



## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

DOGS TRUST MERSEYSIDE



# PREFACE

This A3 size document has been prepared for Dogs Trust by Powell Dobson Architects.

Powell Dobson have been commissioned by The Dogs Trust to design and develop their existing centre in Liverpool. The redevelopment will consist of a mixture of renovation works to the existing facilities as well as introducing new buildings where appropriate, to further expand and enhance canine welfare and education to both the immediate and further communities of the Merseyside region.

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# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by Powell Dobson Architects on behalf of Dogs Trust. It aims to provide a summary of the proposed design proposals for the redevelopment of the Merseyside Dogs Trust rehoming centre.

The document outlines the background & relevant planning policy to provide insight into the considerations that have taken place during design development. Site analysis provides information and context for how the designs have been formed and finalised.

The document is structured as follows;

### Introduction

This section introduces the project, and its background. It also outlines the policies from national and local planning policy that we need to be aware of and take into consideration regarding the site and our design proposals.

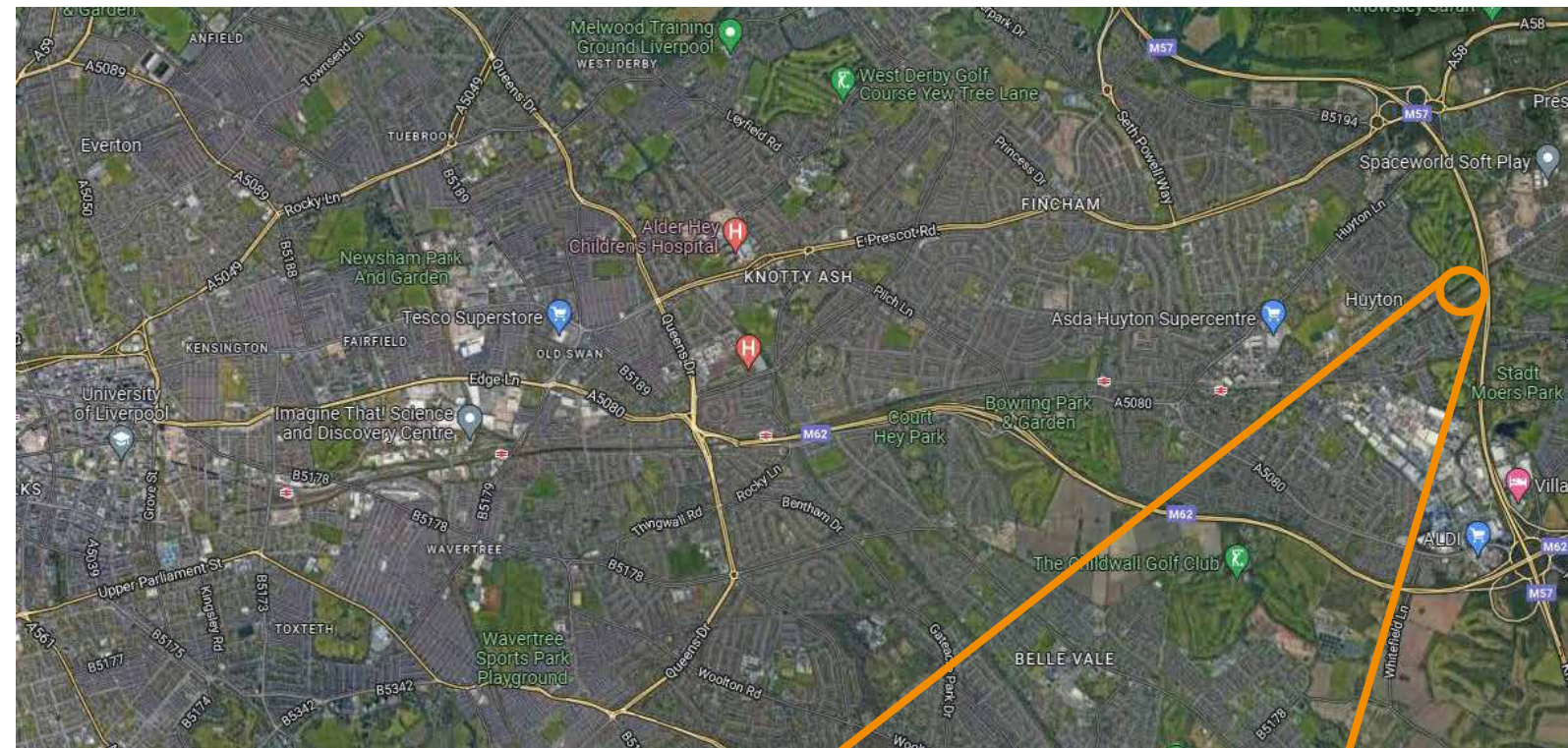
### The Site

This section includes an overview of the site background and context, the vision for the scheme, and site analysis highlighting the projects opportunities and constraints for development.

### The Design

This section outlines how the scheme has developed based on the client's requirements taking into account the site constraints and stakeholder comments.

The final design proposals are presented within this section of the document.



# INTRODUCTION

## SITE HISTORY

The Site has been owned and operated as a Dogs Trust rehoming centre since 1999. The charity has identified that the facilities and service it provides have fallen well behind those provided at more modern new build or recently renovated rehoming centres. The facilities are in desperate need of updating to ensure that dogs get the required level of care needed and to help the staff deliver this.

The Site is not subject to Statutory or Local Listing. It is not located within a Conservation Area or in close proximity to any Historic Assets. The trees within it are not covered by any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Based on online Environment Agency flood mapping, it is located within Flood Zone 2.

