



# BLACKROCK PARK

Masterplan 2020



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

From the outset of the process in the development of the Blackrock Park Masterplan 2020, a detailed Blackrock Park Site Analysis was undertaken by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLR) Parks Section with input from other departments within DLR. The site analysis was undertaken to provide some background information on the park and consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the short and longer term. It was developed prior to considering any suggested improvements or changes to the park and was published as part of the Blackrock Park Masterplan - Have Your Say process. This process invited members of the public to complete a questionnaire about the park and provide associated comments or suggestions.

It is recognised through lessons learned from previous park masterplan public consultations, that early engagement with the public and stakeholders is key to a successful outcome. Therefore, it was decided to refrain from developing a layout for the park until the conclusion of the public consultation process.

Therefore, the approach in the development of the masterplan was to engage with the public and other stakeholders from the outset and use the information from the Have Your Say process, as well as the site analysis as a basis for the development of the masterplan. The goal has been to collect information, particularly specific local knowledge, to help inform the plan. A sense of ownership on behalf of the public is key to the long-term success of Blackrock Park and it is hoped that this was instilled during the public workshop held.

Following on from the Have Your Say process, two internal steering group teams were set up to try to agree the masterplan. The first group was the internal parks team consisting of the designers and the area managers which would allow for an innovative but sustainable plan. The second group consisted of a multi-disciplinary team made up of different service departments with varying knowledge and expertise which allowed for a realistic and deliverable plan for Blackrock Park. The plan was developed over a period of a number of months through a series of workshops with both groups.

The Parks Section wishes to acknowledge the invaluable input, advice and assistance of the internal steering groups, external stakeholders, members of the public and Elected Members who through their participation, suggestions and support helped to guide the final Blackrock Park Masterplan 2020.

### **Parks Internal Team:**

Ruairi O'Dualing, Senior Parks Superintendent  
Eoin O'Brien Senior Executive Park Superintendent  
Bridget Tracey Senior Executive Park Superintendent  
Dara O'Daly Executive Parks Superintendent  
Paul Conlon A/Executive Parks Superintendent  
Marc Cambell, Assistant Parks Superintendent  
Jim Ellis, Parks District Supervisor  
Deirdre Black, Heritage Officer

### **Internal Steering Group Team:**

Eoin O'Brien Senior Executive Park Superintendent  
Dara O'Daly Executive Parks Superintendent  
Paul Conlon A/Executive Parks Superintendent  
Anne Murray, Biodiversity Officer  
Julie Craig, Executive Conservation Officer  
Joseph Craig, Senior Executive Engineer (Water and Drainage)  
John Broderick, Senior Executive Engineer (Traffic)  
Thiago Bodini, Executive Engineer (Transportation Planning)  
Ian Smalley, Administrative Officer (Community)  
Michelle Breslin, Senior Executive Planner

