BMHC - MARQUEE

Design & Access Statement
Heritage Statement

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Architects & Designers

BRITISH MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE

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The MARQUEE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This report has been produced to support a planning application for the extension period of the existing temporary Marquee at the British Muslim Heritage Centre.

The building is Grade II* listed and in the Whalley Range conservation area. This report should be read in conjunction with plans prepared by Create It Studio Architects.

The Building opened as the Lancashire Independent College in 1843, for the teaching of theology and to train men for non-conformist ministry. From 1985 to 2005, the Building was owned and used by the GMB Trade Union for their national training centre. The building is now owned by the British Muslim Heritage Centre, a Muslim educational organisation and registered charity which aims 'to act as a bridge between the British Muslim and the wider community'.

The current proposal is for the retention of the existing in-situ Marquee structure for another 3 years.

The Marquee was originally approved and constructed in 2013. In 2016 planning was approved for extending the period allowing the retention of the Marquee until 2022. This application is to allow the Marquee to be allow its retention for a further 3 years.

Location

The Building is situated on the south side of College Road in Whalley Range, approximately two and a half miles from the city centre. The Marquee is to the rear of the building, on its south side.

The address is The British Muslim Heritage Centre, College Road, Manchester, M16 8BP.

Ownership

The Building is in the ownership of the British Muslim Heritage Centre. The local planning authority is Manchester City Council.

BACKGROUND

Planning was originally approved for the temporary Marquee in September 2013 (100277/FO/2012/S1).

In October 2016 planning was approved for the retention of the temporary marquee for a further 3 years temporary use (112122/FO/2016/S1).

In May 2019 planning was approved for the retention of the temporary marquee for a further 3 years temporary use (122963/FO/2019).

In June 2022 planning was approved for the retention of the temporary marquee for a further 3 years temporary use (133465/FO/2022).

This new planning application seeks to propose the retention of the temporary marquee for a further 3 years following on from the previously approval.

USE

The intended use of the main marquee structure remains as previously – a temporary facility which complements the existing spaces within the current buildings and provides an alternative venue which is capable of accommodating the demand for larger, single space functions in order to develop an income stream to enable further refurbishment and upkeep of the existing building whilst a permanent new facility can be developed and brought on-stream in line with the overall development strategy for the site.

The BMHC will continue to be fully responsible for all aspects of the operation and will control, manage and supervise all events in the marquee.

2.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

PROPOSED DESIGN

SIZE

The marquee provide approximately 900m² gross footprint of internal accommodation excluding the main entrance canopy, perimeter covered walkways and the temporary kitchen, toilet etc accommodation.

The space is notionally divided internally between a smaller main entrance / reception area at approximately 200m² and the main function area marquee of approximately 700m². A demountable central screen can provide separate male and female areas, if required, albeit that these still remain part of a single event within the overall marquee space, or to accommodate a single, smaller function. Intended guest numbers remain as previously.

LAYOUT

The marquee construction sits over an area of existing car parking, and one of the areas previously approved for additional car parking, to the south of the west wing of the existing building. The marquee is now located approximately 13m away from the main existing building.

The main marquee construction comprises a square plan at nom. 30m x 30m. This gives a more efficient, single-span enclosure of the floorspace. Double fire exit doors are located at each corner of the structure, with associated external escape routes with wheelchair ramps, to enable the space to be quickly and safely evacuated if ever necessary.

The main entrance is located on the east elevation – immediately adjacent to, and visible from, the main car parking area; and is signified by a single storey external, open canopy to provide a degree of protection in inclement weather. The marquee is surrounded on three sides by an external walkway to provide maintenance access and to accommodate the gradual fall of the land from north to south across the structure.

The ancillary temporary support kitchen, toilet etc accommodation is located along the west wall of the marquee – opposite the main entrance / reception area. These, slightly more substantially constructed units, will also act as a buffer between the marquee and the west boundary of the site.

SCALE

The size of the marquee is commensurate with that required to accommodate up to 600 persons in a banquet style layout, plus sufficient circulation space etc. The height to eaves level of the proposed marquee is 4m and the height to the ridge is 8.9m. The height to eaves level of the existing building is approximately 11m.

The proposal remains visually subservient to the existing Listed building.