We have undertaken a search of the Site's planning history online which has identified the following applications of interest:

- **74/05350/HIST;**  
Provision of components and buildings for boarding facilities for dogs (approval of details)  
Approved May 1980
- **95/00567/APP;**  
Redevelopment of existing kennel complex, conversion of single dwelling into two flats, conversion of garage/workshop into shop/flat, demolition of nursery buildings and use of land in connection with kennels  
Approved June 1996
- **96/00527/APP;**  
Amendment to layout of circular kennels to accommodate existing trees  
Approved November 1996.
- **96/00528/APP;**  
Construction of new line kennels for an additional 18 dogs, provision of 3 no. Night kennels adjacent to flat and provision of 6 no. Dog runs  
Approved April 1997
- **01/00476/FUL;**  
Erection of building to form enclosed exercise run/behavioural training hall  
Refused September 2001
- **02/00104/FUL;**  
Erection of building to form enclosed exercise area/behavioural training hall (re-submission of previous application 01/00436/FUL  
Approved March 2002.
- **14/00379/FUL;**  
Erection of single storey extension to side elevation  
Approved July 2014.

The above planning history can be considered overwhelmingly positive. A series of permissions have allowed for improvements to the rehoming centre and facilities within it over time.



# INTRODUCTION

## PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

This section sets out a planning policy overview relevant to the consideration of this application. We consider national policy contained in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).

At a local level, we consider the statutory development plan which includes the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and the Saved elements of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006).

### National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development - performing economic, social and environmental roles. The three roles are interdependent and need to be mutually supported.

**Paragraphs 8-11** - confirm that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The planning system should therefore promote sustainable development solutions.

**Paragraph 96** – places emphasis on the fast delivery of public service infrastructure. Local planning authorities are also required to work proactively with delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

**Paragraph 134** – supports good design which integrates within its surroundings.

**Paragraph 140** – identifies at once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.

In respect of circumstances where development within the Green Belt is justified, Part G or Paragraph 149 identifies:

*“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*  
– *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;*  
or – *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*

### Local Policy

The relevant statutory development plan documents covering the Site comprises Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and the Saved elements of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006).

### Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016)

The below image has been taken from the adopted Proposals Map:



The Site is identified as within the Green Belt. Policy CS5 relates to Green Belt sites and states:

### New Development in the Green Belt

*1) Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances in which it has been demonstrated that the harm to the Green Belt (including any harm to its openness, purposes or to its visual and recreational amenities) would be clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

### Major Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt

*2) Major Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt will be identified in the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies.*

*3) Limited infilling and redevelopment of Major Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt is considered appropriate provided it would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.*

### Review of Green Belt Boundaries to meet future development needs

*4) A number of locations (identified as Sustainable Urban Extensions and safeguarded land) have been removed from the Green Belt to accommodate development needs up to and beyond 2028.*

*Guidance concerning the development of these locations is set out in Policies SUE1, SUE2, SUE2a, SUE2b and SUE2c.*

# INTRODUCTION

## PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following land use policies are also of relevance in the context of the proposed development:

- Policy SD1 Sustainable Development
- Policy CS2 Development Principles
- Policy CS4 Economy and Employment
- Policy CS8 Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS21 Greenspace and trees
- Policy CS24 Managing Flood Risk

### Saved Replacement Unitary Development Plan Policies

A limited number of Saved UDP Policies are relevant in the context of the proposed development:

- Policy DQ4 Trees and Development
- Policy ENV2 Noise and Vibration
- Policy ENV3 Light Pollution

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

The following Emerging Planning Guidance is relevant in the context of the proposed development:

- Design Quality in New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Trees and Development SPD
- Developer Contributions SPD

### Emerging Planning Policy

It is the intention for the current Local Plan Core Strategy to be in situ until 2028. Work has therefore not commenced on an update to the Development Plan.

# THE SITE

## SITE CONTEXT

The Site, which falls to the immediate east of the Huyton Settlement Boundary comprises approximately 2.59 Ha. It is brownfield in nature and consists of a Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre. The current site includes a number of existing buildings and significant levels of hard surfacing.

Though located within the Green Belt as per the Local Plan Proposals Map, the site is flanked to the immediate north by a railway line and to the east by the M57.

Whiston Lane is located to the immediate west with allotments to the south. The Site benefits from a limited frontage onto Whiston Lane with only passing views into it. Vehicular and pedestrian access is achieved via Whiston Lane. Pedestrian footpaths provide direct linkages with the core of Huyton.

In respect of public transport, the Site is within 300 meters of bus stops on Pottery Lane. Services 239 and 248 run from the stops to a variety of locations in the surrounding area. It is also within reasonable walking distance of local amenities.

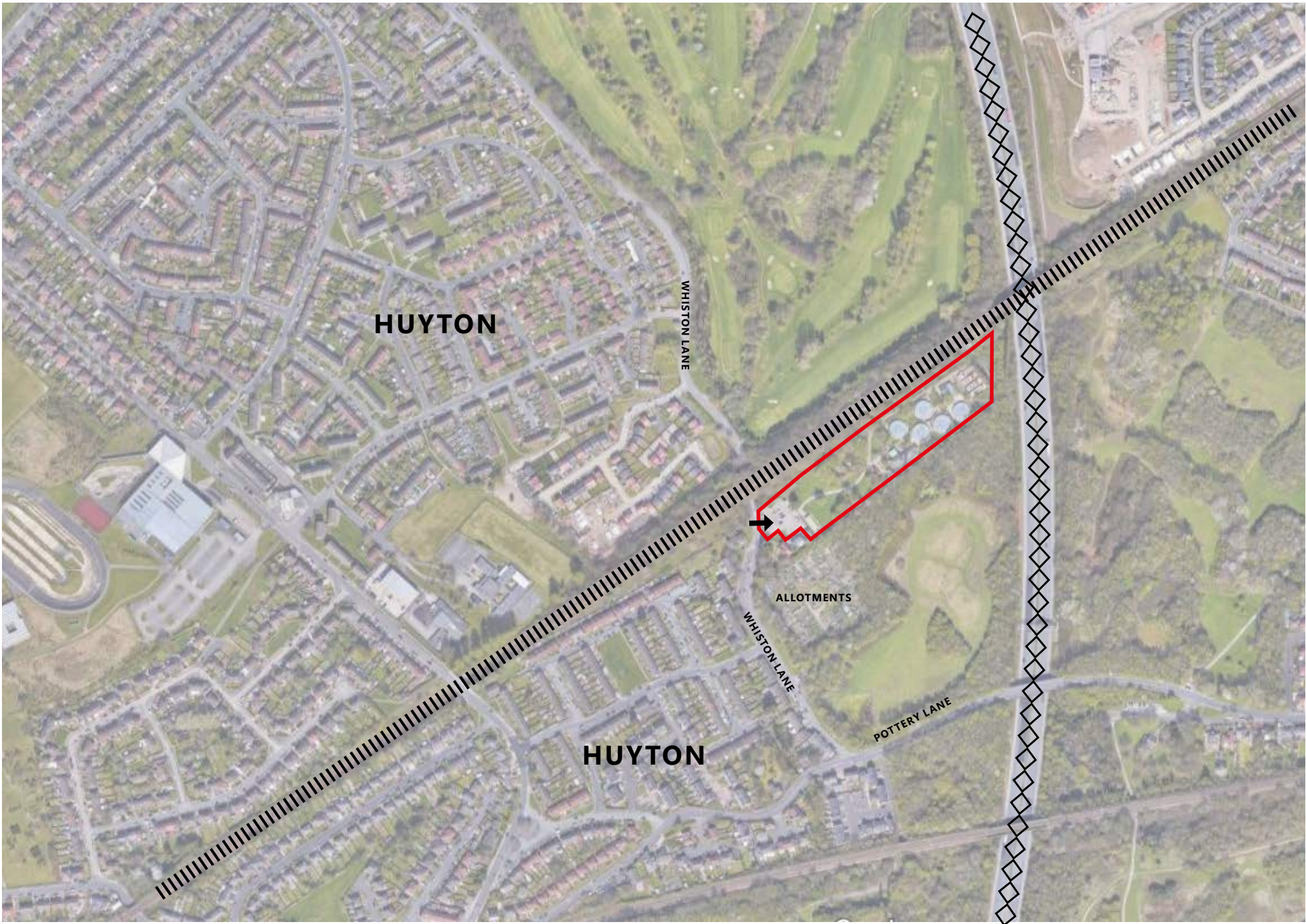
Key:

