



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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# LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT PLAN





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# INTRODUCTION

Leeds is among the top ten universities for research in the UK, and is internationally acknowledged as a centre of excellence in a wide range of academic and professional disciplines. To compliment the academic achievements of the University, its students and its staff, the aim is to become a University with a reputation for outstanding performance on sustainability; a university that challenges the status quo, is renowned for its open, welcoming campus environment and continues to be a global centre for excellence in teaching, research and innovation.

The University of Leeds campus plays a major part in the life of many thousands of people. It has the potential to create vivid memories for students, space for relaxation and social space for meeting friends. The University of Leeds landscape presents significant opportunities to enhance the identity and experience of the University for its students, staff, users and visitors.

Being a sustainable University is at the heart of the University of Leeds and the campus landscape is a core part of this. Some of the key aims of the Landscape Development plan are to re-prioritise the campus for pedestrians, be an exemplar of urban biodiversity and re-enforce the campus' sense of place and thresholds within the wider public realm.

One of the key steps to unlocking the potential of the University is to redefine the quality of the landscape and public realm within the University estate; improving under-utilised spaces, reducing areas of car parking and roads and enriching these spaces and routes

with developments, such as new University squares and courts, productive gardens, rain gardens and green infrastructure. A legible and coherent public realm strategy will help to link together and reveal the physical, cultural and lifestyle aspects of the University.

This strategy involves the promotion of sustainability as a key concept throughout the campus by greening, improved water management, promotion of wildlife habitats and by bringing wider sustainability elements into the public eye, including access, well being and community engagement.

An enhanced and extended public realm and sequence of landscape spaces across the estate will create a richer canvas for University life and promote enhanced learning possibilities.

The Landscape Development plan sets out the high level principles which should be followed for the next 15 years.

## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the design principles which will ground future planning for the campus landscape at the University of Leeds. It also identifies some key potential prospects which will enhance the environment following these principles. The designs included here are outline proposals, with the aim to stimulate discussion and the development of ideas.



# KEY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The design of the Landscape Development plan has been influenced by a number of overarching principles and requirements from the University that set the tone for the character, quality and function of the proposed public realm.

The key principles of the Landscape Development plan are to create...

**...an inspirational campus environment for research, learning and innovation**

Leeds is one of the top UK universities for research and impact power, over 80% of research at Leeds has a top quality rating of either “world leading” or “internationally excellent”. It is important for our campus landscape to be an inspiring place which encourages innovation, live research, learning and discovery.

**...a cohesive campus environment**

The Landscape Development plan should ensure that the visitor experience, from the minute people arrive, is of a recognisable, cohesive environment, through the creation of distinctive, simple but innovative interventions.

**...revitalised public spaces**

Create a revitalised series of transitional and static spaces which reflect the dynamic nature of the University environment as a global centre for excellence in teaching, research and innovation. Invigorated, high-quality public spaces should form a network of hubs across the campus which encourage a diversity of activity.

**...high quality settings**

Set the precedent for the creation of a high quality series of public open spaces and streetscapes, through the use of carefully considered materials, street furniture and planting.

**...a sustainable campus**

The campus landscape will be underpinned by and promote our values of sustainability. It will be a living lab for creating sustainable solutions.

**...space for people to relax and socialise**

Any new or redeveloped public realm should integrate and connect with the existing fabric of the campus so to attract and encourage students, staff and visitors into the spaces to socialise, make the most of university facilities and enjoy campus life.

**...legible, safe and accessible public spaces**

Create high-quality gateways and arrival points for people with a safe comfortable route, improving the physical connectivity to create a more pedestrian-orientated environment.

**...an ecologically diverse campus**

The Landscape Development plan should allow the University to pursue its ambitions to become an exemplar of urban biodiversity, creating a biodiverse environment and provide ecological corridors within the city.

**...sensitively integrated interventions**

A coordinated range of materials and planting palettes should compliment the existing campus infrastructure. Where necessary, a hierarchy of materials should be used to compliment the use of the spaces appropriately.

**...robust and durable landscapes**

The new public realm needs to withstand intensive use over time. It must be robust and maintainable, retaining a high quality environment for the future and in a cost effective manner.

We would welcome your views and feedback on the proposals made in this publication.

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PROPOSED  
PROJECTS

- 1 CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND and DISCOVERY WAY
- 2 ST GEORGES FIELD and UNIVERSITY ROAD
- 3 UNIVERSITY MAIN ENTRANCE
- 4 HILLARY PLACE GATEWAY
- 5 UNION EAST SIDE
- 6 GARSTANG COURT
- 7 EDWARD BOYLE STEPS and GARDENS
- 8 GARDENS AND SMALL SPACE IMPROVEMENTS





# 1

## CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND and DISCOVERY WAY

### CHANCELLORS COURT

Chancellors Court is bordered by the Roger Stevens building, Garstang and the School of Earth and Environment. This space should become the flagship external space for the University, providing a shining example of biodiversity, sustainability and social interaction that other areas, both within the campus and throughout the region, can follow. Activities should be introduced to allow people to comfortably use the space throughout the year, whilst also providing habitat for wildlife and sustainable drainage solutions.

### THE COOLING POND

The pond should be improved in terms of functionality and aesthetics, without loss of respect for the Brutalist nature of the surrounding architecture. Creating access to the water – on top or on the edge, will be important in creating a usable space in this area. Biodiversity and ecological balance can be achieved through introducing submerged aquatic planting in submerged trays. Careful selection and consideration of the planting patterns, species balance and growing considerations will allow the creation of a balanced local ecosystem that provides local environmental benefit and visual appeal. The surrounding paths and access should be improved in order to reinforce the connection between Willow Terrace Road and Chancellors Court.



