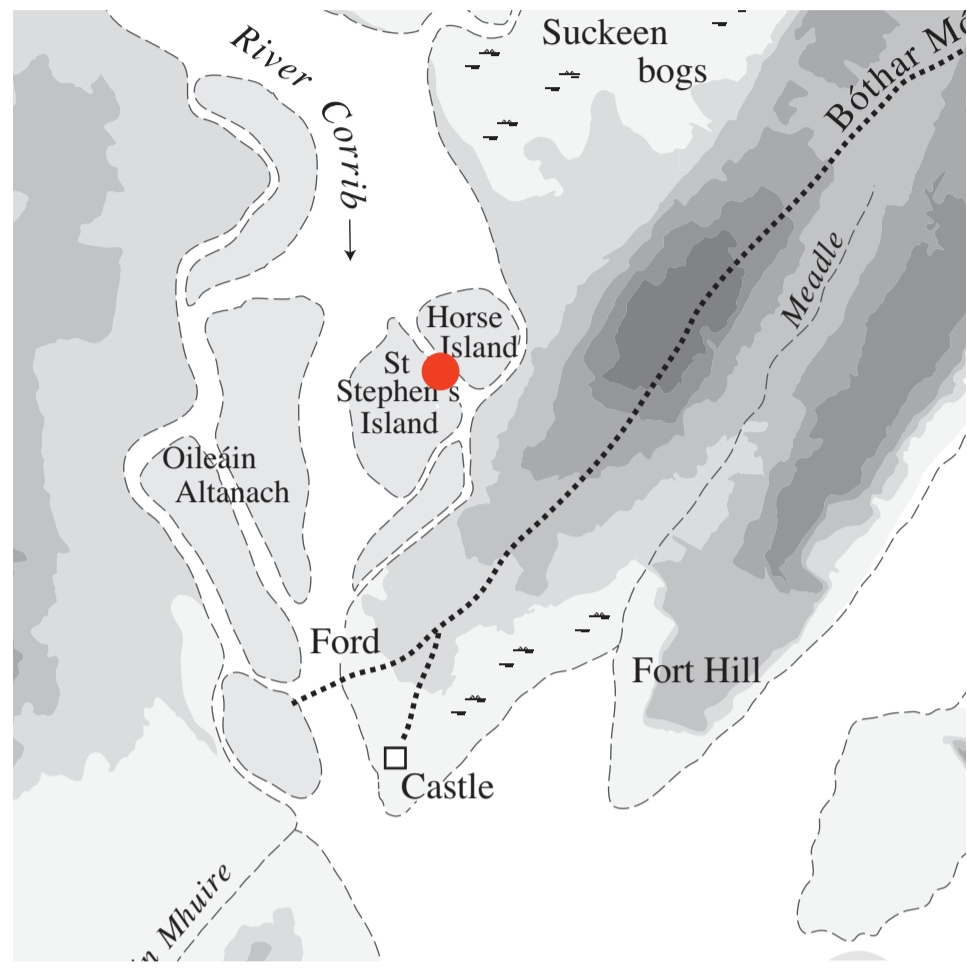
- 'Eyes on the Street'
- An open community space
- Discrete performance areas
- Visual reference to the Corrib and its islands
- Weaving paths
- Diversified planting
- Seating edges
- Playable landscapes
- Incorporation of water through the space

Why change the proposals?

- An opportunity to enhance the wider area by extending the site boundary. This will include the car parking area to the south, Corrib Terrace, Riverside and Waterside.
- An opportunity to respond to other initiatives in the local area.
- An opportunity to identify how others use the park and discover what they might want from the space.
- The design must respond to any constraints identified through recent surveys and studies, in particular the existing mature trees and ecology associated with the site and proximity to the Corrib.
- The design must respond to the climate crisis; for example, the inclusion of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS), planting in line with the All Ireland Pollinators Plan.
- The design must meet the requirements of the primary funding source; Fáilte Ireland Urban Animation Scheme.
- The design must consider future maintenance regimes and budgets.



