

GRANGE SCHOOL EXPANSION PROJECT

PLANNING STATEMENT

Site address: Matthews Lane, Manchester M12 4GR

06 November 2024

CLIENT

Prosperere Learning Trust

Firbank Road
Newall Green, Wythenshawe
Manchester M23 2YS



ARCHITECT

Grated Apple

The Piggery
2 Wigsey Lane
Warburton WA13 9JL

PM/QS/PD

Drees & Sommer

Jackson House
Sibson Road
Manchester M33 7RR

STRUCTURES

Markland

Corby House
38A Chorley New Road
Bolton BL1 4AP

MEP

McKee

Wigan Hall
New Market Street
Wigan WN1 1HH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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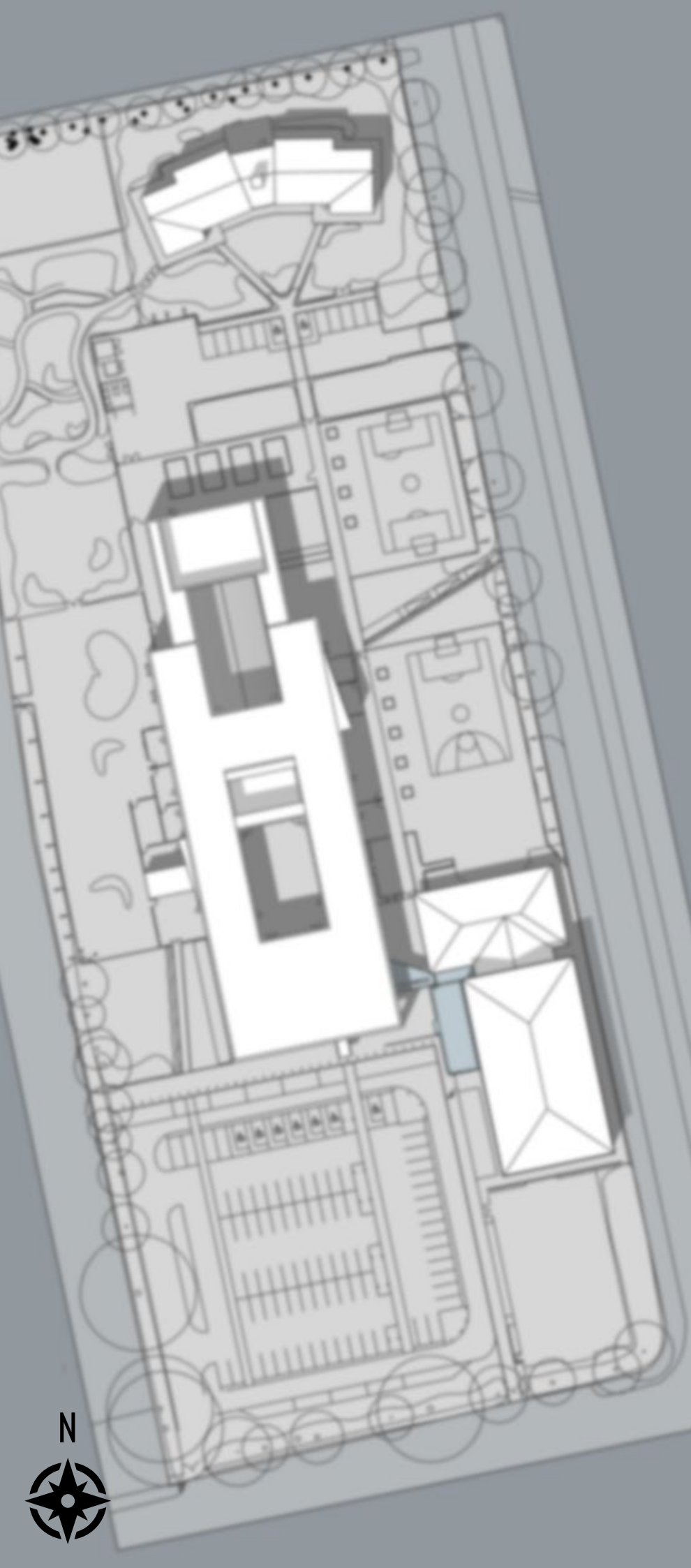
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Background

