

NCstudio

Deuce Padel: Expansion Design & Access

Mitchell Hey Mills, College Road, Rochdale OL12 6AE

We are a creative practice focused
on interiors, brand and architecture

This planning application seeks permission to expand the recently opened padel sports facility at Mitchell Hey, Rochdale, through the change of use of the further part of the building from Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor Sport and Recreation). The northern part of the building has been repurposed and brought into active use following the grant of planning permission in 2025. This proposal builds on the early operational success of the facility by incorporating the currently underutilised southern portion of the building into the wider scheme.

The proposal will enable the creation of five additional indoor padel courts, responding to strong demand and usage levels since opening, and allowing the operator to meet growing interest from the local community and wider region. The scheme continues the sustainable re-use of the existing building, retaining its structure and fabric while introducing targeted internal alterations only, with no material change to the external appearance.

The expanded facility will further enhance opportunities for sport, recreation, and social interaction, supporting Rochdale's objectives for healthier lifestyles, increased physical activity, and the productive reuse of existing commercial buildings.



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Project Overview

NCstudio have once again been appointed as lead designer to support the next phase of development at Mitchell Hey, Rochdale, expanding the existing padel sports facility within a former industrial warehouse. The project focuses on integrating the additional area of the building seamlessly into the operational and spatial logic of the facility, ensuring a coherent experience across the whole venue.

Padel is a fast-growing, highly social sport that encourages participation across a wide range of ages and abilities. The design response is therefore centred on clarity, accessibility, and atmosphere, creating spaces that feel intuitive to navigate and comfortable to use, both on and off the court.

The interior approach builds on the restrained, industrial backdrop, with carefully considered use of colour, lighting, and graphics to give the facility its character. Rather than over-decorating, moments of boldness are introduced selectively to aid wayfinding, reinforce identity, and energise the environment. The overall aim is to create a welcoming, sociable setting that supports the sport, encourages repeat visits, and allows the facility to evolve as demand grows, with an entirely reversible solution.



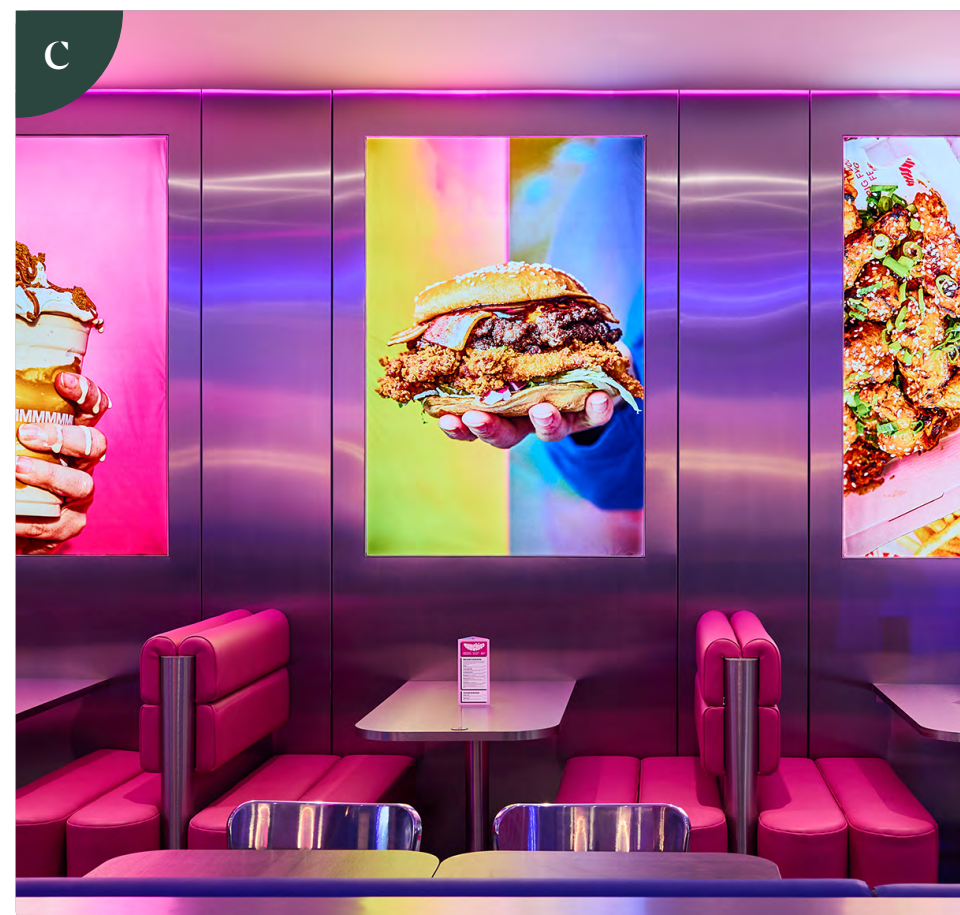
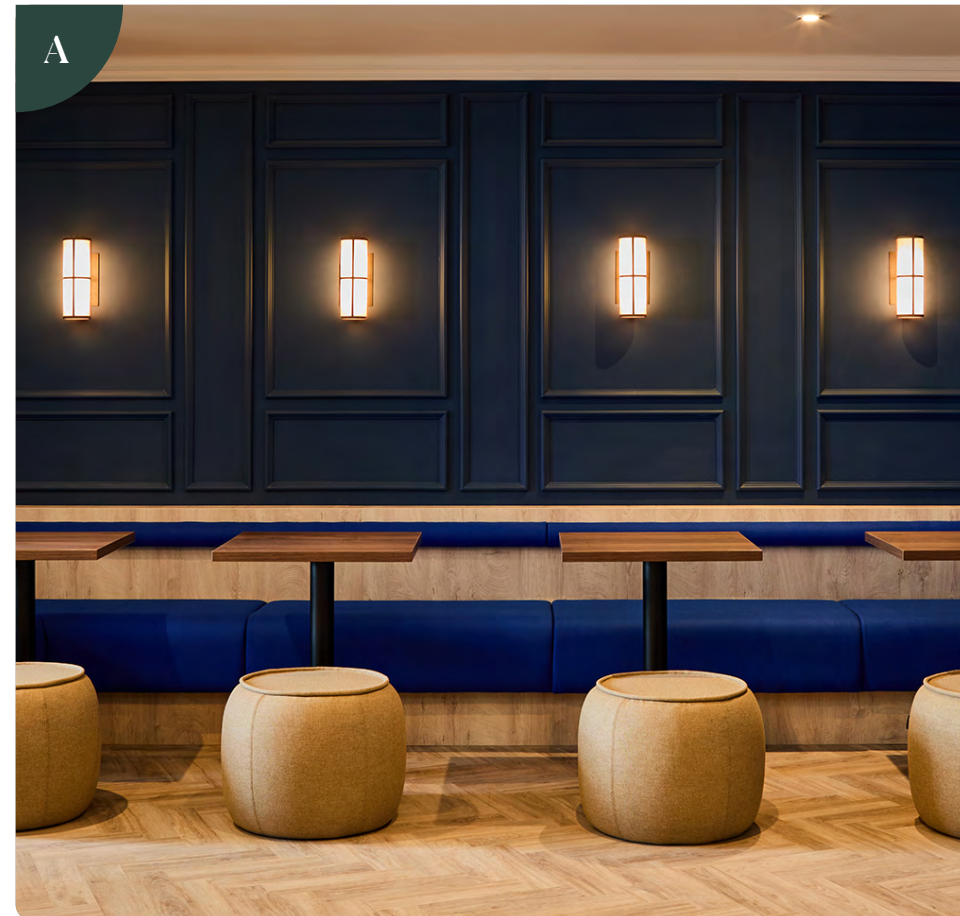
Design Team Details

