

Campaign for a Sports Hall at Shrewsbury Academy

[Click here for Nov 2025 Project update](#)

Submitted by:

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Marches Academy Trust

1. Background and Context

When Shrewsbury Academy joined the Trust in 2019, the Trust sought assurances from the Department for Education (DfE) that a building project would be undertaken to deliver a fit-for-purpose learning environment for students. In support of this ambition, the Trust released The Grange Secondary School to the Local Authority (LA), as the children had already been consulted and moved to the Corndon Crescent site.

The LA supported this strategic move by contributing £2 million towards the expansion of the Corndon Crescent site. Initial plans proposed the construction of a new school on land adjacent to the local Sports Village. However, due to a public campaign led by the local councillor opposing the loss of green space, this proposal was halted. As a result, the revised build was delivered on the existing Shrewsbury Academy site, initially designed for 500 children, but recently expanded to accommodate 1200.

A significant consequence of this site consolidation was the loss of facilities previously available across both sites. Despite moving 800 students onto a site originally built for 500, the accompanying infrastructure was not adequately upgraded or replaced to match the increased demand. In particular, students lost access to key sports and recreational facilities, which were not reinstated or redeveloped at the Corndon Crescent site. This has negatively impacted physical education provision, curriculum breadth, and enrichment opportunities.

Additionally, the Harlescott Primary School secured approval to incorporate and relocate the Harlescott Infant School to its site. This allowed the DfE to approve the transfer of the former Infant School site to Shrewsbury Academy, further enabling redevelopment and expansion of the existing site.

As part of a wider capital campaign, the school benefitted from the construction of a new library and STEM building, funded by the DfE with additional support from the LA. The original proposal also included a sports hall and skills centre, both of which were crucial to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, as well as supporting external qualifications and community use. However, during the final DfE board approval process, no representation was permitted from the school or Trust, and the Trust's DfE contact was on leave, resulting in the project being approved without the inclusion of the sports hall and skills centre.

This omission has had significant implications. The current site lacks a single space large enough to host all children under exam conditions, meaning the absence of a multi-use sports hall now limits the school's ability to meet standard exam board requirements. Furthermore, the lost opportunity to develop a skills centre restricts the potential for vocational learning pathways and broader curriculum access for all students.

2. Executive Summary

This business case sets out the development of a new Sports Hall and Skills Centre on our site in Shrewsbury. This project represents a pivotal investment in our students, our community, and the future of Shrewsbury. Valued at approximately £3 million, this initiative addresses urgent needs across educational provision, vocational training, mental and physical wellbeing, and community engagement.

After a rigorous tender process, SJ Roberts has been identified as the preferred contractor. We now move towards the pre-planning and full planning stages, with a view to commencing works in Q2 of 2026 and delivering a transformative facility for young people and the wider community.

Estimated Project Value: c£3 million

Tender Recipients:

- Gratton Oakes
 - Paveaways
 - Morris Property
 - JRN Construction
 - SJ Roberts
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3. Strategic Rationale

Our Vision:

At Shrewsbury Academy, we are relentlessly ambitious and we are committed to ensuring that every child and young person regardless of background has the opportunity to succeed, thrive, and contribute positively to society. This project directly supports that mission.

Key Strategic Drivers:

a) Enhancing Curriculum and Employability Pathways

The Skills Centre will provide vital infrastructure for delivering vocational and apprenticeship programmes, particularly for students who excel in hands-on, practical learning environments. This supports both alternative provision and mainstream educational pathways.

b) Closing Local Skills Gaps

With a focus on construction, ground maintenance, electrical work, plumbing and other trades, the centre will be a skills hub aligned with Shropshire's labour market needs. It will support sustainable employment and reduce dependency on external contractors.

c) Expanding Adult Learning Opportunities

Post-January 2027, the skills centre will offer community learning for adult upskilling, retraining, and lifelong learning. This will support economic mobility and social inclusion across generations.

d) Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Sports Hall will support physical activity, resilience, and wellbeing. It will serve both the school and the broader community, offering inclusive opportunities for health and recreation.

e) Fostering Community Cohesion

The new facilities will be open for community use, encouraging social integration, reducing isolation, and reinforcing local pride.

f) Tackling Disadvantage Through Equity of Access

With over one-third of our students eligible for Pupil Premium, these facilities will provide accessible, high-quality opportunities that combat social inequality and support long-term positive outcomes.

