

# Ballymun Plaza

Dublin City, Ireland

Design and Part 8 Planning Proposal for  
the town centre of Ballymun

Presented to

Dublin City Council



**AECOM**



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#### Quality information

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#### Revision history

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The background features a faint, light-colored grid pattern of a city street layout. Two thin black lines intersect: one runs diagonally from the top-left towards the bottom-right, and the other runs from the top-right towards the bottom-left, crossing the first line.

# Introduction and Context

**01**

# Introduction Project Understanding

Dublin City Council has engaged AECOM to develop the design for a proposed town centre plaza in the centre of Ballymun in north Dublin City. The development of this public realm design is to lead from the presentation of various options through to the eventual Part 8 planning application material required to ensure that the proposal can continue towards its eventual realisation. The Ballymun Local Area Plan 2017, outlines that there 'is a need to define a 'civic precinct' within the centre of Ballymun through public realm improvements to identify and the focal point and welcome point for visitors and businesses.'

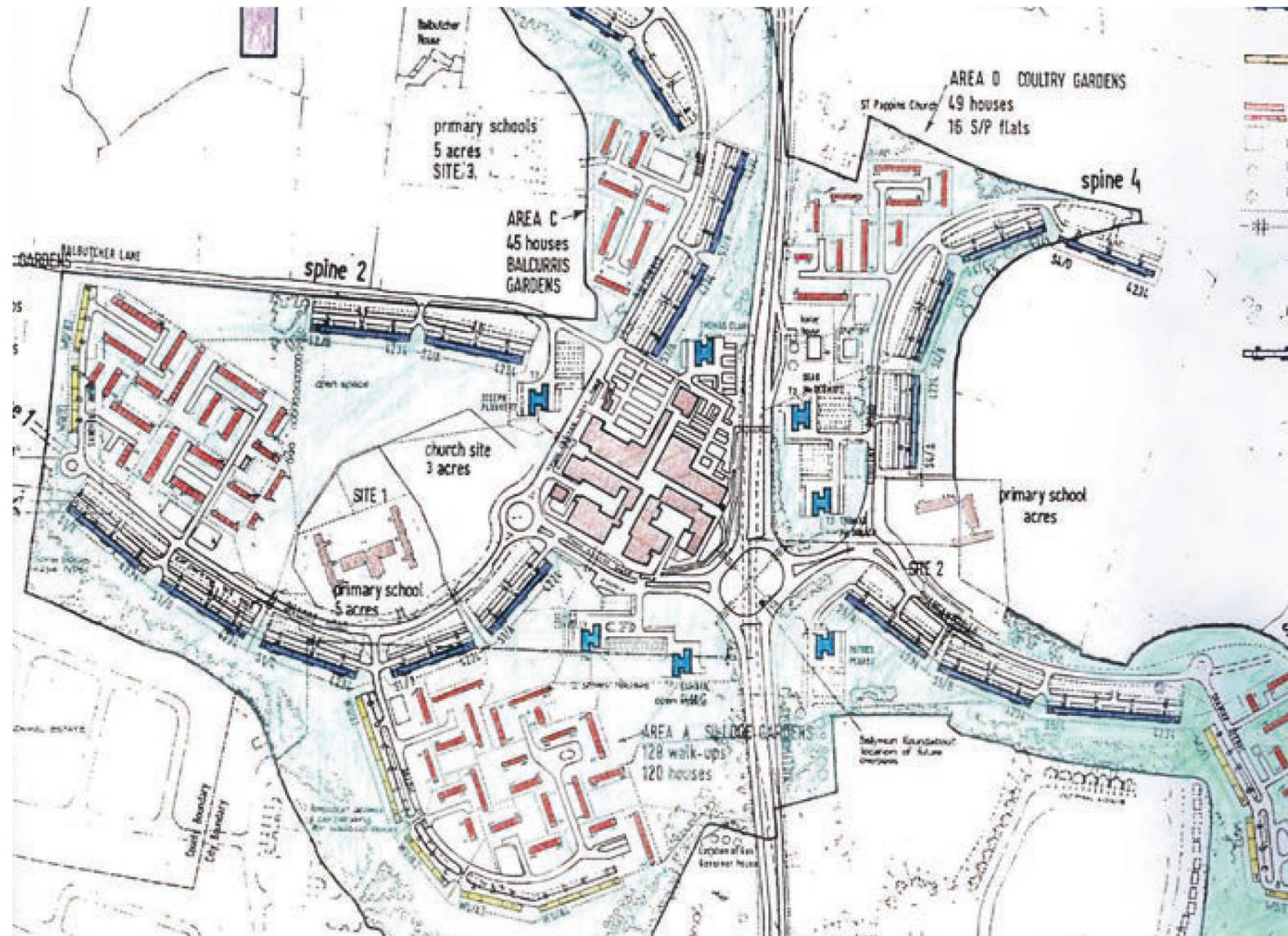
## Project Delivery

In accordance with the agreed scope of works and deliverables from AECOM to Dublin City Council (DCC), it is understood that AECOM are to provide the following items:

- In-depth analysis and project precedent studies
- Utility survey
- Concept formation
- Provision of minimum three design options to inform discussion
- Provision of a Landscape Plan and adequate accompanying drawings for a Part 8 planning application
- Provision of tree and planting design
- Provision of a lighting design
- Provision of cycle parking
- Incorporation of the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) across the site
- Provision of a signage strategy
- Review of existing CCTV provision and the inclusion of associated recommendations
- Consideration of a prospective future Metro North route
- Exploration of the location of the existing bus stop and recommendations regarding alternative locations
- Exploration of the relationship of the space with the existing shopping centre (due for demolition) and possible future development

Ballymun Plaza as seen in its wider context in the north of Dublin City. As demonstrated through annotation, the development site sits at the crux of various land-uses, community facilities and open spaces. ▶

Between the late 1940s and the 1950s, Dublin Corporation made allowance for the inclusion of Ballyfermot and Ballymun as suburbs of Dublin City, laying the groundwork for their eventual development into large-scale residential satellite districts. Ballymun Housing Scheme Master Plan, as seen in development below, begins to mould the district into a master-planned residential neighbourhood of tall blocks. ▼





Community School

Travelodge Hotel

Axis Arts Centre

Gateway Student Village

**Ballymun Plaza**

Student Accomodation

Ballymun Shopping Centre

Retail Centre

# Analysis Site

Ballymun town centre is recognised as a key community node in the wider context of the north of Dublin City, located in the heart of a vibrant mixed-use centre and accessible both locally and regionally along the site's multi-modal corridors. The Ballymun Local Area Plan 2017 outlines the use of the space to be 'an extension the axis, improved outdoor space for events and a 'marker' for the centre of Ballymun'. These elements form the basis for the design approach.

