

THE SECRET GARDEN

at Welwyn Garden City

➔ The Project

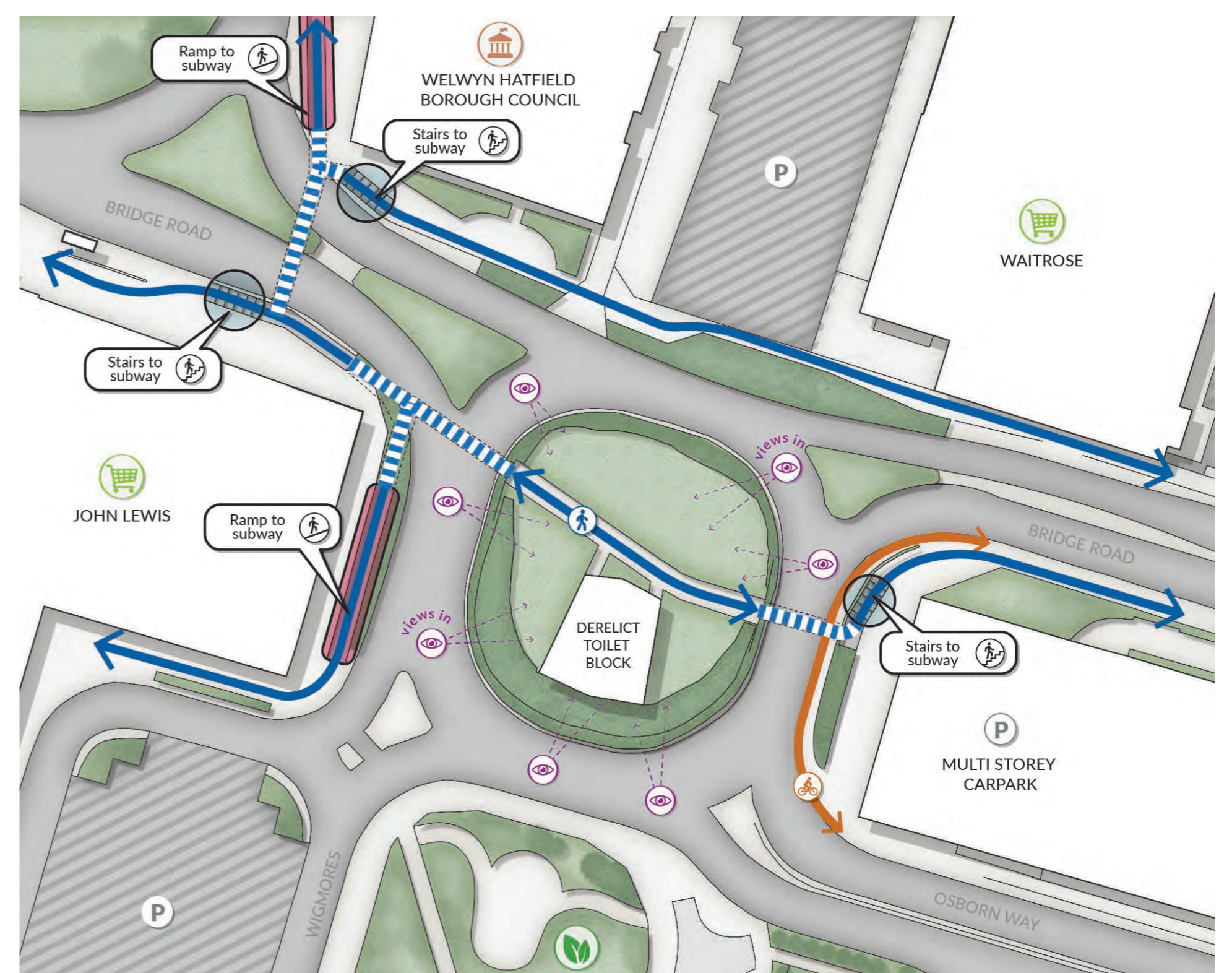
The site is located at the heart of Welwyn Garden City, to the East of the Parkway and West of the railway lines. This project proposes the demolition of the disused toilet block located within the roundabout at the heart of the subway, unlocking the potential of this prime and highly visible site for meaningful community use. In place of the redundant structure, the scheme envisions a vibrant, multifunctional public space designed to bring people together and celebrate local identity. Central to the proposal is a newly paved amphitheatre with gently elevated green seating, complemented by thoughtful urban landscaping, a community garden, and a flexible area for a pop-up shop to support local enterprise. The design also embraces an attractive mural art and lighting strategy within the subway, incorporating colours that reflect the area's culture alongside subtle twinkle lights woven through the landscape to create a welcoming, theatrical atmosphere. Together, these elements aim to transform an underutilised space into a dynamic, inclusive destination for the community.

