



Gwent Police Operational Facility

Design & Access Statement

Revision Log

Revision	Date	Notes
00	18.08.2023	First Issue
01	25.08.23	Updated text



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Torfaen County Borough

1.0 Introduction

Introduction

Corstorphine & Wright have been asked to look at the proposals for new operational facilities on behalf of Gwent Police on the old Headquarters site.

This pre-application document outlines the proposals for the site. The scheme will provide modern buildings for a modern force, including:

- A 50 cell custody suite
- Training building
- Vehicle Workshop
- Associated parking & landscaping

We, along with the rest of the design team, have worked closely with the Police stakeholders to ensure the proposed scheme meets their requirements and provides a safe, secure and healthy environment for all users of the building.

Project Team

Main Contractor	Willmott Dixon Construction Ltd.
Architect	Corstorphine & Wright Ltd.
Landscape	Zebra
Planning Consultant	The Urbanists
MEP Services Engineer	McCann and Partners
Structural and Civil Engineer	Jubb
CDMC	Monmouthshire County Council
Building Control	(tba)
Fire Engineer	Hydrock



Site location in the UK



1.1 Corstorphine & Wright - Selected Projects

Police buildings are often highly specialist buildings and the proposed buildings (similar to those opposite) for this site are no exception. Successful bluelight projects deliver buildings which provide an environment for a modern Police Force, in turn helping the communities they serve whilst ensuring they are value for money both in terms of capital cost but also ongoing operational use.

Corstorphine & Wright have a proven track record for delivering these specialist buildings across the country, ranging from headquarters to firearms ranges to custody suites and command and control centres.

The buildings are highly functional and must be sufficiently flexible for them continue to work for the Police in years to come. Our designs endeavour to be buildings the Police are proud to work in, which allow them to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

The adjacent photographs show a selection of Police buildings recently completed. We often keep the forms and the materiality simple and concentrate on the detailing to provide a high quality standard end result.



Exeter Police Station
A custody suite and associated office space



Bamfurlong Operational Base (above)
A specialist operational facility including office space, car garaging and training space. A secure site with the required spaces to carry out very specific functions of a Police Force.



Sabrina Centre (right)
A specialist training facility including classrooms, offices and gym spaces in an existing building. This scheme provides a space for new recruits and existing members of the Police to carry out their required training.



Custody Suite

The primary driver for this project is to deliver a new, modern, fit for purpose custody suite. The Force currently operate two custody facilities, one in Newport Central and the other in Ystrad Mynach. Newport Central, especially, is old, tired, and not fit for purpose.

All custody suites are specialist buildings, designed to keep both staff and detainees safe at all times. Whilst refurbishing can sometimes be an option, it is often economically unviable to do so.

Providing a new custody suite on the site opened up the opportunity to bring the response and neighbourhood teams to the new facility and site.

Training Facility

Currently the training facility used by Gwent Police is rented, by building a purpose made building for training existing and new officers it provides a specialist environment to deliver first class training.

Overall, the brief is to provide modern policing facilities that are both safe, meet current design guidance and fulfil the opportunity of cross collaboration across the Force. By bring multiple departments together certain services, such as the gym and canteen, can be shared between multiple units and aid with building interdepartmental collaboration.

Vehicle Workshop

The vehicle workshop is currently on the existing site. The proposals look to provide an upgraded facility, suitable for the modern Police Fleet. The Police carry out their own maintenance, MOT etc and this facility will allow them to continue to do so.



3.0 Site & Context

3.1 Existing Site



The site is located in the NP44 district of Torfaen, approximately 2.5 miles from the centre of Cwmbran. The site is accessed directly off Turnpike Road – accessed via (amongst other routes) the main A4042, linking Newport to the South and Abergavenny to the North.

The approximate centre point of the site can be located via any of the below methods;

- Grid: ST 30835 95289
- Lat./ Long.: 51.652118N -3.0011371W
- What3Words: ///loops.kick.frosted

The site is bounded to the west by the A4042 a dual carriageway, a vacant site to the north proposed for residential development and predominantly residential to the west and schools/colleges to the North West.

The vacant site to the North was previously the County Hall prior to its demolition to make way for a residential development.

Site Allocation

A comprehensive study was carried out looking at the feasibility of various sites for a new custody suite and included reviewing the option of refurbishment and extension of the existing suites.

Each site was scored and the old headquarters site offered the most effective, efficient and economical option.



3.1 Existing Site

Existing Buildings

The site campus has three existing building, associated surface car parking and landscaping.

The existing buildings on site were built in the early 1970s as the Police Headquarters. It remained the Police Headquarters until 2022 when it was moved to the new building in Llantarnam.

Elements of the existing buildings are beginning to fail including the windows and the pre-cast concrete cladding. The buildings are also very thermally inefficient and whilst they have been remodelled over the years, they remain very cellular and do not lend themselves to a modern day policing environment (office or operational).

Two of the buildings on site are linked by a footbridge and are mostly administrative buildings. The third building closest to the roundabout at Turnpike Road/ Croesyceiliog Bypass junction is a single storey vehicle workshop. The administrative buildings are between two and three storey.



3.1 Existing Site



1. Internal site view



2. View from Turnpike Road junction



3. Turnpike Road junction



4. Memorial garden



5. Internal site view



6. Turnpike Road junction



7. Internal site view



Key Plan - Existing Site Views



8. Internal site view

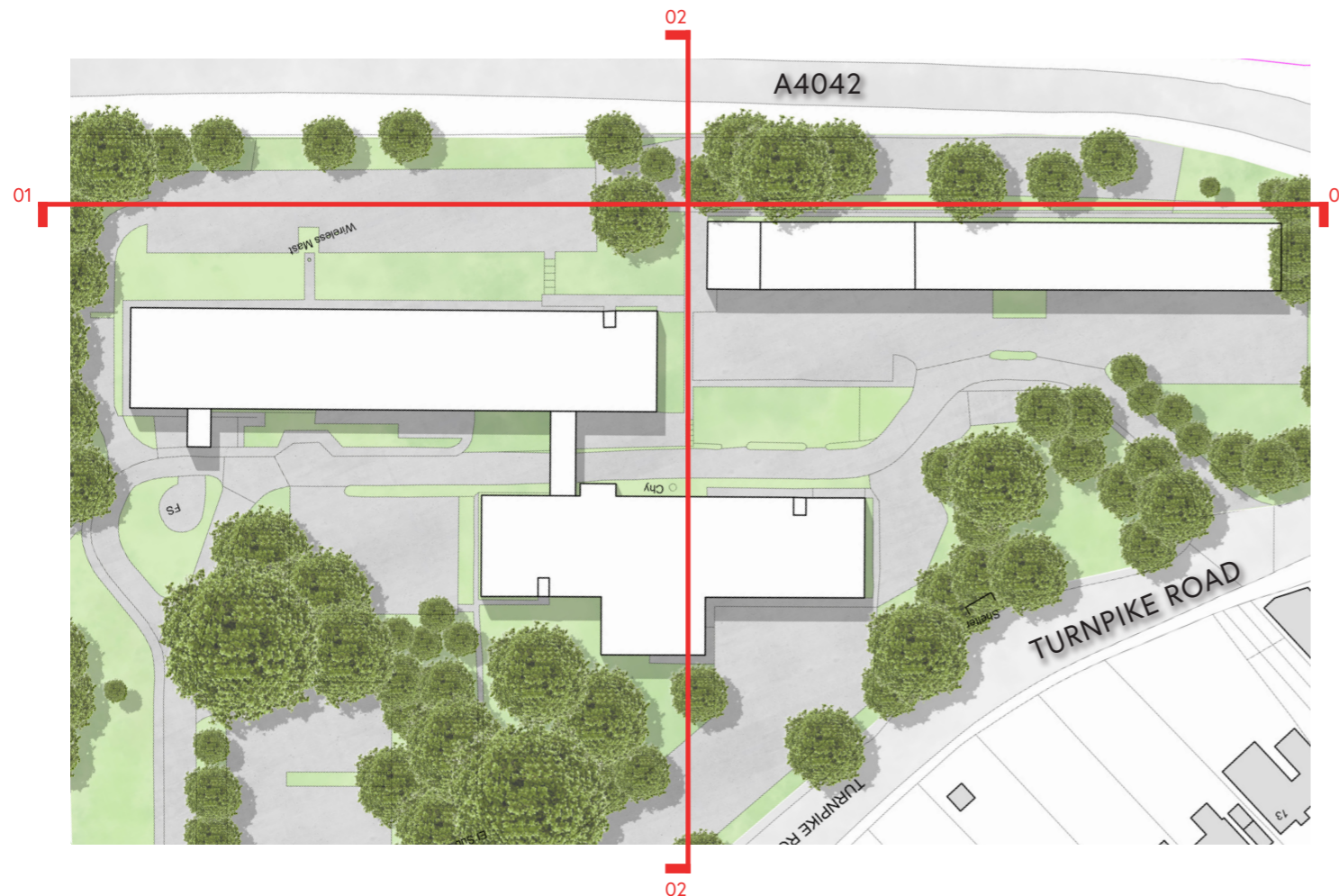
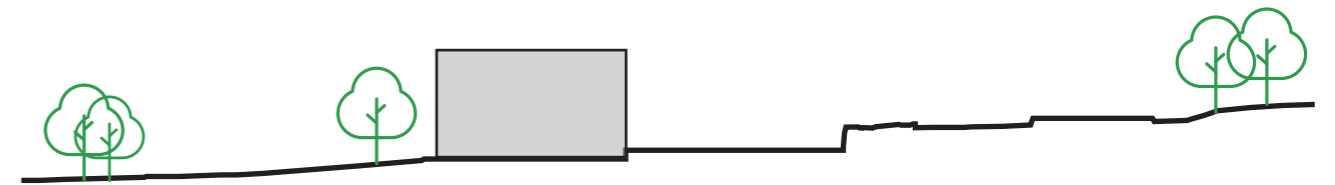
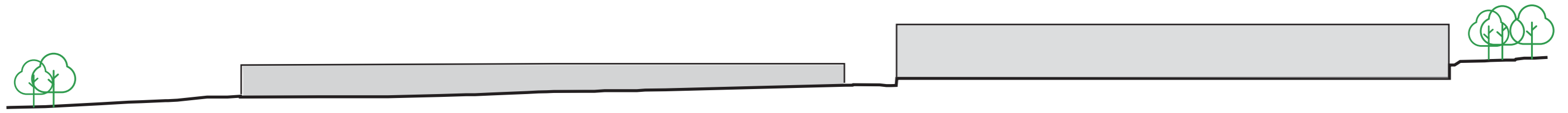


