



THE MANOR STREET REGENERATION, BRAINTREE

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIONS REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Braintree District Council aims to provide strong leadership on the economic development of the District and there is a clear priority to support new investment in both the local economy and community infrastructure.

As part of this investment strategy, the Town Centre Regeneration Project at Manor Street is intended to provide substantial town centre enhancements. The brief for the project includes the provision of a new health facility that is fit-for-purpose in the long-term, which will make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of Braintree's growing population. This will be supplemented by the addition of new retail and restaurant premises which will enhance the existing town centre and improve Braintree's night-time economy. Improvements to the local bus station, better parking arrangements and improved public realm offer the opportunity to re-integrate this corner of Braintree Town Centre and provide an appropriate setting for local cultural buildings including the Town Hall, Braintree Museum and the Public Library.

AHR were appointed by BDC to develop design proposals for the Braintree Town Centre Regeneration project, which comprises the following original elements:

- The redevelopment of a BDC-owned site between Manor Street, Victoria Street and Fairfield Road with a total area of approximately 0.7 hectares;
- To provide a landmark town centre scheme of high-quality design;
- Provision of a GP surgery and pharmacy at first floor and part ground floor levels of approximately 1,400 sq. m. Net;
- Provision of four retail/restaurant units at ground floor level totalling approximately 1,300 sq. m. Net area
- Re-provision of a total of approximately 180 car parking spaces (including 40 for the exclusive use of the GP surgery);
- Integration of an improved six bay bus interchange;
- Public realm enhancements;

In addition to the above, the project provides an opportunity to complement the wider vision and projects for the improvement and upgrading of the Town Centre with particular attention to the proposals for the nearby Market Square.

In the course of the development of the project proposals, the brief and content of the scheme has been developed to include the following:

TO BE DEVELOPED SUBSEQUENT TO BRIEF AND SCHEME DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Planning Context

Braintree lies in an important strategic position on the A120 in North Essex (see Image 1), being located on the cross-route between Harwich, Felixstowe, Ipswich and Colchester in the east and the M11 and Stansted Airport in the west. The town is therefore well placed for expansion. However, the success of Braintree Freeport and the growth of edge of town development is endangering the viability and success of the town centre.

Braintree's core strategy sets out the following town centre guidance which will inform the objectives of this project (Image 2 and 4):

6.25 The Core Strategy objective relating to town centres is:

To maintain and develop vibrant and prosperous main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, by encouraging new development and regeneration schemes that support their function as major service centres, with a range of good quality employment, shops, services and cultural provision.

6.26 The regeneration of the market towns and key service village centres is a high priority. The District has three town centres - Braintree, Halstead and Witham. Braintree is the largest town centre with a wider range of shops and services than at Halstead and Witham. The town centres are supported by a network of district and local centres. Braintree Freeport and Braintree Retail Park together form the largest out of centre retail area in the District. The District falls within the sphere of influence of other larger sub-regional centres, particularly Chelmsford and Colchester.

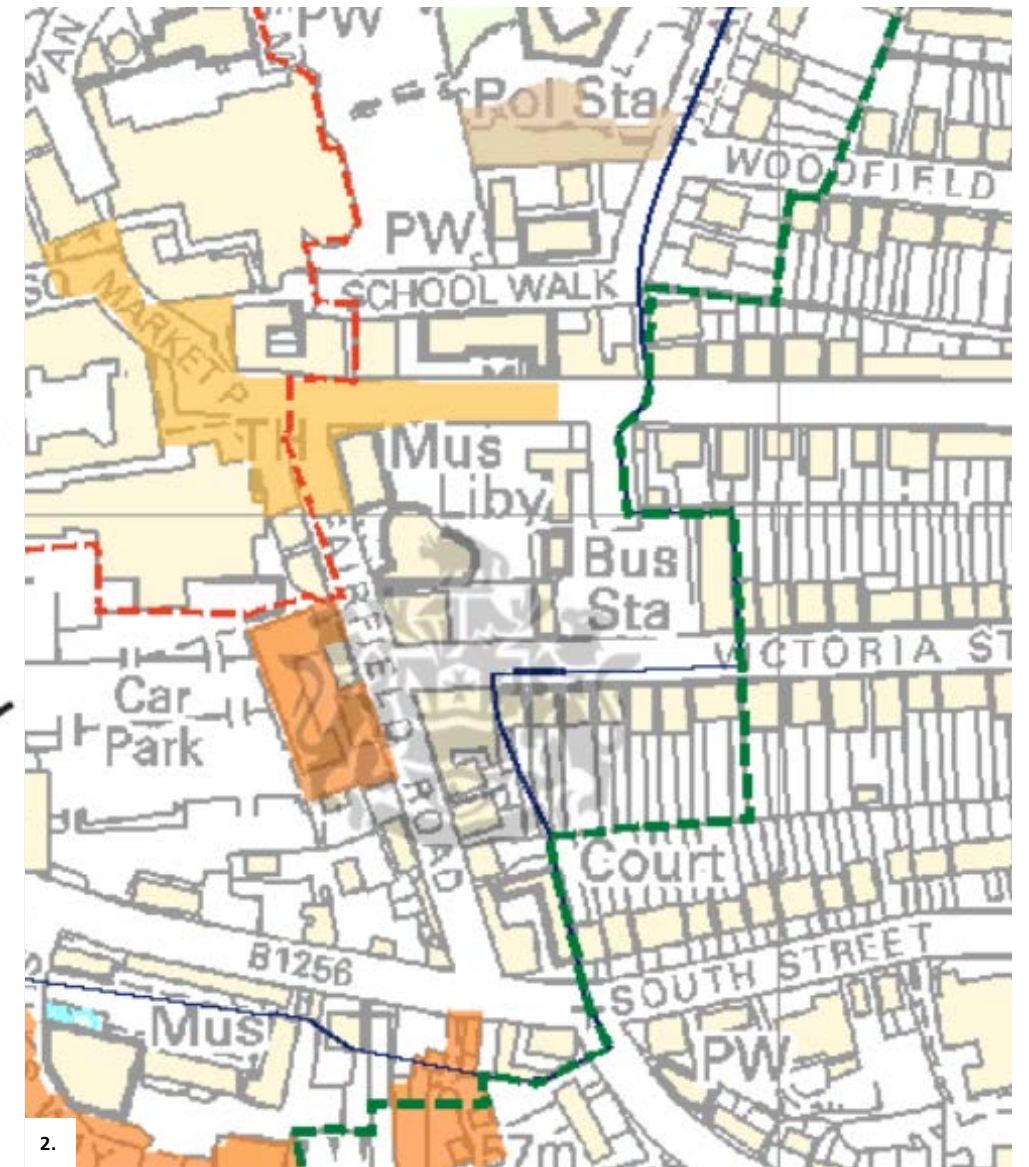
6.27 It is a key priority to maintain and improve the vitality and viability of the District's town centres and regeneration initiatives are proposed for each of them. In planning for the future of our town centres and retailing we have had regard to the North Essex Retail Study 2006 and its update in 2010, PPS4 published in December 2009 and the Braintree Town Centre Analysis dated April 2009.

6.28 For Braintree our studies have identified a need for additional comparison goods floorspace over the LDF period to 2026 and our main priority is to strengthen the comparison goods offer in the town centre. Two opportunities have been identified where additional retail floorspace could be provided - to the east of the Town Hall Centre and to the west of George Yard Shopping Centre. It is considered that these two locations should take priority for accommodating any additional floorspace in the town as part of mixed use developments. Only limited capacity has been identified for additional convenience retailing in Braintree. A discount foodstore has recently opened at Rayne Road. There are existing additional commitments for extensions to the stores at Great Notley and Kings Park Village. Any proposals for new and/or extended convenience and comparison goods floorspace will be assessed on their merits against the sequential test set out in PPS4 and impact assessment threshold set out in policy CS6, taking account of the likely cumulative effect of recent permissions, developments under construction and completed developments.

Previous proposals for the site were previously put forward by the developer Henry Boot (Image 3). Whilst having similar regeneration aspirations to these proposals, this scheme was not taken forwards and the opportunity has been taken to wholly reassess the potential of the site from first principles



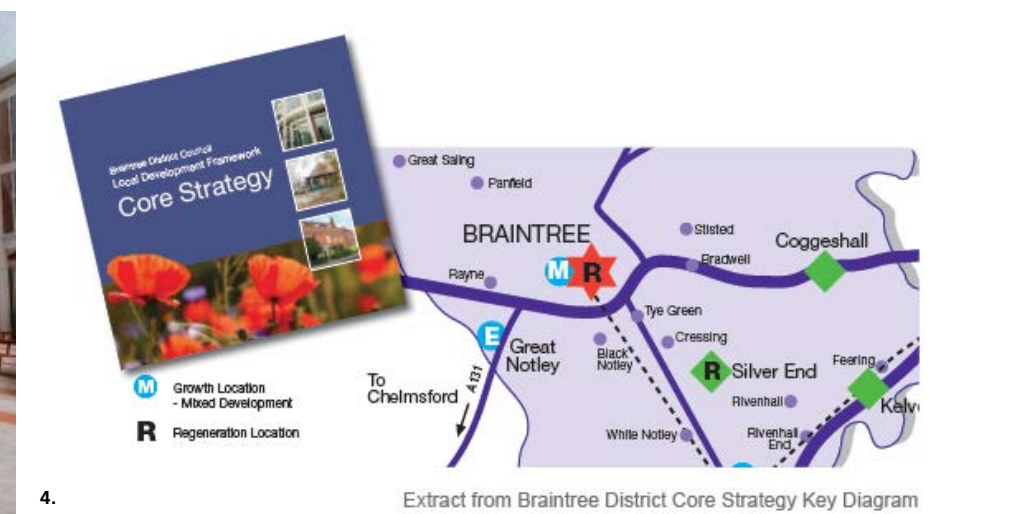
1.



2.



3.



4.

Extract from Braintree District Core Strategy Key Diagram

The background image is a photograph of a street scene in Braintree, UK. It features a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent clock tower on the right side. The clock tower has a domed top and a clock face. In the foreground, there are market stalls with awnings, and several people are walking around. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2 SITE ANALYSIS

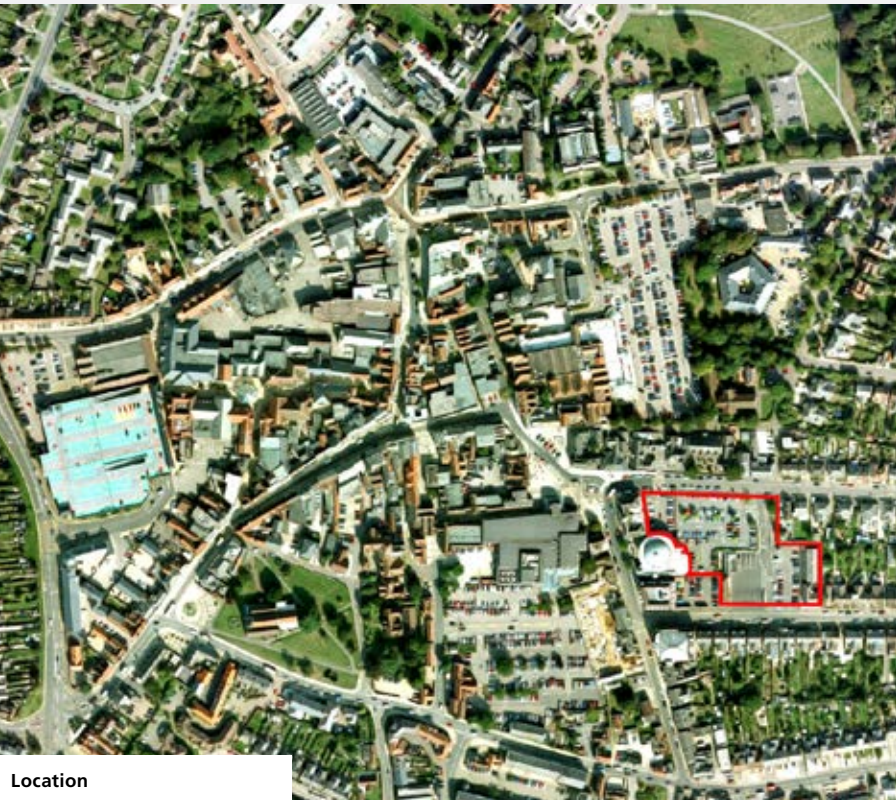
2.1 Location

The regeneration project site is located in the south-eastern corner of the town centre immediately adjacent to the Town hall and Public Library.

Manor Street and Victoria Street connect the town centre to the east but are not main vehicle access routes into the centre.

The Market Place provides an important point of focus within the town centre, but has become more peripheral subsequent to development of the George Square shopping centre and the contraction of the town centre retail offer.

The public buildings surrounding the site represent Braintree's main cultural facilities and include the Town Museum and the listed Town Hall. Taken as a whole, the existing context offers a high degree of potential for complimentary development and urban improvement.



Location



2 SITE ANALYSIS

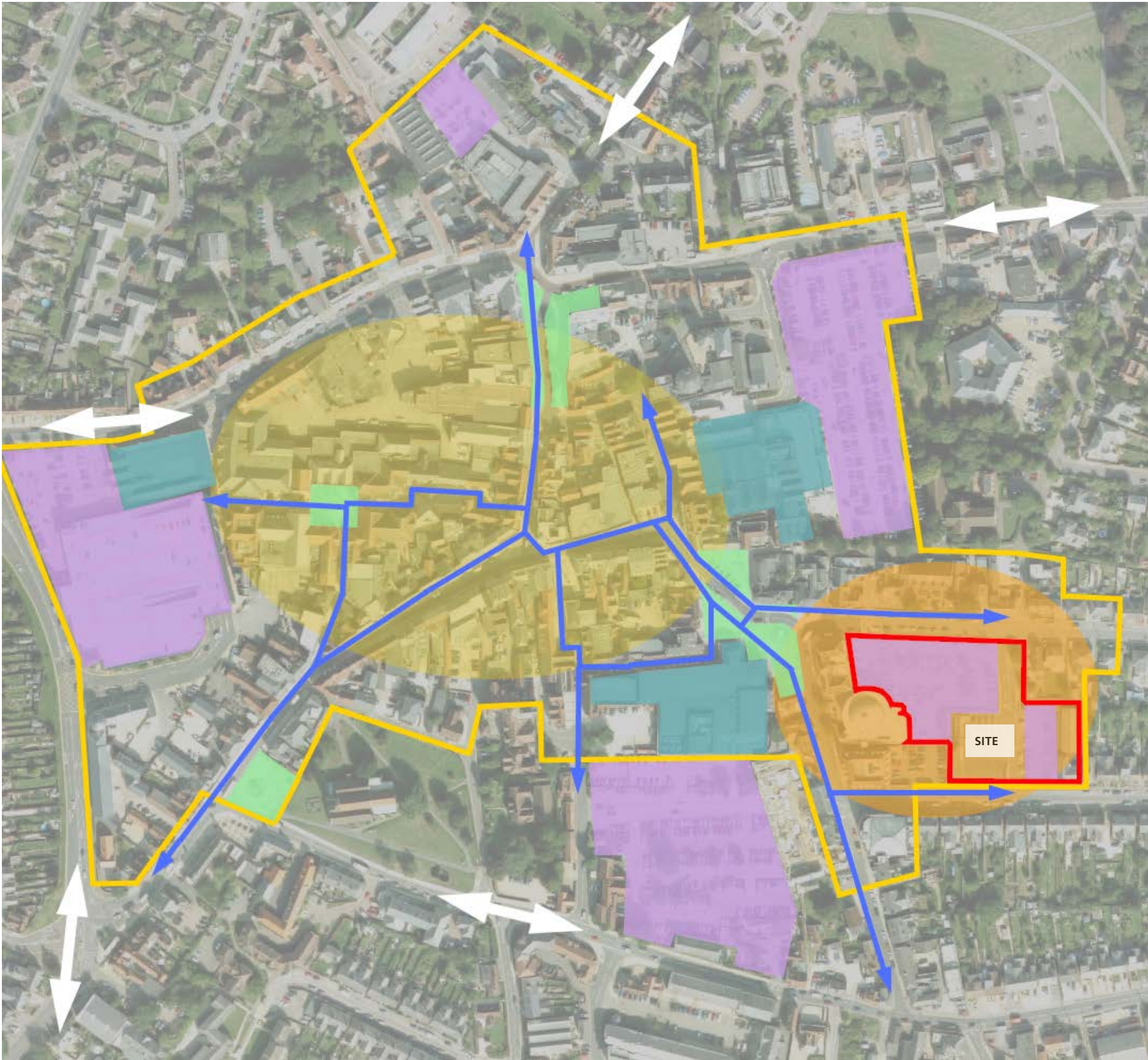
2.2 Local Character and Town Centre Context

The adjacent diagram provides an overview of the site within the broader town centre context. The following outlines some initial considerations arising from this exercise.

The site lies in the extreme south eastern corner of the town centre and outside of the core retail area. However, the mix of existing cultural uses offers a clear opportunity to establish a specific identity and character to the area around the site, perhaps as an emerging cultural quarter.

Substantial car parking is located adjacent to each of the three large town centre supermarkets with the Manor Street parking providing a comparatively smaller capacity. The strategic assessment of the use of town centre parking and any potential for concentrating increased provision on existing sites will inform the options appraisal for the town centre regeneration site.

Current pedestrian routes follow Manor Street and Victoria Road. There is potential for creating a route or series of routes through the site linking cultural facilities and the bus station to the town centre as well as to the new development itself. Cycling infrastructure is currently limited, but could easily link to the site if developed in the future.



2 SITE ANALYSIS

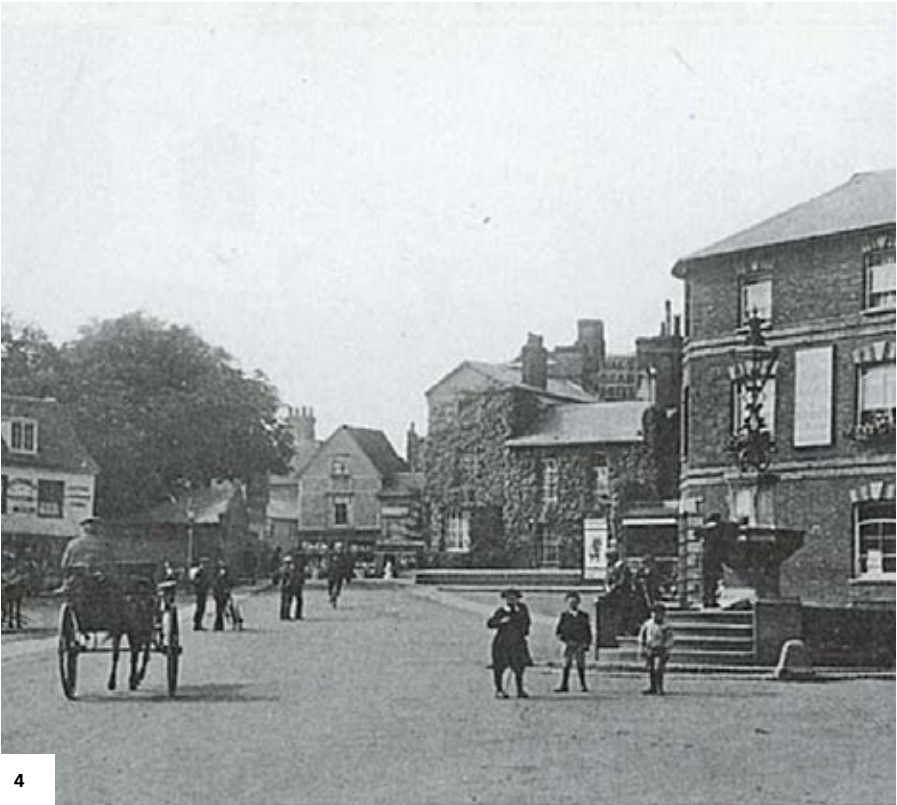
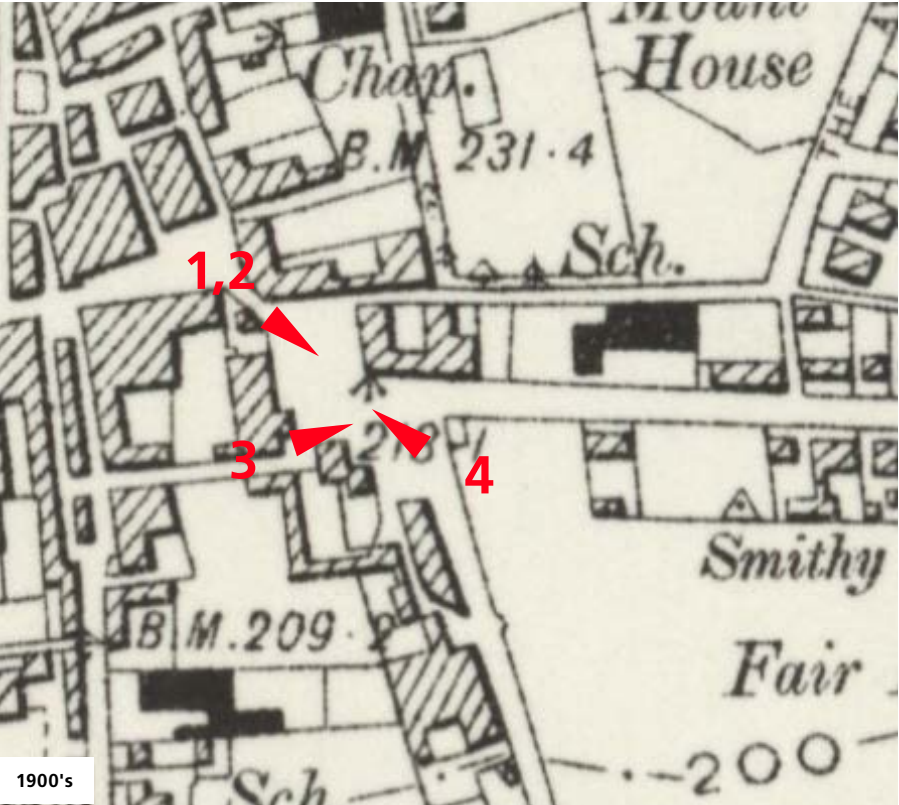
2.3 Historical Context

In order to understand the full urban realm potential for the study area, an outline analysis of the historical context has been undertaken.

1, 2. The Fair Field was a large open space which previously stretched from the town edge up to the Market Place. Victoria Street and its housing was built over the Field which had shrunk to a small vestigial area by 1900

3. The Manor Street School was constructed towards the end of the nineteenth century in a neo-gothic style. Providing a significant addition to the townscape when viewed from the lower part of the Market Place

4. The rural character of Braintree was still very evident in the late nineteenth century with traditional buildings and mature trees surrounding the Market Place



2 SITE ANALYSIS

1. The Town Hall was constructed in the late 1920's on the site of the last open part of Fair Field. This image indicates the original railings along Manor Street which were later removed

2. The view along Manor Street from the Market Place in the 1950's shows the closer proximity of houses which were later removed. However, even at this point, street definition on the southern side was poor and street trees conspicuously absent

3. 1930's view from the Town Hall clock tower looking into the Market Place showing the still largely unchanged town centre buildings and streetscape

4. 1930's view from the Town Hall clock tower looking north east over Manor Street showing the open space behind the Town hall being used at this time as a school playing field. The first pair of semi-detached houses on the south side of Manor Street were later removed, presumably for the creation of the bus station and car parking.



2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.4 Visual Site Assessment

APPROACH AND ENTRY TO SITE FROM MARKET PLACE



1. View along Manor Street from Market Place with Town Hall to right. The lack of street enclosure behind the town hall signifies the apparent edge of the town centre



2 Listed gateway to the Town Hall car park from Manor Street. The original railings above the walls have been removed



3. View towards Manor Street from the main site access on Manor Street. The public realm environment is of poor quality in this area.



4. View of the NW corner of the site adjacent to the bus station entrance with exposed boundary fence, weak building frontage and vehicle priority environment



5. View of bus station from Manor Street indicating the approximately 3m change of level down to Victoria Street



6. View of the eastern elevations of the Town Hall and Town Library from the public car park which dominates the setting of the buildings

2 SITE ANALYSIS

MOVEMENT THROUGH SITE AND EXIT TO VICTORIA STREET



7. View of potential public route leading from car park between the Town Hall and Library towards Fairfield Road



8. View within bus station area looking north indicating approximately 2m retaining wall and large hardstanding area



9. View looking into site from Victoria Street showing existing bus station facilities and car parking providing a poorly defined street edge dominated by vehicle movement



10. View of existing bus shelter within bus station adjacent to Victoria Street. The bus station is often busy and used by a number of different operators



11. View from within site looking east towards the existing community centre building which could be removed as part of any new redevelopment



12. View of the SE corner of the site showing the street frontage of the community centre and the open street frontage of the car park and bus station behind

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.5 Urban Context Assessment

IN PROXIMITY TO SITE



1. View from Market place towards the Town Hall, one of the best known images of Braintree, indicating a homogeneity of urban scale, materiality and level of detail



2 Listed wall and gateway in front of the Town Library in Fairfield Road demonstrating a warm palette of traditional materials combined with the benefit of street trees



3. The old Post Office (now the Job Centre) and old Palace Cinema (now a public house) provide a pocket of larger urban scale of mixed styles united by the use of similar traditional materials



4. The Town Museum in Manor Street (previously a school), also built of red brick with a slate roof and stone details in harmony with other surrounding cultural buildings



5. View of Manor Street looking west towards the town centre. The mixed scale of housing has an informal, semi-rural character, further emphasised by the proliferation of telephone cables



6. Victoria Street, a major late Victorian urban intervention, is of more solidly urban character than Manor Street with repetitive terraces and less street clutter

2 SITE ANALYSIS

TOWN CENTRE



7. Market Place contains sufficient historical buildings to preserve an original urban character and benefits from the ongoing presence of a market



8. The town centre presents a diversity of styles and scales of building typical of a small English country town and retains its medieval street pattern



9. George Yard provides a modern shopping environment with a sympathetic human scale and sequence of pedestrian spaces, but may be drawing footfall away from other streets



10. The scale of building in the town centre lies typically between 2 and 4 storeys, although in some less sensitive locations recent development has reached 5 - 6 storeys



11. Conversion of high quality existing buildings indicates demand for town centre living close to amenities



12. The marginal viability of the town centre for new business and development is evident in some locations, for example in Rayne Road

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.6 Figure Ground Plan - Urban Structure

Key Observations

- The site represents a void within the generally coherent urban structure with a lack of street edge definition
- The site lies at the boundary of the denser medieval town centre street pattern and the less dense surrounding residential streets to the south and east
- The high level of permeability resulting from the town centre's historical network of streets, lanes and passages provides an attractive urban character to the north west of the site
- Alignments of buildings around the Town Hall and Market place area provide human-scaled spaces and potential for sequential wayfinding
- Recent town centre interventions, for example the Tesco supermarket and its car park are of relatively large scale, with some negative impacts on the urban character, coherence and permeability of the town centre

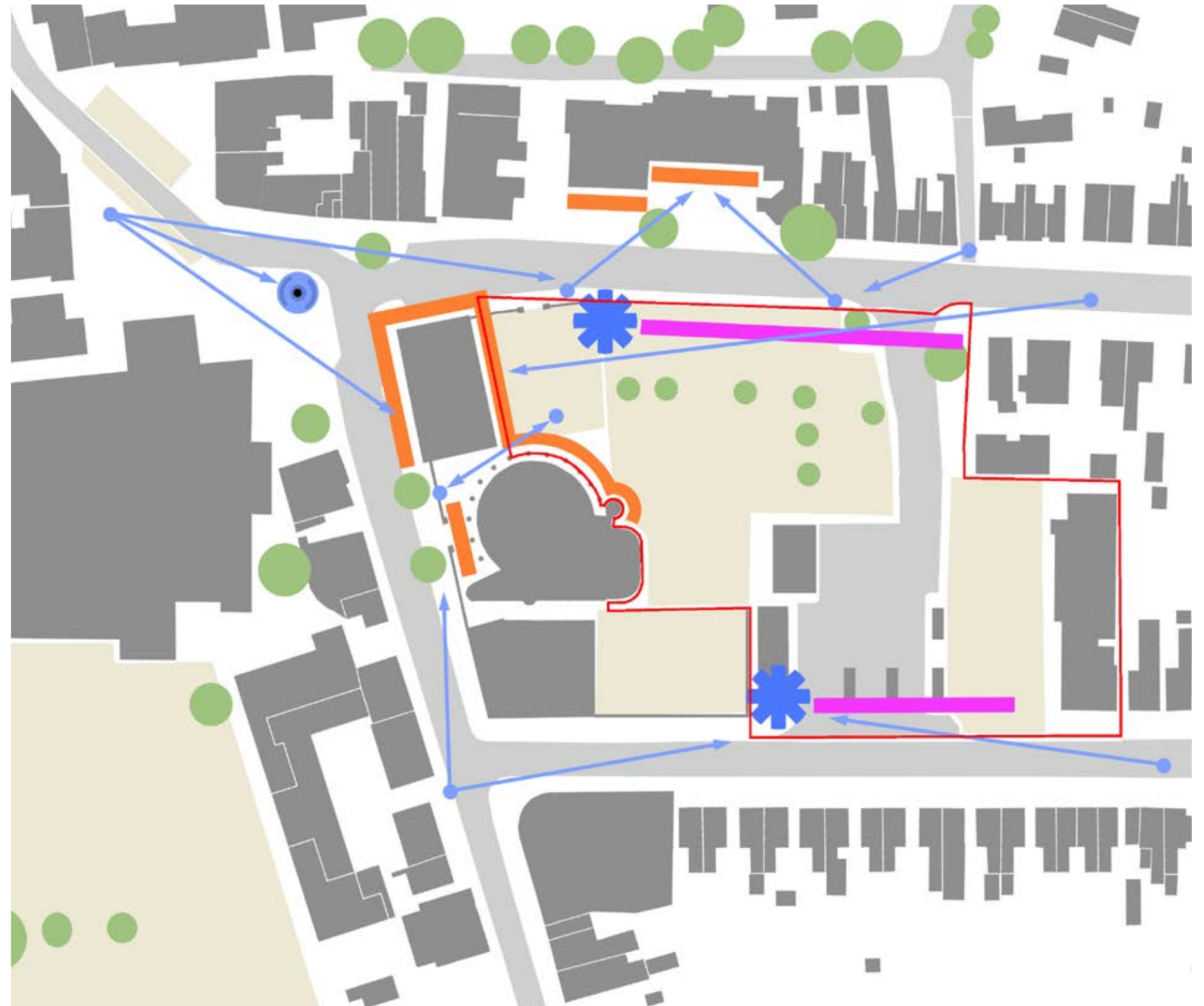


2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.7 Urban Design Analysis

Key Observations

- The Town Hall is an important listed building immediately adjacent to the site
- The view from Market Square towards the Town Hall is of high importance, but is weakened by the isolating effect of the empty site to the rear
- Combined with the Library buildings and the Town Museum, the Town Hall is part of a cluster of high quality municipal buildings requiring a suitable quality of setting
- Manor Street and Victoria Street are poorly defined on either side of the site with car parking, the bus station and hardstanding dominating the local streetscape
- The length of site frontages provides potential for incorporating local orientation or wayfinding markers, potentially designed to enhance the setting of the surrounding municipal buildings
- The routes from Fairfield Road via the Library into the site could be made more attractive and integrated into new proposals



2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.8 Local Land Use

Key Observations

- The site sits within a group of municipal and civic buildings which could be considered a cultural quarter, but with poor cohesion due to the current central positioning of car parking and the bus station
- The site forms a boundary between a largely commercial environment to the north and west and a largely residential area to the south and east
- There is a strong emphasis on food and beverage businesses along Fairfield Road and within the Market Place
- There is some small-scale office provision around the site, primarily in the ex post-office building, now the local job centre
- There is some mixed-use retail with residential accommodation above in the adjacent streets



2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.9 Urban Scale

Key Observations

- The cluster of buildings to either side of Fairfield Road represents the largest concentration of urban-scaled buildings in the centre of Braintree
- For comparison purposes, the heights of these buildings are shown with an equivalent height of 4-5 storeys based on a typical storey height of approximately 3m
- The older, lower buildings lining the west side of Fairfield Road mask the taller residential and supermarket buildings behind
- There is an abrupt drop in scale to the east to two storey residential houses
- The old town centre retains a diversity of scale of between 2 and 4 storeys and thereby retains historical character despite modern interventions
- Following existing precedent, the site appears to offer the capacity to accommodate taller buildings whilst responding to the existing scale of neighbouring buildings around the periphery

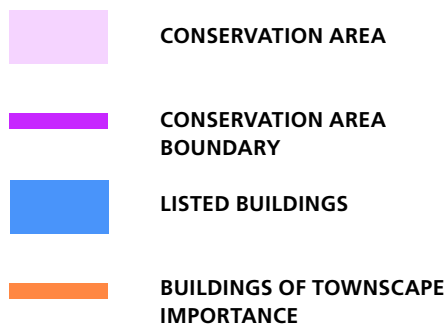


2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.10 Heritage Context

Key Observations

- The site lies predominantly within the Braintree Town Centre Conservation Area
- The Town Hall is Grade two star listed and new development will need to take account of its setting
- The listing of the Town hall includes the neighbouring walls and gateways leading to the car park and Public Library
- Other listed buildings are located around the Market Place
- In addition, a number of buildings adjacent to the site have frontages and architectural detail with significant townscape value. These are indicated on the adjacent diagram
- It is assumed that all trees within the conservation area are protected, although the low number of street trees reduces the issues associated with any potential removals

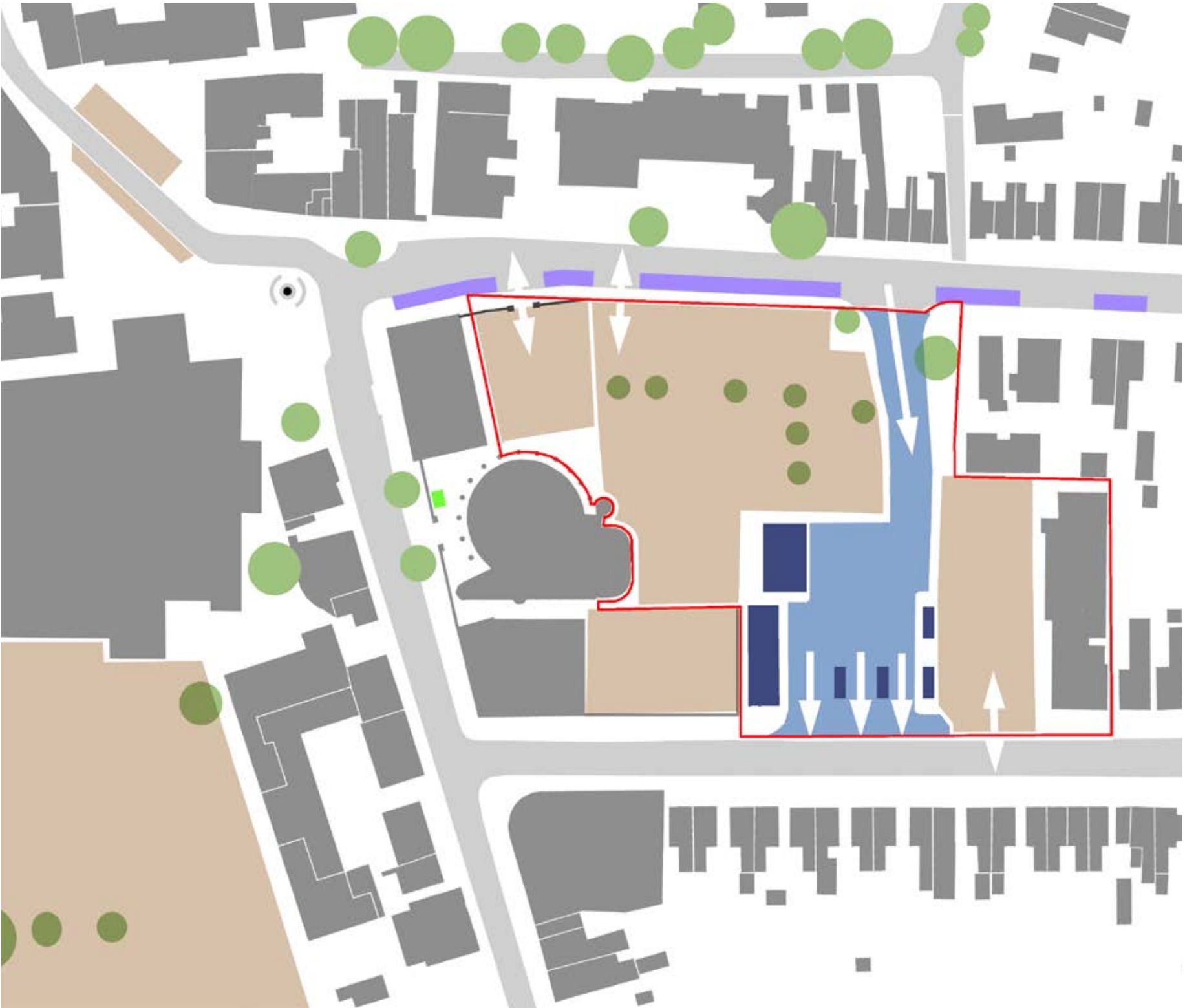
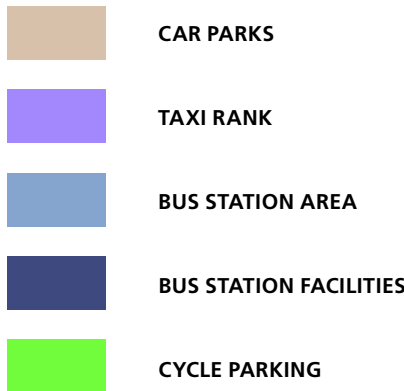


2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.11 Transport Context

Key Observations

- The site is currently dominated by car parking with three separate areas, two accessed from Manor Street and one from Victoria Street
- The bus station is located in a central position between the car parking areas and has a one way circulation system running from north to south
- A taxi rank is located along the full site frontage to Manor Street with interruptions to allow site access
- Manor Street (east to west) and Victoria Street (west to east) are one way streets which may limit ease of access to the site
- No obvious cycle infrastructure is located in or around the site with only two cycle parking spaces located adjacent to the Public Library
- Pedestrian crossovers across the entrance and exit to the bus station are long and potentially hazardous
- There is no control of parking use within the designated Town Hall car park

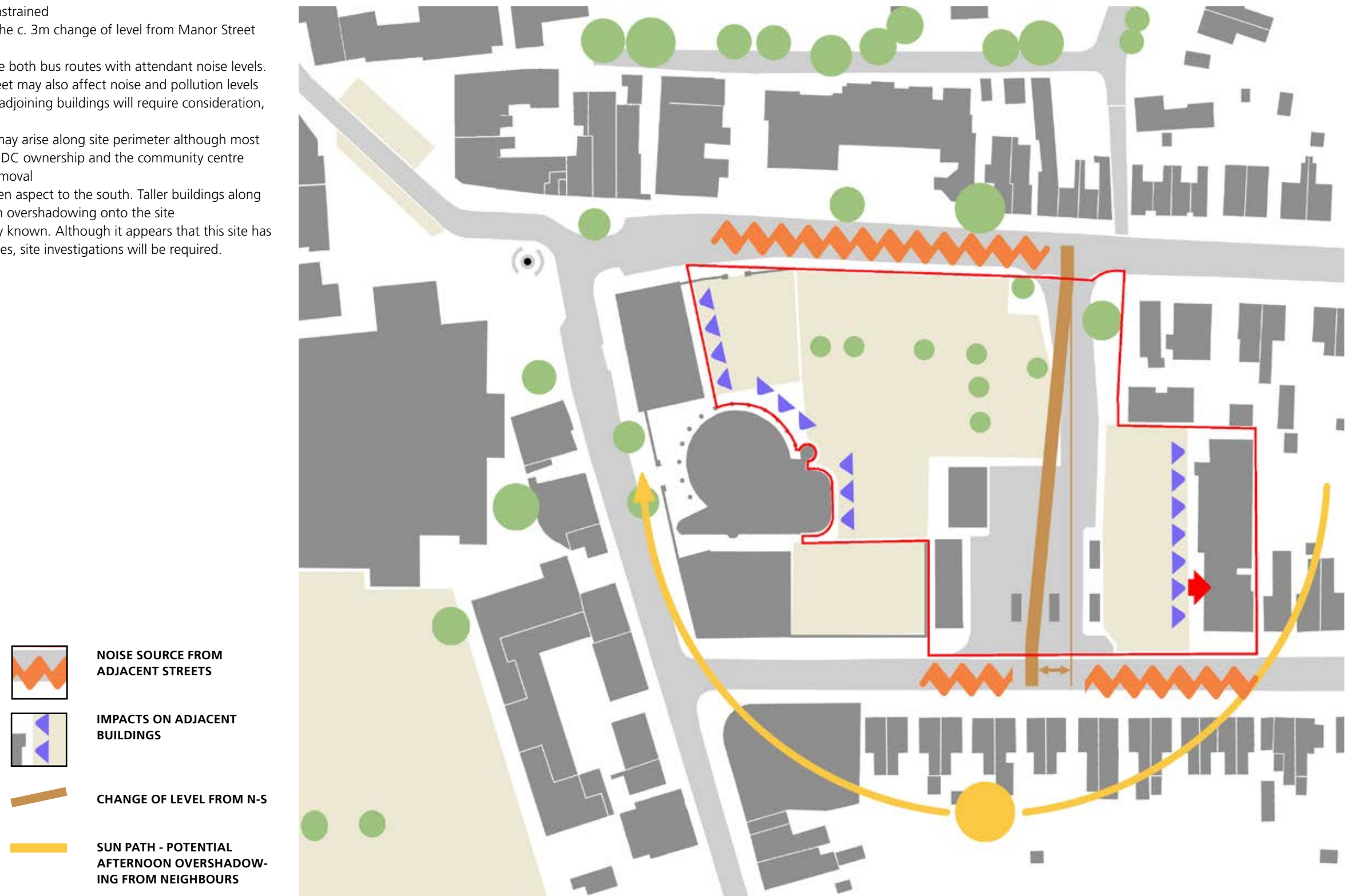


2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.12 Site Constraints

Key Observations

- The site is not heavily physically constrained
- The main topographical feature is the c. 3m change of level from Manor Street down to Victoria Street
- Manor Street and Victoria Street are both bus routes with attendant noise levels. The addition of taxis on Manor Street may also affect noise and pollution levels
- Important physical relationships to adjoining buildings will require consideration, in particular the listed Town Hall
- Some limited rights of light issues may arise along site perimeter although most relevant buildings appear to be in BDC ownership and the community centre building could be considered for removal
- Site orientation is good with an open aspect to the south. Taller buildings along Fairfield Road may create afternoon overshadowing onto the site
- Ground conditions are not currently known. Although it appears that this site has not been used for industrial purposes, site investigations will be required.



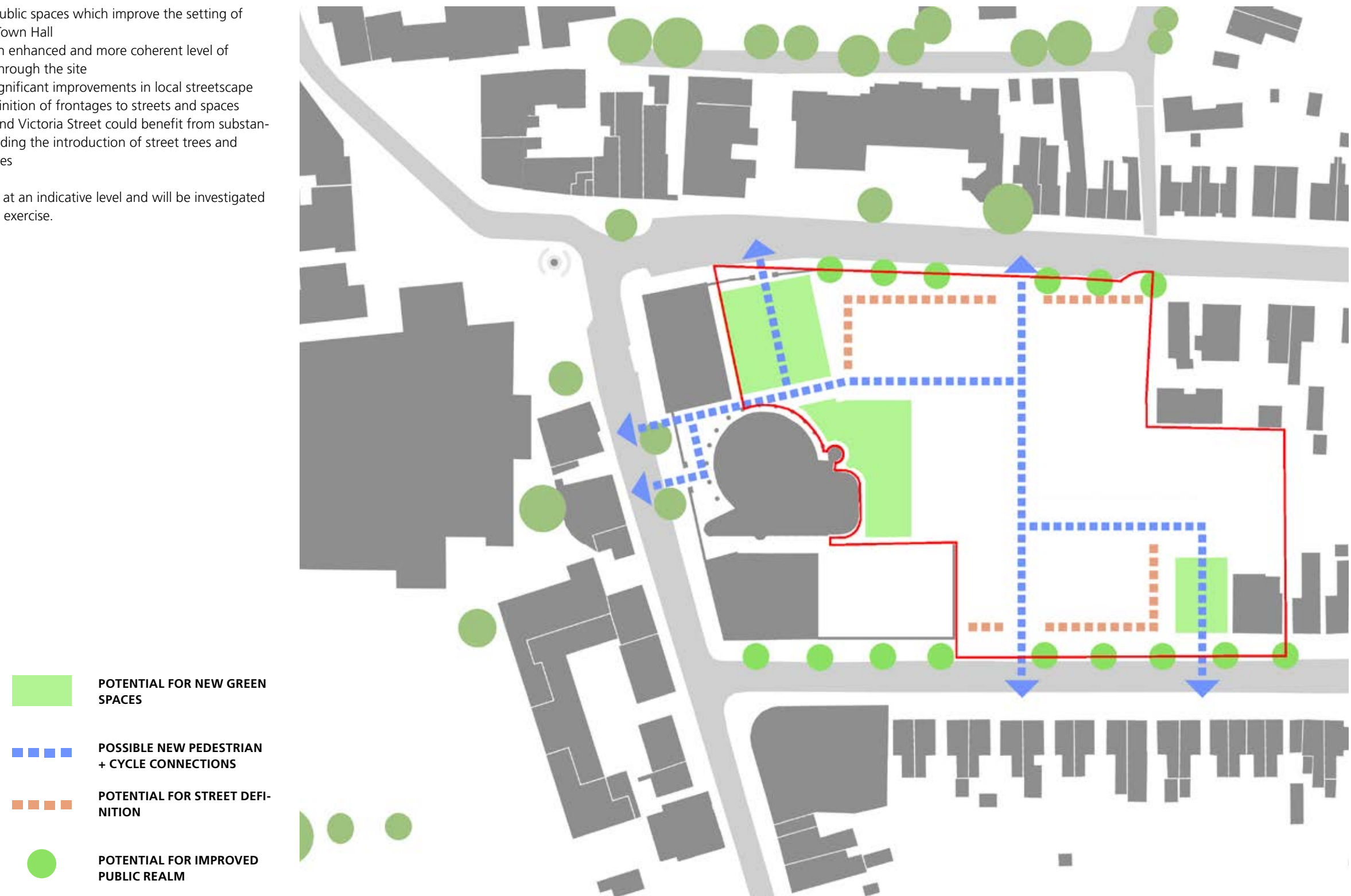
2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.13 Site Layout Opportunities

Key Observations

- There is potential to provide new public spaces which improve the setting of existing buildings, particularly the Town Hall
- There is potential for introducing an enhanced and more coherent level of pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the site
- New development could provide significant improvements in local streetscape character through the stronger definition of frontages to streets and spaces
- The public realm of Manor Street and Victoria Street could benefit from substantial public realm improvement including the introduction of street trees and improved pedestrian safety measures

These opportunities have been identified at an indicative level and will be investigated in detail as part of the options appraisal exercise.



2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.14 Daylight and Sunlight - Existing Site Condition

Key Observations

A 3D model of the site and its context has been used to assess the daylighting and sunlighting performance of the existing site arrangements. The following points were observed:

- The open aspect to the south provides generous access to daylight and sunlight across the site
- At the equinox, very little overshadowing of the site from neighbouring buildings occurs before midday
- Between 1200 and mid afternoon overshadowing of the space immediately behind the Town Hall and Public Library increases to cover the current Town Hall car park
- Significant overshadowing of the site at ground level occurs after 1500 and until evening due to the cluster of larger buildings located along the western edge of the site
- The basic pattern indicated here will be repeated at all times of the year but with reduced impacts in summer and increased impacts in winter

This analysis approach will be used to test daylighting and sunlight access to potential public spaces and buildings as the options and preferred scheme proposals are developed.



September 21 0800



September 21 1000



September 21 0900



September 21 1100

2 SITE ANALYSIS



September 21 1200



September 21 1400



September 21 1600



September 21 1300



September 21 1500



September 21 1700

2 SITE ANALYSIS

2.15 Site Analysis Conclusions

The initial site analysis has investigated and identified a number of key issues and potential scheme objectives which should inform the development of the project brief as well as potential design solutions. The following is a summary of the initial conclusions from this exercise:

Developing the brief

Initial visits and analysis have demonstrated the strong regeneration potential for the Manor Street Car Park site. Whilst the original brief reflects the established town centre needs and presents an important starting point based on the viability exercise carried out by GCW, the full potential of the site should be tested through an options appraisal process which may identify potential for further capacity and uses on the site.

Early discussions and information gathering indicate that there is demand for residential accommodation within the town centre as well as potential for a hotel. If viable, these uses could provide significant knock-on benefits to the town centre.

Importance of an urban design strategy

Any new proposals should be grounded in a thorough urban design strategy which looks beyond the needs of any one particular use such as retail and seeks to provide a holistic solution which benefits the existing surrounding neighbours and town centre development strategy. A synergy of uses could be developed to provide wider benefits to the town centre as well as increasing the viability of the new development itself.

This approach will allow the development of proposals which are designed to create a place of special character, perhaps building on the existing concentration of cultural uses around the site.

The identity of the development should also seek to enhance the character of the town centre through a sensitive and cohesive response to the materiality and form of existing development, rather than introducing an alien or inappropriate form of development or architectural style. This does not rule out a forward-looking, modern response as long as it is sensitive to its context and sustainable in use.

Working within a wider context

The regeneration project will form an important new intervention within the town centre and should be undertaken within a strategic context and co-ordinated with other improvement schemes such as enhancements to the Market Place.

Where possible, consideration should be given to looking outside of the project site for solutions which could provide increased overall benefits to Braintree, for example by looking at parking and transport requirements within a strategic, town centre-wide context.

Close working with the bus operators and relevant authorities is also required to ensure that the replacement bus station is both functionally and spatially optimised

Turning site constraints to advantage

The site is not heavily constrained and where constraints do exist there is potential to turn them to advantage.

- The change of level across the site from north to south could allow for car parking accommodation under other uses.
- The proximity of listed and sensitive buildings could facilitate the creation of a special place of character and purpose and
- The inclusion of the bus station provides guaranteed footfall and activity in and around the site.
- The proximity of residential area can pull people into the town centre more frequently

The following options appraisal will investigate these opportunities.

Developing a Vision

From initial researches and conversations with the Council's team it appears that there is a strong local desire to regenerate the town centre. This is particularly evidenced in the Braintree Portas Pilot videos.

Opportunities for renewal are important and it is clear that the potential of the Manor Street site must be maximised for wider town centre benefit. In order to do this a vision will need to be developed which will evolve as a part of the design process. In order to create a framework for generating this vision, a number of project objectives have been identified. These are set out below, initially for discussion and with a view to becoming the backbone to the project brief.



Braintree is focussed on the need for Town Centre regeneration

2 SITE ANALYSIS

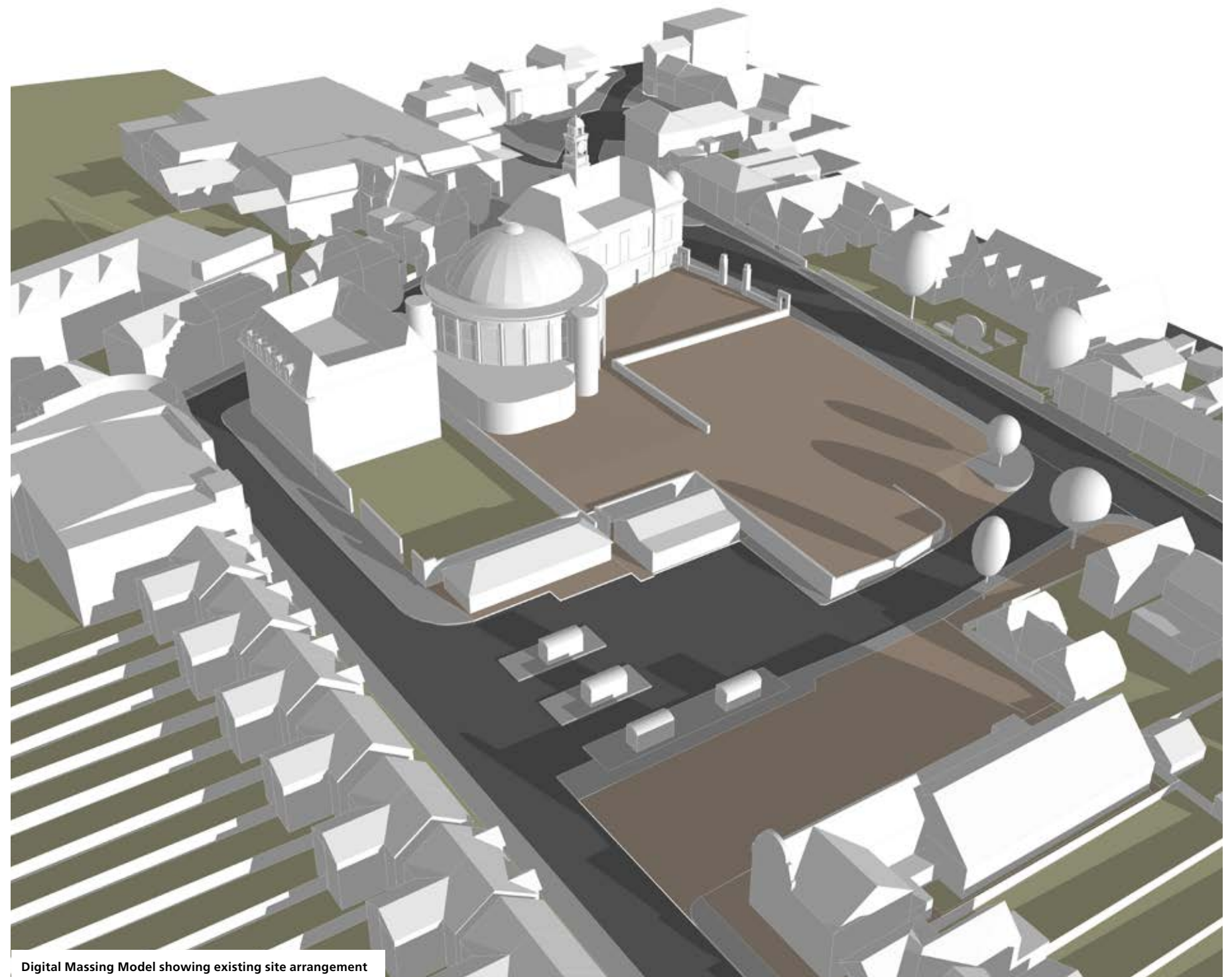
2.16 Establishing Project Objectives

Establishing project objectives at an early stage allows for an ongoing comparative assessment of ideas and proposals throughout the duration of the project. Taken together, a set of key objectives will inform the project vision, enabling clear and strong communication and the sharing of aspirations across the client bodies as well as with stakeholders and interested parties.

The following potential high level objectives have been identified as a result of the initial analysis process:

1. **Create a landmark, high-quality scheme which raises the profile and attractiveness of the town centre**
2. **Develop a viable and deliverable solution with a complimentary and attractive mix of uses which will be enduring and sustainable**
3. **Raise the profile of the existing cultural buildings surrounding the site through an enhanced setting and complimentary uses**
4. **Physically and socially integrate the new proposals into the fabric and structure of the town centre**
5. **Maximise the commercial potential of the site without compromising its quality or importance for town centre regeneration**
6. **Provide a high-profile, state of the art health facility which is not perceived as secondary to the commercial uses of the site**
7. **Provide a holistic transport and access solution which enhances all modes including for pedestrian and cyclists**
8. **Integrate a modern, accessible and attractive bus station facility whilst minimising environmental and visual impacts**
9. **Facilitate a step change in the surrounding quality of the public realm counteracting any perception of this being a peripheral location**
10. **Seek to identify further uses and opportunities which will provide additional value and quality to the scheme**

It is suggested that the project objectives are reviewed and developed at each stage of the design and procurement process to ensure ongoing compliance.



Digital Massing Model showing existing site arrangement



3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1 Footprint Testing Exercise

A number of different potential uses have been suggested for location on the site. In order to test whether these uses can be easily accommodated, and if so what their relative size will be, an initial dimensional footprinting exercise has been undertaken.

The adjacent diagrams are therefore only indicative of scale and do not represent design proposals. The following observations regarding different potential uses were made as part of this exercise.

Proposed Brief Uses - Diagrams 1 and 2

The brief proposes a mix of uses on the site with potential areas of between 500m2 and 1900m2. The footprinting exercise indicates that floorplates of this order can, in principle, be accommodated comfortably within the site area.

A mixed-use building or buildings will provide a more spatially efficient solution than independent buildings. If a three storey solution is considered, the resulting size of building appears to fit comfortably within the site. However, this will clearly be subject to a large number of design considerations, including access, natural lighting and relationships to the surrounding context.

This initial testing would appear to indicate that there is scope to consider additional accommodation on the site for other uses as part of the options appraisal process.

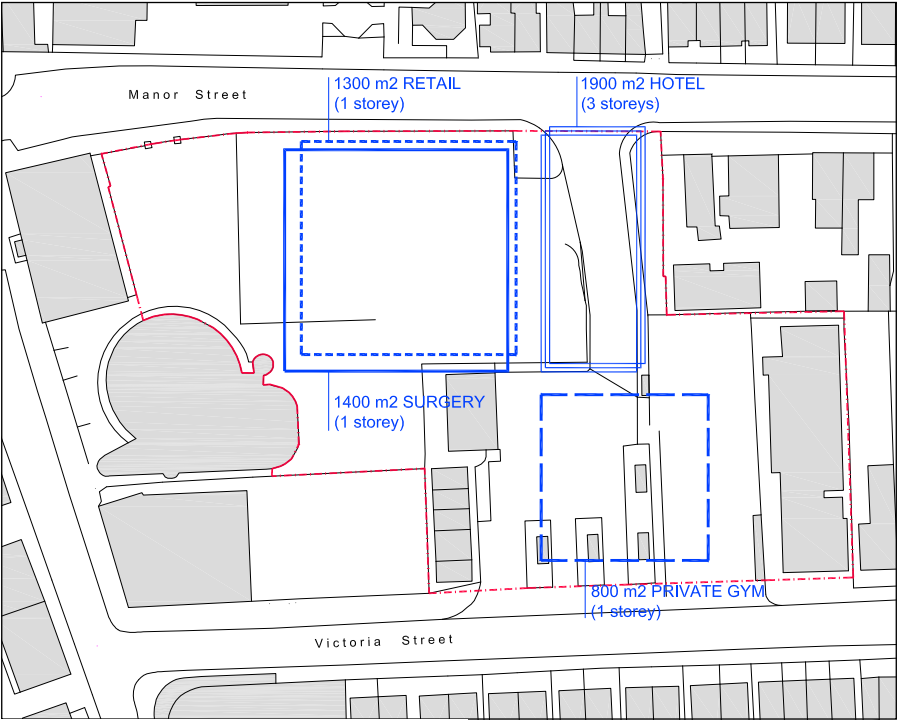
Potential for a Discount Supermarket - Diagrams 3 and 4

The location of a discount supermarket on the site has been considered. Companies such as Lidl and Aldi typically use standard store designs. The footprint indicated is based on a Lidl supermarket layout.

