

WARD: Clifton CONTACT OFFICER: Susannah Pettit
 SITE ADDRESS: 1A Ambra Vale Bristol BS8 4RW

APPLICATION NO: 15/04646/F Full Planning
 EXPIRY DATE: 5 November 2015

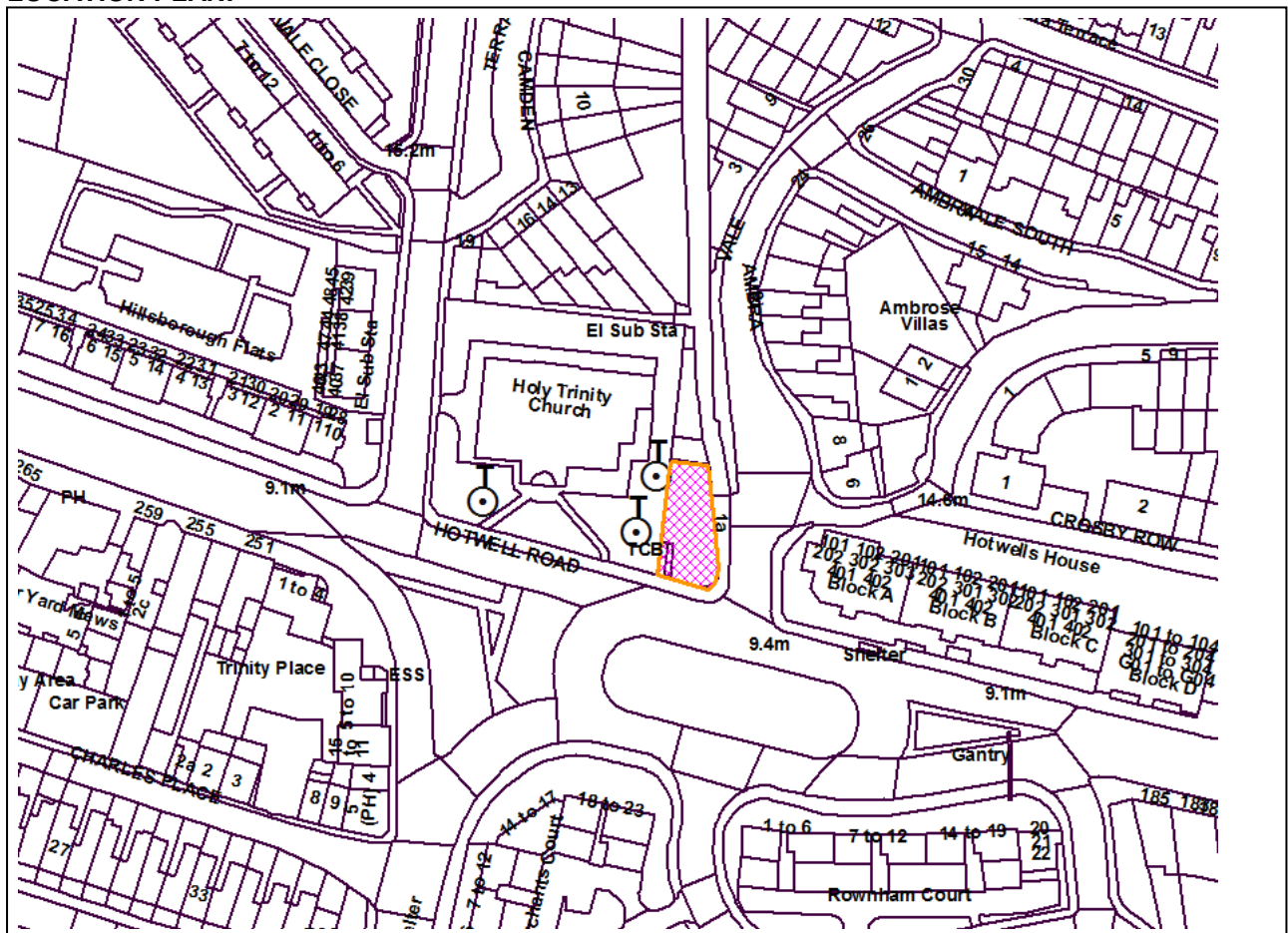
Proposed change of use of the ground floor car park and associated storage area to a student cluster flat (C4) together with associated external alterations.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

AGENT: Mrs Rebecca Morgan
 45 Oakfield Road
 Bristol
 BS8 2AX
 APPLICANT: Iesis Ltd
 C/o Agent

The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.

LOCATION PLAN:



Development Control Committee A – 13 January 2016
Application No. 15/04646/F : 1A Ambra Vale Bristol BS8 4RW

SUMMARY

The application has been referred to committee by officers, due to the number of objections received and also due to the proposed recommendation by officers to refuse the application. The recommended reason for refusal is based on an issue that has not been tested at appeal, and officers therefore deemed it appropriate that the Members take this decision following the benefit of a public discussion.

The application seeks to infill the garage to form a 4 bedroom HMO (C4 use class) for students. There would be a communal kitchen/dining room, and an area for refuse and cycle storage for the whole block would be retained within the building at ground floor level.

A total of 16 objections have been received in response to this application, raising parking pressure, refuse storage, quality of accommodation and resistance to having student accommodation in the area.

Having taken into account the objections and the requirements of adopted Bristol policies, officers are recommending refusal of this application on the basis that the unit would offer a poor quality of accommodation, which is explored in full in the report.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to a recently constructed and occupied block of 5 flats on the corner of Ambra Vale and Hotwell Road. The building is a modern, red brick construction which is four storeys fronting Hotwell Road, reducing to three storeys as it addresses the rise in land round the corner on Ambra Vale. Adjacent to the site to the west is the Holy Trinity Church which is a grade II listed building. Access to the building is at raised ground floor level fronting Alma Vale, and this is also the entrance to the undercroft garage which contains refuse and cycle stores, with 5 car parking spaces and a cycle enclosure.

The area surrounding the site is predominantly residential, albeit bisected by the busy A4 (Hotwell Road). Surrounding streets are subject of a Residents Parking Scheme which is in effect between 9am-5pm.

RELEVANT HISTORY

07/02822/F: Planning permission was refused and later granted on appeal on 11.08.08 for the demolition of existing house and construction of 3/4 storey building comprising 3 No. 2 bed flats, 1 no. 3 bed maisonette and 1 no. 1 bed flat.

10/03709/F: Planning permission was granted on 15 November 2010 for the construction of a 3/4 storey building to accommodate five residential units, with integral car parking.

APPLICATION

The application seeks to infill the garage to form a 4 bedroom HMO (C4 use class) for students. There would be a communal kitchen/dining room, and an area for refuse and cycle storage for the whole block would be retained within the building at ground floor level.