## Vehicular Movement

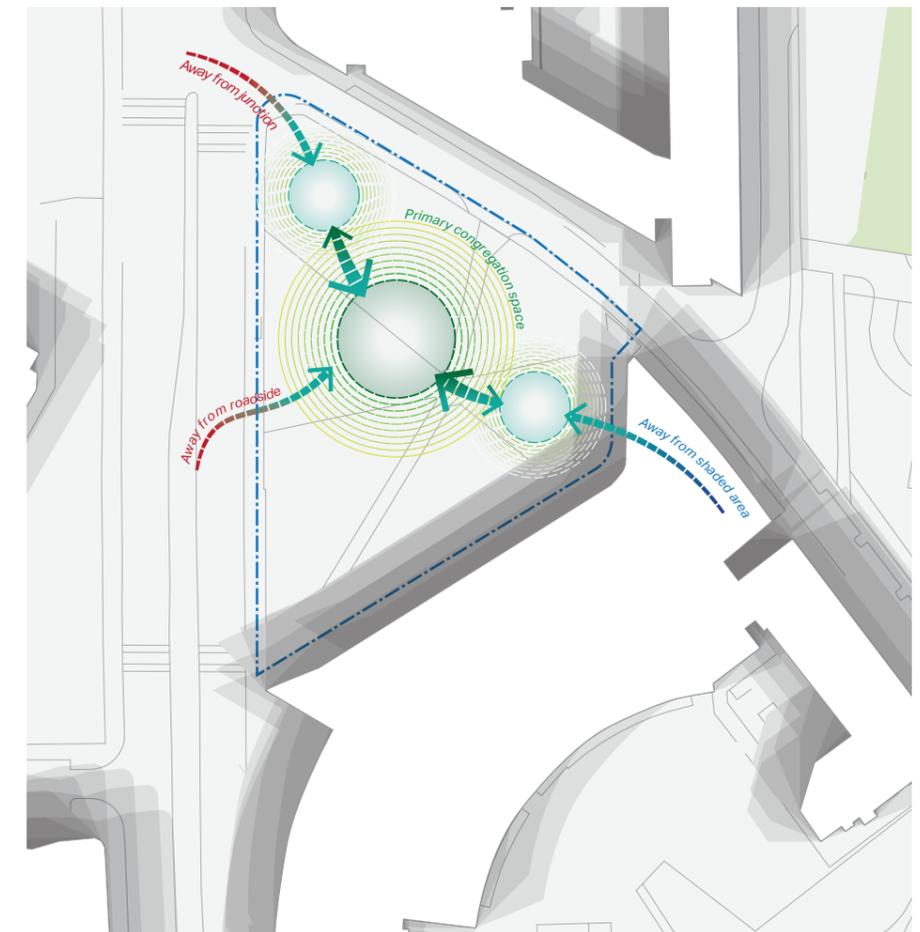
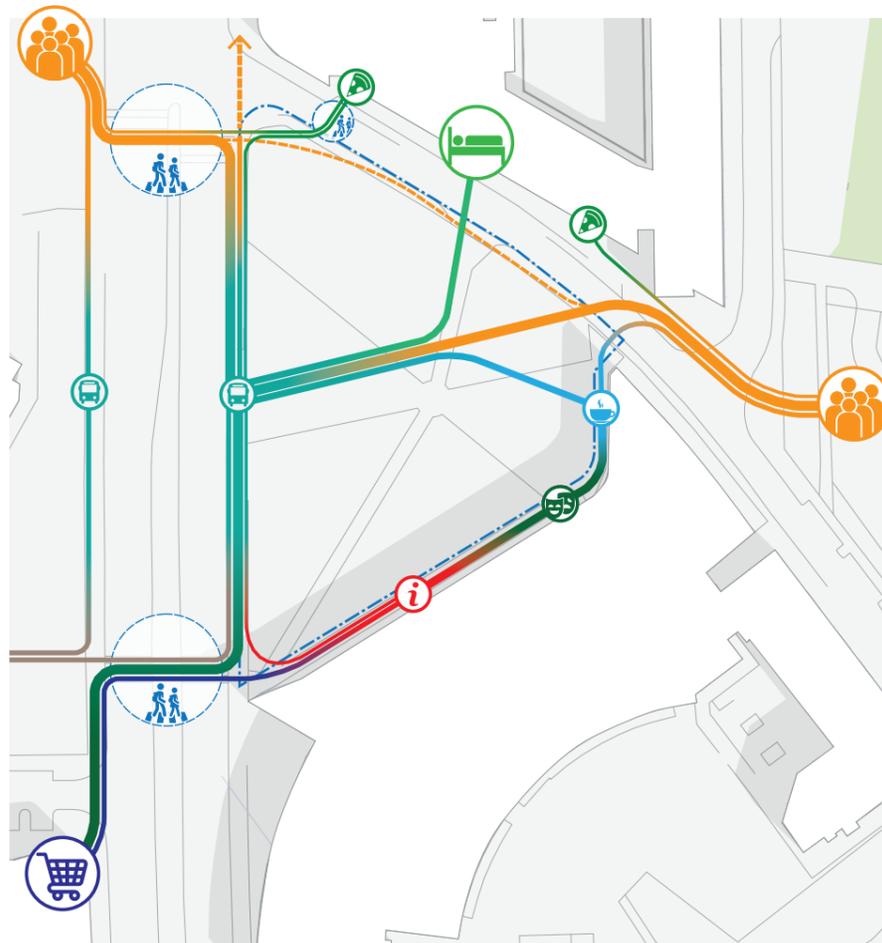
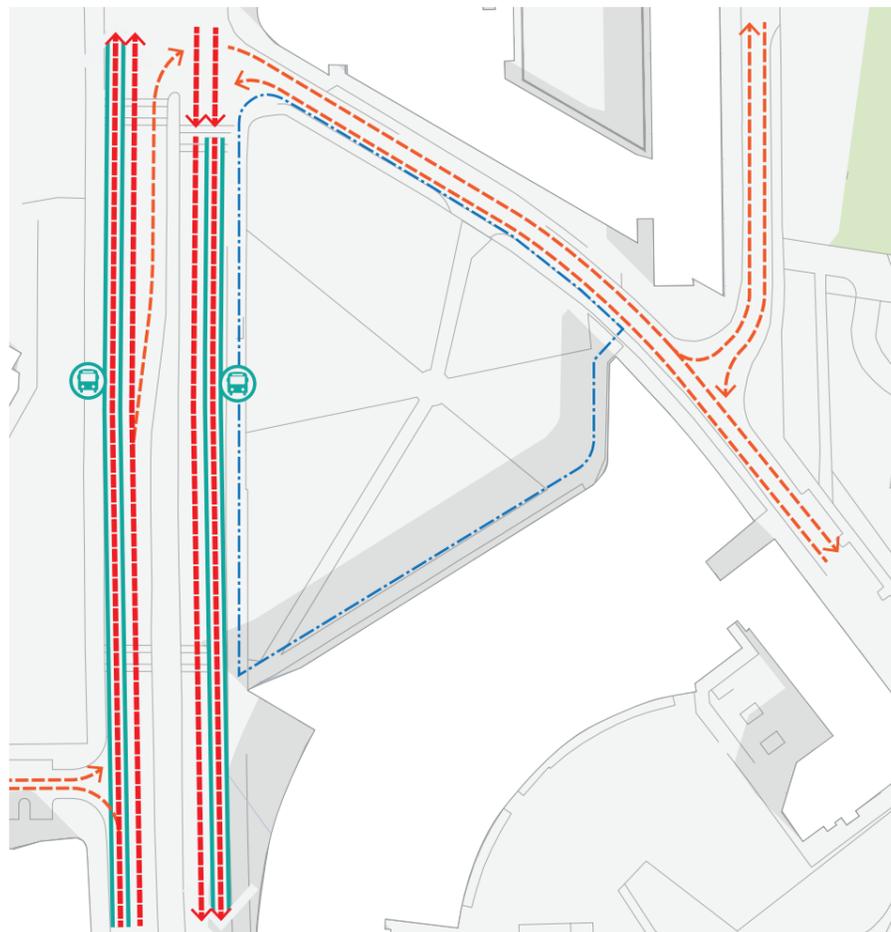
The site is flanked along the west side by a busy dual carriageway, offering strong vehicular connection opportunities while also posing challenges relating to pedestrian access, sound and visual disturbances from the busy traffic and also pedestrian safety.

## Pedestrian movement

An analysis of key pedestrian desire lines within and around the site begin to illustrate the site's significance both as an hub of activity (node) as well as being a transitional place (link) between retail, residential, community and sporting nodes in the area.

## Central focus of site

It is recognised that there are many deterrents around the site which will encourage movement towards the centre of the site; these include heavy vehicular traffic, the permeability of pedestrians through the space and shaded areas along the south.



## Human comfort

Studies have led the design team to analyse the variation of programmatic options within the site, including multi-use and performance spaces. This study has also demonstrated the capacity of the site, using varying densities of congregation.







# Design Approach

# 02

# Design Approach Preliminary Options



**Preliminary Option A** Soft Ground Form

Adopting a series of mounds to divide the space into usable and adaptable community play spaces, while allowing the generous provision of a spill-out space in front of the town community arts centre.



**Preliminary Option B** Soft Tree Form (Clusters)

Using a wider distribution of site-wide lawn mounds to create a greater buffer from the interface with the primary road, and beginning to consider also the ground plane as a surface for pattern and form.



**Preliminary Option C** Soft Tree Grid

Developing from the soft landscape forms comes a harder geometry of tree canopies that sits overhead, allowing for a generous provision of green space at ground level with ample tree canopy above also.





**Preliminary Option D** Hard Tree Grid

An examination of just the tree canopy, as the soft landscape ground elements have been removed, creating a more rigid pattern of tree clusters that also begins to inform a linear paving pattern.



**Preliminary Option E** Linear Ground Plane

Reducing the tree quantities slightly, and focusing more on the rigid ground plane pattern that merges comfortably with the rectilinear reference to the historic tower's footprint.

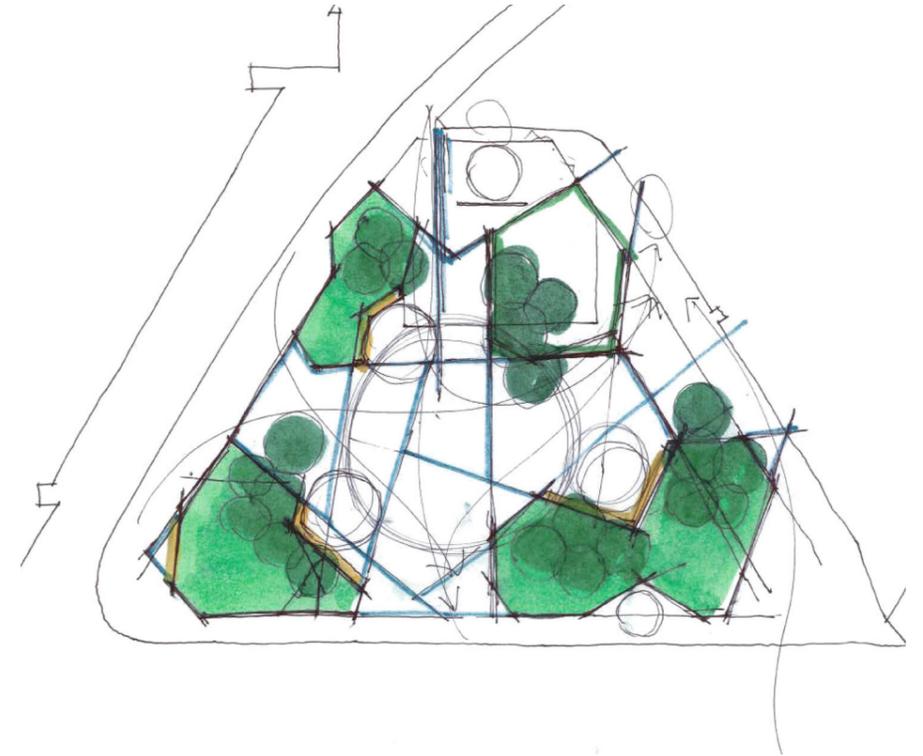
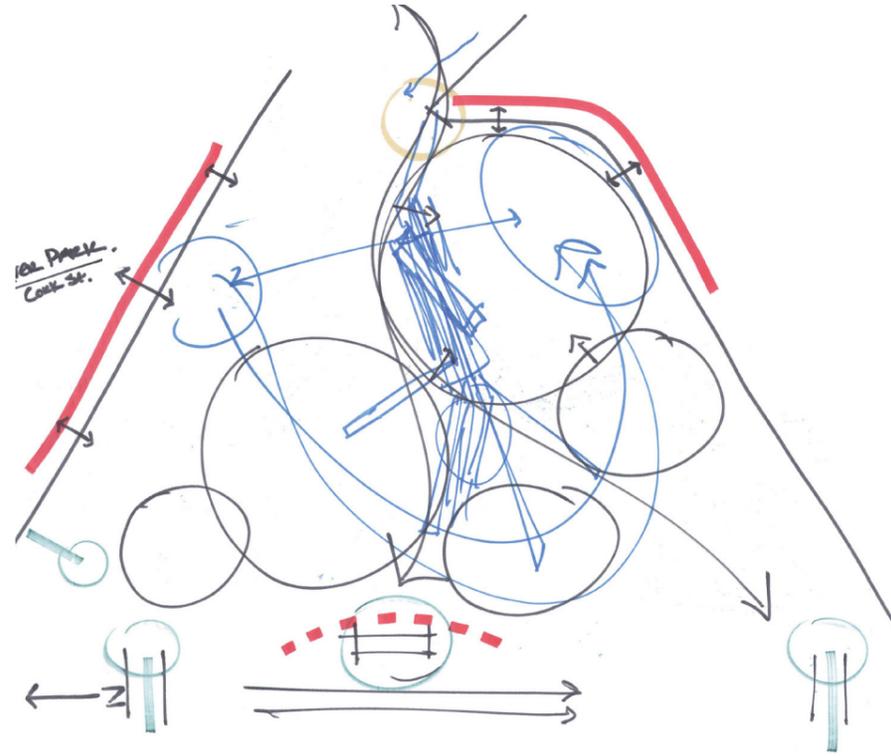


**Preliminary Option F** Abstracted Ground Plane

Abstracting the rigid geometry of the ground plane into a more playful and less orthogonal form, while also providing opportunities for more direct routes through the site using 'cuts' through the softscape areas.



