

CONNECTED CANTERBURY: UNLOCKING THE TALES OF ENGLAND

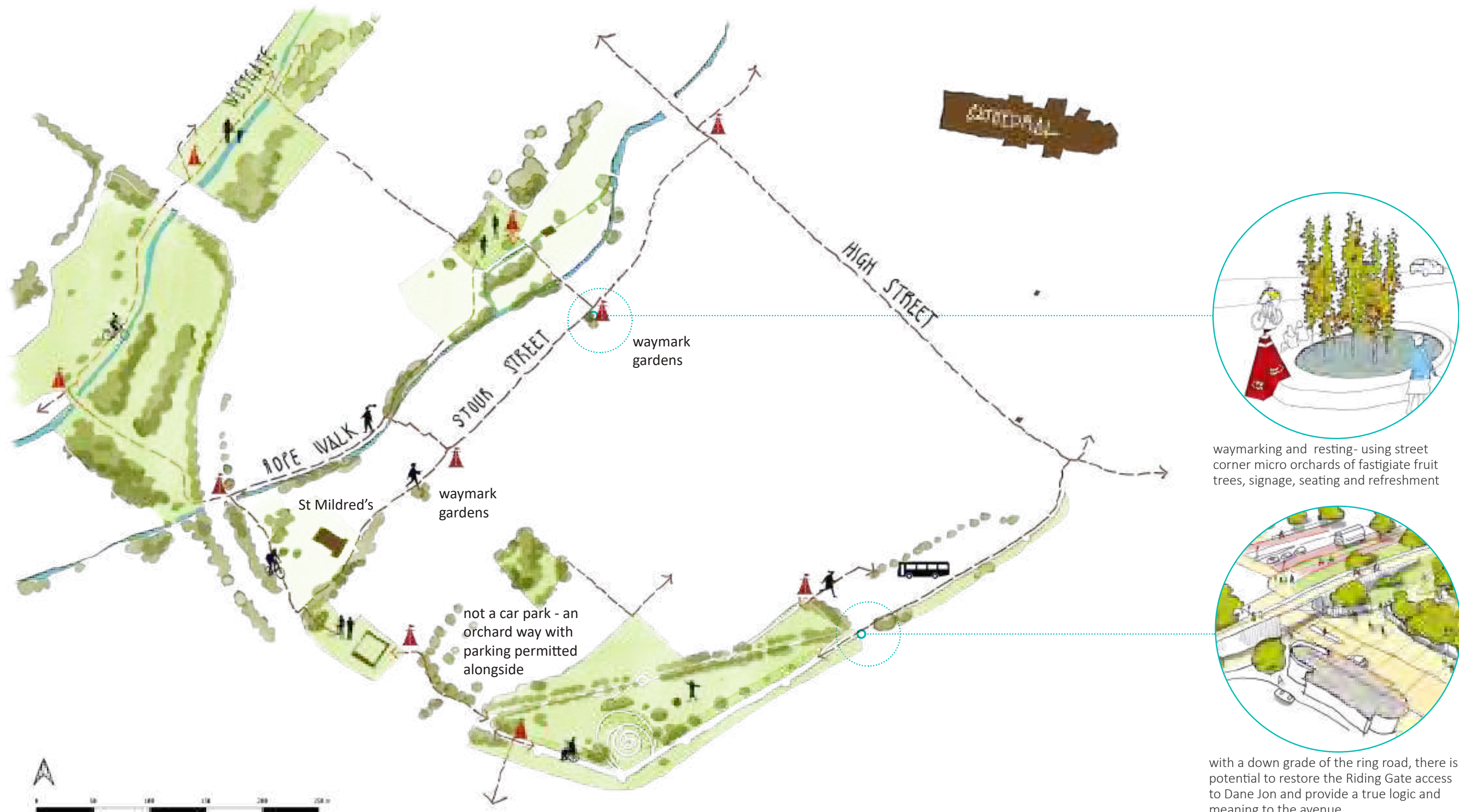
THE GARDEN TALES OF CANTERBURY



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Section 9

Canterbury Connected



AREA1: KEY STORY GARDENS - place and context

Background Approach

The team approach to the story gardens is based on a number of key ideas:

A walk along the city walls

Each of the story gardens is conceived as a stop or a momentary experience that is also part of a larger, perambulatory route connecting up the southern section of the city walls from St George's Terrace to the High Street via a series of planted gardens, routes, walkways and green spaces populated by important monuments.

Entrance points and navigation have been seen as vitally important in knitting these spaces together and encouraging their exploration and enjoyment from a wide and diverse community including residents and visitors. The entry point to each park or green space has thus been opened up to make the route more attractive and encourage exploration.

Canterbury Garden Tales

Narrative and storytelling are used to animate these spaces and bring them together. One narrative thread is the idea of a Kentish landscape weaving its way around and along the city edge: a journey from chalky cliffs to river bank via orchard trees and productive landscape. Walking, cycling and exploration as well as an embracing of health and wellbeing is encouraged along with a sensory experience of bio-diverse landscapes within the city.

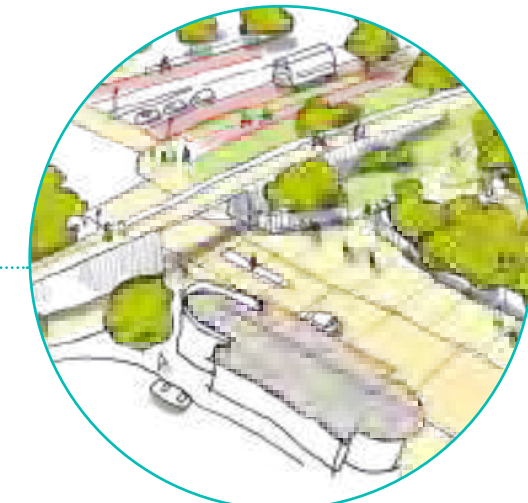
Playful and Practical

The ethos of the various architectural components is to make objects that are robust, good-looking, delightful and useful. Traditional elements such as signage or benches are also asked to 'do more', incorporating elements like bike charging points and drinking water fountains.

Our proposal is rooted in a strongly sustainable strategy. This includes:

- Using recycled and upcycled material to reduce embodied energy.
- Developing innovative materials such as 'Canterbury Stone'.
- Promoting biodiversity in planting and landscaping strategies and developing a green corridor around the edge of the city walls.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling and interaction with nature and natural landscapes.
- Using water features and planting to reduce noise, provide shade and cooling in summer.
- Explore natural drainage and use landscape to reduce surface water run-off etc.
- We will also focus on climate adaptation through our planting and enhance biodiversity across the spaces, prioritising water retention, cooling, shade and pollinators.

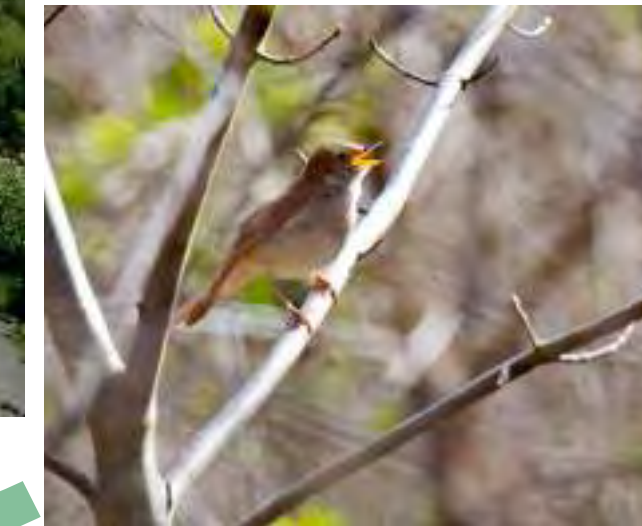
waymarking and resting- using street corner micro orchards of fastigate fruit trees, signage, seating and refreshment



with a down grade of the ring road, there is potential to restore the Riding Gate access to Dane Jon and provide a true logic and meaning to the avenue



a Kentish landscape weaving its way around and along the city edge; a journey from chalky cliffs to river bank via orchard trees and productive landscape. Walking, cycling and exploration