APPEARANCE

Whilst the marquee structure is purpose made to the size required, the materials used are standard marquee components and assemblies.

The roof and gables are clad in double coated pvc polyester fabric, acrylic varnished. The North, South and West elevations have been upgraded to a vacuum-formed rigid pvc cassette panel ABS Solid Wall System as part of the noise reduction strategy for the marquee. The East, main entrance, elevation comprises a fully glazed aluminium frame wall panel system with fully glazed entrance and fire exit doors. As a contrasting / complementing element to the busy red brick form of the rear courtyards, the overall appearance effect is a simple square white and glass structure sitting within its landscape setting.

LANDSCAPE

The marquee's location is over existing car parking or lawn on which additional car parking has been previously approved. The floor level of the marquee will sit above the ground to provide a structure and services void beneath – allowing the ground to be reinstated to its previous condition once the proposed use has expired. The placement of the marquee avoids disturbing any of the existing trees around the site so that the extensive planted and landscape grounds remain unaffected.

ACCESS

As noted above, the floor level of the marquee is slightly raised above the existing ground level. This, combined with the fall of the existing ground level across the site necessitates steps and ramps at strategic points to provide full access to all facilities. Wheelchair accessible, separate male and female toilet provision are included in the temporary toilet accommodation to be provided.

Access into the site itself for those arriving by car to events will remain via the controlled / enlarged vehicular entrance in the North East corner of the site - from College Road. The existing car parking spaces of the previous proposal have been replaced by car parking spaces within the now vacant courtyard such that the total number of car parking spaces provided within the site remains as previous. On this basis, the conclusions of the previously submitted Transport Statement and Travel Plan remain valid for the revised proposals.

The vehicular exit onto Clarendon Road remains an integral component of the proposals to enable a more even dispersal of traffic onto the surrounding road network at the end of events than is currently possible. It is intended that this exit will be fully operational for large marquee functions.

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

HERITAGE CONTEXT & SITE DESCRIPTION

WHALLEY RANGE

Whalley Range developed on fields south of Manchester in the early 19th century. The suburb was initiated by Samuel Brooks, a prominent banker who purchased farmland in the area in 1832 intending to create a residential suburb as 'a desirable estate for gentlemen and their families.' It was one of the first of the city's planned suburbs. Brooks drained the land, laid out roads and built handsome villas in their own grounds, including one for himself at the south end of Whalley Road (demolished 1930).

The layout of the original estate survives, but smaller houses, including terraces, were built in the early 20th century on vacant plots or the sites of demolished houses. After the Second World War, some larger houses were demolished or converted to flats and there was more infill. In 1991 Whalley Range Conservation Area was designated, to protect the remaining character of the historic suburb and encourage the refurbishment of historic properties. The former college building is the most prominent and significant historic building in the conservation area.

THE LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

The Independent College was erected in 1840-3 to the designs of the Manchester architects Irwin & Chester. The institution was set up to train ministers for the Congregational Church and to provide further and higher education for Nonconformists. The building is designed in Gothic Revival style with a tall central tower on the symmetrical north front which is faced in ashlar. The Front Range contains the principal rooms on the first floor, facing north towards College Road. Three wings project to the south and are faced in brick; these are less significant architecturally and in the conservation area than the frontage range. The central of these wings was built by Waterhouse in the 1870s, as part of the expansion of the college. It contains a first floor hall and a prayer room on the ground floor. The side wings were built for residential accommodation and were also remodeled by Waterhouse.

The grounds were landscaped with a large front garden, laid with lawns and planted with specimen trees and shrubs, in the 1840s. College archives show that Francis Chester, John Irwin's associate won a competition for the layout of the grounds. No drawings of the design seem to have survived. Building committee minutes also show that more landscape designs were sought at a later date, and those of Mr Forrest of Kensington chosen. The detail of these schemes is not known.

Apart from the terraced walkway and axial approach in front of the building and the central and side approach steps, which may have formed part of Irwin's proposals, with tree planting, there is little evidence for a designed landscape. The 1848 OS map (Fig.1) shows the central drive on an axis from the entrance gates to the tower, with a drive leading off to the principal's residence to the west. The 1893 OS map shows many trees, including in the rear south-facing yards and around the edges of the site, with a geometric arrangement of paths and drives around the perimeter, and an axial walkway to the south of the building. The grounds retain many mature deciduous and conifer trees, generally planted informally.

