



MERTHYR SKATE PARK

MERTHYR TYDFIL DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Prepared by Percy Thomas Architects - October 2023
175-WSP-ZZ-XX-RP-A-001



PERCY THOMAS
ARCHITECTS

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Document Control

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Approved by	Matthew Thomas

Disclaimer

General Disclaimer

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Document

This document is provided as supplementary information in support of a Planning Application for the redevelopment of the Skate Park in Merthyr Tydfil. Please refer to Section 4 for the Scope of the Proposed Works.

1.2 Project Aims and Aspirations

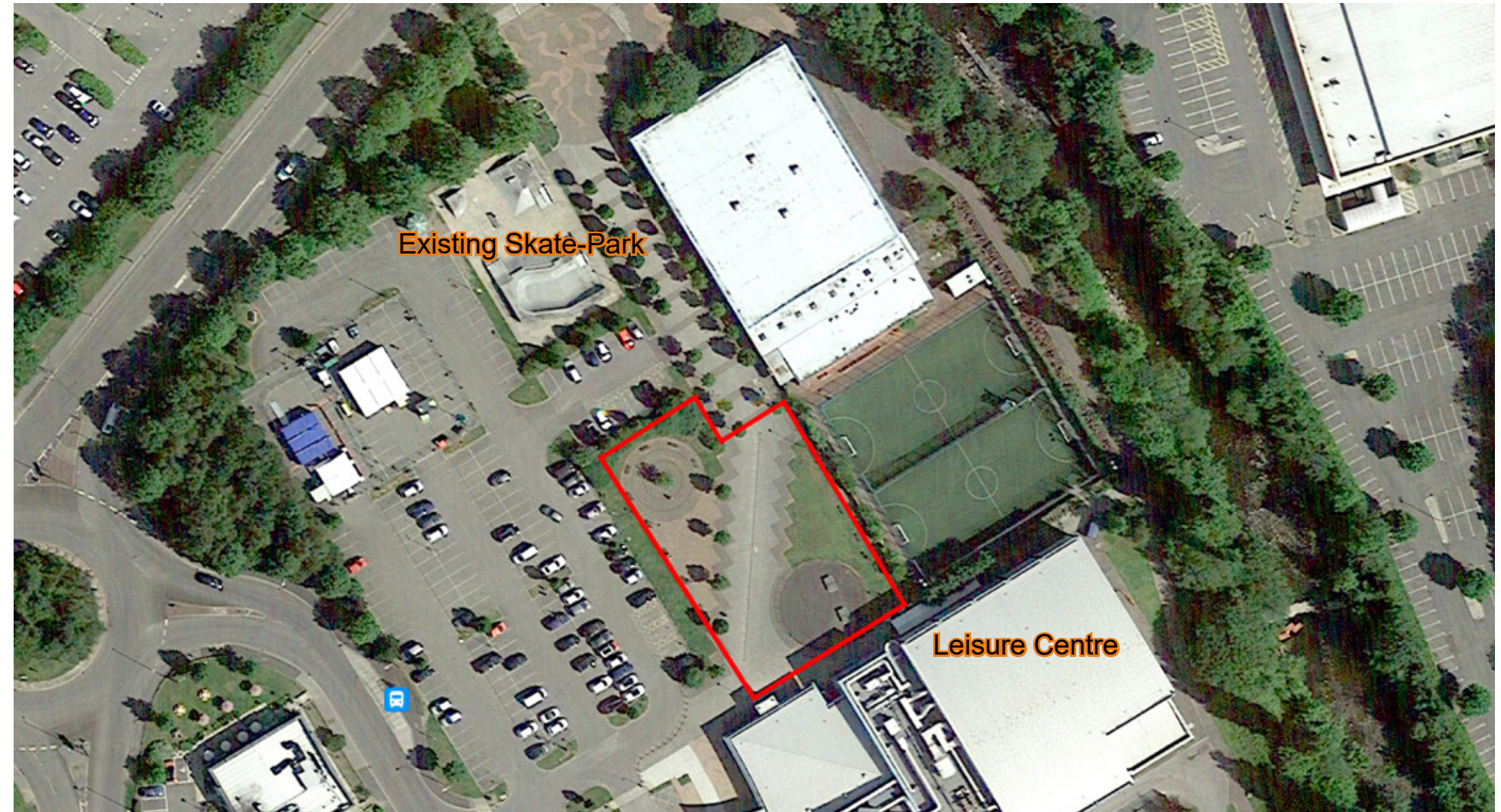
A new skate park is proposed at the Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre adjacent to its North-Western facade and main entrance.

The existing skate park adjacent to the proposed site will not be included as part of this project as due to safety issues MTCBC have had to remove the equipment prior to this application being made.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council are the client and will be responsible for the delivery of the project.

The existing skate park suffered from regular anti-social behaviour, disturbing people using the pedestrian thoroughfare adjacent and the skate-park.

The relatively remote location from more public areas discourages wider family use. The new location and design will change this to a more open and accessible facility.



Proposed Skate Park Site - Location and Extent - red outline



Leisure Centre_Merthyr Tydfil



Food hub near Leisure Centre_Merthyr Tydfil



Cinema near Leisure Centre_Merthyr Tydfil

1.3 Description of Proposal

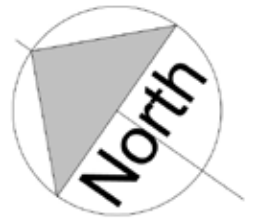
The proposed development seeks to attract people to the area, whilst discouraging anti-social behaviour. The proposed site is directly adjacent the main entrance of the Leisure Centre, benefiting from a less remote from public view and security over-site.

The development is to provide a vibrant environment with new seating and green areas suitable for families to gather around while children and young people are using the skate park.

The palette of materials, planting and surfaces have been selected to be sympathetic with the existing context.



Skate Park proposed design_Merthyr Tydfil





View look South from existing thoroughfare at the Bowling Club



PART 2

CONTEXT

CONTEXT

2.1 Site Location

The location of the proposed site is shown in RED.

Sited at the south area of town, connected to the town centre through main transport A4 road link. There are pedestrian routes to the town centre and the Taff River also. The proposed site situated next to the Leisure Centre is surrounded by other commercial facilities (Super-bowl, a hotel, Frankie and Benny's, McDonald's) that can make the area a family-friendly destination.



Skate Park proposed design_Merthyr Tydfil

2.2. Neighbourhood context

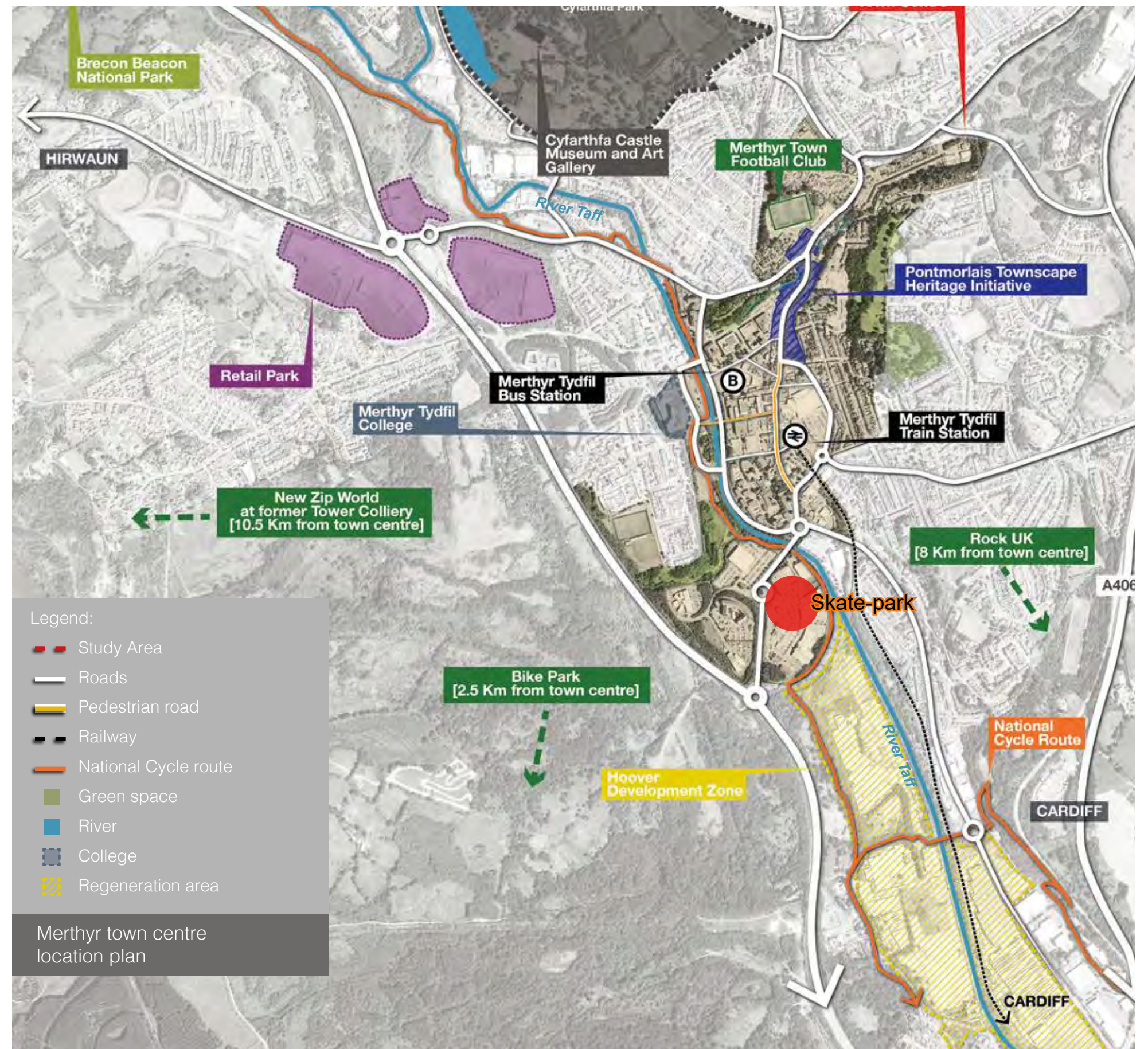
The Skate-park site is part of the redevelopment scheme of Merthyr Tydfil.

The masterplan is presenting the vision for the town for the next 15 years, a plan that has the potential to transform Merthyr and the role that it performs for the region.

...establishing a renown cultural and recreational tourist destination and a great place to live and visit.

The vision for Merthyr Tydfil is to create the place a destination. Leisure, tourism and destination lead developments are already happening and the future of the town can be confidently based around this as a theme.

The new Skate-park contributes to the town plan, making the south of the town a place where outdoor and sport activities are celebrated.



