



MERTON PRIORY PRECINCT WALL SITE
LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL
OCTOBER 2017



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01- Introduction

The site is centrally located in Colliers Wood, London Borough of Merton, a primarily residential area with retail located off Merton High street.

The site, a green corridor is flanked by the Sainsbury's / Marks and Spencers to the West. The Pickle stream runs along the eastern edge of the site and the Priory Retail Park beyond.

Contained within the site is a 200m length of precinct wall. This is one of the last remaining relics of the former Merton Priory, which occupied the adjacent site and served as one of England's most important centres of religion and learning.

This landscape report explores the exciting opportunity to showcase this historic wall within an appropriate and quality landscape setting and provide an asset to Merton and its residents.



⊖ Aerial Photo - NTS

Merton Priory Wall

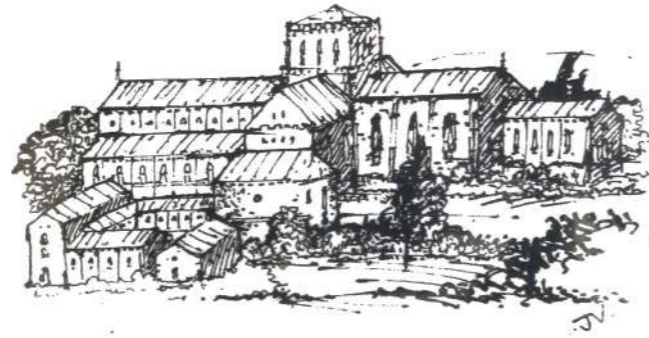
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02- Analysis

Historic Context

With origins dating back to 1114AD, the Priory church was first established at this site in 1117. Initially a wooden church, the construction of a stone church commenced in 1125 and was completed in 1196, this included a Chapter House (a historic 'board room').

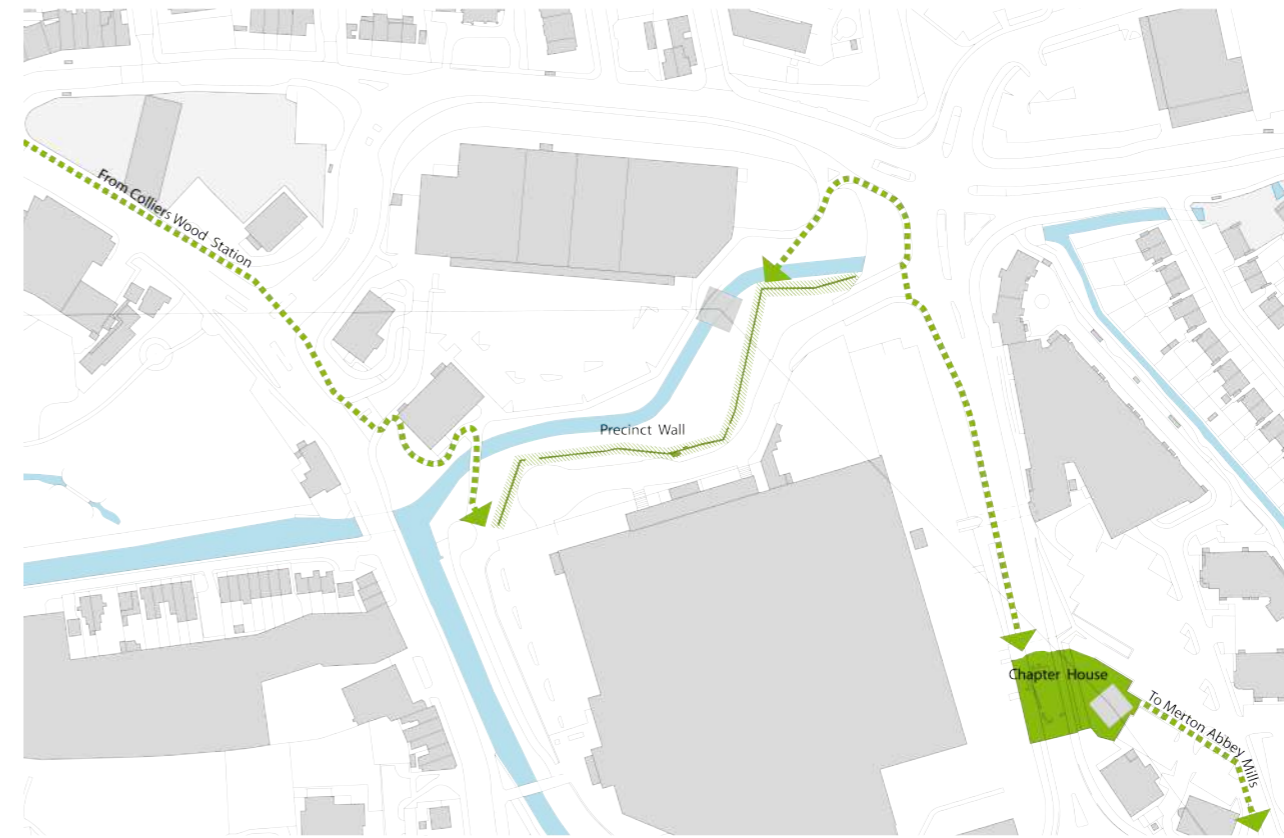


Throughout its 421 year life span the Priory served as one of England's most important centres of religion and learning. Notable dates included, the education of Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket (1130 - 41), the founding of Merton College, Oxford (1274), the crowning ceremony of Henry VI (1437). The church was demolished in 1538 with the Dissolution of Monasteries by Henry VIII.

However The Merton Priory Trust have secured planning to develop this cultural heritage asset, with a proposal that aims to enhance the setting of the remains as well as establish an educational and events centre.

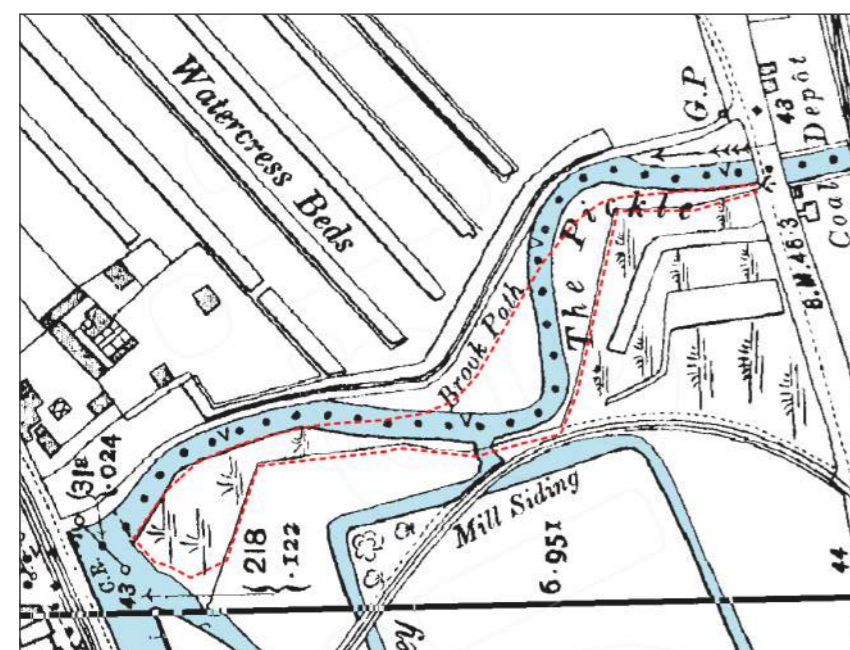
With initial excavations occurring 100 years ago, full excavations were carried out by the Museum of London from 1986 - 1990, revealing the remains of the Chapter House, which are now preserved under the Merantun Way Road bridge and are accessible from a foot tunnel.

