

APPENDIX E - PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE

THE CITY + THE BEACH

Aberdeen has 31 km of coastline and the Masterplan area is significant within this - it is where the City and the sea come together. The connection between the City and the coast is key and the two must work together; connecting the experience of these two areas is essential to the success of this Masterplan.

The two ends of the journey from the City to the Beach are rich in character with both the Castlegate and the Beach having strong identities. The roundabout, Beach Boulevard and the Queens Links however do not positively contribute to this journey. The proposals set out over this chapter aim to explore how this connection can be enhanced both physically, through improving pedestrian and cycle routes, and also in terms of character. The landscape and public realm can be the glue that brings the City and the Beach together. There is an opportunity to extend the character of the City centre further towards the Beach whilst extending the character of the new park back up Beach Boulevard towards the City, shortening the perceived distance between the two. Improvements to Beach Boulevard could then further promote the connection between the City and Beach enhancing the journey and promoting sustainable modes of transport.



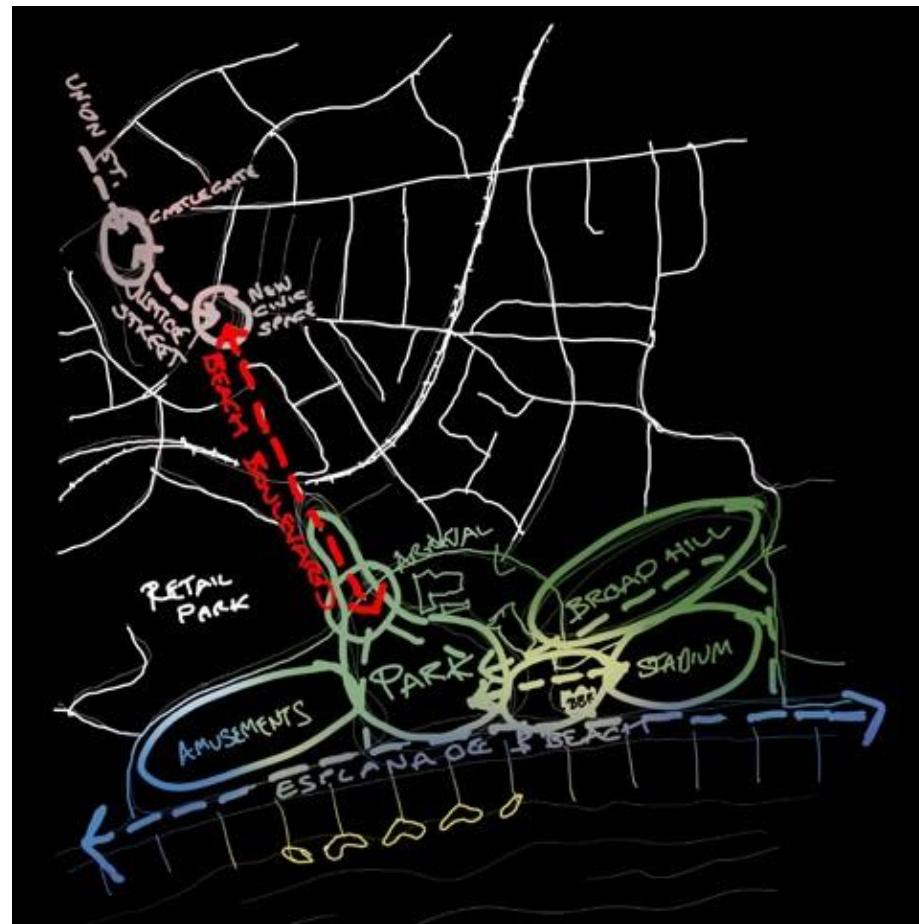
Castlegate



The Beach



The roundabout



Beach Boulevard

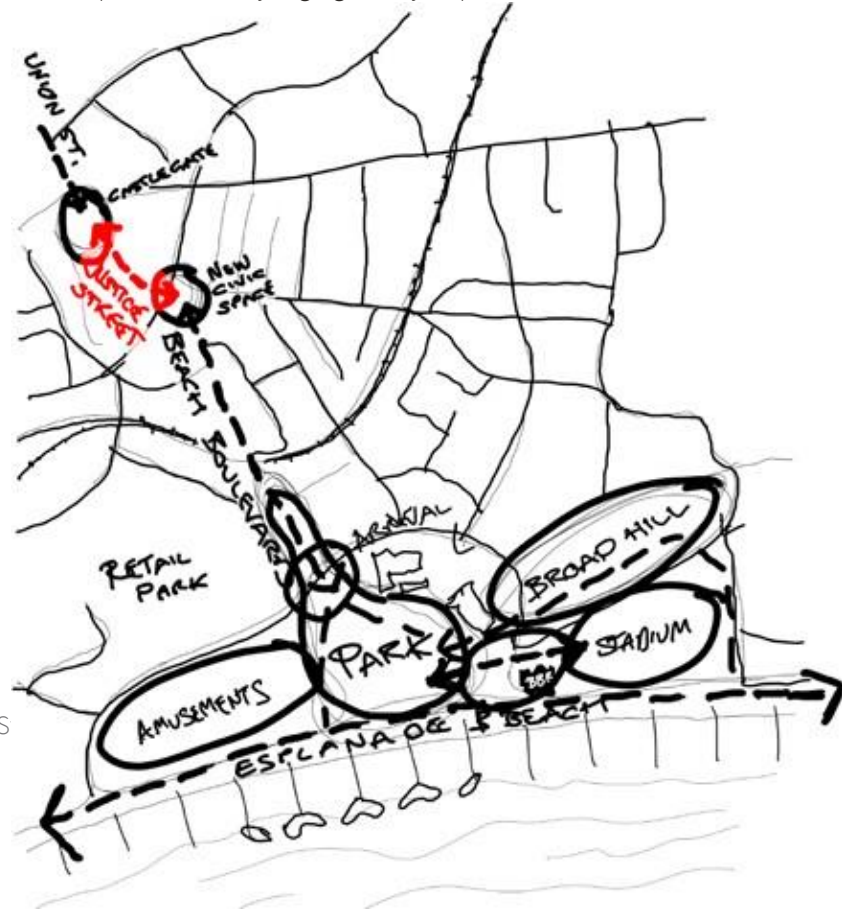


Queens Links

JUSTICE STREET

Justice Street connects to Castlegate. It is generally around 15.5m wide from buildingline to building line. The street has some attractive architecture and could become a key link for pedestrians and cyclists from the City centre to the Beach.

It is proposed that any design proposals for Justice Street should match the character and materiality of the Castlegate and the City centre in order to help connect the City centre to the Beach. In order to achieve this, co-ordination will be required with the design team currently developing proposals for the City centre. An initial meeting to discuss proposals was undertaken on the 2nd August 2021. Other key elements which will require development and co-ordination will include; servicing, parking provision and the provision of any segregated cycle provision.



Justice Street looking west into Castlegate.

Justice Street looking east.



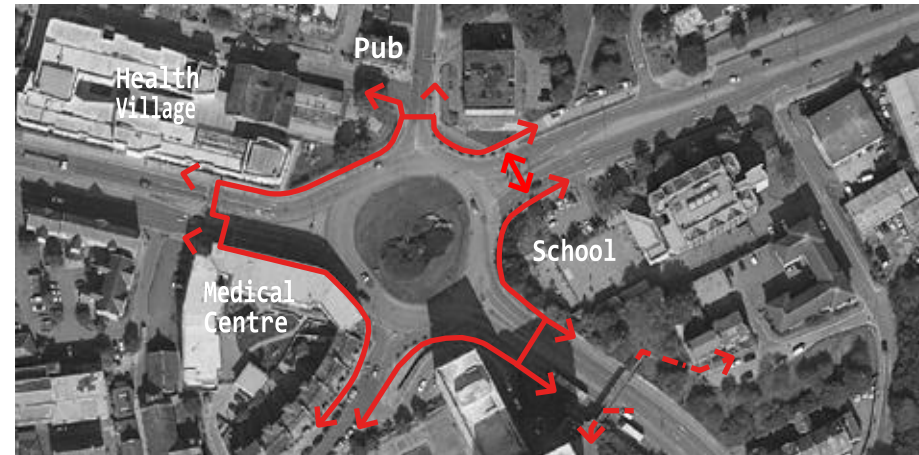
Justice Street looking west.