4. Project Scope

Sports Hall Features:

- Full-size indoor sports court (multi-use)
- Changing rooms and storage
- Nurture and intervention space
- Facilities for after-school clubs and community sports
- Extended curriculum activities (e.g. GCSE PE, fitness training)

Skills Centre Features:

- Workshop and training areas for trades
- Classroom spaces for theory delivery
- Beyond the classroom / after school training for students
- Examination spaces
- Self-contained facilities suitable for BTEC or partner apprenticeships
- Adult learning and evening provision
- Facilities designed for future accreditation delivery (post-DfE/LA approval)
- Partnership with local businesses with local companies like garages, builders etc (QTLS approved)

5. Implementation Plan

Procurement & Contractor Selection

Milestone	Details
Tender Issued	Tender distributed to 5 contractors (Gratton Oakes, Paveaways, Morris Property, JRN Construction, SJ Roberts)
Tender Review	Tenders received from: Gratton Oakes, SJ Roberts, Morris Property
Preferred Contractor	SJ Roberts selected following scoring and review by the Trust Executive Team
Meeting Held	End of June 2025 - SJ Roberts met with the Trust and Shrewsbury Academy

Planning and Development Timeline

Milestone	Date
Pre-Planning Application Submitted	July 2025
Pre-Planning Decision Expected	August 2025

Milestone	Date
Full Planning Application Submission	September 2025
Planning Permission Decision	Early 2026
Construction Start	Q2 2026
Sports Hall & Skills Centre Completion	Estimated Q1 2027
Adult Learning Provision Start	January 2027
Apprenticeship Delivery (Subject to DfE Approval)	September 2027

6. Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Planning Permission Delays	Early pre-planning engagement and clear communication with Shropshire Council
Budget Overruns	Fixed-price tender contract and detailed cost plan
Disruption to School	Construction scheduled to avoid peak learning times; site will be separate from main school
Low Community Uptake	Early outreach and partnership with local employers, training providers, and community groups
Delayed DfE Approval for Apprenticeships	Phased approach, initial use for adult learning and workshops before full apprenticeship delivery

7. Financial Overview

- **Estimated Total Cost:** £3 million
- **Funding Sources:**
 - Capital investment from Marches Academy Trust - £900,000
 - Shropshire Council CIL Contribution - £900,000
 - Targeted grant applications (support from 4 All Foundation if required)
 - Potential partnership contributions

8. Long-Term Impact

- **Curriculum Enrichment:** Enhanced practical and physical education offerings

- **Improved Employment Pathways:** Vocational learning that feeds directly into local employment
 - **Community Development:** Learning and leisure opportunities for adults and families
 - **Increased School Capacity:** Supports future growth in student numbers and specialisms
 - **Reputational Growth:** Establish Shrewsbury Academy as a centre of excellence in both education and community provision
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9. Conclusion

This business case sets out a compelling and evidence-led vision for the future of Shrewsbury Academy and its role in the wider community. The Sports Hall and Skills Centre are essential not only for our young people but for the economic and social wellbeing of the town. With the right partnership and contractor SJ Roberts we are ready to deliver a project that will have generational impact.

Project Update - November 2025

Following the Trust awarding the contract to SJ Roberts, extensive work has been undertaken to reduce the overall project cost and ensure viability. Key updates include:

- **Removal of Skills Centre**

Due to the high cost of the original plan and limited opportunities to secure funding or generate revenue from the Skills Centre provision, this element has been removed from the project scope.

- **Revised Sports Hall Design**

After discussions with Shropshire FA and local sports groups, the proposal now includes a full-size Futsal pitch rather than a five-a-side football pitch. This change offers better alignment with curriculum needs and future community use opportunities.

Additional cost-saving measures include:

- Removing the reception area
- Reducing the overall size of the sports hall
- Removing the second floor and lift

These adjustments have significantly reduced the overall cost, making the project more financially viable.

- **Funding Position**

- see below

- **Planning Progress**

The contractor has submitted a pre-application to planning, which has provided positive feedback.

Adjustments have been made to:

- Reduce building size
- Engage with Sport England
- Ensure the design is in keeping with the neighbouring church and surrounding area

- **Timescales**

The project remains on track to deliver the sports hall in time for 2027, as outlined in the July 2025 update (above).