The planning application also outlined the creation of an archeological route, which would link the remaining relics of the Priory, including the 200m section of the precinct wall (within the site) and the Merton Abbey Mills beyond (a former outbuilding or built with priory remains).

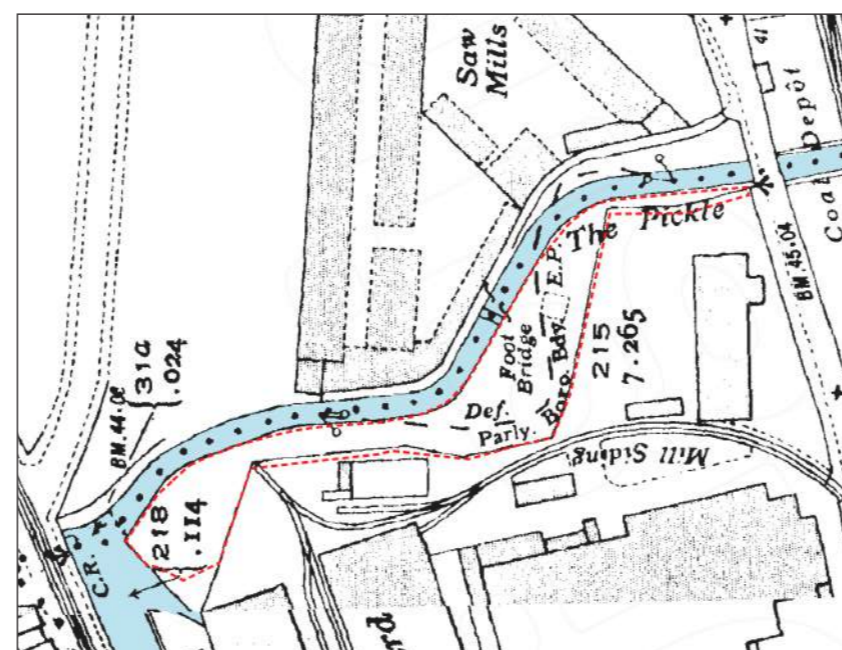


Proposed Archeological route as outlined in Merton Priory Planning submission

Historic Maps

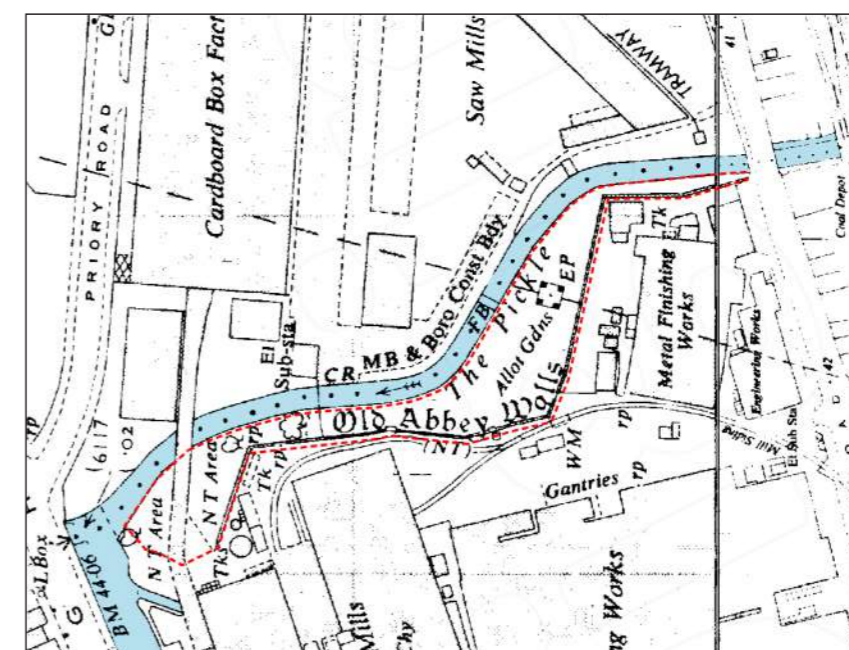


1910s



1930s

The Stream is rerouted away from the wall and likely channelised



1950

The site used as Allotments gardens, likely as a result of World War II

02- Analysis

The Wider Context

Centrally located in Colliers wood, the site is easily reached from Colliers wood Underground Station (less than 5 minutes walk). Natural nodal points anchor the northern and southern ends of the site. To the north of the site, a footpath, via a foot bridge, connects the Priory retail Park with Sainsbury's and Merton High Street. To the South of the site the A24 (Merantun Way) and the A236 (Christchurch Road) intersect at a major traffic junction.

Also to the North, The River Wandle and Pickle stream converge, beyond this, sits Wandle park owned by the National Trust, which presents an opportunity for the site to become integrated with this existing natural landscape.

