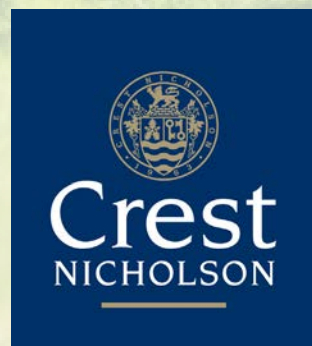




# THE MOAT HOUSE

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT | AUGUST 2024

The Moat House, Arborfield

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Design and Access statement has been prepared by Ascot Design on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd and Defence Infrastructure Organisation in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent application relating to the Moat House, Arborfield Green.

This application is submitted to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and seeks the change of use and conversion of the Moat House.

The site currently accommodates a vacant Grade II Listed building set within a landscaped

environment. This application seeks to convert the existing building into four high-quality apartments, with associated parking and amenity spaces. The proposal has been carefully designed to respect the historical significance of the listed building.

The site is part of the Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) and was identified for residential development under the approved development brief of the 'Moat House Area' in relation to the Hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of Arborfield Garrison (ref. O/2014/2280).

## 1.2 SCOPE & CONTENT

This document explains the design process and parameters that have been followed to produce a high-quality design that contributes to the character of the local area and is in keeping with its surroundings.

This includes:

- Analysis of the site as existing, the immediate area and the wider context.
- Demonstration of the design process followed to reach the final design solution, covering subjects of use, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.
- Consideration of the site's constraints to demonstrate that the proposed scheme is thoughtfully designed with the goal of integrating seamlessly with its surroundings.



— Site application boundary (0.53 Ha/1.31 Acre)

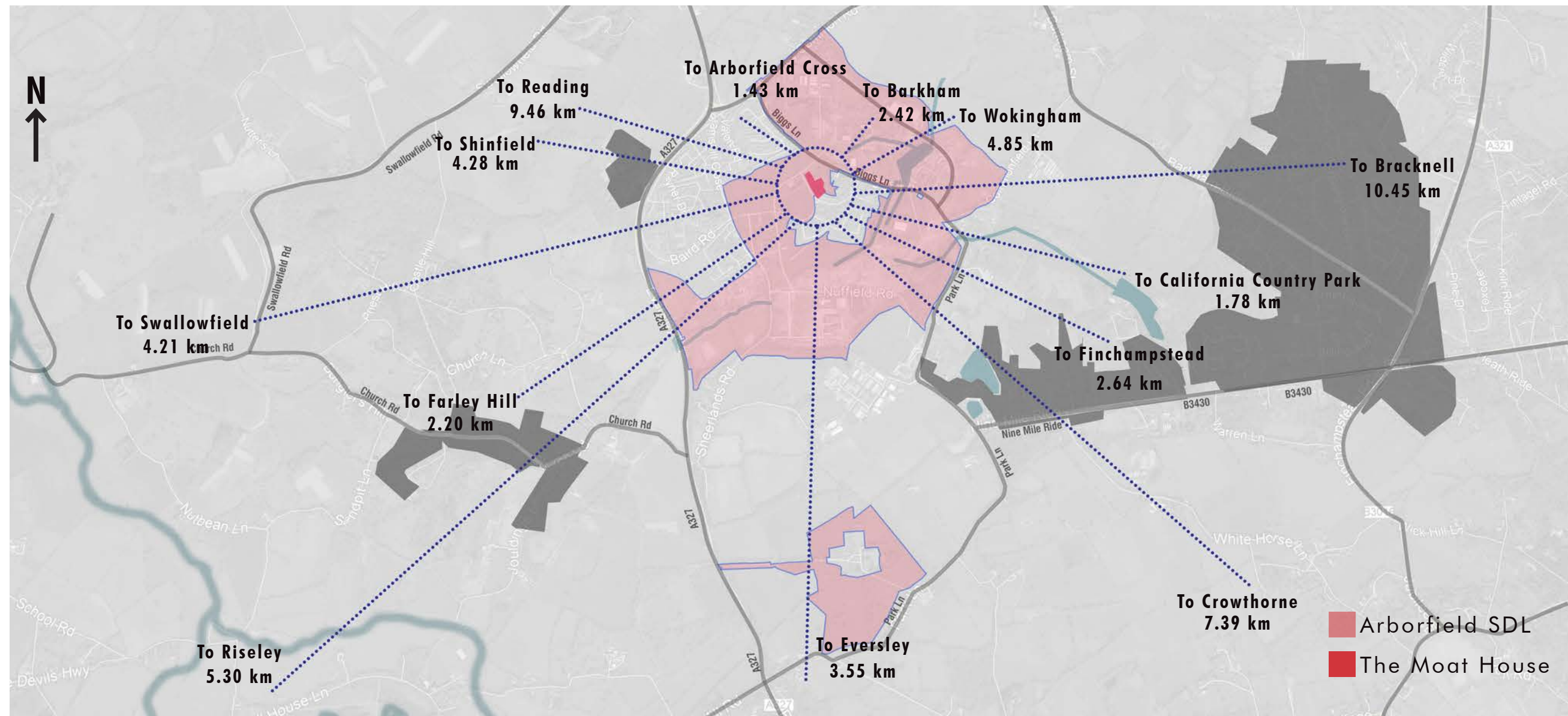
## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### 2.1 SITE LOCATION

The Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) site lies approximately 4km to the south west of Wokingham town and 5km to the south of Junction 11 of the M4 motorway.

The overall Arborfield Garrison site extends to approximately 167 hectares and is bound by Reading Road (A327) to the west, Park Lane to the east and to the north by Langley Common Road. The southern boundary adjoins Hogwood Farm which forms the remaining part of SDL.

The Moat House is positioned centrally within the Arborfield SDL, to the east of Buttenshaw Avenue.



Site location plan

## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### 2.2 SITE OVERVIEW

The site covers an area of 0.53 hectares, as defined by the red line boundary, and is situated within the jurisdiction of Wokingham Borough Council. The existing site features the Moat House, along with a parking area at the front, and an open space extending to the rear and west side of the house.

