

**NEW ADDITIONAL  
LEARNING NEEDS  
SCHOOL (3-19 YEARS),  
CLYDACH**

**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
Design and Access Statement  
Pre - application Consultation**

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# 01 Introduction

# 01. Introduction

## 1.1\_Project Summary

### Site Location:

The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany CF40 2XX

### Size and Type of Provision:

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) is proposing to develop an existing council owned site to provide 176 places for 3-19 year olds with additional learning needs. The new-build school will accommodate learners with a wide range of needs, including but not limited to; Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Social and Emotional Mental Health needs (SEMH).

The proposed development, will include:

- School buildings to accommodate teaching facilities, dining, and other necessary areas
- Cycle storage, bin storage and external planting
- Car parking (including electric vehicle charging)
- Car, taxi, and mini-bus drop off
- External learning spaces, secured outdoor play and learning areas

### Pupil Needs

The new school will support learners with a range of needs and support requirements, including, for example:

- Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
- Severe Communication Difficulties (including Autism Spectrum Disorder)
- Severe Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
- Severe Developmental Difficulties
- Other Learning Difficulties

These projections formed the basis of determining the proportions of class-bases for each need in each year.

There are anticipated to be:

32 pupils in Early Primary (Nursery to Year 2)

52 in Primary (years 3 -6)

70 in Secondary (years 7-11), and

22 in Post-16

## 1.2\_Purpose of this Report

This document forms part of the Pre-Application Consultation information for planning for the development works at the aforementioned site. It is intended to supplement the information required by the Planning Authority by summarising the functional requirements of the brief, together with the architects' interpretation of the site context and the response to it.

The key purpose of the Design and Access Statement for Pre-Application Consultation is to ensure:

- Good design
- Thoughtful design processes have been applied
- Sustainable approaches
- Better understanding of the analysis which underpins the design
- Stakeholder engagement.



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

## 02 Brief



# 02. Brief

## Vision, Ethos and Values

This chapter outlines the brief for the project, which forms the project requirements and design framework for the new school.

The information in these sections has been summarised and/or further developed from the original Design Brief developed at RIBA Stage 1. This includes outcomes from the client engagement meetings at RIBA Stages 1-3, analysis on the wider educational context in Wales, and the structure and curriculum strategy specific to the School.

## 2.1\_ Education in Wales

This section outlines the Welsh educational context, and the resultant impact on project requirements that have been key to the development of the design brief, schedule of accommodation and concept design for the new school.

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**, which was introduced by the Welsh Government in 2015, is centred around the following seven Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The introduction of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** (WBFGA) has been successful in driving recent social, economic, environmental, and cultural policies and legislation in Wales, in particular those centred around the well-being of young people and our future generations.

These policies and visions are reshaping the experiences of young people; changing how and what they learn, and subsequently impacting the way in which the spaces they learn in are designed.

Some key examples are explored below:

### Curriculum for Wales (Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

- The Act builds upon the WBFGA to enable people to fulfil their potential by diversifying areas of learning accordingly.

- It requires schools to create a customised and suitable curriculum for their students ensuring progress for all students throughout their learning journey. Curriculum development is to prioritise experience as well as learning.
- It prioritises the health and well-being of school children in Wales as one of its core areas of learning and experience, encompassing physical health development, mental health, emotional well-being, and social well-being.

### Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET)

- This act established a new legal framework for providing support to children and young individuals with additional learning needs, learners be supported from ages 0-25.
- The Act supports the transition of learners from school to post-16 education to promote greater equity in terms of support and rights for this group of learners.
- The ALNET focuses on increased participation of children and young people, increased collaboration between health, social and other services and education and a unified plan to ensure consistency and continuity.

### Community Focused Schools

- In line with the wider ambition for 'cohesive communities' (refer to WBFGA goals), the **Community Focused Schools** guide outlines the Welsh Governments' desire for all schools to build partnerships with families, respond to the needs of their community and collaborate with other services.
- The guide suggests that designing places for learning with family and community involvement in mind can lead to higher levels of pupil achievement and improved access to essential services.



Source: ALN fact sheet: how will the Act affect children, young people, parents and carers?

## 2.2\_Education in Rhondda Cynon Taf

This section outlines the educational context in Rhondda Cynon Taf, which has formed the basis for the development of the design brief, schedule of accommodation and concept design for the new school.

At a local authority level RCT Education and Inclusion Services have developed a number of strategic documents, which build upon Welsh Government drivers. These include the following two documents:

- Strategic Plan for 2022-2025
- Strategic Plan for Wellbeing 2022-2025

There are common themes across both documents, including the following key strategic priorities for wellbeing:

- Delivering a transformational curriculum for health and wellbeing
- Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families
- Enhancing the wellbeing of our learners and the workforce

The Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 is centred around the values of Collaboration, Aspiration, Inclusion and Innovation. The following pages outline Rhondda Cynon Taf's education ambition, containing excerpts from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Corporate Estates Strategic Brief for this project, and as taken from The Education Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

### Collaboration

RCTCBC views partnership and collaboration as integral to supporting vulnerable learners and their families. The aim to support learners' families is outlined in Strategic Priority 3 of RCT's education strategic brief, with parent's role in their children's cognitive, social and emotional development viewed as critical.

Strategic Priority 4 encourages promoting opportunities for learners to actively engage in their communities.

### Aspiration

Rhondda Cynon Taf's education strategic brief outlines the need for all

learners will be encouraged, challenged and supported to have high aspirations and expectations of themselves.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) is committed to delivering improved performance in Education provision and the requirements of the Welsh Government's latest National Policy Qualified for Life- the educational reform programme to 2020.

### Inclusion

Significant emphasis has been placed on well-being and the support for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) within Rhondda Cynon Taf's policy development. "Improved mental and emotional well-being for staff and learners;" is noted as a key marker of the success of Rhondda Cynon Taf's priorities as set out in the education strategic plan.

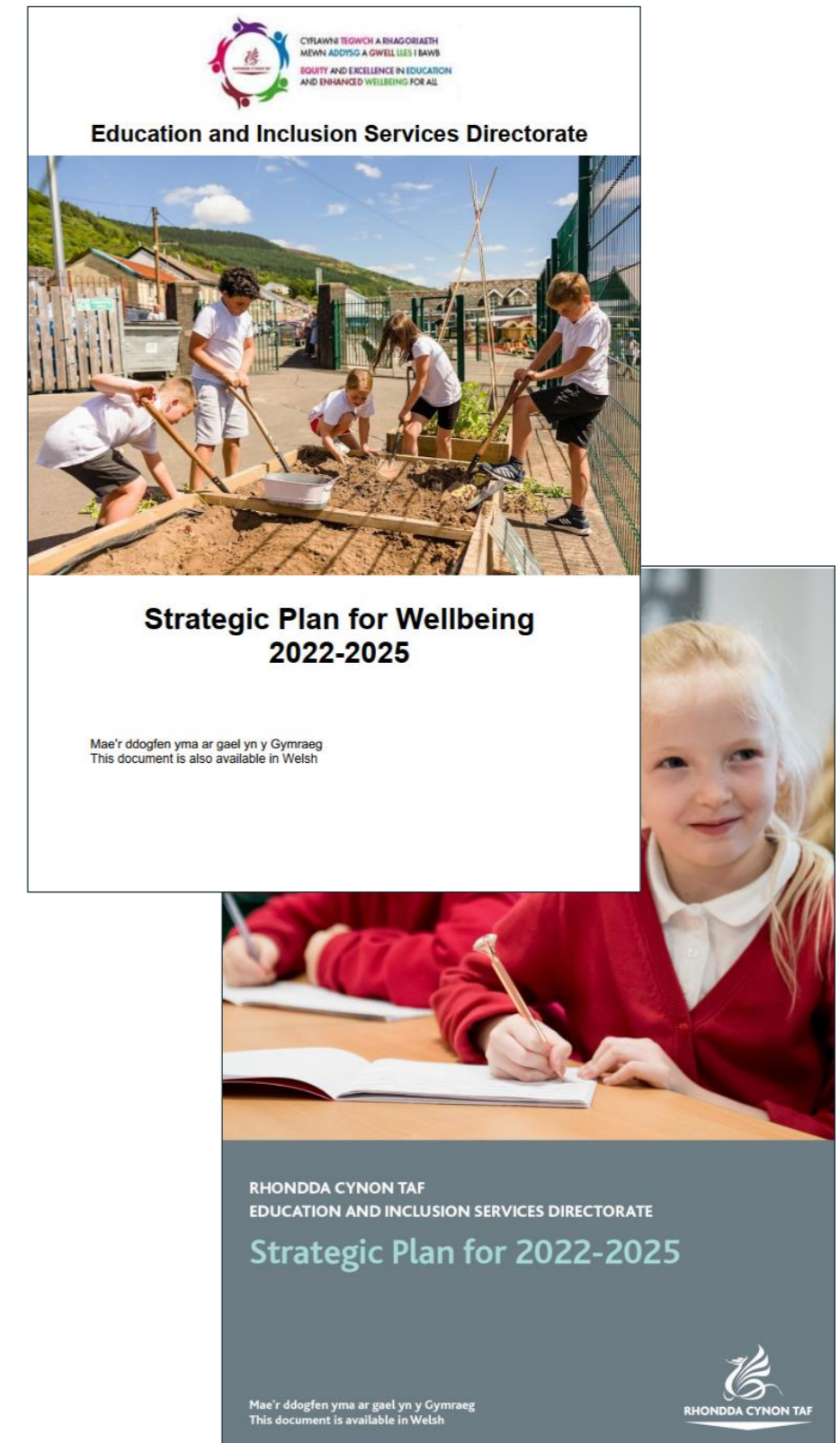
Rhondda Cynon Taf view the new Welsh curriculum as an important vehicle for embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in the experience of learning and teaching and for giving learners an understanding of their rights. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC outlines the rights of children and young people to express their views, feelings and wishes, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

### Innovation

'Every School a Great School' is RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning's Strategic Plan. 'Every School a Great School', focusing not on institutions but meeting the needs and aspirations of all children and young people through high quality learning, recognising the importance of the teacher and other school staff.

Strategic Priority 5 of the education strategic plan outlines the need to deliver safe and innovative 21st-century learning environments for learners and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This includes the requirement for new schools to be built to Net Zero in Operation and align with ambitious embodied carbon targets.

New school environments should enhance staff and pupil motivation and facilitate improvements in standards – academic, life skills, attendance and behaviour. The aim is to transform the way students/pupils learn. This is an opportunity change the whole idea of "school" from a physical place where children are simply taught to one where a community of individuals can share learning experiences and activities.



Source: RCT Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 and Strategic Plan for Wellbeing 2022-2025



## 2.3 Stakeholder Engagement - Process

### Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder engagement has taken place throughout RIBA Stages 1 - 3 of this project as a key resource in optimising the design of the new school to support user needs.

Stakeholder engagement has included holders of varying roles from RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Corporate Estates teams, school representatives, designers and members of the contracting team.

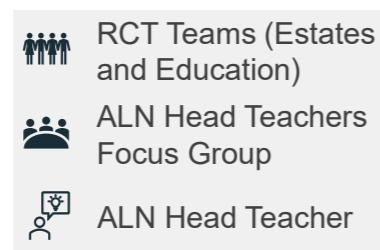
Owing to the project being for a new school, a 'Focus Group' style of engagement was implemented to represent the school at RIBA Stage 1, comprising of the Headteachers from three similar schools within the County: At present there are four ALN schools maintained by RCTCBC; three of which are 'Mixed Needs' ALN schools similar to the brief / pupil need profile for this project, namely:

- Ysgol Ty Coch, and
- Ysgol Hen Felin
- Park Lane School

The shared experiences of the Headteachers and exchanging of ideas helped to form the basis of the new school's design; providing an opportunity to identify key themes and establish a collaborative vision for the new school.

This process has provided an opportunity for other stakeholders to learn from local examples, identifying best practice and lessons learnt to take forward for the design of the new school, and capitalising on continuous learning and improvement.

This stakeholder engagement process is summarised in the diagram, right. During RIBA Stage 2 and 3 the three schools were represented by a single Headteacher, who was able to build on the concepts and strategies agreed with the wider focus group.

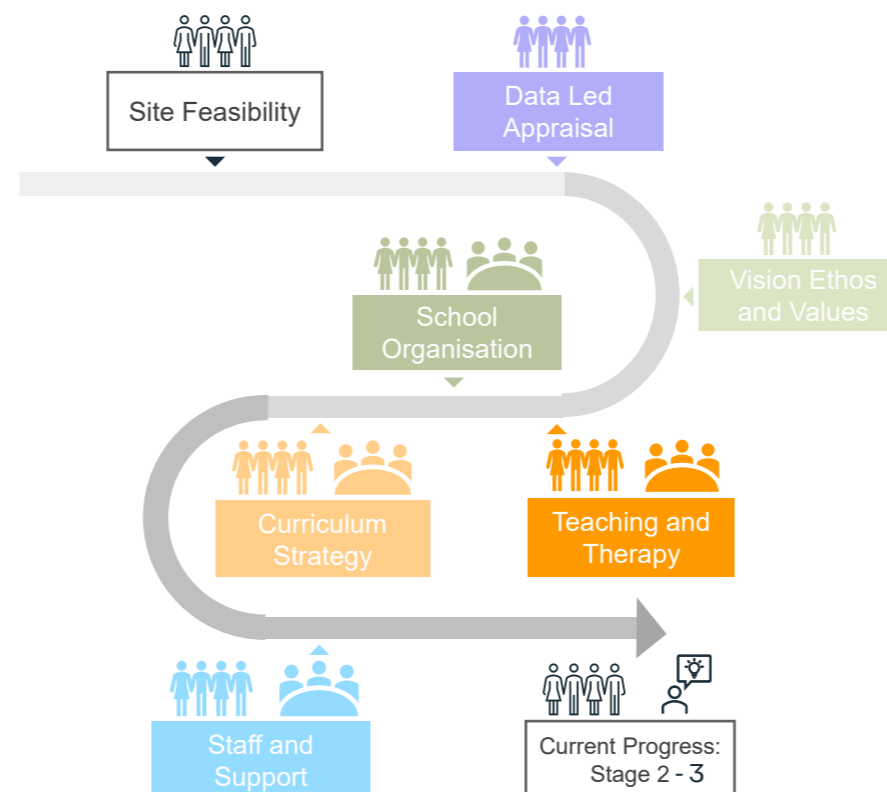


### Design Brief Process

Initial engagement on School-specific practices from the macro detail to micro, based around the following topics, supported the development of the Design Brief and School-Specific Schedule of Spaces at RIBA Stage 1.

- Data Led Appraisal (Pupil Numbers and Needs)
- Vision, ethos and values
- School organisation
- Curriculum strategy
- Teaching / Learning and Experience
- Therapy
- Staff
- Support Spaces

These topics have since been revisited during RIBA Stages 2 and 3 as the initial briefing outcomes were tested during the development of the design.



### Client Engagement Process

Throughout RIBA Stage 2 and 3, a series of Client Engagement Meetings (CEM) were organised involving school representatives and staff.

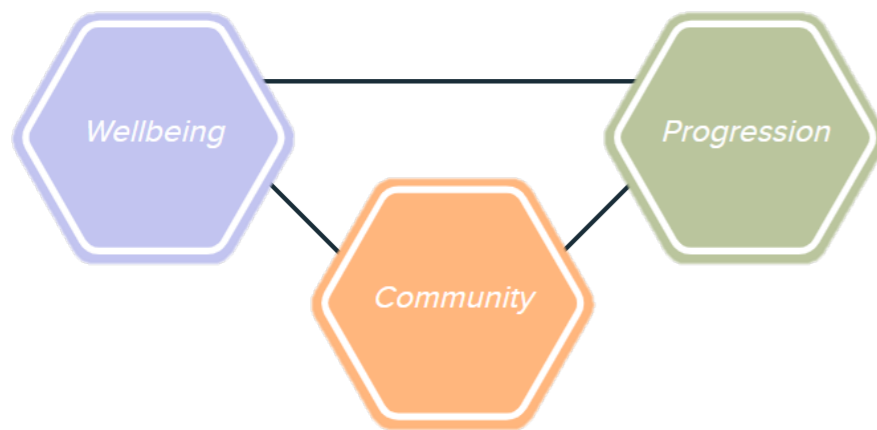
Regular technical meetings are ongoing throughout Stage 3.



## Key Themes

Three key themes were identified through the stakeholder engagement that took place during RIBA Stage 1. These were:

- Wellbeing
- Community
- Progression



All are themes represented in the RCT Strategic Plans presented earlier in this report, and also themes recurrent in the Welsh Government policy and legislation documented in the previous pages.

These themes were used as a basis in developing a Building Bulletin 104 baseline schedule of accommodation into an RCTCBC-specific schedule responding to local need, and local practices.

The design shall not only be formulated from a schedule of areas, standards, and regulations, but should reflect the needs and activities of the pupils attending the school and of their teachers' positive and proactive approach to the delivery of their pupil-centric curriculum.

Each shall be discussed in more detail in the following pages detailing how key 'user-inspired' design drivers have underpinned the development of the briefing information and subsequently the concept design of the new school.

## Curriculum Strategy

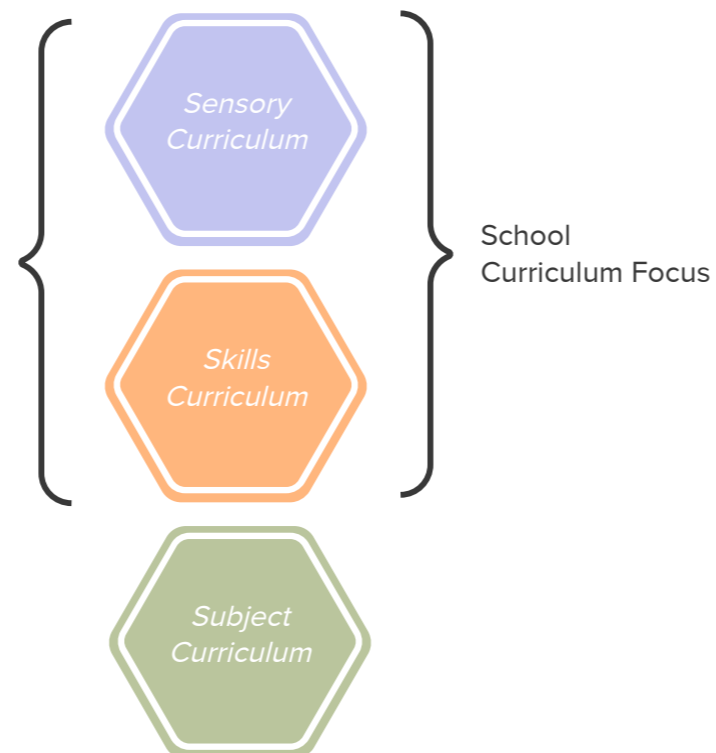
Engagement with the stakeholder group determined the new school will focus on the sensory and skills curricula given the anticipated needs of the pupils.

The school will follow a need over age approach to teaching. However, the school will be arranged generally to support broad groupings of ages for example primary, secondary and post-16.

The school's curriculum, aligned to the new curriculum for Wales, will be agile in its design, to encompass different learning, experience and therapy approaches within flexible educational settings, to meet the changing needs of its pupils in their everyday life. The design of the new school needs to support this flexibility in learning approaches.

Every pupil will access a curriculum appropriate for each different stage of their school life. Younger pupils will access learning through a mixture of play and adult-led activities in a range of differing and interchangeable learning zones.

As pupils progress through the school the design should support the increased independence of the pupils, creating opportunities for vocational learning and more guided life skills.



## 2.4\_Wellbeing and Community Suites

### Mapping Family and Community Engagement

During the stakeholder engagement it became clear that family and community engagement were key priorities across the three 'Mixed Needs' ALN schools in RCT.

A mapping exercise was initially undertaken to understand the full extent of engagement and supporting services being provided by the schools, in order to determine the spatial requirements needed to facilitate these in the new school.

Following this Ysgol Hen Felin's existing facilities were used as a basis to build upon as it has a dedicated space for engaging with the school community, in addition to a well established programme of Wellbeing Officer-led workshops, learning programmes and activities for pupils, parents and the community.

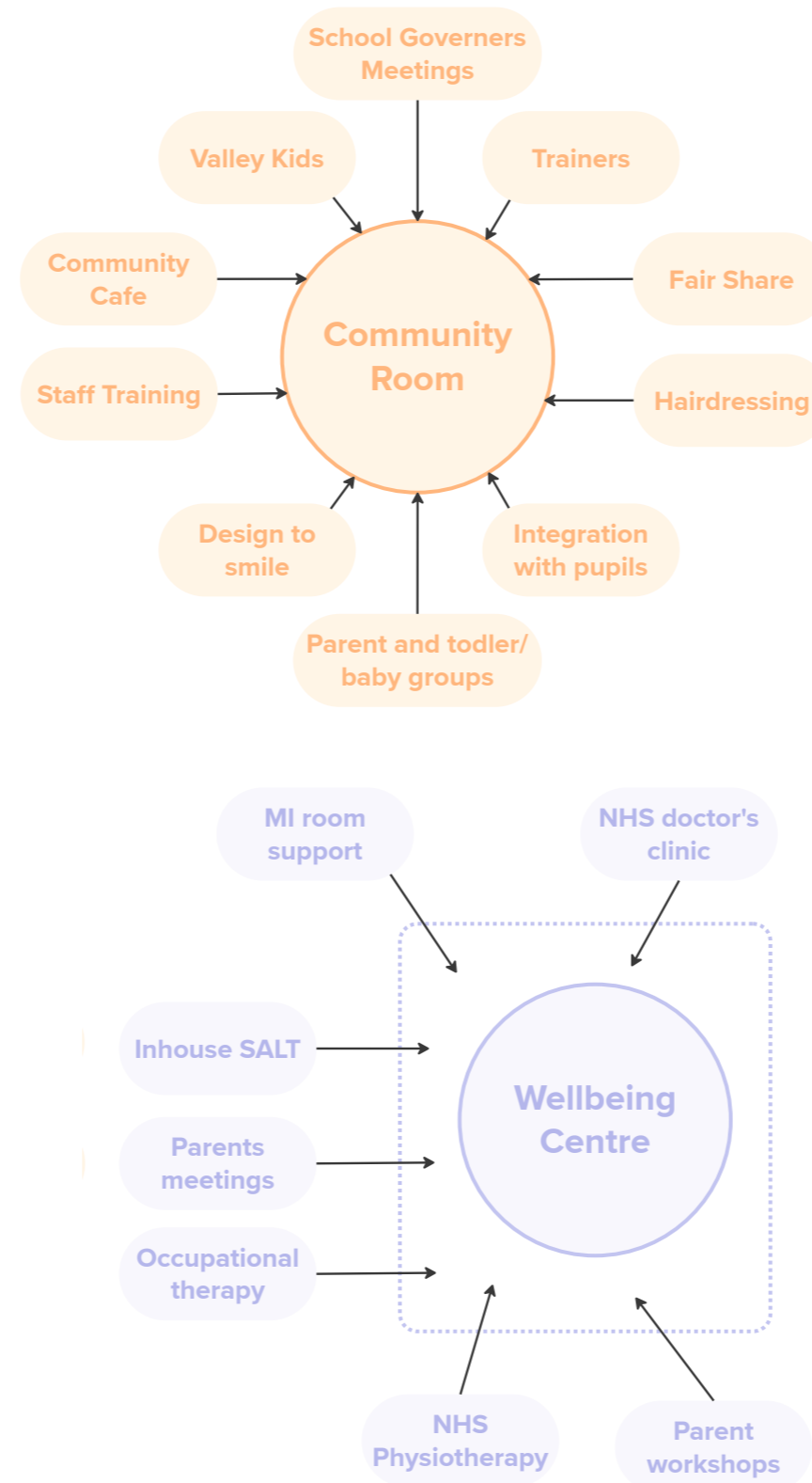
Family engagement includes pupil focussed therapy and wellbeing activities, which make up part of the sensory curriculum being prioritised in the new school.

