



Roaring Meg Retail Park

Stevenage
Design and Access Statement - Link Road

March 2024

2264-MP-PG-B008-P01

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Existing retail park aerial view

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01 Introduction

01 Introduction

Scope and Purpose of document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Mountford Pigott LLP, on behalf of Stevenage Retail Ltd, for the creation of a new link road between the north and south car parks at Roaring Meg Retail Park, which will both enhance the useability of the park, and provide new high quality public realm.

Following the acquisition of Roaring Meg Retail Park by Stevenage Retail, as part of the 9Yards portfolio, a series of carefully focussed improvements, to enhance the tenant mix and create a better customer experience have already been carried out. Linking the car parks to enhance the circulation within the park is the next proposed enhancement.

The purpose of this document will be to accompany the Planning Application submitted for these planned improvements.

Background

Legislative Context

Section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the 1990 Act") (as amended) provides for a development order to make provisions about planning applications, and to require a statement of design principles and access issues, known as a design and access statement ("DAS"). Design and access statements can be a useful tool in planning for high quality development. If design and access issues are considered from an early stage of scheme development, this can and does result in good quality design. Paragraph 029 (Reference ID 14-029-20140306) (as revised 06/03/2014) of the National Planning Policy Guidance sets out in general terms what design and access statements should provide.

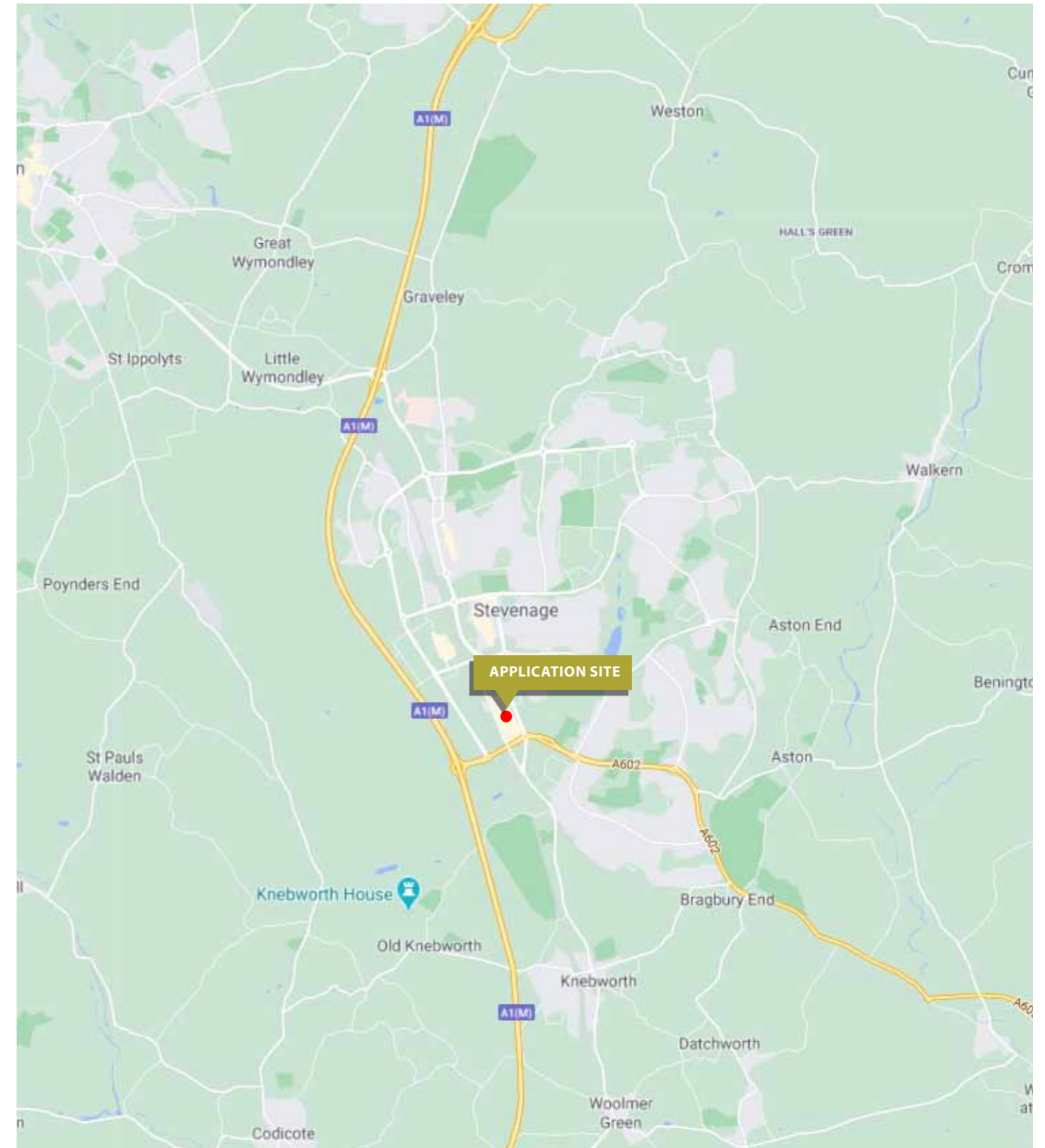
The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 sets out the procedure for making and deciding planning applications, including the requirements to provide a design and access statement (article 9). Article 9 of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 sets out the following requirements for design and access statements:

(2) An application for planning permission to which this paragraph applies must, except where paragraph (4) applies, be accompanied by a statement ("a design and access statement") about -

- (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and
- (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

(3) A design and access statement must -

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- (c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- (d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and
- (e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.



