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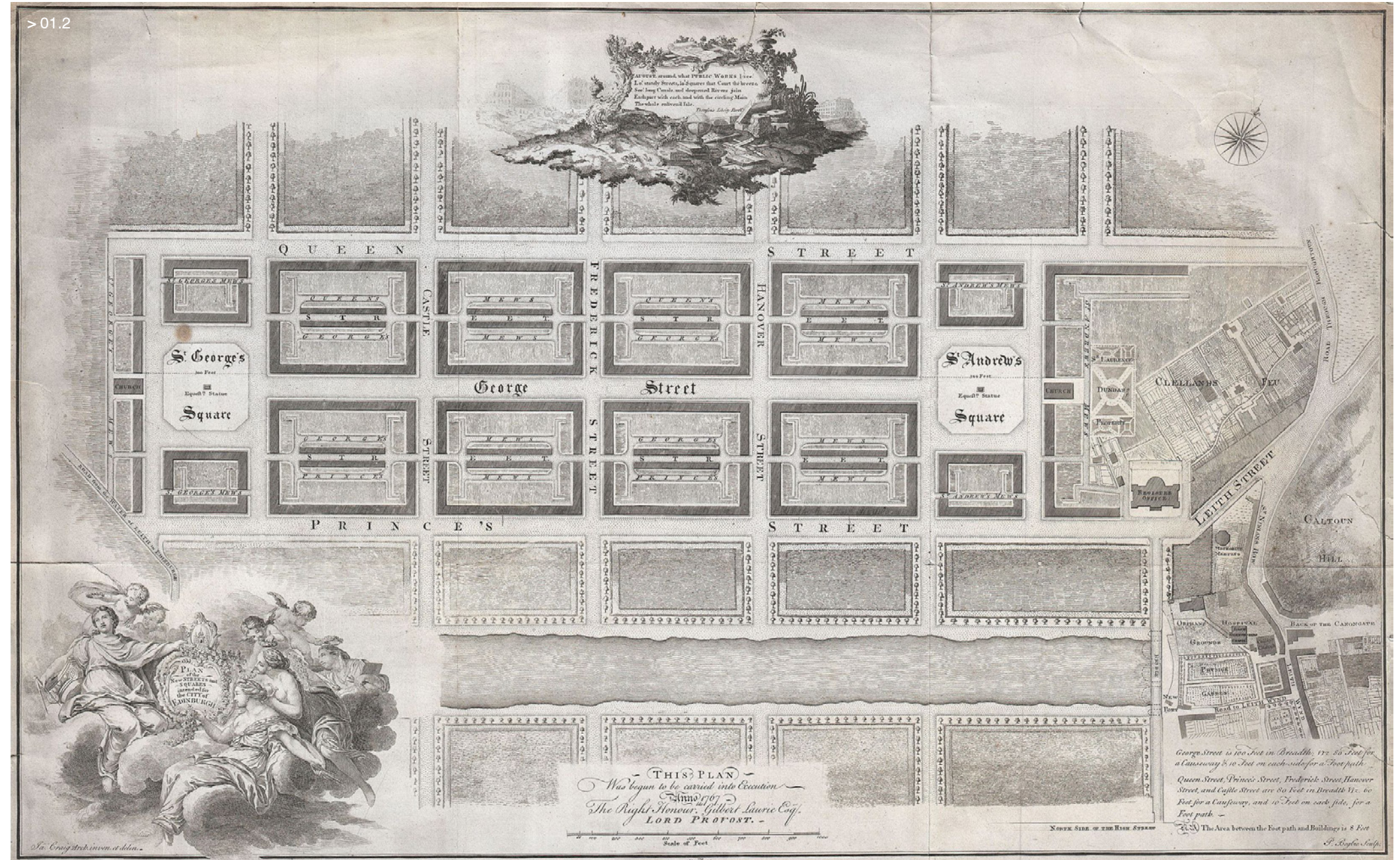


A Vision for Princes Street

The City Council have produced a report on the future of Princes Street. It was criticised by various amenity bodies as “lacking in vision”. At that point we decided to take the initiative and produce our own ideas. We have concentrated on West Princes St as that seems to be the section in most distress.



01 A Brief Historical Note



> Princes Street has for 150 years been the pre-eminent street in Edinburgh. However, this was not always the case and was not the intention of James Craig's New Town plan; George St was to have been the centre with Queen St and Princes St. equally as residential outliers each with their own proprietors' communal gardens.

> Recognising that the street was rapidly losing its residential function the Princes St gardens were taken over for the public by the City Council in 1876. Shortly afterwards in 1880 the street was widened and the embankment in the gardens made steeper as a consequence.

> 01.1, .3 & .4: Princes Street in its heyday
> 01.2: James Craig's New Town Plan



02 The Current Situation

> West Princes Street is in crisis:

Abandoned by major shops who have gone to St James Quarter the quality of shopping has plummeted, there are empty floors above and occasionally boarded up shops. Its future is much more likely to be hotels, residential and at ground floor restaurants, cafes and some retail. However, for this to happen the pavement experience needs to be dramatically improved; that means both widened and upgraded.