Overview

Overarching Principles

- ① Welcoming Garden Entrance Points: Create enhanced, more generous welcoming spaces
 - ② Meaningful Connections: New direct connections from City Wall to Dane John, new green link between gardens
 - ③ Historic Interpretation: including between what was the original castle (Dane John Mound) and Canterbury Castle, interpreting the Black Dyke (once a deep ditch around Dane John Mound).
 - ④ Peaceful pilgrimages: A series of meditative walks, winding, slower journeys as an alternative to direct routes
 - ⑤ Taste and touch: a journey of carefully curated planting to eat, explore, educate
 - ⑥ Cooling off: a series of moments to connect with water (paddle, observe, play)
 - ⑦ The landscapes of Kent: grassland, woodland, orchards, weald, wetland, naturalistic planting approach all reflected within each of the gardens, telling the wider story of the Kent landscape
- * Potential location of cafe drawing people into Dane John Garden



Our proposals thoughtfully weave ideas of pilgrimage and reflection to Canterbury's Gardens. The three gardens are currently disconnected and there is no obvious walking route that visitors or residents would readily take between the spaces. Canterbury would like to improve connections between them and create a sequence which forms part of a wider city exploration. We propose some key overarching themes to help to make the gardens more legible within the urban grain, more welcoming, more functional and improve accessibility, whilst also weaving a sensitive and thoughtful narrative through the spaces

Story Garden 1: Dane John Garden / St Mary de- Castro Garden





Dane John has important historical features and a fascinating past which are not readily visible, and there is a fantastic opportunity to tell more of the stories of this Garden. For example, improving the narrative and visitor understanding around the fact that the mound was originally a motte and bailey castle, and there is opportunity to use the planting design for example to also draw out features such as the Black Dyke that once encircled the Mound

Story Garden 1: Dane John

Overarching Principles

- ① Retain dominant axis and all structures within Gardens. The strong axis countered by informality. Potential to «bookend» the axis with improved urban realm and change of character, creating more of a varied journey.
- ② Retain Peace Pavement Garden, removing railings to the street and low vegetation to create more permeability and civic connection to street to draw people in
- ③ New entry point and cafe announcing Gardens, with railings and gates stepped back from the street to allow more generous approach to the park from City. Opportunity to water feature for play and interaction
- ④ New woodland stepped access directly from city wall to create more welcoming connection from station approach. Design of more accessible ramp (current one too steep) by slight extension into the woodland area
- ⑤ Enhance to create a woodland character, crown lift existing trees, plant additional ones, introduce low key steps through from city wall. Low planting at the edges to open up the space and transition to 6.
- ⑥ New urban realm creating more generous approach into the gardens and connecting to green link to Castle. Relocation of toilets to cafe will create more space here and visual connection
- ⑦ Access points from the City Wall to be reviewed and improved in terms of ramp accessibility
- ⑧ Potential to introduce terraced grassy steps as performance seating for the band stand and access point to the City Wall
- ⑨ A series of meditative walks, winding, slower journeys as an alternative to direct routes, through meadows and herbaceous grassland planting. The journey through the gardens will reference the landscape typologies of Kent. Poetry will be woven through the journey, forcing people to slow down and take in the words, birdsong and peaceful nature of the routes.
- ⑩ Historical interpretation of the Black Dyke (once a deep ditch around Dane John Mound).
- ⑪ We propose a light touch approach to St Mary-de-Castro Garden, extending the journey of carefully curated planting to eat, explore, educate. Potential to introduce additional axin from eastern corner
- * Potential location of cafe drawing people into Dane John Garden



Story Garden 1: Dane John



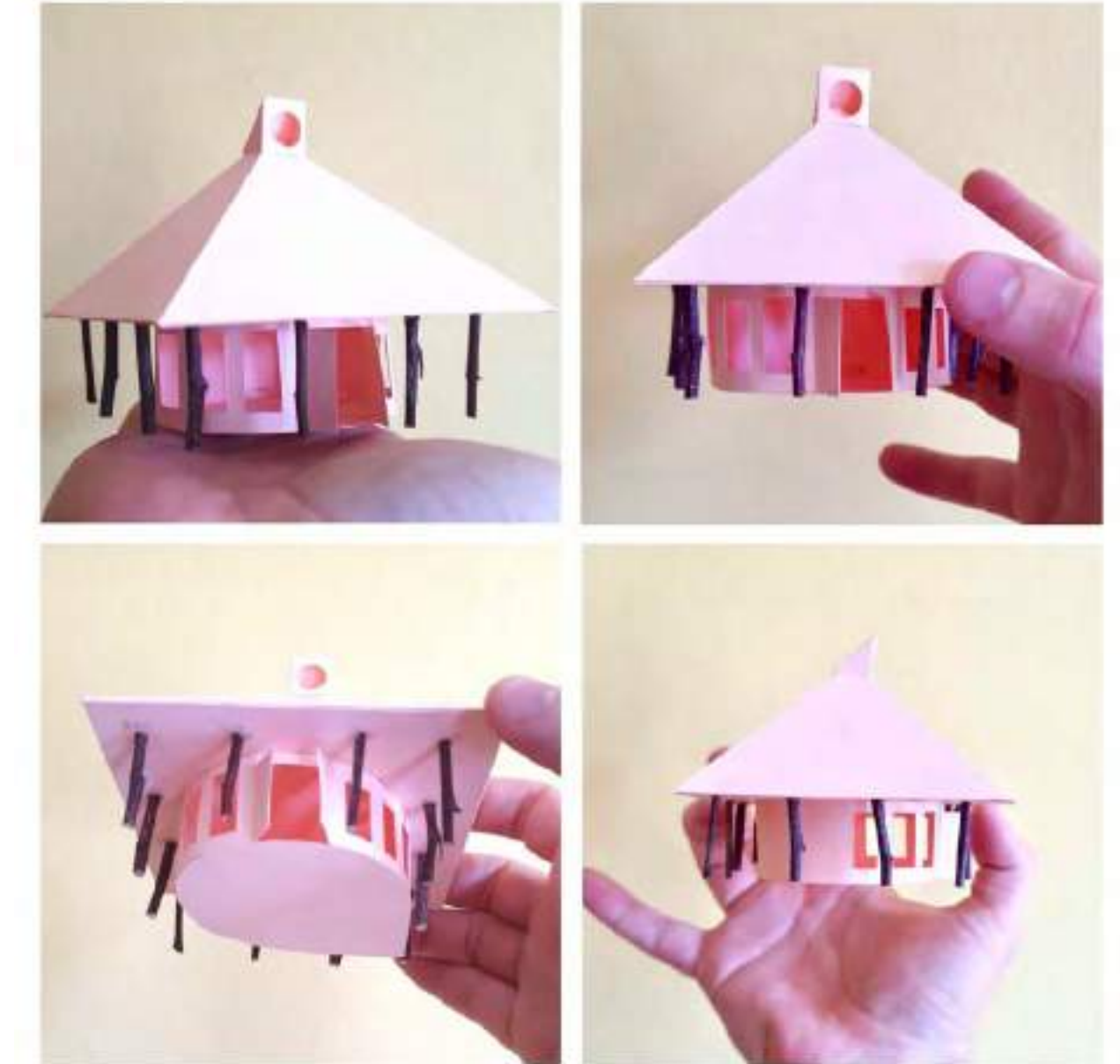
The sketch illustrates the alternative, slow meandering pilgrimage route, a counterpoint to the diagonal, wide and direct axis through the Garden. We appreciate the requirement for flexibility to be retained within the Garden for large scale events. Our proposal is to plant swathes of the garden to meadows that can be sacrificed during the festival season as needed according to the programme of events, but the rest of the year is a biodiverse and interesting habitat and amenity.