The Moat House, a Grade II Listed Building dating back to 1906, was originally constructed as the residence for the commander of the Remount Depot, however, most recently used as office space and now vacant. The Moat House is located to the south of Princess Marina Drive and Biggs Lane and is accessed off Buttenshaw Avenue. The building is set within a well-defined area surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows.

To the north of the site, outside, albeit adjacent to, the application boundary, lies the 'Moated Site North of the Moat House' which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument—the remains of a dry medieval moat, which was designated as an ancient monument in 1977. To the west is the recently completed Parcel AA development.

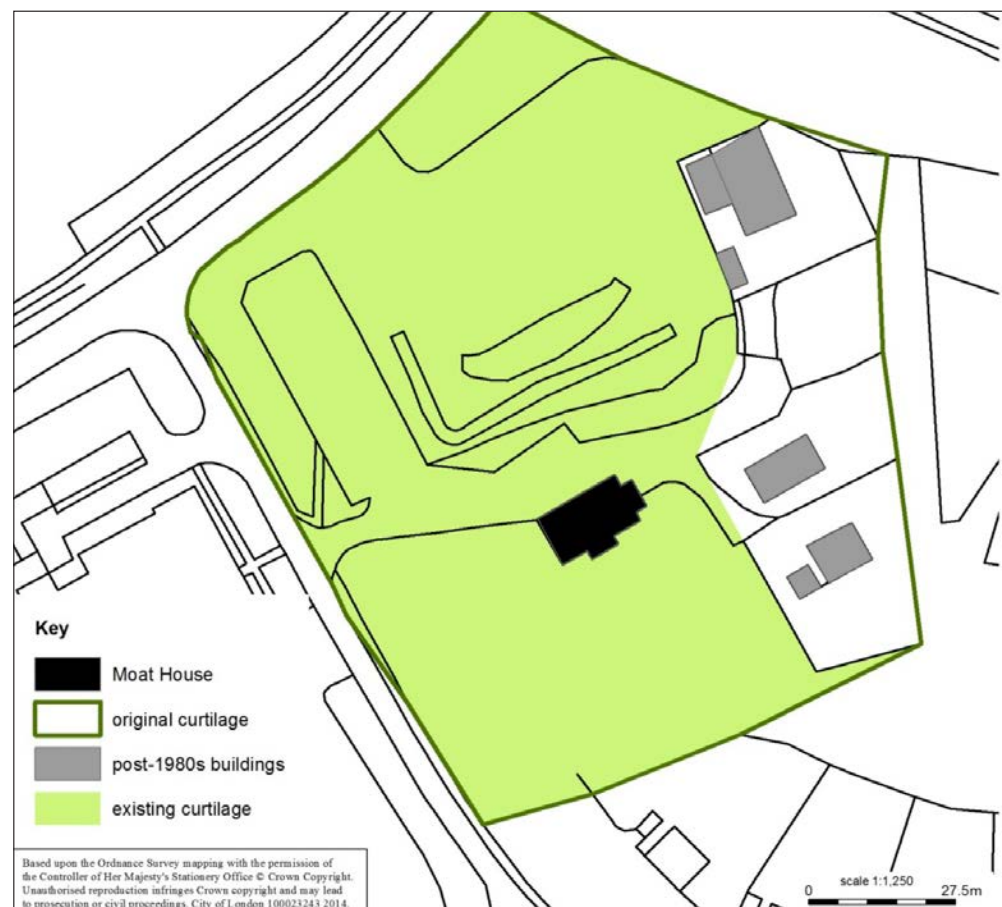
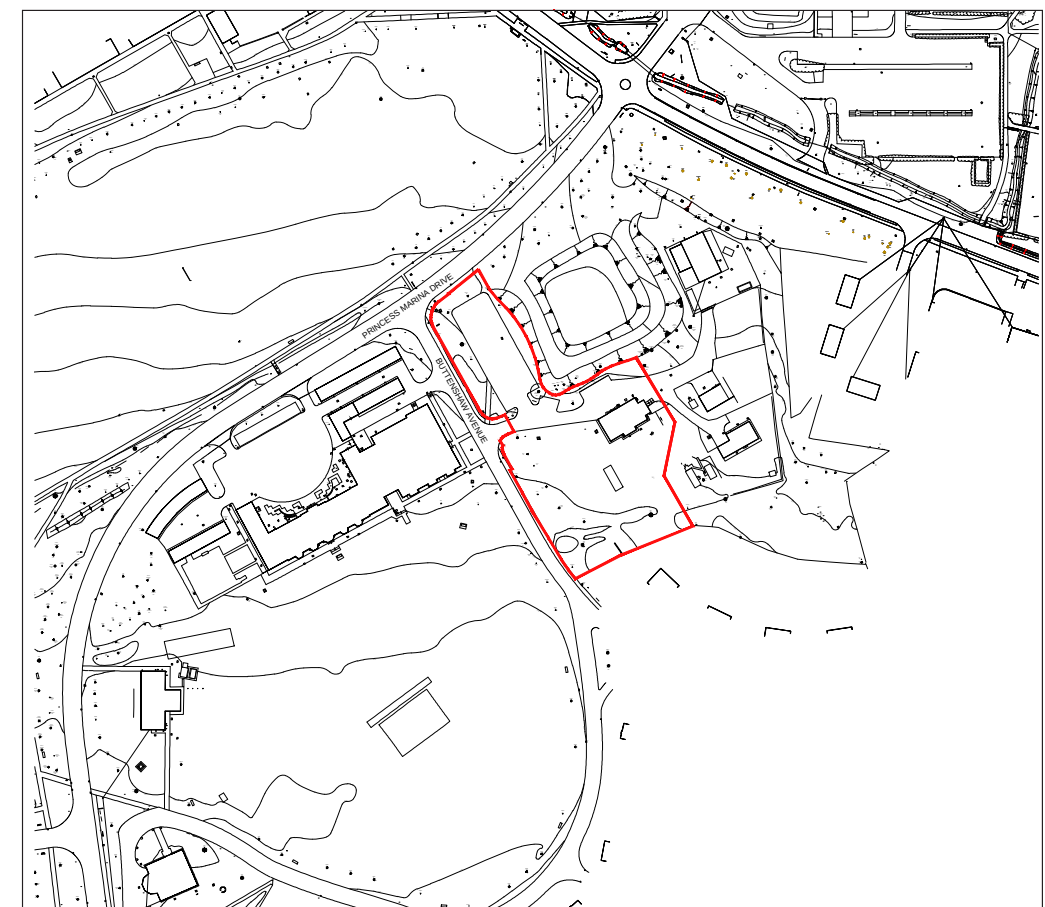


