

{Wonderland: A User's Guide}

{The Team}

Wonderland

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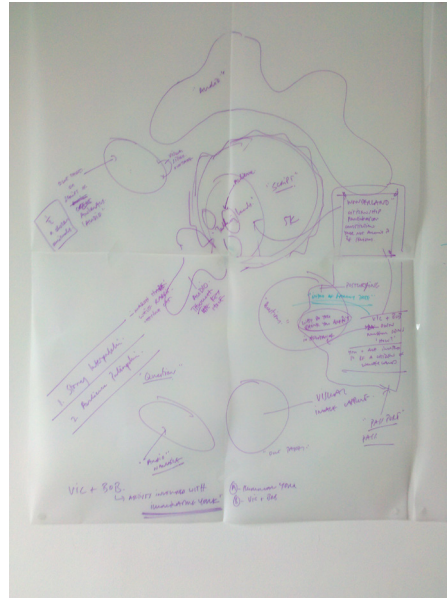
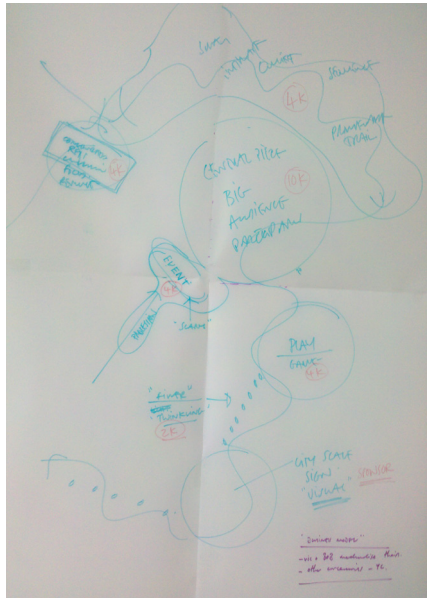
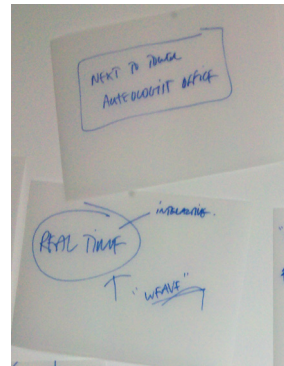
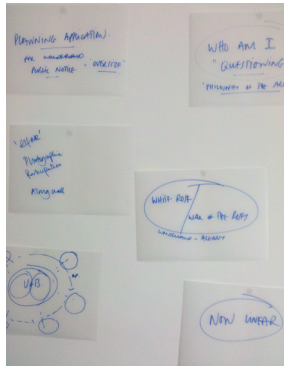
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{The Process}

Wonderland



{What is Wonderland?}

Wonderland

*'Thus grew the Tale of Wonderland:
Thus slowly, one by one,
Its quaint events were hammered out -
And now the tale is done,
And home we steer, a merry crew,
Beneath the setting sun.'*

A family tree is discovered that traces Bob Mortimer to The Earl of March, Edmond Mortimer who is portrayed as the March Hare in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

This entitles him to inherit Museum Gardens aka *Wonderland*.



'The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.'



We, the design team, are essentially establishing an **alternative reality** in which we are the puppet-masters. This alternative reality is *Wonderland*, an independent state within the everyday existence of the City of York. The only way in which we communicate with the participants of the Illuminating York Festival is via the medium of Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer, who are referred to throughout the alternative reality as *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer*.

The **'Rabbit Hole'** that provides the first point of contact between the participants and *Wonderland* is with a planning application to the Local Authority, submitted by *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer*.

As is usual with planning applications, this will be displayed in the local press and on the railings/lamp post adjacent to the site in question. We intend this latter notification to the general public to be

large and therefore act as a billboard for the festival.

Subsequent **'trail heads'** will then build on the planning application through interviews with the press, radio and other hints.

Wonderland is located within Museum Gardens, York, and is divided into zones each with specific characteristics and light installations.

Thresholds are marked with chequerboards.

Central Piece : This area is where the principle projection will be and will be the focus for *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer's* input. A second installation makes use of the main wall of St. Marys Abbey.

Play : A space making use of the bowling green to create a croquet court that encourages an interactive game of croquet.

Congregate : A place to sit down and have some refreshments. Additional installations help create further installations in the 'intimate' area.

