Ropemaker Court

Design and Access Statement

June 2026

REV P03

NORR

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01 Introduction

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Summary

Project: Ropemaker Court

Project Number: RZ3025-0074

Date: March 2026

Current Use: PBSA - Sui Generis

Proposed Use: PBSA - Sui Generis

Site Location:

500 Moss Lane East

Manchester

M14 4PL

Introduction

This design and access statement has been prepared in support of a planning application on behalf of Spinnaker Estates for the increased provision and enhancement of amenity space as part of the existing purpose-built student accommodation at Moss Lane East, Manchester.

Project Team

Client	Spinnaker Estates
Project Manager	Cumming Group
Quantity Surveyor	Cumming Group
Architect & Lead Consultant	NORR Consultants
Planning Consultant	ICENI
Transport Consultant	ICENI
MEP Engineer	Link MEP
Structural and Civil Engineers	Curtins
Fire Engineer	Bailey Partnership
Interior Designer	Ashton Studios
Sprinkler Provider	Armstrong Priestley

Application Proposal

This application relates to Ropemaker Court an existing Student Accommodation Building located in Manchester, UK with approximately 416 bedrooms.

The proposed scheme looks to improve the student experience at this building by providing additional amenity space including a multi-function room for karaoke/podcasts, a games area for pool/ping pong, an area for gaming and a gym.

This is achieved through the introduction of two new lightweight, single storey pavilions constructed separate to the main building(s) but within the ownership boundary of the site. The pavilions are proposed to be constructed from a simple but contemporary material palette complementary to the existing building(s).

These works also require re-arrangement of some site access and servicing features such as the relocation of cycle and waste storage provisions.

02 Location

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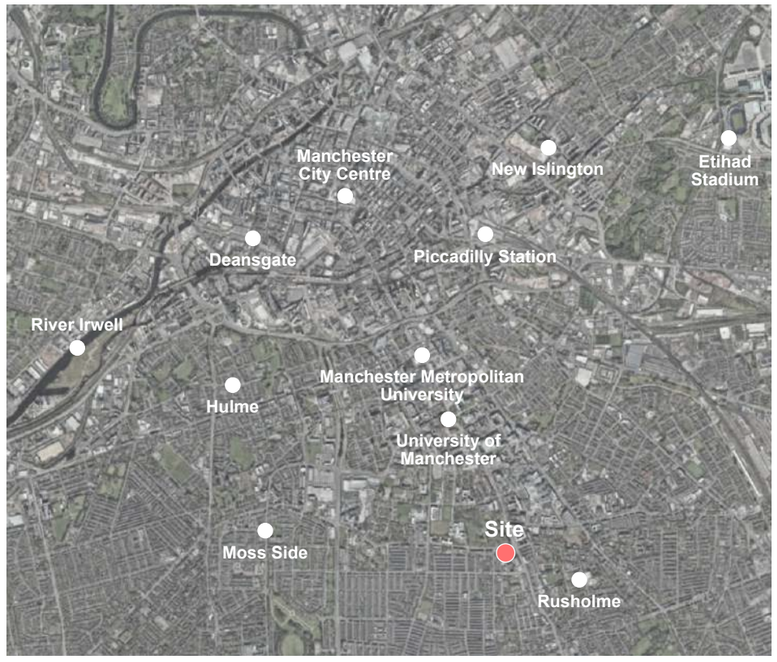
The site is located to the southern side of Manchester, just south of the A57(M), also known as the Mancunian Way.



The site is located in Manchester's main student area. It benefits from excellent transport links, with Victoria and Piccadilly train stations providing easy access to the city and wider UK. Both Old Trafford and Etihad Stadiums are nearby, and the city centre—has great shopping, entertainment, and dining options—is easily accessible by foot, bike, or public transport. The site is ranked an 8 on the Greater Manchester Accessibility Index (GMAI)

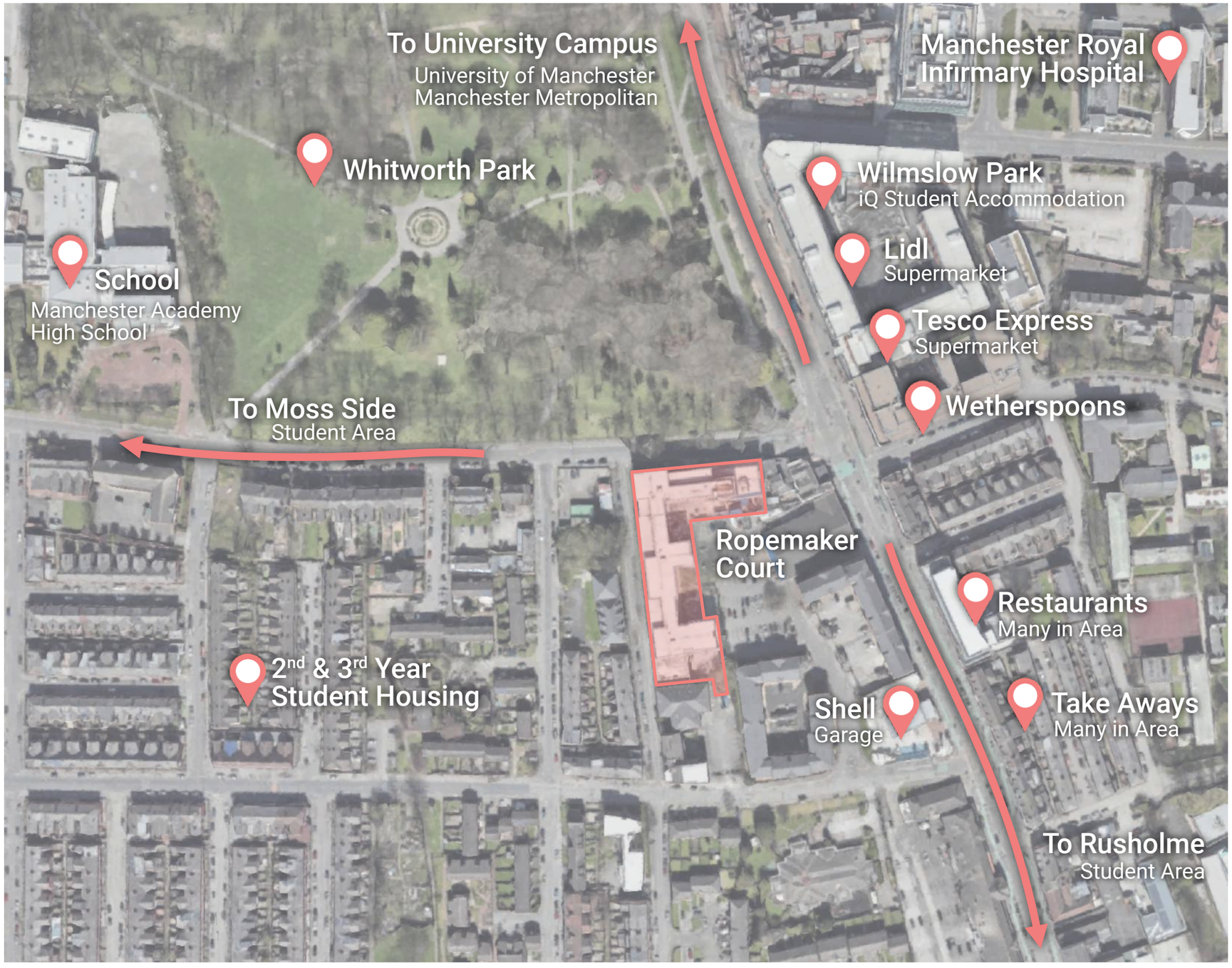
The site is located in a vibrant student area, surrounded by housing primarily occupied by second- and third-year students. It is situated across from Whitworth Park, one of the few expansive green spaces in Manchester City Centre. Positioned on Oxford Road, the site is within walking distance of both the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University.

Local Context and Connections

Ropemaker Court is located at the junction of Oxford Road and Moss Lane, in the heart of Manchester's student district. The site benefits from a prime position, within walking distance of both the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University, and surrounded by a wide range of high-quality local amenities.

To the south, the Rusholme and Moss Side areas provide extensive student housing, particularly for second- and third-year students. Just north of the site lies Whitworth Park and the Whitworth Art Gallery—one of the city's few expansive green spaces.

Oxford Road and nearby Wilmslow Road, known for their vibrant mix of shops, restaurants, bars, and particularly renowned Indian cuisine, are only a short walk away. The site also enjoys excellent transport links, with frequent bus services connecting students to the city centre and beyond. A variety of supermarkets, cafés, and other conveniences further enhance the site's accessibility and appeal.

