



Huntley Wharf

KENAVON DRIVE, READING

West Block Cafe Design Booklet

Berkeley
Designed for life

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared to accompany the non-material amendment application referenced 220223, and communicate the design intent and vision for the commercial proposals at Huntley Wharf, Kenavon Drive, Reading.

Background

Our vision for the Huntley Wharf has always been to celebrate the history of this site and to provide a new and vibrant community where its residents will enjoy living in this new riverside neighbourhood.

The approved commercial floorspace was seen by the LPA, as evident in the Committee Report dated 10th January 2018, as “an ancillary function to serve the Kenavon Drive area” and “to meet residents day-to-day shopping needs”, as well as “to enhance enjoyment of the riverside location”.

Whilst developing the commercial strategy for Huntley Wharf this has been the Applicant’s aim. Our development & planning permission delivers a variety of uses across the site that best meets the needs of the residents, that enhances their enjoyment of this new residential neighbourhood and that ensures the long term use and success of these community spaces.

Our planning permission allows for some flexibility on the uses but this NMA application seeks to vary a single commercial unit to become a residents cafe and lounge to provide a facility that will enhance the resident’s enjoyment of the riverside location.

History

11 May 2016	160733 EIA Screening Opinion	Positive screening opinion made by the LPA for the redevelopment of the site for between 700-800 residential units and a total 1,200sqm of commercial/ community/retail floorspace.
10 October 2018	170509 FULL Planning Consent	Planning permission issued by the LPA for the redevelopment of the site for 765 residential units and 5 commercial units which included 1x flexible Use Class A1-A4, B1 or D1-D2, 1x flexible Use Class D1-D2, 1x flexible Use Class A1-A5, 1x flexible Use Class A3-A4 and 1x flexible Use Class A1-A5 or D1-D2, totalling 1,384sqm.
17 March 2022	220233 NMA Application	Submission of a NMA application to change the use of 1x commercial unit with flexible Use Class A1-A5 to private amenity space (Class C3) reducing the total commercial floorspace to 1,222sqm.

COMMERCIAL STRATEGY



APPROVED SITE LAYOUT - NTS

Current Strategy

The commercial strategy has been developed to provide a variety of uses across the site that meet the everyday needs of the residents at Huntley Wharf.

As a result we hope to attract convenience store, nursery, restaurant, fitness and cafe operators providing both daytime and evening activity that will compliment this new residential neighbourhood. Together these will provide a place for residents to meet, eat, socialise & work out, but also provide convenience through provision of a shop and daycare facility.

Huntley Wharf will follow the aspirations of the planning committee providing a variety of uses on the site. Unit 3 will still provide an opportunity for a restaurant and changing the use of Unit 5 will not only remove a competing unit from the market but will provide an instant active frontage on the river.

Since May 2021 all commercial units have been on the market to attract these types of operators, however to understand local demand other operators whose business falls within the approved use Classes have also been targeted. To date we have only had limited interest for Units 1, 2 & 4 with the below uses.

Key (Intended Uses)

	Commercial Floorspace
①	Convenience Store
②	Nursery
③	Restaurant
④	Fitness Studio
⑤	Cafe

CAFE - THE PROPOSAL

A new approach to respond to changing needs in remote working and provide a long term sustainable use for the commercial unit.

Change of Strategy

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK has seen a major shift in the number of people working from home which has resulted in a trend of normalising remote working. As a result, a growing number of the population are looking for homes on developments that offer this flexibility to provide an opportunity to meet their neighbours and build a successful community.

With Unit 5 having a similar use to Unit 3 and being subservient in size to the other units surrounding the Riverside Square it provides an opportunity to find a better use that will offer a more sustainable and certain future.

By providing private amenity space at ground floor level accessed externally, which will not only support the on-going trend for a hybrid way of working but provide a flexible community space for residents to meet and socialise in a different environment to their home will improve well-being and encourage long term activity to this unit.

This conversion of Unit 5 will still retain over 1,200sqm of commercial floorspace across Huntley Wharf as originally intended, delivered by Spring 2025.

