

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Residential Development

7 Crown Street, St Ives, PE27 5EB

October 2026

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1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Graham Handley Architects Ltd in support of applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the proposed change of use and conversion of the existing commercial/office accommodation and garage at 7 Crown Street, St Ives, to provide five residential units, while retaining the ground-floor retail use (Class E(a)), together with associated internal and external alterations.

It sets out an assessment of the site context, access arrangements, material considerations and improvements and flood risk considerations relevant to the proposed development. The proposal represents a sustainable reuse of a vacant building in a central and accessible town centre location, contributing to the local housing supply while maintaining and supporting the vitality of the existing commercial frontage.

This application seeks Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the sensitive conversion and reuse of the existing building and rear ranges to provide five residential units, comprising one self-contained apartment and four dwellinghouses, while retaining the existing ground-floor retail unit at the front of the property. The proposals include the conversion of the upper-floor office and storage accommodation, the reconfiguration of ancillary rear spaces and the conversion of the existing garage building within the rear courtyard to form House E.

The proposal seeks to bring the building back into active and beneficial use through sensitive redevelopment. Given the ongoing vacancy and the recognised need for additional housing within the district, there is a strong planning justification for the proposed change of use to residential. The conversion of these underutilised areas into residential accommodation would support local housing targets, contribute to the efficient use of previously developed land and enhance the long-term viability of the building.

The proposed residential units have been designed to integrate sensitively within the existing building, preserving its historic and architectural character. Alterations to the principal elevations are minimal, with all works carefully considered in the context of the surrounding conservation area. The scheme includes limited external alterations and internal reconfiguration to facilitate the conversion of the upper floors to residential use.

The statement further outlines the potential impacts of the development, including its effect on the character and appearance of the two Grade II listed buildings comprising 7 Crown Street and the former Courthouse and Offices to the rear, their setting within the St Ives Conservation Area, neighbouring amenity, parking and sustainability. It also identifies the mitigation measures that will be adopted, including soundproofing, careful design of external alterations, and the provision of secure cycle storage to promote sustainable transport.

Overall, the proposed development represents a sustainable and context-sensitive solution, addressing housing needs while enhancing the long-term viability of 7 Crown Street as an active and integral part of the town centre.

1.1 Location

7 Crown Street is located within Area 1.2 of the St Ives Conservation Area, as identified in the St Ives Conservation Area Character Assessment.

7 Crown Street, St Ives occupies a prominent position within the town centre and falls within a designated conservation area. The building forms part of a cohesive historic streetscape characterised by active ground-floor uses and a fine-grained urban form.

The retail unit and former commercial accommodation are currently vacant and represents underutilised space within the building. The proposals retain the ground-floor retail frontage to Crown Street, supporting its continued active use and contributing positively to the vitality and commercial function of the town centre.

The site benefits from a highly sustainable location with strong pedestrian connectivity and access to public transport, services, and amenities within walking distance.

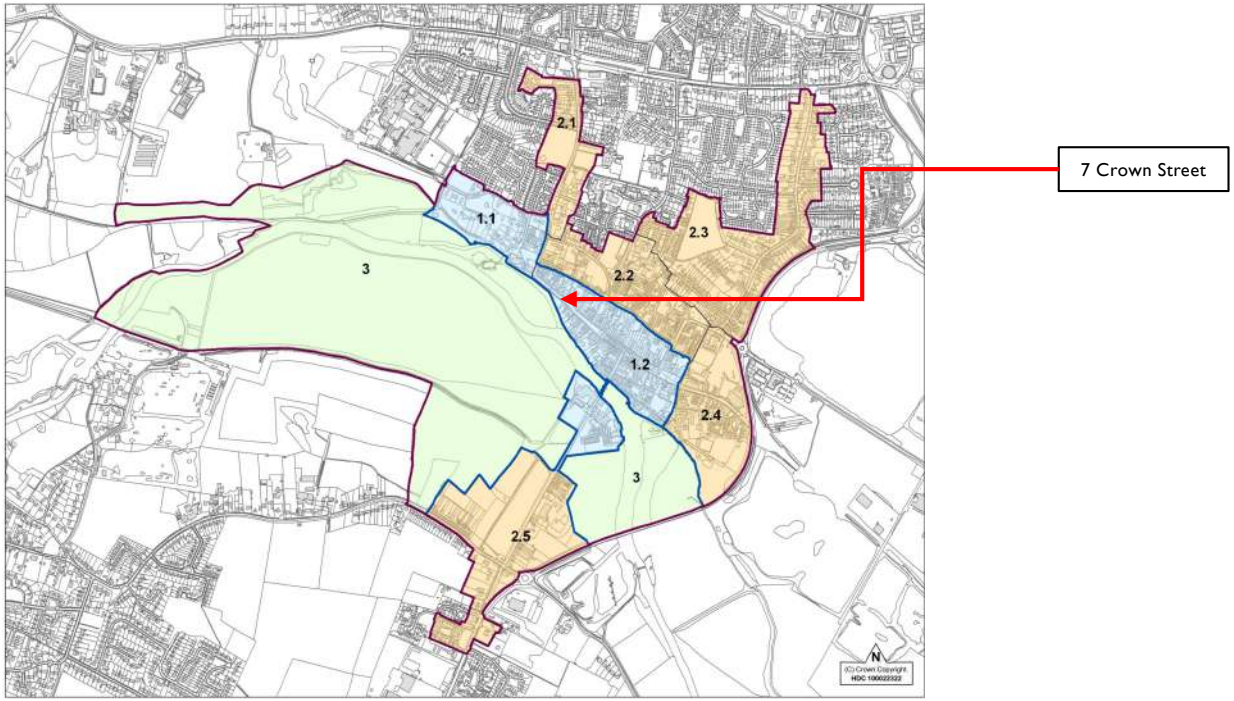


Figure 1 – Map of St Ives showing Conservation Area and its subdivisions.

1.2 Description of 7 Crown Street

7 Crown Street is a Grade II listed building. Its List Entry Number is 1330643 and it was first listed on 23rd April 1972.

The list entry details are below:

CROWN STREET 1. 1588 (North East Side) TL 3171 1/53 No.7.

II GV

2. C18. 2 storeys with attics, brick, tile roof, corbelling below eaves. 4 windows, segmental heads, glazing bars, 2 hipped dormers. Modern Regency shop front.

Nos. 1 to 17 (odd), Nos. 21 and 23 form a group with Nos. 2 to 6 (even), Nos. 12, 14, 16 and Nos. 20 to 32 (even) Broadway.

Listing NGR: TL3131671351

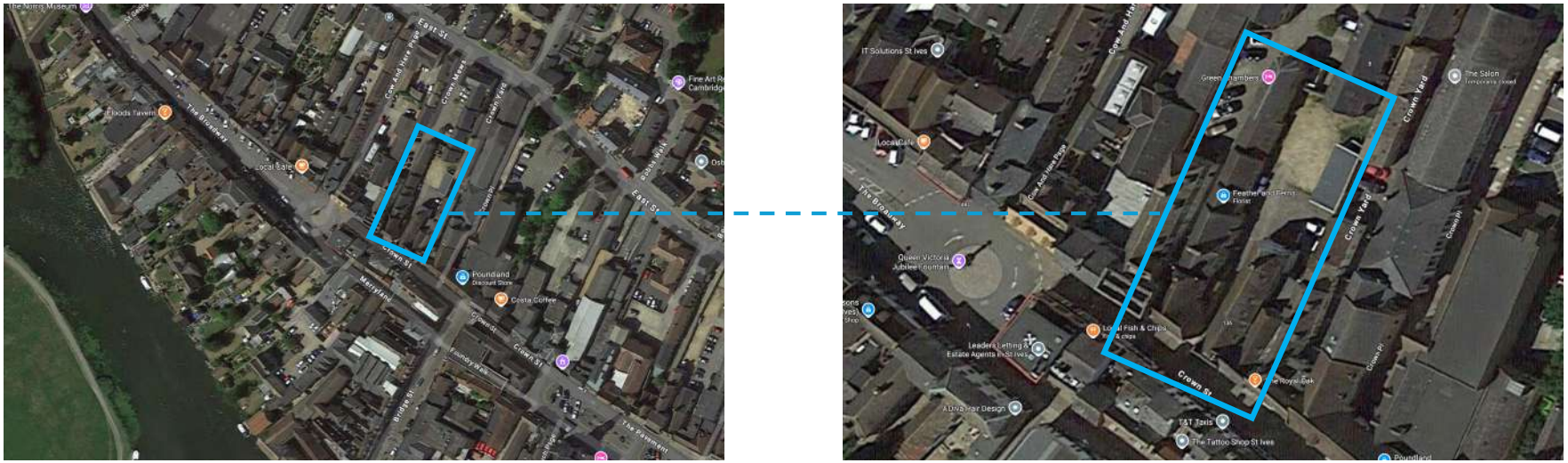


Figure 2 – Map of St Ives, showing 7 Crown Street

1.3 Description of the Former Courthouse and Offices, to the rear of 7 Crown Street

Heritage Category: **listed building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1128690**

Date first listed: **23-Apr-1972**

List Entry Name: **Courthouse and Offices Behind Number 7**



Figure 3 – Map of St Ives, showing 7 Crown Street & nearby listed buildings

The application site therefore contains two Grade II listed heritage assets: the principal building at 7 Crown Street and the separately listed former Courthouse and Offices to the rear. The proposals have been developed with regard to the significance of both listed buildings, their historic relationship with one another and their contribution to the character and appearance of the St Ives Conservation Area.

2.0 Design Evolution and Principles

The design has been developed through a process of careful consideration of the building's historic fabric, spatial constraints and conservation area context.

A range of options were considered, including retention of existing non-residential uses; however, the prolonged vacancy and lack of viable demand for the upper floors and rear accommodation has demonstrated the need for a more sustainable long-term use.

The chosen approach represents a **minimum intervention strategy**, ensuring that change is limited to that necessary to facilitate residential conversion whilst retaining the architectural integrity of the building.

