



Chaplin
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Architects, Planning
and Cost Consultants

Reference Number | Project Name

6958 – New Community Building, Harleston

Client

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Document Name

6958 – New Community Building, Harleston – Public Exhibition Report

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1. Introduction

Harleston Town Council have since 2010 managed the running of the Harleston Memorial Leisure Centre. Facilities on site include a Gym, Tennis and Squash Court, Meeting and Function Room as well as Playing Fields, Playground, Dog run and BMX Track. The Gym has proved to be very successful with over 600 members. The building was originally built between the wars and over the years has been extended. Harleston & Redenhall Town Council have a Neighbourhood Plan and as such, receive CIL funding for each New Open Market Dwelling built. Harleston is expected to grow by approximately 803 new Dwellings between now and 2038.

The Existing Facilities are in need of replacement / refurbishment. Harleston Town Council have received grant funding to look at options for the Site, Building and Services being provided from the site. Chaplin Farrant Ltd have been appointed to work with the Town Council to look at Feasibility Options for the Site and Building. The Town Council have access to approx. £750,000.00 of CIL Funding; additional Grant Funding is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Chaplin Farrant have worked up a number of new build & refurbishment options for the existing site costs ranging from £1.599m to £4.99m.

At the closed Town Council meeting held on the 25th September councillors decided to hold a Public Consultation to seek views from the public.

Two options, which were considered affordable by the Town Council were presented, option 1 & option 1A.

Both options showed the existing squash courts demolished and former sports hall (now used as a gym) stripped back to the frame. The existing historic pavilion was to be refurbished. Option 1 included a café, multipurpose room and administration facilities with option 1A providing the same but also introducing a 1st floor mezzanine to accommodate a gym & ground floor changing facilities together with access to the first floor. Both options saw the car park area increase. The Bowls & Football facilities remained as they are at the moment.

2. Public Viewing

The public viewing was held on Wednesday 16th of October at Harleston Memorial Leisure Hall between 11am – 7pm.

During that time representatives from Harleston Town Council and the Architects were in attendance. Copy of presentation board can be seen in appendix A.

During the exhibition over 123 people attended and 170 comments received. The comments are attached in appendix B. After the event the presentation boards were available online for 2 weeks and additional comments are being collected online.

We summarise comments received – please note some attendees provided more than one comment.

Summary of Attendee Comments Received at the Exhibition	No.	Comments
Preference for Option 1	2	
Preference for Option 1A	22	
Those against Option 1	5	The assumption is that those that support Option 1 or 1A would be against the alternative option. However this is not necessarily the case as those who want a new facility may have been against both Option 1 & 1A.
Those against Option 1A	6	
Would like a brand new facility	7	
Would like to see a Swimming Pool	5	This option was not on the table for discussion.
Retain Gym	40	
Retain Squash Courts	20	Option to retain Squash Courts not presented.
Use multipurpose room for Racket Sports	6	The multipurpose space could be designed to accommodate certain Racket Sports.
Permanent display of History of Memorial Hall	1	Could be included & would help remind the younger generation of the town & building's history.
Café & Soft Play Area to be incorporated	15	Included in both options.

Summary of Attendee Comments Received at the Exhibition	No.	Comments
Too many Café's in Harleston	12	These comments infer that a café is not required in the new building.
Multi-Function room supported	12	
Some residents felt that a Multi-Function room was not required & nor was the office space	4	Size of Multi-Function room as well as office space can be adjusted. Over provision of office space could mean that office space could be rented out or another use found for this space.
Unclear what was happening to Bowls Club	1	Currently nothing proposed to happen to Bowls Club. If space became available within the building the Bowls Club could relocate. Current building leaking.
Current lack of space for activity classes	6	The Multipurpose room could be utilised for gym classes.
Electric charging points in car park would be beneficial	2	If building remodelled electric charging points required to meet building regulations requirements.
Car Park needs to be bigger	8	Car park could be made larger than shown in above options. Alternatively grass reinforcement could be provided for overflow arrangement.
Trees to be retained	3	We are seeking to retain trees.
Bike Racks needed in car park	4	Additional cycle parking will be provided.

Online Comments Received	No.	Comments
Those against Option 1	2	
Those against Option 1A	2	
Preference for Option 1	1	
Preference for Option 1A	1	
Retain Squash Courts	2	Option to retain Squash Courts not presented.
Retain Gym	6	
Retain Cycle Track	1	
Those against Soft Play Area	3	
Too many Café's in Harleston	2	These comments infer that a café is not required in the new building.
Some residents felt that a Multi-Function room was not required & nor was the office space	3	Size of Multi-Function room as well as office space can be adjusted. Over provision of office space could mean that office space could be rented out or another use found for this space.
Multi-Function room supported	2	
Would like a brand new facility	1	
Changing facilities too small	1	
Accessible WC & changing facilities need to be included	1	
Café & Soft Play Area to be incorporated	1	Included in both options.
Car Park needs to be bigger	2	Car park could be made larger than shown in above options. Alternatively grass reinforcement could be provided for overflow arrangement.

3. Conclusion

The turn out was good and comments received will allow Town Councillors to decide how they would like to move this project forward and which services they want to see included on site. From the comments received it is clear that the sports element is important to the residents, however, it should be noted that it is uncommon for the Town Council to run this service.

Appendix A

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the public viewing of proposals for the re-development of Harleston Memorial Leisure Centre. This Exhibition is being held to allow you to view and comment on proposals.

Your feedback is welcomed and will help inform Redenhall with Harleston Town Council of your views, which will be taken into account as the scheme develops.

NEW OR REFURBISHED FACILITIES?

The Town Council’s existing facilities are in need of replacement or refurbishment. The Town Council have received grant funding to look at options for the site, building, and services currently being provided from the site.

Chaplin Farrant Ltd have been appointed to work with the Town Council to look at Feasibility Options for the Site and Building. The Town Council have access to CIL Funding for any refurbishment.



Existing Leisure Centre Building

HISTORY

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council have, since 2010, managed the running of the Harleston Memorial Leisure Centre. Facilities on site include a gym, tennis and squash courts, meeting and function rooms as well as playing fields, a playground, dog run and BMX track. The Gym has proved to be very successful, with over 600 members.

The building was originally built before WWII and over the years has been extended significantly, but in an ad hoc way, & without a clear vision. Redenhall with Harleston Town Council have a Neighbourhood Plan and, as such, receive CIL funding for each New Open Market Dwelling built. Harleston is expected to grow by approximately 803 new Dwellings between now and 2038.

POLICY RWH6: NEW COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals provided for community space(s), that support health and social care services, new or improved education provision, meeting spaces, community cafés and other community infrastructure will be supported in principle. Where development proposals result in land or buildings being offered for community use, the Town Council will consult with the community to establish the most appropriate uses for that land or buildings. Proposals that would enable the wider future community use of existing buildings will be supported.

POLICY RWH7: PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals which result in the loss of an existing community building or facility (either through

- redevelopment or change of use) will be supported where:
- a. It can be demonstrated that the need for the building, use or facility no longer exists, or
 - b. it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer economically viable, or
 - c. It can be demonstrated suitable alternative provision exists in an equally or more accessible location elsewhere in the town and that the capacity of the alternative provision is sufficient to accommodate community requirements currently provided by the existing building, use or facility, or
 - d. Where the existing provision will be lost as a result of new development, suitable alternative provision will be delivered by the new development.



