

Application Number:	2026/0005	Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Proposal:	Proposed decarbonisation scheme at Marl Pits Leisure Centre comprising the installation of six heat pumps, a plant room formed from two adapted shipping containers, a new electrical substation and a temporary access path.	Location:	Marl Pits Swimming Pool Newchurch Road Rawtenstall Rossendale Lancashire BB4 7SN
Report of:	Head of Planning and Building Control	Status:	For publication
Report to:	Development Control Committee	Date:	03.03.2026
Applicant:	Rosendale Borough Council	Expiry Date:	12.03.2026

Contact Officer:	Claire Bradley	Telephone:	01706 238636
Email:	planning@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

REASON FOR REPORTING	
Outside Officer Scheme of Delegation	
Member Call-In Name of Member: Reason for Call-In:	
3 or more objections received	
Other (please state):	Yes – Council application on Council Owned Land

HUMAN RIGHTS

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights:

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out in this report.

2. APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to the Marl Pits Swimming Pool building which is located within the Marl Pits Leisure Centre.

The closest dwellings are located on Marl Pits and Heritage Drive over 50 metres away.

The site is also located within the countryside and designated for recreation.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

1975/0423: Extension for new filtration plant. (Approved)

2010/0537: Construction of 2-storey extension to east side of existing building (inc fitness suites & changing rooms), formation of five outdoor pitches on north side & altered/extended parking facilities on south side (Outline). (Approved)

2011/0083: Construction of 2-storey extension to east side of existing building (inc fitness suites & changing rooms), formation of five outdoor pitches on north side & altered/extended parking facilities on south side. (Approved)

2011/0309: Construction of a single storey extension to the south and east side of the existing building (612 sq m), formation of 4 external football pitches, and the reconfiguration and extension of the existing car park. (Approved)

2011/0592: Discharge of conditions 1, 2, 3 and 7 of planning approval 2011/309. (Approved)

2025/0040: Installation of external ductwork for an air handling unit. (Approved)

4. PROPOSAL

This application is a decarbonisation scheme at Marl Pits Leisure Centre comprising the installation of six heat pumps, a plant room formed from two adapted shipping containers, a new electrical substation and a temporary access path.

The development also includes the replacement of the bulbs in the floodlights for the playing pitches and the car park, with more energy efficient fittings.

5. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2	Achieving sustainable development
Section 4	Decision-making
Section 8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 12	Achieving well-designed places
Section 14	Climate change, flooding and coastal change

Development Plan

Local Plan Policies

SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SD2: Urban Boundary and Green Belt
ENV1: High Quality Development in the Borough
ENV3: Landscape Character and Quality
ENV5: Green Infrastructure networks
ENV6: Environmental Protection
LT1: Protection of Playing Pitches, Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

Other material considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance
National Design Guide
RBC Climate Change SPD

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Consultee	Summary of response
LCC Highways	No objection subject to conditions
RBC Environmental Health	No comments

7. REPRESENTATIONS

To accord with the General Development Procedure Order a site notice was posted on 20.01.2026.

No comments have been received.

8. ASSESSMENT

The main considerations in this case are as follows:

- 1) Principle;
- 2) Visual Amenity;
- 3) Residential Amenity;
- 4) Access, Parking and Highway Safety
- 5) Climate Change

Principle

The proposed development is located within in the countryside in an area designated for recreation and is protected by Strategic Policy LT1 – Protection of playing pitches, existing open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The Framework states as follows:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal playing spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

The proposal is for the improvement of the existing facilities on the site, which is an established recreation facility.

It is considered the principle of the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policy LT1 of the Rossendale Local Plan and the NPPF.

Visual Amenity

Section 12 of the Framework refers to the importance which Government attaches to the design of the built environment:

- *“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.” (Para 131)*
- *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments...will function well and add to the overall quality of the area...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.” (Para 135).*

Policy ENV1 of the Rossendale Local Plan seek to ensure that the built environment is safeguarded and enhanced and proposals take into account design, lighting and materials.

The proposed location six heat pumps and the plant room formed from two adapted shipping containers is between the leisure centre building and the football pitches to the rear.

A raised surface will be provided supported by gabion baskets to provide a level surface for the plant room and heat pumps.

During construction, a temporary access will be provided to the football pitches which will be located on the northern side of the pitches.

