

Service Depot Robertsbridge



Design & Access Statement

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Rev C



gdmarchitects

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Document

1.2 The Architects

2.0 Context Analysis

2.1 Existing Site & Planning History

2.2 Planning Policy

2.3 Access & Transport

2.4 Flood Risk

2.5 Trees & Ecology

2.6 Acoustic Design

2.7 Design Opportunities and Constraints

3.0 Design Proposal

3.1 Massing & Use

3.2 Appearance & Materials

3.3 Landscaping & Ecology

3.4 Access & Transport

3.5 Sustainability

3.6 Security & Lighting

4.0 Conclusions

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of This Document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by gdm architects on behalf of British Gypsum Ltd. It supports the full planning application for a new service depot on an existing light-industrial/ brownfield site in East Sussex.

In accordance with Government guidelines, this document will expand on design and access related matters, explain how the proposed site layout and building design has evolved and positively reacted to the site characteristics.

1.2 The Architects

gdm architects are an RIBA Chartered practice with over 30 years of experience in delivering successful projects in the UK, in virtually all market sectors.

From our head office in Maidstone we can demonstrate a track-record of award-winning designs and projects resolved to all stakeholders' satisfaction.

The images on this page demonstrate a selection of previous projects of similar size and/or setting recently completed by gdm architects.



Scania Facilities Building, Milton Keynes completed by GDM in 2019



Scania Junction Six, Maidstone completed by GDM in 2016

2.0 Context Analysis

2.1 Existing Site & Planning History

Gypsum was initially discovered here in 1873 by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Mining and manufacturing started in 1876 by the Sub Wealden Gypsum Company Limited. In 2003 a £7.3million investment at the plant extended capacity by 30%.

The site is located 10 min drive South from Robertsbridge Town Centre, along the A21, outside the Robertsbridge urban area. It is located South of the Darwell reservoir and North of Battle Golf Club. The site is currently in use for storing and loading raw materials. The ground is primarily hard standing.

The development site is a small portion of land owned and operated by British

Gypsum Ltd. The rest of their property includes Light-industrial premises dsipersed amongst concrete hardstanding and private roads. Beyond the property boundary is predominantly green fields and woodlands.

British Gypsum own a fleet of Scania Trucks. Traditionally they would ask other companies to MOT and service their trucks. However British Gypsum Ltd are evolving how they work. Their business model for now and the future is moving in a different direction. Therefore they can see potential to utilise their current site to their advantage by constructing a service depot. The local area will benefit from reduced truck movements on and off of site.



Aerial view of the site.

2.2 Planning Policy

The proposed Service Depot has been designed with the following Rother District Council planning guidance in mind:

- Rother District Council Local Plan 2006
- East Sussex Guidance for Parking at Non-Residential Development
- Rother District Council Interactive Map

The proposal outlined in this document and the accompanying drawings would create new employment space. Respecting the Council's intention to safeguard the borough's landscapes, the development would be on a brownfield site which has a history of light-industrial use.

We consider the proposed design to be of high quality and to provide a positive contribution to its area – this is explained in some detail in Section 4.0: 'Design Proposal'. The sustainability measures included within this proposal are explained in chapter 4.5 'Sustainability' and are in line with the Council's dedication to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

The proposal will create a positive impact on the existing landscape, increase trees and does not reduce green area. Protection of biodiversity is addressed in chapter 2.5: 'Trees & Ecology'.

2.3 Access & Transport

The site is located to the north of Netherfield Road, approximately 5.5 kilometres east of Netherfield town centre. A flag-and-post bus stop is located approximately 3 kilometres to the West of the site, a ten minute walk from the site access Road. With respect to rail services, Robertsbridge railway station is located approximately 4 miles to the North (a



Existing site, looking South



Existing site, looking South

12 minute drive) of the site access.

Even though the site is only an 12-minute-drive from Robertbridge town centre (3.9 miles), it does not lend itself to be accessible by foot. The public transport links are not currently sufficient for daily commute to work for most people, neither are the roads very pedestrian-friendly.