NCstudio is a multidisciplinary design studio with a strong track record in the delivery of leisure, wellness, and sports-led environments, including gyms, training facilities, and community-focused recreational spaces. Our work is grounded in an understanding of how people move through, use, and experience space, with particular emphasis on operational efficiency, clarity of layout, and brand-led design.

NCstudio was appointed as lead designer for the initial phase and branding of the padel facility at Mitchell Hey and continues in this role for the proposed expansion. Having already delivered and seen the facility brought into operation, the design team has a detailed understanding of the building, the operational requirements of the sport, and the needs of both users and staff. This continuity allows the additional courts to be integrated seamlessly into the existing facility, maintaining a consistent spatial and experiential quality throughout.

We have developed a strong working relationship with the client, Venture&Co Rochdale, underpinned by a shared ambition to create a high-quality, socially active destination that supports health, wellbeing, and participation. The proposed scheme responds to growing interest in padel as one of the fastest-growing sports in the UK, and represents a logical next step in adapting the remainder of the existing warehouse within the application site to support increased demand.

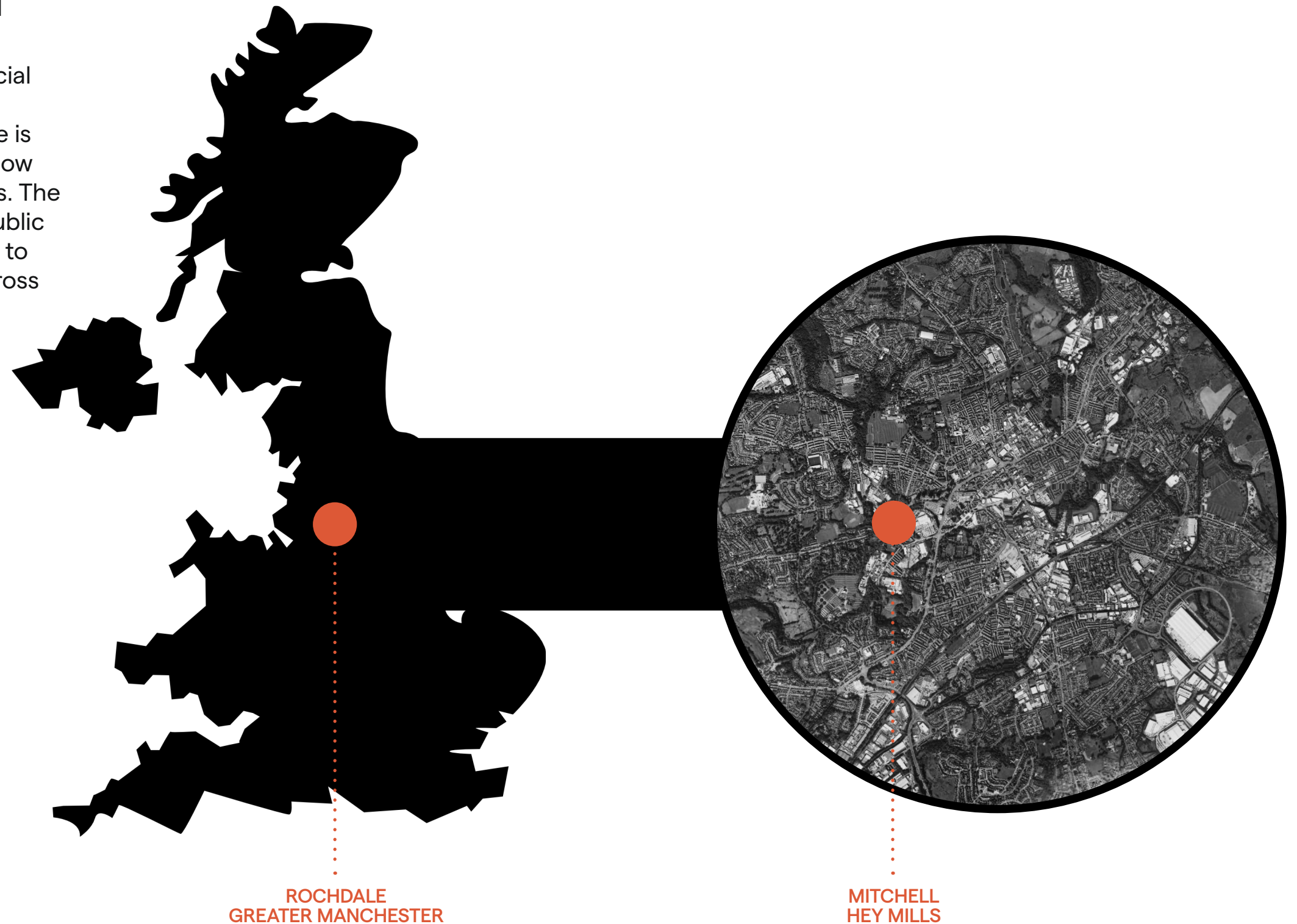
- A The Northern Tennis Club, Manchester
- B Affinity Living, Manchester
- C Munchies, Sheffield
- D WIT, London



