



Sacred Heart Convent

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Design Study

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"....The passion for improvisation, which demands that space and opportunity be at any price preserved. Buildings are used as a popular stage. They are all divided into innumerable, simultaneously animated theatres. Balcony, courtyard window gateway, staircase, roof are at the same time stages and boxes."

Walter Benjamin 'One way Street' 1924

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3.1 Sacred Heart Vision



Aerial view of site with red line indicating site boundary.

The proposed scheme for Sacred Heart is for a beautiful building which meets the aspirations of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham in providing temporary accommodation for at need families and individuals who have been affected by homelessness.

The existing building sits on a very large site with vast amounts of open space which is poorly defined. The strategy for the whole site is to have accommodation devolved around the site in order to minimise what the institutional feel of similarly programmed schemes.

The site's open space allows for the use of a series of buildings to create a secure and protected environment for residents through the use of gardens and courtyards. These would greatly simplify circulation and improve the outlook and quality of light for the accommodation itself. We envisage light and open reception areas, training and counselling spaces, and pleasant living accommodation configured as self-contained studio units, en suite bedrooms and shared kitchens.

Our objective is to create an inspiring and uplifting environment, offering a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere appropriate to the needs of this vulnerable client group.



Main view of Sacred heart from Goresbrook road.

The Sacred Heart Convent is located on the Goresbrook Road opposite Treswell Road and next to the Becontree Ambulance Station. Located in Zone 5, inner London, and is served by Bacontree station and Dagenham Heathway as well as local transport links.

The existing building dates back to the early 1930's shortly after the Ford Motor works was built. It's built in a neo - Georgian style in a mixture of red and plum coloured brick in English bond with a hipped roof and chimneys. It also has a Cupola that is affixed with a crucifix. It is surrounded to the East and West by residential dwellings and to the south by Harmony house; a local community interest and civic centre. The property is not Listed, but is considered to contribute heritage significance to the area. To the south west of the site lies Baden Powell close, another Peter Barber Architects scheme.

Internally the building was originally laid out to provide a Chapel, dining room, meeting rooms, kitchen, bathroom facilities at ground floor and twenty single bedrooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms on the second and third floors. Externally, the building is set within approximately 0.91 lawn acre plot.



Aerial view of site indicated with red boundary line

Sacred Heart

3.0 Design Development

3.3 External Appearance



View from Goresbrook road looking South



View from Goresbrook road looking South East

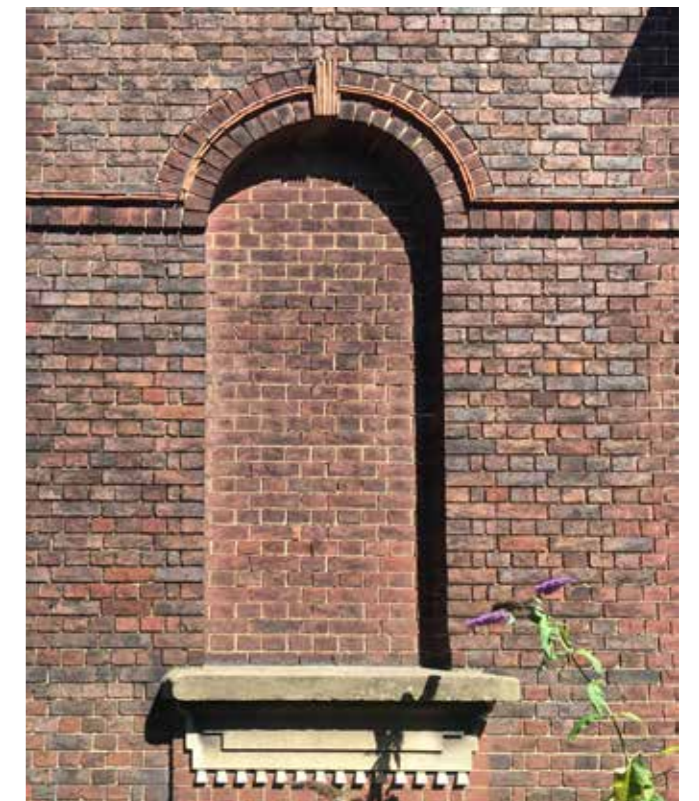


View from Goresbrook road looking West towards Sacred Heart

- Large and formal entrance sequence through front gate and lawn. General appearance is unkept.
- Boundary line is immediately adjacent to the western edge of the building and far removed from the eastern edge. . Consequentially, the frontage appears markedly lopsided.
- Dormer windows on the roof that were extended during the 1960's appear overly large uncharacteristic.



Main entrance



Rear view of Chapel wing

3.4 Summary of Opportunities & Constraints



Rear view looking North



View of lift tower.



View from the roof showing cupola and chimneys

- The opportunity to safeguard a locally significant historic building as well as provide accommodation for homeless people within the local community, for future generations to come.
- The building is currently entered through a cramped and unwelcoming reception space. Circulation within the building mainly relies on long, dark corridors and air-locks, two primary staircases and a lift to the rear of the building.
- Bedrooms are small and share inadequate kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- Refurbishment of the existing building will create a welcoming, light, open and airy reception, with multi-purpose spaces, and a mixture of self-contained studio units and en suite rooms arranged in clusters with shared kitchens. It will further future-proof the building so that, if appropriate, it could be put to some other use in years to come.
- The existing building presents really well, however the site is a missed opportunity. Demolition of the rear ancillary buildings on the site will enable new buildings to be created around the perimeter of the site looking into a delightful, communal courtyards and pleasant garden space - which would form the heart of the new accommodation.
- Further to this, creating terraces of self-contained studio units surrounding the courtyards which provide the residents with their own front door, kitchen and en-suite bathroom; giving them an opportunity to develop independent living skills whilst still within the reach of the support system provided by the staff.
- Creating an inspiring and uplifting environment, offering a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere appropriate to the needs of the vulnerable client group and for the benefit of staff.
- The new development on the site would re-frame a beautiful view of the existing building. It would markedly rationalise and improve the entrance sequence. The entrance area would further be enhanced by adding trees and planting and increasing visibility into reception.
- The tree screen to the east of the site will be maintained however, the shrubs and lower quality bushes which follow the western boundary will be replaced with newly planted trees.



View of the Courtyard at Holmes Road Studios



Three storey apartment block at Holmes Road Studios



Sketch of the proposed kitchen garden that becomes the heart of the scheme at Holmes Road

Sacred Heart

3.0 Design Development



Courtyard Gardens forming the heart of Redbridge Night Shelter



Light filled and spacious open plan reception area for Endell street.