➔ Who We Are

This project is being led by *dwg.*, a public realm design and placemaking practice, working in partnership with engineers, ecologists and other specialists. We form a multidisciplinary team appointed by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to develop a vision for the overlooked space within the Welwyn Garden City roundabout.

➔ Existing Site Context

The site is the central island of a large roundabout. It sits significantly lower than the roadways around it- it is a sunken green space. It consists of grass areas, dense planting areas including trees and shrubs and a derelict toilet block covered in vegetation. This toilet block was built in the 1960's and closed in 2011. A public path cuts through the site and connects to a series of underpasses or subways that run under the roadways. There are 3 sets of stairs and 2 ramps that connect to the site.



➔ Glimpses of the Existing Public Space



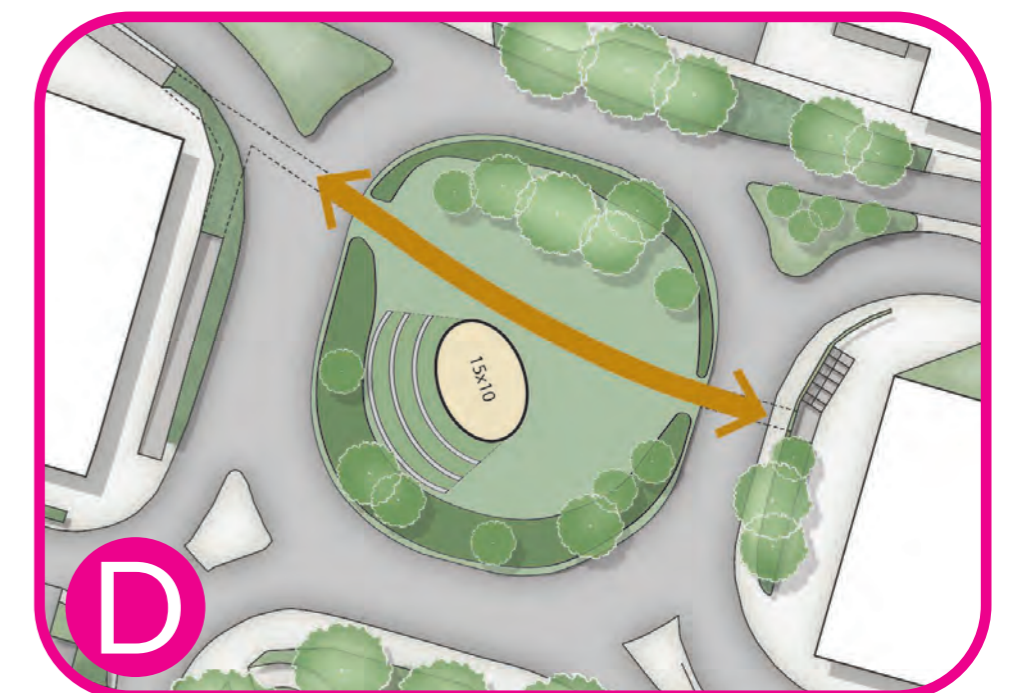
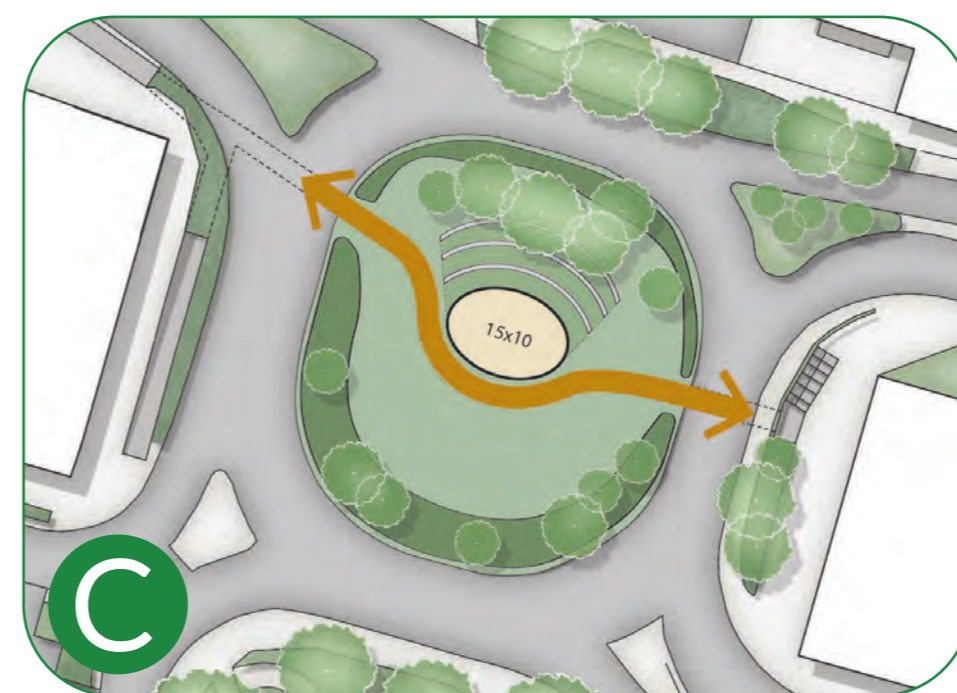
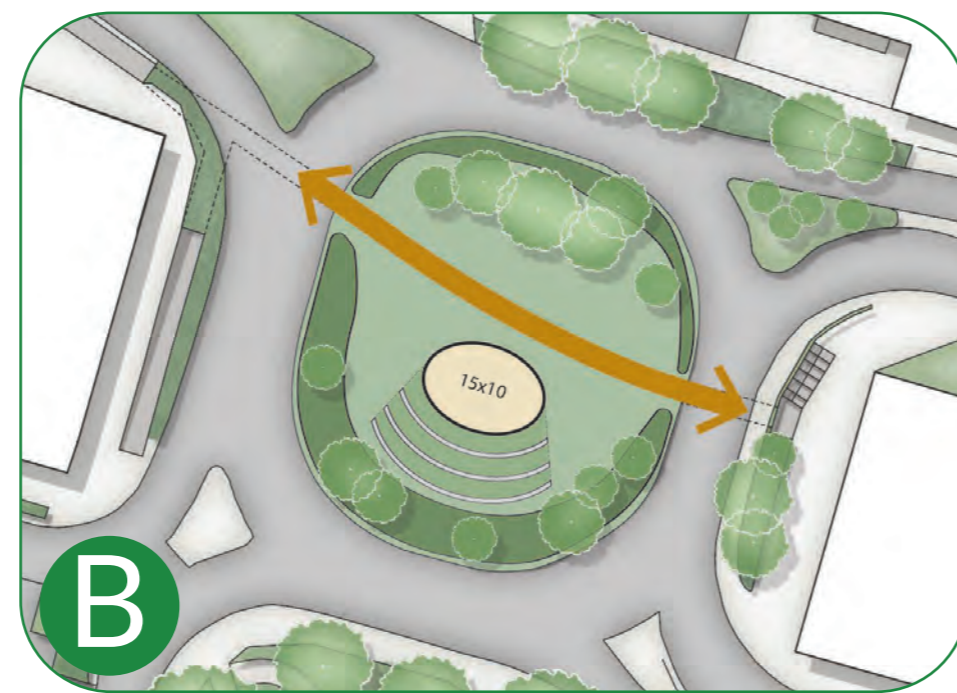
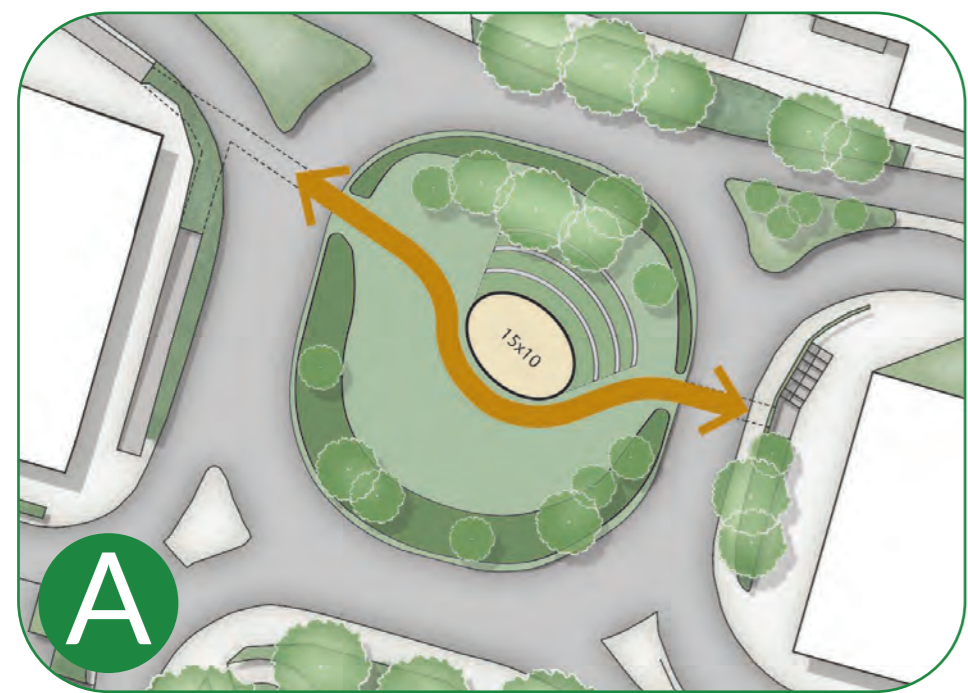
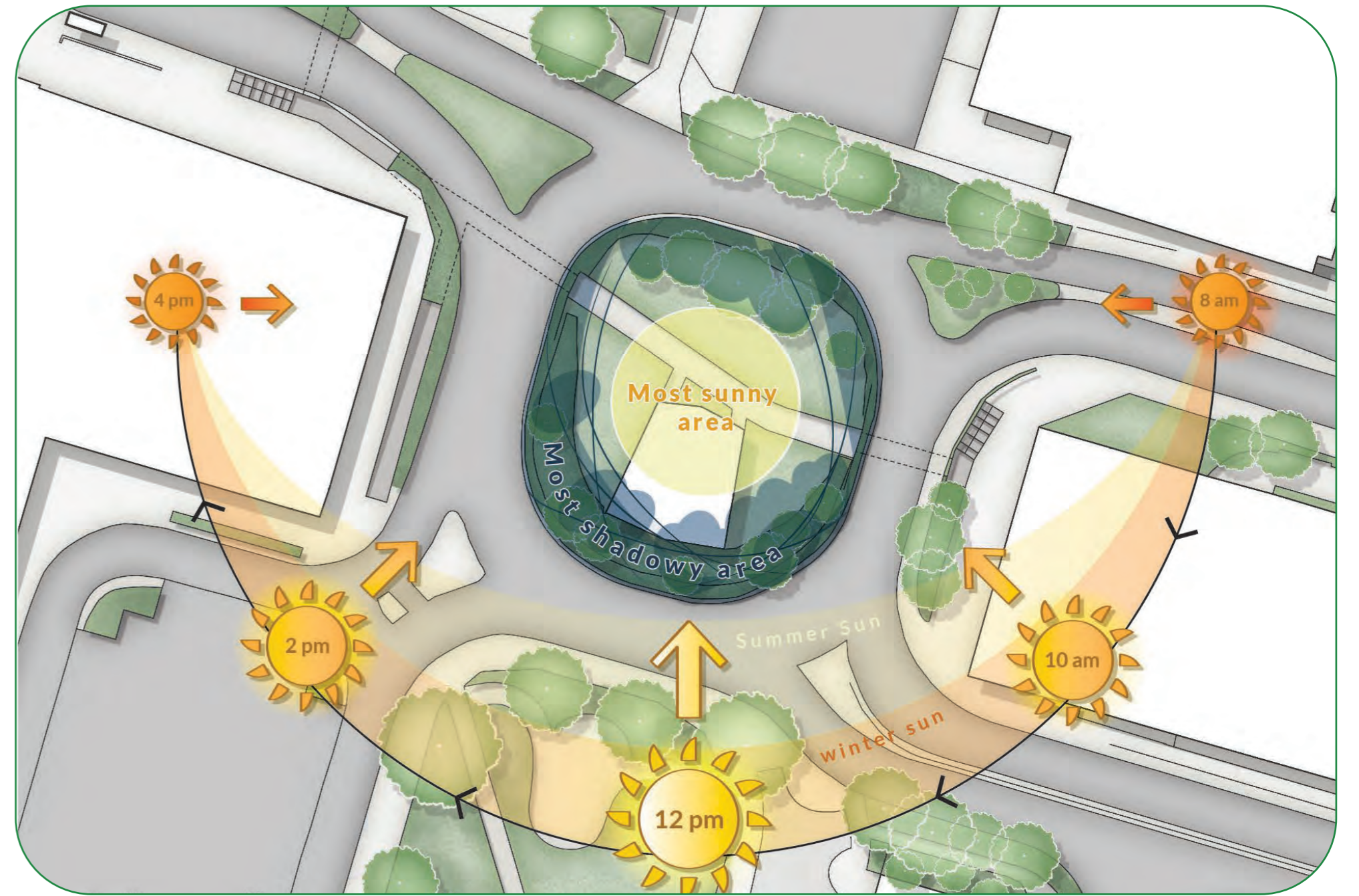
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➔ Site Analysis

