



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PEASE HOUSE
HITCHIN

April 2026
133-OP-PL-DAS

METRIC
MAKER

opstead



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CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Opstead on behalf of Metric + Maker in support of a full planning application submitted to North Hertfordshire Council.

The application seeks consent for a carefully considered package of external alterations to Pease House — a late-1990s office building set within The Priory estate in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

The proposals represent a genuine opportunity to transform an underperforming, largely vacant office building into an attractive and high-quality asset — improving its appearance, performance, and amenity offer whilst remaining entirely sympathetic to its conservation area setting.

Prior approval consent is already in place for the conversion of Pease House into 27 residential dwellings. The proposed external alterations have been specifically designed to serve both the current office use and the consented residential use, delivering improvements that are beneficial, durable and lasting regardless of occupation.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings which accompany this application for planning permission submitted to North Herts Council:

- 133-OP-PL-
- SP-A-101 - Site Location

SP-A-102 - Existing Site Plan

SP-A-103 - Proposed Site Plan

EP-A-001 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

EP-A-002 - Existing First Floor Plan

EP-A-003 - Existing Second Floor Plan

EP-A-004 - Existing Third Floor Plan

EP-A-005 - Existing Roof Plan

EE-A-001 - Existing Elevations

EE-A-002 - Existing Elevations

EE-A-003 - Existing Elevations and Sections

PP-A-101 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

PP-A-102 - Proposed First Floor Plan

PP-A-103 - Proposed Second Floor Plan

PP-A-104 - Proposed Third Floor Plan

PP-A-105 - Proposed Roof Plan

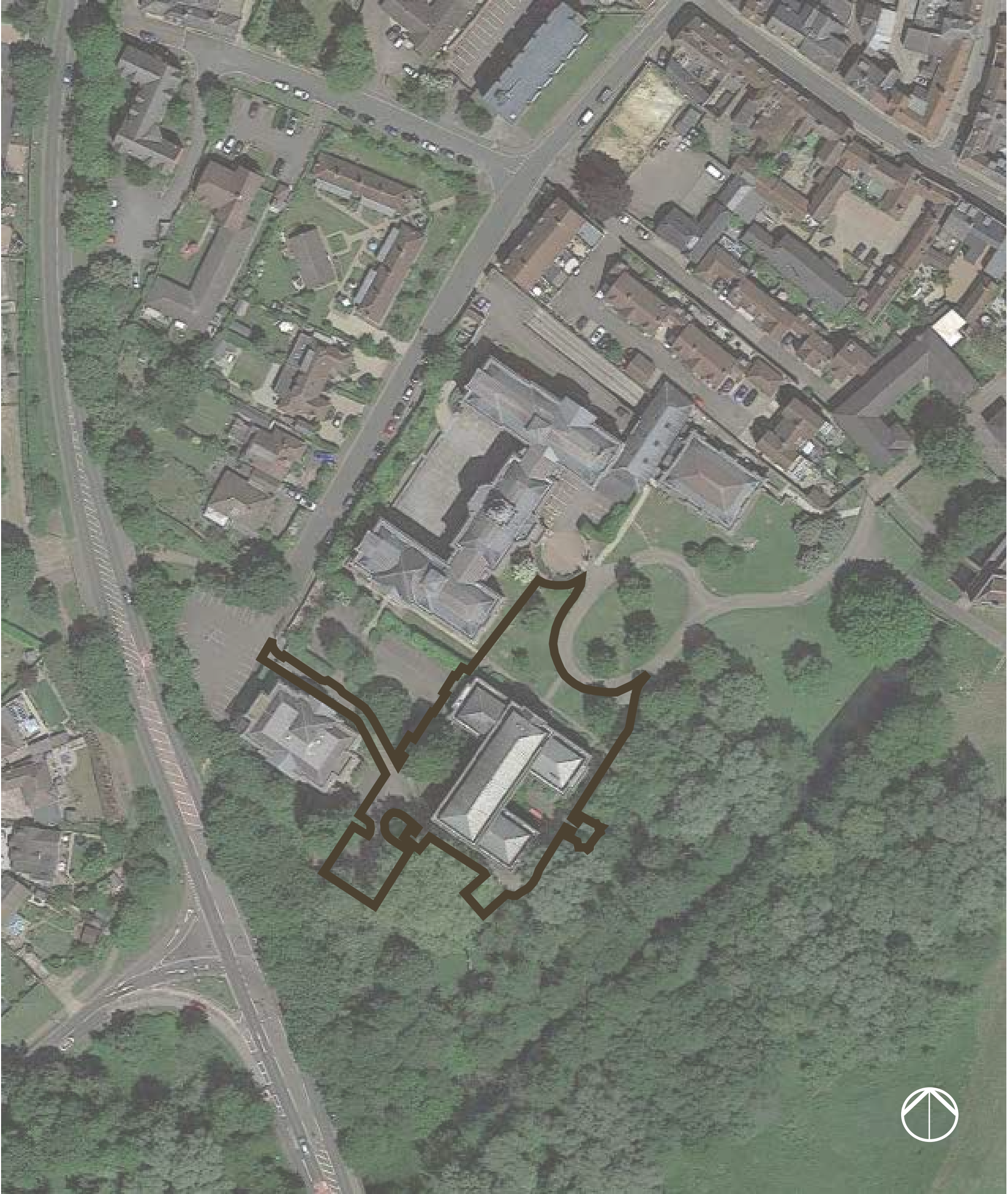
PE-A-101 - Proposed Elevations

PE-A-102 - Proposed Elevations

PE-A-103 - Proposed Elevations and Sections

PE-A-104 - Proposed Cycle and Refuse Store Elevations

Landscaping proposals are detailed in the accompanying Landscape Design Statement prepared by HTA.



1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The vision for Pease House is to deliver a **high-quality, policy-compliant enhancement** to an underperforming late-1990s office building, securing its long-term future and making a positive contribution to The Priory estate and the wider conservation area setting.

The application seeks consent for a **carefully considered package of external alterations** that responds directly to national and local planning objectives, including the National Planning Policy Framework's emphasis on achieving high-quality design, securing the optimal viable use of previously developed land, and sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets through sensitive and well-judged change. The proposals are proportionate, contextual and design-led, ensuring that the character and appearance of The Priory estate conservation area is preserved and, where possible, enhanced.

Prior approval consent is already in place for the conversion of Pease House into 27 residential dwellings. The proposed external works have therefore been intentionally designed to support both the existing office use and the approved residential use, aligning with planning policy principles of adaptability, efficient land use and long-term sustainability. Rather than representing use-specific or interim measures, **the alterations will deliver enduring improvements to the building's architectural coherence, environmental performance and relationship with the public realm.**

By addressing the building's currently inactive frontage and dated appearance, **the proposals will transform a largely vacant and visually recessive structure into an attractive and well-integrated component of the estate.** In doing so, the scheme will enhance the overall quality and perception of The Priory estate, reinforce its sense of care and stewardship, and contribute positively to the character and vitality of this part of Hitchin.

Overall, the project represents a genuine opportunity to secure meaningful enhancements to Pease House and its setting — delivering design quality, sustainability and heritage sensitivity in accordance with planning policy, while ensuring the building becomes a productive, valued and visually positive presence within the estate for the long term.



CHAPTER 2.0 SITE APPRAISAL



2.1 LOCATION + CONTEXT

Pease House - the application site, outlined in red on Figure 2, is located in Hitchin, positioned to the south of the town centre within the established and attractive setting of The Priory estate (Figure 1). Pease House forms one of a coherent group of three office buildings constructed during the 1980s and 1990s, alongside the neighbouring Radcliffe House and Keynes House. Together, these buildings share a consistent architectural language and scale, reinforcing a unified and well-planned estate character.

The cluster benefits from convenient and well-established access arrangements via both Old Charlton Road and Tilehouse Street, ensuring strong connectivity with the surrounding road network and the wider town.

To the west, the site is sensitively screened from the A602 by a dense and mature landscaped buffer, which effectively mitigates visual and acoustic impacts while enhancing the green character of the estate. Old Charlton Road lies to the north, beyond which is an established residential area, creating a clear and appropriate transition between commercial and residential uses.

The eastern and southern boundaries of the site enjoy a particularly attractive setting, adjoining the landscaped grounds of The Priory. These areas comprise mature trees, grassland and the River Hiz, contributing significantly to the site's sense of enclosure, tranquillity and strong relationship with the historic landscape.

The wider Priory estate, shown outlined in blue on the accompanying site location plan, is within the same ownership as the application site. This unified ownership provides an opportunity for a coordinated and holistic approach to estate management and enhancement, ensuring that the proposals for Pease House are fully aligned with the long-term stewardship and quality of the estate as a whole.

