

04 October 2023



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Whitley
Planning Application Reference:	231143/REG3
Site Address:	19 Bennet Road, Reading
Proposed Development	Proposed front extension and raising of roof line of 3 current commercial garages to align with existing adjacent workshop. Works include changes to fenestration, replacement commercial cladding and a single storey side extension.
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Ethne Humphreys – Senior Planning Officer
Deadline:	09 October 2023
Recommendations	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows:
Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Time Limit – 3 years2. Approved Plans3. Materials as Specified4. Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved – pre-commencement.5. Vehicle Parking as Specified6. Cycle Parking to be submitted and approved – pre-occupation7. Details of Sedum Roof (and Maintenance) to be submitted and approved – pre-commencement.8. Mechanical Plant Noise Assessment to be submitted and approved – prior to installation9. BREEAM ‘Very Good’ Interim review to be submitted and approved10. BREEAM ‘Very Good’ Post Construction review to be submitted and approved11. Details of PV and Air Source Heat Pumps to be submitted and approved – pre-occupation.12. Contaminated Land Assessment to be submitted and approved – pre-commencement13. Contaminated Land Remediation Scheme to be submitted and approved – pre-commencement14. Remediation Scheme to be Implemented and Validation Report submitted and approved - before construction above foundation level15. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination at any time
Informatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms and Conditions• Building Regulations• Pre-commencement Conditions• Highways• Construction

- Positive and Proactive

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This is a Reading Borough Council own Regulation 3 application for extensions to the vehicle maintenance warehouse building at the Council's depot, 19 Bennet Road.
- 1.2. The proposal will allow for larger vehicles to be worked on simultaneously and will also provide office and reception space. Better insulation will also provide more comfortable working conditions.
- 1.3. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to conditions as set out above.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application site is a Reading Borough Council owned parcel of land, in use as a depot for the Council's various departments. The site is approximately 1.7ha, located on the north of Bennet Road, with access taken directly off Bennet Road. The building to which this application relates is the vehicle maintenance workshop. The surrounding area is largely commercial and industrial in nature.
- 2.2. The site is located within a Core Employment Area (EM2d: Bennet Road) and an area of potentially Contaminated Land.



Site Location Plan (not to scale)



Existing Building

- 2.3. The application is being considered by the Planning Applications Committee due to it being a Council's own application.

3. The proposal

- 3.1. This application seeks planning permission to extend and refurbish the existing vehicle maintenance workshop from one large bay and three small bays into four large bays.
- 3.2. The enlarged building will be re-clad in thermally insulating industrial cladding with roller shutter doors to the four bays. The extension will allow a greater number, and larger size of vehicle to be worked on simultaneously than is currently possible.
- 3.3. An attached single storey extension is proposed to provide space for an office and reception area, and allows for improved facilities and welfare, such as a kitchenette, break room, locker storage and toilets. A sedum roof is proposed on the single storey extension.

4. Planning history

- 4.1. 182139/CLP Various external alterations including erection of canopy, replacement of fenestration and provision of PV panels. Permitted.
- 4.2. 111183/REG3 Installation of fuel tank with integral pump and nozzle. Permitted.

5. Consultations

Non-Statutory

- 5.1 RBC Transport – No objection subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement and provision of cycle and vehicle spaces as proposed.
- 5.2 RBC Natural Environment – No objection subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of sedum roof including maintenance.
- 5.3 RBC Ecology – No objection.
- 5.4 RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to condition to secure submission and approval of noise assessment for any mechanical plant that is to be provided.

Public

- 5.5 A site was noticed was displayed along the Bennet Road frontage. No letters of representation have been received.

6. Legal context

- 6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).
- 6.2. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework 2023

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- EM1: Provision of Employment
- EM2: Location of New Employment Development
- EM3: Loss of Employment Land
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Sustainable Construction and Design (2019)

Other relevant documentation

- Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (2021)
- Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

7. Appraisal

- 7.1. The main considerations are:
- Land Use Principles
 - Design Considerations
 - Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- Environmental Protection Matters
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Natural Environment and Ecology
- Sustainability
- Equalities Impact

Land Use Principles

- 7.2 The site is located within a Core Employment Area as defined in Policy EM2 (Location of New Employment Development), specifically EM2d: Bennet Road. Policy EM2 requires proposals not to result in a loss of employment land.
- 7.3 This application proposes an extension to an existing workshop unit and would not result in the loss of any employment land.
- 7.4 Therefore, an extension to the existing use is acceptable, provided that other policy requirements of the Reading Borough Local Plan are satisfied.

