



READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

Way Hall Performing Arts Centre & Music Annexe
Design and Access Statement Minor Amendment S73 application

GBS architects

October 2024

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1.0 Introduction

This document sets out Reading Blue Coat School's ("the school") request to submit a minor amendment to planning permission 232925 to Wokingham Borough Council ("the LPA") on the following proposed development at the school's campus in Sonning Lane, Sonning:-

A recent S96a application has been approved by the LPA to amend the planning description as below:

Full application for the proposed erection of a part single, part two storey building for educational purposes following the substantial demolition of existing building; permanent retention of temporary drama studio for educational purposes; external alterations, including new roof and cladding, to existing music annexe; associated hard and soft landscaping.

The School is represented in this matter by Gray Baynes + Shew (GB+S) - Architects and Christopher Wickham Associates - Planning Consultant.

2.0 Proposed PAC

2.1 S73 Minor Amendment

Following on from planning approval granted 18th January 2024 application number 232925 the school have reviewed their ongoing masterplan. The school wish to amend the current approved scheme for the redevelopment of Way Hall to include a café and servery space. This will provide a much-needed facility for the current Sixth Form and also provides a flexible multi-purpose space within the heart of the School for functions and educational purposes. This enables the School to continue to provide top class facilities for all its students and secures a future for the Way Hall building which now requires extensive life cycle repairs and maintenance.



Current Way Hall viewed from Sports Pitches

2.0 Proposed PAC



Way Hall current main entrance



Way Hall current view from School House



Way Hall current main entrance and adjacent RAB



Way Hall current south elevation

2.0 Proposed PAC – visuals of approved scheme



Approved scheme view from School House



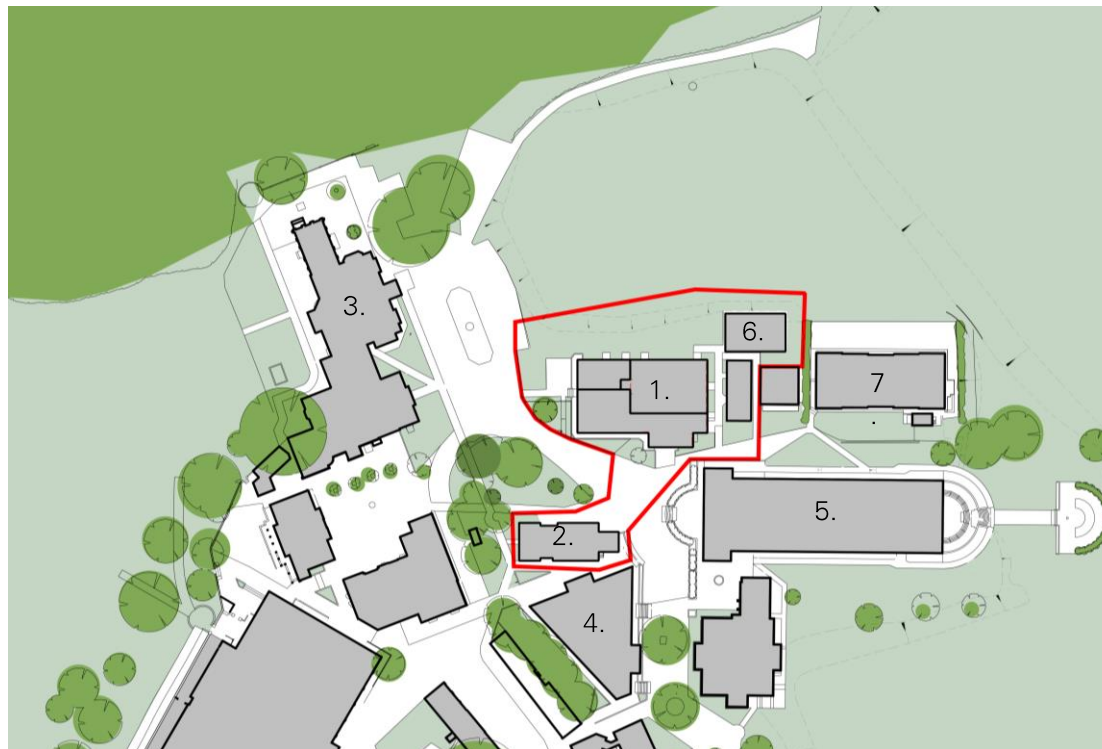
Approved scheme view from Sixth Form Courtyard