Proposals in Detail

Since submitting the planning application we have welcomed the feedback from officers and have developed the design to respond to feedback from the LPA. The revised proposals allow for the space to have a variety of uses to maximise the benefit it has to the residents. It includes a co-working space which contains tables/ benches & private booths so that it can be used by individuals to work privately but also collaboratively by accommodating informal meetings.

The space includes a kitchen dining area which contains a dinning table, kitchen units, kitchen worktop, sink, oven, hob and fridge to allow residents to cook and eat whether having a lunch break during work or to meet and socialise with friends and family. This function will be mainly used during the evenings and weekends which will ensure day to evening activity along the waterfront.

In the summer the space will benefit from outdoor space and through the provision of seating will provide further activity to the public square and waterfront.

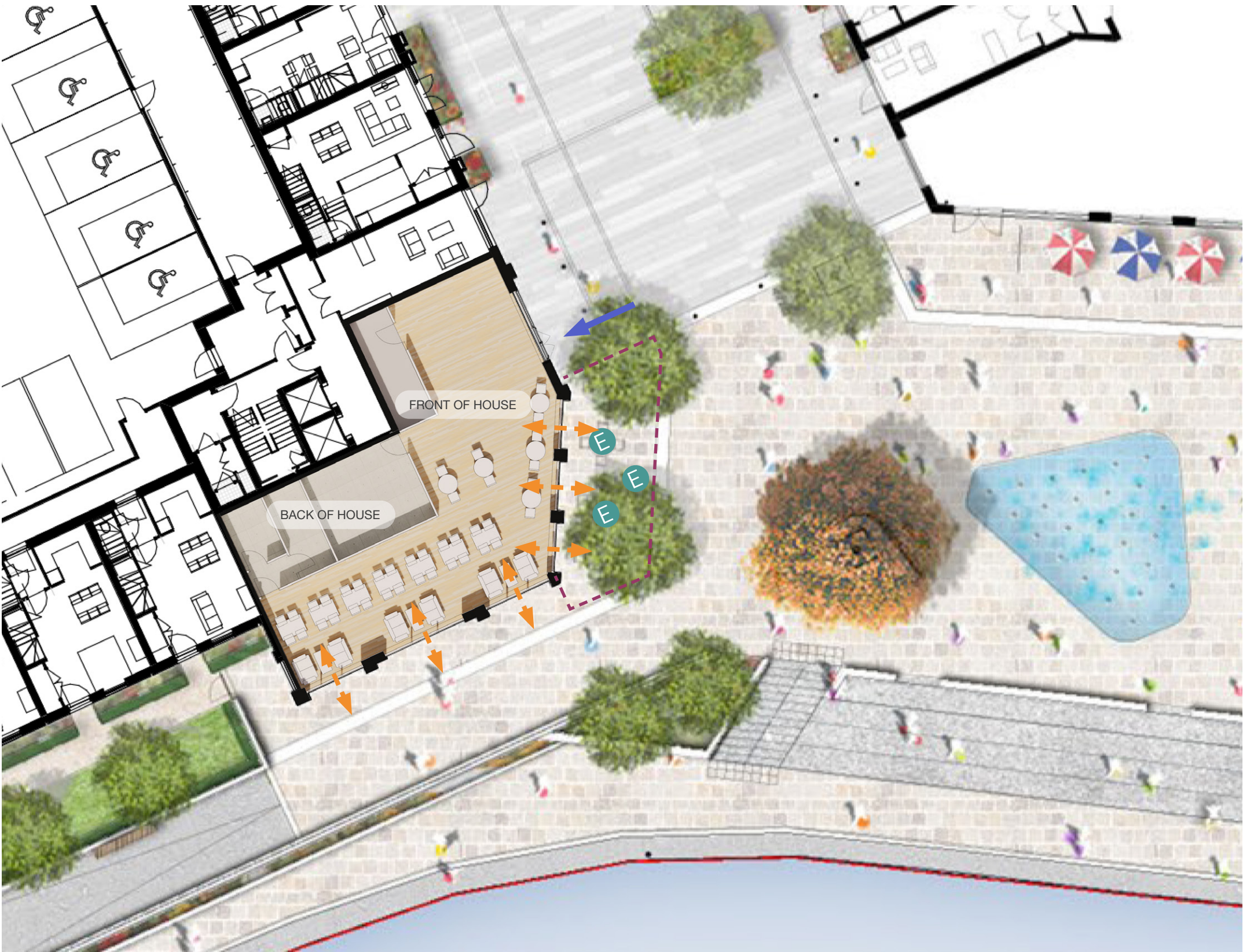
Building strong new communities is incredibly important to the success of a place. Therefore, new resident lounge will also form a place for community events organised throughout the year, such as film nights, providing opportunities for residents to gather.