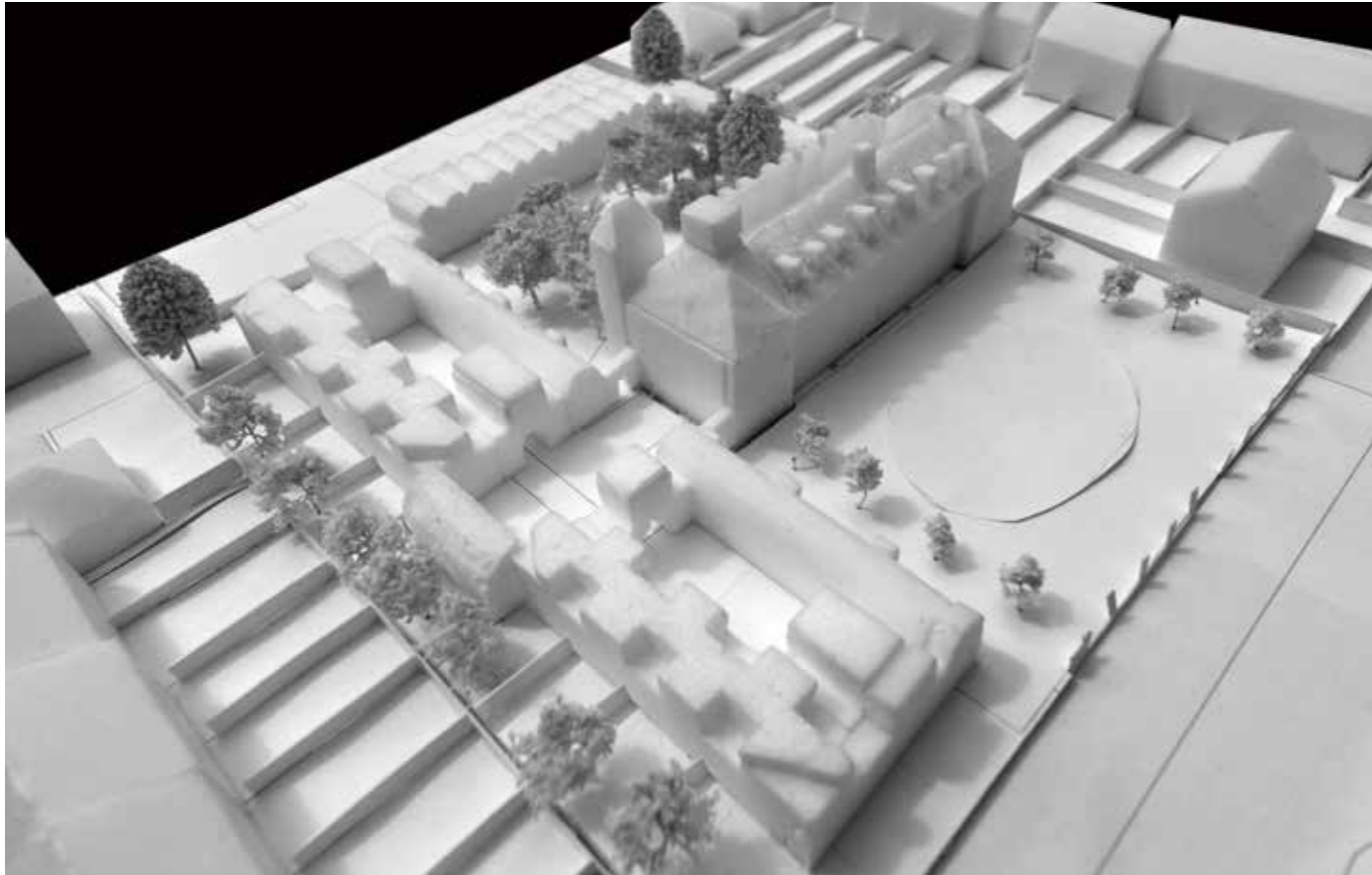
Axonometric drawing showing existing refurbished building and extension of the new scheme.



Light filled Courtyard at Employment Academy that becomes the primary amenity space.



