

Heritage Impact Assessment
Manselton Primary School,
Manor Road, Manselton SA5 9PA

By Anva



Introduction

This statement supports a planning application for conversion of former school building 51 no residential units, outbuilding demolition and rebuild 3 storey building with retail shop and 8 residential units. House 3 no. 2 storey, new refuse, playground, cycle places, new market car park with disabled car park, loading and ambulance place, surrounding gardens walls, repairing walls and fences, new main access from Manor Road with sliding gates.

First and foremost, saving the Manselton School building is the most important thing. Ensuring that it is given a viable and commercially sustainable use, which will ensure its regular maintenance and upkeep and many more years of life, is paramount. This is what these proposals achieve, and, in that respect, they tick the first, and most important, box. In an ideal world, existing / historic buildings are brought back into use in their original use - especially if that has been its use for its entire life, which is the case here. However, in this case, a school is simply not viable. Whilst Manselton School was a ground-breaking school in 1902 when it opened, influencing the design of schools to come; school design and operation have changed significantly in the last 120 years, and Manselton School's configuration and facilities are simply not viable. This is borne out by its closure in 2012. However, the Developer sees residential use as being viable.

Exterior

Secondly, retaining the existing (and, in this case, original) form of the building - not removing any part of all - is important. Again, the proposals do this - the main form is retained.

Whilst it is often the case that new structures are built onto historic buildings - and, as long as they are of a contemporary design - this is often acceptable. However, from the perspective of one's appreciation of the existing building, it is better if no new structure is built on. Again, with Manselton School, no such extension is proposed. This is again a positive, meaning that the original building will still be perceived as it was in 1902.

Thirdly, it is ideal if the existing / original external envelope materials are retained; and, where they might be in a poor condition, repaired or, if repair is not an option, renewed like-for-like. In the event that original materials have been replaced in the past with inappropriate replacements, then, if possible, ideally these are removed and reinstated with something closer to the original, if that can be established.

The proposals for Manselton School do just this. There is no intention to lose any of the stonework, only to repair, or replace like-for-like any stone which is deemed too damaged to be retained. However, where inappropriate cement mortar has been used to point the stonework joints - and has had a considerable detrimental impact on the stonework - the proposals would replace that with a lime-based mortar more akin to the original.

The roof covering - of clay tiles - is in a very poor condition, with many tiles lost, slipped or broken. Likewise, the proposals would seek to retain as much of the roof tiling as possible, however, look to replicate the original Broseley tiles where new tiles are required. In the same vein, most of the windows

are of timber sash – as original – however, the large windows to the front are now of uPVC, however, were originally timber sashes.

The proposals would look to repair any damage to the existing timber window frames, using best-practice conservation techniques; and, where frames need replacing, replace them like-for-like with timber sashes. In the case of the uPVC windows, the proposals would look to replace them with timber sashes, as they originally were. In these respects, the proposals are extremely sympathetic to the existing (and, in the main, original) design and fabric. We have been sent two sets of plans, one dated to 2016 and the other without a date. That dated 2016, we have termed 'Version 2' and that without a date, we have termed 'Version 1', as we believe it to pre-date the 2016 plans. Part of the Version 1 proposals involves the removal of one of the internal staircases to the east and west towers and the entrance doors to these staircases blocked up. This means that the two original entrance doors – with stonework carvings above stating 'Boys' and 'Girls' – would be taken out of use. This would be a pity and would ideally be avoided. If, however, this were to happen, then one would still expect the doors to remain in place, albeit with the opening behind blocked up. This being said, the plans for Version 2 do not remove those staircases and hence retain the use of these two primary entrance doors. This solution is preferred.

Wider Site

Aside from the Annex, there are 3no. out-buildings on the wider site, amongst the tarmac apron, along with an external walled area. The proposals involve the construction of 3no. new out-buildings for residential use. 2no. of these are in the same position as the current buildings and the third is a mirror of the smaller. In this respect, the proposed new buildings are a pretty consistent match, in terms of footprint and location, as the existing; albeit they are, in each case, a little larger than the existing buildings.

Manselton School's original prominence, as a building, was, in part, due to its isolation from the surrounding residential terraces, and the fact that it sat in the middle of its site with open hard surfacing around. The existing buildings have impinged upon that and set a precedent for out-buildings on the site. Because of this, it is not unreasonable to build new out-buildings to replace the existing. However, it is a pity, as it would be great if the School could, once again, be uncluttered within its site. The other reason why it would be ideal to remove the current outbuildings and not replace them, is because the majority, if not all, of the objections to the 2016 proposals from the public relate to concerns about parking. The more open space there is for parking, and a playground and some soft landscaping, the less likely those objections will be repeated. This being said, it is completely understandable that some monies need to be acquired through the development of the wider site to pay for the repair and adaptation of the existing buildings.

Interior

We have produced a series of sheets, which follow, with the Existing and Proposed Plans (as provided by anva architectural, engineering and licensing) and the Significance Plans (produced by Ashley Davies Architects) and we have reviewed them for the internal layout proposals. As stated, we have been sent two sets of plans, one dated to 2016 and the other without a date. That dated 2016, we have termed

'Version 2' and that without a date, we have termed 'Version 1', as we believe it to predate the 2016 plans. Both are included on the sheets.

On the mark-ups, we have identified – in red – existing walls which are original (or more recent walls on the line of the original walls) which the proposals seek to remove. In green, we have identified the locations where the proposal is for new walls on the line of the original walls. We would ask whether it would be

possible to retain the existing walls, as long as they are deemed to meet the requisite fire and/or acoustic standard; and, if they do not, whether an extra skin of fireline board, on one or both faces, might allow for their retention.

We have also identified – in dotted boxes – areas where the existing fabric (which we believe to be original) is proposed for removal. Those boxes in red relate to fabric proposed for removal which we would suggest ideally would not be removed, as they are of considerable heritage significance. Those boxes in orange identify fabric which would ideally also not be removed, however, which we can understand the benefit of removal and can see some justification for its removal.

First and foremost here, the proposals retain all of the outer walls as they are, and the most important inner walls which form the enclosure to the 'Central Halls'. In this respect, no structure and fabric deemed to be of considerable significance is being lost to the main body of the building. Some structure and fabric to the 2no. entrance towers, deemed to be of considerable significance, is however being lost. This is principally because there are two staircases in each tower and only one is required for the proposals.

The general approach for both Version 1 and 2 layouts is to insert a new 'mezzanine' floor within all three of the floors to the main building and provide 6no. floor plates. With floor-to-soffit heights of around 5 metres, this is a viable proposal, providing 6no. floors of between 2.28 metres and 2.65 metres clear height. The 2.28 metres to the two ground floor plates and the 2.33 metres to the two first floor plates are a little tight (the ground floor particularly), not least as this does not include for the downstand beams to the upper level of these two floors (although these all appear to be on the line of a partition, so may not be an issue); however, it is maybe viable. The top floor to the main central space, however, which would sit within the timber segmental arched trusses, would provide some characterful spaces.

The insertion of new mezzanine floors would, of course, result in a significant change to the spaces, compromising their historical and aesthetic values. Ideally, there would be no floor insertions and each space would retain their current volume. However, clearly this would result in a halving of the available floor space, and the spaces being much larger and more spacious than required; and would make the scheme unviable. One has to weigh up the risk of the building not being brought back into use and dilapidating further, against the insertion of new floors and partitions and the change that results in.

The Significance Plans identify the peripheral spaces to the 'U' of the planform to the north, east and west as of 'some significance', they identify the central large south space as being of 'considerable significance'. This is because these were the main Central Hall of each floor, and they have never been sub-divided.

Clearly, to sub-divide these three 'Central Hall' spaces would result in a complete change in the character of the spaces and their loss as historic spaces of significance. Their historical and aesthetic values would be compromised. However, they need not necessarily be lost, as no evidential value – or little - need be removed and an approach using 'reversible' construction would mean that the spaces could, in time, be reverted back to their original form.

Some suggestion has been made of one of these 'Central Hall' spaces being left as it is – i.e. no partitioning and no mezzanine floor – and brought into non-residential use, be that for community, commercial or other use. This would be considered to be a significant benefit, providing not only mixed use to the site and day-time occupancy and activity, but also leaving one of the most historically significant spaces unchanged and able to help tell the story of how the school used to work. Clearly, if the space needs to be publicly accessible – as a community space would certainly need – then it would have to be the ground

floor. This is good, and would be a beneficial variation to the proposals. This area has been identified on our mark-up of the ground floor in an orange dotted box. However, arguably, the top floor would be the more interesting space to remain open as, with its exposed timber and iron trusses and open roofspace, it is a more aesthetically interesting space.

