

Harberton Special School

This Consultation welcomes members of the public to view proposals for the extension and refurbishment of Harberton Special School.

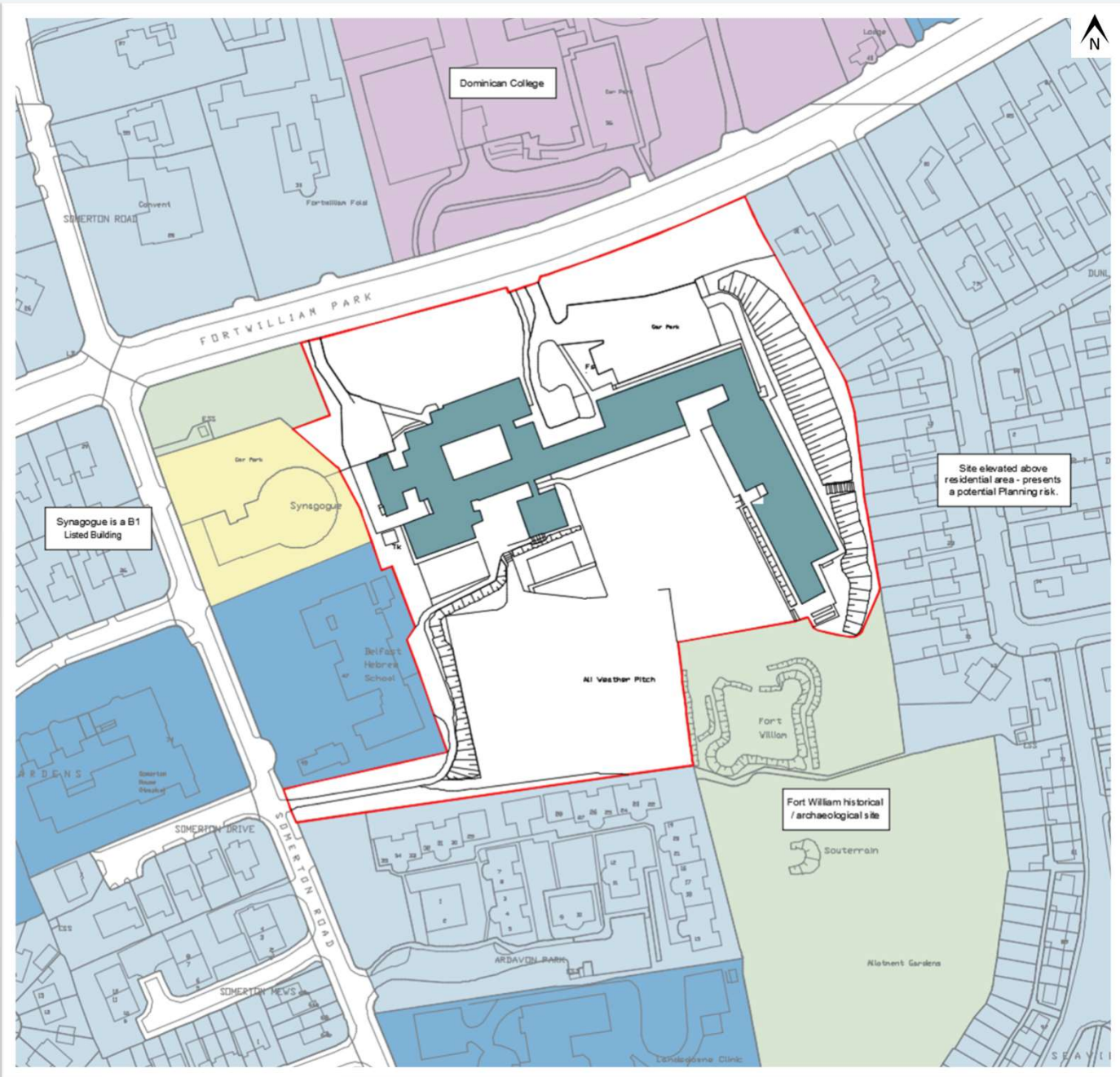
The development will transform Harberton Special School, formerly Castle High School, into a fully functioning, modern special educational facility catering for up to 320 pupils aged 4–19 years. These proposals mark a significant investment in special education within the community.

Harberton Special School will provide co-educational learning for children and young people with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). The scheme has been carefully designed to meet diverse needs, with an emphasis on accessibility, inclusion, and wellbeing.

