



Queen’s Wharf, 47 Queen’s Road, Reading RG1 4QE

Design and Access Statement

December 2023



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of document

This document has been prepared to support the Planning Application for the conversion of office floorspace (Class E) to 8 dwellings (Class C3) at 47 Queens Road.

The Applicant is seeking to undertake changes to the application site, through conversion of unoccupied and redundant commercial floor space, and improve housing capacity in the local area.

The property requires modernisation to bring all the services, fixtures and fittings up to contemporary standards, as well as provide essential cycle storage to new residents and occupiers of the converted residential homes.



2.0 Site

2.1 Site Location

The application site is located on the south side of the River Kennet in Reading, close to the town centre.

The area is characterised by multi storey buildings. The immediate context comprises a range of uses including residential, educational and commercial spaces.

Transport links are excellent with the National Rail and Elizabeth line from Reading Station, approximately a 10 minute walk.



Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey map of site



Fig. 1 Site location and boundary conditions.



Fig. 2 Site location and transport links.

2.2 Site Context

The application site forms part of 47 Queens Road, an 8 storey building situated between Kennetside to the north, and Queens road to the south. It is located within the Central Area of Reading designated employment zone.

The application site comprises the partial ground floor accommodation on the southerly side facing onto Queens Road.

The buildings surrounding 47 Queens Road comprise a mixture of residential and commercial spaces, predominantly 3-4 storeys in a brick finish.



Fig. 4 59-75 Queens Road



Fig. 6 Wesley Gate, Queens Road



Fig. 5 View of 128 Queens Road



Fig. 7 62-66 Queens Road

2.3 Application Site

The building at 47 Queens road comprises 8 storeys, the lowest floor of which is the main entrance from Kennetside, and access to the undercroft parking. The ground floor is a mixture of residential and commercial use, with the upper six storeys in full residential use.

The existing building at 47 Queens Road is primarily residential in use, having been converted in the early 2000s from a government office building. The application site is the last remaining non-residential floor space within the building. This floorspace is served by the same building managing agents as the commercial space.

The building at 47 Queens Road has a rendered finish, with powder coated aluminium window frames. At upper levels, there is a metal cladding finish to the top floors, along with timber balconies.



Fig. 8 Approach to the site from Queens Road



Fig. 9 First Floor units facing the car park. Private residential balconies and terraces can be seen at upper floors

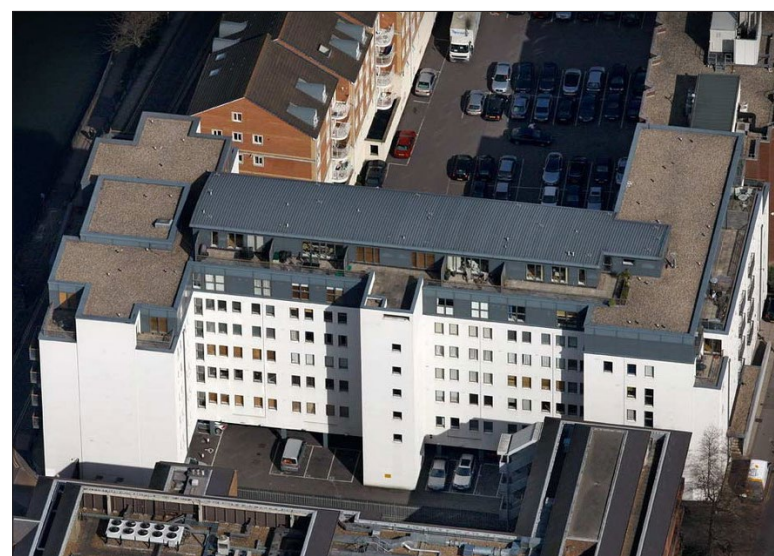


Fig. 10 Bird's eye view of existing building



Fig. 11 Principal entrance to the existing ground floor offices off Queen's Road

2.4 Application Site

The existing office accommodation is approximately 600sqm and comprises a largely open plan space. The accommodation is fairly dated, with suspended ceilings and carpet finishes. In our opinion not up to the standard expected from modern office spaces.



