

Garryowen Reserve Landscape Design

ISSUE

SITE ANALYSIS & CONCEPT

CLIENT



PREPARED BY



Landscape Architect
Urban Initiatives

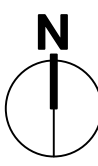
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 **SITE LOCATION PLAN**
NTS

DRAWING REGISTER

Drawing List	
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Preliminary



Garryowen Reserve

Introduction

Garryowen Reserve is a compact but significant ‘small local’ open space in Fitzroy. At just 870m², it is a much-used park providing respite and recreation for residents, workers, and families within easy walking distance. While modest in scale, the reserve plays an important role in the everyday life of its immediate neighbourhood.

The upgrade will focus on delivering the essentials well: protecting valued elements such as the mature canopy, improving amenity for everyday use, and ensuring the space is resilient into the future. At the same time, there is a great opportunity to give the reserve a lift — to regenerate, add creativity and energy, and re-energise the park so it continues to serve the community with renewed character and vitality.

The project will also respond to the strategic directions of the City of Yarra’s Open Space Strategy 2020, Draft Playspace Strategy, and Urban Forest Strategy, which emphasise inclusivity, sustainability, and creating a sense of place unique to Fitzroy.



Site Observations

These early site observations highlight both its existing qualities and the opportunities for renewal:

Mature canopy: The beautiful existing trees give the park immediate impact. They are a defining feature, and protecting and celebrating them is the natural starting point of the design.

Sense of place: A compact, much-loved park woven into the fabric of residential Fitzroy: modest in scale but embedded in a suburb renowned for its layered history, bold design culture, and strong community identity. The project is an opportunity to strengthen that story.

Edges and connections: With roads or laneways on three sides, the reserve has a rare chance to open up and connect more strongly to the neighbourhood. Improving permeability will draw people in, address darker corners, and enhance safety through passive surveillance. Embracing Fitzroy’s iconic laneways can help the park function not only as a destination but also as a junction - a place of movement, meeting, and exchange.

Opportunity for renewal: The reserve is well loved but underutilised. It deserves a stronger presence and voice in the neighbourhood. The opportunity lies in making it more visible, inviting, and connected, while retaining its intimate character as a "small local" park.

Opportunities & Challenges

Informed by these observations, and through our understanding of the brief, we see the key opportunities and challenges of the project as:

Design expression: unifying the park’s character with a cohesive planting palette, robust materials, and flexible spaces for play, relaxation, and community use.

Heritage and culture: respecting the heritage overlay while exploring ways to acknowledge Edmund Garryowen and/or Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung culture.

Garryowen was a keen observer of early Melbourne social life. The intention of this upgrade is to enhance the performance of the space as a stage for local life, providing opportunities for daily life to play out, for people to participate and observe, and for the community to thrive.

Community needs and safety: accommodating diverse users, keeping sightlines open, and supporting visits of varying length and type. Considering the existing types of play provided by the current equipment and ensuring that the proposed scheme provides equal or greater play value.

Environmental resilience: retaining canopy trees, managing soil conditions, and designing for climate adaptability.

Access and integration: ensuring universal access while connecting to surrounding streets and laneways.

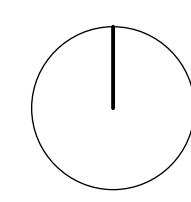
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- LEGEND
- Maintenance Access
 - Primary Park entry point
 - Secondary park entry point
 - Playspace primary entry point
 - Path of pedestrian movement - major
 - Path of pedestrian movement - minor/informal
 - Vehicular movement

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L02 Existing Circulation



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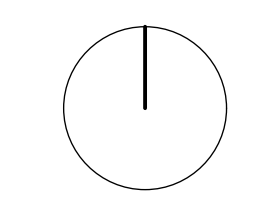




- LEGEND**
- Seating
 - B.B.Q. area
 - Rubbish bin
 - Lighting
 - Drinking fountain
 - Play space extent
 - Shrub Planting
 - Existing established trees
 - White timber picket fence with bluestone kerb
 - Post & chain fence
 - Timber post & wire fence

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L03 Existing Site Features



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The northern boundary (Leicester St) with biege timber picket fence & bluestone kerb



The southern boundary (Garryowen La), interfacing with an apartment block and a coffee house



The eastern boundary (Mechanics La), a blurred interface with a classic bluestone laneway



The western boundary, a paling fence with a row of Callistemon shrubs.



