

Layout Rationalisation and Internal Distribution Principles Design and Access Statement - Annex 03 May 2025

In support of the Full Planning Application Submission:
120 - 124 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL

The purpose of this Supplementary Statement is to address and explain the need for the proposed rationalisation of the upper floors layout, to justify the need of a new, dedicated core and access route, and to outline the underlying principles of the proposed layout. These principles are grounded in UK Approved Building Regulations and reflect a reasoned, practical response to the constraints of the existing structure.



Introduction

This Distribution Principle Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for a proposed refurbishment and conversion of part of an existing building located on Grosvenor Street, in Manchester.

Planning reference: 142467/FO/2025

The applicant for the development is Grosvenor Holding MRC Limited.

This project proposes refurbishing an existing building by converting the 1st and 2nd floor into student accommodations. Key features include upgraded thermal elements, a new staircase core (DDA compliant), dedicated student entrances, and improved internal layout, all designed to respect the building's original character.

The site is located in close proximity with various universities along Oxford Road, and it is within the Manchester City Council boundary.

Involvement:

Consultation with Manchester City Council began back in November 2024 in the form of a pre application enquiry, in order to establish an acceptable approach to development. The allocated Planning Officer was Mr Michael Pearson.

The original proposal involved converting the 1st and 2nd floors from offices into purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) and adding a new dedicated core and an upward extension to create a total of 42 PBSA bedrooms across three storeys.

Extensive discussions then took place regarding the upward extension. The final feedback confirmed that the existing pitched roof, which is visible from the main roads, must remain unchanged. Any possible refinements would need to be limited to the central space, hidden behind the existing ridge line.

As a result, the original proposal was refined, and the revised submission now excludes the upward extension while maintaining the other key elements of the scheme.



The other the key point raised by the Planning Officer (PO) was the need to justify the necessity of a new core, especially given that the existing layout saw multiple levels and stairs, and evidenced to show that the proposal could not be delivered without it.

The concerns raised were:

- the staircase side extension 'feels like an incongruous addition to the property'
- 'consideration should be given as to whether this can be accommodated within the internal aspects of the building'

We effectively had to prove that the dedicated core could not be sensibly accommodated within the internal aspects of the building'

SDP response:

The concerns raised by the Planning Officer were duly acknowledged and appreciated. The team at Street Design Partnership began the design process with a thorough analysis of the existing building. This analysis aimed to identify its strengths, to build upon them, and, more importantly, to highlight its weaknesses and work proactively to address and improve them.

The Design Process

Analysis of the Existing Layout:

The project site is an existing detached building with a basement and three storeys above ground floor level. It currently accommodates various tenants, including a bar, a Korean food takeaway, a music shop, and a bike repair shop. The upper floors are partially occupied as office space, with most areas however currently long-term vacant.

Upper Floors Usage:

Sand Bar Allocation: Three rooms on the upper floors are designated as office space for Sand Bar, while its commercial operations are located on the ground floor and in the basement. These rooms, however, are not used for their intended purpose and function only as additional storage. Sand Bar has expressed willingness to relinquish these rooms as their loss will not affect operational capacity.

Remaining Spaces: The remaining areas on the first and second floors are vacant and unusable due to their poor state of repair.

Strength:

- Location
- Established ground floor small commercial units

Weaknesses:

The existing general arrangement of the upper floors is such that the footprint is fragmented into a series of small individual offices/rooms. This layout is the result of piecemeal modifications made over the years, lacking a unified vision and strategy for the building.

Key issues with the current structure include:

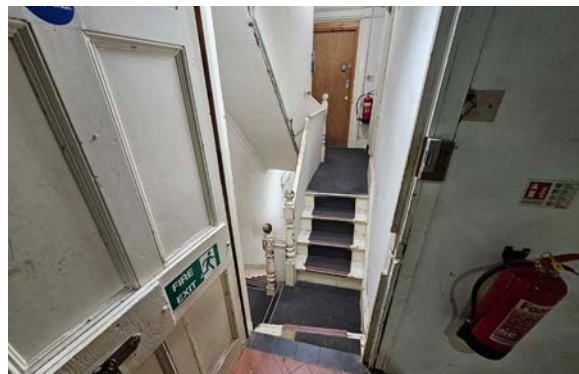
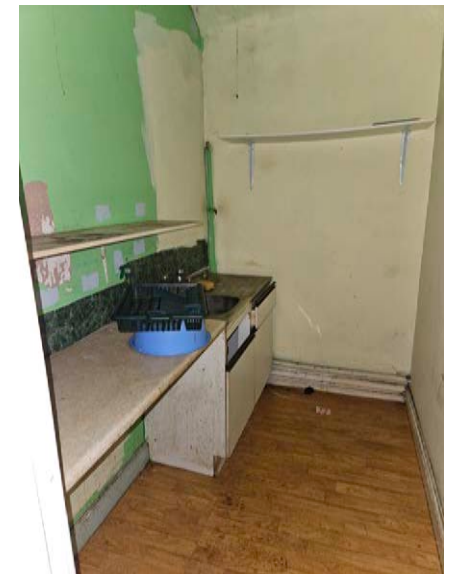
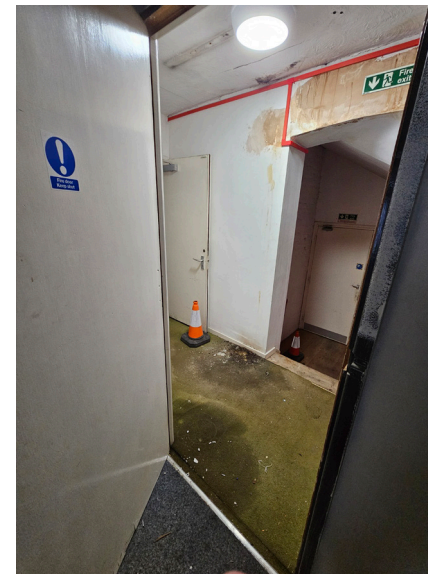
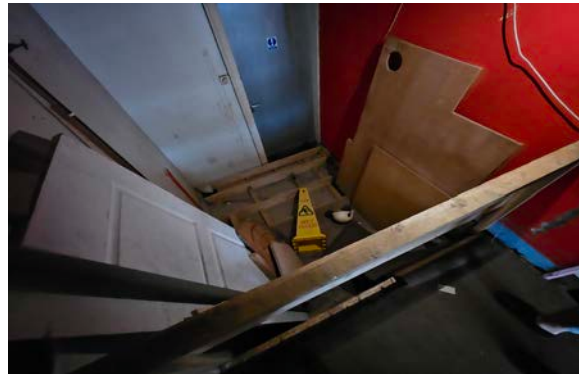
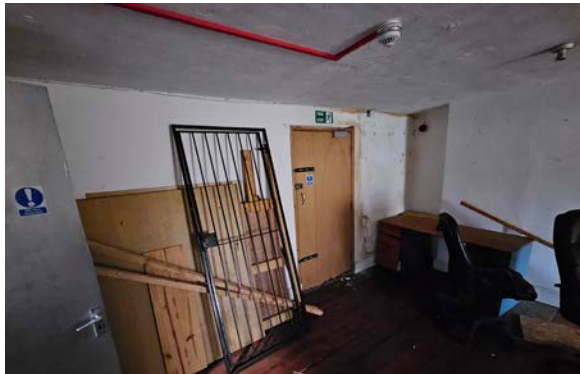
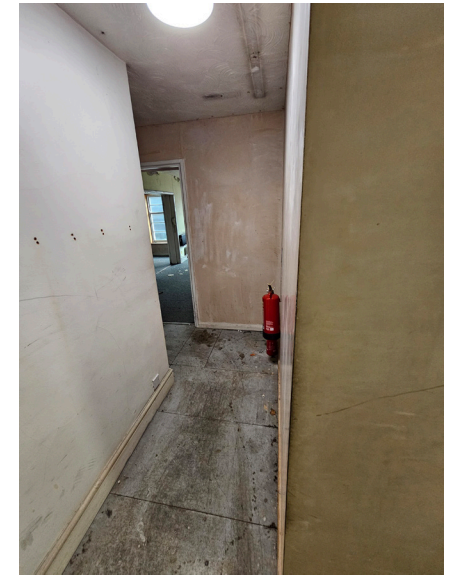
- Narrow, steep, and segmented staircases that fail to meet modern building standards and regulations;
- Derelict and poorly maintained spaces;
- The layout is unclear and feels like a maze
- The fire strategy appears fragmented, following the state of the layout
- Hazardous and non-compliant access to rooms/levels;
- Lack of DDA accessibility;
- Lack of clear, dedicated access connecting the upper floor usage to the street
- Absence of dedicated parking spaces.

