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Design & Access Statement

REVISION 4 - 21.11.25
INCLUDING
LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES

LAND ADJACENT 524 NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE



Google Earth aerial view of the site

SUMMARY

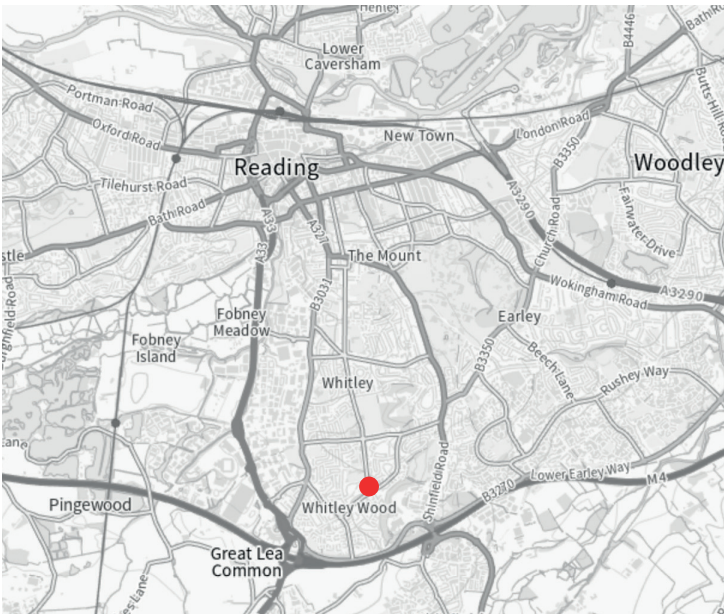
This document has been prepared by StudioMAC on behalf of Opal Group London Ltd in support of the proposed:

Development of the Land adjoining to 524 Northumberland Avenue, Construction of an attached two storey building to create a ground floor retail unit and a self-contained 2 bed dwelling above with cycle and bin storage and external communal amenity space

The site is currently empty and visibly degraded with evidence of frequent anti-social behaviour, including significant fly tipping, creating an ongoing burden for the Local Authority. The proposal therefore seeks to develop the site to provide much needed housing, alongside new retail frontage within the designation of the Whitley Wood Local Centre. This development is envisioned to both improve the visual appearance of the site, with new public landscaping to the front, whilst also helping to mitigate anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping.

LOCATION

The site is located within Whitley Wood, a southern suburb of Reading, positioned alongside the M4 motorway.



Map of Reading



Reading Borough Council Local Plan - Interactive Policy Map



Key:

- Key frontage in district and Local centres
- Cycle route
- Application Site

WHITLEY WOOD



LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The site is not located within a conservation area or subject to any Article 4 directions.

As indicated opposite, the site is highlighted within the Whitley Wood Area Map, identifying the existing retail shop frontage along Northumberland Avenue and Whitley Wood Road as key frontage in a Local Centre. There is also a Cycle route which runs along Northumberland Avenue.

Key considerations for the proposal with regards to planning policy have been with regards to Policy RL3 - Vitality and Viability of smaller centres. The proposal seeks to provide additional retail frontage to this Local Centre location, aligning with the intentions of the policy. For further detail, please see supporting planning statement submitted alongside this application.



