

RICKMANSWORTH AQUADROME

Landscape and Environmental Design Project

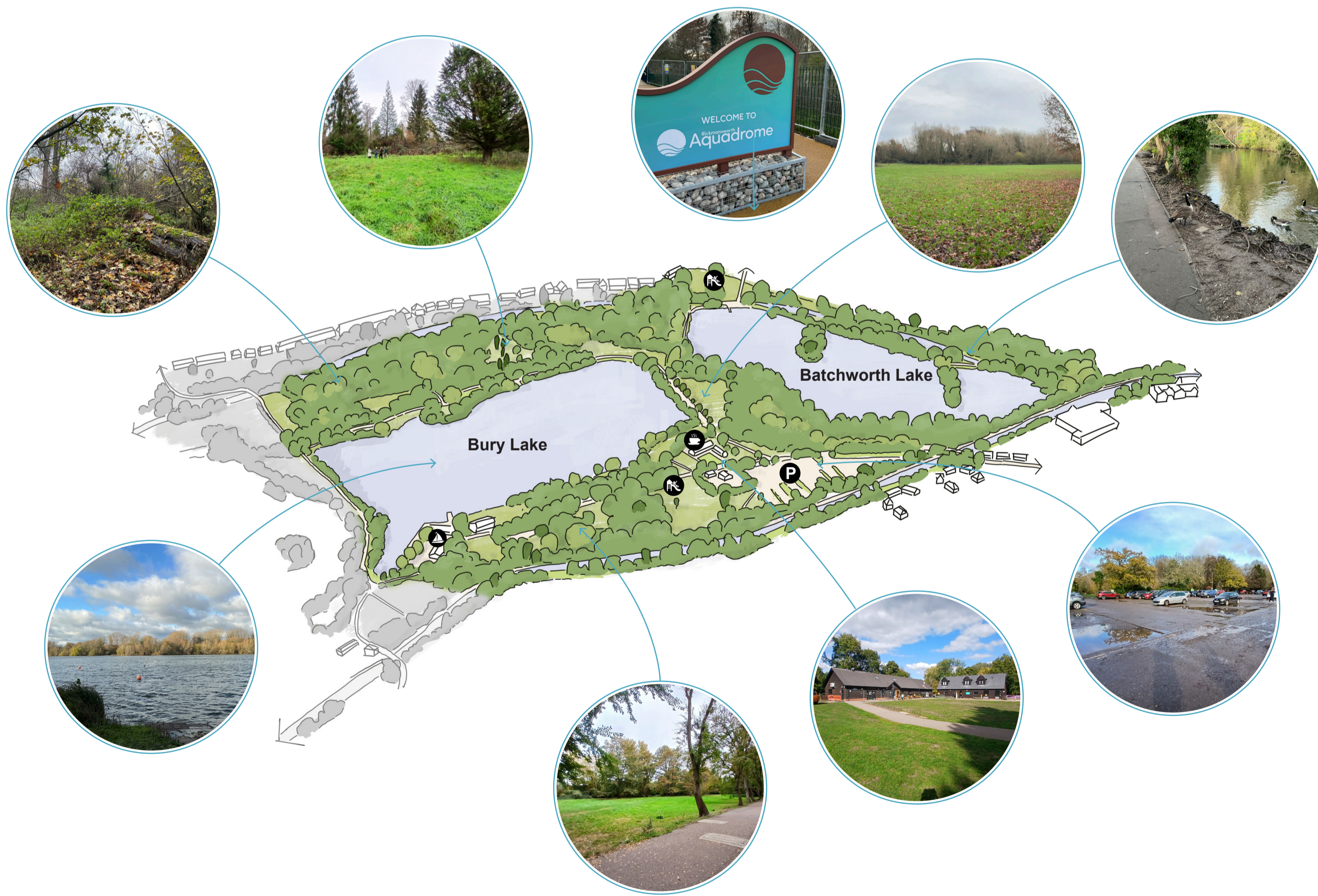
SCENE SETTING

Rickmansworth Aquadrome is a cherished landscape of lakes, woodland and wetland habitats. The proposed Lottery-funded Masterplan to restore and enhance the site will set out a clear, shared direction for how it can continue to be a welcoming, accessible and nature-rich Local Nature Reserve. It will protect the site's special character and habitats while improving everyday visitor experiences and strengthening its role within the Colne Valley Regional Park.

