

FIREPOOL

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Somerset West
and Taunton

WELCOME

Thank you for visiting the public consultation for the Firepool Site in Taunton. This public consultation covers the following:

- **Application 1 - Block 3 & Northern Boulevard**
- **Application 2 - Southern Boulevard**
- **Application 3 - Site Wide Infrastructure**
- **Application 4 - Trenchard Way Access**

The consultation boards have been colour coded as above to make viewing as simple as possible.

Please take some time to review the consultation boards and then fill in the comments form to provide us with valuable feedback.



SITE LOCATION

The Firepool site is located adjacent to the Firepool Weir, and to the south of Taunton Railway station.

- The northern boundary is adjacent to Trenchard Way.
- The south and east boundaries of the site are formed by the River Tone and the Firepool Weir and Locks.
- The western boundary is formed by Priory Bridge Road and Canal Road cuts the site into northern and southern sections.



integral
engineering design



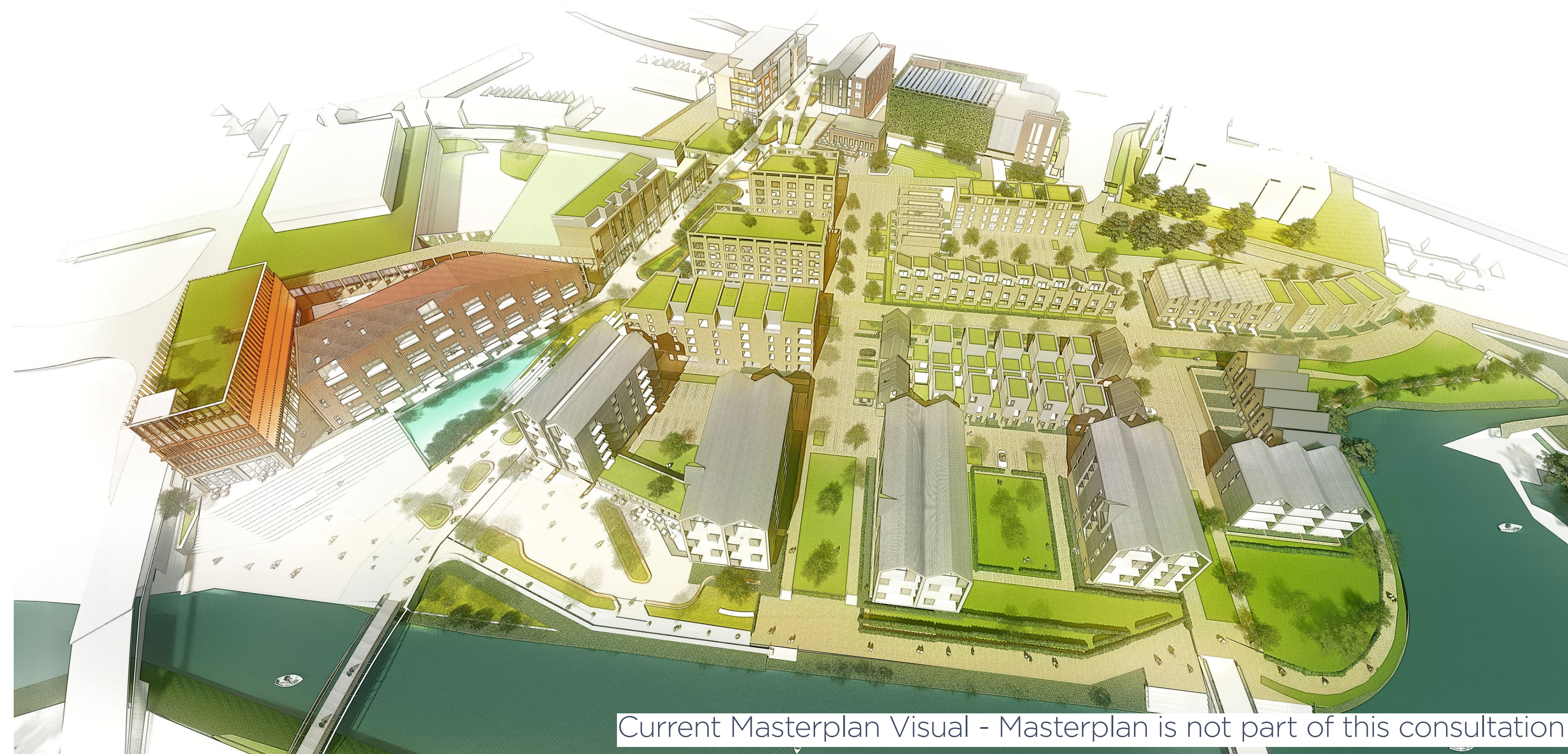
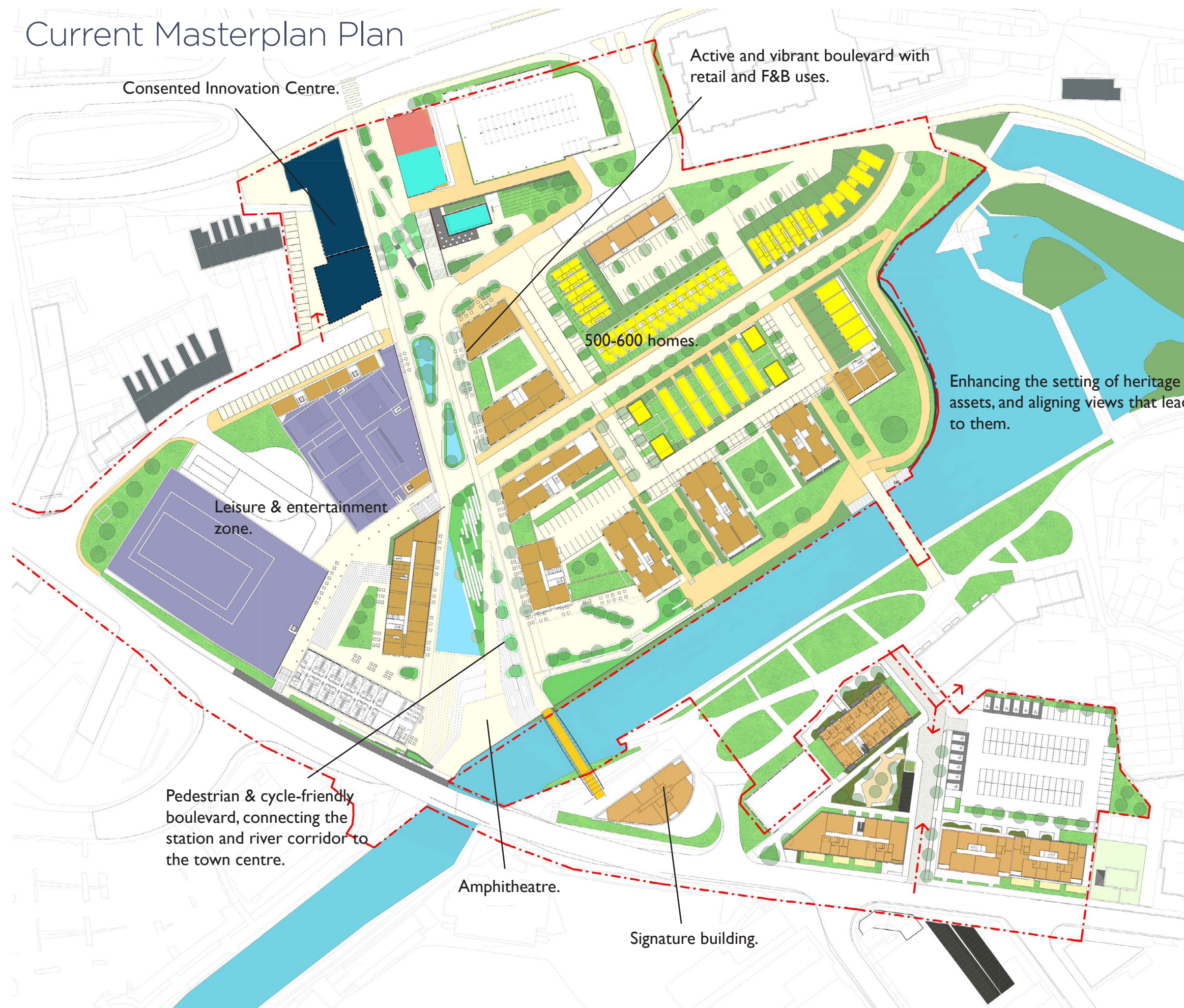
Method
Consulting