CURRENT VIEW OF SITE OF DISCOVERY WAY



CURRENT VIEW OF CHANCELLORS COURT



CURRENT AERIAL VIEW OF PROPOSED SITE



CURRENT VIEW OF THE COOLING POND IN FRONT OF THE ROGER STEVENS BUILDING

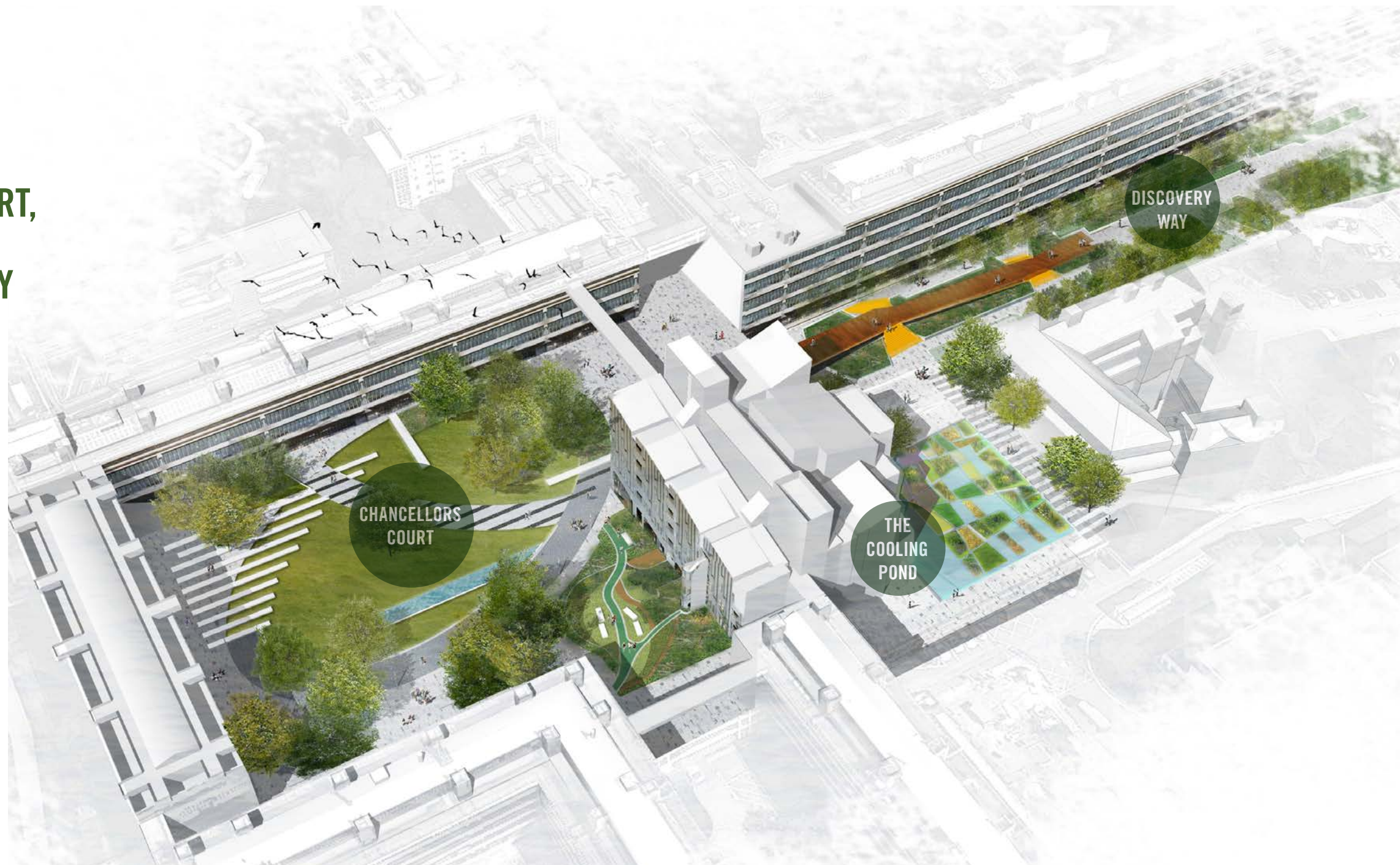


# 1

## CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND and DISCOVERY WAY

### DISCOVERY WAY – HEART OF CAMPUS

This space should become the key ‘ceremonial avenue’ and the principle pedestrian route into the campus. This avenue will create a positive first impression and a clearly legible route for visitors. Although primarily a transient space, opportunity should be provided for activity – in the form of modules which offer a range of spaces for relaxing and socialising. The avenue of trees along the route will define its character. The avenue should transition smoothly into Chancellors Court, to the west. Features in this area should compliment the built architectural form, in order to give this area of the campus a solid identity.



