

**To the Chairperson and Members
of the South East Area Committee**

Peace Park, Christchurch Place, Dublin 8. - Report on Part 8 Consultation

Background and Site Description

The redevelopment of the 'Peace Park' is a project under the Dublin City Council 'City Centre Public Realm Masterplan'. This 2016 report established a list of projects to be implemented over the coming years, with an emphasis on the city centre and the Civic Spine 'Dubline'. The Public Realm Strategy commits the City Council to ensure that all public spaces are accessible to all regardless of ability or age.

The proposal to refurbish the Peace Park is also part of the Dubline for which funding has been secured from Failte Ireland.

The Peace Garden is a 912sq.m. pocket park located on the south eastern corner of the junction of Christchurch Place and Nicholas Street, opposite Christchurch Cathedral. The centre of the park contains a sunken central pool / fountain and hard landscaped area with seating surrounded by mature planting and trees on the upper/street level. The main features within the park include a bronze "Tree of Life" sculpture, the pool / fountain and the natural stonework of Calp and Liscannor. The park is surrounded by cast iron railings and the Millennium Child Sculpture lies just outside the main gateway on the public footpath. The site adjoins the ruins of the Protected Structure of St. Nicholas Church to the south-west, Christchurch View apartments to the south and Jurys Inn Hotel to the east.

The design of the park was centred on a sunken garden which was a popular theme at the time it was developed. However, the space is problematic because it does not comply with up to date standards for universal access and safety. This is due to the inaccessibility of the steps to the sunken area, the potential for trips and falls from the upper to lower area and the lack of passive surveillance. The dense canopies of the trees and their proximity to neighbouring properties have caused excessive shading.

Consequently, due to the design issues and the fact that hidden and secluded spaces facilitate anti-social behaviour, the Peace Park has been closed to the public for almost 10 years.

Recent History

Prior to the current park which was constructed in the late 1980's the area was a derelict corner site. The Parks Superintendent's report from that time stated that the objective *'is to provide an attractive landscape setting for passive recreation, providing a suitable setting for sightseeing and relaxation'*.

The adjacent sites of Jurys Hotel and the Christchurch View apartments were developed in the 1990's.

In 2005, 'The Ship Street/ Werburgh Street Framework Plan', proposed a new six to seven storey civic building on this site however this plan did not progress.

Zoning and policy context under the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022:

The site of the proposed development is zoned Z9 "To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks." The site is located within a zone of archaeological interest and adjoins the boundary of a Conservation Area.

Part 8 Proposal

Parks and Landscape Services have proposed a design layout which is simple and underpinned by the primary concerns and issues that arose during the design and consultation process. The key issues of safety, universal access and maintaining the pedestrian access to the Christchurch View apartment's pedestrian gate are all addressed.

The proposal facilitates greater visual and physical permeability and encourages pedestrians to pass through, experience the park and also to stop and rest there. All level changes have been removed to allow for full universal access through the space and the planting scheme has been designed to provide high quality colourful displays. Clear stemmed tree planting strategically placed throughout the space will provide an appropriate level of tree canopy and minimise nuisance for adjacent residents.

A key design principle underpinning the proposal is that it be designed to universal access standards. This requires the removal of level changes. The park furniture will also be high quality bespoke furniture and this is to ensure that seating opportunities accommodate people who may have mobility impairments, but also encourages the use of the space by the public to make it a safer place to be.

Contrasting colour tones will be used through the materials palette to highlight structural and directional elements and assist those that may have visual impairments.

The Consultation Process

Prior to part 8 a series of meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders to discuss and develop the proposal for the park. A leaflet drop was also undertaken locally which disseminated details of the proposal that emerged through the consultation process and requested comments and feedback. The key external stakeholders that were met during the consultation were; Christchurch View apartments residents and management company, Jurys Hotel management team, Dean of Christchurch Cathedral and Cornmarket Financial Services.

The Part 8 process subsequently commenced in January 2017 and as part of this, further submissions were received. Dublinia, Jury's Hotel, Christchurch Cathedral, Cornmarket Financial have supported and welcomed the project. Residents of Christchurch View Apartments, while supporting the refurbishment of the space object to the removal of the railings which they perceive gives greater security to the residents.

The majority of submissions received were from the residents and owners of Christchurch apartments. Submissions were also received from the Christchurch Apartments management company, Dublinia and Jury's Inn. One of the observations comprised a petition signed by 89 residents of Christchurch apartments.