AVISON
YOUNG



OVERALL FIREPOOL PROJECT AIMS

- Building a quality new neighbourhood for in-town living.
- Creating a greener development – biodiversity and greening will be at the core of Firepool.
- Becoming cleaner and smarter – Firepool will be a benchmark for carbon neutral development in the South West.
- A dynamic and prosperous mixed-use community – promoting enterprise, culture, leisure and sustainable living.



MASTERPLANNING WORK TO DATE

The Council consulted with the public in November 2019 where the then draft master plan was widely supported. Since that time the masterplan work has included much more detailed analysis and design work such that planning applications are ready to be submitted.

The scheme at its heart delivers leisure orientated regeneration that helps rebuild our town centre. A town centre already suffering the UK wide decline of the high street being deeply impacted by online retailing. The global pandemic has acted as a catalyst to this decline. High street retailing is becoming a leisure led experience rather than a functional experience. Taunton has a fantastic waterfront and the heart of the Councils Garden Town regeneration programme not only stitches together the wider area with landscape it also embraces the beauty of Taunton's river frontage.

The route through planning has been much affected by the Somerset-wide phosphate problem and objections from Natural England on any development that involves sleeping accommodation such as housing and hotels.

The masterplan creates at its heart a landmark boulevard with water gardens an amphitheatre and dedicated cycle and pedestrian access in a high quality environment. The boulevard creates that connection between station and river. That connection is key to the regeneration of the town centre together with encouraging more people to live in the town centre.

The route to giving the new masterplan some planning status is the adoption of the masterplan by Full Council as a new planning policy. When that policy is set and a phosphate solution identified a new outline planning permission will be made for the whole site. To that end further consultation from the Local Planning Authority will follow next year.

In the meantime this consultation concerns some more initial planning applications that are not impacted by phosphate issues and enable the site to start to contribute to the rebuilding of our town post the pandemic.

PROJECT AIMS

- Creation of a gateway building which signals the start of Firepool.
- Integration with the Innovation Centre to provide a cohesive gateway to the wider development.
- Enable future development of the site.
- Provision of a new changing places facility.
- Reuse and enhancement of the existing heritage asset.
- Bring together the different site levels.
- Implementation of the northern boulevard.



DESIGN PROPOSALS

A - New Office Building With Cafe and Changing Places Facility At Ground Level:

Design of a new building, of 1,800m² (461m² over 4 floors).

B - Renovation and extension of the former GWR goods building.

A statement restaurant, to sit on the northern end of the boulevard.

C - New road connection

A new road to connect Canal Road with the development site.