Strategic Rationale (Revised)

Key Strategic Drivers:

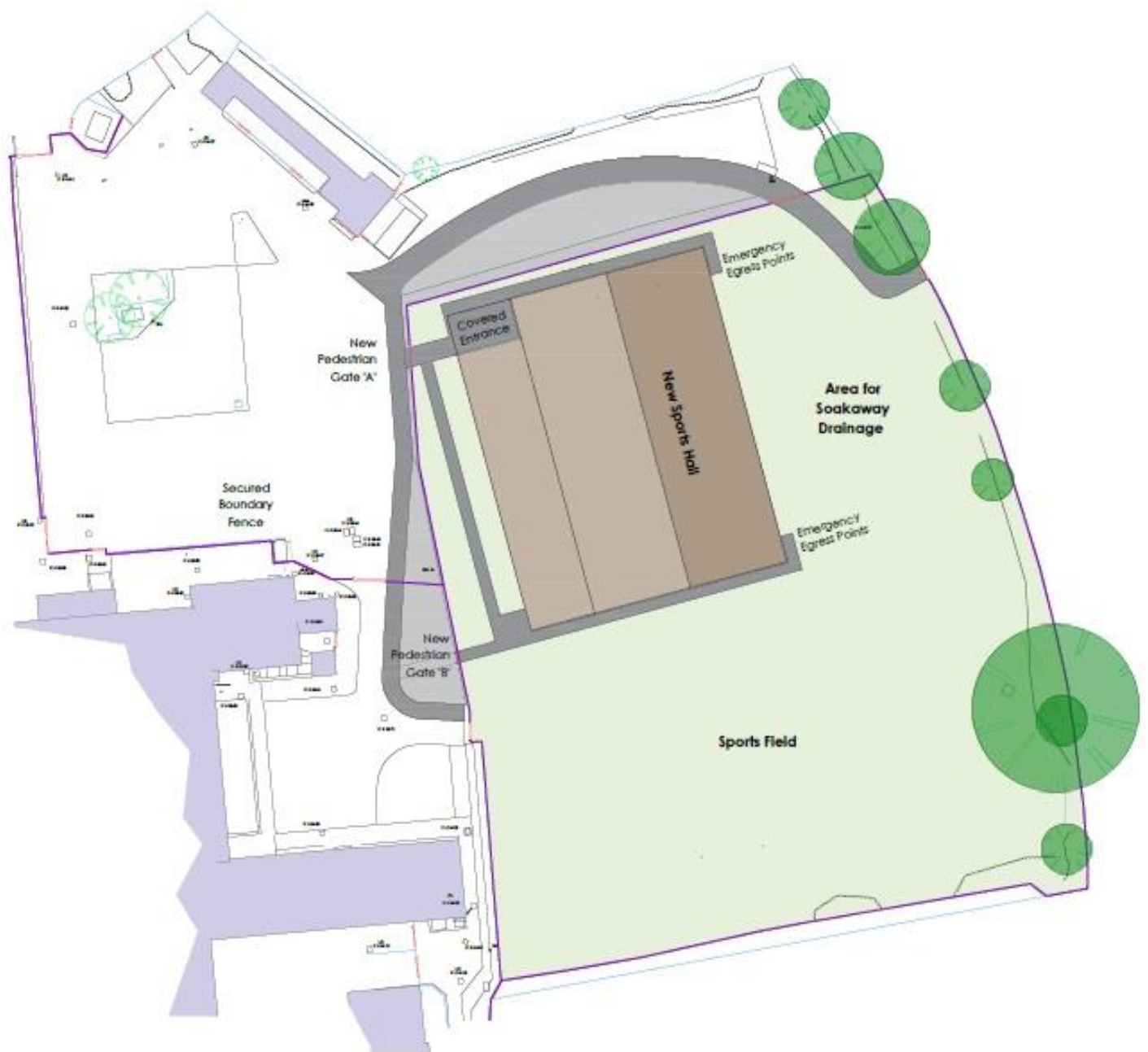
- **Enhancing Curriculum Delivery**
The Sports Hall will enable full delivery of GCSE PE and other physical education programmes, ensuring compliance with exam board requirements and broadening curriculum opportunities.
- **Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing**
Physical activity is proven to support resilience and wellbeing. The hall will provide inclusive opportunities for health and recreation for all students.
- **Fostering Community Cohesion**
The facility will be available for future community use, encouraging social integration and reducing isolation.
- **Tackling Disadvantage Through Equity of Access**
With over one-third of our students eligible for Pupil Premium, this provision ensures high-quality opportunities that combat social inequality and support long-term positive outcomes.