Context plan

01 Introduction

Brief

The brief for this initiative was to create a link between the north and south car parks through the under-used public open space in the middle of the park. The remaining pedestrian areas are to be improved with high quality new public realm including, new seating, areas of landscape and space for the forthcoming Stevenage Cycle Hire Scheme.

The link road will greatly improve the convenience of the park for visitors; at present when either of the car parks are busy drivers are forced out onto the public highway, rather than being able to cross within the site.

Technical consultants

The planning application has been prepared by a team of designers and technical consultants who have all contributed to the proposal in their respective areas of expertise. This team is formed by the following practices:

- *Architecture* Mountford Pigott LLP
- *Planning Consultancy* Montagu Evans
- *Highways consultancy* TTP Consulting
- *Project management* Belshaw Building Consultancy Ltd



Aerial view of Roaring Meg Retail Park in context

01 Introduction

Context analysis



- Ownership boundary
- Application site
- Railway line
- Residential
- Green space
- Education
- Retail
- Industrial/commercial
- Stevenage Football Club
- Main roads

Context analysis plan

01 Introduction

The Retail Park

The 9.82 Hectare/24.27 Acre existing retail park, is located to the south of Stevenage town centre, at the corner of the A602 Broadhall Way and Monkswood Way. The site comprises 23 retail units with associated car park and delivery access.

The retail park has 2 separate parking areas (north and south), both of which can be accessed from London Road to the west, with further access to the southern car park from Monkswood Way to the east. Once in the site there is a service road (Great North Road) which runs up the east side of the site which provides access to service areas for the retail units, as well as providing another link to the northern car park. Between the 2 car parks is a public open space, with limited seating and planting, between some of the newer units.

Within the curtilage of the site, to the east, is Monks Wood West which is defined in the local plan as a wildlife site. The site lies adjacent to a green corridor, as defined in the local plan, which runs along Monkswood Way to the east.

The site is situated a block away from the main railway line to Stevenage station, which lies to the west, and is on the periphery of the largely commercial and industrial area to the south of Stevenage. Between the site and the railway line is the Oaklands Retail Park.

To the east of the site are largely residential areas interspersed with green space.

To the south east of the site, across Broadhall Way, is the stadium of Stevenage Football Club, as well another small retail park, Roaring Meg South. To the north east is the Monkswood Retail Park, which is accessible from Elder Way.

To the north west of the site is the Stevenage Brook which runs above ground for part of the western boundary before being diverted into a culvert under the remainder of the site, under the central plaza. The brook then runs above ground again once past Broadhall Way.

The site falls within Flood Zone 2, with some areas to the north west of the site in zone 3. However, the area in zone 3 is also designated as having flood defences in the form of the Elder Way water meadow flood storage reservoir, immediately to the north of the site, as well as a weir and flow control on the brook.

Recent improvements

Roaring Meg has seen a series of recent improvements that have brought a series of major new retailers into the scheme, including M&S, TKMaxx and Nando's.



