

# Proposals for a new riverside park for Andover town centre



Since adopting the Andover town centre masterplan, Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has been progressing plans to deliver the aspirations of the community to provide more green space in the town centre and open up views to the River Anton.

We have been working with a team of landscape, highway and ecological specialists, alongside a broad range of other technical consultants, to develop the plans for a new park adjacent to the river which will be created through the removal of the gyratory at Western Avenue.

By replacing the noise and congestion of the road with inviting landscapes and accessible pathways, this initiative will foster a seamless connection between the western side of the town, the river, Town Mills park and the new theatre. The riverside park will bring health benefits, ecological benefits and encourage active travel through the provision of new pedestrian and cycle connections.

Please keep up to date with our plans as they progress:

[www.thinkandovertowncentre.co.uk](http://www.thinkandovertowncentre.co.uk)



View looking north of the new central square and river viewing platform within the park



Funded by  
UK Government



Hampshire  
County Council

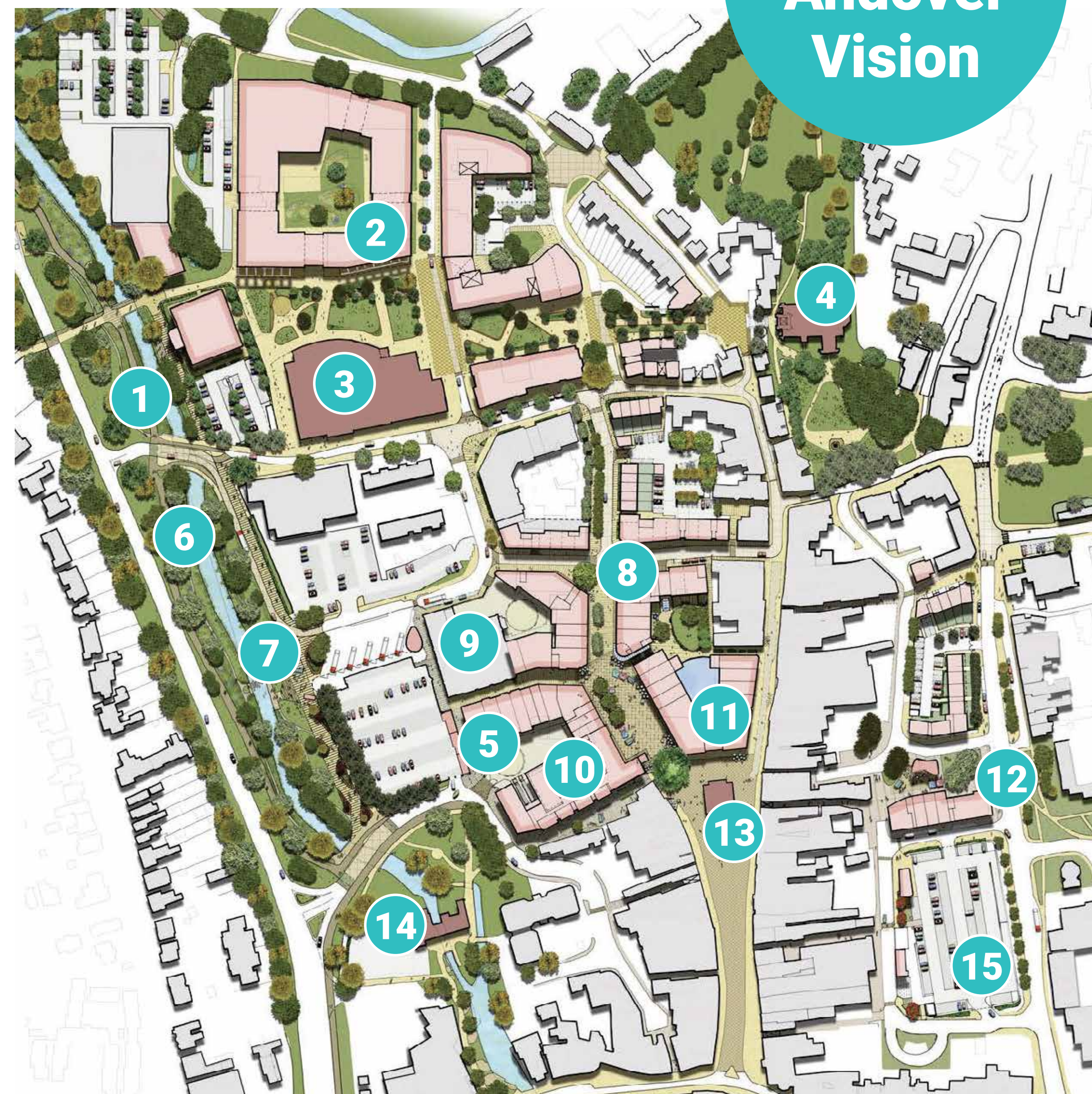




# Andover Town Centre Masterplan

## 2 Andover Vision

- 1 New pedestrian cycle routes as part of the Western Avenue Scheme
- 2 Andover College
- 3 Leisure Centre
- 4 St Mary's Church
- 5 Service Yard
- 6 New river walk along River Anton
- 7 Removal of the Western Avenue gyratory to create the space for the new riverside park
- 8 Chantry Centre
- 9 Waitrose
- 10 New Theatre
- 11 Chantry Centre
- 12 Eastern Avenue
- 13 Guildhall
- 14 Town Mills
- 15 George Yard Car Park



### The creation of the park will:

- Bring more green space into the heart of the town centre for people to enjoy. Access to outside space is known to provide physical and mental health benefits.
- Foster a sense of connection between the community and the river
- Provide outside, accessible spaces for all to enjoy
- Create new spaces for events, food and coffee stalls
- Provide ecological enhancements within and along the banks of the river
- Creation of improved pedestrian and cycle links
- Encourage people to visit and spend time in the town.

The Andover masterplan was produced by Hemingway Design following extensive engagement with the community and was adopted by Test Valley Borough Council. The masterplan delivers a strong vision for Andover town centre and envisaged the creation of new green spaces for the community to enjoy and a feeling of connection to the river Anton.

