

7.2 URBAN PARK



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INTRODUCTION

The Queens link urban park is a tremendous opportunity to create an outdoor destination for the city in a unique context. The urban park is part of the wider landscape Masterplan that glues together many of the proposed and existing buildings and uses in the area, and importantly facilitates connections back to the city centre.

The potential of this beachfront urban park will not only be on a city and regional level but should also be seen as distinctive in a national and international context.

The urban park can be seen in several ways, perhaps as a gift to the city and from the city in equal parts. Hence, its perception as a public park for all is a key aspect of the overall process.

Successful public parks from around the world, are by their very nature invariably designed with the public. The exercise of mutual understanding and design is in fact the start of the actual project. There has been limited consultation with various youth groups to date, and this needs to continue, and wider public consultation needs to happen. Out of this process a truly rich and varied design can be developed, full of 'indigenous' character, working with the inherent natural characteristics of the site and the aspirations of the people of Aberdeen.

A public park must be accessible for everyone, such is the egalitarian existence of true public spaces. The richness of the park will come in its form and uses. Play and games are an obvious part of this mix and creating the physical environment for this to flourish is key. The whole park should be seen as incorporating elements of play opportunity, with areas that are more focused and defined along with the more natural and incidental play integrated throughout the park. To ensure this engagement with the youth groups of Aberdeen needs to continue.

There are many other uses to be considered, and careful analysis of what is best is important as flexibility will be key in the evolution of a public park along with its functionality and flexibility to cater for yet unforeseen city uses. Being considerate not to over prescribe space is a restraint that needs to be exercised. Let people evolve with the structure of a good space – that is what will make it a place to be proud of and allow for the citizens of the city to take ownership.



Concept Visualisation of Urban Park



Scale 1:1500 @ A3



0m 20m 40m 60m 80m 100m

GATEWAY BUILDING

The Gateway Building acts as a sculptural landmark at the entrance to the Queens Links, offering an enhanced sense of arrival at the Gateway to the Beachfront. The flexible building footprint is set within a complementary lightweight structure which spans across the main desire route, increasing visibility from Beach Boulevard and drawing people down towards the new waterfront destination from the City Centre approach.

An integrated Information Booth and Reception area is proposed to assist with orientation within the new Urban Park, with enhanced directional and digital signage.

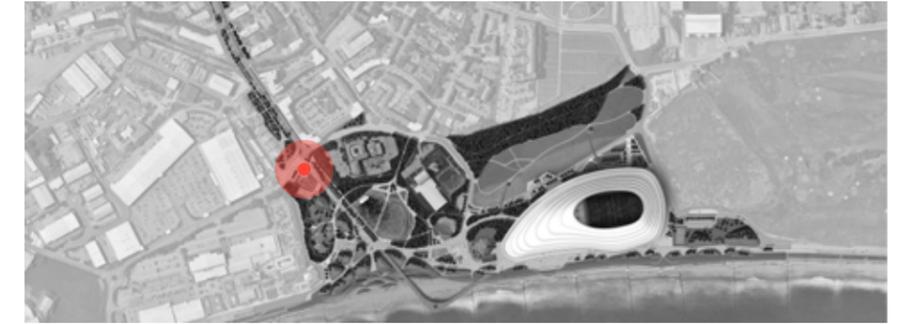
The Gateway proposal offers potential to explore more sculptural elements, feature lighting and opportunities for public art within the design, adding the wow factor upon arrival to the Beachfront.

Accessible/Toilet/Changing facilities will be housed within the proposed structure which will be clad in durable, natural timber cladding, with an angular roof formation to echo the other lightweight architectural interventions within the wider Park.

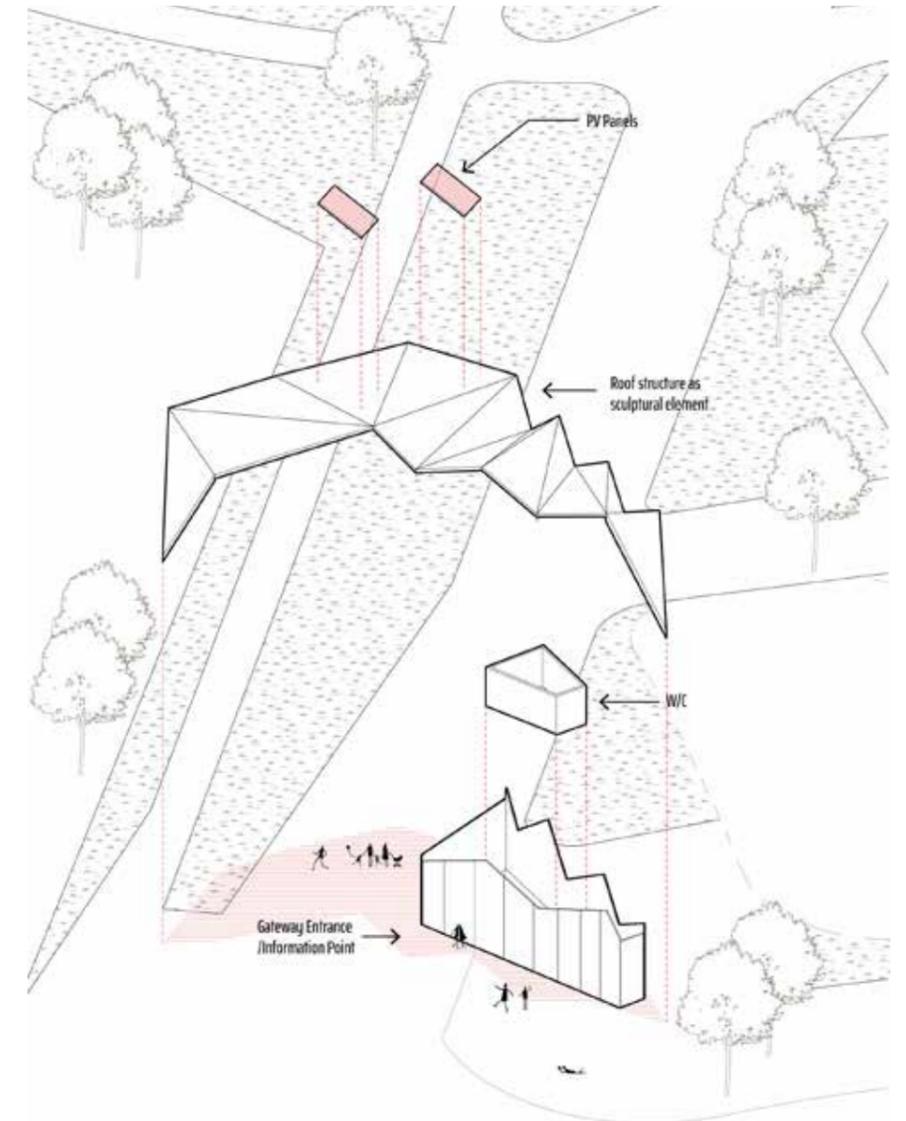
The height of the Gateway canopy will be designed to accommodate vehicular access onto a shared surface if required for managed events.



Plan



Key Plan



Isometric View



Precedent



3D View

HUB BUILDING

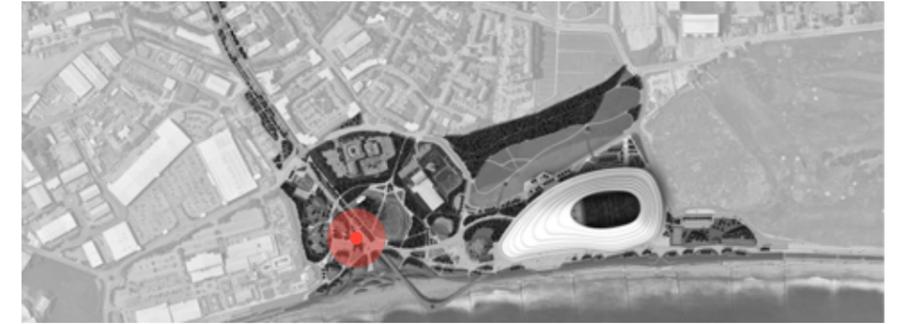
The Hub Building is located in the central plaza area, creating a focal point at the heart of the new Urban Park. Positioned at a key nodal point junction on the main Avenue, the building will capitalise on footfall sweeping down from Beach Boulevard towards the reimagined Ballroom, Stadium & Leisure complex, offering a place to pause, engage and refresh on the primary desire route.

