

Dún Laoghaire Harbour

THE METALS GREEN

Landscape Design Statement

DECEMBER 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....3

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS.....4

SITE HISTORY.....4

CONTEXT.....5

ACCESS AND CIRCULATION.....6

PLANNING CONTEXT.....7

SURVEY INFORMATION.....8

LANDSCAPE DESIGN.....10

MASTERPLAN.....10

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT- DRAFT DÚN LAOGHAIRE HARBOUR MASTERPLAN.....12

ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY.....13

3D VIEWS.....14

SECTION18



INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Council and has been prepared to outline the background and design for the proposed development of The Metals Green, Dún Laoghaire Harbour.

The purpose of the report is to explain the landscape context, design rationale and management requirements for the landscape works as proposed on the accompanying drawings. This report should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

Dwg No.	Sheet Title	Scale	Sheet Size
1955_PL_DR_MUR_LA_1101	Site Location Plan	1:1000	A1
1955_PL_DR_MUR_LA_1102	Site Layout Plan	1:500	A1
1955_PL_DR_MUR_LA_1103	Landscape Masterplan & Sections	1:200 Plan / 1:100 Sections	A0

Development Description Summary

The proposed development comprises the following:

- Public Park of 3,080 sq.m within a site area of 4,070 sq.m adjoining Harbour Road, Dún Laoghaire Harbour.
- The proposed park development comprises of plaza, paths, boundary railings and balustrades, low walls (up to 450mm height), seating/picnic tables, cycle parking stands, lawns, wildflower- and shrub- planted areas, tree planting and public lighting to part of park (adjoining Harbour Road).
- Minor alterations to c. 10 linear metres of existing rock armour sea defences are proposed, with a new retaining wall to support a viewing space on the northern edge of the park.
- A food and beverage outlet – e.g. small modular building or food truck (c.2m x 3m in plan x 2.5m height) will be located in the park, as a commercial opportunity for food and beverage vendor. This outlet will be serviced as follows:
 - Foul sewer connection to manhole in adjoining Commissioners of Irish Lights Headquarters car park.
 - Water Connection in public road from adjoining public water supply.
 - Electrical power connection.
- Drainage system comprises of nature-based Sustainable Drainage Systems with rain gardens, bioretention and stormwater outlets to existing stormwater system.
- All associated site development works and associated services.

