

# Manor Royal: County Oak Pocket Park

Signature Project SP04

## Design folio

July 2025

For planning purposes



## Purpose of this Report

This report is intended to provide more information about the background, design and materials for the proposed public realm improvements at County Oak Pocket Park, Manor Royal Business District, Crawley.

The project has been identified as one of the Signature Projects from the wider Manor Royal Business District Projects Pack 2023-2028.

This report is intended to accompany and to be read in conjunction with planning application drawings and documents submitted to Crawley Borough Council. It summarises background information about the existing site, over arching design principles, the proposed general arrangement, and proposed materials and furniture. It also provides a summary of the proposed public art concept by Richard Wolfstrome.

The report is structured as follows:

- Site location, existing features and considerations
- Existing site plan
- Design process / iterations
- County Oak Pocket Park design principles
- Proposed layout and furniture
- Proposed public artwork concept

Drawings (to scale) are included as part of the planning application and where relevant have been incorporated into this report.

## Background: Arts and Heritage Trail

In the summer of 2019, an application was submitted to Arts Council England to launch an Arts and Heritage Trail programme aimed at enriching the Manor Royal Business District. The application was successful, enabling the BID to commission Richard Wolfstrome to explore, draw out, and document the stories and history of Manor Royal through the voices of the businesses and individuals who have shaped the area. This work was carried out with the support of the BID and in collaboration with landscape architects Allen Scott.

The stories and insights gathered through this research became the foundation for a bold and creative vision: a district-wide network of ‘pocket parks’ and ‘micro parks’ designed to enhance Manor Royal’s public realm. These interventions aim to improve the quality of outdoor spaces by introducing new seating, outdoor meeting areas, wayfinding features, and public art. The objective is to bring about a stronger sense of place through installations that are educational, artistic, and often unexpected—celebrating the district’s identity while encouraging community pride and a sense of local ownership.

This vision is set out in detail in the Manor Royal Arts and Heritage Trail Strategy Phase One report and further reinforced in the Manor Royal BID Projects Pack 2023–2028. Both documents provide essential context and background to the ongoing work of enhancing Manor Royal’s public spaces.

The first set of micro parks, delivered in 2022, were located on Gatwick Road, Rutherford Way, Priestley Way, Metcalf Way, and Fleming Way. These interventions have been warmly received by both the local business community and visitors, confirming their value and impact. Their success has helped generate widespread support for the continued development of the Arts and Heritage Trail.

Building on this momentum, construction has recently begun—or is about to begin—on three further high-profile enhancement projects included among the district’s Signature Projects: the Manor Royal Superhub, Crawter Brook (Lost Woodland Gallery), and Woolborough Lane Linear Park. These projects are physically progressing on site while simultaneously contributing to the broader strategic vision for the area.

At the same time, design development and planning applications are underway for the next set of projects. Among these are County Oak Corner, Gateway 4, and Gateway 5—each offering new opportunities to bring the Arts and Heritage Trail to life and further elevate the experience of working in, visiting, and moving through the Manor Royal Business District.