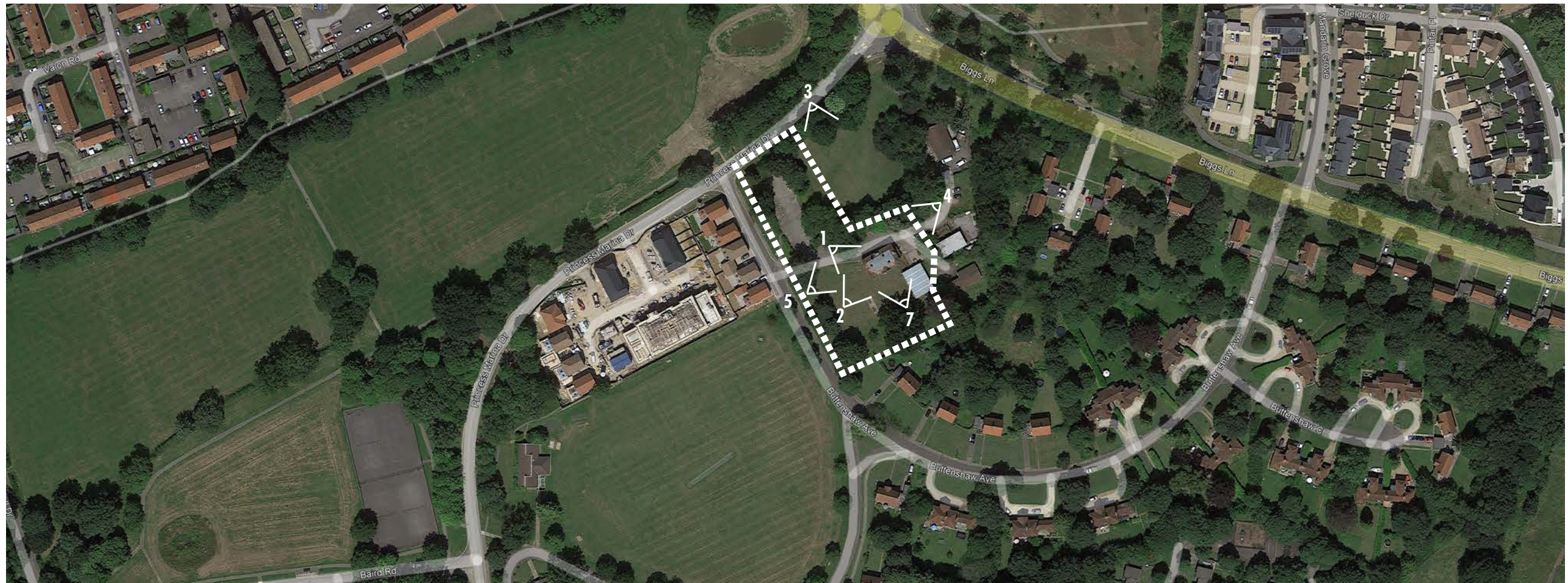
Illustration of The Moat House Curtilage



Site application boundary (0.53 Ha/1.31 Acre)

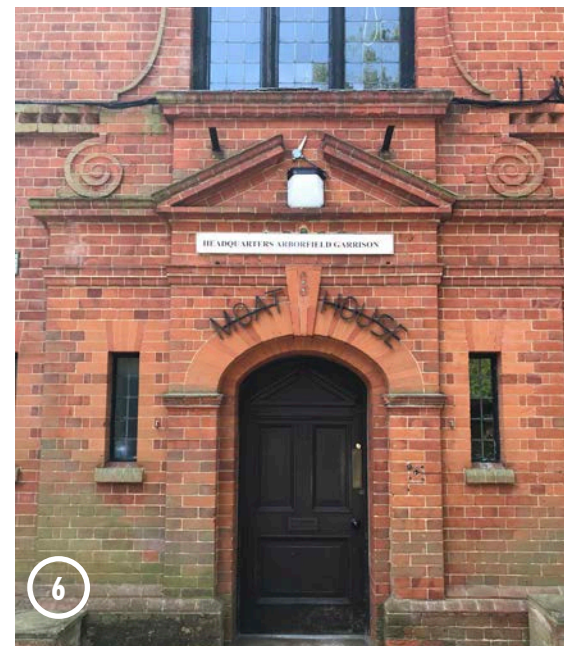
## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### 2.2 SITE OVERVIEW



## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### 2.2 SITE OVERVIEW



# 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

## 3.1 ECOLOGY

The Moat House is surrounded by a network of mature trees, primarily oak and sweet chestnut, but also including beech, ash, sycamore, and cherry trees.

The size, diversity, density, and connectivity of these trees create a connected canopy that is valuable for wildlife, providing a foraging habitat for bats and birds.

Preserving the boundary trees is essential to maintain an ecological corridor that links to Biggs Lane and the adjacent playing fields.

A key ecological principle in this area is the preservation of this canopy network, and as a result, the area has been designated as a secondary dark corridor to minimize light spillage that could affect nocturnal wildlife.

- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
- Category U
- Context Trees
- RPA
- Potential Overshadowed area



Existing Trees plan

## 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 ECOLOGY

The understorey of these trees is connected to a porous section of low hedging around the existing car parking – this understorey provides some limited foraging and sheltering habitat for ground dwelling species such as hedgehog. The understorey does include non-native species laurel and rhododendron; removal of these species would benefit the species composition of this area.

The open grassland areas hold more value for landscape and heritage than for ecology but has been observed to provide foraging habitat for flocks of birds, including starlings, redwings, and fieldfares.



The Moat House Area is part of the Cricket Green character area, which is centred on the cricket pitch and sports pitches for the Arborfield development site. It is typical of a recreational parkland landscape, with numerous individual trees and groups of trees set within amenity grassland and along roads and paths.

The existing character of the Moat House Area is buildings fronting onto open landscaped spaces. Existing areas of built form are nestled amongst mature tree cover and are largely enclosed from the surrounding area.



### 3.2 LANDSCAPE

Views of the open space from the Moat House has been maintained.

The strong recreational parkland character, with its focal buildings set within the wider landscape spaces is the key characteristic of this area.



## 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

### 3.3 HERITAGE

The scheduled monument and Grade II listed Moat House are key elements of the Moat Area. As designated heritage assets, they are both of national significance in themselves which, despite them not being historically connected to each other than by their close proximity, is enhanced by their group value with each other.

The two designated assets share the same setting which currently comprises the rugby pitches to the north, the cricket pitch to the south west and the Parcel AA development to the west. There is a band of mature trees and other vegetation on the east and south side of the Scheduled Monument and Moat House.

The Moat House was listed in July 2014 in recognition of its architectural interest. The significance of Moat House as a Grade II listed asset derives from its architectural and historical interest. The building stands as a example of early 20th century interpretation of the Jacobean style and provides reference to former main house on the estate by Robert Kerr. The brickwork is of good quality with well executed details in the doorcase and detailing.

A degree of historical interest is observed through appreciation of Arborfield's importance as rare example of a remount depot which were fundamental to the mobilisation of the cavalry units during World War I. Additionally, group historic value is found through the nearby scheduled moated site which the building takes its name and forms a historical focus on the asset.

The building has undergone minor alteration, retaining most of its original fixtures and fittings. The Moat House, built in 1906 to the south of the moated farm site at Old Biggs Farm.

Principally constructed from red brick in English Bond, the building is accented with rubbed brick dressings and a tiled roof. The main entrance to the building is located on the asymmetrical north-west elevation which is denoted by the shallow, broken pedimented brick doorcase with a rubbed brick four-centre arch.

The south east elevation is symmetrical and provides a loose neo-Jacobean character to the building through the inclusion of a shaped gable and windows which diminish per storey.



