

301
ST VINCENT
STREET

LANDSCAPE DESIGN REPORT

MARCH 2024

murray & associates
landscape architecture

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1. Introduction

This chapter has been prepared by Murray & Associates, Landscape Architecture in respect of the application to refurbish and upgrade the existing office building located at 301 St Vincent Street, Glasgow. This report provides details of the landscape proposals including landscape context and policies, design concept and approach, and proposal strategies.

The building, currently used by Santander Bank and originally built for the Britoil headquarters in the 1980's, occupies an approximate area of 0.91ha in the city centre.

The landscape areas within the site are all located inside the building footprint; i.e. they are enclosed by the architecture, even at street level. There are terraces on the eastern and western facades at third and fourth floor levels with views of the cityscape and beyond. There are internal courtyards at second and third floor levels, which frame lightwells into the centre of the building block. At the present time, access is not permitted to the terraces as they no longer comply with Building Regulations which have, of course, been updated since the 1980s.

An analysis of the site landscape indicates that planting is generally well-maintained. Over the years, the original plants have died off and been removed but the remaining planting is in relatively good condition. The majority of the planting is non-native and not of value to pollinators or wildlife. One particular species surviving from the original planting is Rhododendron, which is considered an invasive plant in Scotland. Many others are now over-mature for the location. Whilst the interior courtyards and eastern terraces are more intensively maintained, the western terraces have become overrun with Ivy and other self-seeded plants. At ground level, there is not much of value which adds to the character of the streetscape or contributes to urban greening in a meaningful way. Overall, there are few high quality plants worthy of retention going forward.

The landscape proposals aim to enhance biodiversity and activate and optimise each individual space. This will be achieved by providing more usable areas with universal access and with native, biodiverse and pollinator friendly planting that will enhance and enrich the spaces.