Going back to the insertion of the intermediate mezzanine floors: to all spaces, where the floors meet the windows, the proposals return up behind the windows to form an isolated box-within-a-box with an upstand and secondary glazing. Fortunately, the window pattern, split into three sections, would accommodate this; as the central pane of glass would be frosted. To avoid both fire and acoustic bridging, it would be necessary, one assumes, for the new windows to the upper level to be unopenable. This does cause concern for ventilation, comfort and emergency escape. There would also be a similar concern for the opening of the lower sash window to the floor below, which should slide behind the central sash, meaning that the low upstand wall would need to be set some distance inside the window so that the sash below could slide into a gap above. Were the existing uPVC windows to remain, then this would be viable, as the top two panes do not open. However, were these windows to be replaced with replicate timber sash windows, this would result in a series of compromises. Indeed, regardless of what is proposed for the south front elevation, in the case of the rear elevation (and hence the north-facing flats), which are currently timber sashes of this design, these compromises would be apparent.

In Version 2 of the proposals, this issue might, however, be overcome by the fact that the new inserted floors would not be floors between flats, requiring fire and acoustic separation, but floors between living spaces and bedrooms. Whilst these might still want acoustic separation, the requirements would be less stringent. There might also be a design which provide a double-height void at the windows, removing the problem. This, however, would mean that the bedrooms would not have access to windows – or that the bedrooms would be 'open' to this double-height void and to the transfer of sound and smells. Both Version 1 and 2 propose the removal of one of the two staircases in the two entrance towers. Assuming that the design does not require both for escape or access, then removing one is an obvious and commercially understandable approach to maximise usable floor area. Interestingly, the two versions remove different staircases. Given the fact that the south staircases are accessed from the two main entrances, with 'Boys' and 'Girls' above the doors, it seems to make most sense to retain those staircases, as Version 2 does, and remove the east and west staircases.

Both versions include the removal of most, if not all, of the existing internal partitions which are deemed to be original, of at least on the original lines. However, generally, more of the proposed new partitions to Version 2 are on the line of the original partitions, and hence a more considered solution. As stated earlier, we would ask whether it would be possible to retain the existing partitions, as long as they are deemed to meet the requisite fire and/or acoustic standard; and, if they do not, whether an extra skin of fireline board, on one or both faces, might allow for their retention. Whilst it is appreciated that it may not be possible to

retain them, it might be good to review the detail of the layout to locate a partition where an existing partition is where at all possible.

In some cases, a new partition is located inches away from an existing, and it might be worth looking at whether the line could be slightly altered to ensure the retention of an existing partition, or at least its line. We cannot recall whether the carpeted stepped seating to the rear of the Cookery School Annex is formed of concrete or timber and is removable or not. Either way, it is a pity to lose the seating, however, it is understood to be necessary and not deemed to be a highly significant loss. Stepped seating aside, the sub-

division of the space and the insertion of steps and a bathroom over the corridor is a pity and would lose the character of the rather lovely space. Whether it might be better treated as an open plan entrance (using the current entrance with 'Cookery' in the stone above the door) / lounge / dining room / kitchen space with the bedrooms within the adjacent tower might be worth looking at. Inserting a stair across a window is always, however, unfortunate.

In terms of the existing finishes, it would be interesting to see whether any of the original finishes remain on the walls behind newer layers – such as the enamel to the cement dadoes and the distemper to the upper walls – and possibly use that as inspirations for an interior design approach. However, the one element of internal finishes which clearly does remain is the solid tongued and grooved maple blocks to the floors throughout. In many areas, these are in a poor condition, with the water ingress buckling and lifting them. It would be good to see the proposals retain, repair and reinstate this timber flooring. There are, of course, some spaces where it would not be suitable – i.e. bathrooms and kitchens – however, these make up a fairly small proportion of the floor area, and there will be some necessary loss of floor blocks, due to poor condition, that the loss of some areas might allow the repair of other areas.

This being said, of course, the new mezzanine floors need not – and should not – be treated the same as the existing floor; and so those floors can be finished in other ways.

Summary

Saving the Manselton School building is the most important thing. Ensuring that it is given a viable and commercially-sustainable use, which will ensure its regular maintenance and upkeep and many more years of life, is paramount. This is what these proposals achieve, and, in that respect, they tick the first, and most important, box.

In an ideal world, existing / historic buildings are brought back into use in their original use - especially if that has been its use for its entire life, which is the case here. However, in this case, a school is simply not viable. Whereas, the Developer sees residential use as being viable.

Retaining the existing (and, in this case, original) form of the building - not removing any part of all – is important. Again, the proposals do this – the main form is retained. In addition, no new structures are being applied to the building. The proposals retain the existing / original external envelope materials; and, where they are in a poor condition, they would be repaired or, if repair is not an option, renewed like-for-like. Where inappropriate interventions – such as cement mortar and variant roof tiles – have been applied over the years, the proposals seek to reverse those.

The proposals retain all of the outer walls as they are, and the most important inner walls which form the enclosure to the 'Central Halls'. In this respect, no structure and fabric deemed to be of considerable significance is being lost to the main body of the building. Some structure and fabric to the 2no. entrance

towers, deemed to be of considerable significance, is however being lost. This is principally because there are two staircases in each tower and only one is required for the proposals.

The insertion of new mezzanine floors and partitions would, of course, result in a significant change to the spaces, compromising their historical and aesthetic values. Ideally, there would be no floor or partition insertions and each space would retain their current volume. However, clearly this would result in a halving of the available floor space, and the spaces being much larger and more spacious than required; and would make the scheme unviable. One has to weigh up the risk of the building not being brought back into use

and dilapidating further, against the insertion of new floors and partitions and the change that results in. It is, of course, the case that no – or little - evidential value need be removed to achieve this, and an approach using ‘reversible’ construction would mean that the spaces could, in time, be reverted back to their original form.

There are some concerns with the relationship between the new mezzanine floors and the windows, which are explained within the text. We have been sent two sets of plans, one dated to 2016 and the other without a date. That dated 2016, we have termed ‘Version 2’ and that without a date, we have termed ‘Version 1’, as we believe it to pre-date the 2016 plans. Version 2 is, in all respects, a preferable scheme. It retains the existing feature entrances; removes fewer internal partitions (or reuses more of the original partition lines); and it avoids issues around the containment of the mezzanine floors at windows. Some suggestion has been made of one of these ‘Central Hall’ spaces being left as it is – i.e. no partitioning and no mezzanine floor – and brought into non-residential use, be that for community, commercial or other use. This would be considered to be a significant benefit, providing not only mixed use to the site and day-time occupancy and activity, but also leaving one of the most historically significant spaces unchanged and able to help tell the story of how the school used to work. Clearly, if the space needs to be publicly accessible – as a community space would certainly need – then it would have to be the ground floor.

Historic Significance

The building is located between Manor Road and Cecil Street, an area of predominate residential units. The main building is three storey with annex attached building within the cartage of the site. The building is deemed of special architectural and historic importance and is currently recognised as Grade II Listed protected. Listed designation was granted in 1987 for the Jacobethan style building dated from the 1900s. The key protected features as noted under Cad are following:

“Open U-plan form to symmetrical S front with advanced entrance/stair tower wings.

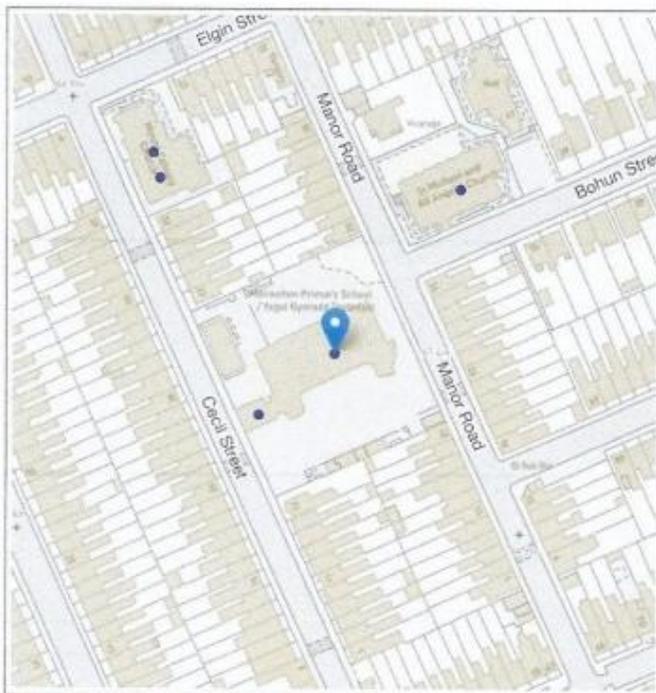
3 storeys and attics, 8 bays to centre. Sneaked rubble facings, bullnosed quoins with incised angles, freestone dressings, tiled roofs. Recessed centre with slightly advanced and gabled outer bays with pedimented tops and Venetian window treatment to upper floor, keystone extended as gable pilaster; segmental headed dormers. Pedimented and panelled band over 1st floor architraves with scrolled aprons, plain ground floor windows. Mostly cross-windows with small panes and lower sashes. Pedimented doorcases in splayed angles to wings, polygonal stair turrets with pyramidal roofs, miniature cupolas with finials, cornice bands, oculi to top floor, aedule treatment to 2nd floor windows.

