

LIBRARY SQUARE RINGSEND

Public Realm Improvement & Library Refurbishment & Extension

Landscape Design Report March 2023

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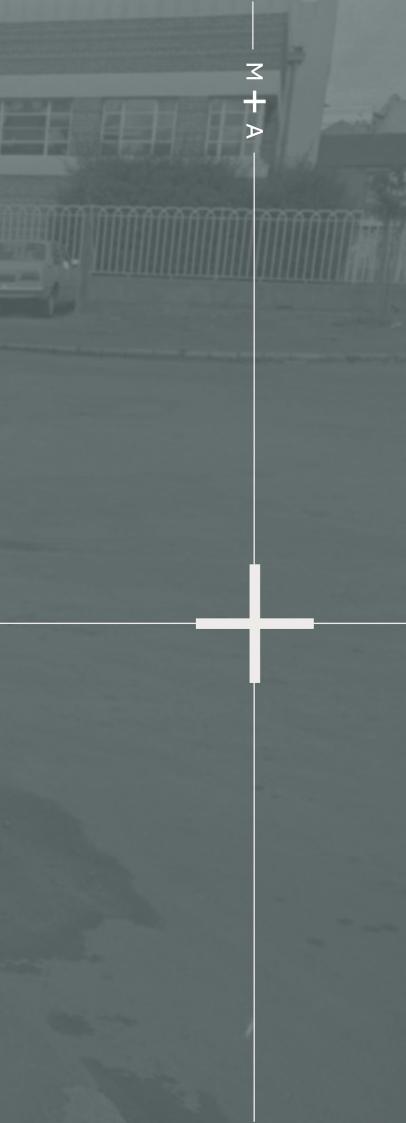
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1.0 Introduction

Project Overview, Client and Project Team Introductions



Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Design Statement has been prepared by Mitchell + Associates on behalf of Dublin City Council East Area Office, to accompany the Part 8 application for the development of Ringsend Library Square and the extension to the existing library building at Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin, D04 Y970.

This Design Statement will deal with the proposed public realm improvements which have been developed in tandem with the proposed library building extension. It describes the site location and history, explains how the proposal has been developed in response to the various site constraints and architectural proposals. It will also outline the key aspects of the proposed design concept, design strategy, and materials.

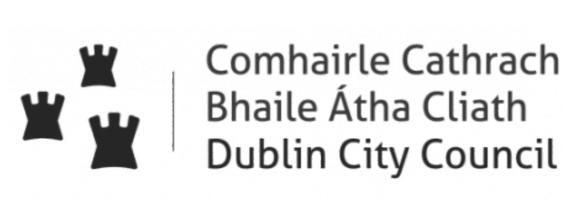
This report should be read in conjunction with other reports and drawings from the design team, namely:

- » Architectural Drawings and Reports from DMOD Architects
- » Engineering (Traffic & Civils) Drawings and Reports from Roughan & O'Donovan Engineers
- » Building Survey Condition Conservation Report from Fergal McGirl Architects
- » Mechanical & Electrical Drawings and Reports from JV Tierney &Co.
- » Arborist Drawings & Report from CMK Hort & Arb Ltd

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1.2 Client and Project Team



DCC East Area Office (Client Body)

Mitchell + Associates

Landscape Architects (Lead Consultant)



Architects

ROUGHAN & O'DONOVAN

Consulting Engineers



Cost Management

Conservation Architect



Consulting Engineers

2.0 History

The Evolution of Library Square and Ringsend Village





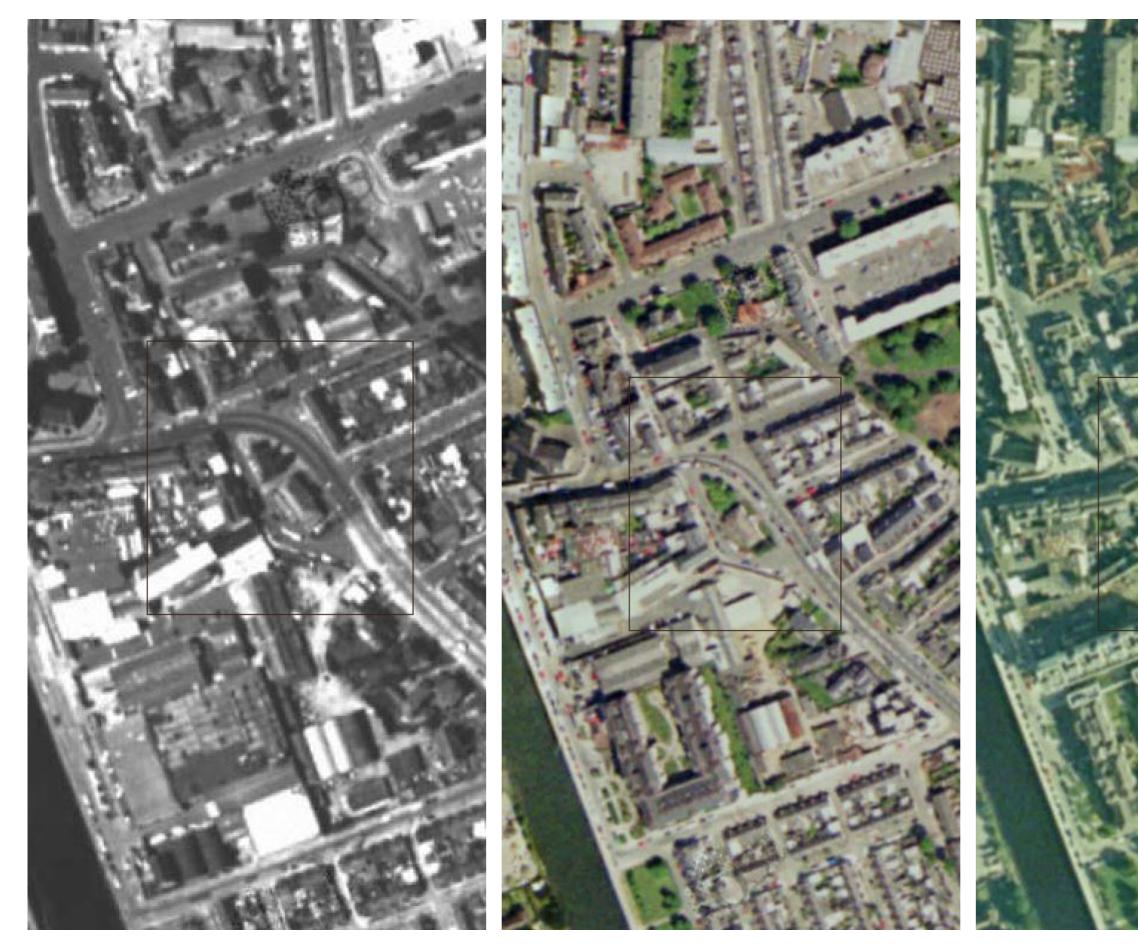
Library Square Ringsend, Landscape Design Report - March 2023

History

Aerial Image 1995

Aerial Image 2000

Aerial Image 2005



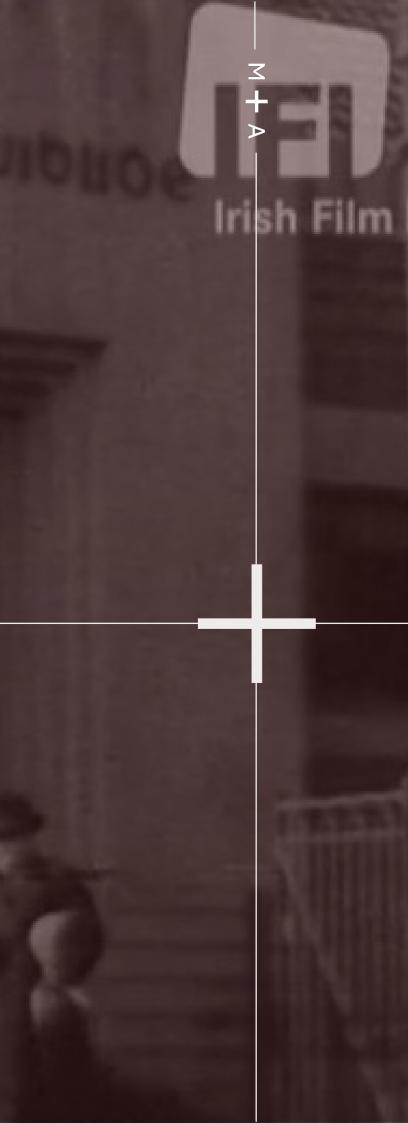
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3.0 Site Analysis

Examining the existing site and its context



3.1 Site Description

The application site is focused at Library Square, Ringsend Dublin 4 and encompasses Bridge Street (R802), Irishtown Road and Fitzwilliam Street. The site area is currently an existing public space with Ringsend Library at its centre and local amenities and residences adjacent to Fitzwilliam Street and the Irishtown Road.