The new park is being funded partly from a government Levelling Up Fund grant of £18.3m. The remainder is being funded by TVBC from the New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 contributions. Additional funds have been allocated to the scheme by Hampshire County Council from section 106 highway contributions and Southern Water as part of its Chalk Stream Resilience Fund



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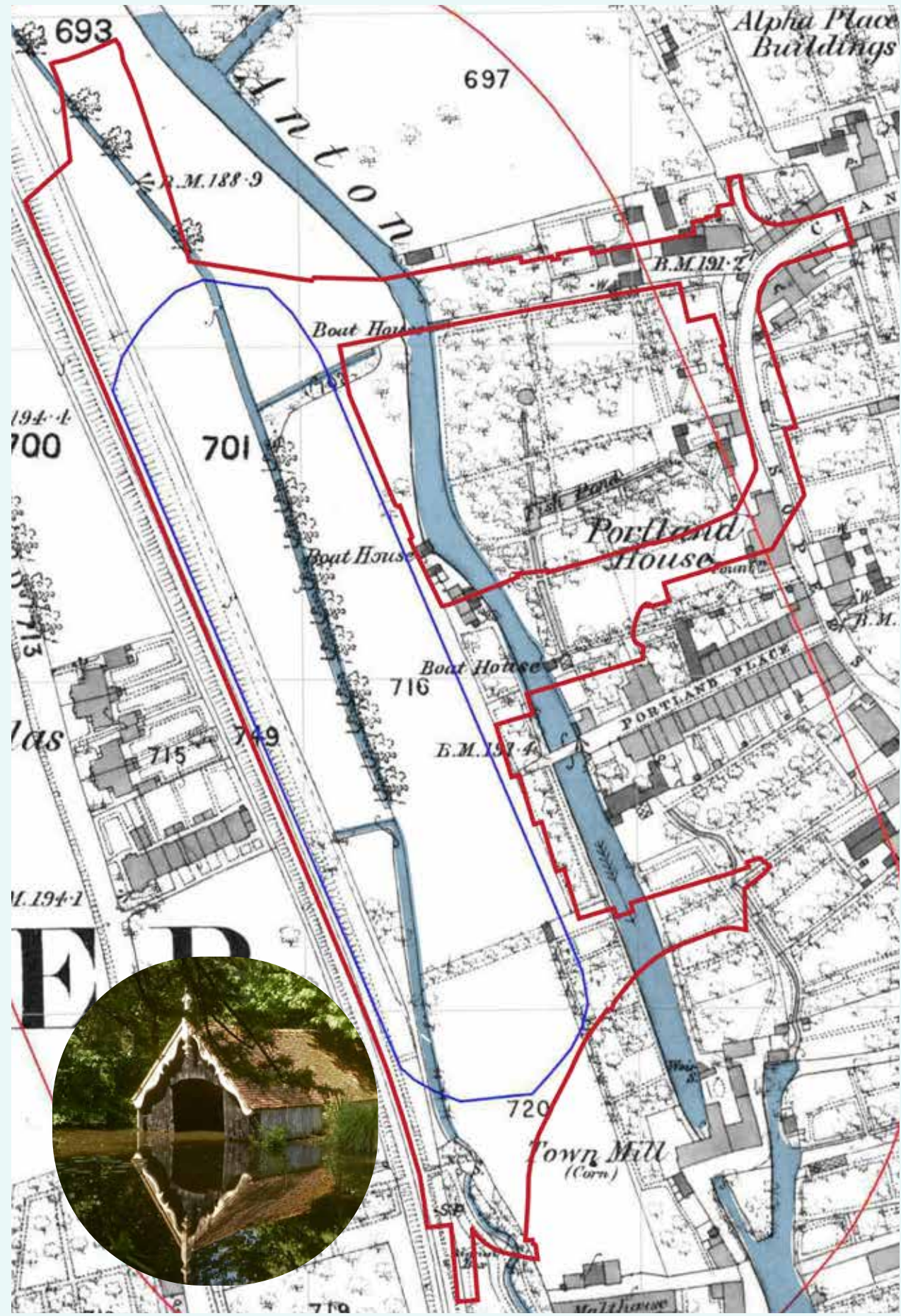


# 3 Site History

The River Anton has always been part of Andover's Identity, and the park's design reflects that. The layout is inspired by the site's past. A series of spaces have been incorporated into the design of the park to echo the former watercress cultivation which once took place here. The railway lines that once carried goods through the town have influenced the paths and movement through the space, while the old boathouse has inspired the elevated promenade, which will give people a great view over the river.

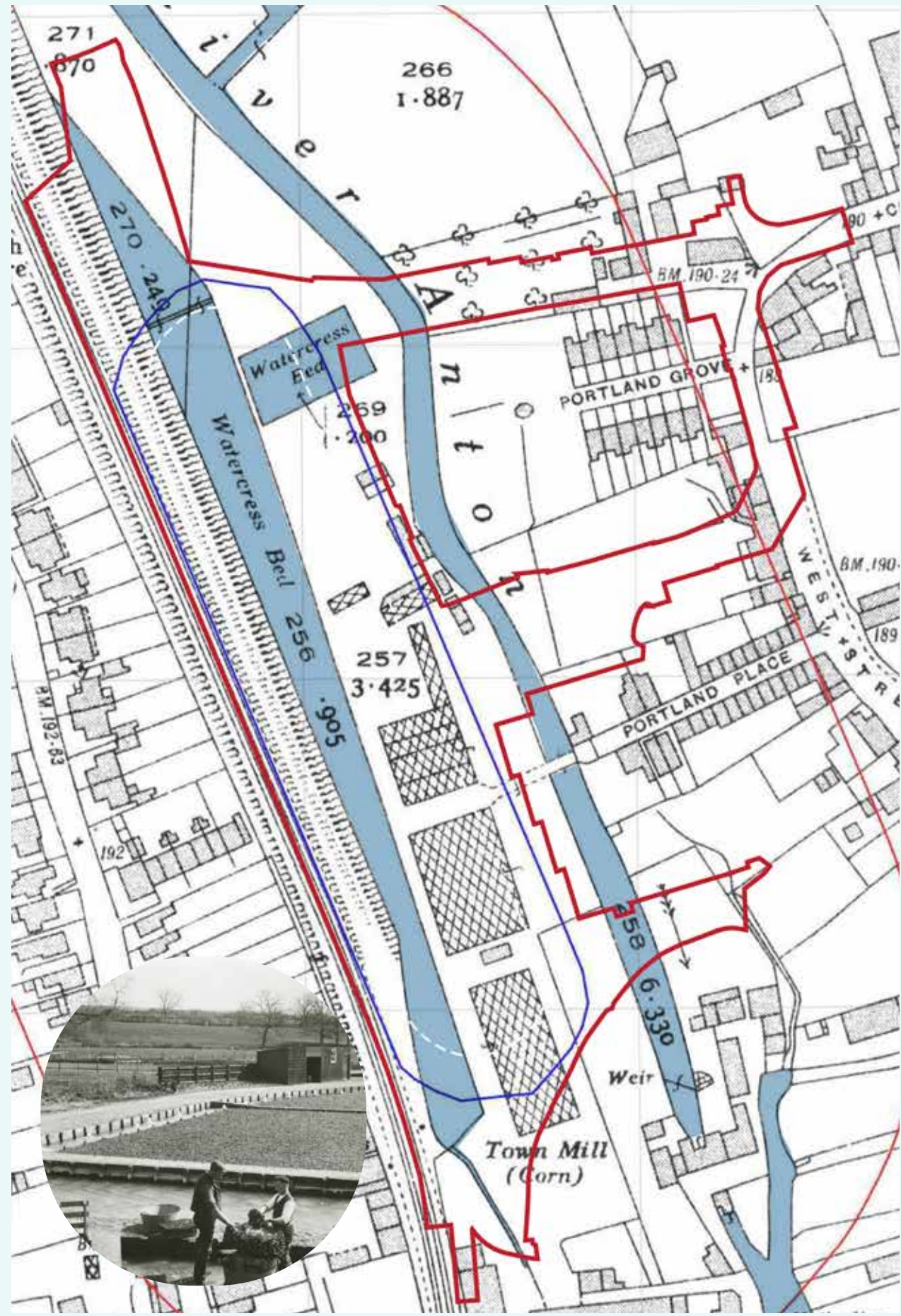
The main components of the design that would be referenced into the landscape layout are:

- **Boathouses**
- **Watercress beds**
- **Agriculture sheds**
- **Railway and its embankment**



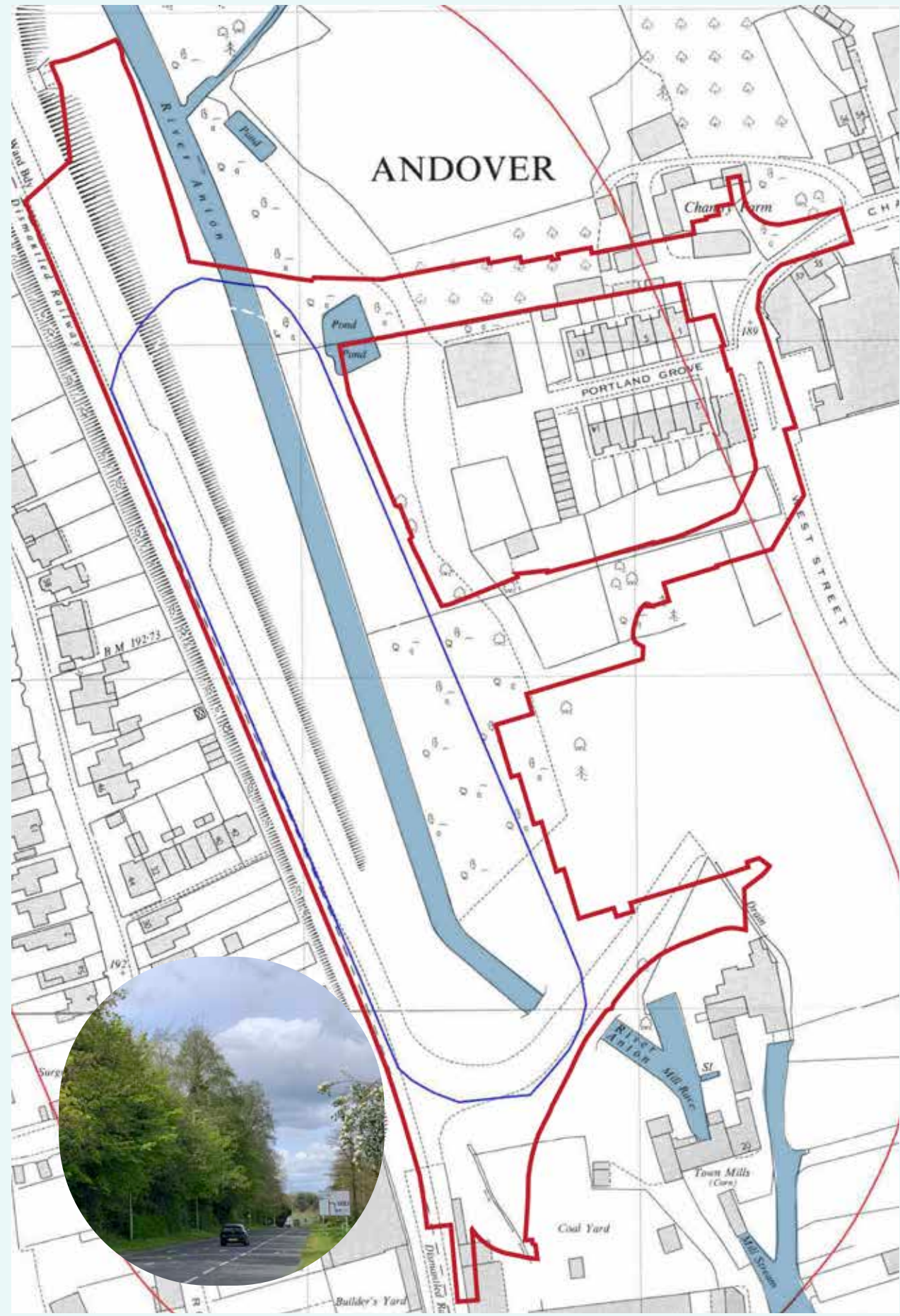
## 1873

Boathouses are found directly sitting above the former River Anton. The Town Mill was already built on site. The River was running to the East and a channel ran in the middle of the gyratory. The railway was located on the western edge of the site.



## 1938

Watercress cultivation was introduced to this area. Using the former canal, and creating large beds for the growth of watercress. It seems that the former boathouses were still present on site and potentially used to transport the goods along the River Anton. Agricultural watercress bunching sheds can be seen in the central part of the site.



## 1969

The River Anton was redirected, the channel was removed, and both were combined into one stream. This would have also removed most of the watercress beds. The railway was also removed and replaced by a road that bridges the river in the South, giving access to the town centre.



# 4 Design Concept

## A park for the community

The park is designed to feature a central space that serves as a vibrant hub for events and gatherings, fostering community interaction and celebration.

It offers a variety of uses to cater to visitors of all ages, ensuring that every corner of the park provides opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. Accessible routes connect all areas, making the park navigable and inclusive for everyone.

Seating is thoughtfully placed along these pathways, encouraging relaxation and rest throughout the journey. Additionally, a covered space has been incorporated to provide shelter, ensuring that the park remains functional and welcoming in various weather conditions.



