

Leeds Eastside

Vision Document

(Condensed Version)

June 2023





Contents

04-05.....	Foreword
06-07.....	The Story So Far
08-09.....	Where Are We?
10-11.....	The Existing Situation
12-13.....	The Vision
14.....	Design Aims & Objectives
15.....	Concept
16-17.....	Community Participation
18-19.....	Consultation Workshops
20-21.....	Key Feedback
22-25.....	Illustrative Masterplan
26-27.....	Key Character Areas
28-29.....	Illustrative Masterplan Zoom-In
30-31.....	Livett Park
32-33.....	Minster Close
34-35.....	Design Detail
36-37.....	Sheepscar Beck
38-39.....	Trees and Greenspace
40-41.....	Destinations
42-43.....	Play
44-45.....	Buildings
46-49.....	Next Steps



Re-imagining Leeds Eastside

How do we make the Eastside area more 'liveable', in the context of the Declaration of a Climate Emergency by Leeds City Council, and projected population increase?

Keep reading to find out!

© Photo, Jules Lister 2020

Foreword

Martin Hamilton
Director of Leeds Civic Trust

Back in 2019, Leeds Civic Trust identified the eastern edge of Leeds city centre as an area which needed a rethink. It is an area dominated by roads - to get from Saxton Gardens to the Palace Pub on foot involves crossing more than 20 lanes of traffic - you need your pint after that! But if there were fewer roads what could the space be used for? Public greenspace? More trees? Community buildings? Areas to play and relax? Art and culture? These are some of the ideas presented in this document.

It is important to stress that this document is a vision not a blueprint. It is a starting point not the end product. But we hope it starts a conversation about how the area could improve and what we could do on the ground (with the support of Leeds Council which owns much of the land), to make this happen. So, whether you live and work in the area or just pass through we would love to what you think about our ideas. Please get in touch.

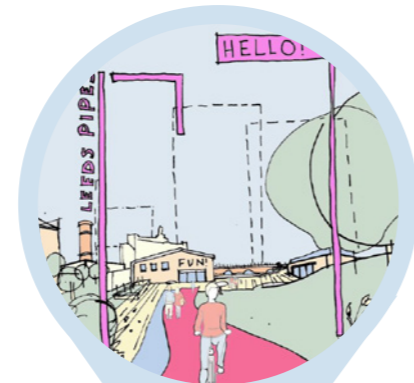
The best way to contact us is by email:
office@leedscivictrust.org.uk

The Story So Far

A Timeline Summary of Work to Date



Stakeholder Consultation
 LCT hosted a stakeholder consultation event at Leeds Playhouse to share the concept of a competition to generate ideas of how to make Leeds a more liveable city! 43 attended.



'Liveable Leeds' Competition!
 Design ideas competition open to the public was launched. LCT received a range of entries, including a suggestion from a 9 year old boy about improving pedestrian crossings.
<https://www.liveable-leeds.org.uk/>
 Competition Results: 1st Prize: Hannah Beard (Urban Wilderness) & Alex De Little (Sound Artist), 2nd prize: Page Park, and Highly Commended: Gillespies and Planit-IE with Buro Happold. Document created by Civic Engineers, summarising all of the competition entries and identifying common themes.



What IF Sound Walk?
 Hannah Beard (Urban Wilderness) & Alex De Little (Sound Artist) conducted a series of community engagement workshops to create an immersive guided sound walk through the Eastside. The walk culminated at a billboard on the A61 roundabout which displayed a collage artwork of a 'collective vision' for the site.
 The artwork aimed to platform voices of people who interact with the site and to raise the profile of the area. The work was funded and supported by the University of Leeds.

Draft Framework Document
 LCT produced and launched a draft framework document relating to Leeds City Council's vision and policies set out within the emerging Local Plan 2040. The document was informed by the competition entries and several additional stakeholder meetings.

Traffic Feasibility Study
 Study undertaken to identify a range of options and interventions for reconfiguring the highway network within Eastside.

2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023

Area Identification
 The Leeds Civic Trust (LCT) Planning Committee's Transport and Liveable Leeds sub-groups identified the eastern area of Leeds' city centre as an area of Leeds which could be transformed.



Vision Document
 Created by Urban Wilderness on behalf of LCT. Presents further site analysis, community engagement and design development. This work builds upon the ambitions set out within the Draft SPD and the traffic modelling options.



Where Are We?

The Eastside area is located next to Kirkgate Market and Leeds Bus Station, extending up towards Mabgate. The A64(M) York Road and Marsh Lane define Eastside to the north and east.

The area includes Leeds Minster, Leeds City College Campus, Leeds Playhouse and Leeds Conservatoire. As well as cultural venues and educational institutions, Eastside has a wide mix of uses, including hotels and major offices. It is also an important residential area with many flats and student apartments constructed in recent years - with many more to come...

© Photo, Jules Lister / 2020



The Existing Situation

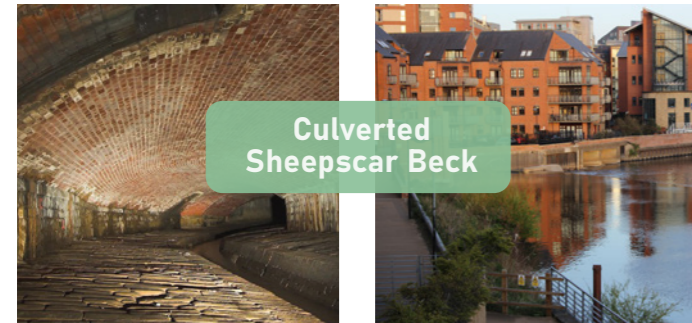
Opportunities and Constraints on Site

Site analysis was undertaken through desk based research and site visits between September 2022 and January 2023. This has informed the vision and illustrative design development.

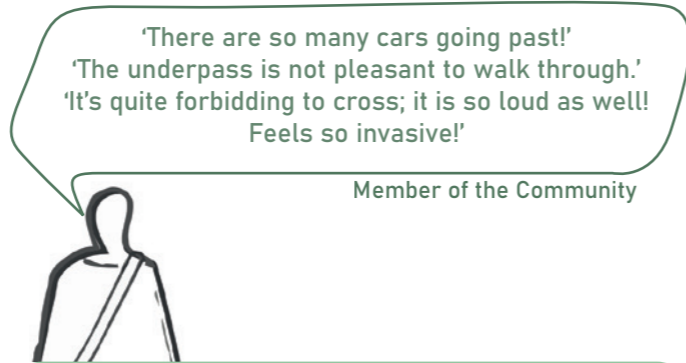
Many of the major issues or threats identified on site, such as the dominating road infrastructure and the culverted Sheepscar Beck, may be seen as constraints, but they have provided an exciting opportunity to drive a bold and creative design process!



Inaccessible & Fragmented Pedestrian Routes

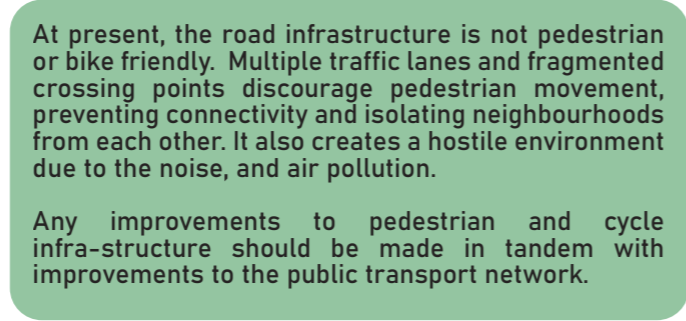


Culverted Sheepscar Beck



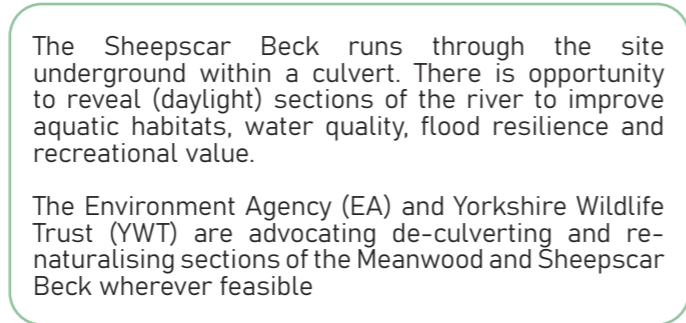
'There are so many cars going past!
'The underpass is not pleasant to walk through.'
'It's quite forbidding to cross; it is so loud as well!
Feels so invasive!'