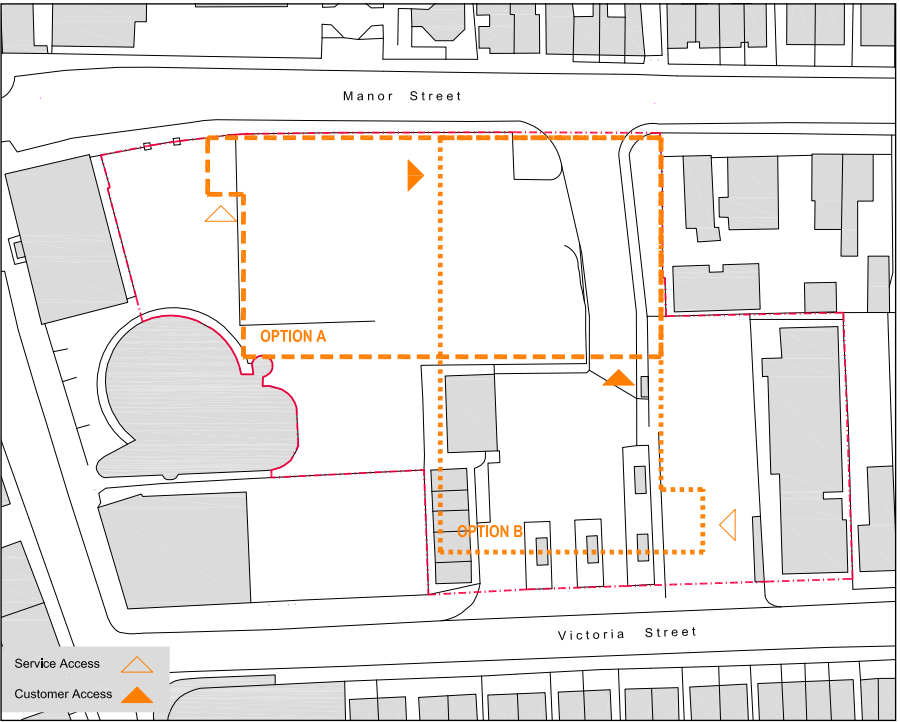
It is clear from this testing that the location of a discount supermarket on the site with its associated servicing and car parking would occupy most of the available area. However, it is also questionable whether the site configuration would allow a workable solution based on the standard supermarket typology.

In order to accommodate a supermarket of this size, other uses would need to be located above, or a basement or rooftop parking solution would be required. It is questionable whether a development of this type would provide a sympathetic addition to the conservation area and the setting of the Town Hall.

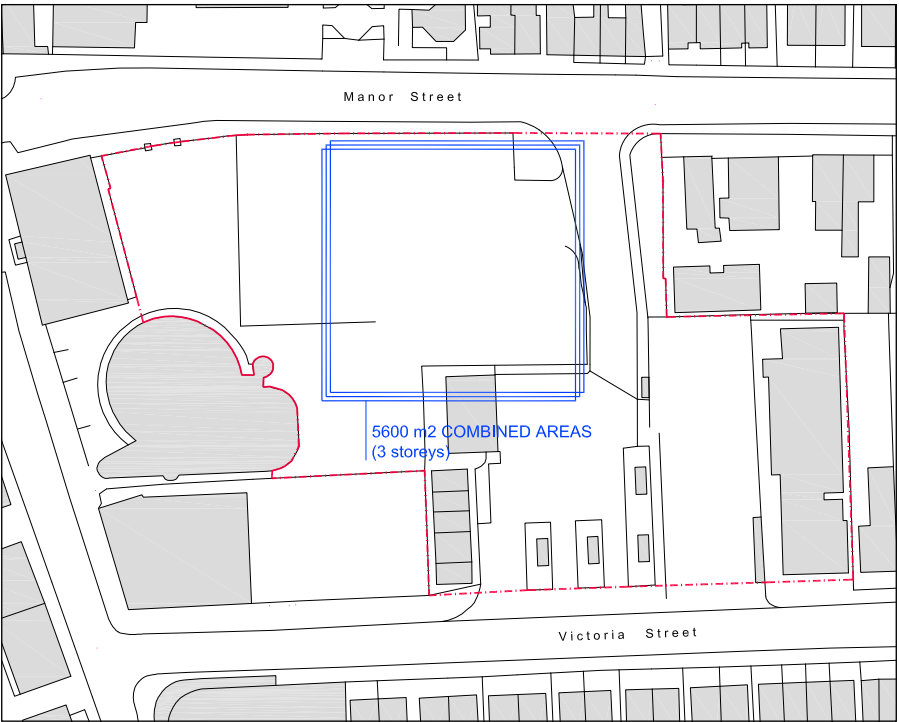
A smaller size of supermarket incorporated as a part of a mixed-use development may however be feasible, but this is likely to be of a different scale and character to the standard discount supermarket model.



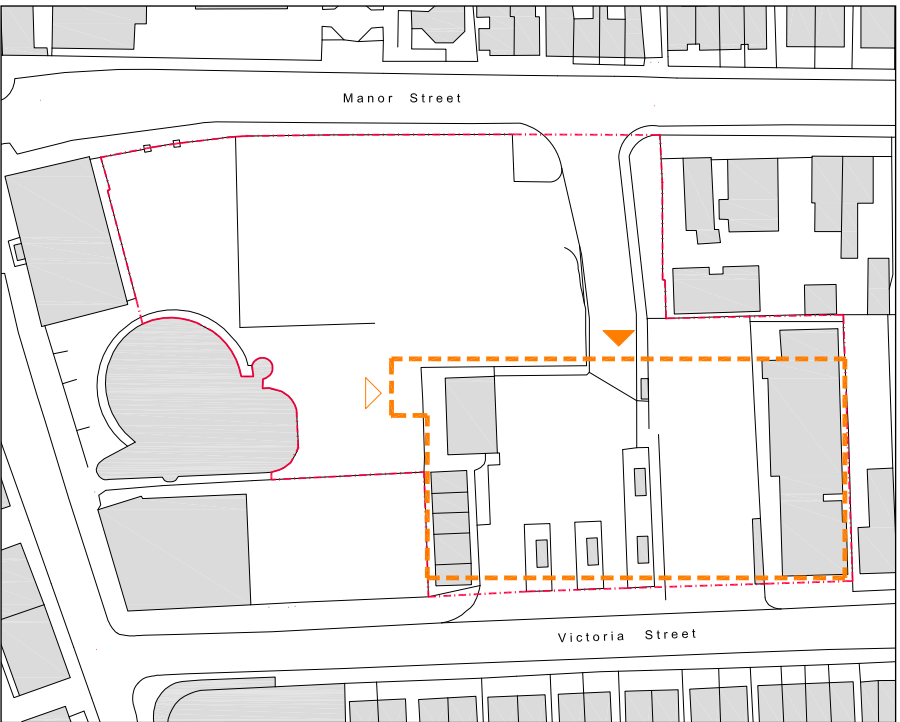
1. Footprint Testing - Proposed Brief Uses



3. Footprint Testing - Discount Supermarket - Option A



2. Footprint Testing - Proposed Brief Uses - Combined Area



4. Footprint Testing - Discount Supermarket - Option B

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1 Footprint Testing Exercise

The site currently accommodates car parking and bus facilities which are to be re-provided as part of the project brief. As there is a desire to better use the site for a number of different purposes, the solutions for each of these uses will need to be as space efficient as possible

Car Parking Re-provision

The brief proposes a car parking provision of up to 200 spaces which is a substantial increase over the existing 136 spaces. In order to avoid using the site solely for car parking a two level solution is likely to be required to reach this capacity. Diagrams 5 and 6 indicate the footprint required to accommodate 100 cars (based on standard space dimensions).

The level change across the site of c. 3m will allow a two level approach with reduced impacts on site usability and visual impact. However, this is still likely to require some level of excavation at the northern end of the site and consideration of locating other uses above the car park decks.

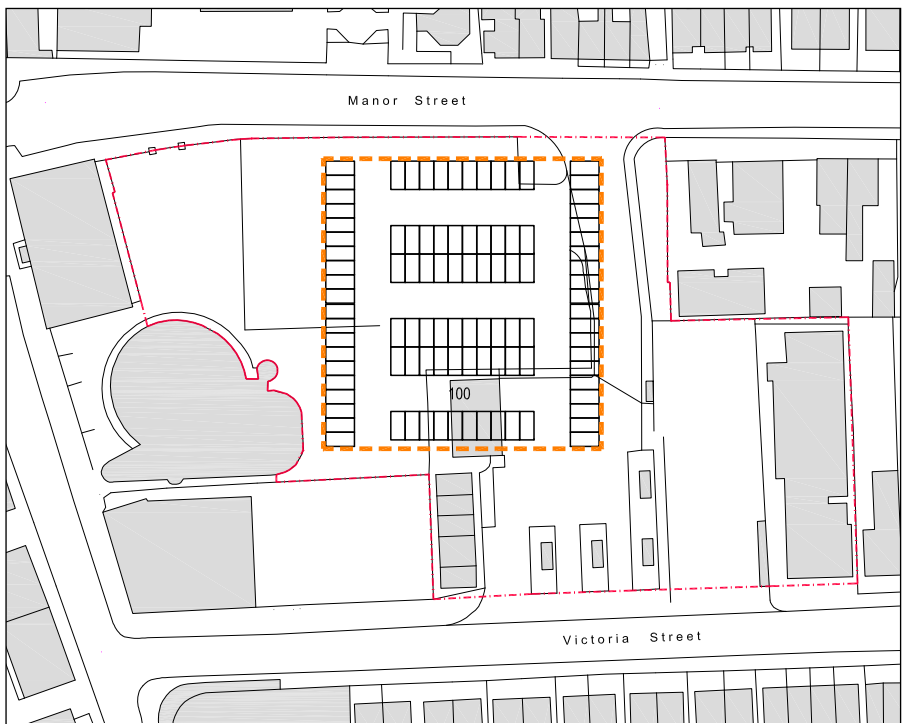
The visual impact of the car parking requirements will require careful consideration and may be a restricting factor once the broader scheme objectives are taken into account. In addition, the physical size of the car park will be a strong determining factor for the form of development as well as the level of site permeability.

Diagram 5 indicates a compact option which could also allow for the car park to be contained within the centre of the site and masked by other uses. This solution would make use of excavation of the northern area of the site for a lower level

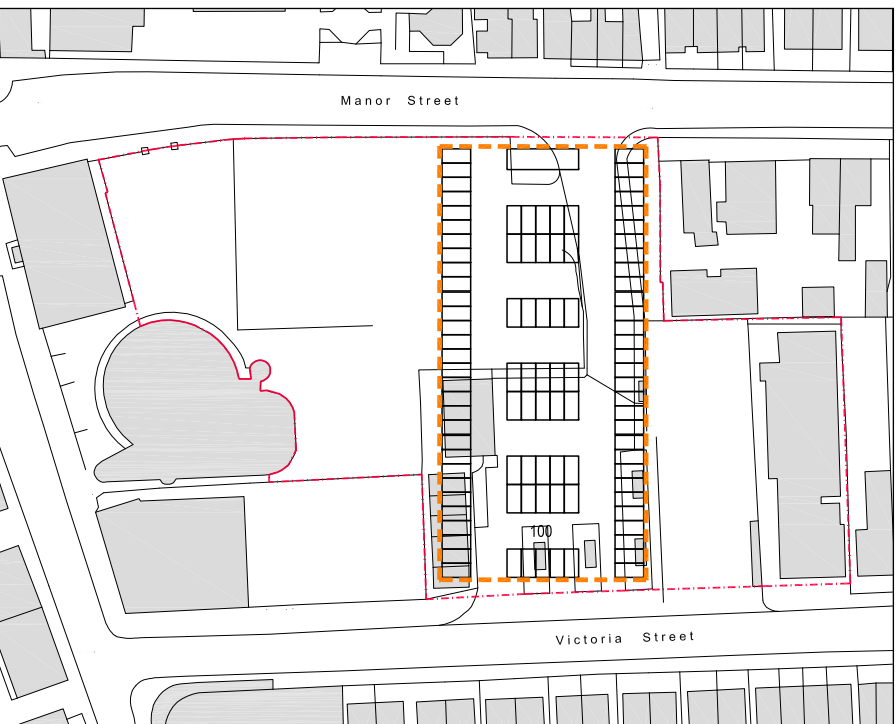
Diagram 6 shows Option B, a linear parking layout which could be considered as a free-standing facility without preventing development of the site towards the west and east sides. However, this solution blocks the potential for a north-south route through the site and would also limit the options for accommodating buses on the site.

Diagram 7 indicates a further developed version of Option B where some parking is located under the north south road link through the site. This would require excavation and a steeper vehicle ramp in the southern part of the site, which may still compromise bus facility operation

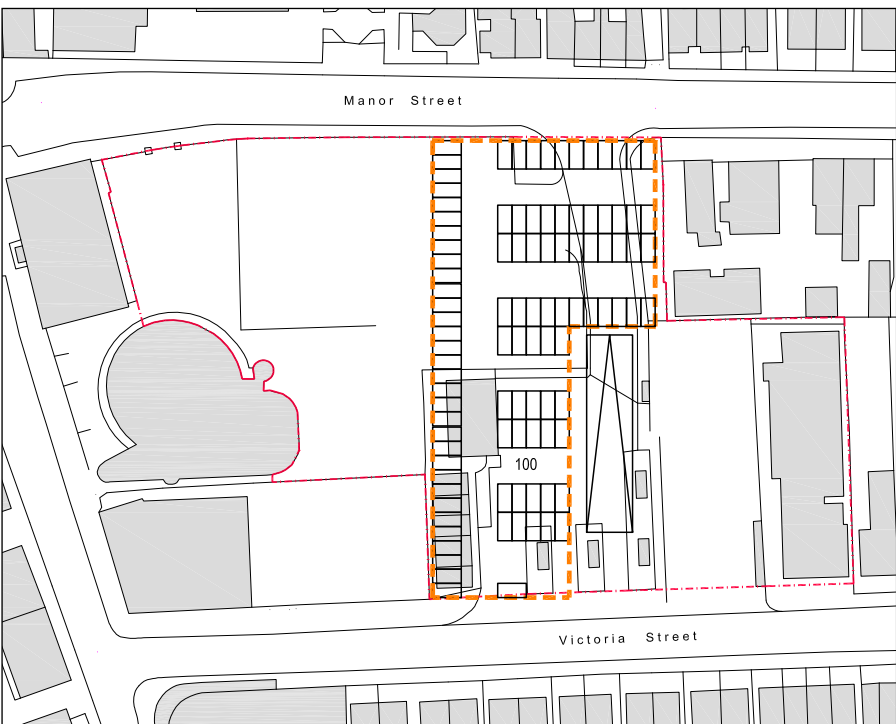
On balance Option A provides the lowest impact solution, although this would most likely necessitate the car park being combined within the lower levels of a mixed-use building. Options B and C would significantly impact on site usability and north - south access. All options limit the degree of east-west ground level access, although this can be best managed with Option A.



5. Footprint Testing - 100 Space Car Park Layout - Option A



6. Footprint Testing - 100 Space Car Park Layout - Option B



7. Footprint Testing - 100 Space Car Park Layout - Option C

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1 Footprint Testing Exercise

T

Bus Facility Re-provision- Diagrams 7 and 8

The requirements of the bus facilities can be divided into two categories, these being (a) the passenger bus stops and associated facilities and (b) additional bus operation facilities such as bus layover bays and driver facilities. The site currently provides a mixture of these as well as some disused or under-used associated buildings.

The arrangement and position of the bus station will need to respond to bus operational requirements and routes which are to some degree determined by the existing one way system in Manor Street and Victoria Street.

Previous Henry Boot proposals indicated bus facilities located along Victoria Street, although the impact of bus manoeuvring and pedestrian street access appeared not to be well resolved and the number of bays was too low to satisfy even current needs.

A number of options have been tested to investiagte prefferd a approach to integrating the bus faciity with potential future redevelopment of the site

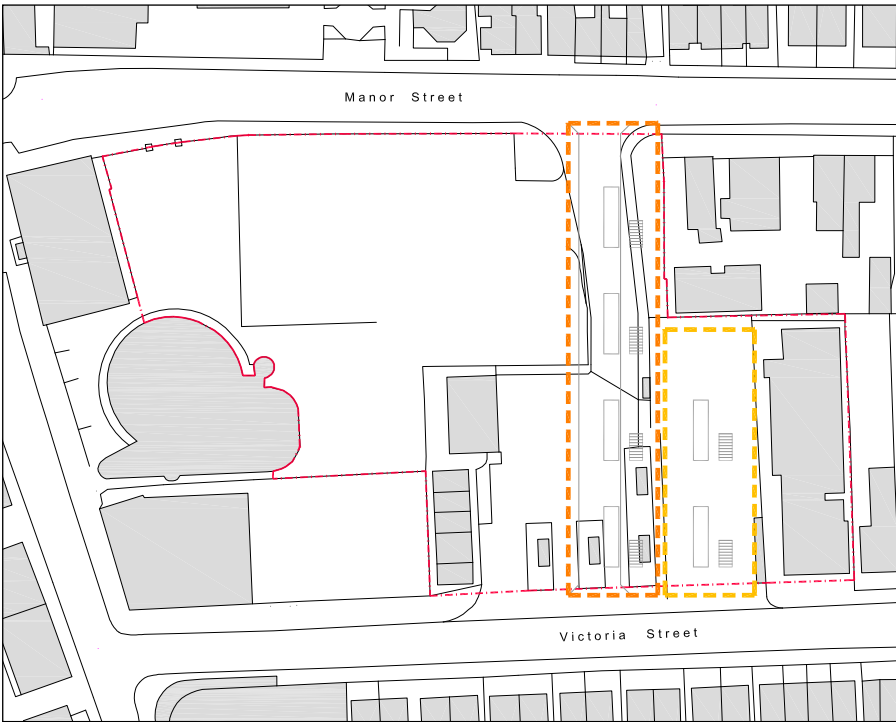
Diagram 8 indicates a streamlined version of the existing arrangement where bus stops are located along a street running north to south through the site. The impact of the bus facilities can be contained without affecting existing access and basic operational arrangements.

Diagram 9 shows a more compact alternative which would only be accessed from Victoria Street. By implementing a loop for access, the layout becomes less efficient, with more space required for turning. Any negative impacts would be concentrated in the south eastern corner with a potential risk of blight to Victoria Street.

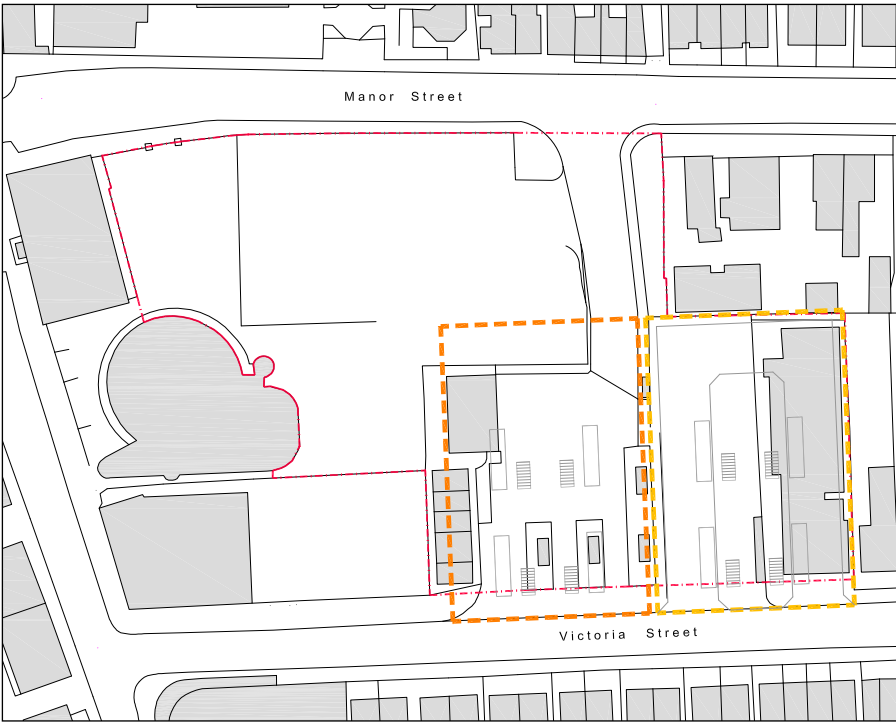
Diagram 10 indicates a linear arrangement located parallel to Victoria Street. This option would reduce impacts on the main site, but creates a barrier to north - south movement. In addition, this solution would not improve the current quality of the Victoria Street frontage, and could increase negative impacts.

From this exercise, it would appear that Option A potentially provides the most attractive solution, both for functional/operational reasons and for urban design considerations of connectivity and minimised townscape impacts. This option would also result in a smaller spatial impact on the larger western area of the site.

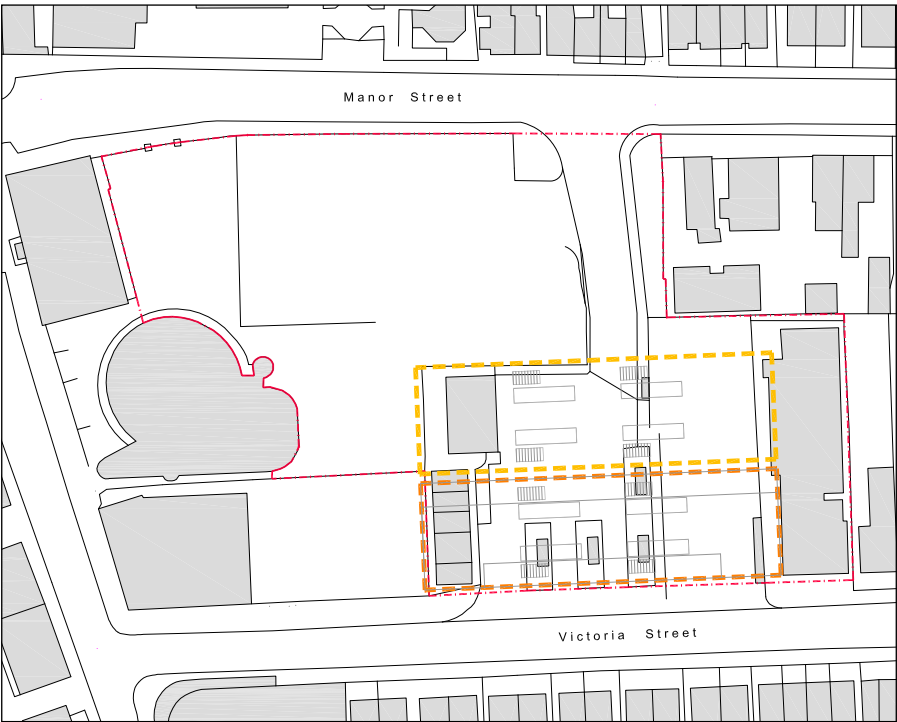
Each option shows a minimal landtake (orange boundary) and a larger landtake (yellow boundary).



8. Linear Bus Facility - Option A - Layout (subject to transport consultant input)



9. Compact Bus Facility- Option B - Layout (subject to transport consultant input)



10. Compact Bus Facility - Option C - Layout (subject to transport consultant input)

Minium Land-take - up to c. 4 Bus Stands
Enhanced Land-take -up to c. 8 Bus Stands

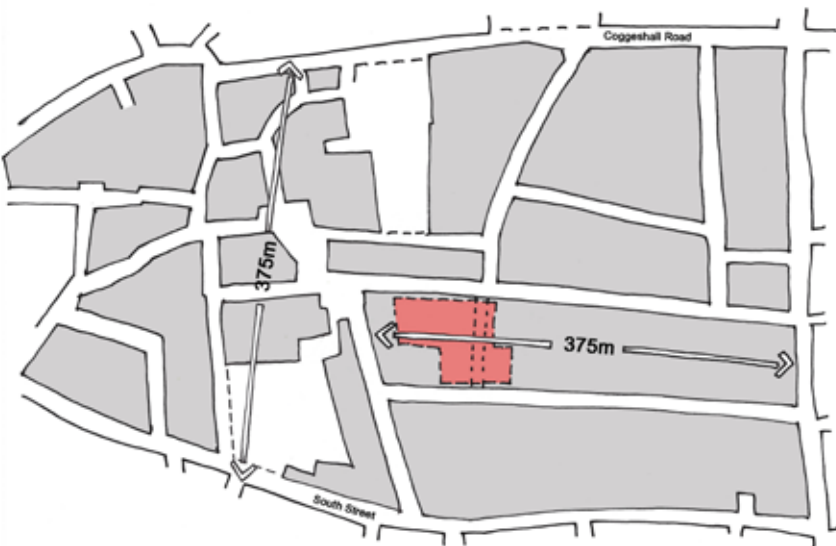
3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.2 Initial Concept Ideas

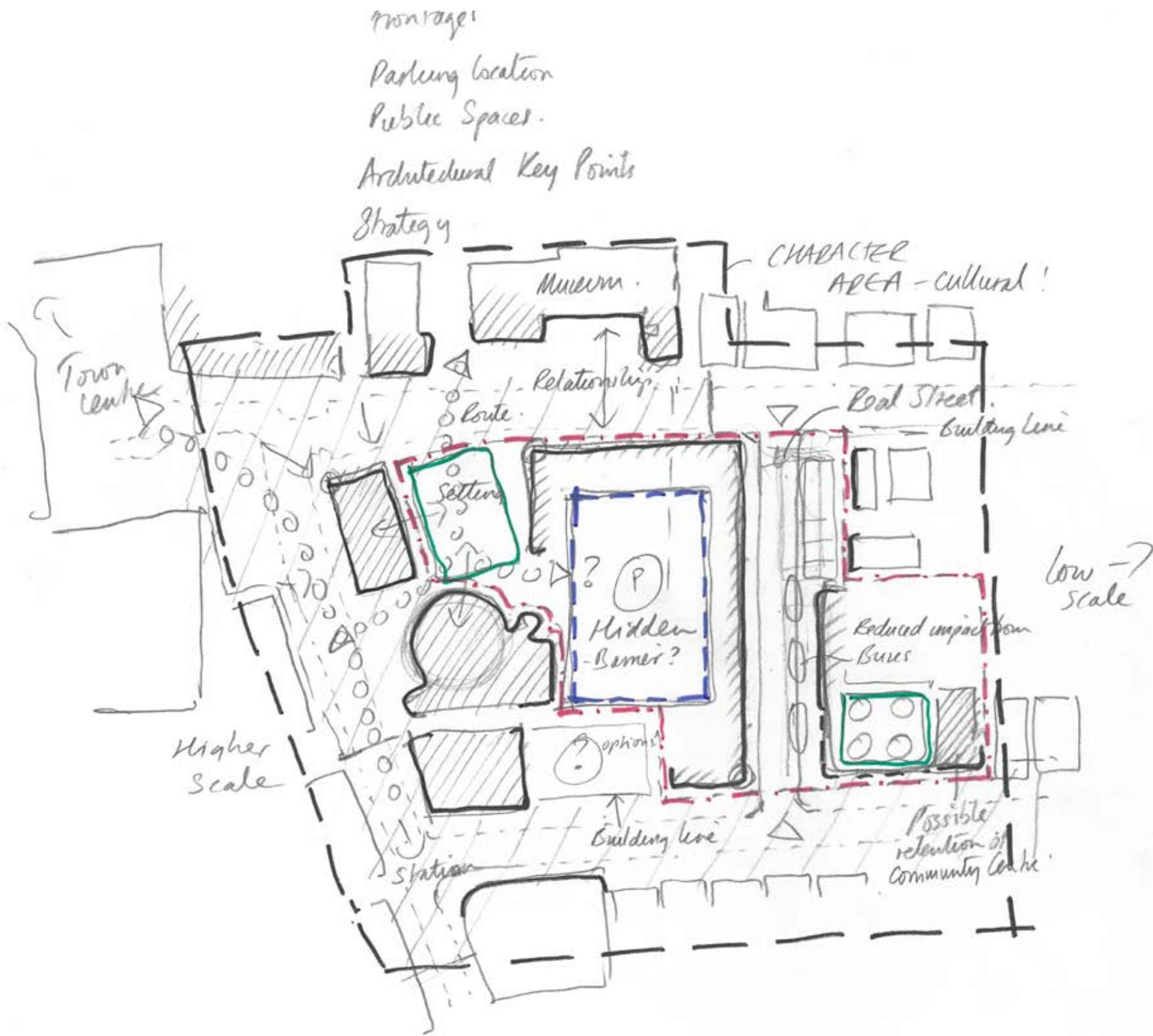
The analysis and testing undertaken above has helped to identify a number of preferred ideas which will inform the design concept. These include:

- Retention of the north - south access road through the site for permeability reasons. The value of this is demonstrated in Diagram 1 below which demonstrates the extreme length of the urban block between Manor Street and Victoria Street
- Public Space should be introduced to address the setting of existing heritage assets
- The bus facility should be retained in a location which safeguards operational functions with minimised impacts on surrounding uses and townscape
- Car parking should be carefully integrated within the development to avoid being a barrier to movement and dominating the site and street frontages
- New buildings should re-instate street frontages and provide an appropriate urban scale and character suitable for the setting of adjacent heritage assets
- The potential for retaining elements of the community centre as a basis for a potential stand-alone residential led development

The adjacent sketch illustrates the first thoughts in bringing these ideas together.



1. Diagram showing relative scale of urban blocks



2. Initial Concept Sketch exploring urban design approach

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

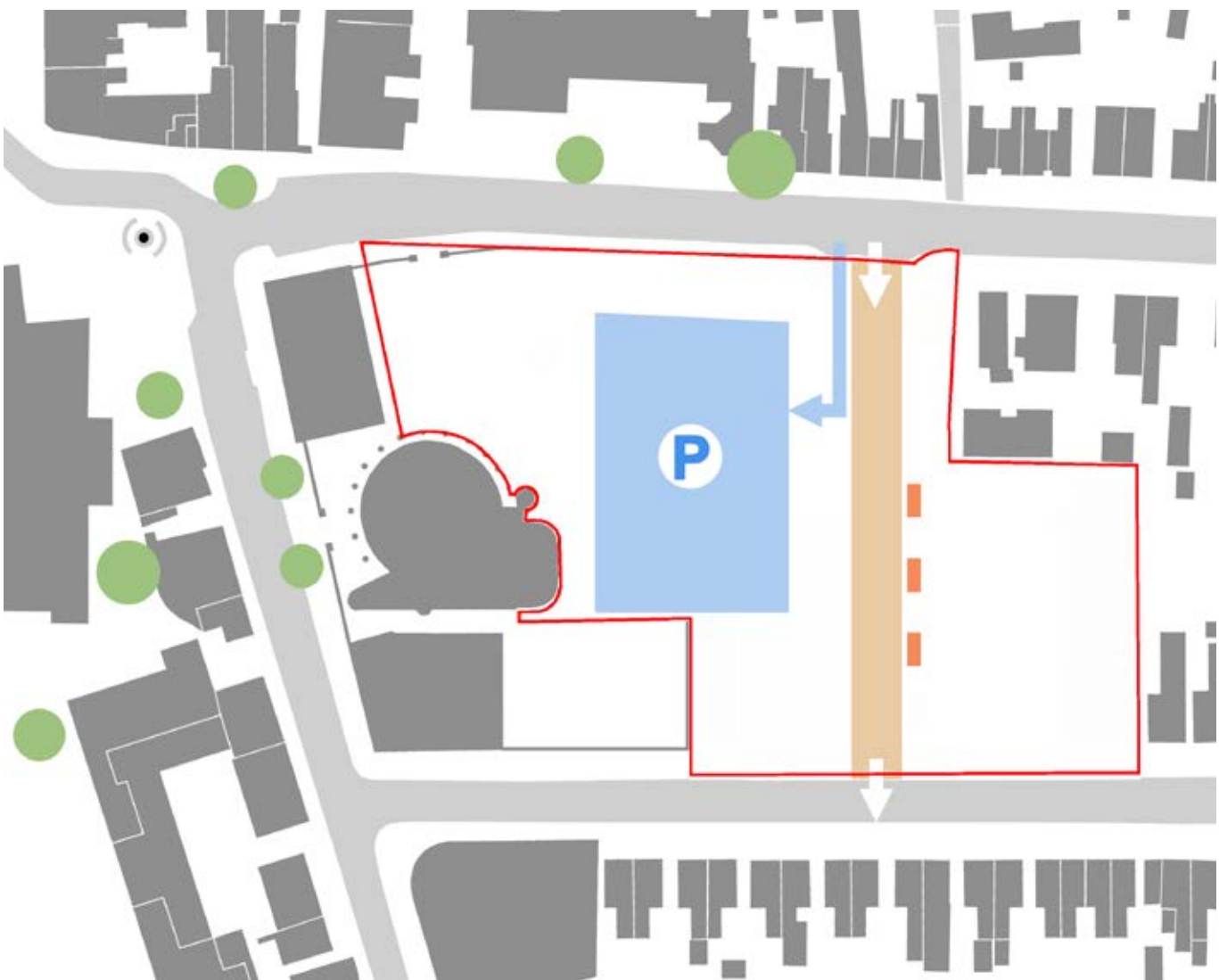
3.3 Urban Design Concept

The diagrams below summarise the initial urban design concept which informs the options appraisal and design development work.

Diagram 1 establishes the strategy for incorporating car parking and the bus facility.

The parking is proposed as a self-contained compact element within the heart of the site , positioned to allow screening by other uses. Access is provided from Manor Street at the upper level and possibly Victoria Street at the lower level with the potential for an internal connecting ramp.

The bus facility is proposed for the retained, but remodelled north south road link through the site. Retention of this road will be cost effective and functionally least disruptive as well as providing pedestrian connectivity and a permeable urban structure. The initial concept assumes a tightly planned facility, although this could expand to the east to accommodate additional stands if required.

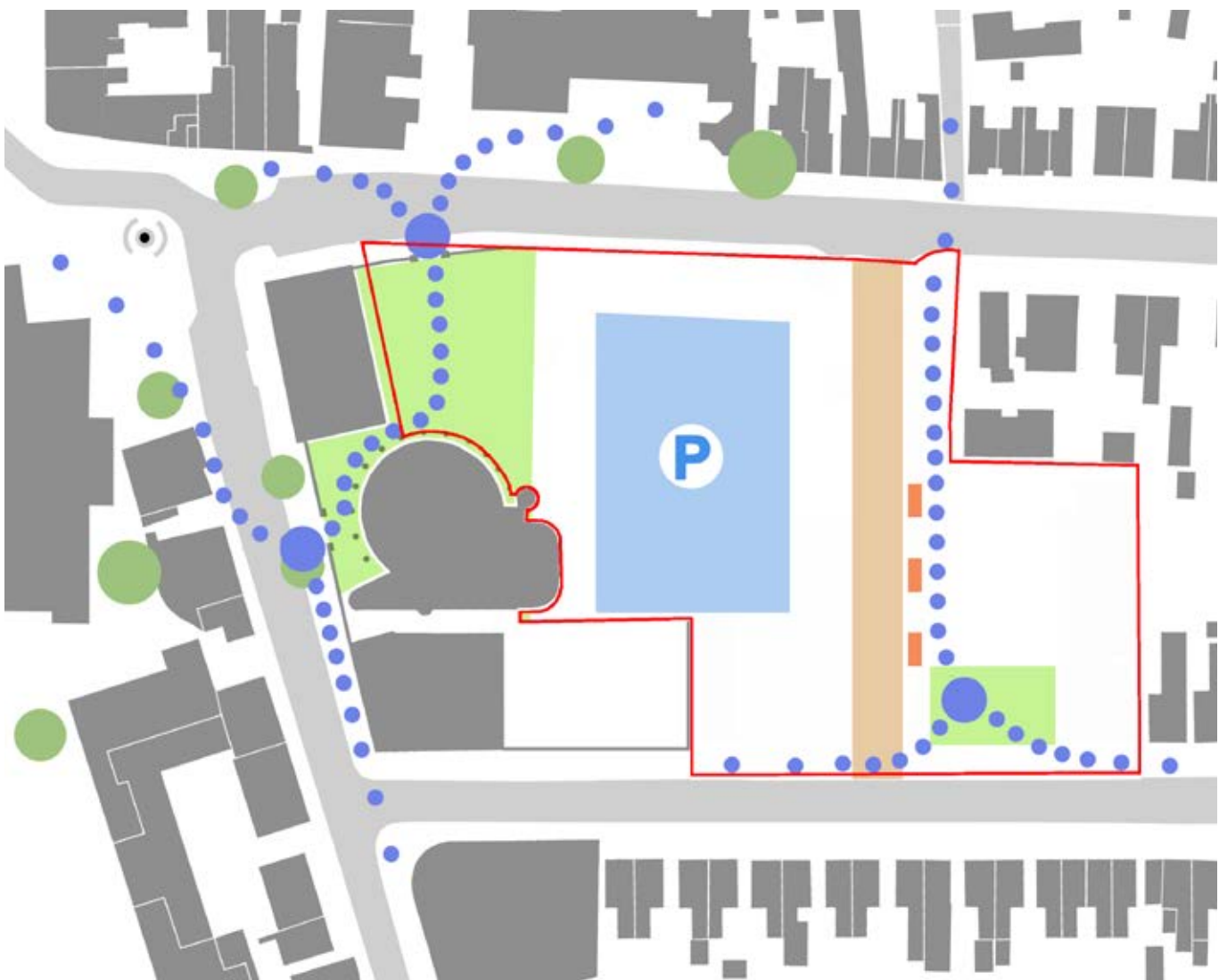


1. Establish scale and location of vehicle access, parking and bus station

Diagram 2 sets out the suggested locations for new public space which responds to potential pedestrian connections as well as places of orientation and enhanced settings for landmark buildings.

The area around the Town Hall and Library is of particular townscape importance where the quality landscaping of the spaces could provide town centre improvements of strategic importance as well as commercial advantages for the surrounding cultural uses.

The additional space indicated in Victoria Street will act as a place of orientation, a buffer entrance to the bus facility and a green space in an otherwise treeless street.



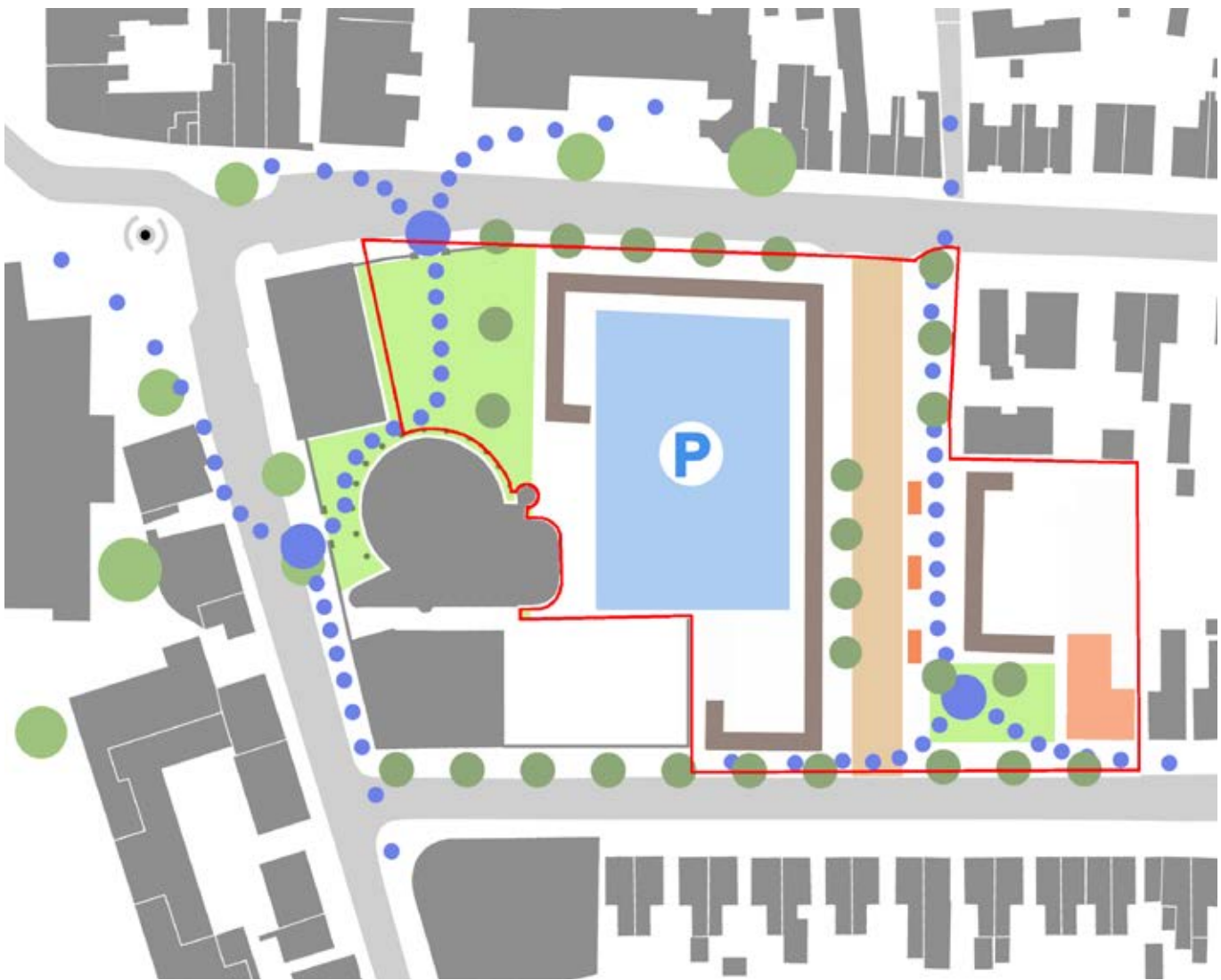
2. Establish main pedestrian access routes and potential for public spaces

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Diagram 3 demonstrates how the potential built form derives from the requirements for access and spaces. By taking this approach, the buildings will be responsive and integrated within their urban context.

The concept diagram indicates the potential for retaining the oldest element of the community centre on Victoria Street. This building could be retained for its established character as part of site redevelopment plans.

An indication of the extent of public realm upgrading is shown along Manor Street and Victoria Street with a strong link through the site along the north-south linking road.

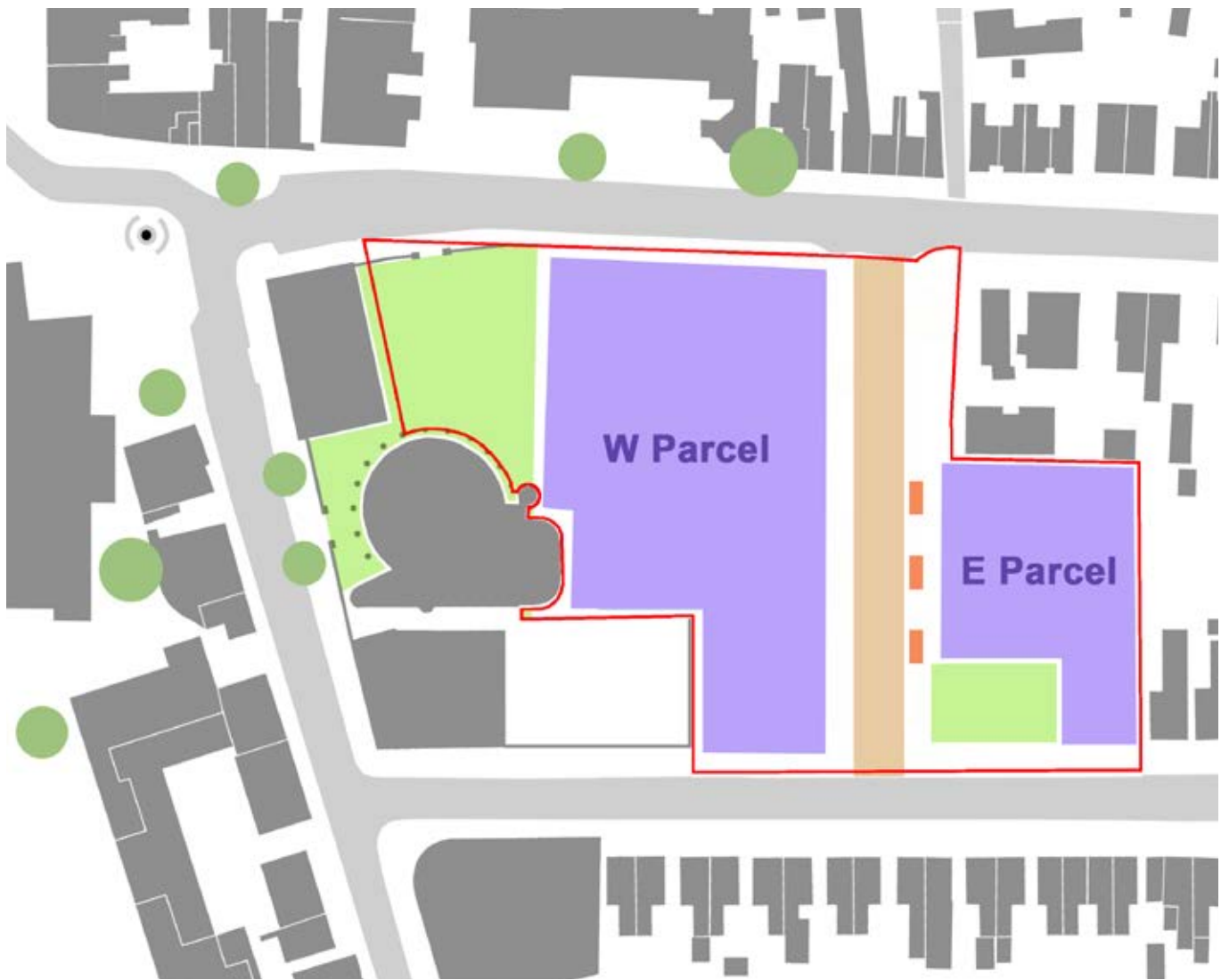


3. Establish new building alignments and organisation reflecting steps 1 and 2

Diagram 4 distills the concept into its simple main constituent elements.

The site could be considered as having two development parcels either side of the north - south linking road which accommodates the bus facility. Both development parcels are associated with correspondingly scaled public space.

Parcel A is most likely to lend itself to a mixed-use multi-storey development with ease of access to the parking below. Parcel B would be appropriate for a stand-alone development, perhaps residential due to its proximity to existing residential areas to the east.



4. Identification of Development Parcels and safeguarded layout features

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.4 OPTION A

Block Layout

Each of the appraisal options follows the urban design concept set out above. In the case of Option A, the west parcel has been based around two separate blocks which are used to define the frontages to Manor Street and Victoria Street as well as establishing a strong edge to the north-south route through the site.

This results in an open courtyard running between Blocks A and B providing good daylight access to the Library and the spaces within the new buildings.

Car Parking

The main car parking provision is located within the west parcel in a two level garage which makes use of the site's 1 storey level change from north to south. In order to minimise external on-site vehicle movements, a single point of entry is indicated in Victoria Street with access to the upper parking level via an internal parking ramp.

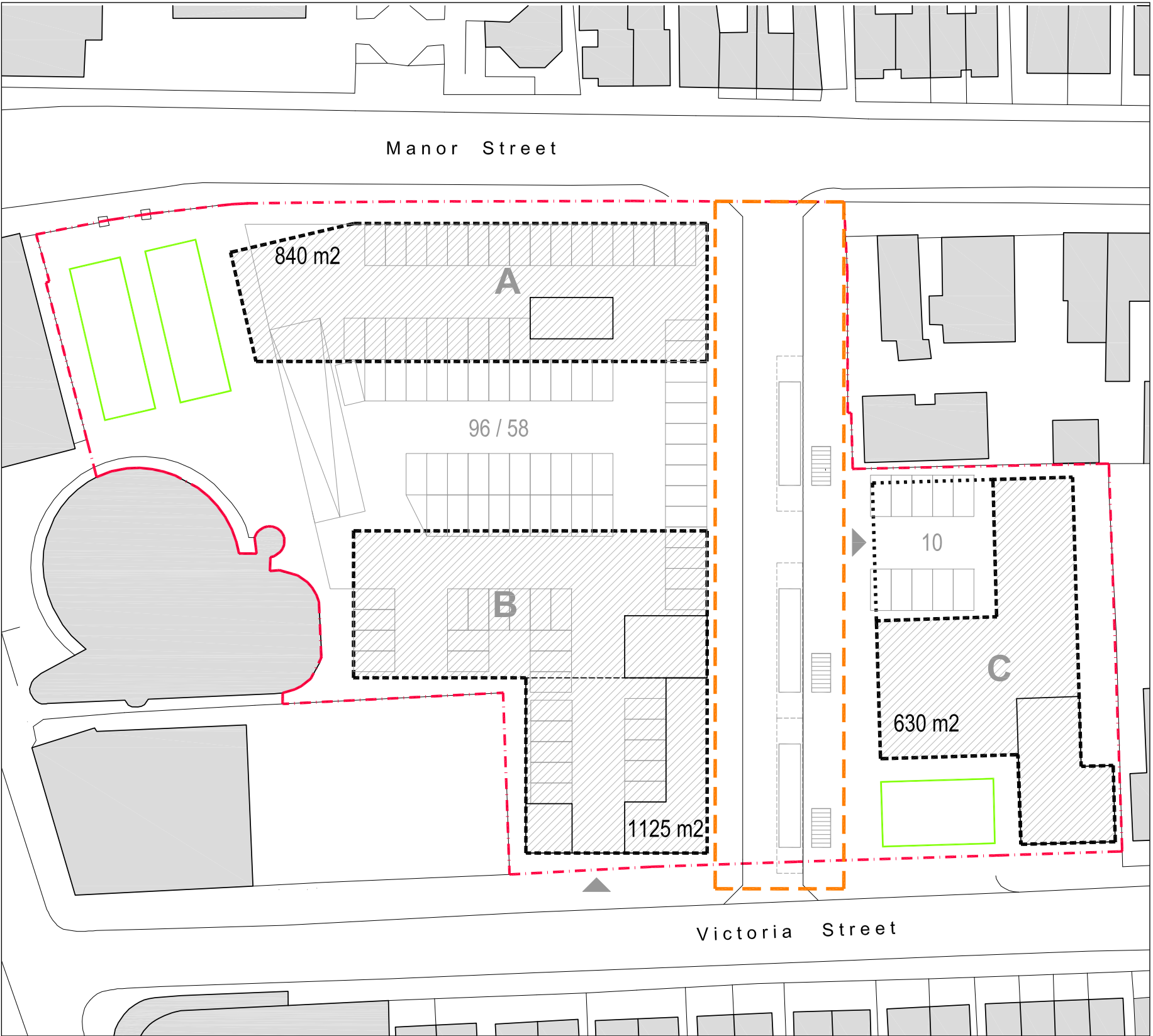
The upper parking level is reduced in size to allow retail uses to front onto Manor Street. A garden topped podium is located between Blocks A and B. The visual impact of the car parking is also minimised by locating other uses around the building perimeter in Victoria Street and along the north-south street.

Massing Approach

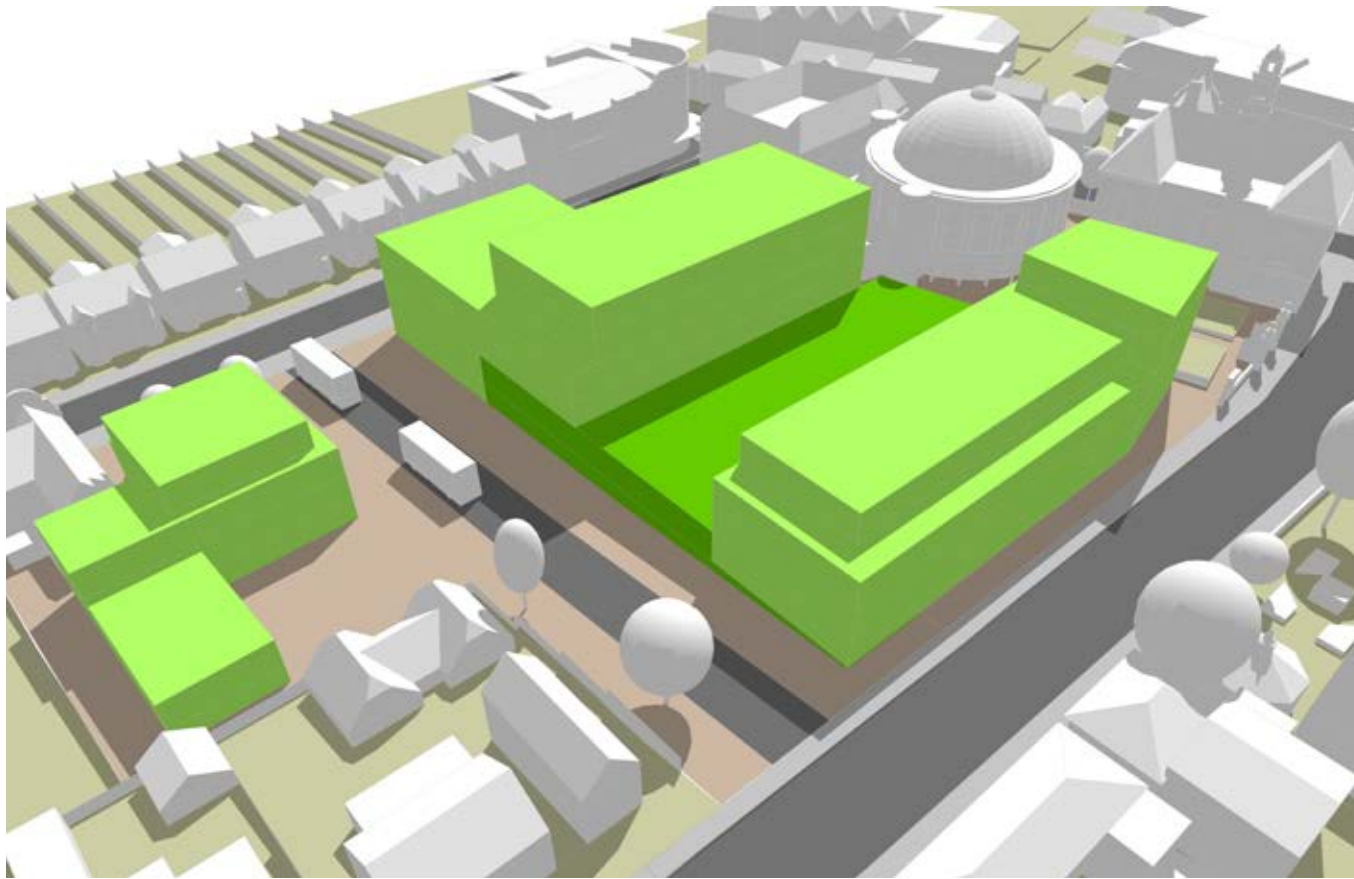
Generally the scale of the buildings seeks to respond to the local context, as well as taking into account the proximity of some of the taller town centre buildings. Height is used close to the town hall and library to give an appropriate civic scale. Building heights then drop down towards the east using set-backs. Block C completes this transition to a lower scale of development adjacent to the houses of Victoria Street.

The massing of Blocks A and B varies between four and six storeys. The sixth storey is located within the northern part of Block B and combined with the site level change will have limited visual impact within the surrounding streets.

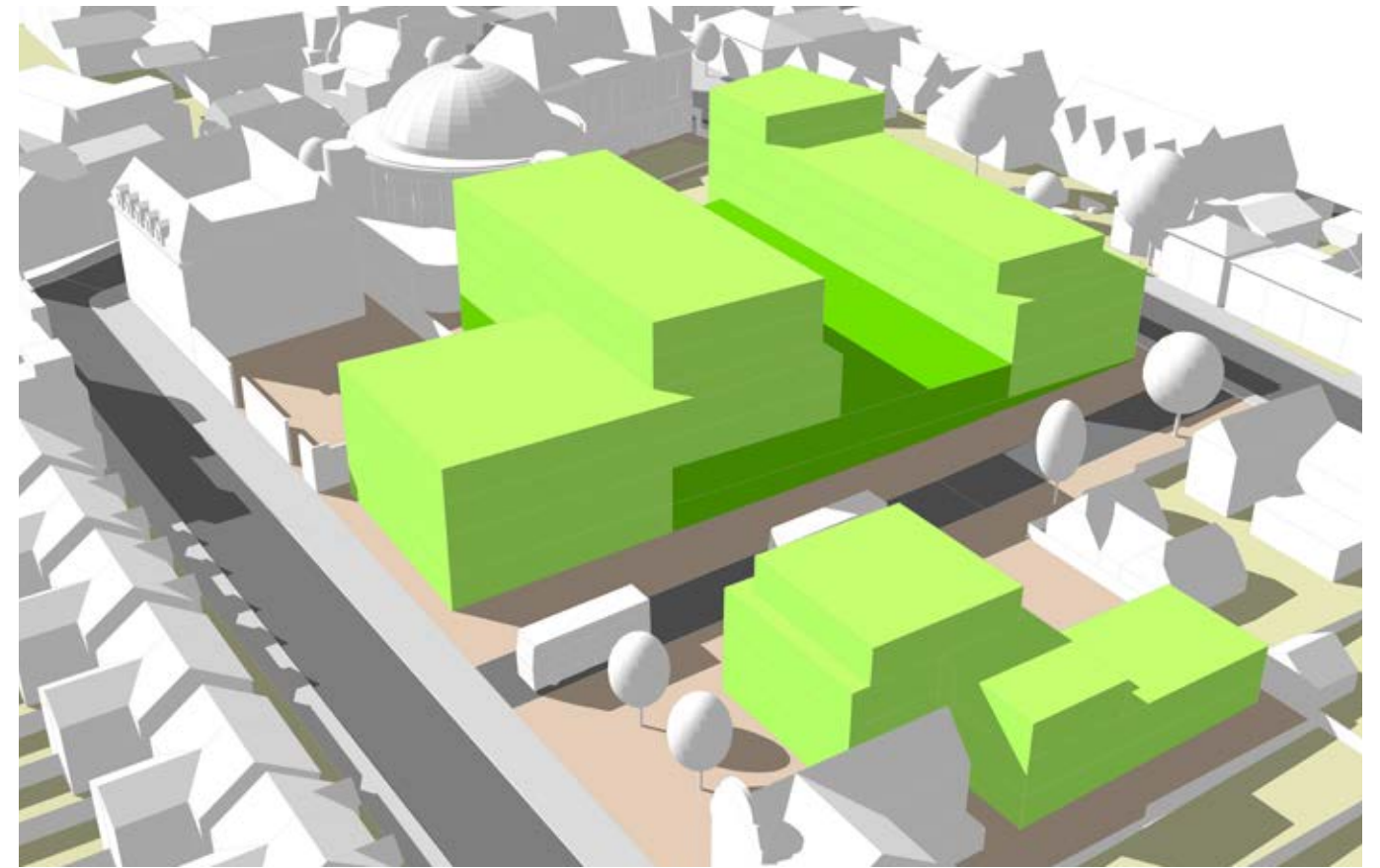
Block C varies between two and four storeys, using further set-backs to minimise visual impacts and overshadowing. Rights of light to neighbours may impact on these assumptions and should be confirmed through survey.