Story Garden 1: Dane John



Dane John Gardens Café/Pavilion

A new café with WCs is proposed for the eastern entrance area to Dane John Gardens. This structure relates to the picturesque and landscape-based planting by being both urban and rustic. A circular café space is sheltered under a broad pyramidal roof with a lantern that brings light into the heart of the space. The roof offers shelter and shade and is supported on a ring of tree-trunk columns. The café walls can open up, so that the space has the quality of a garden pavilion. The structure also contains new fully inclusive WC's that have the natural surveillance of being part of a busy café space.



A House for Essex ©Charles Holland



Summer pavilion 'Polly' ©Charles Holland



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Story Garden 2: Canterbury Castle





Canterbury Castle sits unloved and in decay. It's setting and character is harmed by the adjacent subway. It is closed off at its boundary and is impenetrable

Story Garden 2: Canterbury Castle

To Look Out and Look Back, and the Moment of Transition

A freely accessible lookout for all, delicately placed within Canterbury's historical castle.

It explores a semi fictional moment in time somewhere between shortly after 1066, and the foundation of a motte and bailey castle, or donjon, in the now Dane John Gardens, and prior to the completion of the Norman castle in circa 1086 — a moment of transition between outlook, location, geometry, and material use; a momentary scaffold of sorts before the erection of the castle keep's great stone walls.

Strategically, the Castle lookout will look-back to its former site and the now Dane John Mound, offering historical insight and greatly enriching Canterbury's tourism offer. It will allow intrepid visitors to scope the entirety of Canterbury's cultural assets in one move, significantly adding to the dwell time in the city. And it is seen to be something for all and not just the few — although of course, once reopened, the castle will once again be able to be programmed to better suit Canterbury's diversity, its residents, and its visitors.

As of now, the Castle sits unloved and in decay. Its setting and character is harmed by the adjacent subway and its recent and poorly applied tiling, in supermarket livery. It is closed off at its boundary and impenetrable to those with interest. Heras fencing and warning signs complete the general sense of despair and missed opportunity.

Collectively, the team propose representing the castle as in the landscape. Former accretions will be removed and entrances reopened. By moving the security line to the inner edge of the castle reveals, we allow the sense that this historical relic could be stumbled upon, and up close, amongst the wider fabric of the city. By extending this landscape carpet through the Castle Row car Park to Dane John, we have an opportunity to build excitement, drama, and setting.

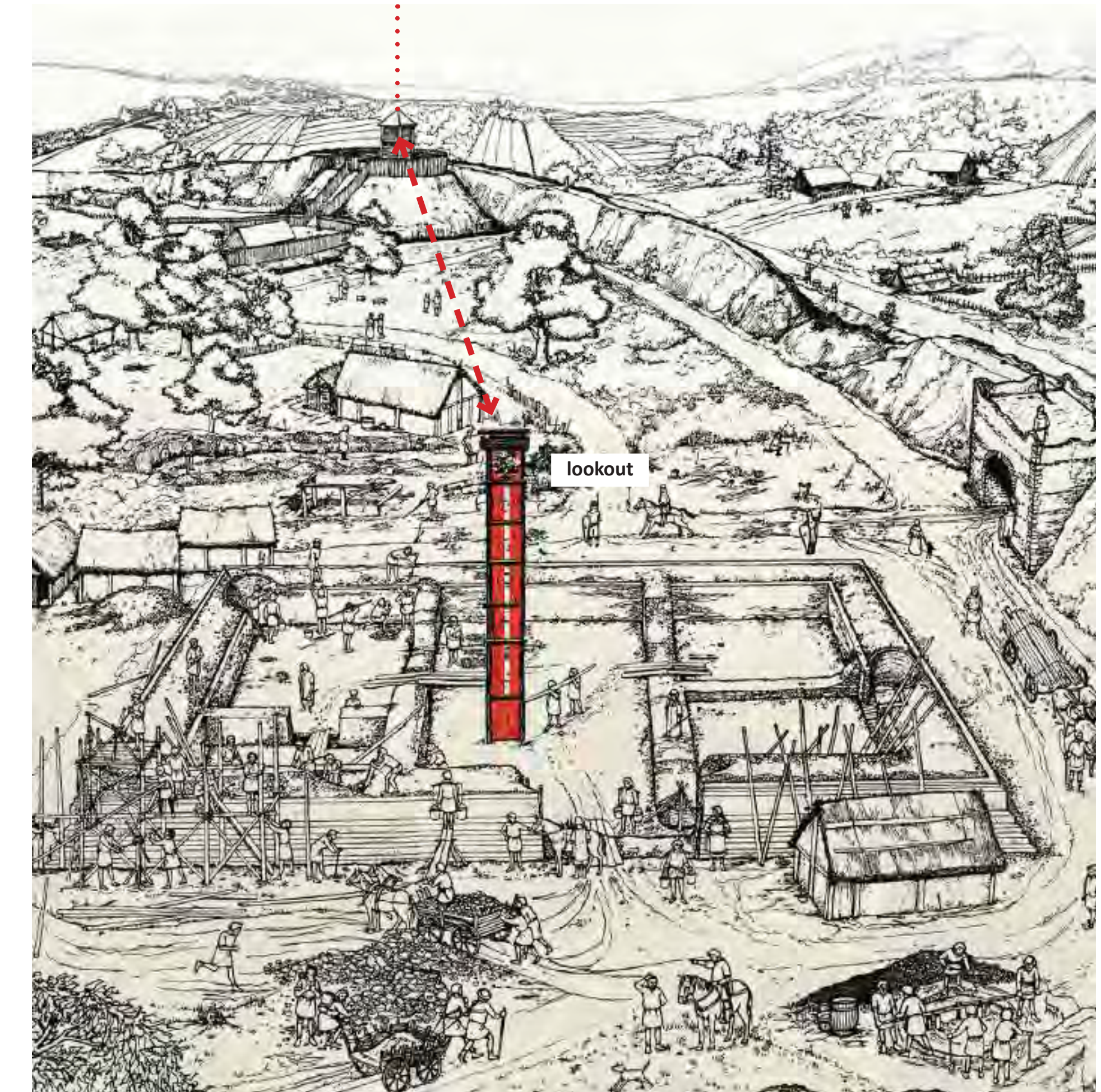
Our proposals will be light touch. The lookout would be placed closest to the castle's western entrance and benefit from the localised loss of adjacent fabric, enabling further reciprocity from inside and outside the castle. We imagine that robust sliding doors, as separate to the original fabric, could provide security and allow other programmes to occur whilst still allowing its gardens to be freely roamed and enjoyed. We imagine what it might be like on hot days to see water and light, over hewn stone, upwardly reflected against the rough heft of the castle.

Formal and material language are shaped by several factors; formally, we explore the bailey's circular form, as if transplanted, and sitting within the castle's orthogonal structure — the circle in the square, and perceived as a scaffold-like forerunner to the stone keep.