The existing Library Square was subject to a redevelopment c.2002 and consists of a natural stone (silver granite) surface treatment which extends to Fitzwilliam Street (South) and the junctions with Saint Patrick Villas and Thorncastle Street. The surface is punctuated at various intervals by a series of angular retaining walls and steps resulting from the provision of an accessible route to the main entrance of the Library.

The site is currently subdivided by Bridge Street (R802) which creates a physical barrier between Library Square and the north side of Ringsend Village leading to Ringsend Park. There are no centrally located controlled pedestrian crossing points connecting to Library Square. The closest crossing points are located adjacent St. Patrick's Church and just north of junction with Fairview Avenue.

Existing vegetation on site is limited to 2 groups of Norway Maple trees (Acer platanoides). The larger group (11 No. trees) is located to the north of Library Square with the smaller group (3 No. trees) located to the north of Bridge Street. The tree condition suggests they have been planted too densely and in sub standard tree pits. For details refer to the Arboricultural Assessment & Impact report prepreared by CMK Hort + Arb Limited and submitted as part of this application

The site measures 0.47 ha in total and falls from northwestto southeastwith existing ground levels to the northwest at approximately 3.68mOD. Levels fall by approximately 1.63m towards the south easterncorner of the site to 2.05mOD

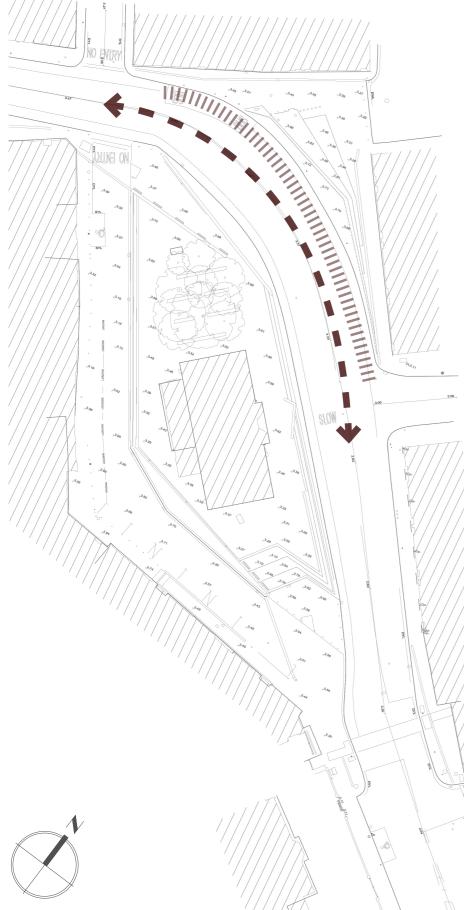
KEY:

- 1. Proposed Development Site
- 2. Ringsend Park Playground
- 3. St Patrick's Boys NS
- Ringsend College 4.
- 5. **Thorncastle Street**
- 6. St. Patrick's Church
- 7. Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre
- 8. East Link Toll Bridge
- 9. **River Dodder**
- 10. **Ringsend Bridge**
- The Naoimh Eanna 11.
- 12. Grand Canal Dock
- 13. Shelbourne Park Greyhound Stadium
- 14. Dooder Park, Ringsend



Aerial Image highlighting the application site (red) and the surrounding context . For illustrative purposes only

3.2 The Existing Road Design



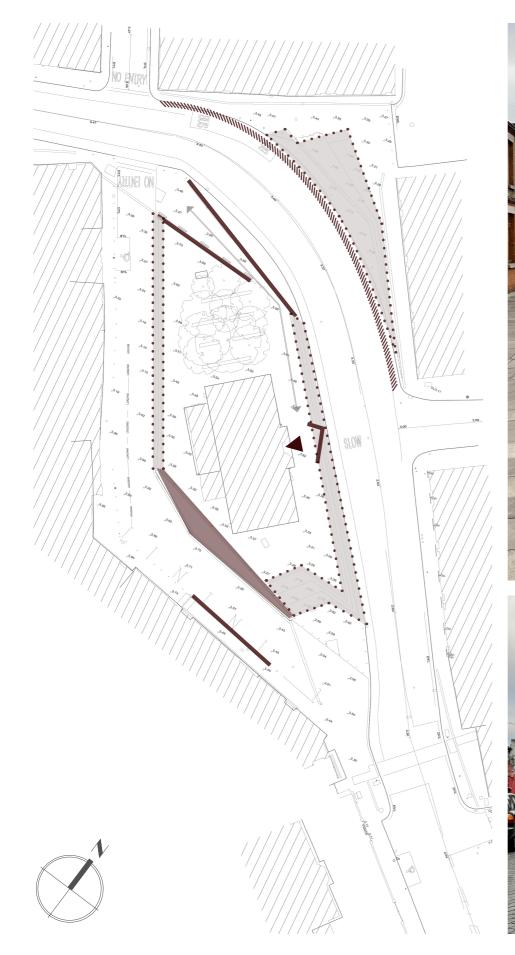






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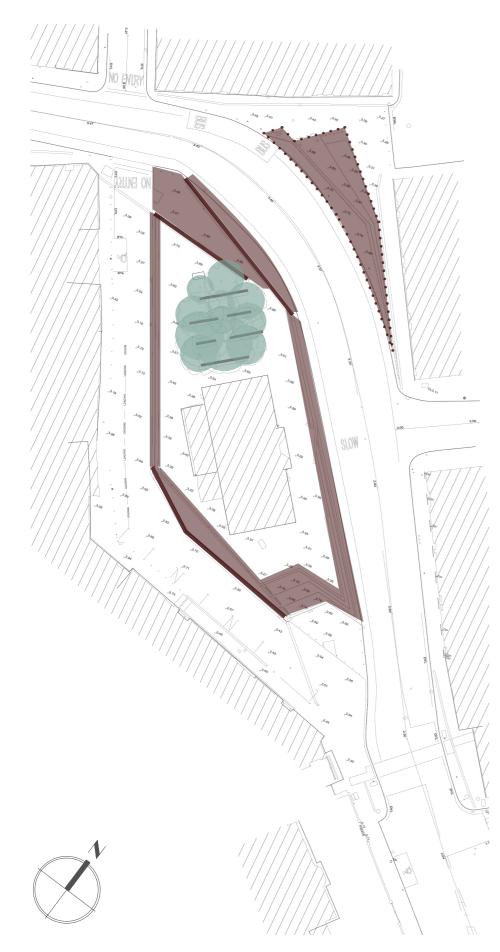
3.3 Physical Barriers - Walls, Railings & Stepped Access