The British Gypsum site is situated within the High Weald National Character Area (NCA). The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 percent of the NCA. The closest site is the River Line SSSI which is 1.5 miles to the west. The River Line (ditch) itself runs within the woodland close to the site area.

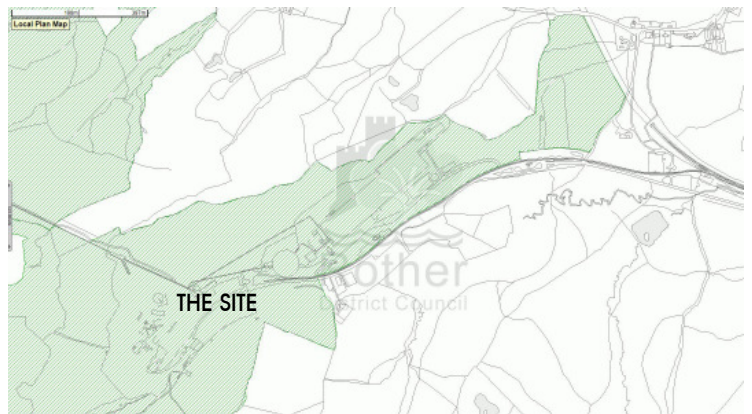
Staff tend to commute to work by car. The proximity of the A21 also makes this an ideal location for a business which relies on deliveries and the ability of staff to get to various construction site locations, while keeping the traffic away from the town centre.

The proposed parking provision has been discussed under chapter 4.4: Access & Transport.

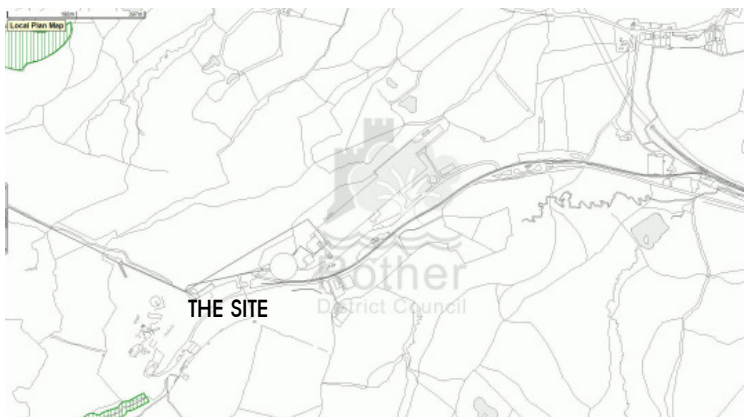
Access for the disabled has been designed to comply with the Approved Document Part M Vol 2, including accessible parking spaces, WC and shower room.



Rother District Council Local Plan Map extract, indicating Woodland areas with green hatch



Rother District Council Local Plan Map extract, indicating SNCI Special Nature Conservation Importance area in green hatch



Rother District Council Local Plan Map extract, indicating SSSI Site of Specific Scientific Interest area in green hatch

2.4 Flood Risk

The site is at low risk of river, sea and surface water flooding. A sustainable urban drainage system is nevertheless proposed to improve surface water run-off and has been detailed on the Drainage Strategy Plan by Evans & Langford submitted with this application.

2.5 Trees & Ecology

The existing trees are shown on the accompanying drawings. There are no protected trees.

British Gypsum produce annual biodiversity action plans to maintain the variety of flora and fauna which can be found at the Robertsbridge site. The ancient woodland contains dense and varied native woodland.

2.6 Acoustic Design

Mechanical ventilation will be installed to prevent staff and visitors from having to open windows. It is our intention also to install double glazed windows to further reduce any impact from noise pollution. The cladding achieves 34dBw sound reduction.



Extract from the Flood Map for indicating no flood risk on site.