Safe cycle routes



New play area



Play trail

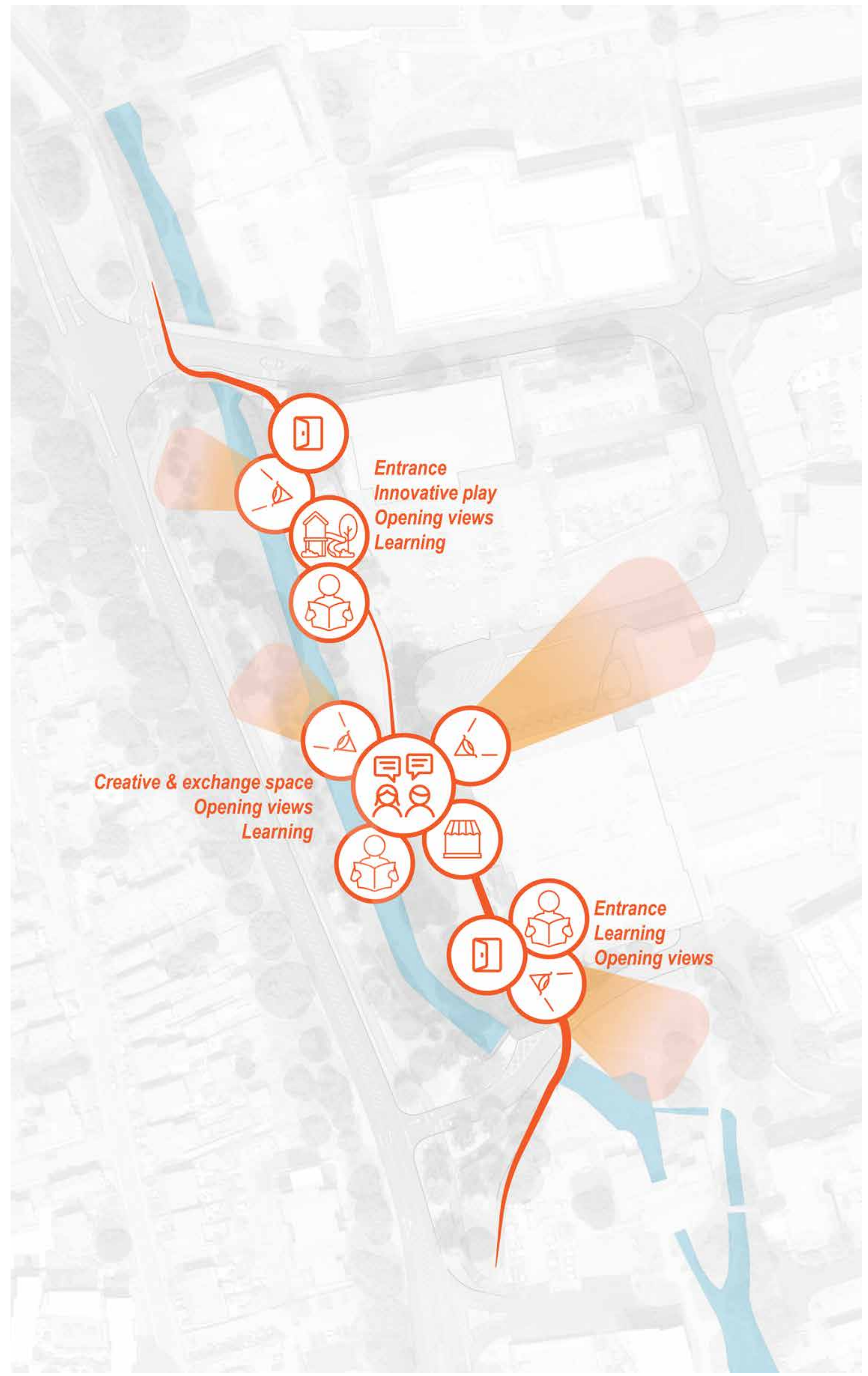
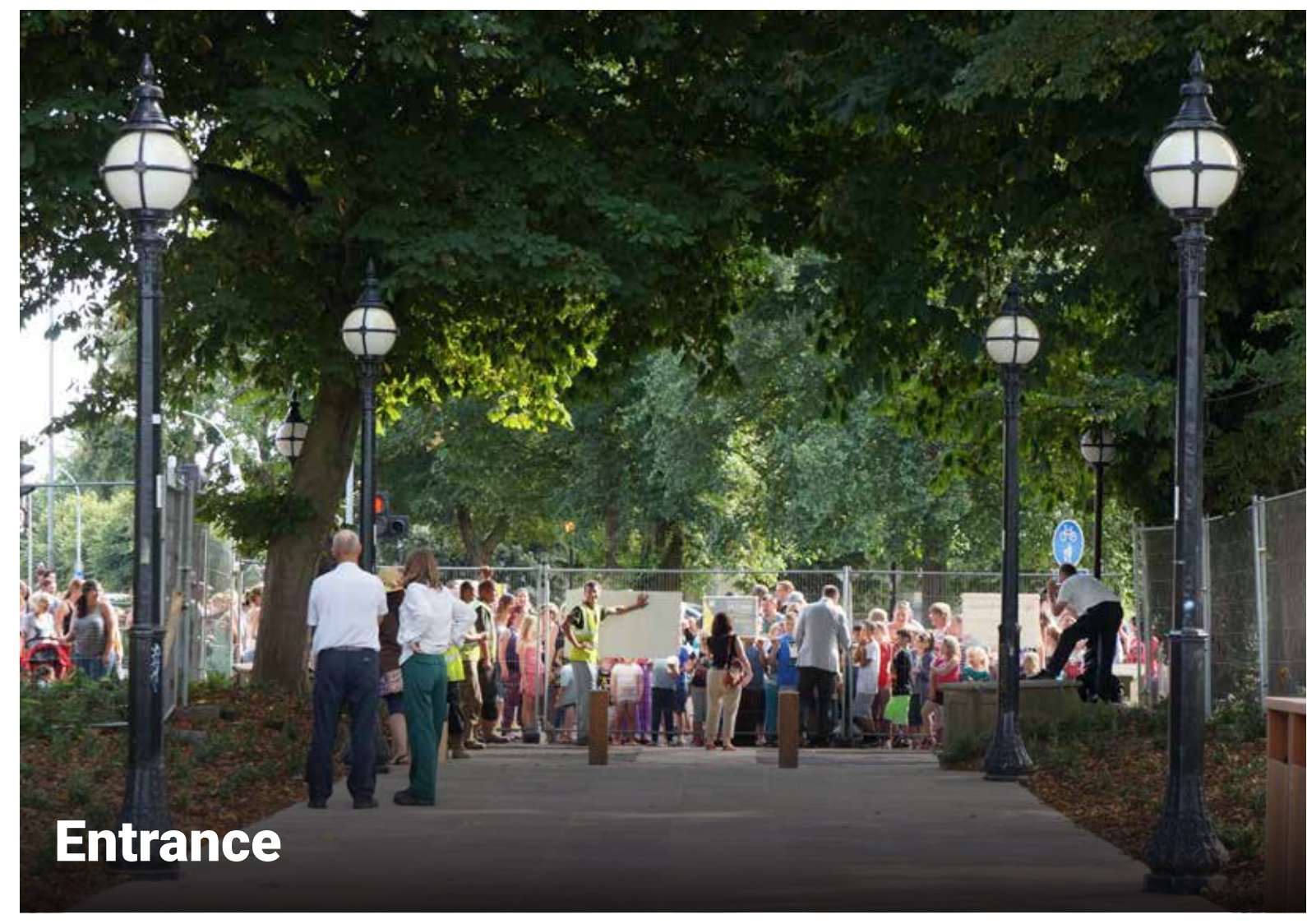