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- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Green Space
 - Buildings
 - Orange Arrow Pedestrian routes
 - Blue Circle with Red Bar Underground stations
 - Blue Square with Bus Icon Bus Stop

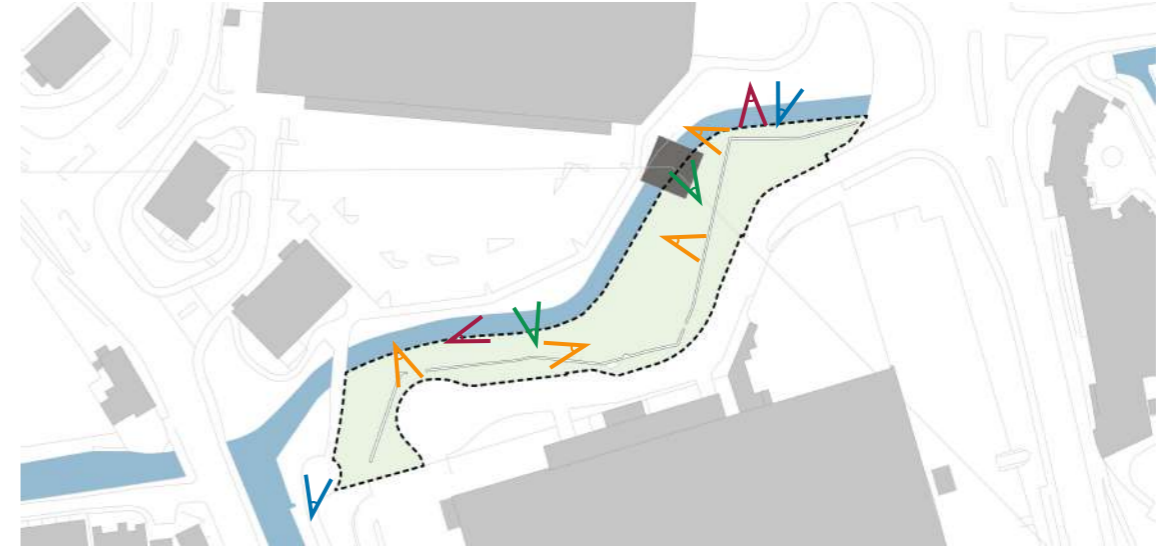
Wider Context Diagram - 1:2500 @ A3

02- Analysis

Photo-study



CONNECTION



VIEWS



CHANNELLED STREAM



WALL



Merton Priory Wall

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03- Analysis

Assets

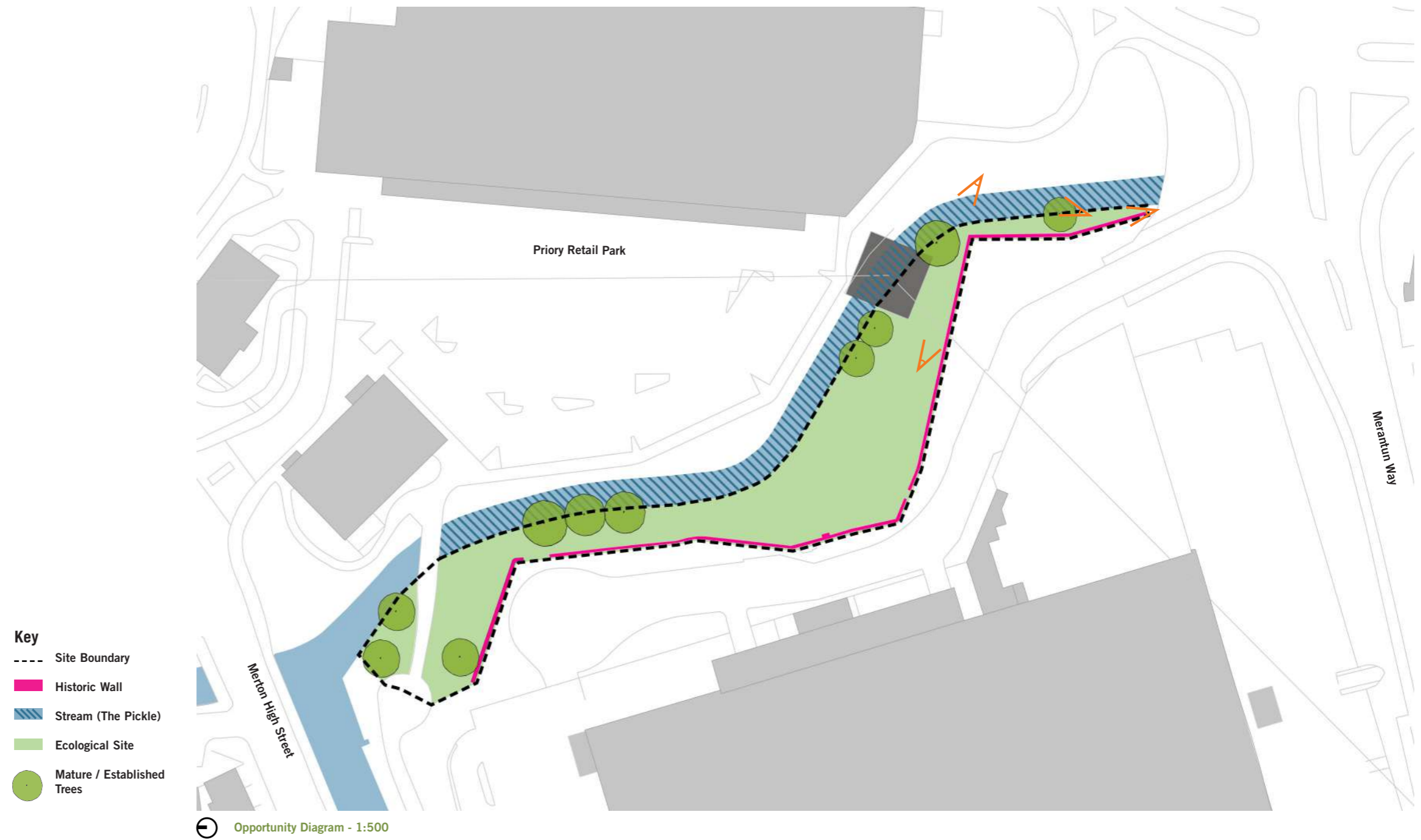
Key Assets:

- Historic wall
- Stream
- Mature / established trees
- Wildlife and biodiversity