All lighting within the site will be replaced with energy efficient lighting.

Whilst it would be visible from surrounding areas, the proposed development is located against the rear side of the building and the proposed materials and colours of the development are appropriate for their use on the site. It is considered that the visual amenity of the proposed development is acceptable in the context of the existing leisure facility, and having regard to the wider area.

As such, the scheme is in accordance with Section 12 of the Framework and Policy ENV1 of the Rossendale Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

The Framework advises that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

“Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”

Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan states that all proposals should take account of the following:

- “c) Being sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers and avoiding demonstrable harm to the amenities of the area*
- “d) The scheme will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring development by virtue of it being overbearing or oppressive, overlooking or resulting in an unacceptable loss of light:- nor should it be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa.”*

The leisure centre building itself is located between the air source heat pumps, plant room, etc, and any residential properties on Marl Pits or Heritage Drive.

It is not considered that the proposed development will impact significantly on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers, in accordance with Policy ENV1 and the Framework.

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

In terms of impact on Access, Parking and Highway safety, LCC Highways have no objections to the proposed development subject to planning conditions.

As such, it is considered that the proposed development, with the recommended conditions, is in accordance with the Rossendale Local Plan and the Framework.

Climate Change

The Climate Change SPD is relevant to this application and states as follows:

Rossendale Borough Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in September 2019 and published a Climate Change Strategy in 2020. The Council is committed to:

- Reaching a carbon-zero position for the Council’s activities by 2030;
- Reducing the Council’s overall energy consumption by 50 percent by 2030;
- Obtaining our energy needs from renewable sources;
- Increasing the number of businesses and households who source their utilities from renewable sources

The Local Plan was adopted in December 2021 and recognises the need to address the climate change emergency.

In terms of this proposal, the air source heat pumps will further reduce dependence on the gas boiler, significantly lowering overall gas consumption. In the case of Marl Pits, the system also benefits from renewable electricity generated by the rooftop solar panels, which helps offset the additional electricity required, making the system even more carbon efficient. This is in addition to the recently installed new air handling unit (AHU) with a heat recovery system which recovers and redistributes heat from the extracted air.

It is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the Climate Change Strategy and will significantly reduce the facility's overall energy consumption.

9. CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable and in accordance with the Rossendale Local Plan and the Framework.

10. CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following:

Application form received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90207 P02 – Site Location Plan received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90200 P03 – Existing Site Plan received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90201 P03 – Existing Plans received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90202 P02 – Existing Elevations received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90203 P03 – Proposed Site Plan received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90204 P03 – Proposed Plans received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90205 P02 – Proposed Elevations received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 65 - 22 / 1200 M1 P1 – Existing and Proposed Plant Rooms received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 62 - 22 / 100 E3 P1 – Proposed Football Pitch Lighting received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 65-22 100 E4 T1 - Car Park Lighting received 15.12.2025

Drawing No: 7318-TRP-ZZ-XX-DR-C-5000 – Proposed External slabs received 15.12.2025

Reason: To define the permissions and in the interests of the proper development of the site.

3. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition or site clearance, until a Construction Management Plan (CMP) or Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved plan / statement shall provide:
 - 24 Hour emergency contact number.
 - Details of the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
 - Details of loading and unloading of plant and materials.
 - Arrangements for turning of vehicles within the site.
 - Swept path analysis showing access for the largest vehicles regularly accessing the site and measures to ensure adequate space is available and maintained, including any necessary temporary traffic management measures.
 - Measures to protect vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists).
 - The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate.
 - Measures to deal with dirt, debris, mud or loose material deposited on the highway as a result of construction.
 - Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction.
 - Details of a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.
 - Construction vehicle routing.
 - Delivery, demolition and construction working hours.

The approved Construction Management Plan or Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

Reason: - In the interests of the safe operation of the adopted highway during the demolition and construction phases.