2.7 Design Opportunities and Constraints

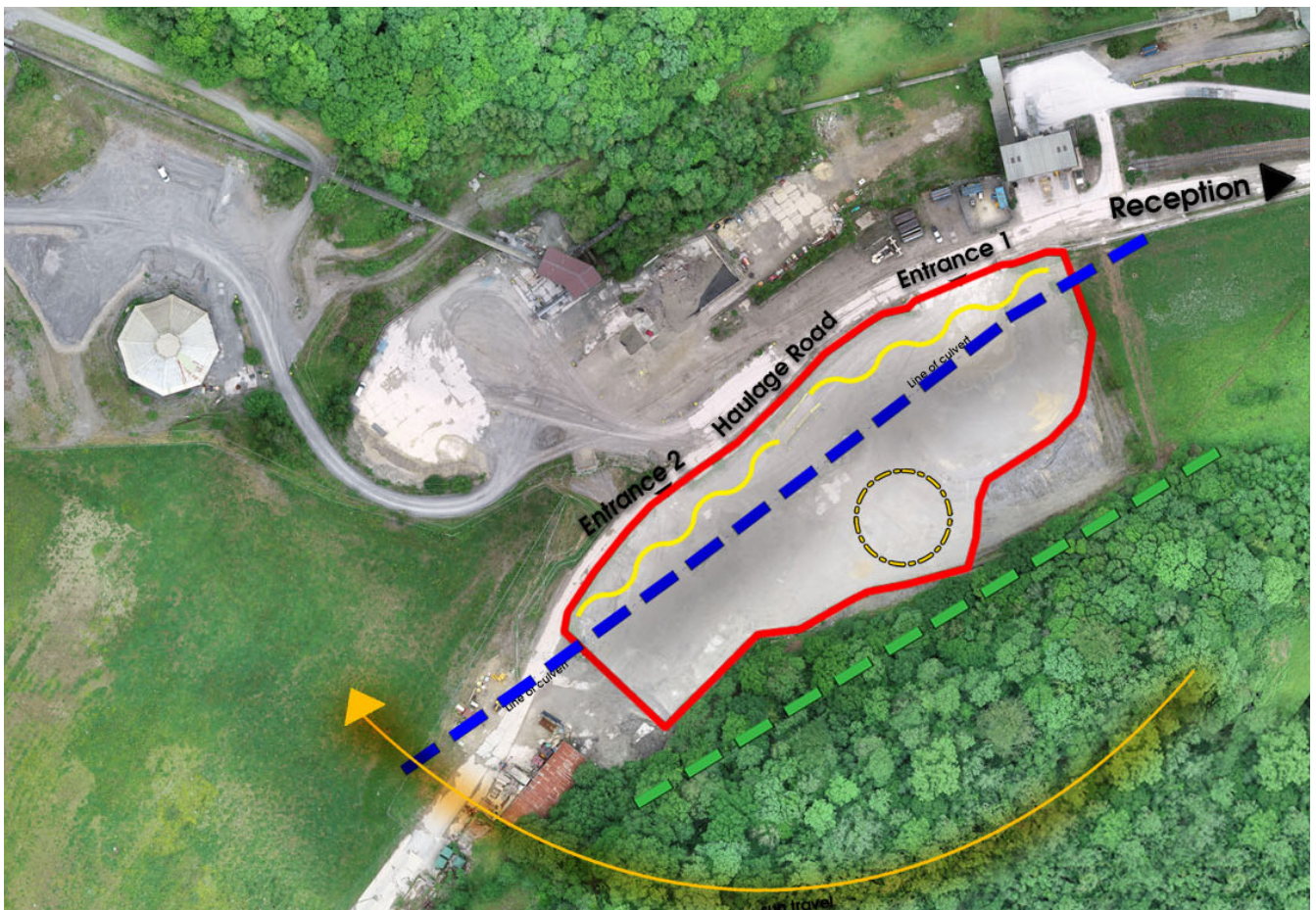
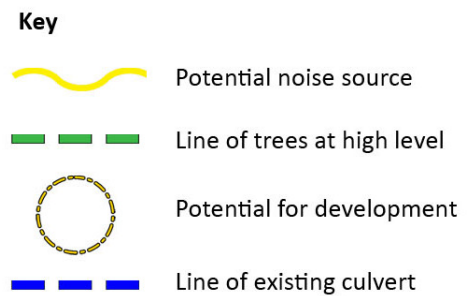
The site presents a number of key opportunities which will need to be considered during the design;