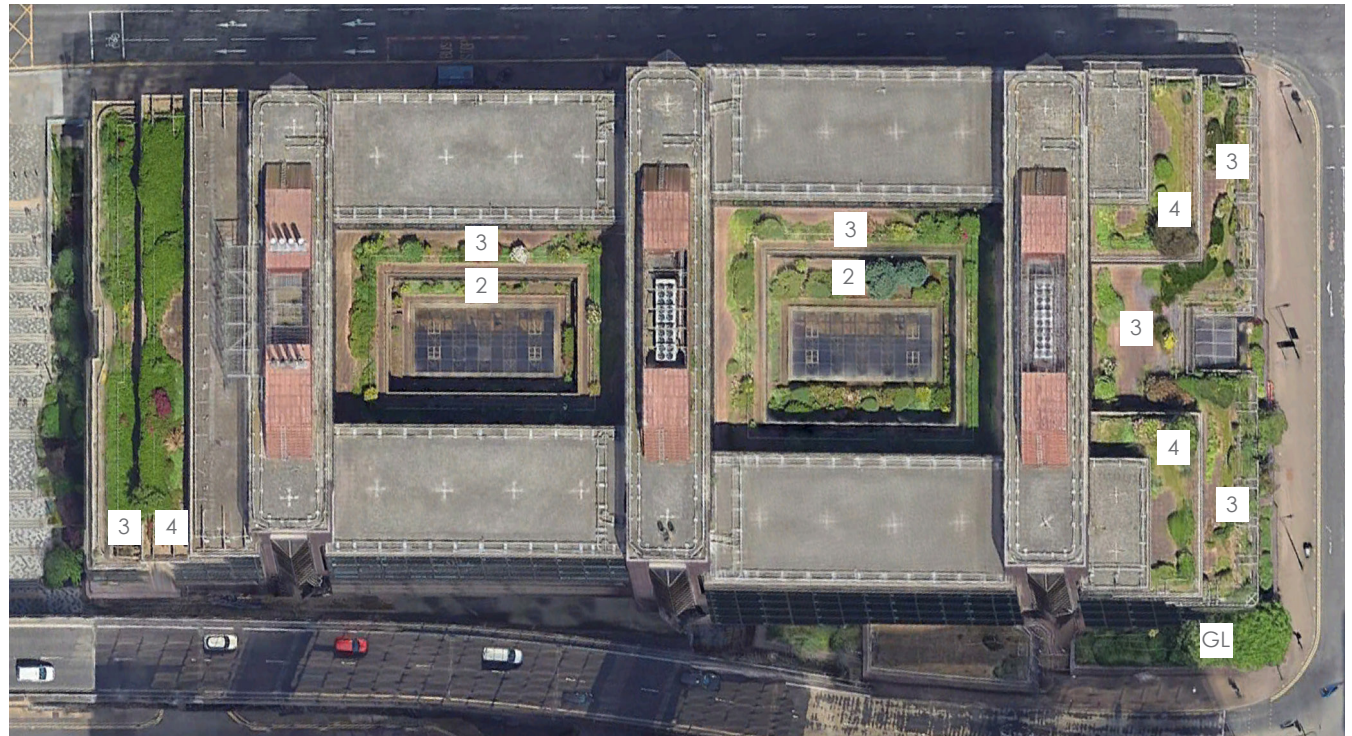


Figure 1 - Aerial view with numbers representing floor levels of planted areas from ground level (GL) to Level 4; Source: Google Earth

2. Policy

Our research indicated the following policies to be the most relevant to the landscape of the site.

Glasgow City Development Plan 2017

- Section IPG3 (SG3) Economic Development locates the site in the City Centre Principal Office Area and in the International Financial Service District (IFSD), part of the Strategic Economic Investment Locations (SEILs).
- Section SG4 Network of Centres - Other Retail & Commercial Leisure Centre identifies SEILs areas as to "Maintain its attractiveness as an investment location through the renewal of the built environment and supporting infrastructure."
- Section IPG6: (SG6) Green Belt and Green Network classifies the planters on the exterior side of the building as being an amenity space, labelling it as "Amenity Greenspace - Transport" under the section of Open Spaces - refer to figures 2 and 3. It's considered a "Publicly Usable" Amenity Space, in which, the Open Space Protection topic states that "In accordance with policy CDP6, there is a strong presumption in favour of the retention of the categories of open space...".
- Section IPG7: (SG7) Natural Environment contains a table with the Opportunities for Enhancing Habitat and Wildlife Interests. For the site, examples of opportunities that can be explored are:
 - Naturalise existing open spaces and deliver new, multifunctional open spaces;
 - Green roofs; Green/living walls;
 - Planting of street-trees;
 - Incorporate bat and bird boxes in design;
 - Link to existing green corridors and design for multi functionality;
 - Incorporate green infrastructure into on and off-road access routes;
 - Plant hedges and trees, create wetlands;
 - Design for longer grass and wildflower grassland.