3.0 Description of Proposed Development

Outline Brief Description

The proposal comprises:

- Conversion of the existing upper-floor and rear ground-floor commercial and ancillary accommodation to provide four residential units, comprising one apartment and three dwellinghouses, together with the conversion of the existing garage building to provide a fifth residential unit (House E).

- Retention of the ground-floor retail unit fronting Crown Street, including the provision of a small WC and kitchenette to support its operation as a retail unit. The unit is currently vacant and lacks the facilities required to support modern occupation. The proposed works will improve the functionality of the space and ensure it is suitable for day-to-day use by a future tenant.

- Internal reconfiguration of the existing layouts to provide suitable residential accommodation, including the sensitive insertion of new staircases and reconfiguration of existing access arrangements.

- Sensitive external alterations to the building envelope, including the restoration, repair and replacement of windows, the removal of the existing external staircase, and the demolition of unsympathetic modern brick and blockwork walls.

- The proposals principally utilise the existing built footprint, with the external form and character of the existing buildings largely retained.

- Sensitive and considered treatment of the courtyard.

3.1 Detailed Description of Proposed Development

The rear range is separately Grade II listed as the "Courthouse and Offices Behind Number 7" and retains evidence of its former civic use, including spaces understood to have formed part of the former courthouse accommodation. The courtroom and lock-up remain located toward the rear of the property, within a series of interconnected ancillary spaces extending away from Crown Street, including storage rooms, cupboards, former kitchen facilities and toilet accommodation.

The front and rear ranges of the building are both Grade II Listed and form part of an important surviving historic streetscape, grouped with neighbouring listed properties on Crown Street and Broadway, contributing significantly to the architectural and civic heritage of the town. The property currently comprises a ground-floor retail unit at the front, presently vacant, with office accommodation, redundant kitchen facilities, and underused storage areas across the upper floors and rear sections of the building. In more recent years, the building has undergone a series of incremental alterations and adaptations reflecting its evolving use over time, some of which have had a limited impact on the legibility of its historic fabric and architectural character.

The self-contained apartment (Apartment A) will be located above the retained retail unit at the front of the building, maintaining the established mixed-use character of the property. Three residential houses (Houses B, C and D) will be created within the existing rear ranges, with the former garage building converted to provide a fourth house (House E). Access to all five residential units will be provided via the existing courtyard to the side and rear of the site.

Each dwelling will be fully self-contained and has been carefully designed to provide good-quality living accommodation appropriate to its historic setting. The proposed layouts have been developed with regard to the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), whilst taking account of the spatial constraints associated with the conversion of the existing listed buildings.

The proposed development represents an efficient and sustainable reuse of vacant floors and redundant ancillary spaces, contributing to local housing supply while securing the long-term viable use of this important listed building. By retaining the active retail frontage and introducing well-designed residential accommodation to the rear and upper floors, the scheme preserves the mixed-use function of the site and supports the ongoing vitality of the town centre.

A sensitive and carefully considered approach has been taken to the treatment of the courtyard, ensuring that its character and relationship with the historic building are preserved and enhanced. The design minimises visual impact, respects the existing form and setting, and provides a functional and attractive external space that complements the overall development while maintaining the architectural integrity of the site.

4.0 External Materials

All external materials will be carefully selected to respect and reflect the traditional character of the existing building. Where new brickwork is required, it will be matched in type, colour, texture, and bond to ensure a seamless integration with the original fabric. Similarly, any replacement windows, rainwater goods, and associated external elements will be specified to closely match existing materials and detailing, ensuring continuity of appearance. The overall approach will prioritise a sensitive and cohesive material palette that preserves the architectural integrity of the building and ensures all new interventions are visually and materially in keeping with the historic context.

The existing garage building will be sensitively renovated and converted to form House E, retaining its existing form and character whilst introducing appropriate improvements to facilitate residential use. The proposed external materials include red/orange clay brickwork, powder-coated aluminium double-glazed windows in cement grey, insulated timber infill panels finished in anthracite grey and an anthracite grey standing seam zinc roof. Painted timber fascias and anthracite grey rainwater goods will complete the external finishes.

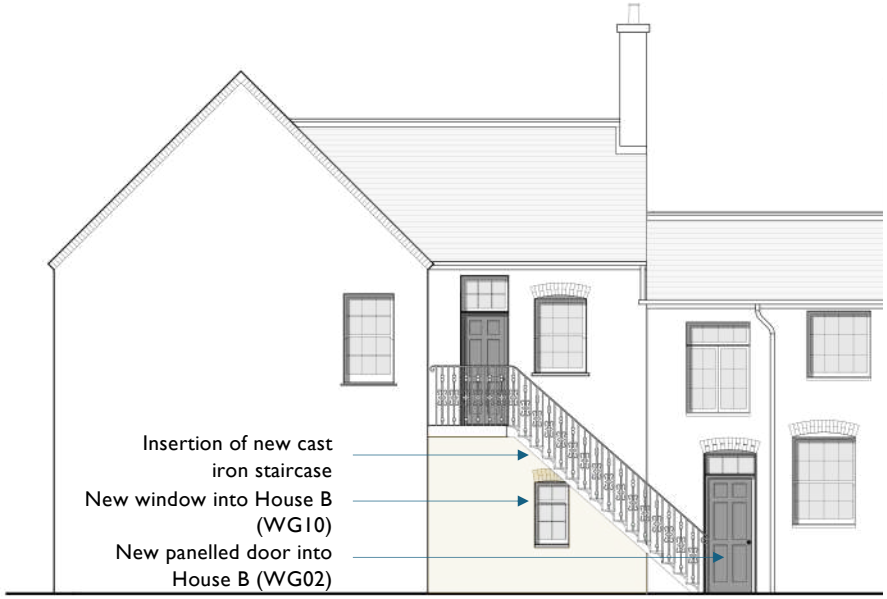
The proposed materials have been carefully selected to provide a cohesive and contemporary appearance appropriate to the building's former utilitarian character, whilst ensuring that the conversion remains visually subordinate to the adjacent historic buildings. The proposed alterations will enhance the appearance and functionality of the existing garage whilst respecting the character and setting of the Grade II listed buildings and the wider conservation area.

4.1 External Stair to Apartment A

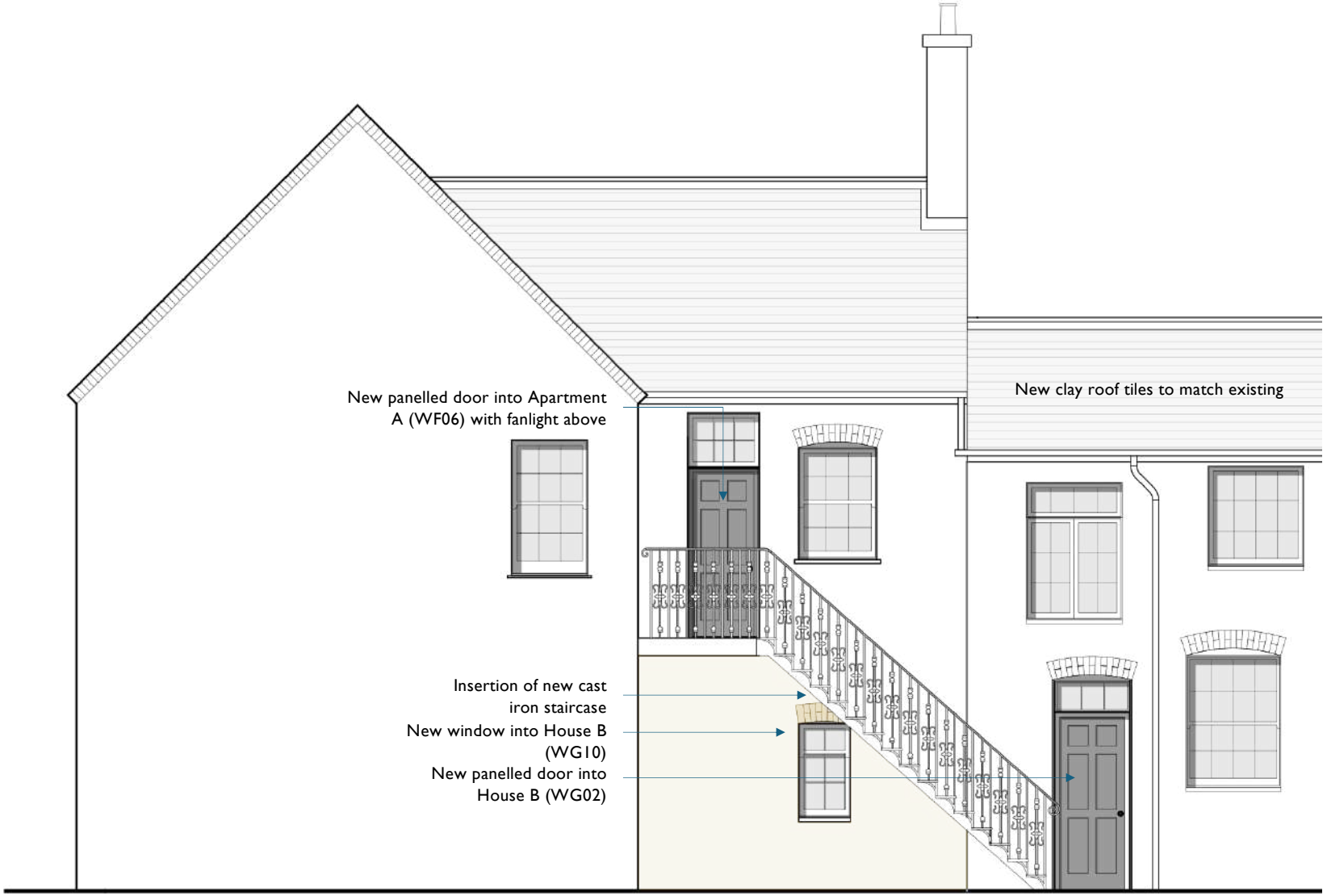
The existing concrete staircase is a modern, utilitarian addition that is incongruous with the historic character of the listed building and is currently in a poor state of repair. Its removal presents an opportunity to enhance the building's appearance through the introduction of a traditionally detailed cast iron staircase. The proposed replacement has been carefully designed to complement the building's historic architecture in terms of materials, detailing, and overall character. The replacement therefore provides an opportunity to remove an unsympathetic modern element and introduce a more appropriately detailed staircase that better responds to the character and appearance of the listed building.