A NEW CITY SQUARE

The existing roundabout is a fundamental challenge to the pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the City centre and the Beach. This is a physical barrier which requires navigating around but also a psychological barrier. Although the physical distance to the Beach is not huge, the roundabout creates a clear break in character from the City centre and discourages movement down Beach Boulevard. With the exception of the 'Beach Boulevard' street name, there is currently nothing to suggest there is a destination worth heading to by leaving the City centre.

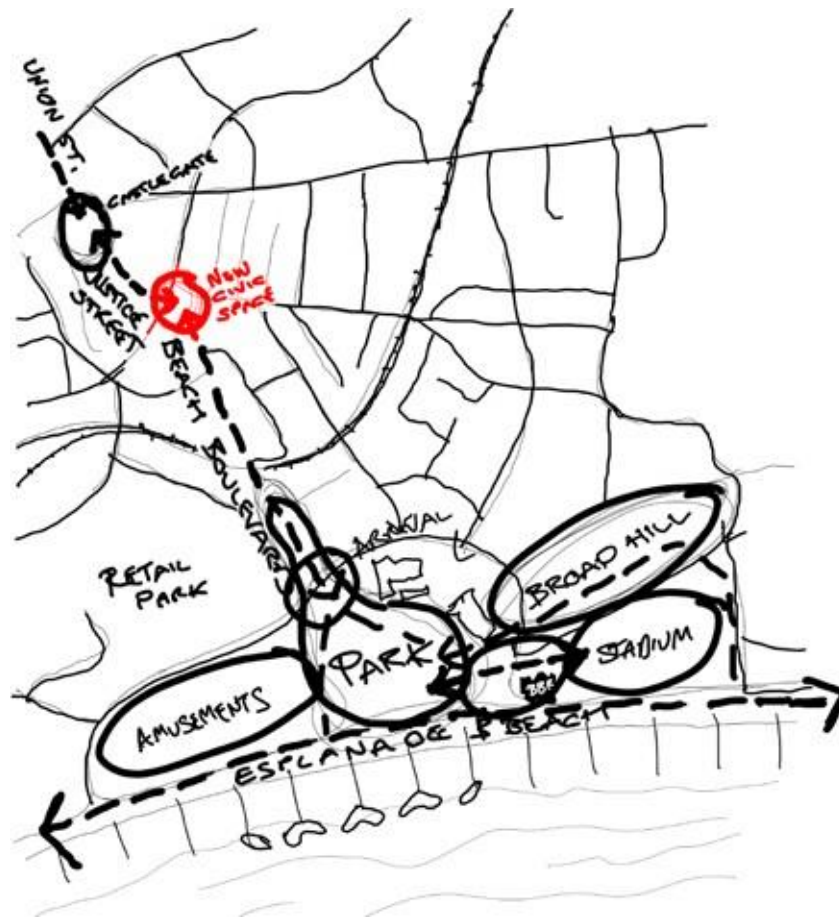
In order to promote sustainable connections to the Beach it is therefore clear that the connection between Justice Street and Beach Boulevard requires bold re-imagining. The sketches opposite illustrate a possible configuration which would convert part of the existing road space and roundabout into a new civic space. This option has been developed to minimise the number of road crossings required by pedestrians and cyclists in order to connect to Beach Boulevard. The new civic space would help bring the City closer to the Beach and would also provide a meeting point at the end of Beach Boulevard. The surrounding land-uses (particularly the school) could also be reconfigured to relate to, and benefit from the new space and active travel connections.



Existing crossing points and adjacent uses.



Potential narrowing of A956 and reconfiguration of existing roundabout.



A potential new civic space, bringing the City centre closer to the Beach and by doing so, creating a direct pedestrian and cycle route onto Beach Boulevard. This could be achieved by reducing the land take of existing road infrastructure.

