



HLM
Architects

Toutley Depot Yard
Wokingham Borough Council

Design & Access Statement
Revision - P02
01 June 2026

TOU-HLM-02-XX-RP-A-000010_010626_P02

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by HLM Architects on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council. It is written in support of a planning application for reconfigured yard facilities at Toutley Depot. The yard will deliver operational facilities for contracted providers of the Council's Recycling and Waste Management, Highways and Transport Maintenance, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance services.

The site was subject to a previous Planning Application (193206), under which consent the first phase of the proposed development – a new administrative/welfare building and staff car parking to the west of the – was completed in 2025. Whilst the principal uses of the second phase of development – reconfiguration of the depot yard – remains unchanged, some material differences are required to meet the latest needs of the Client and its key stakeholders. In particular it is proposed to retain one of the two existing warehouses in lieu of two new-build structures.

As such, this document forms part of a new application.



1.0 Introduction

1.2 Overview of the Proposal

This development comprises the demolition of all existing structures at Toutley Depot, excepting the largest of two warehouses. This will be stripped back to its steel frame and reclad to match the appearance of the completed administration/welfare block. The refurbished warehouse will meet all internal storage needs of the four operators.

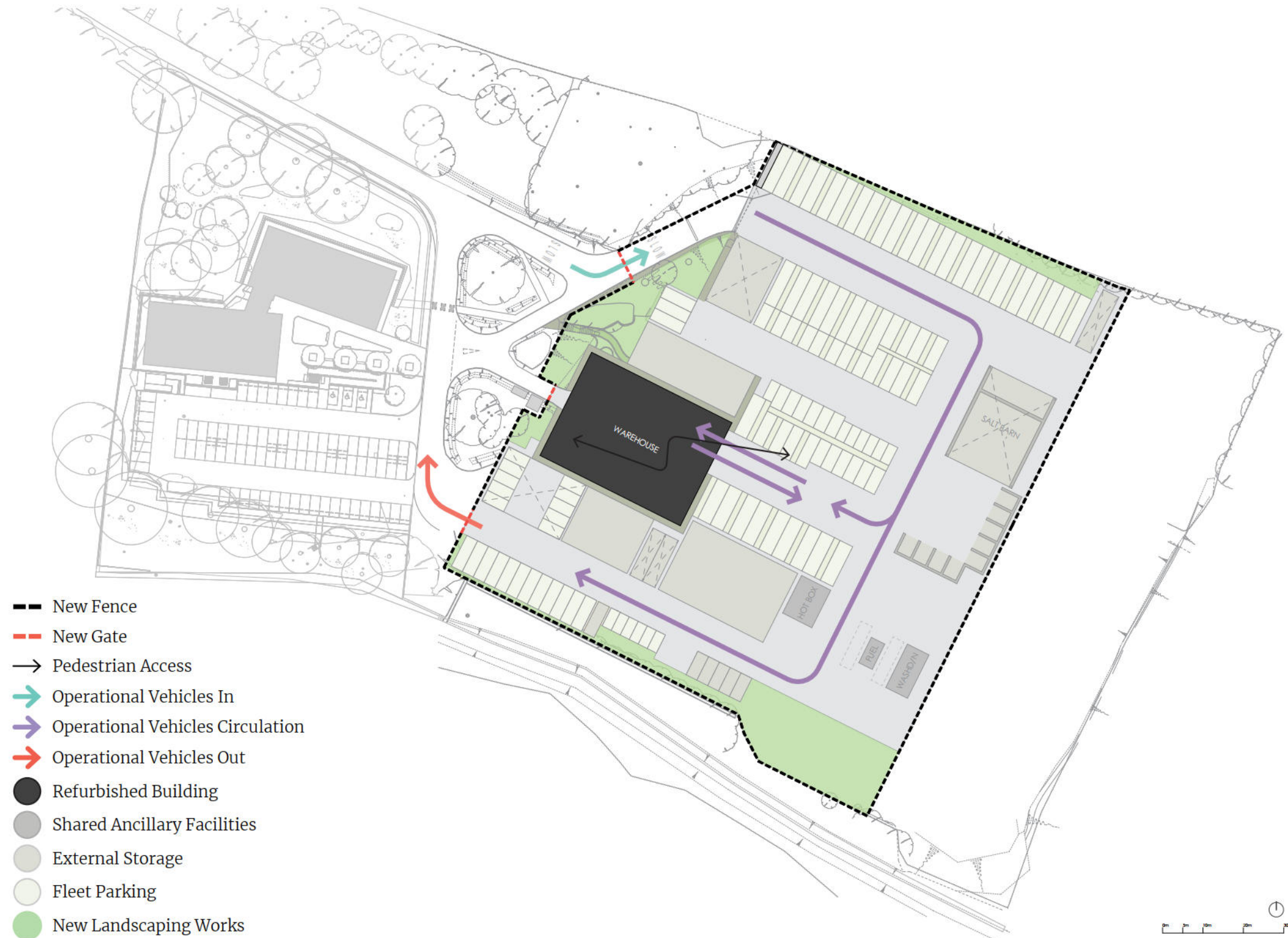
The yard itself will be reconfigured to provide a combination of fleet parking, external storage and ancillary functions of the operators, utilising existing hardstanding where possible but augmented by new surfacing suitable for the use of heavy goods/ specialist operational vehicles. Of particular note is the inclusion of a new salt-barn which will facilitate the storage of salt for winter gritting activities.