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---



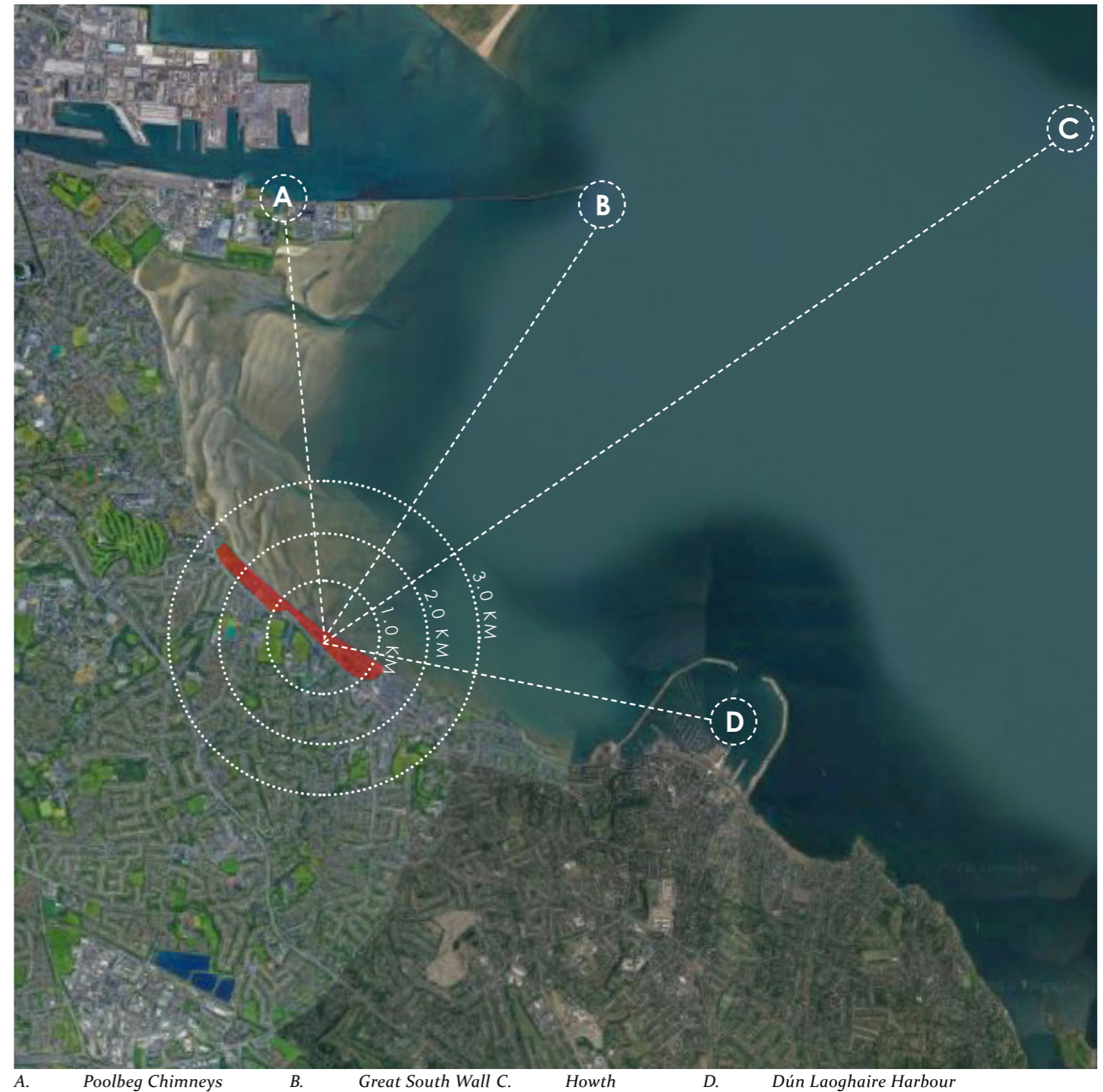
View of a heritage granite pillar, Blackrock Park entrance  
at Mount Merrion Avenue

01	VISION	04   05
02	LINKS AND PERMEABILITY	06
03	PATHS AND CIRCULATION	07   08
04	ACTIVE ZONE AND NATURE PLAY	09
05	BUILT HERITAGE	10
06	INTERPRETING THE LANDSCAPE	11   17
07	DESTINATION POINTS	18

## 1.0 VISION

Blackrock Park is endowed with many great existing characteristics. Its unique, coastal context, its strategic boundary location and its many historic features underpin its potential. The overriding goal of this masterplan is to properly establish Blackrock Park as an outstanding, flagship amenity within the county. This will be achieved with key interventions which will emphasise its many qualities. The Aims & Objectives (outlined below) have been specifically created to help achieve this.

