

Inverleith Park

# CONCEPT MASTERPLAN REPORT

Revision P01 08.02.22

rankinfraser Landscape Architecture



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# 1. Introduction

## Project Overview

Edinburgh is part of a set of eight local authorities across the UK that have been selected for support through the Future Parks Accelerator fund to explore and develop new, innovative, and inspiring ways to manage and develop greenspaces. City of Edinburgh Council's Thriving Green Spaces project is made possible by the Future Parks Accelerator fund.

This project is a 10 year conceptual masterplan for Inverleith Park. The conceptual masterplan seeks to develop a holistic vision for the park, with a particular focus on the southeast entrance to the park from Arboretum Road, which has been identified as the best location for community facilities, a café, public toilet facilities, and a new children's playground. The project aims to make greenspaces central to everyday community life, to give the public a bigger role in how greenspaces are managed, to ensure that greenspaces contribute more to users' mental and physical health and wellbeing, and to consider how greenspaces can adapt to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

A key consideration that has emerged as this project has developed has been the need to consider the role of Inverleith Park within a wider sustainable urban drainage strategy for the Craighleith area of the city. This is an ongoing process separate from the Thriving Green Spaces project, which this conceptual masterplan has sought to capture in its early stages of development. The overall aim of this project seeks to weave community provision and climate resilience into the spatial masterplan, and so consideration of sustainable drainage interventions has sat alongside other needs identified during the process of developing this masterplan.

## Spirit of Place

There is a focus in the masterplan upon placemaking and upon understanding the subjective responses of park users as they relate to Inverleith Park in an attempt to develop a 'Spirit of Place' document which, together with the masterplan, are intended to help guide and influence decision makers now and into the future,

This 'Spirit of Place' document draws upon a methodology developed by the National Trust, who routinely develop 'Spirit of Place' statements to further inform property management and business plans. It is intended to capture the unique and distinctive quality of a place, both tangible and intangible, and seeks to understand places through the eyes of the people that know them best. The Spirit of Place statement has been developed in tandem with the conceptual masterplan and has thus informed the proposals that have been developed and put forward.

## Context

Inverleith Park is located in the Inverleith area, an inner suburb in the north Edinburgh. The name of the area is derived from the Scottish Gaelic *Inbhir Lite* – meaning the ‘mouth of the river Leith’. Inverleith Park is located within proximity to Stockbridge and is well-connected to the neighbouring suburbs of Trinity to the north, New Town to the south, and Canonmills to the southeast.

The wider area is characterised by a wide variety of open green space, which includes public and private playing fields, graveyards, public parks, and a network of public footpaths. Key green spaces include the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, which sits directly to the east of Inverleith Park and shares a historic relationship with Inverleith Park. The public footpaths following the network of disused railway lines across north Edinburgh and along the Water of Leith is also a key link to green and blue spaces within and outside of the city.

The park itself has been awarded a Green Flag Award, which notes the diversity of activities that take place in the park - including sports pitches and club pavilions, allotments, a play area, and pond. It also makes note of the fantastic view south across the city, many of which are protected ‘Key Views’ in the City of Edinburgh planning policy. The wider area is largely residential, although it is also home to offices and shops - most notably along Raeburn Place. Inverleith has one of the lowest crime rates in the city and is a designated conservation area.



People enjoying the view of the Edinburgh skyline from the embankment above the pond

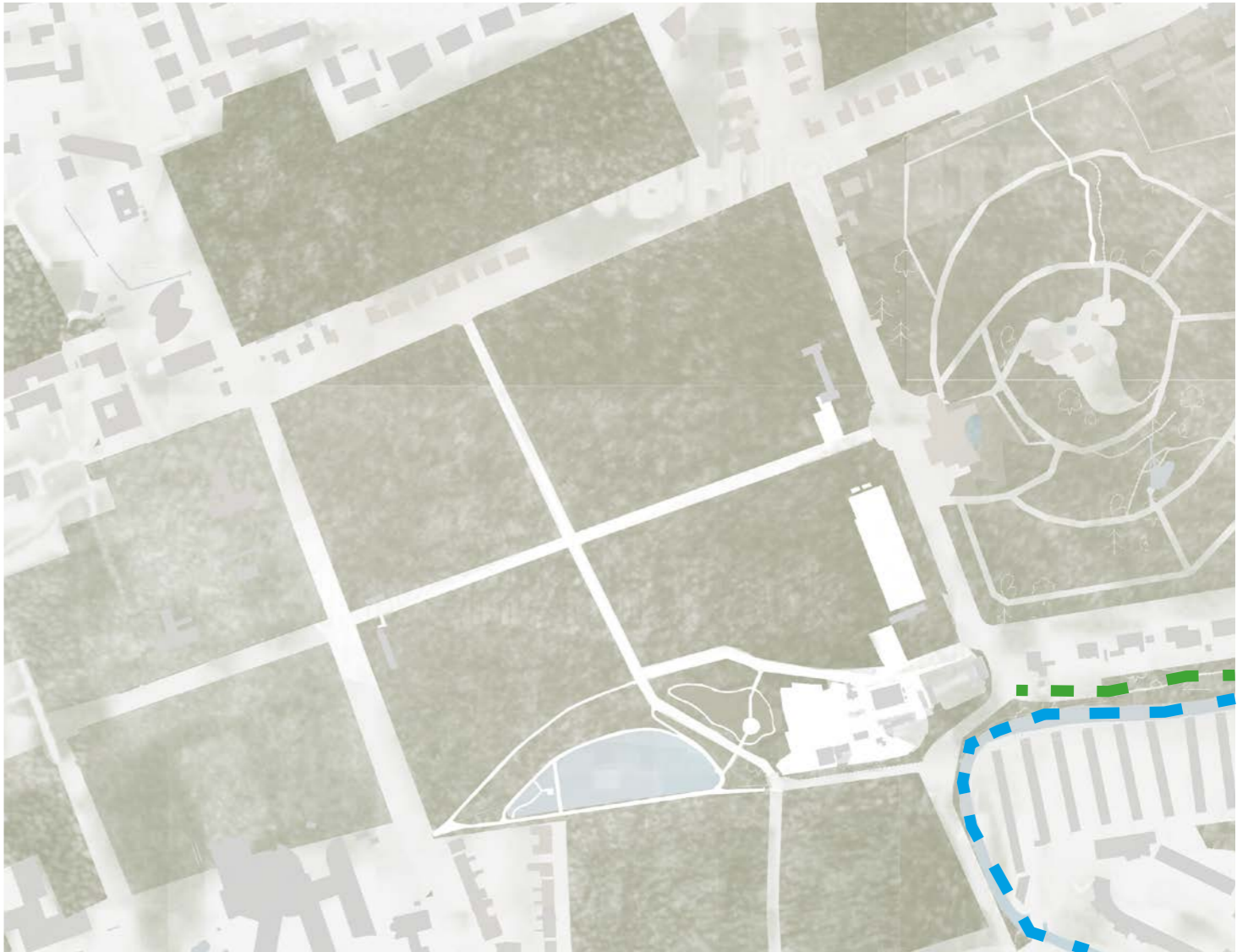
# 2. Existing Conditions

## Existing Conditions Diagrams



User Movement

- ..... QuietRoute 20 - local cycle route
- ..... Popular pedestrian routes
- Pedestrian crossings
- ▲ Tour bus stop



Habitat Corridors

Inverleith Park benefits from being located in close proximity to a wide variety of green spaces - including cemeteries, public and private parks, playing fields, and the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. Two key habitat corridors include the Water of Leith and the Water of Leith walkway, shown here in a blue dotted line and green dotted line respectively.



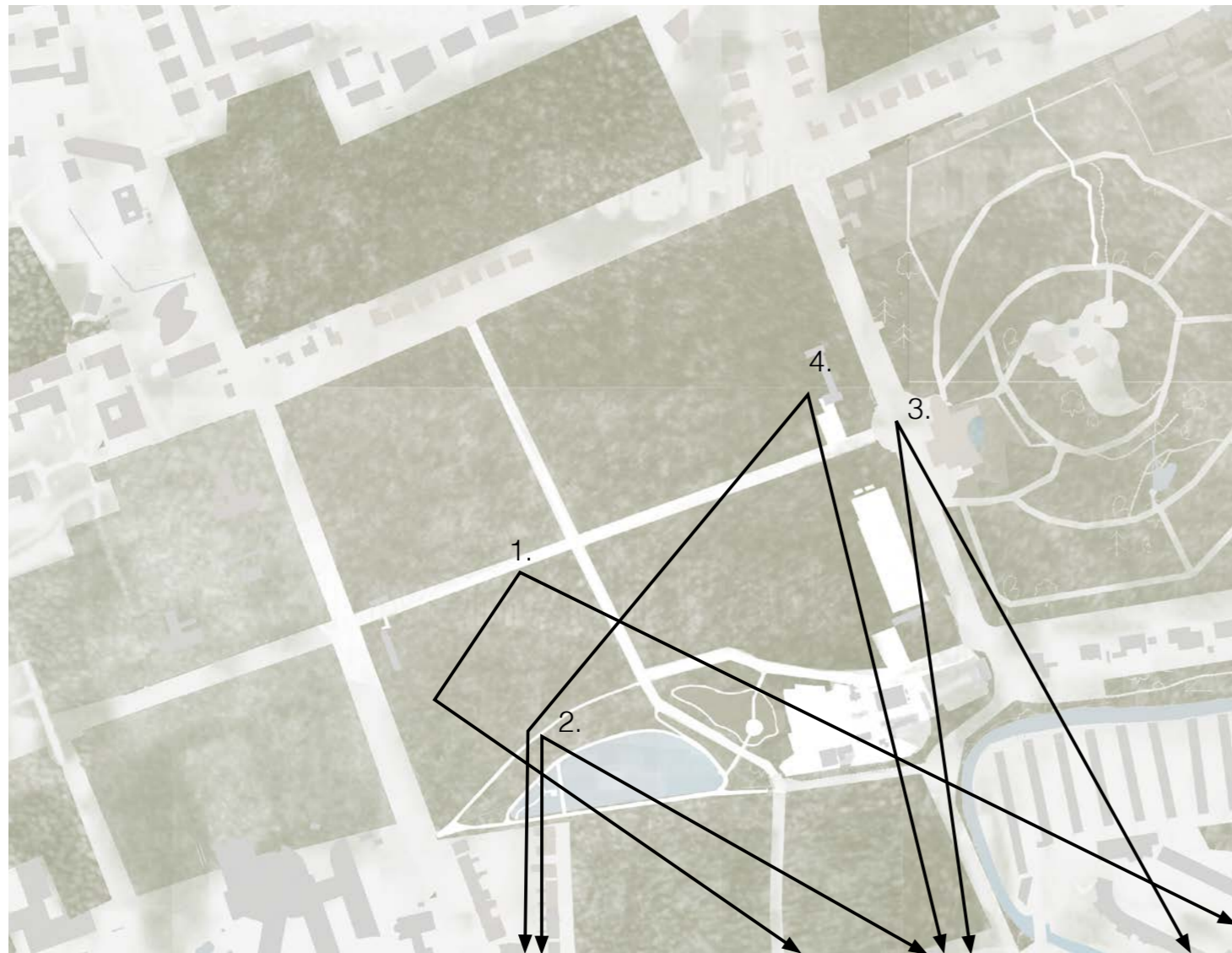
### Existing Tree Framework

Inverleith Park is characterised by its variety of mature parkland trees, with sycamore a key component of the overall existing tree framework. Other notable trees include the avenue of lime trees above the pond area, supplemented by Turkey Oak, and the planting of smaller trees such as the Tulip Tree and Goat Willow along the southern edge of the pond area.



### Topography

The topography falls generally from north east to south west, from a high point in the north east corner of the park to a low point in the pond area in the south west. There is a steeper descent from the Sundial Garden area to the pond area, and from the maintenance yard to the Water of Leith.



**Key Views**

- 1. View No. N2a: Inverleith Park - Arthur's Seat
- 2. View No. N2b: Inverleith Park - Charlotte Square dome, Castle and Hub spire
- 3. View No. N2c: Botanic Gardens, west gate - along Arboretum Place to Castle
- 4. View No. N2d: Inverleith Park - St Mary's spires and west Edinburgh skyline



1.



2.



3.



4.

## Surrounding Greenspace





# Surrounding Greenspace and Land Use



## Existing Landscape and Conservation Designations



**Inverleith Special Landscape Area**

Source: City of Edinburgh Council Open Spatial Data Portal



**Designated Conservation Area: Inverleith**

Source: Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal, City of Edinburgh Council





**Water of Leith Local Nature Conservation Site**

Source: Edinburgh Local Development Plan, City of Edinburgh Council



**RBGE Local Nature Conservation Site**

Source: Edinburgh Local Development Plan, City of Edinburgh Council



1.

