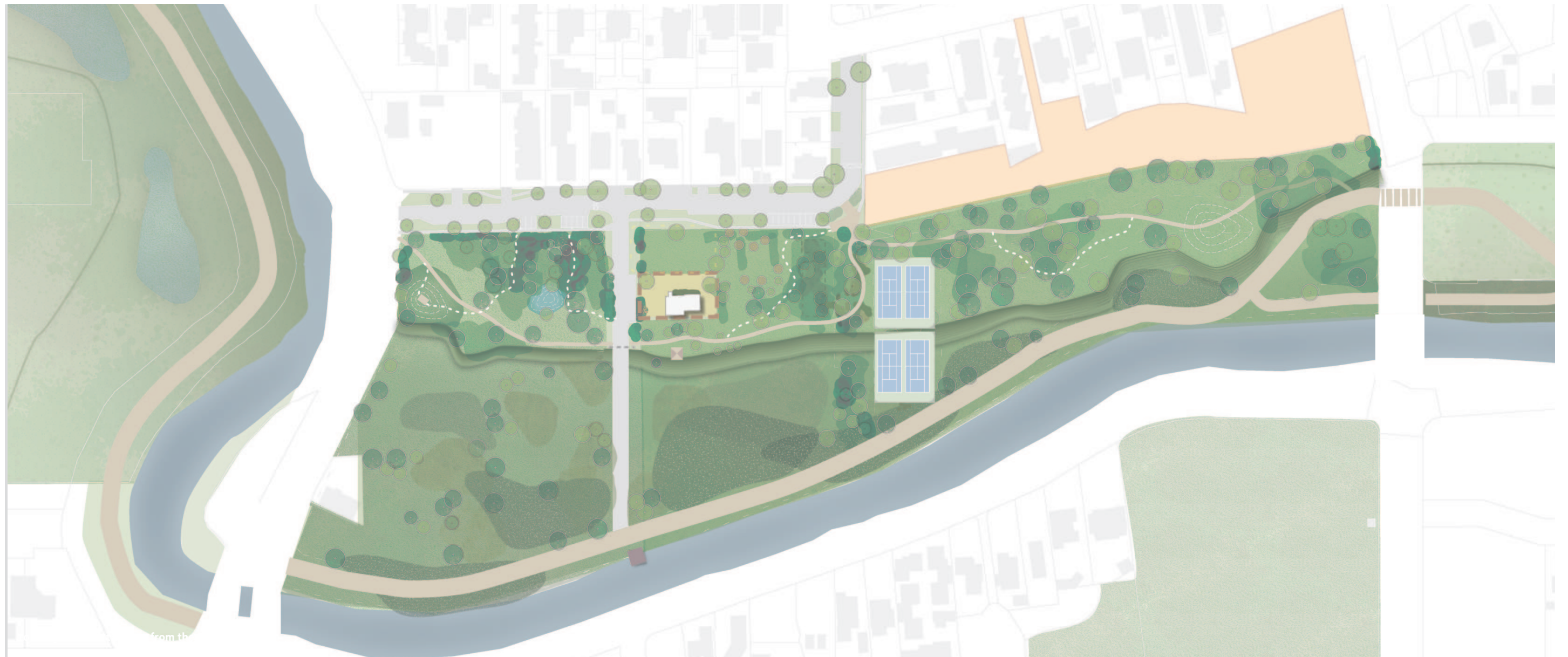


Fitzgerald to Stanmore. Preliminary Design. Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.

17 September 2026

Isthmus.