The design is strongly informed by an analysis of the sun path, ensuring the landscape responds sensitively to light and seasonal change. The accompanying diagram illustrates an estimation of sun exposure across the site, showing how the approximately 2-3 metre level difference between the site and the adjacent roads results in portions of the space remaining in shadow for much of the year, a condition further accentuated by the existing trees along the southern edge. In contrast, the central area is likely to receive the greatest levels of sunlight throughout the year, making it the most suitable location for key gathering spaces such as the amphitheatre and primary seating areas.

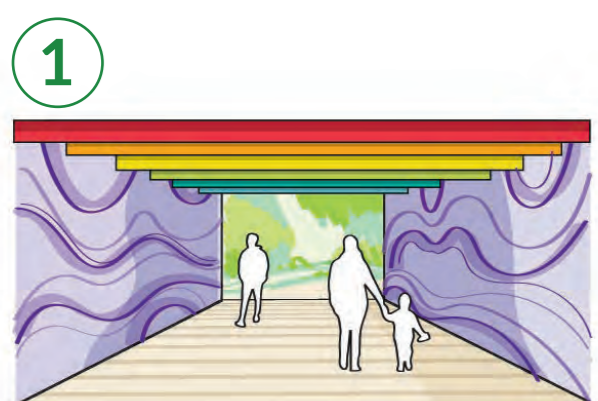
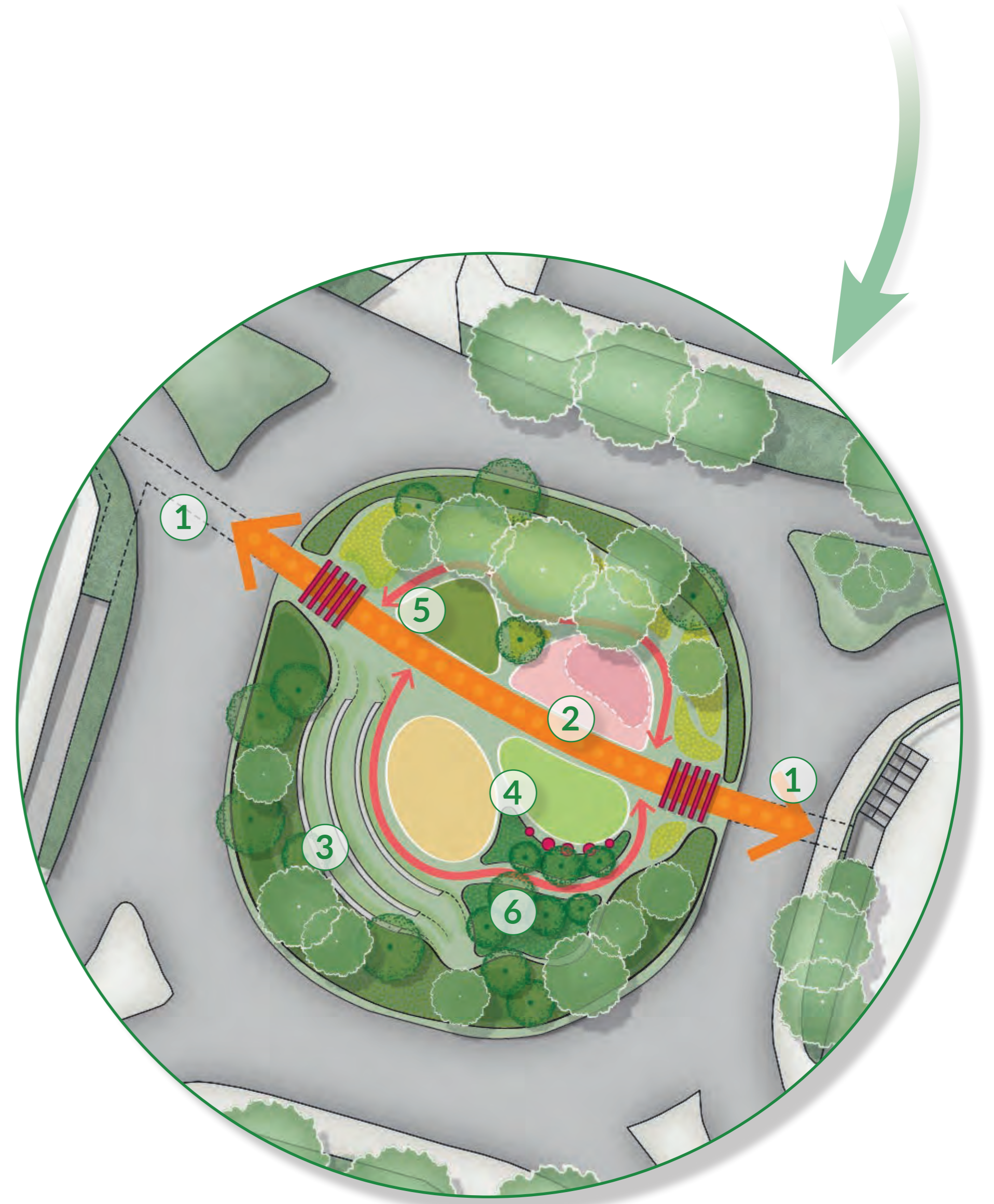
Based on this information, we explored several site layout configurations and developed four distinct options. Option D emerged as the preferred choice, offering the most shade for the amphitheatre and providing a direct, seamless connection between the two subway entrances.