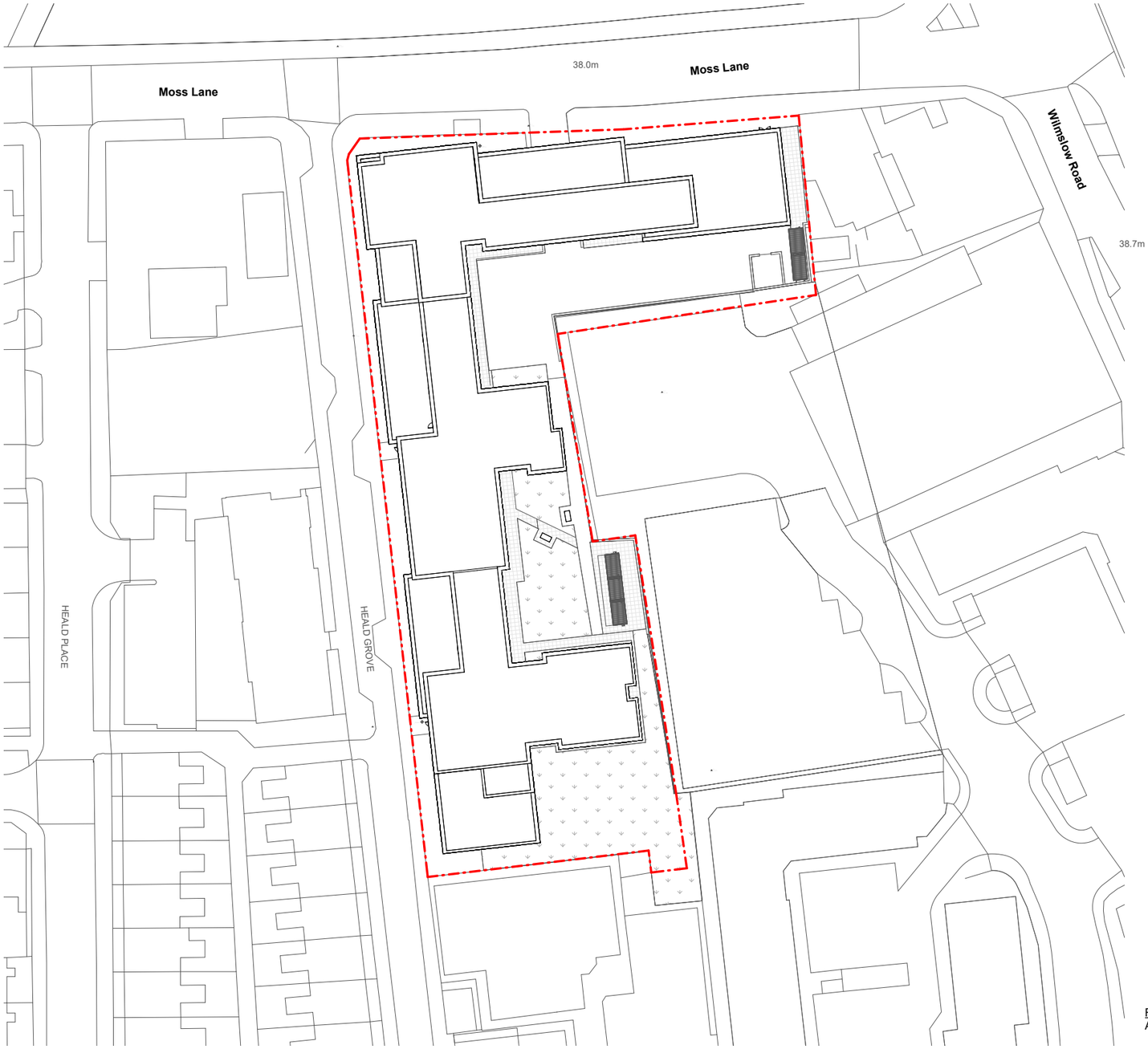


Key:

Location

The Site

Site Location Plan
NTS



BLUELINE BOUNDARY PROVIDED BY CLIENT, INDICATING COMBINED PROPERTY FREEHOLD & LEASEHOLD No.s:
LA215556 + GM533038 + LA253283 + LA215557 + GM539174

03 Existing

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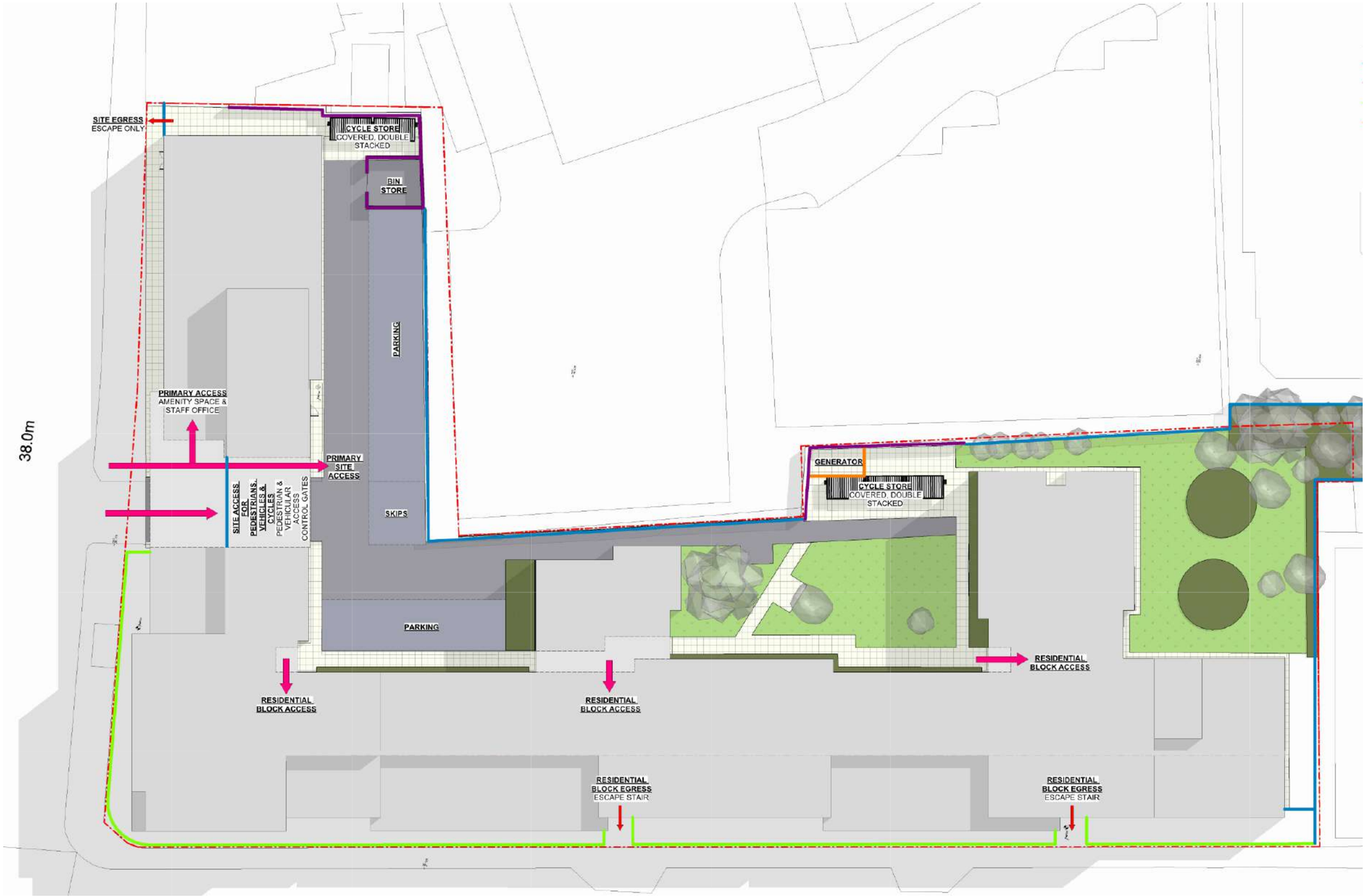
Site Plan
Existing - NTS



Key
Fence Types

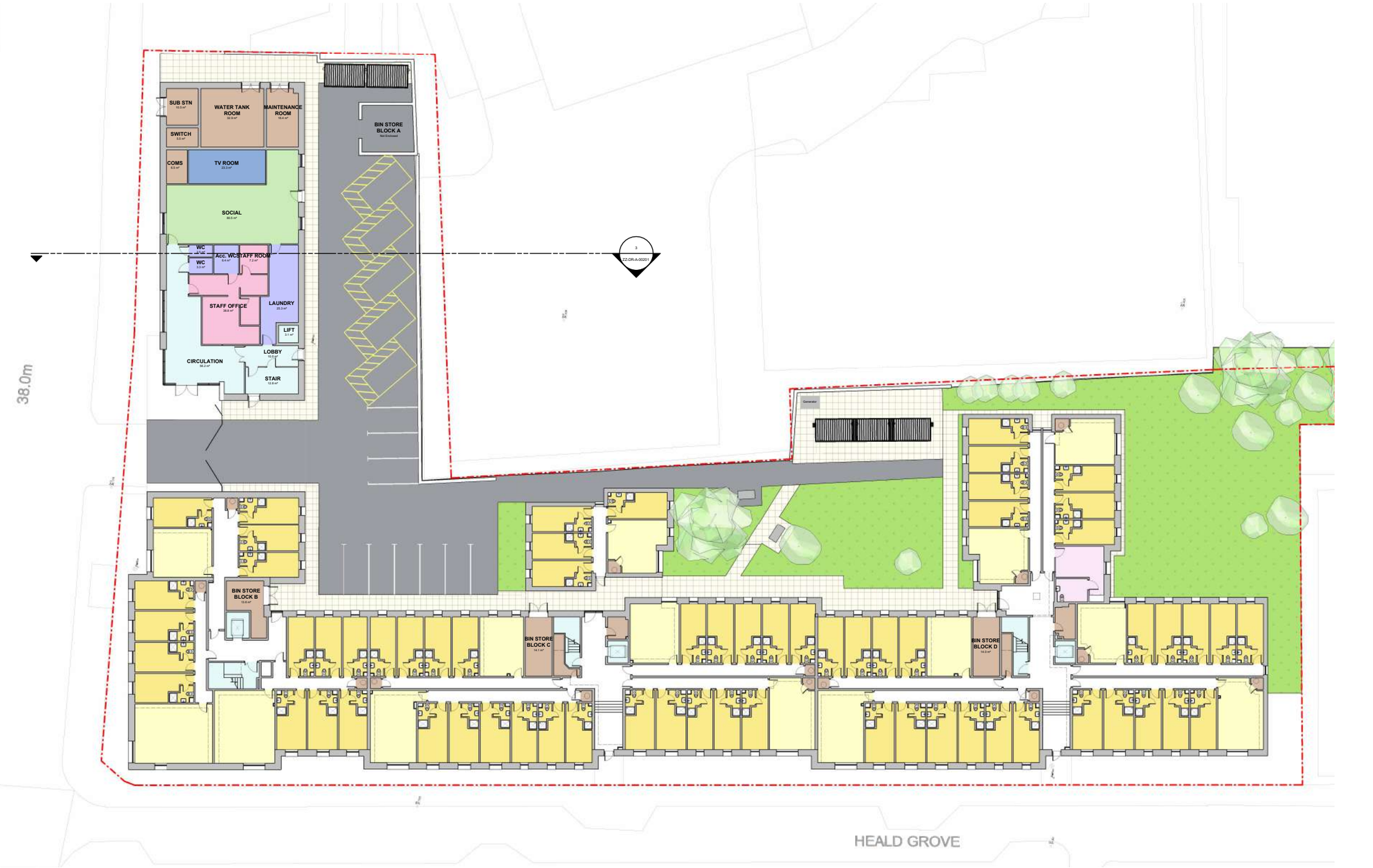
Steel Vertical Bar - Black
Circ. 2.5m

Brick Boundary Wall
Circ. 2.5m

Brick Wall with Fence Over
Circ. 1.5m

Welded Mesh Fence
Circ. 2.0m

Ground Floor Plan
Existing - NTS



Key

- Amenity
- Amenity (Activity)
- Amenity (Social)
- Staff
- Facilities Management
- Circulation
- Kitchen/Living/Dining
- Bedrooms