Approved scheme view of Way Hall

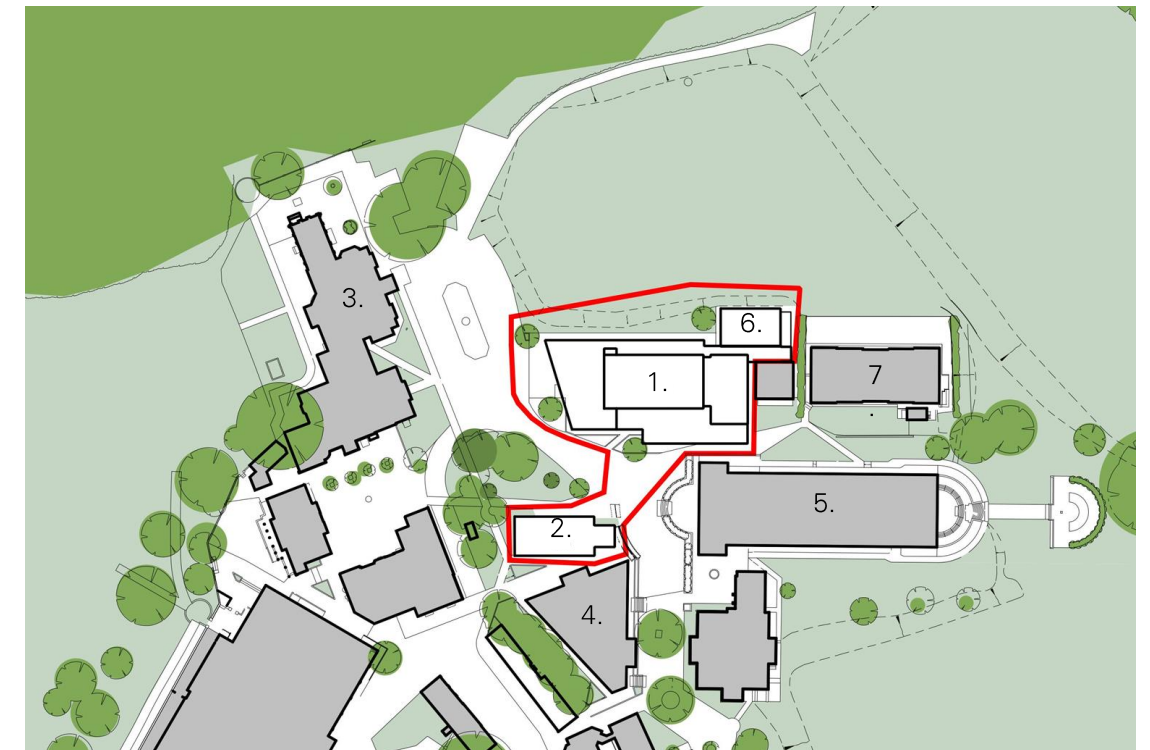
2.0 Proposed PAC

2.2 Site Plans

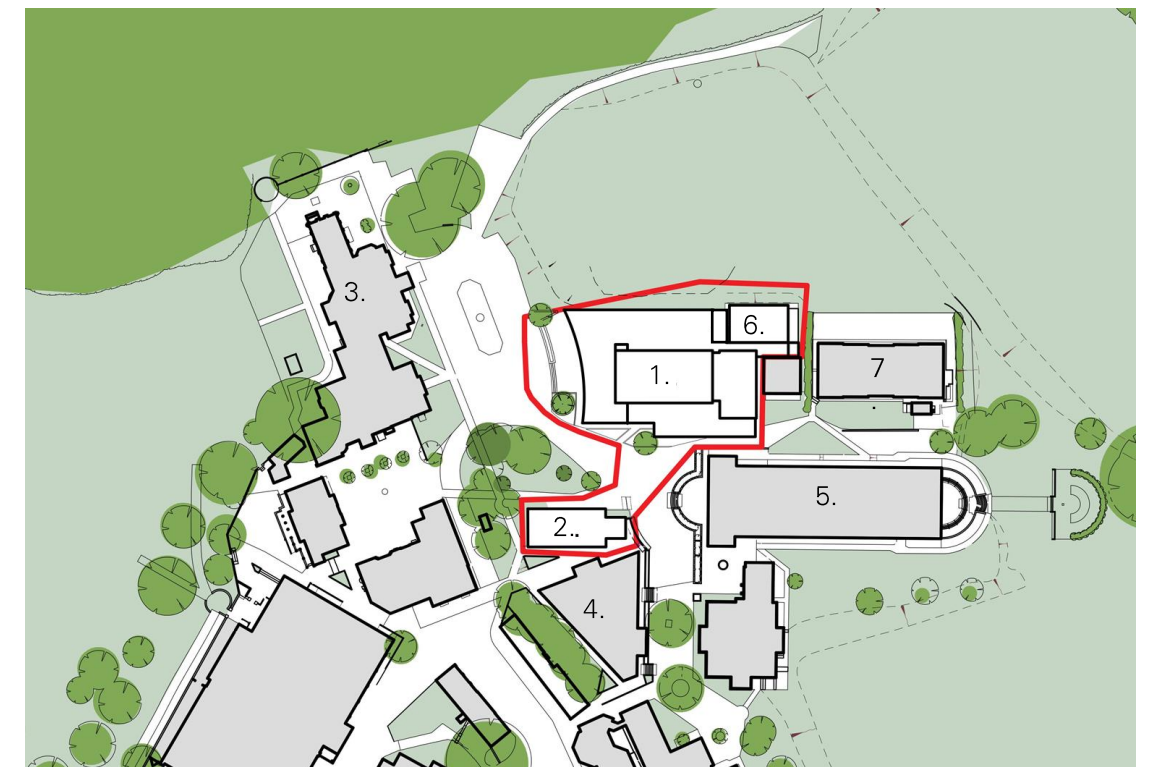


Existing Site Plan

1. Way Hall (WH) - Building to be extended to create new PAC
2. Music Annexe (MA)
3. School House
4. Design Technology
5. Richard Aldworth Building (RAB)
6. Drama Studio
7. Pool with changing room adjacent