The main issues arising and how they are proposed to be addressed are set out below;

Antisocial Behaviour and Security

A right of way exists across the park adjacent to the ruins of St Nicholas Church. This right of way was granted to the residents of Christchurch View apartments about 10 years after the park had been laid out in the late 1980's. It did not form part of the original plan and was agreed to facilitate ease of access for the residents of the new apartments. It should be noted that the main entrance to Christchurch apartments is located on Ross Road.

The proposal recommends the removal of railings around the park which will allow residents to access their gate through the open space without the need for a segregated route. Anti-social behaviour is the primary concern of the Christchurch residents. It is their concern that the plan will expose residents to increased levels of anti social behaviour and that it will be a security risk to residents using the gate to the apartments.

Response:

The principle of opening access and directing people through the space encourages positive social interaction and introduces passive surveillance. This is a proven methodology to deter anti-social behaviour in public space which arises where the space is secluded and/or not freely accessible to the wider public. This design methodology is considered good international practice and has been successfully used by Dublin City Council.

The residents of Christchurch apartments will have un-impeded access to their pedestrian gate which will be covered by public lighting. The Law Agent has confirmed that the Part 8 proposals do not affect the right of way to the Christchurch apartments.

The seating in the park is positioned away from the hotel and apartment complex, while at the same time providing good opportunities for rest and relaxation in an open setting. The specification of the planting and trees will avoid creating secluded spaces and the introduction of public lighting to the space will further improve security and deter anti social behaviour. Coupled with an improved maintenance regime by Parks staff this would provide a significant improvement and enhance the amenity of the area.

As part of the security assessment the Parks Service will put a warden in place similar to that currently operating successfully around the Civic Offices and in St Patricks Park. This would comprise regular inspections throughout the day and evening.

If deemed necessary by the Gardaí, CCTV will be installed however it is not envisaged that this will be necessary.

Greening and Biodiversity

Another concern that arose during the consultation meetings was the amount of proposed hard pavement areas as opposed to green areas. The layout and scale of the soft landscaped areas were guided by the aspiration to open up the park visually.

Response:

The reduction in soft landscaping under the current proposal is approximately 15% compared with the existing layout. However it is accepted that the quantum of the soft landscape area could be increased around the perimeter of the space without detriment to the overall scheme. This would facilitate retaining the existing soft landscape to hard landscape area at the current level without significant change to the Part 8 plan.

It should be noted that in the local context, the Parks Service has recently planted the medians at Nicholas Street and replanted the grounds of the civic offices with pollinator friendly perennial planting and wildflower meadows. The proposal for Peace Park includes similar schemes and the detailed planting proposals will be specified to align with and support the objectives of the Dublin City Council Biodiversity Action Plan.

Play

In recognition of the need for additional play opportunities in the local area, a play space is being developed in consultation with local residents on Ross Road to cater for local children. However there is also opportunity for informal play in the Peace Park using the raised central lawn.

Heritage and Artwork

All current artworks are to be relocated on site in consultation and under the supervision of the Public Arts Officer and approval of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Group.

As the project occupies a historically significant site, interpretation of the heritage of the site is a key component of the project. It is proposed to pursue a comprehensive interpretive information piece in collaboration with Dublinia, the Heritage Officer and the City Archaeologist.