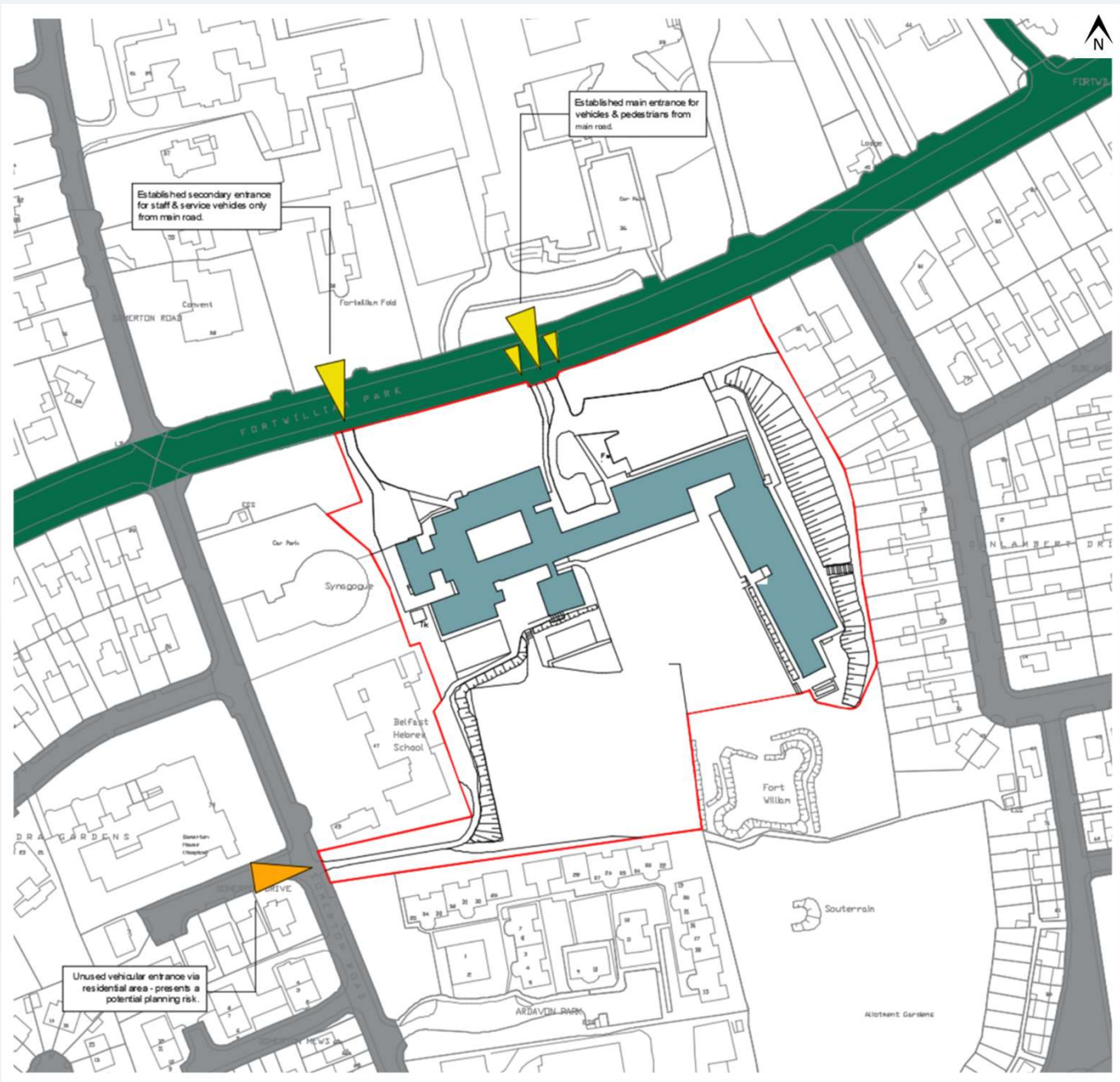
The project will see the refurbishment of existing buildings alongside new extensions and site reconfiguration to create a cohesive, purpose-built environment. Due to the requirement for the existing school to remain operational during construction, the development will proceed in carefully managed phases. Once complete, the state-of-the-art facility will provide a nurturing and inspiring environment, enabling every pupil to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally through innovative design, advanced technology and specialist resources.



