

PROJECT
STAGE

THE EXISTING CUSTOM HOUSE LANE JUNIOR CP SCHOOL BUILDING, CONNAH'S QUAY, DEESIDE CH5 4QL, WALES

Feasibility Study on the viability of re-use

May 2011

THE POSSIBLE TRANSFORMATION OF A BUILDING



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The Building in its immediate context



The Building in its entirety



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JIG Architects have been commissioned to undertake this Feasibility Study to assess the possibility of a re-use for the original building of the Custom House Lane Junior CP School.

In **Part One**, following a general Introduction setting out the reason for this study, and the scope of JIG's work, we set out the Brief that we received.

In **Part Two**, the site and the architectural qualities of the three discrete parts of the existing building are considered.

In **Part Three**, the planning policy context affecting the site is summarised, with a conclusion being reached that there are no planning policy restrictions so long as a re-use serves the community and does not conflict with the surroundings.

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In **Part Four**, a re-use for the whole building is appraised as a manifestation of sustainability.

In **Part Five**, three options are considered for the re-use of the original 1881 part of the building. Site plans are also shown.

In **Part Six**, we offer our conclusion, including an initial study of how the site might be used for residential purposes should the whole of the school building be demolished, including the original 1881 part.

Costs associated with the various options are set out in Part Seven and these are summarised when each option for the site is presented in the text. Finally, an estimate for the demolition of all the buildings on the site can be found at Appendix 7.5.

INTRODUCTION

Following the approval of Planning Application No: 047415 for the erection of a new primary school at Custom House Lane in August 2010, JIG Architects were commissioned to address one part of the contents of Condition 4 to that approval. This condition read, *"No development, demolition work or other site clearance shall commence until a scheme has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for the phasing of the development to include the provision of car parking, demolition work and site clearance work. The scheme shall include details of **a feasibility study to assess the scope for the retention of the historic part of Custom House Lane County Primary School** within any future redevelopment proposals."* The reason for this condition was *"To ensure that all aspects of the development are completed within a satisfactory timeframe and the potential for **the retention of any historic element** within any redevelopment proposals can be investigated."*

The following document constitutes that feasibility study into the retention, or otherwise of a historic element within any redevelopment of the existing school site.

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SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

In order to address the issue fully, JIG Architects has undertaken site visits, both external and internal, and appropriate desk studies into the architectural significance of the building as a whole, the architectural significance of the original building, and possible re-use functions.

One: **THE BRIEF**

With the granting of planning permission for a new primary school at Custom House Lane, it was decided not to immediately order the demolition of the existing school, but to appraise its significance to the general environment of Connah's Quay and its appropriateness for viable re-use, breathing new life, so to speak, into an 'old friend'. JIG Architects brief was to recommend an answer to this question through the vehicle of this feasibility study.

