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Kingston Park and Millers Lane Public Park and Urban Realm Project

KINGSTON PARK LANDSCAPE
DESIGN STATEMENT



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Client Galway City Council

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1 FORWARD

This Landscape Design Report has been produced to describe the design intentions of the proposed landscape design for the Kingston Park, as part of the Kingston Park and Millers Lane Public Park and Urban Realm Project in Knocknacarra and Ragoon, Galway. This document is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings and other submitted design proposals:

Doc No.	Document Title	Sheet Size
P612-XXX-LD-DI-001	Document Issue Register	A3
P612-XXX-LD-SU-001	Kingston Park & Millers Lane - Site Location Map	A0
P612-KIN-LD-SU-001	Kingston Park - Site Location Map	A0
P612-MIL-LD-SU-001	Millers Lane - Site Location Map	A0
P613-KIN-LD-SU-002	Kingston Park - Existing Site Layout Plan	A0
P612-MIL-LD-SU-002	Millers Lane - Existing Site Layout Plan	A0
P612-KIN-LD-GA-101	Kingston Park - Proposed Site Layout Plan	A0
P612-KIN-LD-GA-102	Kingston Park - Proposed Site Sections	A0
P612-MIL-LD-GA-101	Millers Lane - Proposed Site Layout Plan	A0
P612-MIL-LD-GA-102	Millers Lane - Proposed Site Sections	A0
P612-KIN-LD-PL-201	Kingston Park - Planting Plan – Area A	A0
P612-KIN-LD-PL-202	Kingston Park - Planting Plan – Area B	A0
P612-KIN-LD-PL-203	Kingston Park - Planting Details	A0
P612-MIL-LD-PL-201	Millers Lane - Planting Plan – Area A	A0
P612-MIL-LD-PL-202	Millers Lane - Planting Plan – Area B	A0
P612-MIL-LD-PL-203	Millers Lane - Planting Details	A0
P612-KIN-LD-HL-301	Kingston Park - Surfaces & Soils Plan – Area A	A0
P612-KIN-LD-HL-302	Kingston Park - Surfaces & Soils Plan – Area B	A0
P612-KIN-LD-HL-303	Kingston Park - Hard Landscape Details	A0
P612-MIL-LD-HL-301	Millers Lane - Hard Landscape Plan – Area A	A0
P612-MIL-LD-HL-302	Millers Lane - Hard Landscape Plan – Area B	A0
P612-MIL-LD-HL-303	Millers Lane - Hard Landscape Details	A0
P612-KIN-LD-BD-401	Kingston Park - Boundaries & Site Furniture – Area A	A0
P612-KIN-LD-BD-402	Kingston Park - Boundaries & Site Furniture – Area B	A0
P612-KIN-LD-BD-403	Kingston Park - Boundary Details	A0
P612-MIL-LD-BD-401	Millers Lane - Boundaries & Gates – Area A	A0
P612-MIL-LD-BD-402	Millers Lane - Boundaries & Gates – Area B	A0
P612-MIL-LD-BD-403	Millers Lane - Boundary Details	A0
P612-KIN-LD-DS-001	Kingston Park Landscape Design Statement	A3
P612-MIL-LD-DS-001	Miller's Lane Landscape Design Statement	A3
P612-KIN-LD-MP-001	Kingston Park Landscape Management Plan	A4
P612-MIL-LD-MP-001	Miller's Lane Landscape Management Plan	A4
P612-KIN-LD-MP-501	Kingston Park Landscape Management Zones	A0



P612-MIL-LD-MP-501	Millers Lane Landscape Management Zones	A0
P613-XXX-LD-VI-001	Park Visualisations	A3



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2 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Galway City Council (GCC) recognise the need for recreational amenity development for areas believed to be underserved in this regard, predominantly in Knocknacarra but also adjoining neighbourhoods in the West of Galway City. These amenities would cater for both organised sporting activities and informal leisure activities for use by a wide range of sports clubs located within the catchment area as well as to individuals within the community.

To this end, GCC engaged a multi-disciplinary consultant-led team in 2024 to develop the design for these sites through 5 stages to handover. Now at Stage II, Galway City Council seeks planning permission for a development comprising construction of a new Public Park at Kingston, Knocknacarra and improvement of Millers Lane (an existing public park) in Rahoon under the Galway City Capital Programme. The brief comprises design for the provision of new multi-functional buildings with changing rooms, play facilities for a range of users, sports equipment storage areas, trees and planted areas, sports playing fields and all associated development works including access and circulation, parking, drainage, public lighting, earthworks, site furniture and wayfinding and planting. A location map showing the context of the proposed project in relation to Galway City is included in Figure 1.

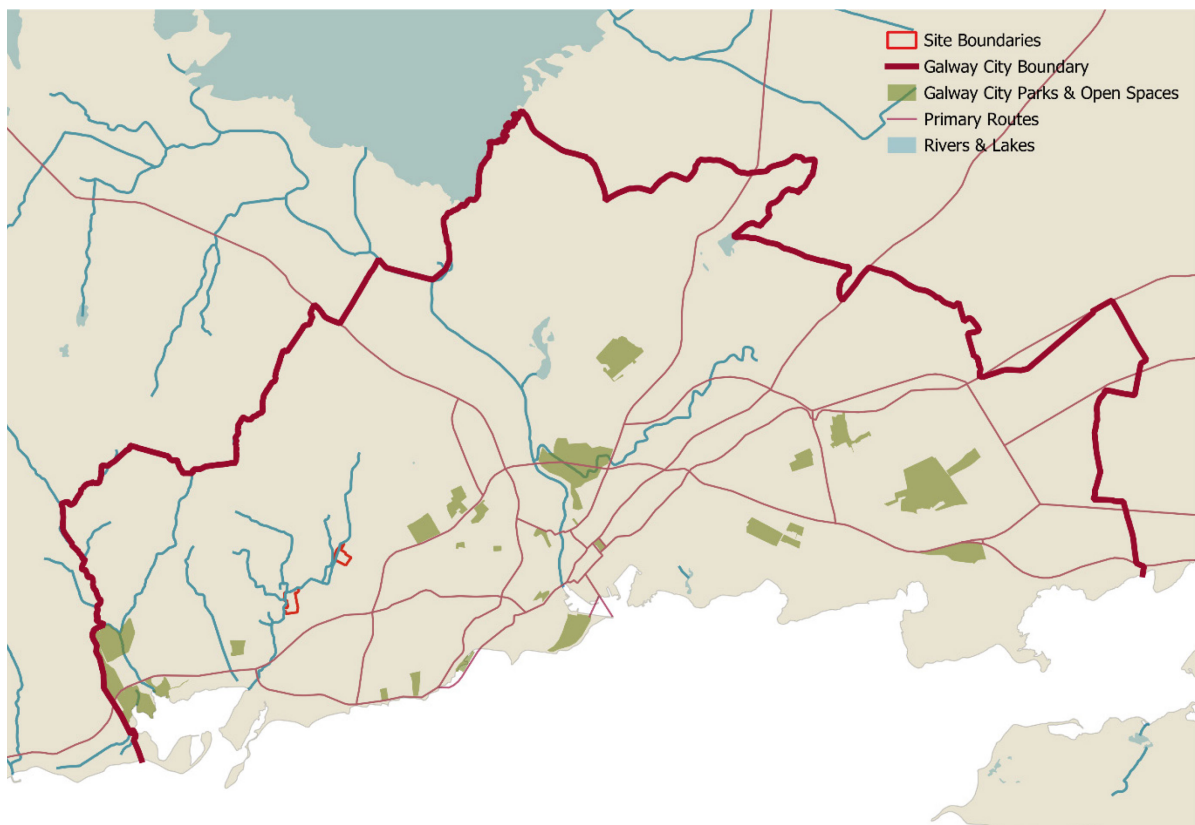


Figure 1 Location Map of Kingston Park and Millers Lane project sites



2.2 PROJECT SITES

There are two sites associated with this project. A new park and public realm associated with a multi-functional building is to be provided on the first site, Kingston Park at Kingston, south of the Western Distributor Road, east of the Clybaun Road and directly adjacent to St John the Apostle NS, Knocknacarra on the Altan Road. This site is the subject of a masterplan that is divided into two phases. Kingston Park Phase I is the subject of this Part X planning application.

The second site consists of the existing playing fields at Miller's Lane which are to be improved and developed into a public park with a multi-functional building.

This design report relates to the first of these sites, Kingston Park (Phase I).



- Kingston Park and Millers Lane Public Park and Urban Realm Project Site Boundaries
- Kingston Park Masterplan Boundary

Google Satellite imagery © Google — captured various dates

Figure 2 Location Map of Kingston Park and Millers Lane project sites



3 KINGSTON PARK SITE

3.1 SUBJECT SITE AND MASTERPLAN SITE

The Kingston Park site is described as the site outlined in red in Fig 3.



 Kingston Park Site Boundary
Google Satellite imagery
© Google — captured various dates

Figure 3 Location Map of Kingston Park site



3.2 URBAN CONTEXT

Galway City Neighbourhoods

Kingston Park lies within the Knocknacarra neighbourhood, identified in the Galway City Development Plan as a key suburban growth area west of the River Corrib. The plan promotes compact, mixed-use neighbourhoods with strong community amenities, improved walking and cycling links, and access to green infrastructure. Kingston and Clybaun are designated as local centres serving surrounding residential areas. The park site therefore plays a strategic role in delivering high-quality public open space and recreation facilities supporting the liveability, identity, and cohesion of the western suburbs.



Figure 4 Project Sites (outlined in red) in relation to the Knocknacarra, Ballyburke, Ballymoneen Neighbourhood, GCC City Development Plan 2023-29 (shaded in grey)



3.3 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VICINITY

Western Distributor Road Cycle Scheme

Galway City Council's *Galway Western Distributor Road Cycle Scheme*, Part 8 application reference number PT8GY253 proposes a continuous two-way cycle route along the Western Distributor Road, less than 100m north of Kingston Park. The project will significantly enhance active travel connectivity, linking the Knocknacarra district to schools, retail centres, and the city centre network. The park design aligns with this scheme through direct access points, complementary planting, and integrated SuDS, reinforcing the city's sustainable mobility objectives.

Kingston Stables Large Residential Development

The [Kingston Stables LRD](#) proposes approximately 362 residential units, public open spaces, and pedestrian and cycle links on a site to the east of Kingston Park. The scheme incorporates active frontage to support safe and secure public realm and a green corridor to expand habitat quantity and connectivity in the neighbourhood. There is potential for a future connection from Kingston Stables into the park through the residential-zoned lands in between the two sites, ensuring permeability and natural surveillance. Its delivery will expand the park's catchment population and strengthen its role as a shared community resource within a consolidated urban neighbourhood.

Clybaun Housing Scheme

The proposed *Clybaun Road Social and Affordable Housing Scheme* (Galway City Council Section 179A application 24/1), which provides 61 residential units comprising 1–3 bed dwellings in terraced and apartment typologies is located to the south west of Phase I of Kingston Park. The scheme proposes new mixed-tenure residential units with associated public realm and access improvements. The development once completed will complement this project by providing a new greenway link with two pedestrian connections from Kingston Park Phase II to Clybaun Road. Together, these projects establish a coherent framework of housing, transport, and amenity that supports sustainable suburban regeneration in Knocknacarra.