Owing to the number of related activities taking place at Ysgol Hen Felin, which are expected to be replicated in the new school, it was determined that area would be prioritised to provide an additional space in the new school to support family and community engagement; enabling programmes to be split in to two distinctive types, across two separate spaces:

- Community Room (an externally facing space to be scheduled for community use)
- Wellbeing Centre (for school internal use)

This is demonstrated in the diagram to the right.

This mapping is translated into an adjacency diagram, further right: A Community Suite will act in conjunction with a Wellbeing Centre. Together, they will deliver a broad engagement programme for the school community.



### Wellbeing Centre

The Wellbeing Centre will be developed around a wellbeing resource base (illustrated right) which will be timetabled to suit the needs of the pupils and their families. Centrally located therapy, sensory and medical spaces shall be accessed off it.

The central space shall act as a coordination point and resource base for pupil therapy and wellbeing activities, and also family engagement. It will compliment the more structured therapy spaces grouped around and accessed from it. The Wellbeing Centre may be used to support parents attending to experience their children's therapy curriculum, and parent workshops, for example.

As the new school will focus on a sensory curriculum area will be prioritised for sensory and therapy activities, which will be delivered centrally (from the Wellbeing Centre, and also supported by interventions locally, in and off the classrooms.

The therapy focussed facilities should be easily accessible to wider parties out of hours for use including:

- Hydrotherapy pool for private hire for other users including baby groups or as an additional medical/therapy facility locally for local authority/charity organisation use.
- Wellbeing Centre as an additional medical/therapy facility locally for local authority/charity organisation use.

### Community Room

As part of this ambition to build a community for the new school, there will be a community room provided.

An extract from the RIBA Stage 1 adjacency diagram is included on the right. This identified the Community Room as externally facing provision, accessed outside of the school's secure line as it will be used throughout the school day.

Uses might include activities where the school's pupils and local mainstream pupils come together, or parent toddler sessions, for example.

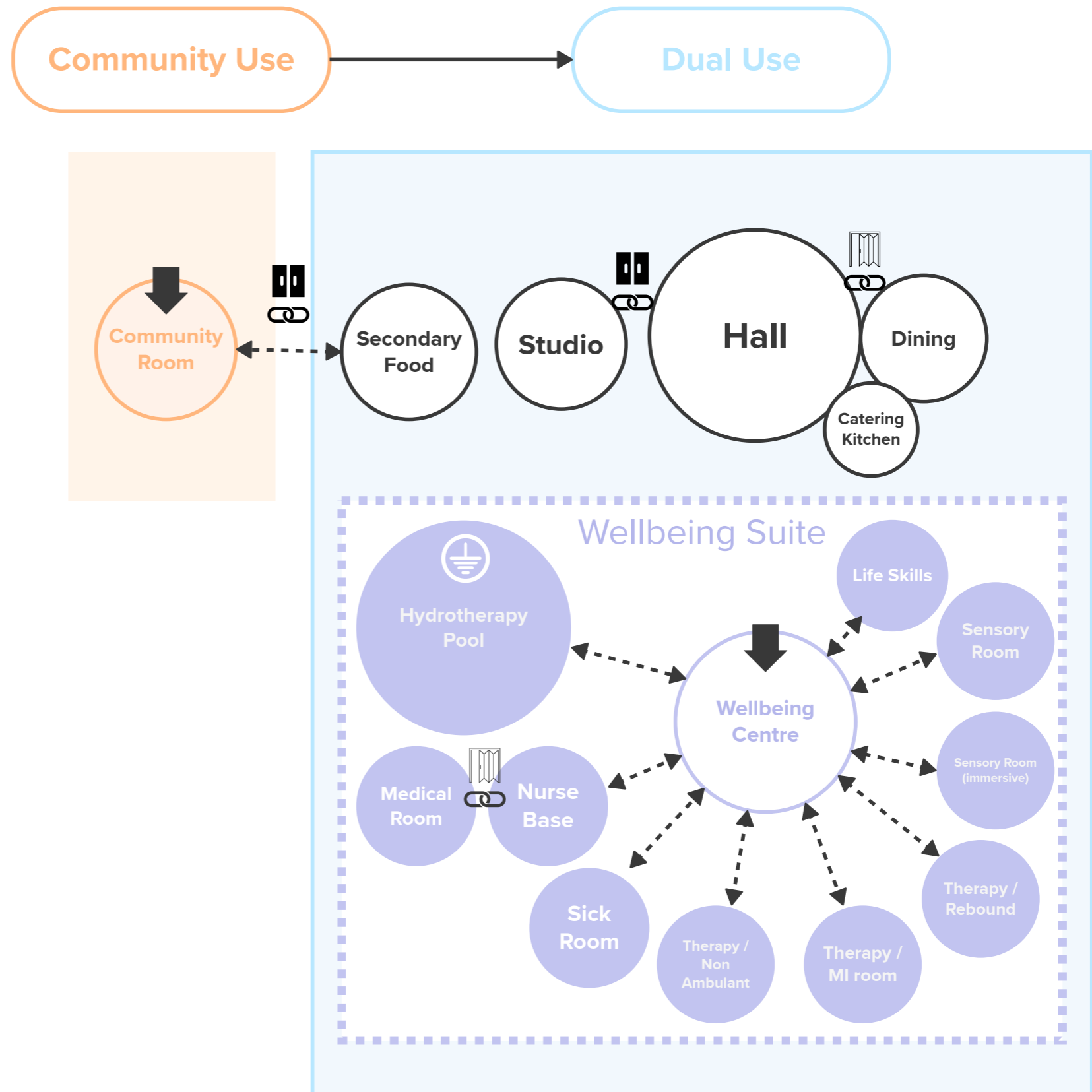
This space shall be used to support the curriculum. The adjacency strategy has been developed to maximise and enhance the use of the space, including connecting it to the secondary food technology classroom to facilitate the development of broader work/social skills, for example where pupils may be able to serve their cooked or prepared food to staff or family members.

### Community Use

As well as accessing the Community Room during the school day, outside of school hours specific spaces in the school could be available for a variety of uses.

### 2.5\_Progression

Progression, relating to area allocation and the organisation of spaces and facilities provided, was a recurring theme during stakeholder engagement. Progression is at the heart of the Curriculum for Wales and has been key to the development of the briefing information and more recently the concept design, incorporated in the every day, and through a series of developed pathways.



## 2.6\_School Vision

This page summarises the vision for the design of the new school through a series of key concepts, aspirations and values, which have been developed following stakeholder discussions.

These concepts capture the key project aims already set out across the previous pages of this report, and culminate in the ambition to create an RCTCBC-specific scheme that responds to local need, and local practices.

Each concept has Wellbeing at its core, with the aim of creating a 'user-inspired' environment that can support the quality of life of young people inhabiting these spaces, as well as the teachers, professionals and parents supporting them.

The new design shall be inspiring, innovative, and flexible to stimulate individual needs, and also allow for a diversity of approaches to education in the future.

The design of the new school needs to create a sense of place, community and belonging for pupils from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and faith. And must create an environment that reflects the core values of the school and be at the heart of the community it serves.

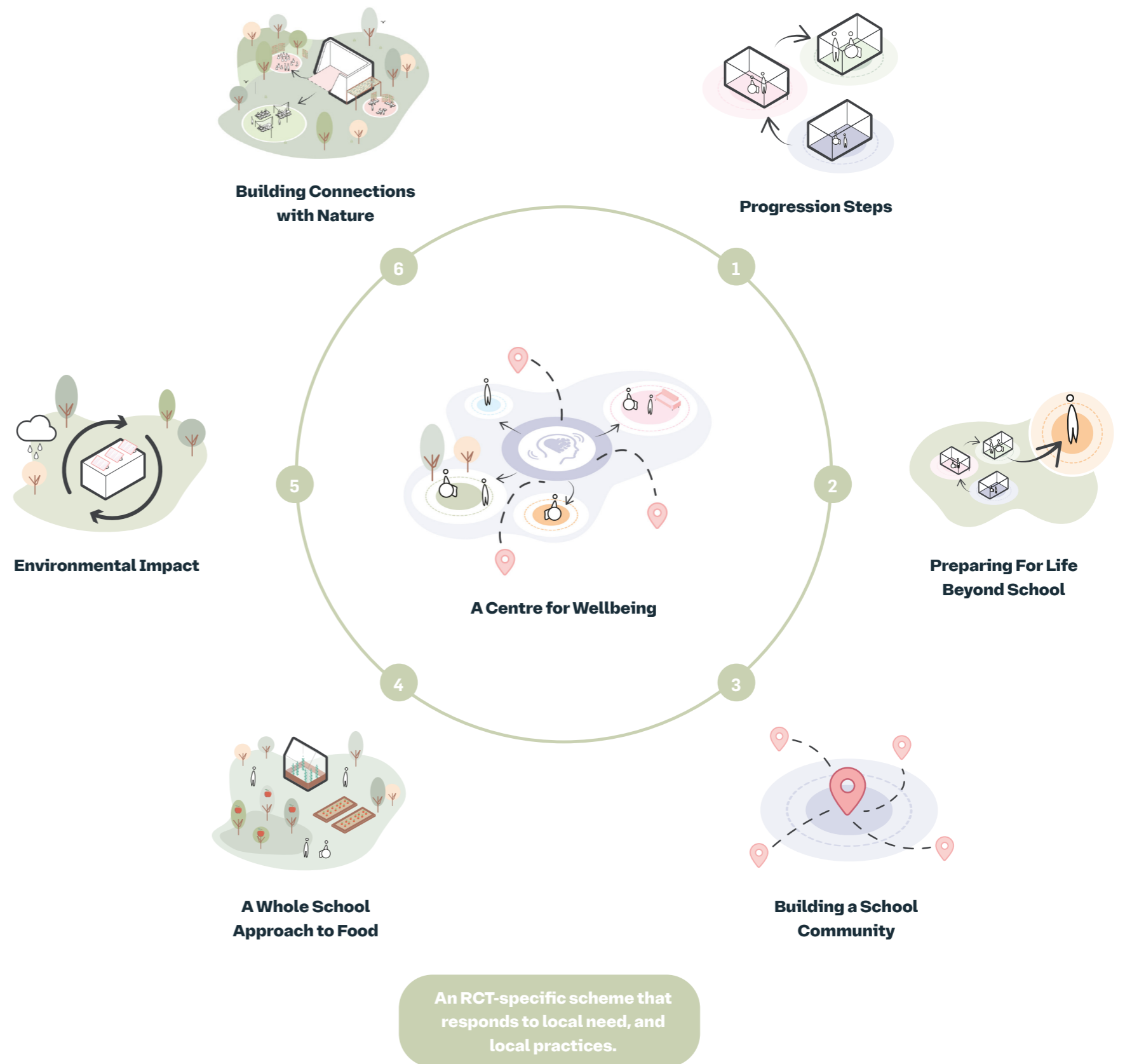
The quality of school design is inextricably linked to the quality of education and a stimulating environment, designed to maximise opportunities to fully develop each individual pupil, shall be developed. The new environment is required to further enhance motivation and facilitate improvements in standards – achievement, life skills, attendance, and behaviour.

### A Centre for Wellbeing

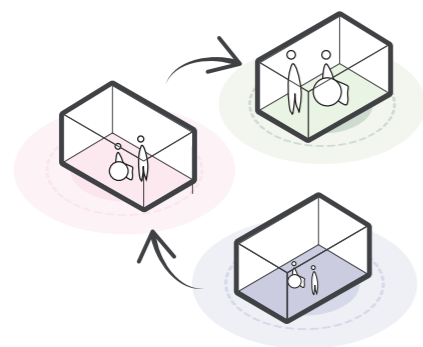
This core concept underpins each of the others identified in the diagram, right. Each concept builds upon the idea of the school as a Centre for Wellbeing, but with a specific focus, such as a whole school approach to food, or building connections with nature.

In addition to being a central theme in the design of the new school key medical, therapy and sensory spaces shall be centralised to form a shared Wellbeing Centre, which shall be located in the heart of the school.

The Wellbeing Centre will be developed around a central wellbeing resource base, which shall act as a coordination point and resource base for pupil therapy and wellbeing activities, and also family engagement.



## 01 Progression Steps

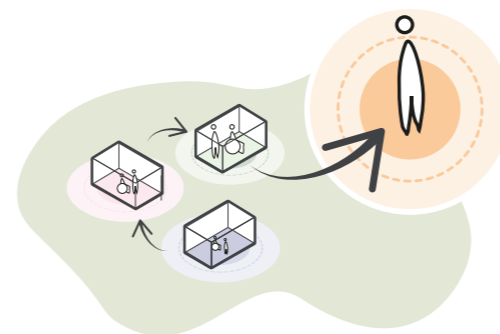


Progression steps should be built into the design and arrangement of the teaching clusters and should be apparent as pupils move through Primary, Secondary and Post-16 phases. This shall promote increased independence and signify the transition between key milestones as they progress, similarly to a mainstream settings.

This should be reflected in the design of space, for example by creating a more mature feel for post-16 areas in comparison to primary, and through creating more choice in what/ how facilities are accessed.

In addition, facilities shall allow pupils to learn and then demonstrate skills, with increasing complexity through a series of developed pathways within the school in order to support the school's curriculum skills focus.

## 02 Preparing for Life Beyond School



In order to support the skills curriculum prioritised for the new school, the design needs to encourage and prepare pupils for life after school, creating opportunities for vocational learning, in-school work opportunities and supporting curriculum delivery of life skills.

This includes preparing the pupils themselves for life after school but also supporting families as their children progress through the school and in particular through the Post-16 phase.

In addition, building on the core theme of wellbeing, the design shall provide enhanced support, therapy and sensory spaces to support pupils in developing healthy regulation strategies, which can be drawn upon both in and out of the school environment.

Linked closely to the Progression Steps concept, the school design should maximise opportunities progress and develop skills, but should also allow for a range of family engagement opportunities including training and support. The latter shall be provided predominantly via the Wellbeing Centre, Community Suite and Life Skills model flat.

## 03 Building a School Community



The design of the new school should support and nurture the relationship with the pupils' families and build a community for the school. The school's design should facilitate the engagement of parents/carers in their children's learning.

The designs must support the inclusion of parents during therapy or life skills classes, as well as provide opportunities for families to access services within work-skills curriculum such as the pupil ruin cafe.

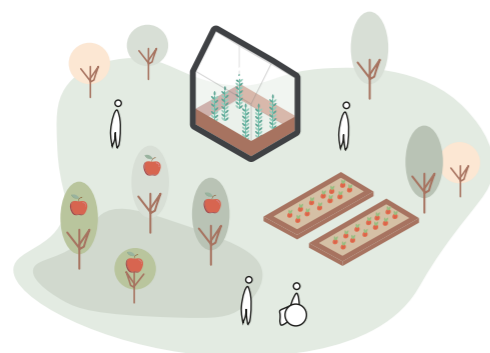
There is an ambition to create a wider school community with local businesses, industry, and education providers, to create opportunities for vocational learning or facilitate more sustainable consumption of resources. The design needs to provide the appropriate spaces/facilities to foster these relationships.

A dedicated provision for community use during the school day shall be included to maintain community use of the school throughout the week.

In addition, the school shall support working families, and the health and social needs of the school community, by allowing for a wide range of uses within the school accommodation.



#### 04 A Whole School Approach to Food



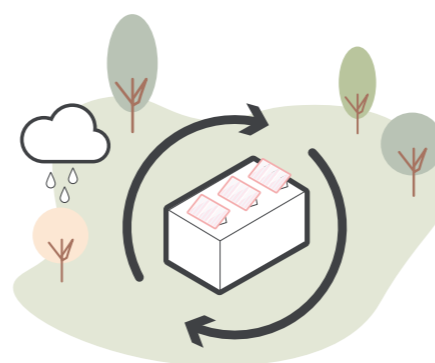
Creating a healthy relationship with food is crucial in improving the health of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs. It also provides an opportunity to support skills and sensory curriculum which shall be prioritised by the school.

Meal times can be challenging for children with ALN, but they also offer opportunities to develop social skills in an informal setting. To support pupils' interest in food. Food learning will be focused on healthy habits and enabling the pupils to develop an understanding of where food comes from with opportunities to experience the growing process (plot to plate) for food production at a scale that serves the school's community cafe and food learning/cooking.

The strategy for the new school's design development shall encompass the production, processing, consumption, and recovery of food.

Food shall be grown, cooked and shared on site.

#### 05 A Sustainable School



Construction practices are to be re-evaluated at every step to identify opportunities to reduce the embodied carbon footprint.

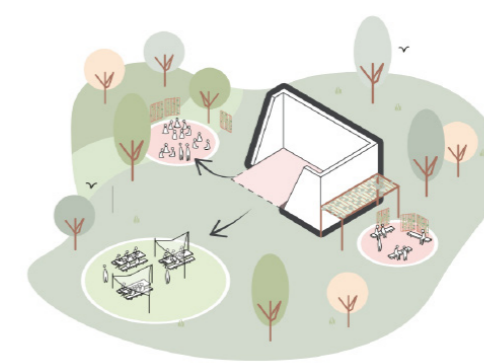
Behavioural changes leading to a reduction in energy use must be facilitated and encouraged through, and within the design.

Generally high carbon footprint materials and highly processed products shall be avoided. These decisions need to be assessed with an understanding of the whole product life-cycle. Natural elements in construction materials shall contribute to the biophillic design ambition, creating harmony with nature and reduce environmental impact.

Recover, reuse, and recycle principles shall be applied to the site design, and used wherever possible to demonstrate the benefits of a circular economy to pupils. As a minimum, this should include ongoing rainwater use (sustainable water cycle). Every effort is to be made to reuse or recycle materials at the highest possible value to reduce downcycling.

The curriculum will embrace learning opportunities in the landscape, and use landscape features to sculpt the environment to mirror the range of educational spaces in the external environment, providing a diverse range of rich, land-based learning environments to support the AoLEs such as Health and Well-being.

#### 06 Building Connections with Nature



There is a unique opportunity to create a park-like setting where learning, experience and social interactions are happening within nature. The design needs to embrace the site opportunities of existing nature, trees and landscape.

Furthermore, designs shall optimise the connection between the building occupants and the outdoors, incorporating biophillic design principles to create meaningful connections to nature. This includes providing classroom access to outside space, where possible so that learning can happen in both indoor and outdoor settings. The design should create experiences throughout the seasons.

The ambition to increase pupils' opportunities to move and be active during the school day should underpin the development of the school's curriculum. The buildings and grounds must be designed to facilitate this. To encourage teachers and pupils to use more of the school more often, the spaces and environments created must be diverse and provide interest.

Landscape should be a source of inspiration to support the curriculum and as a resource for self-regulation and for the health and well-being of the pupils.

## 03 Site

# 03. Site Analysis and Zoning

## 3.1\_Existing Site Information

The site address is:

The Pavilions,  
Cambrian Park,  
Clydach Vale,  
Tonypandy  
CF40 2XX

The site was formerly used by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for council offices. The office accommodation was made up six pavilions ranging from one to two storeys. There was also provision for staff and visitor parking to the North-East and West of the former pavilions. The parking is currently served by an access road running along the northern boundary. Currently, the Western end of the site is part of an area designated as Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

North of the site is Nant Clydach (Clydach Vale Country Park). The lake is separated from the site by woodland and a significant level change, however access between to two is provided by sloped/ stepped path just outside of the site entrance.

Within close proximity to the site there are currently two pitches, a training pitch (A) and running track (B) (See image below).

As well as a football and training pitch, Area B also has a small building and number of portable cabins and shipping containers located on it for changing, offices, storage etc. Area B has athletics track and field facilities, including 400m running track, and a central grass pitch. There is also a changing block on site. Area B, the furthest from the site, are approximately a ten minute walk / a minute drive from the site.