04 Design Development

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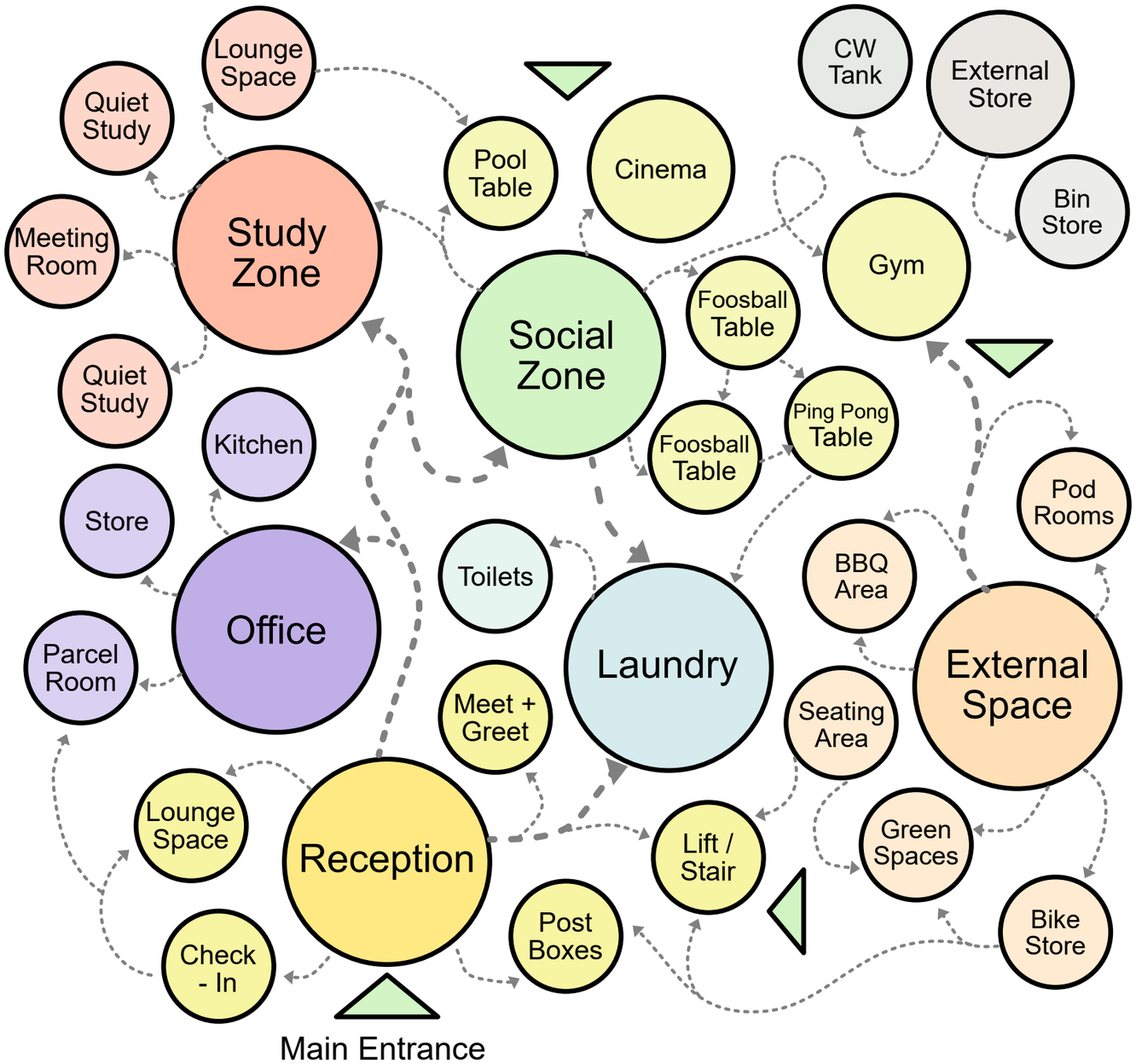
Brief from Spinnaker Estates

This brief focuses on re-imagining and expanding the existing amenity spaces at Unite Students' Ropemaker Court in Manchester, with the goal of transforming the site into one of the more amenity-rich student accommodations in the city.

The building is currently let under a NOMs agreement with Manchester Metropolitan University until 2033.

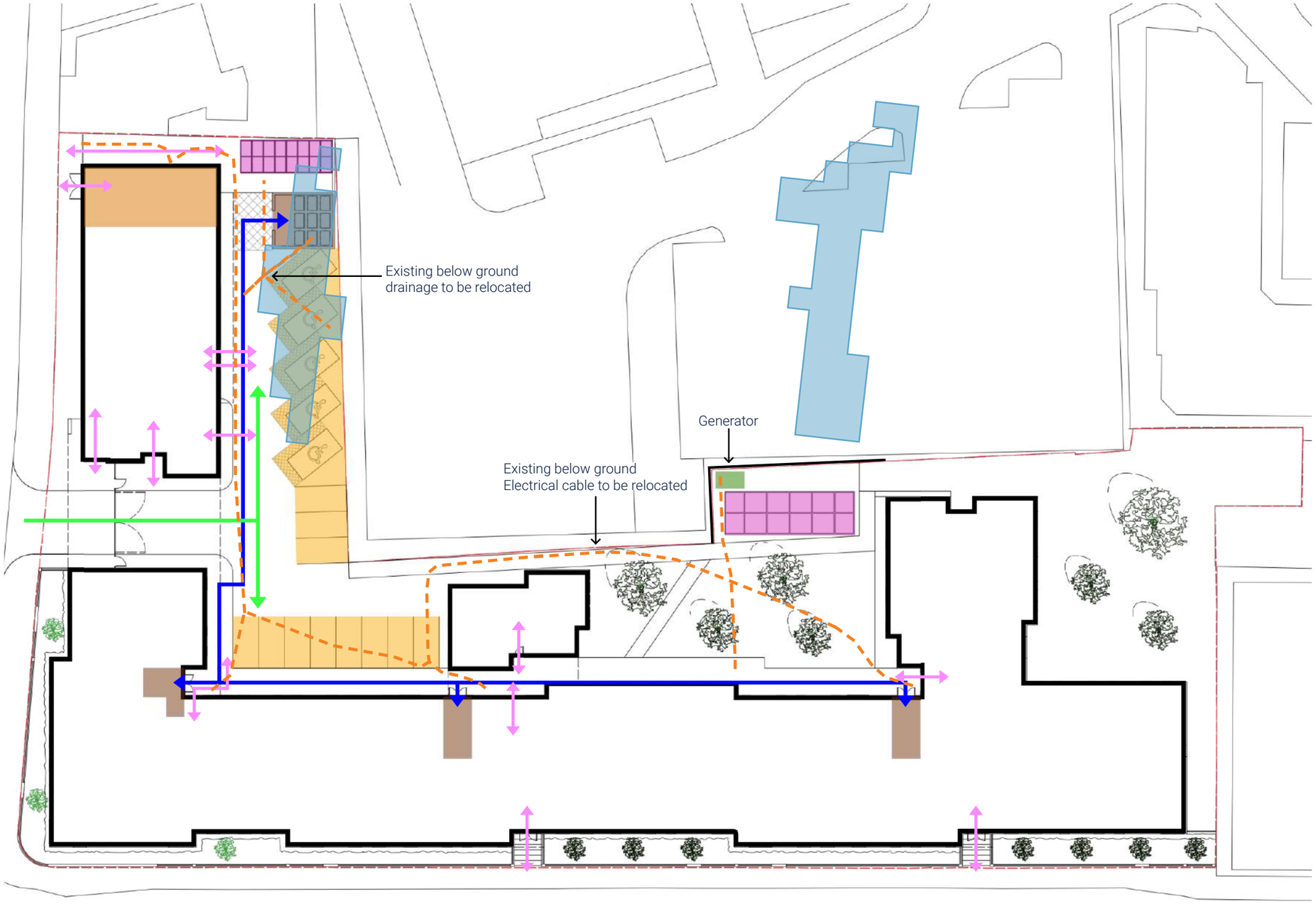
Spinnaker propose to upgrade and enhance the current amenity offering by introducing single storey amenity pavilions in the existing car park and courtyard areas to provide more amenity space to the existing building.

The overall ambition is to create a dynamic, flexible, and future-ready environment that not only meets current student needs but also allows for phased expansion and adaptation over time—positioning Ropemaker Court as a standout destination for student living in Manchester.