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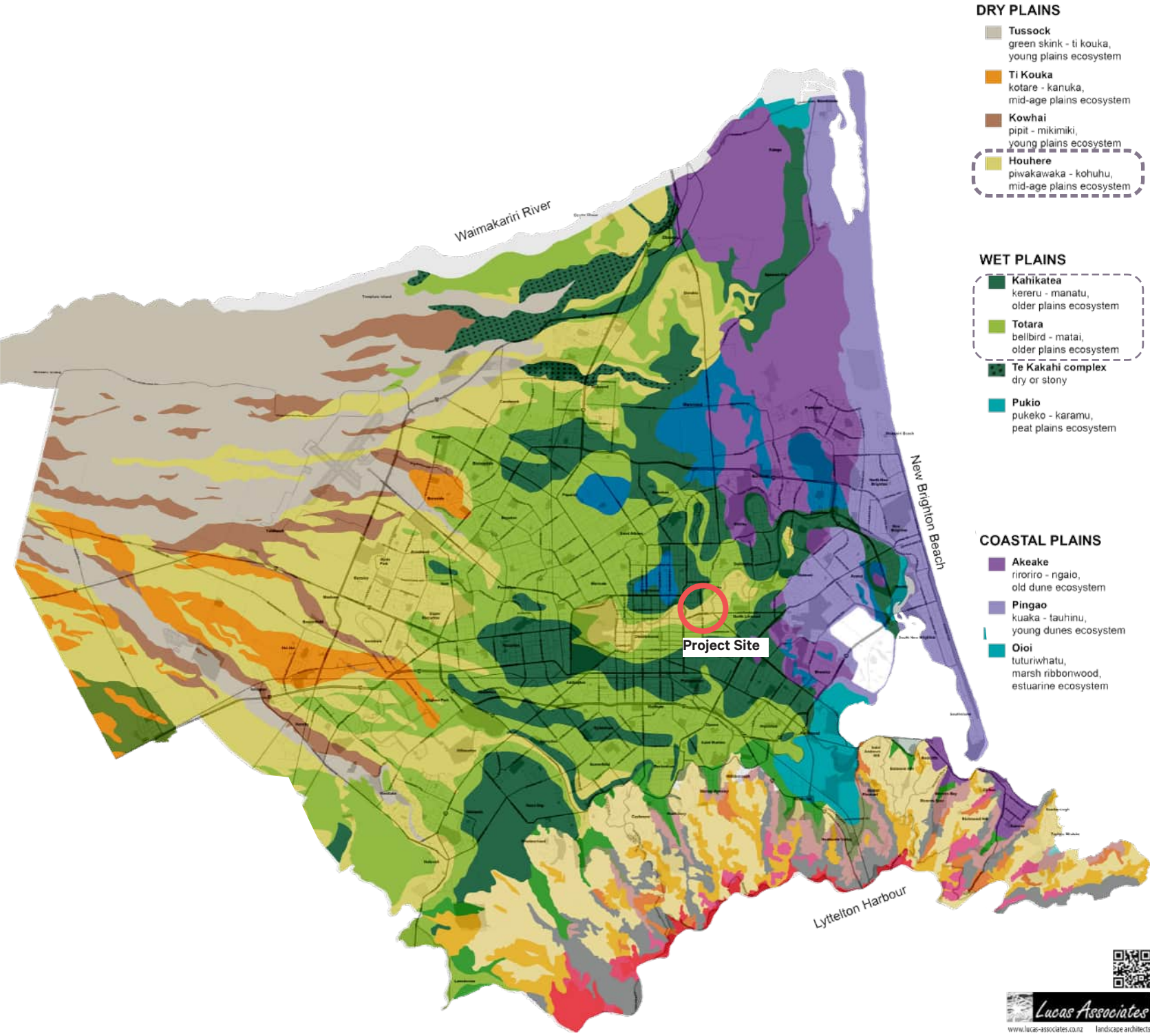


Clearings within established planting on site



01. Understanding Context.

Ecological Context & Opportunity.



The Site is located in a transition of dry plains to wet marshy land sculpted by the Avon River prior to the ecology turning coastal when reaching the ocean edge.

The ecological summaries below have been provided by Instream on 12.03.2025 and 19.03.2025. They highlight the ecological opportunities for the project area which are reflected in the diagrammatic approaches.

- The project area has low ecological values. That is because it is dominated by mown exotic grassland and remnant trees and shrubs from former residential properties.
- There is nothing present within the project area that would qualify as being ecologically significant using recognised criteria. There are no wetlands, there is no intact/original native vegetation, there is no lizard habitat, and ecological connectivity between the river and site is truncated by the City to Sea Pathway.
- The council's tree inventory identifies some larger native trees that are worth retaining, provided they are native to the area. The inventory also notes some exotic trees that may be worth retaining, due to the habitat they provide, provided they are not nuisance species. We will need to work with Zane Lazare from the council's Parks team regarding trees, as he has a lot of ideas about plantings in the ŌARC (per earlier correspondence).
- As noted by Zane, the project area has considerable potential, in terms of ecological enhancement, largely in terms of native plantings.
- Ecological enhancement of the Avon River through this project is restricted by the location of the C2S Pathway along the river edge.
- There is considerable ecological value in pushing the C2S Pathway further from the river, up on to the former river terrace that runs along the length of the project area.
 - This would provide better ecological resilience and buffering to the river, while also providing for a riparian zone that has greater ecological integrity, due to its greater depth.
- The river terrace is presumably a logical location for future flood defences, and this should be considered when weighing up whether to retain the current C2S alignment in the long term.
- Consider including a temporal component to the design, in anticipation of a “shift to higher ground” over time, to make way for higher river levels and increased flood frequency.
- This approach would allow for retention of the existing City to Sea pathway in the short term (say the next decade or so), which is likely to be more acceptable economically – and socially – than ripping it up immediately and dealing with coal tar etc.
- I'd prefer to move the pathway onto the terrace in say 10 years, rather than the full 30 or so years when climate effects become evident, because it would bring about immediate ecological benefits to the river corridor.
 - Ten years is a reasonable time interval to assume the development of technologies to deal with coal tar on site.
 - Bringing the pathway move ahead to 10 years would also hasten the development of a mature riparian forest ecosystem. This would, in turn, ensure the riparian forest ecosystem is more resilient to climate impacts on flooding, erosion etc, as those impacts develop over the ensuing decades.
- Consider where the future “shoreline” of the river will be when tracing the new City to Sea pathway.
 - Try to avoid placing the pathway on the edge of the future shoreline, as that would ultimately defeat the purpose of giving the river more room.
 - This may not be an issue, depending on what flooding and climate modelling results look like.
- As discussed during the meeting, the Parks team are likely to want fewer of the exotic trees retained and more native forest.