The Moat House at Arborfield Cross Remount Depot, circa 1910 - 1915

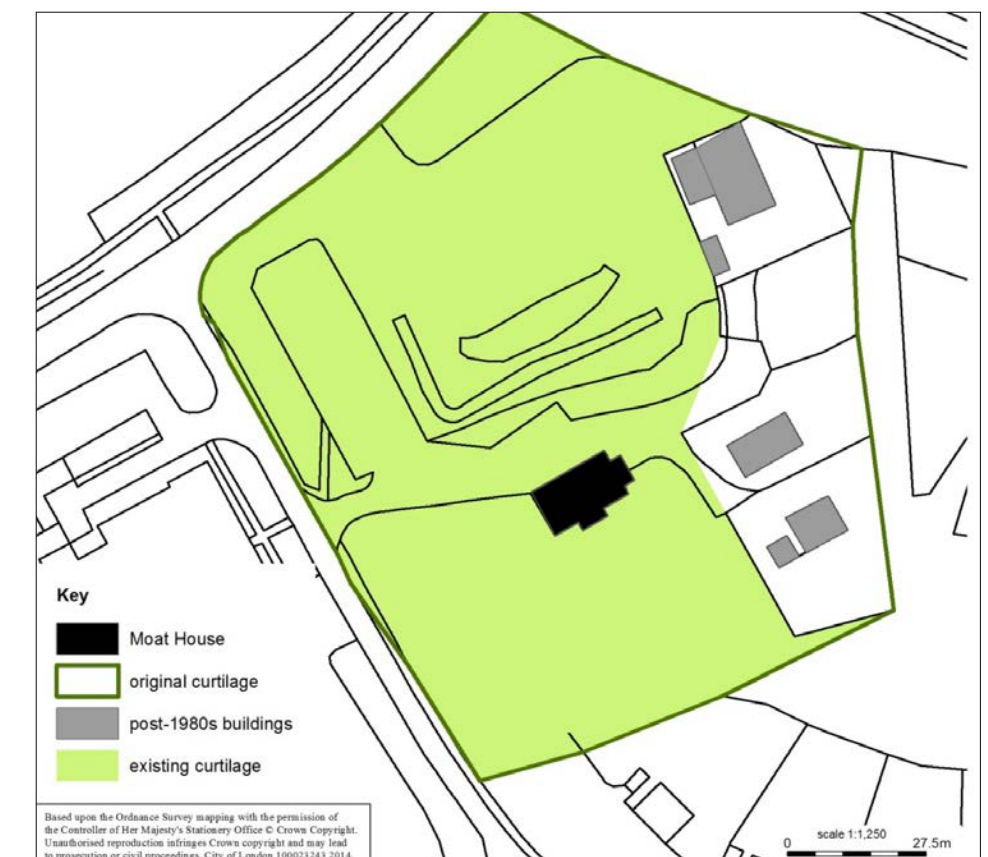


Illustration of The Moat House Curtilage

## 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

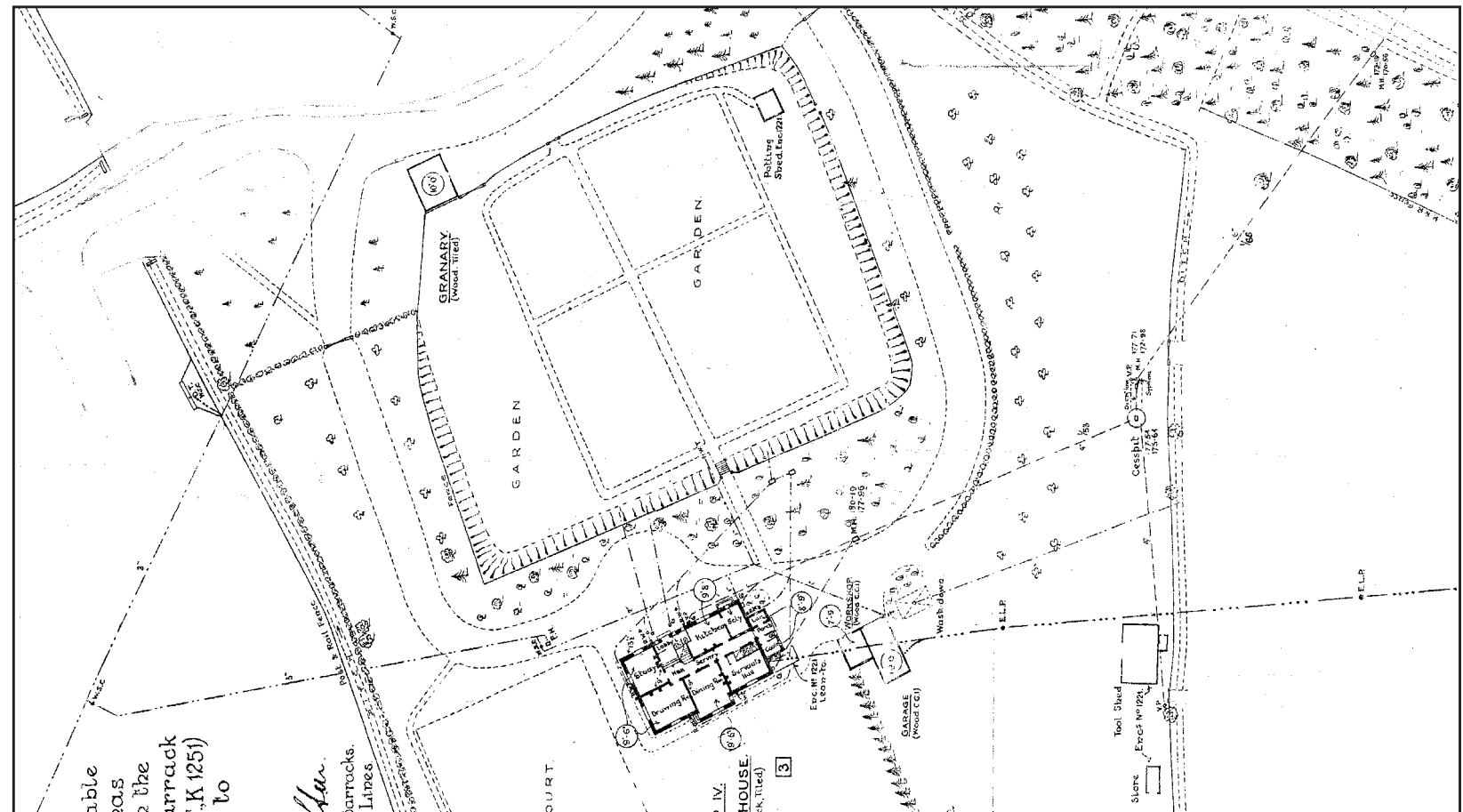
### 3.3 HERITAGE

The scheduled monument site is a dry medieval moat with a single island and visible earthworks on the east, south, and west sides featuring a graded ditch of circa 10 metres. The island rises about 1 metre and banks up to 2 metres.

The scheduled area includes the island, ditch and a 2 metre buffer zone. The Moat House is within the immediate setting of the Site can provides a minor contribution to the setting through evidencing the continuation of the land being occupied.

This asset's extremely high level of significance is derived from its historic and archaeological interest as a surviving example of a medieval moat. The asset holds the potential to retain valuable information relating to the layout of the medieval and post medieval structures and uses of the immediate surroundings which would provide greater information on medieval and post medieval societies.

There were several utilitarian former military single-story buildings, located to the east, northeast, and southeast of the Moat House. However, these have now been demolished. Additionally, a tarmac car park sits immediately to the west of the Scheduled Monument.



The Moat House historic plan

## 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

### 3.4 STREET NETWORK

The Moat House area is bordered by Biggs Lane to the north east, Princess Marina Drive along the north western boundary and Buttenshaw Avenue to the west. Both Biggs Lane and Princess Marina Drive form Primary Streets within the wider Arborfield Garrison SDL street hierarchy.

Buttenshaw Avenue is a private street which joins with Princess Marina Drive at a simple priority junction and routes south east through the Moat House area providing direct access to the Moat House and Parcel S. It subsequently provides access to existing residential properties as well as the Cricket Pavillion and St Eligius Church.

The private road leading to the Moat House from Buttenshaw Avenue can be categorised as a tertiary street within the wider hierarchy.

The existing bus service routes along Biggs Lane and Princess Marina Drive directly pass the Moat House area with bus stops located some 200m to the north on Biggs Lane. Existing footpaths route along the northwest/western side of Princess Marina Drive separated from the carriageway by a verge of varying width. There is an existing footway on the southern side of Biggs Lane which continues along its entire length, with a footway along the northeastern side of Buttenshaw Avenue through the Moat House area.



Street hierarchy plan

## 4. DESIGN

### 4.1 PROPOSAL

The proposals seek to convert the existing vacant Grade II Listed Building in the heart of Arborfield Green to provide new residential development. The proposed internal and external modifications will respect the building's historic character while creating four new apartments, accompanied by parking, amenity space, landscaping, and facilities for cycle and bin storage.

The existing building currently sits within a well-defined space surrounded by mature trees. All existing groups of mature trees will be preserved as they are a key element that defines the parkland characteristic of the area.