A secondary drive runs along the east side of the front gardens (in existence since the 1840s), and is now in use as the main vehicular access. The central front drive is now mainly only for pedestrian use. The stone perimeter wall and decorative gateway along the north frontage to College Road was built around the time as the college building in the 1840s and are separately listed Grade II. To the south side and rear of the college, Clarendon Road did not exist at the time the college was built, and is not shown on the 1848 OS map. At that time, the southern part of the college grounds was less extensive than today.

In 1882 the grounds were extended to the south, as part of the expansion of the college, and a new boundary established along Clarendon Road. The OS map of 1893 shows the extended grounds.

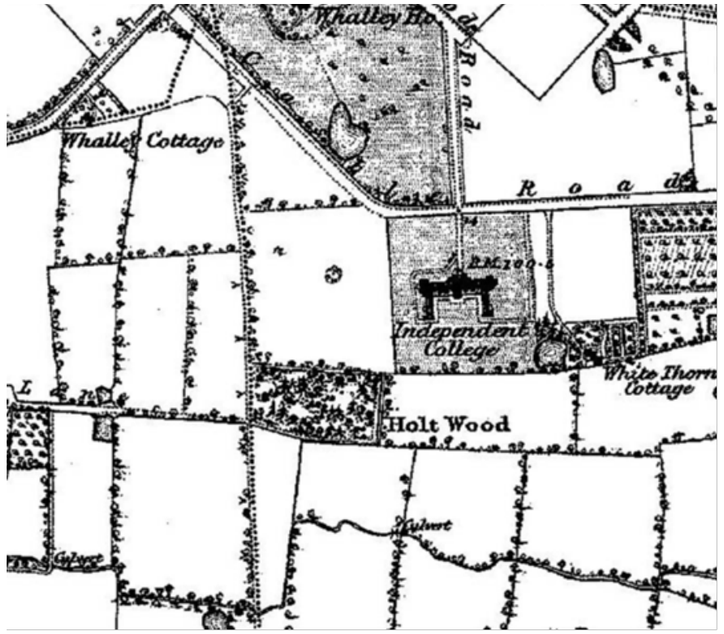

Fig. 1 The College soon after opening, on the 1848 OS map (Digital Mapping)

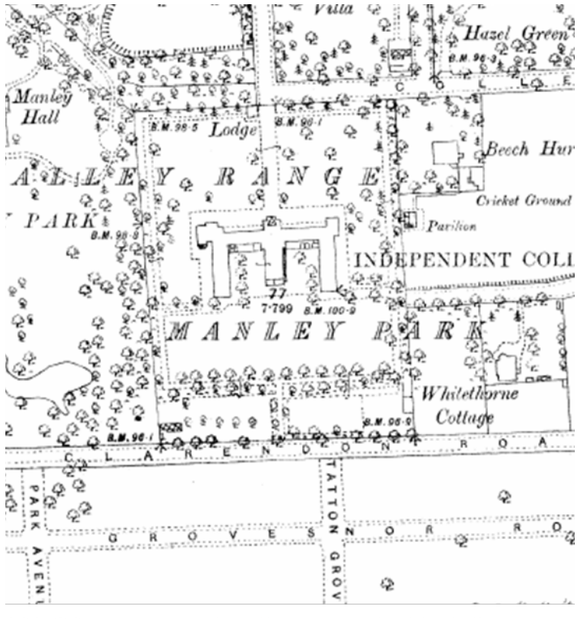

Fig. 2. 1893 OS map, showing the extended building and grounds (Digital Mapping)

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is part of current government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. A key objective in the NPPF is 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation …'. The NPPF sets out a proportional approach; the more significant the heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation. Heritage assets include listed buildings, conservation areas and some unlisted buildings of local interest. Historic England issued Conservation Principles in 2008 identifying four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. Within these categories, significance can be ranked in hierarchical levels:

- **Exceptional** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.
- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDING AND THE SETTING

The 1830s college building has exceptional significance overall for its historical, communal and aesthetic value as a fine and fairly rare example of an early 19th century gothic revival building created to train nonconformist ministers. The works by Waterhouse in the 1870s have high significance. Due to the hierarchy expressed in the architecture, the rear elevation and the east and west wings of the building have less aesthetic significance than the main frontage. The latter is in the highest level of significance while the rear wings are assessed as high. The building is listed Grade II*; this category of listed buildings comprise approximately 5.6% of England's listed buildings (Mynors, p.64). Grade II* listed buildings are considered to have outstanding significance in national terms, and works that affect them require consultation with Historic England.