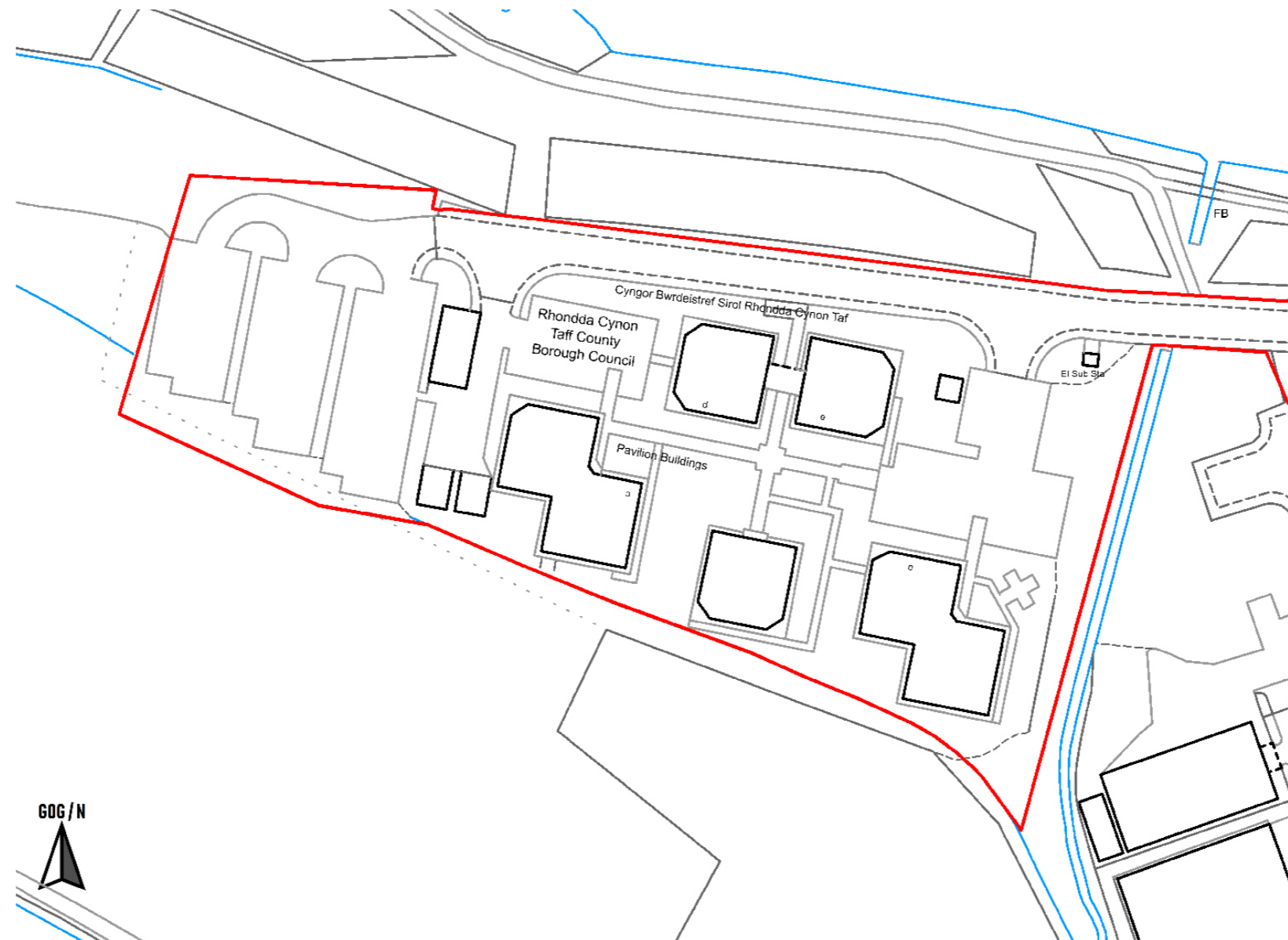


Aerial view of site in context.



### 3.2\_Title Plan

This is the latest title plan as received from RCTCBC in relation to the project.



Site Title Plan provided  
by RCTCBC  
Not to Scale

### 3.3\_Existing Site Plan



Existing site plan



### 3.4\_Existing Site Photos

#### Overview

- The site is rich in ecological and green (and blue) features. The site is surrounded by woodland with an existing stream along the southern edge.
- The western end of the site is part of an area designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- Across the site there is an approximate level change of 5m, otherwise the site is relatively flat for development.
- There is an existing substation at the entrance to the site adjacent to the neighbouring industrial park.
- Demolition of the former Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) council offices is complete, with the only activities left being to crush the foundations.

The images on the right capture the site conditions during a site visit in 2023.



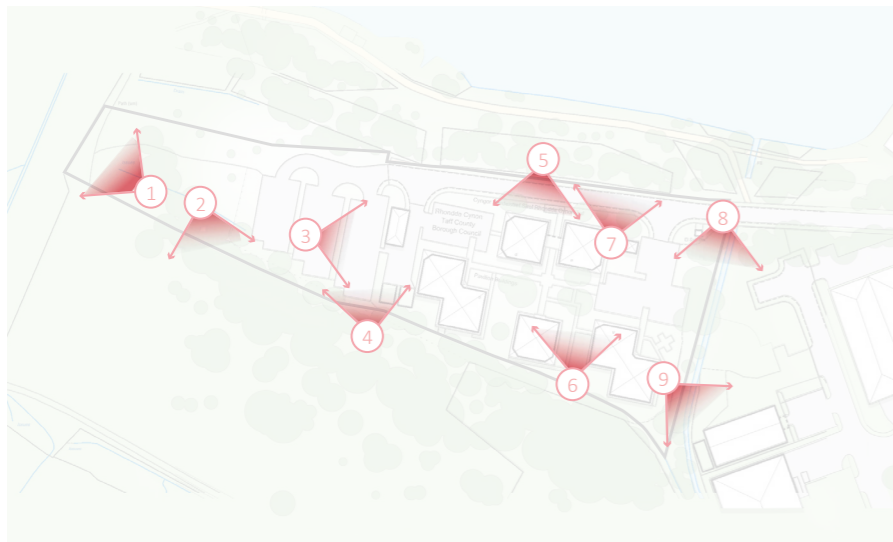
#### Key Plan







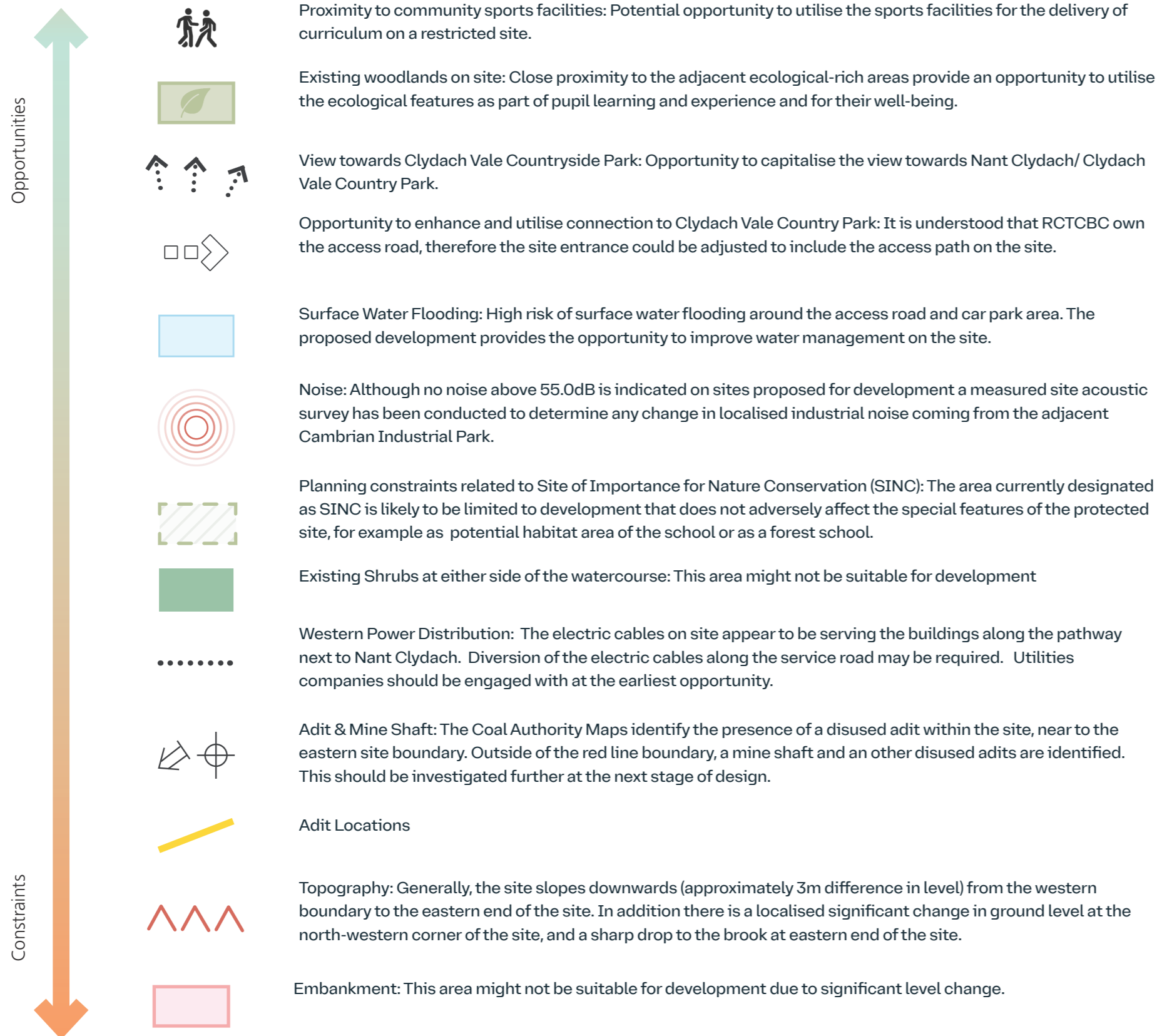
Key Plan



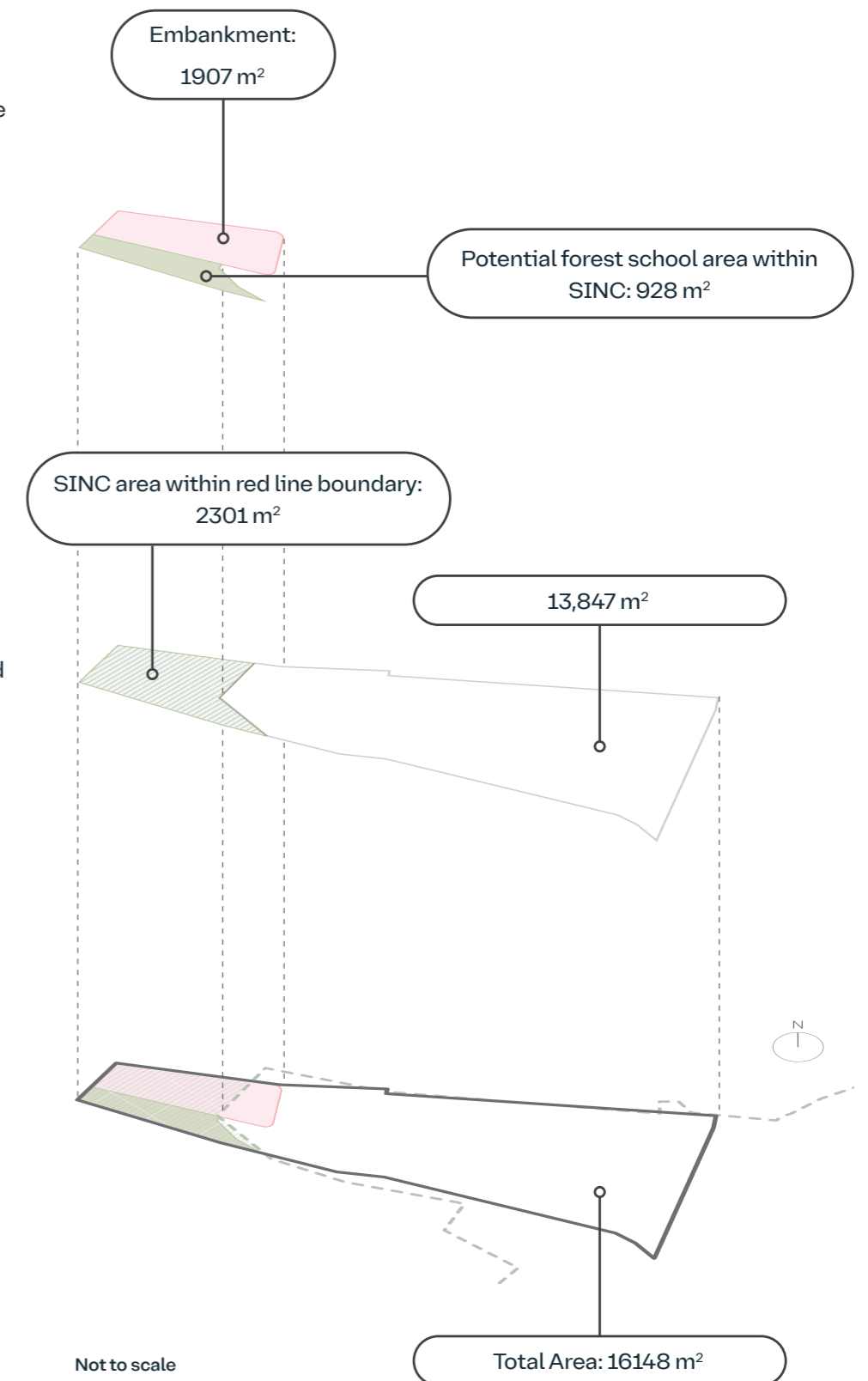


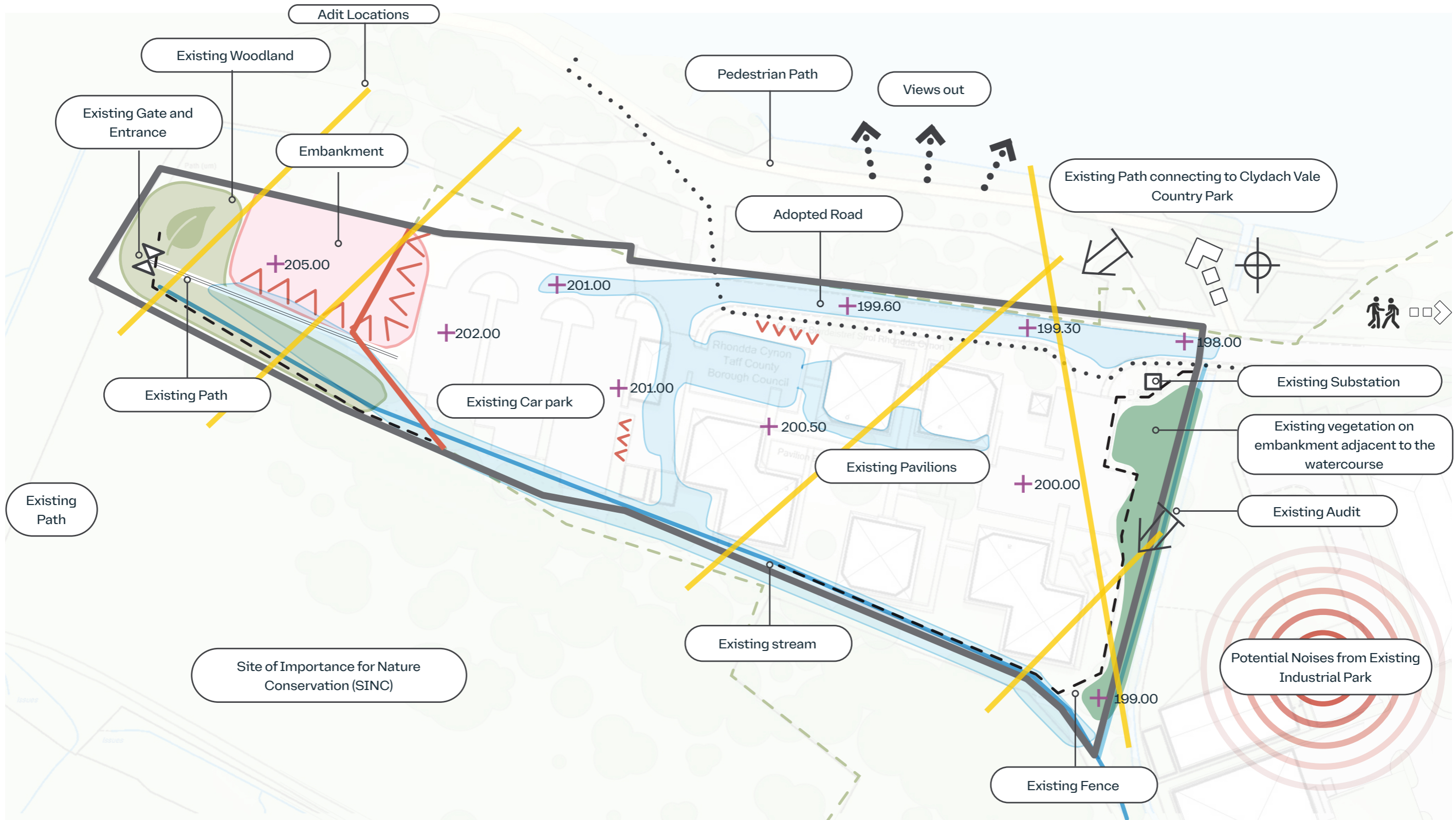
### 3.5\_Site Opportunities and Constraints

#### Opportunities and Constraints Summary



\*Areas shown are high level estimation.



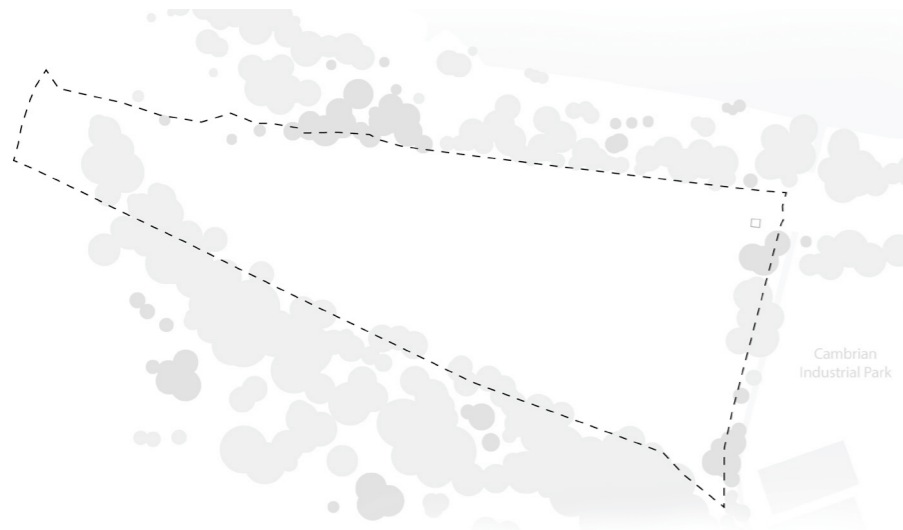


Existing site opportunities and constraints plan - Not to scale

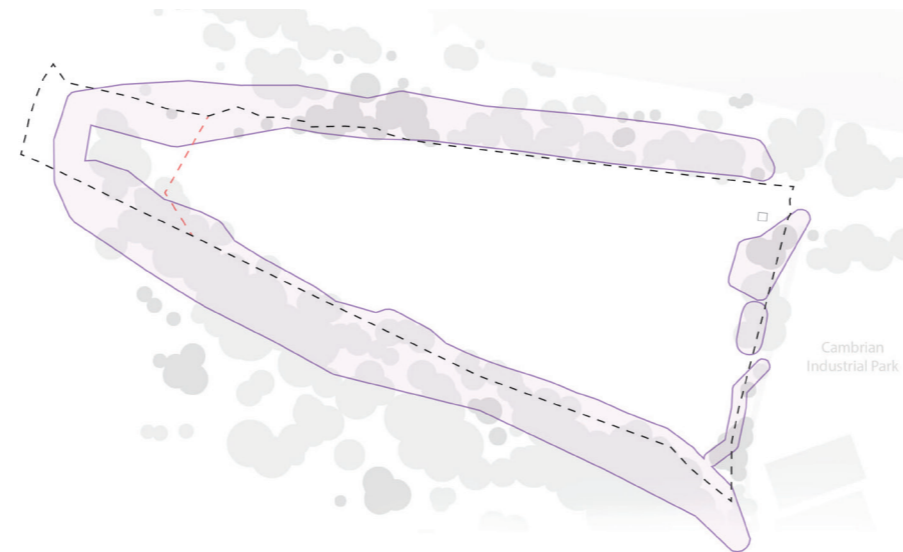
### 3.6\_Site Constraints

#### Site Constraints

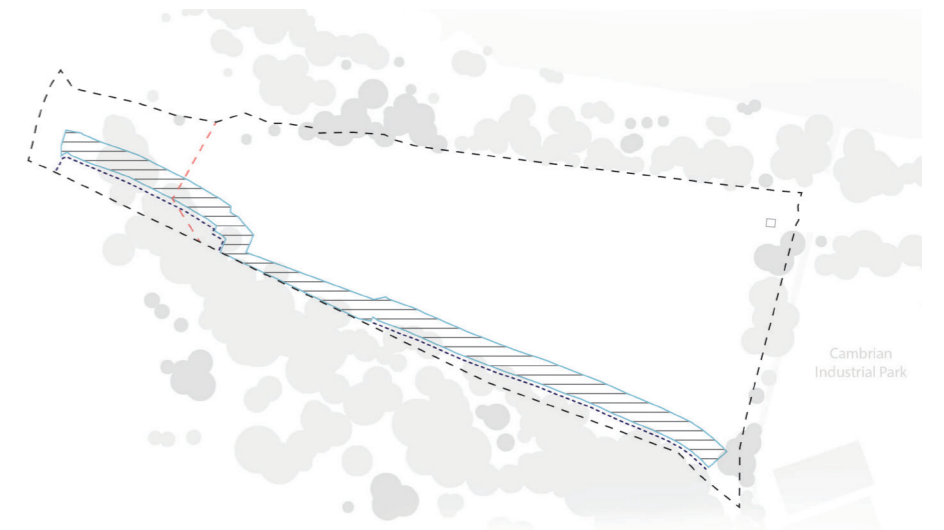
The diagrams below depict how the existing site constraints identified within the site have contributed to the remaining identified area for proposed development.