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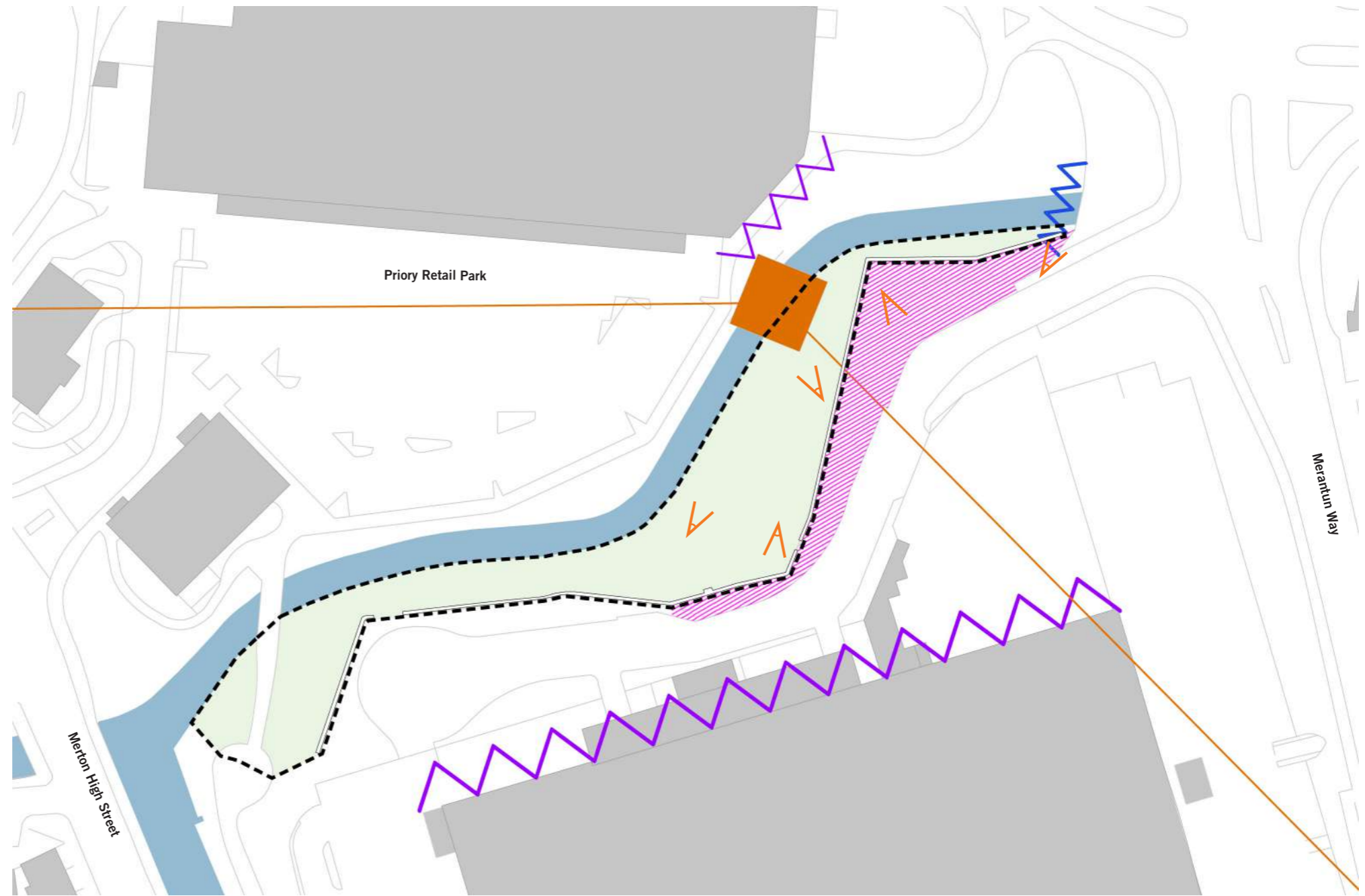
03- Analysis

Constraints

Key constraints:

- Power lines / Electricity pylon
- Industrial backdrop (back of house)
- Dead end
- Steep bank behind wall

- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Pylon / Power Lines
 - ⚡ Industrial backdrop (Back of House)
 - ⚡ Dead End
 - ▨ Steep Bank



⊖ Constraints Diagram - NTS

Merton Priory Wall

Landscape Proposal

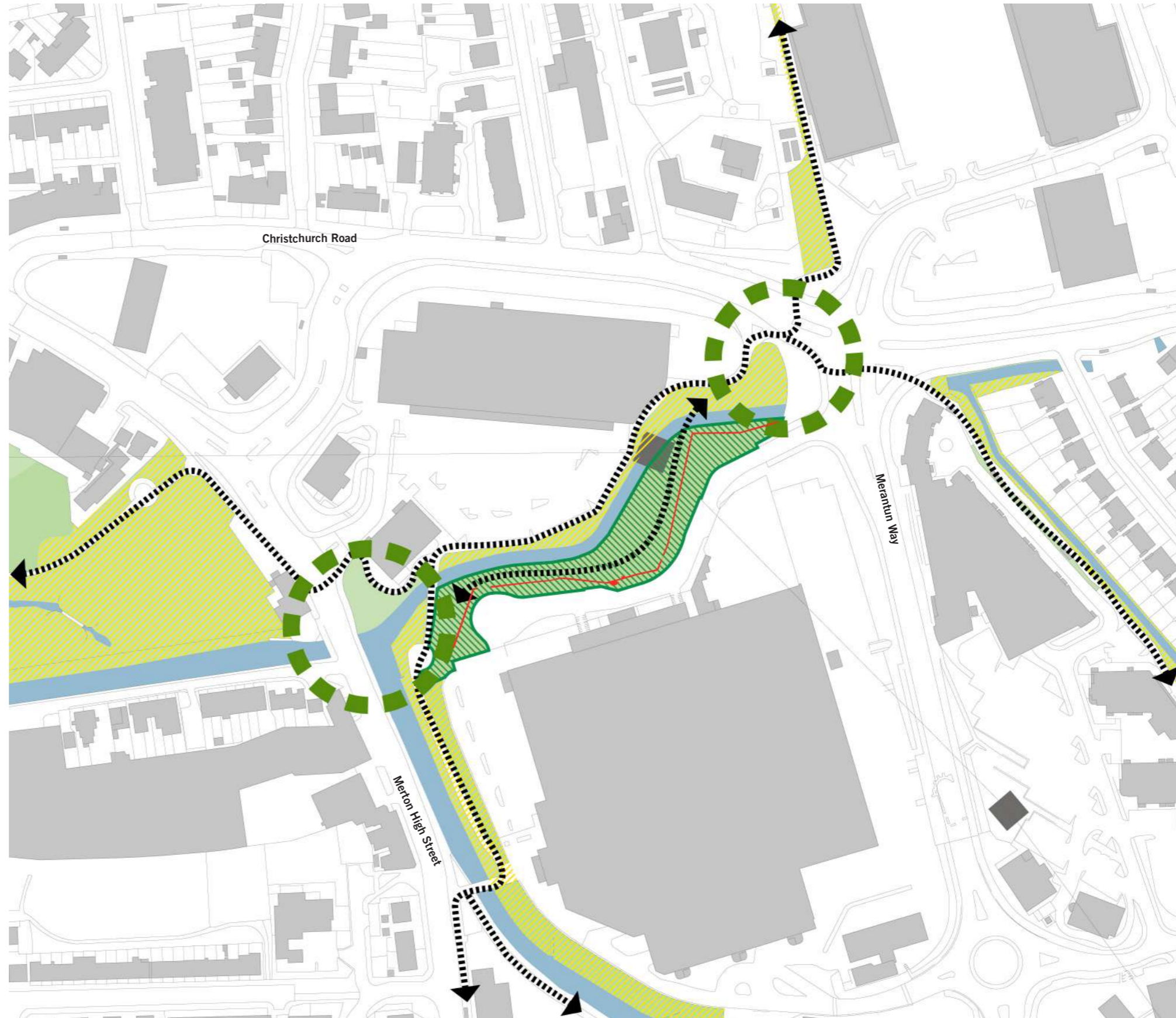
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04- Landscape Strategy

Proposal Opportunities

The proposal offers the opportunity to create a scheme which showcases the historic precinct wall within a new riverside park setting. The site will be opened up to the public, and with increased connections across it, will connect Merton High street with the Merantun way (A24) / Christchurch Road (A236) Junction.