The Masterplan will build on the Aquadrome's strengths while responding to recurring challenges such as flooding, ageing infrastructure, inconsistent wayfinding and signage, and pressure on sensitive habitats from high footfall.

The emerging Masterplan is structured around three interlocking themes: Nature, People and Place.

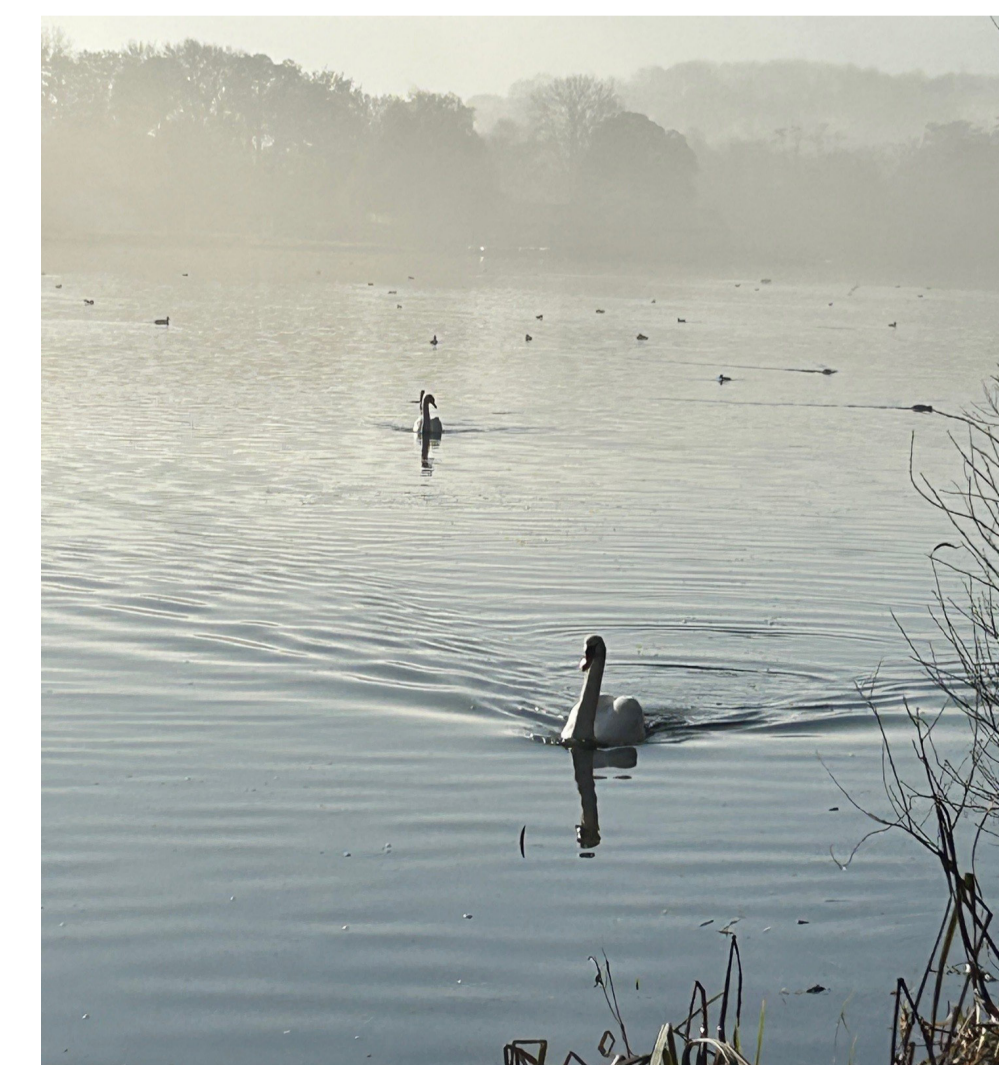
Engagement is central to shaping a Masterplan that reflects the Aquadrome's character, history and everyday users. We are seeking your feedback on the emerging designs to help refine and develop the proposals in the coming months.



- The Aquadrome is a designated Local Nature Reserve containing open water, wet woodland, grassland and riparian habitats.
- Habitats of principal importance include the wet woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, native hedgerows and the river Colne.
- Drainage ditches and lake margins function as ecosystems and wildlife corridors.
- The Aquadrome forms part of a wider network of nature sites across the Colne Valley, because of this habitat quality, lake and river edge management, and biodiversity enhancement are important.