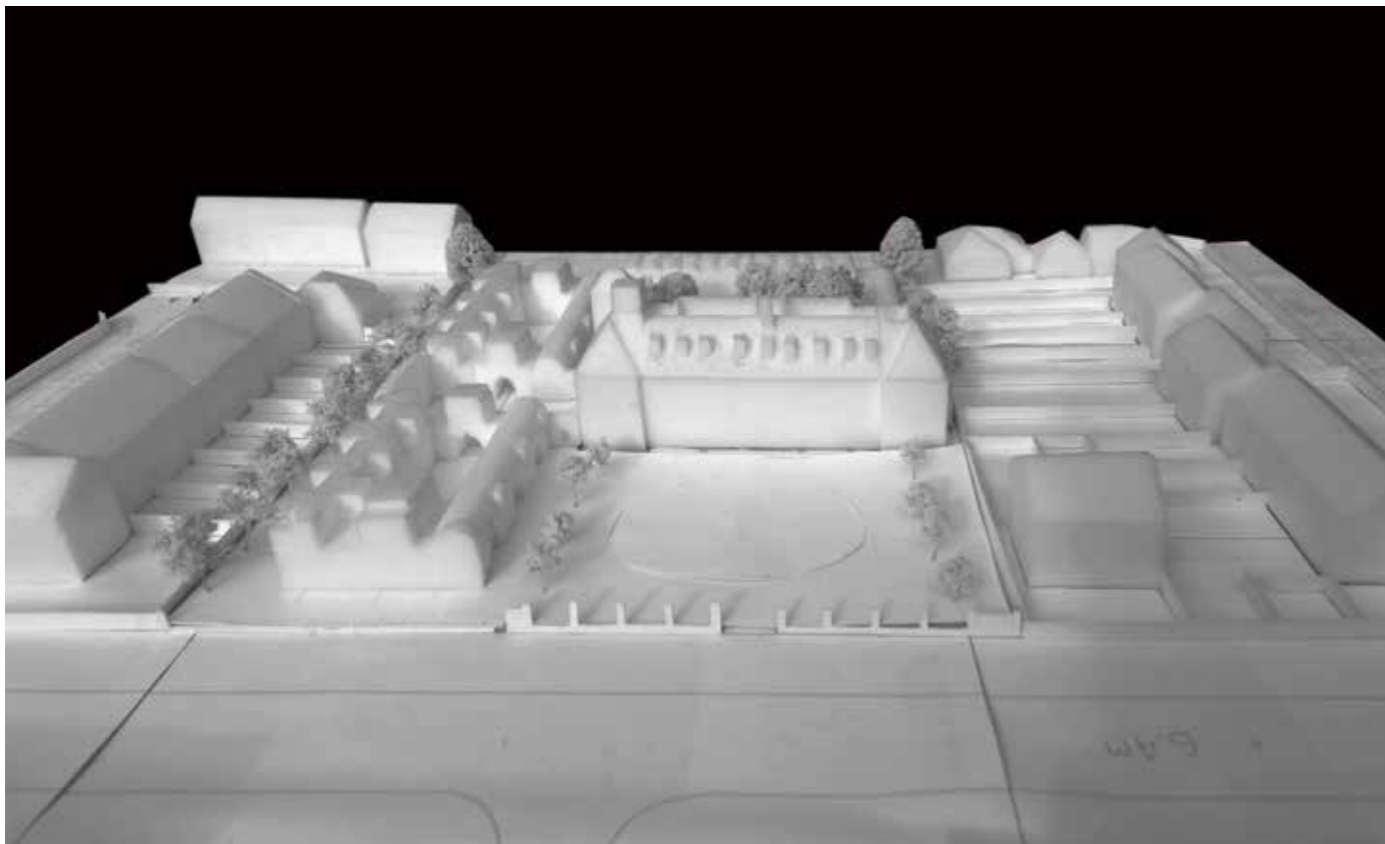
Sacred Heart



Working model showing aerial view of front courtyard



Plan view of model



Working model showing aerial view of front courtyard



Working model showing aerial view of rear courtyard

3.6 Design proposal

Sacred Heart is to be a beautiful new facility that provides high quality temporary residential accommodation all laid out around a series of delightful new courtyards and gardens.

Previous examples of Peter Barber Architects schemes for similarly programmed proposals illustrate a good enthusiasm and positive reception for quadrangular buildings. This is exemplified in the precedent images of Red bridge Night shelter and Holmes Road Studios. The plan thus positions three new buildings to the east and to the south of the existing and these start to clearly define gardens, and quadrangles.



Plan sketch showing the proposed arrangement of new build accommodation around a series of courtyards and a communal garden

Option C proposal

New Build	31 Units
Refurbished Existing	21 Units
TOTAL	52 Units

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New Build	45 Units
Refurbished Existing	17 Units
TOTAL	62 Units



Courtyard arrangement of Holmes road studios



Almhouse typology arranged around a communal courtyard



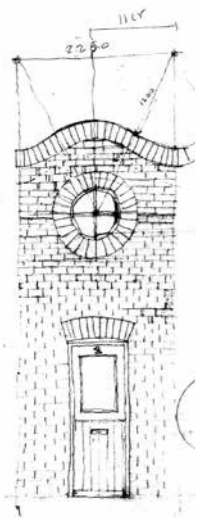
Axonometric development sketch showing the proposed arrangement of new build accommodation around the communal garden



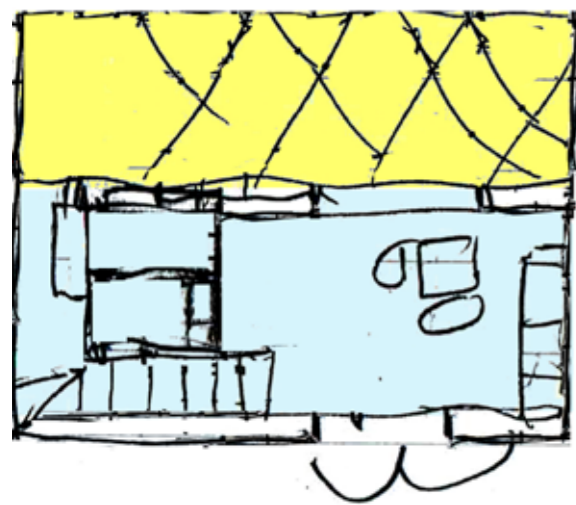
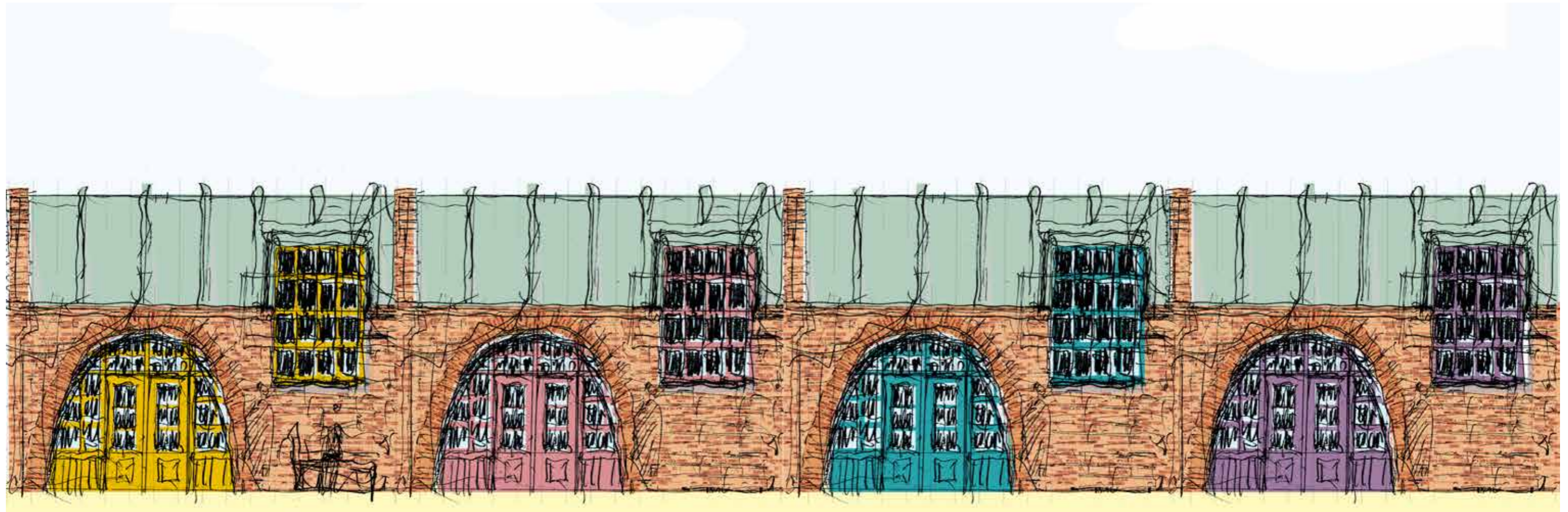
The design of the front elevation seeks to mediate the lopsidedness of the existing layout by rationalising the entrance courtyard, making for a beautiful picturesque view. The oversized and incongruent dormer window is replaced by more suitably sized dormer windows in keeping with the neo-Georgian style of the existing building. A red rustic brick is used throughout the scheme to compliment that of the existing.