The entrance would be recessed and the new elevation would be faced with glass blockwork and render.

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RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION

The application has been advertised by letter, site notice and press advert. 176 letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 29.09.15 giving 21 days to comment. Press advert and site notice were both posted on 07.10.15.

A total of 16 objections have been received in response to this application, and the issues raised are summarised below:

Parking

- The proposal will remove car parking spaces from the street and introduce more students who may bring cars with them.
- Even with the current Residents Parking Scheme it is difficult to find a space at night.
- The impacts of the proposal will be felt in neighbouring streets as well.
- The proposal will remove parking from the existing development, which was granted on the basis that off-street parking was provided.

Refuse storage

- The current building is not well managed, and refuse is consistently left out on the street. This will only worsen as a result of the proposal. This also impacts negatively on the appearance of the conservation area.

Quality of Accommodation

- The scheme offers a poor living environment and the communal area and bedrooms would have very limited natural light.
- The scheme represents an overdevelopment of the site.

Students

- The area is becoming increasingly 'studentified', and this brings with it problems such as late-night-shoutings and bottle-breakings.

OTHER COMMENTS

Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society

- The quality of accommodation is very poor. It is cramped and lacks natural light.
- There are already too many units squashed into this small site.
- There are already too many students in this area causing nuisance to local families.
- The addition of more dwellings in the area would add to existing problems with refuse storage.
- Residents already experience serious parking problems which this proposal would exacerbate.

RELEVANT POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Bristol Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011)

BCS2	Bristol City Centre
BCS5	Housing Provision
BCS10	Transport and Access Improvements
BCS13	Climate Change
BCS15	Sustainable Design and Construction
BCS16	Flood Risk and Water Management
BCS18	Housing Type
BCS20	Effective and Efficient Use of Land

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BCS21 Quality Urban Design
 BCS22 Conservation and the Historic Environment

Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014)

DM14 The health impacts of development
 DM1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 DM23 Transport development management
 DM27 Layout and form
 DM30 Alterations to existing buildings
 DM31 Heritage assets
 DM32 Recycling and refuse provision in new development

Bristol Central Area Plan (Adopted March 2015)

BCAP4 Specialist student housing in Bristol City Centre
 BCAP5 Development and flood risk
 BCAP29 Car and cycle parking

KEY ISSUES

(A) IS THE PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE IN LAND-USE TERMS

The applicant's description of the proposed development is for a student cluster flat within C4 use. Whilst the description specifies that the unit would be used by students, a C4 use class defines a House in Multiple Occupation which could be used by non-students.

The existing building is in use as 5 private flats, (1 x 3 bed and 4 x 2 bed). The application cover letter states that these are in use as small C4 units (HMOs) and some of the responses to the consultation have claimed the flats are occupied by students.

For student housing, Policy BCAP4 "Specialist student housing in Bristol City Centre" directs consideration to the mix of housing within a given area and whether the development would result in concentrations of specialist student housing that would be harmful to residential amenity. The policy also states that where there is little or no residential population, some clustering of student housing may be appropriate.

The same policy also states that student schemes should not lead to a harmful concentration of specialist student housing in a given area. The supporting paragraphs go on to state that "when making assessments on residential amenity, consideration should be given to the particular qualities and characteristics of a residential area ... that might contribute to it being an enjoyable or otherwise satisfactory place to live. These generally include quieter surroundings, a reasonable level of safe accessible and convenient car parking and a well maintained or visually attractive environment."

Comments received in response to the publicity exercise have included complaints about the amount of student accommodation already in the area, and the problems this is perceived to bring about. Whilst the area to the north of the site is predominantly residential, the site is within the city centre which policy DM2 asserts would be an acceptable location for specialist student housing schemes. The issue of concentration of student accommodation within the City Centre has been assessed. For assessment against this policy, the main impacts of the proposal would be felt on Ambra Vale, since this is where the entrance to the building is. Most of the student accommodation in the area is located on Hotwell Road, where its impact is absorbed to a certain extent by the sites' location on the main road. For the current proposal, impacts on residents on Ambra Vale can be therefore broken down into the following three categories:

- Quieter surroundings;

Response: It is not considered that the addition of a 4 person HMO would significantly add to noise

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levels in the area

- Safe, accessible and convenient car parking;

Response: Many of the objections have highlighted problems with existing parking in the area, and the proposal would mean that 5 car parking spaces in the current scheme would be displaced and any new occupiers with cars would not be able to park. Any approval of this scheme would be subject to the informative that all residents of the building on site shall be made exempt from obtaining car parking permits in the Residents Parking Scheme, and as such, it is not considered that unreasonable pressure would be placed on parking in the surrounding streets. The issue of parking is further explored in the transport section (C) below.

- Appearance:

Whilst the proposed elevation to the infill of the undercroft would not give rise to any adverse design issues (which are fully explored in section (D) below), the current storage of refuse and recycling containers is having an unacceptable impact on the building in the streetscene, when viewed from Ambra Vale. The proposed drawings do however show that an acceptable refuse storage solution can be provided on site and this is also explored in transport section (C) below.

The problems highlighted above are current, and it is not considered that the proposed addition of a 4 person HMO would significantly worsen the surroundings or give rise to a harmful concentration of student accommodation in the area. It is appreciated that there are currently issues with the site, and these are weighed against the assessment of this scheme in the following paragraphs.

In land-use terms, the proposal is therefore acceptable.

(B) WOULD THE PROPOSAL OFFER AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD OF ACCOMMODATION?

Good design and protection and enhancement of the environment are critical components of central government guidance, as identified in the NPPF. Adopted Bristol Core Strategy Policy BCS18 makes specific reference to residential developments providing sufficient space for everyday activities and space which should be flexible and adaptable. In addition, Policy BCS21 sets out criteria for the assessment of design quality in new development and states that development will be expected to create a high-quality environment for future occupiers.

DM27 Layout and Form expects proposals to enable existing and proposed development to achieve appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and daylight; enable the provision of adequate appropriate and usable private or communal amenity space, defensible space, parking and servicing where necessary. DM30 requires alterations to existing buildings to safeguard the amenity of the host premises and neighbouring occupiers.

C4 units (Houses in Multiple Occupation) and the National Space Standards

The National Space Standards which came into force on 1 October 2015 provide standards for new residential development, and are applied to all new dwellings across all tenures. The standards do not apply to student accommodation, however, as the application description is for a C4 (house in multiple occupation) an assessment has been made against the standards. The overall floor area of the proposed unit is 72.3sqm, with individual bedrooms being 11sqm each and a communal living area (kitchen and dining room) of 16.3sqm. There is no standard for a 4b4p unit, but the standard for 4b5p flat is 90sqm. A 3b4p unit must be 74sqm. The unit therefore falls below the standards for each size of dwelling.