The setting of the building contributes to its significance, with the hierarchy in the planning and architecture of the building reflected in the relative significance of the grounds. The front grounds with the front wall and gateway onto College Road are of the highest significance and provide the foreground for views of the listed building from the road. The rear lawned areas are of medium or high significance, depending on the level of recent change; the marquee has affected the setting of the south-west area, but as this is hidden in views from the front it does not affect the setting of the north Front Range. The south-east lawn is the least altered part of the rear grounds, and is a significant part of the setting for the rear of the building. It is also seen in views on the approach along the east drive from the north, and south from the pathway running along the east side of the east wing.

WHALLEY RANGE CONSERVATION AREA

The Conservation Area was designated in 1991. Its south boundary is drawn to follow the precinct of the former college building very tightly. College Road is lined with detached and semi-detached houses of various dates, set within leafy gardens, and retains is historic character which contributes to the wider setting of the college. In contrast, the setting outside the Conservation Area, south of the college, is characterised by mixed housing and shops, mainly of late 19th or early 20th century and later dates, including some with haphazard signage, roller shutters and other details inconsistent with the character of the Conservation Area itself.

The former college building and the spacious grounds make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, particularly from the north; the tower has an axial relationship with Wood Road to the north and there are good views of the north frontage of the building through the leafy grounds facing College Road. The south elevation is not seen from within the rest of the conservation area, and makes a lower contribution.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSALS

The current proposal is for the retention of the marquee and an extension of time for a further 3 years. This planning application does not seek to alter the design or conditions of the extant permission.

IMPACT ON SIGNIFICANCE

Under the NPPF applicants are required to demonstrate the significance of assets affected by a proposal and to set out the impact that the work will have on this significance. In terms of significance, this proposal affects the setting of Grade II* listed building, which is an asset of exceptional significance. The frontage of the building and the spacious grounds make a positive contribution to the conservation area. However, the chosen site has less significance than the main north frontage and is a secondary part of the grounds, next to the rear of the building. The south area of the grounds has been altered by the marquee and associated car parking so it is no longer in an unaltered state.

In terms of the NPPF, the proposed marquee and associated areas strikes a reasonable balance between the historic and architectural interest of the historic building and the needs of the user and current standards. The marquee does not harm the character or special interest of the building and enhances the area.

As the marquee has been insitu for almost 6 years now, it has become a integrated element of the site and the setting of the listed building.

The marquee does have a visual impact on the setting of the listed building, and will cause slight harm. The level of harm is less than substantial and is justified by the public and community benefits of the proposal, the specific needs of the owners and forms part of the overall refurbishment works to secure a long-term future for the building, as a Muslim heritage and community centre.

