

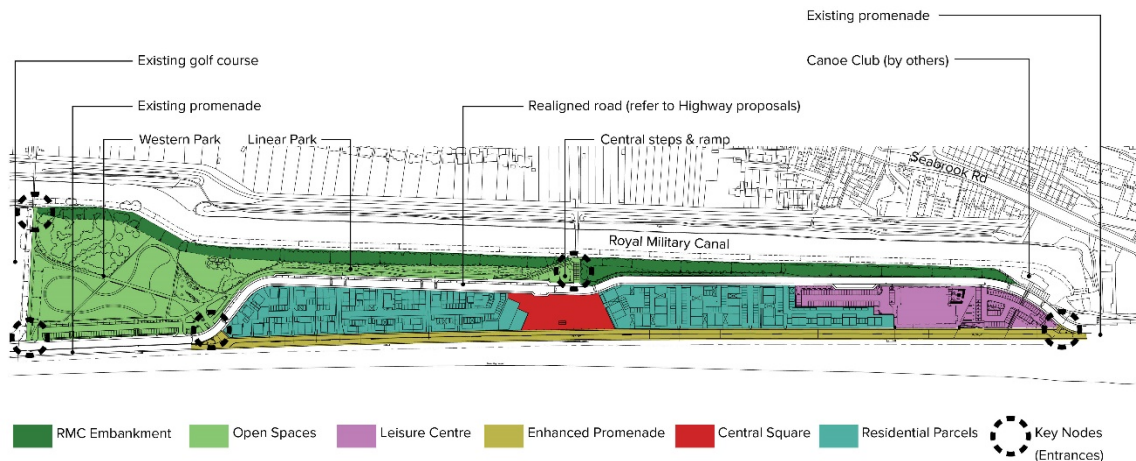
Discharge of Conditions and Reserved Matters Application - Landscape Design Statement

Project No: MHS210.19
Project: Princes Parade
Date: 22.10.2021
Reference: Design Note 22.10.2021_V3

Introduction

Mark Hanton Studio were appointed by F&HDC to prepare design material for discharge of conditions and reserved matters application in relation hard and soft landscape proposals to the Princes Parade development, Hythe. This follows on from previous landscape design work undertaken by Mark Hanton Studio for the detailed Leisure Centre application (Y17/1042/SH).

Our current appointment includes the areas described as: 1) The Leisure Centre, 2) The Enhanced Promenade, 3) Open Spaces (Including the Western & Linear Parks), and 4) The Royal Military Canal Embankment. Our appointment does not include the residential parcels, nor the Central Square, nor the canal tow path or beyond (refer to plan below).



Background Planning Material

The following background information has been used to inform the current design package:

Outline Planning Material (Y17/1042/SH):

- Tibbalds Illustrative Masterplan (Covering Leisure Centre, Promenade, and Open spaces)
- Tibbalds Design Coding (Covering Leisure Centre, Promenade, and Open spaces)

Detailed Planning Approved Material (Y17/1042/SH):

- MHS175.16-001 Landscape Proposals 1 of 2 – Rev D (Leisure Centre)
- MHS175.16-002 Landscape Proposals 2 of 2 – Rev D (Leisure Centre)
- MHS175.16-003 Landscape Elements – Rev A (Leisure Centre)

Design Development Post Y17/1042/SH

Significant design development has occurred over the period since the hybrid application was submitted in June 2017 and includes input from various technical studies undertaken in relation to ground investigation, condition survey of the existing promenade and road structures, habitat surveys/licence applications, and detailed Highway applications. The design has also been developed in full consultation with the client - F&HDC.

The design has had to respond to the constraints highlighted by these studies in reaching its current layout. Of note are:

- The impact of existing and proposed badger habitats on the open space designs, and the necessity to maintain significant areas of existing vegetation along the RMC embankment, and within the Western Park.
- Further constraints lie in the significant contamination, the potential cost of dealing with this, and the need for a viable design response that ensures the financial deliverability of the project as a whole.
- The necessity to maintain, and avoid excavation work, on the existing concrete structure below the promenade/road, and the existing sea wall.

Despite of these challenges the design proposals strongly reflect the aspirations and details set out in the background planning material.