ARTISTS IMPRESSION SHOWING CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND AND PART OF DISCOVERY WAY



# 1

## CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND and DISCOVERY WAY

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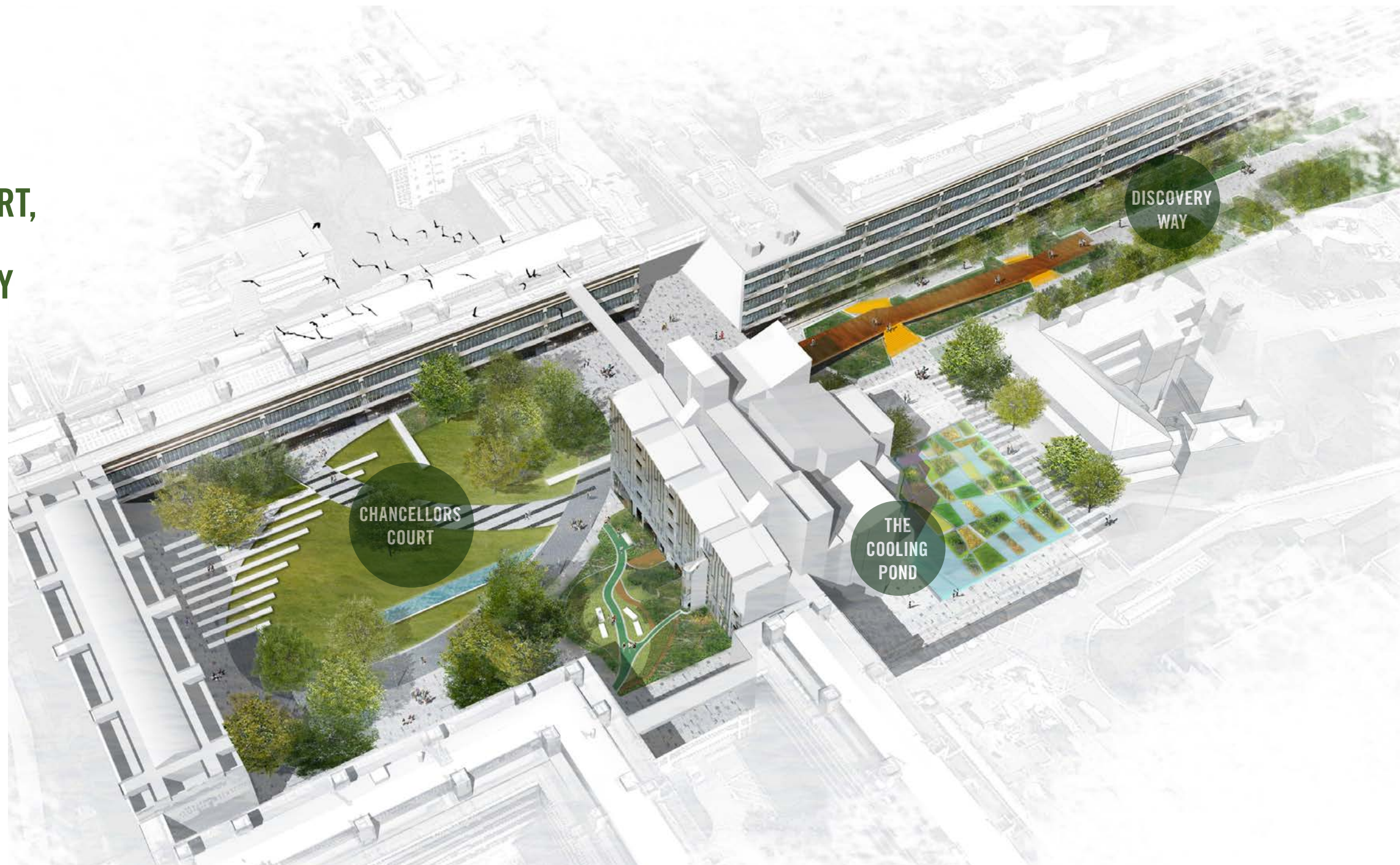
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### DISCOVERY WAY – WOODHOUSE LANE ENTRANCE

Discovery Way, the new pedestrian entrance into the University of Leeds provides an easy, accessible route through to Chancellors Court in the heart of campus.

This new entrance way will be created during late summer 2018, following the completion of Nexus, the high profile gateway to research and innovation at the University.

The entrance will comprise of a piazza area, a major new artwork, high quality landscaping, lighting and street furniture. The fully accessible route will be tree lined – and with a future phase leading to Chancellors Court, through a new accessible ramp and demolition of the pyramid steps to EC Stoner.



ARTISTS IMPRESSION SHOWING CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND AND PART OF DISCOVERY WAY



1

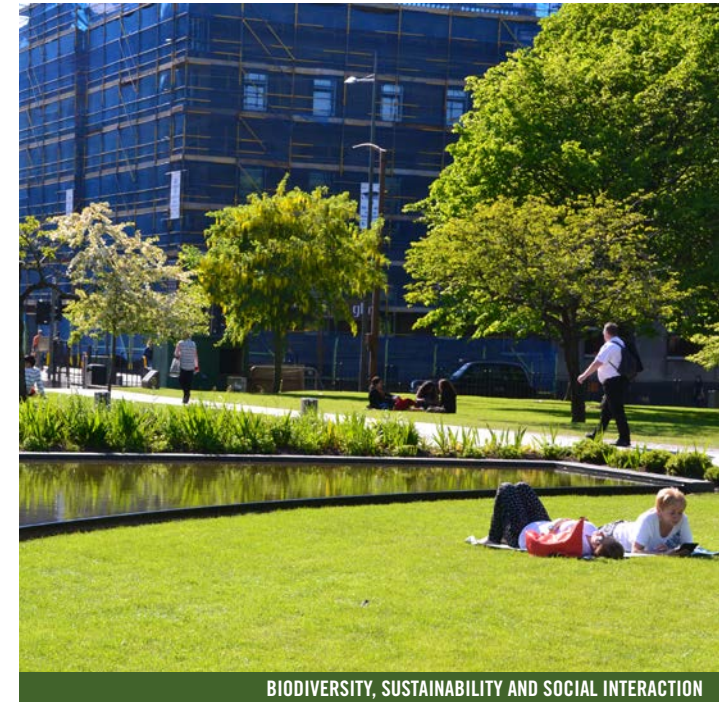
## CHANCELLORS COURT, THE COOLING POND and DISCOVERY WAY