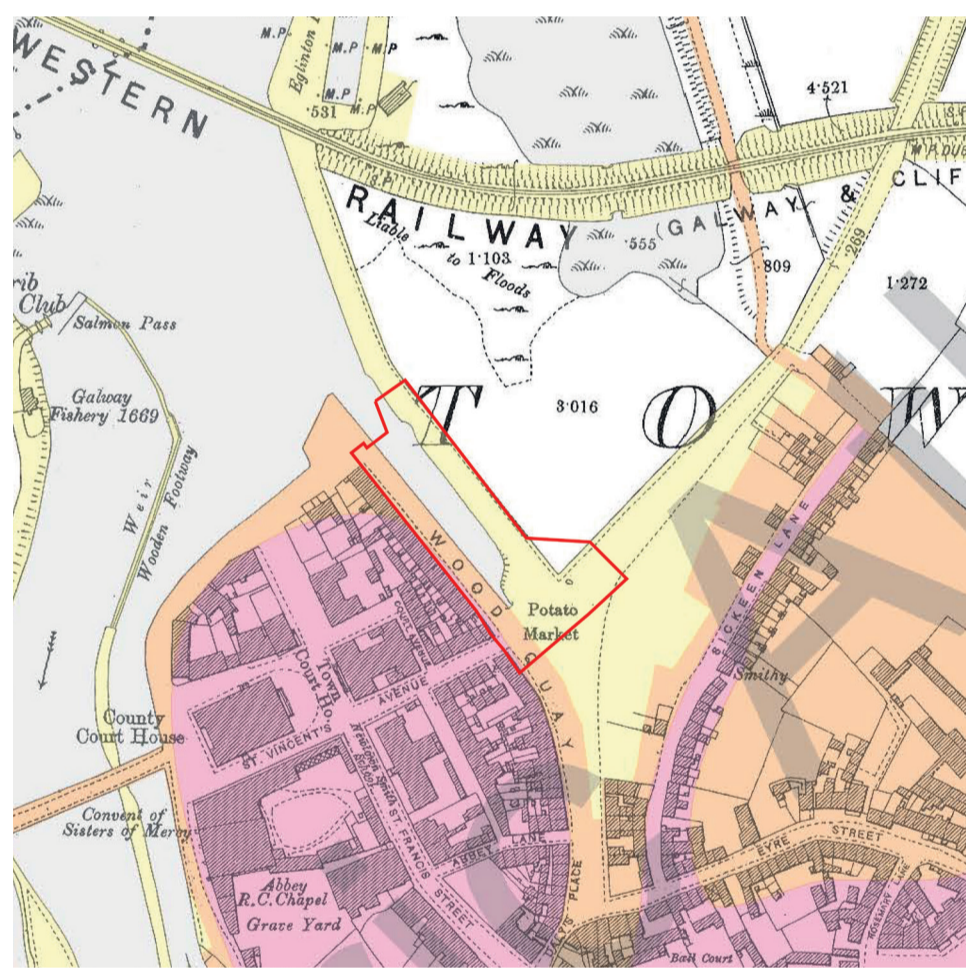
Historic evolution of the site



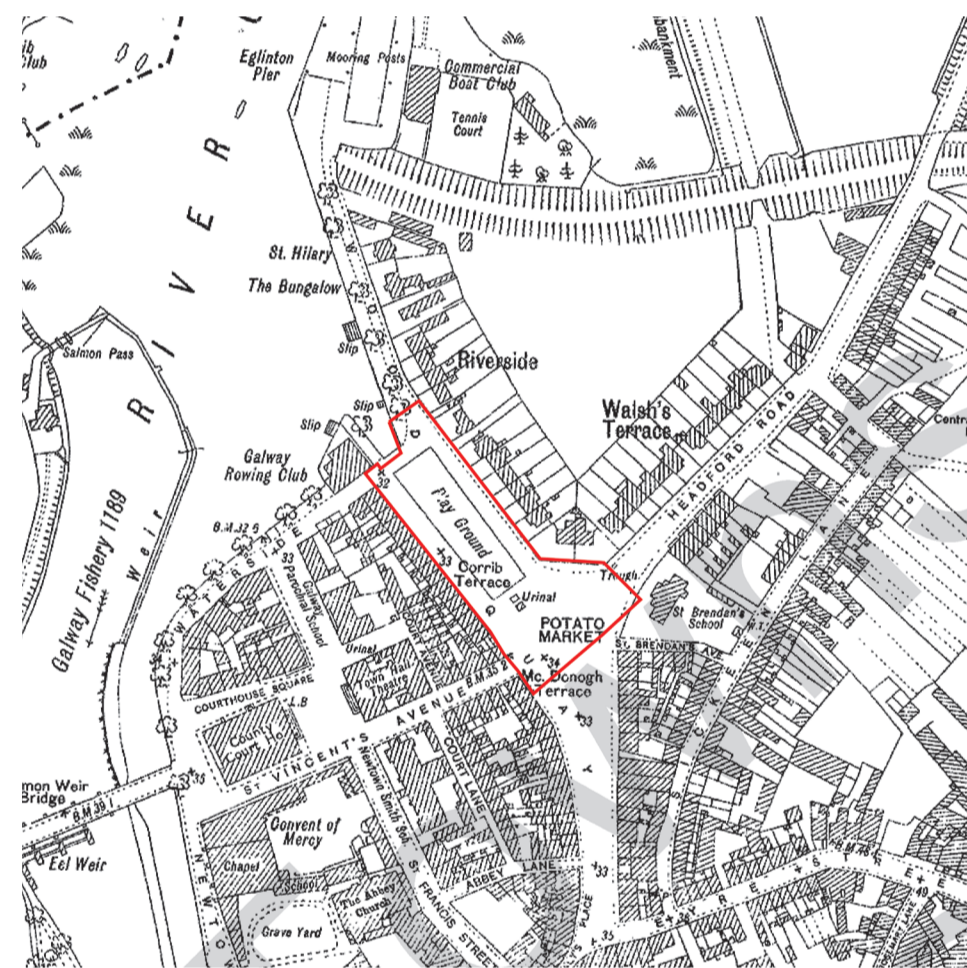
1. Site of Galway



2. 1200-c.1900



3. Growth of Galway to 1895.



4. The site in 1944.

1. Site of Galway - The area was formed by two islands; St Stephen's Island and Horse Island. (taken from Map 25, valuation, 1855, in Jacinta Prunty and Paul Walsh, Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 28, Galway/Gaillimh, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2016)

2. Development 1200-c.1900 - The land was gradually reclaimed in the eighteenth century through the Corrib Drainage Scheme. An inlet of the River Corrib extended towards the city centre. (taken from Map 5, Galway, c. 1200 to c. 1900, in Jacinta Prunty and Paul Walsh, Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no.28, Galway/Gaillimh, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2016)

3. Growth of Galway to 1895 -The inlet was developed as the site for the commercial docks (turf, wood, and timber), with a 150 feet wooden quay that ran the length of it. A Potato Market was developed at the point where it met St Vincent's Avenue. (Taken from Map 28, Galway, to 1895, in Jacinta Prunty and Paul Walsh, Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 28, Galway/Gaillimh, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2016)

4. The site in 1944 - Further infill of the Corrib was undertaken and land at Woodquay was reclaimed to make a play ground (Taken from Irish Townland and Historical Map Viewer, Galway/Gaillimh, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2016)