BEACH BOULEVARD

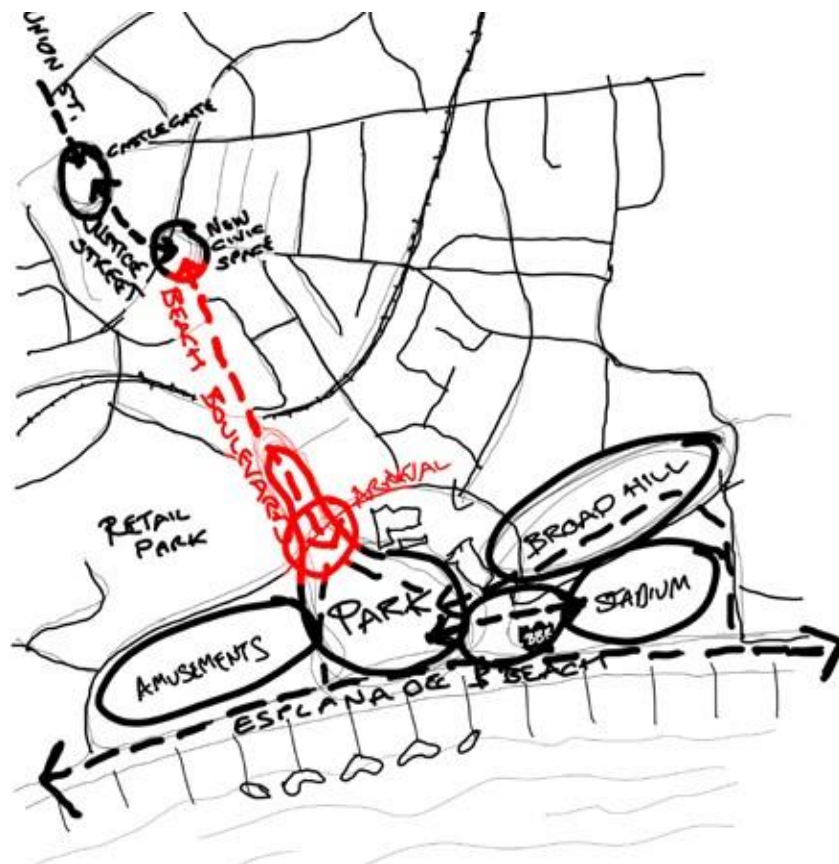
Beach Boulevard is currently car dominated as can be seen in the existing section opposite. The street currently doesn't create a strong sense of place and could easily be a street from any town or city - it provides few clues that it is the route to the beach. At a width of generally around 27.5m (from back of pavement to back of pavement) there is ample space here to transform Beach Boulevard by giving over some of the carriageway to public realm. Through this intervention Beach Boulevard could be transformed into a pleasant walking and cycling route to the beach. The journey to the beach could become part of the experience of visiting the beach, a special and pleasant day out.

Increasing the amount of soft landscape along Beach Boulevard could transform the character of the street and contribute to greening the City, climate change resilience, sustainable drainage, natural environment, biodiversity, shelter and the removal of pollution. Additional soft landscape could bring seasonal interest, texture, movement and colour to the street.

Where Beach Boulevard widens at its eastern end there is an opportunity to pull the character of the Park up into Beach Boulevard and towards the City, bringing arrival at the park closer and making the journey feel shorter.



The section above illustrates the current space allocation along Beach Boulevard. The large majority of space is currently allocated to cars and does not contribute to a pleasant pedestrian or cycle environment.



Generally Beach Boulevard is approximately 27.5m wide (measured from back of pavement on either side) however as Beach Boulevard reaches the Queens Links there is an opportunity for this to widen to approximately 46m. This could bring additional design flexibility to this section of the Boulevard and allow the character of the new Park to extend back towards the City.



The above concept image illustrates how Beach Boulevard could be transformed into a more pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists.

The below shows an indicative section illustrating what could be achieved through a reduction in carriageway space.

This section illustrates parking provision retained and provides a generous separation strip between the cycleway and parking spaces to allow people to safely get out of cars or taxis. The pavement on the north side of the street has been maintained at the existing width whilst the extra space has been added to the south side of the street to connect with new civic space illustrated on previously.