Existing Recreation Ground

FACILITIES & FUTURE OF THE SITE

COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS:

Leisure services in surrounding areas like Diss, Wymondham, and Long Stratton are primarily managed by South Norfolk District Council (SNDC), while towns like Attleborough and Watton rely on private operators who typically run facilities on industrial estates. The absence of gym facilities run by other local authorities might be due to the associated high costs.

It is understood that SNDC does not operate gyms in isolation, preferring instead to offer additional facilities alongside their gyms. For instance, Long Stratton’s facility includes a soft play area and café.



Existing Facilities

FUTURE OF THE CURRENT SQUASH COURTS:

There have been ongoing discussions about the two squash courts. Currently, both courts generate approximately £9,000 per annum (from both courts combined). According to England Squash and Racketball, the benchmark for income generation is around £10,000 per court.

Refurbishing or rebuilding the courts is estimated to cost approximately £180,000 per court. Given these costs, continuing to include the squash courts in the project cannot be considered viable due to the limited potential for recovering the building expenses.

FUTURE OF THE CURRENT GYM:

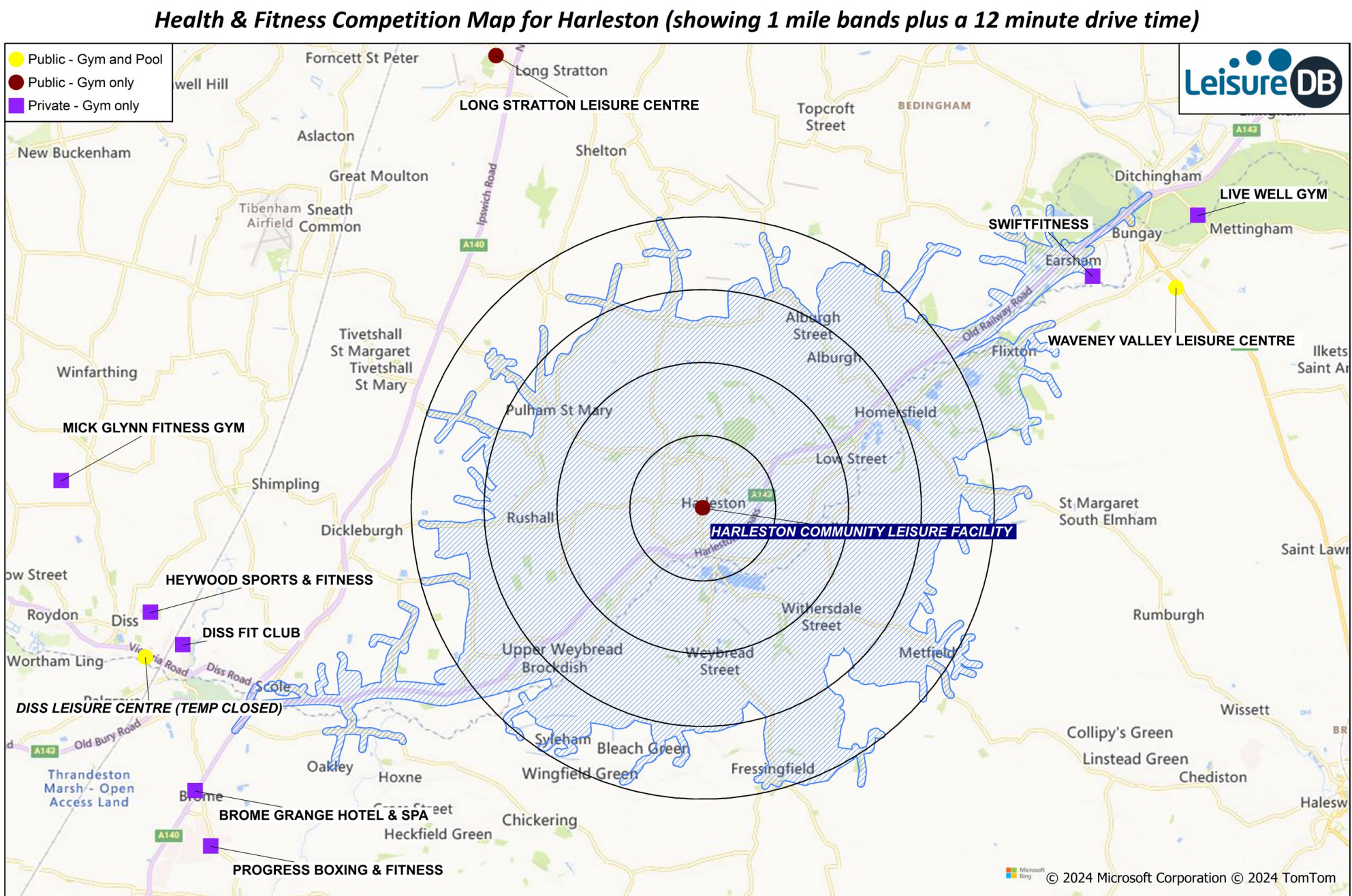
A latent demand report indicates that with a current membership of 600, there is potential for growth to 725 members as the population increases. However, to be financially viable, a membership base of 1,000 would be required– the map below indicates competition and drive times for the gym.

Given the overall running costs of the facilities at Wilderness Lane, it has become apparent that whilst the Gym is very popular with residents, the gym may require subsidization.

South Norfolk District Council’s gyms typically require an additional income, which is partly achieved through soft play and café revenues.