1. Develop the park in a holistic and sustainable manner and explore the use of renewable energy for the parks power requirements.
2. Maximise tree canopy cover in the park and where appropriate implement nature-based solutions in line with Councils Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024.
3. Strategically shape Blackrock Park as a 'Gateway Park' on the threshold between Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and Dublin City.
4. Establish a unified park connecting the necklace of spaces between Blackrock and Booterstown.
5. Put in place a long-term vision for Blackrock Park and arrange the park and its elements into a logical order to exploit the parks amenity value within the context of the historic designed landscape.
6. Conserve, restore and integrate the built heritage and provide suitable, sympathetic and sustainable uses for the properties in the context of a Regional Park.
7. Protect and enhance the natural heritage, flora & fauna and marine heritage of the park in the context of the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere.
8. Reinstate the historic Victorian layout within the heritage section of the park and integrate this with new proposals and uses.
9. Increase the horticultural offering of the park in a sustainable manner with an emphasis on bold, naturalistic sweeps of planting suitable for the coastal conditions.
10. Encourage greater footfall and daily use with a suitable and appropriate level of visitor facilities provided throughout the park.
11. Provide high quality passive recreational facilities including rest and relaxation spaces in appropriate locations.
12. Develop high quality, inclusive active recreational facilities, available to a wide range of the population in order to encourage a more active lifestyle.
13. Develop a stronger physical connection with Blackrock Village and the surrounding residential areas with high quality cycling/walking and permeability links.
14. Create a stronger physical and visual connection with the coastline.
15. Upgrade the existing greenway in the park for walking and cycling.
16. Develop a way-finding strategy for the park and surrounding areas, integrating with Fáilte Ireland's Orientation Strategy for Dublin.
17. Foster greater community engagement and educational programmes associated with the park, Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere and adjacent Booterstown Marsh.
18. Acknowledge the size and scale of the park through strategic interventions that will also benefit the broader county.
19. Ensure the final adopted Masterplan is used in its entirety for the development and restoration of Blackrock Park without significant amendment.



A. Poolbeg Chimneys B. Great South Wall C. Howth D. Dún Laoghaire Harbour

PARK LOCATION



PROPOSED PARK LAYOUT



EXISTING PARK LAYOUT

## 2.0 LINKS AND PERMEABILITY

A key part of the masterplan is to create greater connections with the surrounding area. Providing more convenient and well located access points with transport corridors punctuating its east and west thresholds. The park is neatly bookended with Booterstown DART Station to the north and Blackrock DART Station to the south. The Rock Road is the major north/south traffic corridor in the local area and is serviced by the 7 and 7a bus routes. The main cycle/footpath route through the park serves as a link in a wider commuter corridor and will be upgraded as part of the masterplan proposal.

The design scheme focuses on improving access and permeability into the park for the public. It is proposed to widen the existing Blackrock DART Station access path with a new prominent entrance plaza to the park. This widened access will require consultation and a possible compulsory purchase of land from the neighboring property. Two additional controlled pedestrian crossings are recommended on the Rock Road. The masterplan also includes a proposal for an entirely new, reconfigured entrance at Booterstown, announcing the park for people traveling out of the city centre into Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.

The southern section of the park between Phoenix Terrace and Blackrock Village features a strong boundary with impressive heritage entrances featuring original ironwork. The masterplan proposes to create a similar unified boundary along the entirety of the park. This will help to anchor the park into the local landscape and give it a stronger presence along the Rock Road and provide as a safer boundary to help contain children in the park.



PROPOSED ENTRANCE AT BOOTERSTOWN (indicative)

### INTERVENTION STRATEGIES



Raised tables at pedestrian crossings



Signalised Pedestrian Crossings



Tree lined medians



### 3.0 PATHS AND CIRCULATION

#### Pedestrian and cycling movement through the park

Permeability and connectivity are key goals of the masterplan. A key goal is to improve the path network within Blackrock Park. With reference to the original path layout of the park the masterplan provides an improved circulation network and connections suitable for a variety of activities and abilities.

The plan seeks to facilitate both pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed layout is both self-regulating and avoids the need for a large volume of signage and barrier clutter. This will be achieved through the use of a co-ordinated suite of surface details and materials. Rumble strips and surface contrasts will help direct park users and reduce user conflicts. At present, the existing shared cycle lane is the only access for pedestrians moving through the linear park. The masterplan proposes to widen the existing cycle lane to improve the user quality for both pedestrians and cyclists. There is also a proposal to introduce quiet paths through the park for pedestrians only.

To encourage access and connectivity to Blackrock Park through sustainable means of travel DLRCC has created Greenway cycling routes throughout Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. The park forms part of three Green Infrastructure corridors. These are relatively flat routes on a good surface along a shared pedestrian/cycle route and partly through residential estates with low traffic volumes.