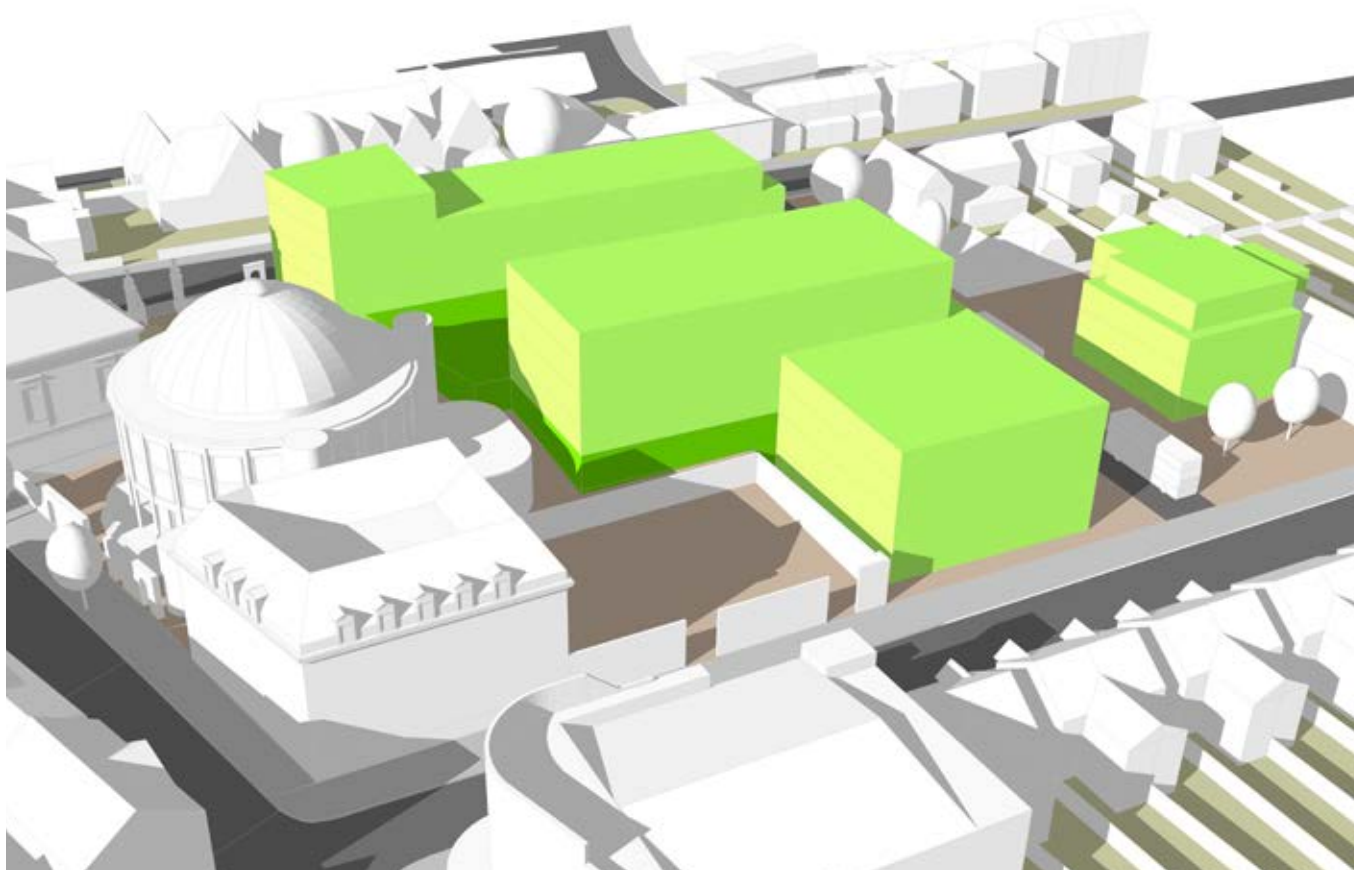
OPTION A - Layout Plan



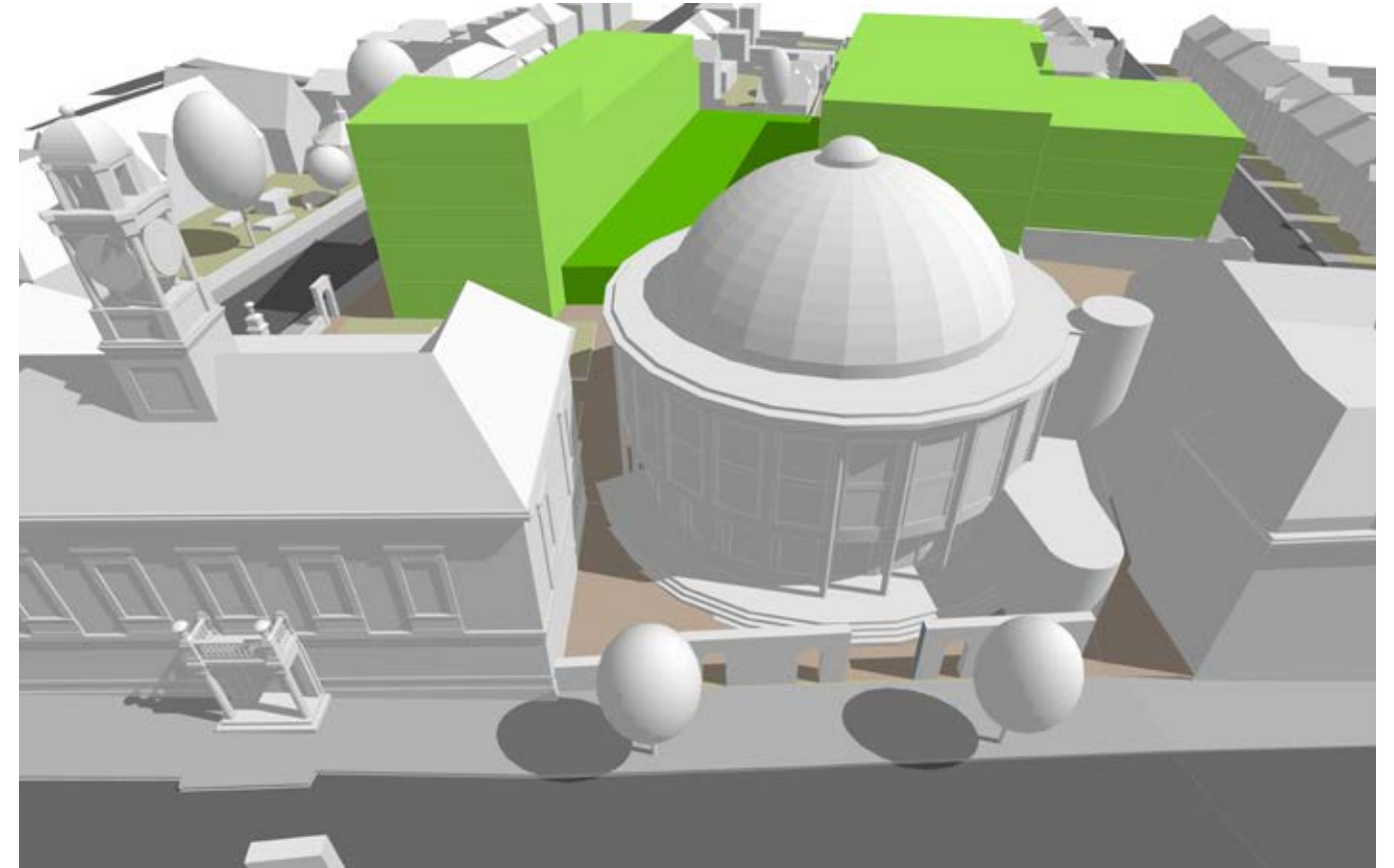
OPTION A - Aerial view from NE



OPTION A - Aerial view from SE



OPTION A - Aerial view from SW



OPTION A - Aerial view from W

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.4 Townscape

The potential visual impacts, relationships with neighbouring buildings and general townscape implications of Option A are summarised in the adjacent views.

View 1 indicates the potential of the new development to create an urban scaled backdrop to the Town Hall. The scale of the five storey western end of Block A sits comfortably with the cornice line of the Town Hall when seen in perspective

View 2 shows the relationship of the new development to the Town Hall when approaching from the east. The slanting of the end of Block A opens and frames the view of the Town Hall, revealing a and pointing towards the central tower.

View 3 demonstrates the potential to create an enclosed garden space framed by the Town Hall, Library and the new development. From this angle, Blocks A and B close the currently open view to the south and offer a scale which is appropriate to its sensitive neighbours

View 4 shows how new development can create a stronger urban edge to Victoria Street with the potential for public realm improvements and a small public space adjacent to the bus facilities located within the north-south access road.



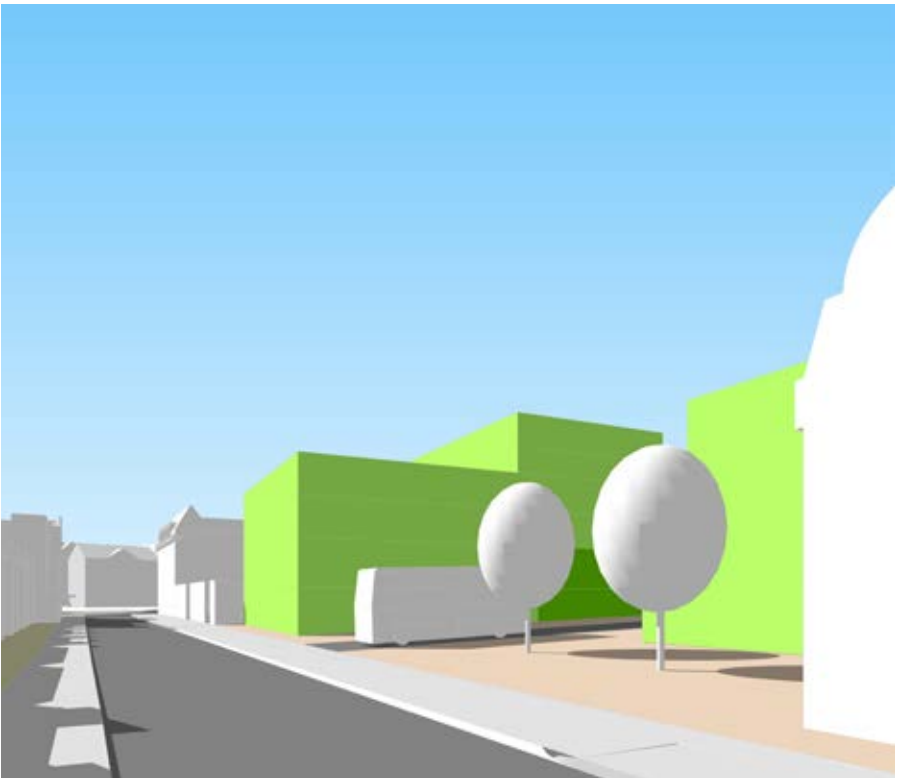
OPTION A - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION A - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION A - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION A - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

Development Capacity

Within this scenario Block A could be considered as a commercial block with ground floor retail and a use such as hotel above. Block B offers a floorplate which would be appropriate for the health facility and commercial office or residential use above.

The east parcel shows a potential development around a retained older part of the current community building which would lend itself to residential use. The form of this building is likely to be constrained by relationships to neighbouring buildings and rights of light.

The modelling generates a total gross external area of c. 13,600 m2 (147,000 sq ft)

Applying an efficiency factor of 80% across all uses an indicative Gross internal area of c. 10,900 m2 (117,000 sq ft) is generated.

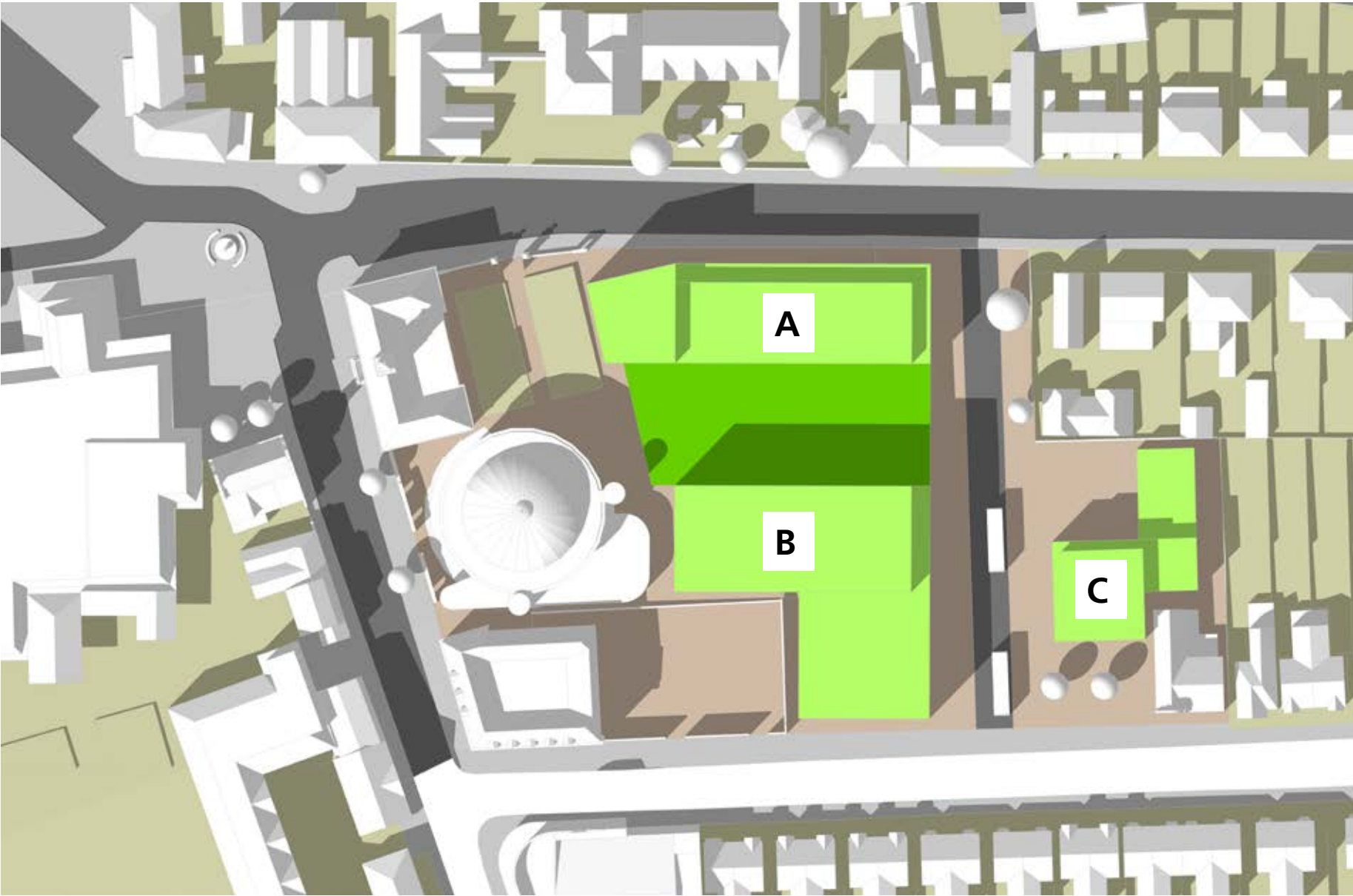
Excluding the car park, the available indicative GIA is 7,600 m2 (82,000 sq ft)

This compares to the initial project brief which indicates a space requirement of c. 5,600 m2 (6,000 sq ft)

The additional area of 2,000 m2 (21,500 sq ft) could therefore be considered for further uses such as residential accommodation or commercial office space

Option A achieves c. 164 parking spaces (subject to detailed design).

OPTION A		Indicative GEA (m2)										
Level	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL (m2)	TOTAL (ft2)	GIA (m2)*	GIA (ft2)*	Car Park Spaces
Car Park		2466	1624	0	0	0	0	4090	44,025	3272	35,220	154
Block A		0	842	842	842	680	186	3392	36,511	2714	29,209	
Block B		427	427	1127	1127	648	648	4404	47,405	3523	37,924	
Block C		625	625	306	170	0	0	1726	18,579	1381	14,863	10
TOTAL	0	3518	3518	2275	2139	1328	834	13,612	146,520	10,890	117,216	164



OPTION A - Aerial Plan View (Shadow at 21 September 1400)

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.5 OPTION B

Block Layout

As with Option A, Option B follows the established urban design concept. The street frontages continue to generate the basic form of the western parcel blocks. However, Block A is indicated as a larger courtyard building which more strongly hides the car park podium beneath. The courtyard is oriented to the south to provide good daylight and sunlight penetration.

The closed form of block A also more strongly defines the garden space adjacent to the Town Hall and Library.

In order to break the scale of the western parcel a separate Block B is retained in Victoria Street. This block mirrors the scale and form of the adjacent old Post Office building. This arrangement could allow for the retention of an access route from the Town Hall garden to the eastern end of the site, subject to consideration of accessibility and security issues.

Block C shows an alternative arrangement allowing a larger public space to the south but dependent on reconciling possible rights of light impacts to neighbours to the north.

Car Parking

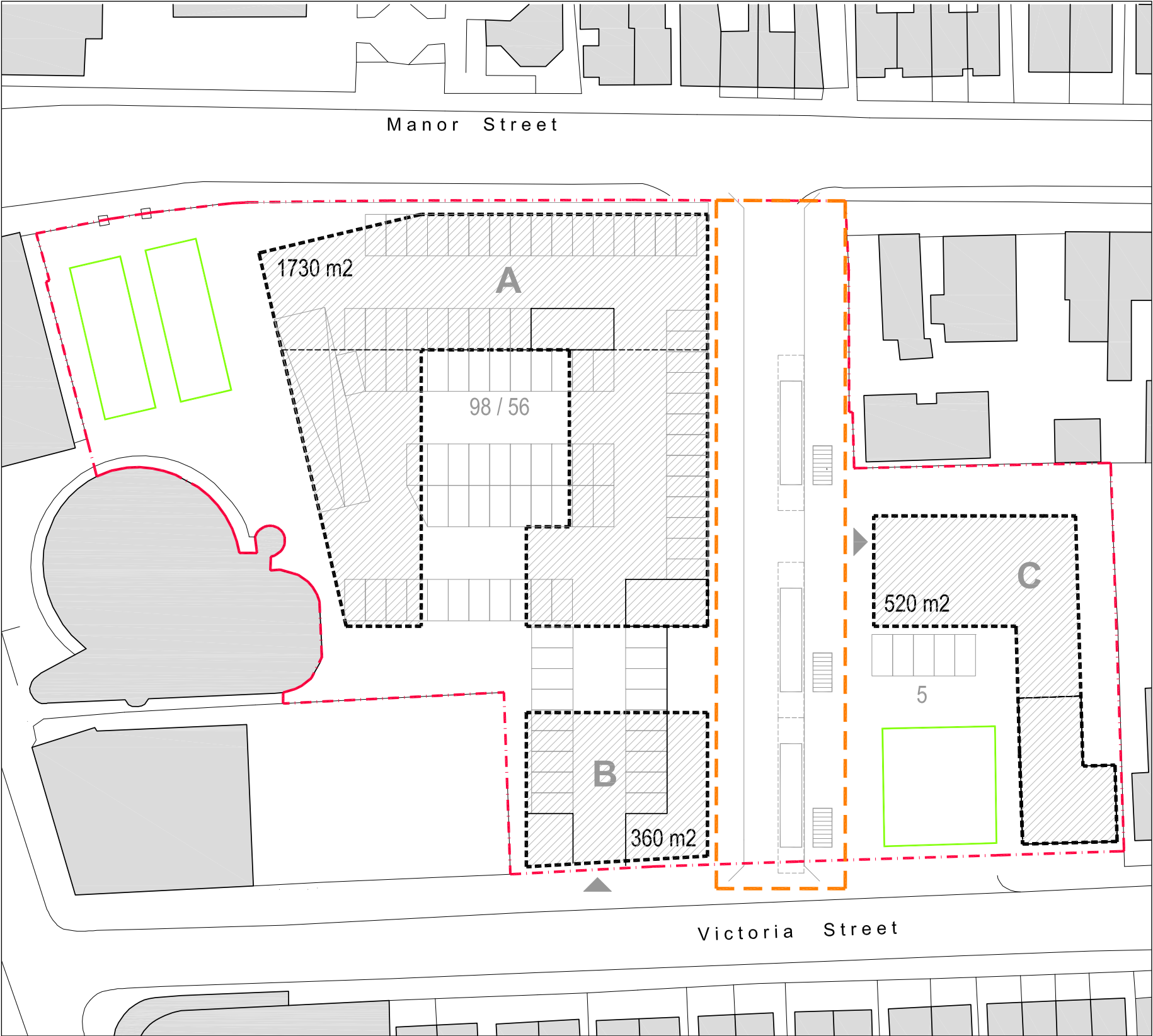
The main car parking provision follows the same layout as Option A. However, the correlation between the car park and buildings above is substantially improved

Massing Approach

Again, the scale of the buildings seeks to respond to the local context, as well as taking into account the proximity of some of the taller town centre buildings. Height is used close to the town hall and library to give an appropriate civic scale. Building heights then drop down towards the east using set-backs. Block C completes this transition to a lower scale of development adjacent to the houses of Victoria Street.

The massing of Blocks A and B varies between four and five storeys. A sixth storey is likely to have a larger visual impact than Option A and has not been included.

Block C follows the same approach set out in Option A.

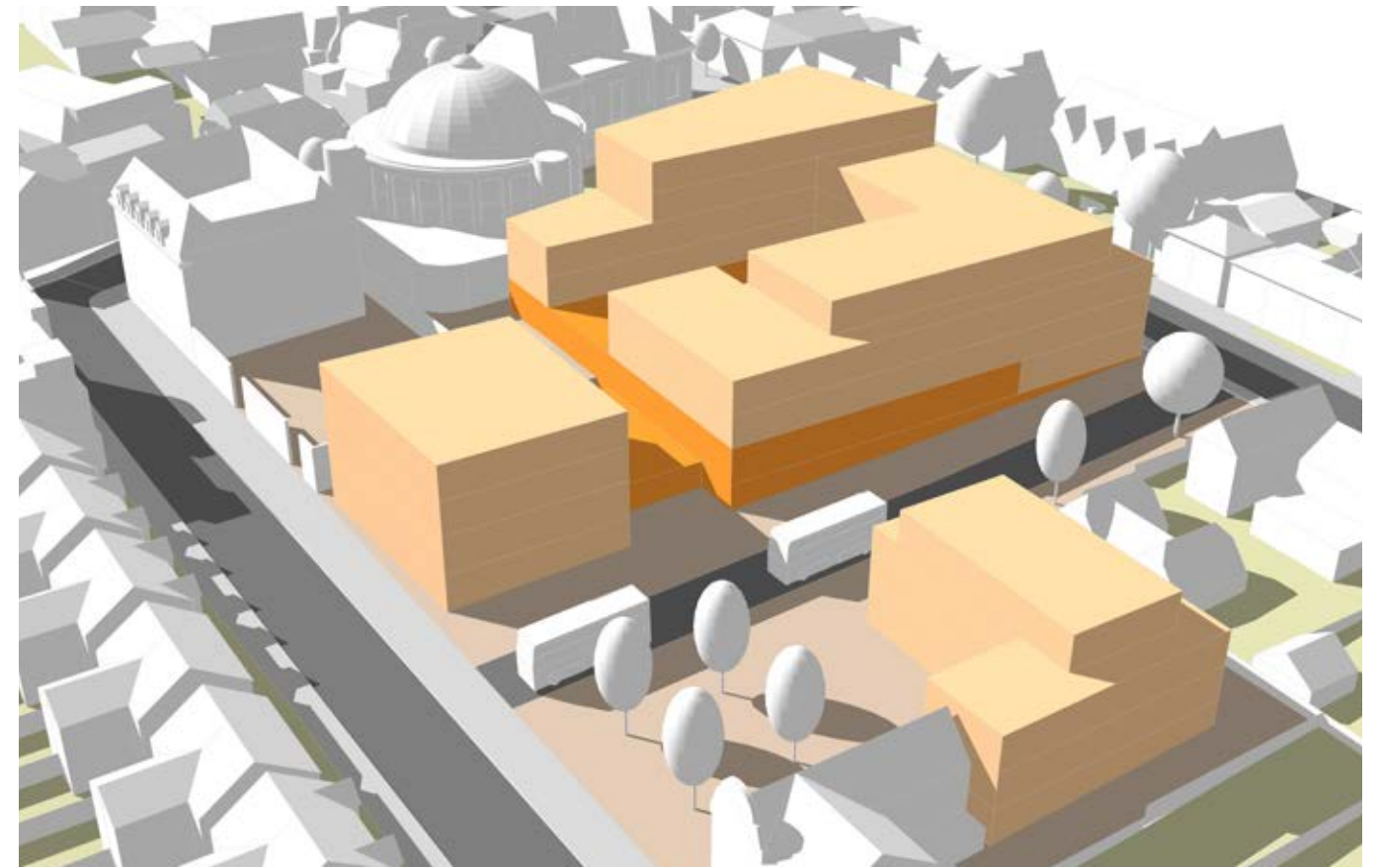


1. Establish scale and location of vehicle access, parking and bus station

OPTION B - Layout Plan



OPTION B - Aerial view from NE



OPTION B - Aerial view from SE



OPTION B - Aerial view from SW



OPTION B - Aerial view from W

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Townscape

The potential visual impacts, relationships with neighbouring buildings and general townscape implications of Option B are summarised in the adjacent views.

View 1 indicates the potential of the new development to create an urban scaled backdrop to the Town Hall. As with Option A, the scale of the five storey western end of Block A sits comfortably with the cornice line of the Town Hall when seen in perspective

View 2 shows the relationship of the new development to the Town Hall when approaching from the east. The slanting of the end of Block A opens and frames the view of the Town Hall, revealing and pointing towards the central tower. This element is larger and more dominant than in Option A

View 3 demonstrates the potential to create an enclosed garden space framed by the Town Hall, Library and the new development. Similarly to Option A, Blocks A and B close the currently open view to the south but with a slightly bolder scale and longer frontage

View 4 again shows how new development can create a stronger urban edge to Victoria Street. From this vantage point, the north facing frontage to the access road is broken into two separate elements helping to provide more visual variety than in Option A



OPTION B - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION B - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION B - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION B - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

Development Capacity

Within this scenario Block A would accommodate a majority of the proposed uses. Retail and car parking would be located on the lowest level, with the health facility occupying the first floor. Accommodation above could include a hotel, offices or residential uses. However, the large size of the floorplate offers a rare town centre opportunity for office commercial use, with the potential to attract a single larger user.

Block B is also flexible with the potential for a small commercial building or possibly residential use subject to further study.

The east parcel shows a potential development around a retained older part of the current community building which would lend itself to residential use. The form of this building is likely to be constrained by relationships to neighbouring buildings and rights of light.

The modelling generates a total gross external area of c. 12,800 m2 (137,000 sq ft)

Applying an efficiency factor of 80% across all uses an indicative Gross internal area of c. 10,200 m2 (110,000 sq ft is generated.

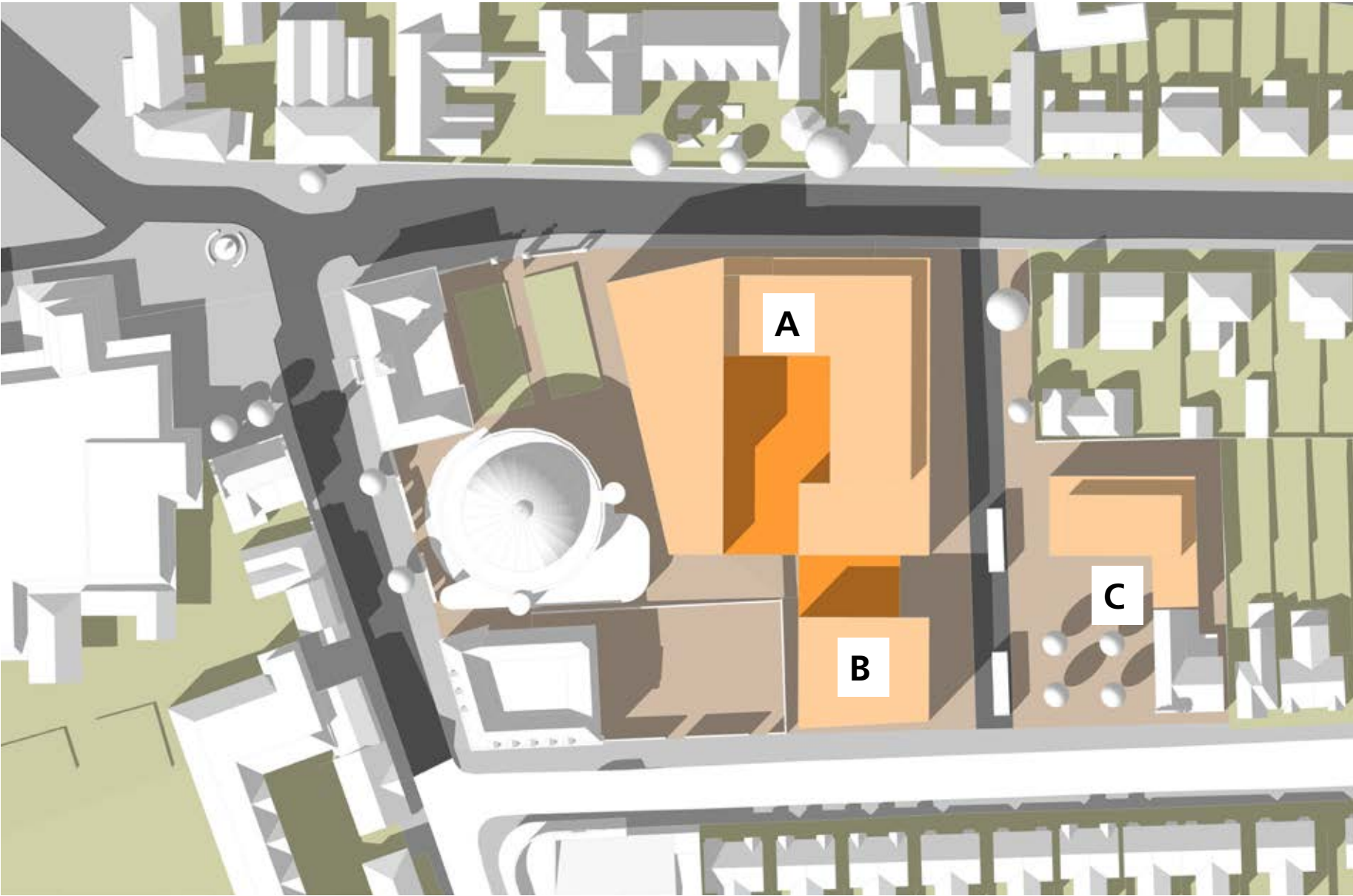
Excluding the car park, the available indicative GIA is 7,200 m2 (77,000 sq ft)

This compares to the initial project brief which indicates a space requirement of c. 5,600 m2 (6,000 sq ft)

The additional area of 1,600 m2 (18,300 sq ft) could therefore be considered for further uses such as residential accommodation or commercial office space

Option B achieves c. 164 parking spaces (subject to detailed design).

OPTION B Indicative GEA (m2)											
Level	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL (m2)	TOTAL (ft2)	GIA (m2)*	GIA (ft2)*
Car Park		2387	1412	0	0	0	0	3799	40,892	3039	32,714
Block A		0	812	1732	1709	1168	519	5940	63,938	4752	51,151
Block B		362	362	362	362	0	0	1448	15,586	1158	12,469
Block C		520	520	360	180	0	0	1580	17,007	1264	13,606
TOTAL	0	3269	3106	2454	2251	1168	519	12,767	137,424	10,214	109,939



OPTION B - Aerial Plan View (Shadow at 21 September 1400)

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.6 OPTION C

Block Layout

Option C is a hybrid of Options A and B. The street frontages continue to generate the basic form of the western parcel blocks. Block A includes a longer elevation to the proposed Town Hall Garden, forming an L-shaped building. Block B is extended to provide a larger footprint than in Option B, thereby reducing the bulk of Block A.

The two blocks still define a central courtyard space located above the car park podium, having an opening towards the south providing good daylight and sunlight access.

Car Parking

The main car parking provision follows the same layout as Options A and B with the podium visible from the south and between Blocks A and B to their east side

Massing Approach

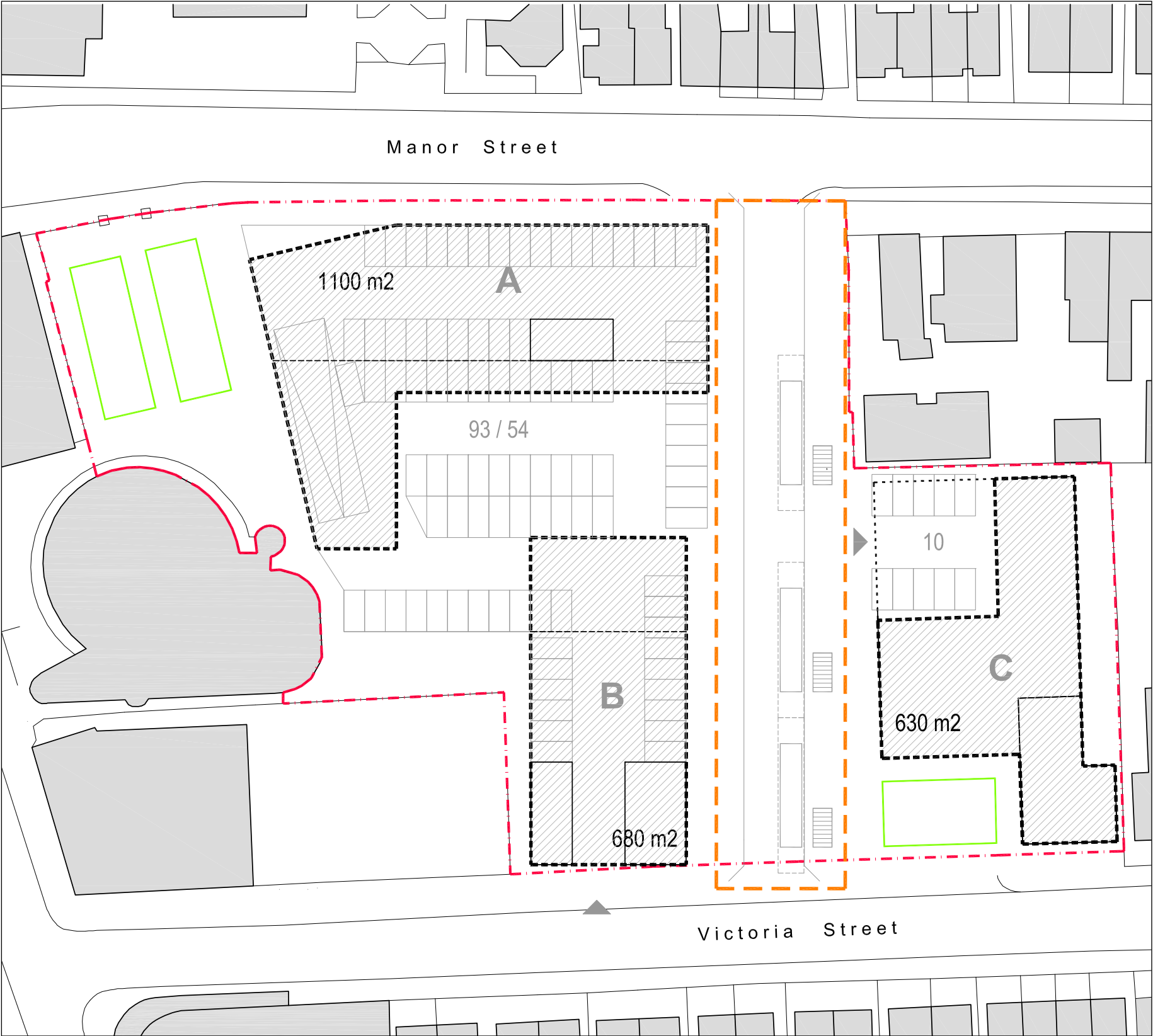
Option C maintains the measured response to the local context, as well as taking into account the proximity of some of the taller town centre buildings. Height is used close to the town hall and library to give an appropriate civic scale.

A greater use of set-backs at upper level is employed in this option, particularly along Mason Street, but also along the access road and fronting Victoria Street

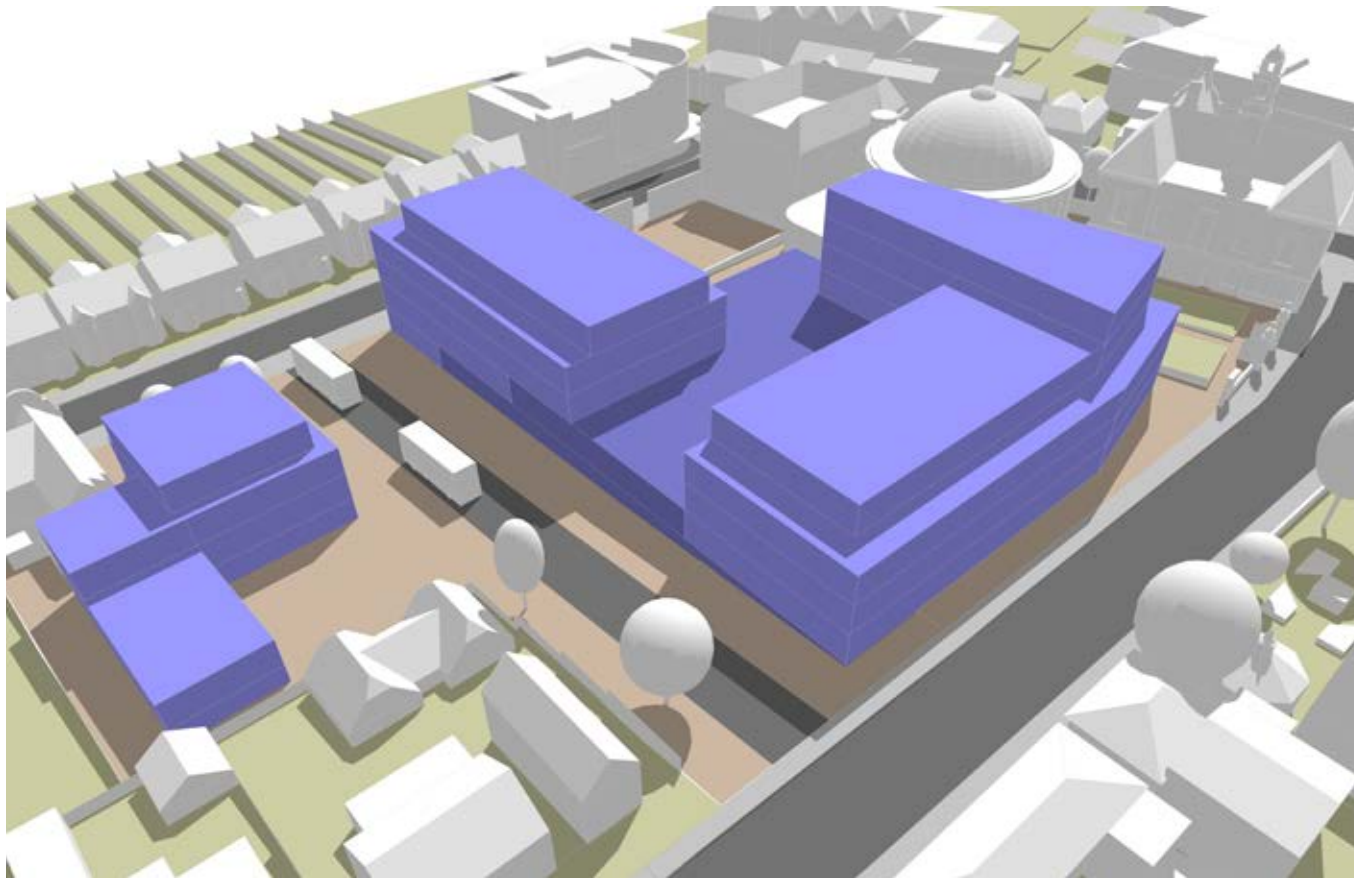
Building heights drop down towards the east using further set-backs. Block C completes this transition to a lower scale of development adjacent to the houses of Victoria Street.

The massing of Blocks A and B varies between four and five storeys with the set-backs generally reducing perceived street scale by a consistent one storey around the site.

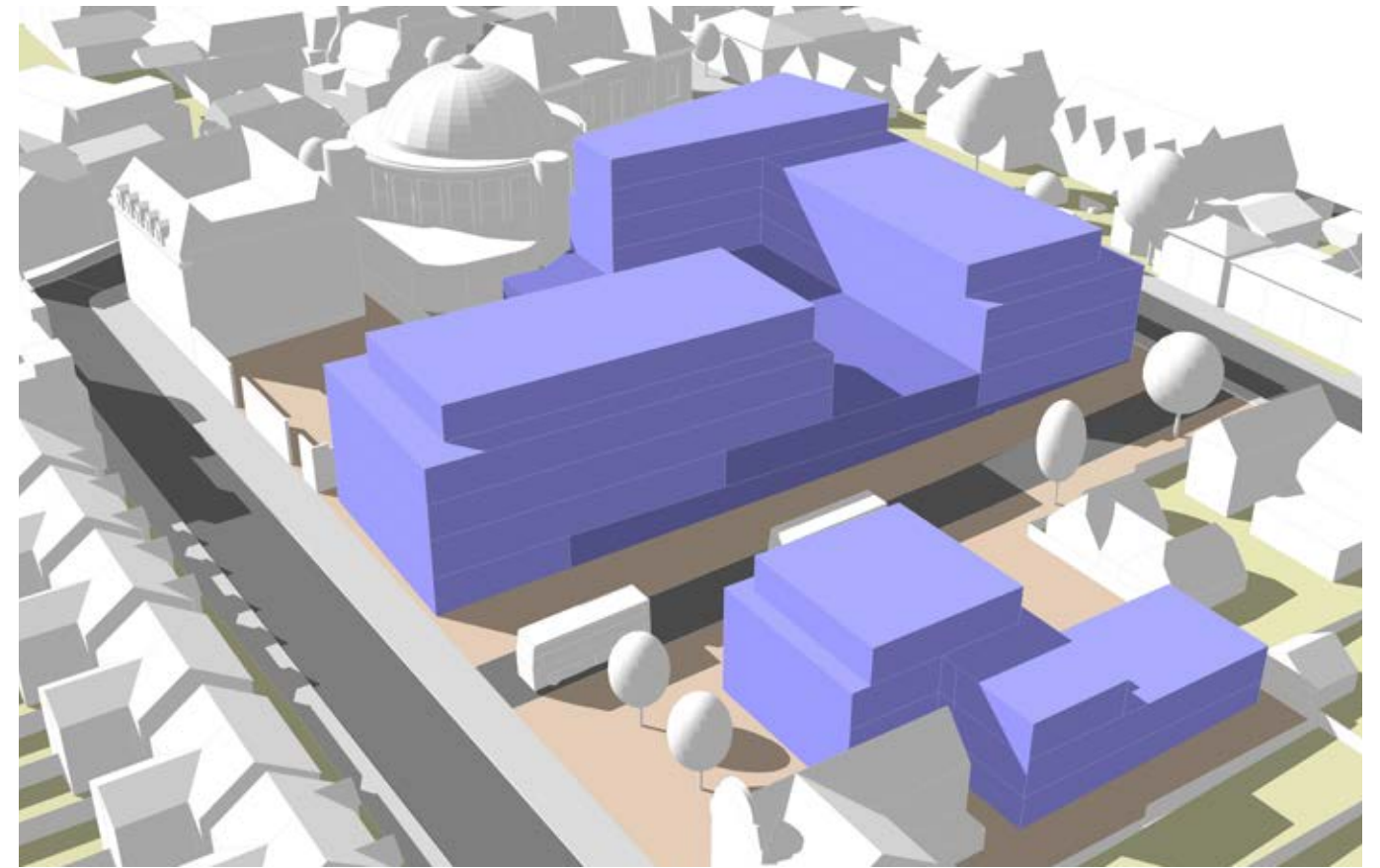
Block C follows the same approach set out in Options A and B.



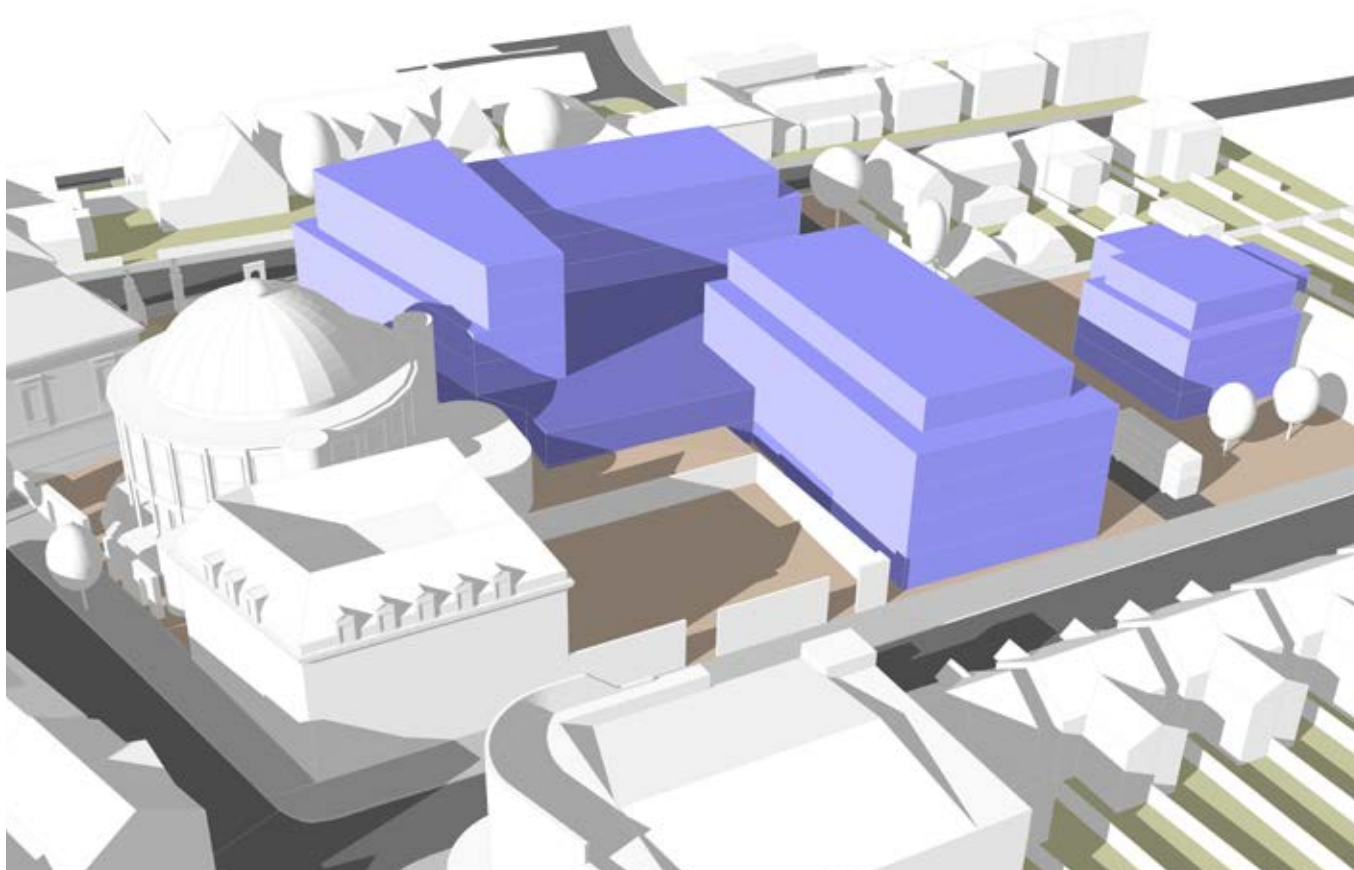
OPTION C - Layout Plan



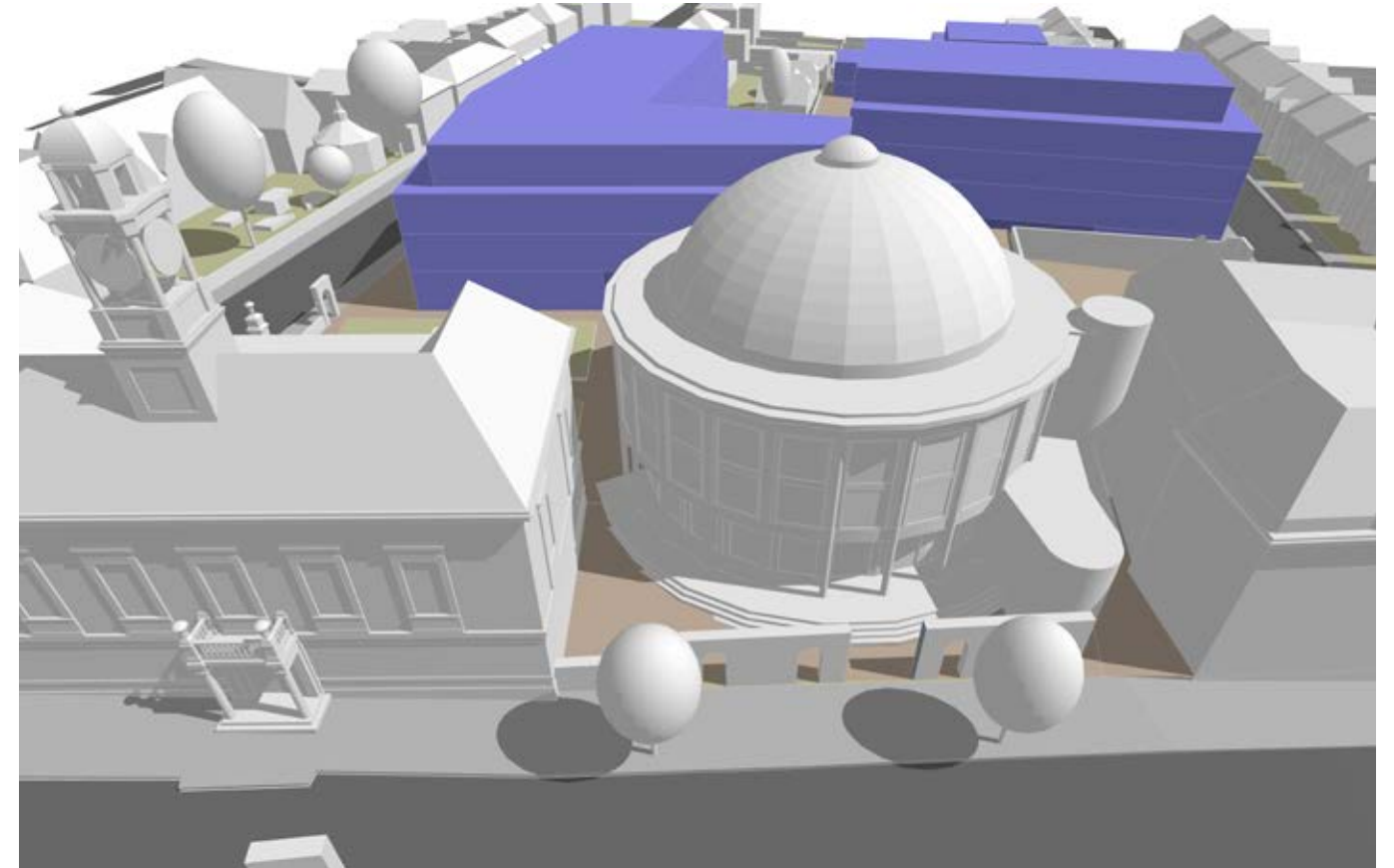
OPTION C - Aerial view from NE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SW



OPTION C - Aerial view from W

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Townscape

The potential visual impacts, relationships with neighbouring buildings and general townscape implications of Option C are summarised in the adjacent views.

View 1 indicates the potential of the new development to create an urban scaled backdrop to the Town Hall. In contrast to Options A and B, the set-back upper storeys of Block A provide a more complex architectural form with a less strongly defined relationship to the Town Hall.

View 2 shows the relationship of the new development to the Town Hall when approaching from the east. As well as slanting the end of Block A towards the Town Hall, the substantial upper level set-backs also allow an earlier glimpse of the central tower when moving westwards along Manor Street

View 3 demonstrates the potential to create an enclosed garden space framed by the Town Hall, Library and the new development. As with Option B, the longer frontage on the east side of the garden defines the space strongly, although the corner is less strong due to the setting back of upper storeys.

View 4 shows a similar arrangement to Option A but indicates a set-back upper fifth storey which extends closer to Victoria Street.



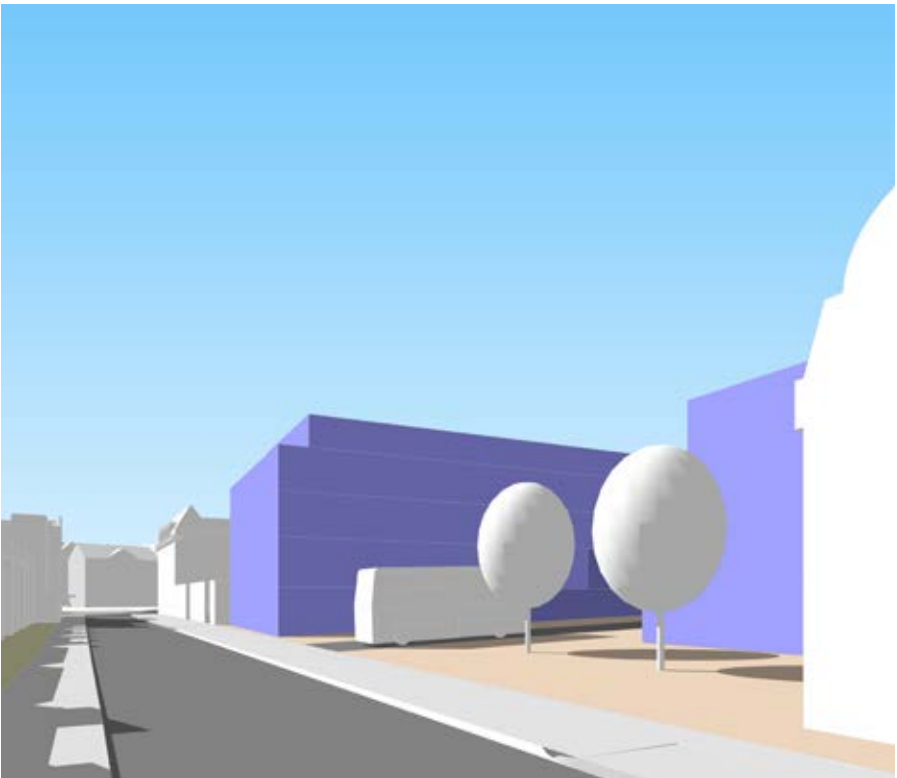
OPTION C - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION C - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION C - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION C - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

Development Capacity

With this option Block A is sized to accommodate the larger uses such as the GP surgery. Retail and car parking would be located at ground and lower ground level, with the health facility occupying the first floor. Accommodation above could include a hotel, offices or residential uses although a clear separation of uses between Blocks A and B could see a standalone commercial or hotel building in Block B..

The east parcel shows a potential development around a retained older part of the current community building which would lend itself to residential use. The form of this building is likely to be constrained by relationships to neighbouring buildings and rights of light.

The modelling generates a total gross external area of c. 13,000 m2 (140,000 sq ft) which is very similar to Option B

Applying an efficiency factor of 80% across all uses an indicative Gross internal area of c. 10,400 m2 (112,000 sq ft is generated.

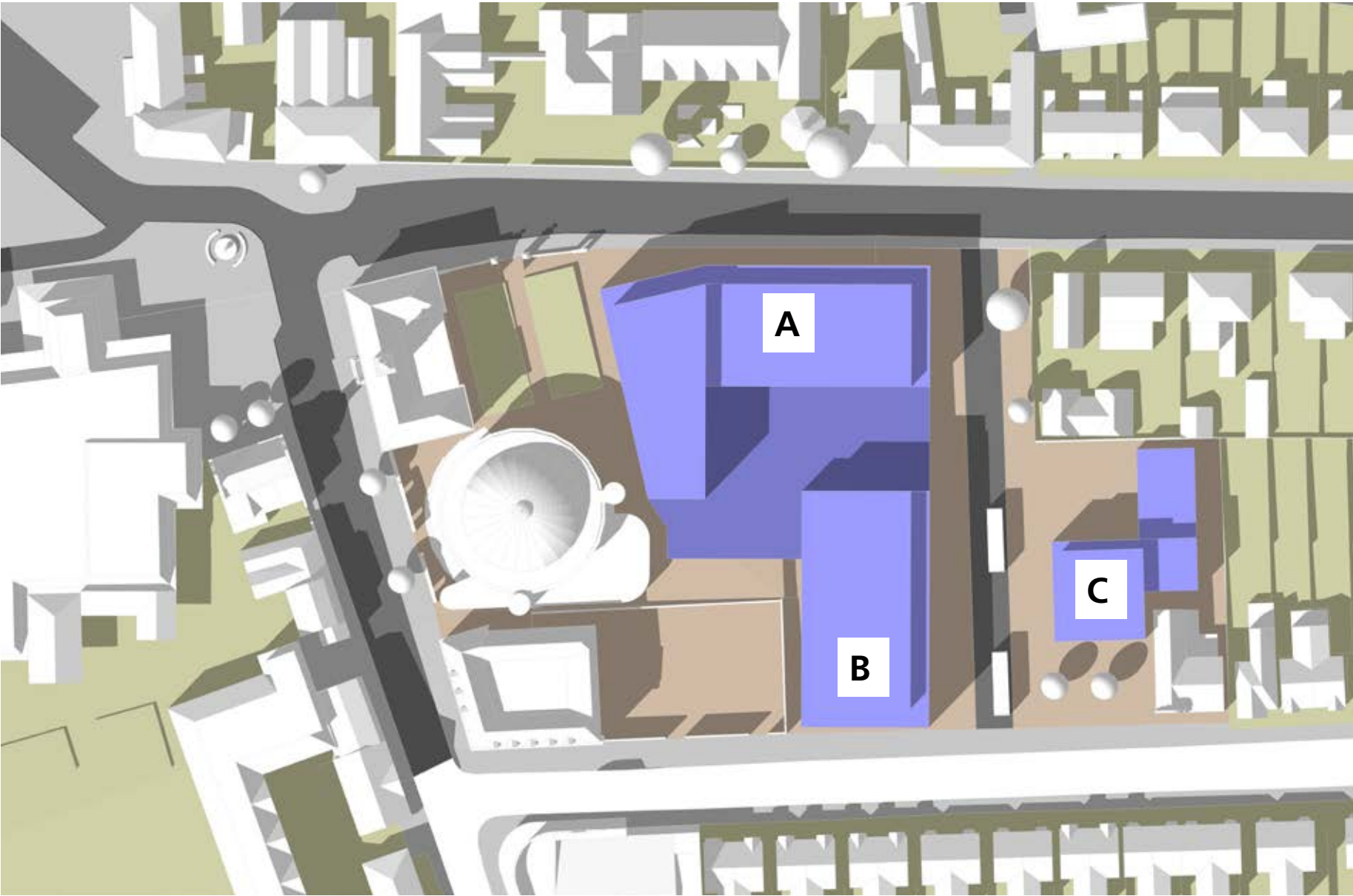
Excluding the car park, the available indicative GIA is 7,365 m2 (79,000 sq ft)

This compares to the initial project brief which indicates a space requirement of c. 5,600 m2 (6,000 sq ft)

The additional area of 1,700 m2 (18,300 sq ft) could therefore be considered for further uses such as residential accommodation or commercial office space

Option C achieves c. 157 parking spaces (subject to detailed design).