Site Boundary

Site Access

Railway Line

M57



# THE SITE

## THE VISION

The Merseyside Centre has been part of the Dogs Trust portfolio for many decades, delivering unrivalled canine welfare, training programmes and rehoming facilities at the heart of the community.

In recent years, the Dogs Trust has invested in its property portfolio, particularly its 22 strong rehoming centres. Merseyside is now coming to a point where its facilities are in need of upgrading, to bring it in line with its more advanced and modern sister centres. This will ensure that the level of care and welfare for the dogs, and staff alike are up to their world leading, consistent standards provided elsewhere within the UK and Ireland.

Over the past 10 years, the design and specification of Dogs Trust kennelling and training facilities have been in a constant state of research and development, to ensure the dogs receive the greatest possible care and welfare possible. Merseyside is now set to benefit from this ongoing work, improving life for the resident dogs, staff and visitors.

The proposed works include the demolition of the 5 existing parasol kennels, puppy block, line kennels and training barn building. These will be replaced with a new rehoming building with annexed training barn closer to the existing car park, as well as new intake, booked and TBA kennel blocks. A new vet & puppy facility is also proposed to be introduced within the existing reception and office block. All new proposed buildings will be provided with state of the art exercise paddocks, alongside proposals to provide year long accessible lead walking paths, and reshaping of existing mounds and fields to offer greater enrichment and access for dogs and canine carers alike.



— Application Boundary

# THE SITE

## SITE OVERVIEW

### Buildings Key

*Noted below which buildings are set to be retained and which are set for demolition within proposed plans.*

- A. Reception Block (Staff fac. first floor) (Retained)
- B. Vets / Food Prep / Isolation (Retained)
- C. Parasol Kennel (Demolished)
- D. Line Block (Demolished)
- E. Training Barn (Demolished)
- F. Store Building (Demolished)

The site is situated on the eastern periphery of the City of Liverpool, in a town called Huyton within the metropolitan Borough of Knowsley. It is bordered to the east by the M57 motorway, and to the north, the main railway line that runs into the heart of Liverpool.

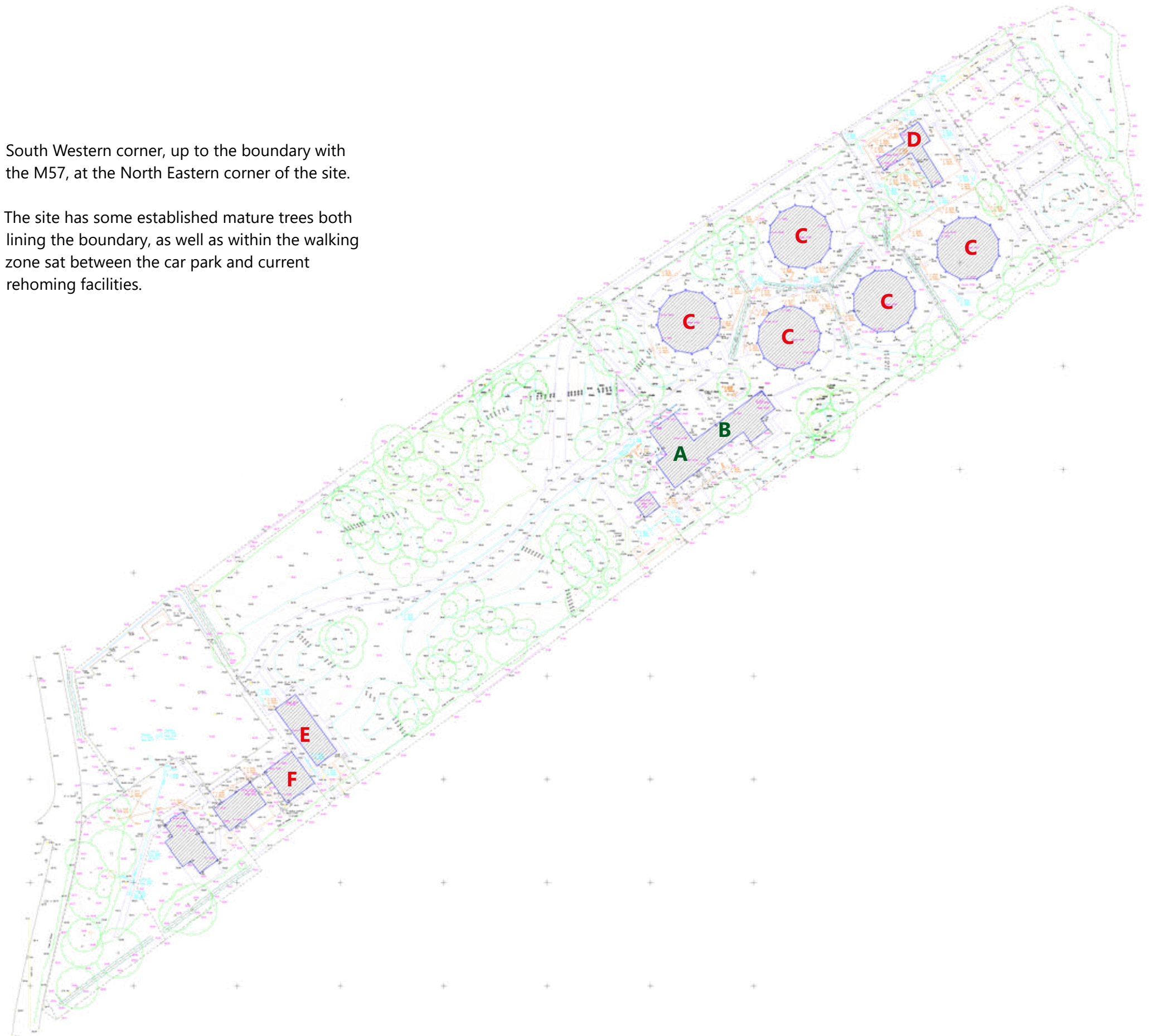
The site currently houses up to **97** dogs, by utilising facilities spread across several buildings. At the centre and heart of the site sits a reception building, which is accessed via a long meandering uncovered pathway from the car park at the western edge of the site. Once at the reception building, visitors are able to carry on walking up the site, viewing dogs within 5 circular parasol kennels blocks lining the boundary, as well as within the walking zone sat between the car park and current rehoming facilities.

