

Hybrid Layout

The Hybrid Layout demonstrates how a high-quality, landscape-led neighbourhood can be delivered within the agreed parameters and principles set out in the Masterplan Framework.

- **Clear Block Structure:**
Walkable perimeter blocks provide legibility, allow varied housing typologies, and create a coherent urban grain.
- **Context Responsive Density & Heights:**
Low density development with around 18dph across the site, with all development to be a maximum of 2 storeys in height.
- **Defined Gateways:**
Main access points marked by enhanced landscape, feature buildings, and framed views to establish identity and a strong sense of arrival, along with improved active travel links.
- **Strategic Landmarks:**
Landmark buildings positioned at key junctions and locations to support way-finding and visual hierarchy.
- **Focal Spaces:**
A landscape-led development with central green (including public play areas), sports pitches, pocket parks, and linear green corridors along both existing and new public routes; creating a hierarchy of public spaces that are well-overlooked and multifunctional.
- **Strong Frontages:**
Active residential frontages line primary streets and public footpaths, ensuring enclosure, surveillance, and a high-quality public realm.
- **Composed Vistas & Views:**
Street alignment, green corridors and open spaces frame key views internally and towards the wider landscape, providing a legible co-herent masterplan.
- **Sensitive Edges & Interfaces:**
Generous buffers are provided to the reinforced green belt edge, SuDS features and ecological corridors are located along rural boundaries; transitional materials towards the green edges.
- **Distinct Character Areas:**
A distinct set of character areas will be provided to ensure a sensitive development with variety, while maintaining a cohesive architectural language.



Hybrid Masterplan (not to scale)

Land Use and Phasing

The development will be delivered in a series of phases to ensure a coordinated and sustainable pattern of growth.

- Phase One will deliver the SEN school, the 3G pitch and 100 homes of which 50 will be affordable.
- Later phases will provide a up to 130 homes, complete the landscape framework and provide a 65 bedroom residential care home.
- Future development has the potential to accommodate further outdoor sports facilities, including further sports pitches and facilities added.

Each phase will be self-contained and fully serviced, while contributing to the overall structure and infrastructure of the masterplan. Landscaping is at the heart of the development in all phases with important green spaces provided in Phase 1.

Affordable Housing

Half of all homes at Icknield Fields will be affordable housing providing a total of 115 affordable homes. Exceeding North Herts Council's policy of 40 percent and reflecting the national priority to deliver genuinely affordable homes. Affordable housing will comprise a mix of 20 percent one bedroom, 35 percent two bedroom and 45 percent three bedroom homes. All affordable housing will meet M4(2) standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings, with 10 percent achieving M4(3) wheelchair user standards.

Private Housing

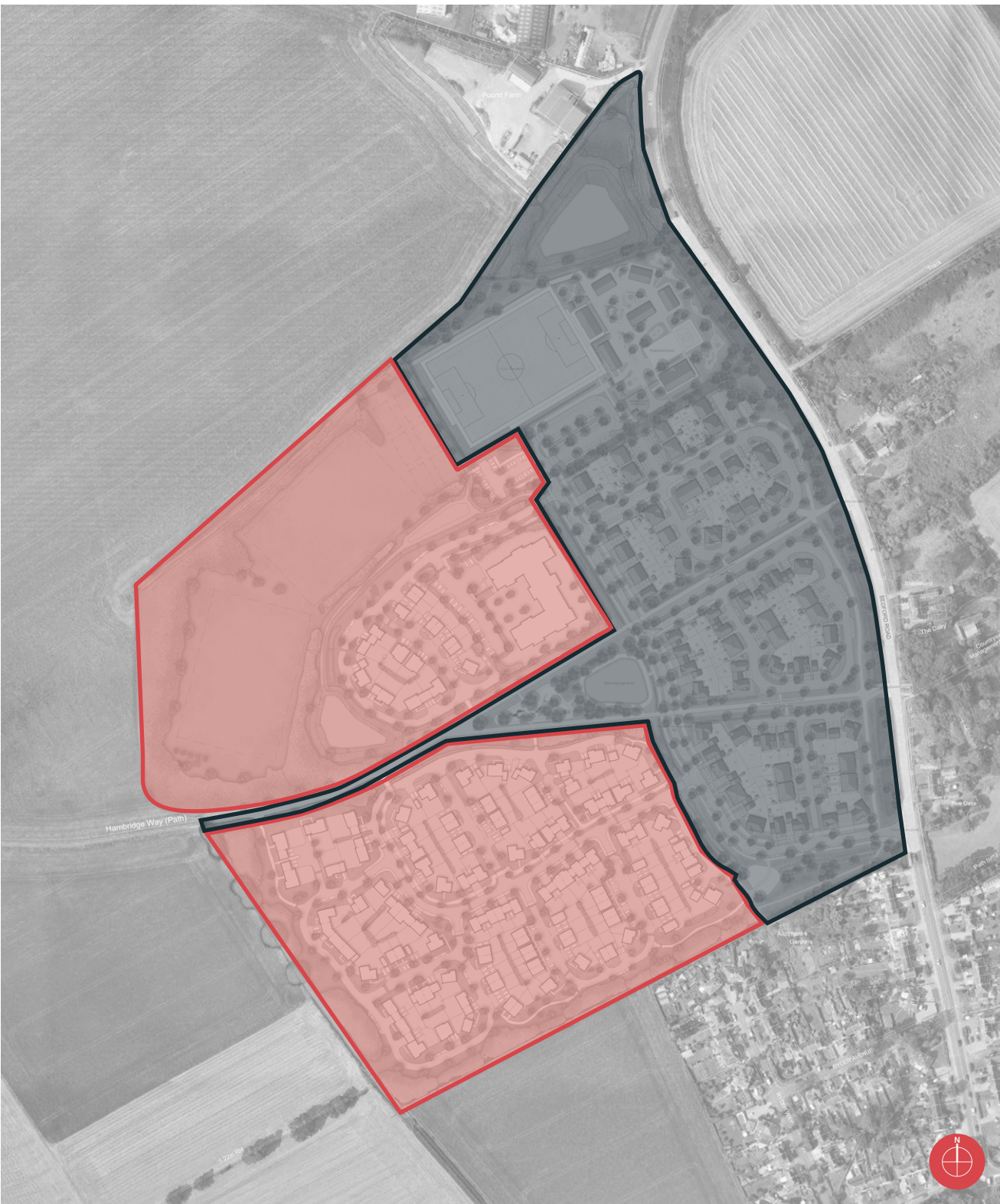
Private housing will include a mix of 10 percent two bedroom, 50 percent three bedroom and 40 percent four + bedroom homes. All dwellings will be two storeys in height, providing variety in form and frontage while remaining consistent with the character of the surrounding area.

Car & Cycle Parking

Car parking will comply with North Hertfordshire policy requirements with a minimum of two spaces per dwelling and will be designed to be convenient without dominating the street scene. Visitor parking is provided throughout the development in accordance with policy. Cycle storage will be provided for all dwellings. A dedicated school and community use car park is provided with an initial 39 spaces and drop off zone. Land has been retained for potential future sports facilities expansion.

Key

-  Phase 1 - SEN School, Sports Facilities, 100 Homes, Upgraded PRow & New Active Travel Links
-  Phase 2 - 65 Bedroom Care Home, 130 Homes & Outdoor Sports Facilities



Phasing Plan (not to scale)

Land at Pound Farm - Phase 1

The SEN School: Detail Application

05.1

The SEN School

A New Independent Special School for North Hertfordshire.

At the heart of our proposals is a new Independent Special School (ISS) for around 30 pupils aged 12–17 with Autism and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

The school is intended to be operated by the Omnia Foundation, following their bespoke DfE approved therapy-first curriculum. The school will include:

- Specialist classrooms and therapy spaces
- Safe outdoor spaces and recreation areas
- Sports facilities, including the new 3G pitch
- A calm, inclusive environment where pupils can thrive academically, socially and emotionally
- A dedicated car parking area with drop off zones to ensure all parking is contained within the school site

The new SEN school will help local children access the right education closer to home, easing SEN pressures on local secondary schools and improving outcomes for young people across the area.

SEND Need in Hertfordshire

There is an SEND crisis in Hertfordshire. Local families are struggling to find the right support for their children, and the Local Authority is being forced to fund expensive out-of-county placements. 23.4% of children with identified SEND needs in Hertfordshire are not receiving the support they require (approx. 8,400 children). Around 6,500 children in Hertfordshire with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have SEMH as their primary need. Diagnoses of Autism have risen by 49% in Hertfordshire between 2015–16 and 2019–20. Hertfordshire is expanding SEND provision, but more is needed. The new SEND School at Icknield Fields offers a practical, deliverable solution.

Key Information

- The school will be built and delivered first, within Phase 1
- 30 specialist places, for pupils aged 12-17 with Autism and SEMH needs.
- Therapy first approach, approved by the Department for Education
- Safe and inclusive environment, designed for learning, well-being and growth
- Places commissioned by Local Authorities, through the EHCP process, with no fees for families
- Fully funded through the development, no public funding required



SEN School - Site Layout Plan (not to scale)

Omnia Foundation

Omnia Foundation is a Department for Education approved Independent Special School, providing therapeutic, physical, and vocational support for young people aged 12–17.

Based in Rayleigh, Essex, the Foundation runs an SEN school supporting students who have been excluded from or are disengaged with mainstream education due to neurodiversity, trauma, or complex SEMH needs.

With a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, the school caters to a wide range of abilities and needs while offering diverse programmes focused on physical activity, the arts, drama, cooking, and other non-conventional subjects.

The Omnia Foundation's approach brings together therapy, sport, physical activity, and vocational pathways within a supportive framework. Building on the proven success of our Essex school, we are now extending this model to, create new opportunities for young people to thrive.

A new SEN School at Pound Farm, Ickleford

Omnia Foundation want to create a new SEN school with places for 30 children providing therapeutic, physical and vocational support for young people aged 12–17.

With a strong emphasis on the importance of education through sport, the school would include space for three multi-sports pitches..

Why here?

Omnia Foundation identified Pound Farm, which offers a quiet, rural setting conducive to therapeutic learning and ample space for outdoor play, sport and physical activity. We have searched for comparable sites across Hertfordshire, and the Land at Pound Farm is the only one that is currently available, suitable and deliverable.



OPEN-MINDED

KEY CONCEPTS - CLARITY * TRUST * CHANGE
When we are open-minded, we promote a culture of openness and honesty, where we tackle difficult conversations and accept constructive criticism. We help to create an environment of trust, where all people are treated fairly and equally and where we can be relied upon to follow through with our commitments to others. We recognise and promote a culture where change is good and reflects progress and where we are adaptable and positive when faced with periods of transition.

MOTIVATED

KEY CONCEPTS - PASSIONATE * PURPOSEFUL * PRIDE
When we are motivated, we actively promote the ethos of our organisation, one in which we share positivity and demonstrate genuine commitment. We continually strive to create an environment where every member of the foundation can be at their most effective and where we each take ownership and responsibility for ourselves and everything we do. We support others to ensure that we are all working towards the same goals, taking pride in our contribution to the foundation community.

NOBLE

KEY CONCEPTS - CREDIBILITY * RELATIONSHIPS * TEAM
When we are noble, we are admired by others and our opinions are sought because we are good role models, taking a considered and thoughtful approach with all members of the community. We lead by example and build strong relationships across the foundation, being approachable, friendly and doing all we can to build trust with others. We actively engage in foundation life, working collaboratively, always listening to new ideas and considering the impact of our actions on others.

INDEPENDENT

KEY CONCEPTS - BRAVE * SELF-AWARE * DECISIVE
When we are independent, we make and carry through informed decisions, are willing to take a stand even in the face of resistance and take accountability when things go wrong. We understand and manage how other people see us, proactively seeking personal development and we are able to minimise the impact of our responses and reactions on others. We have the best interests of the foundation at heart when we make decisions, thinking things through clearly and having a clear rationale before we act.

ACHIEVERS

KEY CONCEPTS - SOLUTIONS * INNOVATION * RESULTS
As achievers, we are recognised by others as being able to see things from different points of view, remaining objective and positive in the face of challenge. We promote and contribute to a culture where people feel empowered to challenge the status quo and share new ideas that we are willing to support and develop. We continually review and evaluate our own progress, demonstrating the belief that anything can be achieved and trying and trying again until everything that can be done is done.

School Offer



30-place school for children aged 12–17



Therapeutic, physical, and vocational curriculum



Space for 3 multi-sport pitches



Rural, calm environment ideal for SEMH support

Benefits

A new SEN school here will:



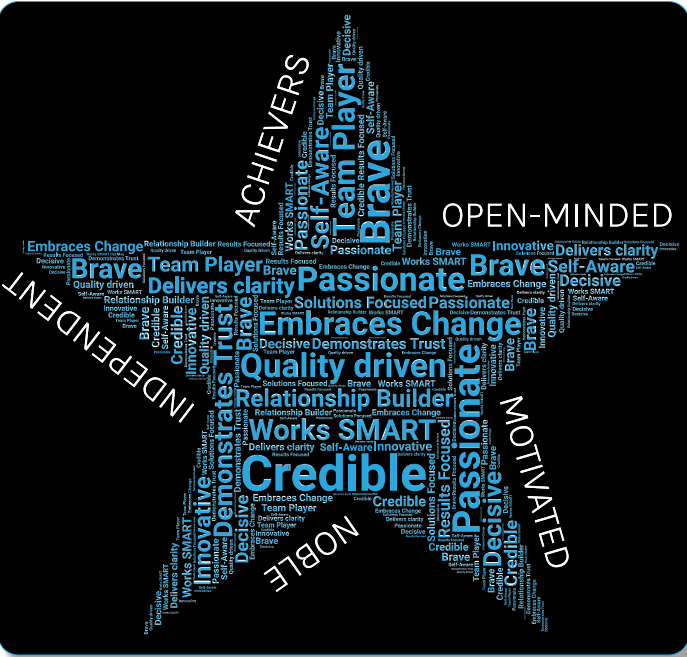
Help to bridge the gap in local SEN provision



Reduce reliance on costly out-of-county placements



Be fully funded and delivered at no risk or cost to Herts County Council or council taxpayer



Information obtained from Omnia Foundation

Design and Setting

The school building will be modest in scale and carefully designed to sit within its edge of site location.

The location of the school has been carefully considered to provide a transition between the residential development and the agricultural use of Pound Farm to the north. This location provides the school with a landscape setting and assists in the transition of development towards the north of the site, reducing density of built form and including significant landscaping.

Classrooms will open onto outdoor learning areas and sensory gardens. The architecture will draw on a simple palette of materials, creating a coherent collection of buildings. Taking its reference from a collection of farm style buildings set around courtyards, reflective of the edge of development setting of the site.

Large windows, natural ventilation and careful orientation will provide a comfortable and energy-efficient environment.

Landscaping is a key part of the school with enhanced landscape buffers and large areas of open space within the site, providing multiple outdoor and recreational facilities.

The external spaces will be secure but open in character, with clear boundaries defined by planting rather than fencing wherever possible. The 3G pitch will be available for use by both the school and the community, strengthening links between education, recreation and health.

Section 2 of the National Guidance on Primary and Secondary School Design and Building Bulletin 104 (2015) have informed the design approach, along with other relevant DfE documents and guidance.



CGI of School Site

Teaching Spaces

A coordinated set of blocks are proposed, offering dedicated SEN teaching and support spaces.

Internal Layout

The development comprises three Twin Classroom Blocks and one Specialist Classroom Block, each single-storey with simple linear forms that support clear way-finding for SEN pupils and reflective of the buildings location on the site.

Each Twin Classroom Block contains two classrooms positioned either side of a central lobby with shared storage and a small-group room. Direct external doors from each classroom allow flexible outdoor learning and ease of movement.

The Specialist Classroom Block provides a larger specialist classroom supported by a series of smaller therapy, sensory, medical and support rooms arranged along a central corridor. Multiple external accesses ensure calm circulation and support a variety of pupil needs.

Use

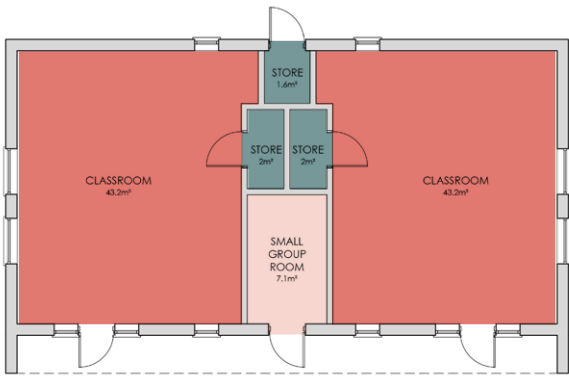
The three Twin Classroom Blocks provide general SEN teaching accommodation suited to structured learning, small-group work and breakout activities. Their mirrored layouts promote consistency across the school and facilitate smooth transitions for pupils requiring routine and predictability.

The Specialist Classroom Block is designed for pupils with higher or complex needs, offering spaces for therapy, sensory regulation, counselling, hygiene support and medical interventions. Together, the buildings provide a balanced mix of standard classrooms and enhanced support facilities tailored to a wide spectrum of SEN requirements.

Amount

A total of three Twin Classroom Blocks are provided within the layout and one Specialist Classroom Block. The classroom areas are provided adjacent, as well as an indication of the location of storage spaces and specialist rooms.

Twin Classroom Block



Ground Floor Plan

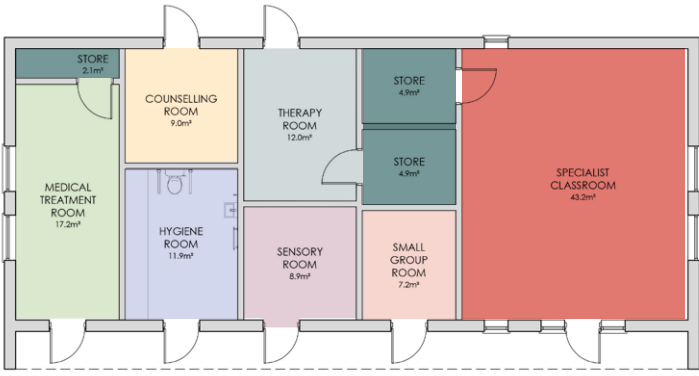


Front Elevation

Key

 Classroom
 Storage
 Small Group Room

Specialist Classroom Block



Ground Floor Plan



Front Elevation

Key

 Specialist Classroom	 Sensory room
 Storage	 Counselling Room
 Small Group Room	 Hygiene Room
 Therapy Room	 Medical Treatment Room

Hall & Staff Spaces

The Staff and Hall Blocks are proposed to provide dedicated spaces for administration, support, teaching, and school activities in an SEN setting.

Internal Layout

The Staff Block includes a staff room, senior leadership offices, a parents' room, interview and sick rooms, WC facilities, a waiting area, and several storage spaces, all arranged around a central corridor with a secure lobby for controlled access.

The Hall Block is organised around a large multi-purpose hall, supported by a catering kitchen, life skills kitchen, staff changing, WC facilities, storage rooms, and a secure lobby. Circulation is simple and legible, enabling safe and efficient movement for pupils and staff.

Use

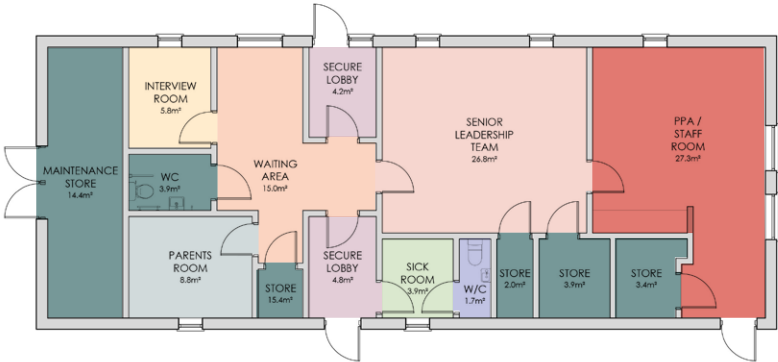
The buildings are designed to support the operational and pastoral needs of a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school. The Staff Block accommodates administration, leadership, staff welfare, parental engagement, and pupil support functions.

The Hall Block provides space for assemblies, physical activity, performances, meal preparation, and curriculum-based life skills teaching. Ancillary rooms ensure suitable support for supervision, hygiene, and secure access.

Amount

The amount of development is limited to the essential rooms and ancillary spaces necessary for safe operation, supervision, and curriculum delivery within an SEN setting. Building footprints and internal provision have been kept efficient and proportionate to the needs of the school.

Staff Block



Ground Floor Plan

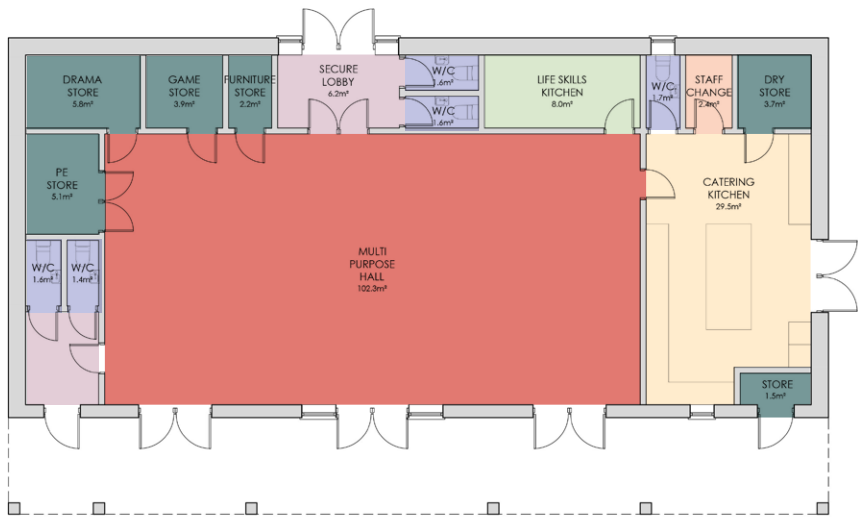


Front Elevation

Key

	PPA / Staff Room		Parents' Room
	Storage		Sick Room
	Senior Leadership Team		Interview Room
	WC		Waiting Area
	Secure Lobby		

Hall Block



Ground Floor Plan



Front Elevation

Key

	Multi Purpose Hall		Secure Lobby
	Storage		Staff Change
	Life Skills Kitchen		Catering Kitchen
	WC		

Appearance & Materiality

The proposed SEN School adopts a calm, coherent and domestic scale architectural language that supports a safe, welcoming and legible environment for pupils.

Appearance

The buildings use simple pitched roof forms and a restrained material palette to sit comfortably within the edge of site location and proximity to Pound Farm, while maintaining a contemporary educational character. Variation in tone and carefully positioned window openings, add subtle articulation across each block, ensuring visual interest without over-stimulation.

Materiality

The material strategy prioritises durability, low maintenance, and a natural, warm aesthetic appropriate for an SEN setting. The proposed materials are shown adjacent, together these materials create a calm, cohesive and human-scaled environment tailored to the needs of the SEN school community and sympathetic to the rural character of the school location.

Boarding introduces warmth and a tactile quality, helping the buildings integrate with the surrounding landscape and local rural vernacular. Grey roof tiles and grey roofing offer robust, long-life solutions suited to differing block functions while providing a consistent tonal palette. Louvres are incorporated to introduce shading, soften façades, and allow filtered daylight where appropriate.



1 Feature Barn Shutters



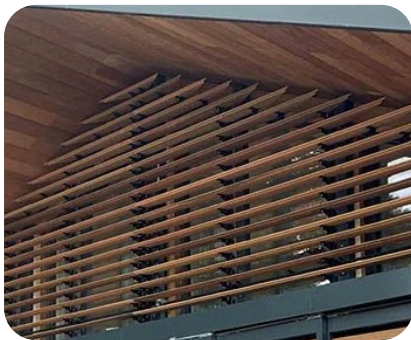
2 Natural Timber Boarding



3 Grey Roof Tile



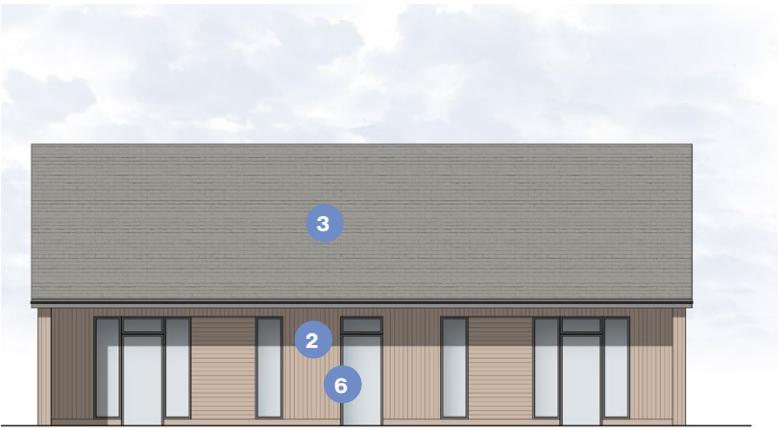
4 Grey Roof



5 Louvre



6 Grey Window Frames



Twin Classroom Block - Front Elevation



Staff Block - Front Elevation



Hall Block - Front Elevation

Not to scale

Access & Parking Strategy

The adjacent diagram illustrates the proposed vehicular and pedestrian and cycle access within the development.

Vehicular / Refuse Access

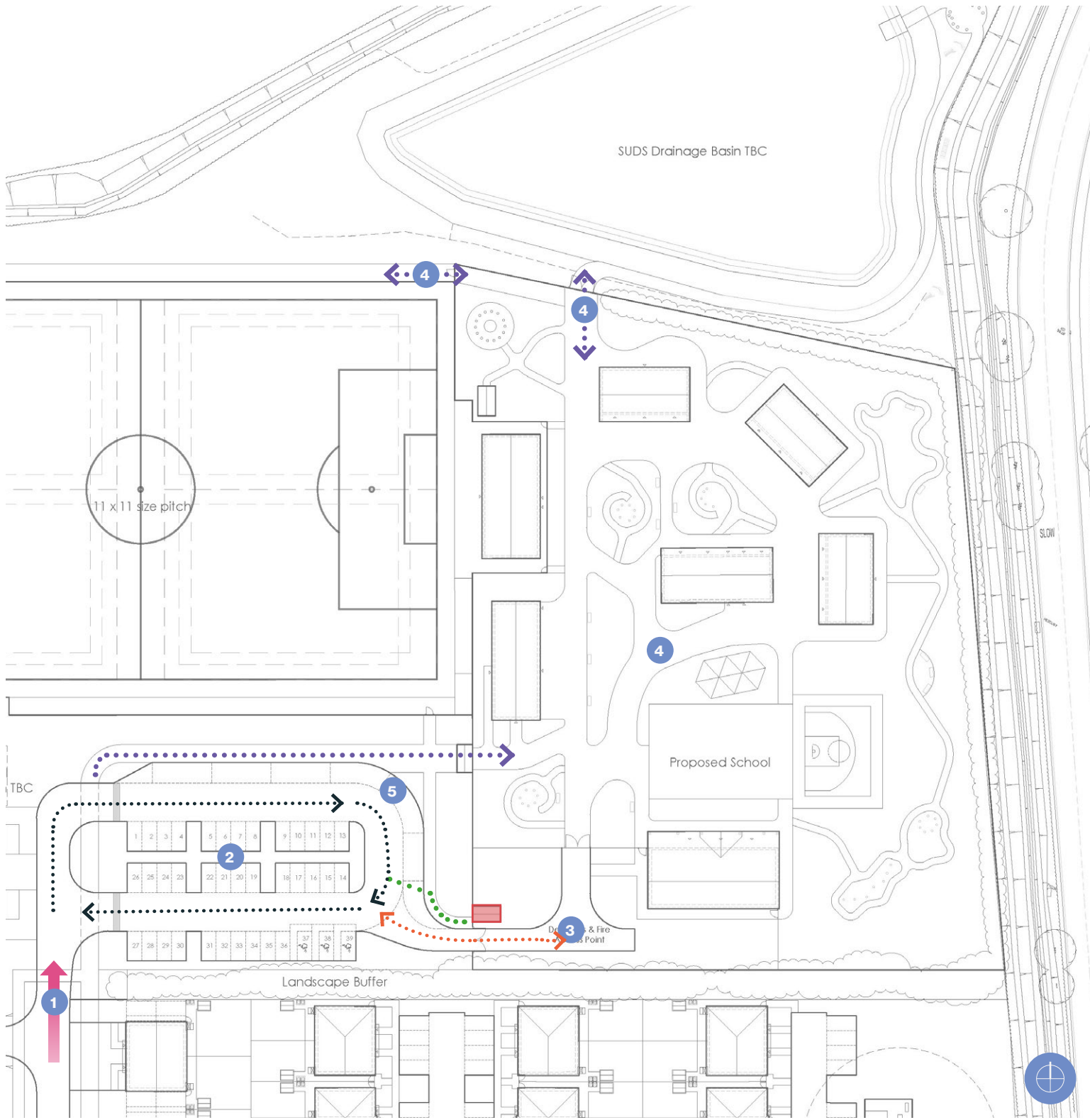
Vehicular access to the SEN school is taken from the south of the site via a clearly defined primary route. The layout supports efficient circulation for cars and drop-off movements while discouraging through-traffic. A dedicated car parking court is located close to the main entrance, providing safe and convenient parking for staff and visitors. Service vehicles use a separate, controlled entrance to avoid conflict with pupil and pedestrian areas.

Pedestrian Access & Cycling

Pedestrian and cycle movement is placed at the heart of the layout. A connected network of accessible, free-flowing paths provides safe and direct routes between buildings, play spaces, and key facilities. These routes are designed through landscaped green corridors, enhancing legibility and visual quality. The layout prioritises safety and inclusivity, ensuring active travel is a convenient option for pupils, staff, and visitors.

Key

- 1 Proposed Vehicular Access off Main Spine Road
- 2 Proposed Car Parking Court
- 3 Deliveries & Fire Access Point
- 4 Free-flow Pedestrian & Accessible Walkways Throughout
- 5 Drop Off Zone
- Primary vehicular access route/ Refuse Vehicle Route
- Service Vehicle Entrance
- Pedestrian access
- Refuse Storage
- Refuse Worker route



Proposed Access Strategy Diagram (not to scale)