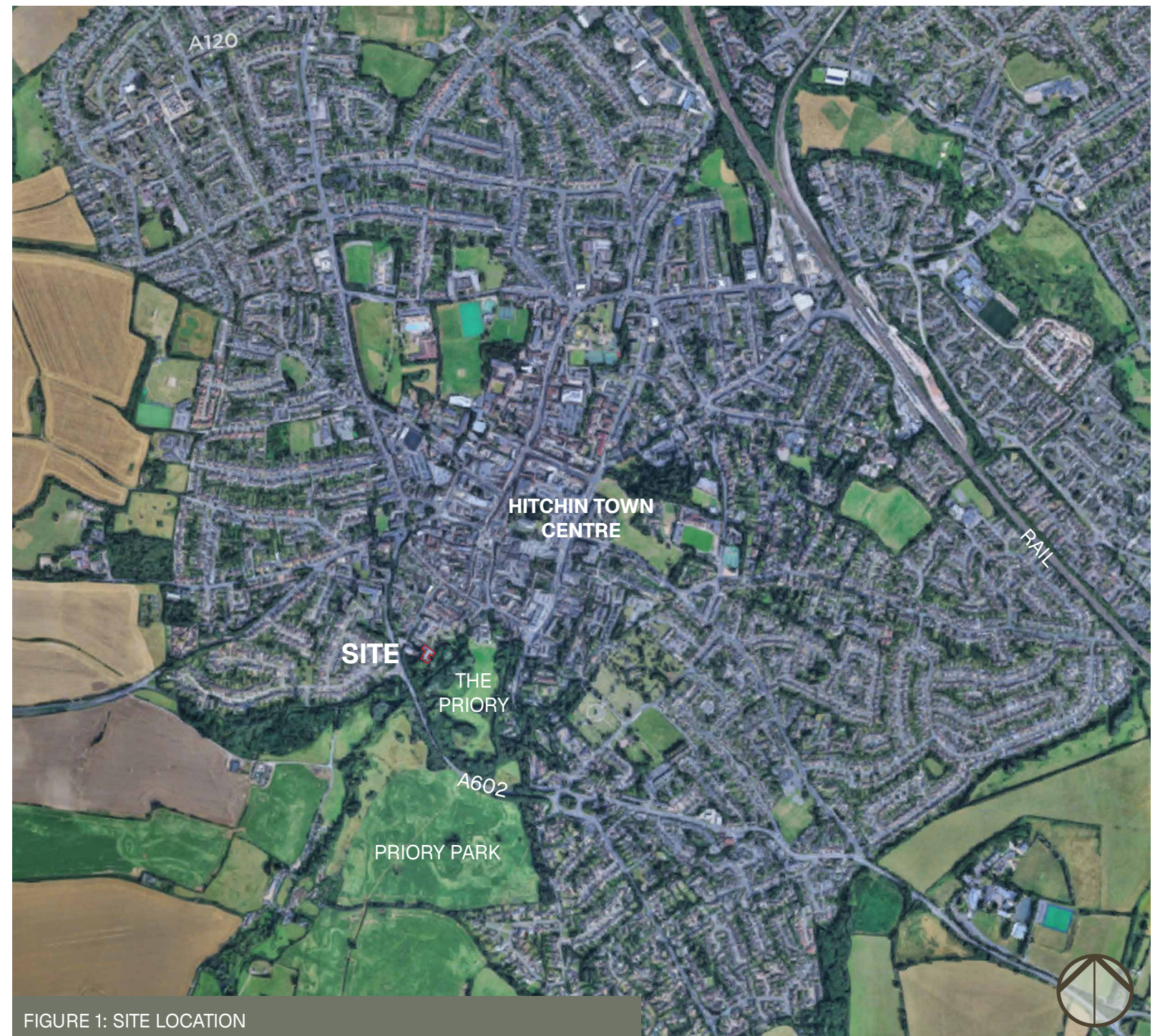


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF SITE

2.2 EXISTING BUILDING

Pease House was constructed in the late 1990s and forms part of a cohesive group of three office buildings within The Priory estate, alongside Radcliffe House and Keynes House. Collectively, these buildings share a consistent architectural language, scale and material palette, contributing to a unified and well-established identity within the estate. Pease House is arranged over two and three storeys, with characteristic set-back mansard roofs that reduce visual bulk and respond sensitively to its landscaped surroundings.

The principal elevations are constructed in red brick, articulated with areas of corbelled detailing and horizontal stone banding that provide visual interest and rhythm. A stone portico clearly defines and elevates the main entrance, reinforcing a formal and legible sense of arrival. The roof structure, formed in steel and timber, is finished with slate to the vertical faces and standing seam lead to the shallower upper planes, lending durability and a traditional material quality appropriate to the estate context.

Openings are currently fitted with white uPVC windows set on stone cills, while black rainwater goods provide a simple and consistent contrast across all elevations. Together, these elements establish a restrained and recognisable architectural character that sits comfortably within the wider Priory estate.

The primary frontage and entrance enjoy an attractive outlook across the landscaped grounds of The Priory and towards Radcliffe House, reinforcing the building's strong relationship with the estate setting. Reflecting its original office use, the building benefits from generous floor-to-ceiling heights and good levels of natural daylight, enhancing internal quality and flexibility. While the building is now largely vacant, these inherent attributes provide a strong foundation for its future enhancement and re-use.

Pease House presents an established and familiar presence within the estate. The proposed works, described in detail elsewhere in this document, have been carefully developed to respect and build upon this character. All interventions are designed to be sympathetic in their design, scale and materiality, ensuring that the building's architectural qualities are retained and enhanced while securing its long-term contribution to the Priory estate.



2.2 EXISTING BUILDING

Photographs of the existing building and setting.



2 North east elevation, main building frontage



3 North east elevation, main building frontage



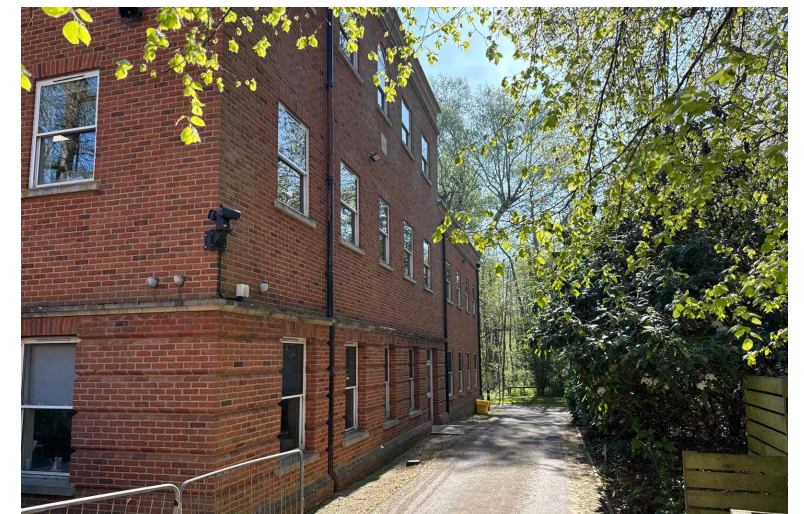
4 South east vehicular route



5 South east courtyard



6 South east / west corner



7 Southern vehicular route

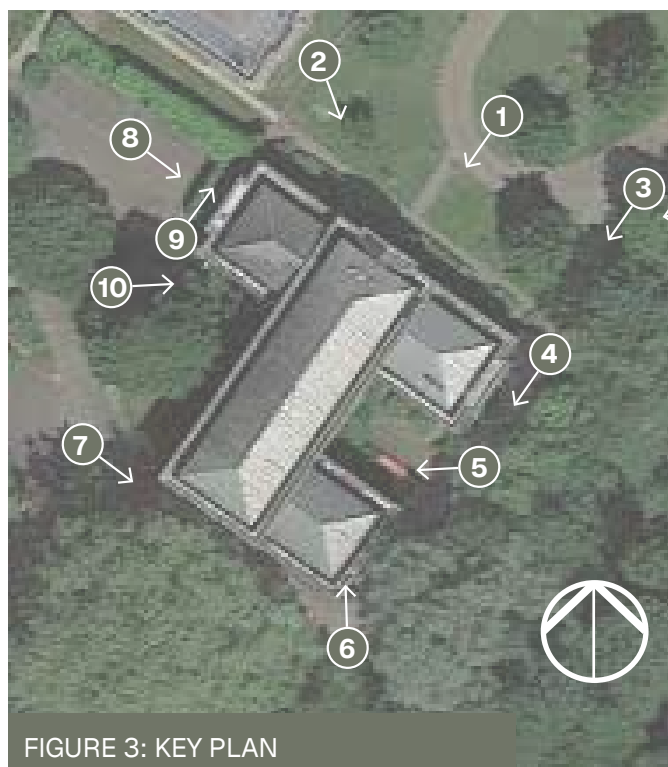


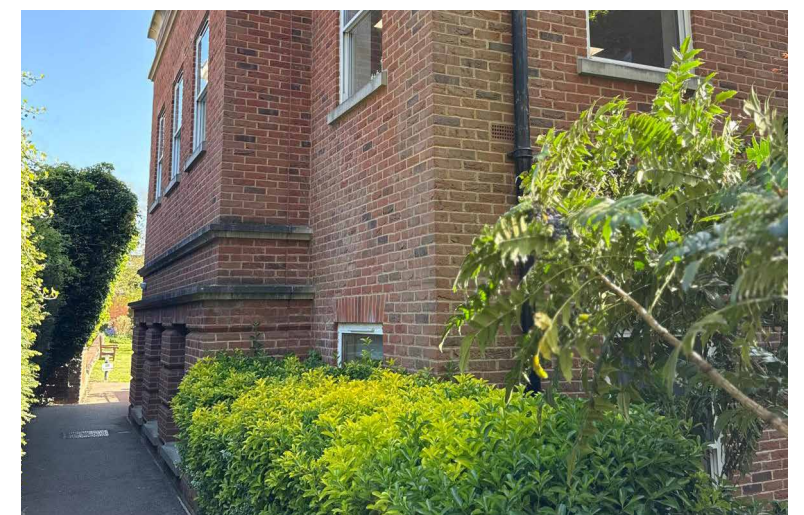
FIGURE 3: KEY PLAN



8 North west overlooking car parking



9 South west courtyard / garden



10 North west footpath back to main frontage

2.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The building currently benefits from prior approval consent for conversion to 27 residential dwellings, (Ref: 25/02689/PNMA) - demonstrating that the principle of residential use is firmly established and supported. The proposed external alterations build directly on this consent, adding value and quality to what will become an excellent residential address.