9. Internal site view



10. Internal site view

3.1 Existing Site



Levels

The level changes across the site are significant.

There is a 9m level difference from North to South between the old County Hall site and the roundabout on Turnpike Road and the Croesyceiliog Bypass.

From East to West the ground drops 9-10 meters between the Bypass the roundabout with Crownbridge School.

The existing buildings on site have utilised the level changes by partially building into the ground.

3.2 Planning Context

1. 143 New Dwellings

21/P/0926/NMA of 18/P/0798/FUL

Submitted 2021



2. Crownbridge School Extension

22/P/0503/FUL

Approved 2022



3. Specialist & Critical Care Centre

12/P/00348 Outline

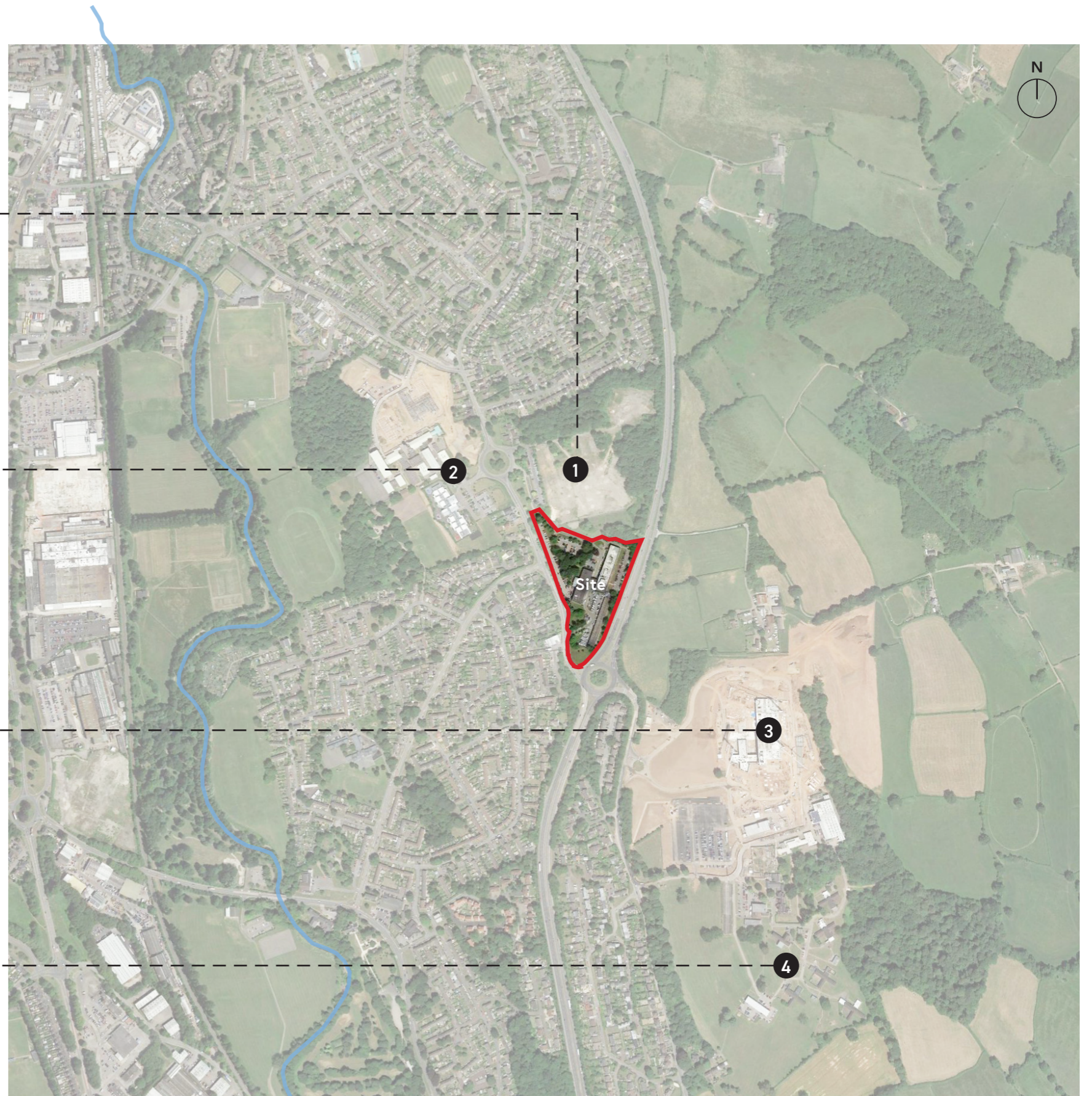
Completed 2020



4. Mental Health Unit

22/P/0446/OUT

Submitted 2022



3.3 Evaluation

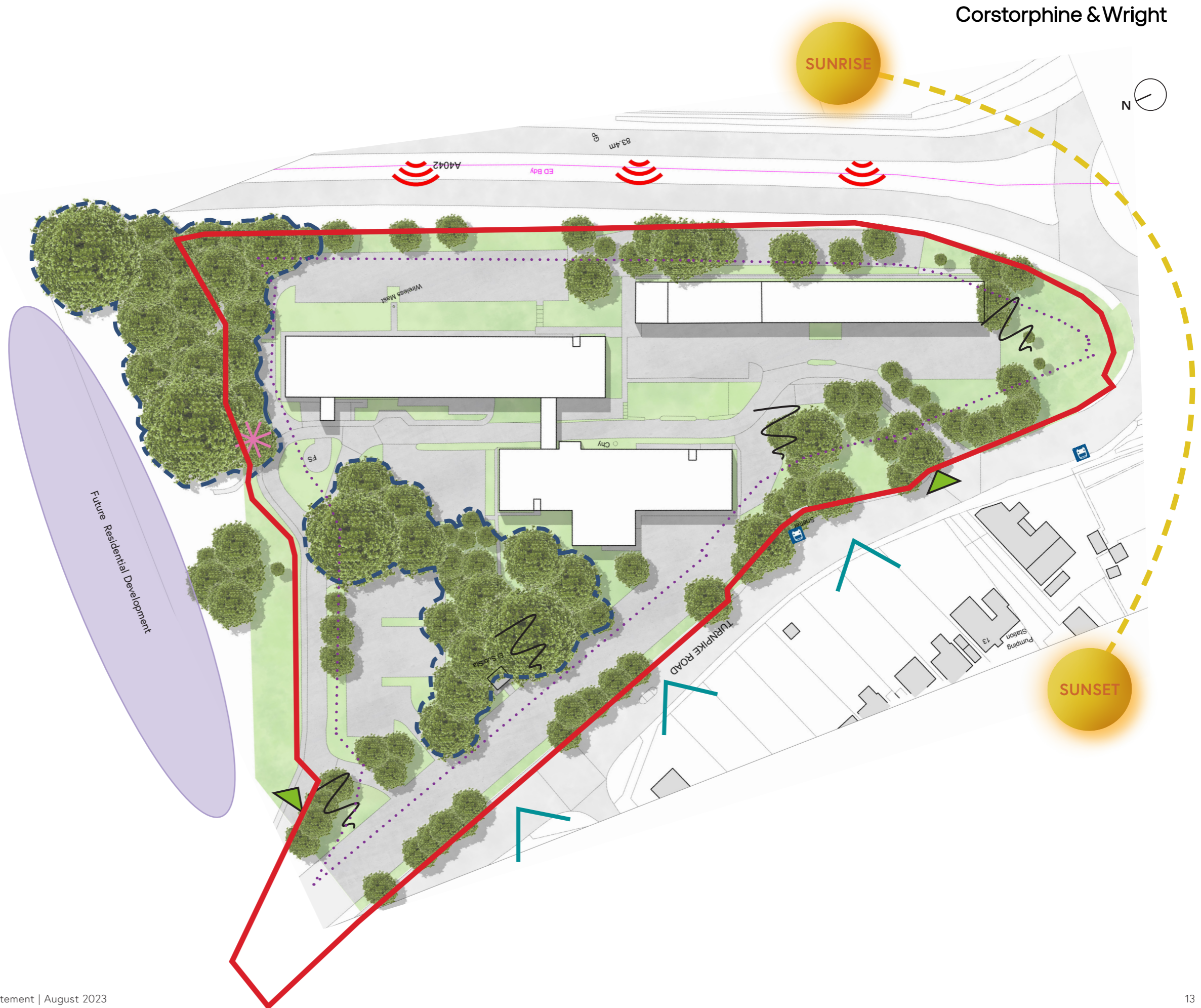
The site offers a number of opportunities, namely:

- Well established soft landscaping with extensive mature trees and boundary hedgerows
- Long distance views from east to west
- Key location coming from the bypass from

Other important considerations include:

- Noise from the A4042
- Limited local building vernacular to reference
- Significant level changes in both directions across the site
- The future residential development on the old County Hall site
- Relationship between the public spaces and the areas that are required to be more secure
- 15m stand-off zone as guidance

- Site Boundary
- ⋯ 15m Stand Off Zone
- - - Sun Path
- ▭ Existing Buildings On Site
- ▲ Site Entrance
- ▭ Other Existing Buildings
- ⌚ Ground Level Change
- ✓ Long Distance Views
-))) Noise
- Future Residential Development
- Existing Mature Trees
- * Memorial Garden



4.0 Proposals

4.1 Use & Amount

There is no change of use in planning terms associated with this application. The use of the site will continue to be non-residential sui-generis.

Vehicle Workshop

The vehicle workshop to the north of the site will be used to maintain the Police's fleet of vehicles. The building will consist of a workshop area including ramps and associated ancillary spaces such as a tyre store. The first floor consists of office and meeting space along with welfare facilities (lockers, rest room etc).

Police Hub

The central Police Hub will consist of a locker room, storage and a voluntary attendee suite on the lower ground floor, a 50 cell custody suite on the ground floor and response offices, briefing room and meeting rooms on the first floor along with appropriate welfare facilities.

Training Building

The training building to the south will have classrooms, which will have moveable partitions to reconfigure to larger spaces when required alongside practical training spaces. Storage and office facilities linked directly to training will also be located in this building. This building will contain other facilities which will be shared by the three buildings including a canteen area, meeting spaces and gym.

Separating this facility from the main hub maintains security between the facilities and allows grade access required on both buildings. The bridge link between the police hub and the training building then encourages the collaboration between the different teams and also provides economies of scale by not having to provide the same facilities three times over.

Area

Gross External Area (m ²)	
Police Hub	6438
Training Building	3528
Vehicle Workshop	1795
Total	11761

Gross Internal Area (m ²)	
Police Hub	5970
Training Building	3298
Vehicle Workshop	1708
Total	10976

Parking

There is an overall number of 299 car parking spaces being provided on site, which is similar to the existing number of spaces (307). A large proportion of the existing car parks are being retained and in some cases extended.

A large proportion of these spaces will be used by operational vehicles (response vehicles, vehicles for the vehicle workshop, specialist training vehicles and custody vans).

