

Exeter City Council
Planning Committee
01 June 2026

Application 25/0676/FUL

Site: Devon And Cornwall Constabulary, Heavitree Road

Applicant: NCO (Seven) Limited

Proposal: Full planning application for the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of mixed-use development comprising Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and Co-Living with associated infrastructure

Case Officer: John Douglass



SITE LOCATION PLAN

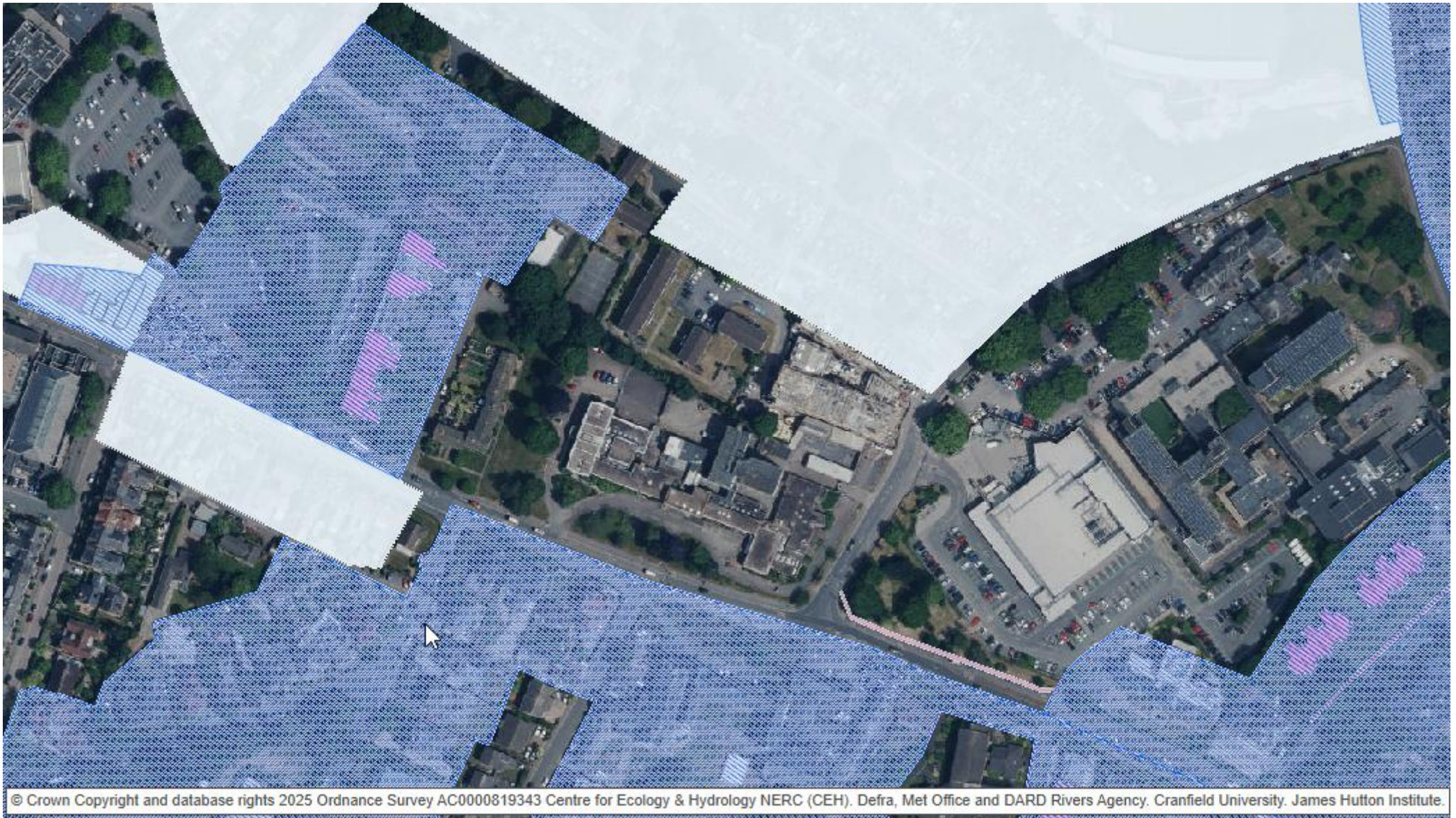
- Existing Resolution to approve subject to S106 (08 December 2025)
- Resolution allowed 6 months to draft and sign S106 (>08 June 2026)
- S106 was to secure 20% of Co-Living as Affordable Housing (83 units)

- Reduction in Affordable Housing in accordance with 'Vacant Building Credit' now requested
- Planning balance

REASON FOR COMMITTEE DECISION



AERIAL VIEW



© Crown Copyright and database rights 2025 Ordnance Survey AC0000819343 Centre for Ecology & Hydrology NERC (CEH). Defra, Met Office and DARD Rivers Agency. Cranfield University. James Hutton Institute.

AERIAL VIEW: ART 4 & HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS



PHOTOS



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PHOTOS

- 21/1564/FUL: Outline planning application with all matters considered in detail except landscaping, for the demolition of the existing buildings and construction of mixed-use development comprising Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (Sui Generis) and Co-Living (Sui Generis) with associated infrastructure.
- Scheme negotiated down during application but was refused at its third committee on 20 Feb 2023



Pedestrian view along Heavitree Road (looking west)

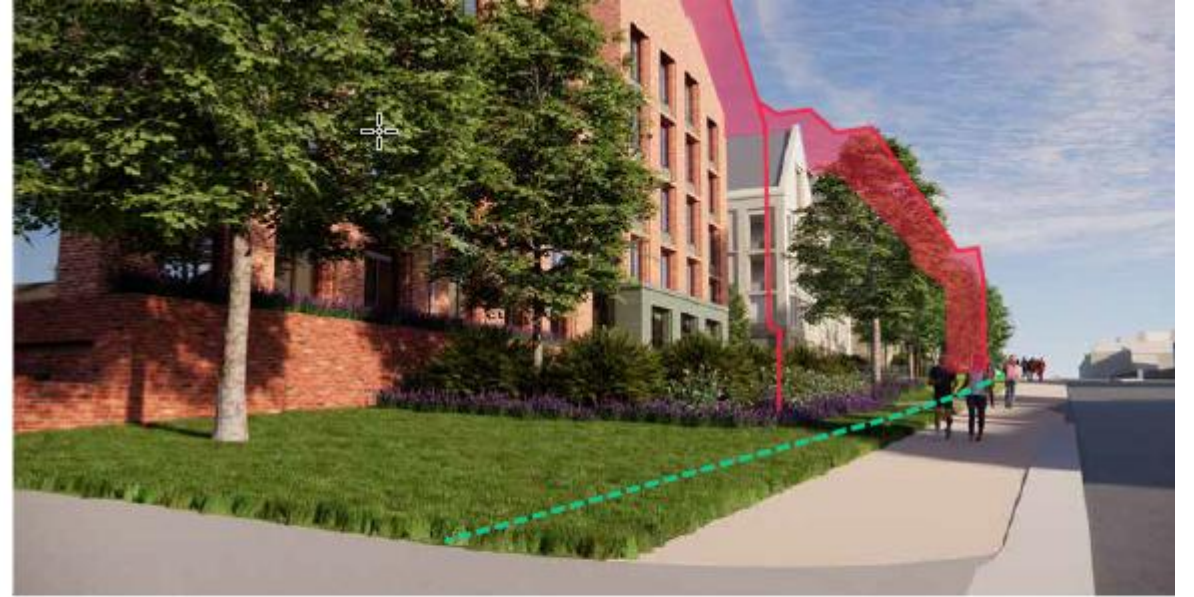


Pedestrian view along Heavitree Road (looking west)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY



Pedestrian view along Heavitree Road



Pedestrian view along Heavitree Road

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY



RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY



RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

20.02.2023: Officer Recommendation for Approval overturned leading to 6 Reasons for Refusal:

1. The proposed development would **harm the character of the area**, including the streetscenes along Heavitree Road and Gladstone Road, and the setting of the locally listed St Luke's College buildings, by virtue of the heights and massing of the two buildings, which would be of a far greater scale than the majority of buildings in the area, and their siting in close proximity to the streets making them feel even more imposing on their surroundings. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy, which requires all proposals for development to complement or enhance Exeter's character and local identity, saved Policies H5 and DG1 of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, and paragraphs 130 and 197c) of the NPPF (2021).
2. The proposed development **would harm the amenity, privacy and outlook of the adjacent residential properties**, particularly in Higher Summerlands, due to the height, scale and massing of the proposed buildings on the site and their siting in close proximity to the properties taking into account their designs. The proposed development is therefore contrary to saved Policies H5(a) and DG4(b) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, and paragraph 130f) of the NPPF (2021).
3. The proposed development would have a **limited amount of external amenity space** for use by the high number of residents of the two buildings and the external amenity space proposed in the form of the internal courtyards would be poor quality with a sense of feeling enclosed and with reduced levels of daylight due to the scale of the surrounding buildings. It is also considered that the proposed development **would provide a poor living environment for residents that would have a negative impact on their health and well-being**. The proposed development is therefore contrary to saved Policy DG4(b) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 and paragraph 130e) and f) of the NPPF (2021).
4. Notwithstanding the applicant's agreement to pay £436,435 for the maintenance and upgrade of off-site public open spaces serving the development (to be spent on upgrades to Exeter City Council parks) and £111,735 for the maintenance and upgrade of off-site play areas serving the development (to be spent on the installation of outdoor adult fitness equipment) in accordance with the consultation response from the Public and Green Spaces team of Exeter City Council to mitigate the impact of additional demand on off-site Exeter City Council public spaces, the proposed development **would have a negative impact on public spaces in the locality of the site**, in particular Belmont Park approximately 400 metres north of the site, due to the additional use and demand of these spaces by residents of the proposed development and limited amount of on-site external amenity space provision. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy, which protects facilities that meet Exeter's community, social, health, leisure and recreational needs, and saved Policy DG4(a) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 stating that residential development should be at the maximum feasible density taking into account site constraints and impact on the local area.
5. The proposed development would **result in the loss of a significant number of trees on the site** including several category A and B trees which contribute to the amenity of the locality and biodiversity of the site. Without a detailed landscaping scheme as part of the application, there is a lack of certainty that the loss of these trees will be adequately and appropriately compensated for to maintain or enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the site. The indicative information submitted with the application in this regard does not demonstrate that this can be satisfactorily achieved. Therefore the proposed development is contrary to Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy, saved Policies H5(a), LS4 and DG1(c)(h) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, and paragraphs 130 and 131 of the NPPF (2021).
6. In the **absence of a s106 legal agreement** to secure the following:
 - xxxx

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Appeal by Public Inquiry (December 2023)

1. The proposed development would **harm the character of the area**, including the streetscenes along Heavitree Road and Gladstone Road, and the setting of the locally listed St Luke's College buildings, by virtue of the heights and massing of the two buildings, which would be of a far greater scale than the majority of buildings in the area, and their siting in close proximity to the streets making them feel even more imposing on their surroundings. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy, which requires all proposals for development to complement or enhance Exeter's character and local identity, saved Policies H5 and DG1 of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, and paragraphs 130 and 197c) of the NPPF (2021).
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6. In the **absence of a s106 legal agreement** to secure the following:
 - 20% of the co-living units (i.e. 63) will be affordable private rented (5% of which will be wheelchair accessible) and priority will be given to essential local workers.
 - Habitats Mitigation = £326,097.45 (in relation to the co-living development only)
 - NHS Devon ICB contribution = £244,480.00 (£163,840.00 for PBSA and £80,640.00 for co-living)
 - Public open space contribution = £436,435.00 (£292,480.00 for PBSA and £143,955.00 for co-living)
 - Play (outdoor adult fitness equipment) contribution = £111,735.00 (£74,880.00 for PBSA and £36,855.00 for co-living)
 - Student Management Plan for PBSA block
 - Co-living Management Plan/Monitoring for Co-living blockthe proposal is contrary to Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2012 Objectives 1, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 10, and policies CP7, CP10, CP16 and CP18, Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 saved policies L4, LS2, LS3 and DG4, Exeter City Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2014 and Exeter City Council Public Open Space Supplementary Planning Document 2005.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Appeal Dismissed 02 February 2024

Design & Character

- 22. To conclude on this first main issue, the proposal would result in **harm to the character and appearance of the area**, thereby running counter to CS Policy CP17....