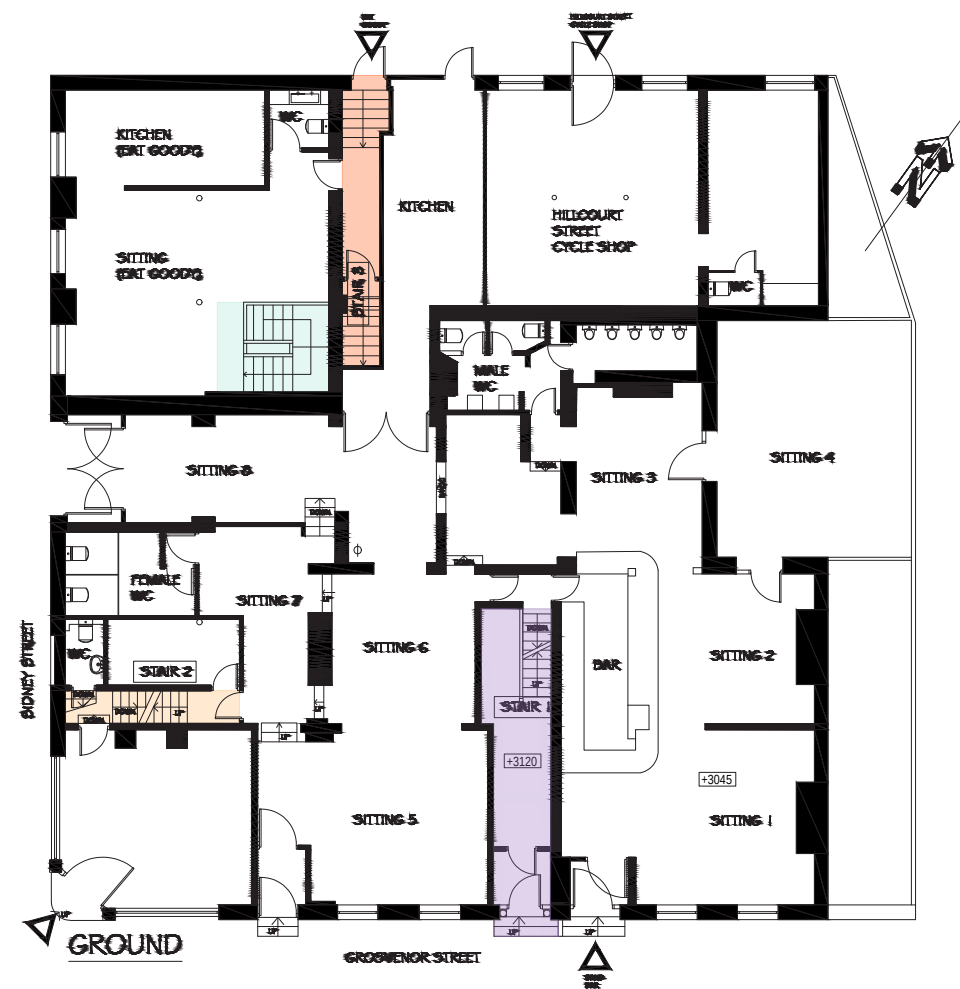
Page 04 : Photos depicting the current state of the building's disrepair.

Page 05: Extract of the drawing '7499 - F.05 Rev.A - Existing Plans'. Note: The original drawing is to scale at 1:100 on an A1 sheet. The extracted version has been scaled to fit an A3 sheet, with its scale now reduced to 1:200. For accurate dimensions, please refer to the original A1 drawing.



Photos of the existing situation





EXISTING PLANS

Current plans indicative only and based on plans by others. Building Survey to be procured ahead of formal Planning Submission.

Previous Preliminary Options - Design Analysis

Preliminary Option 01:

In Option 01, the ground-floor businesses are retained, and the Sand Bar rooms on the first floor remain in use (at the time, Sand Bar had not expressed willingness to relinquish these rooms). The upper floors are converted into Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). The two existing staircases connecting the various floors to the street level are preserved, and a new centrally located lift is proposed adjacent to Staircase 01.

Pros:

- A new lift is introduced, improving some vertical connectivity.
- Partial rationalisation of the layout.
- Existing ground-floor businesses are maintained.

Cons:

Accessibility Issues:

- The lift does not provide a comprehensive solution, as the layout remains divided with numerous steps, leaving communal areas inaccessible.
- The lift does not reach street level, making the building as a whole non-compliant with accessibility standards.

Operational and Functional Limitations:

- No connection to a designated bin storage area; no bin area is provided.
- Staircase 02 serves both the PBSAs and the Korean food takeaway, creating a conflict in fire escape routes.
- The communal area is too small to accommodate all students simultaneously.

Construction Challenges:

- The installation of the lift would disrupt Sand Bar's operations during construction.
- Potential construction issues with the lift, as a basement survey is still in progress.

Page 07: Extract of the drawing '7499 - FS.01 Rev.A - Preliminary Option 01'.

Note: The original drawing is to scale at 1:100 on an A1 sheet. The extracted version has been scaled to fit an A3 sheet, with its scale now reduced to 1:200. For accurate dimensions, please refer to the original A1 drawing.

Preliminary Option 02:

In Option 02, the ground-floor businesses are retained, and the Sand Bar rooms on the first floor remain in use (as Sand Bar had not yet expressed willingness to relinquish these rooms). The upper floors are converted into Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). The two existing staircases connecting the various floors to the street level are preserved. Additionally, a new dedicated core is proposed, featuring a compliant public access staircase and a lift.

Pros:

- A new dedicated access core is introduced, providing compliant public staircase access and a lift that reaches street level.
- Partial rationalisation of the layout.
- Ground-floor businesses remain undisturbed.
- No operational disruption to existing tenants during construction.