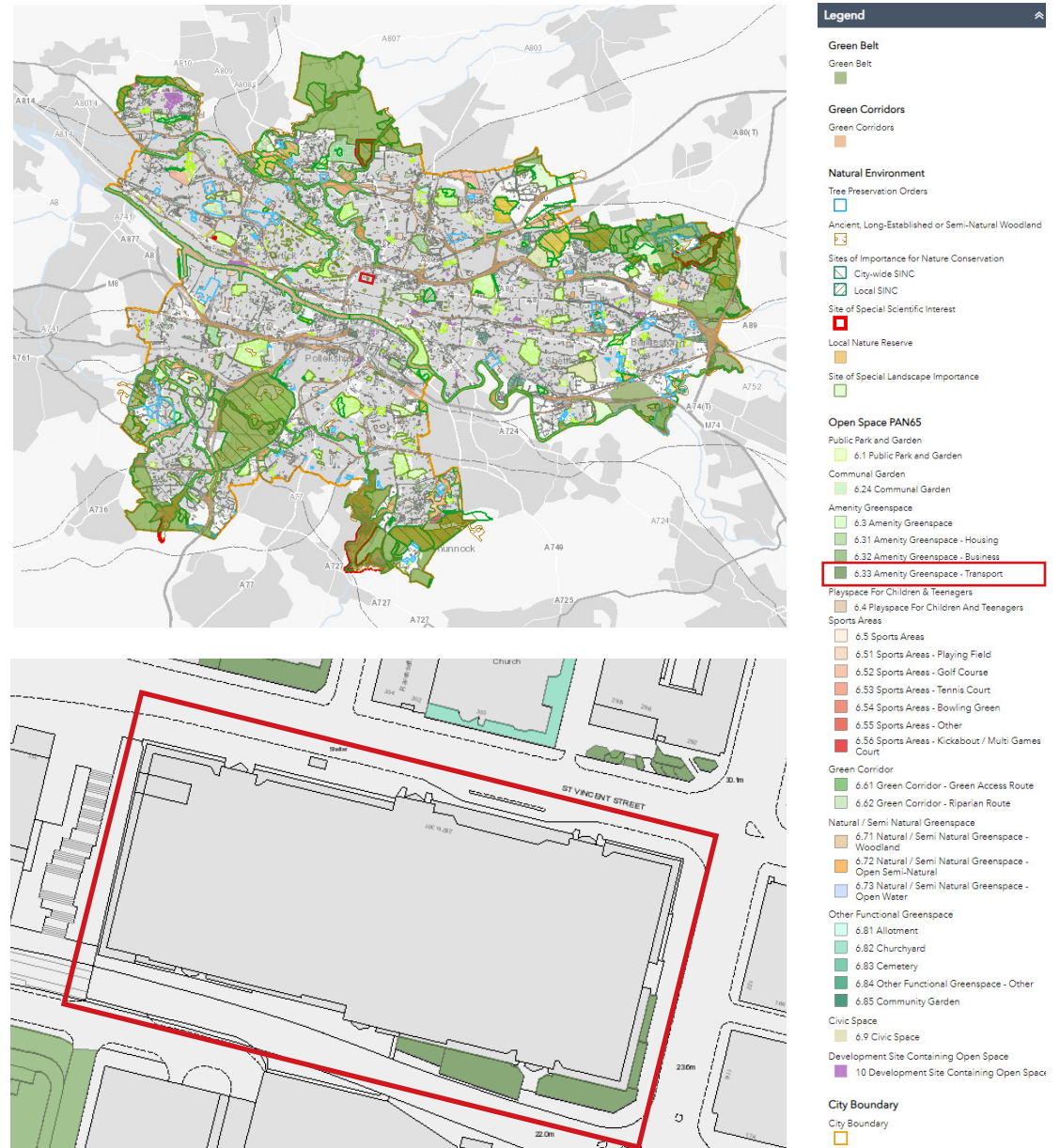


Figure 2 & 3 - Extracts from GCDP - IPG6 (SG3) Economic Development

2. Policy

Scotland's Nature Agency

Developing with Nature guidance

This guidance is a support document for the National Planning Framework done by Scotland's Nature Agency, which states some appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity:

- The Use of Native Plants is preferable - Suitable species include Heathers, Ferns, Hawthorn, Fruit trees, Holly, etc;
- Non-Native Plants can be of great value to wildlife and pollinator friendly but should be planted under the Code of Practice for Non-Native Plants;
- Avoidance of Invasive Non-Native Species;
- Create niche habitats; Artificial habitats, Micro-mounds for insects, nest boxes (esp. swifts), varied planting, sticks, bricks, etc.
- Retain Existing Plants with Biodiversity Value in accordance with policies

Advice & Guidance from nature.scot

Among the resources and policies found here, of particular interest is advice regarding Invasive Non-Native Plants. While most non-native plants cause no real issues, some are highly problematic. *Rhododendron (Rhododendron ponticum)* is one of the plants named as particularly problematic and is present on the site. Technically speaking, the varieties present on site are likely to be hybrids or cultivated varieties, but nonetheless, given the potential threat to the environment they are proposed to be removed going forward.

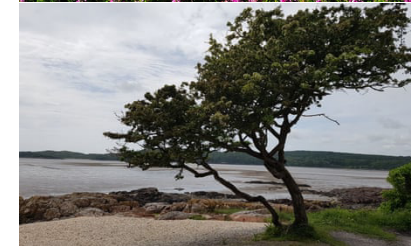
Glasgow Pollinator Plan 2017-2027

The project will assist in achieving the main aim of the Pollinator Plan: To have a robust, healthy and diverse population of pollinating invertebrates in Glasgow.

With input and assistance from Wild Surveys, the appointed Ecologist, this project is aiming for a biodiverse, native and pollinator friendly planting plan suited for the site.