Two: **THE SITE AND THE BUILDING**

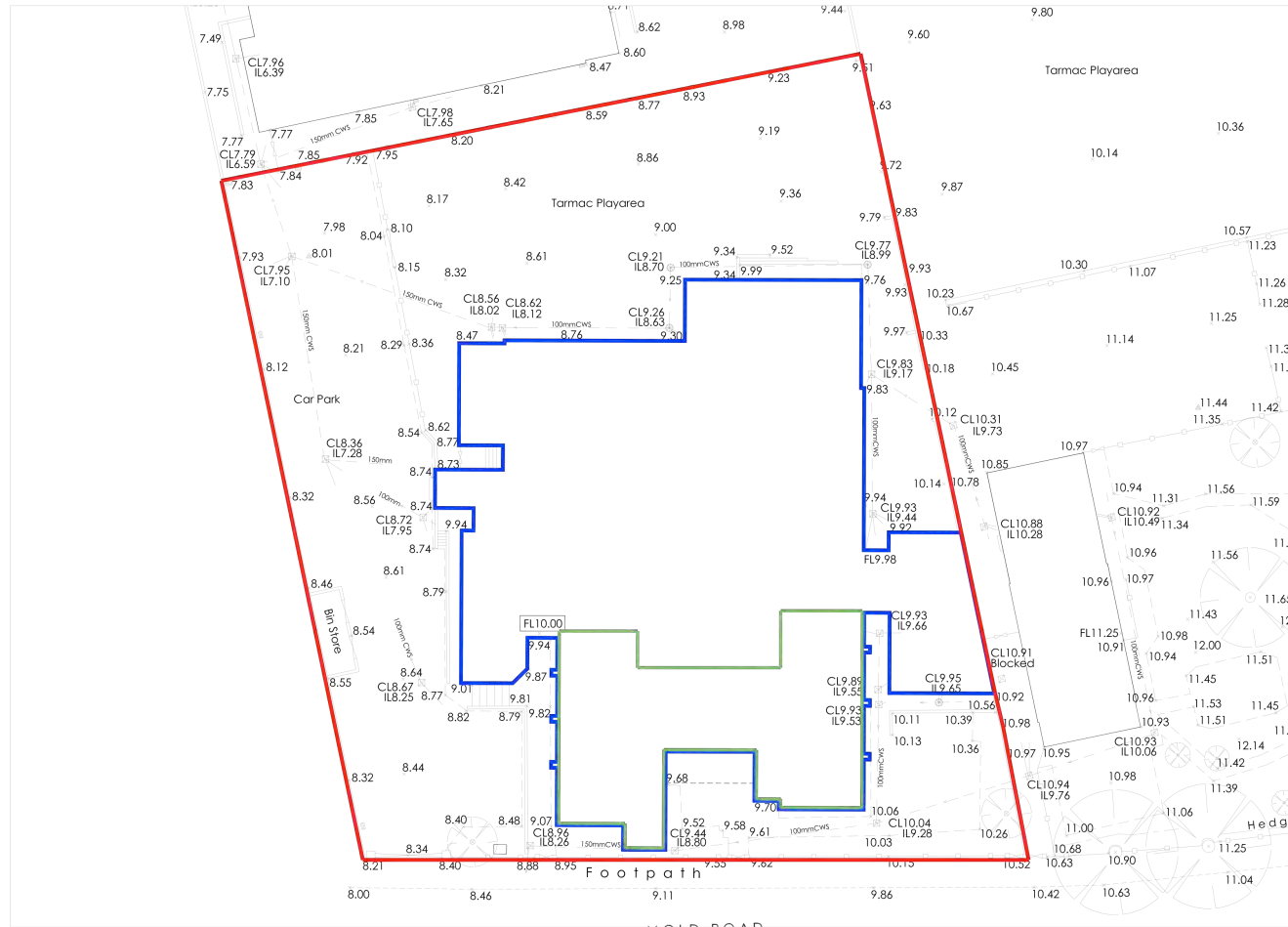
2.1 **The site:** The site area is some 3134.6m² and faces Mold Road to the south. It is otherwise fenced off from surrounding areas. Once the new school is implemented, it will be further fenced off to the east. This situation can be generally appreciated from the cover photograph, where all edges except that which will pertain with the new school can be seen.

2.2 **The building:** The building is generally of three integrated parts – the original building from 1881, extensions from the 1930s and further extensions from the 1980s. These have resulted in a degree of unity through the use of brickwork, the original and the 1930s parts being in imperial sizes, the latest in metric sizes. The plan as a whole pivots around the main Hall, which is lit by clerestorey windows.

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Plan of the site, which is the subject of this Feasibility Study (red) with the whole building (blue) and the 1881 original (green)

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2.3 Exterior



The 1881 part on Mold Road



Patterned brickwork on the front



Names



The rear with different periods of building



Four images on the perimeter of the 1930s and 1980s parts of the building illustrating the variegated forms and differing qualities of the architecture

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2.4 Interior



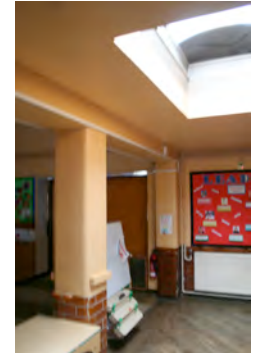
The Hall



Classroom within the 1980s phase



Staff area within the original 1881 part



1930s phase



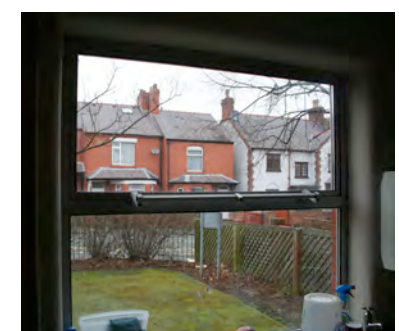
Classroom within the 1930s phase



Room within a wing of the 1881 phase



Attractive top lit circulation space



Contact with surroundings

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2.5 Architectural Appraisal

The building is not listed, in whole or in part, as being of historical and architectural interest, nor does it appear in any architectural guide to the significant architecture of North Wales.

