

1. STEVENAGE SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025

Welcome to this exhibition for the proposed new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage, bringing together the existing sports and swimming facilities currently provided at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre into a consolidated, modern facility.

WHAT ARE WE PLANNING?

The new centre will provide flexible and accessible sports and leisure facilities for users under one roof. Facilities will include a 10-lane swimming pool, training pool, splash pad, soft play, studios and gym space plus a café with access from and interaction with the Town Centre Gardens.

The new building will also help to provide a more efficient use of space, reduce maintenance costs and incorporate sustainable features as we work towards our climate goals.

WHY IS CONSOLIDATING THE FACILITIES IMPORTANT?

These modern facilities in one combined building will significantly enhance visitor experience and support individuals in improving their health and wellbeing.

The health and wellbeing of Stevenage residents is a key priority for the Council, and this facility is designed to provide swimming, sports and leisure activities all under one roof for the community to enjoy.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY:

From the beginning of this project, the Council committed to providing the very best new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage. Following an initial survey in November 2023, at the end of 2024 we shared initial designs and asked for feedback.

Obtaining local resident and community feedback and understanding current user experiences has been invaluable in helping us shape the new facility with the design team. We've actively listened to people's views and suggestions and have engaged in dialogue with several sports clubs.

Having looked at this feedback in detail, we are working hard to progress the designs, incorporating as much feedback as possible. As the centre is designed as a general-purpose facility, it will not be possible to accommodate every specialist sport.

PLEASE HAVE A LOOK AT THE BOARDS AND ASK THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES!



Photograph of RIBA stage 2 consultation - November 2024

LEAVE YOUR FEEDBACK:

Your feedback is important to us, and we would encourage you to leave your thoughts by:

- Completing the hard copy form available at one of the drop-in sessions;
- Visiting the Stevenage Even Better website to view the proposals and leave your views using our online form;

<https://stevenage-even-better.com>

- Completing a hard copy form available at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre.

The closing date for comments is Sunday 9 March at 5pm.



AND SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEAVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!



Artist impression - approach to entrance from car park

2. THE STORY SO FAR YOU ASKED, WE RESPONDED

The team is committed to providing the very best Sports and Leisure Centre for Stevenage.

YOU ASKED

WE RESPONDED

Deliver a modern, environmentally conscious facility that is accessible for all.



- The building will be powered by renewable technologies including solar panels and air source heat power.
- This is a state of the art facility in a prominent location, accessible by a range of transport options.

Include a wide range of sports in the building.



- The new centre will include a 10-lane swimming pool, training pool, splash pad, soft play area, four multi-purpose studio spaces, and a large multifunctional sports hall. These facilities have been designed to support a variety of sports, fitness activities, and community events.
- Whilst we aimed to accommodate as many sports as possible, this is a general-purpose facility, and some space and budget constraints meant that not all specialist sports could be included.
- **Bowls:** While there will be no dedicated bowls space in the new facility, the sport will continue to be available at the existing Arts & Leisure Centre for the foreseeable future. We are also in ongoing discussions with local bowls clubs to explore future opportunities.
- **Squash:** Following a review of participation levels, we found that the current squash courts are underused, with a low occupancy rate. As a result, squash courts will not be included in the new facility. However, we encourage players to use alternative courts available elsewhere in the town.

Increase the size of the Sports Hall and ensure there is provision for multiple activities.



- There is a reduction in the number of badminton courts provided to align with current Sports England specifications, allowing more space between courts, improving safety and playing conditions.
- Colour-coded sports courts will provide flexibility for a wide range of sports hall activities, as provided in the current facility, including pickleball, badminton and short mat bowls.

There must be flexible space for classes to take place.



- Three dedicated studios and a spin studio plus a modern gym. These spaces will accommodate a wide range of classes and activities.

A larger swimming pool with suitable depth to allow galas and artistic swimming to continue.



- A 10-lane, 25m pool with moveable floor that allows the depth of the pool to vary.
- There will also be a separate teaching pool with a moveable floor and a splash pad – a new facility that introduces small children to water.

Include a larger, poolside spectator viewing gallery.



- Spectators will enjoy closer poolside viewing, creating a more engaging experience for families cheering on swimmers. Flexible bench seating and standing areas accommodate up to 200 people, with wheelchair-accessible spaces ensuring inclusivity for all.

Provide facilities for people of all ages.



- Activities for younger users include soft play provision, separate swimming and interactive splash pad plus family-friendly changing facilities.
- The range of sports provided within the facility includes classes, sessions and activities for all ages.

What wellbeing facilities are included?



- The new facility will offer a sauna and steam room.
- The Healthy Hub will relocate to the new centre, providing valuable wellbeing support and services.

A café should be provided.



- There will be a café serving food and drinks designed to connect with the Town Centre Gardens. It will feature outdoor seating for users to relax and enjoy the surroundings.

There must be sufficient parking.



- There will be parking available, however this will form part of a wider strategy focussed on encouraging travel to the site via public transport, cycling and walking.
- Further information on parking can be found throughout this material.

PLEASE LOOK AT THE NEXT BOARDS FOR THE LATEST DESIGNS.

3. A MODERN, STATE OF THE ART BUILDING SITE CONTEXT

The new Sports & Leisure Centre will have a strong physical and visual connection with the Town Centre Gardens to the east and excellent connectivity to the town centre in the west. A new pedestrian crossing on St George's Way will enhance the visitor experience by creating an urban corridor that connects the town centre, the new Life Sciences Quarter and the Sports & Leisure Centre.