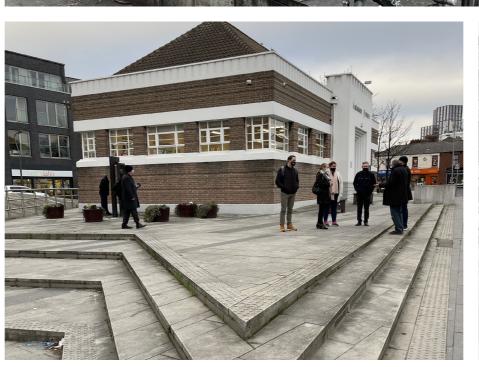


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3.4 Spatial Quality





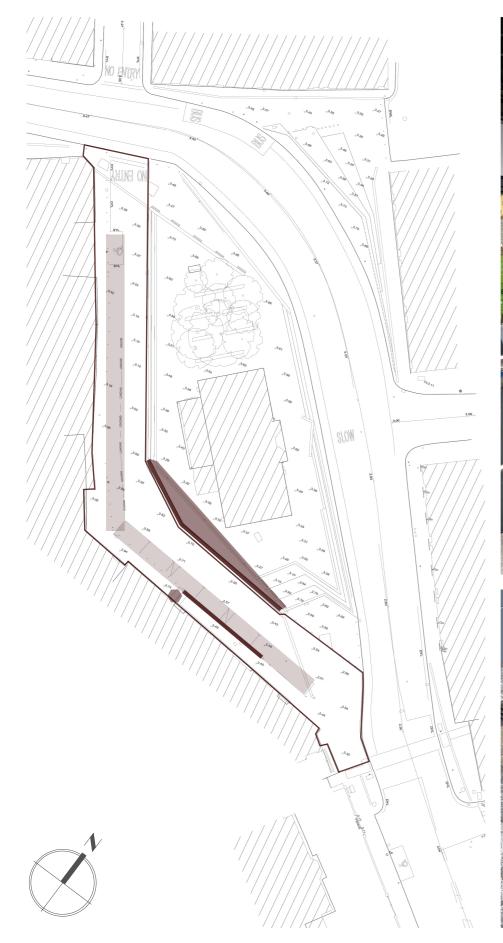


The current spatial arrangement is predominantly peripheral and made up of left over space between the myriad of steps and ramps. The only 'usable' portion of the square is located to the north and is completely overshadowed by a group of mature sycamore trees.



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3.5 Fitzwilliam Street







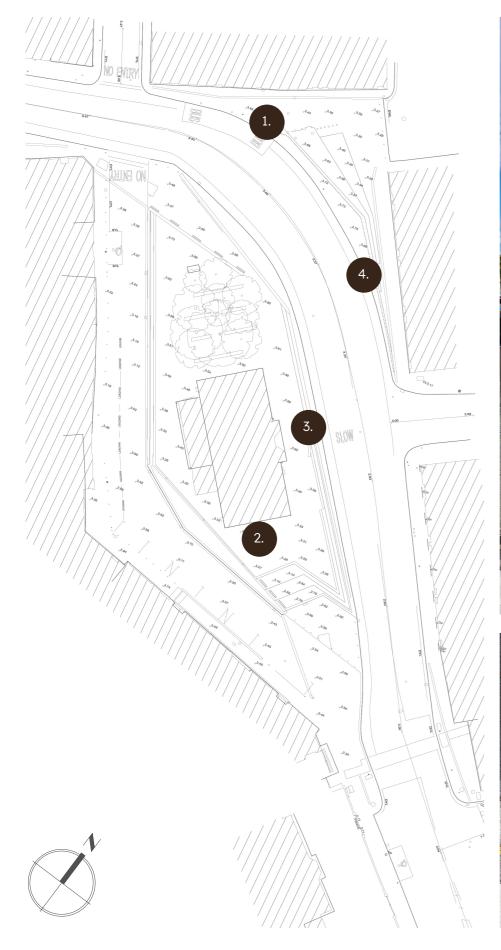


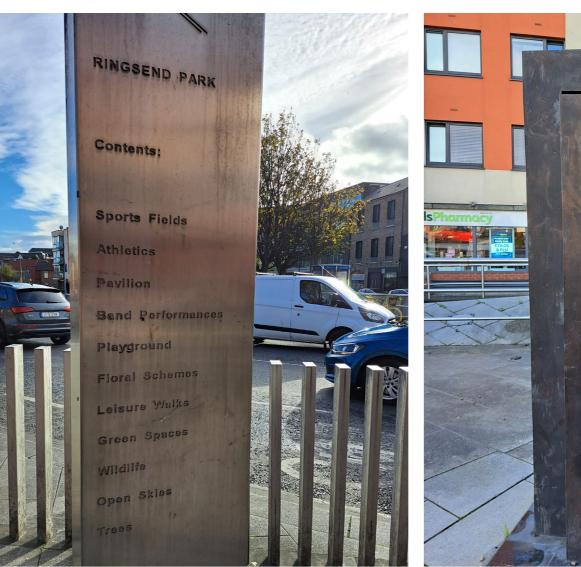


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3.6 General Site Features





1. Stainless Steel Totem Signage



3. Commemorative plaque remembering the original wooden door sculpture erected in 2002 for UN campaign against domestic violence

2. The Door Sculpture was unveiled in 2008 to highlight the problem of domestic violence against women



4. Stainless Steel barrier to the east side of Ringsend Village with various book titles & authors inscribed



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3.7 Colour Analysis





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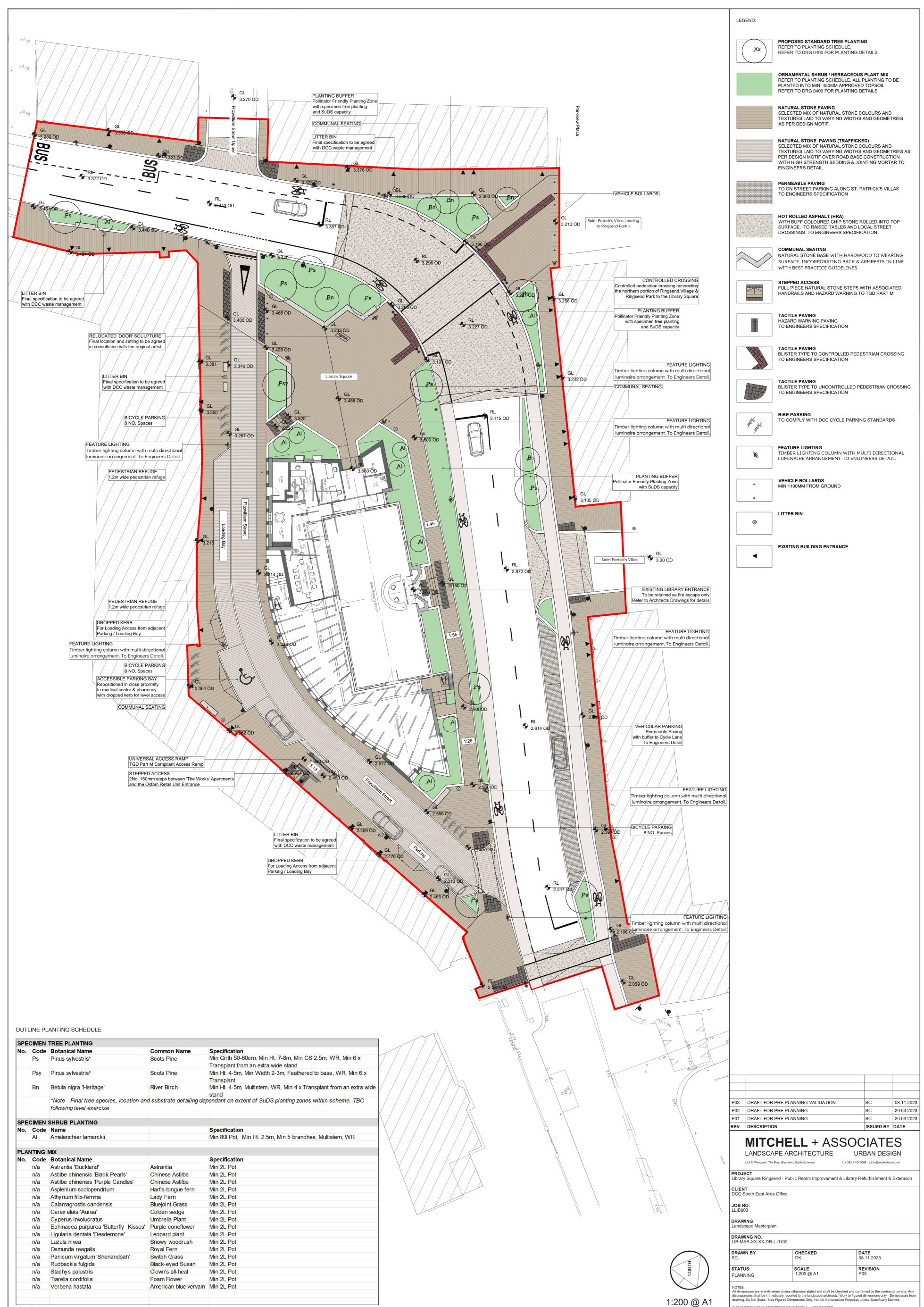
4.0 Landscape Proposals