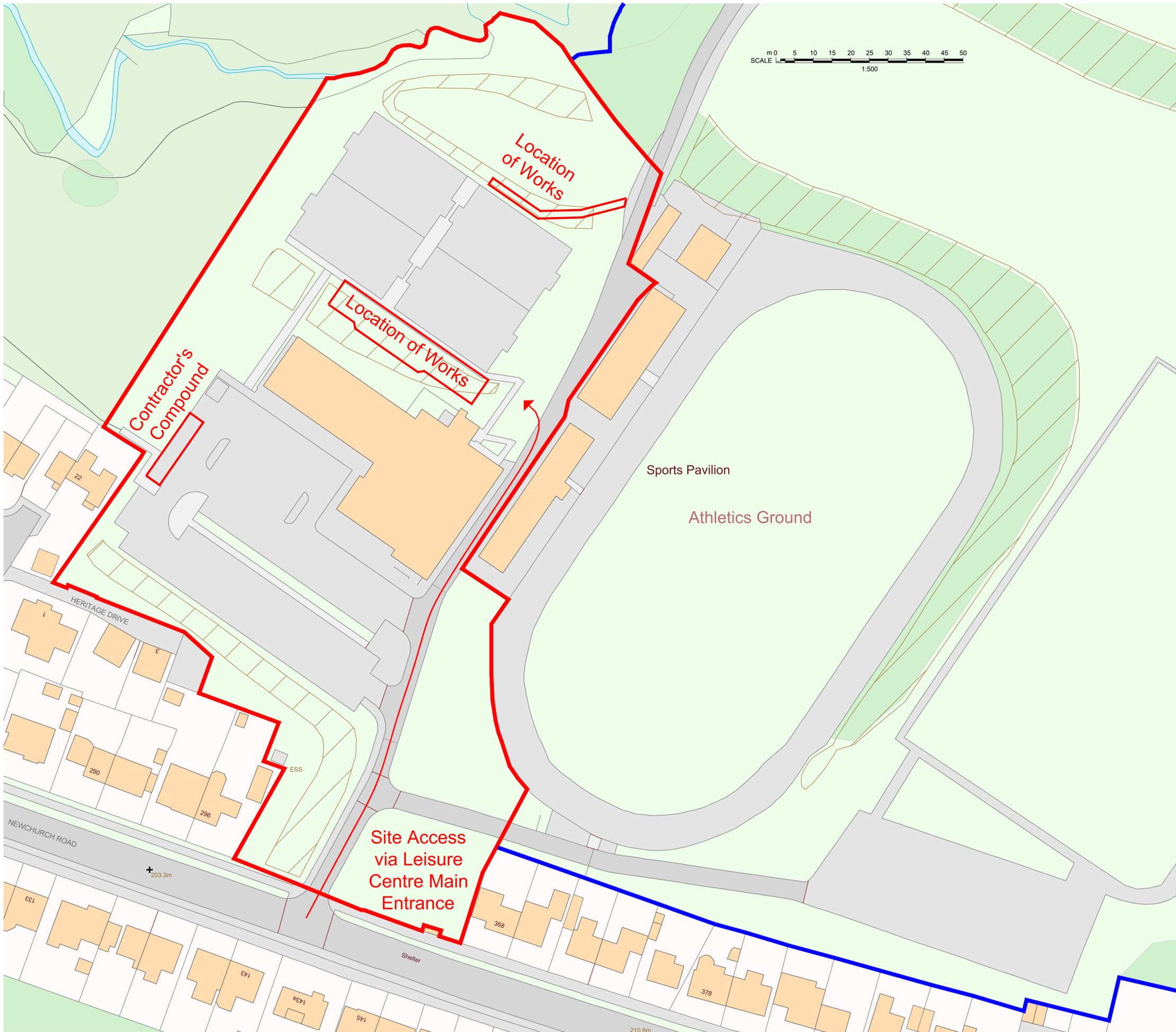
Note: Construction Management Plan.

- *There must be no reversing into or from the live highway at any time – all vehicles entering the site must do so in a forward gear and turn around in the site before exiting in a forward gear onto the operational public highway.*
- *There must be no storage of materials in the public highway at any time.*
- *There must be no standing or waiting of machinery or vehicles in the public highway at any time.*
- *Vehicles must only access the site using a designated vehicular access point.*
- *There must be no machinery operating over the highway at any time, this includes reference to loading/unloading operations – all of which must be managed within the confines of the site.*
- *A licence to erect hoardings adjacent to the highway (should they be proposed) may be required. If necessary this can be obtained via the County Council (as the Highway Authority) by contacting the Council by telephoning 01772 533433 or e-mailing lhsstreetworks@lancashire.gov.uk. All references to public highway include footway, carriageway and verge.*

11. INFORMATIVES

1. The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirement in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The grant of planning permission does not entitle a developer to obstruct a right of way and any proposed stopping-up or diversion of a right of way should be the subject of an Order under the appropriate Act. The applicant should be advised to contact Lancashire County Council's Public Rights of Way section by email on PROW@lancashire.gov.uk, quoting the location, district and planning application number, to discuss their proposal before any development works begin.