POINTS OF REFERENCE

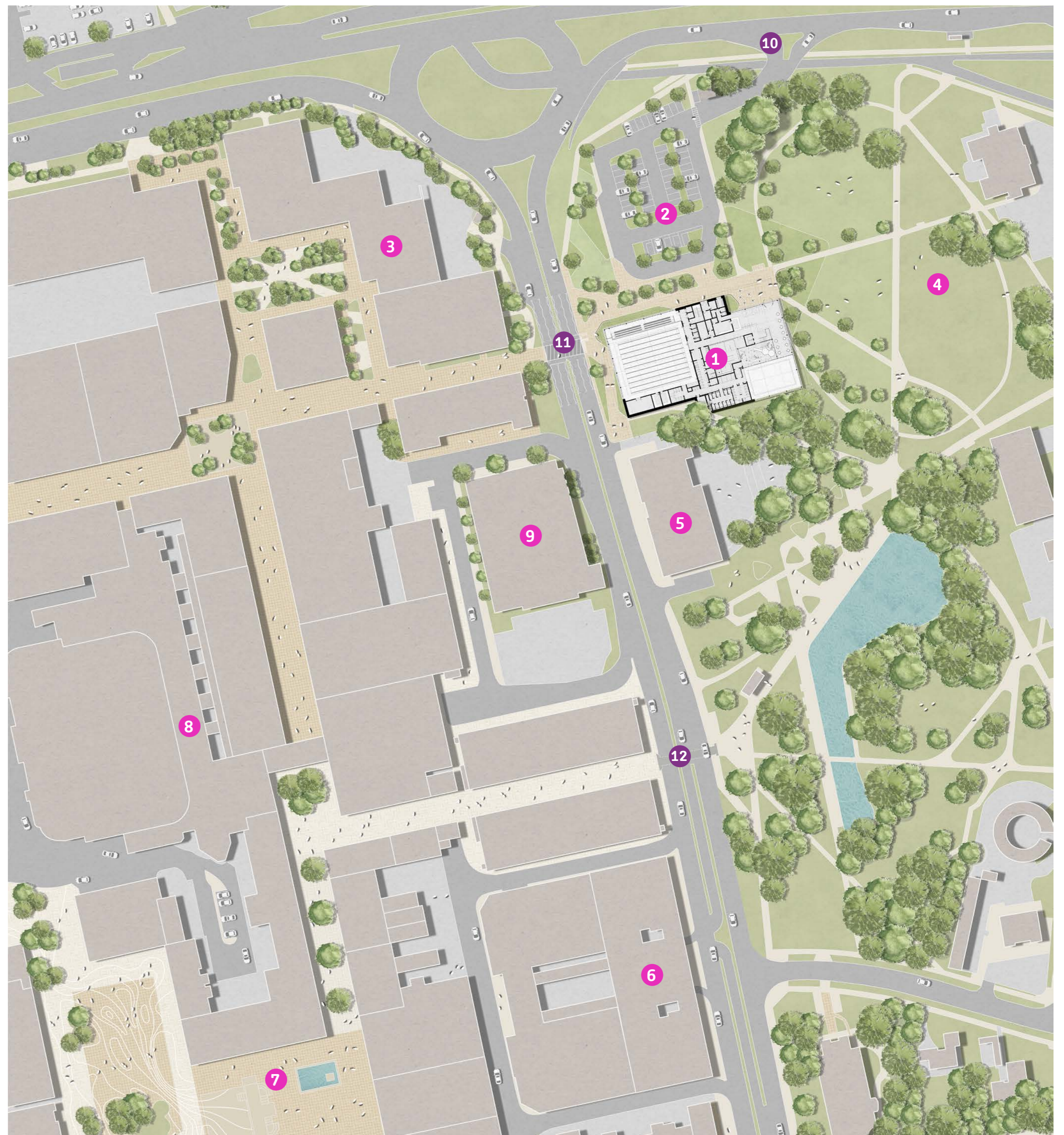
- 1 Stevenage Sports & Leisure Centre
- 2 Sports & Leisure Centre parking
- 3 The Forum development (to be constructed)
- 4 Town Centre Gardens
- 5 Bowes Lyon Young People's Centre
- 6 St George's Way Multi-Storey Car Park
- 7 Town Square
- 8 Westgate Shopping Centre
- 9 Autolus Therapeutics

ACCESS TO THE NEW SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE

- 10 Entrance and exit to the facility
- 11 New toucan crossing
- 12 Underpass connection



Artist impression - approach from St George's Way



Vision site plan highlighting connection to the town centre and Town Centre Gardens