> 02.4: Aerial view facing east



> 02.1: Current pavement experience on the north side



> 02.2: Current pavement experience on the north side



> 02.3: Current dual carriageway empty of traffic



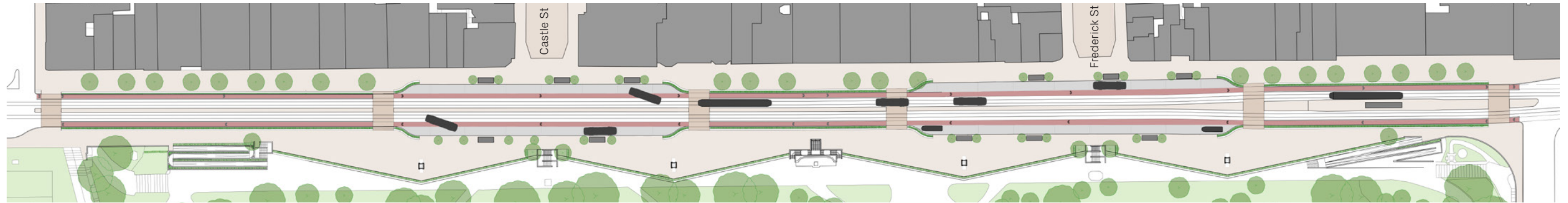
> 02.5: The south side pavement, note the narrowness



> 02.6: Low quality shopping experience



03 The Vision



> Proposed Street-level Plan

> Proposed Garden-level Plan



> Our proposal recognises the extraordinary unexploited opportunity that Princes Street represents. South-facing and with one of the most iconic and recognisable views in the world we are convinced that we need to transform the street so that it and the gardens are one and the same thing and that it is pedestrian dominated.



> Elevated proposed view facing south-west

03 The Vision



> Our vision is for a tree-lined boulevard full of cafes, restaurants, quality retail and residential merging imperceptibly into the gardens which become a 24-hour attraction. Both the street and the gardens we imagine could become an entertainment destination for locals and tourists alike.



> (right) Elevated proposed view facing west

> (below right) Axonometric of the proposed new south side pavement

> Bus stops pulled together into two groups of 6 stops, 3 on the north and 3 on the south on the axis of Castle St & Frederick St

> Frederick Street closed off in the manner of Castle St

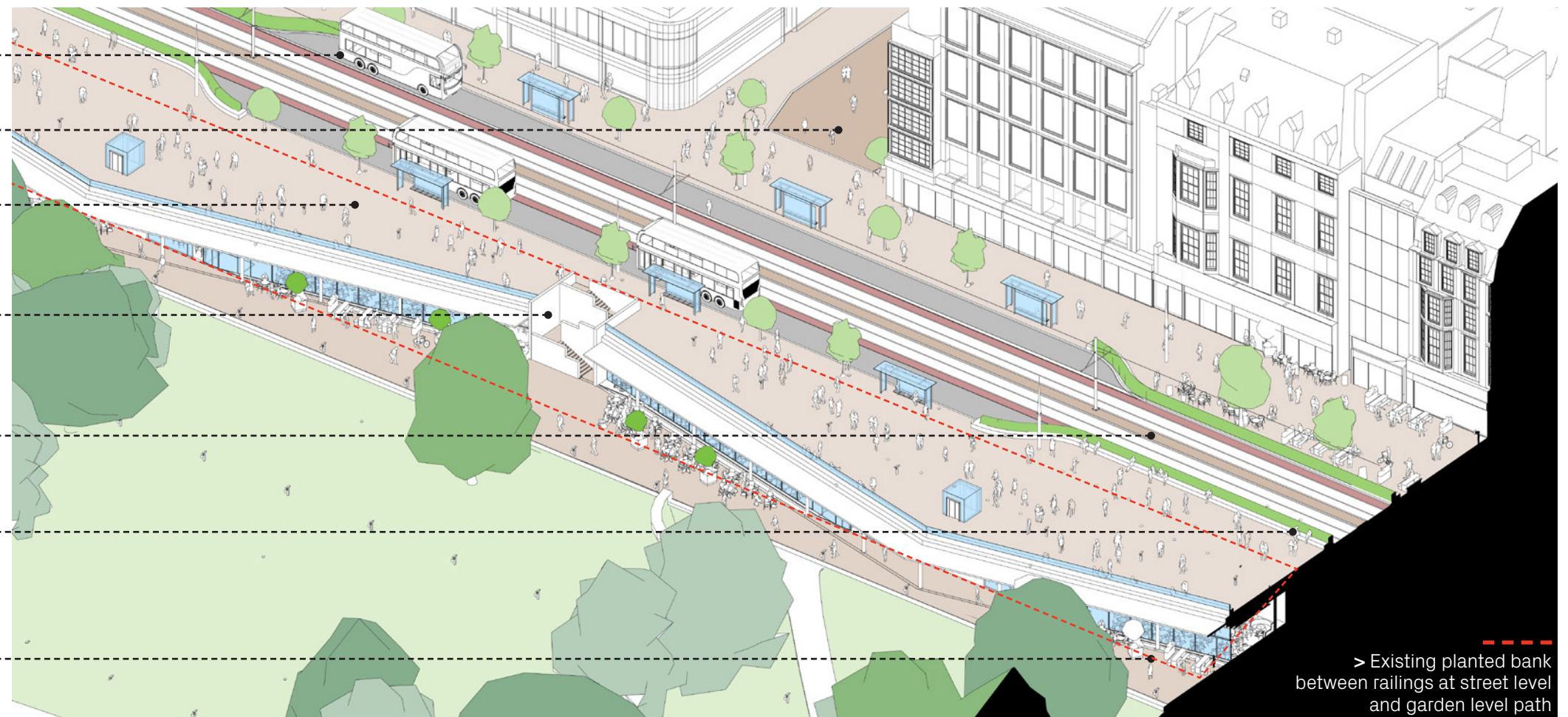
> Removal of the railings and use of the current steeply banked border to form restaurants at the garden level with a greatly expanded pavement above