3.4 SITE TOPOGRAPHY

The site is an irregular shape of 3.43 hectares with the longest dimension running north to south. The site is accessed from Altan Road which connects to the Western Distributor Road at the roundabout with Bothar Stiofain and is bounded by the new access road approved

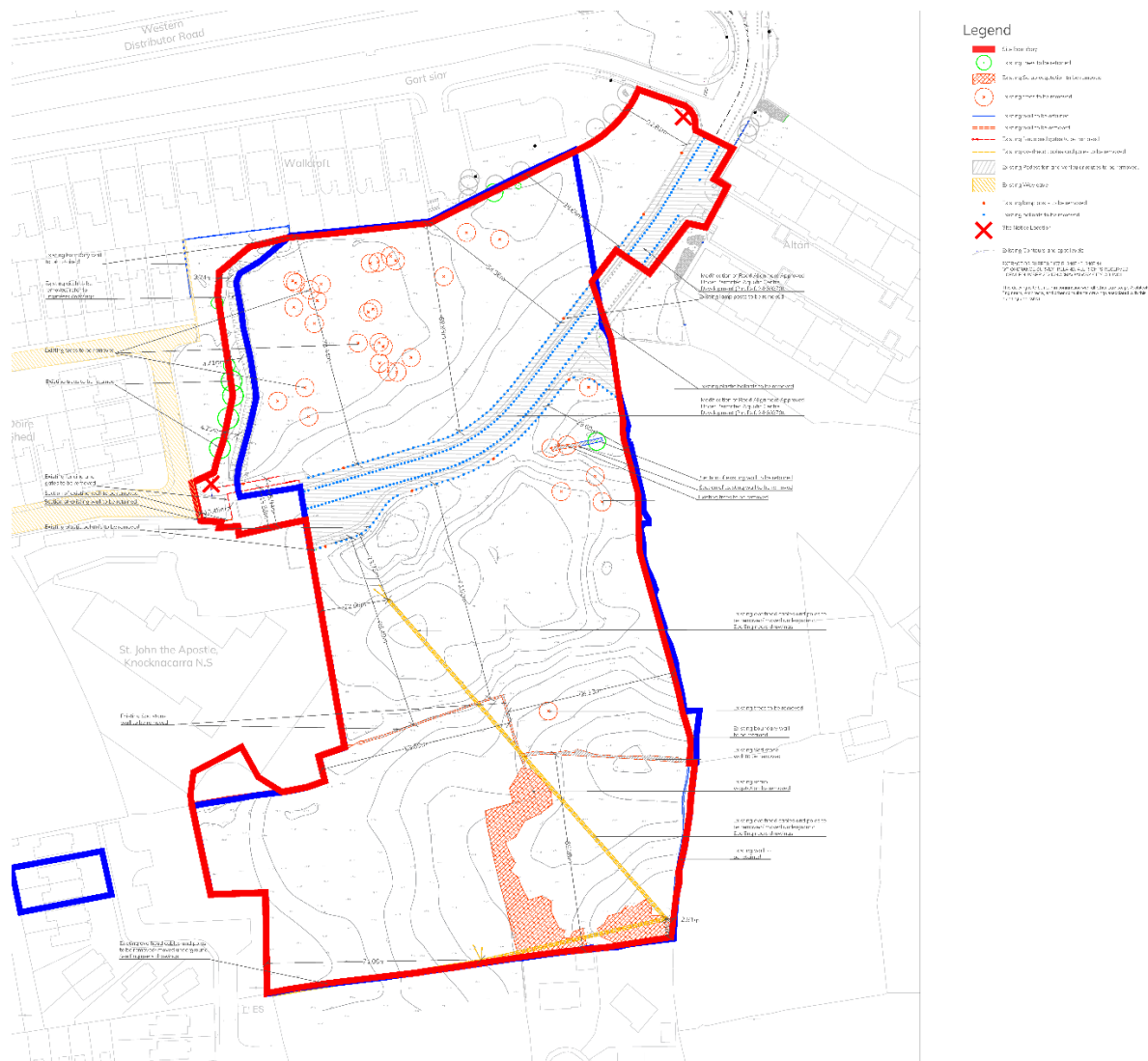


under permitted Aquatic Centre Development (Pln. Ref. 24/60370) to account for the layout of this proposed development.

The site's elevation varies from approximately 19.76m AD at its lowest point in the west, to approximately 24.50m AD on a small rise in the eastern portion of the site. Topography is undulating and the site is broken down into a series of small pasture fields divided by existing field boundaries.

3.5 EXISTING VEGETATION & HYDROLOGY

The Kingston Park site comprises predominantly unmanaged grassland with areas of scrub and scattered trees, reflecting a semi-natural and transitional character. The topographic survey confirms broad open fields with low sod-and-stone wall boundaries, while the ecological baseline identifies dry calcareous and neutral grassland (GS1) of variable quality, some degraded through horse grazing. The northern section includes recolonising bare ground (ED3) and patches of scrub (WS1) dominated by gorse, bramble, and willow, while the western and southern edges support treelines (WL2) and hedgerows (WL1) of hawthorn, holly, and alder with ivy understorey. A smaller area of dense bracken (HD1) occurs near the eastern boundary. Scattered semi-mature birch, willow, alder, and sycamore form pockets of immature woodland (WS2). Ground cover is a mix of coarse grasses, ruderal herbs, and locally compacted soils. Overall, the vegetation provides moderate ecological value and supports foraging and commuting habitat for common bat species.



3.6 EXISTING SITE BOUNDARIES

The boundary with Doire Gheal open space in the north-west of the site consists of a ditch and fence, with a significant difference in ground levels, being lower on the site side. The northern boundary continues to the rear of residential units in Gort Siar and consists of typical blockwork boundary walls to private gardens and walls with railings to public open space.

The eastern boundary to the site follows the edge of undeveloped residential zoned lands to the west of Altan apartments and north of Kingston Gardens. This boundary is marked by sections of blockwork wall, ceding to sod stone walls combined with wire mesh panel



fencing. The southern boundary is comprised of more sod stone wall with overgrown hedgerows.

The eastern boundary with Clybaun Court residential scheme consists of sections of blockworks walls and sections of fences with clipped hedges. North of this the boundary follows the existing railings bounding Knocknacarra NS. These railings terminate at the series of gates and railings that mark the intersection of Altan Road with the public footpath connecting to White Oaks and the entrance to the school.



4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

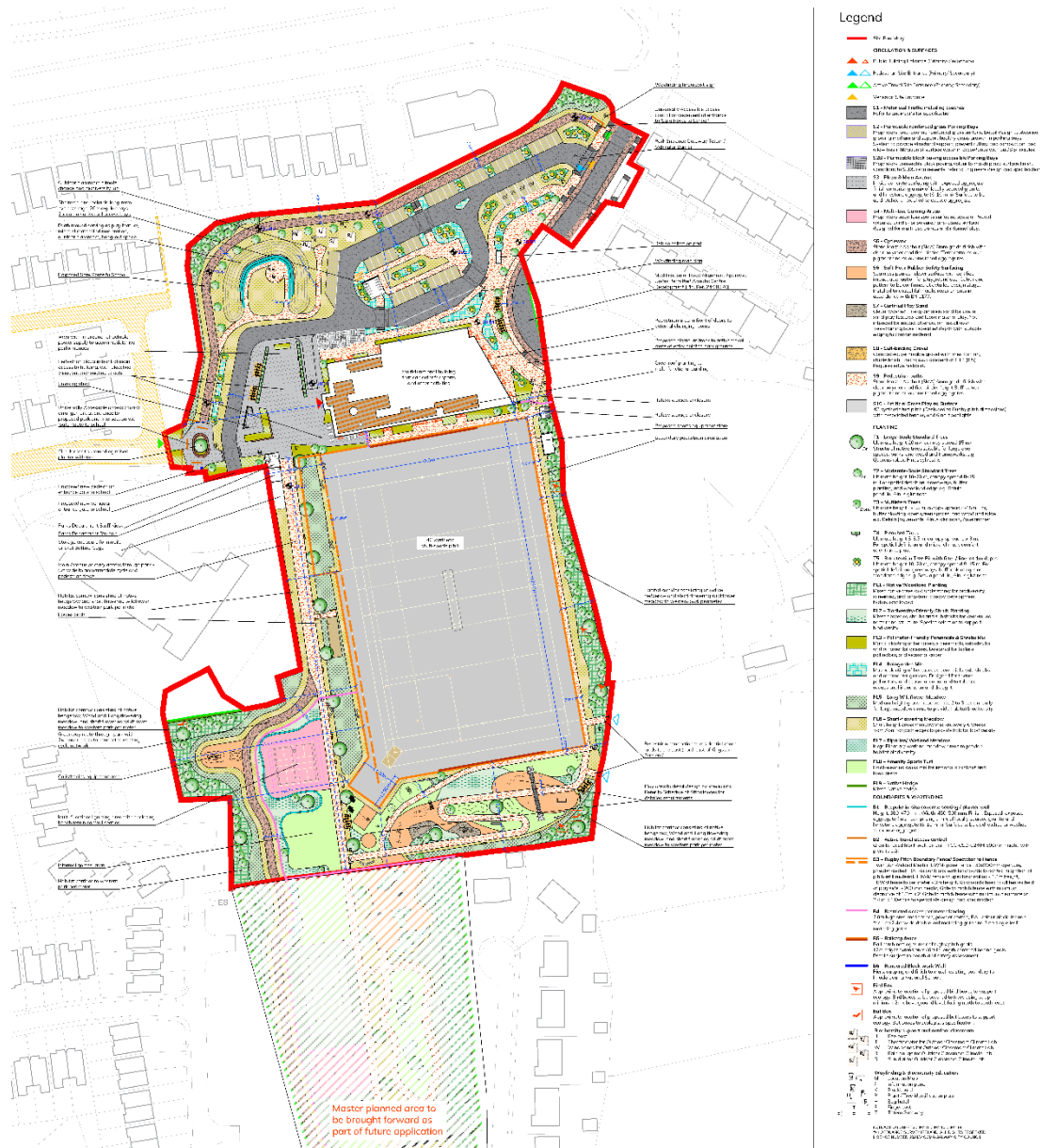
The development of Kingston Park (site area 3.43Ha), includes:

- I The development of 1 no. 4G synthetic turf multi-sport pitch (designed to rugby pitch dimensions) with associated fencing and 6 no. floodlights.
- II New two-storey, multi-functional building which includes public and sports team changing rooms, toilets, and showers (standard and accessible); double-height general purpose community hall including retractable bleacher seating; multi-purpose activity rooms (including 3 no. rooms offering direct views onto the playing pitch); commentary booth; café and servery; sensory room; first-aid room; store room; plant room; reception area; and roof-mounted solar panels.
- III New public spaces and amenities including all-ages play area, outdoor classroom / amphitheatre; internal paths; multi-functional gaming area; informal games lawn; boules pitch; calisthenics area; performance space; pedestrian gateway plaza; parks department staff kiosk; refuse store; sports equipment sheds; public lighting; and public seating.
- IV Extensive landscape planting (including native genus and species) and nature-based drainage measures including pollinator-friendly raingarden/ bioretention areas; reinforced grass paving; native hedgerows; short- and long-flowering meadows; wildflower gardens; native and naturalised wooded areas; and pollinator-friendly perennials and shrubs.
- V Replacement of the existing vehicular site access / junction on the Altan Road, and modification of the new access road approved under permitted Aquatic Centre Development (PIn. Ref. 24/60370) to account for the layout of this proposed development.
- VI Improvement of existing active travel entrance from Doire Gheal, improved links to the St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra National School (via a Safe Routes to School), new active travel accesses from the Altan Road, and provision for 2 no. potential future accesses to lands to the east (northeast of Kingston Gardens).
- VII 50 no. car parking spaces (including 4 no. standard EV charging spaces, 3 no. accessible spaces, 1 no. combined EV and accessible space, and 1 no. age-friendly space), 1 no. coach parking space, 1 no. set-down area, 82 no. bicycle spaces (60



no. standard short-term spaces, and a secure bike shed with 20 no. standard and 2 no. cargo-bike spaces) and 2 no. motorcycle spaces.

All other associated and ancillary works.





5 LANDSCAPE DESIGN VISION AND OBJECTIVES

This section states the overarching vision for Kingston Park and the site-wide objectives that guide the layout and design. It explains the intended character, user experience, and environmental outcomes. The objectives draw on adopted policy and recognised frameworks, including the Green Flag Award criteria, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, Sustainable Drainage Systems guidance, and the client's Environmental, Social and Governance commitments. They address inclusive access, health and safety, public realm cleanliness, biodiversity and habitat quality, climate resilience and resource efficiency, and clear communication with users.

5.1 SUSTAINABLE SITE DESIGN

The design of Kingston Park has been informed by the sustainability principles of LEED v4 (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), an internationally recognised framework developed by the U.S. Green Building Council for evaluating environmental performance and sustainable site development.

LEED emphasises integrated site design, ecosystem services, water efficiency, materials reuse, and human well-being. Under LEED v4, the *Site Design and Development* credits encourage an iterative design process in which environmental performance goals—such as stormwater management, habitat connectivity, heat-island reduction, and pedestrian connectivity—are evaluated from the earliest concept stages. These principles have directly influenced the design of Kingston Park from the early stage layout design, where permeability and connection to local active travel networks was prioritised along with retaining and connecting habitats and minimising hard landscape areas.