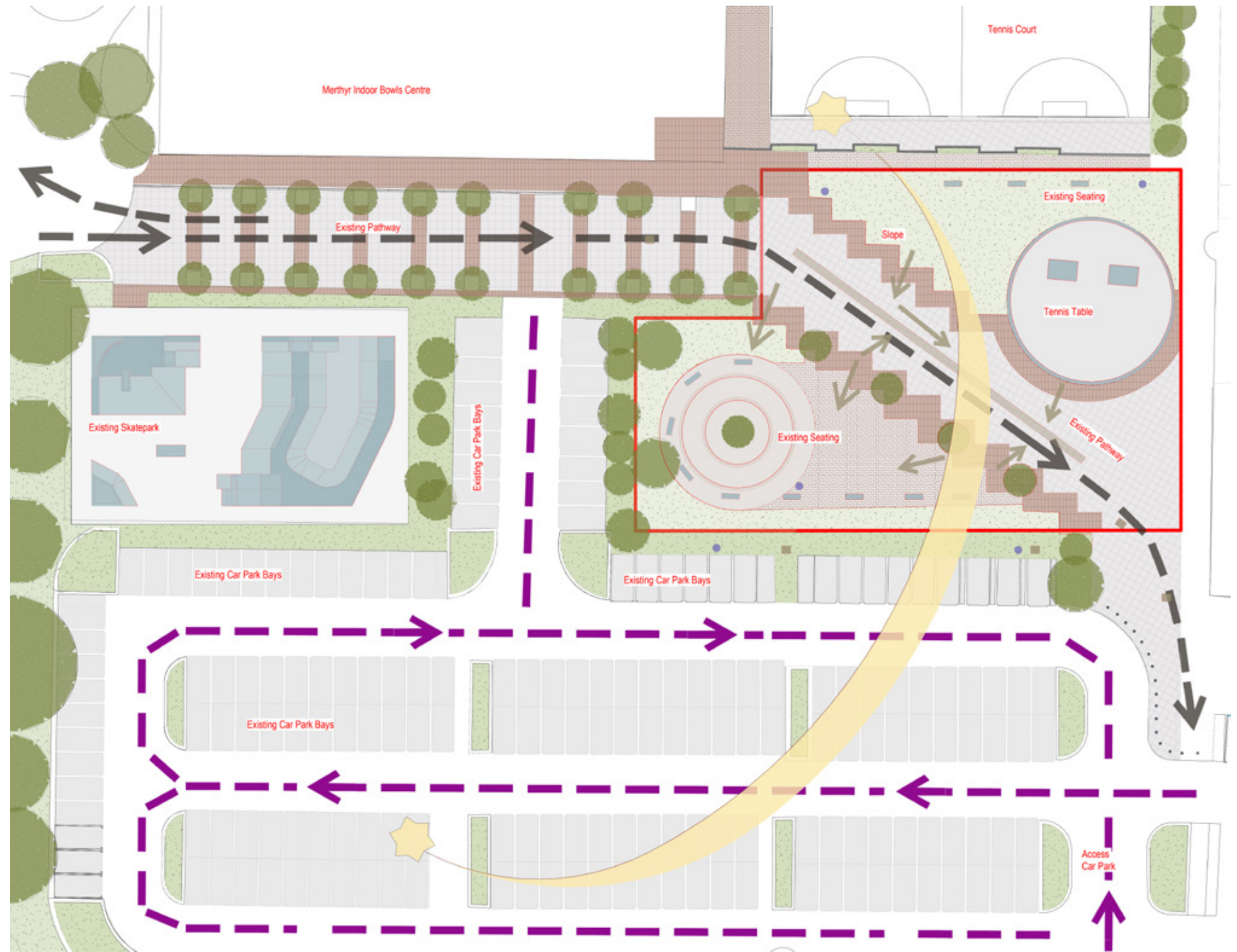
2.3 Site Appraisal

Existing Site

The site very gently rises East to the West.

The visible site services consist of telecoms service manholes in the grass verge to the car park edge. Another group of manholes are located just outside of the southern end of the path that bifurcates the proposed site. A long linear ACO drain runs down the centre of this path. This drainage aligns to these other manholes for drainage.

- Existing Skatepark
- Existing Trees
- Grass
- Existing Pathway
- Existing Seating
- Existing Car Park
- Access - Walking Path
- Access - Car Park
- Slopes
- ACO Drain - Surface Water
- Street Lights
- Existing Ballards
- Sun Path



Existing Site Analysis

Visual Assessment

The site is immediately bounded to the south by the Merthyr Tydfil Leisure centre building and main entrance, to the North the existing skate-park/parking and thoroughfare route to the town centre.

The Merthyr Tydfil Indoor Bowling Centre also is positioned adjacent to the route on the site boundary. To the West is the leisure centre park and site entrance and to the East are fenced ball sports courts. Both to the East and West in the distance are the surrounding hill. Those to the East have residential vantage points into the site over the fenced ball courts. These courts are floodlit.

The impact of the proposed lighting for this site will be seen as part of the existing car parking and ball game flood lit areas.



View of the proposed site looking North



View of the Leisure Centre site and building entrance



View of the proposed site and thoroughfare path entry point

2.4 Topography

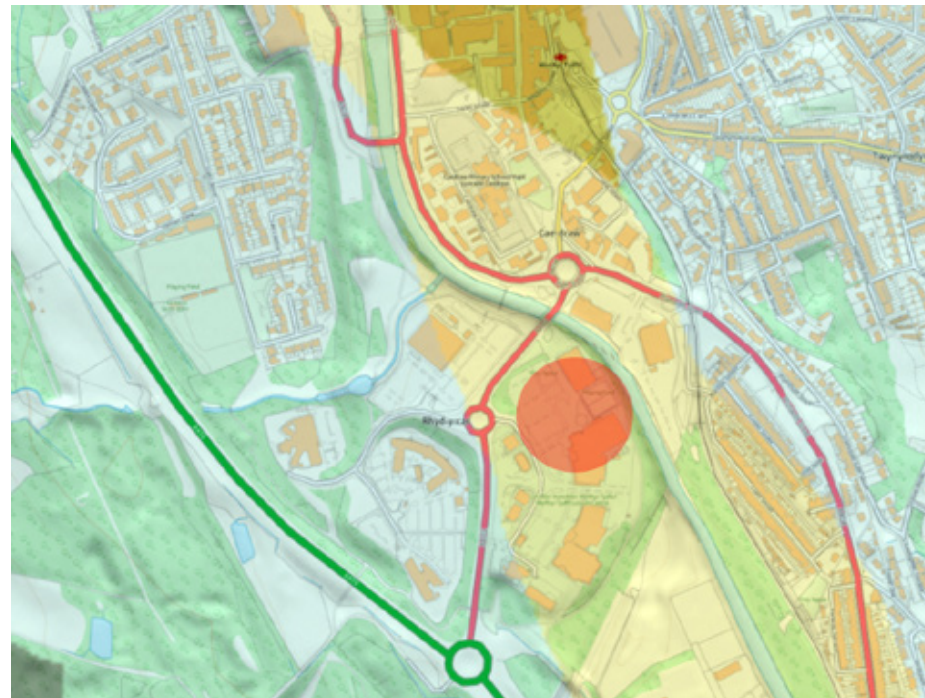
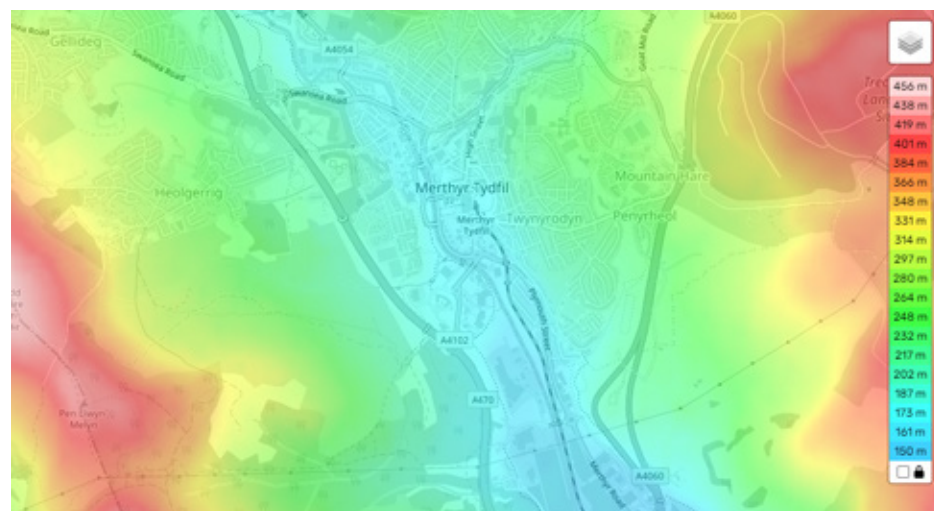
Merthyr Tydfil lies at the floor of the northern end of the Taff Valley, South Wales, approximately 30 kilometres to the north west of central Cardiff.

The town centre stands on the east bank of the River Taff within a deep valley landscape setting with steep rising valley sides to the East and North. Bannau Brycheiniog (The Brecon Beacons) National Park lies approximately 3 kilometres to the north of the town.

The density of the urban grain restricts views, with some prominent landmark buildings at Pontmorlais located on a ridge of higher ground giving prominence within the townscape.

Wider views to the surrounding mountainous landscape are obtained from open spaces and along streets. Geographically, the South Wales Valleys incorporates a large part of the southern-most uplands in Wales and is framed by the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) and Black Mountains to the north and the lowland vale landscapes to the south, east and west.

The site is within National Landscape Character Area 37 South Wales Valleys. This area is characterized by deep, urbanised valleys with extensive ribbon development which fills valley bottoms and lower slopes. Their urban and industrial character contrasts with the dramatic upland setting with steep hillsides, open moors and forests.



Geology Map

Source: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/>

Bedrock geology: South Wales Lower Coal Measures Formation - Sandstone. Sedimentary bedrock formed between 319 and 318 million years ago during the Carboniferous period.

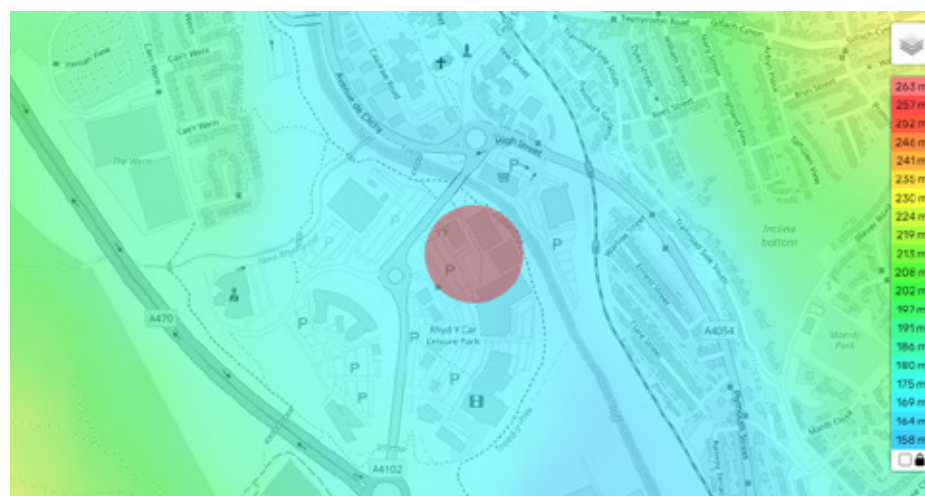
Grey, (productive) coal-bearing mudstones/siltstones, with seatearths and minor sandstones.

