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PROJECT CONNOLLY

Landscape strategy

October 2019





INSPIRATION



BSLA





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Landscape design approach

Development description

The SHD application proposes 68,535m² (GIA) comprising 741 build to rent residential units (with a unit mix of 30.8% studio (228 units), 34.5% 1bed (256 units), 33.9% 2 bed (251 units) and 0.8% 3bed (6 units)) with ancillary facilities and amenities, together with 3,145m² (GIA) of retail /café, commercial, and community uses on a site area of 28,840m² (2.88 Ha/7.13 Acres) bounded by Connolly Station (north west), Sheriff Street Lower (south) and Oriel Street Upper (east). New pedestrianised street connections to the site at existing footpath levels are proposed at Sheriff Street Lower, Oriel Street Upper and Seville Place.

The residential accommodation is provided in eight blocks of varying heights identified in the accompanying drawings as B1 (4 - 15 floors), B2 (4 -15 floors), B3 (4 -14 floors), C1 (21-23 floors), C2 (5-11 floors), C3 (9-11 floors), D1 (13-15 floors) and D2 (5-8 floors).

The application site forms part of a larger site comprising the existing surface carpark area which is located to the rear of Connolly Rail Station. 4 existing buildings are proposed to be demolished to facilitate site clearance and maintain existing and future access to the rail station for the duration of the proposed works.

The existing GAA clubhouse within one of the protected vaults linking Seville Place and the site is proposed to be relocated to a new community space within the proposal to allow for a new pedestrian / cyclist link.

A basement measuring 7,253m² (GIA) comprising plant rooms, residential support facilities, residents cycle parking (640 no.), car parking (58 spaces) accessed from Oriel Street Upper is proposed. A further 766 No. residents and visitor cycle parking spaces are provided at ground floor level.

A service and emergency vehicle only access ramp to Connolly Station and other Irish Rail functions associated with the station is proposed to be accessed from Oriel Street Upper.

Hard and soft landscaping comprising both public, communal and private amenity is proposed at ground floor (all areas), level 1 (all areas), level 4 (Blocks B1-B3), level 5 (Blocks C2 and D2), level 8 (Block D2), level 9 (Block C1) level 10 (Block C3), level 13 (Block D1) and level 21 (Block C1).

Works to existing protected structures on Sheriff Street, Oriel Street Upper and Seville Place are proposed as described in the proposals.



Landscape introduction

The key to providing excellence in urban outdoor space design lies in its integration with inside and outside, with each supporting the other, while offering areas of contrast in a legible and inviting sequence as one moves about. This scheme creates a renewed district, connecting existing housing areas, the commercial activity of the north docks to the busy transport hub of Connolly Station. It does so with an appropriately urban, dense scheme, offering diversity of architectural treatment and use, improving the urban grain of the quarter in which it sits. What is perhaps even more exciting is that it sets out to provide this with a rich series of spaces, generous in extent, with a well-connected and proportioned public realm, an extensive semi-private residential and office landscape termed the High Line for now but possibly more like the Promenade des Plantes in Paris than its eponym. In addition to this residential amenity that forms a loop around the site, the residential blocks also have well designed local courtyards, roof gardens and terraces that are associated with the individual blocks and for their exclusive use.

Integration and community

The landscape proposal announces itself to the city along Sherriff Street, offering entrances to a distinctive public space that is varied in threshold expression, sometimes entered through a covered space, other times through a more conventional gap between buildings or yet again alongside existing railway archways. These are all demarcated in a special way by lighting and the appearance of fragments of recovered material as an artistic motif that begin to pattern the public realm with a motif derived from the natural world. Salvage items collected from site works exposed as an aggregate in the concrete units reveal lively assemblages of site-specific artefacts flush in ground, miscellaneous metal components linked by an overarching continuity of materials. Variations in the detail of these begin to form planters of a scale that can accommodate large trees, which in turn can balance the scale of the buildings with that of a human. Close to hand (texture, pattern, tone, composition) signify changes in character, threshold and moments of enhanced quality.

BSLA engaged the Dublin City Council Parks Department to consult on the broad approach of the scheme as well as specific matters such as site permeability and community initiative. Specific outcomes of the consultation held in DCC offices on Tuesday 25th June 2019 included; maintaining the existing contextual desire lines; exploring possible new connections where opportunities permitted, such as the new pedestrian + bike route proposed through to Seville Place; public artwork; as well as integrated, nonstandard play elements placed within the public realm component of the scheme. These items were integrated into the scheme presented as part of this application.

The public realm and its ground plane

The exterior ground plane is defined by two contiguous materials; historic cobbles and bespoke aggregate concrete units. The historic cobbles are intrinsically linked to the heritage of the site and the adjoining Sherriff Street make up a lesser proportion of the proposed scheme for the new plaza and street. Practically they are very suitable for absorbing the irregular interfaces such as colonnades, tricky edges and skewed alignments. The larger bespoke concrete slab forms the primary surface and captures the main routes, nodes and plazas. This combination of materials speaks to the inherent industrial memory of the site. At the same

time these interact with the energetic eruptions of the freeform planters that acknowledge this sites evolution over many centuries before the arrival of the train and its attendant muscular architecture.

The treatment of the space is linked with the adjacent ground floor uses and residential entrances, together with its arrangement as a through route connecting to the adjoining streets in a manner that will also generate footfall, sets the place up to be busy and lively.

Here we are making small carefully considered moves that enhances a person's sense of comfort, such as many options for seating and the positioning of this seating. It means that as the sun and shadows move through the site in the cycle of a season and of a day there is always a sunny or sheltered spot to it. Trees are proposed in a relaxed positioning as if the seeded themselves in crevices many years ago. However, they are in fact planted in contained mounds, under planted by a low vegetation that is reminiscent of the karst flora of the Burren as the planted mounds taper away to the edges and provide less substrate. In turn additional ribbons of this low planting emphasise the dynamic naturalistic theme of the place and are planted in a Sylva cell, gravelly substrate that is resistant to compaction and can withstand a great degree of trampling.