4.0 DRAWINGS

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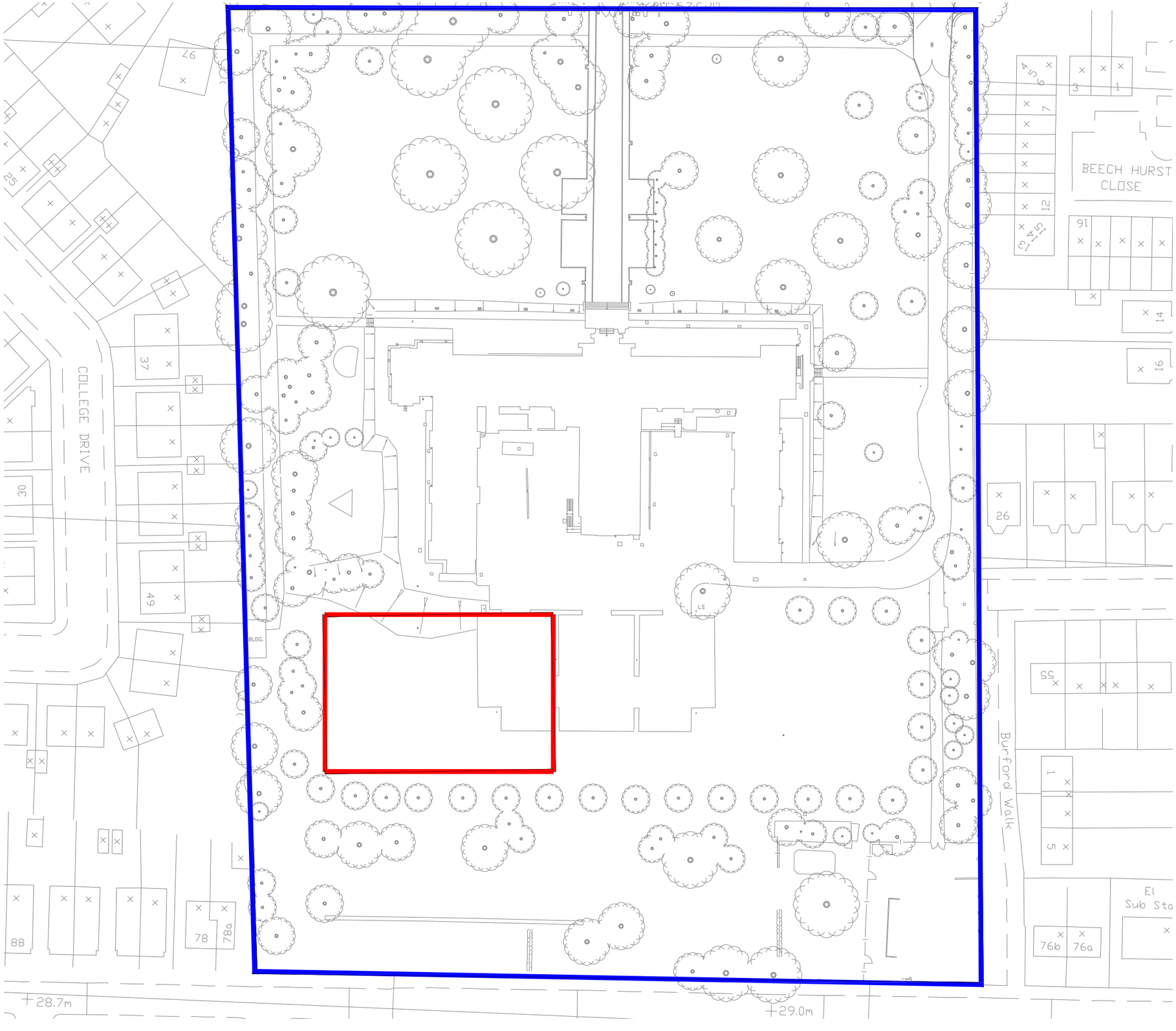
LOCATION PLAN

