MEI LOCI

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Application for the landscape works at St Andrew's Gardens, Crooked Lane, Gravesend.

For Gravesham Borough Council

REF:	M2564_MLOC_REP_L_9001
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For:	Gravesham Borough Council
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Date:	November 2025
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Revision:	P02 _ 02.02.2026.

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Mei Loci is a registered practice with the Landscape Institute

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1.0 Introduction

The Commission

1.1 Mei Loci and Verde have been commissioned to carry out a design for 'Phase 2' of the St Andrews Gardens revitalization on land off Crooked Lane, Gravesend, following on from the successful completion of landscape works referred to as Phase 1 to the east of the application site.

1.2 The principles of Phase 2 are primarily to enhance accessibility and usability of the site whilst making a secure and safe space that addresses the current issues of anti-social behavior whilst also providing a safe pedestrian access, enhancing biodiversity, protecting the historic character of the site and providing opportunities for sculptural and interpretative elements through the site. These interpretative elements are being defined by ongoing community consultation and workshops.

1.3 The brief being to create a safe and attractive space that provides flexibility for events, markets, performance and general use, uniting the gardens with the wider townscape. Part of this being to address accessibility, making existing access points safer and more inclusive to a wide range of users.

1.4 The application site of St Andrews Gardens lies amongst an historically valuable setting and is of historic interest itself which is to be protected and enhanced through interpretation.

2.0 Site Context

Landscape Overview

2.1 The application site is located on the northern edge of Gravesend to the east of the Three Daws Public House, Town Pier, Gravesend. The site is located within the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area, an area of Archaeological Potential, located within Flood Zone 3 and adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building (Three Daws) and the Listed St Andrew's Arts Centre. St Andrew's Gardens lie on the River Thames and are home to the Victorian Church premises of St Andrew's Arts Centre and the adjoining Mission House. The area is also the site of two significant statues: the only seated cast statue of the late Queen Elizabeth II and a statue of Squadron Leader Puji, one of the first Indian Sikh pilots to volunteer with the Royal Air Force during the Second World War.

Figure 01. Site Location (Full drawing shown in appendix 5.1 Ref ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1003)

2.2 The site sits within the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area, directly adjacent to the Grade II Listed Three Daws Public House, and within an archaeology notification area. The east wall of the Three Daws building and retaining wall to the pub garden bounds the site.

2.3 The site itself comprises a mix of lawn areas, limited amenity/shrub planting and a mix of hard landscape materials and furniture. There is a set of existing steps which connect the land adjacent to the Three Daws pub to the gardens. Although forming part of the 'Thames Walk', a National Trail, these steps are extremely steep and dangerous to access. They also create a

difficult and partially hidden space adjacent to the river which attracts antisocial behavior. A key goal of this re-design is to make this step link more accessible and to address the issue of antisocial behavior. (Refer to appendix 5.1 ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1000)

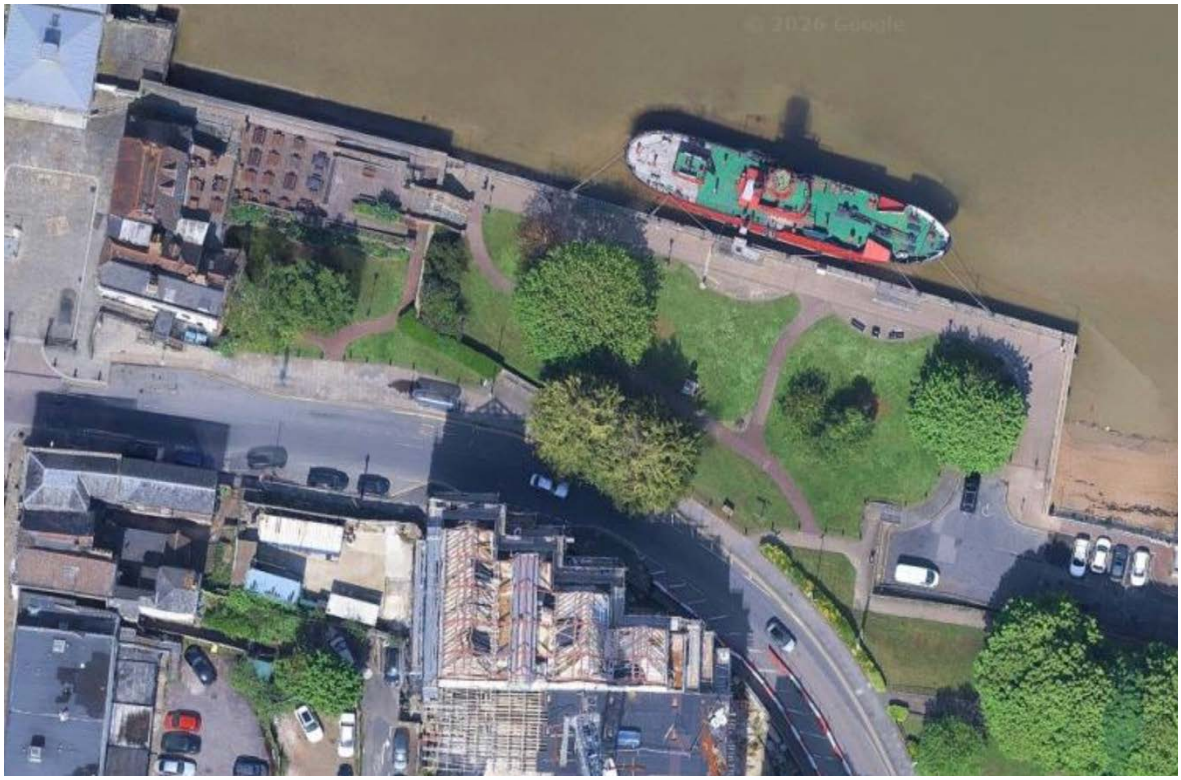


Figure 02. Aerial photograph of the application site, St Andrews Gardens.