Both nationally and locally there has been sustained pressure to increase the number of admissions in special schools over recent years. In Manchester the most urgent need is in providing such places for children of secondary school age. As Grange is an Outstanding Ofsted rated school, the pressure to increase in size has been particularly acute. Twice the LA, through Amanda Corcoran (Director of Education) and Michelle Devine (Head of Access of Sufficiency), have approached the school to increase capacity, most recently asking Grange to increase the number of secondary places by 50. A Grant Funding Agreement of £3,900,000 has been provided to facilitate an expansion of this size.

Context

The existing sports hall is a legacy building from when there used to be a mainstream secondary school on the site. When Grange was built, this building was retained as it was in good condition. A new facility was provided with community use across the road in the Gorton Education Village. Although the school has made use of this facility, it is worth noting that it is not designed specifically with special needs students in mind. Classes at Grange are seldom larger than 12 and smaller, less imposing, spaces are provided for children when designing special schools. The Trust operates Prospect House in Higher Blackley and this new build, created by Manchester City Council, does not have a similar-sized sports hall as Grange. Instead it has a multi-purpose activity space that doubles as a sports space, dining room and assembly hall. The Trust also has just opened Pear Tree High School in Cheadle Hulme, this school created by the DFE. Again, no sports hall has been provided, but instead a much smaller multi-purpose space has been built. Grange is a special school for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and need an appropriate environment. As a result, the existing sports hall has had to be divided into two spaces, rather than one, so that children can learn in a more appropriate environment (although this is far from ideal, as the spaces are too big for the children). There is currently no community use of the facility. The existing outdoor external play is the minimum the school needs to provide its pupils with suitable social and active play.