- Key**
- Precinct Wall
 - New Riverside Park
 - Green Space Connections
 - Pedestrian Links
 - Gathering / Orientation Points

Merton Priory Wall

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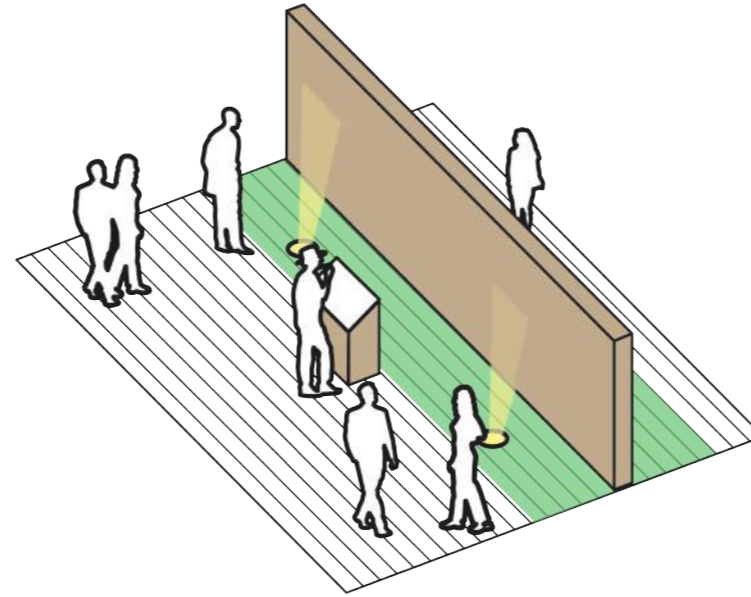
04- Landscape Strategy

Design Principals

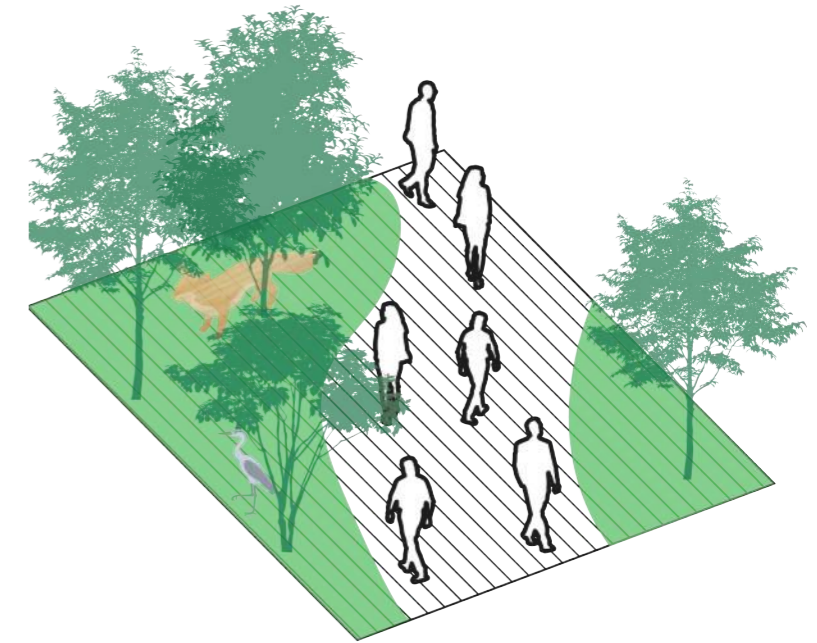
- Create a space to display the precinct wall
- Reinforce learning opportunities
- Increase permeability, with clear connections across the site.
- Provide amenity space
- Retain and reinforce the site's ecological value
- Create high quality hard and soft landscape areas with a naturalistic aesthetic
- Landscape design aesthetic to compliment the surrounding context of the Merton
- Provide and enhance views

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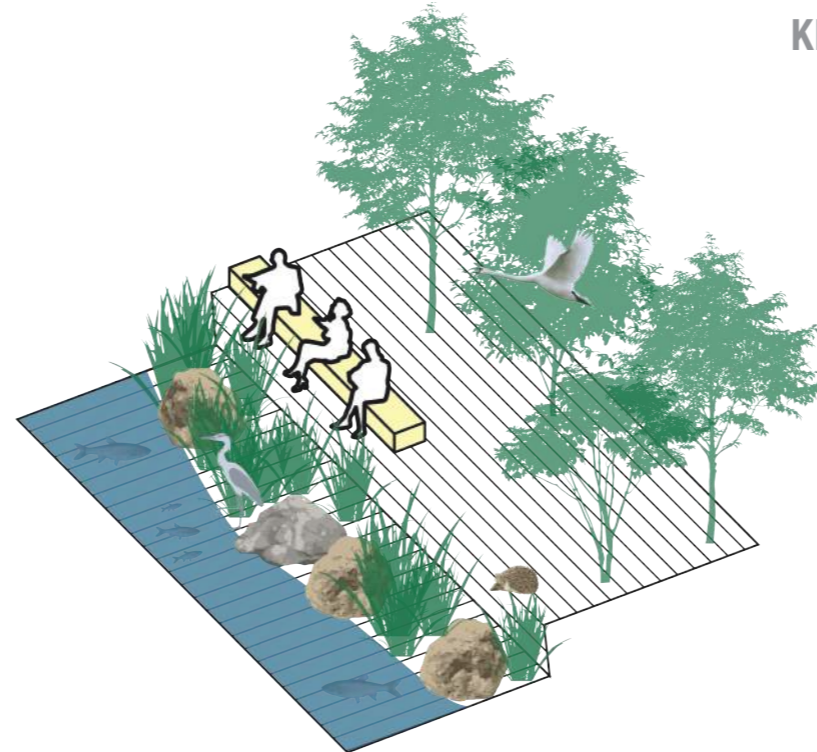