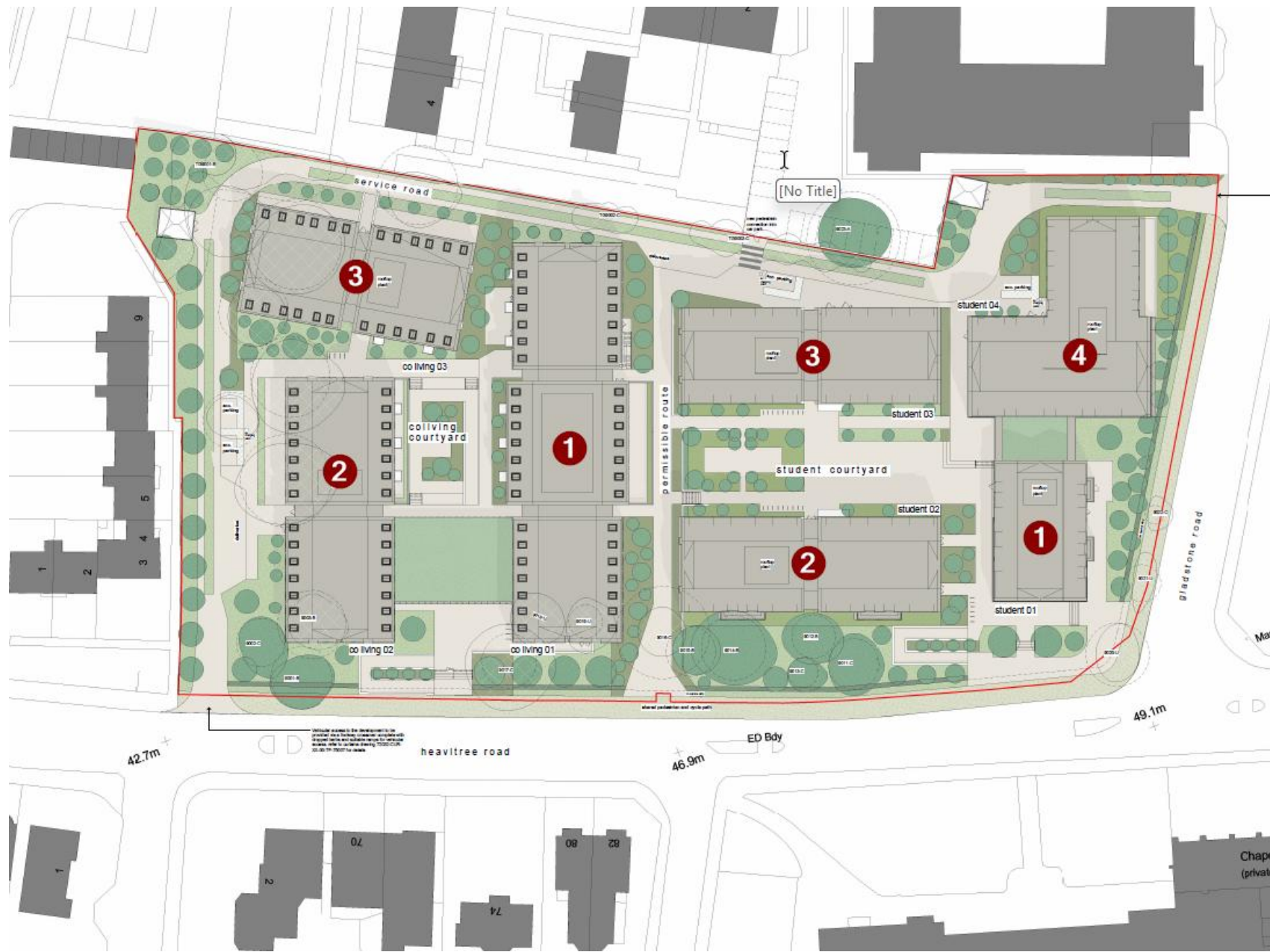
Amenity Impacts

- 28. Taking all of this into account, the effects of the proposed development would **not** be so profound **so as to result in harmful effects either in terms of outlook or privacy for residents in Higher Summerlands**. The proposal therefore accords with LP Policies H5a) and SG4b) which both seek to protect the amenity of residents. It would also accord with paragraph 135f) (formerly paragraph 130f) of the Framework which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future residents.

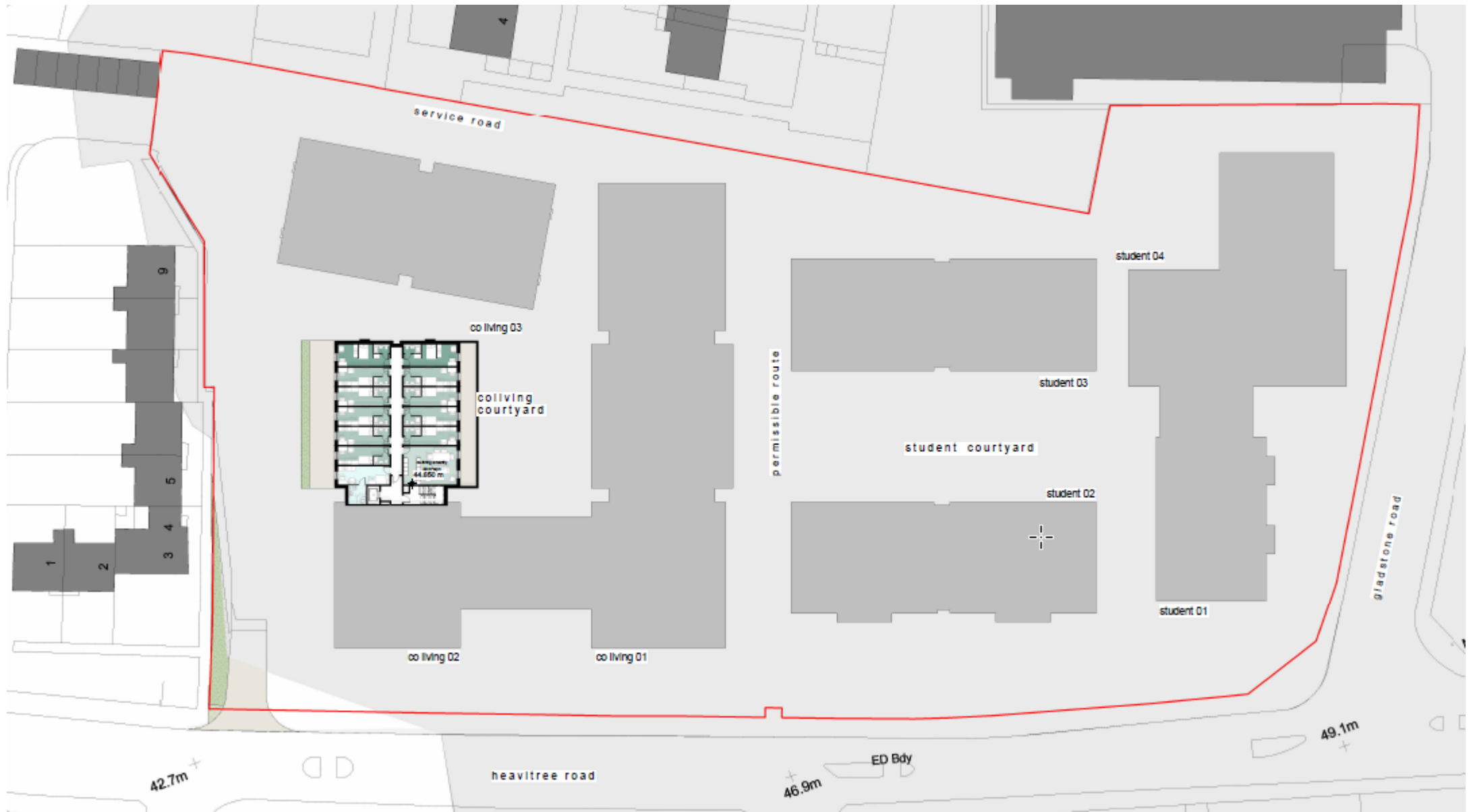
Conclusion

- 36. Set against the identified benefits, **the harm to the area's character and appearance would be severe**. The proposal would cross the line of acceptability in terms of its effects on the local area into which it would not satisfactorily integrate. I have found that it would be **overly-assertive and incongruous**. The level of **harm that would result is sufficient to outweigh the benefits** of the scheme. The proposal would not accord with the development plan as a whole.