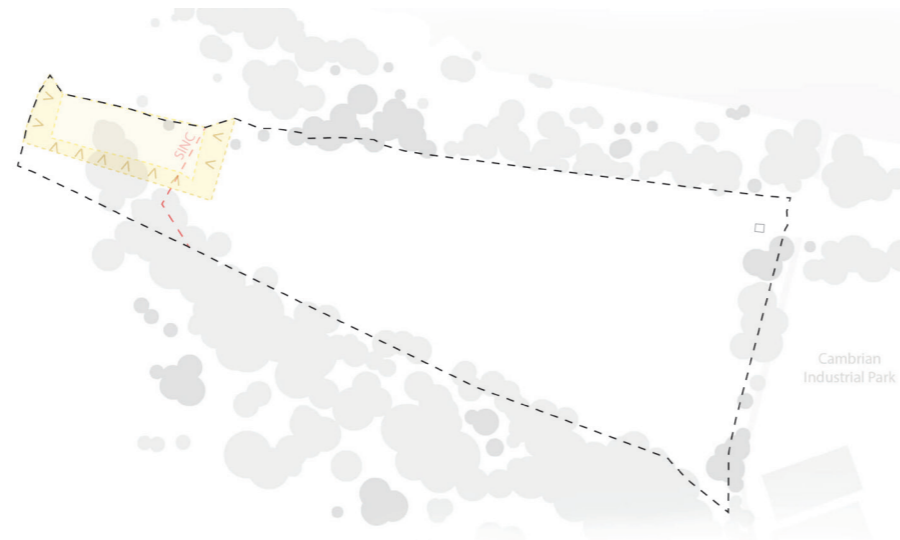
**Identified Site Boundary**



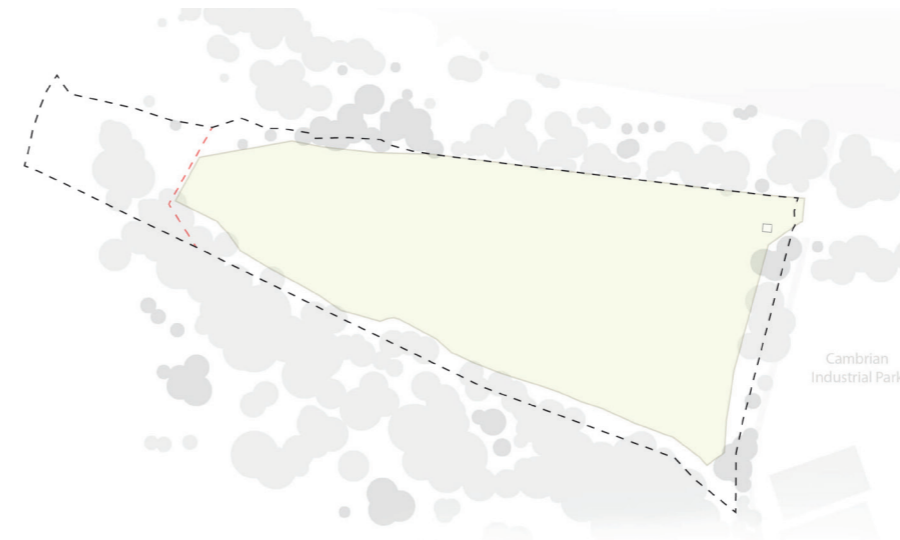
**Root Protection zone**



**Waterways and Exclusion Zone**



**Embankment**



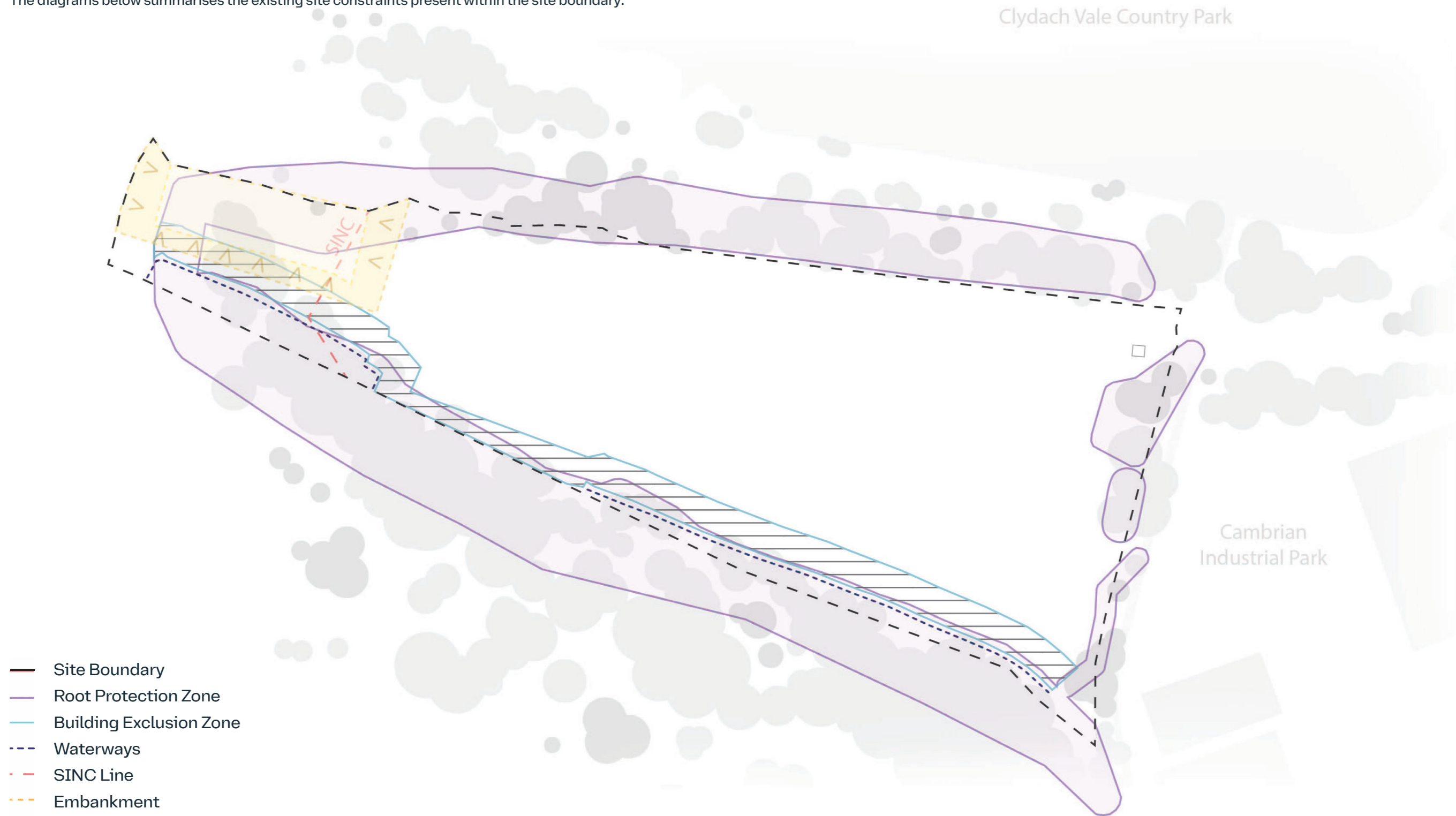
**Remaining Identified Area for Proposed Development**





### Site Constraints Summary

The diagrams below summarises the existing site constraints present within the site boundary:



Site constraints summary diagram - Not to scale

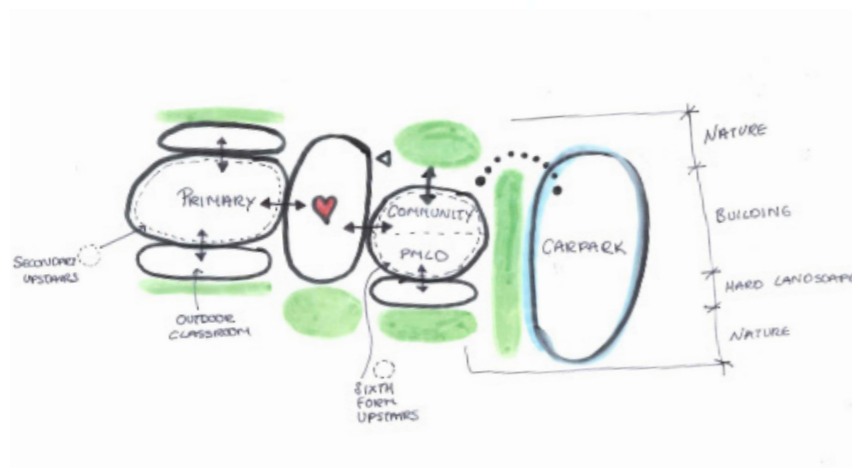
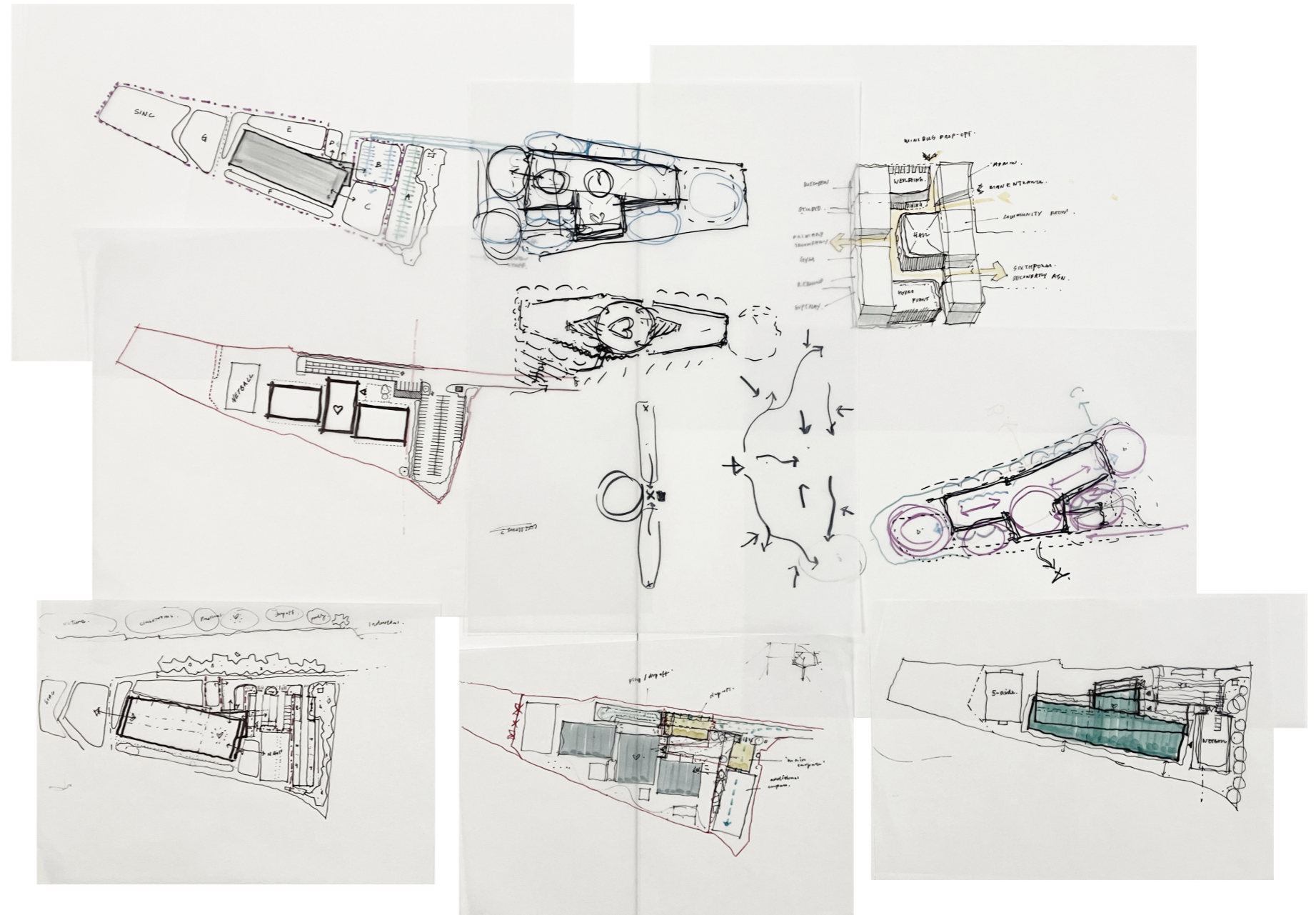


### 3.7\_Building Siting

#### Sketch Exploration and Design Development

The design process focuses on the following objectives:

- Developing the building form in response to the site constraints and opportunities
- Creating connections between internal, external spaces and the surrounding nature
- Enhancing the sense of arrival
- Defining a community focused zone near the school entrance
- Providing external classroom spaces
- Create green buffer zones that also function as SuDs features



Building form explorations on site - Not to scale

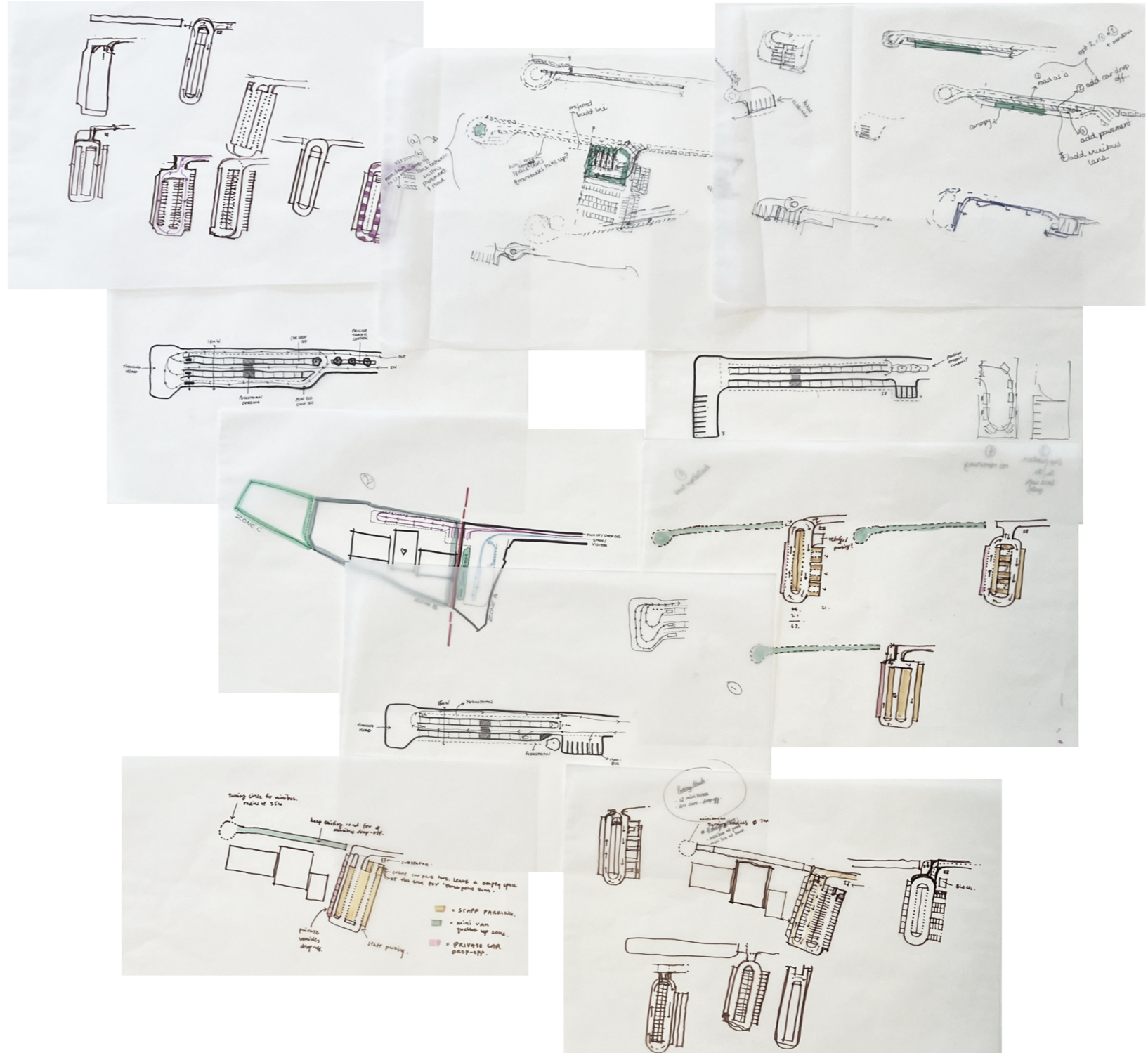


### 3.8\_Drop-off Pick-up Strategy

#### Sketch Exploration and Design Development

The development of the site plan prioritising the design of the drop-off/pick-up strategy that works for the school. This includes:

- Creating dedicated zones for mini buses as well as private/taxi drop-off
- The school prefers a single drop-off/pick-up session although options for staggered drop-off were explored.
- Exploring opportunities for 'lock-down' style or 'airport' style drop-off. The school prefers an airport style drop-off strategy
- Avoiding reversing vehicles where possible
- Providing vehicular access for refuse, delivery, maintenance and for emergency vehicles