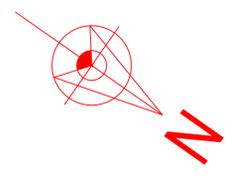
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REVISION STATUS

- S Information issued for feasibility or scheme design
- T Information issued for tender purposes only
- C Information issued for Construction
- NB: Only those drawings containing a C revision to be used for construction

NOTES



The contractor shall be fully responsible for preparing and submitting a comprehensive Site Compound and Construction Logistics Plan for review and approval prior to commencement of works. The plan must include, but is not limited to:

- Site Compound Layout: Location of welfare facilities, storage areas, plant, and material laydown zones.
- Access and Egress Routes: Safe and compliant routes for vehicles and personnel, including delivery scheduling and traffic management measures.
- Security and Hoarding: Details of site fencing, hoarding, signage, and security provisions.
- Environmental Controls: Waste management strategy, dust and noise mitigation measures, and protection of existing trees and landscaping.
- Emergency Procedures: Fire safety arrangements, first aid points, and evacuation routes.
- Coordination with Existing Operations: Measures to minimize disruption to adjacent properties and maintain safe pedestrian access.

P02	15/12/25	Planning Issue	
P01	17/11/25	Tender Issue	
REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	
CLIENT			
Rosendale Borough Council Marl Pits Leisure Centre			
PROJECT			
Decarbonisation Equipment Enclosure			
DRAWING TITLE			
Location Plan			
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED
1:500	28/10/25	MT	
DRG NO.	REVISION		
7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90207	P02		