THE METALS GREEN





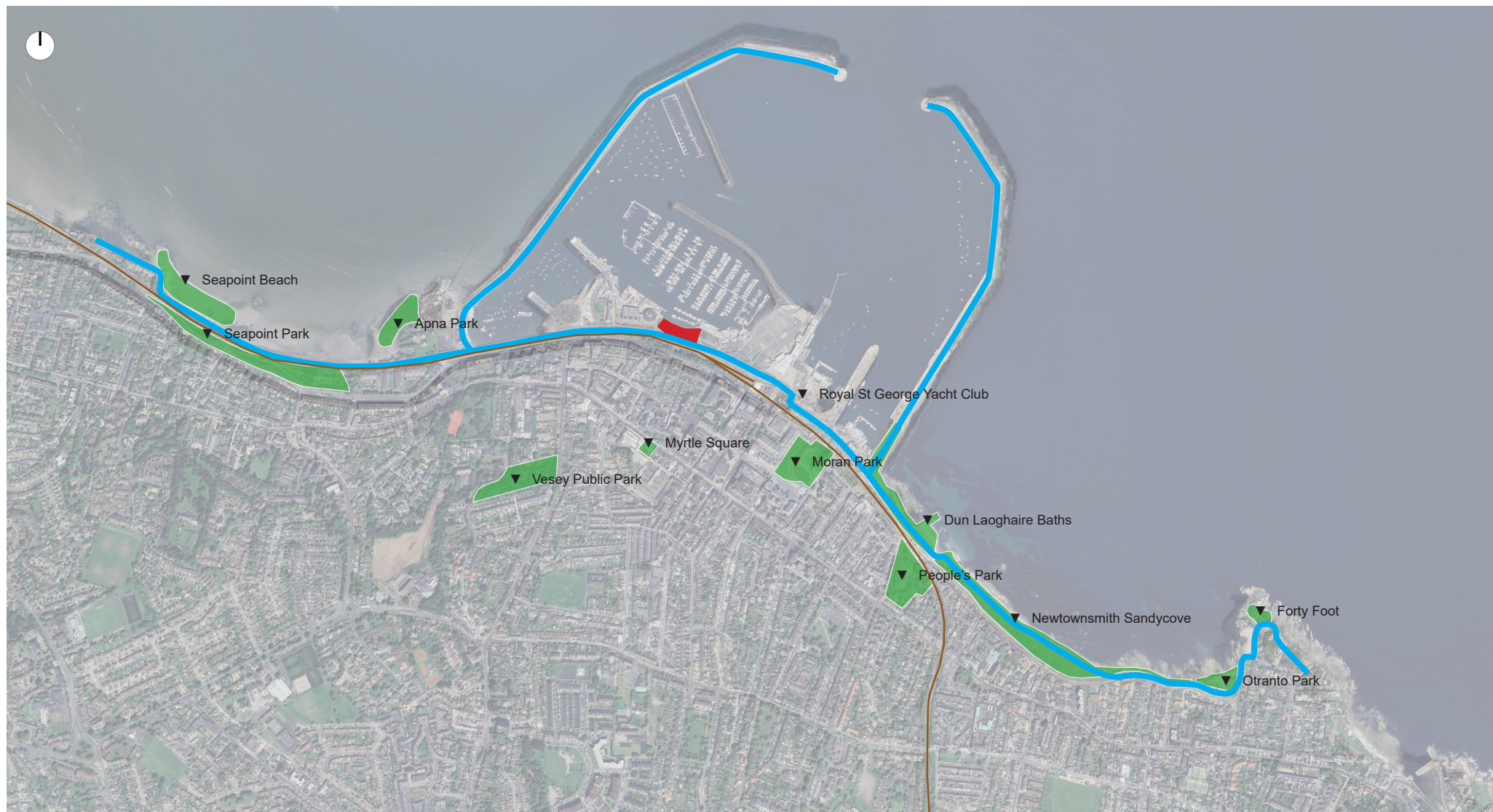
Historic Map – 1930s

THE METALS

The Metals is the historic transport route that carried superior Dalkey granite from local quarries to Dún Laoghaire Harbour. Between 1817 and 1842, skilled stonemasons cut granite at Dalkey Commons, which was delivered to the harbour via a network of trolleys and horse-drawn wagons along a 4.75 km route, including extensions to the East and West Piers and connecting tracks to multiple quarries. At the height of construction, up to 250 wagons of stone were transported daily.

The project site now known as The Green originally served as grazing space for the working horses. Over the past 200 years, the landscape has evolved from open farmland to a fully developed suburban area, with The Metals preserved as a popular pedestrian and cycle route, offering a living reminder of the region's industrial heritage and the vital role of quarry and harbour in the development of Dún Laoghaire.



