

Design and Access Statement
to Accompany an Application for Outline Planning Consent
for the Extension of the
Northern Headquarters of the Aetherius Society
350 Sheffield Road
Birdwell
Barnsley
S70 5TU

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The Extension of the Northern Headquarters of the Aetherius Society at 350 Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley, S70 5TU

Application for Outline Planning Consent

Design and Access Statement

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Application for Outline Planning Consent

Design and Access Statement

Introduction

The Aetherius Society is a world wide spiritual organisation comprised of people dedicated to help, heal and uplift humanity through spiritual action.

The Northern Headquarters of the Society is located at 350 Sheffield Road, Birdwell. These premises were originally built as a police station and had been vacant for some years before they were acquired by the Society in 1976.

The Northern Headquarters incorporates a place of worship and a healing centre, together with offices and meeting rooms, and from here the Society offers many training and healing sessions which are open to all and include:-

massage and healing treatments
karma yoga
power breathing
inner peace
developing intuition
candle meditation
self healing
tuning in to crystals
mantra chanting
kundalini visualisations

Over recent years the Society has grown significantly as local residents have become members and as individuals who are already members have moved into the area to be close to their place of worship.

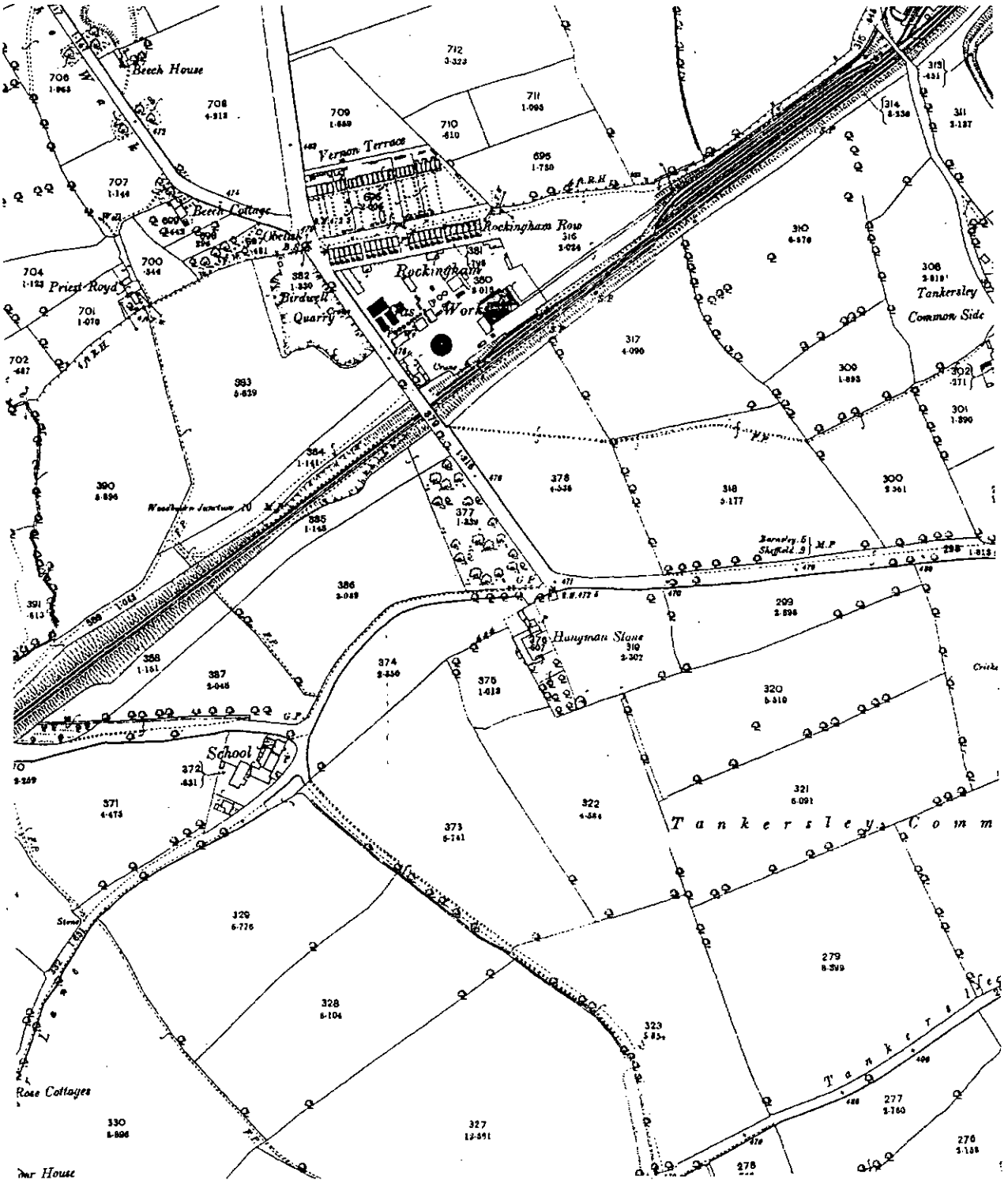
The Society is now well established as a spiritual centre offering alternative treatments and therapies to extend the range of opportunities, facilities and support available to the local and wider communities.