**5  
Design  
Concept**

**A space for people  
to come together  
supporting the day and  
evening economy**

The park is organised around three main areas: two welcoming entrances and a vibrant central square. Open views towards the river and the town enhance the sense of connection to Andover's natural and urban surroundings. The entrance square serves as a visual focal point, drawing visitors into the park and setting the tone for their experience. At the heart of the design, the central square plays a vital role as a gathering space, hosting events and annual activities that bring the Andover community together. Additionally, innovative play elements are seamlessly integrated throughout the park, providing engaging opportunities for recreation and discovery.



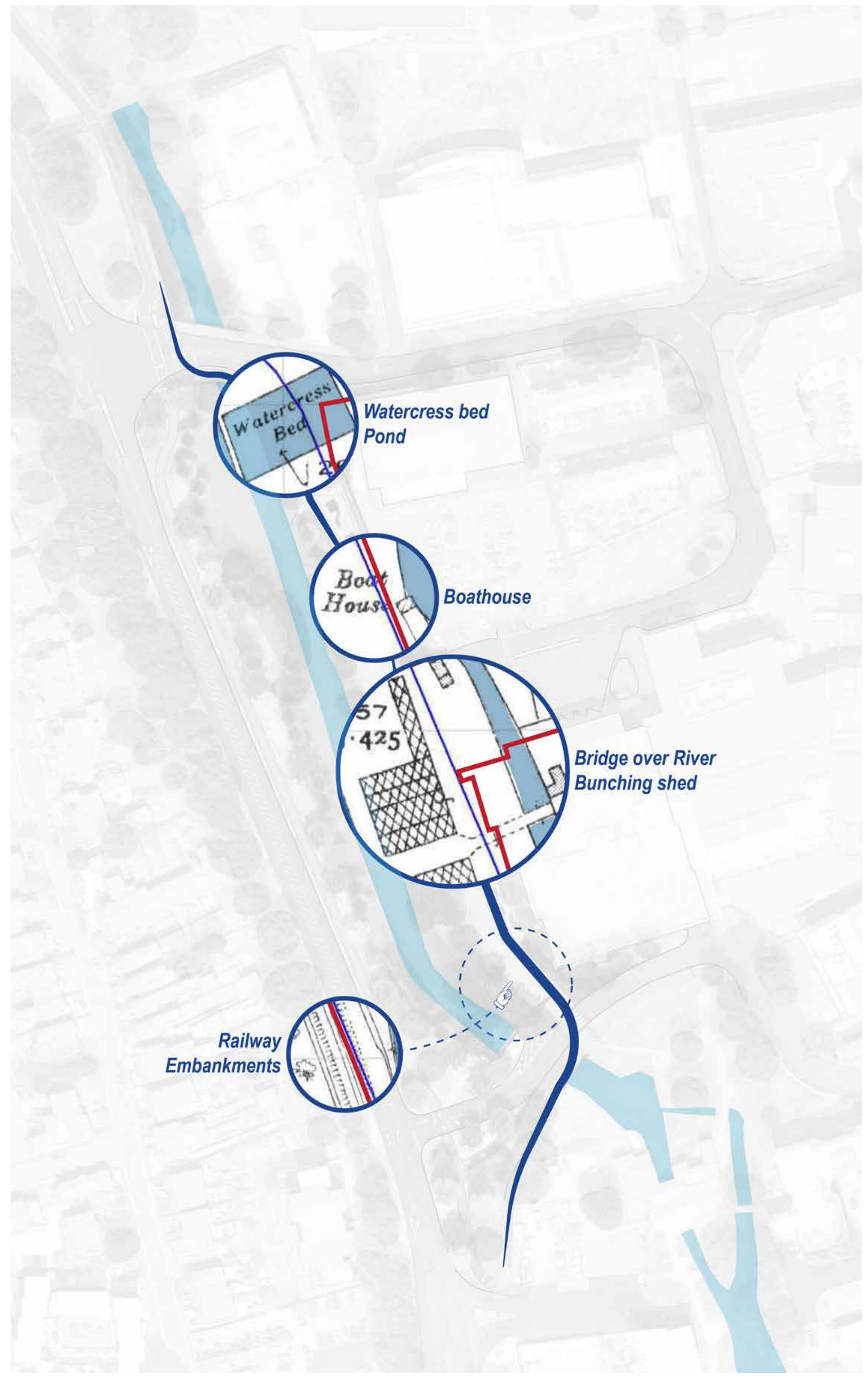


**6  
Design  
Concept**

**A place that values its  
heritage assets**

The park's design draws inspiration from the past, creating unique and engaging spaces that honour Andover's history. It is divided into four distinct areas: the Watercress Beds and Pond, the Boathouse, the Bridge and Bunching Sheds, and the Railway Embankment.

Each space reflects its historical theme through carefully selected materials and a cohesive design language, creating a meaningful connection to the town's heritage. These spaces are organised to follow the sequence of watercress cultivation, from production to hydro-cooling, bunching, and transport, ensuring that the park tells a story while offering a variety of experiences for visitors.