- Opportunity to construct a building without having to demolish first
- Good access to sunlight/daylight
- Ample space for parking
- Existing transport links can be retained and used
- Opportunity to develop redundant area

A number of key constraints have been identified;

- Proximity to slope
- Adjacent to existing culvert

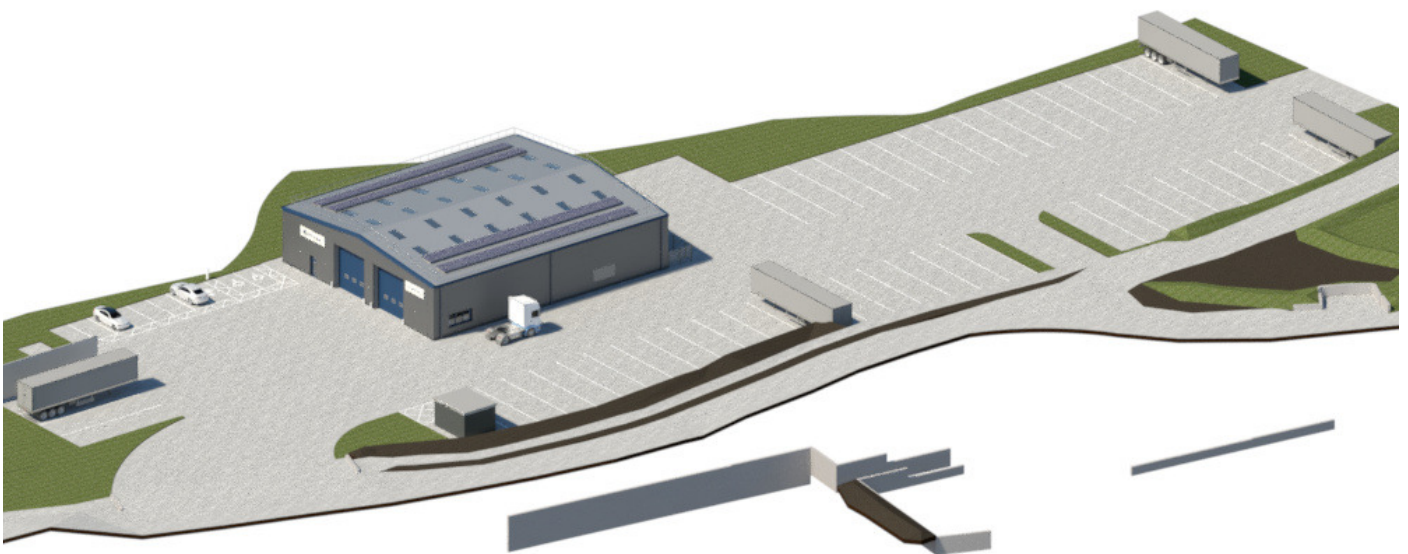
Site levels vary little across the site from 68 to 78m AOD. The development site is 9485m² or 0.95 Hectare.



3.0 Design Proposal

3.1 Massing & Use

There are no existing buildings on site. However there is a relatively small concrete frame used for strapping goods down to vehicles that will require demolition. The site is currently used as storage of stock piles for raw materials..



North birds eye view

3.2 Appearance & Materials

The site is deep in the countryside surrounded by fields, trees and hedges. Any built up areas in the local area are dispersed and small.

The industrial buildings on site are mostly steel clad. The appearance of the proposed building will resemble and complement the existing buildings.

In our opinion the design achieves a balance between 1) protecting the character of the area while also 2) achieving a contemporary aesthetic which will benefit the local workforce.