NTS



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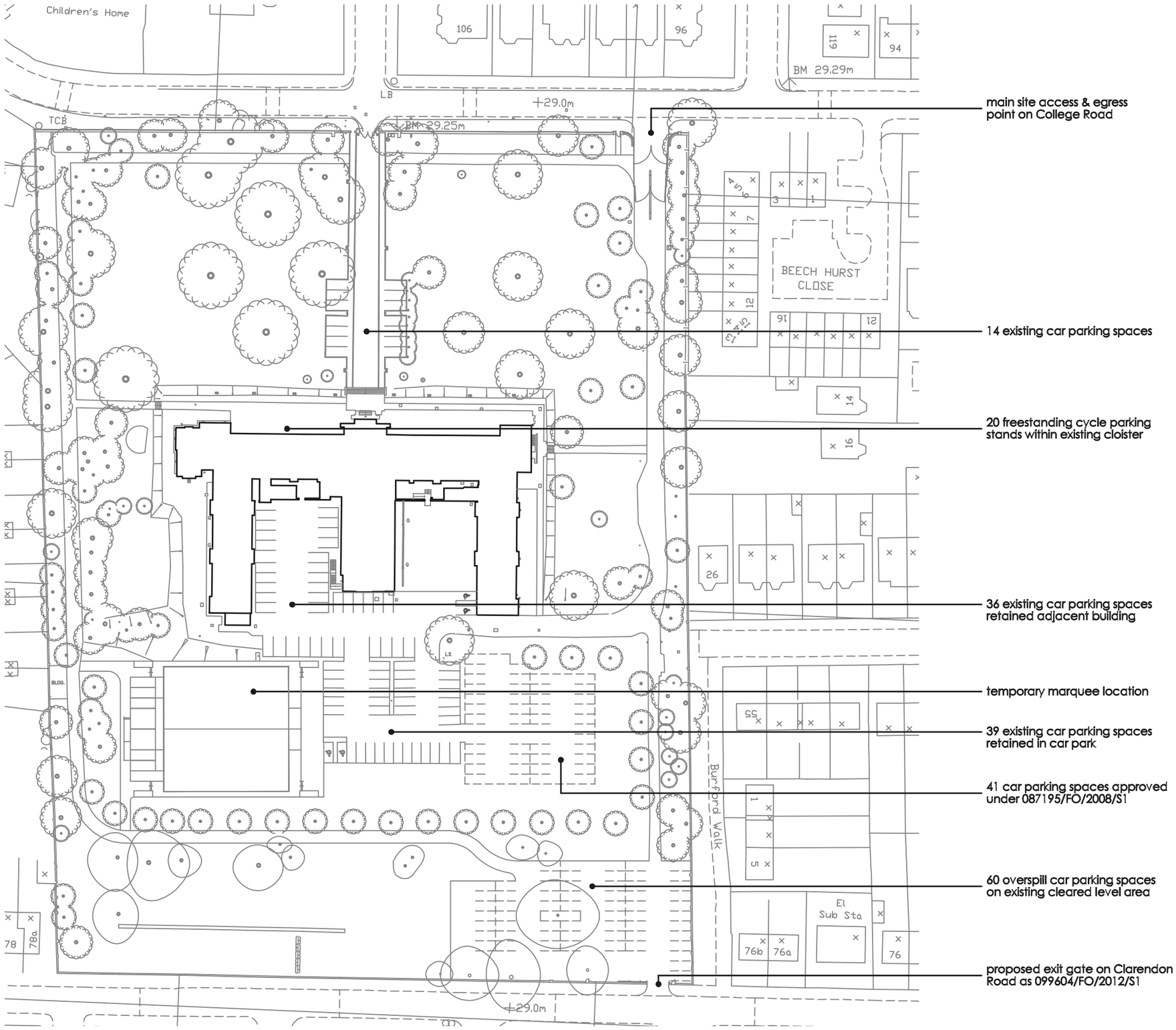
SITE PLAN