Fig. 12 Internal commercial space view



Fig. 13 Internal commercial space view



Fig. 14 Internal entrance space view showing stepped access



Fig. 15 Internal commercial space view

3.0 Existing Layout

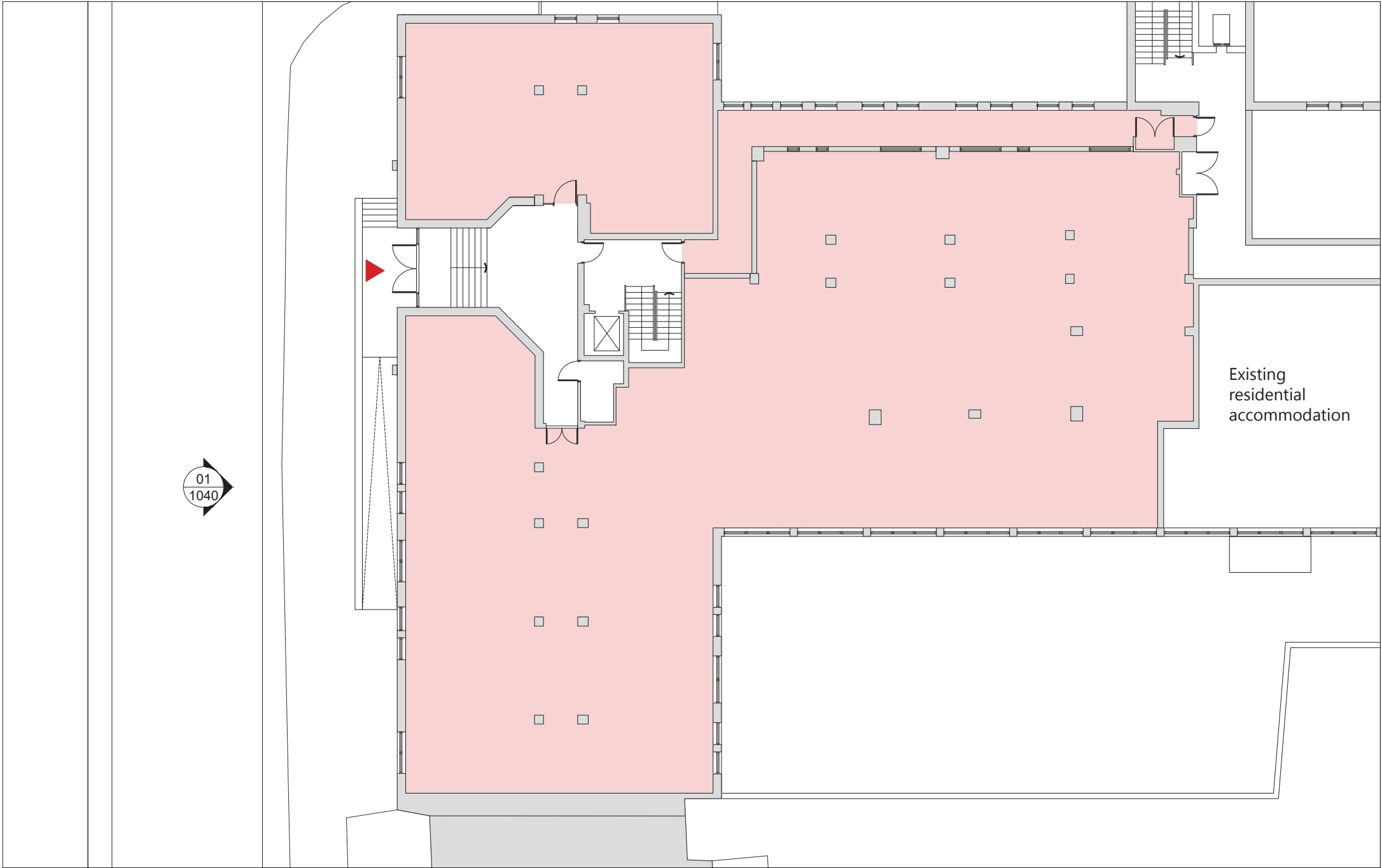
3.1 Existing Ground Floor Plan

The application site is currently designated as commercial office space [use class E].

The main entrance is along the Queens Road facade, with stairwell access to the car park below. The entrance is accessed via ramps or steps, followed by steps within the main entrance area.

The plan is divided into two large units, with a communal corridor running along the western facade, connecting the two stair cores.

The adjacent areas highlighted in pink represents the application site.