The site's material design and specification was then refined through the adoption of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), extensive SuDS measures, and a planting palette aligned with local ecology and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The park prioritises permeable surfaces, habitat creation, and low-maintenance native vegetation, contributing to stormwater management and biodiversity enhancement. Social sustainability is also embedded through universal accessibility, passive surveillance, and gender-responsive design. Collectively, the design approach seeks to exemplify the LEED v4 goals of resilience, resource efficiency, and inclusive open space for Galway's communities.



5.2 SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY

The landscape design aims to retain where possible areas of existing vegetation of value for biodiversity and to increase the extent and connectivity of habitats across the site. The planting palette is designed to support pollinators, taking guidance from the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan*. Planting design for hedges is based on recommendations in *Irish Hedgerows: Networks for Nature and Conserving Hedgerows*. Woodland planting design is informed by *Management Guidelines for Ireland's Native Woodlands*.

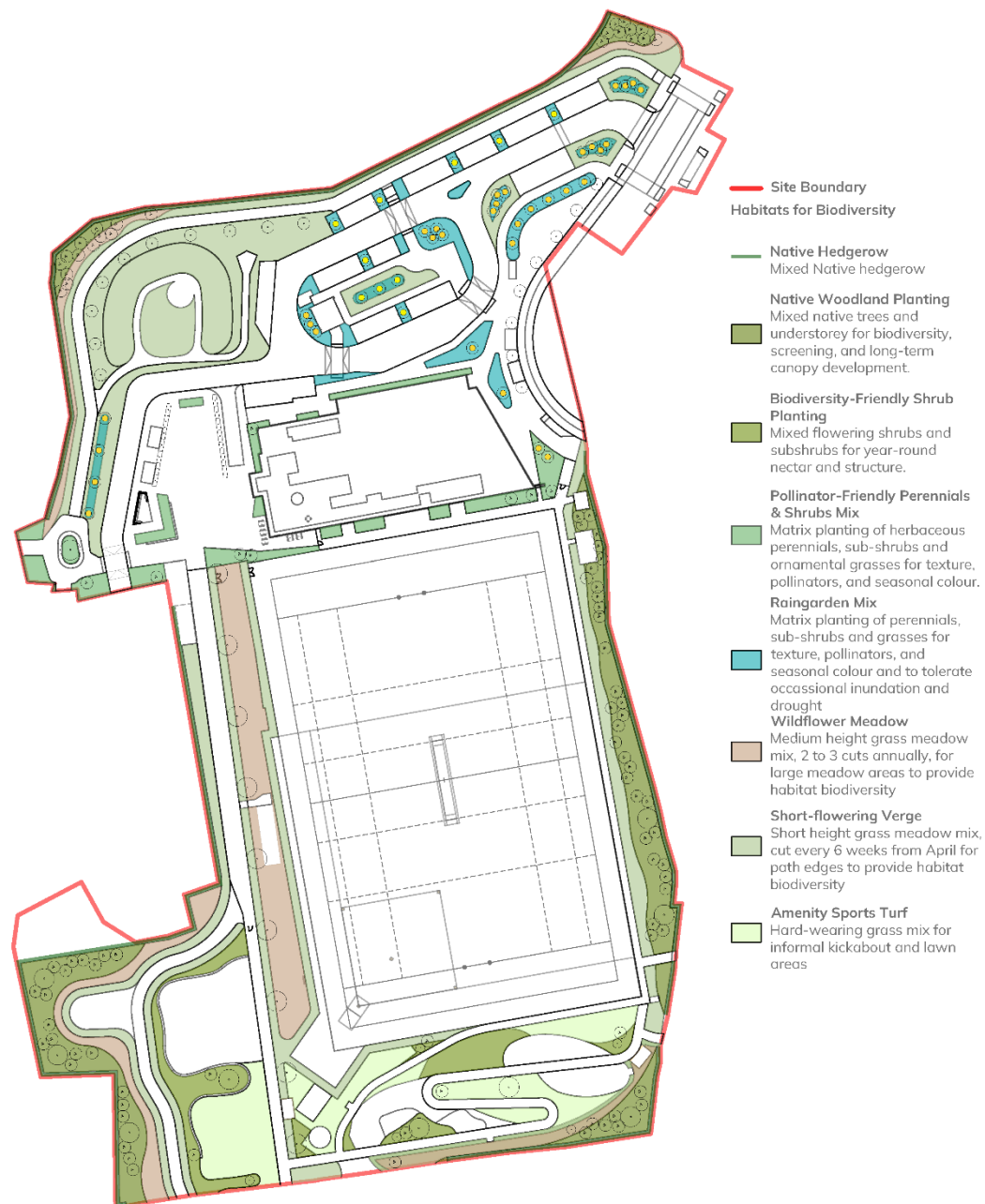


Figure 7 Conceptual Plan Diagram of Kingston Park Biodiversity and Habitat Strategy



Provide and Connect Diverse Habitats

The scheme aims to connect existing habitats as well as to provide new habitat types and increase habitat extents in the area. The site landscape design connects proposed habitat corridor planting to the planted areas within residential green open spaces at Gort Siar, Doire Gheal (White Oaks), Clybaun Court and to the residential zoned lands to the east of the site and to the open space-zoned lands to the south of the site. This habitat corridor is formed by a boundary of native hedgerow planting, with a band of woodland edge planting where space allows, followed by long-flowering meadow and short flowering verges to provide a layered gradient, or ecotone, of habitats that transition gradually into each other. These are supplemented with semi-mature tree planting to provide a more diverse age profile in the newly planted areas. These layered habitats support pollinators and small fauna while softening the park's visual edge.

Selective semi-mature tree planting within open zones provides canopy diversity and vertical structure, accelerating the development of age variety in the new habitats. Together, these measures reinforce the park's ecological function, enhance connectivity, and deliver a resilient urban green space within Galway's western suburbs.

Integrate Nature Based Solutions and SuDS

Soft landscape areas are designed as multifunctional green infrastructure components that deliver Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience.

Nature-Based Solutions are measures that work with and enhance natural processes to address environmental, social, and economic challenges, delivering benefits for both people and nature. While often vegetated, NBS also encompass permeable mineral systems that mimic natural hydrological functions such as infiltration, filtration, and evaporation.

In Kingston Park, NBS are integrated throughout the public realm, combining vegetated SuDS features—such as green roofs, bioretention rain gardens, pollinator planting, and reinforced grass parking bays—with permeable gravelled areas that support local attenuation and infiltration. The self-binding gravel surfacing used in cycle parking areas provides a stable, low-maintenance, and permeable surface layer that allows stormwater to percolate gradually into the subgrade, supplementing the capacity of adjacent vegetated areas.

The bioretention planting employs herbaceous and shrubby species tolerant of alternating drought and inundation, including *Alchemilla mollis*, *Iris siberica*, *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, *Carex pendula*, and *Cornus kousa*, supported by bioretention trees such as *Alnus glutinosa*,



Betula pubescens, *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' and *Ulmus* 'Columnella'. These are complemented by pollinator-friendly perennial and shrub mixes based on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP), and short-flowering meadows that provide extended seasonal nectar sources, visual variety, and reduced mowing frequency.

Together, these systems form an interconnected green and permeable infrastructure that moderates surface water flows, promotes infiltration, enhances biodiversity, mitigates the urban heat-island effect, and contributes to LEED v4 sustainable site and water efficiency objectives. For detailed hydraulic design, refer to the engineer's drainage proposals.

General Planting Design

The planting selection has been designed to provide pleasant amenity space for park visitors as well as adding new planting to support biodiversity and to counter the loss of existing vegetation. The park is designed with a mix of native tree, native hedgerow, native woodland edge planting throughout the site as well as perennial and shrub planting to add visual interest and biodiversity value in smaller areas close to buildings and high-intensity / activity.

The emphasis in the plant selection is on using species that support biodiversity and on grouping them in plant communities that provide a diverse range of habitats on the site. The planting palette is designed to support pollinators, taking guidance from the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan*. Planting design for hedges is based on recommendations in *Irish Hedgerows: Networks for Nature and Conserving Hedgerows*. Woodland planting design is informed by *Management Guidelines for Ireland's Native Woodlands*.

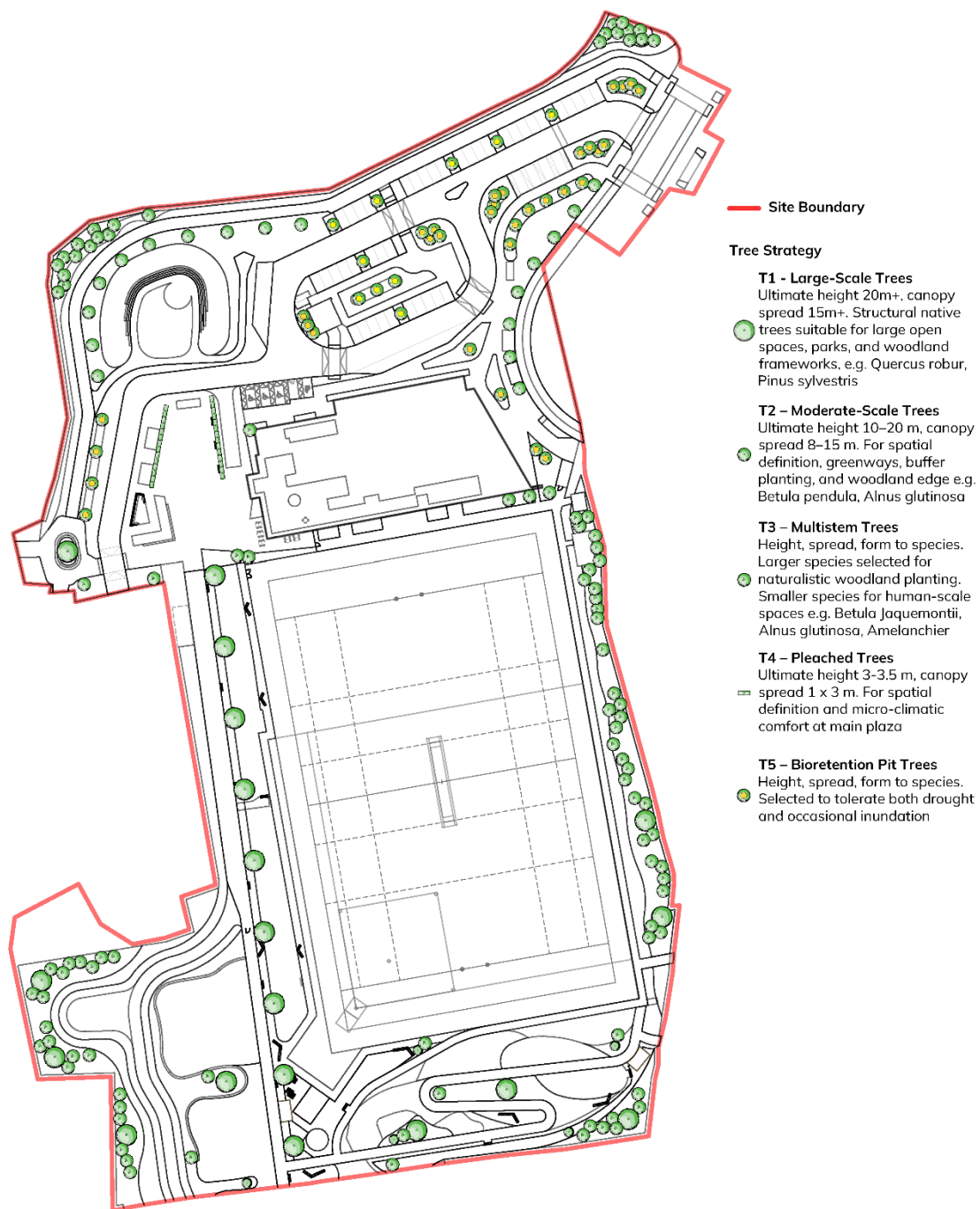


Figure 8 Conceptual Plan Diagram of Kingston Park Trees and Woodland Strategy

Trees and Woodlands

Tree species selections prioritise native and naturalised genus as well as robust, low-maintenance performance in urban coastal conditions. Across the site, 199 semi-mature trees are proposed planted in paved areas, seeded and planted areas and within woodland planting zones, including 65 clear-stem trees, 22 of which are in raingardens and 120 multi-stem trees, 21 of which are in raingardens. These trees range from small, human-scale trees



planted to add visual interest and improved micro-climate to social spaces, to medium-scale trees planted to give directionality to secondary circulation routes, enhance public realm and boost woodland planning to large-scale trees planted to define the Main Avenue and to add scale and habitat value to woodland areas.

