

7 Temporary Open Space

7.1 Landscape: Temporary Open Space design

The proposed landscape strategy makes provision for a new public space offering an attractive landscaped public garden which accommodates a variety of activities including informal elements of play, and places to meet and relax integrated into the landscape.

The open space wraps around the buildings to the southern part of the site and will provide the community with high quality landscape that helps to mitigate for the loss of green space in the area. It needs to cater for a wide range of users and activities with a careful selection of elements to allow activities to take place as opposed to one single activity or user dominate. The project team have undertaken a series of consultant events to develop the design with the local community. The placement of buildings to the rear of the open space will help to screen HS2 construction noise.

Following advise from the pre-application meetings and Design Review Panel, we have reflected on the economic, social and environmental advantages of employing circular principles into the design of the public realm by incorporating the re-use of materials from St. James' Gardens. Careful consideration has also been taken regarding the boundary treatments of the public realm and its relationship with the CSC building.

As some of the existing trees are of low quality and in close proximity to the proposed demolition, it is proposed that they are removed and replaced with a higher quality species of tree. An arboricultural impact assessment report accompanies the submission.



Precedent images

7.2 Site character

7.2.1 Key characteristics of the site are:

- Generally flat site; significant areas of hard surfacing, predominantly tarmac around the existing buildings and to the playground areas;
- Minimal areas of planting and soft landscape within the site; minimal tree cover within the site, focussed on the schools’ Wildlife Garden and Sunken Garden;
- Sunken Garden along Starcross Street:
Some trees but these are not suitable street tree species; area is mostly paving with no understory; litter thrown from the adjacent footpath is collected on a regular basis by the school; predominantly overshadowed area, due to trees and sunken space; failed planting;
- Boundaries:
 - Starcross Street: brick wall with high railings on top to western end; railings along the Sunken Garden to the eastern end.
 - North Gower Street: close-boarded timber fence with mesh fencing to the top.
 - Northern boundary: this area is currently undetermined due to the archaeological and exhumation works;

Photographs on the following page illustrate some of the points above.

An ecological assessment was carried on the site by ASW Ecology in December 2018 (ref: ASW/MELS/093/22/2018), and a subsequent bat emergence visit made. The key findings were that the site has low ecological value with the scope for protected species being present on site being low. The site, however, provides opportunities for improving the ecological value of the site:

- Pond restoration - restore the pond so as to increase it’s ecological value;
- Installation of bird nesting boxes and bat boxes;
- Incorporation of wildlife friendly planting where possible.

An Arboricultural survey was carried out by GHA trees. The findings were:

- Category B trees - 6 trees: 3 in the Sunken Garden; 3 in the Ecology Area;
- Category C trees - 5 trees: 3 in the Sunken Garden; 1 in the playground; 1 group in the ecology area.



Tree Survey plan

7.3 Site Photographs



North Gower Street - existing trees



Edge of the Wildlife Garden - North



View along Starcross Street looking east



View to the school building from the corner of Starcross Street and North Gower Street



