EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This RIBA Stage Two report shows in detail how the design for the Civic Centre has developed since the first report was issued at the end of RIBA Stage One.

The major change to the scheme since Stage One is the relocation of the basement Car Park from being under the Theatre, to the current scheme which shows the car park located under the Office Block. This change came about through design development during Stage Two and was required in order to reduce the extent of disruption to Calverley Grounds and achieve a more cost effective solution for the development.

The Civic Centre for Tunbridge Wells will provide:
• New Theatre with an expanded capacity of 1,200, and the ability to attract high class touring shows, providing a unique experience for audiences, and transforming theatre in Tunbridge Wells
• Give the Council more efficient, appropriate and cost effective Office premises
• Modern Council Chambers facility
• Free the existing Civic Complex for redevelopment.

The project’s benefit to the town, however, goes much further. By replacing the car parking that currently degrades the western edge of Calverley Grounds, the project will:
• Heal the western edge of the park, replacing car parks and the backs of buildings with carefully-designed facades, and a cultural use (the Theatre) appropriate to the town and the park’s history.
• Frame an appropriate western approach to Calverley Grounds.
• Establish a permanent vision for Calverley Grounds that secures its landscape against piecemeal development.

The new civic presence at the entrance to Calverley Grounds will heal the fundamental split in Tunbridge Wells between the two separate centres of Mount Pleasant and The Pantiles.

Redevelopment of the two car parks will be enabled by construction of a new underground car park below the office. Further parking will be provided by an extension of the Crescent Road car park.

The background to this project is contained within a Masterplan Framework that sets out the wider parameters and background to the Civic Project.

Discussions are ongoing with the neighbouring property owners in order to obtain the relevant rights and agree acquisition of properties and rights which are needed for the Development. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is also considering the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders where it is deemed necessary.
1

INTRODUCTION
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The Civic Project has the dual aim of resolving significant shortcomings with the current Council Offices and Assembly Hall Theatre, and of enhancing the central area of the town by resolving the western edge of Calverley Grounds. It has the potential to offer a major step forward for Tunbridge Wells, transforming the town centre, and enlivening the cultural life of both town and wider region.

The scheme is based on a 2016 masterplan by GVA / Allies and Morrison that:

- Identified the Great Hall car park and Mount Pleasant Avenue sites as potential location for, respectively, a new Theatre and new Council office.
- Highlighted the potential this released for redevelopment of the existing Council office and Theatre.
- Realised the possibility it created of enhancing and resolving the western edge of Calverley Grounds.

The project was developed to RIBA Stage 1 by April 2017. The Stage 1 reports developed thinking, sketched out briefs, tested key feasibility issues, and explored in more depth the commercial underpinning of the project. Replacement car parking was resolved through introduction of an underground car park. This was initially placed below Calverley Grounds itself. A further refinement, reported in September 2016, has relocated it to below the new office, extending out beneath the less sensitive northern edge of the park. Stage 2 design has developed briefing and feasibility still further. Design development, meanwhile, has underpinned the great potential of these sites both to deliver high class facilities and to enhance Calverley Grounds.

A wider view of the project, incorporating connected thinking on related sites, including the existing Civic Complex, is contained in the Masterplan Framework Report.

1.2 Calverley Grounds

Calverley Grounds is the heart of Tunbridge Wells. Well used and universally popular, it provides a unique green space at the heart of the town, a landscaped valley which provides the focus for Decimus Burton’s town plan, and retains much of its arcadian nature today.

Calverley Grounds has not survived intact, however. Building development along Mount Pleasant Road closed its western perimeter with the backs of houses, and the western edge of the park has been further degraded by car parking. The current approach does not match the quality of the park itself, while views back from the top of the hill are now focused on car parks.

Municipal adoption of the west part of the landscape (the current Calverley Grounds) secured the park for public use and introduced much wonderful planting. The arcadian nature of the landscape was somewhat compromised, however, by physical construction (some of which, including the tea room, has now been lost or, like the dentist’s surgery, been converted to other uses). The current proposals present the opportunity to develop a coherent and long-term vision for Calverley Grounds, one that builds on its original landscape, providing it, instead of the current car parks, with a well-designed western edge and approach that contain uses, such as the Theatre, wholly appropriate to the town’s cultural life.