- Ownership boundary
- Application site

Aerial view of the retail park

01 Introduction

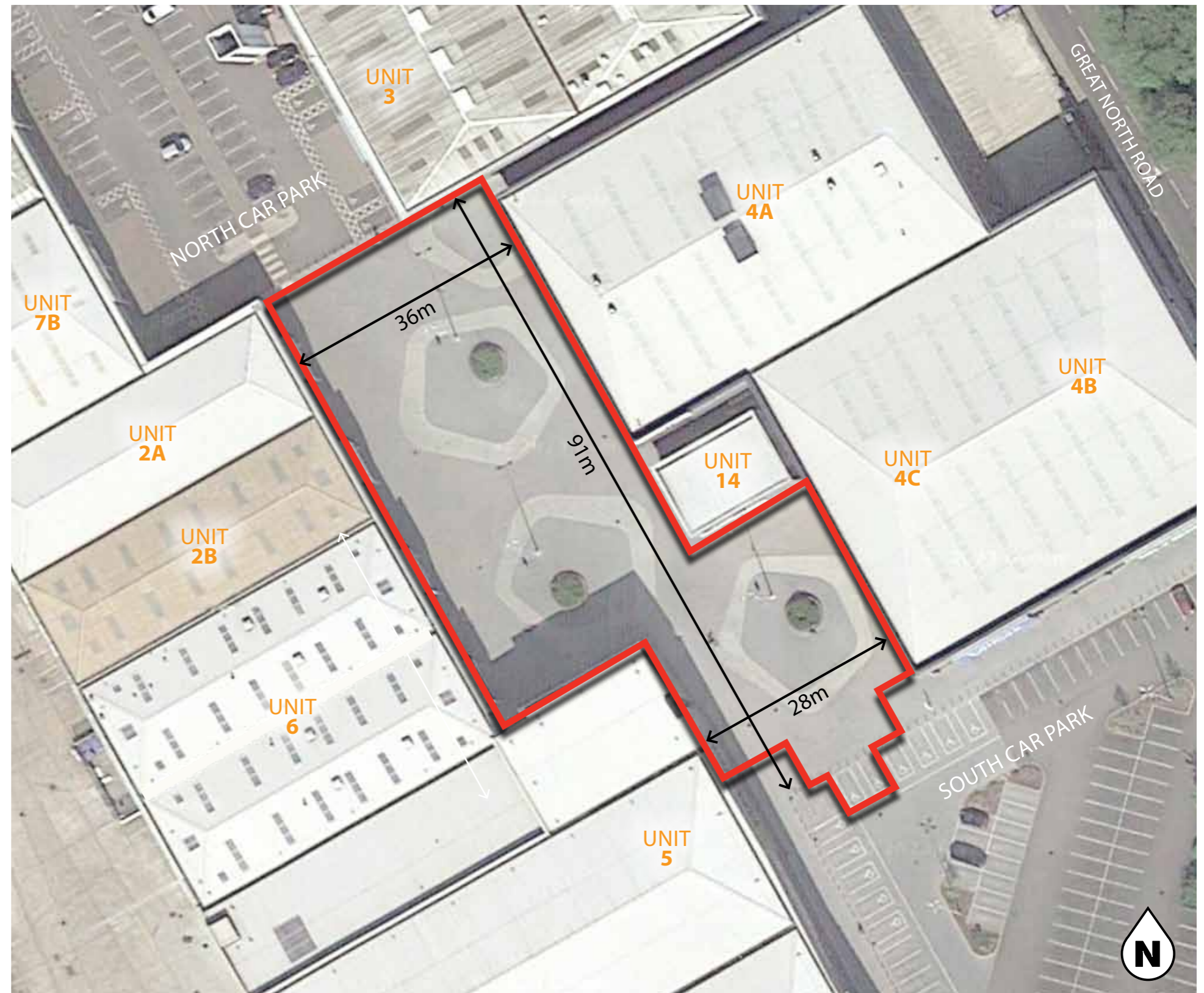
The site

The site, which is the subject of this application, is the public open space between the north and south car parks, in the centre of the scheme, which extends to 3,223sqm (0.79acres).

The whole space is c.91m in length and ranges from 28 to 36m in width at its south and northern ends, respectively. The application site extends from the southern car park to the northern car park and has retail units running along its entire east and west sides.

The space is punctuated by 3No. round planters with seating around the edge, each with a lighting column and a bin in close proximity.

3No. different colours of block paving are used for the space, each laid in a different direction, with the lightest colour creating a pentagon shape around the planters. Either side of the shape is a drainage channel.