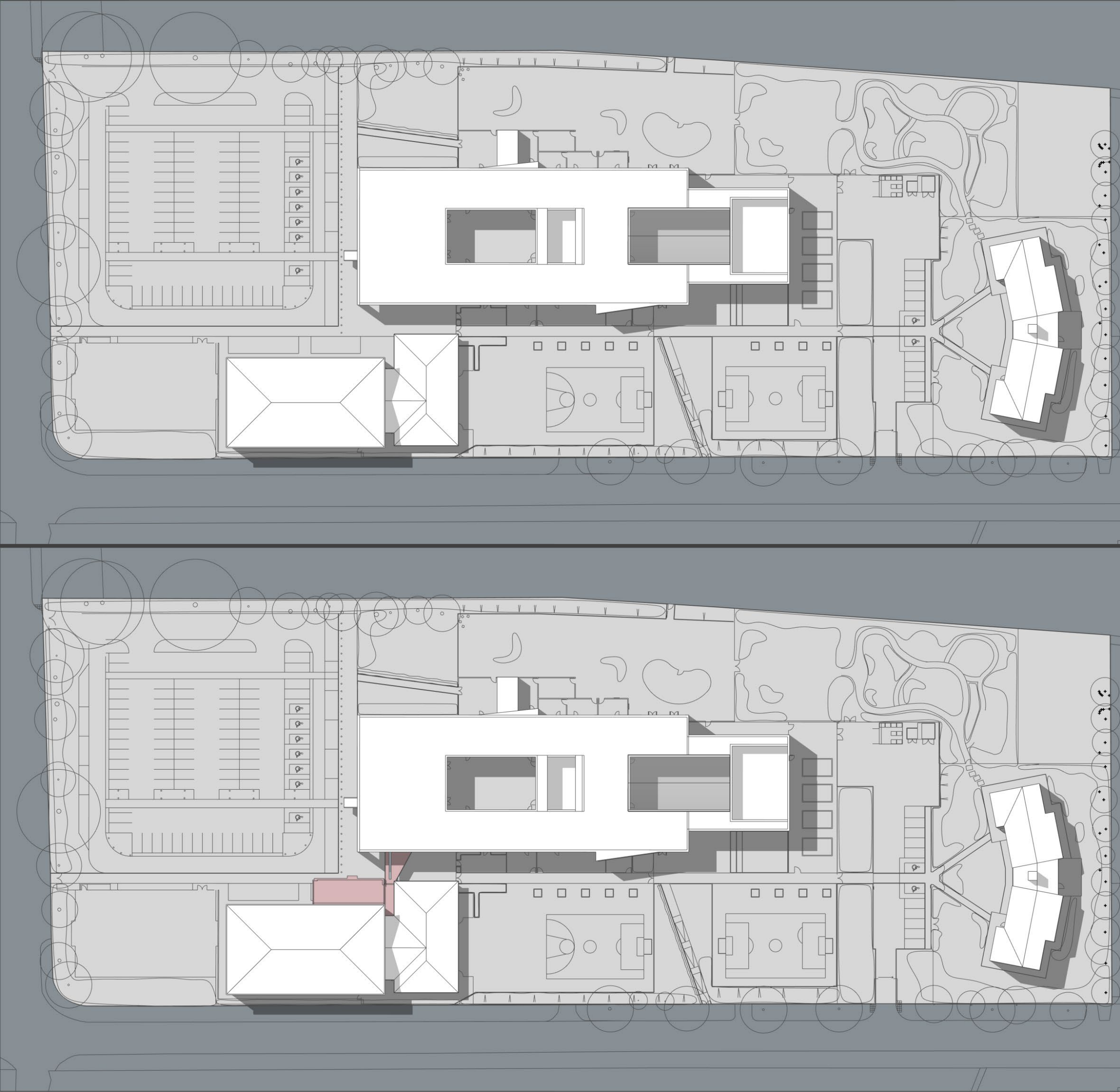
Design Approach

To safeguard the existing outdoor spaces, the objective was to minimize additional footprint by accommodating the required additional spaces into the ‘shell’ of the sports hall/changing room building

Design Solution

- Reconfigure the sports hall to create 5x distinct physical activity spaces suitable for children with ASD. We’re more than doubling the amount usable spaces.

Existing sports hall:	660m2
Activity spaces provided:	
2x on GF:	182m2 each
1x on GF (Heart Beeps space):	37m2
1x on Mezzanine:	98m2
1x on Mezzanine:	112m2
Total space for physical activity:	611m2
- Remodel the changing rooms block to accommodate the required additional teaching spaces.
- The quantity of existing external social/active play remains as existing.
- The ‘extension’ to house the café is located ‘front of house’, facilitating access to it by parents and visitors alike.