Figure 03. Existing Condition View 01. Looking west.

Figure 04. Existing Condition View 02. Looking north east

Figure 05. Existing Condition View 03. Looking north west.

Figure 06. Existing Condition View 04. West elevated view

3.0 Landscape Proposals

Landscape Overview

3.1 The landscape proposal is to create an engaging, flexible, safe, accessible and usable space that mitigates antisocial behaviour, provides an accessible circulation route, and provides an improvement to the material context of the site. In conjunction with St Andrew's Arts Centre, there is potential for markets to be held within the adjacent car parking area, helping to create a more active and thriving place.

3.2 The overall character of the gardens is being retained, though re-shaped to provide opportunity for larger and more diverse planting areas alongside informal and formal seating areas.

3.3. The access routes are being realigned and regraded to make the internal areas of the site simpler to access for those with limited ability and to create a public realm that is more flexible for users and events. The design also seeks to open the space and create greater flexibility, allowing for markets, pop-up events and temporary uses.

3.4 The river frontage is being retained in its existing condition with the new surfacing extending up to the existing wall and access ramps.

3.5 Importantly, the access into the garden is being enhanced to create a better visual and physical integration between the wider town, the National Trail and the green spaces immediately next to the focal space.

3.6 The strong formation lines of the planting terraces along the flood wall are inspired by and reminiscent of Tilbury Fort, located nearby. This influence reflects the area's defensive and industrial heritage while responding to the existing flood infrastructure in a contemporary way.

3.7 There is an existing flood wall on site; design proposals ensure that this remains intact and its height unchanged. Refer to Flood Risk Assessment for details.

Landscape Colour Plan

3.7 The full colour plan shown in Figure 07. illustrates the site extents considered within the design proposal as well as the locations of proposed areas of hard and soft landscape. Figures 08 & 09 show 3d visuals of the proposals.

Figure 07. An indicative colour plan of the phase 2 design proposal

Figure 08. Visual 01 – View along river frontage.

Figure 09. Visual 02 – View down into St Andrew's Gardens.

Hard Landscape Materials and Rationale

3.8 The proposed hard landscape materials, and the reasons for their selection, are as follows:

- **Reclaimed Yorkstone Pavers** (Figure 09)
  Used in Phase I, a continuation of materials to ensure the two separately designed areas respond to each other through materials. Yorkstone is historically prevalent in London and the surrounding area. Yorkstone was widely used to pave busy market towns and for canal infrastructure, as well as in the construction of industrial factories and warehouses.
- **Resin-bound Surfacing** (Figure 10)
  A permeable surface suitable for a flood defence context, while also offering opportunities for embedded interpretation within the paving.
- **Corten Steel Edging to Planting Terraces** (Figure 11)
  Selected to reinforce the site's industrial and heritage character, and to complement the historic red brick prevalent within the gardens and surrounding area. Corten steel also provides opportunities for interpretation through etching, cut-outs or inscriptions.
- **Concrete Seating** (Figure 12)
  To match Phase I, the material allows for interpretation to be embedded through sandblasting or etched detailing.

Figure 10. Yorkstone Pavers used in Phase 1.

Figure 11. Resin Bound Surfacing

Figure 12. Corten Steel Edging to Planted Areas

Figure 13. Concrete Seating used in Phase 1

Interpretation and Community Engagement

3.9 We are exploring opportunities to integrate interpretation and artwork throughout the site, including inscriptions and sandblasted etching on seating, Corten steel tiers and elements within the resin-bound paving. There is also consideration of incorporating names sandblasted into seating as part of a WWII memorial. The resin-bound surface additionally offers potential for added detail around the existing statue.

3.10 Through consultation, the aim is to engage local residents, faith centres, artists, schools and colleges, and other local groups to help develop ideas around key themes that could be incorporated or inscribed within the gardens.

3.11 Interpretation is still at an early stage; the most value comes from an ongoing relationship with the consultees and users to define the detail and content of the interpretative features.

Levels and Layout

3.12 Levels around the amphitheatre seating have been raised to accommodate tiered seating and some existing grassed areas have been replaced by additional hardstanding in front of the seating. This will create a flexible space for pop-ups, performances and events. Terrace planting in front of the flood wall reinforces the contemporary design approach, while providing tiered, vegetated layers designed to capture rainwater and slow surface water run-off.

3.13 A cut-and-fill approach will be used across the site to manage level changes. While local levels may be adjusted to accommodate the design and improve usability, this approach ensures that material is balanced on site and that the gardens remain a usable, flexible and welcoming space within the flood defence context.

Access

3.14 There are a number entry points into the gardens. Currently, to the west is the steep step link from the terrace adjacent to the Three Daws pub, to the east is the access to the waterfront from the existing parking area and to the eastern side of the southern boundary is an access off Crooked Lane. None of the existing paths and step entry points are easily accessible, both steps and paths are very steep and the route from the parking area lacks flush access for wheelchair/pram or those with limited mobility.

3.15 The proposals have been developed to maintain the key access points whilst maintaining as inclusive an access as possible:

3.16 The western step access from the terrace adjacent to the Three Daws pub forms part of the Thames Path and England Coast Path (Ref Figure 13). As part of the proposals, it is the intent to adjust these to create a more easily accessible set of steps. In order to do this, it has been necessary to adjust the location of the step access to a position directly south of the existing location. This avoids the creation of a hidden, un-useable space between the side of the steps and the riverside. This is currently a problem for health and safety reasons, so the adjustment of the steps has allowed us reduce opportunity for antisocial behavior with only minor adjustment to the route of the National Trail.