In addition, it is proposed to introduce new fencing around the full perimeter of the yard to improve security and to introduce new, below-ground drainage systems to alleviate localised flooding issues to the south-east corner of the site adjacent to an existing watercourse.

Together, these works will dramatically improve working conditions within the depot yard, creating a more efficient and less hazardous environment for the contracted operators, and ensuring that the long-term maintenance needs of the borough can be properly met.

To ensure that existing services are not impacted by the programme of works, the project will be phased, however the number of phases will be minimised to reduce disruption to the activities of the key stakeholders.

The project will also include minor landscape improvements.



2.0 Site Context

2.1 The Site

The Toutley Depot site (outlined in blue on the adjacent plan) is located approximately 1.7km to the north-west of Wokingham town centre and train station, and in close proximity to Junction 10 of the M4. The A329(M) motorway runs along its northern boundary. The depot is therefore strategically located to meet the various maintenance needs of the borough.

Access into the site is via Old Forest Road to the west, past the existing Toutley Industrial Estate which includes single and two-storey light-industrial buildings and a scrap yard.

To the south, the Ashridge Stream separates the site from the two and three-storey housing developments at Copsewood and Matthews Green Farm. The stream is subject to intermittent flooding.

The field to the eastern side of the depot is subject to an outline consent for 130 new dwellings and a 70 bed care home. These are accessed from the east via Twyford Road.



- Extent of Proposed Works
- Extent of Toutley Depot Site
- Extent of Completed Works

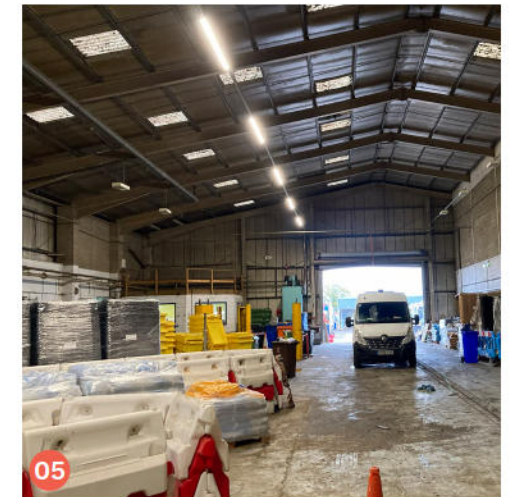
2.0 Site Context

2.2 The Existing Depot Yard

The existing depot site includes a large main building to the western half of the yard. This comprises two warehouses (1) & (2) – the larger being located to the south – around which is wrapped, principally single-storey office/ancillary accommodation (3). The offices are no longer in use, since all administrative functions were transferred to the new building to the east in the latter part of 2025.

The warehouses were constructed in the early 1980s. Their external fabric (including some hazardous materials) has come to the end of its service life, whilst the internal arrangement (4) & (5) no longer meets the needs of the operators.

Beyond are a number of smaller buildings added over time on an ad-hoc basis (6), together with a series of structures for the storage of materials and facilities to accommodate the large fleet of vehicles required to deliver Council services (7). Again, these do not meet the needs of the operators, creating an inefficient and slightly chaotic arrangement that does not support safe working practices.



2.0 Site Context

2.2 The Existing Depot Yard

Typical of this arrangement is the eastern edge of the site (8), which provides storage space for highways maintenance operations, mostly loose materials and aggregates (9). Here bays are not fully utilised, patterns of vehicle movement are unclear and all activities take place on an unsuitable, muddy surface. The proposed reconfiguration therefore represents a significant improvement to working conditions.

Some ancillary functions are also visible on site. To the north is a vehicle washdown facility (10), though a second washdown gantry to the south is now redundant. Similarly, there is a refuelling point at the centre of the site, but an adjacent set of above-ground pumps are no longer in use (11). Beside these pumps is a large salt barn (12). Like the warehouses, this is in a poor state of repair and no longer fit-for-purpose.

The site falls some five metres from its northern boundary down to the stream running along the southern boundary. Whilst the site as a whole contains a number of trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the depot yard itself has little vegetation and/or biodiversity value. Rough hedging is restricted to the perimeters of the depot yard only.

The pedestrian entrance to the yard (13) is via steep steps down from the access road. Vehicular access utilises a one-way traffic system, with operational vehicles entering via a gate to the north (14) and existing to the south before heading north past the new administration/welfare block and back onto Old Forest Road.



2.0 Site Context

2.3 Constraints & Opportunities

Flood Risk (01): The southern part of the site sits within flood zones 2 & 3. Whilst some localised works to Ashridge Stream may create improvements, flooding remains a key constraint in the design of the yard. In the first instance, the layout has been designed to strategically locate critical infrastructure outside the flood zone – notably the salt barn, whose materials are soluble. Where this is not possible, levels have been adjusted to mitigate impacts. Secondly, the proposal introduces drainage systems to alleviate the extent of flooding & surface water run-off.