SHOWCASE HERITAGE

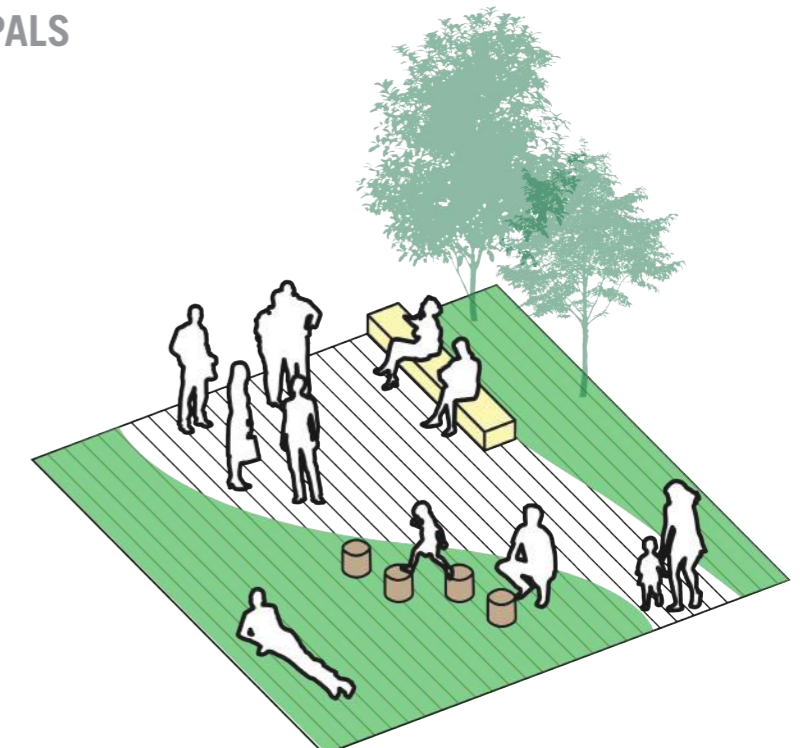


CONNECTION

KEY PRINCIPALS



ECOLOGY / WATER FRONTAGE

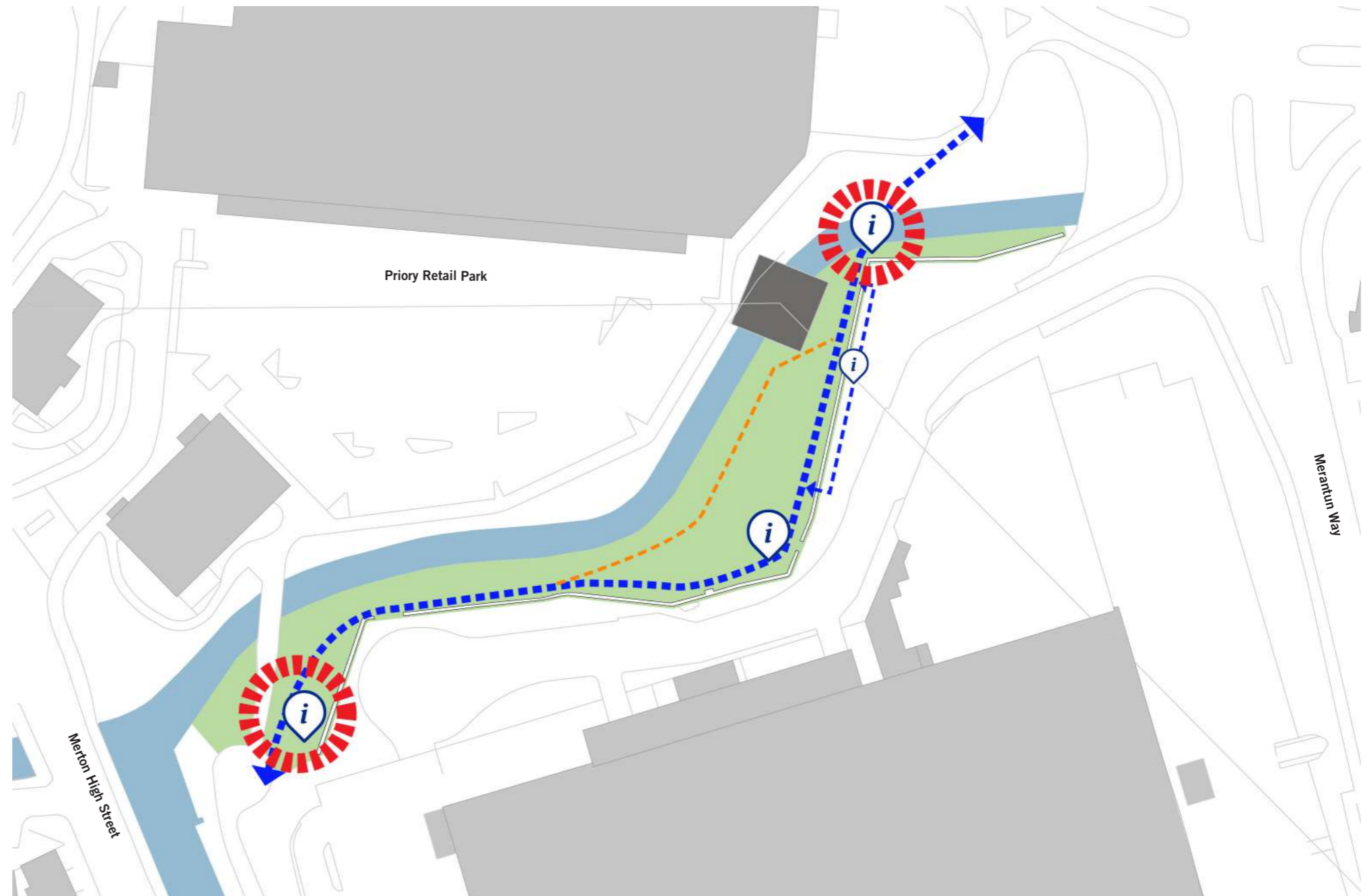







AMENITY SPACE

04- Landscape Strategy

Showcasing Information

The preservation and proper display of the Precinct wall is the primary reason for the enhancement of the site. It is important that visitors are provided with information and an appreciation of the wall, as well as its archaeological context. This narrative will be presented to the visitor as they journey across the site, using information boards at strategic points. Proposed information boards will be placed at the two entrance points, to greet visitors, with an additional point at the centre of the site, central to the amenity space. Uplighting the wall at the entrances could be used to maximise impact enhancing the visitors sense of arrival, as well as provide presence after dark.

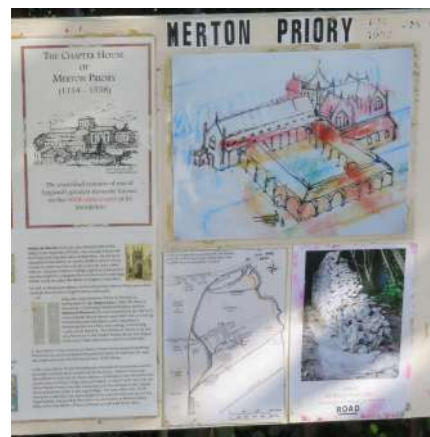


- Key**
-  Site Gateways
 -  Information Boards
 -  Primary Information Route
 -  Secondary Information Route
 -  Ecological Route

 Proposed Information Route Diagram - NTS

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Existing information on display

04- Landscape Strategy

Design Principals

As outlined in the assessment undertaken by Civic Engineers in June 2017, prominent issues impacting the precinct wall's existing condition include the absence of a retaining wall in certain areas, to hold back ground from the western face of wall, as well as lateral pressure from vegetation. The following design principals have been developed to ensure the protection of the wall, as well as enhance its setting.