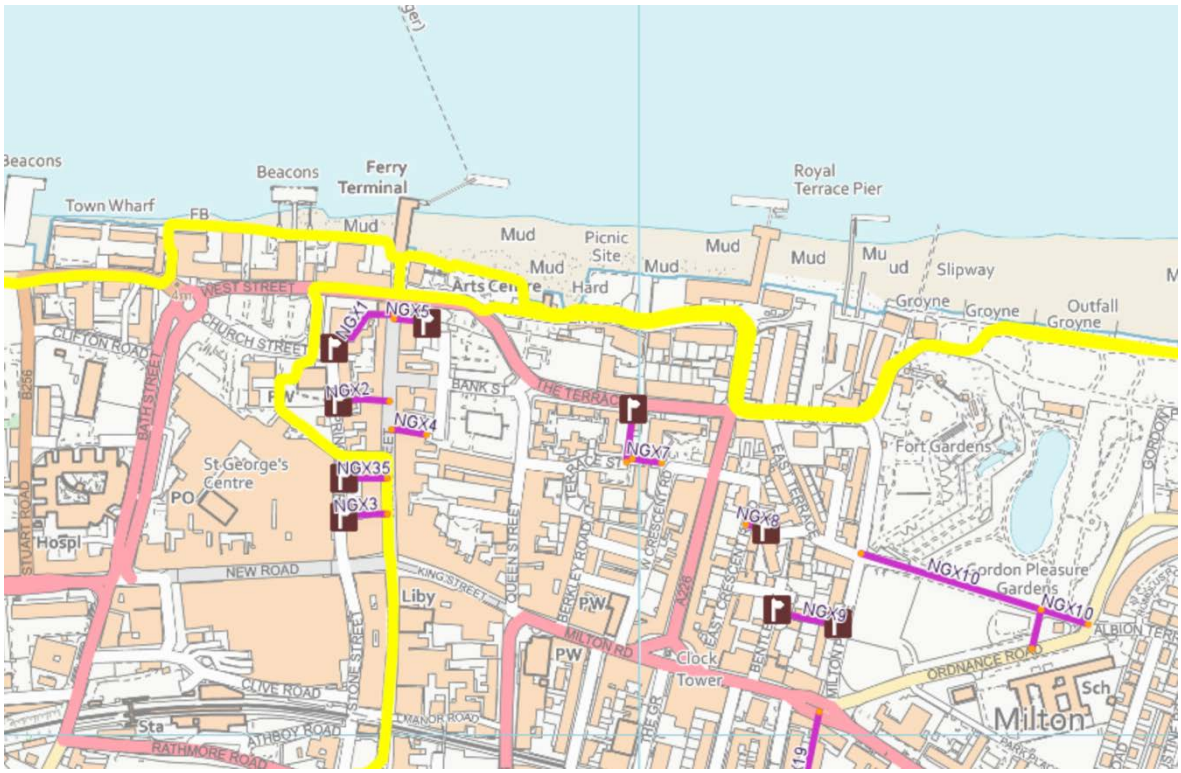


Figure 14. Route of the National Trail.

3.17 The design proposals ensure the existing access off Crooked Lane is retained with the introduction of steps and addition of a path link to provide a ramped accessible route from both the lower car park and also the existing path. This then leads into an adjusted access path through the Gardens at a 1 in 21 gradient or less, providing an accessible route to the river frontage and performance/flexible space.

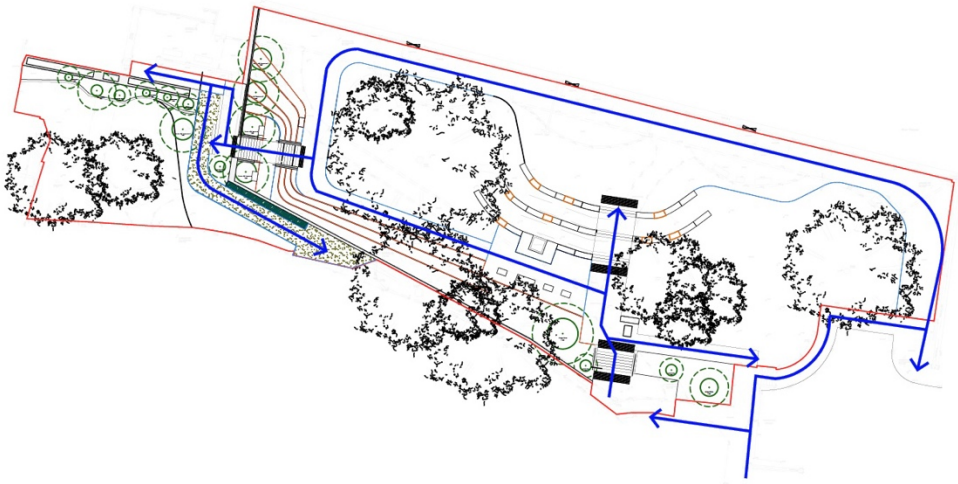


Figure 15. Proposed Access Routes.

Lighting

3.18 Lighting has been kept primarily to wayfinding and lighting of access points and steps. This is consistent with the approach used as part of Phase 1 of the works. In addition, there is a proposal to light the amphitheatre benches so that this highlights the seating areas and paths between each tier of informal bench seating.