1. Front view of the site taken from Northumberland Avenue



2. Side view of the site taken from Cooper Close

EXISTING CONDITION

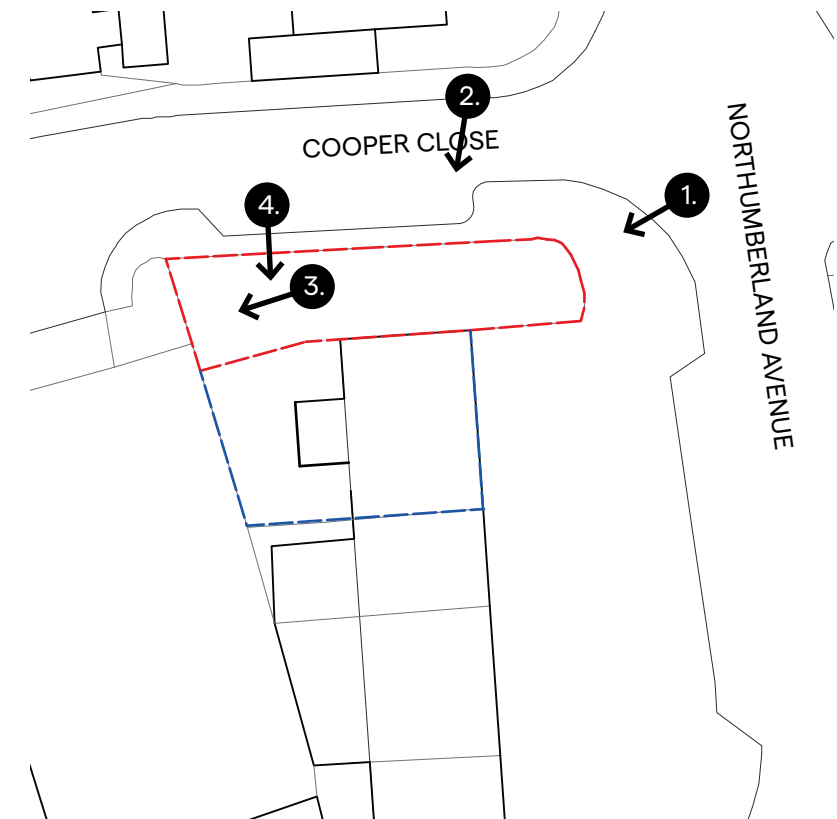
The site comprises of the land left over following the development of the Northumberland shops and flats, and shares a boundary with the gable wall of No. 526. The existing appearance is rather tired, with graffiti to the gable wall and evidence of frequent fly-tipping. As indicated, the current boundary fence to the residential properties is very exposed to the public realm, offering little privacy to the residents. The existing landscaped area is of very low quality and heavily degraded, contributing to the poor appearance of the site.