It is acknowledged that the level of material here submitted is at a full 'technical' stage and perhaps beyond that normally submitted for planning. This is due to the landscape design delivery programme developing at speed and to necessitate the Stage 2 tendering process. We understand that this does not prejudice the planning process and that any comments received by the planning authority will be considered and addressed accordingly through redesigns as required.

As a large and complex application with a significant schedule of drawings and specifications, we would welcome the opportunity to present the material in more detail to the Planning/Landscape Officer responsible for determining the acceptability of this design material. For clarity drawing schedules are provided below.

To aid with the understanding of the development of the Western and Linear Parks design, we provide the preliminary 'Sketch Proposals' (SK15_Western Park Sketch Proposals C) for background and information purposes. This lies at the end of this report.

It should also be noted that we are currently preparing on and off-site 'Heritage Mitigation' work alongside the project Heritage Consultant (Martin Mckay) and this work will add to the richness of the design through further historical interpretation. This work will be prepared in November 2021 and require on-going consultation with Historic England before completion. The outline designs will be made available to the planning authority as soon as this is possible.

End

Princess Parade, Western Park

Hythe

SKETCH PROPOSALS

MARCH 2021

SK15

DESCRIPTION
Western Park Sketch Proposals

Rev C

PROJECT NO.
MHS210.20

PROJECT
Princess Parade

CLIENT
F&HDC

DRAWN BY
MHS

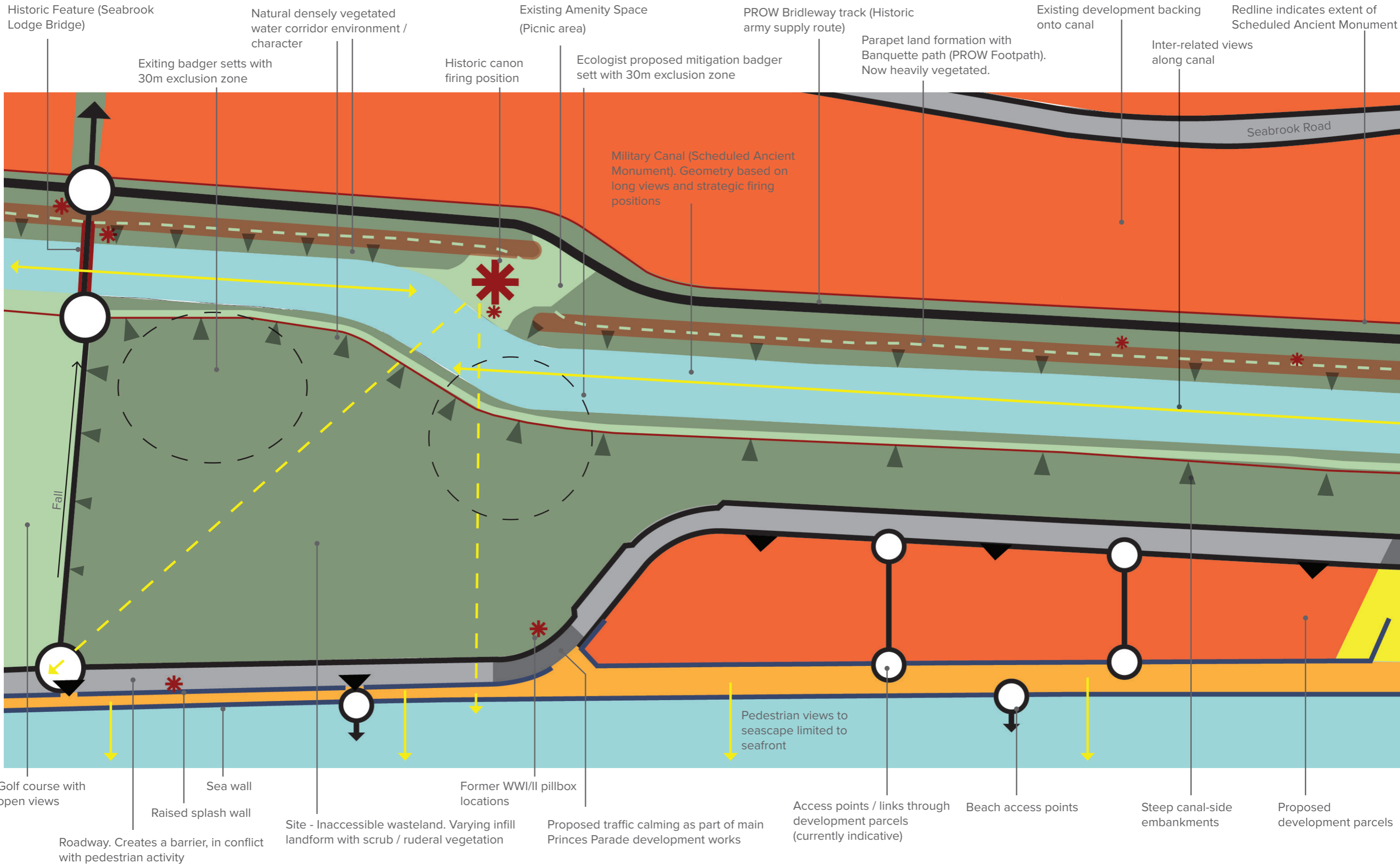
REVISION
A First Issue 18.03.2021
B Highway/Ecology coordination 30.03.2021
C Material palettes added 15.04.2021