A very important invisible but environmentally sensitive task is the public realms co-ordinated approach to water attenuation and a series of explanatory studies are included showing how this works. The outcome of the liaison between the drainage engineer and landscape architect means that every opportunity at each level has been maximized for attenuation and the method of interception and storage in the public realm worked out and integrated at an early stage.

The High Line

This is essentially a network of connected spaces set along a route that threads though and around the site, in places overlooking the public realm, in others more introverted like a secret garden. It connects the blocks and one can enter the residential blocks from it, so that it can be well used by residents to socialize. The arrangement is emphatically different to the ground plane in that it has a modular quality. The reason behind this is that the in-situ tables, seating, planters, and planting ensembles that form the sequence can be assembled in different ways in response to the empirical information from studies on the wind, and sun is and the location of internal amenities become fixed. The key thing is that the current design responds to warmer orientations such as south facing with a wall to the back as the location for places to sit and read and in areas less favoured, the more active facilities such as outdoor exercise areas and equipment. Planting Strategies will support this, offering a further layer of screening and shelter in key location. This is also place for residents to meet, with many outdoor "rooms" where one can arrange to meet perhaps to walk or jog the circuit after work, or for sitting in a quieter lacuna one side of the passing parade of neighbours and residents. The theme of being protected, as afforded by the spaces being off a pedestrian only thoroughfare is assisted by a quieter more reflective treatment. The balance and sizing of feature paving, cellular grass features, domestically scaled furniture, indirect lighting and small play areas are again reassembled toward this end. Trees are proposed to intensify towards the edges of the larger areas and a light canopy species that allows filtered light to pattern the ground plane in daytime will be used, an effect mimicked in turn by the lighting at night.

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Landscape design approach

Residential Courtyards

The landscape opportunities afforded by the generous courtyards is one where the outlook to them and the occupation of them could be said to have equal importance. The phenomenon of "rus-in-urbe" requires that emphatically lush vegetation be established by maximizing the planted areas available within the scheme, while managing this to manipulate light and shadow through canopies. One must be able to walk under a light canopy of foliage and on a sunny day see the filtered sunlight on the ground plane, patterning both vegetation and paving. In this instance these courtyards are conceived to be experienced as a green enclave. The emphasis will be on the passive or quiet experience of sitting amongst nature, protected from the city noise by the enclosing residences and enjoying the great views off towards the south. The space is considered from the perspective of view and inhabitation. So whether you are overlooking from inside, coming or going to the various entrances or enjoying the solitary pursuit of reading or maybe even working digitally in such a place, the objective is to experience the psychological benefit of restful green surroundings, designed to attract wildlife and mark the seasons change in the natural world.

A privacy buffer zone of planting runs along the building facades, with a light filter of foliage acting as the buffer between a private area accessed directly from the ground floor units and the activity of residents from other floors, who might be enjoying their evening meal outside in summertime.

The landscape will also work by emphasizing direct routes, throughout the site, concealing certain facets and directions, framing entrances and forming interesting plant compositions that one has to experience at close quarters while moving within the scheme. It responds to desire lines within the patterns of movement forming green corridors with plants spilling out of adjoining beds, blurring and softening volumes juxtaposed against a rigid framework of paved and decked planes.

The proportions of the courtyards are generous, within this length the sequencing of seats and gathering places, the articulation of the resulting spaces and the demarcation of paving mean that matters of identification, orientation and recognition are made clearer through these changes and a coherent organization of the scheme is achieved. There is also a marked contrast in materials with grass / stone combinations used as surfacing inserts to soften and emphasise the verdant theme of these places. Planes of wood are also inserted on the ground plane and the material is used for the furniture here that combines the functions of table and bench. This is important in strengthening the notion of "within" and "without" and adds homeliness to the value of the courtyards.

A light canopy cover of birch, pin oak and honey locust on multi-stems and 2m cleared trunks cast light shadow over a rich tapestry of under-planting, with ferns, herbaceous plants, bulbs and groundcover deployed to mark the seasons. Views on the long axis through the courtyard will be framed by the planting while across the short axis the vegetation will screen the device of not being able to see it all from any vantage point being used to add a complexity to the rectangular geometry.

Inhabited Roofs

These roofs are the places to feel the sun on your face and the wind in your hair, to grow your own micro herbs and garnishes and to meet with friends to burn meat on the barbeque. However, we are seeking to modify any extremes of weather by providing a sheltering balustrade, local additional wind protection and by deploying tough plants as windbreaks. Furthermore the central arrangements in each have an in situ barbeque, potable water and a sink, for washing salad and dishes afterwards, benches that can be moved but are heavy enough not to fly away with a breeze, set amongst planters and ground plane that once again has a planted component growing in a gravelly structural soil. There are also variations where greenhouses are provided and more extensive growing facilities as the trend to veganism draw more and more people to growing for pleasure and the satisfaction of growing one's own food.

Brown Roofs

We have also proposed that the inaccessible roofs be treated as brown roofs to maximize the biodiversity of the scheme in an area that is not otherwise rich in habitat and have included detail of this. Once again, the attenuation factor is a major invisible outcome of this approach.

Components of Quality

An array of public functions, cafes and interesting alternative uses populate the visible realm as experienced by the pedestrian, internally and externally. Trees, planting, shelters, paving patterns and innovative surfaces and artefacts make the progression through the space visually stimulating and distinctive. The proportions, sequencing and articulation of the resulting urban spaces mean that matters of identification, orientation and recognition are made clearer and a coherent organization of the scheme can be achieved. In general, the public sequence is characterised by durable materials and bespoke elements, of quality hard landscape.