Quality of Accommodation

The bedrooms would all have a narrow window opening onto the brick boundary wall, but there would be no windows in the communal dining area, or shower room. This is considered to result in a poor quality of accommodation due to the lack of outlook from the proposed unit, limited opportunity for cross ventilation, and general cramped layout of the unit, which would be likely to

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have an adverse impact on health and wellbeing of its inhabitants. There is no storage space, and limited circulation space within the unit, and whilst it would be inhabited by students normally on a short-term let basis, this is not considered adequate justification for such poor quality accommodation.

(C) IS THE PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE IN TRANSPORT TERMS?

DM23 requires proposals to provide a level of safe, secure and accessible parking in line with the adopted parking standards, and to provide appropriate servicing and loading facilities.

Car Parking

Officers have considered the issue of the 5 cars which currently benefit from off-street parking spaces being displaced onto the highway, and whether this would place unreasonable pressure on the surrounding Residents Parking Scheme. This has also been weighed up against the consideration from the previous approval (BCC ref: 10/03709/F) which explored the level of off-street parking, and at the time, off-street parking was considered to be justified. Under current policy and in this sustainable location, a car-free development of 6 units (which would be the resulting capacity of the unit with the proposal in place) would not give cause for undue concern and would be supported. The expectation in this location is that residents move away from reliance on the private vehicle, and use more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. The removal of the garage, and the likely exemption of new residents from applying for car parking permits would encourage this modal shift. The site is also in a sustainable location where private cars are not essential due to the proximity of bus stops as well as local shops and services. There is therefore no transport reason to refuse this application on the basis of parking pressure in the area.

Cycle storage

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies sets out the minimum standards for bicycle parking which all developments must comply with. Space for 8 cycles is proposed here, and these are in the form of Sheffield stands within in the ground floor storage area. Whilst the standard for a development of this size (incorporating the existing units) would be 11 spaces, the applicant has pointed out that the existing development only provides storage for 5 cycles as this was implemented under old policies which have now been superseded by more ambitious ones in relation to cycle storage. The development proposed under this application is required to provide 3 spaces to comply with the standards, therefore a total of 8 for the development is acceptable in this instance. The cycle storage facility is accessed through two doors, and around a corner with other doors opening out onto it, and is therefore not very well-located and may serve to discourage users. However, there is sufficient space for storage and this matter alone is not a reason to refuse the application.

Refuse and Recycling storage

Policy DM32 requires shared housing schemes to provide shared recycling facilities and refuse bins of sufficient capacity to serve the proposed development. Further standards are set out in the Council's Practice Note for developers: "Waste and recycling: Collection and storage facilities", which includes the types of bins and capacity required for each development size. The proposed drawing shows that there would be sufficient space for the storage of refuse for the entire development in an area of the ground floor. Whilst the current development appears from a site visit to experience management issues with returning containers to the storage area following collection, the applicant's agent has provided assurance that the management company will be responsible for returning bins to their allocated area within the proposed scheme. If recommended for approval, a condition on waste management would be imposed to ensure the containers are returned to the storage area following collection and not left on the front forecourt

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area.

(D) WOULD THE PROPOSAL SAFEGUARD THE APPEARANCE AND SETTING OF THE NEARBY LISTED BUILDING AND SURROUNDING CONSERVATION AREA?

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Authority is also required (under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Section 12 of the national guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, with any harm or loss requiring clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Further, Para.133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Finally, Para 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

In addition, the adopted policies BCS22 and DM31 seek to ensure that development proposals safeguard or enhance heritage assets in the city.

The only building works would be to infill the ground floor undercroft area, and the new elevation would face Ambra Vale with a recessed entrance in the same place as existing. This elevation would be constructed from glass blocks and a rendered panel which would be in keeping with the materials used on the rest of the building. The elevation facing rear (west) would not be visible from the wider public realm as it would remain behind an existing brick boundary wall. It is not considered that the physical alterations proposed would result in any harm to the setting of the listed building, and they would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

CONCLUSION

Due to the cramped layout of the proposed unit, with limited outlook for its residents, limited circulation and storage space, the proposal would fail to offer an acceptable standard of accommodation for future residents. This would result in harm to their amenity and may also have adverse impacts on their health and well-being. Refusal is therefore recommended.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The CIL liability for this development is £11,200

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RECOMMENDED REFUSED

The following reason(s) for refusal are associated with this decision:

Reason(s)

1. Due to the cramped layout of the proposed unit, with severely limited outlook for its residents, limited opportunities for cross ventilation, and limited circulation and storage space, the proposal would fail to offer an acceptable standard of accommodation for future residents. This would result in harm to their amenity, which is contrary to BCS18 and BCS21 of the Core Strategy 2011; and DM27 and DM30 of Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014.

Advice(s)