ARTISTS IMPRESSION SHOWING NEXUS AND THE WOODHOUSE LANE ENTRANCE TO DISCOVERY WAY



AVENUE OF TREES ALONG THE ROUTE



BIODIVERSITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION



FLAGSHIP CEREMONIAL AVENUE



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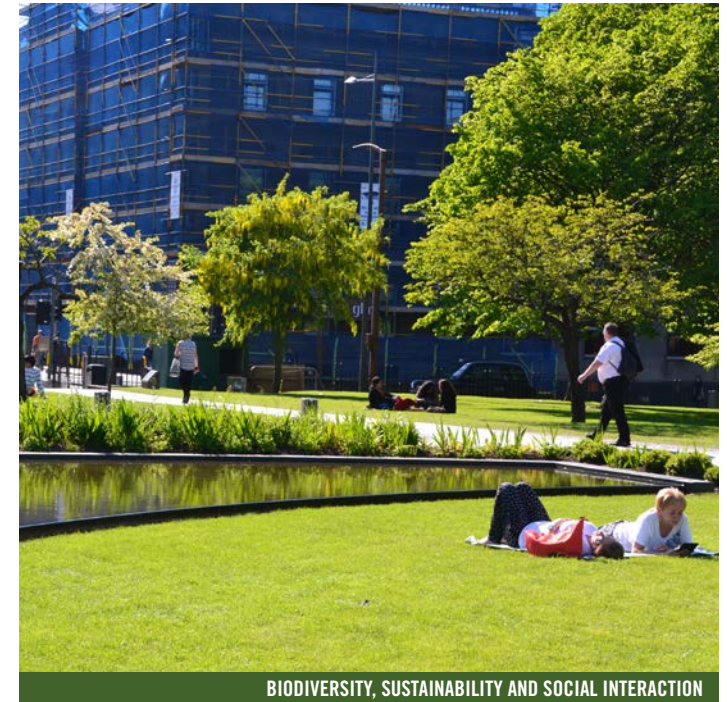
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AVENUE OF TREES ALONG THE ROUTE



BIODIVERSITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION



FLAGSHIP CEREMONIAL AVENUE



# 2

## ST GEORGE'S FIELD and UNIVERSITY ROAD

### ST GEORGES FIELD

St George's Field is a much-loved green space that lies in the north of the University of Leeds Campus. Surrounded by University buildings, it represents an opportunity for users to escape, engage with nature, and reflect.

It has inherited its distinctive atmosphere from its former use as the burial ground of the Leeds General Cemetery Company. Buildings and monuments survive, as do the remains of more than 90,000 people buried within the walls. Extensive and detailed records of these burials were transferred to the University at the time it took ownership of the Field, and our intention is to link these records to the Field once more, allowing visitors to understand better the heritage of the site.

The proposals are also intended to improve access more generally, allowing less able visitors to experience the qualities of St George's Field, and to broaden its use without destroying the qualities for which it is valued. St George's Field is also a valuable green space within Leeds, and this project seeks to strengthen the existing biodiversity by providing a haven on the edge of the urban core of Leeds, while improving the richness of the site and the opportunity for visitors to engage with nature.

As well as a space for nature, St George's Field provides a fantastic space for reflection and contemplations. This will be preserved and enhanced through any future proposals.



CURRENT VIEW OF ST GEORGE'S FIELD



UNDER-SEAT LIGHTING



INCREASED BIODIVERSITY, WOODLAND PLANTING AND WATER-RETENTIVE AREAS



BOARDWALK ACCESS TO WILDLIFE AREAS



WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

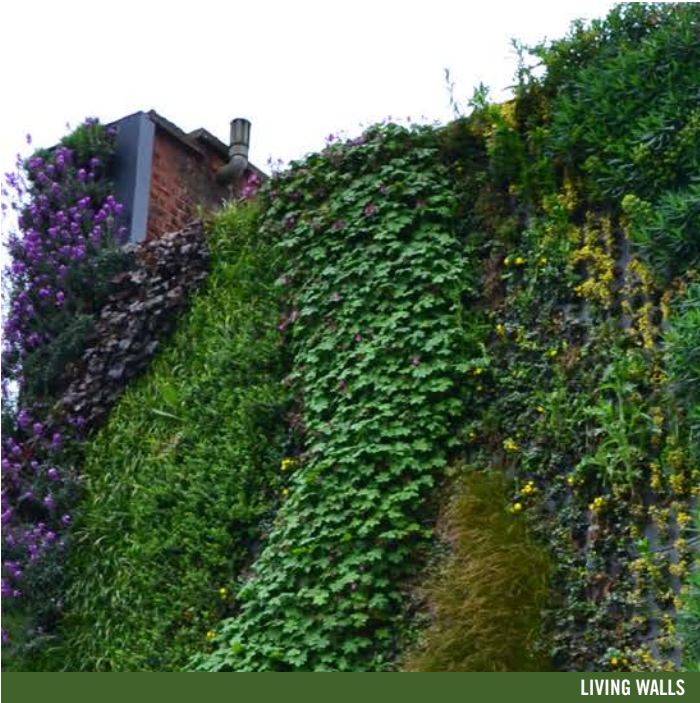


# 2

## ST GEORGE'S FIELD and UNIVERSITY ROAD

### UNIVERSITY ROAD

As part of the rationalisation of vehicular routes, both through and into campus, University Road is identified as a key road that should be pedestrianised, with vehicular access only. It is intended to continue the pedestrianisation in sympathy with the area already completed outside the Great Hall, with a new square created adjacent to the recently refurbished 'Arts Building', through the demolition of the old Geography East building. The creation of the square will also allow a major new accessible entrance into St George's Field.