Wider Context.

Legend.

City to Sea Pathway

Primary Vehicle Movements

Project Site

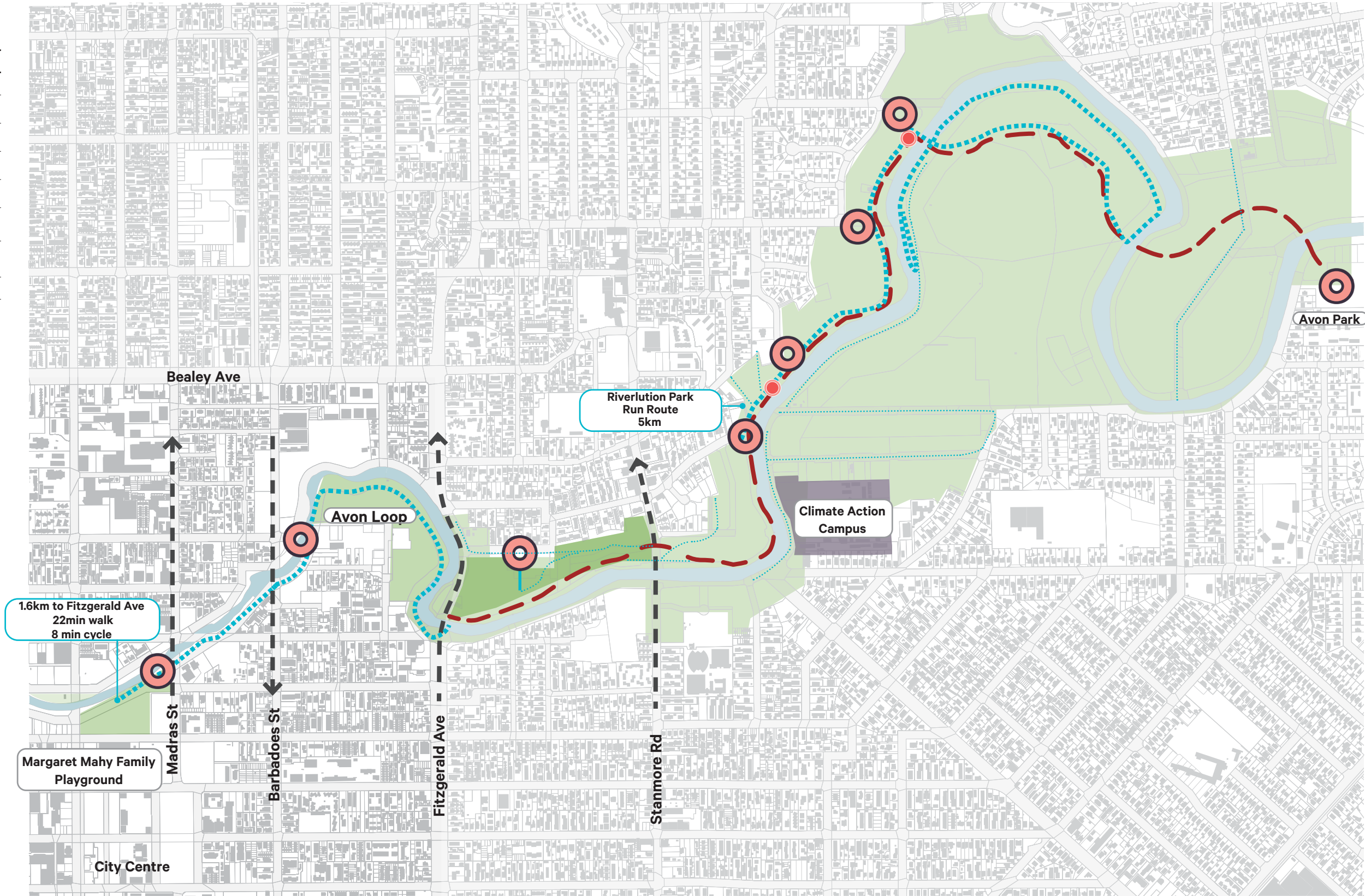
OARC Corridor

Ōtākaro Avon River

Launch point to OARC

Potential local loops and connections

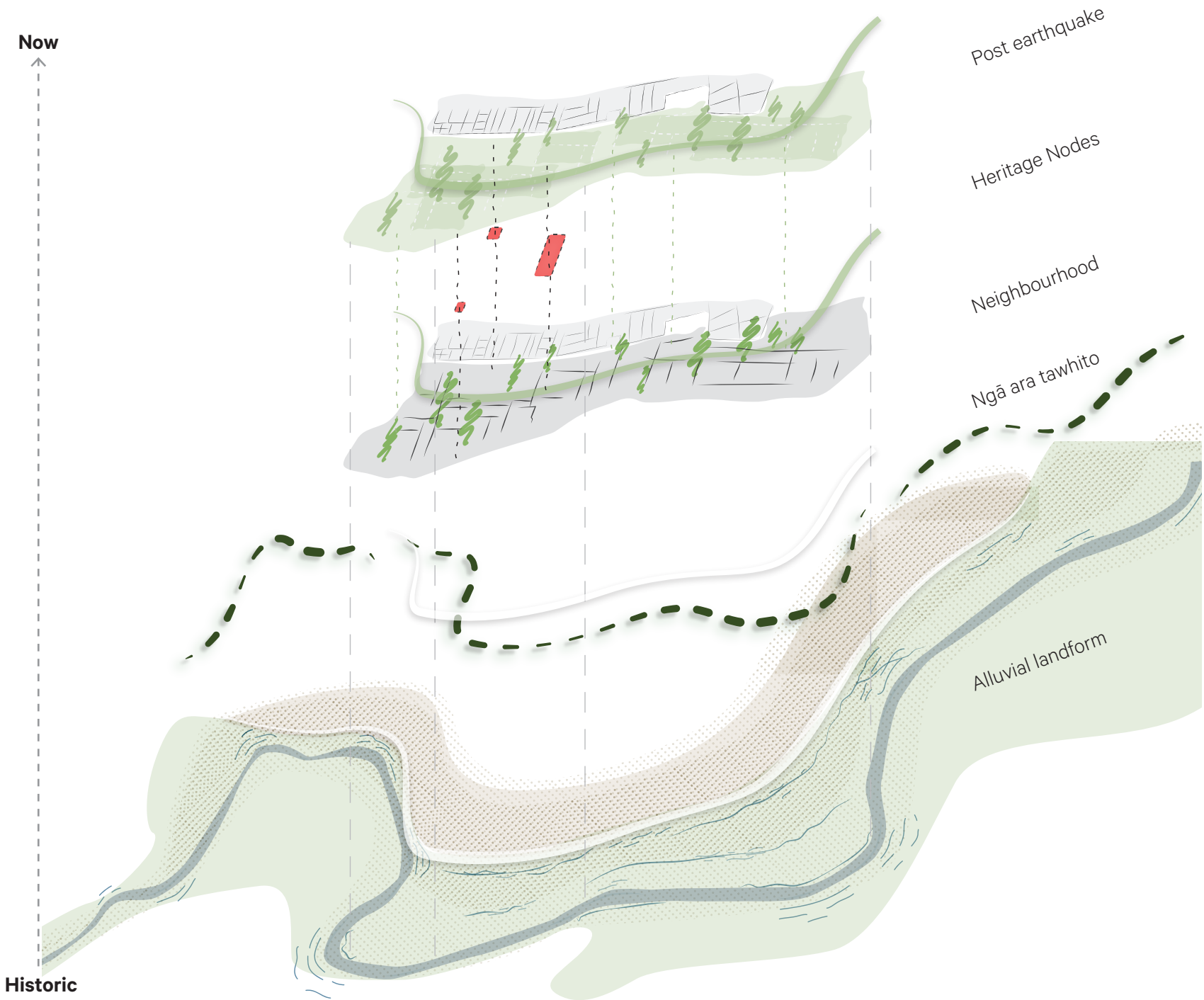
Existing/ proposed informal path



1:10,000 @ A3

Site Significance.

Layered History.