1. Refused Applications Deposited Plans/Documents

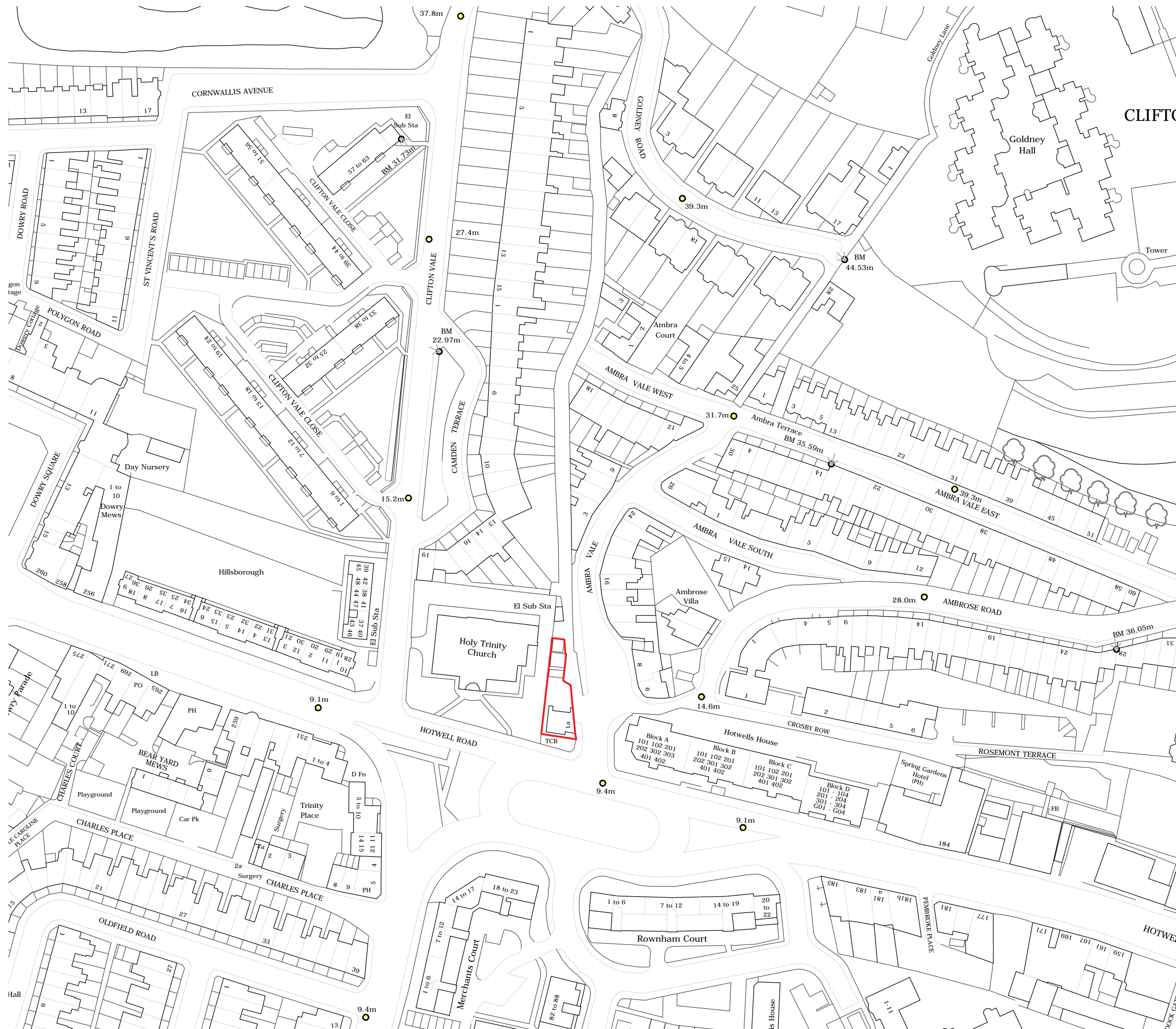
The plans that were formally considered as part of the above application are as follows:-

Site Plan, received 10 September 2015
07.106.05 Proposed Site/Roof Plan, received 10 September 2015
Site Location Plan, received 10 September 2015
Sustainability Statement and Energy Strategy, received 10 September 2015
Application Cover Letter, received 10 September 2015
AVCP-15-01, received 11 December 2015
AVCP-15-02B, received 11 December 2015
AVCP-15-03B, received 11 December 2015
AVCP-15-04 , received 11 December 2015

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Flood Risk Manager

24 September 2015



CLIFTON

Goldney Hall

Tower

Holy Trinity Church

Hillsborough

Hotwells House

Rownham Court

Spring Gardens Hotel (PH)