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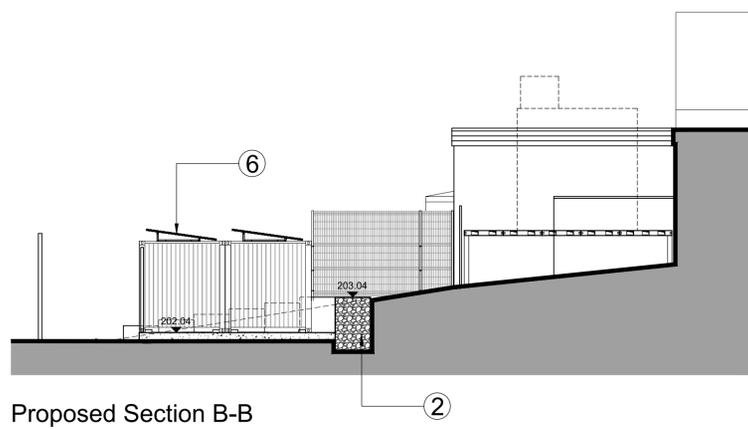
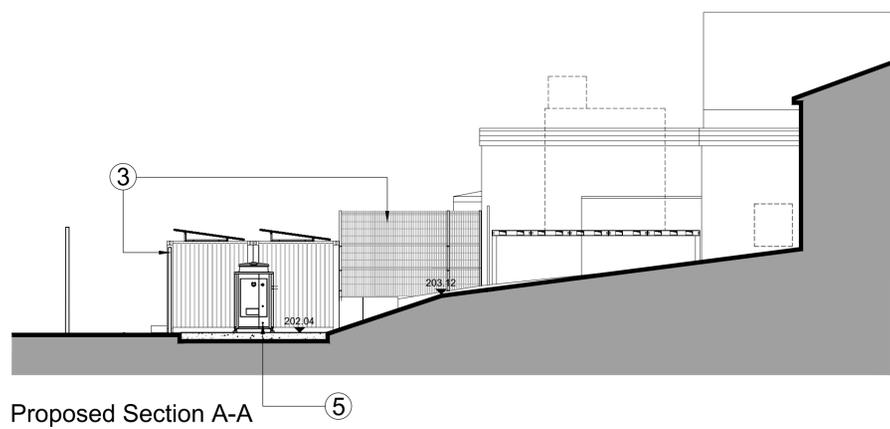
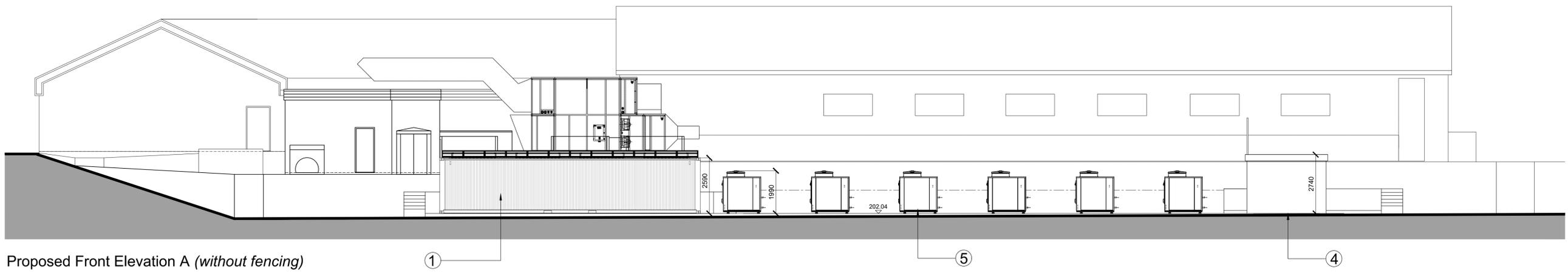
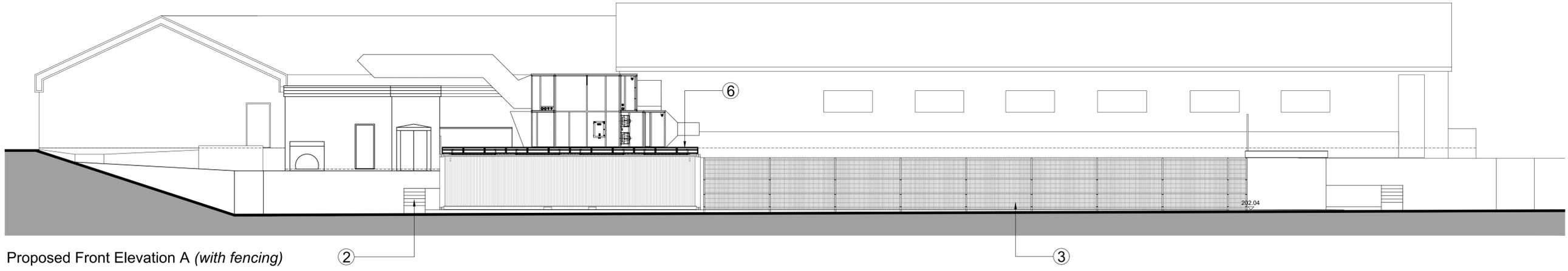
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ELEVATIONAL TREATMENT KEY

- Shipping Containers:**
External faces to receive a durable paint finish, colour to be confirmed. Select elevations to feature vinyl wrap signage for identification and branding.
- Gabion Wall:**
Positioned around container base, stepped to follow existing ground levels. Constructed from galvanised steel baskets filled with angular stone.
- Fencing:**
Jacksons Euroguard Combi panels with timber slats (or similar), 2.5m high, powder-coated green to match adjacent fencing.
- Substation:**
Factory-finished GRP cladding in standard colour. Positioned on concrete plinth.
- Heat Pumps:**
Units positioned on concrete slab and screened by fencing. Clearance zones maintained as per manufacturer guidance.
- Solar PV Panels:**
Mounted on container roofs, angled to optimise solar gain.

P02	15/12/25	Planning Issue
P01	17/11/25	Tender Issue
REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION

CLIENT
 Rossendale Borough Council
 Marl Pits Leisure Centre

PROJECT
 Decarbonisation Equipment Enclosure

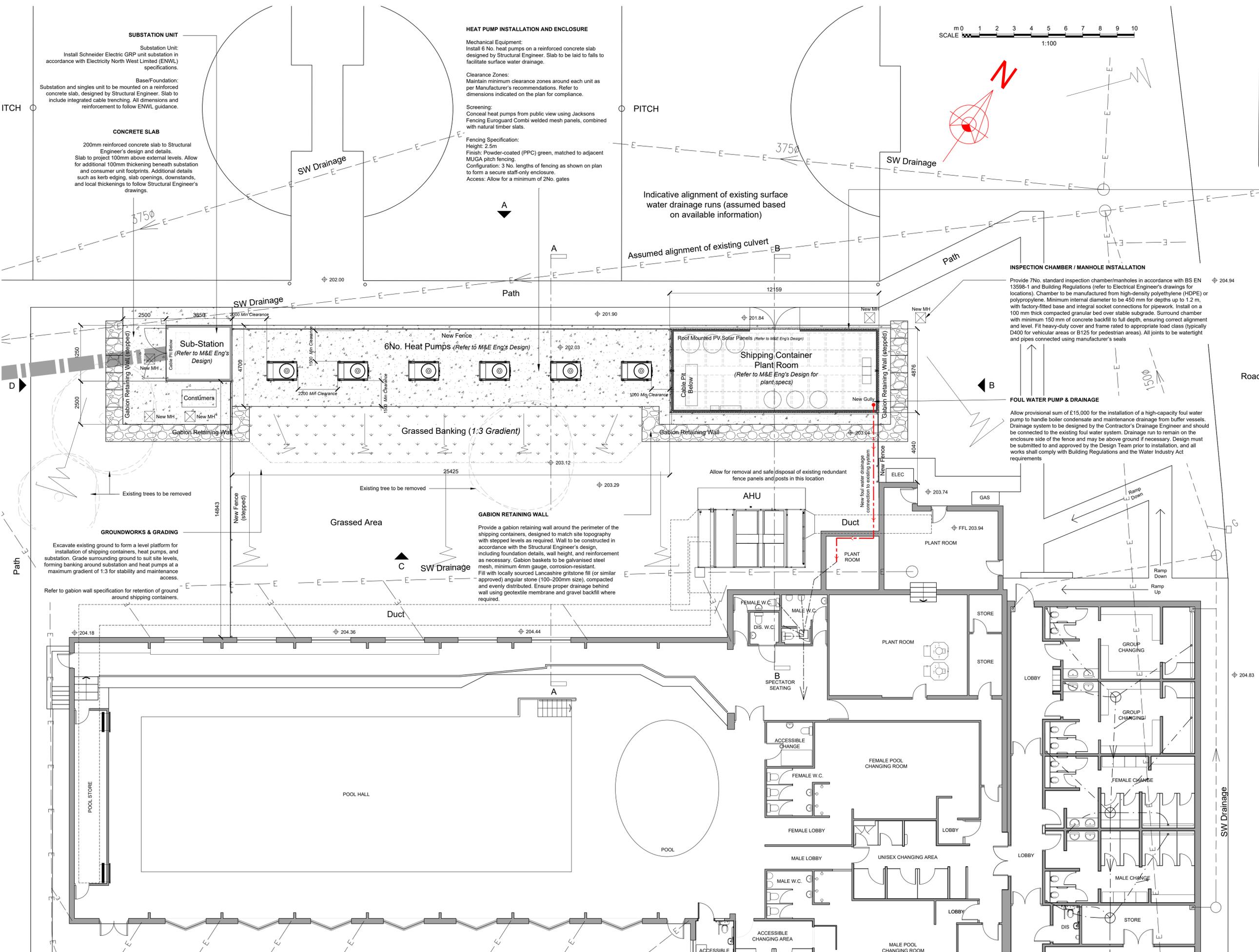
DRAWING TITLE
 Proposed Elevation and Sections

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED
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DRG NO.	REVISION
7886-FWP-XX-DR-A-90205	P02

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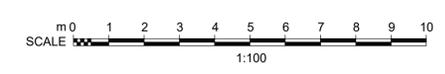
HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION AND ENCLOSURE

Mechanical Equipment:
Install 6 No. heat pumps on a reinforced concrete slab designed by Structural Engineer. Slab to be laid to falls to facilitate surface water drainage.

Clearance Zones:
Maintain minimum clearance zones around each unit as per Manufacturer's recommendations. Refer to dimensions indicated on the plan for compliance.

Screening:
Conceal heat pumps from public view using Jacksons Fencing Euroguard Combi welded mesh panels, combined with natural timber slats.