The Studio
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Spelders Hill
Brook
Ashford
Kent TN25 5PB

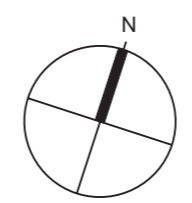
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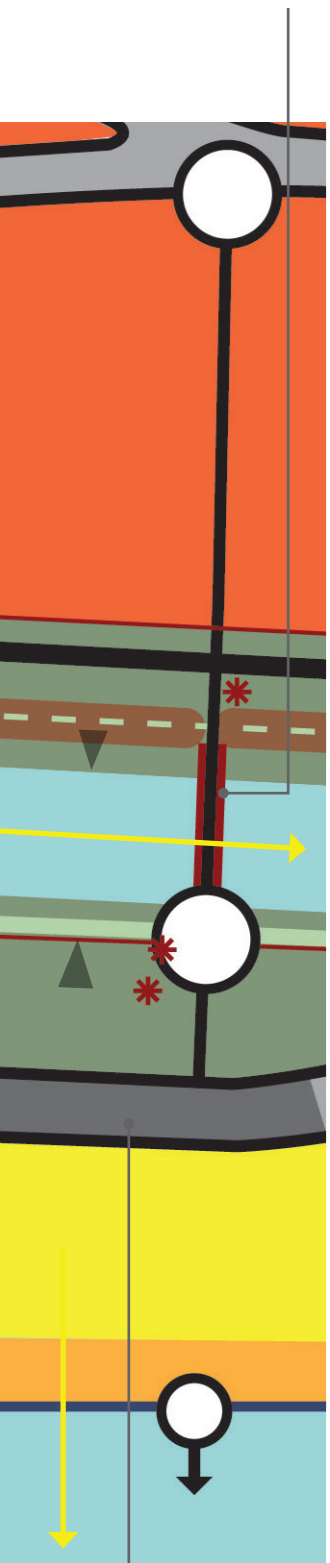