1:25000



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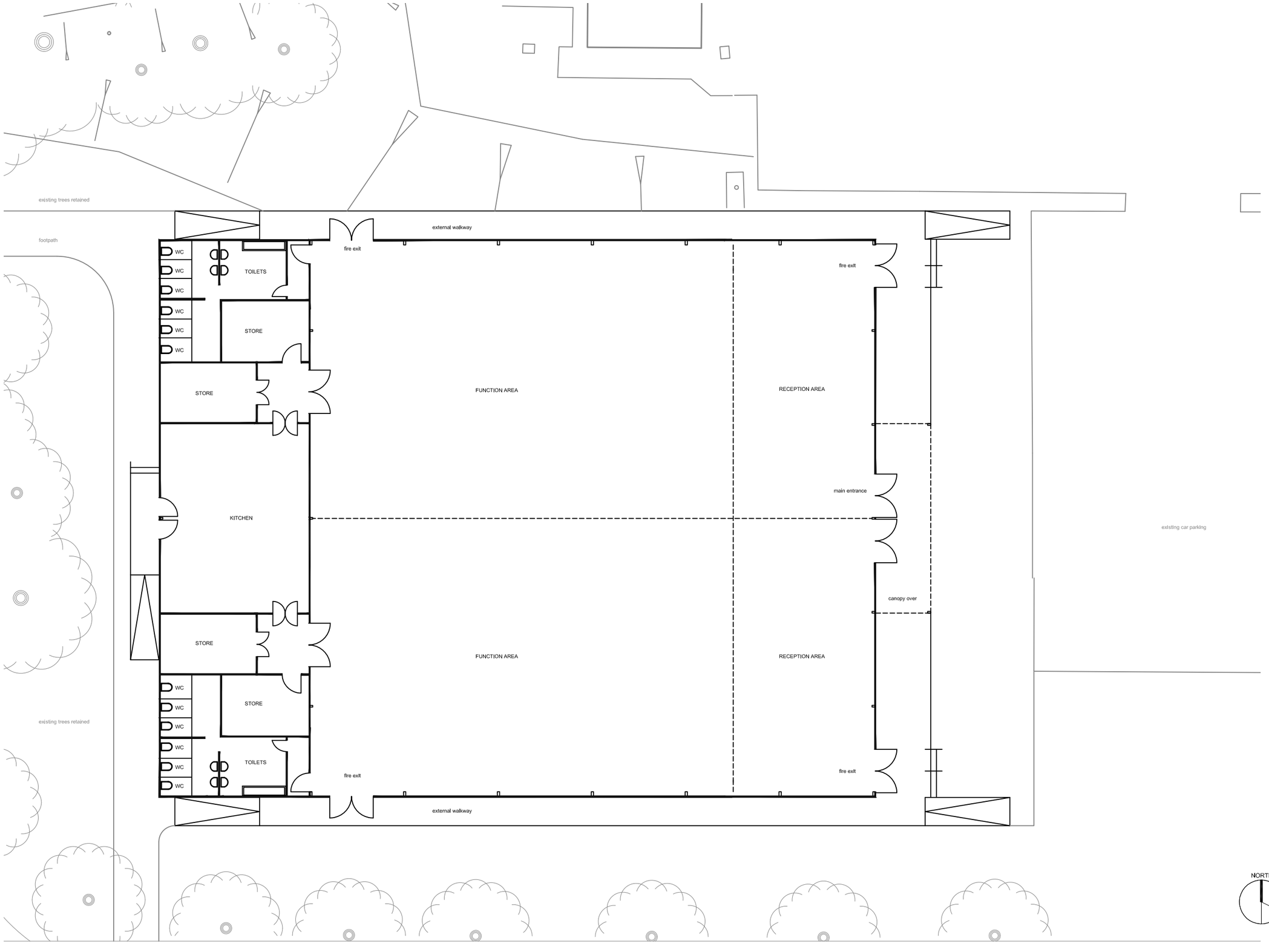
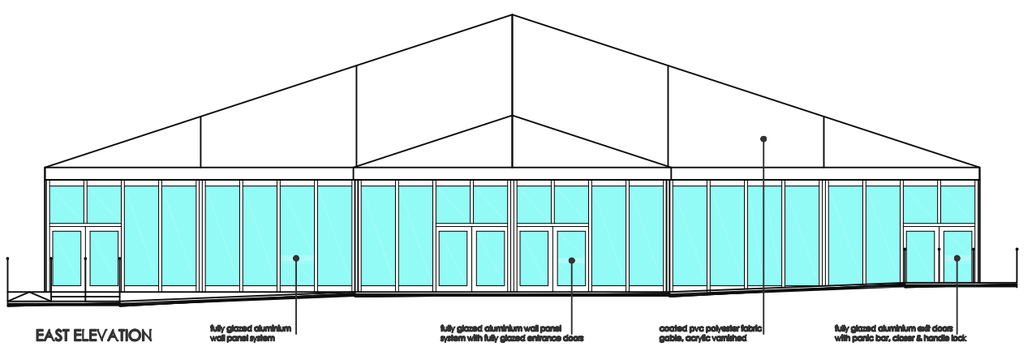
PROPOSED PLAN