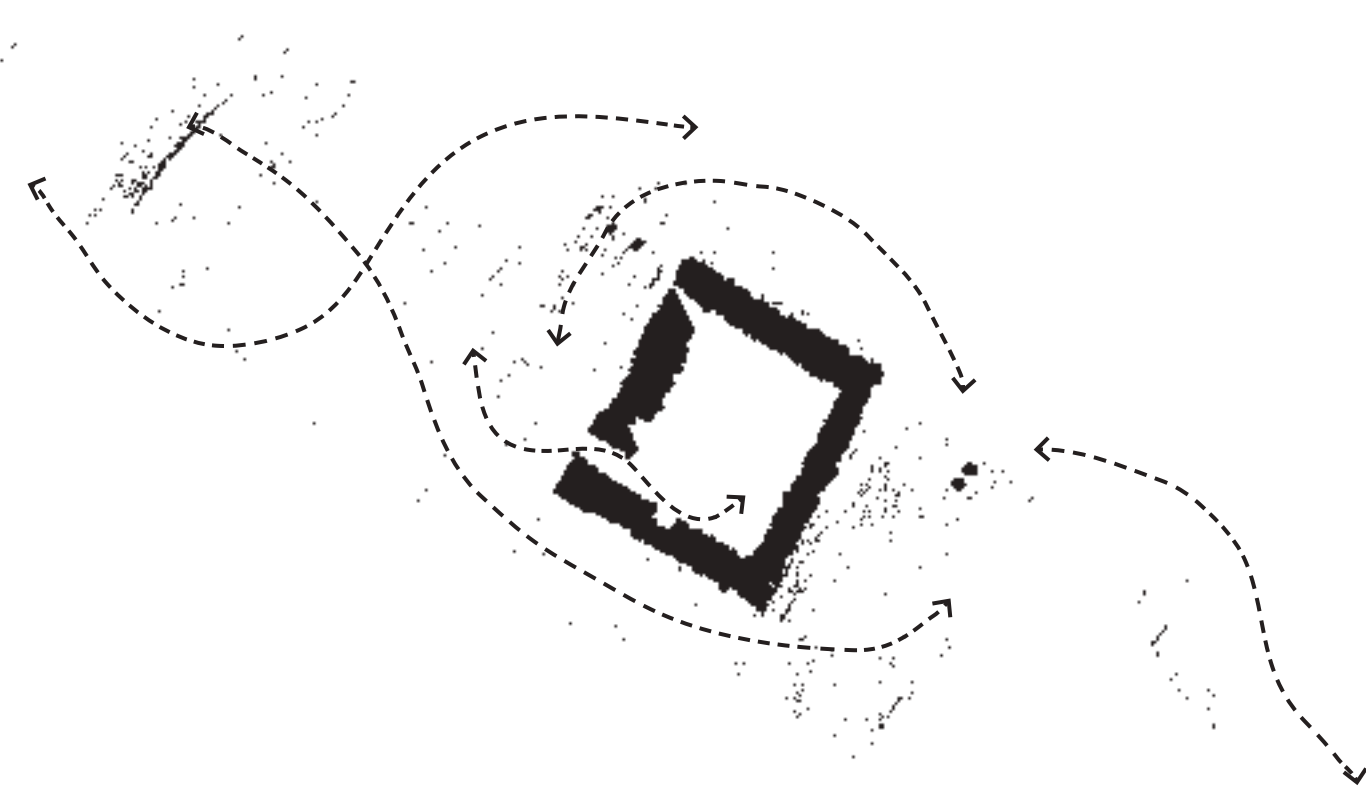
Material selection and deployment again continues this notion of transition; if original motte, bailey, and keep are earth and timber, and the subsequent Norman keep is stone, what might an interim position be? Here, a primary timber structure, as delicate scaffold, takes on earthen elements as evolutionary bridge to stone — locally pigmented rammed earth mixed with hemp creating a structure that straddles evolutionary building methods.

This, is the healthiest, most sustainable way of building there is.

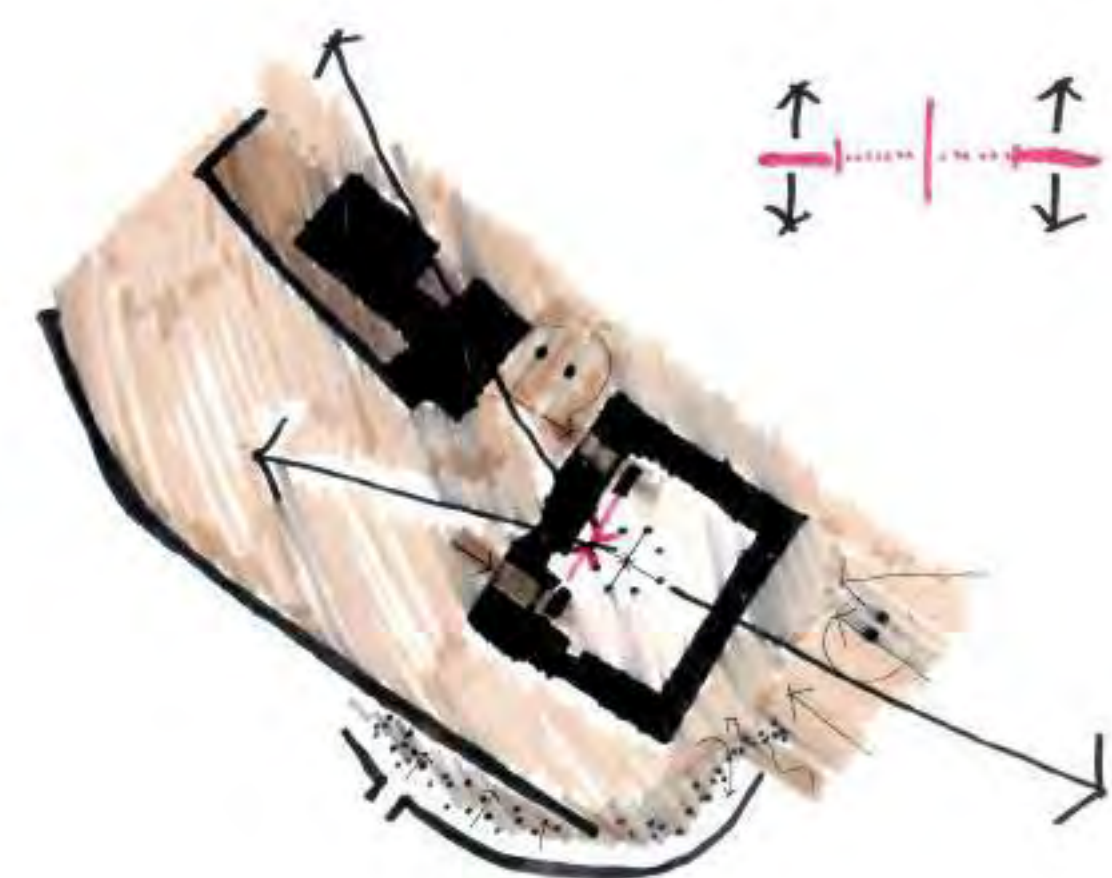
TO LOOK OUT AND LOOK BACK, AND THE MOMENT OF TRANSITION



CASTLE OPEN, AND IN THE GARDEN

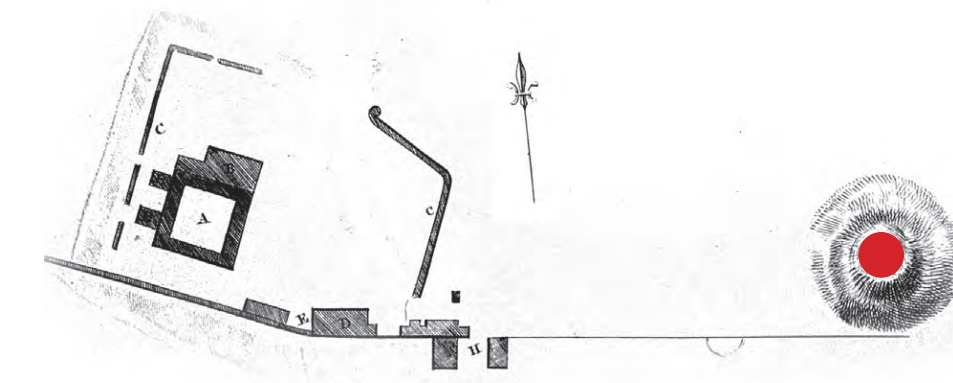


INTENSIFY ARTEFACT AND RETRACT LINES OF SECURITY



SECURITY FROM WITHIN ALLOWING CASTLE TO BETTER READ 'AS FOUND' AND WITHOUT OVERT CONTEMPORARY PARAPHERNALIA TO ANNOUNCE OTHERWISE.
 - DOOR OR DOORS OF SUBSTANCE AS PART OF CORPUS OF ARCHITECTURAL WORKS CAN OPEN AND RETRACT FOR OTHER USE OR CLOSURE.