> Increased access points to the gardens via additional stairs, ramps and lifts

> Road between the grouped bus stops reduced to two lanes for tram and bus traffic with cycle paths on both north and south sides (highlighted in red)

> A low wall with a planted border is formed to obscure the lower part of passing buses and trams, lessening their prominence within the streetscape

> The amount of useable open public space is increased at both street and garden level due to the new pavement formed atop the restaurants units

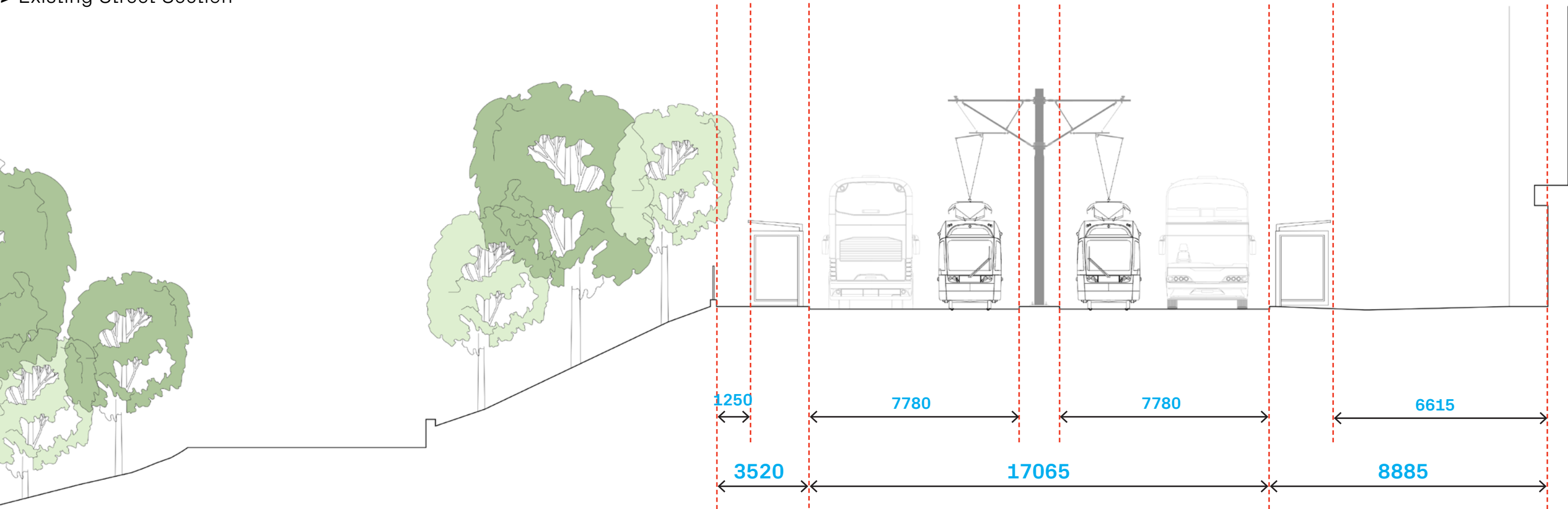


> Existing planted bank between railings at street level and garden level path

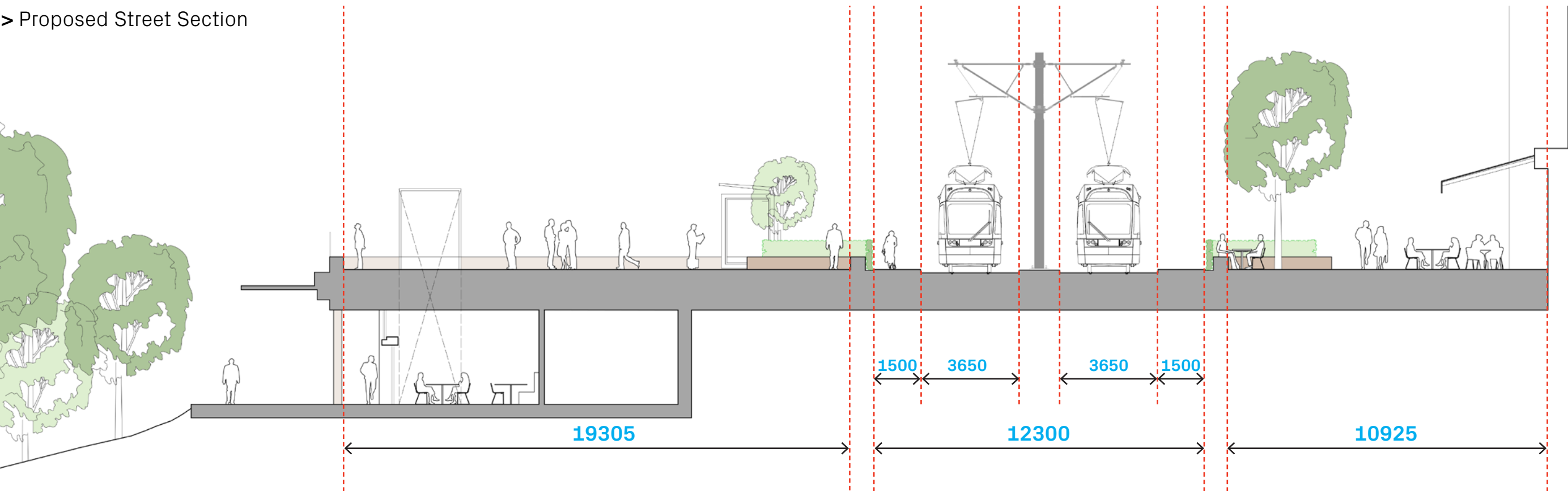
03 The Vision - Section



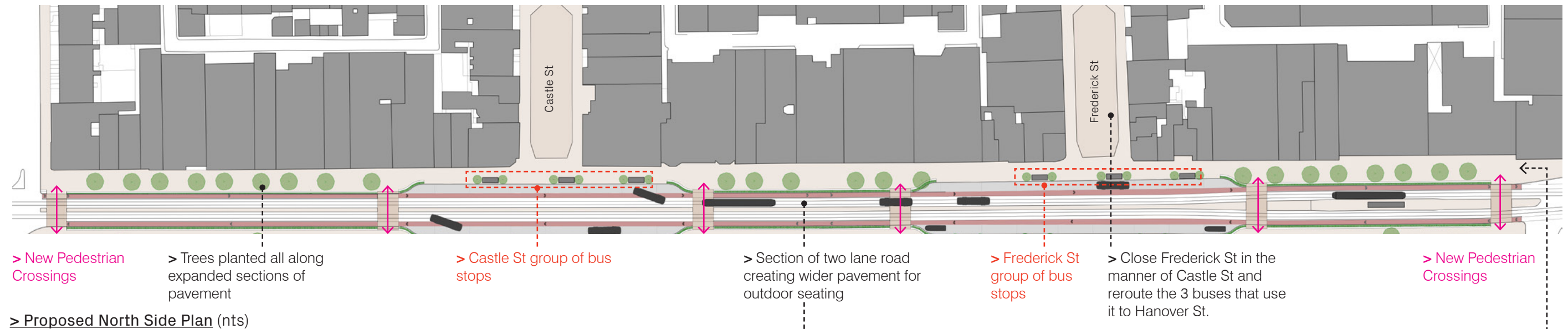
> Existing Street Section



> Proposed Street Section



04 The North Side



> Summary of Proposed Physical Changes:

> Close Frederick st in the manner of Castle st and reroute the 3 buses that use it to Hanover St.

> Pull together the existing six bus-stops into two groups of three stops to be located at the end of Frederick and Castle streets respectively. Each bus stop has room for a bus and a bus waiting.