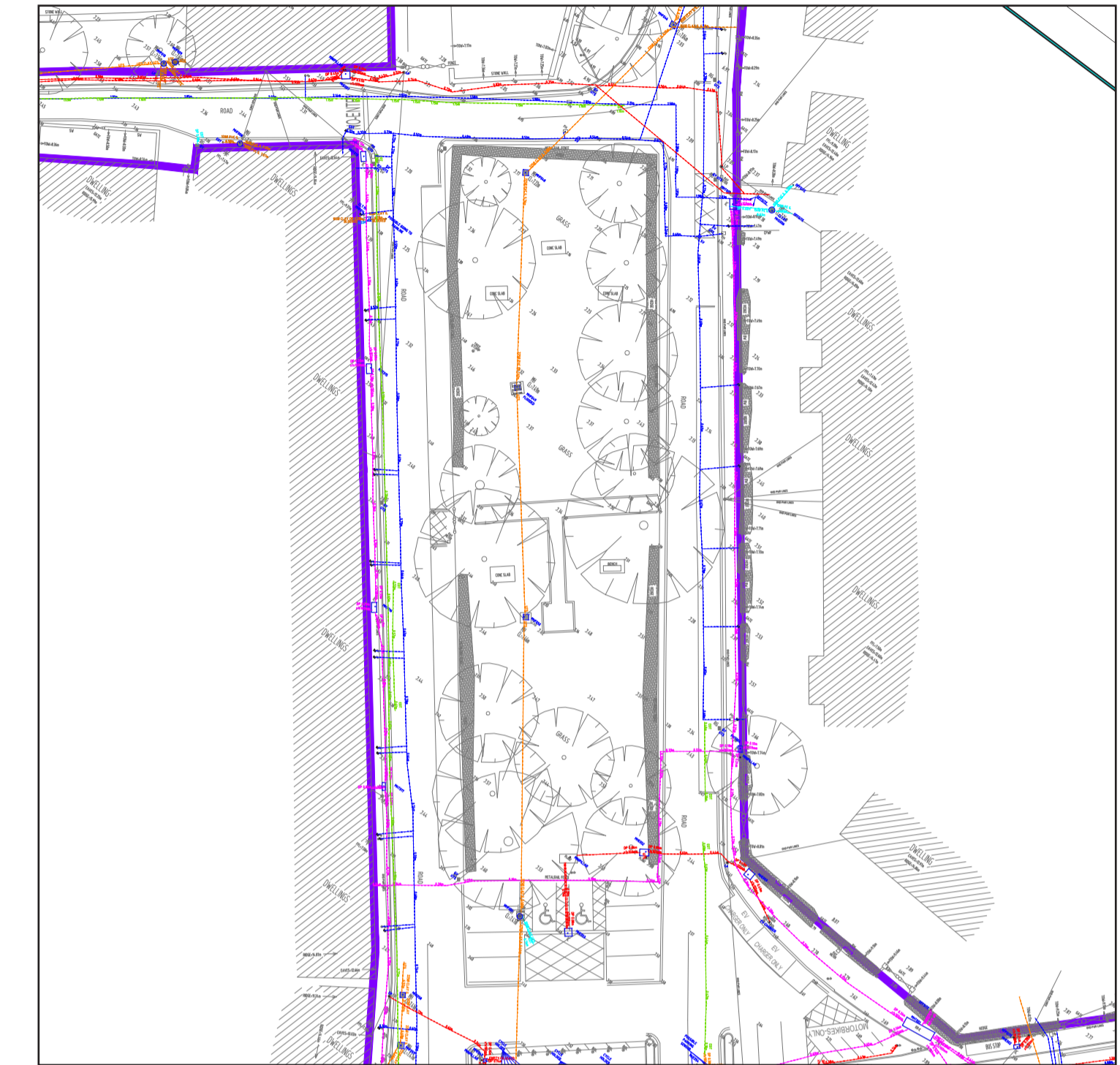
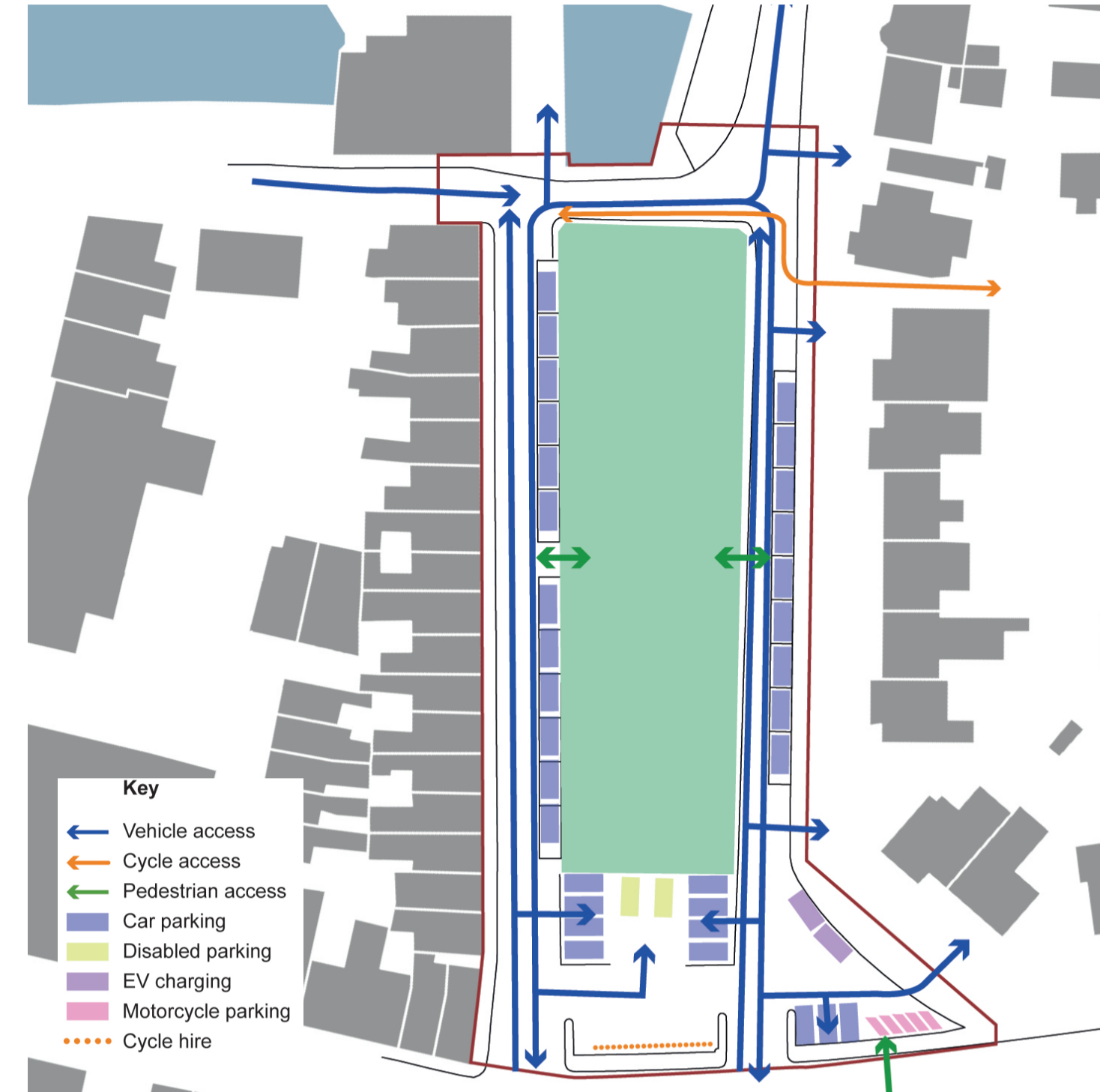