OPTION C		Indicative GEA (m2)										
Level	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL (m2)	TOTAL (ft2)	GIA (m2)*	GIA (ft2)*	
Car Park		2545	1269	0	0	0	0	3814	41,054	3051	32,843	147
Block A		0	968	1172	1172	917	375	4604	49,557	3683	39,646	
Block B		246	553	777	777	523	0	2876	30,957	2301	24,766	
Block C		625	625	306	170	0	0	1726	18,579	1381	14,863	10
TOTAL	0	3416	3415	2255	2119	1440	375	13,020	140,147	10,416	112,118	157



OPTION C - Aerial Plan View (Shadow at 21 September 1400)

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.7 OPTION D

Block Layout

Option D is a developed approach learning from Options A, B and C. The layout seeks to maximise street edge definition whilst incorporating a clearly defined northern courtyard, individually expressed building elements and sufficient enclosure to the proposed Town Hall garden.

By seeking to respond to a number of different objectives the form of the layout has become more complex, although this results in a potentially more contextually responsive design approach.

Block C continues to follow the same approach as in previous options.

Car Parking

The main car parking provision follows the same layout as Option C with the podium visible from the south-east and between Blocks A and B to their east side, although the extent of open podium is reduced from Option C.

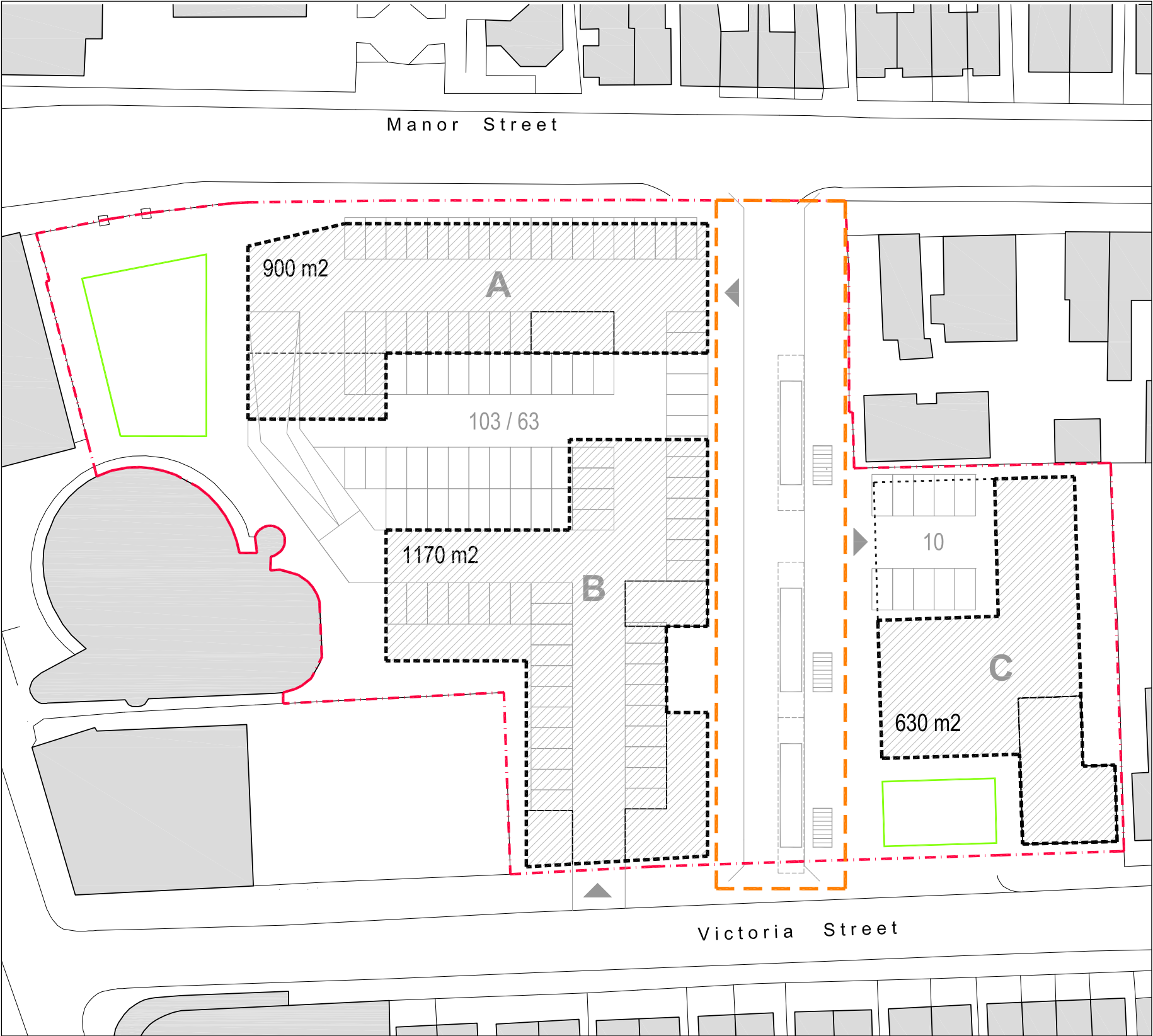
Massing Approach

Option D enhances the response to the local context, by seeking an increased variety of form and avoidance of large-scaled frontages. The interweaving of the built form around internal open spaces provides the potential for sequential views related to pedestrian movement and varied townscape.

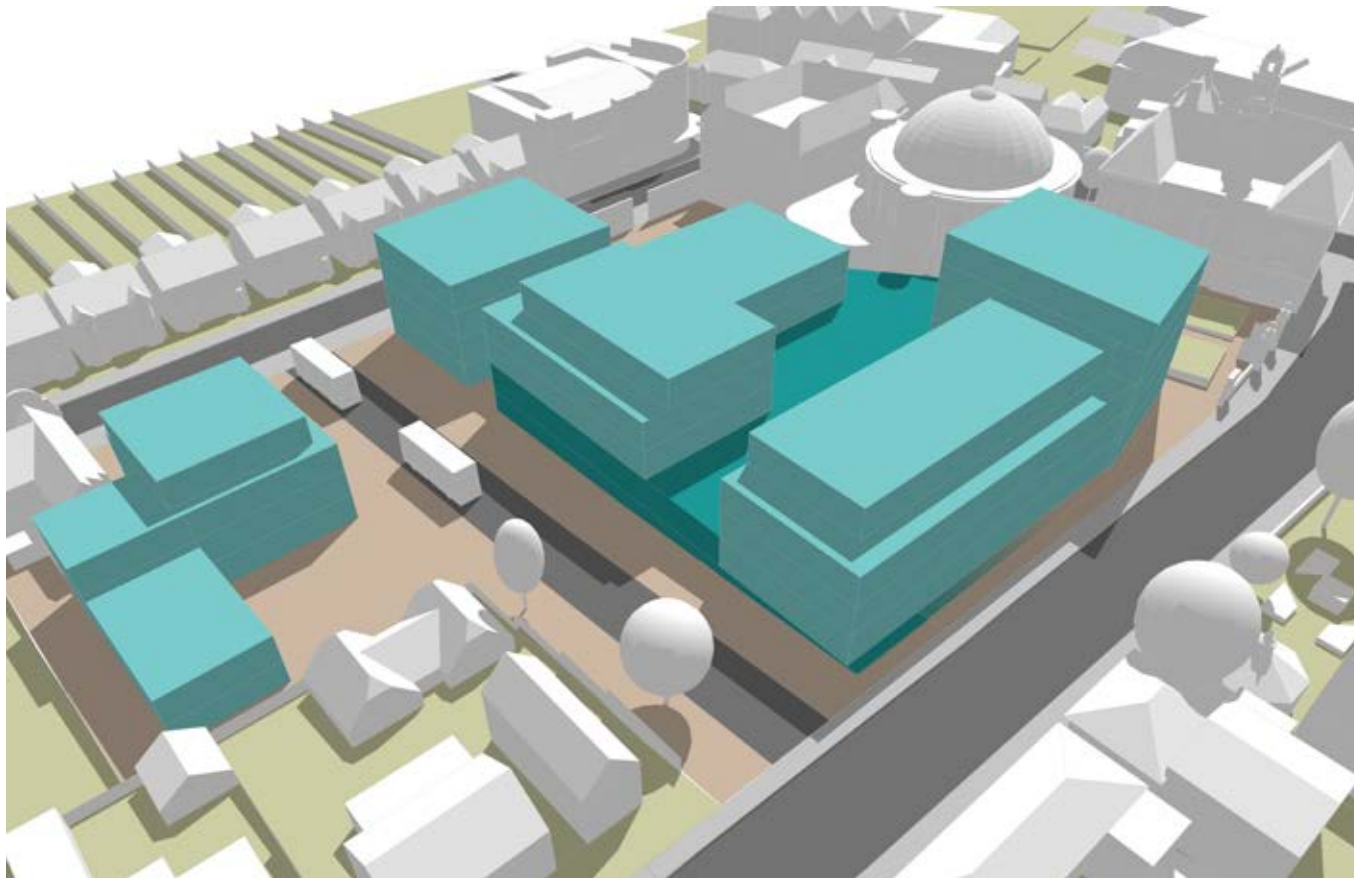
As with all options, building heights drop down towards the east using further set-backs. Block C completes this transition to a lower scale of development adjacent to the houses of Victoria Street.

The massing of Blocks A and B varies between four and five storeys with the set-backs generally reducing perceived street scale by a consistent one storey around the site, the exception to this being adjacent the Town Hall garden where a stronger building form is envisaged

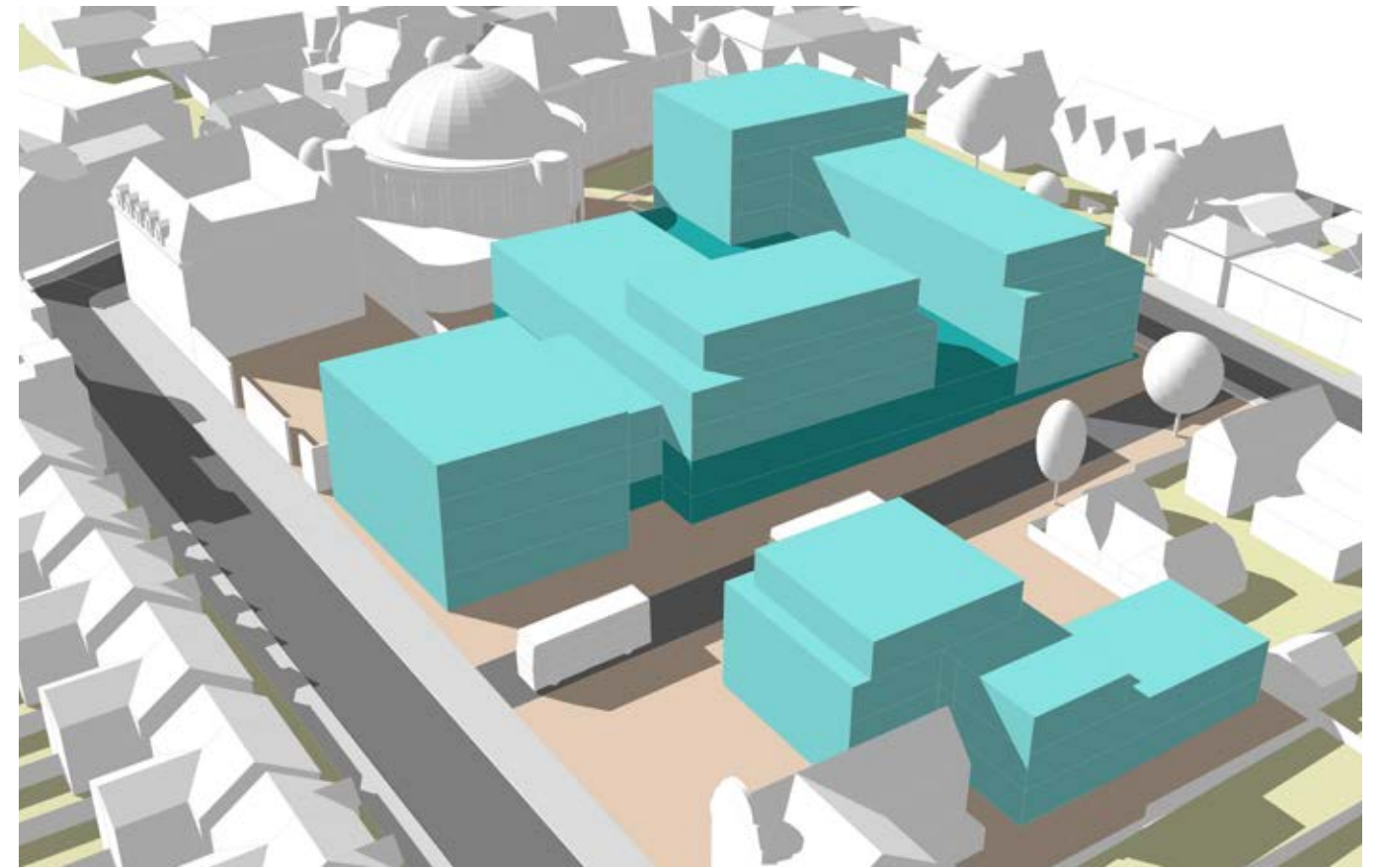
Block C follows the same approach set out in Options A, B and C.



OPTION D - Layout Plan



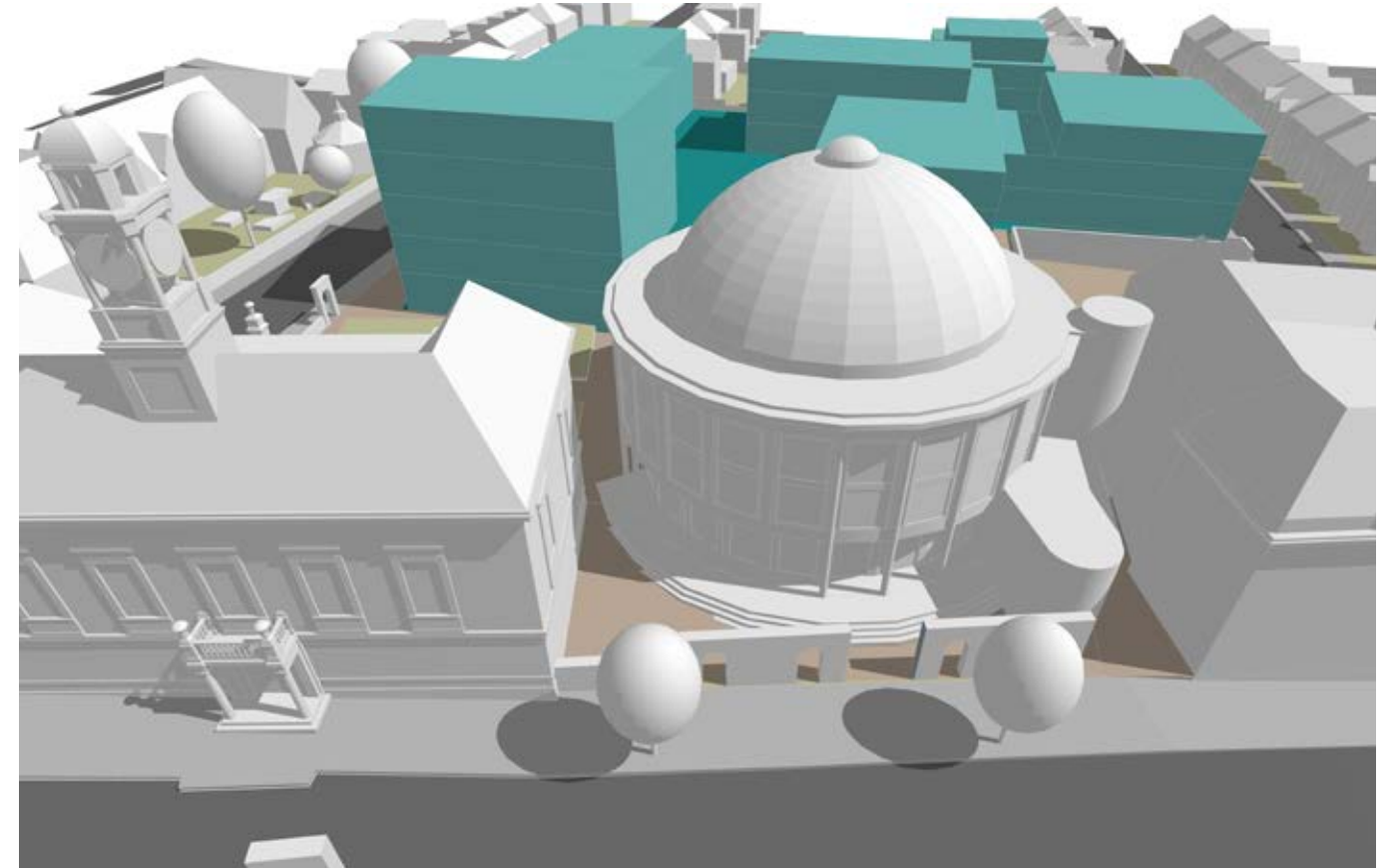
OPTION D - Aerial view from NE



OPTION D - Aerial view from SE



OPTION D - Aerial view from SW



OPTION D - Aerial view from W

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Townscape

The potential visual impacts, relationships with neighbouring buildings and general townscape implications of Option C are summarised in the adjacent views.

View 1 indicates the potential of the new development to create an urban scaled backdrop to the Town Hall and follows the approach shown in Options A and B where a strong, simple form echoes the robust proportions of the Town Hall without creating visual competition.

View 2 shows the relationship of the new development to the Town Hall when approaching from the east. In Option D, the street frontage has been set further back providing an earlier and more open view of the Town Hall when approaching from the east.

View 3 demonstrates the potential to create an enclosed garden space framed by the Town Hall, Library and the new development. The massing of Option D follows a similar approach to Options B and C, but with increased separation from the Library.

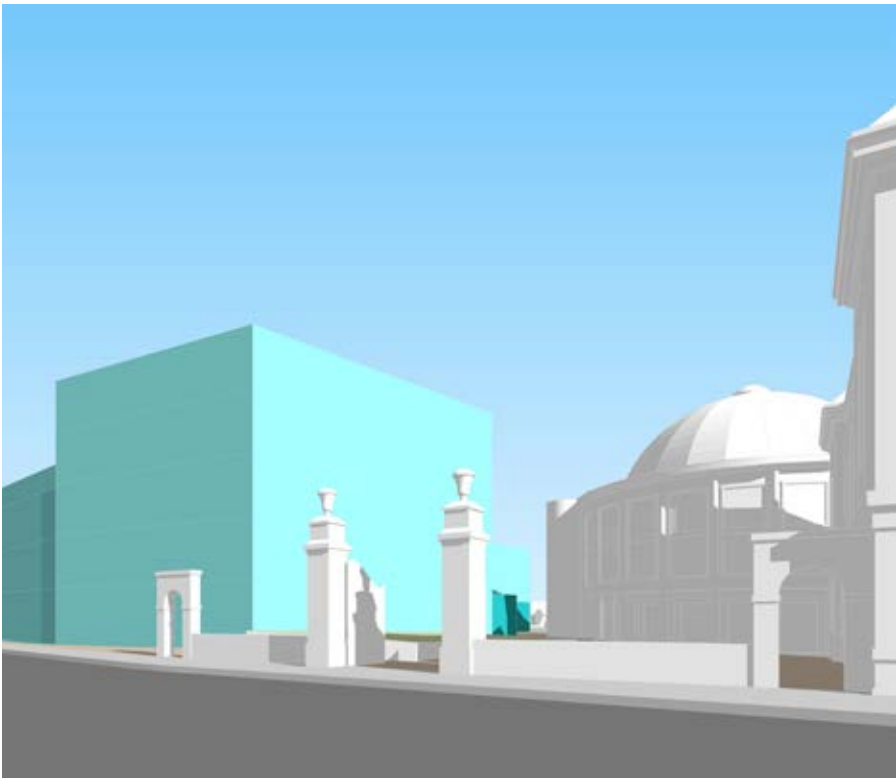
View 4 shows a similar arrangement to Option B where the mass of building fronting the north-south access road is broken up to reduce perceived bulk. However, with Option D set-backs have been used to link the block elements together.



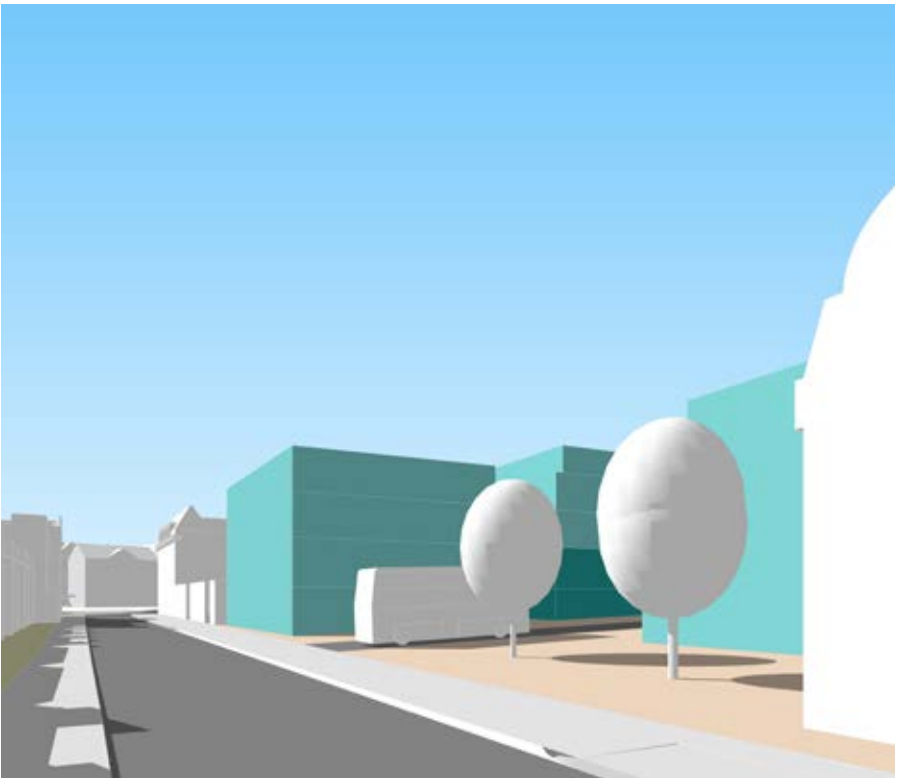
OPTION D - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION D - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION D - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION D - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

Development Capacity

Within this option Block B is the larger block and would accommodate larger uses such as the GP Surgery. Retail and car parking would be located on the lowest level, with the health facility occupying the first floor. Block A would be suitable for accommodation such as a hotel, offices or residential uses.

Block B could also accommodate residential or commercial uses at upper levels. The more articulated building form could be most suitable for residential use

The east parcel shows a potential development around a retained older part of the current community building which would lend itself to residential use. The form of this building is likely to be constrained by relationships to neighbouring buildings and rights of light.

The modelling generates a total gross external area of c. 13,200 m2 (142,000 sq ft)

Applying an efficiency factor of 80% across all uses an indicative Gross internal area of c. 10,600 m2 (114,000 sq ft) is generated.

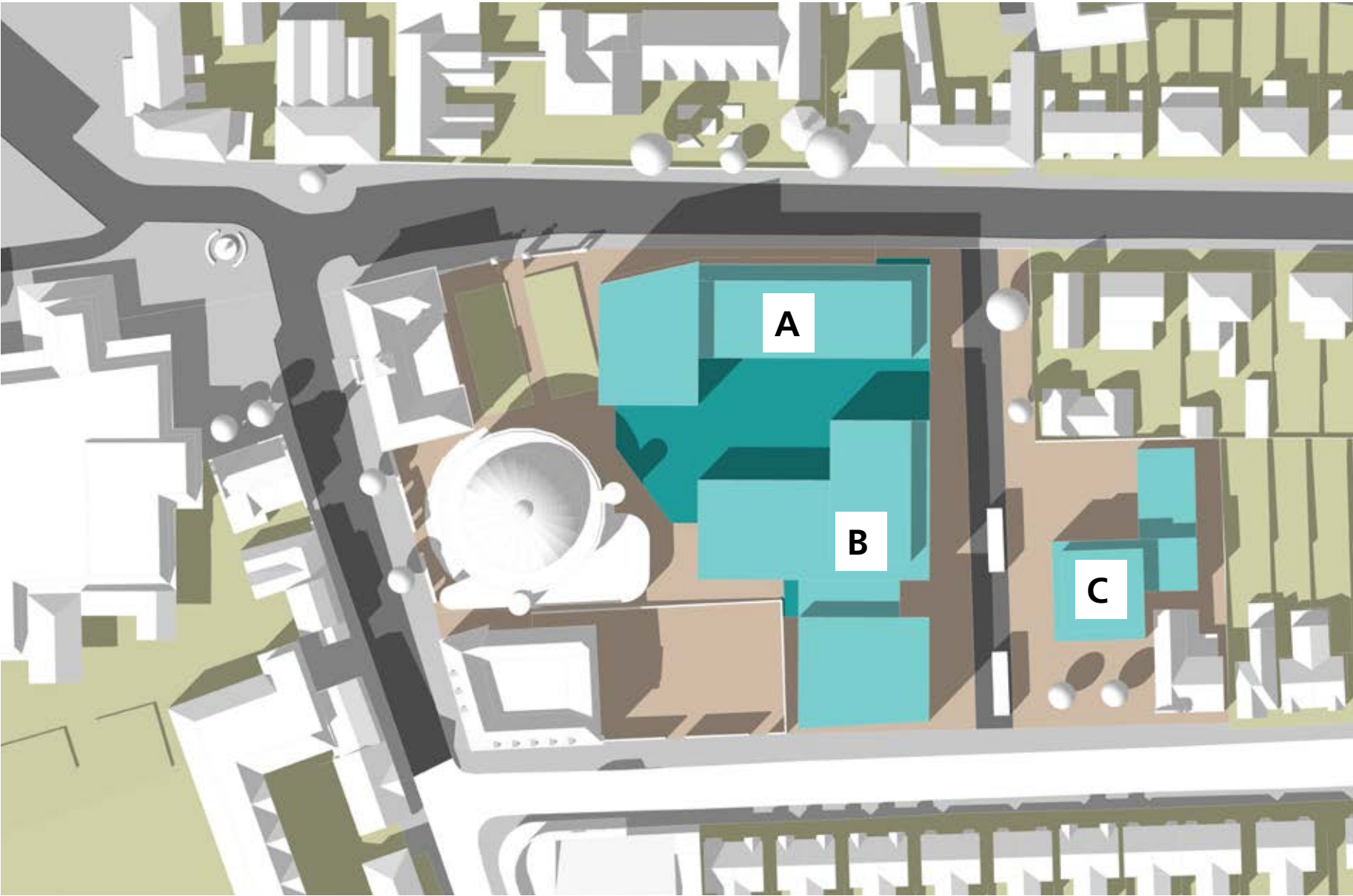
Excluding the car park, the available indicative GIA is 7,100 m2 (78,000 sq ft)

This compares to the initial project brief which indicates a space requirement of c. 5,600 m2 (6,000 sq ft)

The additional area of 1,500 m2 (16,200 sq ft) could therefore be considered for further uses such as residential accommodation or commercial office space

Option B achieves c. 172 parking spaces (subject to detailed design).

OPTION D		Indicative GEA (m2)										
Level	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL (m2)	TOTAL (ft2)	GIA (m2)*	GIA (ft2)*	
Car Park		2835	1524	0	0	0	0	4359	46,920	3487	37,536	162
Block A		0	900	900	900	763	339	3802	40,925	3042	32,740	
Block B		162	460	1210	1210	294	0	3336	35,909	2669	28,727	
Block C		625	625	306	170	0	0	1726	18,579	1381	14,863	10
TOTAL	0	3622	3509	2416	2280	1057	339	13,223	142,332	10,578	113,866	172



OPTION D - Aerial Plan View (Shadow at 21 September 1400)

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.8 BUS STATION ASSESSMENT

A meeting was held with Braintree District Council and Essex County Council Highways and Public Transport officers on 20 December 2016 to discuss the operational requirements of the existing bus station facility as well as potential for growth and future needs.

Information received indicated that a reduction in the capacity of the bus station as proposed in the previous Henry Boot proposals would not be acceptable to ECC or Bus Operators.

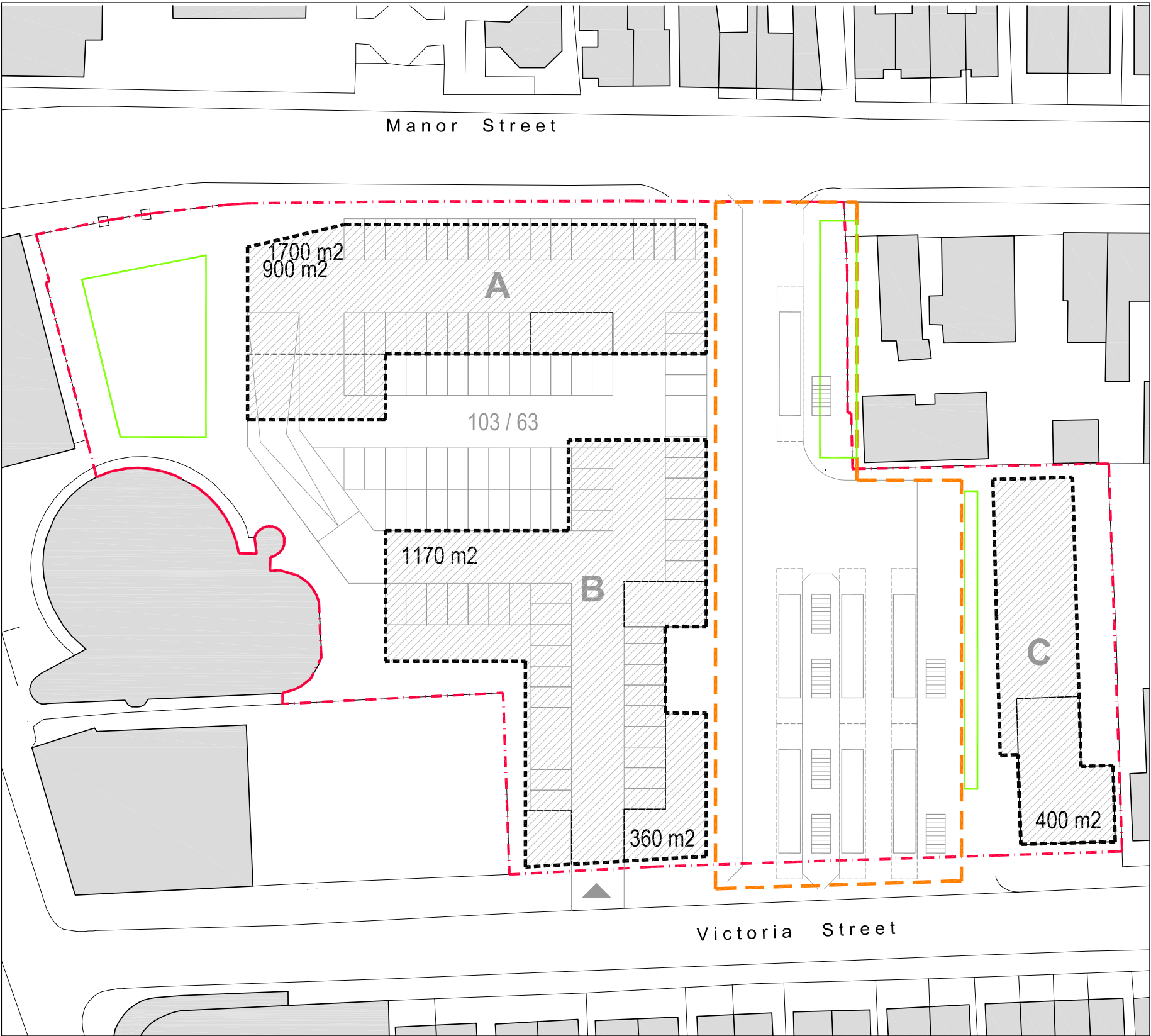
The starting point for more detailed study will therefore need to be based on existing capacity plus identified future increases up to 2033. As an initial indication of the spatial effect on the options outlined above, the impact of a larger bus facility is illustrated on the adjacent plan.

The preferred approach to accommodating the bus station requirements is to ring fence the bus operations area away from the main (western) development parcel.

If this facility needs to be enlarged from the assumptions used in the options appraisal above, a loss of potential development within the eastern parcel commensurate with the number of bus stands to be accommodated will arise.

The illustration is based on seven bus stands being located on the site with the potential for further capacity on a remodelled Victoria Street.

This layout is indicative only and will require testing for vehicle tracking and safe access.



OPTION D 2 - Alternative Bus Station Layout

Development Implications

Retention of a substantial and potentially enhanced bus facility on the site will need to be reconciled with other project objectives. The following lists out a number of issues and considerations which will need to inform the design proposals:

Spatial Impacts

- The bus station footprint will remain substantial and could occupy a significant proportion of the site area
- The bus station will potentially retain a high profile within the local streetscape particularly in Victoria Street
- Bus station ancillary accommodation will need to be incorporated
- Rear gardens and perimeter fencing may remain unscreened by new development
- Public realm design quality will be of high importance to prevent the bus station area becoming unsightly and to successfully resolve perimeter conditions

Access Issues

- Safe bus access must be reconciled with pedestrian movement, particularly along Manor Street and Victoria Street
- There is potential for congestion and conflicts between buses, cars and taxis
- Additional highways impacts of on-street bus stops/stands needs to be assessed and co-ordinated

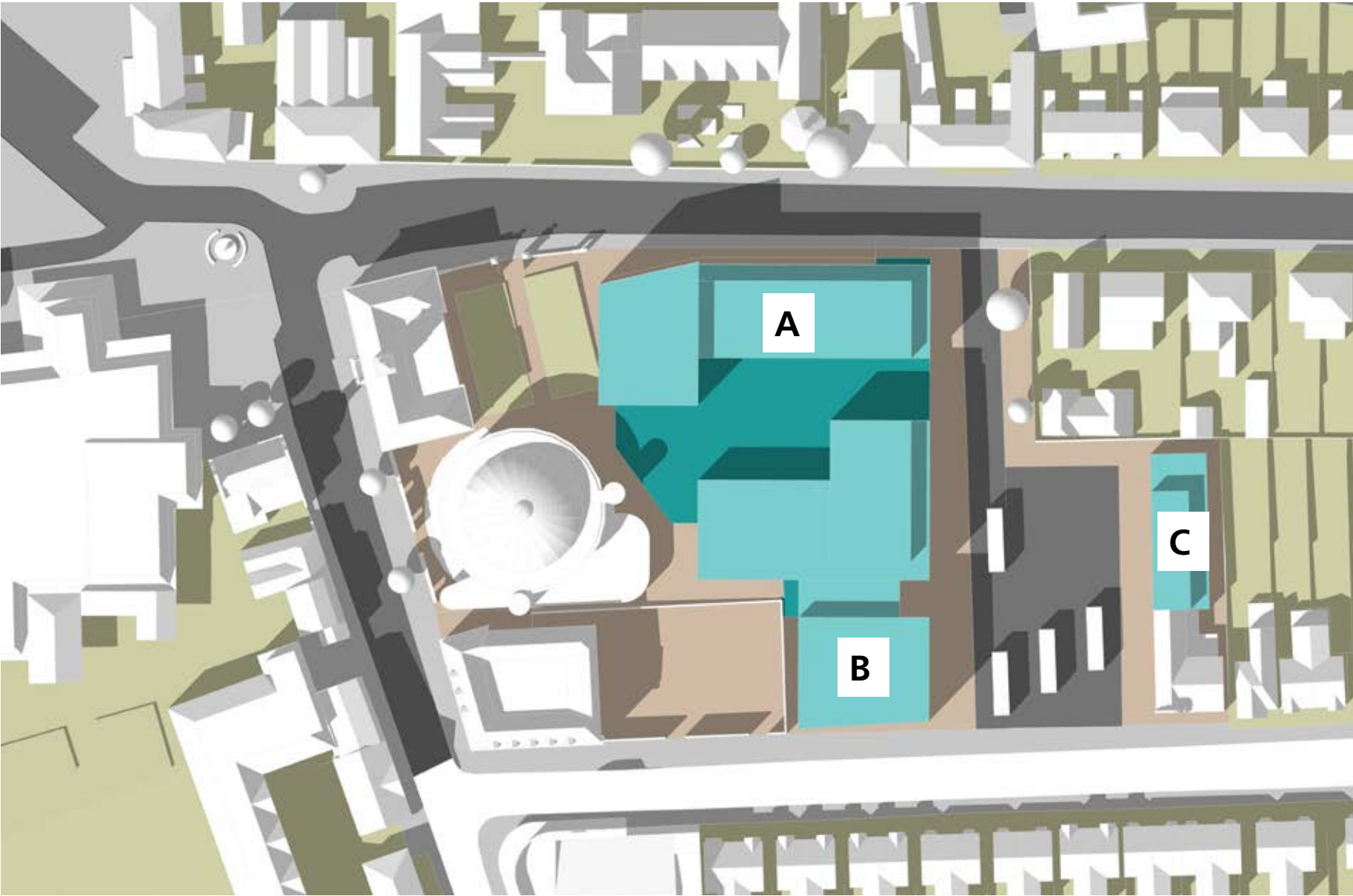
Environmental Impacts

- The concentration of buses in this location will impact on adjacent development and may in part determine suitability for different uses
- Noise impacts will require assessment and may restrict the appropriateness for residential use in some locations
- Air pollution impacts will require assessment and may restrict the appropriateness for residential use in some locations
- Visual impacts will need to be considered as part of the townscape assessment' for example to prevent walls of buses accumulating along site frontages

Development Capacity Impacts

- The size of bus facility will affect the quantum of development on site
- An undercroft solution is unlikely to be appropriate in this location due to overall limitations on building heights
- The adjacent plan and schedule demonstrate the indicative footprint of a 6/7 stand facility. This leads to a loss of 600m2 of development area from the eastern parcel compared to the options appraisal layouts
- Loss of Block C to allow a c. 10 bus stand solution would most likely result in a further reduction of 800 m2 and full removal of the existing community centre buildings

OPTION D 2		Indicative GEA (m2)									
Level	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL (m2)	TOTAL (ft2)	GIA (m2)*	GIA (ft2)*
Car Park		2835	1524	0	0	0	0	4359	46,920	3487	37,536
Block A		0	900	900	900	763	339	3802	40,925	3042	32,740
Block B		162	460	1210	1210	294	0	3336	35,909	2669	28,727
Block C		400	400	200	0	0	0	1000	10,764	800	8,611
TOTAL	0	3397	3284	2310	2110	1057	339	12,497	134,518	9,998	107,614
		* GEA / GIA Correction Factor 80%									



OPTION D 2 - Aerial Plan View (Shadow at 21 September 1400)

3 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.9 OPTIONS COMPARISON

OPTIONS APPRAISAL MATRIX

OPTION	SITE CAPACITY	PARKING CAPACITY	URBAN INTEGRATION	LAYOUT CLARITY	FUNCTIONALITY	DAYLIGHT/SUNLIGHT	AMENITY SPACE	PHASING	SCORE
	Development Quantum and efficiency	Number of Spaces	Massing and Layout responds to context	Rational layout and good co-ordination of parts	Appropriate footprint sizes and flexibility	Impacts on internal spaces and neighbours	Well-defined and usable spaces	Ease of construction and phasing	SEE BELOW
A	10890	164	MEDIUM	GOOD	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	MEDIUM	24
B	10330	164	GOOD	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	24
C	10416	157	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIUM	25
D	10578	176	EXCELLENT	MEDIUM	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	MEDIUM	24

The above appraisal matrix sets out a relative assessment of the options. This provides an indication of the overall quality and performance of each option based on a set of identified parameters.

Typically this exercise may reveal a clear favourite option. In this case there is not a decisive winner although Option C performs best overall. The similarity of scores is most likely due to the project brief requirements and contextual constraints which limit the degree of possible design variation.

However, this tool does allow an identification of the most successful elements of each option which can then be adopted in the development of a preferred scheme moving forwards.

The following observations have been extracted from this exercise:

- Whilst option A provides the highest development area, this relates to the inclusion of a sixth storey which may be difficult to integrate with other layouts without wider area visual impacts
- The height limit for successfully integrated development appears to lie at 5 storeys, with a sixth storey requiring carefull assessment for suitability
- Urban integration is most successful where the massing is broken down to some degree, although this tends to increase the complexity of building form
- The clarity and functionality of the layout needs to provide sufficiently large a floorplate to accommodate the needs of a health centre on one main level
- A simpler layout and massing approach assists the integration of the car park with overlying development
- A single or dominant larger building is possible but may become complex if a variety of uses are to be accommodated
- The quality of any courtyard space will be limited by its accessibility over a podium car park and the access to daylight and sunlight. More succesful options have openings to the west and south
- Parking capacity is improved by expanding the building footprint towards the west (Option D), but a balance needs to be struck to retain a well sized Town Hall garden
- Potential for phasing and construction sequencing will be limited and determined by the need to integrate the car park underneath the development

4 Points

3 Points

2 Points

1 Point

3.10 OPTIONS APPRAISAL CONCLUSIONS

Each of the options provides strengths and weaknesses. The lack of a clear favourite implies that aspects of each option could inform the development of the preferred approach which will act as the basis for detailed design development.

Option A

Option A provides a clear functional diagram with the largest site capacity. This results from the use of large linear blocks. However, the resulting long frontages and central linear space could appear over-scaled in relation to the surrounding context. The central linear space does not assist in defining the town hall garden and is not well oriented for daylight and sunlight.

Option B

Option B is based on a dominant courtyard building which would incorporate a mix of uses. Whilst providing a potentially large footprint in the main block, the concentration on a single building results in a risk of higher functional complexity and lack of flexibility in comparison with other options which have a variety of building footprints. There is a danger that this form of development could fel over-scaled within the local context.

Option C

By splitting the western parcel into two simple, well sized blocks, autonomous and functional floorplates are achieved. The central courtyard enjoys good access to sunlight and daylight from two directions. The linear nature of the blocks would need to be addressed to respond contextually to the surrounding urban character.

Option D

BY creating more diversity of form and layout, Option D represents the strongest response to townscape integration, although this has resulted in additional scheme complexity. This option therefore indicates ideas which could perhaps be applied to the other options where these do not affect overall functionality and layout flexibility.

In conclusion, Option C appears to offer a strong direction for more detailed design development due to fundamental clarity of approach, good integration of the constituent building elements and the quality of external spaces. However, aspects of other options, for example, the more articulated massing shown in Option D could be incorporated to ensure the proposals respond most positively to the surrounding context.

Consideration Against Brief Requirements

GP Surgery and Pharmacy

The space requirement of 1400m2 will need to be accommodated within the larger block on the western parcel. An exercise to ascertain the options for the distribution of GP Surgery facilities will be undertaken to fine tune the layout to provide the optimum fit within the preferred massing approach. Options to locate GP surgery offices on an upper floor may provide flexibility to avoid the building footprint becoming over-scaled within its context. It is assumed that the pharmacy will be located on the ground floor in association with the GP Surgery entrance and lobby.

Retail / F+B

Due to its location on the ground floor, the amount of space available for the retail accommodation is inversely related to the size of the podium car park. The option layouts typically provide about 800m2 of ground floor in Block A along Manor Street. This is less than the brief target of 1300 m2. Questions of viability will affect the potential for locating retail and F+B in other locations, for example along the Victoria Street frontage

Car Parking

The parking provision for all options assumes a two level car park requiring excavation of a lower level up to the Manor Street site perimeter. This approach takes advantage of the site level change and provides approximately 150 - 160 car park spaces. Additional spaces could be included as part of the eastern parcel if this is available for development rather than bus station use. Any increase in parking above this level is likely to impact on other uses, particularly retail (see above).

Bus Facility

As demonstrated in 3.8 above, the size of the bus facility is of high significance regarding the potential for development on the site. Subsequent to discussion with ECC, a facility with at least 7 stands is likely to be required with further capacity potentially accommodated on the surrounding highways. In order to ensure that the brief for other uses is satisfied, it is suggested that the western parcel is ring-fenced for development, with the eastern parcel reserved for further discussion and investigation regarding the bus facility arrangements.

Other Potential Uses

The initial project brief identifies a requirement of 2700 m2 of accommodation (surgery and retail). The options study indicates the potential for approximately 6000m2 of accommodation within Blocks A and B on the western parcel.

This additional 3300m2 could accommodate other uses including a hotel, commercial office space or residential units. A number of issues will require consideration in order to agree the developed brief for more detailed design assessment:

Hotel

A hotel of the Premier Inn/Travelodge type could be accommodated at upper levels with the scheme. Access, servicing, parking and general efficiency of layouts will need to be considered to inform further design development. Design stage input from a potential operator would be beneficial to ensure a commercially optimised design solution

Commercial Office Space

Larger floorplate office space could be provided on upper levels. Alternatively, smaller, self-contained office buildings could be considered on the eastern parcel or to the south of the site. There may be scope to design a flexible building to allow fit-out as either office or hotel, subject to further advice regarding viability, potential tenants/ operators requirements. This would require a separate further design and commercial appraisal.

Residential

Whilst it is feasible to integrate residential use into the scheme, building footprints are to some degree pre-determined by the needs of other building uses. Access, orientation, amenity space needs and environmental conditions will need to be considered to achieve optimised, efficient layouts. The eastern parcel appears to be more suitable for residential use, due to proximity to existing residential properties and a clean separation from the relatively complex mixed-use western parcel. However, the scale and potential for development is dependent on resolving the bus facility requirements. The potential for residential development will also require a separate design and commercial appraisal.



4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1 DEVELOPED OPTION A

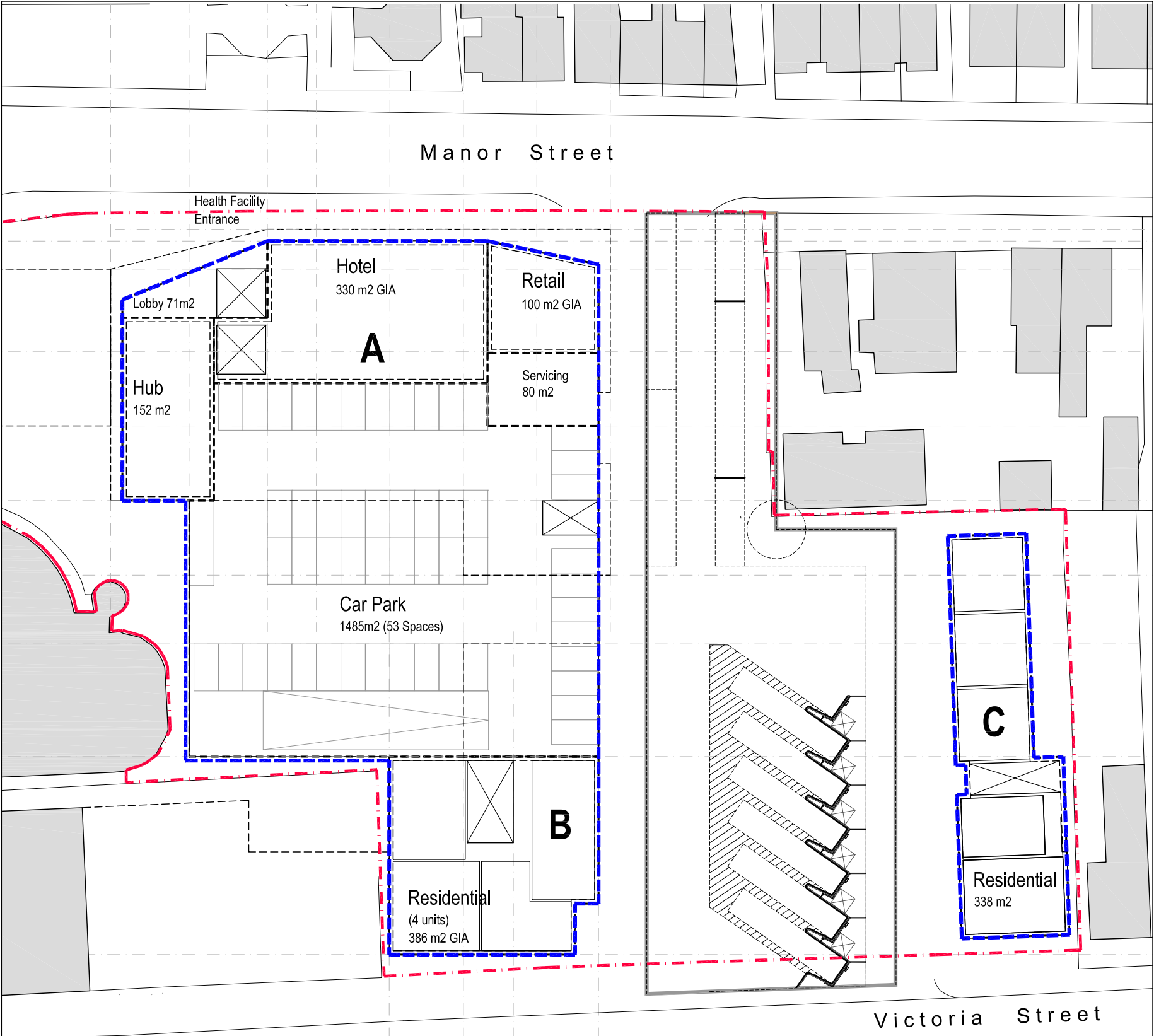
4.1.1 Block Layout

Subsequent to confirmation of the project brief, a further developed option appraisal was carried out. These developed options have been evolved from the results of the initial options appraisal, combining the most positive aspects of each scheme as identified in the comparison matrix.

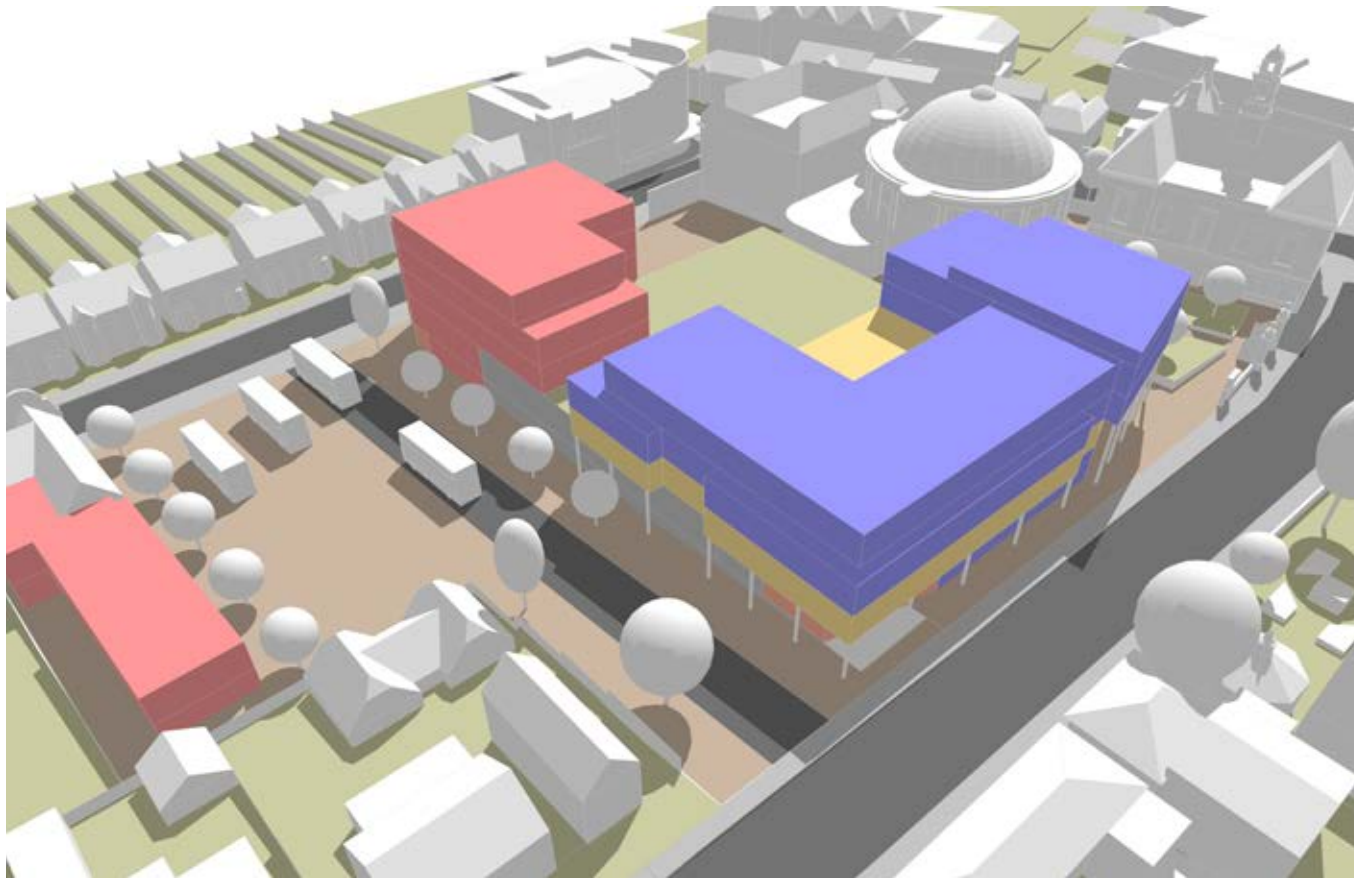
Developed Option A consists of a main northern building (Block A) incorporating the large floorplate uses of the health facility and hotel located over a podium structure incorporating parking and servicing. A community hub is located adjacent to a new town hall garden and a retail unit positioned on the eastern corner to provide street frontage activity.

Residential accommodation is located in a second five storey building fronting Victoria Street (Block B) and a two storey extension and conversion of the existing community centre building (Block C).

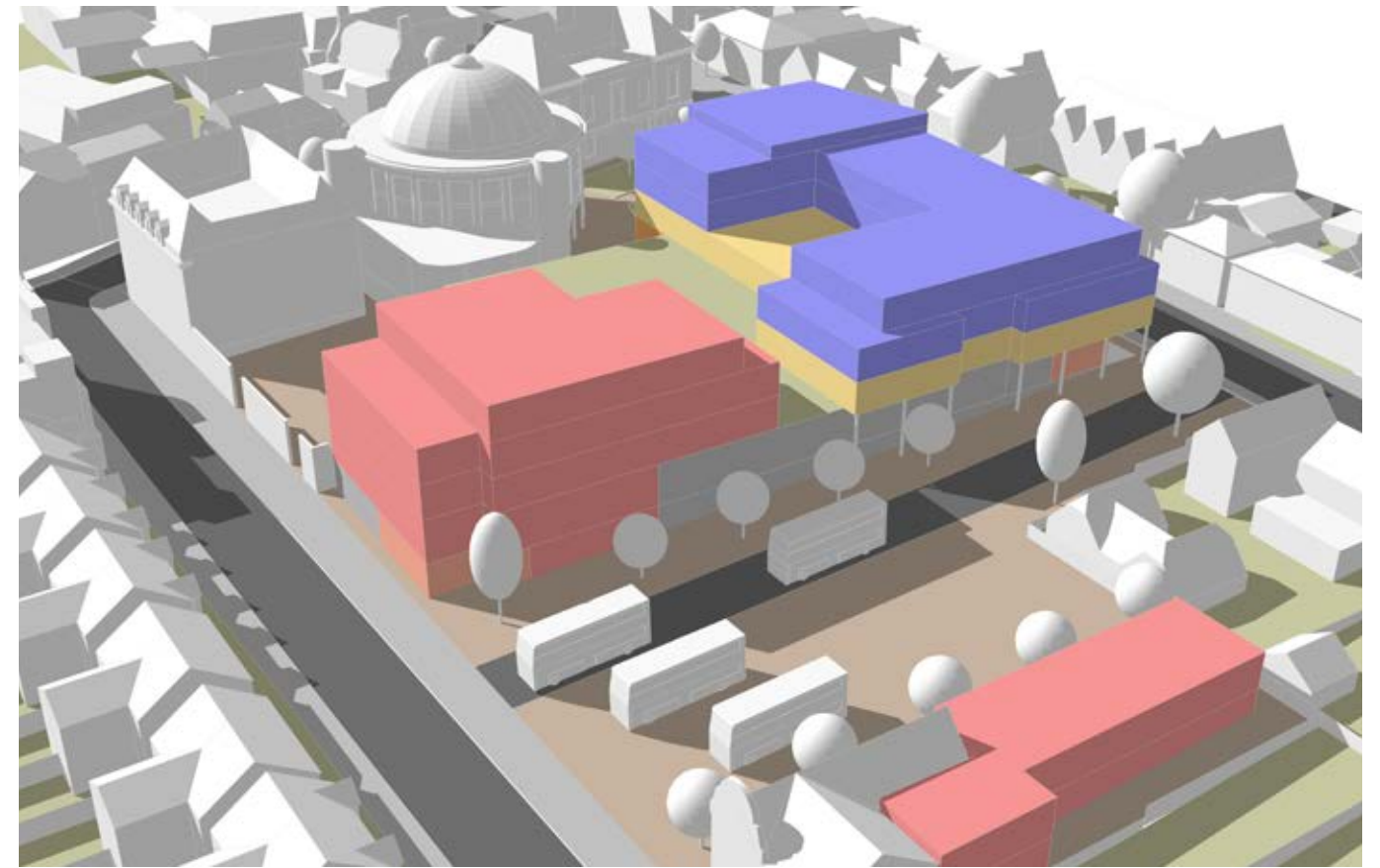
In terms of massing, the buildings are limited to four storeys along Manor Street and five storeys to Victoria Street, making use of the drop in ground level. Set-backs are used to reduce local impacts from overshadowing and townscape. The contextual impacts of this approach are outlined further under the Townscape section below.