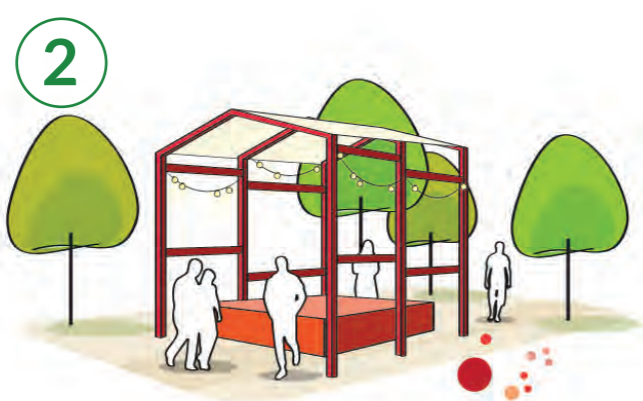
➔ The Vision

By understanding the sun's movement across the site, seating and activity zones were positioned to maximise warmth and natural daylight, enhancing comfort and usability, while planting zones were carefully arranged according to varying light conditions to support healthy growth.

Shaded areas were also intentionally incorporated to provide relief during peak summer hours, ensuring the space is comfortable, environmentally responsive, and enjoyable year-round.



attractive access



pop-up kiosks



green amphitheatre



art installations



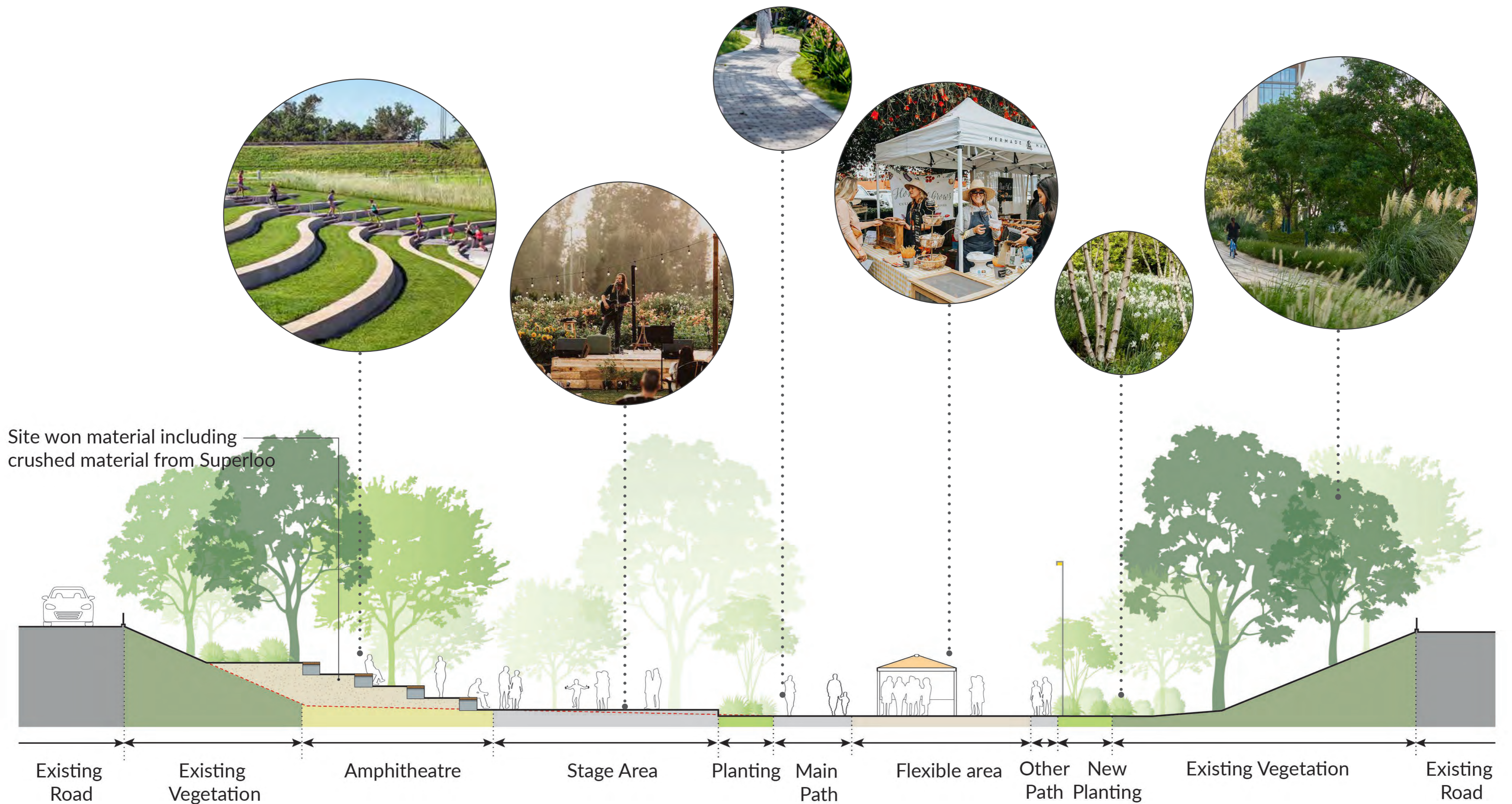
community gardens



an urban forest

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➔ Illustrative Layout

Our comprehensive plan envisions an amphitheatre for performances, thoughtfully designed urban landscaping, a community garden, flexible pop-up shop areas, and creative artistic lighting. These features aim to enrich the lives of residents and visitors, fostering social interaction, cultural engagement, and local economic growth.