Member of the Community



At present, the road infrastructure is not pedestrian or bike friendly. Multiple traffic lanes and fragmented crossing points discourage pedestrian movement, preventing connectivity and isolating neighbourhoods from each other. It also creates a hostile environment due to the noise, and air pollution.

Any improvements to pedestrian and cycle infra-structure should be made in tandem with improvements to the public transport network.



The Sheepscar Beck runs through the site underground within a culvert. There is opportunity to reveal (daylight) sections of the river to improve aquatic habitats, water quality, flood resilience and recreational value.

The Environment Agency (EA) and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) are advocating de-culverting and re-naturalising sections of the Meanwood and Sheepscar Beck wherever feasible



Existing Heritage Assets



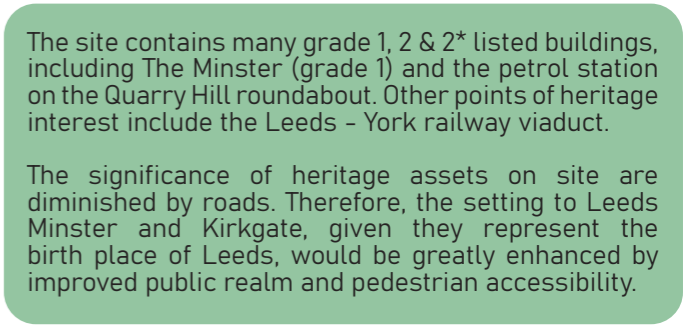
Existing Cultural Assets & Artist Community



Fragmented & Unusable Greenspace

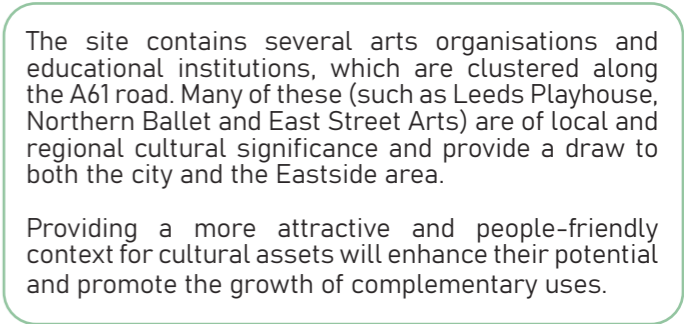


Lack of Community Facilities



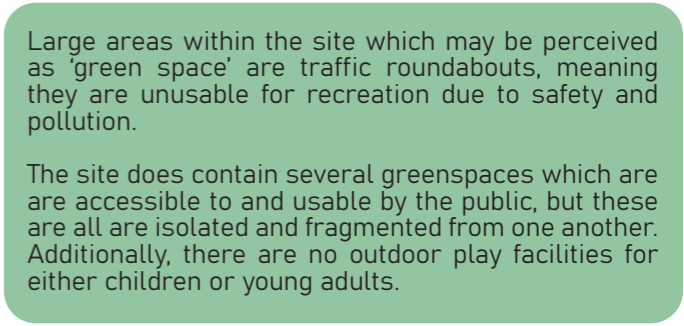
The site contains many grade 1, 2 & 2* listed buildings, including The Minster (grade 1) and the petrol station on the Quarry Hill roundabout. Other points of heritage interest include the Leeds - York railway viaduct.

The significance of heritage assets on site are diminished by roads. Therefore, the setting to Leeds Minster and Kirkgate, given they represent the birth place of Leeds, would be greatly enhanced by improved public realm and pedestrian accessibility.



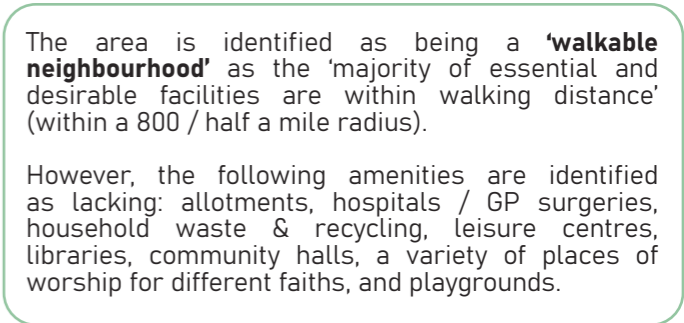
The site contains several arts organisations and educational institutions, which are clustered along the A61 road. Many of these (such as Leeds Playhouse, Northern Ballet and East Street Arts) are of local and regional cultural significance and provide a draw to both the city and the Eastside area.

Providing a more attractive and people-friendly context for cultural assets will enhance their potential and promote the growth of complementary uses.



Large areas within the site which may be perceived as 'green space' are traffic roundabouts, meaning they are unusable for recreation due to safety and pollution.

The site does contain several greenspaces which are accessible to and usable by the public, but these are all isolated and fragmented from one another. Additionally, there are no outdoor play facilities for either children or young adults.



The area is identified as being a 'walkable neighbourhood' as the 'majority of essential and desirable facilities are within walking distance' (within a 800 / half a mile radius).

However, the following amenities are identified as lacking: allotments, hospitals / GP surgeries, household waste & recycling, leisure centres, libraries, community halls, a variety of places of worship for different faiths, and playgrounds.

The Vision

A 'Liveable' Eastside

“Leeds Eastside aims to become an attractive, lively and inclusive space within the heart of the city centre.”

Leeds Civic Trust Draft SPD.

Incorporate a rich mix of uses and facilities which celebrate existing heritage, culture and diversity

Foster community ownership, a sense of place and pride

Centered around the daylighted Sheepscar watercourse

Improve pedestrian connectivity and sustainable transport

A network of high quality greenspace



© Photo, Jules Lister 2020



Design Aims & Objectives

To Guide Design Evolution

Improve Climate Change Resilience

1. Establish interconnected greenspaces of high biodiversity value, alongside street tree planting.
2. Daylight (reveal) the Sheepscar Beck to improve flood resilience and the creation of a cooler microclimate through evaporative cooling.
3. Establish marginal and aquatic habitats within a 'blue-green' corridor along the Sheepscar Beck.
4. Explore the opportunity for the creation of renewable energy on site.
5. Create new sites for sustainable development, primarily for affordable housing and local businesses.

Celebrate Culture

1. Further engagement with existing local community groups, cultural organisations/institutions and local stakeholders to form an integral part of the design process.
2. Public art/sculpture and buildings with civic functions to foster a sense of place and community ownership.

Create a New Movement Plan

1. Simplify the complex A61 traffic route to reduce its impact (physical severance & pollution) and free up land for the creation of new greenspace.
2. Promote sustainable travel modes (opportunity to form part of the proposed mass transit network).
3. Improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility through the site, and out into surrounding areas.