KEY



Entrance



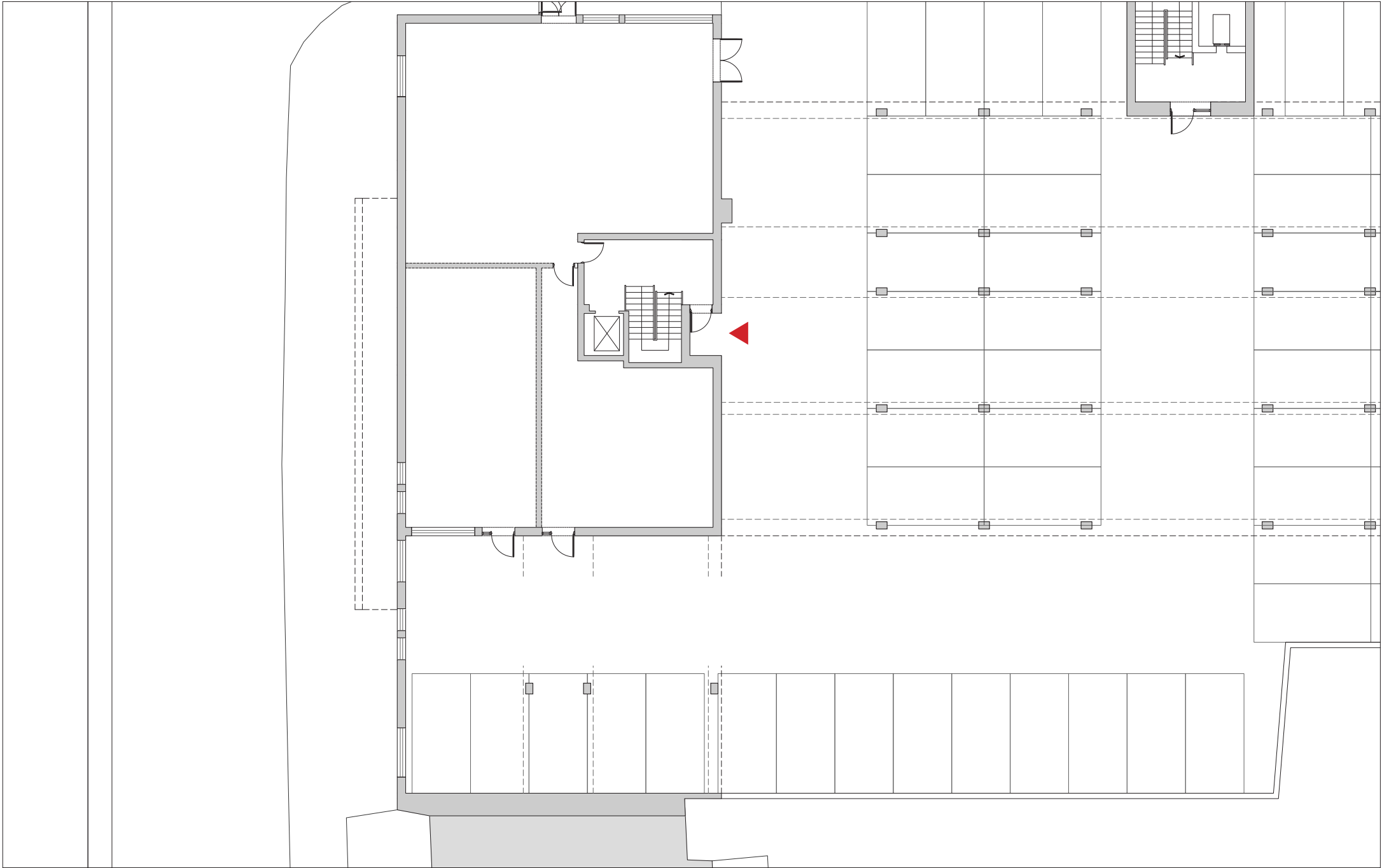
Existing fabric

Fig. 16 Existing Ground Floor Plan (1:200@A3)



3.2 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan

The lower ground floor includes a car park and service area to the office block, accessed at the stair core.



KEY

Entrance

Existing fabric

Fig. 17 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan (1:200@A3)



3.3 Existing Elevations

The following pages show the respective existing elevations of the application site., highlighted in pink.

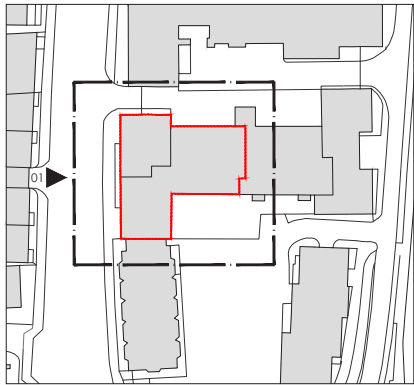


Fig. 18 Existing Elevation 01 (1:400@A3)