Financial Overview (Updated)

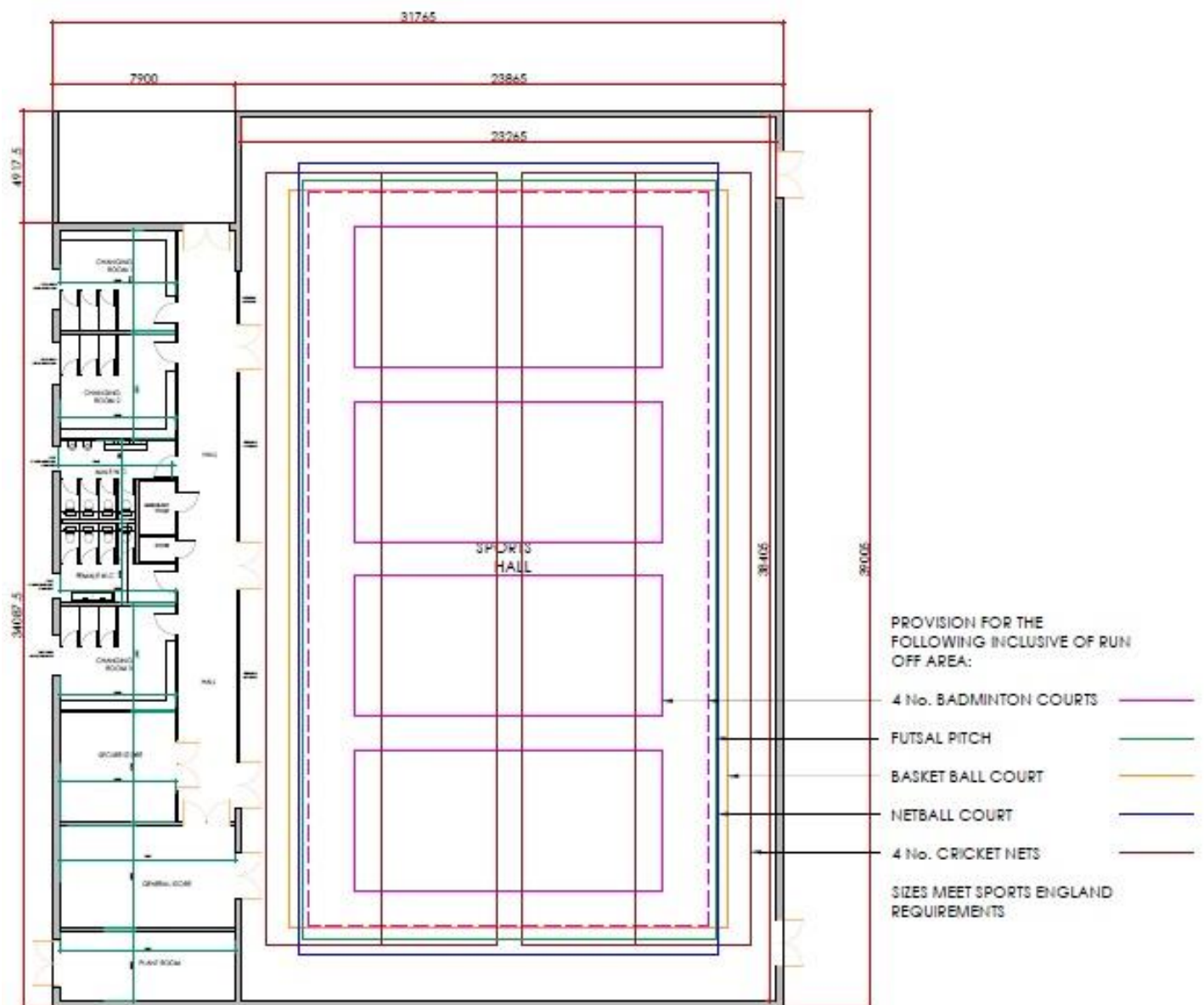
- **Total Cost (Revised):** £2,293,611.41
- Spent to date on ground investigation works etc: £11,630
- **Funding Sources:**
 - Marches Academy Trust (SCA allocation to date): £900,000
 - Shropshire Council: £900,000
 - Remaining shortfall: **£493,611.41**