### Listed Structures within the Park

1. Inverleith Park Gatepiers Arboretum Road: Category B

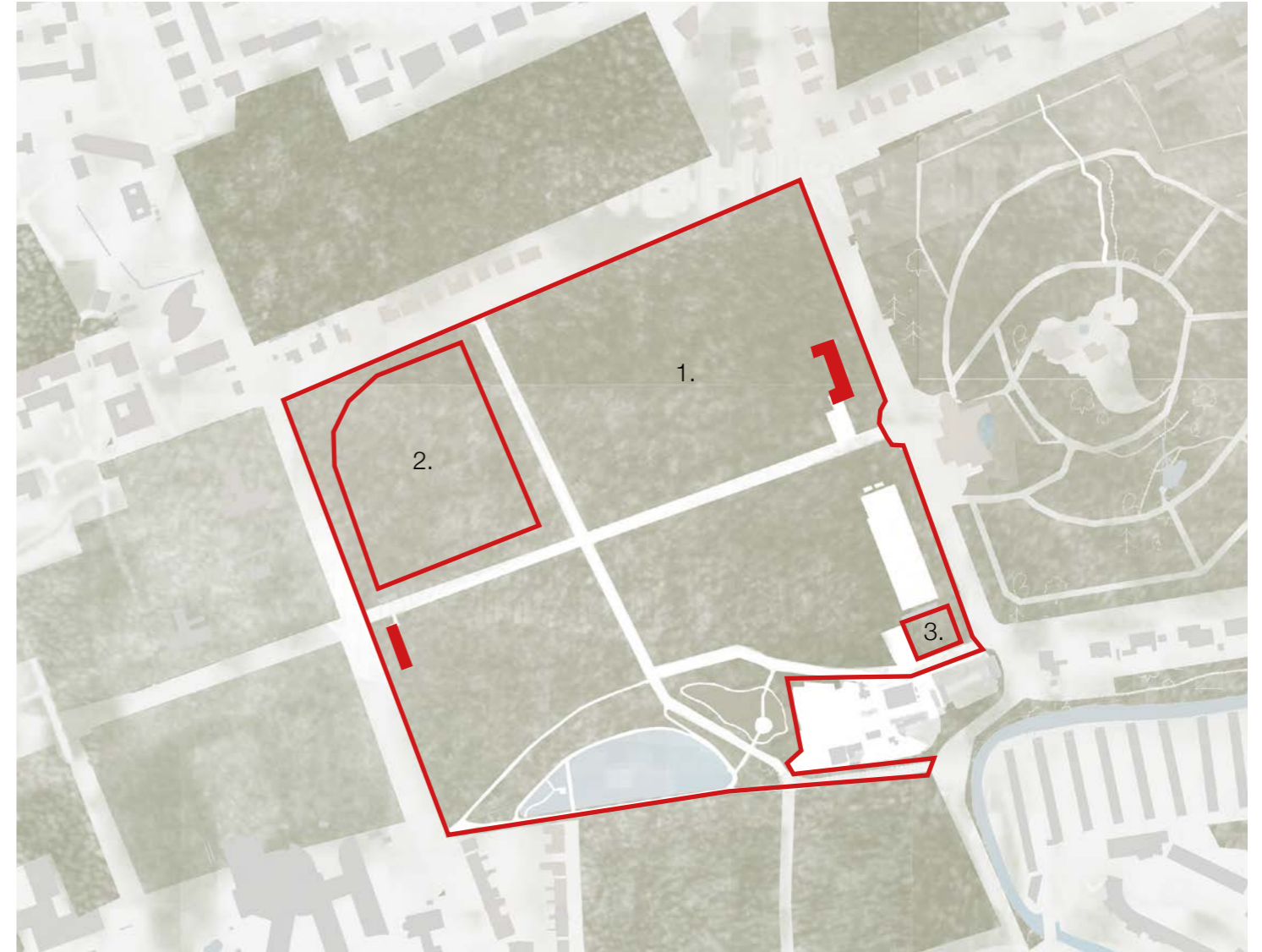
Source: Historic Environment Scotland





**Premier Park**

Source: Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy



**Open Space**

- 1. Inverleith Park
- 2. Inverleith Allotments
- 3. Tanfield Bowling Club

Source: Edinburgh Local Development Plan, City of Edinburgh Council



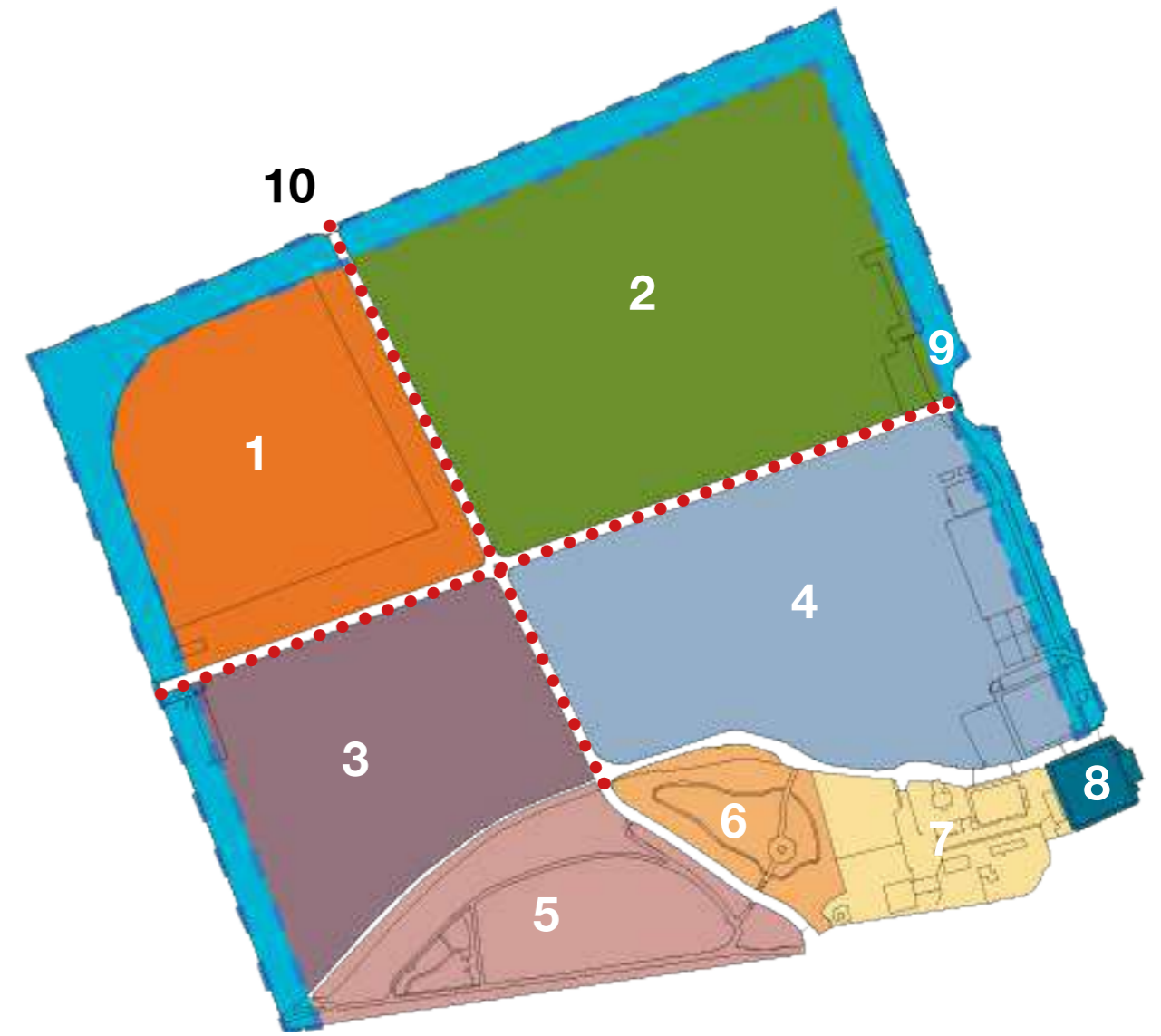
**Greenspace Proposal (GS1-11): Inverleith Depot**

‘The Council is keeping the operational role of its service depots under review. If that process determines that the depot at Inverleith Park is no longer required for depot functions or other services, it can be converted into green space. The type(s) of greenspace should be identified at that stage in consultation with the local community and should take account of local and citywide needs.’

Source: Edinburgh Local Development Plan, City of Edinburgh Council

## Existing Zones

1. Inverleith Allotments Area  
*Area dominated by allotments, with mature trees following the central paths*
2. North East Field  
*Used for grass sports*
3. South West Field  
*Used for rugby with pavilion*
4. South East Field  
*Used for grass sports, ball and tennis courts, petanque, play area and bowling green area*
5. Pond Area  
*Boating pond with reed bed and board walk*
6. Sundial Garden  
*Ornamental garden area*
7. Maintenance Yard  
*CEC parks and forestry work space*
8. Tanfield Bowling Club  
*Private Bowling Club*
9. Perimeter  
*Framed by mature trees, the perimeter currently acts as an informal series of footpaths, intersecting with other zones within the park*
10. Cruciform Paths  
*Framed by mature trees*



This diagram showing existing zones within the park is informed by the Character Zones diagram on p. 14 of the *Inverleith Park Management Plan 2010-2014* and site analysis

**Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities**



*Strength* The park is subject to several conservation measures and is home to structures of historical significance



*Opportunity* The Maintenance Yard is home to CEC parks and forestry staff and is subject to the Greenspace Proposal (GS1-11): Inverleith Depot (see p. 14)



*Strength* The park is notable for the breadth and diversity of its activities, including the Edinburgh Petanque Club. This is a key part of the park's identity and should be retained.



*Strength* Park users value the wide, open green space that the park provides and it is essential that this is retained



*Weakness and Opportunity* The southeast entrance to the park presents a conflict between vehicle movement and park users - a new entrance space could be designed



*Weakness and Opportunity* Informal paths negatively impacting the health of existing mature trees and create an uneven surface for walking - a new footpath could be installed along the park's perimeter



*Weakness and Opportunity* The existing children's playground is dated and new play facilities could be provided



*Opportunity* The park provides a number of opportunities to increase its biodiversity value and introduce climate resilience measures



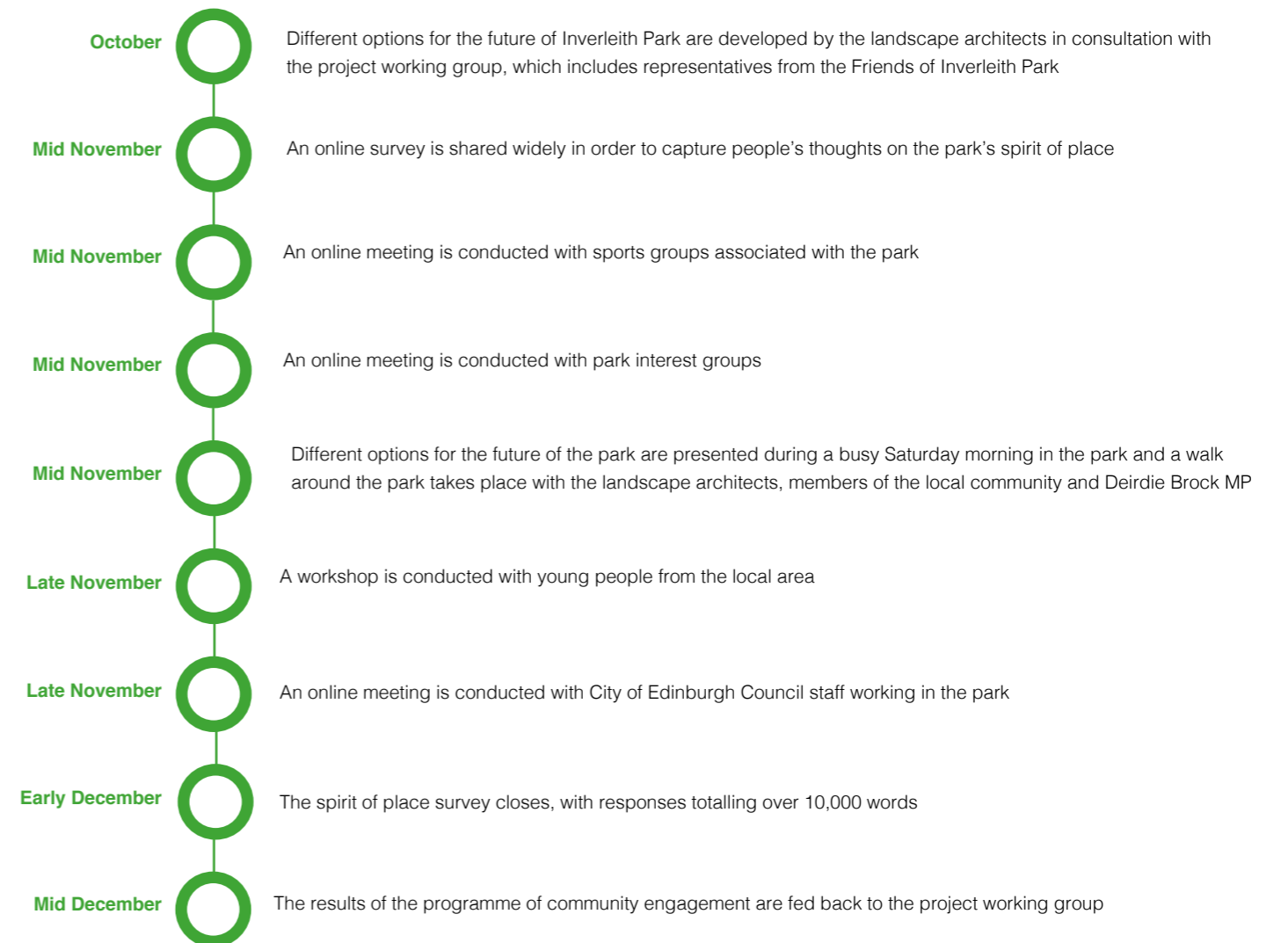
### 3. Engagement

A range of park users were approached as part of a community engagement programme, during which two different options were presented for the future of the park. These options were intended as a catalyst for discussion, and the responses that were received were then taken on board as part of a process of further development and refinement.

Community engagement meetings took the form of online meetings with sports groups associated with the park, general park users and interest groups, and City of Edinburgh Council staff working in and managing the park. Nearby schools were also approached as part of this engagement process and, while no responses were received, a separate engagement meeting with young people from the local area was undertaken in parallel to this masterplan consultation process. A stall and display was set up in the park on Saturday the 20th of November that allowed for informal consultation with park users.

A separate engagement process was undertaken in order to develop a picture of what it is that makes Inverleith Park distinctive and unique. This was done as part of the process of developing a 'Spirit of Place' statement for the park, the writing of which also influenced the development of the concept masterplan. This engagement process, which took the form of an online and printed questionnaire, had significant reach and garnered over 10,000 words in written responses.

This engagement process should be seen as the beginning of a process of consultation with interested groups over the next ten years and beyond. Further development of sustainable drainage solutions within the park will require significant community engagement, for example, and the 'Spirit of Place' statement (see p. 66) should be regarded as a starting point for an ongoing and developing process of engagement that will ensure that the users of Inverleith Park have a meaningful say in its future.



## Community Engagement: Results and Reflection

Several key themes emerged from the community consultation process. These served to guide the team as we developed and refined the concept masterplan for the park.

These key points were:

- The need to preserve the wide, open spaces and iconic views associated with the park
- The need to provide for a variety of park users in line with the current scope of provision that the park enjoys - from team sports to dog walking, children's play and spaces for quiet contemplation and walking
- The need to enhance biodiversity and provide opportunities for people to engage with and enjoy nature
- The importance of maintaining and improving, where possible, sporting provision within the park
- The need for better lighting within the park
- The need for better park maintenance
- The need for community facilities such as storage for activities taking place within the park, meeting spaces and cafe
- The need for public toilets within the park

The community engagement process also shed light on the depth of people's feeling towards the park, which is detailed within the 'Spirit of Place' statement.



The community engagement process included a morning spent in the park and a walk around the park with members of the public

Collectively, these responses indicate that a subtle approach to developing the park over the next ten years would be preferred by park users, with a focus on enhancing biodiversity and opportunities for community engagement within the park. Where changes have to take place, they should do so in such a way as to enhance what are regarded by park users as the defining qualities of the park.