The site in its current state is part of a living and evolving history. Respecting its layers while looking to its future.

Elevate the mana and mauri of both river and people. A positive and inclusive future built on a rich history reaching back centuries.

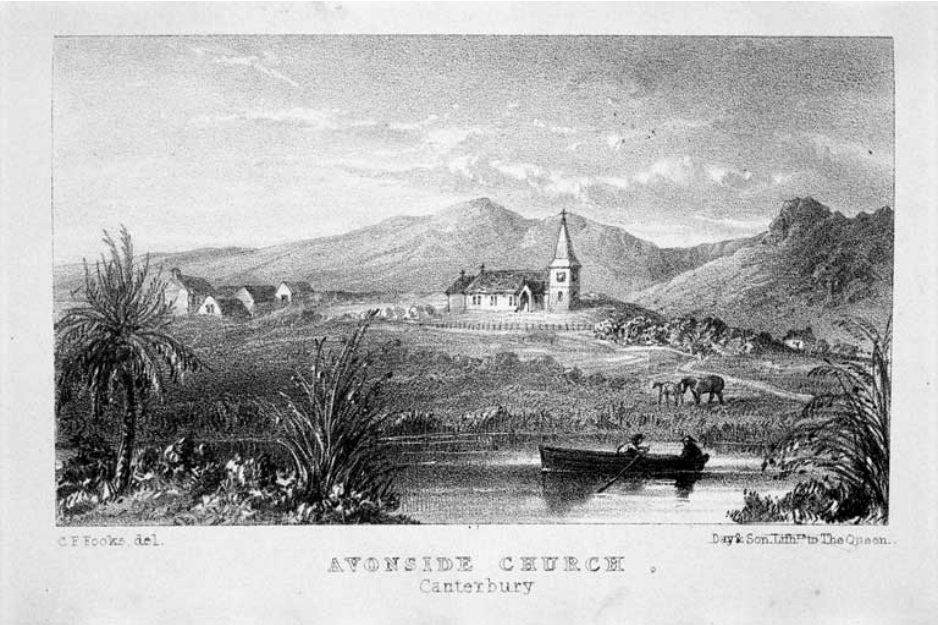
The Bill Sutton House, Avonside Tennis club - the oldest Tennis club in Ōtautahi as well as historic pump stations are key historic elements embedded within the project area.