A dual direction cycleway could be appropriate in this location as there are a limited number of side streets which connect to Beach Boulevard.



The below shows an indicative section illustrating the what could be achieved where car parking was not provided along Beach Boulevard. This could provide space for bus stops, additional soft landscape or seating and cycle parking.



THE PARK

The park must create a strong sense of place which becomes a destination within the City. It should be unique and special, respecting its coastal location. The park should be inclusive and with activities for all to use.

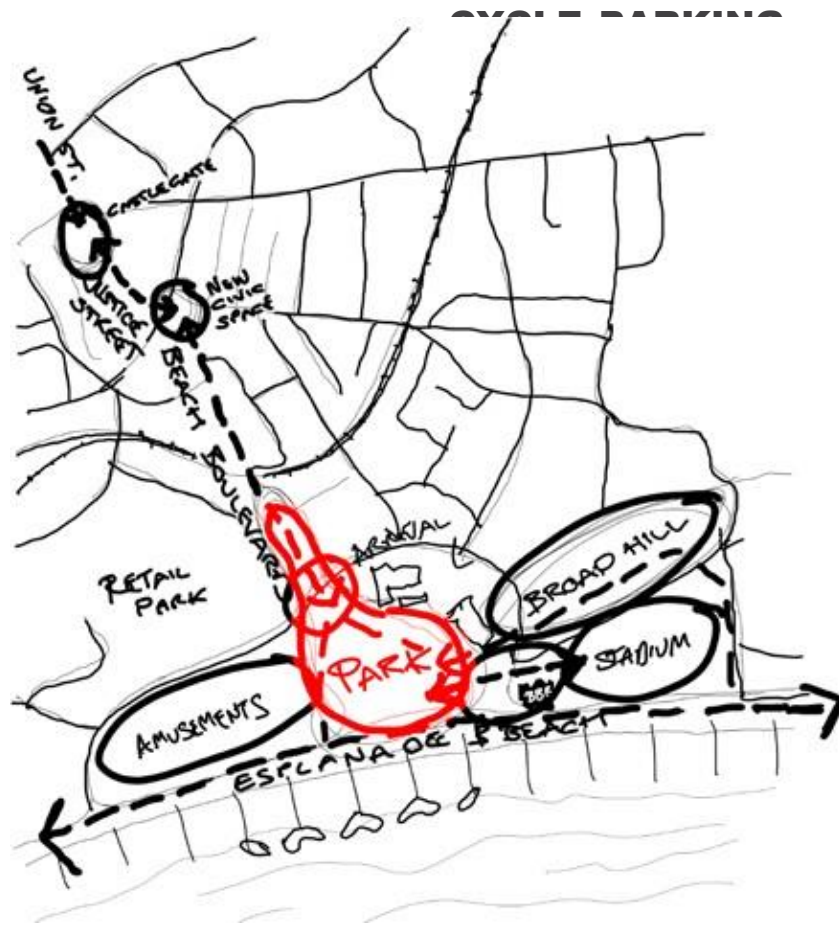
The design must consider micro-climate and the provision of shelter so that it can be used 365 days a year. It must also be comfortable and welcoming for different sizes of groups including individuals, families, small gatherings and large events. A variety of scales of space will be required to meet these requirements.

Movement through the park, whether to reach the Beach, the Stadium or the Arcades must be a key consideration, ensuring that the park can cope with the movement of large groups of people. In designing these routes, desire lines must be catered for.

Uses and elements

The below graphic indicates some of the uses and elements which will be required or could be included within the park. Whilst not a comprehensive list it begins to outline what the programme of the park could include.

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE



- SCULPTURE
- CIVIC SPACES**
- SEATING
- COASTAL ROUTE
- HERITAGE AND INTERPRETATION
- OUTDOOR GYM
- INFORMAL PLAY
- DUNE LANDSCAPE
- CHESS TABLES
- PUMP TRACK**
- JOGGING ROUTES
- BIODIVERSITY
- AMPHITHEATRE
- MEETING POINTS
- FOUNTAINS**
- CHANGING AREAS
- CAFE
- PLAY PARK**
- VIEWS
- EXERCISE
- ROLLER BLADING
- ART
- WATERFEATURE
- EVENTS
- SHELTER**
- SWIMMING

Concepts

The concepts below illustrate how a common theme could be developed for the park which influences both the plan, materiality and character. Through development of a strong character the park landscape can become a distinct place and hang together as a whole.