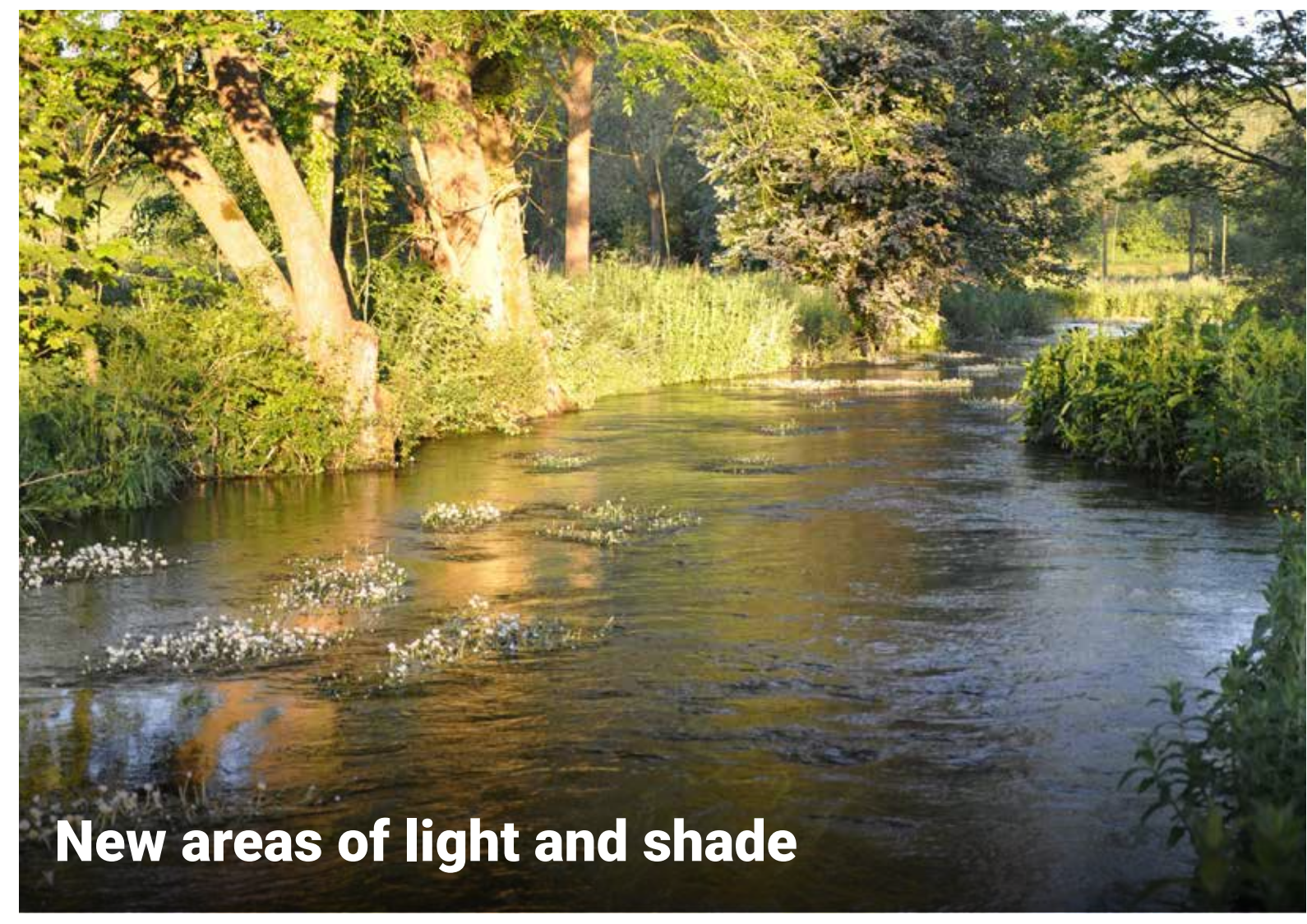


**7  
Design  
Concept**

**A beautiful new park for the town centre that provides visual connections to the unique and enhanced chalk stream habitat of the River Anton**

The River Anton will be enhanced to become a more prominent and vibrant feature of the park. Southern Water, as part of their Chalk Stream Resilience Fund, are undertaking significant improvements to the river Anton that will enhance the chalk stream habitat of the river. The River works will modify the channel bed to create more variation in light and shade, water depth and velocity, helping support new marginal planting and enhance its habitat. While preserving as much of the existing planting as possible, the design introduces vibrant new vegetation to enhance the park's natural beauty.

*Images courtesy of Cain Bio Engineering, Southern Water's contractor*



**New areas of light and shade**



**Herbaceous water loving vegetation**



**River enhancements will enhance existing habitats that support river species**





# Landscape design

The removal of the existing gyratory road was a transformative decision that paved the way for the creation of a new riverside park for the town.

The park features a series of interconnected spaces, each offering unique experiences that cater to a diverse range of activities. Significant improvements to the River Anton will also enhance its chalk stream habitat.

At the heart of the park lies the central square, a dynamic hub that connects the bus station to the river and the town centre, serving as a focal point for community gatherings and events. Surrounding this square, generous seating and the 'bunching shed' pavilion foster a welcoming atmosphere, while the nearby playground and elevated promenade, inspired from the 'boathouse', offer spaces for both energetic play and tranquil reflection.

At either end of the park, the entrance squares provide welcoming gateways that transition visitors from the urban landscape into the park's beautiful environment. These squares seamlessly connect to vibrant meadow areas on the riverside, designed for active, impromptu play and community picnics.

## 8 The new park

A dedicated cycle lane runs along the western side of the park, facilitating safe north-south movement for cyclists while preserving the natural tranquillity of the riverbank.

By thoughtfully integrating these varied spaces, the riverside park not only enhances the ecological and recreational value of the area but also serves as a catalyst for community interaction, making it a cherished destination for all.

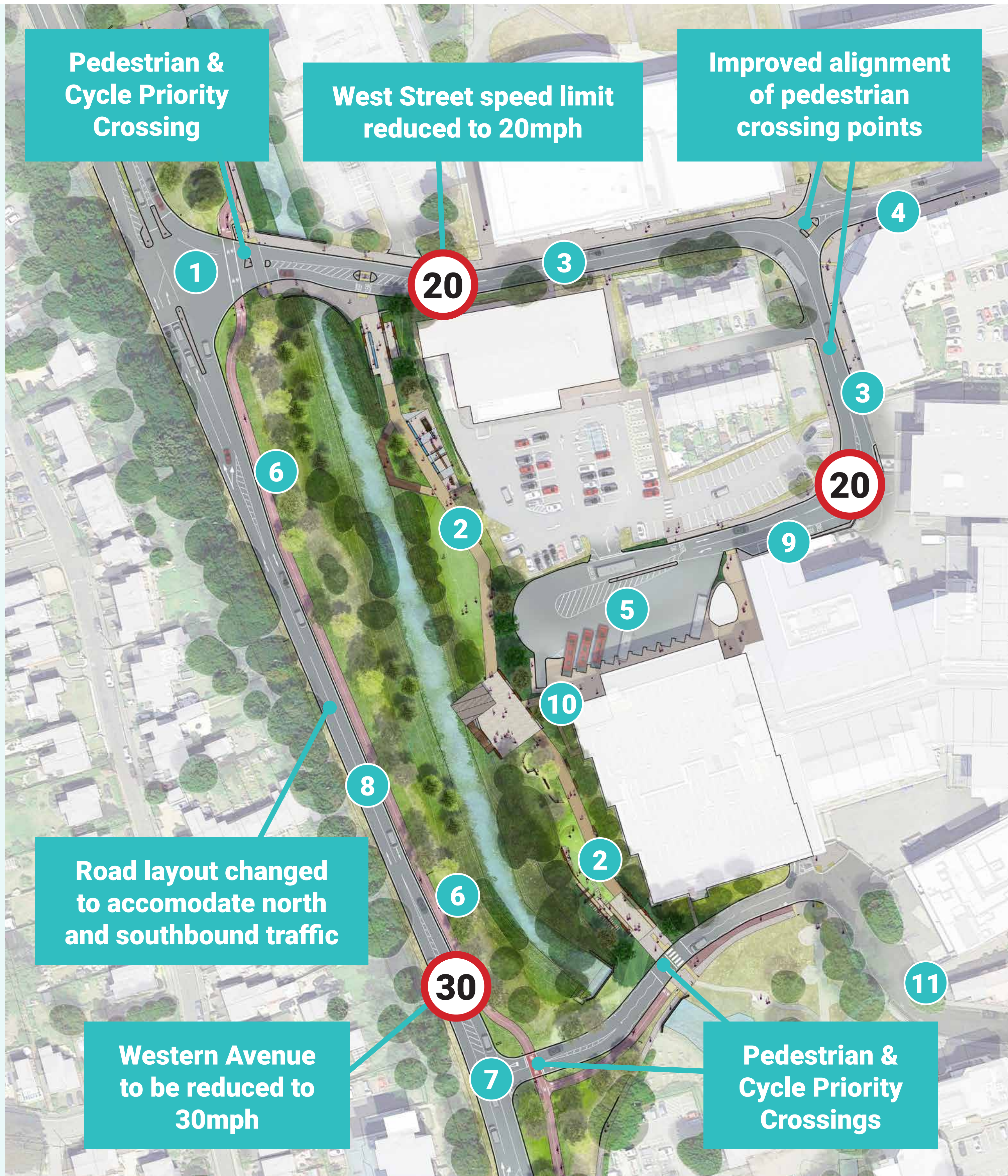
- 1 Central square
- 2 Pavilion
- 3 River viewing platform
- 4 Play area
- 5 Grass area
- 6 Entrance square
- 7 River enhancement
- 8 Cycle lane
- 9 New Theatre