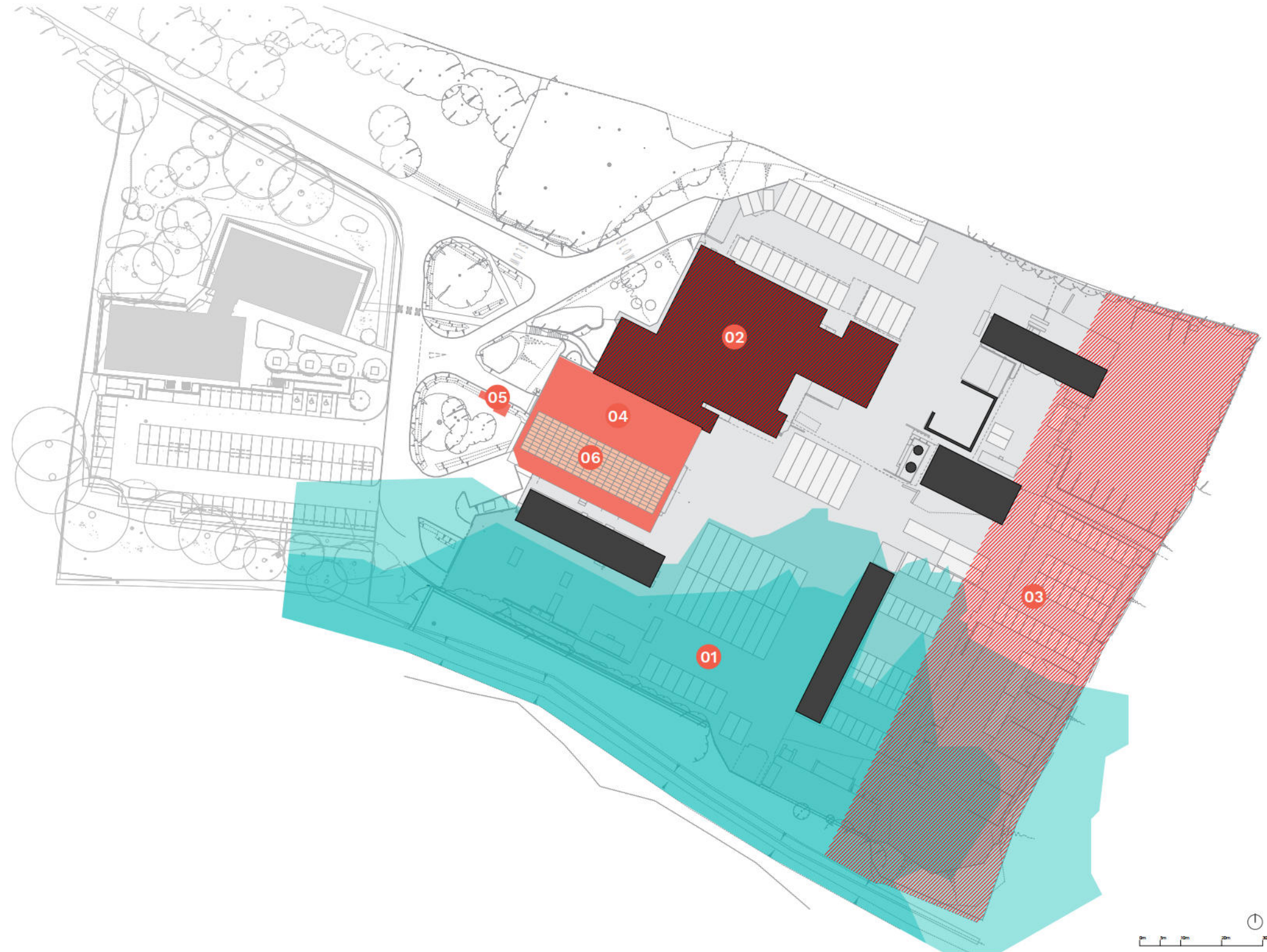
Levels (02): The site slopes from north to south, and whilst the depot yard only deviates by around a metre-and-a-half over its length, the level of the northern warehouse and surrounding offices sits somewhat higher than the surrounding topography. As such, this area will need to be regraded to ensure level thresholds around the full extent of the retained warehouse. In addition, access into site via the steep drop from the Admin/Welfare block to the depot yard must be carefully managed.

Buffer Zone & Biodiversity (03): To the east of the site is a proposed buffer zone between the depot yard and the future residential development. Although this forms part of the current yard and can be used for the purpose of phasing to maintain continuous operations, it does not form part of the completed project. As such, achieving Biodiversity Net Gain requirements may be difficult.

Existing Warehouse Location (04): In retaining the existing warehouse, some of the flexibility inherent within the original Planning Consent is lost and other operational requirements (storage, hardstanding, fleet parking etc) must be managed within the remaining available space.

Power (05): The operators have stated a desire to introduce EVs to their existing fleet. It is not intended to add to the supply as part of this application. EV charging will therefore need to be managed within the existing electrical capacity, though passive ducting will be introduced to ensure future flexibility.

LZC Technologies (06): The large, south-facing roof of the existing warehouse creates the opportunity to introduce an extensive PV array. Secondary structures may also support this objective subject to orientation and design.