Aerial view



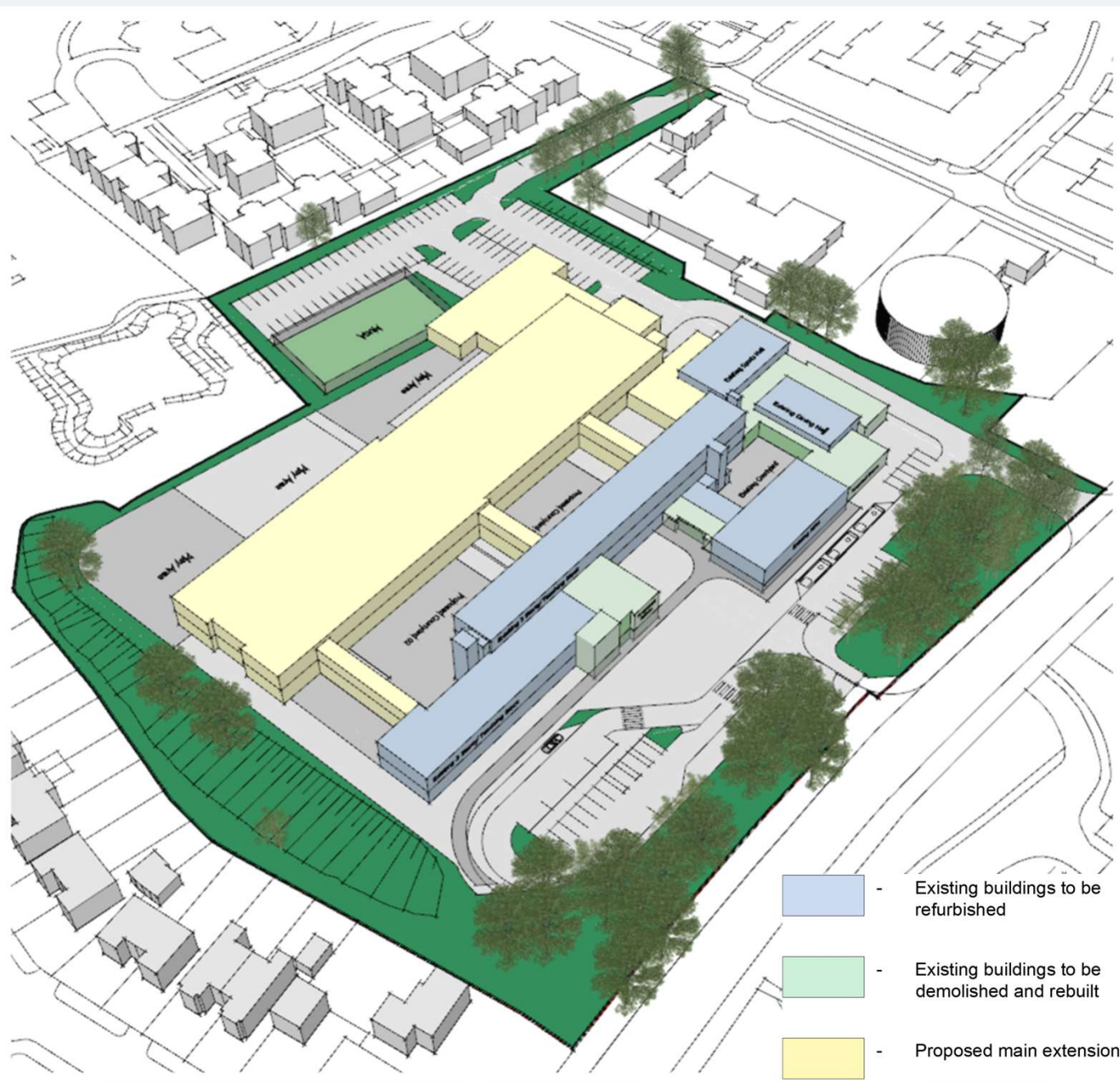
Location & Surrounding Area



Infrastructure & Accessibility



Site Boundaries & Constraints



Extensions & Refurbishment



Propose Site Plan

Design Summary

The main body of the existing school, including the Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH), Dining Hall, and Sports Hall, is retained and refurbished to preserve the core structure and optimise the use of existing assets. Selective demolitions create pockets of space that accommodate carefully integrated new extensions, including a two-storey administration block with a new main entrance, a dedicated pupil entrance, drama suite, school meals kitchen and support accommodation serving the Sports Hall.

The primary new extension is arranged over two storeys and positioned parallel to the existing building, connected via three glazed link corridors that enhance circulation and natural light within the central spine of the school. A single-storey section to the rear accommodates specialist facilities, including the Hydrotherapy Pool, Technology & Design, and Music departments, providing a distinct yet cohesive addition to the overall layout.