Site Constraints

As Presented in Planning Pre-application Submission

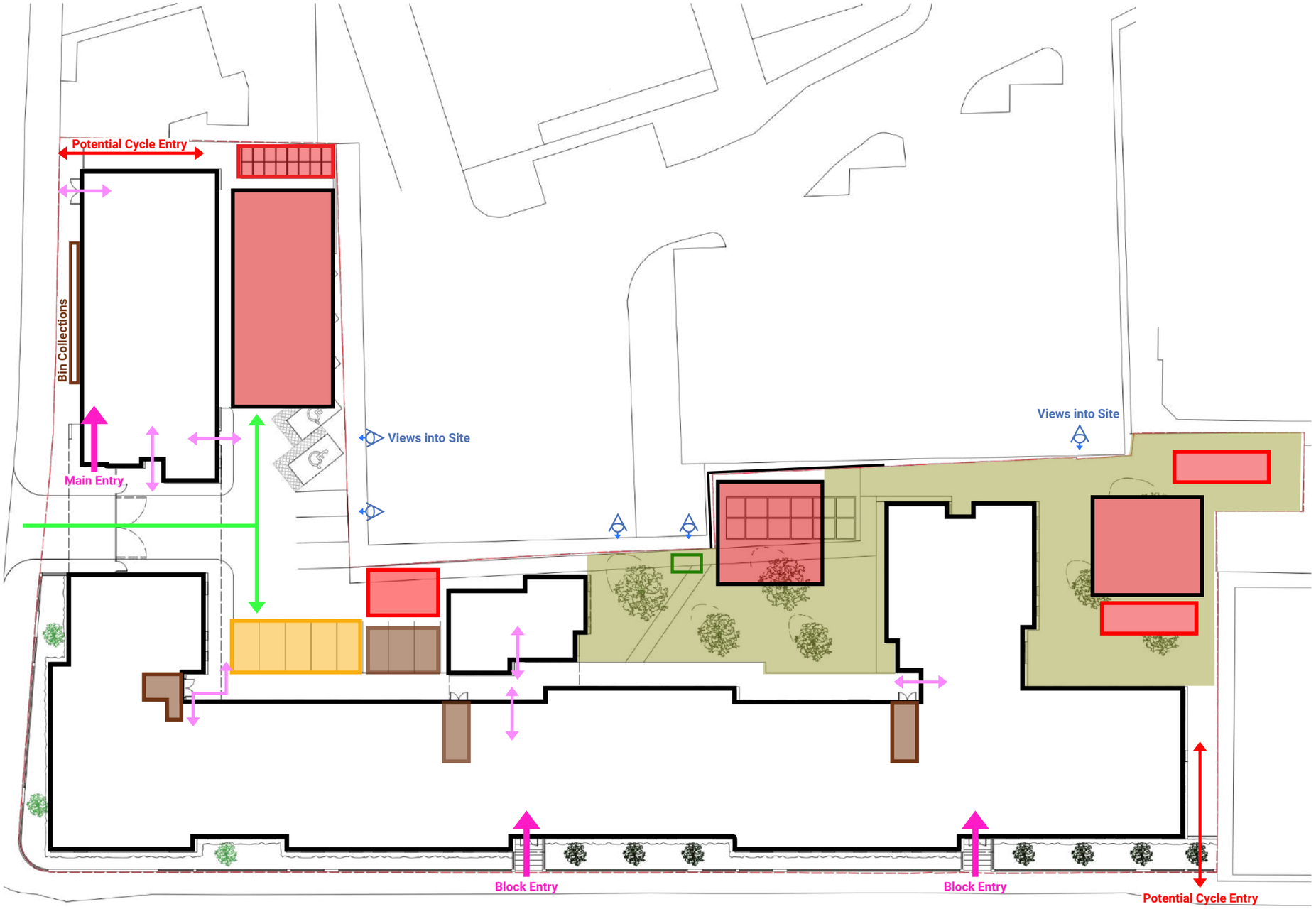


Key

- Sub St./Plant/Tanks etc.
- Cycle Storage
- Waste Storage
- Parking
- Generator
- Services Route
- Vehicular Access
- Waste Servicing
- Entry/ Exit
- Surface Water

Site Opportunities

As Presented in Planning Pre-application Submission



Key

- Potential Amenity Pavilion
- Waste Storage
- Waste Collection Point
- Retained Parking
- Relocated Generator
- Retained Vehicular Access
- Retained Entry/ Exit
- Potential Cycle Access
- Potential Cycle Storage
- Landscaping Opportunity

Previously Submitted Scheme

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS
(Superseded)

The Scheme shown opposite was included in a planning pre-application submission on 06.11.2025

Following the planning officers review of the pre-application, they concluded that there would be no need for a formal meeting to discuss the project, as the general principle of proposed pavilions is considered acceptable.

Following written discussions at the pre-application stage it was agreed that:

Car Parking

- As the five existing blue badge spaces are currently underutilised, and given the high accessibility rating for the site. The proposal to reduce this to 3x blue badge spaces was acceptable, in-line with other student schemes permitted elsewhere in the local area, where less or nil were provided for.

- The existing spaces are also generally underutilised and as students cannot currently park at the site, the loss of the existing 2x spaces will arguably not change the existing situation.

- There is no existing EV provision and the proposals do not warrant new EVPC provision.

Cycle Parking

- The proposals would not technically require an increase in cycle parking as there is no increase to student occupancy numbers proposed. The 94 current covered cycle parking spaces will continue to be provided as part of the proposal.

Servicing

- Further information would be provided regarding refuse servicing, new bin pick up location, resident deliveries

Site Access

- Pedestrian access would not change.

- Highways access would be retained to allow access of fire tender vehicles and delivery drivers that need to turn in the car park.

Biodiversity Net gain

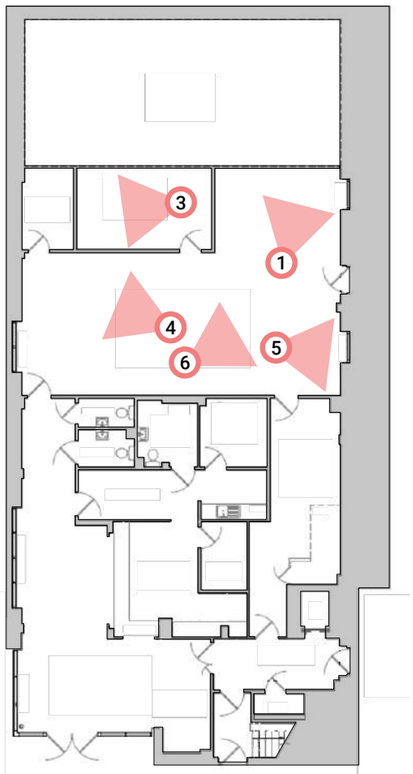
- An exemption would be applicable due to existing nature and scale of the site.

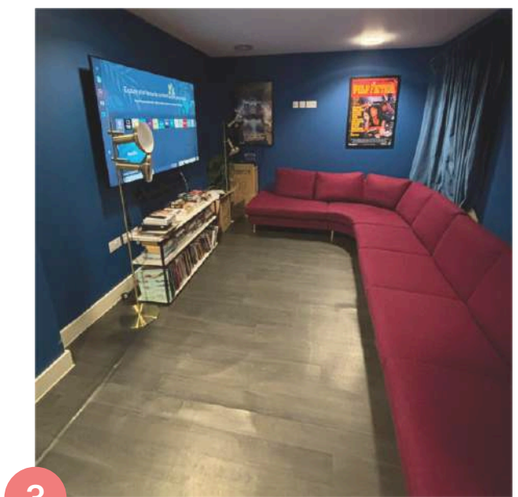
Existing Amenities Space

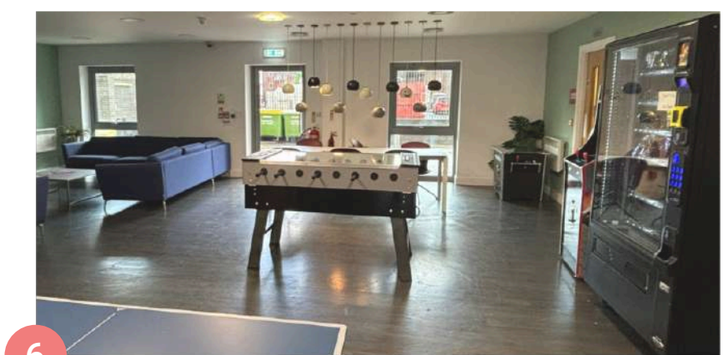
Site Photographs

The existing amenities at Ropemaker Court are located behind the reception and lobby area, where a generously sized common room is currently underutilised. Much of the space is occupied by a ping pong table, limiting its functionality. While the area includes a cinema room and a large lounge sofa, it lacks dedicated study zones for students - aside from a meeting room located upstairs. (see image 2)

Key Plan



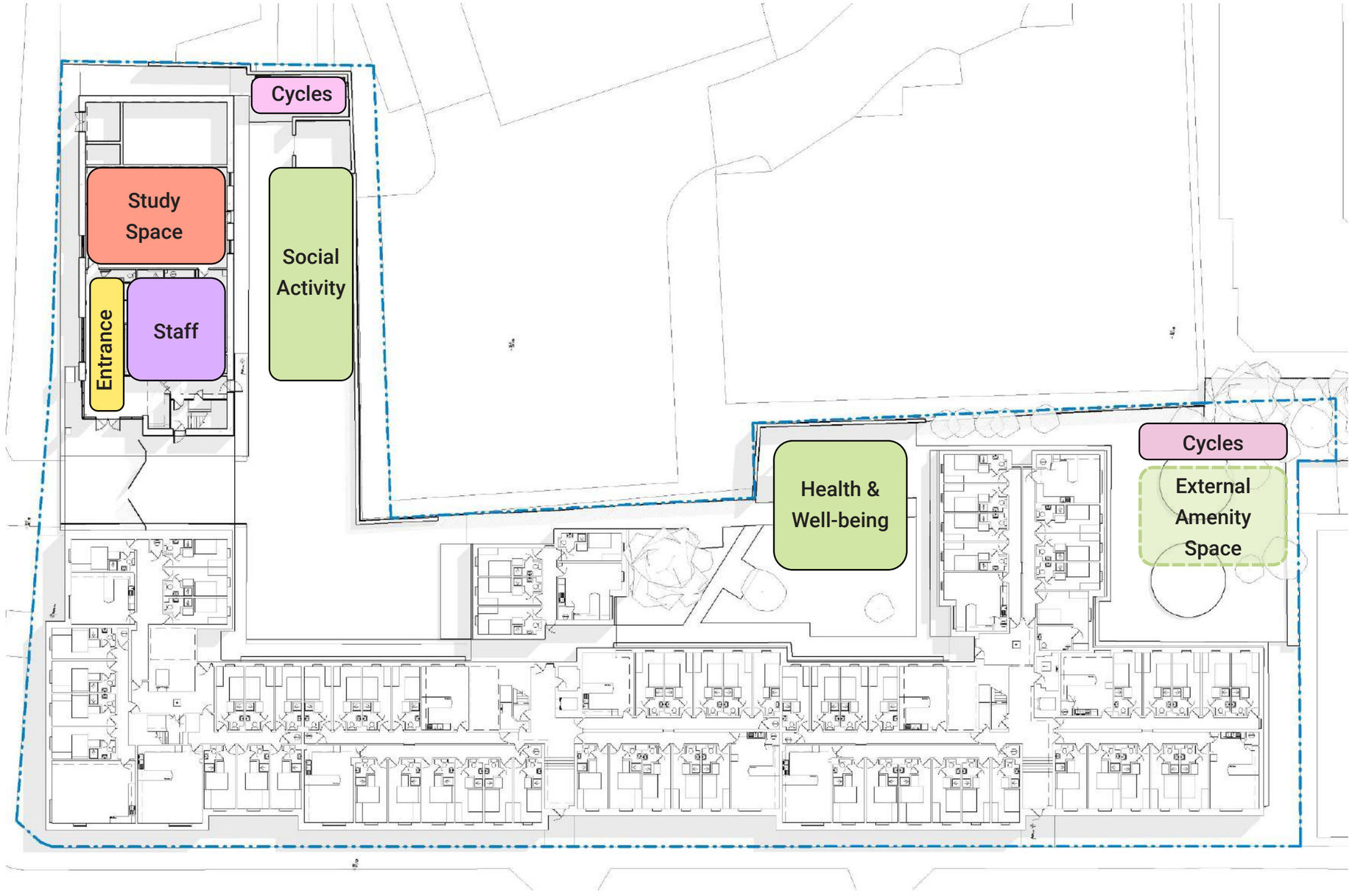




Site Arrangement

Proposed Location of Amenity Pavilions

The current proposed design intent broadly aligns with that submitted in the Pre-Application Submission with the exception of the Southern-most Pavilion now being omitted, replaced with an outdoor area of hard landscaping, to be utilised by students as external amenity and social space.