# 3

## UNIVERSITY MAIN ENTRANCE

### PARKINSON ENTRANCE

The Parkinson building is an icon of the University of Leeds, acting as a form of way-finding totem at the highest point on both the campus and in the city. The crisp white Portland stone face of the Parkinson Building and the imposing steps leading up to the portico entrance provides an impressive principle entrance to the campus.

Currently this gateway into the University is undermined by a combination of congestion and inappropriate street furniture, including a rather utilitarian security hut at the barrier entrance. The security hut provides the first point of contact for many visitors to the campus and sits in stark contrast to the grandeur of the Parkinson Building. The presence of a 'meet and greet' facility at the entrance is important in assisting wayfinding, however the current infrastructure undermines the overall experience.

The use of the main entrance by servicing vehicles further impacts on the visitor experience, with large vehicles crossing a busy pedestrian access into the campus and disrupting the flow into and out of the campus.



CURRENT VIEW OF UNIVERSITY MAIN ENTRANCE



PRIORITISATION TO PEDESTRIANS



CONTEMPORARY URBAN LIGHTING



PLAZA SPACE



# 3

## UNIVERSITY MAIN ENTRANCE

The design will see the creation of a plaza space in front of the University that will be distinctly different in material and design from the traffic dominated Woodhouse Lane. The space will give priority to pedestrians and will provide wide 'safe spaces' around a new shared surface style treatment. Traffic movement will be modified, with alterations in the taxi stand and vehicle access arrangements, to provide more usable pedestrian space. A series of seats and benches with trees set in a soft landscaped area will be placed in the centre of the redesigned space to facilitate further the 'people watching' activities that currently occur on the grassed roundabout. Traffic control / access measures will be simplified and automated to reduce street clutter.



ARTISTS IMPRESSION OF THE NEW MAIN ENTRANCE



# 4

## HILLARY PLACE GATEWAY

The pedestrianisation of Hillary Place would dramatically change one of the most popular routes through campus, improving the student/visitor experience, and raising the profile of the University to the public. Currently, the threshold to Woodhouse Lane is very poor, and presents a low-quality face to the street and the centre of Leeds.

The Physics Deck is currently home to the School of Physics and Astronomy. The School moves during 2020 to the new Sir William Henry Bragg Building (behind the Old Mining Building and adjacent to Chemistry); this presents an opportunity to demolish the Physics Deck and allow for a major new development within an important gateway entrance area.

Hillary Place Gateway will be de-cluttered and will become a recognisable route into the campus with a signature backdrop of Trinity St David's Church.



CURRENT VIEW OF HILLARY PLACE GATEWAY



ARTISTS IMPRESSION SHOWING THE IMPROVED, PEDESTRIANISED GATEWAY OFF WOODHOUSE LANE AND THE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE OF THE EXISTING PHYSICS DECK



5

UNION  
EAST SIDE

UNION PLAZA (BESIDE THE STUDENT UNION)

Currently, the area is primarily a busy pedestrian route with a small gathering area, which provides spill-out space for the Student Union. The array of materials and position of bins in this area gives the impression of a back route reinforced by the narrow bridge over the garbage lorry access way.

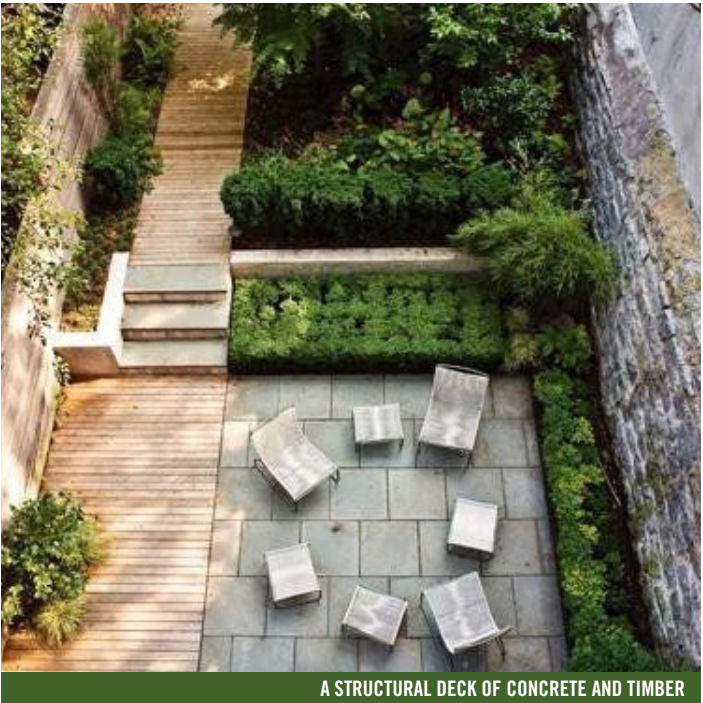
This area should become a leafy spill-out space for the students union, with a structural deck of concrete and timber, mature trees, a variety of seating and entertainment options. The character should be vibrant and colourful to uplift the space, with refuse points and service access below screened from view. The structural deck will bridge over the service access route thereby screening out a visually poor area and the same time gaining much needed space in this highly used area.