Site Plan - Proposed

Site Plan - Existing



New Build = 134m2
Canopy = 40m2

AMOUNT



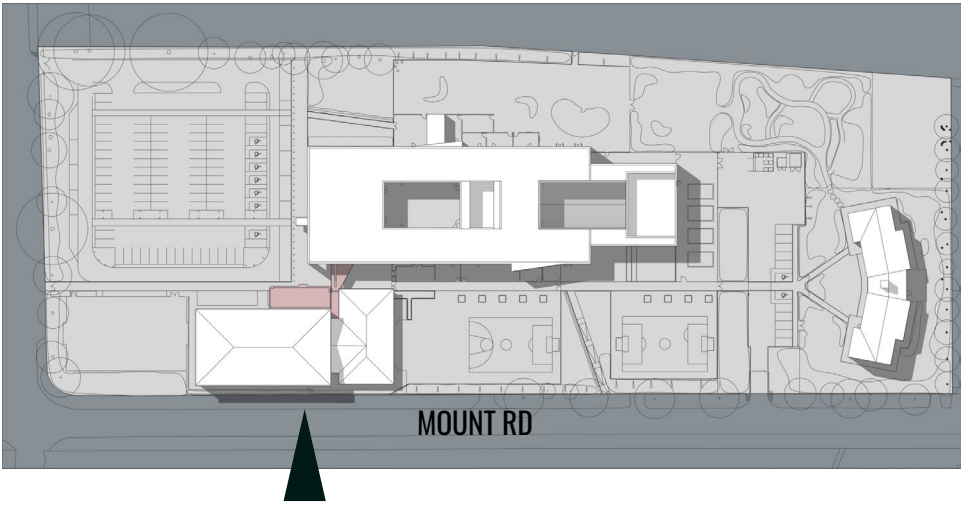
Mount Rd (True) Elevation ▲ Existing

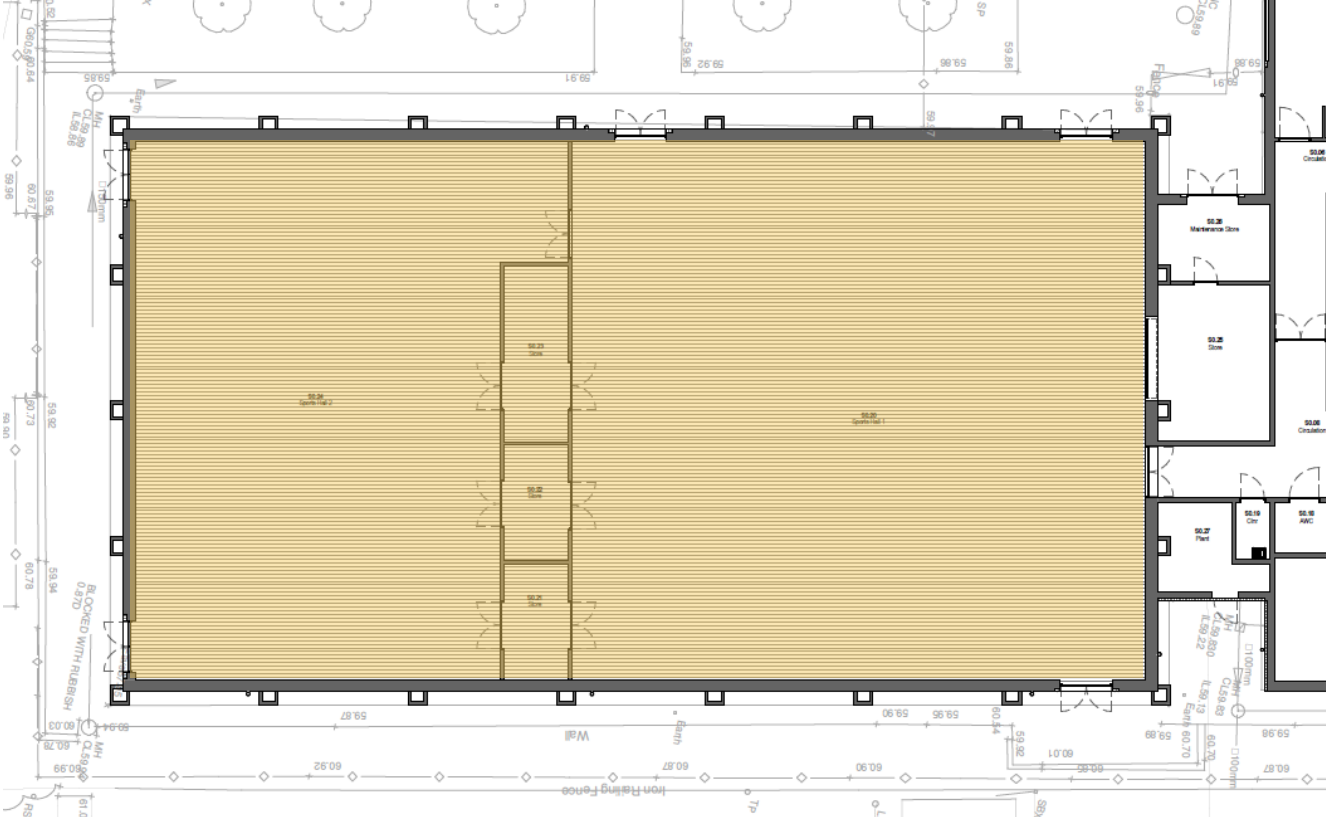
For this project, the most relevant street elevation is along Mount Rd.