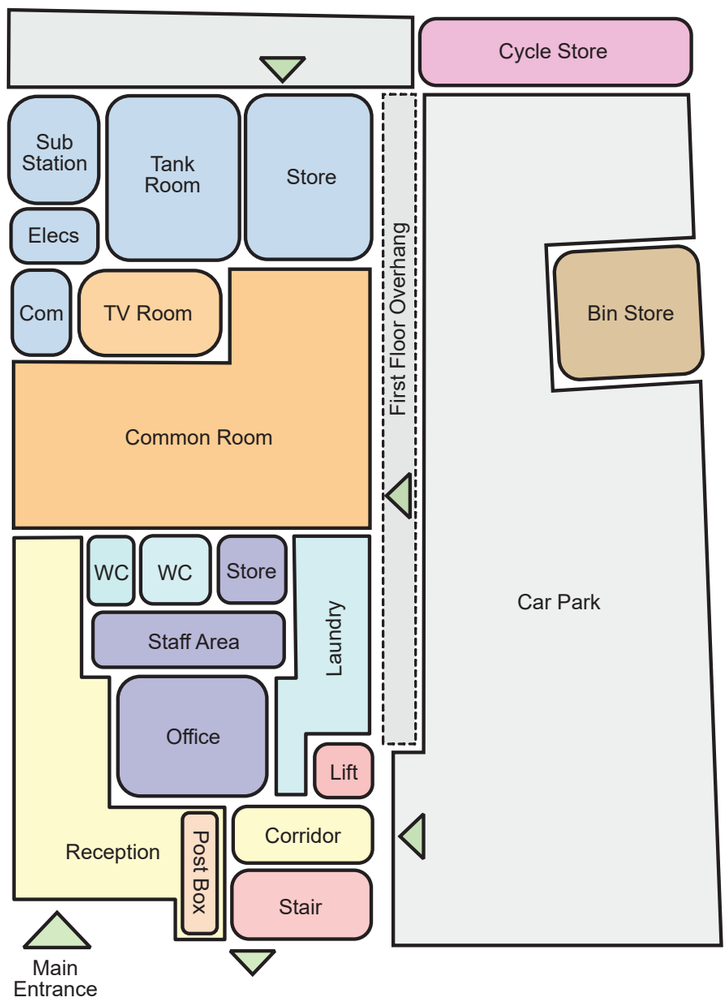


Spatial Planning
Exploration of benefits to amenity expansion

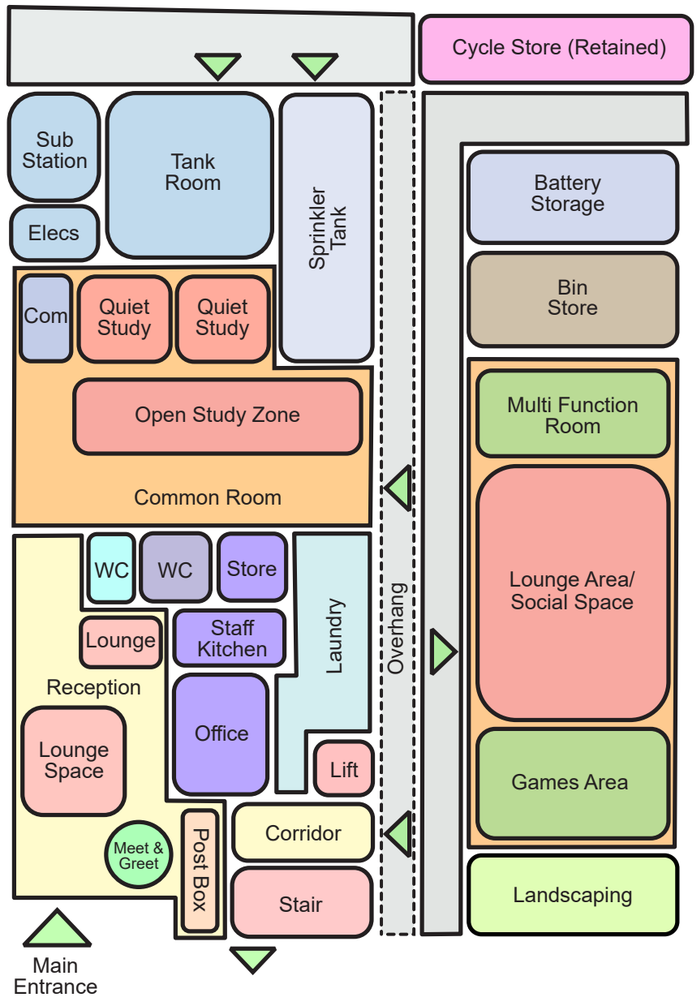
Existing
Currently a small Common room space at the back of the entrance and reception space to the building. Large space to extend out into the existing car park to allow for more amenity space.

Proposed
The proposed space now is detached from the main building acting as a stand alone amenity pavilion. Extension to the Common Room has allowed for a diverse range of on-site amenities. The expanded layout accommodates the potential for dedicated facilities.

Existing Reception and Amenity Space



Proposed Spatial Planning of Amenity



Key

- Reception / Lobby
- Amenity Area
- Shared Space
- Study Space
- Staff Space
- Toilet / Laundry
- Services