# Design Approach Refined Option



## Refined Option Step 1 Return to site wide dynamic study

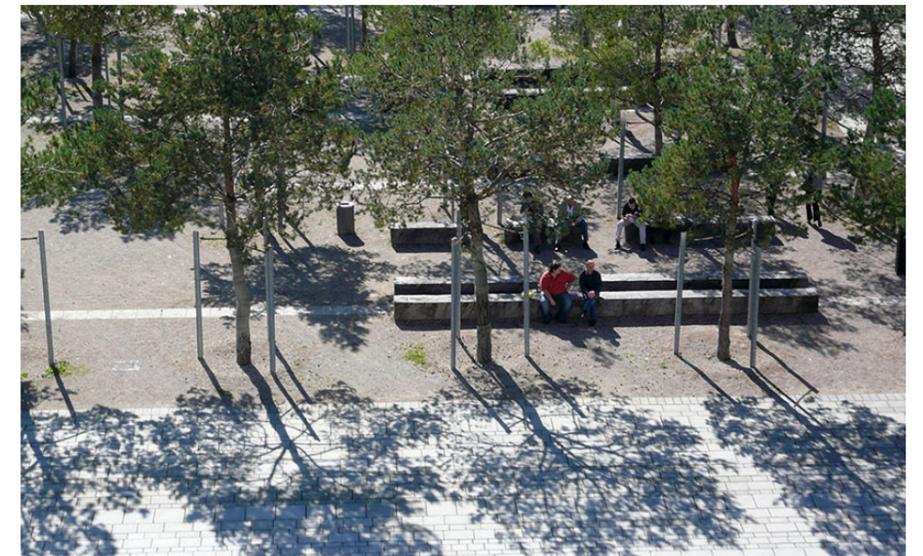
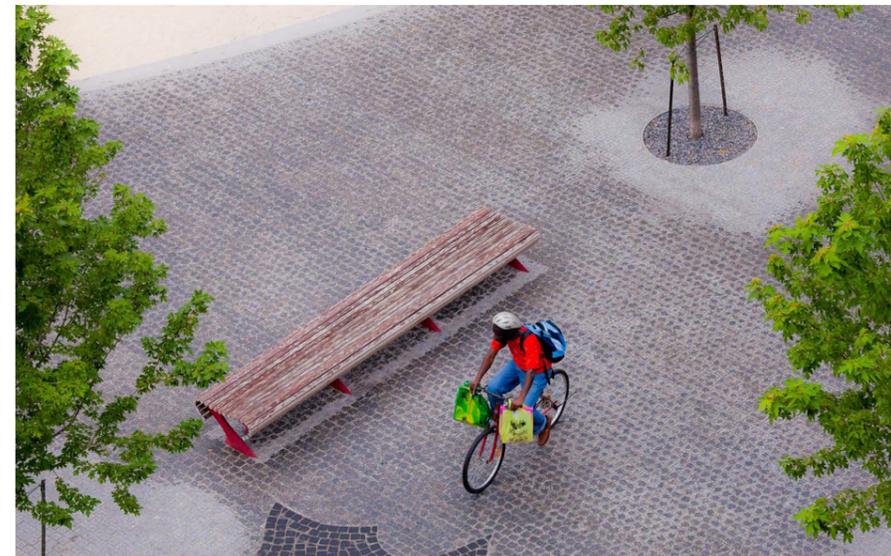
Spatial divisions into and around the site are examined at a broad level, developing zones of congregation and lines of movement. This begins to inform a link-and-node arrangement across the site.

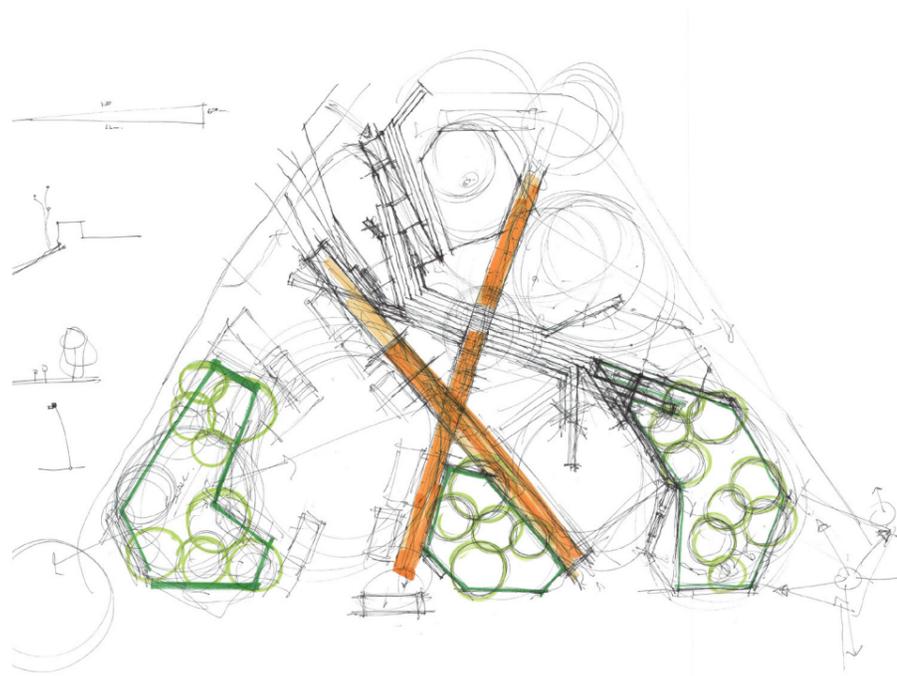
## Refined Option Step 2 Understanding of Movement

These zones inform a high level system of programmatic areas that are scaled appropriately to their context and adjacencies. For example, the areas next to the bus stop and cafe become significant nodes of arrival and departure.

## Refined Option Step 3 Creation of site wide forms

Geometric styles are studied in plan and in section, developing a site wide language that allows for the fluid movement of people while retaining a cohesive and rigid form.





**Refined Option Step 4** Developing a Hierarchy of Space

Combining the principles of the programming study with that of the geometric and spatial sketches allowed the site wide design to become far more spatially clear and defined, which in turn develops a strong hierarchy of movement.



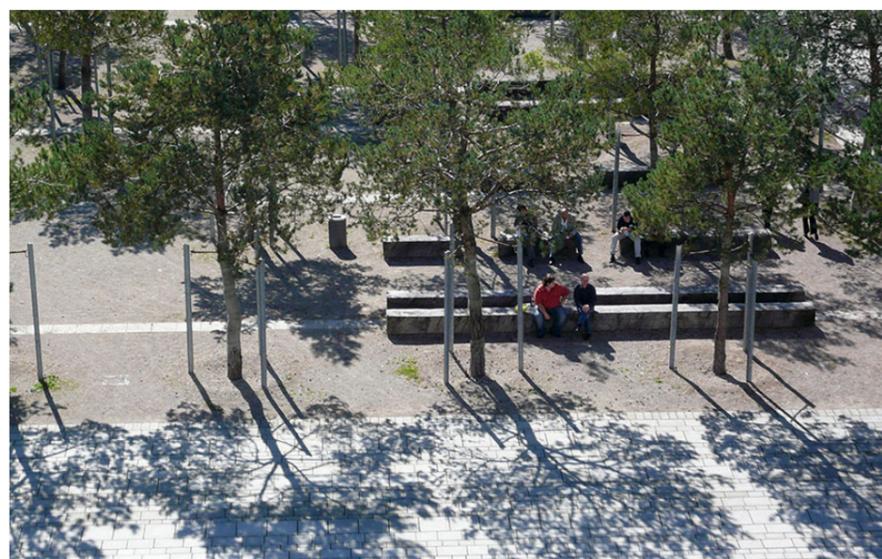
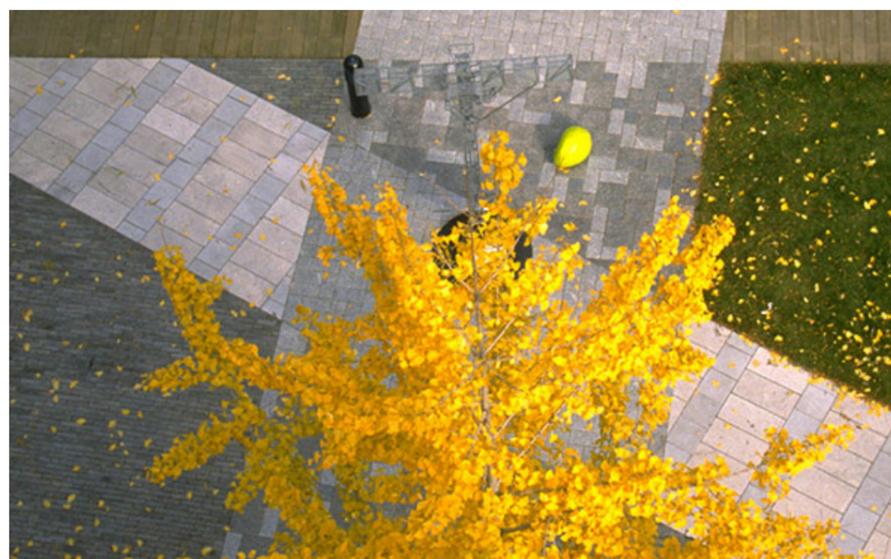
**Refined Option Step 5** Broad Programmatic Studies

These programmatic zones are now examined individually: populating each area with elements, such as seating, lighting, and market stalls. There remains a refinement of these areas, but the scheme becomes clearer in its intent.



**Refined Option Step 6** Adapting the Details and Geometries

A greater use of road side planted buffer zones and a more dynamic use of strong geometric lines creates a more refined series of spaces across Ballymun Plaza, each taking into consideration criteria such as scale, access, and programme.