There are 31 response parking spaces proposed, sitting centrally in the site. They are positioned directly outside the Police Hub building as this is where the response officers will be based when on site. The position means the cars can be accessed quickly and a clear route is provided both to the south and the west to give optimum response times.

Within the total number 4 spaces are designated as accessible with three of these spaces located in the visitor car park. This lesser provision is for operational requirements for the type of work that is to be carried out in these buildings.

10% of spaces will have access to electric vehicle charging, this does not include operational spaces as the current Fleet of vehicles use combustion engines with no current plans to change.

There will be sufficient space for 36 bicycles, which will be provided as Sheffield hoops under a proprietary shelter and will be located around the site for maximum convenience.

Parking	
Total Car Parking	299
Electric Vehicle Charging	22
Accessible Car Parking	4
Motorcycle Spaces	6
Secure Cycle Spaces	36

Car Parking Breakdown	
Operational Spaces	93
Visitor Spaces	13
Staff Spaces	206
Total	299
<i>Existing Car Parking Spaces</i>	307

4.2 Custody Use

Custody suites are highly specialised units, which adhere to the highest standards of safety protecting detainees and staff.

They are designed to meet Home Office Design Guidance. The proposed design has been through rigorous stakeholder engagement as well as a peer review by the National Police Estates Group.

The flows in, around and out of the unit are carefully considered as part of the design. This includes pedestrians and vehicles.

The custody unit will facilitate the processing of those suspected of committing criminal offences. On a typical day Gwent Police arrest around 25 individuals, these will be conveyed to the custody unit by the arresting officer. Some of these detainees will be arrested on suspicion of offences, they will be interviewed and then:

- a. Released with no further action if there is no evidence of wrong-doing.
- b. Released for further investigation.
- c. Released on bail for further investigation or to seek a charging decision.
- d. Charged and bailed to court.
- e. Remanded in custody to appear before the next available court.

Of those that are released, the custody officer will carry out a pre-release risk assessment. They will consider the risk of exploitation and/or victimisation of the detainee. The custody officer will also ensure that any risk posed by the detainee to other persons has been considered as part of the pre-release process, and, when appropriate, bail conditions are put in place to address any risk identified. As individuals from across Gwent may be brought to the unit, Gwent Police will return them to their home area upon release, there are very few occasions when those released refuse the offer of transport. This normally occurs when family or friends may occasionally collect individuals upon release. Few individuals currently use public transport to return home.

Individuals who have been released on bail may have to answer the custody unit from time to time as part of their bail conditions. On these occasions they will make their way to and from the custody unit themselves. However, after each attendance a pre-release re-assessment takes place.

Other people who the police believe need to be interviewed for offences may come to the police station as voluntary attendees. This takes place where offences of a lower level have taken place not necessitating an arrest but where the individual still needs to be interviewed. These interviews are carried out regularly in police stations across the force area as they do not specifically need to be done at the custody unit. It is likely that only people who live in the Cwmbran area would be attending under these circumstances.