Cons:

Accessibility Issues:

- The layout remains divided with multiple steps, and the bedrooms are not fully accessible due to a step up from the communal areas.
- While a new access core is provided, the floors still have split levels, rendering the overall proposal inaccessible.
- There is no connection to a designated bin storage area; no bin area is provided.

Existing Staircases:

- Maintaining the two existing staircases adds limited value, as the new compliant access core renders their functionality redundant.
- Staircase 02 continues to serve both the PBSAs and the Korean food takeaway, causing a conflict in fire escape routes.

Communal Area Limitations:

- The communal area is too small to accommodate all students at the same time.
- The volume of the new access core reduces natural light and leaves only one window for the communal area.

Page 08: Extract of the drawing '7499 - FS.02 Rev.A - Preliminary Option 02'.

Note: The original drawing is to scale at 1:100 on an A1 sheet. The extracted version has been scaled to fit an A3 sheet, with its scale now reduced to 1:200. For accurate dimensions, please refer to the original A1 drawing.





PROPOSED



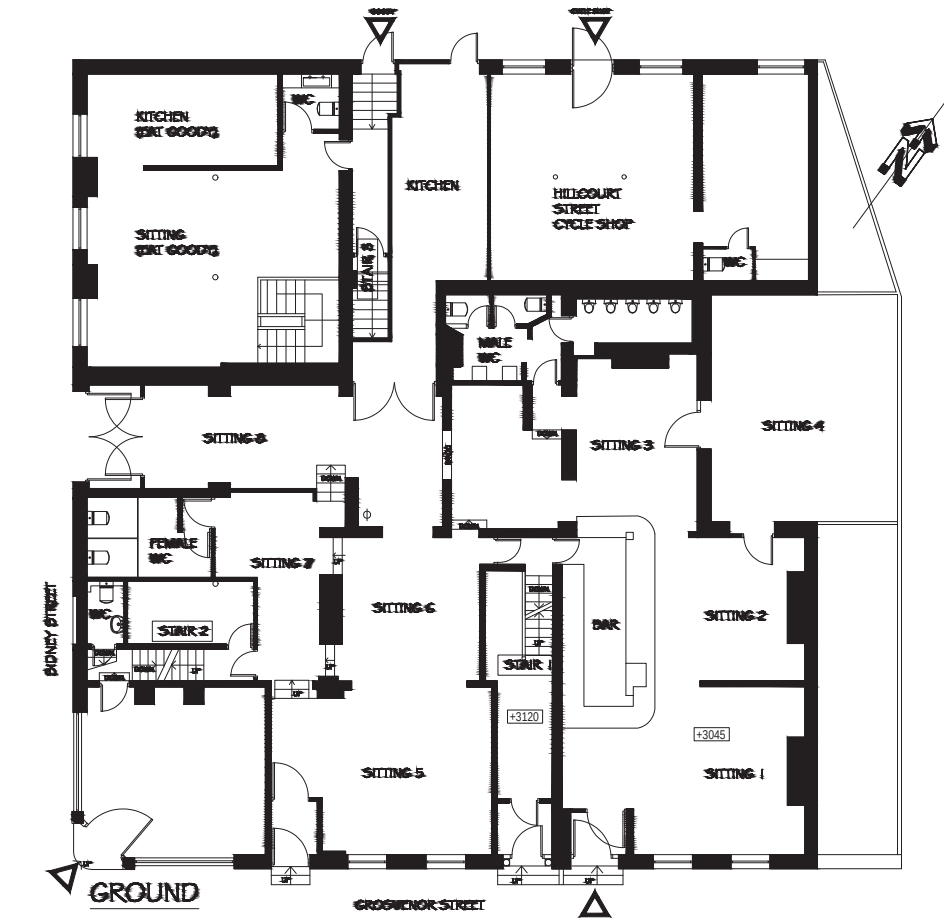
1ST



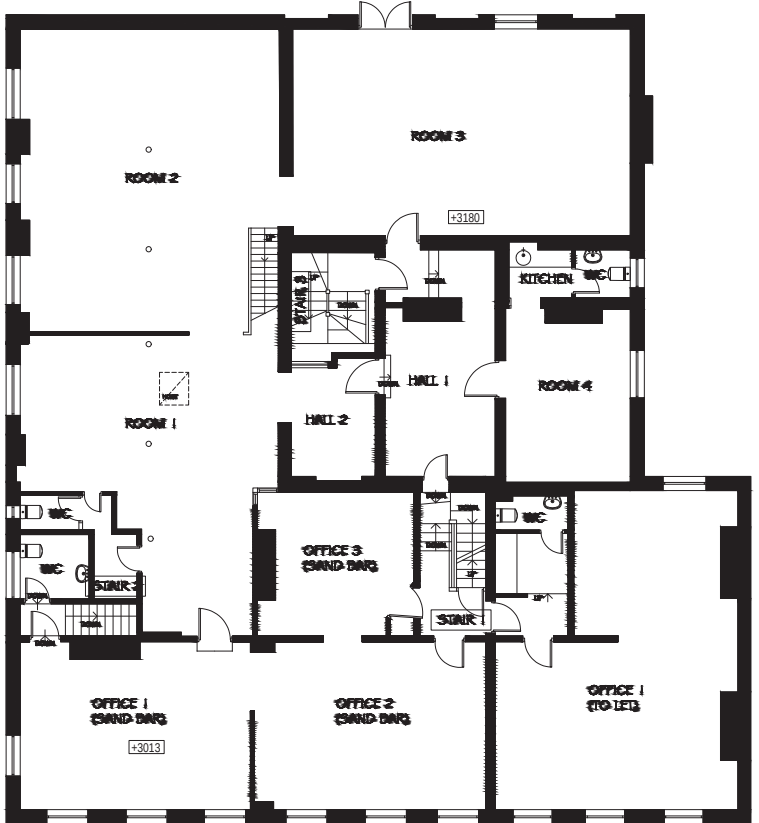
2ND and 3RD (one storey upward extension to replace the existing pitched roof)

Proposal
Preliminary Option 01
38 No. Student beds

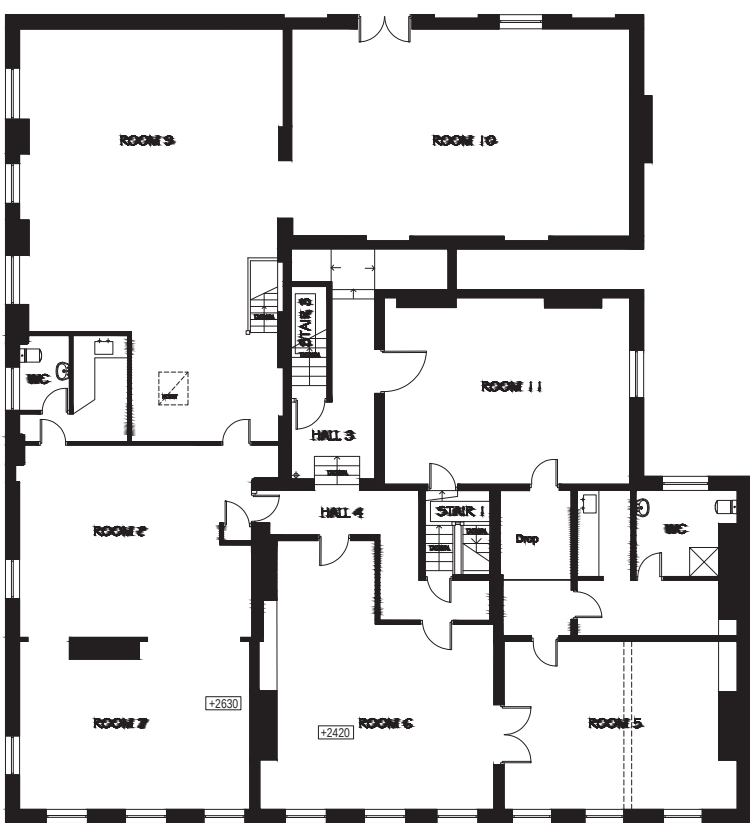
Schedule:
Proposed walls
Existing walls



EXISTING
Subject to detailed survey and based on plans by others.



