

# Dc.30 DIAMOND PARK



Design Rationale

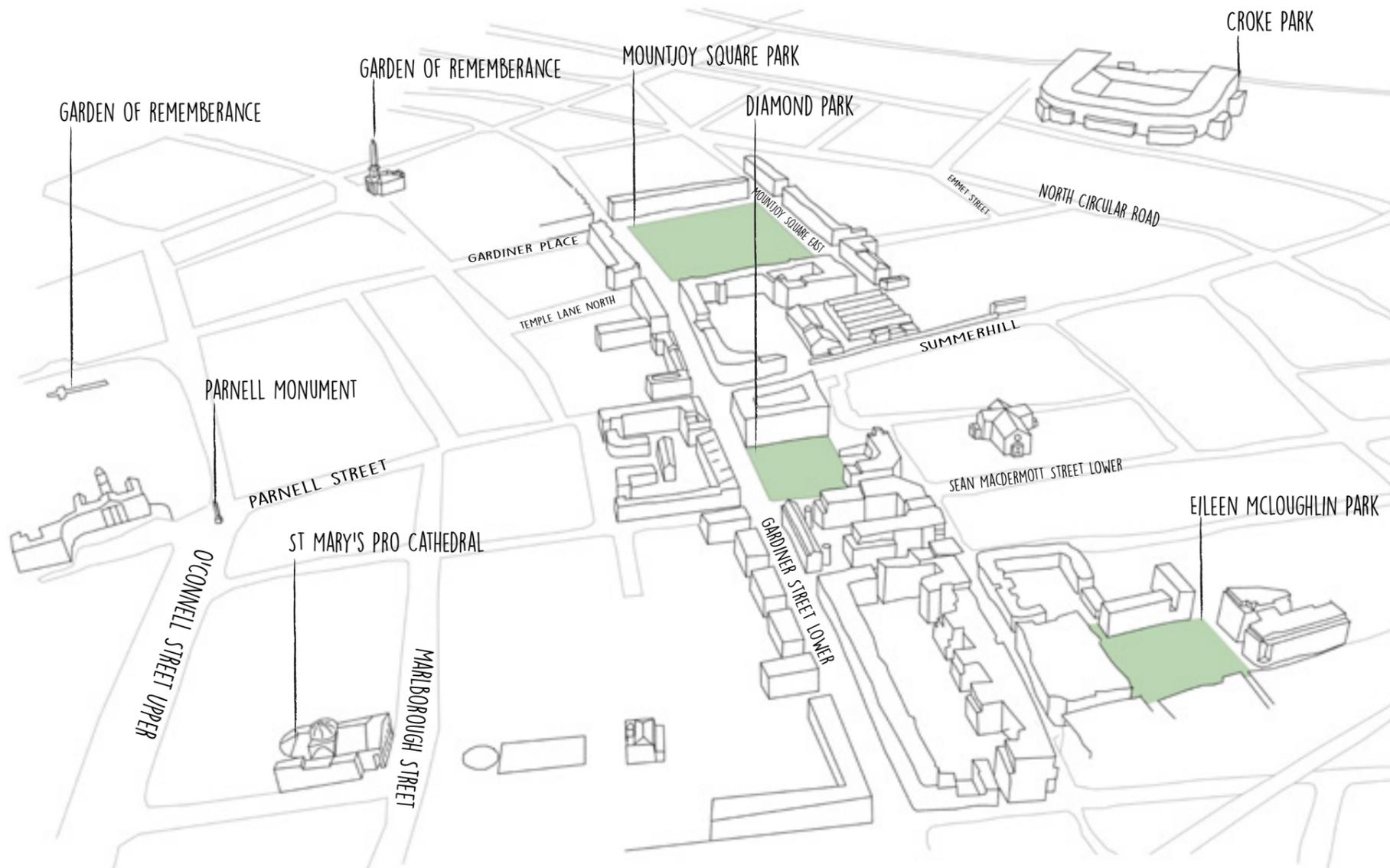
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Above: Context surrounding Diamond Park.

## 1.0 Introduction

Diamond Park is proposed as a major new public open space for the North East Inner City area and the city of Dublin. It has the potential to transform this part of Dublin and to act as a major resource for local residents, other citizens and tourists who are visiting the area in increasing numbers.

The purpose of this document is to describe the subject site, the design team's response to the site as well as the design proposals for new landscape and external works for the park. This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects, Austin Reddy & Company and others.