ROSEMONT TERRACE

HOTWELL

revision

drawing number

Site Location Plan

drawing title
PROPOSED PLANS

scale
1:1250 @ A3

date
MARCH 2015

project
Ambra Vale

Aspect360 Ltd
45 Oakfield Road Clifton Bristol BS8 2AX UK

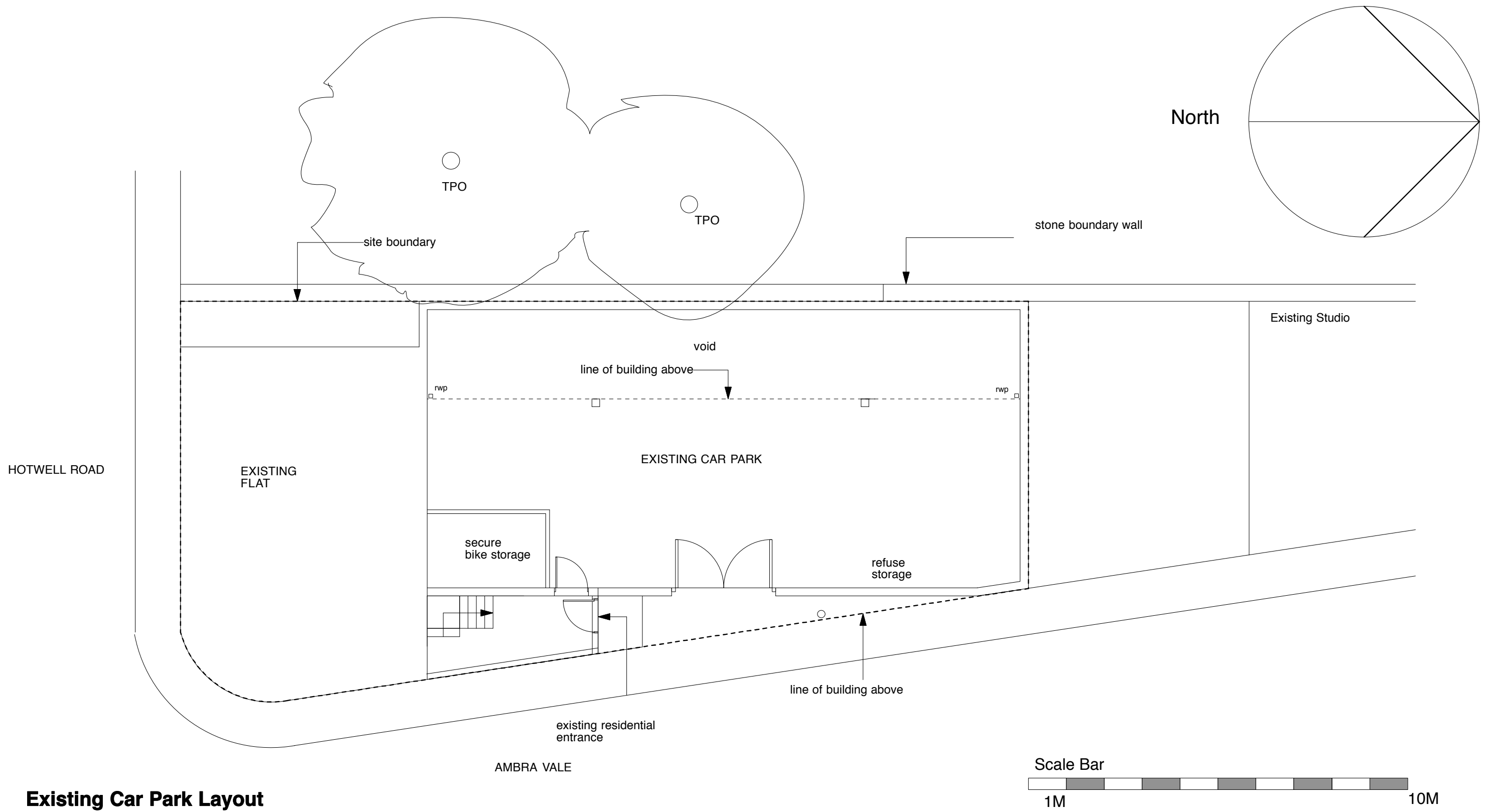
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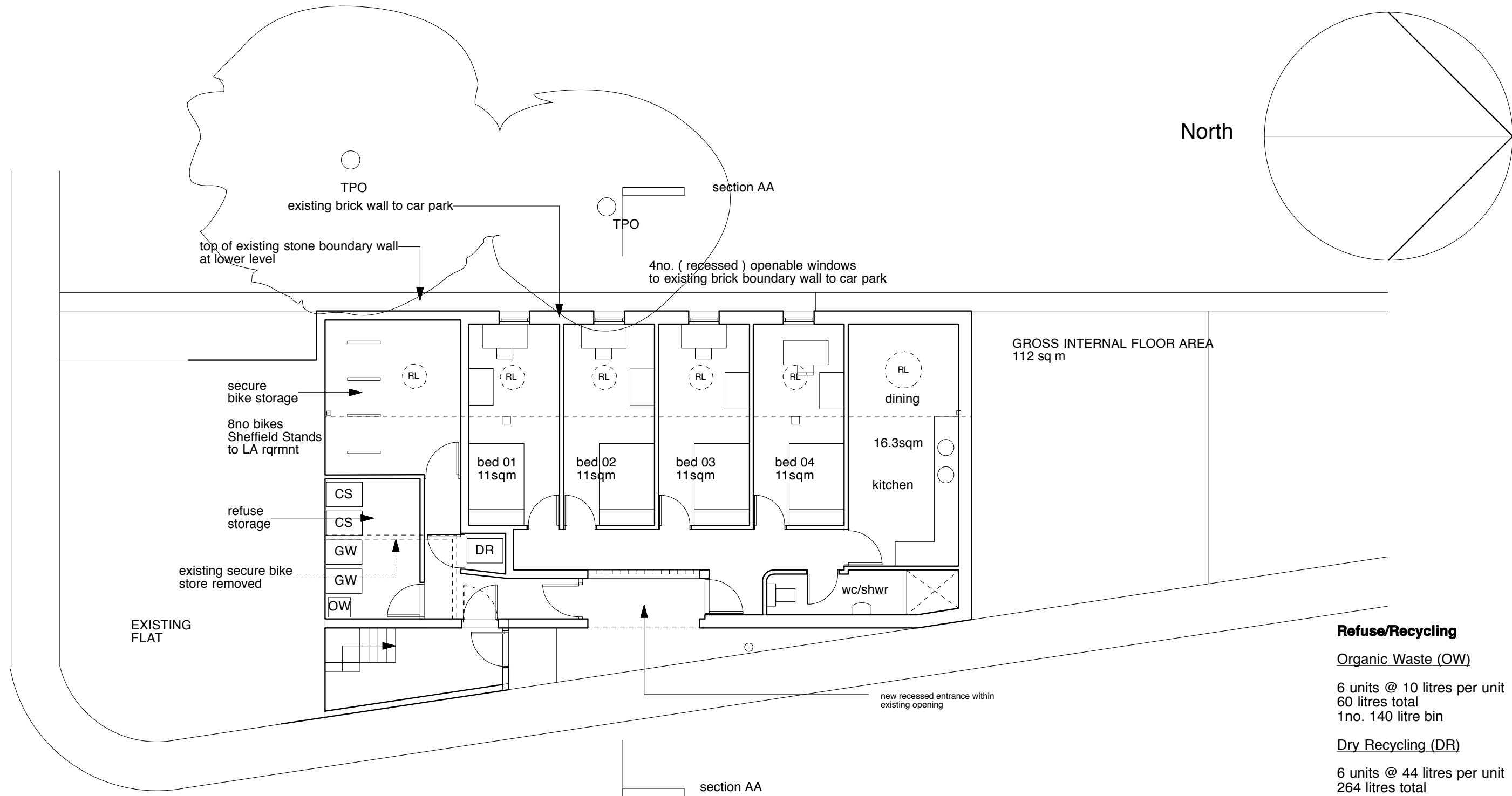


Existing Car Park Layout

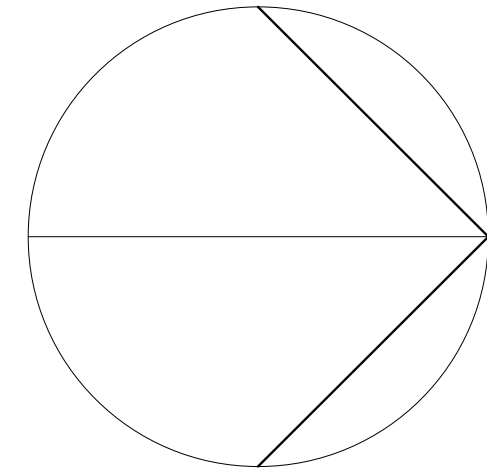
1A Ambra Vale, Cliftonwood, Bristol.
Existing Floor Plans
 Scale. 1:100@A3

McKee Architects - 83 Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2DE
 tel 0117 973 2664 (m.mckee2005@btinternet.com)
 date 2.6.2015

Drwg.No. AVCP-15-01



North



Proposed Residential Layout

Revisions

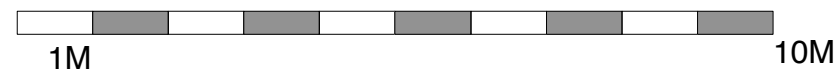
Rev. A. 22.10.2015

Bike and Refuse/Recycling storage separated and enclosed
Bike store increased in size

Rev. B. 2.12.2015

Windows to study bedrooms increased in size/ position of existing trees with preservation order indicated

Scale Bar



Refuse/Recycling

Organic Waste (OW)

6 units @ 10 litres per unit
60 litres total
1no. 140 litre bin

Dry Recycling (DR)

6 units @ 44 litres per unit
264 litres total
1no. 360 litre bin
(in separate store)

General Waste (GW)