> The road in-between would be reduced to two lanes, and this allows the pavement in front of the majority of the three "blocks" (South Charlotte St to Castle St; Castle St to Frederick St; Frederick St to Hannover St) to be widened from 6.8m to 8.55m

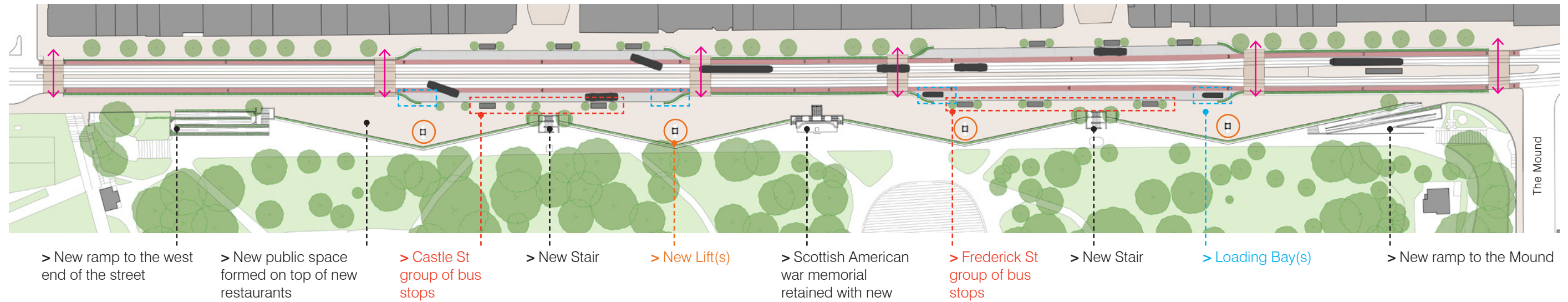
> To increase the attractiveness of pavement seating a planted low wall would be constructed to obscure the lower part of passing buses. Note: by 2035 all LRT buses will be electric.

> Plant trees all along the expanded pavement



> Proposed views of the north side pavement

05 The South Side @ Street Level



> Proposed South Side Street Level Plan (nts)

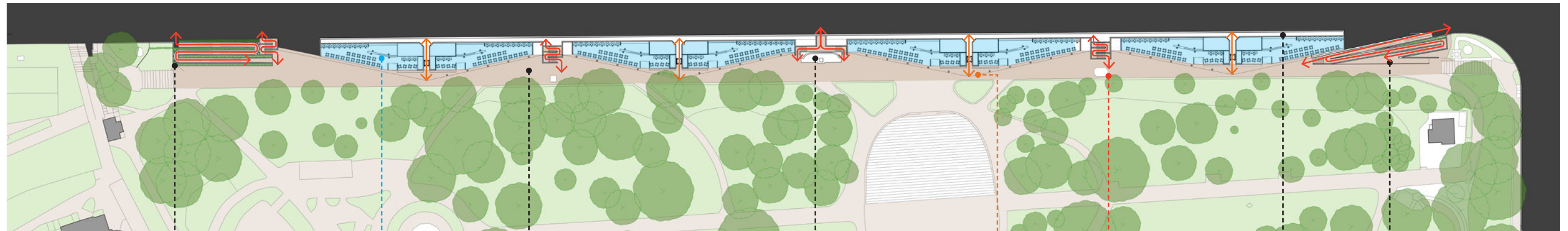
> Summary of Proposed Physical Changes:

- > Group the existing 5 bus stops into two groups of three and two (as per the north side).
- > Incorporate 4 loading bays for gardens restaurants.
- > Construct 8 restaurants each 350 sq. m serviced by a rear service corridor connecting to four lifts. The restaurant could be subdivided into smaller units
- > The roof of the restaurants is available as new public space. The zig-zag edge creates place making at both Princes St and gardens levels and also ensures that the restaurant can be seen from Princes St (cf. unlike the RSA restaurant from the Mound).