The following additional documents have been issued by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects as part of this submission:

No.	Scale	Size	Rev.	Title
200	1:000	A3	-	Site Location Map
201	1:200	A2	-	Site Survey
202	1:200	A2	-	Landscape Plan
240	1:100	A1	-	Landscape Sections
270	n/a	A1	-	Artist's Impression

Dermot Foley Landscape Architects (DFLA) have worked closely with the client, Dublin City Council, and design team to arrive at a proposal which maximizes the opportunities for a high quality usable and enjoyable open space. A series of public consultations were held over an extended time period. The design proposals illustrated in this document and the accompanying drawings, emerged directly from the consultation process. The proposals express the input of all involved.

The following statutory and other documents were used to inform the proposals:

- Dublin City Development Plan 2016 - 2022 (published by Dublin City Council)
- Dublin City Public Realm Strategy, 2016 (published by Dublin City Council)
- North East Inner City Greening Strategy (Draft), 2018 (published by Dublin City Council)

## 2.0 Planning Context

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022 zones the site Z9, with objectives to 'preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks'. The North East Inner City Greening Strategy (2018) classifies Diamond Park as a 'vibrant and well-used green space' with 'new opportunities for all ages and abilities'.

The Dublin City Public Realm Strategy (2016) identifies the immediate context in which Diamond Park is located as an area to seek 'design opportunities that may reduce crime and anti-social behavior in an inner urban residential area'. It also seeks to 'consult with interest groups' to 'make public spaces more inclusive and accessible for all ages and capabilities, with a particular emphasis on children, youth and the elderly'.

It is evident that the subject site is widely acknowledged as having the potential to play a larger role in the inner city; providing improved play facilities, permeability and enjoyment for locals and visitors alike.

Generally, the planning documentation acknowledges a relative lack of usable public open space in the North East Inner City. Much of the space available is associated with open lawn space with limited play facilities. The area has the potential to cater for a dynamic local community, growing in diversity. Dublin City Council publications support the proposition that Diamond Park could play a prominent role as both an enhanced public open space and a node within a network of amenity spaces in the local urban fabric.



*Above: Extract from Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 highlighting Diamond Park. Diamond Park is located under zoning objective Z9 'To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks'.*







Attendees participating in the exercises and discussing the range of activities that Diamond Park could host.

### 3.2 Workshop 2 - Held on 7th November 2018

On Wednesday 7th November, the public were invited to join Dublin City Council and Dermot Foley Landscape Architects in a workshop for Diamond Park. Two workshops were held in the Community Room, Summerhill Court on Summerhill Road. The workshop was hosted twice, in the morning and again in the evening, in order to facilitate as many people and as wide a mix of participants as possible.

It comprised of two exercises designed to give an insight into participant preference. For the first exercise attendees were asked what they would like to see and do in the park. Opinions were recorded and analyzed. The findings were summarized in a diagram which illustrated the main activities that emerged from that process. These were organised into the three activities: social, active and passive.