3.0 Design Proposals

3.1 Design Brief & Stakeholder Engagement

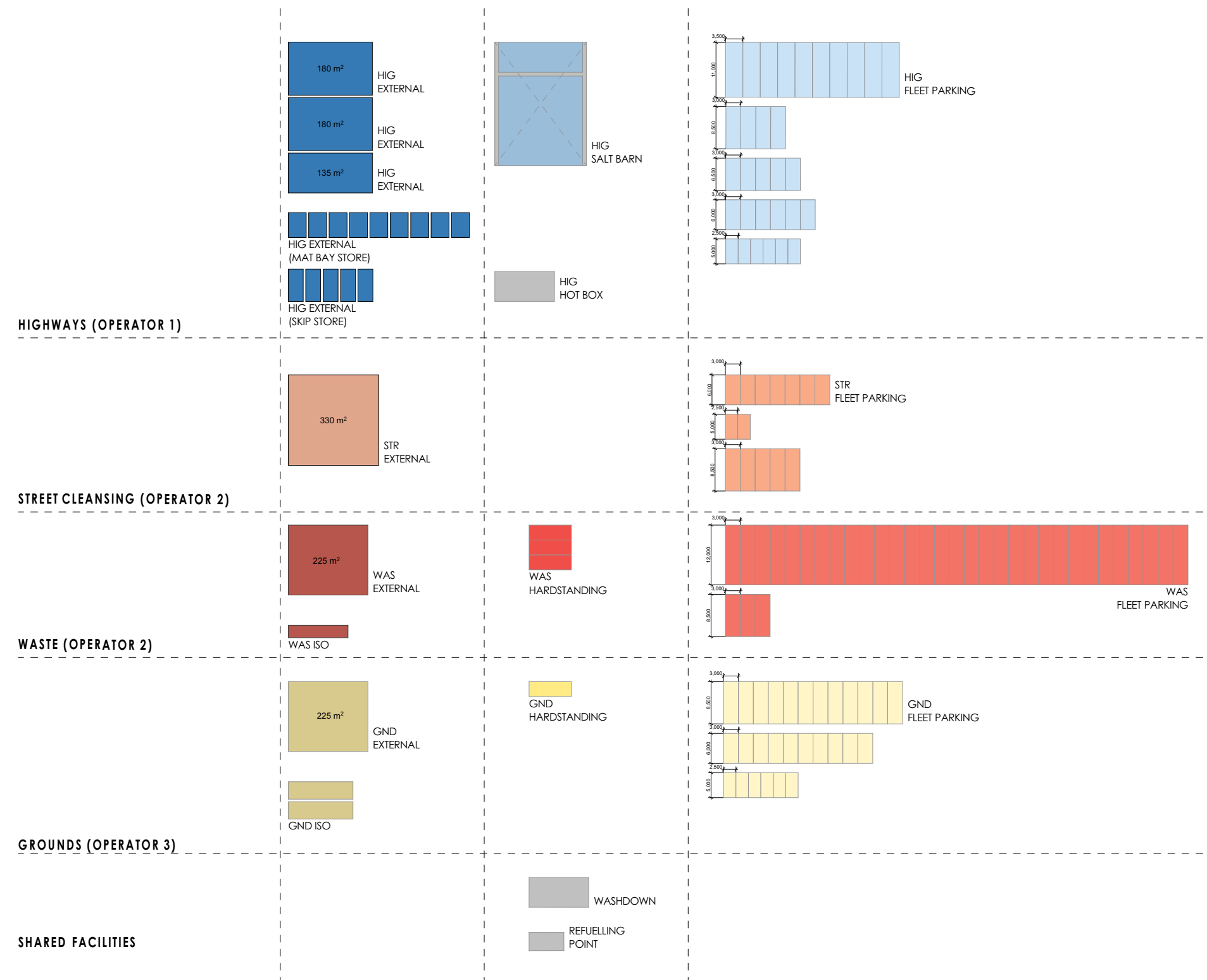
The Depot Yard project forms a continuation of the development of the site, starting with the completion of the Administration/Welfare Block and car parking to the west.

The original intention had been to further develop the depot yard in line with the original consent, in which two new warehouses would be constructed and storage, fleet parking and other operational requirements would be reconfigured around them. However, on further review, it was determined that the retention of one of the existing warehouses and the introduction of racking systems within would adequately meet the internal storage needs of the various stakeholders.

Wokingham Borough Council's revised therefore contained the following over-arching requirements:

- to refurbish the southern warehouse to meet the storage needs of the stakeholders
- to improve and reconfigure the depot yard to provide adequate external storage, fleet parking and other operational requirements (washdown, refuelling etc)
- to ensure continuity of operations for the contractors throughout construction through a phased development process

As part of this briefing process, the Client and Design Team have met frequently with the contracted operators to validate the requirements. The following schedule of accommodation has therefore been developed and agreed with Recycling & Waste Management, Street Cleansing, Highways & Transport Maintenance and Grounds Maintenance services.