Improve Health & Well-being

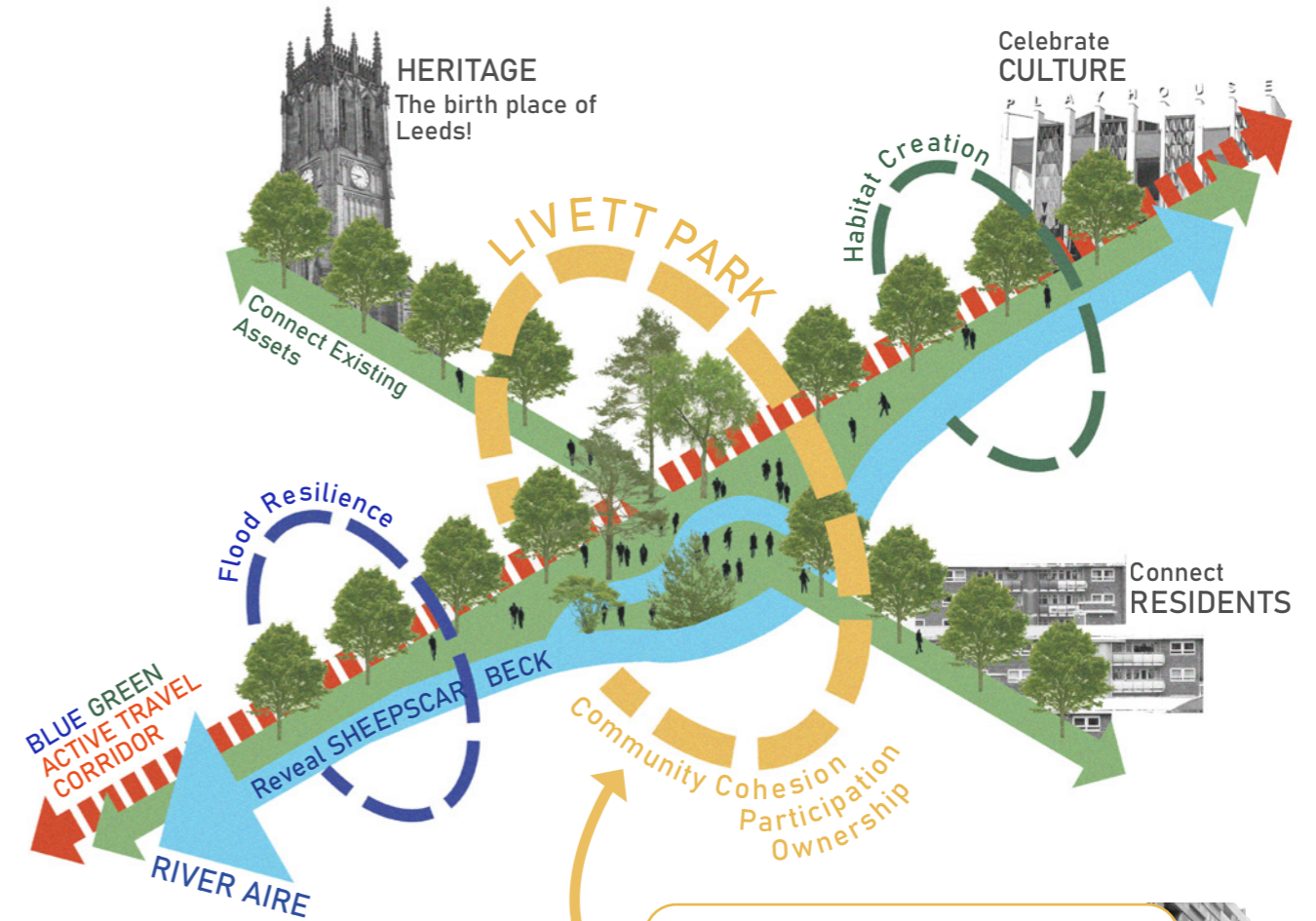
1. Establish a network of safe greenspaces which are accessible to existing and new local communities and are protected from roads.
2. Provide opportunities for play.

Enhance Heritage Assets

1. Enhance the setting and context of Leeds Minster.
2. Interpret the rich history of the site (Kirkgate, Quarry Hill, Sheepscar Beck, etc).

Concept

Reveal - Connect - Celebrate - Create - Community Ownership



R.A.H Livett = Richard Alfred Livett OBE (1898 - 1959) was an architect and pioneer of modernist social housing, who designed Quarry Hill Flats (formally situated within the Eastside site) in the 1930s.



Community Participation

'I love that connection to the water. If you're going to the effort of uncovering this (Sheepscar Beck) I think you need to be able to engage with it, easily.'

'I think given that this was where Leeds was founded, there's actually no better place to put in stone, essentially, something about the history of Leeds.'



© Photo, Urban Wilderness 2023



Consultation Workshops

A Touring Model!

In January 2023 a series of consultation workshops were conducted by Urban Wilderness, in collaboration with sound artist and researcher, Alex De Little, in the following locations within Eastside:

- Leeds Minster
- The Palace Pub
- Mecca Bingo
- Leeds Playhouse
- Leeds City College
- East Street Arts

The above groups were chosen to try and capture a representative view of the many different existing users of the space, including religious communities, cultural institutions, educational institutions, local business employees, local artists and recreational users.

Key user groups which were not consulted, and who should be consulted in the future are:

- Existing residents
- Children and young adults
- Local businesses
- Local skateboarding community



Consultation Feedback

Key themes and conversation highlights!

Images of exciting projects around the world were used to stimulate imagination and initial concept design proposals were presented to each group to facilitate discussions. The discussions were both insightful and inspiring and have informed the design development.

Daylighting the Beck

All positive responses! Seen as centre of the park. Desire for access to water's edge and aquatic habitats.

History

History of Kirkgate and Leeds Minster should be celebrated.

Culture

Desire for local sculpture & art, temporary and permanent. Need for outdoor performance space.

Buildings

Big fear of gentrification. No to high rise. Desire for local 'artisan' shops. Places for a 'cheap lunch'. Space for artists and makers & local facilities for residents.

Public Transport

Current public transport provision needs to be improved if roads are removed (faster, more reliable and frequent, part of Mass Transit network?).

Climate Emergency

Opportunity to set a precedent which puts Leeds on an international stage (habitat creation, sustainable transport, renewable energy production etc).

Greenspace

Desire for lots of tree planting, habitat creation, flowers, blossom, places to sit and to walk through freely.

Play

Desire for play for all ages. Ideas included: a bowling green, designated skateboarding / roller blading area.

Civic Space

Desire for open space for people to picnic and play freely a civic building with social functions. Interest in community planting.

Roads

Currently dominating, noisy, severing: an issue.

Safety

Concerns over existing antisocial behaviour around the viaduct. Suggestions to liaise with West Yorkshire Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, St Anne's Community Services, local homeless charities. Concern over darkness and requirement for lighting.



© Photo, Urban Wilderness 2023

Illustrative Masterplan

'If you have a feature stage or a feature sculpture area where someone could be featured for say, 6 months. Somewhere where people can go and put their own artwork up. It can be inspirational to people walking past.'

'(I want) places that are free. Tropical World is nice, but Tropical World costs money!'



© Photo, Jules Lister 2020





Munro House

York Road

Railway Viaduct

Leeds Bus Station

5 min walk to Kirkgate Market

York Road

Mecca Bingo

The Palace Pub

Leeds Minster



Current day...

Re-imagined

Ibis Hotel

Marsh Lane

2 min walk to Crown Point Bridge

Illustrative Masterplan

Key Character Areas

The Site Wide Illustrative Masterplan has developed in response to the site's existing environmental, cultural and historical considerations and key feedback from the community consultation workshops.

Four distinct character areas have been proposed to facilitate a range of different activities and to celebrate the sites special characteristics (heritage and cultural assets). The daylighted Sheepscar Beck flows through the heart of the scheme, providing a central focus and dynamic gathering point for local communities and the people of Leeds!



1. Green-Blue Active Travel Corridor

Segregated bus tram / lanes with potential to form part of the Mass Transit network. Tree lined boulevard with a linear planted bio-swale for sustainable urban drainage.

Daylighted Sheepscar Beck

2. Livett Park

New City Park centred around the daylighted Sheepscar Beck.

3. Brussels Gardens

A new residential community off Brussels Street.

4. Minster Close

Improved setting to Leeds Minster.

Existing A61 re-routed along Marsh Lane to reduce carriageways, freeing up space for new greenspace.



Key

- Existing trees
- Proposed trees
- Existing greenspace
- Proposed greenspace
- Proposed pedestrian crossing points
- Enhanced existing pedestrian crossing points
- Proposed segregated 2-way cycle lane
- Proposed bus / tram, taxi & access traffic routes
- Existing bus, taxi & access traffic routes
- Proposed all traffic routes
- Existing all traffic routes
- Existing vehicular access points retained

Proposals:

- 'Daylighted' Sheepscar Beck
- Bridges / decked platform
- Community growing space
- Sports areas
- Play space
- ▲ Water feature / fountain
- Public realm & pedestrian only routes ('hard space')
- Key gathering areas
- Shared surfacing (pedestrian & vehicular access)

Proposed Built Form:

- 3 - 6 storey mixed use (low rise residential housing, commercial & community use).

Illustrative Masterplan Zoom-In

Key Features, Destinations & Zones



The Minster Pavilion

Lightweight structure for use as a cafe to help activate the area and to increase natural surveillance.



The Minster Plaza

Plaza with a central water feature, to provide a more open and tranquil setting to Leeds Minster.



Timble Bridge

A contemporary reinstatement of the former historic bridge over Sheepscaer Beck.



Sheepscaer Stage

Circular performance space elevated above the Beck, with associated amphitheatre seating on the eastern bank of the watercourse.



The People's Pavilion

A building and associated central plaza, for the people of Leeds. Providing a space for shelter and congregation in the east of the city centre.