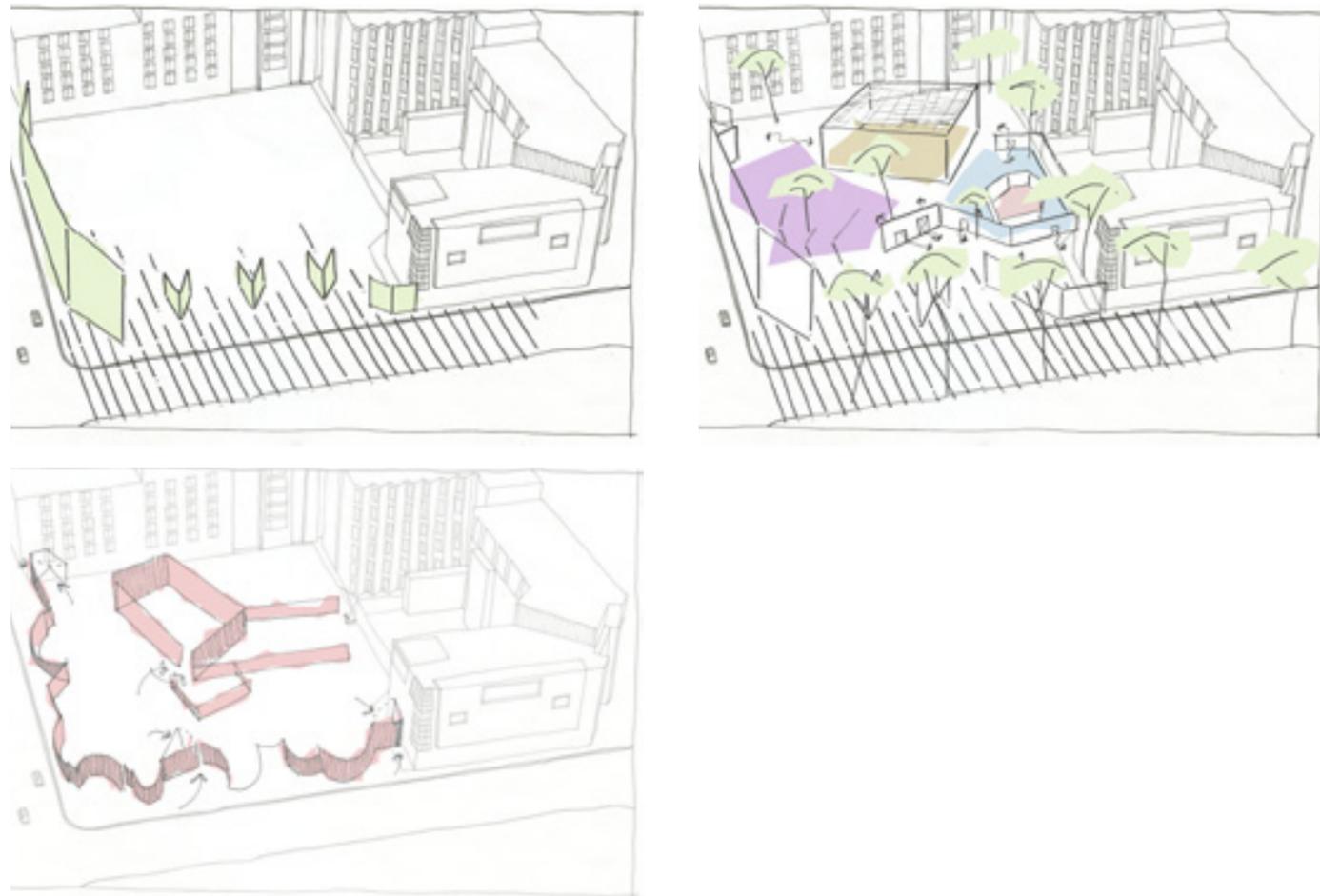
The second exercise related more specifically to potential elements within the park, such as furniture, materials and art installations. The participants were asked to review a series of images and select the ones that they found most appealing. Images depicting use of water, retention of the existing mosaics, creative play and interactive art installations were found to be most popular. Combining the results of both exercises produced a picture of a multi-layered landscape; an inviting park that brings the community together, with an ability to cater for all ages.

Based on the findings of the second consultation, DFLA and the design team went on to develop a sketch landscape design proposal for the park.

### 3.3 Workshop 3 - Held on 6th December 2018

The sketch landscape design proposal was exhibited at the third workshop. Similar to the previous workshop a morning and evening workshop was held in the Dublin Adult Learning Centre on Mountjoy Square. Each workshop consisted of a projected presentation informing the public of the design development and results to date. A range of precedents, based on the results from the previous workshops were also shown and discussed. A number of sketch design options were tabled, and participants were invited to draw and write their comments on the designs presented to them.

A series of lively verbal discussions were generated throughout the two sessions. The participants were also asked to give their opinions and comments in the form of written feedback, which was then collected, analysed and considered. Comments on the type of elements in the park, their location and use were recorded. Feedback was generally positive, nonetheless comments have been carefully considered and where possible incorporated in the design proposal.



Above: Sketch diagrams showcasing the playful nature of the proposed design.



Above: Attendees discuss the park and engage in the interactive feedback exercises.

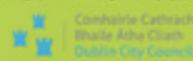


PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO REVIEW  
THE DESIGN OF DIAMOND PARK

THURSDAY

12TH MARCH 2020 @ 7PM

RUTLAND NATIONAL SCHOOL (NEXT DOOR TO DIAMOND PARK)



Above: Presentation of the sketch design during workshop 4 in March 2020.

Left: Poster advertising the public workshop.

### 3.4 Workshop 4 - Held on 12th March 2020

On Thursday 12th March, the public were invited to join Dublin City Council and Dermot Foley Landscape Architects in a workshop for Diamond Park. The workshop was held in Rutland National School on Seán MacDermott Street beside Diamond Park. The workshop consisted of a Powerpoint presentation informing the public of the proposed design of the park including a summary of the previous workshops to date.