Massive stone doorcases to outer paches, pedimented tops with scrolled supports. Splayed 5 storey angles with broken pediments and polygonal finials rising from 3rd floor scrolled pediments as before. Twin gabled side elevations and advanced gabled bays to outer sides of plainer N front.

Small attached lodge block on Cecil Street in similar style. Hipped tiled roof with domed cupola, segmental headed dormers, small pane tripartite sashes. Basement entrance under “Manselton School Board SSB tablet”

The former school began life in the early 1900 and remained so until 2012 when it closed and was subsequently sold in auction in 2016. Whilst the initial use as a school is not viable, the development of new residential units whilst protecting the historic significance of the building is the most welcomed proposal.

The proposal intends to protect the external fabric of the listed building and key internal features. The proposed alterations and the enhancements to the building will bring new life into the building and provide wider use which are considered to be a welcome improvement to the Listed Building without detrimental impact.

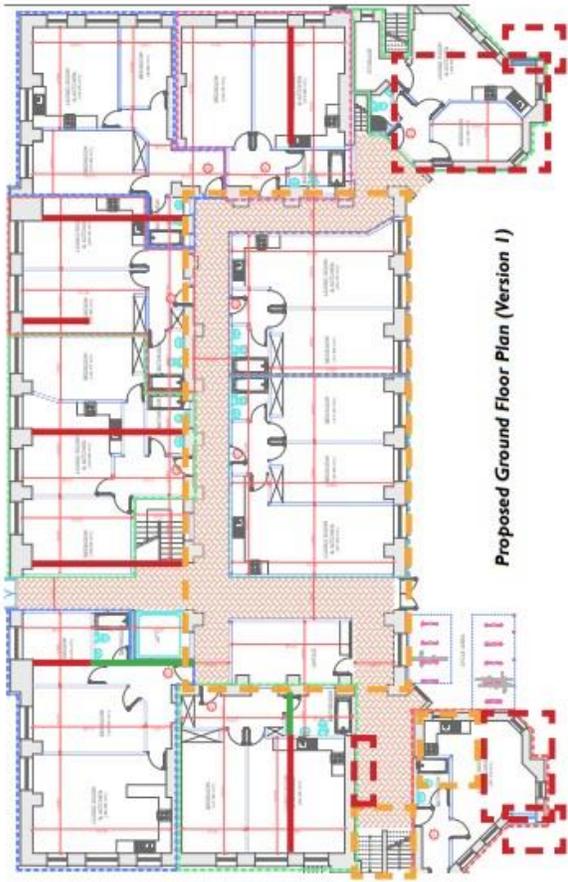


Listed Building : Manselton School
Reference Number : 11680
Unitary Authority : Swansea
Community : Cwmowrta

This map does not form part of the official record. It has been drawn from positional information provided within the list description to aid identification. By law, the listed building also includes any object or structure which is fixed to the building, or which is within its curtilage and forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948. It is important not to rely only on this digital map as the primary source for identifying the listed building. The map must be read in conjunction with the list description to ensure that the correct building has been identified. The list description is also available via the Online Mapping Database. This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions.

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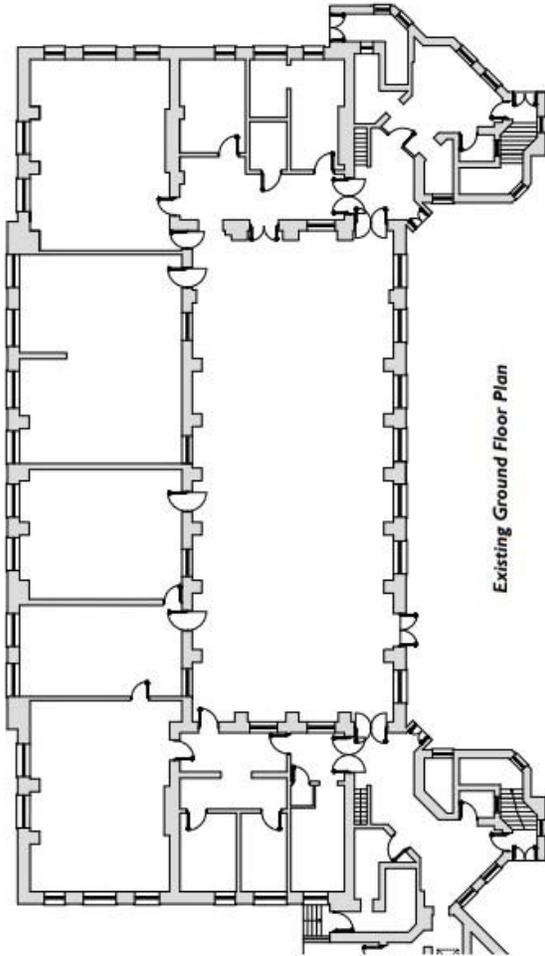
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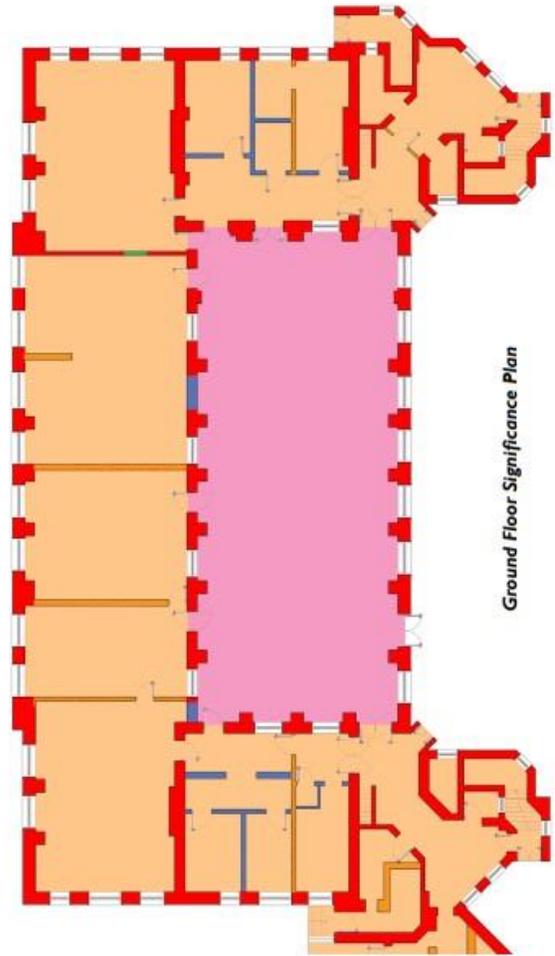
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Version 1)



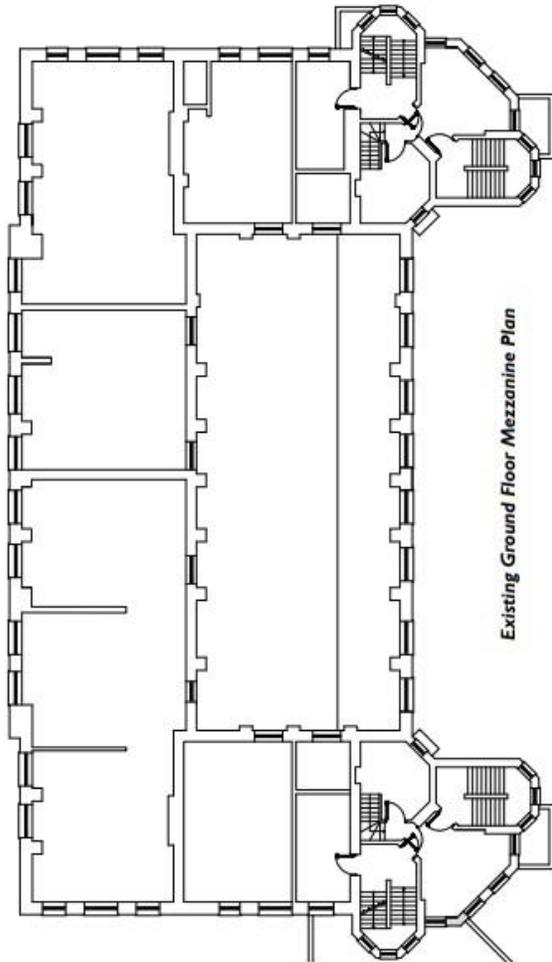
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Version 2)