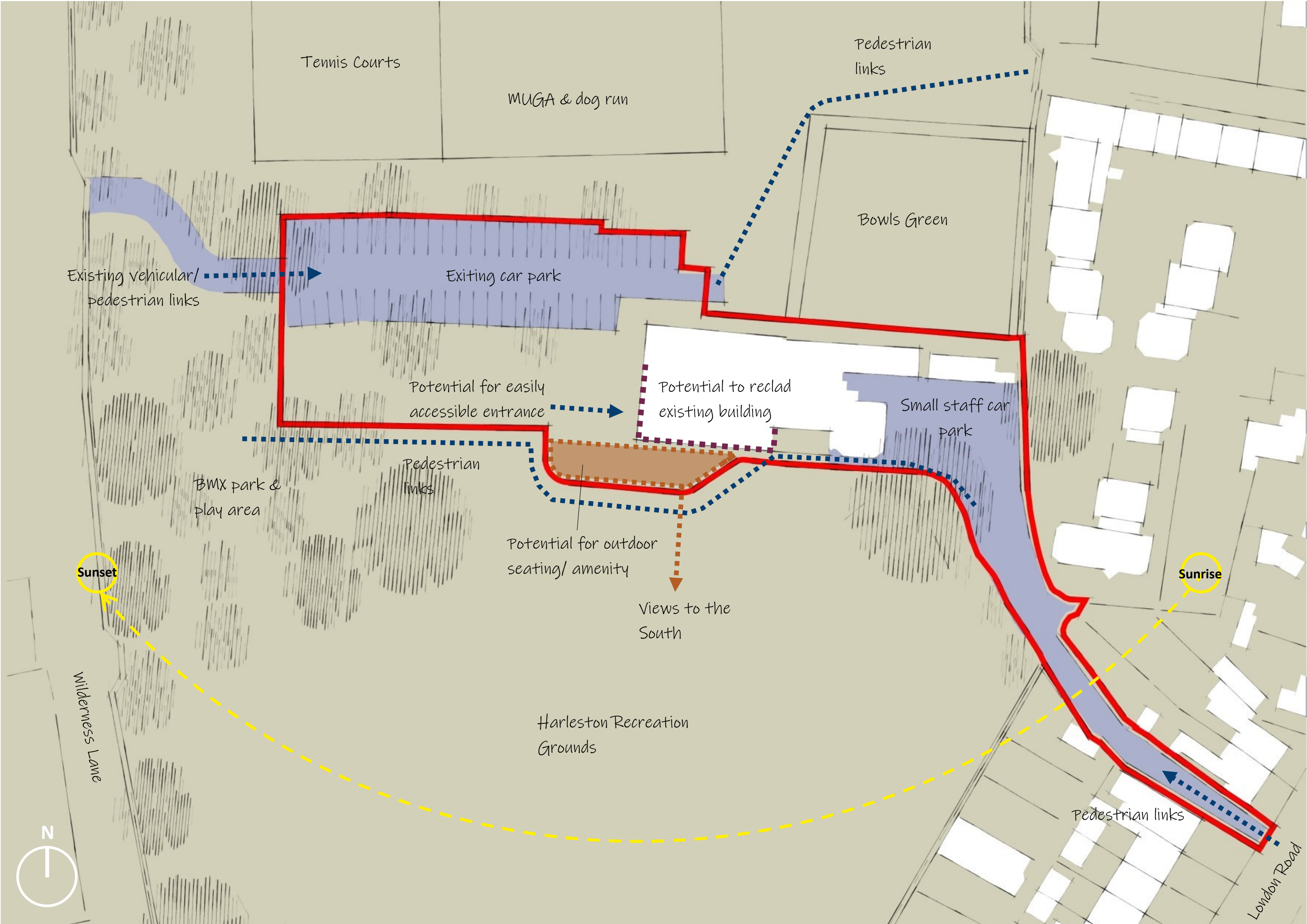
FUTURE OF HTFC:

Harleston Town Football Club have recently enjoyed promotion and have over 100 members using the facilities during the week, for matches & training. Numbers are currently supported through their fees. Facilities are used on site, however there is currently no club house. The First Team have changing facilities within the existing building, but these are remote from the pitch. While the grounds enjoy frequent use on Saturdays, Sundays and mid-week, the current facilities have their shortcomings.