# 4. Concept Masterplan



## Legend

- |                              |   |  |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Softworks (Retained)</b>  |   | <b>Facilities (Proposed)</b>   |  |
|                              | Existing trees  | 22   | Community facilities - including storage for existing sporting and games activities, public toilets, meeting spaces, and a low-key cafe and bins |
|                              | Existing planting   | 23   | Public toilet/baby changing facilities - in refurbished existing pavilion  |
|                              | Existing amenity grass  | 24   | Children's play facilities   |
|                              | Existing hedging  | 25   | Shared vehicle and pedestrian access   |
| <b>Softworks (Proposed)</b>  |   | 26   | Maintenance Yard vehicle entrance  |
|                              | Proposed trees  | 27   | Older children/young adult facilities - seating and exercise and play equipment  |
|                              | Proposed planting   | 28   | Bouldering facilities  |
|                              | Proposed biodiversity area  | 29   | Pedestrian link between RBGE and Inverleith Park   |
| 1                            | Extending and lowering hedging to edge of proposed playground - improving views into the park whilst screening vehicles | 30   | Parking bays   |
| <b>Hardworks (Retained)</b>  |   |  | New fitness trail  |
|                              | Existing asphalt to be retained   | 31   | Renovated decking  |
|                              | Existing hard standing game and sports areas  |  | Additional seating - park benches  |
|                              | Existing lighting   |  | Seating area - picnic tables   |
| <b>Hardworks (Proposed)</b>  |   | <b>Maintenance Yard</b>  |  |
|                              | Proposed asphalt paths  | <i>Plans are subject to the potential relocation of parks and/or forestry staff away from the Maintenance Yard</i> |  |
|                              | Proposed self-binding gravel path - to perimeter paths  |  | Potential Sundial Garden extension   |
|                              | Proposed high quality brick paver to southeast entrance space and RBGE link   |  | Potential high-end cafe/restaurant   |
|                              | Proposed children's playground surface  |  | Potential community croft  |
| 2                            | Park perimeter path   | 32   | Potential reopening of the connection from Lovers' Lane  |
| 3                            | Boating pond perimeter path improved through widening/removing stepped edge and incorporating seating                   |  |  |
| 4                            | Additional entrances  |  |  |
| <b>Facilities (Retained)</b> |   |  |  |
| 5                            | Rugby pitches   |  |  |
| 6                            | Football pitches  |  |  |
| 7                            | Cricket pitches   |  |  |
| 8                            | Edinburgh Northern Rugby Football Club  |  |  |
| 9                            | Edinburgh Model Boat Club   |  |  |
| 10                           | Edinburgh Leisure   |  |  |
| 11                           | Allotments  |  |  |
| 12                           | Boating Pond wetland  |  |  |
| 13                           | Boating Pond  |  |  |
| 14                           | Sundial Garden  |  |  |
| 15                           | Multipurpose activity area  |  |  |
| 16                           | Table Tennis  |  |  |
| 17                           | Multipurpose games courts   |  |  |
| 18                           | Tennis courts   |  |  |
| 19                           | Pétanque  |  |  |
| 20                           | Tanfield Bowling Club   |  |  |
| 21                           | South-facing embankment retained as open space  |  |  |
|                              | Retained seating - park benches   |  |  |
|                              | Proposed bollard lighting   |  |  |
|                              | Proposed column lighting  |  |  |
|                              | Proposed atmospheric lighting   |  |  |
|                              | Proposed cycle stands   |  |  |
|                              | Removable bollards - to Maintenance Yard entrance   |  |  |

Scale 1:1250 @ A1  
 0 25 50 100m

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## 5. Proposals

Collectively, the proposals outlined on the following pages seek to ensure that Inverleith Park continues to play a central part in everyday community life, retaining and enhancing the park's valued qualities and reinforcing the park's Premier Park status. A new entrance space to the southeast of the park, for example, is designed around a new play park and community facilities – including provision for existing groups and sports clubs as well as refreshment opportunities and public toilets.

These proposals also recognise the importance of greenspaces such as Inverleith Park to people's mental and physical health and wellbeing. A range of interventions will provide for different needs and user groups – from more accessible paths to opportunities to experience and move through more natural spaces within a proposed biodiversity area and increased sporting provision in the form of bouldering facilities.

Giving the public a bigger role in how the park is managed is a key aim of the concept masterplan. A southeast entrance space centred on community activity is an important part of realising this aim, as are tentative plans to develop a community croft in the Maintenance Yard area of the park in line with the 'Greenspace Proposal (GS1-11): Inverleith Depot'. The 'Spirit of Place' statement, which is based on responses from over 170 park users, is also seen as a starting point for an ongoing discussion relating to the future management of the park.

Finally, these proposals take into account that Inverleith Park, in common with parks across the city, is likely to face significant challenges in coming years as a result of the climate crisis.

As well as opportunities for community participation and involvement then, these proposals seek to weave climate mitigation strategies throughout the park. To this end, the proposed biodiversity area is expected to provide for a variety of nonhuman species as well as for park users, whilst a strategy for managing existing and proposed trees and a sustainable drainage strategy aim to ensure that the park is able to thrive in the face of a changing climate.

The proposals outlined on the following pages are broken down into the following sections:

- Southeast Entrance: Playground and community facilities
- Young Adults
- Additional Entrances
- Improved Lighting
- Perimeter Paths
- New Fitness Trail
- Boating Pond Improvements
- Tree Strategy
- Biodiversity Area
- Sustainable Drainage Strategy
- Further Steps

*i. Southeast Entrance:  
Children's playground and community facilities*

Currently, the southeast entrance into the park represents a conflict between pedestrian park users and vehicles entering and leaving the Maintenance Yard. In order to resolve this conflict, it is proposed that a separate, pedestrian-only entrance space is developed at the southeast corner and designed around a new playpark and community building. A planting buffer between a proposed playpark and the existing road into the park will help separate children from moving vehicles, whilst the removal of some hedges and changes to the maintenance of those hedges will help promote views into the park.

There was a clear desire among those involved in the community engagement process for new and improved community facilities within the park. This was partly in response to the discussion around the future of the premises currently occupied by the Ferranti Bowling Club, whose lease expires in May 2022.

It is proposed that these premises become a publicly-accessible facility for park users, including meeting spaces for local groups, public toilets and baby-changing facilities, storage for park activity groups, and a cafe space serving a limited variety of refreshments. The primary function of this building should be one that is centred on community activities such as a café, toilets and community space, and not be dominated by a commercial enterprise. These facilities will help define a new pedestrian entrance space in the southeast of the park.






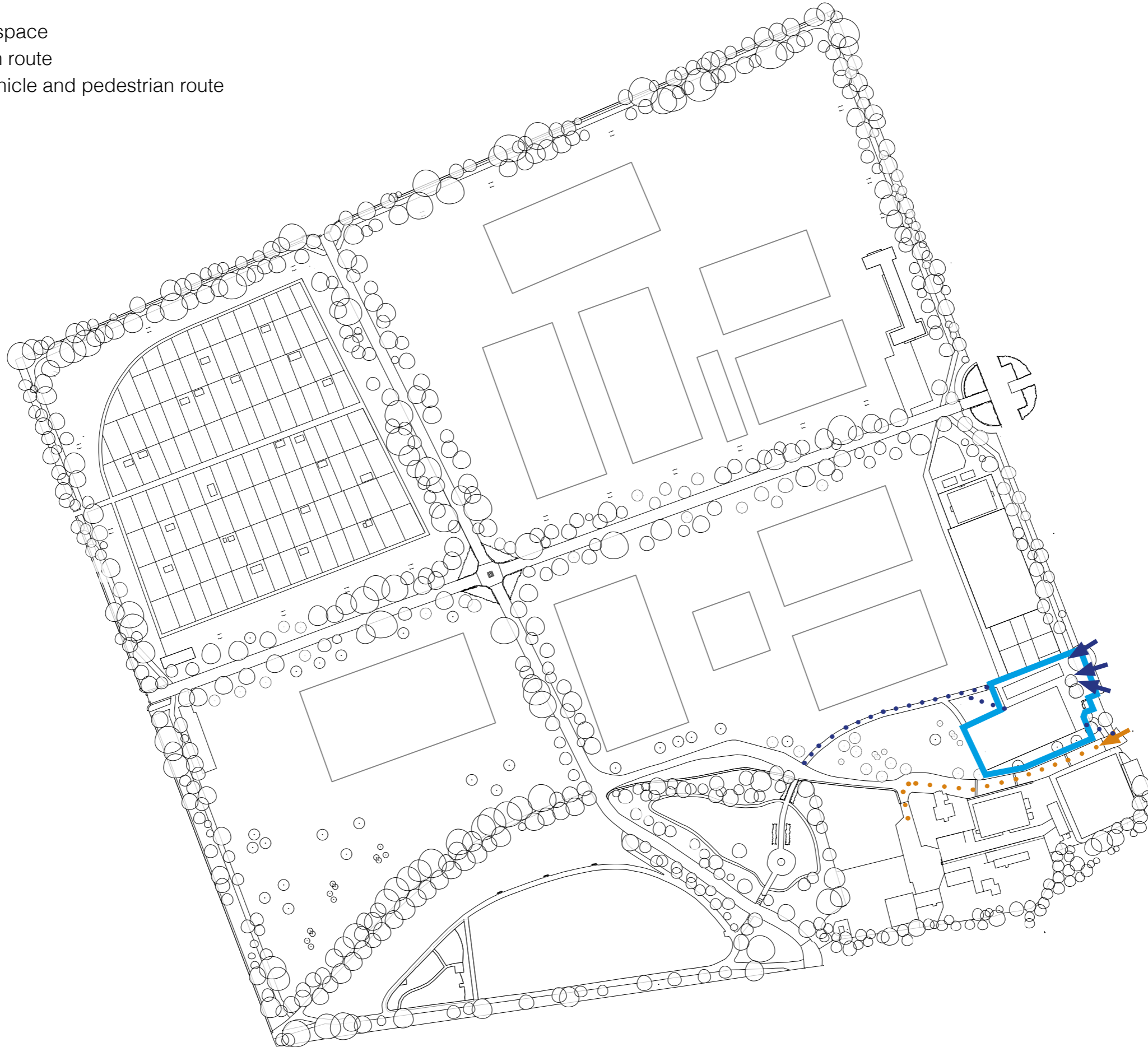
The existing southeast entrance into the park



The proposed southeast entrance into the park, with lighting tree planting and a lower hedge in order to allow for views across the park

## Southeast Entrance: Proposed user movement

-  Southeast entrance space
-  Proposed pedestrian route
-  Proposed shared vehicle and pedestrian route



## Southeast Entrance: Proposed programming

### Children's Playground



Natural play facilities, RBG Kew Gardens



Sun tunnel, RBG Kew Gardens



1. Perimeter path
  2. Community building and potential cafe with toilets
  3. Proposed playground
  - □ Current extent of playground
  4. Clear pedestrian access point
  5. Cycle storage
  6. Potential public toilets
  7. Seating area
  8. Additional park benches
  9. Shared vehicle and pedestrian access point
  10. Low hedging allowing views into the park
  11. Retained sports facilities
- Area of biodiverse planting
  - Existing trees
  - Proposed trees







This image continues the existing journey into the park in the southeast corner, with annotation indicating interventions that might improve the experience of park users



*New path to continue along a clear line of visibility to join existing paths and link to the Sundial Garden*

*Proposed Southeast Entrance*

*Retaining existing trees*

*New playpark*

*Celebrating views into the park*

*Community facilities building*

*Paths into the park*

*New cycle storage facilities*

*New high-quality hard surface  
e.g. permeable paving*

*Restricting parking at entrance space*



## ii. Young Adults

There is a clear need for better recreational and play facilities for older children and young adults within the park. This was identified during the community consultation process and in the workshop that was organised with young people from the local area.

During this workshop, young people expressed a desire for outdoor gym and exercise equipment, increased sports provision, increased lighting, a community space that could also be used as a youth space, and an accessible and affordable café. They also had creative ideas about improvements to some of the underused buildings in the park, which they suggested could be developed alongside graffiti artists in a similar manner to the recent redevelopment of the Colinton Tunnel.

Provision for young people is proposed to be spread throughout the park, providing spaces for young people to meet with others and to exercise and play. The provision of bouldering facilities along the eastern edge of the park, an area which is already defined by sporting activities, will draw upon the rich sporting heritage of the park and provide up-to-date facilities for a sport that is growing in popularity and which finds particular support among young women.



Street art in the Colinton Tunnel

Young Adults: Play and recreational equipment



1.



2.



3.



4.



Proposed locations of older children play facilities

### *iii. Additional Entrances*

At present, a number of informal entrances exist along the perimeter of the park and, in particular, along its northern and eastern edge. These are in locations adjacent to pedestrian locations or other obvious locations where people seek to enter the park. These have resulted in gaps in the hedging, causing ongoing maintenance issues.

Responses received during the community consultation process highlighted the extent to which gaps in the hedging along the perimeter of the park can lead to negative perceptions of safety for those walking within and outside of the park, especially at night. Some respondents also felt that closing these informal entrances was an inefficient use of resources and felt that the time and energy of maintenance staff could be better used elsewhere in the park.

By formalising some of these entrances and creating wider entrances with better visibility in and out of the park, it might be possible to lessen the maintenance burden associated with closing them and increase perceptions of safety. This is also an effective way of responding to user movement within the park. Several of the proposed new entrances also have historical precedents, as documented in historic maps from the nineteenth century (see p. 61).



An informal entrance into the park along its eastern perimeter - with damage to tree roots highlighted

## Existing and Proposed Entrances

- Existing formal entrances
- Suggested additional entrances



#### *iv. Improved Lighting*

The need for improved lighting in the park was expressed by a significant number of park users during the community engagement process. While further investigation will be required in order to determine the exact location of new lighting within the park, a general improvement to lighting within the park will help improve perceptions of safety and will mean that the park can be enjoyed into the evening and for longer periods during winter.

Areas that would benefit from improved lighting were identified by park users as being the lime tree avenue above the boating pond area, the Lover's Lane path connecting the park to Arboretum Avenue, and in the north of the park. Different approaches to lighting are proposed, using LED column lighting to tie in with the existing lighting along the eastern, western, and southern legs of the cruciform paths, and bollard lighting elsewhere in the park. This will balance the need for improved lighting with the potential impact that such lighting might have on wildlife and upon species such as bats.

Finally, an improvement to the lighting within the park is also conceived as part of a placemaking strategy, emphasising historic structures within the park such as the stone arches, fountain, and sundial using atmospheric lighting. These lights are intended to be positioned in close proximity to these historic structures and are not intended to be fixed onto them. This will contribute to making Inverleith Park feel like a welcoming park at different times of the day, and will also assist with wayfinding at night.



Column lighting and atmospheric bridge lighting, Finsbury Park (London)



*Improved Lighting*

- Existing lighting
- Proposed bollard lighting
- Proposed column lighting
- Proposed atmospheric lighting



## v. *Perimeter Paths*

The proposal of new perimeter path responds to an obvious desire for people to walk and jog around the park perimeter. It also responds to the need to make the existing informal paths around the park's perimeter more accessible for park users and to protect the roots of existing mature trees, which are currently being damaged as a result of soil compaction.

A number of park users expressed their support for this idea during the community consultation process. The perimeter path has a historical precedent in the form of the horse run that once occupied the northern quadrants of the park (see p. 61).

Built from the ground up using a special mesh that will protect the nearby trees from the results of soil compaction, the proposed footpath could be made from self-binding gravel and help distinguish the perimeter paths from the existing asphalt paths that cross the park.

These paths will connect to existing and proposed entrances, and will run underneath the canopy of the existing trees along the park's perimeter. With a width of 3 meters, these paths will allow people to pass each other comfortably and will allow, for example, for people with prams to walk alongside each other. A level surface along the perimeter will be of significant benefit for people with disabilities and will expand the provision of accessible spaces within the park, responding to a clear desire among park users to walk along the outer edge of the park and underneath the canopy of trees.