The landscape shall work by providing continuous habitat linkage, appropriate porosity of surface treatment, water attenuation and for public enjoyment of the civic spaces. The occupants and residents will have a whole other world to themselves, above the public areas, where a sequence of routes, gardens, small plazas and garden that make up the high line offer a rich amenity. Inward focused garden courtyards of the podium between residential blocks offer yet again another type of amenity, linking inside and outside with a focus on proximity to nature and finally the more extroverted paces on the roofs overlooking the city with marvellous view in all direction. The approach for the place-making and landscape objectives of this project as it has such potential to be a special place, where the challenge is to embody the quality of the outcome for years to come, for the intended occupiers and the local populace alike.



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Ground floor

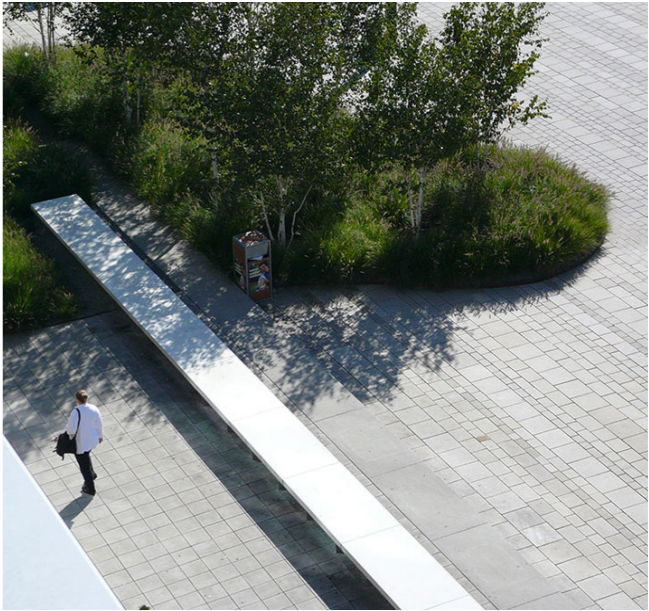


THEMATIC APPROACH

- Intersections & Terminus
- Dissolve boundaries
- Paving as directional device
- Theatre of illuminated floor
- Practical access
- Build up not down
- Mark entrances
- Signify view in from outside
- Plants & paving read as woven rug
- Coherent grain from above

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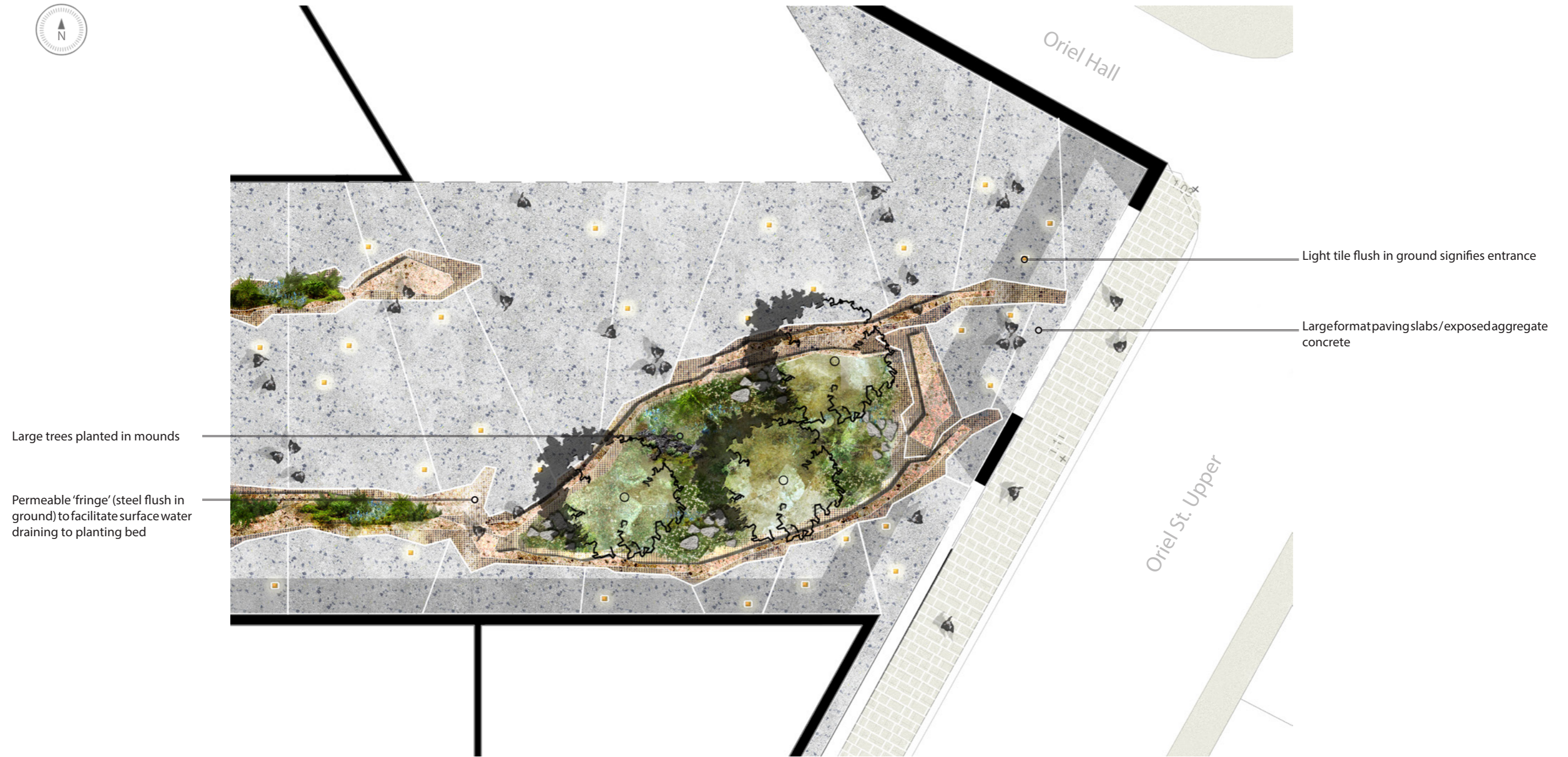
Ground floor plan



Concept plan

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Ground floor material plan



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Ground floor integrated drainage strategy





'Ravine' landscape:

Large format paving slabs used in conjunction with perforated steel panels facilitates a permeable fringe at the interface of each planted zone to intercept surface water.