05 Proposal

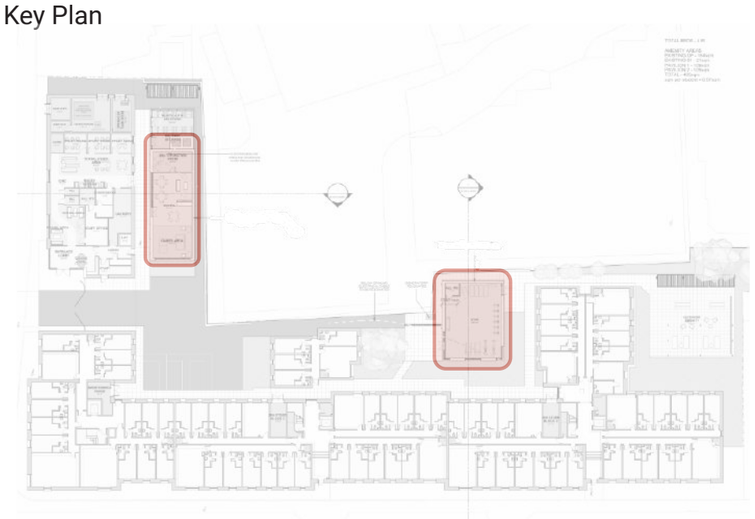
Proposed Scheme

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

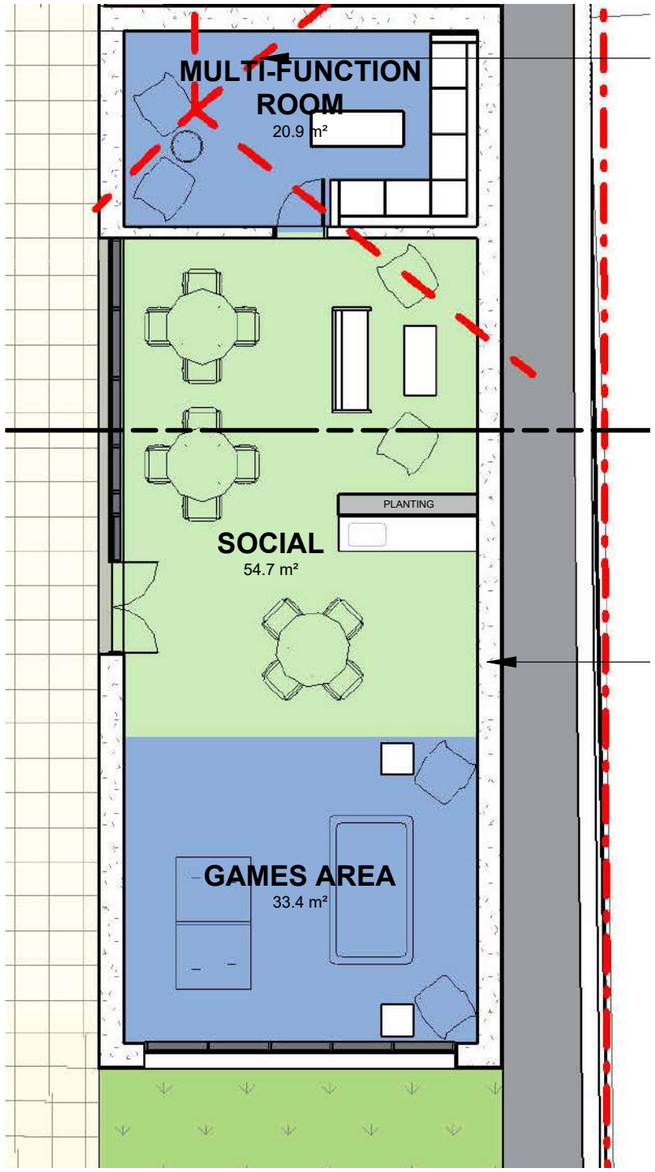
Proposed Pavilions

Proposed Ground Floor Plans - NTS

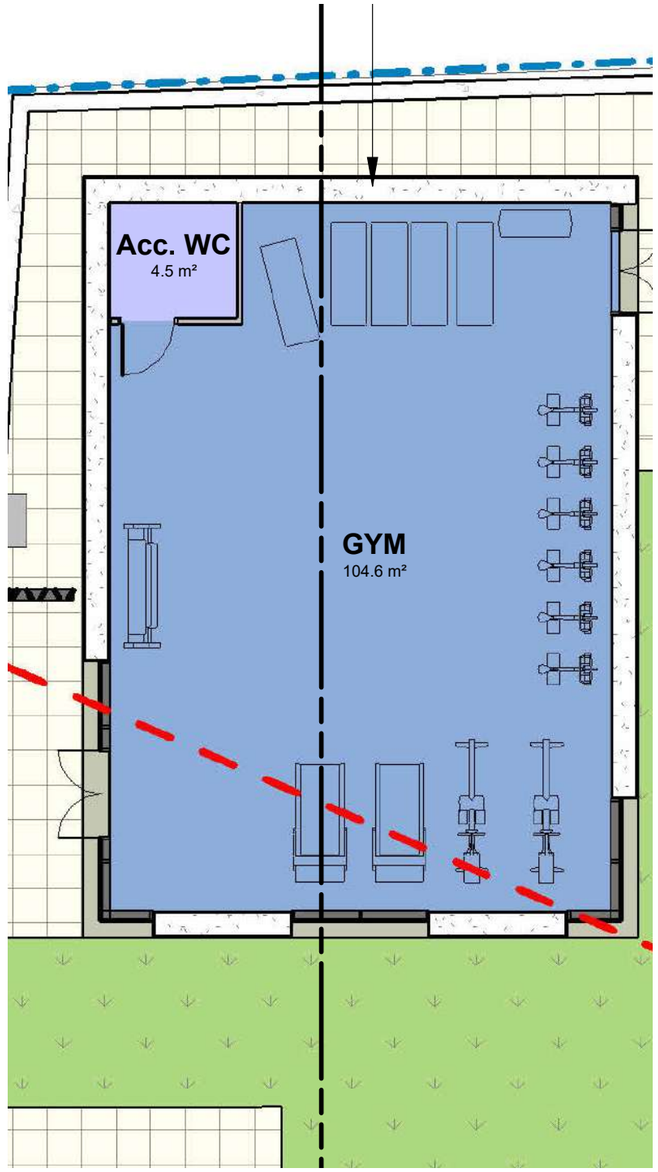
Key Plan



Pavilion One



Pavilion Two



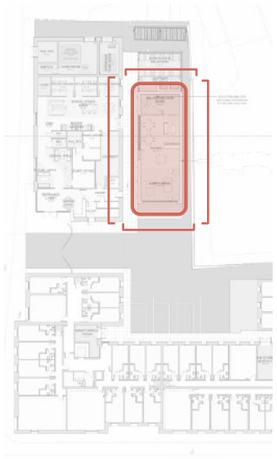
Proposed Pavillion One

Proposed Elevations - NTS

West Elevation

South Elevation

Key Plan



East Elevation

North Elevation

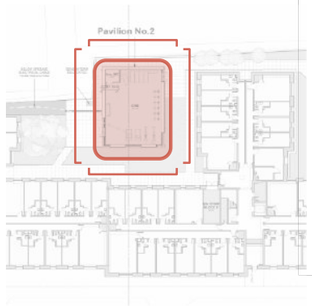
Proposed Pavillion One

Proposed Elevations - NTS

North Elevation

West Elevation

Key Plan



South Elevation

East Elevation

Materiality
Indicative Proposed Materials

Fibre Cement details

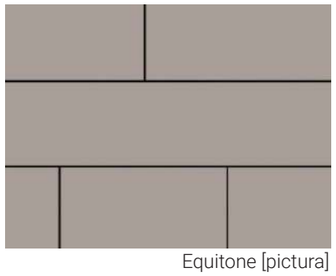
EQUITONE [linea] is a unique 3D shaped, through-coloured facade material that plays with light and shadow.
Touch: Structured, relief, depth
Visual: Different, playful, lot of possibilities, changes depending on the point of view.

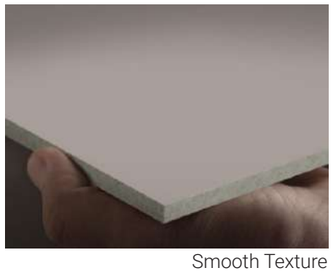
EQUITONE [pictura] is an eternit fibre cement facade material with ultra matt architectural finish.
Touch: smooth, matt, no visible fibres
Visual: Classic, brings colourful accents in the facade

Fibre Cement Facade

Equitone [linea]

Ribbed Texture

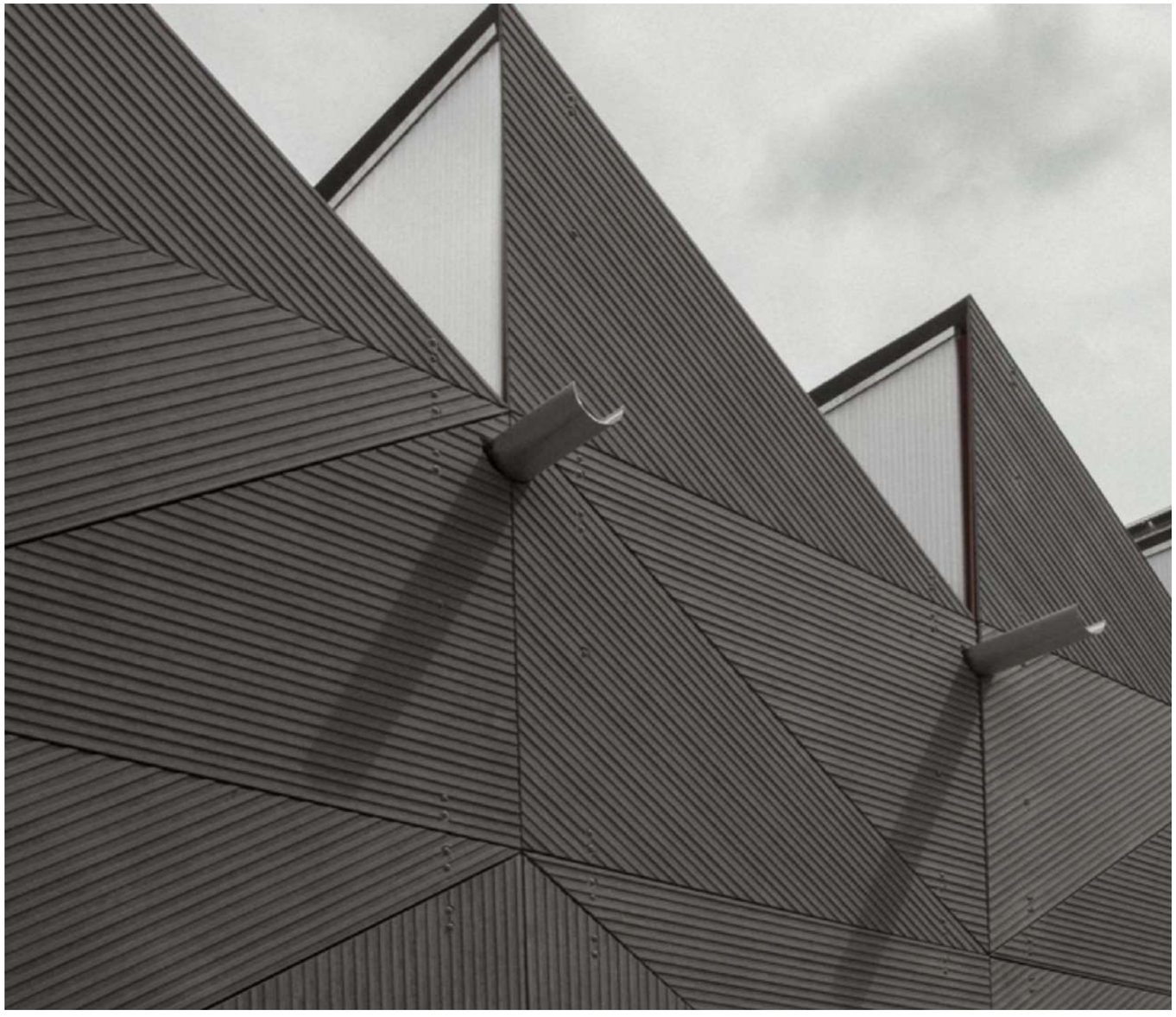

Equitone [pictura]