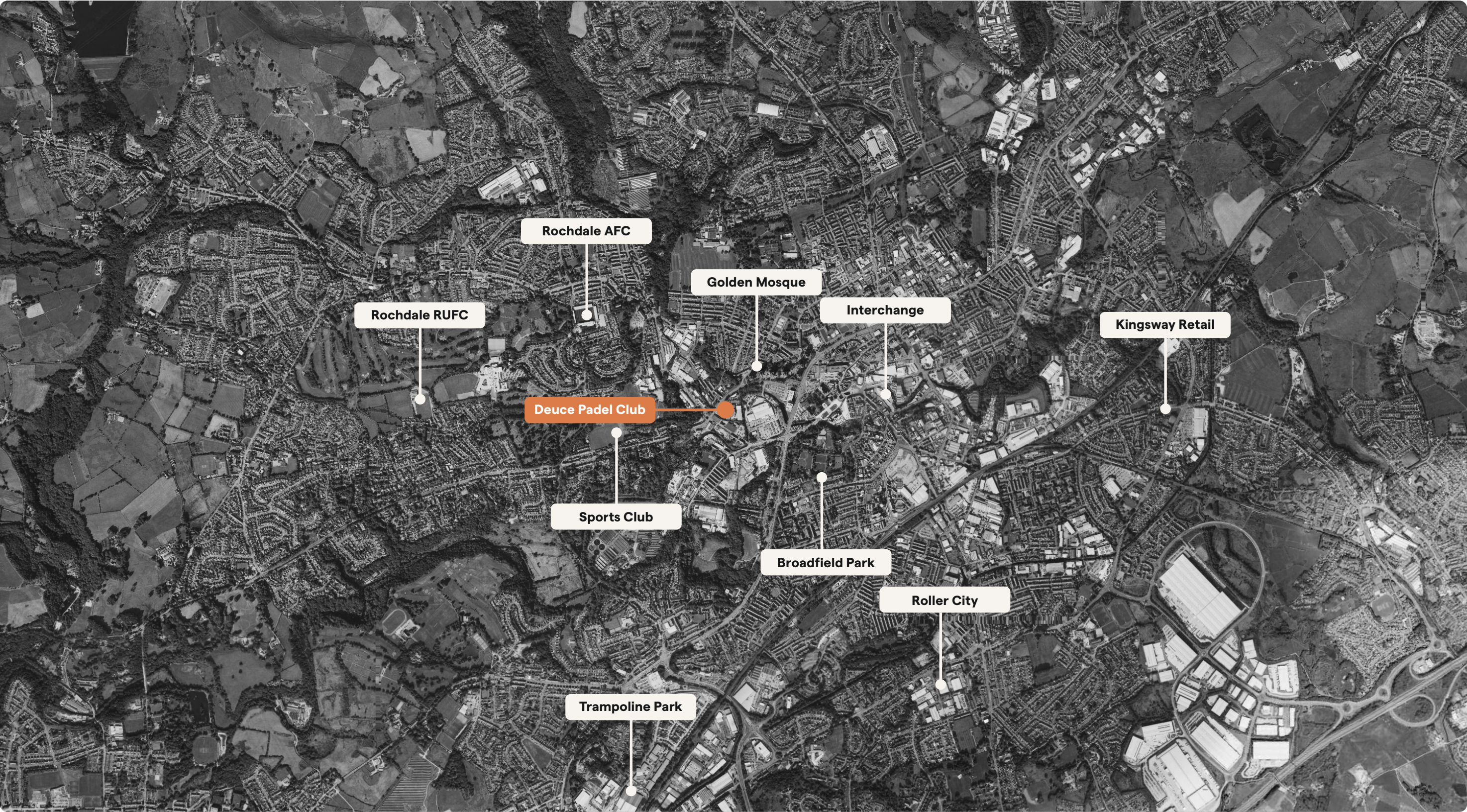
Urban Context

The site is located to the north of Rochdale town centre, within an established industrial and commercial area. It is accessed via a private street off College Road and currently comprises a large warehouse building with extensive parking and service areas.

The surrounding area includes mixed commercial units, storage facilities, and residential neighbourhoods within walking distance. There is also neighbouring schools and colleges, who now are benefitting from the nearby sports facilities. The site benefits from strong transport links and public transport options nearby, making it well-suited to serve both local residents and visitors from across the borough.



Project Location



Mitchell Hey Mills

The site comprises a large industrial warehouse building at Mitchell Hey, Rochdale, which is now partially in active use as a padel sports facility. The overall building expands to approximately 4,100 sqm, with a significant proportion already brought into active use following the implementation of the earlier planning permission (ref. 25/00447/FUL). The current application relates to the southern area of the building, which is proposed to be incorporated into the wider facility.