It is therefore safe to conclude that it is through local and community interest that the issue of retention has been raised, while there is also the important matter of sustainability – not arbitrarily removing assets that have environmental value and consequently creating waste.

What therefore can be said about the quality of the architecture? The matter can be dealt with directly.

2.5.1 The 1980s buildings are not of any significant architectural quality.

2.5.2 The 1930s buildings have some architectural attraction – especially in terms of the interior detail of the circulation areas – but they cannot be called architecturally significant in relative terms, when compared with the notable examples of the period.

2.5.3 The original building does have architectural quality especially in terms of the characteristics of the external brickwork and the merits of its central bay internal roof trusses. Given the ordinariness of the general architectural surroundings, this building does merit retention should a viable use be found.

2.5.4 In terms of holistic sustainability, we take the view that a duty of care exists and therefore that some consideration should be given to the retention of the whole building – in other words that it should be tested for its community value – however should that test fail for any significant reason, all parts can be demolished except for the original building, which again needs to be tested and then marketed for re-use.

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Three: **THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

In terms of the reuse of the building as a whole or in part, there are no planning policy restrictions as to a reasonable function, so long as it serves the community and does not clash or conflict with the generally residential character of the urban area of which it is part.

In terms of access, a single vehicular access exists at the southwest corner of the site, with a pedestrian-only access on the southern footpath. Given the new school access points that have been granted planning permission east of the site, it is likely that any re-use of the existing building (in whole or in part) – and indeed any redevelopment of the site should the existing building be demolished – will need to work with a single vehicular access point, whether in the existing position of further to the east.

Overall therefore, the re-use of the building is not impeded by access constraints.

Four: **OPTION ONE – RETENTION OF THE WHOLE BUILDING**

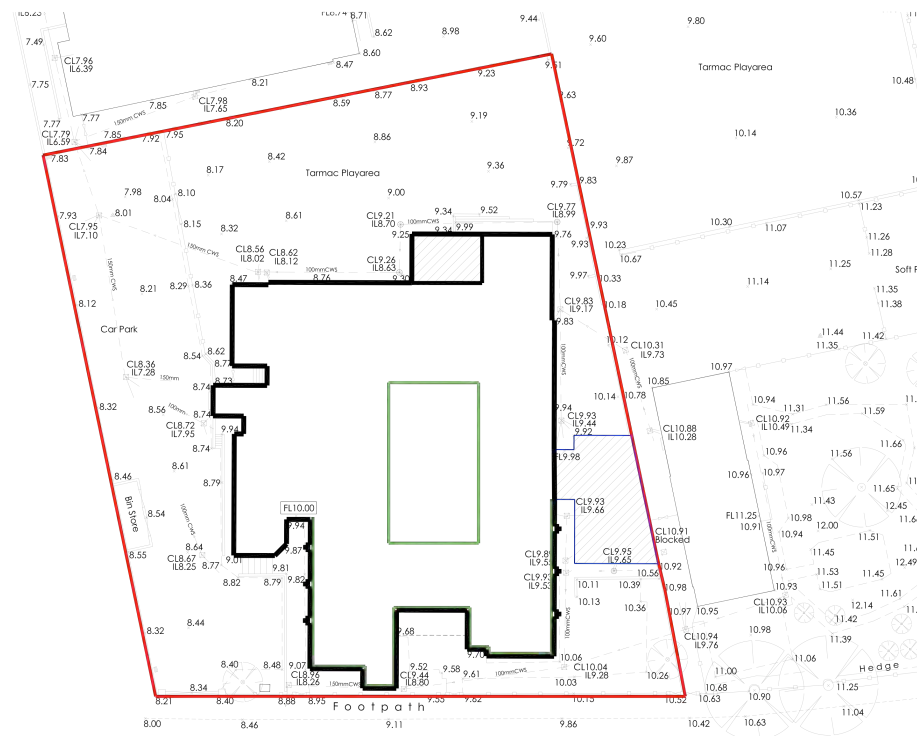
In terms of holistic sustainability, there is merit in considering the retention of the whole building, despite the fact that the architectural quality of most of the ensemble is mediocre.