The design of the North facing elevations of the buildings fronting the garden has a curved parapet building similar to Holmes Road with an elevation that undulates along. Each unit has an individual door and features circular window atop. It's clad in a similarly red rustic brick that adds warmth and character. The scale of these charming units effects a pleasant domesticity to the project.



Elevation sketch of single unit



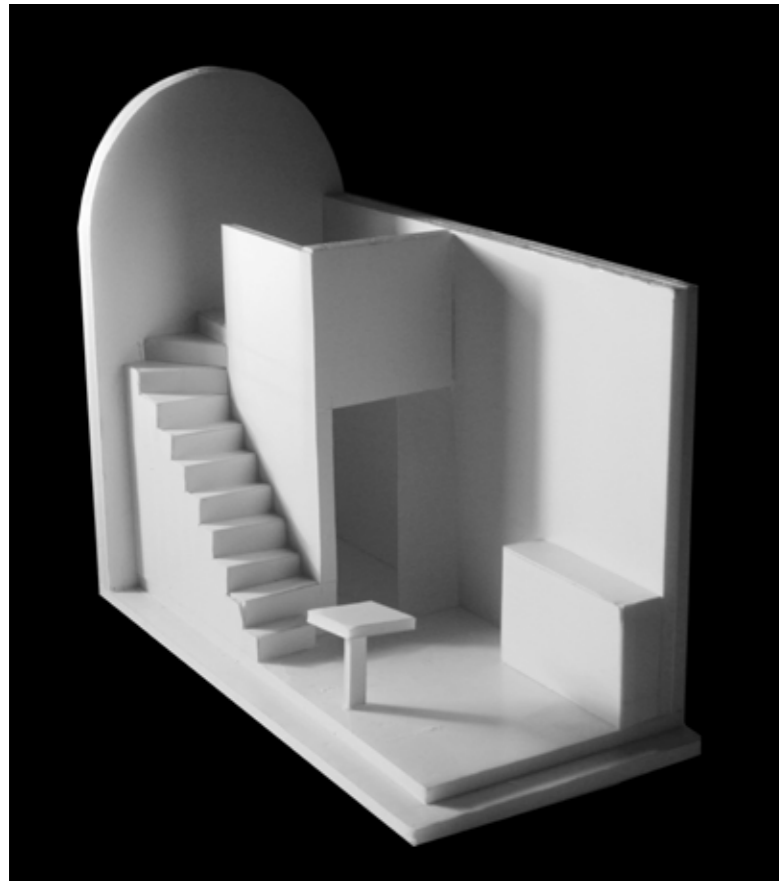
Plan of Barrel roof units with a kitchen diner and toilet at ground floor



Cross Section showing toilet at the back of the unit, with a mezzanine level and dormer window allowing light in across the stair.

The design of the proposed east and west facing elevations of the buildings fronting the garden are generated by the design of the self-contained studio units. These have a barrel roof with individual dormers projecting forward. Each unit has its own entrance accessed through a delightful arch. The intention is for these buildings to be clad in a high quality rustic red brick.

Sacred Heart



Internal layout

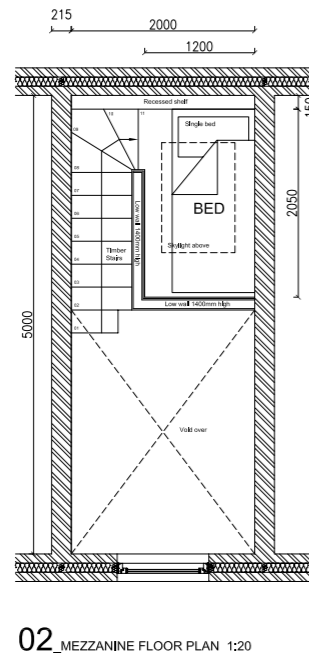
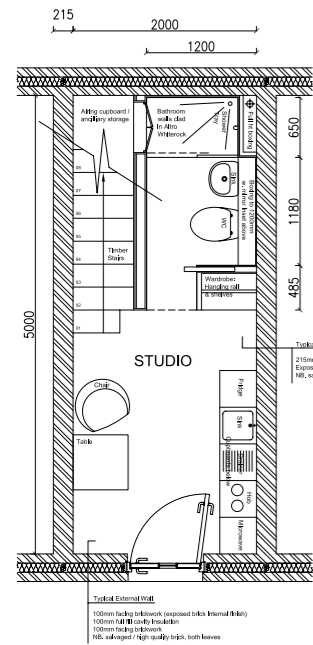


Sketch model of typical unit

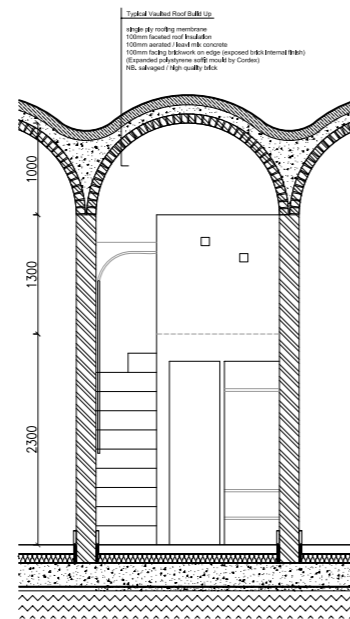
3.8 Typical Self contained uni7.2

The self-contained studio unit is designed as a little cottage with its own front door leading onto the communal garden.

The internal dimensions for the North facing units are 2.3m x 5m. The East and West facing units are of similar layout but their internal dimensions are 4m x 5m. A compact, robust kitchen is provided, together with a seating area. A ground floor bathroom is accessed through an opening between stairs and in-built wardrobe. The stairs lead upwards to a mezzanine bed area. Light is brought into the dwelling through windows in the door, a circular high level window and skylight above the bed, thus maximising light whilst maintaining privacy in each unit.