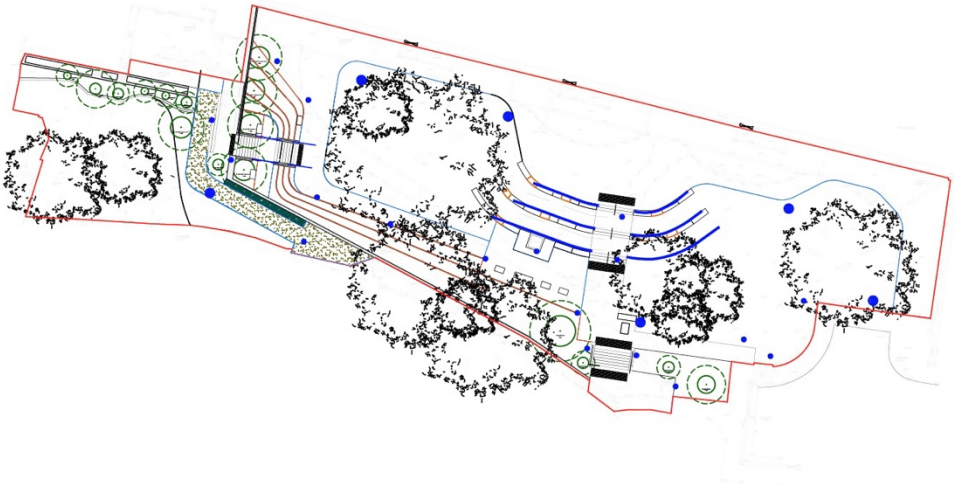
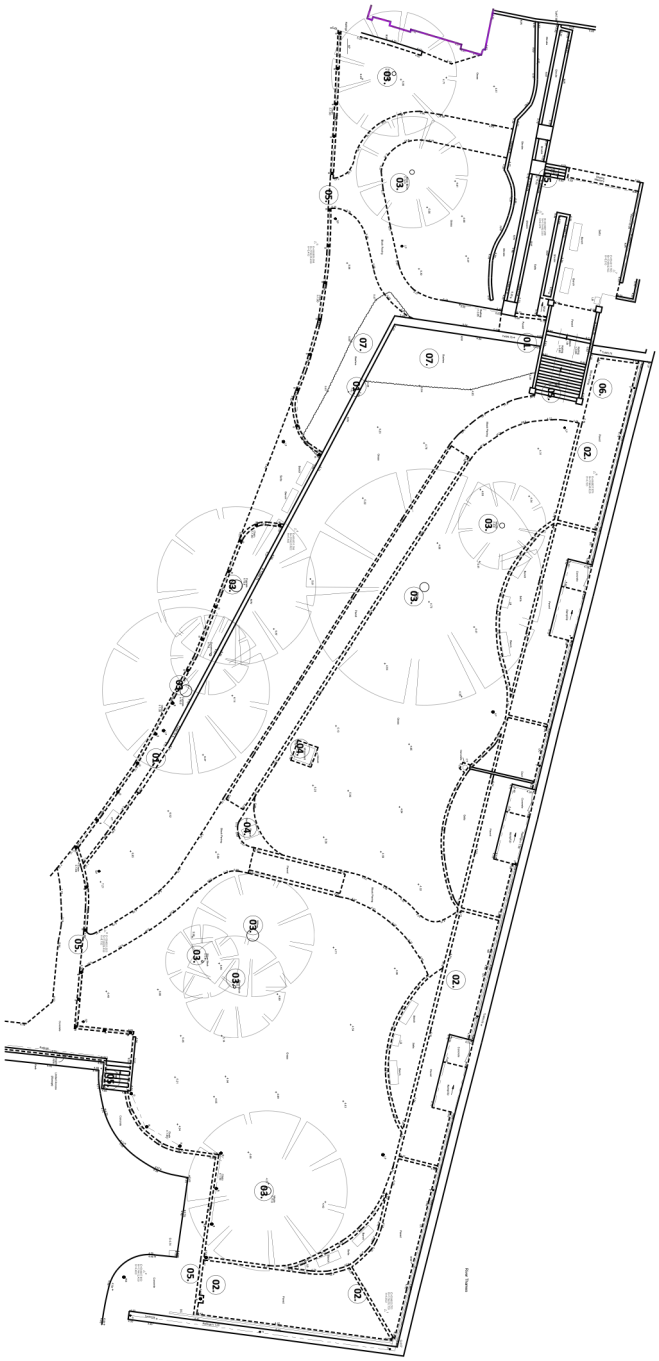


Figure 16. Lighting.

4.0 Appendices

ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1000 – Existing Condition



01. Flood wall. Current height of 4.45m AOD. It is important to retain and protect this flood defence wall in order to maintain the integrity of the requirements for the flood zone 3 protection. Measures to improve the pattern on be adjusted to suit the proposed new levels. Any adjustments to the wall must be agreed with the Environment Agency in writing from the outset to **clarify our proposals and ensure that the works align with long term strategies for flood defence.**

The overall proposals must also maintain sufficient capacity, i.e. not reduce storage capacity. For this reason cut and balanced cut and fill to ensure that we are not reducing flood storage capacity.

02. Access to the riverside and protection of access for maintenance and mooring. The hard surfaced zone must be protected and maintained. Space should be provided to allow events to be provided without preventing access if required.

03. Mature trees.
All existing trees are currently to be retained and protected throughout the works. Where hard surface is required it should aim to be constructed outside of the RPZ and where possible replace and improve upon existing paving to ensure longevity of the assets.

04. Existing memorial and features are to be retained and protected in its current location. The marker plaque will require relocation as approved.

05. Existing access points into the gardens. These are currently narrow, steep and do not provide inclusive access to older, mobility and complaint access.

06. The fences behind the existing steps currently does not appear to serve any purpose and suffers from antisocial behaviour, due to the lack of passive surveillance. If possible this should be opened up and brought into the gardens landscape.

07. Boundary edge vegetation. Review the extent and value of the existing vegetation and determine if it is appropriate to be retained or removed to maximise value of the gardens. Any removals should be offset and calculated as part of the 10% BNG.

01 EXISTING CONDITION
SCALE: N/TS

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NOTES / REVISIONS

REV	DESCRIPTION	INIT	DATE
01	Available Issue	LG	02/02/2026

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CLIENT
Gravesham Borough Council

JOB DESCRIPTION/LOCATION
St Andrew's Gardens
Gravesend

DRAWING TITLE
Existing Condition

STATUS	RIBA WORK STAGE
PLANNING	3

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Checked by
02.02.2026	N/TS	MH	PN

Drawing No.
ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1000

Revision
01

ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1001 – GA

01 / 1001 GENERAL SITE ARRANGEMENT
Scale 1:200

01:
The existing steps are proposed to be removed. They are currently very steep and difficult to access. There is a 'dead' space to the north side which is a focus for antisocial behaviour. The proposals seek to open this space and the park to the river. This will maximise passive surveillance, create some informal seating and allow for extensive planting as part of the new sculpted landform.