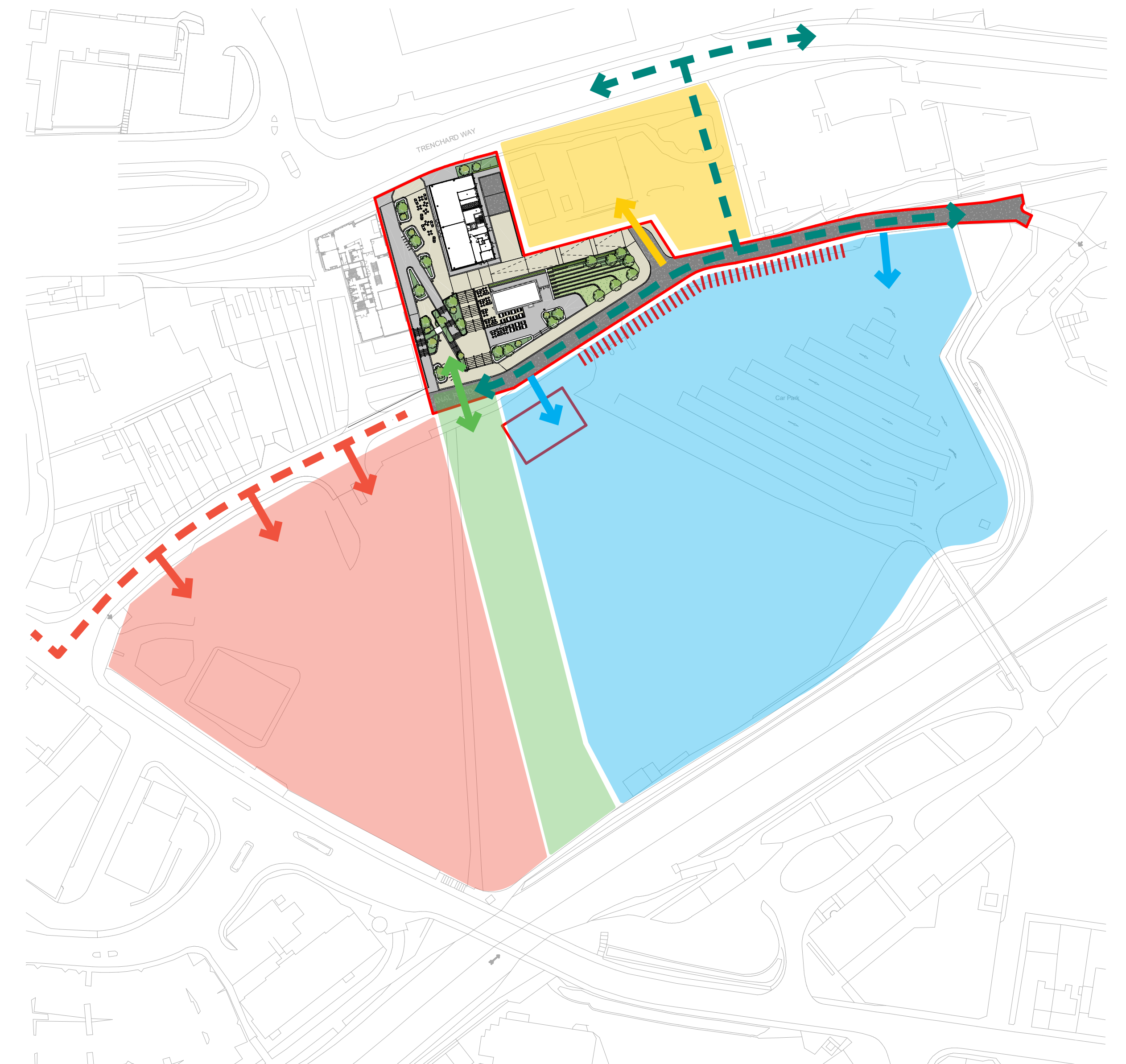
D - Landscaping

The first phase of the new boulevard that will run through the site from north to south.

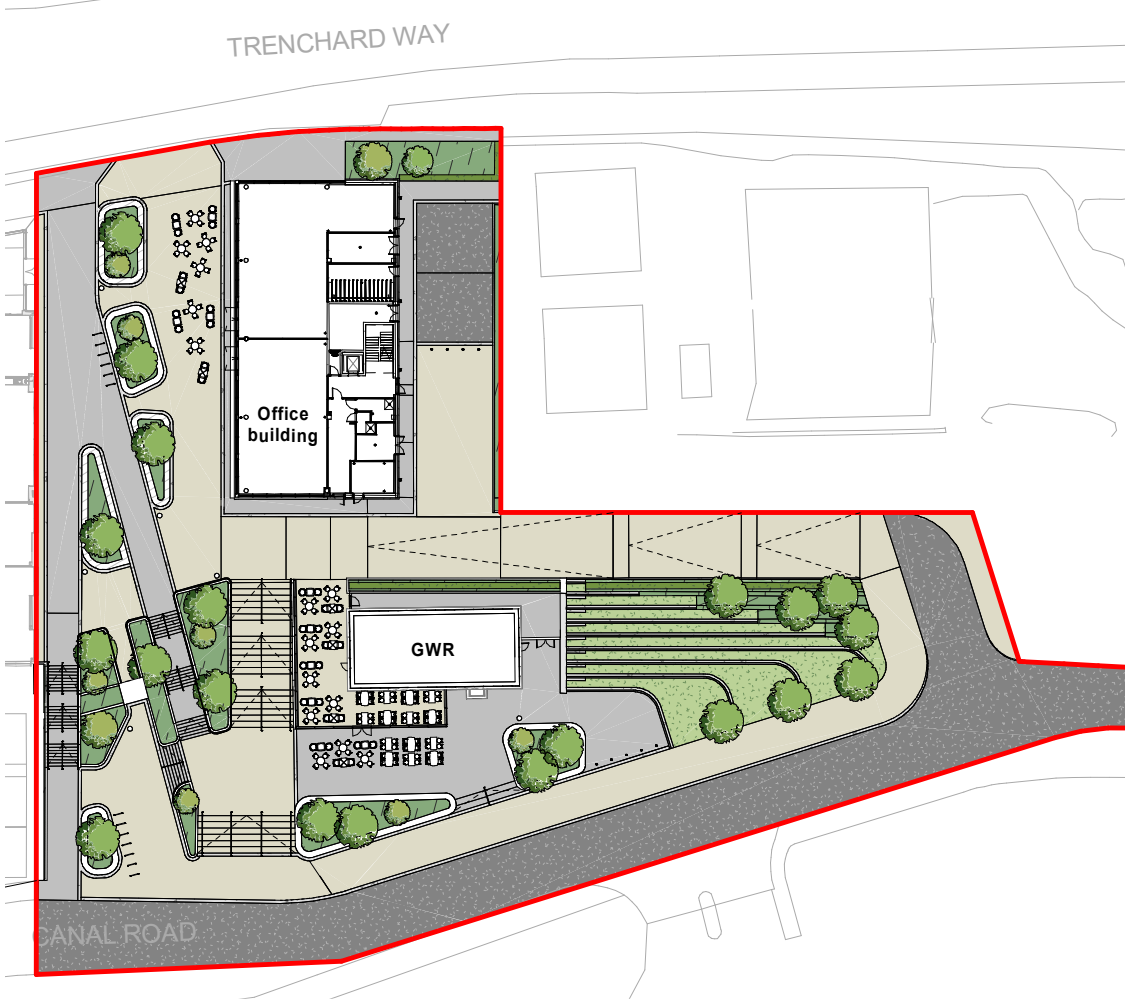


FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- The remainder of Block 3 (application 4) is left clear for future development once the new access is created.
- The central part of the site (application 2) is clear for the southern part of the boulevard to come forward.
- The eastern section of the site (blue below) is left vacant until required for development.
- The western section of the site (red below) is left clear and easily accessible from Canal Road.