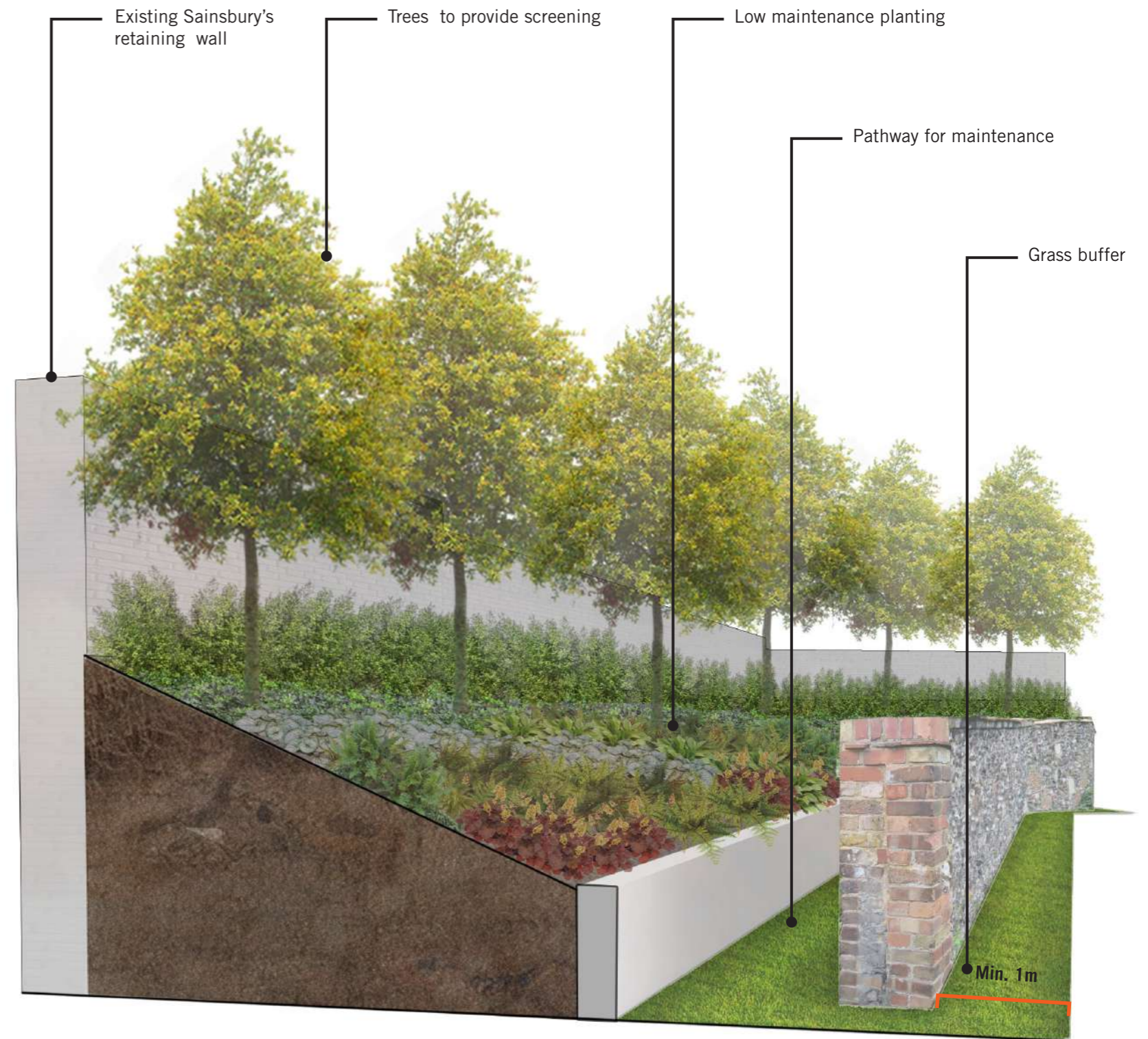
- Maintain grass buffer of 1m minimum around wall
- Propose a new retaining wall to create separation between the wall and earth and vegetation
- Screen industrial backdrop where possible with trees
- Under planting to be compact and low maintenance with an emphasis on native and ecological rich species.

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Existing condition - Insufficient / Failing gabion wall



Proposed wall protection

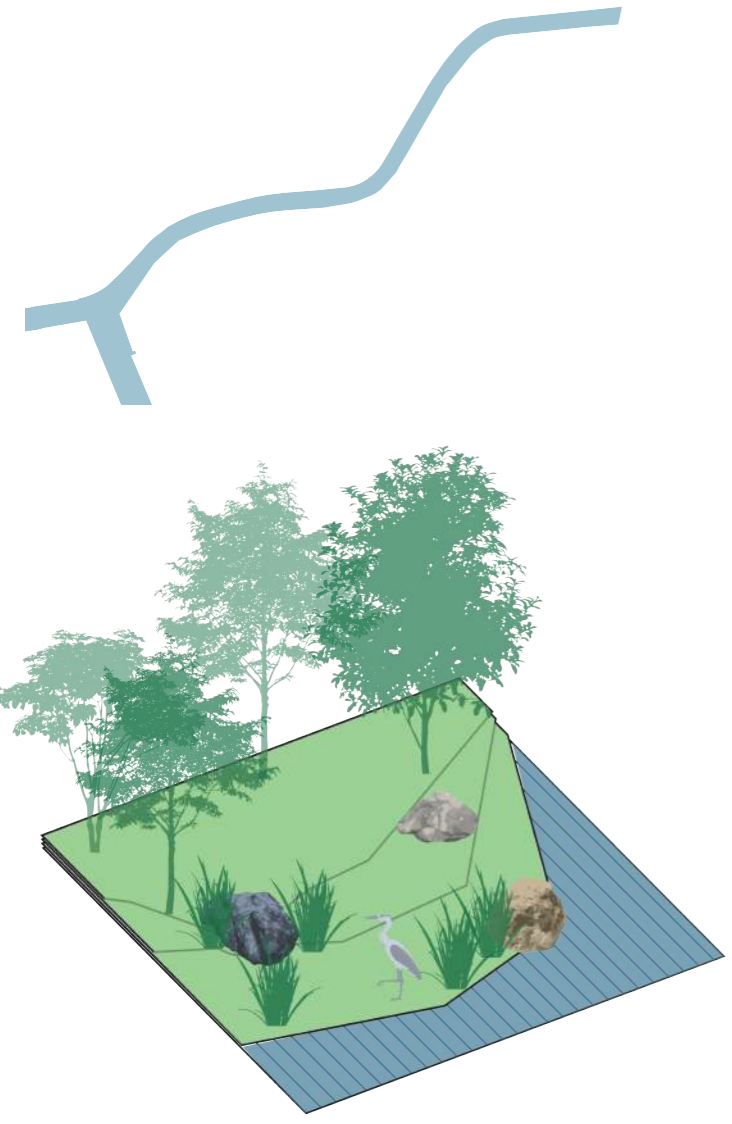
04- Design Proposals

Option A - Ecological / Habitat

Design Concept

The landscape proposal celebrates the rich ecology of the existing site. The organic aesthetic of the design references the 'Pickle' stream running along the eastern edge of the site. The ecology will be enhanced through the reinstatement of the soft edge of the Pickle, creating habitat for native fauna and flora.