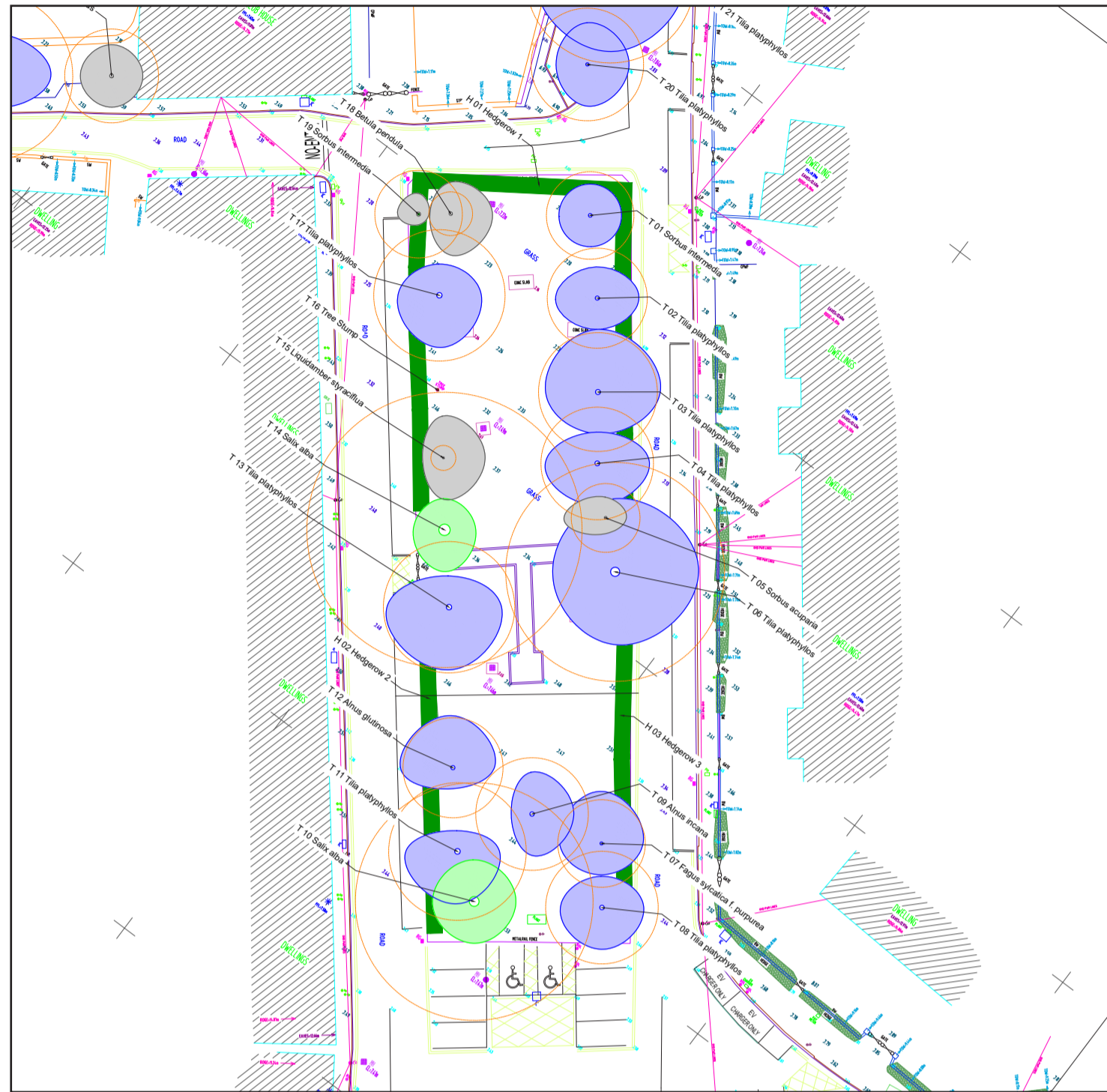
Site Constraints