# 9 New road layout

- 1 New signalised junction
- 2 Shared foot/cyclepath through new park space
- 3 West Street to be changed to allow for two-way vehicle movements
- 4 New loading bay on Chantry Street
- 5 Reconfigured Bus Station to allow for turning buses
- 6 Segregated cycleway
- 7 New giveaway T-junction into/out of Waterloo Court
- 8 Western Avenue layout changed from three lanes heading north to allow vehicles to travel north and south
- 9 Removal of taxi rank and limited wait bay to accommodate bus layover space
- 10 New Unity bus bay
- 11 Re-provision of taxi space outside the new theatre



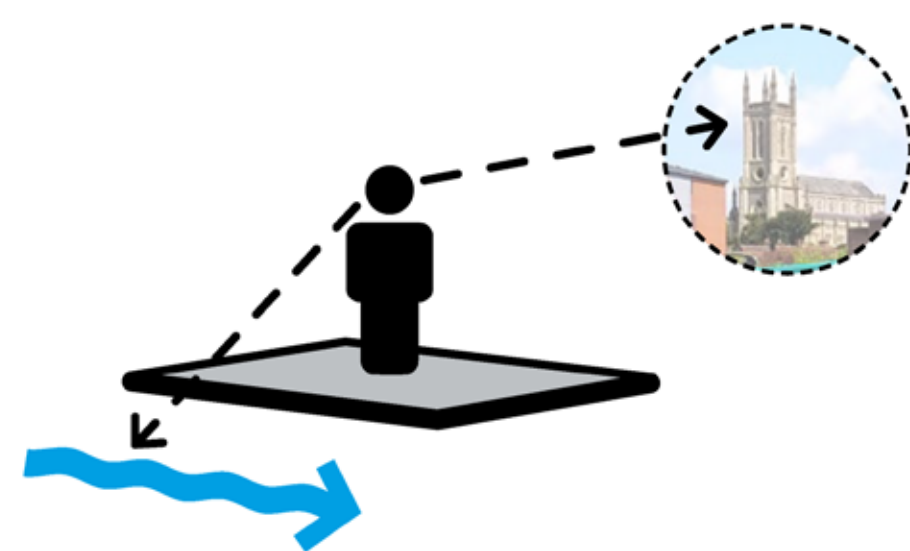


# The Central Square



## Orientation

The square has been orientated to look at St Mary's Church. People will have a clear view towards St Mary's church, that has been emphasised in the design. On the other side, the square steps down to get closer to the river, and offers new views to the banks' enhancement.



## Flexible space

Multi-purpose central square for community events, gathering space and also a resting spot with views across the river.



The new central square will be comparable in size to the footprint of the Guildhall



# River Viewing Platform and Pavilion

The central square stands as the heart of the park. Stretching east to west, it links the bus station to the river, while its north-south pathway improves connectivity between the station and the town centre, making it a crucial crossroads for both pedestrians and community life.

A pavilion and river viewing platform, inspired by the form of the agricultural sheds, serves as a symbolic anchor, paying homage to the area's riverside heritage.

Surrounding the square is generous seating, offering ample opportunities for rest, socialising, or simply taking in the surroundings. The open design of the square provides flexibility, creating the perfect setting for markets, festivals, and various community events, allowing it to transform throughout the seasons.







## Northern Entrance Square - 'The Watercress Beds'

The entrance square, positioned at the northern end of the park just beyond the pedestrian crossing, serves as a welcoming gateway that transitions visitors from the bustling streets into the calm of the park. This square is designed as an open, inviting space with ample seating and clear sightlines, encouraging people to gather, pause, and orient themselves before entering the main park area.



To emphasise the entrance, varied topography will be crafted, complemented by colourful perennial planting for a lively and welcoming atmosphere. Additionally, the riparian planting will be carefully pruned to open up views toward the River Anton and the western bank, enhancing the visual connection to the surrounding landscape. A water feature will be incorporated into this part of the park to reflect its watercress cultivation history.



## Southern Entrance Square - 'The Embankment'

At the opposite end of the park, another entrance space provides a complementary gateway. While using similar materials to the rest of the park for cohesion, this entrance incorporates specific references to the site's past.