# Site Design

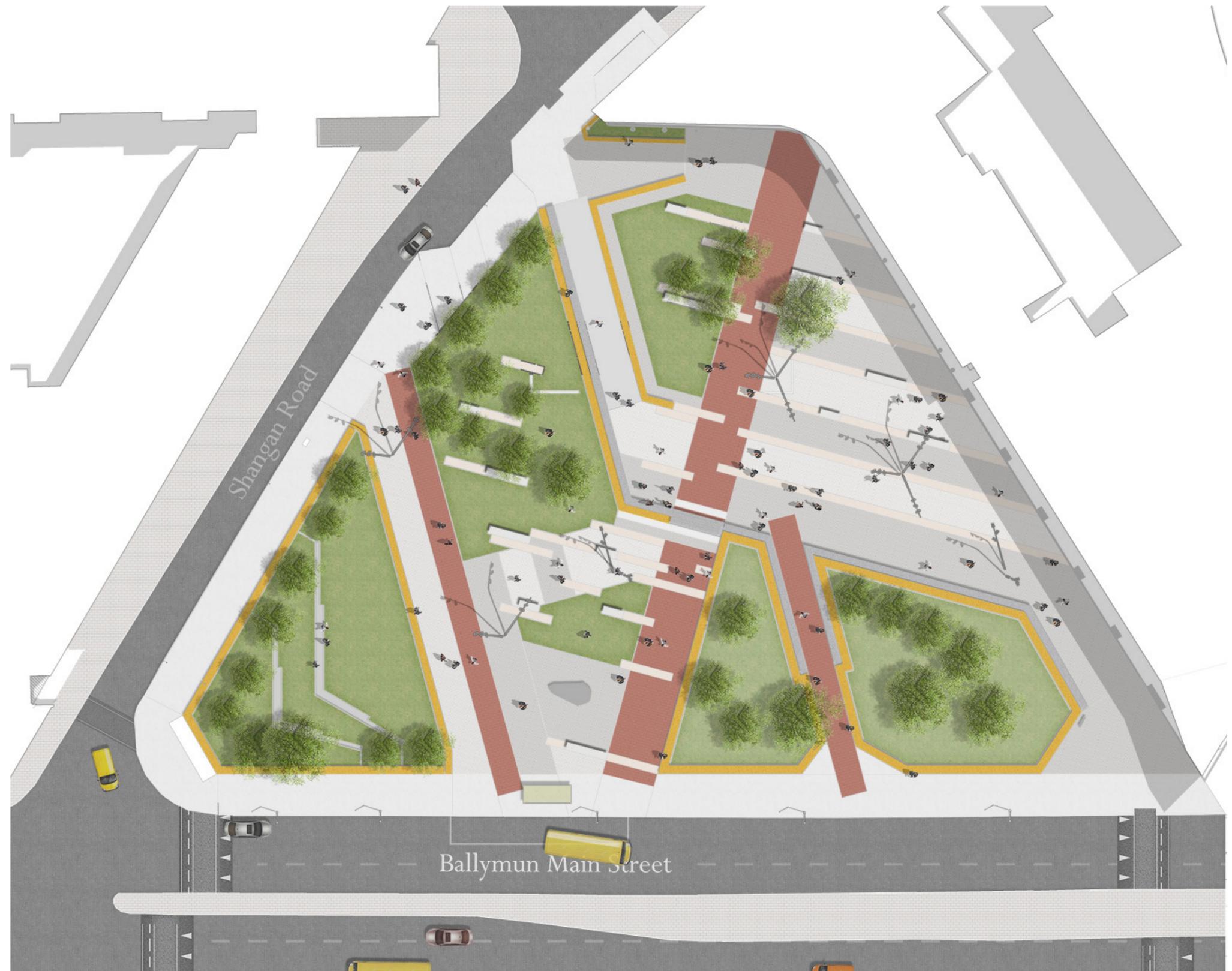
# 03

## Site Design Public Realm Plan Development

The Ballymun Local Area Plan 2017 defines the need for 'new areas to be designed with a high degree of permeability' and 'to improve the connectivity within the existing area adding new links and completing missing links.' Ballymun Plaza is designed around a system of direct and efficient access lines connecting the varied programmatic elements in the centre of the town. Using these lines to inform the creation of smaller spaces across the wider plaza ensures a varied programme of places and event spaces for the plaza and environs.

Combining areas of hard and soft ground planes allows for the hosting of various events - markets, performances, small family congregations - within a single high quality town centre space.

Concrete seating elements 'slide' across the site, leaving traces of hard paving that merge and blend the main link arteries of hard paving with the soft nodal lawn spaces built into the scheme.

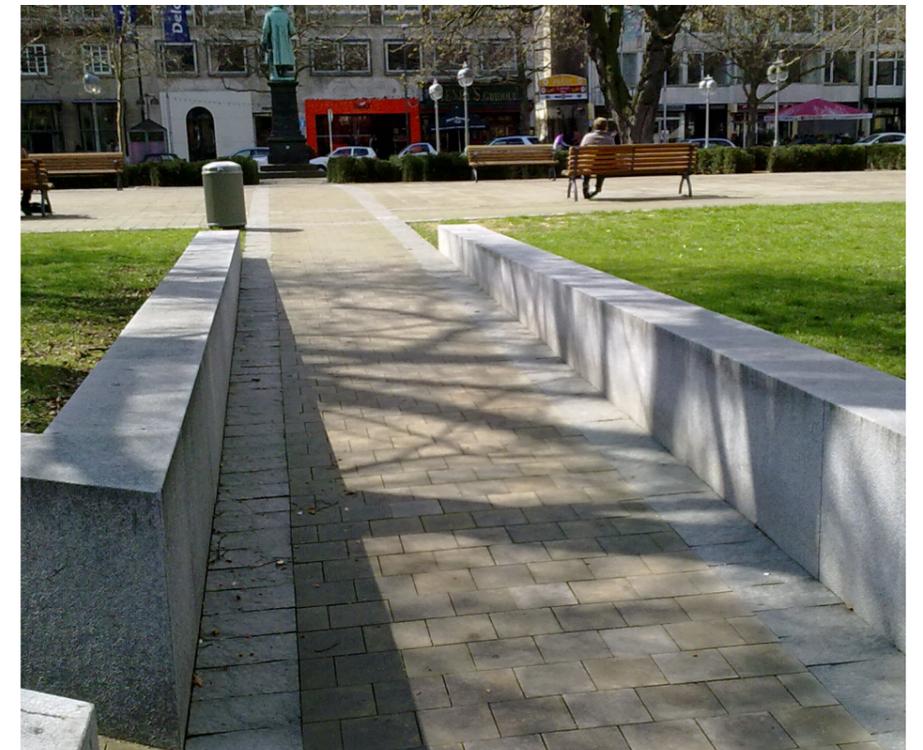
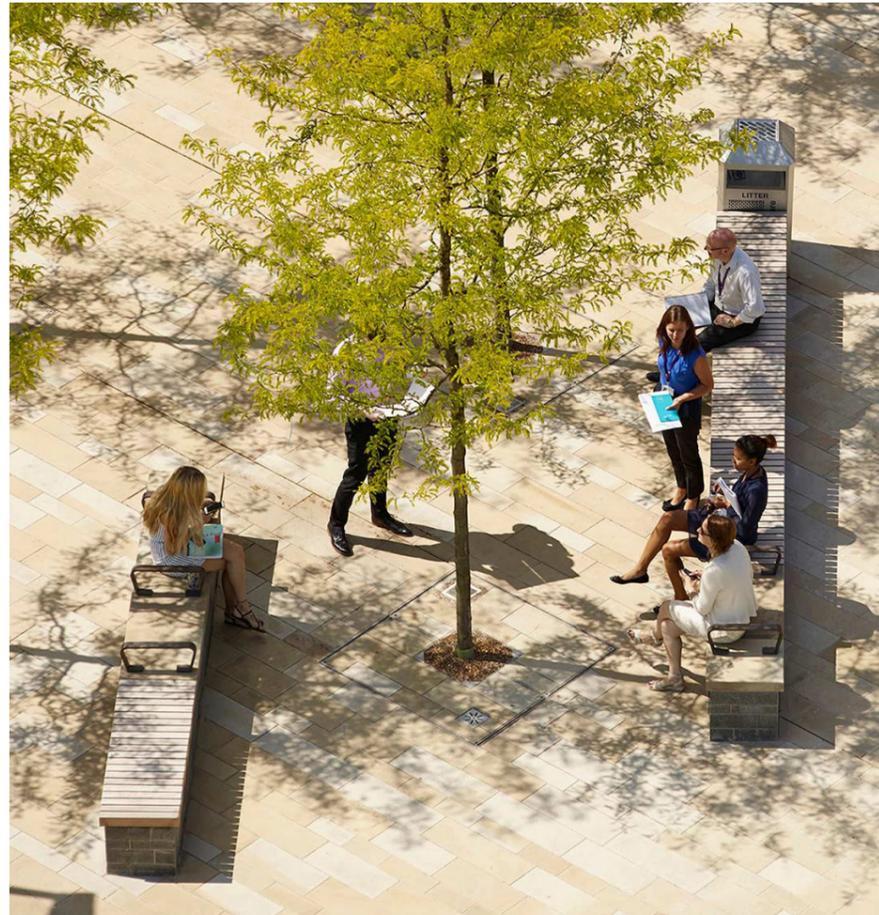