Elevation A – Existing Access Stair



Elevation A – Proposed Access Stair to Apartment A



Elevation A – Proposed Access Stair to Apartment A

4.2 Replacement and Upgrading External Roof Coverings

The existing ranges to the rear of the property are currently roofed with asbestos-containing sheet material. In addition to its visually utilitarian appearance, the existing roofing system provides limited opportunity to achieve the level of thermal performance and fabric improvement sought as part of the proposed works. Its replacement therefore presents an opportunity to deliver both an architectural and environmental enhancement to the building.

There is an established precedent on site for the use of traditional clay roof tiles, which are considered more appropriate to the architectural character and material palette of the property. The introduction of clay tiles to the rear ranges would provide a more cohesive and visually integrated roofscape, whilst reinforcing the traditional built form and improving the overall appearance of these ancillary elements.

The proposed replacement roof construction would incorporate a new, upgraded insulation build-up designed to significantly improve the thermal performance of the existing ranges. The improved roof build-up will reduce heat loss through the roof envelope, improve the overall thermal efficiency of the building and contribute towards reducing energy demand associated with heating. The works will therefore provide a meaningful improvement to the fabric performance of the building while retaining an appropriate and sympathetic external appearance.

The removal and replacement of the existing asbestos-containing roofing material would also provide an opportunity to address the condition and longevity of the existing roof coverings. Subject to the appropriate surveys, controls and disposal procedures, the existing material would be safely removed and replaced with a durable, traditionally appropriate roofing system.

Overall, the proposed works represent a considered improvement to the rear ranges, combining enhanced thermal performance and fabric efficiency with a more appropriate architectural treatment. The use of clay tiles, together with improved insulation and roof construction, will enhance the appearance, durability and energy efficiency of the building while remaining sympathetic to its established traditional character.

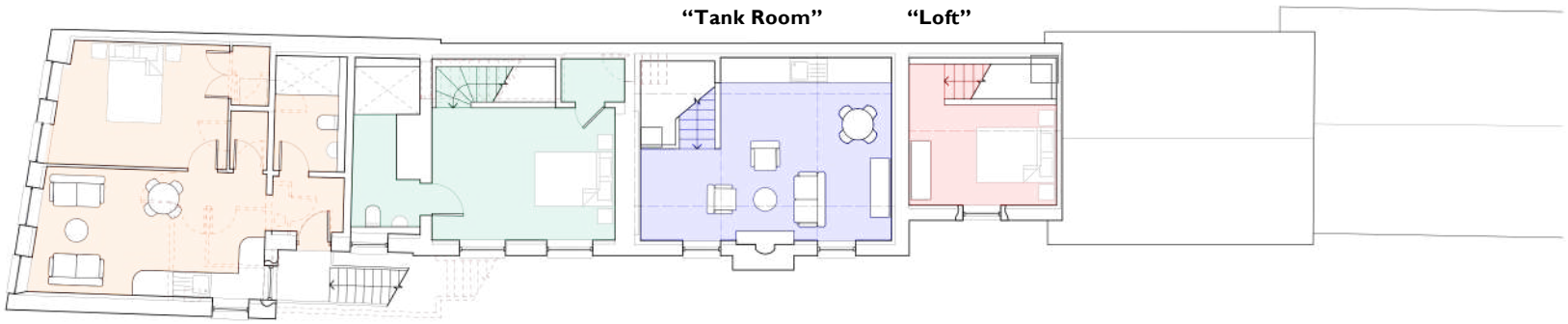
5.0 Internal Materials

Wherever possible, original internal features such as doors, skirtings, architraves, fire surrounds, mouldings, and other historic joinery details will be carefully retained and preserved as part of the proposed works. Existing elements of historic significance will be repaired and refurbished rather than replaced, helping to maintain the character and authenticity of the building's interior. Where alterations are necessary or proposed, any removed historic features considered suitable for reuse will be carefully salvaged and reinstated where appropriate. Any new or replacement elements will be designed to complement the existing historic fabric in terms of scale, detailing, and materials, ensuring a sensitive and cohesive approach throughout the development.

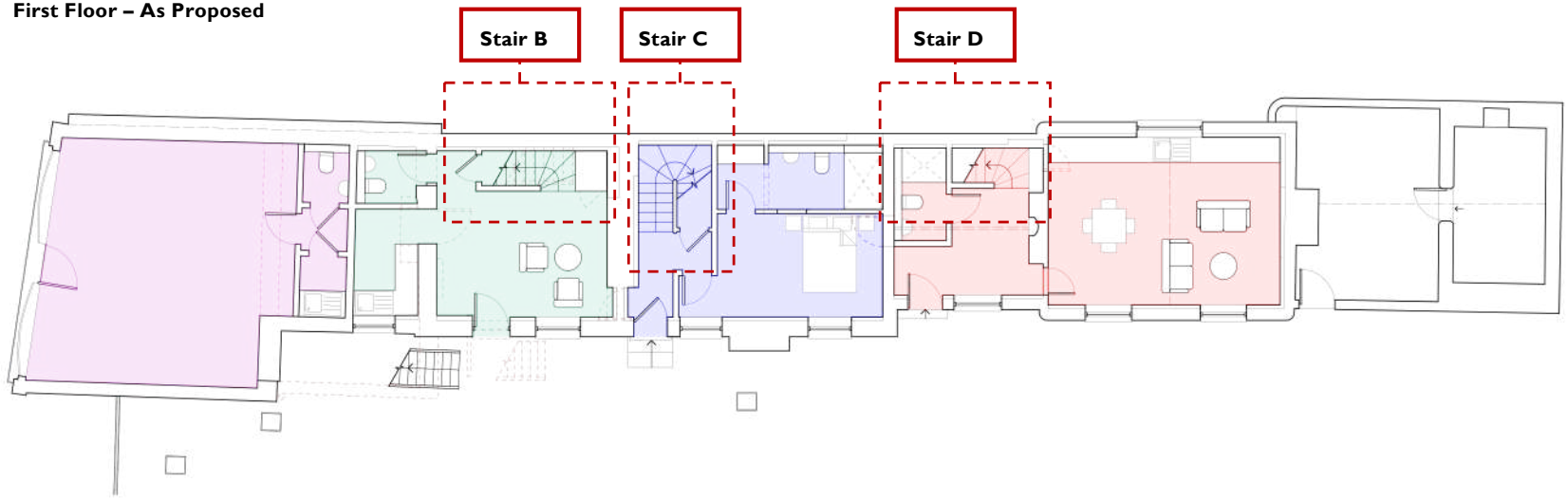
5.1 Insertion of Internal Stairs

The proposals include the reconfiguration of the existing staircase within House B and the insertion of new staircases within Houses C and D to provide safe and practical access to the upper-floor accommodation. The design and positioning of each staircase have been carefully considered to minimise intervention within the historic fabric and to ensure that the works are undertaken in a sympathetic manner.

Across all locations, the proposals seek to minimise the loss of historic fabric and limit the extent of new openings to those necessary to facilitate access and the continued viable use of the building. The staircases will be detailed and constructed using materials and forms that are sympathetic to the character of the listed buildings, ensuring that they integrate sensitively within the existing structures whilst preserving their special architectural and historic interest.