The flexible building footprint could support a variety of uses, with opportunity for Social Enterprise and supporting local business with a potential Coffee Shop/Ice Cream Kiosk offering light refreshments.

Toilet and Changing facilities would be provided including centrally located accessible facilities/CPT. The proposed Hub will incorporate a sculptural angular roof structure, aligned with the wider family of lightweight structures located throughout the Urban Park.



Plan



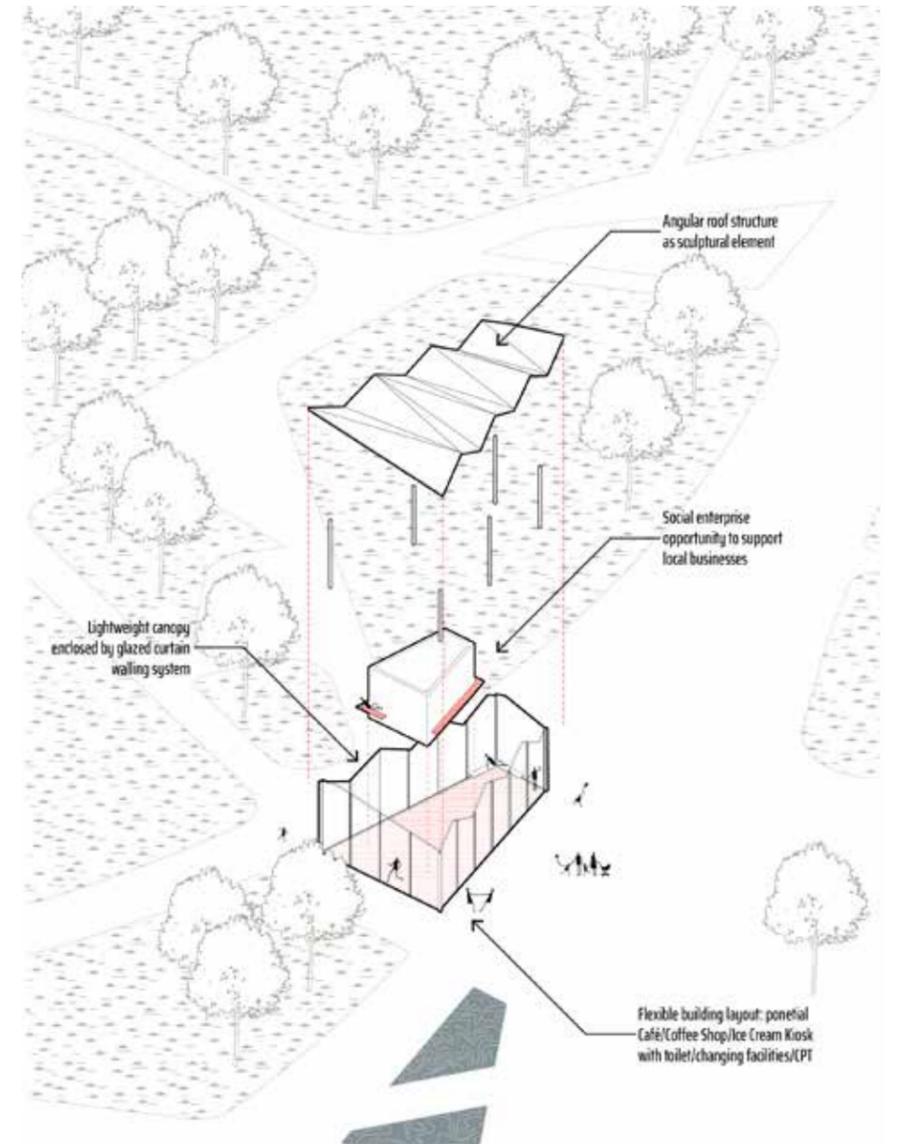
Key Plan



Precedent Imagery



3D View



Isometric View

BEACH PAVILION

The Beach Pavilion offers a flexible layout that can be used for a variety of different Beachfront activities. The building provides active frontage to the Beach Esplanade which could potentially house a Surf Pavilion, Sports Clubhouse and other complementary uses such as retail, Beach Café or Juice Bar. Changing/Toilet Facilities would be accommodated alongside First Aid provision and equipment storage areas.

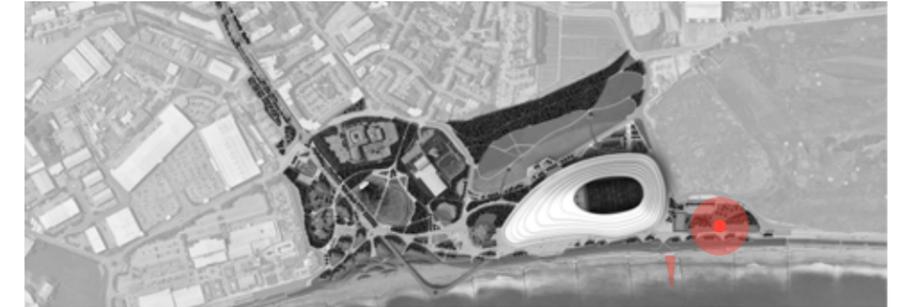
The building will be located in close proximity to suggested accessible parking and will be fully accessible with ramped access integrated into the landscape design. The proposed associated Slipway will be accessible via the existing underpass route which we be maintained and enhanced, giving direct access to the Beach. The Pavilion could form part of a wider Surf Village or potentially be utilised for future extreme sports facilities, linking in to the new Stadium and Leisure complex.

In line with proposals for other lightweight structures located within the Masterplan vicinity, locally sourced larch timber cladding is proposed – a species native to Aberdeen. This will offer a durable, natural and cost-effective cladding solution, with appropriate fixing/ weathering details to suit the coastal/marine environment.

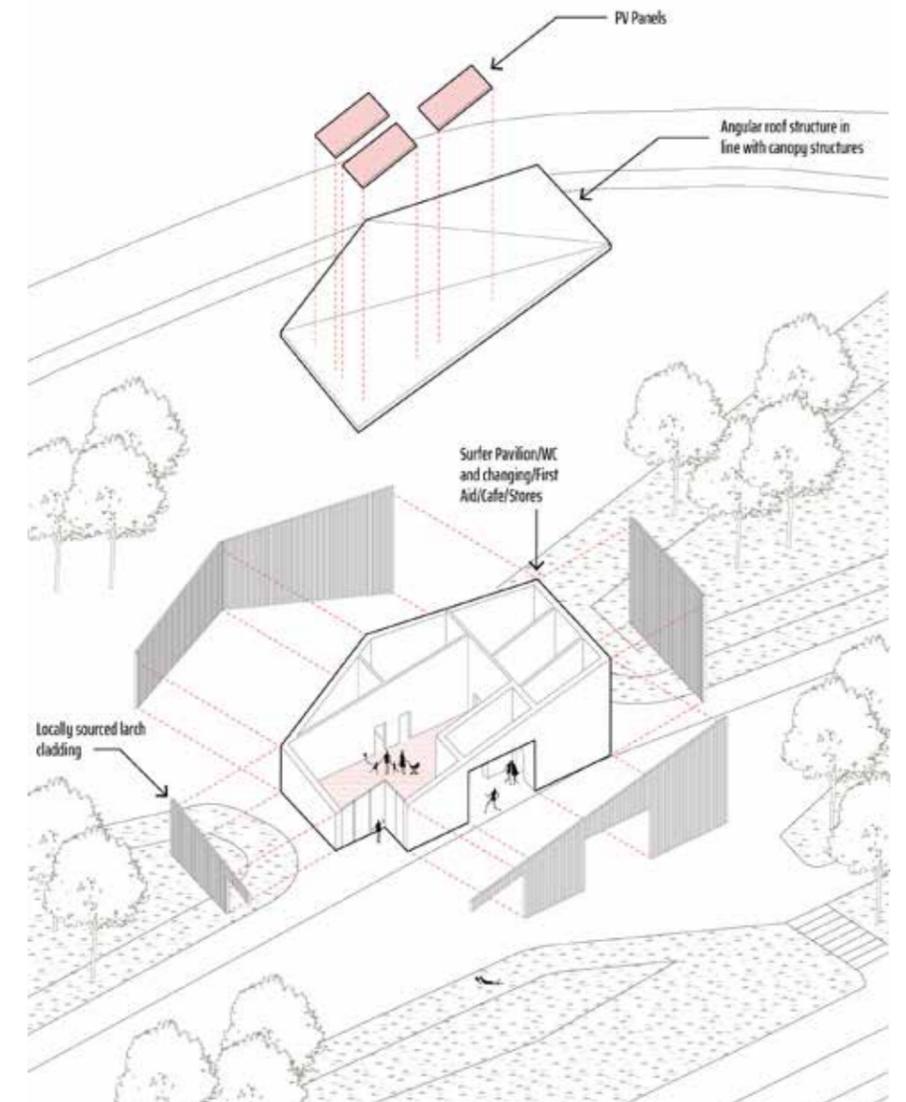
PV panels will also be explored on the angular roof form to generate solar power, in conjunction with other lightweight canopy structures offering solar collection through the Masterplan area.