Housing development and sub-urban densification led to a more permanent change in landscape and its use.

Historic pathways along the banks of the Ōtākaro - Ngā Ara Tawhito - have moved people up, down and across this resource-rich environment for centuries.

Historic sand dunes, incised by the meandering Ōtākaro River, over time created a river plain and elevated terraces which bend with the river.

Recent History.



“Here, across the footbridge from the Belt one came to the open paddock known then as the daisy-field. Of course, this is now subdivided and closely built over, with Heywood, Windsor and Brittan streets intersecting it.

When I first remember it, it was a terraced paddock thick with daisies, and many a time I rolled down the terraces till one day the rolling made me giddy, and I have never rolled since. Along the river at this part, too, was always the scene of boating festivities, opening-day being a very important gala-day.

There were booths on the daisy-field and the river-side with cakes, and fruits, and drinks. There were high poles with flags along the river, and festoons of flags across the river; the old footbridge at the Belt was decorated, and the banks were thronged with people, young and old.”



Bill Sutton House and Garden on Templar Street is a significant Christchurch heritage site associated with renowned Canterbury artist Bill Sutton. The purpose-built home, studio and integrated garden provide a rare and authentic record of Sutton’s life and work, while also representing an important example of local modernist design and Christchurch’s artistic heritage.

The site was divided in 1878 into over 25 plots for housing and early aerial imagery from the site shows housing covering the site from 1940s, the tennis courts in the centre of the site are prevalent in this also. Fitzgerald Avenue and Stanmore Road have always formed barriers to the site as housing developed in the areas, manicured planting was established along the river, growing over time.

The area was marked a residential red zone after the 2011 earthquakes and the housing removed. Clusters of garden vegetation remain around the former plots, over time the boundaries are blurring as the clusters expand through self seeding and lack of strict maintenance.



Current Condition.

View from upper landscape terrace down to Fitzgerald Ave.



Bill Sutton House.



Former driveway access to residences in the north.



Existing maintenance access



Desire lines through denser vegetation.



Established native vegetation
- Kauri



Pockets of open space amongst structural planting



Natural spring



View south west to city.



Historic pump station.



Existing terraced tennis courts with level change in topography



Insect hotels and educational board.



Naturalistic play along the way timbers.

Current Condition.

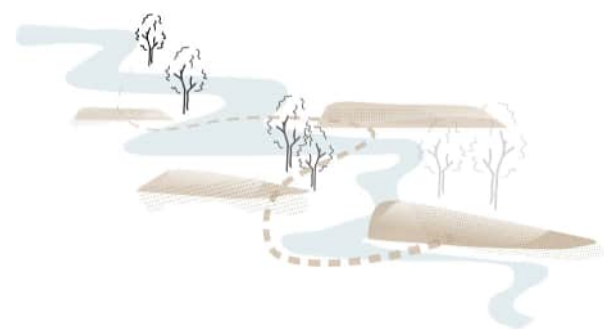


02. Schematic Design.

A River Language.

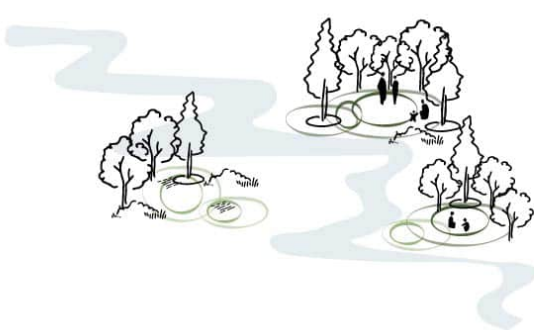
In keeping with the language of the river, the project site reflects the fluidity of the landscape, adjacent to and being one with the Avon River.

● **Movement and Flow**



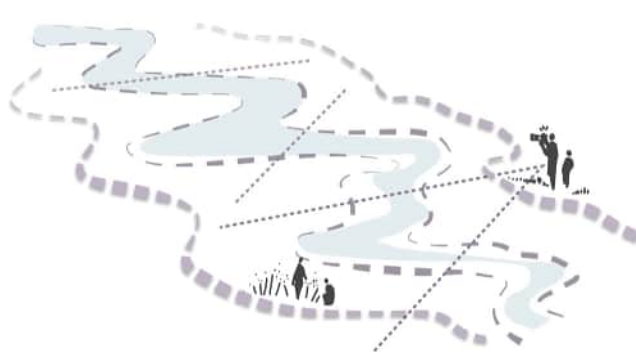
An ever changing landscape characterised by the powerful flow of the Avon River. Spaces that change over time can be re-explored through soft or light touch connections. Mimicking the archaeology of the site as a dynamic sand dune landscape, along with the effects of climate change moving further upstream, flow and movement are present as ever.