TRAMWAY



ROPEWORKS



GROYNES AND PIERS



Play for all, as sculptural elements and as part of the landscape

Play provision should be inclusive, and could include physical play, sound and light. Play features have the potential to form sculptural elements within the landscape or to work with the landform to create a truly memorable place, possibly building from the concepts outlined on the previous page.



Concept image for a sculptural whale play element in Dundee

Movement of people and spaces to gather in

Movement of people through the park, and spaces to meet and gather in large or small groups is an important consideration in the design of the park. Equally the movement of bicycles through the park requires consideration, along with appropriate cycle parking facilities.



Zhengzhou Vanke



Amphitheatres and event spaces

Amphitheatres and events spaces could be provided to cater for events of different scales. These could be either informal grass terraces or more formal seating elements.



Nature and biodiversity

Nature and biodiversity should be included as a priority within the park. This could be a wilder more natural landscape drawing inspiration from the coastal dunes, saltmarshes and rough grassland, a more manicured parkland, or a combination of the two.



Water for sustainable drainage and play

Water could be included within the park as elements such as rain gardens or swales to help clean water before it discharges to the sea, or it could be included as more formal water features which are designed to provide interest, animation and play opportunities to the space.



THE BEACH BALLROOM

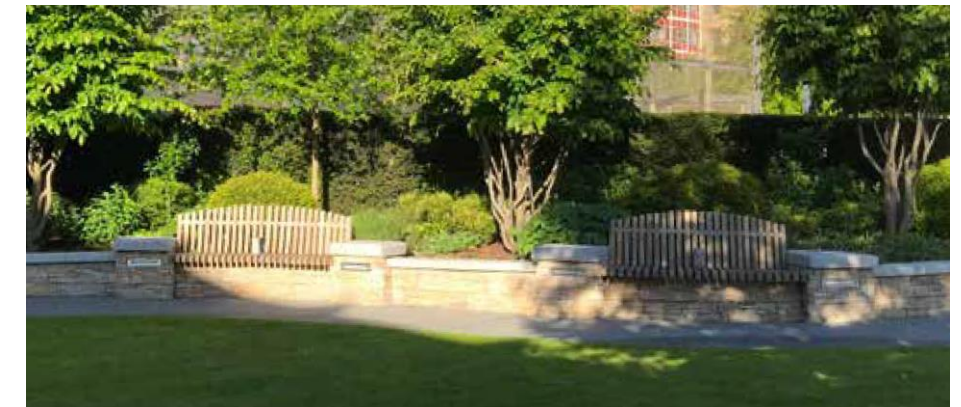
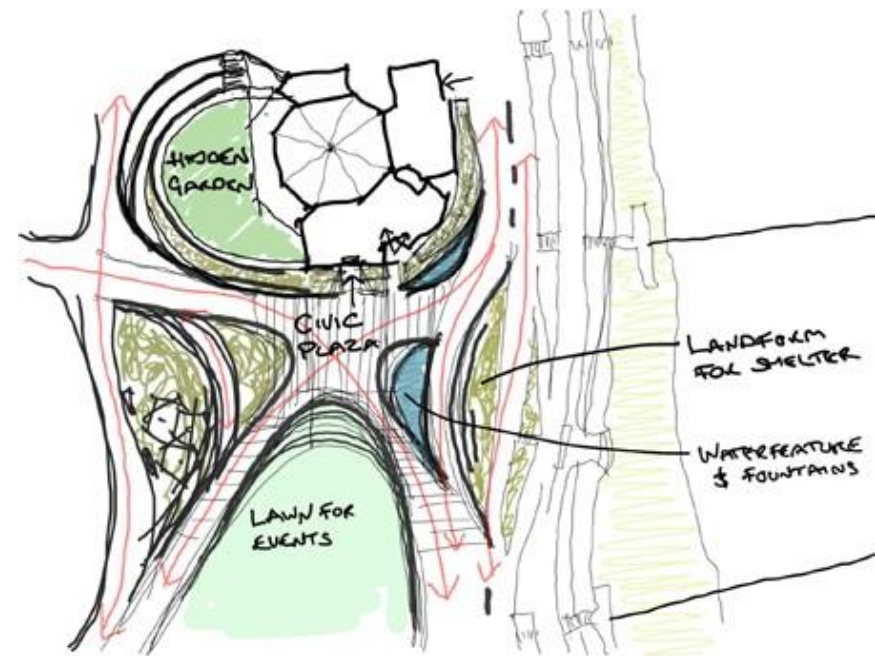
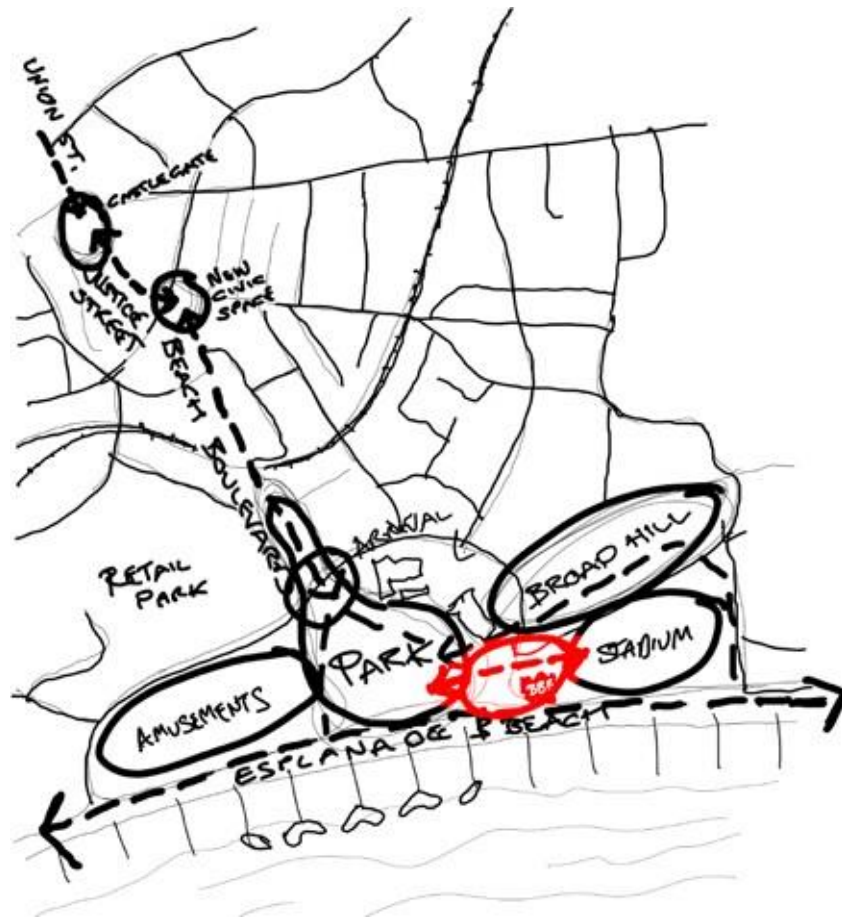
The Beach Ballroom is a focal point on the promenade and adds a distinct character element. At present however the approach and setting of the Ballroom is dominated by road infrastructure and the setting is rather bleak and utilitarian. There is an exciting opportunity to celebrate the Beach Ballroom through the creation of a new arrival experience through the park and through the creation of a new civic space which responds to the building frontage.

As part of the refurbishment of the Beach Ballroom consideration should be given to how the external spaces around the Ballroom can contribute to the use and function of the building. This could include a sheltered and hidden garden with a unique and special character on the western side of the building, providing additional outdoor space for events. Equally, adjacent spaces, whether a civic space in front of the building or a larger lawn located within the park could help increase opportunities for flexible use of the building.

The below sketch illustrates the potential for a new arrival space to the Beach Ballroom creating an appropriate arrival experience to replace the existing road-dominated space.