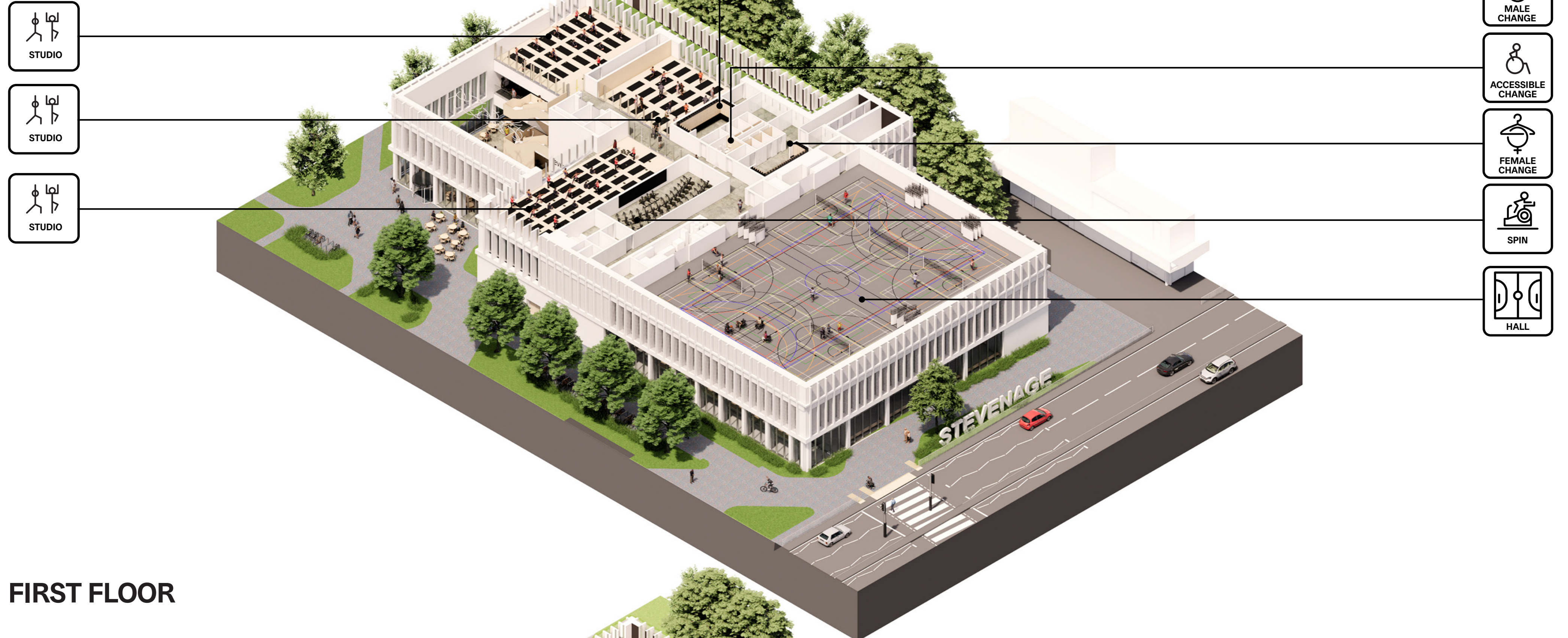


Artist impression - view of leisure centre from Town Centre Gardens

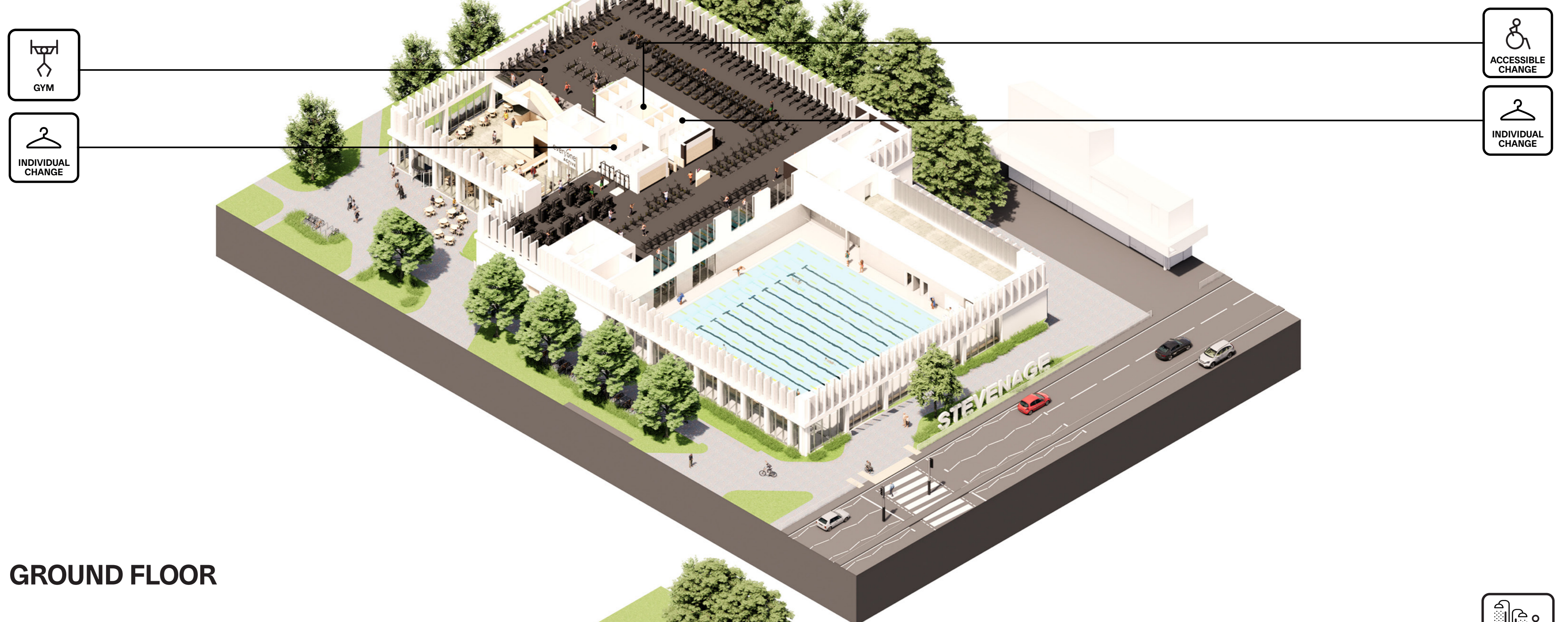
4. FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE INSIDE THE BUILDING

This building will provide a state of the art facility fit for the needs of local people, that will encourage ongoing sports and leisure activities in the town. As this is designed to be a general facility, it won't accommodate all specialist sports. However, many sports are available elsewhere within Stevenage and we will continue to work with clubs if they wish to transfer elsewhere.

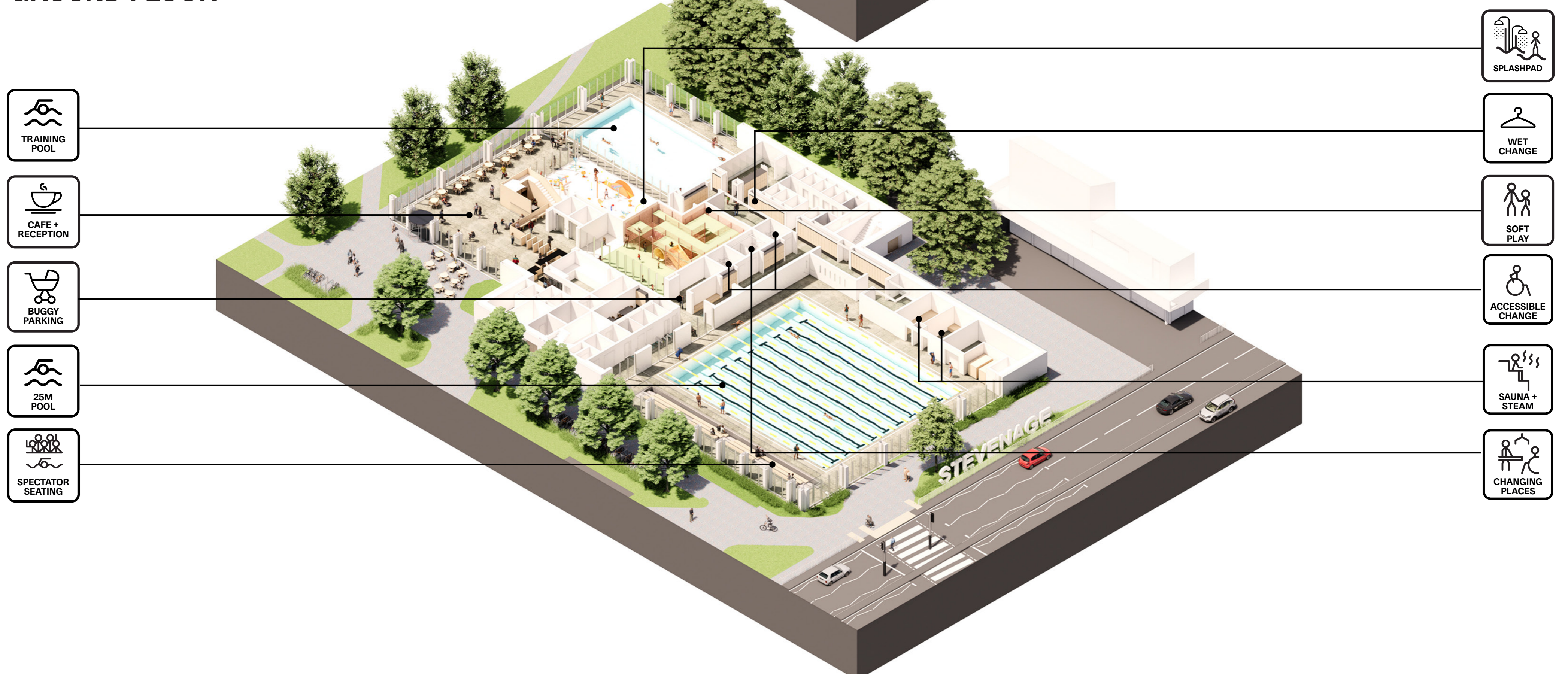
SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