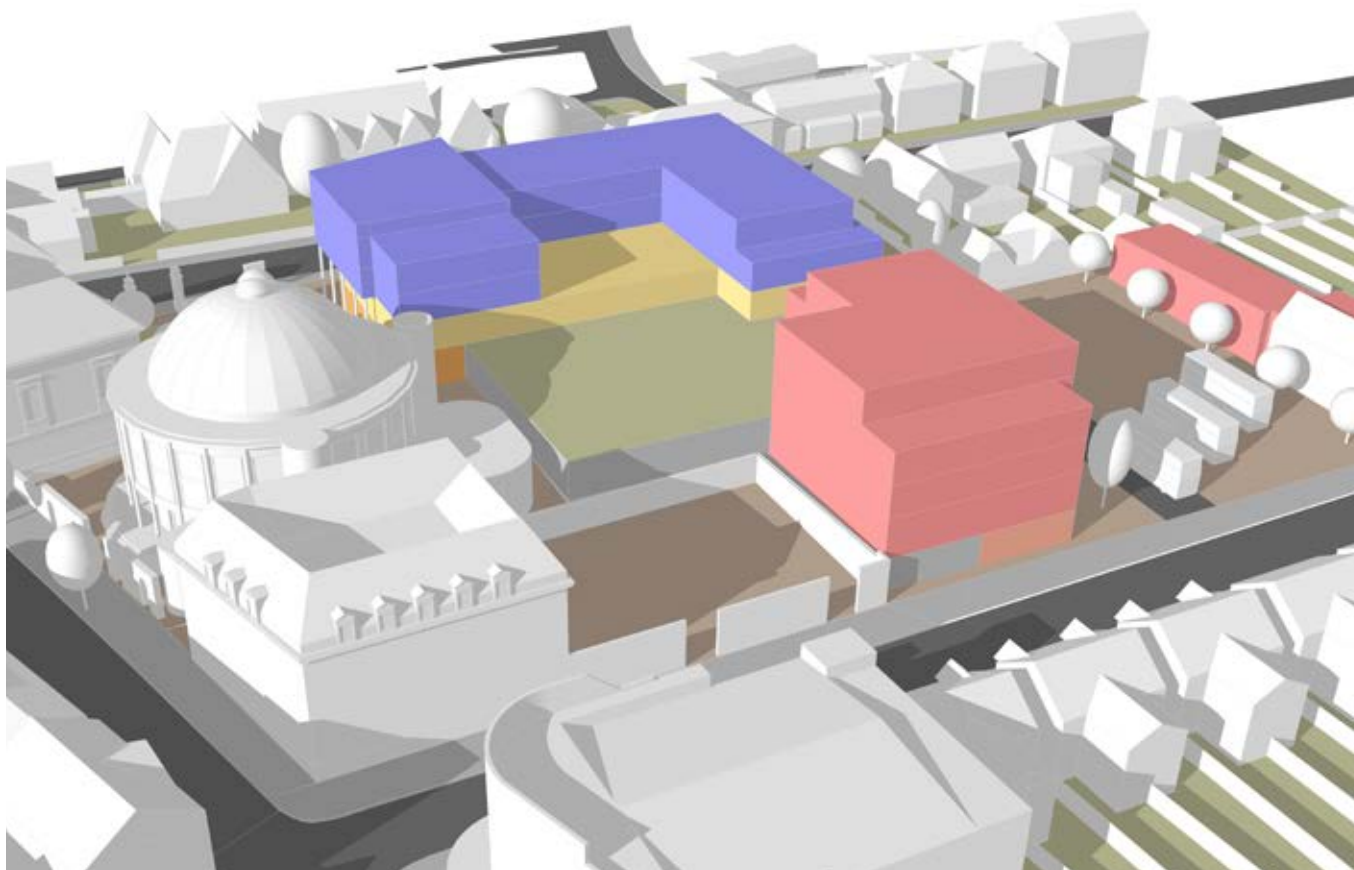
OPTION A - Upper Ground Floor Layout Plan



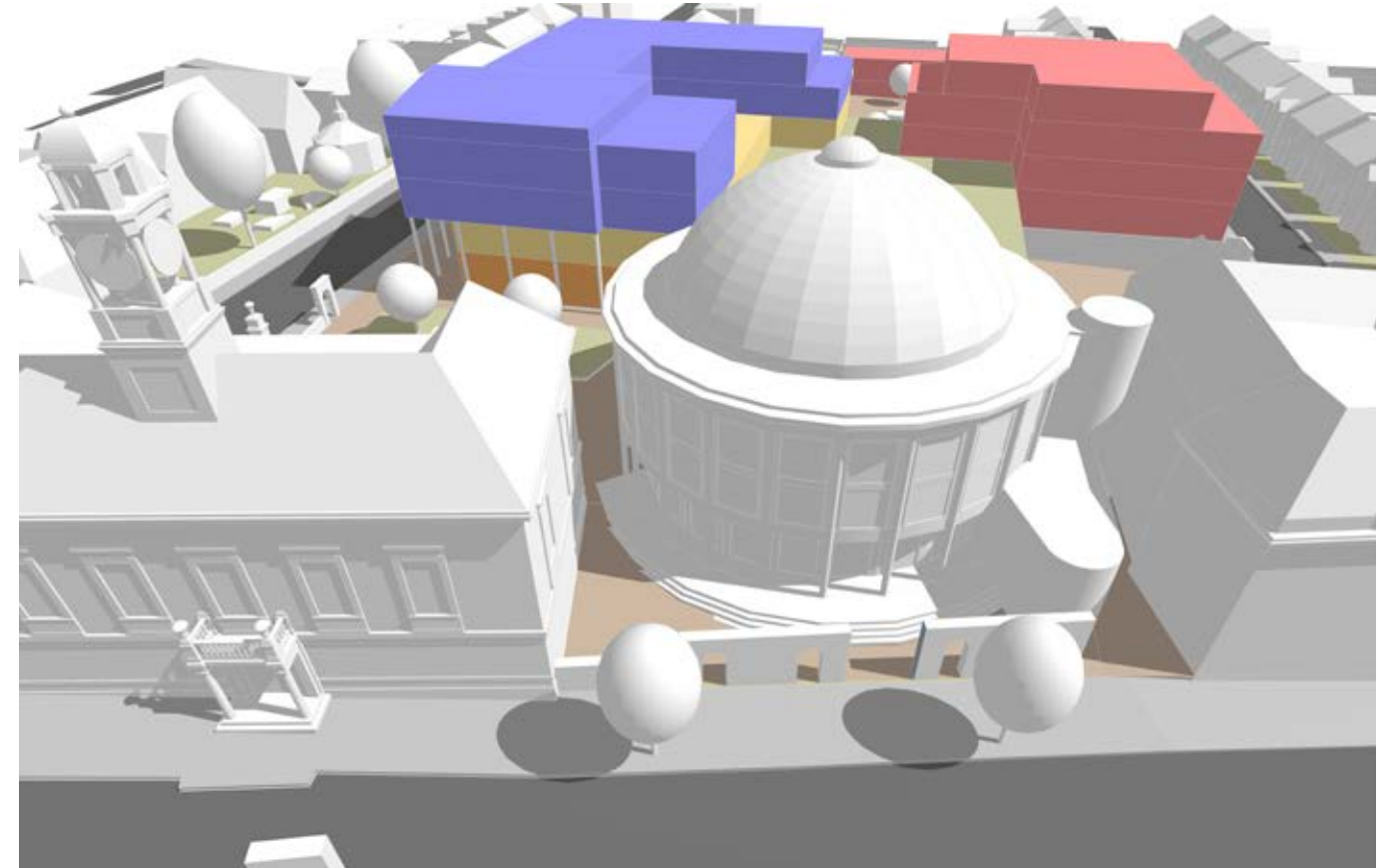
OPTION A- Aerial view from NE



OPTION A - Aerial view from SE



OPTION A - Aerial view from SW



OPTION A - Aerial view from W

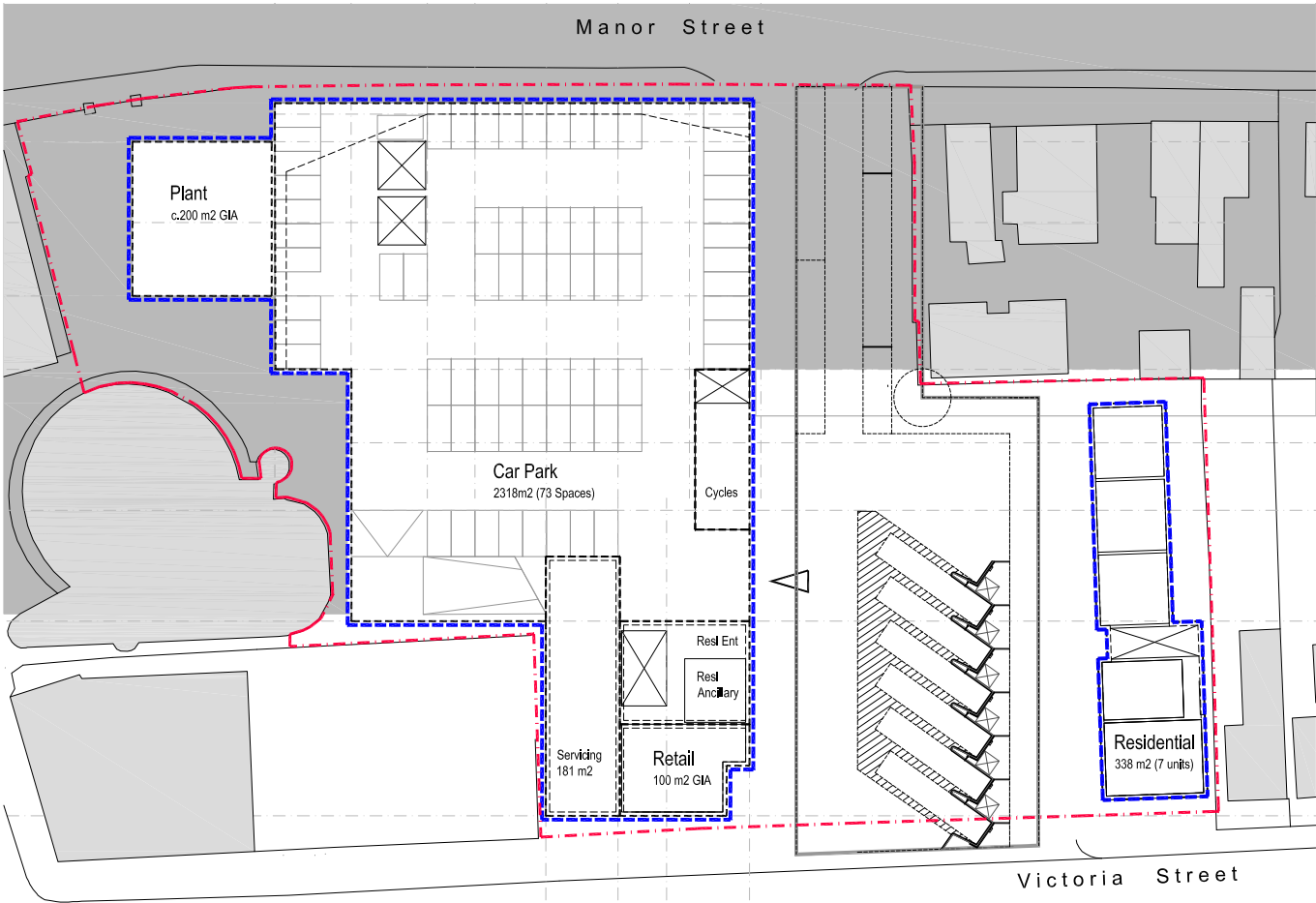
4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1.2 Design Characteristics

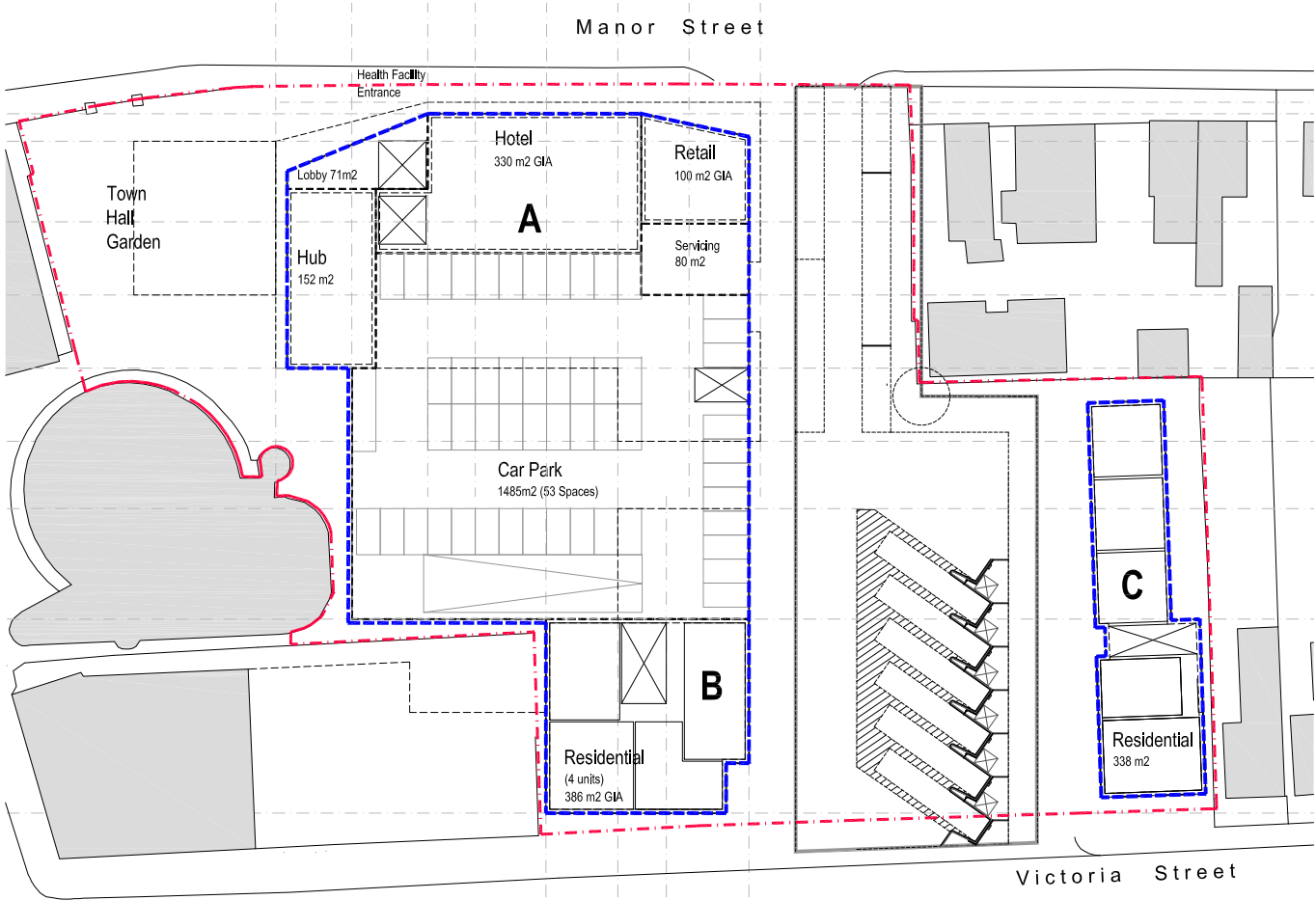
- The car parking is located on two levels, requiring an internal ramp
- Car park and servicing access is proposed from the bus station area, requiring careful co-ordination of movement
- A plant room serving the entire development is located under the proposed town garden
- The health facility and community hub share a combined entrance foyer in a high visibility location on Manor Street
- The hotel provides the bulk of the Manor Street ground level frontage
- The health facility is a compact deep-plan space located at first floor level
- The main residential building is organised around a single central core with the potential for a retail unit and servicing at lower ground level
- The hotel is arranged in a compact 'U'-shaped configuration with a requirement for non-standard room layouts in some locations
- The two storey residential extension of the community centre could be developed to include some third storey elements such as roof terraces subject to more detailed design



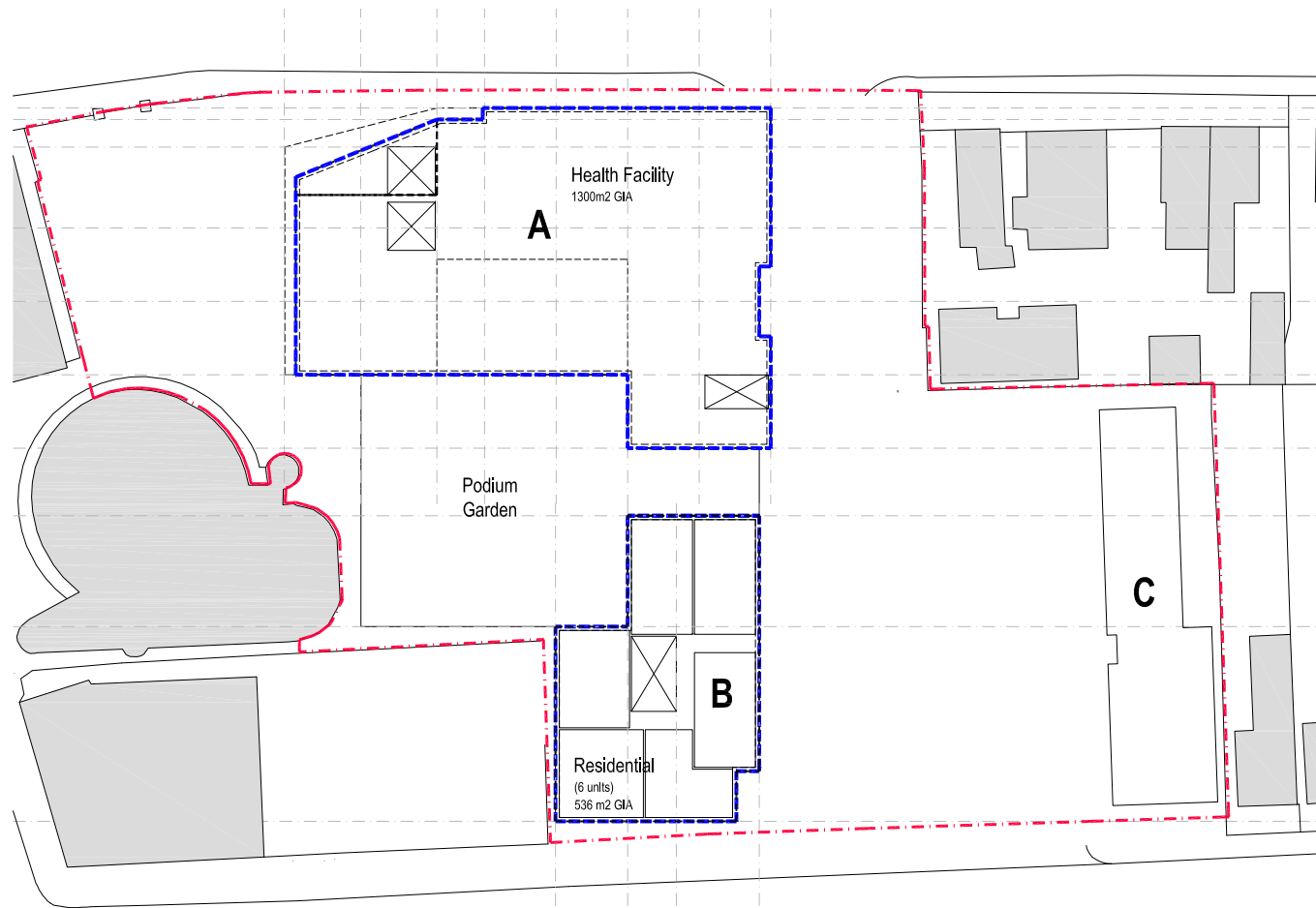
OPTION A - Aerial Shadow Plan



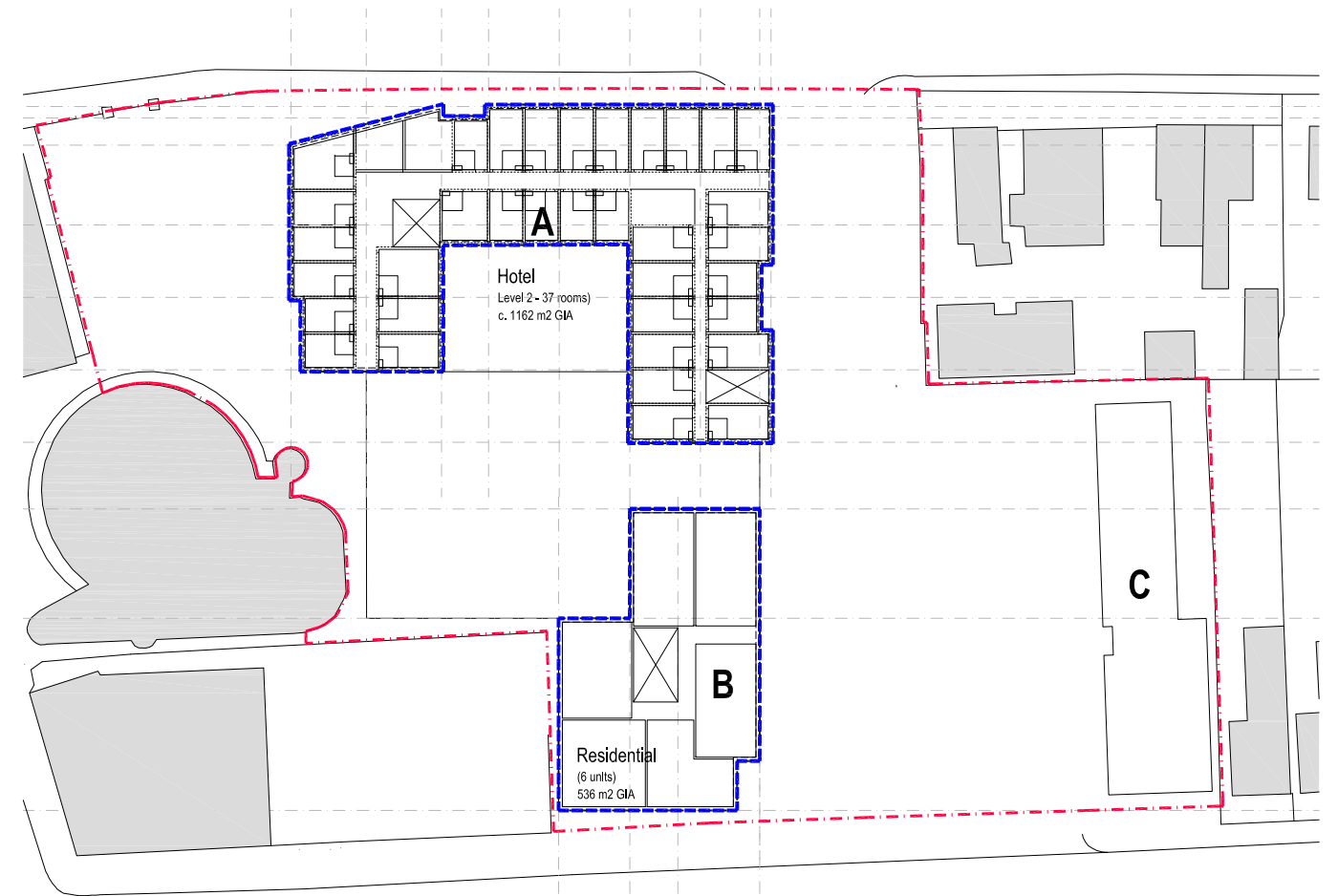
OPTION A - Lower Ground Floor



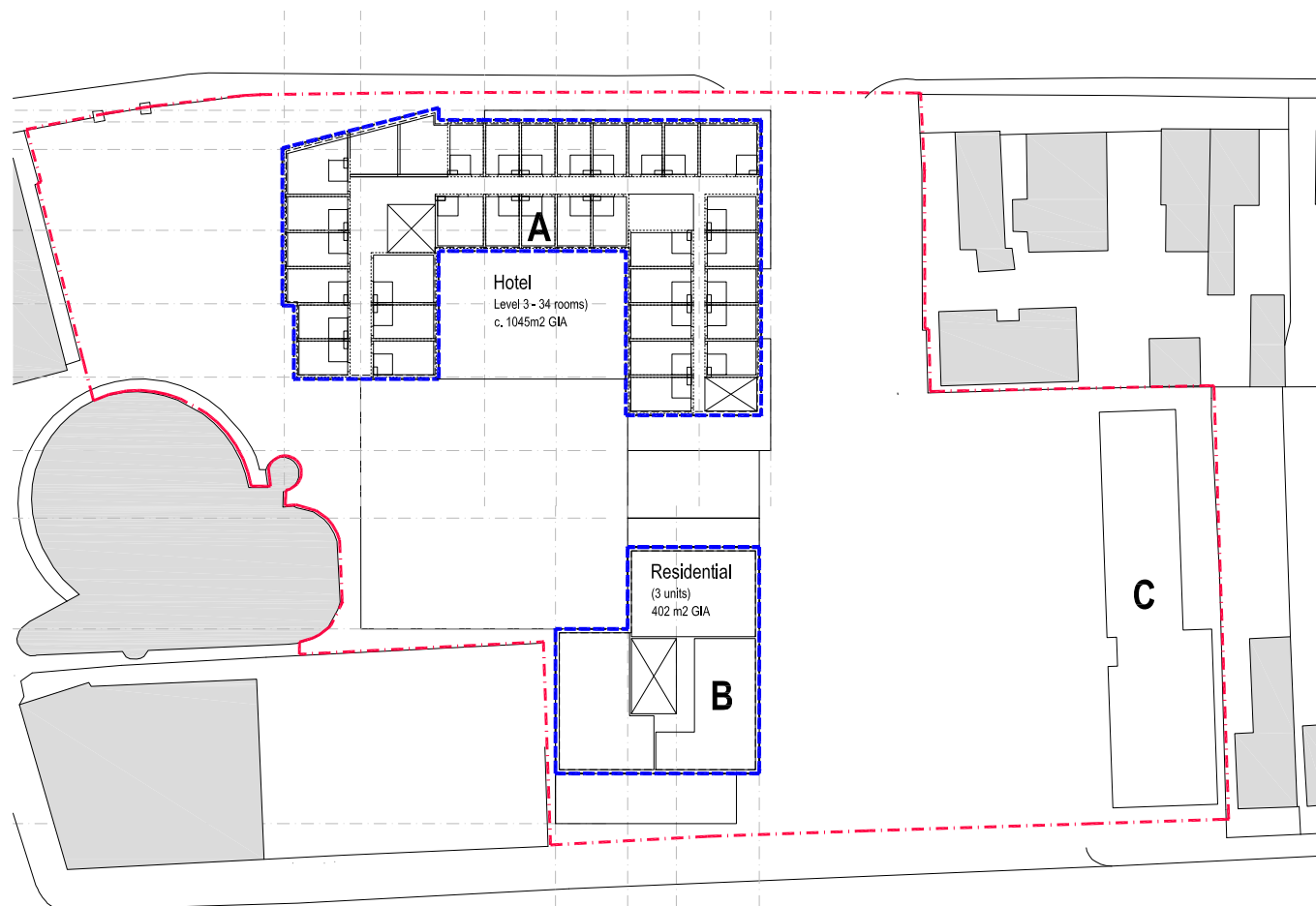
OPTION A - Upper Ground Floor



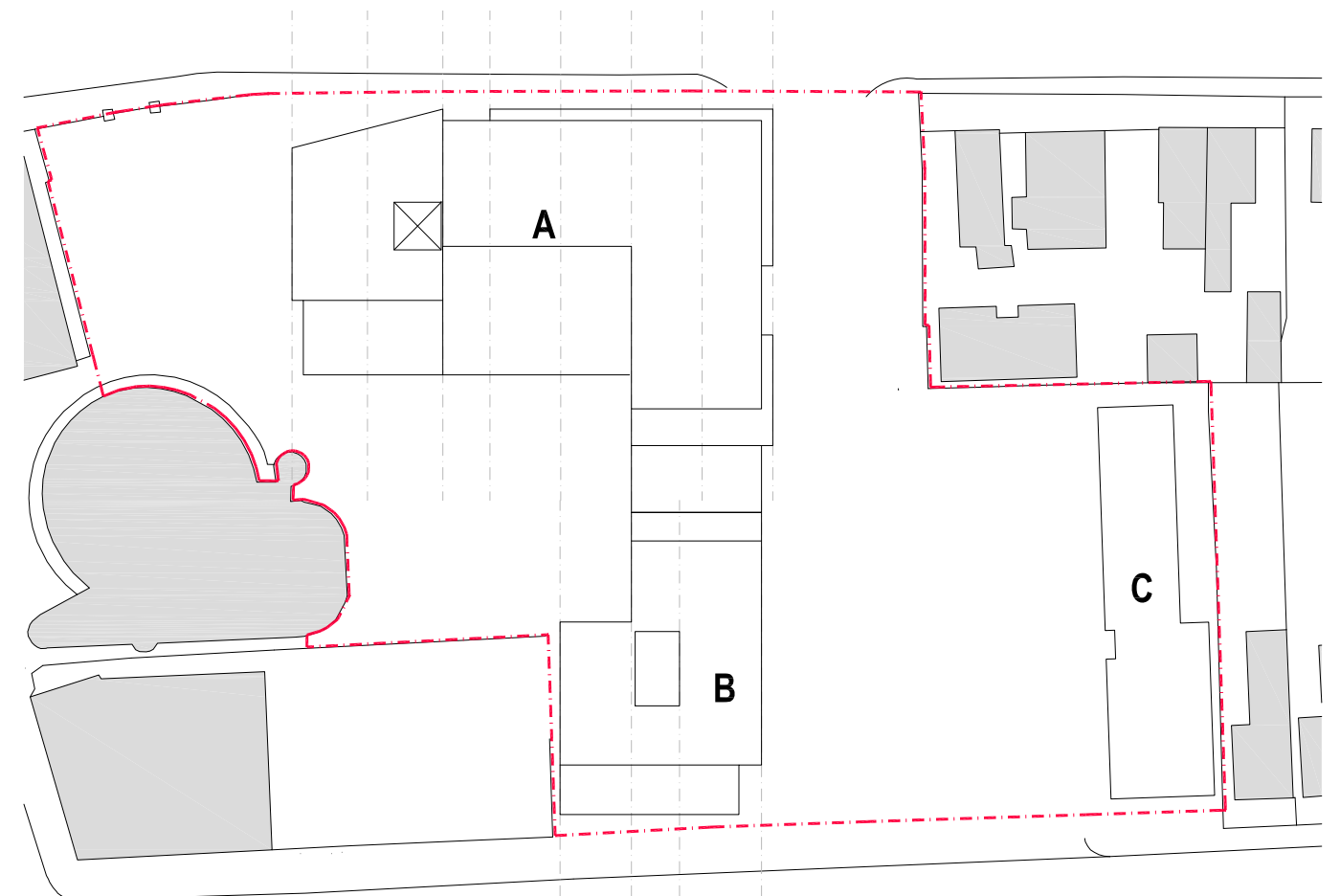
OPTION A - First Floor



OPTION A - Second Floor



OPTION A - Third Floor



OPTION A- Fourth Floor / Roof Level

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1.3 Townscape

Each of the developed options is based on the fundamental townscape aspirations identified in the initial options appraisal. However, the organisation and functionality of the proposed buildings for the developed options has required further consideration of the response to the surrounding urban context.

View 1 demonstrates the relationship of a building element which is designed to create a sympathetic backdrop and partner to the town hall. In perspective the parapet line coincides with the cornice line of the Town Hall.

View 2 shows the effect of canting the corner block of the new scheme to open up the view towards the Town Hall and the new garden. This is further enhanced by the creation of a two storey colonnade providing a route into the building foyer and the gardens beyond

View 3 provides a direct view into the new garden with the retained listed gateways and enclosing wall. The new colonnade evokes the architecture of the library and together with the choice of materials can seek to create a strong contextual relationship to the existing public buildings

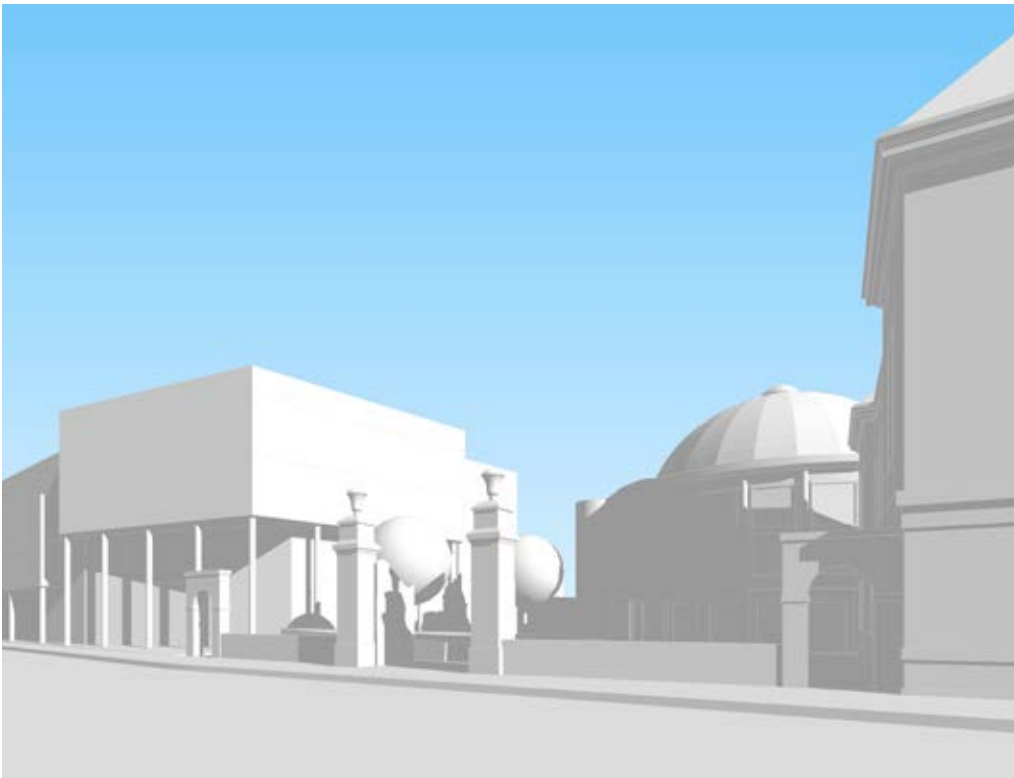
View 4 indicates the eastern frontage of the main development which opens on to the expanded bus facility. The modelling of the five storey building is softened through the provision of a top floor set-back



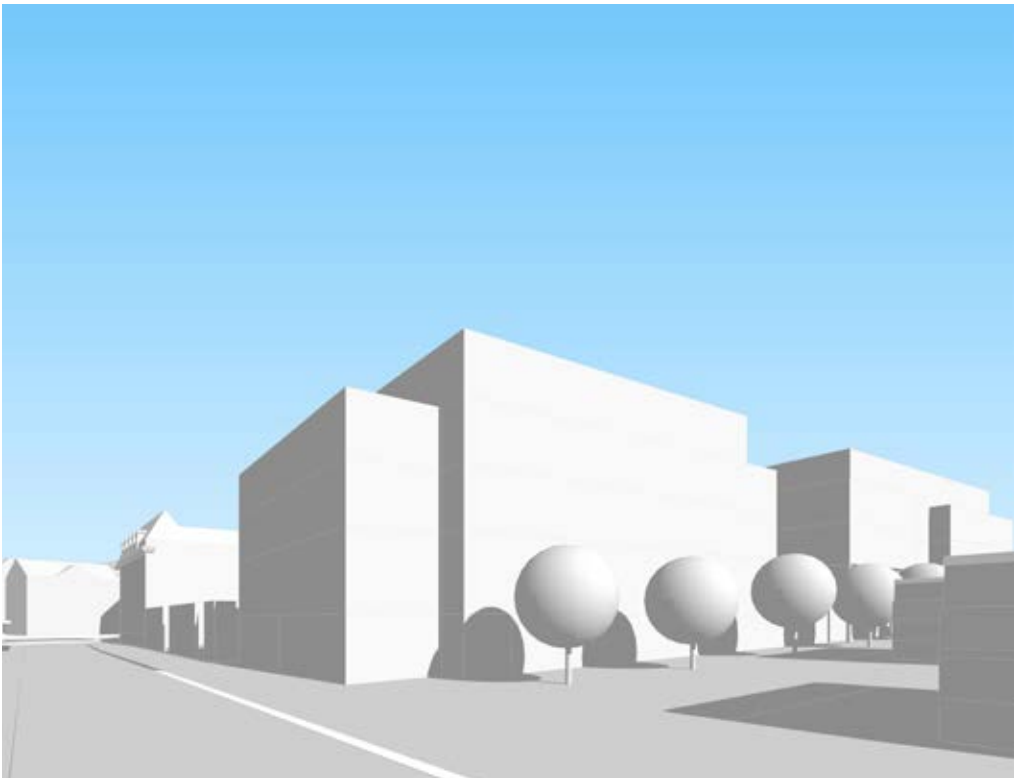
OPTION A - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION A - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION A - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION A - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

4.1.4 Development Capacity

A more detailed appraisal of the resulting breakdown of areas has been undertaken. This is based on the preliminary layouts presented above. This exercise has allowed the building efficiencies to be revised upwards compared to the initial options appraisal, primarily due to the chosen mix of uses.

This option achieves the brief requirements for the health facility and the hotel. The scheme includes the provision of c. 26 residential units as well as two retail units and a community hub.

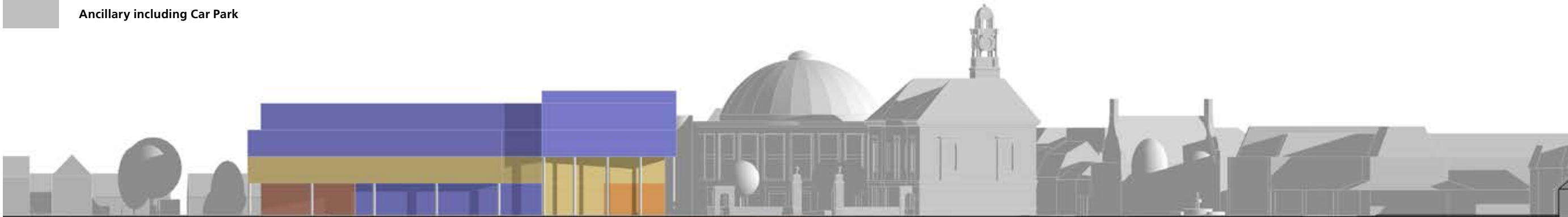
The parking allocation is below the original brief requirement. Project team discussions have however indicated that parking provision should not be prioritised over the quality, functionality and commercial viability of the development.

- Health Facility
- Community hub
- Retail
- Residential
- Hotel
- Office
- Ancillary including Car Park

DEVELOPED OPTION A - AREA SCHEDULE

15.05.2017

Level	LG	G	1	2	3	4	GIA (m2)	GIA (ft2)
GP Surgery	0	71	1300	0	0	0	1371	14,757
Comm Hub	0	152	0	0	0	0	152	1,636
Retail	100	100	0	0	0	0	200	2,153
Residential	464	724	536	536	402	0	2662	28,654
Hotel	0	330	25	1162	1045	0	2562	27,577
Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Car Park	2318	1485	0	0	0	0	3803	40,935
Plant	200	0	0	0	0	0	200	2,153
Anc./Serv	276	100	0	0	0	0	376	4,047
TOTAL	3358	2962	1861	1698	1447	0	11,326	18,546
GEA CHECK	3616	3155	1994	1820	1558	0	12,143	130,707
Efficiency GEA - GIA							93%	
Residential Units							26	
Hotel Rooms							71	
Parking Spaces							126	



OPTION A - Manor Street Frontage

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.2 DEVELOPED OPTION B

4.2.1 Block Layout

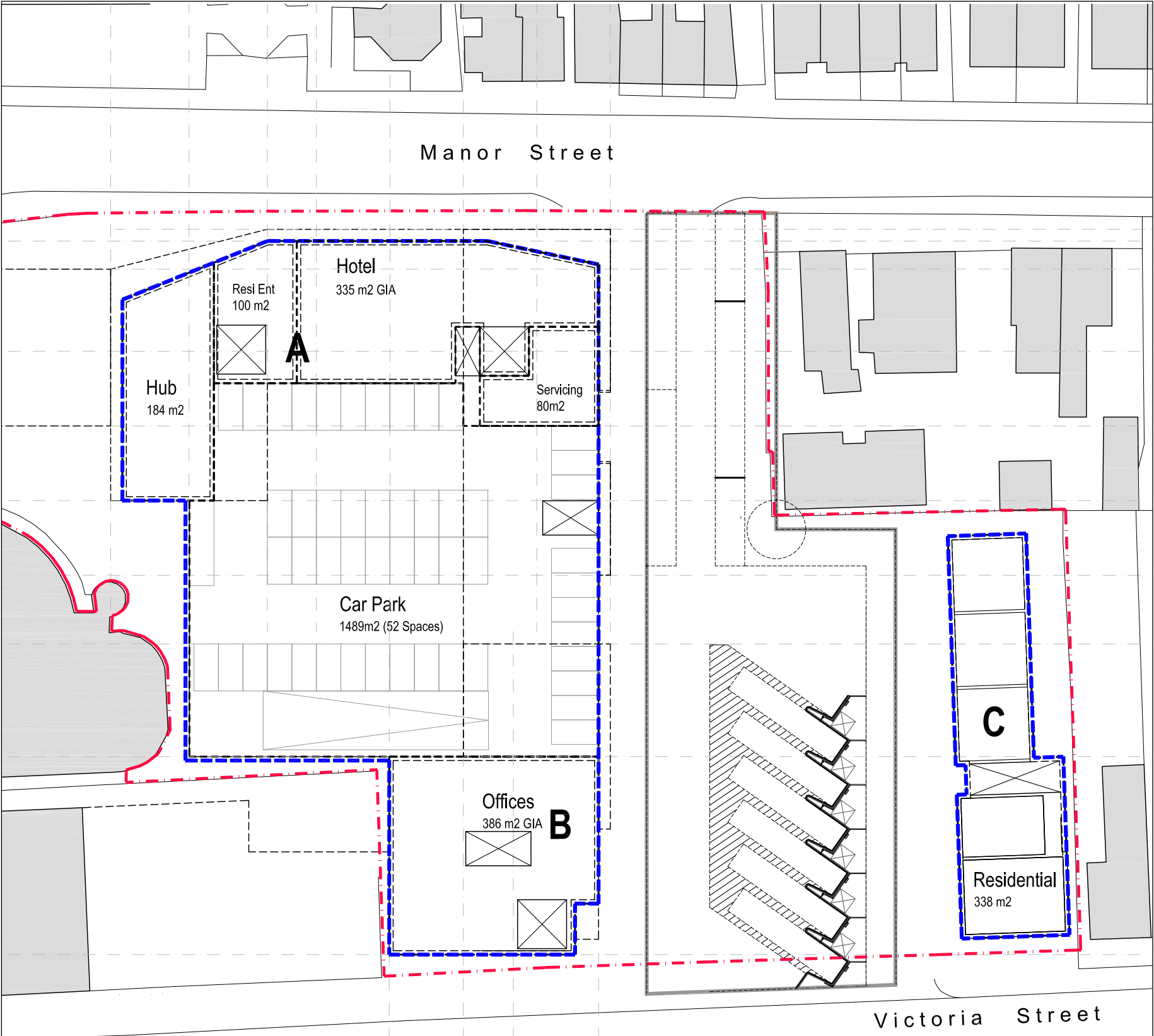
Option B was developed to address the following issues identified in Option A:

- Locate residential accommodation away from the bus facility to improve outlook, reduce disturbance risk and improve potential values
- Consider a more efficient hotel layout, reducing the number of non-standard room types
- Address building massing issues e.g. reduce height on Victoria Street and create stronger presence in Manor Street when viewed from Market Square

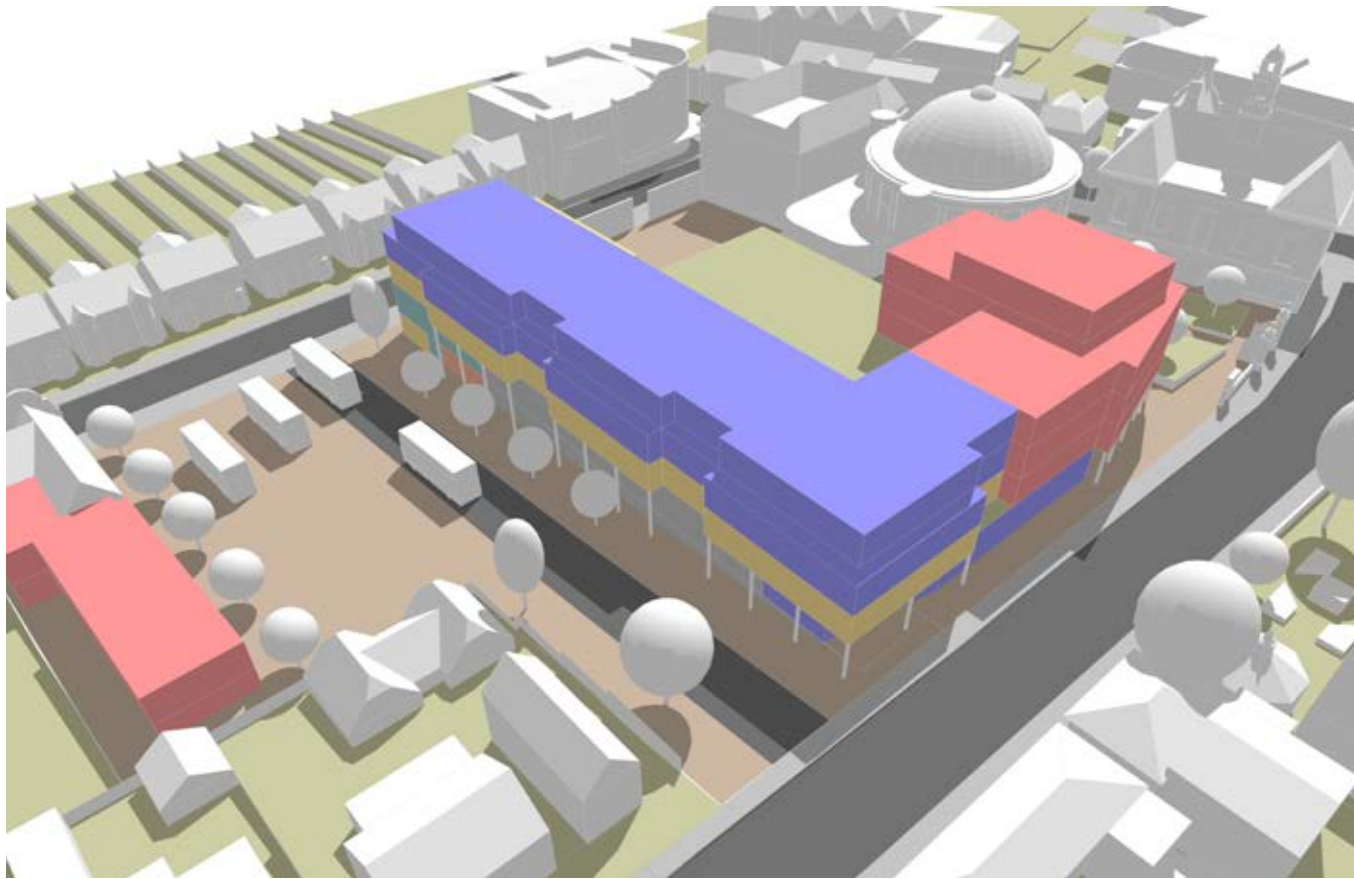
The lower ground and ground level organisation is similar to Option A but with the health facility and residential entrances swapped over. This will provide a focus of activity based on the health facility in Victoria Street, but with a loss of the relationship to the community hub.

The health facility and the hotel are located within a linear north-south orientated block along the eastern side of the western parcel. In order to fit this configuration, the health facility offices are located on the floor below the main accommodation. Whilst flexible for future potential changes of use, this arrangement may lead to day to day functional compromises for the health facility

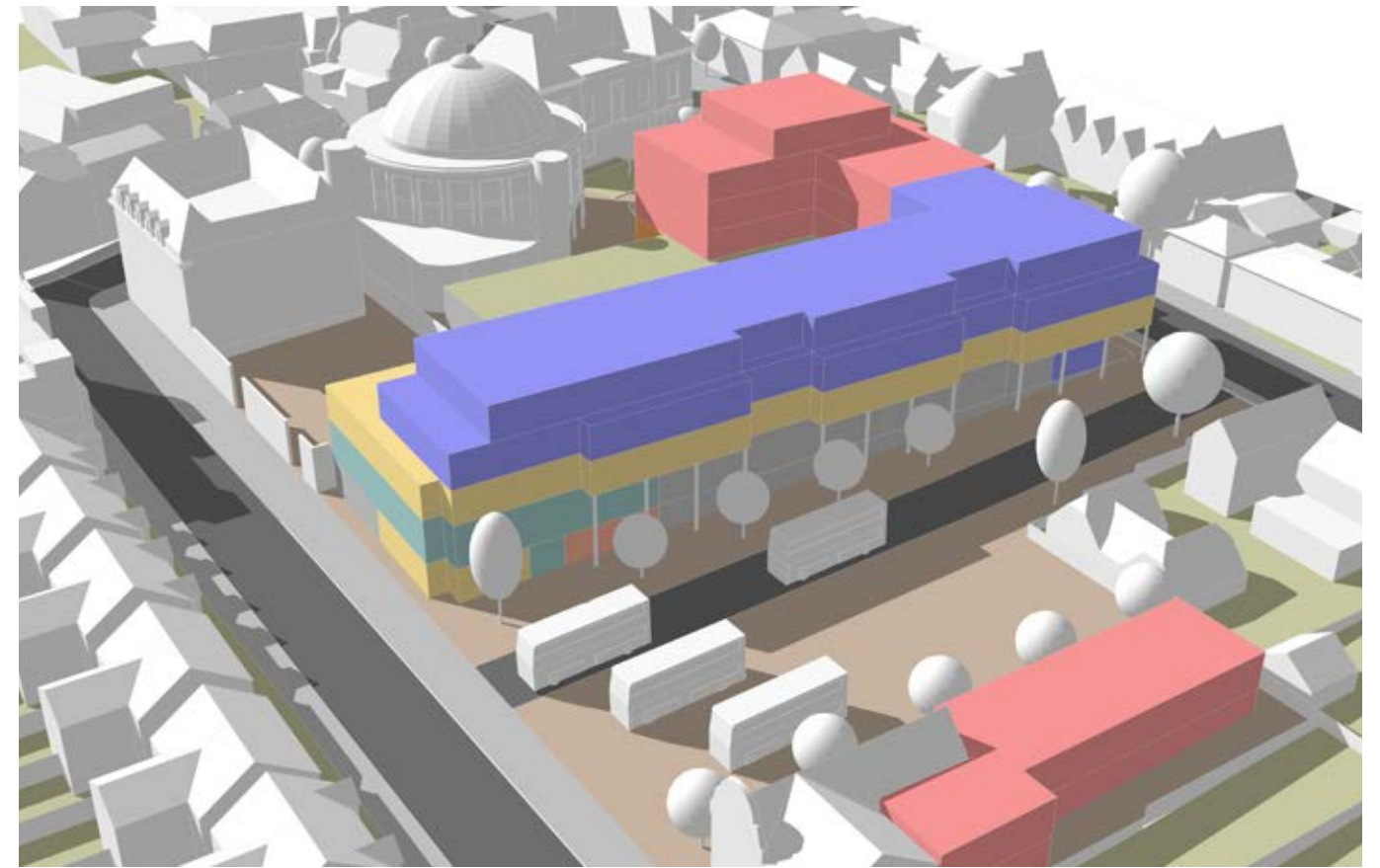
The residential accommodation is located in a higher value location on Manor Street overlooking the Town Hall garden with the added potential of a further set back upper floor, providing an appropriate scale in relation to the Town Hall. This option includes the same residential accommodation within the community centre conversion as Option A.