Sunken Garden to the frontage, adjacent to North Gower Street



Gym equipment and tree within the school grounds



Main playground area

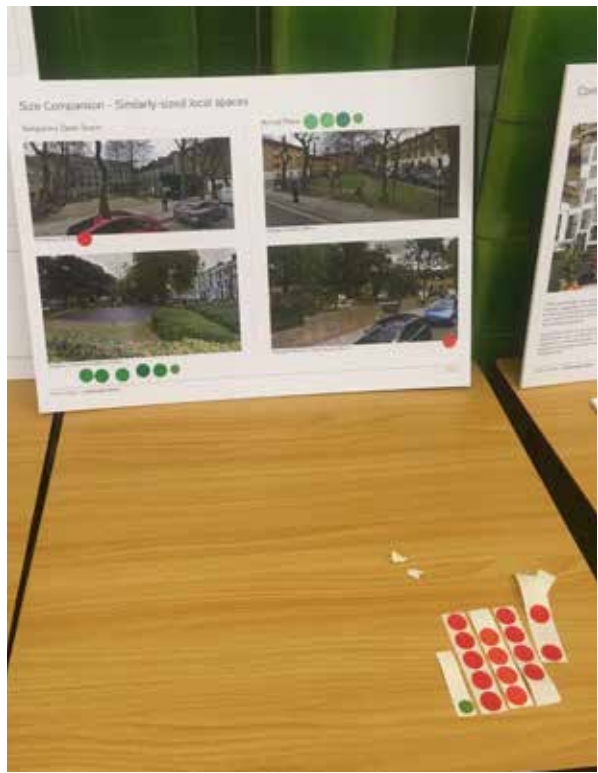
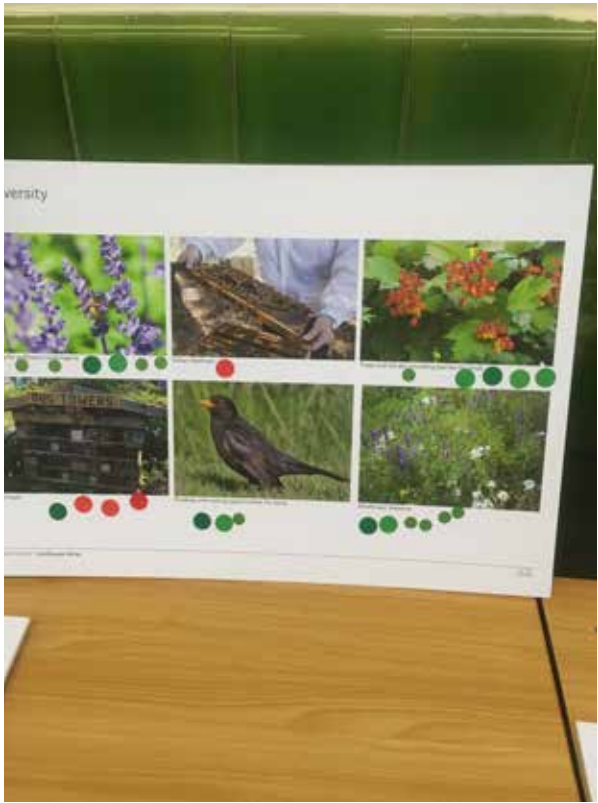
7.4 Community Consultation

A community event was held at Maria Fidelis School on the 1st November 2018. A series of boards with landscape precedent images were prepared and displayed, and attendees were asked to put green dots against landscapes that they liked, and red dots against landscapes they did not like. We also took notes from conversations with residents about specific thoughts and issues that they have.

The key findings from the event were:

- A Flexible space for activities, including Yoga, Dance and Open Air Boxing;
- A Sociable Space - an area for the community to us, including a lawn area;
- A Growing Space, where the community can grow come together and grow produce;
- Planting for and contact with Nature - including plants with flowers and berries (no bug hotels though);
- Naturalistic planting;
- An Informal Play space, which provides seating areas in a more integrated form;
- Extensive tree planting, including groups of trees and substantial boundary planting;
- Some Sculptural elements, including seating;
- No Dog Walking.

Images of the boards are shown. These findings have been incorporated in to the design where achievable and appropriate.



7.5 Landscape Concepts

From the site analysis and community engagement session, and working with the design team, we have developed a concept design for the site. The approach taken has been to develop a series of key landscape areas of different character, based on their location, on the site characteristics, proximity to existing and proposed buildings, circulation and movement and current landscape or ecological value.

The Concept diagram illustrates the key landscape spaces. The key spaces are:

- Open Space - a flexible providing a publicly-accessible pocket park. This space will be managed by Camden and is enclosed with 1.6 metre high railings reused from the previous St. James's Gardens. The space has been left flexible for a range of activities;
- Play/Social Space - a more intimate space linking to the main Open Space, using level change and 'objects' in the landscape to create seating and informal play opportunities;
- Arrival - this is the entrance to the Workspace, and will provide a better visual connection between the school building and the surrounding area;
- Buffer area along North Gower Street - this provides additional planting to soften the edge to the street, together with raised planters as part of a 'Grow Your Own' connected to the cafe within the Workspace;
- Ecology - an extension and enhancement of the existing ecology area, with additional native tree and shrub planting.