Many of the regular events organised by the Society are very well attended, especially by local residents, and this increase in support and activity has brought with it the requirement for additional space. Various options for the extension of the premises have been considered; the most acceptable option is considered to be the building of an extension to the north west, partly on land owned by the local authority. It is this option which is the subject of this application for outline planning consent.

Historical Development of the Site

Mid Nineteenth Century. The former police station, now the Northern Headquarters of the Aetherius Society, was built in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Prior to this time, during the mid nineteenth century the area was essentially rural; the land on which the police station was to be built was woodland, at the junction of Sheffield Road, the main southern approach into Barnsley with Moor Lane, which lead to Tankersley and on to Sheffield. To the north was the Woodbourn Junction to Aldham Junction Railway and to the north of that was Birdwell Quarry, the Rockingham Gas Works and coke ovens, with terraced housing for those who worked there.

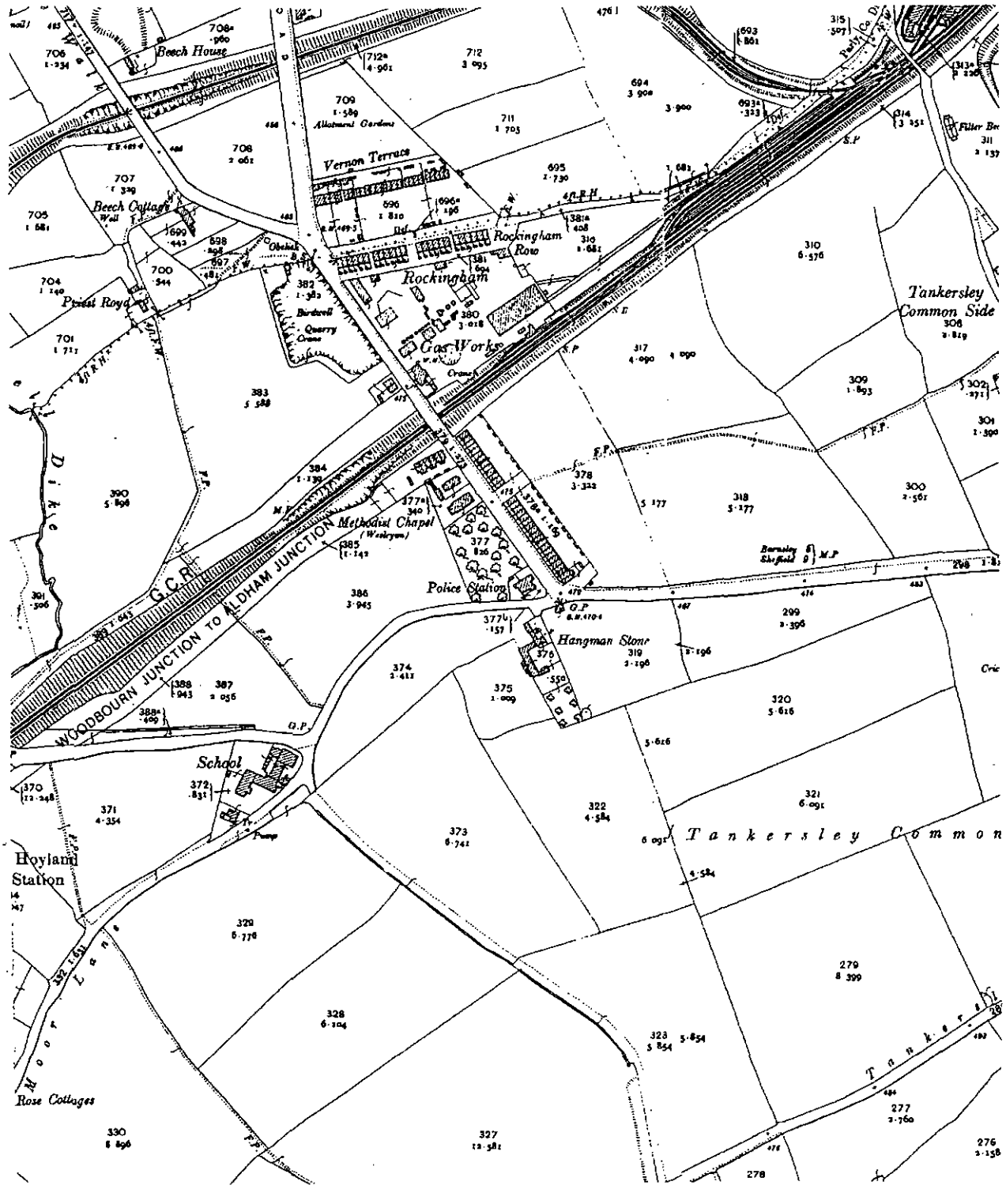
Plan - Mid Nineteenth Century



Historical Development of the Site (Continued)

Late Nineteenth Century. By the end of the nineteenth century considerable development had taken place, with the building of new terrace housing, a Methodists Chapel, a Drill Hall, and the building of the police station, on what at that time would have been a prominent site, no doubt to emphasis the police presence.

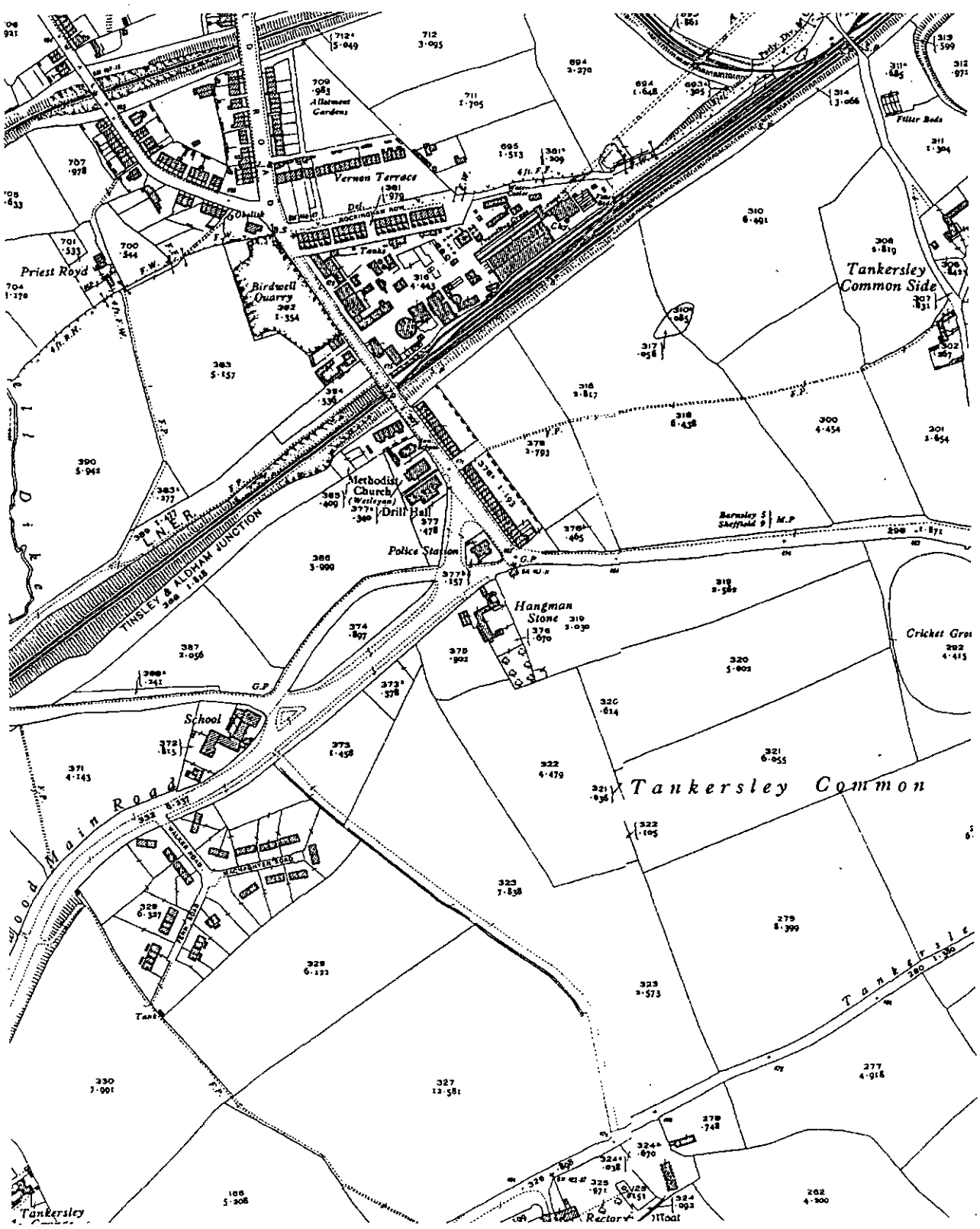
Plan - Late Nineteenth Century



Historical Development of the Site (Continued)

Early Twentieth Century During the earlier part of the twentieth century a new road was constructed, over a short distance, to the south of Moor Lane and extending to the north west side of the police station, in order to divert traffic more directly to Barnsley, avoiding a hairpin bend junction to the south east of the police station, which was now encircled by roads.

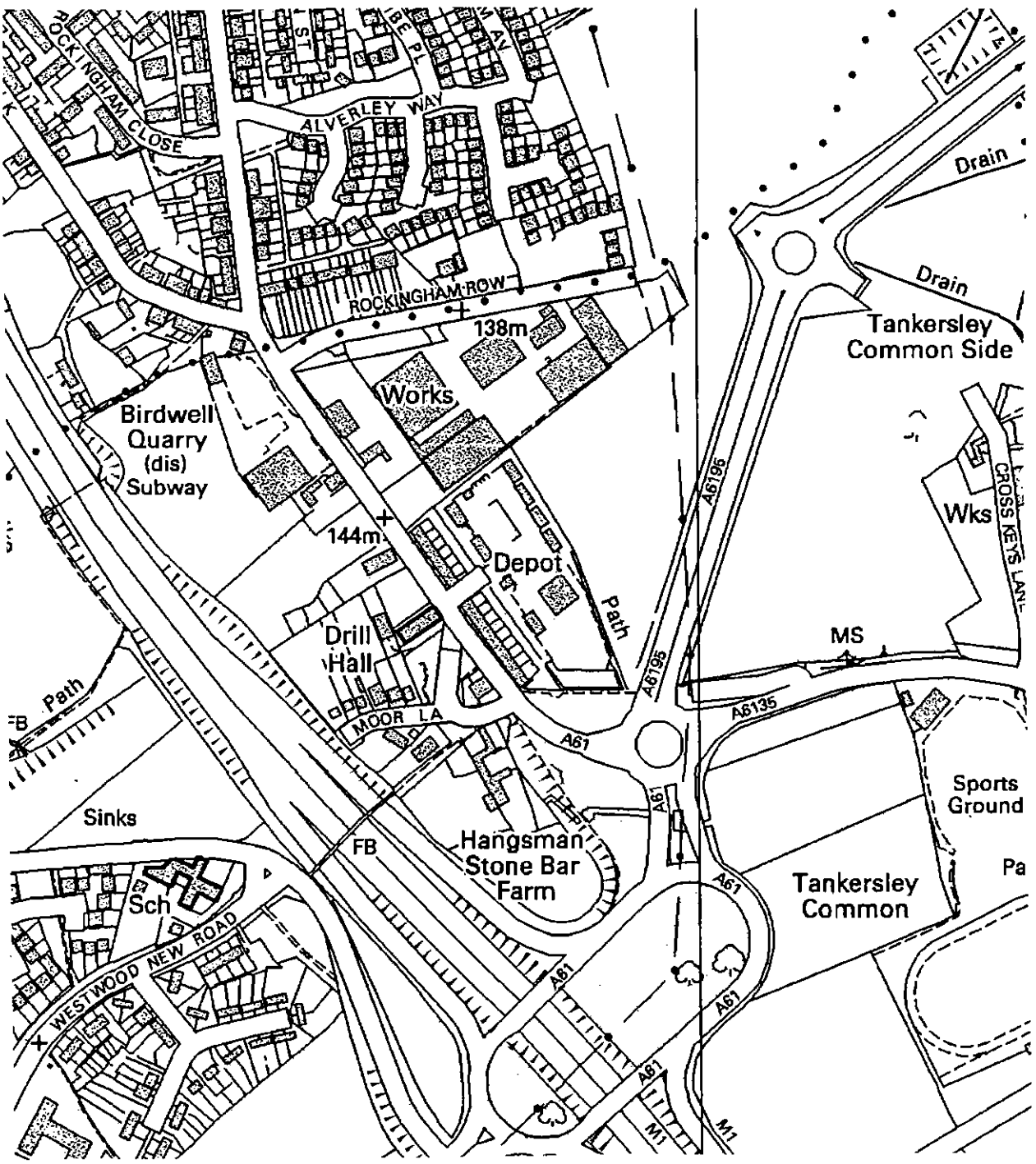
Plan - Early Twentieth Century



Historical Development of the Site (Continued)

Late Twentieth Century. During the latter part of the twentieth century the M1 Motorway was built to the south west of the police station. To the south, new sections of trunk road were built to form Junction 36 and to join the A61, the A6135 and the A6195 together to emphasis this route as the main southern approach into the town. To the west, Moor Lane was closed to form a cul-de-sac and the road to the south was extended over the M1 as a footbridge; adjacent land was developed for residential use. The road to the west of the police station was closed at its junction with the A61, Sheffield Road.

Plan - Late Twentieth Century



Assessment

Physical

The Aetherius Society's headquarters have a ground floor area of 151 sq. m., a first floor area of 106 sq. m. within a site area of 633 sq. m. bounded by the A61 Sheffield Road to the east, Moor Lane to the south and a further road to the west. This latter road was closed during the mid C20 at its junction with Sheffield Road and is now used as a collection point for waste recycling and as a car park. Adjacent to the headquarters to the north west is an open area of land of 317 sq. m., owned and maintained by Barnsley Metropolitan Council.

Farther afield, to the east and on the opposite side of Sheffield Road, is a long terrace of houses constructed towards the end of the C19. To the south and south east are a number of detached houses mostly built during the C20, and Hangsman Stone Bar Farm, which is much earlier. To the west is Tankersley Garden of Rest.

The entire area is allocated as Housing Policy Area HN2 on the Hoyland Community Area plan within the Unitary Development Plan.

The Society's headquarters is the first prominent building on the main southern approach into Birdwell and on to Worsbrough and Barnsley; together with the C19 terraced housing opposite, it forms a 'gateway' into the town. The headquarters however could contribute more positively to the main southern approach, e.g:-

- Boundary planting would benefit from the introduction of more mature trees to provide year round colour. (See Photograph 1)

- The north west side of the building was designed as the 'private' side, i.e. the rear access and outbuildings, exposed to view by the construction of the road during the early part of the C20 and now making no positive contribution to the environment. (See Photograph 3).

The open land to the north west is of little value as a recreational area due to its confined area, proximity to a busy trunk road and arrangement of planting beds. The principal function of the eastern section of this land is to contribute by means of landscaping and planting to the southern approach into town; however the quality of landscaping is poor and the area fails to make any positive contribution. The western section of the land does not contribute to the southern approach into town; the area is now overlooked and is frequently visited by vandals. (See Photograph 3).

The quality of the landscaping to the narrow strip of land adjacent to the west boundary is poor; the area could make a far more positive contribution to the environment. (See Photograph 2).

Assessment

Vehicular and Transport Links

Public transport connections to the Society's Northern Headquarters are good, with a nearby regular bus service along Sheffield Road to Birdwell, Worsbrough and on to Barnsley to connect with the rail network.

Vehicular transport to the Society's Headquarters is also good, with Junction 36 on the M1 within 500 m. and links to the M18, A1(M), M62 and M180 all nearby.

Car parking within the site is limited to two spaces with restricted turning space but adequate area for the parking of bicycles.

Outside the site, on the road to the west are some 20 car parking spaces and a further 10 spaces on Moor Lane. These spaces are mostly used during extended office hours, by commuters making use of the bus service into town, and by those 'car sharing' for longer journeys on the motorway. Outside these hours and at weekends the car parking spaces are less used. As the Headquarters are used only little during office hours and mostly during the evenings and Sundays then no increase in car parking provision is considered necessary, especially as part of the philosophy of the Society is to conserve natural resources by less dependence on private transport; however please see Inclusive Access below and the design proposals at pages 11 and 12.

Assessment

Inclusive Access

There are no dedicated car parking spaces for disabled visitors and those confined to wheelchairs.

There are three entrances into the building; that on the north west elevation is usually used as the main entrance. Access to this entrance from Sheffield Road and from the west is via footpaths which follow the slope of the land and do not present obstacles to wheelchair users; however a portable ramp is required to negotiate the entrance steps. There are no facilities within the building for wheelchair users.

The outline application is to include proposals for dedicated car parking spaces, toilet accommodation and means of access for disabled visitors; an access audit is to be prepared to inform more detailed provision, e.g. for signage, lighting, loop systems etc.

Assessment

Planning Policy

The design of the extension to the Society's Headquarters building will conform to the following:-