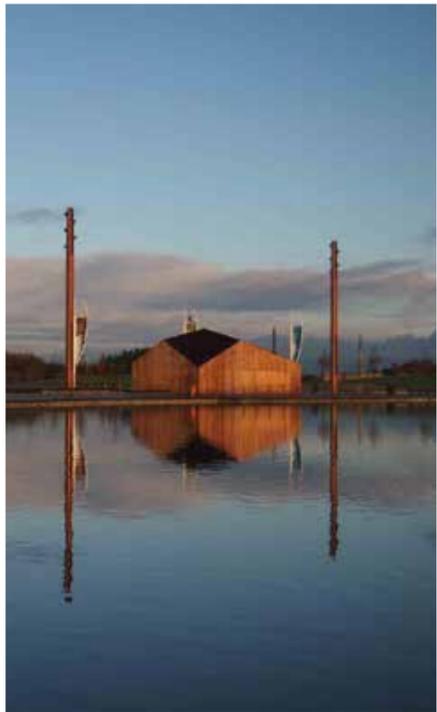
Plan



Key Plan



Isometric View



Precedent Imagery



3D View

LIGHTWEIGHT CANOPY STRUCTURES

A number of canopy structures are proposed at key nodal points within the Urban Park to aid orientation on the Beachfront journey. The angular roof structures proposed will provide shelter from the elements and seating areas for rest and reflection.

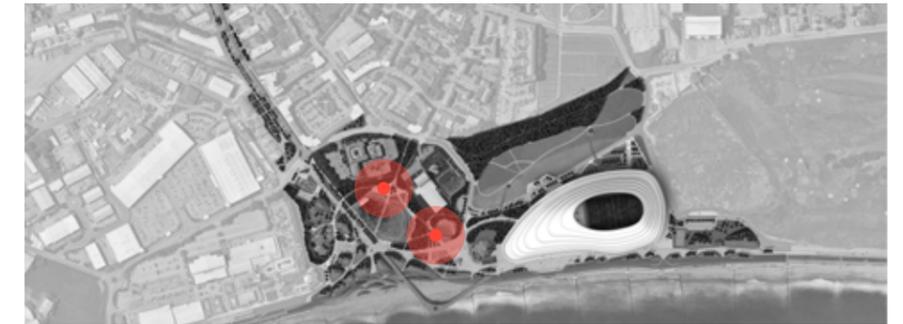
A variety of seating, including back and arm rests will be provided, as well as accessible spaces for wheelchair users. These flexible structures offer opportunity for social/meeting points, picnic areas, recycling points, individual seating and quiet areas.

Feature structural columns are proposed as sculptural elements, supporting an angular roof form with opportunities for integrated PV panels to provide solar energy to potentially illuminate the public realm areas, with feature up-lighting of the canopy forms.

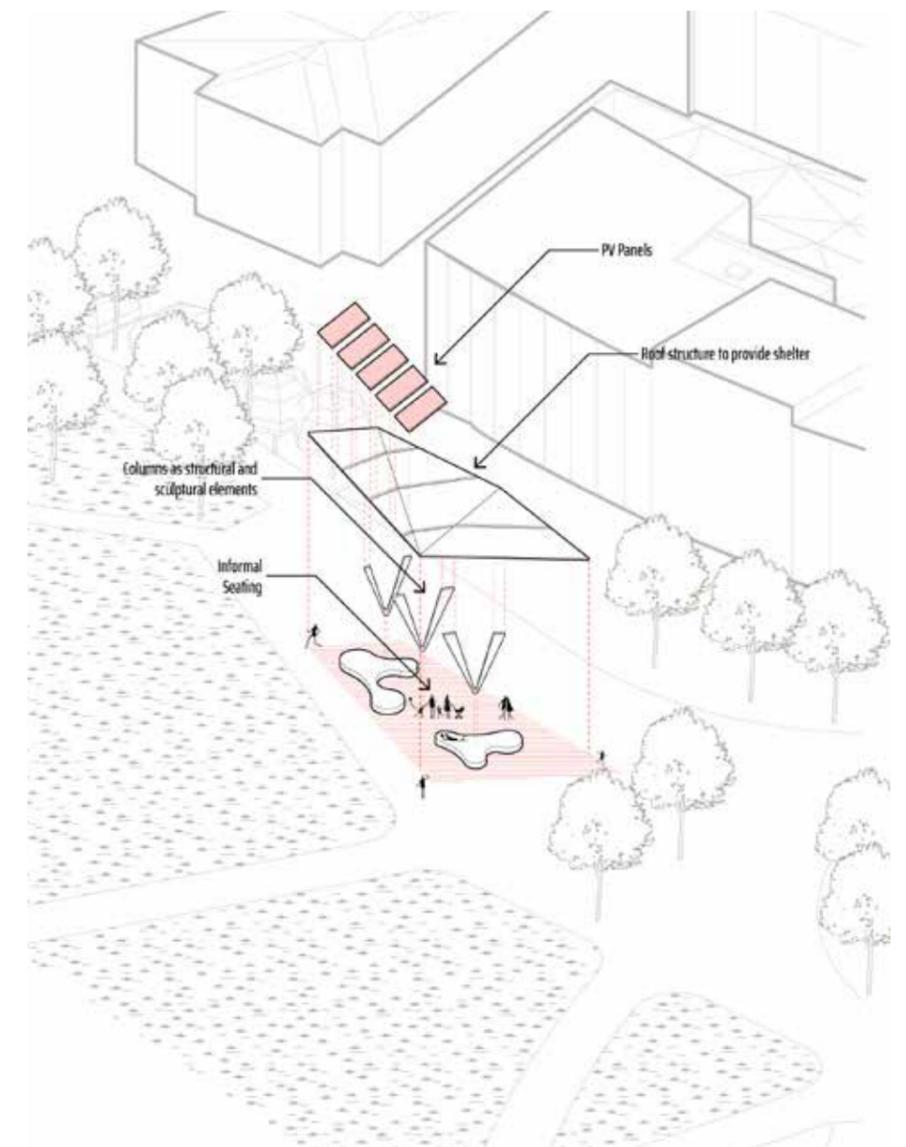
Durable, locally sourced, sustainable materials have been suggested, creating a family of structures which follow a common architectural language and materiality to tie through with wider Masterplan interventions.