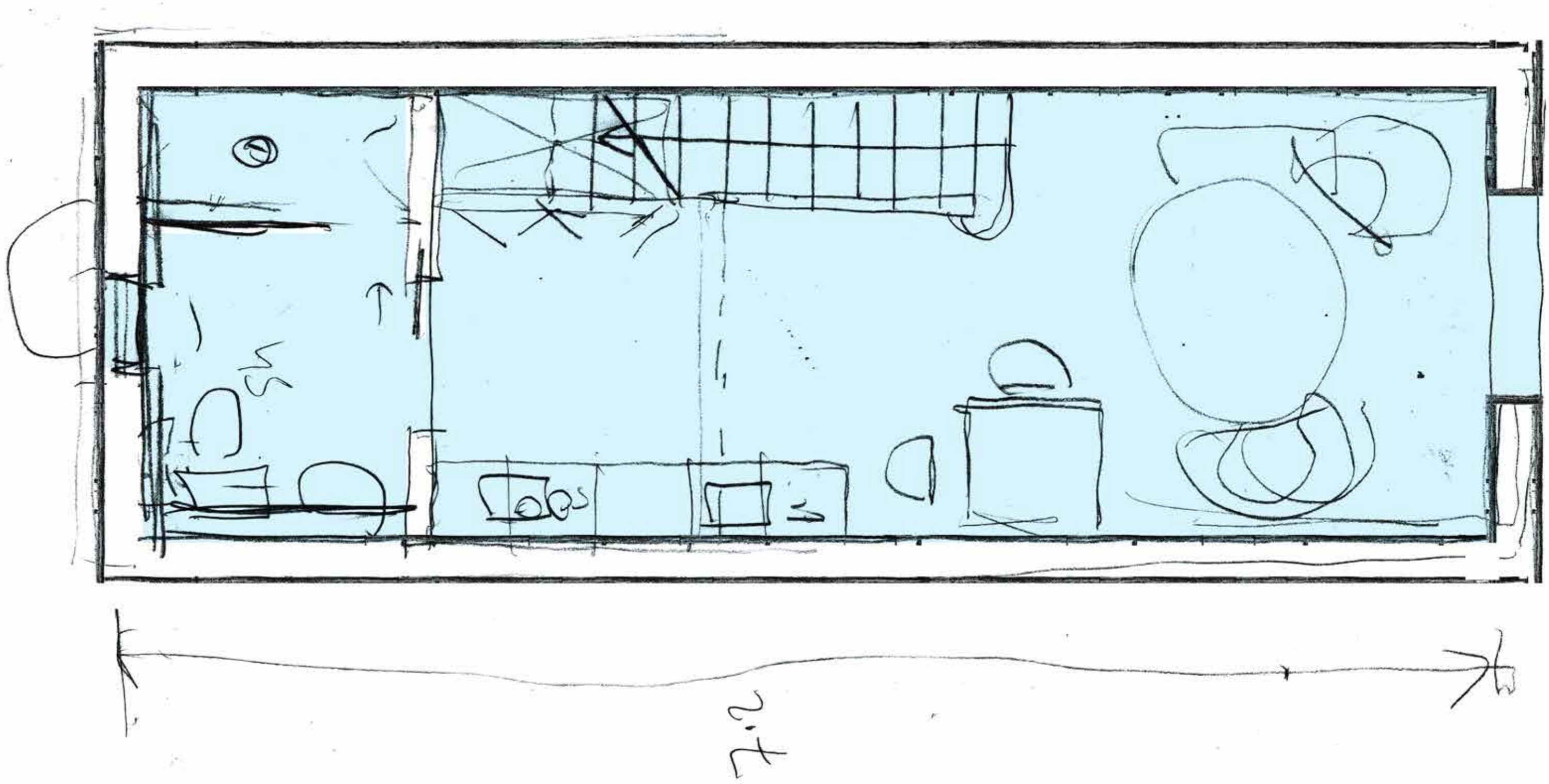
02_MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN 1:20