Elements of shelter and water features could provide animation of the space and create a unique and attractive setting. Views of the Beach Ballroom from all directions should be considered in developing these.

Adjacent spaces such as a hidden garden or a lawn space could also be considered helping increase the flexibility of the building use.



A hidden garden
The precedent images above illustrate how the character of a new hidden garden could be developed which could add extra flexibility to the use of the Beach Ballroom.



The above concept image illustrates how a new arrival space to the Beach Ballroom could transform the setting of the listed building.

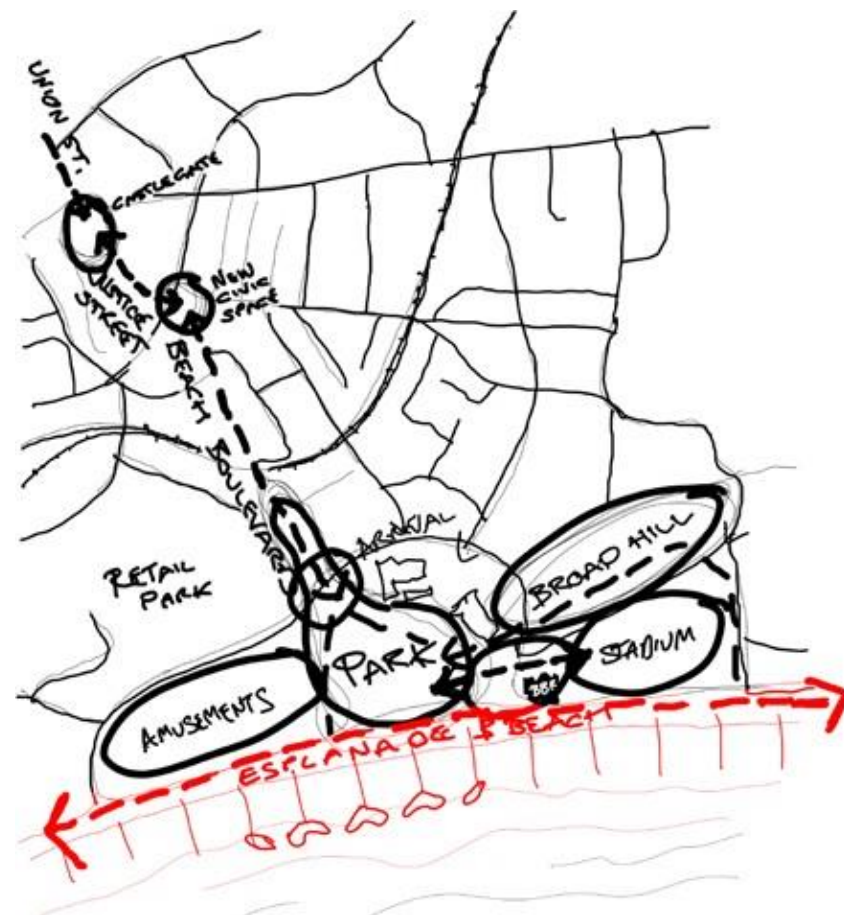
THE BEACH + ESPLANADE

The beach and esplanade are a unique and sensitive site which require detailed investigation and liaison with the team working on the coastal defences. The existing structures, level changes, beach, groynes and esplanade all create a fantastic opportunity to develop a rich and characterful waterfront, improving what is already a popular destination.

Through a common design language of street furniture, lighting, balustrades etc. a unifying character can be created along the waterfront contributing to character and sense of place. This character should have the flexibility and be appropriate in character to allow its design language (or elements of it) to be extended along the coast line, linking from Footdee through the site and northwards.



View from the Beach Ballroom



BROAD HILL

Routes, views and an experience

There are great 360 degree panoramic views from the top of Broad Hill, taking in both the sea and the City. The routes which connect Broad Hill to the park, beach, stadium and City will be a key consideration within the masterplan and provide the opportunity for circular walking or running routes.

There is a further opportunity on Broad Hill to create something special, something which becomes a destination at the top of the hill, whether this is sport's related or artistic.