CURRENT VIEW OF UNION EAST SIDE AREA



PLAN VIEW OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



A STRUCTURAL DECK OF CONCRETE AND TIMBER



A LEAFY SPILL-OUT SPACE



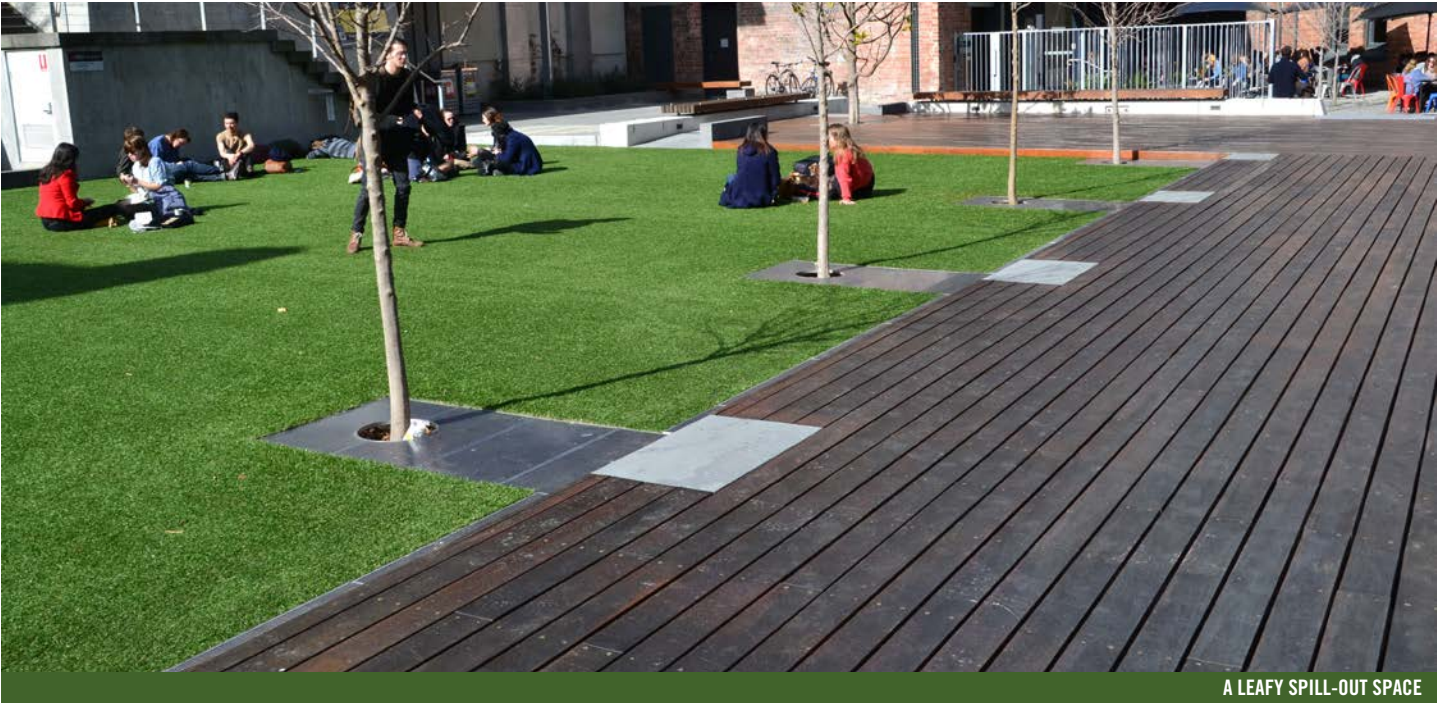
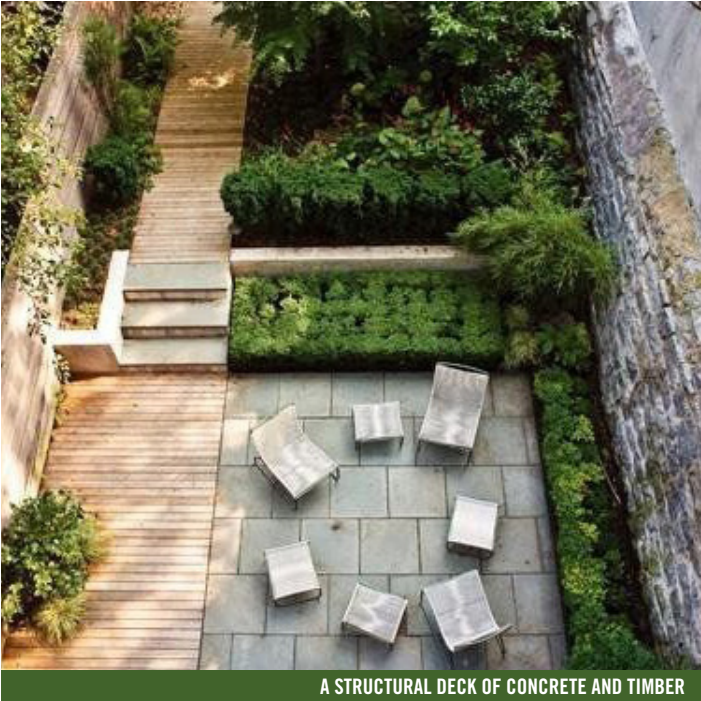
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6

GARSTANG COURT

Garstang Court is currently used as a service and parking yard, enveloped by a number of major listed buildings housing the School of Geography and the Faculty of Biological Sciences (including the new Astbury Centre). The setting of the buildings can be enhanced immeasurably through the transformation of the yard into a green oasis, allowing the area to be given over to staff and students for amenity purposes.

Garstang Court will be a local, intimate open space that provides sheltered seating, soft-shade tolerant planting and gathering spaces for the students and staff of the surrounding buildings.

The Astbury Centre hosts a 950MHz nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer and two 300kv electron microscopes; these are amongst the most powerful devices of their kind globally, creating the capability of world-leading Research. A new reception area for this major facility will be enhanced by a carefully designed landscaped area externally leading directly into the new courtyard.