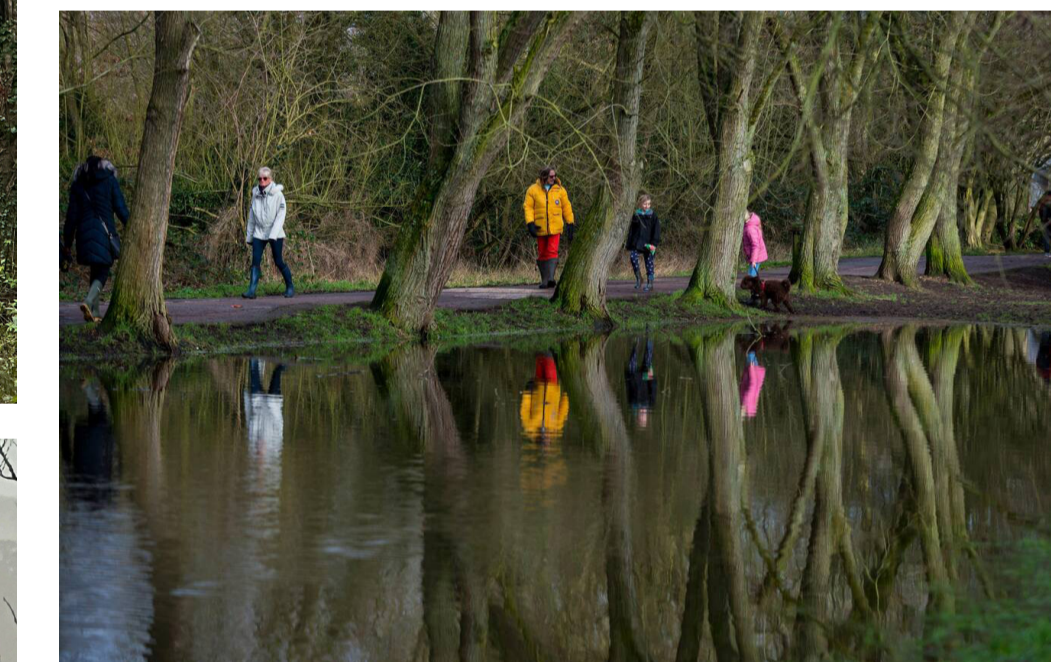
Opportunities diagram - Nature (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026)



- The proximity to Rickmansworth makes it feel particularly special as a Local Nature Reserve in an urban setting.
- The Aquadrome is a gateway for walking, wheeling and cycling within the local area and further afield, with both the Ebury Way and the Grand Union Canal towpath providing connections to Watford, Uxbridge and beyond.
- The Aquadrome meets the everyday needs of local residents for recreation and activity.
- A large, accessible footpath network on site connects key destinations and facilities such as The Café in the Park, toilets, free public parking, family play areas, fitness equipment, seating and picnic spaces.
- Established clubs and community activities, including sailing at Bury Lake Young Mariners, fishing on Batchworth, and regular events programming, contribute to a lively but balanced visitor offer.



Opportunities diagram - People (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026)



- The Site is a 41-hectare Local Nature Reserve on the northern edge of the Colne Valley Regional Park, set between the River Colne and the Grand Union Canal and connected to Rickmansworth town.
- The Aquadrome includes Batchworth Lake and Bury Lake, both framed by woodland and walking routes.
- It has a distinctive waterside character and offers pockets of long views across the wider Colne Valley from certain locations.
- The Aquadrome's form is a legacy of early 20th-century gravel extraction, where pits left in the valley floor naturally filled with water.
- Batchworth Lake is topped up by the River Colne, while Bury Lake is largely spring-fed, with both draining back to the Colne.



Opportunities diagram - Place (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026)



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Haley Sharpe



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MASTERPLAN, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The site-wide Masterplan shown on this board creates a resilient, regenerative and stewardship based design framework for the detailed design interventions that will be delivered in the Lottery funded project. These will enhance the resilience of the Aquadrome, and so it can be enjoyed for the long term by current and future generations. The Masterplan is guided by the Vision below.

VISION

For the Aquadrome to be enhanced, nurtured and protected. To achieve a careful balance so nature can flourish and visitors can connect with and discover beautiful and unique habitats, whilst understanding the importance of the environmental heritage of the Site.

Nature

Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments - The Aquadrome will conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and heritage features and all aspects of management will be undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle.