- 24/0561/MP - Redevelop site for PBSA and Co-living May 2024-May 2025
- 25/0676/FUL submitted June 2025: Full planning application for the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of mixed-use development comprising Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and Co-Living with associated infrastructure
- 399 PBSA studios (17.5-28sq m) in 4 blocks 4-6 storeys in height
- 414 Co-Living Units (18.3-27sq m)
- Additional Information Received
- Revised proposed received 09 October 2025



PROPOSED SITE PLAN



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN: CL LGF



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN: CL LEVEL 01, PBSA LEVEL 00



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN: TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN (CL LEVEL 06), PBSA LEVEL 05



PROPOSED SITE PLAN: LANDSCAPING



←-----→
co - living

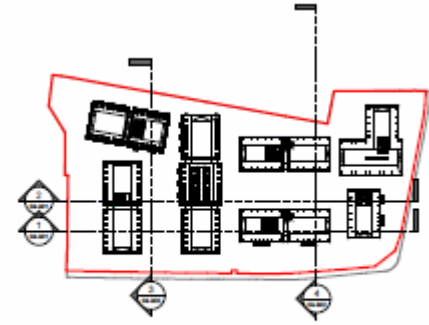
←-----+-----→
pbsa



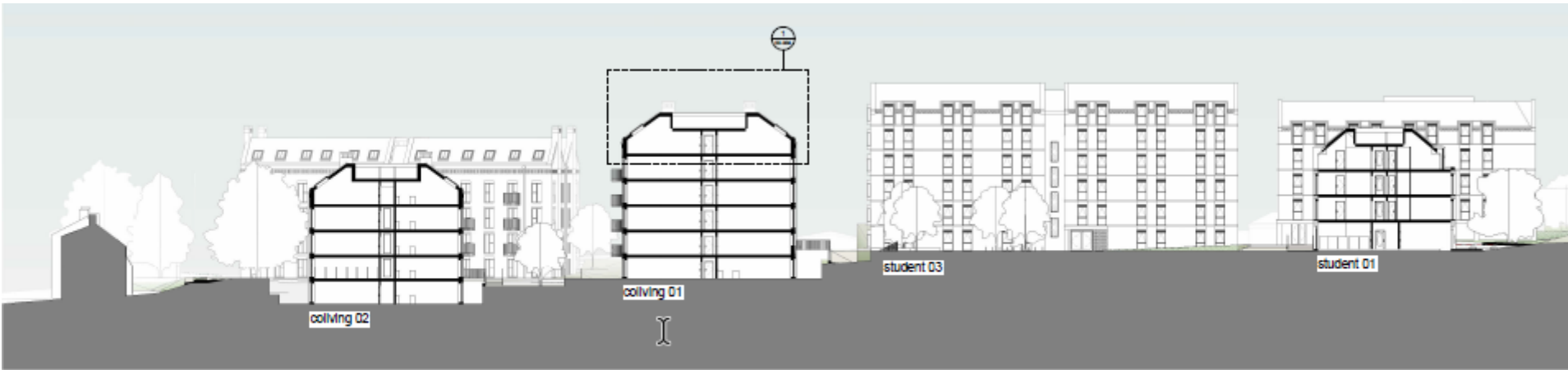
PROPOSED SECTIONS E-W



① Site Section 01
1 : 200

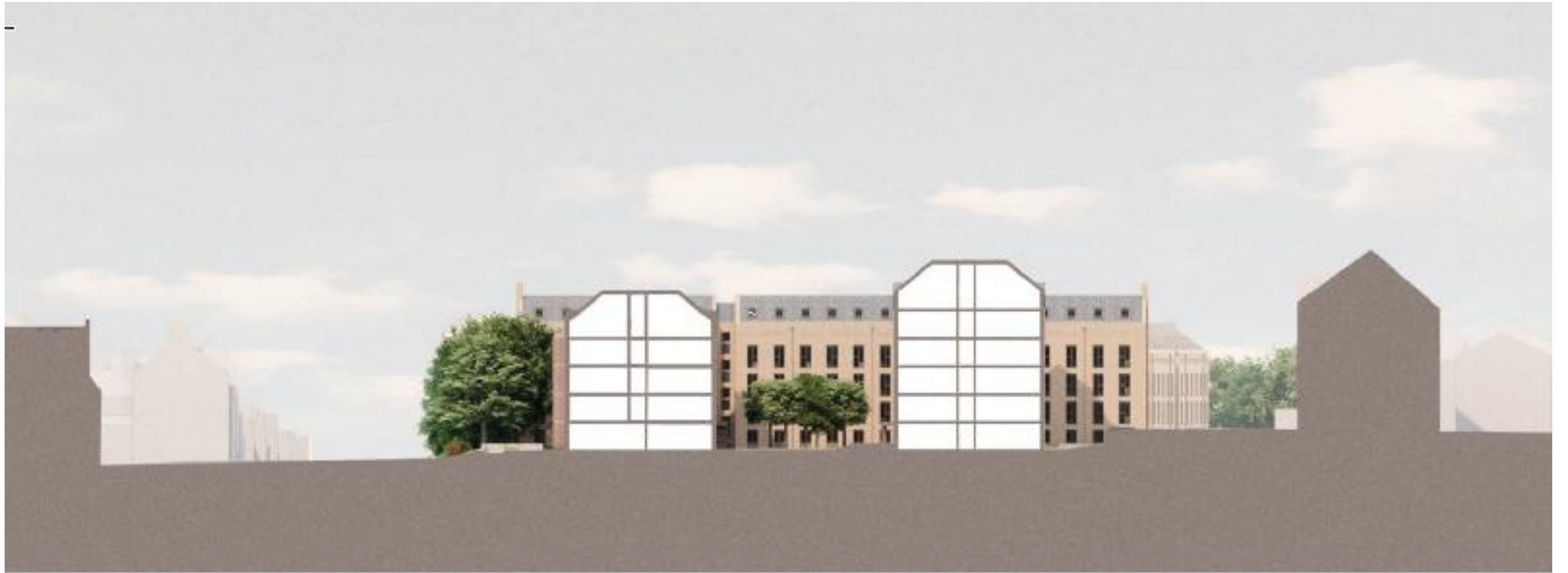


⑤ Proposed Site Key Plan
1 : 1000



② Site Section 02
1 : 200

PROPOSED SECTIONS: E-W



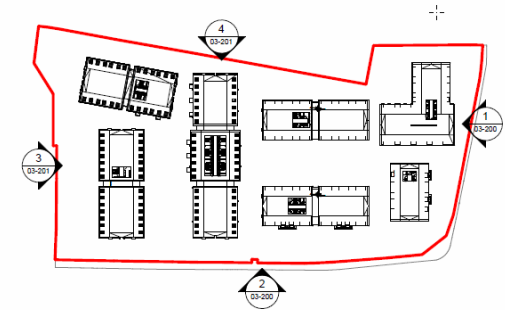
←-----→
pbsa

←-----→
the gorge

PROPOSED SECTIONS: N-S



① Proposed Gladstone Road Elevation
1:200



Proposed Site Key Plan
1:1000



② Proposed Heavitree Road Elevation
1:200

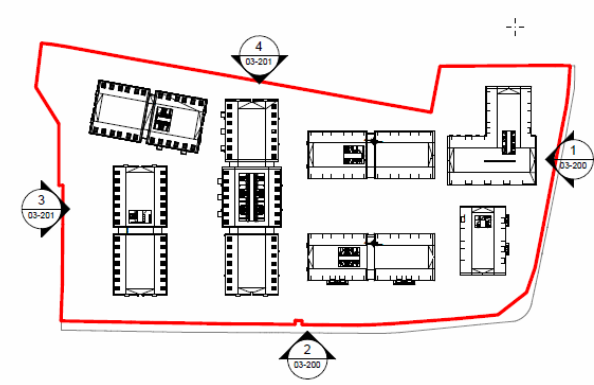
bro
+
co

Existing
 New
 Boundary
 Street
 Proposed

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS: STREET



③ Proposed Higher Summerland Elevation
1:200



Proposed Site Key Plan
1:1000

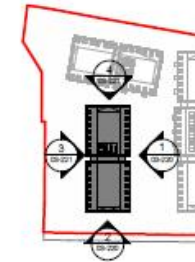


④ Proposed St Matthews Close Elevation
1:200

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS: STREET



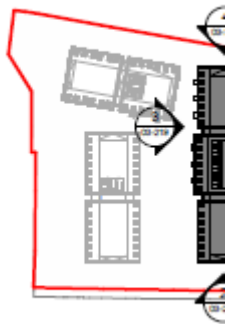
① Coliving 02 - Elevation 01
1:100



Proposed Site Key Plan
1:1000



③ Coliving 01 - Elevation 03
1:100



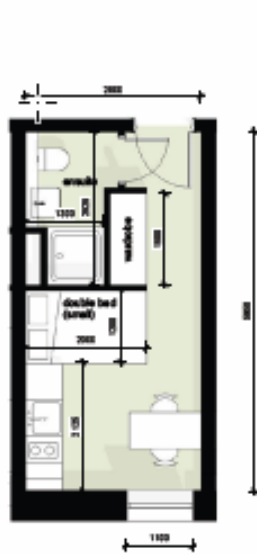
PROPOSED ELEVATIONS: BLOCK 01 & 02 COURTYARD ELEVATIONS

- Principle acceptable
- Density acceptable subject to technical assessment
- Mix of PBSA & Co-Living
- X% Affordable Private Rent to Co-Living
- c5% Accessible units across both uses

Table 2: Accommodation Schedule

Development Type	Unit Type	Unit Size (m ²)	Amount	Affordable Housing Requirement
PBSA	Studio	17.5	195	0%
		19	123	
		21	56	
		22.5	4	
	Accessible Studio	26	8	
		28	13	
Sub-total			399	-
Co-living	Studio	18.3	289	20%
		20.7	68	
		21.9	37	
	Accessible Studio	27	20	
Sub-total			414	83
Grand Total			813	

KEY ISSUES: PRINCIPLE



PBSA Typical Studio 01
1 : 50
area: 17.5 sqm



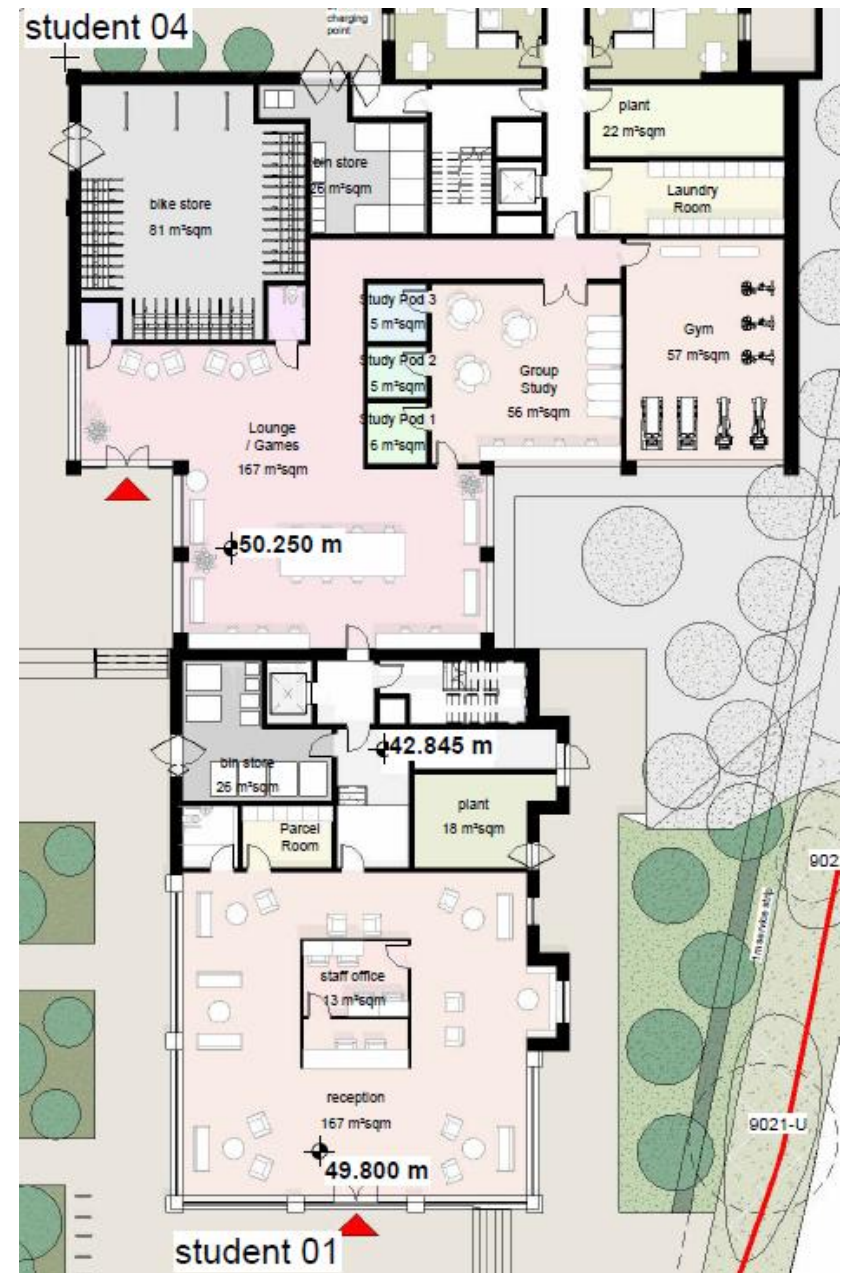
PBSA Typical Studio 02
1 : 50
area: 19.5 sqm