The landscape setting of the listed Moat House will be retained and improved using new proposed trees, native hedges and areas of long grass and wildflowers.

The proposed apartments will include a mix of 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units, with three of the apartments designed as duplexes. The breakdown is as follows:

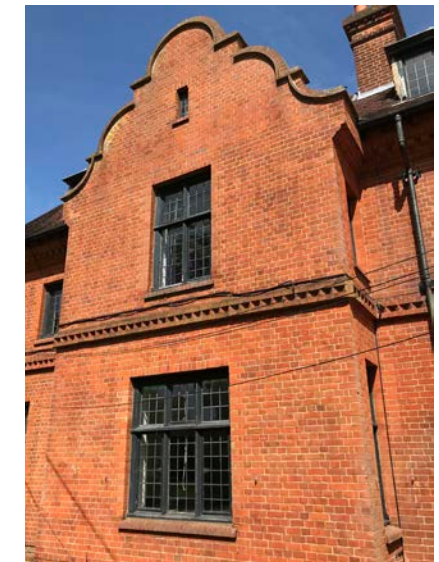
1 Bedroom: 64.8 m<sup>2</sup> / 698 ft<sup>2</sup>

2 Bedroom Duplex: 86.4 m<sup>2</sup> / 929 ft<sup>2</sup>

1 Bedroom Duplex: 84.3 m<sup>2</sup> / 907 ft<sup>2</sup>

2 Bedroom Duplex: 117.4 m<sup>2</sup> / 1,263 ft<sup>2</sup>

The external alterations are focused on de-cluttering the building of excessive modern cabling, downpipes and air-conditioning extraction vents which detract from the appreciation of the building's interest and their removal would be a heritage benefit.



## 4. DESIGN

### 4.2 SITE LAYOUT

The site entrance is accessed via Buttenshaw Avenue, a private road that intersects with Princess Marina Drive at a simple priority junction.

The existing road network will remain intact, ensuring that the surrounding trees are preserved and undamaged.

The proposed site layout includes 8 parking spaces for the apartments, with 2 spaces allocated per unit. These spaces will be located within the existing hardstanding area in front of the Moat House.

The current hardstanding car park to the north will be replaced with green space to enhance the site's open character and create a connection to the Scheduled Monument. A native hedge will be added to screen the parking bays from the monument.

The area to the side and rear of the building will be transformed into a communal amenity space, featuring regularly mowed grass, areas of long grass and wildflowers, and timber benches.

The proposal also includes provisions for bin and cycle storage, which will be situated away from the main house, near the site entrance, and screened from the principal approach to ensure the setting remains unaffected. To ensure no harm, the bin stores reflect the historic identity of the area through their rural materiality and scale.



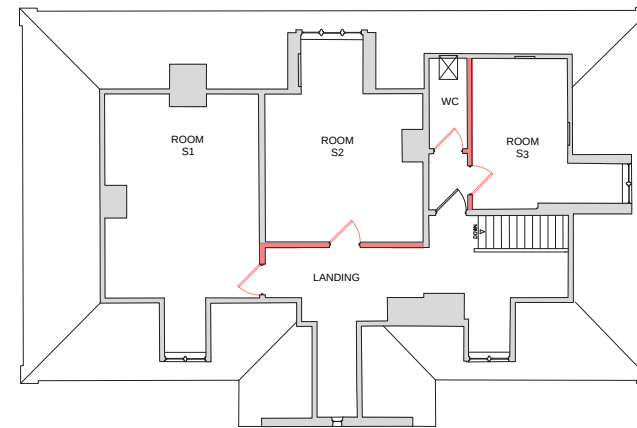
Proposed site layout

## 4. DESIGN

### 4.3 INTERNAL WORK

The scheme has been carefully designed to optimise the existing internal structure. Non-original partitioning will be removed, and new openings will be kept to a minimum.

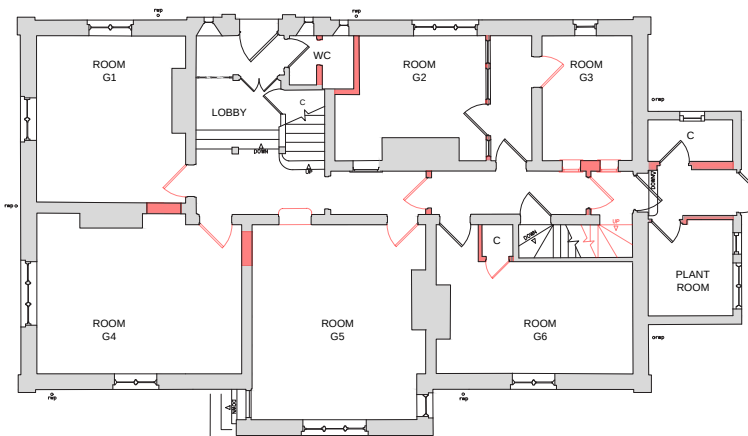
The existing fireplaces will be retained, and the blocked basement window will be reopened and enlarged to create French doors to the proposed bedroom, which will open onto a new proposed light well.



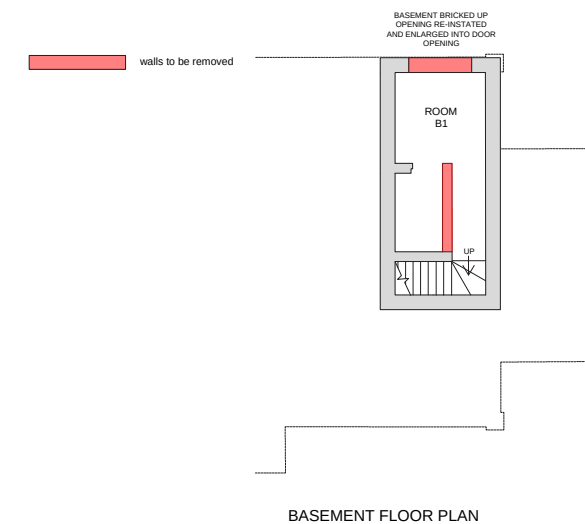
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

## 4. DESIGN

### 4.4 USE, AMOUNT & SCALE

The proposal is to convert the Moat House into four apartments, with all modifications designed to be in harmony with the character of the Listed Building.