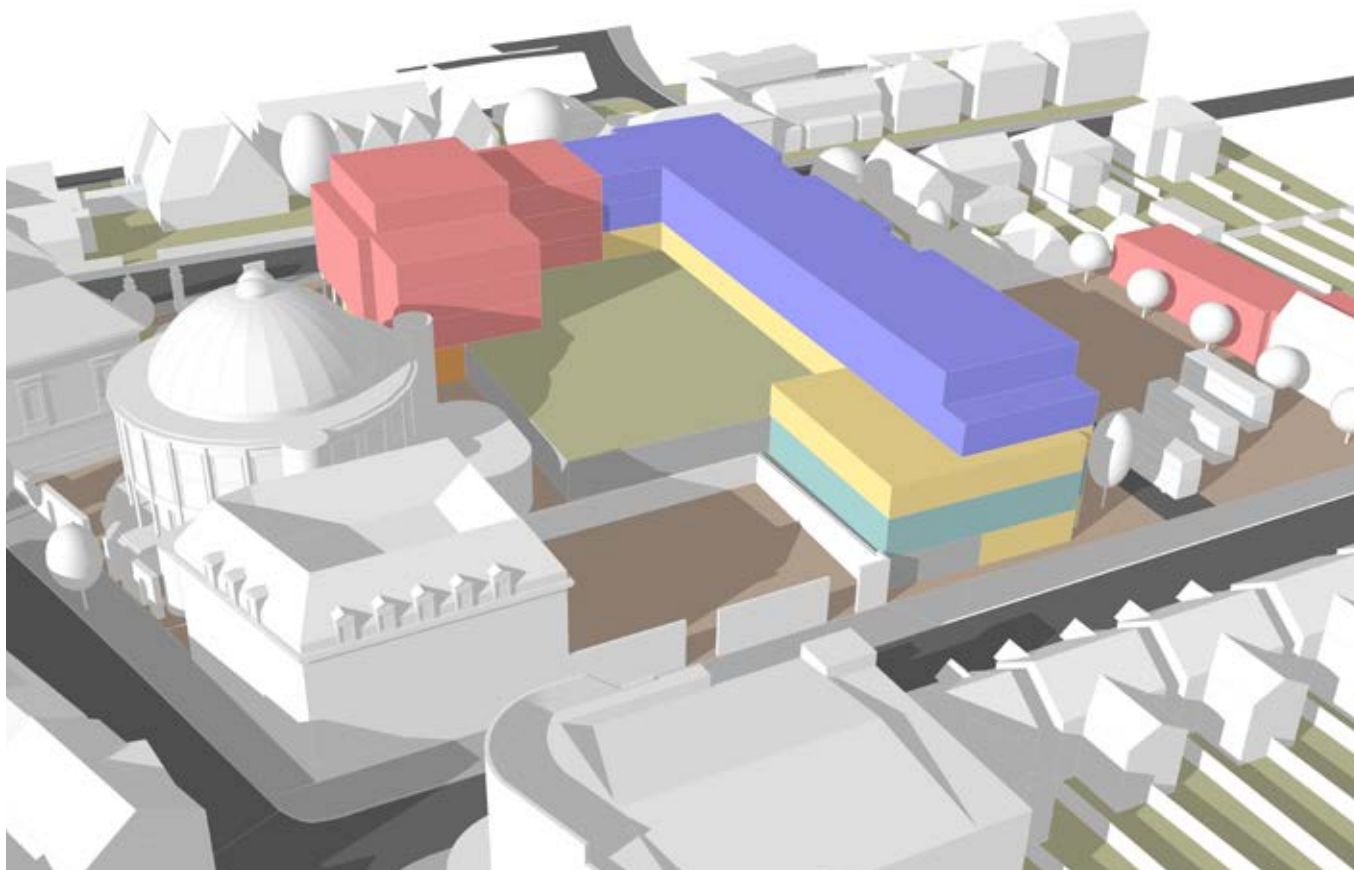
OPTION B - Upper Ground Floor Layout Plan



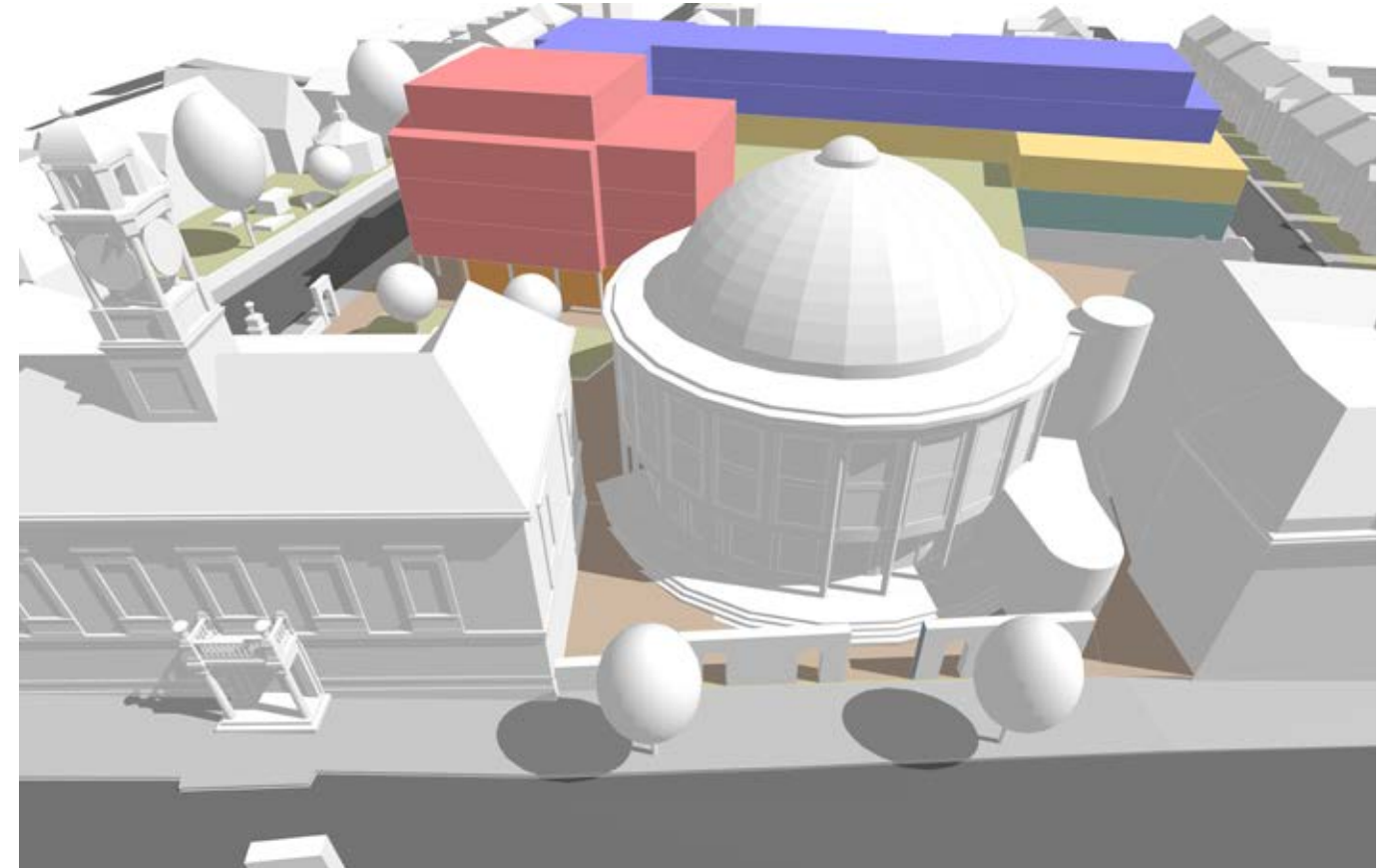
OPTION B- Aerial view from NE



OPTION B - Aerial view from SE



OPTION B - Aerial view from SW



OPTION B - Aerial view from W

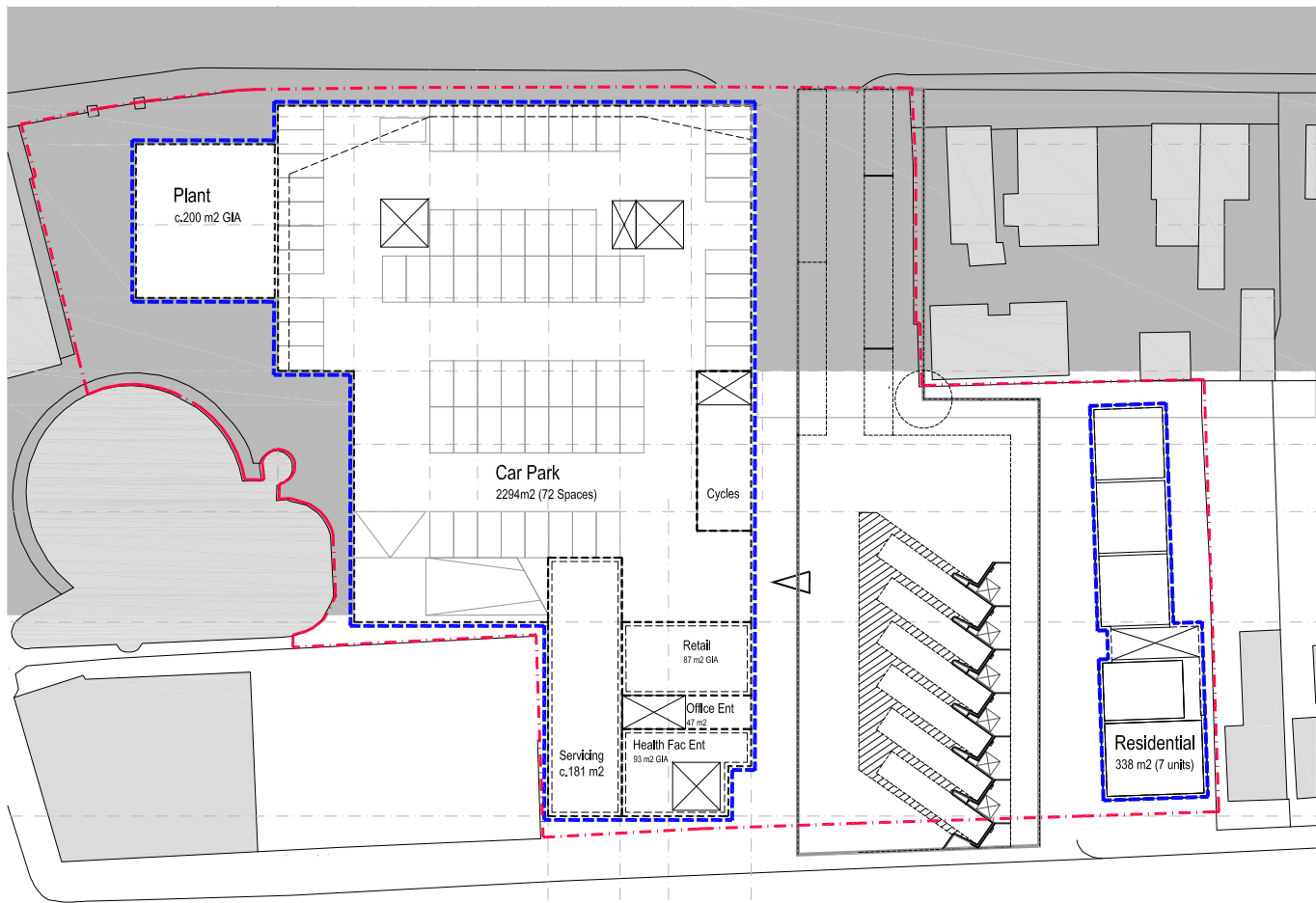
4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.2.2 Design Characteristics

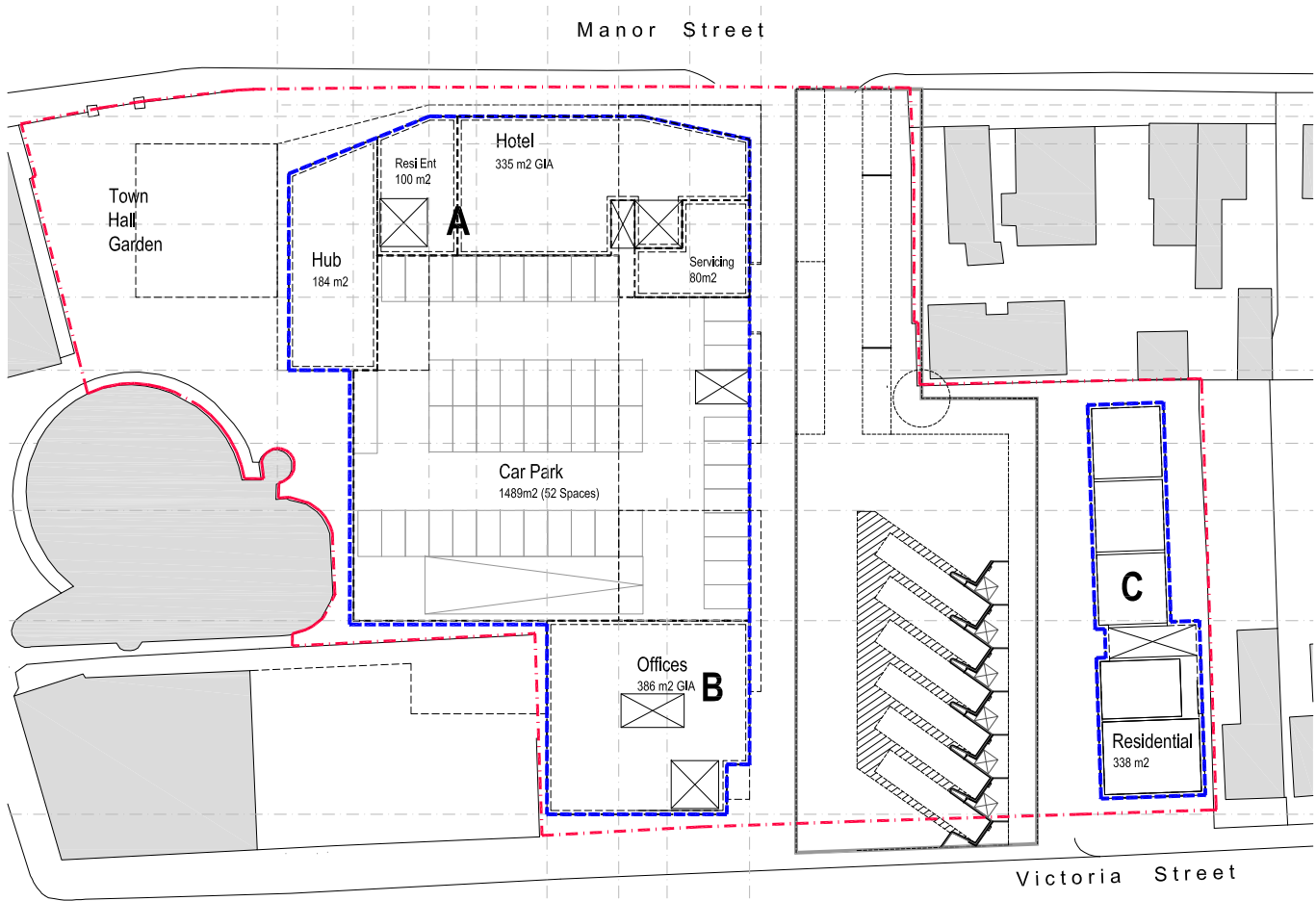
- The car parking is located on two levels, requiring an internal ramp
- Car park and servicing access is proposed from the bus station area, requiring careful co-ordination of movement
- A plant room serving the entire development is located under the proposed town garden
- Entrances to different building uses are distributed around the development perimeter
- The hotel provides the bulk of the Manor Street ground level frontage
- The health facility is a linear plan space located at first floor level having good potential access to natural daylight and ventilation
- The main residential element is organised around a single central core with a high profile entrance lobby on Manor Street
- The hotel is arranged in a linear configuration with good repetition and limited non-standard rooms
- The two storey residential extension of the community centre could be developed to include some third storey elements such as roof terraces subject to more detailed design



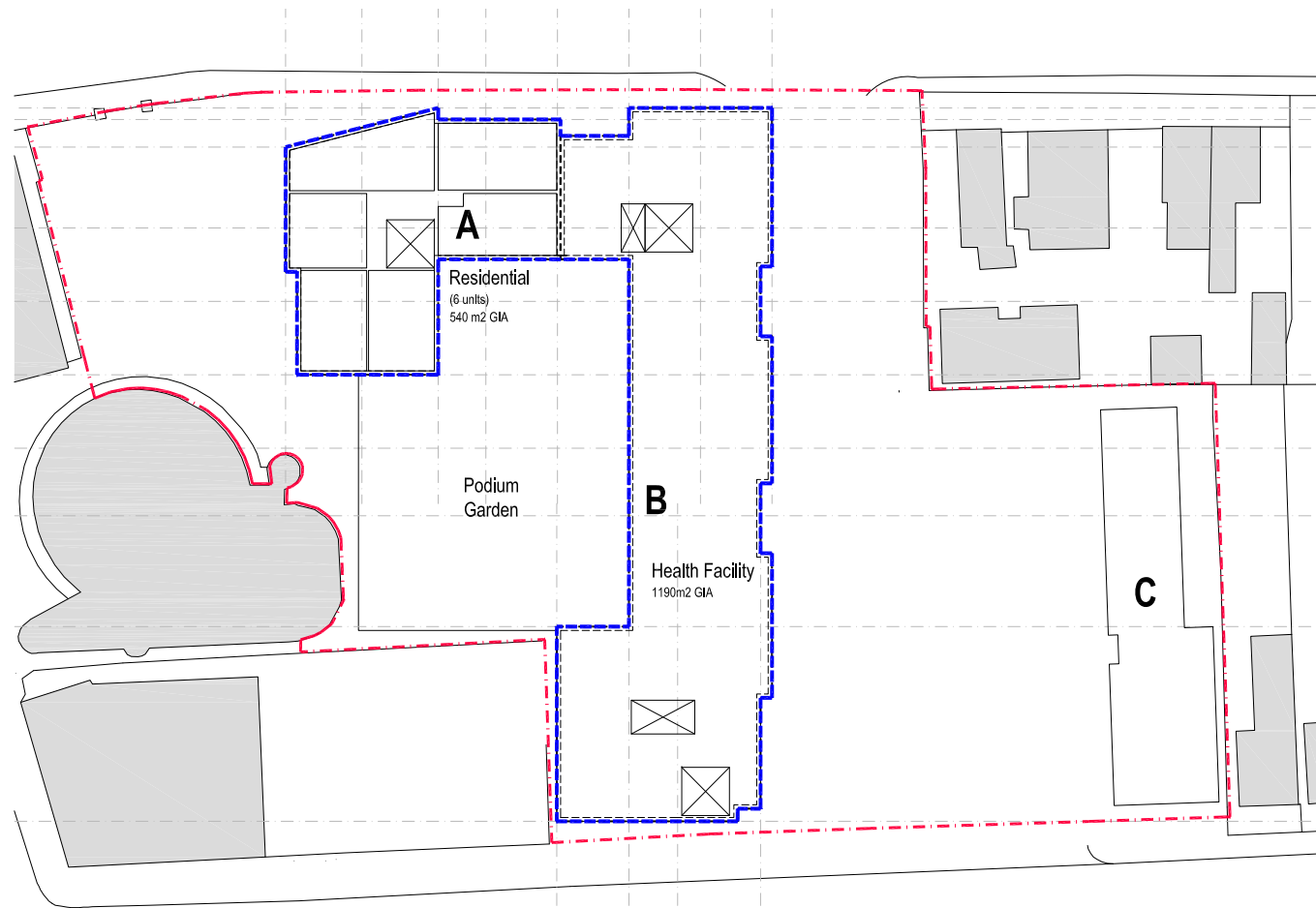
OPTION B - Aerial Shadow Plan



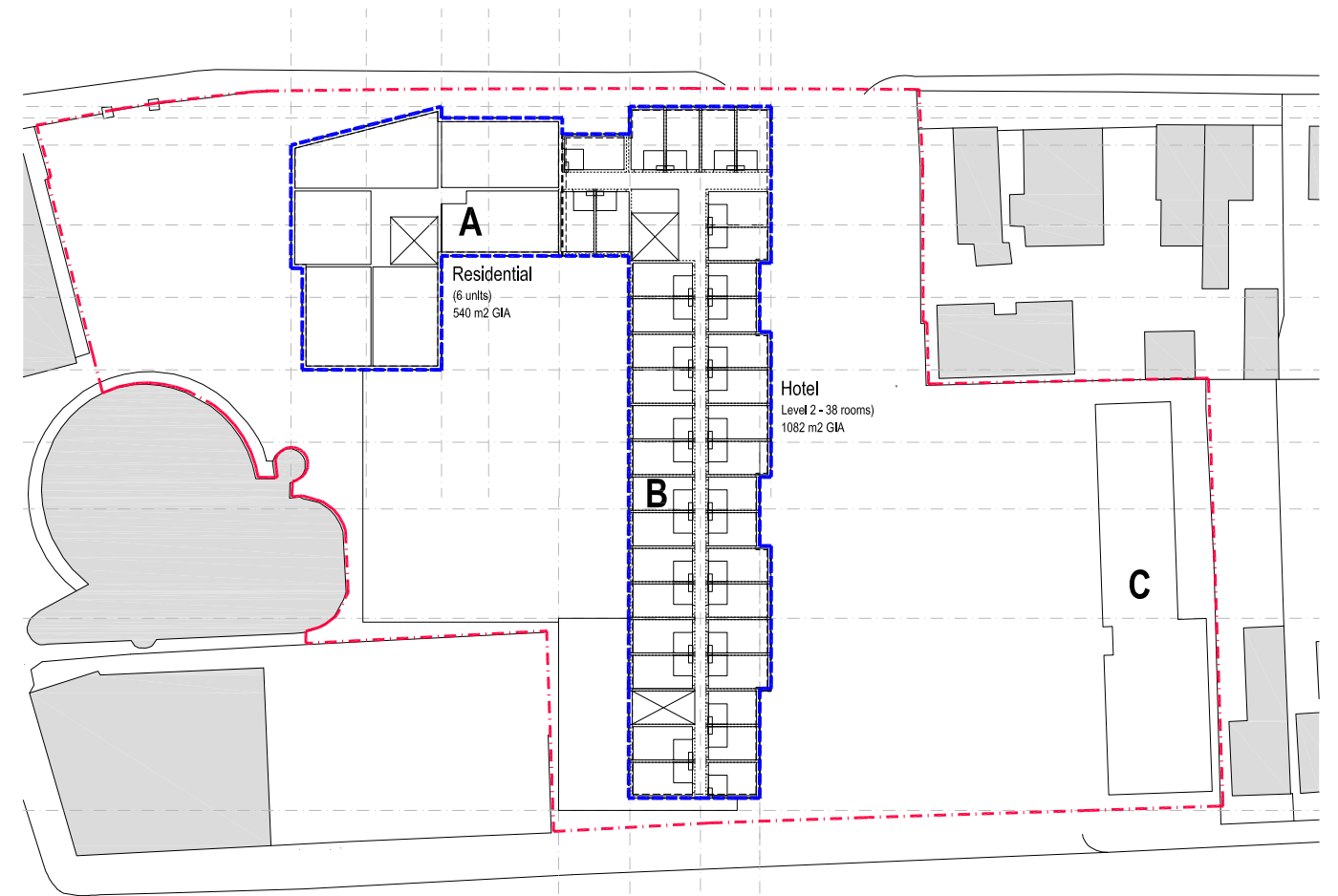
OPTION B - Lower Ground Floor



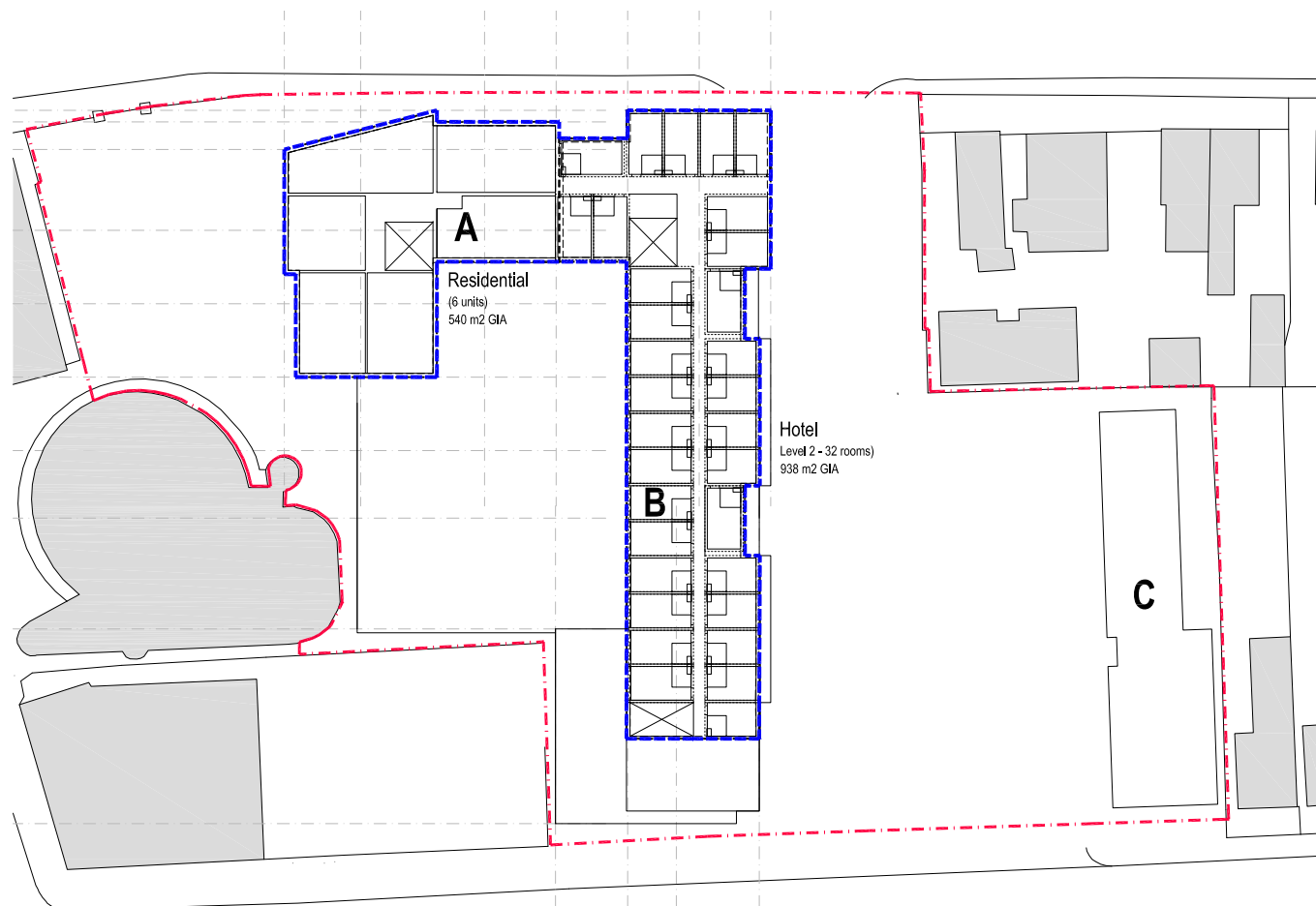
OPTION B - Upper Ground Floor



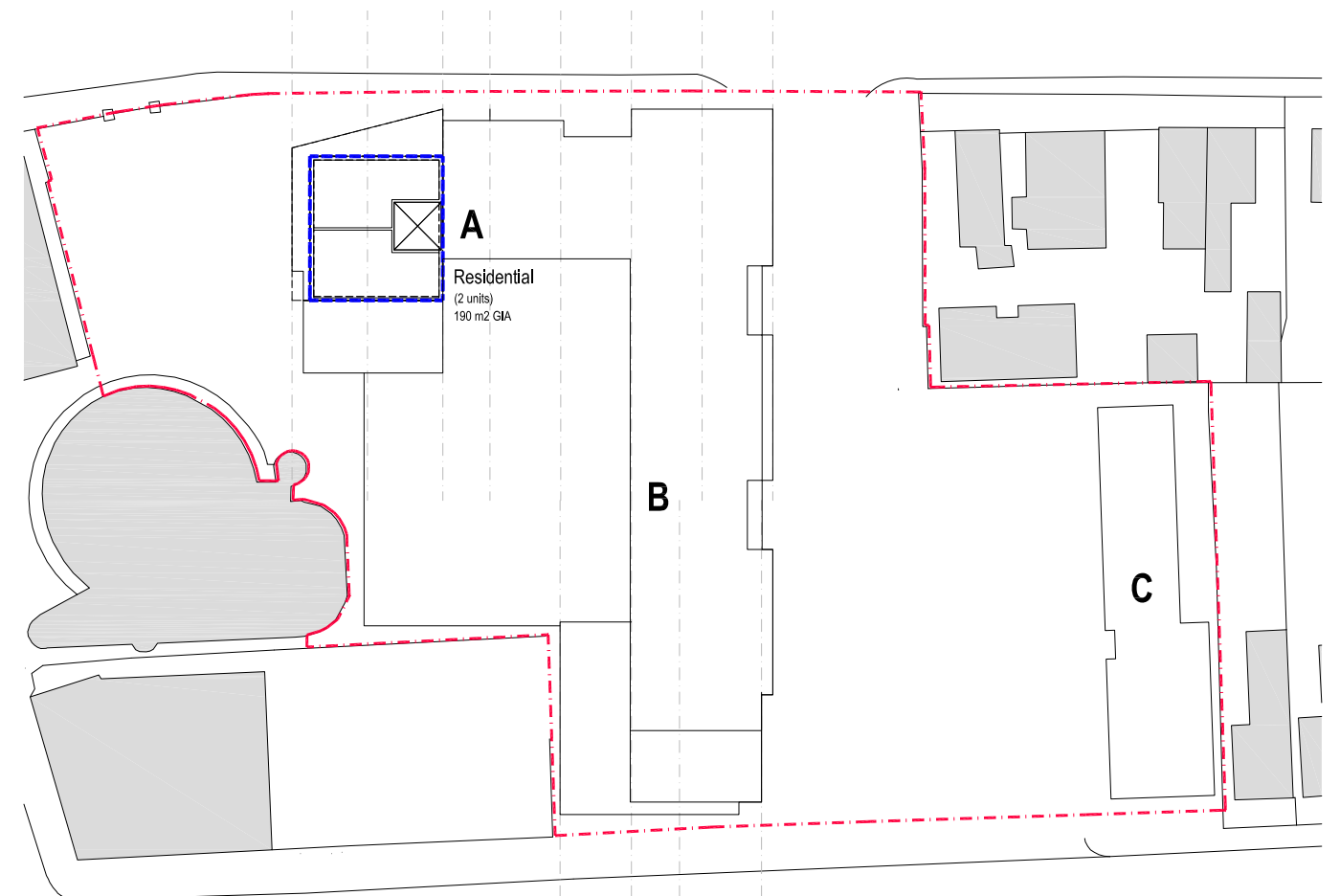
OPTION B - First Floor



OPTION B - Second Floor



OPTION B - Third Floor



OPTION B - Fourth Floor / Roof Level

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.2.3 Townscape

Each of the developed options is based on the fundamental townscape aspirations identified in the initial options appraisal. However, the organisation and functionality of the proposed buildings for the developed options has required further consideration of the response to the surrounding urban context.

View 1 shows the same basic modelling approach as Option A but with the addition of a set back upper floor which provides scope for an architectural treatment echoing the form and materiality of the Town Hall roof and a softening of the form of the new buildings

View 2 shows the effect of canting the corner block of the new scheme to open up the view towards the Town Hall as in Option A, although the view through to the garden is reduced by only having a single storey colonnade

View 3 provides a direct view into the new garden with the retained listed gateways and enclosing wall. The new colonnade evokes the architecture of the library but is less strong than Option A. The additional roof storey provides a finer element of massing and could be designed to reflect the materiality of the roofs of existing adjacent buildings

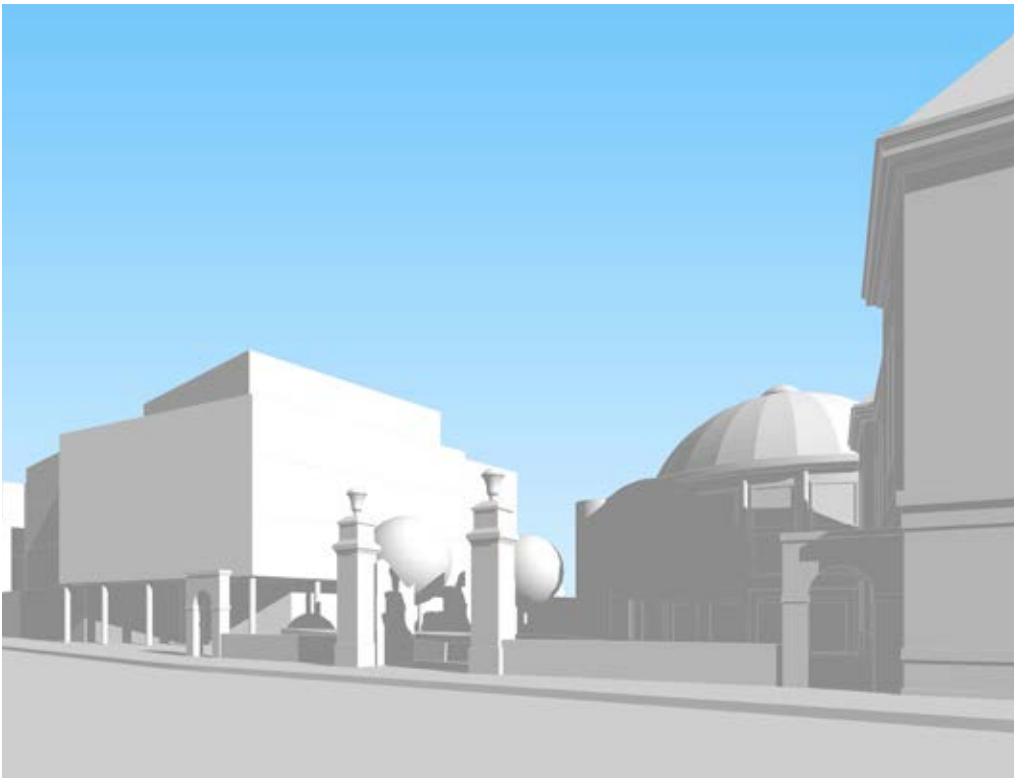
View 4 indicates the eastern frontage of the main development which fronts on to the expanded bus facility. The linear arrangement of the hotel and health facility are expressed from this angle resulting in a dominant facade with limited articulation



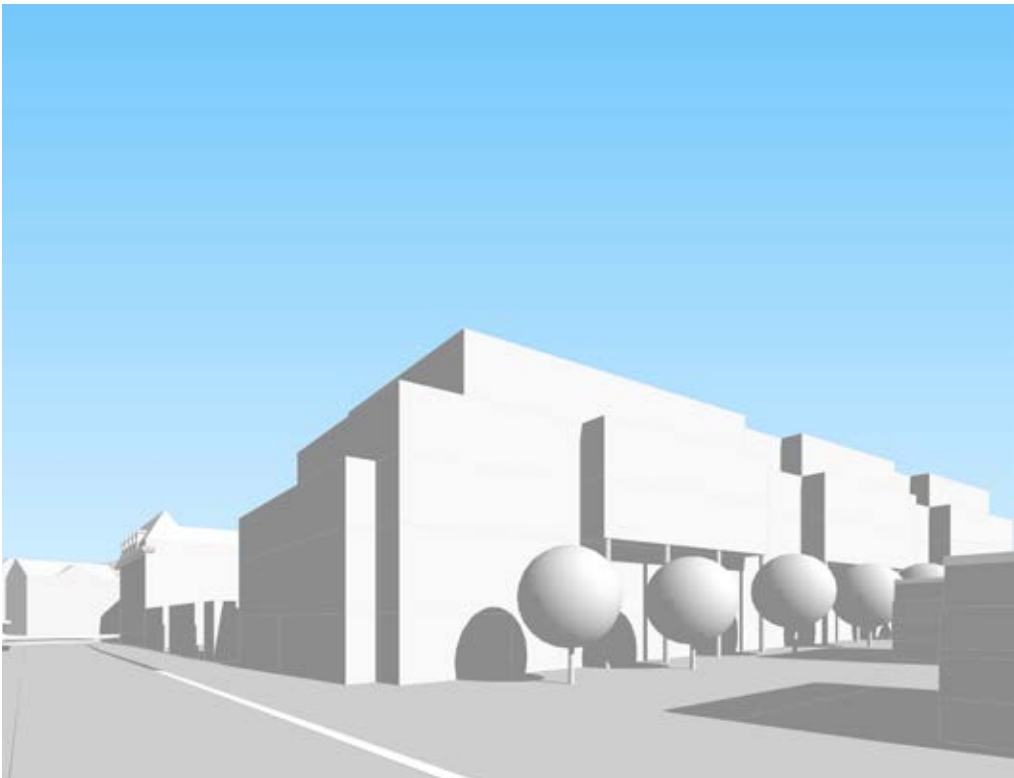
OPTION B - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION B - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION B - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION B - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

4.2.4 Development Capacity

A more detailed appraisal of the resulting breakdown of areas has been undertaken. This is based on the preliminary layouts presented above. This exercise has allowed the building efficiencies to be revised upwards compared to the initial options appraisal, primarily due to the chosen mix of uses.

This option achieves the brief requirements for the health facility and the hotel, although the health facility would be located over two levels. The scheme includes the provision of c. 27 residential units as well as one retail unit and a community hub.

The parking allocation is below the original brief requirement. Project team discussions have however indicated that parking provision should not be prioritised over the quality, functionality and commercial viability of the development.

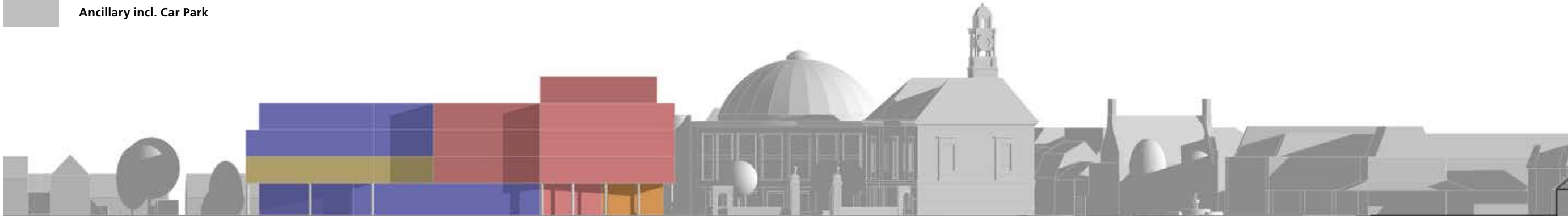
Option B provides an overall development area almost identical to Option A.

- Health Facility
- Community hub
- Retail
- Residential
- Hotel
- Office
- Ancillary incl. Car Park

DEVELOPED OPTION B - AREA SCHEDULE

15.05.2017

Level	LG	G	1	2	3	4	GIA (m2)	GIA (ft2)
GP Surgery	93	46	1190	0	0	0	1329	14,305
Comm Hub	0	184	0	0	0	0	184	1,981
Retail	87	0	0	0	0	0	87	936
Residential	338	438	540	540	540	190	2586	27,836
Hotel	0	335	48	1082	930	0	2395	25,780
Office	47	363	0	0	0	0	410	4,413
Car Park	2294	1489	0	0	0	0	3783	40,720
Plant	200	0	0	0	0	0	200	2,153
Anc./Serv	276	80	0	0	0	0	356	3,832
TOTAL	3335	2935	1778	1622	1470	190	11,330	17,222
GEA CHECK	3637	3155	1902	1739	1600	213	12,246	131,816
Efficiency GEA - GIA							93%	
Residential Units							27	
Hotel Rooms							70	
Parking Spaces							124	



OPTION B - Manor Street Frontage

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.3 DEVELOPED OPTION C

4.3.1 Block Layout

Option C was developed to address the following issues identified in Options A and B:

- Locate residential accommodation away from the bus facility to improve outlook, reduce disturbance risk and improve potential values
- Consider a more efficient hotel layout, reducing the number of non-standard room types and also improve compactness and an autonomous identity
- Address building massing issues e.g. reduce height on Victoria Street and create stronger presence in Manor Street when viewed from Market Square
- Reduce impact of potentially overbearing frontage towards the east side of the west parcel
- Increase the residential development potential
- Retain and develop the most promising townscape and design potential of Options A and B

The lower ground and ground level organisation has been simplified to avoid complex mixes of uses and improve layout efficiency. This results in the ground floor of the hotel being located in Victoria Street and the hub and increased retail space being located in Manor Street.

The health facility reverts to a deep plan layout with potential for top-lighting and ventilation from above. The podium garden is enlarged to provide amenity space for the residential units above which are split between two entrance cores to minimise north facing units and maximise street level activity

As with Option B, the residential accommodation is located in a higher value location on Manor Street overlooking the Town Hall garden with the added potential of a further set back upper floor, providing an appropriate scale in relation to the Town Hall. This option also includes the same residential accommodation within the community centre conversion as Option A.

Health Facility

Community hub

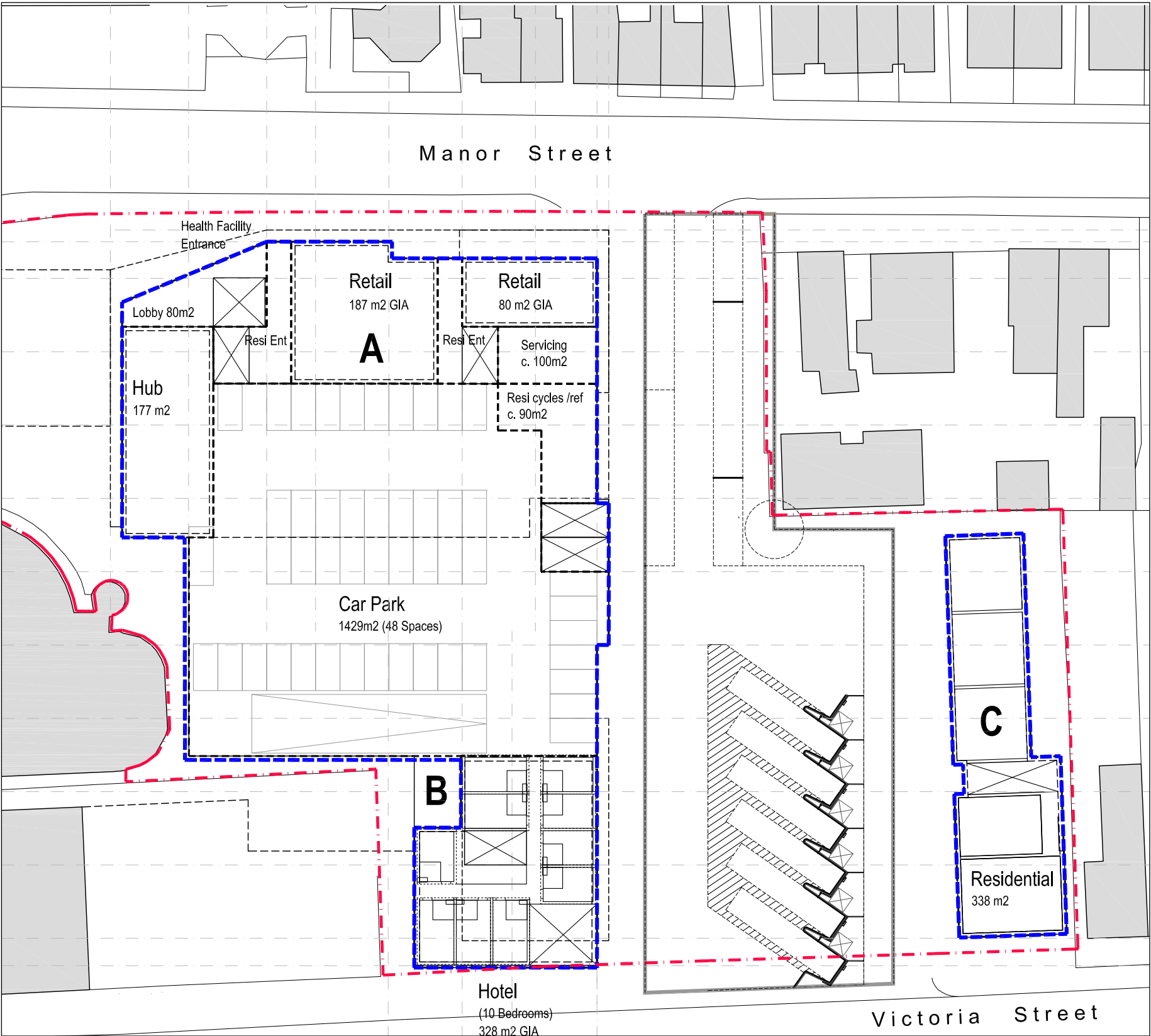
Retail

Residential

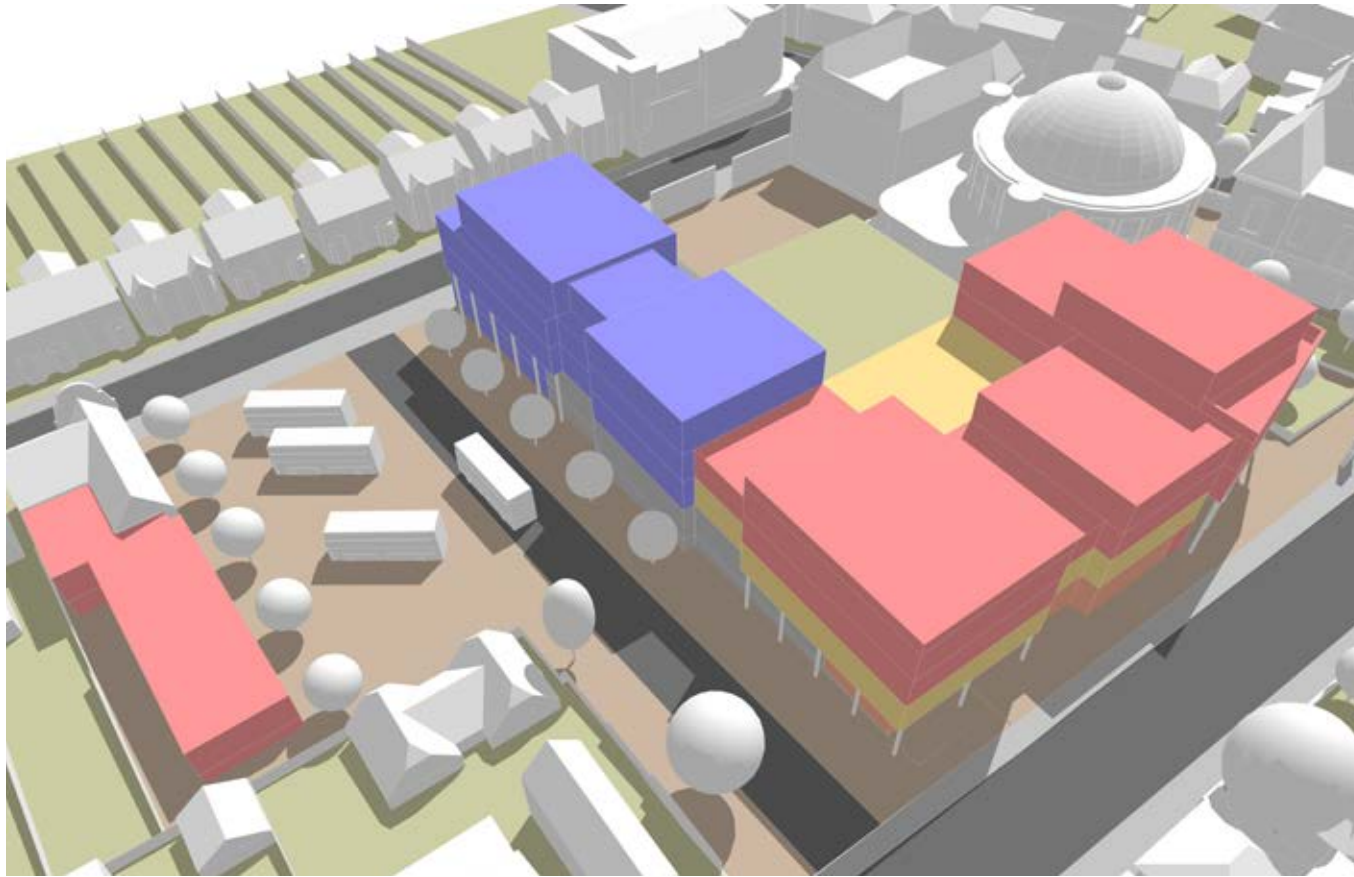
Hotel

Office

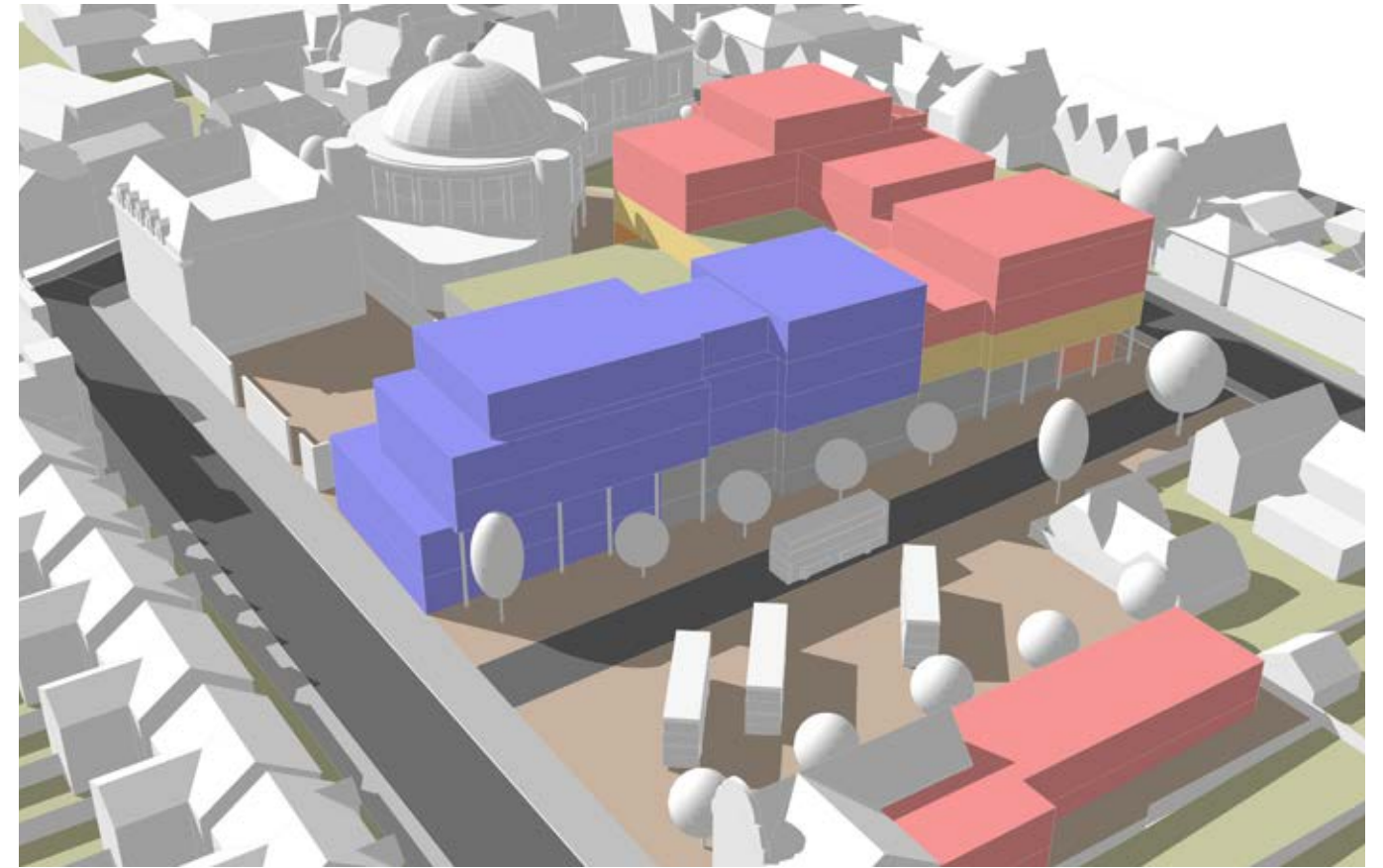
Ancillary incl. Car Park



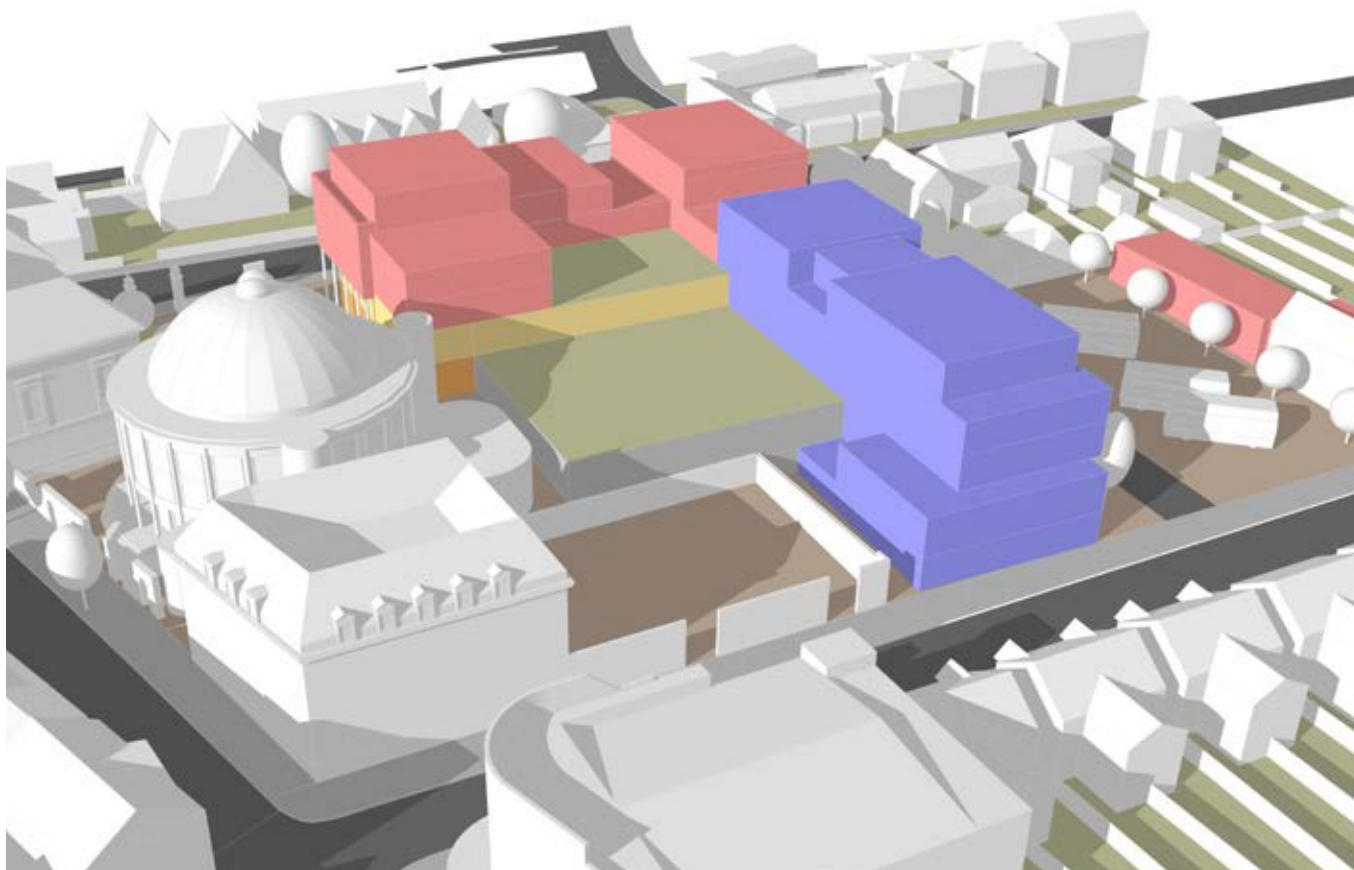
OPTION C - Upper Ground Floor Layout Plan



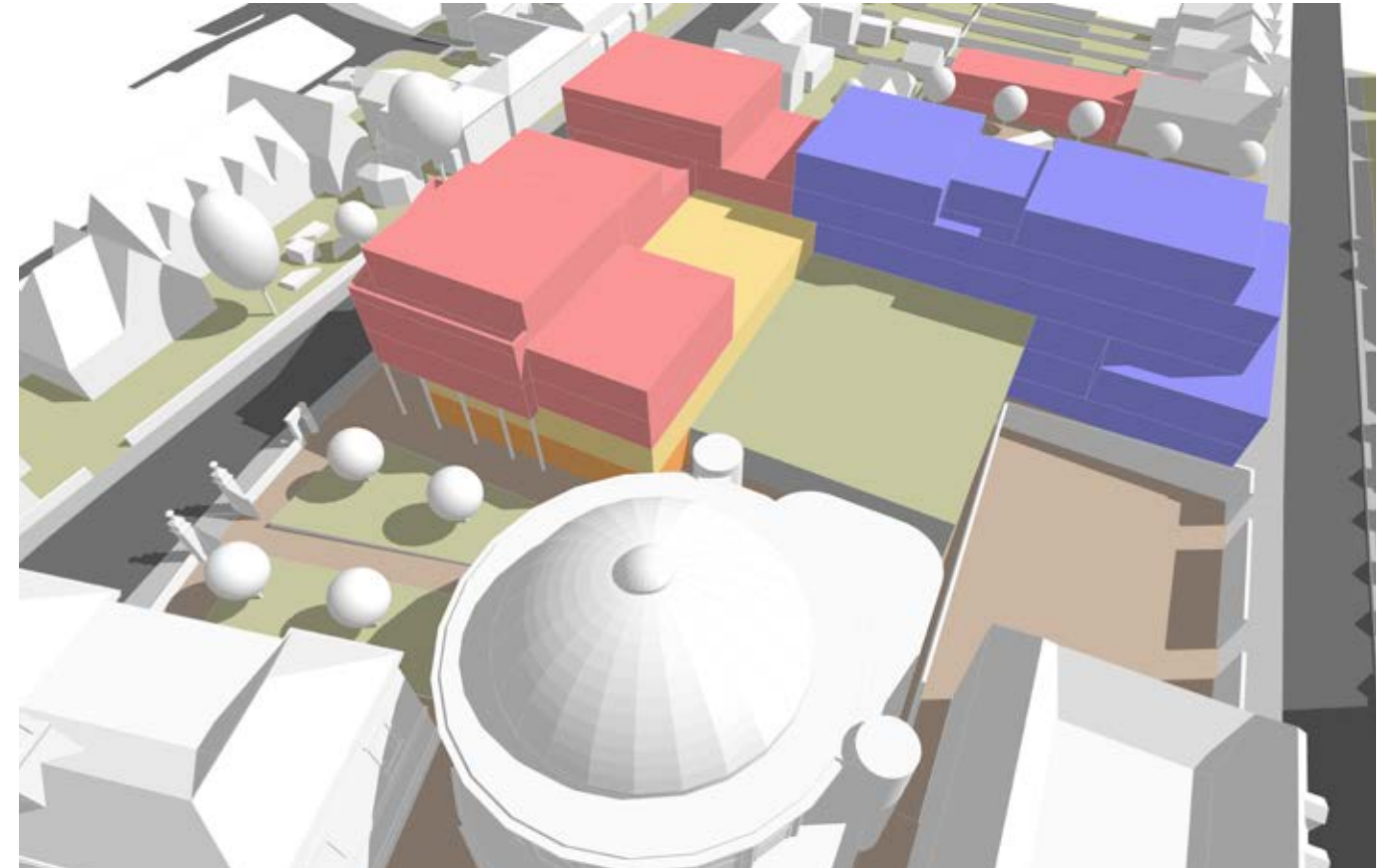
OPTION C - Aerial view from NE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SW



OPTION C - Aerial view from W

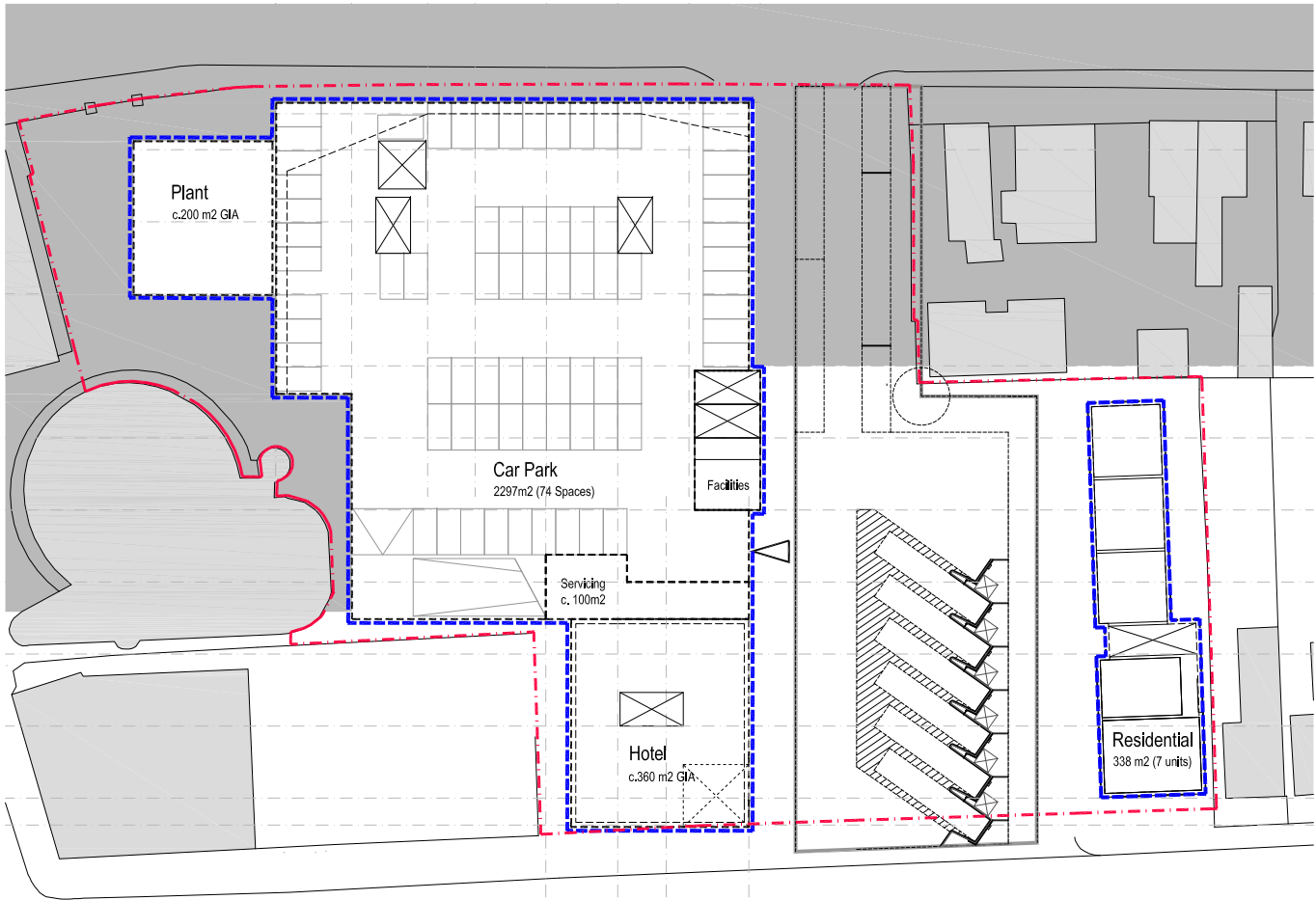
4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.3.2 Design Characteristics