Where possible, additional planting including tree planting to the boundaries, has been used to enclose and highlight spaces, control movement and access into and around the site. Existing retained trees (3 Category B trees and 1 Category C tree group in the Ecology Area) are to be reinforced with appropriate tree planting. The number of proposed provides an indicative ratio of 4.5 new trees to every tree felled.



7.6 Landscape Plan



7.7 View of the Workspace Entrance



7.8 View of the Overall Scheme



7.9 Recycled materials from Camden depot

Given the temporary nature of the open space and the budget available, we have worked with Camden to reuse currently stored landscape materials from St. James’s Gardens together with other stored external furniture.

A key element is the reuse of the railings from St. James’s Gardens. These are 1.6 metres high by 3 metres length in panels; the total length is 90 metres. The original gates are also stored. The panels and gates will be used along Starcross Street, the frontage to the Workspace and also along North Gower Street; additional railings where required are to match the reclaimed railings to give consistency.

Other elements include:

- Granite setts - a large number available;
- Other natural stone, to be used in small areas within the Open Space;
- Four cast iron columns (each is 4.5 metres high);
- Benches;
- Litter Bins.

These items will be made good before being used within the site.



Granite setts (200mm x 100mm; 100mm x 100mm)



Benches



Cast iron columns (4 No.) - 4.5 metres high



Railings from St. James’s Gardens - 1.6 metres high (excluding the top finials)



Sawn natural stone

7.10 Planting

7.10.1 Trees

A range of tree species are proposed for the site, based on their location and on function.

The larger tree species are proposed along the frontage, to provide a green edge to development and to tie in with trees along North Gower Street. We are proposing some of the existing species to be included.

Further within the site, especially within the Open Space, we are proposing smaller tree species; this is due to the temporary nature of the site. These trees will be planted in removable containers at ground level, to allow them to be repositioned at a later date.

Fruit trees are proposed for the 'grow Your Own' area; possibly as trained specimens to the edge of this space.

Where practical, native tree species will be incorporated in to the Open Space and Arrival areas; the Ecology Area will have only natives to enhance the existing trees.



Birch *Betula utilis* 'Jacquemontii'



Acer x freemanii 'Autumn Blaze'



Liquidambar styraciflua 'Worplesdon'



Malus 'Cox's Orange Pippin'



Malus 'Gascoyne's Scarlet'



Maidenhair Tree - *Ginkgo biloba*



Edible Cherry - *Prunus avium*



Fastigate Hornbeam - *Carpinus betulus*

7.11 Ecological enhancements

The proposed landscape design provides opportunities to enhance the ecology in the following ways:

- Improved pond in the Ecology Area - existing pond to be desilted and relined, with a varied profile to the edges. Marginal aquatic planting to be incorporated, together with floating plants;
- Bird boxes - both Garden Bird boxes (32mm hole) and Open-Fronted Bird boxes; bird boxes to be wall-integrated and/or fixed to proposed semi-mature trees (minimum 10 No. - to be confirmed with the ecologist);
- Bat boxes - to be located where appropriate, typically as wall-integrated boxes and/or to proposed semi-mature trees (minimum 10 No. - to be confirmed);
- Lacewing/Mason Bee/Invertebrate Boxes - a range of suitable habitats to encourage nesting of invertebrates fixed to mature trees;
- Herbaceous Perennials - the planting proposals will include a range of wildlife-friendly herbaceous species, and natives where appropriate;
- 'Tapestry' Hedges - containing a range of native shrubs;
- Native and Ornamental Shrubs - incorporated into the planting proposals, to attract butterflies, birds and other wildlife and to provide sources of nectar. We are aiming to provide at least 50% native species or non-native species with a known benefit to wildlife;
- Deadwood habitat - some of the timber from trees felled or maintained on-site could be retained as deadwood habitat in discreet locations to the planting areas.