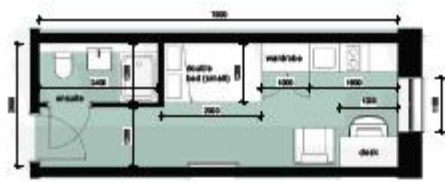
PBSA Typical Studio 03
1 : 50
area: 20 sqm



PBSA Accessible Studio
1 : 50
area: 25.9 sqm



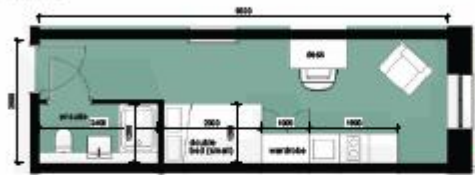
KEY ISSUES: LIVING STANDARDS - PBSA UNITS



Co - Living Typical Studio 01

1 : 50

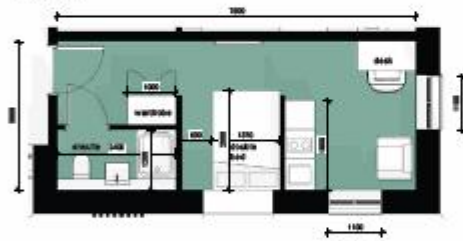
area 18.25 sqm



Co - Living Typical Studio 02

1 : 50

area 20.75 sqm



Co - Living Typical Studio 03

1 : 50

area 21.75 sqm



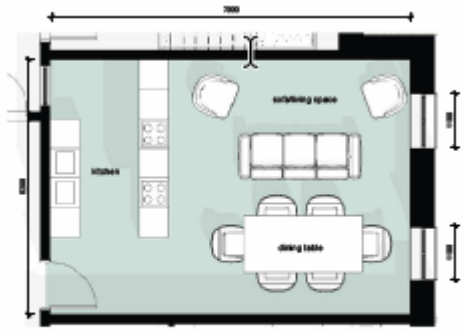
Co - Living Typical Accessible Studio

1 : 50

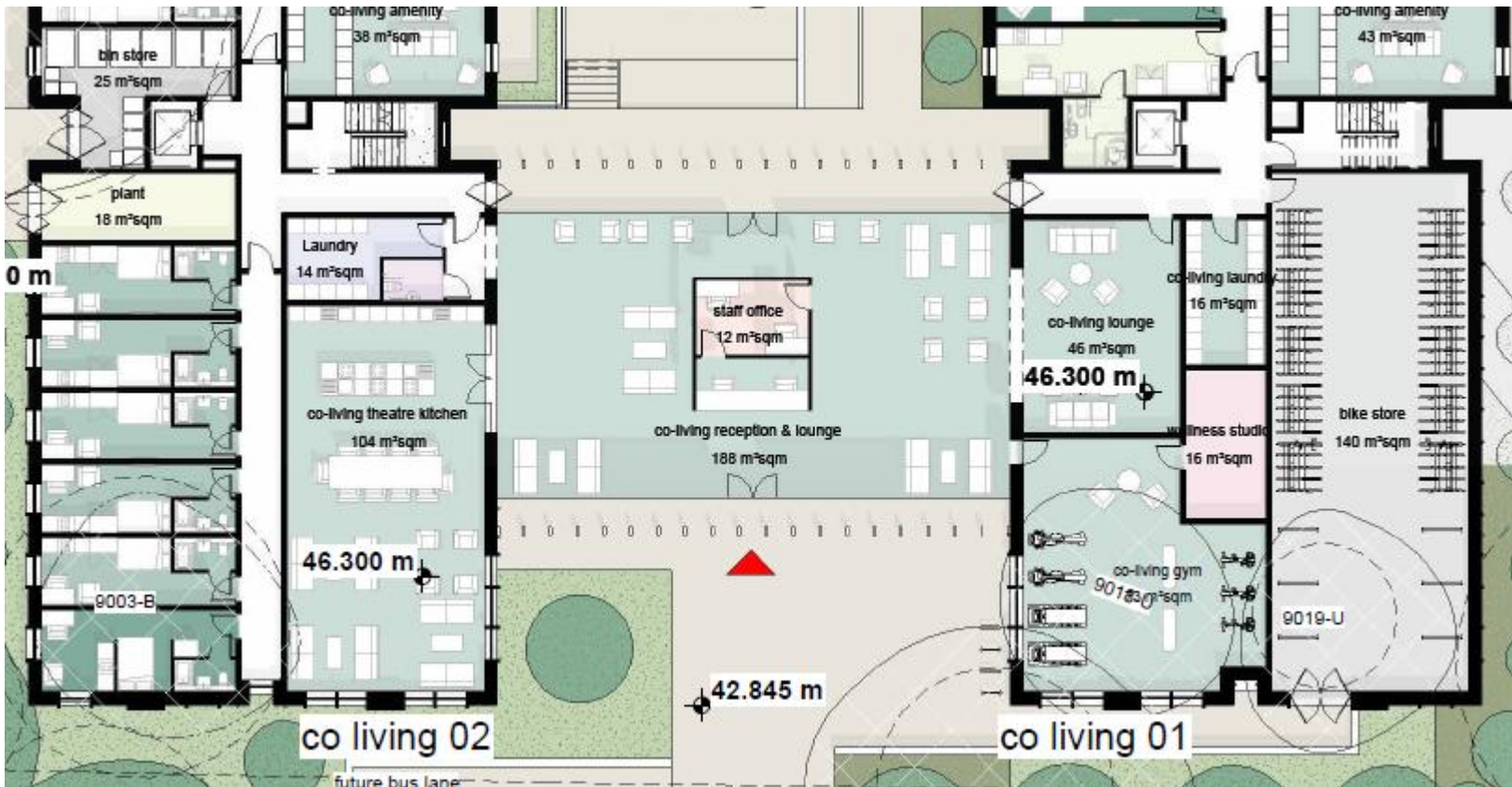
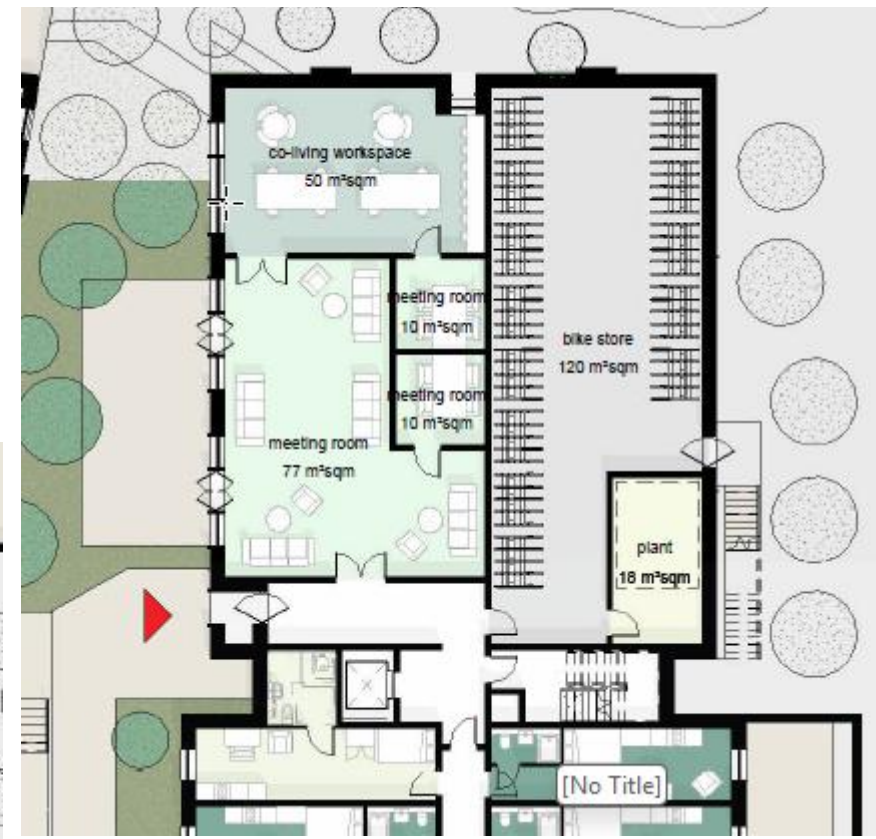
area 27.25 sqm