Superficial deposits: No superficial deposits recorded



Flood Risk Map

Source: <http://flood-map-for-planning.naturalresources.wales/River and Sea>



Skate Park Site - Location and Extent



PART 3

DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN PROCESS

3.1 Design Process

This proposal was based upon a previous feasibility design carried out for the existing site to reduce the existing. This feasibility design was adopted to fit the shape and size of the new site. As the new proposed site is more constrained than the previous, the feasibility design fits with the addition of an artificial grass bank to the edge of the skate structures.

This proposal will be further developed after the planning submission by a skate park specialist supplier. Any changes will be subject to a minor amendment of the planning submission.

3.2 Community Consultation

Plans for the development of the site have been shared with the public and stake-holders. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has been pro-actively engaging with local bodies and the general public. Visual presentation boards, including details of the planned works along with illustrative visualisations, have been displayed in town and comments from the general public have been actively encouraged and collected. To supplement the public engagement session, a press release with an accompanying questionnaire was posted on the MTCBC website and other social channels.

As part of the design process, a photo-realistic visualisation has been generated of the site in its entirety; as a visualisation tool this is far more accessible and easily understood by stake-holders.

3.3 Design Development

Through regular consultation and engagement sessions with MTCBC's Team and appropriate stake-holders, including:

South Wales Police
MTCBC Cabinet Planners (Formal Pre-App submission)

Following these consultations adjustment have been made. The comments from the police have been accommodated for as well as those from the local authority ecologist.

Comments from the public and in particular existing users have made suggestions that could be addressed by the specialist skate park supplier.



PART 4

DESIGN PROPOSAL

DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.1 Scope of Works

4.1.1 Enabling works - demolitions

Existing Skate Park Site

There are no planned works to this area within this application as due to safety reasons, MTCBC have had to remove the equipment from site prior to this application being sought.

4.1.2 Proposed Site - Enabling and Proposed Scope of work

Proposed Site

Demolition of the existing elements on the proposed site includes, removal of all the fittings i.e. benches, fences, table tennis equipment etc. The existing linear drainage is to be removed, which will be relaid to a new configuration.

Some of the existing paving setts will be retained for reuse. A proportion will not, as not in good condition. A number of the existing trees will also be retained and replanted along with additional trees. The existing lighting is to be retained, with additional lighting for the skate-park and public realm features.

The skating area will consist of a new bespoke concrete skate surface/ slopes/ features. The slopes terminate at their apex with artificial grass banks to it's entire elevated perimeter. The remainder of the site will be the public realm consisting of the reconfigured thoroughfare/ path, seating areas and tree/soft landscape areas.

The extents of demolition for this proposed site is shown by the red line on the following site plan demolition drawing.



Existing Skate Park site view looking North



Proposed site - existing public realm looking North



Proposed site - existing fenced play area looking South

Existing Site

The area for this development adjacent to the leisure centre is a flat hard landscaped public realm space, featuring a fenced flat tarmac play area with two tennis tables and seating, bifurcated by a thoroughfare paved path connecting the leisure centre entrance to the pedestrian route to the town centre. The entire public realm except for the table tennis area and perimeter grassed/planted borders is paved with permeable concrete and clay paving setts.



Tree 1



Tree 2



Tree 3



Tree 4



Tree 5

4.2 Proposed Site Proposals

Outline Specification

It is proposed that a sprayed concrete skate park replaces the existing facility.

The Proposals - Description and Scope of Work

The new sprayed concrete skate park structure will take up most of the site to the Northwest half divided by a new alignment of the reinstated thoroughfare path. The skate slopes rise to perimeter concrete shelves which are bounded by artificial grass 20% gradient slopes which intern lead onto flat grassed areas with shrub planting at perimeters.

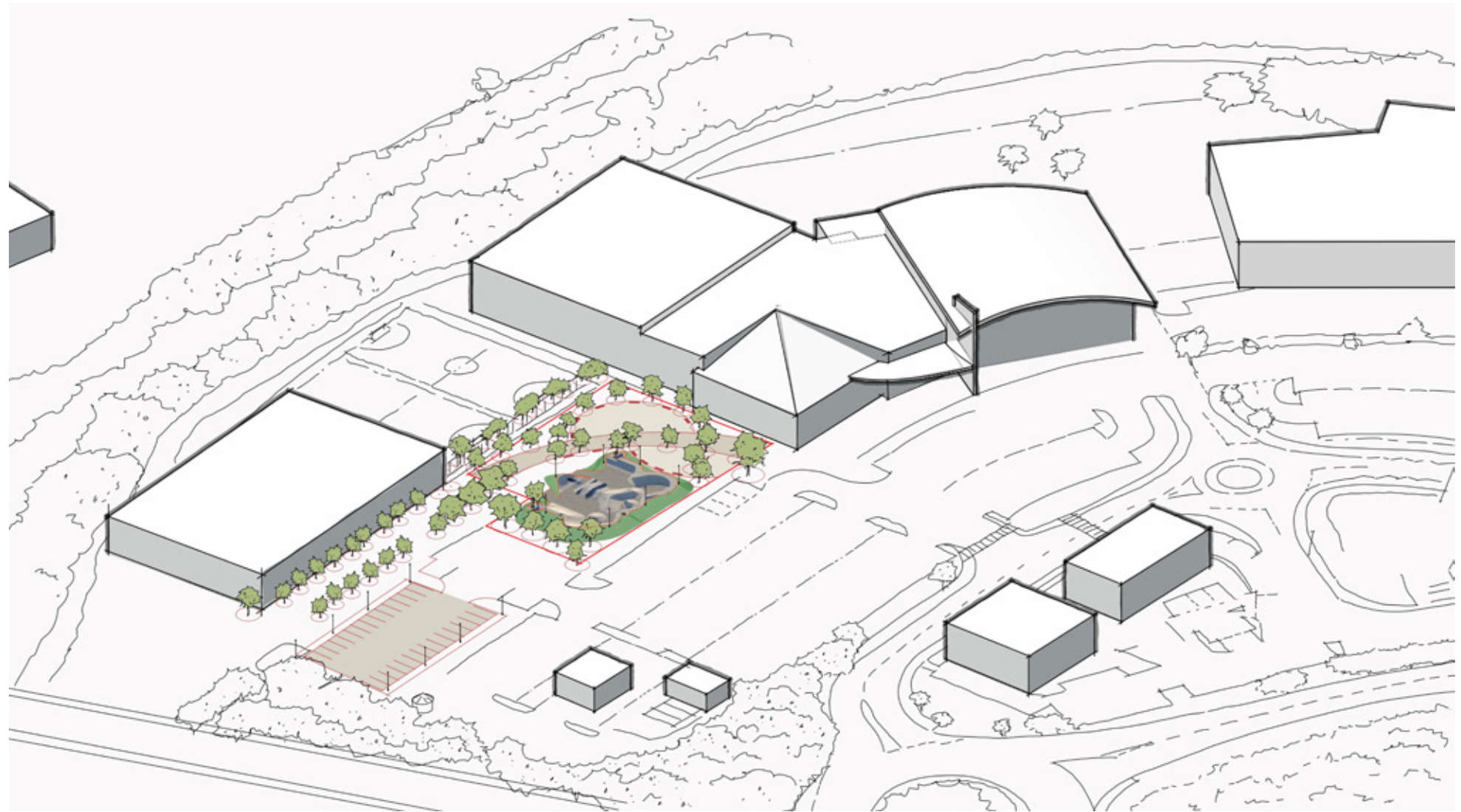
The existing 4 lamp post and lamps to be retained in full within the grass verges. One to be removed within the existing public realm. For budget costing it is suggested 8no. new 5m lamp standards and 10no LED bollard lights for the new public realm.

The hard standing and paths area outside of the skate-park concrete surface will be in permeable concrete/recon stone paving slabs.

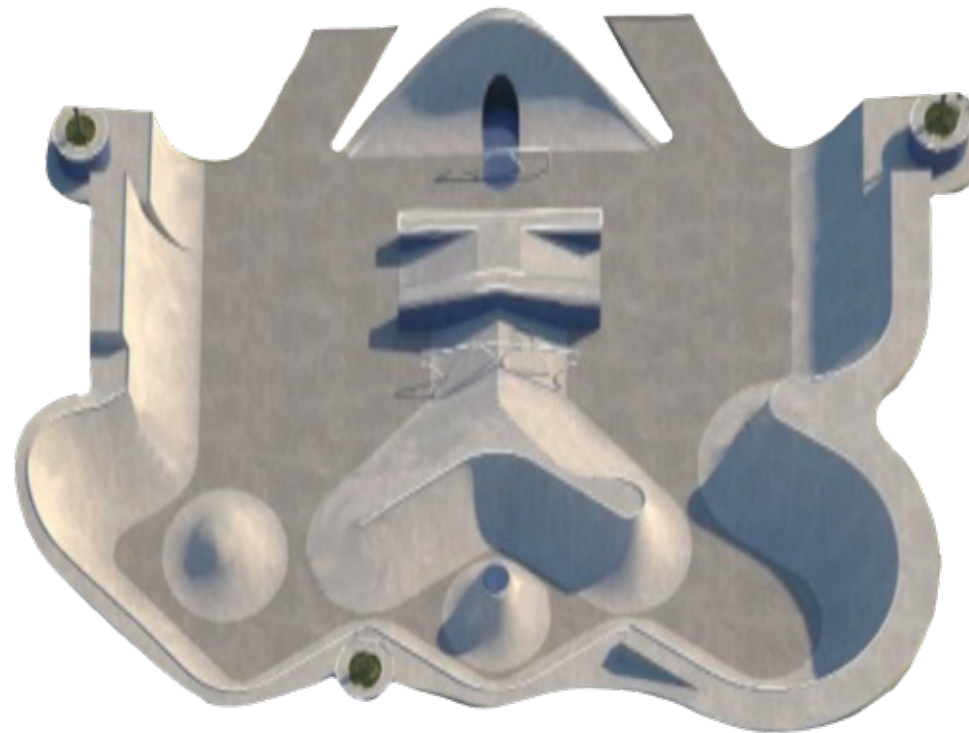
Both the new aligned thoroughfare path and skate park to be linked to the existing drainage system.