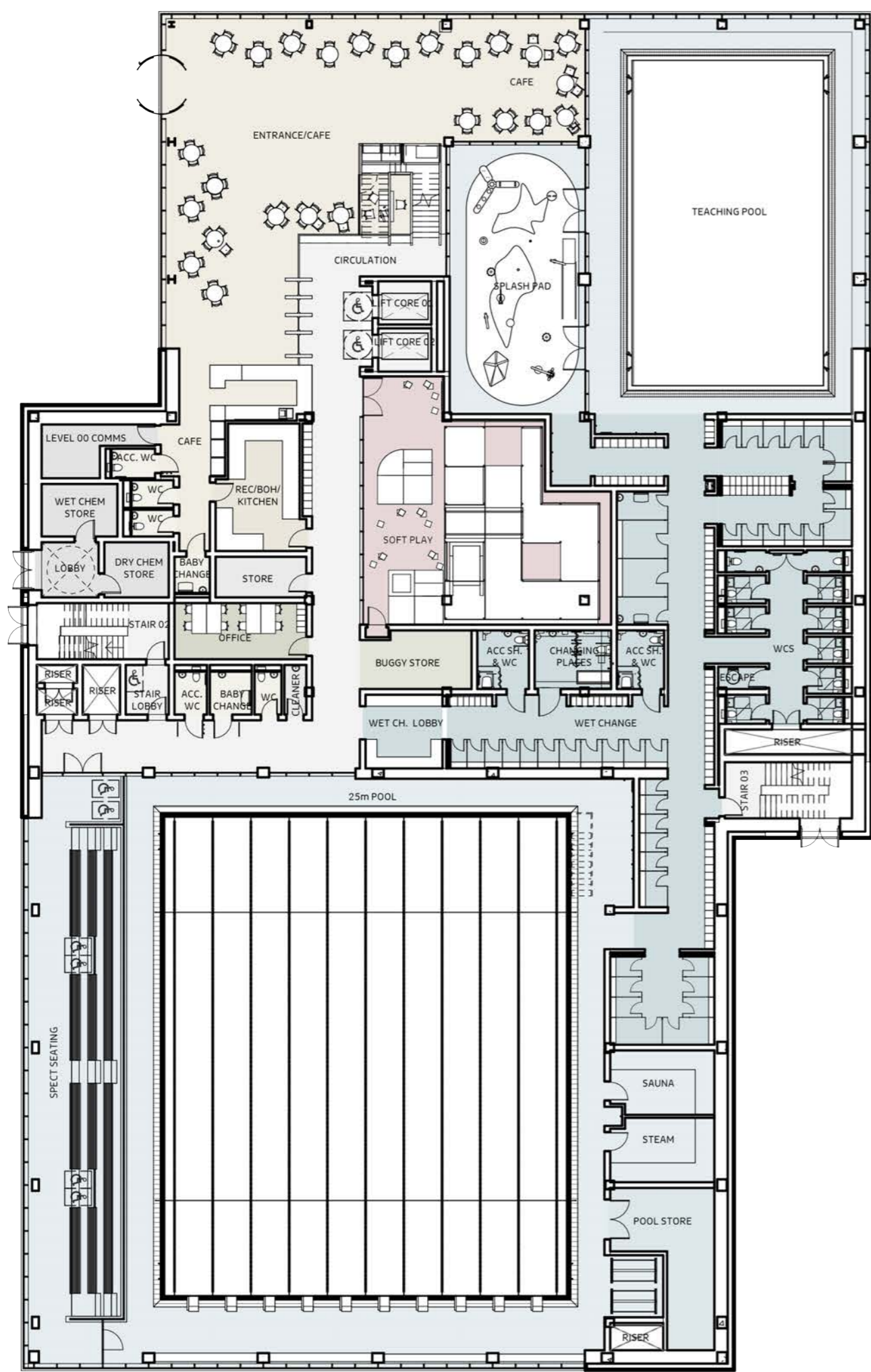


GROUND FLOOR



5. FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE

SPORTS FACILITIES - GROUND FLOOR



Artist impression - view of splash pad with training pool and café beyond

GROUND FLOOR - SPORTS FACILITIES MIX

25M POOL:

- A 10-lane, 25m pool with a moveable floor that can be raised to surface level and lowered to any depth up to 1.8m.
- Pool side spectator seating for up to 200 people, including wheelchair accessible spaces.
- A sauna and steam room accessible from the pool.

TEACHING POOL:

- A large teaching pool with a moveable floor and views to the café and the Town Centre Gardens.

SPLASH PAD:

- A child-friendly wet play area with a variety of play equipment visible from the café. This is similar to the splash pad at Fairlands Valley Park but can be used year round.

CHANGING AREAS:

- A changing facility with cubicles and lockers of varying sizes, accessible changing facilities and a dedicated Changing Places room.
- The changing area has been flexibly designed to facilitate group and individual changing.

SOFT PLAY:

- A child-friendly play area with visibility to the café area.