#### Pathway Lighting

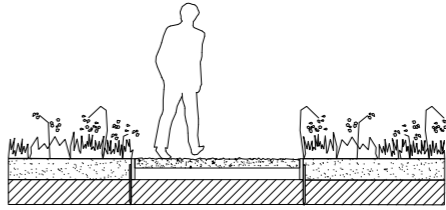
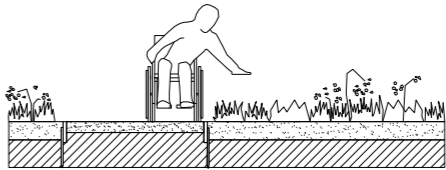
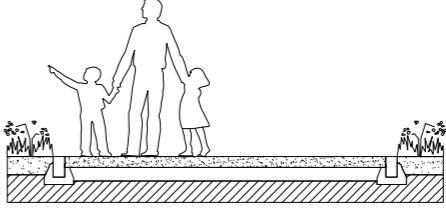
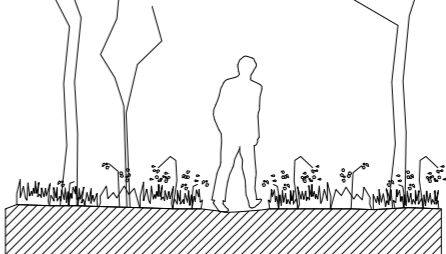
The park will be open on a 24 hour basis to maintain the pedestrian and cycling permeability at all times. This will mean that the park will be in use during night time hours. Park user security will be an issue so lighting will be an important feature of the future park. The requirement for security will have to be balanced with night-time light pollution. A lighting management plan will be devised during the project stage to consider things such as; height, light timing & dimming options, placement, spill and pollution to coast and sensitive areas.



PROPOSED VIEW OF THE MARTELLO TOWER ALONG A PEDESTRIAN ONLY ROUTE (indicative)



# PATHS - POTENTIAL HIERARCHY

TYPE OF PATH	EXISTING / NEW	HISTORIC ROUTE kept / restored	ACCESSIBILITY natural / tamed / tempered	SECTIONS
Historic Landscape Paths	existing	kept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tamed</li> <li>improved accessibility - introduce resting areas on steep inclines</li> <li>width varies 2m - 4m</li> </ul>	
Pedestrian only route	new	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tamed</li> <li>fully accessible</li> <li>typically 1.8m width</li> </ul>	
Shared Surface Path for cyclists and pedestrians	existing	kept and upgraded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>widened to a 4m width</li> <li>universally accessible</li> <li>clearly marked</li> <li>remove pinch point locations to reduce any potential conflicts</li> </ul>	
Meadow Trails/ Pedestrian route	new	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not universally accessible</li> <li>varying width</li> </ul>	



## 4.0 ACTIVE ZONE AND NATURE PLAY

### Active Recreation Provision

The narrow linear layout of the park provides limited opportunities for field sports. The masterplan seeks to exploit this and incorporate alternative sport facilities within the park to promote more diverse active recreation within the county. The masterplan proposes a skate park, pump track, outdoor gym and bouldering within the park interlaced with meadow and tree planting. The tree planting will provide additional shelter from coastal winds and improve the park's climate change resilience.

It is proposed to remove the existing playground adjacent to the bandstand and the defunct Italian Garden within the park and replace them with new natural play elements to promote free play and imagination. The feasibility of incorporating existing structures as play elements within the park, such as historic follies will be explored in the detailed design process.

A permanent staff facility beside the car showroom in the active area will provide additional supervision and foster a sense of safety as there will be more staff in the vicinity.

### INTERVENTION STRATEGIES



Skate Park



Improved playgrounds



Calisthenic Gym



Biodiversity Education Opportunities



PROPOSED VIEW OF INTEGRATED SKATE PARK (indicative)



Existing playground

Proposed nature based play zones

Proposed alternative sports/active recreations

## 5.0 BUILT HERITAGE

.....

### **Built Heritage**

The architectural heritage within the park is critical and must be retained and repaired wherever appropriate. It is preferable to oppose the loss of any historic fabric unless a comprehensive, compelling proposal is put forward to suggest otherwise. Often, minor alterations to the fabric of protected structures can impact on their character and special interest. To ensure the right balance is struck between the changing demands and the continued use of the buildings, it is vital that proposed works be thoroughly assessed and evaluated prior to implementation.