Grasses at the main entrance off Leicester St are quite worn, result of heavy foot traffic.



There are multiple types of fencing in the reserve. Understorey planting is quite healthy.



Existing barriers to stop traffic from entering include bollard, chain and boulders.



Current playground.



The northeast part of the reserve has the best patch of grass, partly due to exposed sunny aspect and less foot traffic.



The grasses in the back part of the reserve are quite worn, partly due to a more shaded condition and compaction.



Roses and signage in good condition.



Existing park furniture, such as bins, drinking fountain, seats, BBQ and picnic seats are in various conditions. Some of them are suitable for re-use. Notice the red brick is also present in the architecture of the apartment behind.

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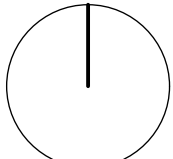
L04 Site Context

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L05 Issues & Opportunities

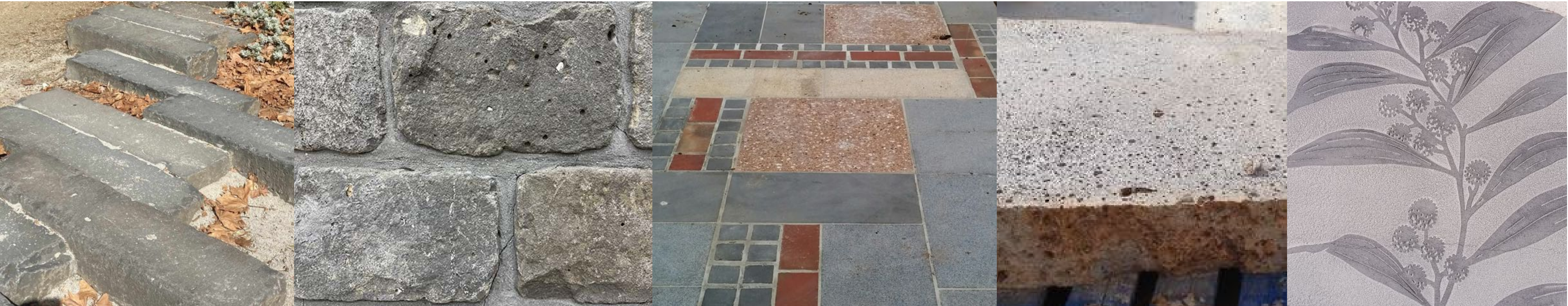


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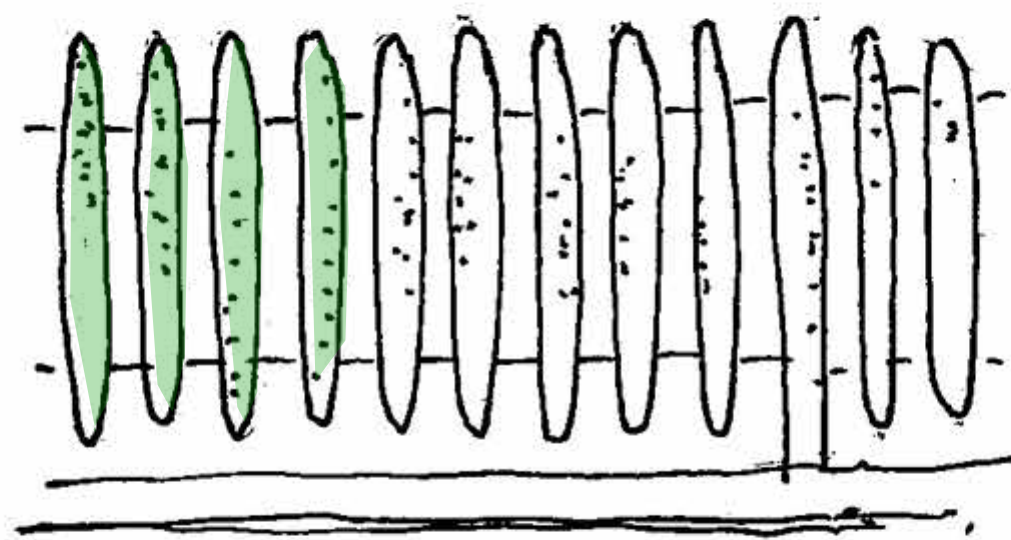
INDICATIVE PALETTE