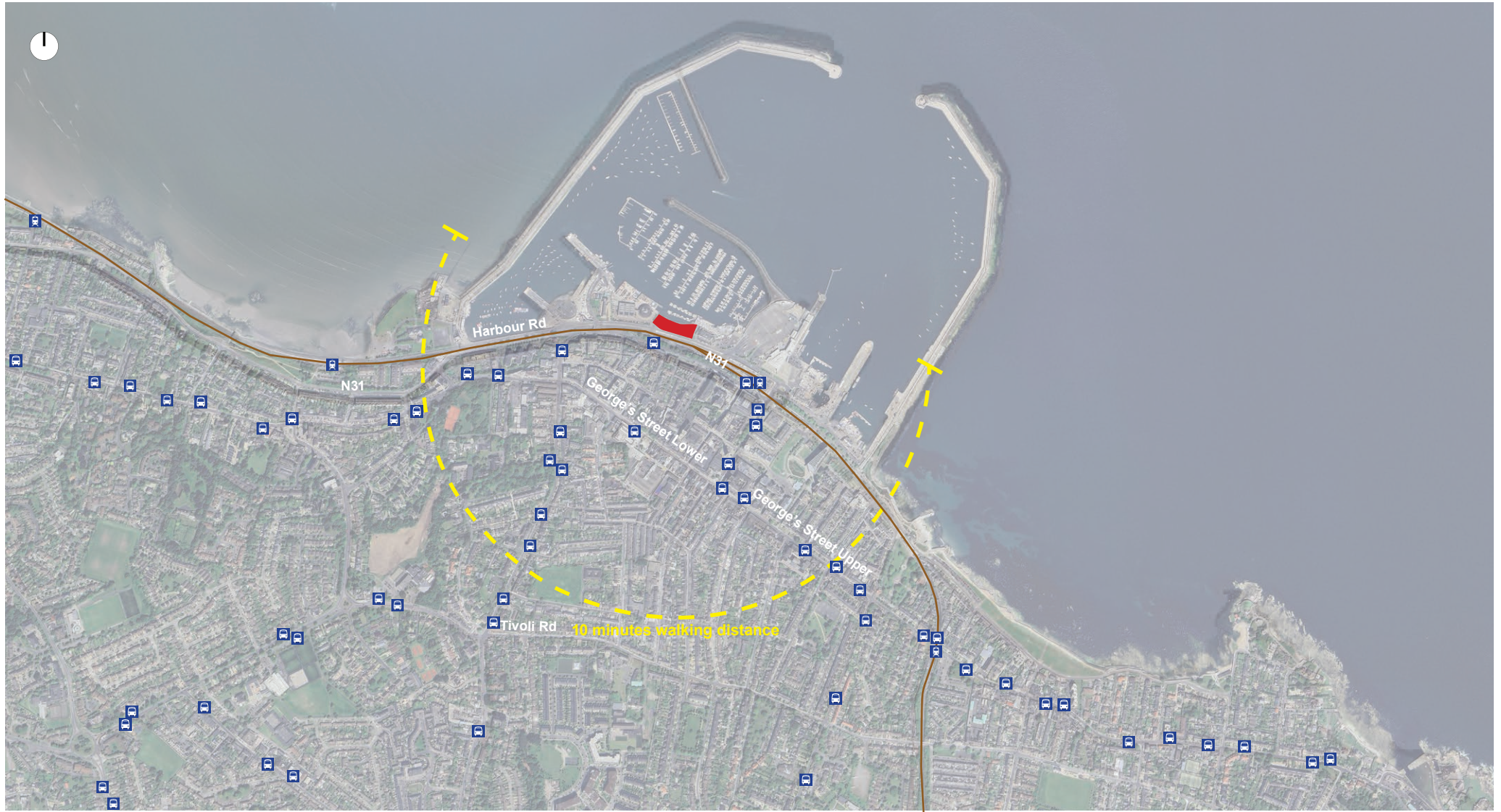


Site location in context with surrounding areas.


- Site Location
- Coastal Walking Route
- Train Line
- Public Spaces

The proposed development is located within Dún Laoghaire Harbour, at almost the midpoint between the east and west piers. The site is currently an open green space with benches and views of the marina, situated between the Royal Irish Yacht Club and the Irish Lights Headquarters.