Landscape Architecture/
Urban Design
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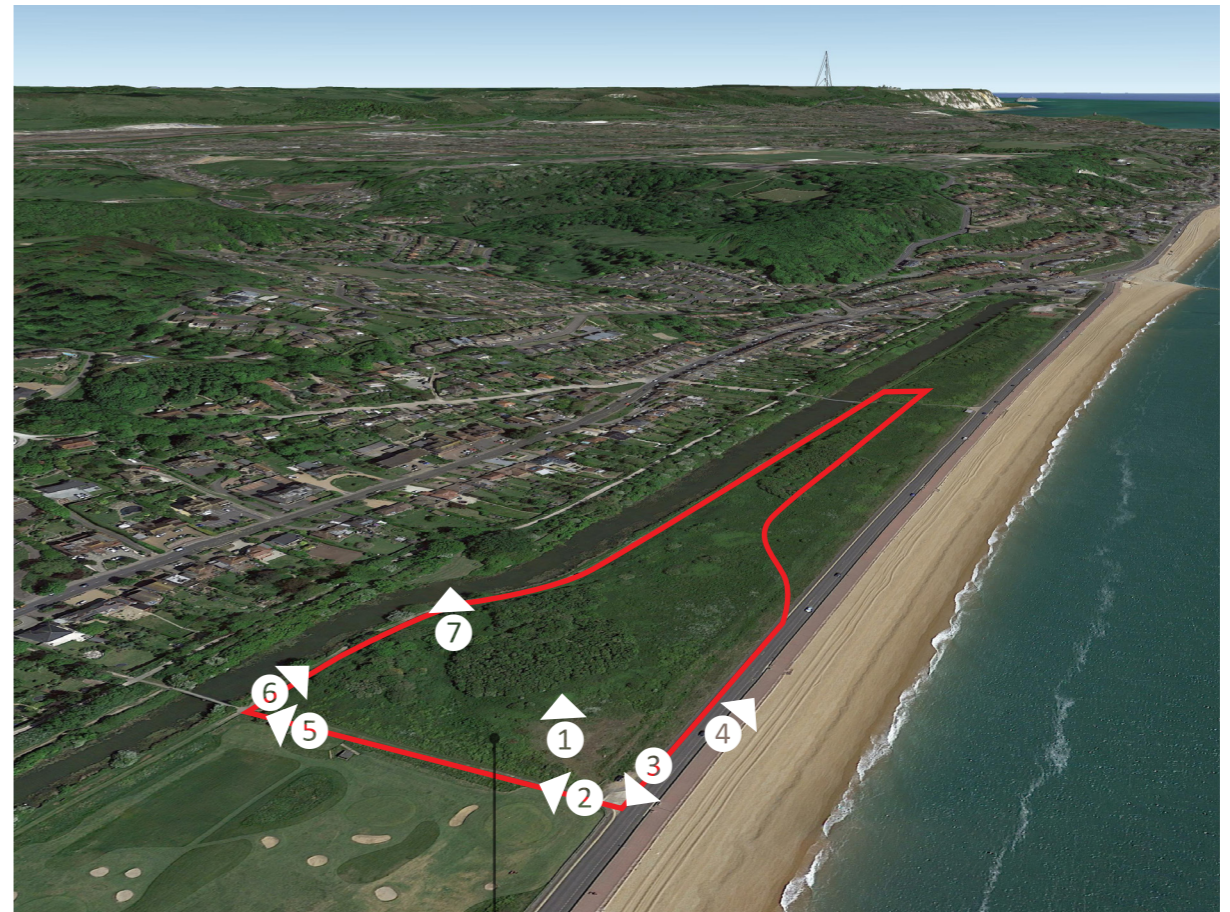
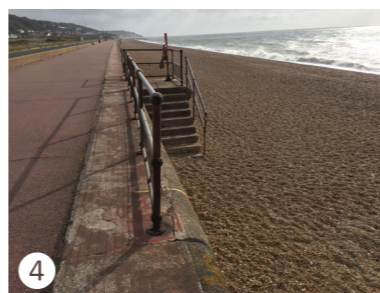
Appraisal



Historic Feature (Seaview Bridge)