Design Considerations

- 7.5 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. The policy requires a “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located”.
- 7.6 The proposal represents a sizeable extension. However, the extension would form a continuation of the existing building and will result in a uniform appearance. The single storey side extension will be small-scale with Sedum roof and not readily visible.
- 7.7 The proposals are not considered to result in an overly intrusive or dominant addition when viewed in the context of its commercial/industrial setting. The materials will match those of the existing building, with some modern material detail to match neighbouring commercial/industrial uses which is appropriate. In accordance with Policy CC7.

Impact on neighbour Amenity

- 7.8 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety. Policy EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment) requires noise generating equipment to not result in adverse noise impacts to sensitive receptors.
- 7.9 The site is located in an established industrial/commercial area and is currently operational. Given this and the nature of the proposals and the surroundings, no material overbearing effects or privacy issues are considered to arise.
- 7.10 The proposal includes the provision of external plant (extract fan, heat pump and compressor) and indicative noise levels have been submitted. Based on the relatively high noise levels from the plant items, there is a possibility for residents (to the north east) to be affected. As such, a noise assessment is required to assess the impact of the plant installation on nearby sensitive uses. The Council’s Environmental Protection Officer has confirmed that this can be dealt with via condition. In accordance with Policies CC8 and EN17.

Environmental Protection Matters

Contaminated land

- 7.11 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.

- 7.12 A contaminated land investigation report has been submitted with the application which recommends a small-scale intrusive investigation to confirm the risk levels from the possible presence of contamination. The Council's Environmental Protection officer recommends the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement). In accordance with Policy EN16.

Impact on Parking/Highways

- 7.13 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.

- 7.14 The current layout arrangement only allows for maintenance of large vehicles in the single large workshop bay. The proposed extension will enable an increase in the capacity of the workshops to enable large vehicles to be worked on concurrently. It is anticipated that the increase in operations will allow for employment of 4 additional members of staff.

- 7.15 Tracking diagrams have been submitted to demonstrate that vehicles can safely navigate through the car park and operate without causing obstruction or restricting movements around/through the site.

- 7.16 16No. vehicle spaces are provided (4No. for each additional staff and 3No. for each service bay) and 1No. covered cycle spaces with Sheffield type stands are to be provided within the site compound. There are no Transport objections to the proposal subject to submission of a Construction Method Statement which is proposed to be secured via condition. In accordance with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Natural Environment and Ecology

- 7.17 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) requires that new development should provide a net gain for biodiversity where possible and should incorporate biodiversity features into proposals where practical.

- 7.18 A bat survey has been submitted with the application and the Council's Ecologist agrees with the conclusions that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, there is unlikely to be any harm to bats or other protected species.

- 7.19 There are limited opportunities for soft landscaping at the site. However, a sedum roof is proposed on the single storey flat roof extension which is welcomed and would assist in complying with climate and ecological policy aims. It would also be of some benefit for wildlife. There are no Natural Environment or Ecology objections to this application subject to full details of the sedum roof and its maintenance which is proposed to be secured via condition. The development is therefore considered in accordance with Policies CC7, EN12 and EN14.

Sustainability

- 7.20 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, states that "Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. To meet these requirements: (...) All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Very Good' standard as a minimum;"

7.21 The application submission includes commentary stating that a 'Very Good' BREEAM standard is targeted as a minimum, plus 5%. The sedum roof would also assist with rainwater management. Submission of the standard BREEAM certificates to be provided are proposed to be secured via condition (along with details of the sedum roof). This is to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards. The submission also indicates provision of PV panels and air source heat pumps in the future which would be a positive sustainability benefit and welcomed by the Council. In accordance with Policy CC2.