3.0 Design Proposals

3.2 The Proposed Depot Yard

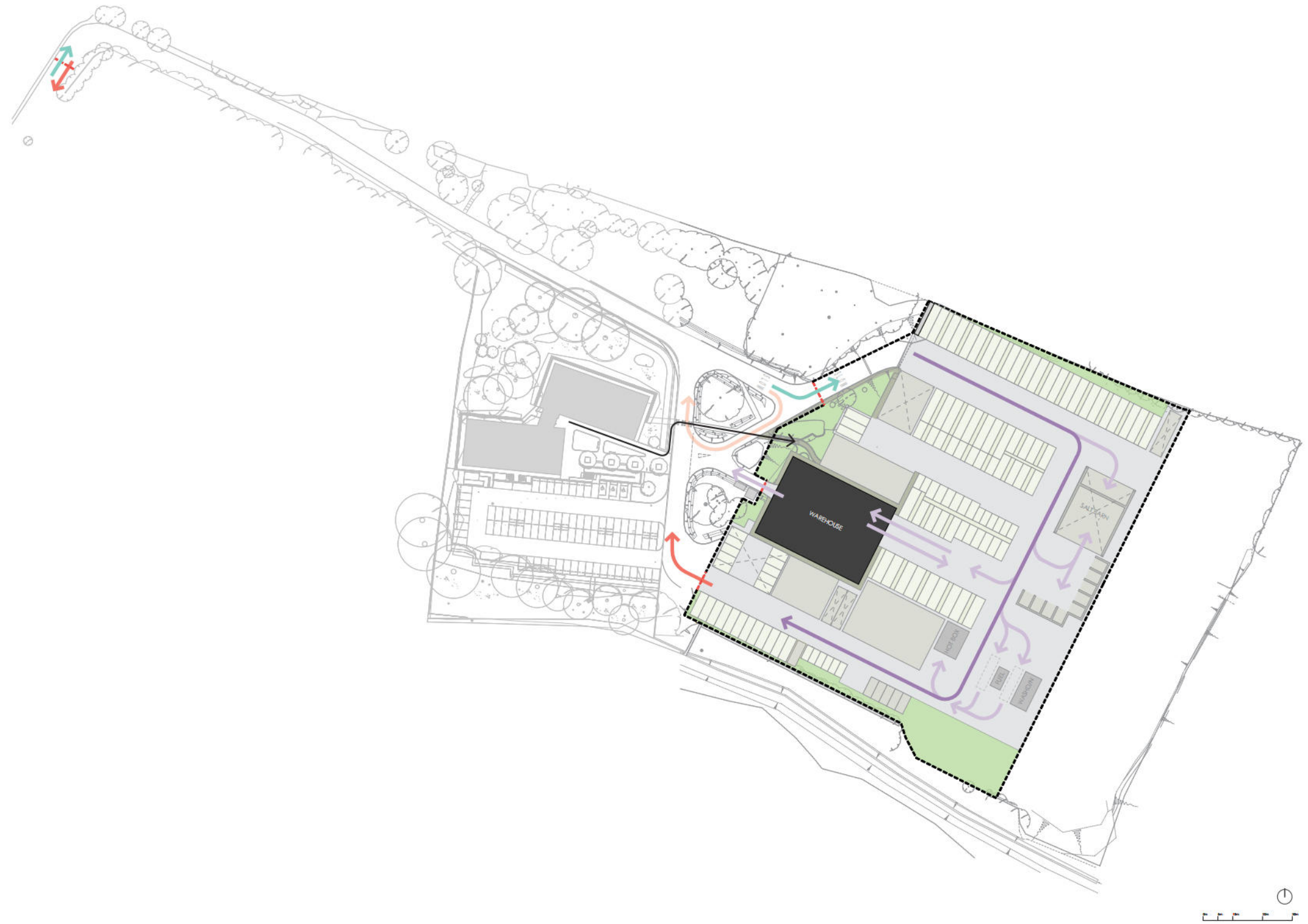
Access

The proposal seeks to retain the basic principle of access to the site in which all traffic enters via Old Forest Road, with primary entry at the north/south area of the carriageway. Here a new sliding gate will be installed to restrict unauthorised access and improve security.

Access to the depot yard itself utilises a northern gateway, as per the current arrangement, though the position of this has been adjusted to the south-west. This gate will be accessed controlled, with any rejected vehicles able to turn right and back out onto Old Forest Road.

Once within the depot yard, vehicles will circulate in a one-way, clockwise direction with final exit via a southern gate and back to the main carriageway. Within the site, contra-flow is limited to operational areas off the main circulation route and is designed to reduce vehicular conflicts and improve overall safety.

The majority of pedestrian movements will be to/from the administration/welfare block and staff car park to the west. As such, personnel access is retained from the west via a secure gate. Once on site, all pedestrian routes will be clearly marked and, where possible, separated from operational areas.



- New Fence
- New Gate
- Pedestrian Access
- Operational Vehicles In
- Operational Vehicles (Primary Circulation)
- Operational Vehicles (Secondary Circulation)
- Operational Vehicles Out
- Rejected Vehicles Out

3.0 Design Proposals

3.2 The Proposed Depot Yard

Layout

The principal structure on site will be the retained warehouse, the layout of which will be significantly modified from its existing arrangement insofar as all extraneous subdivisions will be removed to create a single, large volume. This will meet all stakeholder requirements as regards internal storage, with racking solutions introduced to maximise the warehouse's substantial height (a feature which is underutilised in its current form). Access to the warehouse will be via one of two roller shutters on the two short ends. The first, to the west, is in the same location as at present. That to the east is slightly adjusted to accord with the parking arrangement within the yard and requires minor structural modification. It is this doorway that will be most frequently used.

A pedestrian pathway will run around the full perimeter of the warehouse and will provide access to a series of personnel doors. These are typically located at the corners of the building to reduce travel distances, both for practicality and for the purpose of escape in the event of emergency.

The remainder of the yard is planned, as much as is practicable, into operator areas to reduce conflicts in day-to-day activities. Waste & Recycling services are typically located to the far north, with a large run of fleet parking along the northern boundary and directly opposite it. This zone incorporates a covered enclosure which will primarily be used for vehicle maintenance.

Directly to the south are parking bays and external storage areas associated with Street Cleansing functions. These will be carried out by the same operator and, as such, reduces the impact of competing activities.