02:
The new steps are designed to be accessible and to meet the current regulations for accessibility and inclusive access. The intent is that the alignment of the steps allows for a positive integration of the upper levels of the green space, streetscape and waterfront to unite the spaces. The top of the steps provides a wide landing and stepped ramp into the parklet and the northern paved terrace.

03:
The paved surface is extended to create a flexible open space for performance, pop-ups and markets. This also steepens the embankment which provides an opportunity to make an amphitheatre type space which is accessible from all areas.

04:
A larger accessible access is proposed that links Phase 1 and 2 and makes a more prominent and useable access to the gardens. Making use of the existing ramp access and creating some wide, flexible steps/perch seating it further connects the gardens with the adjacent landscape and townscape.

05:
An accessible (1 in 21) ramp links the existing seating area to the north of the bus stop with the pub and gardens. This replaces the existing paths, improving the growing environment for the trees and creating a more open and accessible green space.

The ramp continues up to the existing terrace and rationalises the levels to integrate spaces. The existing brick planter walls are mostly retained and integrated into the detail of the new ramp and steps.

06:
Sculptural terraces, similar in form to Phase 1 but with the addition of 450mm high corten steel retaining edges to form planted terraces and further informal seating arrangement on the lower tier amongst the planting. The terraces integrates into the landscape blending the steps, flood wall and embankment.

07:
The top of the existing steps is proposed to be 'made good' and a barrier installed between the two brick walls. This encloses the space and maintains a viewing point over the gardens and surrounding landscape.

08:
Under-lit amphitheater-style seating creates an attractive, functional and flexible space within the gardens. Forming a strong focal point, the seating overlooks the river, opening up the garden and enhancing its connection to the landscape. The space is well suited to events and performances, while also providing a relaxed setting to sit, gather and enjoy views of the river.

09:
The widening of the hard landscaping and the introduction of additional seating will celebrate and integrate the memorial statue into the gardens. This approach highlights the statue as a focal point while providing seating which supports future memorial events and creates a contemplative space within the gardens.

10:
Slope to be graded on site using cut and fill from on site spoil.

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- Do not scale for construction purposes. Figured dimensions shall have precedence over scaled dimensions.
- Any discrepancies should be reported to the Landscape Architect.
- All trees and hedgerows are to be protected in accordance with BS5837 and/or Arboricultural recommendations unless instructed otherwise.
- This drawing is not for construction purposes.

NOTES / REVISIONS

REV	DESCRIPTION	INIT.	DATE
01	PRELIMINARY ISA	MH	20.10.2025
02	SEATING, LEVELS REVIEW AND UPDATE	LG	09.12.2025
03	UPDATE RE: COMMENTS FROM ASH	LG	08.12.2025
04	SEATING, LEVELS, WALLS, HANDRAILS UPDATE	LG	12.12.2025
05	SEATING UPDATE	LG	30-01-2026
	PLANNING ISSUE	LG	02-02-2026

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verde landscapes

CLIENT
Gravesham Borough Council

JOB DESCRIPTION/LOCATION
St Andrews Gardens
Gravesend

DRAWING TITLE
General Arrangement

STATUS
PLANNING

RIBA WORK STAGE
3

Date	Scale	Drawn By	Checked
30.01.2026	1:200	MH	PH

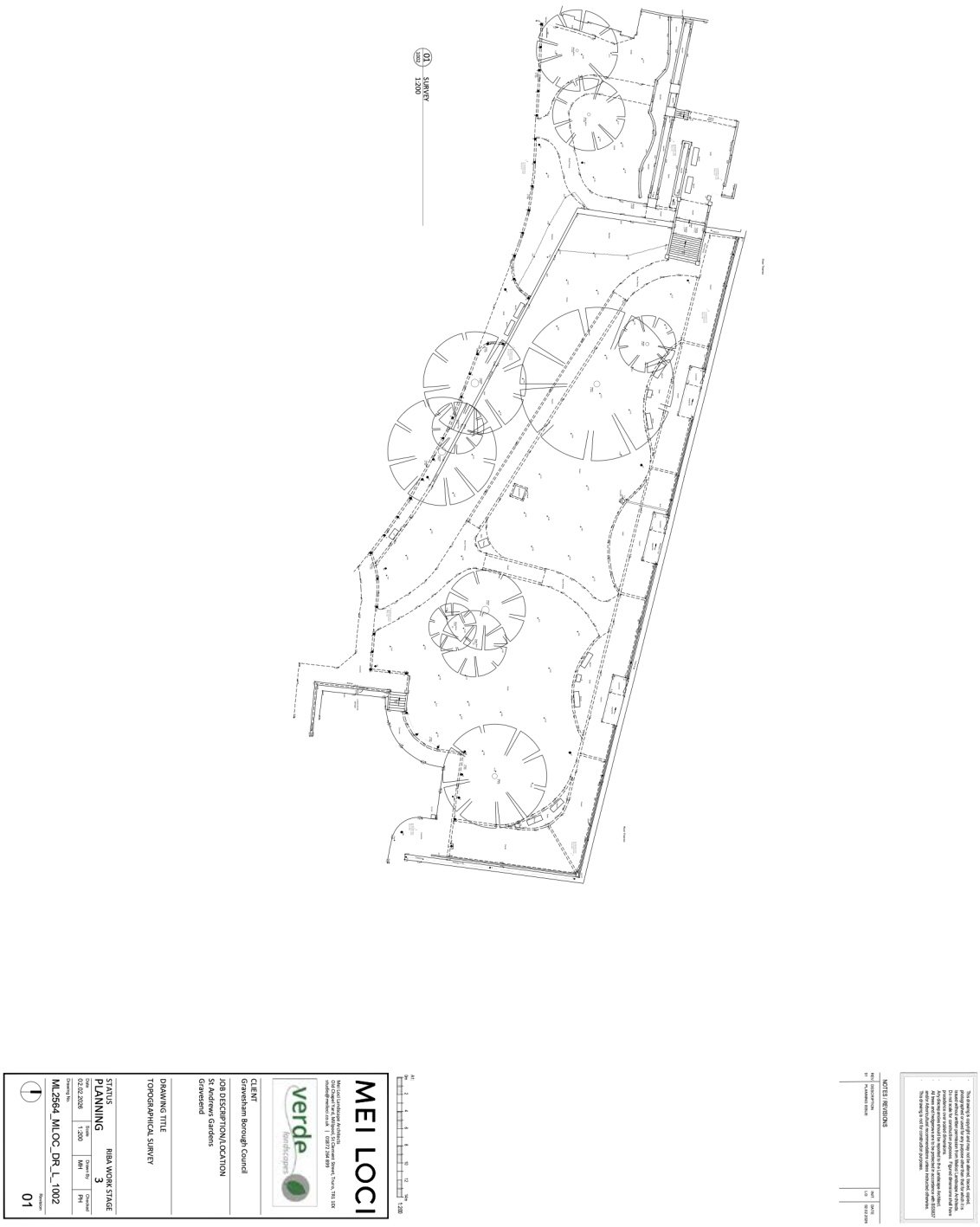
Drawing No.
ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1001