8. Equality implications

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion & planning balance

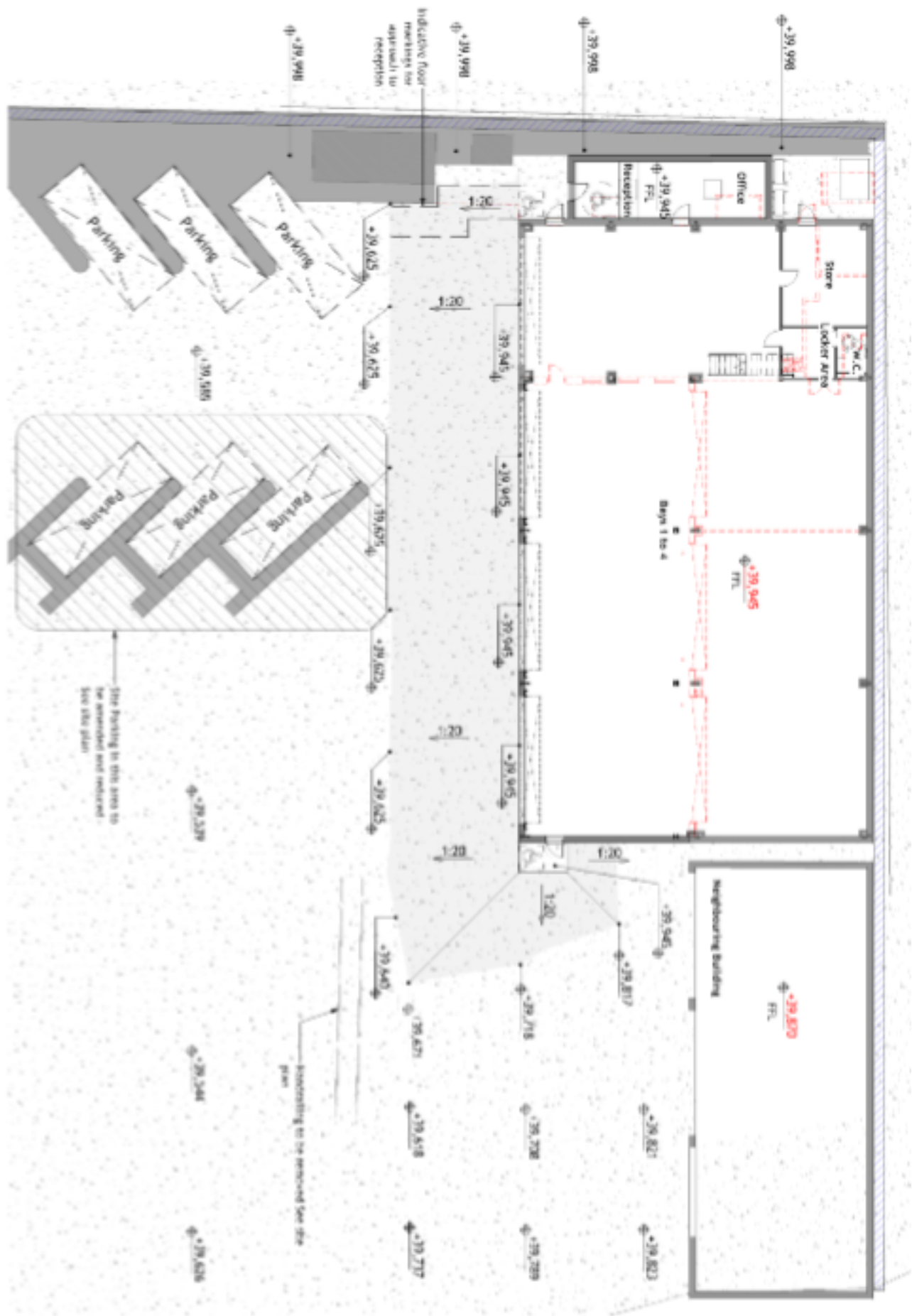
9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9.2 Officers consider that no material harm would arise, and the proposed works are acceptable with particular regard to the effect on the character of the area, noise impacts, sustainability and ecology and highways matters.

9.3 The application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions specified at the outset of this report.

Case Officer: Miss Ethne Humphreys

Proposed Plans shown below:



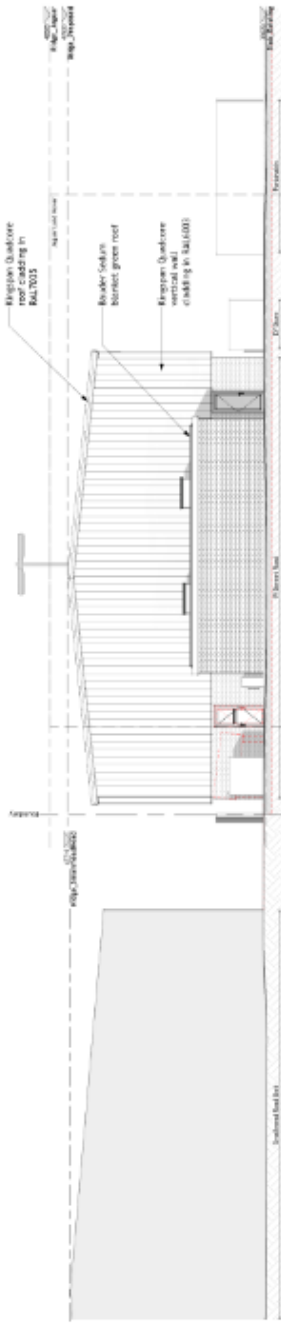
Proposed Ground Floor/Site Plan



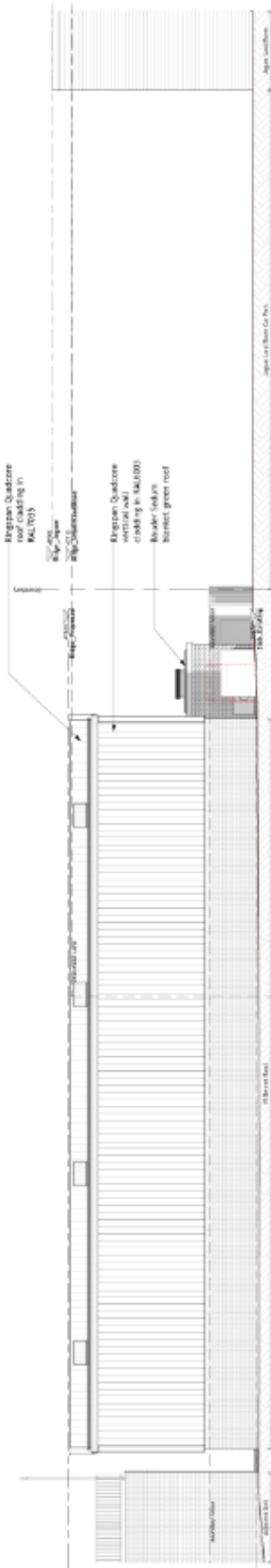
Proposed Roof Plan



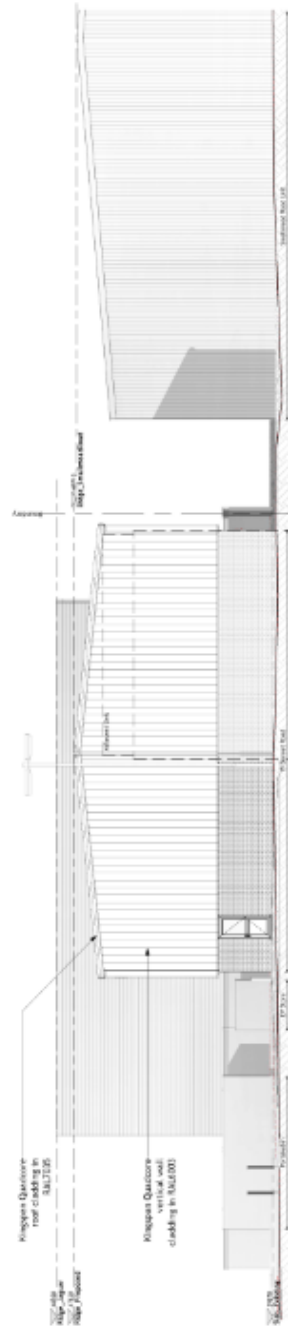
Proposed Elevation - South
General Arrangement | Scale 1:100