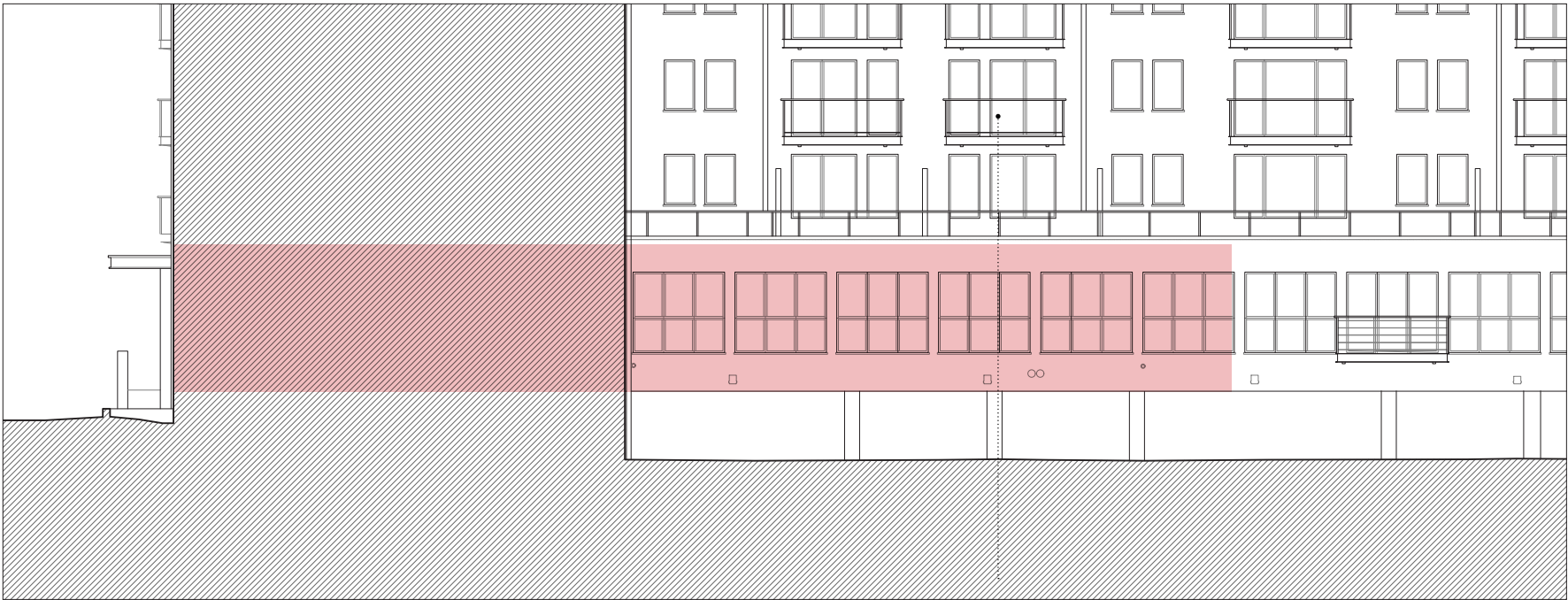
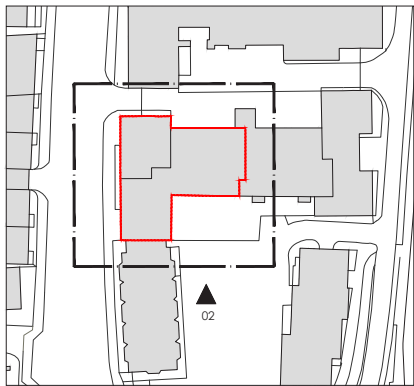


Fig. 19 Existing Elevation 02 (1:400@A3)

Balconies serving existing residential properties



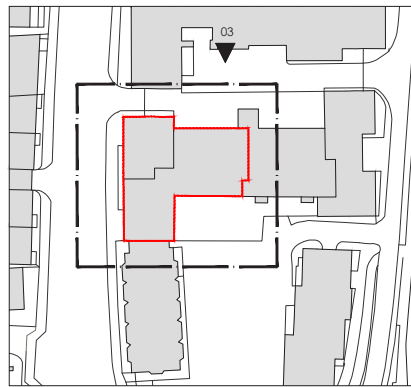


Fig. 20 Existing Elevation 03 (1:400@A3)

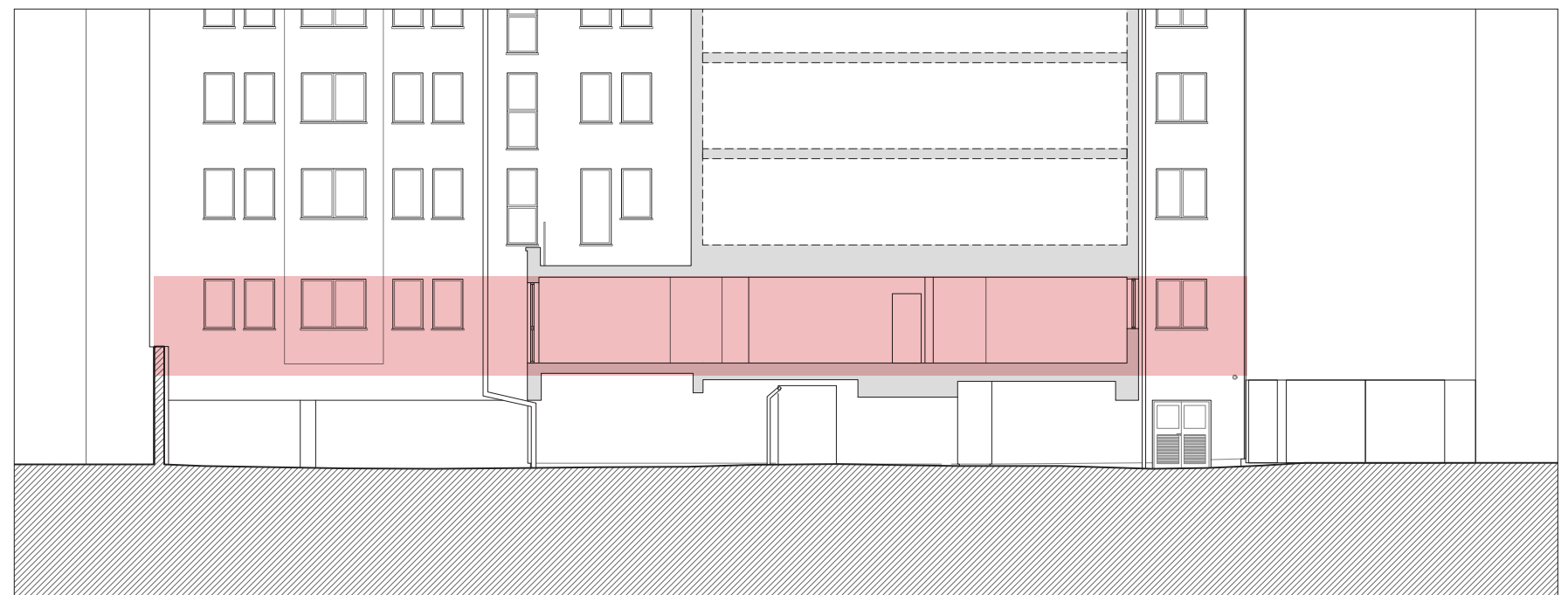
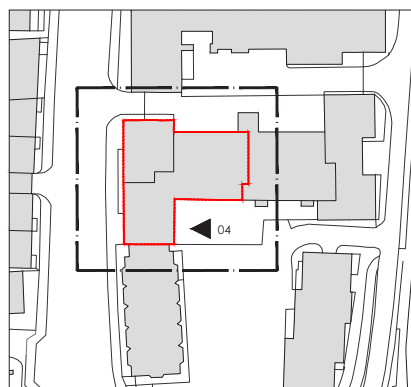