1ST



2ND

rev A: Staircases hatch addition		date: 14.01.2025 F1	
PRELIMINARY OPTION.01	client:	project:	drawing:
	ASHA GROUP	GROSVENOR HOUSE MANCHESTER	STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PRELIMINARY OPTION 01
project no:	drawing no:	revision:	drawn: checked: date: scale @ A1
7499	FS.01	A BB	4.9.2024 1:100



PROPOSED



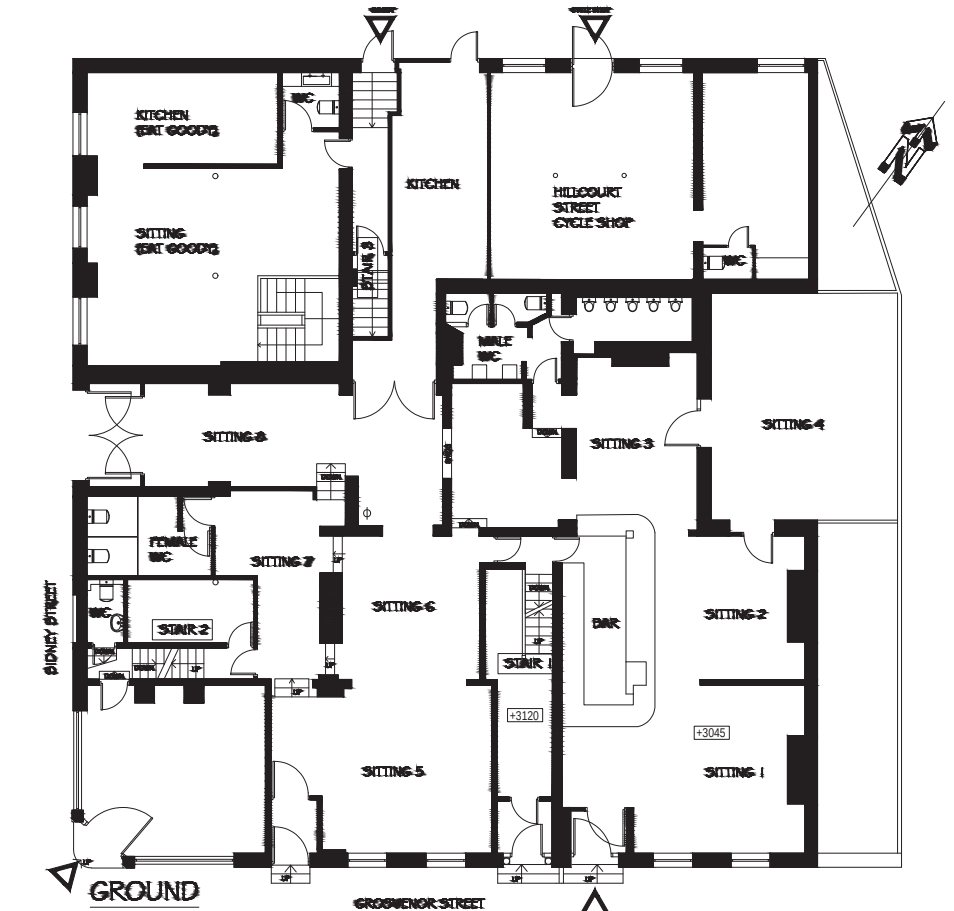
1ST



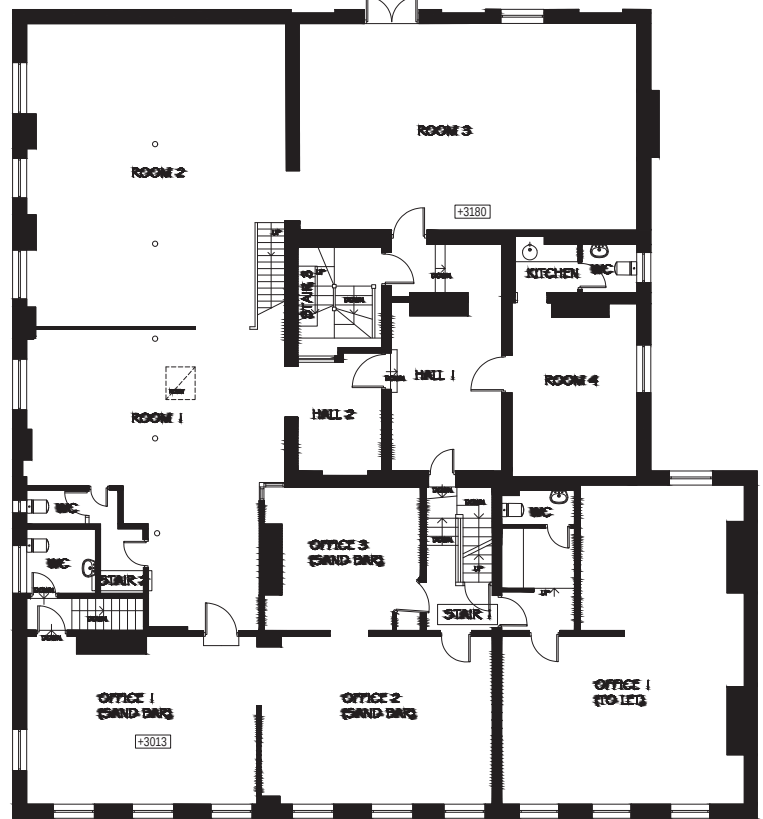
2ND and 3RD (one storey upward extension to replace the existing pitched roof)