## Background: County Oak Pocket Park

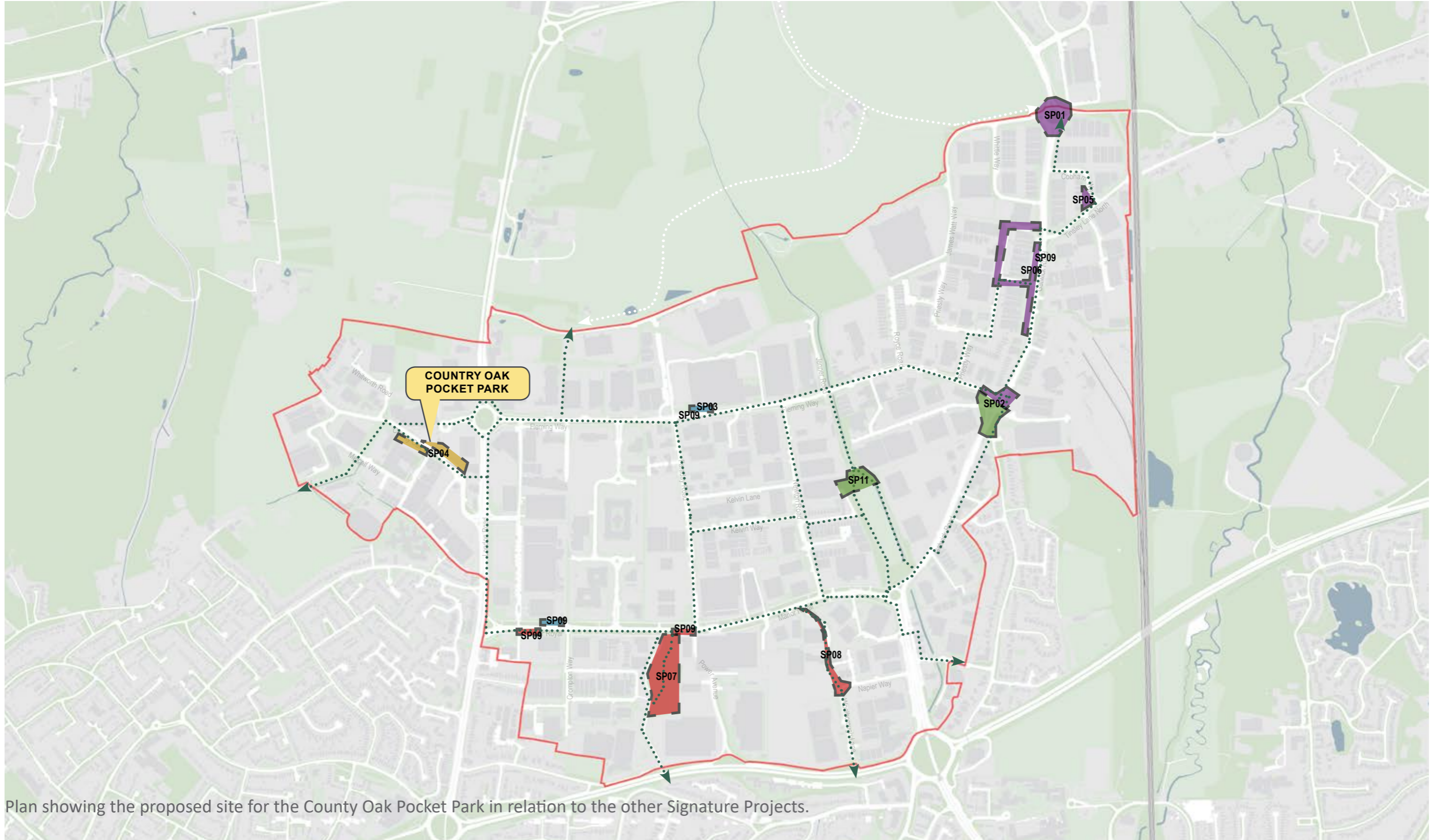
County Oak Pocket Park is located along County Oak Way, adjacent to the Wickes building and near Pets at Home, positioned prominently on the main approach road to County Oak Retail Park. Identified in the previous Projects Pack, this site presents a valuable opportunity to introduce a distinctive and active public open space within Manor Royal. The aim is to transform this underused area into a place that offers meaningful public benefit while reinforcing the district’s evolving character.

The initial concept for the park, as outlined in the Manor Royal BID Projects Pack 2023–2028, envisioned a visually attractive and accessible green space, integrating public art, seating, and planting. While those core principles remain, the current proposals being prepared for planning adopt a more environmentally responsive and softer approach, reducing the extent of hard paving originally envisaged. This shift reflects not only updated design thinking but also a response to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements introduced nationally.

Working in collaboration with Allen Scott and Adonis Blue Environmental Consultants, and as part of a broader effort to strengthen Green Infrastructure across Manor Royal, the revised proposals place greater emphasis on retaining and enhancing green space. They seek to maximise opportunities for biodiversity uplift, improve local habitats, and make practical use of existing spoil and soil on-site, all while creating a welcoming and functional public area.

Planned enhancements include upgrading existing footpaths, removing unnecessary visual clutter, introducing informal seating, and enhancing planting to create a softer, more natural character. In addition, the existing boundary with the Wickes working yard, which is currently visible from the park and County Oak Way, presents an opportunity to introduce a green wall or climbing plants, helping to soften views and improve the visual amenity of the area.