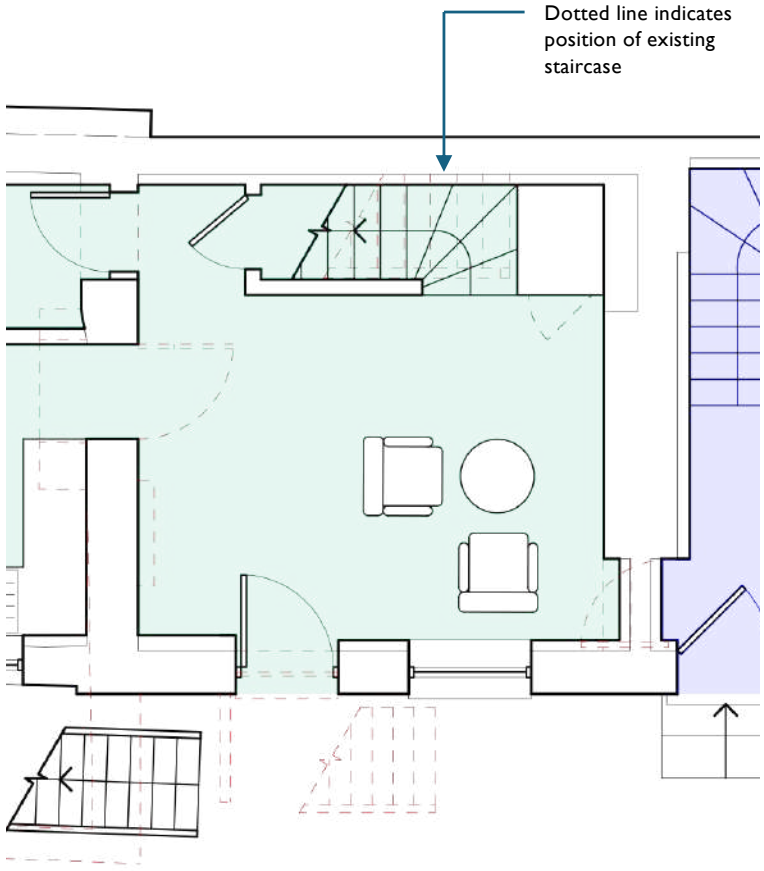
First Floor – As Proposed



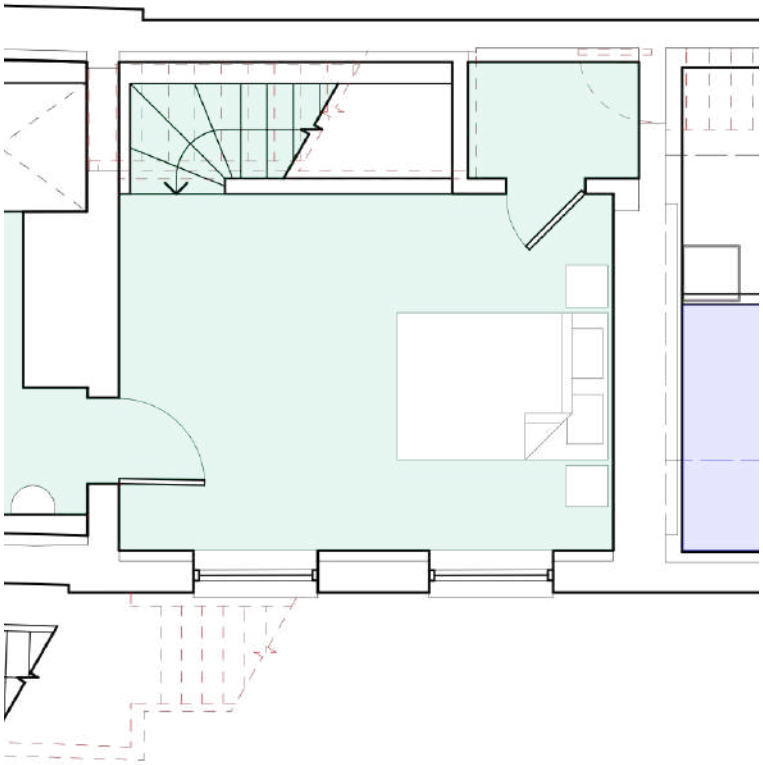
Ground Floor – As Proposed

5.2 Insertion of Internal Stairs – House B

In House B, the staircase will be installed within an existing opening, with only limited reconfiguration required to improve circulation and accessibility. As a result, the intervention will make use of an established point of access and minimise the need for alterations to the surrounding historic fabric.



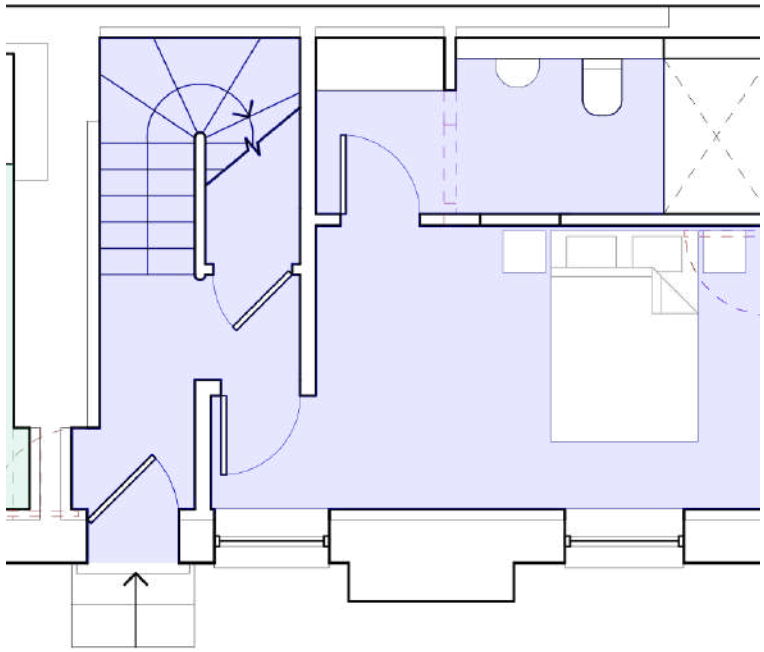
Ground Floor – As Proposed



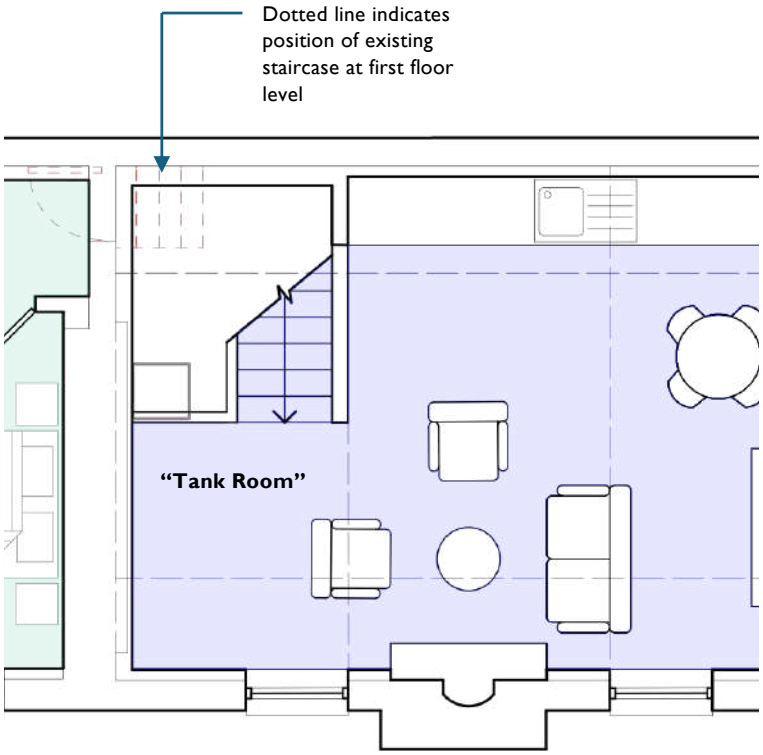
First Floor – As Proposed

5.3 Insertion of Internal Stairs – House C

In House C, the proposed staircase serving the former tank room is located within an area that appears to have been subject to previous alteration. The insertion of a new staircase in this location is therefore considered to have a limited impact on the significance of the building, as the works are concentrated within a part of the structure that has already experienced change. Evidence of a former staircase at first-floor level providing access to the Tank Room from the adjacent part of the building indicates that a means of access previously existed in this location. The proposed staircase therefore reflects an established pattern of circulation and can be regarded as reinstating access to a space that was historically connected to the wider building.



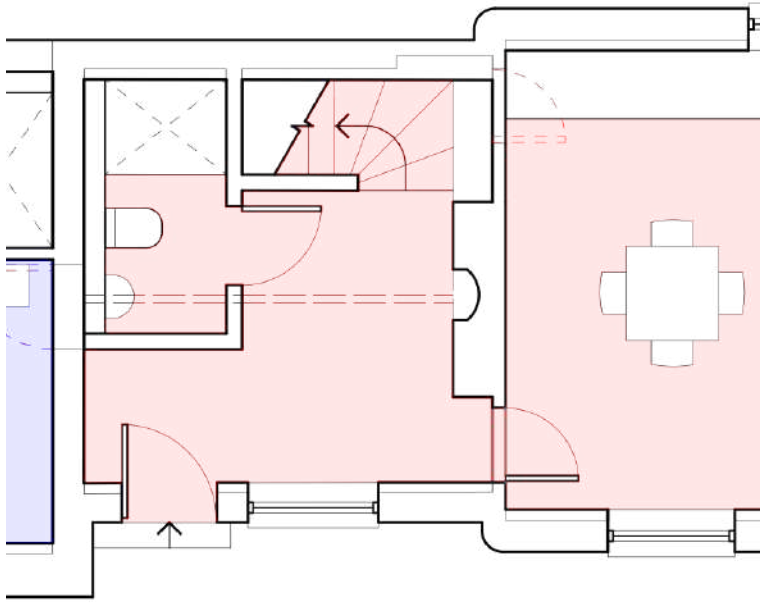
Ground Floor – As Proposed



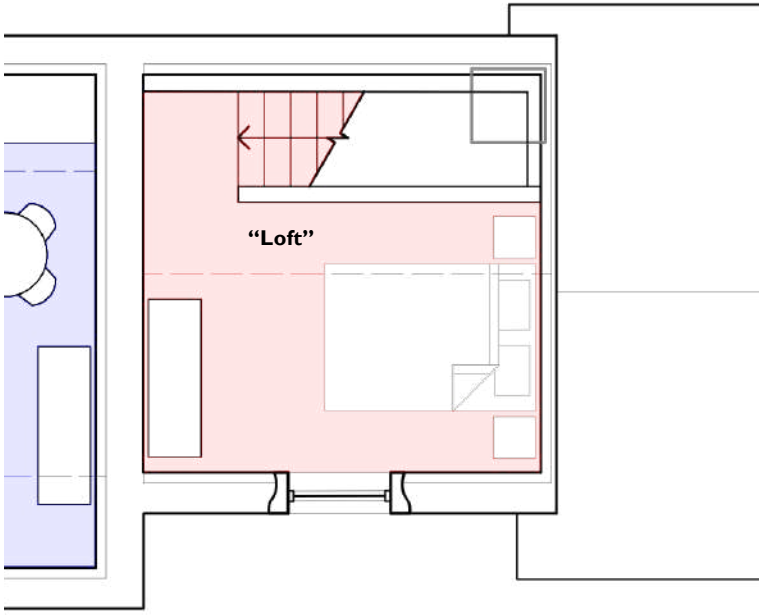
First Floor – As Proposed

5.4 Insertion of Internal Stairs – House D

In House D, a new staircase is proposed within the ante-room of the former court room to provide access to the upper floor accommodation. Although no historic plans have been identified to confirm the original arrangement, the presence of first-floor accommodation indicates that some form of access is likely to have existed historically. The proposed staircase therefore seeks to re-establish functional access in a manner that is respectful of the building's historic character.



Ground Floor – As Proposed



First Floor – As Proposed

5.5 Internal Doors

An assessment has been undertaken of all existing internal doors within the building to establish their architectural and historic significance and to inform the proposed works. The following schedule identifies those doors considered to be of historic or architectural significance, which will be retained and repaired wherever possible, together with those doors identified as having no significance and proposed for removal. Doors identified for retention will be carefully refurbished and upgraded as necessary, including the repair of defective timber, adjustment or replacement of ironmongery where appropriate, and redecoration using suitable materials and finishes, ensuring their continued use and contribution to the character and significance of the building.

New internal doors will generally be timber-panelled doors, designed to complement the traditional character and appearance of the existing buildings. Where fire-rated doors are required, these will be specified to achieve the necessary fire resistance in accordance with the Building Regulations and the agreed fire safety strategy. Appropriate fire-rated timber doorsets will be selected to ensure that fire safety requirements are met whilst maintaining a consistent appearance with the traditional internal joinery.