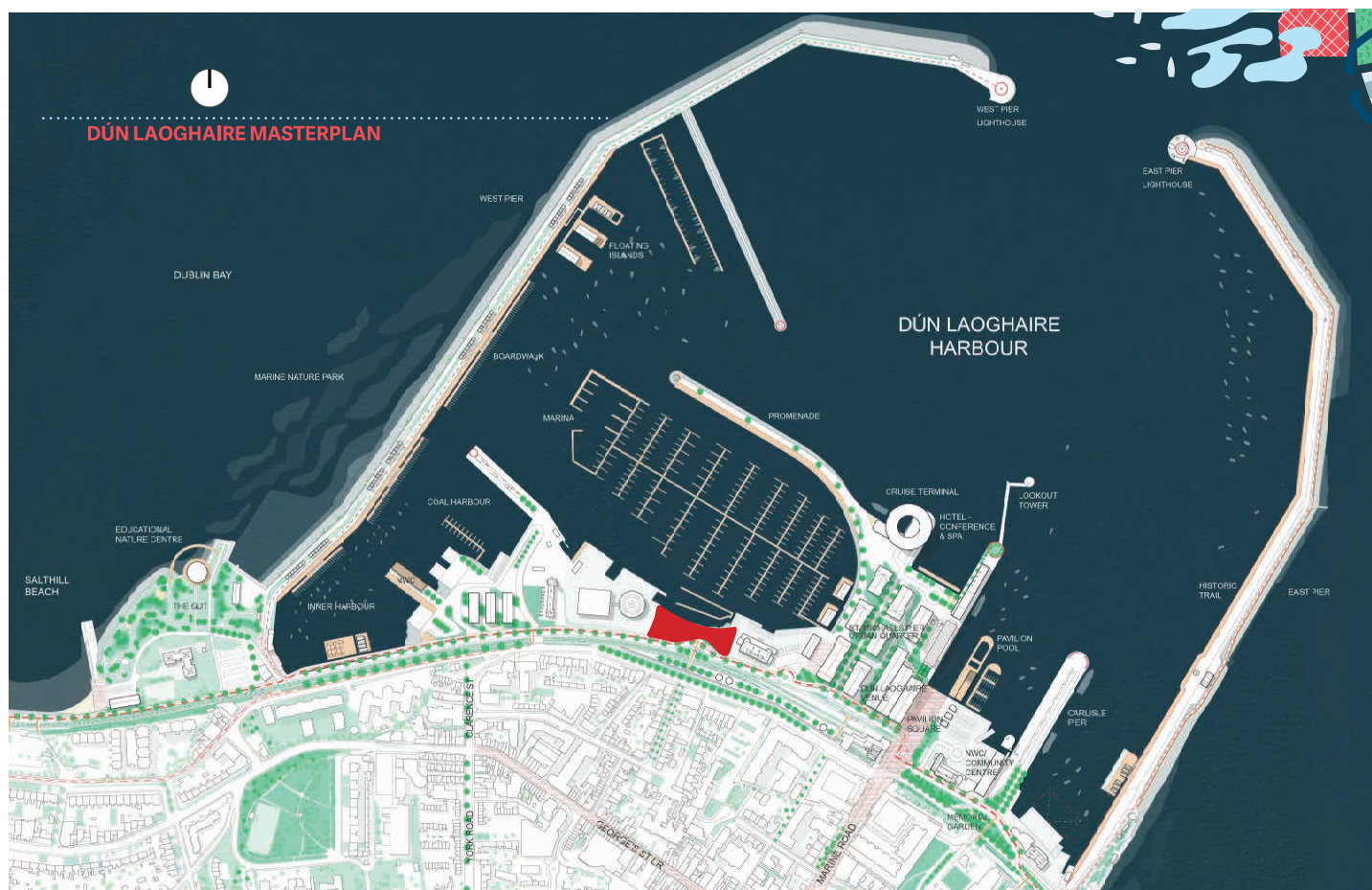
A coastal walking route passes the site, providing recreational access and visual amenity for the community. This is the only maintained green space in the harbour area, which- while not short of public amenity space- is primarily composed of hard materials, paving and built elements.



Development with public transport connections.

- Site Location
- Train Line
-  Bus Stop
-  Train Station

The site is strategically located within close proximity to Dún Laoghaire's integrated public transport network, providing excellent connectivity for visitors and the local community. The area is served by several bus routes, including 7, 7a, 111, E2, L25, L27, and S8, which provide efficient links to the wider urban fabric. Rail services are accessible via Mallon Station, offering DART connections to Howth, Bray, Greystones, Malahide, Rosslare Europort, and Dublin Connolly. In addition, the station accommodates mainline rail services to destinations such as Wexford and Maynooth. This level of accessibility ensures that the site is well integrated with both local and regional transport infrastructure, supporting pedestrian movement and reducing reliance on private vehicles.