Smooth Texture

Swatch Colour

Hessian - LT60

Fawn Grey - PG843

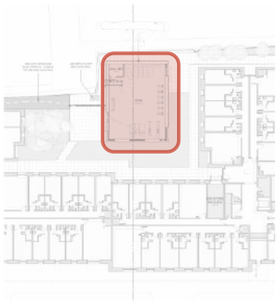


Visualisation
Proposed Pavillion One

Key Plan

Visualisation
Proposed Pavillion Two

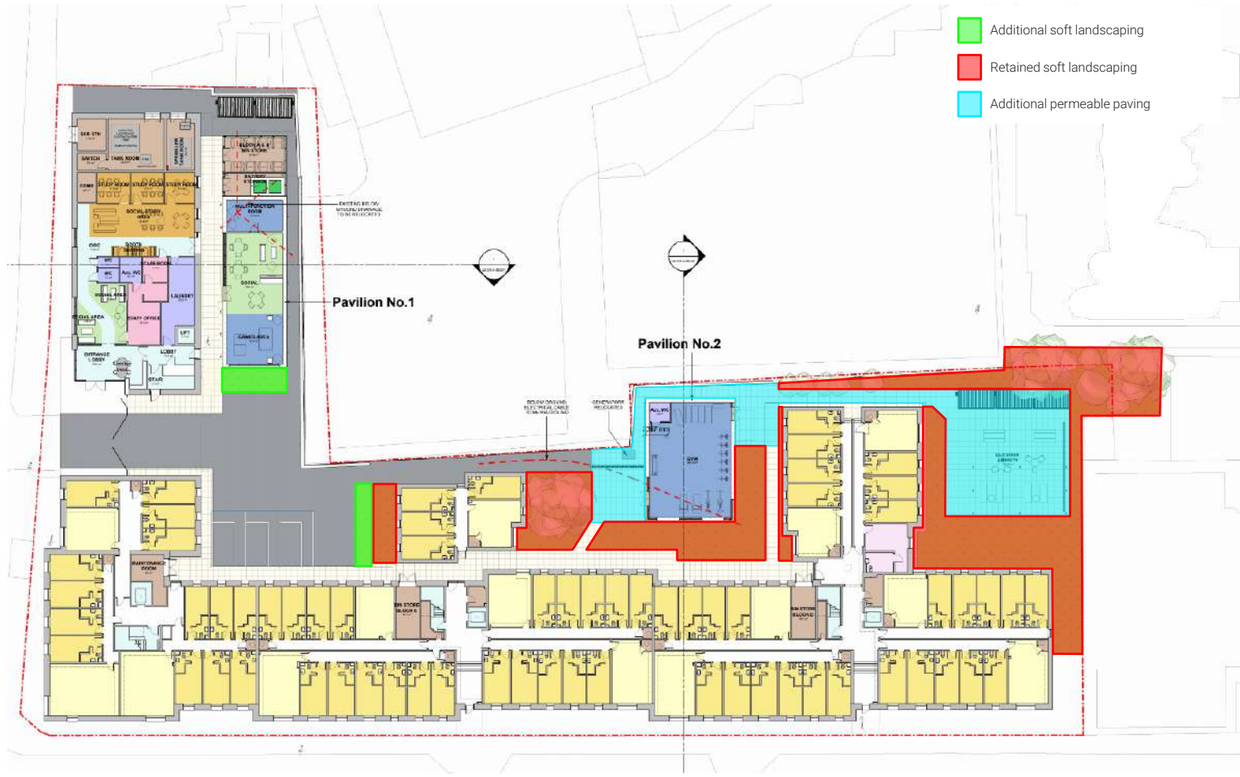
Key Plan



Proposed Landscape Scheme

Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plans - NTS

Existing



Proposed

06 Access & Servicing

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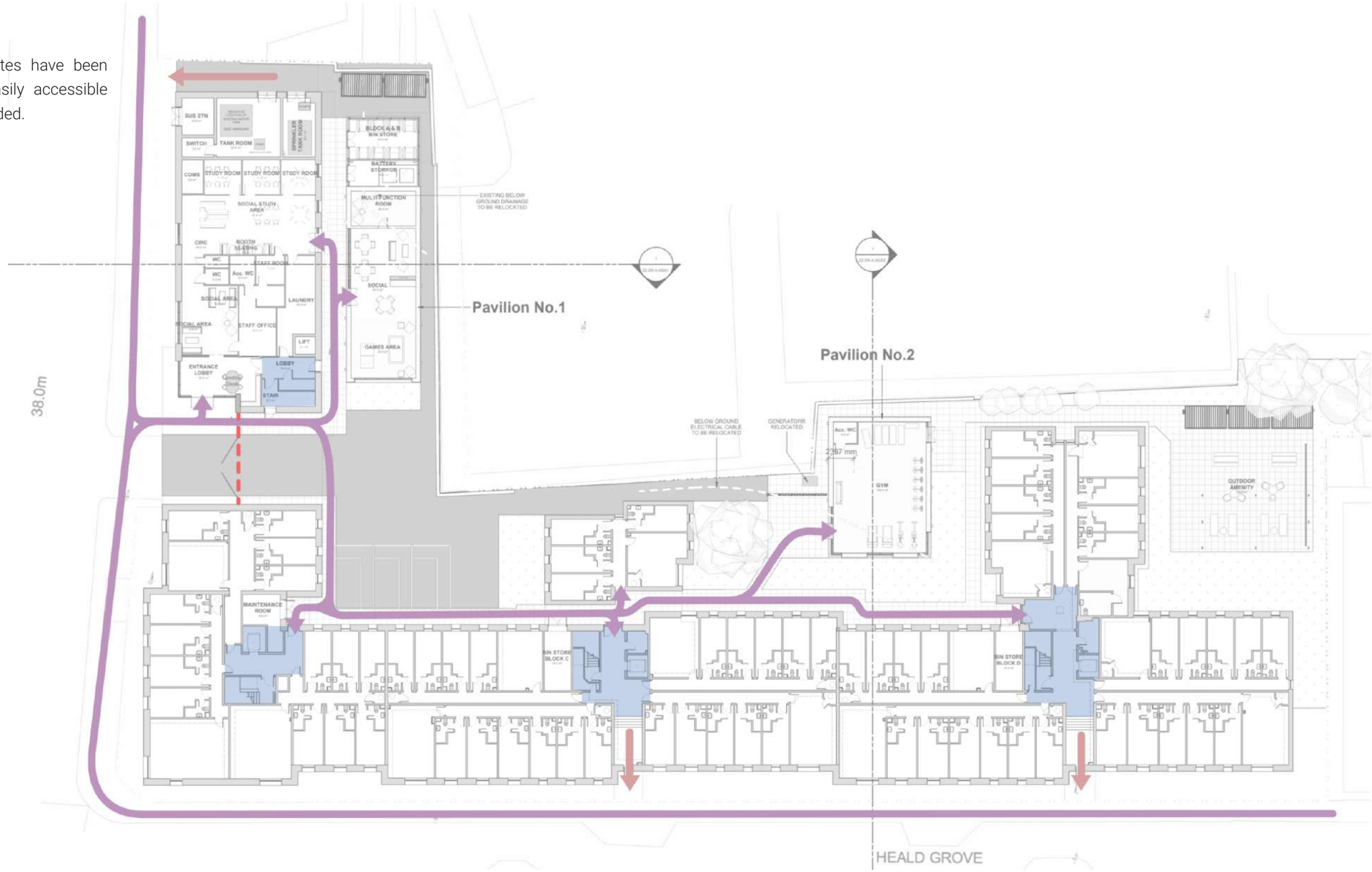
Pedestrian Access

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

The existing pedestrian access routes have been retained with the new pavillions easily accessible from all blocks and level access provided.



Key

- Pedestrian Access
- Escape Only
- Vertical Circulation
- Controlled Access Gates

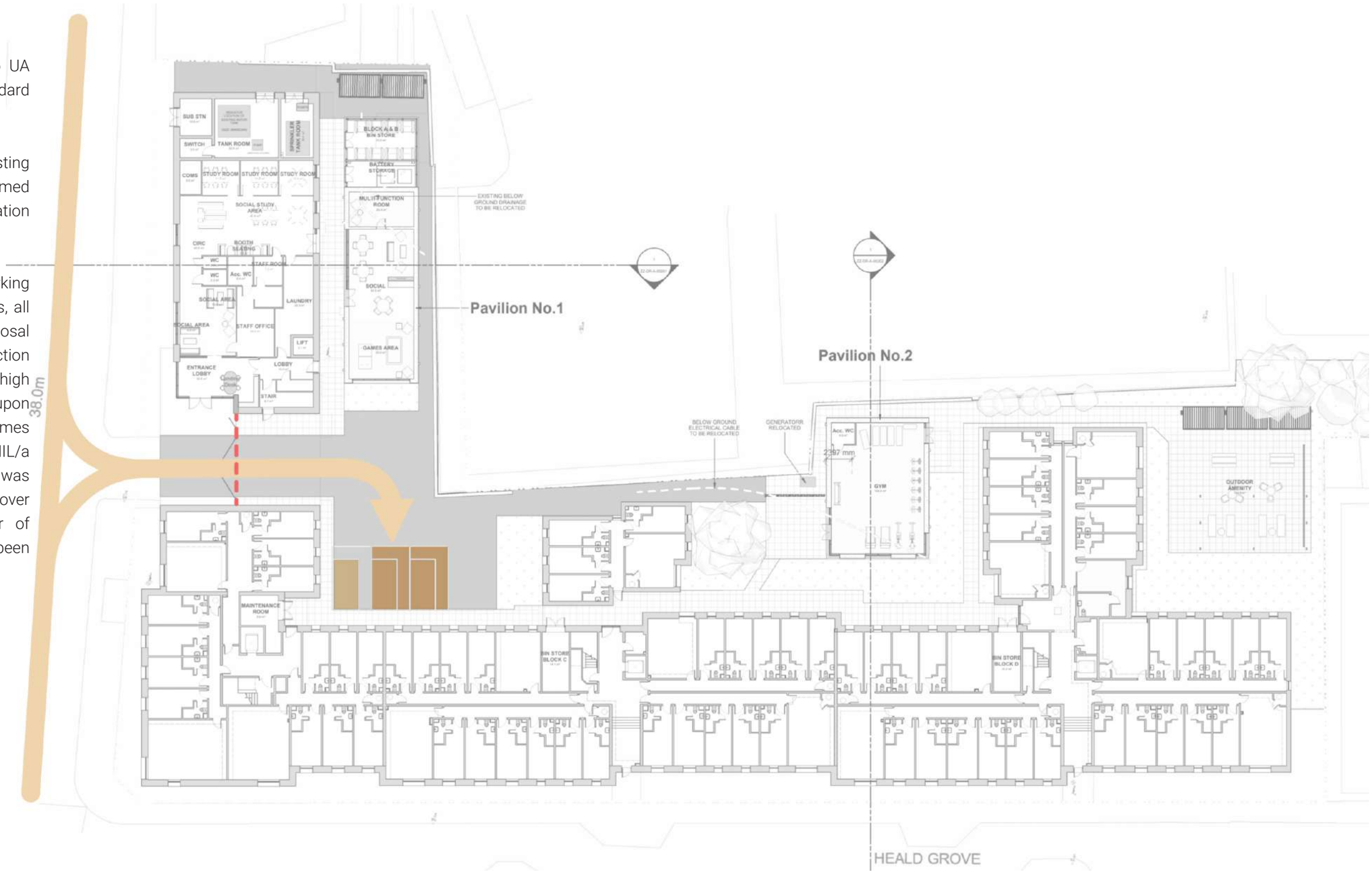
Vehicular Access

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

The proposed scheme provides two UA parking bays and 1 typical standard parking bay.

This is a reduction from the existing parking provision however, it is deemed sufficient for the Student accommodation use case.

The site currently has five UA parking spaces and 10 standard parking bays, all of which are underutilised. The proposal provides UA spaces, meaning a reduction of two spaces. However, given the high accessibility rating for the site and upon review of other student schemes elsewhere in the local area (where NIL/a similar provision of UA parking was acceptable; see supporting planning cover statement for details) The number of spaces proposed have therefore been deemed suitable.