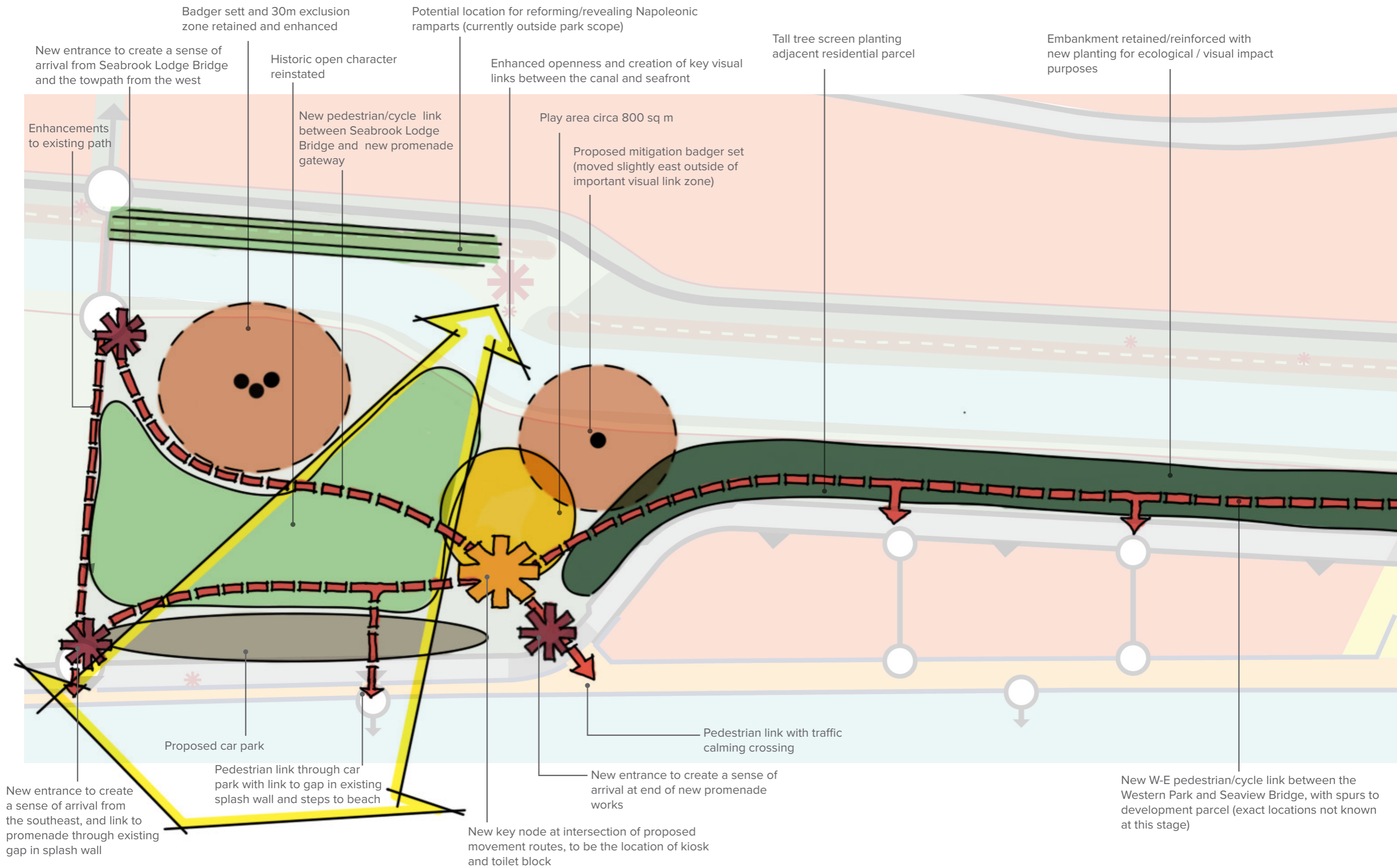
-  Pedestrian Nodes / Junctions (Indicative in main development parcels)
-  Access Points (Indicative in main development parcels)
-  Extent of Scheduled Ancient Monument (Royal Military Canal)
-  Proposed/Existing Residential
-  Vegetation
-  Promenade (promoted Route)
-  Open grass
-  Water
-  Proposed central square
-  Pedestrian Paths
-  Towpath (PROW - Bridleway)
-  Informal Path (PROW Footpath)
-  Existing / Proposed Road Alignment
-  Key Views
-  Historic Key Views



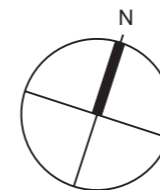
Extent of site

'Existing context & main Princess Parade development constraints'