Here, the only difference between existing and proposed are the new openings proposed for the Sports Hall block. These new openings will enhance/enliven the street scene as seen from this public highway.



Mount Rd (True) Elevation ▲ Proposed



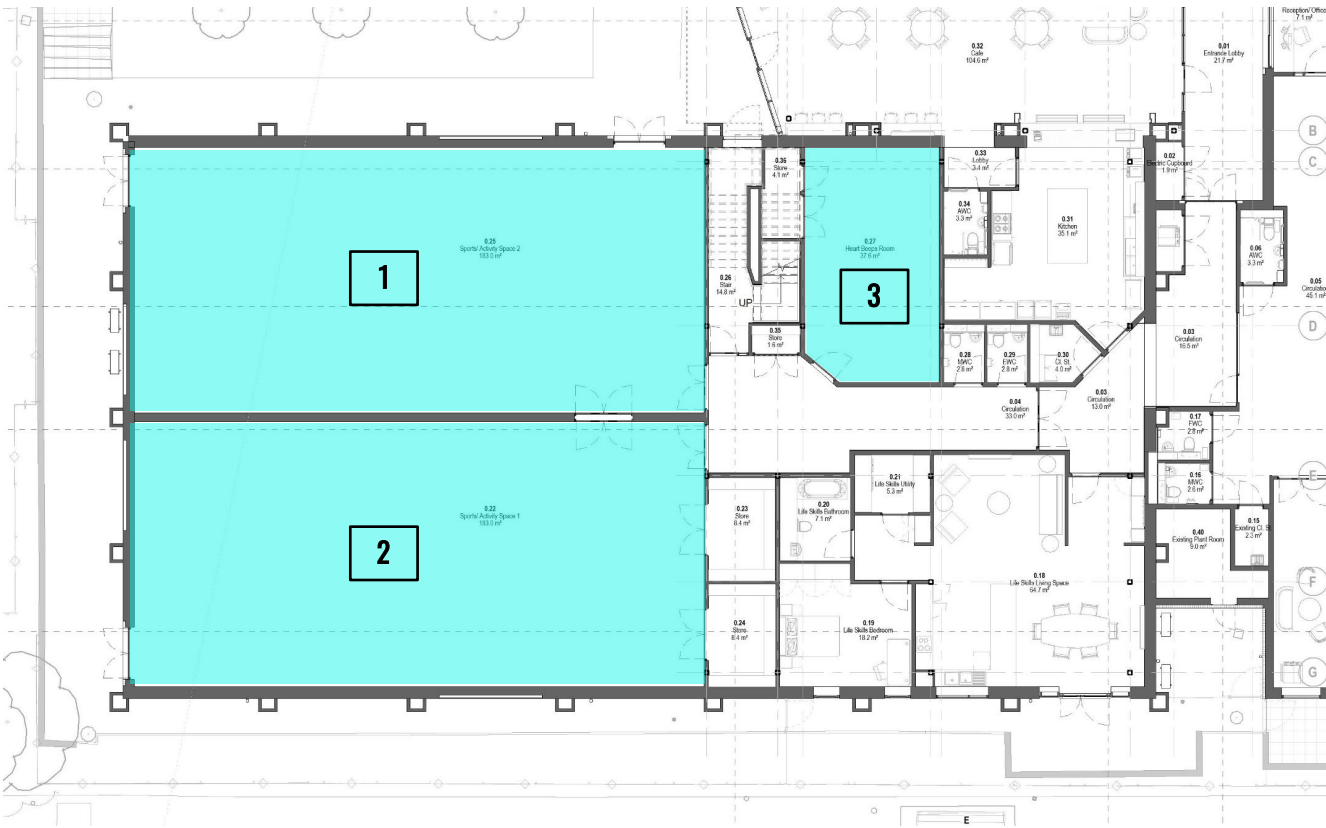


Existing Sports Hall (660m2)