## Site Design Public Realm Principles

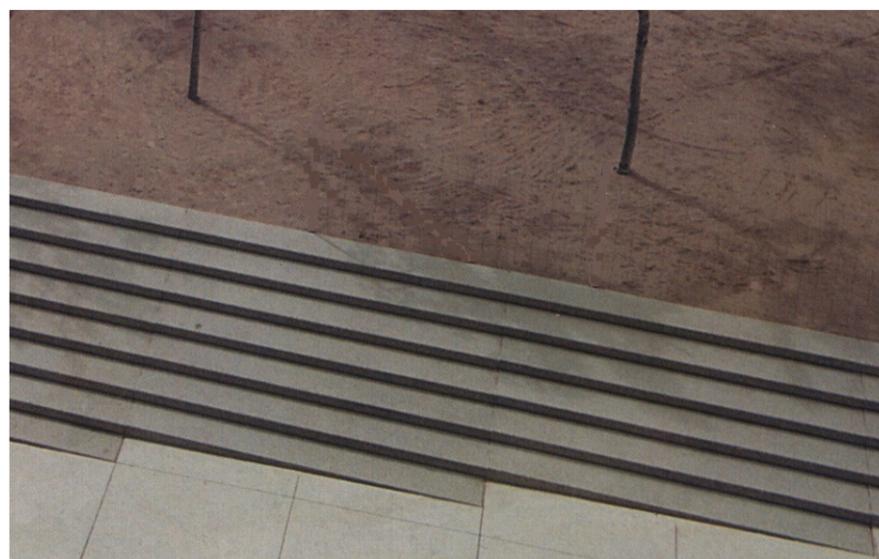
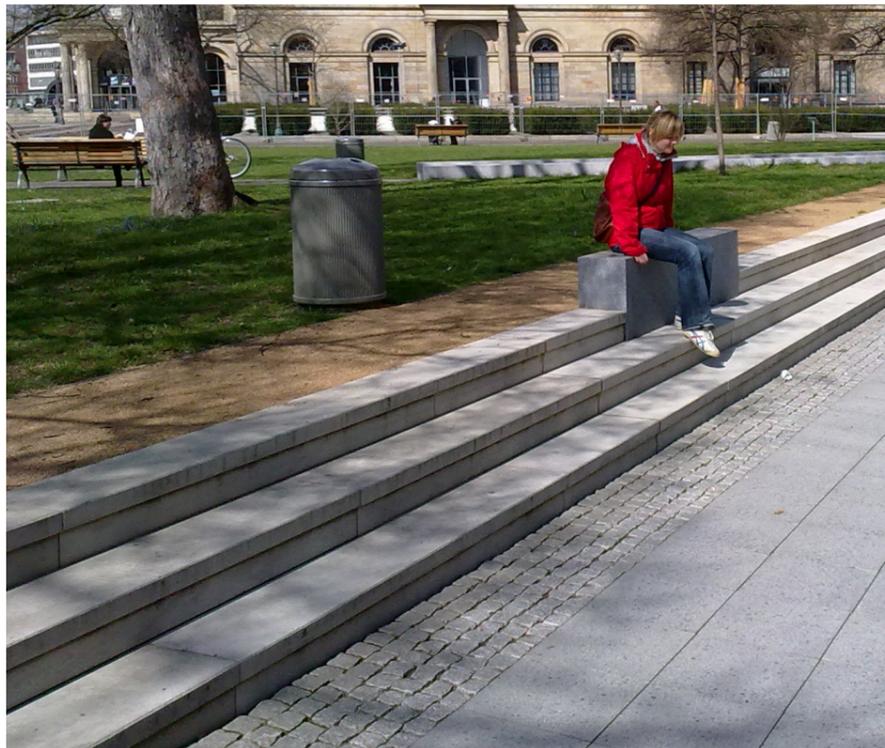
A system of integrated steps and landings gently unfolds throughout Ballymun Plaza, allowing small pockets of public realm to remain contained and to a comfortable human scale. Each of these areas - hard and soft - are contained using concrete seat walls and pockets of screening plants, striking a balance of comfort, containment and landscape interest across the scheme. Open spaces can be viewed from all directions providing safe places to walk, play and sit.

▲ A geometric system of seating, paving and planting areas are arranged across a site wide geometry so as to ensure a cohesion of design elements while creating unique and individual spaces. ▶

▲ A range of hard and soft landscape areas are divided into separate spaces using concrete seating and stepped areas - creating individual zones that cater for the human scale of comfort and movement. ▼



▲ Emergency Vehicle Access is provided across the sloping site through the adoption of a ramp that cuts through the main seating area into the site.



# Site Design Public Realm Softscape

## Design Strategy Softscape

A series of lawn spaces and planted buffer zones provides Ballymun Plaza with a diverse range of softscape elements and spaces. Various lawn areas are defined by a broad geometric language that is extruded from the ground plane using seating benches, while a dense buffer of planting offers a necessary division between the busy roadways and the public and active core of the scheme.

### Key

- Building Edge
- Context Information (Roads)
- Paving Type 1: PCC Paving
- Paving Type 2: Feature Bands
- Paving Type 3: Flush Banding
- Concrete Seating
- Stepped Seating Area
- Tree: Standard Specimen
- Tree: Feature Element



## Design Strategy Softscape

A varied palette of plant materials is proposed across the scheme, providing a rich variety of colour, texture and year-round interest.

Site-wide Planting Palette

Feature Trees



*Prunus avium 'Plena'*



*Platanus acerifolia*

Specimen Trees



*Betula utilis 'Jacquemontii'*



*Acer griseum*

Shrub Mix & Ground Plane



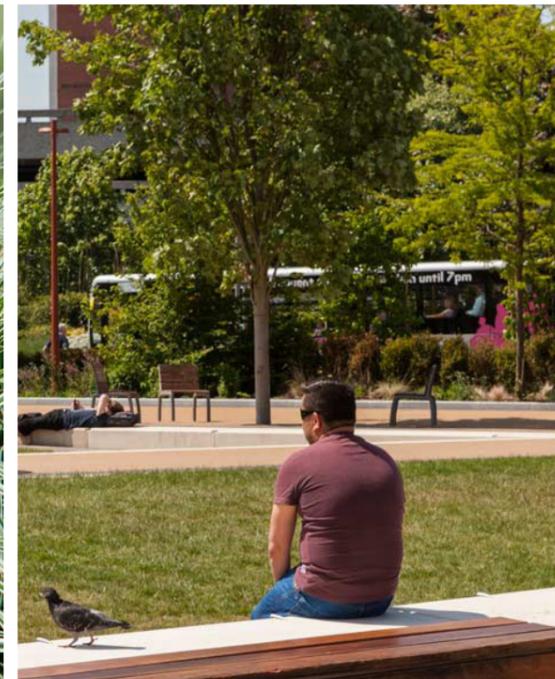
*Polystichum setiferum*



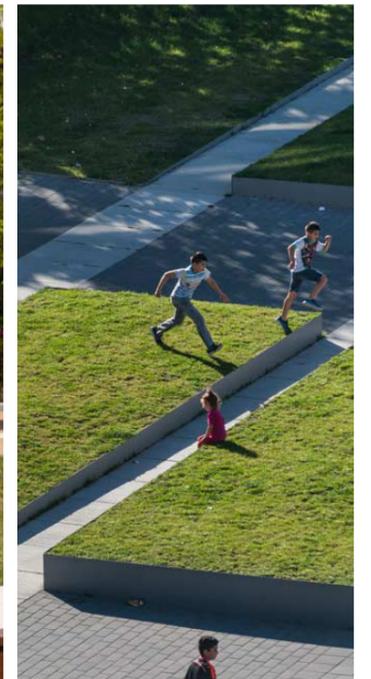
*Stipa aruninacaea*



*Carex oshimensis 'Everest'*



Expansive lawn and seating areas



Raised recreational lawn

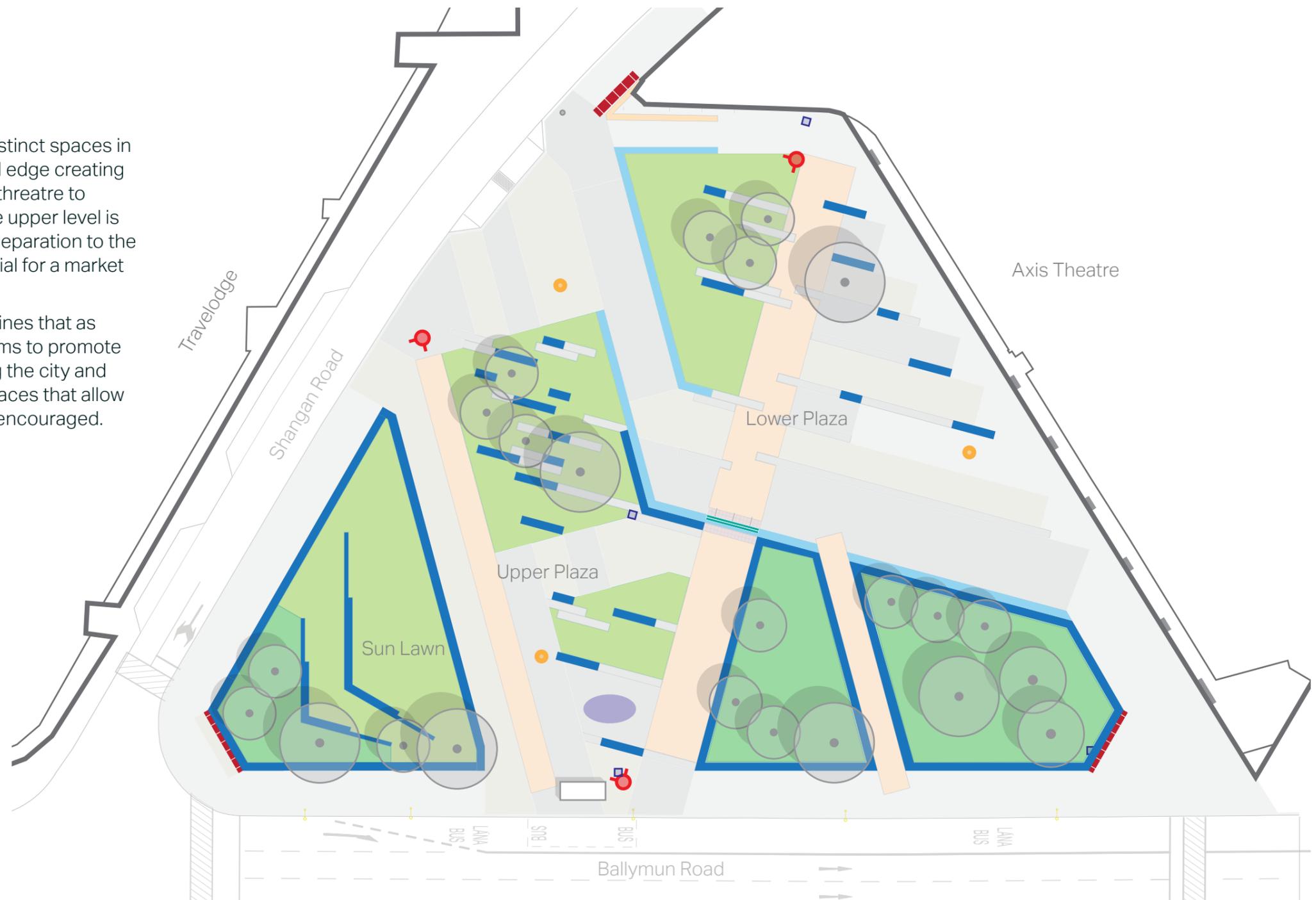
# Site Design Public Realm Components

## Design Strategy Elements

The plaza space has been divided to create two distinct spaces in the plaza. The lower space is defined by a seat wall edge creating an amphitheatre feel and facing towards the Axis theatre to define this as a functional performance space. The upper level is defined by large planting areas to give a sense of separation to the carriageway and enclose the overall space. Potential for a market space is defined adjacent to the sun lawn.

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 outlines that as part of the strategic development of Ballymun it aims to promote Ballymun as a leading arts and cultural hub serving the city and wider region. The elements in the plaza provide spaces that allow provision for this strategy to be implemented and encouraged.