TO PICK UP STICKS: FROM TIMBER KEEP ON MOUND TO TIMBER KEEP AWAITING STONE ENCLOSURE



Circle denoting location of original timber keep within a donjon (or motte and bailey), and now the Dane John Gardens.

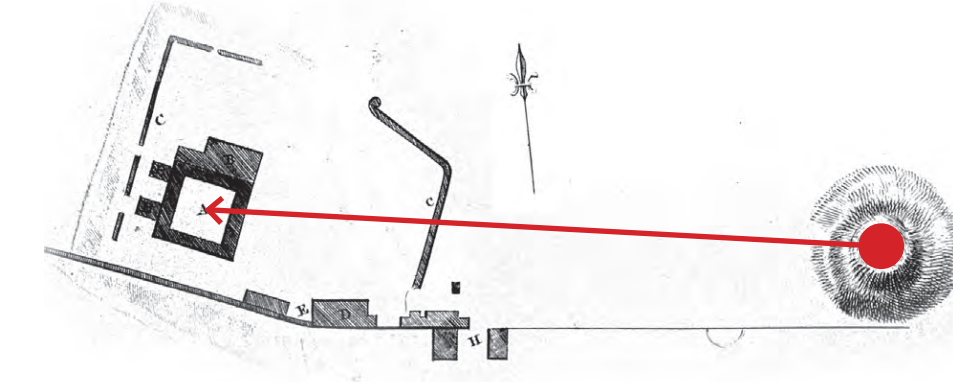
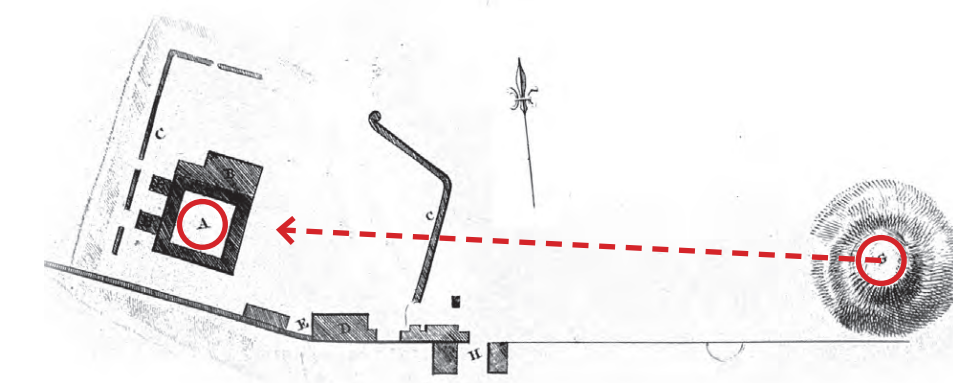
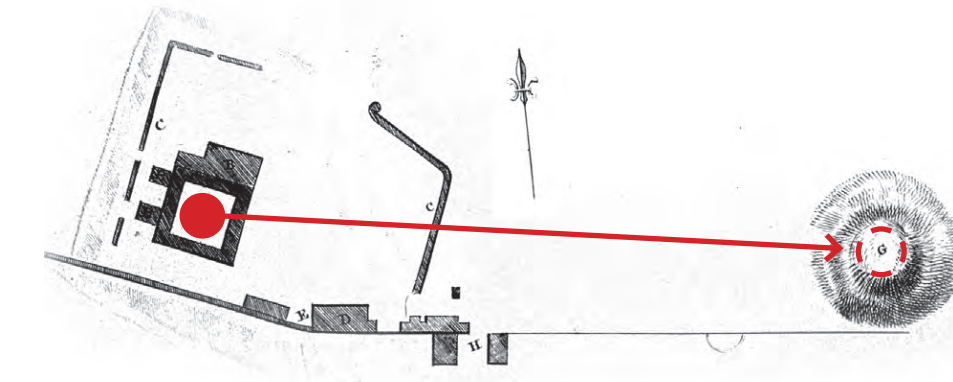


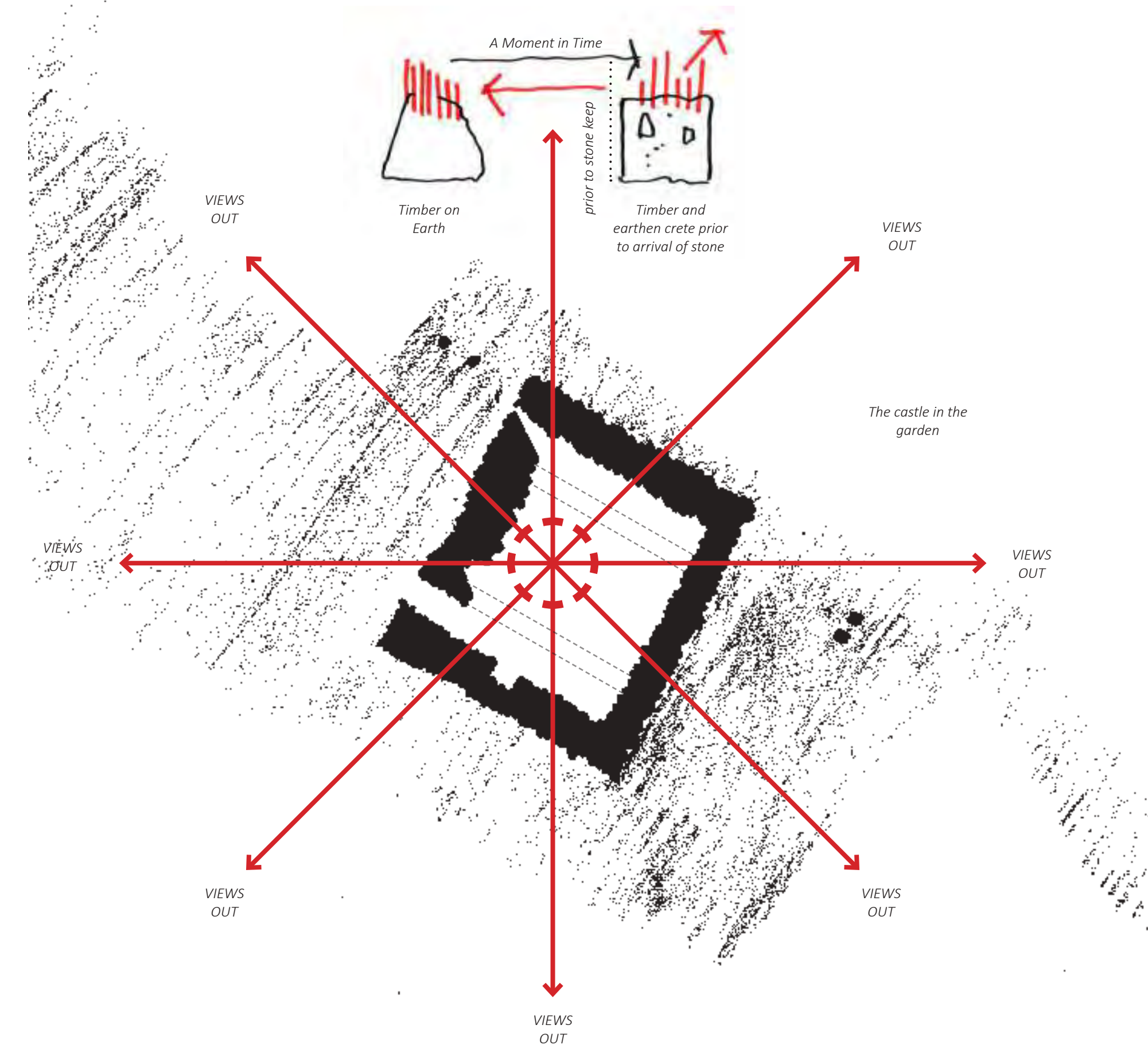
Diagram to demonstrate new location of fortification 'A' and line of site between.



A notional moment inbetween moving from the former donjon keep to emergent stone keep.



To look out and look back. The former circular typology set within the square.