Deadwood habitat



Pond improvements



Planting to attract Butterflies



Bird Feeder



Bird Box - on trees



Lacewing Box



Teasel - *Dipsacus fullonum*



Purple Loosestrife - *Lythrum salicaria*



Common Valerian - *Valeriana officinalis*

8.0

Height and Scale

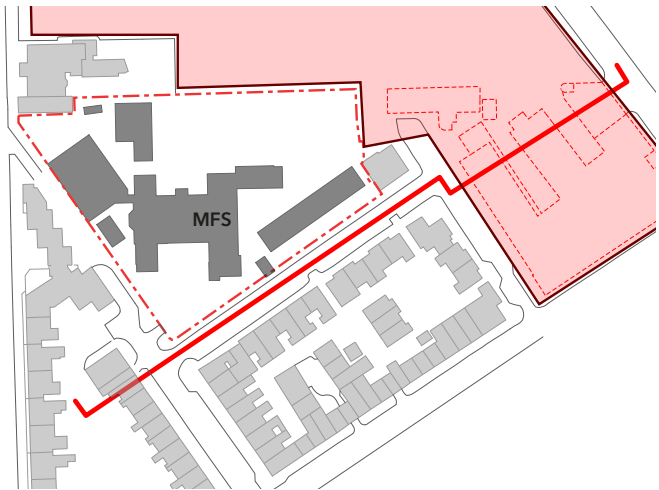
Construction Skills Centre

8 Height and Scale

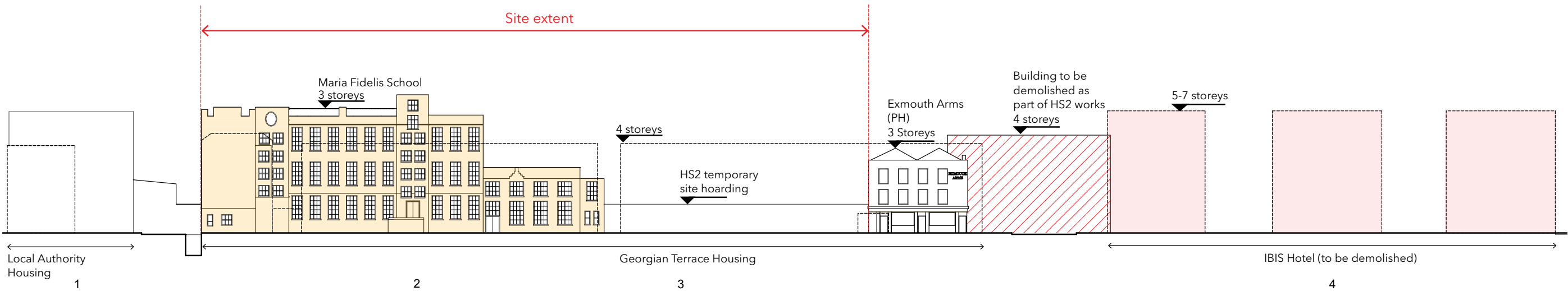
8.1 Existing Height and Scale of Surrounding Context

The existing Maria Fidelis School is 3 storeys in height however with high floor to ceiling heights it is similar to five domestic storey heights.

There are a range of building heights across the site and surrounding area. The pub to the east of the site is two storeys in height. The housing to the south is four storeys whilst the post war housing to the west rises up to seven storeys in one location.



Key of existing site section



Buildings to front of site:



1. Stepped George mews local authority housing



2. Four storey flat-fronted terrace housing on Starcross street



3. Four storey flat-fronted terrace housing on Starcross street



4. 5 storey closed Ibis hotel - due to be demolished as part of HS2 works.