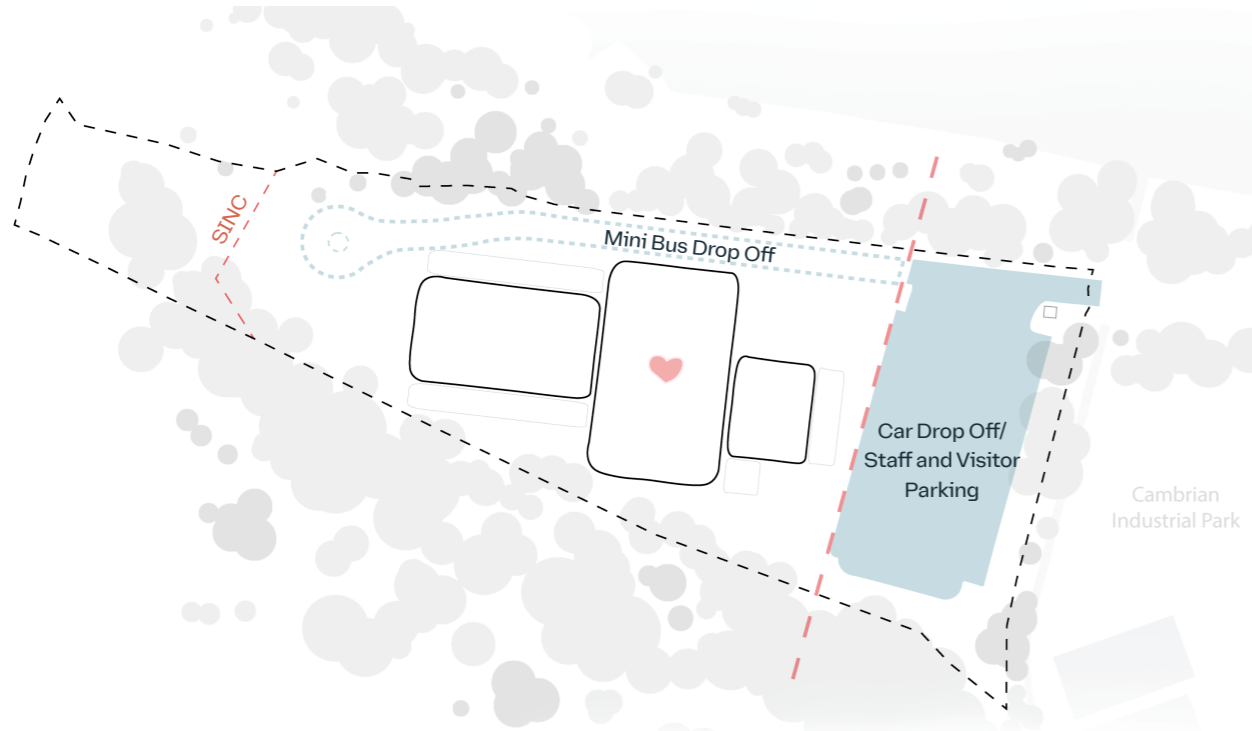


Minibus drop-off and parking explorations on site - Not to scale

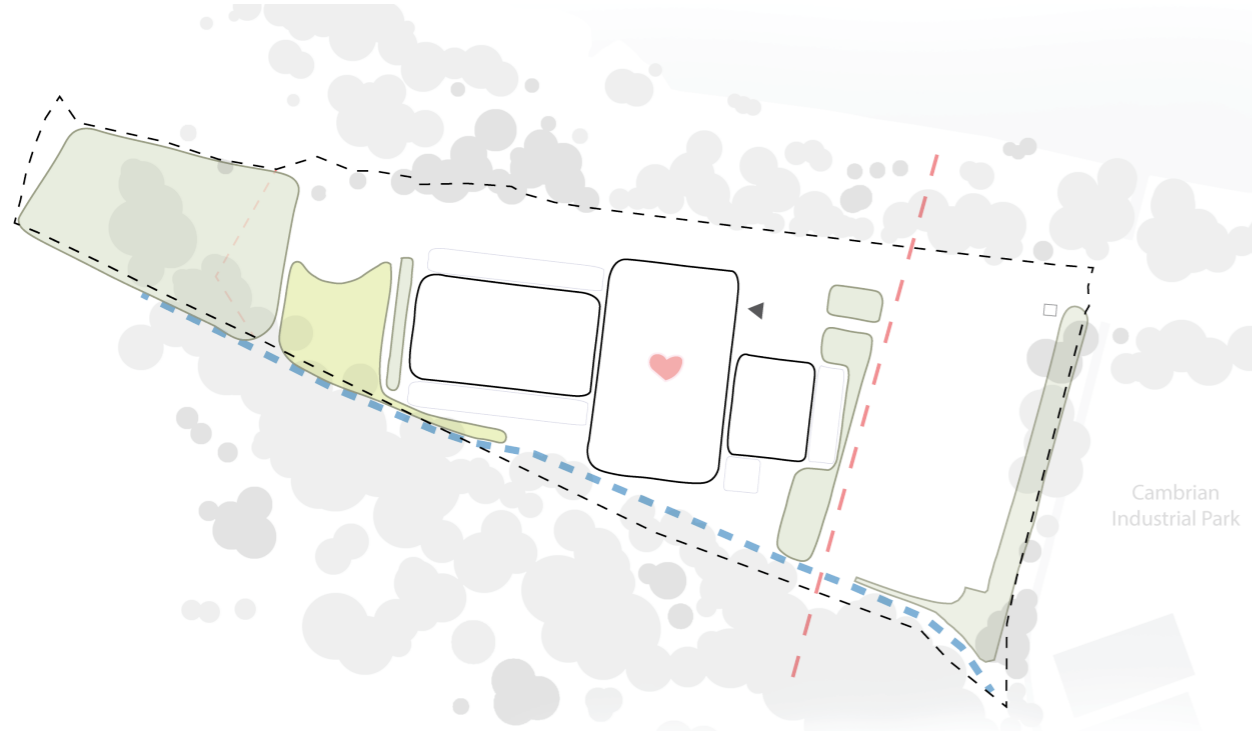


### 3.9\_Site Zoning and Landscape Strategy

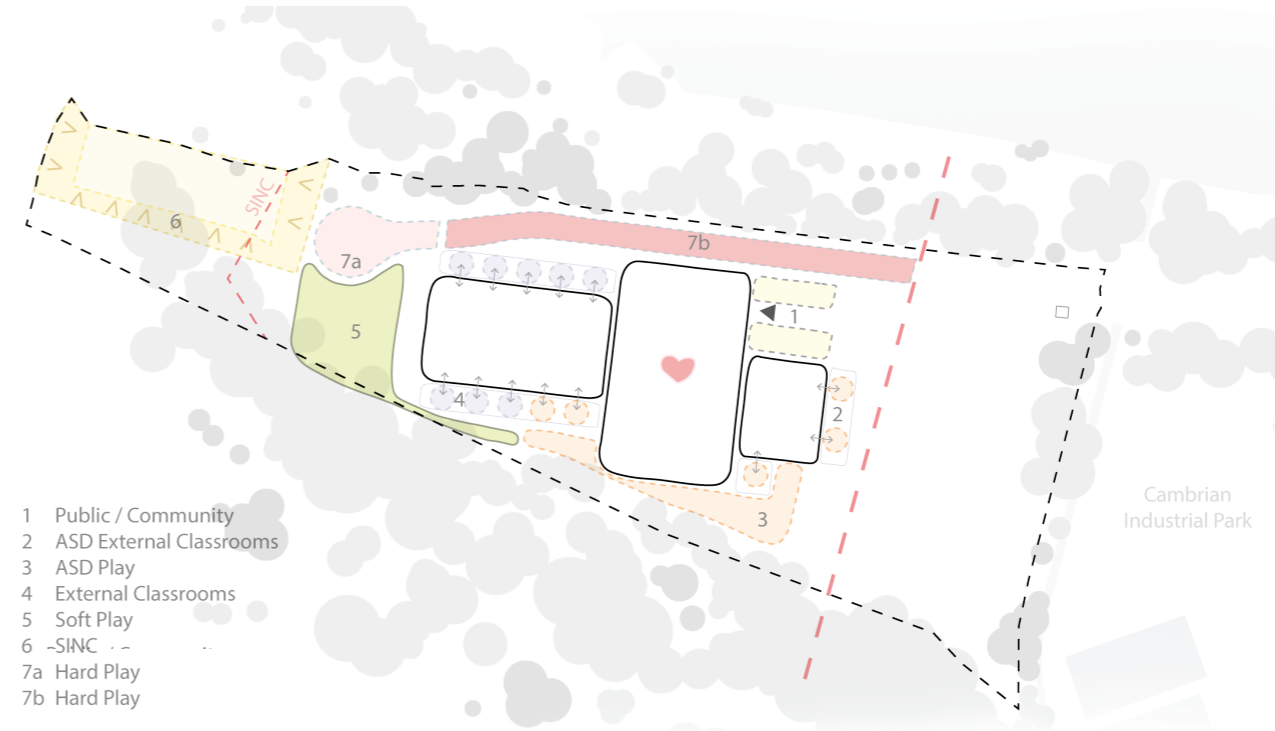
#### Initial Site Strategy Principles



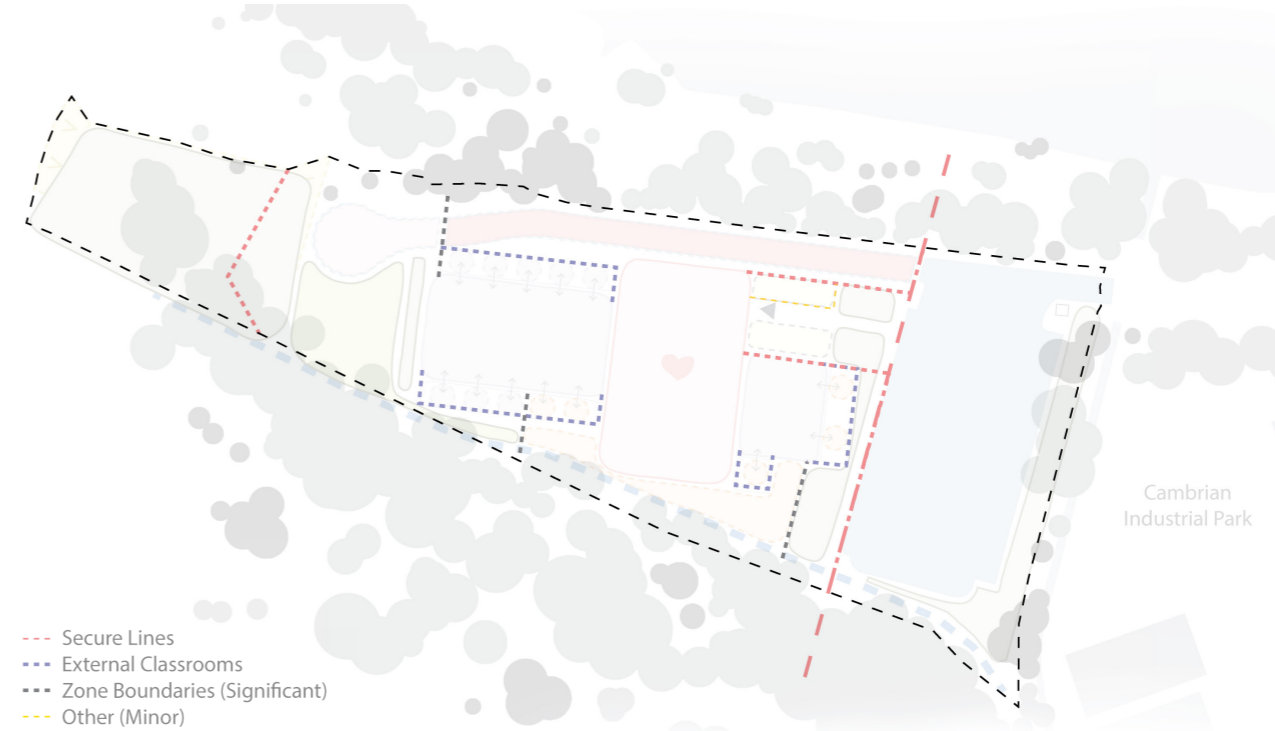
#### 1. Drop off and Pick Up



#### 3. Green Spaces/ SuDS



#### 2. Play Spaces



#### 4. Fence Lines



**Initial Site Principles and Landscape Features**



- 1 Public / Community
- 2 ASD External Classrooms
- 3 ASD Play
- 4 External Classrooms
- 5 Soft Play
- 6 SINC
- 7a Hard Play
- 7b Hard Play

## 04 Design Development

# 04. Design Development

## 4.1\_Building Concept

01. The design concept is based on a central block acts as the heart space of the school, connected by two blocks to the east and west.

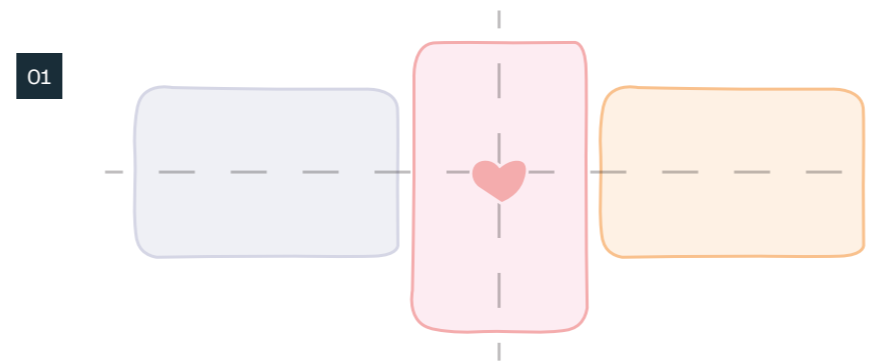
02. The central block houses the shared spaces while the east and west blocks act as the main teaching wings for the school. The lengths of the blocks are adjusted based on the distribution and number of classrooms at each wings.

03. Ground floor classrooms to have direct access to a sheltered external classroom spaces.

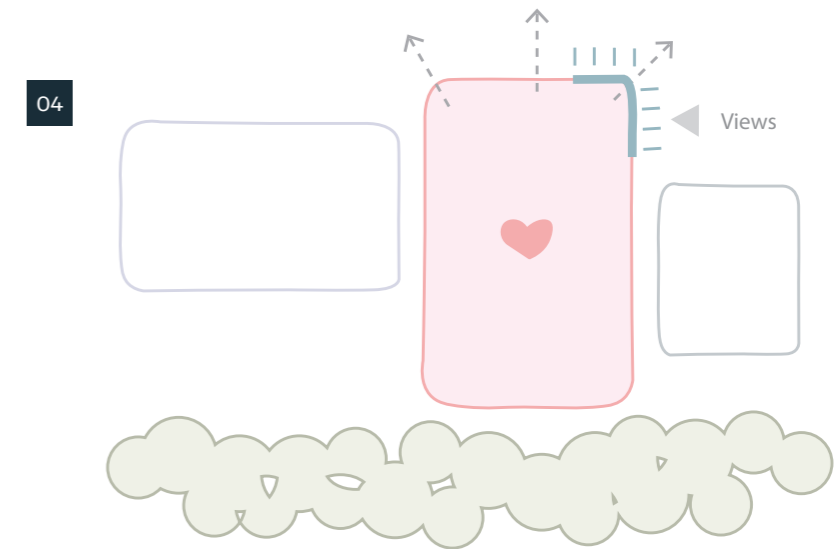
04. The northeast corner of the central block is identified as the main point of arrival and therefore the key elevations of the school.

05. A hierarchy of privacy is established. Zones closer to the main entrance provides the higher degree of community access. The level of privacy increases deeper into the floor plan.

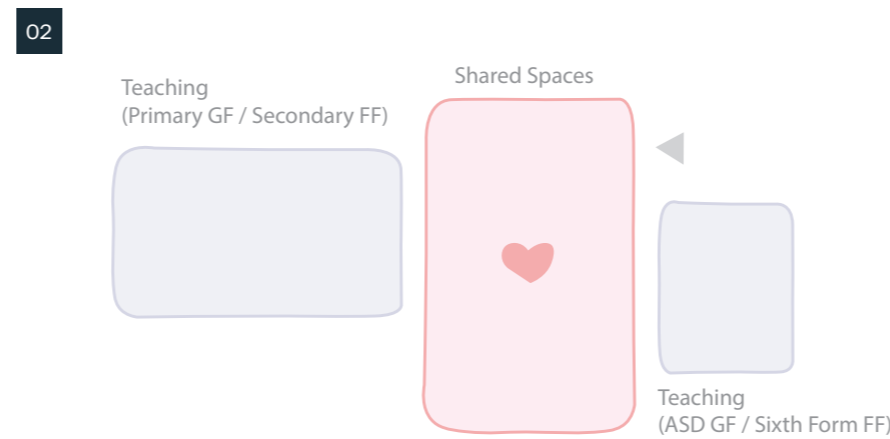
06. Opportunity to create a community space outside of the main entrance is identified.



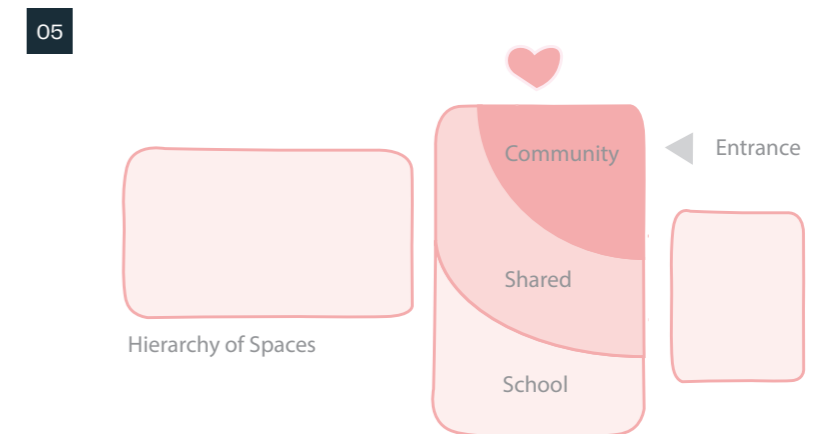
01



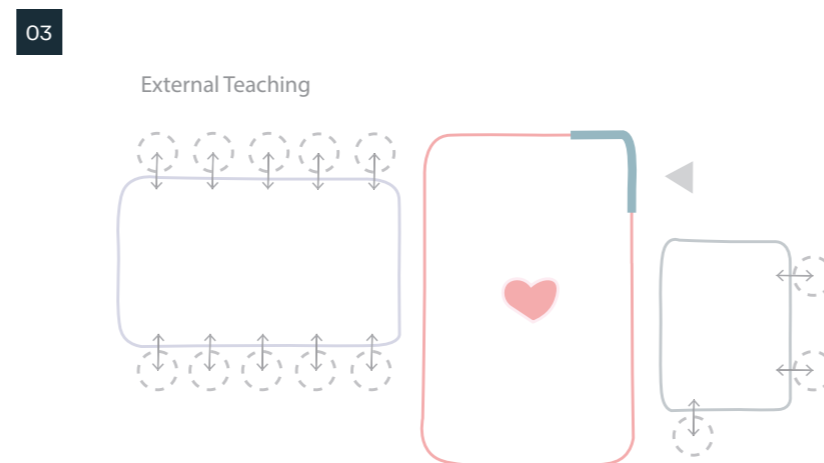
04



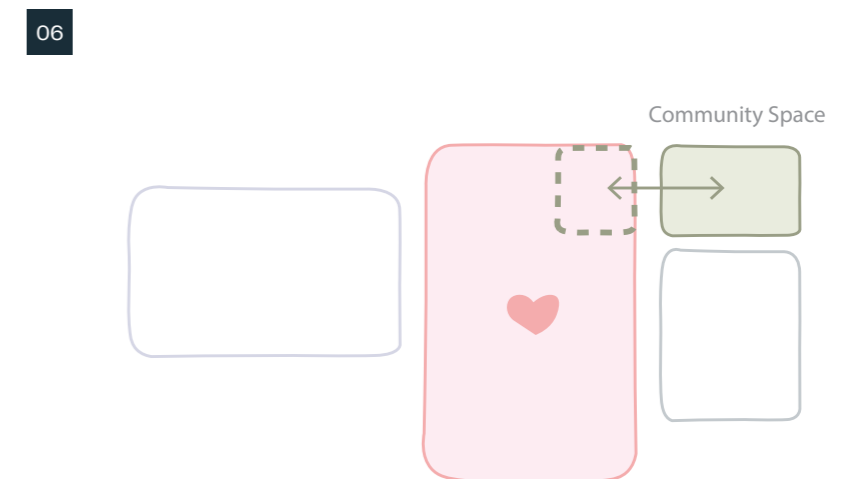
02



05



03



06

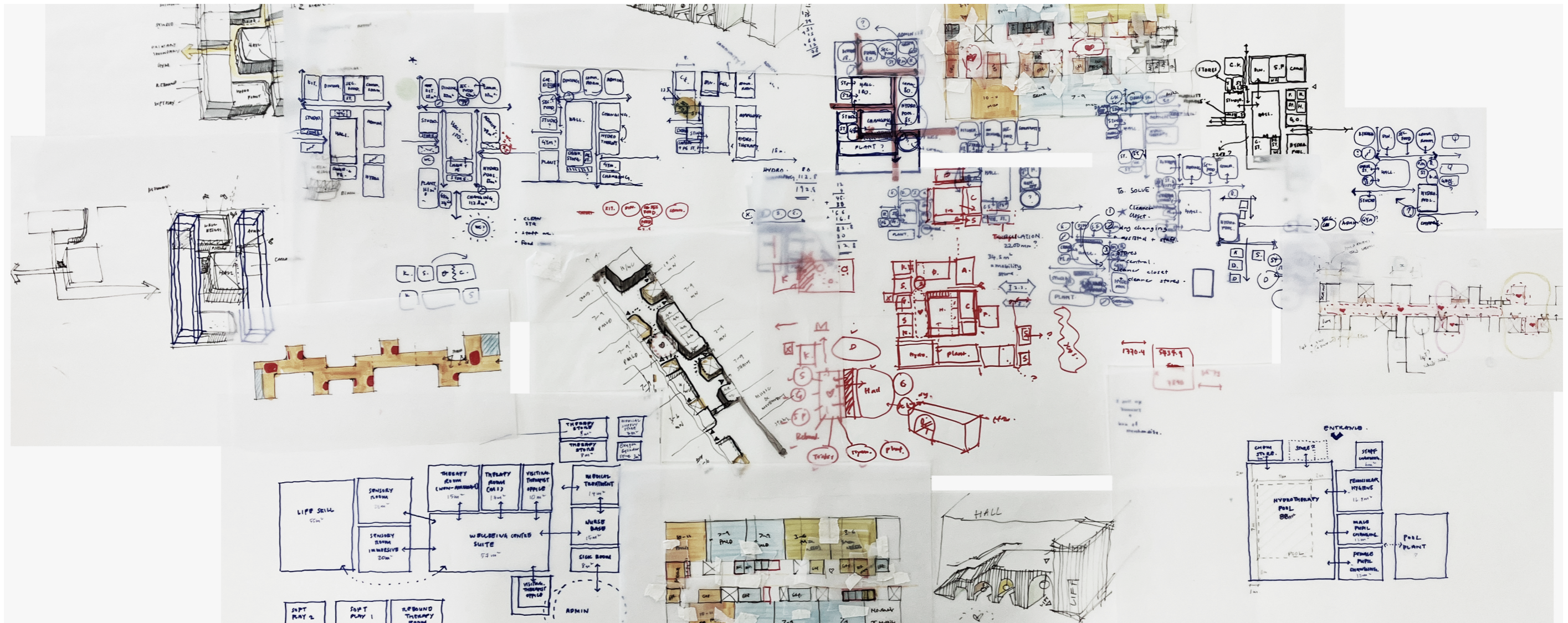


## 4.2\_Development of General Arrangement Plans

### Heart Space Study

The design process focuses on the following objectives:

- Creating a community zone outside of the school secured line to enable community access the community room during school hours. The secondary food room is located next to the community room to facilitate a community cafe in this zone.
- Defining a 'food-focused' zone helps to facilitate the school's dining strategy involving the dining hall and studio
- Consolidating the key therapy spaces to create a wellbeing suite
- Positioning classrooms and the supporting spaces based on the needs of the users and the curriculum
- A simple but effective circulation strategy to guide people through the building effortlessly with a feature staircase that forms the 'heart' of the school



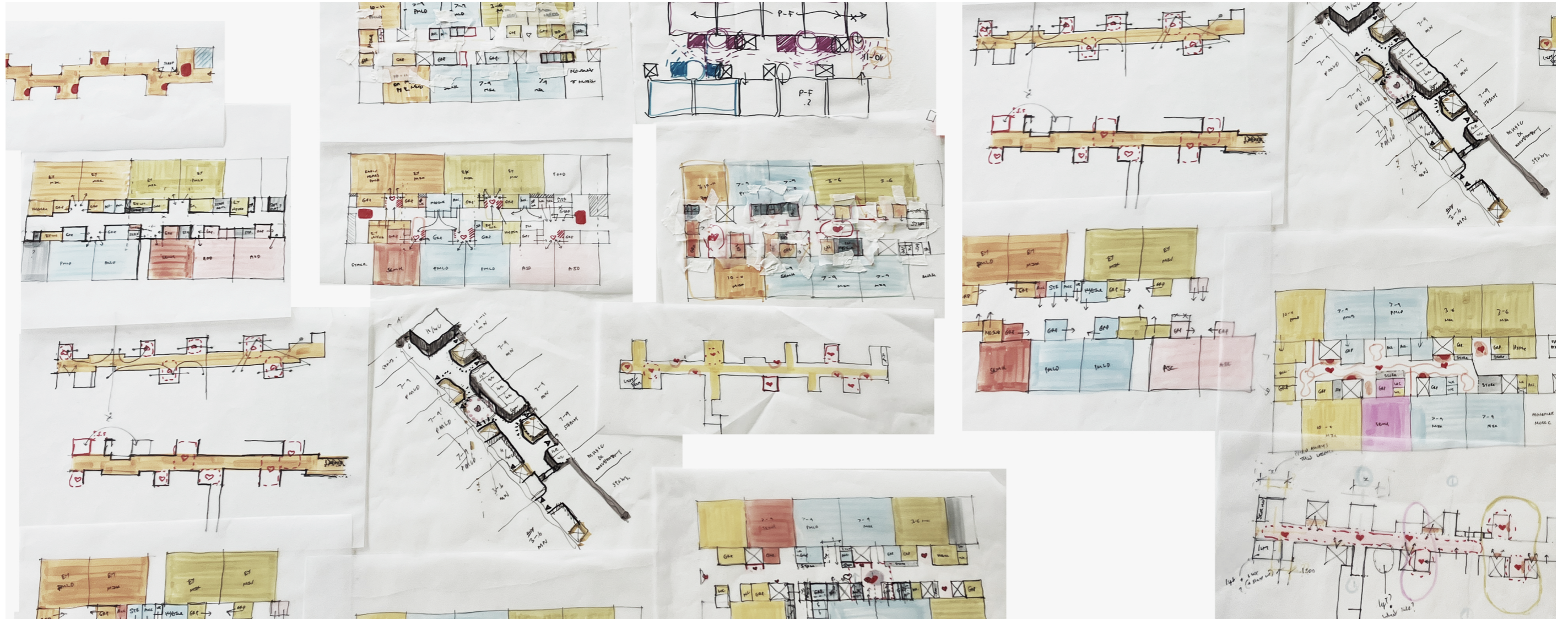
Locating heart spaces within the school through sketch explorations.