Crucially, each proposed alteration has been designed to function effectively under both the current office use and the future residential occupation, ensuring the proposals deliver benefits regardless of the timing of conversion.

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL + ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The site falls within Flood Zone 1 — the lowest risk of fluvial flooding — and has been subject to a thorough Flood Risk Assessment by Water Environment. The ecological value of the site has been comprehensively assessed by MKA Ecology, with the proposals specifically designed to bring ecological enhancements. The landscaping proposals, prepared by HTA, further extend the quality and biodiversity value of the site's setting.

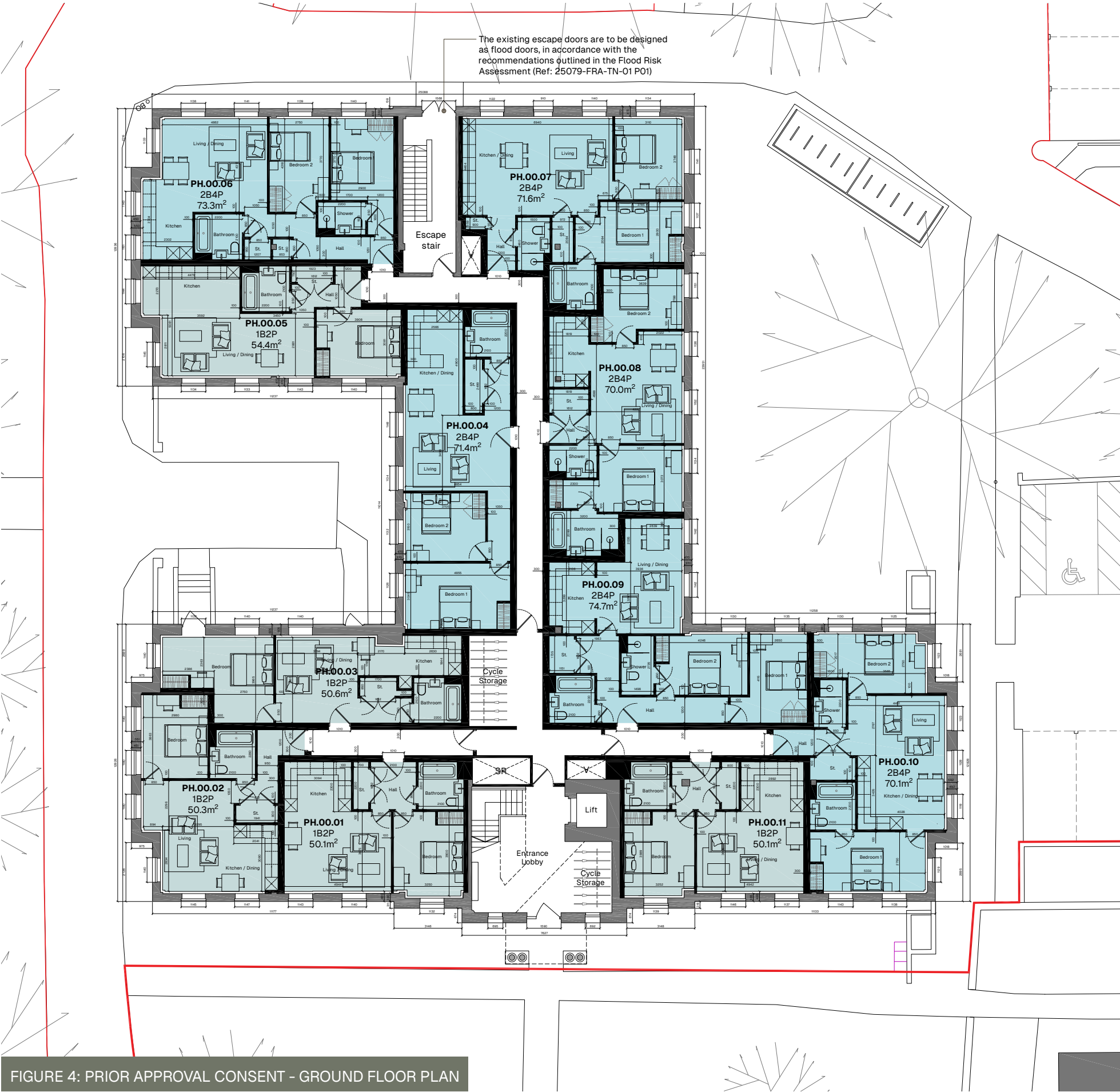


FIGURE 4: PRIOR APPROVAL CONSENT - GROUND FLOOR PLAN

2.5 CONSERVATION + HERITAGE

The application site lies within the Hitchin Conservation Area. Whilst Pease House is not itself listed, the wider estate sits in the context of several significant heritage assets — most notably The Priory, a Grade I listed building of national importance, as well associated Grade II listed buildings within the estate and Grade II listed buildings along Tilehouse Street.

The proposed alterations have been developed with careful and sustained reference to the character of the conservation area, the setting of The Priory and the architectural language of the surrounding buildings. It is the considered view of the design team — supported by the accompanying Heritage Statement prepared by Planit Consulting — that the proposals will cause no harm whatsoever to the significance or setting of any heritage asset, and will in fact enhance the appearance of the building within its historic context.



Ribbon of Grade II Listed Buildings along Tilehouse Street



The Priory, Grade I Listed Building with associated Grade II Listed Buildings adjacent

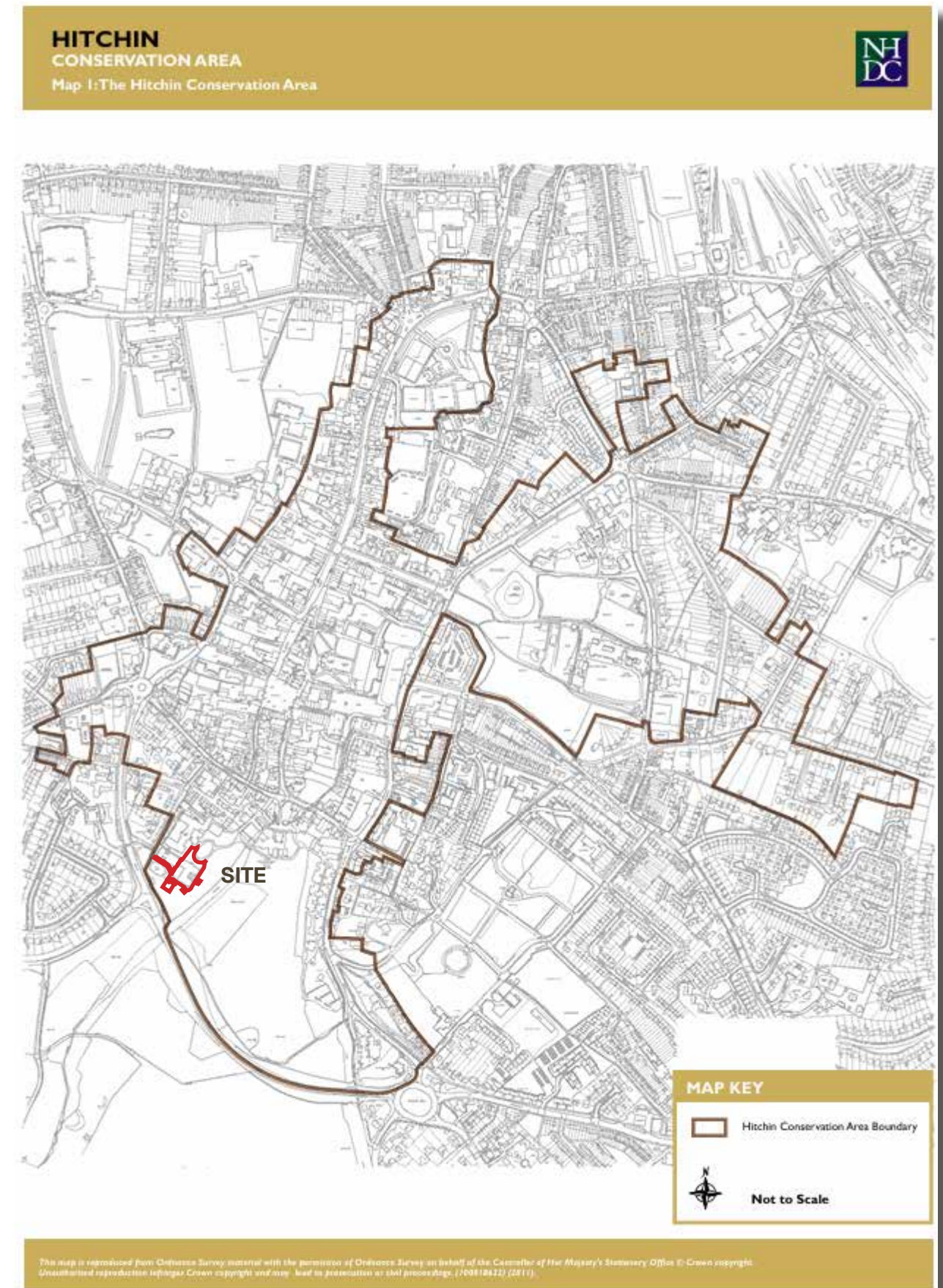


FIGURE 5: HITCHIN CONSERVATION AREA MAP

CHAPTER 3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

3.1 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

The proposed alterations bring together six carefully coordinated enhancements to deliver a clear and purposeful uplift to Pease House. Developed as a unified strategy, the works significantly improve the building's appearance, performance and amenity, transforming it into a more attractive, comfortable and sustainable asset. The proposals enhance architectural quality, introduce high-quality outdoor spaces and reinforce the building's relationship with the wider estate, securing long-term value and ensuring Pease House makes a positive and lasting contribution to The Priory as it transitions to residential use.