An analysis of the plan suggests that a Care Home use could be a possible re-use. This would result in an 18-room facility surrounding a roof-glazed internal courtyard. In order to achieve this, major building works would be required. The roof of the existing Hall would be removed and replaced with glazing to achieve an internal temperature-controlled garden. This is required given the lack of external space for outdoor use, once parking requirements are satisfied. The classrooms would be divided into separate en-suite rooms, while the current kitchen and staff room area would be converted for staff and medical care purposes.

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The cost of such a conversion is £1.73 million and this is shown in detail in Appendix 7.1. These are significant sums of money and it is likely that an 18-bedroom complex will not be viable, especially when it is borne in mind that there is very limited outdoor garden and habitat areas for the possible residents.

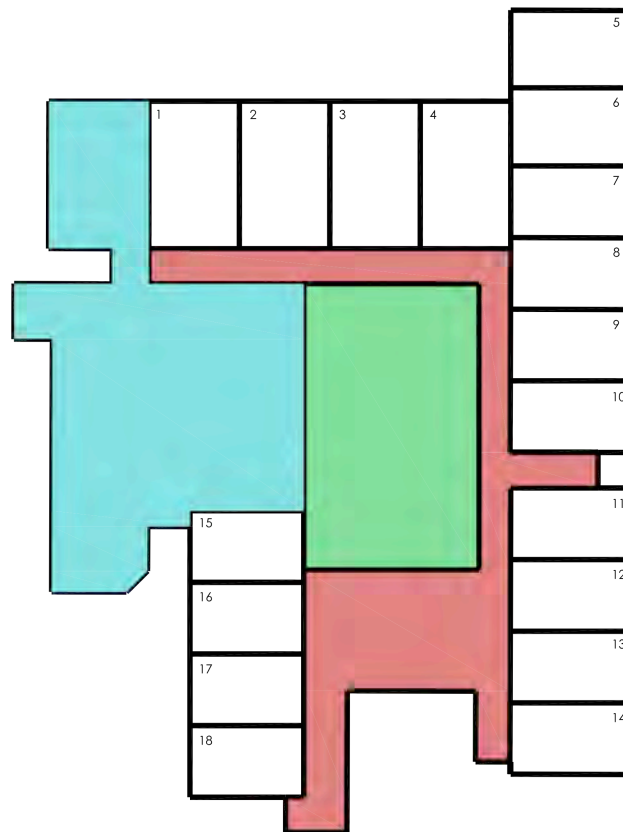


Extent of demolition (hatched) for a Care Home Option. Parking is edged in blue and the glazed internal garden in green

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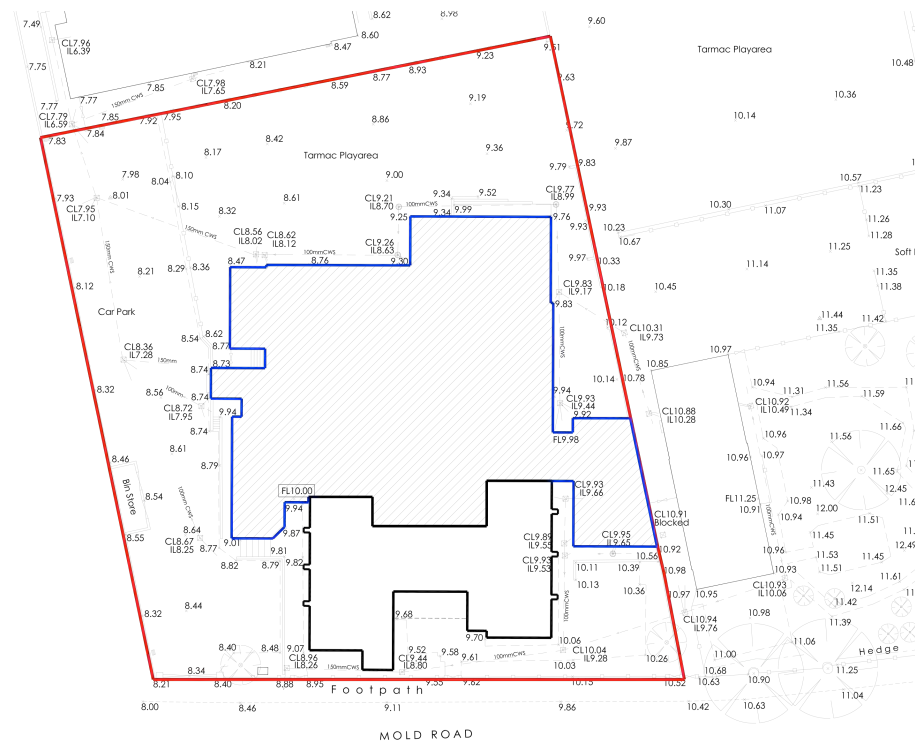
Diagrammatic Plan of a Care Home – rooms are numbered; Internal Garden (green); Social and Circulation areas (orange); Staff and Care areas (blue)