4.3 Site Organisation and Access

The location, orientation and form of the buildings have been determined by site analysis, the existing topography, and the location of existing buildings, the new access strategy and an understanding of the flows around the site.

There will be a number of vehicle movements around the site which have been a key consideration.

There is a significant level difference across the site between the Croesyceiliog Bypass and the roundabout near Crownbridge School. This has influenced both the orientation of the buildings and the links between.

The two access and egress points on the site are retained, along with much of the existing car park to the west of the site. The internal roads within the site have been designed to allow for response cars to exit the site as quickly and safely as possible, visitors able to attend site without hindering other access, access to custody to be allowed for in two directions in line with the Home Office Design Guide.

There are a great number of trees across the site, whilst we have to remove some for the new buildings, a key driver in the layout was to ensure the large copse of trees in the centre of the site was retained, which is where we are proposing a new memorial garden to replace the existing one on the perimeter of the site. The memorial garden will be at the heart of the site, making the most of the green area.

Whilst much of what the Police do is open and transparent, by it's nature there are many aspects which must be more secure and closed off. The arrangement of the layout has been influenced by the two sides and has created a front and back to the site. With the front being accessible and more transparent and the back being the more secure and closed off.

The orientation of the buildings emulates the existing building, limits tree loss across the site, reduces the impact of the scale of development on Turnpike Road and enables to the more functional and secure part of the site not to be public facing.



4.3 Site Organisation and Access



Vehicle Workshop

The vehicle workshop has been proposed in the corner of the site with the roller shutter vehicle entrance doors facing the car park to minimise any disruption to the current and future resident's in the surrounding area.

Police Hub (inc. Custody)

This has been situated in the centre of the site, with the offices facing the main car park and custody facing the dual carriageway. This gives a better outlook for the office staff and provides circular, secure access around the building, in line with Home Office guidance.

Training

The training building sits on the corner, allowing it to address the corner with the roundabout, which is a key view as you enter Cwmbran

Horizontal and Vertical Access Within facilities

The building provides full equalities act compliant access and movement.

Level access is provided to each of the buildings as follows:

Training is accessed from the area immediately under the bridge link into a "reception area" which then has level access throughout the ground floor and lift and stair access to the first floor facilities.

The police hub is accessed at both ends of the floorplate at lower ground level with public able to park adjacent to the RHS of the building and enter via the main or separate bail entrance from which there is stair and lift access to the upper floors. Staff enter to the LHS of the plan and again have access to stairs and a lift to the upper floors. The custody floor is accessed at ground floor level by officers bringing in detainees by car and again once up at this level, level access is provided into the building and ambulant and wheelchair facilities provided within the suite.

Due to the level of the bridge link it has a combination of steps, ramps and part level platform lifts to provide access for all potential building users.

The vehicle workshop has level access and stairs and a lift to the first floor.

DDA compliant access is provided to the memorial garden.



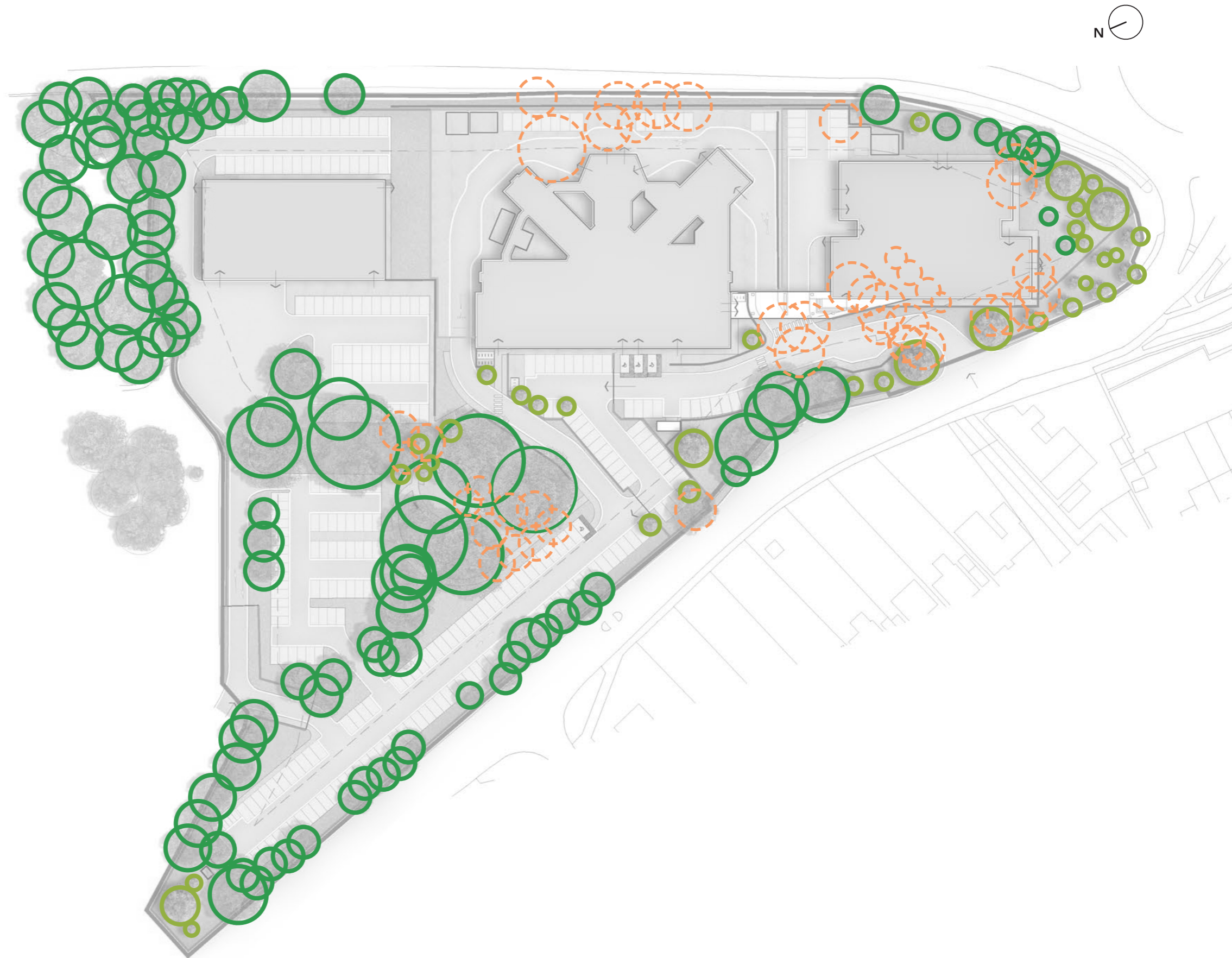
4.4 Trees

The existing trees on the site have been a key driver in the design process. Where possible (and where trees are healthy) we have looked to retain them. The new access road in from Turnpike Road has been adjusted through the design process to retain the G6 (Common Lime). The road between the staff car park and the custody building has also been adjusted to retain T5800.

However, it is acknowledged that a number of trees will need to be removed for the new development. The group of trees that are on the eastern boundary adjacent to the new custody suite (T35, T36, T41, T40 & G17) have to be removed in line with the Home Office Design Guide.

Tree planting forms part of the proposals to mitigate the tree loss and enhance the landscaping of the site.

Please refer to the arboriculturist report and landscape strategy for further details.



- Existing trees retained
- Trees to be removed
- Proposed trees

4.5 Memorial Garden

The new Memorial Garden proposals replace an existing memorial area, located adjacent to the northern boundary, which currently comprises a memorial stone, bench, and small area of untidy paving.

The proposals seek to primarily create a Memorial Garden that evokes a sense of peace, quiet and contemplation.