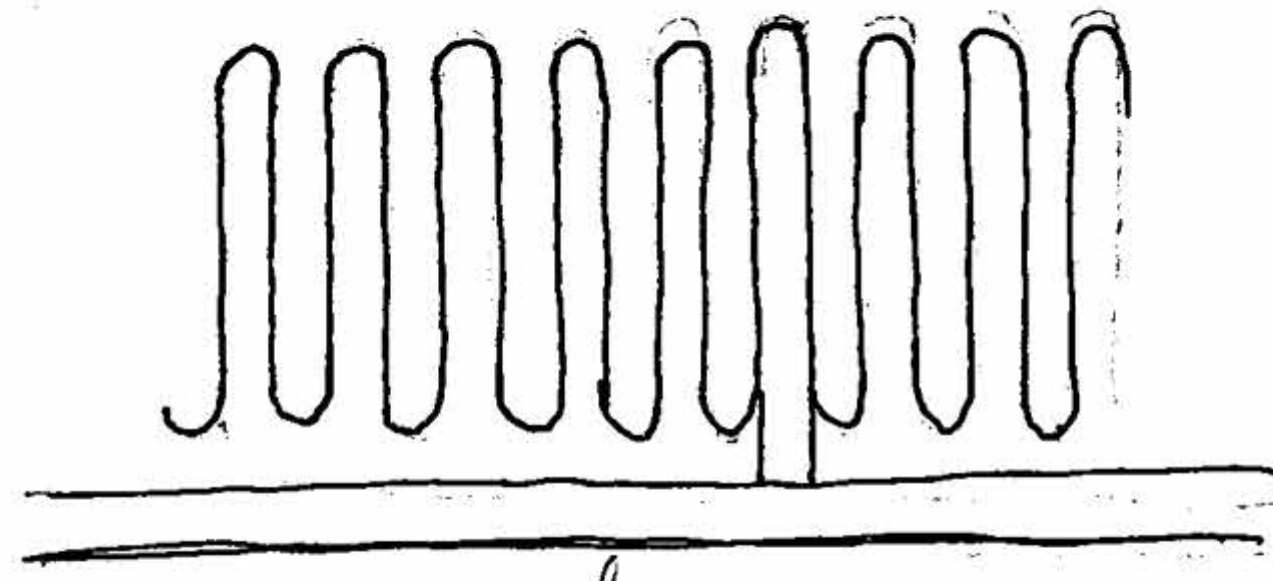
- Complementing existing environmental features.
- Materials of local origin.
- Varied textural and visual experiences.
- High quality, durable materials.

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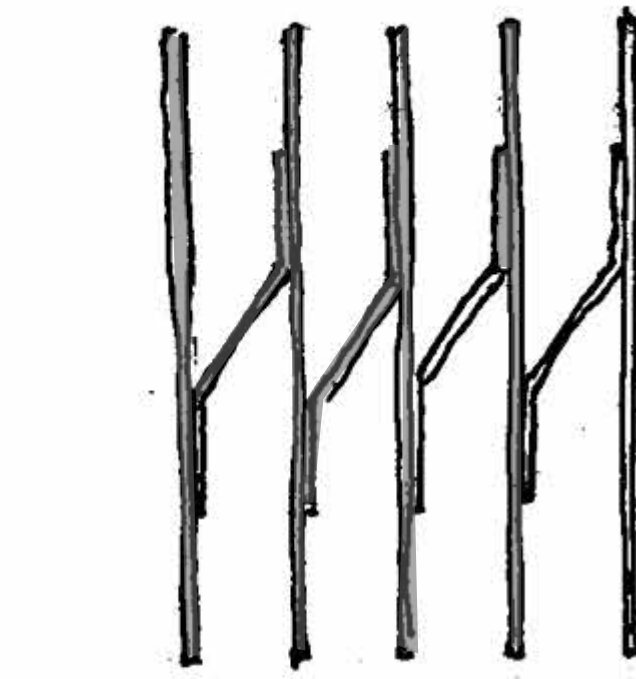
FRONT FENCE IDEAS