Proposed Elevation - West
General Arrangement | Scale 1:100

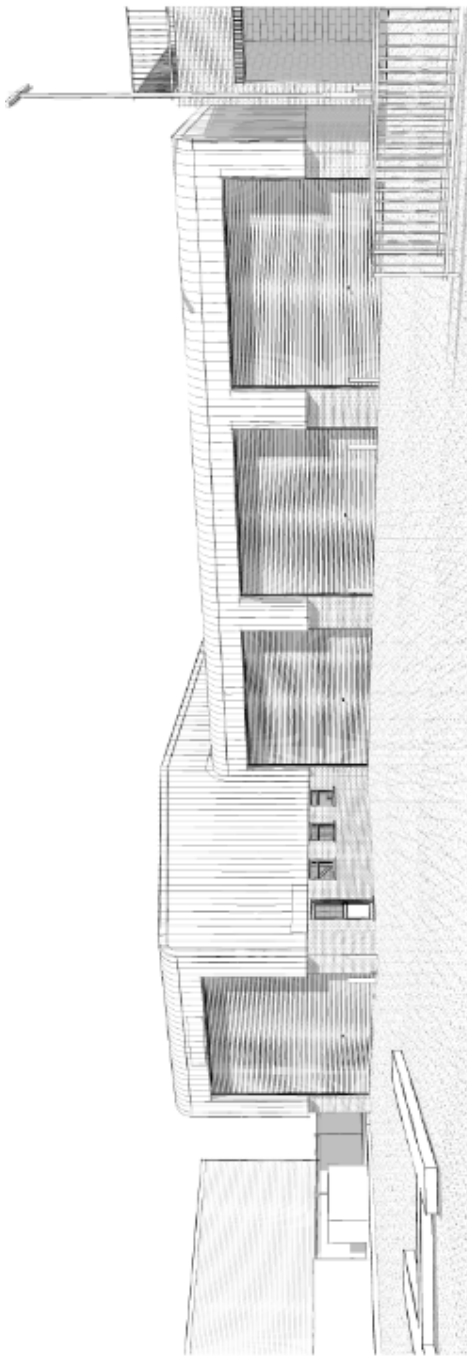


Proposed Elevation - North
General Arrangement | Scale 1:100

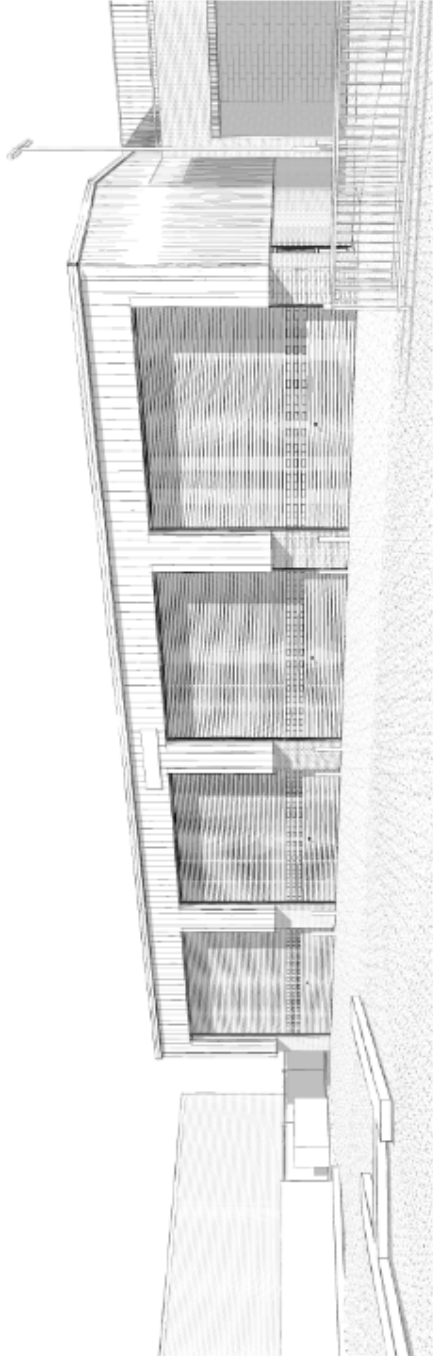


Proposed Elevation - East
General Arrangement | Scale 1:100

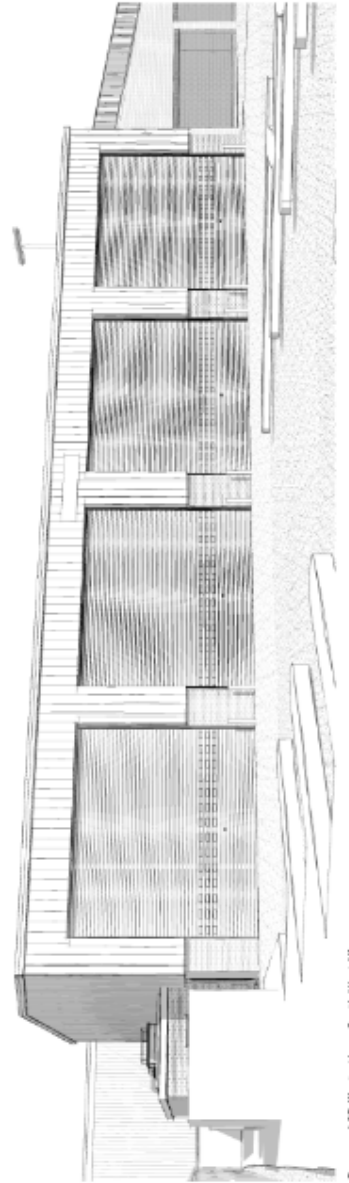
Proposed Elevations



Existing 3D Illustration - South East View
3D Illustration | Scale: 1:15



Proposed 3D Illustration - South East View
3D Illustration | Scale: 1:15



Proposed 3D Illustration - South West View
3D Illustration | Scale: 1:15

Existing and Proposed Visuals