- Restore blue-green systems and improve resilience.
- Protect and enhance priority habitats.
- Educate and inform visitors about vital wildlife and their habitats.
- To conserve and share the landscape and heritage of the

People

To Be Welcoming for All - The Aquadrome will be an inviting, clean and well-maintained green space for all to enjoy.

- Inclusive, legible and intuitive arrivals.
- Enable access for everyone.
- Provide balanced and diversified activity offer.
- Clean and well-kept by design.

Place

A High Quality Green Space - The Aquadrome will be a flagship destination, providing high quality facilities and diverse recreational opportunities alongside its rich wildlife habitats.

- Create memorable gateways.
- Celebrate and strengthen Site informed character areas.
- Enable year-round access.



MASTERPLAN

Legend

- | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Site gateways | Vantage point | 1 Woodland Walk | 6 Pinetum Threshold & Lake Connection | 11 Uxbridge Road Gateway (Orientation Point) | 16 Navigation Node | 20 Dog Enrichment Area | 24 The Meadow |
| Important nodes | Bird viewing | 2 Woodland Walk Node & Boardwalk Start | 7 Floodplain Lowering | 12 The Causeway & Western Lake Edge | 17 Bury Point | 21 Car Park Reconfiguration | 25 Sightline Management |
| Picnic platforms | Panoramic views | 3 River Restoration | 8 Formalising Desire Lines | 13 Visitor Hub - Lakeside Picnic Area & Bird Viewing | 18 Bridge & Boardwalk Link | 22 Vehicle Entrance | 26 South-western Gateway (Orientation Point) |
| Localised views | Long views | 4 Viewpoints & River Edge Improvements | 9 Prominent Bury Lake Viewpoint | 14 Visitor Hub - Vegetation Management Behind the Café | 19 Natural Play & Discovery Zone | 23 Gate Line De-cluttering | |
| Bank repairment | Potential arts trail | 5 Pinetum | 10 The Hollow | 15 Visitor Hub - Café Fourcourt & Lawn | | | |



Proposals to restore and re-naturalise sections of the River Colne



Proposals to enhance access and views to the lake edges



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KEY PLACES – DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Key Places form the foci for detailed design projects which will be delivered with the Lottery funding. These are: the Woodland Walk and Pinetum (including a new Arts Trail), Visitor Hub (café setting and lakeside), Bury Point on the southern shore of Bury Lake and the Natural Play and Discovery Zone at the southern entrance to the site from the car park and café area.

The visuals on this board indicatively show the potential look and feel of the key spaces, supported by design principles for what could go in them as the detailed design develops over the next few months.

Key Places
Location Plan

- 28 Visitor Hub
- 29 Bury Point
- 30 Woodland Walk
- 31 Natural Play and Discovery Zone
- 32 Pinetum



Bury Point

Rationalise seating and introduce a restrained surfacing palette for inclusive access. A new, semi-enclosed shelter offering prospect and refuge will form a focal point sharing inter-visibility with vantage points around Bury Lake and encouraging people to sit and dwell to reflect and enjoy the views across the water to the wooded skyline. A robust new edge platform will provide sheltered space for model boating, alongside sensitive bank improvements.



Bury Point: Illustrative visual of contemplative 'basket weave' or 'coracle' seat looking across the water to the Pinetum

LOOK & FEEL



Visitor Hub

Reconfigure the existing lawn as a lively, inclusive social space with outdoor seating, incidental play and lawn games. The space will provide varied seating for all ages and abilities, a Changing Places facility, clear desire-line routes and intuitive connections to adjacent paths.

The proposals will also create a welcoming lakeside picnic terrace with new bridge crossing from the café and footpath access along Bury Lake. A modest bird-viewing platform, akin to the new platform overlooking Batchworth Lake, will frame safe, elevated views while protecting marginal habitat, while selective vegetation clearance will re-open views to Bury Lake.