6 units @ 120 litre per unit
720 litres total
2no. 360 litre bins

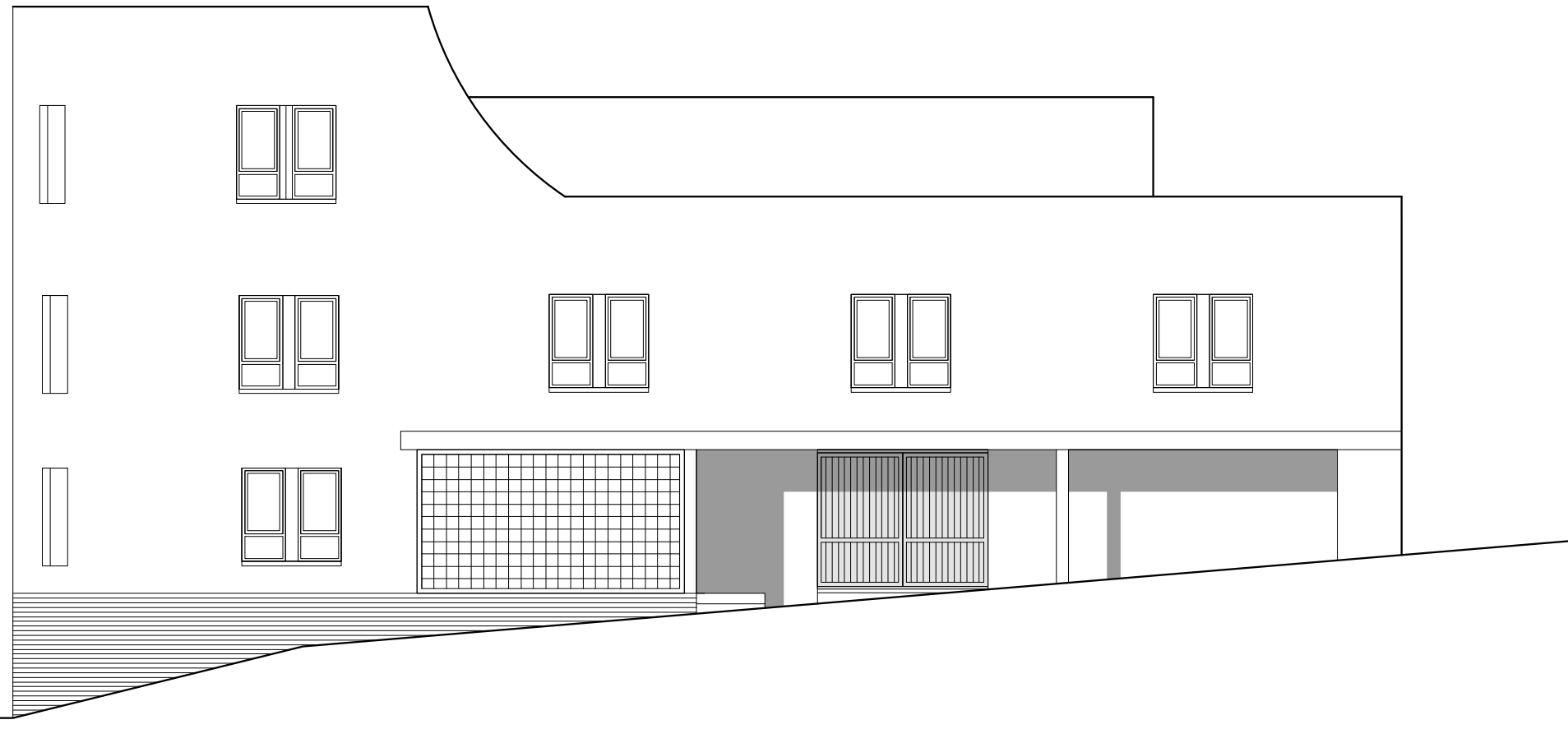
Cardboard Storage (CS)

660 litre total requirement
2no. 360 litre bins

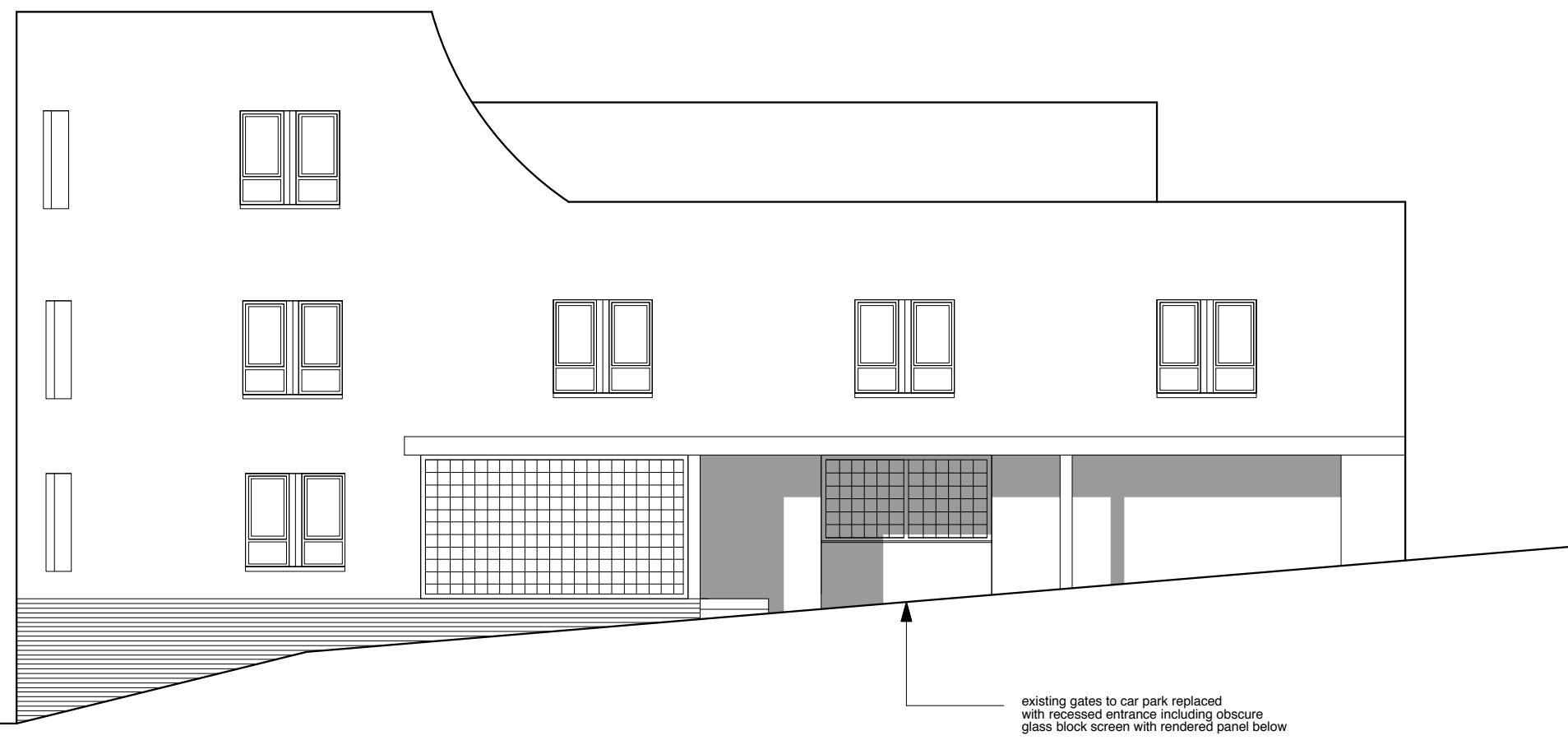
1A Ambra Vale, Cliftonwood, Bristol.
Proposed Floor Plans
Scale. 1:100@A3

McKee Architects - 83 Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2DE
tel 0117 973 2664 (m.mckee2005@btinternet.com)
date 2.6.2015

Drwg.No. AVCP-15-02 Rev. B.