Glasgow Pollinator Plan

2017-2027



Figures 4 & 5 - Glasgow Pollinator Plan & Biodiverse Planting



Figures 6- Green Roofs System - Source: Murray & Associates

3. Concept / Approach

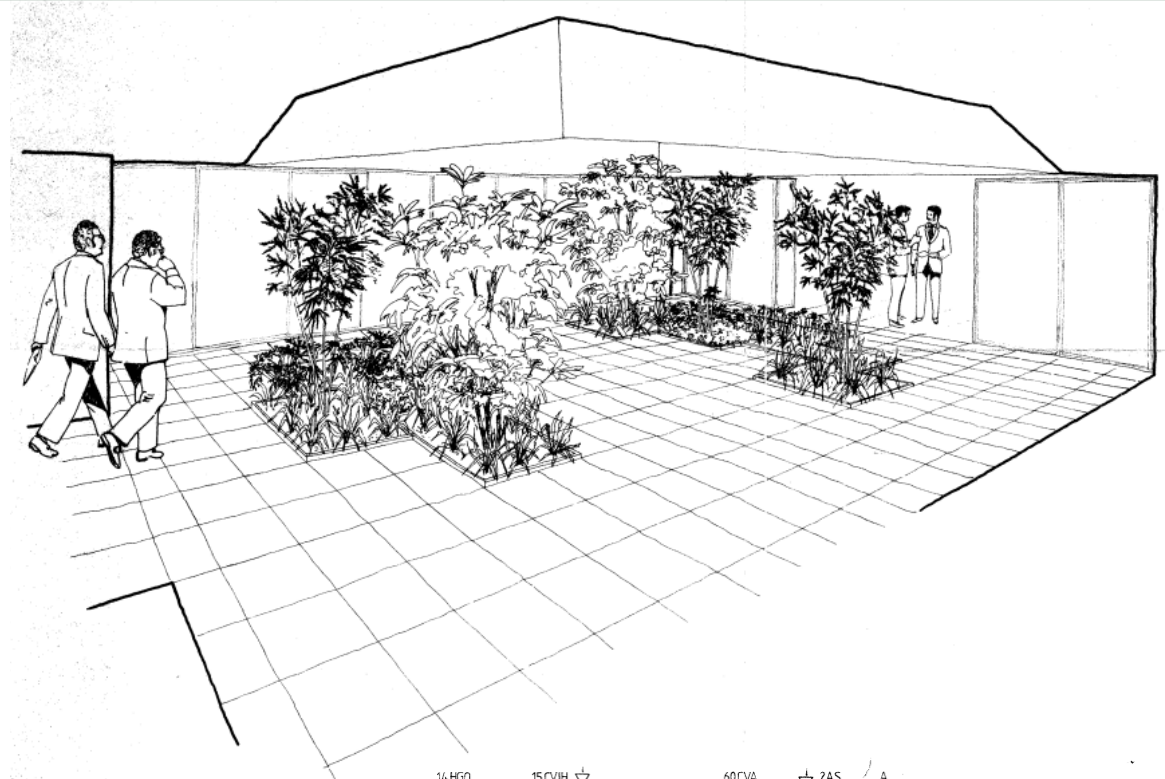
Original Landscape Proposals & Existing Site

The team had the opportunity to review and analyse the original hand-drawn 'as-built' landscape plans and details prepared by Landscape Architects WJ Cairns & Partners for the Britoil Development which dated from 1984. These contained original planting plans, soft landscape details, hard landscape sections and irrigation plans, which have assisted greatly in understanding the existing landscape. The planting lists contained many plants typical of the 1980s such as Birch, Rhododendron, Broom, Cotoneaster, Laurel, various conifers, Vinca and Aucuba. Many of these were evergreen and had little or no biodiversity value.

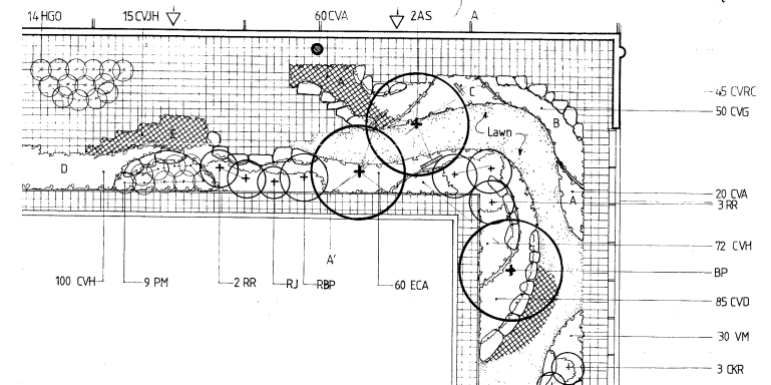
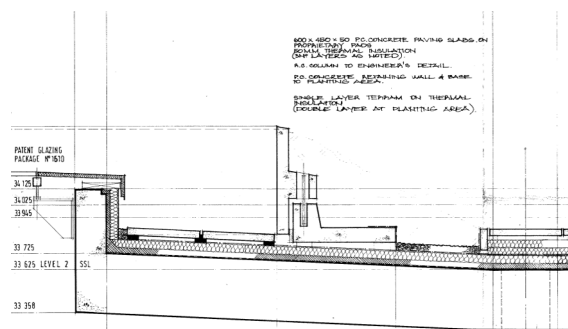
Those which have survived are the hardiest 'landscape' plants, and it is clear that only a small percentage of the original plants have survived to the present. Those which have survived (or have been replaced) fill out the space quite well, but there are many bare spaces – notably in the more shaded parts of the courtyards – and some terraces have been overwhelmed with ivy or similar.