Edge materials and other fittings such as lighting are selected with continuity of materials in mind for coherency.



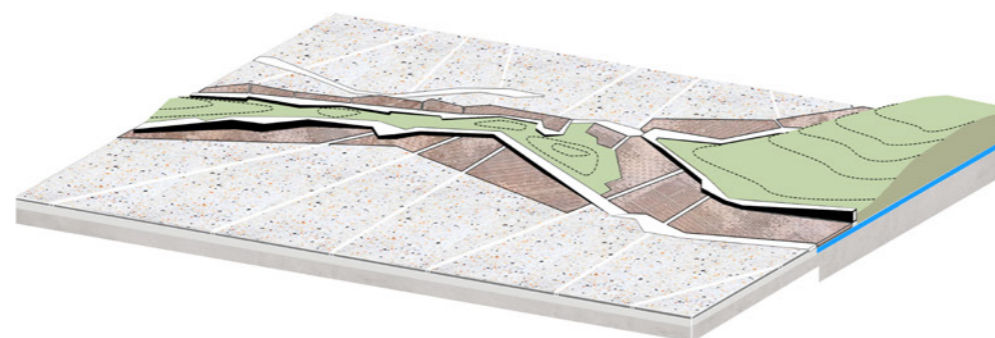
Animation

-  Light mast
-  Trees; large pines
-  Underplanting; mosses, ferns, outcrops
-  Informal seating edge





Mature planting:

The planter edge is formed to a height that is ideal for seating and tapers to flush in ground in key instances where desire lines dictate a requirement for pedestrians to move unimpeded across the space.

Local mounding of the soil within the contained planter facilitates sufficient depth for large tree planting.



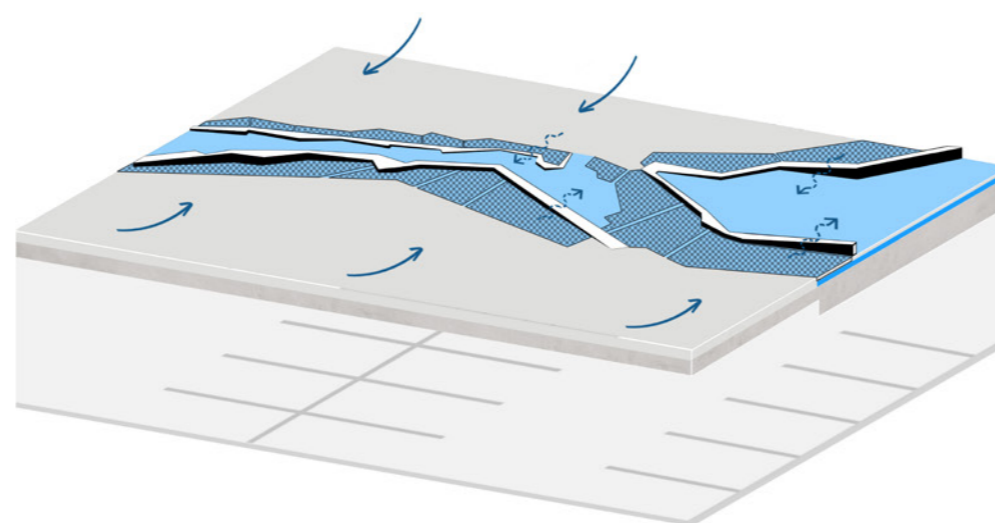
Ground plane

-  Soil zone
-  Planter edge
-  Perforated steel surface (permeable)
-  Paved surface (impermeable)






A coordinated approach:

Impermeable surfaces are designed to fall towards soft landscape zones.

A permeable threshold interfaces with the planter wall where the water is intercepted permeates down to the drainage board where it makes its way beneath the planter wall into the soft landscape.



Base plane

-  Planter edge cast in situ
-  Drainage board (beneath planting)
-  Drainage board (beneath permeable surface)
-  Impermeable surface
-  Podium slab

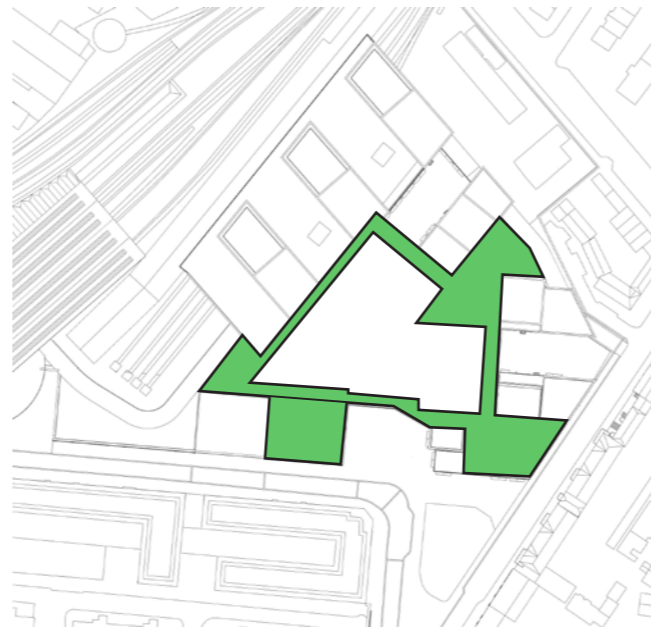
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Ground floor CGI