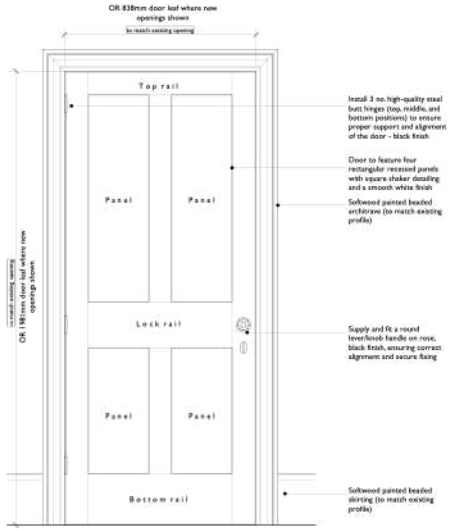
FLOOR	Reference	Historically significant	Retain/Remove
GROUND FLOOR			
Retail Unit	D01	Panel door - modern	Remove
Retail Unit	D02	Panel door - modern	Remove
Retail Unit	D03	Panel door - modern	Remove
Retail Unit	D04	Panel door - modern	Remove
Retail Unit	D05	Plain flush door	Remove
Middle Shop	D06	Plain flush door	Remove
Rear shop	D07	Plain flush door	Remove
Rear Shop	D08	Plain flush door	Remove
Rear Shop	D09	Plain flush door	Remove
Ante-room	D10	Traditional Timber panel door	Retain
Ante-room	D11	Traditional Timber panel door	Retain
Cell/Storage Room	D12	Cell door	Retain
FIRST FLOOR			
Front Office (East)	D13	Plain flush door	Remove
Front Office (East)	D14	Plain flush door	Remove
Front Office (West)	D15	Plain flush door	Remove
Front Office (West)	D16	Plain flush door	Remove
Rear Office	D17	Plain flush door	Remove
Rear Office	D18	Plain flush door	Remove
WC	D19	Plain flush door	Remove
Kitchen	D20	Panel door - modern	Remove

5.5 Internal Doors

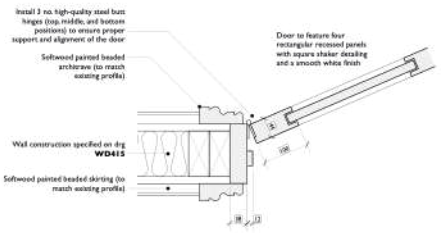
Proposed new internal doors:



⑦ Internal Photo - Door type
Scale: NTS



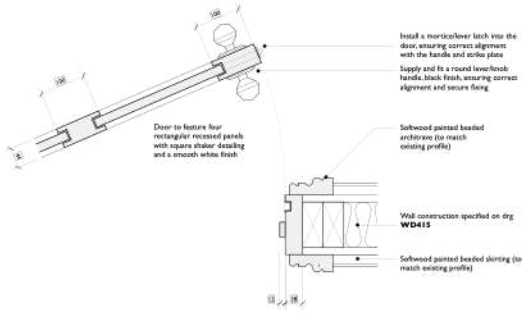
① Front Elevation
Scale: 1:10



③ Jamb Detail
Scale: 1:5



② Plan
Scale: 1:10

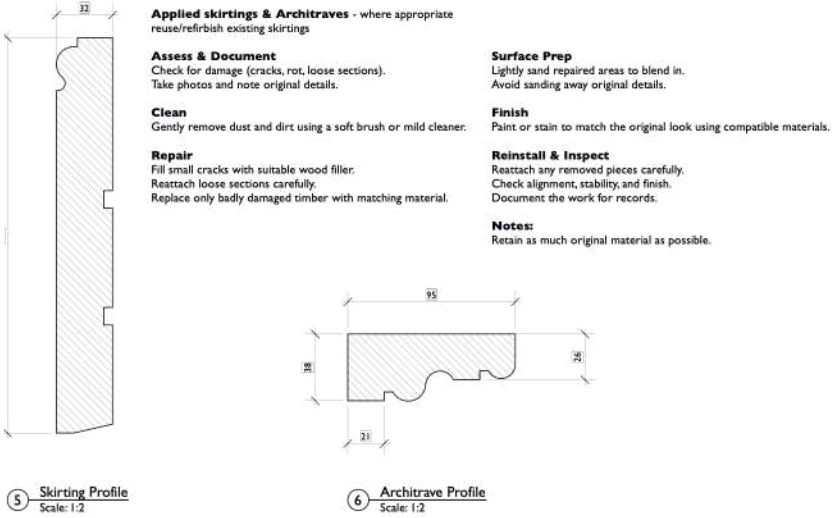


④ Jamb Detail
Scale: 1:5

5.6 Internal Joinery (Architraves & Skirtings)

The existing architraves, skirting boards and other items of decorative timber joinery have been assessed as part of the wider review of the building's historic fabric. Elements that are considered to be of architectural or historic merit will be retained and repaired wherever possible. Existing historic joinery will be carefully refurbished, including the repair of defective timber, consolidation of damaged sections and redecoration using appropriate materials and finishes, ensuring its continued contribution to the character and significance of the building.

Where architraves, skirtings or other joinery details are identified as modern insertions that do not contribute positively to the historic character of the building, they will be replaced with traditionally detailed timber joinery. The design of replacement elements will be informed by surviving historic examples within the building, ensuring that profiles, proportions and detailing are appropriate to the age and character of the property. This approach will enhance the architectural coherence of the interior whilst preserving significant historic fabric and reinforcing the traditional character of the listed building.



6.0 Planning Policy Documents

The proposals have been developed with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, in particular Policies LP11 (Design Context), LP12 (Design Implementation), LP13 (Quality of Design) and LP34 (Heritage Assets and their Settings), together with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and the relevant Conservation Area Character Statement. The scheme seeks to secure the viable and sensitive reuse of the listed building through residential conversion, whilst preserving its architectural and historic significance and the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.

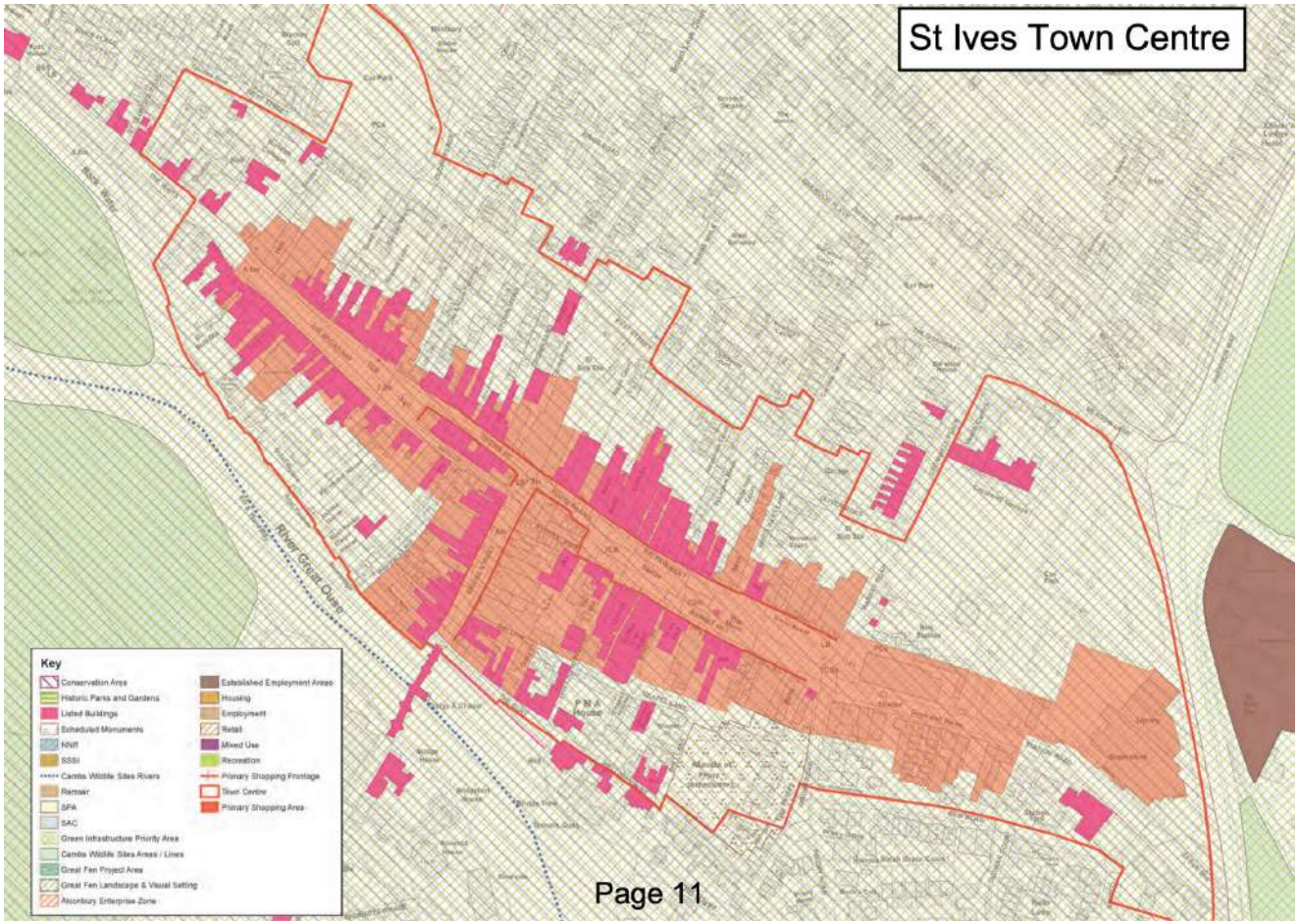


Figure 6 – Extract from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

7.0 Flooding

Flood Zone & Sequential Testing

The property lies within Flood Zone 2.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Huntingdonshire (2017) identifies the site as being at *very low risk* of flooding, with less than a 0.1% chance of flooding annually. The assessment takes into account the presence of flood defences, including the flood walls along The Waits. While these defences significantly reduce the flood risk, it is acknowledged that no defence system is infallible, and there remains a possibility of overtopping or structural failure during extreme conditions.