It was also interesting to note that the volume of soil provided in most of the planting areas was less than would be considered acceptable nowadays – with maximum depths around 600mm, and an average depth of c.300mm. It is perhaps not surprising that the Birch, Japanese Maple and Austrian Pine originally specified have not lasted to the present, but vigorous conifers like Juniper and Lawson Cypress or tough plants like Rhododendron are surviving.

There are one or two plants in each courtyard which can be retained going forward; plants with ornamental value which have been sculpted with age into interesting specimens. As noted previously, all surviving Rhododendron plants are proposed to be removed going forward. With relation to Ivy: although it is generally to be encouraged in urban environments due to its biodiversity value and anti-airborne pollution qualities, it can't be retained in this context as it can be destructive to buildings.



Figures 7 to 10 - Extracts from Britoil construction drawings (1985)



CODE	LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	QUANTITY	SIZE	MAX. SIZE	E	D	S	REMARKS
AIH	ARELIA GRANDIFLORA	"	63	100 - 120	≥ 250	●			PINK & WHITE FLOWERS
AS	ACER SENKAKI	JAPANESE MAPLE	10	350-400	≥ 600	●			NEE FALL COLOR
BE	BETULA ERITANII	"	2	250-300	≥ 700	●			WHITE BARK, BRIGHT FALL-GLOW
BP	BETULA PENDULA	SILVER BIRCH	7	300-350	≥ 500	●			WHITE BARK, GOLD
BP1	BETULA PENDULA	SILVER BIRCH	1	250-300	≥ 500	●			"
CB	CYTISUS BURKWOODII	BROOM	60	30 - 40	≥ 150	●			HARD FLOWERS
CBE	CYTISUS BEANII	"	7	10 - 15	≥ 30	●			YELLOW FLOWERS
CC	CYTISUS CORNISH CREAM	"	3	60 - 80	≥ 180	●			LEGANT FLOWERS
CF	COTONEASTER FRANGETHI	"	139	40 - 50	≥ 200	●			ORANGE BERRIES
CK	CYTISUS KEWENSIS	BROOM	112	20 - 30	≥ 60	●			CLUSTER OF YELLOW FLOWERS
CKR	CYTISUS KILWNEY RED	"	12	30 - 40	≥ 80	●			BRIGHT RED FLOWERS
CP	CYTISUS PURGANIS	"	9	20 - 30	≥ 70	●			YELLOW FLOWERS

3. Concept / Approach



Figure 11 - Robinia to be retained and Ivy removed



Figure 18 - Lawson Cypress - over mature for context - to be removed or pruned to appropriate size



Figure 12 - Cotoneaster to be removed



Figure 13 - Group of Rhododendrons to be removed



Figure 14 - Juniper with interesting shape to be retained



Figure 15 - Typical group of shrubs and groundcover in courtyard to be removed



Figure 16 - Overgrown planting, self seeded Ash and ivy to be removed

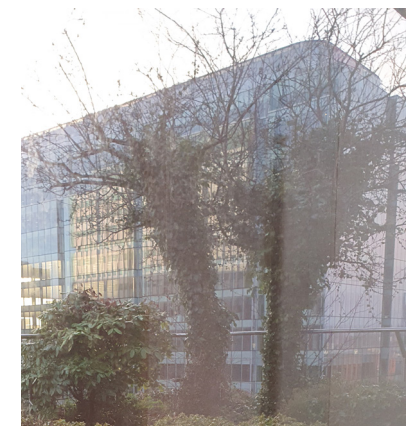


Figure 17 - Specimen trees - Apple - to be retained, with ivy for biodiversity



Figure 19 - Group of Portuguese Laurel with interesting form to be retained

Existing Site Vegetation

3. Concept / Approach

Aesthetic - New Naturalism

The naturalistic forms of the original planting scheme are well suited to the intention of introducing a biodiverse, 'wild' aesthetic. The sinuous forms will be emulated within a more structured and layered planting scheme, contrasting with the orthogonal grid of the building and paving.