Story Garden 2: Canterbury Castle

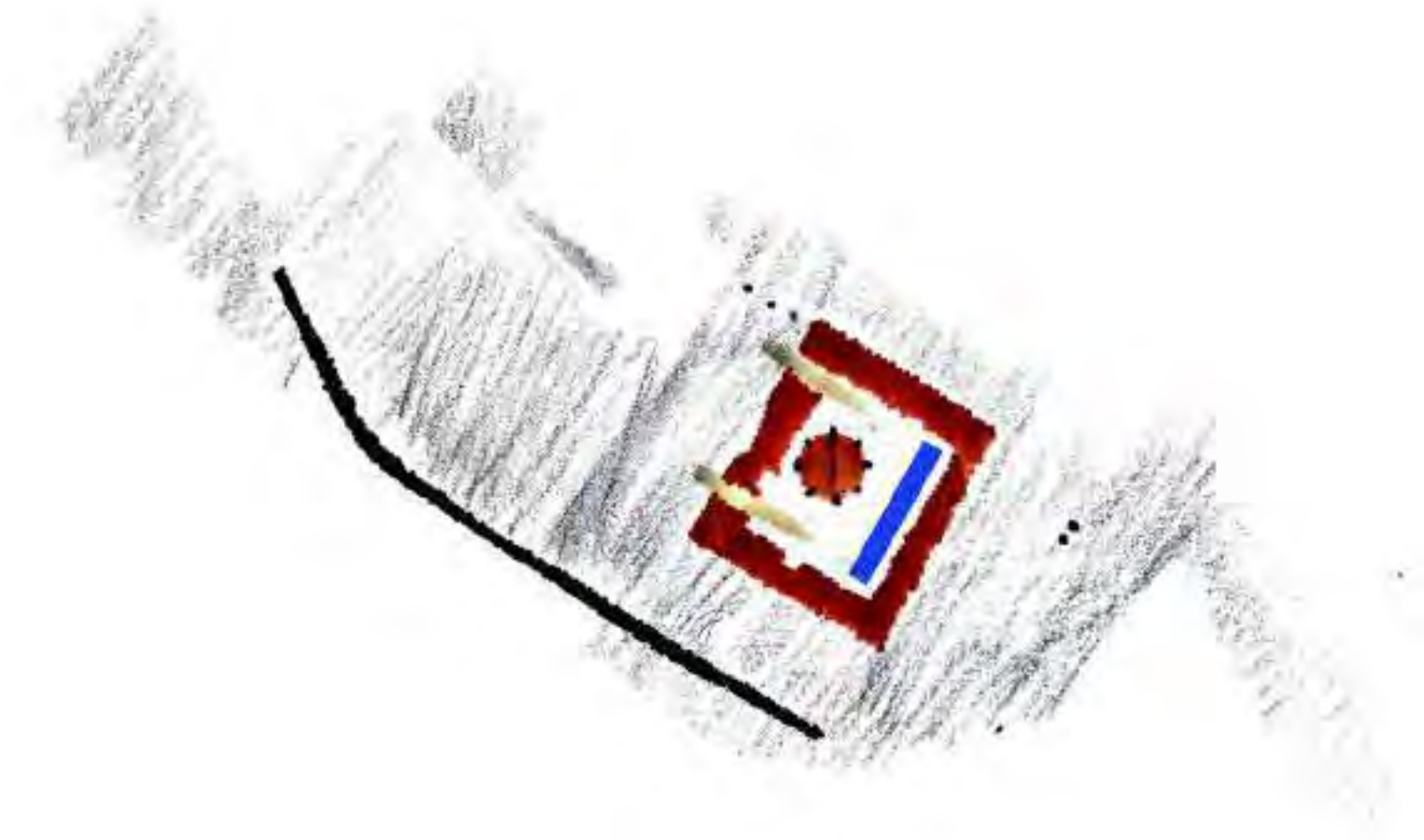
Overarching Principles

- ① More generous urban realm approaches, welcoming people into the Castle grounds.
- ② Wide steps onto the footpath to the north will form a further connection to pedestrian trails, linking beyond to Westgate Gardens and to Greyfriars Garden
- ③ Resting points including under the beautiful trees within the castle grounds.
- ④ One of Canterbury's famous Plane trees in, however it is largely hidden from view at the moment by railings. Opportunity to remove some of these visual barriers and allow the tree space to breathe.
- ⑤ A castle set within beautiful gardens, important to keep the mystery and magical qualities and not over-design the garden
- ⑥ A series of meditative walks, winding, slower journeys as an alternative to direct routes, through meadows and herbaceous grassland planting. The journey through the gardens will reference the landscape typologies of Kent. Poetry will be woven through the journey, forcing people to slow down and take in the words, birdsong and peaceful nature of the routes.
- ⑦ A lookout within the Castle, a light touch approach. We would seek the historic buildings research to inform and support proposals for new interventions, repairs and or change and to seek a viable and sustainable future for the heritage assets and their settings.
- ⑧ A discreet tableau creating a cooling mist, somewhere to take off your shoes and explore. The traffic noise of the ring road is completely deadened by the walls, creating a space that could be used equally for acoustic performances or quiet contemplation
- ⑧ Any proposals within or adjoining the castle would be light touch, and we would design interventions to be free-standing in order not to attach to the fabric of the Castle with fixings.