1.3 Theatre

Designed as part of the Civic Complex, the Assembly Hall Theatre was always limited in its capabilities, and has now reached the end of its useful life. Although its creative and management team have worked hard to overcome its shortcomings, its limited capacity (978), and poor backstage facilities make it unable to attract high quality touring shows. Front of house, the entrance is low key, located on a busy road, while the foyers lack space, have little room for catering, and offer a poor audience experience. The auditorium, designed long after the great theatre boom of the early twentieth century, has none of the verve or intimacy of the Tunbridge Wells Opera House.

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The Civic Project has the dual aim of resolving significant shortcomings with the current Council Offices and Assembly Hall Theatre, and of enhancing the central area of the town by resolving the western edge of Calverley Grounds. It has the potential to offer a major step forward for Tunbridge Wells, transforming the town centre, and enlivening the cultural life of both town and wider region.

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A wider view of the project, incorporating connected thinking on related sites, including the existing Civic Complex, is contained in the Masterplan Framework Report.
Existing civic buildings, comprising of the Town Hall, Assembly Rooms Theatre and the Police Station and magistrates court.

Mount Pleasant car park (new council office + car park)

Great Hall car park (new theatre)

assembly Hall Theatre

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council office

stage 1 masterplan extents

Mount Pleasant car park (new council office + car park)

Great Hall car park (new theatre)
1.4 Council Office
Costly and inaccessible, the current council offices have reached the end of their useful life. Cellular, dilapidated and inaccessible, they lack flexibility to accommodate the changing needs of local government, while their high running costs create a constant drain on the town’s resources. By contrast, a new office building can:

- Reduce running costs
- Provide more efficient, cost-effective space
- Provide an income stream through sub-letting space to tenants
- Release the current civic complex premises for redevelopment to fund the scheme.

The 1934 competition for the current Civic Complex required dignity "without elaborate or unnecessary features". There was a clear aim to move on from the elaborate architecture of Victorian town halls, and the general drift towards modest efficiency has continued. The new Council Office must be open and welcoming, with architecture appropriate to its function, and, most importantly, to its sensitive location on Calverley Grounds. But the central requirement is for efficient, workable office space, allowing flexibility for future change in Council needs.

Significantly, it no longer seems inappropriate for the Council to share office space with other users. A flexible office building, in which the Council sub-lets space to tenants, will both future-proof the development, allowing room for the Council’s office requirement to expand or contract, and provide the town with an ongoing income stream.

As currently envisaged, the Council will occupy only part of the office space. The remainder will be let to a tenant (or tenants), who will share the entrance and principal spaces. In future, however, requirements may change. The building has therefore been designed to allow for multiple sub-lets and continued change in the Council’s office need.

While there is no vision of a grandiloquent Civic Centre, the Council Office will include spaces to accommodate the needs of local democracy, including meeting rooms and a council chamber. These larger spaces will be designed for flexibility and the council chamber without fixed seating, might be used for weddings or hired for events.

This vision is sustained by the Office’s prominent location on the west side of Calverley Grounds. It is this location, as much as its civic purpose, that will give the building its personality and status, and the stunning Calverley Grounds setting has driven its architectural development.

1.5 Car Park
The new Council Office and Theatre will replace existing parking provision on Mount Pleasant Avenue and behind the Great Hall arcade. While existing Great Hall and Mount Pleasant car parks need to be considered as part of an overall strategy for parking provision within Tunbridge Wells, sufficient parking needs to be provided to:

- Match the existing parking provision.
- Supply the Council’s obligation to offer spaces under side contracts.
- Provide additional places to serve the new Office building.

It has been noted that locating the car park adjacent to the new Theatre makes it well-placed to serve shoppers during the day and theatre audiences during the evening.

Calverley Grounds provides an extremely sensitive context for the new Car Park. The principle of car parking below parks is well-established (Hyde Park in London provides an obvious example). However, the original concept of an underground car park next to the new Theatre proved costly, difficult to access, and its impact on Calverley Grounds seemed inappropriate.

In September 2016, an alternative concept was therefore developed. This placed the new underground car park beneath the office building, extending out into the less sensitive area at the north corner of the park. A quality of landscaping fully appropriate to the Calverley Grounds setting will be needed to ensure that the park is unaffected. However, the project offers a real opportunity to enhance this underused part of Calverley Grounds.

Further parking will be provided through an extension to the Crescent Road car park.
2 STRATEGIC BRIEF

2.1 Overview
The brief for the Civic Centre has remained broadly constant, although a number of options and possibilities have been explored to ensure that the proposals really do represent the optimum resolution of site, Council requirement and budget.