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Highline






THEMATIC APPROACH

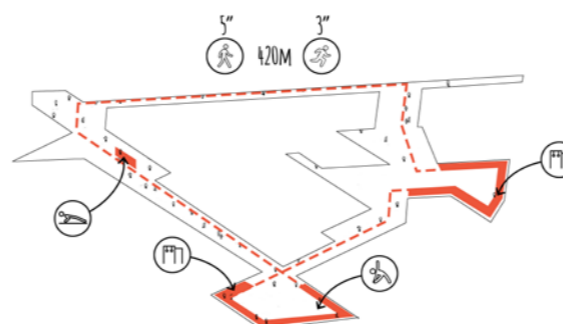
- Modularised + solidity
- Indirect lighting
- Glow at night
- Simplified groundplane
- Node & Hinge devices
- Geometrical construction
- Function + fitness - 30min exercise
- Sunny lacunae

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

Highline strategy

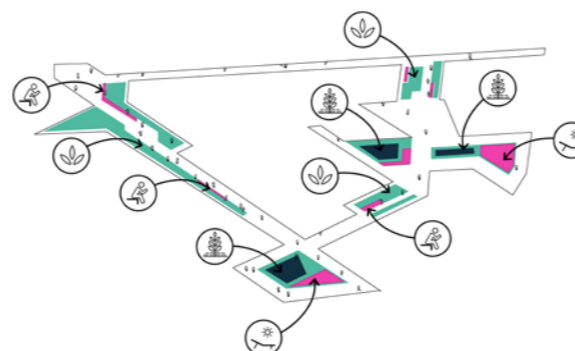
Circuit

-  Trim trail
-  Outdoor gym
-  Yoga zone





Zoning

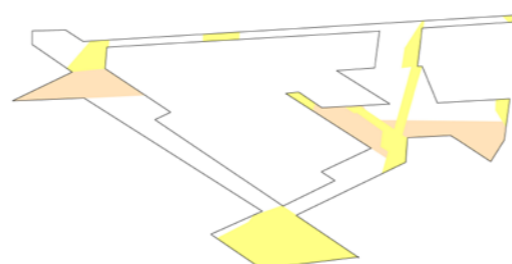
-  Seating
-  Sun trap
-  Low planting
-  Tree planting




Sunlight

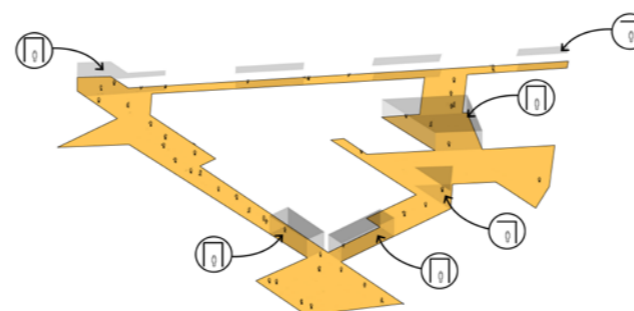
In accordance with Daylight, sunlight and Overshadowing report

-  Morning sun
10:00am - 12:00pm
-  Afternoon sun
14:00pm - 16:00pm



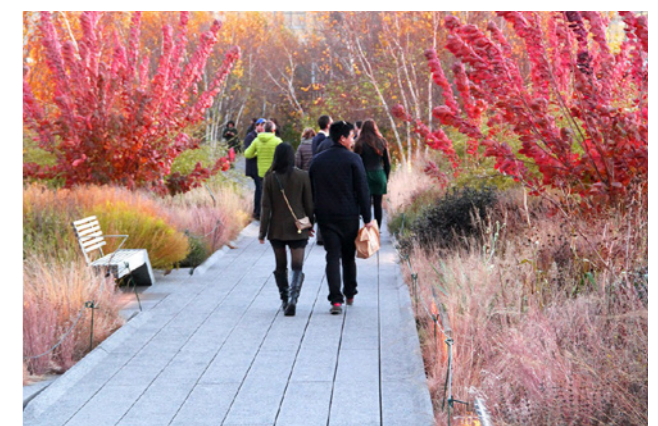
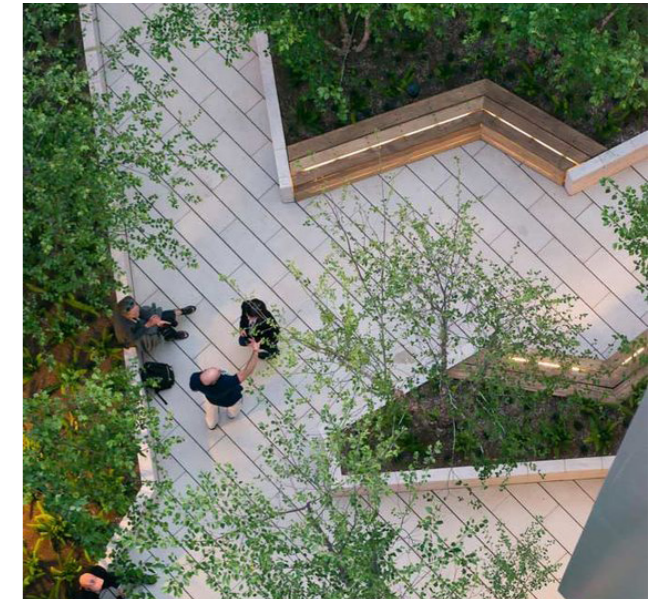
Enclosure