At the north eastern corner of the site, a 'line block' building can be found, alongside a series of exercise paddocks, consisting of concrete, sand and astroturf finishes.

An extension to the reception building gives access to a small single storey puppy and feeding prep facility, which is not accessible to the public. The site gently slopes from the car park in the

South Western corner, up to the boundary with the M57, at the North Eastern corner of the site.

The site has some established mature trees both lining the boundary, as well as within the walking zone sat between the car park and current rehoming facilities.



# THE SITE

## OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

The detailed site analysis adjacent shows recent images of the existing buildings and site topography, highlighting the constraints that had to be factored into the design proposals.

### Opportunities:

1. Large open spaces, that could be developed to offer further enrichment for dogs, and flexibility/ year round usage for carers and staff.

2. Option to revisit current visitor routes, and look to limit and control to aid in dog stress levels with rehoming facilities being placed in new location.

### Constraints:

1. Long thin site, with possible acoustic issues to two principle boundaries

2. Generally the site currently suffers from poor drainage



# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## INITIAL SITE LAYOUT

### Site Plan General Arrangement

Due to the age and design of the majority of the facilities, it was the desire of the Dogs Trust to demolish the majority of the buildings, and have a complete rethink on how the site could work for them.

It was quite clear, that the existing route to the reception area and rehoming kennels from the car park was very disconnected, and not utilising the site to its full potential.

To improve this, the reception and rehoming facilities were moved to the front of the site, accessed directly from the existing generous car park. This would enhance the visitor experience and accessibility, but also free up the remainder of the site, to be used for the dogs. The aim is always to control visitors movements, and ensure the dogs are kept in calm and predicable environments. By keeping visitors to one small section of the site, this becomes far easier.

Due to the gradual slope of the site (high point NE, low point SW), in order to create a suitable plateau for the rehoming building, it was expected that a retaining wall would be required, to step the site.

Within this first concept, the zone between the rehoming building and back of house areas would be home to year round gravel lead walking paths, utilising the existing trees. From here, the existing reception building would become the 'hub' for staff, offering office and welfare facilities. A new extension would be built from this retained building, giving the centre new vet and puppy facilities. Moving up from here would be a staff car parking zone, and two new kennel blocks, for intake and booked dogs.



# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## INITIAL PROPOSALS - REHOMING BUILDING

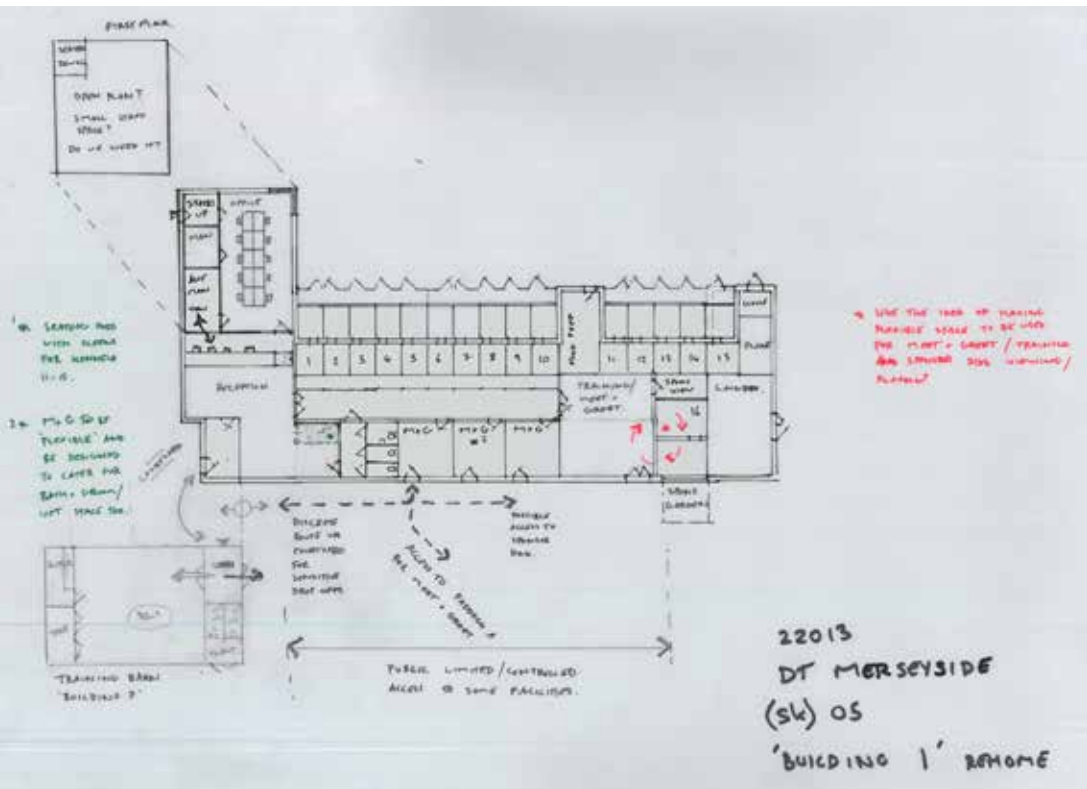
The purpose of this building is to provide visitors a facility to view and interact with the dogs. The spaces must be designed in a way that keeps the dogs stress levels as low as possible, and the routes around the building for staff and visitors are imperative to this being achieved.