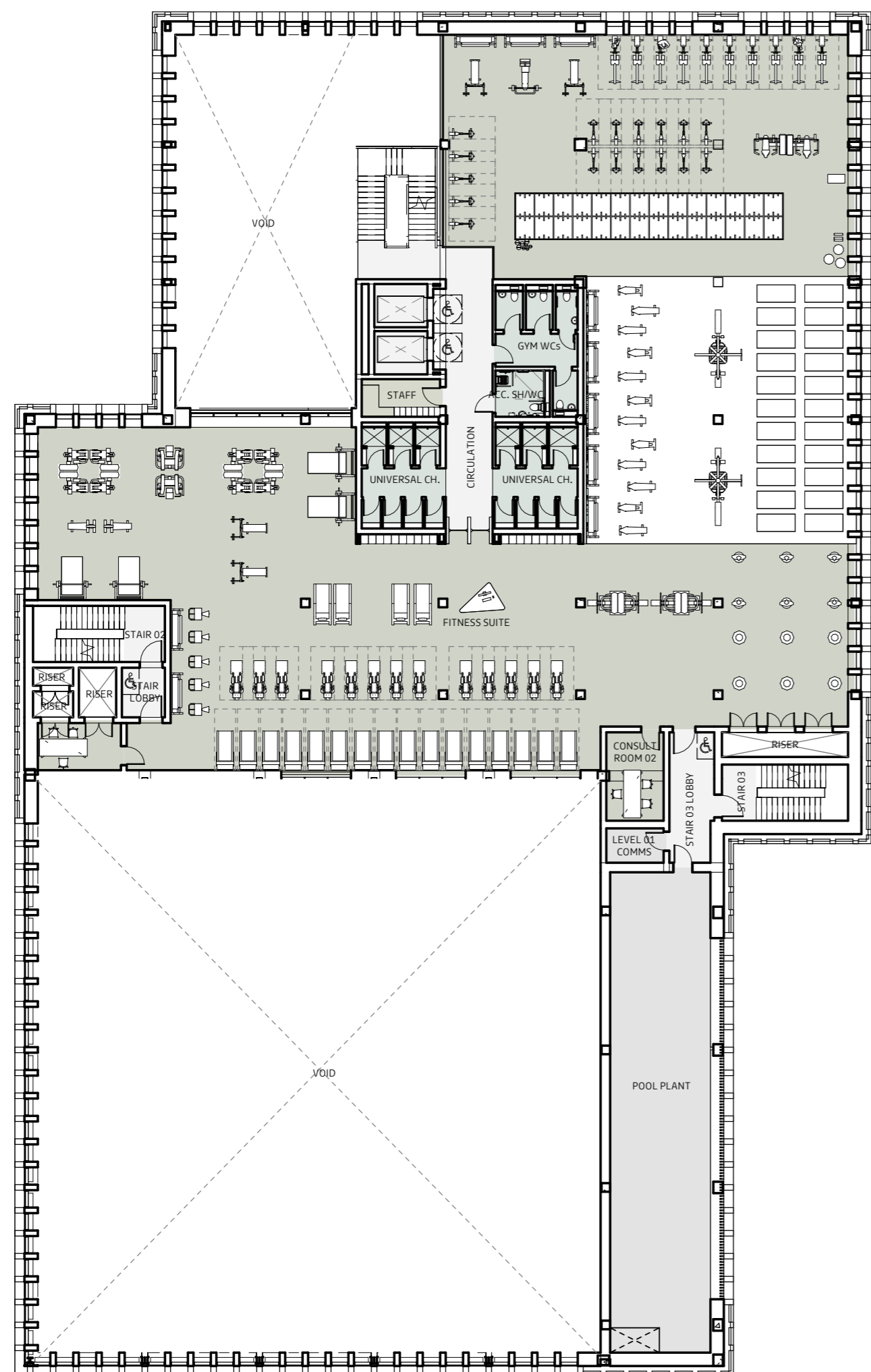
Artist impression - view of training pool with splash pad and café beyond



Artist impression - view of 25m pool

6. FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE

DRY FACILITIES - FIRST FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR - SPORTS FACILITIES MIX

FITNESS SUITE:

- 1,000sqm of flexible fitness suite with panoramic views of the park and 25m pool.
- Fitness zones including free weights, cardio, and consultation rooms including The Healthy Hub.

CHANGING AREAS:

- Flexible individual changing facilities, WCs and showers are provided plus accessible changing rooms on this level.
- Lockers are provided within the gym.



Artist impression - view of gym stretch zone



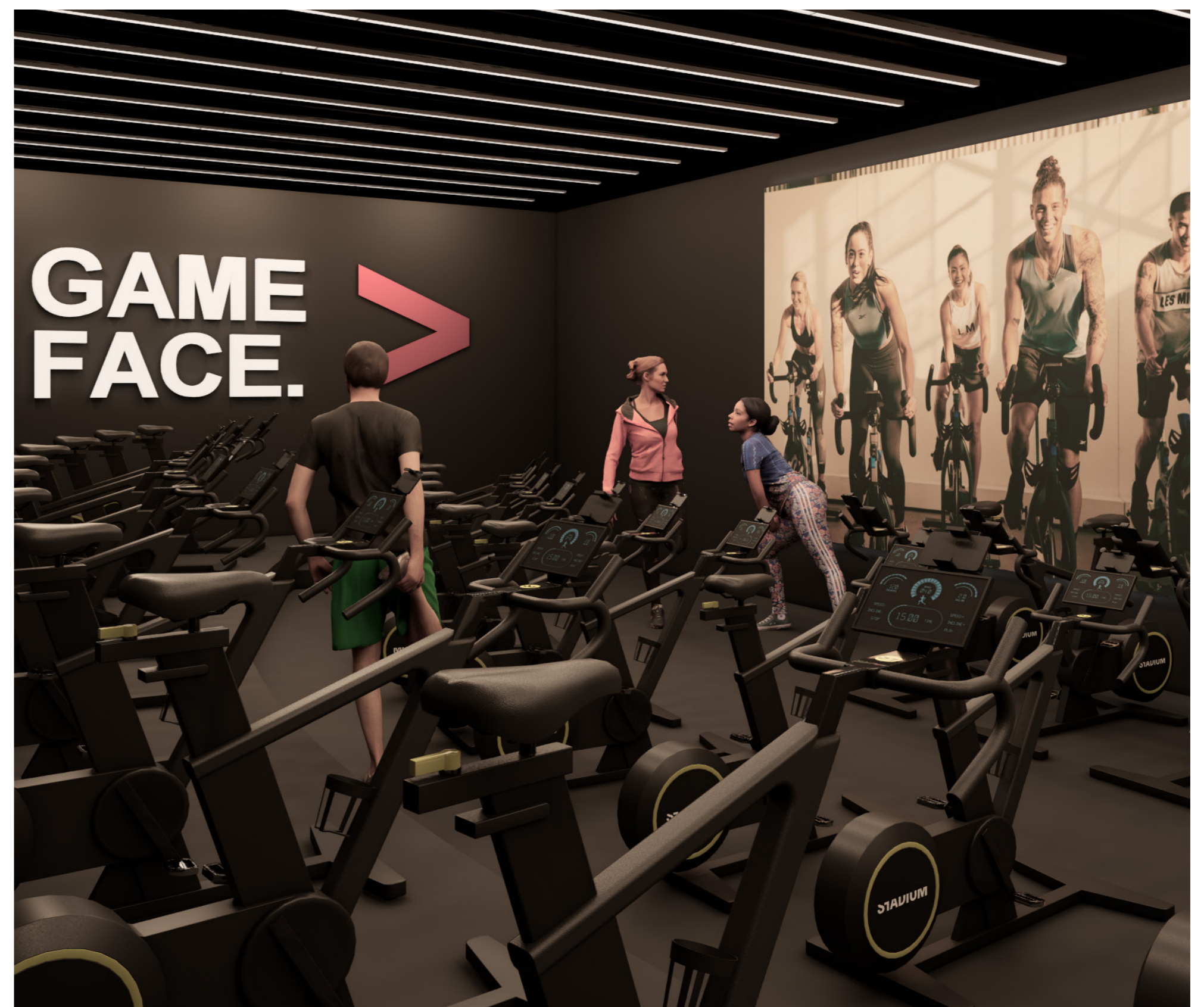
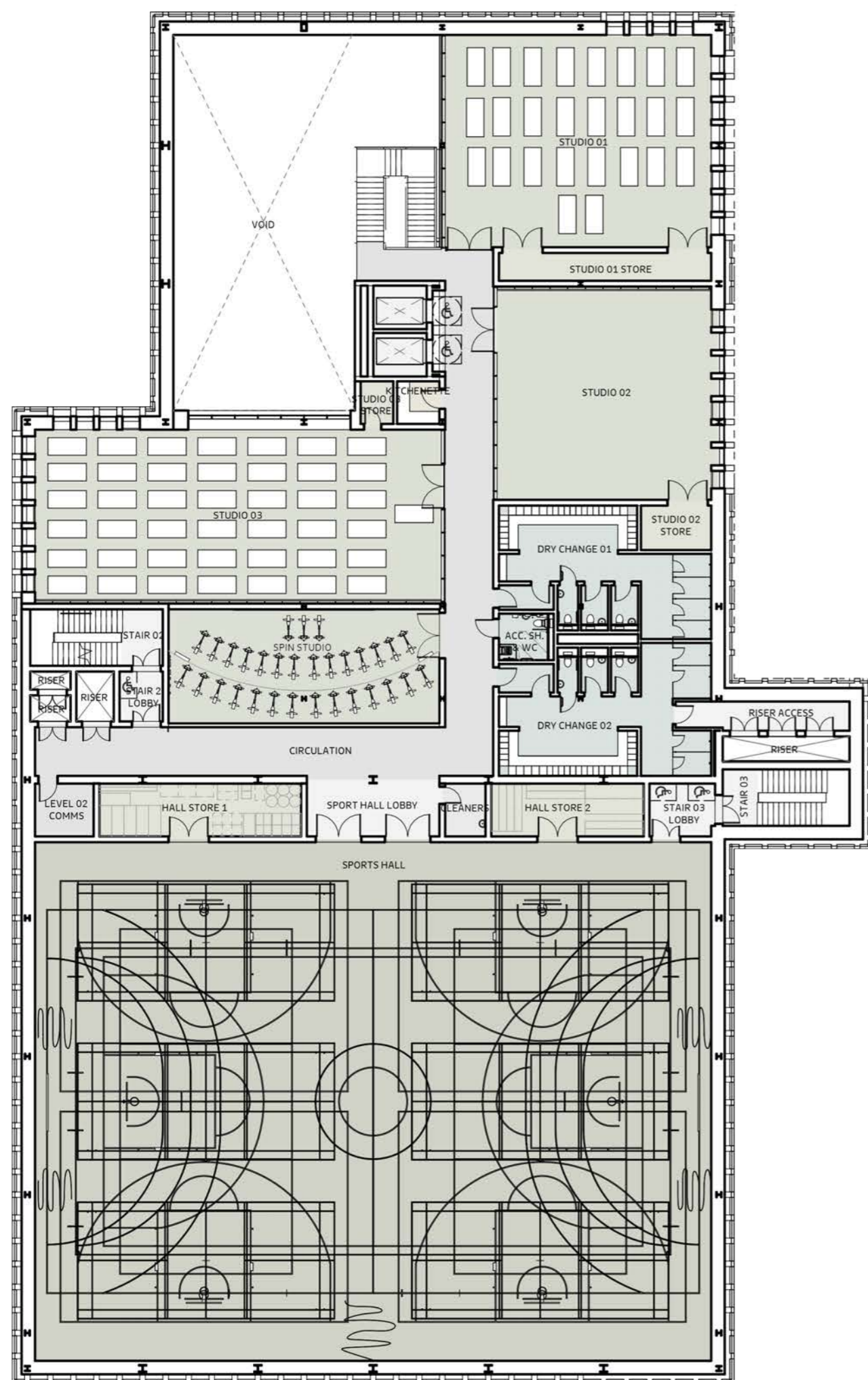
Artist impression - view of gym highlighting visual connection to the Town Centre Gardens