Precedents



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04- Design Proposals

Option A - Ecological / Habitat

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Key

- Grass
- Shrubs
- Natural water Edge / Wetland
- Hard Surface
- Timber

Diagram Showing Proposal A



04- Design Proposals

Option A - Ecological / Habitat

Visualisation



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04- Design Proposals

Option B - Amenity

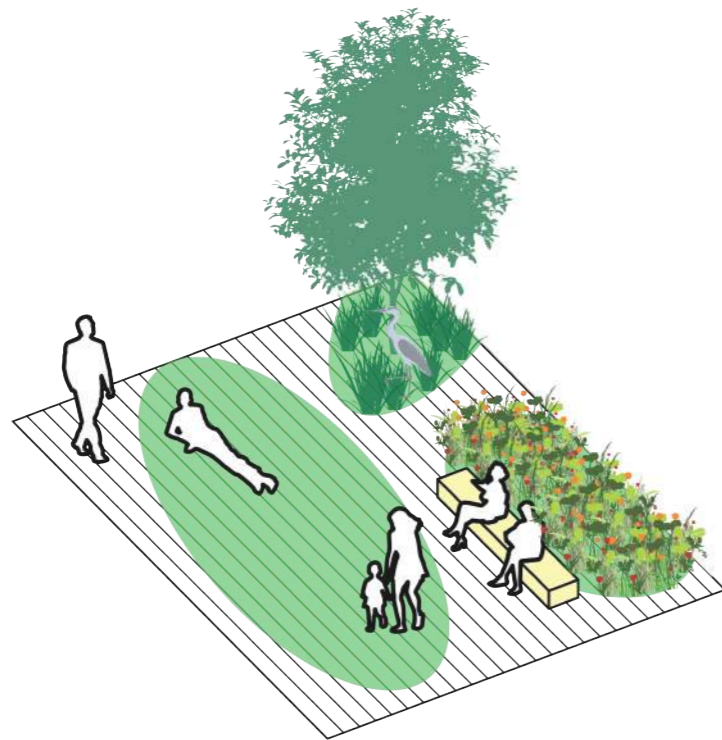
Design Concept

A riverside park is proposed, with emphasis on the creation of amenity space. Distorted ovals provide a platform for recreation, activities and planting. The space in between provides a system of paths for pedestrians to meander through the site. The existing hard edge is retained but softened with boulders and planting.

Merton Priory Wall

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Precedents



04- Design Proposals

Option B - Amenity



- Key**
- Grass
 - Shrubs
 - Natural water Edge / Wetland
 - Hard Surface
 - Timber

Diagram Showing Proposal B



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04- Design Proposals

Option A - Ecological / Habitat

Visualisation

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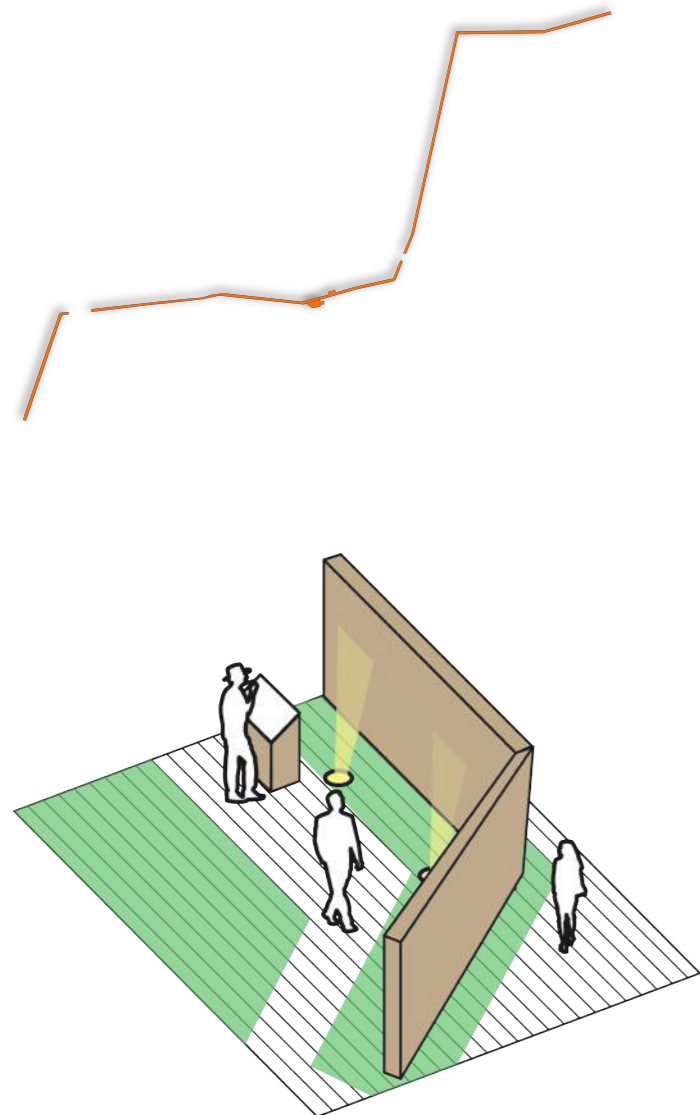


04- Design Proposals

Option C - Combined Ecology & Amenity

Design Concept

This landscape proposal has equal focus on habitat creation and amenity space. It draws influence from the angular shape of the wall to inform the Landscape aesthetic. The river edge is broken down at either end of the site, whilst the retained hard edge through the central section maximises amenity space.



Precedents



Merton Priory Wall

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04- Design Proposals

Option C - Combined Ecology & Amenity

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Key

- Grass
- Shrubs
- Natural Water Edge / Wetland
- Hard Surface
- Timber

Diagram Showing Proposal C



04- Design Proposals

Option C - Combined Ecology & Amenity

Visualisation



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