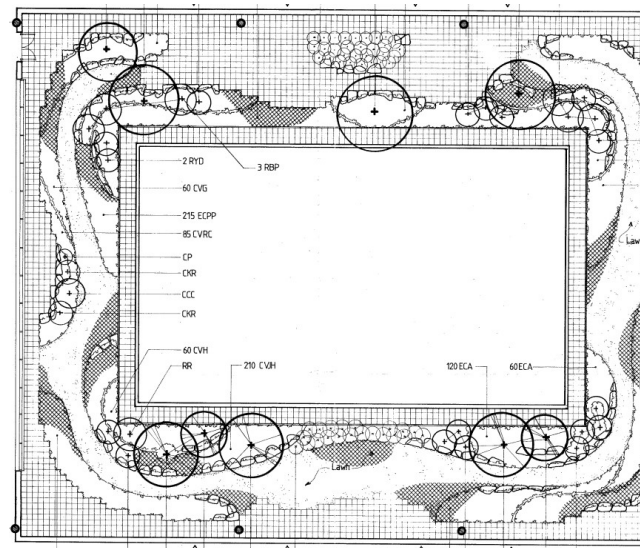
On the outer terraces there will be a greater emphasis on native planting, with selected plant communities which reflect the natural landscapes beyond the city – making a connection with the distant views and forming a connection with the landscape which will bring a greater sense of place: borrowed landscapes such as Heathland, Woodland/Scrub, Wildflower, etc in microcosm.

Enclosed courtyards will be filled with native and pollinator plants with colour, texture, diversity and seasonality.

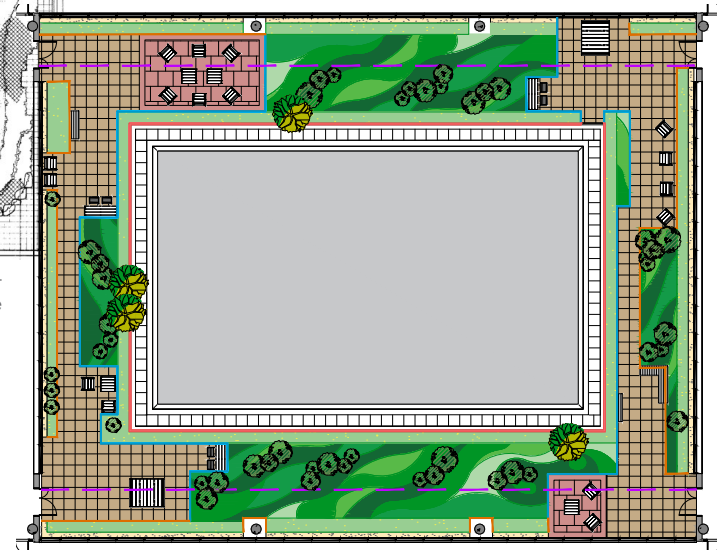
Indicative planting lists are provided on the Landscape Plans - See drawings nos. PL_P_01, PL_P_02, PL_P_03, PL_P_04 and also see Section 5 of this document.



Figure 20 - Extract from The ARUP Journal Winter 1986



Figures 21 & 22 - Level 3 western interior courtyard - Extract from Britoil construction drawing (left) & current landscape proposal (right)



3. Concept / Approach

Indicative Sections

Through the analysis of the original construction details, it seems the site has a maximum of 600mm soil depth but typically it is shallower, with an average of 300mm. Looking at the existing planting and the original planting plans, it's clear that a lot of plants have failed over the years.

This being said, the planting strategy for the site is to increase the depth of soil, which is possible through mounding the soil and raised planters.

Increasing the depth of soil is subject to detailed structural analysis of the building which has not been finalised at this stage of design. Thus, it may not be possible to introduce large tree or shrub specimens, but the core intent is to improve the diversity and vigour of the planting on the site.

Please note the indicative sections refer to the planting scheme. For edging treatments and planting plans and details please refer to landscape plans.

Minimum soil depths for each type of planting:

- Specimen Shrubs - 600mm;
- Shrubs - 400mm;
- Ferns - 300 to 400mm;
- Perennials, Grasses & Climbers - 300mm.