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Five: **OPTION TWO – RETENTION OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING**

There are three possible uses for the core 1881 building, which has a ground floor footprint of some 315m². These will all require an extensive area of demolition.



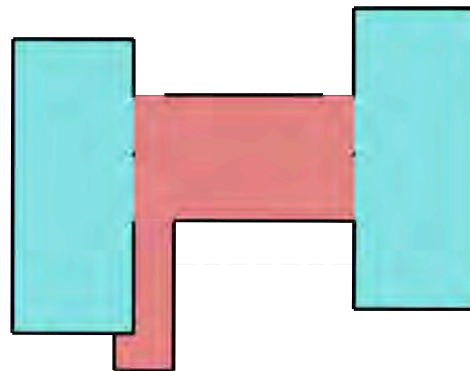
Extent of demolition (hatched) for all three Options for the re-use of the 1881 building

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5.1 Private Play School

This use would have three rooms, all with the potential for mezzanine levels, with the remainder of the site being used for outdoor play purposes and teacher / visitor parking. The cost of such a conversion is £0.76 million and this is shown in detail in Appendix 7.2.



Diagrammatic Plan of a Play School use – Quiet Play Rooms (blue) with possible mezzanines hatched; Entrance and Active Play Room (red) with direct access to the rear Outdoor Garden Play Area and Habitats

Pros: The valuable historical building is brought into use for the youngest of the community; a conversion of the existing spaces will not be overly expensive.

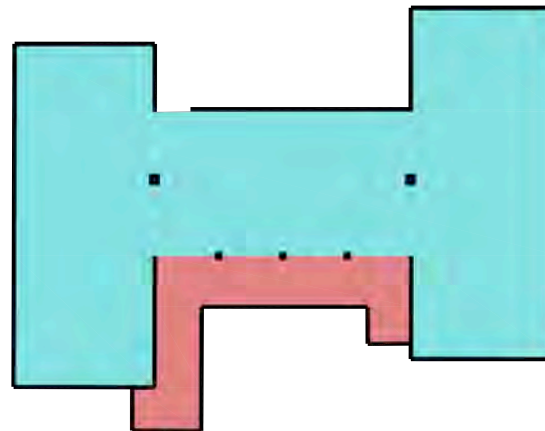
Cons: There is no natural vehicular drop-off space for parents, with the consequence of possible traffic congestion on Mold Road; the capital receipt to the Local Authority will be modest; the building will have no use in the evenings.

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5.2 Offices

This use would provide contemporary office space within the historical envelope. The space could either be created with an open plan approach, or be divided into varying office rooms. As such, the overall conversion of the building could provide opportunities for various small or start-up enterprises. The cost of this option is £1.19 million and this is shown in detail in Appendix 7.3.



Diagrammatic Plan of an Office use – Work Space (blue); Entrance and Reception (red)

Pros: This function would introduce an acceptable mixed-use dimension into the urban area. The integrity of the 1881 building could be maintained both externally and internally.

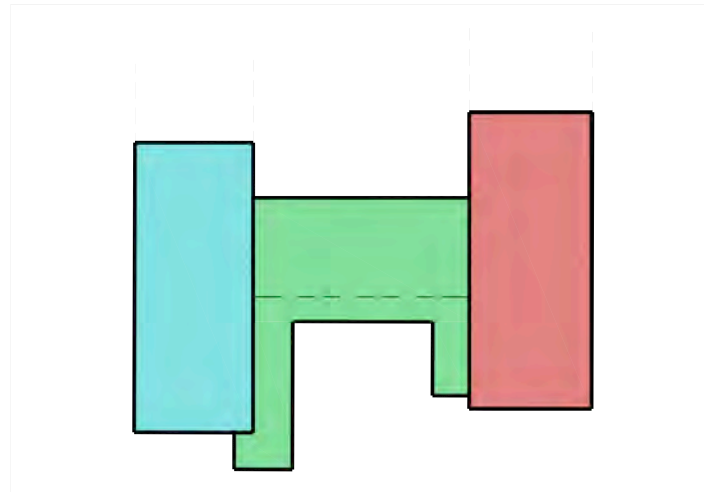
Cons: The full extent of the site is not efficiently used even with the provision of adequate car parking for the offices, unless a further office 'villa' is built behind the existing 1881 building.