- The proposed site largely comprises reclaimed ground and a culverted river channel, and these works may have disturbed earlier archaeological deposits from the medieval period.
- The site is partially located within the Zone of Notification for the historic town of Galway, however no element of Galway's town defences are located on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- The site is not a protected structure and there are none in the immediate vicinity of the park.

- There is a small memorial plaque for the Irish Countrywomen's Association, 1910-1985. This will be retained and relocated.
- The site lies adjacent the Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation, close to the Inner Galway Special Protection Area and Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation. Site Investigations within the Proposed Development site. Report to be submitted to relevant authorities.

Site Survey and Analysis - Key Findings



Trees

- A Tree Survey was undertaken in summer 2023. This identified the quality of the trees and their suitability for retention.
- There are eighteen trees within the park. These are planted in two rows and define the edge of the park. A Grey Alder, at the centre, interrupts views to the riverside.
- Species include Large leaved Lime, White Willow, Common Alder, London Plane, Swedish Whitebeam, Rowan, Purple Beech, Sycamore, Silver Birch, Grey Alder and Liquidambar.
- Two White Willows (Grade A trees) require ongoing pruning to ensure they do not become too large for the space.
- A Rowan, Liquidambar, Silver Birch and Swedish Whitebeam are classed as Grade C.
- All other trees within the park are categorised as Grade B, with no significant defects.
- A calculation of their rooting area was made; this has informed the design layout.

Ecology

- A baseline ecological survey was undertaken in summer 2023.
- The site is located within an area of high groundwater vulnerability, within the same hydrological sub-catchment as the Lough Corrib Special Area of Conservation.
- Proposals should avoid indirect impacts on the important habitats and species through deterioration of water quality.
- Trees to the east and west margins have been identified as having low to moderate roosting potential for bats. A more detailed Bat survey will be commissioned during the survey window.