— Application site

Aerial view of the site

01 Introduction

Site Aerial Views



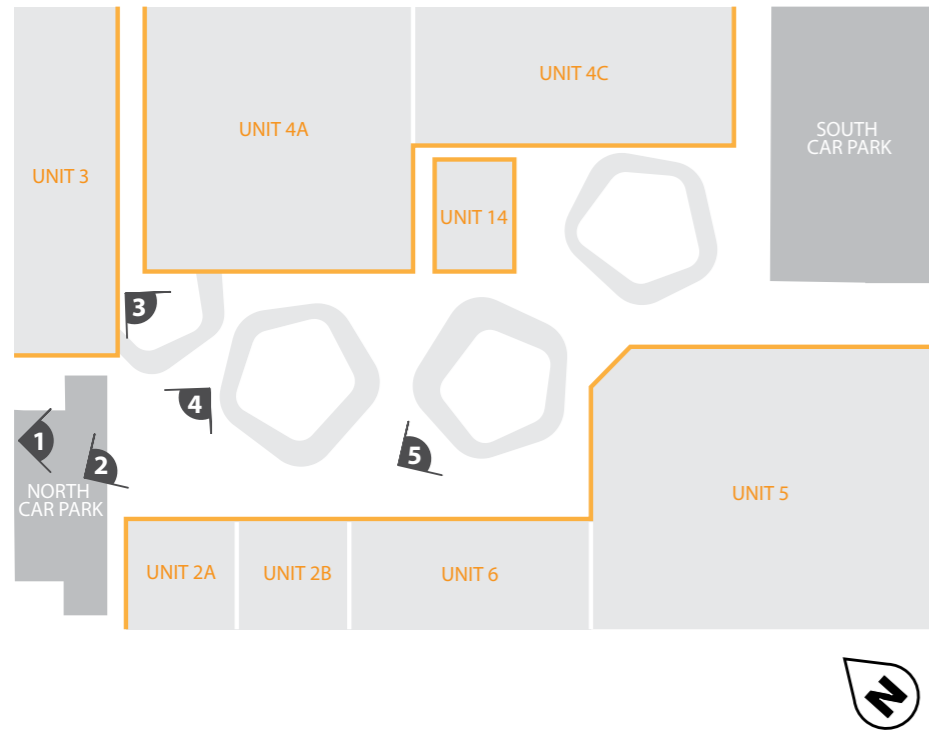
The existing site looking south



The existing site looking north

01 Introduction

Site Photos



View 1



View 2



View 3



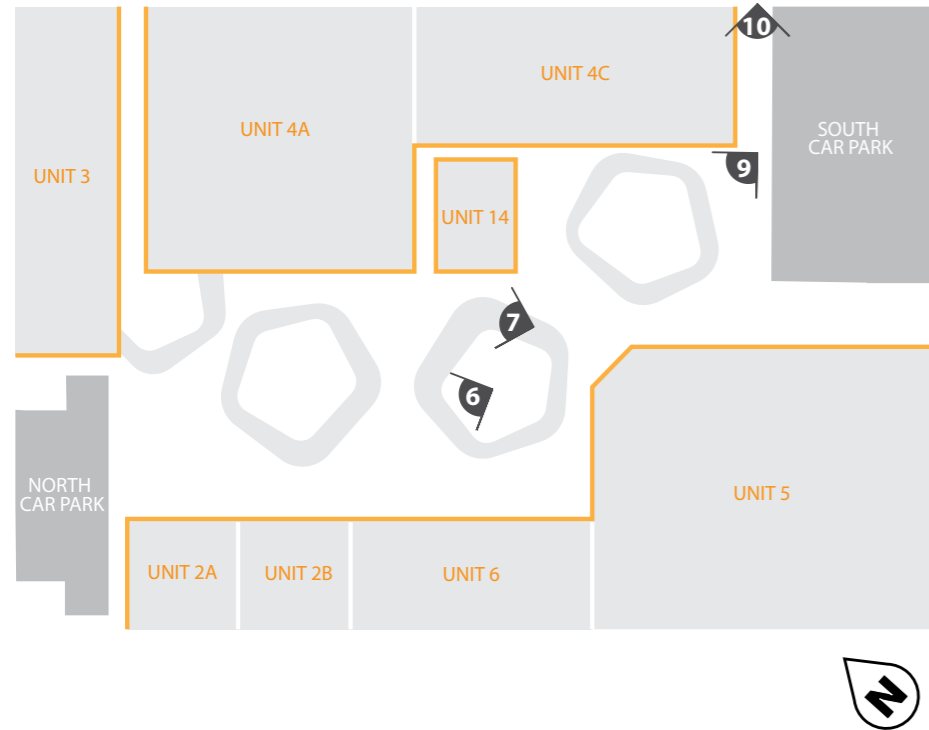
View 4



View 5

01 Introduction

Site Photos



View 6



View 7



View 8



View 9



View 10

02 Site Analysis

02 Site Analysis

Opportunities and Constraints

The retail park is split into two parts, north and south, with the existing public space in the middle. There has always been a space between the car parks, which was originally much larger, until the north car park was extended.

The main reason for the space being there is the culvert (with associated easements) which runs beneath, meaning no construction can take place in the space.








Evaluation

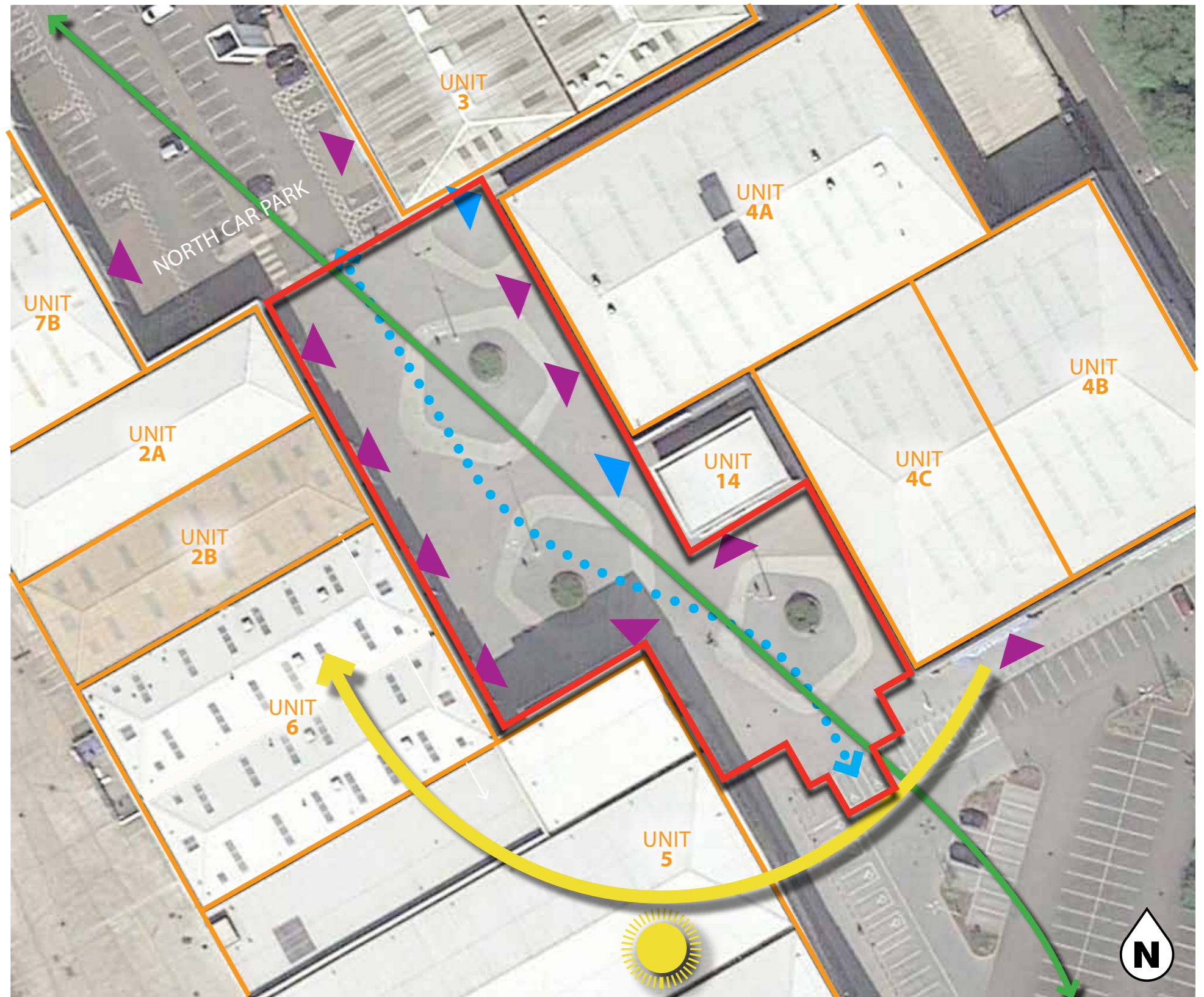
The public space is currently underused, and people don't tend to dwell in the space - it is not a particularly welcoming environment.