Approved Scheme Site Plan



S73 Scheme Site Plan

2.0 Proposed PAC

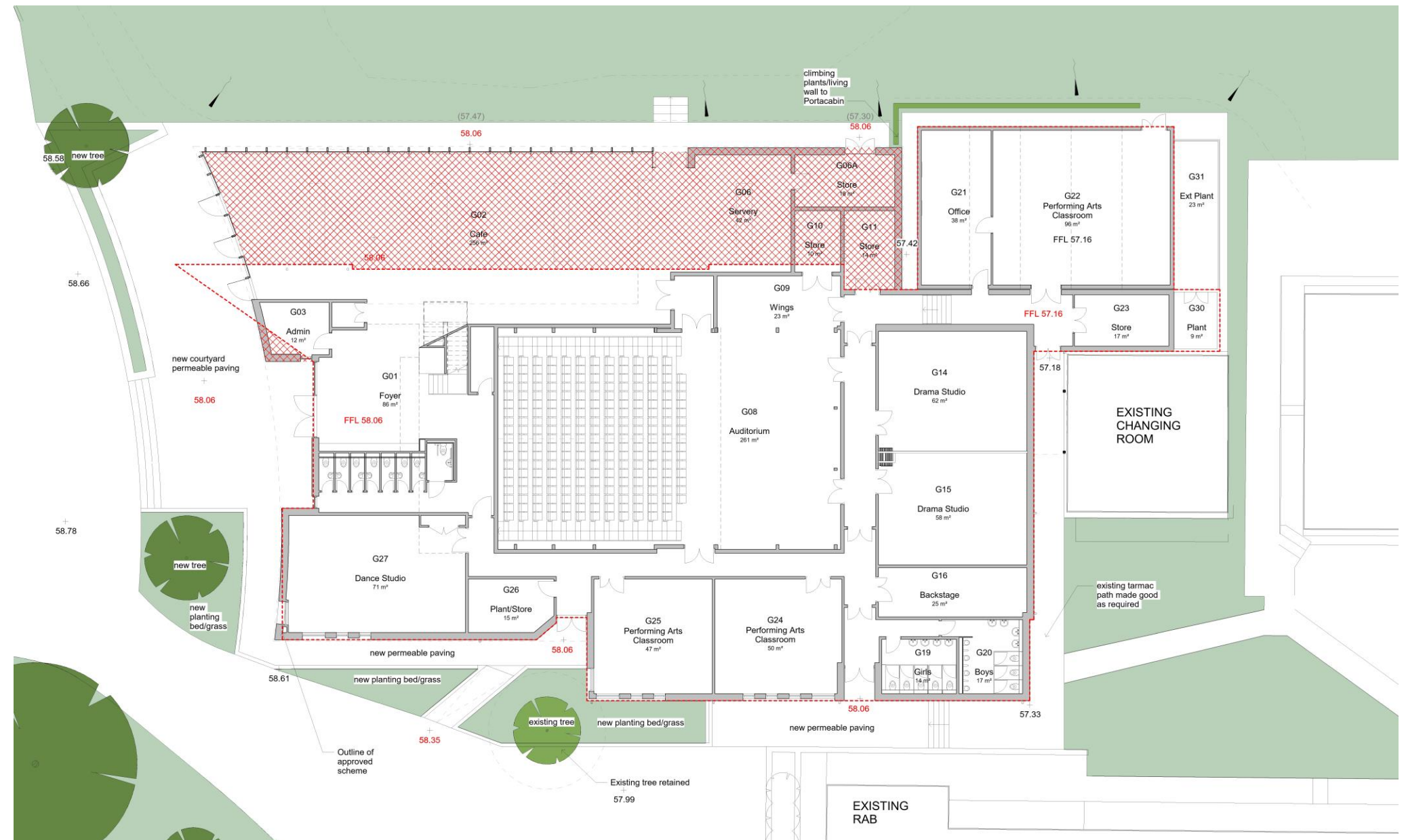
2.3 Footprint of the Proposed PAC

Following the updated brief from the School to amend the current approved scheme to include a café and servery space which can be used by the Schools' growing Sixth Form, various options were considered.

These options were then reviewed, and the scheme shown opposite was agreed upon as it retains much of the approved scheme and limits a single storey extension to the north (field side).

The footprint does not extend past the approved scheme outline to the West frontage (shown with red dashed line) or beyond the retained portacabin to the field side) limiting impact on the setting of School House