The initial design called for a reception zone, and open plan office behind. This office space would provide good access links to the kennel run zones. Moving through and down the building, a large open atrium viewing corridor would give visitors a view of the dogs, in their glazed screened sleeps. From this corridor would be WC's, and a series of meet and greet rooms, used for sensitive dog drop offs, and training.

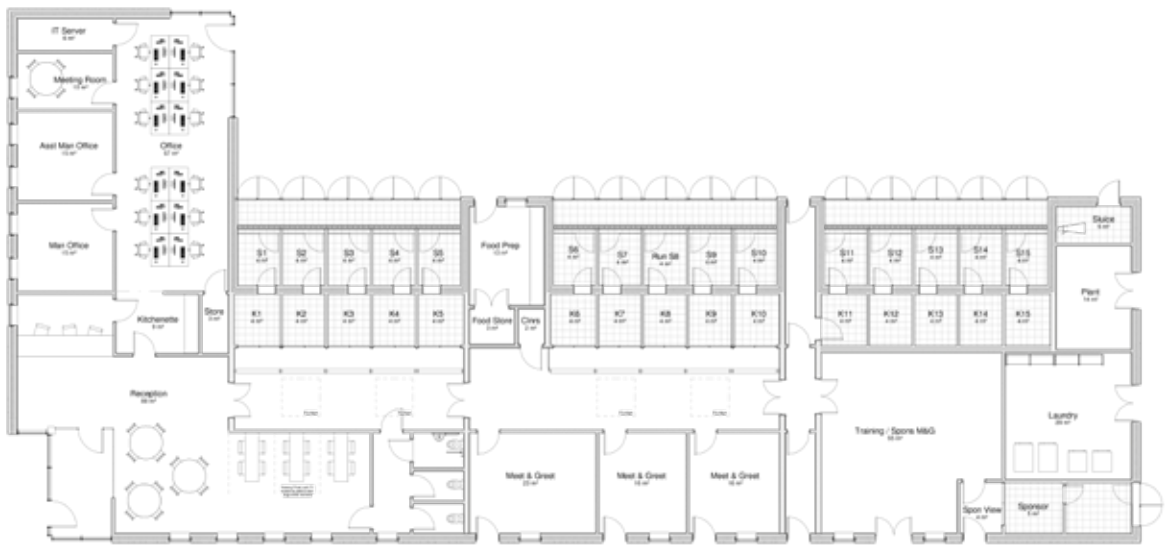
To the rear, a laundry, sponsor kennel and training room were proposed.

When looking at the initial site plan designs, the zone to the south, flanked by a large detached training barn, formed a visitor courtyard, which would extend the facilities to external runs and paths. This courtyard would then give access to the lead walking zone in the centre of the site.

Upon initial review, the Dogs Trust wanted to re-look at the location of the offices, and bring them closer to the courtyard zone. The meet and greets and visitor experience was preferred to be closer to the car park, and the bank of 10 kennels split, to help with separating to help with reducing stress for the dogs.