3.1.1 Replacement Roof

The existing mansard roof will be replaced in its entirety. The replacement has been carefully designed to faithfully replicate the established mansard form, scale and profile of the existing roof, ensuring that the familiar character and silhouette of the building — as perceived from the public realm — is fully preserved.

At present, the mansard roof is finished with slate tiles to the lower, steeply pitched slope and lead standing seam to the upper, shallower roof plane (Figure 6). This material hierarchy will be retained in principle. Existing slate tiles will be carefully removed and re-used wherever their condition allows, with any necessary replacements precisely matched to the original in colour, size and finish to ensure a consistent and high-quality appearance.

The proposed roof replacement represents a significant opportunity to deliver meaningful and lasting benefits:

- A step-change improvement in thermal performance and airtightness across the building envelope, directly reducing energy demand and enhancing occupant comfort for both the current office use and any future residential occupation.
- Replacement of the existing lead covering to the upper roof plane with standing-seam metal (Figure 7). This is a well-established, visually appropriate and historically sympathetic roofing material that offers improved durability, reduced maintenance requirements and enhanced long-term performance, while remaining consistent with the character and appearance of the existing roofscape.
- Delivery of a fully weathertight, well-insulated and robust roof structure, ensuring the building is fitted for long-term use and representing a high-quality and enduring investment in the future of Pease House.

Overall, the roof replacement will preserve the architectural integrity of the building while significantly improving performance, longevity and sustainability — securing a lasting enhancement for the estate and all future occupants and for its long-term use.



FIGURE 6: EXISTING ROOF

Slate tiles

Lead standing seam



FIGURE 7: METAL STANDING SEAM

3.1 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS [CONT.]

3.1.2 Roof Dormer Windows

New flat-roofed dormer windows will be introduced at roof level, carefully designed with direct reference to the established dormer typologies found on the neighbouring Radcliffe House and within the wider local context (Figure 8). Their form, scale and proportion draw on familiar precedents, ensuring that the additions sit comfortably within the existing architectural language of the estate.

The dormers are intentionally modest and restrained in their expression. Their flat-roofed form, low profile and regular rhythm allow them to read as a subtle and integrated layer within the roofscape, avoiding visual dominance or unnecessary articulation. As such, they provide functional and daylight benefits while remaining visually discreet and calm when viewed from the public realm and surrounding heritage assets (Figure 8).

Clad in standing-seam metal to match the replacement roof covering, the dormers will appear as a unified and coherent extension of the roof plane rather than as applied or contrasting elements. This material consistency reinforces a sense of order and architectural clarity, ensuring that the dormers are perceived as an integral part of the roof composition. White uPVC window frames have been selected to align with the existing fenestration, maintaining continuity with the established building character (Figure 9).

Overall, the dormers represent a sympathetic and well-judged addition that enhances the functionality and legibility of the building without introducing visual clutter or harm. Their carefully controlled design ensures that the setting of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings is preserved, with the additions making a quiet, positive contribution to the roofscape rather than competing with or detracting from it.



FIGURE 8: EXISTING DORMERS AT THE PRIORY AND SURROUNDING AREA

Heritage response

“The new dormers are deliberately modest in scale, with clean detailing that complements the building’s late 20th century character. The design approach has been guided by the architectural language of the existing building, with the new openings adopting a traditional form and proportion.”



FIGURE 9: INDICATIVE ILLUSTRATION SHOWING ADDITION OF DORMER WINDOWS TO FRONT ELEVATION OF PEASE HOUSE

3.1 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS [CONT.]

3.1.3 Roof Level Terraces — Recessed Openings within the Mansard Roof Plane

Where roof-level terraces are proposed, the design approach differs fundamentally from the dormer strategy described above and has been carefully developed to ensure a sympathetic and visually restrained intervention. In these locations, full-height windows and doors are formed directly within the sloping plane of the mansard roof itself, drawing clear precedent from similar roof openings already present at nearby Radcliffe House (Fig. 11). This contextual reference reinforces the appropriateness of the approach within the established estate character.

Rather than projecting outward in the manner of conventional dormers, the openings are recessed behind the roof line, with the resulting recess in plan forming the terrace space contained entirely within the envelope of the roof. By working with the inherent geometry of the mansard, the terraces are accommodated without introducing additional bulk, projection or perceived mass to the roofscape. This ensures that the overall silhouette of the building remains unchanged when viewed from the public realm and across the wider Priory estate.

The full-height window and door frames serving these recessed terrace openings will be finished in a muted grey tone, carefully selected to sit comfortably against the surrounding slate-tiled mansard roof. This subdued colour treatment allows the frames to visually recede, ensuring that the openings are read as refined architectural details rather than prominent insertions. As a result, the intervention appears calm, deliberate and well-integrated within the roof composition, minimising visual contrast and avoiding any sense of intrusion.

The roof terraces created by these recessed openings (Fig. 12) will provide high-quality, sheltered private amenity space, discreetly embedded within the building form. New metal balustrades (Fig. 13) will enclose the terraces, fixed behind the existing roof parapet walls so that they are largely screened from external views (Fig. 10). Their design and finish are informed by local precedents and reflect the character of other metalwork found within the Priory estate and the surrounding area, including existing balustrade and railing details.

Taken together, this approach delivers functional and amenity benefits while maintaining a composed and understated architectural expression. The recessed terraces are a sympathetic addition that respects the established character of Pease House and its setting within the Priory estate, preserving the building's contribution to the conservation area and resulting in no harm to the wider historic environment or its setting.



FIGURE 10: INDICATIVE ILLUSTRATION SHOWING ADDITION OF DORMER WINDOWS TO FRONT ELEVATION OF PEASE



FIGURE 11: ROOF DOOR RECESS

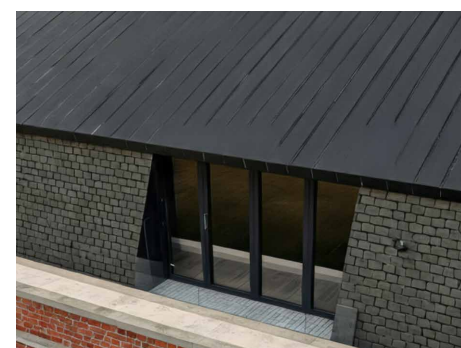


FIGURE 12: CONCEPT VISUAL

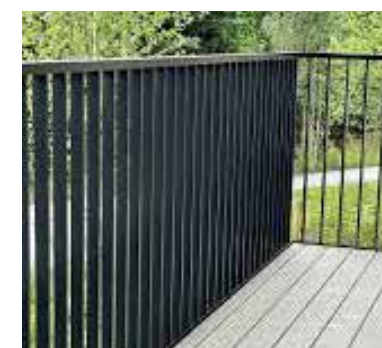


FIGURE 13: EXAMPLE METAL BALUSTRADES

3.1 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS [CONT.]

3.1.4 Ground Floor Terraces and Associated Door Alterations

It is proposed to introduce terraces at ground floor level, set at garden level (Fig. 14). To facilitate direct access from the building interior to these terraces, a number of existing ground floor windows will be altered to form door openings - Fig 17. Where a level change exists between the interior floor level and the garden, a small number of steps will be provided to negotiate the difference. Not all terraces will require steps; where the garden level is commensurate with the internal floor level, step-free access will be achieved.

Where steps are required, they will be designed in full accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations, with appropriate consideration given to the needs of all future building occupants, including those with reduced mobility. Step dimensions, nosing profiles, handrail provision and surface finishes will be detailed to meet the relevant requirements, ensuring safe and dignified access for all users.

These terraces will provide private external amenity space directly accessible from the building. In the context of the existing office use, they will provide valuable informal breakout and external working areas for occupants. In the context of the consented residential use, they will serve as private amenity spaces for the dwellings at ground floor level, meeting the reasonable expectations of future residential occupants for accessible private outdoor space.

Refer to accompanying landscape drawings and Landscape Design Statement, by HTA, for further details on the design and proposed materials for these external terrace spaces.