Artist impression - long view of gym

7. FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE

DRY FACILITIES - SECOND FLOOR



Artist impression - view of spin studio

SECOND FLOOR - SPORTS FACILITIES MIX

6 COURT SPORTS HALL:

- Colour-coded sports courts will provide flexibility for a wide range of sports hall activities including basketball, netball, handball, badminton, volleyball, pickleball, futsal and short mat bowls.
- The Sports Hall can be partitioned for other uses.

STUDIOS:

- Three multi-functional studios with mirrors and the flexibility to be used for everything from exercise classes to group meetings and kids' parties.
- A spin studio with state-of-the-art spin bikes, adaptive lighting and sound system for virtual and in-person spin classes.

CHANGING AREAS:

- Separate male and female changing rooms are provided on this floor, as well as accessible changing rooms.



Artist impression - view of yoga studio



Artist impression - view of sports hall

8. ACCESSING THE NEW SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE TRANSPORT LINKS AND PARKING

The new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage will be accessible via a range of transport options to ensure users of all ages and abilities can access the facilities to help improve their health and wellbeing. This board highlights the various options available for visitors who are visiting by car, by public transport, by coach and by bike.

MAP A: CAR PARKING



MAP A: KEY

CAR PARKS LOCATED NEAR THE NEW LEISURE CENTRE



TRAVELLING BY CAR

The proposals include a car park to the north of the site, with an improved access from Fairlands Way. At this stage, the exact number of parking spaces has not been finalised as the landscape design is still being developed. Our landscaping proposals will need to have regard to other key planning requirements, for example enhancements for biodiversity and the incorporation of sustainable drainage measures.