INITIAL HAND SKETCH



INITIAL CAD PLAN

# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

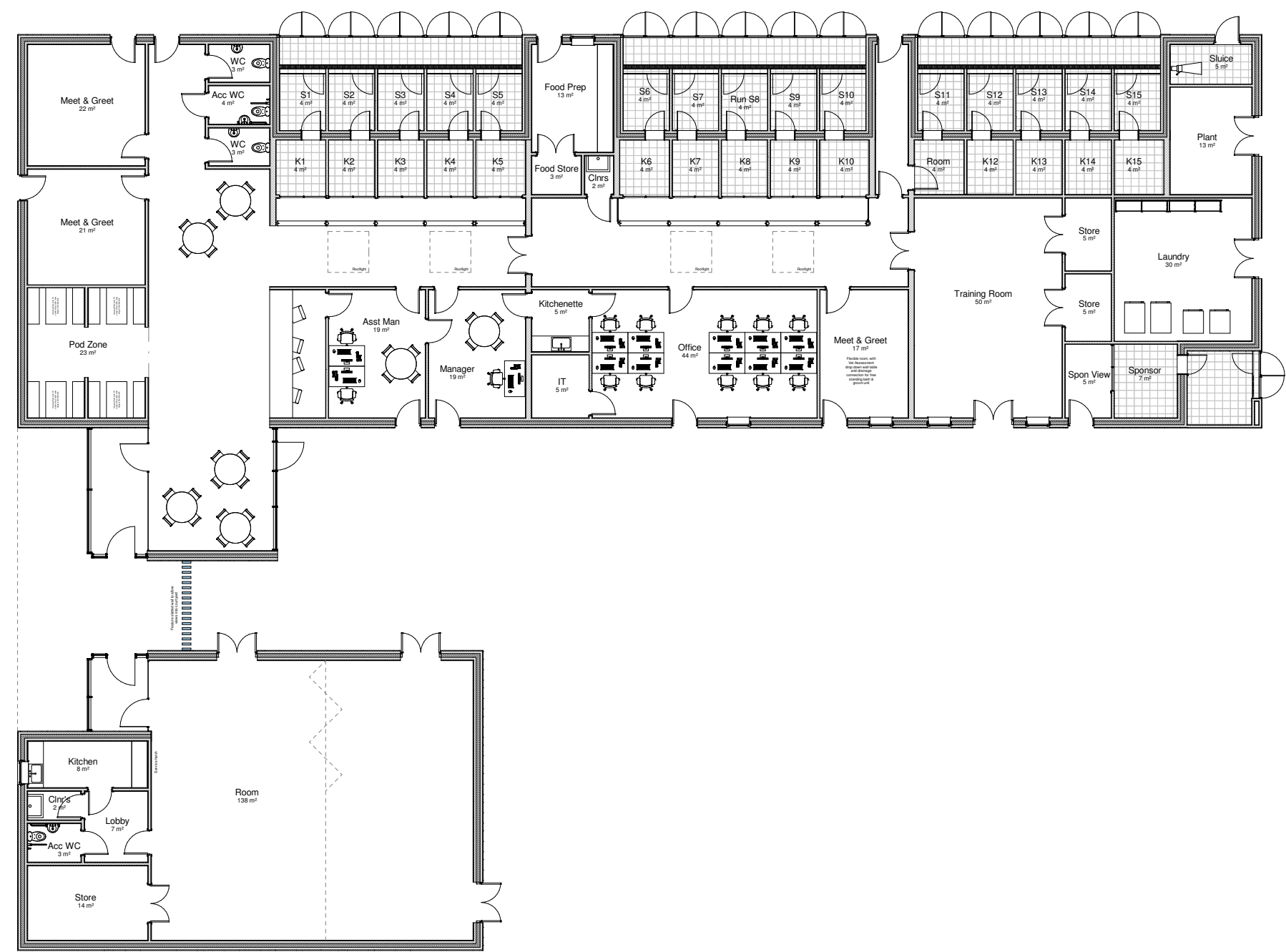
## INITIAL PROPOSALS: NEW BUILD – REHOMING BUILDING DESIGN PROGRESSION

The adjacent plan shows the revised layout, which had taken on board the original set of comments from Dogs Trust.

This layout allows for access to the courtyard for staff and visitors alike.

The visitor zone was made more streamlined, with meet and greet rooms located close to the car park for easy access for dogs to enter from the car park when meeting prospective new family members. They are also ideally situated for sensitive drop offs of dogs.

A zone for visitor viewing via screens was also included, directly opposite the reception desk for easy staff and visitor dialogue and communication.



REVISED PLAN

# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## INITIAL PROPOSALS: NEW BUILD – BOOKED & TBA

The Booked TBA block has two important functions to provide to the centre.

The Booked element (left side) of 10 ‘standard’ type kennels provides in essence an overflow of capacity, for Dogs in transition between training and rehoming stages, or if have been allocated to a new home, but are in isolation waiting to be picked up by their new family. This zone has its own food prep and laundry facilities.

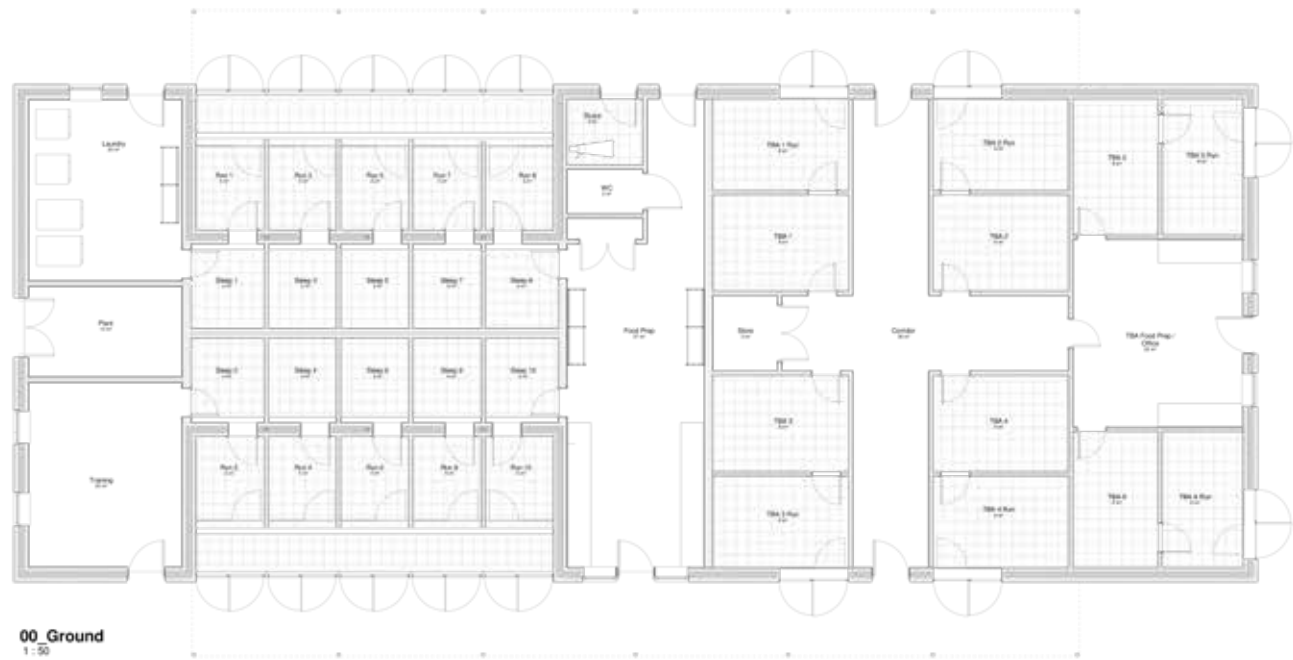
To the right, we have a TBA kennel array. These ‘Training Behaviour Assessment’ kennels are larger, and are separated form other kennels. These are specialist areas used for dogs that are showing particular behavioural issues, or are very nervous and need space to be calm and assessed. A TBA officer will be allocated dogs that require some extra care and attention, and will work up a plan to prepare the dogs for rehoming.