Intimate : A 'twinkling' and meandering route takes participants through the wooded areas of Museum Garden, leading to a story telling circle.

Event : This makes use of the unique Medieval buildings of King's Manor, and creates a safe courtyard to play with scale and appreciate the buildings.

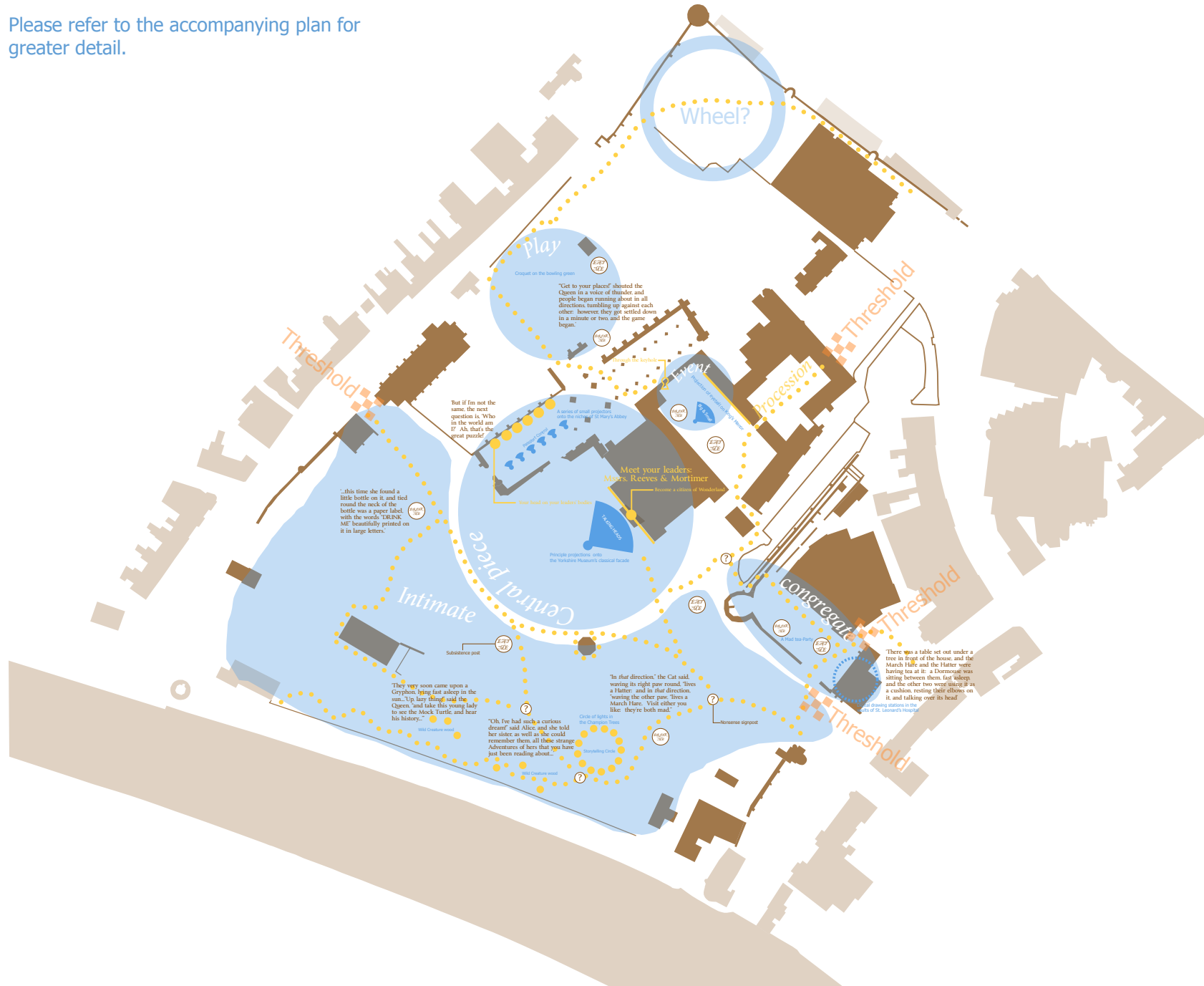
Each of these areas are linked with subtler, elegant lights, and audio of *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* encouraging participants to 'Follow Me...'



{Map of Wonderland}

Wonderland

Please refer to the accompanying plan for greater detail.