An area 1,525m² of native woodland edge planting is proposed as additional habitat provision. Feathered and multi-stem trees planted in the woodland areas will add diversity to the age profile in the surrounding habitat. Some of the clear-stem and multi-stem trees are native cultivars, selected for their consistent form.

Tree placement has been coordinated with pedestrian and anticipated vehicular movements to protect turning radii and visibility at entrances and junctions. A cyclical arboricultural inspection regime is recommended—light formative pruning, periodic crown-lifting and clear-stemming where required—to sustain tree health, clearance and safety through establishment and maturity. Woodland planting may require periodic thinning to enhance habitat diversity.

Shrubs and Perennials

The proposed shrub and perennial planting palette has been selected to provide delight in the social spaces of the park and is in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan plant list. Shrub and perennial planting will be supplied in 2-3 litre pots and planted at a density of 5no/ m². Planting beds in public facing areas will be finished with a 50mm layer of bark mulch. Plant species have been selected to enhance biodiversity and create habitat on the site.

5.3 PROVIDE FACILITIES TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRAVEL

The site design provides an Active Travel Corridor that connects local active travel routes (existing and proposed) through the park. The purpose of this corridor is to keep everyday mobility friction-free and welcoming, so that active travel is the default choice to and through the park—and to school—year-round.

There are two dedicated active travel routes proposed in Kingston Park which are connected by the park's plaza and Main Avenue. The first active travel route is a dedicated Safe Route to School (SRTS), designed with input from An Taisce and GCC's Active Travel team in response to the *Safe Routes to School Draft Delivery Plan St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS*. This route runs from the north-east entrance, where it connects to existing and future cycle paths along Altan Road, and follows inside the northern boundary of the site leading to the newly configured front gates of Knocknacarra National School on the



western boundary at Doire Gheal. Here, the route connects to the Recreation and Amenity Greenway (RA Greenway) along Doire Gheal shown in the *Land Use Zoning and Specific Objectives* map in GCC's *Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029*. Because this connection is the meeting point of the western entrance to the park, the RA Greenway, the SRTS and the motorised access to Knocknaracca NS, it has been designed with the safety of all users in mind. It is designed to slow movement with baffled walls and planting forming an oval-shaped, nodal space anchored by a planter with integrated seating and an Oak tree.

The second active travel route begins where the Main Avenue of the park splits into two, approximately 250m south of the plaza. Here, the active travel route veers west and follows an undulating and gently meandering path to the southern boundary, where it will connect onwards in the second phase of Kingston Park. In doing so, the active travel route can remain open 24 hours a day and can be protected from stray balls by the perimeter fencing that defines the restricted access portion of the park.

In the second phase of Kingston Park, this active travel route will continue south to connect with the greenway proposed as part of the *Clybaun Road Social and Affordable Housing Scheme* (Galway City Council Section 179A application 24/1.)

The configuration of the active travel routes also take into consideration the proposed *Galway Western Distributor Road Cycle Scheme*, (Part 8 application reference number PT8GY253) which will follow the alignment of the Western Distributor Road, less than 100m north of the site.

Cycle parking facilities are distributed at key access points and facilities, providing outdoor stands for short-stay users, covered, lockable storage for staff and longer stays, provision for cargo or universal-access cycles. These are located for natural surveillance and ease of maintenance, reinforcing the park's role as a fully connected, inclusive, and climate-resilient urban green space. A 1-2m buffer of short flowering meadow is proposed along the active travel routes to provide good visibility, while adding biodiversity-friendly planting.

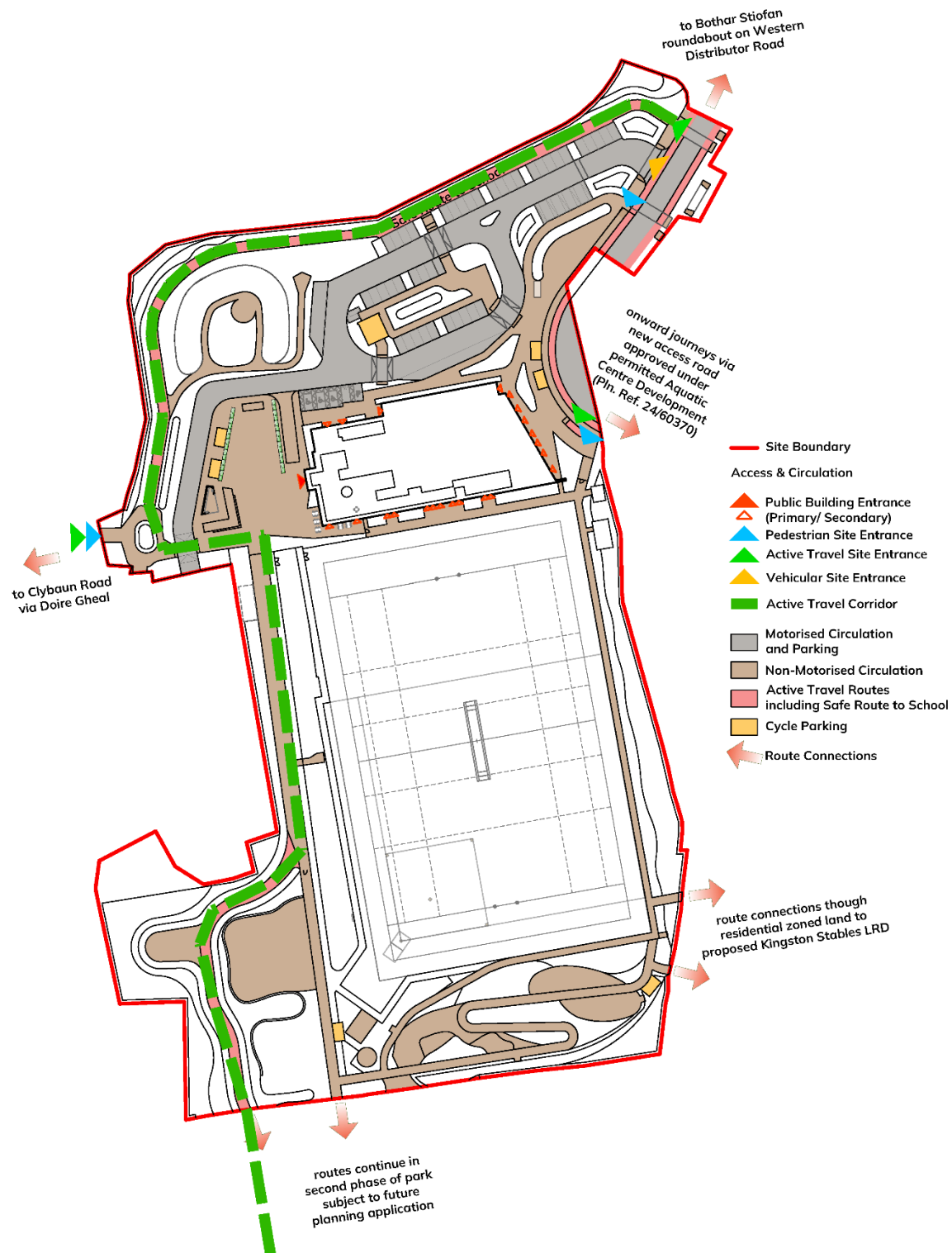


Figure 9 Conceptual Plan Diagram of Kingston Park Circulation and Access Strategy

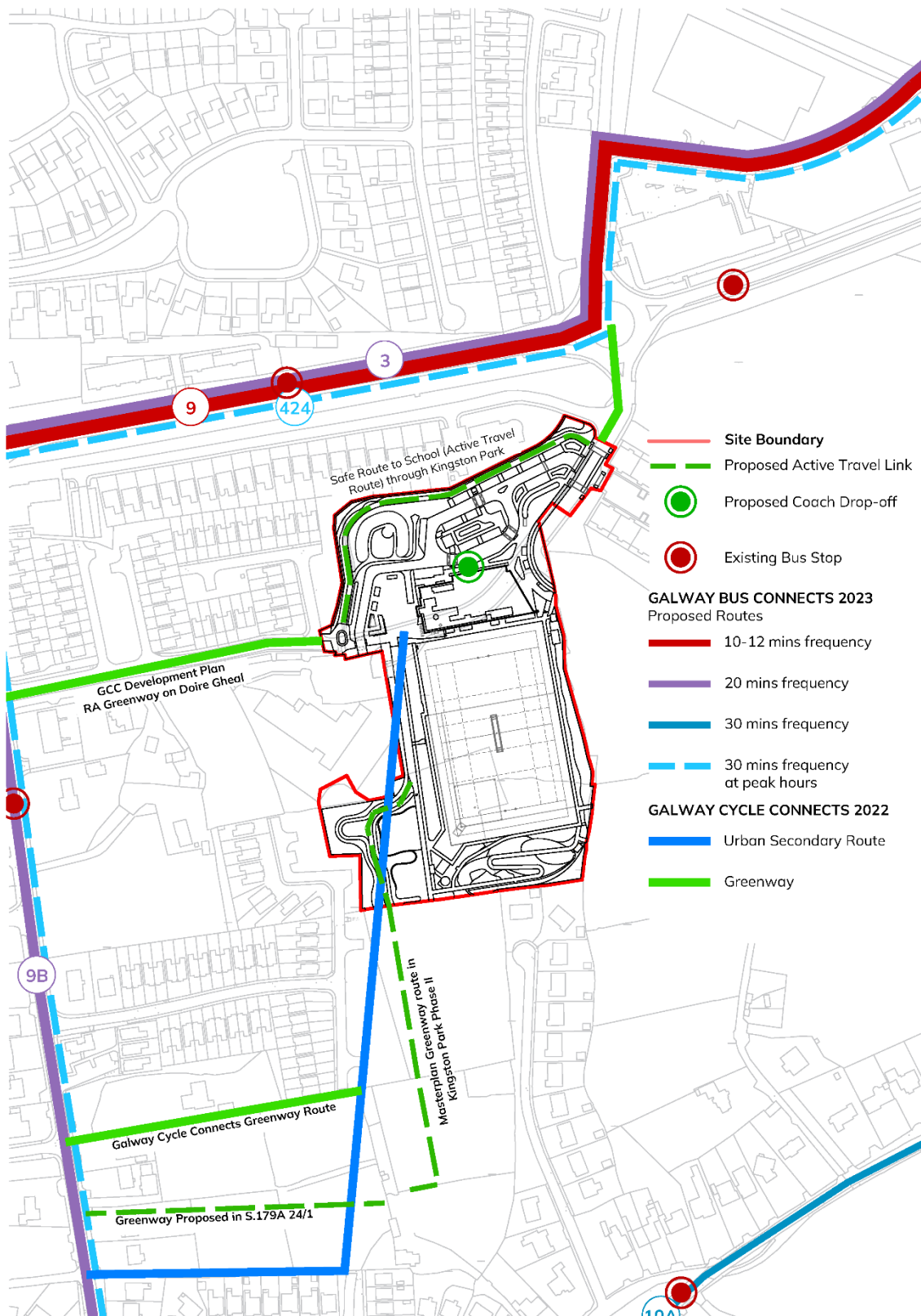
5.4 PROVIDE FACILITIES TO PROMOTE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The layout of Kingston Park has been planned to prioritise access by public and semi-public transport, reinforcing Galway City Council's objectives for sustainable mobility. Coach



access for visiting teams is accommodated through a dedicated drop-off area directly north of the multi-purpose building and connected to the park's primary pedestrian circulation, ensuring safe and efficient movement between the transport arrival point and the main facilities. An associated coach parking bay affords a second bus access to the site without buses visually dominating the plaza. The site layout takes into consideration the *Galway Western Distributor Road Cycle Scheme* (Part 8 application reference number PT8GY253) which will follow the alignment of the Western Distributor Road, less than 100m north of the site.