Blackrock Park has several layers of history that can be clearly read in the landscape. The park is a fine example of Victorian landscape design with features including, and not limited to, the bandstand, lake and pavilion. The Martello Tower is one of the most prominent and oldest built features in the park.

Other more inconspicuous surviving details such as railings, gates and stonework provide a rich historic narrative. Repairs to enhance the built heritage in Blackrock Park should be carried out to the highest conservation standards, and should avoid over restoration making them materially unidentifiable from the original. The interventions should be simple in nature and easily reversible using similar methods and materials. Where new interventions are proposed they must be sympathetic to their surroundings while representing quality modern design ideals and standards.

All development proposals potentially impacting on Protected Structures shall have regard to the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2011). All works will comply with BS 7913

Works carried out by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on the historic built fabric within Blackrock Park has been conservative in nature – striving to avoid the appearance of over-restoration. Works have been carried out to the highest conservation standards using materials of suitable or matching quality.

### **Martello Tower**

This structure is registered as a Protected Structure (RMP) and currently not a National Monument. Prior to any works being carried out on the tower a zone of archaeological potential will be investigated and any development proposals will be dependent on any findings.

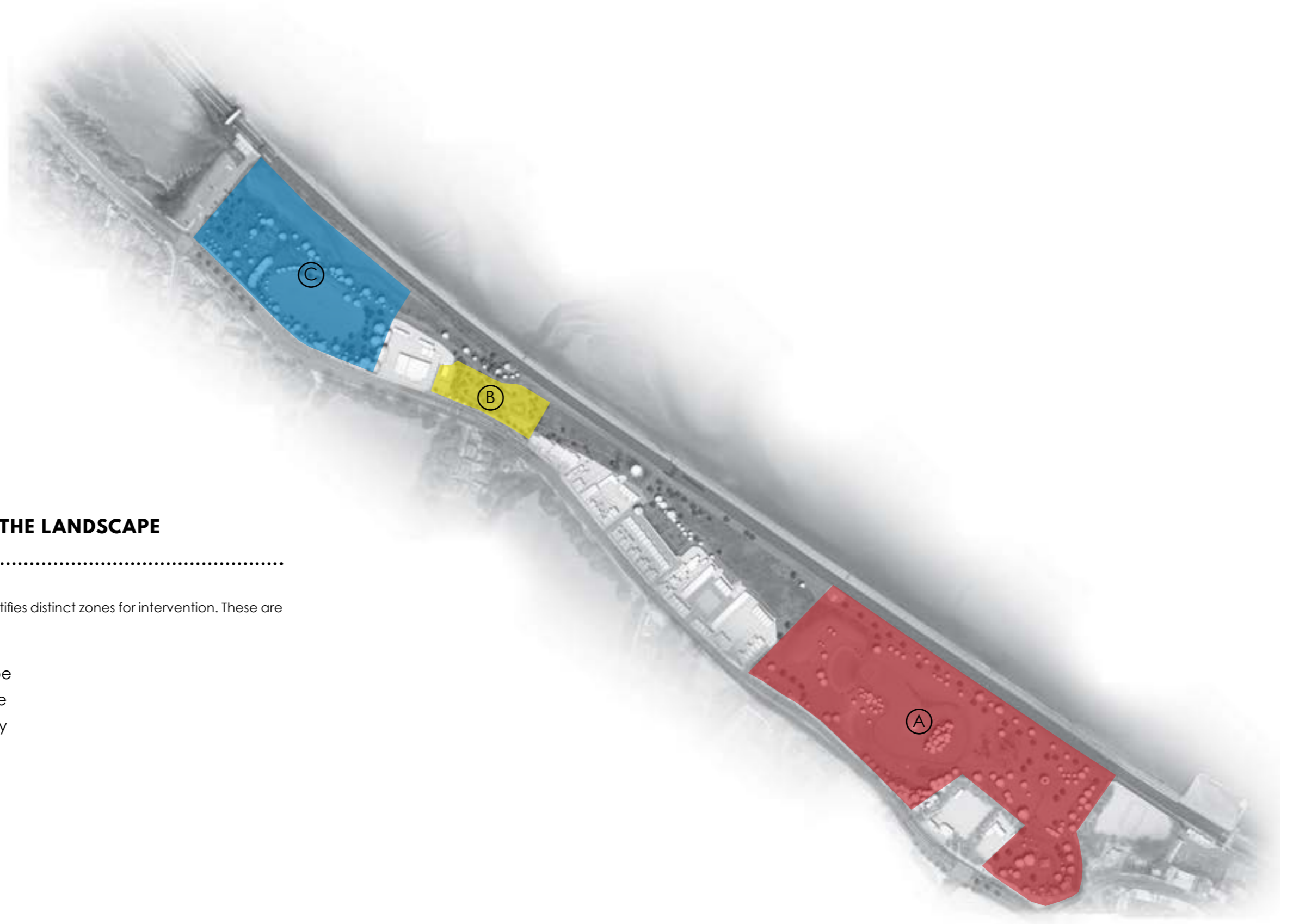
As part of the Masterplan and full inventory of remnant designed landscape heritage features within the park will be recorded with a view to restore them in order of necessity.