A series of verbal discussions were gathered throughout the session. Comments on the type of play elements and sports facilities were discussed as well as the concept of having the park open 24/7. The participants were also asked to give their opinions and comments in the form of written feedback, which was collected and considered following the workshop.

The feedback was generally positive. People were mostly concerned with the topics of the openness of the park and organised sporting facilities. The participants generally felt that they have been listened to and the park will make a positive impact to the community. They were appreciative of the effort that was put in to cater for the range of suggestions that the public have made over the course of the four workshops. Following the workshop, the client and design team were happy to progress the design further and proceed with the official Part 8 application.

## 4.0 Appraisal of Existing Landscape

The site is bound by Gardiner Street on the west, Sean MacDermott Street to the south, Rutland National School to the south east, Gloucester Place Student Residence to the north east and Gardiner Street student accommodation to the north. It is situated in close proximity to many social housing complexes and other residential accommodation, and the newly constructed Gardiner Street student accommodation and Gloucester Place student residence. The park is currently gated with a black iron fence running the length of Gardiner Street and Sean MacDermott Street. An iron fence also is used as a boundary to both of the new student accommodation blocks as well as Rutland National School. The site is situated on a south-facing shallow slope with low to moderate exposure. The slope offers possibilities for terracing and other spatial devices. Consideration has been given to provide universal accessibility as the current situation has no steps or other obstacles.

The current situation includes a predominantly hard landscape with an extensive area to the north of tarmacadam which is bounded on all four sides to create a 5-a-side football pitch. A number of benches are located in the park as well as two table tennis tables, gym equipment and art installations in the forms of ground murals and a mosaic bench. Following the park's most recent redesign in 2003, a children's playground was introduced bounded by a railing and hedge.

There is a scattering of early mature tree planting within the park and pockets of grass lawn. A line of pine trees were recently planted within the park which have failed to establish. A memorial tree known as 'Jerry's tree' is located to the south of the park. A number of existing street trees form a line along Gardiner Street.



*Selected site photographs, September 2018, illustrating the range of site conditions and specific elements.*





*Above: Diamond Park under construction, Lord Mayor Bertie Ahern opens Diamond Park in 1986, looking north east over Sean MacDermott Street towards Gloucester Place (Dublin City Library Digital Collections).*

## 5.0 History

The site was generally undeveloped until after the 17th century when Brookings map of 1728 showed the first of any substantial development in the area, with the laying out of present-day Corporation Street/James Joyce Street (formerly Mabbott Street), Seán MacDermott Street/Railway Street and Talbot Street.

The main development of this area of Dublin is strongly associated with the Gardiner estate. Although the Gardiners were active in other areas of the north inner city throughout the 18th century, they do not appear to have turned their attention to this particular part of Dublin before the last quarter of the 18th century when they constructed a number of terraces in the early decades of the 18th century.

During the 18th century, development was characterised by the gentrification of this part of the city. However, during the 19th century this impetus had slowed and by the mid-19th century it had developed a reputation as a red-light district. The tenement buildings on the site of Diamond Park remained standing until the urban regeneration programmes of the 1980s that led to their ultimate demolition. The present park was developed in the mid-1980s as part of the Corporation Urban Renewal Programme. It was re-designed in 2003 to include a children's playground and an all-weather pitch.

## 6.0 Landscape Design Proposals

The landscape proposals have been developed in close collaboration with Dublin City Council (DCC) and the design team so that they are fully integrated with both the existing and future architectural design intent and cognisant of civil engineering constraints. The proposals facilitate the access requirements for emergency vehicles, drainage, attenuation and services. The landscape proposals are specific to the requirements of the local community as well as visitors to the area. The proposals offer the following important landscape and public realm opportunities:

1. Universal access throughout all of the proposed spaces
2. Increased passive supervision
3. Safe and secure public park
4. New play spaces and seating throughout the proposed park
5. Attractive, innovative and multi-functional landscape
6. New landscape buffer between Gardiner Street and Diamond Park
7. Improved biodiversity with a variety of new vegetation proposed throughout the proposed park
8. Improved visual integration to the urban fabric of the existing urban realm.



Above: Sketch design presented at workshop 4 in March 2020.



Above: Series of sketch diagrams of the plan presented at workshop 4 in March 2020.