The main warehouse space is of portal-frame construction, with elements of the older structure constructed in red brick, much of which has been painted in an anthracite grey finish. The building has a strong industrial character and benefits from generous internal heights making it well suited to accommodating associated leisure uses.

Parts of the building are currently used for Podz storage, while the remaining internal areas are underutilised and present an opportunity for further improvement and integration into the padel facility. The forecourt to the building is surfaced in tarmac and is used for parking and servicing. The padel facility currently benefits from 21 dedicated parking spaces, which are clearly demarcated and signed to distinguish them from parking associated with neighbouring warehouse uses.

The site is located within an established commercial and industrial area and is sufficiently separated from nearby residential properties such that no adverse impacts on residential amenity are anticipated. The building is accessed from College Road and benefits from good connectivity to the surrounding area.





Floor Plan

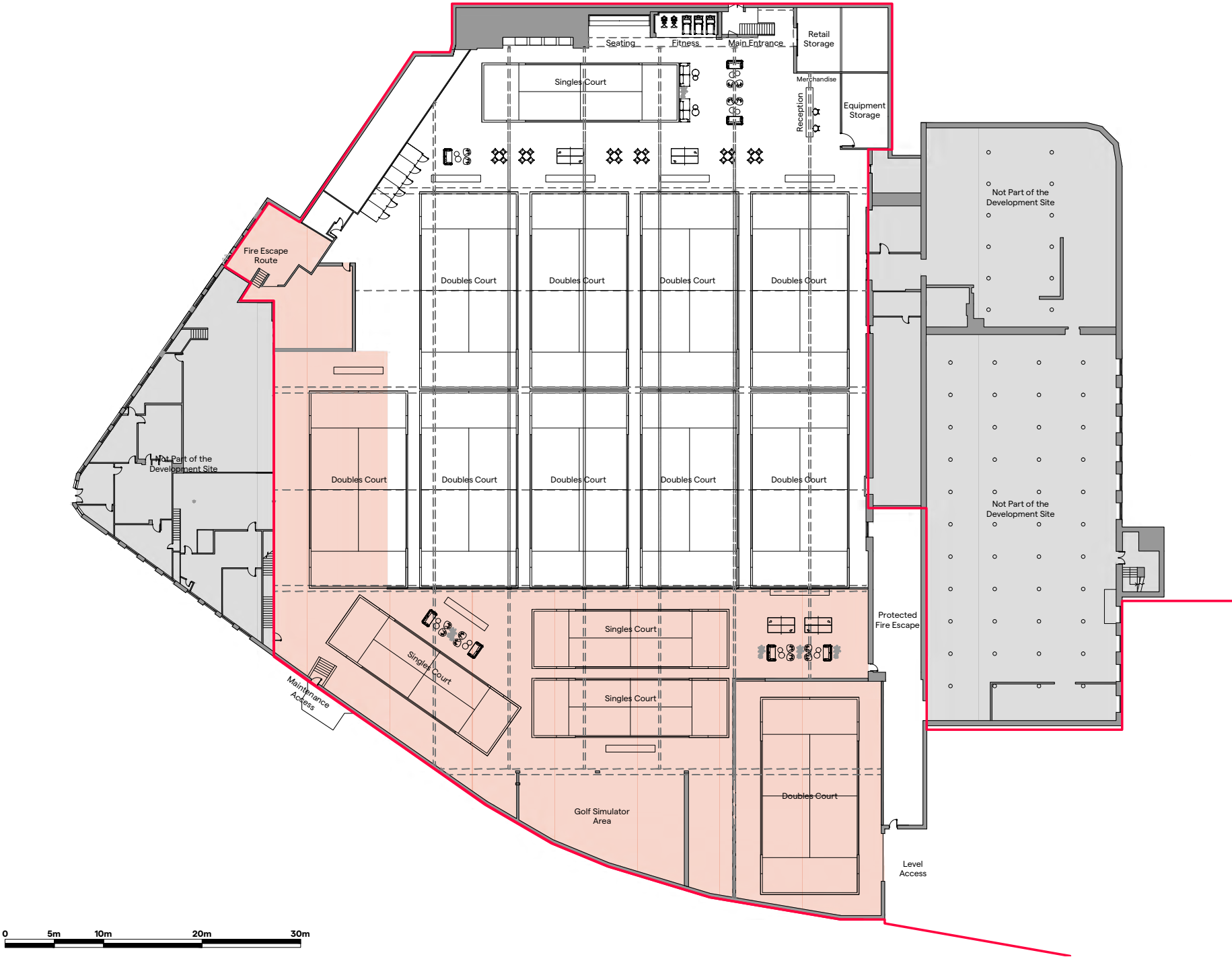
The proposed development will extend the change of use of the main building from Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor Sport and Recreation), consolidating the padel facility across the site.