Glazed doors highlight entrances against the grey cladding.

The hipped roof drains in to box gutters at the eaves.

The roof design works in harmony with the overall geometry of the building, with most visual interest placed on the front elevation.

The building will not be visible from public view. The buildings internal functions are technical in nature and the simple elevations reflect these operations externally.

The service depot will be placed at the back of the site near existing trees to avoid an existing culvert below ground. The materials will resemble other buildings on the property.

The internal service area benefits from ample natural light through rooflights integrated to the roof slope.

Four full height goods doors allow two trucks to drive through the building at any given time. The door positions allow easy access from and in to the site.



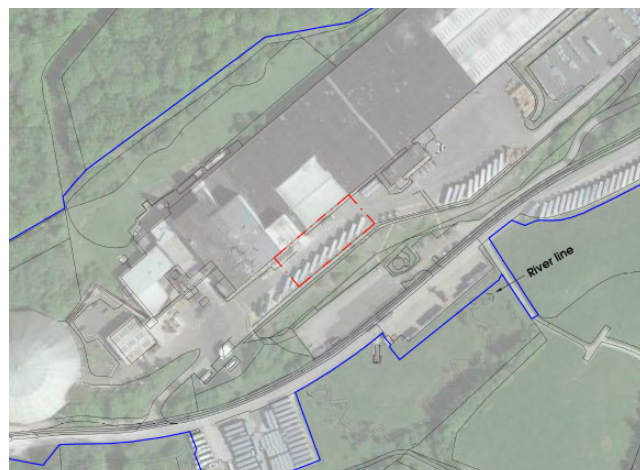
Service Depot aerial view of the front

This application also concerns the construction of a lorry strapping shed adjacent to the existing Reception.

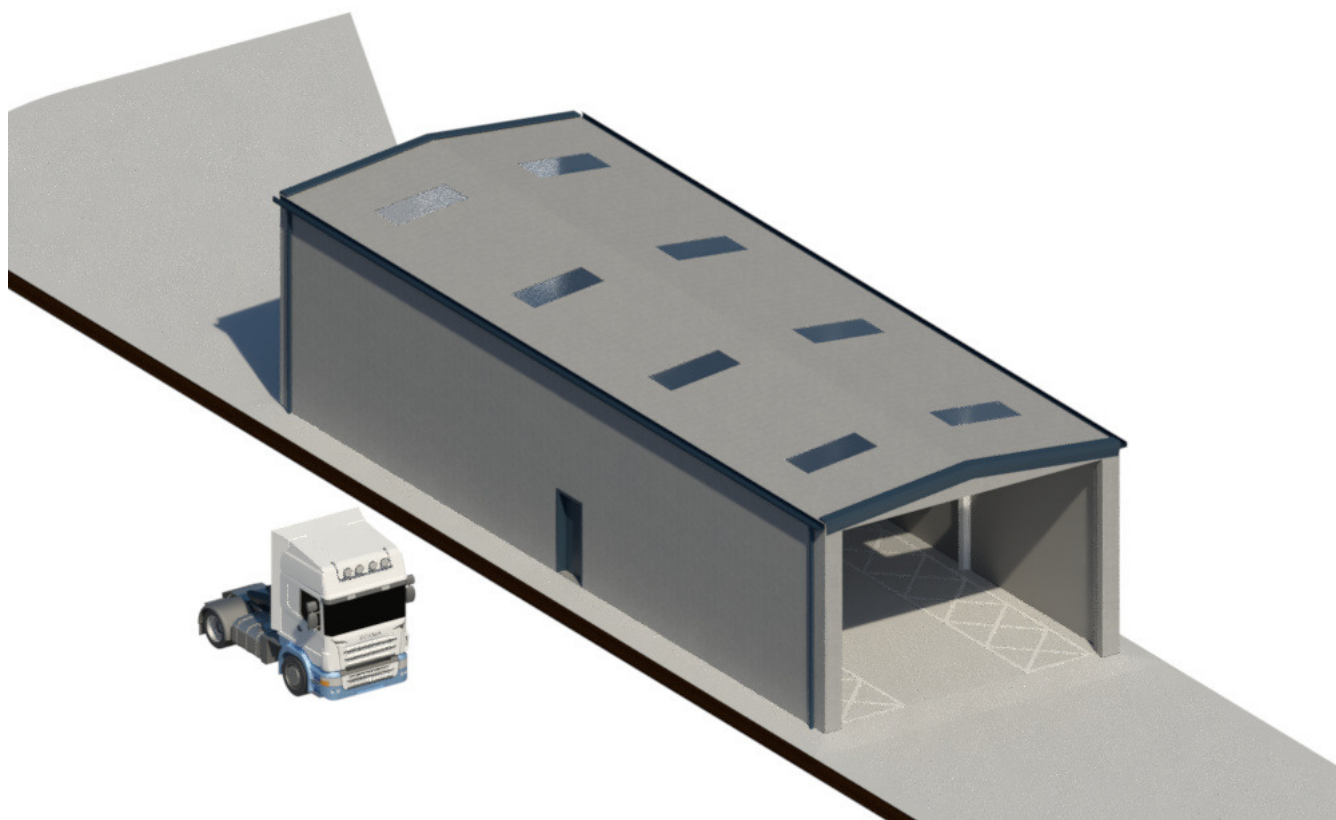
Lorries loads will be secured within this enclosure. Personnel will be protected from incremental weather whilst securing the products with ratchet straps.