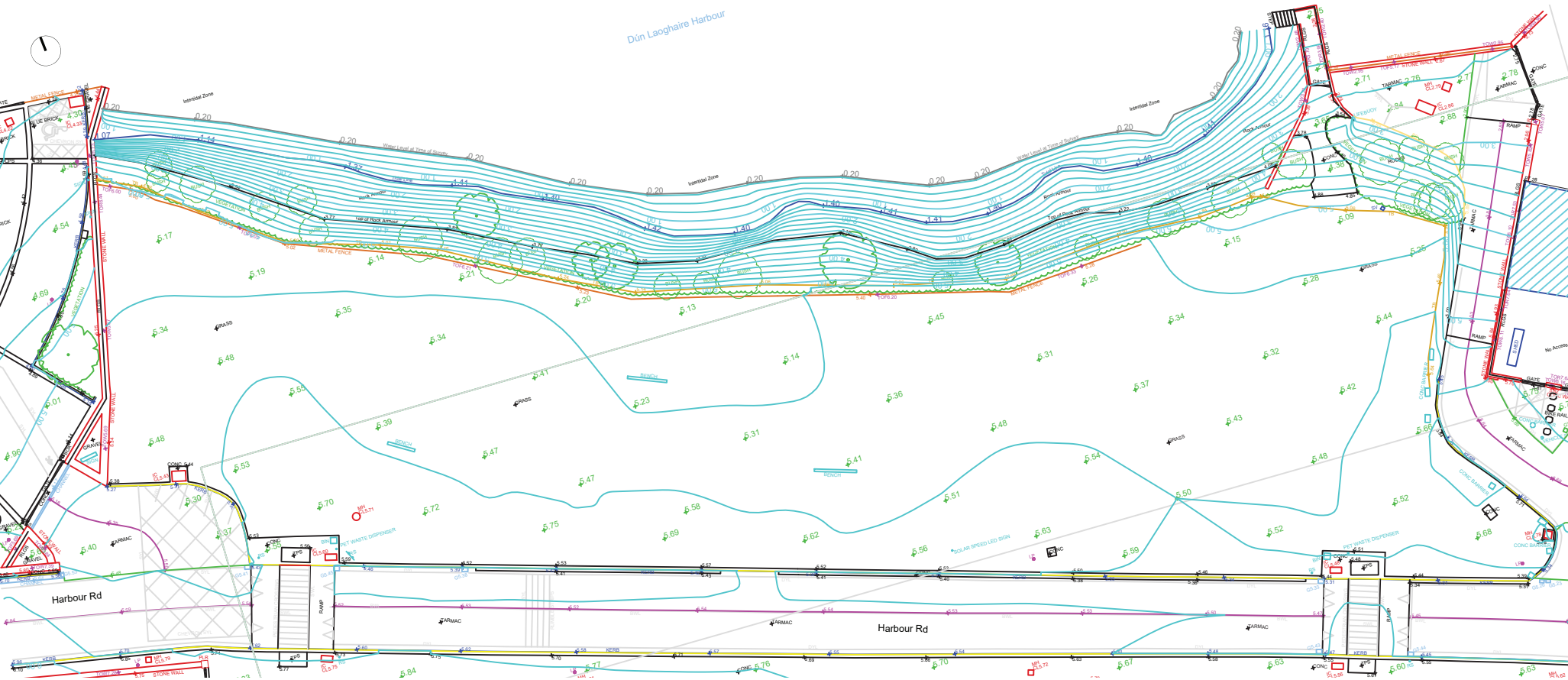
Site location in context with the harbour masterplan.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council are in the process of planning for the future of Dún Laoghaire Harbour. A Draft Masterplan for Dún Laoghaire Harbour was launched in June 2025, inviting residents, stakeholders, and visitors to share their views on the future of this iconic coastal destination. The results of this consultation are being analysed at present prior to progressing to the next stages.

The Draft Masterplan outlines a bold and long-term vision for a 'Living Harbour'—a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable waterfront that enhances recreation, tourism, and economic vitality while strengthening climate resilience and biodiversity.

The site area for the proposed park is sited within the masterplan area and is called up as 'The Green- Pocket Park' in the plans. The project team, including members of the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company, have re-named the space The Metals Green to connect it to its history and of the wider area, as outlined previously. A proposed greenway passes the southern edge of the green.

The Metals Green would be one of the first projects to be completed in the masterplan area. The preliminary results of the public consultation have not raised any specific issues for the site, and aspects of public concern around biodiversity, protection of amenity and environment have been taken on board in the development of park design proposals.



LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

SURVEY INFORMATION

THE METALS GREEN





Site Masterplan - 1:500

KEY

1. Plaza area with open viewing
2. Kiosk with outdoor seating
3. Tiered gathering area with informal play and walls
4. Multi-functional open lawn area
5. Picnic area with diverse planting mixes
6. Circulation paths with resting areas
7. Water edge path with low planting
8. Mixed planting with screening hedges

Inspired by marine the architecture of the harbour and flowing, organic marine forms such as kelp, shells and weathered coastal rock formations,, the design of The Metals Green seeks to enhance connectivity, accessibility, and urban structure, while contributing to the overall public realm of Dún Laoghaire.

The project's key objectives are:

- To ensure universal accessibility across all areas of the park
- Maintain a large open lawn for diverse activities such as yoga, play, relaxation, informal games, performances and events
- Integrate biodiverse, resilient planting
- Preserve clear visibility throughout the site to make the area more attractive and welcoming, and safe and secure for all.
- Introduce playful elements and enhance play value

The proposals also include provision for a coffee or food kiosk and supporting infrastructure, adding to the quality of the public amenity space. The vision is to deliver a balanced, vibrant, and enduring urban landscape that strengthens the identity and public life of Dún Laoghaire.

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Future development based on the Draft DLHMP showing how the future greenway (1), road (2), and potential bridge connection (3) can integrate with the proposed park design.



Proposed footbridge extract from draft DLHMP



Extract from draft DLHMP

This study is intended to show how the design of the Metals Green is informed by the draft DLHMP, and adapts to the proposals therein, allowing for seamless integration in the future. The greenway and southern park path follow a bowed profile, as per the masterplan to allow for a potential future footbridge connection to connect this space directly with Crofton Road, bridging over the railway. The footbridge is a strong concept but will be subject to feasibility and analysis as the Harbour Masterplan rolls out. If this aspect of the masterplan is not implemented, the greenway can follow the route envisaged in this design or remain in line with the road. The park design is sufficiently robust in form to adapt to either situation.

At present there are two streetlights in the vicinity of the site on Harbour Road, intended to light the road, not the site.

For strategic and biodiversity-related reasons, it is proposed to light only the proposed southern path. In strategic terms, it is not intended that the park should be used at night – only the path which will be part of the future greenway infrastructure under the Harbour Masterplan.

In relation to biodiversity, results of the bat survey show two bat species were recorded in very small numbers: common pipistrelle and Leisler's bat.

The summary of the Bat Survey carried out for this project by IDEC is as follows:

Treelines and hedgerows are generally favoured by bats for commuting and foraging. The area of works does not support any mature treeline or hedgerow, offering limited potential foraging and commuting areas for bats. Given the open nature and urban context of the development site, along with the presence of street lighting and the absence of woody or vegetated features, the site is considered low in suitability for bats. No trees or structures with potential bat roosting features were recorded within the site.

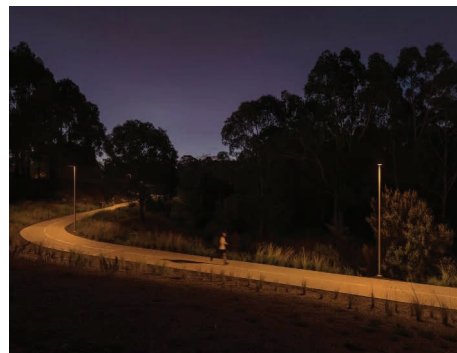
The Ecological Impact Assessment - which included as assessment of the lighting proposals - concluded that "the impact on bats will be negligible." However, it is considered good practice to avoid casting light onto open water, and- even in the context of the marina adjacent- it was concluded that lighting should be kept to a minimum.



Location of existent (Red) and proposed (Yellow) streetlights.

The design will be simple and minimal, and the proposed lighting poles and fittings will be agreed with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Council Public Lighting Section at detailed design stage. Criteria to be used in lighting design will include:

- Minimal light levels to comply with safety and accessibility requirements
- Fittings that minimise or avoid any lightspill or that would increase light pollution
- Lighting will be switched off at an agreed time, e.g. 10pm [noting that there is a path south of Harbour Road which is lit and could be used as an alternative if needed]
- Compatibility with Council policies and technical requirements
- Solar lighting will also be considered, which is a technology being used more in the county at present, if suitable for the site.