Proposal
Preliminary Option 02
38 No. Student beds

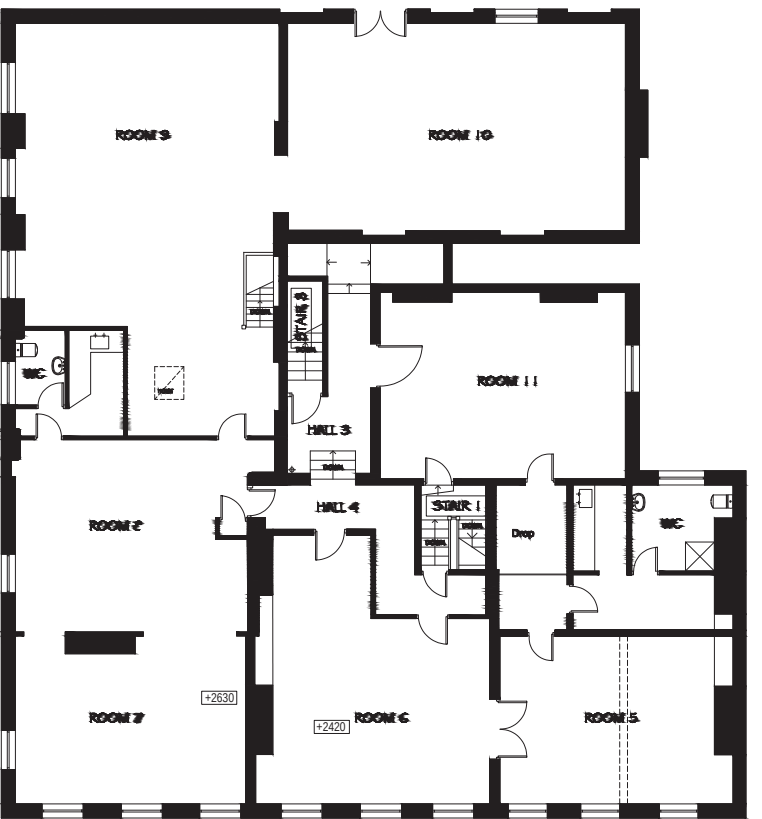
Schedule:
Proposed walls
Existing walls



EXISTING
Subject to detailed survey and based on plans by others.



1ST



2ND

PRELIMINARY OPTION 02	rev.A: Staircases hatch addition		date: 14.01.2025 FI	
	client:	project:	drawing:	
	AGHA GROUP	GROSVENOR HOUSE MANCHESTER	STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PRELIMINARY OPTION 02	
project no:		drawing no:	revision:	drawn: checked: date: scale @ A1
7499		FS.02	A BB	3.9.2024 1:100

Critical Analysis

Based on the critical analysis of the previous preliminary proposals, the following key points were implemented/considered to address identified challenges and opportunities, ensuring the proposal is rationalised for maximum efficiency, accessibility, and compliance.

Rationalising the Layout

The proposal brings all levels up to the 'C'-shape side at the same height as the bedroom level, ensuring both the bedrooms and communal areas are aligned. The existing Staircase 01 already connects to the bedroom level, and the new core will link the street level to the PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) level. All PBSA storeys will be level and fully accessible.

Key improvements include:

- **Bin Enclosure:** A dedicated bin area at street level that opens toward a public area, allowing for easy access and collection.
- **Minimal Internal Disruption:** No new lifts are being created internally.
- **Compliance:** No clashes with means of escape (MOE) or other classifications of use.

External Core Benefits

Moving at least one core outside offers several advantages:

- **Rationalised Layout:** The building's layout has become fragmented over time due to modifications and divisions. An external core provides a more unified spatial organisation.
- **Improved Escape Routes:** Simplifies and clarifies the means of escape.
- **Enhanced Design Quality:** The external core is not merely a functional escape route. It is designed as a dedicated student entrance that complements the building's character without resorting to imitation.
- **Accessibility:** Includes a DDA-compliant lift servicing all levels.
- **Minimal Disruption:** Avoids significant changes to the existing ground-floor commercial units.

We are not pursuing partial solutions; the objective is a unified vision for the building.

Option 03 Current Proposal

Option 03 emerged as the result of a critical design analysis and was proposed during the pre-application submission as the most appropriate solution. It was considered the best option, and the Planning Officer agreed with the principle of the rationalised internal layout.

Feedback during the pre-application stage primarily focused on the proposed upward extension. Ultimately, the third floor had to be removed entirely to preserve the defining features of the building. During this process, the Planning Department identified the building as a non-designated heritage asset, and any changes to the roof facing the three principal elevations were strongly discouraged.

Option 03 retains the ground-floor commercial units and introduces the following key changes:

- The Sand Bar rooms on the first floor have been removed following the Sand Bar's expressed preference to relinquish those rooms.
- The upper floors have been converted into PBSAs.
- The existing staircase connecting the upper floor to street level is retained and brought back into use, effectively serving as a dedicated core.
- The central communal area will feature a raised floor, ensuring a flush, accessible layout.
- A new core with a compliant staircase and DDA lift will also serve as a dedicated student entrance, avoiding overlap with commercial unit users.

Pros

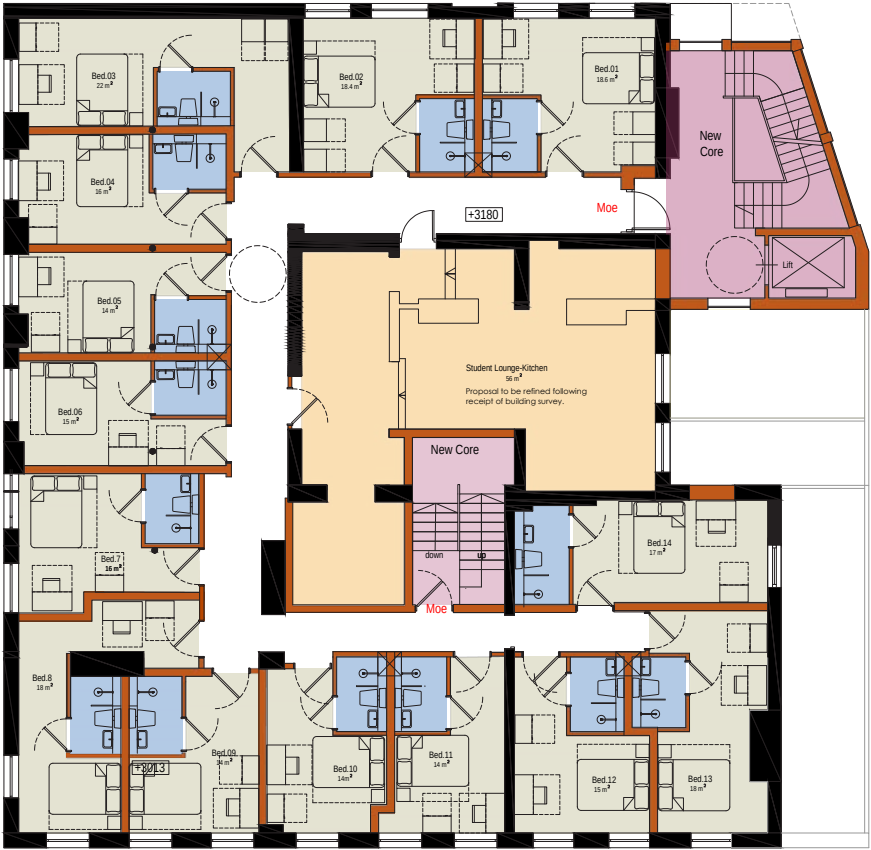
- New DDA-compliant lift.
- Complete rationalisation of the layout.
- Ground-floor businesses remain operational.
- Direct connection to the bin area.
- No MOE clashes.
- Larger communal area with natural light, sufficient to accommodate all occupants of the floor.

Page 10: Extract of the drawing '7499 - F.06 Rev.B - Proposed Plans'. Note: The original drawing is to scale at 1:100 on an A1 sheet. The extracted version has been scaled to fit an A3 sheet. For accurate dimensions, please refer to the original A1 drawing.