The ground floor will house two apartments: Apartment 1 will be a one-bedroom unit, while Apartment 2 will be a duplex, utilising the existing basement to create a two-bedroom apartment. A new lightwell is proposed to provide light and ventilation to the interior space

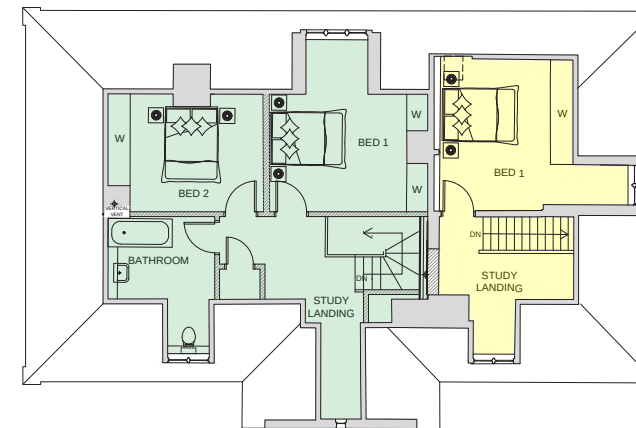
The remaining two apartments will span the first and second floors, with duplex layouts that place the bedrooms on the second floor.

Careful consideration has been given to preserving existing period features, such as stairs, balustrades, and door surrounds.

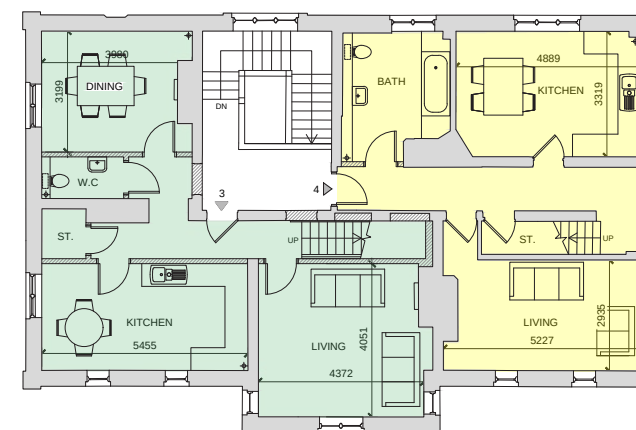
Any new partition walls will be constructed using lightweight timber stud work to avoid disturbing the floorboards and ceilings.

Existing windows will be refurbished, with secondary glazing added internally.

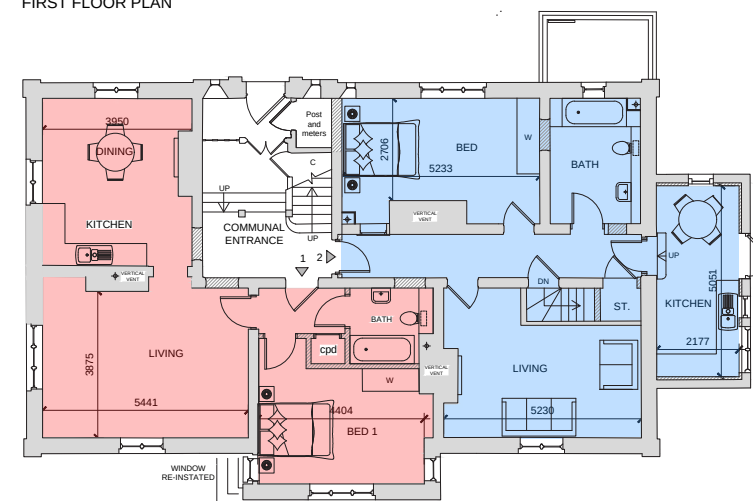
| SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| APT. 1                    | = 64.8 sqm / 698 sqft   |
| APT. 2                    | = 86.4 sqm / 929 sqft   |
| APT. 3                    | = 117.4 sqm / 1263 sqft |
| APT. 4                    | = 84.3 sqm / 907 sqft   |
| TOTAL                     | 352.9 sqm / 3797sqft    |



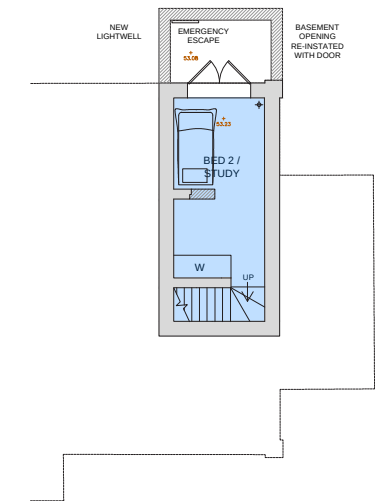
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