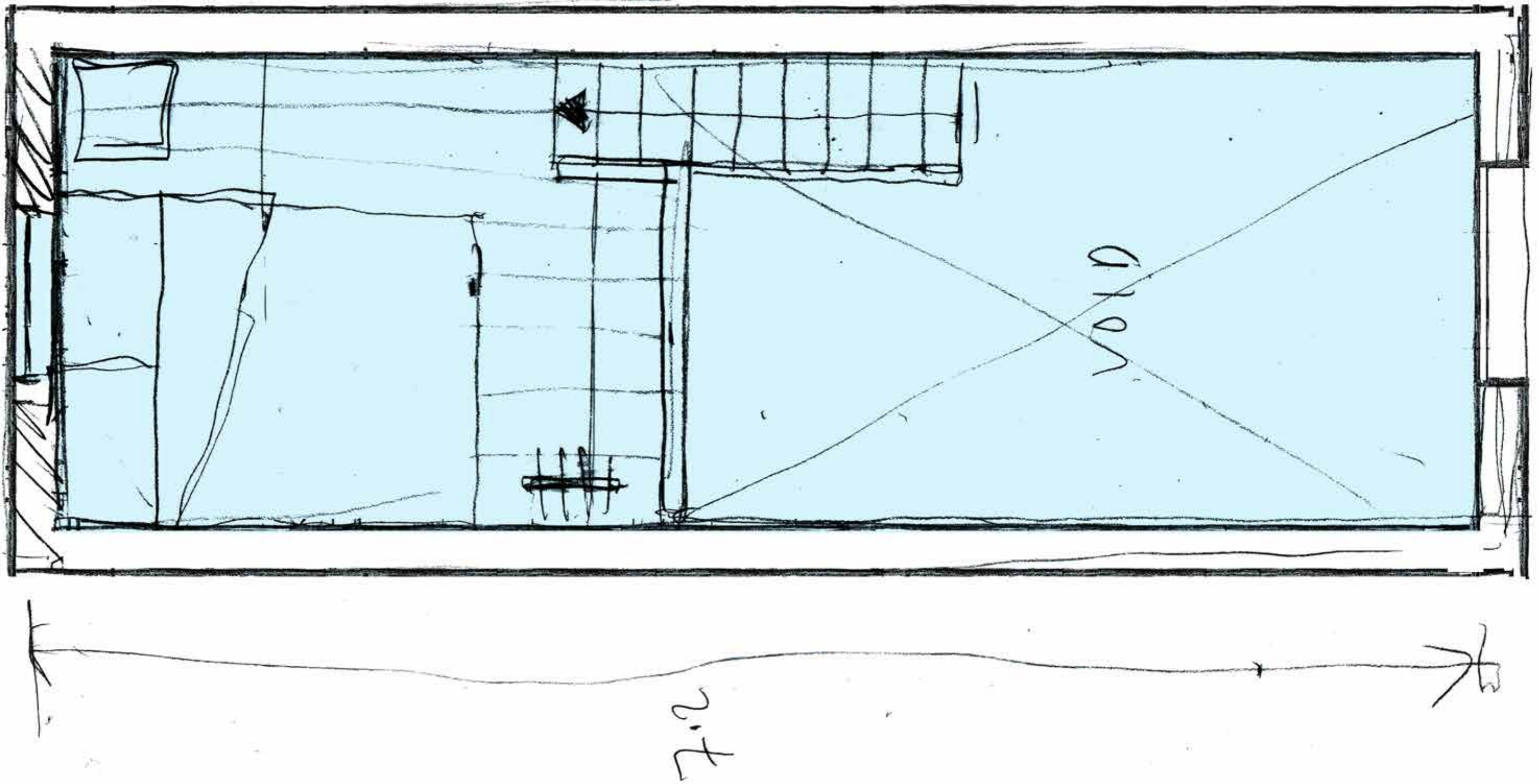
03_TYPICAL CROSS SECTION 1:20

Plan and section of 2m x 5m self contained unit

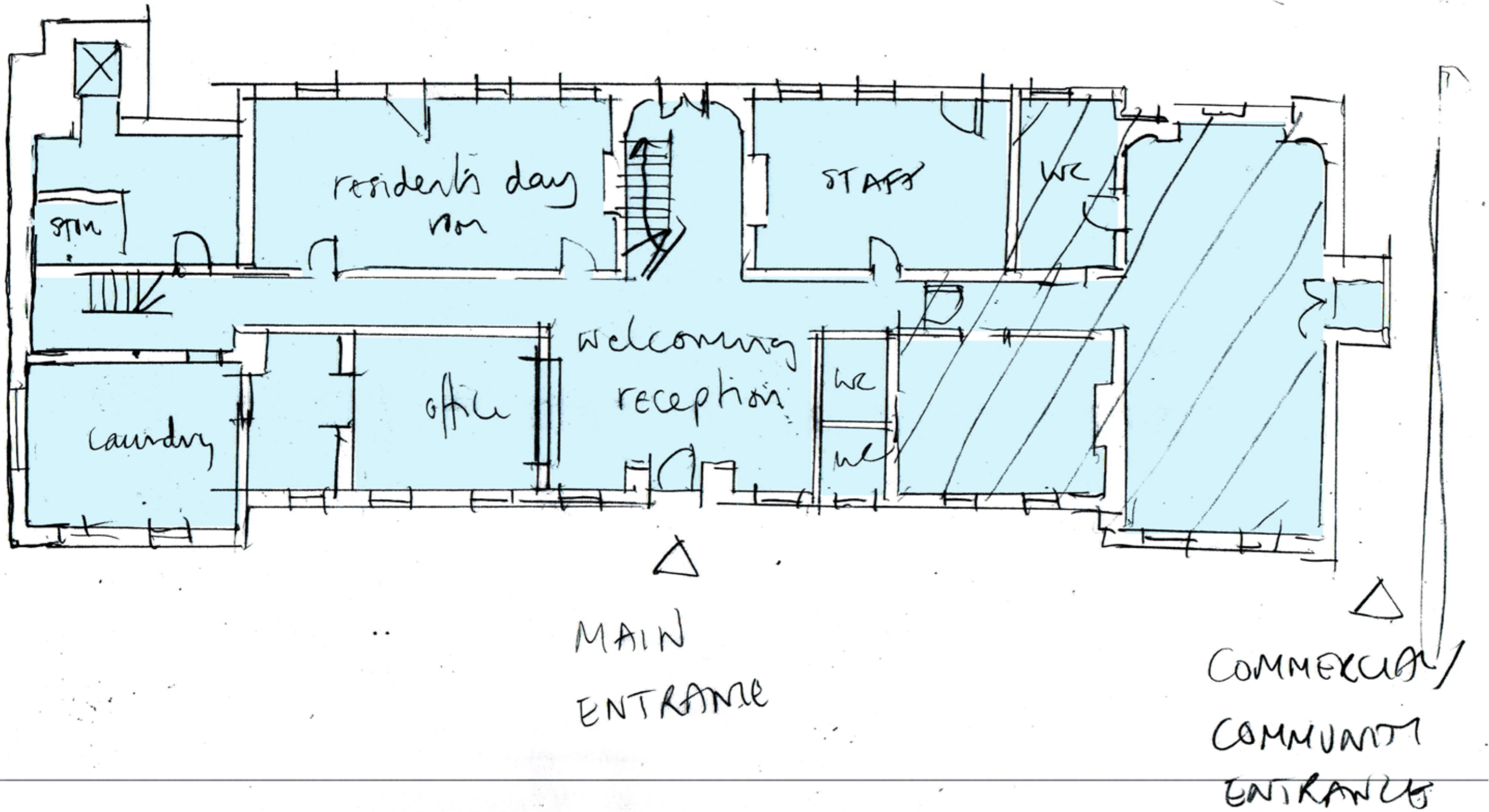




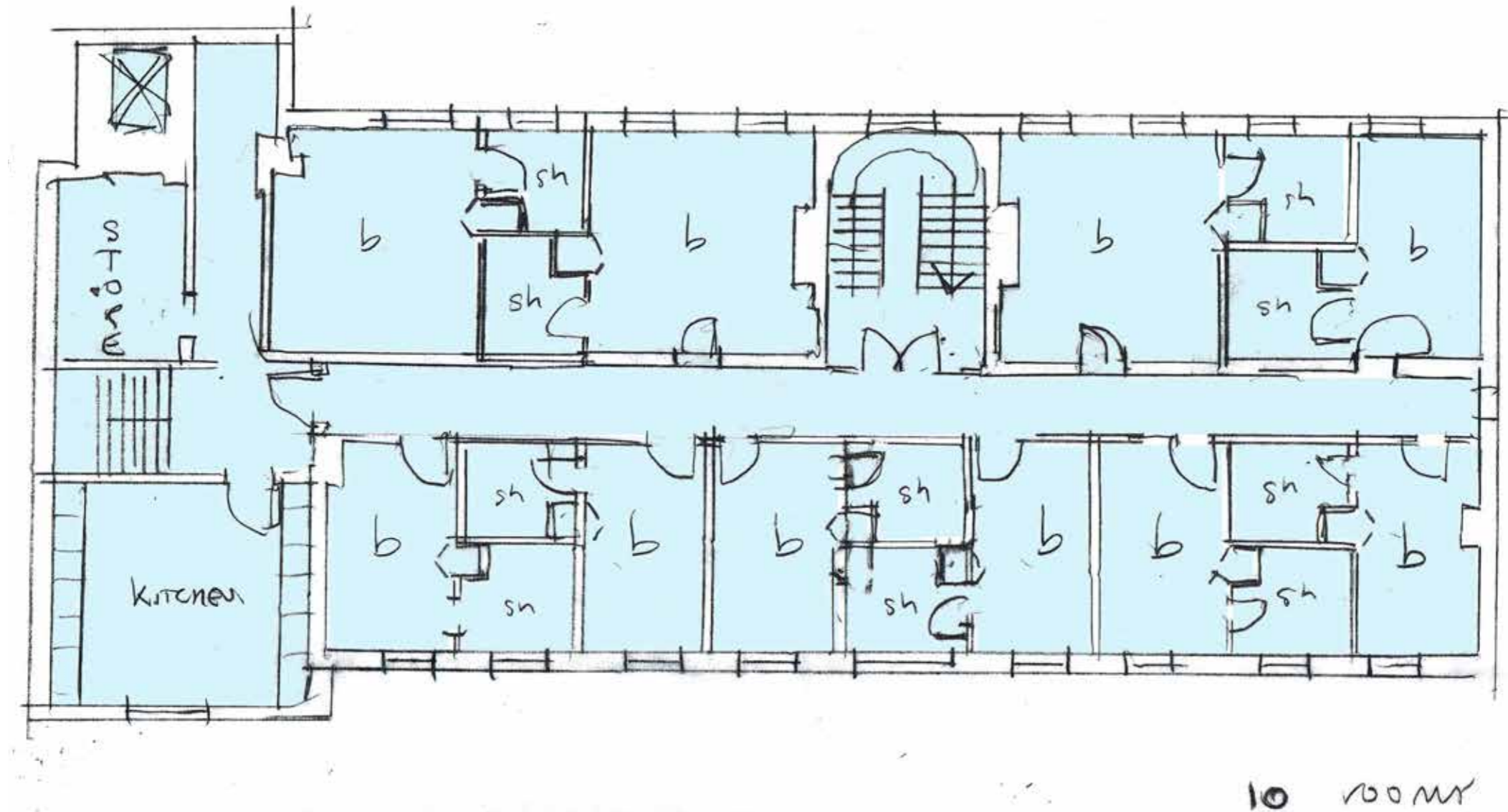
Sketch Ground floor plan of a 2/3 person self contained unit
Internal dimensions are 7.2m X 2.3m



Sketch Mezzanine level

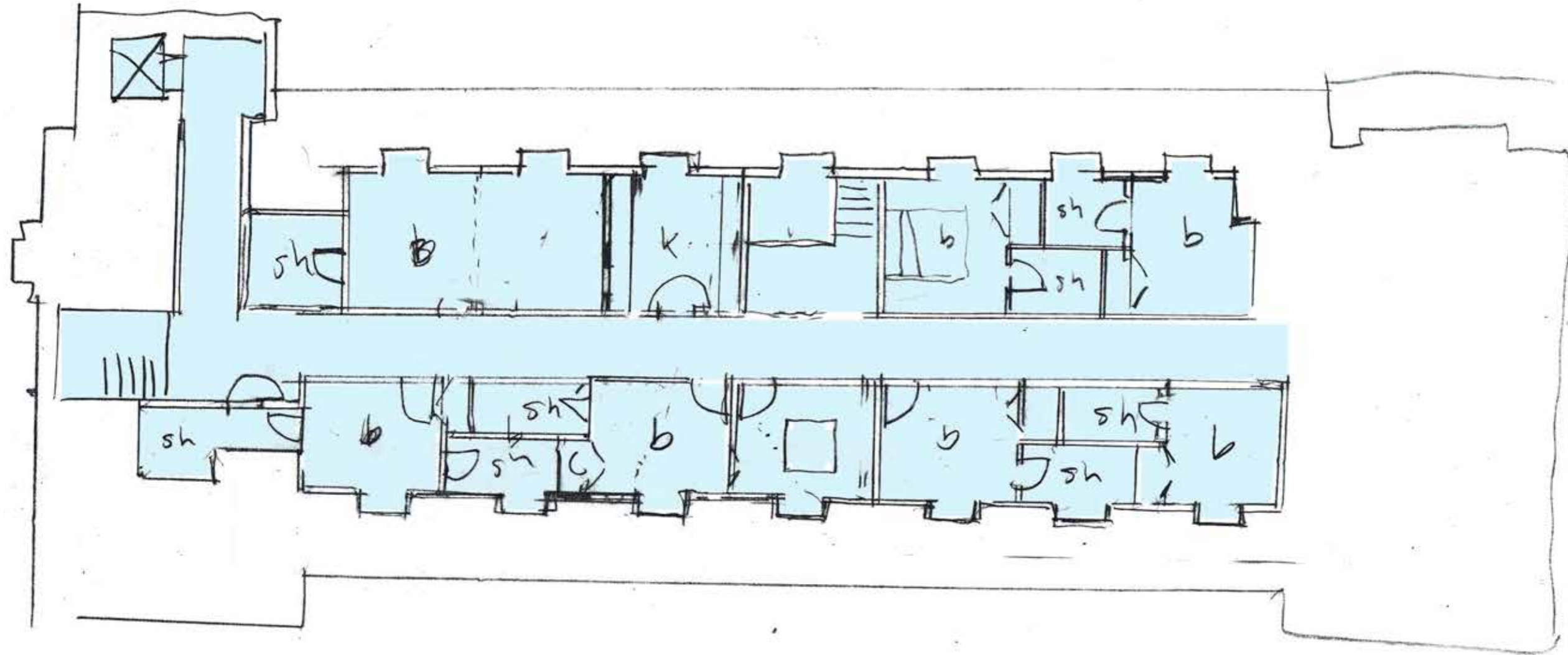


Ground floor Plan of refurbished existing unit



Stairs lead up to generous studio rooms at first and second floor. Each of these has an en-suite bathroom to mediate the previous inadequate facilities as well as bring the accommodation in line with current standards. The indicative budget is adequate for a major refurbishment of the existing and the introduction of en-suite bathrooms would mean that only two bedrooms per floor are lost. The refurbished existing building would provide a total of 17 units of accommodation.