Protected Structure

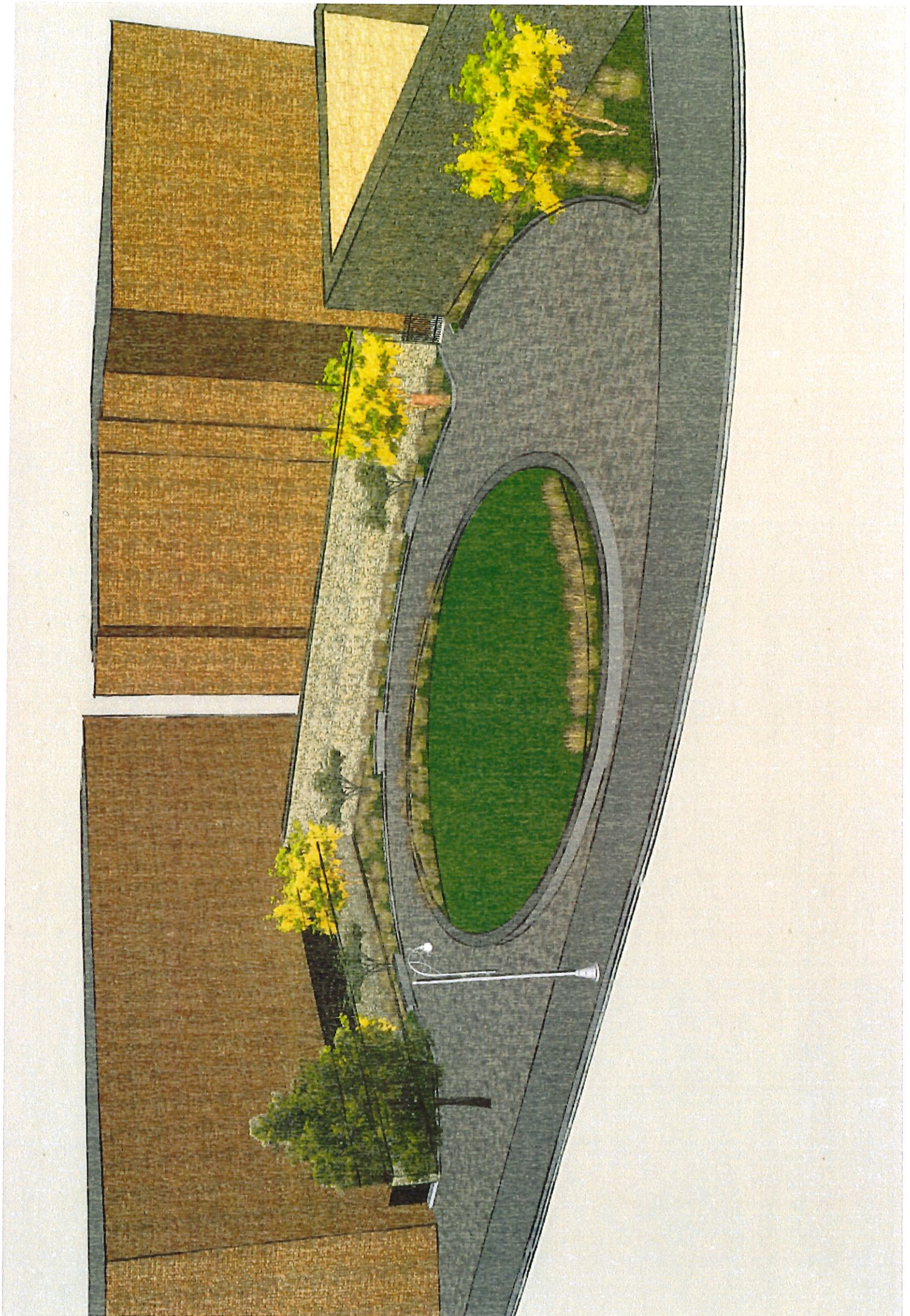
It is not proposed to carry out any work to the protected structure, St Nicholas Church as part of the project. The ivy on the structure will remain and will not be removed. None of the works proposed will impact on the protected structure which will be fenced off for the duration of the works. Any future works to the protected structure will be subject to necessary consultations and the required permits.