Cafe & Lawn: Existing View



Cafe & Lawn: Illustrative Proposals



The Meadow: Illustrative Proposals



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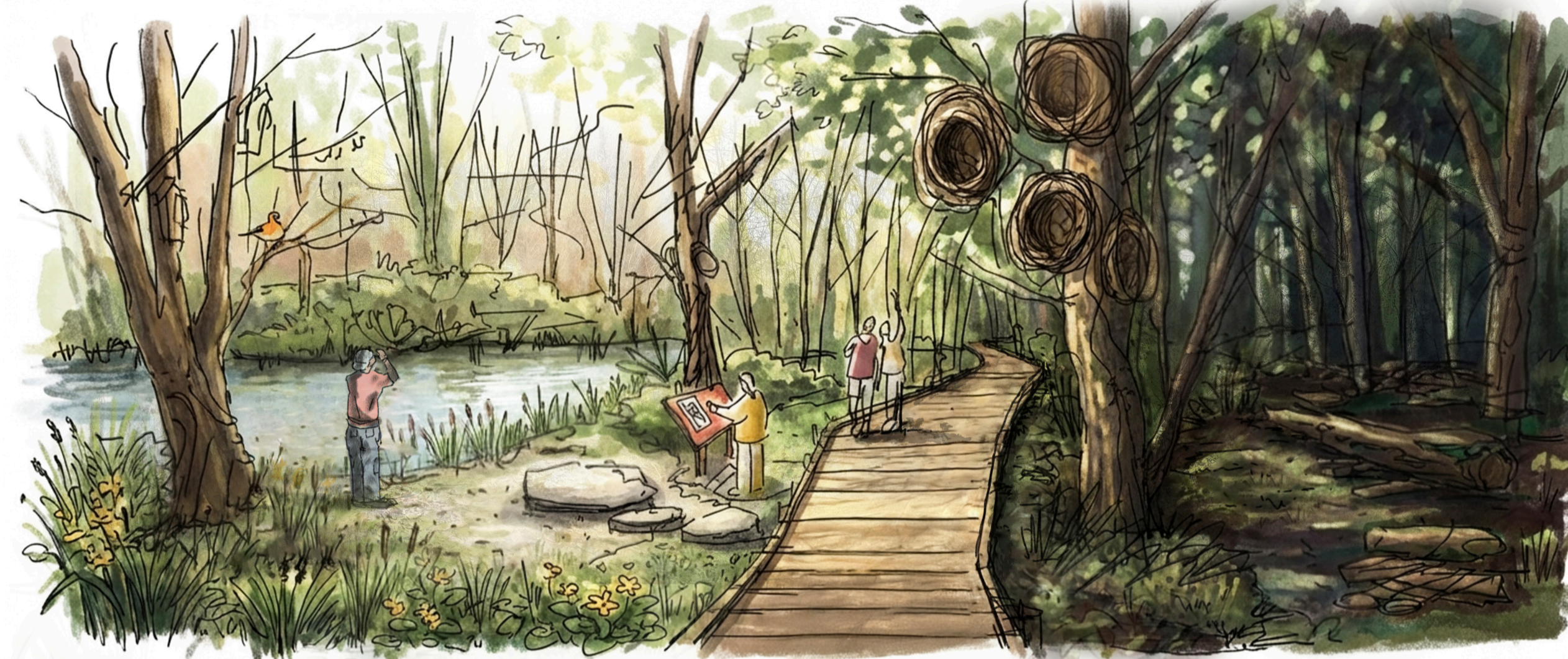
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Woodland Walk

The proposals celebrate this tranquil route, safe access: upgrades to surfacing, repair riverbanks, and deliver in-channel enhancements. New resting points (benches, perches and quiet bays) invite short pauses to absorb birdsong, moving water and the dappled textures and light and shade of wet woodland.

Clear wayfinding markers will denote new inclusive access routes (materials and form are being explored, images are indicative only), giving more flexible access to the woodland and riverside, branching toward the Pinetum, with site specific art interventions giving a gentle cue to slow down, explore and enjoy contact with nature.



Illustrative visual of potential design for Woodland Walk

Natural Play and Discovery Zone

Create a dog-free, nature-led playful area with picnic tables and shaded seating. The space will include provision of a new access path from the canal as the main walking route to the Visitor Hub (bypassing the car park). The space will incorporate natural play features (low mounds, stepping and balancing logs) preferably sourced on Site and referencing the woodland and wilderness landscape into which it leads beyond.