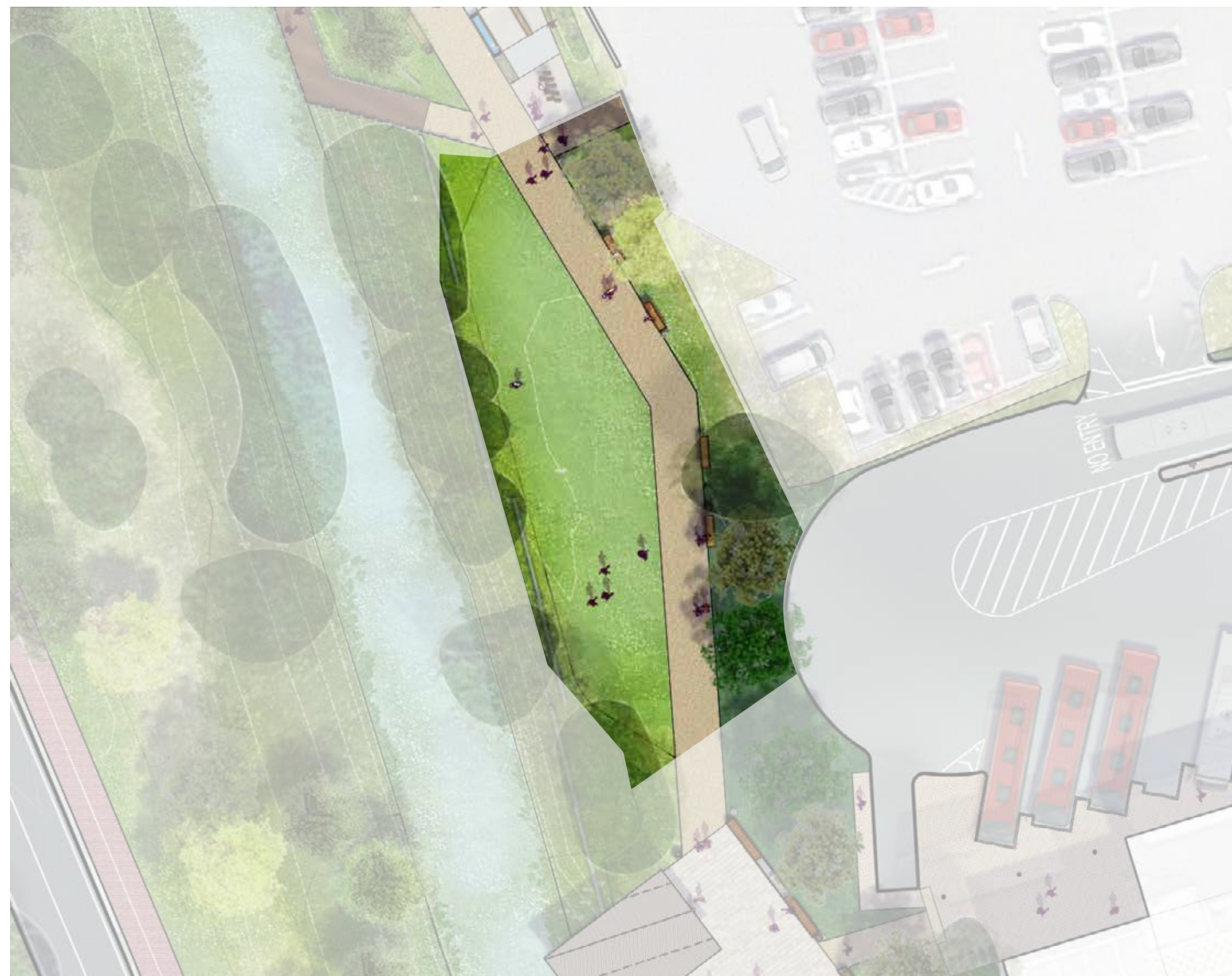
**13**  
The new  
park

The rail transportation that played a key role in watercress movement is honoured through the introduction of metal edges and walls, which double as seating supports. These elements, along with paving lines that echo the historic railways once located next to the site and elevated by banks, create a physical link between the town's history and the park's future development.

This entrance also highlights the drainage line, symbolically connecting it to the water feature in the northern part of the park and reinforcing the park's relationship with the river.







## Active Area - 'The Meadow'

On the park side of the river, an expansive meadow area provides an open space that invites active, impromptu play and gatherings. Surrounded by clusters of trees and mid-level planting, this meadow offers a natural setting that fosters a sense of freedom and exploration. Naturalistic planting styles and locally distinctive plant species provide a link to the surrounding countryside.

**14**  
**The new  
park**



The generous grassy area is perfect for casual sports, games, and family outings, while the strategic placement of seating and picnic areas encourages visitors to relax and enjoy leisurely meals in a picturesque environment.

This integration of lush greenery and open space not only enhances the park's ecological diversity but also creates inviting spots for community events, such as outdoor concerts or seasonal festivals.

The combination of dynamic play areas and tranquil resting spots ensures that these meadows serve as vital spaces for recreation and relaxation, enhancing the park's overall appeal.



**15**  
**The New**  
**Theatre**



**View of the new theatre from the high street**

**Please keep up to date with our plans for the theatre as they progress:**



**Inside the new 400 seat auditorium**



**View of the rear of the theatre that will connect to Town Mills Park**



**Funded by**  
**UK Government**

**Test Valley**  
Borough Council

**BURRELL | FOLEY | FISCHER**  
ARCHITECTS AND URBAN DESIGNERS





- 1 New delivery bay gates
- 2 Raised surface
- 3 The scoop: slopes up to the park entrance with amphitheatre steps
- 4 Existing trees
- 5 New trees
- 6 New Paving
- 7 Park Entrance
- 8 Park Bar
- 9 Accessible dressing rooms
- 10 Foyer
- 11 Second space
- 12 WCs
- 13 Get in
- 14 Staff office
- 15 Main Theatre
- 16 Theatre Cafe Bar
- 17 Box office
- 18 Theatre Square entrance
- 19 Theatre square with outdoor seating
- 20 New colonnade
- 21 New bench around plane tree
- 22 Kitchen
- 23 New entrance to Chantry Centre
- 24 Taxi rank
- 25 Disabled parking
- 26 Chantry Centre car park
- 27 Vehicle drop off

The Lights is a successful, council-operated theatre venue, located adjacent to the leisure centre. It has established itself as an important stepping stone for many successful artists, providing a well-received range of entertainment from comedy and gigs to dance and theatre. It is also an important community hub, supporting community classes and workshops. The hire rooms are used by over 20 local groups and organisations.

A new home will allow the Lights to go from strength to strength by:

- **Increasing the size of the theatre from 249 to 420 seats and attracting a wider range of shows;**
- **Holding gigs in a 350-capacity flexible venue at the same time as drama in the main theatre;**
- **We have taken advice from a range of local groups to ensure that the building is accessible for all;**
- **Making technical operations easier for staff and apprentices;**
- **Providing a welcoming café bar;**
- **Increasing the number of classes and events that will take place in the purpose-built studios;**
- **Hosting meetings and events bringing visitors to Andover.**

Thank you for coming to this exhibition, for more information please visit: [thinkandvertowncentre.co.uk](http://thinkandvertowncentre.co.uk)

Please send us your comments via email to: [thinkandvertowncentre@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:thinkandvertowncentre@testvalley.gov.uk)