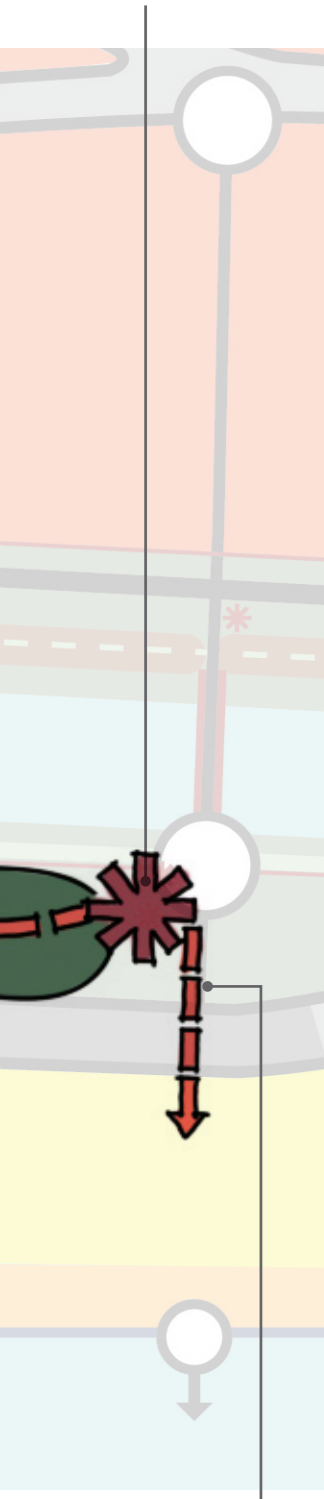
Proposed traffic calming as part of main Princess Parade development works



Opportunities / Constraints



New entrance to create a sense of arrival from Seaview Bridge and the towpath from the east.



Enhancements to existing route with proposed steps and ramp

'Key issues to consider...'



Artist Illustration by John Cann



Profile of Royal Military Canal (1804)

Heritage

The significance of Royal Military Canal (RMC) has been eroded over recent decades and the openness between the RMC and the sea, that the site once afforded, is no longer. The provision of a new park provides public benefits including significant heritage benefits through potential to reinforce the setting of, and greater awareness of, the Scheduled Ancient Monument. This can be achieved by:

- Drawing on the positive contribution made by the historic environment to the distinctive character of the place by reinstating the open nature of the site (where possible and in relation to other site constraints), and thus improving views and vistas
- Expanding on the interpretation signage work already undertaken by Folkestone & Hythe District Council, in conjunction with Historic England and thus enhancing visitor experience and learning opportunities
- Through the design and material choices of the park elements/interventions, so that they reflect the heritage assets observed in the wider canal setting.

Movement/Permeability / Legibility

Although there is significant east-west permeability along the canal and seafront, only two links exist from the RMC to the beach, and with the road as a substantial barrier. The development offers the opportunity to provide significant walking/cycling access benefits across the whole site and improve the existing N-S routes through new surfaced paths, steps, ramps, and traffic calming measures/pedestrian priority crossing points over the Princes Parade road.

Identifying and highlight key nodes throughout strong entrance design interventions will create a sense of arrival and to reinforce legibility around the park.

Biodiversity

The canal setting has changed to one of a significant wildlife corridor, and this is seen as a positive characteristic of the site, albeit with obvious tensions with that of the historic open nature of the site. Badger sets have been found on site and the mitigation required to protect these is a significant constraint/opportunity, requiring the retention of large swathes of existing vegetation. The canal embankment is also heavily vegetated but much of it is ruderal/scrub species. The park provides opportunities to enhance biodiversity through a number of ways:

- Selective clearance and introduction of areas of new mixed species native planting along the RMC embankment.
- The creation of more open coastal species rich meadow areas
- Significant tree/hedge/shrub planting throughout the park
- Specific ecology interventions such as the provision of bird/bat boxes, hibernacula features etc
- Expanding on the wildlife signage work already undertaken by the Folkestone & Hythe District Council, to enhance visitor experiences and learning opportunities

Amenity

Apart from a private golf course that lies directly adjacent the western edge of the site, the beach and the promenade are the main leisure resource of the site. The promenade is being upgraded as part of the main Princess Parade development works and will provide significant amenity benefits. The park presents an opportunity to create a network of open spaces that provide a broader range of leisure activities to the local and wider community. This could include:

- A destination play area (circa 800m sq. 1020m sq required for whole Princes Parade development and circa 200m sq already approved at the Leisure Centre)
- Provision of flexible open grass areas that provide opportunities to relax, play, picnic, and hold events
- Incorporation of a landmark pavilion building with a cafe/kiosk, toilet block, and possible community room
- A car park with circa 72 spaces, integrated into the landscape with sensitively planted margins
- Fitness opportunities through a guided trim trail and a series of exercise station

'A Coastal Heritage Park'



Seabrook Lodge Bridge

Possible location of restored military canal ground profiling / ramparts, with soldier sculptures as seen in Hythe centre. Would require clearance of existing vegetation, but provides significant heritage benefits.