The internal layout has been designed to respond to both operational efficiency and user experience. The padel courts are arranged to maximise the generous internal volume of the building, with clear circulation routes and good visual connectivity throughout the space, while maintaining sufficient clear heights for play. Courts are positioned to create a legible and intuitive layout, supported by social and ancillary areas located in close proximity to the main entrance to encourage activity and engagement on arrival.

The layout is capable of accommodating peak usage comfortably, with appropriate provision for players, spectators, and staff. Existing reception, changing and ancillary facilities, approved and implemented as part of the earlier phase of development, will continue to support the expanded facility, ensuring efficient operation without unnecessary duplication of spaces.

The building benefits from multiple existing external fire exits, which are retained and incorporated into the overall fire strategy to ensure safe and compliant means of escape.

-  Full padel facility extent (existing and proposed)
-  Proposed change of use from B2 to Class E(d)
-  Not part of the development site



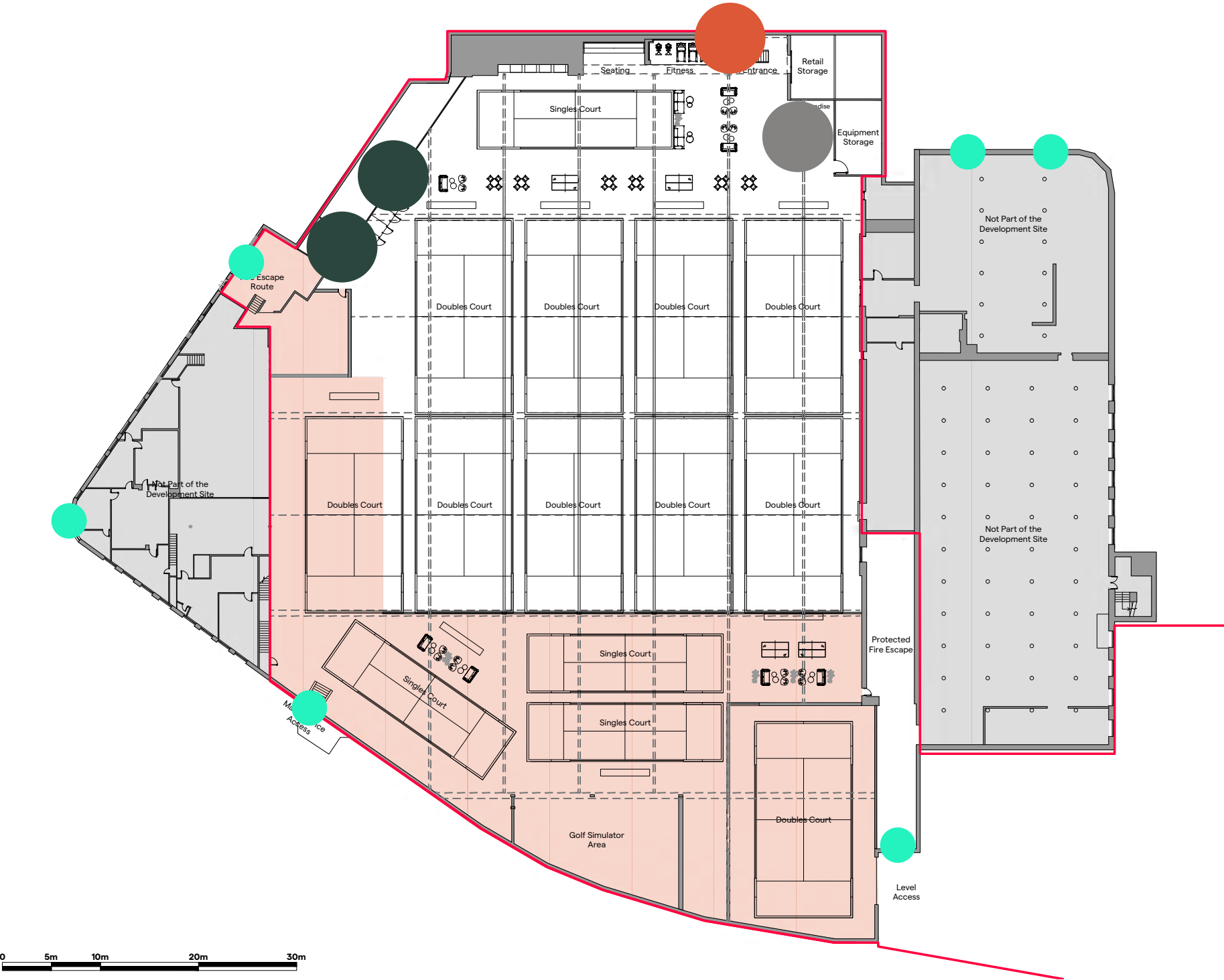
Access

The proposals continue the sensitive adaptation of the existing warehouse building, building on the upgrades already implemented as part of the initial phase of the padel facility.

Step-free access to the building is provided via an existing external ramped route and dedicated accessible parking, which offers a safe and practical means of access for users with limited mobility, with staff support available where required. The introduction of the additional internal floorspace strengthens the relationship between the level-access entrance and the wider facility, providing a clearer and more purposeful route into the building for those with access requirements. Accessible WC provision has been incorporated in accordance with Part M requirements and remains unchanged as part of this proposal.

The expanded facility will benefit from increased on-site parking located to the side of the building and accessed from College Road. Existing parking provision is retained and supplemented as part of the wider site strategy, supporting the scale and operation of the facility without the need for significant external alteration.

- Entrance
- Main Reception
- WCs
- Existing Building Fire Exits



Low Impact, High Performance

The proposal delivers clear environmental and social benefits through the further reuse of an existing industrial building. By adapting and expanding the use of the warehouse rather than pursuing new construction, the scheme avoids the significant embodied carbon associated with demolition and rebuild, supporting a more sustainable approach to development.

The design strategy is deliberately light-touch, retaining the building’s primary structure and fabric and focusing on targeted reversible internal upgrades only. This approach maximises the value of the existing asset while minimising material use and construction waste. Building services are designed to support efficient operation, incorporating energy-efficient lighting, modern heating systems, and passive measures where possible to reduce overall energy demand.

Beyond environmental considerations, the expanded padel facility delivers tangible social and health benefits for the Rochdale community. The facility promotes regular physical activity, social interaction, and inclusive participation across a broad range of ages and abilities. The layout and operational model support both casual users and organised groups, helping to foster a welcoming and sociable environment.

The operator is already supporting community engagement through targeted initiatives, including school outreach, partnerships with local organisations, and accessible group sessions. Together, these measures will help ensure the facility functions not only as a sports venue, but as a positive and enduring community asset.



Parking

The proposed development provides a total of 32 on-site car parking spaces.