2.2 Calverley Grounds
Calverley Grounds is well-used by Tunbridge Wells residents, providing an active landscape not only for walking and recreation, but for occasional events, as well as the sports uses at the top end of the park.

Workshops have been held with Calverley Grounds managers to review:

• Current uses requirements of the park, including vehicle access for deliveries and maintenance, and requirements for seasonal events such as the ice rink.
• Current proposals for further development of the park, such as the project for regeneration of the bowling pavilion.

Since Calverley Grounds lies at the heart of the Civic Project, it is essential that the brief for the park is fully integrated into design thinking for the project as a whole.

2.3 Theatre
Bonnar Keenleyside's report, included in the Stage 1 pack, analysed the current Assembly Hall Theatre audience and local demographic, reviewed theatre provision in Kent and adjoining areas, and assessed the appetite among touring theatre providers and operators for bringing shows to Tunbridge Wells.

It considered possible operating models, likely commercial outcomes, and the potential economic impact of a successful theatre on the town centre. Its conclusions were encouraging, and have continued to inform design development in Stage 2.

In summary:

• It seems likely that Tunbridge Wells' demographic, and the relative lack of competition nearby, would attract touring shows if there were a suitable theatre to receive them.
• Touring operators seem enthusiastic about enhanced theatre in the town.
• A successful theatre could have a significant impact on the local economy, benefiting other local businesses.

The Theatre will need to be able to accommodate high quality, sophisticated touring shows such as The Bodyguard, while maintaining a wide range of other events, from music to comedy, and sustaining links with community groups and other users of the Assembly Hall Theatre. An expanded Theatre would be likely to host week-long runs of shows, rather than ‘one-night-stands’. The Bonnar Keenleyside report stressed that it will take time to build the new Theatre up to an operation of this sort, and that full commercial self-sufficiency is always very hard to achieve.

To achieve these benefits, the new Theatre will need:

• A capacity of 1,200 seats.
• A high quality audience experience front of house.
• Stage and technical facilities adequate for musicals and other sophisticated shows.
• Backstage and servicing facilities able to accommodate the rapid get-in required for touring.

It is not envisaged that the new Theatre will produce large-scale shows of its own, and it will therefore not need workshop and production facilities. While the possibility of a studio space (as at the Marlowe) was considered, the site is too constrained to house this easily, and it was felt likely to have a negative impact on the valued Trinity Arts Centre. Although the current Assembly Hall Theatre can be used in flat-floor mode, this is not required for the proposed new programming. It is important that the shape of stage and auditorium are familiar enough to make it an easy venue for touring operators to use.

There is a strong aspiration for the Theatre to enhance Calverley Grounds not only before and after shows, but throughout the day. This suggests venues being open, (at least in part) throughout the day, a model pioneered by the National Theatre that works successfully in a number of cultural venues, attracting a varied daytime crowd ranging from cultural entrepreneurs (benefitting from with and meeting space) to groups of mothers and children. The benefits are obvious, in maximizing public use of a public building, and developing public familiarity with a cultural building. The Calverley Grounds location is, of course, ideal for this.

It is suggested the Theatre will provide an all day café/deli offer, providing coffee, light snacks, sharing platters, tapas, hot sandwiches, plated salads and desserts. During the evening this offer will be enhanced to a café/bar reflecting the different customer requirements. The catering report, appendix K, assesses the case for this in more detail, while also considering the most viable food and drink offer to serve theatre-goers. Its conclusions will be implemented in Stage 3.

In the course of Stage 2, the detailed operational brief has been further developed, in association with the Assembly Hall Theatre team, and is included in appendix L.

Some further brief aspirations have been identified in the course of Stage 2:

• Additional catering and foyer space to enable an enhanced catering offer.
• Additional dressing room space.

Costed sketches of this ‘enhanced Theatre option’ are included within appendix R2. Indicating how these aspirations could be achieved, and at what additional cost.

2.4 Council Office
At Stage 1, the assumption was that the Council Office would be shared between TWBC and a single large, long-term tenant. Early discussions were held with one possible tenant, and the scale of the sub-let office provision was matched to their needs. Meanwhile, entrance, meeting and some other spaces were designed to be shared. A large private room was included to serve not only as Council Chamber, but as a flexible room available for commercial hire: small conferences, weddings and other events. A café was proposed at this design stage on ground floor level to serve building users and visitors to the park, and to animate the new public space leading into Calverley Grounds.