There is also scope to expand the reach of this project by making improvements on the opposite side of County Oak Way, where further seating and footpath enhancements could extend the sense of accessible, usable public space. Together, these enhancements will contribute not only to the quality of Manor Royal’s environment but also to its usability, biodiversity, and sense of place.



Plan showing the proposed site for the County Oak Pocket Park in relation to the other Signature Projects.

LEGEND

- [ ] PROJECT (WITH ZONE COLOUR)
- ..... SP10 - INDICATIVE ONLY

MANOR ROYAL BID PROJECTS  
SIGNATURE PROJECT LOCATIONS



## County Oak Pocket Park



### Location:

The County Oak Site is located on the west side of Manor Royal.

The site is adjacent to the Wickes building and close to Pets at Home

The site is within Manor Royal Zone 1 (yellow).

The site is close to County Oak Retail Park, Metcalf Way and Gateway 3 (The Big M).

### Site Features / Elements:

- North side is overgrown, unkept and 'wild' with a distinct level change between foot-paths;
- South side is relatively flat / level ground laid to grass and asphalt paving;
- Designated bridle way / PRow ;
- Existing business signage and access bollards;
- There is an existing sub station central to the north part of the Site;
- Adjacent zebra crossing connecting the retail parks;
- Existing mature trees;
- Nearby private boundary fence; and
- The location is generally visible from most angles due to the roundabout and car park access.

### Considerations for the Micro Park:

- Boundary treatment (by Wickes) which forms part of the backdrop to the "micro park";
- Greening and green wall options;
- Working around the services and the existing sub station;
- Minimising clutter;
- Complex and multiple land ownership
- All works within highway land will need to be agreed with WSCC, likely through a Section 278 agreement depending on the nature of the works.