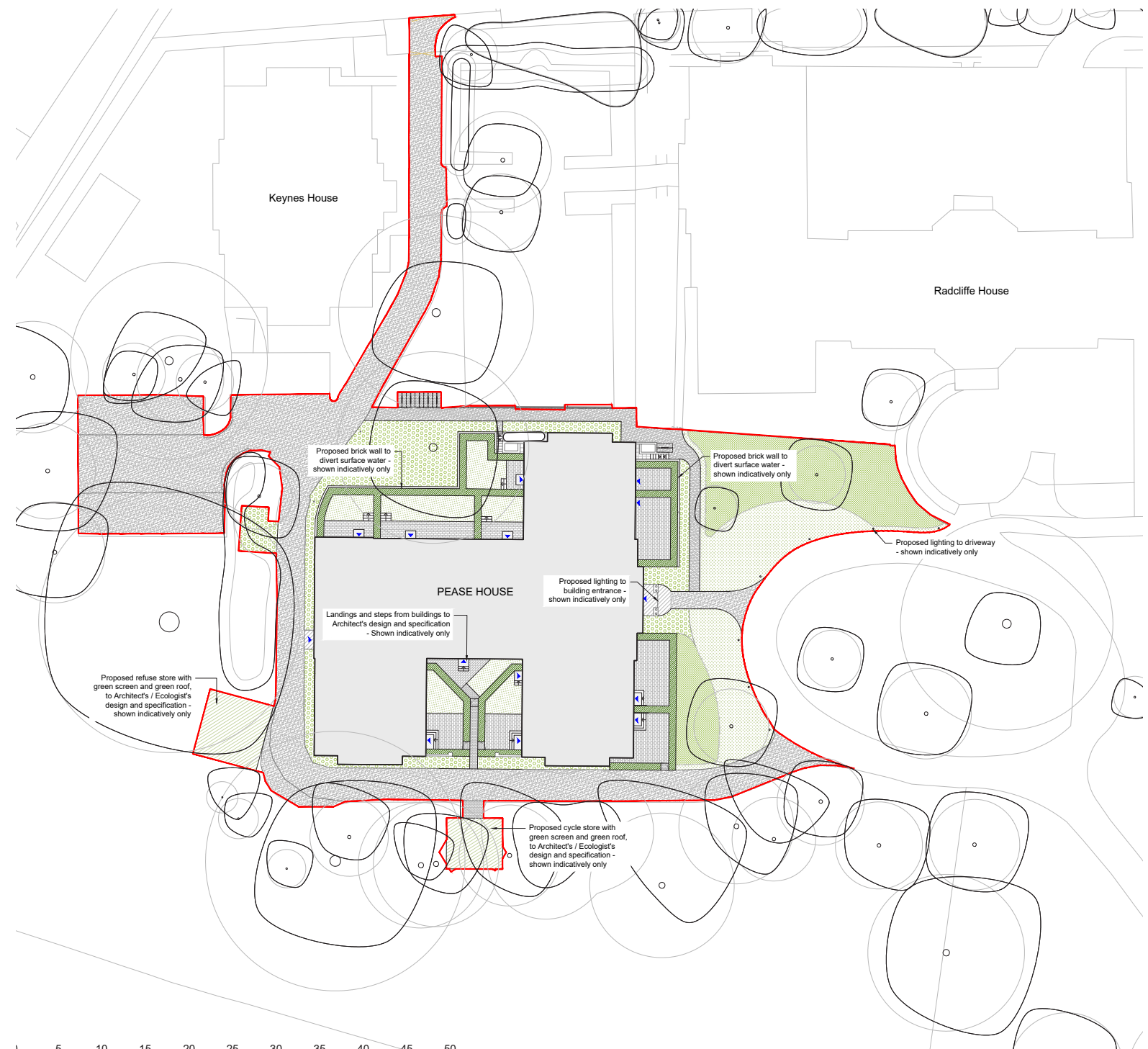


FIGURE 14: HTA MASTERPLAN SHOWING NEW TERRACES TO GROUND FLOOR LEVEL

Landscape-led design

The ground-floor terraces deliver a landscape-led enhancement that provides generous, accessible outdoor space, improving everyday amenity and wellbeing for building users. By carefully managing levels and incorporating sympathetic new door openings, the proposals strengthen the connection between the building and its setting while preserving architectural character and delivering a well-integrated improvement to the Priory estate

3.1 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS [CONT.]

3.1.5 Replacement Windows

All existing U-PVC windows (Fig. 15) to the building are to be replaced. The replacement windows will be carefully designed and specified to respect the character and appearance of the existing building, maintaining the established fenestration pattern, proportions and visual rhythm of the elevations. The replacement of all windows presents an opportunity to significantly improve the thermal performance and airtightness of the building envelope, benefitting both the current office use and the future residential occupation through reduced energy consumption and improved comfort.

The specification of the replacement windows will be U-PVC, matching the existing, ensuring the style and detail are appropriate to the character of the building and its context. The window replacement works are considered to be a straightforward improvement to the building fabric that will enhance its appearance, performance and longevity.

3.1.6 Window Bars to Existing Windows

Decorative bars will be incorporated into the new replacement windows. The design of these bars has been informed by the established character of the local area (Fig. 16), where window bars are a recognisable and recurring feature of buildings in the vicinity. By integrating the bars into the replacement windows at the point of manufacture or installation, a clean and well-resolved detail will be achieved, ensuring the bars appear as a considered and deliberate design element rather than a retrospective addition.

The addition of window bars is therefore considered to be a contextually responsive element that reinforces the building's relationship with its surroundings and contributes positively to the local character. In addition to their aesthetic contribution, the bars provide a degree of security to the building, which is of benefit for both the existing office use and the future residential occupation.



FIGURE 15: EXISTING WINDOWS



FIGURE 16: EXISTING WINDOWS WITH WINDOW BARS AT THE PRIORY AND IN LOCAL AREA

3.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT + RATIONALE

The proposals for Pease House have been developed in accordance with six clear, positive and interrelated design principles. Together, they ensure that the scheme delivers a coherent, high-quality and enhancement-led response that improves the building, its setting and the wider Priory estate.

Contextual Responsiveness

All interventions respond directly to local character and context. The replacement mansard replicates the existing form and slate finish, dormers draw on local precedents, recessed terrace openings sit quietly within the roofscape, and decorative window bars reference familiar local detailing. The landscape strategy reinforces the estate's park-like character through greener, softer spaces that feel entirely at home within their surroundings.

Dual-Use Benefits

Each element has been tested against both the existing office use and the approved residential use, ensuring that every intervention delivers lasting benefits regardless of occupation. The proposals future-proof the building through durable, adaptable and high-quality improvements.

Quality of Amenity

Private terraces at both ground and roof level provide generous, directly accessible outdoor space, significantly enhancing wellbeing and everyday use. At ground level, new landscaped terraces transform underutilised areas into attractive and usable amenity spaces.

Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement

The landscape proposals represent a step-change improvement to the building's setting. New planting, hedging, terraces and a more cohesive soft-landscaped character will soften hard edges, improve visual quality and introduce meaningful biodiversity enhancements across the site.

Materiality, Performance and Scale

A carefully selected material palette maintains continuity with the existing building while delivering significant improvements in thermal performance, durability and longevity. All new elements are controlled in scale and remain subordinate to the established building form and roofscape.

Inclusive Design

Inclusive design principles underpin the scheme, with accessible external amenity, step-free access where possible, and Part M-compliant solutions where level changes occur, ensuring the building can be comfortably used by all.

3.3 IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS

The proposed alterations have been carefully developed in direct response to the established character of Pease House, its companion buildings within The Priory estate, and the wider local context. Through a restrained and design-led approach, the scheme respects the scale, form and materiality of its surroundings, resulting in enhancements that are sympathetic, visually calm and well-integrated. It is therefore considered that the proposals will cause no harm to heritage assets or the Hitchin Conservation Area and will, in practice, reinforce the building's positive contribution to its setting. Further assessment is set out in the accompanying Heritage Statement prepared by Planit Consulting.



Heritage response

“The works are modest, remain entirely within the existing envelope of Pease House and do not intensify its visual presence. The introduction of additional soft landscaping will further soften the modern office character of the site, offering an enhancement to the buildings immediate setting”.

3.4 ACCESS

The existing site access arrangements for both vehicles and pedestrians will remain unchanged as part of the proposed conversion (Fig. 17).