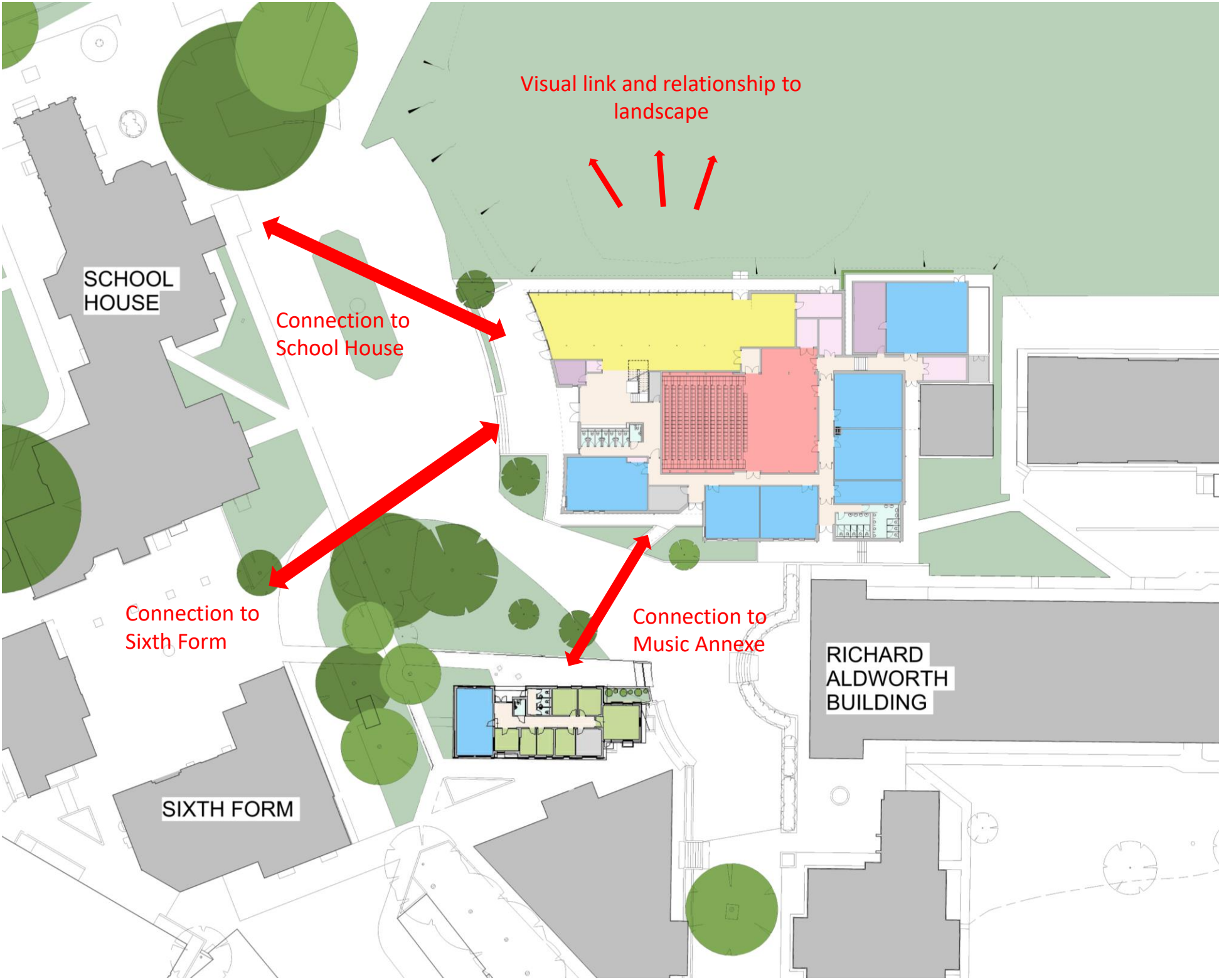
The increase in footprint is 267m² (shown in red hatch)