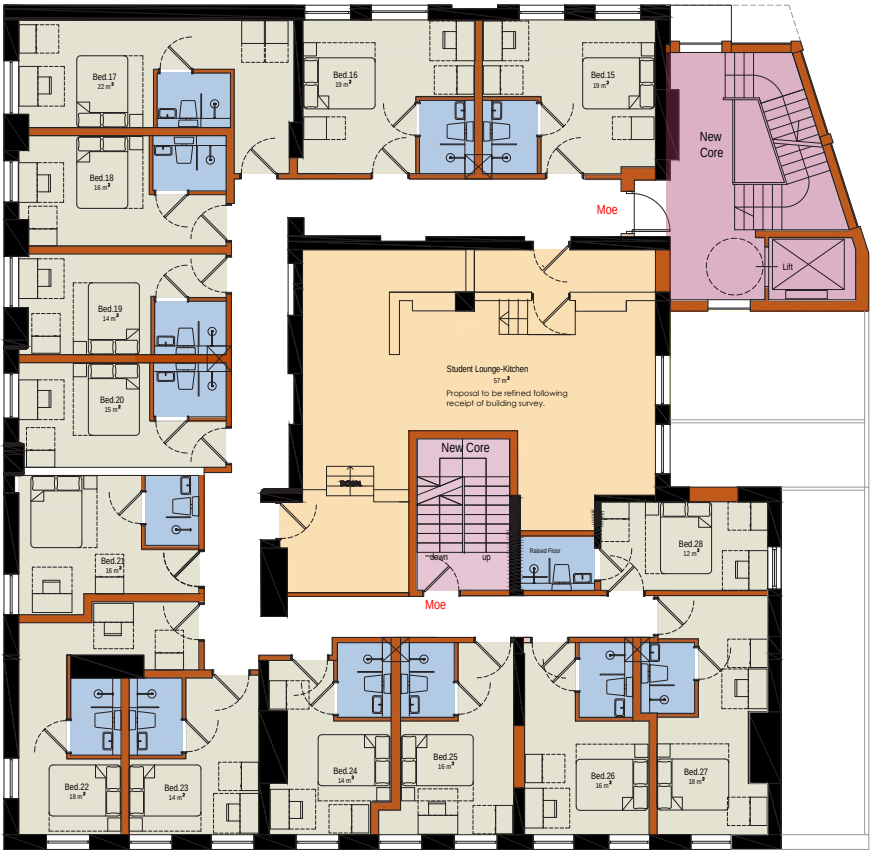




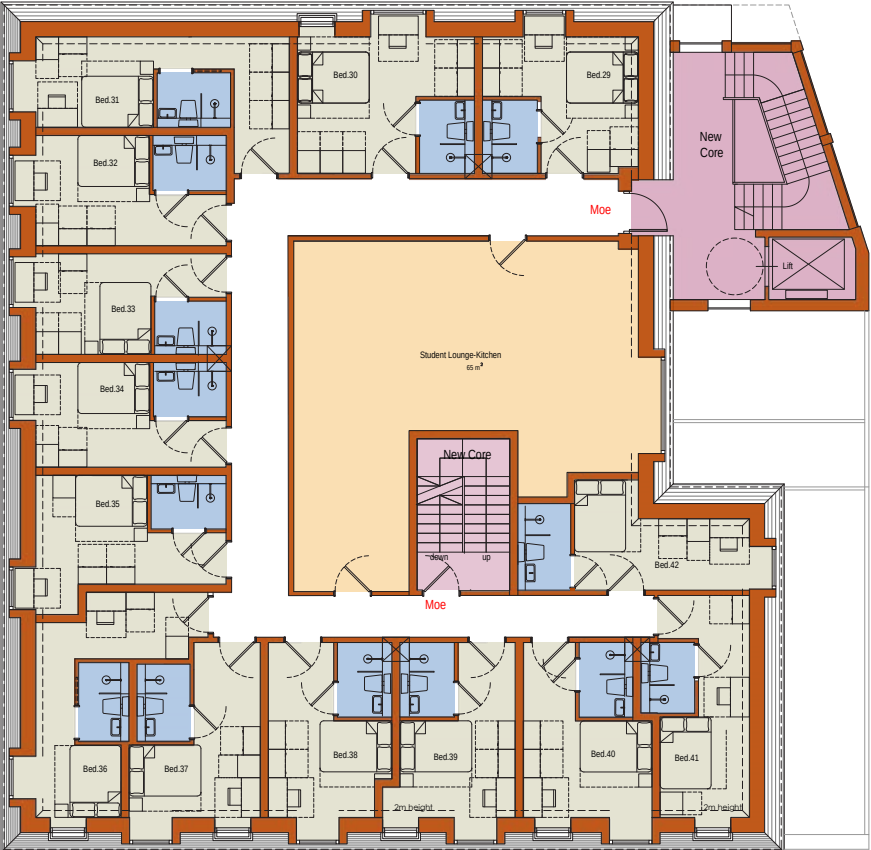
Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed 1st Floor Plan
14No. Student Accommodation



Proposed 2nd Floor Plan
14No. Student Accommodation



Proposed 3rd Floor Plan
14No. Student Accommodation

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS
PROPOSED PLANS - SINGLE STOREY
UPWARDS EXTENSION
Schedule of accommodation
1st floor - 14no. bedrooms
2nd floor - 14no. bedrooms
3rd floor - 14no. bedrooms
Tot. 42no. student accommodations

Drawings indicative and in draft form.
Final version to be refined upon
receipt of the building survey.

1 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE 1:100 m

client:	project:	drawing:
AGHA GROUP	GROSVENOR HOUSE MANCHESTER	STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROPOSED PLANS - SINGLE STOREY UPWARDS EXTENSION
project no:	drawing no:	revision:
7499	F.06	B
checked:	date:	scale @ A1
BB	5.9.2024	1:100

The principles of this option formed the basis of the current final proposal, as detailed below.

Current Proposal

The current proposal is the result of a thorough design analysis and incorporates feedback received during the pre-application process. It is now being formally submitted for full planning permission and represents a refined version of the principles established in Option 03.

This refinement ensures that the layout aligns, wherever possible, with the recommendations of the Approved Documents to the Building Regulations - specifically Parts K (Protection from falling), B (Fire safety), and M (Access to and use of buildings) - taking into account the constraints of the existing structure.

Vertical Means of Escape

The existing south-facing core is being retained. Its enclosure at first and second floor levels will be slightly enlarged to accommodate a refuge area, thereby enhancing its function without significantly altering the core itself.

A new core is also proposed, which will serve as the main dedicated entrance for students. This core has been designed to fully comply with the relevant Building Regulations. The new staircase within this core will be 1200mm wide.

Both staircases discharge directly to a final exit at ground level, ensuring safe egress from the building.

Horizontal Means of Escape

Travel Distances

All travel distances comply with the relevant requirements of Approved Document B.

A protected corridor connects the two stair cores. The travel distance within this corridor remains below 30 metres. It includes a 1.5 sqm automatic opening vent (AOV) to support smoke control, and both stair cores also include AOVs at roof level in accordance with Building Regulations.

The corridor also includes a passing point measuring 1.8m x 1.8m, which ensures compliance with Part K and provides accessibility for wheelchair users and individuals with reduced mobility.

Southeast Bedroom Wing

This section of the layout includes a single-direction means of escape with a travel distance of only 3.55 metres. According to the Approved Document B guidance for small single-stair buildings, the maximum one-way travel distance is:

4.5 metres without ventilation, or

7.5 metres if smoke ventilation is provided.