Desire lines along the northern perimeter of the park



The proposed path could be made from self-binding gravel



*Proposed path will create an accessible surface along what is a popular walking route*

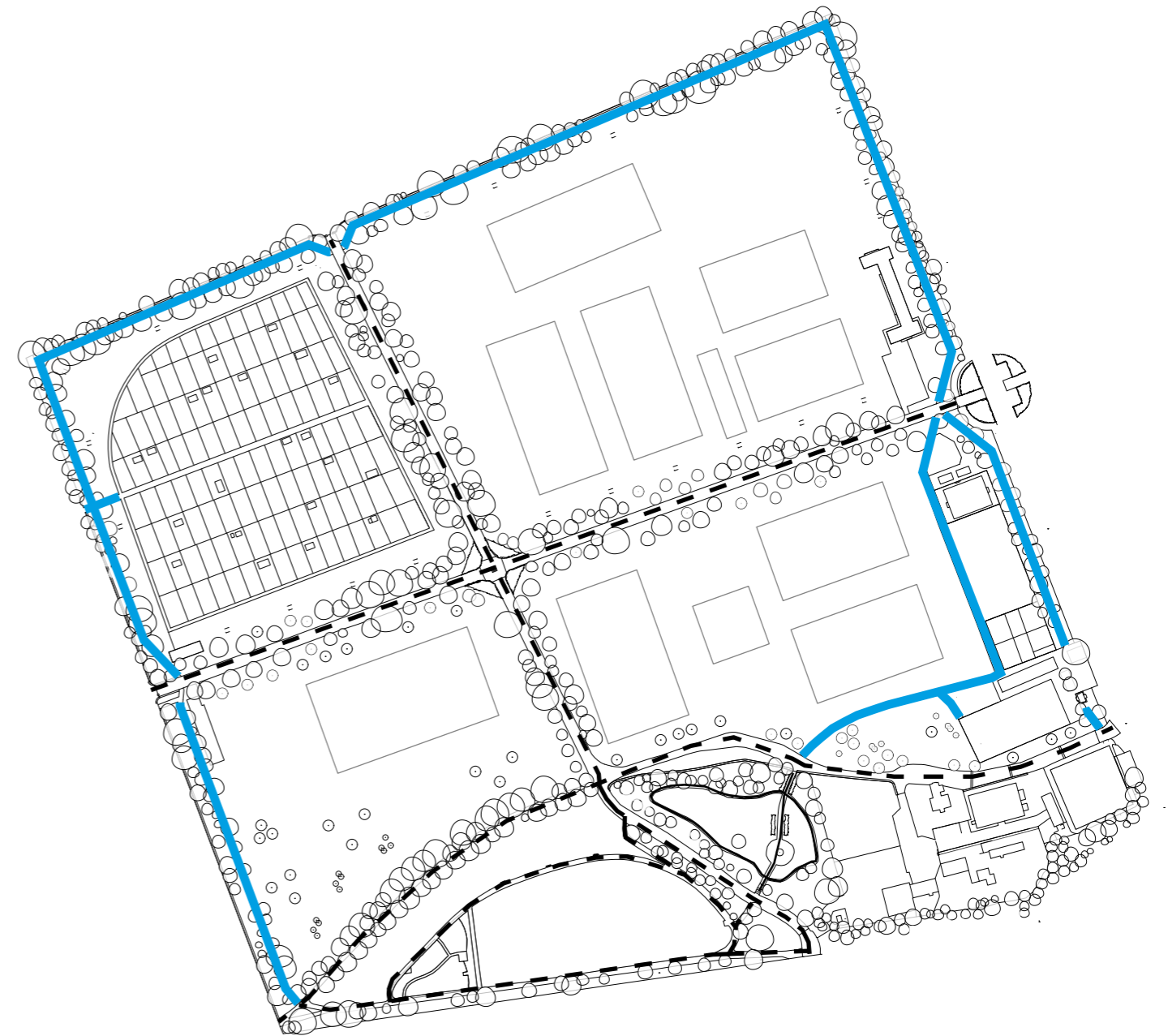
*Informal paths lead to soil compaction around existing tree roots, which damages their health*

*Proposed path will protect existing trees from compaction around their roots*

## Perimeter Paths: Materials



Self-binding gravel paths built upon a root protection mesh with help protect the roots of existing trees from damage arising from soil compaction and help define a hierarchy of paths within the park



- Self-binding gravel perimeter paths build on root protection mesh
- Existing gravel paths
- - Existing asphalt paths

*Proposed Perimeter Path*

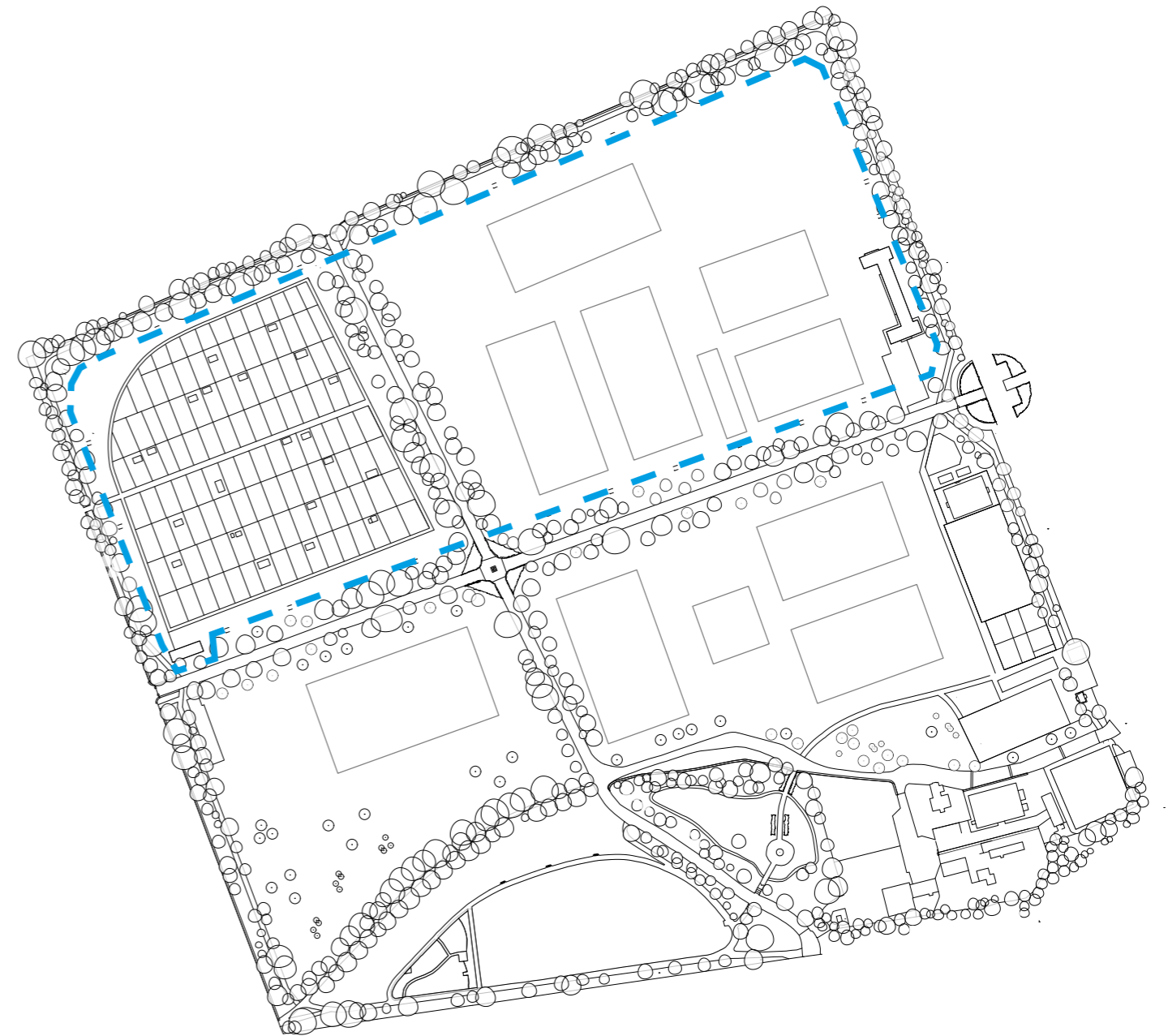
*View from new entrance in the northeast of the park, looking south east across playing fields*



## vi. New Fitness Trail

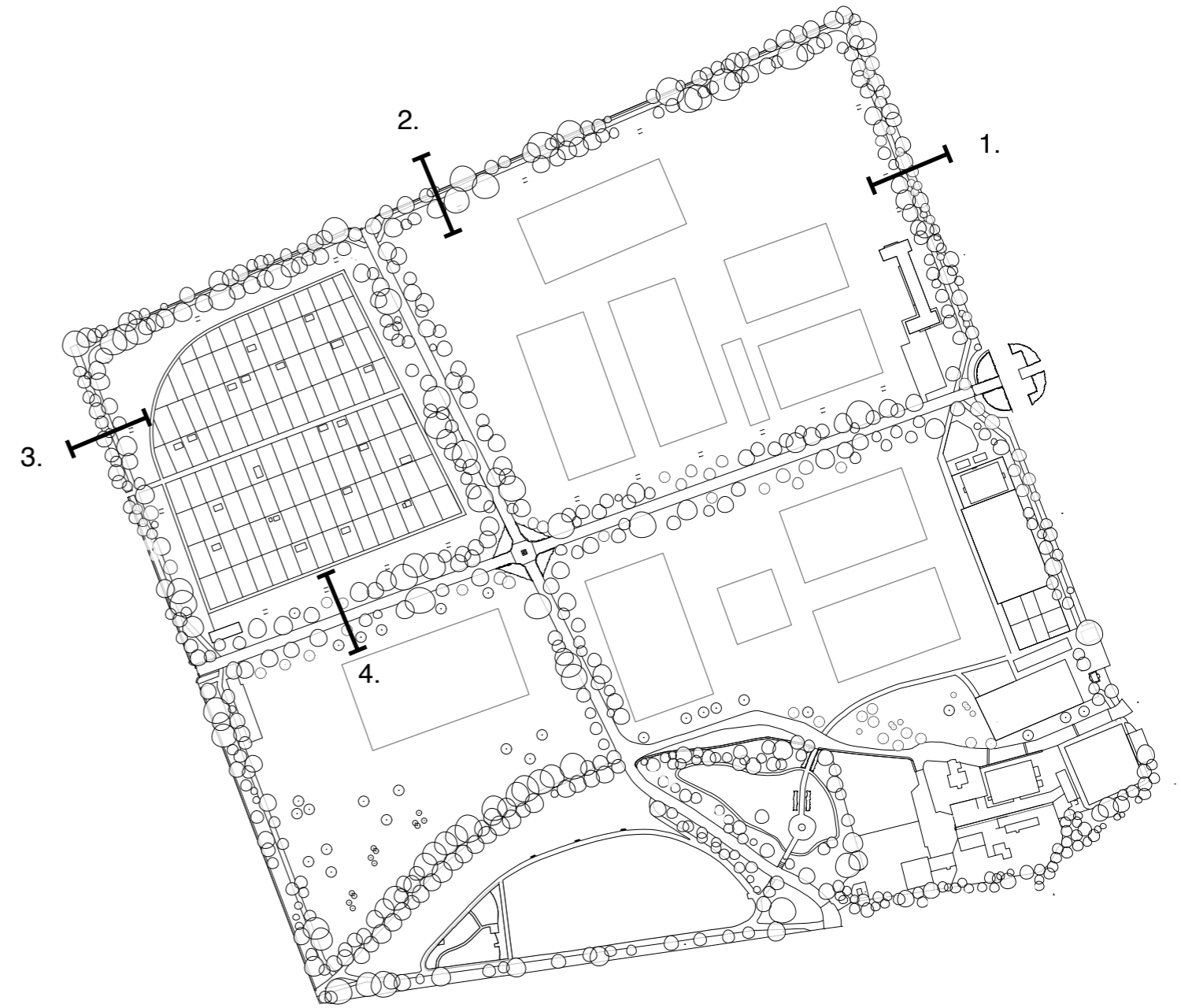
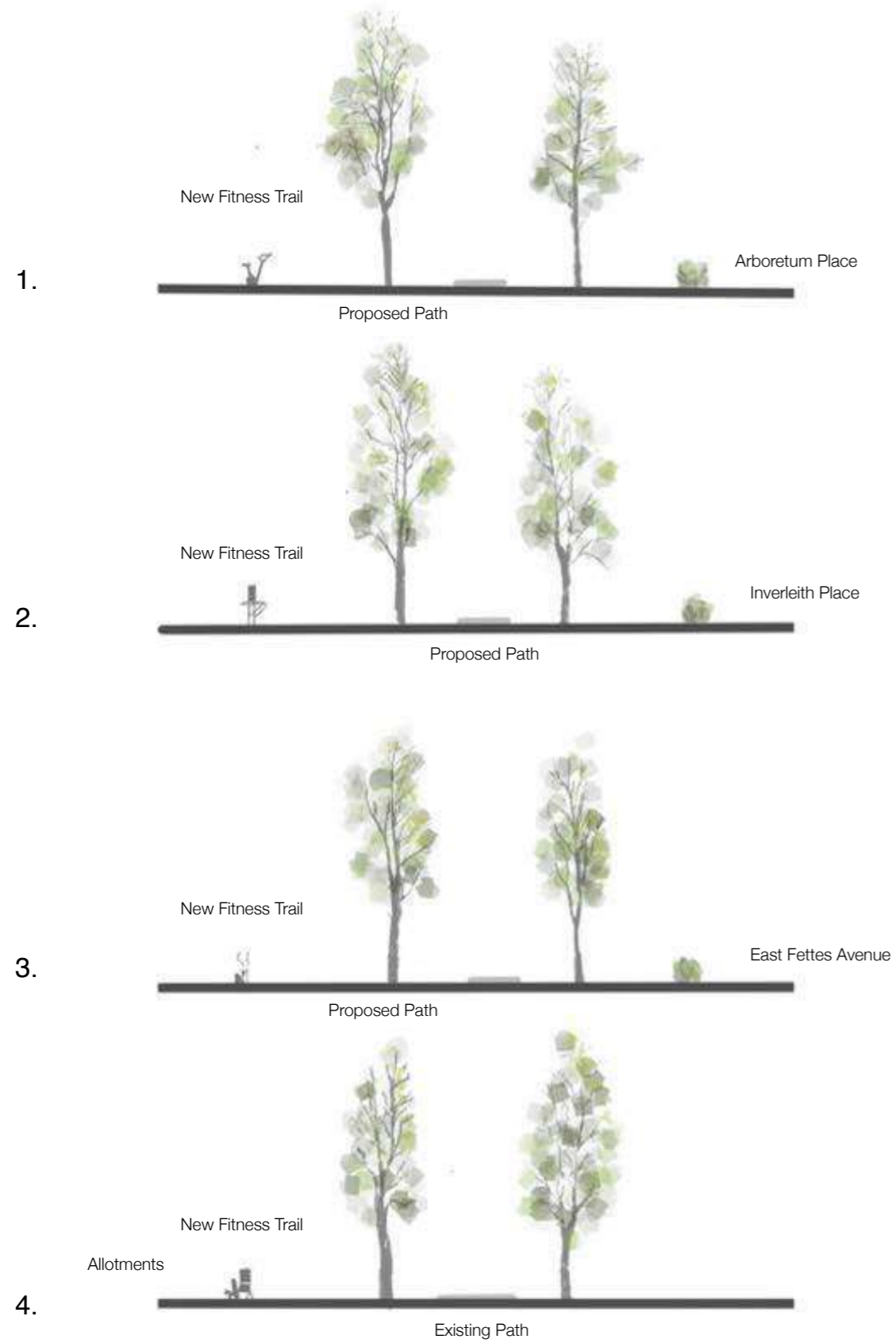
The existing fitness trail that runs along the perimeter of the park in its two northernmost quadrants is in need of replacement. They are a popular set of facilities, and their replacement speaks to a clear desire among a variety of park users to be able to enjoy such facilities in years to come.

Off-set from the proposed perimeter path and the existing cruciform path that runs from east to west, this fitness trail would be an up-to-date replacement of what currently exists in the park. It is also proposed that the fitness equipment currently located next to the children's playground are relocated as part of the redevelopment of the southeast entrance space.