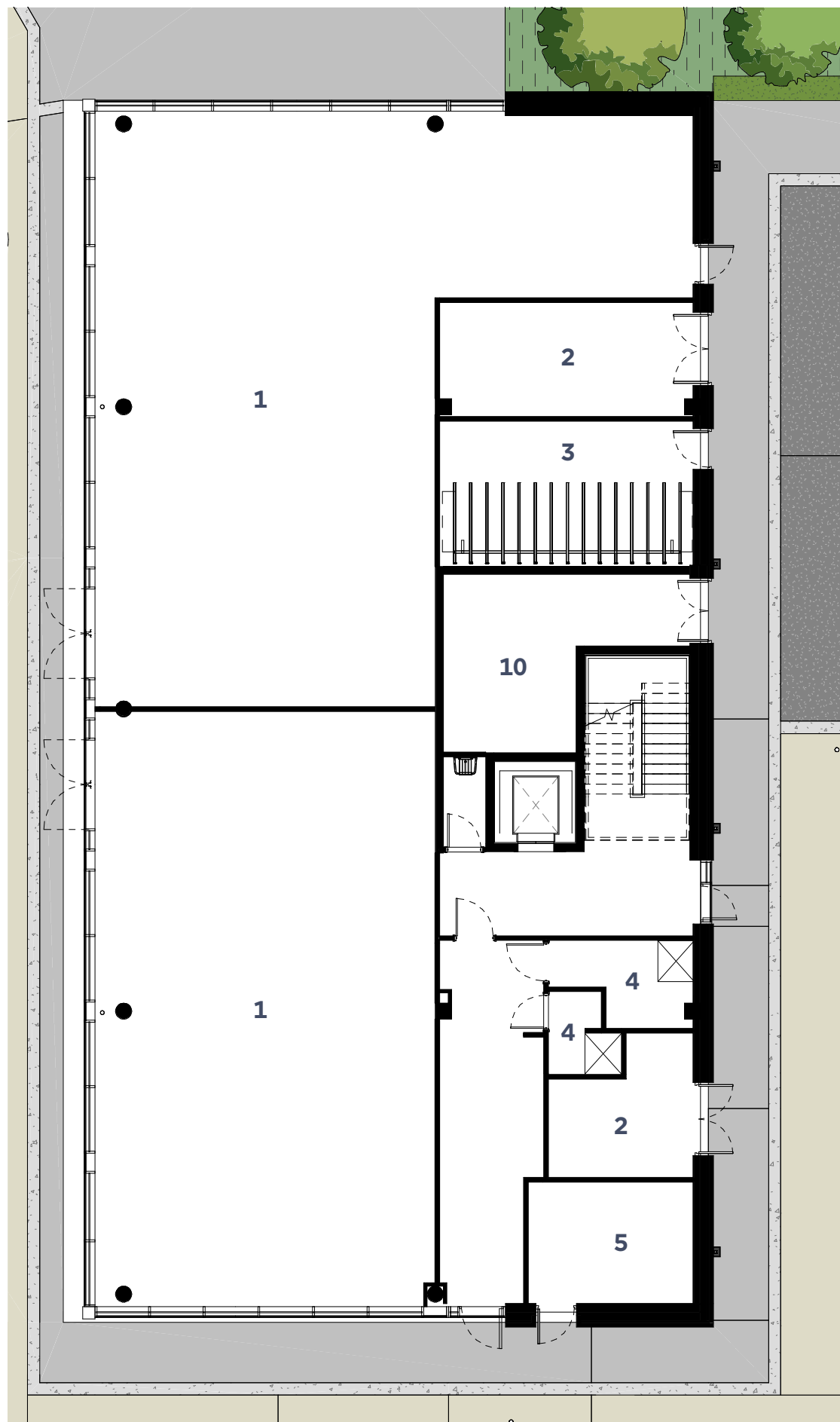


Block 3 and Northern Boulevard Application Boundary



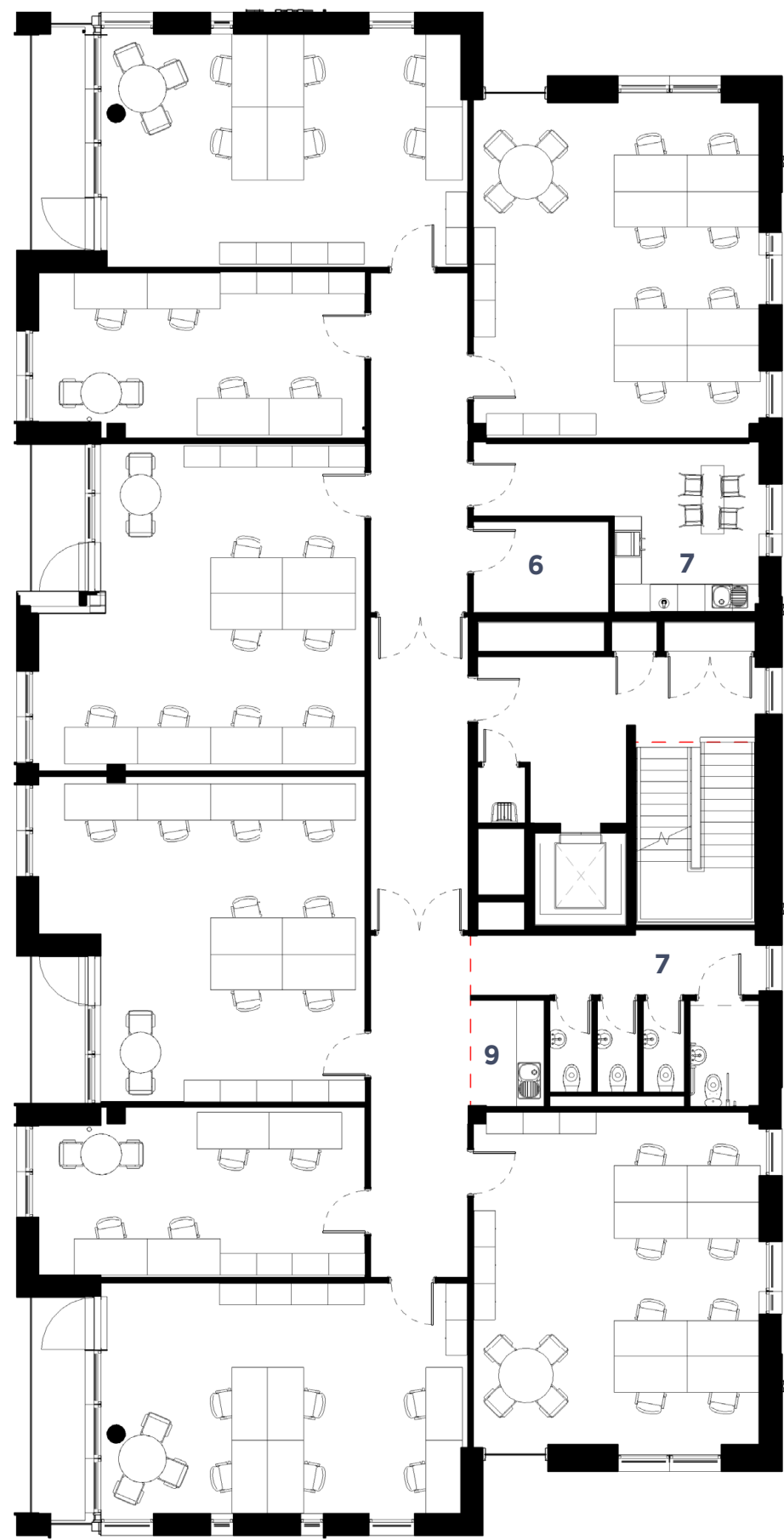
NEW OFFICE BUILDING

- Ground Floor Cafe
- Changing Places WC
- Small Rentable Offices which complement the Innovation Centre



Ground Floor

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1.Cafe | 5.Changing Places |
| 2.Store | 6.Cleaners Store |
| 3.Bike Store | 7. WC |
| 4.Showers | 8.Kitchenette |