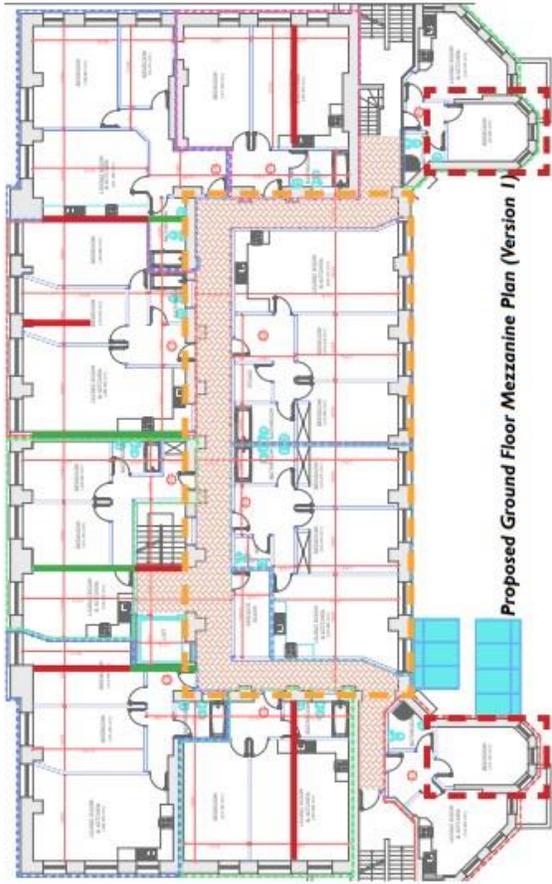
Existing Ground Floor Plan



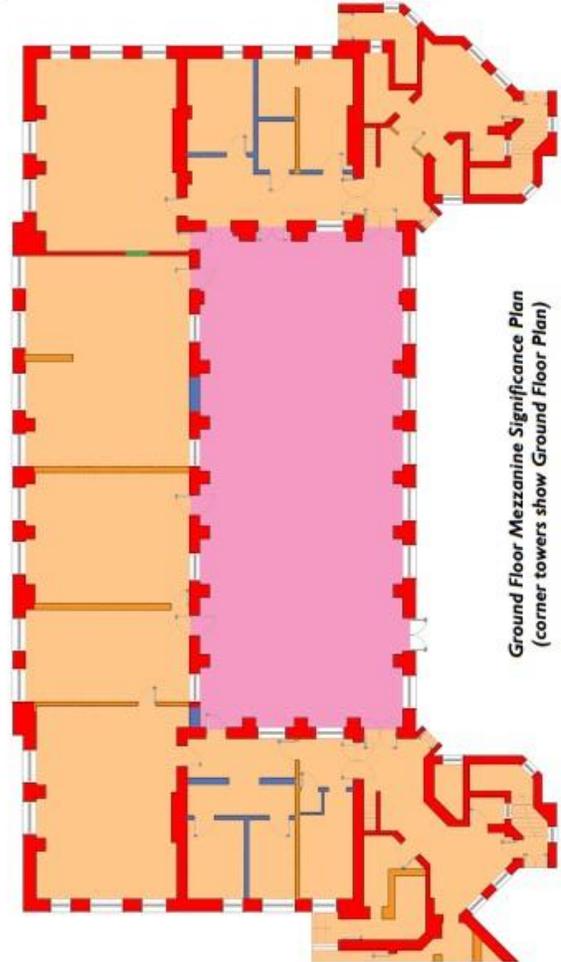
Ground Floor Significance Plan



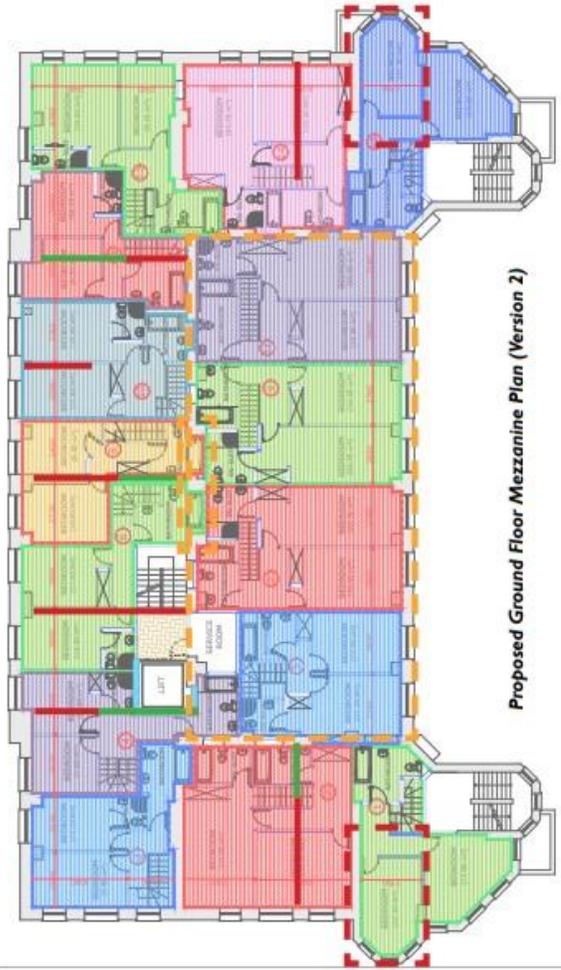
Existing Ground Floor Mezzanine Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Mezzanine Plan (Version 1)



Ground Floor Mezzanine Significance Plan
(corner towers show Ground Floor Plan)



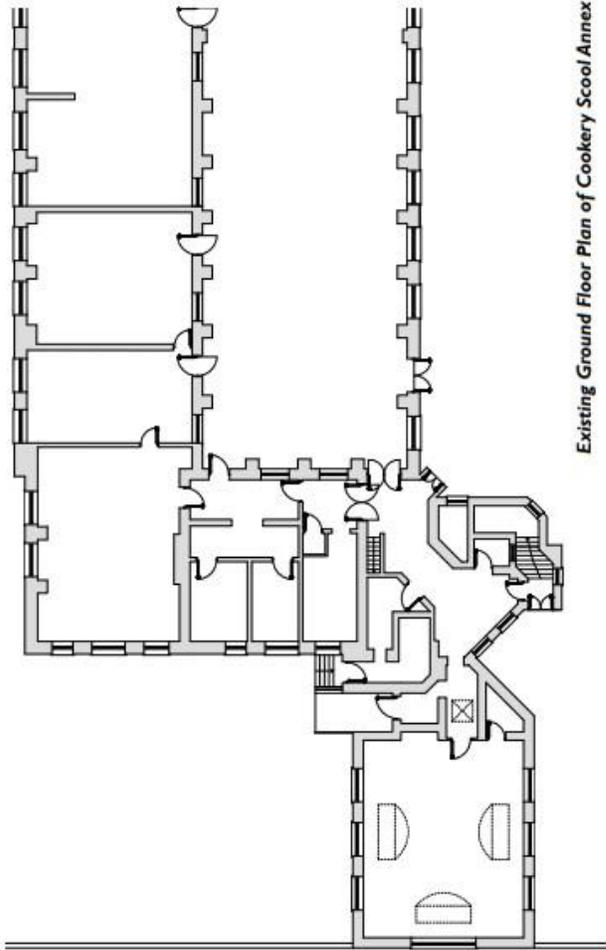
Proposed Ground Floor Mezzanine Plan (Version 2)