Exhibition Space

An art and cultural exhibition space for both local and regional communities, organisations & institutions.



Community Hub

Central workshop, library & event space for local groups such as Climate Action Leeds.



Active Arches

Railway viaduct archways to be utilised by local businesses to create an active 'market street'.



Cycle Corridor

2 way segregated cycle lane forming part of the sustainable blue-green transport corridor.



Bus / Tram Corridor

2-way segregated lanes for buses / mass transit, taxis and access traffic, forming part of the sustainable blue-green movement corridor.



Mixed-Use Residential Community

A mixture of apartments and town houses (primarily affordable housing) with private gardens and roof terraces.



Play Space

Play destinations for both children & adults, linked by incidental, informal play trails throughout the site.



Skateboarding Zone

Co-designed with the local skateboarding community. Areas designated for skating.



Sports Zone

Secondary area for sports activities such as rollerblading, scooting etc.



Sports Court

Court for ball sports such as football and basketball.



Community Growing Space

Areas for community growing. Accessible to community groups, volunteers and local residents.



Enhanced Existing Planting

Existing area of mown grass to be enhanced with herbaceous perennial planting and wildflower meadow.



'Daylighted' Sheepscaer Beck

Lengths of the culverted Beck to be opened and widened alongside the establishment of wetland planting.



Sustainable Urban Drainage

Linear network of planted bio-swales to capture surface water run off and increase infiltration.



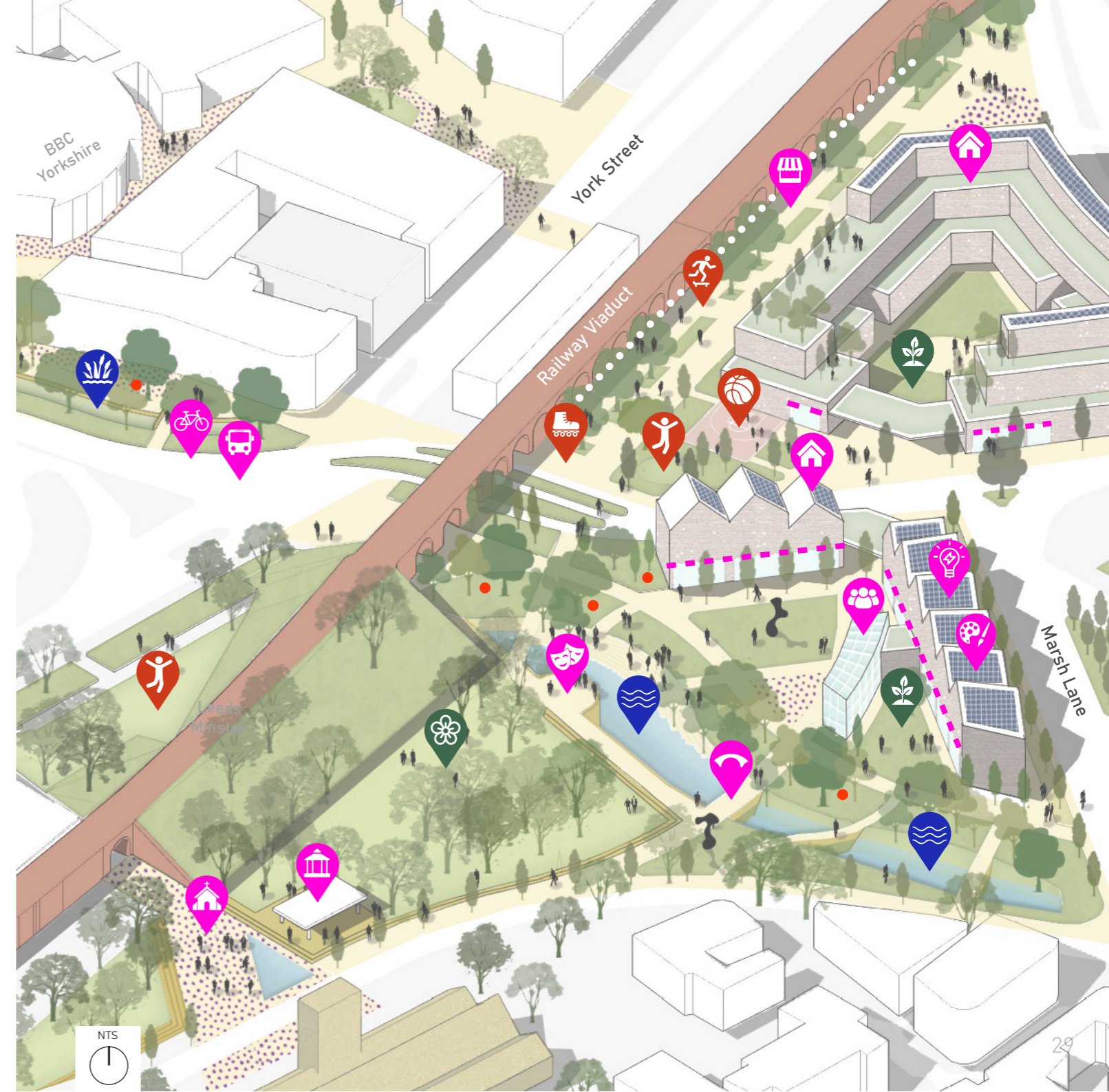
Active Frontages along existing railway viaduct archways.




Active Frontages along proposed new built form.



Public Art / Sculpture



Livett Park

Conceptual Visualisation: 
Looking south east across the A61 from St. John's Park

Before



After



Minster Close

Conceptual Visualisation:

Looking south towards Leeds Minster from St John's Park



Before



After

Design Detail

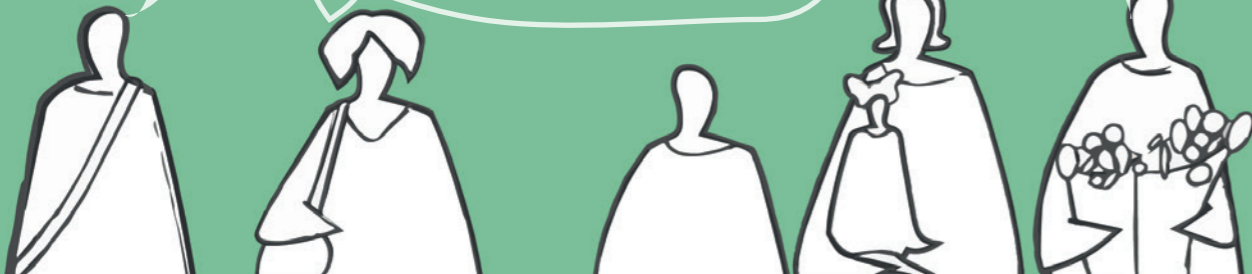
'If you had a dedicated space (for skateboarders) you could build an area that's like stairs, brick, walls, and it not be like a skatepark, but a street skate area.'

It would be great if you could do a consultation with that (skating) group actually. Asking them - what would make a brilliant skate park for you?'