Fencing Specification:
Height: 2.5m
Finish: Powder-coated (PPC) green, matched to adjacent MUGA pitch fencing.
Configuration: 3 No. lengths of fencing as shown on plan to form a secure staff-only enclosure.
Access: Allow for a minimum of 2No. gates



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SHIPPING CONTAINER PLANT ROOM

Supplier:
Container to be supplied by:
Containers Direct Ltd.
Manor Yards
Newslat Rd
Knowsley Industrial Park North
L33 7TJ

Or similar approved specialist capable of:
Carrying out all required structural adaptations, including cutting openings, reinforcement, and linking multiple units.

Configuration:
Provide 2 No. Hi-Cube 40-foot shipping containers securely fixed together to form a single large plant room.

Fixing Method:
Containers to be joined using continuous welded steel plates along the vertical and horizontal seams, supplemented with internal bolted brackets for structural integrity. All fixings to comply with relevant structural and fire safety standards.

Opening Between Units:
Form a full-length, full-height opening between the two containers to create an open-plan internal space. Note: The container supplier shall provide full details of reinforcement required to form this opening and joining methods to maintain structural integrity.

External Door Opening:
Allow for the formation of a new external door opening in the container wall, including all necessary structural framing and weatherproofing details.
Install new PPC steel double door, complete with ironmongery, threshold detail, and secure locking mechanism, suitable for external plant room access.

Base/Foundation:
Containers to be installed on a structural base designed and detailed by Structural Engineer.

Internal Construction:
Insert a timber frame inside the steel structure of the container (no drill fixings to container walls). Pack walls with Rockwool insulation for thermal and acoustic performance. Fix timber ply boards to the frame over the insulation. Finish all edges with beading to ensure no gaps remain.
Install chequer plate flooring for durability and slip resistance.

Ventilation & Apertures:
Provide raised vent grilles for airflow.
Form apertures for pipework and services as per M&E Engineer's specifications.

Weatherproofing:
Provide continuous flashing and sealing around the joint between containers to ensure full weatherproofing. Use high-performance sealants and corrosion-resistant flashing materials.

External Finishes:
Apply intumescent paint system for fire protection to all internal and external steel surfaces. Prepare and paint all external container walls with durable, weather-resistant top coating in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, colour TBC.
Apply vinyl wrap signage to designated areas as per branding and wayfinding requirements, design TBC.

Solar PV:
Install Solar PV panels on container roofs upon completion of structural and weatherproofing works.
Ensure all penetrative fixings are sealed with UV-resistant, waterproof grommets and sealants to maintain roof integrity.

Cable Pit:
Provide a cable pit in the switchgear location (refer to Electrical Engineer's drawings for further details). Adapt the shipping container to form an access panel above the cable pit.
Cut a reinforced opening in the container floor aligned with the pit location. Install a removable steel chequer plate cover with recessed lifting points for safe access. Ensure the cover is flush with the floor and sealed for weatherproofing.

Drainage:
Provide floor drain to handle boiler condensate and maintenance drainage from buffer vessels. Install floor gully of stainless steel or heavy-duty polymer, complete with removable grates and trapped outlets. Connect gully to existing site drainage using appropriate pipework, including backflow prevention/insulation where required and pump. Refer to 'Foul Water Pump & Drainage note' for further details. All drainage works to comply with local building and plumbing regulations.

Revision History

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P02	15/12/25	Planning Issue
P03	08/12/25	Tender Issue

Client
Rosendale Borough Council
Marl Pits Leisure Centre

Project
Decarbonisation Equipment Enclosure

Drawing Title
Proposed Part Site Plan

Scale
1:100

Date
27/10/25

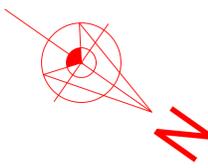
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REVISION
P03

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NEW HV SUPPLY TRENCH
Provide a new HV supply trench as indicated to serve the proposed substation.

Trench construction details, including depth, width, bedding, and backfill shall be in full accordance with the Electrical Engineer's drawings and specifications.