The central/eastern part of the depot yard is defined by Highways functions. Again, a large part of this provision is defined by fleet parking, however, as described above, the highways requirements incorporate some specialist storage area. To the north-east is the salt barn, which utilises a lightweight, proprietary canopy system over a new sub-base. Directly to the south of this are reinforced concrete material bays for loose materials and



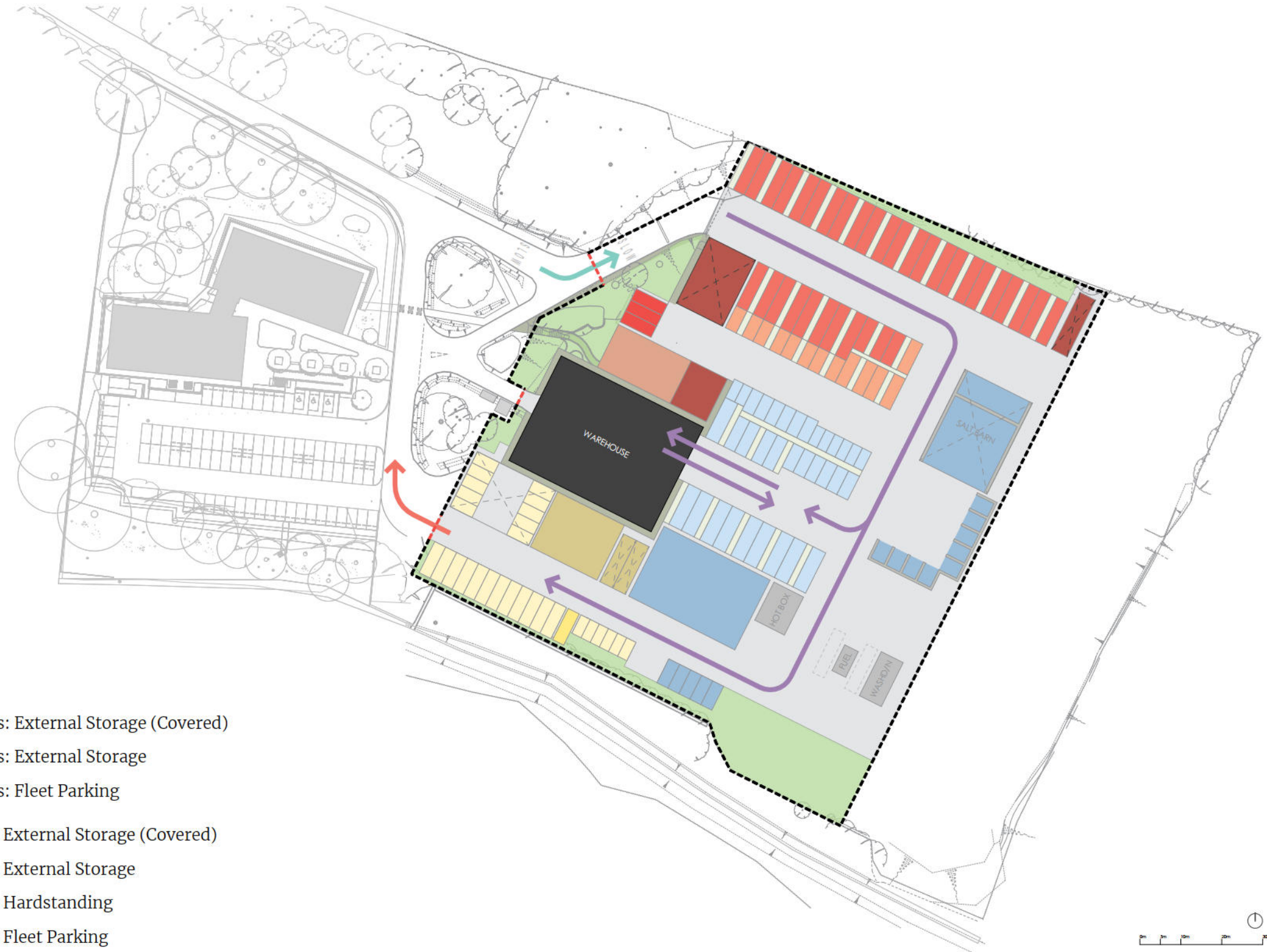
3.0 Design Proposals

3.2 The Proposed Depot Yard

aggregates etc. These are arranged in an 'L' shape to contain the necessary vehicle movements within a compact zone off the main circulation route. To the south of the parking bays is a large, open external storage area, hotbox and space for a number of enclosed skips.

The last operator – Grounds Maintenance – is located to the south-west, directly below the retained warehouse. Parking is arranged along the southern site boundary, whilst opposite is a large external storage area and a covered enclosure for parking mowers.

In addition to these operator specific requirements, shared facilities include a vehicle washdown area and refuelling point, both located in the south-west corner. The latter will be formed of an above-ground tank which will sit upon a plinth to sit circa 300mm above the flood zone 3 (1 in 100 year) level.