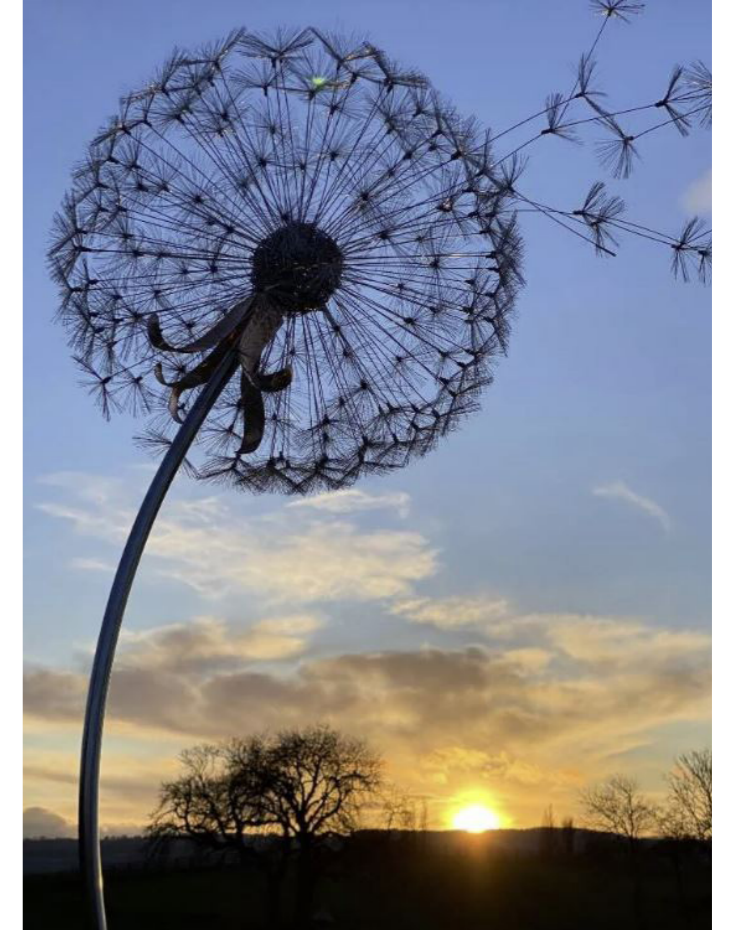
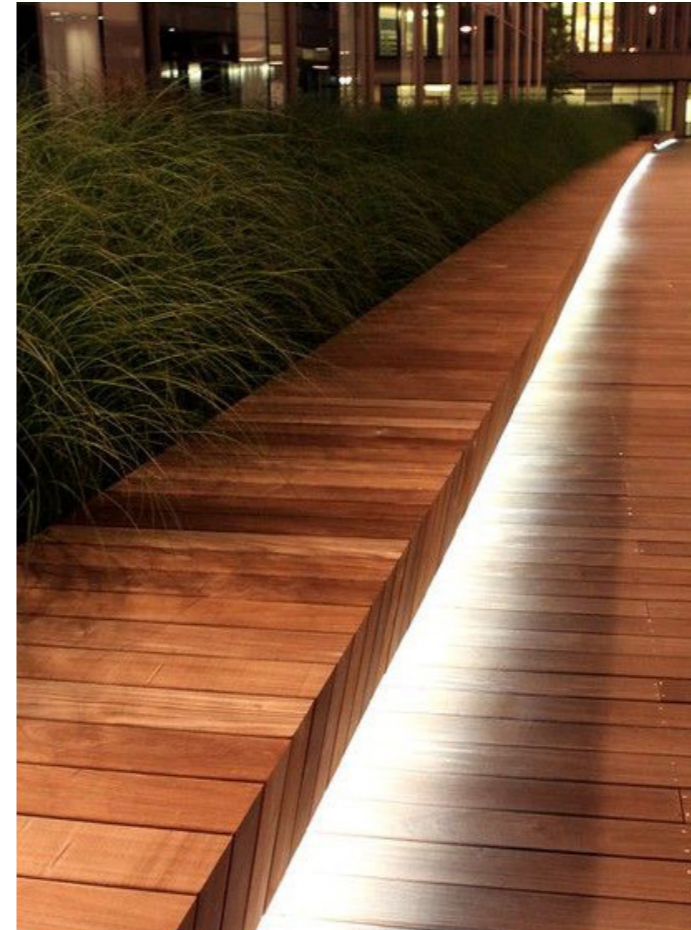
Nestled within the large existing trees in the centre of the site, the setting is already mature and well shaded. Stepped access from the central building joins a boardwalk, which leads to a circular central decked area with wooden seating around the edge, the relocated memorial stone and motto inscribed into a timber feature. Beyond this, a stepped feature provides further informal seating and access to the lower decked area, where a sculpture provides a focal point.

Its secondary purpose is to provide space for staff to relax between shifts and during breaks. This is fulfilled by pathways, offset from the main central area, which provide fully DDA compliant access and seating areas which utilise relocated memorial benches. The distance ensures that the privacy of the central area is maintained, and staff welfare is also considered.

The decked areas and boardwalk structures are raised above ground level, using ground screws, to avoid disturbing the Root Protection Areas of the trees.

The walkways will be further enhanced with native woodland planting; several new trees will be planted in open areas adjacent to the Memorial Garden.

Lighting will be kept to a minimum and low level only.



4.6 Boundary Treatments



Given the function of the site, security is of the paramount and managing the interface between the public facing and secure parts of the site needs to be carefully considered. The proposed site layout addresses this junction by clearly defining the public/private areas using fences and gates to delineate the boundaries.

The three buildings will not be open to the public and the site has been organised with this in mind. Any visitors will be arriving by appointment only and will be given instructions on where to attend on arrival. A detailed narrative on the process of release from custody is provided in section 4.2.

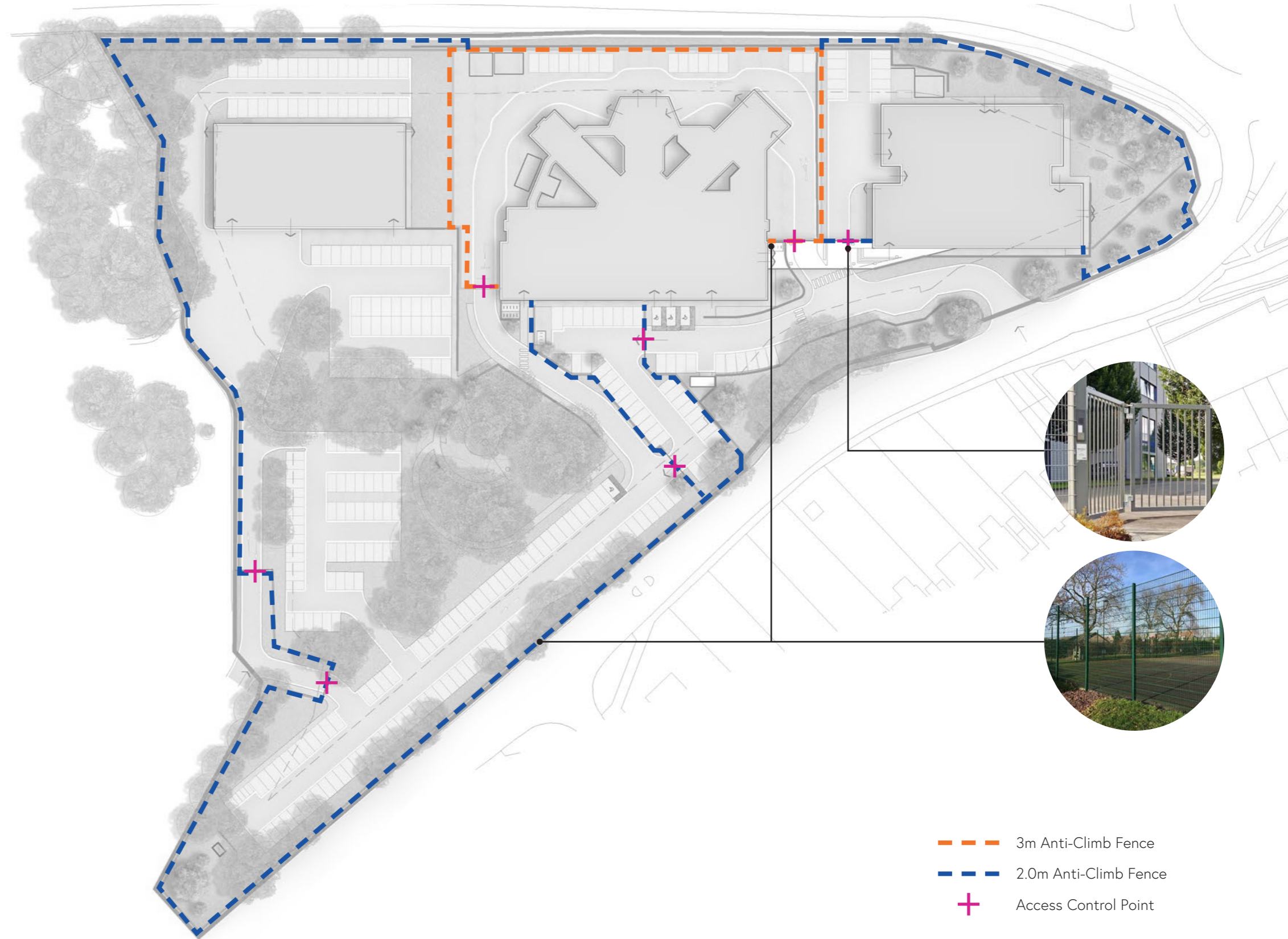
This building is not intended for public visitors and is very much a specialist operational site. To that end the boundary treatments have been designed to secure the site with the exception of a pocket around the main entrance.

