

Information on The Site & Proposals:

The Site's Historical Background:

The woodland at Braidwood Gate has grown more or less spontaneously on ground left vacant following the comprehensive redevelopment of the area in the 1960s. Prior to demolition, the area (in red) was covered by tenements, as can be seen in the maps and photos of the area below:







Empty space left after demolition

Traces of this disappeared neighbourhood can still be seen in the Heriot Mount steps which lead up to Holyrood Park, as well as a few other foundations/walls remnants scattered around the woods.



The Woodland Today: Little Used & Undervalued

The woods itself currently serve as amenity green space for the local area.



However, the area is generally fairly overgrown (with fairly minimal maintenance provided by the City Council), and correspondingly, is not used a great deal, beyond the occasional dog-walker.

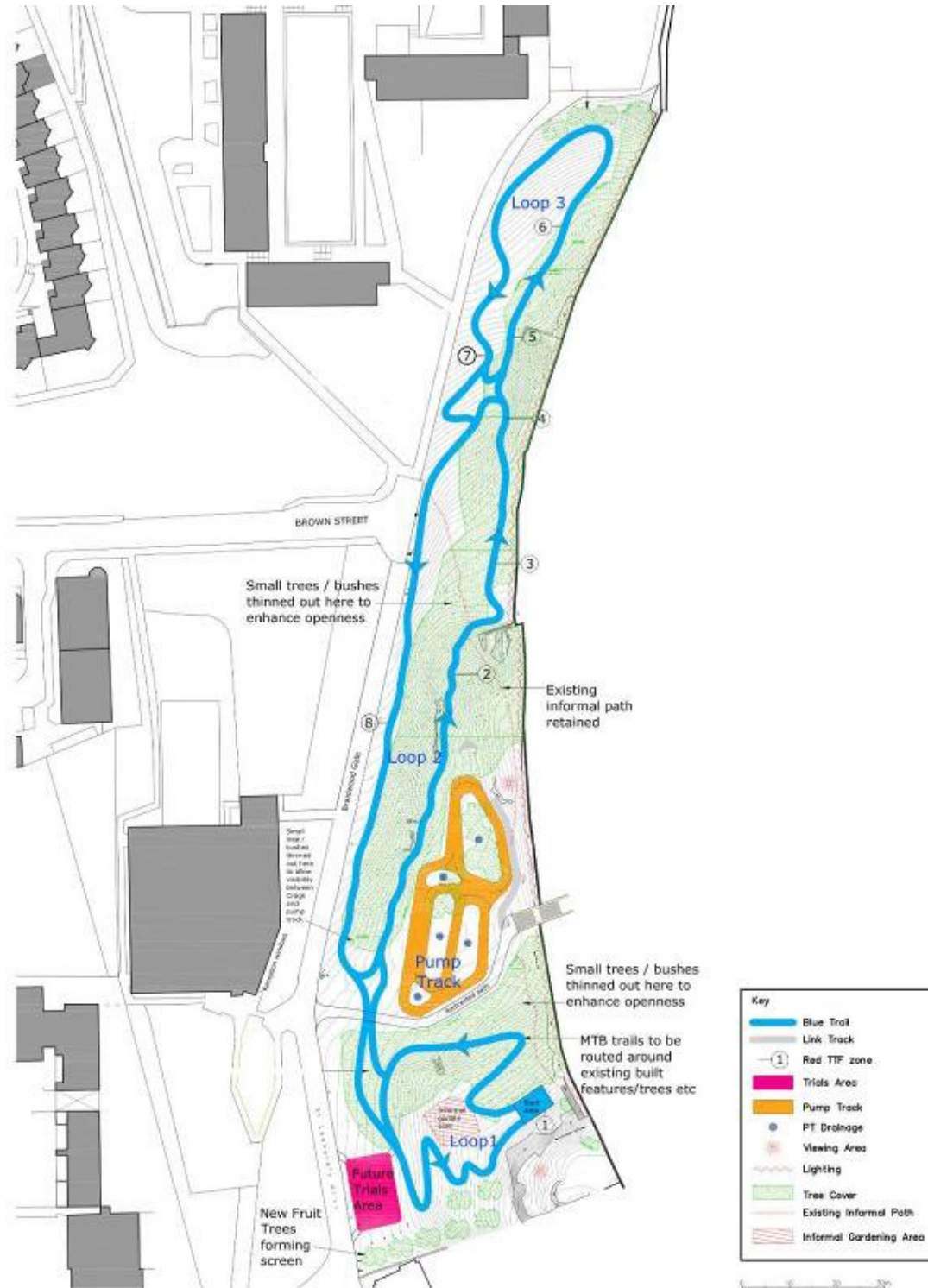
Connected to this lack of use, the woods have also become home to a variety of undesirable antisocial activities. Specifically, the woods are fairly frequently home to rough sleepers, some living in tents in rubbish-strewn, and sometimes unsanitary encampments. The woods also provide suitably secluded and unsupervised spaces for underage drinking/aerosol abuse, and increasingly, intravenous drug abuse, as can be seen from the extensive detritus left behind in many places.



This antisocial behaviour, together with the overgrown nature of the woods themselves, mean that beyond the woods being a significantly under-used resource for the local community (and the city as a whole), they are also a source of anxiety to the passing public.

Proposals:

We have recently commissioned a full Feasibility Study from the UK's leading MTB trail design specialists, Architrail, who have developed the proposed outline site plan below (explanations of each key element of the proposals follow):



Blue Trail:

Fairly wide and smooth, this blue graded trail (thick blue line in plan above) forms a continuous loop through the woods, and caters for:

- Beginners
- Younger kids
- Cycle proficiency classes.

The images below (taken from other locations) give some idea of this type of trail, which would have minimal impact on the existing trees and amenity value of the woods.



Skills Development Technical Trail Features (TTFs):

These more advanced level technical trail features, located along the Blue Trail (numbered circles on plan), and are intended to allow more able/experienced riders to develop existing bike skills, and would include:

- Rock steps
- Tabletops
- Rock Gardens
- Pinch Points

Each TTF will be constructed from natural material (ie rocks, gravel etc) mostly taken from within the site itself, and each TTF will be clearly graded & signed, allowing people to make informed choices about whether the TTF would be suitable for them, and a bypass option would be provided.



Pump Track:

A pump track is:

- A small but intense circuit of rolling bumps, table-top jumps, and bermed corners
- Designed to be ridden continuously without pedalling by using weight shifts (pumping) and gravity
- Great for developing skills and improving your technique whether you're a beginner or an expert.

Creating a pump track in the woodland (shown in orange in the plan above) would involve more extensive landscaping, and the probable removal of around 50 (self-seeded) trees.

However, the intention is to integrate the track with retained trees as far as possible, and plant double the number felled of higher quality native species & fruit trees around the site to compensate.