The retail units either side of the space do not spill out on to it, and therefore the space is not animated and feels empty and vacuous.

There is the opportunity to link the north and south car parks, and allow people to navigate between the two, which would activate the space and create a useful link, thereby improving the public realm. Currently, to get from one car park to the other, visitors would need to use London Road to travel between. Hence creating a link would limit the need for the public highway to be used for these trips, and improve connectivity.

Also, if you are coming from the A1(M) the south car park is the closest and easiest to get to, so having the option to get to the north car park from within the park would simplify journeys.

-  Application Boundary
-  Culvert under
-  Potential Route
-  Sun path
-  Unit Boundaries
-  Building entrances
-  Service/ MoE access



Constraints plan

03

Proposals

03 Proposals

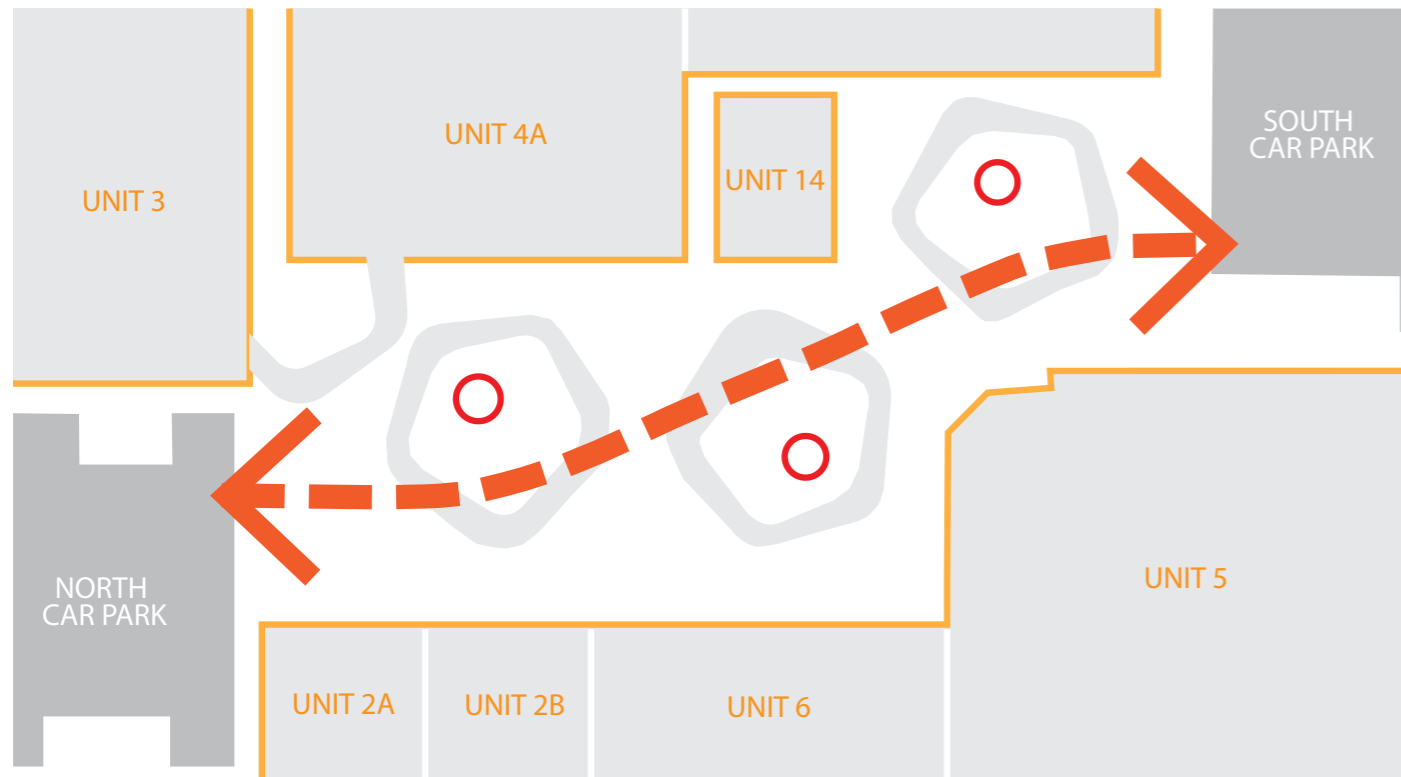
Linking the Car parks

The proposal is to create a linkage between the north and south car parks with a new road to improve connectivity and convenience within the park.

The road will start at the ends of access roads from both car parks, leading to the loss of 2 accessible spaces in the south car park.

The road will then curve through the public space linking the 2 connection points, running between the 3 existing planters which currently populate the space.

Existing surface materials are proposed to be retained as much as possible, to limit the embodied carbon of the proposals.