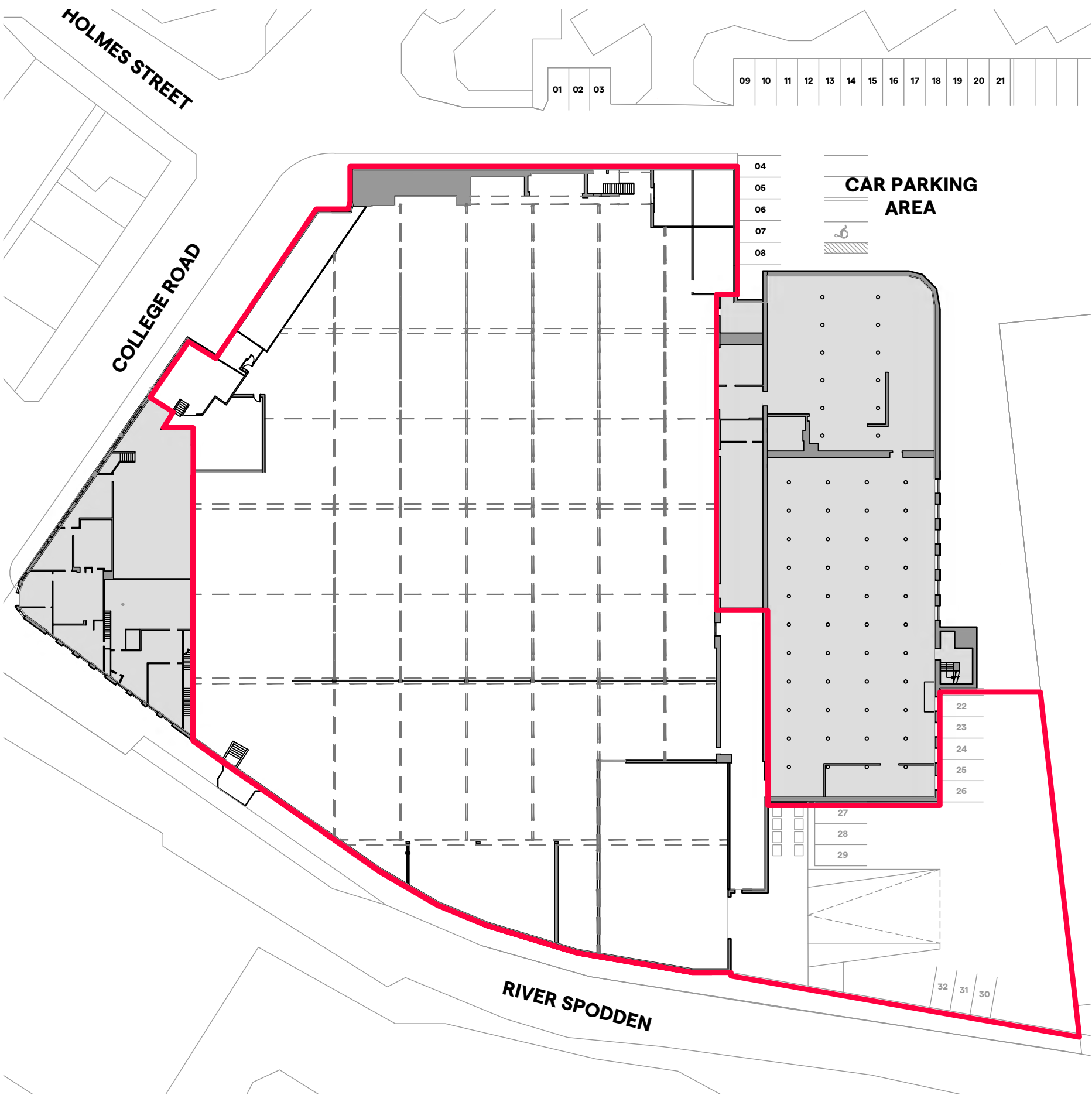
The approved Transport Statement for the existing facility identified a peak parking demand of 15 spaces, equating to approximately 0.44 spaces per player, based on a maximum of 34 players on court during a peak hour.

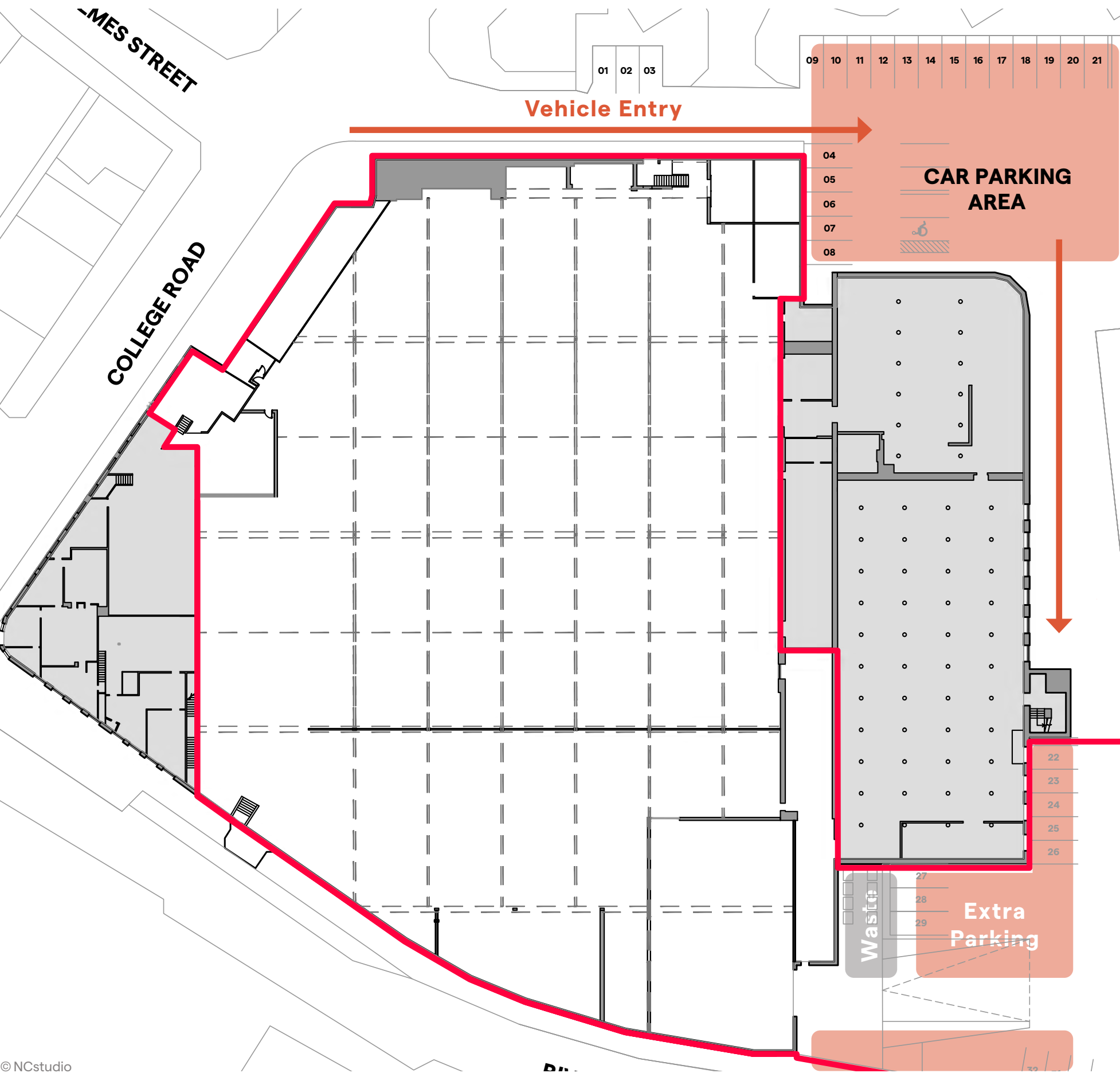
With the revised proposal comprising 10 double courts and 4 single courts, a maximum of 48 players could be on court during a peak hour. Applying the same parking ratio results in a forecast peak parking demand of approximately 21 spaces ($48 \times 0.44 = 21.1$).