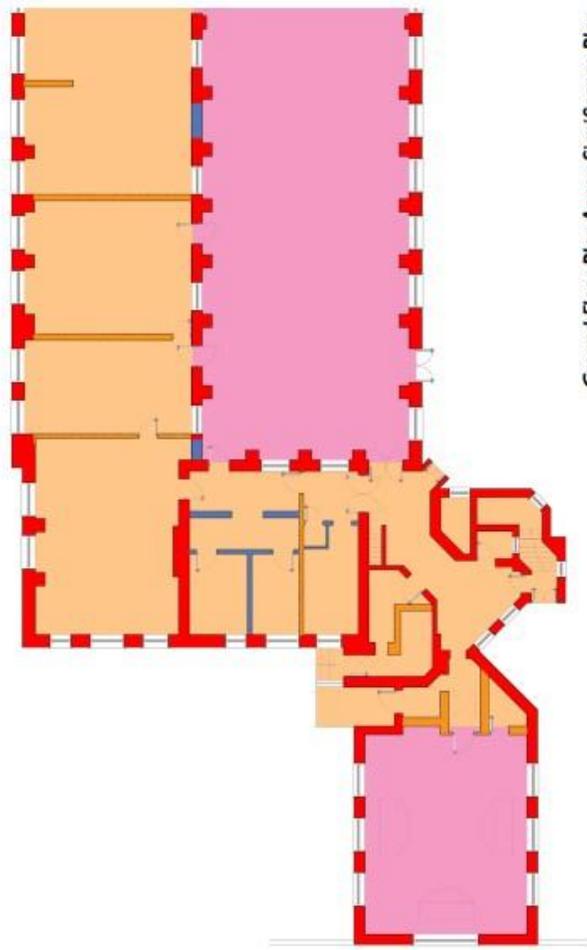
Proposed Ground Floor Plan of Cookery Scool Annex (at upper level) (Version 2)



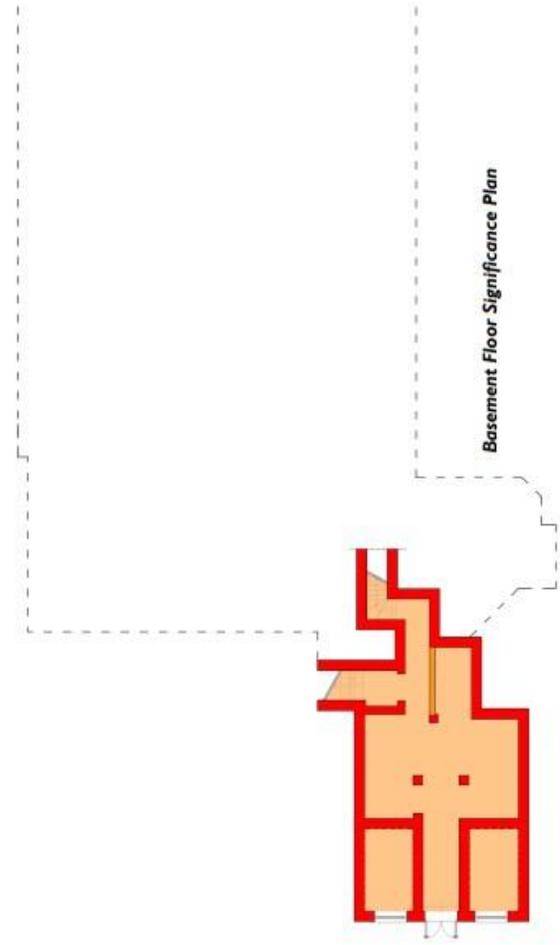
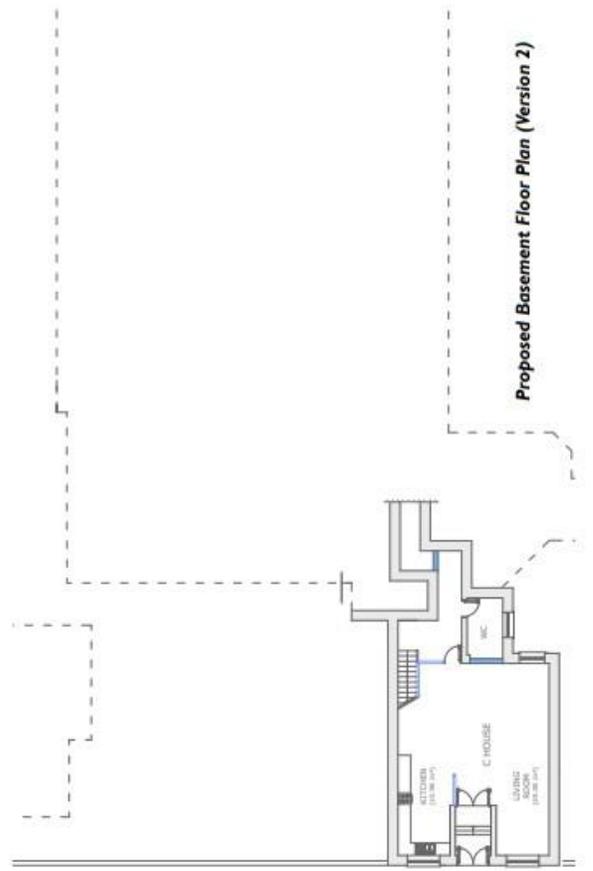
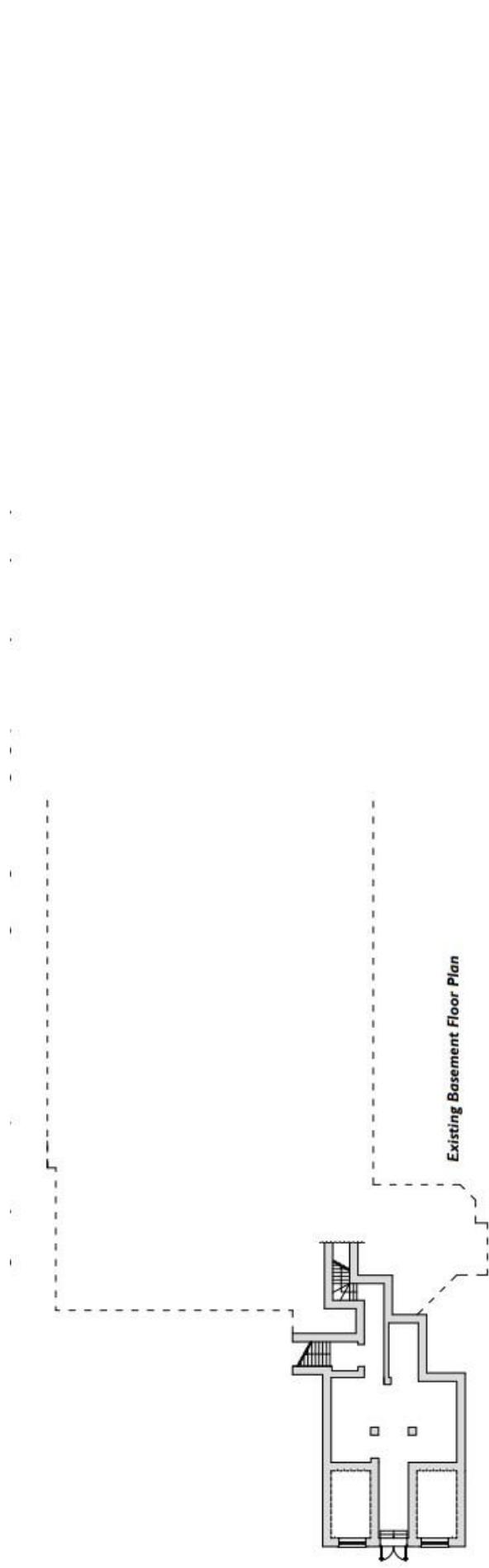
Proposed Ground Floor Plan of Cookery Scool Annex (at lower level) (Version 2)