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5.3 Residential use

This use would be consistent with the residential character of the surroundings and could provide three interesting dwellings in terrace form. The cost of such a conversion is £1.99 million and this is shown in detail in Appendix 7.4.



Diagrammatic Plan of a Residential use – the smallest unit (blue), the medium-sized unit (red) and the largest unit (green) could all have mezzanine-level bedrooms (hatched) and rear gardens (this will require a relaxation of external space standards as found in many historical / conservation residential areas)

Pros: A suitable re-use for the area; given the apparently sound state of the construction, the conversion may prove to be economic.

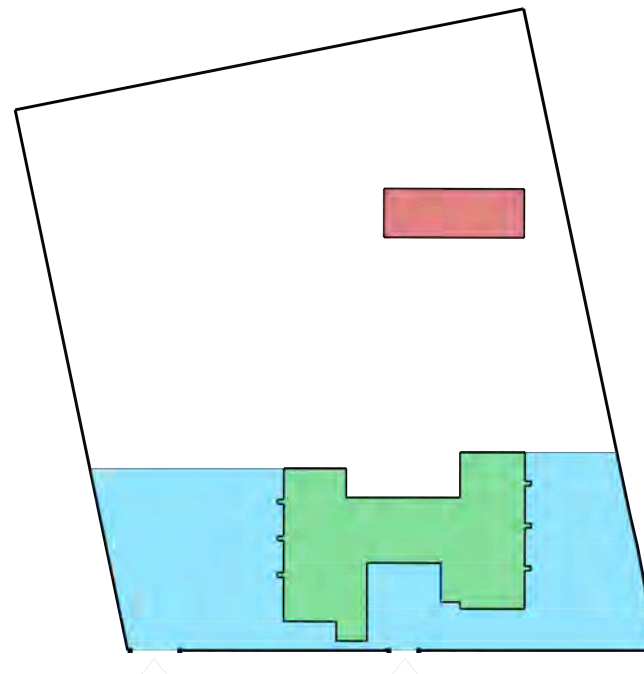
Cons: The full extent of the site is not efficiently used even with the provision of adequate car parking for the dwellings, unless further dwellings are built behind the existing 1881 building.

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5.4 Site Plans for the three possible uses

Play School: This use of the 1881 building could be supplemented by the construction of a simple building for the express purposes of outdoor play.

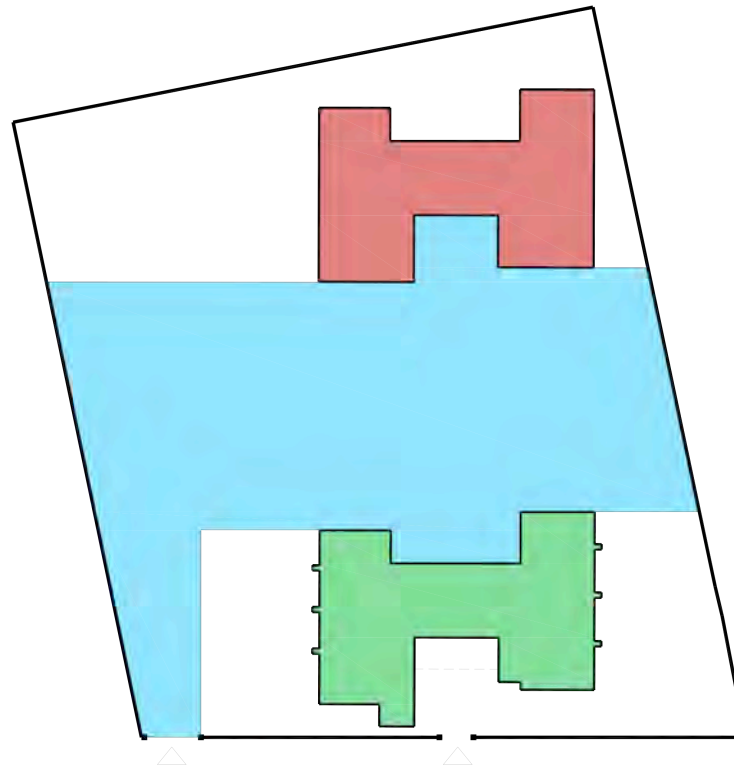


Diagrammatic Site Plan of a Play School use for the whole site – converted existing building (green); new outdoor use building (red); hard landscape and car parking (blue) – the remainder of the site being play and habitat areas

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Offices: This use of the 1881 building could be supplemented by the construction of a two-storey office 'villa'.