EXISTING ELEVATION to AMBRA VALE



existing gates to car park replaced
with recessed entrance including obscure
glass block screen with rendered panel below

PROPOSED ELEVATION to AMBRA VALE

Revisions

- Rev. A. 22.10.2015
- Detail to new pedestrian entrance screen ammended as shown
- Rev. B. 2.12.2015
- Outline of existing building added

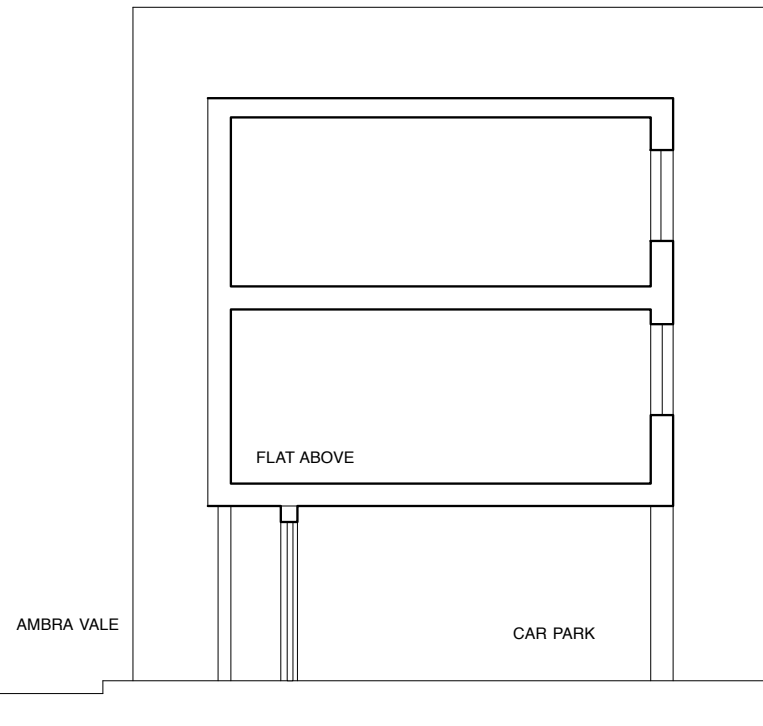
Scale Bar



1A Ambra Vale, Cliftonwood, Bristol.
Existing and Proposed Elevations to Ambra Vale
 Scale. 1:100@A3

McKee Architects - 83 Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2DE
 tel 0117 973 2664 (m.mckee2005@btinternet.com)
 date 2.6.2015

Drwg.No. AVCP-15-03 Rev. B.