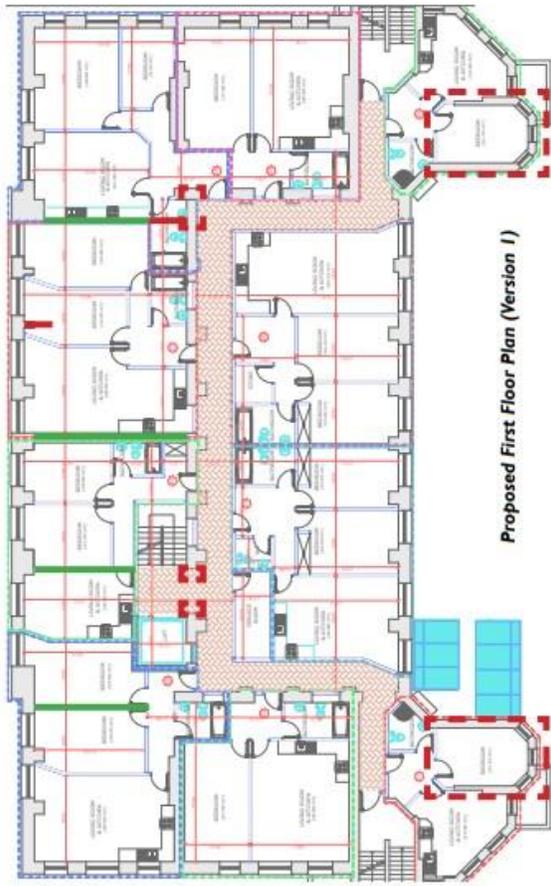


Existing Ground Floor Plan of Cookery Scool Annex

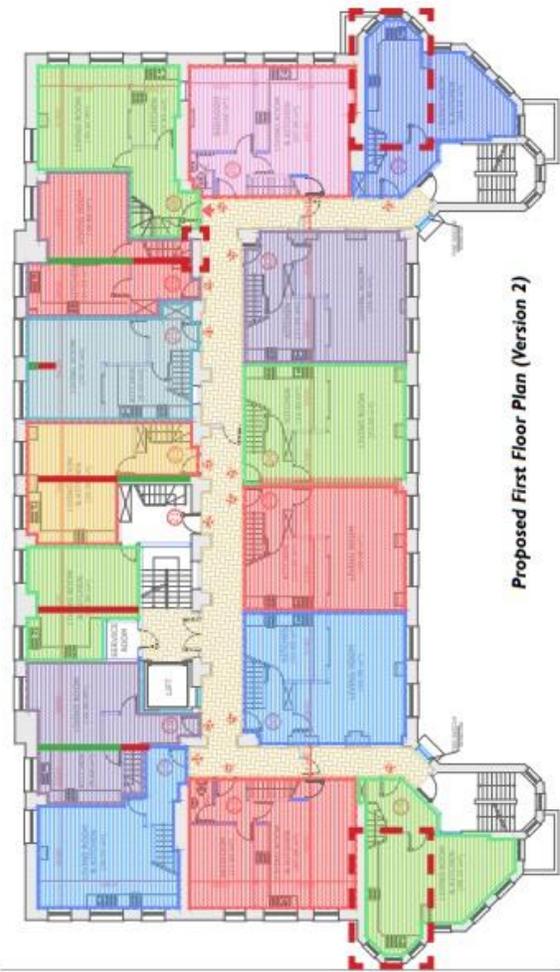


Ground Floor Plan Annex Significance Plan

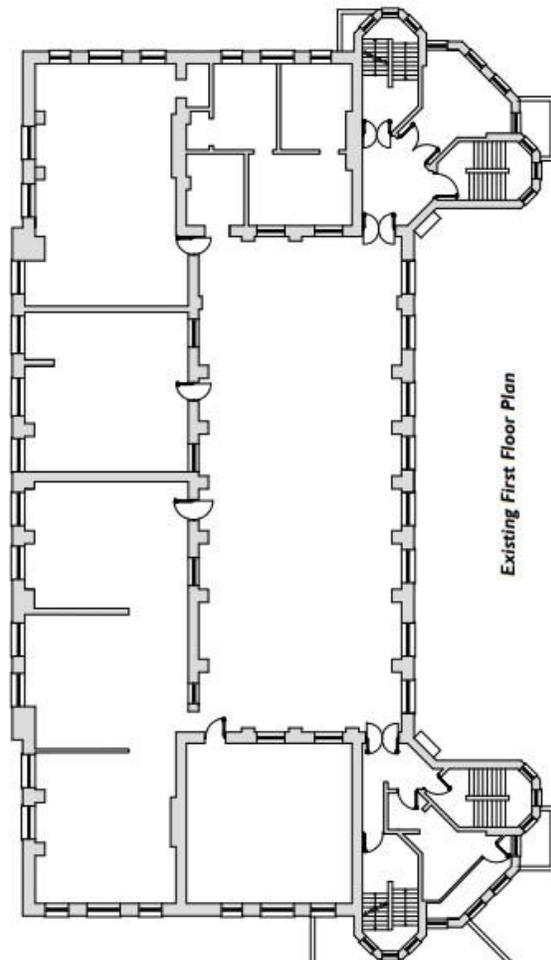




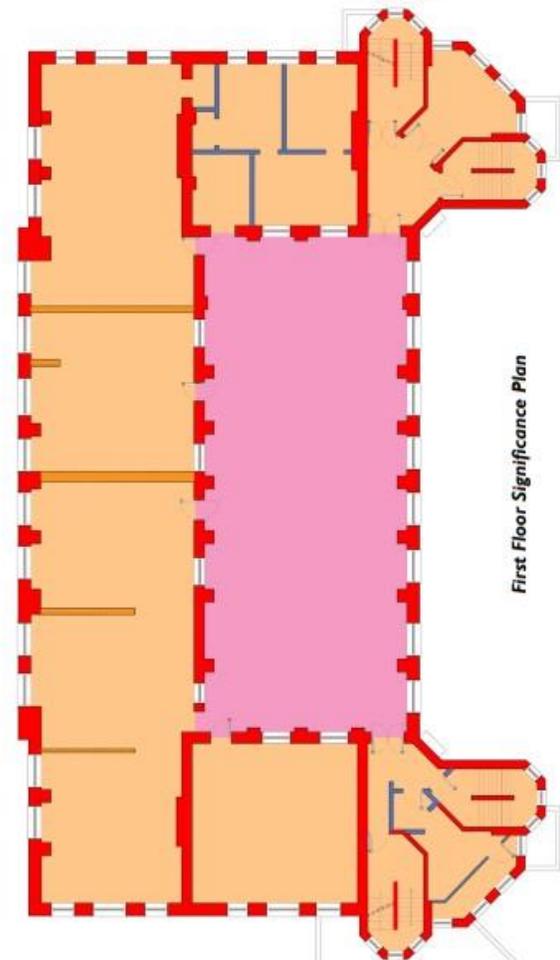
Proposed First Floor Plan (Version 1)



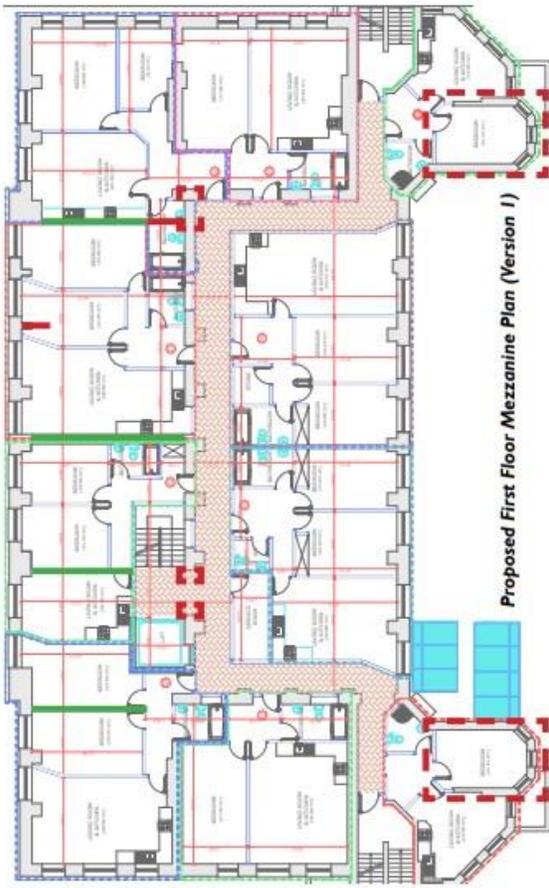
Proposed First Floor Plan (Version 2)