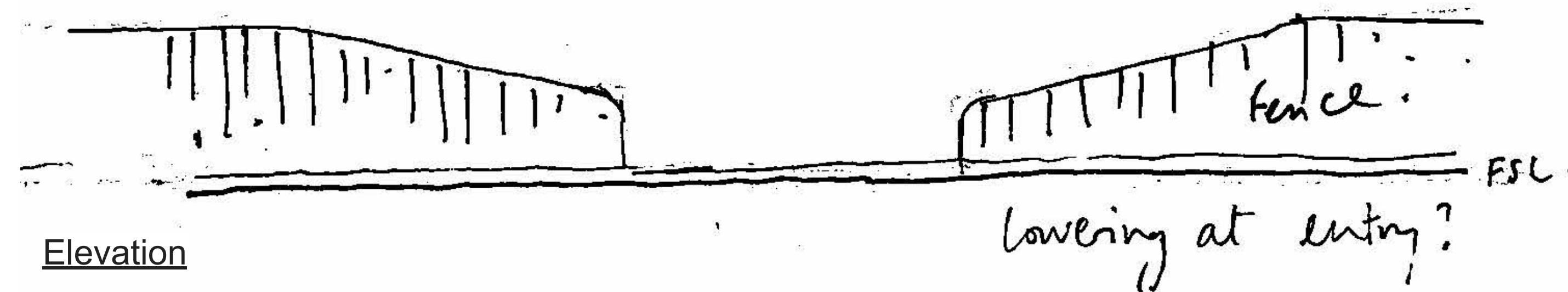
organic
leaf like



curved



bluestone
FSL



Elevation

lowering at entry?

FSL



- Reference heritage qualities.
- Provide playful & creative response.
- Provide high visual permeability.
- Consider appropriate pattern & repetition.
- Consider durability and maintenance.

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INDICATIVE PALETTE



- Incorporate and respect heritage features.
- Provide versatile furniture items.
- Consider dual usage of furniture as seating/social and play.
- Consider textural experiences.
- Consider durability and maintenance.

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PRECEDENT IMAGES



- Natural materials in an urban context.
- References and materials that are connected to the site.
- Multi-functional and integrated elements.