3. View to the rear of the site, capturing the current state of rubbish

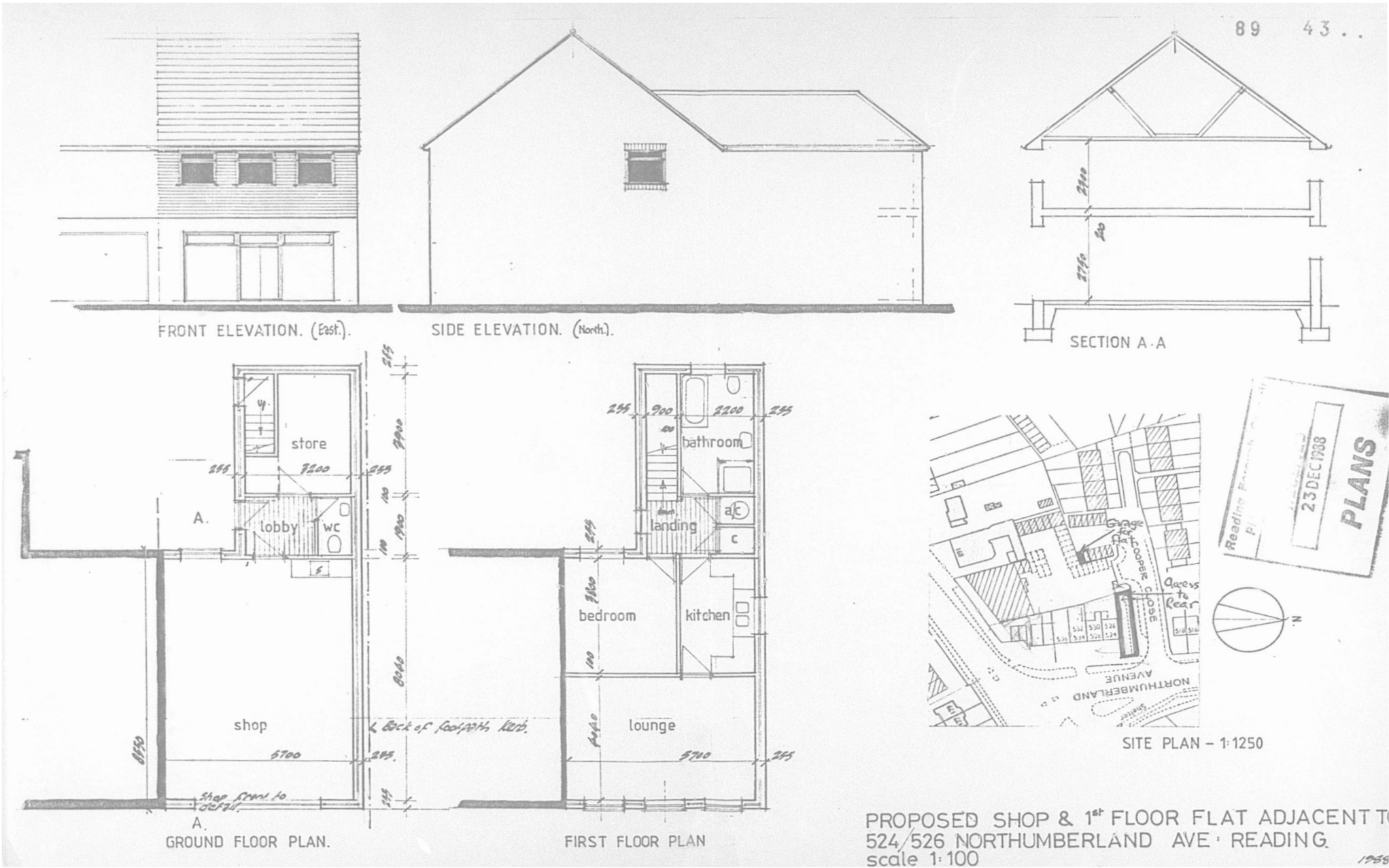


4. View looking towards gated entrance to No. 524 and 530.

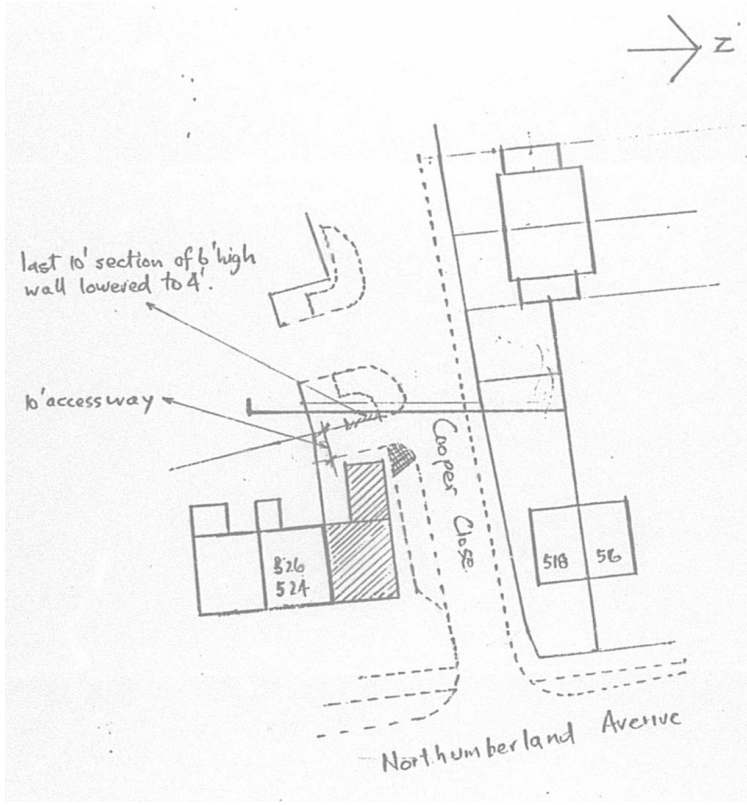


PLANNING HISTORY

The site has been subject to a previous historic application (89/43/FD) which was approved in 1989, but not implemented. This application proposed a two storey extension to the existing terrace, accommodating a new retail space at ground, with first floor flat accessed via the rear, in-line with the current proposal.