Existing sub-station surrounded by vegetation



Existing signage for surrounding businesses



South Side - Grass verge by halfords. Grass verge intensively maintained

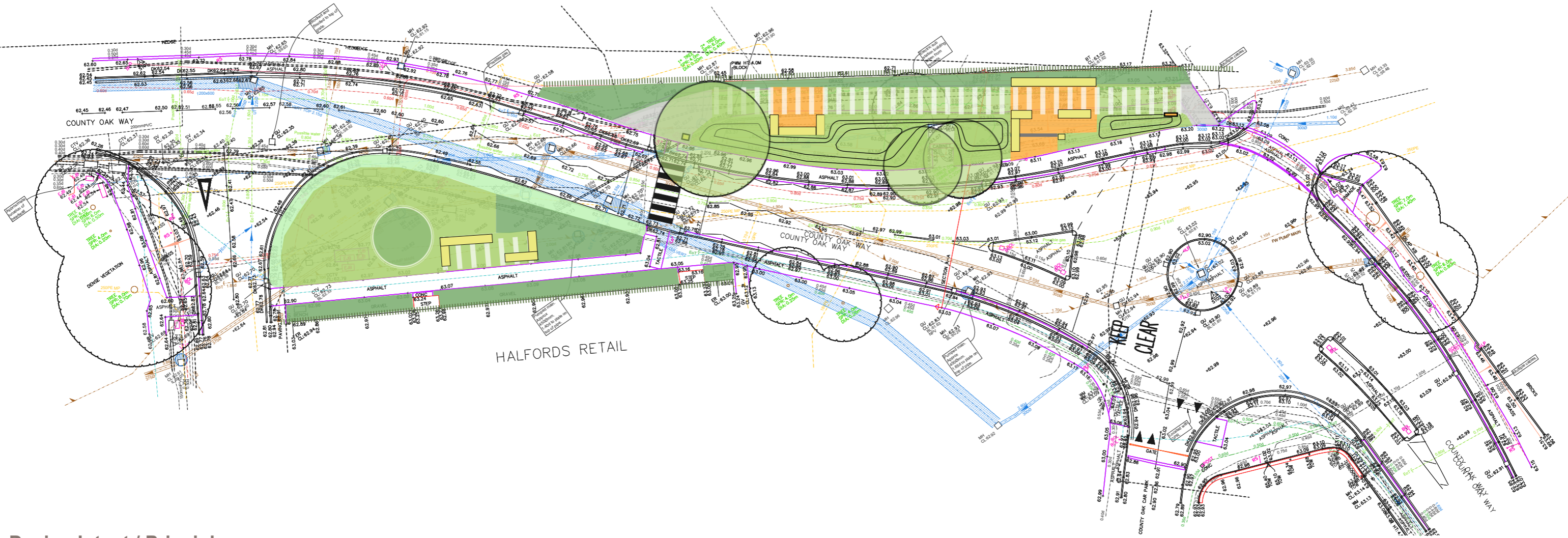


North Side - Scrubby character adjacent to Pets R Us


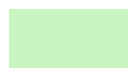










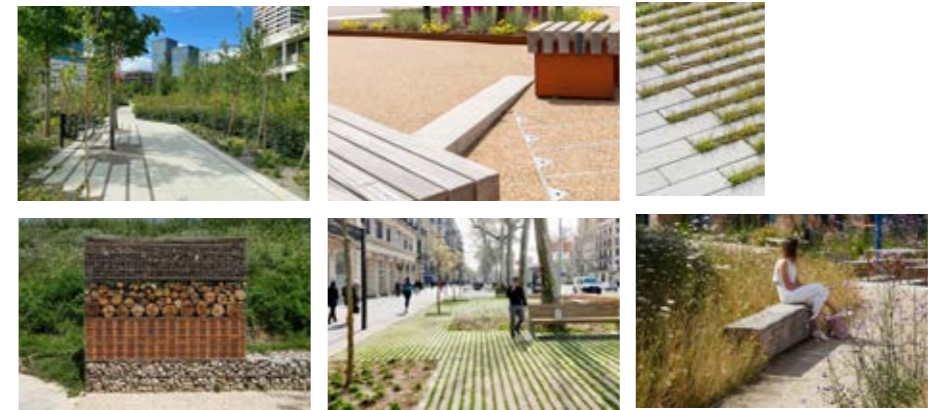
Plan Showing Existing Layout. Drawing not to scale.





Design Intent / Principles:

-  Species rich grass
-  Mown grass strip
-  Native planting (habitat rich)
-  Permeable asphalt
-  Permeable resin bound aggregate
-  Furniture (indicative)
-  Green wall / climbing plants / public artwork
-  Hydro lineo pavers
-  Proposed tree
-  Sign (potential with art / bug hotel)