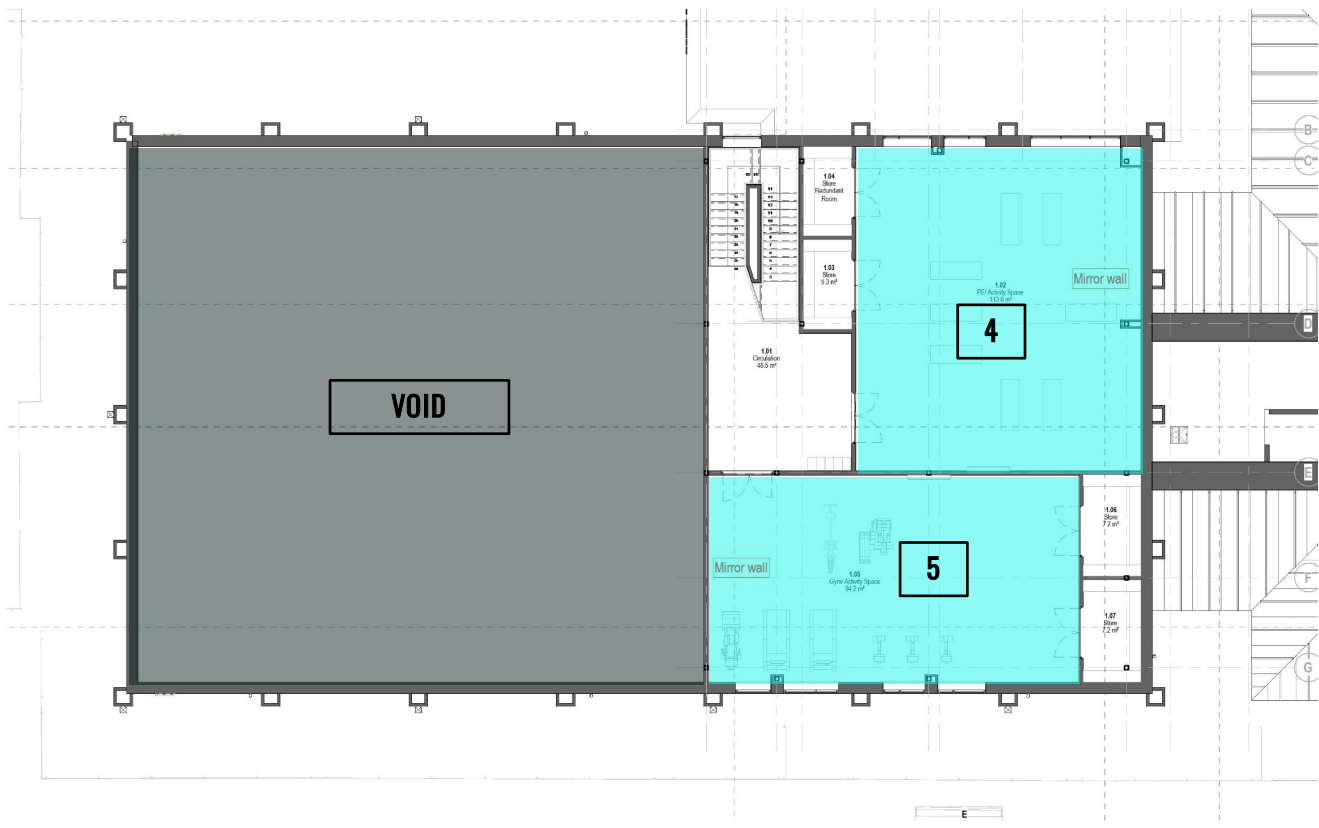


The existing Sports Hall is a typical ‘4-Court’ Sports Hall. Due to their neurodevelopmental condition, the children at the school must do physical activity in small groups. The existing sports hall is too big for this purpose, making the space too difficult to manage and control. The school has already partitioned the space in two to create more appropriately sized spaces.