FORMER VIEW OF THE BANDSTAND



VIEW OF THE BANDSTAND FOLLOWING RESTORATION



## 6.0 INTERPRETING THE LANDSCAPE

.....  
The masterplan proposal identifies distinct zones for intervention. These are as follows:

- A. Historic Landscape
- B. Active Landscape
- C. The Park Gateway



PROPOSED PLAN

..... EXTEND NATURAL PLAY AREA TO EXPLOIT GRADIENT OF SITE AND HISTORIC FOLLY

..... RESTORE FOUNTAIN AND ISLAND FOLLY AND REINSTATE THE TIDAL INLET/OUTLET MECHANISM FOR REGULATING THE LAKES WATER LEVEL

..... INCREASE TREE CANOPY ALONG COASTAL EDGE USING EVERGREEN SPECIES TO ENHANCE YEAR ROUND GREENING

..... REPLACE EXISTING PLAYGROUND WITH INTEGRATED NATURAL PLAY FEATURES TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND PLAY OPPORTUNITIES AND ENCOURAGE FREE PLAY

..... UPGRADE MOUNT MERRION AVENUE ENTRANCE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON GREENING AND REDUCED HARD SURFACING

..... SENSITIVELY RESTORE THE VICTORIAN PAVILION AND DEVELOP A MODERN STRUCTURE ALONGSIDE FOR USE AS PARK TEAROOMS & PUBLIC TOILETS.

..... INTRODUCE A NEW PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE AND DRAMATIC BRIDGE FEATURE THAT CREATES A BETTER INTERFACE BETWEEN THE PARK AND THE TOWN

..... CREATE A PROMINENT ENTRANCE AT BLACKROCK DART STATION TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY WITH BLACKROCK VILLAGE AND THE SEAFRONT



## HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

### ZONE A

This zone is the historic core of Blackrock Park. The design of the masterplan will seek a minimal but impactful intervention into the existing fabric of the park. The plan restores and improves the original layout and features of the park while proposing new editions to meet the modern demands of the public.

Exploiting the unique topography of the site, offering additional seating and interventions at significant viewing platform locations a key strategies of the plan. The restoration of the Victorian Pavilion to be used as a tearoom forms a hub for the park which will also include additional seating and accessibility to encourage congregation with views over the park and Dublin Bay.

The masterplan will seek to plant more trees similar to the original planting plan of the park which will add to the greening in the park but also offer shelter in the expansive, windswept spaces. Additional works propose the removal of other derelict structures and superfluous paths. The old playground adjacent to the bandstand would be removed and a new natural play element constructed.