- Key**
-  Building Edge
  -  Context Information (Roads)
  -  Raised seat (900mm wide)
  -  Stepped seat (900mm wide)
  -  Feature light element
  -  Wayfinding point (sign post)
  -  Wayfinding panel (bespoke wall)
  -  Pedestrian steps and handrails
  -  Litter bin
  -  Relocated Sculpture



## Design Strategy Furnishing and detail

In accordance with the varied programme of the site and its context, an indicative palette of site furnishings is shown:

### Site-wide Furnishing Palette

#### Lights and upright furniture



On-street lighting with banners



Site-wide feature light elements: Escofet 'Ful' model

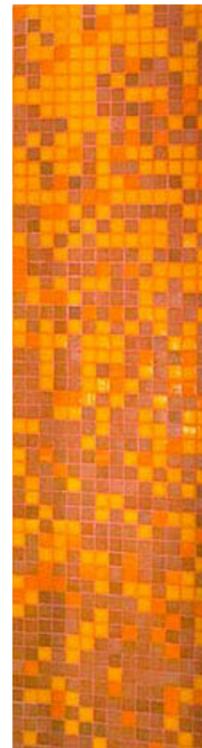
#### Walls and seating



Wide rectilinear seating



Linear paving bands



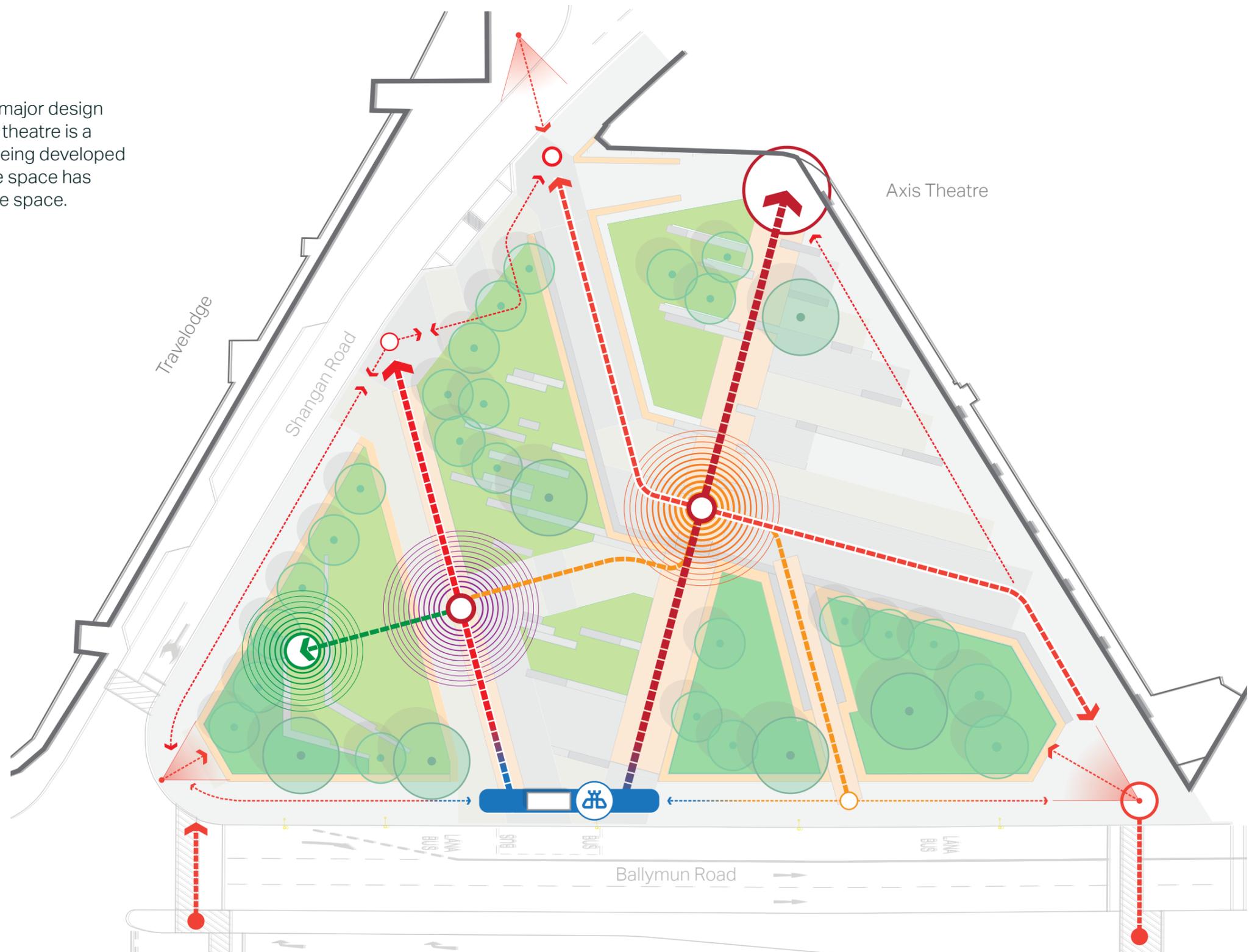
# Site Design Public Realm Dynamics

## Design Strategy Movement

The plaza space has been designed to look at the major design lines and movements through the space. The Axis theatre is a focal point to the square with a strong desire line being developed to give the main pathway structure to the park. The space has been defined with a number of linkages through the space.

### Key

-  Dublin Bus Stop
-  Key Node
-  Primary Circulation Route
-  Secondary Circulation Route
-  Tertiary Circulation Route
-  Peripheral Route
-  Link to Greenspace
-  Viewpoint into site



## Design Strategy Hardscape

A robust mix of ground paving types provides elegant and contemporary highlights to feature areas across the site while ensuring a cohesive mix:

Site-wide Hardscape Palette

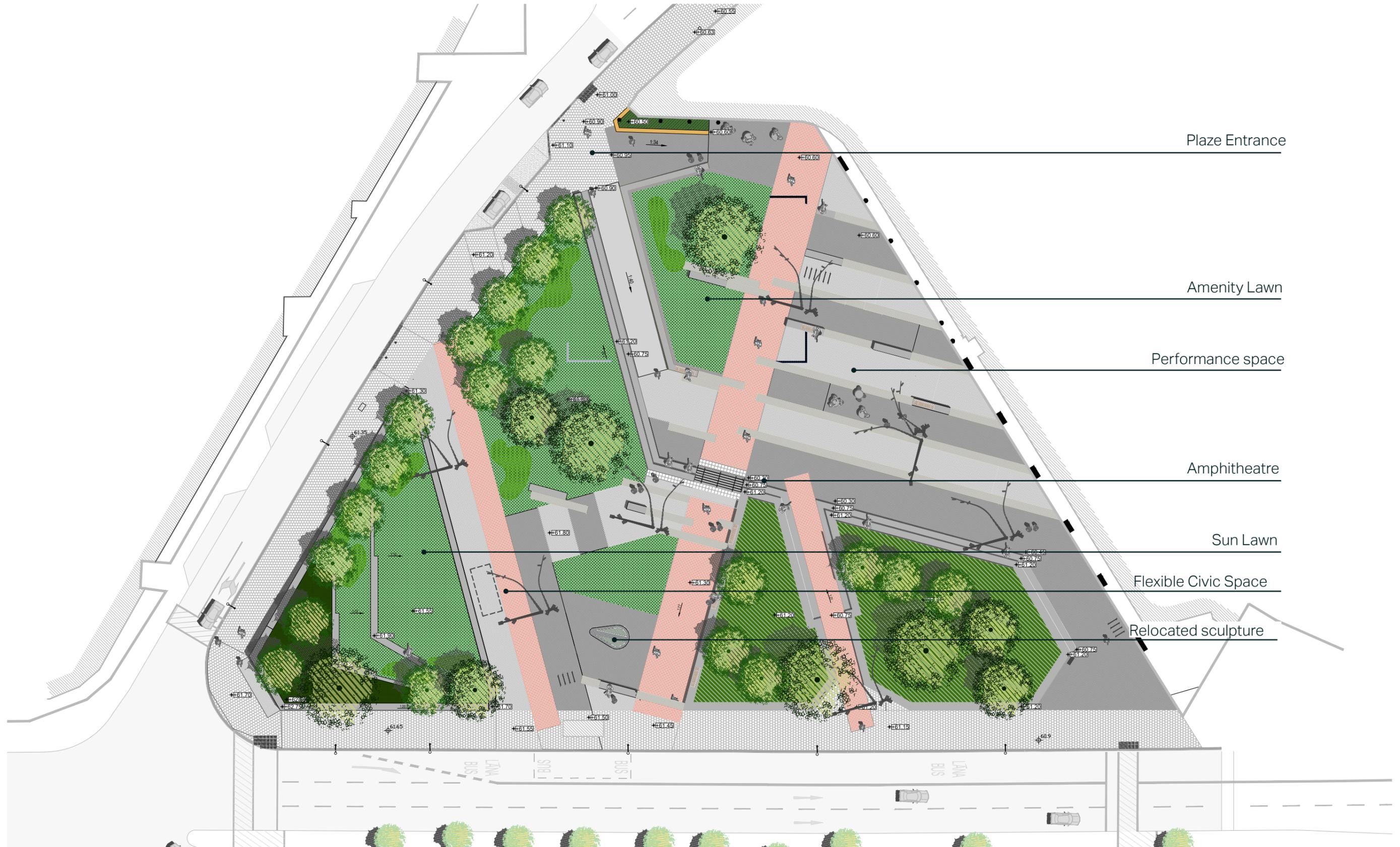
Feature Paving and banding



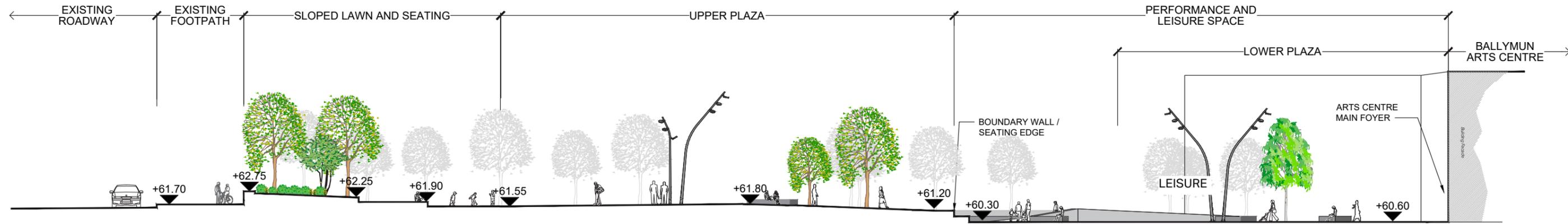
Main paving and circulation areas



# Site Design Public Realm Masterplan

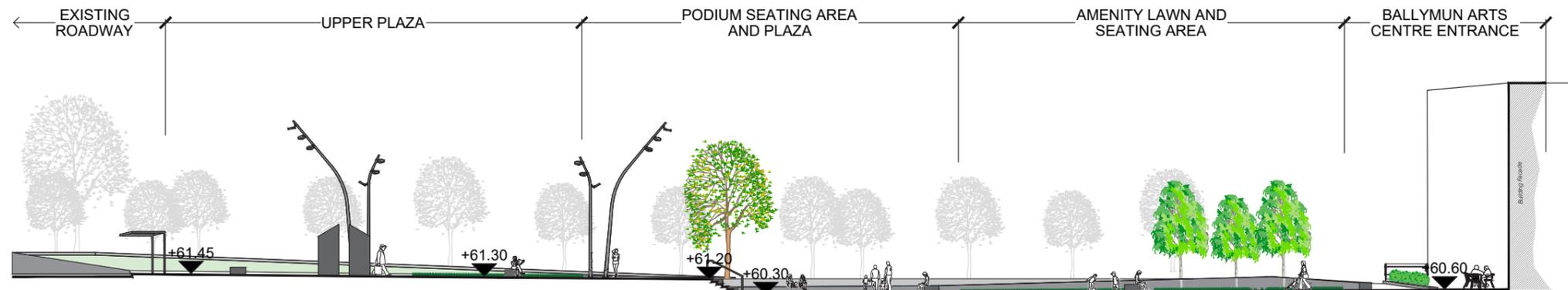


# Site Design Public Realm Section



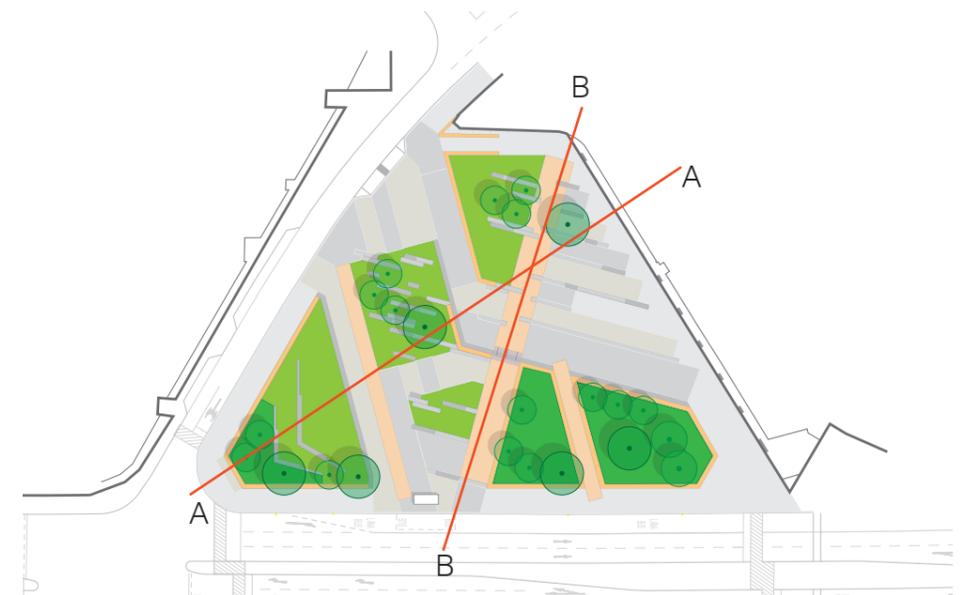
## Section A - A

Section through plaza space



## Section B - B

Section through plaza space



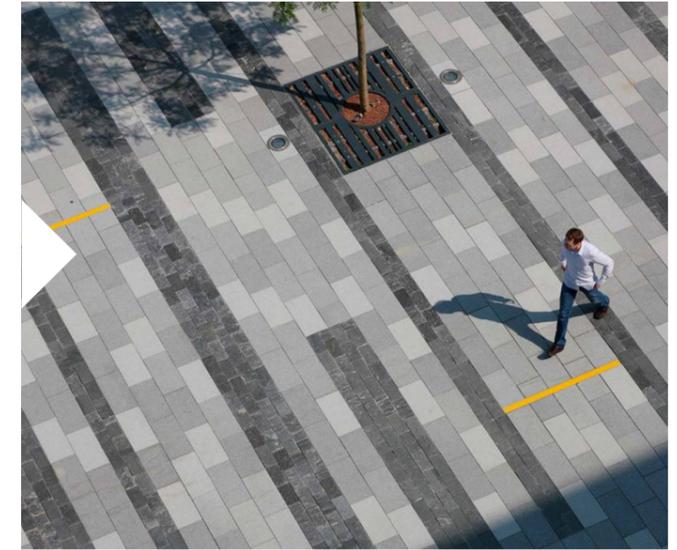
# Site Design Public Realm Materials

Drawing on our extensive experience of design projects of similar scale and complexity, we will develop a bespoke hierarchical materials palette for both hard and soft landscape areas within the civic plaza.



## Hardworks Palette

The hardworks palette has been chosen to be sympathetic and contextual to the surroundings, yet the materials equally need to be robust and durable with the intention of bringing a more modern and contemporary feel to enhance the space.



The design will be mindful of the need for ease of maintenance and with an focus on long term management. Existing features which benefit the environment will be retained wherever possible. A unifying palette of materials appropriate for use, which include vehicular; cyclist; and pedestrian areas will be developed to ensure that cost is controlled, while quality is delivered at every scale.



## Softworks Palette

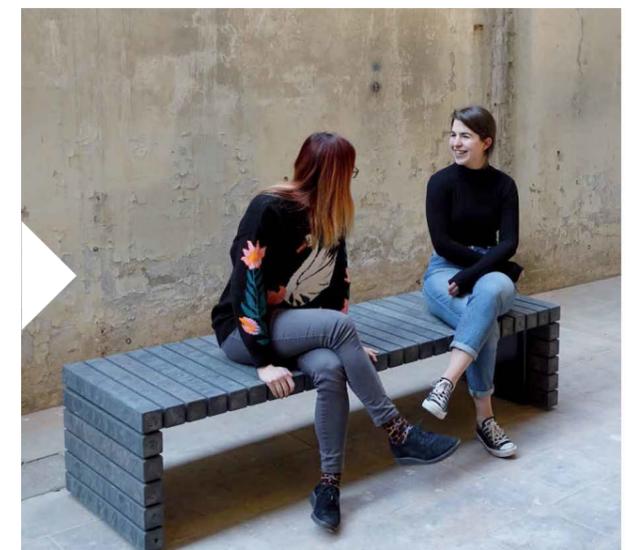
The softworks palette will consist of robust street trees to give colour and seasonal interest as well as under planting to create distinct spaces. Grasses will be used to give movement and form as well as being durable. Semi-mature trees will be included complete with underground drainage and guying systems to help promote establishment.

Soft landscaping with native provenance and trees appropriate to location will be specified to further reinforce the character and enhance biodiversity.



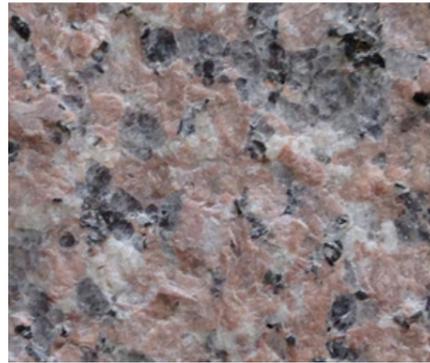
## Furniture

Street furniture has been chosen to be robust and solid but similarly to the hardworks palette we have selected furniture with a contemporary and modern design to help promote and stylise the space and thereby give ownership to users of the plaza.



# Site Design Public Realm Materials

## Surface Treatments



Paving Type -01  
200x100x100mm  
Granite | Feature paving  
Red



Paving Type -02  
200x100x80mm  
PCC Paving | Field paving  
Light Grey



Paving Type -03  
200x100x80mm  
PCC Paving | Field paving  
Mid Grey



Paving Type -04  
208x173x80mm  
PCC Paving | Periphery paths  
Light Grey



Paving Type -05  
100x100x100mm  
Granite | Paving bands  
Building Footprint Reference  
Grey/Red



-  
PCC Paving | Hazard Paving  
Buff



255x200x915mm  
Road kerb | Site Wide  
Granite - Grey



200x200x915mm  
Flush Kerb | Site Wide



-  
Seating Wall | Site Wide  
Precast Concrete  
Acid etched finish



-  
Bicycle Rack | Site Wide  
Stainless steel



-  
Bollards | Site Wide  
Removal Bollard



-  
Bins | Site Wide

# Site Design Public Realm Materials

The following sources have been used in the development of a suitable planting scheme that combines the overall design intent with a biodiverse planting palette to achieve a rich and sustainable softscape programme:

- **Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022**

*Ch 8: Green Infrastructure and Ch 9: Heritage, Conservation and Landscapes*

- **Dublin City Tree Strategy**

- **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020**

- **National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021**

The landscape architecture proposal aims to create a diverse planting scheme that contributes to the overall biodiversity within the Ballymun Plaza and its wider area. Plant species have been selected with direct reference to the '*All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020*' and the approach aims to align with the specific policies and objectives as set out in both the '*Dublin City Tree Strategy*' and '*Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022*'.