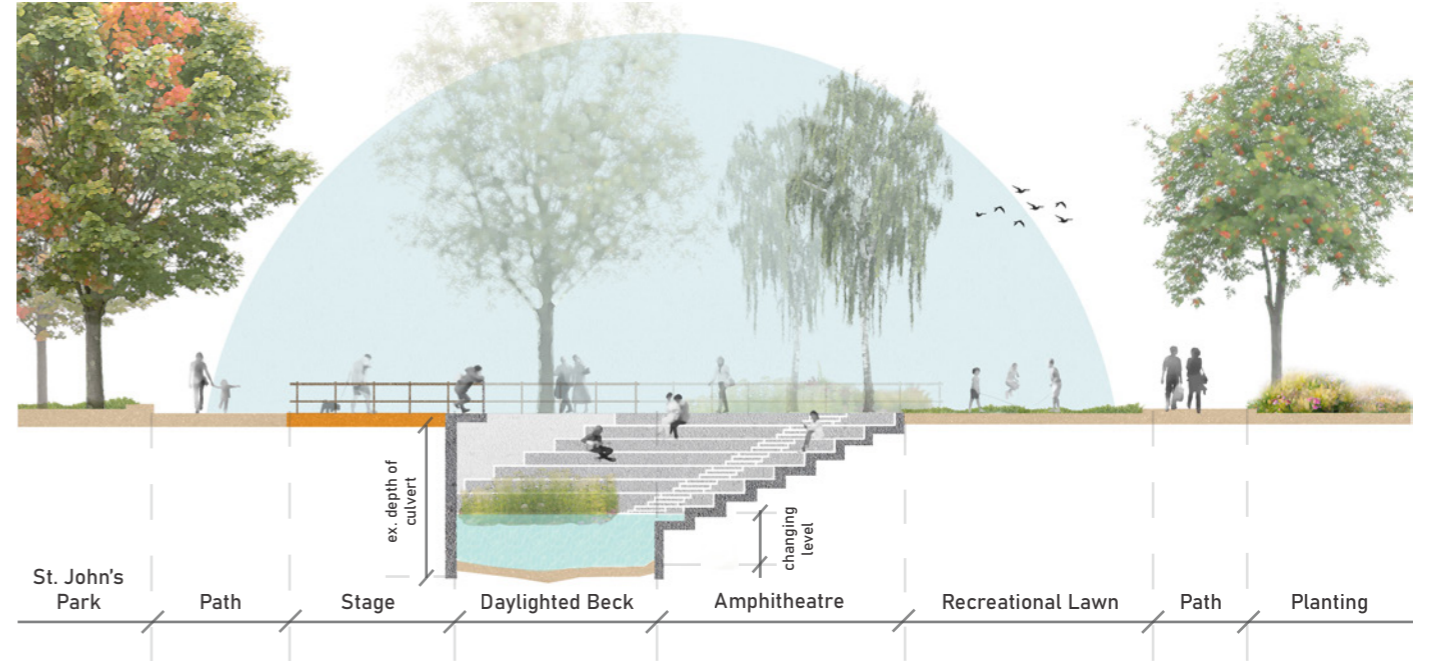
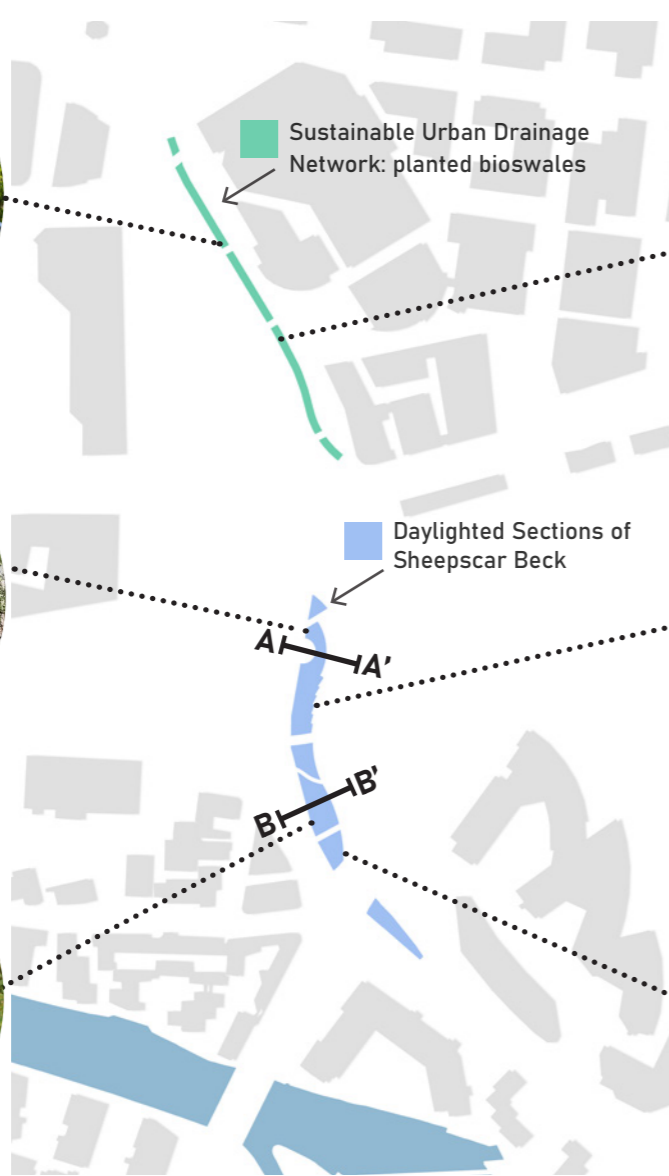
'Just to be in a green space would be like, really nice, a really nice change.'

'If we were to have this public open space, more could be made of that, by celebrating the fact that you've got all these cultural institutions just over the road. You could occupy that space with cultural interventions, activity and arts things that will engage with families.'

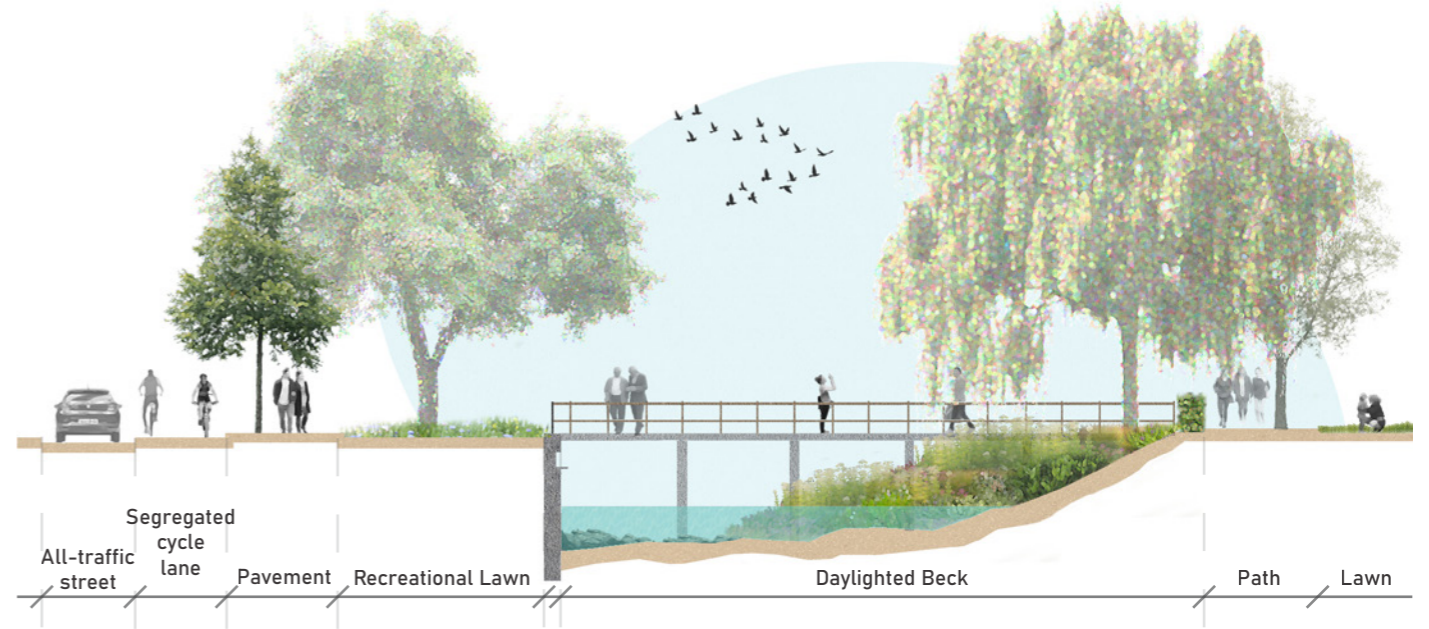
'If people have just moved to a new city, they want to see a sign directing them to a greenspace, or a playground!'