At the same time, it was clear both that Council need for office space was likely to change over time, while any tenant may choose to move out in future. The brief there established that office space needed to be as flexible as possible, to allow for a greater or lesser requirement for Council office space and a variety of permutations of sub-let.

In the course of Stage 2, further briefing and workshops have greatly refined understanding of the Council’s office requirement. Further work has been done to assess the Council’s current space need and review how it may change with developing working practices, moving towards a much more open plan layout. Exploration has been carried out of how more flexible ways of working can be implemented. This has rejected the one desk per employee model in favour of hot-desking, supported by a range of alternative work settings. These settings will include meeting rooms of varying size, ‘quiet’ rooms for focused work or private phone calls, casual meeting areas created using furniture solutions and break out areas.

An outline brief for the type and size of workstations and the quantity of meeting rooms and support spaces was established. This allowed the overall area provision to be tested and confirmed. Options were explored that included a small number of private offices, or alternatively a screened of ‘Executive Area’. 
The steep slope of Mount Pleasant was potentially problematic for office use. Office floors buried too deep in the hill would not provide workable (or valuable) space. The rise of the site from west to east created a risk of office floors buried effectively within sunken areas, with light reduced and views curtailed. Both of these concerns have been addressed in the course of Stage 2 design development.

A benchmarking exercise has been carried out to establish the scale and nature of the ‘Council Chamber’. Flexibility emerged as the key, with sliding walls to allow subdivision, and adjacent break-out and service spaces enabling a range of different uses. Catering provision was included in the brief to open up the possibility of commercial hire for weddings and events. Close connection with the landscape was confirmed as the key to successful commercial operation of the space.

Following development of the catering strategy during Stage 2, it is suggested the cells space proposed during Stage 1 on the ground floor of the office building is let or used for a non-food service activity. This will give the new Theatre catering offer the best chance of operational and financial success. Alternative uses for this space will be developed at the start of Stage 3, which maintain the active ground floor frontage and work holistically with the Theatre to provide an activated entrance into Calverley Grounds. Further analysis is provided within the catering report, appendix K.

Discussions have continued with a prospective tenant for the remainder of the office space. Whether or not this particular tenant becomes involved with the building, these have been helpful in refining the nature of space that would be likely to attract high-quality long-term tenants to the new building. The scale of space available for tenancy has been planned to co-ordinate with Council need, and the limitations of the site and surrounding area.

For the sake of thoroughness, some further consideration was given to the option, identified at Stage 1, of developing a stand-alone Council Office building, with the Mount Pleasant site to the north of it left for future development. However, this was not thought commercially viable.

The following strategic brief for the office building has therefore been identified:

- A shared entrance for all uses of the building that reflects the professional nature of its occupants
- Approx 12,200 sq ft of flexible office space for Council use
- Approx 20,000 sq ft of flexible office space for use by the tenant
- Ceremonial space of a scale to house council meetings, but flexible enough to be used for a wide range of meetings, events and functions. 
- A ground-level lettable/retail space to activate the new public approach to Calverley Grounds, which would provide public access but could double as a casual meeting and breakout space for office occupants.
- An efficient back-of-house area incorporating rationalised storage and archive space.
- The car park below the Council Office should provide: 
  - As many new spaces as possible, to match the provision within the Great Hall car park.
  - 6 no. disabled bays (in line with current provision within the Great Hall car park, but less than the recommended number of bays for new car parks).
  - Good connection to the office building.
  - Accessible connection to the Theatre.
  - Facilities for goods and waste management of the office operation.

Current parking provision on the Great Hall and Mount Pleasant Avenue sites offers 265 spaces. Of these, 92 are controlled by a sub-tenant, an arrangement that may be open to renegotiation.

It is clearly beneficial to maximise parking numbers on site, while balancing this with the need to avoid excessive impact on Calverley Grounds. While these appears to be some excess provision in the town as a whole, this has not been fully analysed.

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- Good connection to the office building.
- Accessible connection to the Theatre.
- Facilities for goods and waste management of the office operation.
see key plan opposite
3 THE SITE

3.1 TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Tunbridge Wells is, by and large, a town of small-scale, humane buildings. Large structures are rare (the civic complex is the most prominent). Instead, the broken terrain forces terraces to step progressively down hillsides, while the typology of detached villas established by Decimus Burton — among them the array of villas around the east edge of Calverley Grounds — has established a cityscape of legible units, rather than uniform blocks.