> Proposed views of the south side pavement

05 The South Side @ Garden Level



> New ramp to the west end of the street

> New restaurant units, 8 in total each 350sq. m with guest access from the front

> Enlarged public spaces at the garden level can be used for a variety of purposes

> Scottish American war memorial retained with new stair framing it

> New Lift(s)

> New Stair(s) & Ramps

> Service Corridor

> New ramp to the Mound

> Proposed South Side Garden Level Plan (nts)

> Summary of Proposed Physical Changes:

> At the east & west end create a 1:20 disabled access ramp (in addition to the lifts) and the formation of new stairs. Note the existing Scottish American war memorial is retained and enhanced with a new stair wrapping around the back of it.

> At gardens level maintain the southern line of the existing path but increase the area available by extending northwards

> Create seating (additional to café seating)

> Plant trees as shown.

> (right) Proposed views of the south side at garden level



> Light the gardens as per examples from (L-R) the recently completed Union Terrace Gardens in Aberdeen to some examples from Japan.



06 Conclusion



> Proposed view of the south side pavement

> In summary:

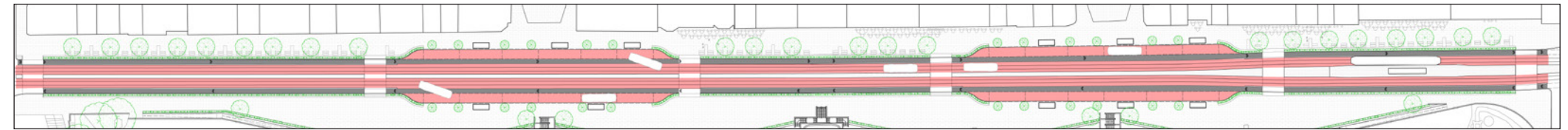
We want the street as a whole stretching from shops across to the gardens to act and feel like a single great urban destination. For visitors it should be one of the sights and activities of Edinburgh to experience; for residents it should be a regular destination for shopping, eating and entertainment.

A place to be.

07 Footnotes

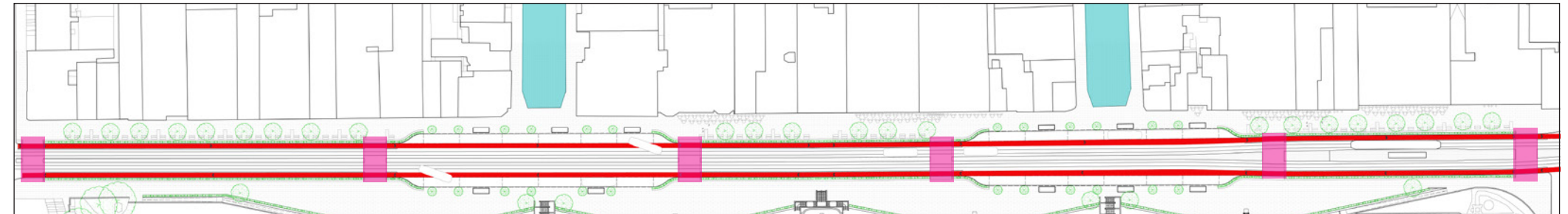


> **1 Buses:** Commercial coaches, long distance, tourist buses and airport buses will be re-routed down Queen St. Lothian buses will be the only buses on the street. We have deliberately not interfered in any other way with the frequency or variety of LRT buses.



> **1:** Buses (Trams remain unchanged)

> **2 Taxis** (■) will be banned but taxi stands created at the foot of Frederick St and Castle St. The maximum walking distance to a taxi would be 88m.



>**2, 3 & 4:** Taxis, Cycles and Pedestrian Crossings

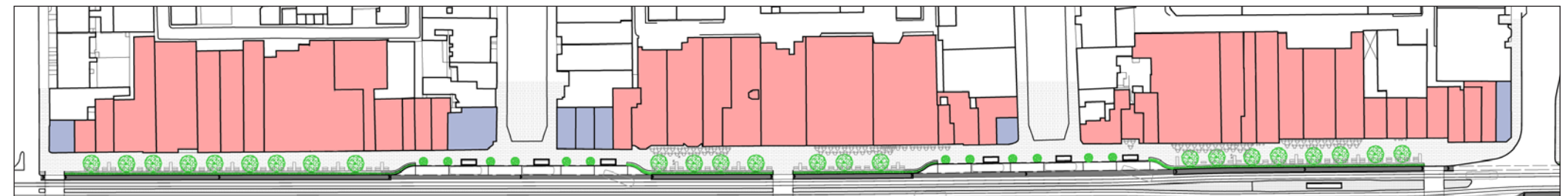
> **3 Bicycles** (■): two bicycle lanes are incorporated after consultation with “Spokes”

> **4 Pedestrian crossings:** increased from four to five.

> **5 Servicing of shops:** virtually all existing shops are serviced from Rose St Lane South.