A site survey is required to confirm the final location and route of the new HV cable trench. The trench must be positioned to avoid existing trees (tree positions shown on plan are approximate) and all below-ground services. Installation is to be carried out in strict accordance with ENWL's guidance and recommendations. Further on-site checks are required prior to excavation to verify service locations and ensure compliance with statutory requirements

Allowance to be made for reinstating all suspended grid ceilings following completion of M&E works within the existing building. Include provision for:

- Replacement of ceiling tiles to match existing where necessary.
- Repair and making good of any plasterboard/skim ceilings to match existing finish.
- Reinstallation of ceiling grid systems to original layout and alignment.
- Replacement or adjustment of any perimeter trims, edge details, and associated components disturbed during works.
- Ensuring integration with existing lighting, ventilation grilles, and other ceiling-mounted services.
- Cleaning of reinstated ceilings to present a uniform finish.

Contractor shall carry out a drainage survey in the vicinity of the proposed works prior to commencement. The survey must accurately locate all existing drainage runs and assess their condition to ensure compatibility with the proposed works and to avoid any clashes. Survey findings shall be submitted to the Design Team for review and approval before installation begins.

SITE LEVELS
Existing and proposed site levels indicated on drawings are approximate and provided for guidance only. The contractor shall undertake a full site survey to verify actual levels prior to commencement of works. Any discrepancies or variations from the indicated levels shall be reported immediately to the Project Architect for review and instruction before proceeding with construction. No works to commence until confirmation of levels has been obtained

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TEMPORARY RAMP FOR PUBLIC ACCESS
Temporary ramp to provide public access to football pitches during construction works and remain as secondary access upon completion.
Ramp to comply with the principles of Approved Document M for accessibility, acknowledging temporary nature and site constraints; design prioritises safety and accessibility within site constraints. Gradient exceeds Part M preferred maximum (1:12) but remains within acceptable temporary range (1:10).
Ramp to accommodate a level difference of approximately 3.5 m, with a maximum gradient of 1:10. Overall ramp run: 39.5 m, comprising 4 flights of approx. 8.75 m each, separated by 3 intermediate landings.
Ramp width: 1800 mm clear between edge restraints throughout.
Landings: 1800 mm wide x 1500 mm long, positioned at 8.75 m intervals.
Ramp alignment: To follow existing gravel path where practicable.

Groundworks and Formation:
Existing ground rises approx. 3.5 m over 23 m; lower section to be built up to achieve correct slope. Fill: Compacted granular material (Type 1 MOT or similar) in layers ≤150 mm, mechanically compacted. Where fill depth >600 mm: incorporate geogrid reinforcement or timber sleeper retaining edges to prevent lateral movement.
Made-up ground to extend ≥300 mm beyond ramp edges for stability (Structural Engineer's design).
Formation: Excavate and grade embankment to achieve required levels; ensure firm, free-draining base. Allow 250 mm depth below finished surface for ramp build-up.

Ramp Construction:
Sub-base: 150 mm compacted Type 1 MOT over geotextile membrane.
Wearing surface: 50 mm hoggin (self-binding gravel mix), rolled and compacted for firm finish suitable for pedestrian traffic.
Crossfall: Max 1:50 for drainage (Structural Engineer's design).

Edge Restraints:
Timber sleepers laid flat along both sides, providing 100 mm upstand.
Sleepers: Approx. 200x100 mm, pressure-treated to BS EN 335 Use Class 4. Bed on compacted granular material; secure with timber stakes at 1.5 m centres.

Handrails:
Both sides of ramp: Height 900 mm above surface.
Posts: 100 mm square treated timber at 2 m centres.
Rails: 47x100 mm treated timber.
All timber: Pressure-treated to Use Class 4; fixings galvanised.

Landings:
Constructed to same specification as ramp.
Positioned at intervals of approx. 8.75 m.
Surrounding ground graded to suit new levels; feather edges to avoid abrupt changes. Disturbed areas reinstated with topsoil and grass seed.

Signage:
Provide clear signage at both ends indicating "Temporary Ramp - Gradient 1:10 - Assistance Available".

Lighting:
Temporary lighting to be provided as Electrical Engineer's design.

P03	15/12/25	Planning Issue
P02	08/12/25	Tender Issue
REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION

CLIENT
Rossendale Borough Council
Marl Pits Leisure Centre

PROJECT
Decarbonation Equipment Enclosure

DRAWING TITLE
Proposed Site Plan

SCALE 1:250 **DATE** Nov'25 **DRAWN** JC **CHECKED** MT

DRG NO. 7886-FWP-XX-XX-DR-A-90203 **REVISION** P03

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