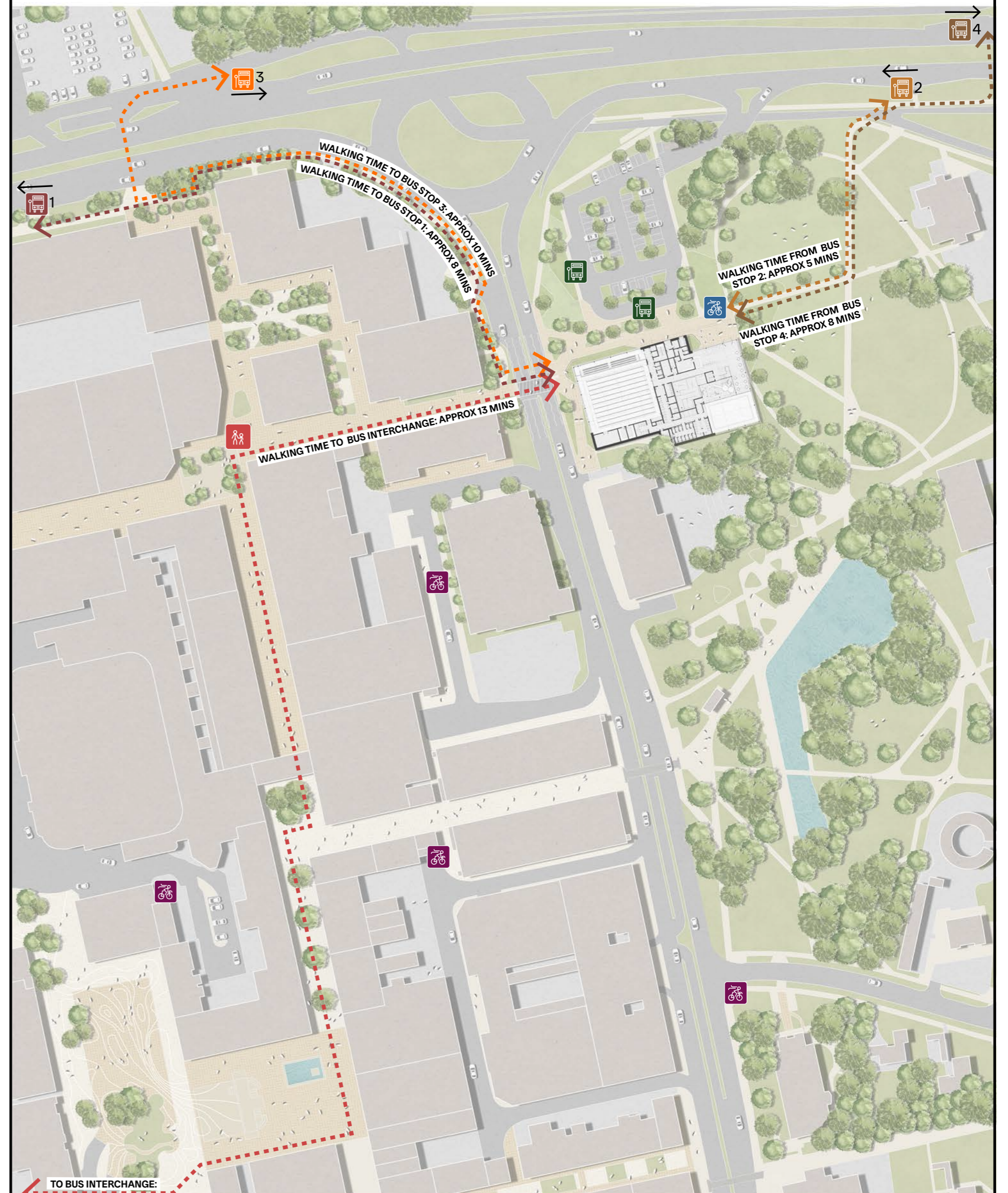
There is plenty of additional parking within a ten minute walk of the new facility:

- **5 minute walk:** St George's Multi Storey Car Park - 996 spaces (16 blue badge bays)
- **5 minute walk:** The Forum Car Park - 300 spaces (11 blue badge bays)
- **10 minute walk:** Westgate Multi Storey Car Park - 364 spaces (17 blue badge bays)

In the future, a multi-storey car park will be developed as part of the Forum site development providing up to 300 spaces, conveniently located opposite the facility. As well as Leisure Centre visitors being able to benefit from the redeveloped Forum, our on-going transport assessment for the project highlights significant spare capacity in both the St George's Way and Westgate car parks, even at peak times, during the week and weekends.

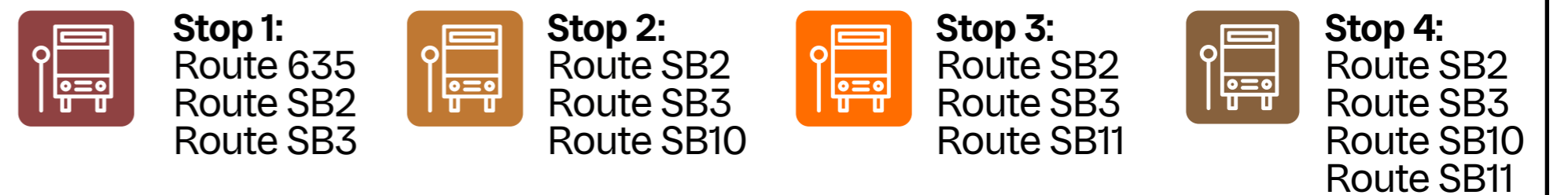
The walking routes from all car parks are well lit and we are working with Hertfordshire County Council to enhance the nearby underpass for improved accessibility. An at-grade crossing will provide easy access to the Sports & Leisure Centre from all car parks situated to the west of St George's Way.

MAP B: PUBLIC TRANSPORT, COACH PARKING AND BERYL BIKES



MAP B: KEY

CURRENT BUS STOPS LOCATED NEAR THE NEW LEISURE CENTRE



WALKING ROUTE TO BUS INTERCHANGE



PROPOSED COACH DROP OFF LOCATIONS - LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARK



BERYL BIKE STOPS LOCATED NEAR THE NEW LEISURE CENTRE



VISITING BY BUS

The map above shows the bus routes currently available near the site. We have listened to concerns about the availability of town-wide public transport links. To address this, we are actively working with Hertfordshire County Council, as the public transport provider, to explore the feasibility of adding a bus stop near the new building.

VISITING BY COACH

Dedicated coach pick-up and drop-off zones will provide a safe walk to the entrance of the new facility.

VISITING BY BIKE

Long term covered cycle parking and short term cycle parking will be located close to the entrance and connect to the Town Centre Gardens. A 2m wide cycle path wraps around the current Swimming Centre car park and will be retained. Additionally, a Beryl Bike bay will be installed, providing convenient access to shared bikes for visitors.

9. APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENT DESIGNING WITH THE PLANET IN MIND

The new Sports & Leisure Centre aspires to be a model for sustainability, with eco-friendly features throughout the design and its operation. We will be seeking sustainable building materials such as recycled materials and renewable energy sources such as solar panels. Active travel is encouraged with bike parking provided.

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS:

The building design incorporates key sustainable features including:



Building in section showing sustainability features

KEEPING IT GREEN:

1. Solar panel installation.
2. Air source heat pumps to power heating and hot water.
3. Natural ventilation to sports hall.
4. Natural light to key spaces in the building including pool areas, reception and café. High performance window glazing to maximise external views.
5. Pool cover and floating floor in pools to reduce heat loss.
6. Views to the surrounding Town Centre Gardens
7. High-efficiency LED lighting.
8. Encouraging the use of stairs with a bold, attractive and open design.
9. Connection to Town Centre Gardens to improve walking routes around the site and to the town centre.
10. Bicycle parking (not shown in drawing above).
11. Fossil fuel free.