■ ■ New fitness trail layout

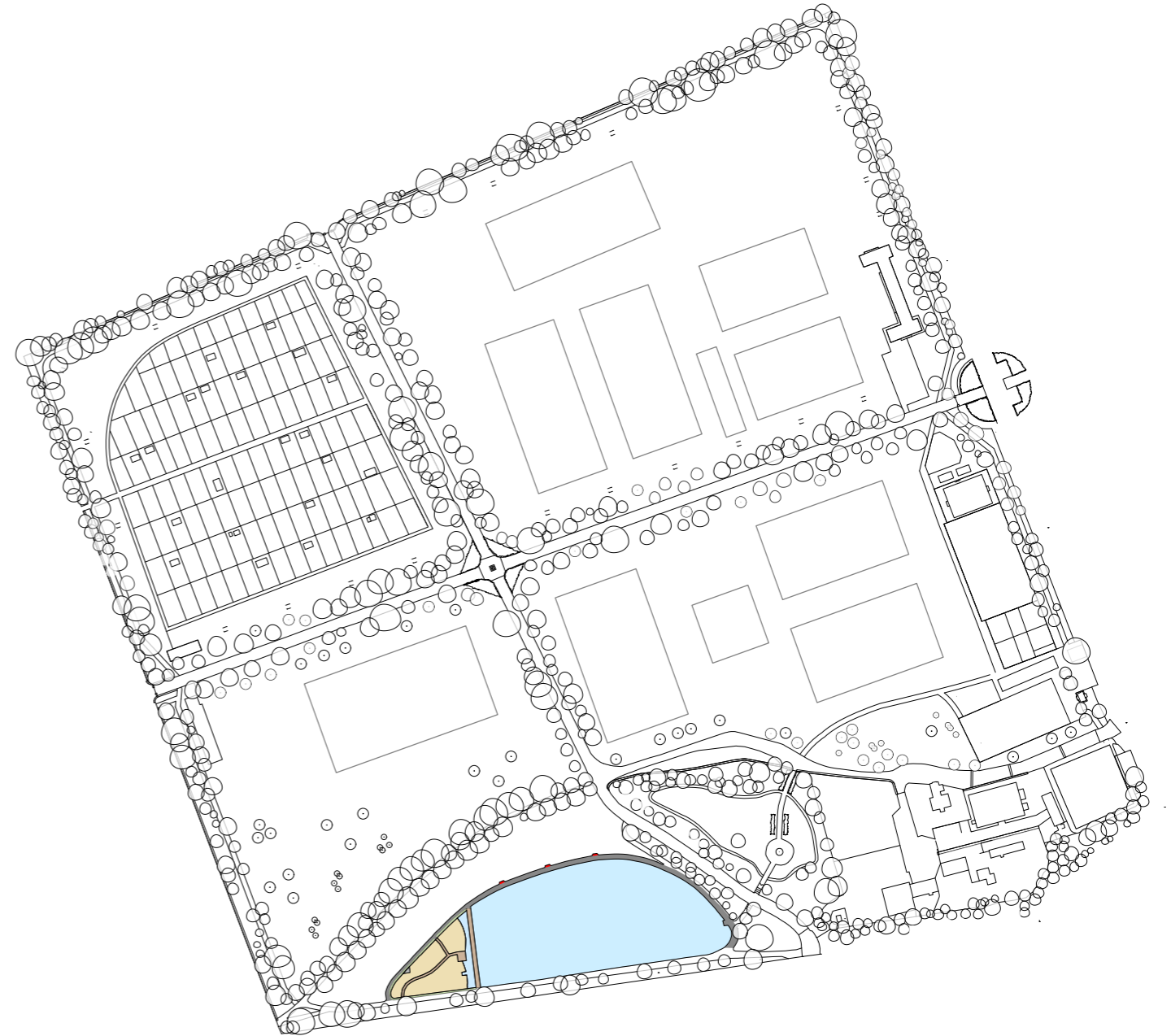
# New Fitness Trail: Layout



## vii. Boating Pond Improvements

Improvements to the paths around the Boating Pond include ensuring that the path along the north of the pond is widened and levelled where possible. Paths around the pond should be able to accommodate people walking along the path comfortably, with room to pass. At certain points, seating could be included at recessed points along the northern embankment. The existing connection to the water's edge will be maintained for the benefit of pond users.

The south-facing embankment above the pond will be retained as open space. It is recommended that the grass cutting regime in this area should include a provision for collecting and disposing of grass cuttings so as to avoid any potential problems involving the blockage of the pond outlet.

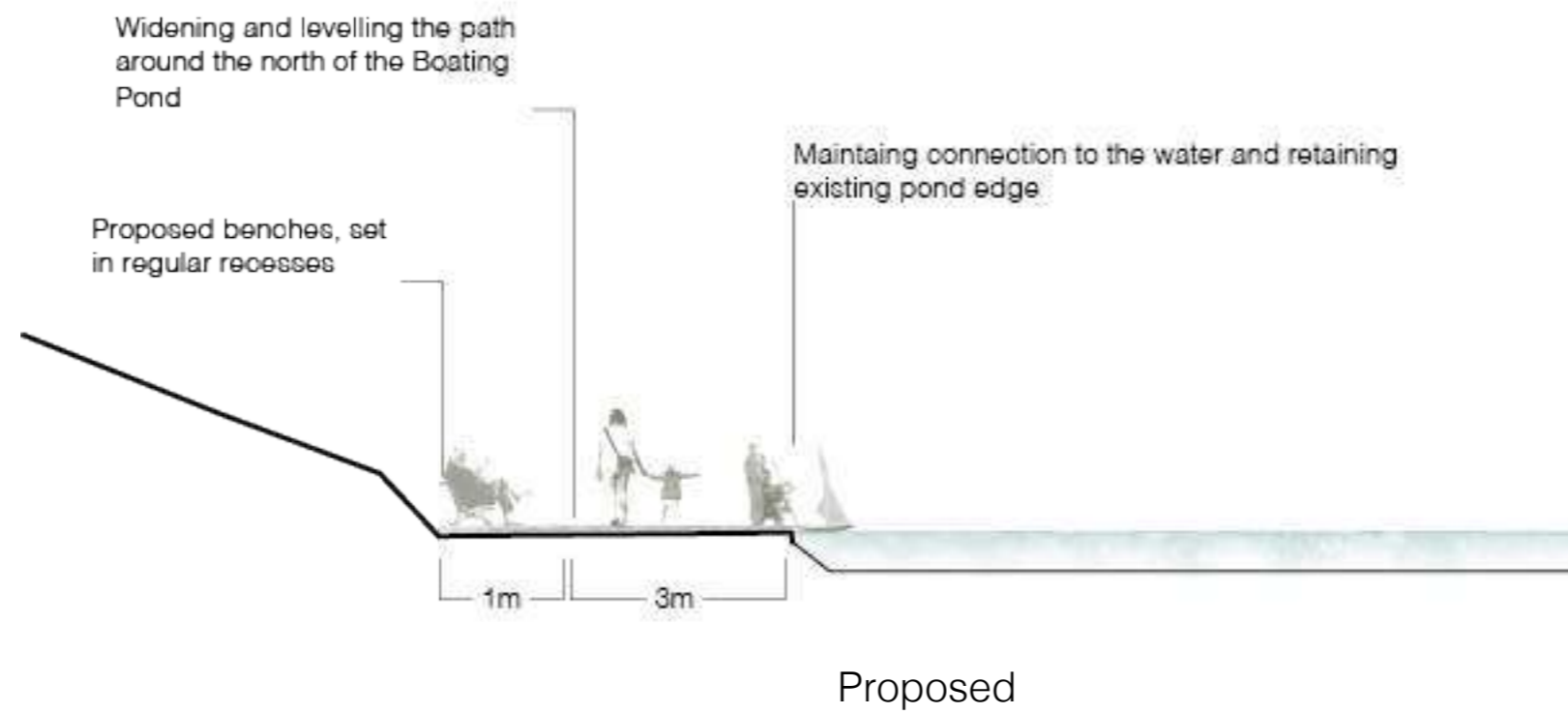
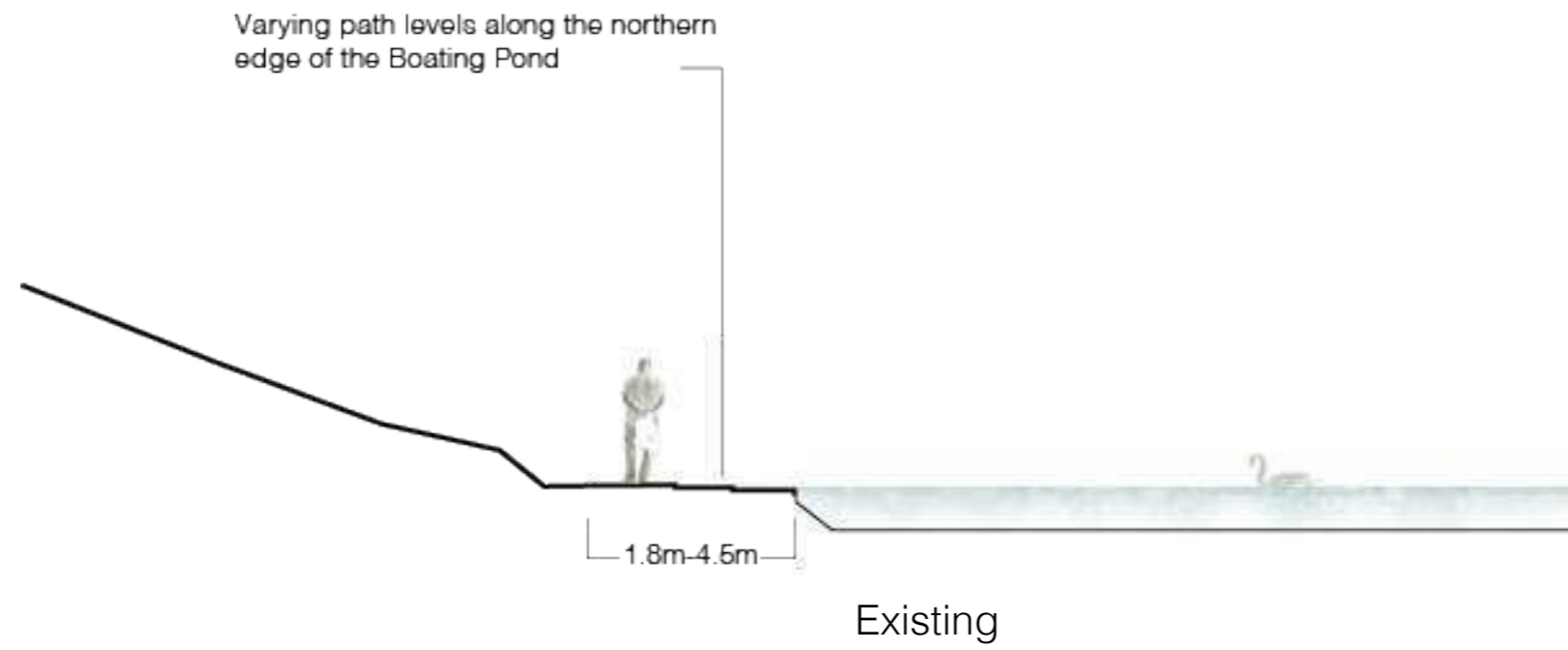






*Simplifying the path by removing the stepping will create a wider, more generous path and aid accessibility.*





*Proposed Boating Pond Path*

*Grass verge will be retained as an open space*

*Recessed seating to be included at intervals along the northern pond path*

*A simplified path will provide a wider and more accessible walking route*



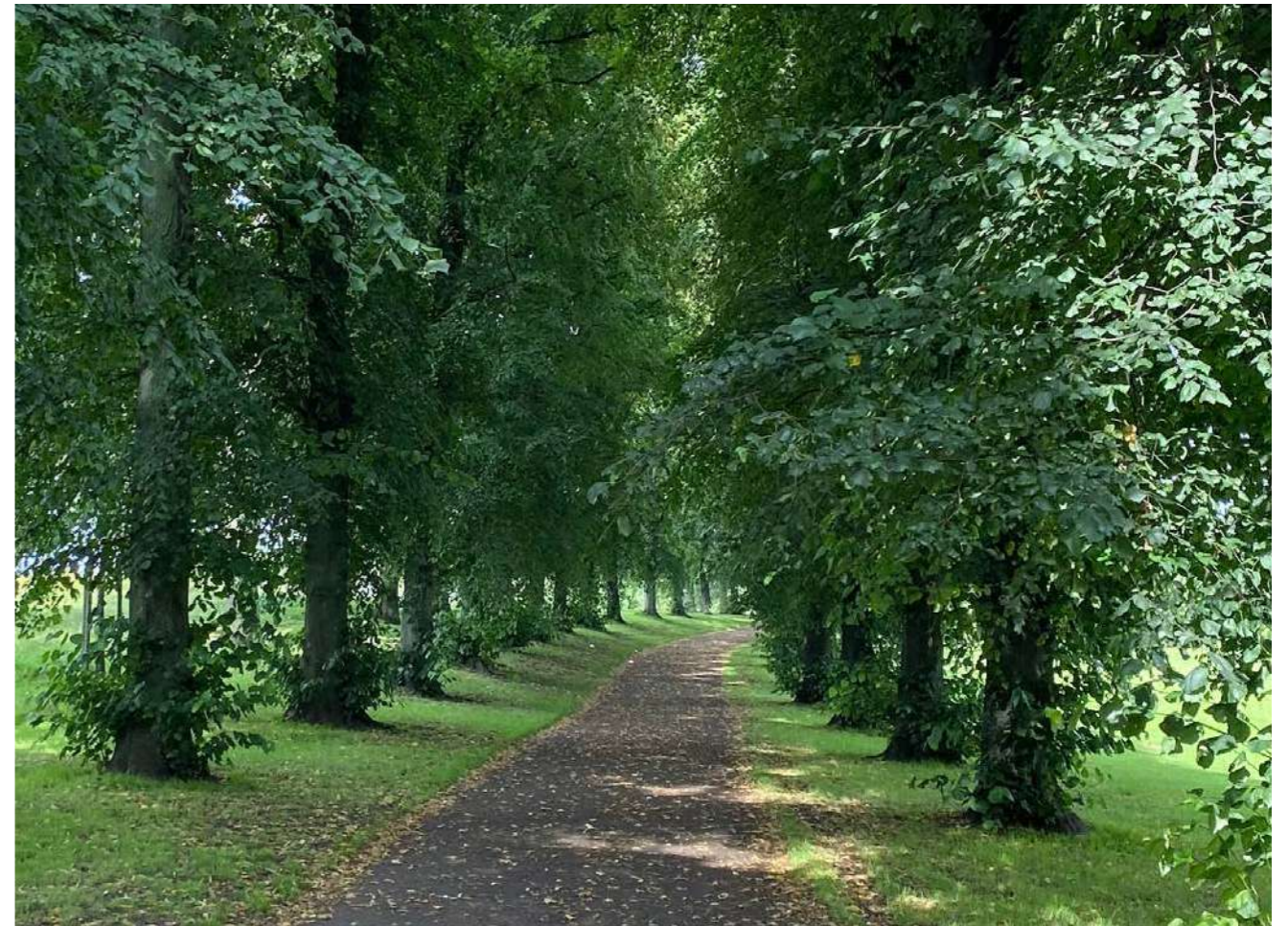
## *viii. Tree Strategy*

The key aim of this tree strategy is to ensure the health and longevity of existing trees within the park, and to supplement existing tree planting with a diversity of new species whilst maintaining its parkland character and the overall framework of trees within the park that contribute to its spirit of place.