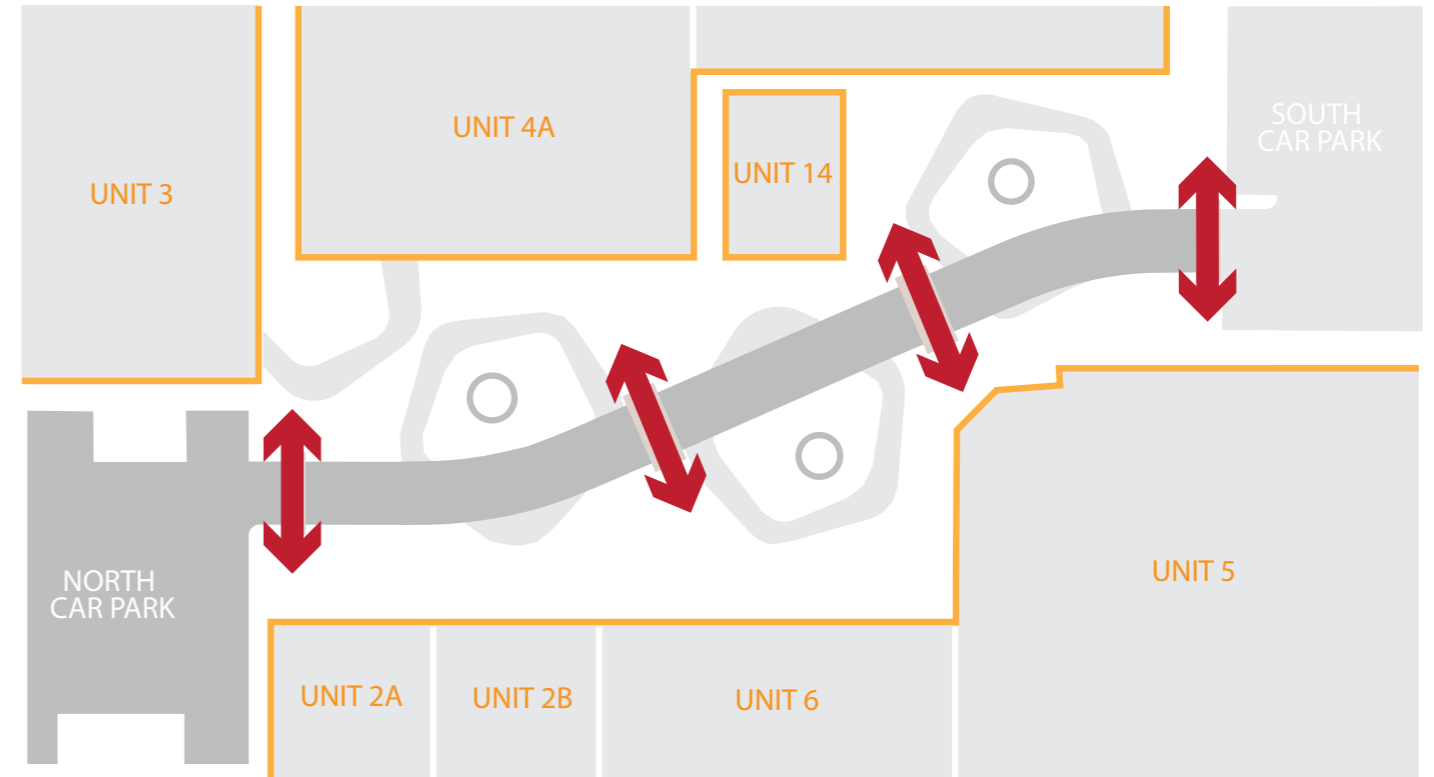
A link between car parks



Permeability

A number of pedestrian crossings will be provided across the new link, at key desire lines. These are at either end of the road, with one outside the corner entrance to unit 5 and another between units 4A and 6.

These crossing points will be raised to aid traffic calming through the space, and ensure good connectivity.



Crossing to created permeability



03 Proposals

Public Realm

Around the 3 existing planters, there is an opportunity to improve on the monotone nature of the existing space by replacing some of the existing paving with new surface materials .

These new materials might be artificial grass or coloured resin bonded gravel, which will help to animate the space and create opportunities for people of dwell, and children to play.

The visuals on the following pages illustrate how this might look, but the details of the colours and materials, will be confirmed through further applications.