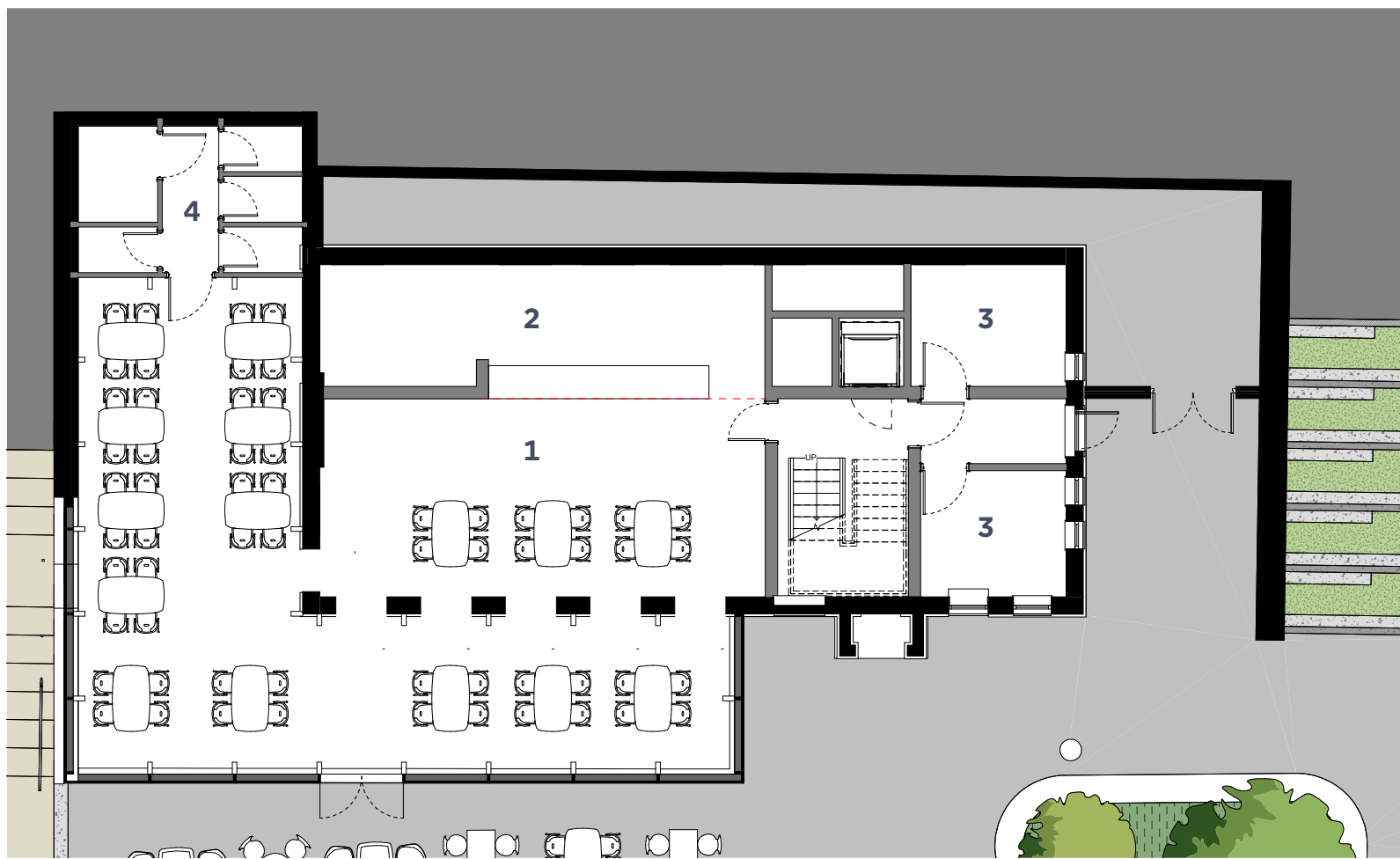
Typical Upper Floor

- | |
|----------------|
| 9.Tea Point |
| 10. Plant Room |



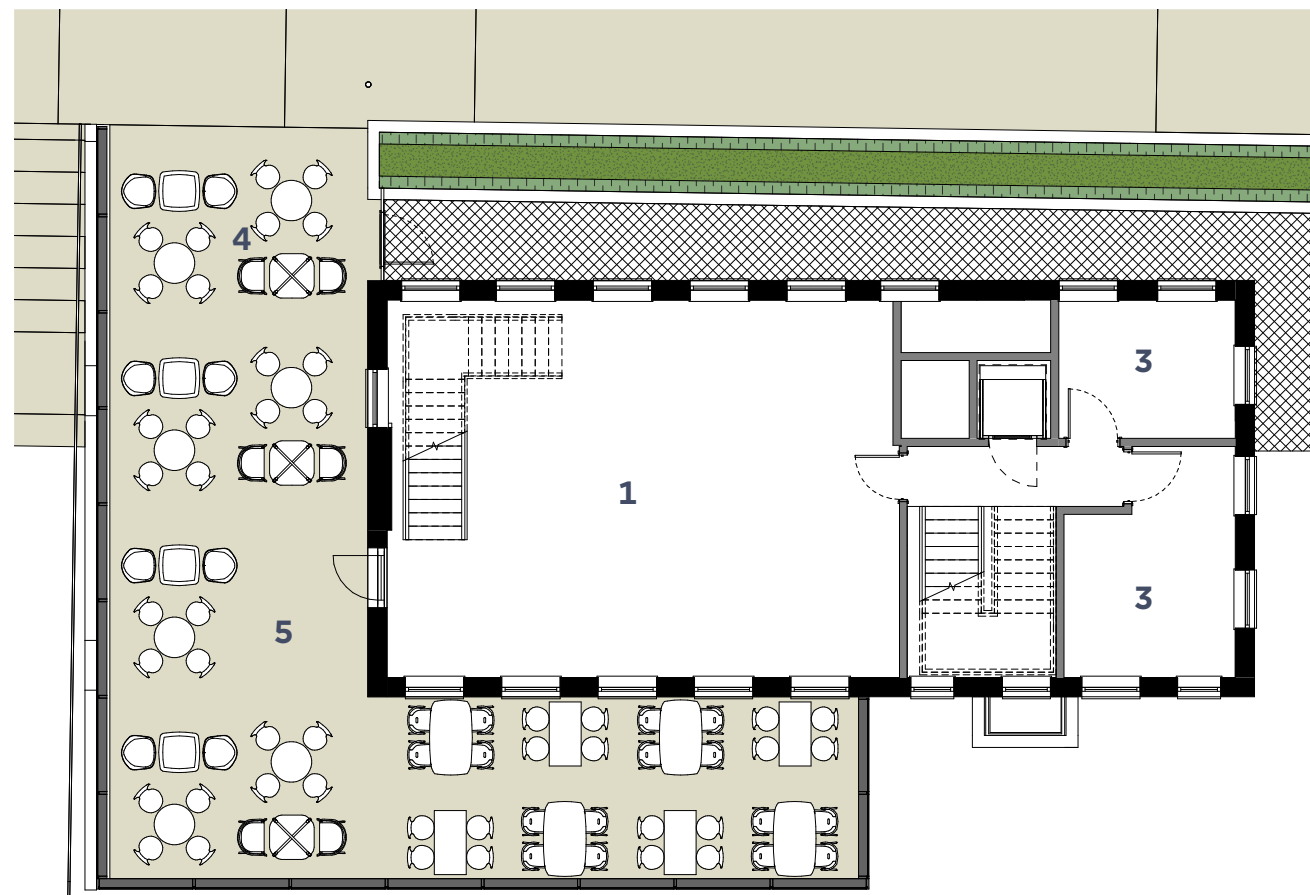
GWR EXTENSION

- Converted into a restaurant
- Windows opened up to create an internal colonnade
- New ground floor and first floor terraces