Proposals for the redevelopment of Library Square and the associated surrounding public realm



Landscape Proposals

4.1 Landscape Masterplan. Not to Scale



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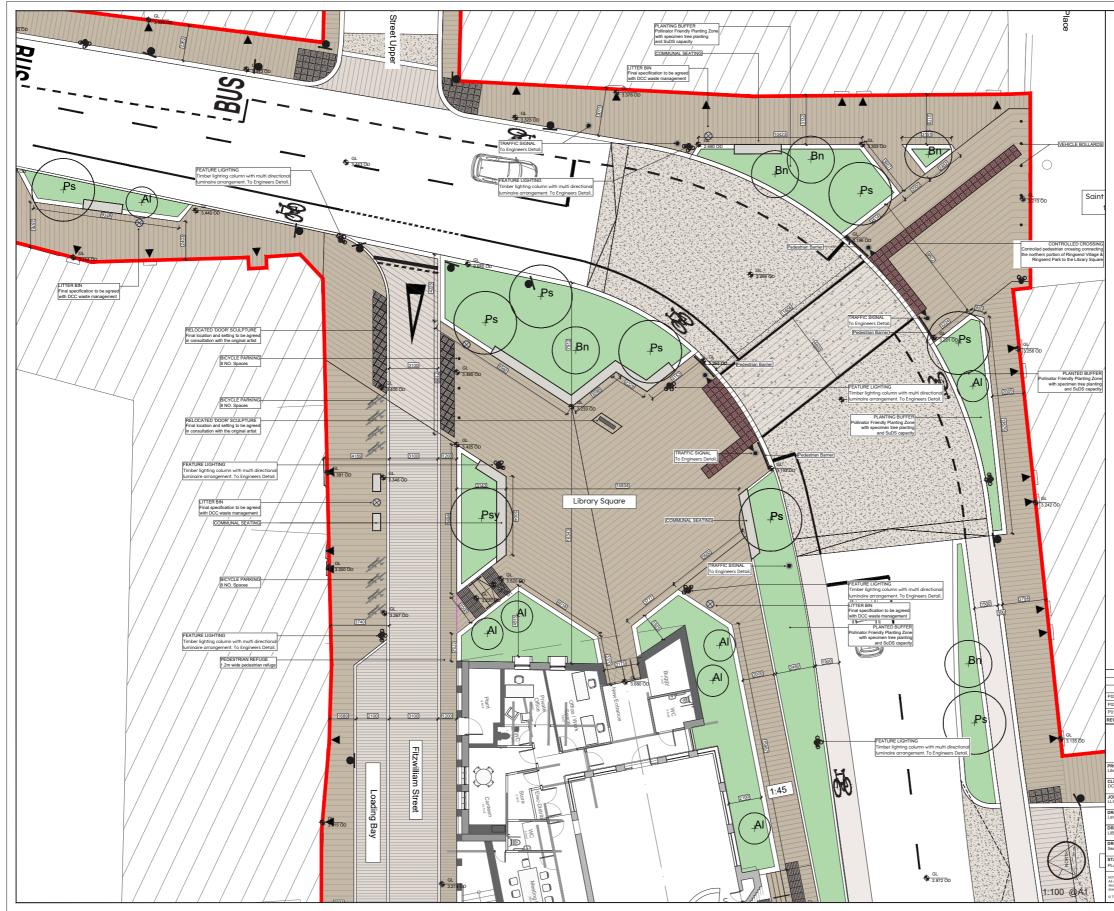
No.	Code	Botanical Name	Common Name	Specification
	Ps	Pinus sylvestris*	Scots Pine	Min Girth 50-60cm, Min Ht. 7-8m, Min CS 2.5m, WR, Min 6 x Transplant from an extra wide stand
	Psy	Pinus sylvestris*	Scots Pine	Min Ht. 4-5m, Min Width 2-3m, Feathered to base, WR, Min 6 x Transplant
	Bn	Betula nigra 'Heritage'	River Birch	Min Ht. 4-5m, Multistem, WR, Min 4 x Transplant from an extra wide stand
		*Note - Final tree species, location ar following level exercise	nd substrate detailing o	dependant on extent of SuDS planting zones within scheme. TBC
		Tonowing level exercise		

No.	Code	Name		Specification
	AI	Amelanchier lamarckii		Min 80l Pot, Min Ht. 2.5m, Min 5 branches, Multistem, WF
PLA	NTING	MIX		
No.	Code	Botanical Name		Specification
	n/a	Astrantia 'Buckland'	Astrantia	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Astilbe chinensis 'Black Pearls'	Chinese Astilbe	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Astilbe chinensis 'Purple Candles'	Chinese Astilbe	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart's-tongue fern	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Athyrium filix-femma	Lady Fern	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Calamagrostis candensis	Bluejoint Grass	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Carex elata 'Aurea'	Golden sedge	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Cyperus involucratus	Umbrella Plant	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Echinacea purpurea 'Butterfly Kisses'	Purple coneflower	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Ligularia dentata 'Desdemona'	Leopard plant	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Luzula nivea	Snowy woodrush	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Osmunda reagalis	Royal Fern	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Panicum virgatum 'Shenandoah'	Switch Grass	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Rudbeckia fulgida	Black-eyed Susan	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Stachys palustris	Clown's all-heal	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Tiarella cordifolia	Foam Flower	Min 2L Pot
	n/a	Verbena hastata	American blue vervain	Min 2L Pot

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Landscape Proposals

4.2 General Arrangement - Zone 1. Not to Scale



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Landscape Proposals

4.3 Southern Detail Plan. Scale 1:200@A3

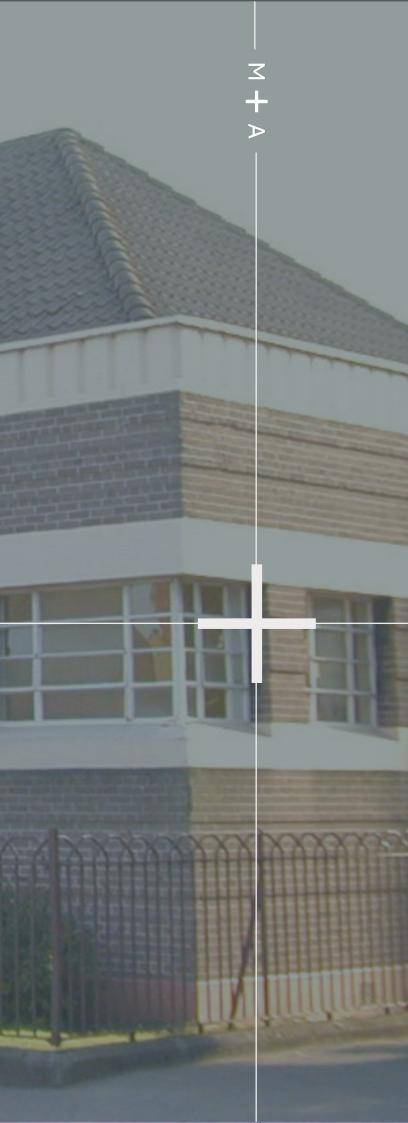


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Landscape Architectural proposals for the proposed Library Square Public Realm Improvements

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5.1 Design Objectives

The overall aim of the landscape design is to create a high quality attractive environment with increased amenity facilities for the general population and visitors to Ringsend Village.