S73 Scheme Ground Floor Plan

----- Red outline denotes approved scheme
Additional footprint shown red hatched

2.0 Proposed PAC





Proposed visual of S73 Way Hall & Music Annexe - View from Sixth Form Courtyard

2.0 Proposed PAC

2.4 Scale and Massing of the Proposed PAC

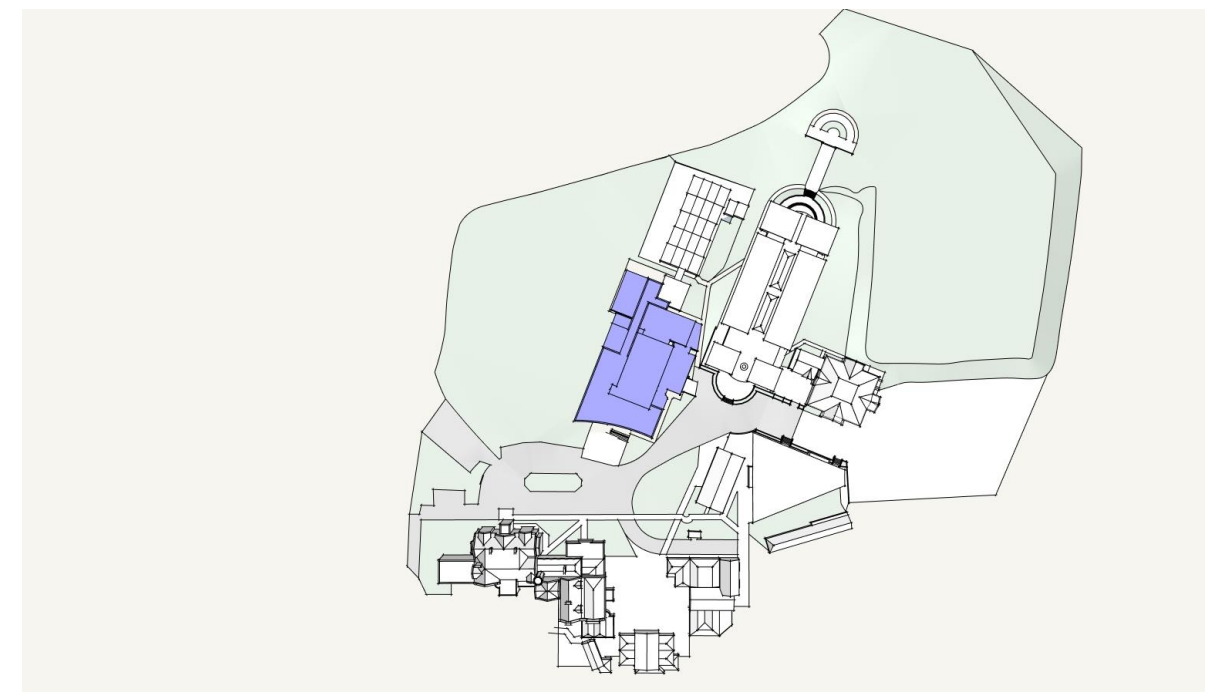
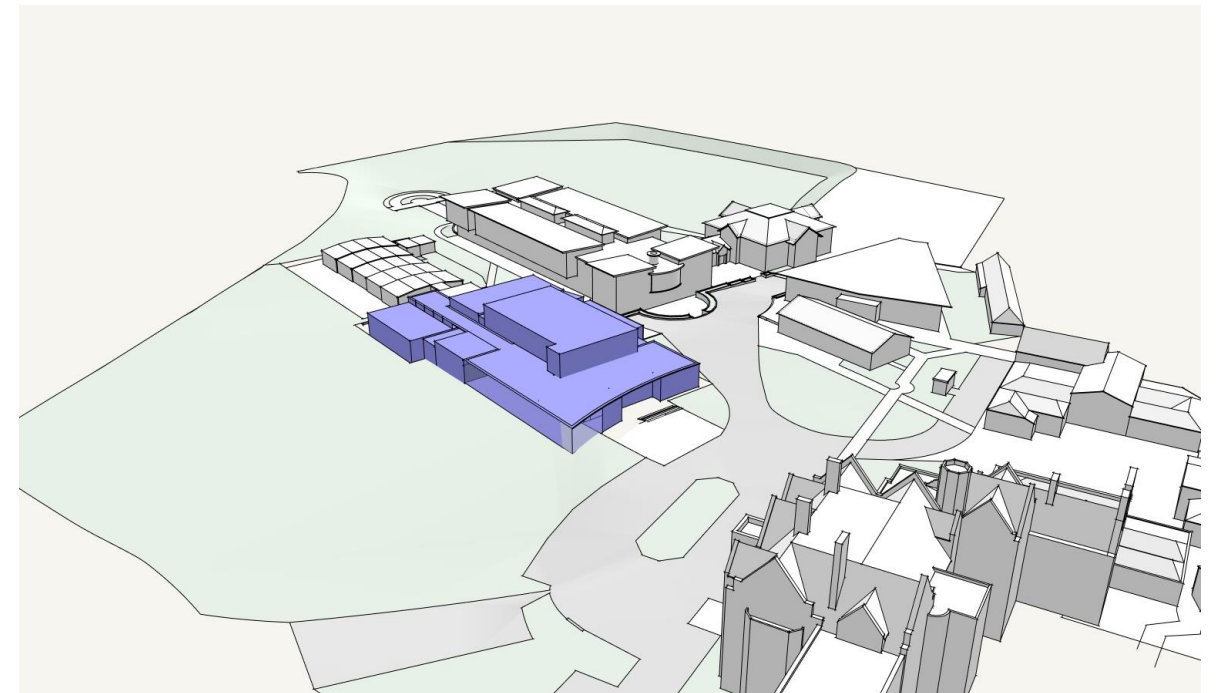
The mass and scale of the revised PAC scheme has been carefully and sensitively considered to improve the visual appearance of the current Way Hall, particularly when viewed from School House and ensuring its impact on the setting of School House is minimised.

The height of the revised elevations to the west and north sides are below that previously approved and is consistent across these elevations so that the new scheme creates a calm and balanced west (front) façade.

We have retained the angled façade that related to School House albeit now curved to also address the existing Sixth Form courtyard. The proposed extension also sits behind the projection of the portacabin reducing its impact to School House.