## 6.1 Boundaries, Access and Lighting

The spatial conception is based on a methodical design process that identifies what is unique about the area, pays attention to the demands of the public and takes into account the feasibility of ideas. Through the various consultation processes a series of core activities have emerged which helped to determine the spatial arrangement and outcome of the site. It is important to note that a flexible approach has been adopted to the way spaces and activities in the park cross-over to assist how the overall park is used.

The park is intended to be gated. As a result, a key component to the new parks design is readapting how a boundary is read so that it becomes part of the park's aesthetic. Therefore, the proposed boundary encloses the park from Gardiner Street student accommodation around to Rutland National school using a lightweight fence which varies in height. The lightweight boundary will assist in allowing an increased degree of passive surveillance into the park as well as forming a strong aesthetic element to the park's facade. In certain locations such as the north west corner along the new 5-a-side pitch, it is proposed that the fence transitions into a stronger fence to contain the games within. To the south west, a container café is proposed to form part of the boundary with access to both the inner and outer sides of the park. On the outer side of the boundary fence a number of incidental spaces have been created to cater for gathering when the park is closed.

Two gated entrances control the flow of visitors, one fronting Gardiner Street to the north west and one to the south east fronting Sean MacDermott Street. These entrances will be designed with a pivoting element to control visitors, in particular, children from running directly out of the park. Within the park, circulation includes a meandering path that varies in width around the edge of the central lawn space which interacts with a number of activity spaces. It is also intended that the lawn is used as an informal path to traverse the park.

Careful consideration has been given to universal accessibility. A gentle ramped route has been provided around the park which deals with the slope from north to south of the park. All other areas are gently sloping and have been designed in a way as to cater for a wide range of users.

Lighting is intended to form an important component of the park's composition as well as an additional layer of security at night when the park is closed. Multicolored directional light fittings are intended to light up certain spaces in the park which will be carefully designed to avoid interfering with the residence of the student accommodation.

A number of designated spaces have emerged in the design, following on from the consultation process. These include flexible use open lawn space, organized games, café space, terraced seating area, retention of existing mosaic elements, passive recreation and informal and formal play. Considering the overall spatial sequence of the site, a final layout was generated. It strikes a balance between dedicated specific activities and flexible multifunctional uses for the park.

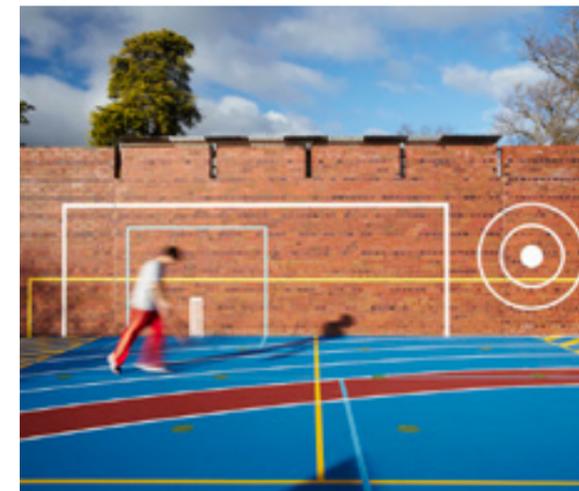


Above: Reference images of potential transparent boundaries for Diamond Park.

## 6.2 Play and Activities

Following the extensive consultation process a number of activities and play elements have been incorporated in the design. Informal play opportunities will be provided all over the site. Nonetheless a higher concentration of those is located in the north eastern side of the park. A play tower is intended to rise in the north east corner to form a commanding view over the park with a number of incidental play elements branching off, such as a curving slide. Large boulders, planting and steps would also be incorporated into this mound in such a way as to encourage children to engage with the landscape. A play wall and play platform/play boat will be located in close proximity to the play tower to form the dedicated play space.

A 5-a-side partly bounded by a transparent fence forms the northwest corner of the park with an integrated wall ball space carefully designed within the fence line. Nestled between the five-a-side is a skate bowl. An open lawn space forms the central component of the park with a line of existing trees retained transecting through the center of the lawn. A dedicated table tennis space cuts into the lawn space with the main pathway separating it from the halfcourt basketball court. A linear outdoor fitness trail catering for all ages stretches along the eastern boundary by Rutland National School with a landscape buffer and existing fence line separating the park from the school grounds.



Above: Reference images of a range of play elements for Diamond Park.