Despite being in a separate location the design harmonises with the proposed vehicle servicing building as well as the existing buildings.

Lorries are currently loaded in the trailer bays. The service depot site will provide 50 trailer bays. Therefore following construction of the strapping shed there will still be a net gain in trailer parking bays on the property.



Strapping shed site location



Strapping Shed aerial view from South West

3.3 Landscaping & Ecology

The existing site is predominantly concrete, enclosed within a drainage channel to the North and lined by high level trees to the south.

The proposal is to preserve any trees that are deemed to be in good condition.

Further points affecting the ecology are outlined in chapter 4.5, 'Sustainability', below.



3.4 Access & Transport

The existing transport arrangements on site were outlined in chapter 2.3.

Vehicular access to the site will be maintained via the existing access road off of the junction to the A2110.

Due to the nature and the location of the business, the development will provide a total of 8 car parking spaces, 2 disabled car parking bays and 50 truck trailer parking bays. These are indicated on the proposed site plan.

Given the rural location of the site it is likely that staff will travel to work with private cars and therefore the level of parking is deemed acceptable. One car parking space and one disabled car parking space will have a electric car charging point.

The existing site has no parking provision and therefore the proposed development will result in an increase of parking spaces.

The local area will benefit from reduced truck movements on and off of site by servicing the vehicles in situ.