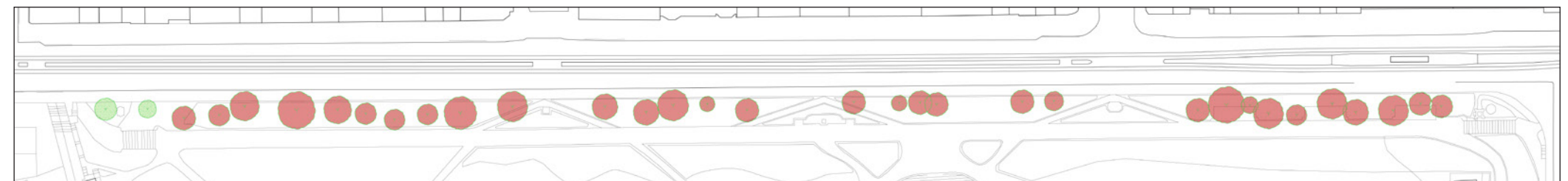
■ > Existing shops - serviced from Rose St Lane South

■ > Existing shops - serviced from the front

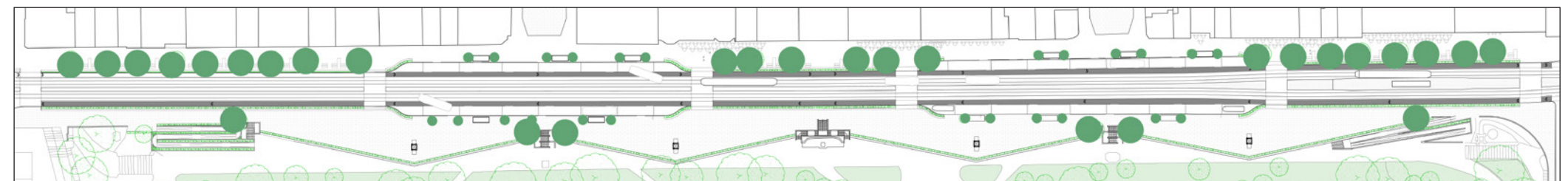


> **5:** Existing shop servicing arrangements

> **6 Trees:** 31 trees need to be felled. In summer, many of these block the view of the castle. 35 trees would be planted on the north side and 17 trees on the south side in addition to those retained.

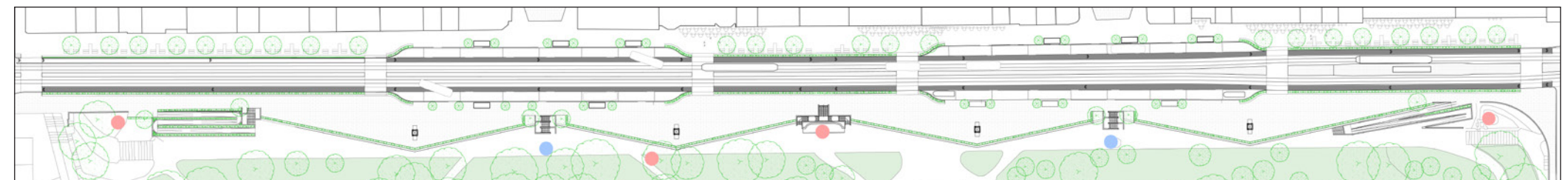


> **6:** Existing Trees felled shown in red, those retained shown in green



> **6:** Proposed new Trees

> **7 Statues and monuments.** The American-Scottish monument would be untouched but reset. All other statues could be re-sited at Princes St level to better advantage considering the increase in public space.

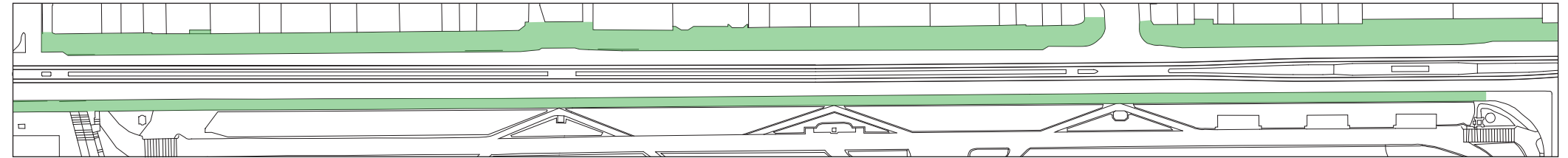


> **7:** Monuments. Red identifies those remaining in the same location, and blue represents those relocated

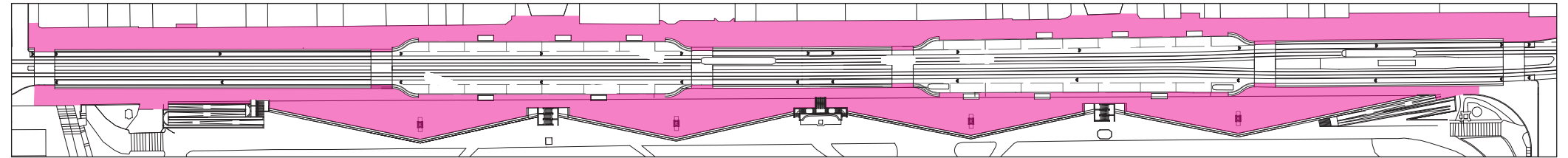
07 Footnotes (cont'd)



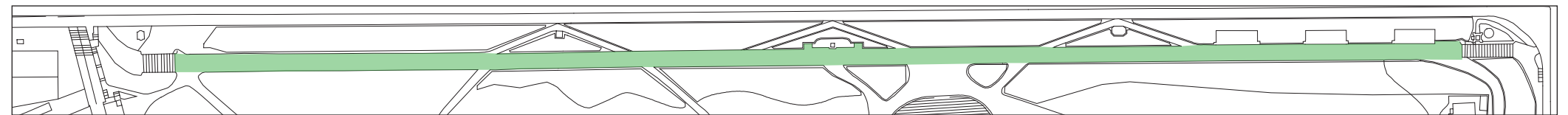
> **8** Public space: on the north side 558m² of extra space would be created; on the south side at street level 3441m² of extra space would be created; on the south side at gardens level 721m² of extra space would be created. Overall there would be a **45% increase of public space**.