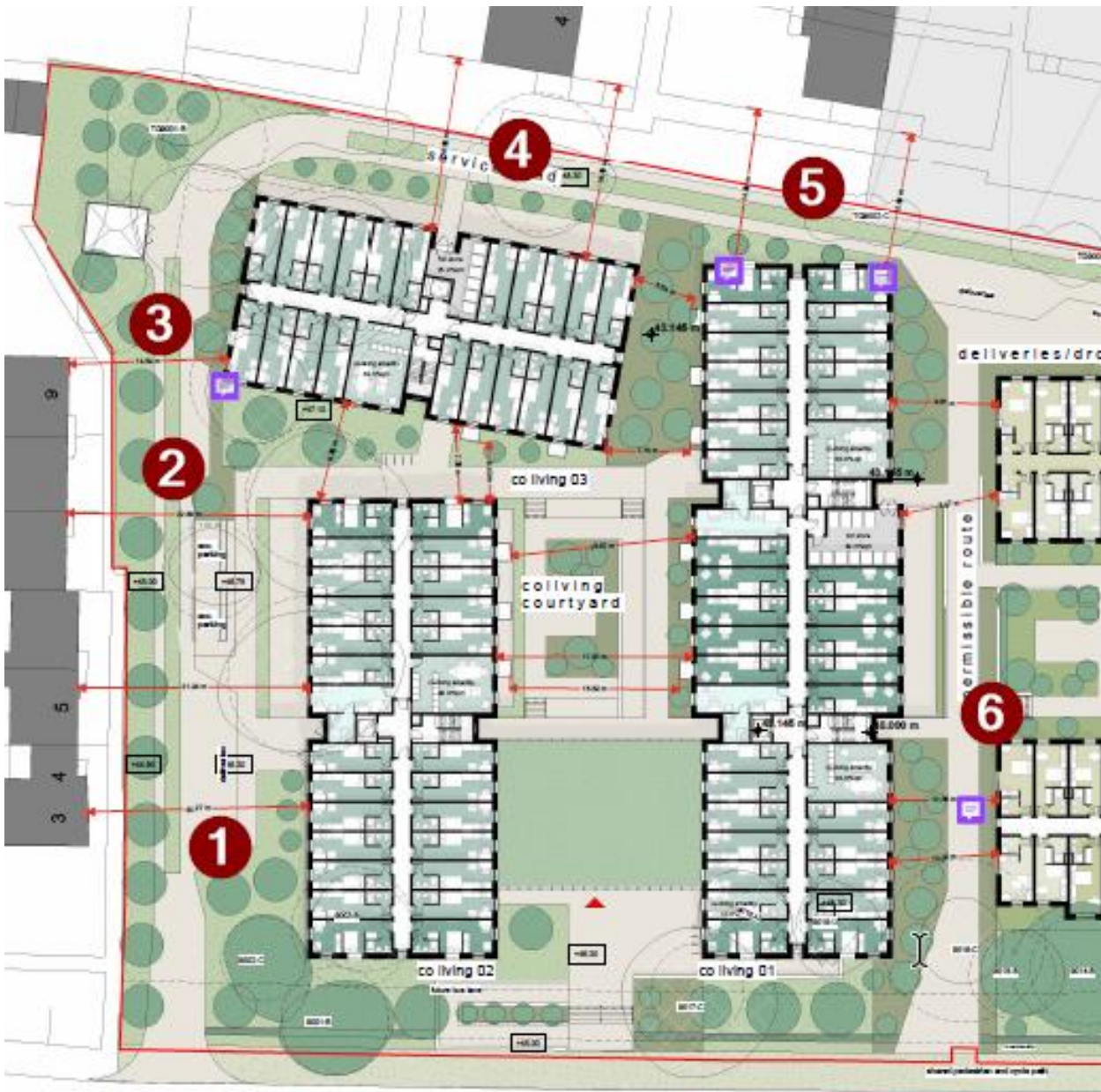
KEY ISSUES: LIVING STANDARDS - CO-LIVING UNITS



Co - Living Typical Kitchen
1 : 50



KEY ISSUES: LIVING STANDARDS - CO-LIVING UNITS



KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY (PRIVACY)

Obscure glazing to be applied to windows



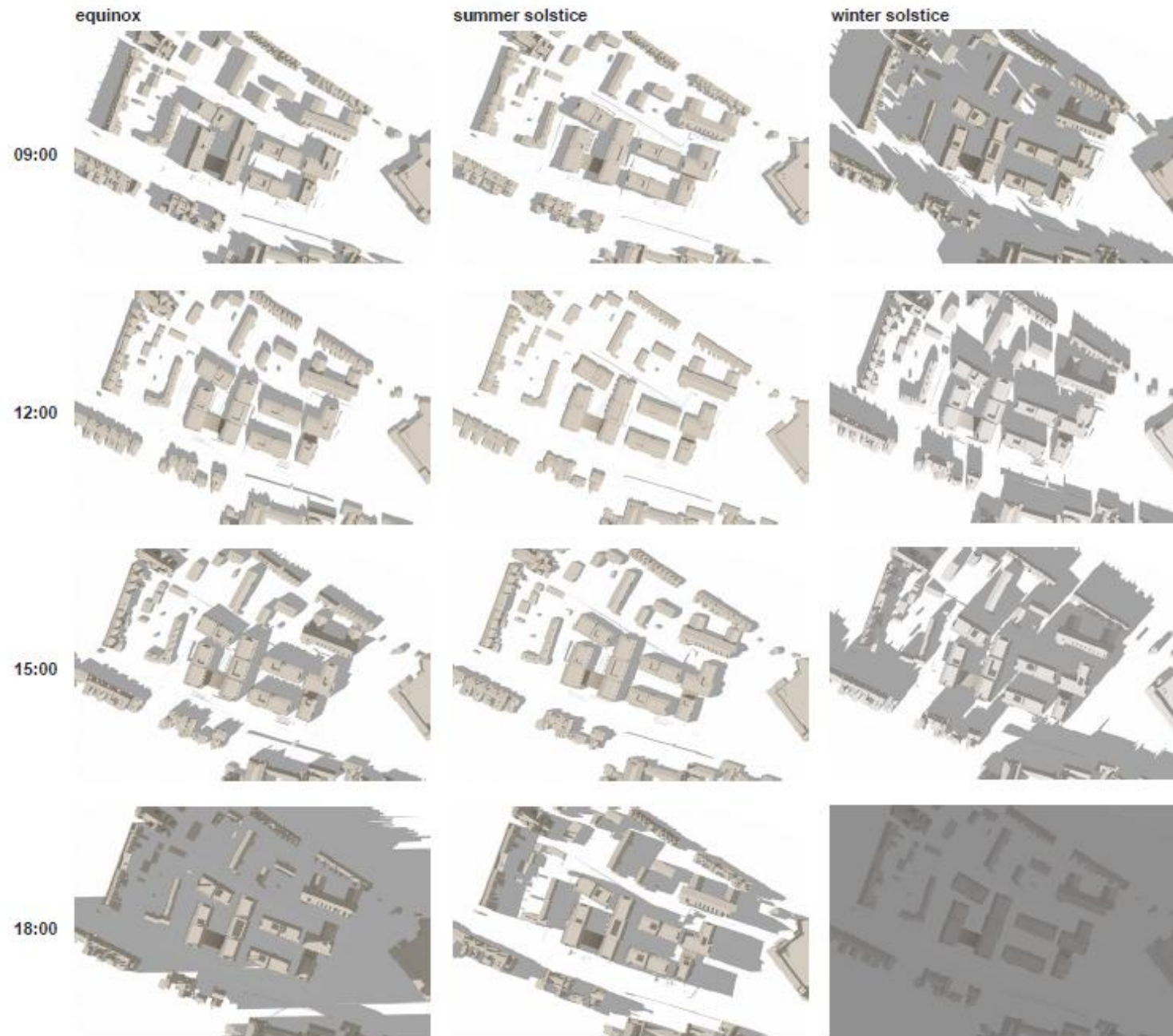
proposed gable design



example of oriel window design.

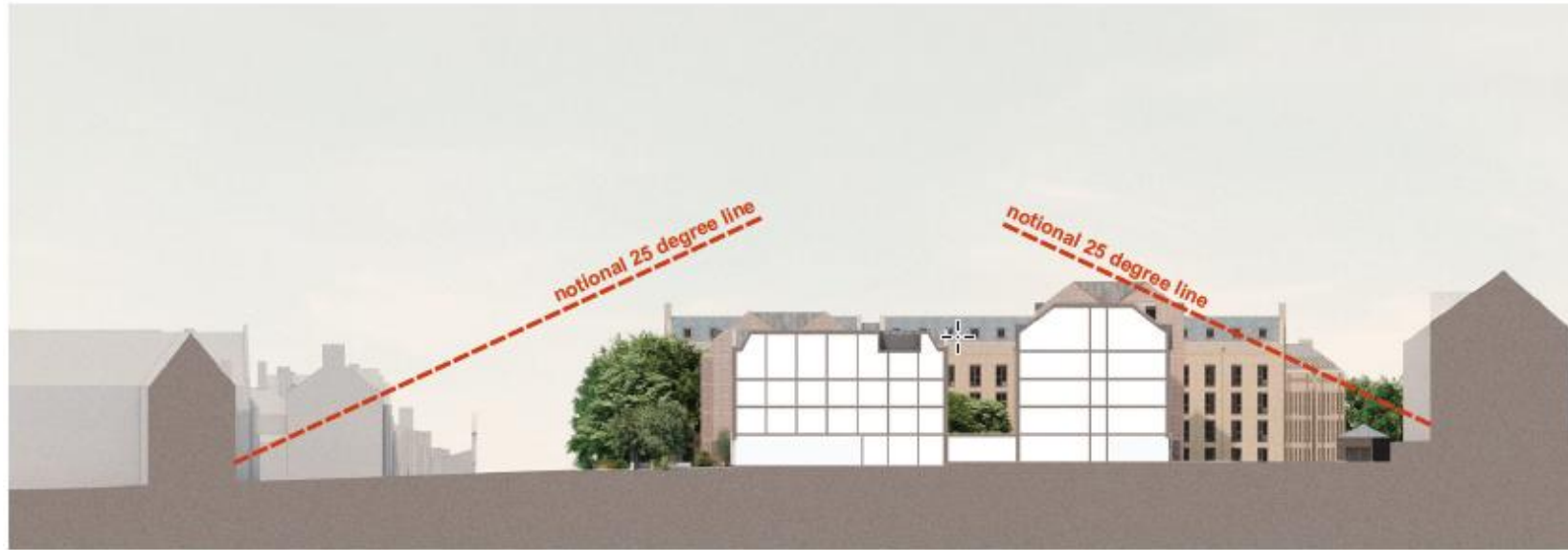


KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY (PRIVACY)

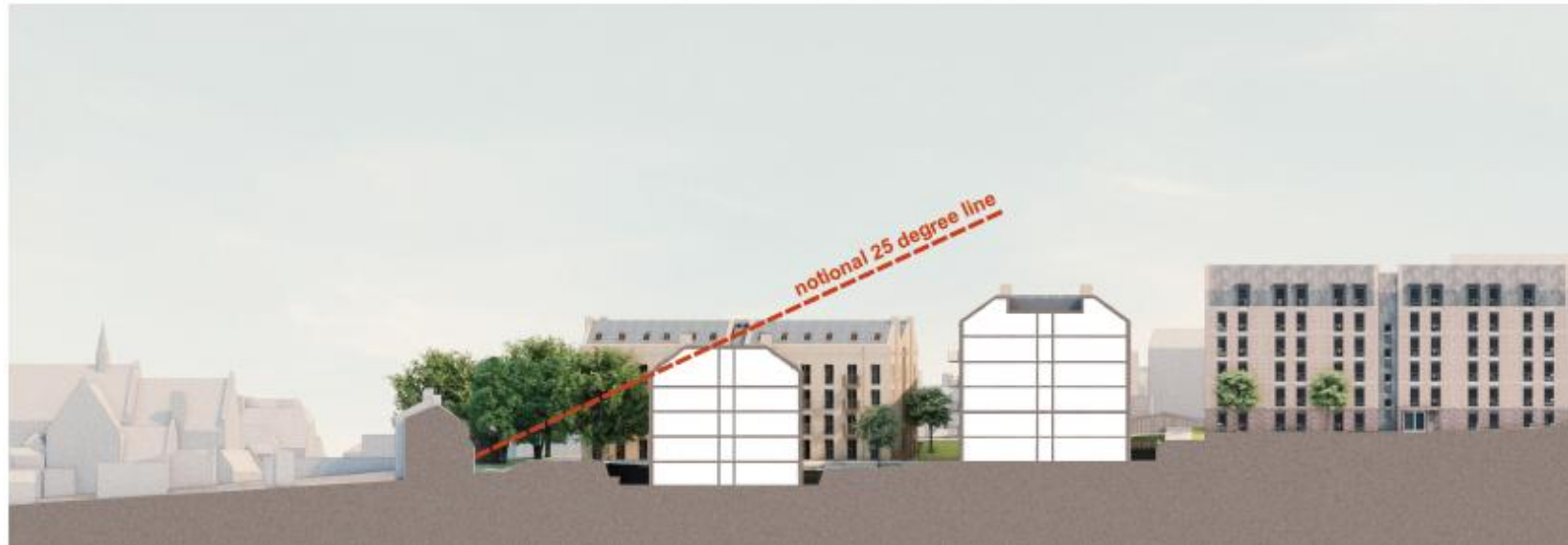


KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY (OVERSHADOWING)