Fig. 21 Existing Elevation 04 (1:400@A3)

4.0 Proposed Layout

4.1 Proposed Ground Floor Plan

The application proposals have been developed following feedback received at Pre-application stage.

The primary objective of the proposed development is to provide high quality housing to replace underused commercial space, in an otherwise residential building.

The dwellings have been design to provide generous spaces, which utilise the existing and constrained floor layout, and maximise existing single and double aspect external openings. All units are in accordance with Local and National minimum space standards.

A storage space for the dwellings is provided adjacent to the main entrance from Queen’s Road.

There are 8no. dwellings as part of this application with the proposed housing mix as follows:

- Studio: 1 dwelling
- 1 bedroom 2 person: 3 dwellings
- 2 bedroom 4 person: 4 dwellings

The communal corridor is positioned centrally in the plan, allowing units to be located along the western facade utilising the existing windows.

KEY

- Entrance
- Existing fabric
- Proposed fabric

Unit Mix

- Studio
- 1 bedroom 2 person
- 2 bedroom 4 person
- Proposed balconies

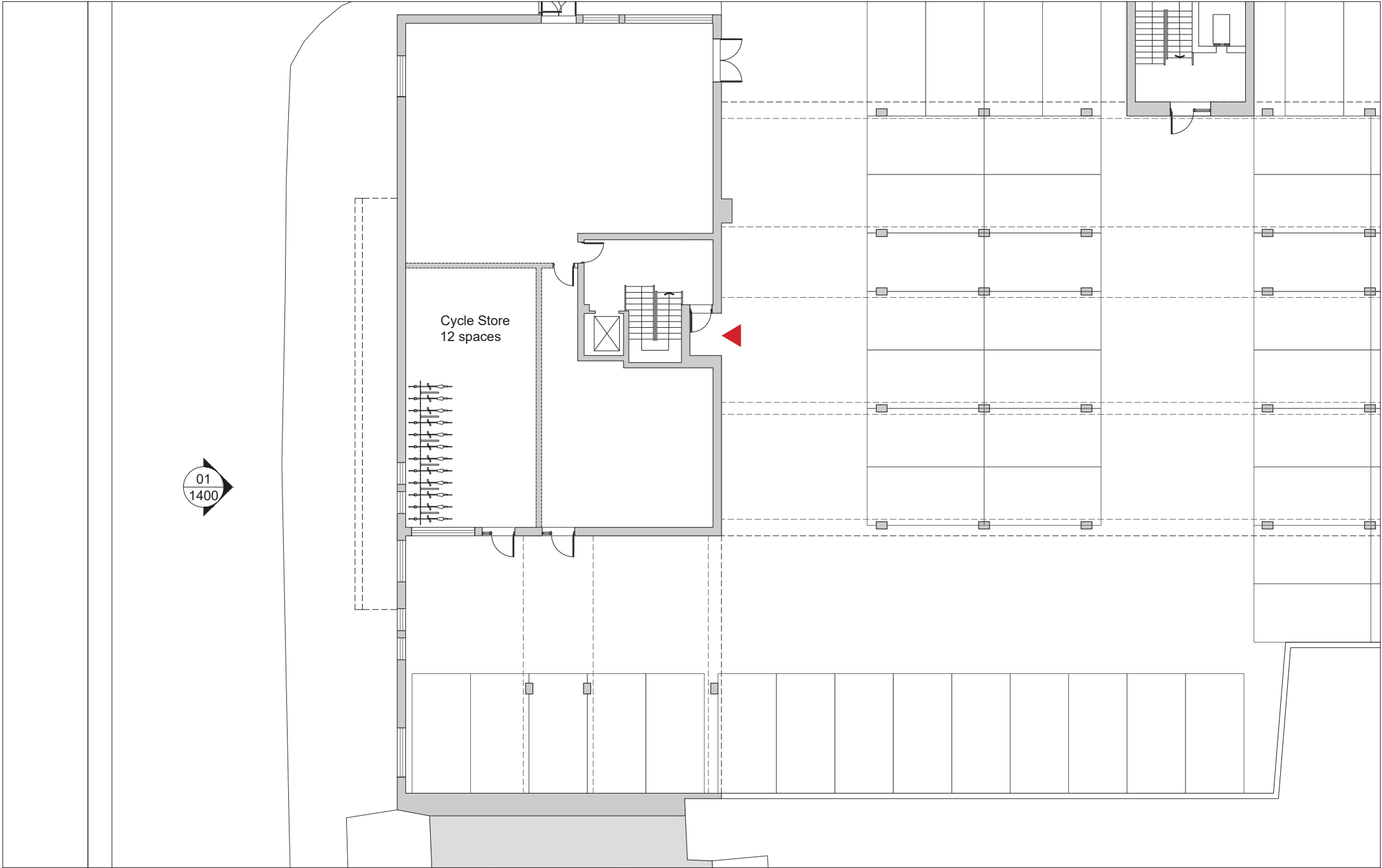


Fig. 22 Proposed Ground Floor Plan (1:200@A3)



4.2 Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan

The proposed lower ground floor level includes 12 cycle storage place for the new units, exceeding Reading Borough Council's requirement for cycle storage.



KEY

- Entrance
- Existing fabric
- Proposed fabric

Fig. 23 Proposed Lower Floor Plan (1:200@A3)



4.3 Design updates

The application proposals have been revised to reflect the following feedback received at Pre-application stage:

Private Amenity:

The units appear to meet the space standards, and some would provide private amenity space in the form of balconies. Given the nature of the development, it is accepted that not all units would be able to be provided with private amenity space.