The following design objectives have been shaped through consultations with the relevant Dublin City Council Technical Departments.

- » To provide an attractive, practical, and usable public space for community use and gathering, including a possible venue for weekly and one-off community events;
- » to moderate speeds of traffic to improve comfort of vulnerable road users;
- » to improve connections across Library Square and primarily between the two sides of the road carriageway and to Ringsend Park;
- » to improve access to the Library and in its interface/relationship with the public realm generally;
- » to elevate the status of the Library, its patronage, and its relationship with the public;
- » to improve the connectivity between retail units, the community space and the library;
- » to create a focal space that links together local areas within Ringsend/Irishtown and encourages the community generally to avail of this and other local spaces;
- » to create a 'greener' space with improvement to biodiversity;
- » to undertake a fully coordinated approach to site services, in particular to SUDS.
- » To develop a palette of hard and soft landscape materials that will be deployed in a sophisticated manner. The materials will have a bespoke quality (in certain instances), be durable, and respond to budget allocation.



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5.2 Traffic Management

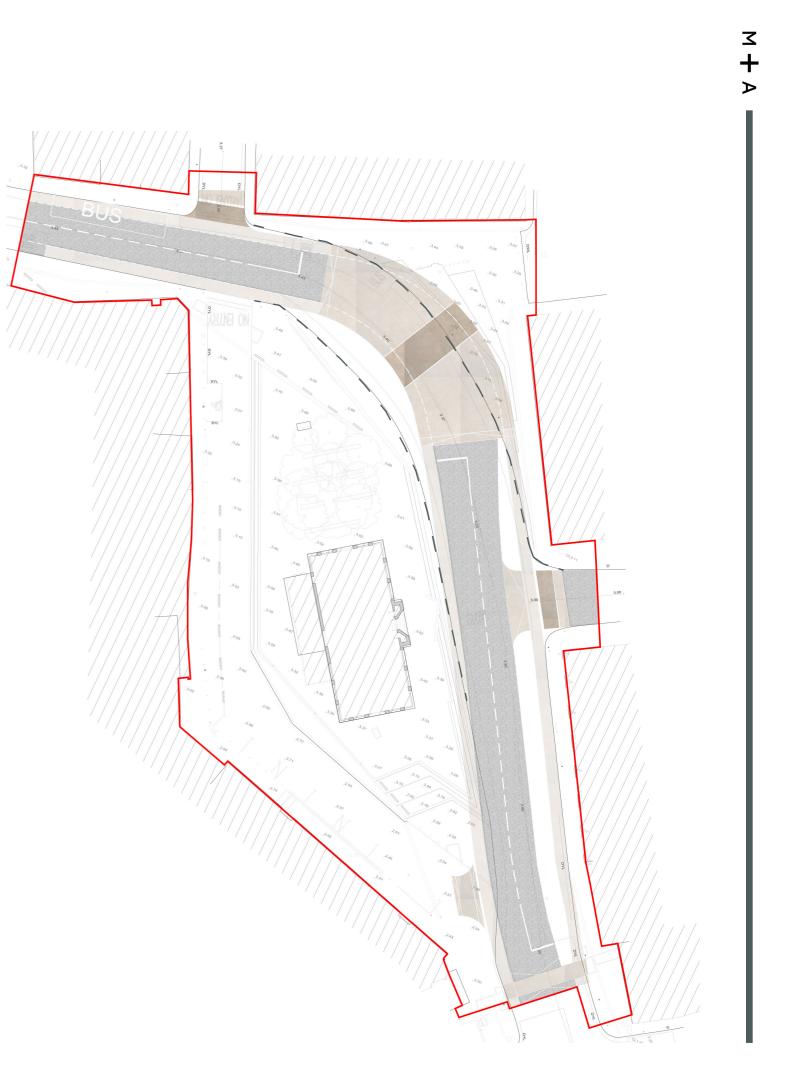
Following an extensive period of site analysis (refer to section 3.0 Site Analysis) it became clear that the current road configuration does little to control and calm traffic movement through the space. The super-elevated outer radius of the bend in the (R802 Bridge Street) only serves to promote vehicular speed through the village. This arrangement coupled with the extent of physical barriers to pedestrian movement across the space has resulted in a vehicle focused environment.

To reduce traffic speed and refocus the configuration on pedestrian priority it is proposed to introduce a new controlled crossing at the bend. Here, the carriageway is reconfigured with the bend radius and lane width reduced to the minimum required width that will allow two Dublin buses to pass one another safely. The levels are also re-profiled, removing the super-elevation and creating a level access at the crossing point.



ABOVE: The existing super elevated road bend along the R802 Bridge Street.

RIGHT: Diagram showing the extent of carriageway modifications proposed with the existing road alignment picked up in a dashed line.



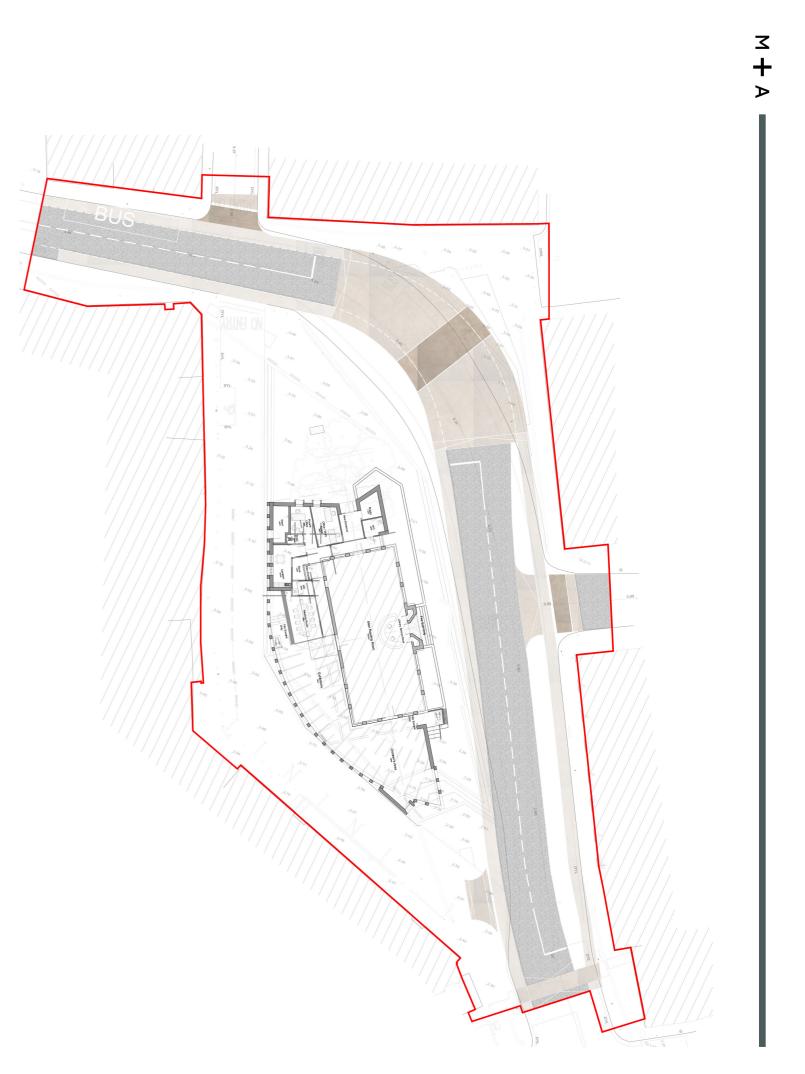
5.3 The Library Extension

The design strategy for the upgraded Library Square, its associated public realm and the proposed Library extension are inherently and intrinsically linked. This symbiotic relationship places the library and its newly proposed extension at the heart of the proposed regeneration. It is intended that the proposed extension will elevate the status of the library by improving its patronage and its relationship with the wider community. This is achieved through an increase in services offered e.g event/exhibition space, meeting facilities and a dedicated children's area. The new extension will also see an improvement in accessibility with a newly configured entrance along its northern gable that directly addresses Library Square. Furthermore, the proposed extension works to define a new streetscape at its interface with Fitzwilliam Street.