The finished floor levels are 7.58-7.78m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The existing finished floor levels are proposed to remain unchanged. The flood risk implications associated with the proposed residential conversion have been assessed within the accompanying site-specific Flood Risk Assessment prepared by MTC Engineering. Any necessary flood resilience or mitigation measures will be informed by the recommendations of that assessment.

The site is located within an established built-up area, in a highly sustainable location. The proposal comprises the change of use and conversion of existing buildings and is therefore exempt from the Sequential Test in accordance with national flood risk guidance. Notwithstanding this exemption, the implications of introducing residential accommodation within Flood Zone 2 have been assessed through the site-specific Flood Risk Assessment prepared by MTC Engineering.

As part of this application MTC Engineering have carried out a Flood Risk Assessment and have concluded:

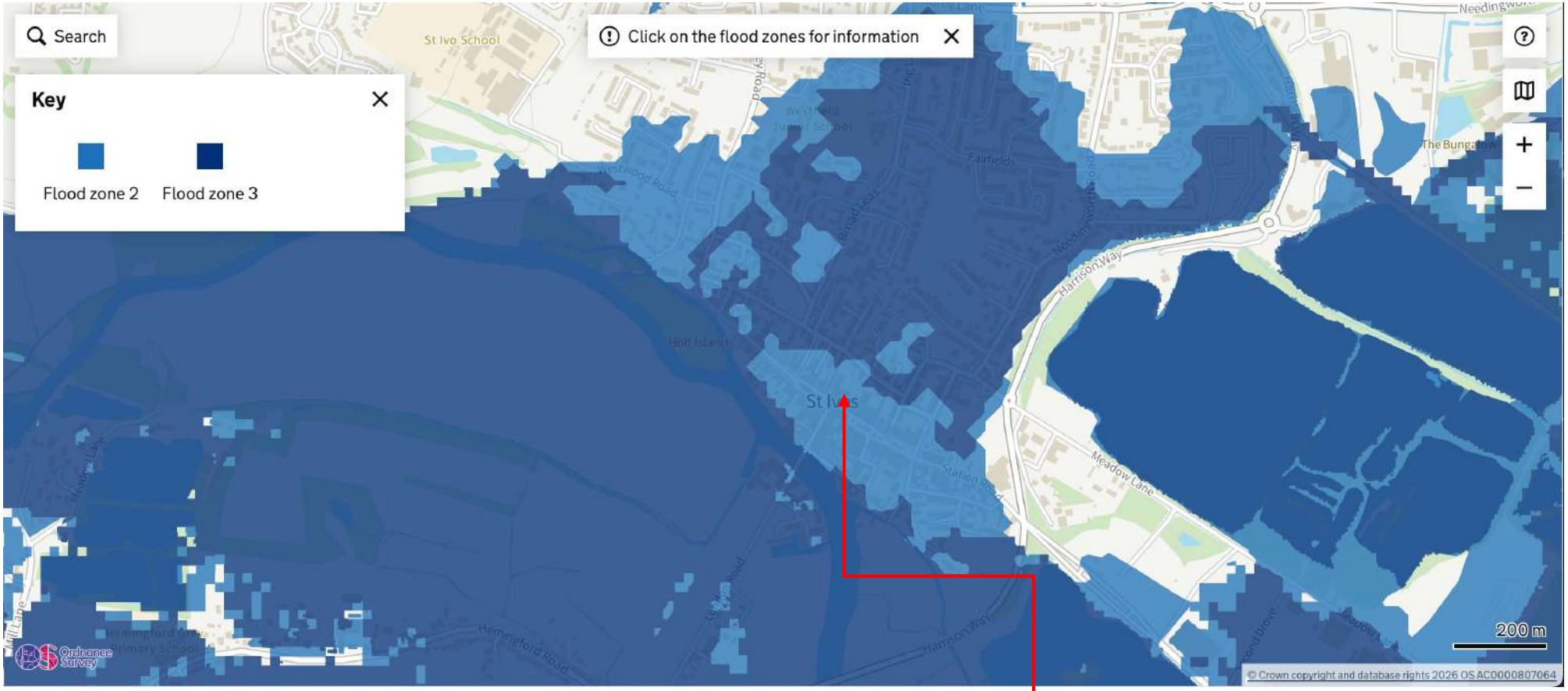
"…There are no flood risk or drainage related grounds under The National Planning Policy Framework on which to object to the proposed change of use and conversion of the existing building at 7 Crown Street, St Ives, to provide 5 residential units with retention of the frontage shop at ground-floor level…"

Floor Levels & Finishes

Existing ground floor levels, as well as finished floor levels at the first and second floors, will be maintained as existing. For the rear of the property, where modifications are being made, suitable ground floor finishes will be installed.

The proposals will retain the existing ground and finished floor levels throughout the development. As the works principally involve the conversion and adaptation of existing buildings, no significant alterations to the existing site levels or ground conditions are proposed. The potential implications for flood risk have been considered within the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment prepared by MTC Engineering, which concludes that the proposed development is acceptable in flood risk and drainage terms.

7.1 Environment Agency Flood Map



8.0 Potential Impacts and Mitigation

In developing the proposals, careful consideration has been given to their potential impacts on the historic buildings, neighbouring amenity and the character and appearance of the St Ives Conservation Area, together with the relevant principles of national and local planning policy.

The following aspects have been assessed and addressed accordingly:

1. Loss of Commercial/Non-Residential Use

The site was previously in mixed use, with the frontage building operating as a retail unit, a use which will be retained as part of the proposals. To the rear of the site, the rear ranges were previously used as an events marketing office, while the separate garage building served an ancillary storage/garage function.

In accordance with the NPPF's objective of promoting the effective use of land, the proposal seeks to optimise the use of this previously developed town-centre site by bringing vacant and underutilised floorspace back into productive use through residential conversion. This represents a sustainable form of development that makes effective use of the existing building stock.

The scheme retains the ground-floor retail unit, ensuring continued active frontage and contribution to the vitality of Crown Street, while the introduction of residential accommodation above will support a more intensive and efficient use of the building in a highly sustainable, central location within the settlement.

2. Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

The proposal involves predominantly internal alterations, with only minor external changes that are limited in scale and sensitive in design. These have been carefully considered to ensure that they do not detract from the building's architectural character or the wider streetscape. Materials and detailing will be in keeping with the historic setting, thereby preserving the significance of the conservation area and the visual integrity of the building.

3. Residential Amenity

The proposed residential units have been designed to provide a good standard of amenity, with appropriate consideration given to natural daylight, ventilation and internal living space. The layouts have been developed with regard to the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS), balancing the requirements of modern residential accommodation with the constraints of the existing historic buildings.

The relationship between the residential accommodation and the retained ground-floor commercial use has been carefully considered. Appropriate acoustic mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure a suitable level of residential comfort and to prevent noise transmission between uses.

8.0 Potential Impacts and Mitigation (Continued)

4. Servicing and Waste Management

The design includes appropriate and discreet provision for waste and recycling storage in accordance with local authority standards. A new communal bin store is proposed within the courtyard garden to serve Units A–D, providing sufficient capacity for waste and recycling whilst ensuring a tidy and organised arrangement. The bin store has been positioned to be easily accessible for residents and collection purposes whilst remaining sensitively integrated within the wider landscape design to minimise its visual impact. House E will benefit from its own dedicated bin storage area located adjacent to the dwelling, allowing waste and recycling facilities to be conveniently accessed without reliance on the communal provision. The proposed bin storage areas will be carefully designed and screened to ensure they sit comfortably within the setting of the development, preserving the quality of the external environment and maintaining an attractive appearance throughout the communal courtyard and garden spaces.

5. Parking and Access

Given the central and highly accessible location of 7 Crown Street, St Ives, the development is well served by local services, amenities and sustainable transport links. The site is within easy walking distance of shops, employment opportunities and community facilities, with good access to public transport, including regular bus services and connections to the nearby guided busway network. This sustainable town-centre location reduces reliance on the private car and supports the proposed residential development without dedicated on-site parking provision.

The proposals will result in the removal of the two existing informal parking spaces within the application site to facilitate the creation of a communal landscaped garden and associated amenity areas. Existing parking spaces located outside the application boundary will remain unaffected, with vehicular access to these spaces retained.

Secure communal cycle storage will be provided within the shared garden area to serve the proposed residential units, encouraging active travel and providing a convenient alternative to car use. The provision will be appropriately located and integrated into the landscaping to ensure ease of access whilst maintaining the character and appearance of the courtyard.

Overall, the proposed arrangements are considered appropriate to the site's sustainable location, prioritising pedestrian and cycle access whilst making efficient use of the available external space.

8.0 Potential Impacts and Mitigation (Continued)

6. Sustainability

The proposal incorporates a fabric-first approach to improving the energy efficiency of **7 Crown Street**, prioritising retention and reuse of the existing building structure in line with sustainable development principles. Measures such as enhanced internal insulation, draught proofing and sensitive replacement of windows (where shown) will be introduced to improve thermal performance without causing harm to the building's listed features. These measures are a means of improving resilience to climate change.

Energy-efficient lighting and appropriate energy-efficient heating systems will be considered as part of the detailed design to reduce operational energy demand. Given the listed status of the building, all sustainability interventions will be carefully designed to ensure they are reversible where possible and do not adversely affect the architectural or historic significance of the property.

By reusing the existing building fabric and introducing sensitive energy efficiency measures, the proposal reduces embodied carbon associated with new development and contributes to the long-term environmental performance and resilience of the building and the wider town centre.

7. House B – Alterations to Existing Chimneybreast

The proposed conversion of House B requires the removal of the remaining chimneybreast structure at ground-floor level to accommodate the proposed kitchen and WC facilities. Whilst the retention of existing historic fabric has been carefully considered, retaining the chimneybreast in this location would result in an excessively constrained kitchen area, significantly compromising the functionality and usability of the proposed dwelling.

The provision of a ground-floor WC is also considered an important element of the proposed accommodation, providing convenient and accessible facilities at entrance level without the need to use the first-floor bathroom.