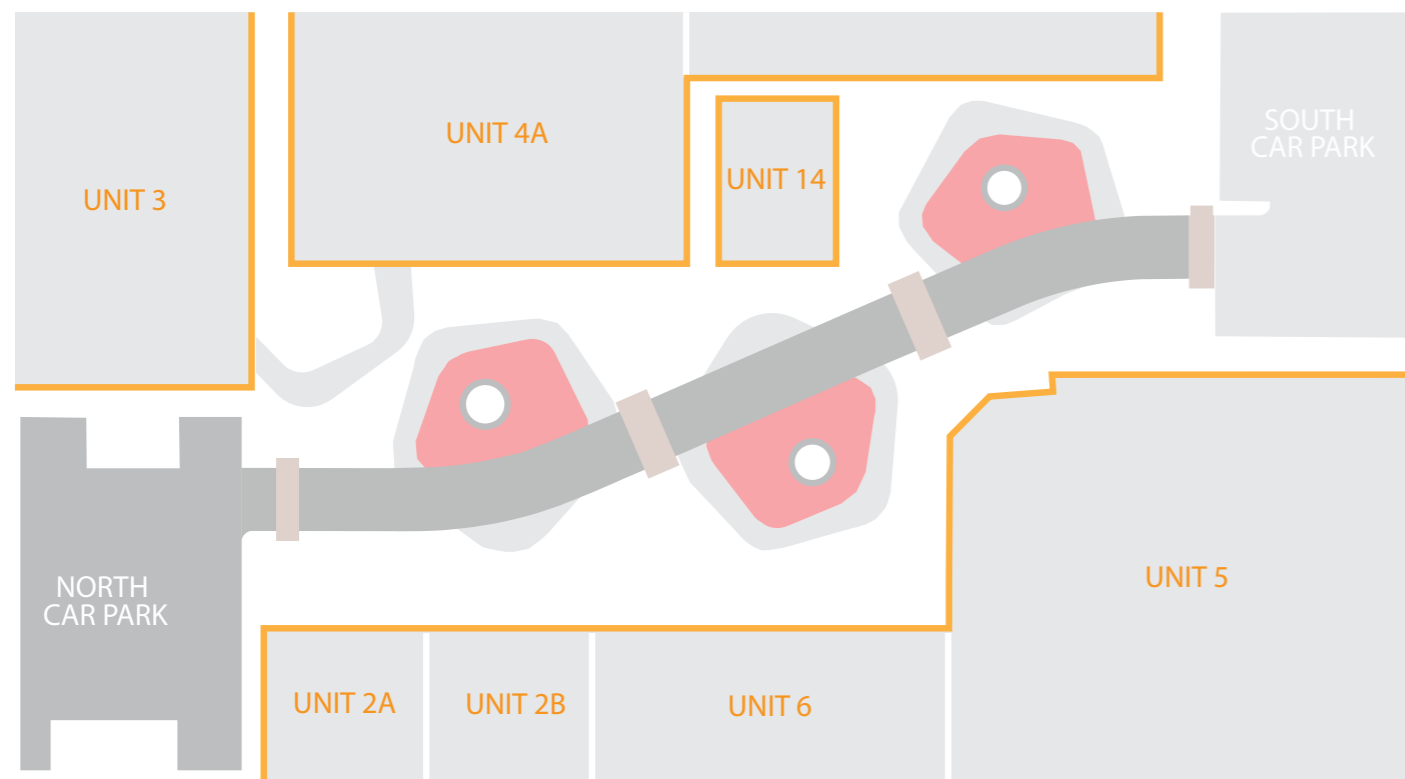
Animating the space

In order to animate the public realm, and encourage visitors to dwell, a number of seating opportunities are proposed throughout the space.

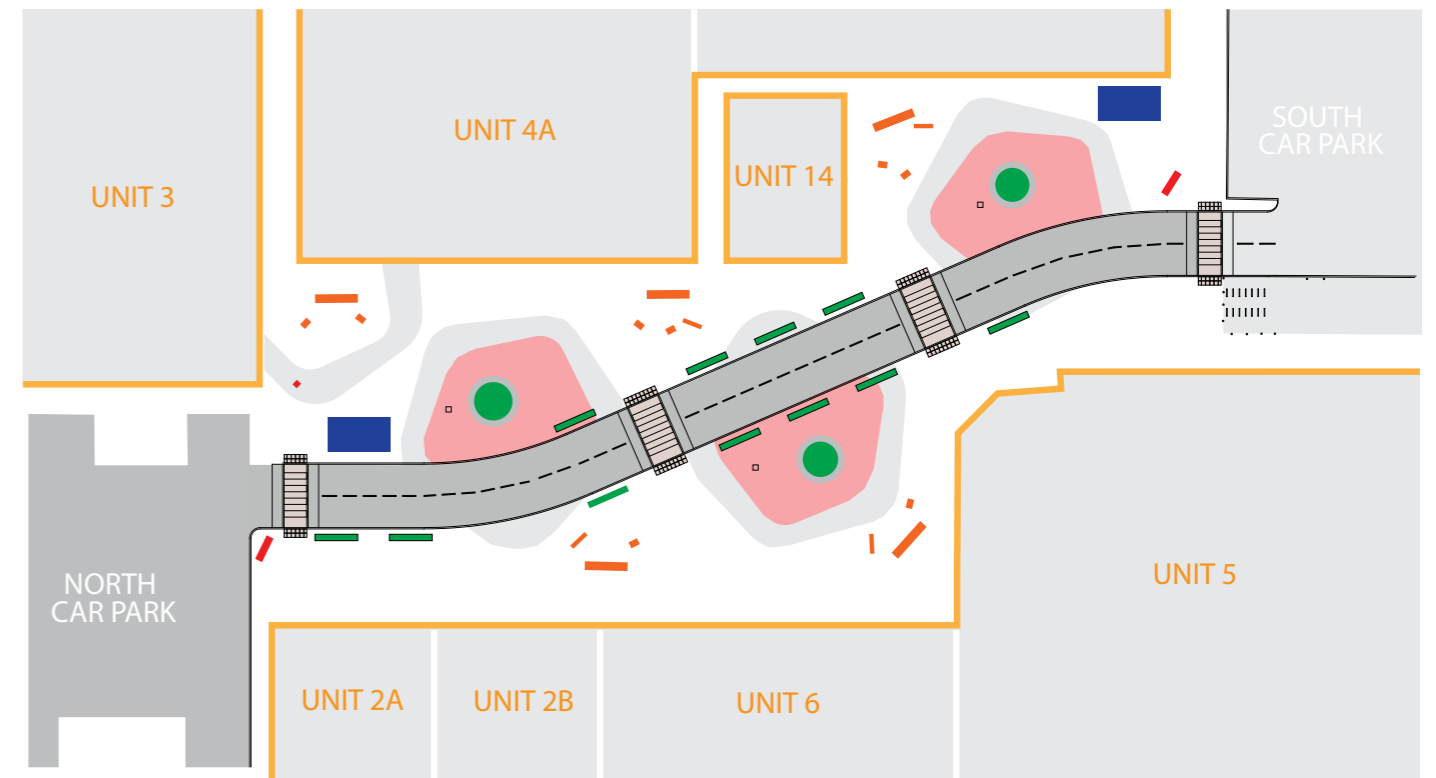
As well as the seating there will also be new wayfinding and branding features placed within the space.