The park layout offers active travel routes that connect to the wider street network to reach existing and proposed bus stops on the Western Distributor Road, Clybaun Road, Shangort Road and Kingston Road. With the implementation of additional routes and increased service frequencies under Bus Connects Galway 2023, Kingston Park will be comprehensively served by public transport. The integration of safe, step-free walking and cycling connections with public transport nodes supports multi-modal travel, reduces car dependency, and contributes to Galway City Council's climate action and low-carbon mobility goals for accessible, inclusive community infrastructure.





5.5 PROVIDE AN ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC REALM

Primary Circulation and Desire Lines

Primary circulation and access are designed to serve a diversity of visitors to and activities in Kingston Park and the public realm surrounding its associated multi-functional building.

The main axis of the Kingston Park's primary circulation runs north-south, echoing the site's orientation. From the south-facing amphitheatre in the north, through the plaza at the building entrance—the social heart of the park—and south along the Main Avenue, this axis forms an artery connecting the park's most active spaces.

The park's public realm also encompasses the wider pedestrian area linking the carpark and access from Altan Road to the building and the formal plaza outside the entrance to the multi-functional building and is designed with both human well-being and biodiversity in mind. The wider public realm is formed around predicted desire lines serving the carpark, footpath and crossings on Altan Road, access to the eastern park gates and to the externally accessed WC, showers, storage and services.

Main Plaza

The formal plaza at the main building entrance is defined by two lines of pleached trees forming a south-facing trapezoidal space capable of hosting events such as live performances and markets. This space is designed to optimise natural surveillance. It is bordered on the east by the entrance façade of the multi-functional building, overlooked by the entrance lobby, stairwell and café area with outdoor seating. To the west of the plaza is the western gateway to the park, where pedestrian access from Doire Geal (White Oaks) intersects with the Safe Route to School active travel path at the entrance to Knocknacarra National School.



Figure 10 Visualisation of the Main Plaza, viewed from the Western Gateway Oval

Western Gateway Oval

The intersection of the Safe Route to School with the park's western pedestrian entrance is designed to slow active travellers as they approach the school entrance and the gateway to the park. It is an oval-shaped space anchored by a raised tree planter with integrated bench seating and bounded by three access control arrangements to slow movement from the west and north before entering either the school to the south or the park to the east. Each access control is formed by a baffle of low walls with geometry that allows for cargo and universal access cycles to enter the park, while presenting a barrier to vehicular access and a cue to cyclists to slow down and dismount on approach. The baffle walls are softened by planting in the surrounding beds and the bench seating surrounding the central tree planter forms an anchor point around which movement slows but continues to flow.

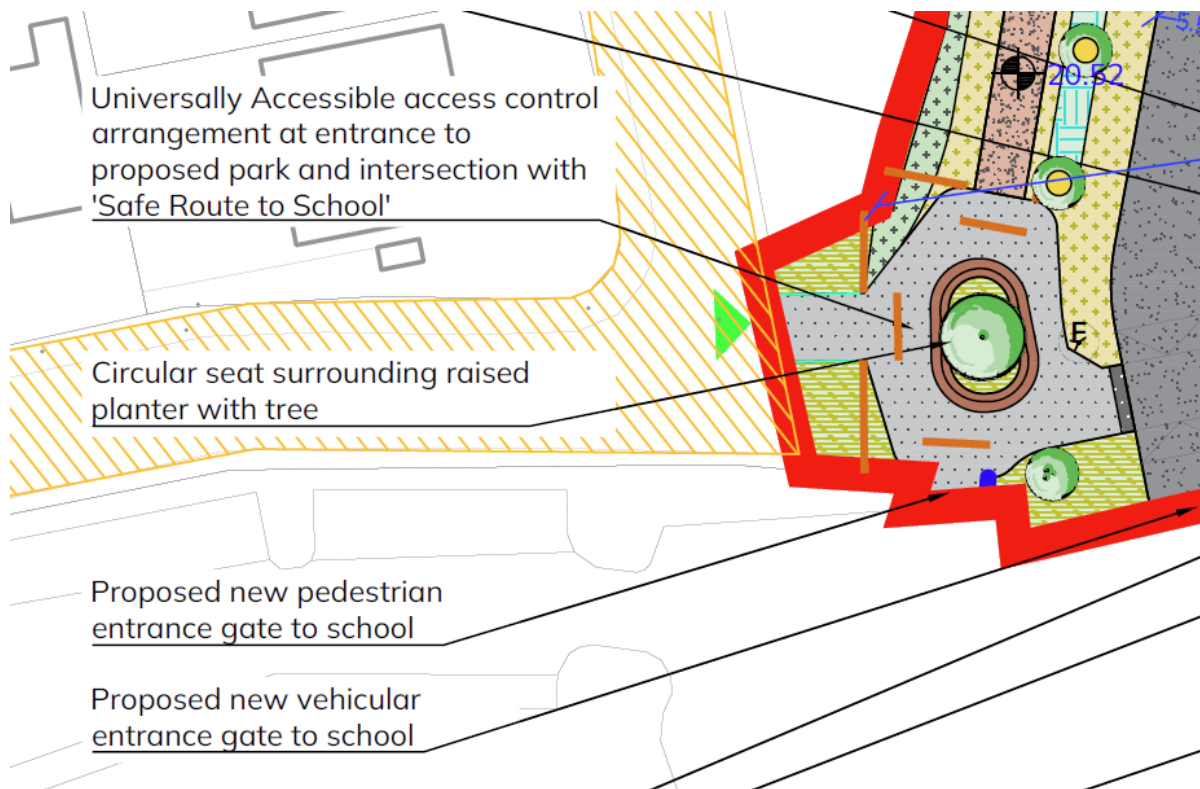


Figure 11 Western Gateway Oval detail from proposed Site Layout Plan of Kingston Park (Drawing P612-KIN-LD-GA-101)

Meet and Gather Spot

Outside the externally accessed WC and showers the space allows for small groups (e.g. runners or cyclists clubs) to meet, gather and sit. This pedestrian area is punctuated by SuDS bioretention rain gardens with trees and pollinator-friendly planting to soften the scheme in the landscape.

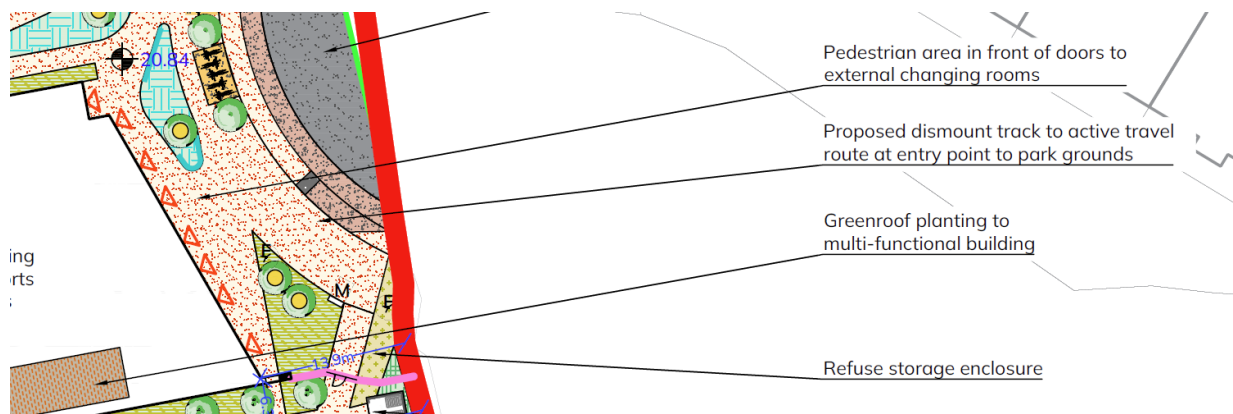


Figure 12 Meet and Gather Spot detail from proposed Site Layout Plan of Kingston Park (Drawing P612-KIN-LD-GA-101)



5.6 PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE AND SPACE ACTIVATION

The park's design prioritised passive surveillance in the core area as a safety and security strategy by clustering activities along the north-south axis formed by the amphitheatre mound, the formal plaza and the main avenue. At its northern end an outdoor classroom and climate change lab generate activity during the day, with stepped seating and a mound providing an informal playscape. The plaza is activated by the gateway area to the west while it is overlooked from the east by the multi-functional building's lobby and café areas and from the south by the park attendants' kiosk. From the plaza, the main avenue runs south with the 4G pitch to its east.

As the park opens up south of Knocknacarra National School, the main avenue is bordered by the calisthenics area, the Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), an informal kickabout and the playground. From the playground a secondary path running adjacent to the 4G pitch forms a looped route back to the public realm surrounding the building that is visible from the main access and from the pitch.

5.7 PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR ACTIVE RECREATION

Kingston Park provides spaces for a range of active recreations, both formal and informal. The new 4G synthetic turf multi-sport pitch (designed to rugby pitch dimensions and to accommodate GAA rounder practice) forms the principle asset for formal active recreation. There is also a storage enclosure for a mobile cricket batting practice cage for use in the 4G pitch enclosure. Semi-formal active recreation is served by the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with markings for a half-basketball court, badminton and pickle-ball. A further grassed area is available for active recreation as an informal kickabout area that can accommodate a volleyball short-court. In addition, there is an area dedicated to calisthenic equipment located on the active travel route to the west of the site.



Figure 13 Sample of active recreation facilities, detail of proposed Site Layout Plan of Kingston Park (Drawing P612-KIN-LD-GA-101)

5.8 PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR PASSIVE RECREATION

Passive recreation is provided for in a number of ways across Kingston Park. Circulation is designed to accommodate looped walking and wheeling routes for casual use with the main avenue providing an axis from which secondary footpaths and the active travel corridor are accessed.

Seating to accommodate sitting for socialising, reading, contemplating or observing nature and surrounding activities is provided at intervals of 50m minimum and more frequently where space allows. A range of seating heights is provided to accommodate different seating needs. Seating is clustered in sociopetal configurations where appropriate to facilitate conviviality. Seating is provided for in different formats, including benches with back-rests and arm-rests for universal access along circulation routes, informal monolith benches set in grassed areas to activate green spaces, raised planters with integrated benches to activate paved spaces and tiered seating at the amphitheatre to afford hang-out space. A formal picnic area near the playground and MUGA affords universal access to picnic tables and views to adjacent activities while the informal kick-about lawn can also be used as a picnic area where rugs can be laid out on drier days.



5.9 CLIMATE CHANGE

Kingston Park is designed to reduce climate risk and support adaptation and mitigation. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) intercept, store and slowly release rainfall to limit flood peaks and protect infrastructure; green roof, bioretention areas and permeable surfaces manage intense storms and speed post-event recovery. Rainwater harvesting supplies appropriate non-potable uses to lessen demand on potable water supply during dry spells. Planting and soils are selected for drought tolerance and rapid recovery after saturation. Planting selection allows for heat- and moisture-triggered responses rather than fixed watering schedules.

Surface finishes are light in colour and high-albedo to limit heat gain and lower urban heat-island risk, with texture and layout selected to control glare and maintain visual comfort. Shade and wind moderation are increased through a resilient tree canopy and carefully oriented structures and earth mounding, improving thermal comfort on key routes and gathering spaces.

5.10 END-USER NEEDS AND INCLUSION

Kingston Park is planned and designed to be welcoming and usable for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. The approach follows recognised universal design guidance and Irish accessibility policy so that movement, rest, socialising and informal activity are comfortable, predictable and safe. Lighting, seating, route design and planned practices work together to deliver inclusive everyday use.

Universal access and wayfinding.

Primary routes provide step-free access to all destinations. Gradients, crossfalls and camber support independent movement for wheelchair users, people pushing prams and those with limited mobility. Surfaces are even and slip-resistant with clear tonal contrast at edges and at any change in level. Tactile paving defines crossings and decision points. A consistent family of maps, fingerposts and noticeboards uses plain language and high-contrast lettering. These measures accord with National Disability Authority universal design guidance and accepted external-environment standards.