Vehicular Access & Circulation:

- **Main Entrance (Fortwilliam Park)** - Visitors and selected staff access the site through the main entrance gates on Fortwilliam Park, with parking available to the front of the school. Taxis also use this entrance, with a dedicated drop-off point located at a covered walkway along the access road.
- **Bus Access** - Buses enter via the main entrance on Fortwilliam Park and exit through the secondary gates on the same road. A lay-by in front of the Multi-Purpose Hall, adjacent to a covered walkway, provides a safe drop-off area. The lay-by can accommodate up to three medium-sized buses, allowing for future demand or the occasional use of a full-sized bus for school trips. Vehicles collecting school meals also follow this route and use the same lay-by.
- **Staff Access** - Most staff vehicles enter via the Somerton Road gate, parking at the rear of the site and exit through the secondary gates on Fortwilliam Park.
- **Deliveries and Servicing** - Small deliveries can be made to the front of the school. Larger service vehicles enter via the Somerton Road gate, unload at a dedicated lay-by, and exit through the secondary Fortwilliam Park gates.

Car Parking:

A total of 141 car parking spaces is currently provided on site:

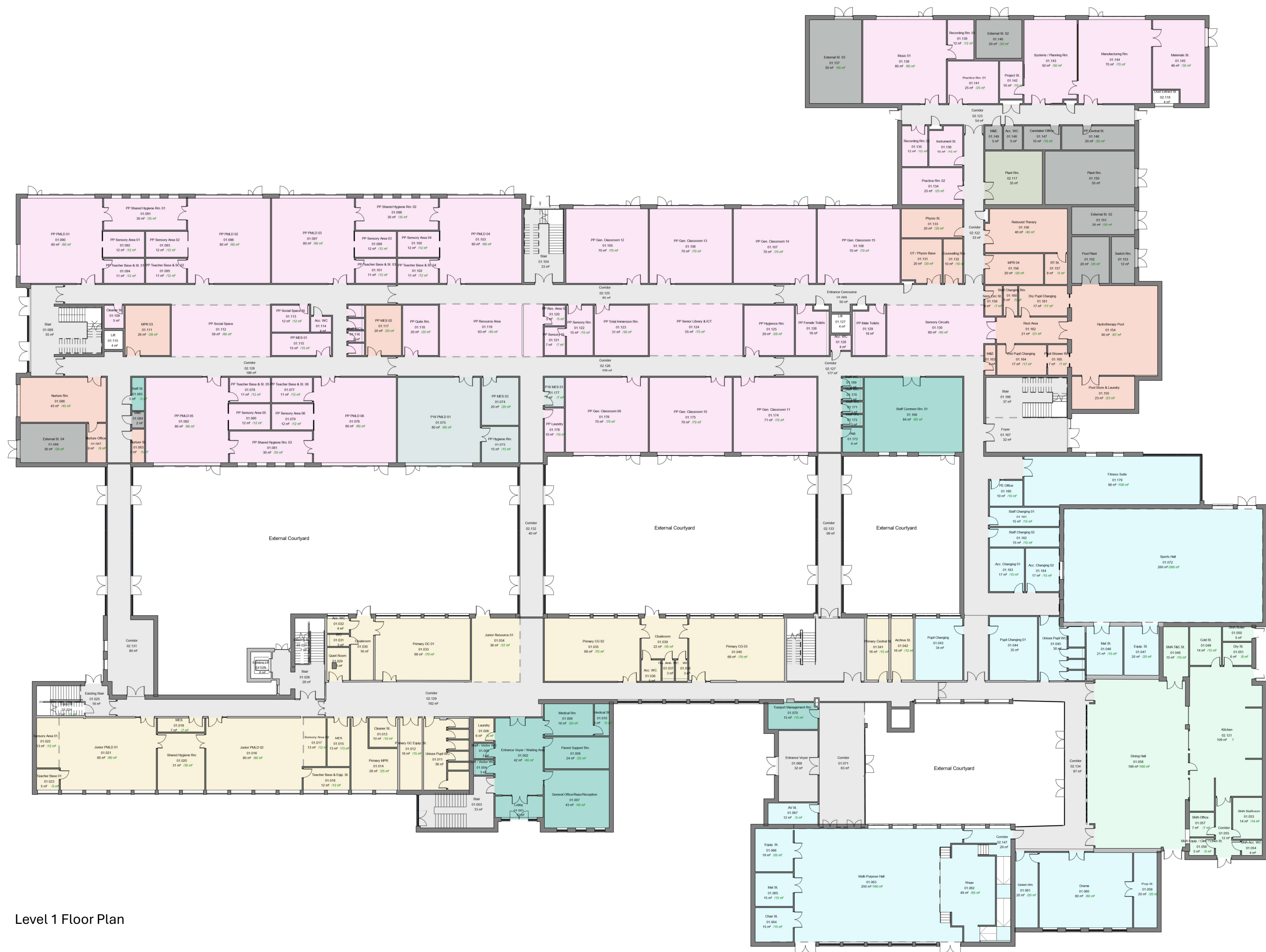
- Front of School (Staff/Visitors): 33 spaces
- SMA Area (Ancillary Staff): 8 spaces
- Rear of Site (Main Staff Parking): 100 spaces