New trees and seasonal planting will be planted in the retained existing planters, and new planters will be placed along the road, and amongst the new seating.

Designated locations for food/beverage trucks will be created, with space for informal seating.



Parking along the link road



Features to animate the space



03 Proposals

Proposed urban equipment and materials

Various items are proposed throughout the space from seating, bins and planters, to branding and wayfinding, to help animate the space.

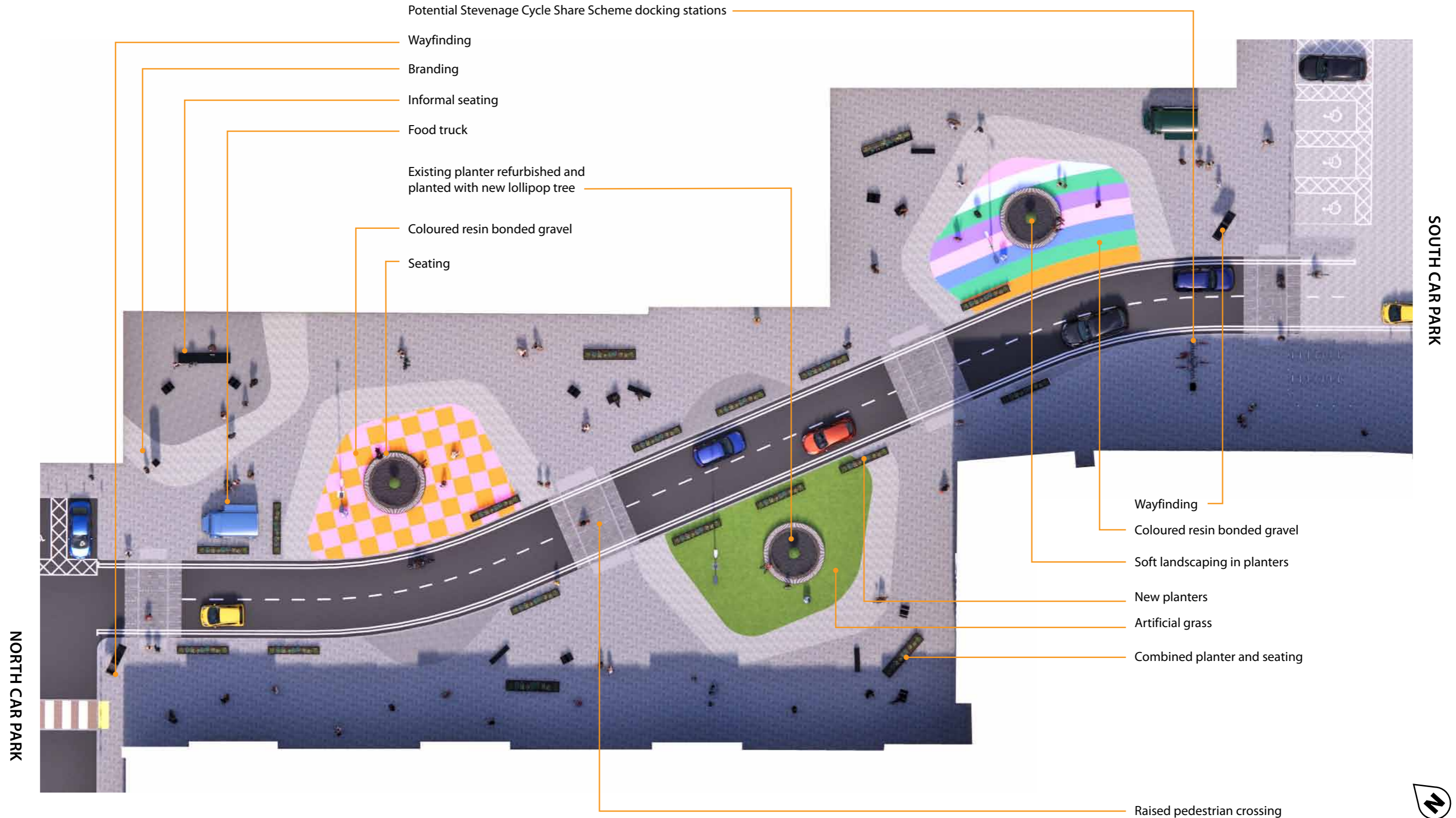
Branding, wayfinding (such as the larger hand) and some of the seating areas will be illuminated in the evening.

As far as possible, the existing paving materials will be retained and re-used where practicable, and new materials will be complementary. The surface of the link road will be tarmac to create a safe differentiation with the pedestrianised areas.



03 Proposals

Proposed Improvements to Public Realm



03 Proposals

Visual



The proposed link road as seen from the North car park

03 Proposals

Visuals



The access to the proposed link from North car park



Looking at M&S and Smyth's Toys from Furniture Village



View from above M&S corner with Smyth's Toys



Looking at the proposed link from above South car park

03 Proposals

Visual



The proposed link road's access from the South car park

04 Conclusion

04 Conclusions

Summary

The enhancement to the public open space will provide:

- New link between North and South car parks, greatly improving customer convenience
- Improved connectivity within the park
- Reduced reliance on public roads - visitors don't have to drive out of the site to go between the north and south areas
- New soft landscaping and opportunities to dwell throughout space, will create a more active and animated public realm
- Space for 8No Stevenage Cycle Share scheme docking stations

Conclusion

The improvements of the link road, as well as the additional features throughout the space will provide a more active and animated space at the heart of the retail park, which will improve the customer experience of visitors to Roaring Meg.



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