Seating and resting

Seating is provided from the project's detailed furniture suite. Selected benches include backs and arm supports to assist sitting and rising. Spacing on principal routes targets intervals of 50 metres or less, with closer placement on slopes, at nodes and near activity areas. On the amphitheatre mound and around the plaza edges, bench geometry is



arranged as sociopetal groupings to support conversation, oversight and passive supervision. Locations and specifications follow the issued hard-works details.

Children, Play and Education

Kingston Park delivers a coherent network of child-friendly spaces centred on a mixed-ability playground and supported by an outdoor classroom with climate and biodiversity learning features. The playground provides graduated challenge and inclusive opportunities, with sand pits and water tables for loose-materials and water play. Step-free routes in the playground link directly to the circulation network while alternative climbing, stepped or ramped routes provide a range of challenges for play purposes.

Equipment and impact-attenuating surfacing are specified, inspected and maintained to European Standard EN 1176 and European Standard EN 1177. Seating with backs and armrests is positioned for passive supervision; sociopetal bench arrangements on the amphitheatre mound and plaza edges encourage small-group interaction and oversight.

The outdoor classroom and climate lab enable hands-on interpretation of Sustainable Drainage Systems, meadows and woodlands through a bee post, thermometer, wind vanes, rain gauge and sun dial, supported by seasonal signage and local educators. Wayfinding and interpretation include location maps, fingerposts, an information panel, blackboard, plant and tree identification plates, and a bug hotel, providing clear orientation and compact learning moments throughout the site.

Lighting and personal safety

Movement corridors and principal approaches are lit to provide uniform, glare-controlled illumination suitable for recognition and obstacle detection after dark. The strategy uses a warm spectrum of approximately 3000 kelvin. Lighting levels and uniformity targets are as set out in the Kingston Park Lighting Simulation Report; maintenance and timing profiles follow that report's route categories. Planting to the edge of circulation routes remains low to maintain long sightlines and natural surveillance, and emergency contact information is posted at entrances and principal nodes.

Inclusive activity and gender-responsive layout.

The playground, multi-use games area and calisthenics zone are arranged for mixed-ability, inter-generational use. Approaches are step-free, fall zones are unobstructed, and passive surveillance is maintained from adjacent paths and benches. In line with recognised gender-inclusive park guidance, including Make Space for Girls and contemporary public-realm safety handbooks, activity is distributed across several smaller, clearly visible pockets rather



than concentrated in a single dominant court. Each pocket provides more than one exit choice and nearby places to sit with friends. The amphitheatre mound and plaza edges employ sociopetal seating and open sightlines to encourage confident use by girls and by teens. Programming and site communications explicitly welcome these users and reinforce the intended culture of inclusive participation.

Quieter places and sensory comfort

Within Kingston Park's first phase, calmer seating moments are provided along sections of the Main Avenue where benches sit within or beside the meadows and slightly away from the highest pedestrian flows. These locations are signed and maintained to the same access standard as primary routes, offering a lower-stimulus option without leaving the legible network. Where shelter from wind is feasible, seating is oriented to improve comfort; otherwise, benches are placed to maximise natural surveillance and ease of approach.

Cyclists

Network connections and cycle parking accommodates standard, cargo and adapted cycles at principal destinations. Entrances retain clear pedestrian space free of parked cycles. The active travel corridor is designed to be legible, lit and off-road, and crossing geometry and surface transitions are designed to reduce conflict with people walking and wheeling.

Dogs and Dog-Owners

Kingston Park is dog-friendly on a leash basis. Clear messaging sets expectations for control and fouling. Waste bins are positioned at logical entry and exit points. Planting and meadow management avoid concealed corners near primary paths so that shared use remains safe and predictable.

Operations that sustain inclusion

Public Realm Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance maintain predictable cleanliness and route legibility. All mown verges operate on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan short-flowering regime of cut-and-lift every six weeks; a single earlier cut occurs only where sightlines or safety require it. Vegetation on active routes remains below sightline envelopes. Defects affecting accessibility receive same-day make-safe action, and winter service prioritises the active travel corridor and primary approaches. Periodic user walk-throughs with representative groups inform minor adjustments to seating placement, route marking, lighting fault response and event layout.



6 PROPOSED PARK CHARACTER AREAS

6.1 CHARACTER AREAS INTRODUCTION

Kingston Park is organised into seven distinctive landscape character areas, each contributing to the overall spatial composition and visitor experience of the park. The character areas establish a legible structure where active, social, and ecological functions are balanced to create a unified and resilient public space.

The central hub formed by the multi-functional building and the multi-sports pitch at the park's core forms the primary activity focus, framed by supporting public realm spaces that accommodate circulation, viewing and social interaction. A north-south axis defined by the Main Avenue and the plaza, connects the central hub to the amphitheatre and the western oval gateway in the north, to the calisthenics area, MUGA, informal games lawn and playground in the south to provide informal recreation and everyday use.

The park's edges provide a softer landscape transition with planting and biodiversity corridors to the adjacent proposed and existing private dwellings backing onto the park. The peripheral zones are designed to integrate rainwater management, habitat creation and visual screening, linking the park seamlessly with the adjoining residential and school environments. Collectively, the seven character areas provide a coherent framework for design, ensuring that each part of the park is distinctive yet complementary, responding to site context, user needs and the wider landscape setting within Knocknacarra.

6.2 CHARACTER AREAS (MAP KEY)

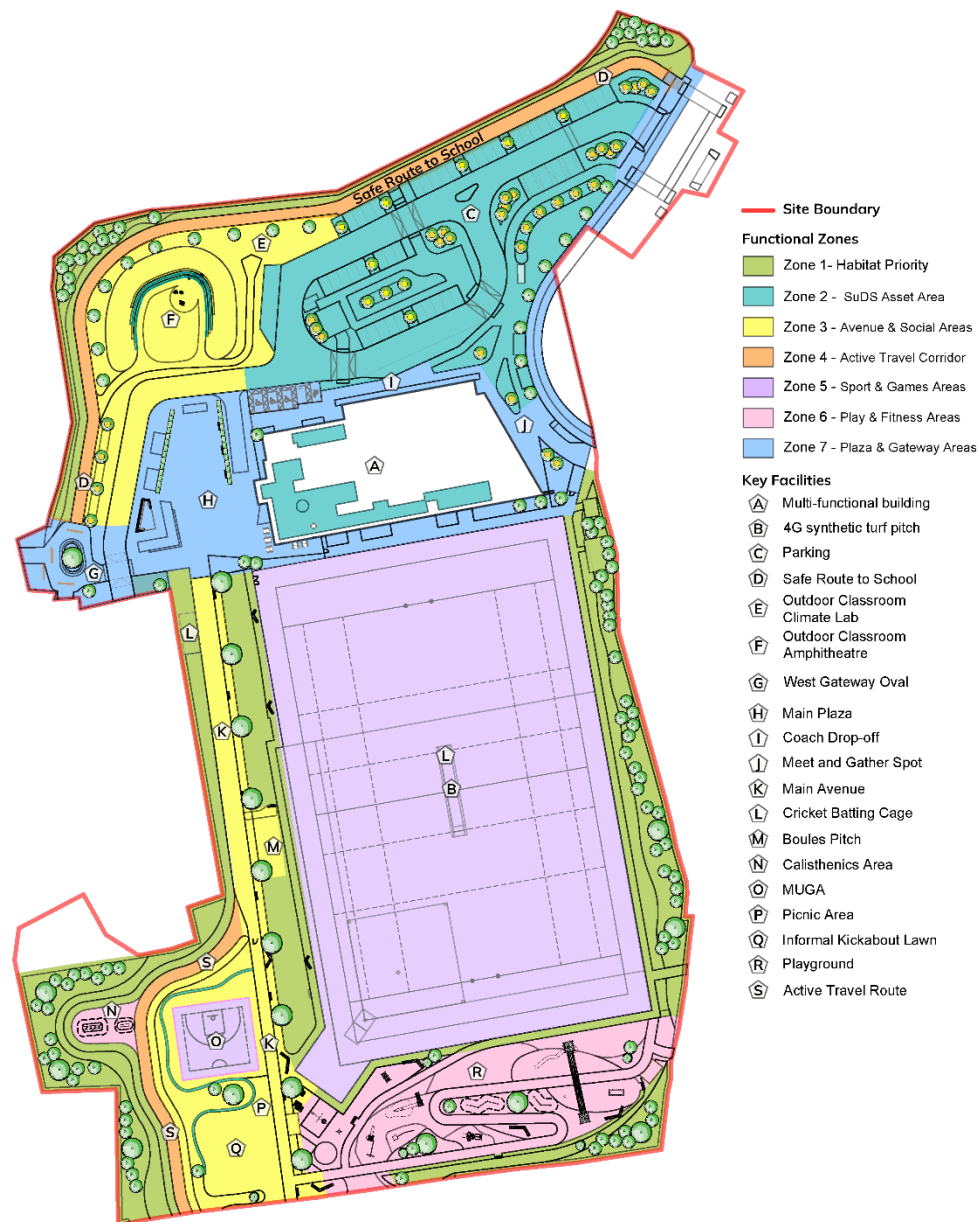


Figure 14 Conceptual Plan Diagram of Kingston Park Landscape Character Areas (based on Drawing P612-KIN-LD-MP-501)

6.3 ZONE 1—HABITAT PRIORITY AND LOW ACTIVITY AREAS

These zones prioritise biodiversity outcomes and ecological function over amenity, encompassing habitat corridors and quieter areas along the edges of more active zones of the park. Planting categories include native hedgerows, woodland edge planting and species-rich meadows. This zone also includes Bird and Bat Boxes within the planted areas to support biodiversity. Lastly, there is an educational aspect to this zone, with both permanent and temporary signage explaining the intent of the habitat plantings.



6.4 ZONE 2 - SUDS ASSET AREA

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are an integrated, nature-based approach to managing rainfall at source—slowing, storing, cleaning, using, and safely releasing runoff to mimic natural hydrology. SuDS features (e.g., raingardens, swales, permeable paving, green roofs, detention areas, and rainwater harvesting) deliver multiple benefits: flood attenuation, water-quality treatment, biodiversity, amenity, and climate resilience—while animating the public realm and everyday spaces of the park.

This zone includes infrastructure that is designed to manage water quality and attenuation at ground and roof level. Together these assets intercept, treat and attenuate runoff close to source, protect receiving waters in Galway City, support biodiversity and climate resilience, and reduce potable-water demand where reuse is feasible—key aims set out in the engineering strategy and SuDS design for Kingston.

At ground level, SuDS shape the public realm at the car park, bus set-down and pedestrian plaza and include bioretention raingardens with trees and pollinator-friendly planting, and permeable reinforced-grass parking bays. These SuDS assets manage water quality and quantity while presenting a tidy, legible area from which to access the park.

At roof level, the extensive green roof areas contribute to interception, storage and biodiversity, with their drainage tied into the rainwater strategy. Rainwater harvesting (RWH) tanks proposed for the development collect water sourced at roof level, providing a non-potable source for building needs and under specific conditions, watering of planting outdoors.

6.5 ZONE 3—MAIN AVENUE AND SOCIAL AREAS

This zone covers the Main Avenue, Amphitheatre Mound and Outdoor Classroom and the park's everyday social pockets—integrated benches and free-standing seating, picnic lawns, hang-out spots. The purpose of this zone is to provide a year-round welcoming, legible, usable core to the park.

6.6 ZONE 4—ACTIVE TRAVEL CORRIDOR

Zone 4 encompasses an Active Travel Corridor that connects local active travel routes (existing and proposed) through the park, including the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) segment that leads to the entrance to Knocknacarra National School. The purpose of this zone is to keep everyday mobility friction-free and welcoming, so that active travel is the default choice to and through the park—and to school—year-round.



Zone 4 forms a legible movement spine for people walking, wheeling and cycling and is open to the public 24 hours a day, 365 days a year outside the restricted-access boundary. It links the multi-functional building to the neighbourhood's street network and key park destinations. The northern section, following the northern boundary of the park site, also forms part of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) scheme, providing a direct, off-road route on approach to the school for pupils and carers.