Plan



Key Plan



Isometric View



Precedent



3D View

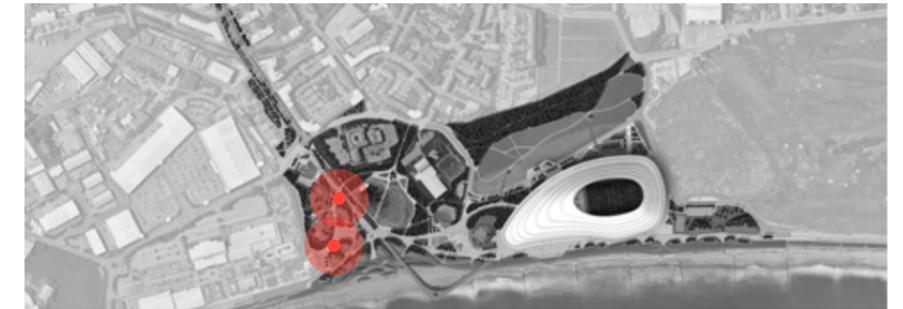
LIGHTWEIGHT CANOPY STRUCTURES

Adjacent to the Play and Games Zone within the Queens Links Urban Park, alternative organic lightweight structures have been explored with a more playful geometry and roofscape, reflecting the sinuous nature of the overall Rope Works Masterplan concept.

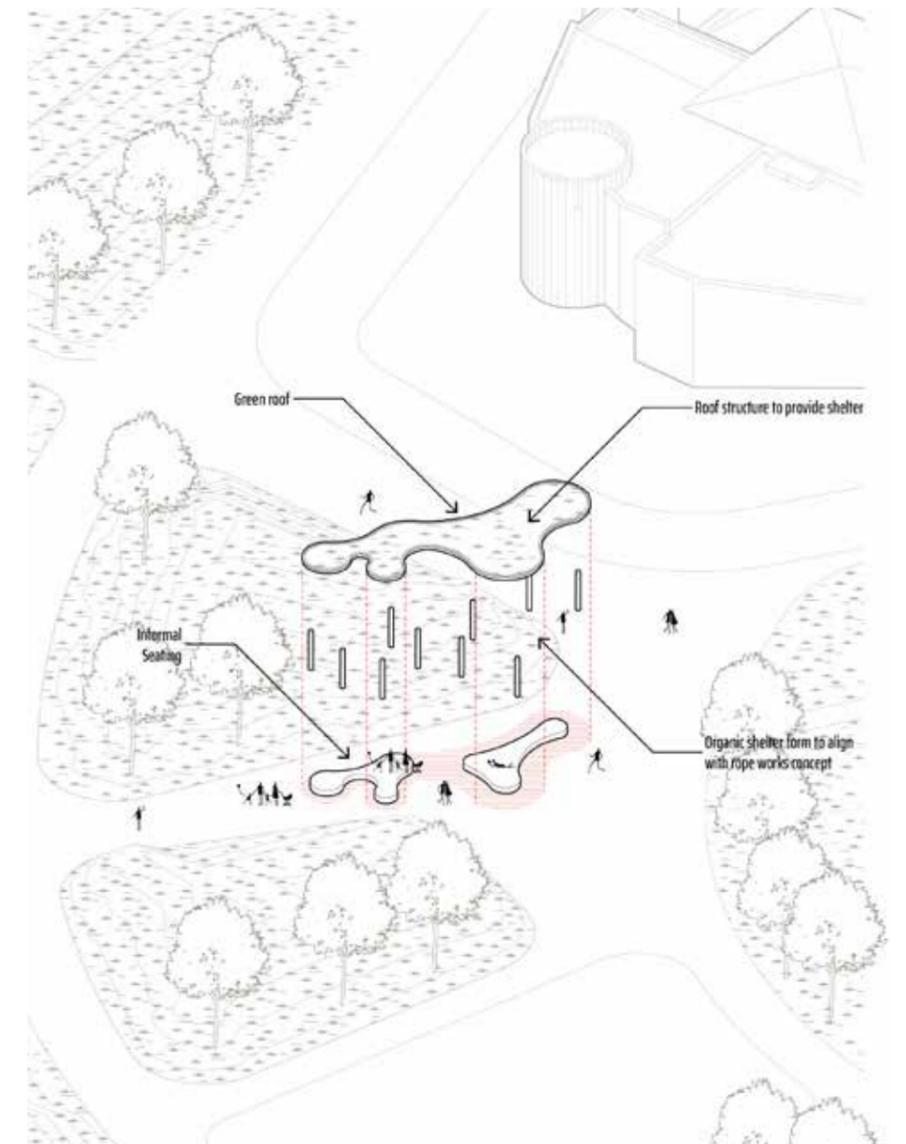
These structures offer more informal sheltered seating areas, with opportunities to explore green/sedum roof solutions with a variety and mix of species to enhance biodiversity within the Park



Plan



Key Plan



Isometric View



Precedent



3D View

AMPHITHEATRE

Within the Urban Park the opportunity to create a more intimate outdoor venue, suitable for music, theatre, outdoor cinema or screenings is provided with the creation of a small external amphitheatre located adjacent to the Beach Ballroom.

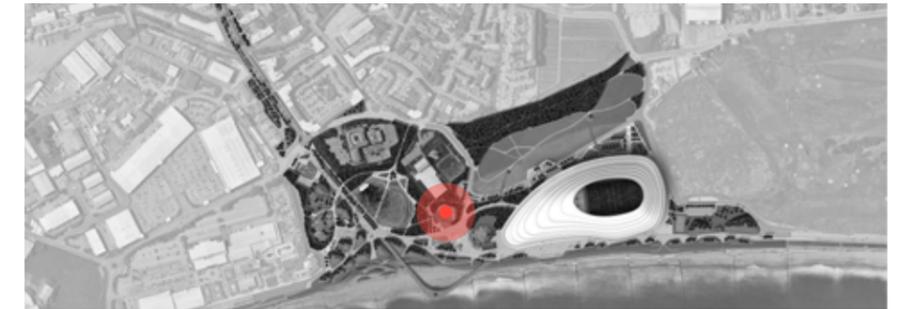
The amphitheatre is supported with a lightweight angular canopy structure, tying in with the sculptural roof forms of the wider Masterplan, providing an element of shelter to the seating area and simultaneously offering opportunity for localised accessible toilet facilities adjacent to the accessible parking on the West part of the site.

Taking advantage of the existing site topography/ levels, the location for the Amphitheatre naturally shields the adjacent buildings to the West, whilst the orientation of this space provides natural screening and acoustic benefits which can be enhanced with strategic planting to provide an additional level of privacy to the space.