Given our compliant travel distance of just 3.55 metres, we have opted not to include an AOV in this location, primarily due to spatial constraints in the existing layout which make the inclusion of a 1.5 sqm vent impractical.

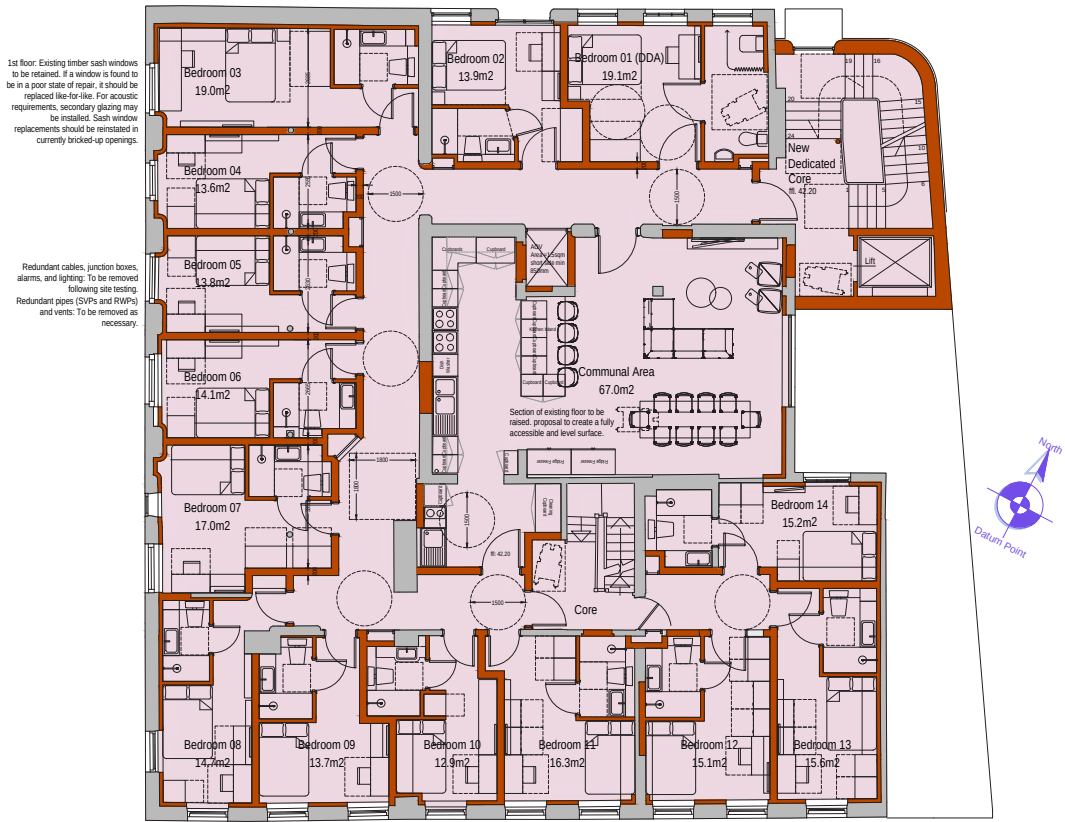
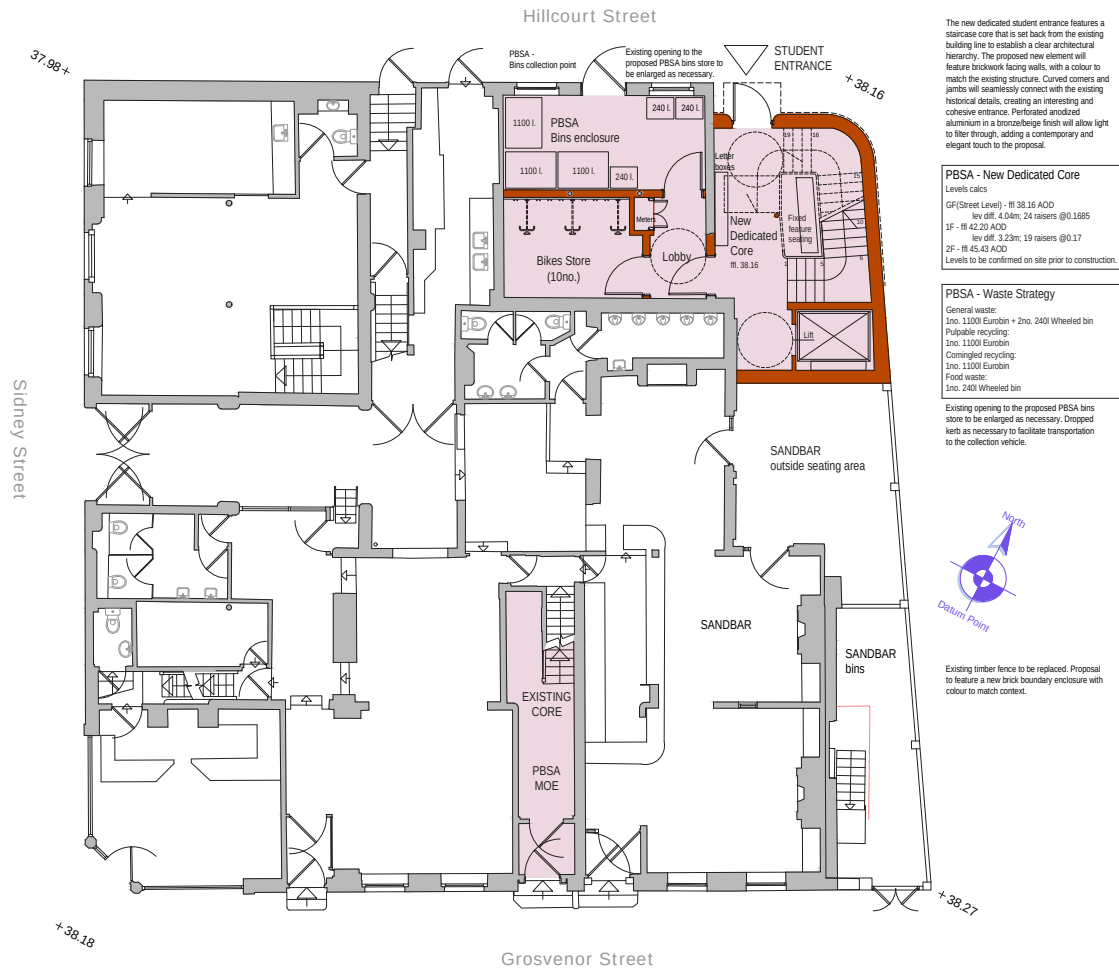
While this approach deviates from general recommendations, we have taken a considered, rational position based on the short travel distance and physical limitations of the existing structure. A similar approach has been accepted by specialist consultants in previous projects. However, we acknowledge that this point must be formally reviewed and confirmed by a fire safety consultant at the earliest opportunity.

Bin Enclosure

The refuse enclosure at ground floor level is easily accessible, including for people with disabilities. It benefits from permanent natural ventilation via existing windows, which will be fitted with louvred panels to ensure continuous airflow.