For full details refer to Refer to the Architectural Drawings and Design Statement for Ringsend Library dated September 2023 (prepared by DMOD Architects), included with this submission.



ABOVE: Extract from CGI of proposed eastern elevation of the Library from Saint Patrick's Villas. RIGHT: Diagram showing the extent of proposed Library Extension



5.4 Connectivity

The existing Library building designed by Robert Sorley Lawrie (c.1937) is deliberately configured along a set axis. This symmetry has been utilised by DMOD Architects to align the newly proposed main entrance to the north and to inform the internal circulation of the building (Refer to Architects Report & Drawings).

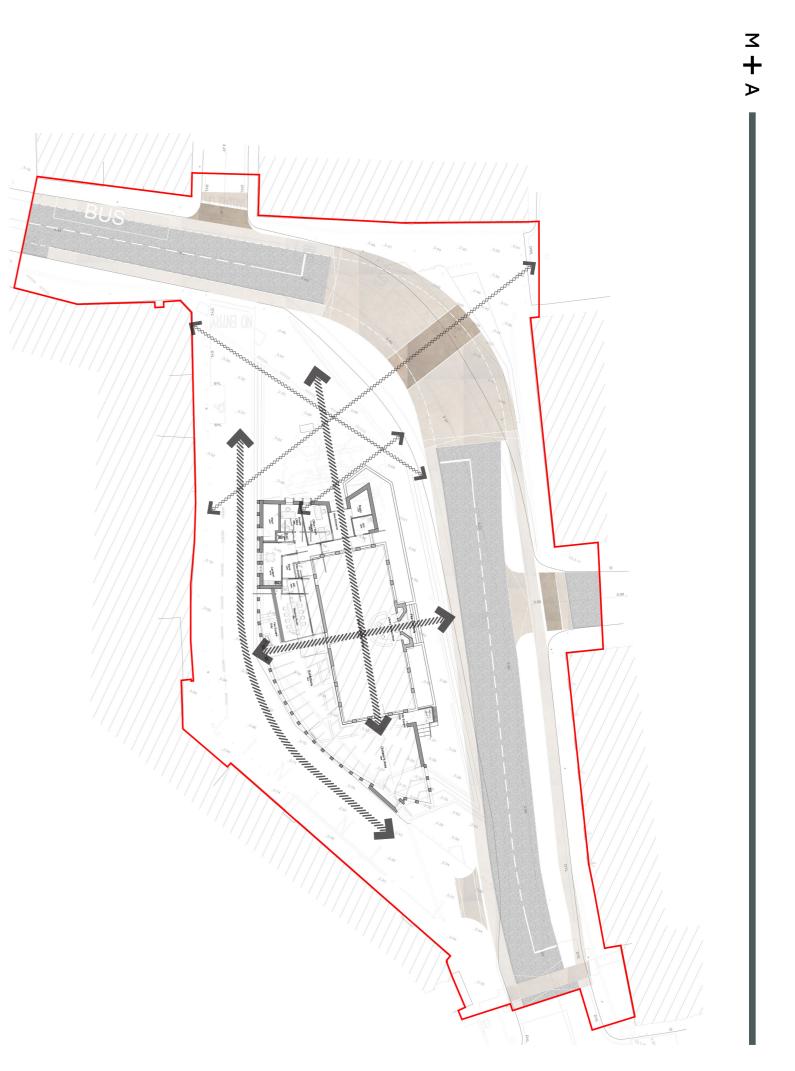
Derived from these symmetries are a series of secondary axial connections which work to encourage pedestrian movement into the Library Square and to the newly extended Library itself.

In the first instance this 'absolute directionality' looks to utilise the new controlled crossing and reconnect Library Square with the severed space to the North-east and further to Ringsend Park. This connection is of particular importance to the success of the space and provides a direct link between Park and Plaza which will only serve to increase footfall to both. Furthermore, this increased connectivity will create a safer movement corridor for school children attending St. Patrick's Boys National School and students attending Ringsend College.

The second connection creates a direct link west towards the city centre. These distinct geometries go on to inform the alignment of paving, planters, and street furniture. They also create an inherent link between the proposed Library entrance and the adjacent public realm through the use of common geometries.



ABOVE: Extract from CGI of Library Square looking southwest from the proposed controlled pedestrian crossing poin RIGHT: Diagram showing the various axial connections incorporated into the landscape design.



5.5 Protecting the Space

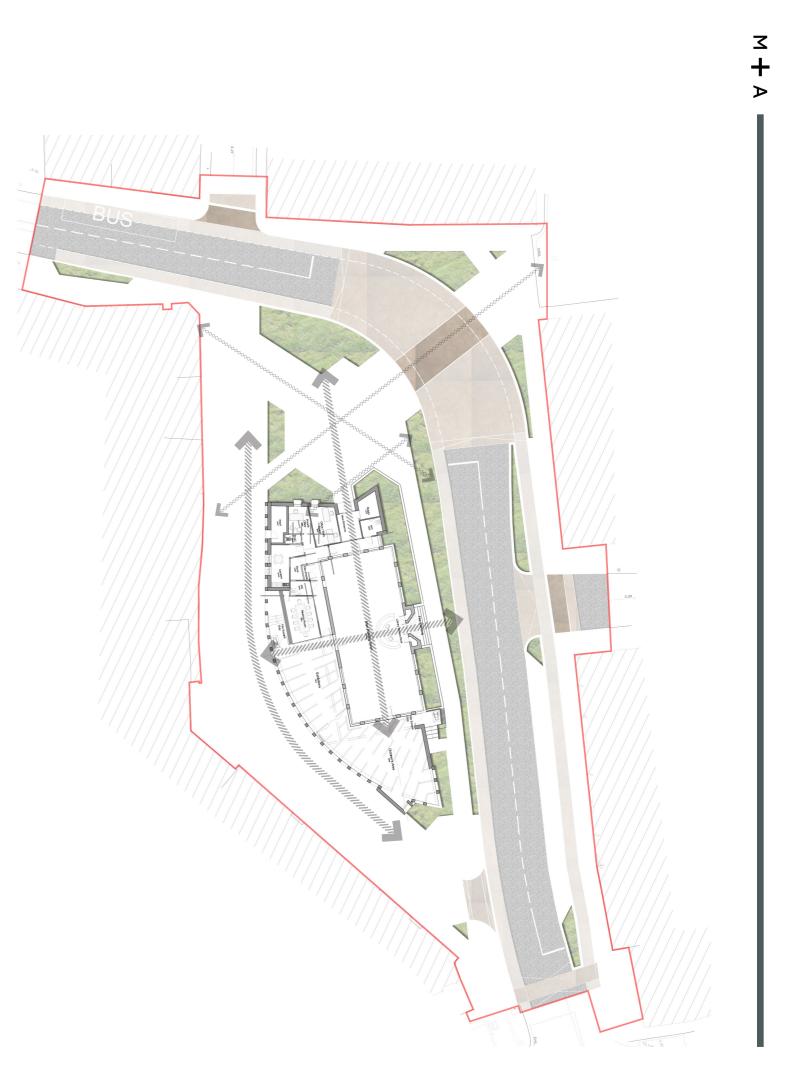
One of the main obstacles to achieving a strong spatial hierarchy for the newly proposed square was to provide further mitigation against the vehicle focused environment as highlighted in section 5.2 above.

To achieve this, it is proposed to re-establish a 'garden' setting for the square by wrapping the library building and the curtilage of the space in an apron of defensive planting. This approach extends to both sides of the pedestrian crossing providing a vegetative filter against passing traffic and a backdrop to seating opportunities. It is also serves to create a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians and for homeowners that face on to the main road. The proposed planting will contribute to the reduction of noise and pollution whilst serving as baffle to car headlight glare.