Revision
05

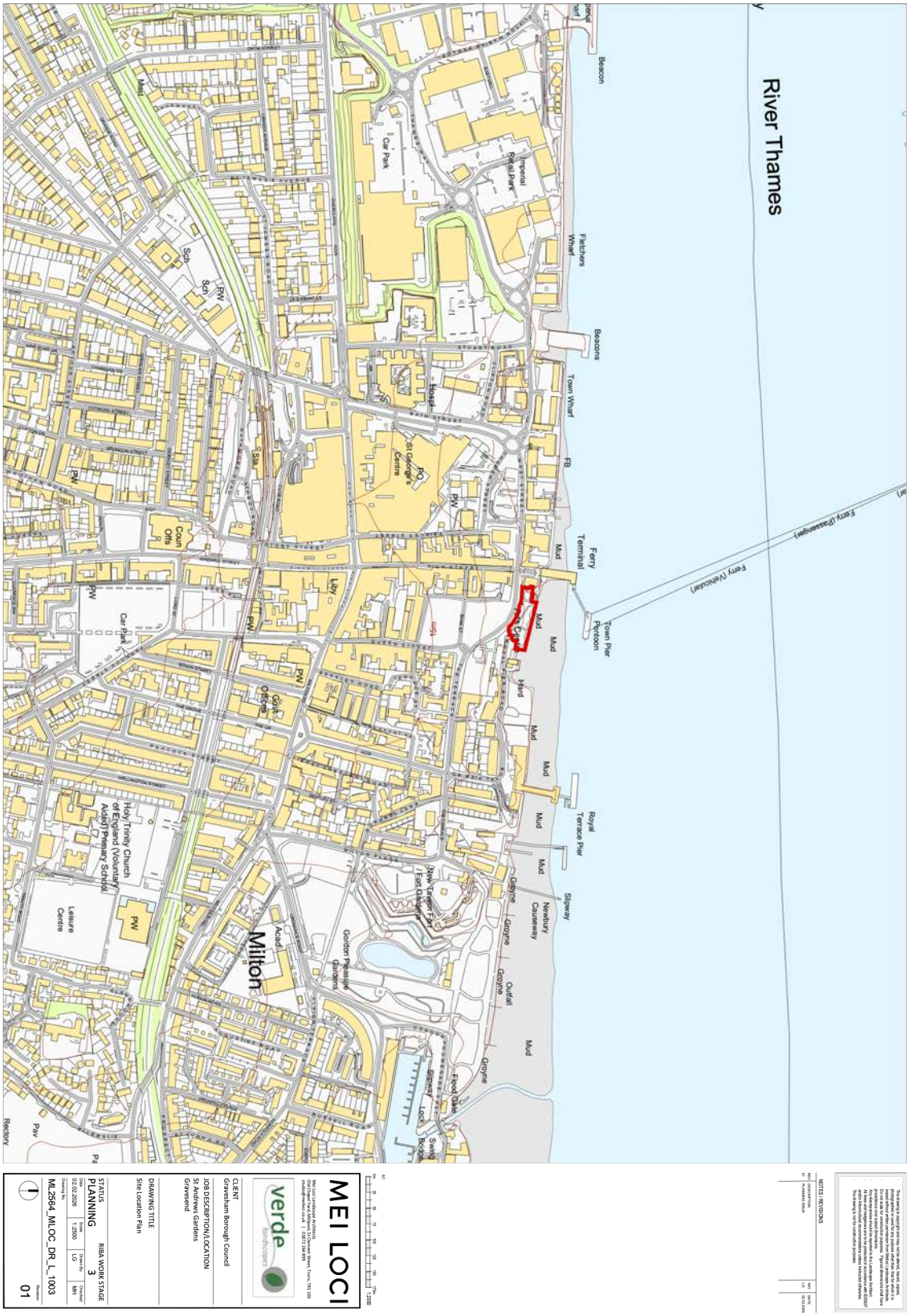
St Andrew's Gardens Phase 2, Gravesend.
Design and Access Statement

Mei Loci Landscape Architects, 17

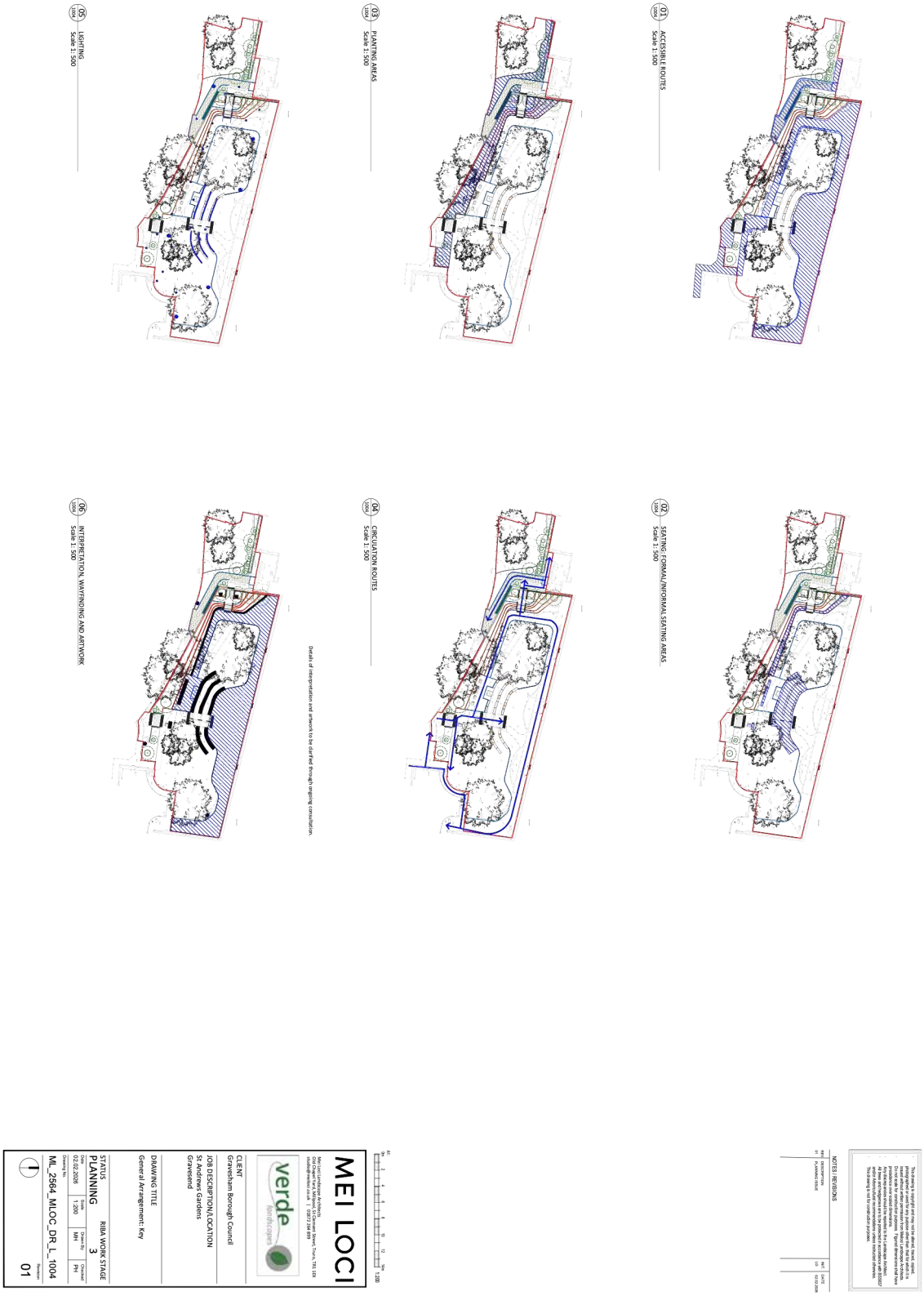
ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1002 – Survey



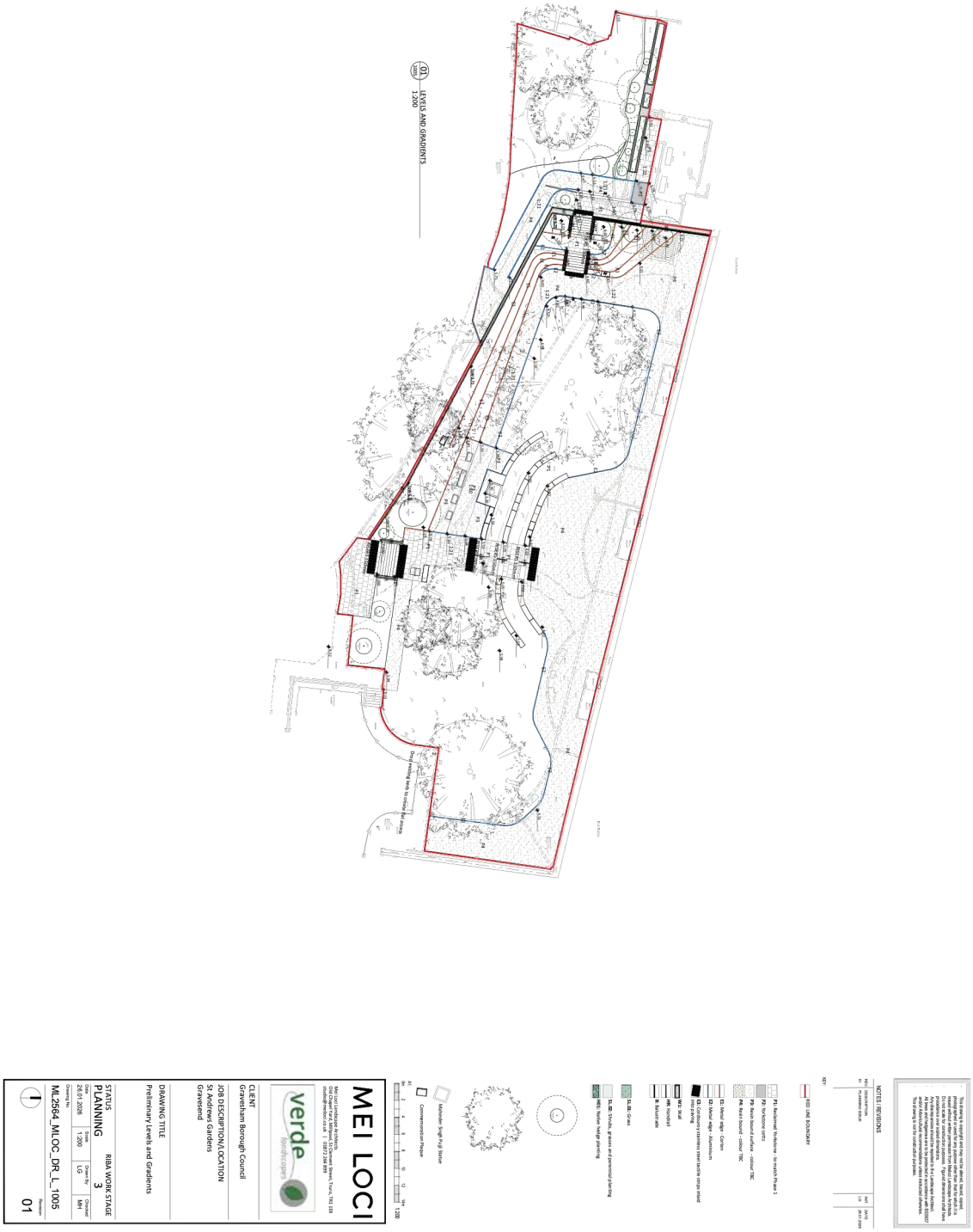
ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1003 – Site Location



ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1004 – General Arrangement: Key



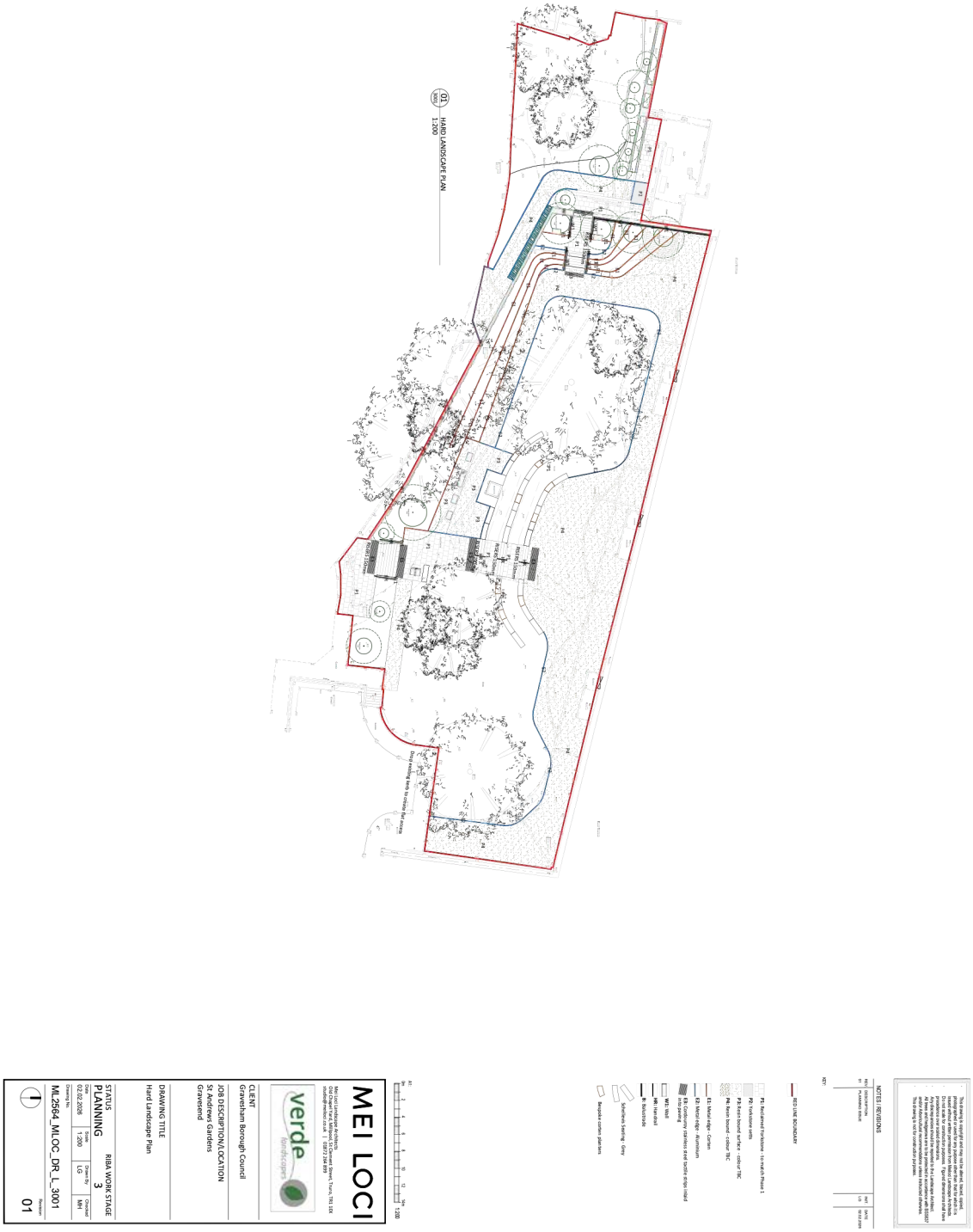
ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1005 – Levels and Gradients



ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_1006 – RPZ Hard Landscaping

ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_2001 – Site Sections

ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_3001 – Hard Landscape Plan



ML2564_MLOC_DR_L_4001 – Soft Landscape Plan

Supporting Information

5.2 The following technical reports associated with the St Andrew's Gardens design proposal have been undertaken, including statements from Arboricultural consultants (Evolve), Ecological consultants (Lakeway Ecology) and Flood Risk consultants (MBA).

- Arboricultural Survey
- Ecological Survey
- Flood Risk Assessment