Wonderland

1: {Talking Heads}

'The Hatter shook his head mournfully. "Not I!" He replied. "We quarrelled last March - just before he went mad, you know - " (pointing with his teaspoon at the March Hare,) " - it was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing.'



'Talking Heads' forms the central installation in *Wonderland*. This is the place in which to bring together the congregation in order to invite them to participate in and become citizens of *Wonderland*. *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* are both the owners and ambassadors of this land, and this installation is their opportunity to explain - in their own words - the world of *Wonderland* and their aims and ambitions for the realm.

The place of **'Talking Heads'** is largely defined by the mass of people focussing upon the projections of *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* onto the classical backdrop of the Yorkshire Museum, with the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey creating an enclosure to the North. The space is an open centre to Museum Gardens, and creates a hub from which participants can go forth and explore *Wonderland*.

Wonderland

2: {Passport Control}

'Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!'



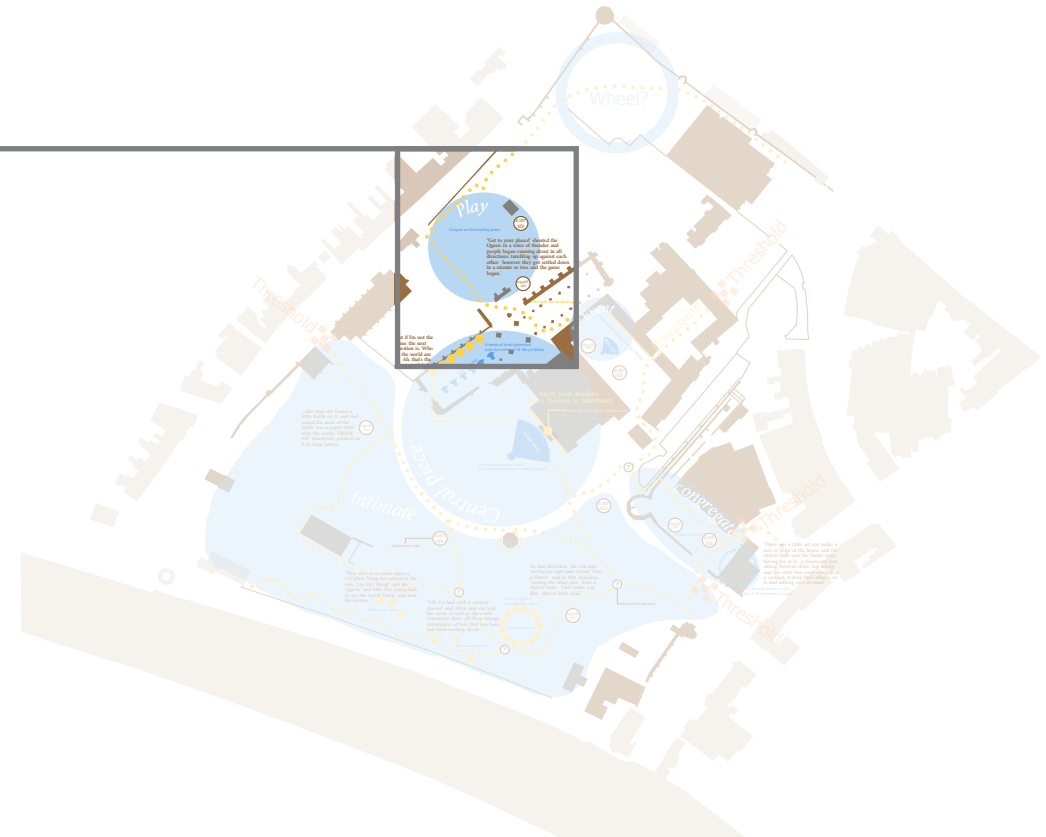
'Passport Control' forms part of the central installation with **'Talking Heads'**. *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* will invite the congregation to become citizens of *Wonderland* by applying for a passport, that is, participants' heads are applied to the dancing bodies of *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer*.

Participants' photographs are taken at one of three special photographic booths beneath the portico of the Yorkshire Museum. These booths become mini-architectural interventions reflecting the themes of *Wonderland*. The heads - on the dancing bodies of *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* are then projected onto the niches of the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey. As more heads are photographed, each head moves up one place, and then another and so on and so forth.