Sheepscar Beck



Section AA'



Section BB'

Trees & Greenspace



Malmö, Sweden



Hofgarten-Öhringen, Germany



Mayfield Park, Manchester



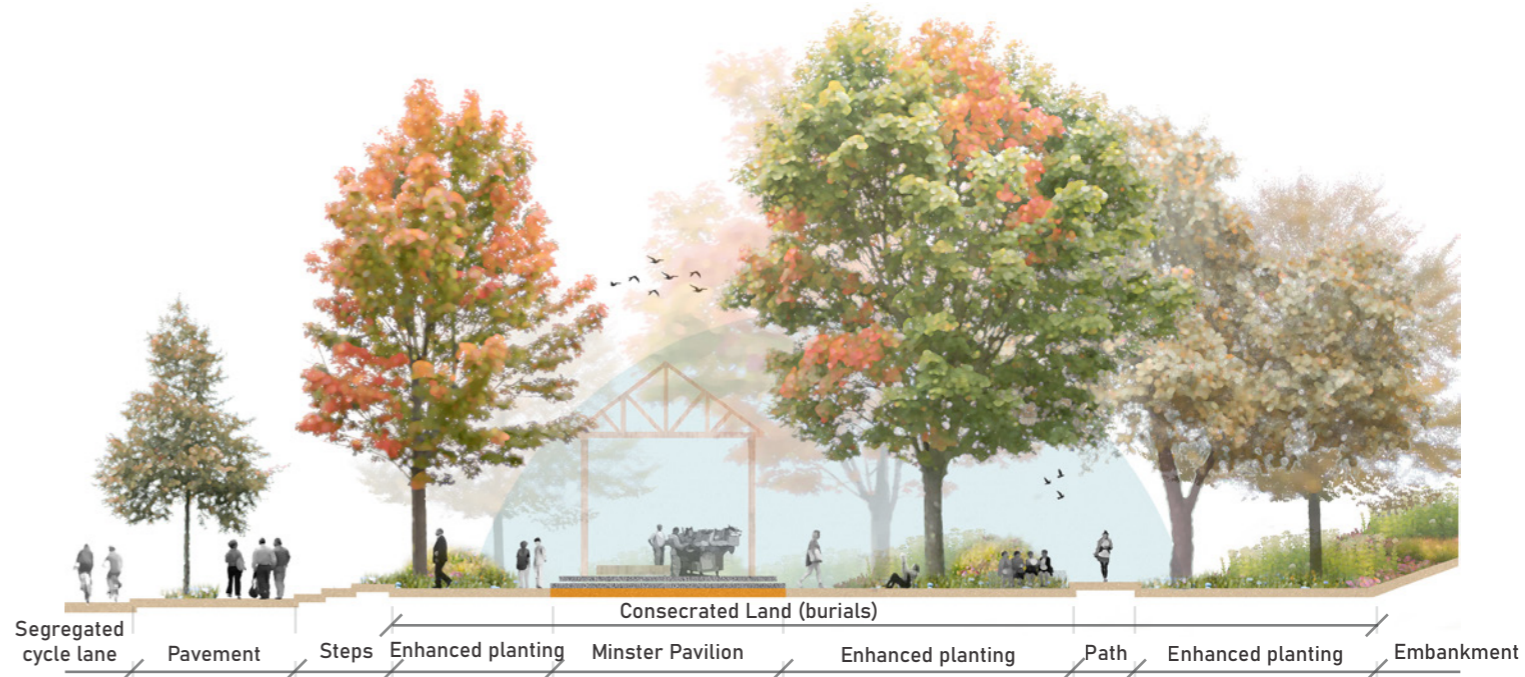
Utrecht Courtyard, Netherlands



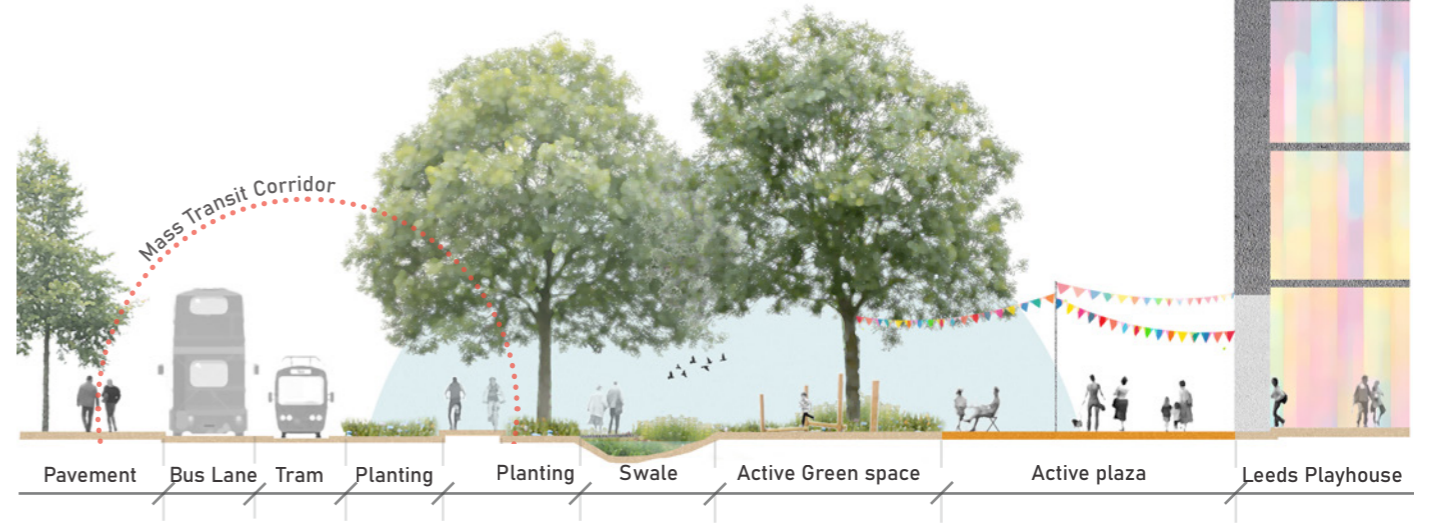
Square des Bouleaux Paris



Elephant Park, London

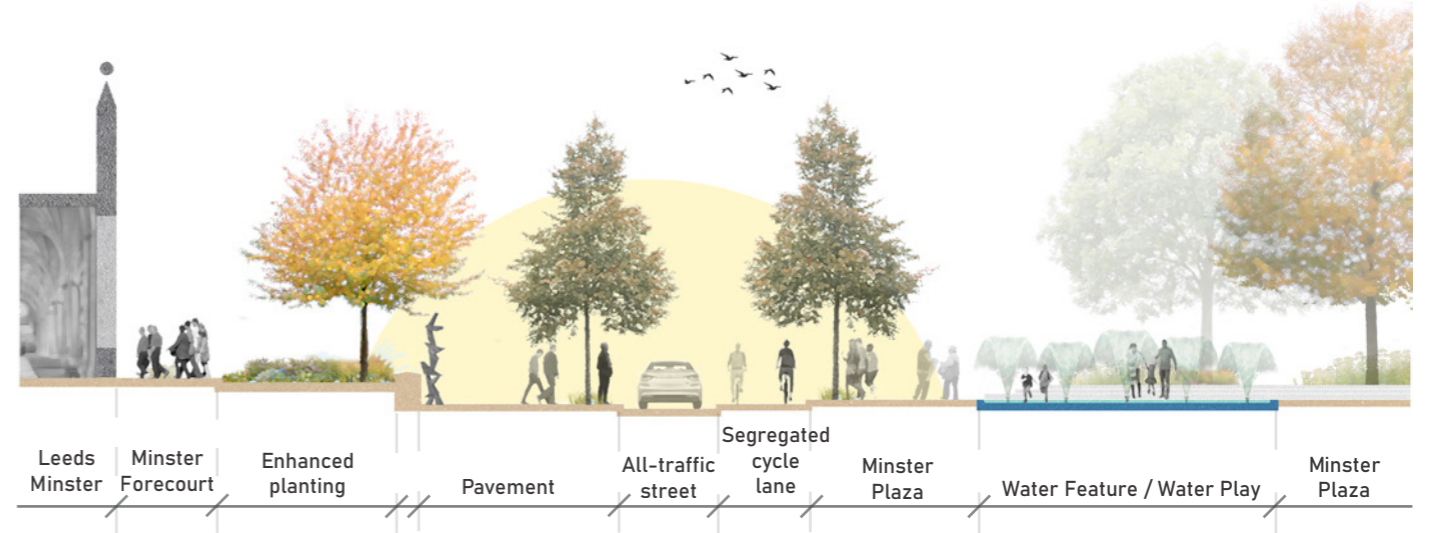


Section CC'