Ground Floor

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1.Front of House | 4.WC |
| 2.Kitchen/Bar | 5.Terrace Seating |
| 3.Store | |



First Floor



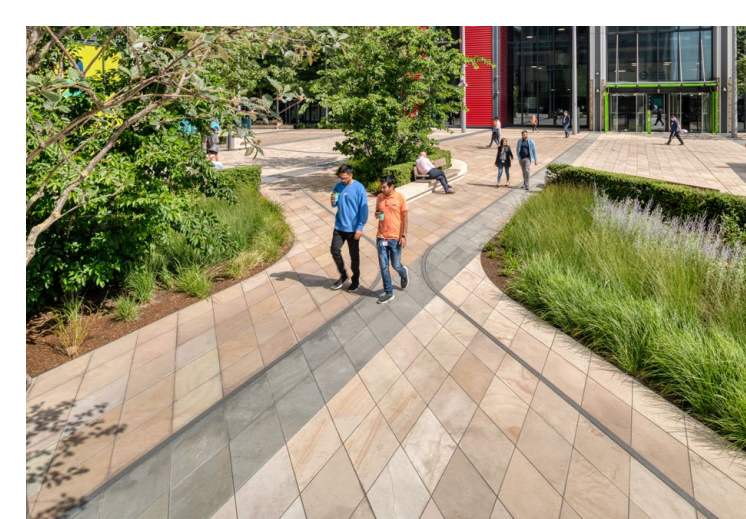
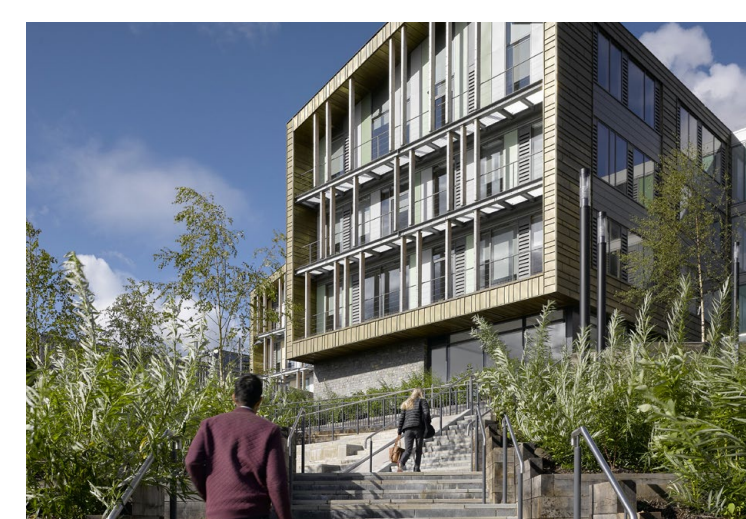
FIREPOOL PUBLIC CONSULTATION

APPLICATION 1 - BLOCK 3 AND NORTHERN BOULEVARD

OVERALL LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

- Form an arrival gateway from Taunton Station
- Banding and colour within paving is used to define circulation routes and spaces to dwell.
- Extensive opportunities to sit and dwell are provided across the design. Hard landscaping with raised planters provide enclosure and integrated seating.
- Cycling and walking are the primary modes of travel.
- A breakout area and integrated terrace are provided for the GWR restaurant for additional external seating.
- The spaces around the buildings have a different landscape character to the rainwater gardens provided at the lower boulevard level.

NORTHERN BOULEVARD PLAN AND PRECEDENTS



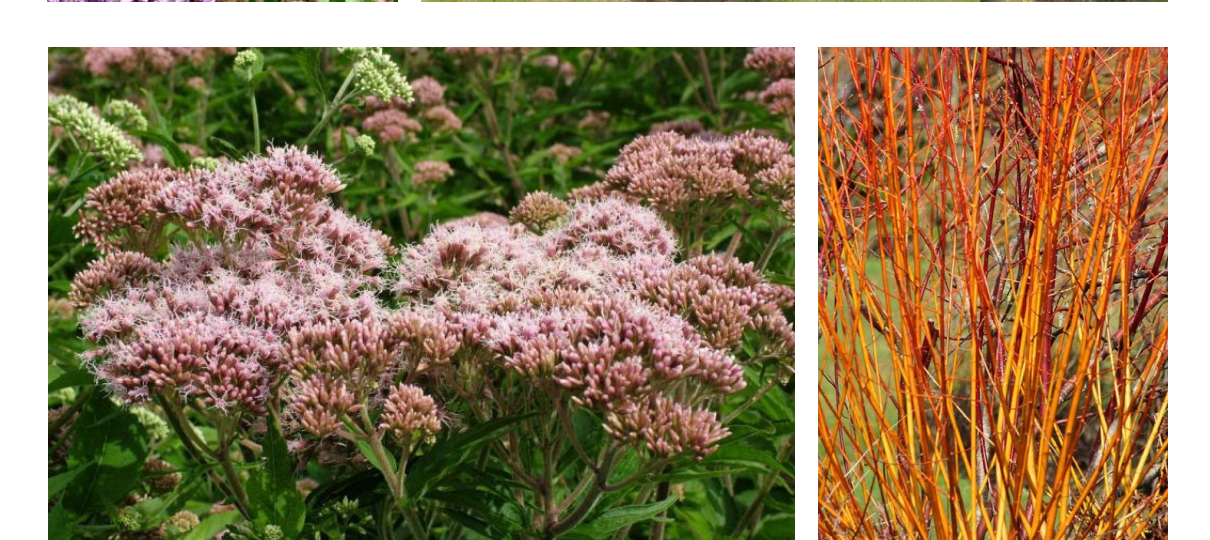
View from Boulevard looking towards Application 1 Site