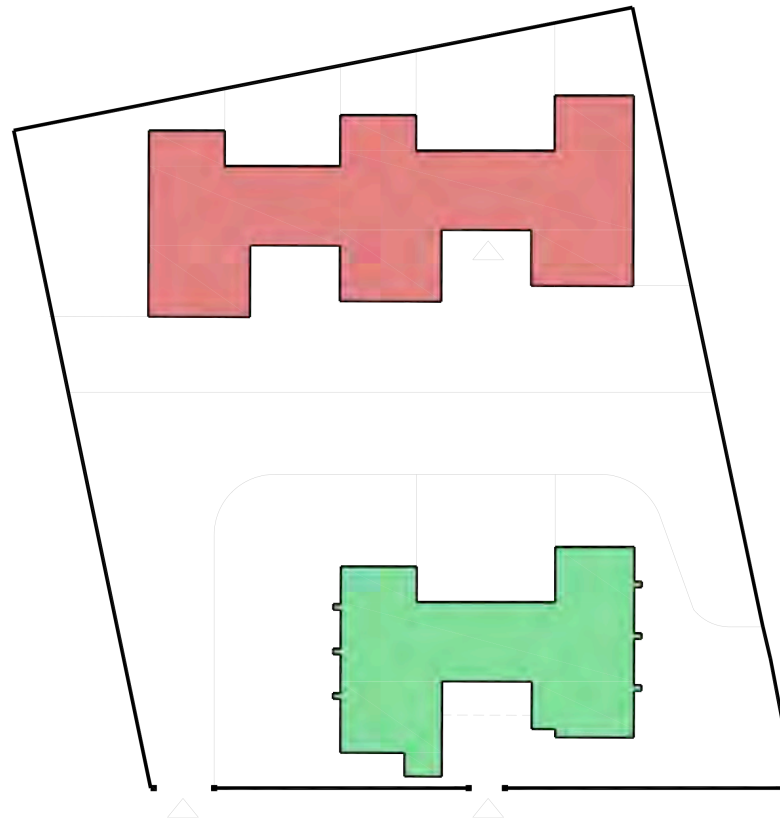


Diagrammatic Site Plan of an Office use for the whole site – converted existing building (green); new office 'villa' (red); hard landscape and car parking (blue)

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Residential: This use for the 1881 building could be supplemented by the construction of new dwellings to the rear.



Diagrammatic Site Plan of a Residential use (this will not require a relaxation of external space standards)

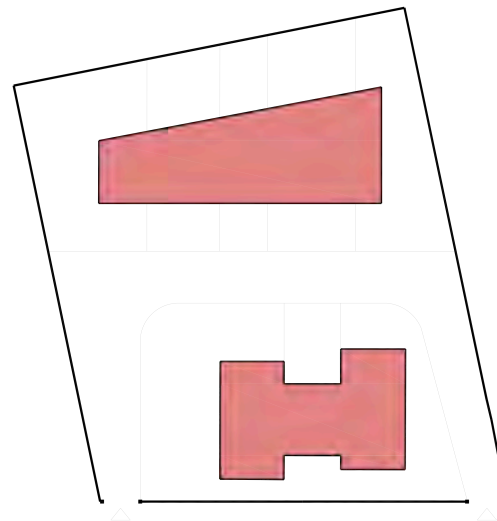
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Six: **CONCLUSION**

Conclusion: It has been ascertained that it is neither architecturally desirable nor economically viable to convert the existing school building as a whole into a new use, a Care Home facility for 18 rooms being the only option likely to be of value to the local community.

Should it be decided in the light of this feasibility Study that demolition of all three parts of the existing school should proceed, then a fully residential use could result in the construction of a maximum of 8 dwellings as demonstrated below. The cost of full site demolition is £? and this is shown in detail in Part 7.



