

The Drill Hall Horsham

Design and Access Statement

January 2026

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This Design & Access Statement was produced by Mohsin Cooper Ltd. on behalf of Lifespring Church in regards to proposed works at:

The Drill Hall,
Denne Road,
Horsham,
RH12 1JF

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January 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The Drill Hall, Denne Road is a 1920s military drill hall similar to several that were built across the UK from the 1850s - 1930s. They were used for military training, administration and social events.

Lifespring Church are the new owners of the building which has been in local authority ownership for several decades previously.

The church wishes to refurbish and modernise the building as both a venue for their Sunday services, and as an arts and community venue for Horsham.

This full planning application presents a variety of proposed changes to the building that will facilitate the wider scheme of modernisation.

The full project is presented in the drawings, although it is recognized that much of the wider scheme does not require consent either because it would be regarded as maintenance, or because elements of work are limited to internal changes only.



Historic images of The Drill Hall

Satellite images of 'the site'

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY (CONTINUED...)

In summary, proposed planning relevant items include, but are not limited to:

1. New side entrance onto alleyway serving Dukes Square and Denne Road with associated window above canopy. This provides a significant enhancement to the building in the form of equitable, **step free access to the building**. It includes the proposed resurfacing of the alleyway and associated external lighting.

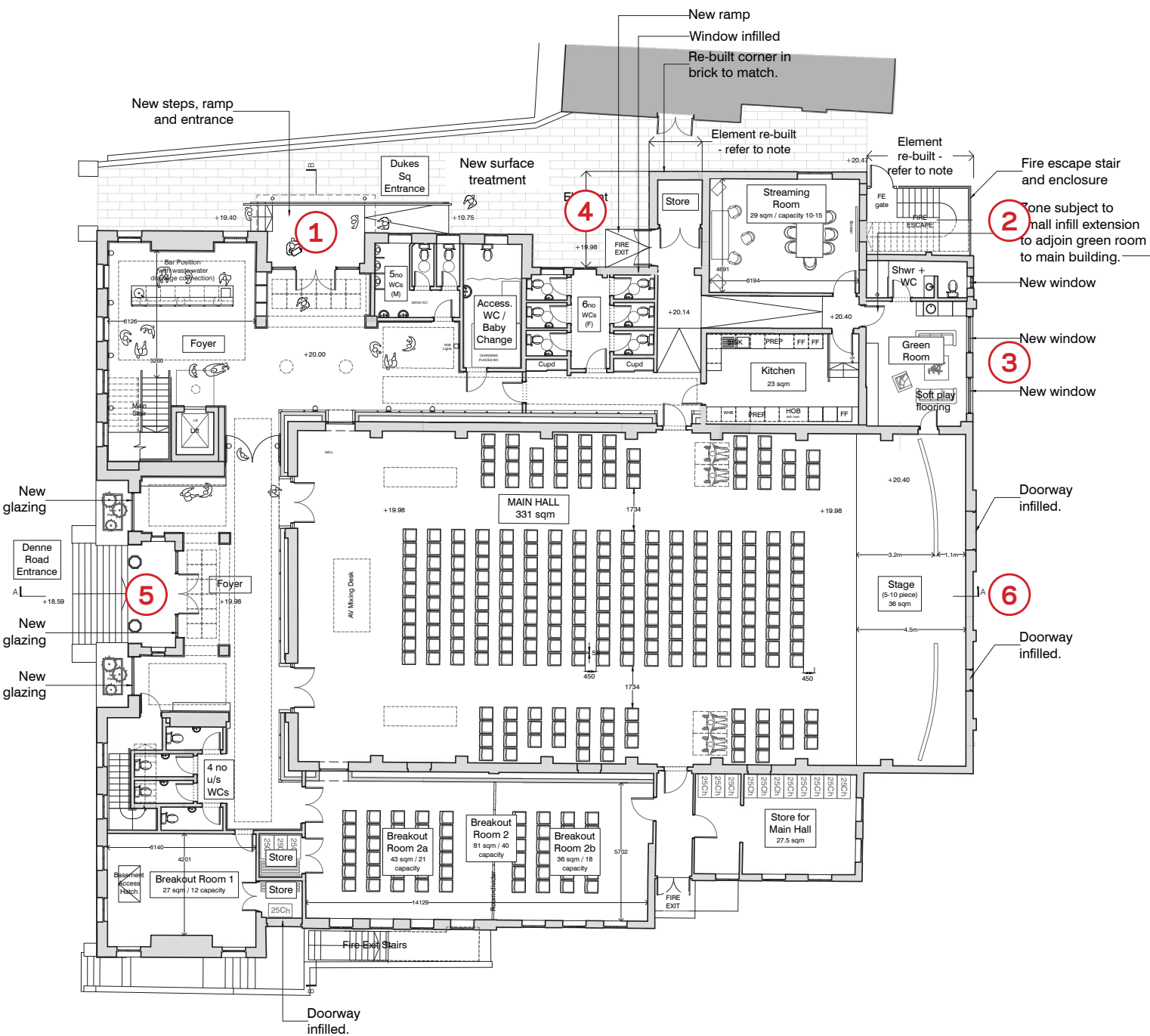
2. Fire escape stair removed from North East Elevation. New Fire Escape stair proposed to East Corner of the building. In conjunction with the new side entrance this stands to enhance the quality and safety of the public realm space along the alleyway side of the building. It also provides for a more rationalized fire escape stair position coordinated with the new roof terrace.

3. Toilet block to East corner of the building demolished and rebuilt as Green Room space with associated facilities (in materials to match). This element of work optimizes and re-constructs a portion of the building built with poor quality materials. The new configuration of the space will also allow for better internal dimensions and the support of the MEP plant enclosure at external 1F level.

4. Small portion of the building relating to a Fire Exit on the NE side of the building **re-built**. Again, this is a small portion of the building built in poor quality materials.

5. Full height glazing introduced to front elevation portico. This element of work is proposed to enhance the appearance and visual appeal of the building from the street. The new glazing will activate the front elevation whilst preserving the character and original features of the original building.

6. Miscellaneous adjustments to fenestration across the whole building. Various openings across the building will be introduced and/or infilled or replaced. Style and materials will match existing.



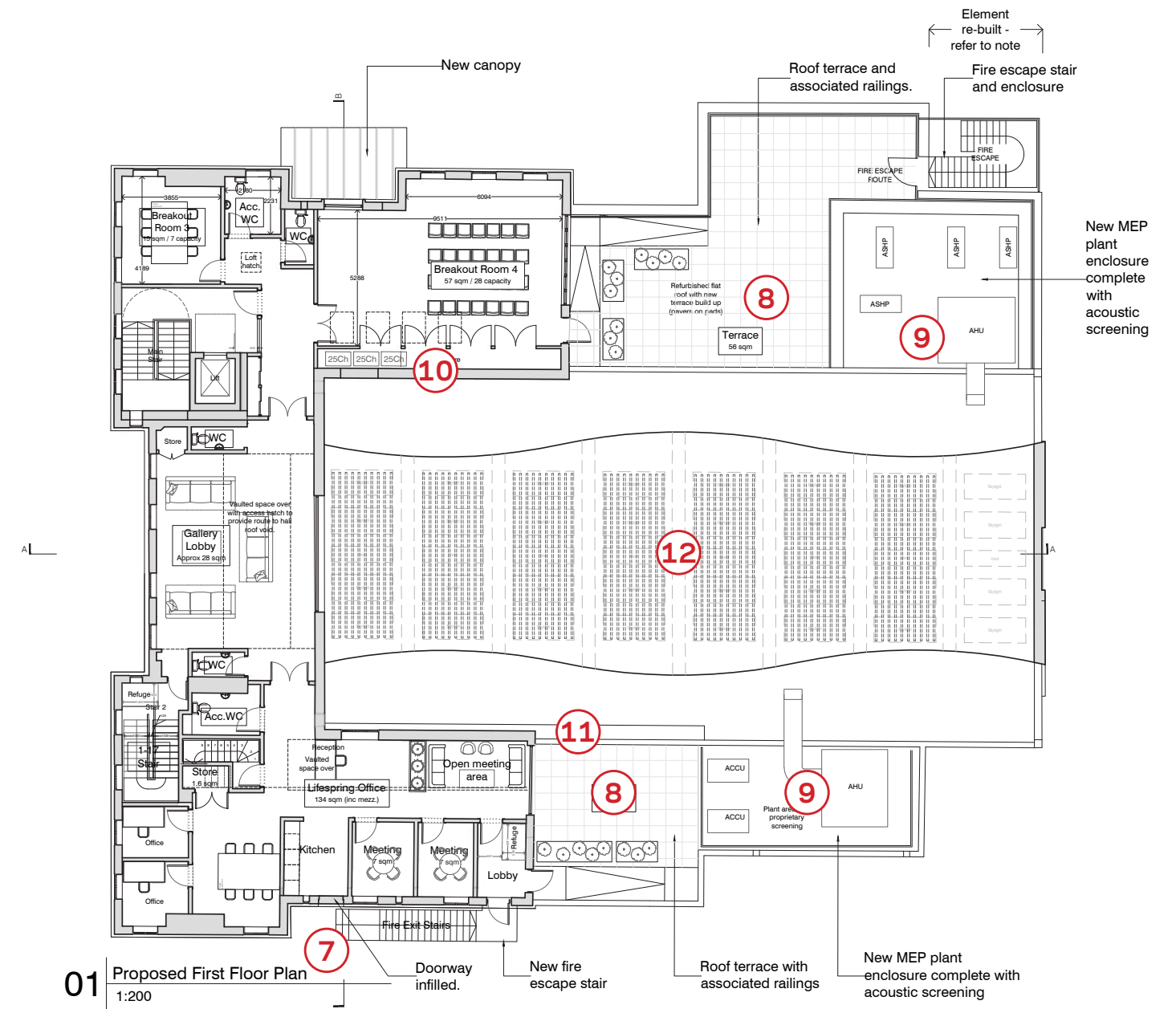
Proposed ground floor plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY (CONTINUED...)

- 7. Fire escape stair removed from South West Elevation. New Fire Escape stair proposed to South West elevation of the building.** This new location for the fire escape stair coordinates with internal remodeling at first floor and provides a means of escape from the roof terrace and office on that side of the building.
- 8. 2no. flat roofs converted to amenity roof terraces.** This introduces high quality external amenity space for users and employees within the building.
- 9. 2no. MEP plant enclosures added adjacent to new roof terraces.** In association with the wider scheme of modernisation and enhancement, the new MEP services scheme will bring compliant levels of ventilation to the main hall along with a wider scheme of sustainable heating and cooling to other spaces. These 2 no new enclosures house the plant equipment required. They are subserviently scaled, appropriately screened, and positioned on a non-principal part of the building.
- 10. New roof lights added to internal facing roof slopes facing North and South.** New rooflights will deliver increased levels of natural light to portions of the wider scheme of internal spaces.

- 11. Valley gutters widened.** This small piece of proposed work should result in better drainage of the roofscape thus significantly reducing the maintenance burden and the need for working at height (from a CDM perspective).
- 12. Polycarbonate roof apex replaced in polycarbonate to match.** This is a maintenance item to replace a roof covering at the end of its serviceable lifespan on a like for like basis.
- 13. Existing chimneys removed.** Roofscape to be made good to match existing.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

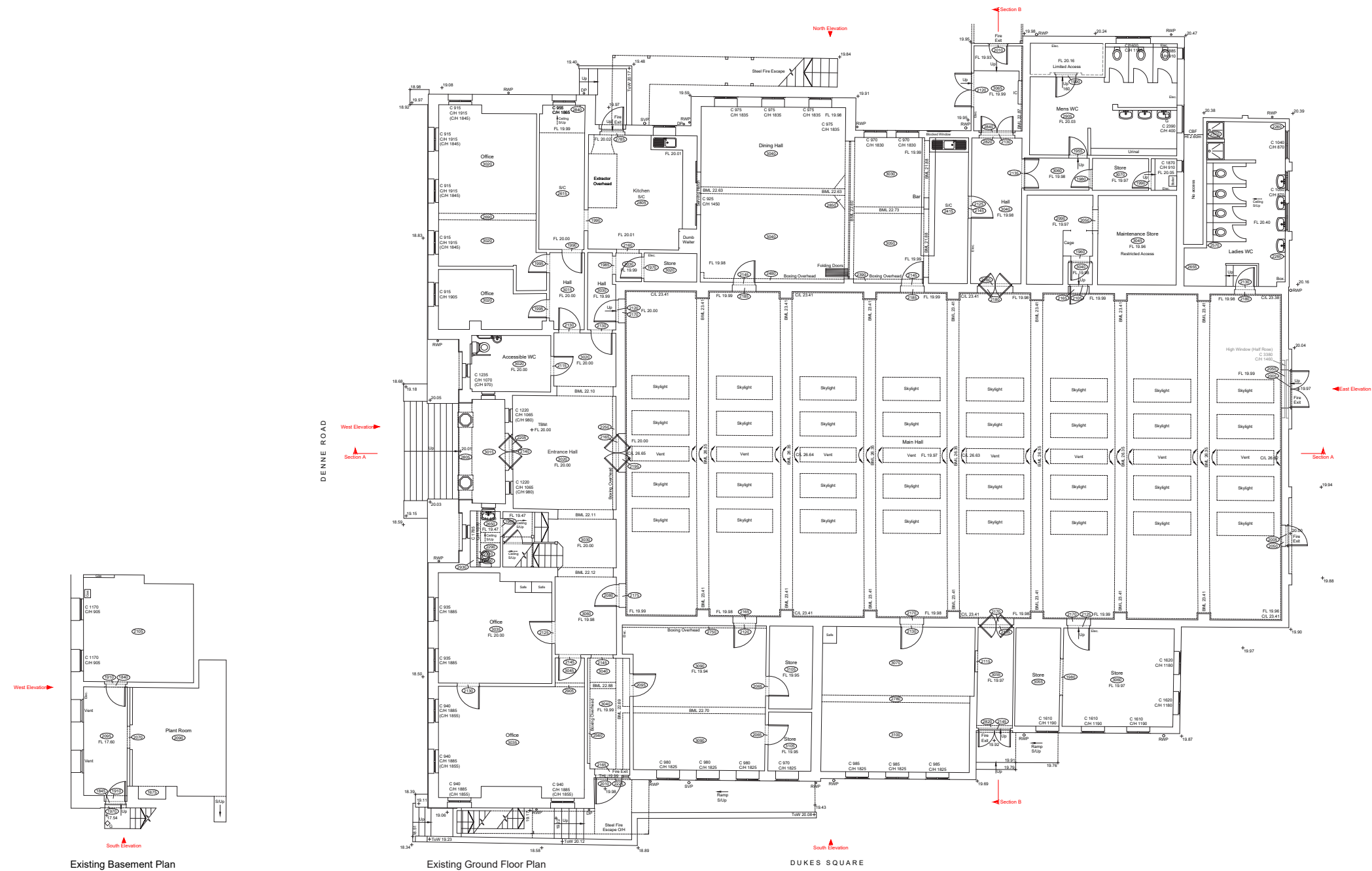
1.2 PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY



1. Front elevation from Denne Road
2. Existing flat and polycarbonate roofs
3. Denne Road entrance (external)
4. Existing Denne Road entrance (internal)
5. Main hall
6. Rear elevation from Dukes Sq. car-park
7. Front elevation from Denne Road

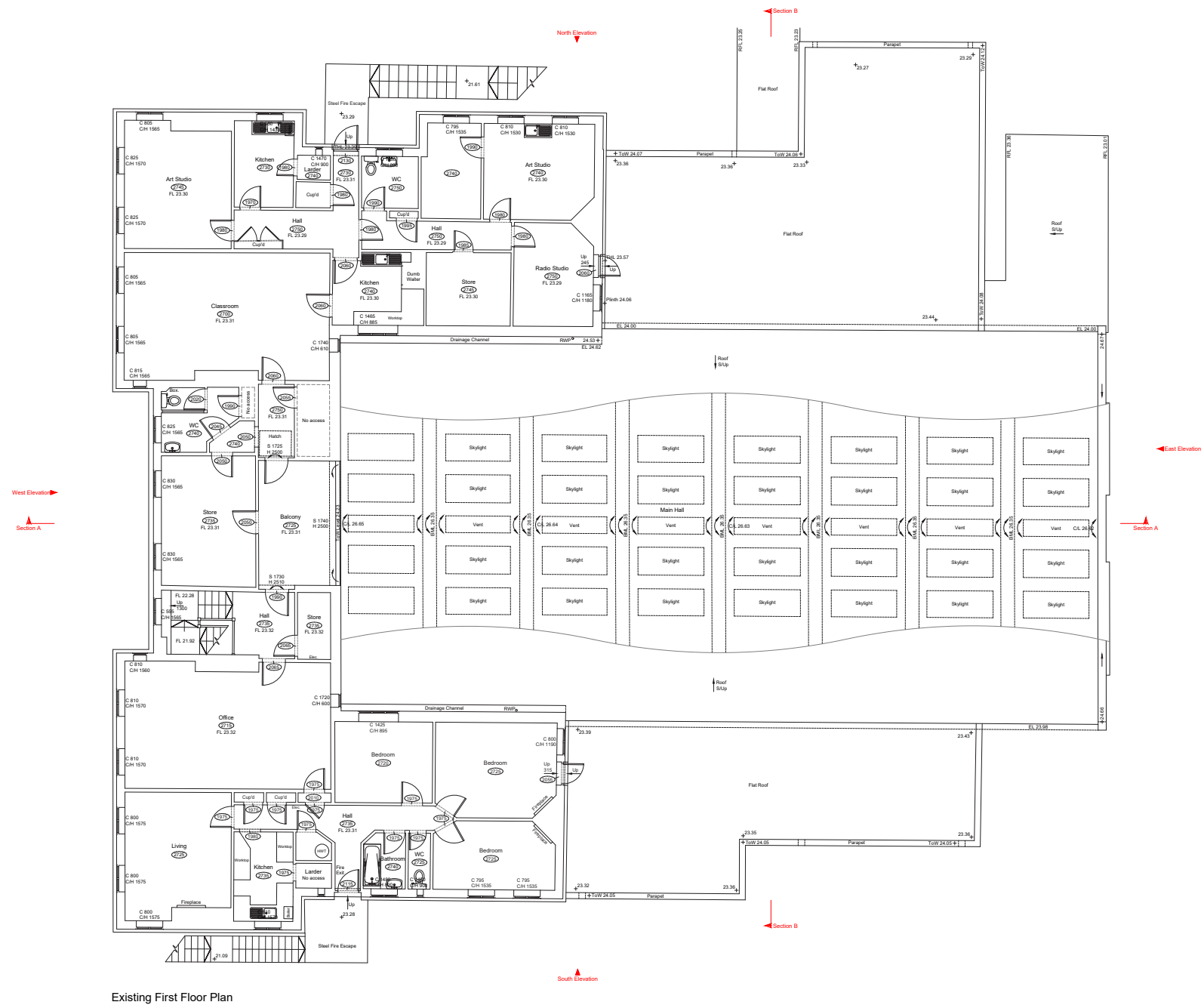
2.0 THE SITE AND CONTEXT

2.1 EXISTING BASEMENT AND GROUND FLOOR PLANS



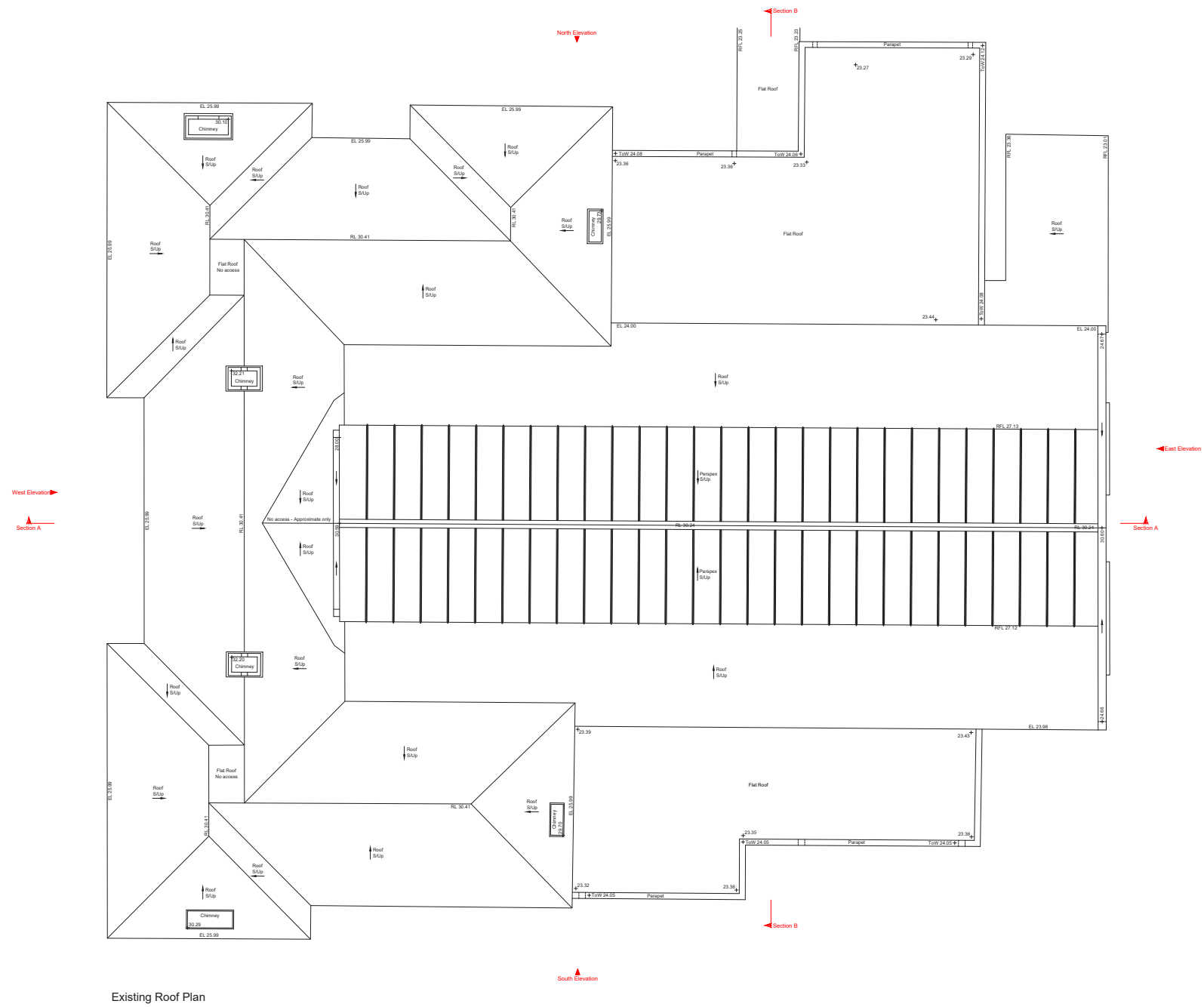
2.0 THE SITE AND CONTEXT

2.2 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



2.0 THE SITE AND CONTEXT

2.3 EXISTING ROOF PLAN

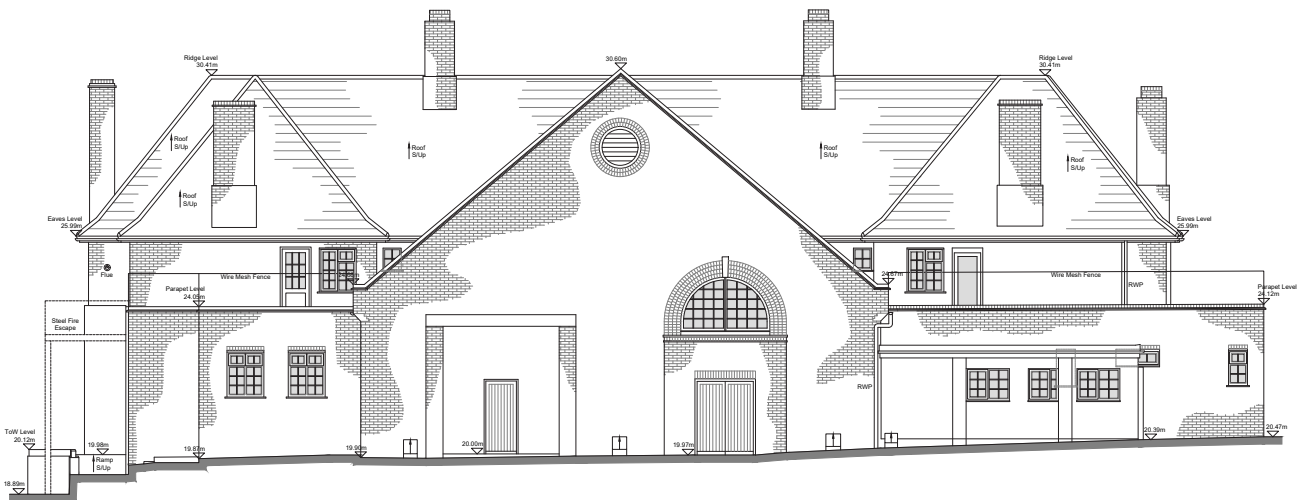


2.0 THE SITE AND CONTEXT

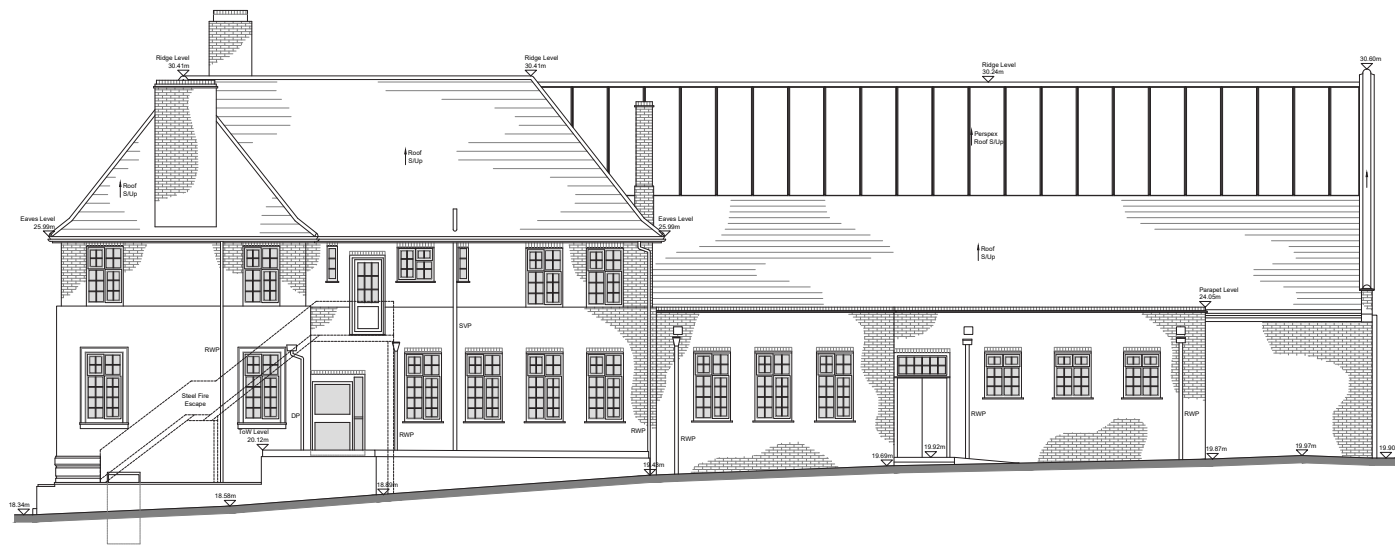
2.4 EXISTING ELEVATIONS



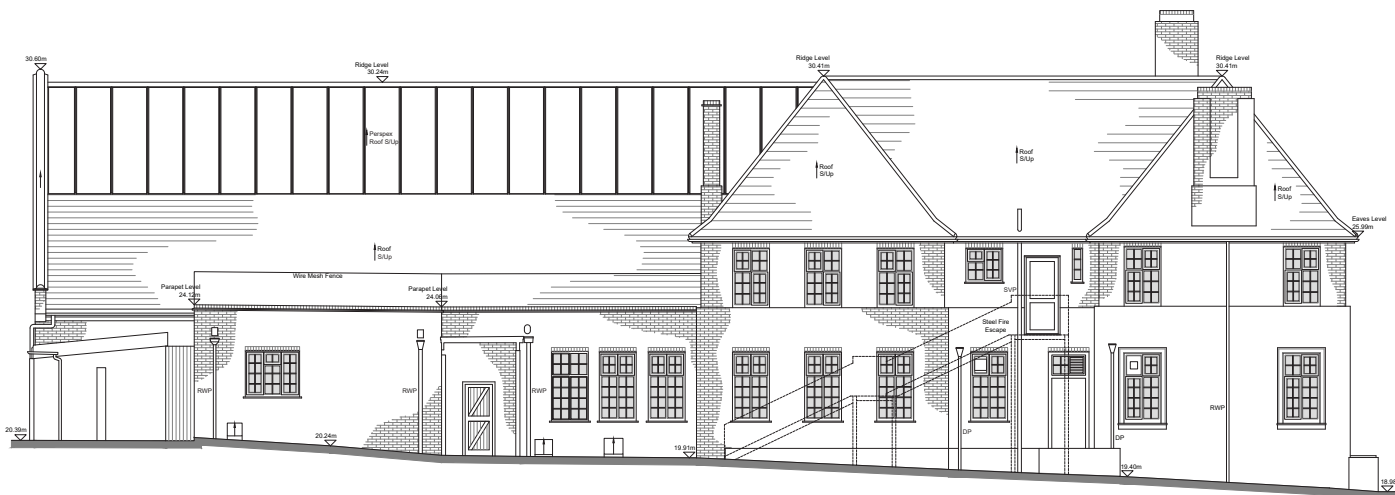
Existing West Elevation



Existing East Elevation



Existing South Elevation



Existing North Elevation

3.0 DESIGN PROPOSAL

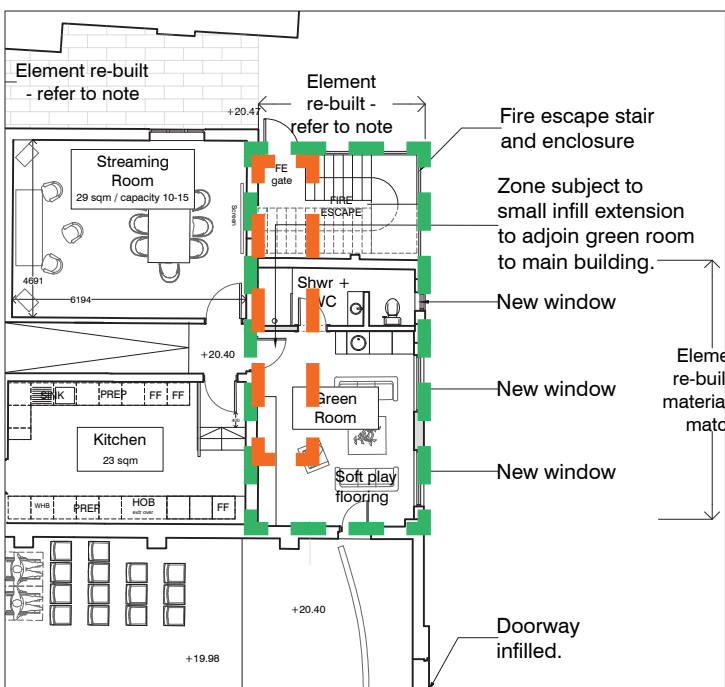
3.1 USE & AMOUNT

The building has an overall GIA of approximately 1,250sq.m. It has a use class of F2 which will remain the same under the proposals.

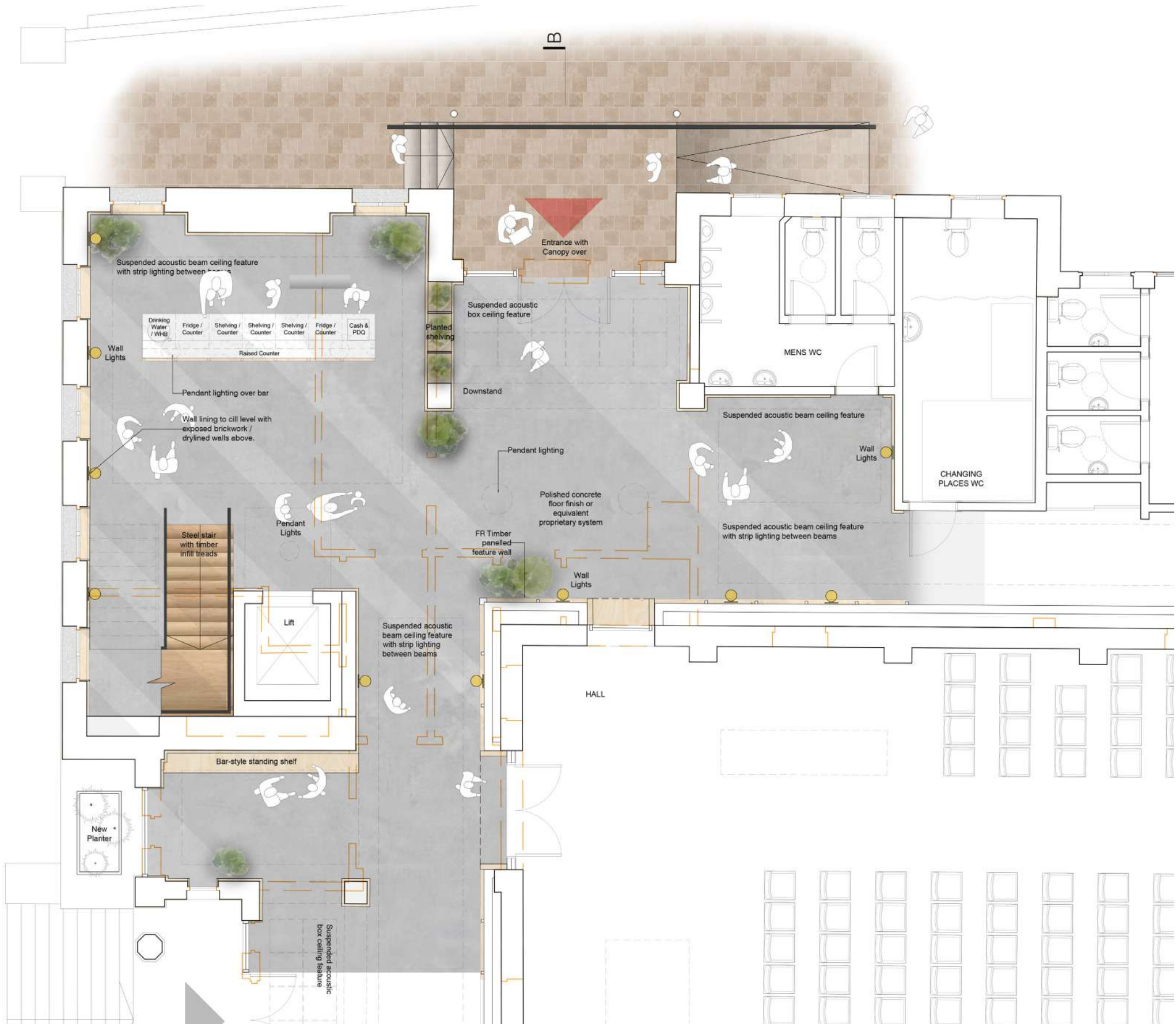
More specifically, the building retains its general use as a community facing facility with spaces available for hire by the general public.

Approximately 25sq.m of existing floorspace will be rebuilt in the form of the Green Room to the East corner of the building.

In association with the same portion of the building, an additional 4.4sq.m will be created, infilling an incongruous gap.



Ground floor plan excerpt showing rebuilt portion (green) and infill portion (orange)



Proposed Dukes Sq. foyer coloured plan (internal layout not subject to consent)

3.0 DESIGN PROPOSAL

3.2 LAYOUT

The layout of the building on the site remains broadly as existing under the proposals.

However, some of the proposed changes affect emergency escape and/or access to the building. Other elements provide for new amenity space.

A new entrance is formed to the North East elevation of the building, labelled 'Dukes Sq' entrance on the plans. This is an important part of the proposals that will provide a **genuinely accessible entrance to the building**, something the building lacks in its current form.

The new entrance will take the form of a canopy and plinth accessed via a short flight of stairs or a Part M compliant ramp. Internally the new entrance will relate to a newly created internal Foyer space which in turn links to the front Foyer accessed from the Denne Road entrance.

Aside from delivering accessibility benefits to the building, the new entrance proposal will also deliver tangible **enhancements to the public realm**. The entrance will be accompanied by **new lighting** along the length of the building facing the alley way. The external ground surface of the alley linking Dukes Sq. and Denne Rd. is also **proposed to be re-surfaced**.

In connection with the new entrance, existing fire escape stairs on the NE elevation will be demolished with a **new fire escape stair formed on the East corner** of the building providing escape from 1F and the roof terrace.

Similarly the existing fire escape stair on the SW elevation of the building will also be demolished and a **new a new fire exit from 1F formed at the far SE end of the Office Area** together with a new fire escape stair.

Proposals also provide for the conversion of the two flat roofs to the NE and SW sides of the building to be converted into usable **roof terrace amenity areas**. These will provide the building with external amenity which the building currently lacks. The roof terraces will primarily serve one of the new break out rooms formed at 1F, and the Office area. They will provide building users and employees with access to outside space.

By virtue of the building's general location and setting, both terraces are situated at least 45m from the nearest dwellings, with the bulk of the Denne Road portion of the building forming a **natural barrier to noise spill**.

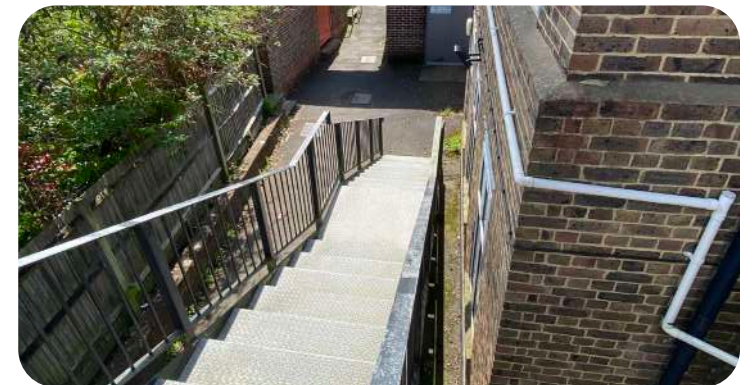
New MEP plant enclosures are also positioned adjacent to the same roof terraces benefitting from the same natural acoustic separation.



Proposed Dukes Sq. entrance



Proposed Dukes Sq. foyer internal 3D visualisation (internal layout not subject to consent).



A new fire escape stair will replace the existing one in the alley way along the side of the building.



Existing flat roof space proposed for conversion to external amenity space.



One of the refurbished break-out rooms which will be served by the new roof terraces. (internal layout not subject to consent)

3.0 DESIGN PROPOSAL

3.3 SCALE AND APPEARANCE

The proposals will not have a significant impact on the perceived scale or form of the building, and will read as a series of minor adjustments to the existing property.

New elements that are replacing existing portions of the building will be **formed in a scale commensurate with the existing**. For example, the Green Room will be re-built as a single storey element, in effect replicating the existing toilet block that it replaces.

The height of the single storey will be slightly higher than the existing (approx. 3.8m as opposed to the existing 2.6m) but this is to provide **a genuine enhancement to the quality of building fabric and internal space**. The existing space is formed in poor quality materials with inadequate headroom.

This element of the building will also be built in **facing brickwork and detailing** (soldier course parapet etc.) to match. New windows will be formed in a style and scale to match those along the North East elevation.

The new Dukes Sq. entrance will also adopt an **appropriately subservient scale** such that it will not challenge the character or perceived dominance of the Denne Road Entrance. It will feature a 3.6m wide glazed set of doors **set within an original recess** along the NE elevation. A 4.8m wide canopy will be set at 1F level and will project 1.5m away from the building's external face.

The **new MEP plant enclosures** will comprise 2no external areas of flat roof (approx. 6.3 x 7.8m and 8.2 x 3.8m in size) with polyester powder coated acoustic screens. The screens are expected to be approximately 2m high (from external terrace level) and in terms of scale, will constitute **a subservient addition** in the context of the building as a whole. The final height of the screen will be subject to the final specification of the plant - refer to the accompanying External Plant Noise Assessment.

The screening will be installed in a **colour to compliment the tones of the existing** facing brickwork of the building.

New full height glazing and entrance doors are proposed to portions of wall within the portico of the front elevation. This small scale intervention will **sensitively modernise and enhance** the appearance of the Denne Road elevation of the building whilst **maintaining the character and original features** of the principal elevation. The proposed glazing will activate the building frontage providing sightlines to the activity within the foyer space. The neoclassical columns will be protected and restored as a maintenance item under part of the wider scheme of work.

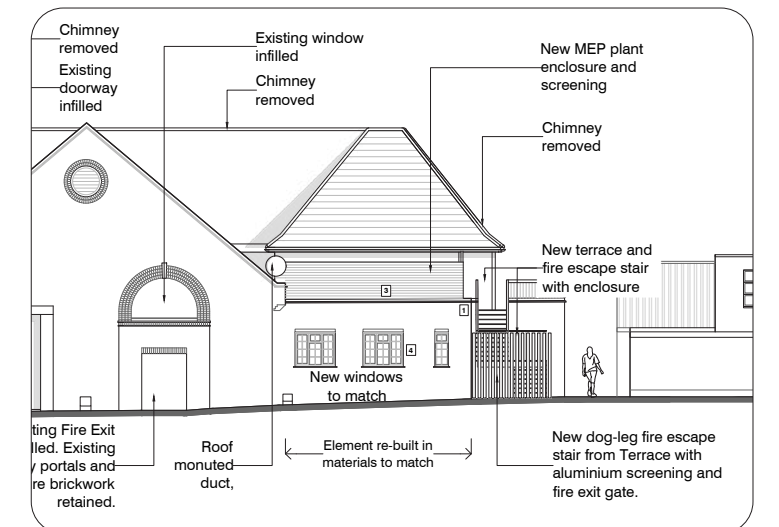
All other external additions or changes will also adopt **similarly appropriate and contextual scale, appearance, and materials**. For example, new balustrades to the roof terraces will be formed in black polyester powder coated metal to match soffits, fascia and rainwater goods on the existing building.



Proposed coloured front elevation



Existing toilet block to rear of the building proposed to be re-built as Green Room to serve the hall.



Excerpt from proposed elevation drawing.

3.0 DESIGN PROPOSAL

3.4 LANDSCAPING

The **2no. new roof terraces** will provide much needed external amenity space, something the building currently lacks. The connection between access to outdoor space and wellbeing is well documented. These new facilities will significantly enhance how the building can be used and by whom.

The terraces will be **formed through the conversion of existing flat roof space**. Following a thorough refurbishment/upgrade of the roofs' insulation and waterproofing, the spaces will be finished with new external grade paving on plastic riser pads.

Raised planters will complement the space with soft landscaping, and new balustrades fitted adjacent to the parapet will provide fall protection and prevent unauthorised access to the main roof. As already described, **MEP plant will be screened off from the terraces**, partly so as to provide an attractive setting.

Also included in these proposals is the **resurfacing of the alley way** connecting Dukes Sq. and Denne Rd, and the provision of new external lighting along the length of the associated elevation. This is proposed in conjunction with the new entrance to the side of the building as a further means of **enhancing the quality and safety of this public realm** pedestrian link.

The applicant acknowledges that the alleyway itself falls outside of its ownership, and that some degree of collaboration with the local authority / county council would be required in the realisation of this element of the proposals.

3.5 ACCESS

The new Dukes Sq. entrance is an important enhancement to the building in terms of providing **Part M compliant step free access**.

At present, the only step free access to the building is via small, largely overlooked side entrances on either flank of the building. Neither provide direct access to central circulatory or foyer spaces and along with their scale it implies secondary status to wheelchair users or those who cannot negotiate the stairs on the Denne Road entrance.

The new entrance addressing the alleyway to the North **provides direct access to the primary foyer within the building**, (part of the wider scheme of internal remodelling), which incorporates the building's lift. It will also be **covered and well lit**.

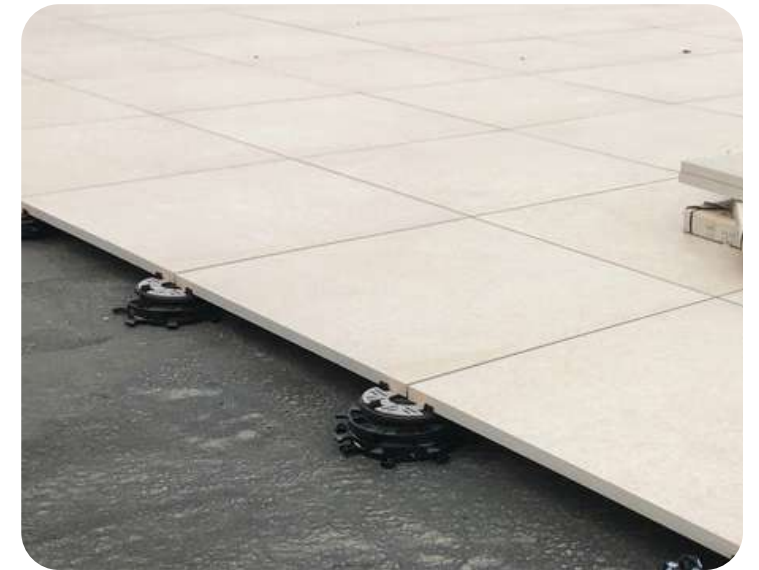
While the entrance is subservient in the overall context of the building, its **proximity to Dukes Square car park** means it is expected to be very well used as one of two main entrances. This will normalise step-free access as part of the building's everyday operation and ensure an **equitable experience for all users**.