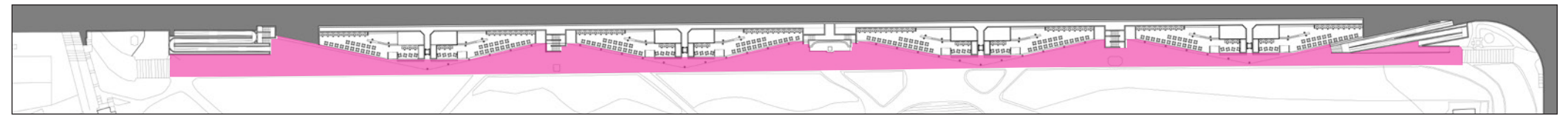
> **8: EXISTING** Public Space - street level



> **8: PROPOSED** Public Space - street level

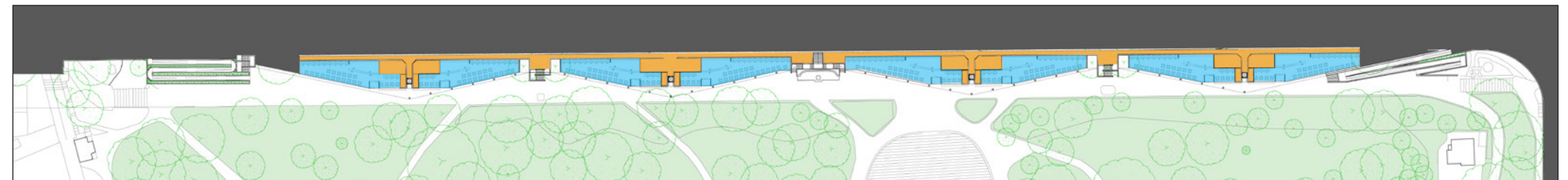


> **8: EXISTING** Public Space - garden level



> **8: PROPOSED** Public Space - garden level

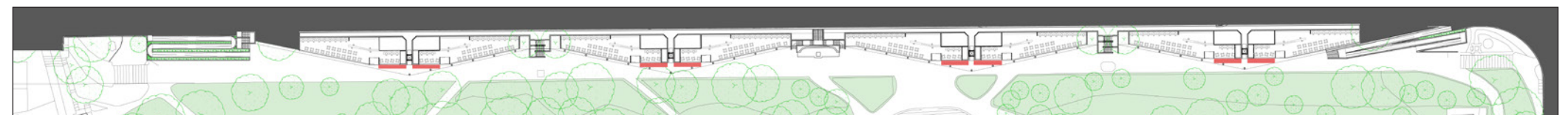
> **9** Commercial space created (■). At garden level 3836m² would be created capable of being subdivided into 8 or 16 units; at Street level there would be many opportunities for street vending, created.



> **9 & 10: Proposed** commercial space and assoc. servicing at garden level

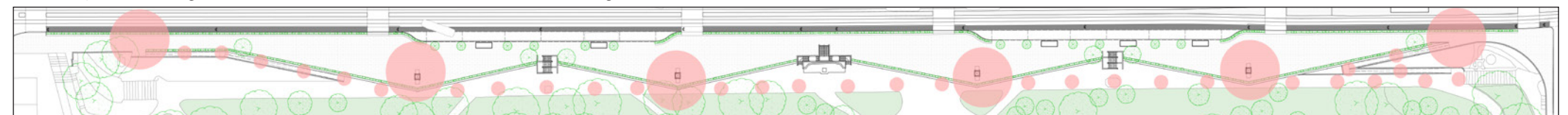
> **10** Servicing of commercial space (■). This would be done by lifts from Princes St reserved loading bays; one lift be two restaurants.

> **11** New seating in the gardens: In addition to café seating there will be new general seating available.



> **11: Proposed** seating - outdoor with commercial units & assoc. outdoor seating

> **12** Disabled access: The same 4 lifts would also be available. In addition there will be 1:20 disabled ramps at the east and west ends.