-  Full
-  Partial



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Highline plan



Highline plan

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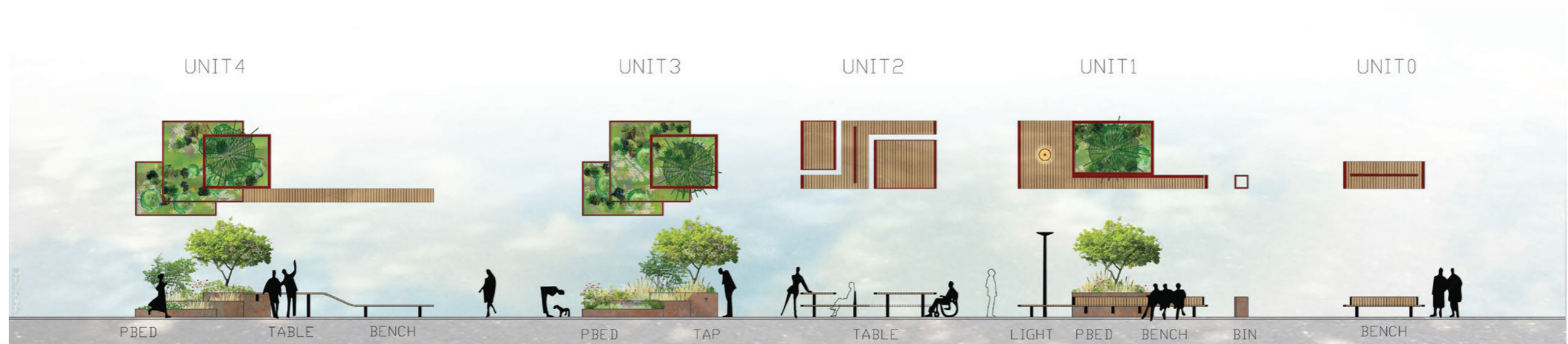
Highline materials



Material plan



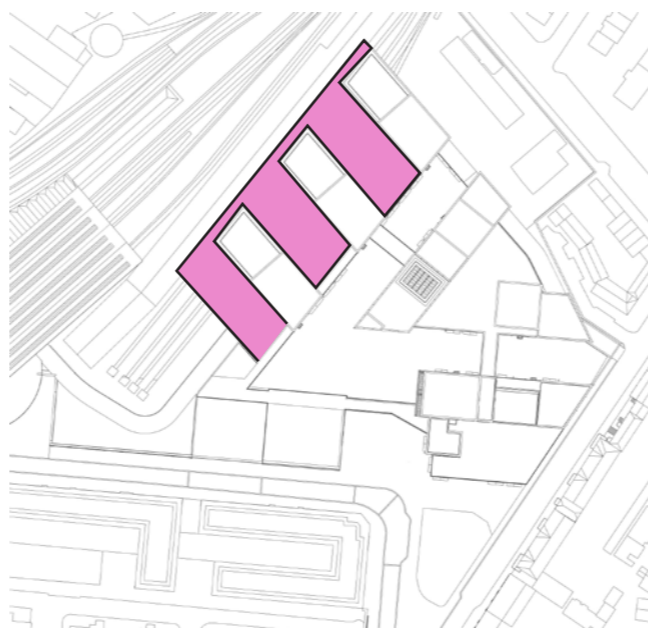
CGI



Modular furniture arrangements

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Podium residential courtyards (4F)



THEMATIC APPROACH

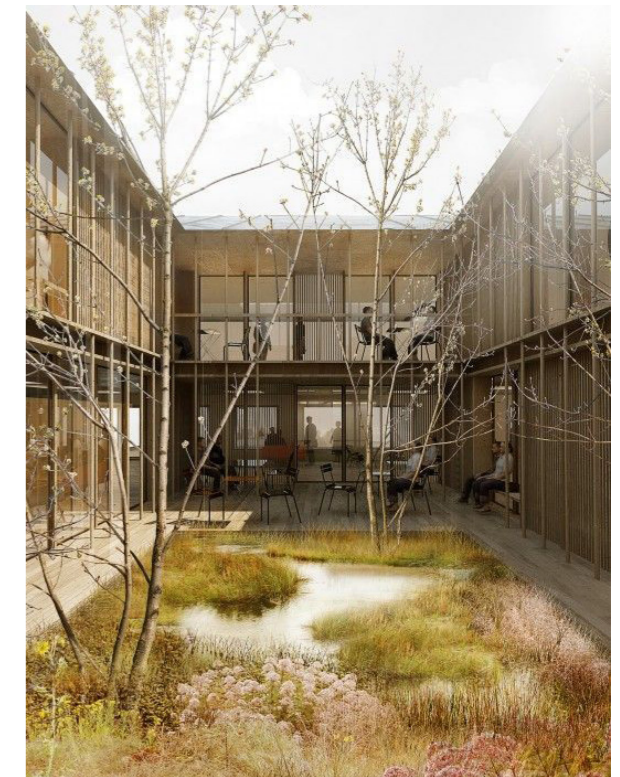
Intensively green
Build up in mounds
Pavillion entrance with shelter
Life outdoors in summer
Dining communal areas
Hold water

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Podium residential courtyards (4F)



Render plan



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Podium residential courtyards (4F)