The park has a clear spatial framework that is primarily defined by the size and organisation of trees - it is important to retain this framework as it is a key part of the park's landscape character. A number of park users that were involved in the community engagement process noted the importance of existing mature trees in defining the park's sense of place. As such, species diversification should be balanced with the need to retain key design features such as the lime tree avenue

Diversifying tree species is an important tool in building resilience to future climate change and pests and diseases. The diversification of species also promotes biodiversity within the park, and the improvement of growing conditions for existing trees is an important measure in building a climate resilient park strategy.

This tree strategy works in tandem with other proposals, such as the proposed biodiversity area and sustainable drainage strategy for the park. Trees are an essential part of the park's character and provide a variety of benefits for park users – including benefits for users' mental and physical health and wellbeing. As well as serving an important ecological function, trees are also able to alleviate the risk of surface water flooding.



The lime tree avenue

**New Tree Planting**

**Tree replacement and plugging gaps**

*Including Sycamore, lime, London plane, Norway maple, elm*

**Biodiversity Area**

*Including Birch, rowan, field maple*



**Tree Strategy: Potential species for new tree planting**



Common Lime *Tilia x europaea* - Identified as a suitable tree for planting in an urban area in the face of a changing climate and is inkeeping with existing landscape character



London Plane *Platanus x acerifolia* - Identified as a suitable tree for planting in an urban area in the face of a changing climate and is inkeeping with existing landscape character



Resistant Elm *Ulmus* 'New Horizon' - Suitable for a variety of conditions and fully resistant to Dutch Elm Disease, this tree will help replace historic elm populations



Box Elder Maple *Acer negundo* - Identified as an important species in the diversification of urban tree populations, which is an important part of building a resilient ecosystem in the face of changing climate



Aspen *Populus tremula* - Increasing the diversity of tree species is a key way in which Inverleith Park can respond and adapt to climate change. Aspen has been identified as one of several species that, collectively, can replace ash-like ecosystem traits, thus helping to rebuild ecosystems that suffered as a result of Ash Dieback.



Apple Tree - Apple trees benefit a variety of animals and insects as well as people, who would be able to pick apples in their local park. The introduction of apple trees would also help increase the diversity of tree species within the park.

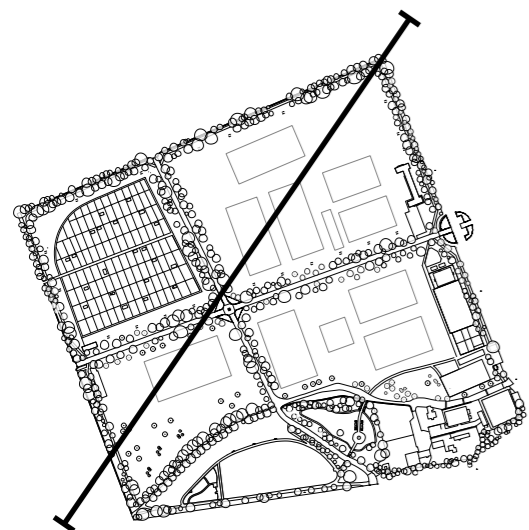
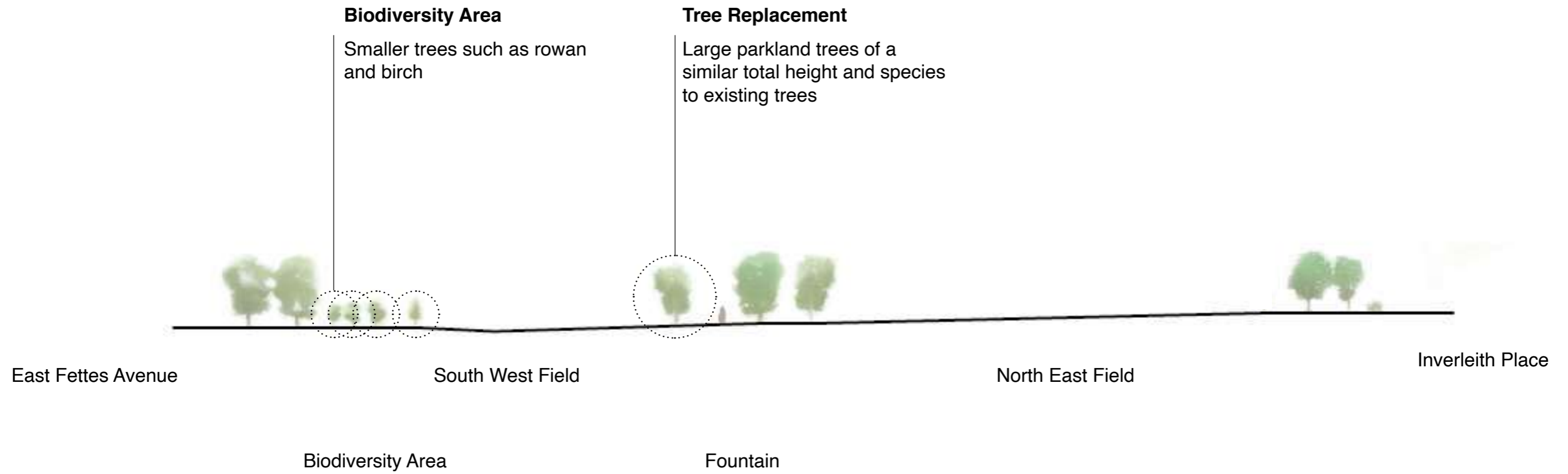


Field Maple *Acer campestre* - This tree has been identified as a key replacement species that can help recreate ash-like ecosystem traits in the face of Ash Dieback, which has firmly rooted in Edinburgh.



Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* - This tree will help enhance biodiversity within the park and contribute to the diversification of tree species. The rowan tree, as well as other species such as field maple and aspen, has been identified as a key replacement species for ash-like ecosystem traits, thus helping to guard against the wider effects of Ash Dieback.

**Tree Strategy: New tree planting and existing spatial framework**



## ix. Biodiversity Area

The proposed Biodiversity Area is conceived as a means of increasing the biodiversity value of the park and providing opportunities for people to enjoy and to interact with wildlife. The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2021 aims to 'make Edinburgh a greener city with more opportunities for wildlife, enabling people to engage with nature' by 2050 and these proposals go some way to fulfilling that aim on a local scale.

Incorporating a relaxed mowing regime, the planting of a native wildflower mix and trees such as rowan, the Biodiversity Area will also work alongside proposals such as those for a wetland area to be included in the southwest quadrant on the park as part of a wider sustainable drainage strategy. This will result in a Biodiversity Area that is diverse in character, providing interest for park users and for wildlife, particularly amphibian, invertebrate, and bird species.





*Proposed Biodiversity Area*



*Opportunities to spend time in a more natural environment*

*Retaining key views across the city*

*Working as part of a sustainable drainage strategy*

*Wildlife benefits*

## *x. Sustainable Drainage Strategy*

Inverleith Park has been identified as a key node within a larger sustainable drainage strategy for the Craighleith area. The sustainable drainage strategy for park seeks to respond to everyday flooding events as well as small, medium, and significant storms and flooding events. The plans set out here are not indicative of a final design or layout for sustainable drainage solutions within the park, but are intended to provide a design justification for such solutions should they be implemented in future.

This design justification is rooted in a thorough analysis of different character areas within the park, and an understanding of the activities that take place there. It seeks to minimise the impact upon existing land uses within the park, and tie the proposals for sustainable drainage solutions to the overall strategy set forward in the ten year masterplan for the park. For example, planting beds and permeable paving could help to define the space that links Inverleith Park to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on Arboretum Place, creating a safe and pleasing crossing area as well as a means of capturing surface water run-off.

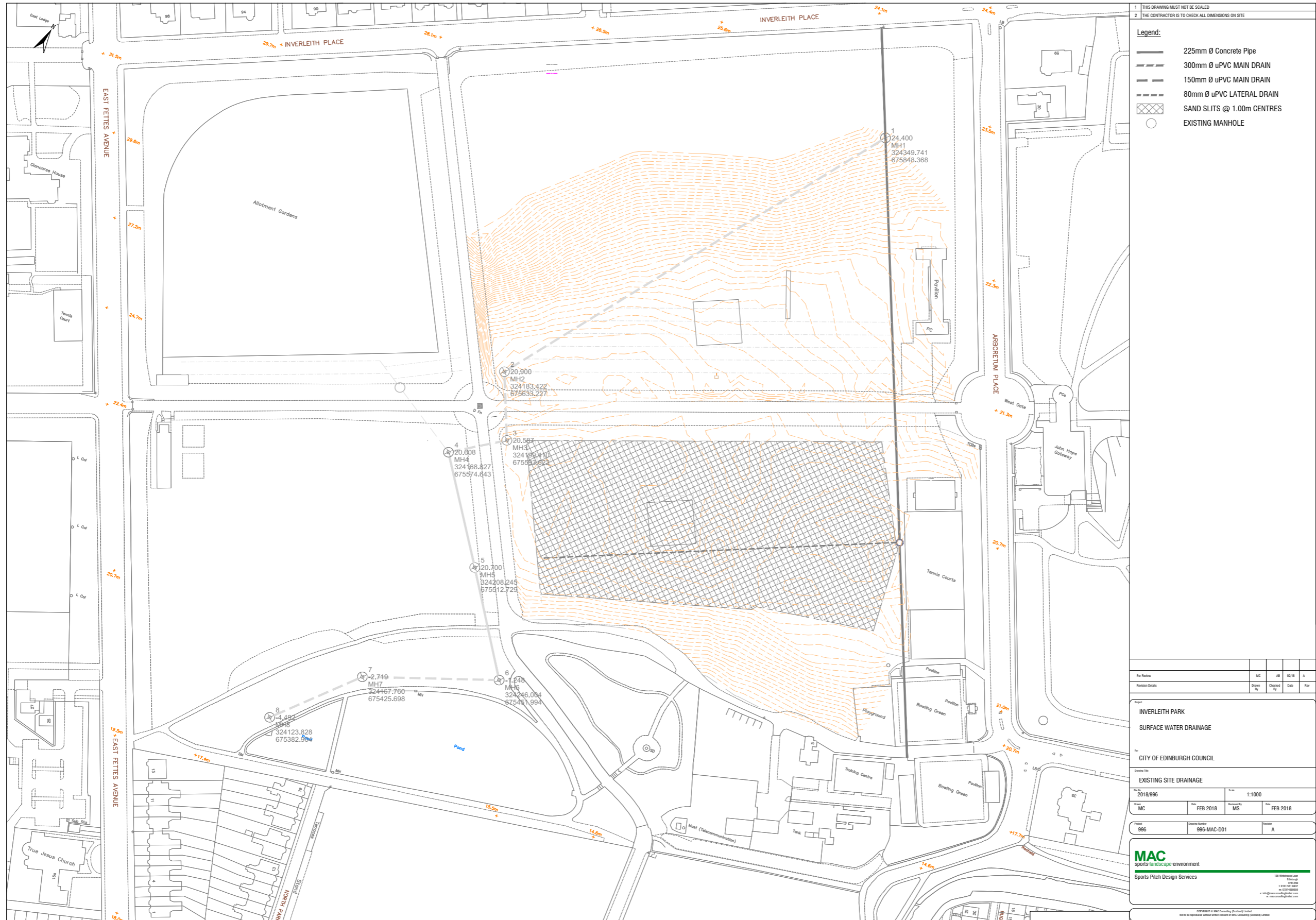
It is important to note that sustainable drainage solutions can serve a variety of purposes – they can provide valuable space for wildlife and creating pleasing green spaces that benefit people’s mental and physical health and wellbeing. In addition, the use of underground attenuation systems means that people can continue to enjoy extant park facilities such as pitch sports. The proposals set forward here recognise that Inverleith Park will have a key role to play in future flood mitigation strategies for the Craighleith area and seek to achieve this whilst also preserving what is unique and distinctive about the park. These proposals will be subject to further consultation with the community.

Separate from this, other plans for improving drainage within the park were completed in 2017, but have not yet been implemented. These plans considered options for addressing the ongoing problem of localised surface water flooding within the park. There are known issues along the main line of the culverted stream running from north to south in the northeast and southeast quadrants of the park resulting from various factors including insufficient pipe diameter, tree root ingress, and blockages. The recommendations included the replacement of drainage structures and pipes and the installation of additional lateral and secondary drainage to various points, which would involve an extensive dig through the embankment and raised ground immediately north of the pond and tree removal along the route of the existing pipe.

The sustainable drainage strategy and the proposals outlined above represent two different approaches to managing water within the park. As part of the consultation process for the sustainable drainage strategy, these two approaches should be reconciled and a new approach should be effectively communicated. An important point to bear in mind is the role that the existing underground drainage system plays in feeding water to the Boating Pond, which is a key feature of the park and should be retained.

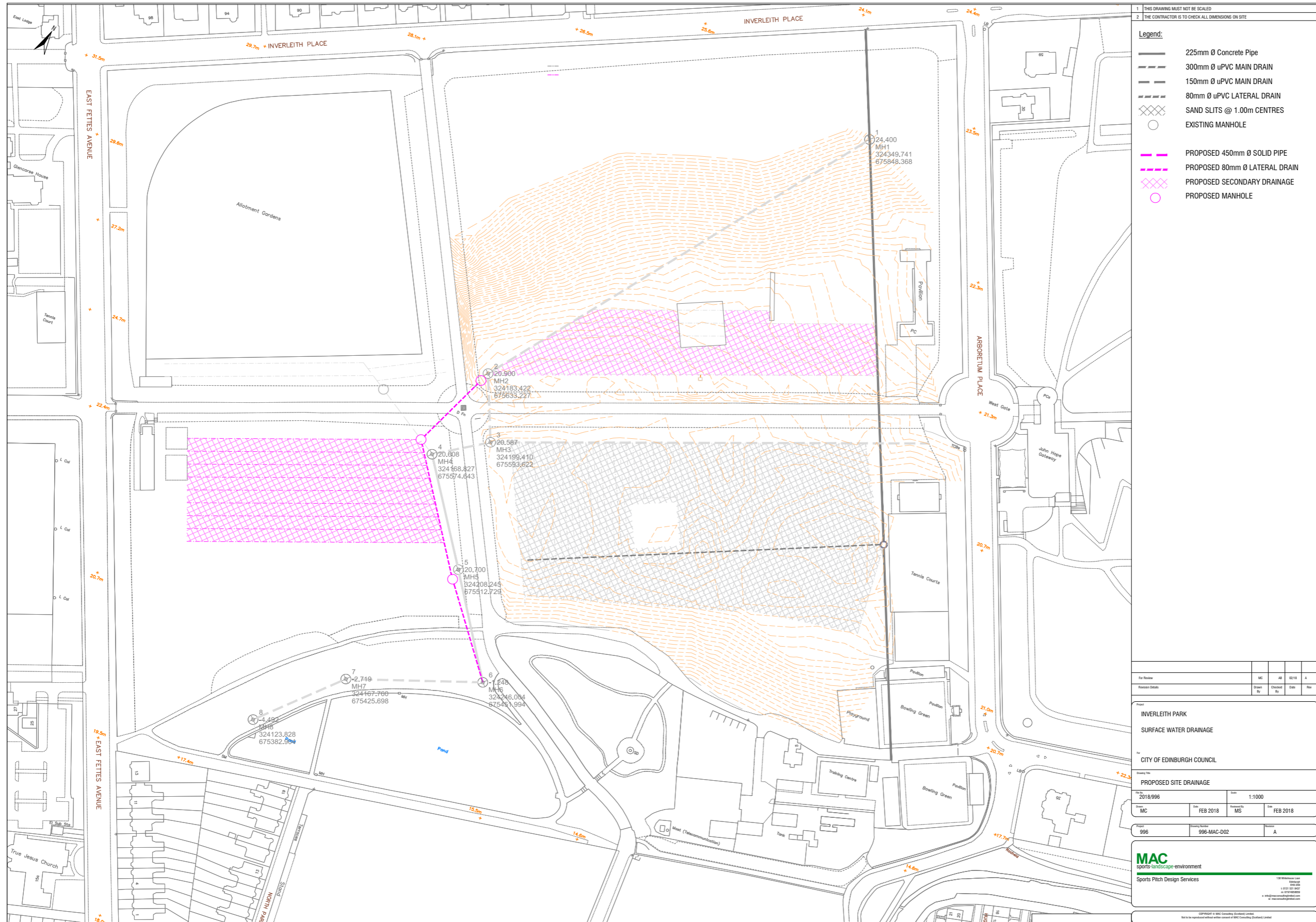


# Existing Drainage



Existing drainage (2017), MAC Consulting

# Proposed Underground Drainage (2017)



Proposed drainage (2017), MAC Consulting

**Proposed Sustainable Drainage Strategy: Key Principles**

Different options for the proposed deculverted stream attempt to minimise the impact upon existing land uses within the park.