EXISTING VIEW OF VICTORIAN PAVILION



EXISTING PLAN

**PRECEDENT IMAGES FOR THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE**

---





PROPOSED PLAN

NEW PARKS SUB-DEPOT FOR STORAGE AND STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES

SPECIMEN TREE PLANTING AND NATURLAISTIC MOUNDING THROUGHOUT

INTEGRATED PUMP TRACK

EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING A PLATFORM TO VIEW THE LAGOON AREA AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE WILDLIFE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPECIAL PROTECTION

PARK ENTRANCE WITH SIGNALISED CROSSING

INTEGRATED SKATE PARK

CALISTHENIC GYM

SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ONLY ROUTE THROUGH PARK



## THE ACTIVE LANDSCAPE

### ZONE B

This zone is currently an underused resource within Blackrock Park. To meet the increasing pressure to provide quality spaces and facilities within the park the plan seeks to convert this area into a multi-use zone that is attractive for walking, exercising and relaxing for a multitude of ages.

The proposed skate park and pump track will be surrounded by undulating ground intertwined with woodland and meadow planting that will provide increased shelter and biodiversity habitats. The proposal seeks to consolidate a variety of active recreation activities into this zone with a new park entrance that will lend itself as a destination point within the park.

Signalised crossing at the Rock Road will improve linkages and will allow for safer access to the park. It is proposed to provide alternative walking routes for park users which will traverse this area.

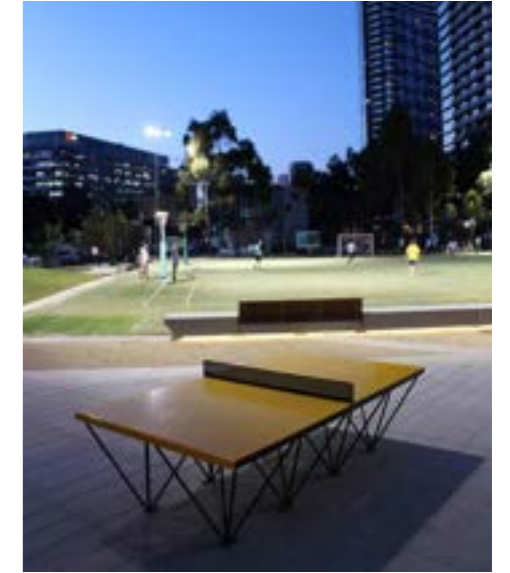


EXISTING VIEW OF ACTIVE LANDSCAPE



PROPOSED PUMP TRACK (indicative)

**PRECEDENT IMAGES FOR THE ACTIVE LANDSCAPE**





PROPOSED PLAN

- ..... PROVIDE A PROMINENT PARK ENTRANCE TO FORM A STRONG GATEWAY TO THE COUNTY OF DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN
- ..... PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INTERPRETATION SIGNAGE AND PROMOTE LOOK OUT POINTS FROM BOOTERTOWN AND BLACKROCK DART STATIONS
- ..... INTRODUCE A LARGE SCALE HIGH QUALITY HERBACEOUS DISPLAY SUITABLE FOR COASTAL CONDITIONS
- ..... UPGRADE AND EXPAND PLAYGROUND INTO THE ITALIAN GARDEN TO CREATE AN INTEGRATED NATURAL PLAY SPACE
- ..... UPGRADE THE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE PATH IN THE PARK TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND ENHANCE USAGE IN LINE WITH THE COASTAL GREENWAY PROJECT.
- ..... SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN ONLY ROUTE THROUGH PARK



**THE PARK GATEWAY**

ZONE C

As a zone of high usage and footfall DLRCC plans to provide increased seating, play and gathering opportunities for the public. The aim is to create an area that has the potential to serve those enjoying the natural and play amenities of the park in close proximity to public transport.

A new pedestrian entry points at the Booterstown end will be provided as a focal point upon entry to DLRCC and provide park users with clear entrances into the park. Additional improvements include a new natural play space within the defunct Italian Garden, new boundary treatment and a generous provision of herbaceous planting display. Additional tree planting will act as a visual screen for users within the park, reducing vehicular noise and visual intrusions.

Additional interpretation signage for the wildlife and biodiversity inw Booterstown marsh at the DART stations –will further exploit this publicly accessible elevated viewpoint.