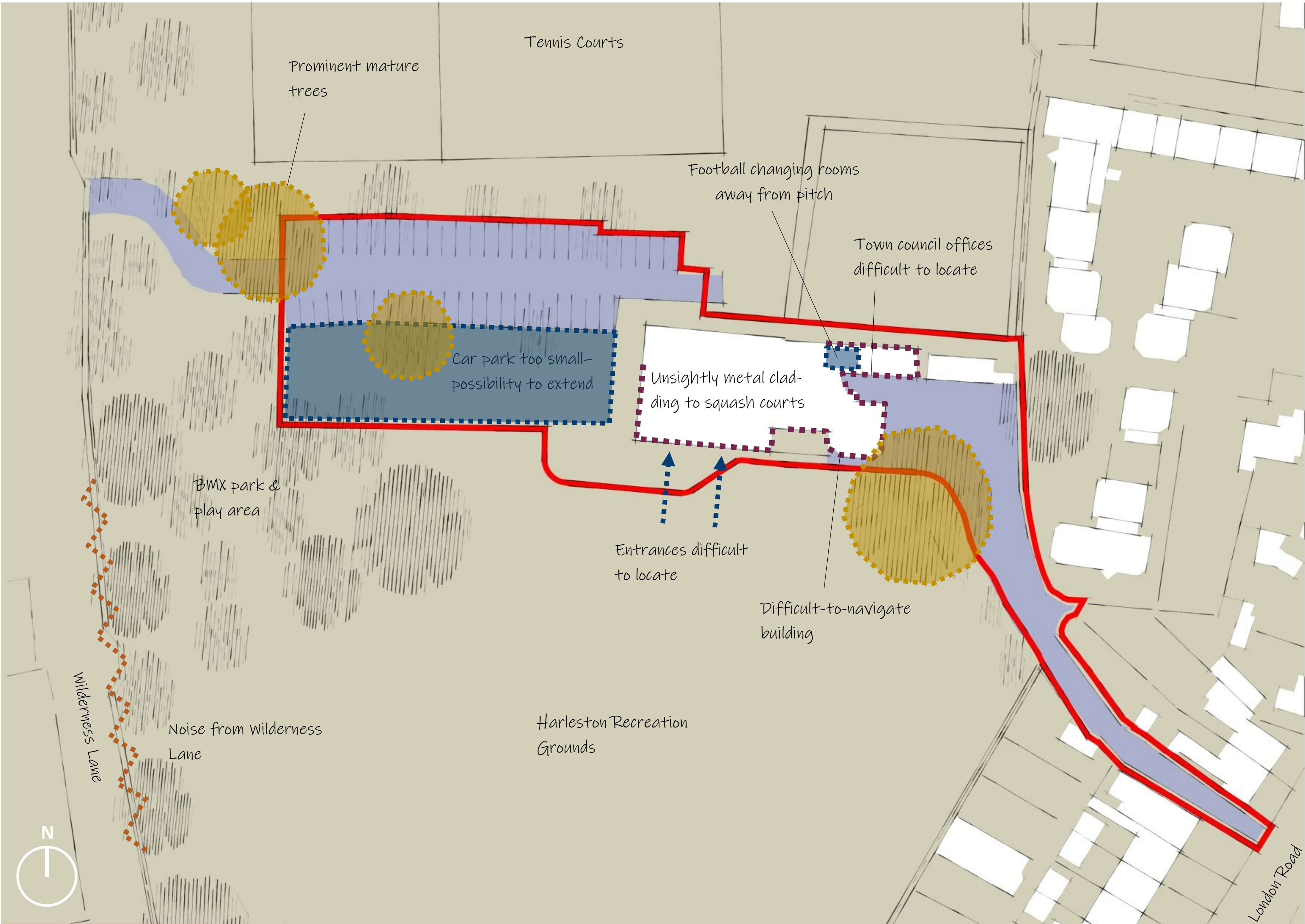


Latent Demand Competition Map

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

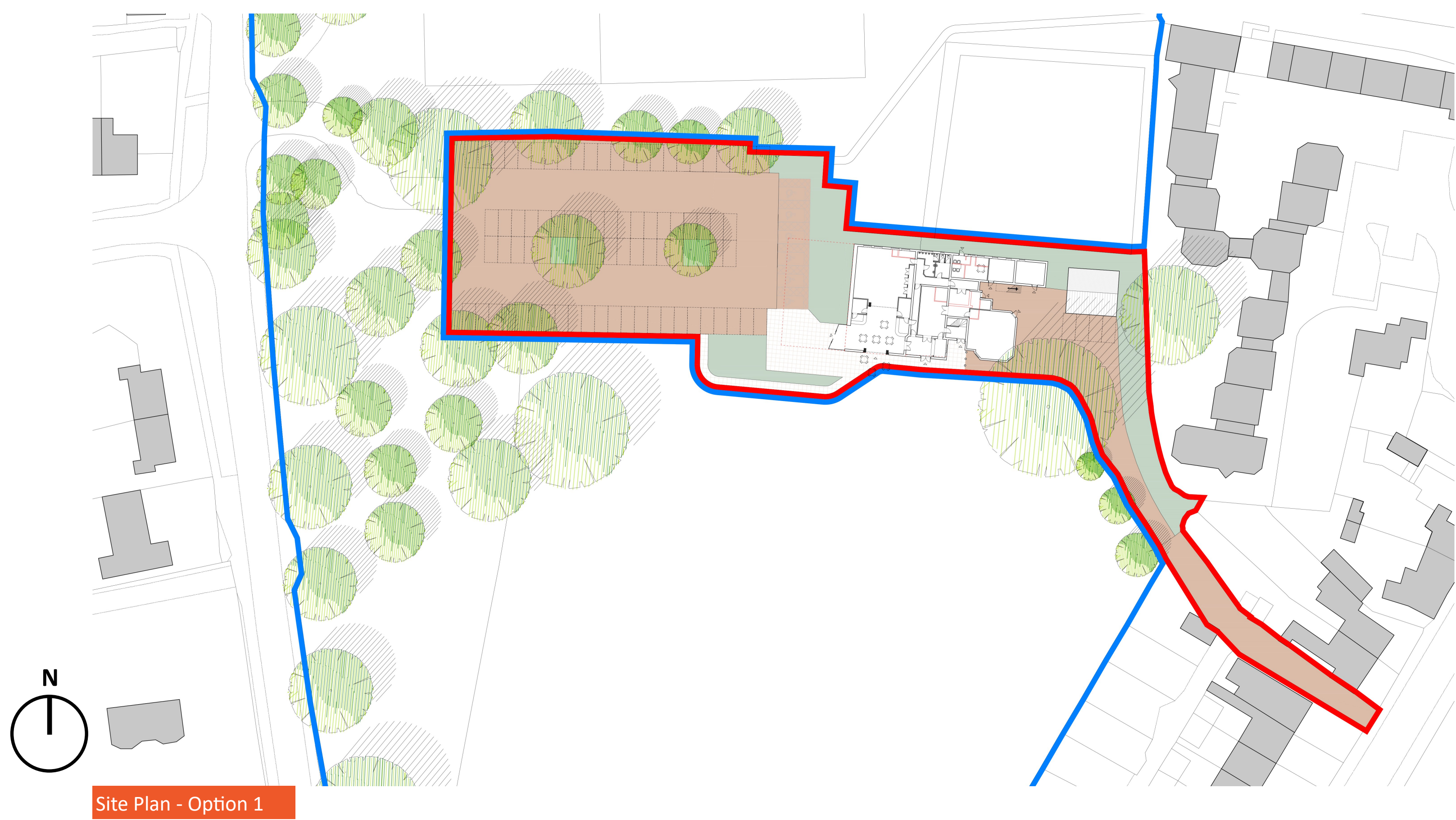


Opportunities Diagram



Constraints Diagram

DEVELOPMENT OPTION 1



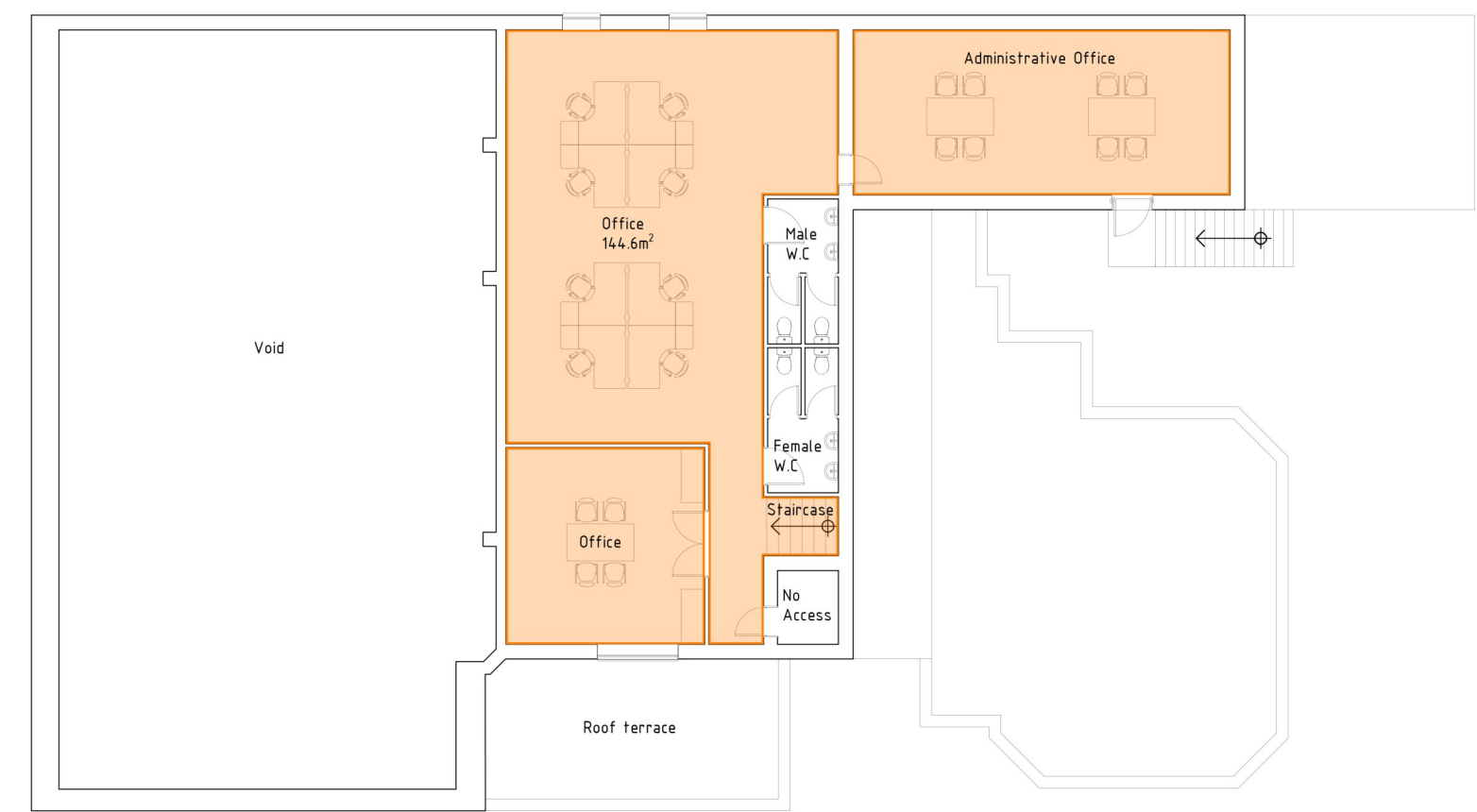
OPTION 1

Development option 1 includes the demolition of the existing squash courts and refurbishment of the gym into a café and function room. The proposal would see the existing building retained and reclad to minimise the carbon footprint of the development.

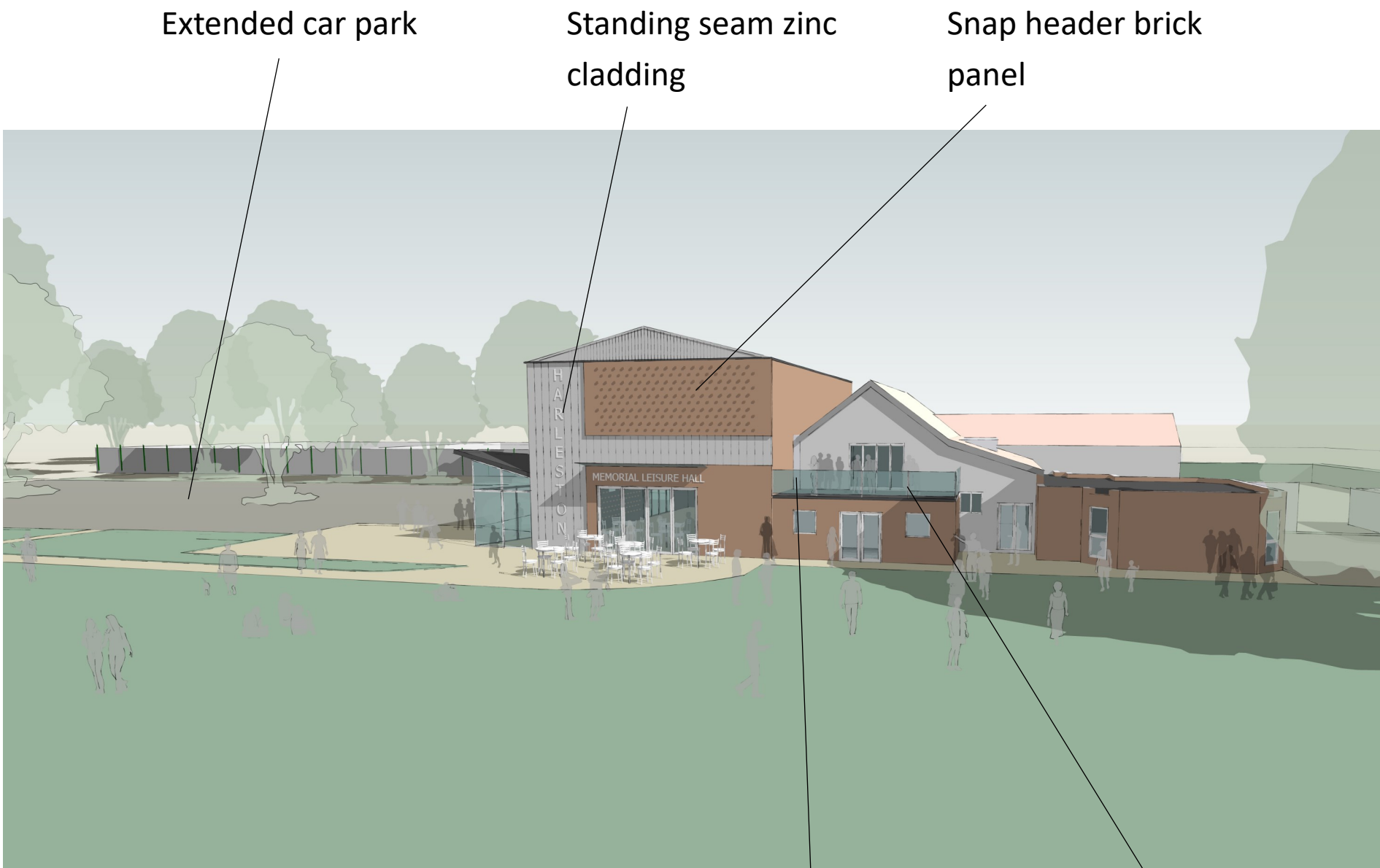
KEY FEATURES

- New café and function room
- Fitness studio replaced with multipurpose room
- Town council facilities improved & expanded
- Existing building reclad
- Extended carpark

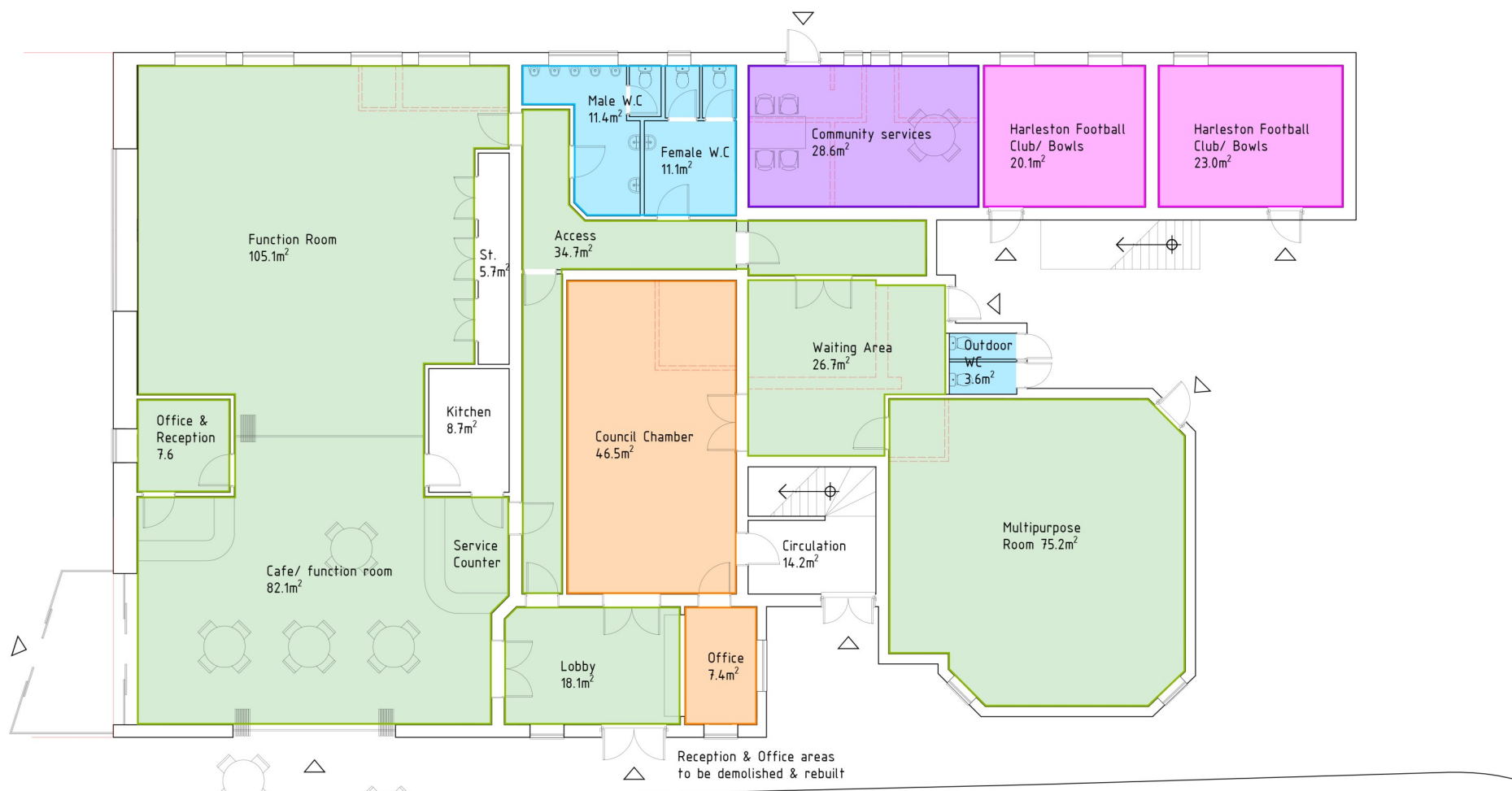
- Football, tennis, and bowls club facilities retained
- Southerly views utilised with siting of café
- Improved building entrance to assist with wayfinding
- Historic existing building retained