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Green roofs

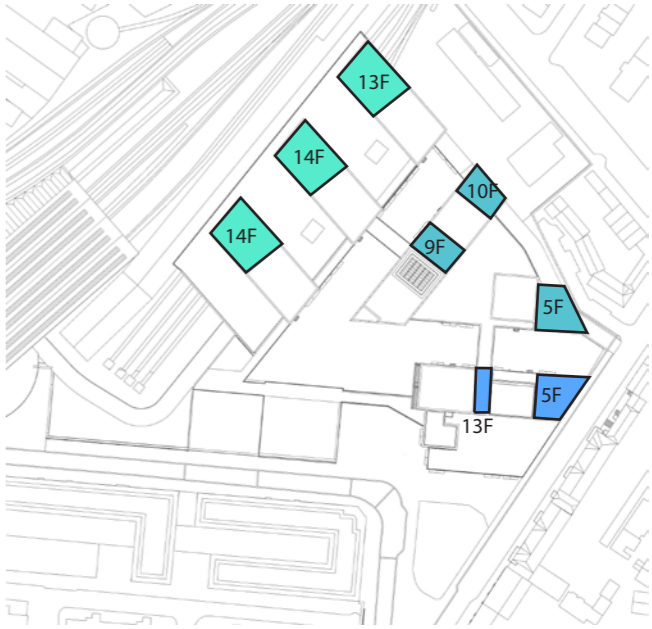


THEMATIC APPROACH

- Own grow areas/greenhouse
- Life BBQ areas
- The sky
- The city
- Sloped to South
- Taps and sink - useful
- Outdoor fire and degree of shelter

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Composite Roof Plan



- Block B
- Block C
- Block D

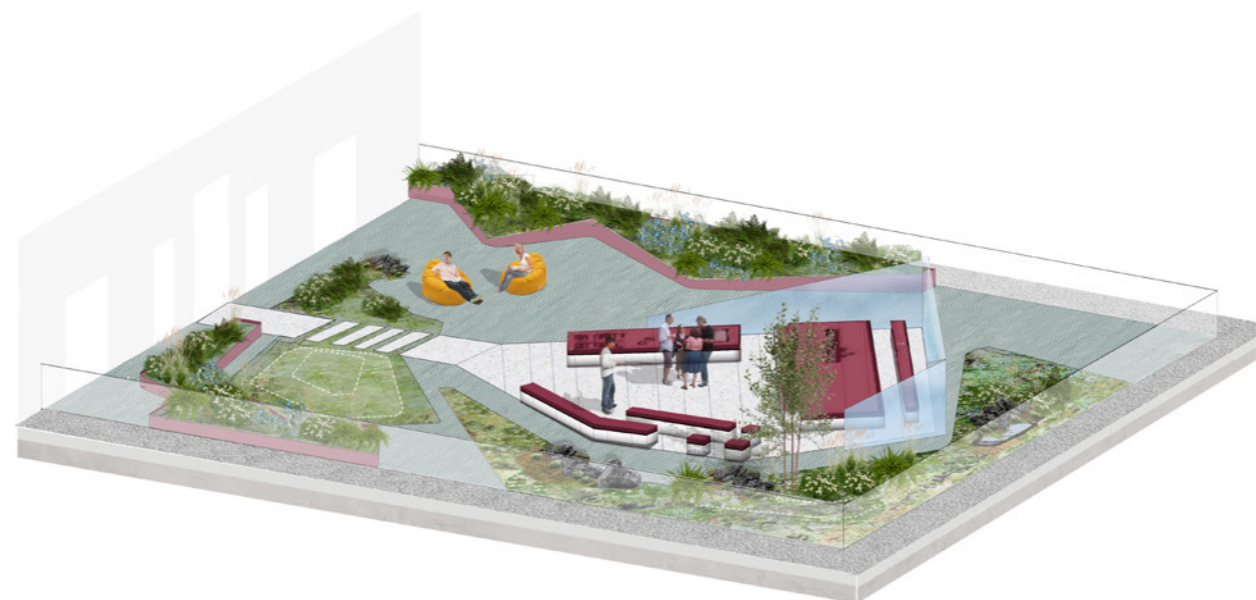
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Green Roof - Block B




Feeling of 'not on pedestals':

Configuration of the space is not dictated by the constraints of standard pedestal systems, instead the result is a scheme where materials overlap seamlessly as if on regular ground.

Glass screens are positioned to shelter seating areas from prevailing south westerly winds.



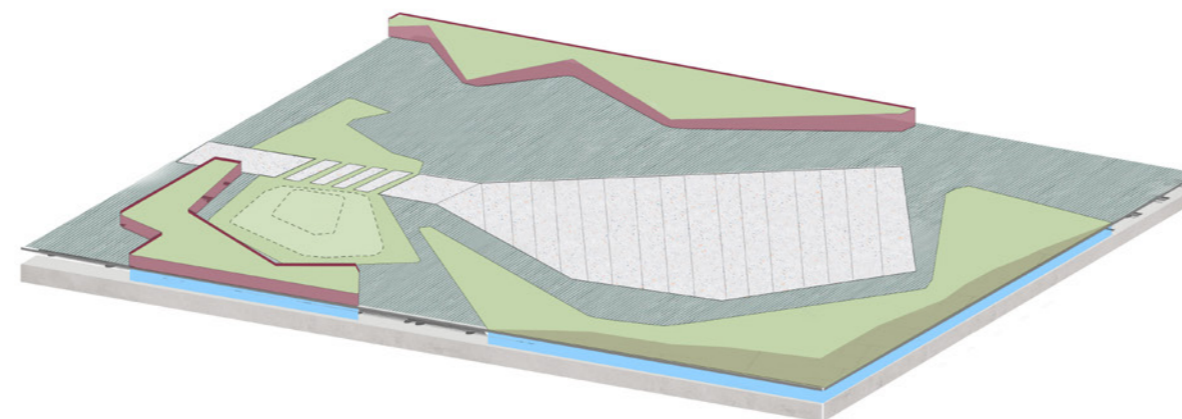
Animation

-  Trees; small multistem
-  Herbaceous planting mix
-  Wind buffer/screening (glass)

Materials:

The planter edge tapers from a height that is sufficient for larger planting, to flush with ground where paved surfaces cut through.

Local mounding of the soil within the contained planter facilitates sufficient depth for large tree planting.