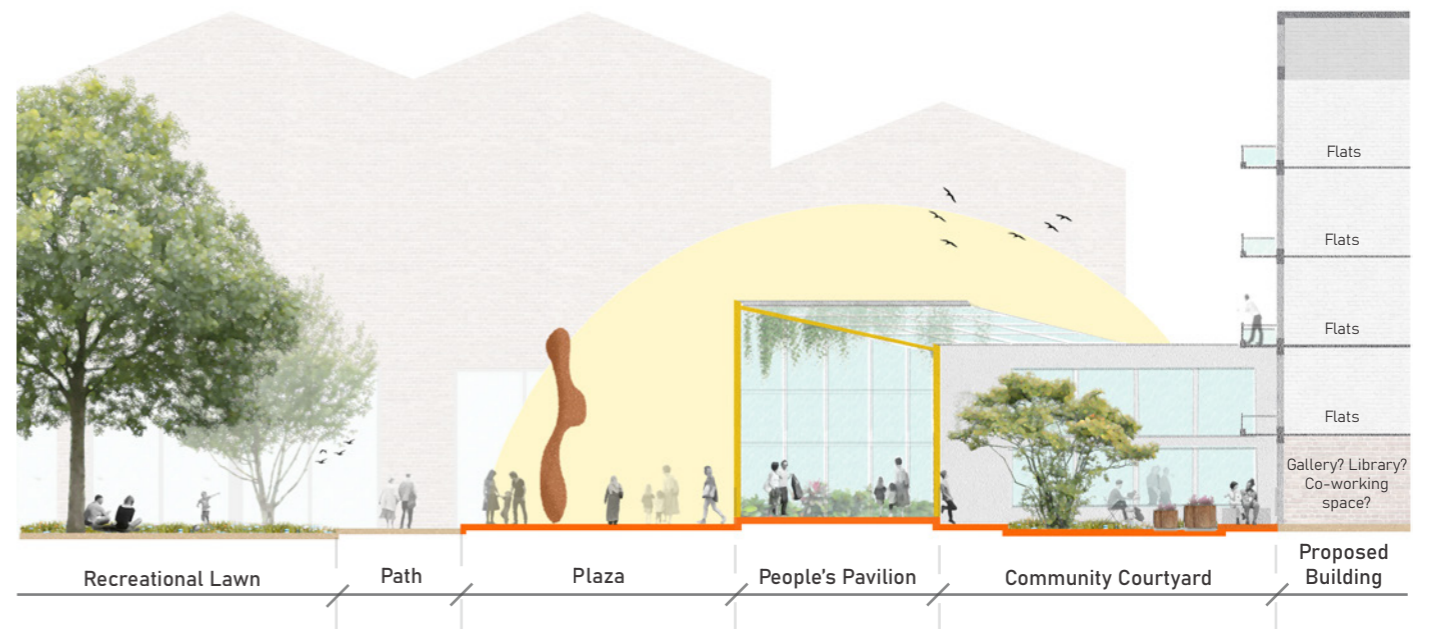


Section DD'

Destinations

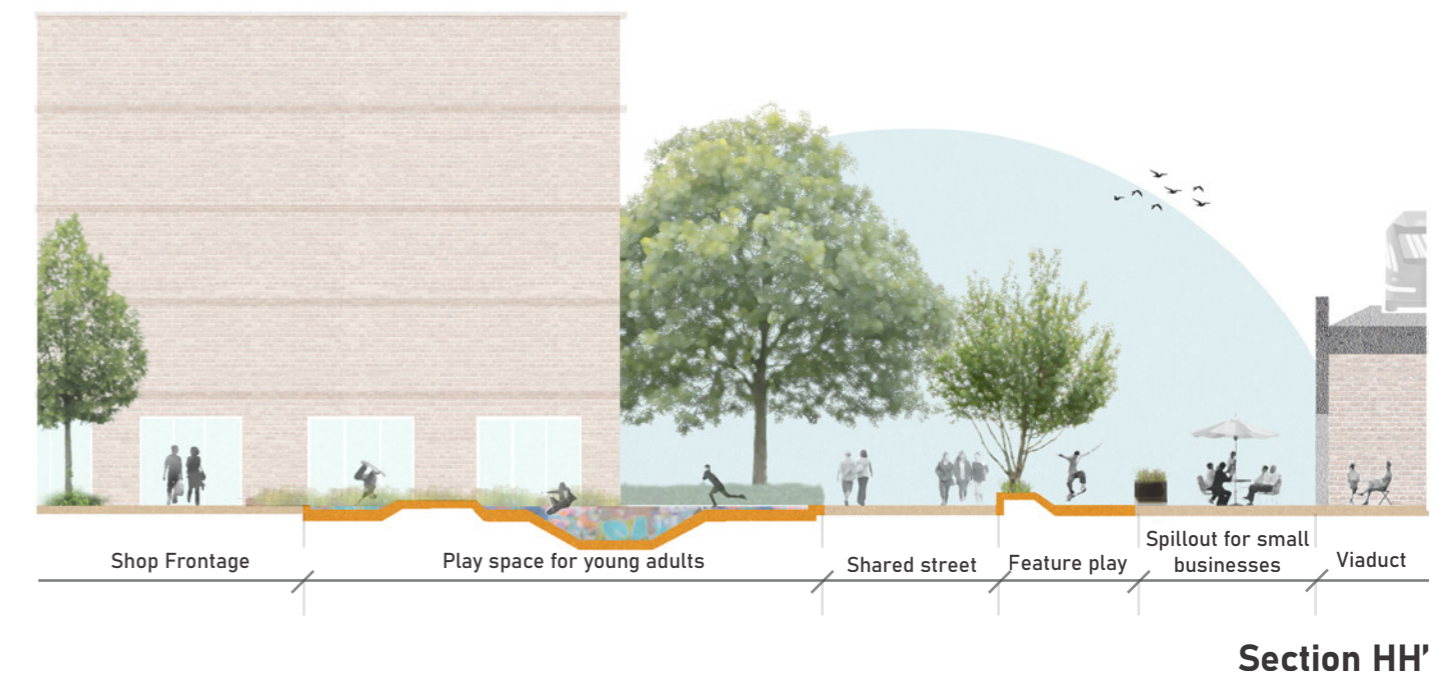
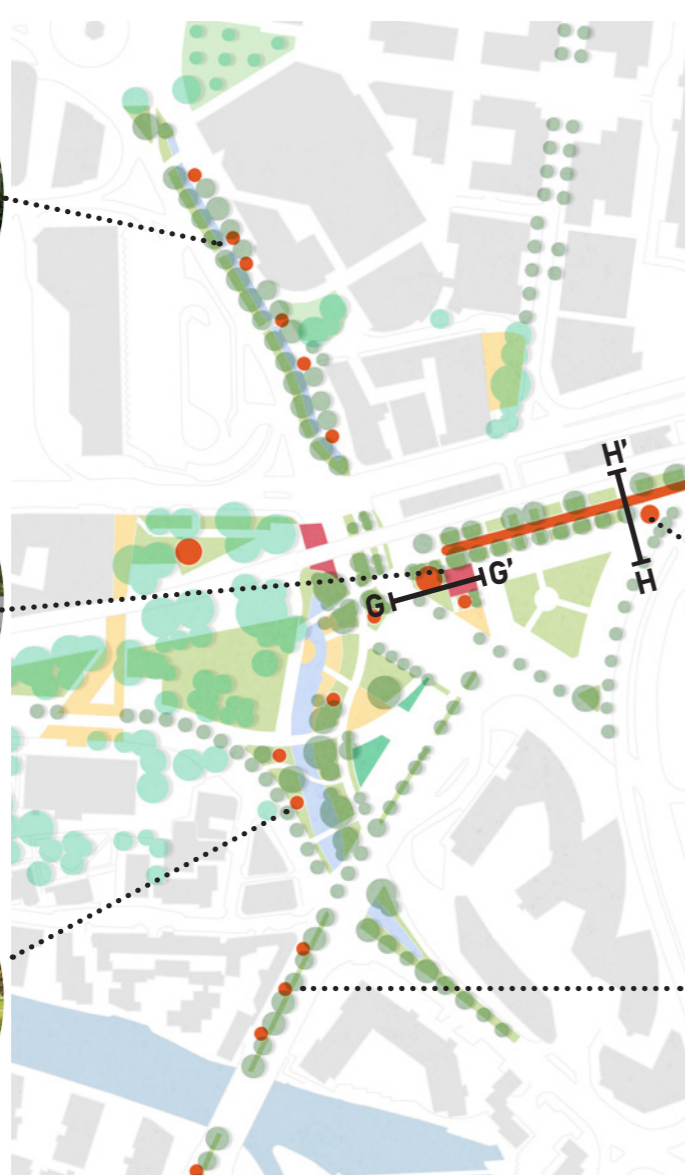