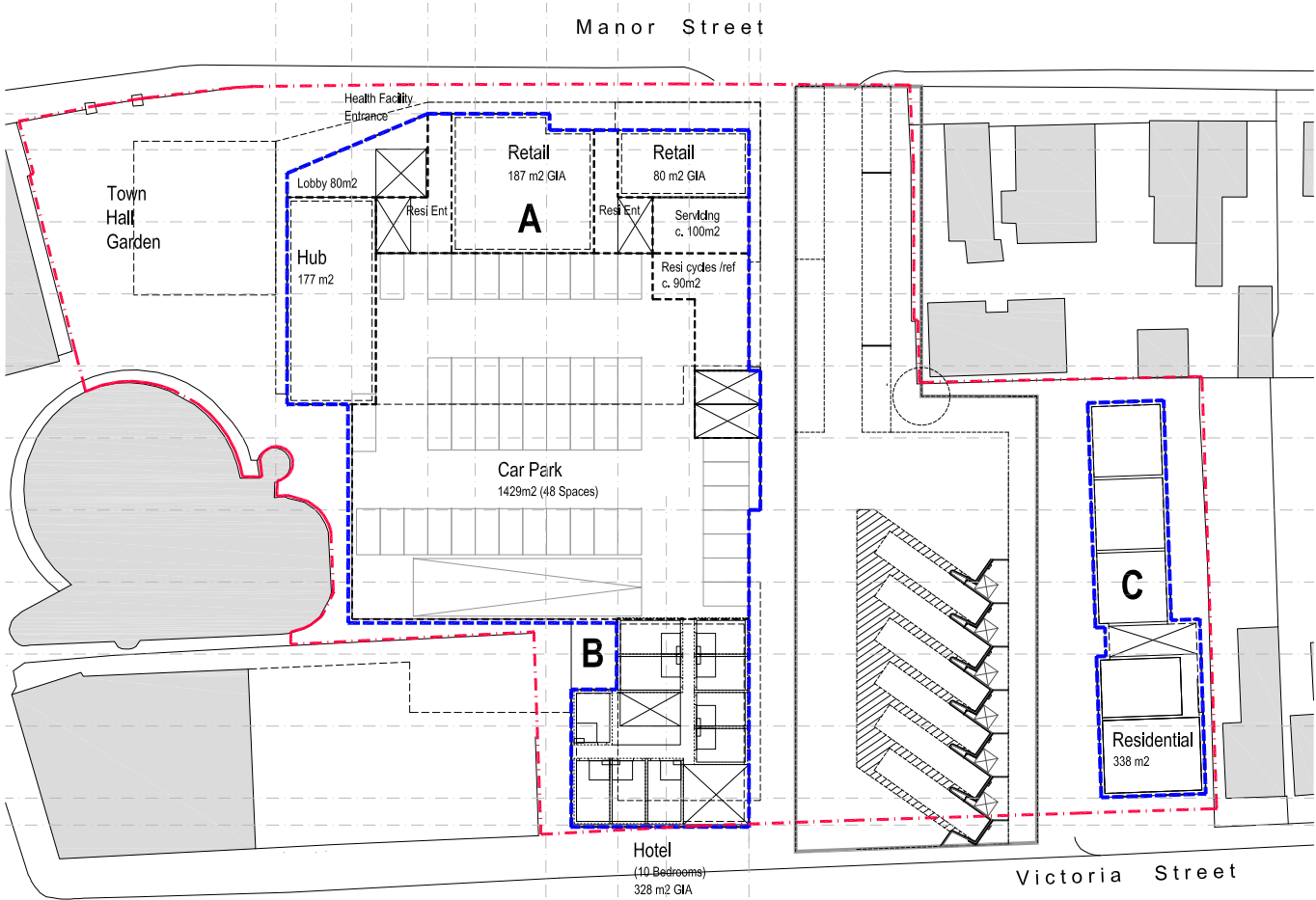
- The car parking is located on two levels, requiring an internal ramp
- Car park and servicing access is proposed from the bus station area, requiring careful co-ordination of movement
- A plant room serving the entire development is located under the proposed town garden
- As with Option A, the health facility and community hub share a combined entrance foyer in a high visibility location
- The hotel provides a focus for ground floor activity in Victoria Street
- The health facility is a compact deep-plan space located at first floor level
- The main residential building is organised around two central cores with massing designed to improve townscape integration and potential for roof terraces
- The hotel is arranged in a compact linear configuration over 5 levels, using set-backs and top floor modelling to fit the urban context
- The two storey residential extension of the community centre could be developed to include some third storey elements such as roof terraces subject to more detailed design



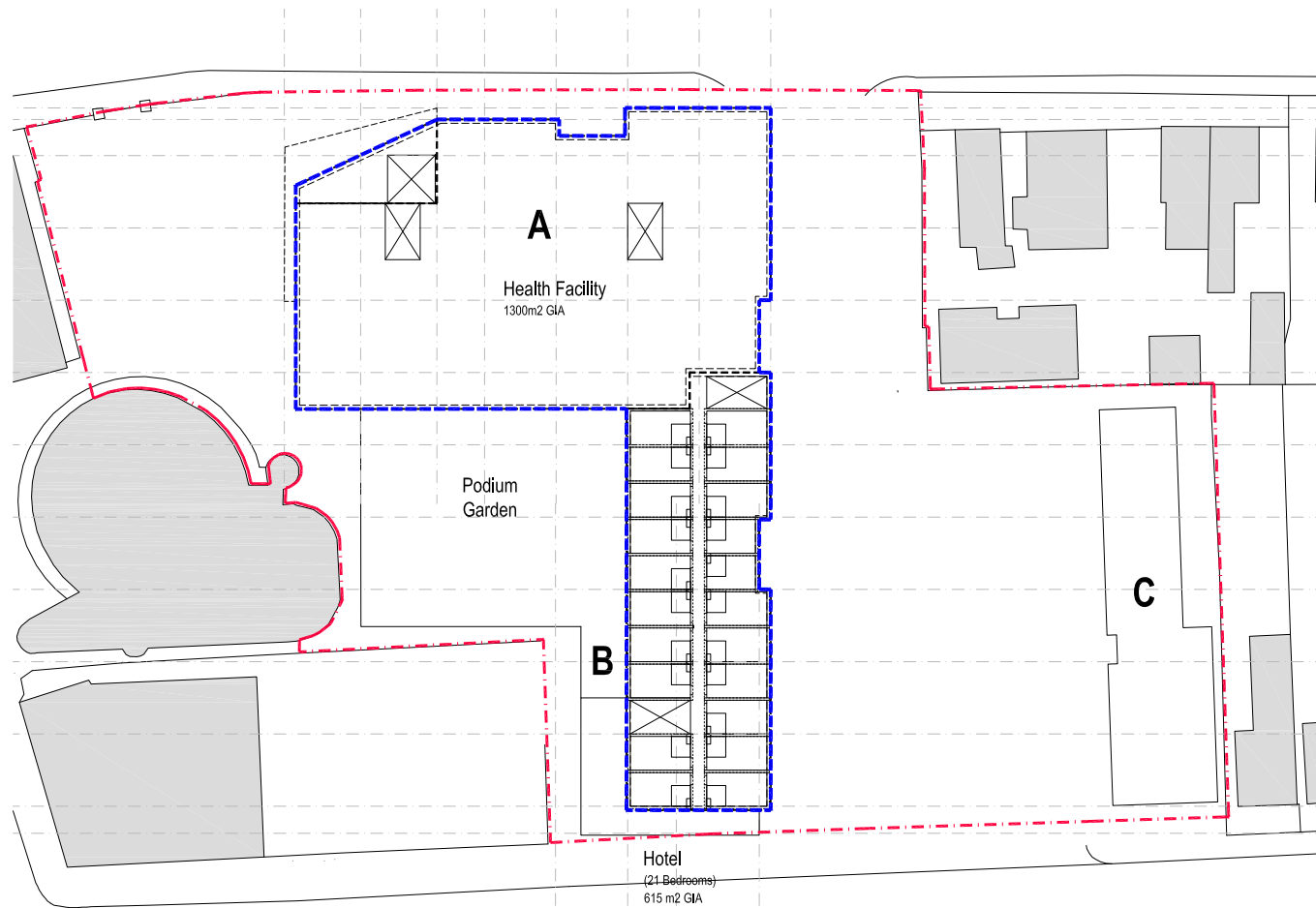
OPTION C - Aerial Shadow Plan



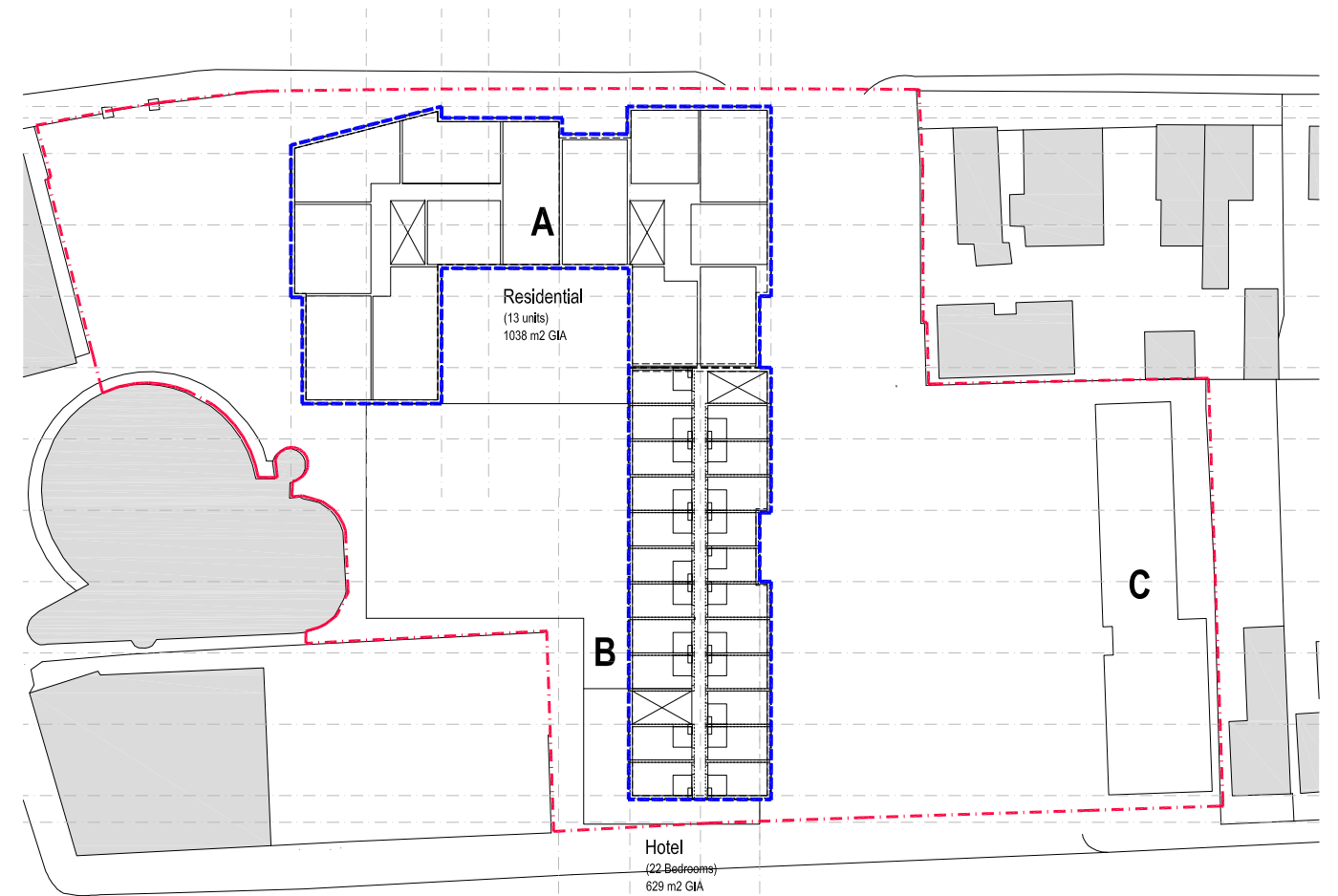
OPTION C - Lower Ground Floor



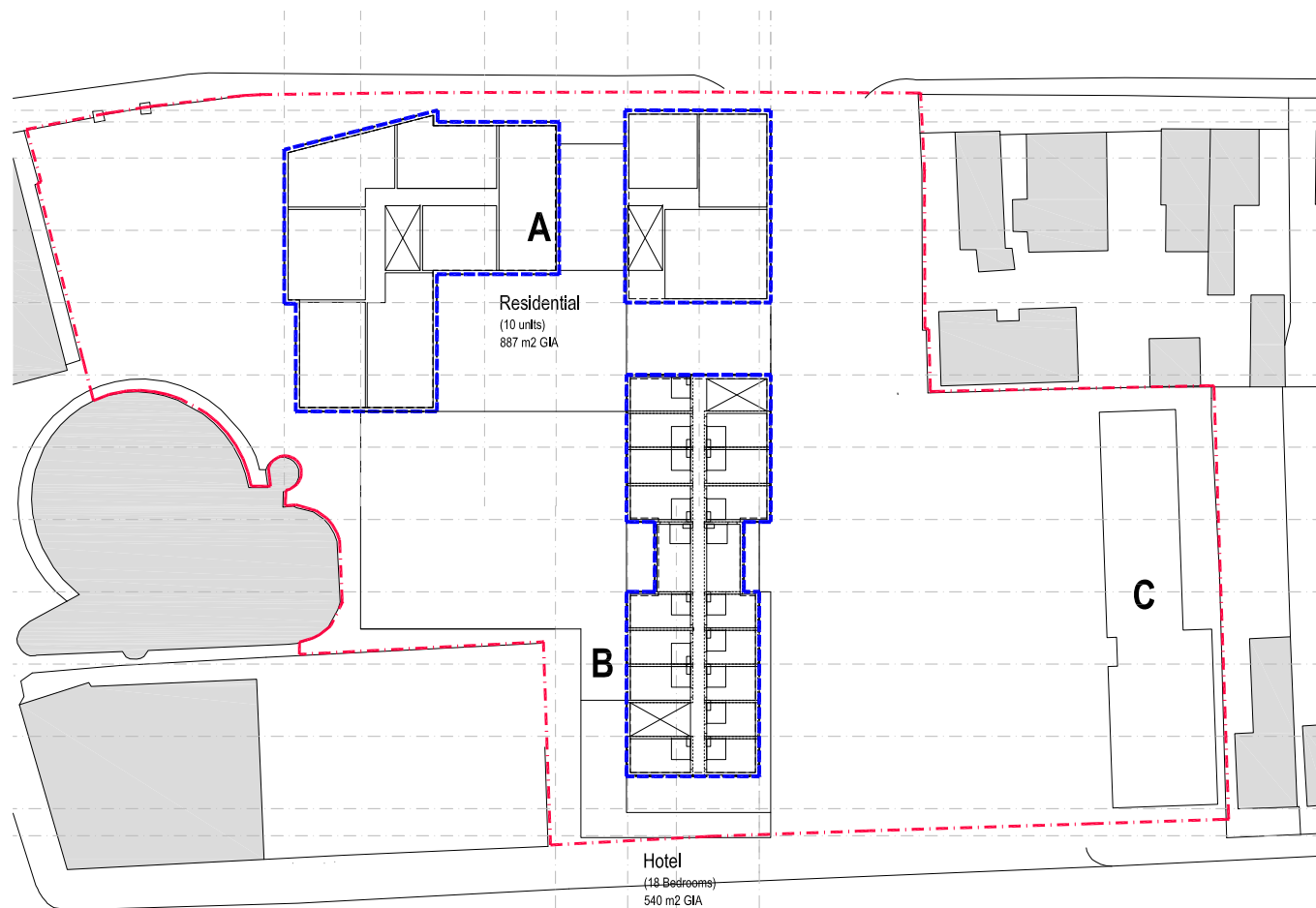
OPTION C - Upper Ground Floor



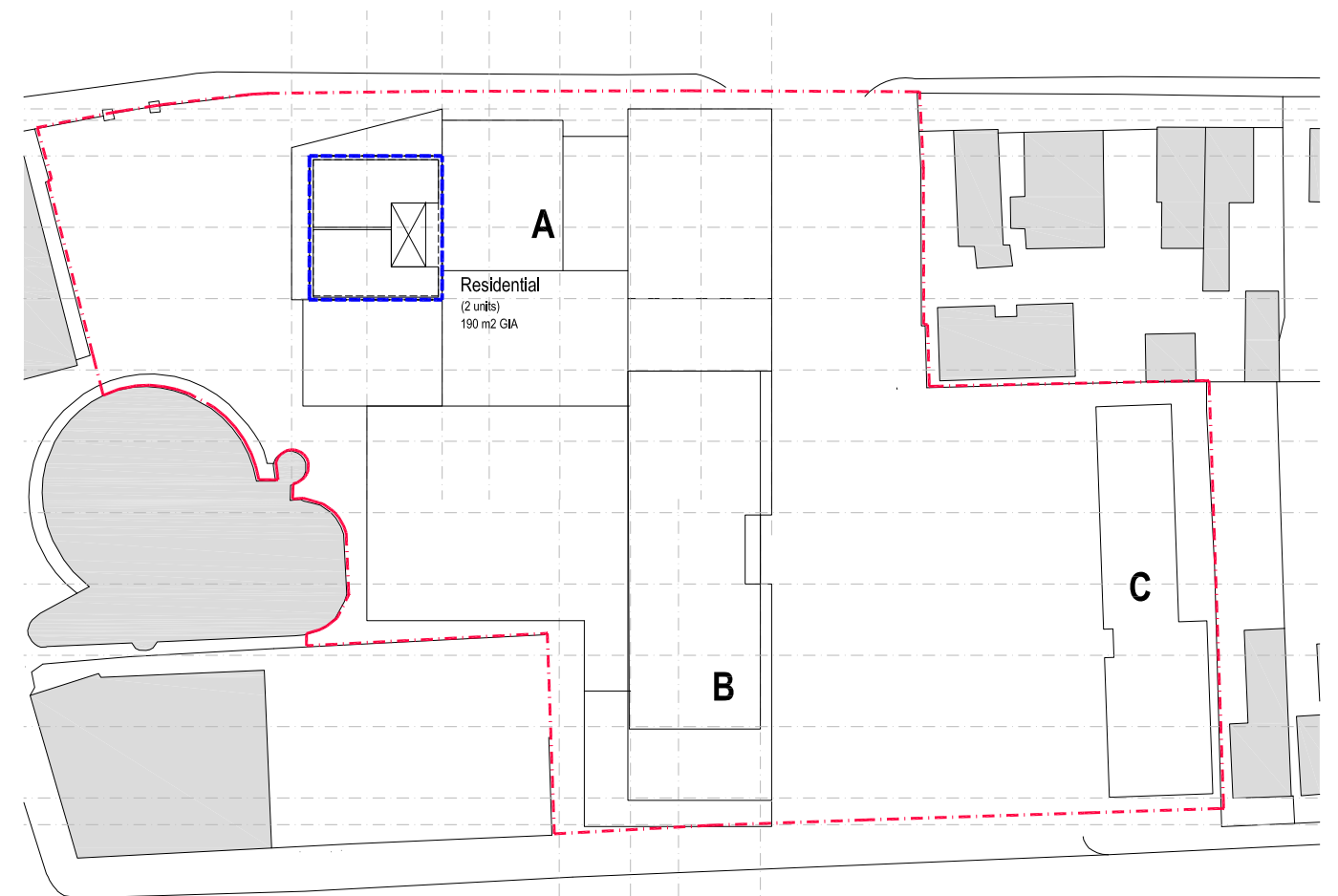
OPTION C - First Floor



OPTION C - Second Floor



OPTION C - Third Floor



OPTION C - Fourth Floor / Roof Level

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.3.3 Townscape

Each of the developed options is based on the fundamental townscape aspirations identified in the initial options appraisal. However, the organisation and functionality of the proposed buildings for the developed options has required further consideration of the response to the surrounding urban context.

View 1 shows the same basic modelling approach as Option B with the additional set back upper floor providing scope for an architectural treatment echoing the form and materiality of the Town Hall roof. The varied massing along manor Street provides a grain more in keeping with the townscape context of Braintree

View 2 shows the effect of canting the corner block of the new scheme to open up the view towards the Town Hall as in Option A, with the double height colonnade. The facade area behind the colonnade would be animated by a double height foyer space serving the community hub and health facility

View 3 provides a direct view into the new garden with the retained listed gateways and enclosing wall. The new colonnade evokes the architecture of the library. The additional roof storey provides a finer element of massing and could be designed to reflect the materiality of the roofs of existing adjacent buildings. The extent of the new side elevation provides a strong enclosure to the garden helping to create a collegiate style of space

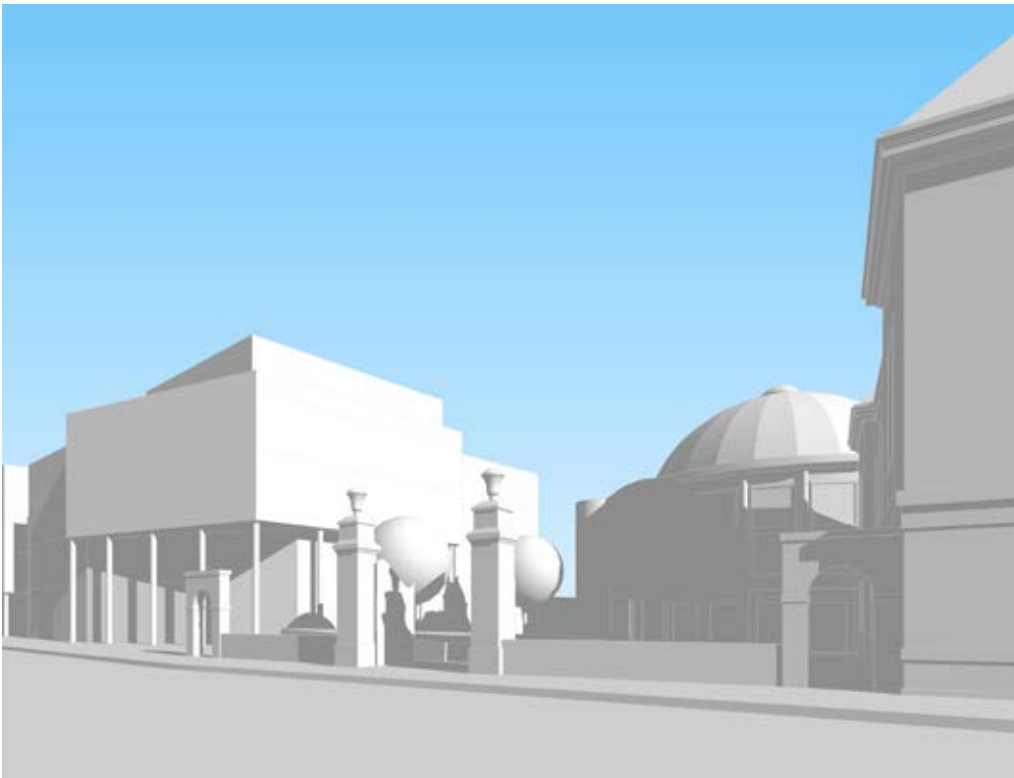
View 4 indicates the eastern frontage of the main development which fronts on to the expanded bus facility. The increased articulation and variety of form assists in reducing the visual impact of the scheme when viewed from Victoria Street



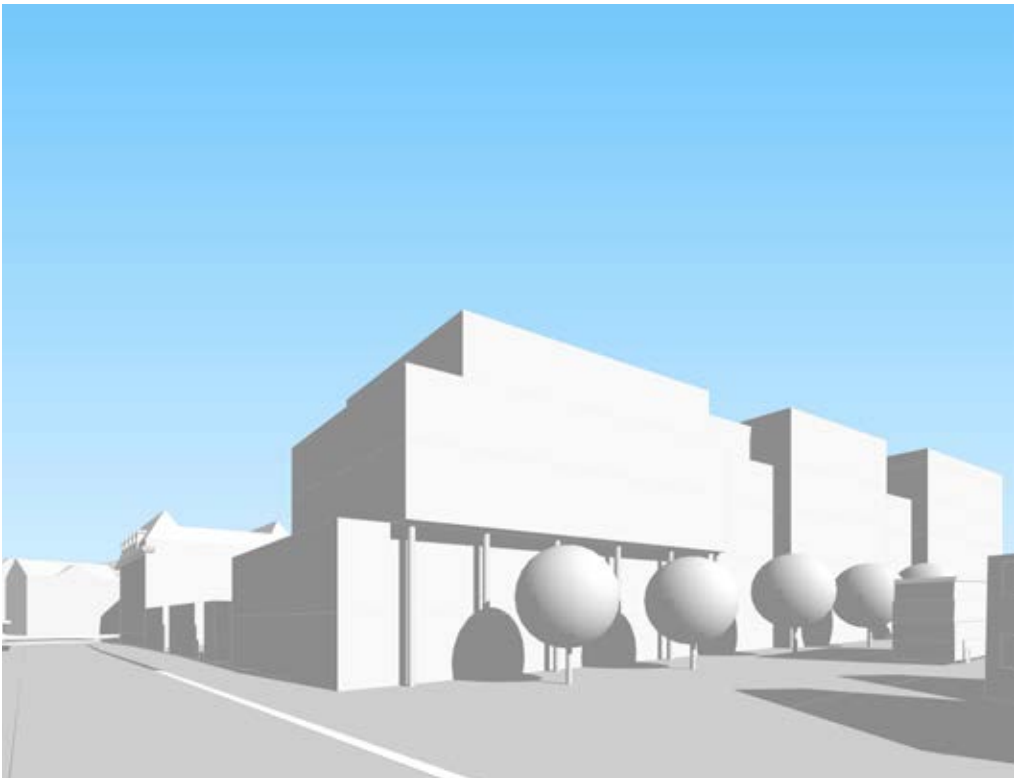
OPTION C - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION C - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION C - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION C - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

4.3.4 Development Capacity

Option C represents the development of an optimised option learning from the benefits and limitations of Options A and B. This has resulted in the added benefit of an increase in overall development area combined with a more contextually sensitive massing approach.

This option achieves the brief requirements for the health facility and the hotel, with both having compact and autonomous organisation and well define entrances. The scheme includes the provision of c. 32 residential units which is a substantial uplift over options A and B. In addition this option provides additional retail space as well as the community hub. Whilst retail space has not been considered strongly viable, this rise in capacity is not excessive and could represent a benefit to the overall flexibility of the scheme.

As with Options A and B, the parking allocation is below the original brief requirement. Project team discussions have however indicated that parking provision should not be prioritised over the quality, functionality and commercial viability of the development.

Option C provides the highest overall development area.

Health Facility

Community hub

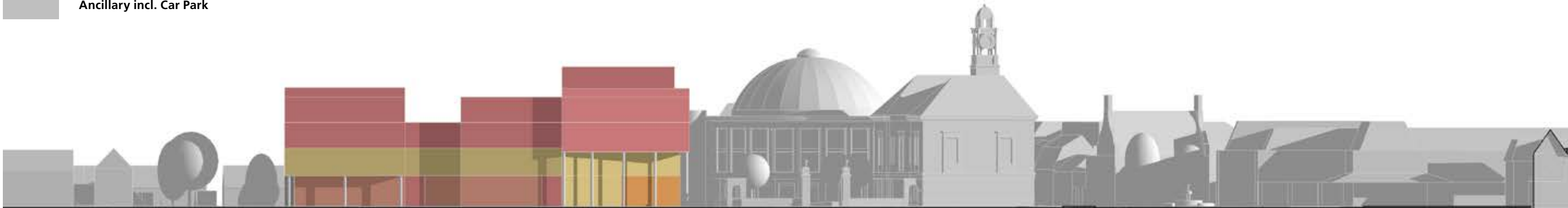
Retail

Residential

Hotel

Office

Ancillary incl. Car Park



OPTION C - Manor Street Frontage

DEVELOPED OPTION C - AREA SCHEDULE

15.05.2017

Level	LG	G	1	2	3	4	GIA (m2)	GIA (ft2)
GP Surgery	0	80	1300	0	0	0	1380	14,854
Comm Hub	0	177	0	0	0	0	177	1,905
Retail	0	267	0	0	0	0	267	2,874
Residential	338	459	42	1088	887	190	3004	32,335
Hotel	360	328	615	629	540	0	2472	26,609
Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Car Park	2300	1429	0	0	0	0	3729	40,139
Plant	200	0	0	0	0	0	200	2,153
Anc./Serv	200	238	0	0	0	0	438	4,715
TOTAL	3398	2978	1957	1717	1427	190	11,667	19,634
GEA CHECK	3637	3110	2063	1840	1524	213	12,387	133,334
Efficiency GEA - GIA							94%	
Residential Units							32	
Hotel Rooms							71	
Parking Spaces							122	

4 DEVELOPED OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

Uses

The developed options appraisal has confirmed the ability of the site to accommodate the proposed mix of uses (see project brief dated 19.05.17).

This can be achieved primarily within the western parcel, with a small additional element of housing in the eastern parcel.

The health facility is located on the first floor within a single large floorplate in Options A and C. Option B would require a separation of some accommodation (offices) to a lower floor. The detailed layout of the health facility will establish the location and need for natural ventilation and lighting from the podium level above.

Option C illustrates the potential to construct about 32 new apartments. The exact capacity will depend on the confirmed mix and sizes of units which should now be confirmed to inform the development of the detailed design

The hotel layout of Option C appears to be the most efficient whilst ensuring the optimum design of other uses. This layout can now be developed in consultation with the hotel operator's design advisors. The location of the hotel ground floor facilities on Victoria Street assists in counteracting the risk of this being perceived as the rear of the development, assisting in raising the identity of this area of the town centre

All options include a community hub located adjacent to the Town Hall Garden providing a high profile shop window for the Council's use of digital services. It is preferred to combine access to this with the health facility to create a critical mass of activity as well as a shared identity within the town centre.

Retail space is provided in each option, with Option C providing two units. This could include the required pharmacy and an additional convenience store or similar.

Bus station facilities have not been incorporated as yet, pending advice on the brief requirements. Inclusion may affect car parking capacity or the accommodation mix of Block C.

Parking remains within the podium, located over two levels, but all options foresee a capacity in the region of 120 - 130 spaces. This level of parking ensures that street frontages are active and servicing areas accommodated in accessible locations. Further pressures on parking could arise subject to confirmation of the hotel brief, structural design and other servicing and plant requirements.

This study is based on the assumptions of providing a maximum of nine bus stands on site. However, the detailed design and layout of the bus station, car park access and servicing remains a major potential scheme restraint and further design work will be required to confirm the approach for a safe , functional and attractive site layout.

The setting-out of the blocks seeks to widen the pavements on Victoria Street and Manor Street with additional space provided through the use of colonnades.

The proposed Town Hall Garden is approximately 900 m2 (0.09Ha) in size and could provide a mix of hard and soft landscaping, trees, seating areas, potential for water features and pedestrian links. It is proposed to locate the development's main plant room under the garden, necessitating co-ordination of planting with structures below.

It is suggested that the area of Manor Street adjacent to the garden be considered for traffic calming to provide a safe link between the development and the museum.

A sensitive landscaping design will be required around the bus facility, particularly to either side of its southern end to minimise negative impacts on the adjacent uses.

Massing

In order to accommodate the proposed uses, the scheme will require the inclusion of buildings up to five storeys in height.

The urban design and townscape analysis indicates that the eastern side of the Town Hall Garden and the western end of Victoria Street are the best locations for taller buildings.

Use of set-backs and building articulation will reduce the impact of the buildings, in particular along Manor Street and adjacent to the bus facility. The objective will be to avoid the sense of a single monolithic development by breaking down the massing to reflect the typical scale and grain of the town centre context.

In regard to Block C, including the extension and conversion of the former community centre, it is probable that development will need to be restricted to two storeys to avoid negative impacts on neighbouring gardens and buildings. However, some three storey elements may be achievable subject to further detailed design.

Daylight and sunlight impacts could be caused to neighbours. Whilst in some cases these are buildings within the local authority's ownership, such as the library, the risk of negative impacts will still require assessment at the detailed design stage.

In addition there may be daylighting or rights of light impact to properties on the south side of Victoria Street, also requiring early assessment.

The scheme requires the vertical layering of different uses which will add a level of technical complication to the design approach.

For the developed options study, a structural grid of 7.5m has been assumed with the intention that this will be co-ordinated with parking layouts, hotel room layouts, apartment layouts and the health facility layout. This assumption will require early testing at the commencement of the detailed design stage.

Requirements for transfer structures should be reduced by the above approach but it is still likely that some requirements will remain, especially at the basement level.

Stacking of services, particularly from the residential use down through the building below may have space and organisational implications within the building and strategies will need to be prioritised at the detailed design stage. Negative impacts could include increased building height and loss of usable area.

The location and connections to and from the plant room will require testing to ensure that services can be efficiently co-ordinated within the basement and car park areas. A boiler flue will most likely be required to discharge at the highest point of the development close to the plant room.

The varying site levels will require an early assessment of access and ground floor entrance arrangements. The gradient of the north-south road through the site should be optimised to provide optimal functionality, both for the bus facility and the surrounding buildings. This is most likely best provided by trying to accommodate s compact ramped level change as close as possible to Manor Street.

Recommendations and Next Steps

From the developed options study, Option C appears to provide the best approach to be taken forward to the detailed design stage. The key advantages are:

- Largest development area
- Clearest separation of different uses
- Efficient layouts and floorplates
- Potential to create sensitive response to context
- Even distribution of street level activity
- Ability to locate taller elements where they are most appropriate

Subsequent to team review and client sign-off it is therefore recommended to develop Option C to detailed design and a planning application.

FURTHER NOTES TO BE ADDED SUBSEQUENT TO TEAM AND CLIENT FEEDBACK



Indicative Sketch of Potential Community Hub and Health Facility Entrance in Manor Street



5 DEVELOPED DESIGN (STAGE 3)

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.1 PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Feedback from Meeting of 20th June 2017

The previous sections of this report were presented to the Braintree District Council Planning Team who, in summary, provided the following general comments:

- The applicant is to be commended for the thorough site analysis and options appraisals considered within the submitted Design Development and Options Report. The options appraisal sets out a clear preference and a strong justification for ‘Option C’ which is supported by the clear and reasoned analysis undertaken by the applicant team.
- Officers acknowledge and welcome this ambitious proposal to develop this site which will greatly assist with the regeneration of the wider town centre. In particular the provision of a new GP surgery in this location is supported and is considered to be an appropriate location given the accessibility of the site.

The planning team raised the following design points which would require further consideration as the scheme was developed:

- In view of the heritage context, the materiality of the development needs to be sufficiently robust and sympathetically designed so that the building does not tire, date or stain.
- In regard to the proposed Town Hall Garden, further consideration needs to be given as to how this space can be animated and used by the surrounding uses, including the Town Hall.
- Officers would encourage the applicant team to examine how the floorspace at ground floor level and lobby entrances could be rearranged to better exploit the opportunities that the development of this site presents.
- It is imperative that the residential lobbies and entrances are designed to be legible, safe and secure for future occupiers.
- The location of the health facility entrance on the ground floor on the chamfered edge of the building is supported. The detailed design of the entrance and surrounding public realm needs to be legible and accessible for people of all ages.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the design of the eastern façade, particularly at ground floor level
- The design of the vehicular and pedestrian entrance into the car park needs to be well resolved and legible. The interaction of the car park entrance and the movement of buses in this area is a concern.
- Further design development is needed in respect of Block C, particularly given the location and proximity of the bus station, to ensure a high quality residential development.
- In view of the different uses on each level, careful consideration needs to be given to fenestration in particular, in order to ensure that the building is well articulated and provides sufficient visual interest.
- In regard to the basement plant room, clarification is requested as to the need for any ventilation or extractor equipment and whether this would need to be provided within the new public space.
- The submitted plans indicate a number of dual aspect units, but also a number of single aspect units. The provision of single aspect units and particularly, north facing single aspect units would not be supported.
- The applicant team should also seek to ensure that each of the new residential

- units comply with the nationally prescribed space standards.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the design and arrangement of the podium space given that both the health facility and hotel bedrooms will directly overlook this podium.
- The Council has adopted the Essex Design Guide which outlines minimum garden sizes of 25sq.m per flat. (However, it is understood that this development would fall under an urban classification and the requirement will therefore need clarification).

In view of the heritage setting and proximity of the listed Town Hall, a number of heritage and conservation comments were provided as follows:

- In principle there is no objection to redeveloping the site in terms of its contribution to the Conservation Area
- Nor is there an objection to the extent of the built form proposed for the site, particularly along the Manor Street frontage, where built forms would allow a better sense of arrival into the town centre.
- A high quality of design and materials will be required
- There is not an objection to the principle of built form on the site, but in regard to the listed building, the highest point of the building needs to be below the eaves level of the Town Hall when viewed from the Market Place, to allow for an appropriate stepping down of built form and subservience to the listed building

The important public transport element of the scheme requires attention to a number of highways and transport issues:

- In light of the proposals to reconfigure the bus station, consideration needs to be given to ensure that linkages to the town centre for pedestrians are safe and legible. Clarification should also be provided on the facilities proposed to support the bus station.
- With regard to car parking, the Council’s policies require proposals for new development accord with Essex County Council’s Vehicle Parking Standards 2009. (However, discussions with ECC Highways have indicated the potential to reduce this in line with the high accessibility and central urban location of the site).
- Any formal planning application needs to clearly set out a justification for the level of parking proposed, the level of parking dedicated for each of the uses proposed and details of how the car park is proposed to be managed.

Conclusions

The pre-application feedback was summarised as follows.

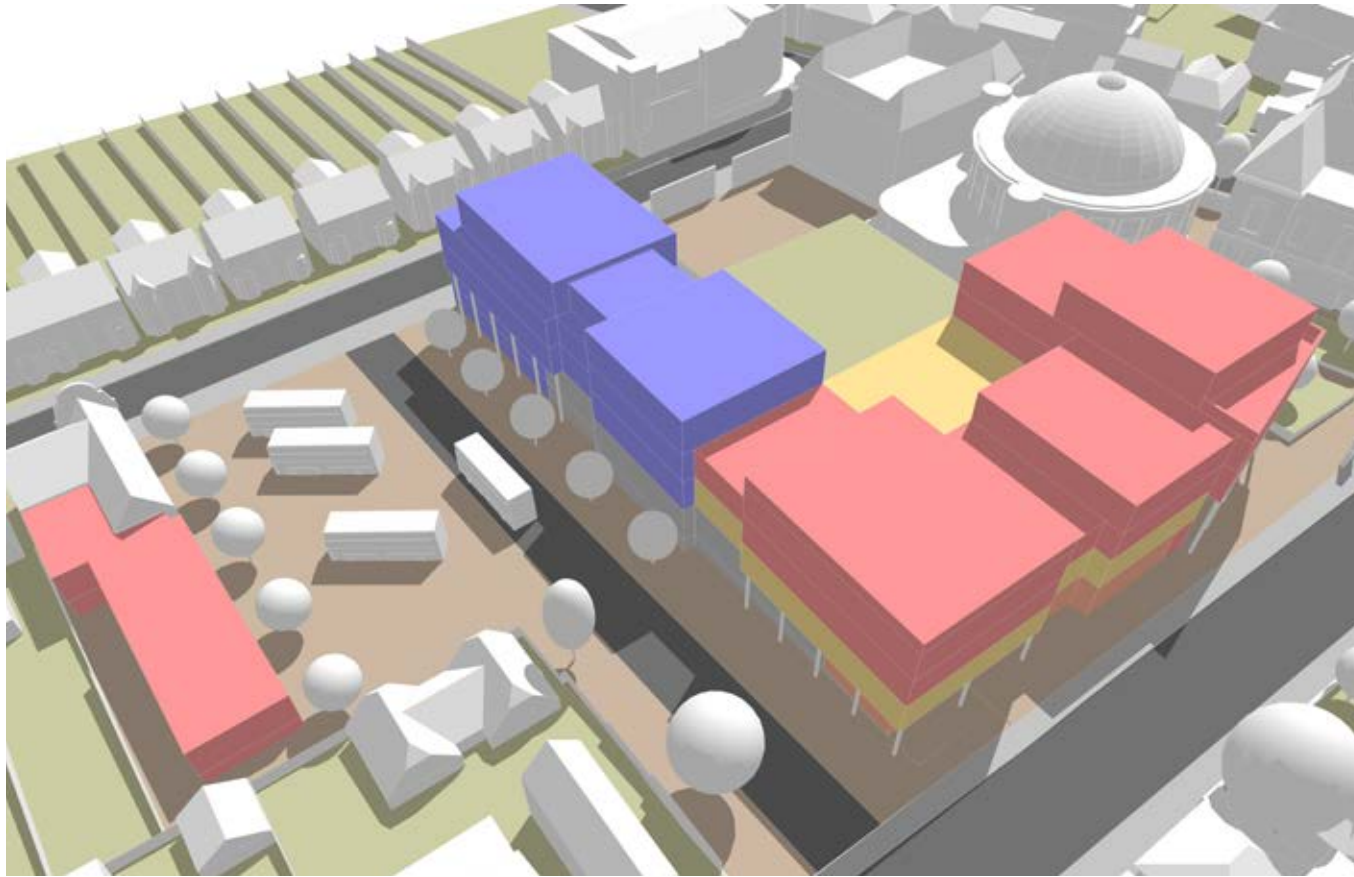
The officers commended the applicant team on the thorough site analysis and options appraisals that have been undertaken and support the principle of redevelopment of this site and the range of uses proposed which are considered to comply with the Council’s adopted and emerging policies.

The proposal represents a significant intervention within the heart of Braintree Town Centre and within the Conservation Area. There is the potential to make this a landmark twenty-first century building, but equally there is a risk of a poorly designed building which would cause considerable harm to designated heritage assets and the character and appearance of the Town Centre. Officers recognise that this is an ambitious proposal which seeks to accommodate a substantial amount of new floorspace for a range of uses within one development. The key issue at this stage is whether the quantum and scale of development proposed can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site.

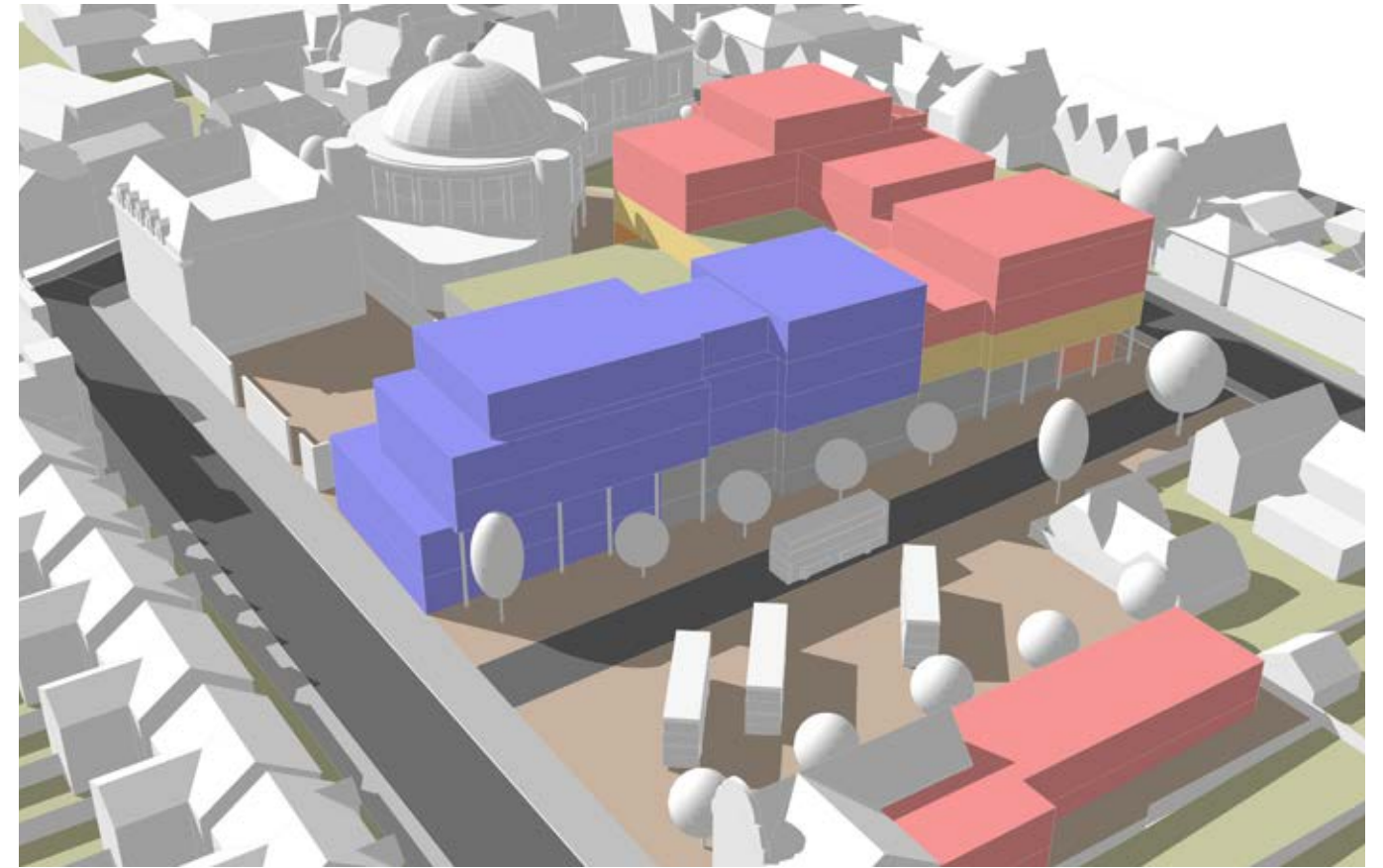
Next Steps

The work presented in this section shows how the design team has developed the scheme design to address the issues raised above. Whilst not a final developed scheme, this level of detail is sufficiently developed to provide a clear indication regarding the detailed approach to the scheme design. The Massing of Option C is shown opposite for comparative purposes.

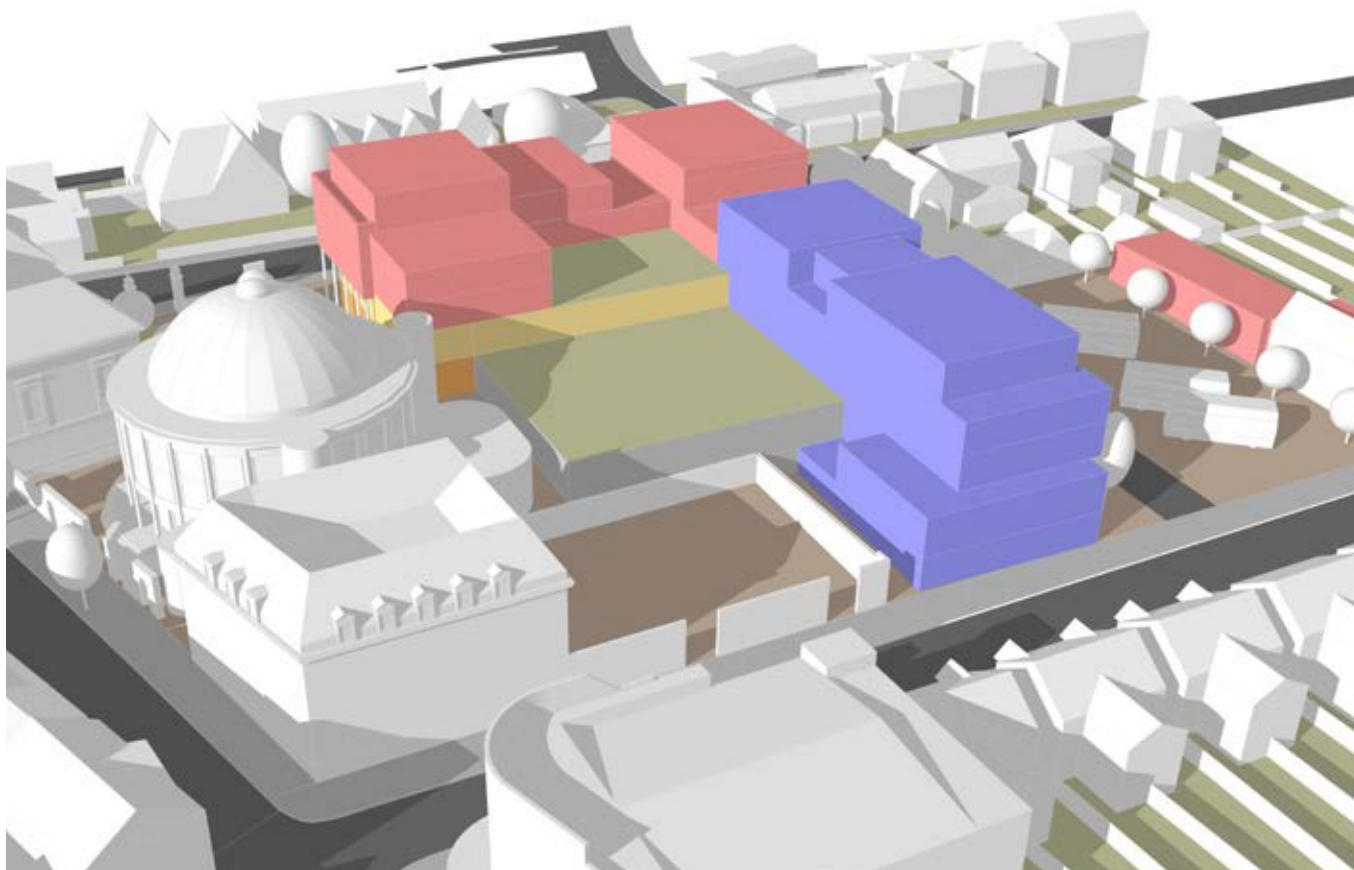
	Health Facility
	Community hub
	Retail
	Residential
	Hotel
	Office
	Ancillary incl. Car Park



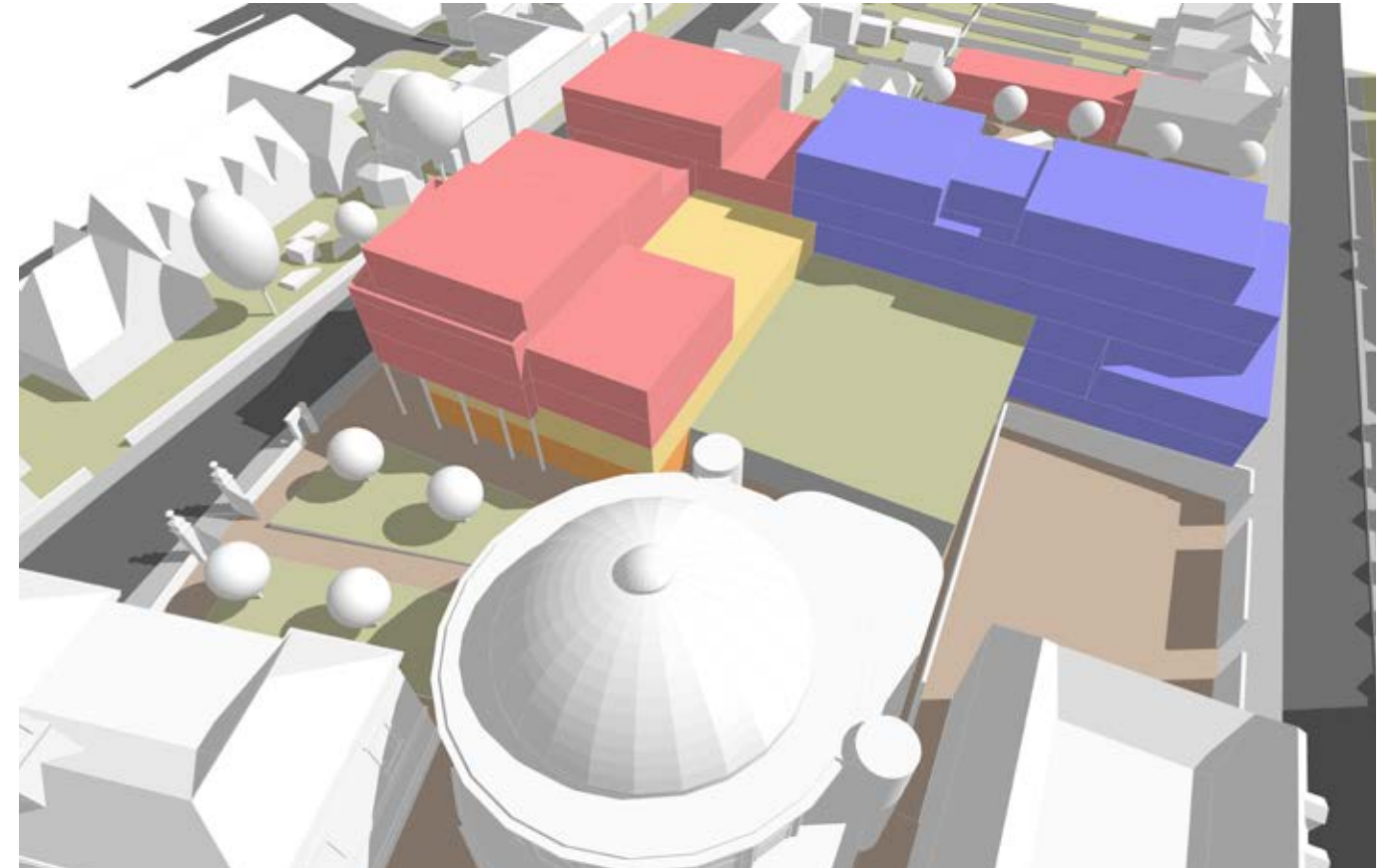
OPTION C - Aerial view from NE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SE



OPTION C - Aerial view from SW



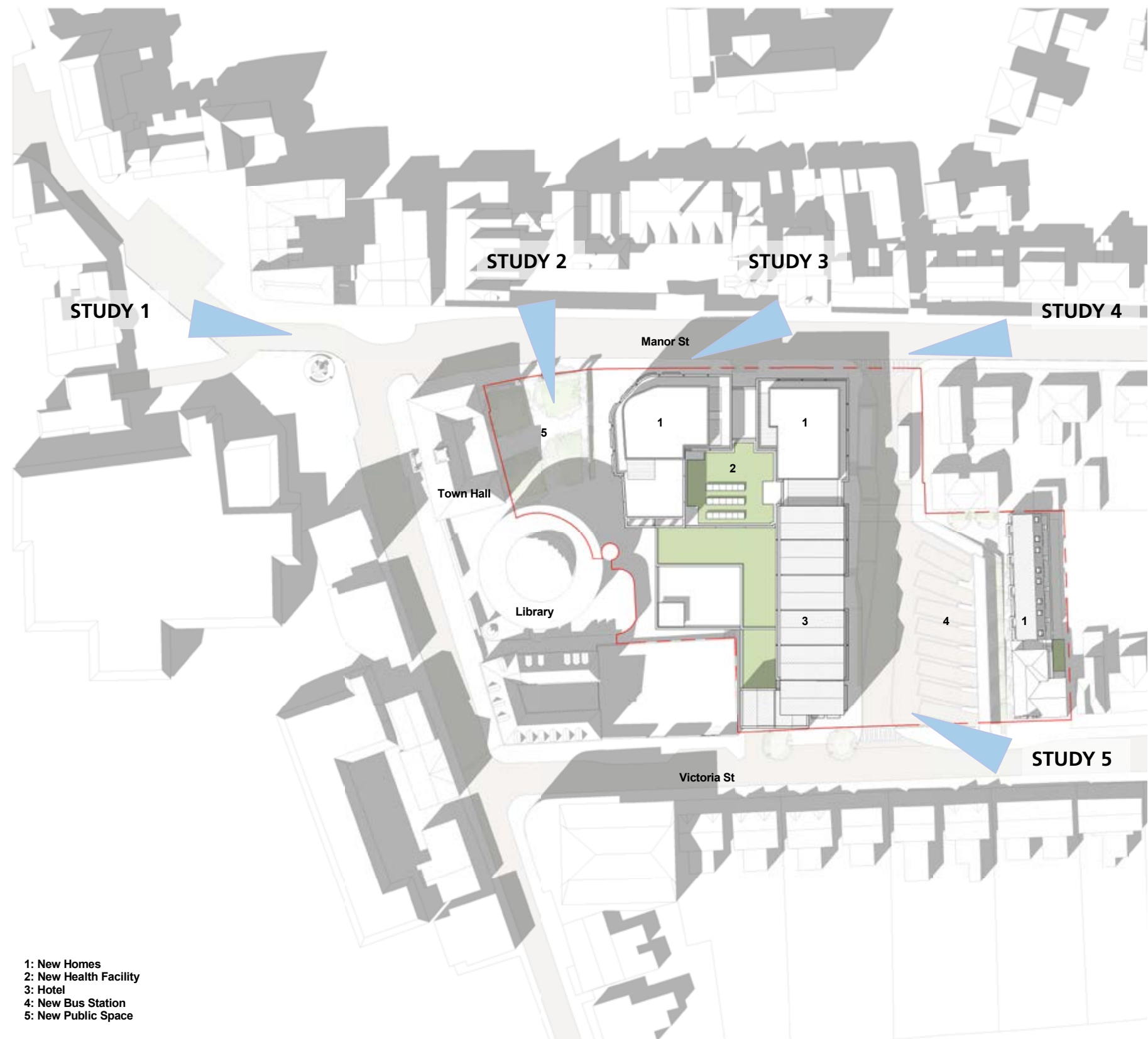
OPTION C - Aerial view from W

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.2 DEVELOPING THE MASSING APPROACH

Whilst the fundamental massing principles were developed as part of the concept design, key elements of the design have been developed in more detail and fine-tuned to ensure the most responsive and sympathetic relationship with the local context.

A number of studies was undertaken to investigate specific key locations around the scheme including relationships to neighbouring buildings. The following pages summarise these studies and outline the rational for the designs as they have been developed.

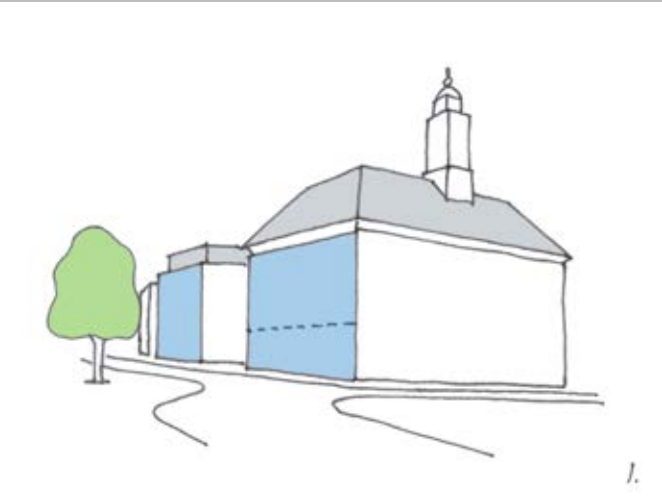


Study 1 indicates the relationship of the new entrance corner to the Town Hall when viewed from Market Square.

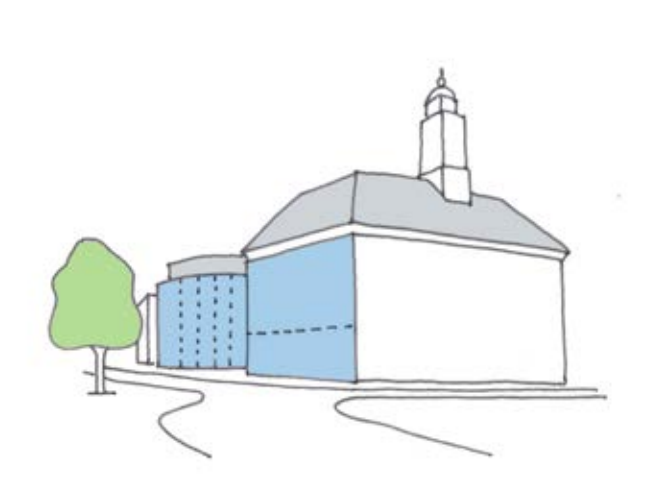
Approach A shows a simple relationship where the Manor Street elevation of the new development echoes the scale and proportions of the flank of the Town Hall but does not look directly towards the square itself.

Approach B shows a fully curved corner, potentially responding to the library building (hidden in this view). However, the two buildings tend to merge visually with this option due to the continuity of the curved facade.