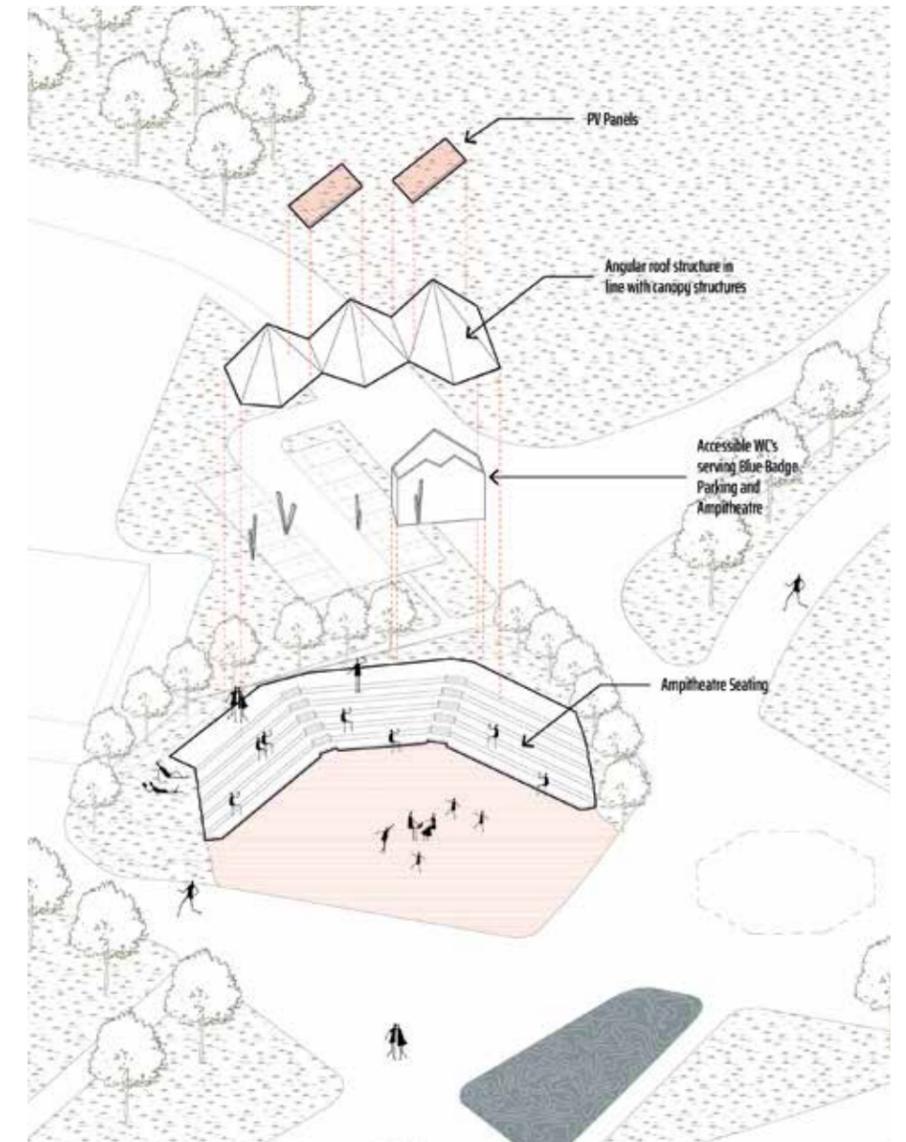
The vision for this space is to create a flexible, intimate external events space with the potential to tie in with larger events hosted at the Beach Ballroom/ Stadium.



Plan



Key Plan



Isometric View



Precedent



3D View

BOARDWALK STRUCTURE

The proposed Boardwalk allows for the creation of an enhanced beach frontage with opportunities for views towards the sea. This new structure will become a focal point at the Masterplan's periphery, forming a new key public space and creating a threshold between Beach Boulevard, the Esplanade and the North Sea.

Formed as an extension of Beach Boulevard, the Boardwalk enhances the fundamental relationship between the boulevard and Beach Ballroom. These two principal paths are joined through the creation of a centrepiece at the nose of the Boardwalk in the form of a sculpture with a key light element to symbolise Aurora (Northern Lights). This sculpture is to be designed by a local artist in cohesion with the Masterplan concept.

In addition to the large Boardwalk at the end of Beach Boulevard, a smaller Boardwalk structure facing the leisure entrance is designed to create a humble public space with further views towards the sea.

The form of the Boardwalk aligns with the Masterplan's rope concept to create an organic and intuitive journey. In order to ensure protection of the elements, the structure slopes up outwards towards the sea. It further provides the opportunity for level change in order to ensure accessibility to the beach.

Structural support elements are located at 10m centres to ensure robustness, with the columns and structure designed in a similar architectural language to other interventions within the Masterplan for the purpose of continuity and consistency.

There is an opportunity for animation along the Boardwalk through the incorporation of landscaping and seating. Glass balustrades are to be used in order to create a sense of openness towards the sea. Locally sourced materials, such as larch species native to Aberdeen will be used for the purpose of sustainability and consciousness of the location.



Precedent



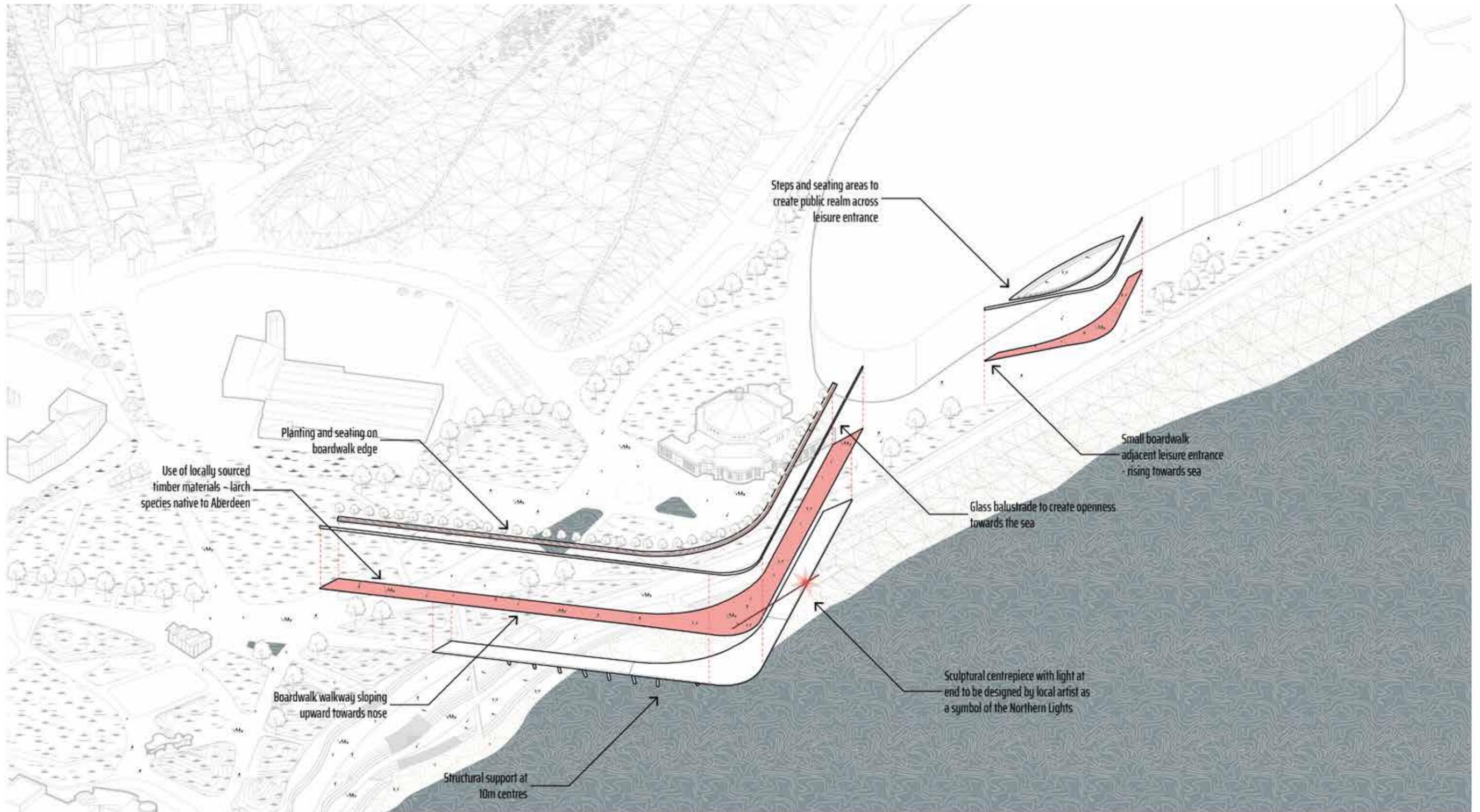
Key Plan



Precedent



3D View



Isometric View

EVENTS FIELD

The events field has been designed as a flexible space capable of holding events, festivals, larger concerts etc. but also to provide a large grassed area for day to day use including informal sports and games such as football, touch rugby, ultimate frisbee, and passive recreation such as picnicking.

The field covers an area of circa 8,800m² however additional space is also provided by the adjacent hard landscaped public spaces.



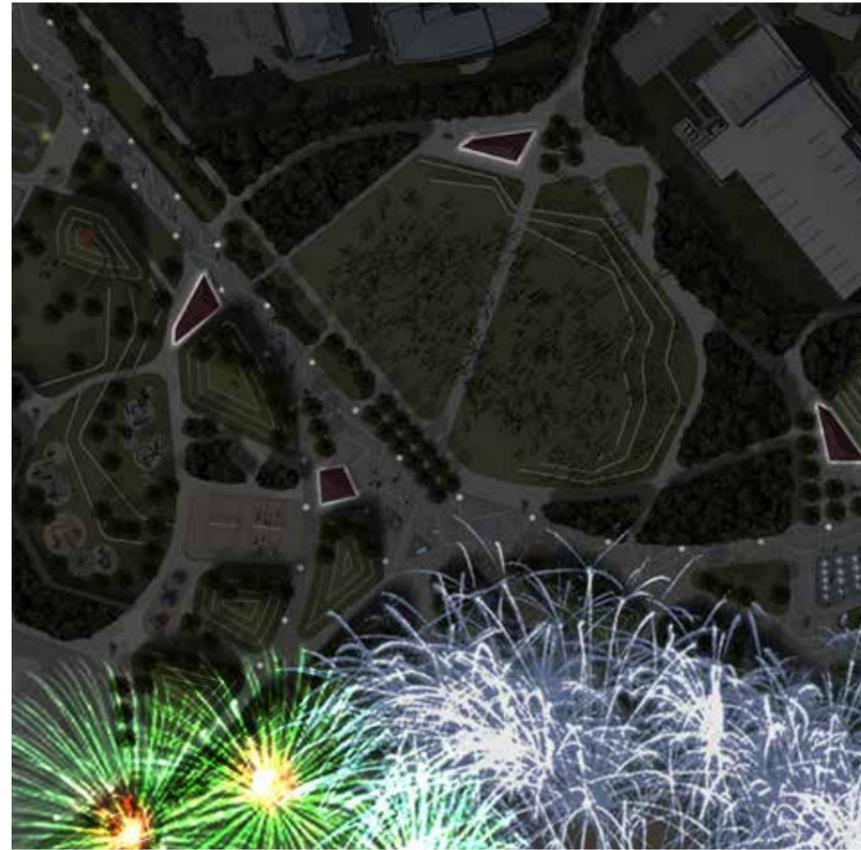
CONCERT

The below plan illustrates a possible arrangement of a larger concert/festival within the park.



FIREWORKS

The below plan illustrates a possible arrangement of a fireworks event within the park.



CHRISTMAS MARKET

The below plan illustrates a possible arrangement of a large Christmas market within the park.



CENTRAL SQUARE

The Central Square is formed where the different strands of the rope works concept split apart. It is a key nodal point within the site and also forms a part of the main circulation route to the Stadium on match days. The design of this space has been carefully considered to ensure an appropriate width to accommodate the flows of people required on a match day whilst maintaining an appropriate scale and character on other days. A small pavilion, water features and trees in hard landscape help bring interest and animation to this space and a varying width from circa 25 -30m allows the possibility of this area being used to set up small markets of food trucks stands etc. on non match days.



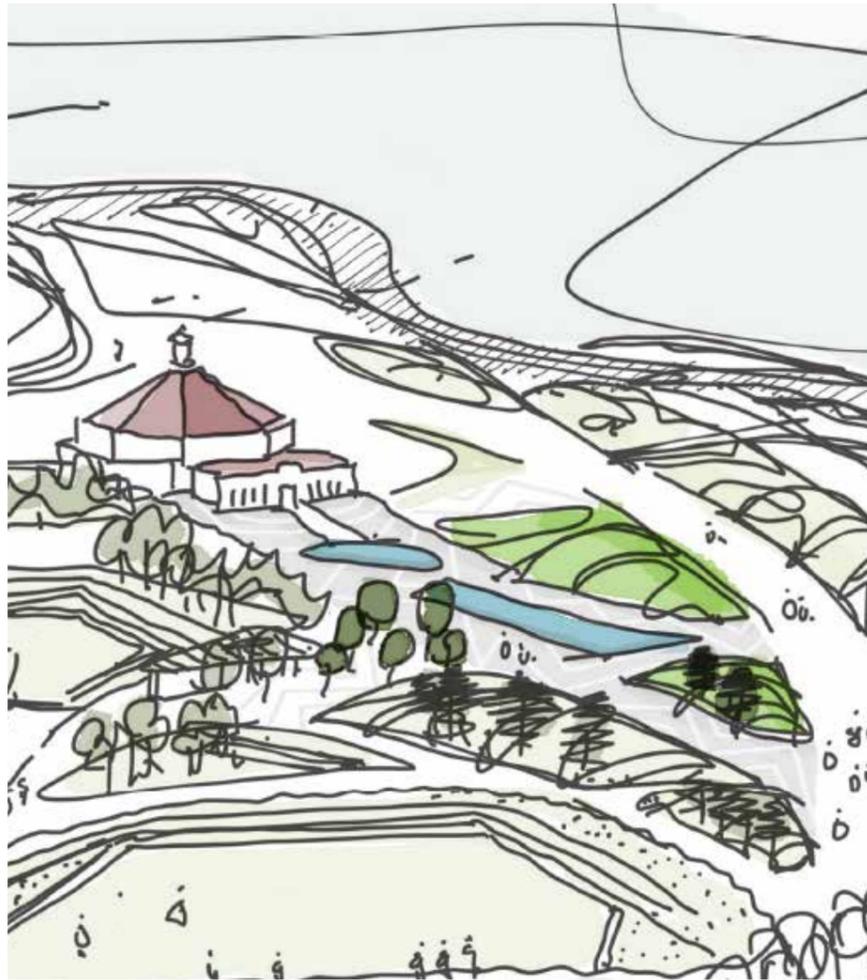


The new central square forming a meeting and gathering point within the park.

BEACH BALLROOM PLAZA

The Beach Ballroom Plaza will create a grand setting for the building. The main circulation routes of the site pass either side of the space ensuring that pedestrian movement to the Stadium on match days is accounted for and that the Beach Ballroom is a key landmark and part of this journey.

The space formed between the two routes will have less through movement within it and therefore provides a calmer space in which people can sit and relax out of the main flow of the park. Water features proposed within the space will add sound and animation to the space and provide opportunities for play whilst enhancing the grandeur of the building.





Arrival at the Beach Ballroom through the new plaza space

ARRIVAL SQUARES

The arrival squares are a series of smaller hard landscape spaces within the park. These have been typically located at key arrival or nodal points within the site. These spaces will provide areas to meet, park a bicycle, take shelter, have a game of chess or sit and relax. They are of a scale which would also allow them to accommodate smaller events, markets or food trucks etc. helping to animate these spaces. They should be locations which assist legibility and way-finding within the park, either through unique identities and landmarks or the inclusion of way-finding information.

The provision of power, water and data within these spaces should be considered.

BEACH BOULEVARD ARRIVAL

This space will provide a welcome point and main arrival into the park from Beach Boulevard. A Gateway building, described in more detail elsewhere within this document will act as a sculptural landmark at the entrance to the Queens Links, offering an enhanced sense of arrival at the Gateway to the Beachfront and providing facilities including Accessible/Toilet/Changing facilities.



AMUSEMENTS SQUARE

This space will provide a welcome point into the park from the promenade and adjacent arcades. It will also act as a key pick up/drop off point for the Park.



PLAY GATEWAY

This space will provide a main gateway into the play area off the main route through the park. It will create a place to meet and explore the park from and will include opportunities for shelter.



TRAMWAY SQUARE

This space will create an arrival into the park from Urquhart Road. At its southern end it incorporates an element of the existing tram lines which could be incorporated into this space to create character and a link to the history of the site. At its northern end this space could also form a connection to Transition Extreme Sports. At its eastern edge this space has a direct relationship with the events field which would allow these two spaces to be used in conjunction with each other for larger events.