Planning Policy

The proposals are considered to be a non-material amendment because;

- » No loss of active frontage to the buildings, therefore there is no impact on the vitality of the public realm;
- » There is no material impact on the amenity of the residential dwellings;
- » Maintains compliance with planning policies at all levels;
- » It is a minor change to the description of development to reduce the number of retail units from 5 to 4;
- » No administrative related amendments are required to the Section 106 Agreement; and
- » They do not alter the nature of the development and are not material when considered in the context of the approved scheme as a whole.

APPROVED LAYOUT

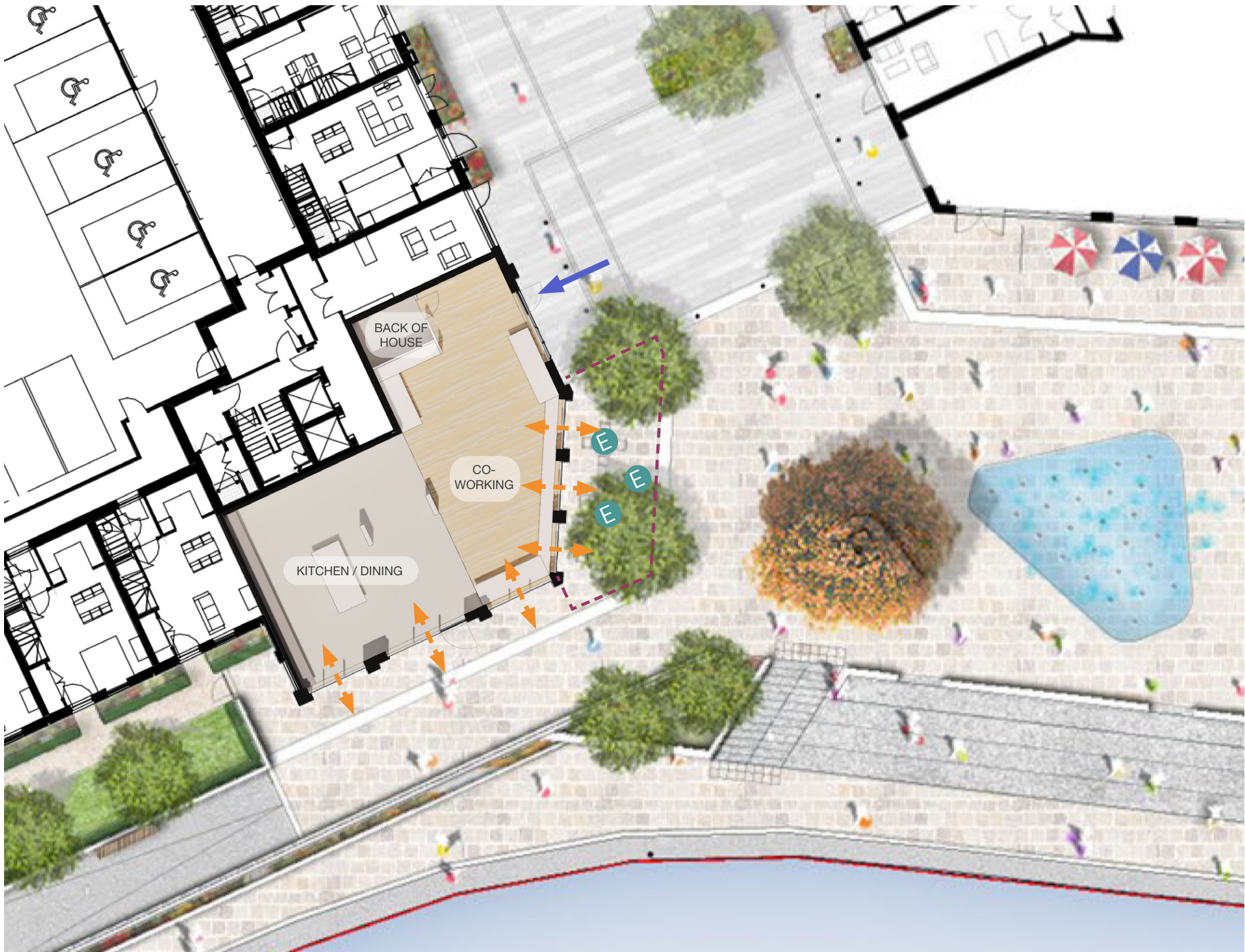


Key

	ENTRANCE
	ACTIVE FRONTAGES
	EXTERNAL SEATING
	EXTERNAL SEATING SPACE

APPROVED SITE LAYOUT - NTS

CURRENT PROPOSED LAYOUT

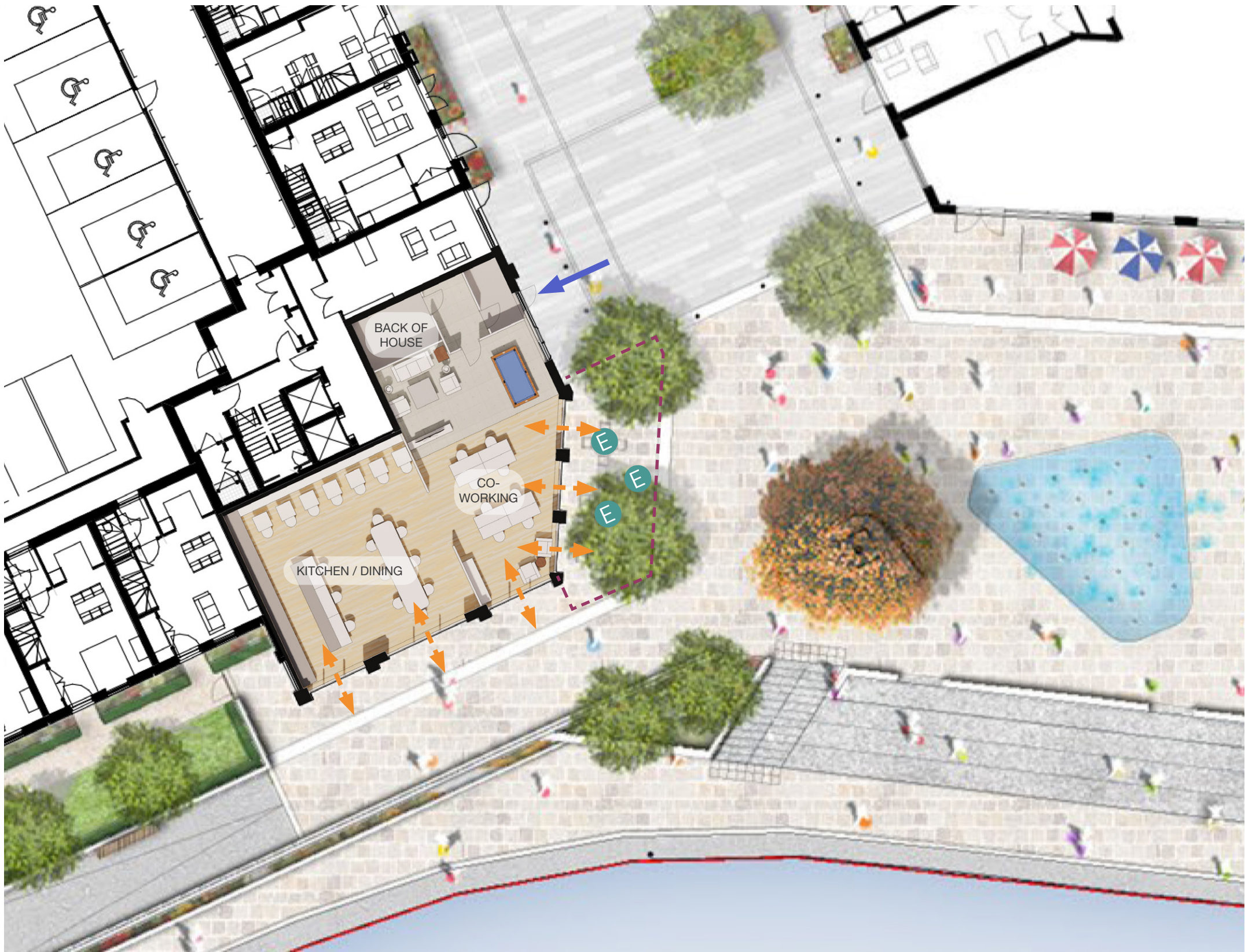


Key

	ENTRANCE
	ACTIVE FRONTAGES
	EXTERNAL SEATING
	EXTERNAL SEATING SPACE

CURRENT PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT (AS SUBMITTED) - NTS