These units are of great architectural richness and variety. Burton’s stone classical villas are rightly celebrated, but their dignity is offset by the exuberant vernacular of the Pantiles, and the festive architecture of the Opera House. Many of the surrounding buildings reflect the spa and holiday origins of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

The town’s building materials have been equally varied, ranging from sober limestone, through red brick, white brick, and blue engineering bricks, to white-painted stucco, weatherboarding, and pantiles.

The history of Tunbridge Wells explains its dual nature, with two areas of focus: one at the top of the town and the other around the spa itself. The railway station and Calverley Grounds are located midway between the two. The proposal for a new Council Office and Theatre at the mouth of the park will reinforce this middle ground, uniting the town and linking its high street to Calverley Grounds.
3.2 CALVERLEY GROUNDS

Much valued by residents, Calverley Grounds provides a unique green space at the heart of the town. Its natural setting is extraordinary: a steep valley sloping down towards the main western entrance. Its landscaping and planting are exceptional. Nonetheless, its quality has diminished somewhat over time:

- Although originally entered past formal lodges, the current entrances are disappointing. The west approach is much degraded by vehicle traffic, with the entrance to the park itself being squeezed between a roadway and the car park entrance.
- The western perimeter of the park is now entirely filled by the Mount Pleasant Avenue and Great Hall car parks, providing a disappointing view from the upper slopes of the valley.
- The number of kiosks and structures within the park has naturally grown over time. The park would benefit by removing some of them, so long as valued functions are still maintained.
- The north corner of Calverley Grounds is less used than the rest, and experiences some social issues.

Sensitively handled, the new Council Office and Theatre can not only provide Calverley Grounds with new life and a new western approach, but also trigger a more widespread step forward in management and appreciation of this highly-valued natural asset.
3.3 THE THEATRE SITE

The location of the Great Hall on the western edge of Calverley Grounds emerged as the preferred location for the proposed new Theatre during studies carried out in 2015.

The Council acknowledges that the Assembly Hall Theatre (AHT) is becoming structurally and culturally obsolete and in 2013, Stephen Browning Associates estimated the cost of converting it into 1,200 seat theatre capable of attracting top touring shows to be of the order of £25m. The nature of the scheme, the extent to which it would really meet the Council’s objectives and the cost of doing so have not been further reviewed as it was acknowledged that extensive refurbishment or rebuilding of the AHT would result in a closure period of at least two years which was contrary to the Council’s requirement to maintain continuous operation.

Re-siting the Theatre on the site of the Civic Centre, once vacated by the Council was also considered but discarded as it would require demolition of substantial parts of the Grade II listed Town Hall. The other possible building within the complex which could possibly accommodate the Theatre is the Police Station and Magistrate’s Court. However, this is not within the Council’s ownership, while its Grade II listing makes conversion to theatre use extremely difficult. One other site which has sometimes been raised is the former cinema site. This is not in the Council’s ownership, adding the purchase price to the overall development costs. As importantly, it would create serious challenges for a Theatre both through the complex site levels, and the presence of the railway tunnel below.

The existing Great Hall Car Park, which is in the Council’s ownership, provides a well-proportioned site of adequate dimensions to site a 1,200 seat theatre capable of attracting major West End musicals, ballet and contemporary dance, visiting companies such as Glyndebourne Opera, National Theatre on Tour, the RSC and Northern Ballet, maintaining longer runs of popular performances and increasing the number of performances and matinees.

Importantly from the perspective of improving the town centre, locating the Council Office building on the existing Mount Pleasant Car Park site (also in the Council’s ownership) immediately to the north of the proposed Theatre also provides the opportunity to create a central core of important civic buildings and community amenities which help to pull together the competing centres clustered around the Pantiles to the south and the Victoria Centre to the north.

The Theatre site is currently occupied by the 2/3 level Great Hall car park.

The current structure is of grey brick, matching the adjacent Great Hall. By car park standards, it is well-detailed; however, it could not be described as a building of architectural merit, and does nothing to enhance Calverley Grounds. On the basis of initial discussions with Historic England it seems clear that a strong case can be made for its replacement by a high quality and architecturally sensitive public building.