Pedestrian Access & Circulation:

Pupils arriving on foot enter and exit via the main Fortwilliam Park gates. Designated pedestrian crossings ensure a safe route from the entrance to the dedicated pupil entry point of the building.

External Spaces:

Four secure external courtyard spaces are provided, offering flexible areas that can be used by different year groups or tailored to pupils of varying abilities. These spaces form an integral part of the educational environment at Harberton Special School. Additional hard play, together with a fenced Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), is provided at the back of the school.



Level 1 Floor Plan

- Administration
- Circulation
- Plant
- Primary
- Post Primary
- Tutors, Therapists & Miscellaneous
- Post 16 Accommodation
- General / Shared Accommodation
- SMA
- Other Ancillary

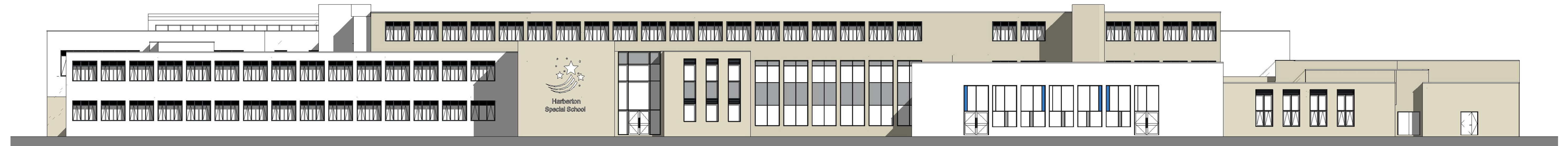
Holistically, the school is designed such that the pupils get older as you progress further back and higher up into the building. The youngest primary pupils are located at the front of the school with minimal travel distances from drop-off, and the Post 16 pupils are located on level 2 of the main extension at the back of the school.



View of the front of the School from the main site entrance



View of the community entrance at the Fitness Suite and Hydrotherapy Pool



Front Elevation



Level 2 Floor Plan

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Administration | Tutors, Therapists & Miscellaneous |
| Circulation | Post 16 Accommodation |
| Plant | General / Shared Accommodation |
| Primary | SMA |
| Post Primary | Other Ancillary |

Two storey link blocks, not only provide the connection from existing to new, but also serve to create separate safe and controlled external social spaces, optimise circulation, minimise travel distances, provide alternative routes if a child is in crisis, and optimise the phasing strategy.