The removal of the ground-floor chimneybreast is therefore considered a necessary and proportionate intervention to facilitate the successful residential conversion of the building. The remaining chimneybreast at first-floor level will be retained, with an appropriate structural support solution designed by a structural engineer to ensure its stability and minimise intervention into the surrounding historic fabric. Refer to Heritage Statement paragraph 5.19 for further details.

9.0 Access for Future Occupants

Access to the proposed residential accommodation will be provided from Crown Street via the existing side passage and rear courtyard. Two new internal staircases are proposed within Houses C and D to provide access to the upper-floor accommodation, whilst House B will incorporate a reconfigured replacement staircase within the existing stair opening.

The proposed staircase arrangements have been carefully considered to provide safe and practical circulation for future occupants whilst minimising intervention into the historic fabric of the listed buildings. Recognising that the insertion and reconfiguration of staircases may have structural implications, the detailed design will be developed in consultation with a structural engineer and conservation specialist to minimise the impact on existing floors, walls and historic structural elements. The staircases will be positioned within less sensitive areas wherever possible, with careful consideration given to the retention of original fabric and the use of independent structural supports where appropriate. Any necessary opening-up works and structural alterations will be carefully managed to ensure that interventions are limited to those essential for the proposed conversion and are reversible wherever practicable.

A replacement external staircase is proposed to provide dedicated access to Apartment A. This element has been carefully designed to be introduced in a sensitive manner, with full regard to the traditional character of 7 Crown Street and its setting within the conservation area. The stair will be appropriately scaled and positioned to minimise visual impact and will be detailed using materials and finishes that are sympathetic to the existing building, ensuring it reads as a subordinate and considered addition rather than a dominant feature. Overall, the design ensures that the external staircase provides necessary functional access while preserving the architectural integrity and historic appearance of the property.

10.0 Energy & Services

Enhancement to walls
The existing building is lacking adequate insulation throughout, which contributes to significant thermal inefficiency. This results in high heat loss during colder months and increased energy consumption for heating and cooling. The absence of effective insulation leads to poor temperature regulation within the building, compromising its overall energy performance and increasing operational costs.

The proposal aims to significantly enhance the building's energy efficiency by installing internal wall insulation and providing additional insulation to the roofs. These improvements will reduce heat loss, enhance thermal comfort, and contribute to better temperature regulation throughout the building. The added insulation will not only improve the overall energy performance but also reduce the need for excessive heating and cooling, leading to lower energy consumption and operational costs.

The insulation will be applied internally to avoid any detrimental effects on the historic fabric of the building. This approach ensures that the building's exterior and architectural integrity are preserved.

Enhancement to floors
Existing floor constructions will be sensitively upgraded, where necessary, to achieve appropriate acoustic and fire performance for the proposed residential use. The detailed construction build-ups and finishes will be developed during the detailed design stage, with particular consideration given to minimising intervention into the historic fabric whilst meeting the relevant Building Regulations requirements.

Services
Careful consideration will be given to the routing of all building services, including electrical, plumbing, heating and drainage installations, to ensure they are integrated in a discreet and coordinated manner that minimises impact on the historic fabric. Service runs will be planned to utilise existing voids and previously altered areas wherever possible, avoiding unnecessary intrusion into original structural elements. The scheme will seek to meet current Building Regulations requirements for residential use as far as practicably possible, including requirements relating to ventilation, drainage and overall building performance, while maintaining a sensitive approach that respects the character and significance of the listed building.

Heating and Hot Water Strategy
The heating and hot water systems for the proposed residential dwellings have not yet been finalised and will be considered as part of the detailed design and Building Regulations stage. The selection of appropriate energy-efficient heating systems will take account of the improved thermal performance of the building, the individual requirements of the proposed dwellings and the constraints associated with the conversion of the existing historic buildings.

Consideration will be given to suitable low-carbon heating technologies where technically and practically feasible, with particular regard to the potential visual, acoustic and physical impact of any associated equipment on the Grade II listed building and its setting.

The final heating and hot water installations will be designed to comply with the applicable requirements of Building Regulations Part L, while ensuring that interventions into the historic building fabric are minimised.

11.0 Upgrading of Building Fabric (Insulating walls and Roofs)

Where internal wall insulation is proposed, the materials and finishes will be carefully selected to ensure compatibility with the existing historic building fabric. The intention is to incorporate breathable, vapour-permeable insulation systems with appropriate lime-based plaster finishes and breathable decorative coatings, allowing the existing walls to manage moisture effectively.

The final insulation specification, thicknesses and associated finishes will be determined during the detailed design stage, informed by appropriate hygrothermal assessment and specialist advice, to ensure that improvements to thermal performance are balanced with the conservation of the historic building fabric.

The proposed roof insulation strategy seeks to improve the thermal performance of the building whilst respecting the character and traditional construction of its historic fabric. Where roof slopes are accessible and intervention can be undertaken without harm to significant historic features, suitable breathable and vapour-permeable insulation materials, such as wood fibre, may be incorporated between and, where appropriate, beneath the existing rafters.

The final insulation specification and construction build-up will be determined during the detailed design stage, informed by appropriate condensation risk and hygrothermal assessments. Particular consideration will be given to moisture management, ventilation and the compatibility of materials to ensure the long-term performance and durability of the existing roof structure.

In areas where existing flat ceilings are to be replaced or renewed, insulation may be introduced at ceiling level to improve thermal performance whilst minimising intervention within the historic roof structure. All proposed works will be carefully detailed to retain significant historic timbers and architectural features wherever possible.

All insulation materials will be selected for their compatibility with traditional construction methods, with a preference for breathable and hygroscopic materials that support the building's natural moisture balance. The works will be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to historic fabric, retaining existing structural timbers and historic features wherever possible. Through this approach, the proposals will deliver improved energy efficiency and occupant comfort whilst preserving the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

11.1 Services – Routes and Penetrations

The installation of new building services will be carefully designed and coordinated with the appointed services engineer to ensure that any impact on the historic fabric and significance of the listed building is minimised. The routing of new pipework, cabling, drainage, ventilation and associated service infrastructure will be developed alongside the architectural design to identify the least intrusive solutions and to make use of existing voids, service routes and areas of previous alteration wherever possible.

The overarching principle will be to minimise intervention in historic fabric and avoid unnecessary loss of original material. Existing floorboards will be carefully lifted and reinstated where access beneath floors is required, rather than introducing new openings. Service runs will be routed to avoid cutting through historic structural elements, with particular care taken to ensure that timber joists, beams, roof structures and other significant fabric are not unnecessarily altered. Where penetrations through walls, floors or ceilings are unavoidable, these will be limited to the minimum size and number necessary to accommodate the required services.

The location of soil and vent pipes (SVPs), external plant, vents and associated service terminations will be carefully considered to minimise their visual impact on the building's historic character and appearance. Such elements will be positioned discreetly, preferably within less sensitive locations or areas of previous alteration and coordinated to avoid prominent historic elevations and architectural features wherever practicable.

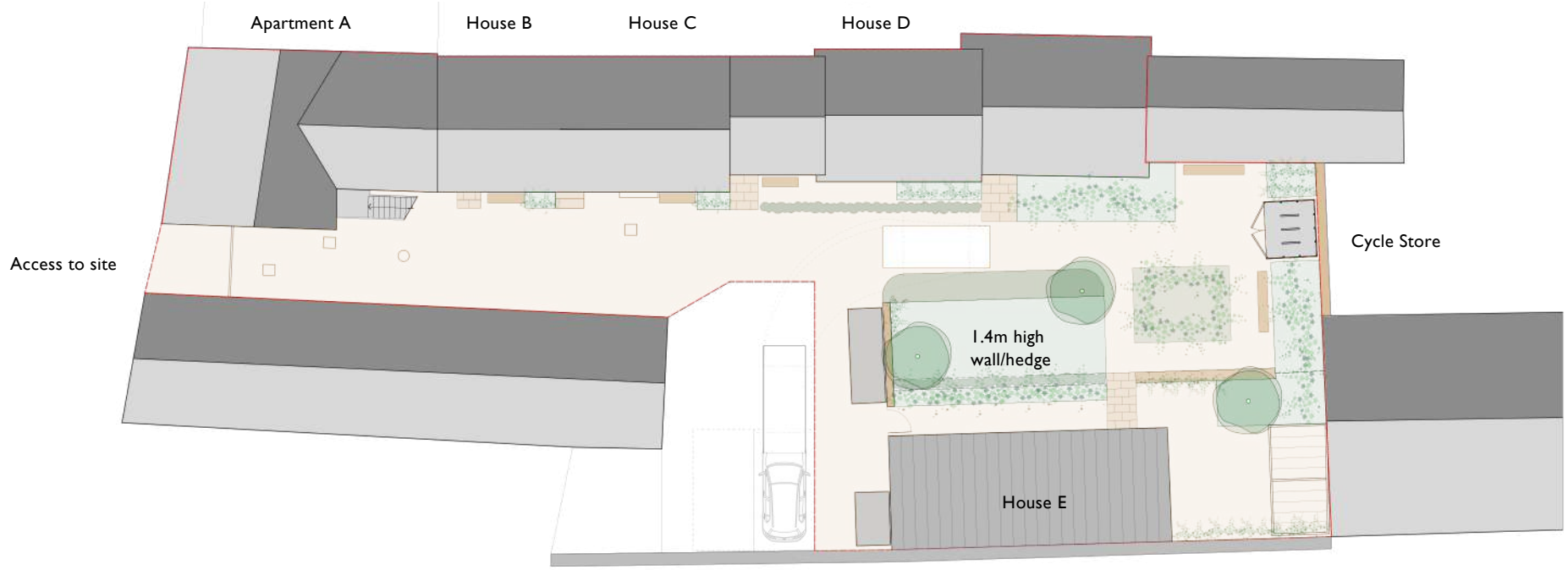
Any new pipework, cabling or ductwork will be installed using methods that minimise disturbance to surrounding historic materials, with all interventions designed to be as reversible as reasonably possible. Through careful planning, coordination and detailing, the proposed services strategy will enable the building to meet modern operational requirements while ensuring that the loss of historic fabric and the impact on the building's special architectural and historic interest are kept to an absolute minimum.