3.4.1 To the building

3.4.1.1 Vehicles

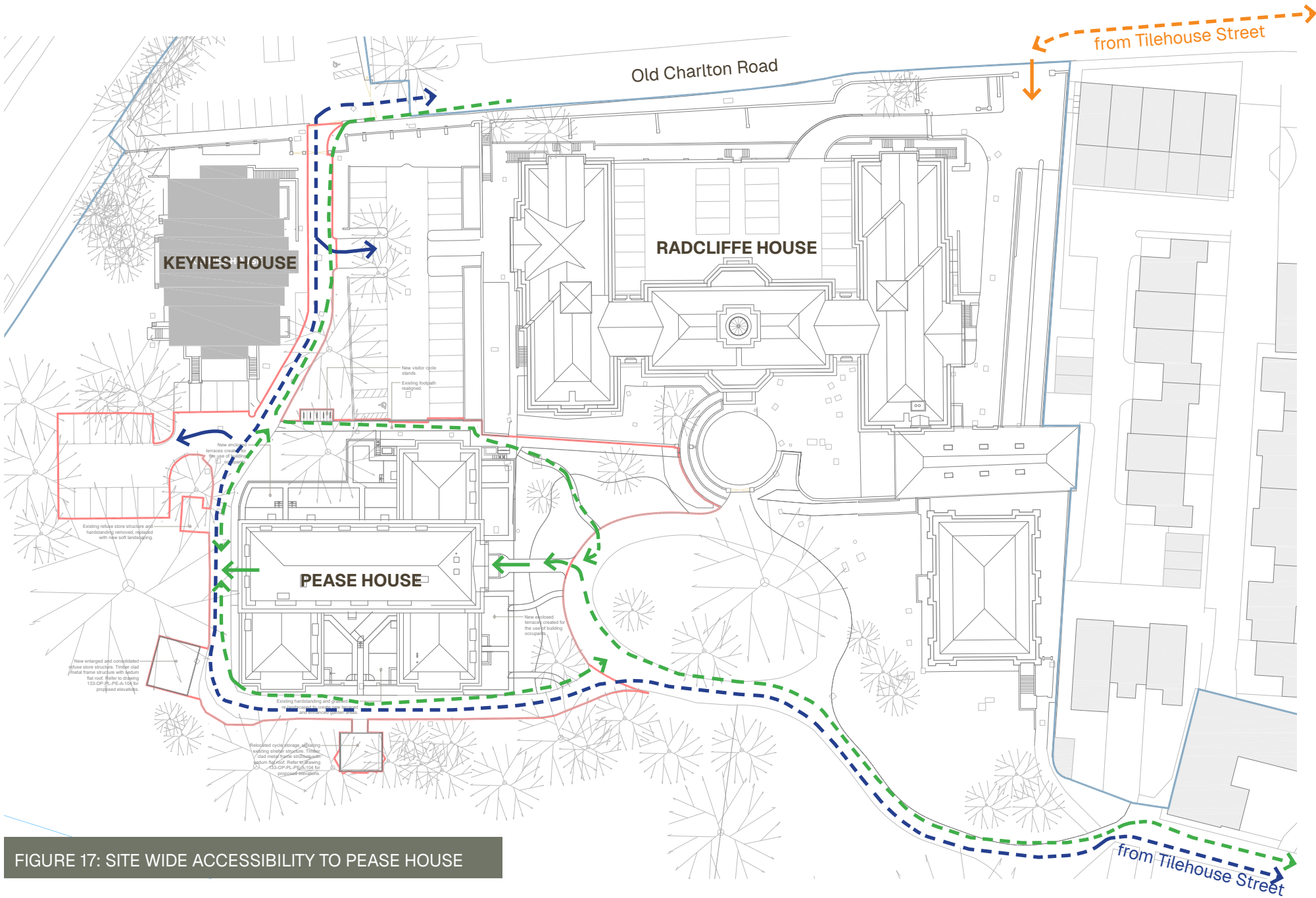
Vehicular access to the site is currently taken from Old Charlton Road and Tilehouse Street, serving an existing on-site parking area used by office staff and visitors. The proposal does not involve any alteration to the existing access points or road layouts.

Refer to the accompanying Transport Statement, by i-Transport, for further detail.

3.4.1.2 Pedestrians

Pedestrian access to the building will continue to be taken from the existing principal entrance on Tilehouse Street, which will remain unchanged. The existing building has a primary entrance lobby and additionally has a rear access / exit. The proposal does not introduce any new access points.

The primary and secondary access points to/from the building remain unchanged. Access to both cycle and refuse storage principally remains unchanged, however the external locations will change, within similar proximity to the building access points.



Legend:	Route	Access Point
Cars / Emergency	← - - -	←
Refuse Vehicle	← - - -	←
Pedestrians	← - - -	←

3.4 ACCESS

3.4.2 Within the building

Access and movement within the building will remain largely unchanged, ensuring continuity and familiarity for occupants. Existing access to lifts and stair cores is retained, providing clear, inclusive and well-established vertical circulation throughout the building.

The access arrangements associated with the proposed alterations are set out below and Figure 18.

3.4.2.1 Access to the Ground Floor Terraces

Ground floor terraces will be accessed directly from within the building via the proposed altered window and door openings described earlier in this statement. These terraces are positioned at garden level and are designed to provide convenient, high-quality external amenity space that is closely integrated with the internal accommodation.

Where internal and external floor levels align, step-free access will be provided directly from the building to the terrace, supporting inclusive use. In limited locations where a level change necessitates steps, only a small number will be introduced. All steps will be designed fully in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations, with careful attention to step geometry, handrails, guarding, surface finishes and visual contrast. This ensures safe, comfortable and dignified access for all users, including those with reduced mobility.

3.4.2.2 Access to Roof-Level Terraces

Access to the roof-level terraces will be provided from within the building, with the internal layout allowing level access for future occupants. This arrangement ensures these private outdoor spaces are easily and safely reached, maximising their usability and benefit without introducing additional access complexity.

3.4.2.3 Inclusive Design

Inclusive design principles have informed the proposals throughout. External amenity spaces are provided at both ground and roof levels, widening accessibility and choice for occupants. The ground floor terraces have been carefully designed to minimise the need for level changes, and where steps are unavoidable, they are fully Part M compliant and sensitively detailed to accommodate a wide range of users.

Access routes, thresholds and interfaces between internal and external spaces have been designed to reduce physical barriers and ensure a clear, equitable and welcoming experience for all occupants. The result is an access strategy that not only meets regulatory requirements but positively enhances comfort, independence and enjoyment for current and future users of the building.

Legend:

-  Main Access Points (existing)
-  Terrace / Garden Access (proposed)
-  Lift (for step-free access to upper floors)
-  Stairs (for access to upper floors)



FIGURE 18: GROUND FLOOR ACCESS POINTS

3.5 PARKING

Cars

The application site benefits from established car parking provision both immediately adjacent to the building and across the wider Priory estate, which is capable of accommodating the existing office use as well as future residential occupants.

A total of **35 car parking spaces** will be provided within the adjacent car parks to the west and north of the building (Fig. 22), ensuring convenient access while avoiding the over-provision of parking within sensitive landscaped areas. This approach supports sustainable travel choices and helps to minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles within the estate setting. Further detail is provided in the accompanying Transport Statement prepared by i-Transport.

Cycles

The proposals place strong emphasis on encouraging sustainable modes of travel, with comprehensive and enhanced cycle provision for office users, future residents and visitors. Cycle parking is provided in accordance with, and exceeds, the minimum standards set out in the Council's Vehicle Parking at New Developments SPD (2011). While existing covered cycle storage is currently provided externally (Fig. 19 and 21), the scheme introduces a significant upgrade.

Building on the prior approval position of 54 spaces, provision is increased to 56 secure internal spaces, together with 12 external visitor spaces. All cycle parking will be consolidated and rationalised into a new, dedicated and secure cycle store located close to the building (Fig. 22), replacing ad-hoc arrangements and reducing visual clutter across the estate. The new store will be metal-framed, timber-clad and topped with a sedum roof, delivering a high-quality, sustainable structure that integrates comfortably with the landscaped setting (Fig. 20). Cycle parking will be provided using double-tier racks.

Additional visitor provision will be accommodated via Sheffield stands, with 10 spaces to the north and 2 to the south of the building, positioned discreetly to maintain a clear and uncluttered public realm. These proposals support active and sustainable travel while enhancing the overall visual coherence and quality of the Priory estate. Further detail is provided in the accompanying Transport Statement by i-Transport.

Legend:

-  Car Parking
-  Cycle Parking



FIGURE 19: EXISTING CYCLE SHELTER



FIGURE 20: EXAMPLE CYCLE SHELTERS

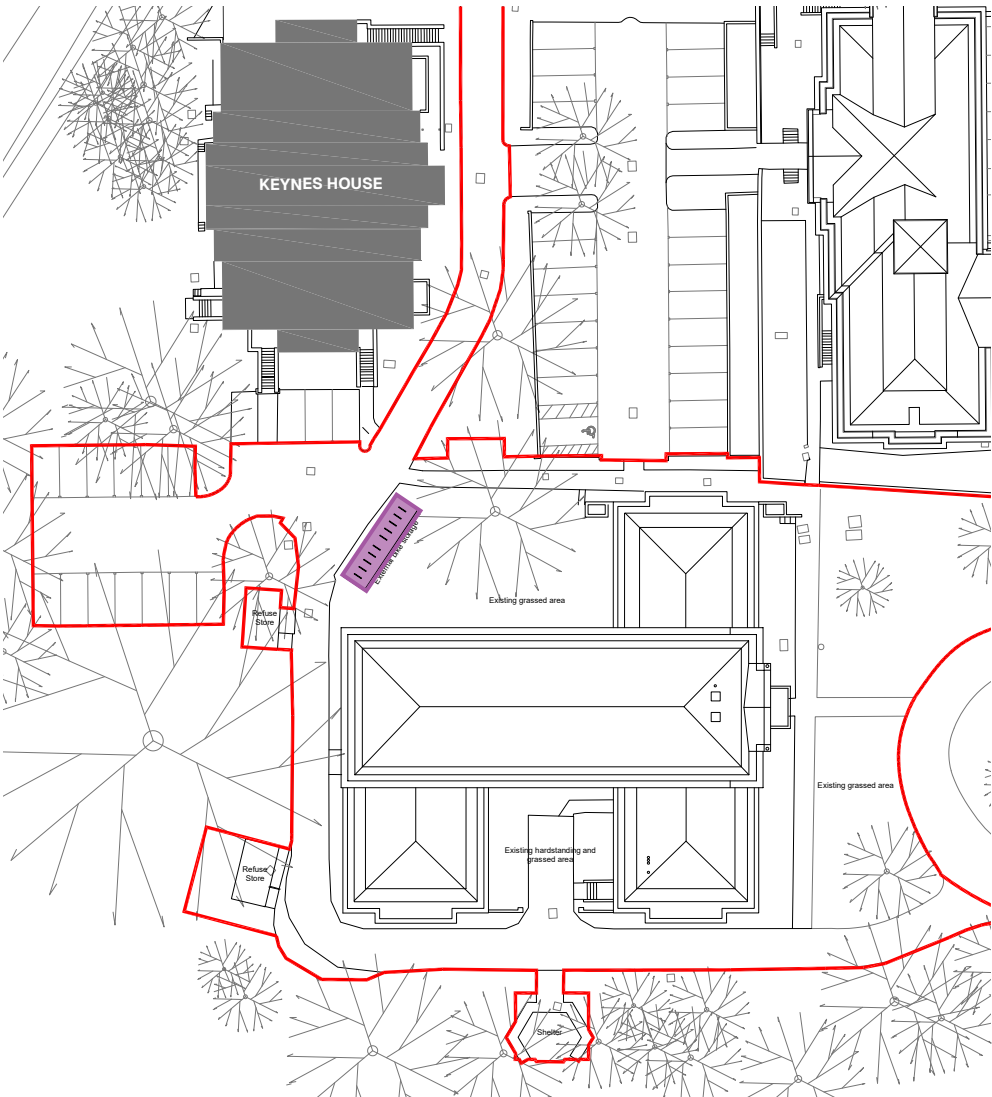


FIGURE 21: EXISTING CYCLE STORE LOCATION

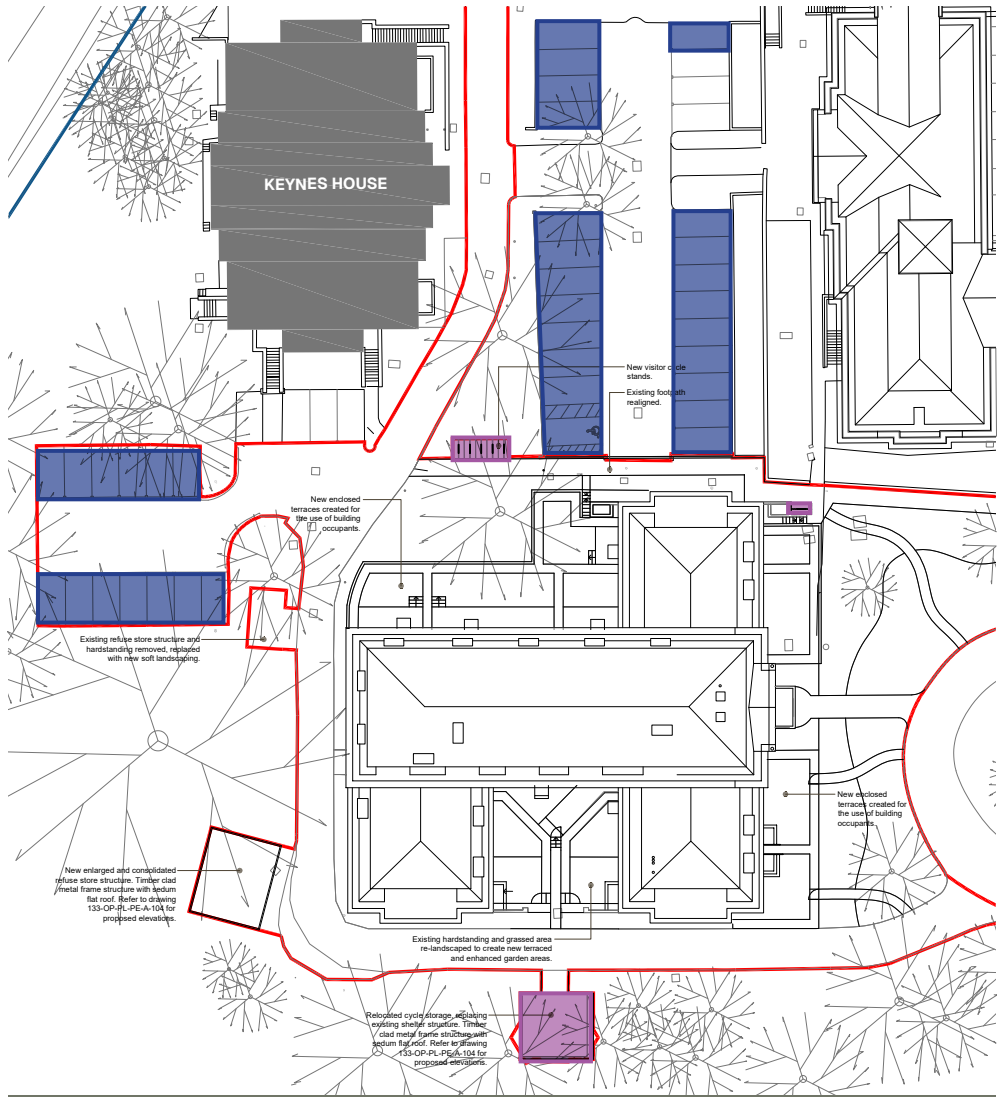


FIGURE 22: PROPOSED CYCLE STORE + CAR PARKING LOCATIONS

Our ambition

By enclosing cycle parking within a purpose-built store, we support sustainable travel while protecting the calm, landscaped character of the estate — delivering secure, convenient facilities without visual clutter, and adding lasting quality and value to the grounds for all who use and enjoy them

3.6 SERVICING

The proposed alterations do not introduce any change to the established servicing arrangements for the building, ensuring a familiar, efficient and well-functioning approach is retained.

Servicing and Deliveries

Servicing, deliveries and refuse collection will continue to operate from the existing access arrangements on Old Charlton Road, with Tilehouse Street also providing additional servicing access. Both routes are already used to accommodate service vehicles associated with the current office use and are demonstrably capable of supporting ongoing servicing requirements.

Access for emergency and service vehicles will remain clear and uninterrupted at all times and will continue to fully comply with Building Regulations Part B (Fire Safety) and local highway standards. As such, the servicing arrangements remain unchanged from the existing situation and will result in no material impact on highway safety or on the operation of Old Charlton Road or Tilehouse Street.

Refuse and Recycling Storage

Refuse and recycling storage will continue to be provided within the site boundary, consistent with the existing arrangement. On collection days, bins will be transferred by the management company to an established holding area to the rear of Radcliffe House, which is conveniently located for kerbside collection from Old Charlton Road and minimises collection vehicle movements within the estate.

It is proposed to rationalise the existing refuse provision by consolidating the current dispersed storage areas (Fig. 25 and 26), which are fenced, gated and largely open to the elements, into a single, purpose-built and secure refuse store (Fig. 24). The location of the new store has been carefully selected in response to site constraints, striking an appropriate balance between minimising walking distances for building occupants and reducing visual impact within the estate setting.

The new refuse store will be metal-framed with timber cladding and a sedum roof (examples shown in Fig. 27), significantly improving its appearance and environmental quality. Its design and materials will align with the proposed cycle store, ensuring a coordinated and visually calm approach to estate infrastructure while avoiding ad-hoc or visually intrusive elements. The combined refuse area will be fully compliant with North Hertfordshire Council’s waste management guidance and will provide sufficient capacity for both general and recyclable waste, as follows:

- General Waste: 3 × 1,100-litre bins (3,300 litres)
- Dry Recycling: 3 × 1,100-litre bins (3,300 litres)
- Fibre: 12 × 240-litre bins (2,880 litres)
- Food Waste: 4 × 180-litre bins (720 litres)

This provision exceeds the requirements of both the existing office use and the future residential use permitted under the prior approval consent, ensuring flexibility and resilience for long-term operation.

Further detail is provided in the accompanying Transport Statement prepared by i-Transport.