The Home Office Design Guide for Custody requires a 3m anti-climb fence to secure the envelope and this needs to all be obscure so as to prevent anyone looking into the secure area, protecting the privacy and dignity of those entering the custody area.

The established hedgerow along the dual carriageway will be maintained, with the fence line sitting behind and a lockable maintenance gate being provided for access.

Around the rest of the site a 2.0m high anti-climb fence is proposed to secure the site.

Design measures that will be part of the strategy to reduce crime or the threat of crime include the installation of a CCTV system. External lighting will be widely used to help create a safe environment for staff and students. The landscape design will incorporate when applicable, 'Secure by Design' principles'. The police 'architectural liaison officer' has been consulted during the pre-application period.



- - - 3m Anti-Climb Fence
- - - 2.0m Anti-Climb Fence
- + Access Control Point

4.7 Scale & Massing

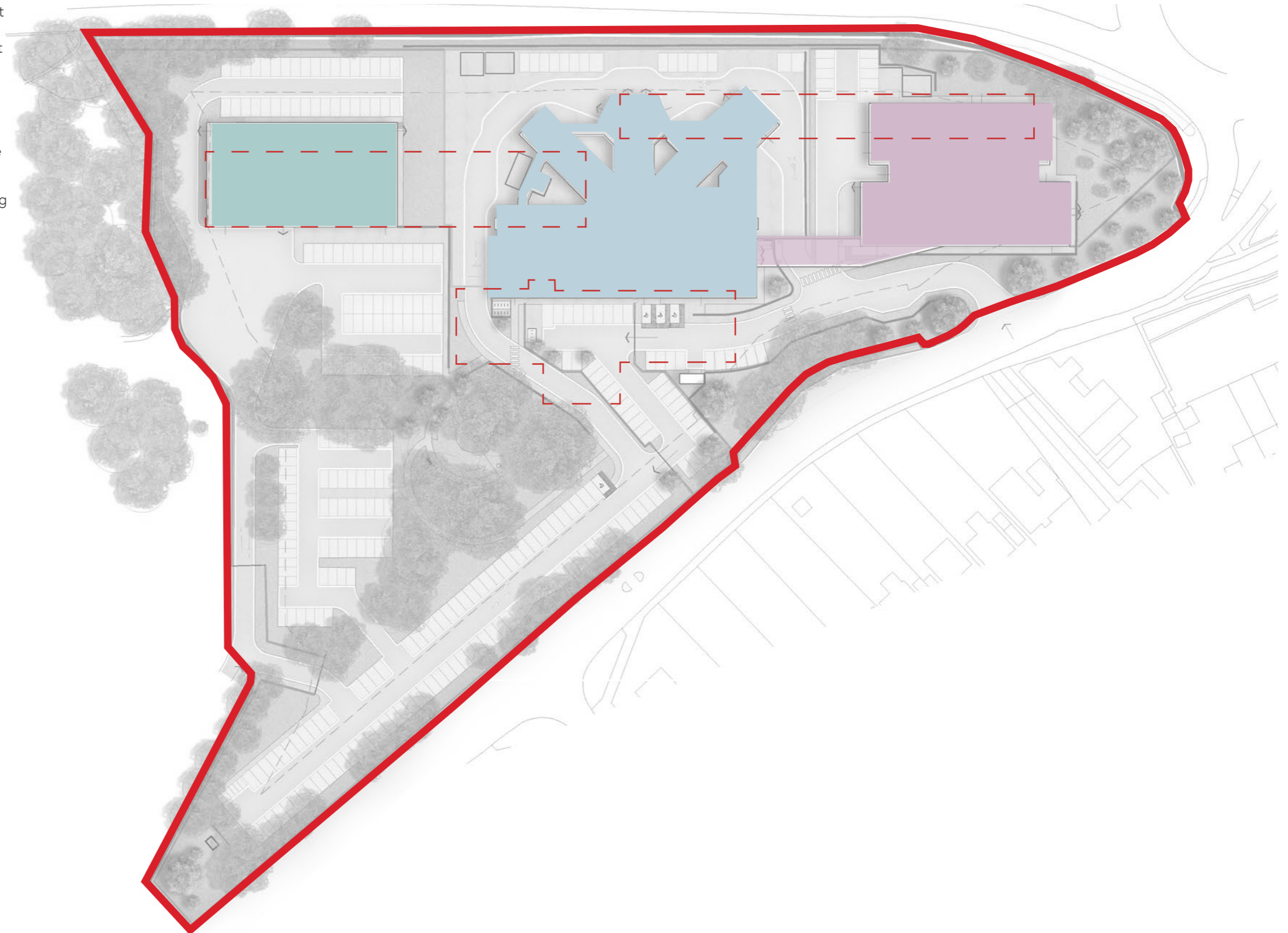


Following the analysis of the site it was determined that the best location for the new buildings is in a similar location to the existing buildings to minimise the impact on the trees on the site and allowing the buildings to work with the site topography.