● **Nooks**



Nooks in between the established vegetation are micro spaces of where residences once stood. Those pockets of space create protected zones for people to dip into, offering light touch soft interventions for gathering, contemplation and exploration.

● **Landform**



Working with the existing topography/ natural river terrace within the landscape to open up views across the site and a differentiation of spatial types. Healing from the previous fractured landform, accommodating for the forms created by the river.

Schematic Design.

Guiding Moves.



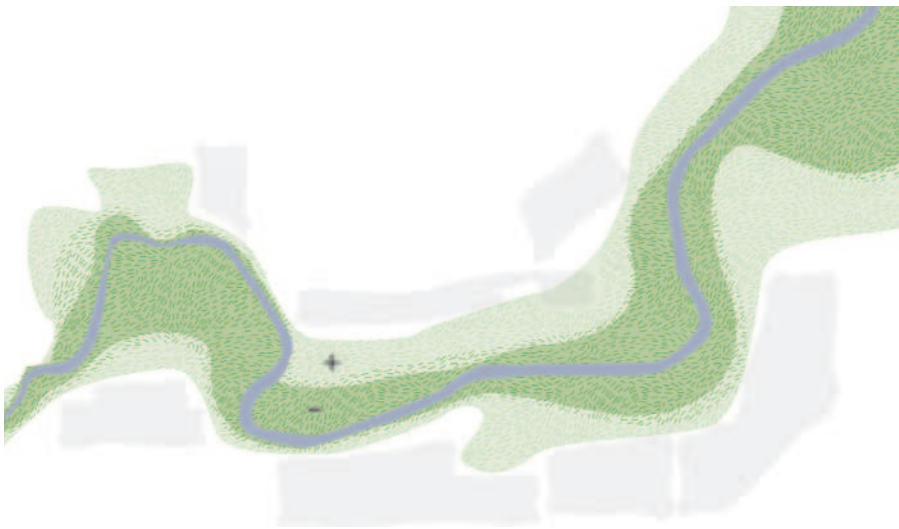
City and Wild — A transitioning of landscape characters, from manicured urban waterfront to regenerating river environment



Community & Connection — Create community frontages that connect, invite users and foster ownership.
— Use existing historical features to reveal and acknowledge the past.



Ecology — Draw river ecology up into the site
— More ordered edges at urban interface
— Immerse visitors in the evolving river ecology



Landform — Use existing topography to highlight spatial zones and visual connections both within and across the wider landscape.

03. Preliminary Design.

Design Statement.

Located where the urban edge meets the more natural character of the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor (OARC), the site provides an important gateway to the City to Sea experience. Shaped by historic sand dunes, wetlands and the continuing influence of the awa, the landscape has evolved from private residential land to open green space on an upper and a lower terrace. Mature trees, informal pathways, the former pump station, historic tennis courts and the presence of the Bill Sutton House together create a rich and distinctive layering of stories that define the character of the site.

The design vision builds on these existing qualities, celebrating the flow of the river and the movement of people through the landscape. Across the upper and lower terraces, we will create a place that invites exploration, connection and discovery. Informal routes weaving through green space create opportunities to wander through sheltered spaces and pause within quieter landscape settings. In naturally elevated areas, and viewing structures, wider views of the river corridor, city and hills is provided.

The upper terrace will become a more active and connected community space, anchored by the Bill Sutton House and strengthened by improved connections to surrounding neighbourhoods. Existing parking will be retained and complemented by a flexible multi-purpose area that can support a range of activities such as markets, events and gathering spaces.