Section EE'

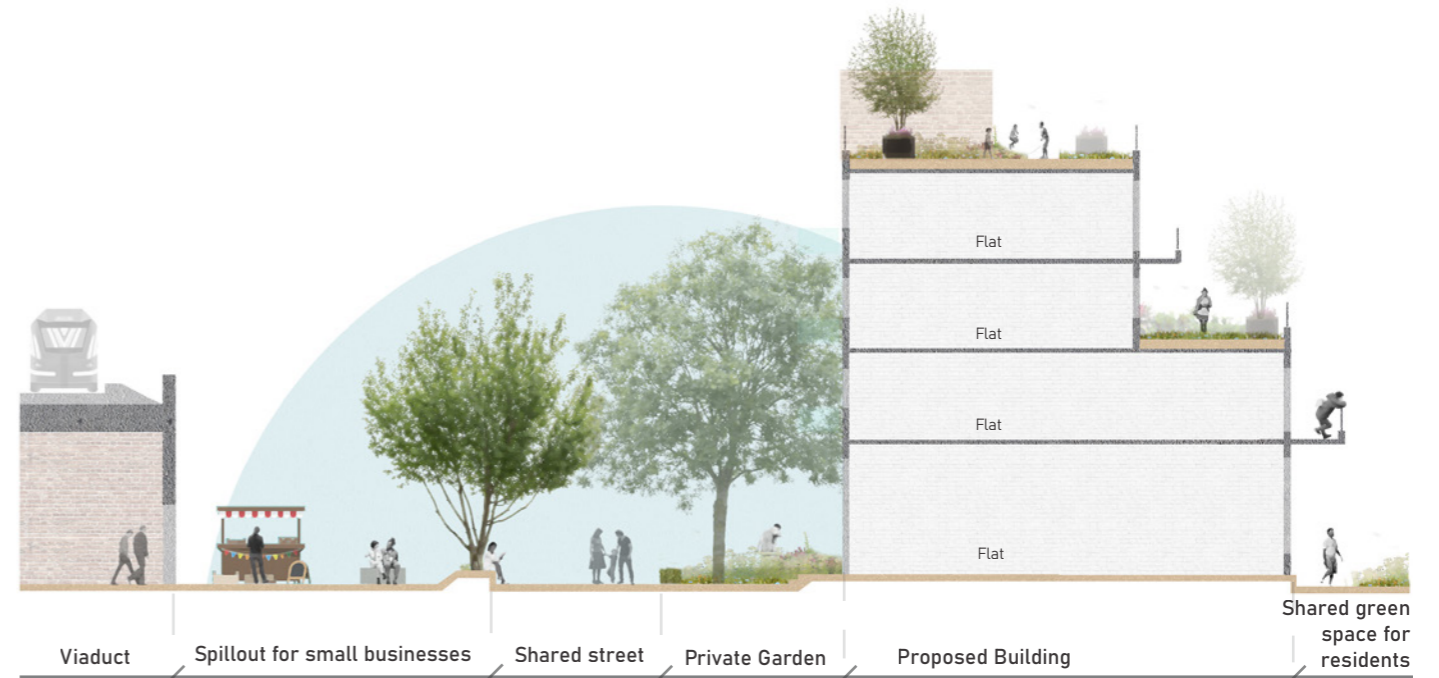
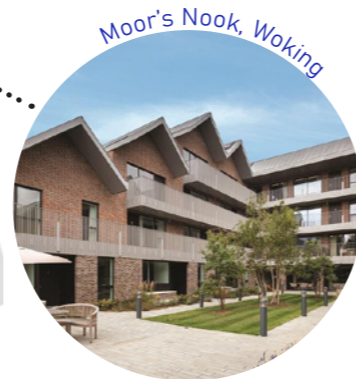


Section FF'

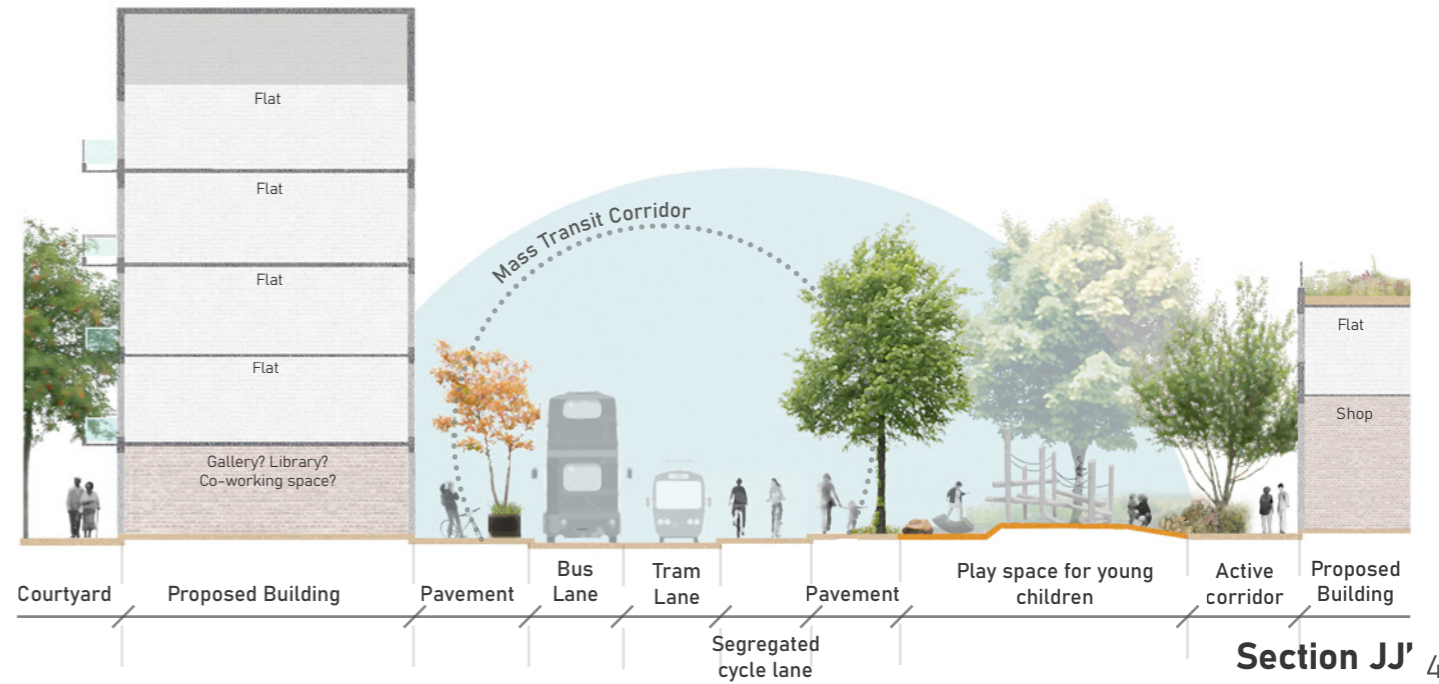
Play



Buildings



Section II'



Section JJ' 45

Next Steps

' I think it needs some amenities to attract people over to it.. so something like a... a temporary art space, or you know some sort of pavilion, but also something to eat and drink, you know a concession stand.. an ice cream stand, a coffee place.. a bit like a Meanwood Park...'

' There's not much art... a sculpture park would be great! Something that pays homage to the history of Kirkgate.'



Next Steps

Opportunities for temporary interventions & events?

How do we establish and foster community ownership now and in the future?



How can we meaningfully engage existing communities in the design process?



Interested in the next stage?
We need your support!
Keep an eye out for updates and events here...

<https://leedscivictrust.org.uk/>
<https://www.liveable-leeds.org.uk/>
or contact us via:
office@leedscivictrust.org.uk



'To me Quarry Hill was a wonderful experiment in space and time and I would dearly love to see a similar experiment on up-to-date lines'

Peter Mitchell, *Momento Mori*, The Flats of Quarry Hill, Leeds. [1990].

**Is Eastside the next experiment?
Let us re-imagine...**





URBAN
WILDERNESS



(what outdoor spaces do you like?)
I think anywhere where
there's green or water.
Water's a big thing I think.
Yeah I really do. You can
go a walk with your dog
or pram with a baby. Or
just with yourself to walk
around. It's just home in't it?
That's all it is. Green grass.
Home.'