Section A

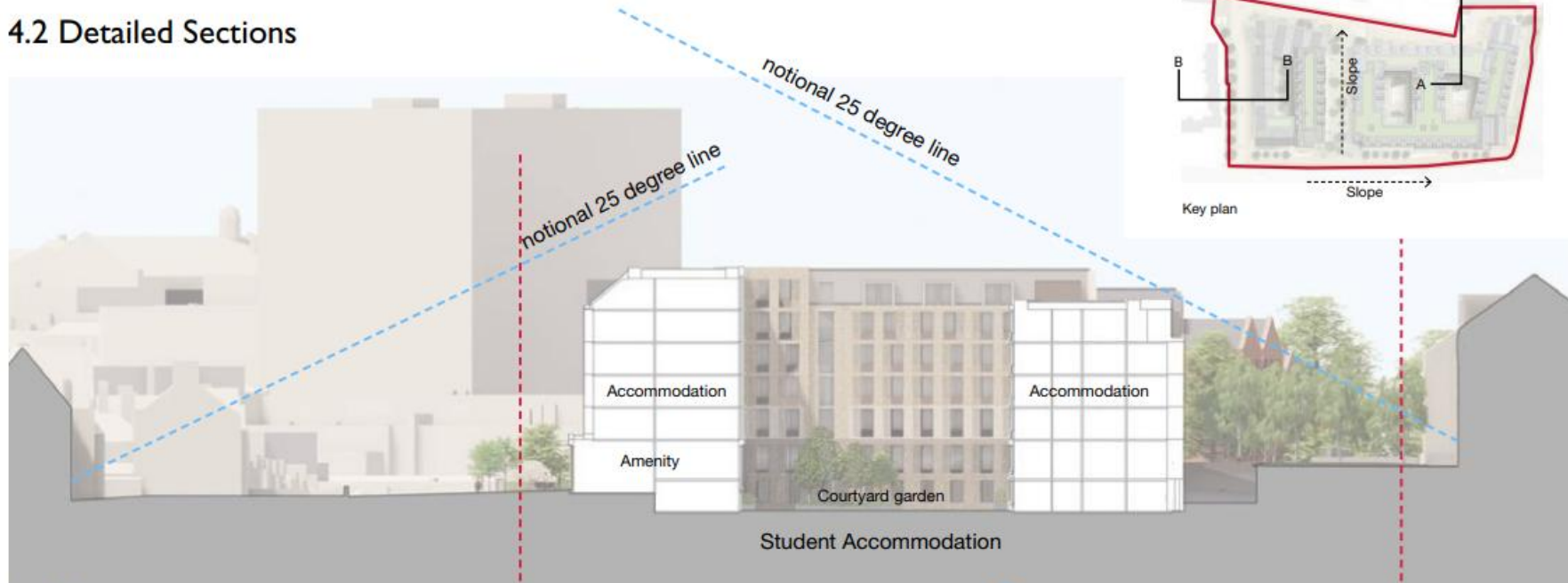


Section B

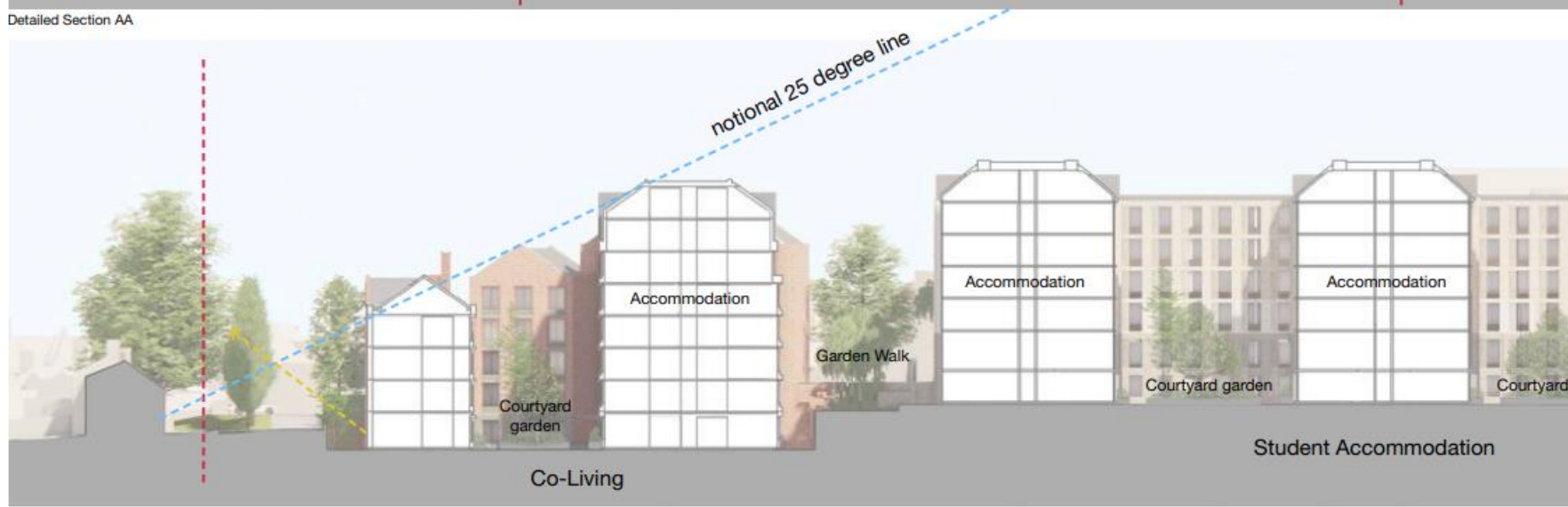


KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY (DAYLIGHT IMPACTS)

4.2 Detailed Sections

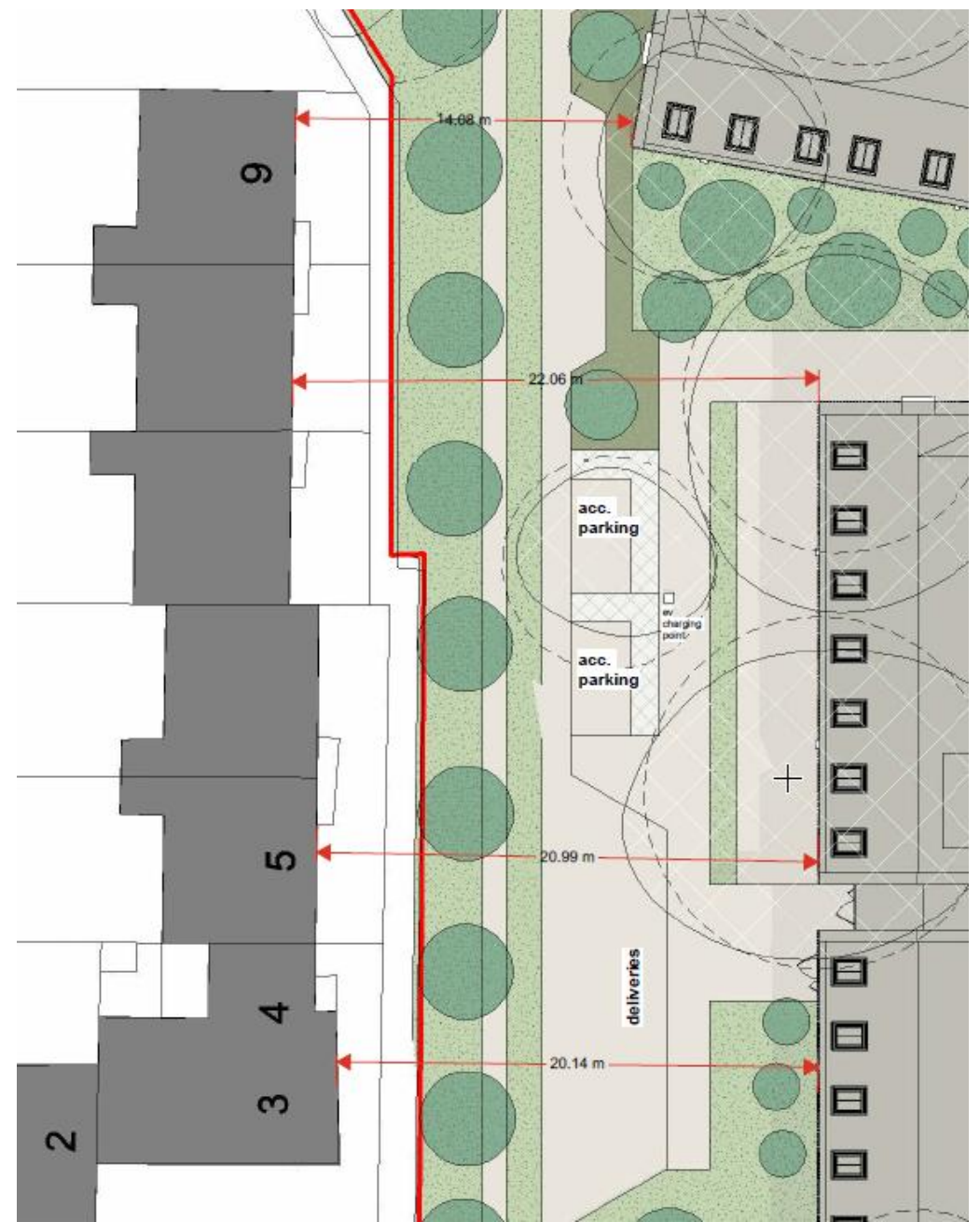
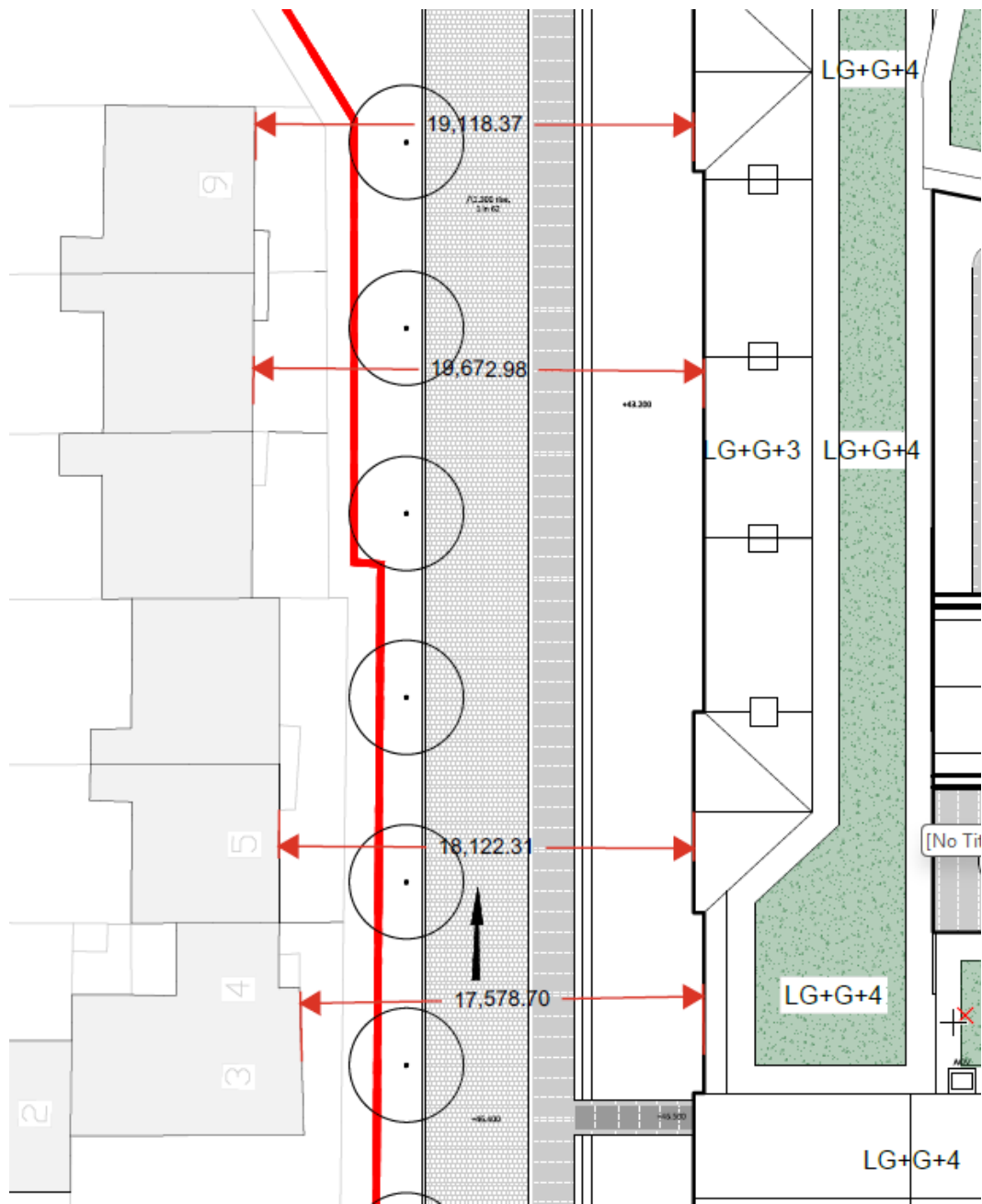