Enhance views to/from firing position. Possible location for canon sculptures.

Existing track

Existing informal path

Royal Military Canal

Existing Towpath

Existing golf course

Coastal meadow grassland

Destination play area (Content not shown)

Pavilion

Proposed road alignment

Habitat zone accommodating proposed badger sett location

Development Area (Indicatively shown)

Raised tables at key node to reinforce pedestrian priority crossing

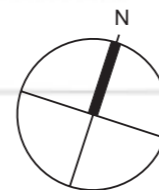
Promenade

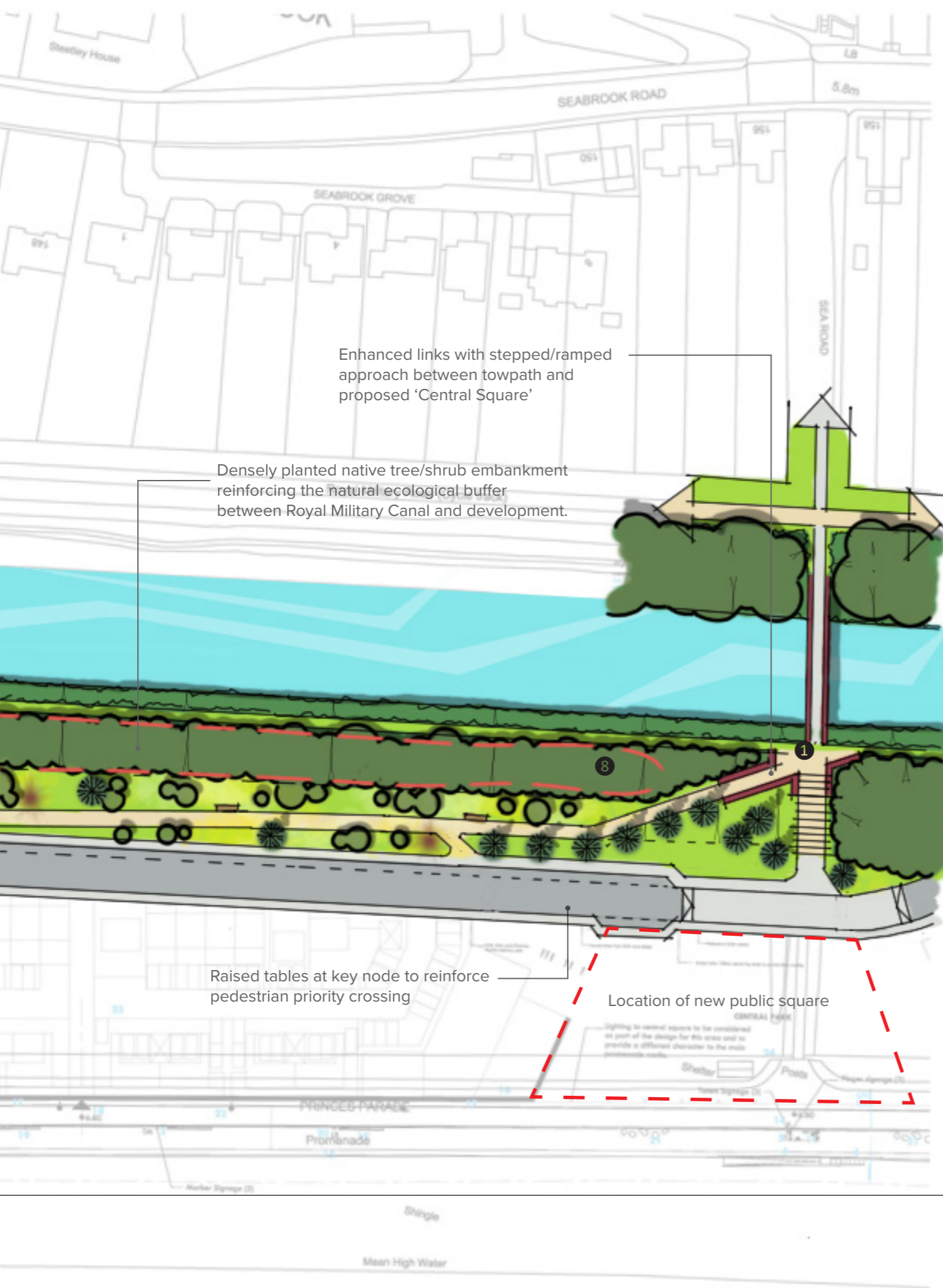
Existing road alignment

Location of trim trail stations

Habitat zone around existing badger sett

Sketch Proposals





1 Entrances

Entrances are key to the legibility of the park and creating a 'sense-of-arrival'. Gabion baskets filled with Ragstone will form strong geometric gateway structures (incorporating seating), suggestive of the historic Napoleonic Ragstone fortifications seen elsewhere along the canal. Informative signage of the natural and historical context of the site will be located at these locations to enhance user experience.

2 Movement / Connectivity

A significant new movement network builds upon the existing E-W routes along the canal/promenade and provides greater permeability between them to improve N-S connectivity. This provides greater opportunity to walk/cycle and explore the park and canal setting.

As part of a desire to promote fitness and wellbeing, a series of fitness stations are to be located throughout the park and are linked by marked trails along the proposed and existing movement network. The stations could have multipurpose use as fitness equipment and also sculptural landscape features (based on the idea of fallen/ exploded cannon balls) that stand out in this open landscape. These could be a bespoke artist designed element worked up in collaboration with the Creative Foundation or others.

3 Coastal Meadow

Expansive open flat grass areas are to be seeded with an appropriate meadow mix to create a strong natural coastal character and valuable ecological habitat. Requiring only 1/2 cuts per year, this will create a low maintenance park. Linear Ragstone benches provide seating/viewing opportunities.

4 Amenity Grass Area

One area is to be maintained more formally as an amenity use grass area for informal play (ball games etc), relaxing, picnicking etc

5 Natural Habitat Area