Page 12: Extract of the drawing '7499 - F.06 Rev.B - Proposed Plans'. Note: The original drawing is to scale at 1:100 on an A1 sheet. The extracted version has been scaled to fit an A3 sheet. For accurate dimensions, please refer to the original A1 drawing.



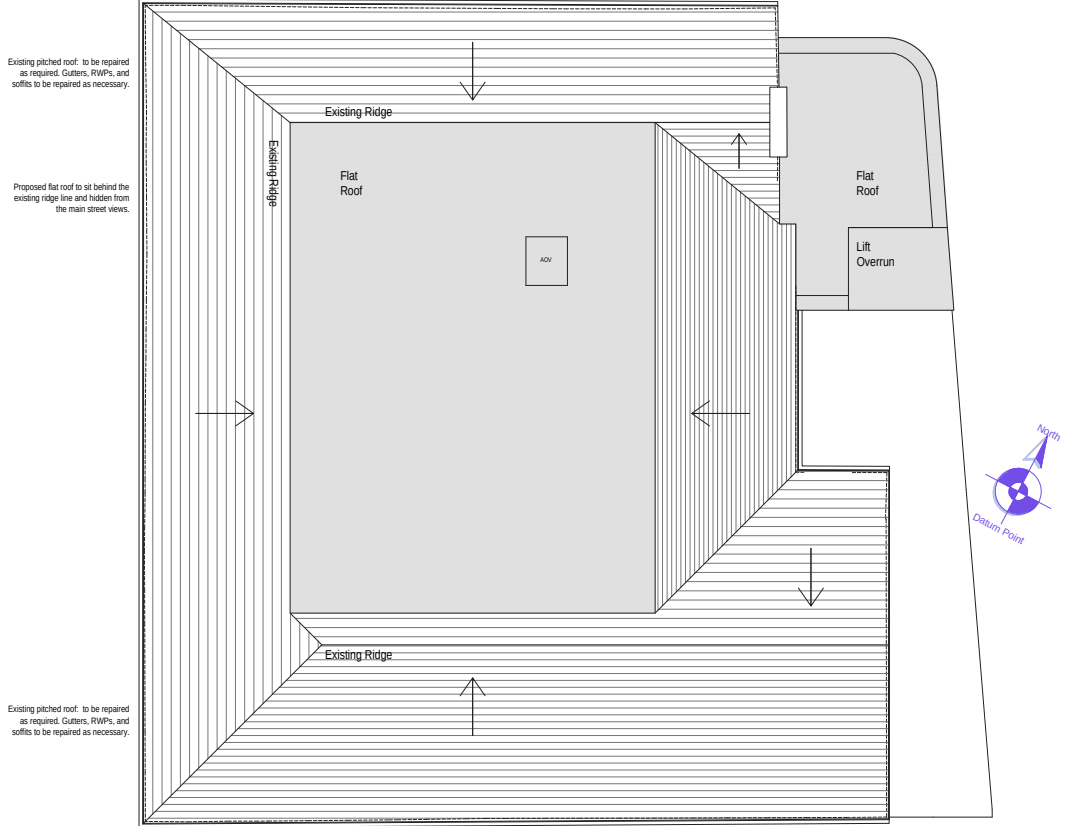
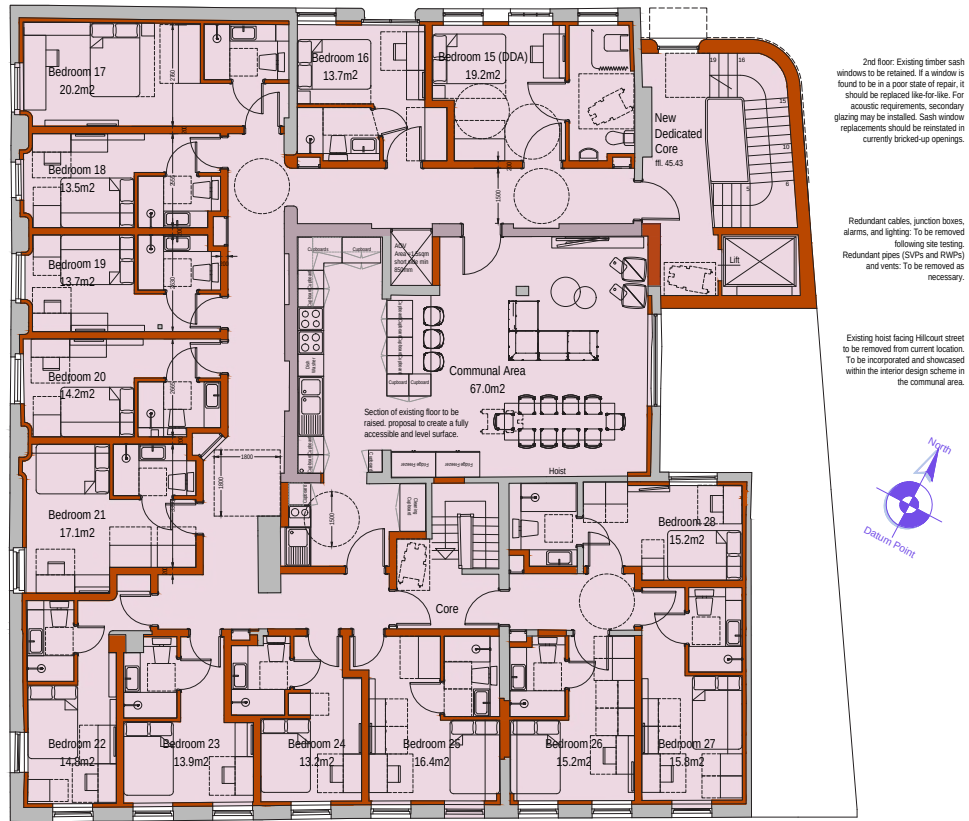


STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROPOSED PLANS	
1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
SCALE 1:100	

General schedule - Proposed Change of Use

Existing vacant offices to proposed purpose built student accommodation PBSA

GF -	2no. dedicated cores, bins and bike store
1F -	2no. dedicated cores, 14no. student accommodation units, communal room
2F -	2no. dedicated cores, 14no. student accommodation units, communal room
Tot.	28no. student accommodation units



rev. B: Bike store refinements.		date: 16.04.25	
rev. A: Staircase core refinements.		date: 11.04.25	
client:	project:	drawing:	
GROSVENOR HOLDING MCR LIMITED	120-124 GROSVENOR STREET MANCHESTER, M1 7HL	STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROPOSED PLANS	
project no:	drawing no:	revision:	drawn: checked: date: scale @ A1
7499	PS.02	B	FI 05.03.25 1:100

Conclusion

We are committed to delivering a high-quality, purpose-built development that secures the long-term viability of the building and contributes positively to the revitalisation of the surrounding area.

The proposal includes a new side extension, providing a dedicated student entrance, a fully compliant staircase, and a DDA-compliant lift. These elements form the foundation for a safe, accessible, and modern internal layout.

Wherever possible, the rationalised layout complies with the relevant Approved Documents. In areas where full compliance is not achievable due to existing constraints, we have adopted sensible and pragmatic solutions, always aiming to prioritise safety, accessibility, and functionality.

We recognise that specialist input will be required to confirm certain elements of the proposal, particularly regarding fire strategy. The purpose of this statement is to establish the key design principles underpinning the current application and to record the design rationale for this building moving forward.