Masing model of Way Hall as approved scheme



Masing model of Way Hall as proposed in S73 amendment

2.0 Proposed PAC

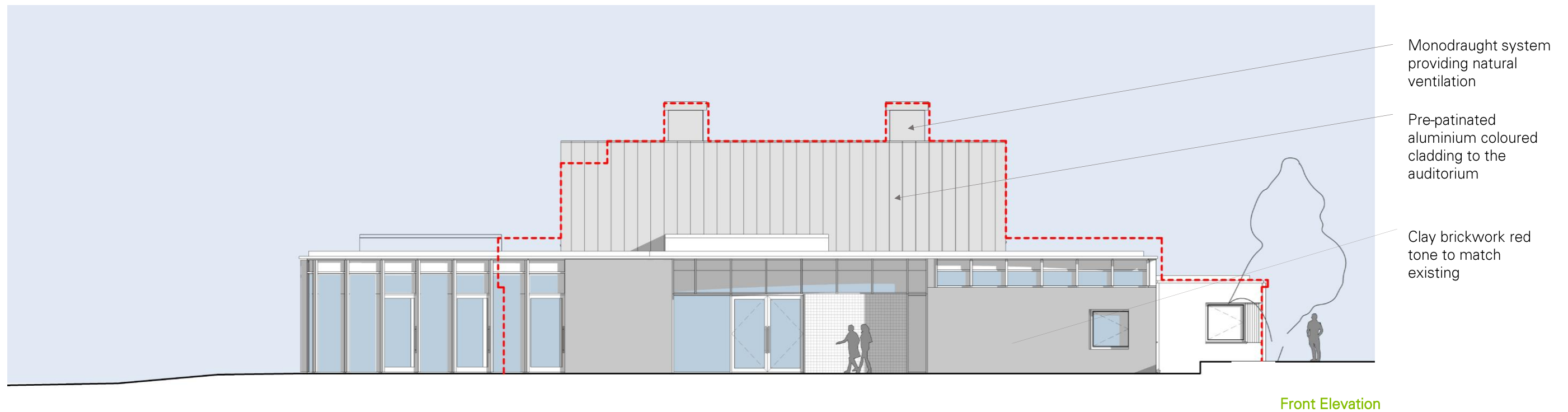
2.5 Elevations, Appearance and Materials of the Building – Way Hall

The building has been sensitively designed to respond to its peripheral location within Holme Park and building setting within the environs of School House.

The building is contemporary in style and will use a simple palette of traditional materials which reflect the materiality of the existing building and the adjacent Richard Aldworth Building (RAB).

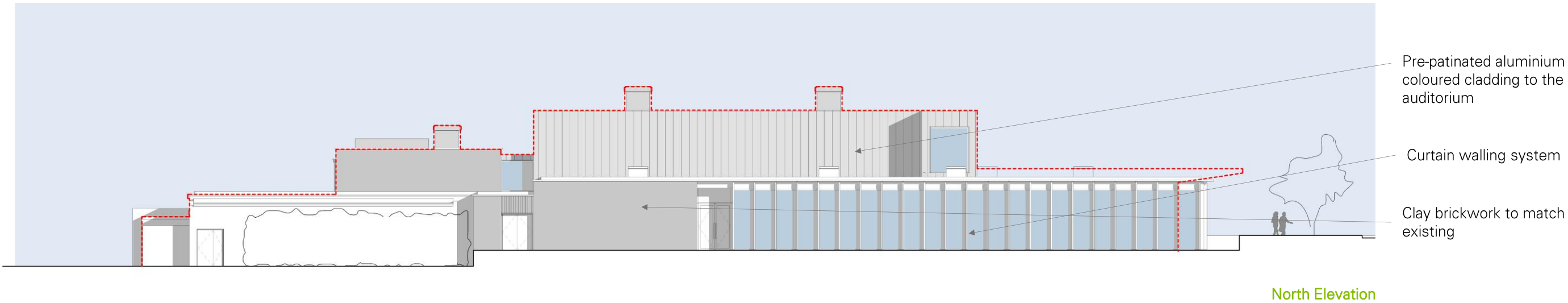
- Clay brickwork in tones of red similar to the existing brick. Accent areas between windows and to the secondary entrance will be relief banded to add areas of depth to the façade.
- Pre-patinated aluminium coloured cladding to the auditorium which references the cladding to Richard Aldworth Building and the flint colour of School House.

The palette of materials chosen for the PAC are selected to ensure that the view of the building from the School House will complement the existing adjacent buildings including the refurbished Music Annexe.



----- Red outline denotes approved scheme

2.0 Proposed PAC



----- Red outline denotes approved scheme



GBS architects



Precedent for pre-patinated aluminum Cladding

2.0 Proposed PAC – Music Annexe

2.6 Elevations, Appearance and Materials of the Building – Music Annexe

There are no alterations proposed within this S73 amendment other than the roofing system will be the same pre-patinated aluminium cladding as now proposed on the Way Hall auditorium.



2.0 Proposed PAC



Existing Façade to Way Hall – grey composite panels with brick infill panels



Precedent for brickwork detailing



Existing Façade to adjacent Richard Aldworth Building – grey composite panels with brick walling



Precedent for Pre-patinated Aluminum cladding



Way Hall view of new front entrance



Aerial Way Hall view

3.0 Appendices

3.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

Existing character

The site is characterised by School House and the open parkland setting to the north. To the south the site is characterised by the smaller scale of the school campus buildings and spaces between. The parkland is open and expansive with broadleaved woodland framing the northern playing field boundary and a visually strong row of Lime trees to the east. The immediate environs of School House are planted with small trees, shrubs and climbers trained against the building walls. The school campus to the south of the site is dotted with single trees, grassed areas and shrub beds.



Parkland Character



View towards school campus



School House and Magnolia and shrub planting

3.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

Existing planting

The school campus is planted with existing trees, shrubs, climbers and perennials which are well maintained. Trees are a strong feature throughout the school campus as structural avenues, Woodland edges, specimen parkland trees as well as single trees within the courtyards and spaces between the campus buildings. A variety of ornamental shrubs, grasses, climbers and perennial plants feature throughout the campus which enhance the setting and provide cohesion and connection to the wider landscape.