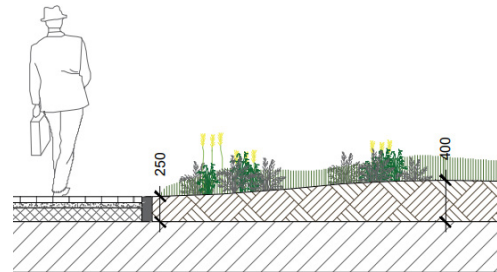


Figure 14 - Indicative Section - Ground level - Mounded

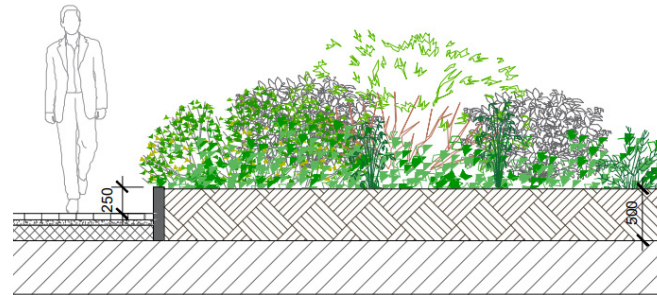
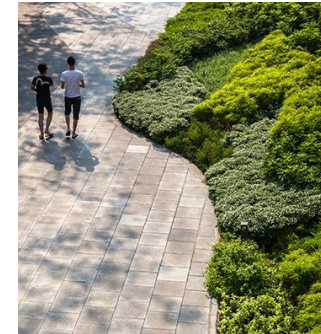


Figure 15 - Indicative Section - Raised Planter/High kerb

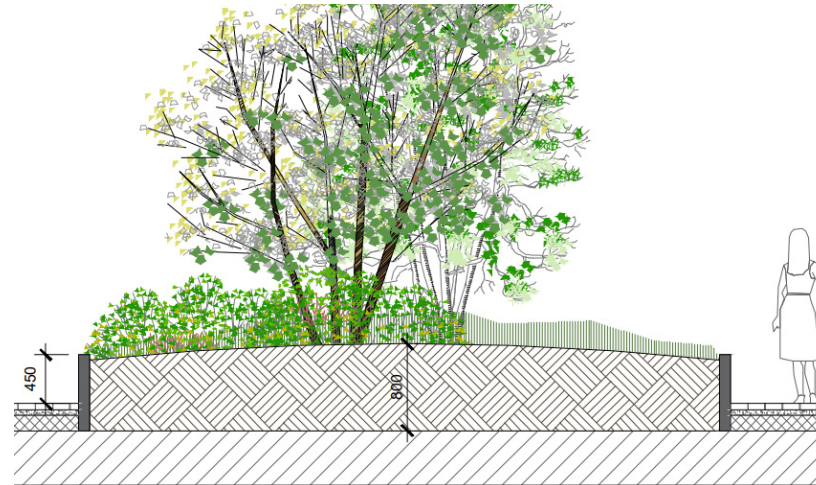
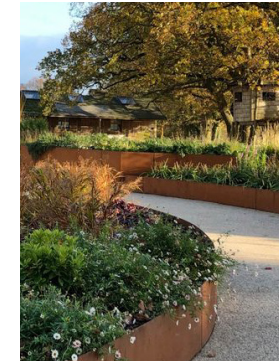
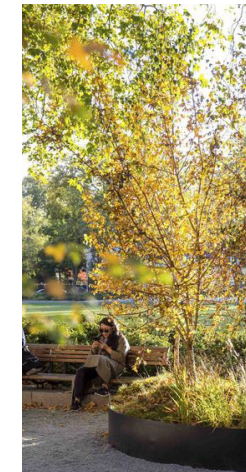


Figure 16 - Indicative Section - Raised Planter



4. Proposals

Landscape Concept - Key Points

The two primary and mutually beneficial landscape strategies for the site are around **Activating the Spaces** for greater amenity and **Enhancing Biodiversity**.

Activating the Spaces

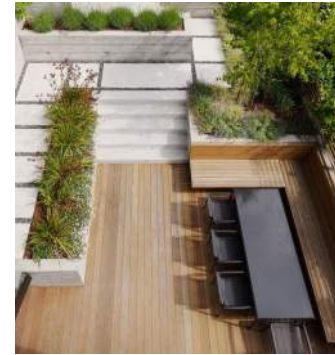
- Multipurpose and flexible- for breaks, socialising, eating, working or meeting.
- Intimate areas suited for individual people or small gatherings.
- Varied furniture types – Single & combined seating; Regular and high seating & tables; Fixed and movable furniture; Shade & shelter provided.
- Shelters to provide greater functionality and extend the usability of the external spaces.

Enhancing Biodiversity

- Use of Native Plants where possible and Non-Native Pollinator Plants in naturalistic arrangements.
- Create niche habitats; e.g. Micro-mounds for insects, nest boxes (esp. swifts), varied planting, sticks, bricks, etc.
- Distinctive and unique character and value enclosing the amenity spaces.
- Low maintenance planting that provides year round interest.
- Planting colour and textures to soften hard landscape.

Another key aim is **universal accessibility**, to ensure that the spaces are inclusive and respond to needs of all site users, including wheelchair users and other challenges. Emergency and maintenance accesses will also be incorporated into the design.