Existing First Floor Plan



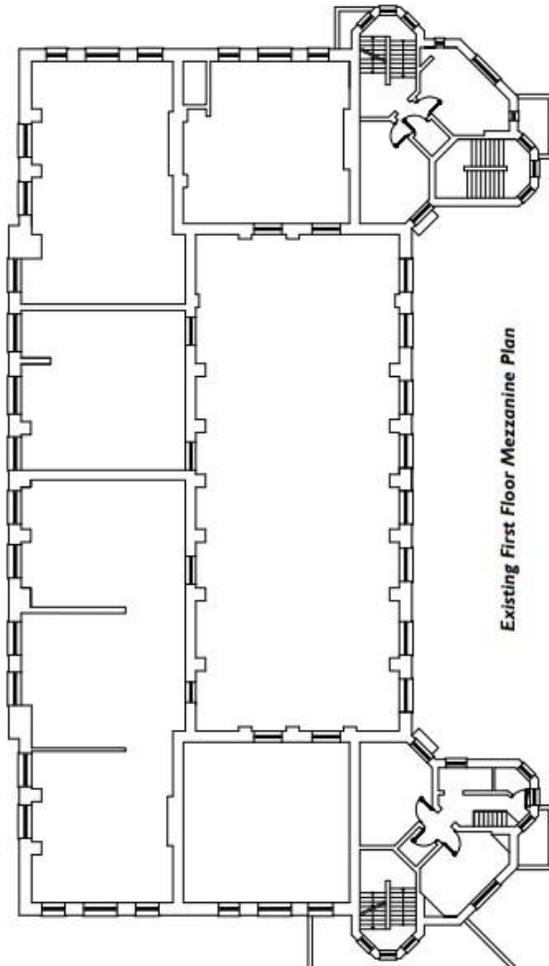
First Floor Significance Plan



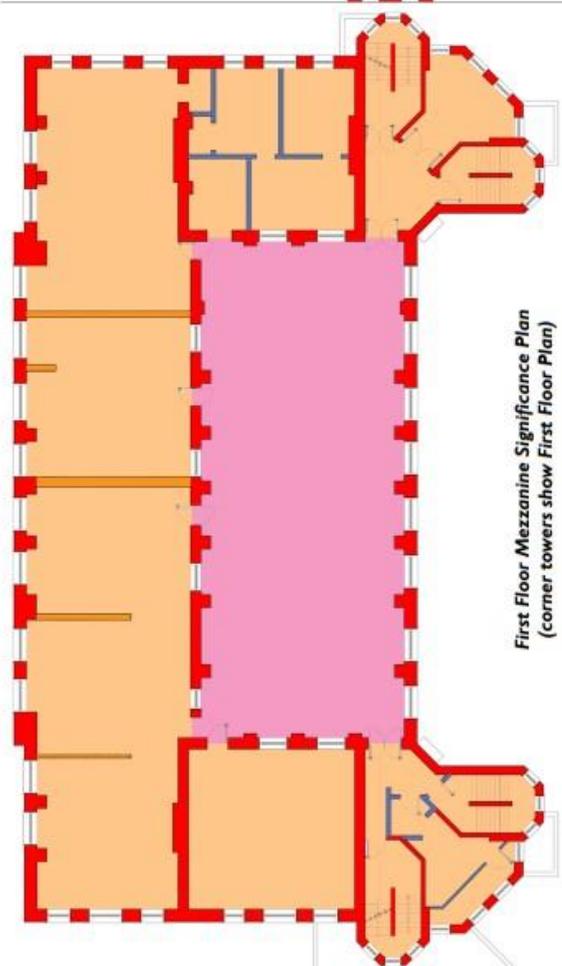
Proposed First Floor Mezzanine Plan (Version 1)



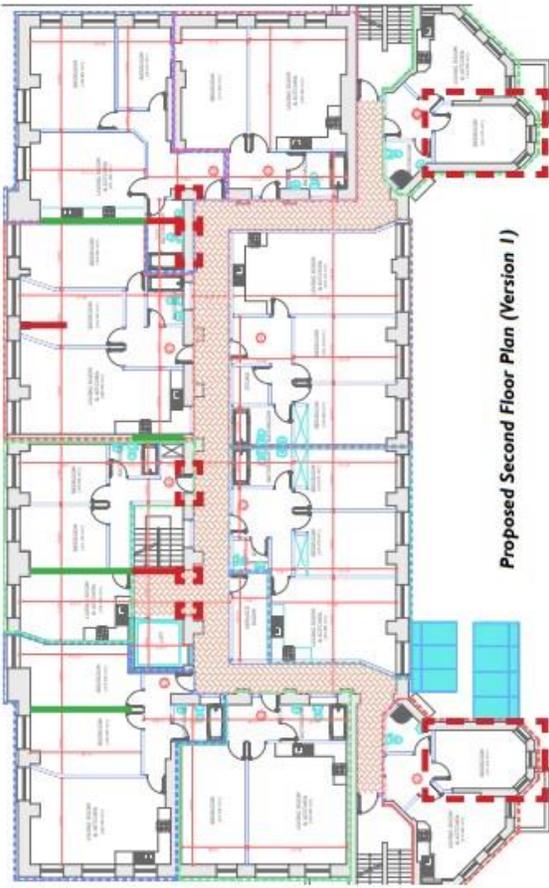
Proposed First Floor Mezzanine Plan (Version 2)



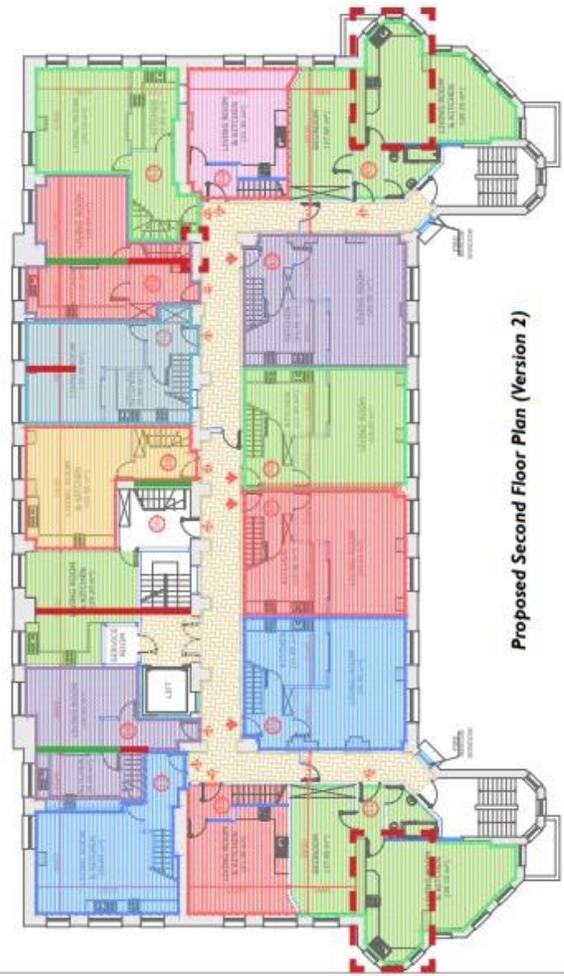
Existing First Floor Mezzanine Plan



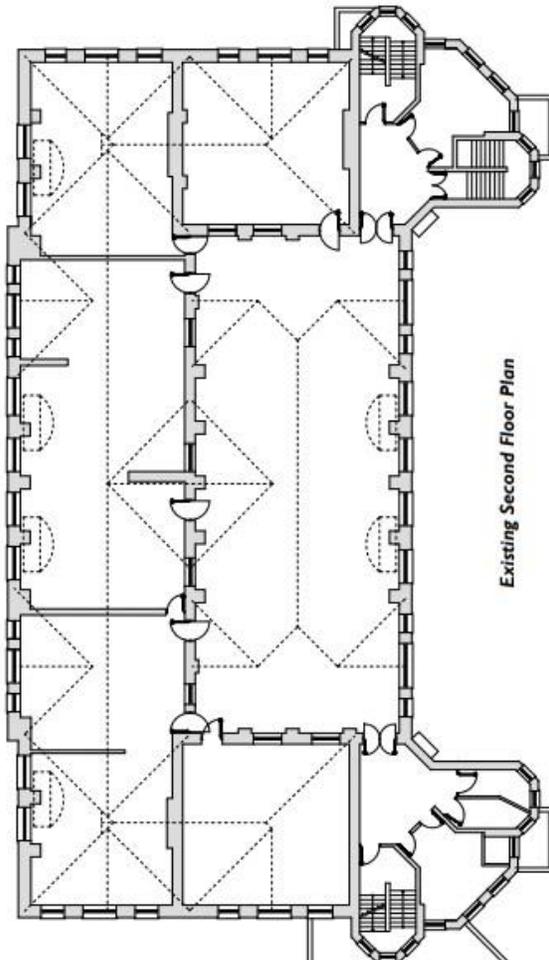
First Floor Mezzanine Significance Plan
(corner towers show First Floor Plan)