Existing views from School House

The aspect to the north-east is open with views across the playing field. Views are framed by broadleaved woodland to the north of the playing field and terminated by Lime trees to the east. Way Hall and the Drama Studio frame the view across the playing field to the south. Views to the south-west are of the Music Annexe with school campus beyond. The foreground consists of areas of mown grass with single trees, paths and vehicular access routes. Crowns of single trees are visible dotted amongst the campus buildings.



Existing tree and shrub planting to south of Way Hall



Climbers to Sixth Form Centre



View from school House of existing Way Hall and Drama studio

3.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

Proposed scheme

Planting rationale

The proposed soft landscape plan seeks to protect and enhance important historic views across the parkland from School House, and connect Way Hall Performing Arts Centre and the Music Annexe to its setting, the parkland and the wider campus.

Trees

Proposed trees are a mix of native and ornamental trees and have been selected to relate to the open parkland to the north and smaller scale of spaces within the school campus to the south. The proposed trees will provide seasonal interest while supporting and encouraging bio-diversity.



Sorbus comixta provides seasonal interest

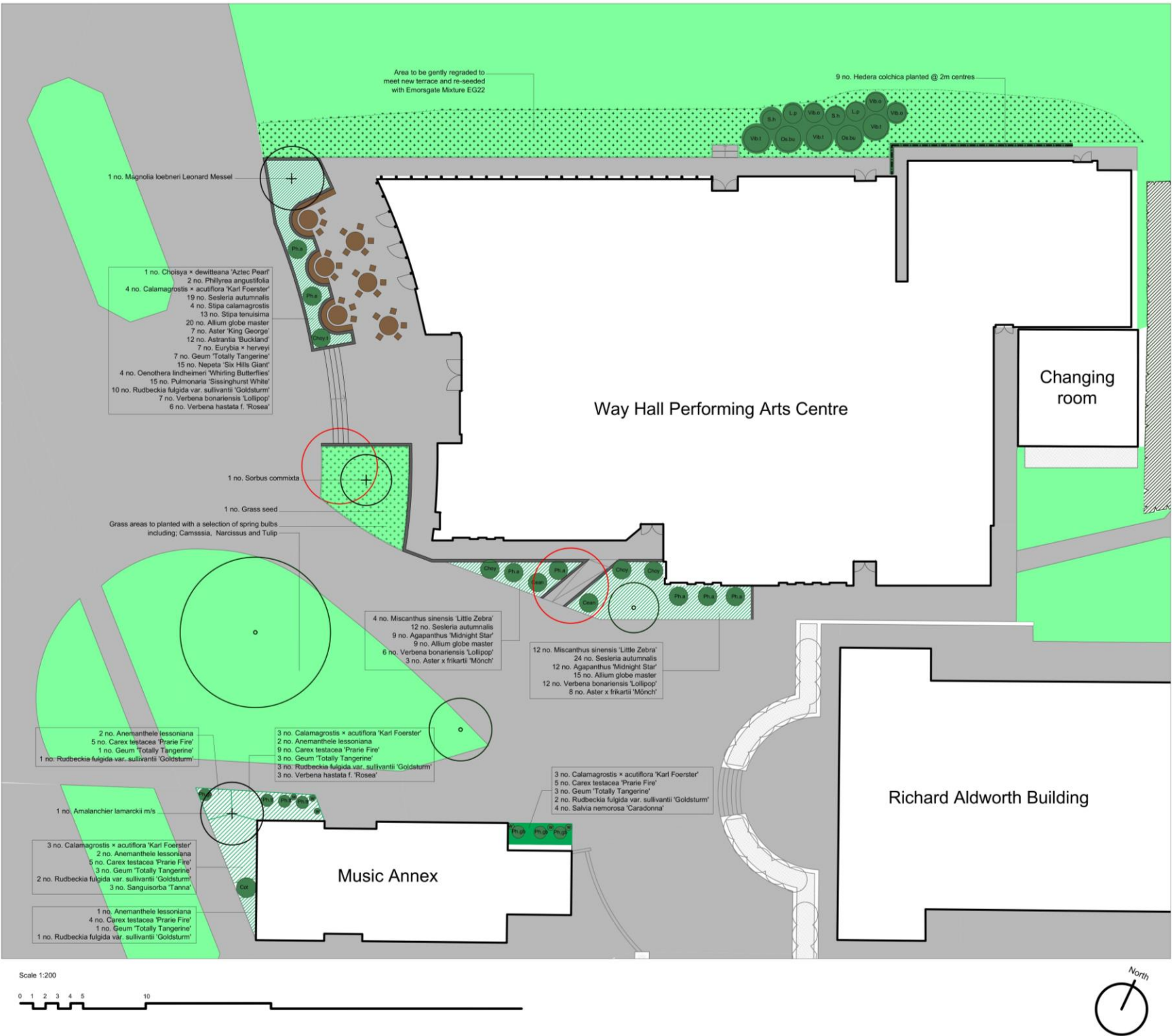


Existing Cherry tree to be removed



Magnolia loebneri Leonard Messel multistem

3.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio



4.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

Proposed scheme

North elevation

A proposed informal shrub bed on the north elevation between the section of curtain wall of the Sixth Form Servery and Drama Studio is intended to soften the interface between Way Hall PAC and the playing field, and visually connect it to the woodland to the north. The shrubs are in keeping with the parkland character and reflect the loose billowy woodland canopy to the north of the playing field. Views from School House across the playing field will be enhanced by softening the brick clad section of the elevation and reflecting the woodland boundaries. The shrub planting will blend into the ivy covered self supporting structure and existing evergreen hedge beyond.