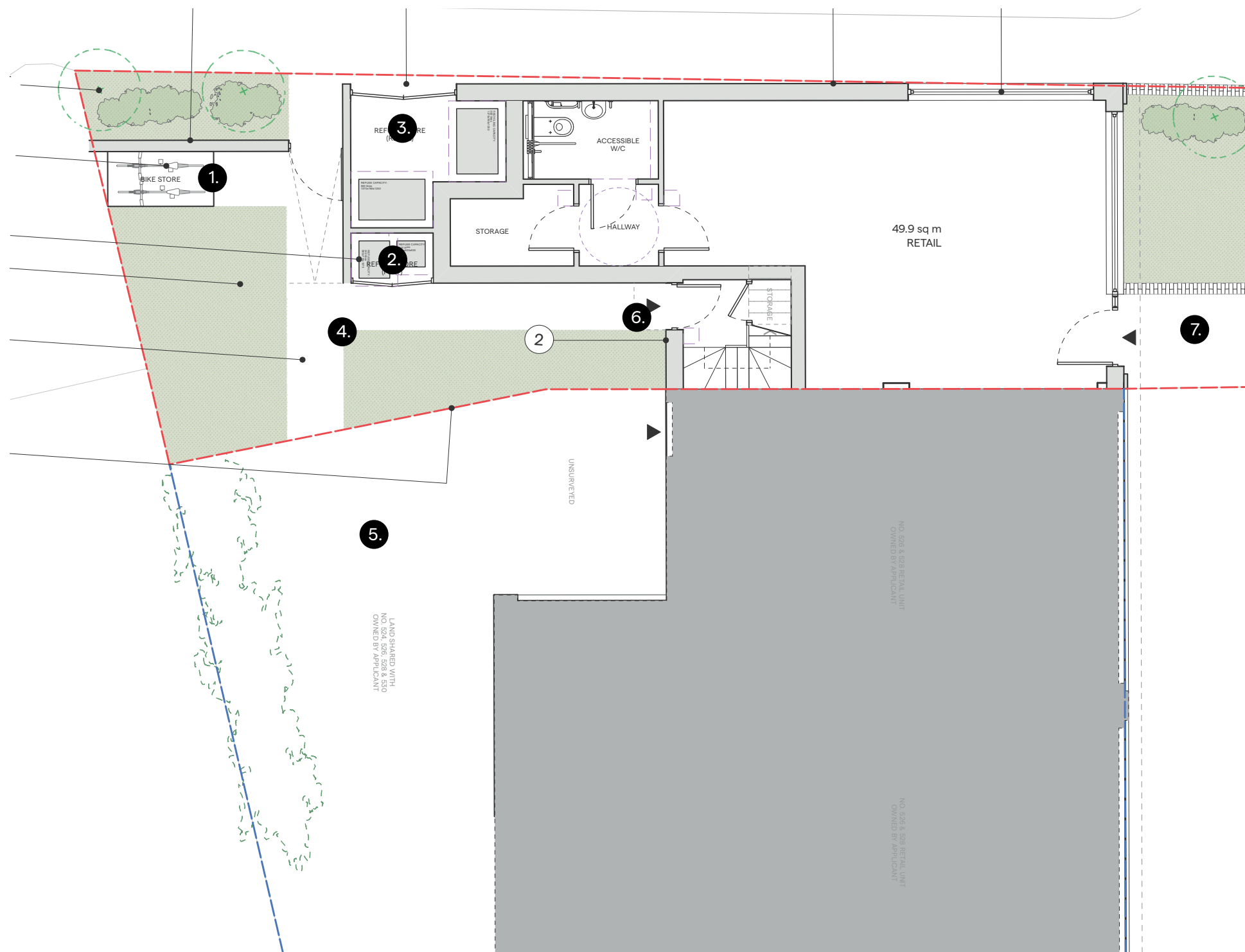


Consented planning drawings from historic application (89/43/FD)