AMPHITHEATRE SQUARE

This space adjoins the naturally sheltered and sunken space of the amphitheatre, working with the distinct topography of the area. The space provides an arrival at the Beach Ballroom and a space to meet and linger off the main pedestrian thoroughfare which forms the route to the Stadium.



Scale 1:750 @ A3
N
0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

PLAY AND GAMES ZONE

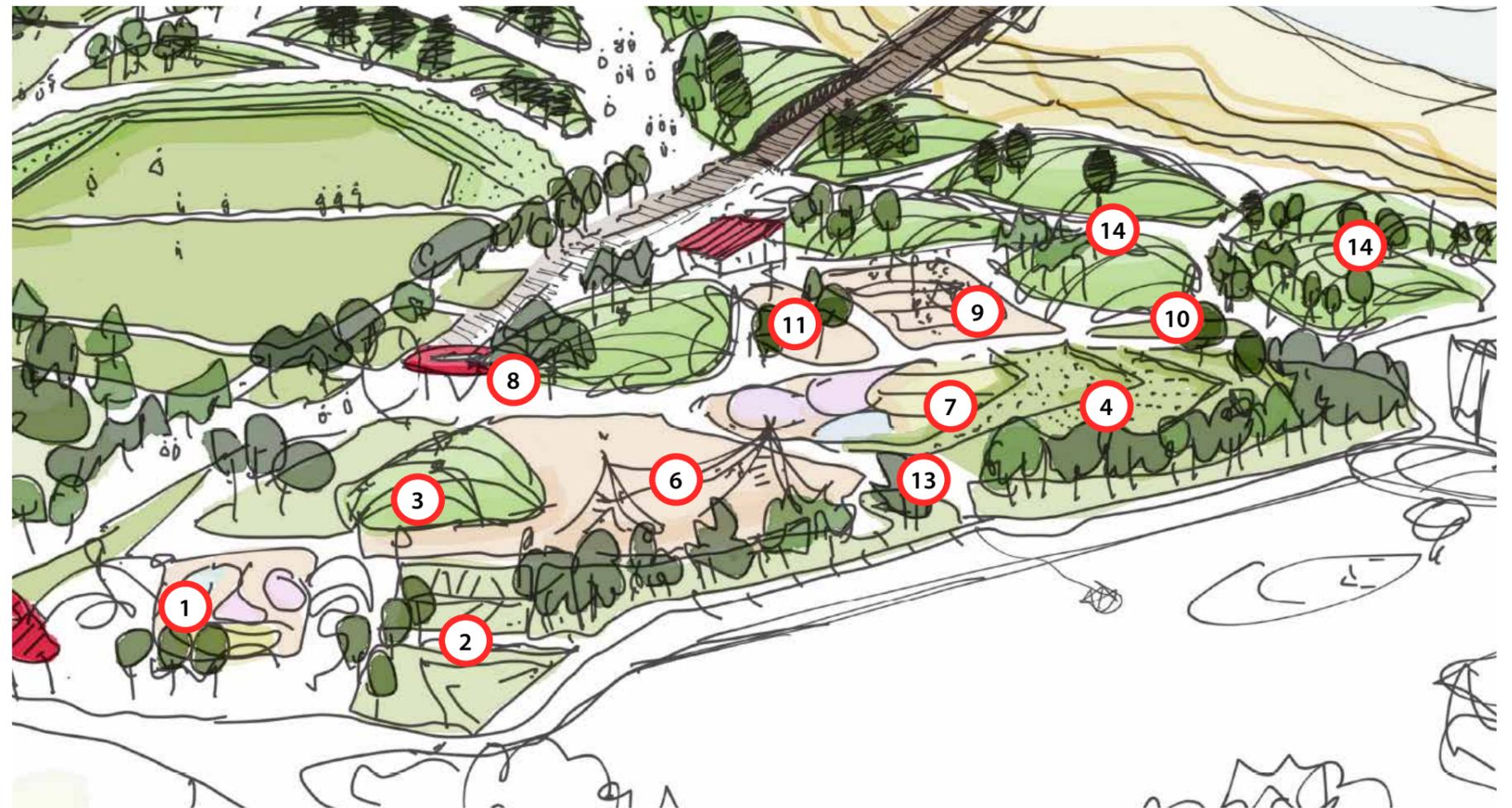
Although this area has been termed the play and games zone it is not intended that opportunities for play will be constrained to this area of the site. The intention is that informal play opportunities will be present through out the park. Equally the intention is that this area is a fully integrated part of the park landscape and is permeable and able to be explored as part of a visit to the park.

The play park has been enclosed to some degree by landform/tree planting in order to help create a suitable micro-climate and provide a comfortable year round space. Equally the aim has been to provide some shelter from the wind which is particularly important for games such as table tennis and volley ball.

A structure for the play and games zone has been developed which can accommodate a variety of play. At this point the content of the play parks is still being developed however approximate areas have been set aside for separate younger and older children's play areas. Recently undertaken consultation with children and young people is helping to inform this process and refine the types of play which should be included within these areas.

Other uses with a larger footprint have been included within the development of the plan to ensure space is allowed for these uses within the plan, these included a pump track/skate park, a basketball court and volleyball courts all of which were raised during youth engagement.

Other smaller uses have been indicated on the plan such as chess tables, table tennis tables etc. the final location of these elements is more flexible due to their smaller size.



Photograph by Göran Ekeberg, Addlight AB.
(Image courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)

Legend

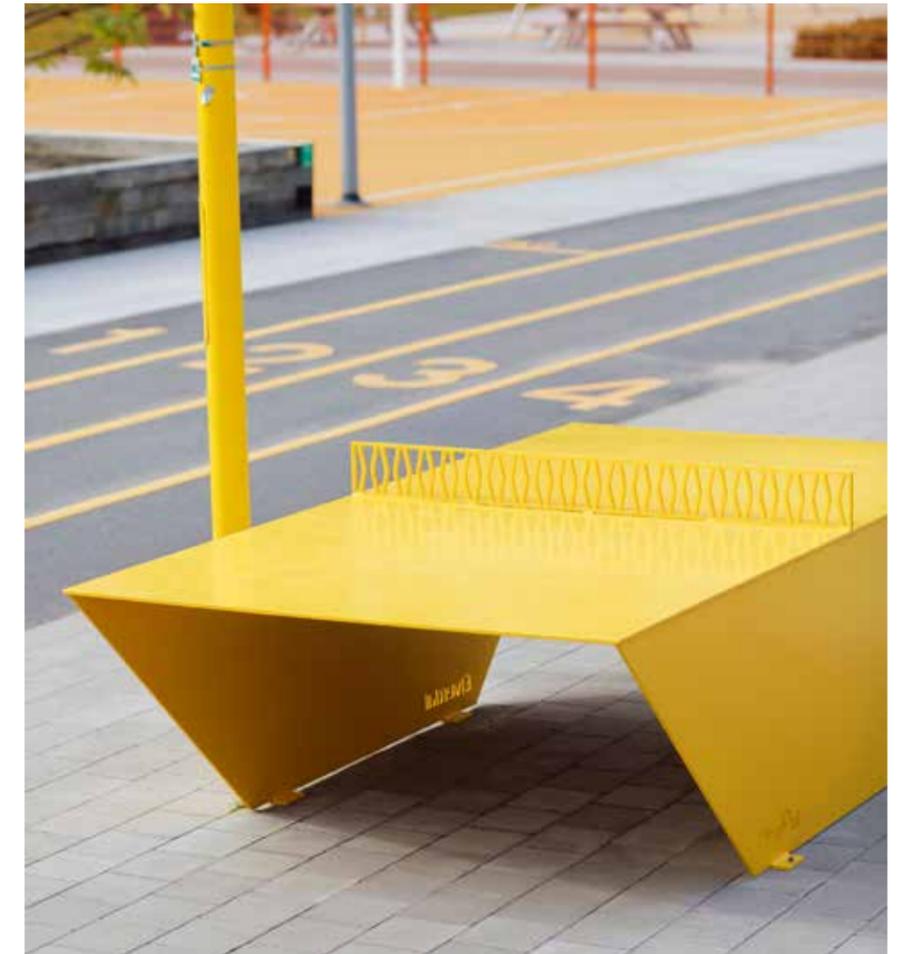
1. Pump track/skate park (total area illustrated 1,190m²)
2. Basketball Court
3. Lookout dune with slides
4. Low seating/parkour walls
5. Seating
6. Older children/youth play area (total area illustrated 2,620 m²)
7. Small children's play area (total area illustrated 2,770 m²)
8. Shelter
9. Volley ball sand pit
10. Climbing boulder sand pit
11. Table tennis
12. Chess tables
13. Spinning boulder
14. Lookout binoculars



Scale 1:750 @ A3
0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

PLAY PRECEDENTS

The content of the play parks is still being developed however a recently undertaken consultation with children and young people is helping to inform this process and refine the types of play which should be included within these areas.