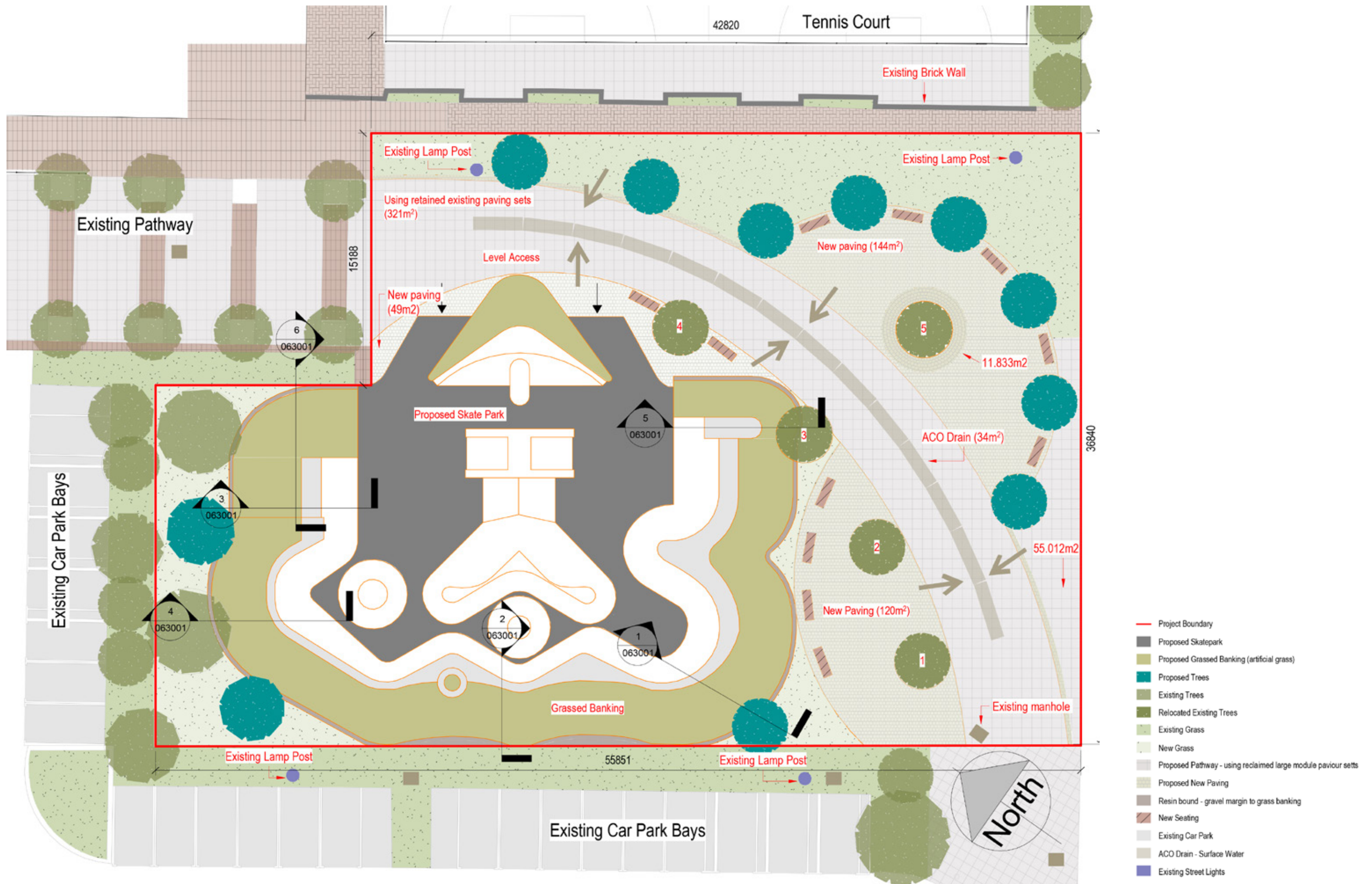
New trees shrub planting and grassed areas are proposed.

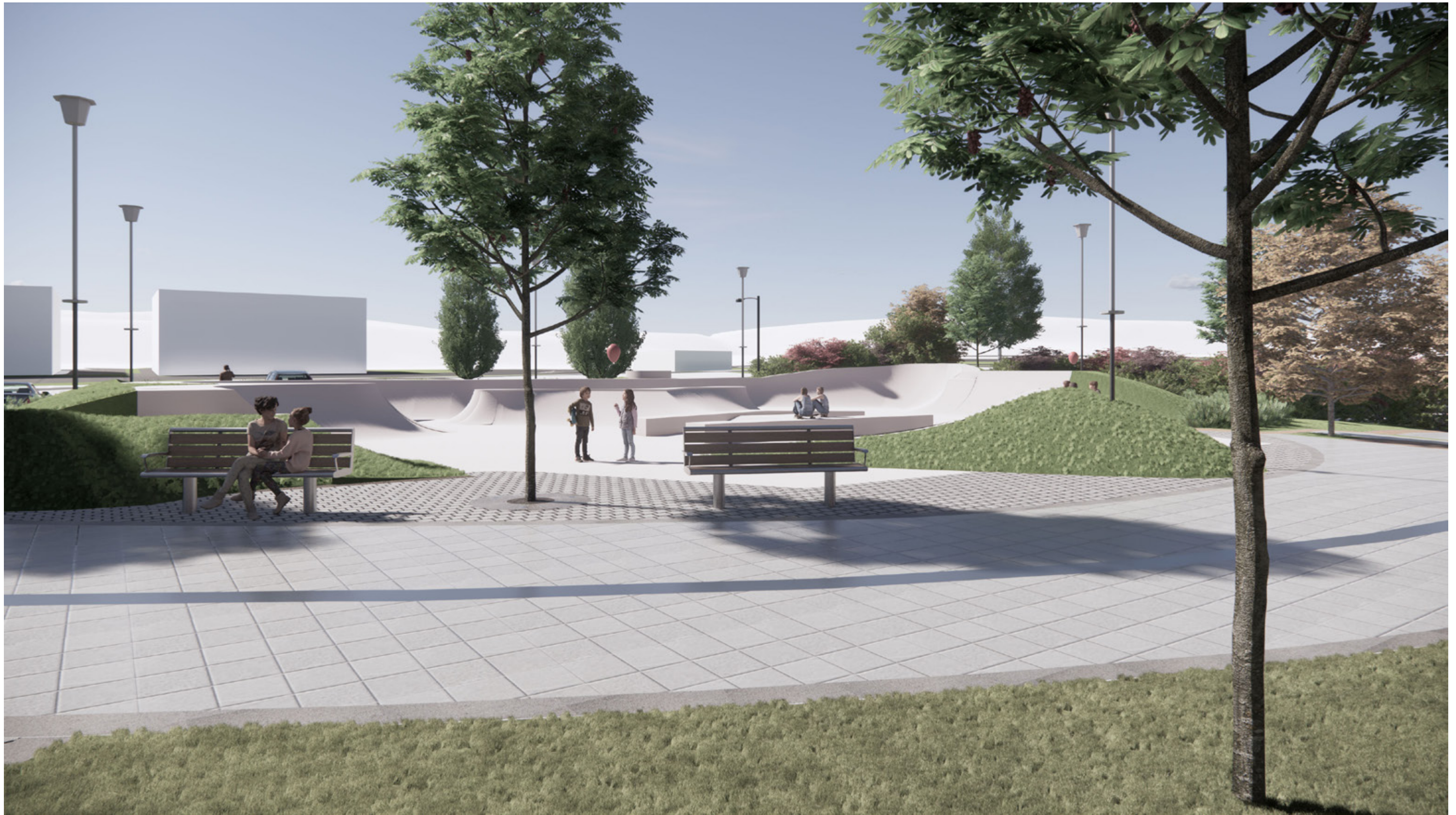
New benches, sign-age, and litter bins. CCTV coverage of the new site could be facilitated by the Leisure Centre CCTV system.