Response: Additional balconies have been provided to units on the 3no units on the eastern facade. Out of 8 units, 6 have external private balconies.

Outlook, aspect and light:

Five of the nine units would be single aspect, and there are some concerns regarding their outlook and light into habitable rooms. ...A daylight and sunlight report should be submitted as part of the application to demonstrate that appropriate levels of light are provided for future residents.

Response: Layouts have been amended to address the depths of rooms in each of the units, particularly the living/dining rooms and bedrooms.

Privacy

The privacy of units G.1, G.2 and G.3 appear to be compromised by their position at the front of the building. The windows face directly onto the footpath and, in the case of Unit G.2, are directly onto the ramp into the building, which would attract the most footfall.

Response: The number of units has been reduced to 8 units (previously was 9 units) removing one of the units from the front facade facing the ramp. Where possible the bedrooms on the front facade were moved or positioned away from the ramp. The kitchen window on a higher point on the ramp is proposed to be fixed. The extra space has been allocated as communal storage for the residents.



Fig. 24 Proposed Ground Floor Plan (1:200@A3)



4.4 Quality of Accommodation

The proposed units meet the required minimum gross internal floor areas in the Government’s ‘Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard’ March 2015.

Out of the 8no. dwellings, 6no. have external amenity in the form of a balcony, to match the existing balconies.



Fig. 25 Typical studio unit
(1:100@A3)

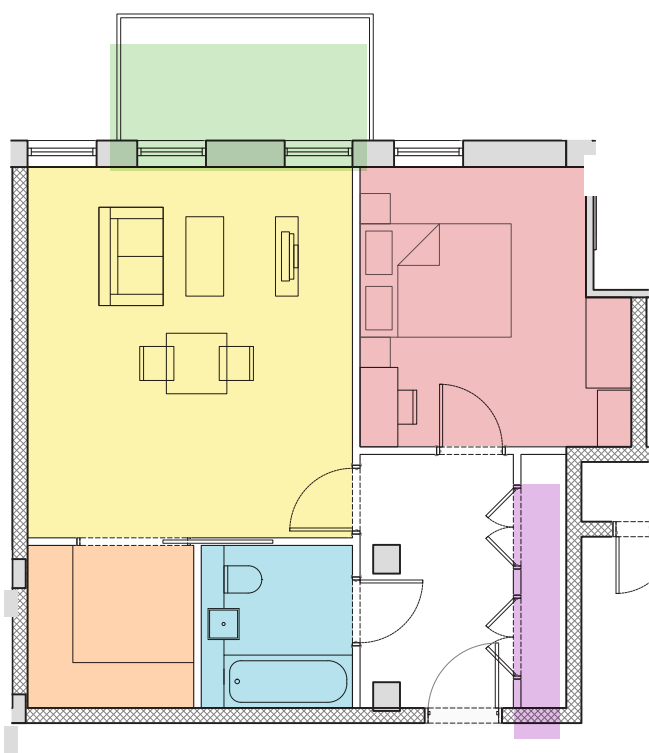


Fig. 26 Typical 1 bedroom-2 person unit
(1:100@A3)