REVISED PROPOSED LAYOUT

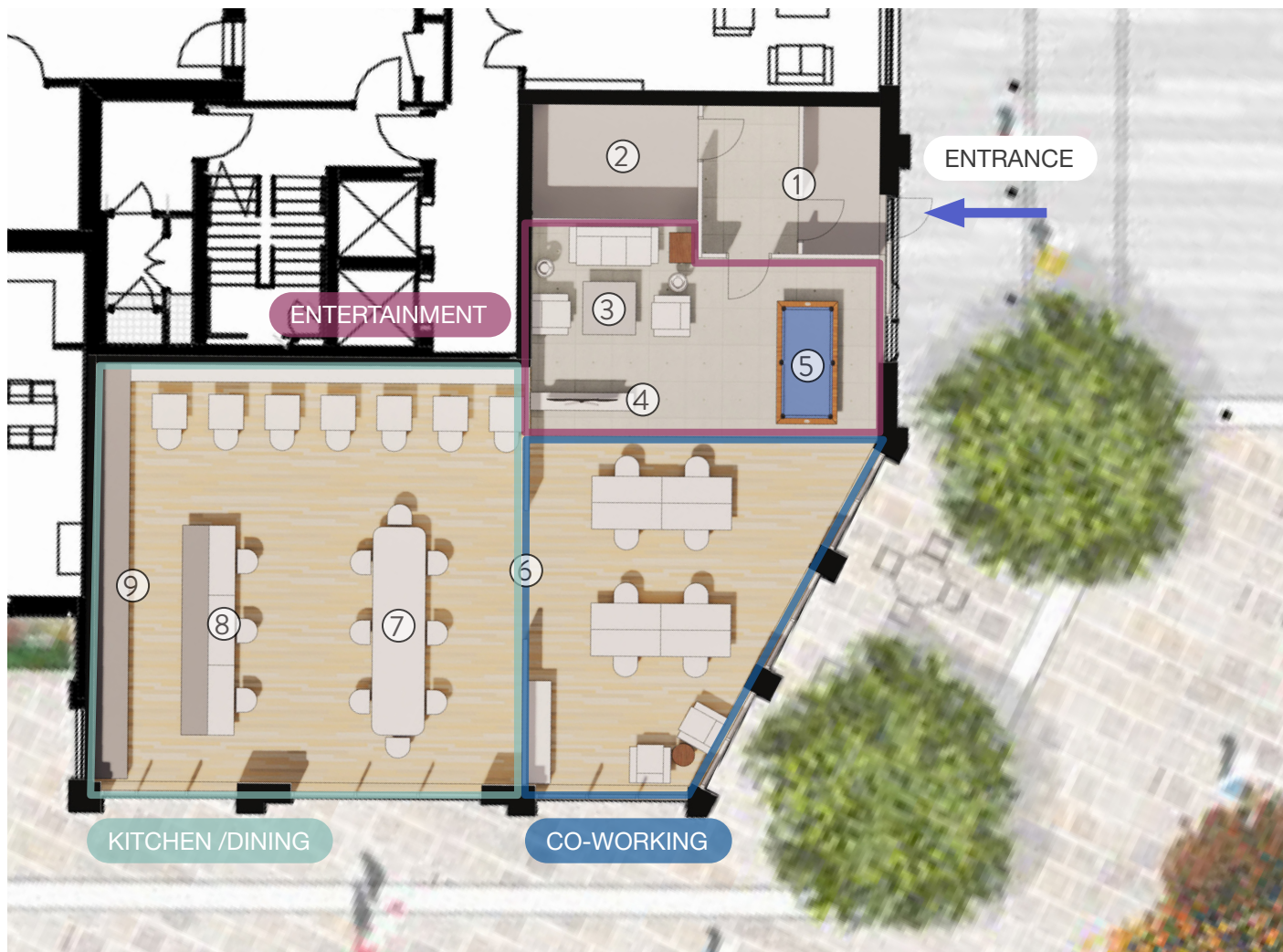


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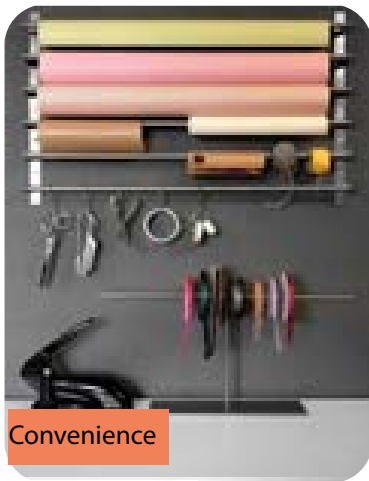
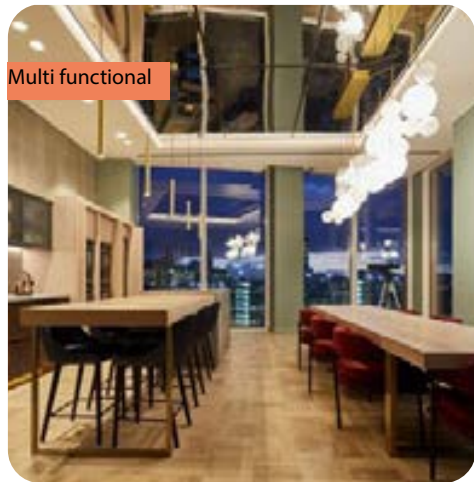
	ENTRANCE
	ACTIVE FRONTAGES
	EXTERNAL SEATING
	EXTERNAL SEATING SPACE

REVISED PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT (TO BE SUBMITTED) - NTS

PROPOSED INTERNAL FIT-OUT



- ① Entrance
- ② W.C.
- ③ Lounge Seating
- ④ TV
- ⑤ Pool Table
- ⑥ Retracting Door/Wall
- ⑦ Dining Table
- ⑧ High Table Seating & Island
- ⑨ Kitchen & Dining



BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS

The change of use of the cafe to private residential amenity will bring the following benefits.

Summary

Converting the commercial unit to private residential amenity gives certainty that it will be available for use once it is completed and from first occupations of West Block in Spring 2025. There is a significant risk that if left as a commercial unit it will be vacant for a considerable period of time once it is completed which will not contribute to the vitality or placemaking of the development immediately.

In the current economic climate, with the cost of living rising putting strain on disposable incomes and cost of materials rising making it more expensive for businesses to invest in upfront fit out and opening works, we believe securing a new sustainable use for this space now will benefit the residents in the long term without materially altering the nature of the development proposals.



Early completion, ready for use when residents move in in Spring 2025



Flexible co-working space for residents to respond to shift towards remote working



No ongoing competition with adjacent commercial units with similar uses



No risk of short and long term vacancy periods ensuring continued activity



Residents dining space providing a more appropriate space for entertaining



Sustainable long term use that is robust against national and local economy shifts



Continued active frontage that compliments Riverside Square



Community events space



Additional CIL contribution totalling c.£25k