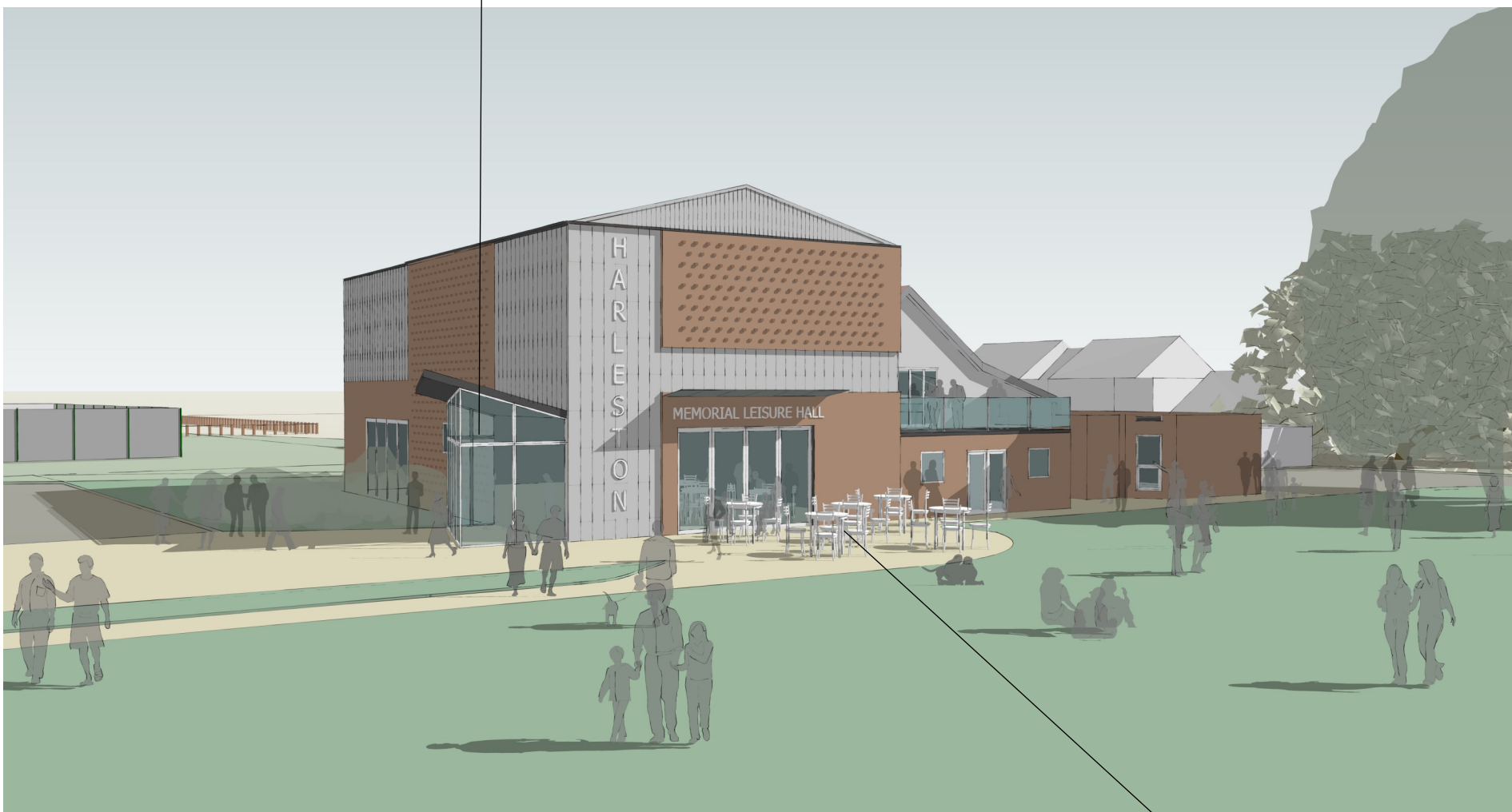
First Floor



3D Visual 1



Ground Floor



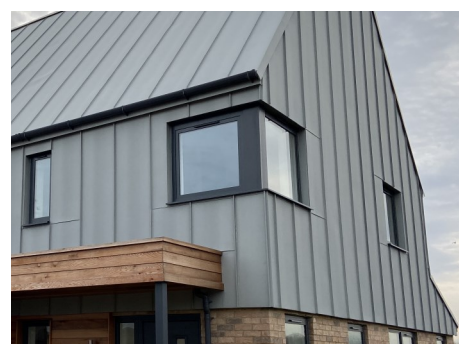
3D Visual 2



Brick snap header panel

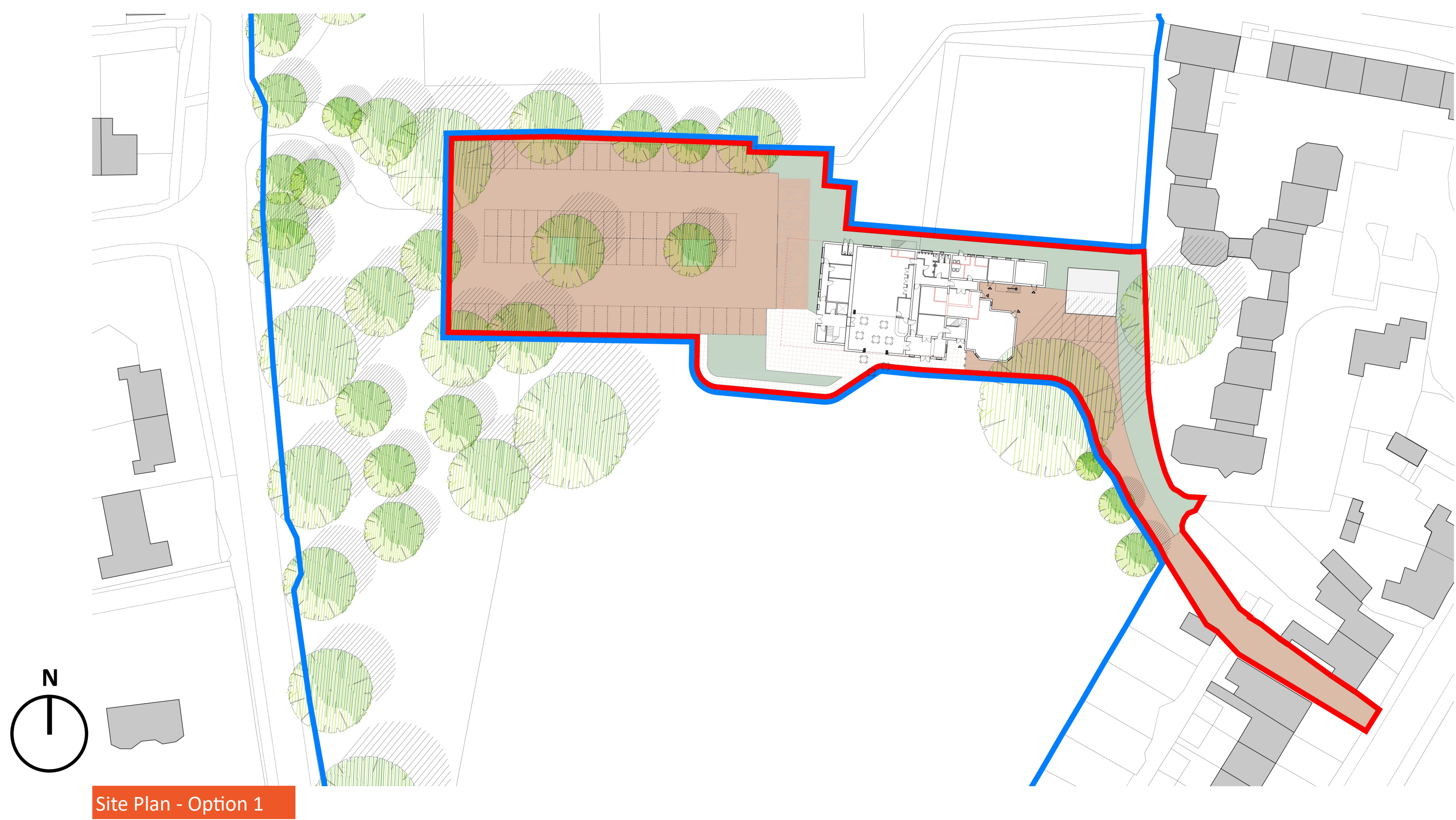


Soft red multi brick



Standing seam zinc

DEVELOPMENT OPTION 1A



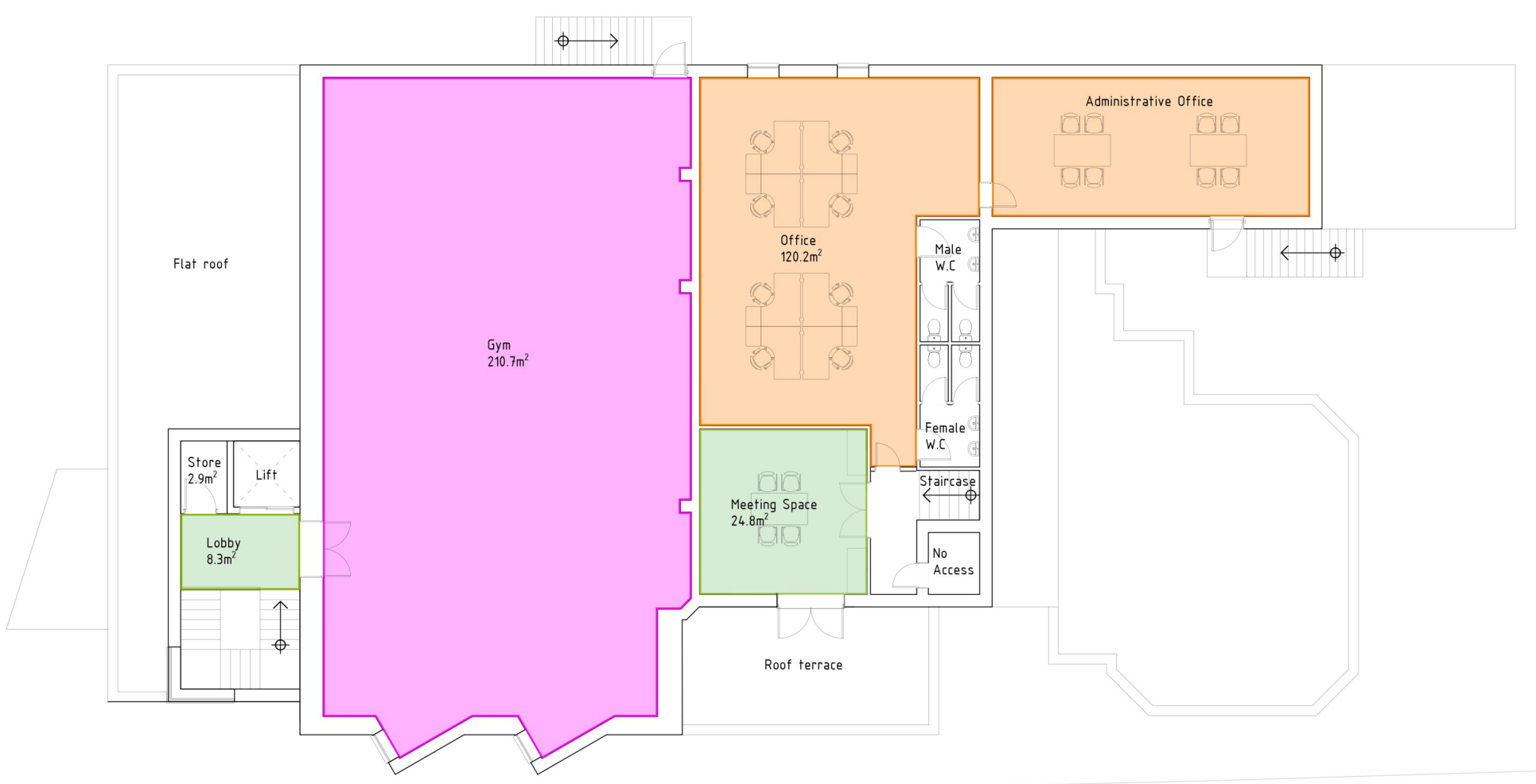
Site Plan - Option 1

OPTION 1A

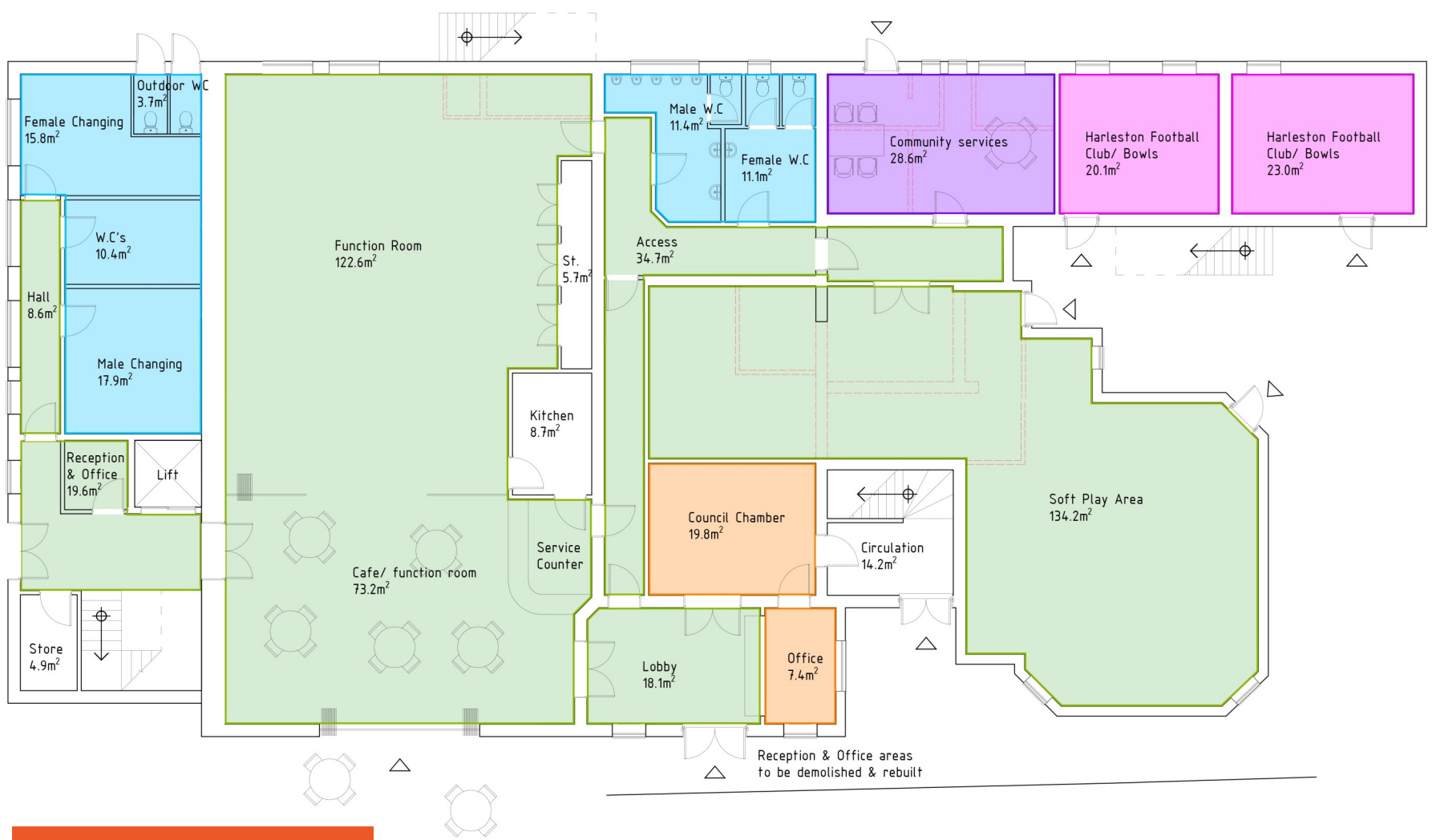