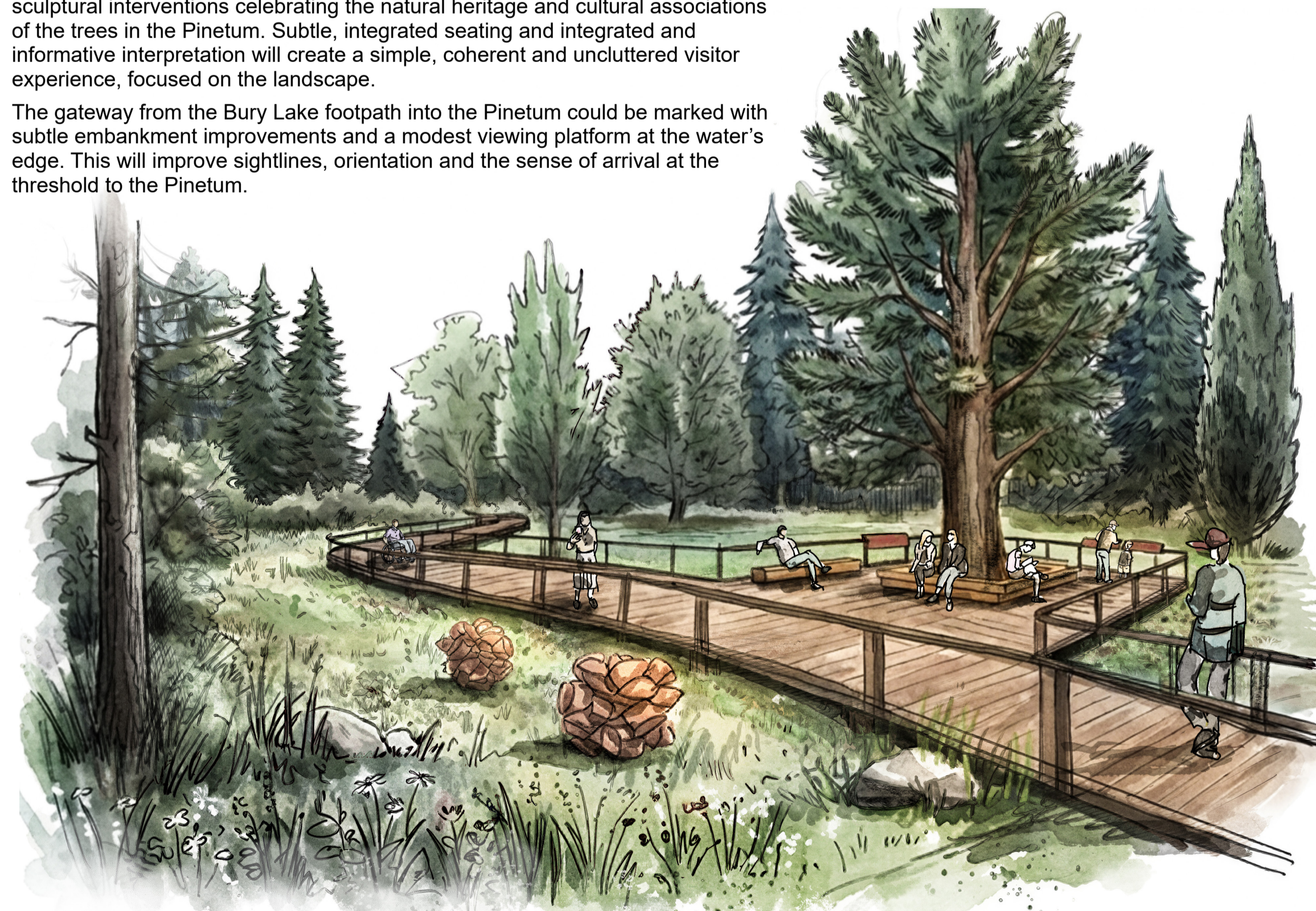


In-progress sketch concepts for design of Visitor Hub and Natural Play and Discovery Zone

Pinetum

Keep ground vegetation low and largely grassland to reveal the coniferous trees' sculptural forms, encourage people to look upwards and create views to new sculptural interventions celebrating the natural heritage and cultural associations of the trees in the Pinetum. Subtle, integrated seating and integrated and informative interpretation will create a simple, coherent and uncluttered visitor experience, focused on the landscape.

The gateway from the Bury Lake footpath into the Pinetum could be marked with subtle embankment improvements and a modest viewing platform at the water's edge. This will improve sightlines, orientation and the sense of arrival at the threshold to the Pinetum.



Illustrative visual of potential design for Pinetum

Circulation	Surfacing
Furniture	Thresholds
Planting	Dark sky
Hydrology	Inclusive
Signs	Views
Maintenance	Play & Education
Art	Sustainability

Themes being considered in guiding design development



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