12.0 Courtyard & Landscaping

The proposed landscaping strategy has been developed by Jamie Buchanan (Landscape Architect) to create an attractive and functional external environment that provides both communal and private amenity space whilst respecting the historic character and setting of the site. A communal bin store will be provided to serve Apartment A and Houses B, C and D, together with a secure communal cycle store for the proposed residential development. House E will benefit from its own dedicated bin storage facilities positioned adjacent to the dwelling, along with a side access gate to provide additional privacy and security.

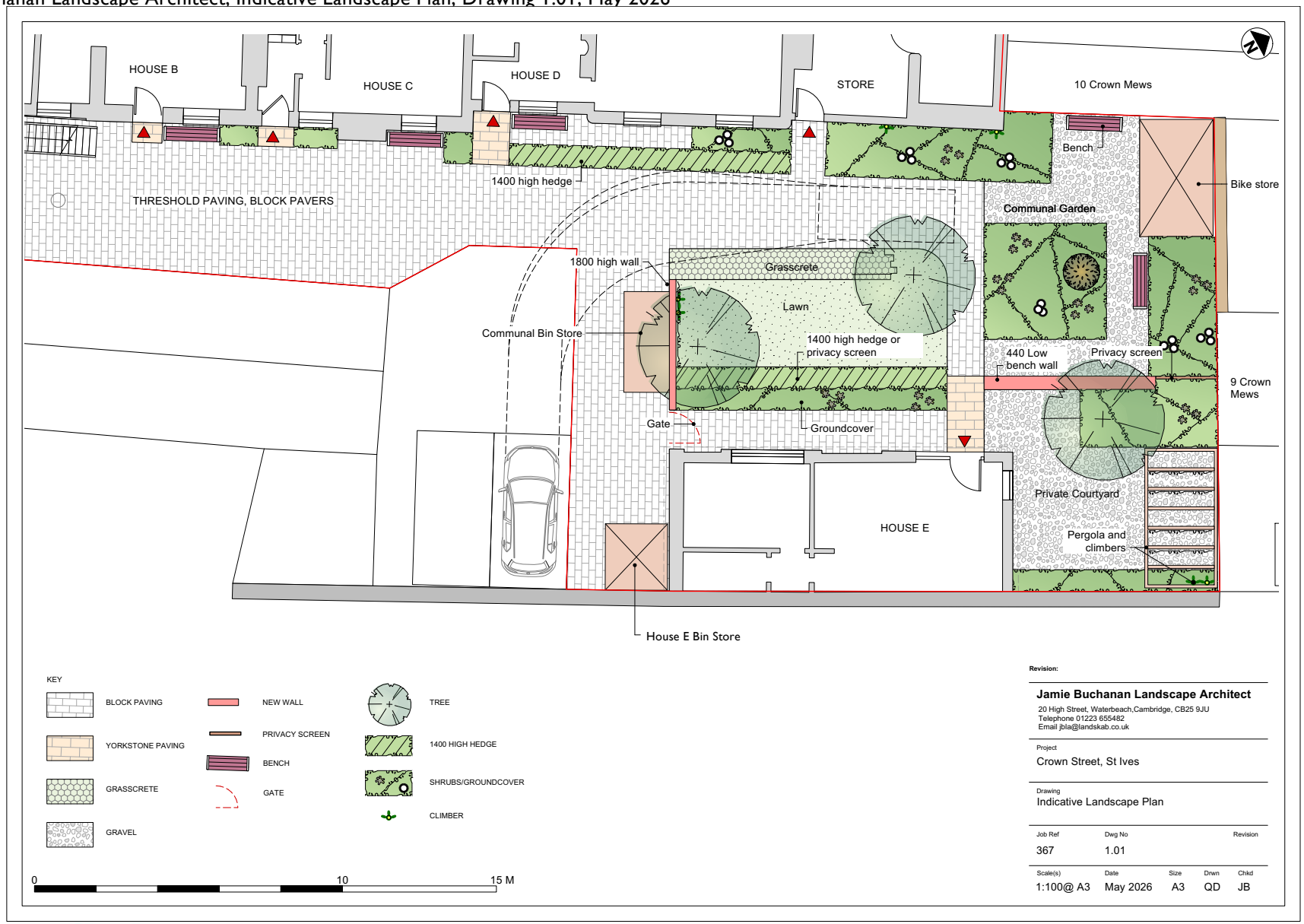
The communal garden will provide shared amenity space for residents of Apartment A and Houses B, C and D, with carefully positioned planting and hedging to create areas of privacy whilst maintaining an open and welcoming character. A hedge or privacy screen, approximately 1.4m in height, is proposed adjacent to the bedroom of House E to provide an appropriate degree of screening without the visual dominance of a solid boundary wall. The final planting arrangements and screening details will be developed in accordance with the proposed landscape design.

A low bench wall is proposed adjacent to the communal garden to provide a subtle transition between private and shared spaces, maintaining a sense of separation whilst allowing visual connections between the residential accommodation and the landscaped courtyard. Overall, the proposals seek to balance privacy, security and amenity whilst creating an attractive and cohesive setting for future residents.



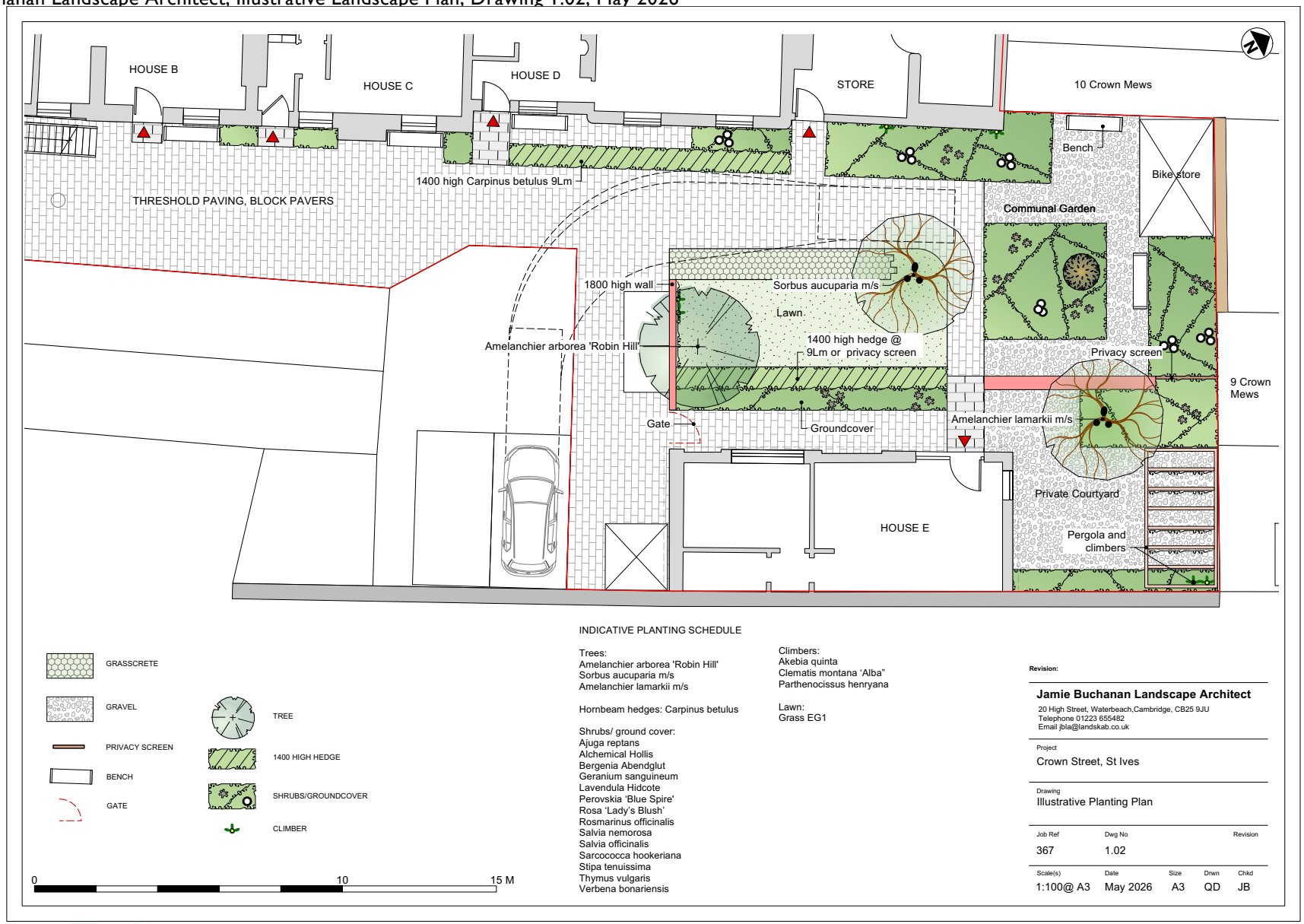
12.1 Indicative Landscape Plan

Jamie Buchanan Landscape Architect, Indicative Landscape Plan, Drawing 1.01, May 2026



12.2 Illustrative Planting Plan

Jamie Buchanan Landscape Architect, Illustrative Landscape Plan, Drawing 1.02, May 2026



Graham Handley Architects

13.0 Conclusion

The proposals provide a sensitive and sustainable approach to the reuse of 7 Crown Street and the associated former Courthouse and Offices, securing the continued beneficial use of these Grade II listed buildings while retaining the established retail frontage to Crown Street.

The proposed five residential units are accommodated predominantly within the existing built form, with alterations carefully designed to minimise the loss of significant historic fabric. The removal of unsympathetic later interventions, sensitive repair and upgrading of the existing buildings, replacement of inappropriate roof coverings and considered treatment of the courtyard will improve the appearance, functionality and long-term condition of the site while respecting its contribution to the St Ives Conservation Area.

The proposals make effective use of existing vacant and underutilised buildings in a highly accessible town-centre location, while retaining the commercial frontage and introducing appropriate residential accommodation. Overall, the development provides a conservation-led approach to securing the long-term viable use of the site while preserving its architectural and historic significance.

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