3.5 Sustainability

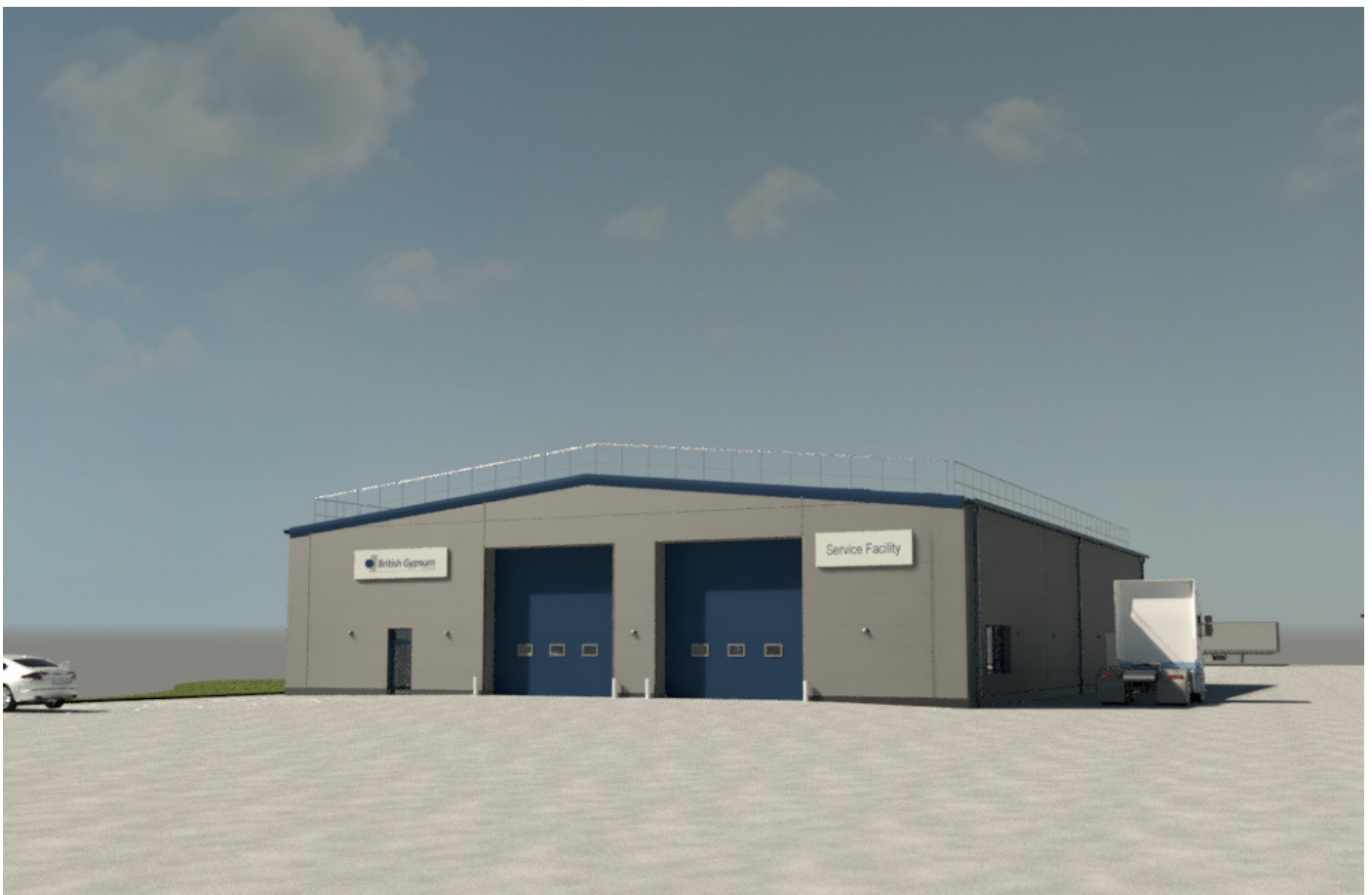
In line with Rother District Council's aspiration to protect and enhance the natural environment, as well as to reduce the future impacts from climate change, the following features to improve environmental sustainability have been incorporated into this proposal:

- Photovoltaic cells on the roof for on-site energy generation
- Electric car charging points
- Sustainable drainage system
- Use of local materials to reduce energy use and carbon emissions during construction

3.6 Security & Lighting

The site layout and building have been designed in accordance with 'Secured by Design' guidance. Passive surveillance of the entrance area is encouraged by the orientation of large windows. The private access road from the A2100 has good surveillance with reception next to the main entrance.

The external entrances, will be well lit to ensure both ease of access and adequate lighting levels for security.



East elevation

4.0 Conclusions

The proposed design takes inspiration from the local vernacular, whilst resulting in contemporary appearance.

The proposal will be an improvement on the existing in terms of ecology and landscaping.

British Gypsum, Robertsbridge site employs over 100 people and as such is one of the largest employers in the local area. The service depot will create even more jobs for the local area.



View from West