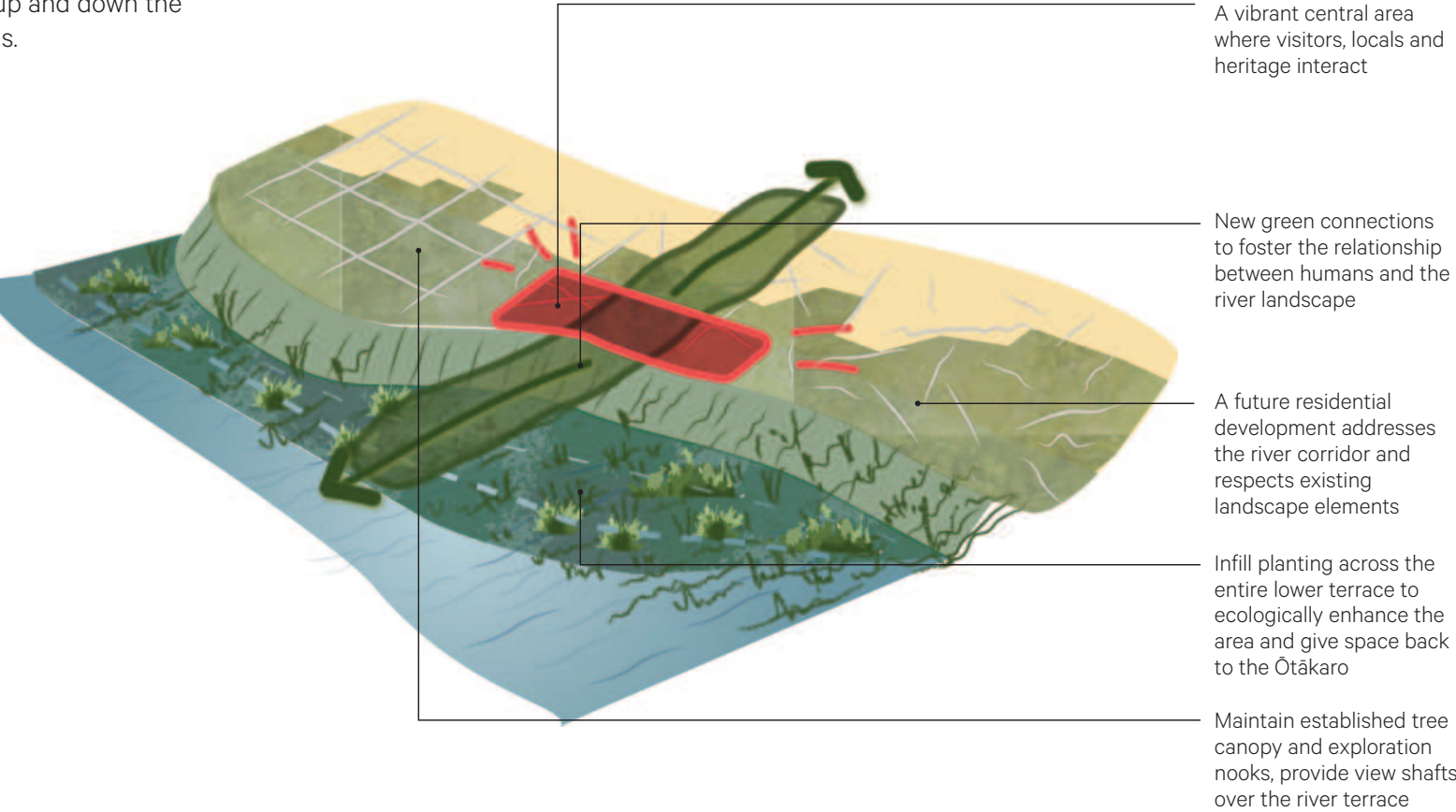
Water quality is improved here before its journey into the river through planted treatment area.

The lower terrace will remain the ecological heart of the site. New planting using water-tolerant species will enhance the river margins, improve habitat values and strengthen the resilience of the landscape during flood

events. Existing trees and established vegetation will be retained wherever possible, preserving the site’s distinctive character and history, while supporting the long-term health of the wider river corridor.

Underpinning the design is a commitment to sustainability and stewardship. Waste will be minimised, priority given to locally sourced native planting, and the reuse of site materials will be explored. Future development will respect the existing landscape framework, ensuring that growth strengthens rather than diminishes the green character, ecological values and community connections that make this place unique.

The result will be a place-based landscape that honours its history, responds to its environment, and creates both a welcoming starting point for journeys up and down the Ōtākaro Avon River, and a place for locals.



Schematic Approaches. Zoning Diagrams.



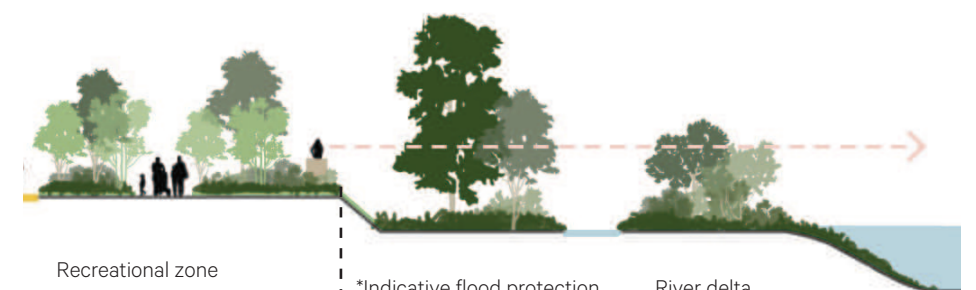
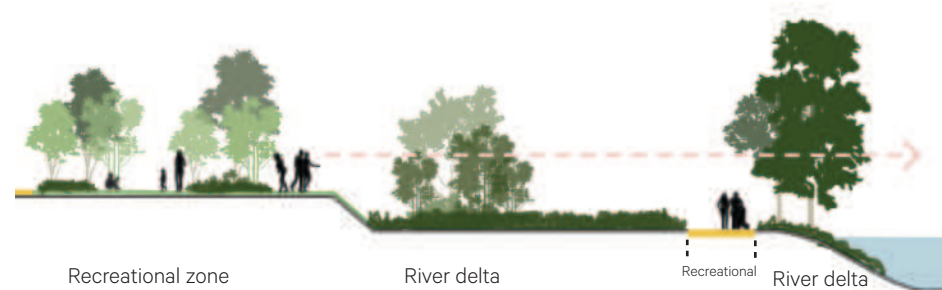
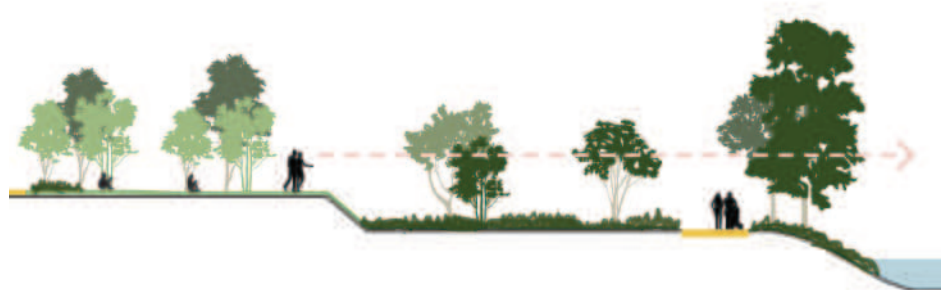
Immediate approach.