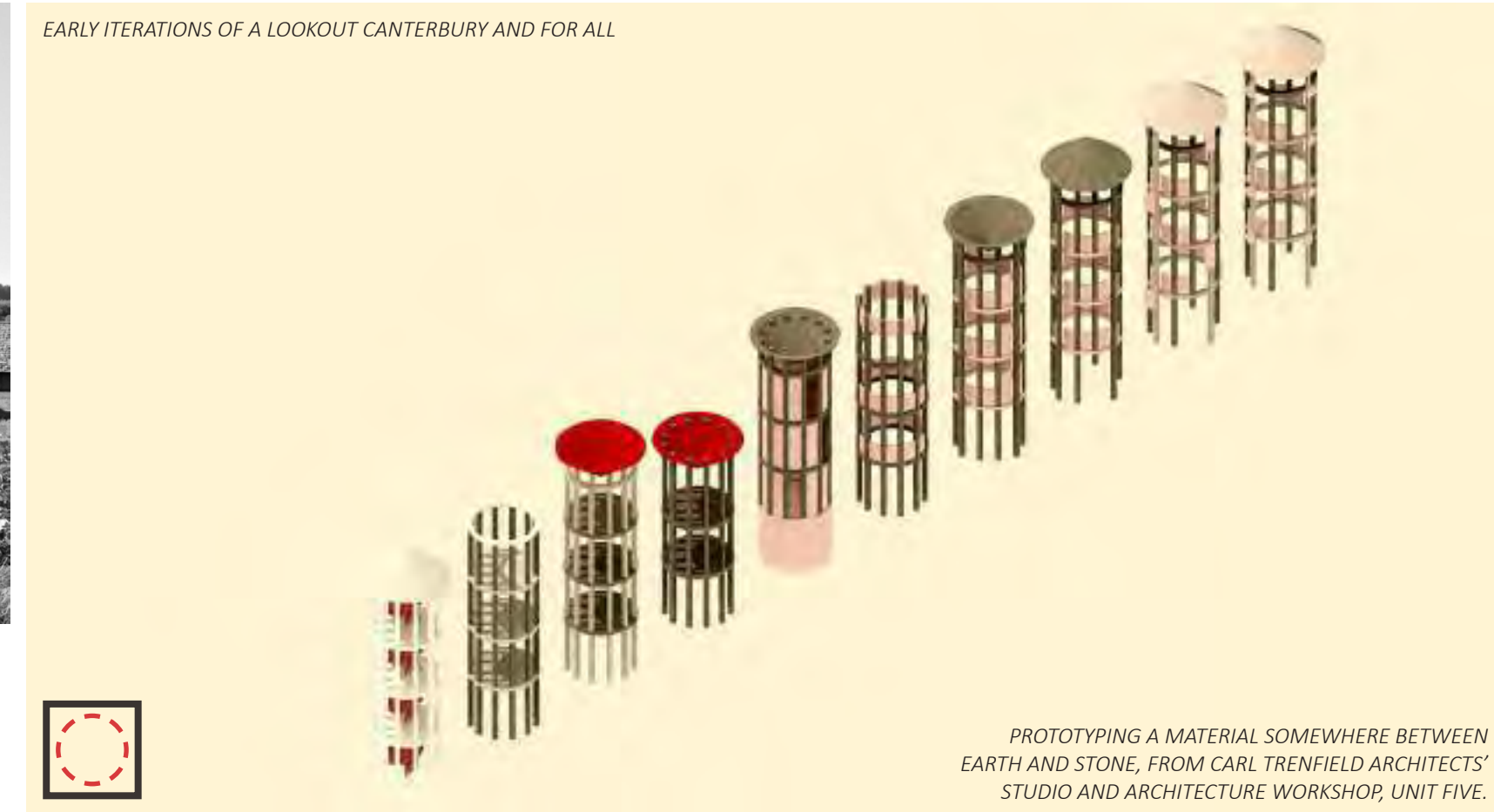


The sketch illustrates how the gardens might feel with a series of meadows, herb gardens and seating spaces, and spaces to rest under trees, forming a beautiful, contemplative and naturalistic setting for the Castle

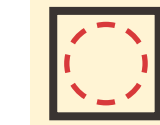
DELICATE CYLINDRICAL LOOKOUT, A CITY REWARD FOR ALL
 TIMBER AGAINST STONE
 WATER SPARKLES AGAINST RUBBLE
 A CASTLE GIVEN HOPE AND LIFTED FROM DESPAIR



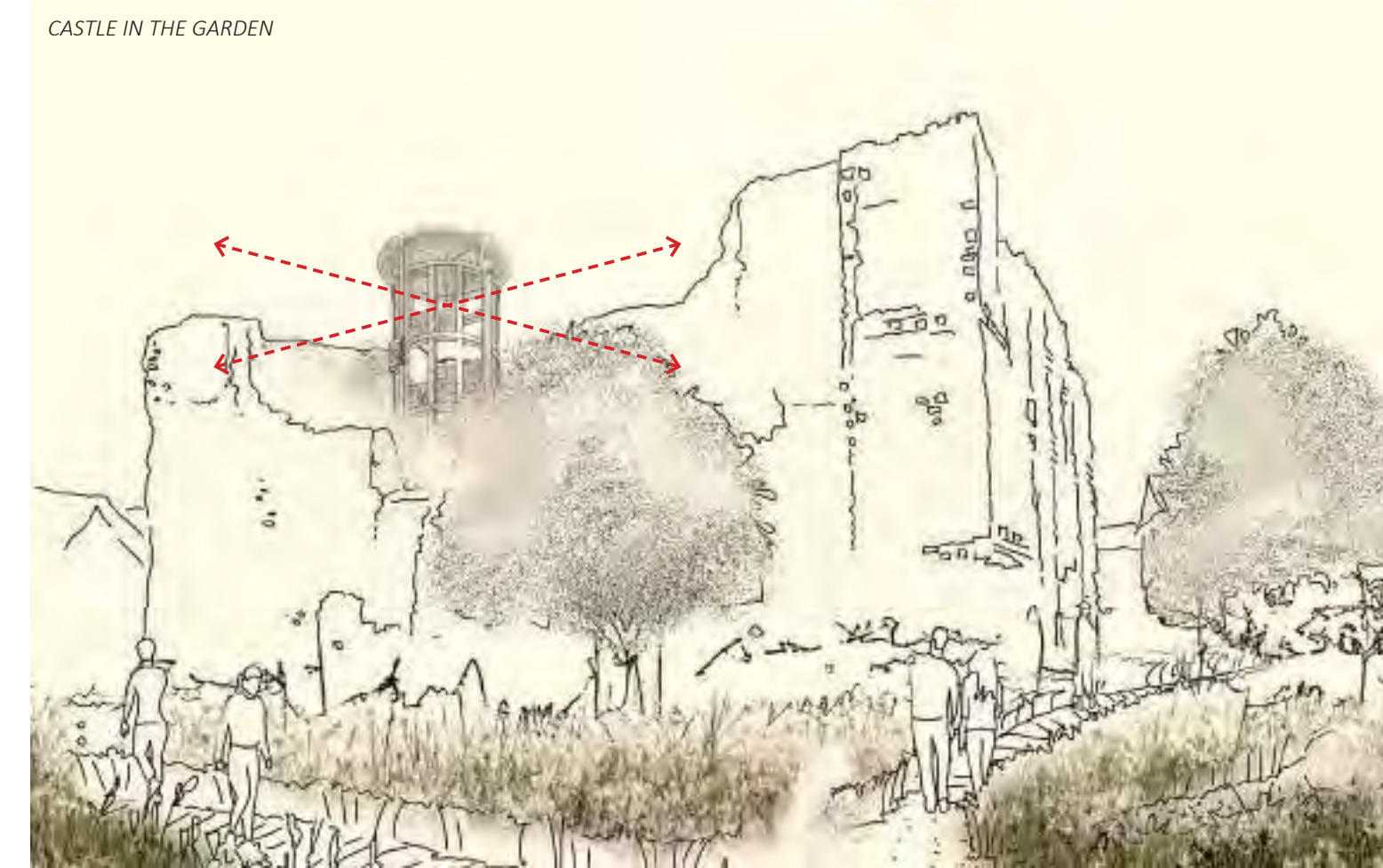
EXAMPLE OF FORMAL REFERENCE



EARLY ITERATIONS OF A LOOKOUT CANTERBURY AND FOR ALL



PROTOTYPING A MATERIAL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN
 EARTH AND STONE, FROM CARL TRENFIELD ARCHITECTS'
 STUDIO AND ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOP, UNIT FIVE.



CASTLE IN THE GARDEN



A CASTLE COLLAGE:
 LOOKOUT OF TIMBER AND CRETE MEETS STONE ENCLOSURE OF NORMAN KEEP
 REFRESH ON DEWY ENGLISH STONE AT ITS BASE

Connecting the Spaces

Various elements populate this landscape – signs, benches, drinking fountains, electric bike charging points, railings and gates – all conceived as a family of objects.

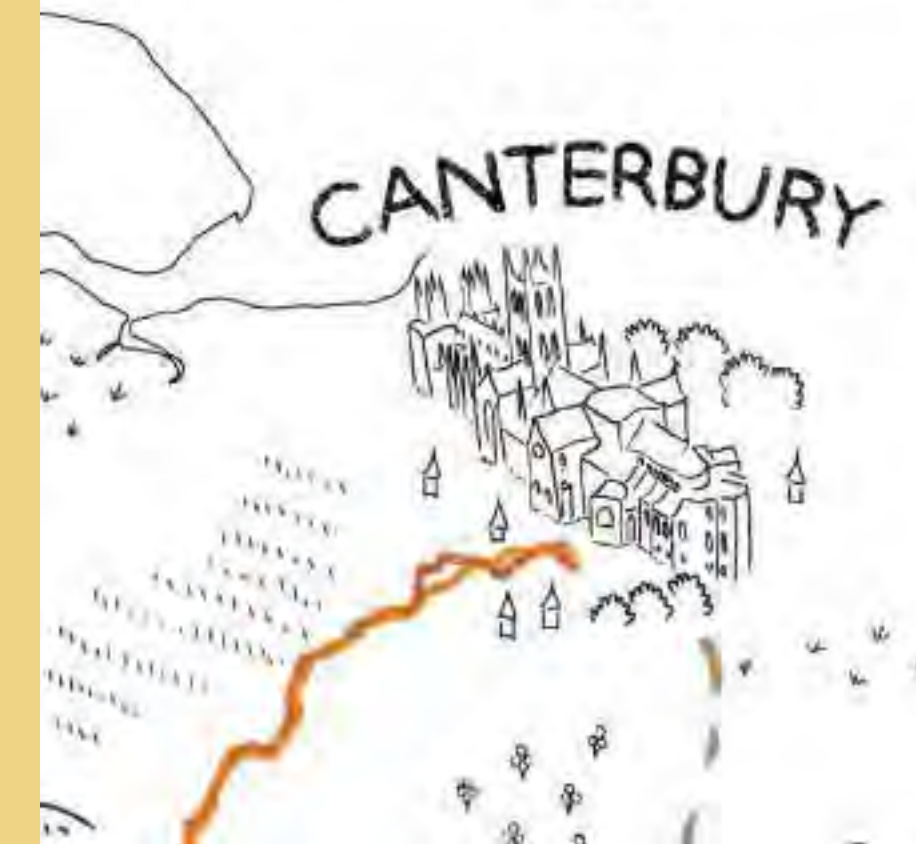
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Crataegus monogyna