## Teaching Wing Study

The design process focuses on the following objectives:

- Defining a clear strategy for classroom distribution by prioritising ground floor access to all ASD classrooms and primary school classroom where possible
- Positioning classrooms and the supporting spaces based on the needs of the users and the curriculum
- Celebrate the circulation, avoiding the creation of a 'long and narrow' corridor



Learning resource spaces within the circulation.



### Teaching Wing Study - Physical Model

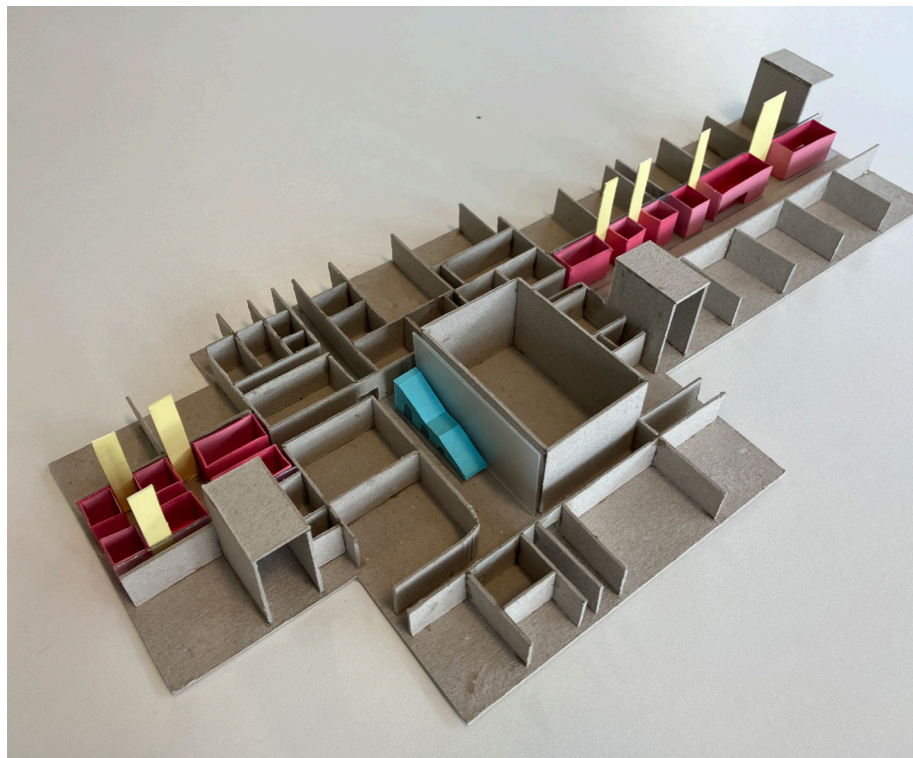
The use of model making as part of the design process help to develop the design of the key spaces in both two and three dimensions

01. Level 00

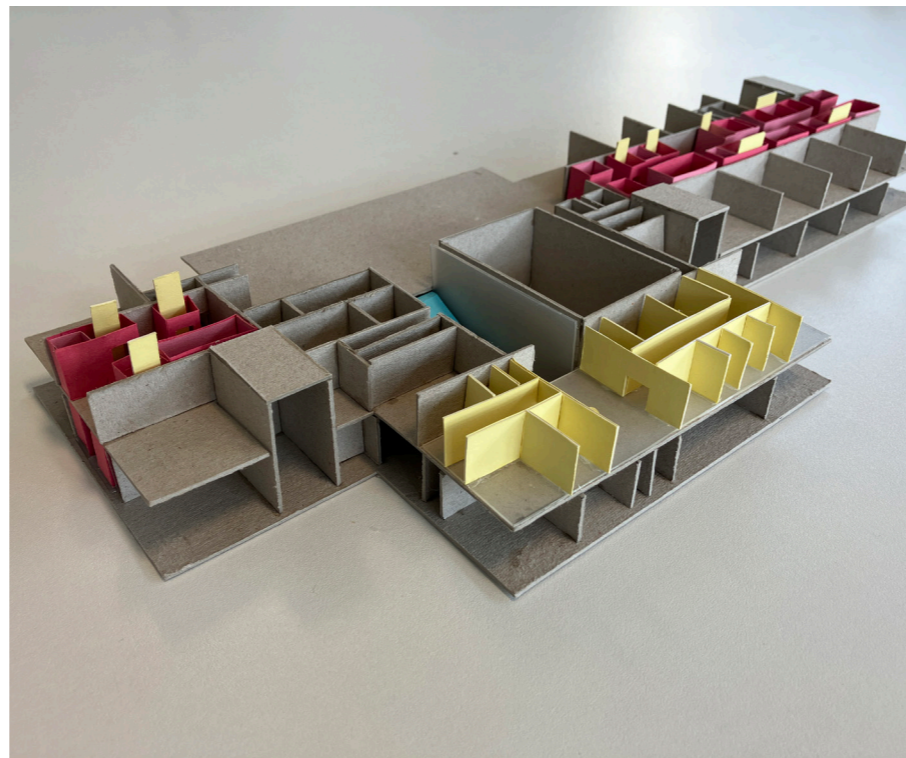
02. Level 01

03. Overall floor plans

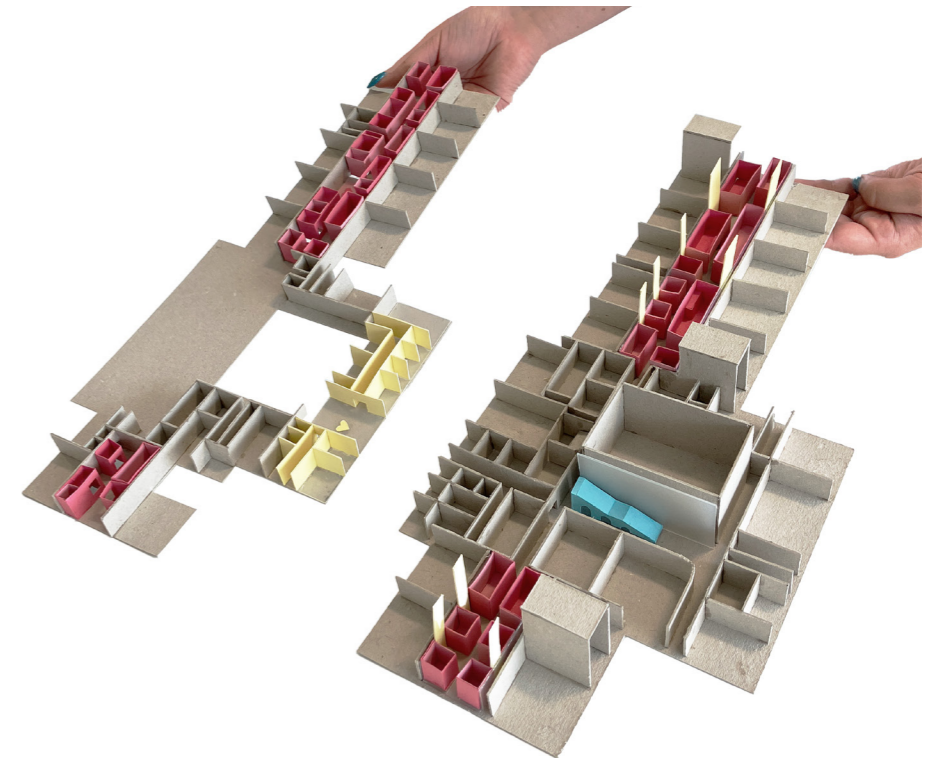
01



02



03



### 4.3\_Massing and Elevations Concept

The design drivers for the massing and elevations are based on the following:

#### 01. Creating three interlocking blocks

The architecture consists of three distinctive blocks with the central block being the main focal point of the school.

#### 02. Large openings

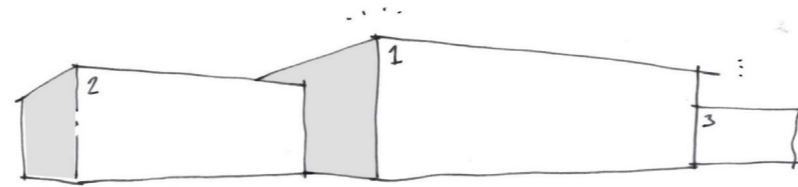
The central block will feature large windows, designed to celebrate and reveal key spaces such as the main entrance and wellbeing suite. The openings also provide an opportunity to connect the internal spaces to the outdoor.

#### 03. Further massing and elevation studies

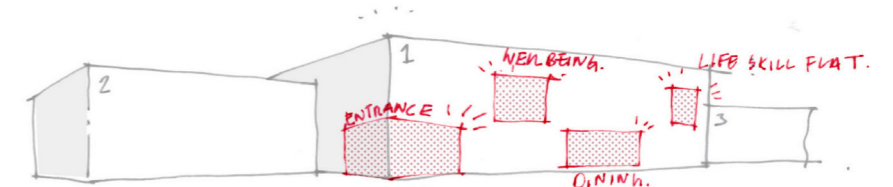
Further studies were conducted to understand how the key design concepts could be implemented into the elevation treatment.

**The preferred strategy:** The central block to have a distinctive architecture from the teaching wings, featuring large openings. The teaching wing features a continuous canopy that extends across the facade. The openings to the classroom are aligned in a rhythm generated by the columns of the canopy.

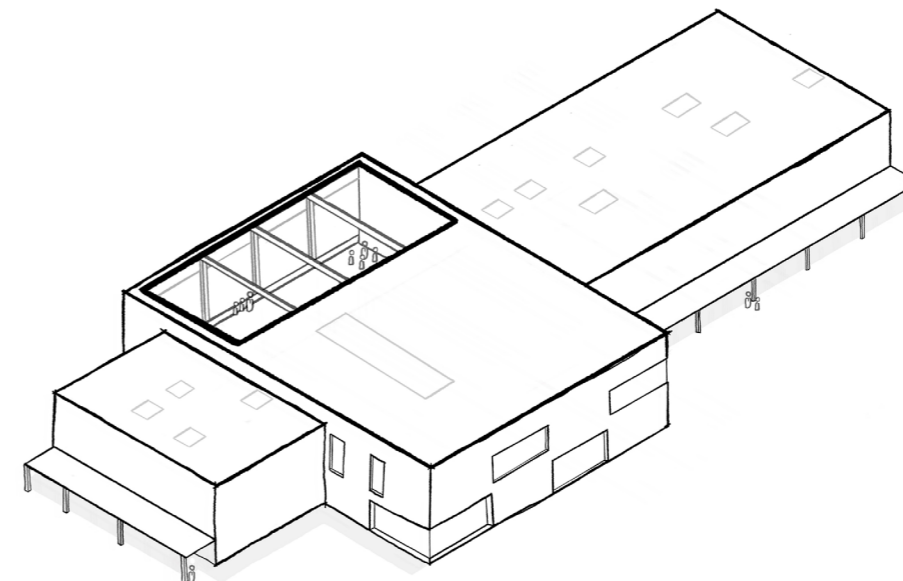
01



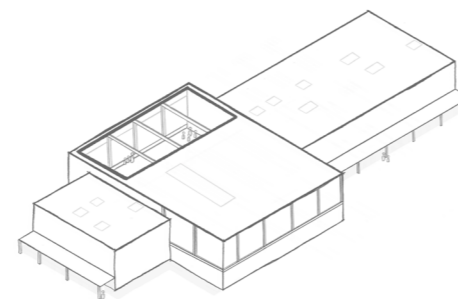
02



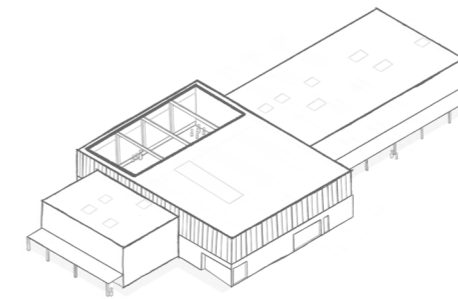
03



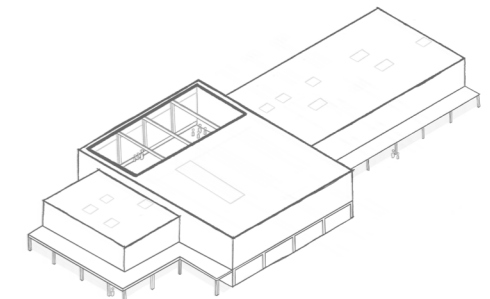
Option 1 - preferred strategy



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4

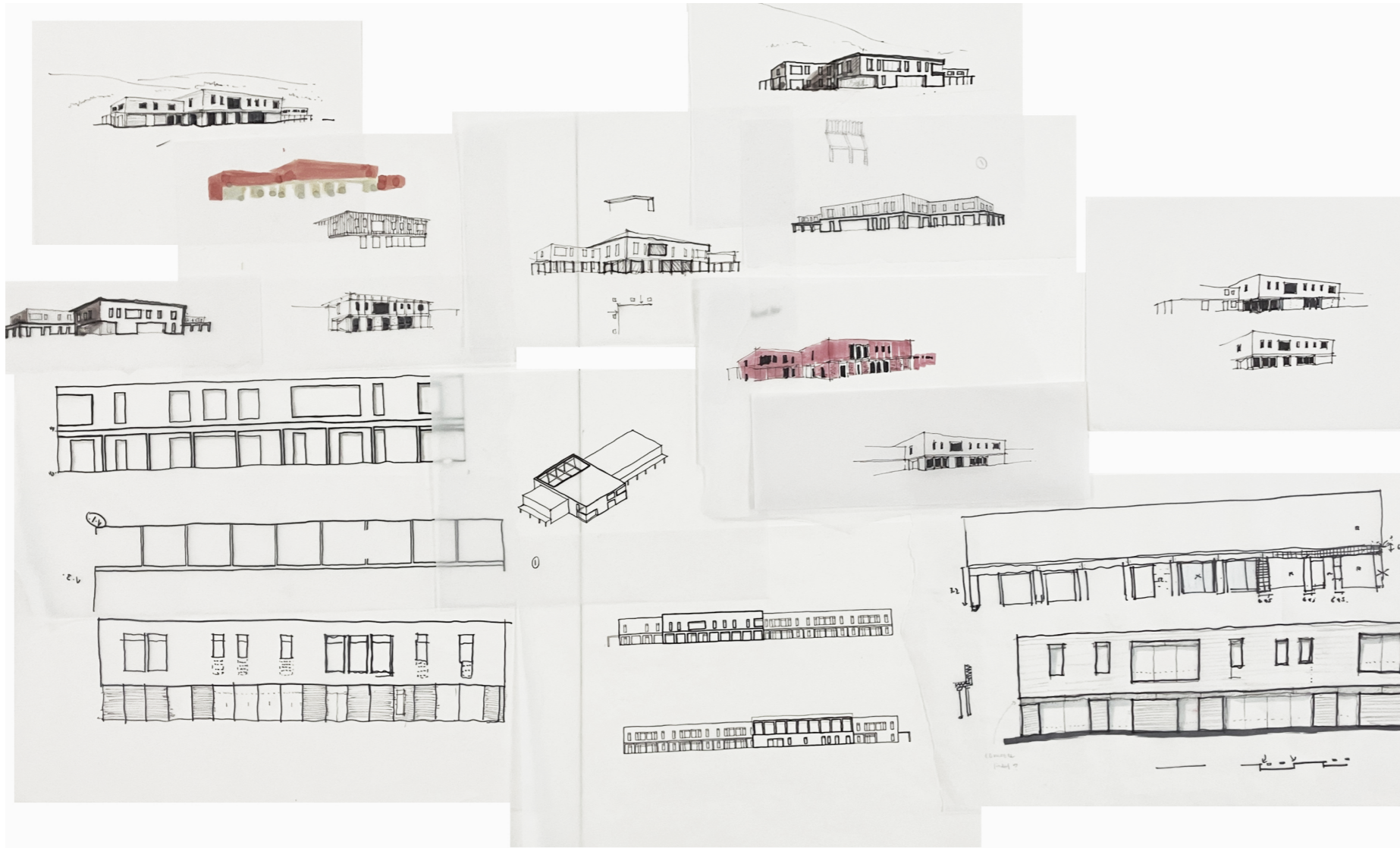


### Central Block Study

The initial concept is that the heart space has a different architectural language to the two teachings wings, helping to highlight it as a key focus area within the design.

The design development is driven by the following consideration:

- An elegance design language for the central block
- A clearly defined, prominent main entrance. Functionally, the entrance should provide a sheltered transition from the outside to the inside
- The introduction of featured windows at strategic positions such as wellbeing suite and dining area



Elevation studies - rhythms of the openings at the shared spaces



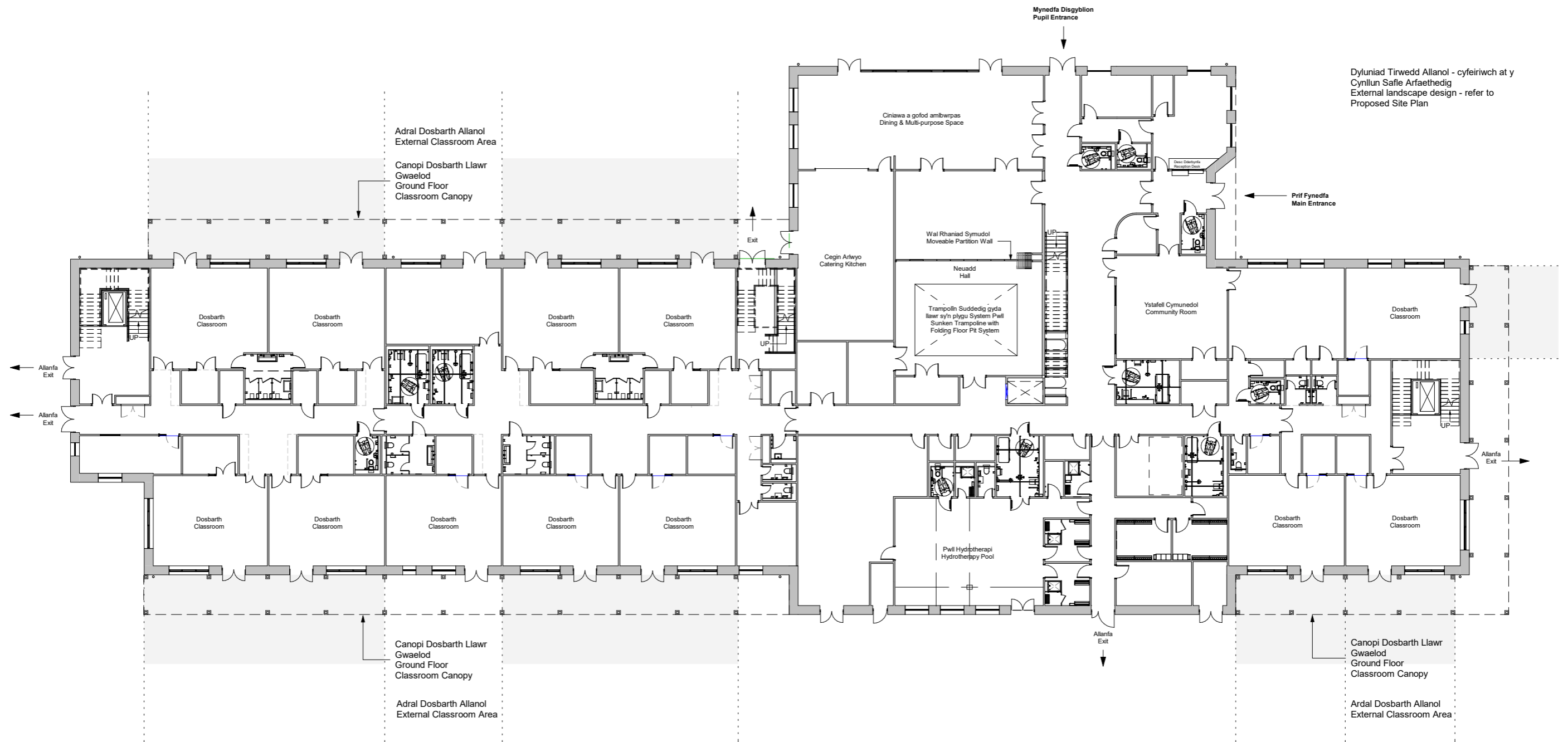
Elevation studies - rhythms of the openings at the shared spaces