Furthermore, the introduction of significant areas of planting (~410 m2) into what is a predominantly impermeable space will contribute to overall 'de-paving' strategy currently ongoing within Dublin City. In certain instances these planting zones will act as bioretention areas receiving run-off from adjacent footpaths and cycle lanes where the levels allow (For details refer to Engineers Drawings & Reports). The net effect of this new planting strategy will work to enhance the local biodiversity by creating patches of pollinator friendly planting adjacent to the much larger GI asset that is Ringsend Park.



Above: Extract from CGI of Library Square looking south highlighting one of the proposed planting buffers that surround the square. RIGHT: Diagram showing the extent of planting buffer proposed and their relationship with the axial connections.



5.6 Fitzwilliam Street Improvements

It is clear from our site analysis and public consultations (incl. local traders) that there are inherent problems with the current configuration along Fitzwilliam Street both from an aesthetic and operational point of view (Refer to Section 3.5).

Its is proposed to undertake a series of key design interventions that together will work to create a safer and more visually appealing pedestrian environment that maintains the status quo with regard to the servicing of the existing businesses along the street.

The following design interventions are proposed:

- » A new suite of surface materials that tie in with the overall proposals for Library Square and the surrounding public realm improvements
- » Re-alignment and reduction of the vehicle carriageway to 3.1m
- » Reconfigure road levels generally to allow for the retaining wall and associated barriers to be omitted to the southern half of the street (adjacent Tesco & Lloyds Pharmacy)
- Introduction of a dedicated universal access ramp and stepped access at the interface between the entrance to the The Works Apartments (C2) the entrance to the Oxfam retail unit.
- » Repositioning of the Universally Accessible Parking space adjacent the medical centre and closer to the Pharmacy and Grocery units
- » Clear definition of the pedestrian and vehicular spaces by introducing raised kerbs including a 1.2m pedestrian refuge zone along the southern & western facade of the proposed Library Extension
- Introduction of drop kerbs to allow easier loading within the loading bay adjacent the Eurosales retail unit and within the bank of parallel parking adjacent the Tesco & Lloyds Pharmacy retail units.
- » Increased footpath widths adjacent the existing retail and residential units including the introduction of a new suite of street furniture to include bench seating and bicycle parking.

It is proposed to limit the vehicle size allowed to access Fitzwilliam Street to 8m. This is in the interest of pedestrian safety. Furthermore, it is proposed that Fitzwilliam Street will become fully pedestrianised during weekends.



Extract from CGI of Library Square showing proposed public realm improvements and carriageway realignment of Fitzwilliam Street

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5.7 Creating a Sense of Place

One of the primary design objectives is to create a sense of place for Library Square that specifically promotes the sense of a 'Village Square' and creates a unique identity for Ringsend that is instantly recognisable. In the first instance this is achieved by a unified approach to surface treatments that draws on clues from the colouration of surrounding building facades (Refer to Section 3.7), that works in harmony with the proposed Library building materials and that is robust and durable enough to be fit for purpose vehicle & pedestrian traffic.

The next intervening layer is made up a suite of street furniture including bench seating, bicycle parking, and high-level lighting columns at strategic locations (Refer to Lighting Report dated March 2023 prepared by JVT Engineers, included with this submission.). The site furniture will be designed specifically for Library Square and will be comprised of high-quality materials capable of withstanding the test of time.

Finally, it is proposed to replace the existing Sycamore trees (Acer platanoides) with a selection of semi-mature Scot's Pines (Pinus sylvestris) and birch trees (Betula nigra) in a more scattered distribution across the whole scheme. By comparison with the Sycamores, the proposed Pines are more compact with a higher canopy and greater branch dispersion, creating a dappled shade. The birch trees will be deployed as a companion tree offering seasonal variety against a coniferous backdrop. The tree species are chosen for their distinctive habits and will act as totems for the scheme providing instant maturity from the outset. They also have They also have excellent biodiversity and carbon sequestration credentials which will only serve to benefit the local area.



ABOVE: Extract from CGI of Library Square looking southeast towards the newly proposed Library entrance. RIGHT: Composite render of the proposed site plan.



6.0 Materials

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Proposed Hard & Soft Landscape Materials and Furnishings



Materials

6.1 Surface Materials

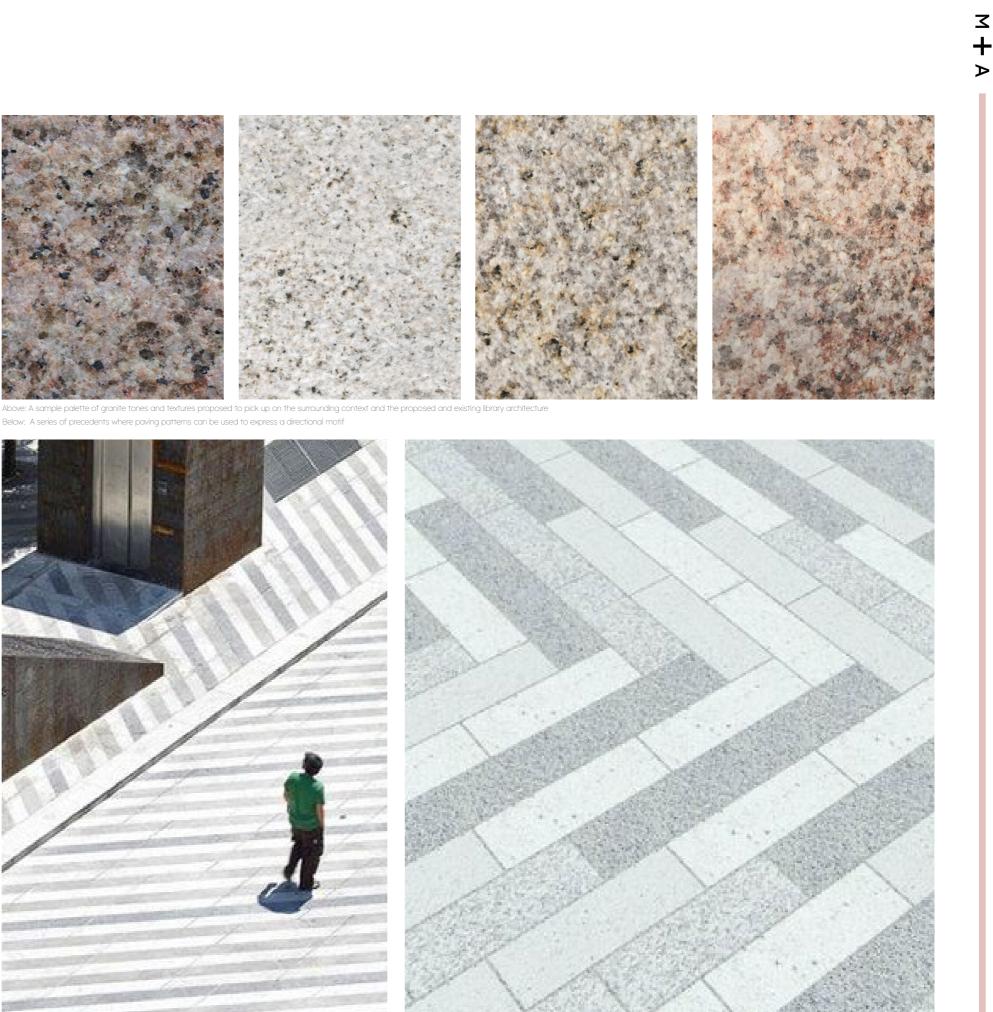
The various Surface Materials have been carefully selected to compliment the existing library building and its proposed new extension, while also sensitively integrating the new proposals (landscape & architectural) with their receiving environment. One of the methods by which this is achieved is through the examination of the various tones and textures within the surrounding built facades (Refer to Section 3.7). This information will be utlised to inform final colour selection and surface finish of the proposed paving.

As part of the overall design strategy it is proposed to deviate somewhat from the standard palette of materials traditionally used within Dublin City Council and that a regeneration project of this nature commands a departure from the norm in order to emphasise the importance of the new public spaces. In that regard we are proposing to introduce a variance in scale, tone & texture within the paving palette that helps to further reinforce design strategies such as the connectivity of absolute directionality described in Section 5.4.