6.7 ZONE 5 PROGRAMMED SPORT AND GAMING AREA

Zone 5 is the 4G synthetic turf multi-sport pitch (designed to rugby pitch dimensions) with associated fencing and 6 no. floodlights and immediate environs and includes the playing surface, run-offs, spectator rail, coach/officials' access, and ball-stop fencing and netting at goal ends. Its purpose is to provide a bookable, all-weather field with consistent footing, line visibility and safe approach routes, distinct from passive recreation. The zone is laid out to separate players, officials and spectators, guide crowd flows onto hard routes, and protect adjacent habitats.

6.8 ZONE 6—PLAYGROUND AND INFORMAL ACTIVE RECREATION AREAS

Zone 6 comprises the outdoor play and informal active recreation areas, bringing together the children's playground, the calisthenics area, informal kickabout lawn and the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) each with surfacing specific to requirements. The intent is a series of welcoming, everyday activity spaces that support self-directed play, casual games, and body-weight fitness without bookings.

Layout prioritises clear sightlines, short desire-line connections to the Main Avenue, and mown verges where these spaces meet meadows or planting so they read as intentional and safe. The playground's impact-attenuating surfacing, edges, and equipment zones are arranged for age-appropriate challenge; the MUGA affords informal ball play and rebound fencing to minimise conflicts with the active travel route to the west, while remaining open to casual use along its avenue edge; calisthenics apparatus is located for supervision and accessible approaches along the active travel route. Wayfinding, nearby seating, bins and drinking water complete a compact, legible cluster that feels lively on busy days and comfortable for passive recreation at quieter times.



6.9 ZONE 7—PLAZA AND GATEWAY AREAS

Zone 7 comprises the plaza and gateways at Kingston Park: a hard-landscaped forecourt designed for live performances, small markets and civic gatherings. It includes under-ground power and data points (lockable service bollards/ports), a smoking shelter, cycle parking (including accessible/cargo stands), pleached trees, planters with integrated seating, and outdoor café seating with moveable tables and chairs.

The space is laid out for clear pedestrian desire lines and intuitive navigation to building entrances and park amenities. Wayfinding and noticeboards make the plaza the park's "front door," performing as a lively social node on busy days and a comfortable, legible place to pause at all other times.



7 HARD LANDSCAPE MATERIAL SELECTION

The materials and fixtures proposed for the hard landscape at Kingston Park are selected to complement the architectural proposals for the multi-functional buildings in the scheme. The hard landscape design for Kingston Park is also guided by the *LEED v4 Materials and Resources* framework, which sets out principles for sustainable procurement, embodied-carbon reduction, and life-cycle efficiency in urban infrastructure. Under this framework, every material element—from paving and edging to seating, railings, and lighting—was reviewed for durability, recyclability, local sourcing, and capacity for disassembly and reuse.

LEED v4 encourages a circular-economy approach that values long-life products, low-VOC finishes, and transparent supply chains verified through Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). In response, the Kingston Park scheme specifies high-recycled-content aggregates and steel, locally quarried stone, and certified sustainably harvested timber. Concrete mixes target reduced cement content through supplementary cementitious materials, while modular paving systems allow future lifting and relaying without waste.

Surface treatments, fixings, and coatings were selected for robustness and ease of maintenance, reducing replacement frequency and operational emissions. Drainage details integrate permeable joints, infiltration layers, and rain-garden interfaces to support the site's SuDS strategy. Collectively, these specifications advance LEED v4 objectives for life-cycle optimisation, resource stewardship, and indoor/outdoor environmental quality, ensuring the park's hard landscape achieves both functional resilience and aesthetic longevity in Galway's temperate coastal climate.

7.1 SURFACES

The approach to hard landscape surface selection is informed by the principle firstly of 'Pave Less,' whereby the minimum areas required for circulation are provided to reduce soil coverage and stormwater runoff, in turn reducing the water management burden of the site. Site circulation footway widths are kept to a minimum required for universal access and are constructed in materials suited to their route hierarchy. Parking bays are treated as a SuDS opportunity.

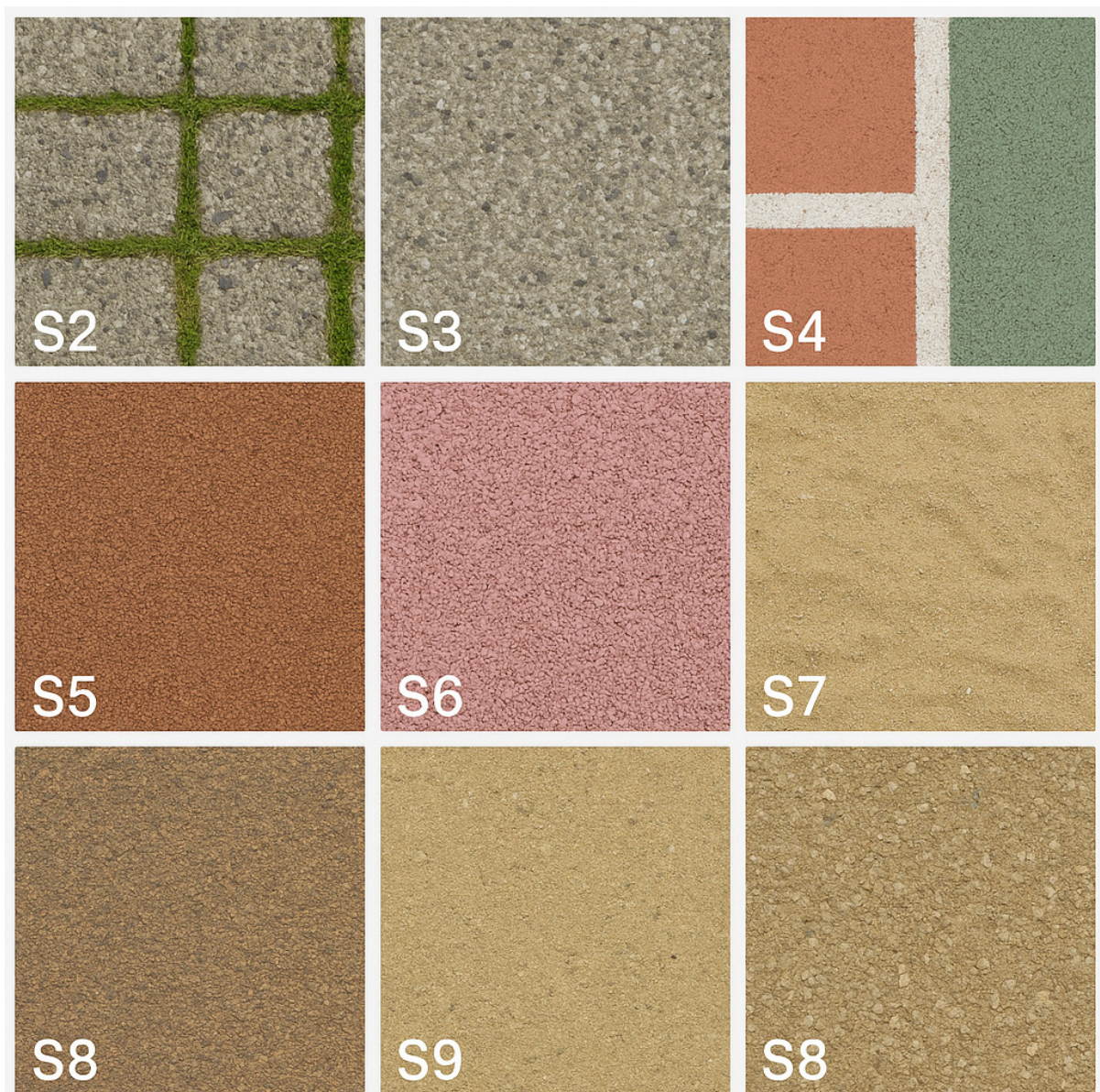


Figure 15 Palette of proposed hard surface materials

The surface materials strategy for Kingston Park follows a coherent and sustainable design approach, balancing functional diversity with visual unity. The palette is defined by warm natural tones—buff, terracotta, and exposed granite aggregate—chosen to sit comfortably within the surrounding landscape. Finishes prioritise durability, permeability, and low maintenance, aligning with LEED v4 principles for sustainable sites, stormwater management, and heat island reduction.

Vehicular surfaces (S1) are limited to key access and service areas, delivered to the Engineer’s design and specification. Their restrained extent ensures that harder finishes do not visually dominate, instead providing a subtle frame for pedestrian and planted areas. Permeable parking bays and bus set-downs (S2) use reinforced grass systems that allow



infiltration, reduce runoff, and soften the visual impact of hardstanding. These surfaces blend seamlessly with adjacent meadow planting, supporting rainwater management and reducing local heat gain.

The plaza (S3) is defined by its surface of in-situ exposed aggregate concrete with locally sourced granite and limestone. This tactile, regionally grounded surface expresses a civic identity while maintaining high reflectance and durability. The muted colour variation complements the buff asphalt paths and gravel areas, giving a sense of continuity throughout the park. Multi-use gaming areas (S4) employ a seamless proprietary surface in subtle playful tones. Its robust, slip-resistant finish offers longevity with minimal maintenance, while colour zoning retains harmony across the site's palette.

Cycleways (S5) in terracotta-toned Stone Mastic Asphalt create a distinctive but coordinated movement layer that links into the wider city network. The colour's warmth balances the cooler concrete of the plaza, reinforcing the visual rhythm of movement through the site. Soft-pour rubber surfacing (S6) in the play areas introduces texture and safety with playful yet muted colour blends derived from recycled rubber materials, supporting circular economy goals under LEED's low-emitting materials criteria. Certified play sand (S7) adds a natural tactile element for sensory play, echoing the light tones of gravel and concrete and promoting permeability and non-toxic performance.

Self-binding gravel (S8) is used for cycle parking areas, offering a robust, low-carbon alternative to sealed surfaces. Its buff quartzite fines align chromatically with the asphalt and concrete elements, maintaining a unified character. Pedestrian paths (S9) in light buff SMA provide a smooth, accessible surface with consistent tone and reflectivity that ties the park's circulation together, balancing formality with warmth. Finally, the artificial pitch (S10) offers a year-round playing surface that conserves water and fertiliser inputs while visually integrating with the park's green structure.

Together, these materials achieve a harmonious and climate-responsive palette—robust yet natural, urban yet ecologically aware—embodying Kingston Park's ethos as a sustainable community landscape.

7.2 SITE FURNITURE & FIXINGS

Bespoke In-situ Concrete Seating / Planter Walls

These seating walls combine durability and material integrity, and are grounded by the local material in their composition. Using locally sourced granite and limestone aggregate, the finish visually ties to the park's main hardscape palette, maintaining cohesion between



plazas and circulation areas. The exposed aggregate concrete reduces the need for imported materials and surface treatments, contributing to LEED v4 credits for regional sourcing, low maintenance, and reduced finishes. The continuous seating edges also double as low retaining elements, supporting accessibility by allowing varied height seating and affording flexible social use.

Proprietary Bench Seating

Timber benches with weathered steel-coloured accents complement the natural tones of the paving and planting palette. Designed with back and armrests for universal access, these benches use sustainably sourced hardwood and powder-coated recyclable metals. Their spacing along key routes enhances walkability and passive recreation. Under LEED v4, their materials and finishes support indoor and outdoor environmental quality through non-toxic, low-VOC coatings and long service life.

Bespoke Accessible Picnic Tables

These picnic sets balance inclusivity and aesthetics, providing wheelchair-accessible seating integrated with warm timber finishes and weathered steel-toned frames. The robust, modular design ensures longevity, while the recyclable metal base and sustainably sourced timber reduce embodied carbon. Their neutral palette harmonises with surrounding furniture and paving, reinforcing the park's cohesive visual identity and contributing to LEED credits for social equity and universal design.

Steel Planter Edges with Integrated Seating

Formed in weathered steel or weathered-steel-coloured powder-coated steel, this planter provides subtle structure and visual continuity through the park's plaza area. Integrated timber seating adds warmth against the metal tones. The combination of recycled steel and responsibly sourced timber contributes to LEED's Material Reuse and Responsible Sourcing credits. Their dual function—structural edge and rest point—embodies material efficiency and space economy.

Rounded Raised Planter with Integrated Seating

This circular planter in concrete, steel, and timber (or composite) frame features an oak tree and understorey planting as an anchor to the western gateway oval space. The design's sculptural quality enhances placemaking while supporting biodiversity and microclimate regulation. Locally produced materials and long design life minimise replacement cycles. Their layered materiality—timber over weathered steel and exposed concrete—links seamlessly with other park elements for visual coherence.