- Refurbished Warehouse
- Shared Facilities
- New Surfacing Works
- New Landscape Works
- Waste: External Storage (Covered)
- Waste: External Storage
- Waste: Hardstanding
- Waste: Fleet Parking
- Street: External Storage
- Street: Fleet Parking
- Highways: External Storage (Covered)
- Highways: External Storage
- Highways: Fleet Parking
- Grounds: External Storage (Covered)
- Grounds: External Storage
- Grounds: Hardstanding
- Grounds: Fleet Parking

3.0 Design Proposals

3.2 The Proposed Depot Yard

Form & Materials

The appearance of the new buildings and choice of materials is informed by the context of the existing adjacent buildings and surrounding landscape, and by the site's industrial use and identity. The main structures on site are:

Warehouse

This is the largest building on site. As an existing structure its form and mass are predetermined by the steel frame to be retained.

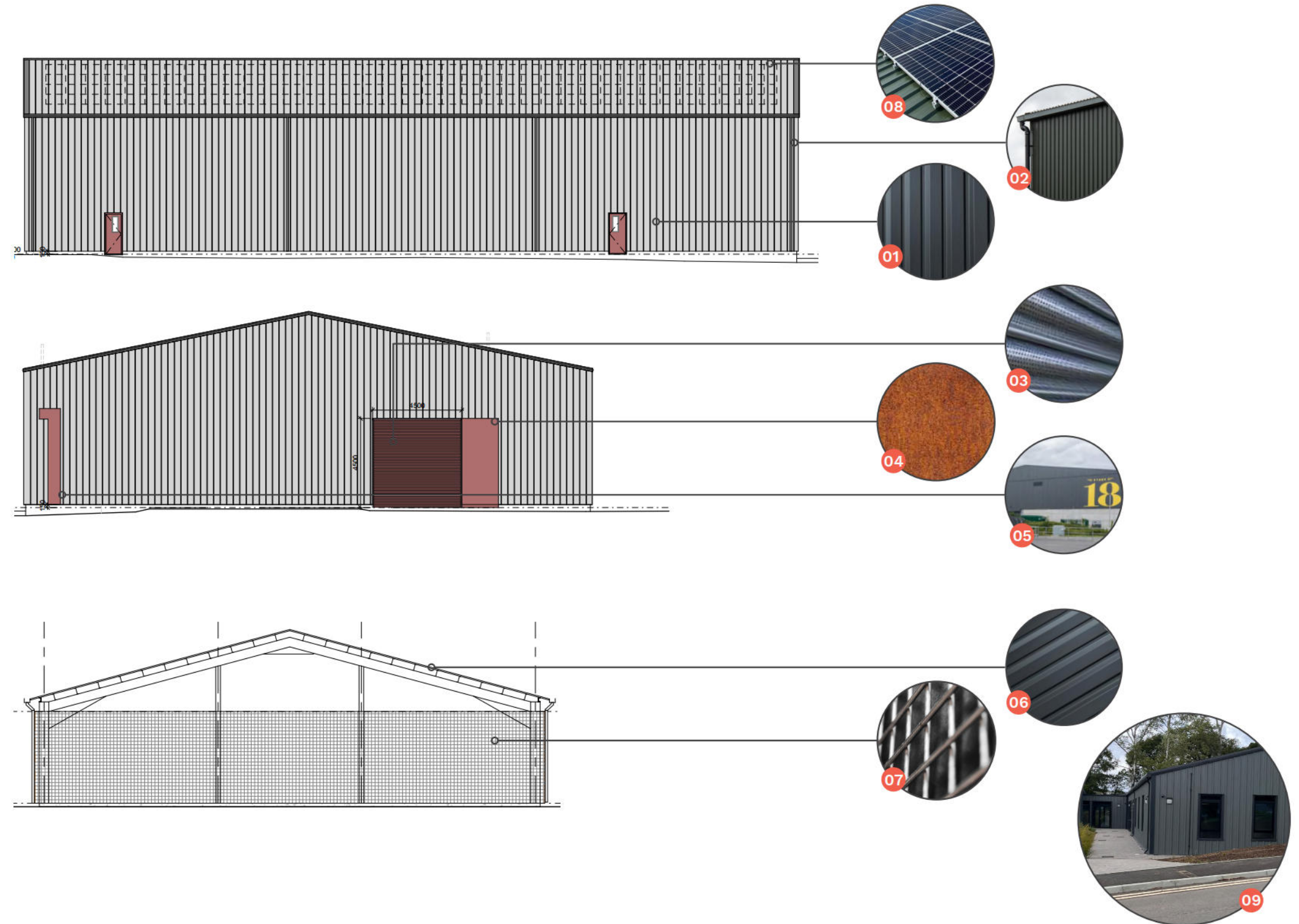
Its external appearance will however be upgraded. Like the recently completed administration and welfare block, the warehouse will be wrapped in a simple, profiled metal cladding (01). This is an efficient and cost-effective choice which will help to create a consistent family of buildings that share the same architectural language. This vertical profile extends up onto the roofs, with simple rainwater goods along the eaves line (02).

The large openings at each short end of the warehouse will use roller-shutters (03) to provide access for forklift/tele-handler type vehicles. To one edge of the opening is a metal panel in contrasting colour to the profiled cladding (04). This is also reflected in the 'super-graphics', used to assist wayfinding (05).

Covered Enclosures

The covered enclosures share much in common with the main warehouse and, as such, form part of the same suite of buildings. Structurally they are formed of simple, portal frames with pitched roofs of the same profiled metal as the warehouses (06). Both are, however, open structures albeit requiring some degree of security/screening. The enclosure to the south has metal mesh fencing (07) to all four sides with a gate in its southern elevation for access. The northern enclosure has mesh fencing to its two long sides only, enabling vehicles to drive through it in a forward gear, but constraining access to adjacent areas.