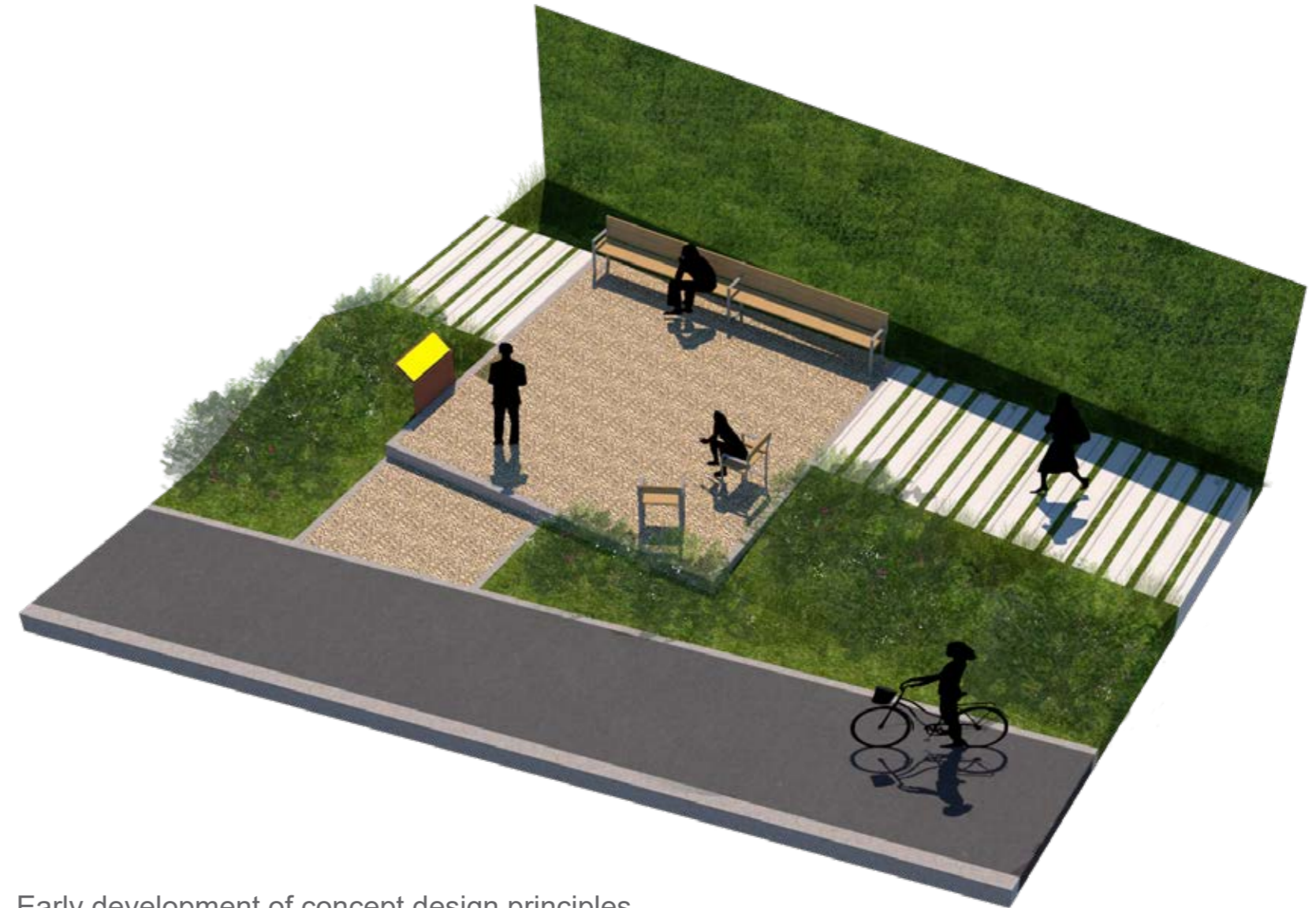
Images used to demonstrate desired outcomes / precedent examples.

## Mini-beasts and Micro-plazas - idea

The intent is to create welcoming, usable and accessible spaces with quality plaza like furniture, nestled within a naturalised green space, rich in biodiversity and seasonal change.

The proposals have been developed working alongside Adonis Blue Environmental Consultants to achieve an on site BNG over the statutory 10%.

The project also evolved and the design influenced by collaborating with public artist Richard Wolfstrome who has designed the proposed public art (see next pages).