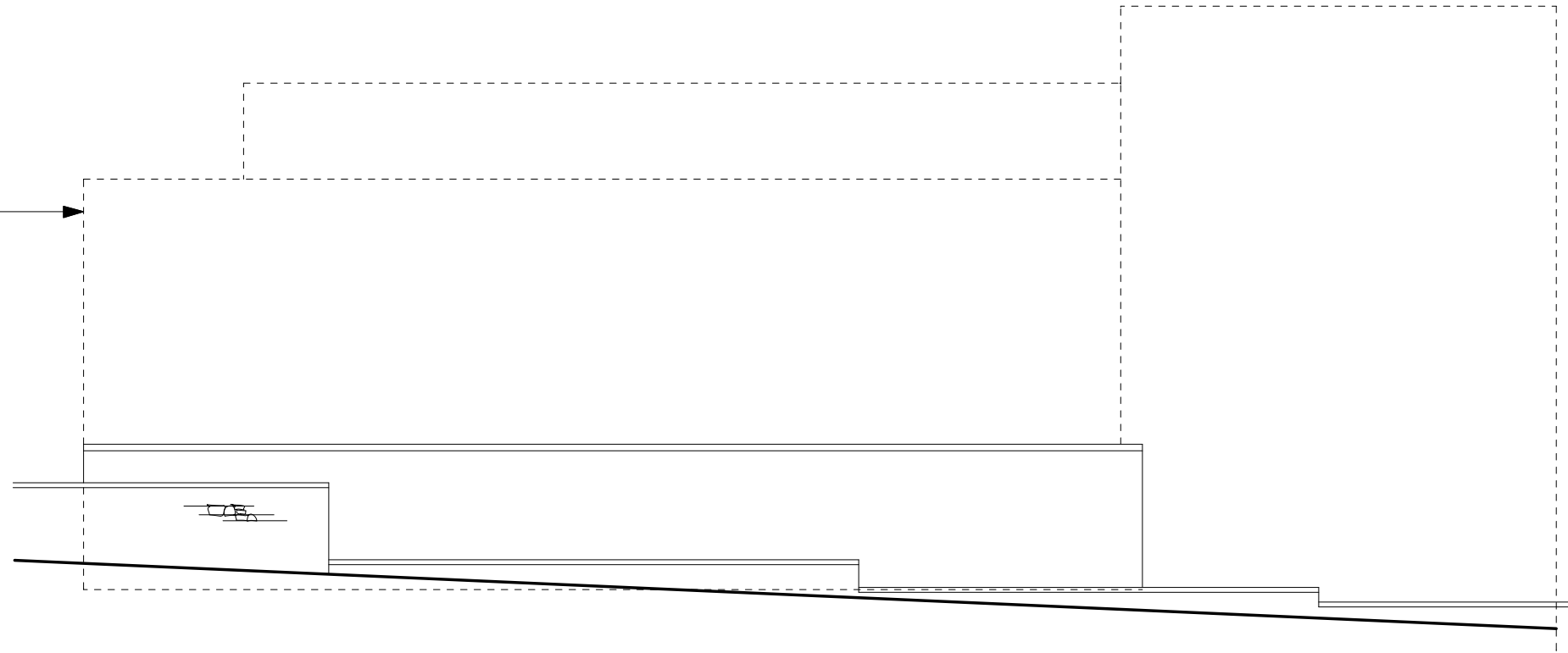


EXISTING SECTION

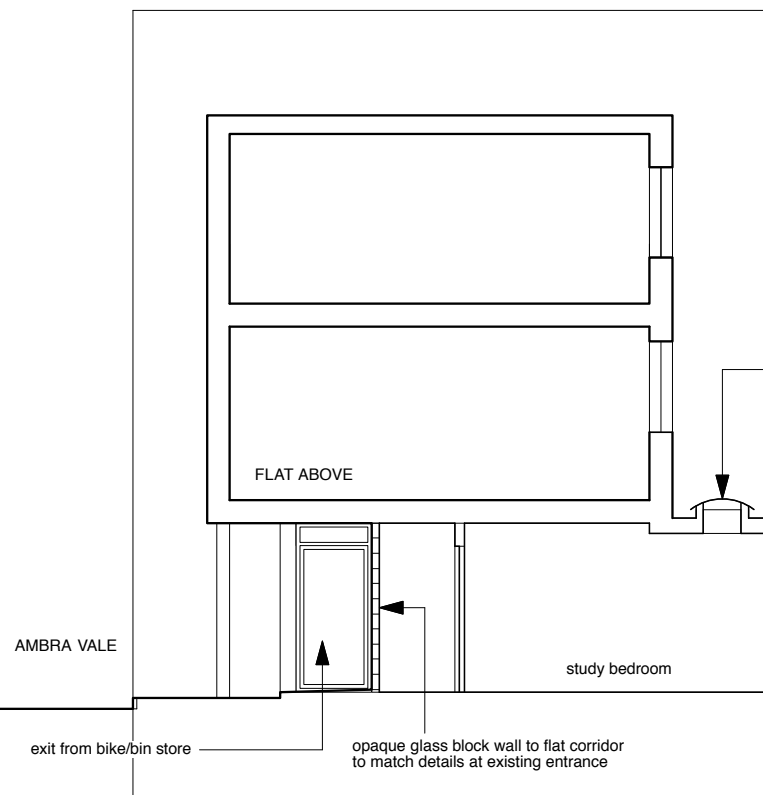
outline of existing building behind

existing brick boundary wall to car park

existing stone boundary wall, height varies



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED SECTION AA

dark grey single ply roof with pebble finish

600 diam rooflight with obscured glazing

height of existing boundary wall to car park increased by 450mm in matching brickwork and coping

750 wide recessed window

existing stone boundary wall to churchyard (varies in height)

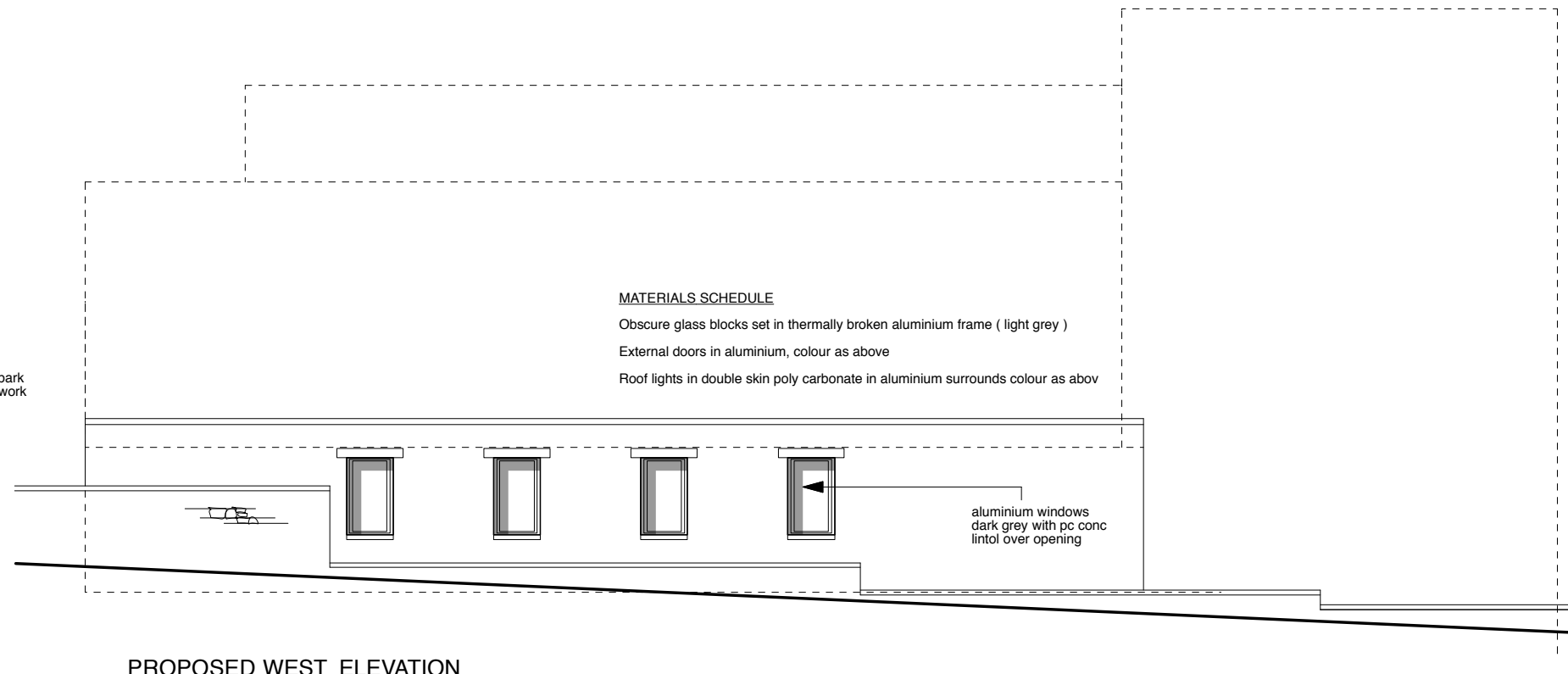
MATERIALS SCHEDULE

Obscure glass blocks set in thermally broken aluminium frame (light grey)

External doors in aluminium, colour as above

Roof lights in double skin poly carbonate in aluminium surrounds colour as above

aluminium windows dark grey with pc conc lintol over opening



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

Revisions

Rev. A. 2.12.2015

windows to study bedrooms increased in size

outline of existing building added

Rev. B. 4.12.2105

line of boundary wall added to drawing

Scale Bar



1A Ambra Vale, Cliftonwood, Bristol.
Existing and Proposed Sections/Elevations
 Scale. 1:100@A3

McKee Architects - 83 Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2DE
 tel 0117 973 2664 (m.mckee2005@btinternet.com)
 date 2.6.2015

Drwg.No. AVCP-15-04 Rev B