Please see the accompanying landscape plans for details of all landscape spaces [Murray & Associates Drawing nos. PL_P_01, PL_P_02, PL_P_03, PL_P_04]. The following pages provide some examples of specific spaces.



Figures 23 to 31 - Reference Images of furniture and seating areas

4. Proposals

Landscape Proposal - Street Level

At street level, the design intent is to enhance planting around the main entrance, to retain worthwhile trees with presence and plant new trees and shrubs within the curtilage that will enrich the public realm, wherever possible. The original building design included some raised planters along the northern façade. These were covered with stone lids which will be removed to reintroduce green elements to this rather shaded space. Small, sculptural trees are proposed, together with a ground layer of native ferns and other shade-tolerant pollinator plants to give year-round interest and biodiversity value. Examples of suitable trees for threshold planters might include native Holly (*Ilex aquifolia*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), and non-native pollinators like Oregon Grape (*Mahonia*), Laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus*) or Daisy Bush (*Olearia*). These will give interesting form and presence on the street but will be vigorous and robust enough to be sustainable and lasting.

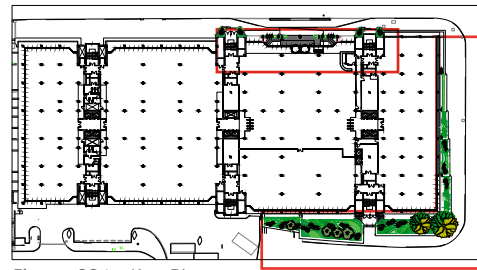


Figure 32A - Key Plan



Figure 32B - CGI showing planting at entrance area; Source:LOM



Figure 32D- CGI showing planting at entrance area; Source:LOM

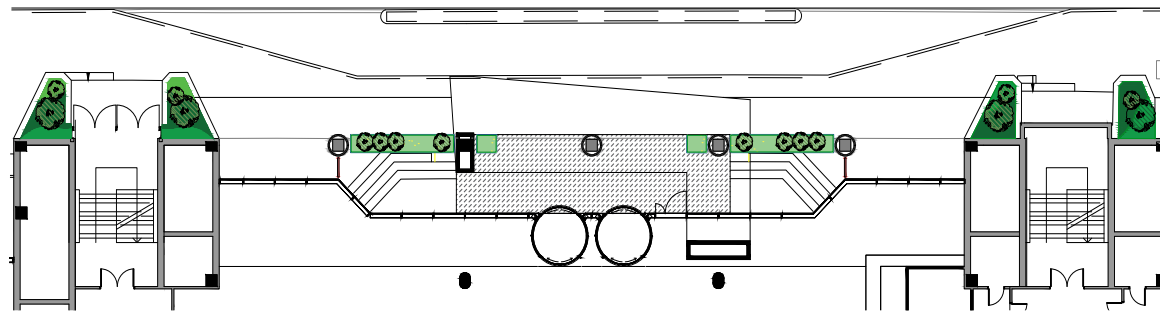


Figure 32C- Entrance Planters

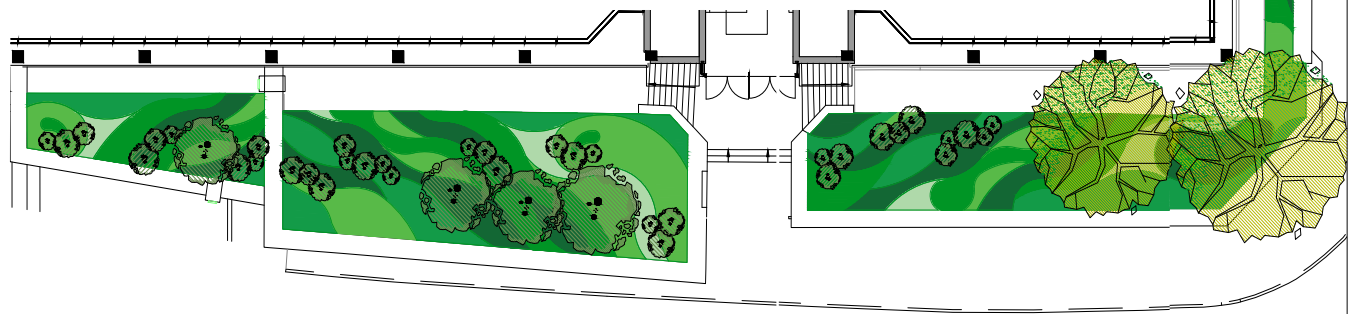


Figure 32E- Planters around the building