The site rises both eastwards towards the park, and southwards towards Mountfield Road. A perimeter road dividing it from the park is screened by trees, at which point the ground rises sharply into the landscaping of the park itself.

No significant challenges have been identified for development.

- Its current use is visually unattractive and the current structure is of no historic significance.
- A geotechnical desktop survey (see Stage 1 report) has identified no exceptional ground conditions.
- No insuperable utilities issues have been identified.

The main challenge of the site is providing vehicle access to service it. A successful theatre operation requires not only audience parking and drop-off, and refuse and delivery vehicles to service the front of house, but large articulated lorries and tour buses to bring in touring shows. Vehicle routes into the Great Hall car park site are limited. Vehicles up to a certain size can access the Theatre service yard through Hoopers car park (subject to agreement with Hoopers). Large articulated lorries delivering shows will need to come in from the shared space between the Theatre and Office, and access the service yard along the lane between the Theatre and Great Hall Arcade (they will then leave through Hoopers car park).

The remaining challenge in establishing the use of the Great Hall car park site is therefore to reach an agreement regarding access with Hoopers department store (for access across their service yard).
The Mount Pleasant Avenue site is characterised by its very steep slope, rising approximately 12 metres northwards from the park approach. The majority of this site is occupied by the Mount Pleasant Avenue car park. This is visually unattractive, and contains no structures of historic or architectural significance. Furthermore, the car park is raised by up to 2m above the road level, abutting the edge of the road with a retaining wall, which creates a narrow passage and unpleasant pedestrian environment.

The area of Calverley Grounds immediately to the east of the car park is one of the less frequented areas of the park. Although containing some mature trees, the planting and landscaping are less notable than elsewhere in Calverley Grounds. There are few paths, and this part of the park has, on occasion, proved difficult to manage.

At the foot of this slope, the entrance to Calverley Grounds is disappointing. Its shortcomings are noted above. Instead of a formal lodge, visitors are welcomed by a utilitarian toilet block and a dentist’s surgery, whose architecture is of limited quality, and whose function has no connection with Calverley Grounds.

A sub-station enclosed with primitive timber fencing is located at the top of the slope, feeding neighbouring buildings.

The steep slope of the office site has been a major driver in its design. Other than that, no significant challenges have been identified for development.

- Its current use is visually unattractive and of no historic significance.
- A geotechnical desktop survey (see Stage 1 report) has identified no exceptional ground conditions.
- No insuperable utilities issues have been identified.
3.5 THE CAR PARK SITE

The site lies beneath the Office, and extends eastwards below Calverley Grounds.

Comments about the office site, above, therefore also apply to the proposed car park site. A geotechnical desktop survey has identified no exceptional ground conditions. The principal challenge in sustaining the proposed use is to ensure safe vehicle movements, not only for access to the car park, but in servicing the office building and catering to the existing occupants of Mount Pleasant Avenue.

Vehicle movements are analysed in more detail in appendix D.

With regard to the car park below Calverley Grounds, some amendment of levels will be needed, but it should be stressed that this area of Calverley Grounds is less sensitive than others, with no Grade A trees, and with current problems of surveillance and openness that the current scheme should improve.

Adequate planting depth will be allowed so that mature trees can grow above the car park, maintaining the historic landscape strategy, and screening the east elevation of the new office.

Vehicle access to the car park and office will require some local widening of Mount Pleasant Avenue, with possible impact on some of the mature trees on the east side of the Avenue.
3.6 THE PUBLIC REALM SITE

The design of the park has been fluid since it was originally created. With reference to the Calverley Grounds Heritage Baseline by Built Heritage Consultancy the design of the landscape will seek to be sympathetic to the existing park and seek to reinstate the park where affected by the landscape works to respect and enhance the Grade II status of the landscape.

Some of the key points to note regarding the evolution of the park is the changing extent and character of the western edge. Originally extending to Mount Pleasant Road, development along the western boundary was introduced by 1898. Since then there have been a number of uses and developments along the western edge culminating in the development of the Great Hall carpark.

Within the park, the landscape originally had an open, Arcadian character. A stream and lake were formed along the bottom of the valley and the grass landscape flowed up the hill with groups of trees forming focal points within the park.

While the proposed Theatre and office buildings create an opportunity to provide a positive edge along the western boundary. The landscape has looked to the original, Arcadian character of the park as reference when seeking to consider the appropriate response to the landscape.