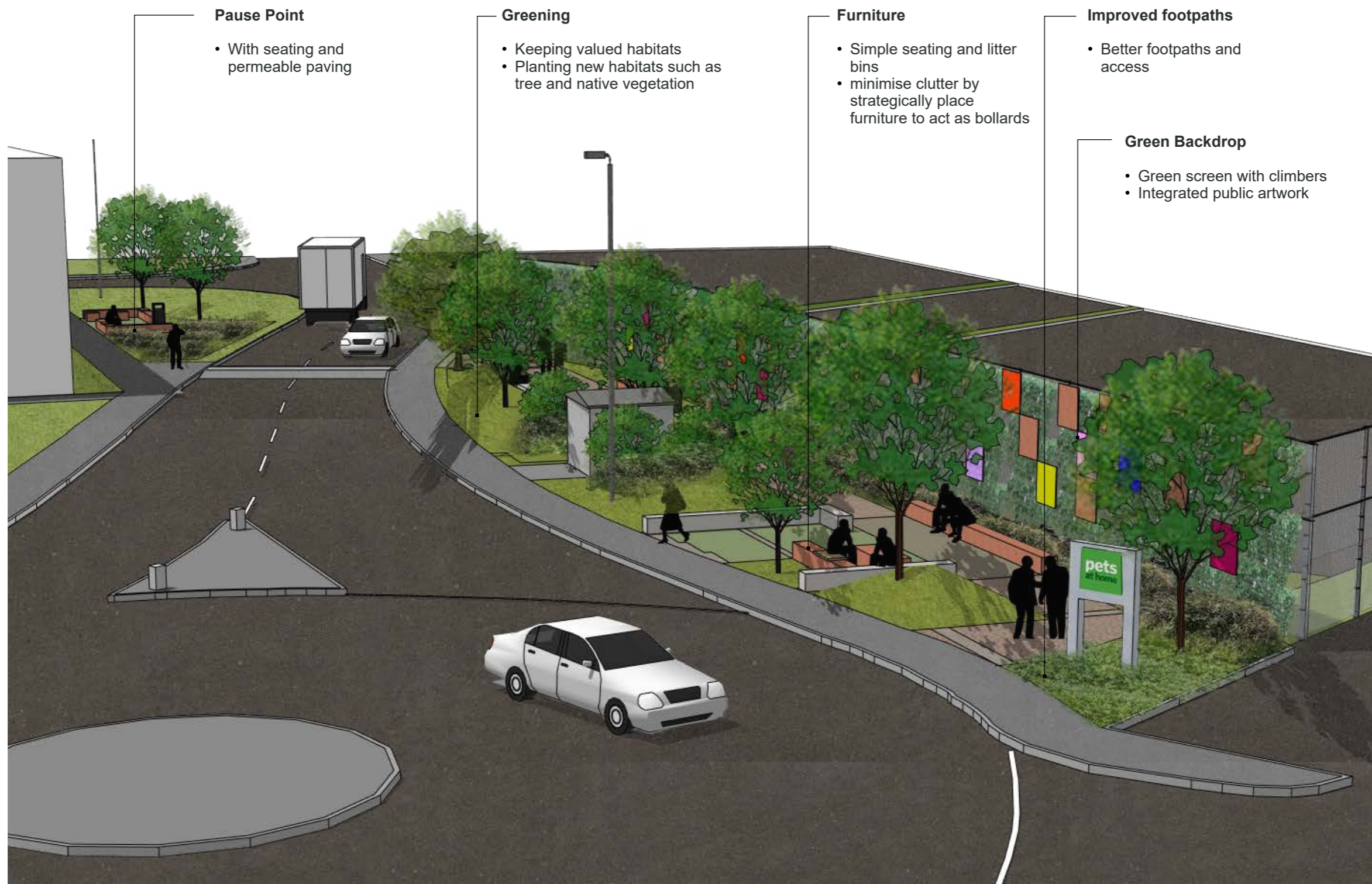
Early development of concept design principles



Relevant precedent examples and materials explored



Illustrative proposals / ideas. Indicative only.



Concept design in 3D. Indicative only.



- LEGEND
- Planning Application Site Boundary
  - Existing Trees to be Retained
  - Existing Trees to be Retained
  - Existing Trees to be Removed
  - Proposed Trees
  - Existing Vegetation to be Retained
  - Proposed Vegetation
  - Proposed Species Rich Grass
  - Existing Paving
  - Proposed Paving Tar Spray and Chip
  - Proposed Paving Concrete Block Paving
  - Proposed Paving Hydro Lineo Paving
  - Existing Tactile Paving
  - Existing Wall
  - Existing Fence
  - Proposed Fence/Trellis
  - Proposed Logpile
  - Existing Furniture
  - Proposed Bins (BN) and Bollards (BD)
  - Proposed Benches and Seating
  - Proposed Knee Rails
  - Existing Utility Cabinets
  - Existing Covers / Ironworks
  - Existing Spot Levels
  - Proposed Spot Levels
  - Proposed Contours

Proposed layout. Drawing not to scale.

## Public Art Concept by Richard Wolfstrome:



### A tapestry of heritage told through image and word

A curated collection of designs celebrating Manor Royal's rich past; blending colourised historical photographs with textured overlays, and interwoven with stories, reflections, and quotations cut into Corten steel.

These panels are thoughtfully clustered near the 'public rooms' to create a strong visual presence across key crossing points, while a scattering of others appears more playfully along the length of the green wall.

Together, they evoke the feel of shifting pixels from afar; an abstract homage to Manor Royal's legacy of innovation and technology.

"When it was hot at Stone Chance we opened the windows and so did the factory opposite that made condoms... lines of women testing them was a sight to see. Stone Chance had big works picnics and one time had a charity football match. One side had the England captain heading it up and the other side had a young actor with fabulous legs – Sean Connery! I was checking out the bassist in the New City Jazzmen; dated him for a while, nice guy." Janet