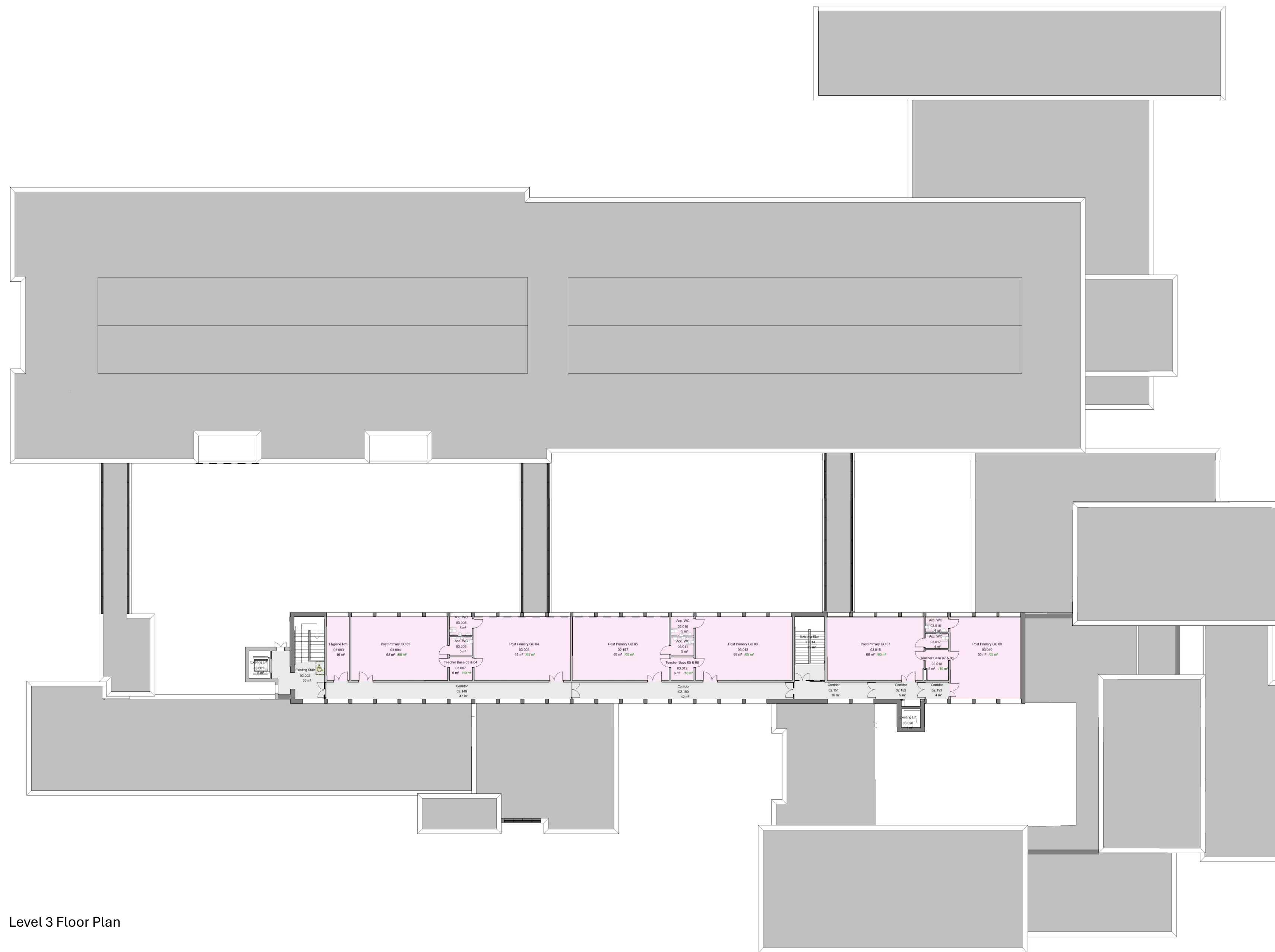
View of the back of the School from the staff car park



View of the east elevation that looks out over the views of Belfast



Courtyard Section/Elevation



Level 3 Floor Plan

- Administration
- Circulation
- Plant
- Primary
- Post Primary
- Tutors, Therapists & Miscellaneous
- Post 16 Accommodation
- General / Shared Accommodation
- SMA
- Other Ancillary

The design of the main extension is arranged around parallel corridors with teaching spaces to the outside of the plan and ancillary accommodated in a central core. Breakout spaces are open plan and generally double height to provide open and spacious volumes. This strategy is optimal to the school's day to operations.



Courtyard view



View of the east elevation and the back of the School



Rear Elevation



View of the main entrance



View towards the pupil entrance

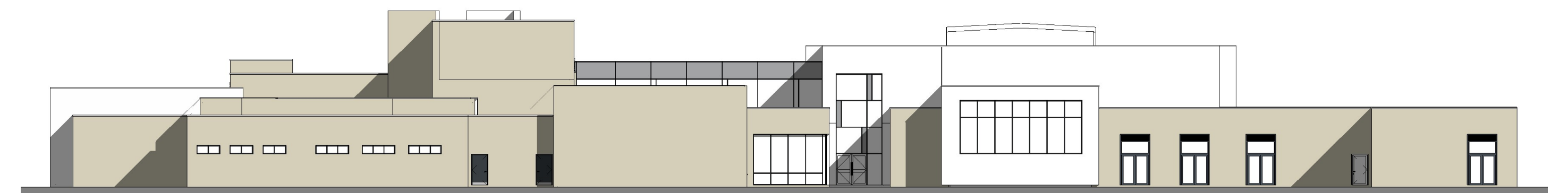


View across the front of the School from the drop-off area

Harberton Special School



East Elevation



West Elevation