Detailed Section AA



Detailed Section BB

SITE SECTIONS (SEPTEMBER 2022 COMMITTEE)



KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY



KEY ISSUES: NEIGHBOUR AMENITY (APPEAL SCHEME)

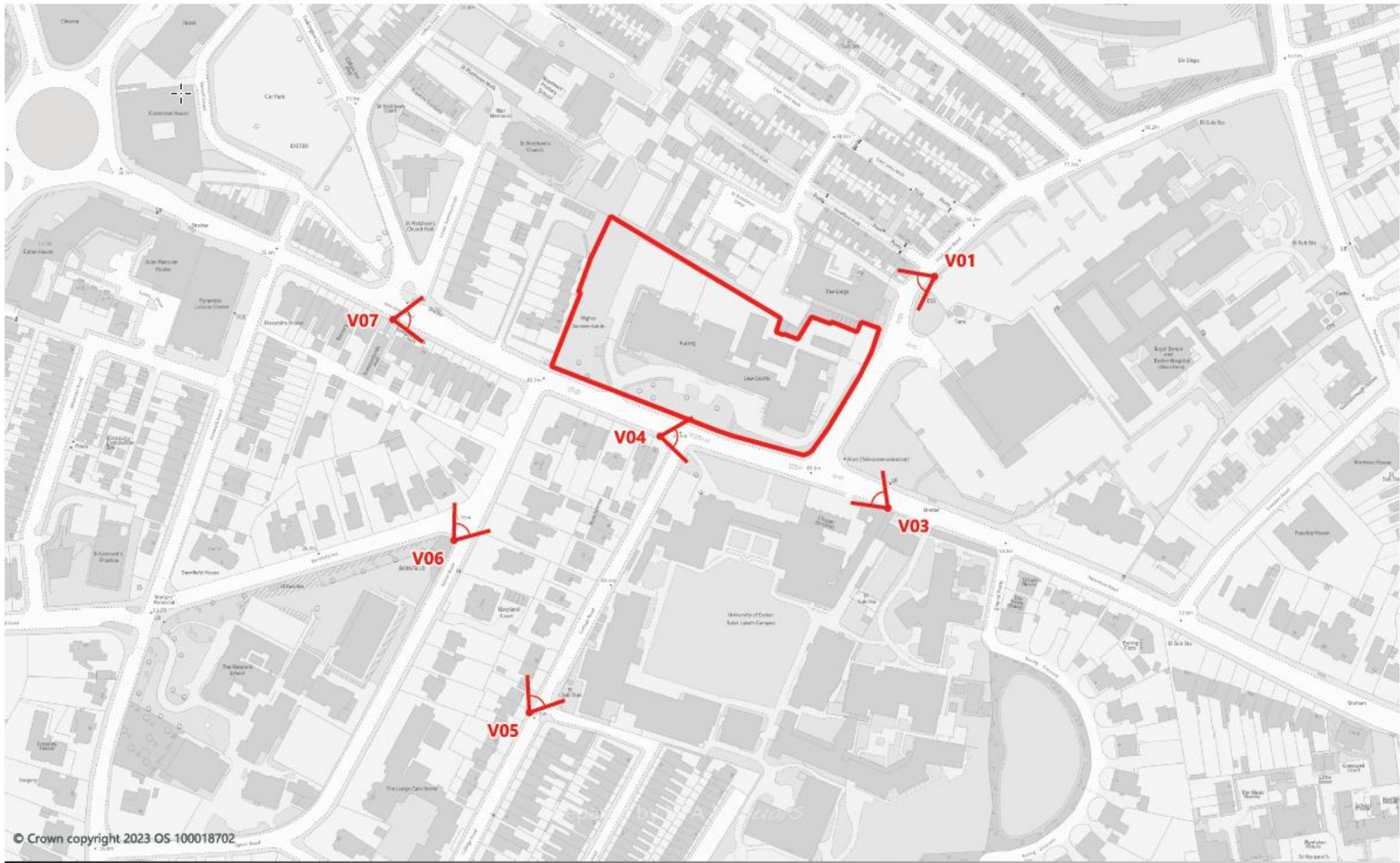


PROPOSED SITE PLAN: TREES



KEY ISSUES: DESIGN (MASSING)

Viewpoint Location Plan



3D STREET VIEWS



3D STREET VIEWS: V01 GLADSTONE RD - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V01 GLADSTONE RD - APPEAL SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V01 GLADSTONE RD - APPLICATION SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V03 HEAVITREE RD (W) - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V03 HEAVITREE RD (W) - APPEAL SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V03 HEAVITREE RD (W) - APPLICATION SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V04 HEAVITREE RD - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V04 HEAVITREE RD - APPEAL SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V04 HEAVITREE RD - APPLICATION SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V05 COLLEGE RD - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V05 COLLEGE RD - APPEAL SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V05 COLLEGE RD - APPLICATION SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V06 SPICER RD - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V06 SPICER RD - APPEAL SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V06 SPICER RD - APPLICATION SCHEME



3D STREET VIEWS: V07 HEAVITREE RD - EXISTING



3D STREET VIEWS: V07 HEAVITREE RD - APPEAL SCHEME



Prepared by NPA *Visuals*

Note: Indicative Landscape shown

3D STREET VIEWS: V07 HEAVITREE RD - APPLICATION SCHEME



NON-VERIFIED CGIs



NON-VERIFIED CGIs



NON-VERIFIED CGIs



NON-VERIFIED CGIs

NPPF:

“To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount³⁰”. (paragraph 65)

Footnote (30):

- *“Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned, or to major development on land within or released from the Green Belt, for which the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 of this Framework should apply.”*

What is the vacant building credit?

National policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought. Affordable housing contributions may be required for any increase in floorspace.

See related policy: National Planning Policy Framework [paragraph 63](#)

Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 23b-026-20190315

Revision date: 15 03 2019

What is the process for determining the vacant building credit?

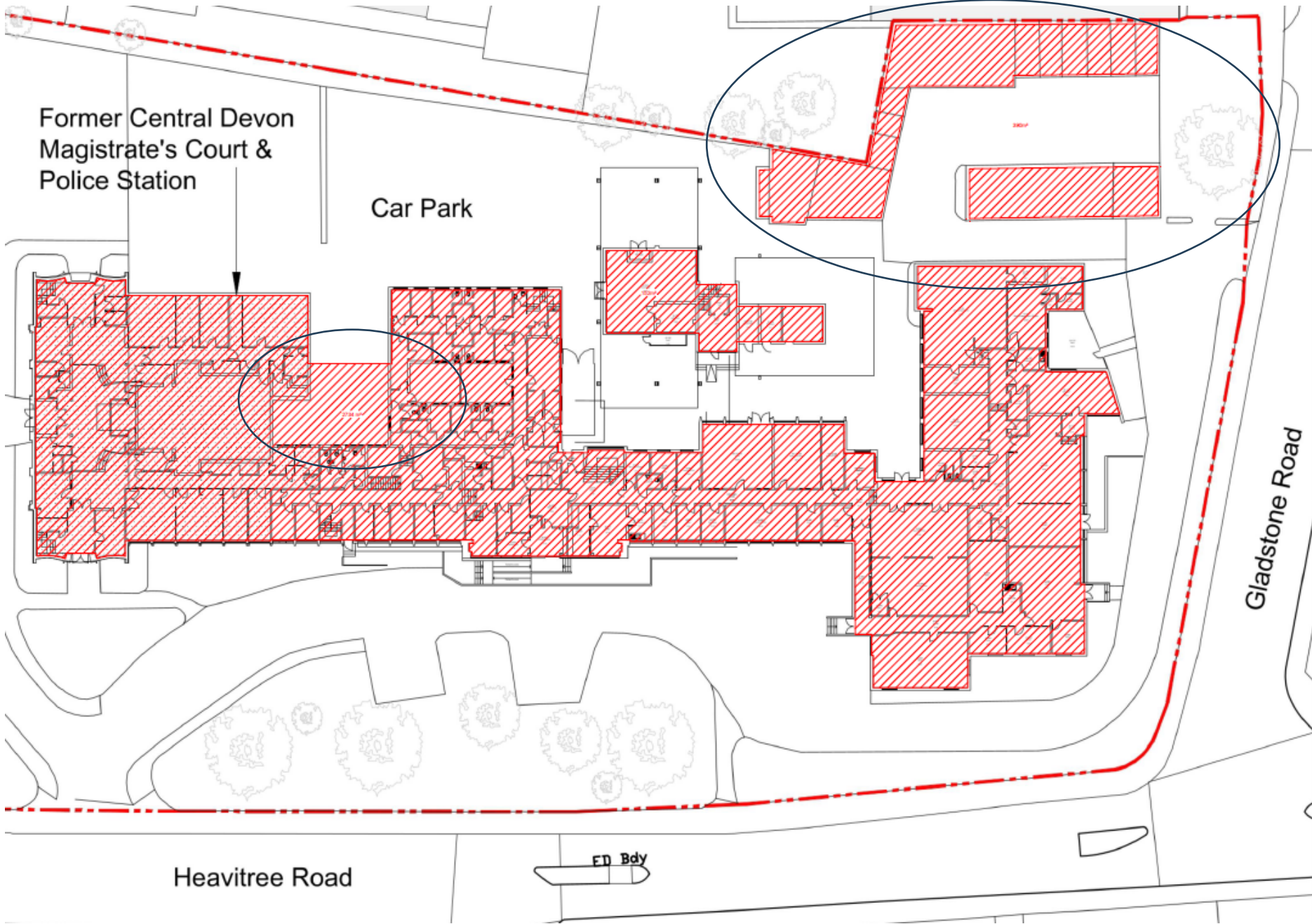
Where there is an overall increase in floorspace in the proposed development, the local planning authority should calculate the amount of affordable housing contributions required from the development as set out in their Local P plan. A 'credit' should then be applied which is the equivalent of the gross floorspace of any relevant vacant buildings being brought back into use or demolished as part of the scheme and deducted from the overall affordable housing contribution calculation. This will apply in calculating either the number of affordable housing units to be provided within the development or where an equivalent financial contribution is being provided.