Site plan from historic application (89/43/FD)

PROPOSAL



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Resident Bike Store | 5. Existing Communal External Amenity |
| 2. Resident Refuse Store | 6. Private covered entrance |
| 3. Retail Refuse Store | 7. Level access entrance |
| 4. Communal External Amenity | |

PROPOSAL

USE

The proposal seeks to create a new retail space at ground, alongside accessible toilet, storage and external refuse store. The first floor will accommodate a 2B3P self-contained flat, accessed via the rear of the property, with bike store and refuse store.

LAYOUT

The proposal mirrors the existing condition along the terrace, with ground floor frontage facing Northumberland Avenue. The area to the rear of the site provides communal amenity, to be shared by the residents of No. 524 & 530, while the existing area to the front of the site will be landscaped with grassland, introduced shrubs and small trees.

AREA

Proposed Retail NIA : 49.9 m²
Proposed Residential NIA : 63.4 m²

ACCESS

The retail unit is accessed via a primary entrance off Northumberland Ave, aligning with the existing shops, and will be M4(3) compliant.

The flat will be accessed via a level access private entrance to the rear of the site, with stair to first. It will be M4(2) compliant

APPEARANCE

The proposal will utilise materials to match the appearance and character of the existing terrace.

AMENITY

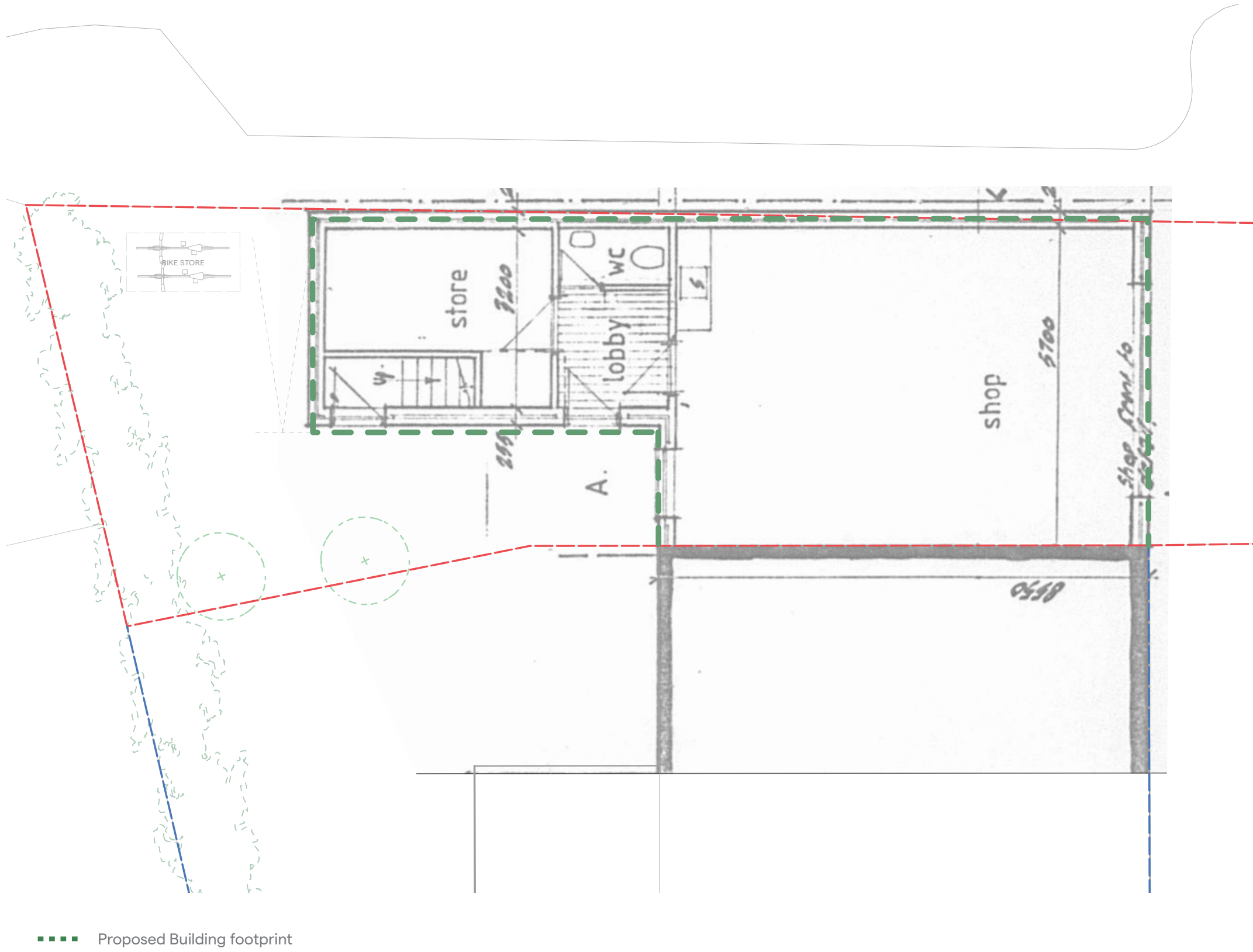
External amenity is provided through the communal space to the rear of the site (approx 41m²) which will be combined with the existing (68m²) of the neighbouring property, also owned by Opal Group.

REFUSE

The refuse will be collected from kerb site off Cooper Close and stored within the dedicated refuse store to the rear of the proposal at ground.

PARKING

No new parking spaces will be created on site, residents will be able to utilise the existing on street parking to Cooper close.



PLANNING PRECEDENT

The proposal is almost identical in footprint to the consented historic application, as indicated by the overlaid drawing opposite. The proposal also follows the approach of the front elevation, aligning with the neighbouring existing properties.



Front Elevation from historic application (89/43/FD)



Proposed Front Elevation

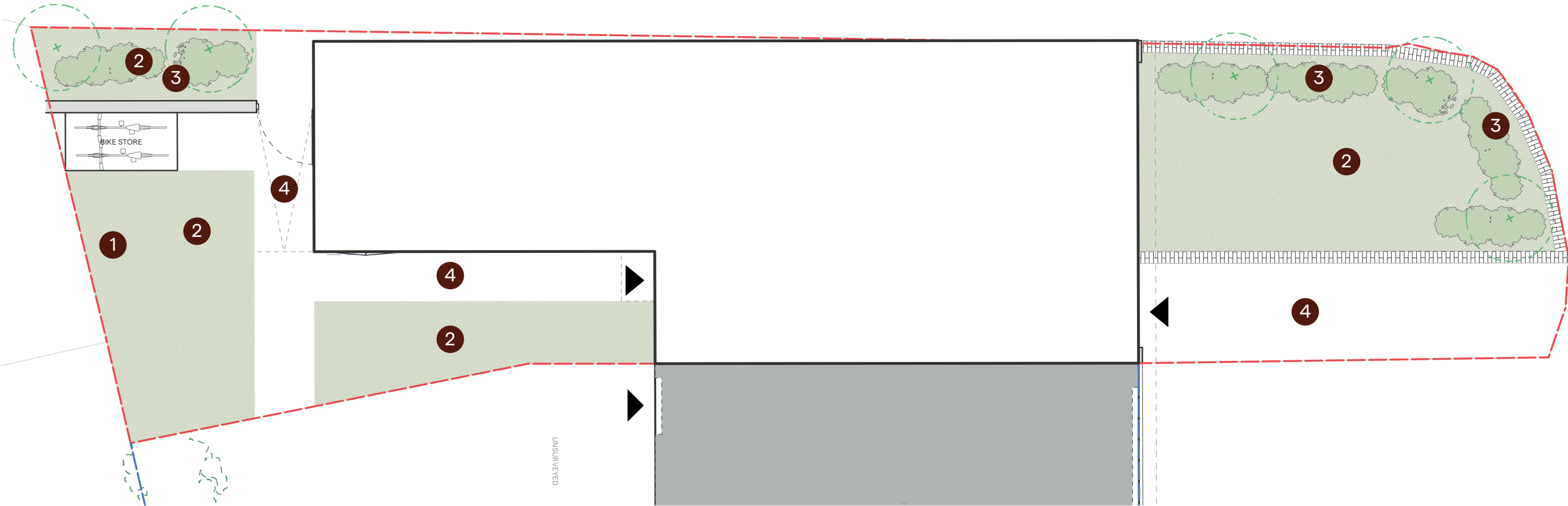
LEGEND

- SITE BOUNDARY
- INTRODUCED SHRUB
- WILDFLOWER GRASSLAND
- NEW SMALL TREE

LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES

The following plan sets out the landscaping strategy for the site, including publically accessible areas.

- 1 Existing overgrown brambles removed
- 2 New Wildflower Grassland planting
- 3 Introduced pollinating shrubs like lavender
- 4 Hardscaped permeable paving, reducing surface water runoff





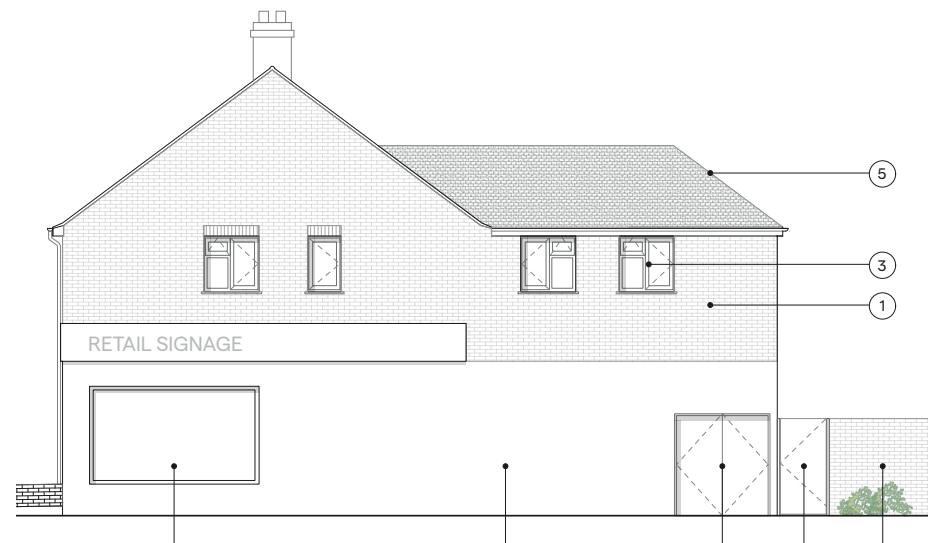
Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Existing Side Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation

STREET APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER

The proposal adopts the material palette and character of the existing terrace building, while maintaining the rhythm and proportion of the front elevation windows and shop frontage. The side elevation integrates a large shop window providing natural surveillance onto Cooper Close, along with side entrance door and refuse store for the retail unit.

The ground floor is finished in white render, while the upper floor is exposed brickwork, aligning with the neighbouring properties and helping to break up the massing of the side elevation. The roof line and eaves are continued through from the existing terrace, with the rear extension stepping down, ensuring it is subordinate in form. All windows are proposed in white uPVC to match the existing, while ground floor doors and frames are in PPC metal.

Legal

This report has been produced by StudioMAC and is intended for the sole use of Opal Group, to support an application for a two storey building, extending the existing terrace block to create a ground floor retail unit and self-contained 2B4P dwelling above.

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