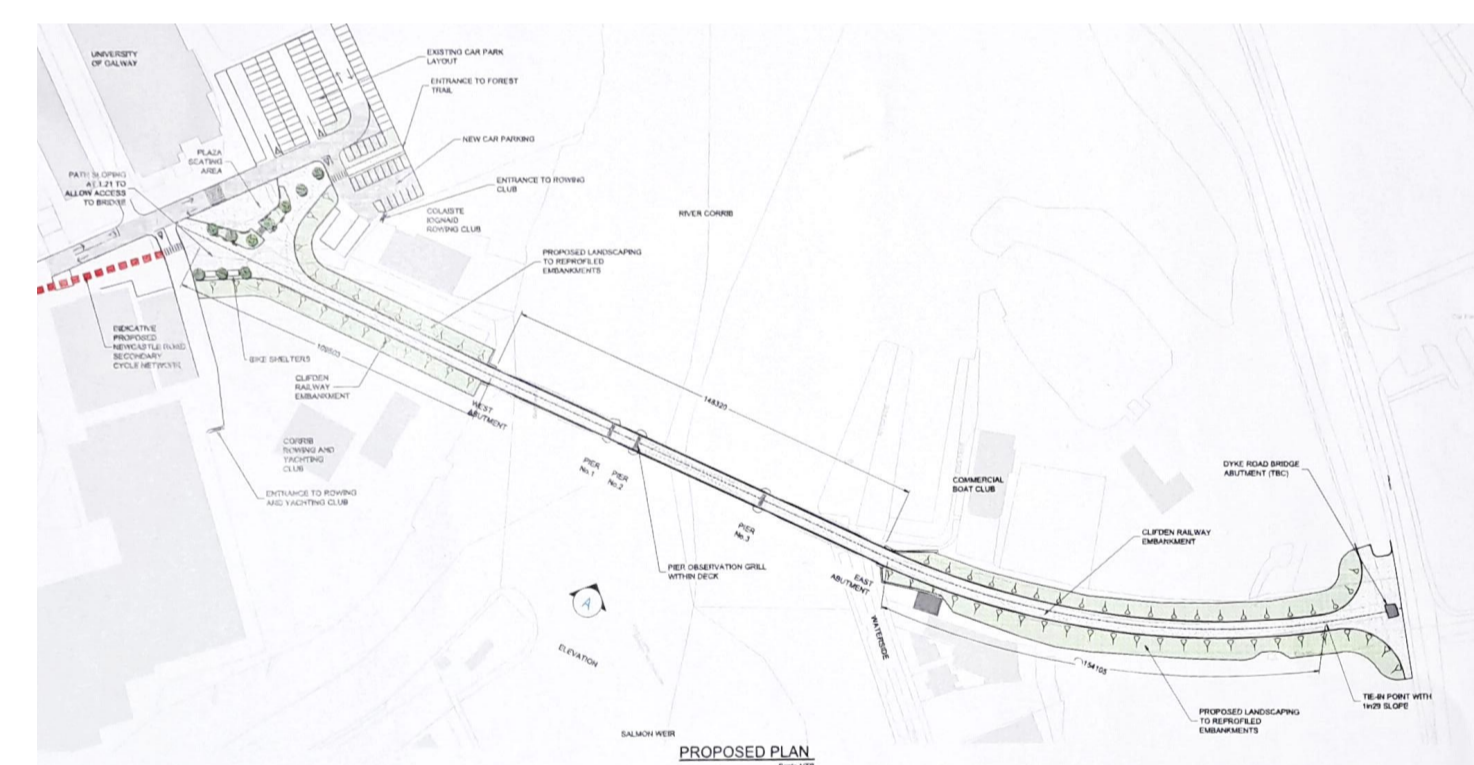
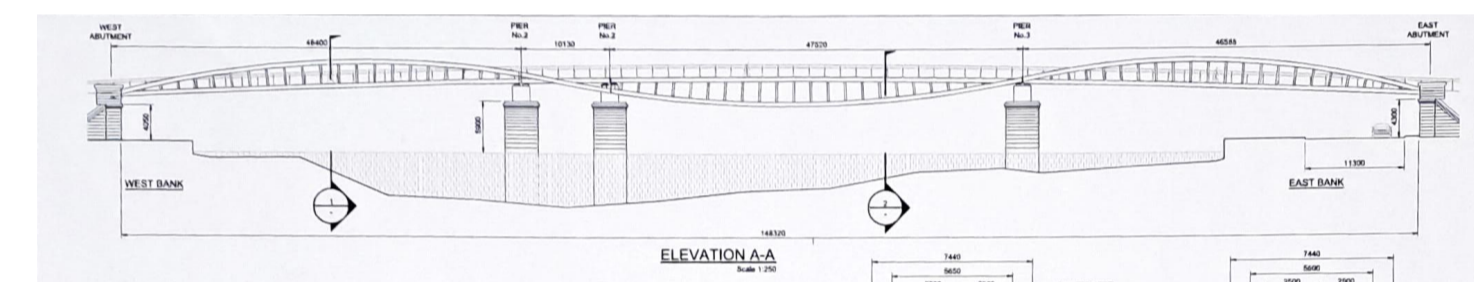
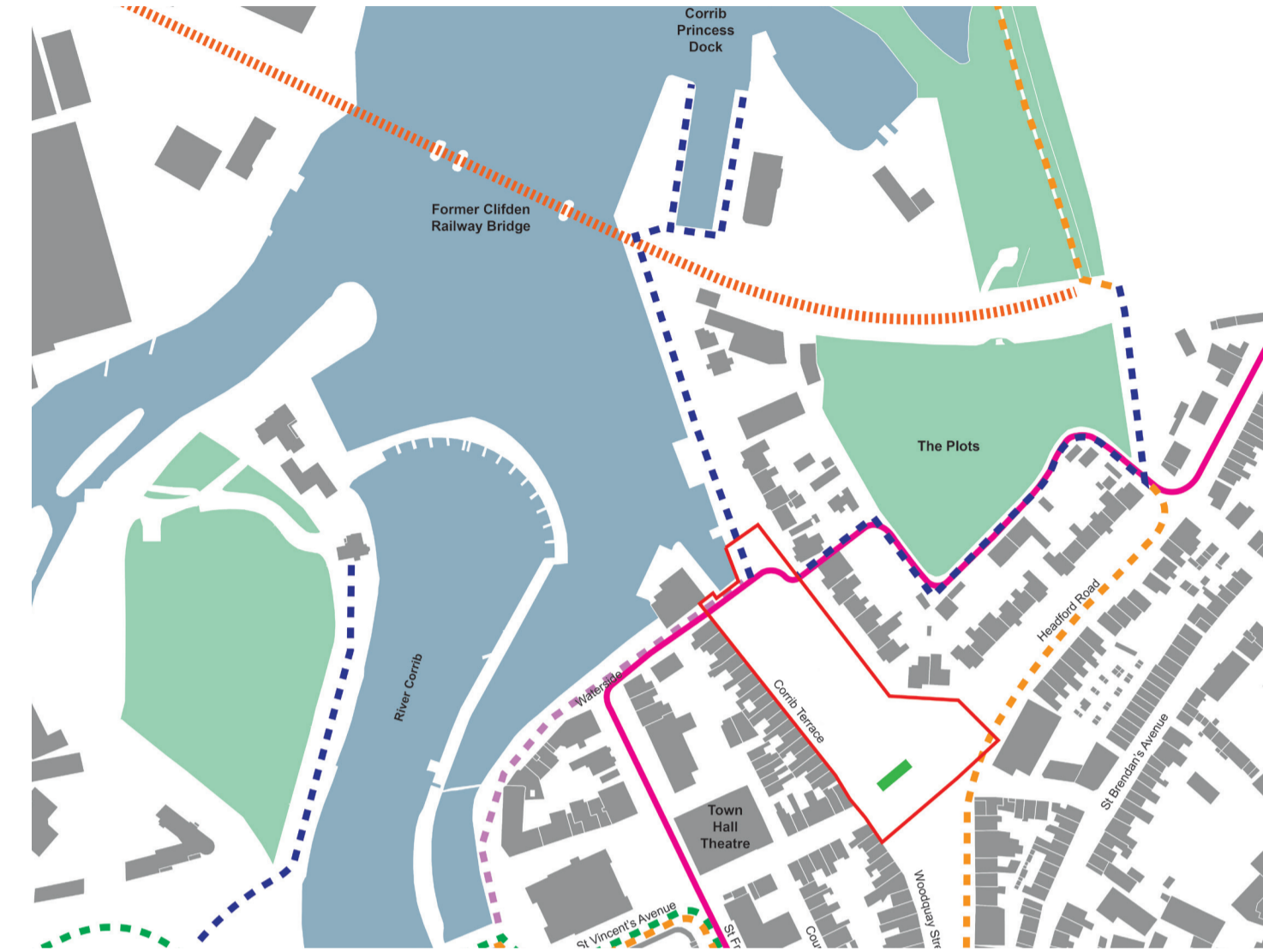
Access and Parking

- Two way access to Corrib Terrace and Riverside but width is restricted (2.6-4.3m).
- Coach operators use Riverside as entry and exit route from the dock at Steamer's Quay.
- 12 metered parking spaces are provided on Corrib Terrace and 9 on Riverside.
- 43 residents permits have been issued for Zone 8 including Corrib Terrace, Waterside and Riverside. 35 Park and Stride permits have been issued to parents/carers.
- 8 parking spaces and 2 disabled spaces are provided to the south of the park. 2 standard spaces, 2 spaces for EV charging and 5 motorcycle spaces are located at the end of Riverside.
- Driveway access is required at three locations on Riverside.
- A cycle hire station comprising 20 stands is located to the south of the park.
- The school cycle bus passes the northern end of the park.