Drawing and finishes

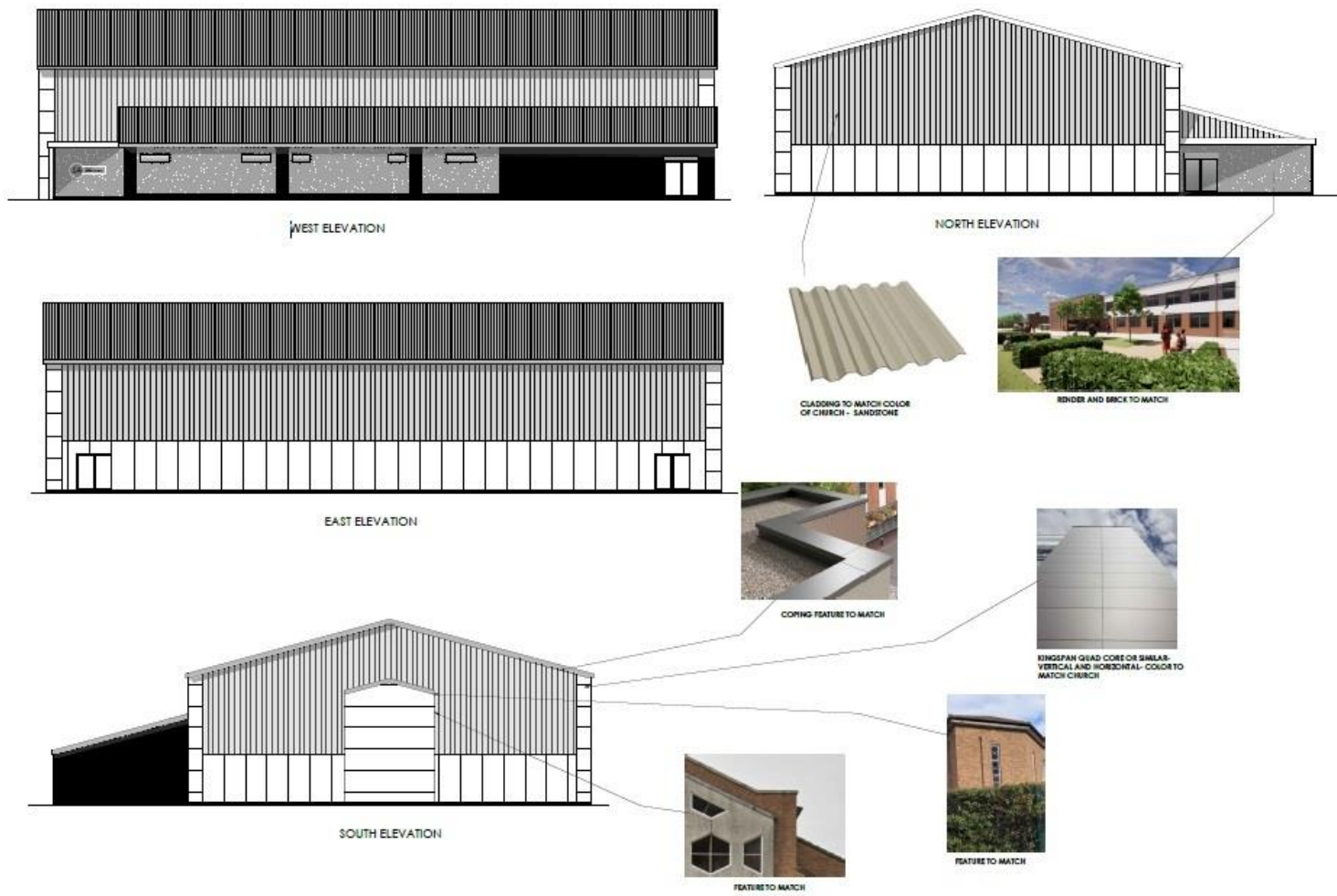
Site location accessing from Corndon Crescent – plenty of parking available and limited disruption/impact to neighbours due to the revised orientation.



Building drawing showing scale and facilities.



Building drawing showing proposed material in keeping with the church and surrounding houses.



Artist impression.

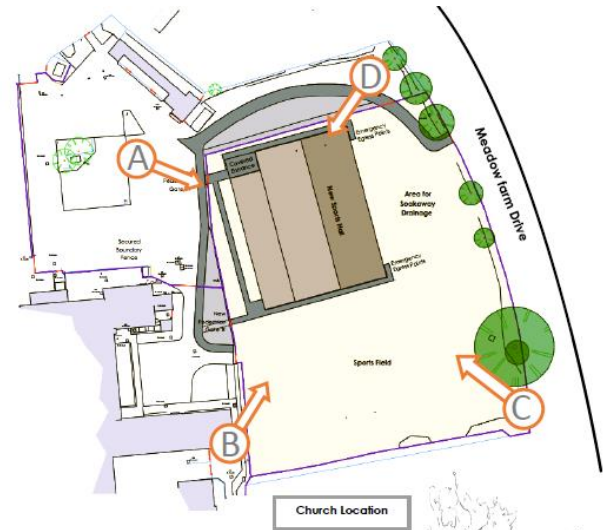


SJRoberts
CONSTRUCTION

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ARTIST IMPRESSION