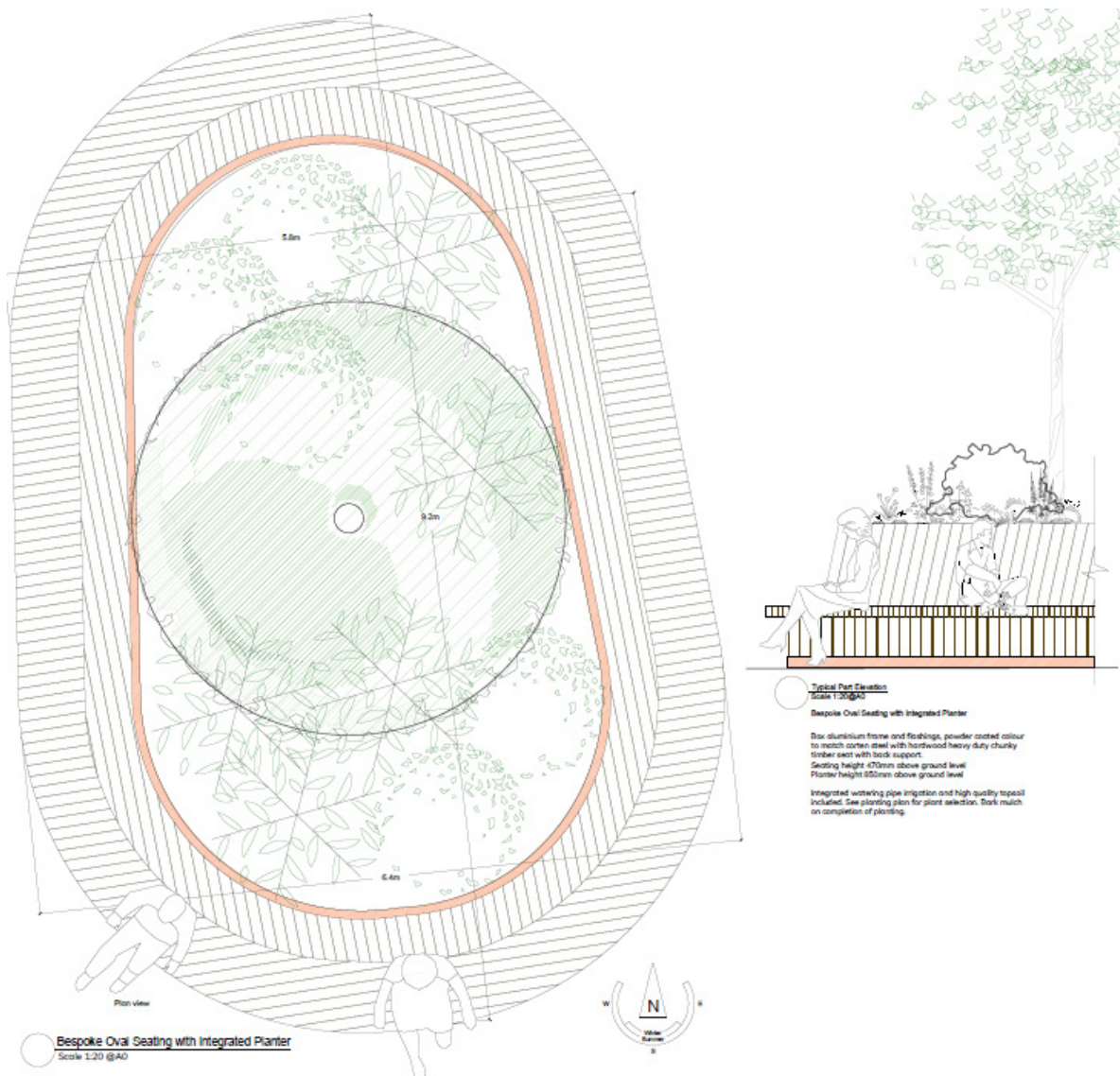


Figure 16 Detail of Hard Landscape Details for bespoke oval seating with integrated planter proposed Site Layout Plan of Kingston Park (Drawing P612-KIN-LD-HL-303)

Cycle Parking Stands

Weathered steel-coloured cycle stands echo the site's warm metal tones while providing functional infrastructure for sustainable transport. The simple, durable form supports LEED Alternative Transportation credits and encourages active travel. Their discreet integration beside main paths maintains aesthetic order without visual clutter, reinforcing both mobility and material continuity.



7.3 SITE BOUNDARIES

Granite Active Travel Access Control Walls and Piers

These elements follow the TII Active Travel Access Control guidelines and standard detail (TII CC-CSD-02404), ensuring consistency with national best practice. The granite-faced walls and piers are robust, accessible, and visually refined, providing clear separation between pedestrian, cycle, and vehicular zones without compromising inter-visibility or permeability. Their use of regional stone supports LEED v4 credits for regional sourcing and durability, while the natural grey-honey tone integrates with the park's hard landscape palette of granite and limestone. The design's proven reliability enhances safety, legibility, and long-term sustainability through low-maintenance construction.

Multi-Sport Pitch Fencing and Spectator Rail

Twin-bar welded mesh fencing and low spectator rails in black powder-coated steel provide secure yet transparent boundaries around the 4G synthetic turf multi-sport pitch. The dark neutral tone allows these structures to recess visually into the landscape, maintaining openness while ensuring functionality. Modular fabrication and high recycled content support LEED's construction waste reduction and materials reuse principles. The fine detailing and limited colour variation keep the visual language consistent with other metallic elements in the park such as cycle stands and planter edging.

Restricted Access and Perimeter Fencing

The 2.0 m-high steel mesh fence, finished in black powder coating, secures the restricted access zone of the park, limiting access after dark, while maintaining visual lightness and permeability. It also serves as a ball-stop fence to the MUGA and informal games lawn, ensuring stray balls cannot enter the Active Travel Route. Its minimal aesthetic aligns with the wider site fencing palette, providing a coherent visual transition from active recreation to support areas. The fence's durability, recyclability, and low-maintenance finish align with LEED v4 priorities for robust, long-life infrastructure with minimal environmental impact.

Existing Boundary Walls and Fences

Where feasible, existing stone and post-and-wire boundaries are to be retained and repaired, preserving the established residential character and ecological continuity along the site edges. Selective reinstatement uses locally sourced materials to match existing fabric, reducing embodied carbon and construction waste. This approach supports LEED's materials reuse and site stewardship objectives while maintaining the park's contextual authenticity. The strategy ensures a balance between new interventions and the inherited landscape framework, reinforcing the park's integration into its suburban setting.



8 PLANTING

8.1 PLANTING STRATEGY – OVERVIEW

The planting design for Kingston Park establishes a resilient, climate-adaptive landscape framework that enhances biodiversity, manages stormwater naturally, and delivers year-round amenity. The layout layers native hedgerows, woodland edges, pollinator-rich beds, bioretention rain gardens, and seasonal meadows to form a connected green network around the park's paths and spaces. All planting aligns with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and prioritises native Irish provenance where feasible, with wildflower seed sourced from Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine-registered suppliers. The palette has been developed to complement the park's material and colour scheme while meeting the objectives of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Version 4 rating system for habitat creation, reduced heat-island effect, and sustainable water management.

Native Hedgerow Network

A network of mixed native hedgerows defines paths and site boundaries, creating a robust framework for native and naturalised habitat provision and green infrastructure. Dominant hawthorn is combined with hazel, rowan, spindle, holly, and Scots pine to ensure seasonal variety and ecological resilience. This approach reinforces the existing landscape character, provides nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and insects, and establishes visual softness around play, sport, and circulation areas. From a sustainability perspective, the hedgerows require minimal irrigation, fertiliser, or chemical inputs, directly supporting LEED Version 4 criteria for sustainable sites and open space habitat. Their flowering and fruiting sequence supports pollinator species in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, while the tonal greens and autumnal hues integrate seamlessly with the park's palette of muted and playful colours.

Woodland Edge

Woodland edge planting reinforce the park's perimeter of hedgerows, buffering recreational spaces and providing expanded ecological connectivity. The composition includes hazel, birch, holly, willow, rowan, and guelder rose with ferns and ground flora beneath. This layered structure provides habitat and shelter for birds, bats, and pollinators, improving biodiversity while visually softening the park boundaries. The mix is designed for low maintenance and resilience in Galway's coastal climate. Under LEED Version 4, this planting contributes to on-site biodiversity, natural shading, and improved microclimate regulation. The subdued green tones and seasonal berry colours integrate naturally with the



surrounding hard materials and weathered steel detailing, reinforcing the park's biophilic identity.

Avenue, Feature and Pleached Trees

Tree planting defines key routes, entrances, and gathering spaces, using a mix of native and carefully selected non-native species suited to Galway's coastal environment. Oak, field maple, cherries, alder, elm, birch, rowan, pleached hornbeam and Amelanchier establish hierarchy, orientation, and shade. The trees reinforce wayfinding and comfort, providing canopy structure that contributes to the reduction of local surface heat and enhances visual unity across the park. The selection of hardy, low-water-demand species aligns with LEED objectives for reduced potable water use and the creation of long-term canopy cover. Clear-stemmed trees maintain open sightlines, while multi-stemmed forms introduce texture and scale variation appropriate to plazas and play areas.

Trees in Paving and Plazas

In paved and plaza areas, trees are established in engineered soil cells with irrigation and aeration systems, root barriers, and protective grilles. This ensures adequate rooting volume and long-term stability without surface heave. Species are selected for tolerance to urban conditions and seasonal expression, bringing light shade and visual relief to mineral-dominated spaces. These trees contribute to LEED Version 4 credits for heat-island reduction and long-term landscape performance. Their foliage and form provide a natural counterpoint to the surrounding concrete and stone, reinforcing comfort, identity, and environmental quality within the public realm.

Bioretention Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are located along paths and parking bays to intercept, filter, and attenuate stormwater in line with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles. They contain moisture-tolerant trees such as alder, birch, liquidambar, and columnar elm, underplanted with robust perennials and ornamental grasses adapted to fluctuating wet and dry conditions. Engineered soils, gravel mulches, and controlled overflow systems ensure reliable performance. The rain gardens contribute to LEED Version 4 Rainwater Management credits by promoting infiltration, pollutant removal, and natural cooling. Their textured foliage and muted flowering colours harmonise with buff gravel and exposed aggregate paving, expressing sustainable infrastructure as an integral part of the park's design language.



Short-Flowering Meadow

The short-flowering meadow provides a soft visual transition between paved spaces and taller meadow areas, offering a mown, walkable surface that still supports pollinators. It contains at least fifty percent native wildflower content from a Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine–registered supplier, combining low-growing herbs and grasses suited to frequent cutting. This approach balances recreational usability with ecological function. The reduced fertiliser and irrigation requirements align with LEED criteria for sustainable landscape management, while regular maintenance retains a tidy, intentional appearance that supports public perception of naturalised planting as designed space.

Long-Flowering Meadow

Long-flowering meadow zones occupy larger, less trafficked areas, managed through a twice-annual cut. The species mix includes native wildflowers and grasses, providing high nectar value, seedheads for birds, and visual interest through the seasons. These areas contribute directly to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan objectives and to LEED Version 4 habitat creation targets by providing extensive naturalistic planting with minimal resource inputs. The warm golds and muted greens of the meadow complement adjacent paths and hard surfaces, creating a soft, immersive edge to more formal recreation areas while fostering ecological richness and landscape continuity.

Pollinator-Friendly Shrub and Perennial Beds

The ornamental planting beds are designed to deliver ecological value alongside visual structure. Species such as *Helenium*, *Echinacea*, *Salvia*, *Stachys*, *Geranium*, and low-growing roses ensure extended flowering from spring through autumn. This sequence supports bees, butterflies, and other pollinators in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The planting is arranged in bold, legible swathes that define entrances, seating areas, and key sightlines. From a LEED perspective, drought-tolerant perennials minimise the need for irrigation, and organic mulching reduces maintenance inputs. The palette of cool blues and violets, balanced with warm golds and greens, complements the terracotta and buff tones of the paving and self-binding gravel, maintaining harmony across the park.