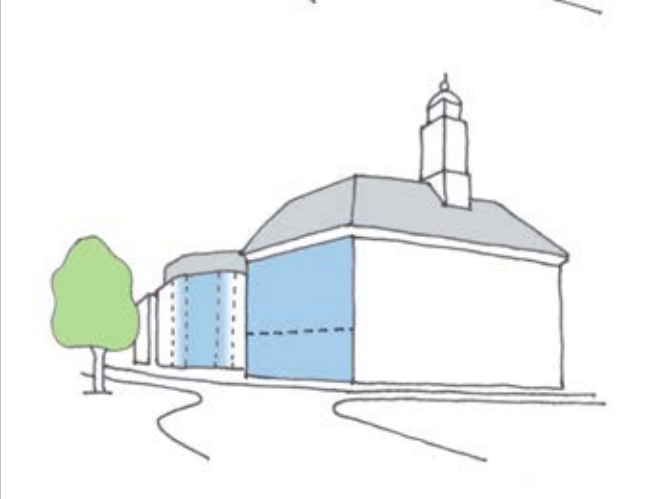
Approach C shows a hybrid solution where the entrance facade is oriented directly towards the Square with curved corners providing a relaxed relationship with the Town Hall whilst signifying that an accessible space is located between the Town Hall and the new development



View from Market Square - A



View from Market Square - B



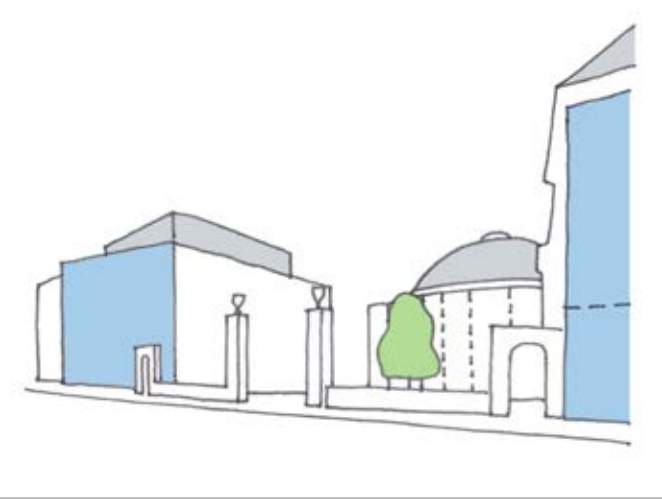
View from Market Square - C (PREFERRED APPROACH)

Study 2 shows the relationship between the three public buildings which will surround and define the new Town Hall Garden.

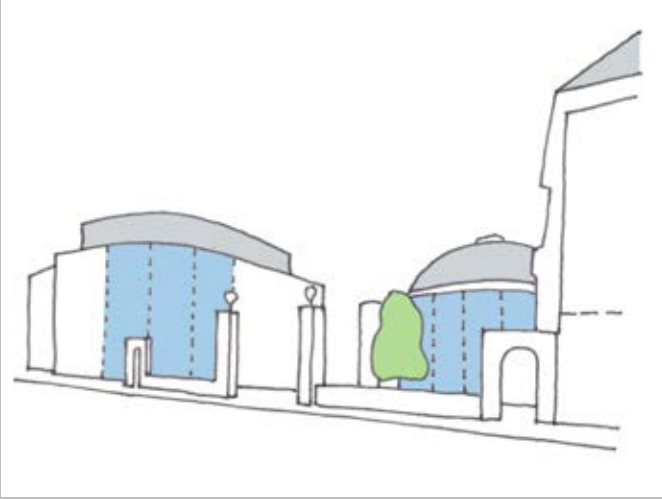
Approach A indicates the orthogonal new building which relates to the Town Hall geometry and defines the Manor Street frontage. There is no strong gesture towards the corner

Approach B shows a fully curved corner facade. This results in a strong visual connection to the library building, although this could be to the detriment of the relationship to the Town Hall

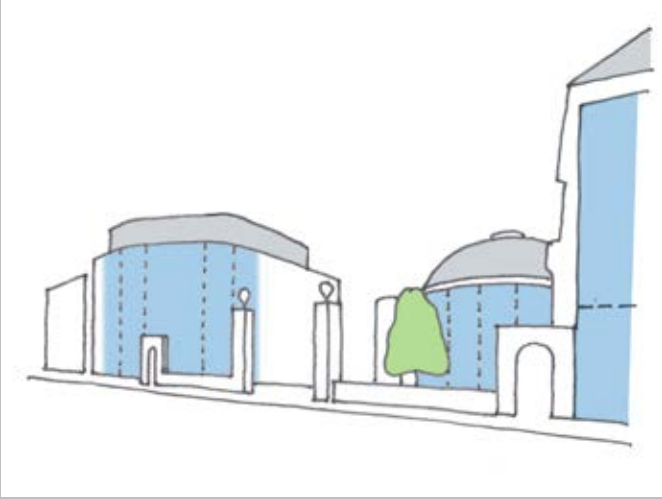
Approach C provides a balanced approach with references to the curves of the library, a strong corner orientation and elevational proportions which respond to the Town Hall



View into Town Hall Garden - A



View into Town Hall Garden - B



View into Town Hall Garden - C (PREFERRED APPROACH)

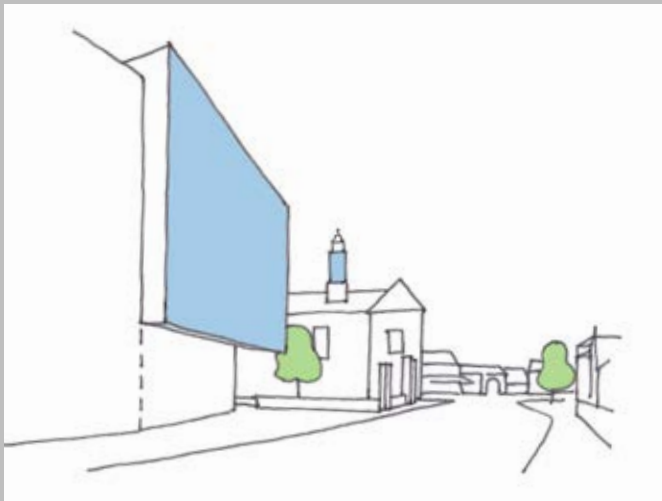
5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

Study 3 considers the relationship of the new development with the view towards the Town hall when approached along Manor Street. The Town Hall currently feels isolated and is surrounded by surface car parking when viewed from the east. The fundamental massing approach seeks to frame the view of the Town Hall, gradually revealing the rear side of the building.

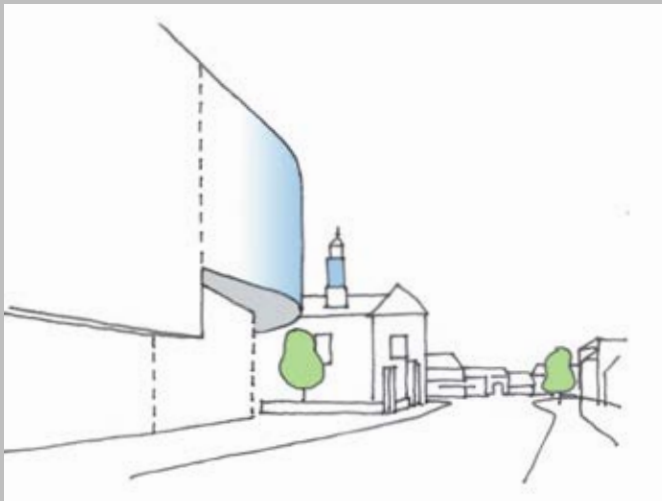
Approach A shows the original concept where the plane of the building is canted to reveal the Town Hall. The hard edge provides a fairly abrupt termination of the corner

Approach B indicates a fully curved corner which projects further towards the Town Hall

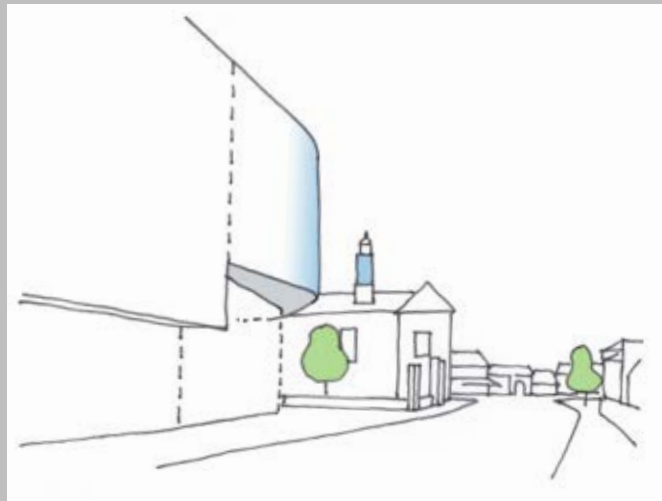
Approach C shows the hybrid corner option shown in Studies B and C. This geometry provides a soft edge and an improved distance to the central clock tower compared to variant B



View towards Market Square - A



View towards Market Square - B



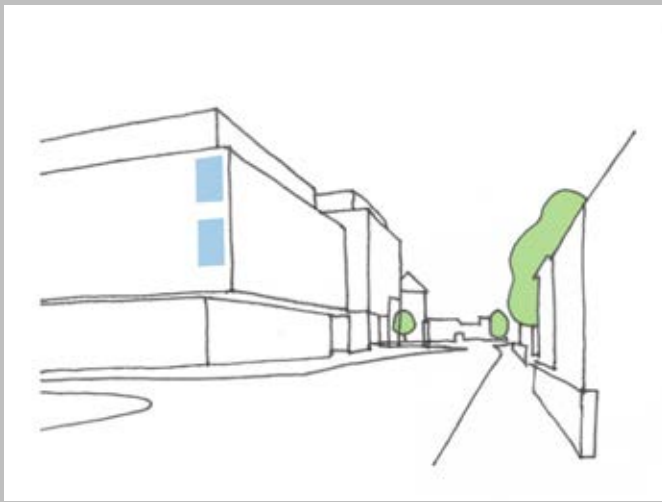
View towards Market Square - C (PREFERRED APPROACH)

Study 4 investigates the north east corner of the new proposals. This corner has a strong presence in the townscape when moving westwards along Manor Street towards the Town Centre.

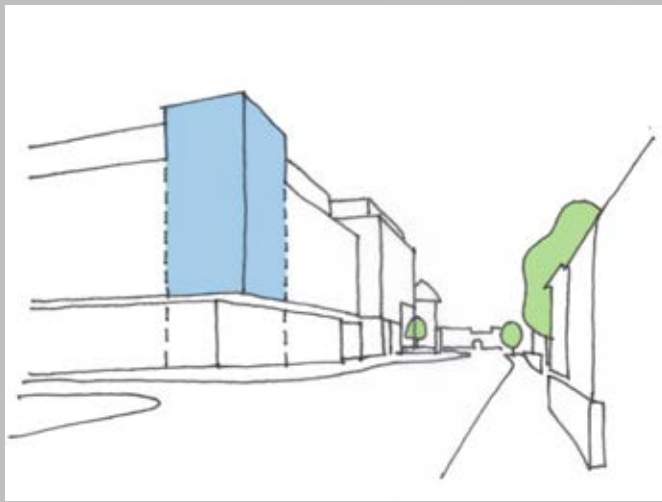
Approach A indicates a low profile solution where the corner is signified by the arrangement or scale of facade openings

Approach B shows a stronger modelling of the corner with a vertical emphasis. However, this elevates the height of the building considerably above the contextual scale of the eastern part of Manor Street

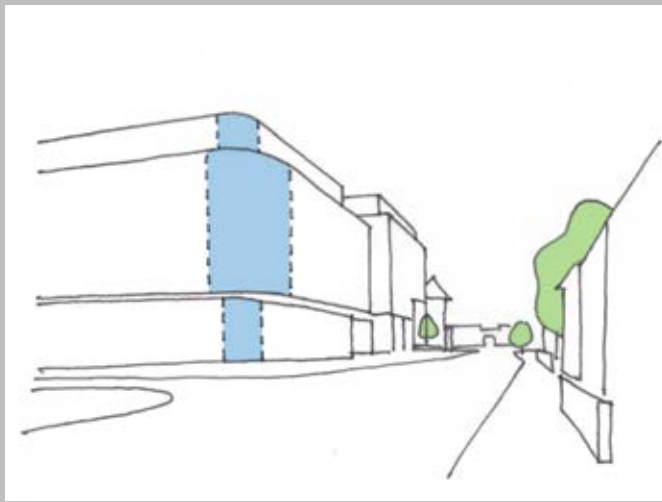
Approach C creates a feature corner which echoes the proposed treatment of the more important corner opposite the Town Hall. This approach retains consistency within the architectural approach



View along Manor Street - A



View along Manor Street - B



View along Manor Street - C (PREFERRED APPROACH)

Study 5 demonstrates the investigations undertaken in regard to the massing of the Victoria Street corner and northern facade of the hotel building.

Approach A shows the fundamental massing principles which are based on a stepping down towards Victoria Street. The scale of the southern end of the hotel is designed to respond to the existing Job Centre (previously the Post Office). However, a purely orthogonal massing appears potentially out of character with the surrounding context of broken and pitched rooflines.

Approach B investigates varied levels within the top of the main facade. This approach introduces additional complexity without any strong contextual references

Approach C develops the thoughts investigated with Approach B through the introduction of gabled pediments. These pick up on the rhythm of the Victorian facades with Victoria Street as well as echoing the Dutch gables seen in a number of buildings within the Town Centre. However, the flat top to the set-back 'mansard' storey is still a dominant feature due to the length of this frontage

Approach D moves the articulation to the mansard roof, providing a varied skyline in sympathy with the local urban grain. Each gable relates to a bay of the building below. Overall, this composition will allow the hotel to have a distinctive character, differentiated from the other parts of the development

Approach D shows a variant of approach D whereby the top gable element of the building is extended over two floors. However, the resulting proportions lead the building feel taller and overextended

Approach E was also tested to see whether more variation would add to the overall composition. It was felt that this represented an over-complication and loss of clarity



View from Victoria Street - A



View from Victoria Street - B



View from Victoria Street - C



View from Victoria Street - D (PREFERRED APPROACH)



View from Victoria Street - E



View from Victoria Street - F

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.3 EXTERNAL ENVELOPE PRECEDENTS

In order to inform the architectural approach a precedent study has been undertaken. Based on a wide range of experience and visits to relevant schemes a number of examples have been identified which demonstrate approaches which can provide a responsive, contextual and coherent design approach, suitable for the new scheme in Manor Street.

5.3.1 Sensitive Urban Frontages

- 1. A recent office building in Wigmore Street, West London shows the potential to emulate the scale and proportions of neighbouring Victorian buildings within an elegant modern facade
- 2. Detail of a modern building corner where the textural quality of the brickwork and the use of opening provides an enhances t to the setting of neighbouring historical buildings
- 3. Town Centre Development in Assen, Holland showing the use of openings and materials to create a varied and active street frontage
- 4. Urban apartment building in Groningen Holland where a strong ordering grid is varied to respond to different uses and configurations of spaces behind the facade



5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.3.2 Residential Typologies

- 1. Contemporary mews terrace with a clear rhythm of facade elements and window openings and a strongly defined roofline designed as a contemporary mansard
- 2. A new residential terrace in Manchester where the details and proportions evoke traditional Victorian townhouses through the use of high quality detailing and generous window proportions
- 3. Contemporary infill within an existing historical terrace in Bremen, Germany showing a freedom to vary window sizes and proportions whilst retaining the original building form and material quality
- 4. The use of a characterful top floor storey and elements of colour to provide a domestically-scaled and appropriate urban response in a large building



5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.4 ENVELOPE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

5.4.1 West Block - Initial Massing Study

Each of the developed options is based on the fundamental townscape aspirations identified in the initial options appraisal. However, the organisation and functionality of the proposed buildings for the developed options has required further consideration of the response to the surrounding urban context.

View 1 demonstrates the relationship of a building element which is designed to create a sympathetic backdrop and partner to the town hall. In perspective the parapet line coincides with the cornice line of the Town Hall.

View 2 shows the effect of canting the corner block of the new scheme to open up the view towards the Town Hall and the new garden. This is further enhanced by the creation of a two storey colonnade providing a route into the building foyer and the gardens beyond

View 3 provides a direct view into the new garden with the retained listed gateways and enclosing wall. The new colonnade evokes the architecture of the library and together with the choice of materials can seek to create a strong contextual relationship to the existing public buildings

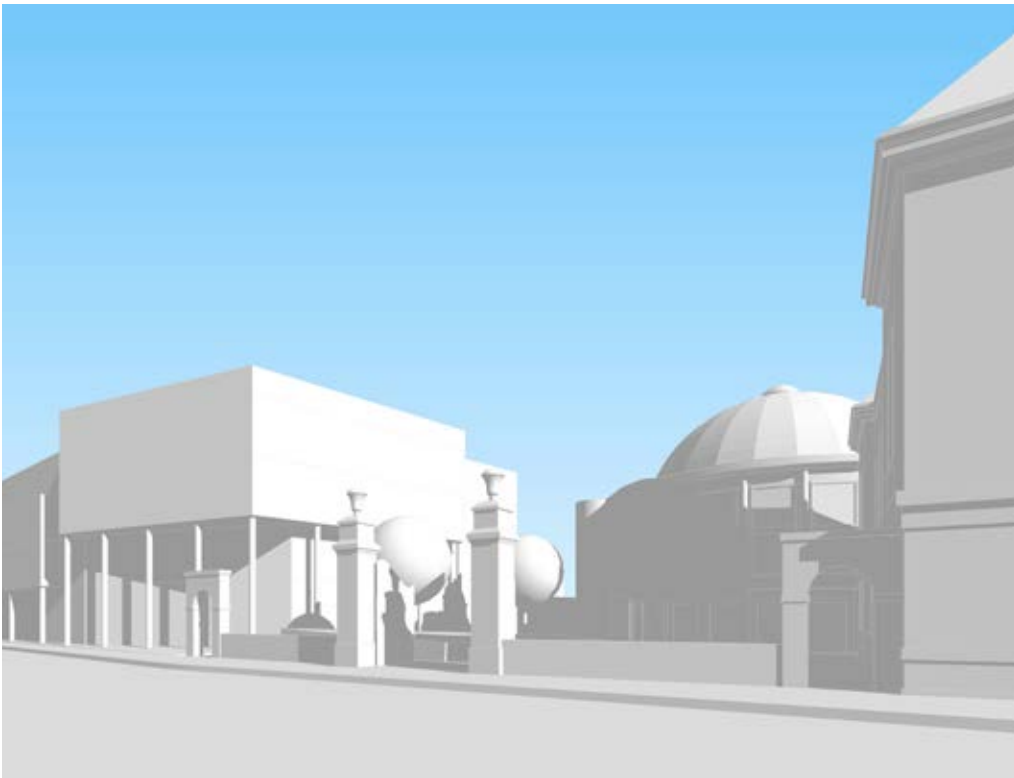
View 4 indicates the eastern frontage of the main development which opens on to the expanded bus facility. The modelling of the five storey building is softened through the provision of a top floor set-back



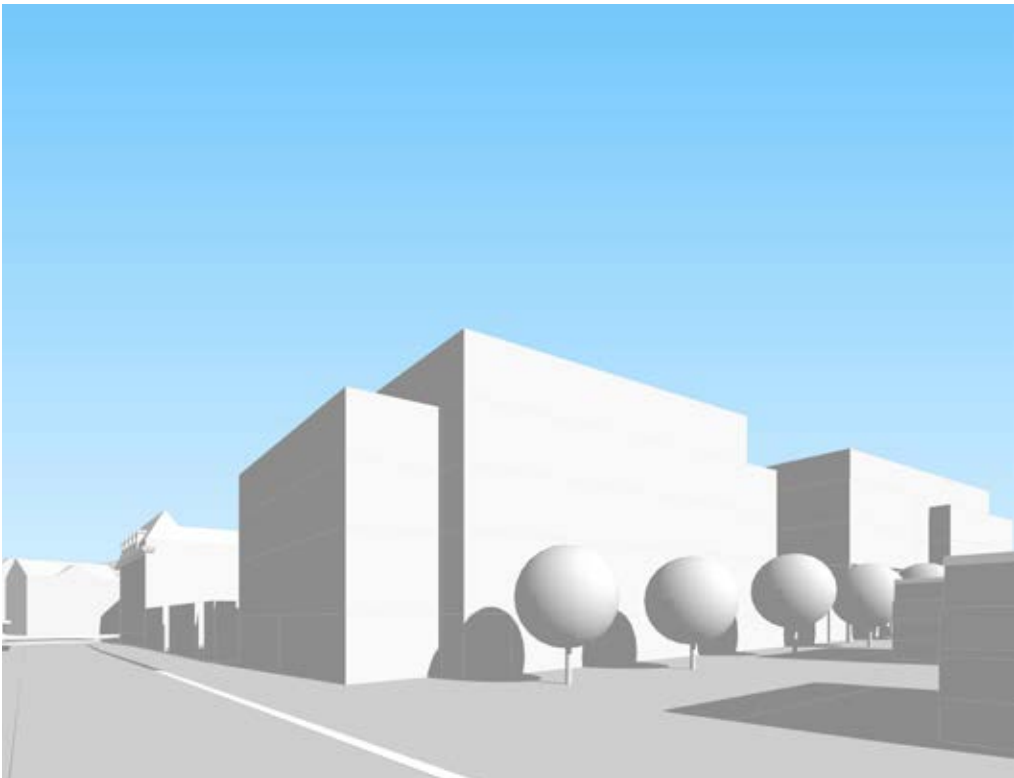
OPTION C - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



OPTION C - View 2 - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



OPTION C - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



OPTION C - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.4.2 West Block - Envelope Design Development

The views shown here indicate the initial modelling exercise for the more developed scheme massing.

View 1 shows the development of the key corner of the new development when viewed from Market Square. The design has been developed to be visually inviting, but subservient to the Town Hall which should remain the dominant element within the streetscape.

View 2 demonstrates how the angled and gently curved corner allows the view into the garden and the rear of the Town Hall to be revealed progressively when moving towards the Town Centre. By stepping up the colonnade towards the corner, the eye is drawn towards the Town Hall Clock Tower.

View 3 provides an indication of the emerging architectural approach's relationship to the existing Town Hall and Library buildings with clear proportions, simple form and bold openings providing a deliberate sense of harmony around the new gardens.

View 4 indicates how the hotel design has been developed to provide a distinctive presence and a welcoming character. The roofscape deliberately seeks to create a resonance with the old Post Office building and the double height main lobby to the corner provide activity in a key high-visibility location



Developed Scheme - View 1 - Looking east along Manor Street from Market Square



Developed Scheme - Looking west along Manor Street towards Market Square



Developed Scheme - View 3 - Looking south towards Library from Manor Street



Developed Scheme - View 4 - Looking west along Victoria Street

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.4.3 East Block - Design Development

The east block will provide an important frontage to the eastern side of the bus station area, providing 'eyes on the street' and protection to the gardens areas along the rear of Victoria Street.

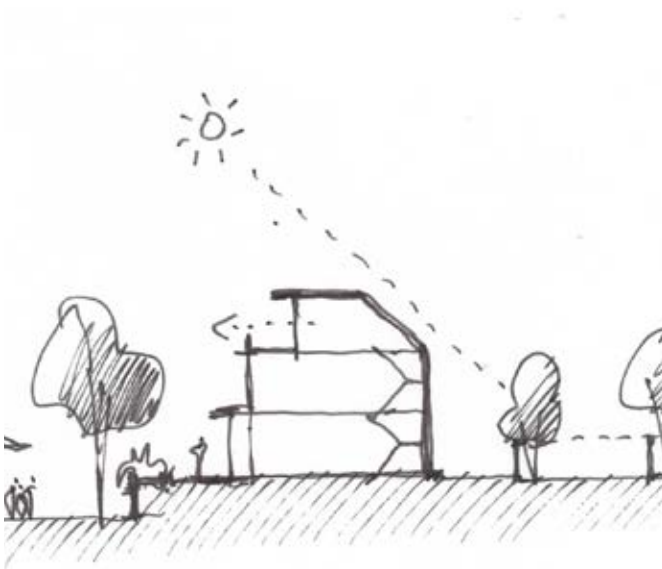
The retention of the old 'Drill Hall' building maintains a good quality element of the local urban fabric. This building also provides a benchmark for the scale and materiality of the new building to be built to the rear.

A number of options were tested during the course of the design development process. Initially, it was foreseen to provide a row of townhouses with independent front doors opening to the street.

The initial scheme design was presented as part of the pre-application planning discussions. The character and materials indicated sought to create a synergy with the western block as well as the Drill Hall building. It was agreed that the front elevation could better correspond to the height and proportions of the Drill Hall and these observations were picked up in the next design development iteration.



Initial Design Sketch - showing relationship of proposed new houses with the existing Drill Hall building



Sketch section - showing relationship to neighbouring garden



Initial scheme design - front elevation

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

In addition to the previous comments, the design of the east block was further developed to accommodate a change in the brief to provide apartments in lieu of townhouses.

The resultant mix of homes, spread over three levels was therefore adjusted from three townhouses to four one bedroom apartments on the ground floor and four two bedroom, duplex apartments on the upper floors.

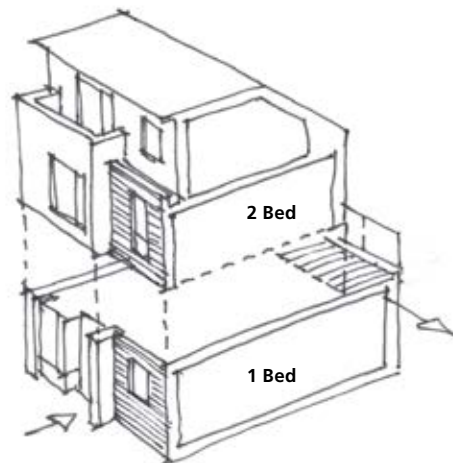
The ground floor apartments remain accessible from the front access path with the duplex units accessed from a communal stair between the new building and the Drill Hall building.

The developed architectural composition of the front elevation has been derived from a fusion of the proportions within both the Drill Hall building and the main block of the new development. This will ensure harmony within the overall architectural composition in the Victoria Street area.

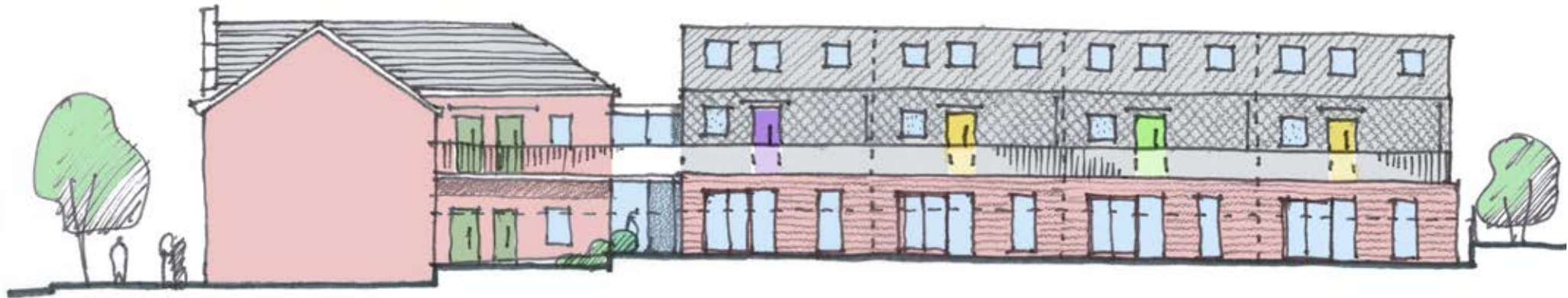
The rear elevation follows the same material rationale as the front elevation. The layout avoids the need for any windows directly overlooking the neighbouring property's garden.



Sketch Study of Front (West) Elevation



Sketch showing arrangement of homes



Sketch Study of rear (East) Elevation - upper level windows are obscured glass (bathrooms) or rooflights

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.5 DEVELOPED FLOOR LAYOUTS

5.5.1 Lower Ground Level

The Lower ground level corresponds to the street level within Victoria Street, the frontage being animated by the ground floor of the hotel which extends a considerable distance along the eastern facade to accommodate a cafe restaurant. The corner lobby of the hotel is designed as double height space providing a strong corner feature.

Hotel accommodation and technical requirements have been confirmed by the proposed operator and incorporated within these design proposals.

The entrance to the lower (public car park) is located adjacent to the hotel and accessed directly from Victoria Street. The car park itself is restricted to a single level.

The old Drill Hall building is retained and has been re-planned to accommodate new apartments.

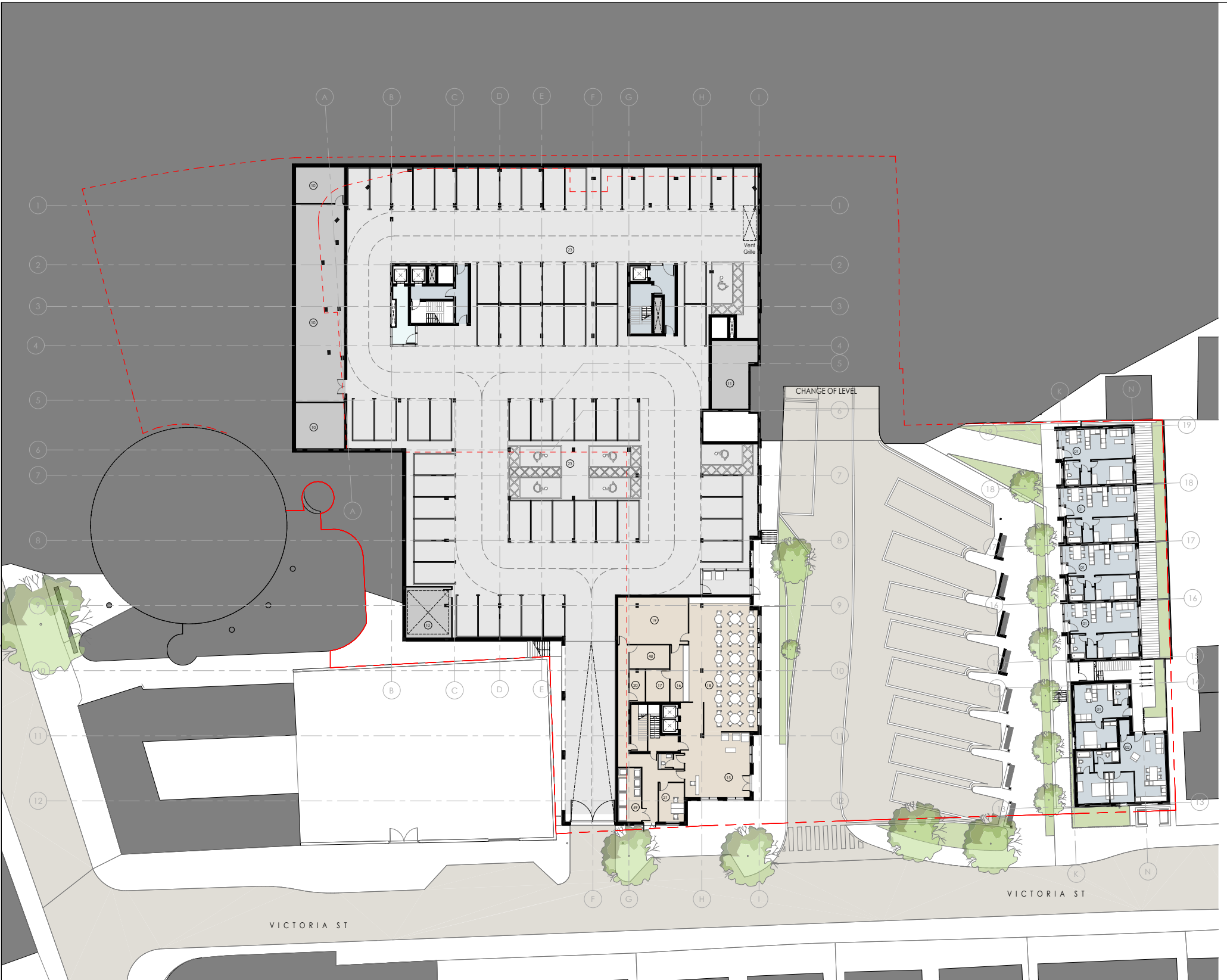
The bus station layout has been optimised to maximise the amount of bus station accommodation on the site whilst ensuring safe and practical operation.

On street servicing bays are included within the proposals and will feature on each side of the building

The underground plant room to the NW of the scheme has been reduced in size and its alignment co-ordinated with the above ground landscaping approach.



Early Sketch of the Hotel Corner - This approach was not felt to be sufficiently responsive to the local context - see also Section 5.4



Lower Ground Floor Layout Plan

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.5.2 Upper Ground Level

The upper ground level corresponds to the street level within Manor Street.

The Manor Street frontage contains a number of different uses including the entrance lobby to the health facility, a pharmacy, a flexible commercial unit and residential lobbies. A small restaurant/cafe is provided adjacent to the new Town Hall garden.

This frontage is colonnaded and provides an angled route focussed on the new Town Hall Garden and the Town Hall behind.

The entrance to the upper (private car park) is located within a recess between the two blocks making up the northern part of the building. This car park will serve the residential apartments and the staff requirement of the health facility.

This car park entrance location avoids difficult co-ordination and safety problems related to operation of the bus station.

Discrete servicing of the residential and health facility uses is located on the eastern side of the main building utilising a suitably located loading bay.

The eastern housing block is accessed from an elevated private pathway and provide enclosure and passive surveillance to the eastern side of the site.

A new sub-station is incorporated within the western block.



Upper Ground Floor Layout Plan

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

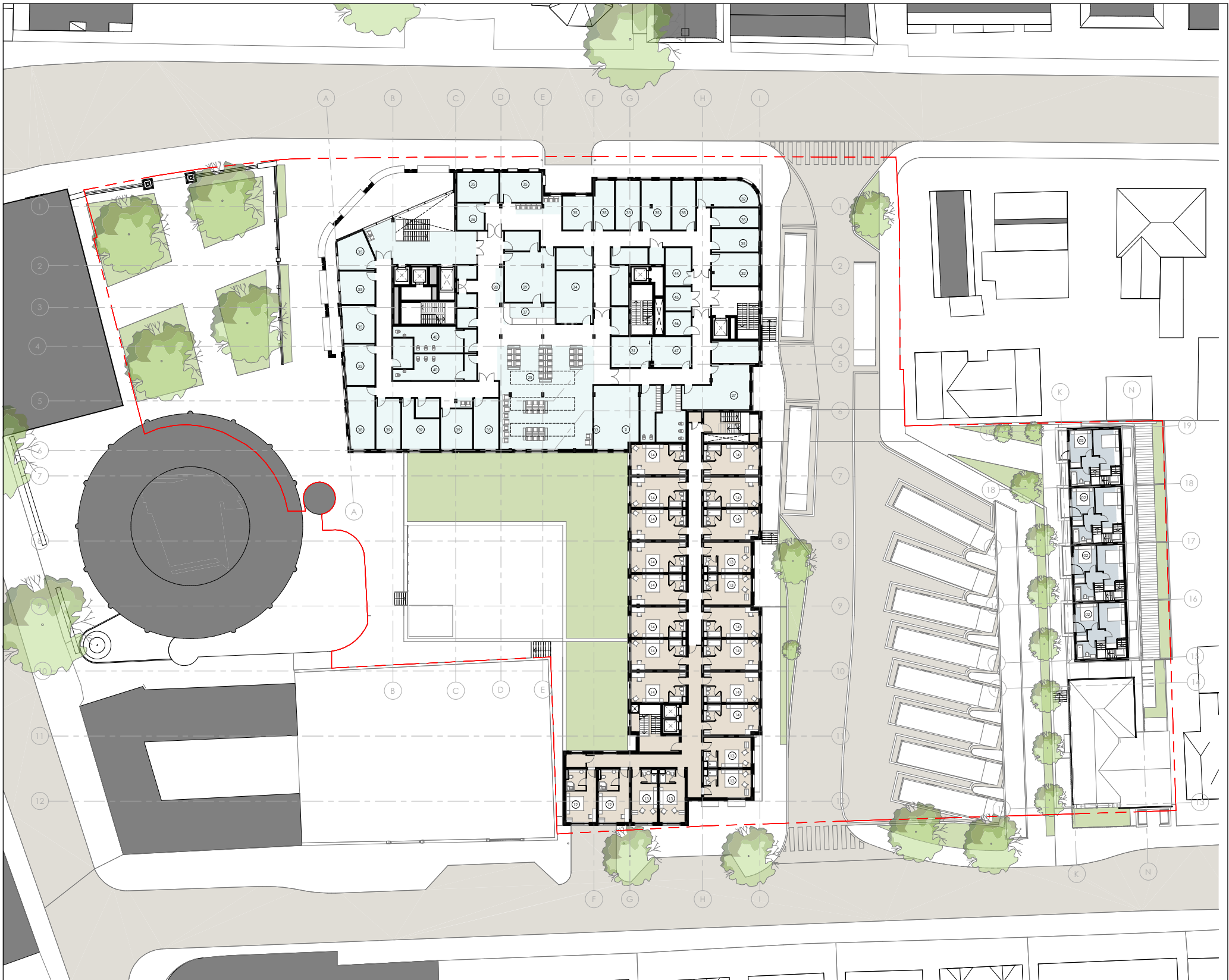
5.5.3 First Floor Level

The health facility requires a single floorplate for its accommodation and this is located to the north of the site fronting Manor Street. Access is from the main entrance lobby, incorporating a double height space on the NW corner of the building.

The health facility waiting room is located on the south side of the building providing an outlook onto the rooftop landscaped area. Treatment and consultation rooms are generally arranged around the building perimeter to maximise access to natural daylight and ventilation. Service area and storage are located more generally in the central area of the building.

The hotel accommodation completes the first floor running along the eastern side of the building and turning to front Victoria Street.

The upper floor of the eastern residential block is reduced in size to minimise overshadowing to adjacent gardens. West facing balconies are provided to the upper duplex apartments.



First Floor Layout

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

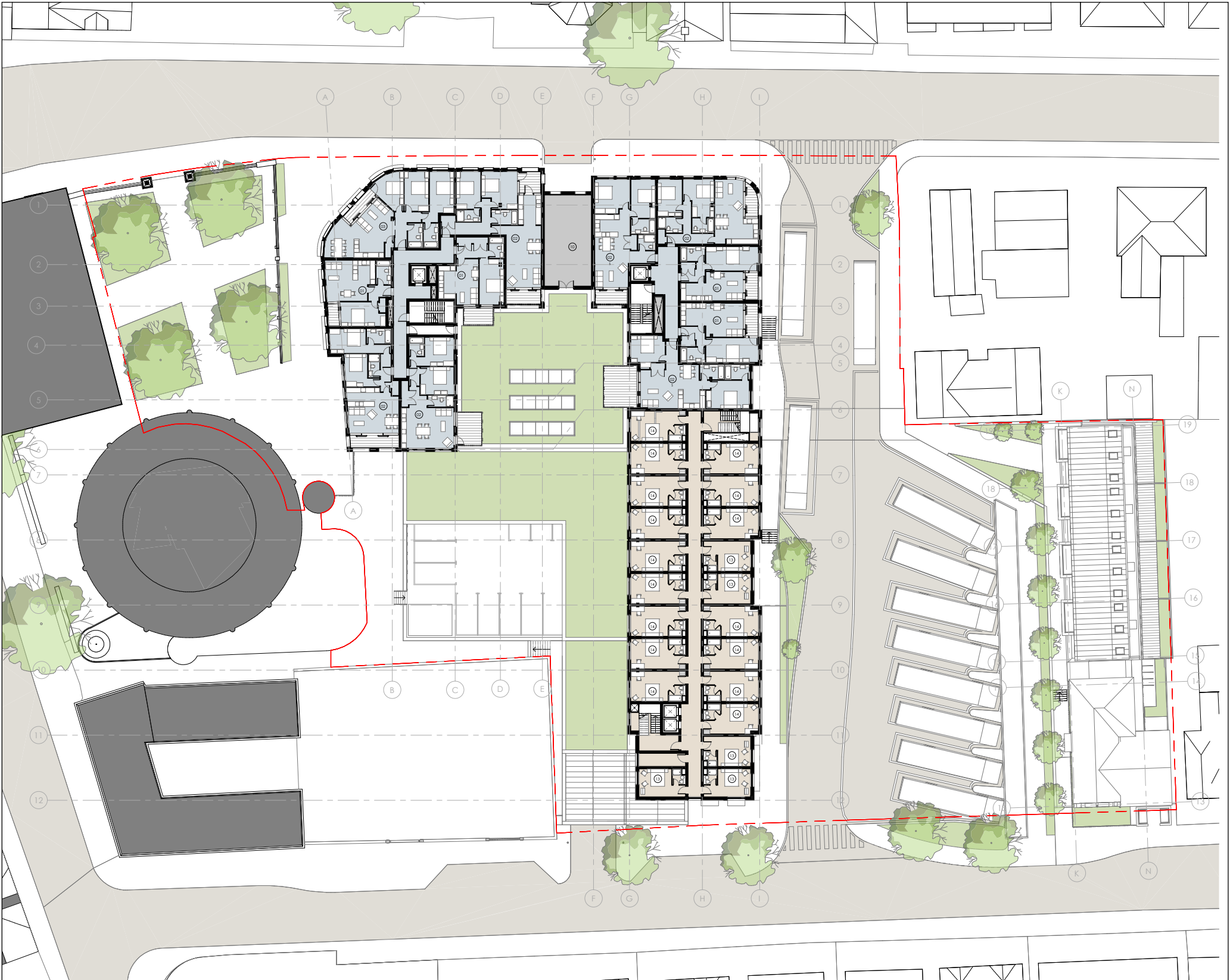
5.5.4 Second Floor Level

The second floor incorporates the first level of residential accommodation in the form of apartments arranged around two separate cores which are accessed via generous lobbies from Manor Street.

The orientation of the site provides a challenge in balancing the requirements of aspect, views from homes and definition of the street edge. However, flats have been designed and oriented to avoid homes with a north facing aspect. The thirty five proposed homes are provided with private amenity spaces in the form of balconies and terraces.

The use of two cores allows internal circulation to be kept compact. All homes have been designed to comply at least with nationally prescribed space standards.

The apartments are designed to allow either a conventional protected corridor for fire escape purposes or an open plan arrangement with an economical domestic sprinkler installation. The use of sprinklers could be utilised to increase the number of open plan units if required.



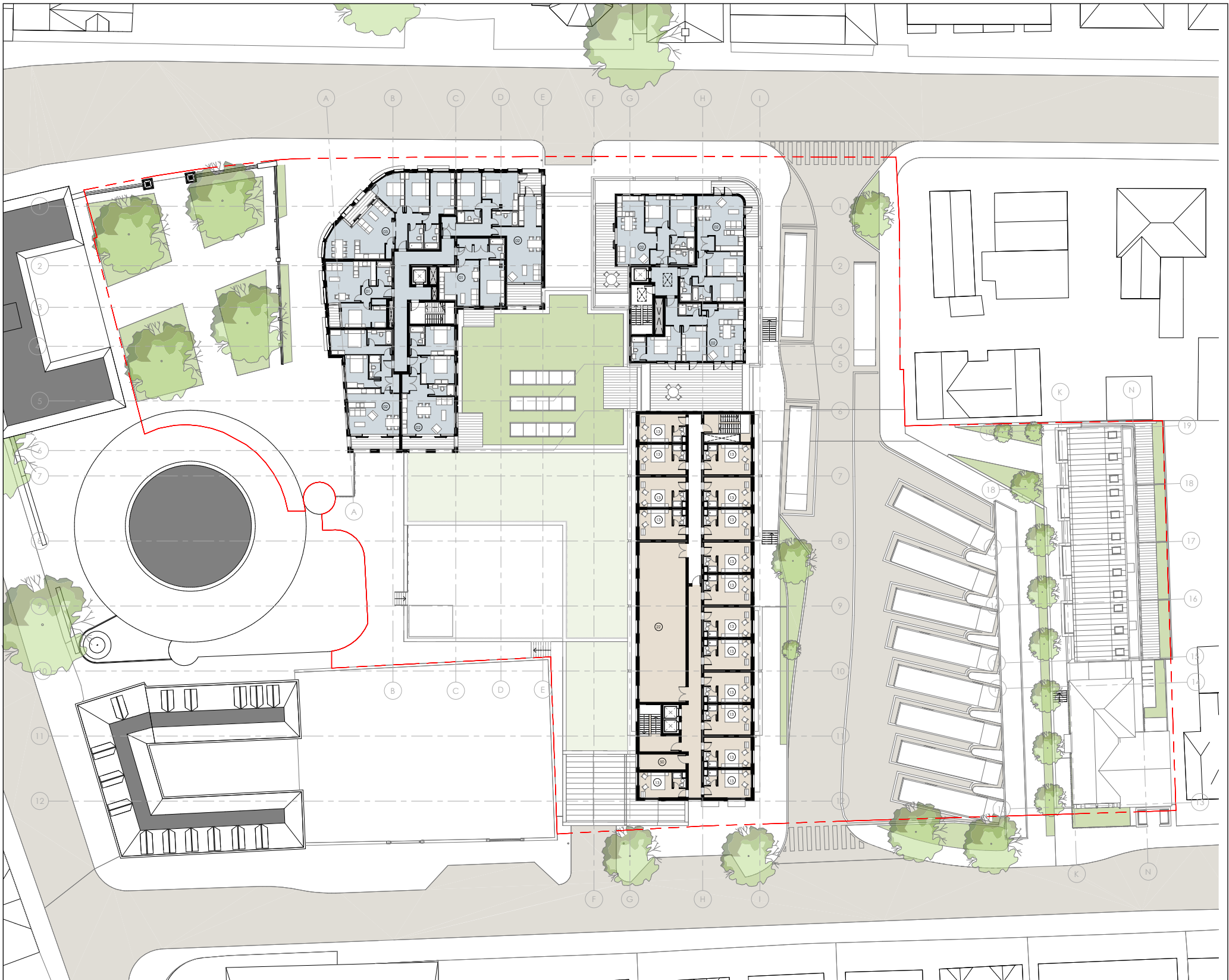
Second Floor Layout

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.5.5 Third Floor Level

At this level, the massing of the building is broken down into constituent parts to provide the articulation of the overall form and ensuring a suitable scale of building in relation to its context. This also provides the potential for roof terraces.

Upper level plant rooms have been deliberately built within the envelope of the building to avoid exposing rooftop plant areas.

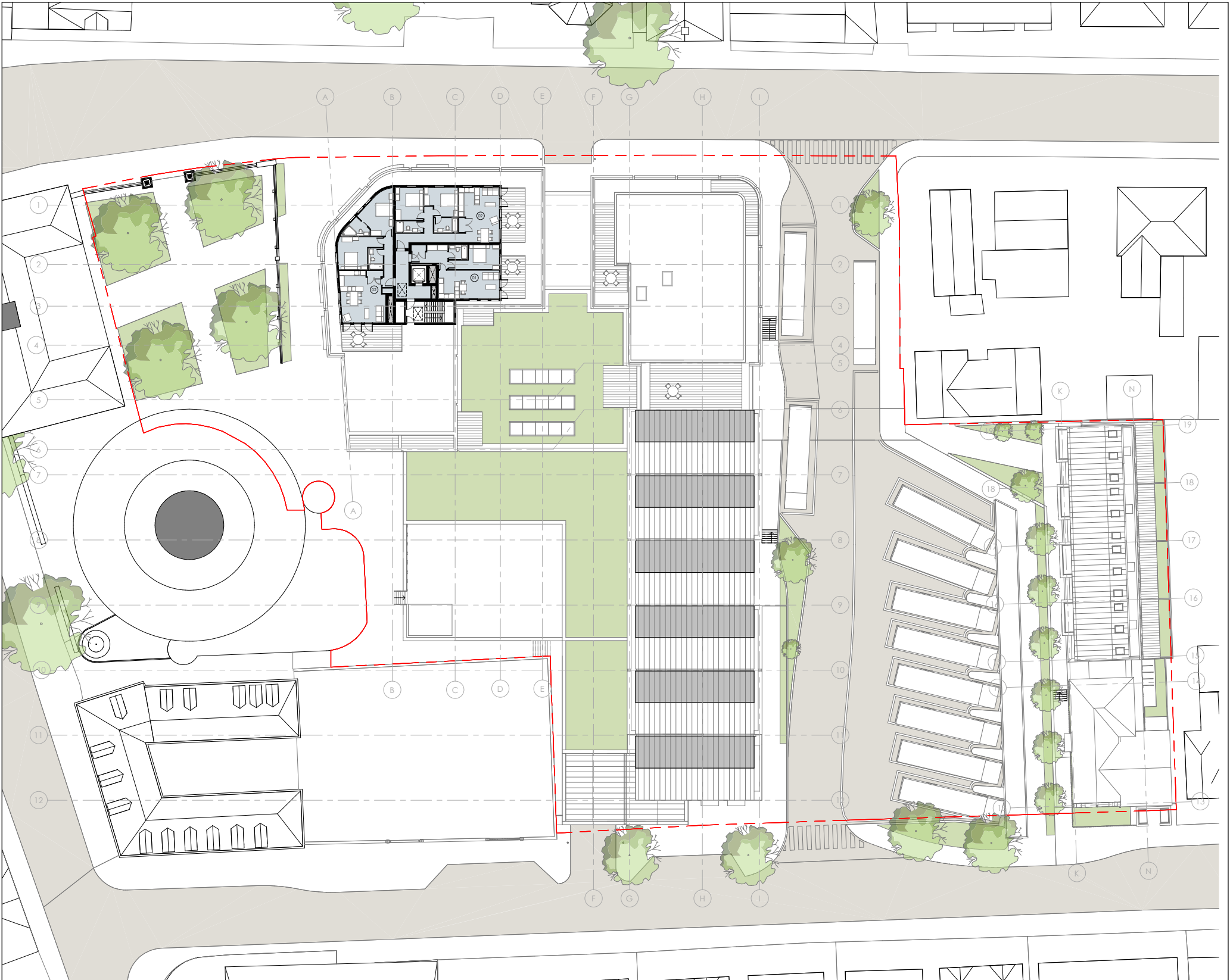


First Floor Layout

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.5.6 Fourth Floor Level

The top floor of the building is limited to three penthouse apartments in the north-western corner of the western block. These are set back from the main facade, having views across the town centre and access to extensive roof terraces.



Second Floor Layout

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.6 DEVELOPED ELEVATIONS

5.6.1 Main Street Elevations

The Manor Street elevation generates a calm urban scale and vertically aligned facade articulation in keeping with the existing town centre context.

The overall massing is articulated into two main forms with a clear separation between them. This allow the building to express its different functions as well as responding to the scale and character of the surrounding urban realm. Top floors are set back substantially and correspond to the level of the adjacent roofs of the Town Hall and Library.

The contextual approach is developed through the introduction of a vertical emphasis in the detail of the facades and further reinforced through the creation of an elevated colonnade at the western end where the main entrance to the health facility is located. These features echo the verticality and form of the Library and Town Hall without offering overt competition or mimicking the architecture of the existing buildings.



North Elevation - Manor Street

The Victoria Street frontage is shorter than that in Manor Street. Elevations located further back into the site will not be easily viewable from Victoria Street due to the depth of the site. The hotel is architecturally defined by its distinctive roofline which gently evokes the gabled character of the houses within Victoria Street.

A strong corner demonstrating the internal double height hotel lobby is located where Victoria Street turns into the north-south route running through the site.

The building has been designed to allow a future infill development over the existing Job Centre car park.



South Elevation - Victoria Street

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.6.2 Internal Site Elevations

The eastern elevation of the main western building has been developed to provide a clear definition of the hotel. This will have a distinctive form which follows the same vertical detailing principles established for the other main street elevations.

The palette of materials is kept deliberately restricted to ensure that the new buildings provide an elegant simplicity when viewed in the surrounding context



East Elevation - From Bus Station Area

The western elevation fronts onto the new Town Hall Gardens and provides a continuation of the Manor Street frontage which turns the corner utilising a curved facade. This approach is proposed to provide an elegant and well proportioned backdrop to the Town Hall when viewed from Market Square.

The colonnade is continued around this corner and accommodates the residential lobby as well as access to other potential ground floor uses opening onto the garden.

The western elevation of the hotel follows the same principles as the main eastern elevation to ensure a consistent quality of outlook from within the scheme itself and from the rear of the Town Hall and the Library.



West Elevation - From Bus Station Area

Fourth Floor Layout

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.6.3 Mews House Elevations

The mews houses are being designed to have a clear relationship with the Drill hall building. The elevations shown here demonstrate the emerging approach although this will be subject to further development in relation to proportions and materiality.

The elevation of the houses is determined by the access requirements to accommodate the site levels. However, further detailed design will aim to lower the houses to create a better relationship with the adjacent Drill Hall as well as minimising overshadowing to the adjacent rear gardens. Measures will also be investigated to remove unwanted overlooking to the rear, for example through use of rooflights to the rear upper floor.



West Elevation



East Elevation

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.6.4 Site Sections

The north-south sections through the site indicate the level change which exists between Manor Street and Victoria Street.

This has been used to advantage by creating a semi-basement car park within the change of level.

Generally the building therefore steps down towards Victoria Street reflecting the level change.

The ground and first floors require higher storey heights to accommodate the servicing requirements of the health facility and the ground floor retail spaces. The upper residential levels are designed with a lower storey height appropriate to their use, but still able to achieve a 2.5m internal floor to ceiling height.

The use of internal plant rooms will avoid the location of visually intrusive plant on the roof, although solar PV panel arrays can be discretely arranged without causing visual impacts.



North-south Section through Health Facility Lobby



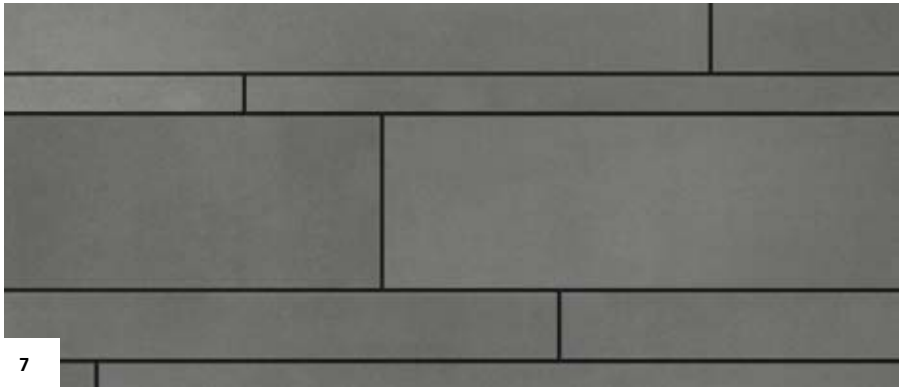
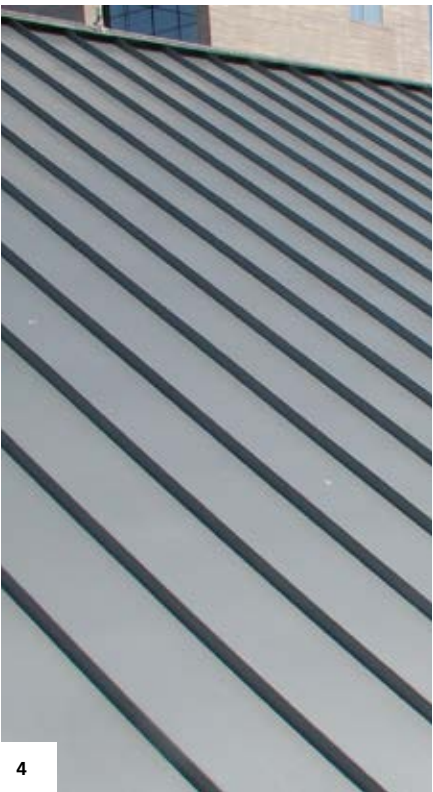
North-south Section through Hotel

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.6.5 Approach to Materials

The buildings have been designed to respond to their context whilst providing a modern and clean aesthetic. The materials shown on this page indicate the basic material palette that is proposed:

1. The main brick will be a red stock brick chosen to match the Town Hall facades. This will be a soft coloured brick with a creased texture and subtle colour variation as seen within the original brickwork in the town
2. The secondary brick will be used to differentiate massing elements of the buildings to evoke a scale and density appropriate to the town centre. Again this will be creased stock brick. The colour will be chosen to evoke the traditional East Anglian Galt brick which is also prevalent within the town.
3. Tile hung areas of the facade will act to enforce rhythm and define set-back elements, especially at roof level. High quality fibre-cement panels provide a textured, durable finish which will not degrade over time.
4. It is proposed that the roof surfaces will be covered in a standing seam zinc system reflecting the materiality of the adjacent library roof and providing a visually coherent combination with the tile hung areas.
5. Aluminium clad windows will be used, providing a modern counterpoint to the traditional brick cladding material and ensuring long term durable performance.
6. The areas of glazing at ground level will be specified to match the profiles, colour and detailing of the upper level windows, utilising a high quality, metal curtain walling system. In addition, canopies will also be fabricated in metal, incorporating lighting
7. Areas framed by brickwork at ground level, for example service areas will be clad in fibre cement panels co-ordinated with flush windows and doors
8. Balustrades will be limited on the building and generally set back from the main elevations. Where required it is proposed that these will be of frameless structural glass



Illustrative palette of external building materials

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN



Computer generated image showing the new proposals within the context of Manor Street (shown at January 2018 public exhibition)

5 DEVELOPED DESIGN

5.8 ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

The design development undertaken at this stage has allowed the development of a more accurate schedule of accommodation.

The main changes in the scheme from the previous proposals are:

- Removal of the community hub based on a client decision regarding need for this facility and replacement with a cafe/restaurant
- Reduction in retail space due to concerns of viability within an already struggling town centre
- Removal of any options for commercial office accommodation
- Inclusion of flats in the east block and removal of houses
- Reduction in parking capacity to accommodate other ground floor uses and technical requirements

Despite the incorporation of further plant and servicing requirements, the amount of parking allocated within the development has remained at a similar level. This is primarily due to the removal of the internal vehicle ramp and associated efficiency improvements.

The following are the current gross internal areas for each use:

HEALTH CENTRE	1,493	m2
HOTEL	2,659	m2
RESIDENTIAL	3,141	M2
PHARMACY	168	M2
RETAIL	266	m2
PARKING (Car Park - 110 Spaces)	3,575	m2
PLANT AND SERVICING	296	m2
TOTAL GIA	11,598	m2

This total remains in line with the assessment at the options appraisal stage..

Residential Breakdown

The residential use of the development is broken down into three distinct elements as follows:

1. New Build Apartments - West block
2. New Build Apartments - East block
3. Converted Apartments (Drill Hall Building)

The current mix of homes is as set out in the following table:

RESIDENTIAL AREA SCHEDULE		PRE-APPLICATION STAGE						
		LG	UG	1	2	3	4	No.
New Build Apartments - West Block	Size (Min m2)							
1Bedroom - 2P	50	0	0	0	4	2	1	7
2 Bedroom - 3P	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 Bedroom - 4P	70	0	0	0	6	6	2	14
Penthouse - 4P+	98	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
New Build Apartments - East Block								
1Bedroom - 2P	51	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
2 Bedroom - 4P	73	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Conversion Apartments (Drill House)								
1Bedroom - 2P	41	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
2 Bedroom - 4P	72	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL		6	6	0	11	9	3	35