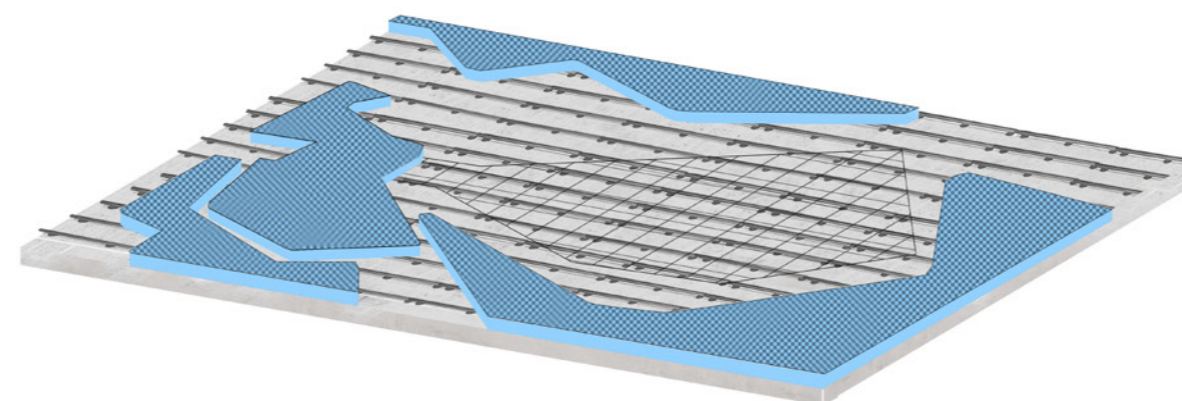


Ground plane




-  Soil zone
-  Planter edge
-  Paving flags
-  Concrete surface

Structure + Drainage:

A suspended substructure comprising pedestals and aluminium joists creates a simple and integrated system for supporting paving, furniture and planters. Open jointed paving allows water to permeate to waterproofing layer below before being intercepted by drainage board beneath planted areas.



Base plane

-  Support structure system (Joists, pedestals and trays)
-  Drainage board (beneath planting)
-  Podium slab

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Green Roof - Block B



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Brown Roof - Block B

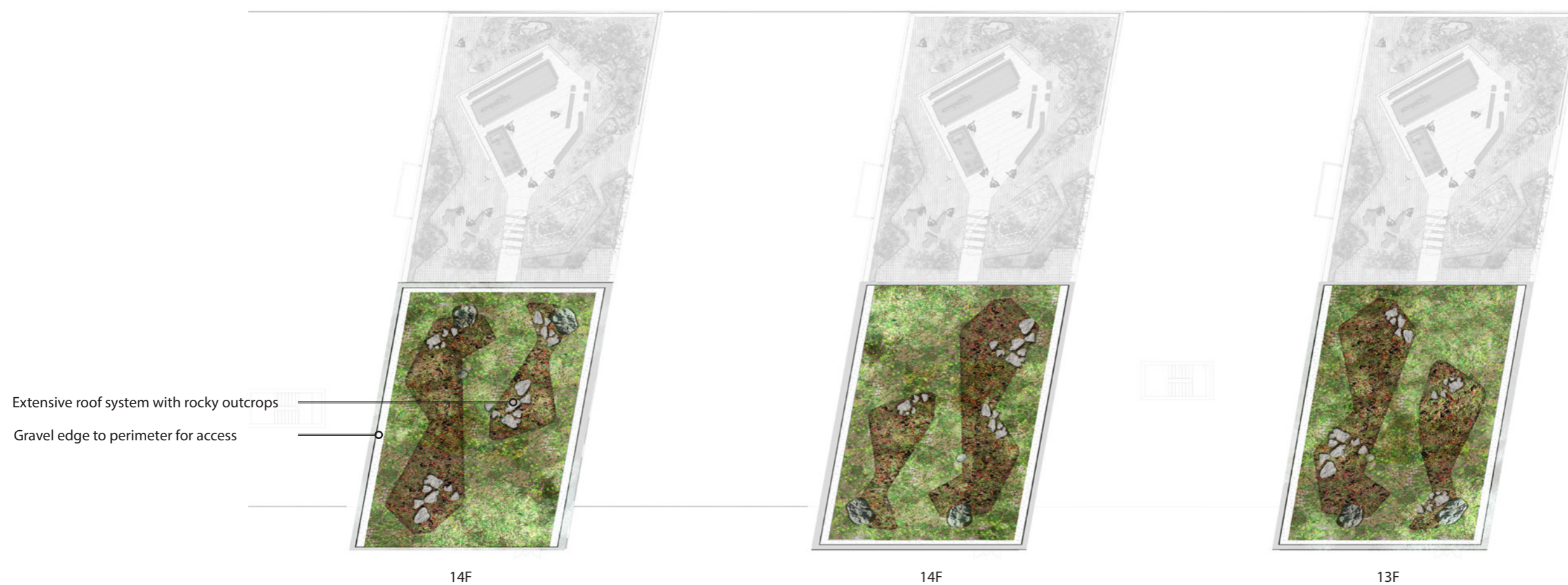
Habitat Creation:

Despite areas of biodiversity being reduced in urban areas, some species have adapted to live in the challenging conditions, birds in particular.

Of the 450 or so bird species on the Irish Bird List, 214 have been recorded in the Dublin City area. While many of these are sustained by the larger parks and waterways at the peri-urban fringe, there is a significant amount that thrive in the urban core.

The terms biodiversity and flora & fauna are often used when referring to benefits of green spaces without much elaboration on the creatures they refer to. This ranges from the direct relationship of the bird making a nest in a new tree, to the cascade effect of increasing the predators that depend on them. The more habitat provided for them, the more often we will see them in everyday life.

The logs and medium sized stones proposed on the brown roofs provide vital city microhabitats for birds and insects such as solitary bees.



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Green Roof - Block C - 5F



Steel planters and natural stone surfaces



Stepping stones through planting



Glasshouse: grow your own



Key plan