Proposed scheme aerial sketch



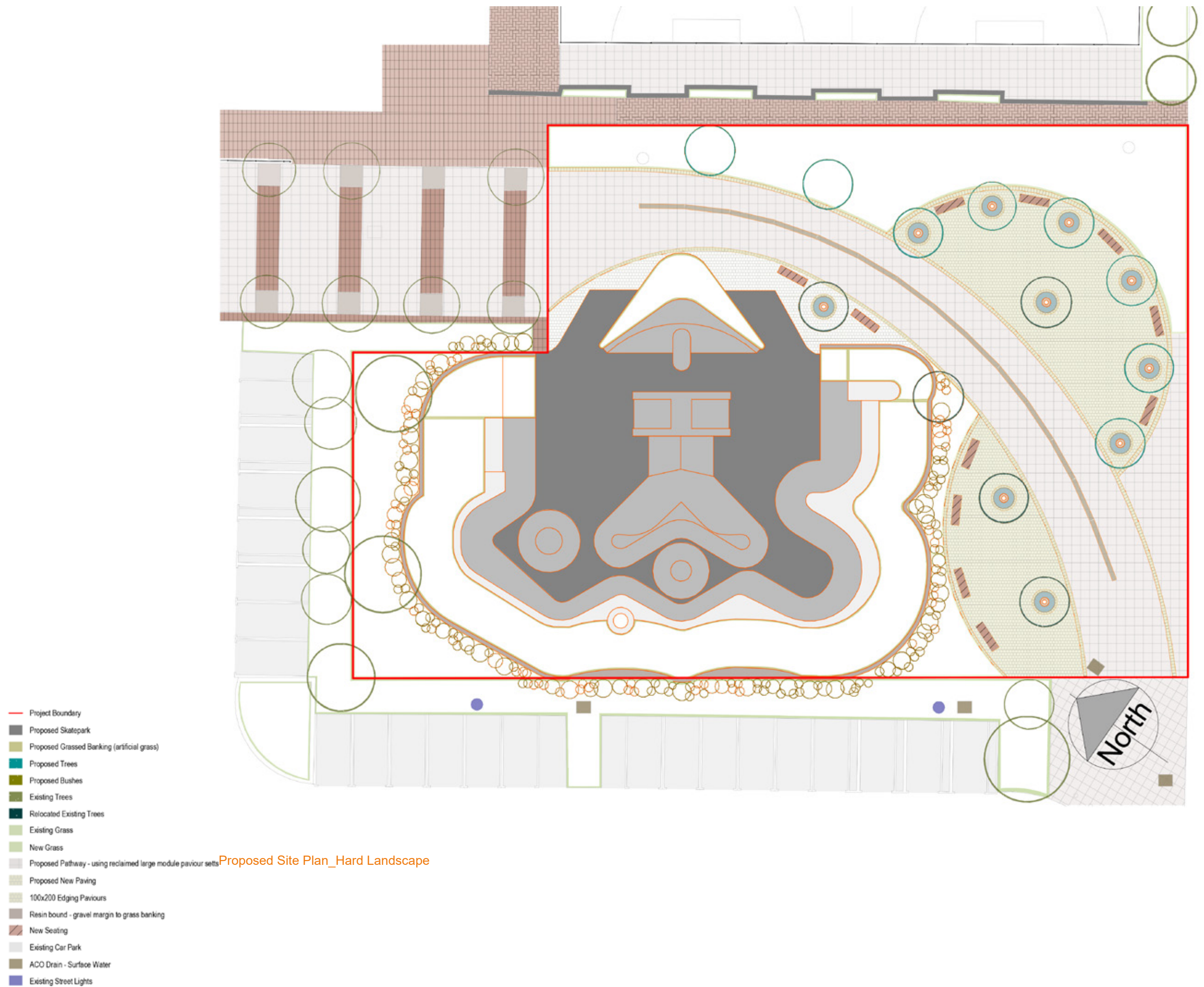


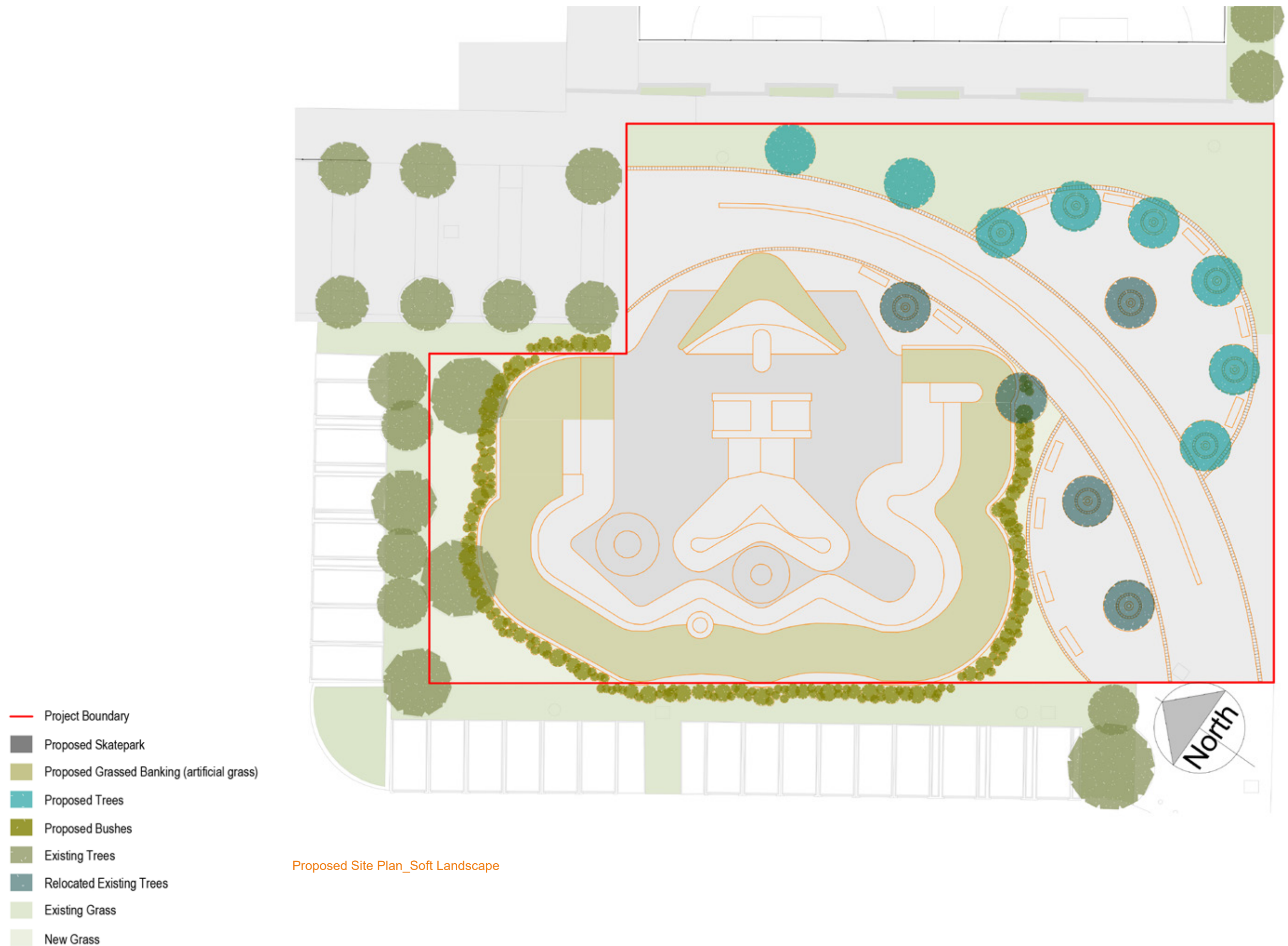


Proposed scheme perspective model view



Proposed scheme perspective model view



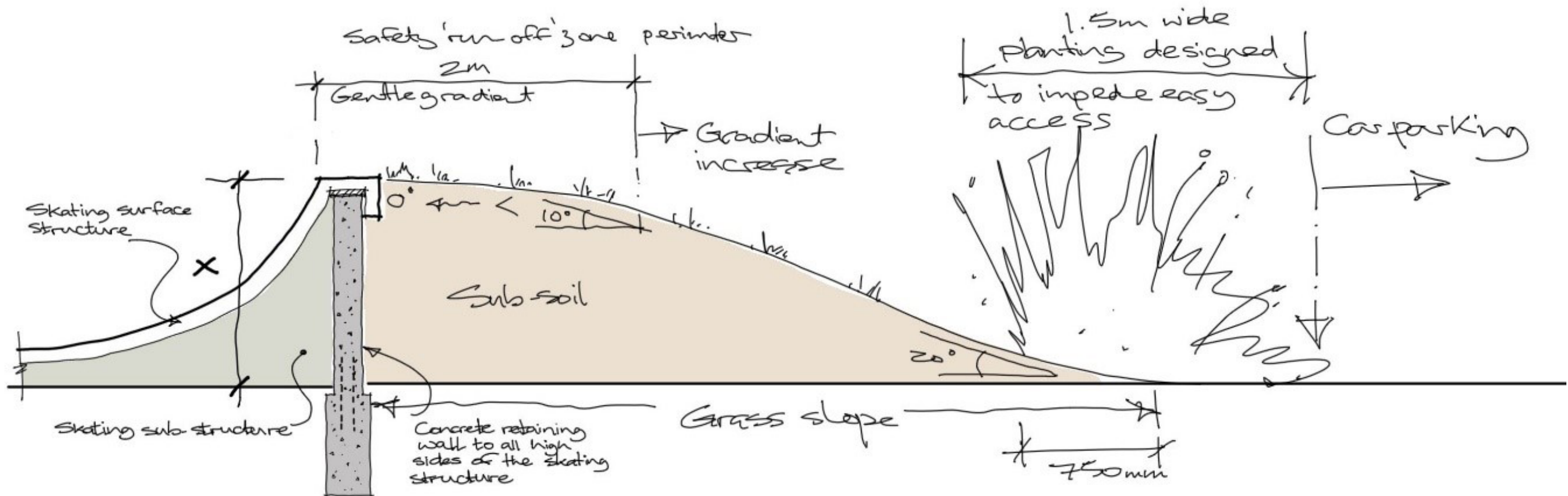


Proposed Site Plan_Soft Landscape

4.3 Run-off / Safety Zone

The facility has been designed to incorporate a safety zone of 2 meters beyond the perimeter of the skate park. This is to provide isolation from surround areas such as pedestrian walkways and the car-park. This safety zone will consist of artificial turfed ground and will be ramped up in a 'S' / sigmoid curve to meet raised perimeter ramps and rolling surfaces.

This safety zone reduces the risk from falling should an over-run occur by reducing the fall height off the back of perimeter ramp features and provides a softer impact surface. The safety zone must be clear on any obstructions that could cause an injury to a skate park user. This includes signposts, bollards, fencing or planting such as trees or sturdy shrubs.



Grass slope safety margin illustration

4.4 Landscaping and Fixtures

4.4.1 Planting

Planting will be incorporated around the perimeter of the skate park to direct users towards the main skate park entrance. This encourages them to engage with the sign-age and `rules of play` of the skate-park. It also reduces the risk of passers by cutting across the skate park or dog walkers using the turfed verges and safety barrier zone.

Following advice from the police consultation, all the proposed bed - planting will be low-level and not too dense.

4.4.2 Paving

Concrete paving to match in module size to the existing adjacent hard paved surface. A textured concrete surface will ensure a wet non-slip characteristic. The following image demonstrates the variation of pattern proposed in the new paved areas. (seating in this image not part of this project).

Existing paving setts are to be incorporated into areas adjacent to new paving areas.



Proposed paving - example

4.4.3 Fixtures

New park-benching is proposed for the new public realm hard paved areas. A single product specification will be adopted to unify this aspect of the scheme. It will also need to be robust and discourage misuse from skaters and rough sleeping.



Proposed benching - example



PART 5

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Environmental Impact

The sections following are a preliminary `desktop` commentary on the principal aspects of the environmental impact of this development.

5.2 Ecology

There will essentially be little change in the characteristic of the existing site except for a wider spread of lit surface in the new proposal. Any bat or bird fly-routes over the site should not be adversely affected as the new proposal is not dissimilar to the existing site condition. The lighting poles will be more numerous but will be specified to reduce light spill vertically and horizontally, mitigating disruption to flying mammals and birds.

5.3 Pollution

There will be no additional impacts on the immediate surroundings or water drainage system or ground infiltration. Any additional levels of site illumination will be localized, with light spill/glare mitigated against.

5.4 Noise

There will be no additional impacts on the immediate surroundings from the existing conditions found today. The existing skate park activity will be relocated 1000m south.

5.5 Drainage

The skate park will be designed with adequate slopes and drainage to prevent the accumulation of standing water on all rolling surface. Surfaces designed to be normally flat must have a drainage gradient of no greater than 2%. (1.15 or 1 in 50). All drainage covers and linear drains should be level and easily rolled over without presenting an obstacle to skate park users. Holes in covers should not exceed 8x8mm in size.

The wider public realm paved areas will feature semi-permeable paving with a linear ACO drain running in line with the proposed linking path bifurcating the proposed site.

5.6 Lighting

Lighting is an important consideration in the operation of a skate-park. A decision needs to be made by the client team as to if the facility is to be designed to be used after dusk or not. Lighting may be provided for general extended usage of the skate-park into and beyond dusk hours, or for use in special events that may be undertaken at the park.

If skate park lighting is provided for after dusk usage, it should provide uniform lighting across the upper and lower surface, whilst avoiding light spilling out into adjacent areas, glare, or contributing ecological light pollution.

The wider public realm areas within the proposed site will feature both new power efficient luminaries on lamp posts design to be reduce glare and light spill to the wider context, but also low-level bollard to the proposed path running through the site.

It is noted that adjacent areas to the North, East and West have flood lighting.

5.7 Signage

New sign-age is proposed to guide the public through the site on the retained thoroughfare route to the town centre from the leisure centre entrance area. Other sign-age will guide the use of the skate park facility.

5.8 Health and safety and due diligence

The design development of this project will properly consider the best practise in the design of open access skate parks. The mitigation of serious injury is central tenant of this design. There are inherent risks of injury in skate parks, but the adherence to industry standard design guidance, additionally robust operator protocols will be essential in these mitigations. Consultations with the local police authority, the client operators and commissioning stake holders have been undertaken to ensure the safety of the public.



PART 6

ACCESS STATEMENT

ACCESS STATEMENT

6.1 Access Overview

The site layout has been developed to facilitate convenient and safe access to all areas and for all site users, regardless of special accessibility requirements and familiarity with the site. The design proposal support good accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, together with those using cars. They conform to current legislative requirements and best practice guidance.

The new skate park will feature level access from the public realm paving onto the skating surface.

Access around and onto elevated portions of the skate park is segregated by dense perimeter shrub planting and artificial grass banking which has a gradient of 20 deg.

6.2 Parking and Public Transport

Vehicular access for service and maintenance, along with temporary parking is directed via the dedicated entrance through A4 main road; those aspects suffering no alteration due to the new scheme design intervention.

6.3 Pedestrian Access and Egress

The perimeter of the site is bounded with adjacent paved, areas; the existing walk-path adjacent to the current skate-park through the Merthyr Leisure Centre. The pedestrian route will be adjusted to the new design, which does not change the original start and end points of the thoroughfare the proposed site.

The proposed new paving pattern layout to the reconfigured thoroughfare route will employs a hierarchy of different materialities, colours and textural changes. This will define the path slope and edges. The skate park area is separated from the pedestrian route by hazard strip paving units, making the mitigated skaters existing the skate arena into the public path.