The **existing floorspace** of a vacant building should be credited against **the floorspace of the new development**. For example, where a building with a gross floorspace of 8,000 square metre building is demolished as part of a proposed development with a gross floorspace of 10,000 square metres, any affordable housing contribution should be a fifth of what would normally be sought.

Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 23b-027-20190315

Revision date: 15 03 2019

- Vacant Building Credit does apply (reduction from 20% justified)
- Disagreement over Methodology:
- Officers:
 - The New Development = All new floorspace (inc PBSA)
- Applicant
 - The New Development = The floorspace liable for AH (exc PBSA)
- Is all Existing Floorspace Eligible?



Floor	GIA
Basement	152 sq'
Ground	2278 sq'
First	1345 sq'
Second	287 sq'
Total	4863 sq'
Fourth	458 sq'
Total	5321 sq'

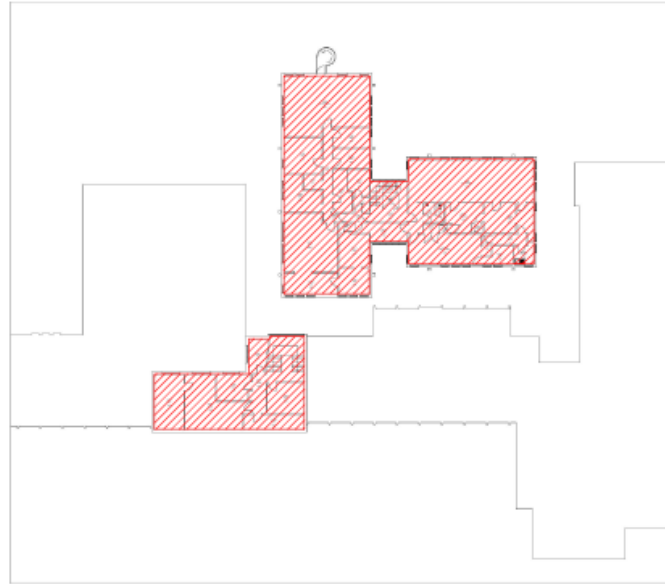
001 27/03/26 Issued for Planning ES RM
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brown + company

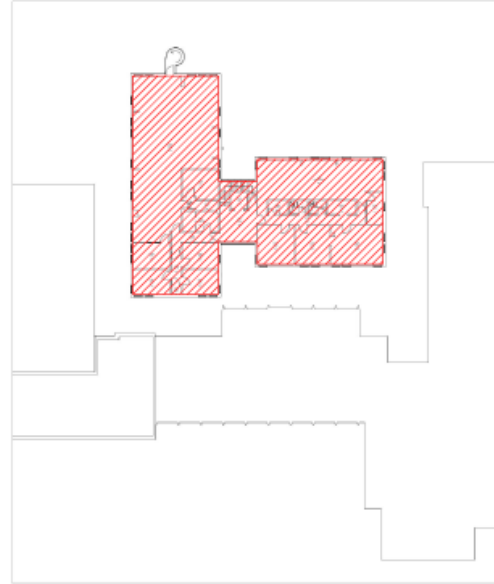
Project: Heavitree Road
 Erector: Ereter
 Drawing: Ground Floor Plan - Gross Internal Area

Date: 27/03/26
 Stage: Planning

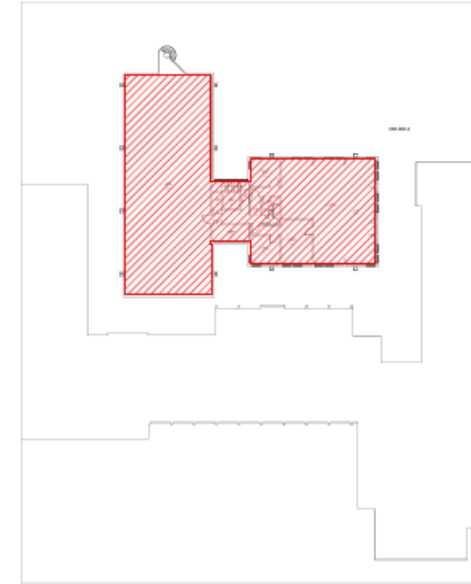
VACANT BUILDING CREDIT



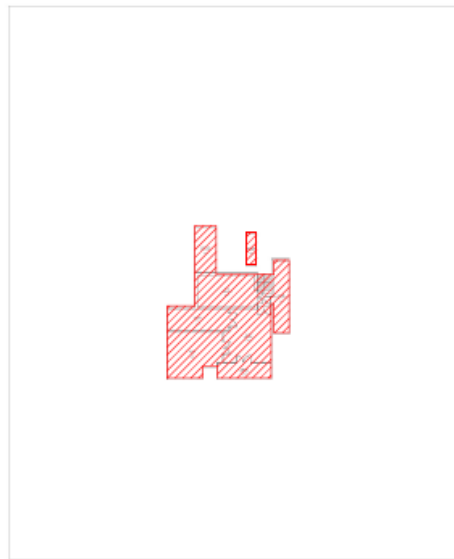
Second floor plan



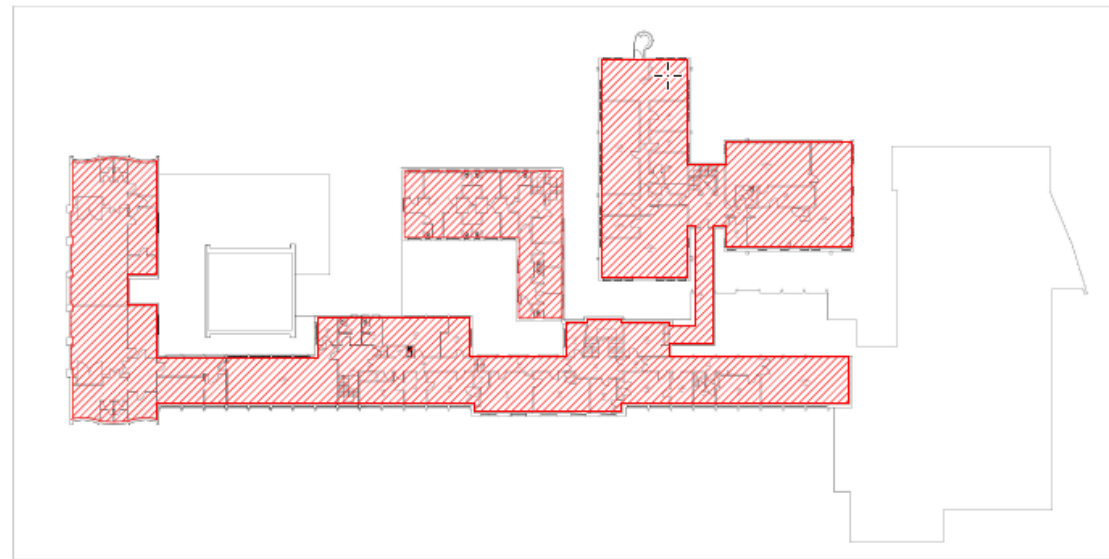
Third floor plan



Fourth floor plan



Basement floor plan



First floor plan

VACANT BUILDING CREDIT

VBC Scenario	Existing Floorspace (GIA)	Proposed Floorspace (GIA)	AH %	Option 1		Option 2
				AH Units	Additional Residual Commuted Sum	AH Units Rounded up
Initially Submitted Existing Floorspace, All New Floorspace (as reflected in 08.12.25 cttee report)	5250	23297	15.49%	64.14	£20,068.80	65
Officer Existing Floorspace, All New Floorspace (Officer Preferred)	6395	23297	14.51%	60.07	£10,179.86	61
Officer Existing Floorspace, Co-Living Floorspace Only	6395	12381	9.67%	40.03	£4609.39	41
Applicant Existing Floorspace, Co-Living Floorspace Only (Applicant Preferred)	6599	12381	9.34%	38.67	£95,127.27	39

VACANT BUILDING CREDIT

- X% of Co-Living Units (X units) 'Affordable Private Rent', including 4 accessible units
- Off-site Highway Works for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists:
- Widening of the footways to 3.5m to Heavitree Rd and Gladstone Rd
- Upgrade pedestrian crossing of Gladstone Rd to Green man/push button
- Minor upgrades to pedestrian crossing of Heavitree Rd on the eastern arm of its junction with Gladstone Rd
- Provision of permissive path, including 24hr public access and ongoing maintenance
- Safeguarding of land for future bus lane extension by DCC
- Safeguarding of land for a future Electric Bike Sharing Scheme
- Measures to prevent car ownership and use
- Management Plans for both residential uses
- Primary Health Care (GPs) contribution - £244,680.81
- Public Open Space Contribution - £371,541.00
- Outdoor Leisure Facilities ('Play') contribution - £95,121.00
- City-Wide Playing Fields contribution (Co-Living only) - £115,092.00
- Habitat Regulations mitigation - Exe Estuary (Affordable units only) - £1284.71 per affordable unit
- S106 Monitoring Fee

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

DELEGATE to **GRANT PERMISSION**, subject to:

- Completion of the Section 106 Agreement covering the identified matters (as 08.12.25 subject to the following changes):
 - Level of Affordable Housing following VBC reduction to be finalised by Head of City Development in consultation with Planning Committee Chair
 - Habitat Regulations mitigation (remains at £1284.71 per unit, but total will reduce as only sought for Affordable Co-Living Units)
- The conditions set out in the report (agreed changes from 08.12.25 Update Sheet incorporated);
- A secondary recommendation to **refuse** the application if the Section 106 Agreement is not completed by 01 December 2026 or such extended time as agreed in writing by the Head of City Development

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION