



BICESTER HERITAGE:  
CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING GUARD HOUSE (BUILDING 89) FROM SUI GENERIS MOD USE TO A3  
USE CLASS CAFE/RESTAURANT  
CMI ARCHITECTURE LTD, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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USE TO A3 USE CLASS CAFE/RESTAURANT  
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A15-079-DA01 B

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# SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION & APPLICATION

## 1.0 THE PROPOSAL

1.0.1 This statement seeks detailed planning approval for the change of use of the existing Bicester Heritage guard house at Bicester Heritage from sui generis mode use to a3 use class cafe/restaurant. The proposal involves a new extension and internal alterations to the existing building with new bar area.

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

1.1.1 The site is a former guard house belonging to RAF Bicester and was previously used to detain military prisoners during World War II, comprising a court room.

1.1.2. The Bicester airfield site comprises a number of other associated listed buildings such as the control tower building.

1.1.3. The proposal seeks to convert the building into a fully functional restaurant and bar

1.1.4 This enquiry relates to Building 89 at Bicester Heritage on the Technical Site of the former RAF Bicester.

1.1.5. The building is set within the RAF Bicester Conservation Area and is one of the 22 listed buildings on the site. The structure is grade II listed having been added to the statutory list on 1st December 2005. The listing description is attached to this letter for convenience.

1.1.6 Building 89, also known as the Guard and Fire Party House, dates from the inter-war period having been constructed around 1926.

1.1.7. The facility is to act as a hub for the Bicester Heritage site and includes private dining/meeting spaces alongside the more conventional dining hall. The restaurant will also be open to the public to allow a wider range of visitors to experience and enjoy the heritage site.

## 1.2 APPLICATION

1.2.1 This application seeks full plans approval for the change of use of the existing guard house building to A3 class use cafe/restaurant.



Fig 1. Site aerial map

# SECTION 2

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

### 2.0 CONTEXT

2.0.1 The Guardhouse was the first and last building on any RAF Station and therefore it was here that any visitors had to report to on arrival for verifying that they had the correct authority to enter the camp.

2.0.2 The guard house lies at the front of the RAF Bicester site entrance, accessed from A4421 and overlooks other listed buildings belonging to the airfield site.

2.0.3. The guardroom part of the building was the working office of an Orderly Officer who operated the building in a good workman like manner to create a good impression.

2.0.4. The airfield is located to the east of the guard house building which comprises of a gliding club and a station for motorsport experience days.

2.0.5. The A4421 to the west of the guard house divides RAF Bicester and the adjacent 2507 Bicester Squadron base camp. Opposite the south of Bicester airfield is a residential context accessed from Buckingham Road which leads to central Bicester.

2.0.6. An important function of the guard house was the care of prisoners pending appearance before the Section Officer or CO depending how serious the 'crime' was. They were confined to the general detention room or a single prisoner could be kept in the service detention room. In either cell, windows were in the form of top lighting, air ventilators provided fresh air and electric lighting was of the guarded type. There were no doors on the latrine or showers and only a plank bed and a pillow board were provided for sleeping. Defaulters (perpetrators of a minor crime) periodically throughout the day, had to report to the guardroom, but still carried on with their everyday jobs.



Fig 1. Illustrative existing site plan showing the location of the guard house in proximity to surrounding buildings.

# SECTION 2

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

### 2.1 SITE FALLS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA OF BICESTER

2.1.1. The Map opposite (fig. 4) illustrates that the application site clearly falls within the RAF Bicester conservation area map.

2.2.2. Cherwell District Council designated RAF Bicester forms an area of special architectural and historic interest which should be preserved and enhanced. The Council has therefore designated the area bounded by a solid black line on the plan overleaf as a Conservation Area under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.2.3. The impact of the conservation area designation means that listed buildings will remain essentially unaltered as listed building consent takes precedent.



Fig 3. View of site entrance of RAF Bicester from the A4421 junction.

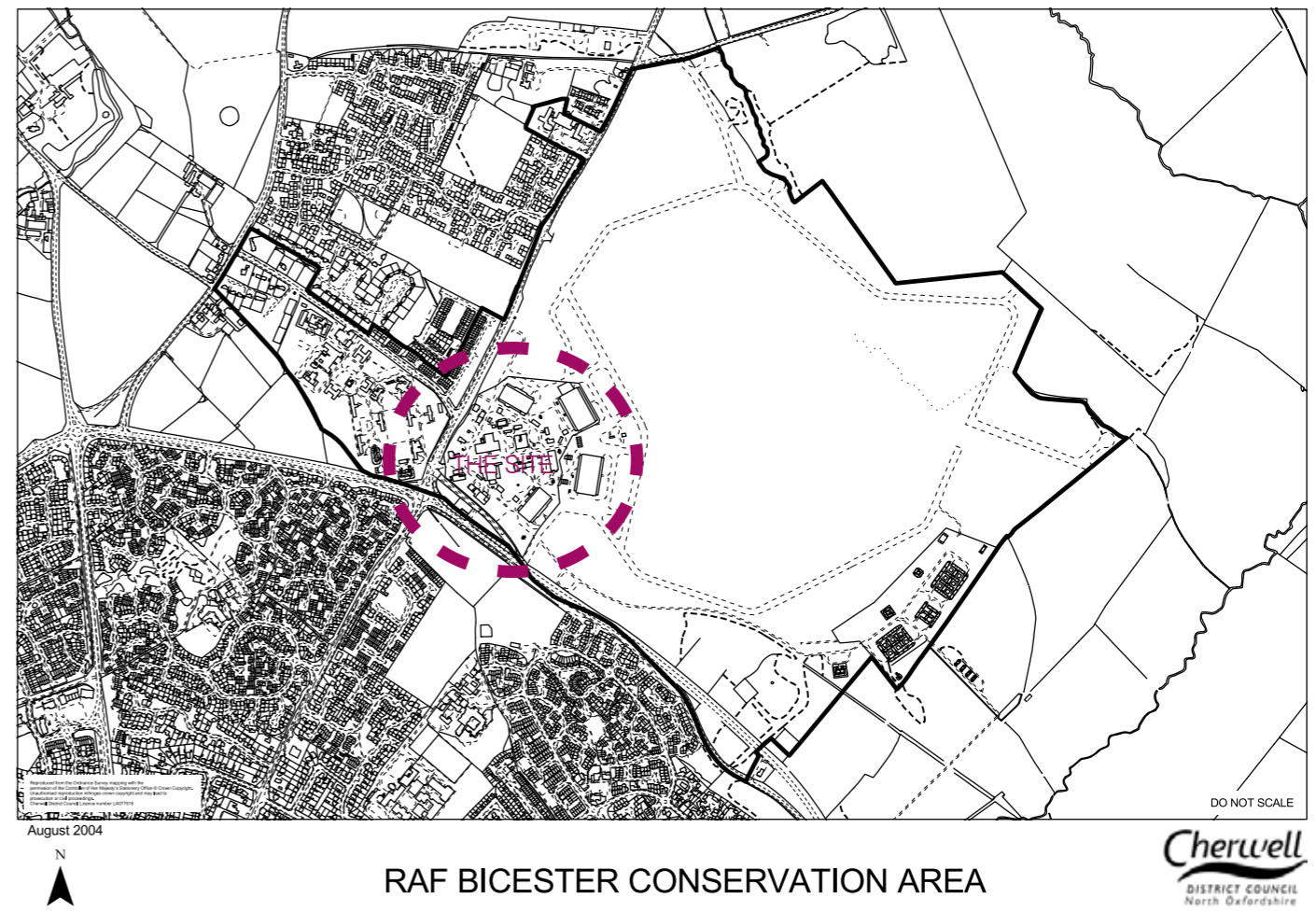


Fig 4. RAF Bicester conservation area map.

# SECTION 2

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

### 2.2 THE GUARD HOUSE



Fig 5. View of the guard house front elevation, showing the covered canopy.



Fig 7. Rear elevation.



Fig 6. Rear view of the guard house, where the proposed extension will be positioned, leading onto the rear garden.



Fig 8. Example of existing high level prison windows to the side of the building.

# SECTION 2

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

### 2.2 THE GUARD HOUSE



Fig 9. Side view showing the fortress like condition of the existing building, and use of red brick construction.



Fig 11. Internal corridor of cell block.



Fig 10. Internal view of the prison cells, showing the poor condition of the internal fabric in need of improvement.



Fig 12. Internal view of court house.

# SECTION 3 PLANNING

## 3.0 PLANNING SUMMARY

3.0.1. The Local Planning Authority for this development is Cherwell District Council.

## 3.1 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.1. None

## 3.2 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

3.2.1. Listed building

3.2.2. Conservation area

## 3.3 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Principle of development
- Design and appearance
- Highways and parking
- Refuse
- Layout and consideration

# SECTION 4 CONSTRAINTS

## 4.0 CONSTRAINTS PLAN



4.0.1. The existing guard house is grade II listed and the site is heavily screened from the public realm by vegetation with the main access at the front of the building, where it will be intentioned to utilise existing parking and access where appropriate.

4.0.2. There is an opportunity for expansion at the rear of the existing building, which overlooks a rear garden/ green space. Any extension will need to be sensitively designed either in a traditional or contemporary design that benefits the change of use and function of the restaurant/cafe.

4.0.3. Another opportunity is to utilise the rear of the site for additional car parking and side access.



### KEY:

- |   |                             |   |   |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|
|  | Vegetation screening        |  | Opportunity for extension                                     |
|  | Views into site             |  | Nodal frontage  |
|  | Main site access from A4421 |  | Opportunity of side access for vehicular use or rear parking. |
|  | Site frontages              |   |   |



# SECTION 5 THE PROPOSAL

## 5.0 PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE AND NEW EXTENSION

5.0.1 The proposal is to change the use of the building from its established sui generis MOD use to an A3 restaurant. The facility is to act as a hub for the Bicester Heritage site and includes private dining/meeting spaces alongside the more conventional dining hall. The restaurant will also be open to the public to allow a wider range of visitors to experience and enjoy the heritage site.

5.0.2. The restaurant will, in the main, be contained within the existing structure with all kitchen and storage provided in the single building. A modest extension is proposed to the eastern end of the northern elevation. It is also proposed to cover the enclosed exercise yard to create an additional dining space.

5.0.3. We have sort the Council's input through a pre-application enquiry prior to this submission and have taken the views of the heritage officers comments into account.

5.0.4. The proposed development will create a restaurant for the benefit of Bicester Heritage and the wider community as encouraged by Local Plan policy Bicester 8 which states that the Council will support: "heritage tourism uses, leisure, recreation, employment and community uses". The provision of hotel and conference facilities is also supported under the same policy.

5.0.5. Whilst the individual premises provided have been attractive to occupying companies the absence of any suitable space for businesses to meet and entertain clients on the site has consistently been raised as an issue. This is particularly problematic in view of the number of businesses on the site that deal in high-value premium goods and services. Presently businesses operating at Bicester Heritage are forced to schedule meetings away from the site adding to vehicle movements. The absence of dining facilities also means workers travel elsewhere for lunch, coffee, etc.

5.0.6. The lack of a communal 'hub' facility of the site has also prevented the true potential of Bicester Heritage as a specialist knowledge and business centre from being realised. At present there are very limited opportunities for networking and sharing of knowledge between businesses, normally a key asset of such a specialised business park. Provision of the proposed restaurant will enhance the sustainability of the site in economic and environmental terms.

5.0.7. The provision of a restaurant to serve the northern portion of the town would clearly be beneficial to the area fostering a sense of community and identity. The scale of the facility proposed is not such that it would undermine the wider offer in Bicester town centre.

5.0.8. The proposed plan opposite shows the reconfigured layout, working within the existing fabric to provide minor internal alterations. The rear of the building has an extended element consisting of the staff room and store rooms serving the main kitchen suite. A new central lobby leads onto the rear garden from the central bar area which has been kept open plan to allow flow of circulation through the main restaurant.

5.0.9. The main restaurant will sit at the front of the building with inset private dining suites replacing the cell blocks. The plan overall works within the existing spaces, and where walls are removed, this is to provide improved articulation and access to suit the required function. The restaurant opens out onto an external seating area overlooking the front of the site, sited under the existing canopy roof. The main front entrance will be maintained at the centre of the building.

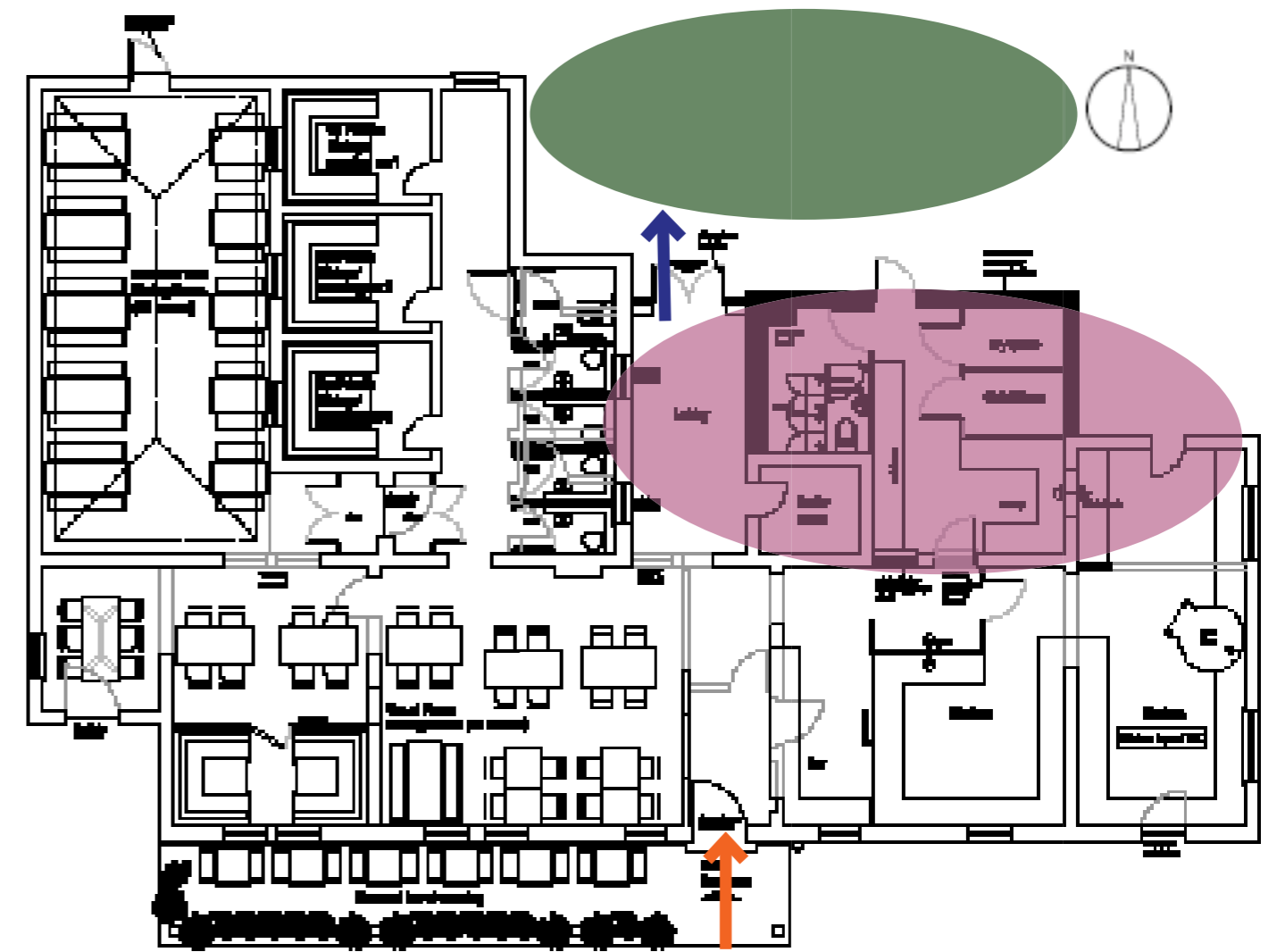







Fig 1. Proposed ground plan.