Filipendula ulmaria



The following section illustrates how we might weave beautiful storytelling details through the gardens, creating a clearly legible sequence of spaces. We propose these to be both playful and practical and create a language for Canterbury that could be extended across the city too.

We propose to look at the smaller details, the things that imperceptibly and subconsciously inform opinions of a place without realising. The layering of poor design decisions (or no design decisions as the case may be), can be reversed within this approach. We take examples in this section such as railings, benches, totems, mosaics, forming a coherent and fun family of objects, unique to Canterbury.

We also turn our attention to planting design, linking to pilgrimage and community connections.

Our team includes Sarah Salway, a poet and former Canterbury Laureate who will work with the team and consultees to weave poetry and stories through the gardens

Leaf Railings

These are intended to replace the traditional railings found across these spaces. Our proposal will be informed by our team's conservation survey of existing railing and draw on natural landscape features, mimicking traditional urns and fleur de lie with leaf shapes referencing the planting of the rest of the scheme. The railings thus became part of the story and a way of navigating the landscape in a way that is both playful and practical.



Typical wrought iron decorative finials & examples of City Wall railings.

Railings with Tree Leaf Finials, informed by landscape around Canterbury and Kent

Benches

The benches also form a family of similarly constructed objects evoking architectural fragments. Formed from the same 'Canterbury Stone' as the totems, the benches take the form of columns laid on their side in various configurations offering intimate spaces to sit alone or large benches for groups.

Monumenta Romana, 2022
public art & bench



Benches informed by the history and architectural quality of Canterbury; giving you places to pause and watch the city and its gardens.



Totems



Totems made from 'Canterbury Stone' (recycled construction waste from Canterbury)

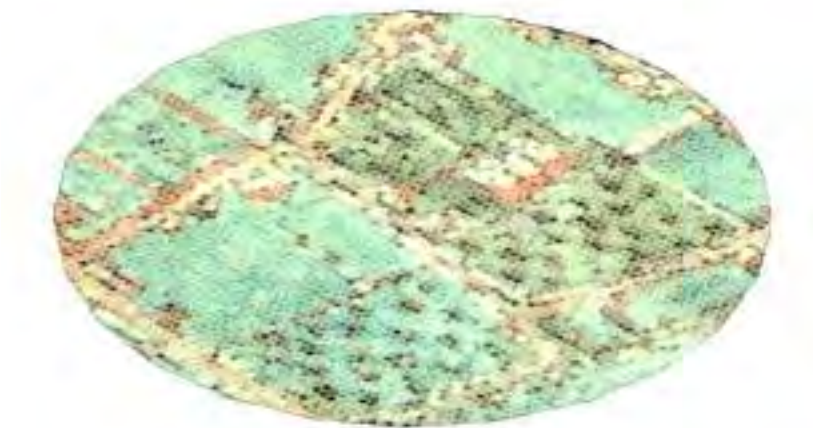
Mosaics



Map of Canterbury, William Smith, 1588



Roman Mosaics in Canterbury, Canterbury Roman Museum



Mosaic spot markers, depicting maps and the history of Canterbury, informed by Roman mosaics found beneath Canterbury today.

Planting Strategy: Kent Landscape Archetypes

The pilgrimage routes to and from Canterbury pass through the unique landscapes that make up the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Three key Kent landscape archetypes will form the inspiration for the planting proposals, connecting the city centre with the surrounding landscape.



Woodland

Woodland covers about 20% of the Kent Downs AONB, and forms an important habitat for wildlife such as mammals (bats and dormice), birds (nightingales and woodpeckers) and butterflies. The design proposals will include pockets of woodland planting where appropriate, providing shade, forage, opportunities for play and wildlife habitat.



Woodland Edge Planting Palette

Plants will be selected to be in scale with the surroundings, and would include native woodland edge and hedgerow species such as *Acer campestre*, *Betula pendula*, *Carpinus betulus*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, along with a native grass and wild flower mix for woodland.



Orchard

Orchards have formed a distinctive feature of the Kent countryside since the 16th century. Traditional orchards were planted throughout the Kent Downs because of the warm climate and the well-drained soils. Orchard planting will provide habitat for wildlife, shade, and opportunity for community gardening initiatives and events.



Orchard Planting Palette

Trees will include heritage varieties which are fast disappearing from commercial orchards, selected following guidance from experts such as the Kent Orchard Trust. A grass and wild flower mix and a landscape management plan would help provide the mosaic of habitats associated with traditional orchards.



Chalk Grassland

Chalk grassland is found mainly on the North Downs, with occasional patches on the East Kent coast. It is one of the richest habitats of Western Europe, containing a great diversity of plants and animals. It is now very rare and fragmented, and is of international conservation importance.



Meadow Planting Palette

The proposals will seek to evoke chalk grassland using a diverse palette of plants which are suitable for the specific site conditions, resulting in a high impact, low maintenance scheme. Further information on plant selection criteria can be found on the following page.

Planting Strategy: Plant Selection and Planting Design

A series of plant mixes will be designed, inspired by the surrounding landscape character of the Kent Downs AONB and the plants found along the pilgrimage routes to and from Canterbury.

Rather than focussing on individual plants, selection criteria for sustainable planting aims to create diverse communities, tailored to the specific site conditions and to deliver long seasonal interest and maximum benefit to wildlife. Planting will be high impact and low input, in an informal, naturalistic style.

Mixtures of dry-tolerant evergreen sub-shrubs, perennials, biennials, grasses and bulbs will reduce the need for water use and deliver biodiversity benefits in the form of flowers, pollen, nectar, stems, leaves, seed heads and winter structure.

Resilience

- Precise suitability to site conditions - micro climate and soil
- Climate adaptation
- Ecological/competitive compatibility with neighbours
- Reduction in water-use
- Resistance to pollution
- Resilience against extreme weather conditions
- Tree planting for shade and carbon sequestration

Biodiversity

- Mixtures with high ecological benefit
- Long season/multiple season interest
- Native to cater for specific wildlife species requirements
- Non-native for diversity, and to cater for migrating wildlife species

Visitor and Stakeholder Engagement

- Productivity
- Longevity
- Long season/multiple season visual interest
- Colour
- Form
- Texture
- Scent
- Successional planting to encourage repeat visits

Management

- Precise suitability to site conditions
- General maintenance requirements
- Reproduction method
- Longevity
- Long season/multiple season interest
- Extensive management techniques
- Surface mulches, soil management
- Reduction in water-use
- Planting, direct seeding

Safety

- Routes and gardens to feel safe for users.
- Planting to allow for natural surveillance and avoiding creation of potential hiding places.
- Straightforward management requirements resulting in well maintained planting.
- Planting in car parks and adjacent to highways will not interfere with vehicles or sight lines.

Vibrant, tactile, colourful, successionalal, layered planting will encourage high stakeholder and visitor engagement.

Public planting that is beautiful, calming, refreshing and inspiring will not only be environmentally sustainable but encourage a sense of local pride and stewardship.