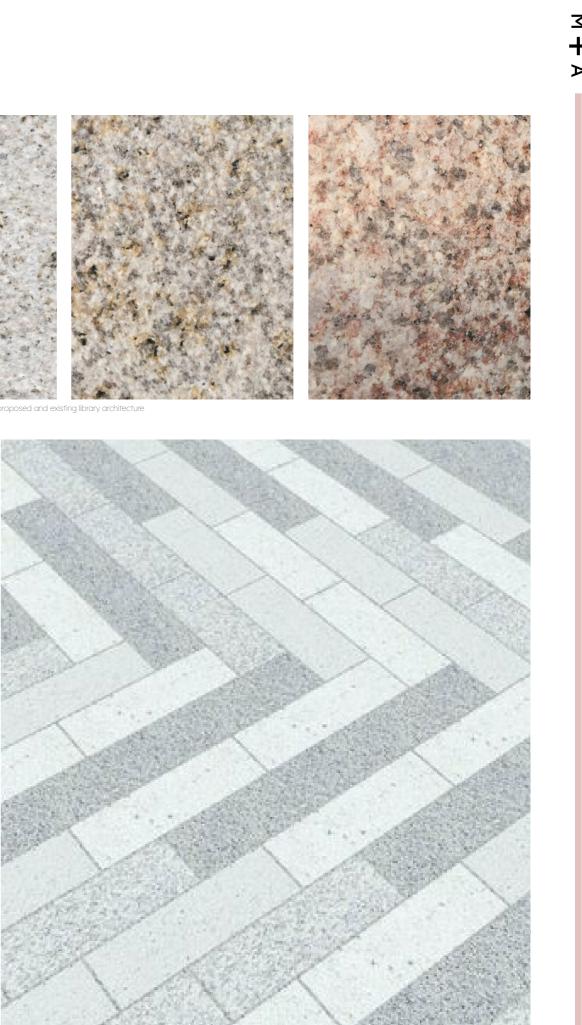
The materials will be selected with the core aims of sustainability, durability and life cycle costing. We will also endeavor to specify locally sourced materials with the aim of reducing the projects overall carbon footprint. Recent experience in Public Realm projects has also informed the material selection with regard to site suitability and envisaged usage.

Note: All proposed surface materials are subject to detailed agreement with Dublin City Council Road Maintenance Department.









Materials

6.2 Street Furniture

Similar to the proposed surface materials it is important that the proposed suite of street furniture is carefully selected and designed to give a unique identity to the new Library Square and its surrounding public realm.

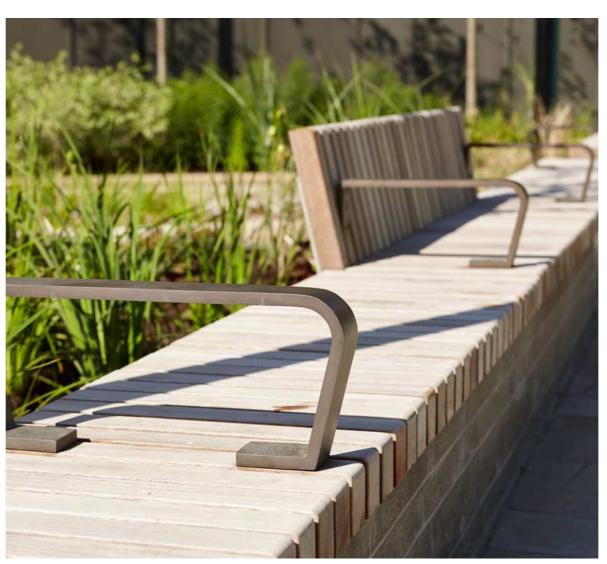
In that regard, we are proposing a limited palette of hardwood and natural stone accented with inserts of special metal (Bronze). The proposed seating will be designed to best practice accessible guidelines with arm & back rests as well as variance in seating height to accommodate a multitude of end users.

The proposed feature lighting (Selux 'Olivio Floracion') will be instantly recognisable with its 7 & 9m timber poles seamlessly blending with the new and existing context. They light poles will also have the facility to house power connections or charging stations should it be required.

The proposed bike parking will again accommodate multiple users including children's bikes & scooters

Right: Hardwood bench tops over natural stone base with PPC armrests Below: Dual bike parking to incorporate children's parking spaces.





Far Right: Proposed multi-directional lighting timber lighting columns Below: Metal inserts into paving and street furniture elements







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6.3 Planting Strategy

The planting strategy has been developed to help integrate the scheme with the surrounding area and to provide shelter and amenity value within the site. Tree Planting will be instantly recognisable with an under-storey of pollinator friendly shrubs, grasses & flowering perennials providing an abundance seasonal colour & interest. Furthermore, the planting strategy will utilise a range of hardy species which will reduce maintenance overtime and contribute to the early and rapid development of the planted installation.

The planting pallet has been selected with regard to the 'All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025' with a view to promoting a biodiverse environment that will create a suitable habitat for local birds, bees and other fauna.

This is achieved through the following:

- » Pollinator friendly species are included within the shrubs and groundcover mix and inclusion of pollinator friendly street trees
- » Planting mix includes drought tolerant species as well as being robust and low maintenance.
- The planting species will aim to strengthen areas within the site for wildlife and biodiversity and to reinstate green infrastructure across the site where feasible.

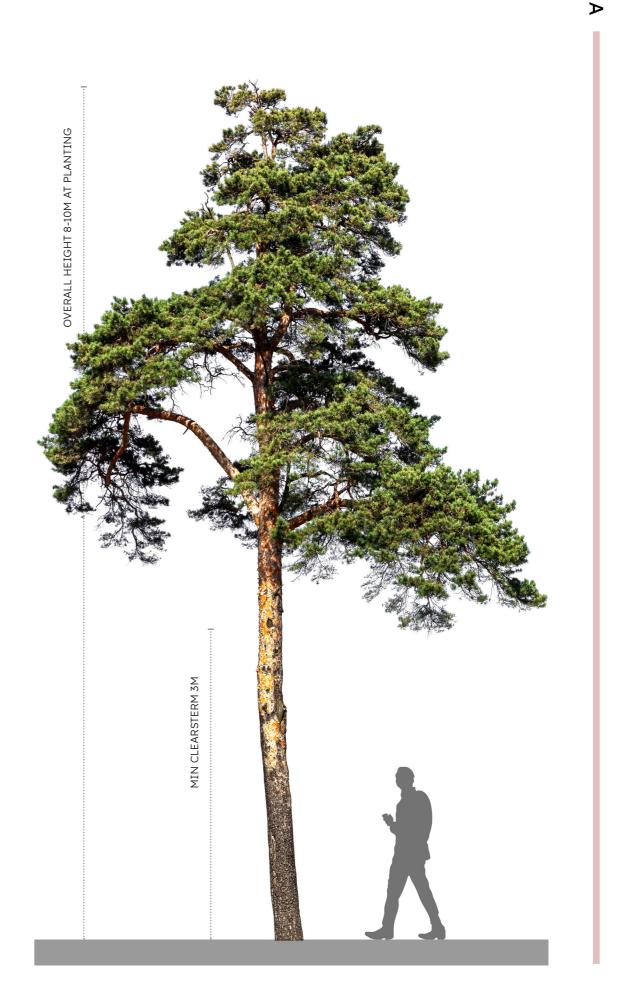


Right: Pollinator Friendly shrubs, grasses & flowering perennials. Image Source: https://www.nigeldunnett.com/ Far Right: Diagram showing proposed scale of Scot's Pine trees at planting



Library Square Ringsend, Landscape Design Report - March 2023





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CGI Renderings of the Proposed Scheme

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View from St Patrick Villas



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View Looking Northwest towards the southern end of Fitzwilliam Street



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View looking southwest from the newly proposed controlled pedestrian crossing

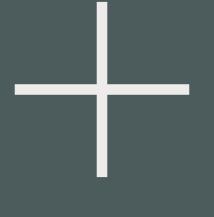


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View looking South East towards the new Main Entrance to the Library and Fitzwilliam St



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Thank You

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