### KEY:

-  Rear garden access
-  Main entrance access
-  Rear garden
-  Extent of extension
-  Vehicular access to frontage

# SECTION 5 THE PROPOSAL

## 5.1 ELEVATIONAL TREATMENT & LAYOUT

5.1.1 The new extension takes on a traditional approach to echo the historic form. The old guard house constructed of red brick and large prison cell windows form part of the character and fabric of the building and so these features have been delicately maintained.

5.1.2. The new rear extension providing a functional use, will match the guard house and will be a flat roof and reclaimed brick external walls. This will contrast with the new glazed lobby leading onto the rear garden giving providing a contemporary and clear link into the building.

5.1.3. The proposed works to the listed building are considered to be the minimum required to create a viable restaurant. The covers proposed are the lowest necessary for a viable business with the kitchen space the smallest realistic area with which to serve those covers.

5.1.4. The design now proposed has been shaped by the historic building in order to limit unnecessary interventions. It will be noted that the historic cells have been retained as private dining and meeting rooms. This allows retention of the particularly characteristic feature and also provides much needed meeting space for businesses on site.

5.1.5. The exercise yard is also proposed to be enclosed with a shallow pitched glazed roof that will ensure the sense of the external space is retained. Where interventions are required to the fabric of the building elements of the structure will be retained wherever possible. This will ensure the historic separation of spaces can still be read to the benefit of historic interest.

## 5.2 KITCHEN FLUES AND VENTS

5.2.1 The intention is for the new kitchen flues and vents to be redirected into the existing chimney's. The parapet wall will also enable external outlets to be hidden from view.



Fig 2. Proposed rear elevation.

# SECTION 5 THE PROPOSAL

## 5.2 SITE PLAN

5.2.1 The proposed site plan has been designed to be sympathetic to the existing context. The front access into the building has been maintained with parking at the front. The improvement is the side access link which leads onto additional car parking. This will provide a total of 36 spaces in accordance with the Cherwell District Council parking standards guidance.

5.2.2. The additional parking is to enable provision for the number of covers within the restaurant. Inclusion of disabled parking bays has also been included.

5.2.3. On the north of the building the extension has been set back from the eastern flank so as not to another interfere with the visual aspect of the trident road junction and the avenue of trees.