Both buildings therefore replicate the approach of the completed Administration & Welfare block (09), applying a clarity and quality of detail that will produce simple, contemporary industrial structures appropriate to their surrounding context.



3.0 Design Proposals

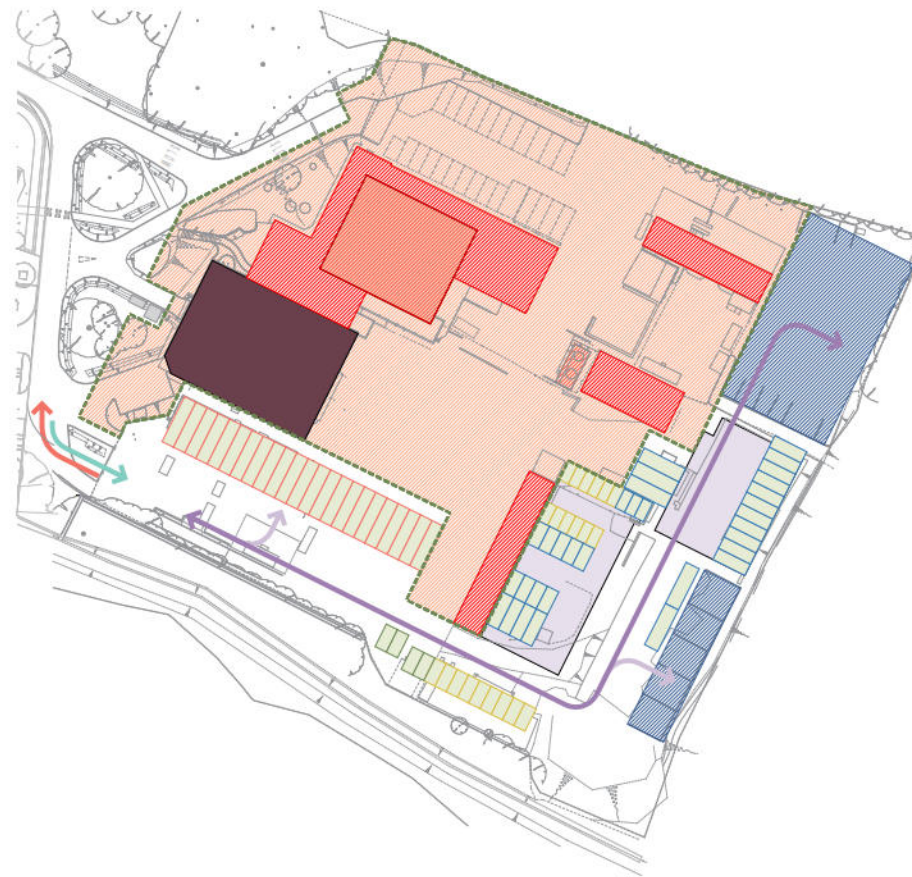
3.3 Phasing Strategy

It is intended to undertake construction works within the depot yard in as few phases as possible to limit disruption to the operational activities of the various stakeholder groups.



Enabling Phase

The existing, lightweight Grounds Maintenance office (now redundant) will be removed to enable relocation of some fleet parking.



Phase One (Demolition)

The first phase will take place in the northern and central parts of the site. Existing activities in this area will be relocated to the open space to the east and all current/subsequently redundant buildings demolished. This includes the northern warehouse and the office space that wraps around it, and stripping back of the southern warehouse to its structural frame. Depot yard access will be via the existing southern gateway, whilst construction traffic will use the existing northern gateway. The one-way circulation pattern will therefore be replaced by a contra-flow system, to be managed by the contracted operators.



Phase One (Construction)

The principal activity is to complete the refurbishment of the existing warehouse so that it can be used to fulfil all operator storage requirements. In addition, the salt barn will be constructed, which must take place outside the annual gritting period (ie construction must take place between April and September inclusive). More widely, the fleet parking areas for Waste, Street Cleansing & Highways will be delivered, along with other incidental uses – external storage, covered enclosure, landscaping & fencing works etc. The new refuelling point will also be completed as part of Phase One.



Phase Two (Demolition)

The second phase will take place in the remaining, southern part of the site. No significant structures are to be demolished, though some lightweight structures, such as the redundant washdown facility, will be removed. Access within phase two is the reverse of phase one, with depot yard traffic entering/leaving from the north and construction vehicles using the southern gate. Remaining operator functions that cannot be facilitated within the new depot yard will be contained within the north-east corner of the existing site.



Phase Two (Construction)

With the exception of the covered enclosure to the south-west corner of the existing warehouse, all construction within Phase Two is lightweight, with the majority being simple resurfacing works, landscape and fencing etc.



Completion

With the new facilities complete, the remaining, temporary operator activities to the north-east will be relocated and the buffer zone between the depot yard and the residential development site to the east vacated. NB Works within the buffer zone fall outside the scope of this project.

4.0 Conclusion

The proposed application represents a modest deviation from the consented scheme, with no significant changes in types and/or volumes of activity. Indeed, the retention/refurbishment of the existing, southern warehouse offers material advantage in reusing the structural steel frame and reducing waste.

As with its predecessor, the current proposal will provide a safer and more secure working environment for those operating within it, whilst the delivery of a more efficient depot yard will improve the service that can be offered to those within the borough and reduce costs to the taxpayer.