Screening to existing drama studio

A self supporting structure with mesh panels planted with climbing ivy will screen the north and west elevation of the existing drama studio, enhancing and protecting views from School House. The proposed climber has been chosen to blend with the character of the woodland to the north and to provide year round screening. The climber will be maintained to achieve the character of an evergreen hedge. The trellis will be positioned offset from the Drama Studio building to facilitate maintenance. It is intended that shrub planting adjacent to the screening will create textural layers of planting to soften the ivy screen, and will further enhance views to the north from School House. Proposed shrubs are a mix of native and ornamental and are tolerant of the shade and open conditions



Self-supporting mesh screen planted with Ivy



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. Field maple (*Acer campestre*)
2. Winter flowering honeysuckle (*Lonicera purpussi* 'winter beauty')
3. Sweet box (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna*)
4. Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus* 'compactum')
5. Winter flowering Viburnum (*Viburnum tinus* 'Eve Price')

4.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

Proposed scheme

West elevation

The proposed terrace to the west elevation provides a dedicated seating area for the Sixth Form Servery and Performing Arts Centre. The terrace is enclosed on the west side by wide steps leading down to the main entrance to Way Hall and a planted bed which navigates a 60cm (approx) level change down from the driveway onto the terrace. To the terrace side the planting bed is retained by a 60cm high wall into which 3 semicircular seating booths are recessed with the terrace accommodating a number of further tables and chairs. The seating booths frame the terrace and orientate towards Way Hall and playing field strengthening the connection to the wider landscape beyond. The gentle curve of the PAC facade is reflected in the line of the retaining wall which will be clad in brick to match Way Hall PAC.

The planting acts to strengthen and unify the relationship between Way Hall, School House and Music Annex by using plants, bulbs and shrubs that are reflected across the proposed planting areas.

The planting frames the terrace and consists of a mix of soft perennials and grasses with evergreen shrubs which provide year round interest and structure. In addition a multi-stem magnolia (*Magnolia loebneri* Leonard Messel) also features in the planting bed and references the planting adjacent to School House. A second proposed Japanese rowan tree (*Sorbus commixta*) set within grass replaces a dwarf cherry and provides seasonal interest during summer and autumn. This will be underplanted with a selection of spring bulbs.

Southern elevation

Planting here relates to the formal character of existing planting to adjacent buildings. Structure is provided by evergreen flowering shrubs which will be clipped to retain a structural form. The existing tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is retained and underplanted with shrubs, evergreen grasses and perennials which will provide year round structure and interest while supporting pollinators.



Planting to Southern elevation of Way Hall

4.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio



Example of built in seating areas to West Terrace



Planting to West Terrace

3.1 Landscape Proposal by Artemisia Studio

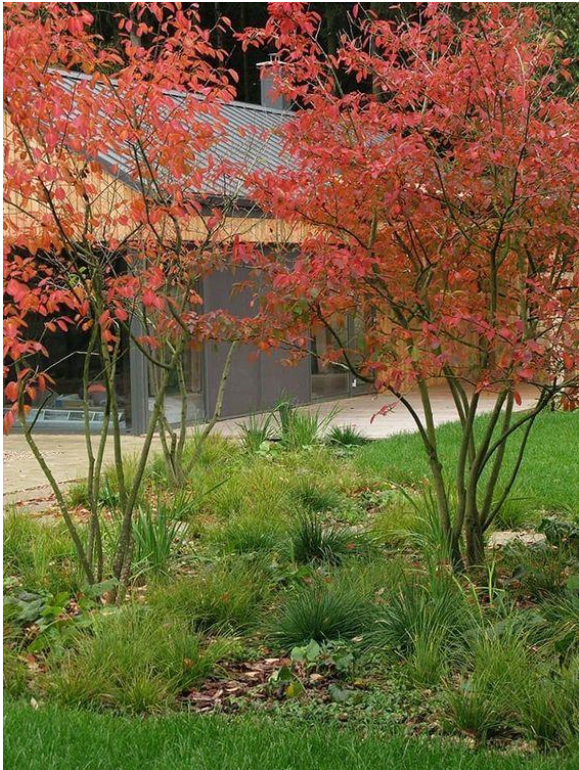
Proposed scheme

Music Annexe

Proposed new planting beds to the south west will be planted with a multi-stem serviceberry tree (*Amalanchier lamarckii*) which will provide seasonal interest during spring and autumn. The surrounding bed will be planted with a mix of ornamental shrubs and grasses for year round structure interplanted with perennials which will support pollinators and provide seasonal interest. The loose planting style will complement the larch cladding and soften the west elevation.

Bio-diversity

Planting is intended to contribute to supporting and enhancing bio-diversity on site with native and ornamental trees are proposed. *Sorbus commixta* in particular supports bees and the *Magnolia* and *Amalanchier lamarckii* support other pollinators. Shrubs and perennials have been selected to provide flowering succession throughout the year maximising the flowering season to support pollinators.



Multi-stem *Amalanchier lamarckii*



Planting to music annexe



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