First floor Plan of refurbished existing unit



7 rooms

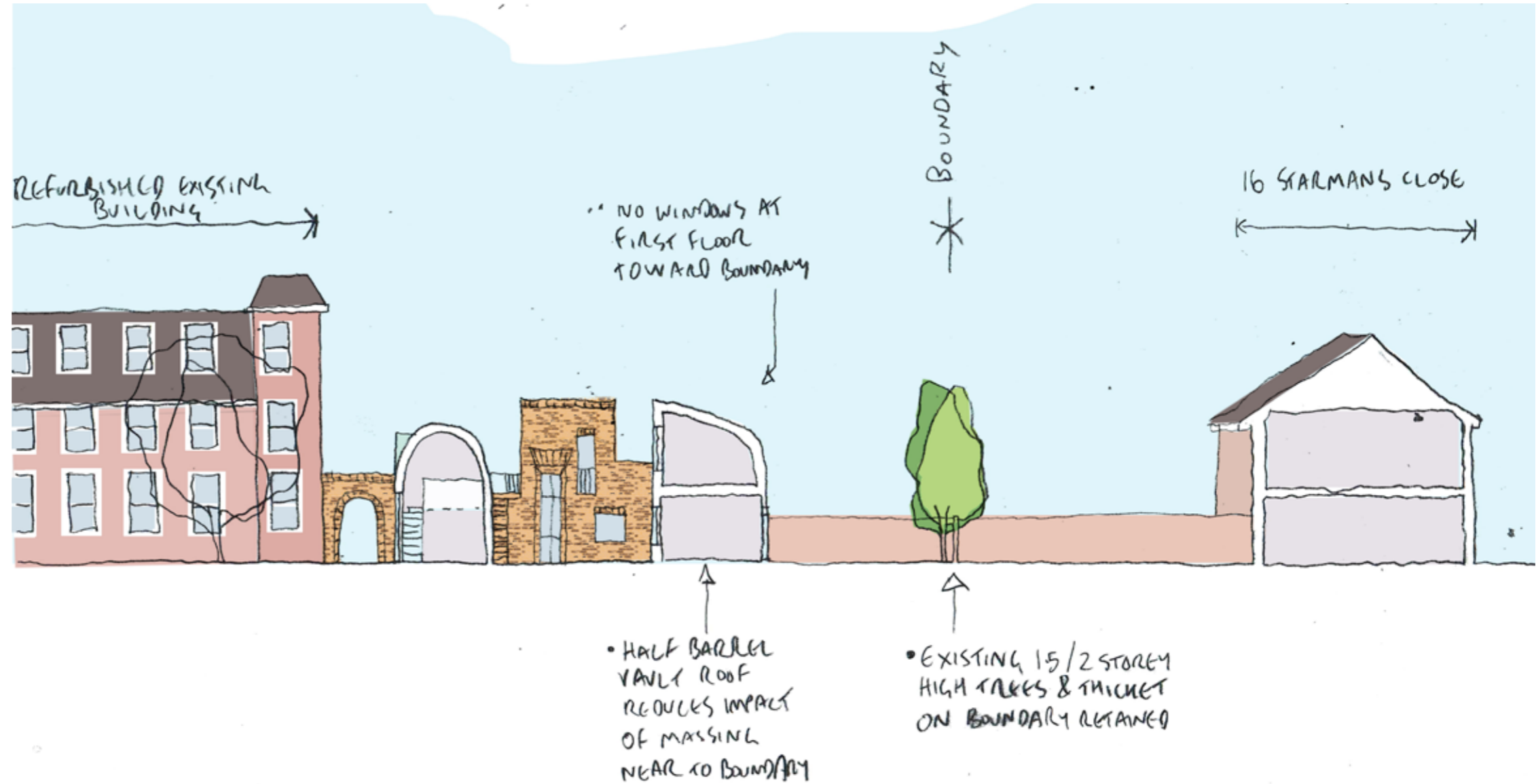
Second floor Plan of refurbished existing unit



Two storey high trees on the Eastern boundary



Existing shrub and trees on the Eastern boundary to be retained



Sketch section through the courtyard block that demonstrates the proposed change to the massing near to the Eastern boundary in response to the planners comments

- The images of the existing 1.5/2 storey high trees and thicket on the boundary (which will be retained) shows that it will be difficult to see the proposal from the neighbouring buildings.
- There are no proposed windows at first floor looking toward the boundary.
- The massing is reduced through the introduction of a half barrel vault roof in response to the planners comments. This reduces the impact of massing near to boundary.
- The half barrel vault roof will be clad in materials to ensure a positive outlook from neighbouring buildings onto the scheme.

4.1 Extent of development and Amenity



View of two storey new build from the ancillary courtyard.

The proposed development, through refurbishment of the existing front building and by providing new buildings around the perimeter of the site, enclosing a central communal garden and creating two courtyards plus individual gardens, would provide 17 units in the existing and 46 units in the new build, Giving a total of **63 units**.

The alteration / development of the existing building is mainly to improve the standard of residential accommodation on the second and third floor and gain unusable floor space. The proposed new buildings to the rear of the site create small pockets of external space, that rationalise the arrangement of accommodation around the site whilst minimising a reliance on corridor circulation. The new large central communal garden and axial courtyards which are created will provide far greater amenity and opportunity; and the arrangement of the accommodation around these spaces provides clear way-finding and sensitive massing.

The proposed extent of new development along the eastern, western and southern boundaries has been carefully considered with respect to the surrounding buildings. The 2 storey building along the eastern boundary will have self-contained studio units with their primary aspects orientated towards terraced balconies and courtyards thus significantly minimising overlooking into the neighbouring properties.

Along the western and southern boundary, the building is a low one and a half storey building with a barrel roof with primary aspect facing the communal garden, thus not affecting the privacy of the neighbours to the rear. Roof light windows have been added to the south facing elevation of the existing building to bring additional light into the mezzanine bed space.

The design of the new building elements have been carefully considered and refined through the design process to ensure that the massing reduces accordingly and minimises any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupants.

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