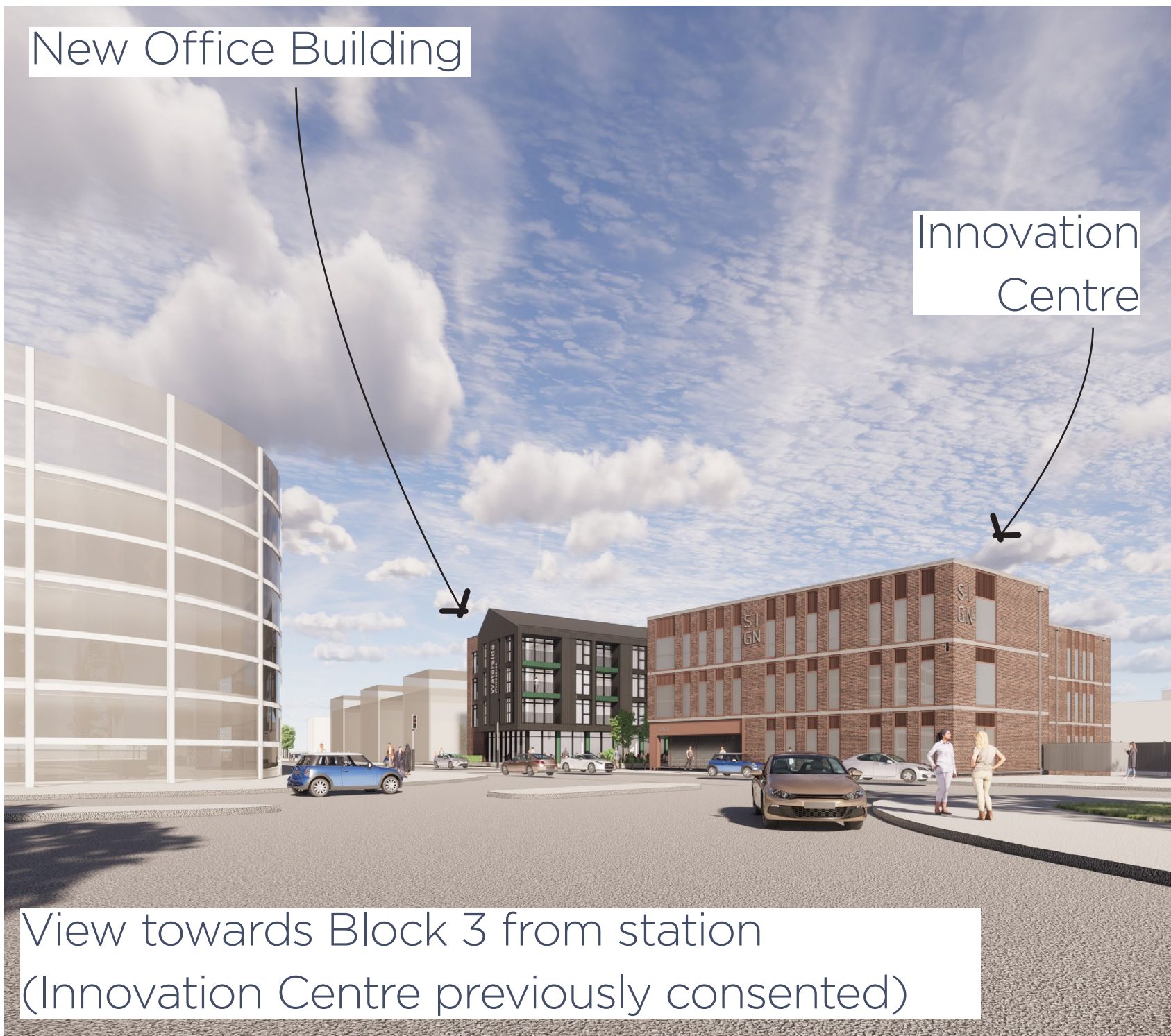


Application 1 Aerial View

LANDSCAPE PLANTING PROPOSALS

- Larger shrub planting interspersed with herbaceous perennial planting.
- Planting selected to provide contrast, form, texture, colour and seasonality.
- The plants provide an environment where ecology can thrive.
- Tree planting within the rainwater garden, provides verticality.
- Rainwater gardens planted with water tolerant wildflower mix.





PROJECT AIMS

- Create a pedestrian and cycle connection from the Taunton Train Station to the River and County Ground.
- Creation of a connection along the River Tone and onto Coal Orchard and Taunton Town Centre.
- Enhance the connection underneath the Bridge on Priory Bridge Road and the integration of this area with the Boulevard.
- Incorporation of sustainable drainage measures to manage overland flows.
- Provision of an Amphitheatre within the Boulevard.



CHARACTER AREAS

1. Lower Boulevard

- More natural landscaping scheme.
- Landscape character deliberately spans both sides of Canal Road.
- Rainwater gardens will be shallow and provide visual amenity and SUDS.

2. Landscape Water Feature

- Significant piece of sustainable drainage.
- More engineering scale & character.
- Deeper excavation to allow culvert to discharge through.
- Permanent water within the water feature.

3. Amphitheatre

- Provide a multi-functional area of public realm to connect boulevard with bridge and onto Coal Orchard and the Town Centre.
- Hard space with limited planting.
- Provide seating and raised standing areas for events.

4. Market Square

- Flat space suitable for smaller events.
- Provided with power and drainage infrastructure for market stalls.
- Can be cleared to give service access.



Amphitheatre at the south of the boulevard



Boulevard looking South



Market square with stalls



Landscape Water Feature with integrated seating and views of the church towers



Boulevard looking North

Rain Garden - Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure



Landscape Water Feature - Sustainable Drainage Infrastructure



SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

The boulevard incorporates Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs) along the length of the development .

- Rainwater gardens provide interesting landscape features and shallow areas for surface water to drain.
- The landscape water feature is a more engineered approach, providing discharge for the culvert and a more permanent water feature in the boulevard.