There are two pedestrian access points into the site; one at the Northern boundary and the other is at the South-western boundary. Both access points are level and well lit.

Access around the public realm will be levelled and subject to a maximum 1/40 gradient fall for surface water drainage.

6.4 Servicing and Loading

Planting, street furniture and surface finishes have been selected for their ease of maintenance. Products, where possible, are finished in their natural state, however, where necessary, applied finishes - such as paints - are to be resilient, requiring minimal annual upkeep.

Permitted service and maintenance vehicles will be able to pull up adjacent to the site pedestrian thoroughfare route, within the vehicular access route to the Leisure Centre main entrance area.

No vehicles will be permitted onto the site itself.

6.5 Inclusive Access

The proposal has been designed to be as family friendly and inclusive as possible within the constraints of this skate-park activity.

Interlinking foot-ways across the site are designed to ensure that all key destinations are accessible, and that any level changes comply with The Equality Act and Part M requirements for users with accessibility and mobility issues.

Surface materials have been specified to support user enjoyment of the space and to soften the environment but are suitably resilient and free from obstruction to ensure that the accessibility needs of all pedestrians are met.

All sign-age and lighting will comply with all standard for public accessible areas.

6.6 Conformance to Legislation

The Equality Act 2012 is an evolving piece of legislation which, given changes in expectation, case law and new technological advances will require service providers and employers to re-evaluate their premises and management procedures continually.

With many different activities taking place at different times of the day, Skate Park and Leisure Centre Area is a complex multi-use facility. With many demands made of it, by a wide constituency of users, it therefore needs to be flexible.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that statutory authorities should not only meet the requirements of The Act, but also promote equality. It is also recognised that requires all those who carry out a public function, on behalf of the authority, to fulfil this obligation. It is with this aspect in mind that the design proposal has been developed, not only regarding current regulatory requirements, but also future flexibility.

Currently there are no absolute technical criteria against which The Equality Act 2010 matters can be judged. As part of the detailed design process, we have meet key skate-holders, ensuring that accessibility needs have been fully explored and discussed and that all anticipated requirements addressed.

The design of the whole site will aim to meet the current statutory requirements of Building Regulations Part M and will reflect good practice guidance within and regulatory documents have been used in the development of the design proposals.

- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **Approved Documents Part M of the Building Regulations**
- **BS 8300:2010 Design of Buildings and Their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People - Code of Practice**
- **Department of Transport - Inclusive Mobility**
- **Planning and Access for Disabled People**
- **Colour and Contrast: A design Guide for the Use of Colour and Contrast to improve the Built Environment for Visually Impaired People**



PART 7

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

- A. Pre App Report
- B. Police Report
- C. Public Consultation Report
- D. Design Safety Report

A. Pre App Report

Judith Jones BA (Hons), BTP, MRTPI
Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdogaeth
Director of Neighbourhood Services

Unit 5, Parc Fusness Triangl, Pentrebach,
Merthyr Tudful, CF48 4TQ

Unit 5, Triangle Business Park, Pentrebach,
Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TQ

Ffôn/Tel: (01685) 725000

Ffacs/Fax: (01685) 374397

www.merthyr.gov.uk

Croesawn alwadau yn y Gymraeg
We welcome calls in Welsh



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Mr Michael Speechly
Via Email: Michael.Speechly@capita.com

Dyddiad/Date: 18.05.2022

Ein Cyf./Our ref.: PA/22/0018

Eich Cyf./Your ref.:

Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Caroline Pulley

Llinell Uniongyrchol/Direct Line: 01685 726200

e-bost/e-mail: Caroline.pulley@merthyr.gov.uk

Dear Mr Speechly,

RE: PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY FOR A REPLACEMENT SKATE PARK FACILITY ADJACENT TO MERTHYR TYDFIL LEISURE CENTRE

I refer to your correspondence registered by the authority on the 20th April 2022 concerning the above and your request for pre-application advice.

Having considered the nature of the submission I can respond as follows.

Relevant Planning History

The recent history relating to the site is as follows:

P/08/0100 – Section 73 application for the variation of condition 9 of planning permission P/06/0242 (relating to the clearance of vegetation) – Approved 12.06.2008

P/07/0240 - Erection of sports and leisure centre building, ten pin bowling, cinema and restaurant building and construction of associated site access, car parking and other site works – Reserved Matters approval – 15.06.2007

P/06/0633 - Erection of new building comprising ten pin bowling suite, 9 screen cinema and restaurant, and associated car parking and site infrastructure – Full approval – 19.01.2007

P/06/0585 – Demolition of existing leisure centre, erection of new sports and leisure centre building with associated site access roads, service facilities, car parking and pedestrian routes, including site infrastructure for further development – Full approval – 22.12.2006

Merthyr Tudful
... lle i fod yn falch ohono

Croesawn ehebu yn Gymraeg a Tydd gobeu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhwng wybod hwn both yr'ch dewis i'w hysbysu neu'n ddwyieithog.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.

Merthyr Tydfil
... a place to be proud of

P/06/0242 – Development of new leisure centre, bowls club, hotel, backpackers hotel, cinema, 10 pin bowling complex, pub, restaurant and residential units (maximum of 30 units) – Outline approval – 21.08.2006

P/04/0631 – Development of new leisure centre, bowls club and associated landscaping, cinema, hotels, family pub and sandwich bar – Outline Approval 18.05.2005

Relevant Policies and Guidance

In addition to national guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales, any future application would be considered against the Policies within the adopted Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan, details of which are available on the Council's website by visiting:

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/>

The relevant policies would include:

- Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
- Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- Policy CW1: Historic Environment
- Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitat and Species.
- Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection

The following supplementary planning guidance (SPG) is also applicable:

- SPG4 – Sustainable Design
- SPG5 – Nature and Development

Summary of the acceptability of the proposal

The site comprises an existing skate park and an area of public realm located to the front of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre. The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing skate park and provide a replacement facility with new planting on a flat hard landscaped area of public realm adjacent to the front of the leisure centre. Apart from measures needed to remove the skate park structure, there is no information regarding the future proposals/remediation measures for the existing skate park site. Details of the proposals for the existing site will need to be provided with the planning application and the land comprising the existing skate park will need be included within the planning application boundary (i.e. the red line). The LPA will be seeking to ensure that the existing skate park site is not left in an abandoned state and appropriate remediation measures are provided to successfully incorporate this area of land in the public realm or the surrounding area.

Turning to the proposed skate park facility, the policies contained within the LDP generally support the development. Under Policy SW10 of the LDP, the land is protected as open space and development proposals that improve the quality, quantity or access to this space will generally be supported. In this respect, the Council's Landscape Architect has highlighted that the site has been in receipt of substantial sums of investment over a number of years. While no principle objection has been raised to the relocation of the skate park facility, the Council's Landscape Architect suggests that it would be advisable that as much of the existing materials on the site (both hard and soft), are re-used and incorporated within the new proposals. In particular, he draws attention to the trees that contribute enormously to the character of the space. These trees would be vulnerable to damage during the construction/demolition phase and will require relocation and intermediate aftercare dependant on the timing of the operations. Additionally,

he highlights that there is a single Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*), which should be provided within a prominent position when incorporated into the new design. The details of the new and replacement planting will need to be included within a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site, which will need to be accompanied by a tree survey and a tree protection plan. The entire scheme will also require a management plan for a time period of 5 years.

Any replacement trees will need to be a high specification and semi-mature (as defined by the Horticultural trades association). Appropriate species successful for use in the local situation would be *Carpinus betula* (for continuity with the existing planting), other successful species would be *Tilia cordata cvs.* and *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'. The proposed grass areas will require establishment as perennial wildflower meadow areas. The attendant maintenance of which shall be specified within the planning application submission. The proposed seating should be simple, single bench type seat constructed of seasoned hardwood or cedar.

In terms of the skate structure, in the absence of elevation plans or sections details, the height and full scale of the structure is unknown at this stage. As such, it is difficult to make a full assessment of the visual impact of this part of the development. The proposals contain, what appear to be, some steep grass banks surrounding the proposed skate park. Clarification will be required as to the steepness of the slope, treatment and subsequent aftercare. It is assumed from the details provided on the pre-application enquiry form and within the proposal report that the slopes would be finished with artificial grass. This is considered acceptable subject to the colour and quality of the artificial grass being agreed prior to construction. If the slopes were to be seeded, careful consideration would be required as to how the subsequent treatment of these is likely to work in terms of maintaining a tidy appearance. Details of the proposed fencing, lighting and paving will also need to be provided.

Highway safety

Turning to the highway safety implications of such a scheme, based on the level of information that is available to us, the Council's Head of Engineering has not raised any principle objections at this stage. However, it is highlighted that the development will require a separate SAB (Drainage Approval Body) application to the SuDs approval body. For more information on this application, please contact Huw Williams (07568 100588).

Ecology

I have attached the comments from the Council's Ecologist which are hopefully self-explanatory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the principle of developing the site and providing a replacement skate park is acceptable and is supported by the LDP. However, a full assessment of the entire scheme will need to be undertaken following the submission of full details of the proposal, which includes details of the plans for the existing site, proposed sections and a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

The above advice is provided at officer level and would therefore not prejudice any decision that may be made in the future by the Council.

Required Information

Should you decide to submit a planning application based on this pre-application enquiry, please note that the following information would be required:

- Two copies of a completed application form (this can be found on the Council's website: www.merthyr.gov.uk)
- Two copies of an up to date 1:1250 location plan which clearly outlines the site in red and the direction of north

- Two copies of an existing and proposed block plan, to scale (i.e. 1:500 or 1:200) accurately showing the development in relation to the existing buildings, boundaries, roads etc.
- Two copies of proposed elevation and floor plans to a scale of 1:50 or 1:100.
- A comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site.
- Topographical survey and existing and proposed cross sections.
- Required planning fee

It is also recommended to applicants that detailed information is submitted at the application stage to ensure that, in the event of planning permission being granted, that 'pre-commencement' conditions (which require approval of details prior to work starting on site) can be minimised. You are therefore encouraged to ensure that your initial submission incorporates as much information as possible (for example materials, details of obscure glazing), and address all matters raised in the advice given above.

I trust the above information is of assistance. However, I must note the advice given in this response represents an informal opinion, provided in accordance with the Council's Planning Pre-Application Service. In particular, it is emphasised that while this pre-application advice will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on an application, the final decision on any application that you may make can only be taken after we have consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested party. It does not therefore prejudice any decision which the Local Planning Authority may make should an application be submitted.