## 05 Architectural Design Proposal

# 05. Architectural Design Proposal

## 5.1\_Proposed Plans

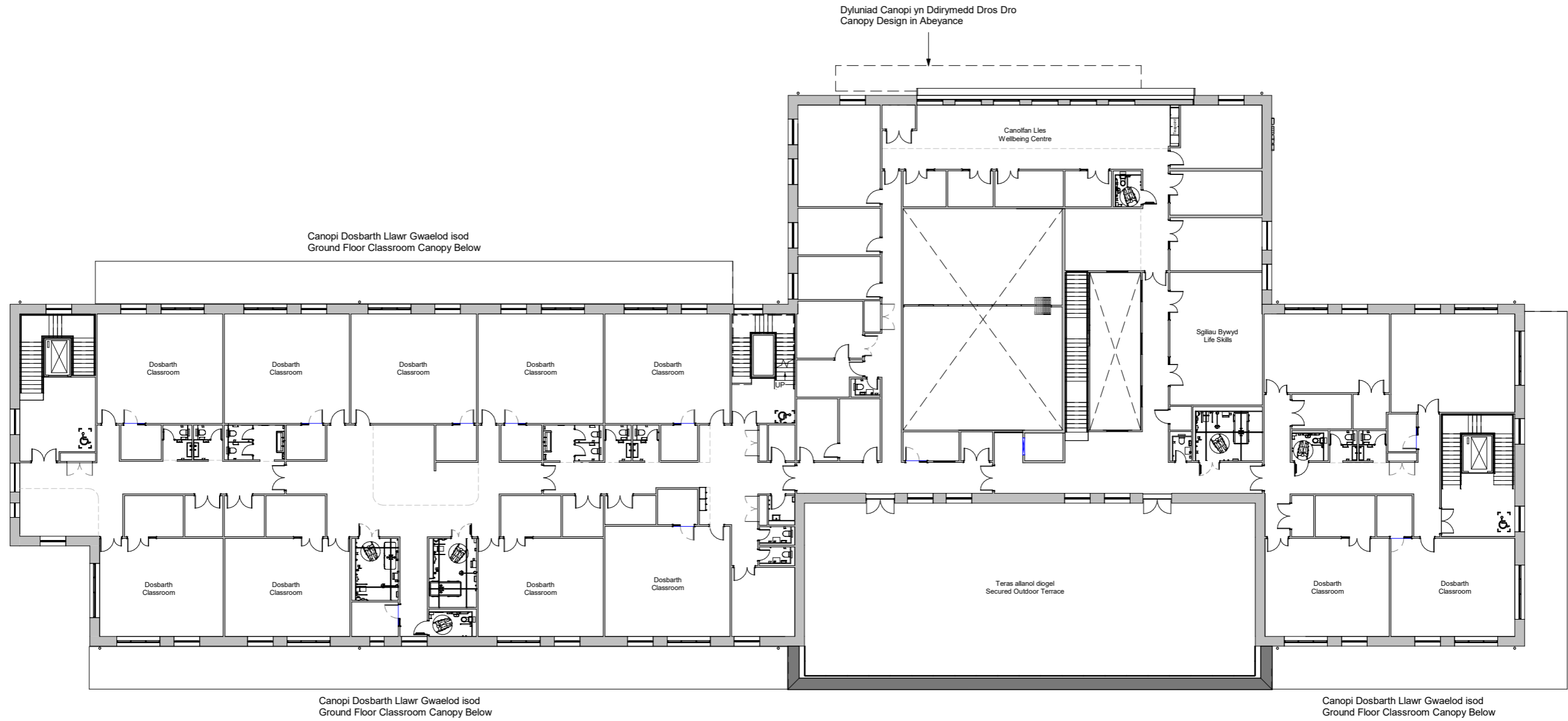
### Ground Floor General Arrangement Plan



Not to scale



**First Floor General Arrangement Plan**

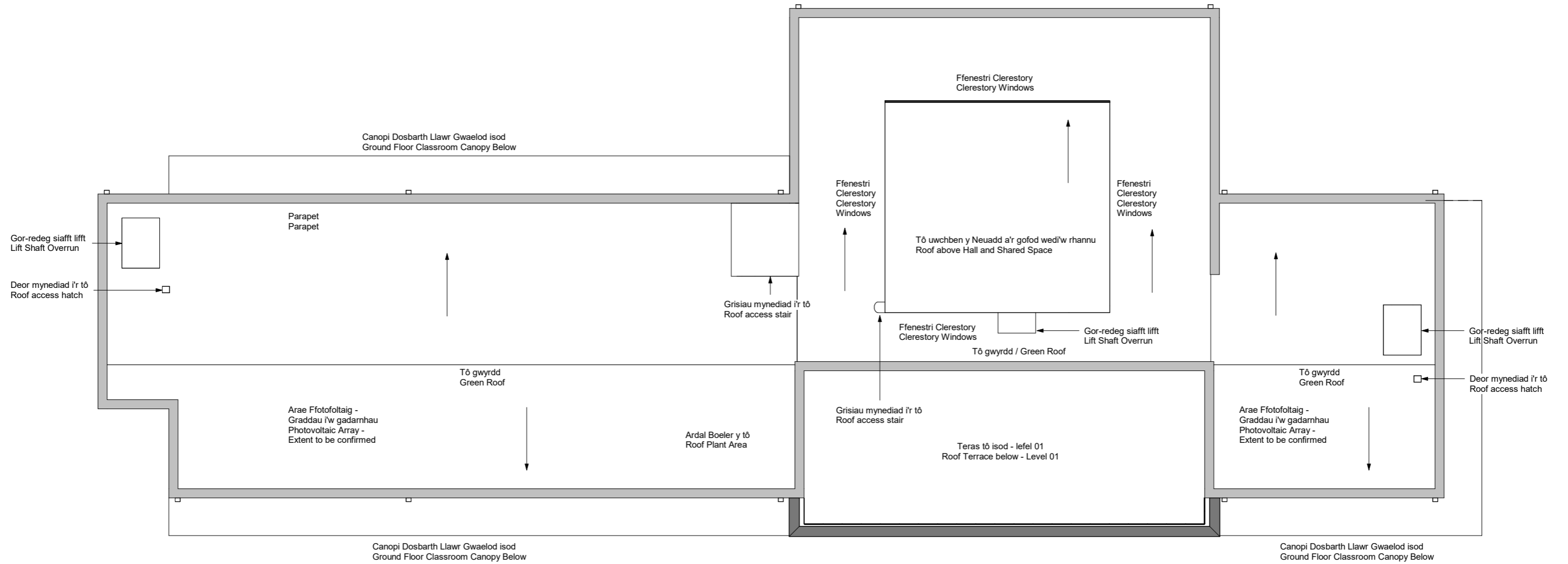


Not to scale



3  
012021

**Roof General Arrangement Plan**



3  
012021

Not to scale



## 5.2\_Summary of Key Spaces

### Ground Floor

The concept design for this scheme has been developed using principles of 'super block' design in order to create a more spatially efficient plan on the site. This includes allowing for roof openings in central spaces core and internal glazing, which are required to provide day light in internal spaces.

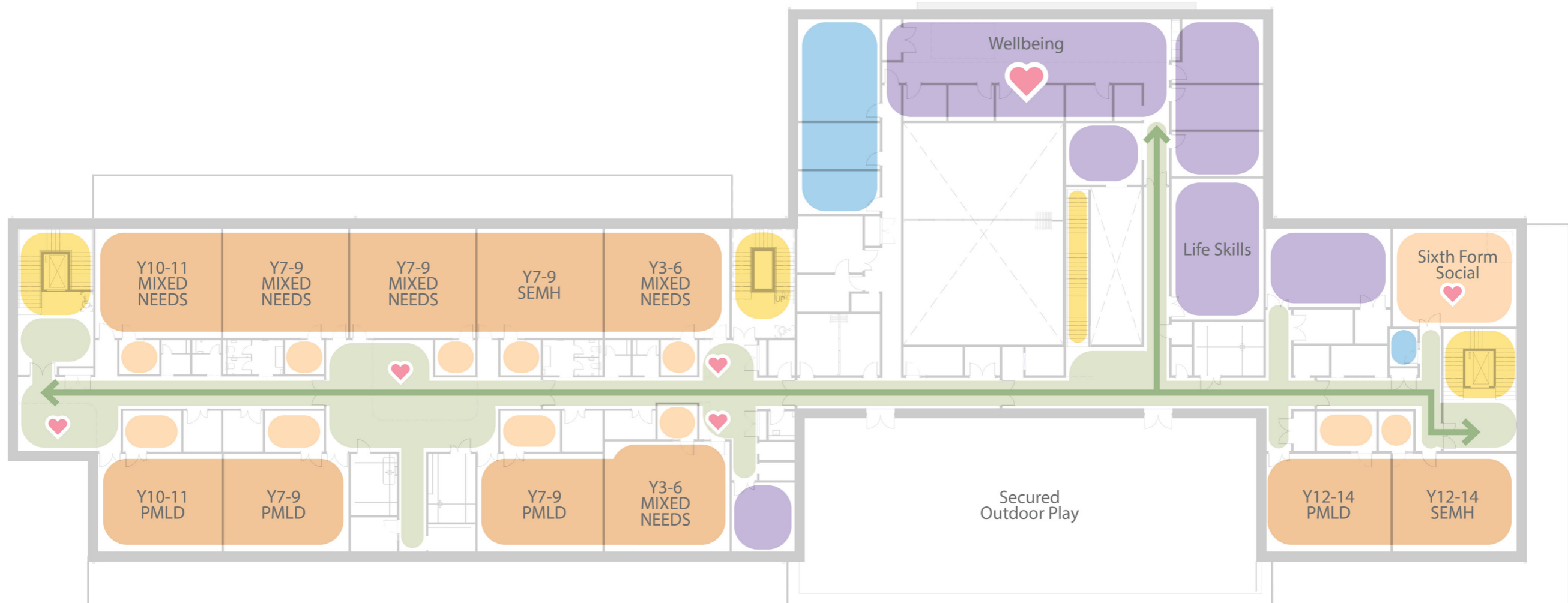


### KEY

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Teaching Spaces |  Wellbeing/Therapy/Medical |  Circulation (Vertical) |
|  Community Use   |  Dining and Food           |  Staff and Admin        |
|  Activity        |  Circulation (Horizontal)  |  |



**First Floor**

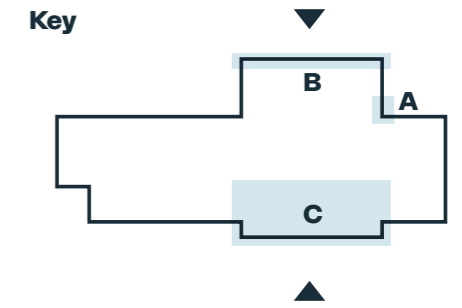


**KEY**

- Teaching Spaces
- Wellbeing/Therapy/Medical
- Circulation (Vertical)
- Community Use
- Dining and Food
- Staff and Admin
- Circulation (Horizontal)
- Activity



### 5.3\_Look and Feel - External Elevation



**A** Recessed entrance and glazed brick



**B** Feature windows and coloured frames



**C** Outdoor terrace space

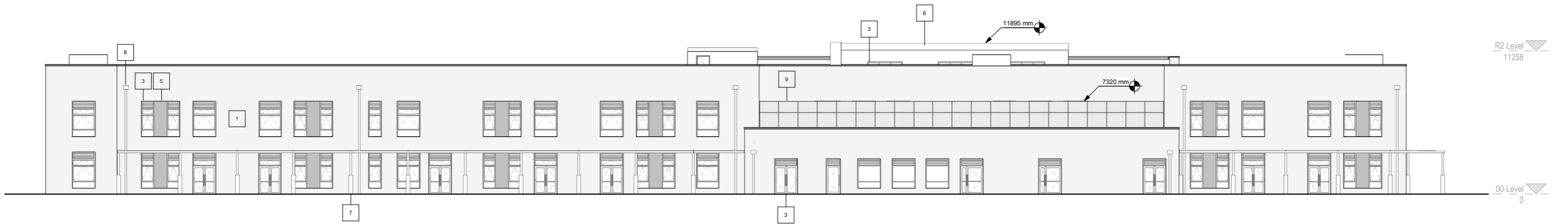




## 5.4\_Proposed Elevations



### 1. North Elevation

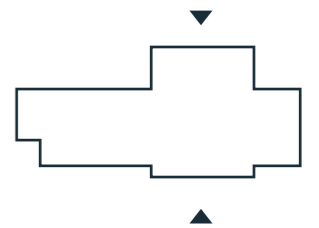


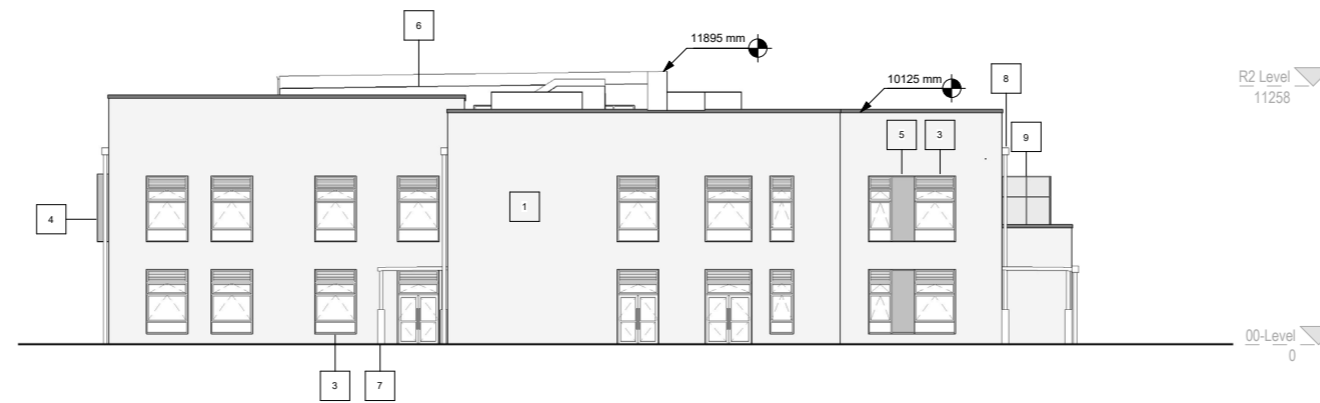
### 2. South Elevation

#### Elevation Material Key:

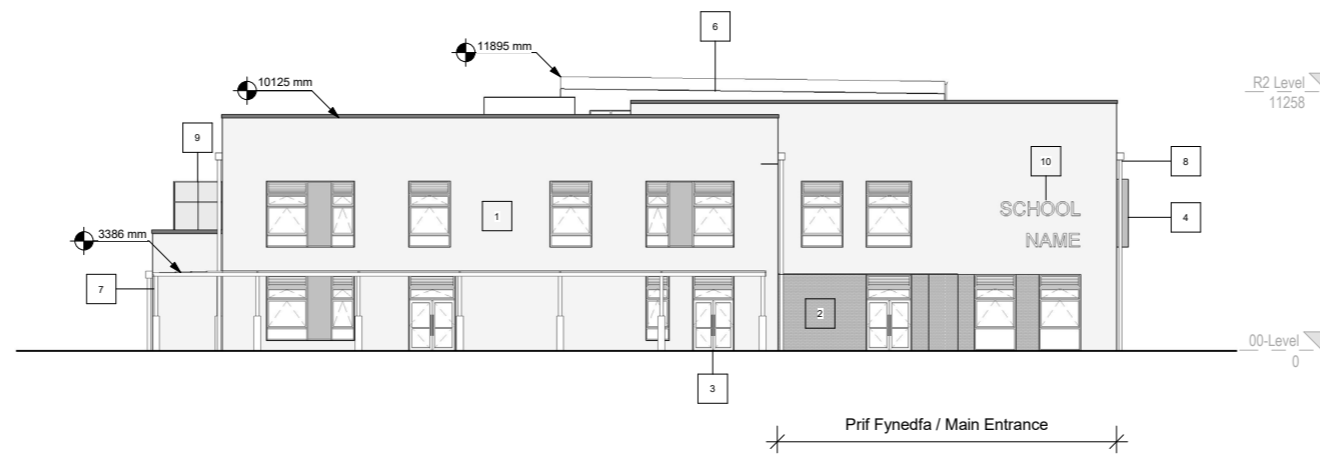
- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Facing Brickwork Colour 1 - to be confirmed                               | 6. Rain Screen Cladding               |
| 2. Facing Brickwork Colour 2 - to be confirmed                               | 7. External Canopy                    |
| 3. PPC Aluminium Windows, Curtain Walls & Doors - RAL Colour to be confirmed | 8. Rainwater Goods                    |
| 4. PPC Aluminium Window Reveal   | 9. Fencing to Secured Outdoor Terrace |
| 5. Spandrel Panel  | 10. Signage                           |

#### Key





### 3. West Elevation



### 4. East Elevation

#### Elevation Material Key:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Facing Brickwork Colour 1 - to be confirmed                               | 6. Rain Screen Cladding               |
| 2. Facing Brickwork Colour 2 - to be confirmed                               | 7. External Canopy                    |
| 3. PPC Aluminium Windows, Curtain Walls & Doors - RAL Colour to be confirmed | 8. Rainwater Goods                    |
| 4. PPC Aluminium Window Reveal   | 9. Fencing to Secured Outdoor Terrace |
| 5. Spandrel Panel  | 10. Signage                           |

#### Key





**5.5\_Proposed Entrance View**



Artists Impression  
Not to scale



## 5.6 Sustainable Design Principles and Strategies

### Key Design Principles



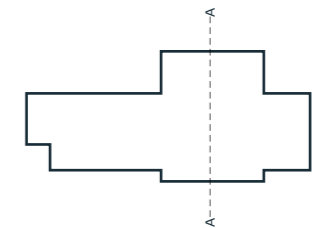
05. An enclosed outdoor rooftop space is used as a secure play area, benefiting students in upper floor classrooms.



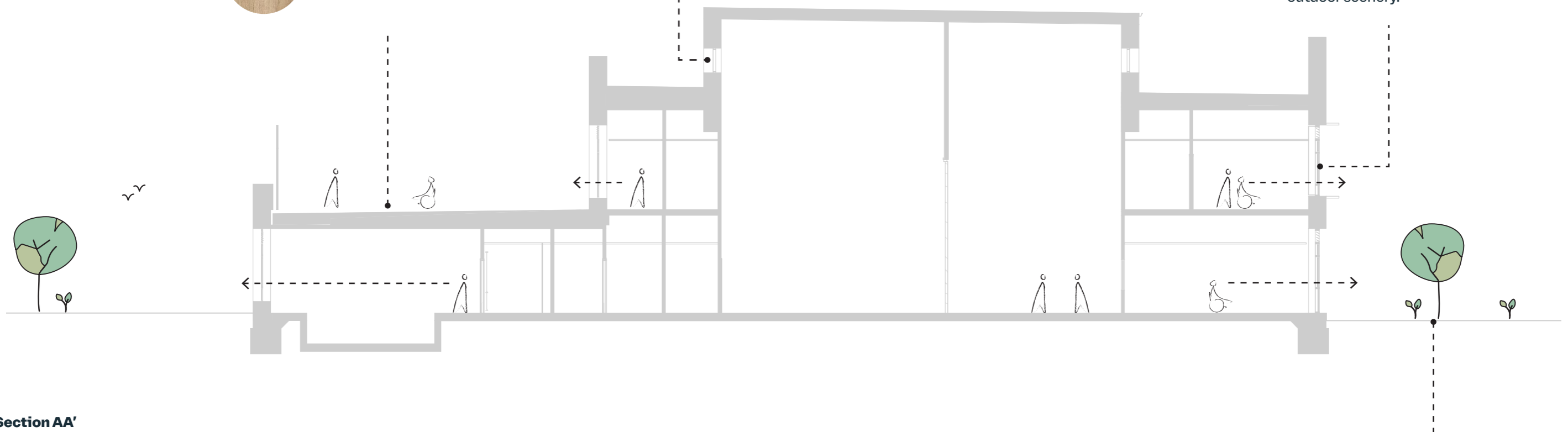
01. Whenever possible, the building incorporates natural materials.

03. In internally positioned spaces, clerestory window openings and internal glazing are incorporated to introduce natural light.

### Key



02. Windows are strategically placed to offer sweeping views of the surrounding outdoor scenery.



### Section AA'



06. Internal / external free-flow approach implemented at all ground floor classrooms maximising the benefits of nature in self regulation of pupils and supporting biophilic design strategy.



04. Growing food forms an important part of the school and is celebrated throughout its landscape design. Food is an example of how circular economy principles shall be implemented in to the design.



## Passive Design

The passive design strategy adopted in the Stage 2 concept design takes into consideration the specific requirements for an education setting for students with additional learning needs. We are continuing to develop this at stage 3.

Passive Design Strategies	Design Consideration for Learners with ALN	Adopted Design Principles
Building Orientation for Solar Shading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharp temperature changes within a classroom or other spaces can distract pupil and trigger anxiety/behavioural responses. Introducing good solar shading will help reducing sharp temperature rises caused by direct sunlight.</li> <li>Solar shading solutions such as brise-soleil may create shadows. Shadow could create 'barriers' or trigger behavioural responses for learners with enhanced sensitivity for specific stimuli. The use of solar shading is required to be considered carefully.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The building is orientated according to the seasonal changes of the sun's position for maximum protection against summer heat while harnessing the winter sunlight. This include maximising the number of classrooms that have north-south orientation.</li> <li>There are opportunities to utilise the glazed canopy (of the external classroom area) as a solar shading elements for each individual classroom</li> </ul>
Maximising Daylighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glare and uneven light in classrooms often have a negative impact on pupils and can trigger anxiety / behavioural responses. Glare control will be required to be considered.</li> <li>Being able to control the lighting level will be essential especially for students who use communication devices and if they have vision impairment.</li> <li>Some specialist rooms such as immersive sensory room and dark room will require total black-out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The layout maximises daylighting in main teaching areas such as classroom area, with the depth of classroom no more than 7.8m. Glare control will be included.</li> <li>Utilising internal glazing and clerestory window to provide daylighting in heart spaces, supporting spaces and hall.</li> </ul>
Fabric-first approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A constant thermal environment will be important. Any sharp temperature changes within a classroom or other spaces can distract pupil and trigger anxiety/behavioural responses. A fabric first approach that focuses on better building insulation and better air tightness will help maintaining a constant thermal comfort.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By maximising the level of airtightness and insulation, the design aims to improve the energy efficiency of the building and reduce the energy demands.</li> <li>The insulation for the building will adopt a robust standard adopted by the industry</li> </ul>
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design of any ventilation system needs to be carefully considered as many young people are sensitive to smells, noise, air movement as well as potential contamination/ infection for those with complex health needs.</li> <li>Any system proposed must be localised, specific to use and ease of control by the teacher.</li> <li>Localised draughts can be distracting to the learners.</li> <li>Maintaining a constant temperature during the school hours and providing better control of internal room temperature will be essential.</li> <li>The ventilation strategy should not compromise the ability of noise control (particularly noises from outside into the teaching spaces)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In most areas, an efficient local mechanical ventilation with heat recovery system (MVHR) for winter fresh air.</li> <li>Mixed mode ventilation outside of heating season subject to noise consideration.</li> </ul>





## **Access**

The access strategy for this site seeks to provide safe and convenient access routes throughout, which are fully inclusive for all users.

The site has been designed to provide a welcoming legible safe approach and arrival for all modes of transport including public and private transport, cycling and walking.

Sustainable transport is advocated through the arrangement of the site frontage and provision of safe routes for pedestrians and cycles from the local neighbourhood to the identifiable main building entrances. Appropriate secure cycle storage is provided, catering for pupils, students, staff and visitors, though it is understood, due to pupil needs, most will arrive on local authority provided transport.

The design has considered potential conflicts between vehicular and non-motorised users and has sought to minimise these risks to ensure appropriate safety and security of pupils, staff and visitors.