Utilities and Drainage

- A ground-penetrating radar survey was undertaken in Summer 2023.
- Further CCTV surveys, ground infiltration tests and site investigation will take place in Spring 2024.
- The site is not at risk from coastal or river flooding and does not form part of the Galway City Flood Relief Scheme.
- Galway City Council will require use of nature-based drainage solutions, such as permeable paving and bioretention areas.

Other Initiatives



Galway Public Realm Strategy

- Woodquay Square, is identified as a 'Key Public Realm Space'.
- Priorities include removing car parking, aligning the street to the east, and creating a large area for lively markets or events.
- Immediately to the south of the Park, existing parking is identified as a 'Microspace', an extension to the Park, possibly incorporating an element of play.
- The strategy suggests the inclusion of artwork at the southern end of Woodquay Square to create a visual marker.

Galway Cross-City Bus Link

- An east-west public transport route for buses, cyclists and pedestrians.
- South of Headford Road, car parking will be removed to create extensive public realm.
- A raised 'shared surface' is shown linking Woodquay Square to Woodquay Park.
- New cycle stands, planting and street trees will be incorporated along Headford Road.
- Waterside will be closed to traffic and vehicles diverted via Courthouse Square.
- Court Avenue will remain as a one way street.

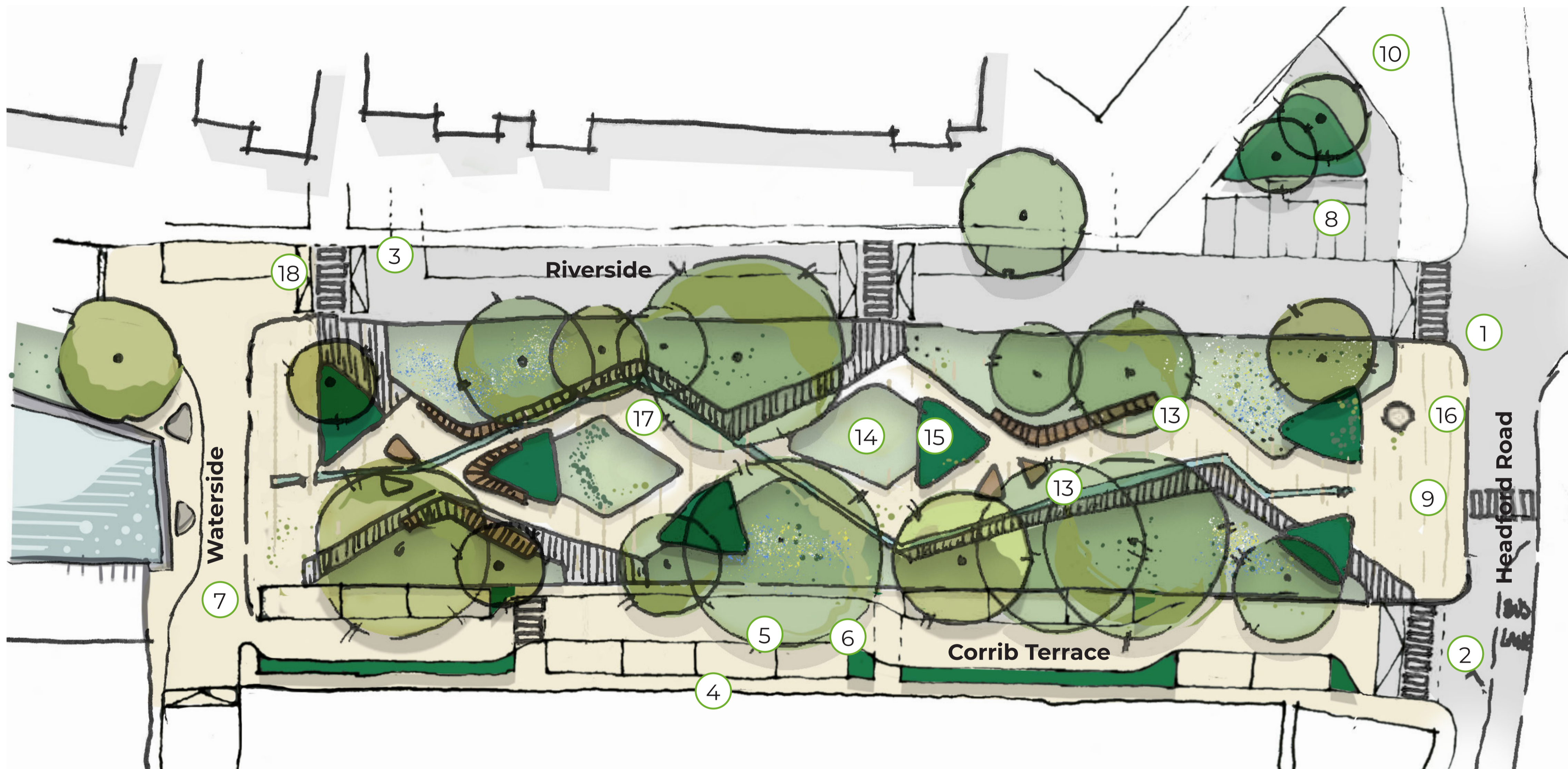
Clifden Railway Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

- These proposals seek to re-use the surviving pillars of the old Clifden Railway Bridge to create a new pedestrian / cycling bridge over the River Corrib, as part of the Galway to Clifden Greenway. This will provide a direct connection between the University of Galway and the Woodquay area.

Galway Orb

- To celebrate Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture a fire parade was held across seven towns, using decorative spheres.
- Each sphere reflects the celebrations and memories of the towns with silhouettes of landscape and people. Every town has a river and each sphere illustrates the river along its base. These spheres (or orbs) were designed with the intention of being used as permanent art installations in their respective towns.
- Ballinasloe has recently installed its orb in a permanent setting within the town.