The proposed provision therefore exceeds the anticipated peak demand by **11 extra spaces**, allowing sufficient capacity to accommodate users while avoiding overspill and maintaining safe and efficient operation of the site.

Use of the courts is managed via a booking system (Playtomic), which allows demand to be distributed and supports orderly arrivals and departues.

As part of the day-to-day operation, staff parking will be directed to the rear parking area where possible, helping to retain a clearer and more convenient parking area for customers closer to the main entrance. The rear area also provides flexibility for occasional overspill parking during busier periods, ensuring the site can operate efficiently without causing congestion or adverse impact on surrounding uses.





Operations

Vehicular access to the site will continue to be taken from the existing entrance on College Road, which is shared with neighbouring commercial uses. The proposed development does not introduce any new access points, and the nature of the use is not anticipated to result in a material change to traffic movements within the local area. Any increase in vehicle activity associated with the expanded facility can be accommodated within the existing highway arrangement without adverse impact on residential amenity or highway safety.

Waste generated by the facility is managed through a commercial waste collection service. On-site provision has been made for general waste, mixed recycling, and sanitary waste, with storage located within the existing external waste area. Bin capacity has been sized appropriately to reflect the scale of operation and anticipated occupancy, with regular collections to ensure the site is managed in a clean, safe, and efficient manner.

The level of provision is considered appropriate based on standard commercial waste benchmarks and the operational characteristics of the facility. The existing waste storage area provides sufficient space to accommodate these bins without the need for additional external works.

The use is entirely internal, with no external music or amplified sound proposed.

Potential for flooding

The proposed development does not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere and is consistent with the findings of the reissued Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Unda Consulting in support of this application. The updated assessment considers the revised internal layouts and the full extent of the building and confirms that the conclusions of the original assessment remain unchanged.

Environment Agency mapping shows that parts of the site fall within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. The proposed use as an indoor padel sports facility falls within the “less vulnerable” classification under the National Planning Policy Framework. The development involves a change of use only and does not introduce any residential accommodation or sleeping uses. As such, the vulnerability of the site is unchanged when compared to the former Class B2 (general industrial) use.

The proposal does not result in any increase in built footprint, ground levels, or impermeable surface coverage. Existing floor levels will be retained, with no encroachment into the functional floodplain and no loss of fluvial flood storage. As confirmed within the Flood Risk Assessment, there will be no increase in surface water runoff as a result of the development.

Environment Agency mapping confirms that **the site has a “Very Low” risk of surface water flooding** at present day and under future climate change scenarios (2040–2060). There are no flood storage areas or formal flood defences affecting the site, and no evidence to suggest historical flooding from groundwater, sewer surcharge, or reservoirs. A recorded surface water flooding event in the surrounding area in March 2019 was associated with overwhelmed local drainage infrastructure rather than river flooding and does not alter the conclusions of the assessment.

In summary, the proposed development is considered appropriate in flood risk terms, complies with national planning policy, and does not increase flood risk to people, property, or the wider environment.

Summary

This planning application seeks approval to amend the change of use of the building from Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor Sport and Recreation) to support the continued operation and expansion of the padel sports facility.

The proposal represents a logical and sustainable evolution of an already operational leisure use, enabling the remainder of the building to be brought into active use without material alteration to its external appearance or impact on the surrounding area. The scheme consolidates the padel facility across the site, supporting increased participation while making efficient use of an existing commercial building.

Key benefits of the proposal include:

- Continued reuse of a brownfield industrial building, minimising embodied carbon
- Expansion of a high-quality indoor sports facility supporting health and wellbeing
- No unacceptable impact on local traffic, parking, or residential amenity
- Ongoing community engagement through inclusive programming and local partnerships

The proposal aligns with Greater Manchester and Rochdale objectives relating to active lifestyles, regeneration, and the productive reuse of existing buildings. The scheme represents a measured and well-managed response to demand, securing the long-term viability of the facility while delivering wider social and environmental benefits. We respectfully submit this application for consideration and welcome continued engagement with planning officers and consultees during the determination process.



NCstudio

Thank you
It's been our pleasure

Please do not hesitate to get
in touch if you have any questions.

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