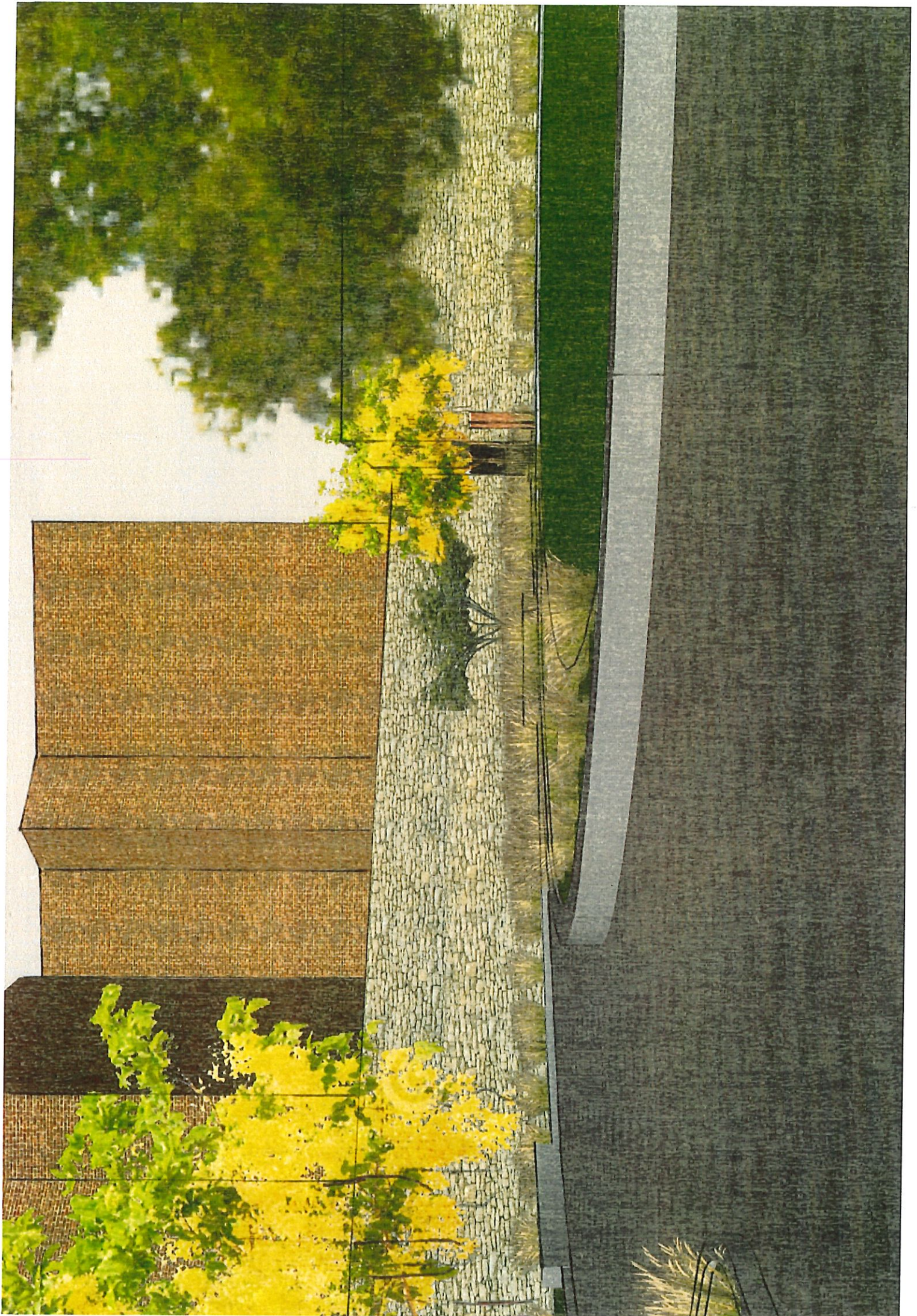
Conclusion

It is considered that the Part 8 design proposal, supported with additional maintenance and security arrangements will deliver a significant improvement to this public space and bring it back into public use.

Every effort has been made to address the genuine concerns of the residents in the design stage. Dublin City Council will monitor the space in the construction and post construction phase to ensure that this public space is a success, given its location in the heart of Christchurch and on the Dublin.