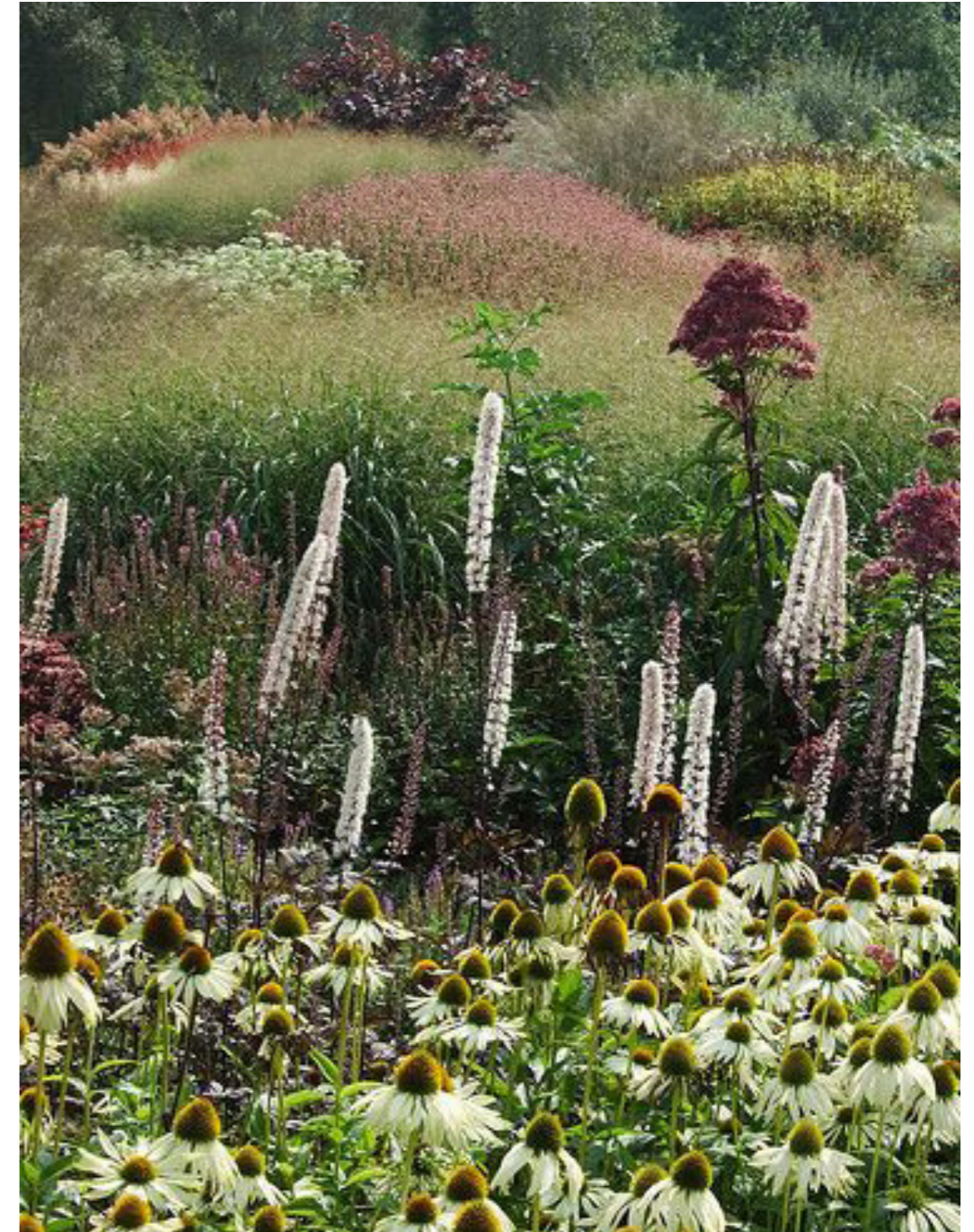
EXISTING VIEW OF ITALIAN GARDEN



EXISTING PLAN



**PRECEDENT IMAGES FOR THE PARK GATEWAY**



## 7.0 KEY LOCATIONS

.....  
REFERENCE IMAGES OF KEY LOCATIONS WITHIN PUBLIC PARKS



INTEGRATED SKATE PARK AND PUMP TRACK



WILDFLOWER MEADOWS AND GRASS PATHS



FEATURES AND HERBACEOUS BORDERS



COMMUNITY GARDENS



NATURAL PLAY



DESTINATION POINTS/ KEY LOCATIONS