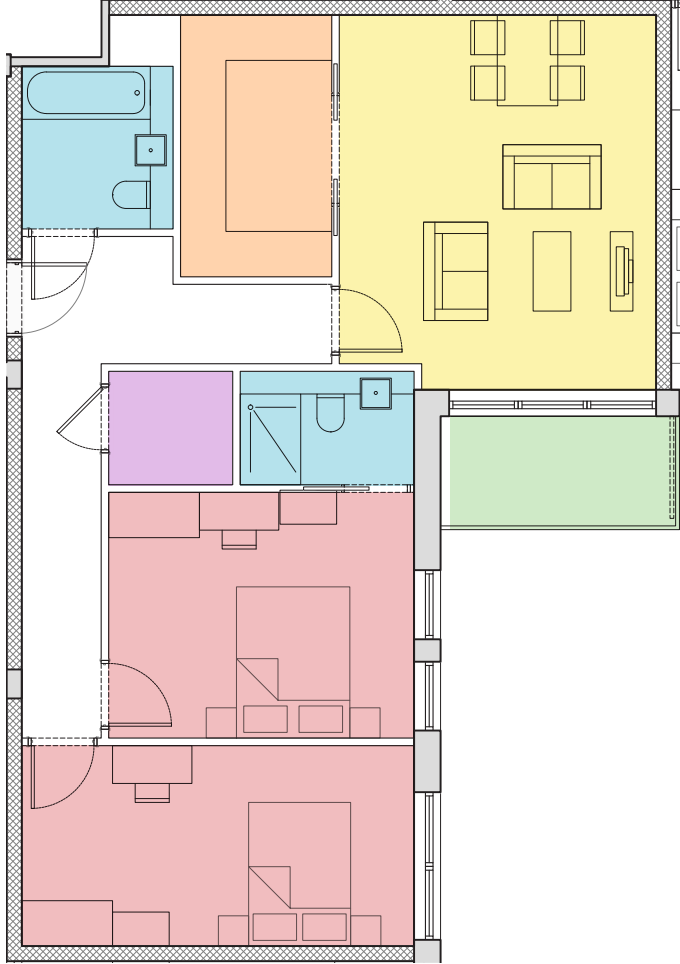


Fig. 27 Typical 2 bedroom-4 person unit
(1:100@A3)

- KEY
- Living/Dining
 - Kitchen
 - Bedroom/Wardrobe
 - Bathroom
 - External Private Amenity
 - Storage



4.5 Proposed Elevations

The following proposed elevations show the main alterations to the existing elevations which form part of this application:

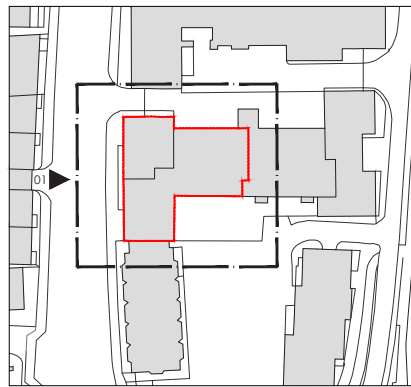


Fig. 28 Proposed Elevation 01 (1:400@A3)

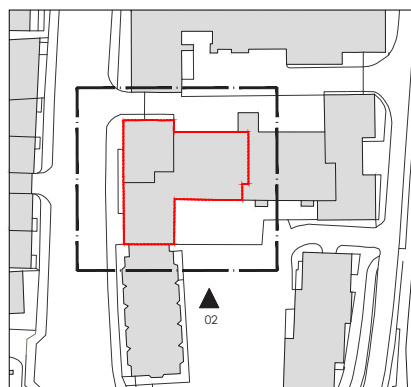


Fig. 29 Proposed Elevation 02 (1:400@A3)

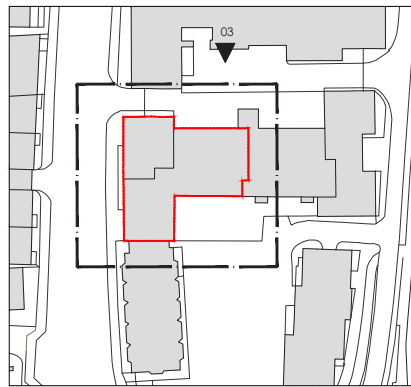


Fig. 30 Proposed Elevation 03 (1:400@A3)