Wonderland

3: {The Queen's Croquet Ground}

“Get to your places!” shouted the Queen in a voice of thunder, and people began running about in all directions, tumbling up against each other: however, they got settled down in a minute or two, and the game began.’



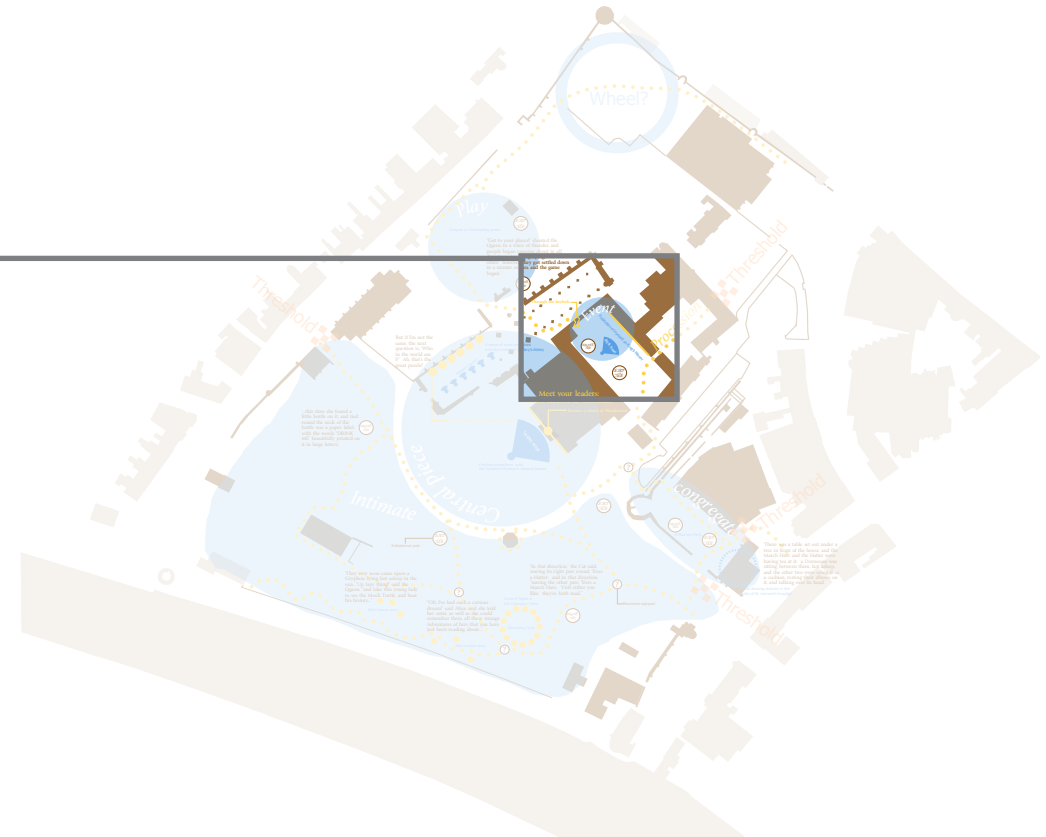
Audience participation is key to the installation of **'The Queen's Croquet Ground'**. The participants represent balls, and are invited to run towards lit croquet hoops. But the lights change from one croquet hoop to another, resulting in participants running from A to B to C to B. As the lights change, *Msrs. Reeves & Mortimer* appear against the backdrop of the Abbey Walls, making fun of the hapless players.

By using the bowling green of Museum Gardens, visitors to the festival are introduced to an area of the Gardens that is rarely visited and used. The croquet green is already defined by the bowling green boundaries, with opportunities to use the pavilion as part of the installation's logistics.

Wonderland

4: {Big & Small}

*“Rule Forty-two. All persons more than a mile high to leave the court.”
Everybody looked at Alice.
“I’m not a mile high,” said Alice.
“You are,” said the King.
“Nearly two miles high,” added the Queen.’*



A formally light processional route through a series of courtyards brings the congregation to the *Wonderland's* Embassy. By peering through small keyholes in the walls, enormous eyeballs appear on the walls and windows of the courtyard; eyeballs watching and blinking, wondering at what it is they are looking at.

It is not widely known that the grounds of the medieval complex of the King's Manor is open to the public, and this installation provides an opportunity to show this space in a different light, with an alternative route to Museum Gardens opened up to the public.