## 4. DESIGN

### 4.5 EXTERNAL WORK

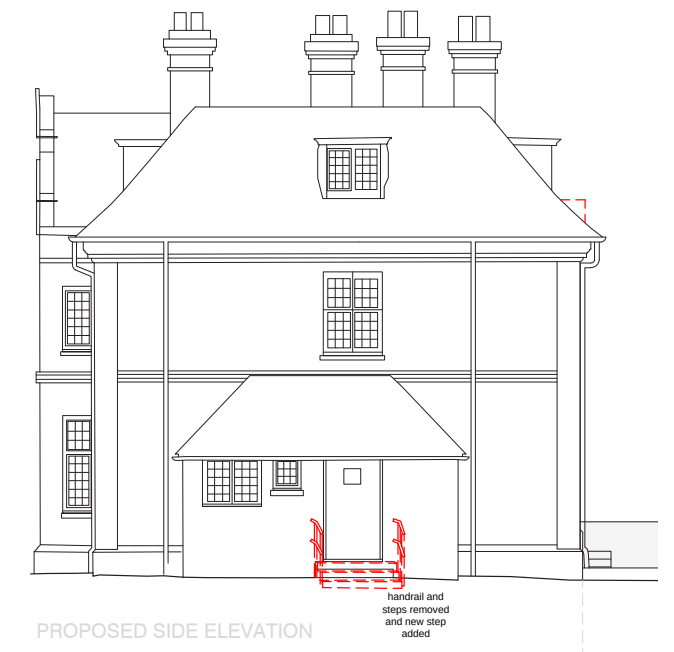
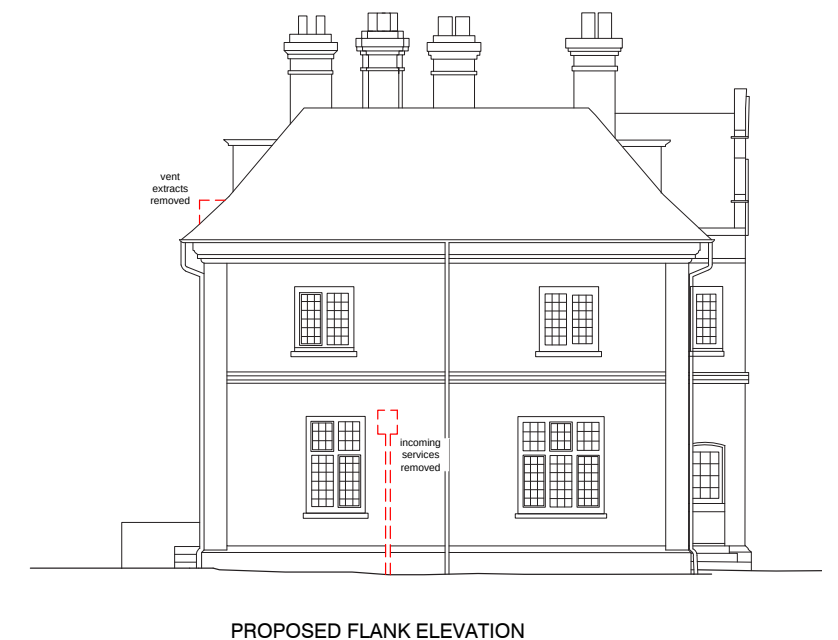
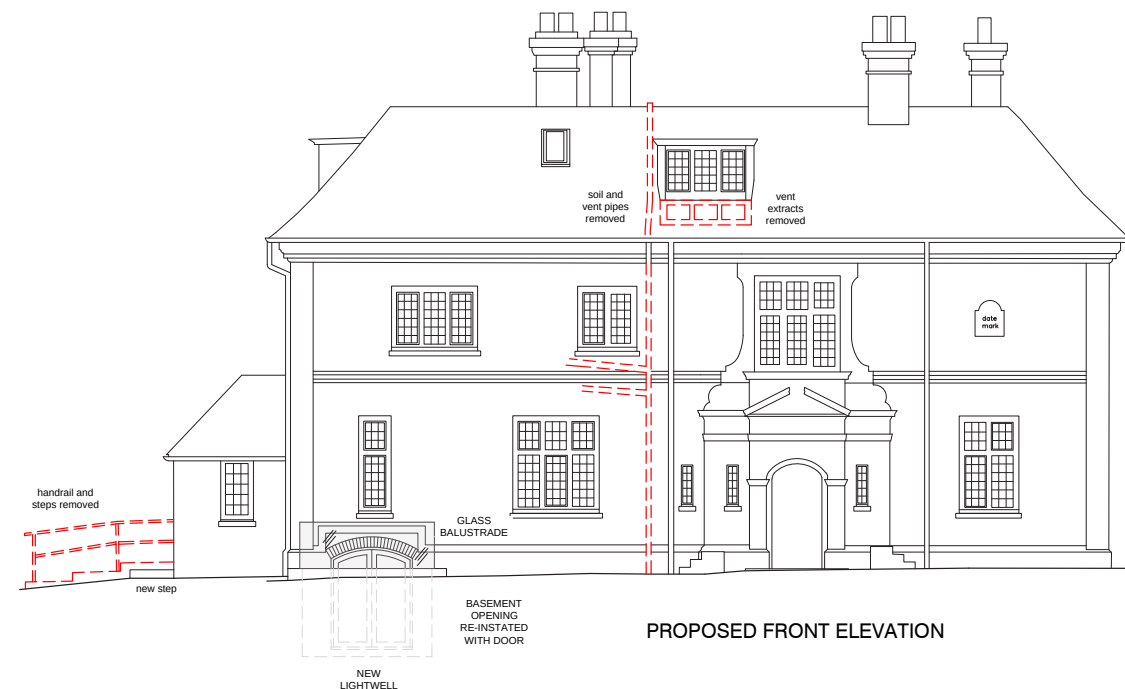
The proposed intervention to the elevations and appearance is minimal in order to maintain the integrity of the existing listed building.

Elements such as pipes, handrails, and vent extracts are suggested for removal.

Any newly proposed MEP cabling is to be run internally in a non-invasive method, where possible. Where achievable, existing soil pipes on the external elevations will be removed and replaced by alternative routes within the existing stacks.

A new lightwell is proposed for the basement, which will be finished in brick and bordered with glass balustrades.

A new lightwell is proposed to the basement. This will be finished in brick and edged on glass balustrades.



## 5. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been designed to ensure the building heritage and interest is maintained, yet also provide accommodation for modern day use within a complementary landscaped setting.

The proposals have been developed based on specific heritage guidance to ensure that the proposed scheme respects the building's special interest and includes heritage benefits. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed scheme would not cause any overall harm and would offer a viable modern-day use for the building.

The assessment has taken into account the historical development of the site and surrounding area in order to assess the significance of the building and its impact on the setting of the nearby scheduled monument of the Moated Site north of Moat House. A site visit was conducted to identify special interests and to aid in the creation of plans.

More details are included in the heritage statement submitted as part of this application.