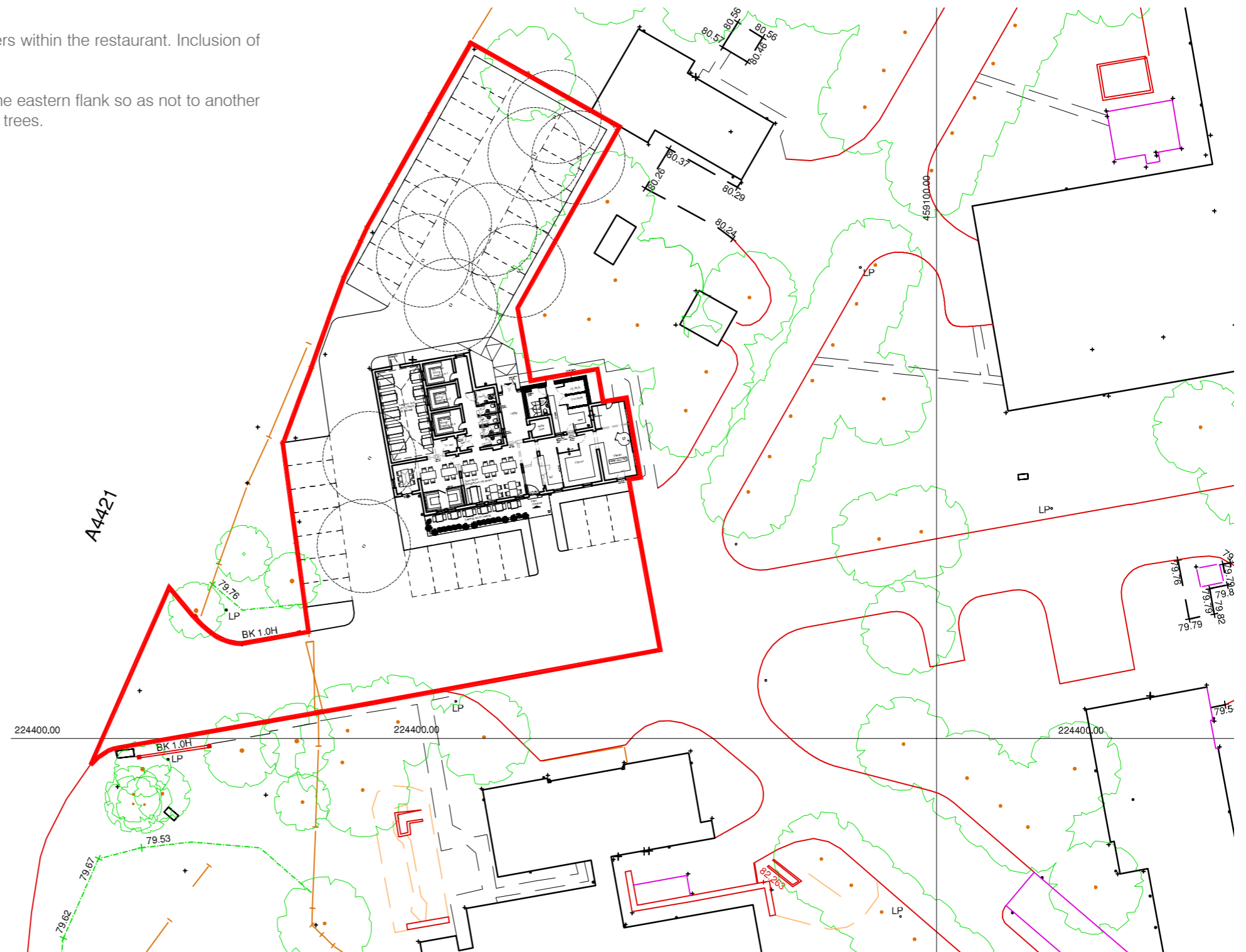


Fig 3. Proposed site plan.

# SECTION 6 MATERIALS

## 6.0 MATERIALS

6.0.1 The existing building will remain intact and repaired and made good where necessary. New replacement windows and door will match existing.

6.0.2. The new extension will be a structure that matches, as far as possible, the host building. There will be a flat roof element, matching reclaimed brick elevations with simple detailing and metal windows where specified. The glazed lobby leading the rear garden will consist of dark grey powder coated alluminum doorset and as to provide a clear contemporary link for visitors.

6.0.3. The glazed lantern above the dining area will be a traditional design by a suitable manufacturer to harmonise with the existing building.

## 6.13 MATERIALS

6.13.1 The building presents a simple palette of materials including: brick, glazing and flat roofing in keeping with the host building and the wider context.

6.13.2 Reclaimed brickwork to match existing building and laid in matching bond



6.13.3 Suggested roof over exercise yard



# SECTION 7 SUMMARY

## 8.0 SUMMARY

9.0.1 The proposed scheme has been designed to utilize the current fabric of the guard house, making use of the cell blocks in particular to provide discreet private dining areas and promoting access to the heritage asset.

9.0.2 The new extension takes on a traditional form to provide diversity and to distinguish between the old and the new elements of the building.

9.0.3 Should you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Buffer

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