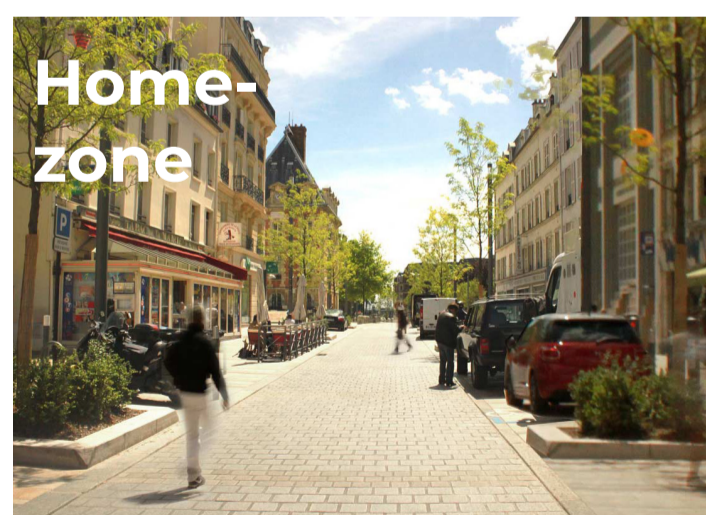
Developed Concept Design



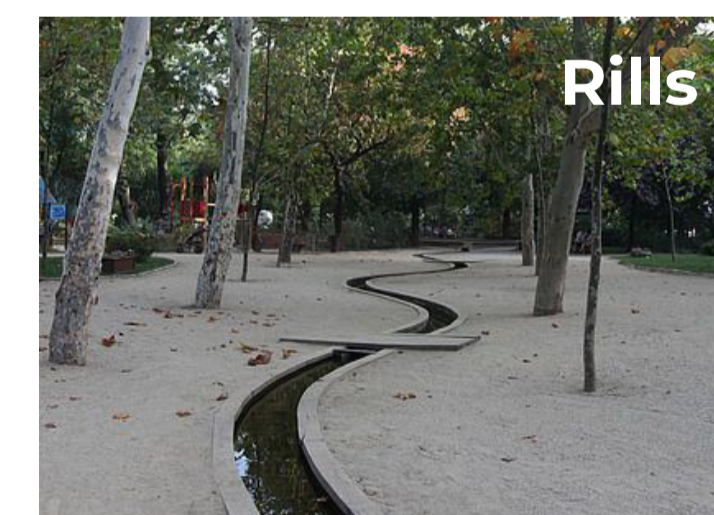
Proposed changes

- 1 Two way access would be maintained to Riverside.
- 2 One way access would be created to Corrib Terrace.
- 3 9 metered parking spaces would be maintained on Riverside.
- 4 12 metered parking spaces would be maintained on Corrib Terrace.
- 5 Corrib Terrace would be designed as a 'Home Zone'; this prioritises pedestrian movement and will promote life on the streets.
- 6 Parking spaces on Corrib Terrace would be interspersed with areas of planting and both the footpath and road surface would be paved.
- 7 Paving would continue to the end of the park at Waterside, to improve physical and visual connection to the Corrib.
- 8 2 disabled space, 2 spaces for EV charging and 5 motorcycle spaces would be retained within a reconfigured area on Riverside.
- 9 10 parking spaces would be lost adjacent Headford Road, which becomes part of the park.
- 10 Cycle hire station to be relocated to this area.
- 11 3 trees would be removed. One Grey Alder would be removed from the centre of the park, to open up views to the river. One Swedish Whitebeam and one Silver Birch would be removed from the Waterside end of the park. The Birch is near the end of its lifespan and the Whitebeam is growing within the hedge.
- 12 12 new trees will be planted
- 13 Seating would be provide to the edges of the park and in clusters within the park, catering to a range of users.
- 14 Mounded landform would be created, to reference the islands in the Corrib. These could be used for play.
- 15 Rain gardens would be introduced to provide sustainable drainage. These would include biodiverse planting and informal pathways.
- 16 The Galway Orb would be installed adjacent Headford Road, to create a focal point to draw people into the park. A rill feature within the paving would meander from the Orb and through the park, leading people to the riverside.
- 17 Paved areas would be located away from mature trees to minimise disturbance to their roots.
- 18 Additional crossing points into the park will be created to increase permeability.

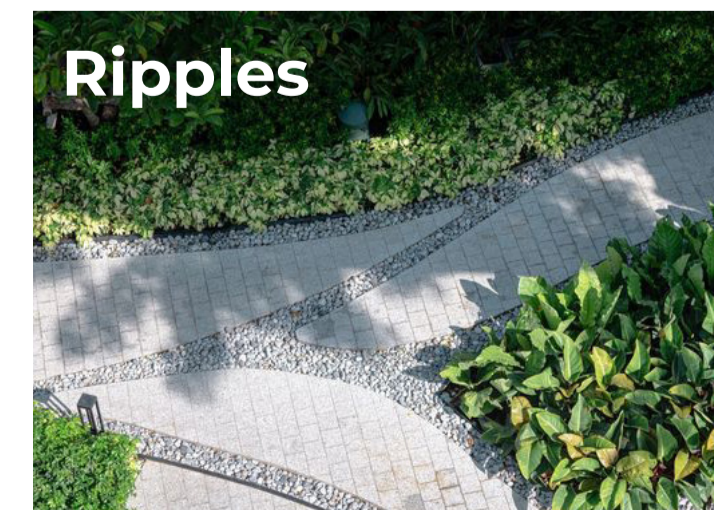
'Eyes on the Street'



The Corrib



Animation



Design Themes

Artist's Impression