Leslie Moore
City Parks Superintendent





PEACE PARK

Landscape Masterplan

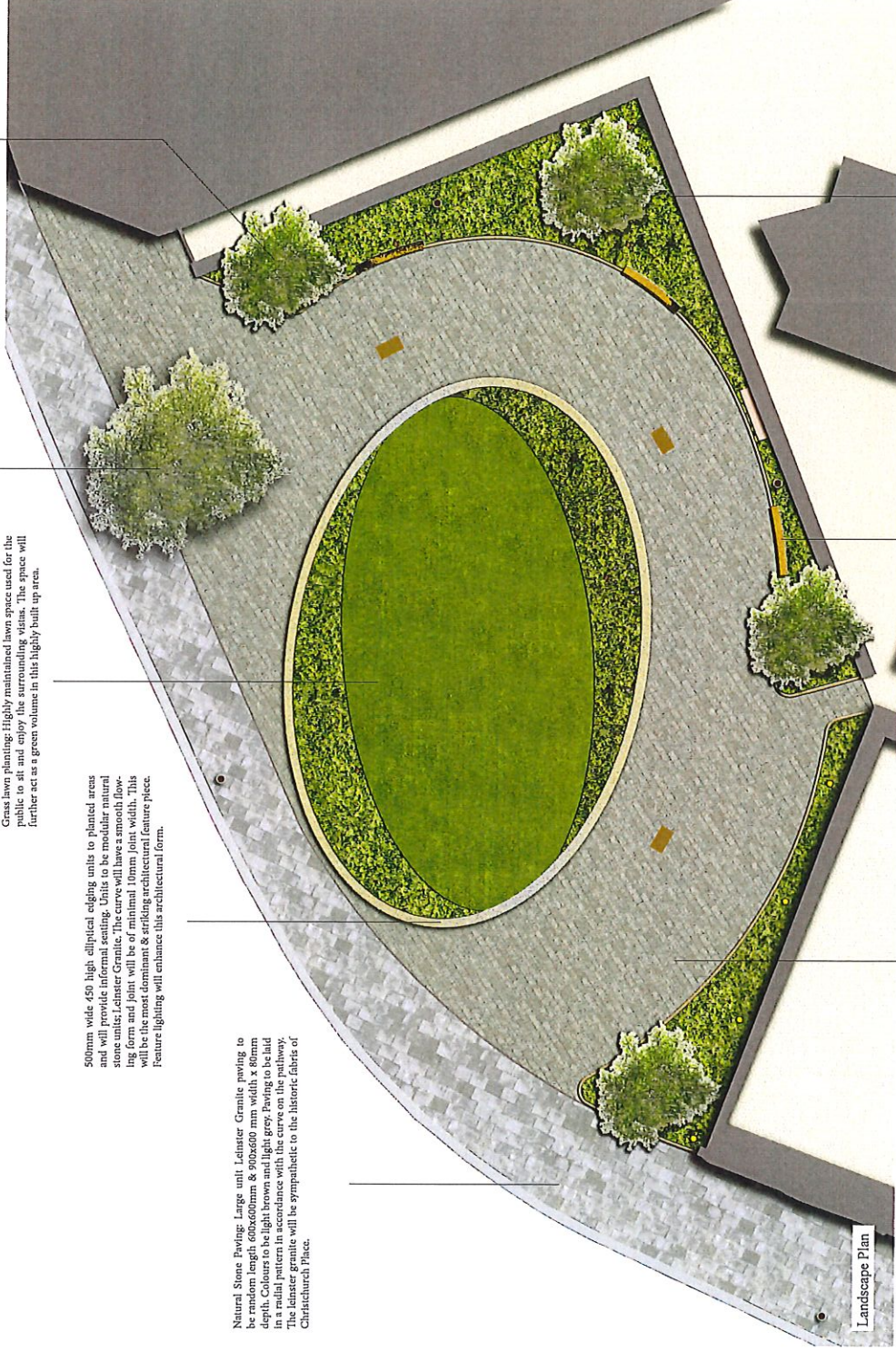
Semi-Mature Tree Planting: *Platanus x acerifolia* (London Plane), Standard Semi-mature, 1x transplanted, 30-35cm girth, minimum 450cm height, minimum 200cm clear stem, Root Balled. Trees to develop into large standard specimens and will be a key feature of the park as it develops in coming years. Tree species as per specimens found in neighbouring Christchurch.

Multi stem, minimum of three stems specimen tree species. Max height 4500mm. Root Balled. Trees to develop into specimens trees with a transparent nature to allow light into neighbouring properties whilst greening the boundary walls.

Green lawn plantings: Highly maintained lawn spaces used for the public to sit and enjoy the surrounding views. The space will further act as a green volume in this highly built up area.

500mm wide 450 high elliptical edging units to planted areas and will provide informal seating. Units to be modular natural stone units; Leinster Granite. The curve will have a smooth flowing form and joint will be of minimal 10mm joint width. This will be the most dominant & striking architectural feature piece. Feature lighting will enhance this architectural form.

Natural Stone Paving: Large unit Leinster Granite paving to be random length 600-800mm & depth 80mm width x 80mm depth. Colours to be light brown and light grey paving to be laid in a radial pattern in accordance with the view on the fabric of Christchurch Place.



Natural Stone Paving: Medium unit Leinster Granite (light brown and light grey) paving (Non Paving) size 450mm x 150x600mm & 150x300x80mm. The Limestone will become more predominant towards the interior of the space.

Locations for solid timber seating, 400x400mm singular timber units fixed onto steel uprights. Detailing of timber benches will be as per St. Austons re development in Dublin.

Herbaceous & Grass Planting: 30-60cm height/Spread, Container, 2 - 5 Litres. Ground cover towards the front. Climbers along the boundary wall. All planting to be of a transparent nature with colourful displays during the spring - autumn months.

Landscape Plan