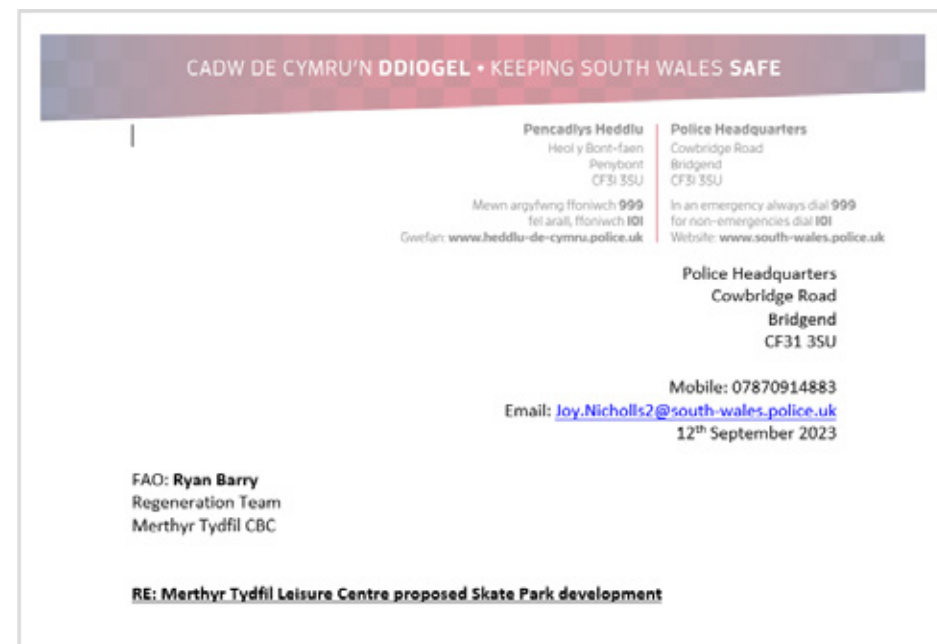
Yours sincerely,



MISS J JONES

CYFARWYDDWR GWASANAETHAU CYMDOGAETH/DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

B. Police Report



South Wales Police has no objection to the application, however, it is imperative that the proposed design must be safe, secure and accessible. Here are a few recommendations:

Lighting – reason: to enhance community safety

- * lighting around skate park must be effective and complement CCTV
- * bollard lighting should only be considered for decorative purposes as they do not provide facial illumination

Boundary Identification – reason: define the boundary of the skate-park for users and provide protection against any possible hostile vehicle attack

- * Insert a shallow entry 'V' ditch on the approach side of the bund/bank
- * New paving should be of a kind that would make using skateboard very difficult - ensuring that the users skate only within the skate-park itself
- * Extend the grassed area at both entrances to the skate park – to prevent anyone skating onto the footpath and colliding with pedestrians
- * Insert areas of cobbled stone (or other type of paving) within the main footpath – preventing skating on the main path
- * Vehicle mitigation should be inserted into the gaps between the bollards at the main entrance – prevent vehicles driving up to the main doors

Landscaping and planting - reason: to enhance community safety

- * Overgrown shrubs and other thick barriers must be avoided in close proximity to public areas
- * Planting must not obstruct any CCTV
- * Landscape features must not create hiding/entrapment spaces, obscure sign-age and lighting or provide a potential climbing aid into properties
- * Growth rates, height and spread should be taken into account as well as a maintenance plan for the planting scheme

Seating Areas – reason: to help prevent loitering, ASB and rough sleeping

- * Reduce the number of benches (due to the level of ASB at this location) – prevent loiter in the area and antisocial behaviour
- * Consider single seating and curved, uneven benches – prevent rough sleeping
- * All seating should be covered by CCTV

CCTV – reason: to reduce opportunity for crime and disorder

- * The whole skate-park should be covered by CCTV
- * Sign-age should accompany any CCTV – act as a deterrent against crime and anti-social behaviour

C. Public Consultation Report

1. Do you like the design of the new skate park?

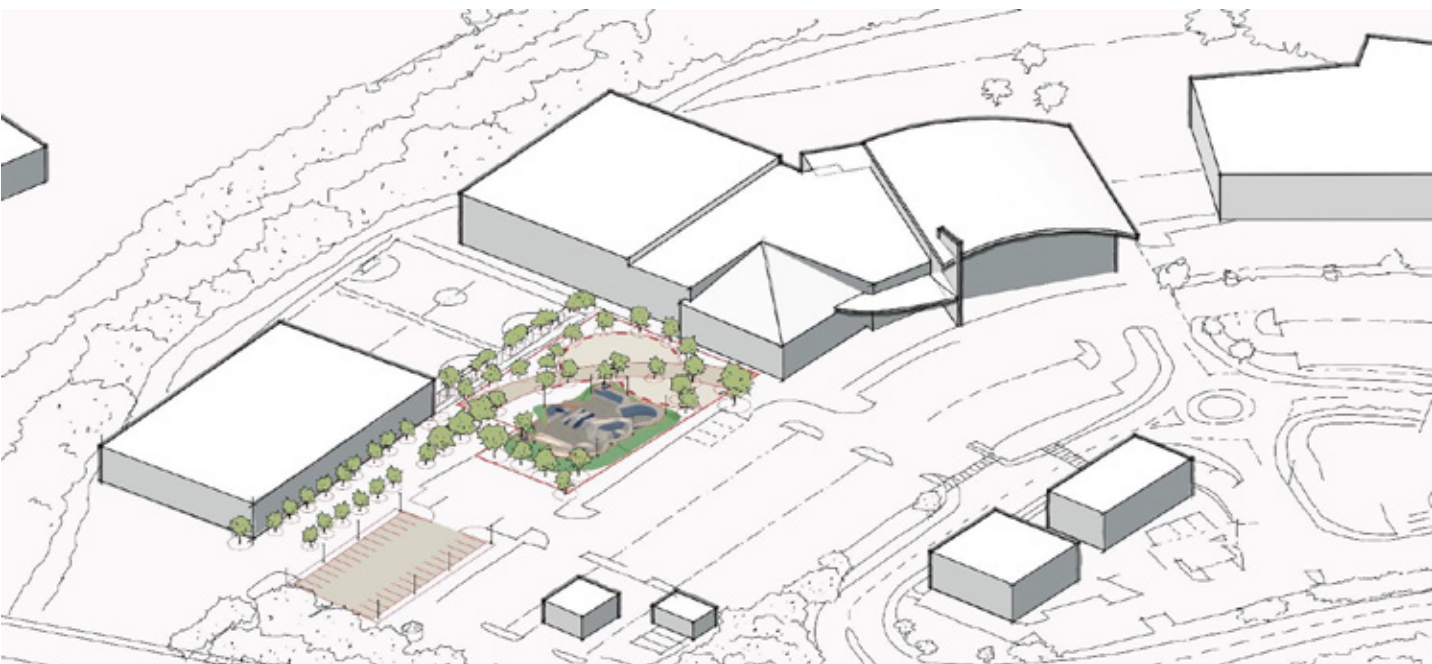
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		59.33%	89
2	No		40.67%	61
			answered	150
			skipped	0

2. Do you prefer the proposed skate park's new location, situated closer to the leisure centre?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		50.00%	75
2	No		36.67%	55
3	I don't know		13.33%	20
			answered	150
			skipped	0

3. With the proposed new location next to the leisure centre, do you think that the skate park will be used by more people?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		44.00%	66
2	No		36.67%	55
3	I don't know		19.33%	29
			answered	150
			skipped	0



Merthyr Skate Park

Design Safety Report
175-WSP-ZZ-XX-RP-A-001

Prepared by Percy Thomas Architect
WSP (Real Estate and Infrastructure) Limited

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1.0 Document Control

Project Number	ED 000175
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Document Name	Design Safety Report
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Revision	P02
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Classification	

1.1 Document Revisions

Revision	Amendments	Issue Date	Auth/ Chk/ App
P01	First Issue	24-03-22	RR/ MS/ MT
P02	Client issue	28-03-22	RR/ MS/ MT

1.2 Executive Summary

This due diligence report outlines the health and safety issues and guidance for the design development of this new skate park. This new skate park is intended as an open access public realm facility which will require due consideration for public safety to mitigate any liabilities on the part of the operator and consultants delivering this project.

1.3 Disclaimer

General Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Percy Thomas Architecture, a brand of WSP (Real Estate & Infrastructure) Limited (“WSP”) in favour of [Merthyr Tydfil Borough Town Council] (“the Client”) and is for the sole use and benefit of the Client in accordance with the agreement between the Client and WSP under which WSP’s services were performed. Other than in respect of liability which cannot be excluded by law, WSP accepts no liability to any other party in respect of the contents of this report. This report is confidential and may not be relied on by any other party without the express prior written consent of WSP.

Whilst care has been taken in the construction of this report, the conclusions, and recommendations which it contains are based upon information available and standards applicable at the time the report was created and may include information provided by third parties (“Third Party Information”). WSP has for the purposes of this report relied upon and assumed that the Third-Party Information is accurate and complete and has not independently verified such information for the purposes of this report. WSP makes no representation, warranty or undertaking (express or implied) in the context of the Third-Party Information and no responsibility is taken or accepted by WSP for the adequacy, completeness, or accuracy of the report in the context of the Third-Party Information on which it is based.

Freedom of Information

WSP understands and acknowledges the Authority’s legal obligations and responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “Act”) and fully appreciates that the Authority may be required under the terms of the Act to disclose any information which it holds. WSP maintains that the report contains commercially sensitive information that could be prejudicial to the commercial interests of the parties. On this basis WSP believes that the report should attract exemption from disclosure, at least in the first instance, under Sections 41 and/or 43 of the Act. WSP accepts that the damage which it would suffer in the event of disclosure of certain of the confidential information would, to some extent, reduce with the passage of time and therefore proposes that any disclosure (pursuant to the Act) of the confidential information contained in this report should be restricted until after the expiry of 24 months from the date of this report.

2.0 Introduction

This due diligence report outlines the health and safety issues and guidance for the design development of this new skate park. This new skate park is intended as an open access public realm facility which will require due consideration for public safety to mitigate any liabilities on the part of the operator and consultants delivering this project.

Any skating activity has inherent risks of physical injury mainly to those skating and to a lesser extent any adjacent spectators within the skating area. Design guidance listed in this report follows best practice to mitigate these risks of injury and hazards associated with its use.

Consideration within the design is required to protect the users and public from undue harm for those areas that are not directly within the remit of these guides. Curtailing easy access by young children and domestic animals without the use of fencing is a challenge in keeping with the 'open' nature of the development. Dense site perimeter shrub planting and artificial grassed gently gradient perimeter banks will be incorporated into the design to discourage/signal such easy access to the higher skating slopes.

Good lighting and drainage will also be a consideration that will impact on the safe use of the skate park and adjacent public realm areas.

CCTV covering the proposed area should also be a consideration.

3.0 Health and Safety and Due Diligence

Skateparks by nature are considered high-risk play areas in which accidents will occur. As such, it is important to mitigate risks to users and passers-by in the design of the facility whilst also considering the residual health and safety risks. It will be incumbent on the skate park operator to manage these operational and maintenance risk post completion of the skate park (Failure to do so could result in litigation and negligence claims against the operator).

Note, this section should be read in conjunction with the Construction Design and Management Risk Registers for the project which identify project specific risks, residual risks and mitigating measures.

3.1 Skate Park Demographic and Common Injuries

Before looking at measures to be adopted, we should consider the demographics of users and types of injuries commonly sustained in skateboarding, BMX cycling and inline skating as this helps focus on health and safety items that need addressing

- Most users are male and typically under the age of 16,
- Death in skateboarding and associated sports such as BMX cycling is thankfully rare and mostly caused by collision with motor vehicles,
- Injuries such as broken wrists, ankles and long bones are a common form of injury,
- Head injuries are of significant relevance, accounting for around 20% of reported injuries, they include amongst other injuries, skull fracture, concussions, and blunt trauma,
- Approximately third of injuries are reported to be amongst users new to the sport; with less than 1 week experience.
- Skaters under 10 are of note as they will have underdeveloped motor co-ordination and a higher centre of gravity due to the size of their heads in proportion to their bodies. This results in more frequent head injuries.
- Most injuries can be avoided using protective equipment such as helmets, wrist guards, elbow, and knee pads. However, many skaters are reluctant to use protective equipment due to stigma from peers relating to image.