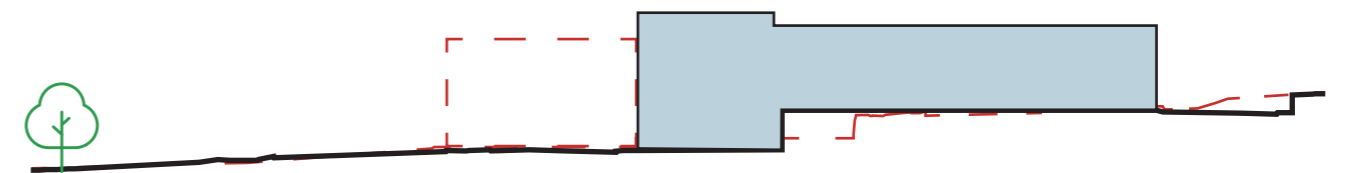
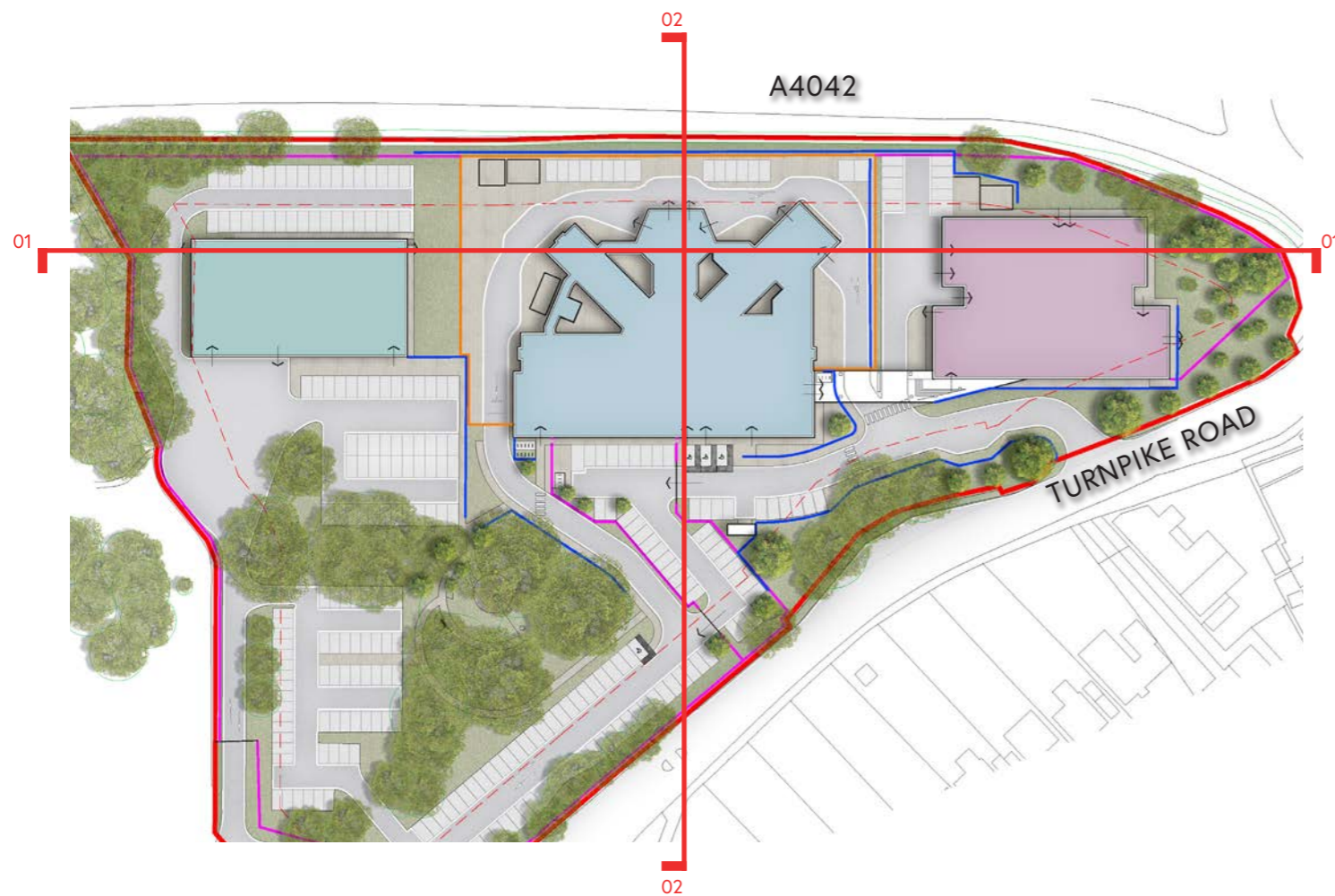
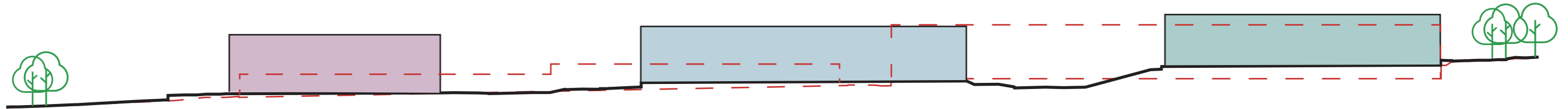
The three new buildings are proposed towards the eastern boundary, in a similar location to the existing. The buildings will use the natural topography of the site where possible.

As there is little by way of context for scale and massing to draw from except the existing buildings, these have been referenced and considered when developing the proposals.

The scale of the proposals is also a direct response to the requirements in the brief.



4.1 Scale & Massing



The existing buildings are a mix of 1-3 storey buildings, utilising the topography on the site to include semi-basement spaces. There is also a large chimney centrally located on the site.

The proposals are also a mix of 1-3 storey buildings. The Police Hub is similar in height to the 2/3 storey building on the site. We have utilised the natural topography so the building heights step and we have include a lower ground floor for Police Hub, allowing us to utilise this space for locker rooms, plant space etc.

The vehicle workshop is higher as it follows the natural topography of the site.

The training building is taller than the existing vehicle workshop that currently sits on the corner of the site as we look to address the roundabout.

4.1 Scale & Massing

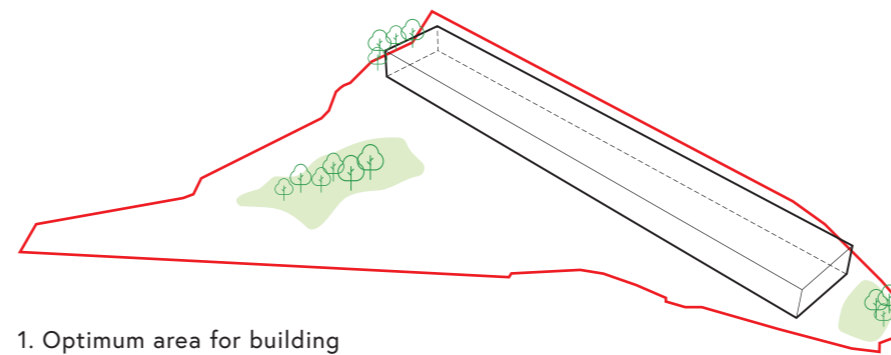
The process of developing the massing of the proposals started with the analysis of the site, followed by the operational requirements including consideration of the Home Office Design Guide.

The custody and training building have some very specific requirements imposed by the Home Office Design guide which naturally dictates a public face and a more utilitarian face to the building, this aesthetically makes them naturally a two sided building. We have therefore chosen to provide the more public facing side of the building to face Turnpike road and the custody element and the practical side of training address the eastern boundary against the A4042 which can be provided with an element of screening and is visually experienced at speed.

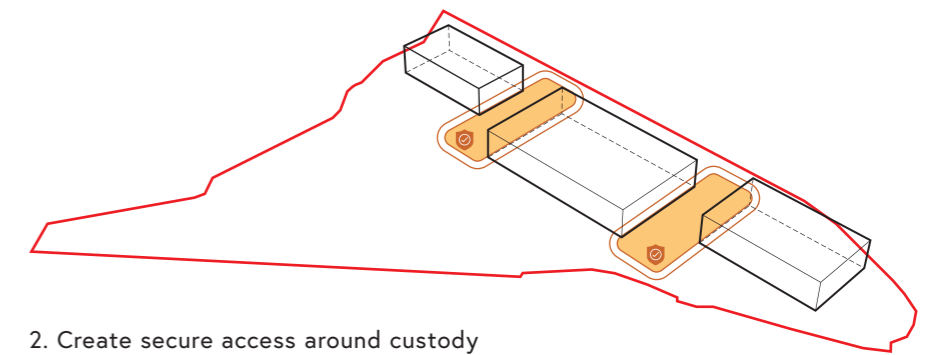
The police hub and training buildings were then linked to make the use more efficient and encourage collaboration between the teams in each building.

The split of the training building (practical / theoretical learning) offered an opportunity to break down the mass of the building facing Turnpike Road.

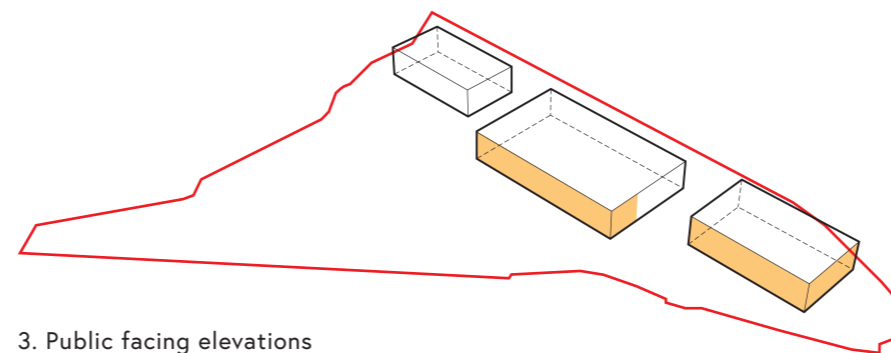
Then two key corners were identified as focal points of the development.