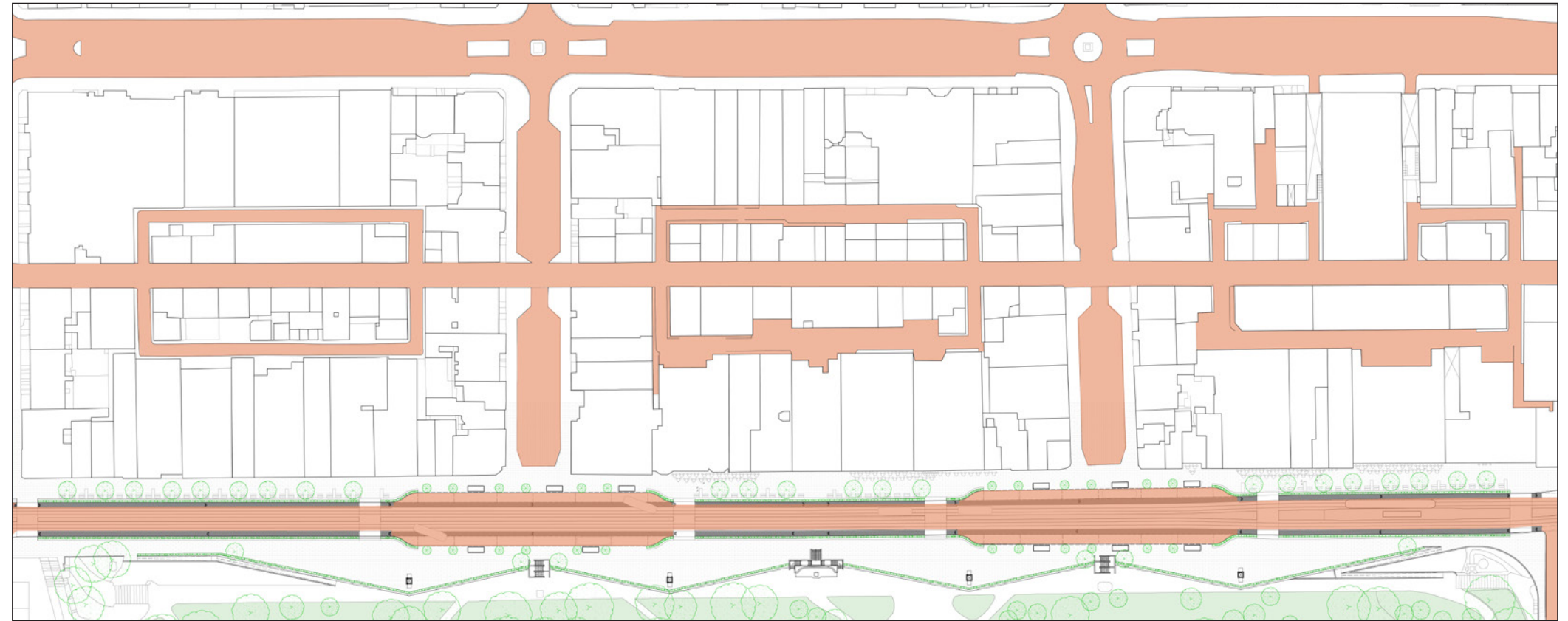


> **12: Proposed** accessibility to lower level

> **13** 24-hour access. The gardens would be imaginatively lit all night as a destination. Essential Edinburgh would take on the role of maintenance and night-time supervision.

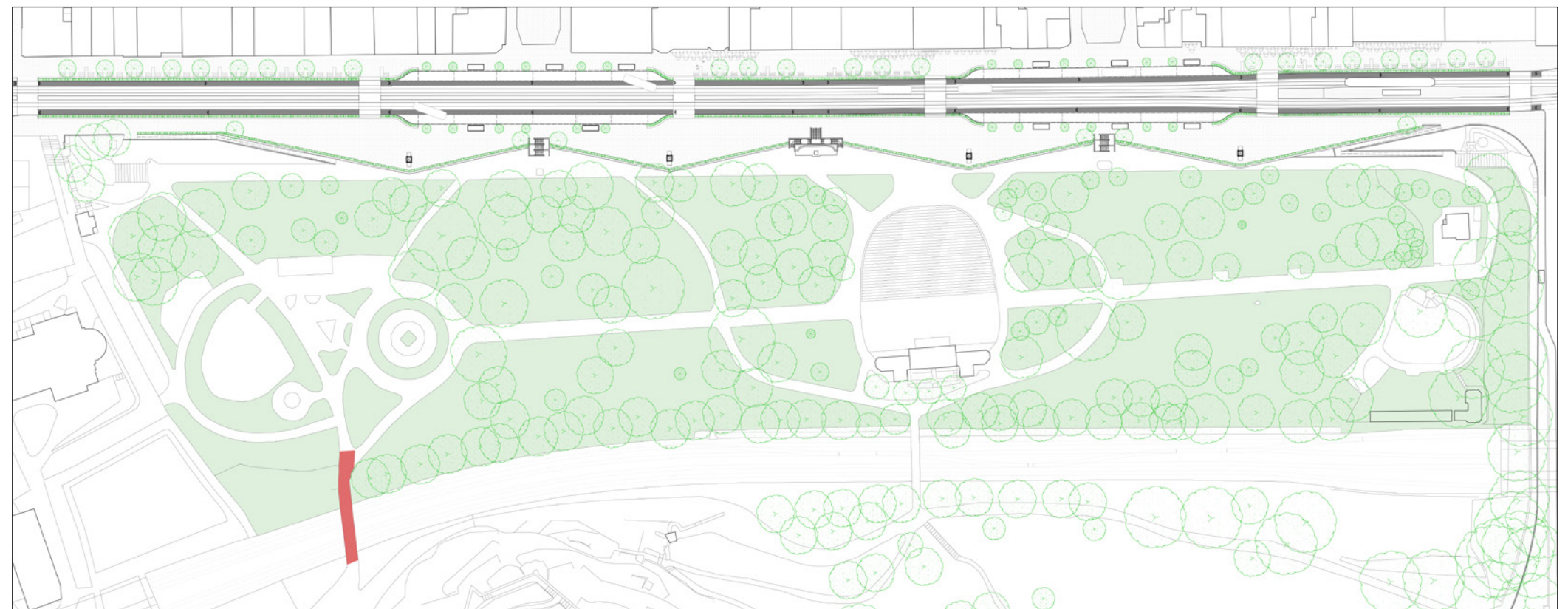


> **14** Emergencies. On the north side for fire or ambulance the pavement needs to be designed to withstand fire-engines; similarly on the south side the first 4m could be designated to do the same with bollards protecting the remainder. In addition cross-overs could be created between tram poles.



> **14:** Emergency access

> **15** Construction traffic. Ideally the existing bridge across the railway tracks from Kings Stables Road should be strengthened (ARUP cite £2M). This is, in any event, a necessary move to allow for efficient servicing of the bandstand.



> **15:** Construction access

> **16** Economics. Our research indicates that the new commercial space could generate up to £10M pa.

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