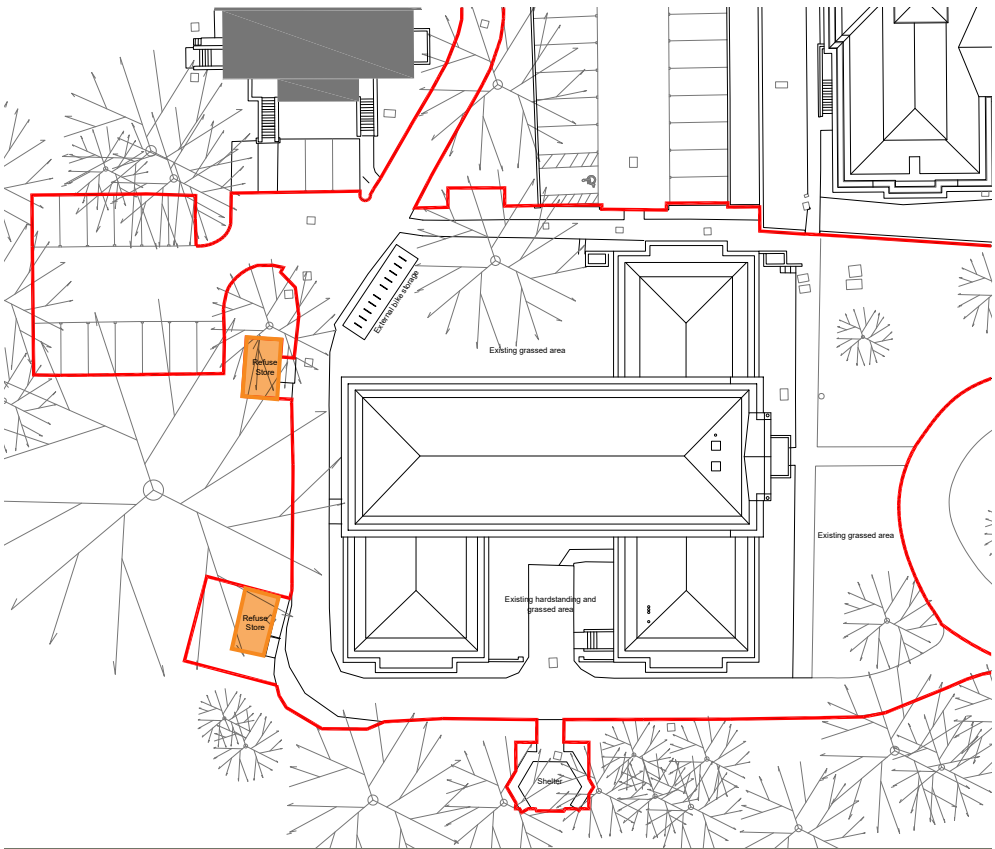


FIGURE 23: EXISTING REFUSE STORE LOCATIONS

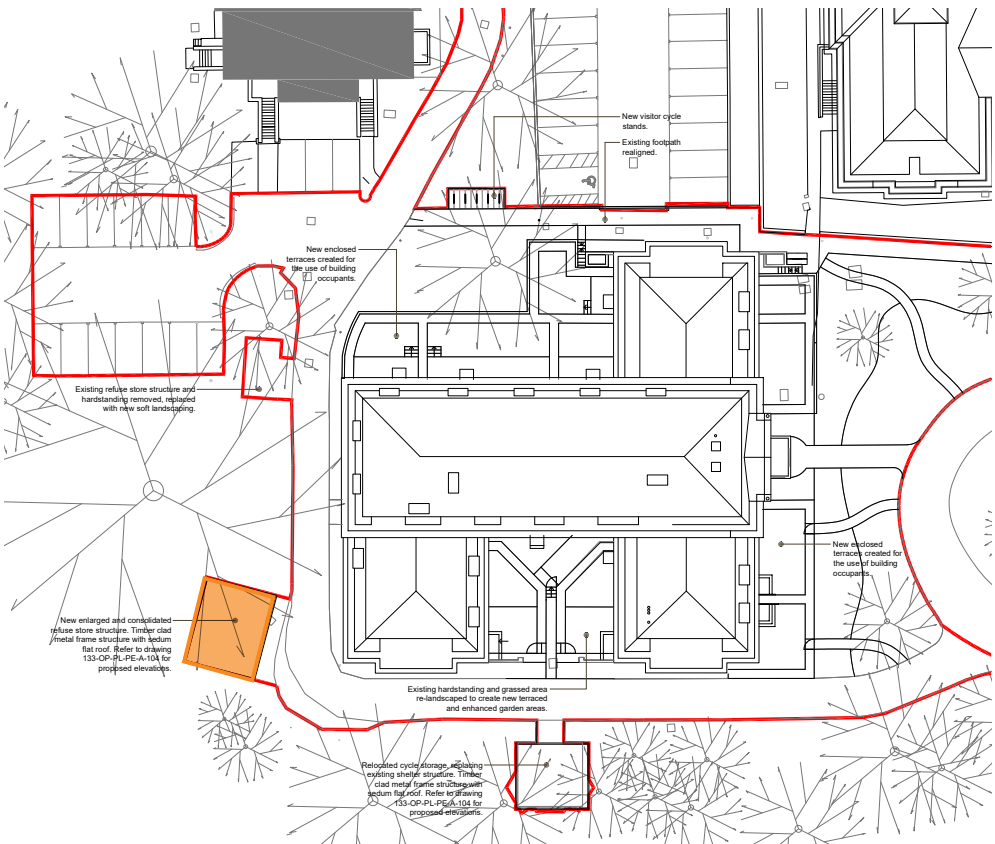


FIGURE 24: PROPOSED REFUSE STORE LOCATION



FIGURE 25: EXISTING REFUSE STORAGE AREA 1

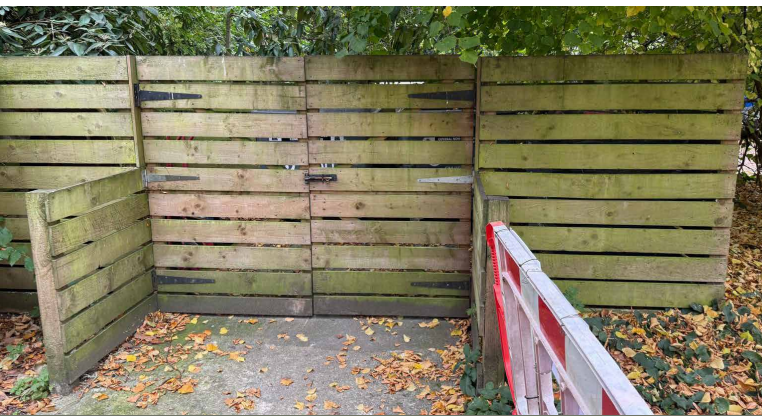


FIGURE 26: EXISTING REFUSE STORAGE AREA 2



FIGURE 27: EXAMPLE REFUSE STORE

Legend:

 Refuse Storage

CHAPTER 4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY + KEY BENEFITS

This Design and Access Statement has set out a comprehensive and carefully considered case for the proposed alterations to Pease House. The scheme has been developed through a thorough understanding of the building’s architecture, its place within the Hitchin Conservation Area, and the needs of its future occupants. Every design decision has been made with reference to context, character and long-term benefit — resulting in a proposal that is not only policy-compliant, but genuinely transformative in its impact on the building’s appearance, performance and amenity offer.

The proposed alterations address the building holistically. From the replacement mansard roof at the uppermost level to the new ground floor garden terraces, cycle stores and replacement windows, each element has been designed to work in concert with the others, delivering a coherent and complete package of improvements. Particular attention has been given to the landscaping strategy, which introduces a series of new defined gardens and terraces that bring structure, greenery and a sense of place to the building’s external environment. These spaces are not incidental additions — they are a material enhancement to the quality of life available to future residents, providing private outdoor amenity that is well-designed, well-considered and directly connected to the internal accommodation.

The scheme also demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability and future-proofing. The replacement roof, new windows and improved material specification collectively raise the building’s thermal and weathering performance, reducing running costs and extending the life of the fabric. The new cycle and refuse stores are purpose-built to exceed current policy requirements, supporting sustainable travel behaviour and improving the visual quality of the wider estate. Taken together, these improvements position Pease House as a building that is genuinely fit for the long term — in its appearance, its performance and its contribution to the conservation area.

It is submitted that the proposed alterations represent a clear, compelling and well-evidenced case for the grant of full planning permission. The scheme is of high design quality, is contextually sensitive, and is demonstrably in the public interest. Pease House, as altered, will be a significantly improved building — better looking, better performing and better equipped to serve its occupants and the wider Hitchin community for many years to come.

THE PROPOSALS FOR PEASE HOUSE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING KEY BENEFITS:



Landscape-Led Enhancement of the Estate setting

- The introduction of defined gardens and terrace areas will help soften the currently hard-edged environment, strengthening the green and landscaped character of The Priory estate.
- The greening of existing hardstanding areas will reduce the dominance of hard surfaces, improve visual amenity and reinforce the estate’s park-like qualities.
- Landscaping proposals are designed not merely as private amenity, but as a visible enhancement to the wider estate, contributing to a more cared-for, verdant and welcoming environment.



Heritage + Character

- The proposals will significantly enhance the architectural quality and coherence of Pease House, transforming a dated and visually recessive building into a more refined and positively contributing element of The Priory estate.
- The replacement mansard roof preserves and reinforces the building’s established roofscape character, using durable and sympathetic materials that respect the wider conservation area context.
- Replacement windows with decorative bars strengthen the building’s contextual relationship with the historic built environment and enhance its overall appearance
- New dormer windows draw on local character and precedent, adding articulation and interest to the roof without visual clutter, and contributing positively to the wider townscape, whilst providing natural light and outlook to upper-level accommodation in a manner entirely consistent with local architectural character
- Recessed roof-level terrace openings provide a calm and elegant architectural solution, introducing activity and use at upper levels while avoiding additional bulk, projection or visual competition with nearby heritage assets



Sustainability, Longevity and Responsible Investment

- The replacement roof improves thermal and weathering performance, ensuring the building is well-protected and energy-efficient for the long term.
- Replacement windows improve energy efficiency across the building, reducing heat loss and contributing to lower running costs for future occupants.
- New purpose-built cycle and refuse stores exceed current policy requirements, supporting sustainable travel choices and improving the functional and visual quality of the estate



Improved Amenity, Well-being + Inclusivity

- The combined package of alterations significantly improves the quality, comfort and amenity available to all future residents
High-quality ground-floor garden terraces will introduce discreet activity and occupation at lower levels, bringing life to currently inactive frontage areas while remaining contained and well-managed.
- Roof-level terraces provide private outdoor space in a manner that is carefully integrated into the building form, ensuring that increased amenity does not come at the expense of visual calm or heritage sensitivity.
- Collectively, these interventions will support a more active, lived-in and balanced estate environment, without introducing noise, visual intrusion or overdevelopment.



Conclusion

The proposals deliver a confident and uplifting transformation of Pease House, revitalising the elevation frontage through a high-quality new roof, elegant dormer additions and refined window detailing that draws on local character. Enhanced by carefully designed landscaped areas and new ground-floor terraces, the scheme softens the building's edges, brings life to its setting and creates a more welcoming, useable and visually compelling presence within The Priory estate

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