3.1.1 Community Outreach

While design of a safe facility is important, due to the nature of the sports, injuries are still likely if personal protective equipment is not worn by users. Consideration should be given if to involve prominent local skatepark users and groups in the design and operation of the skate park and if it schemes can be put in place to encourage the wearing of personal protective equipment. Setting up schemes where experienced users show new users how to fall 'safely' and the benefits of using protective equipment can reduce the risk of injury from falling and encourage usage of protective equipment.

3.2 Skate Park Guidance

Particular attention must be paid to the following design, operational and maintenance guidance relevant to skate parks:

- BS EN 14974:2019 Skateparks – Safety requirements and test methods.
- BS EN 1176-1:2017 Playground equipment and surfacing. Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods

- BS EN 1176-7:2020 Playground equipment and surfacing. Part 7: Guidance on installation, inspection, maintenance, and operation.
- BS EN 12193:2018 Light and lighting - Sports lighting

Of the above standard BS EN 14974:2019 is directly relevant to skate parks concerning materials specification, fastenings, safety requirements, testing, markings, inspection and maintenance and signage amongst other areas. The skate park will be designed to the requirements of this European harmonised British Standard.

3.3 Skate Park rolling surface

The skate park rolling surfaces will be constructed out of sprayed concrete, hand finished to smooth curves and transitions. This concrete should have a minimum strength designation of C35/45 to EN 1992-1-1 (Eurocode 2) and should comply with EN 206 and EN 14487. Advice on applied loadings to rolling surfaces is given in BS EN 14974

Consideration should be given to if surface hardening and waterproofing techniques should be employed to improve the wear resistant characteristics and long-term durability of the rolling surface, however any techniques or coatings that would reduce the slip resistance of the surface should be avoided to reduce any increased risk of injury due to slipping. Wear polishing of the surface over repeat usage and time should also be considered and reduced if possible.

The rolling surface must be clear of any obstructions such as signpost, bins or other site features that could present a hazard to skatepark users.

3.4 Rails, Copings, and Grinding surfaces

Rails, copings, and grind surfaces should be designed in accordance with the requirements of BS EN 14974. They shall be corrosion and wear resistant, ends should be sealed, joints should be interlocking and smooth (without gaps or changes in level) and without sharp edges. They should be securely fixed to the skatepark elements.

3.5 Fasteners

Any exposed fasteners must be designed and laid out in such a way that they do not present an obstacle or safety hazard to the skate park users themselves. Metal Fasteners should be corrosion resistant for long term durability and be without sharp edges. Baseplates should project less than 100mm on all edges. Fasteners should not be able to be undone without tools, to prevent the risk of vandalization or metal theft. Root fixing of elements such as rails should be considered as an alternative to baseplates if the baseplate could present a hazard to skate park users or if metal theft is a strong possibility.

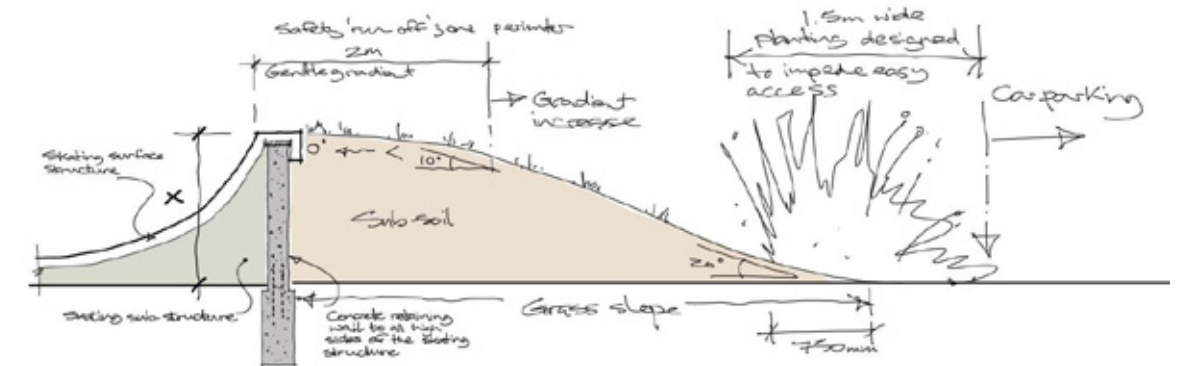
3.6 Drainage

The skate park must be designed with adequate slope and drainage to prevent the accumulation of standing water on all rolling surfaces. Surfaces designed to be nominally flat must have a drainage gradient of no greater than 2%. (1.15° or 1 in 50). All drainage covers and linear drains should be level and easily rolled over without presenting an obstacle to skate park users. Holes in covers should not exceed 8 x 8mm in size.

3.7 Run-off/ Safety Zone

The facility has been designed to incorporate a safety zone of 2 meters beyond the perimeter of the skate park. This is to provide isolation from surround areas such as pedestrian walkways and the carpark. This safety zone will consist of turfed ground and will be ramped up in a 'S' / sigmoid curve to meet raised perimeter ramps and rolling surfaces.

Figure 1 Grass slope safety margin illustration



This safety zone reduces the risk from falling should an over-run occur by reducing the fall height off the back of perimeter ramp features and provides a softer impact surface. The safety zone must be clear of any obstructions that could cause an injury to a skate park user. This includes signposts, bollards, fencing or planting such as trees or sturdy shrubs.

3.8 Planting

Planting will be incorporated around the perimeter of the skate park to direct users towards the main skate park entrance. This encourages them to engage with the signage and 'rules of play' of the skatepark. It also reduces the risk of passers by cutting across the skate park or dog walkers using the turfed verges and safety barrier zone.

Only soft planting which does not present a safety hazard to skate park users should be specified in the 2m safety zone. Broad leaf deciduous shrubs or trees planting in proximity of the skate park, or its safety margin should be avoided to reduce the amount of leaf litter and branches blown into the skate park.

3.9 Lighting

Lighting is an important consideration in the operation of a skatepark. A decision needs to be made by the client team as to if the facility is to be designed to be used after dusk or not. Lighting may be provided for general extended usage of the skatepark into and beyond dusk hours, or for use in special events that may be undertaken at the park.

If the skatepark is not intended to be used after dusk hours it is important to consider unintended consequences of lighting that will be provided around the skatepark for security, road, and foot path general illumination. This may provide a low level of illumination that due to the open nature of the skatepark could encourage users to utilise the park after dusk. However, the level of lighting provided would likely be insufficient and non-uniform in nature and therefore would not allow for the safe usage of the facility. It must be clearly identified in the rules of play on signage around the facility that the park is not intended or safe for use after dusk.

If skate park lighting is provided for during and after dusk usage, it must be designed by an electrical engineer and/ or lighting designer in accordance with BS EN 12193:2018 and the requirements of Table A29 within. It should provide uniform lighting across the upper and lower surfaces, whilst avoiding light spilling out into adjacent areas, glare, or contributing ecological light pollution.

3.10 Signage

BS EN 1176-7 and BS EN 14974 advises that a clearly visible signage should be provided at the entrance of the skate park giving:

- an emergency telephone number,
- a number for reporting maintenance issues, identifying the administrator,
- the name and address of the skatepark,
- 'Rules of Play' including:
 - identifying that the facility is not a playground, its use is for adults, teenagers, and children above the age of 8.
 - identifying that the use of unsuitable equipment such as traditional road bikes, motorised sports equipment or toys is not permitted,
 - use of appropriate protective equipment (e.g., helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards.) is recommended,
 - to pay attention to other users,
 - the rolling surfaces and skate elements are not a waiting area and shall be kept clear of objects,
 - the facility should not be used when wet, icy or in snow conditions,
 - If the skate park is not to be used during or after dusk hours,

Due to the skate park being open at the perimeter rather than fenced in, it may encourage users to cut across the boundary and enter the park. While planting will be incorporated to encourage people to access the park via the main entrance, some users will inevitably not use this main entrance. Signs should be incorporated around the perimeter at likely access points advising of the skate park and to refer to the Rules of Play at the main skate park entrance before using the facility.

3.11 Security, Vandalism, Theft and Police Liaison.

The skate park will be designed to be predominantly of construction resistant to damage and vandalism. However, it is recommended a police architectural liaison officer is contacted during design to discuss security issues. This could involve considerations such as minimising the risk of metal theft, security lighting and CCTV coverage. This must be weighed up against other health and safety concerns (such as those identified in the lighting section) and privacy concerns.

3.12 Skate Park Maintenance and Inspections.

It is important that a schedule of inspection and maintenance is formulated by the operator. This should be based upon the guidance within **BS EN 14974:2019**, also considering guidance in **BS EN 1176-7:2020** and **BS EN 1176-1:2017**. Below is a summary of the principles of inspections and maintenance that must be undertaken by the operator and will be required for insurance of the facility.

Post completion of the skate park, inspection should be undertaken by an independent competent person/ organisation such as the 'Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents'. This should ensure design and safety standards contained in **BS EN 14974:2019** are met prior to the facility becoming operational.

'Annual Main Inspections' of the facility should be undertaken by an independent competent person to **BS EN 14974:2019**.

The skate park operator should also undertake their own safety inspections as defined in **BS EN 14974:2019**, these should be broken down into 'Visual Routine Inspections' undertaken frequently (frequency is decided by the operator based on intensity of use and condition of the skate park but could be daily for a high use skate park. 'Operational Inspections' should be undertaken by the operator ever 1-3 months unless advised by equipment manufacturers to be more frequent.

All inspections, regardless of if independent or inhouse should be undertaken by trained competent personnel and logged with records kept for a minimum of 15 years. Items identified by the inspections should be risk assessed and actions to rectify undertaken in a suitable timeframe based on the risk identified.

There should also be a simple and clear process for skate park users to report issues to the operator. This may be providing phone numbers (as noted in the signage section) or reporting at the reception desk in the nearby leisure centre.

The skate park should have a schedule of routine maintenance e.g., being regularly cleaned of debris such as waste and leaf litter, cleaning of drains, emptying of bins etc. Maintenance should be pre-emptive, with routine and corrective maintenance scheduled and undertaken in advance of it becoming a health and safety issue for users.

If emergency corrective maintenance is required and it is unable to be undertaken straight away, that element of the skatepark should be taken out of use until maintenance can be undertaken and clearly indicated as out of use to skate park users.

Logs of the maintenance undertaken, and by whom should also be kept by the skate park operator as a record. Where repair to the skate park is required, this should be undertaken by competent persons experienced in the construction and maintenance of skate parks to BS EN 14974 and the standards referred to within.

4.0 Conclusions

This report will be a principle document guiding the design team and onward operation of this development. The inherent risks and public liability issues can only be effectively addressed by due consideration of best practice guidance now established by this report. The Principle Design under the CDM 2015 regulation will take this guidance into consideration in the design development and construction of this project.