When viewed on the site plan, the TBA kennels can be seen in the furthest corner of the site, away from passing lead walking, and any visitor zones. Any unwanted stimulus, other than planned calm environments will impact on training plans, and make some dogs very nervous.

These kennels are something that the existing site doesn’t have, and desperately needs.



INITIAL HAND SKETCH



INITIAL CAD PLAN

# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## INITIAL PROPOSALS: NEW BUILD – INTAKE

The intake is the first building that any new dog to the centre is taken too.

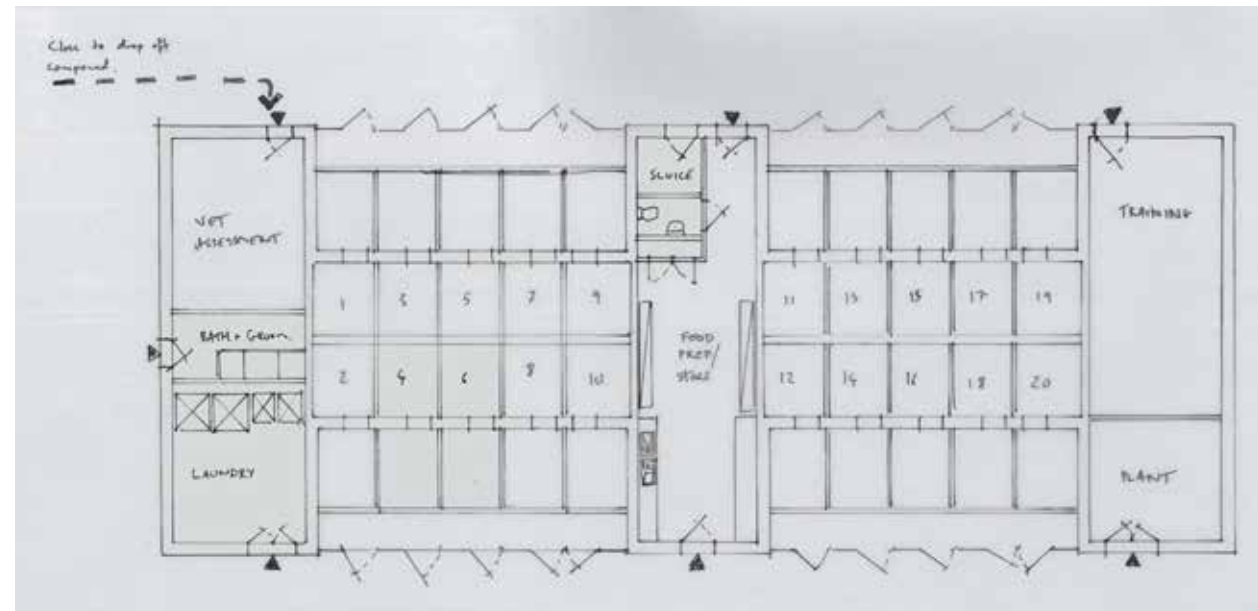
It is here that the initial assessments for behaviour, general health and vaccination status are carried out.

Each new dog is required to stay within this kennel for a set number of weeks, before being able to be put up for adoption in the rehoming building.

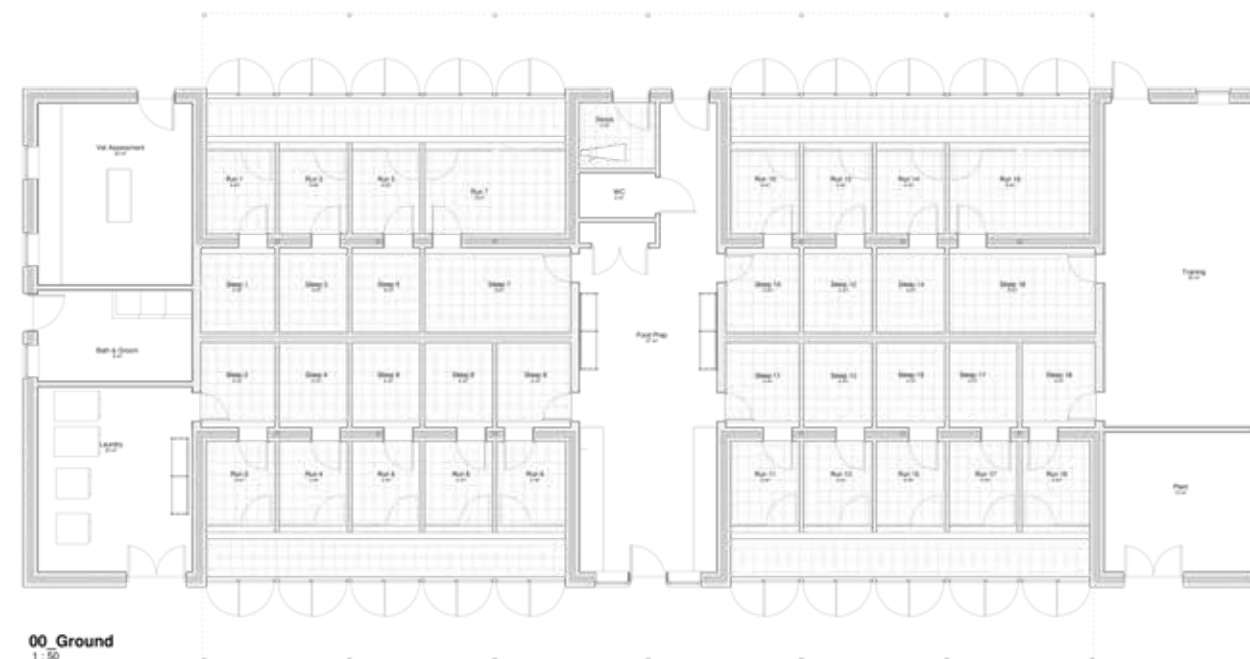
The building is split into banks of kennels. This is done to control disease outbreaks, as new incoming dogs may be infected, and need to be isolated, by providing the centre with banks as shown, outbreaks of disease can be controlled.