RAISING THE SITE LEVELS

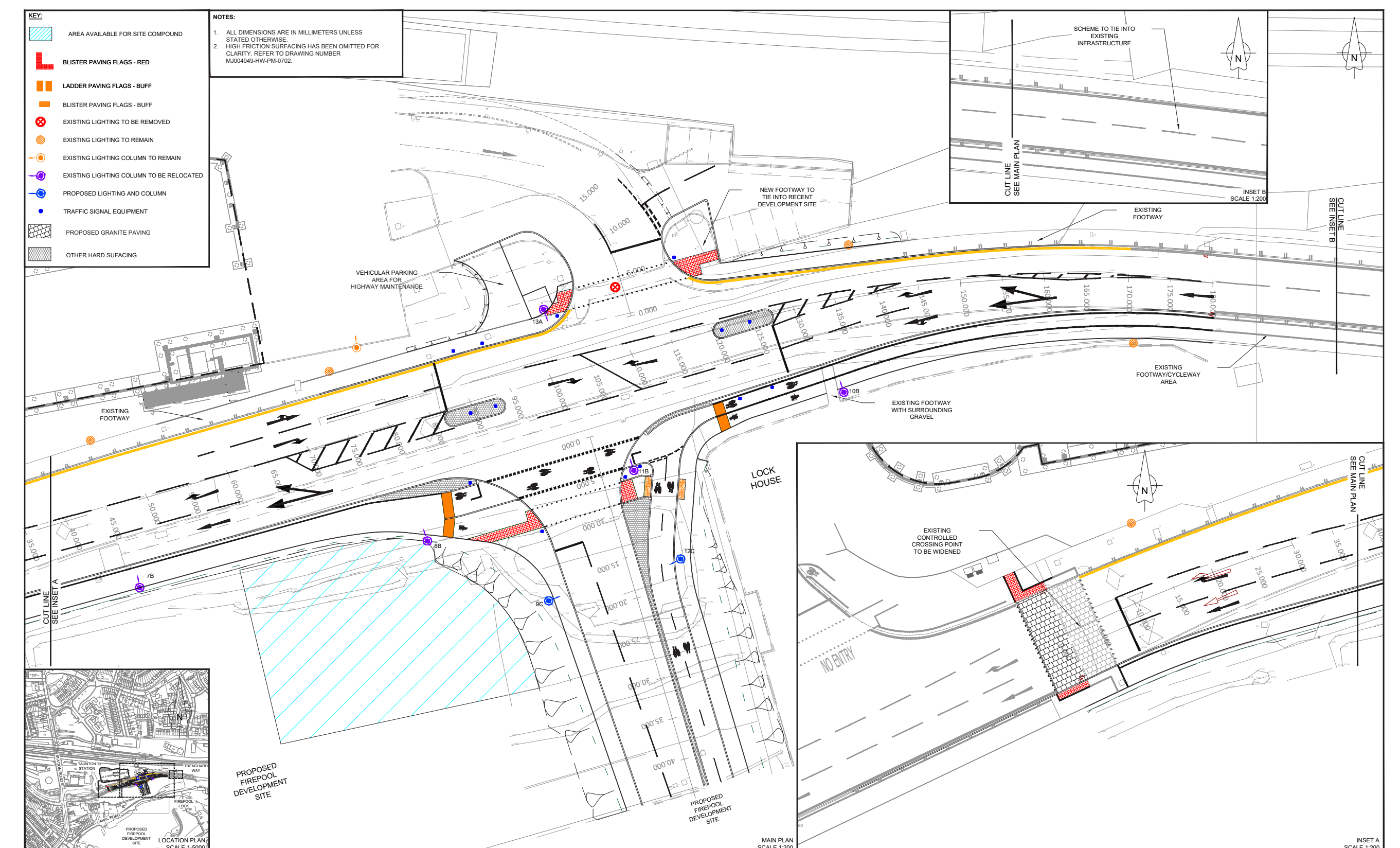
- The central northern Taunton area is currently at risk of fluvial flooding.
- The Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme suggests improvements to alleviate this.
- The ground on the Firepool site will be raised.
- The ground level will be increased by upto 1.5m .
- The raising of levels within the site provides a barrier to overland flows.
- A culvert will be provided to manage these flows.

INFRASTRUCTURE DRAINAGE

- The site currently contains a number of public and private sewer assets.
- The private drains will be removed.
- The current surface water network will be diverted.
- The Combined Sewer system is a network of larger and smaller sewers.
- The sewer network will be diverted along the western boundary at the back of Priory Bridge Road before turning back to connect into an existing siphon.

APPLICATION 4 - TRENCHARD WAY ACCESS

- The site is currently only accessible via Canal Road. This is not suitable for the masterplan.
- A new access will be put in place from Trenchard Way.
- This new junction will form the primary access point for the Firepool site when it is complete.



SUMMARY

Your feedback on these initial applications is welcomed. We have a unique opportunity to get these elements into formal planning applications and seek planning approvals late this year or very early next year. Our intention is that our team is on site starting construction in March of 2022.

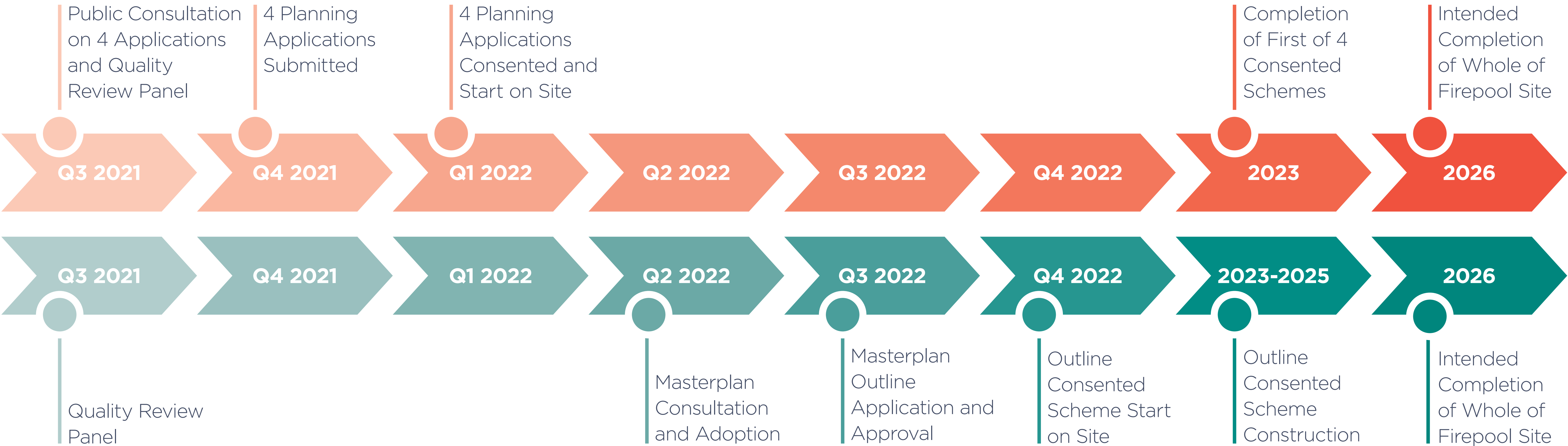
The outcome of these applications is a site lifted out of the functional flood plain with services moved to facilitate the delivery of the wider masterplan as fast as possible next year. The new access means the eastern part of the site can be accessed without cars having to cross the boulevard.

The completion and approval of the Northern and Southern Boulevard will create amazing and very high quality public realm space that delivers that vital connection between our mainline Train Station and the river.

The point of connection from Firepool to the Town Centre is then alongside the river and into the almost completed Coal Orchard development and these elements are part of the Councils wider Garden Town regeneration plans for Taunton. Please see more on this by visiting Taunton Garden Town 2040 (somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk).

We strongly believe these early projects set the stepping stones for a regenerated Taunton Town Centre that delivers our vision and objectives. We hope that you can support these proposals that already reflect your feedback from previous consultations and with your help this Council can deliver on this vision now.

PROJECT TIMELINE FOR THE DETAILED PROPOSALS FROM THIS CONSULTATION



PROJECT TIMELINE FOR FORTHCOMING MASTERPLAN