This area in the heart of the park is home to a significant badger sett. This sett and a >30m buffer zone is incorporated into the scheme as a mature natural feature. It is made up of mounded spoil with a strong Willow tree/shrub structure and will complement the parks proposed coastal character.

6 Pavilion

A new focal pavilion will mark the key nodal junction between the Western Coastal Heritage Park and the end of the new promenade. It will contain a toilet and kiosk building with a large over-sailing canopy shelter, all close to areas of high user activity.

Formal Play Zone

7 Destination play area circa 800m sq. Citadel/coastal themed (to reinforce historical relationship with the Royal Military Canal and former Napoleonic era of the site) with strong natural play elements and using timber as the main material. To be set within a woodland backdrop and to contain new pine tree planting. All similar to that seen at the highly valued Lower Leas Coastal Park play area.

Natural Canal Setting

8 The canal embankment is to be retained as a densely vegetated buffer for the benefit of ecological habitats, and as tall screening to the new development areas. Much of this section shown here is ruderal scrub such as nettles, bramble, and doc leaves. As part of the design proposals there will be selective clearance (strictly in accordance with an ecology method statement), with any large shrub or tree species (predominantly Willows) retained where feasible. It will then be inter-planted with an appropriate native tree and shrub mix to provide greater diversity and taller canopy structure. This will ensure the long-term viability of the natural setting of the Royal Military Canal.

Stock fencing is used to restrict human/dog incursion within these areas, but will allow badger/hedgehog migration.

Formal Canal Setting

9 This area, and an open park behind, allows far greater intervisibility to/from the original canon firing position and reinforces the open relationship between the sea and the Royal Military Canal as originally conceived.

There is further possibilities to reform actual historical embankment form to the north of the canal, with possible soldier sculptures as seen in Hythe centre.

10 Car Parking

Car parking is provided through the creation of a significant parking area to the south of the Western Coastal Heritage Park, and also through on-street parking bays along the new road alignment.