Sheffield cycle hoops



Solar panels



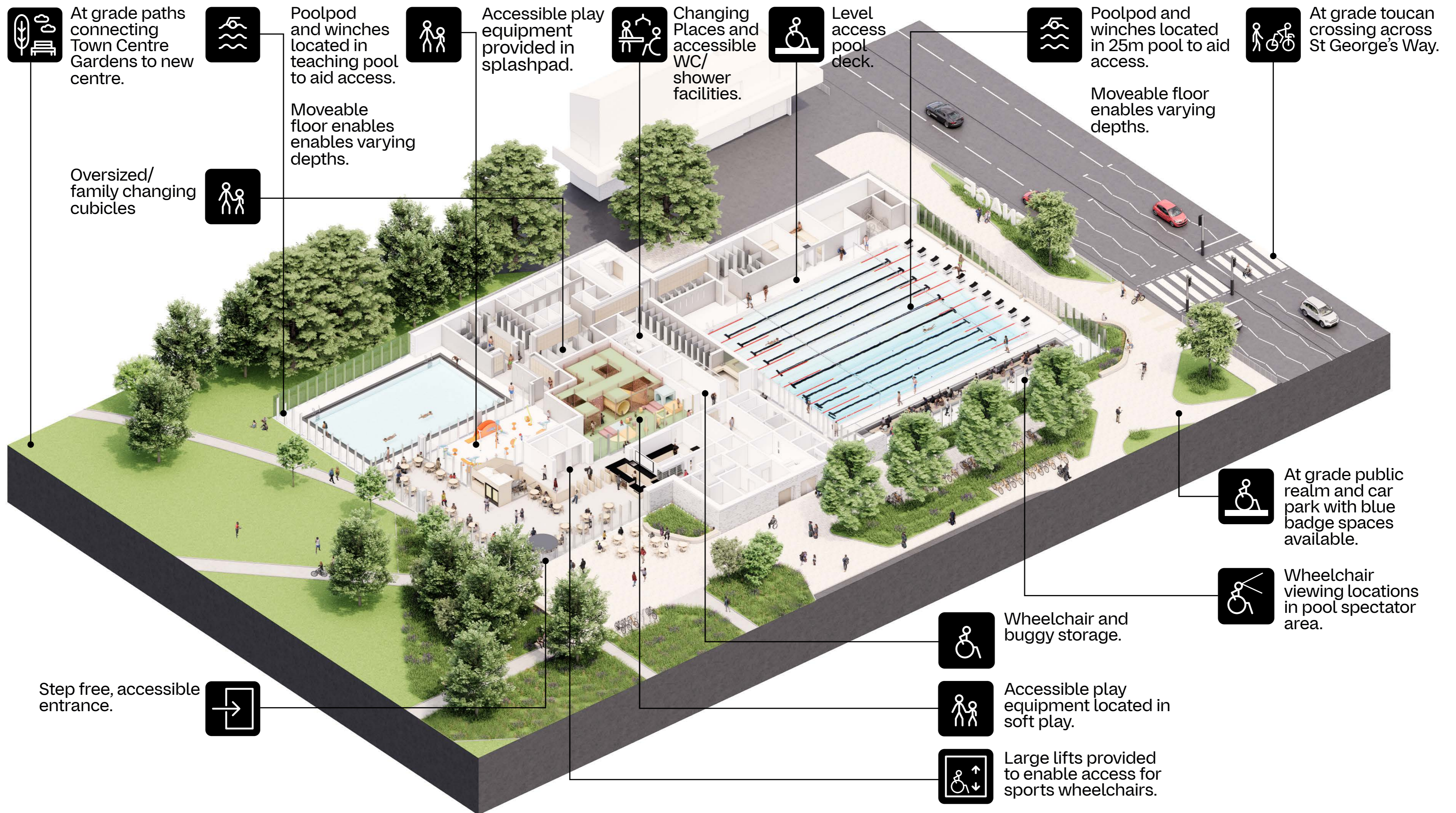
Pool cover







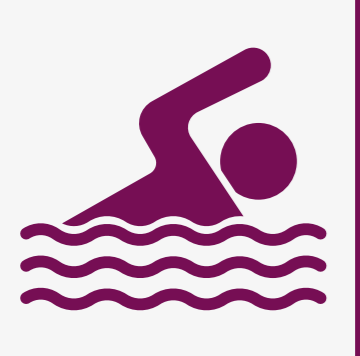




10. APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY DESIGNING WITH PEOPLE IN MIND

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL:

The building will be designed to modern day accessibility standards, including:



Ground floor axonometric highlighting key accessibility features

			
Hearing aid induction loops for people with hearing difficulties	Dementia-friendly design to make navigation as easy as possible	Accessible entrances, stairs, ramps and lifts suitable for wheelchair users	Easy access to toilets and changing accommodation, including fully accessible toilet and changing rooms
			
Easy pool access using pool pods	SEN multi-sensory equipment included in teaching and splashpad areas	Wheelchair-accessible lockers	Full height lockers for storage of walking aids
			
			Buggy and wheelchair storage

Accessible wet facilities - Poolpod



Accessible Changing Places



Blue badge parking



11. NEXT STEPS TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT

OUR COMMITMENT

We encourage you to share your views with us before a planning application is submitted. The details on how to do this are below.

Throughout the planning process we will keep an open dialogue with the local community, who we are committed to working alongside on this new facility for the town.

Please be assured that the Leisure Centre and Swimming Centre in Stevenage will remain operational throughout the construction of this new building. The Gordon Craig Theatre remains unaffected by this plan.

LEAVE YOUR FEEDBACK

Your feedback is important to us, and we would encourage you to leave your thoughts by:

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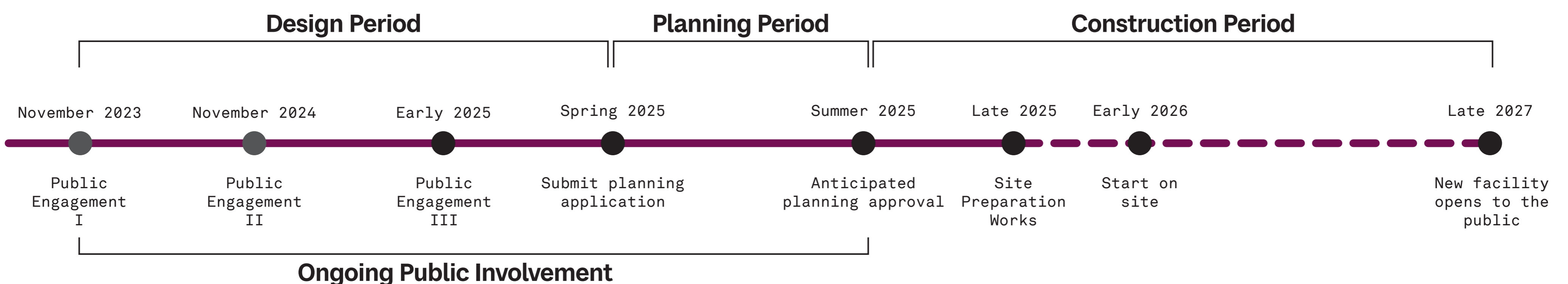


Artist impression - view of reception and café



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEAVE US
YOUR FEEDBACK!**

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



Artist impression - view of café and Town Centre Gardens beyond