*From right to left; Prunus avium 'Plena',  
Viburnum farreri, Pinus sylvestris, Arbutus  
unedo, Corylus avellana*



### 6.3 Soft Landscape

The objective from the outset of the public consultation process was to maximize the 'green' character of the park while keeping a strong level of passive surveillance into the park. The landscape of the proposed park is seen as one rich in biodiversity, which offers an alternative to the prevailing hard landscape character of the NEIC area and which can act as an 'outdoor classroom' for events and engagement in relation to ecology, biodiversity and nature. Existing trees are retained where possible. Planting mixes have been considered and will be developed to ensure high ecological value as well as a therapeutic environment for visitors and users. The design proposals incorporate areas of mown lawn, bulb planting, herbaceous, groundcover and swale planting, as well as hedges and trees.

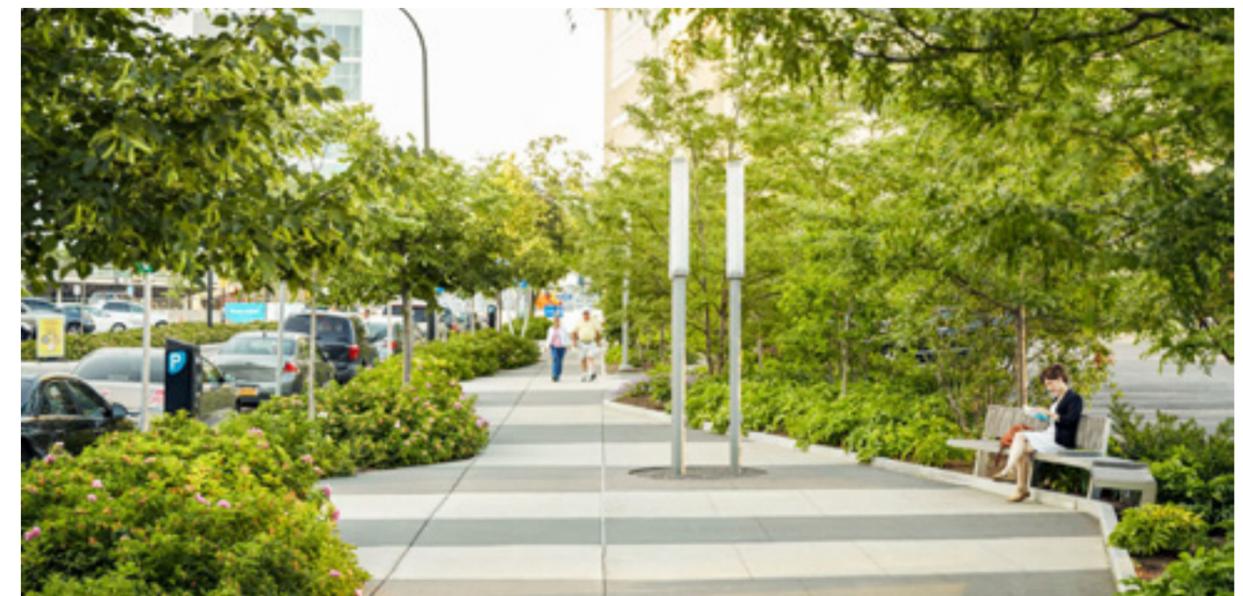
The proposed tree species have been selected for decorative, ecological and spatial characteristics, diversity, seasonal interest, drama and engagement. Individual trees, as well as groups of trees are proposed. A variety of flowering trees are proposed to provide seasonal interest, particularly around the perimeter of the park where they will be seen from the surrounding streetscape.



*Above: Reference image of potential soft landscape for Diamond Park.*



*Clockwise from top left; typical groundcover species: Luzula sylvatica, Dryopteris filix-mas, Echinacea purpurea, Alchemilla mollis, Verbena bonariensis.*



*Above: Reference image of green buffer fronting Gardiner Street.*



#### 6.4 Hard Landscape Materials

The landscape design is intended to facilitate high visitor numbers, as well as be durable, robust and take into account the specific context of the park. Painted tarmacadam will form the basis for the surface material within the gates of the proposed park. The surface aesthetic and colour scheme will be painted on the tarmacadam. The graphic surface design is intended to create informal play opportunities as well as varying spatial experiences.

Other hard surfaces include in-situ concrete which will form the basis for the selected concrete finish outside the park gates. Low concrete seating walls will form part of the retaining elements as well as forming part of the suite of furniture for the park. Following the consultation process it was noted that there was a desire for the existing mosaic elements to be retained. Therefore, they are to be retained and relocated in different locations throughout the park.

*Above: Reference images of potential surface graphics and seating elements for Diamond Park.*



*Artist's impression of the proposed design.*