Access for servicing, deliveries and the Emergency Services is also provided without compromising the safety or convenience of pedestrian and cycle access.

Clearly defined footways provide access through hard and soft landscape areas, designed such that equal accessibility is provided for all persons. Level thresholds are to be provided at all building entrances; all footways within the site will consist of safe and wheelchair-accessible surfaces; with safe changes in level or transitions between surfaces; of sufficient width including passing places as required.

The site plan development prioritises the design of a drop-off/pick-up strategy for the school. This includes the creation of a secure zone for minibus drop-off as the primary method for pupil arrivals. This is provided via secondary use of the hard surfaced play space along the school's perimeter. This is to the north of the site, allowing for efficient and safe passenger disembarking. Additionally, private car/taxi drop-off zones are established to the west of the site, with careful consideration to ensure that vehicle queuing is contained within the car park, reducing congestion and maintaining a smooth traffic flow.

Moreover, in the interest of safety and efficiency, the school will adopt an airport-style drop-off approach with mini-buses diving in a forward direction at all ties, with roundabout style turning to the rear of the site. This method aims to streamline the drop-off process, minimising disruption and enhancing overall safety for students and pedestrians. Additionally, the site is designed to minimize the need for vehicles to reverse whenever possible, further enhancing safety measures and reducing potential traffic hazards. Drop-off / pick-up areas are located within accessible proximity to the building entrances.

## **Parking**

A designated area to the west of the site is provided for a whole school car park, serving both staff and visitors. Dedicated clearly marked accessible parking spaces are located in close proximity to the school's main entrance.

EV parking is to be provided.

## Internal Access

Accessibility is an essential component for the school and as such numerous measures above and beyond Building Regulations and BS8300 are to be provided to accommodate the varying access requirements of the students. Circulation is a key aspect of this.

Two entrances are provided; each accessing into the main circulation/heart space of the building. One main entrance has been provided for pupils in order to make the arrival easy and clear for orientation, whilst also aiding security. A second visitors and staff entrance as a reception located immediately to the right within a secured lobby upon entering. A staff member can greet visitors and monitor and assist those looking to enter the school. The configuration of the entrance area creates an 'air-lock' arrangement allowing control of those who can proceed further into the school. A visitor toilet, interview room and community space can be accessed without crossing through the school's secure line.

The building follows a super block typology, with three blocks featuring deeper plans to suit site constraints these comprise a central block for shared spaces, and two teaching wing blocks linked to the central block, where primary and secondary classrooms are located on the west, and secondary ASD and sixth form classrooms are located on the east. Circulation in these blocks is linear, with clear direct sight lines for ease of navigation and reducing wayfinding and control issues. Most of the shared facilities including the main hall, hydrotherapy pool, dining, and rebound therapy room are provided on ground floor level within the central block to ensure ease of control for community use outside of hours. Within the central block at first floor further shared spaces are provided including therapy/ wellbeing, medical and life skills spaces. As the building is a two storey building, accessible lifts are provided across the three blocks, as well as part M compliant stairs, to further ensure universal access for all pupils.

The building maximises the use of both external and internal glazing to bring natural daylight into the heart of the school, and maximises views out and connectivity. Clerestory windows are also introduced for this purpose to the main hall and circulation within the central block.

The internal circulation route enhanced to aid the accessibility of users with wheelchair or specialist mobility equipment.

Within the central block, the main hall provides a space to gather for school events, accommodating different uses such as performances, assemblies, sports and other events. A large floor level trampoline with retractable floor covering is proposed and the space will be served by a mobile hoist to maximise flexibility of the space. The main hall and dining are located in such away that it can accommodate different uses simultaneously.

The Hydrotherapy pool is located towards the south of the central block along with support spaces and changing rooms. The wellbeing centre is also located within the central block on the first floor which includes shared therapy and sensory rooms.

Classrooms are located along the length of the circulation spine of each teaching wing, and each have a number of associated spaces, including external outdoor classrooms (on ground level), breakout spaces and access to hygiene rooms, WCs, and mobility storage. A number of these spaces are to be equipped with ceiling mounted hoists. For classrooms on the first floor, a secure outdoor terrace is provided for external outdoor play.

An Acoustic Strategy has been developed as part of the Stage 3 works to ensure good acoustics and sound insulation to all occupied spaces - good acoustics being vital in education environments, particularly so where students may have sensory impairments and / or communication difficulties.

Internal partitions are typically lightweight metal stud and plasterboard construction but of a severe duty specification, with added protection to circulation and vulnerable areas, and acoustically insulated to occupied spaces.

The location and design of the doors have been developed to be fire and acoustic rated as necessary and appropriately sized for users and items of equipment. Specific details such as anti-finger trap guards and kick plates have been considered. Detailed specifications are to be developed in the next stage of design.

The interior design strategy has been carefully developed to suit an ALN environment and the various specialist needs of the users, creating a calm, neutral and natural environment that encourages positive experiences, and avoids too much colour, contrast and intense patterns that can negatively impact students.

A biophilic strategy has been proposed, utilising natural materials and textures to engage and enhance students' attachment to place and respect and ownership of their learning spaces, whilst also promoting sustainability. Finishes are to avoid glare and be appropriately robust. Manifestation will be provided to areas of glazing as necessary.

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) for the school is being developed with a specialist FF+E consultant and close consultation with key members of the school team. The location and specification of the FF+E is vitally important and layouts have been developed accordingly, for example teaching walls have been located to minimise glare, height adjustable desks and sinks have been provided to suit the differing needs of students.

The mechanical and electrical design has also been tailored to suit the users. The fire strategy has been developed to include for sprinklers and an L2 alarm specification to allow early warning and reaction to ensure appropriate escape times. Access control and door hold opens are provided to suit the access strategies. Further detailed design development is to take place during the next stage of design.





06 Landscape Design Proposal  
by The Urbanists

**theurbanists**



# 06. Landscape Design Proposal

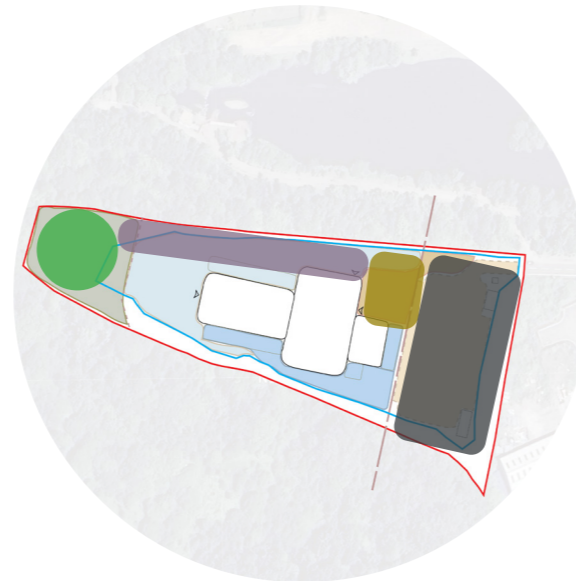
NOTE: Information shown within this section has been developed by The Urbanists Landscape Architects team.

## 6.1\_Design Principles

Our approach is to celebrate the natural landscape context and look to bring nature into the site. Building on an existing community facility at Clydach Vale and Wales' second Country Park, there is an opportunity for the new ALN school to complement existing community facilities and connect with the wider landscape and community.

### Key project outcomes:

- A site that addresses the woodland edge
- Great connectivity with nature
- A robust landscape
- A varied landscape with colour and interest



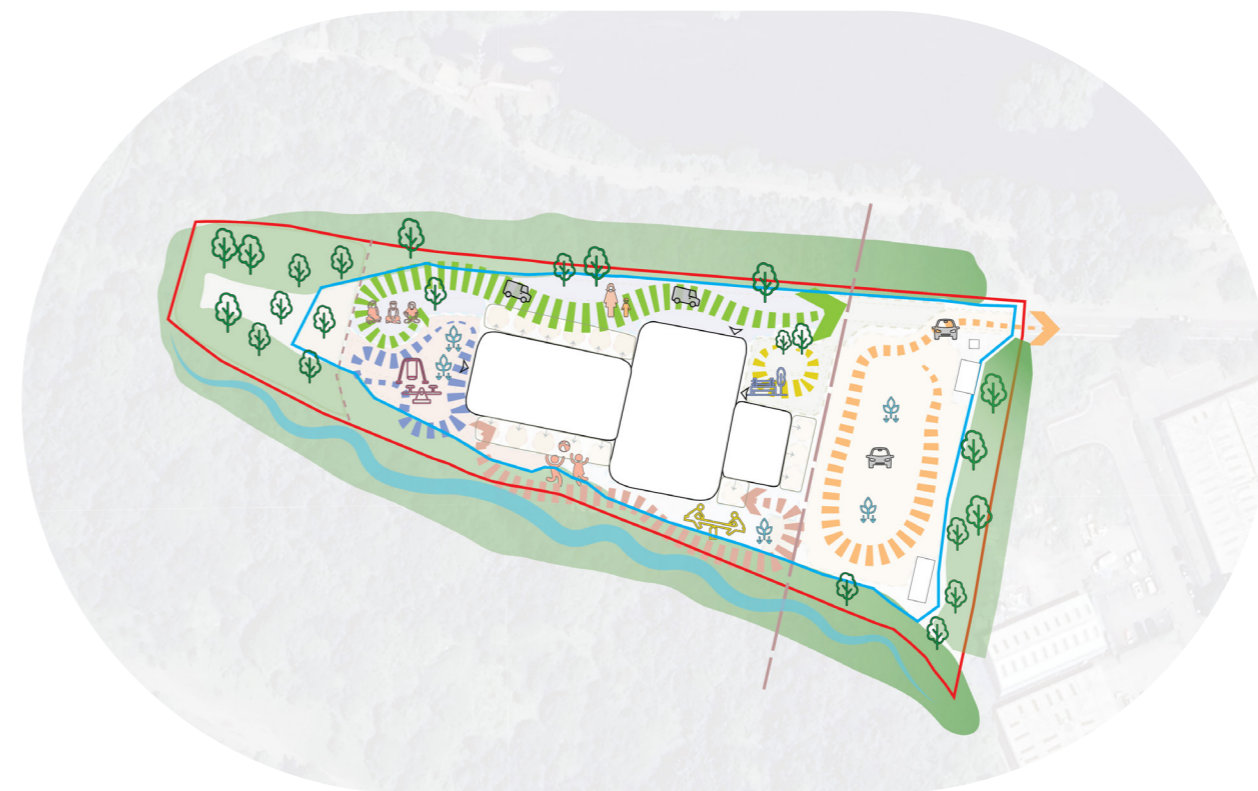
Landscape



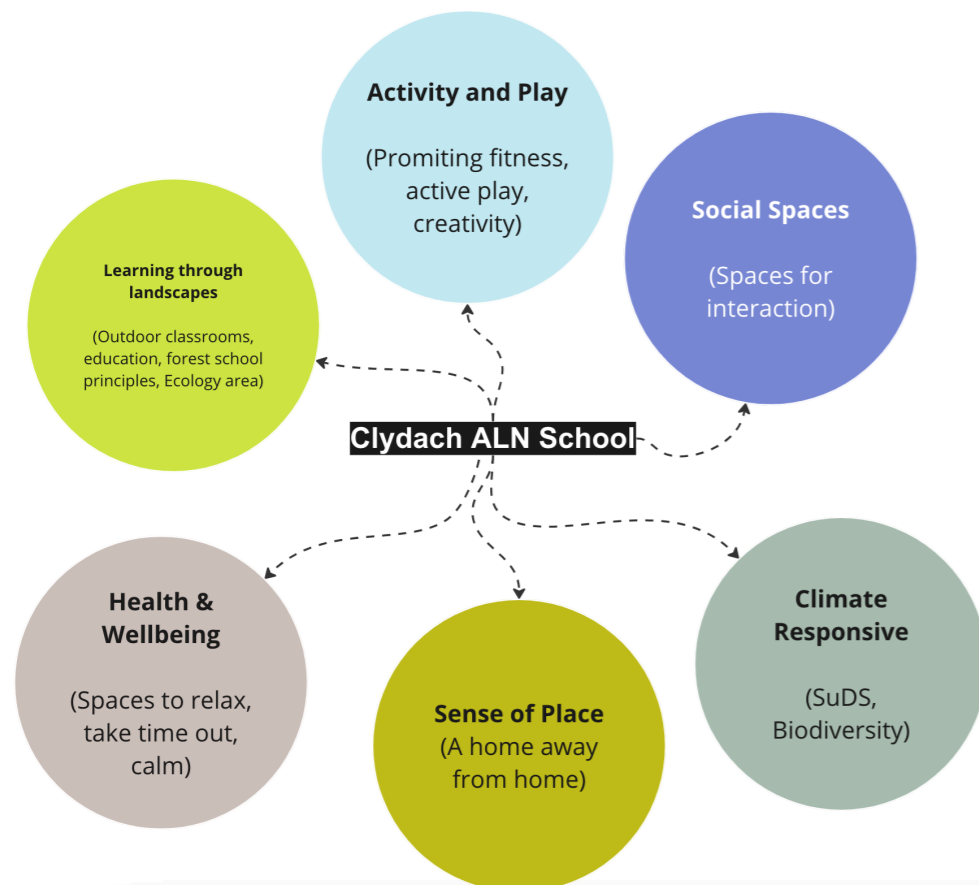
Green & Blue



Boundary



Landscape





NOTE: Design development is still ongoing following stakeholder engagement sessions.

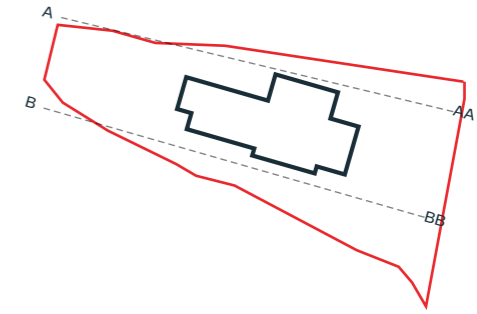
## 6.2\_Proposed Landscape Concept Plan



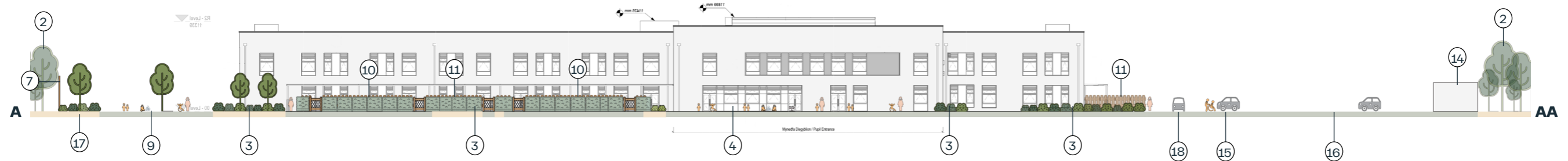
Not to scale  
Source: The Urbanists Landscape Architects



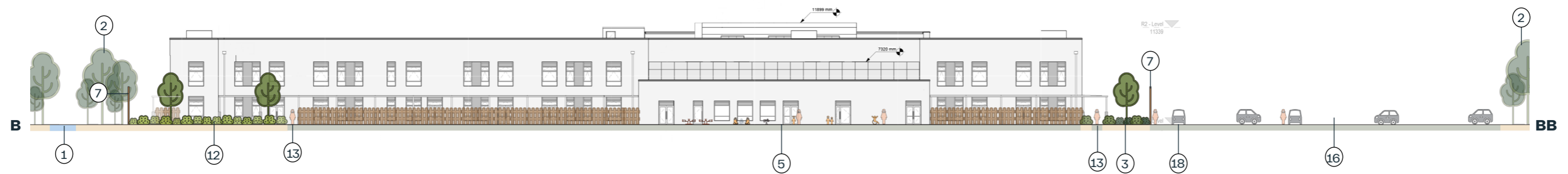
NOTE: The building depicted in sections 1 and 3 has been mirrored to illustrate the external landscape design. The icons shown on the section are conceptual and are not representing the final landscape and fencing design.



### 6.3\_Sections



#### 1. North Elevation



#### 2. South Elevation

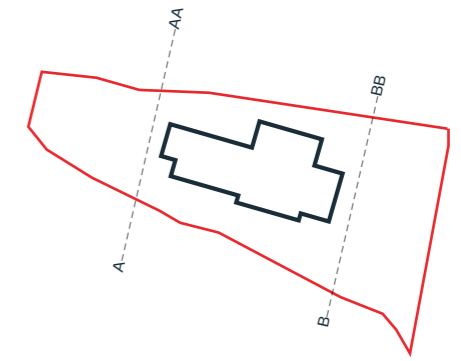
##### Elevation Key:

- 1. Water course
- 2. Existing woodland
- 3. Proposed SUDS
- 4. Student drop-off road - Shared playground
- 5. External ASD classroom
- 6. Cycle shelter

- 7. Secure boundary
- 8. Internal blade boundary
- 9. Shared playground
- 10. External classroom
- 11. Fence with hedging
- 12. Ornamental planting
- 13. Path

- 14. Sprinkler tank and hydrant compound
- 15. Disabled parking
- 16. Parking
- 17. Habitat zone
- 18. Drop-off bay

NOTE: The building depicted in sections 1 and 3 has been mirrored to illustrate the external landscape design. The icons shown on the section are conceptual and are not representing the final landscape and fencing design.



### 3. West Elevation



### 4. East Elevation

#### Elevation Key:

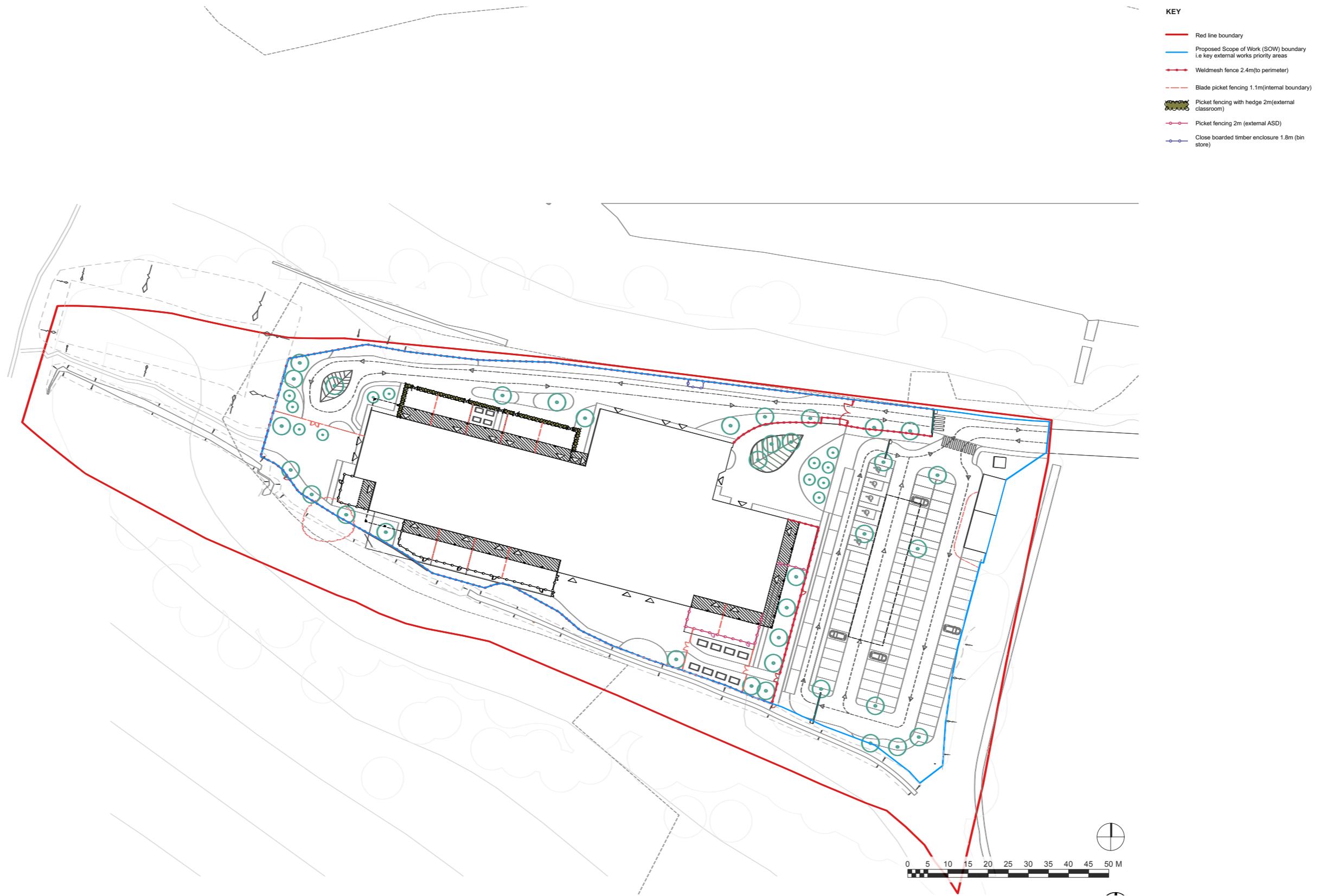
- 1. Water course
- 2. Existing woodland
- 3. Proposed SUDS
- 4. Student drop-off road - Shared playground
- 5. External ASD classroom
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- 7. Secure boundary
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- 10. External classroom
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- 12. Ornamental planting
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- 14. Sprinkler tank and hydrant compound
- 15. Disabled parking
- 16. Parking
- 17. Habitat zone
- 18. Drop-off bay



## 6.4\_Proposed Boundary Treatment

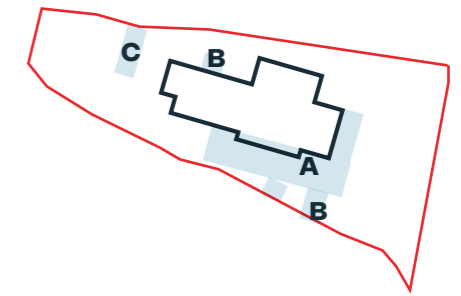


Not to scale  
Source: The Urbanists Landscape Architects



6.5\_ALN added value

Key



A ASD Focused area



B Agriculture - Food growing area



C Ecology Nature



D Sensory







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