Images showing lighting which minimises light spill; simple, minimal design.



Possible solar light type.

A full ecological survey was carried out by Ian Douglas Environmental Consultants [IDEC]. Please see the Ecological Impact Assessment Report submitted with this application for full details of site ecology.

Several species of bird and two species of bat were observed on the site. In summary, there are no significant negative effects predicted on any of the species of flora or fauna identified, as a result of the proposed park development. No important or rare plants and no Annex I habitats or habitat types of high or higher local ecological value were found within the proposed development site. A series of mitigation measures are proposed which relate to construction phase environmental management and these will be integrated into works requirements.

IDEC also carried out a sub-threshold Environmental Impact Assessment screening exercise (see *Environmental Impact Assessment Report*) and Appropriate Assessment Screening exercises (see *Appropriate Assessment Screening Report*) and concluded that full Environmental Impact Assessment or Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment are not required for this proposed development.



Crataegus monogyna



Arbutus unedo

As part of the landscape proposals, there are significant areas of planting proposed. It is intended that planting proposals will be in accordance with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and enhance site biodiversity. The following principles will be followed in the detailed specification of planting:

- Native species will be utilised where feasible, with species such as Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Strawberry Tree *Arbutus unedo*, Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and others used as feature shrubs/trees where appropriate.
- Any non-native species specified for sensory, ornamental or functional purposes will be non-invasive and suited to the coastal location, and will have value as pollinators (with reference to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and similar respected guidance)
- Low maintenance requirements: generally the planting specified will have minimal or no maintenance requirements; grass areas should be cut on 6-week rotation where possible.
- Grass areas will be seeded with a mix that includes robust native wildflowers that are low-growing and compatible with amenity use, e.g. clover, daisy, etc.
- All wildflower and grass seed mixes and methods of seeding will be agreed with the County Biodiversity Officer and Project Ecologist to ensure the optimal range of native species are included.



Coastal wildflowers



Ilex aquifolium



Pinus sylvestris



Open viewing area



Pattern design of plaza area



Aerial view from the East side of the park



View of the terraces with varying heights



Design Inspirations



Aerial view of the plaza and café / kiosk building

SIGHTLINES & PERSONAL SECURITY

Clear sightlines are prioritised throughout the park to ensure natural surveillance and personal security. Planting is designed to be robust yet low enough to maintain visibility across the site, fostering a safe and welcoming environment.



Seating wall and bike parking spaces



Waterfront view



View from the West side with planting, multi-stem trees, and the playful element

BIODIVERSITY

Native and climate-resilient planting will be introduced to strengthen local biodiversity while ensuring durability in a coastal environment. The scheme integrates habitats that support pollinators and birdlife, contributing to environmental sustainability.



Open lawn area with playful element reflecting the site history as pasture for working horses

SuDS

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated to manage surface water naturally and reduce flood risk. Permeable surfaces and planted areas will contribute to stormwater retention while enhancing ecological value.



Raised walls with integrated seating and SuDS rain garden to rear

PLAYFUL ELEMENT

The playful element is designed to honour the site's history as a grazing pasture for working horses, which once transported granite along The Metals to Dún Laoghaire Harbour. Drawing inspiration from this heritage, the design incorporates forms and materials that evoke the movement, strength, and rhythm of the horses, creating a subtle narrative connection to the past. Its placement within the open lawn maximises visibility and ensures a safe, engaging experience for visitors.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

3D VIEWS

THE METALS GREEN

ACCESSIBILITY

Universal access is a key priority, ensuring barrier and step free movement across all areas of the site. Pathways, play elements, and open spaces will be designed to exceed accessibility standards, promoting inclusivity for all users.



Plaza area

SERVICES

Infrastructure will be provided to support the integration of a small kiosk and public amenities. This includes connections for water, electricity, and waste management, ensuring functionality without detracting from the green character of the park.



Information board in the plaza area

murray & associates
landscape architecture



Plan view of the terraces



Detail of the landscape walls - height and width varies for sculptural effect; Note: joints not shown; regular movement joints will be required for engineering reasons.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

SECTION

THE METALS GREEN

Key Plan
Scale 1:1000



Section A-A'
Scale 1:500