CURRENT VIEW OF GARSTANG COURT



ARTISTS IMPRESSION OF GARSTANG COURT



7

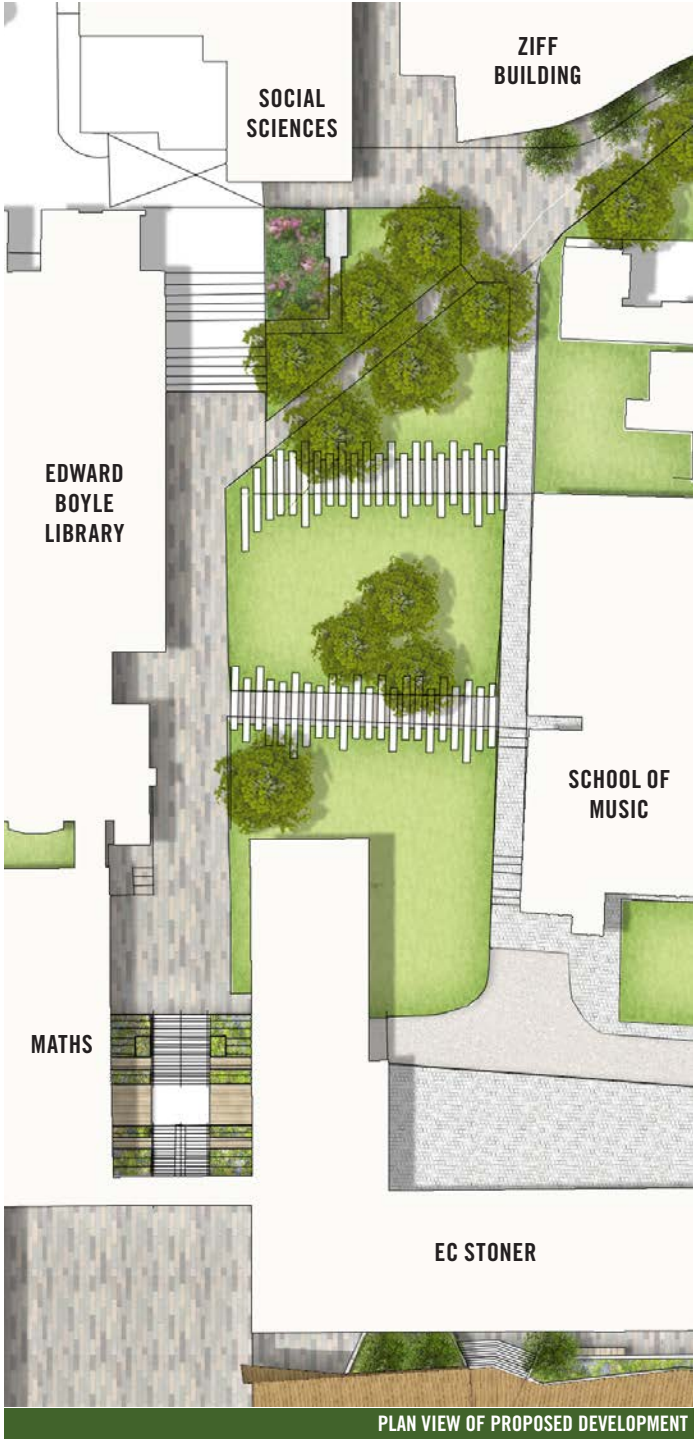
EDWARD BOYLE  
STEPS and  
GARDENS

The location of the site, on the axis of primary pedestrian routes through the campus, makes it an important strategic space for pedestrian legibility and movement.

The distinctive stepped access, forming part of the Grade II library listing, also provides access across the site's steep topography down to the School of Music and School of English, as well as providing informal social breakout space. The landscape proposals will define the edge of the square, creating a definite edge to the gardens on the eastern and northern boundaries. The proposals will also provide a variety of seating and gathering areas and types to create social spaces for people to gather and dwell within the gardens. The University places ecology and biodiversity at the core of regeneration works throughout the campus.