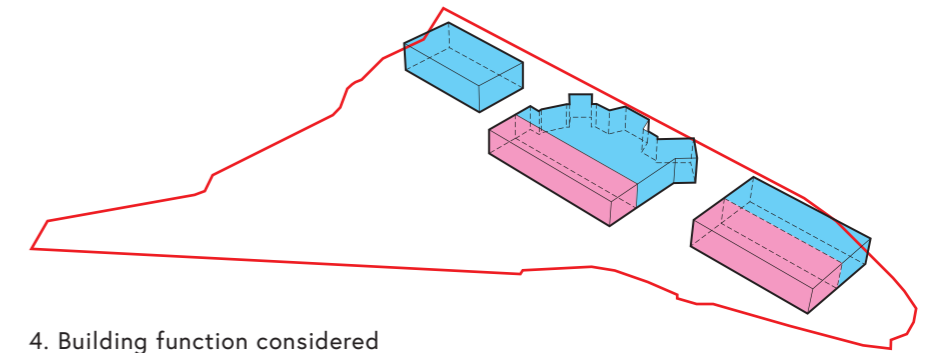
1. Optimum area for building



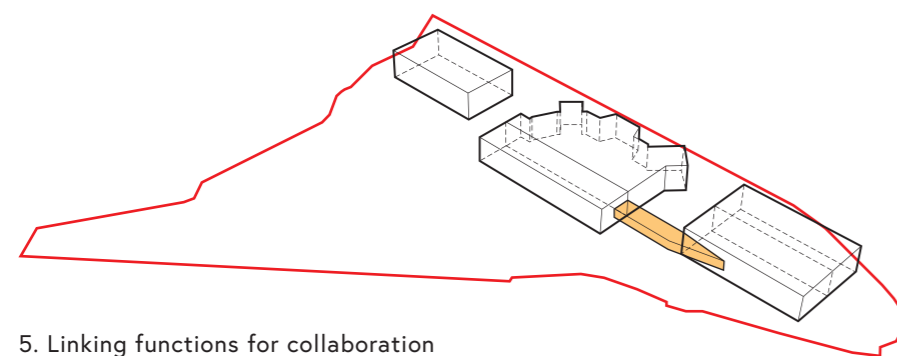
2. Create secure access around custody



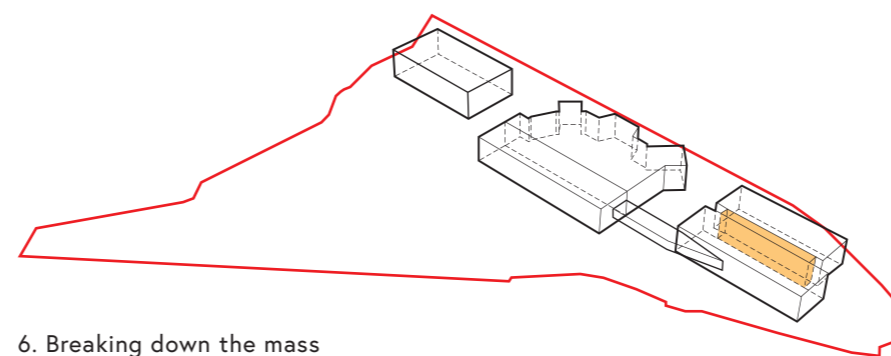
3. Public facing elevations



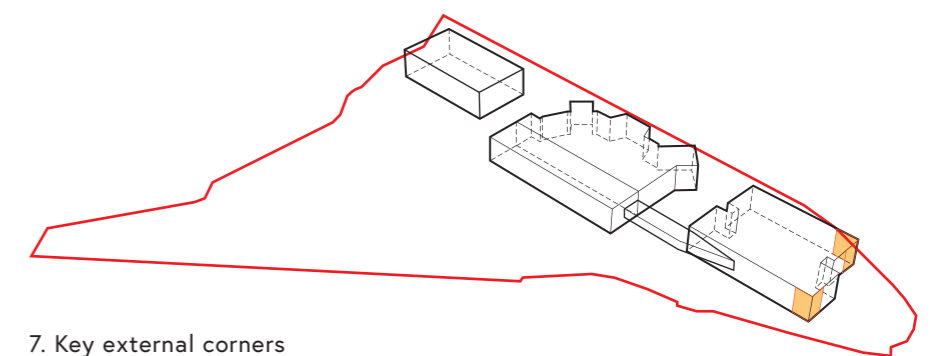
4. Building function considered



5. Linking functions for collaboration



6. Breaking down the mass



7. Key external corners

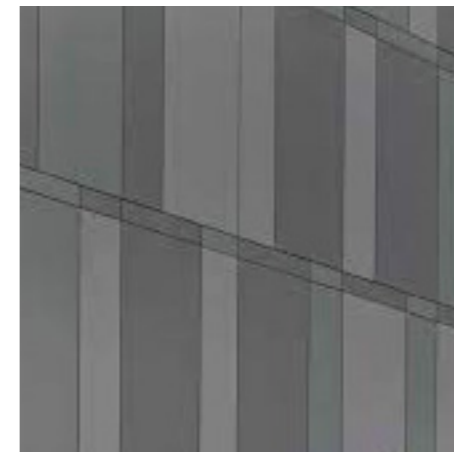
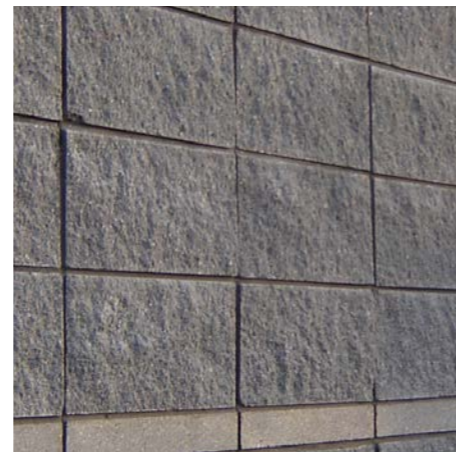
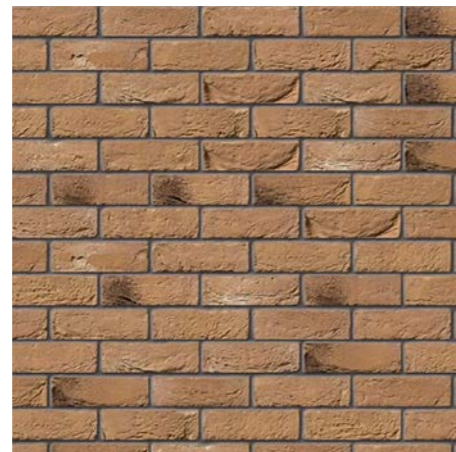
4.8 Materiality

The proposals look to create a building that represents the modern Police Force using it. The materials used across the three buildings represent the use of all the buildings whilst being complimentary so the site has a campus feel.

The brick and slate provide a solid grounding to the proposals. The glazing on the front denotes the areas that are publicly accessible and also breaks this up the masonry.

The metal cladding is used where the more heavy duty, practical activities take place.

The rear of police hub fair faced architectural blockwork is proposed as the custody secure envelope requires this to meet secure standards. The areas where this is being proposed are to the rear of the building which sits much lower than the A4042 and has a fence between the dual carriageway and the building providing an element of screening. This elevation will be seen at high speed and is therefore felt it is a suitable material for this location to meet the physical and visual requirements.



4.9 Key Features

One of the key features of the design is the exaggerated frame around the curtain walling on the front of the building.

This looks to add definition and interest. The angled section represents the topography of the site. A recessed channel runs beneath the frame to give it depth and provide a clean break between the masonry and curtain wall elements.



The second key feature is the corner that presents itself to the roundabout. This elevation shows the two sides of the building.

The curtain walling frame wraps around the corner creating an inviting elevation to the start of the development. On the corner directly on the roundabout, although there is no opportunity for glazing, the corner has been articulated with a different cladding adding interest. It also provides opportunity for Police Force signage, these two distinct elements also help to represent the different functions that occur within the building.



5.0 Appearance












Corstorphine & Wright



Contact us to discuss your project

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