Proposed South-West elevation



Example of raised planters



Paving on plastic pads



Example of resurfaced hard landscaping



Example of the impact of external lighting

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY

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In an era of climate emergency, the most sustainable form of development and stewardship of the built environment is the one that **facilitates responsible ongoing use of existing buildings**.

Construction accounts for 42% of global carbon emissions. **Securing the future of existing building stock** through remodelling, modernisation and careful re-appropriation, avoids the need for demolition and redevelopment of sites - with an associated sizeable carbon footprint by comparison to refurbishment options.

A holistic sustainability approach also recognises the **wellbeing and accessibility of building users as a sustainability matter**.

A majority of the proposals contained within this planning application are critical to a wider scheme of modernisation works for Drill Hall that seek to:

- Modernise the building and secure its ongoing use for decades to come
- Deliver improvements with tangible benefit to the well being of the building users
- Reduce operational carbon emissions

Specifically under this application:

- The new plant facilities will introduce **low carbon energy sources** to the building in the form of air source heat pumps, and compliant ventilation rates to the main hall space.
- The new side entrance will provide genuinely **step free access** to the building.
- New **external amenity** provides a well being enhancement for users.
- Replacement polycarbonate roofing will retain widespread **natural light to the main hall** reducing reliance on artificial lighting. New rooflights also provide natural light to other part of the building.
- Installation of 14no. new photovoltaic (solar) panels to the south-facing section of the main hall roof, providing **on-site renewable energy generation** and supporting overall sustainability targets.
- Based on Stage 2 calculations and applying the Be Lean, Be Clean and Be Green hierarchy in order, the proposals are set to **reduce the total Energy consumption by approximately 62%** from 237 kWh/m²/year to 90 kWh/m²/year.
- Carbon emissions are also set to **reduce by approximately 66%** from 46.42 kg/Co₂/Year to 15.44kg/Co₂/Year



New MEP plant will be screening by acoustic panels similar to those shown above.



The proposed air handling unit will deliver fresh air to the main hall.



Renewed polycarbonate panels will maintain good natural lighting to the hall.



New air source heat pumps will deliver a low carbon source of heating and cooling for the building.



New photovoltaic panels will provide the building with a renewable source of electricity reducing reliance on the national grid.

5.0 HERITAGE

5.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Drill Hall, Horsham is a **non-designated heritage asset** (but not a nationally listed building). It has local historic and architectural significance, reflecting the town's late nineteenth - and early twentieth-century civic and military history, and has had a long-standing role as a **flexible and well-used community building**.

Its **simple, robust form**, principal elevations and **generous internal hall space** contribute positively to its character and evidential value. Crucially, the building's continued active use has been central to its survival and ongoing relevance within Horsham's historic environment.

This Heritage Statement accompanies a planning application for a series of **minor and discreet interventions** that have been carefully developed to conserve the building's heritage significance while securing its ongoing viable use, aligning with the spirit of **NPPF paragraph 16**.

The proposals - including (but not limited to) new floor-to-ceiling glazing within the front portico, the introduction of low-carbon MEP plant and associated enclosures, the relocation of fire escape stairs, and the rebuilding of areas of poor-quality existing fabric - are **modest in scale and impact**.

Collectively, they are intended to improve functionality, safety and environmental performance, without undermining the **significance of the heritage asset**.

The proposals have been designed to ensure that their impact on the most sensitive elements of the building's character, including its overall form and principal elevations, is negligible. **Where change is introduced, it is discreet, proportionate and in most cases reversible.**

Proposals will **enhance the building's presence and legibility within the street scene**. In certain areas, such as the rebuilding of the poor-quality toilet block at the eastern corner of the building, the works will use **materials that match the main structure**. This will result in a modest enhancement to the overall character and coherence of the building.

The Drill Hall is a locally relevant Heritage asset. Overall, the proposals will support and secure a relevant and **meaningful ongoing use** of the building for decades to come, reducing the risk of vacancy, decline and eventual loss. Proposed works will have negligible impact upon the building and in many instances will enhance functionality and reverse unsympathetic additions.

By enabling continued occupation, improving environmental performance and addressing poor-quality elements of the existing building, the scheme will ensure that this **valued local heritage asset** is conserved and enjoyed by future generations.



The main hall is the centre piece of the building. Through the introduction of new building services under this application, the hall will be provided with modern and compliant standards of ventilation allowing for continued effective use.



Sensitive enhancements will be made to the building with decorative retained, and preserved.



The non-original and poor quality toilet block will be rebuilt in materials to match the existing building.

6.0 CONCLUSION

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The proposals for The Drill Hall represent a **carefully considered and sensitive programme of works** that will secure the long-term future of this important community asset aligning with HDC Local Plan policy 33 and 34.

By modernising the building, improving accessibility, enhancing external amenity, rationalising circulation, and upgrading building services, **the scheme provides the foundations for a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable arts and community venue for Horsham.**

The design approach respects the **building's heritage significance** while introducing discreet, high-quality improvements (HDC Local Plan policy 39) that will enhance its functionality, environmental performance and public presence.

Through these measures, the **project delivers meaningful public benefit**, enabling continued active use of the building for generations to come and **supporting the wider aims of sustainable development** and cultural enrichment within the town.

We therefore respectfully seek the support and approval of the local planning authority for this application.



Excerpt of north-east coloured elevation showing the proposed Dukes Sq. entrance

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Report Notes

- 1.THE BOUNDARIES SHOWN ARE
BASED ON INFORMATION BY OTHERS.
ALL BOUNDARIES TO BE VERIFIED ON SITE
PRIOR TO COMMENCING CONSTRUCTION.
2. TOPOGRAPHICAL LEVELS TO BE
CONFIRMED.
3. DESIGN & QUOTED AREAS ARE SUBJECT
TO DESIGN DEVELOPMENT & STATUTORY
CONSENTS.
4. ALL SURVEY INFORMATION SHOWN IS
SUBJECT TO FURTHER SITE INVESTIGATION
DURING DEMOLITION.

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