The proposal is to replace 1 large, unsuitable Activity Space with 5 suitable, purposely sized and designed Activity Spaces.



Proposed Activity Spaces



1.	ACTIVITY SPACE	182m2
2.	ACTIVITY SPACE	182m2
3.	HEART BEEPS (Dance Studio for young pupils)	37m2
4.	ACTIVITY SPACE	112m2
5.	ACTIVITY SPACE	98m2

The refurbished and reconfigured sports hall to create smaller, more suitable activity spaces, lends itself to community use for targeted disability groups in the locality.

Consultation with Manchester Active has confirmed there is a need to access specialist spaces for sport and physical activity that are safe and accessible to people with additional physical, mental health, or neurodiverse needs. Manchester Active also has a Physical Activity Referral Service which works with local GPs to help people with mental or physical health issues become more active. Sessions range from one to one for people with long term health conditions (Pathway One) to small group sessions for people needing more time or confidence before joining a local gym or attending open community sessions (Pathway Two).

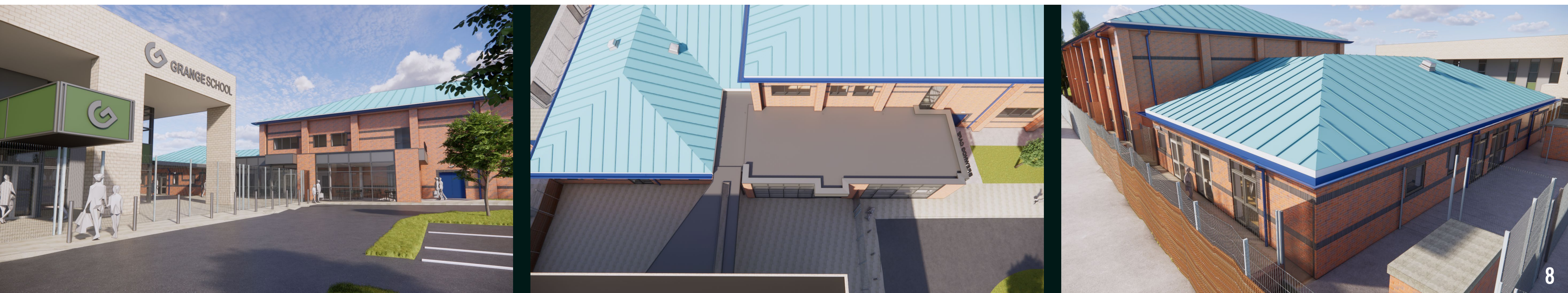
One of Manchester Active's key strategic objectives is to widen access to school facilities by establishing partnerships with schools who have activity spaces that can be used to meet the needs of the local community. The school is committed to working with Manchester Active to enter into such a partnership via a Community Use Agreement which will be prepared prior to completion of the school extension project and activated in accordance with the agreement.



“The new design provides a once in a generation opportunity for the school to markedly improve its activity facilities for children at the school. Instead of one cavernous space, five different spaces would be available for children of all ages.

A small, personable space for younger children would be created to meet sensory needs and allow for suitable physical activity. A larger space would be created which the school could use flexibly to meet the demands of the children and the curriculum. Another space would be created which could possibly be used as a gym, greatly enhancing the school’s ability to fulfil its physical education curriculum on site. And the two teaching and activity spaces in the existing sports hall would be retained.

Together, a range of learning environments would be available to children to best address their needs and no outdoor activity spaces would be lost. This design would greatly enhance children's opportunities to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle.” Prospere Learning Trust



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