## Planting



Prunus avium



Platanus acerifolia



Betula utilis var Jacquemontii



Acer griseum



Stipa arundinacea



Allium



Erysinum "Bawles mauve"



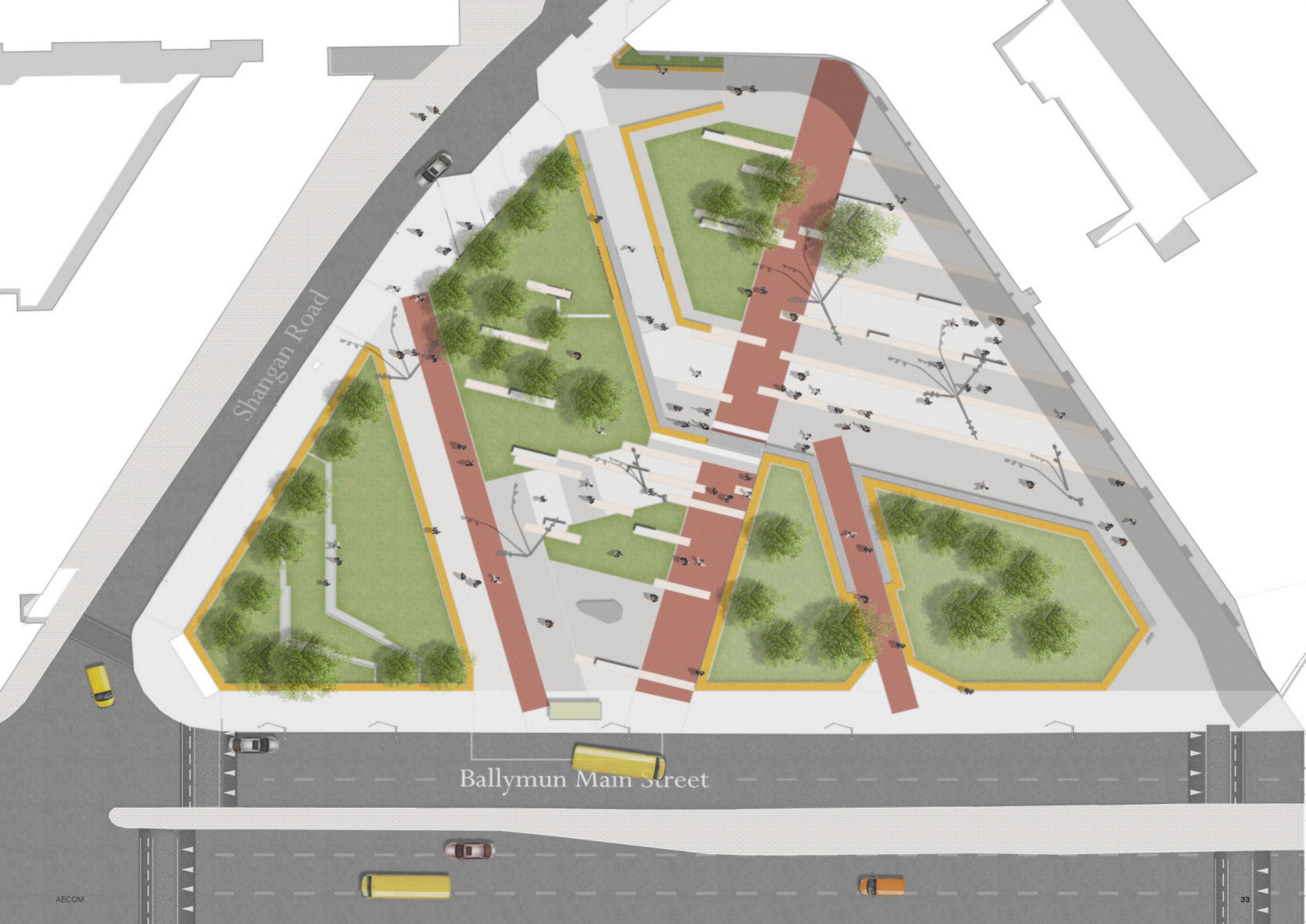
Polystichum setiferum



Nepita Six hills giant



Calamagrostis x acutiflora



Shangan Road

Ballymun Main Street

# Site Design Axis Theatre Corner

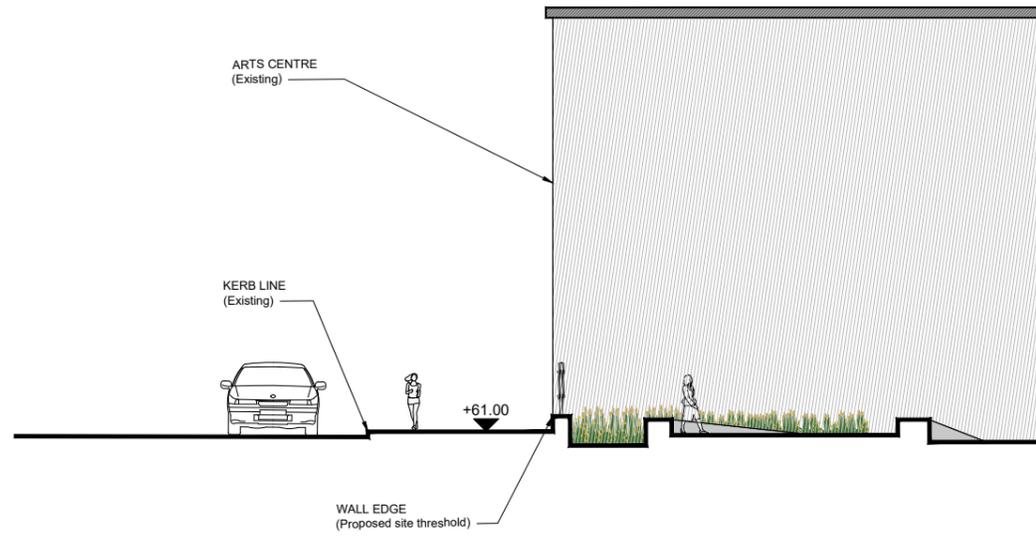
Illustrative 3D image of Axis Theatre

Not to scale.



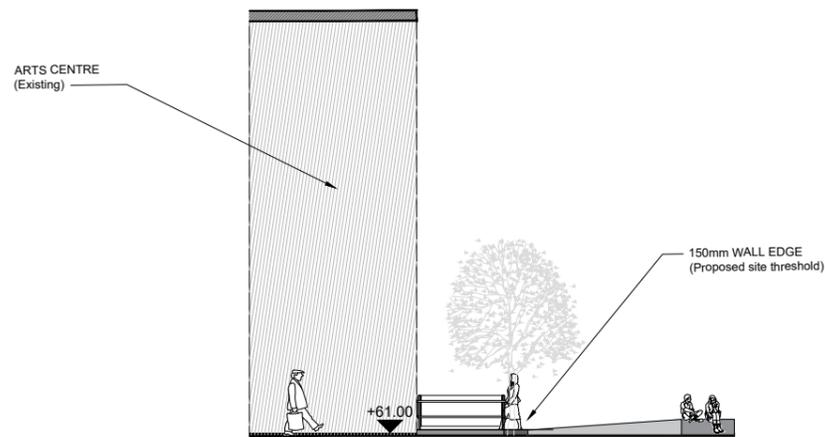
Illustrative 3D image of Axis Theatre

Not to scale.



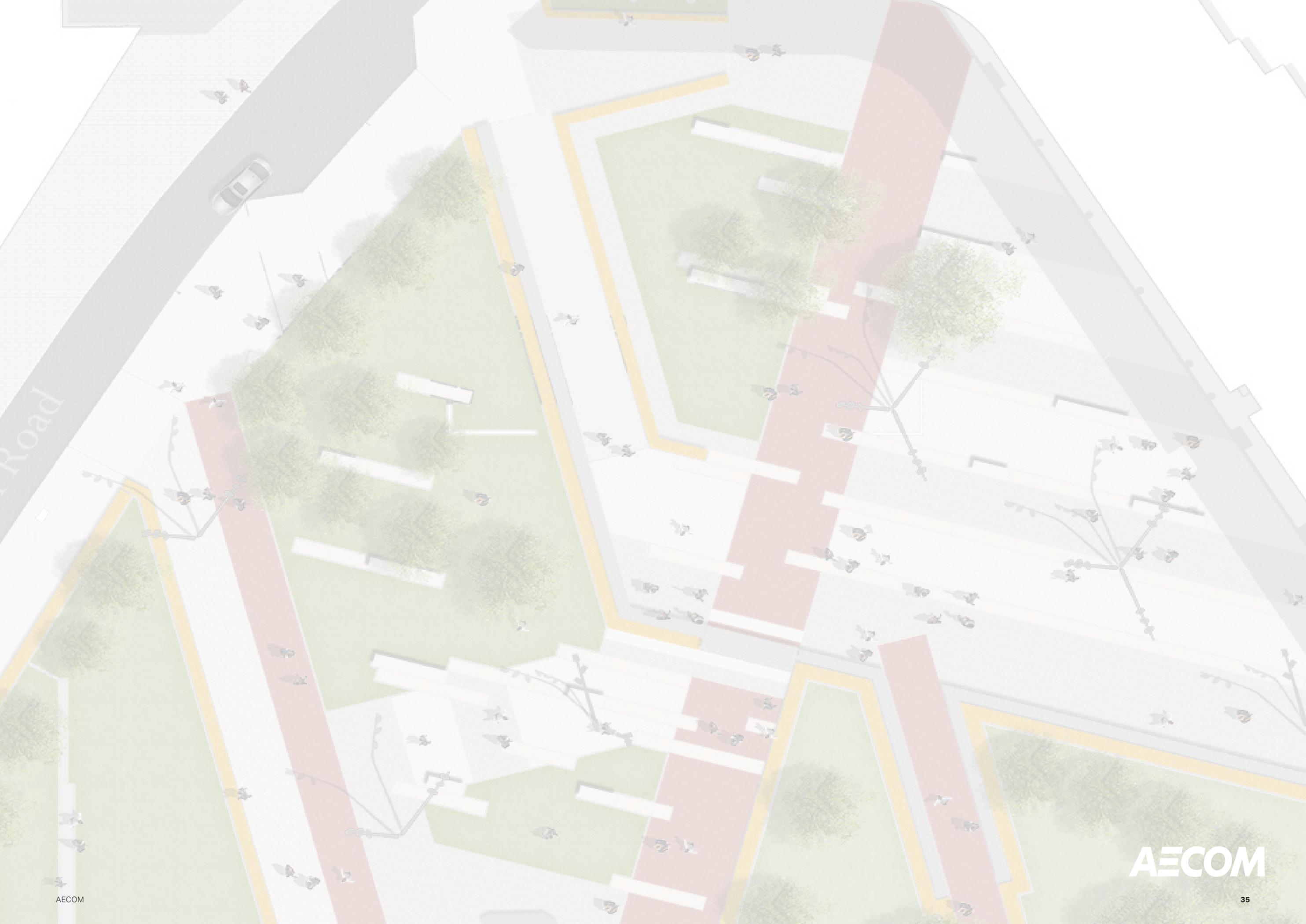
Axis Theatre Corner Section A

Scale: 1:400



Axis Theatre Corner Section B

Scale: 1:400



Road

#### About AECOM

AECOM is built to deliver a better world. We design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets for governments, businesses and organizations in more than 150 countries. As a fully integrated firm, we connect knowledge and experience across our global network of experts to help clients solve their most complex challenges. From high-performance buildings and infrastructure, to resilient communities and environments, to stable and secure nations, our work is transformative, differentiated and vital. A Fortune 500 firm, AECOM had revenue of approximately \$17.4 billion during fiscal year 2016. See how we deliver what others can only imagine at [aecom.com](http://aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).

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