CURRENT VIEW SHOWING STEPS UP TO THE GARDENS



PLAN VIEW OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL SEATING



WILDFLOWER PLANTING TO SOFTEN THE STAIRWAY



7

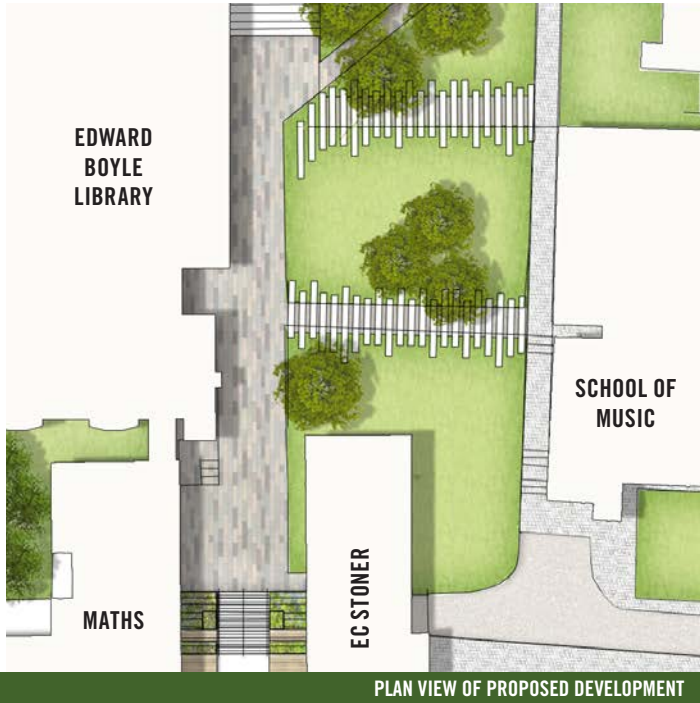
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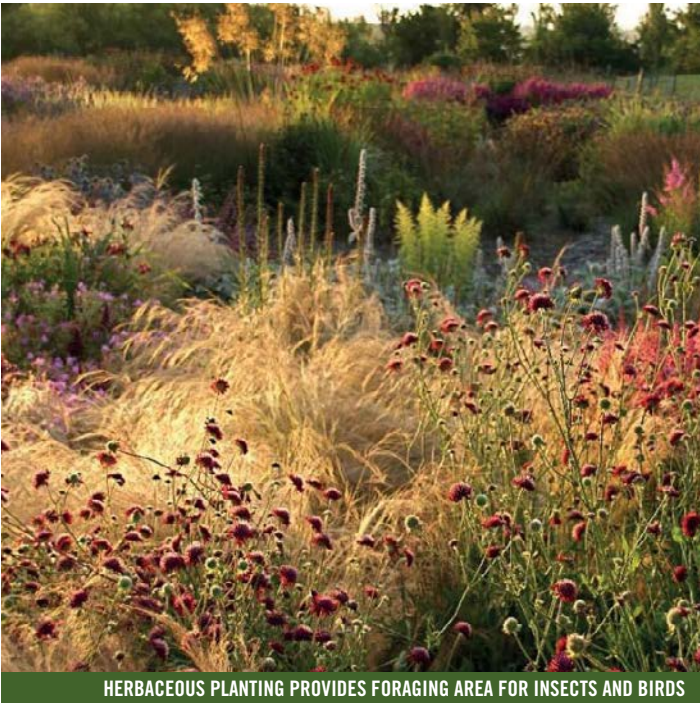
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CURRENT VIEW SHOWING STEPS UP TO THE GARDENS



PLAN VIEW OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



HERBACEOUS PLANTING PROVIDES FORAGING AREA FOR INSECTS AND BIRDS



SOCIAL SEATING



WILDFLOWER PLANTING TO SOFTEN THE STAIRWAY



# 8

## GARDENS and SMALL SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Many of the existing small spaces in front of the old terraces and other 'in-between' spaces are currently surfaced with lawn grass. This requires regular mowing in the growing seasons. Many of these spaces are too small to use anything but a small hand mower, requiring a significant amount of labour to maintain and offering very little biodiversity or support for pollinators.

The arrangement of spaces, walls and pathways is to remain unchanged unless obvious reasons are evident on a case-by-case basis. Small alterations to the arrangement of water management should be introduced where possible, to allow the infiltration of run-off and roof water to irrigate and be retained within the garden spaces in the form of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) facilities. This project entails reinstatement of some of the original architectural external features (hand rails, iron railings, repaired steps) along with feature lighting.

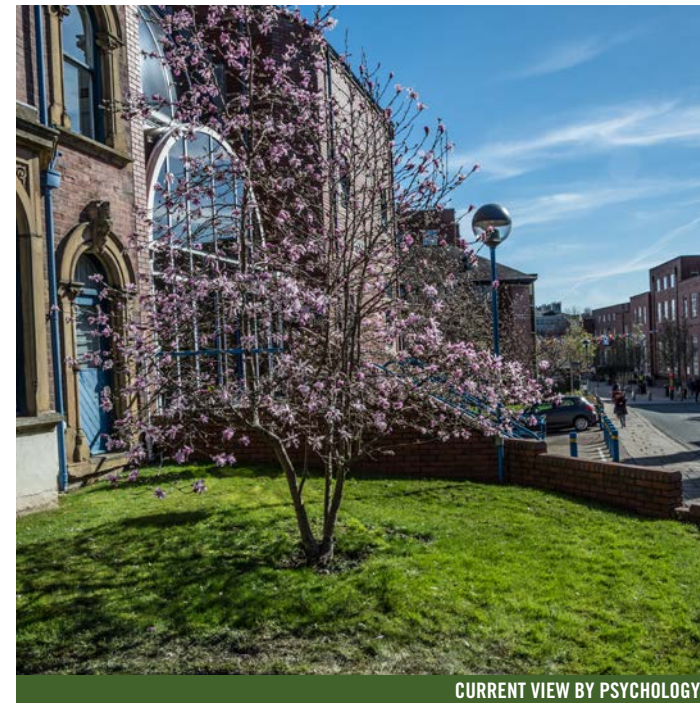
Substantial opportunity exists in many areas to introduce a species-rich planting regime that is suited to the specific solar characteristics of the space. In areas that gain considerable direct sun, wild flower mixes can be introduced. In areas with moderate sunlight a mix of habitat shrubs and grasses can be planted, and in areas with substantial shade a mix of woodland species can be planted. Planting for these smaller spaces should be taken from the appropriate planting palette, depending on the location and character of the area being considered.



CURRENT VIEW BY CHEMISTRY



CURRENT VIEW BY BEECH GROVE TERRACE



CURRENT VIEW BY PSYCHOLOGY



CURRENT VIEW BY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH



CURRENT VIEW BY BAINES WING



8

GARDENS and  
SMALL SPACE  
IMPROVEMENTS



CURRENT VIEW LIFTON PLACE



WILDFLOWER MIXES



SPECIES-RICH PLANTING



YEAR-ROUND COLOUR



SEASONAL VARIETY







IT'S ALL PART  
OF OUR CAMPUS

# MASTERPLAN



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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