Key

- Standard Parking Bay
- UA Parking Bay
- Vehicular Access
- Controlled Access Gates

Cycle Storage and Access

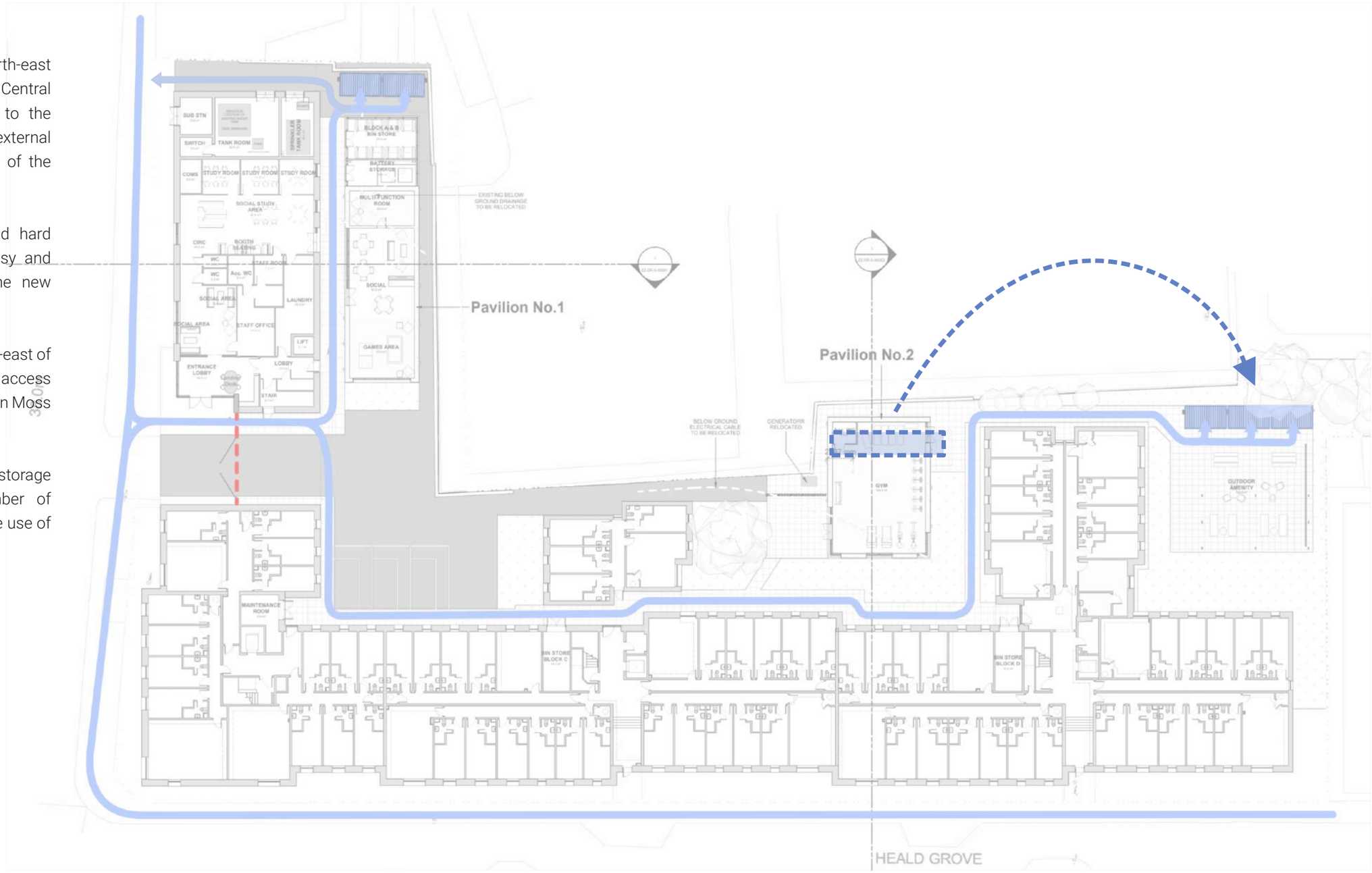
Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

The proposed scheme retains the North-east bank of cycle storage as existing. The Central bank of cycle storage is relocated to the southern courtyard, adjacent to the external amenities area to allow construction of the central pavillion.

This location is served by proposed hard landscaping features to facilitate easy and level access around Block D to the new location.

The existing cycle storage to the north-east of the site will also be accessible, with an access fob, through the existing access gate on Moss Lane East.

Overall, these changes to the cycle storage provisions do not affect the number of provided spaces nor do they affect the use of facilities or their access.



Key

- Cycle Storage
- Cycle Access Routes
- Relocated Cycle Storage
- Controlled Access Gates

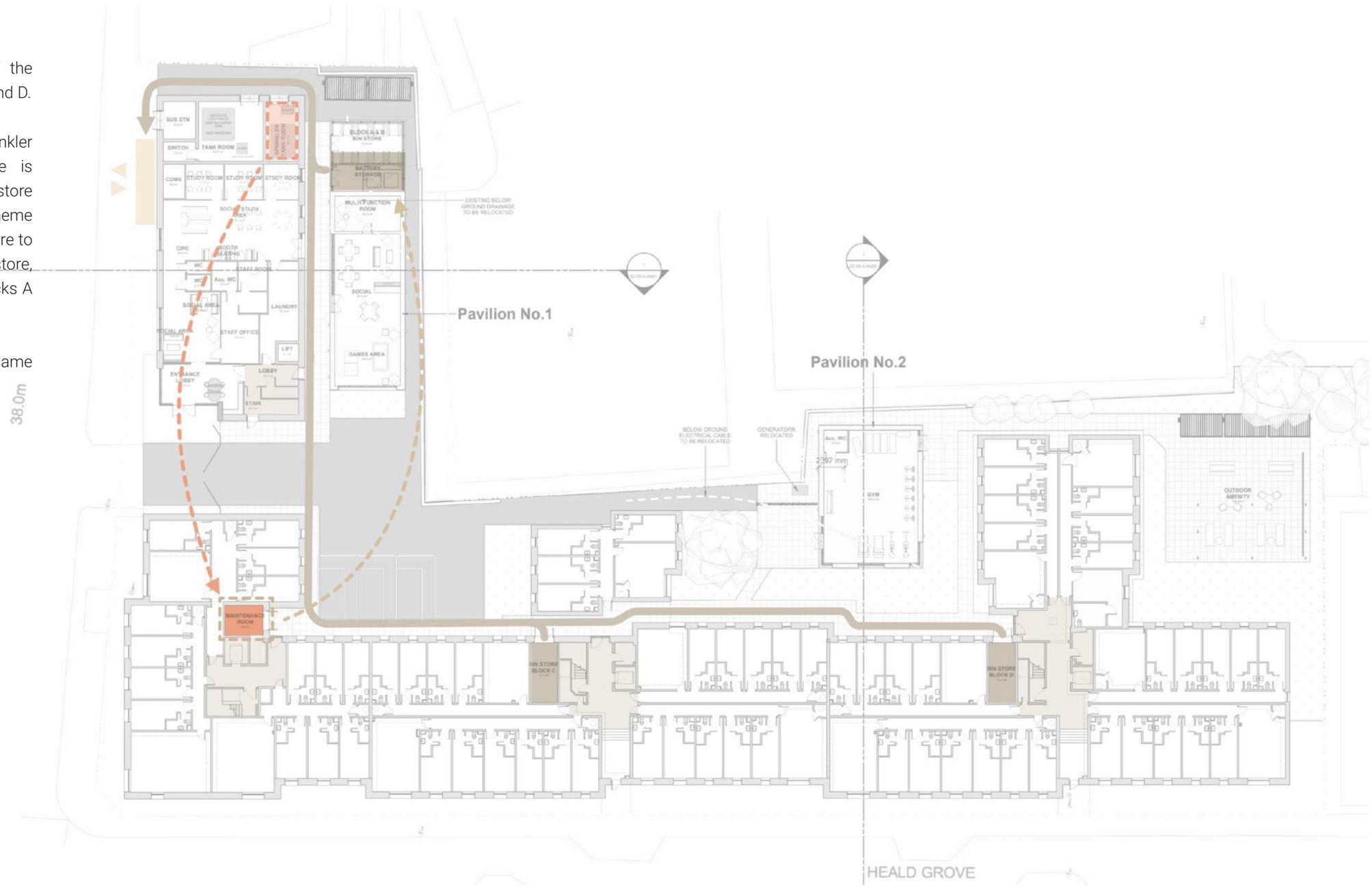
Waste Storage and Servicing

Proposed Ground Floor Plan - NTS

The proposed scheme retains two of the internal bin stores which serve Block C and D.

To allow sufficient space for the sprinkler tank, the existing maintenance store is proposed to move to the existing bin store which currently serves Block B. The scheme proposes that the bins within this store are to be relocated to a larger proposed bin store, adjacent to Pavillion 1, serving both Blocks A and B.

This bin store is in approximately the same position as the existing block A.



Key

- Bin Store
- Waste Disposal Route
- Vertical Circulation
- Relocated Bin Store
- Maintenance Store
- Relocated Maintenance Store
- Waste Collection Point

07 Conclusion

NORR

Application Conclusion

The proposed development represents a carefully considered enhancement to the existing student accommodation, delivering significant benefits for current and future residents while respecting the established character and operation of the site. The introduction of two new amenity pavilions within the existing property boundary will substantially improve the quality and range of facilities available to students, providing dedicated spaces for social interaction, recreation, and well-being.

The proposals include the creation of flexible social areas incorporating gaming, karaoke, and pod-casting facilities, alongside the provision of an on-site gym. Together, these amenities will support a more balanced and engaging student living environment, encouraging community interaction, creative activities, and healthy lifestyles. By providing these facilities on-site, the scheme will enhance the day-to-day experience of residents and reduce the need for students to seek such amenities elsewhere.

The design approach ensures that the new structures are sensitively integrated within the existing site, making efficient use of available space while maintaining appropriate relationships with the surrounding buildings and external areas. The proposals therefore represent a sustainable and positive investment in the long-term quality and attractiveness of the accommodation.

Overall, the development will deliver meaningful improvements to the living environment for students, strengthening the sense of community within the accommodation and supporting modern student lifestyles. The scheme is therefore considered to represent an appropriate and beneficial enhancement to the existing development, and approval of the application is respectfully sought.

Contact

Ropemaker Court

Project No. RZ3025-0074

NORR Consultants Ltd
Percy House
Percy Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE1 4PW
T 0191 222 1116

NORR.COM

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