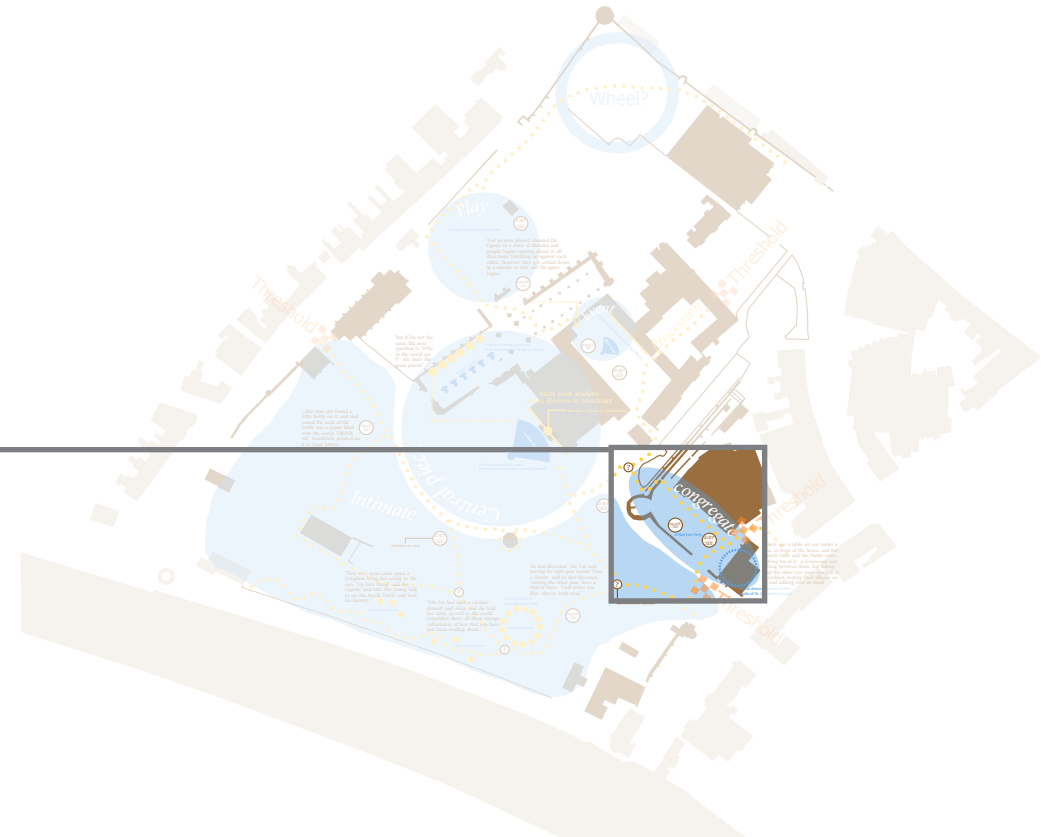
Wonderland

5: {A Mad Tea-Party}

'There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head'

Time for a sit down at the **'Mad Tea-Party'**. Whilst sipping tea and enjoying bread and butter, descriptions of creatures found in *Wonderland* are relayed by *Mrsrs. Reeves & Mortimer*. These in turn are interpreted by those attending the tea party, the images re-appearing among the trees of **'Wild Creature Wood'**.

The **'Mad Tea-Party'** is defined by the City Library and the vaulted ruins of the Medieval St. Leonards Hospital, the latter providing shelter should the weather be inclement. The area, in particular, has exposed elements of the earliest parts of York's history, with a Roman tower creating an amphitheatre for additional storytelling and performance. Again, new routes through the Gardens are being opened up, allowing further exploration of a space that is not always considered.