1:5000

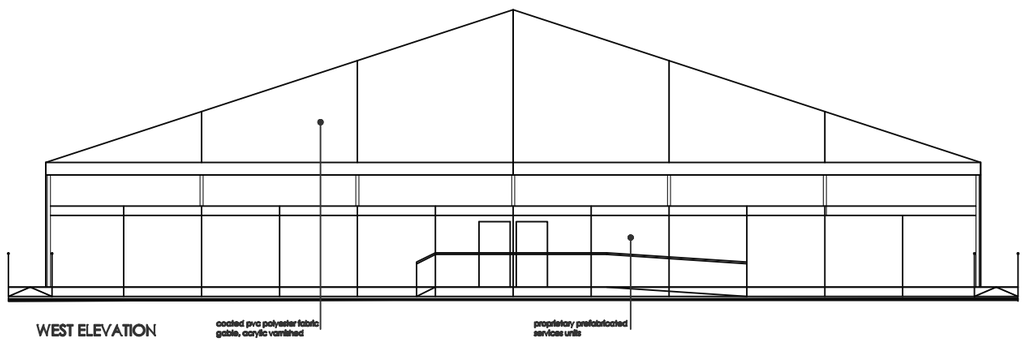


PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

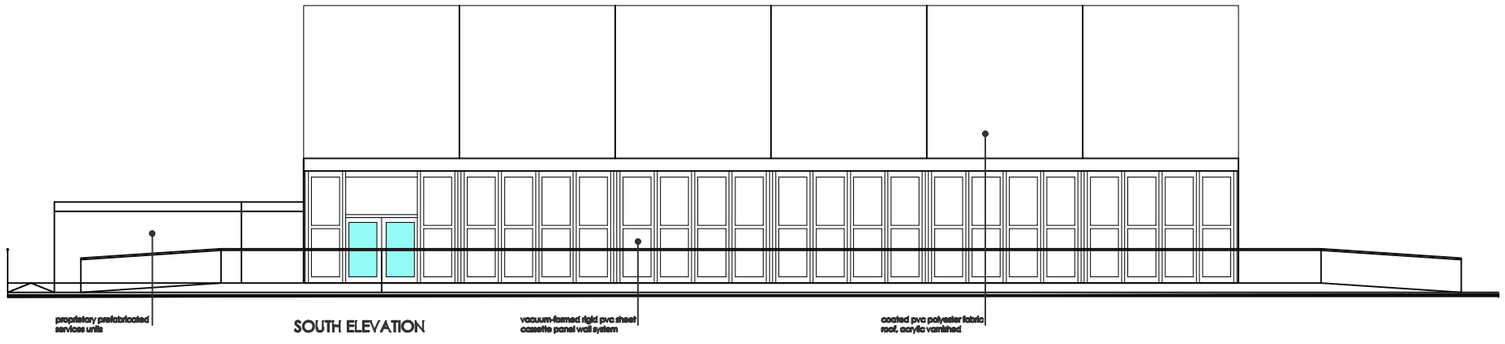
1:5000



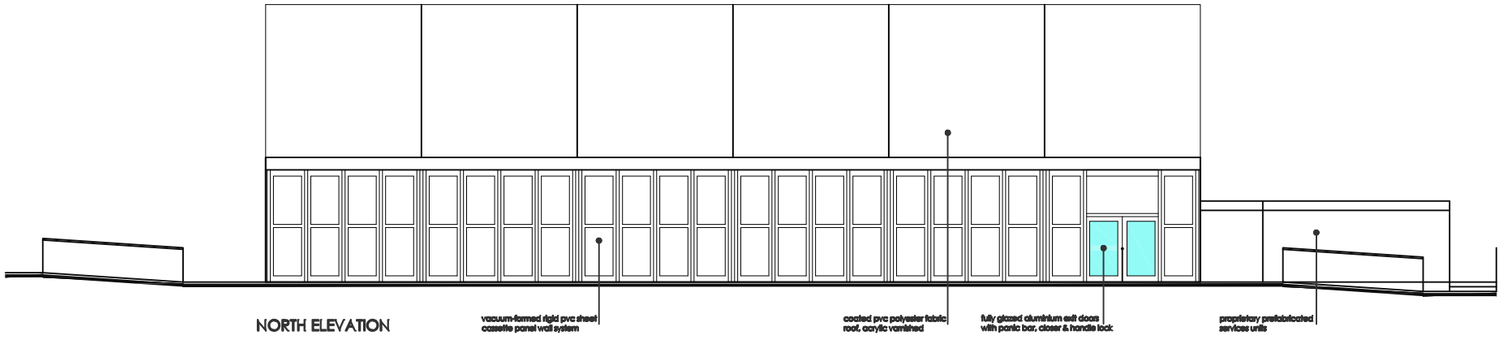
EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

Architecture | Planning | Visualisation Graphics | Branding | Websites

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