Development option 1A includes the multipurpose room and café as shown in option 1, but the introduction of a mezzanine floor ensures the continued provision of a gym. A new two-storey element is proposed which will house ancillary facilities for the gym, and the football changing room, bowls club & town council facilities are similar across both proposals.

KEY FEATURES

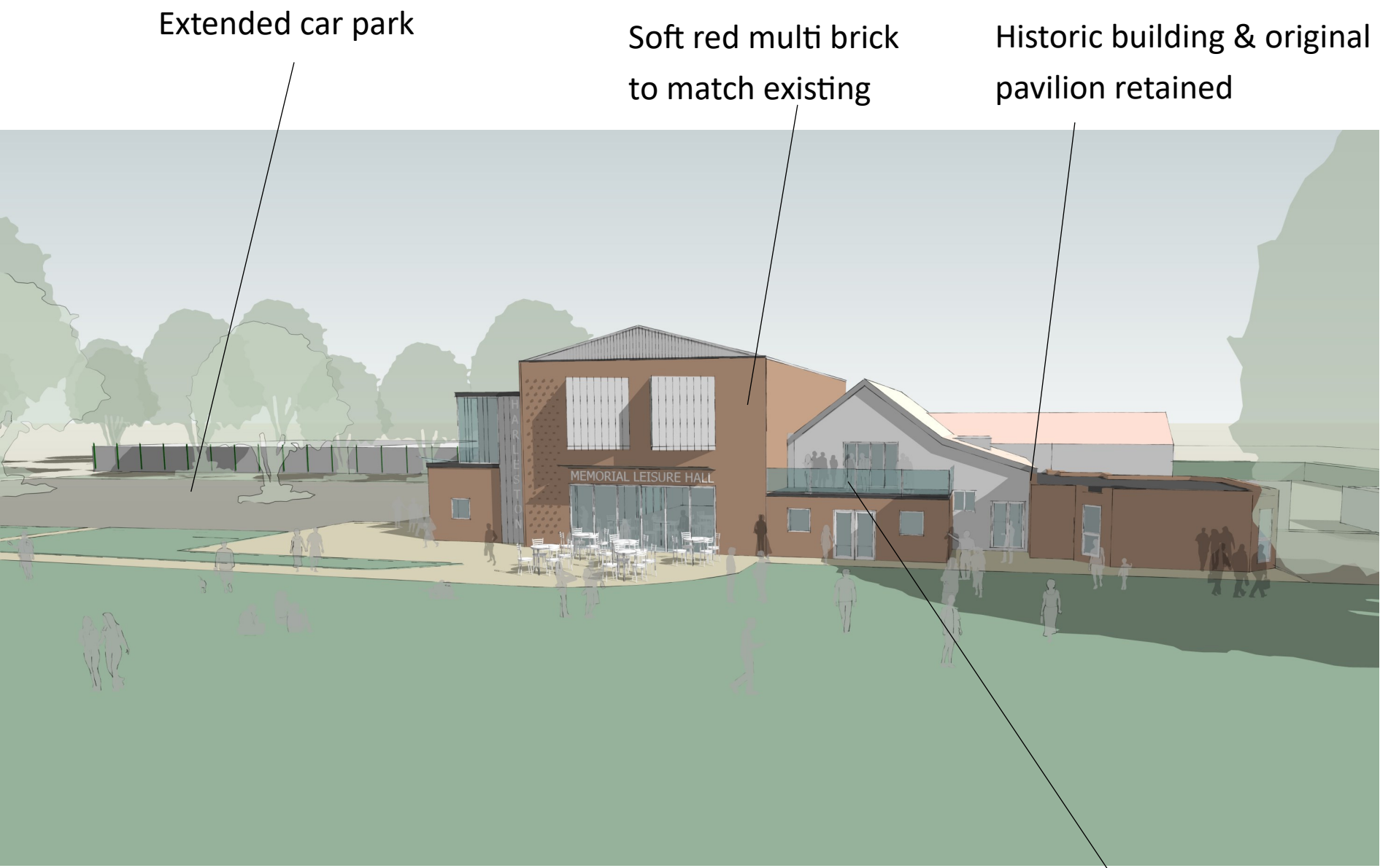
- New café and function room
- Fitness studio replaced with a soft play area for children
- Town council facilities improved and expanded
- Existing building reclad
- New gym facilities on first floor
- Football and bowls club facilities retained
- Southerly views utilised with siting of café
- Improved building entrance to assist with wayfinding
- Extended carpark
- Historic existing building retained



First Floor



Ground Floor



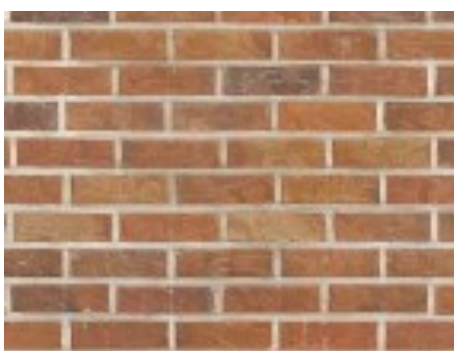
3D Visual 1



3D Visual 2



Brick snap header panel



Soft red multi brick



Standing seam zinc