- Option 1: Deculverted stream between pitches, possibly allowing for supply of water to Inverleith Allotments
- Option 2: Deculverted stream along eastern perimeter, creating a pleasant walking space

**Linear Swales/  
Rain Gardens**  
Everyday Flooding

**Deculverted Stream**  
Everyday flooding and all storm scenarios

**Wetland**  
Significant Storms



**Rain Gardens**  
Everyday Flooding

**Underground Flood  
Attenuation**  
Small and Medium Storms

**Lowered Pitches**  
Significant Storms

**Rain Gardens**  
Small and Medium Storms

## Sustainable Drainage Strategy: Local precedent

These pictures show the implementation of a large scale sustainable drainage solution in Hunter's Hall Park, Edinburgh. They provide a general idea of the area of land that may be needed for the daylighting of a stream such as that which runs through Inverleith Park - although various factors, such as the depth of the culverted stream, may affect this.

These images show a change in land use within the park from playing fields to a meandering stream and footpath. Playing fields have been retained to the east of the deculverted stream. At its widest, the deculverted stream, including its riverbank, takes up roughly 80m.



*Hunter's Hall Park, Edinburgh, with the extent of land taken up by subsequent burn daylighting indicated*



*Before and after: Deculverting a stream in Hunter's Hall Park, Edinburgh*

## Sustainable Drainage Strategy: Connection to RBGE

### Sustainable Drainage Streets



Greener Grangetown, Cardiff



Greener Grangetown, Cardiff



1. Atmospheric lighting to illuminate listed gates
2. Rain gardens
3. Crossing points
4. Cycle parking
5. Vehicle parking
6. Accessible parking
7. RBGE John Hope Gateway





## xi. Further Steps

The 'Greenspace Proposal (GS1-11): Inverleith Depot' identifies the Maintenance Yard as a space which holds the potential to be converted into greenspace. It states that 'The Council is keeping the operational role of its service depots under review. If that process determines that the depot at Inverleith Park is no longer required for depot functions or other services, it can be converted into green space.'

These proposals represent tentative plans for the space that have been developed in consultation with the local community and stakeholder groups. The potential for a high-end restaurant or café in the park has been identified as a potential source of funding for the City of Edinburgh Council and for the park. In discussions with park users and with the working group, it was decided that the best possible location for such an establishment would be the old farmhouse that is currently used as offices. The building that is being leased to Ferranti Bowling Club until May 2022 was not deemed suitable owing to the general consensus that the focus of this building should remain as a community-orientated building.

There is also space within the Maintenance Yard for the expansion of the Sundial Garden, creating another secluded and quiet space within the park where people can be engaged in communal activities such as gardening with the Friends of Inverleith Park. Elsewhere in the Maintenance Yard, there is space to develop a community croft, with communal growing beds and facilities such as a seed and book exchange and a possible separate entrance onto the Lover's Lane path that connects to Arboretum Avenue. This would increase the opportunities for local people to become involved in their local park and alleviate some of the pressure that currently exists upon the allotments, which has a ten year waiting list.

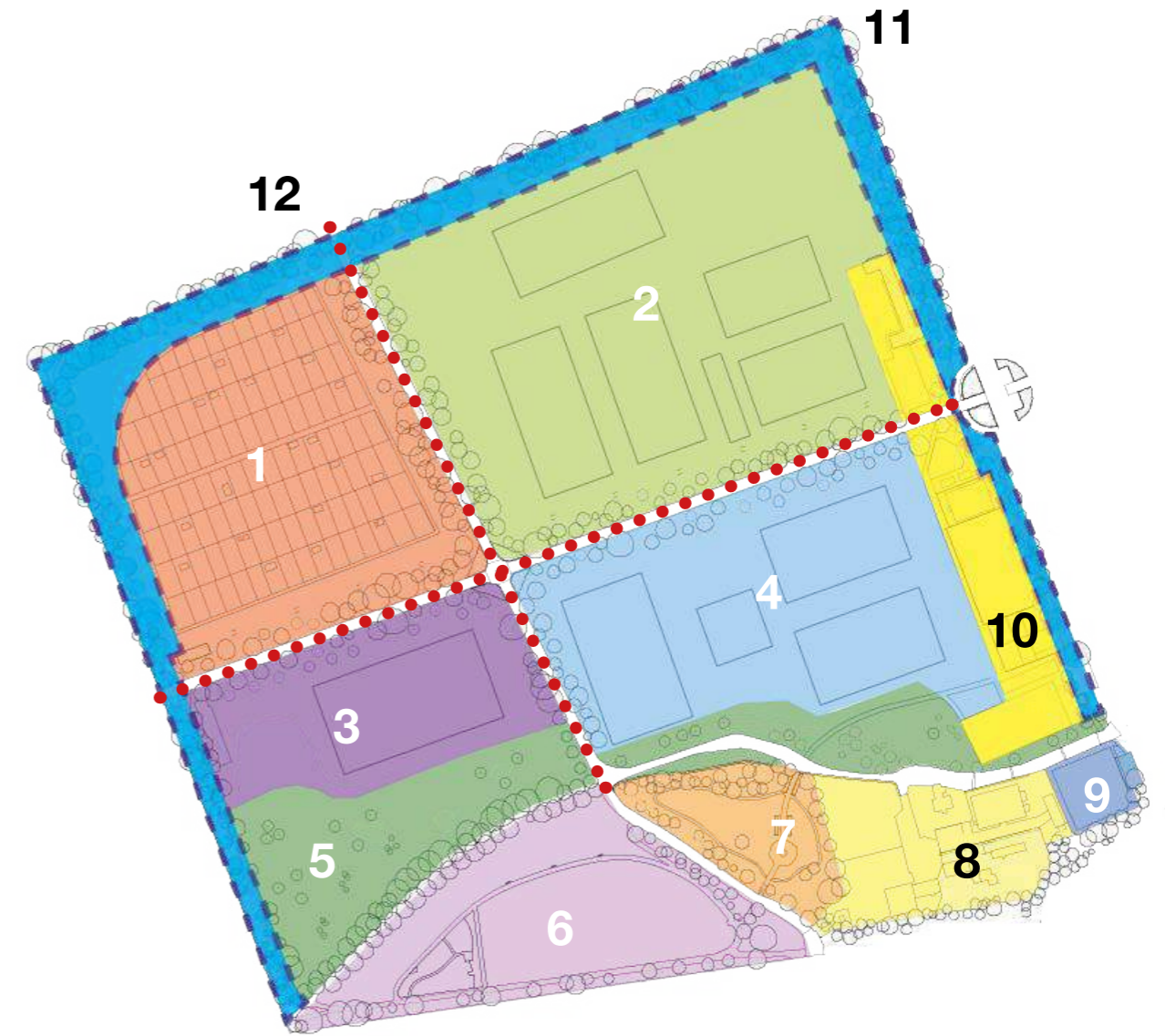


-  Potential sundial garden extension
-  Potential high-end cafe/restaurant
-  Potential community croft
-  Potential reopening of closed-up entrance onto Lover's Lane



## xii. Proposed Zones

1. Allotment Gardens  
*Area dominated by allotments, with mature trees following the central paths*
2. North East Field  
*Used for grass sports*
3. South West Field  
*Used for rugby with pavilion*
4. South East Field  
*Used for grass sports, ball and tennis courts, petanque, play area and bowling green area*
5. Biodiversity Area  
*A transition zone between the lower park and the upper playing fields*
6. Pond Area  
*Boating pond with reed bed and boardwalk*
7. Sundial Garden  
*Ornamental garden area*
8. Maintenance Yard  
*CEC parks and forestry work space, with options for future development*
9. Tanfield Bowling Club  
*Private bowling club*
10. Games + Play  
*Sports and community facilities along the eastern edge of the park, including changing rooms, multipurpose pitches, petanque courts, a new playpark and proposed bouldering facilities*
11. Perimeter Path and Fitness Area  
*Formalising informal paths around the perimeter of the park, which is lined with mature trees*
12. Cruciform Paths  
*Framed by mature trees*



Key changes between the Proposed Zones and Existing Zones diagram include the formalising of the informal paths around the perimeter of the park, creating a distinct zone that frames the north, east and west of the park. The games and play space along the eastern perimeter of the park is recognised as a distinctive space within the park, with the addition of new and improved children's play facilities and bouldering facilities. Finally, the proposed biodiversity area creates a wildlife buffer and pleasing natural space between the north and south of the park.

## 6. Spirit of Place

### Historical Overview

The land that was to become Inverleith Park was purchased by the Edinburgh Corporation from the Rocheid family in 1889. The purchase also included a farmhouse and a building identified on historic maps as South Inverleith Maine. This farm was later transformed into a plant nursery, which supplied parks across Edinburgh.

It was during the next decade that the park began to take the shape that we would recognise today, with its characteristic paths laid out in a cruciform pattern and a fountain in memory of Councillor John Charles Dunlop installed in the centre of the park. A ride for horses was also established along the northern perimeter of the park, and the newly built Arboretum Place came to separate the park from the nearby Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

A pond was created in the southwest of the park during the early 1900s and became a popular destination for model boaters. Councillor Kinloch Anderson presents the park with a sundial and the shape of the Sundial Garden (then known as the Rose Garden) is formalised. In 1914, a Report on Public Parks commends the park, and draws particular attention to its 'two gymnasia, one for boys and one for girls: two Bowling Greens, four Tennis Courts, and two Golf Courses; also a Ride for Horse Riding exercise. Football, Cricket, and Shinty are permitted, and there is a good Shelter – Ladies' and Gentlemen's Cloakroom, and Pavilion for Football and Cricket.' Not all of these activities remain in the park, but the diversity of activities and uses is an important part of the park's landscape character.

Aerial photographs from 1949 indicate that the allotments, presumed to have been established during the Second World War, once extended across the two westernmost quadrants of the park. Historic maps dating from the 1960s indicate that the allotment area

has shrunken to its current size, in the northwest quadrant of the park. A miniature golf course has been established in the southwest quadrant of the park, and the horse ride along the park's northern perimeter has been removed.

At the turn of the millennium, the pond, which suffered from poisonous algae, was restored and a wetland was established in the west of the pond. During the 2010s, the sundial that was gifted to the park by Councillor Kinloch Anderson was restored with support from the City of Edinburgh Council and the Kinloch Anderson family.

Historic Photographs: Inverleith Park



Cruciform paths and fountain (c. 1902-1911)



Views across the park (date unknown)



Tree avenue (date unknown)



Winter in the park, courtesy of Andrew Bingham (c. 1950-60)



Sundial Garden, courtesy of Arthur Dutch (date unknown)

## Historic Photographs: Boating Pond



Children at the boating pond (date unknown)



Children at the boating pond (early 1900s)



Looking east along the lime tree avenue (c. 1957)



A busy day at the pond (date unknown)



Looking north across the pond, with model boats and spectators (c. 1926)



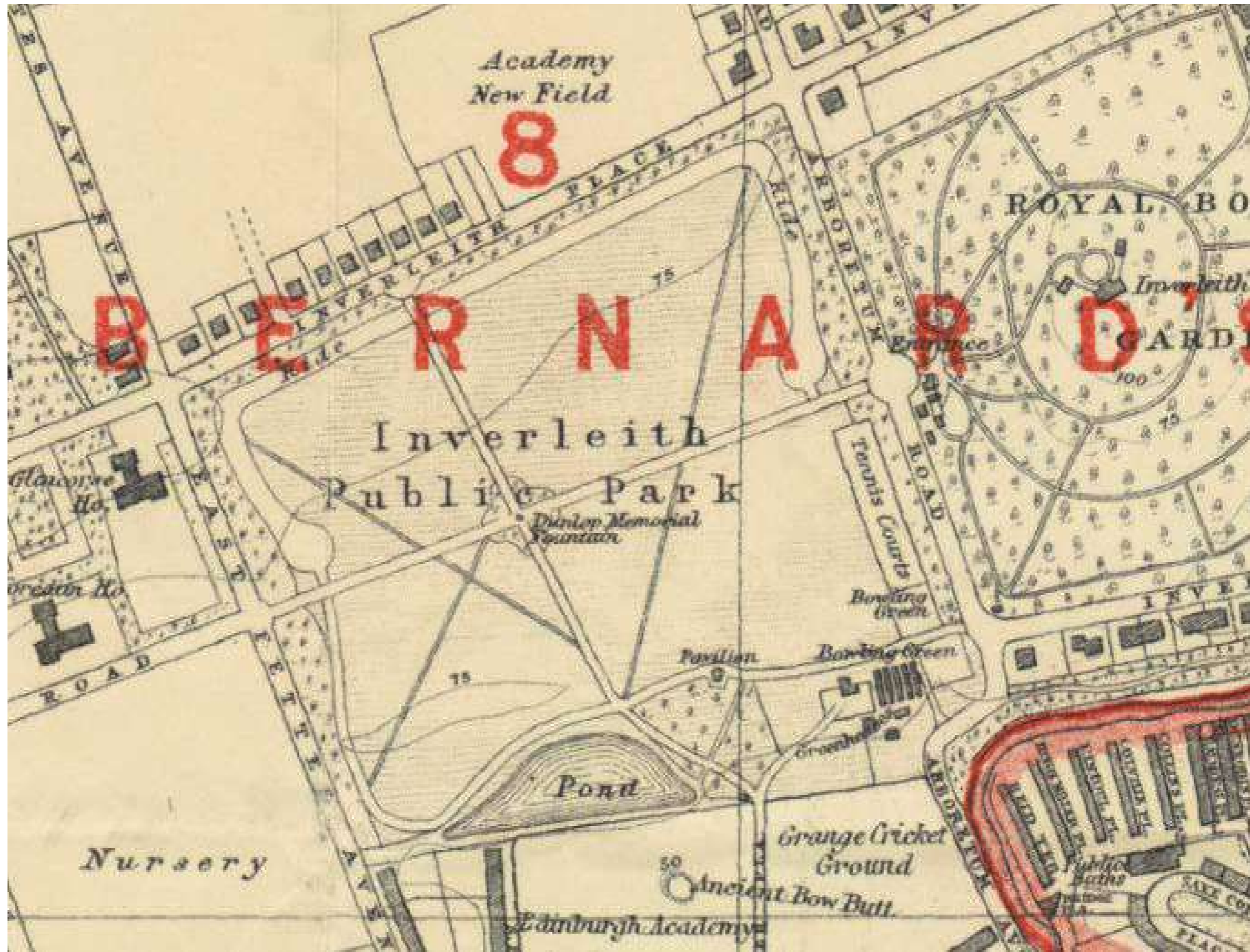
Views across the city (date unknown)



Historic map showing a horse ride along the northern perimeter of the park, additional smaller entrances along the perimeter and the distinctive cruciform paths that exist to this day. Note the absence of a pond and the present day lime tree avenue and path, and the existence of South Inverleith Mains.