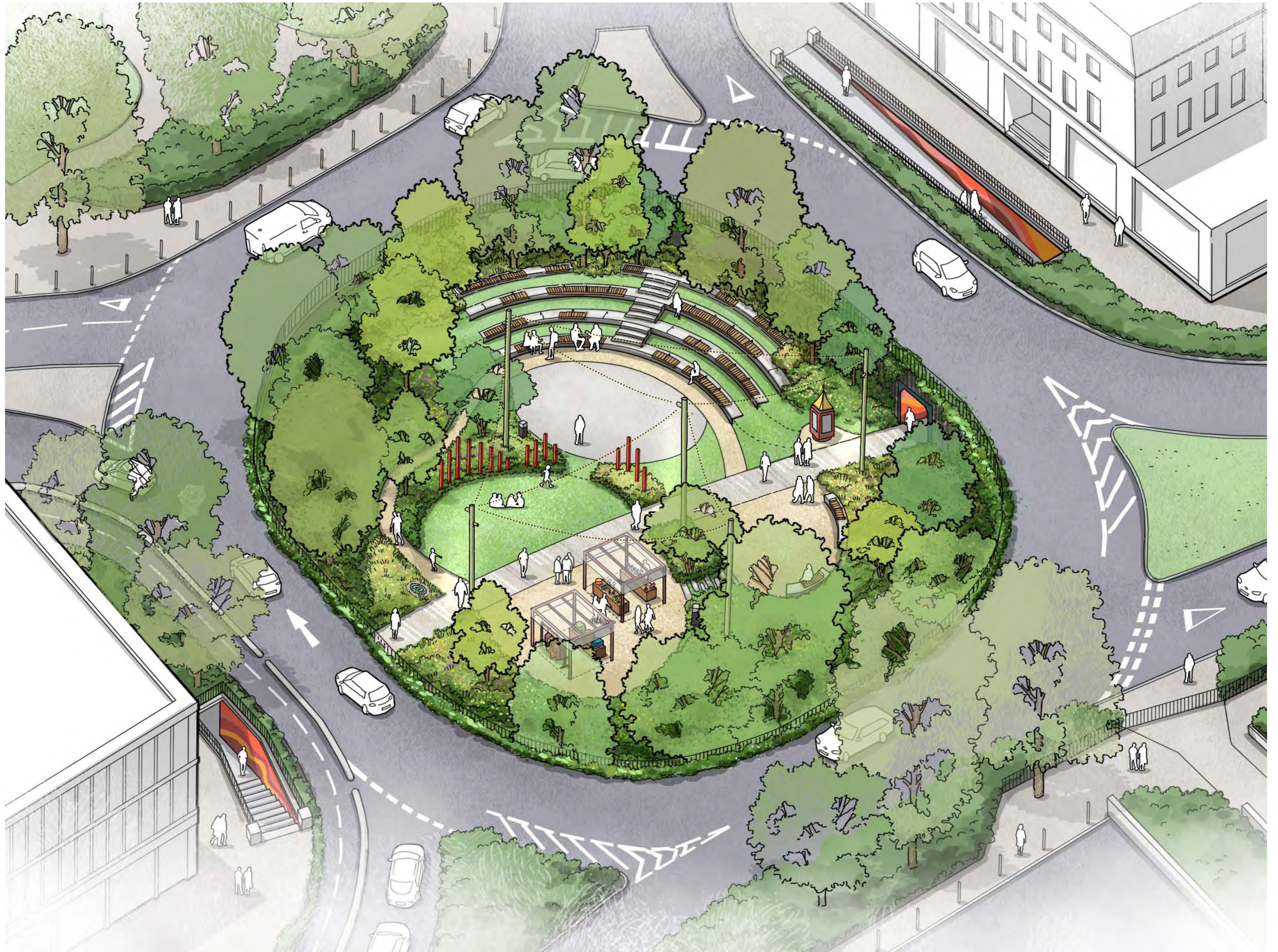
1. Re-paved & re-aligned main path
2. Secondary paths
3. Colourful timber posts
4. Amphitheatre
5. Stage area
6. Community garden
7. Flexible area for pop-up shops
8. Open lawn
9. Green buffer including existing vegetation
10. New planting areas
11. Re-purposed art feature
12. Re-purposed WGC Information Kiosk
13. Light columns



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➔ Artists Impression



➔ Share Your Views:

By blending safety, accessibility, and creativity, this project aims to enrich daily life, foster social interaction, and stimulate local economic growth. Together, we can turn this overlooked site into a beloved landmark—a place where memories are made, ideas flourish, and the spirit of our community shines.

We'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas about the emerging design for the Secret Garden. Your feedback is central to shaping a greener, more welcoming transition space that brings the community together!

You can share your views by chatting with us today, completing a paper form, or emailing any feedback to streets@studiodwg.com. Every comment counts — thank you for helping shape this sunken, derelict roundabout!

Art & Community



Planting & Ecology