Diagrammatic Site Plan of a Residential use should demolition of the whole school be decided upon (this will not require a relaxation of external space standards)

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Seven: **Costs**

7.1 Costs involved in converting the whole building to a Care Home.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	AREA		RATE	TOTAL
A	Demolition	136	m2	35.00	4,760.00
B	Asbestos Removal	1		15000.00	15,000.00
C	Land Remedials	1899	m2	10.00	18,990.00
D	Remedial Works to Existing Building	68	m2	75.00	5,100.00
E	Refurbishment of Existing Building	1130	m2	900.00	1,017,000.00
F	Creation of Internal 'Green' Space	145	m2	250.00	36,250.00
G	Hard Landscaping	788	m2	65.00	51,220.00
H	Soft Landscaping	1248	m2	20.00	24,960.00
I	Drainage	1918	m2	20.00	38,360.00
J	Perimeter Fencing & Gates	219	m	100.00	21,900.00
K	Preliminaries	15	%		185,031.00
L	Contingencies	10	%		123,354.00
M	Design Fees	12	%		185,031.00
TOTAL COST					£1,726,956.00

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7.2 Costs involved in converting the original 1881 building to Private Play School use.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	AREA		RATE	TOTAL
A	Demolition	976	m2	35.00	34,160.00
B	Asbestos Removal	1		15000.00	15,000.00
C	Land Remedials	1899	m2	10.00	18,990.00
D	Remedial Works to Existing Building	128	m2	75.00	9,600.00
E	Refurbishment of Existing Building	300	m2	750.00	225,000.00
F	New Build	69	m2	1000.00	69,000.00
G	Hard Landscaping	567	m2	65.00	36,855.00
H	Play Area Landscaping	204	m2	125.00	25,500.00
I	Allowance for Play Equipment	Item			25,000.00
J	Soft Landscaping	2036	m2	20.00	40,720.00
K	Drainage	936	m2	20.00	18,720.00
L	Perimeter Fencing & Gates	219	m	125.00	27,375.00
M	Preliminaries	15	%		81,888.00
N	Contingencies	10	%		54,592.00
O	Design Fees	12	%		81,888.00
TOTAL COST					£764,288.00

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7.3 Costs involved in converting the original 1881 building to Office use.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	AREA		RATE	TOTAL
A	Demolition	976	m2	35.00	34,160.00
B	Asbestos Removal	1		15000.00	15,000.00
C	Land Remedials	1899	m2	10.00	18,990.00
D	Remedial Works to Existing Building	128	m2	75.00	9,600.00
E	Refurbishment of Existing Building	300	m2	750.00	225,000.00
F	New Build	296	m2	1250.00	370,000.00
G	Hard Landscaping	1390	m2	65.00	90,350.00
H	Soft Landscaping	1172	m2	20.00	23,440.00
I	Drainage	1986	m2	20.00	39,720.00
J	Perimeter Fencing & Gates	219	m2	100.00	21,900.00
K	Preliminaries	15	%		127,224.00
L	Contingencies	10	%		84,816.00
M	Design Fees	12	%		127,224.00
TOTAL COST					£1,187,424.00

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7.4 Costs involved in converting the original 1881 building to Residential use.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	AREA		RATE	TOTAL
A	Demolition	976	m2	35.00	34,160.00
B	Asbestos Removal	1		15000.00	15,000.00
C	Land Remedials	1899	m2	10.00	18,990.00
D	Remedial Works to Existing Building	128	m2	75.00	9,600.00
E	Refurbishment of Existing Building	300	m2	925.00	277,500.00
F	New Build	936	m2	990.00	926,640.00
G	Hard Landscaping	691	m2	65.00	44,915.00
H	Soft Landscaping	1716	m2	20.00	34,320.00
I	Drainage	1927	m2	20.00	38,540.00
J	Perimeter Fencing & Gates	219	m	100.00	21,900.00
K	Preliminaries	15	%		213,234.75
L	Contingencies	10	%		142,156.50
M	Design Fees	12	%		213,234.75
TOTAL COST					£1,990,191.00

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7.5 Costs involved in demolishing the whole building.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	AREA		RATE	TOTAL
A	Demolition	1,276	m2	35.00	44,660.00
B	Asbestos Removal	1		15000.00	15,000.00
C	Land Remedials	1,899	m2	10.00	18,990.00
D	Preliminaries	10	%		7,865.00
E	Contingency	10	%		7,865.00
F	Design Fees	6	%		5,662.80
TOTAL COST					£100,042.80