Interim approach.



Long term approach.



- The upper terrace with its established tree canopy and shrubs will be maintained. Visitors can use existing nooks with slight lines through, to explore and reflect while enjoying elevated and unobstructed views over the regenerating river environment.
- By providing infill planting with water tolerant plants, the lower terrace will be ecologically enhanced. This adds resilience during flood events.
- Additional parking supplements the roadside perpendicular parks currently on site, with accessible parks along Templar Street by the Bill Sutton House entrance.
- There is potential to upgrade the fencing of the upper terrace tennis court and if able, use this court for other racket sports such as pickleball or padel to encourage a variety of users to get into sport on the site.

- By planting additional native trees, the upper terrace could see a densification of the existing tree canopy. Relocating the main path through the site East-West brings passive surveillance to the nooks improving perceived safety. This allows people to witness how the project area and wider landscape changes over time.
- Informal tracks can be formed in a light-touch approach, e.g. by using Teddington. This could not only help with mitigating potential tree root damage, but could test spatial alignment of meandering tracks.
- Planting on the lower terrace grows denser and provides resilience during flood events. Low-lying areas will naturally absorb water and alleviate pressure on the Ōtākaro Avon River system while boosting ecological benefits for flora and fauna.

- Flood protection work will be required here in the coming decades, sea level rise elevates risk to property and infrastructure. At this point, the C2SW should be pulled to the upper terrace, with the lower terrace transitioning to an increasingly wet river margin, along with the relocation of the tennis court to the upper terrace.
- The central community area brings people together to explore, play, discover and reconnect with the whenua and their neighbourhood.
- The contrasting forms between the upper and lower terraces highlight the dynamic relationship between the man-made and the more natural. While the upper terrace's design reflects human intervention and urban development, the lower terrace serves as a sanctuary for nature's resilience.

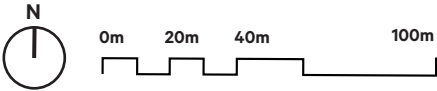
General Arrangement.



Legend	
1	Existing parking retained
2	Exploration path - Path weaving through existing trees and proposed vegetation, opportunity for informal play along the way.
3	Daisy Field - Reference to the history of place, native flowering plants with informal play
4	Existing vegetation retained - subject to arborist assessment, nature based play
5	Possible future flood protection
6	Sutton House
7	Existing Streetscape
8	Flexible space beside Sutton House. Uses beyond parking may include art exhibitions, shelter and gathering space.
9	Accessible car parking
10	Existing parking retained
11	Garden Rooms- Series of outdoor rooms with themed planting (succulent rock garden, native grove, seasonal flower drifts with nature based play, fruit trees and edibles)
12	Landmark viewing platform or elevated ground- long views over to the city, up stream and down stream, opportunity to educate on history of place, floodplains,
13	Informal exploration path - Teddington chip path
14	Existing tennis courts - opportunity to be included in wider design of the area
15	Natural play along exploration path - Challenging obstacle course, callisthenics/obstacle course
16	Shared access path - pedestrian access and maintenance vehicular for bioscape/pump station management, tennis courts
17	Planted water treatment area - inground pump station and kiosk
18	Edge housing Zone - not part of this project (shown for context)
19	Historic Pump Station
20	Planting around natural spring

General Arrangement.

Key Moves.



Legend	
	Exploration path - with natural play elements along the way
	Shared path / vehicular entry - for water management and tennis courts
	Vehicular circulation
	Active area - Viewing points, flexible active space, active play - callisthenics/obstacle course
	Quiet / shelter / refuge - amongst established vegetation

	Water treatment - piped stormwater
	Water treatment - in ground pump station, planted bioscape, small electrical kiosk
	Water treatment - stormwater outlet into Ōtakaro / Avon River
	Lower Terrace - Drawing from the river ecology, overtime planting throughout to ecologically enhance the area and give space back to the Ōtakaro

Precedents.



Precedents.