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PRECEDENT IMAGES



Climbing structure, hammock & slide



Basket swing



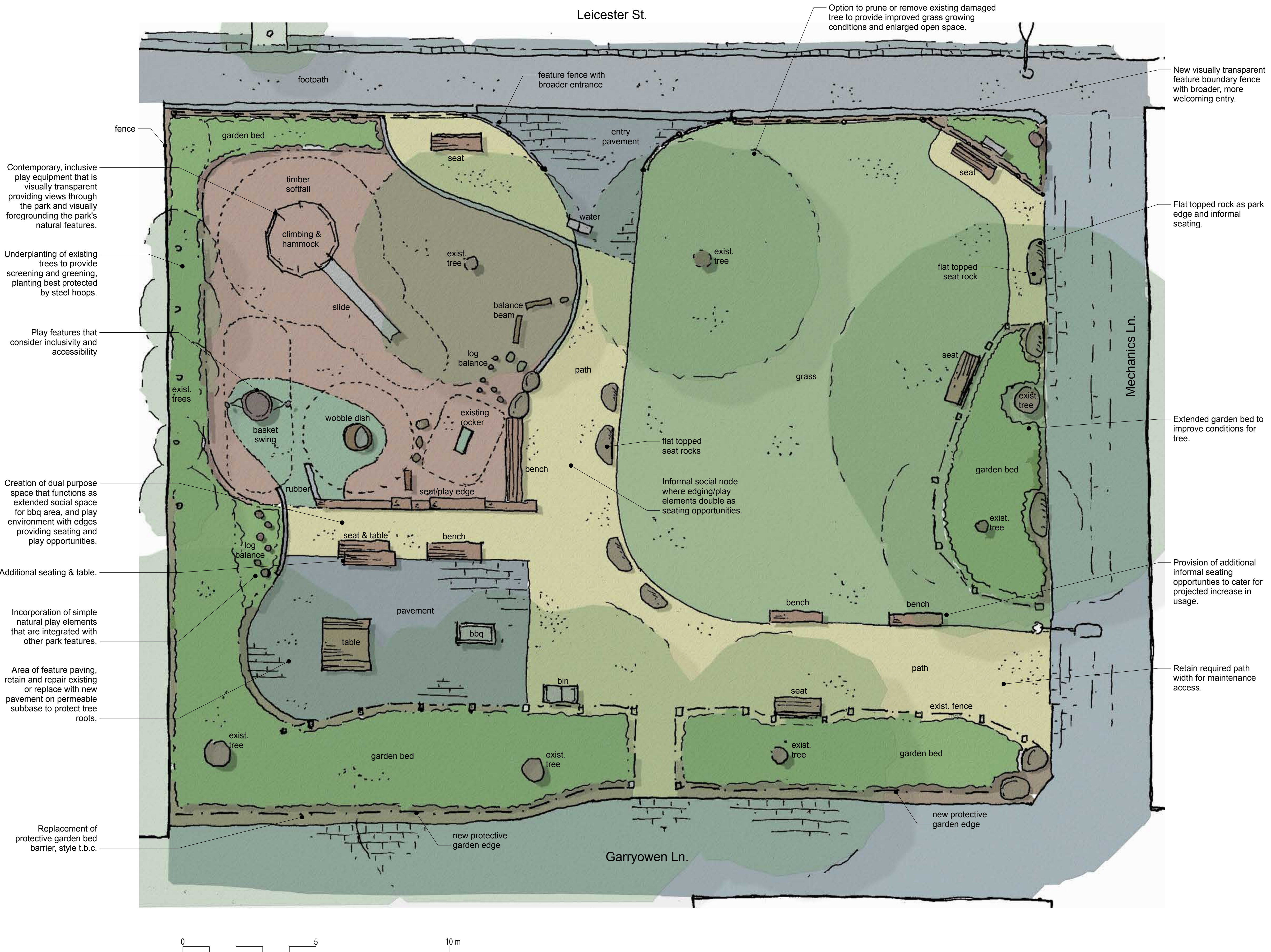
Wobble dish



Existing rocker

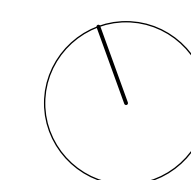
- High play value.
- Inclusive.
- Creative & contemporary design.
- Durable & low maintenance.
- Visually unobtrusive.

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2.1 Tree ratings

2.1.1 Assessed trees suitable for retention

Thirteen trees were assessed as suitable for retention (Table 1).

Table 1. Details of assessed trees suitable for retention and notional distances for tree protection.

Tree #	Species name	Origin	Height (m)	DBH (cm)	Retention Value	NRZ radius (m)	Comments
1	<i>Eucalyptus nicholii</i>	A	14	112	High	13.4	Tree is showing signs of stress. Large-diameter deadwood in the crown, and foliage is sparse.
2	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	E	10	46	Medium	5.5	Wounding on western stem from branch failure. Eastern branches are end weighted.
3	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	E	12	47	Medium	5.6	
4	<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	A	4	15	Medium	2.0	
5	<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	A	4	12	Medium	2.0	
6	<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	A	4	8	Medium	2.0	
7	<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	A	5	11	Medium	2.0	
8	<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	A	5	13	Medium	2.0	
9	<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	V	18	73	High	8.8	
10	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	E	12	62	High	7.4	
11	<i>Agonis flexuosa</i>	A	11	35	Medium	4.2	
12	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	E	8	30	Medium	3.6	
13	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	E	4	11	Medium	2.0	

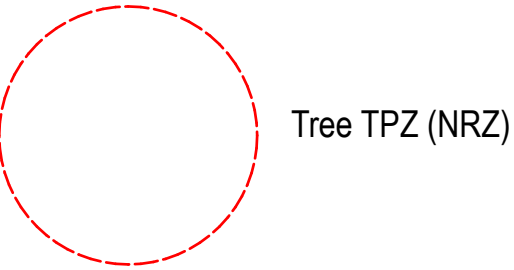
The trees listed in Table 1 were assessed as suitable for retention because they have either *fair* or *good* health combined with *fair* or *good* structure (Appendix C).

Three of the 13 trees (trees #1, 9 and 10) have *high* landscape significance; these trees should be retained in preference to lower significance trees.

Table 1 also provides the NRZ radius which forms the basis of the TPZ. This radius is measured at ground level from the centre of a tree's stem and gives a circular area, above and below ground. The NRZ incorporates the SRZ to protect tree viability and stability from construction disturbance. When defining the TPZ, the area can be altered from the NRZ in consideration of various factors, if required, where works near a tree/s cannot be avoided. Refer to Appendix E for further information on the definition and implementation of the TPZ.

Tree Report Extract (Tree Dimensions, August 2025, page 5)

Legend



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