The building houses a standalone vet assessment room, which will be used by the resident vet to assess new dogs on arrival. A separate room within the building is used, rather than taking the dogs to the vet suite, again to aid in disease control.

The building has its own laundry and food prep facilities, as well as a large training room, used for behavioural assessments. Once the dog is assessed, its either moved to the booked / TBA block or straight into rehoming.



INITIAL HAND SKETCH



INITIAL CAD PLAN

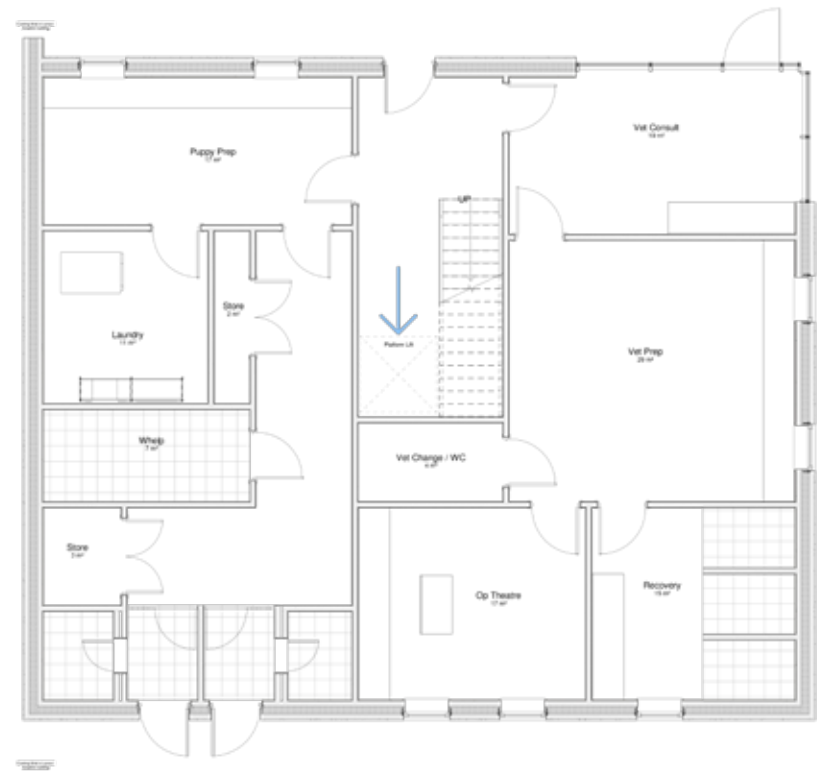
# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

## INITIAL PROPOSALS: NEW BUILD – VET & PUPPY

The initial brief for this block was to provide puppy, vet and some additional office facilities on the first floor.

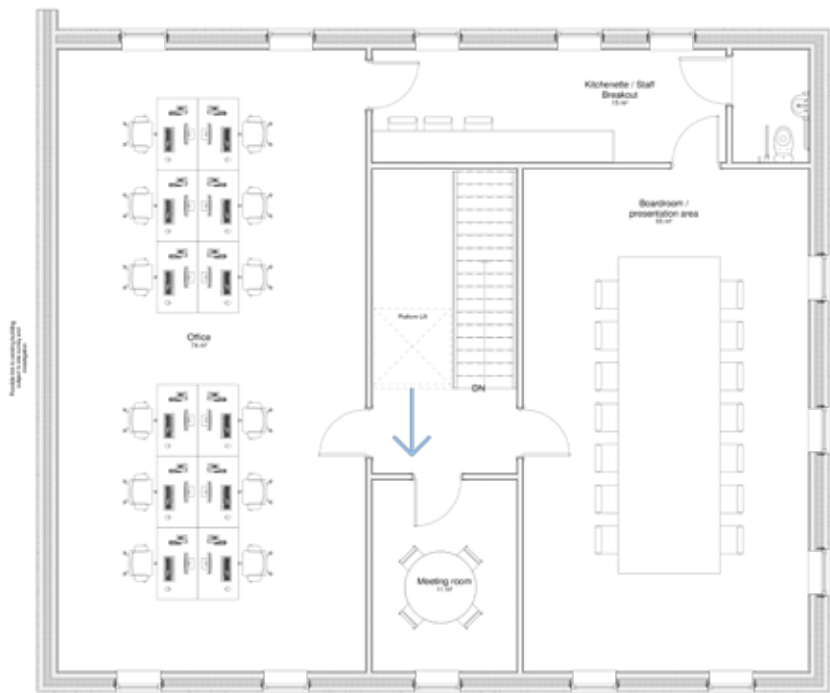
As the designs, and brief developed, the requirement for additional office space was deemed unnecessary, as the existing reception building, which this 'extension' is abutted too, was deemed to have adequate desk space when converted.

The Dogs Trust asked for a more refined, slimmed down footprint, with definitive separate access doors between the vets and puppy zone, to limit risk of disease transmission.



**00\_Ground**  
1:50

INITIAL CAD PLAN



**01\_First**  
1:50

# CURRENT DESIGN PROPOSALS

## SITE LAYOUT

The finalised site plan has been developed and honed compared to initial sketch proposals.

The building locations have stayed primarily in the same locations, but the exercise paddocks and links between the buildings have been gradually tweaked and improved, mainly to ensure existing trees and green spaces can be retained.

The rehoming building remains at the front of the site, to give visitors the feeling of arrival. The courtyard between the rehoming and training hall has been refined, and designed for training and meet and greets.

The staff car park zone has been increased, and the maintenance shed moved to be accessed via the drop off turning head, to limit car and maintenance vehicle traffic.

The vets and puppy suite has been incorporated within the existing reception building, forming a secondary courtyard which is to be designed with rain gardens and planting, to aid site drainage.

The intake building layout has been rationalised following feedback from other centres. The TBA and booked facilities have been split to provide more flexibility, and quieter spaces for the more at risk dogs.

The main access road running along the northern edge will provide a fantastic base for constructing the centre, but will also provide much needed drainage form the railway track which runs along the northern boundary.

The existing car park will be redesigned to allow for safe pedestrian routes, and enhanced greening and planting.