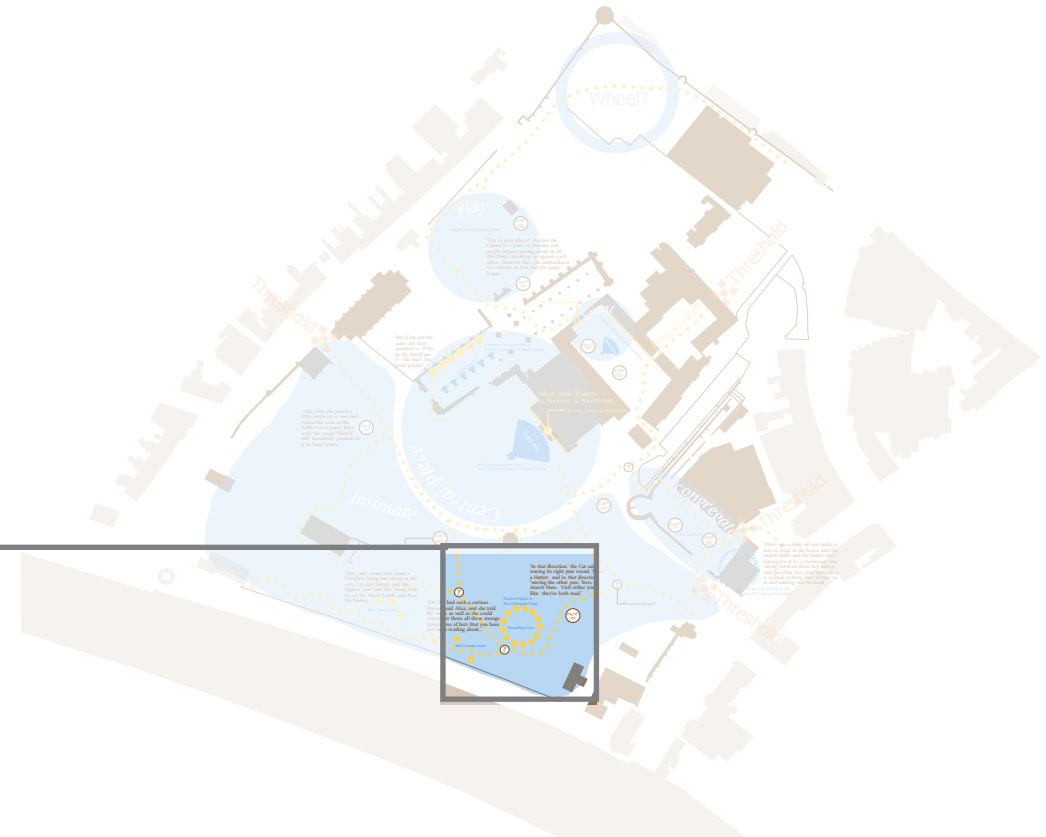
Wonderland

6: {Storytelling Circle}

“Oh, I’ve had such a curious dream!” said Alice, and she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about...’

Deep within the **‘Wild Creature Woods’** lies a secret circle that is used to tell the story of *Wonderland* to the future citizens of the land. The only hint of such a space is the circle of lights hanging from the *Wonderland’s* Champions Trees.

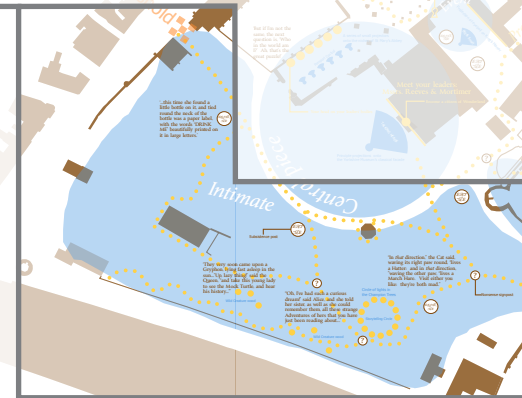
This is a space that is defined by the landscape as opposed to the built features of the Gardens, and it is intended that the **‘Storytelling Circle’** is subtle and quiet, a space to contemplate and listen.



Wonderland

7: {Wild Creature Wood}

‘They very soon came upon a Gryphon, lying fast asleep in the sun...’Up, lazy thing!’ said the Queen, ‘and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, and hear his history...’



Each of the principle destinations within *Wonderland* are connected by a twinkling trail around and through the realm. This trail winds its way through the **'Wild Creature Wood'**, where the weird creatures described by the *Mssrs. Reeves & Mortimer* are hiding in the bushes.

The aim of this trail is to connect each of the sites together to create a coherent story for the installations. The trail aims to be quiet and subtle, creating a magical framework in which to explore both Museum Gardens and wider aspects of the City of York. It is this trail that goes some way to acquaint participants to lesser-known routes through the Gardens as well as introducing new routes and connections that had not existed prior to the Festival.