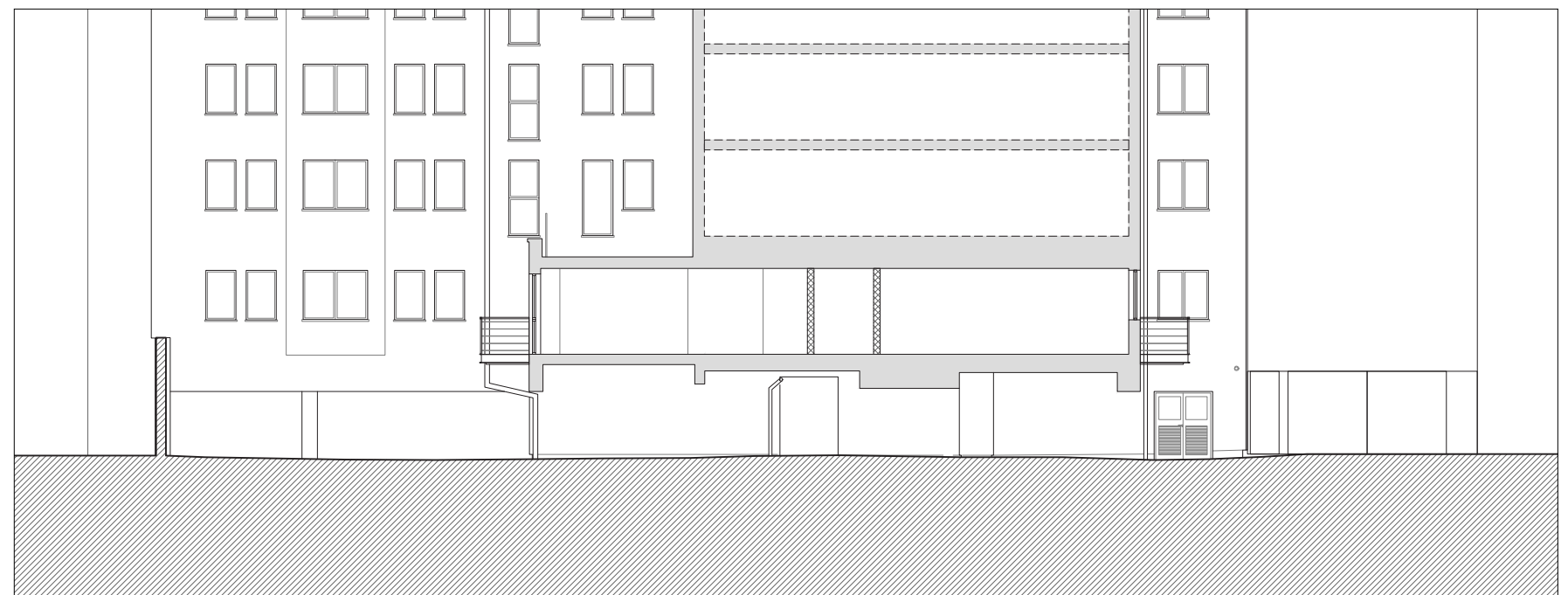
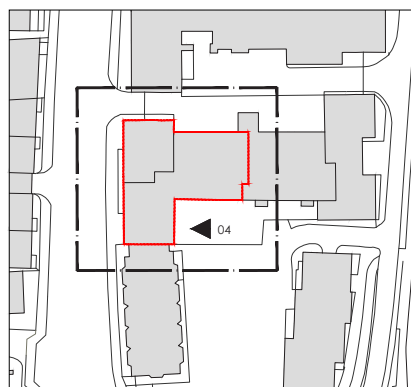


Fig. 31 Proposed Elevation 04 (1:400@A3)

5.0 Fire Strategy

5.1 Means of escape

There are three means of escape, which include the principal entrance as shown on the adjacent plan.

5.2 Building Fabric

The proposed conversion of the building will comprise the following works to the internal building fabric:

- 60min separation between flats
- 60min separation between protected means of escape
- 60 min fire protection to underside of ceilings
- Meets part B regs for fire strategy



Fig. 32 Proposed Ground Floor Plan with means of escape (1:200@A3)

KEY

- Entrance
- Existing fabric
- Proposed fabric
- Escape route



5.3 Upgrade Works

The existing building is currently undergoing refurbishment works to enhance the fire safety of the building, including replacement of insulated render, balcony decking and handrails.

Planning application no: 231112

Replace existing insulated render building external facing material and replacement of vertical metal cladding panels. Replacement of balcony decking and timber handrails

Decision date: 09/07/1999



Fig. 33 Proposed Elevations [courtesy of Oxford Architects]



Fig. 34 Proposed new decking specification [courtesy of Oxford Architects]



Fig. 35 Proposed new handrail specification [courtesy of Oxford Architects]



6.0 Summary

6.1 Summary

The existing commercial accommodation is underused, and not currently fit for modern office use. Moreover, the constraints of the location of the application site within a residential building makes it difficult to upgrade the accommodation to meet the discerning requirements of current office-based businesses.

With the immediate context of the application site being predominantly residential, the opportunity to convert this vacant space into high quality residential accommodation, along with the refurbishment of services, fixtures and fittings to be brought up to modern standards.

The layouts have been carefully developed to ensure the internal quality is as high as possible, to provide optimal living environments for residents, and exceed minimum local and national standards.

On this basis we trust the application proposals will be supported.



Fig. 36 Proposed Ground Floor Plan (1:200@A3)