Photograph by Göran Ekeberg, Addlight AB.
(Image courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)



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(Image courtesy of Karavan landskapsarkiter)





Shelter and sense of place created within new play area

THE 'DUNES' AND THE BEACHFRONT

The intention at the beachfront is to modify the beach edge, pulling this back into the site and creating better visual and physical connectivity between the park and the sea. Behind this modified edge, dune landforms will help provide shelter to the park and will frame views out to sea.

The modification of the landform in this area, due to the removal of the road, will play a key role in heightening the relationship between the beach, the park and the city. It is important that the humanising of this interface is a priority, while maintaining the necessary coastal defenses by investigating more natural flood defense systems which can afford to utilise a greater area therefore introducing a distinctive and unique environment. One of the out turn aims will be making the beach bigger and more accessible.



LIGHTING

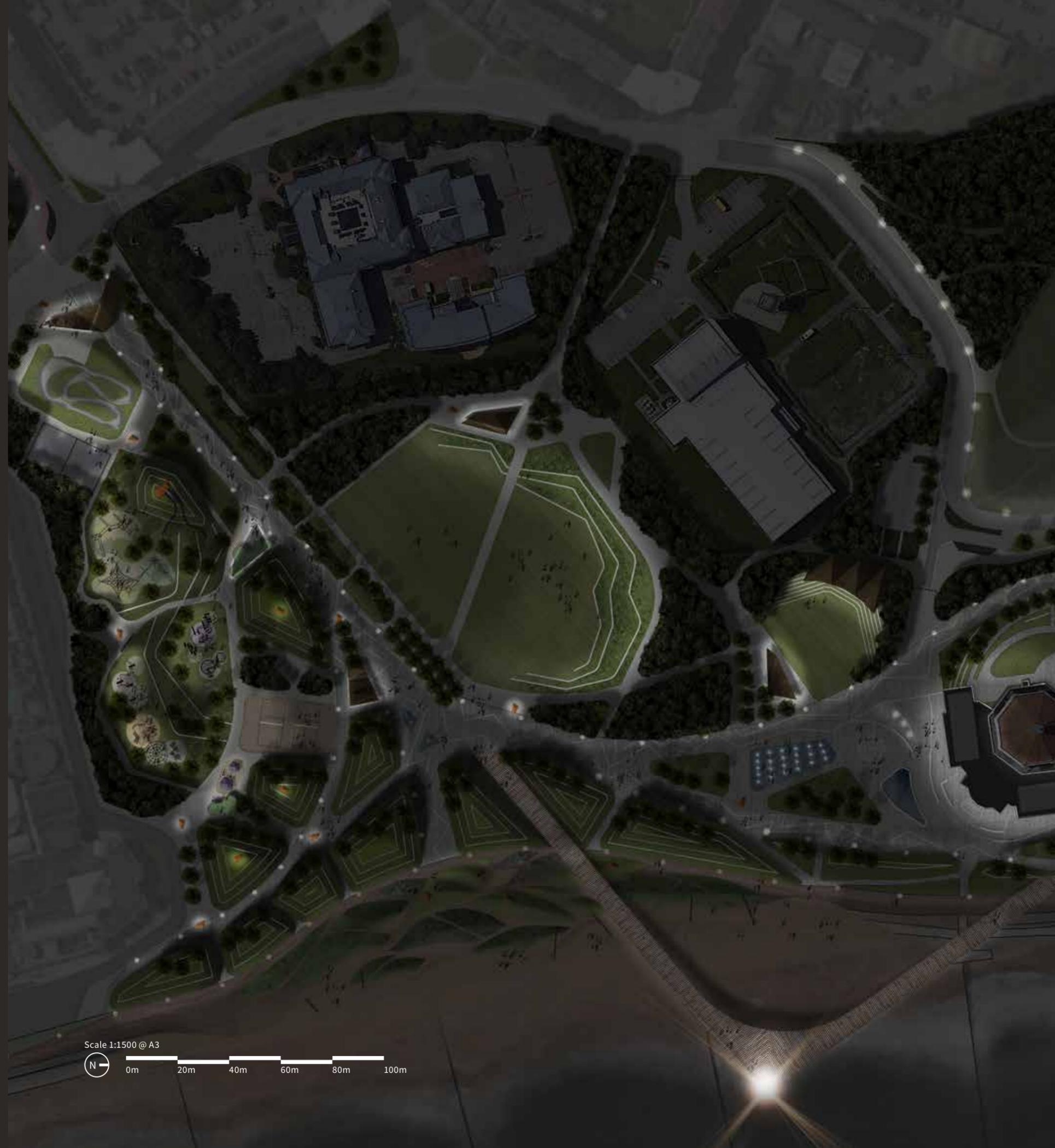
The night time appearance, usability and safety of the park should be a key consideration within the design. Lighting therefore has an important part to play. As well as functional lighting, lighting which enhances the character of the park and provides additional play opportunities should be considered. The plan opposite illustrates how a hierarchy of lighting across the park could illuminate key routes and spaces and also provide character and interest. In addition to this base scheme temporary seasonal lighting and street dressing could be considered adding a further level of interest which would change throughout the year.



POWER, DATA & WATER

Provision of power, water and data should be considered through out the park to ensure the maximum flexibility of spaces for events and seasonal dressing.

The inclusion of USB charging integrated within street furniture and provision of WiFi could also be investigated.



Scale 1:1500 @ A3



INFORMAL PLAY

The consideration of play should not be limited to the Play Zone of the park, all elements should be designed with the aim of maximising their play value. Whether this is low seating walls which could be used for parkour, fountains or water features which can be used for play, or informal elements which can be used for clambering on these opportunities should be actively sought out within the park design.



BINS AND RECYCLING

Litter and recycling was one of the recurring themes within the consultation undertaken with the Primary 6 students.

Bins should be provided at regular intervals within the park and especially at entrance points and nodal points. Bin provision should allow for and encourage recycling. In the design and specification of bins consideration should be given to seagulls and measures to prevent them from accessing the bins. Bins should not be located directly next to benches where they may attract

SEATING

There should be a variety of seating within the park. This should include but not be limited to the following types:

- Solitary seating to provide individuals space
- Seating with back and arm rests to assist the elderly and infirm
- Seating positioned in social groupings, particularly allowing those who may be hard of hearing to face each other to assist communication.
- Spaces for wheelchairs to be positioned adjacent to benches
- Opportunities for picnicking



HARD LANDSCAPE

A detailed materials palette has not yet been developed however this should consider sustainability, longevity and ease of maintenance as well as creating an attractive and welcoming environment.

SCULPTURE AND ART

There are opportunities for sculpture and art of various scales to be included throughout the park. These could help create character and assist way-finding. These could respond to the consultation undertaken with children and young people and could incorporate bright colours, informal play, street art and graffiti.



WAY-FINDING

Way-finding within the park will be helped by a clear hierarchy of paths. Existing and proposed landmarks such as the Sea, Broad hill, Codona's amusements, the Beach Ballroom and the Stadium will also help with orientation. Additional way-finding information could be included within the proposed arrival squares.