Historic map showing the development of sports facilities along the eastern edge of the park, as well as the establishment of a pond and a path running above it along the top of the embankment. South Inverleith Main has been demolished and a pavilion stands in its place.



Historic map showing a path around the perimeter of the park. The allotments in the two westernmost quadrants of the path would soon follow, but would reduce their footprint to the northwest quadrant of the park following the Second World War.

# Inverleith Park Timeline

## 14th Century

The land is owned by the Ramsay family, who are thought to have built the old Inverleith Castle, which was situated to the south of where the playground is today.

## 1774

Inverleith House is designed and built for the Rocheid family, which is now an art gallery within the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh.

## 1889

The land that was to become Inverleith Park was purchased by the Edinburgh Corporation from the Rocheid family. The purchase also included a farmhouse and a building referred to as South Inverleith Maine. The farm was later transformed into a plant nursery, which supplied parks across Edinburgh with trees and, in particular, chrysanthemums.

## 1890s

Paths are set out in a cruciform pattern within the park. A ride for horses is established along the northern perimeter of the park and the newly built Arboretum Road separates the park from the neighbouring Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh.

## 1660s

The land was passed to the Rocheid family.

## 1877

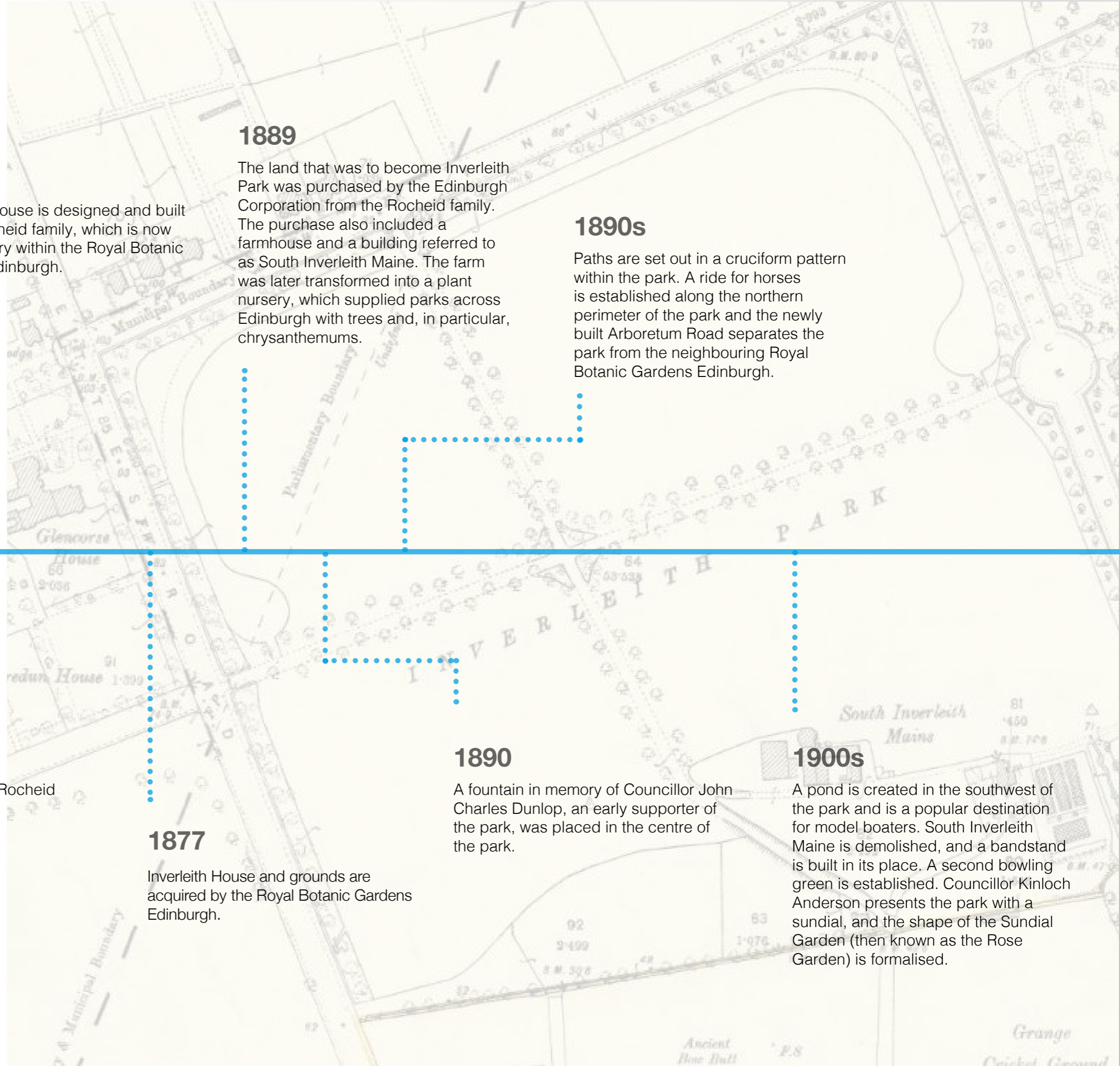
Inverleith House and grounds are acquired by the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh.

## 1890

A fountain in memory of Councillor John Charles Dunlop, an early supporter of the park, was placed in the centre of the park.

## 1900s

A pond is created in the southwest of the park and is a popular destination for model boaters. South Inverleith Maine is demolished, and a bandstand is built in its place. A second bowling green is established. Councillor Kinloch Anderson presents the park with a sundial, and the shape of the Sundial Garden (then known as the Rose Garden) is formalised.





"So passes time. Alas! How swift."

*Inscription on the sundial gifted by Cllr Kinloch Anderson*

## 1914

A Report on Public Parks commends the park, and draws particular attention to its "two gymnasia, one for boys and one for girls: two Bowling Greens, four Tennis Courts, and two Golf Courses; also a Ride for Horse Riding exercise. Football, Cricket, and Shinty are permitted, and there is a good Shelter - Ladies' and Gentlemen's Cloakroom, and Pavilion for Football and Cricket".

## 1949

Aerial photographs indicate that the allotments, presumed to have been established during the Second World War, once extended across the two westernmost quadrants of the park.

## 1970s

Historic maps show that a playground has been established next to the Ferranti bowling green. The bandstand is now demolished.

## 2010s

The sundial and the Sundial Garden is restored, with support from Edinburgh Council and the Kinloch Anderson family. A fitness trail is opened around the perimeter of the park and metal fitness equipment is installed next to the children's play park.

## 1930s

Historic maps indicate that a new avenue of trees have been planted in the southwest of the park, following the line of the embankment above the pond.

## 1960s

The allotment area shrinks to its present size and a miniature golf course is established in the southwest quadrant of the park. The horse ride along the park's northern perimeter is removed.

## 2000s

The pond, which suffered from poisonous algae, is restored and a wetland is established in the west of the pond. A proposal to establish a skatepark in the south-west of the park is abandoned after significant local opposition.

## 2011

Plans to sell the council's depot (on the site of the old farm and nursery) falls through in the face of local opposition. Having recently been designated as 'urban space' in council planning documents, it is reclassified as 'green space'.

rankinfraser  
landscape architecture

## Spirit of Place Statement

Inverleith Park is a popular green space that is enjoyed by a variety of users. It is widely recognised for its exceptional sporting facilities – including cricket, rugby, and football pitches as well as tennis, table tennis, petanque and bowling facilities. The park also has a longstanding relationship with the Edinburgh Model Boat Club, who make regular use of its boating pond. Many people have a lifetime's association with sports in the park. Others find inspiration in watching people engage in sporting activities, and feel that it motivates them to exercise.

Many people also enjoy visiting the park for the peace and quiet that it provides in the middle of their busy lives and within a busy part of the city. Some park users may not have a garden of their own, and so the park functions as a kind of proxy back garden for those that want to experience the benefits of being outside and in pleasing, green surroundings.

People particularly value the park's wide, open spaces and views of the Edinburgh skyline. This is one key reason why the park is popular with visitors who come to the park in order to watch fireworks displays across the city during Hogmanay and at other times of year.

Many respondents to our 'Spirit of Place' survey were keen to emphasise the lifeline that Inverleith Park offered during the successive lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the importance of the park for people's mental and physical wellbeing extends beyond that particular moment in time. For many people, the park is part of a daily routine – a routine that encompasses the highs and lows of life. Some respondents emphasised the importance of the park for them during cancer treatment, or during other times of ill health. For others, the park and the community that exists around it provides companionship. One respondent noted that the 'beauty of the lime tree walk' helped calm them after the death of their wife. Another puts it very simply: 'Always raises spirits'.

People feel a strong emotive and familial association with the park. Several respondents brought up childhood memories of playing football in the park, or feeding ducks down at the boating pond. For many people, their relationship with the park appears to be inherited – or, at the very least, something that began in childhood and which has continued into adulthood. Several noted how fortunate they felt to have been able to enjoy the park in childhood, as a parent and again now as a grandparent.

People particularly value the connection that the park provides to nature and to wildlife. Inverleith Park sits within a network of green and blue spaces which include the old railway network which has since become a popular footpath and cycleway, graveyards and private playing fields, the Water of Leith Walkway and the Water of Leith itself. Indeed, the name "Inverleith" describes the area's relationship to this body of water.

One of the key themes to arise from the 'Spirit of Place' consultation process however was the diversity of its uses and spaces – that there is something for everyone in the park. It is '[a] big green space in the City with lots of nooks and crannies, a place to escape to and see the world and the city, the ability to find quiet spaces or busy spaces depending on the mood, and a place to watch the seasons change, both in the park and on the horizon.'

**Key Phrase**



*A wide, open space – a place for community and wildlife, with stunning views and something for everyone*

## Themes

### Playing Sports

“Playing sport, walking and relaxing, a restful greenspace in the city and conduit to many areas in the north of Edinburgh.”

“I have played cricket there for nearly 40 years”

“For me as a competitive petanque player it’s important for me to have access to the petanque pistes for practise. The clubhouse allows my club to host events that promote my personal development and development of the club itself, opportunities for members and members of the public to get involved. This club currently has the best facilities of all clubs in Scotland.”

“Watching the various activities motivates me to do some exercise.”

### A quiet, green space

“A vital place to relax, recharge and exercise. This is especially important as we have no garden of our own.”

“Have lived in the area for over 20 years don’t have a garden so this is my open space.”

### Wide, open spaces

“Great to have a beautiful Park with nice views of the city in a local area. I went walking and running there, as well as catching up with friends.”

“Hogmanay is such a wonderful atmosphere in the park, watching the fireworks and counting down to the new year.”

### Health and wellbeing

“I’m a runner, and Inverleith Park is my go-to running route. It’s great park for wandering around and clearing your head, and it was a huge part of my mental wellbeing during lockdown.”

“I have had poor health re breast cancer and heart ops. So regular walking in the park has been great. Seeing the change of seasons is very pleasing.”

“A few years ago I had to walk every day for 6 weeks for breast cancer treatment. It was an extremely privileged reassuring way to return to reality walking home through a mixture of people and nature! (that and a bacon butty).”

“Companionship. Volunteering in the Sundial garden.”

“Sitting on the black metal bench one winter day and letting my husband know about my diagnosis of breast cancer, having just come from the Western: and being lucky



enough to still be able to sit on it 5 years on.”

“The beauty of the lime tree walk helped calm me after my wife died.”

“Tending my allotment has been very important as a safe outdoor environment. I live alone so being able to meet and talk to other park users and allotmenters has been an important lifeline for me.”

“Always raises spirits”

### **A park for life**

“Going to the park with my Dad to use the swings and slide in the olden days (more than 50 years ago).”

“As a young mum, taking my child to the playpark and pond. Bench for my mother and father where he used to sit watching the swans.”

“The park has been important to us for nearly 50 years. We were frequent visitors especially when our children were young, and now we go there with grandchildren.”

“Having used the park for all of my life, as a child, as a parent and retired this park means so much to me and my family. It saved my sanity many times, during illness, bereavement and recently for uplifting walks through the rose garden etc during lockdown.”

### **Nature and wildlife**

“A place to get away from houses, cars, buses, with its own natural history, swallows in summer, redwings in winter.”

“A breath of fresh air and connection with nature”

### **Something for everyone**

“A big green space in the City with lots of nooks and crannies, a place to escape to and see the world and the city, the ability to find quiet spaces or busy spaces depending on the mood, and a place to watch the seasons change, both in the park and on the horizon.”

“Have used the park for over 40 years and enjoyed it when the children were young, when they used it to meet friends, when I could take the dog there and meet people, walk the grandchild, watch the wildlife. Endless opportunities!”

# 7. Potential Ten Year Implementation

		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
1	SUDS consultation and implementation	[Black]										
2	Current bowling green building given over to community use	[Black]	[Black]									
3	Public toilets introduced in park											
4	Lighting design and implementation		[Black]	[Black]								
5	Young people involved in graffiti/street art makeover of existing park buildings		[Black]	[Black]								
6	Tree planting and biodiversity area		[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]						
7	Consultation on new playground		[Black]	[Black]								
8	Build new playground and older play facilities			[Black]	[Black]							
9	Build new paths and carry out improvement on existing paths					[Black]	[Black]					
10	New fitness trail					[Black]	[Black]					
11	New entrances					[Black]	[Black]					
12	Additional seating in park					[Black]	[Black]					
13	Sundial Garden extension (subject to CEC decision)							[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]
14	High end cafe to farmhouse (subject to CEC decision)							[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]
15	Community croft and reopening of Lover's Lane entrance (subject to CEC decision)							[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]	[Black]

Plans are subject to change and further development



## References

- p.4 'The Strategy for Justice in Scotland: Evidence Paper', 21st September 2012  
'Key Views - North', City of Edinburgh Council  
'Inverleith: Conservation Area Character Appraisal', City of Edinburgh Council
- p. 10 'City of Edinburgh Council Spatial Data Portal'  
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- p. 23 Ground Control, Nature playground: RBG Kew  
Ground Control, Nature playground: RBG Kew
- p. 29 Jacopo Gennari Feslikenian, Into the Wild Playground: Openfabric, Dmau  
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- p. 46 Fred Montwell, Apply Tree - licensed under Creative Commons  
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- p. 61 Historic Maps: 1891-1914, National Library of Scotland
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