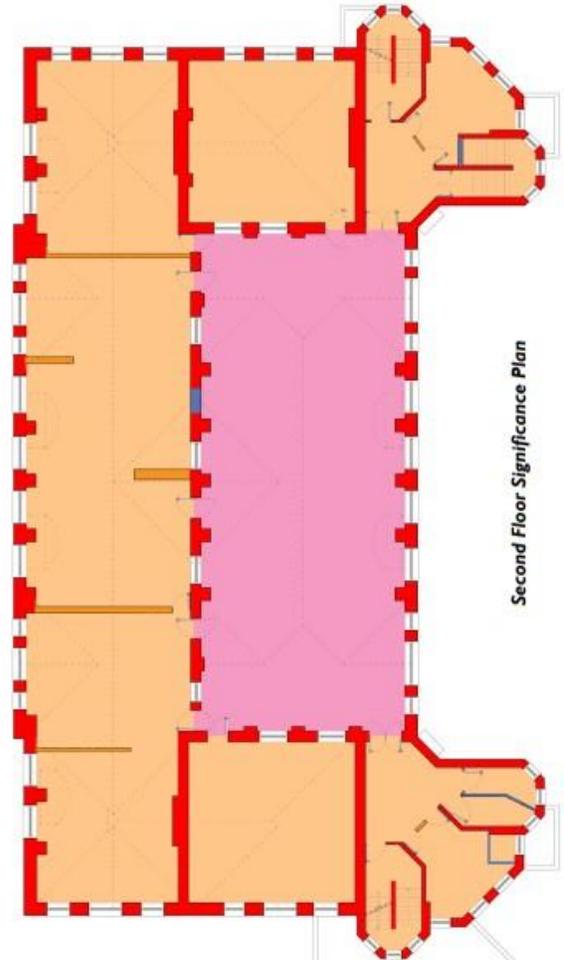
Proposed Second Floor Plan (Version 1)



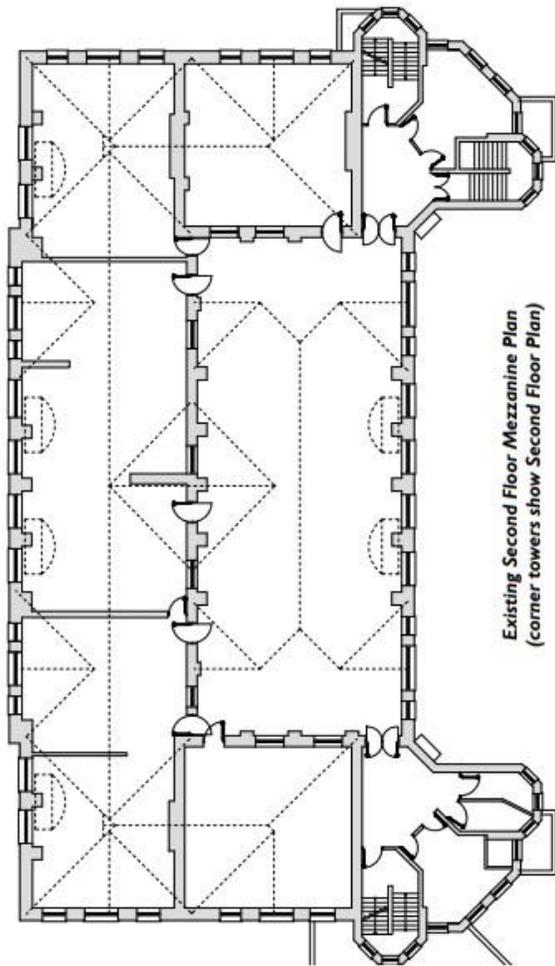
Proposed Second Floor Plan (Version 2)



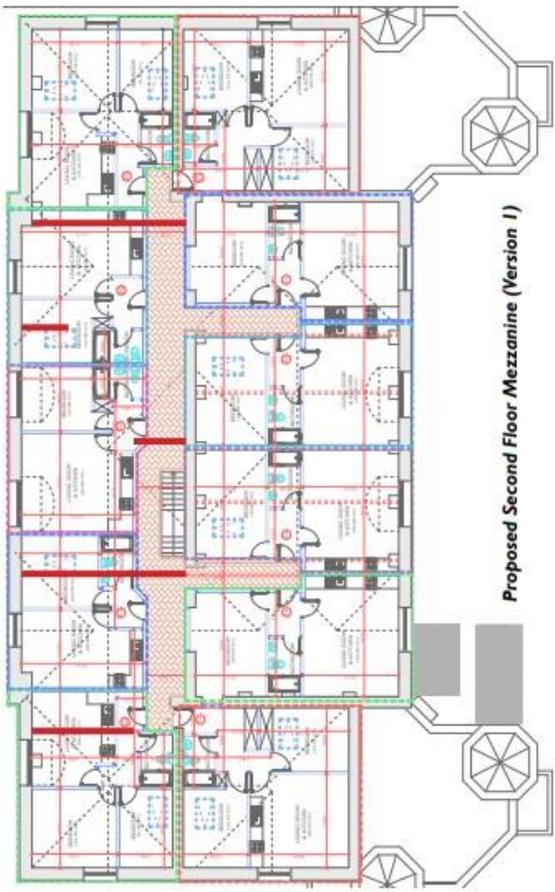
Existing Second Floor Plan



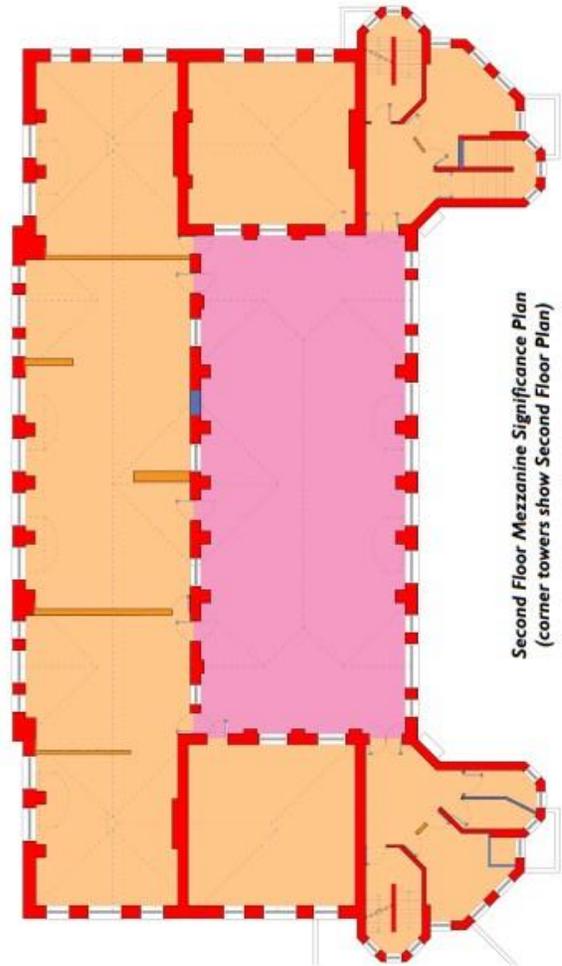
Second Floor Significance Plan



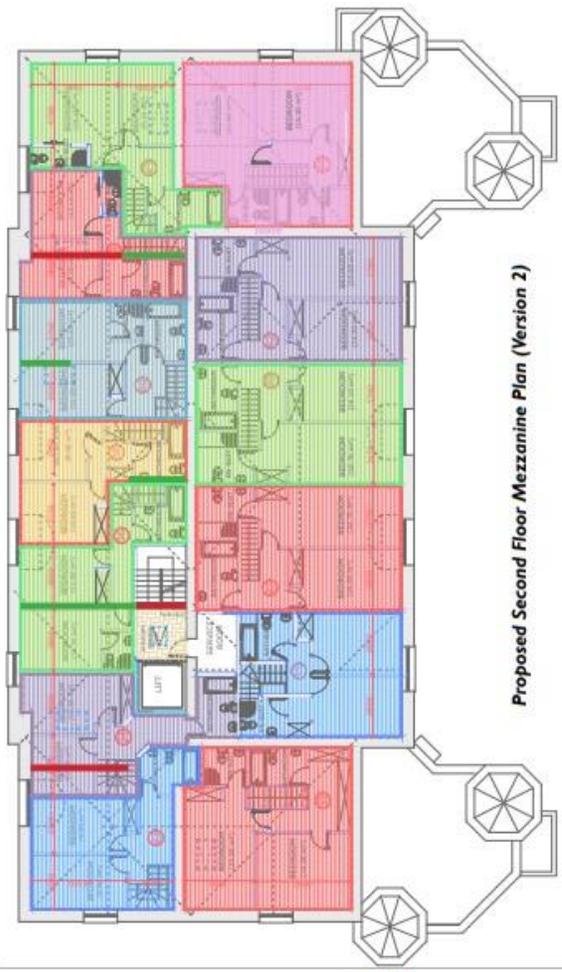
Existing Second Floor Mezzanine Plan
(corner towers show Second Floor Plan)



Proposed Second Floor Mezzanine (Version 1)



Second Floor Mezzanine Significance Plan
(corner towers show Second Floor Plan)



Proposed Second Floor Mezzanine Plan (Version 2)