UDP Policy BE6 - Design Standards

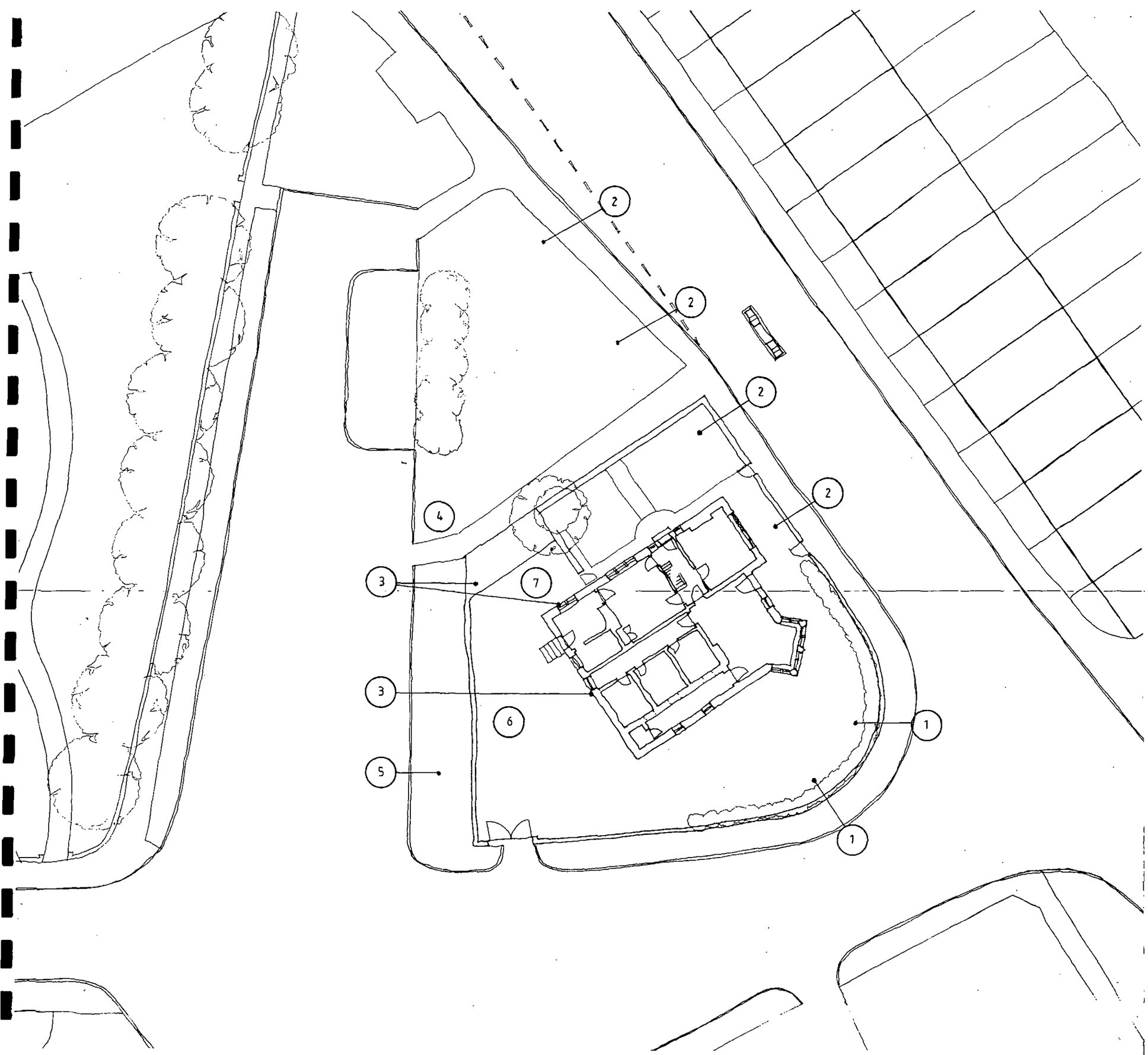
Supplementary Planning Guidance 11 - Design to Avoid Crime

Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 - Landscape Design

Involvement

The outline proposals were first discussed at a meeting held on the 12 July 2007 with Councillor J. Andrews and Mrs K. Driver, Senior Planning Officer, of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Mr. D. Moodie and Mr. D. Trimble of the Aetherius Society, and Mr. R. Jaques, Architect for the Aetherius Society.

During September 2007 local residents were invited to an open day held at the Society's headquarters, where drawings of the proposed scheme were on display and where members of the Society and their Architect were in attendance to provide further details and answer any questions. The proposals attracted considerable interest and without exception received positive support, many individuals having since confirmed their support in writing. A copy of the letter inviting local residents to the open day and copies of the letters of support are included at the appendix.



Evaluation

The design of the extension to the Northern Headquarters of the Aetherius Society is to respond to the following issues noted in the preceding pages:-

1 Introduction of additional planting to provide year round colour and enhance the main southern approach into Birdwell and on to Barnsley.

2. Introduction of improved landscaping and planting to enhance the main southern approach into Birwell and on to Barnsley, in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 - Landscape Design.

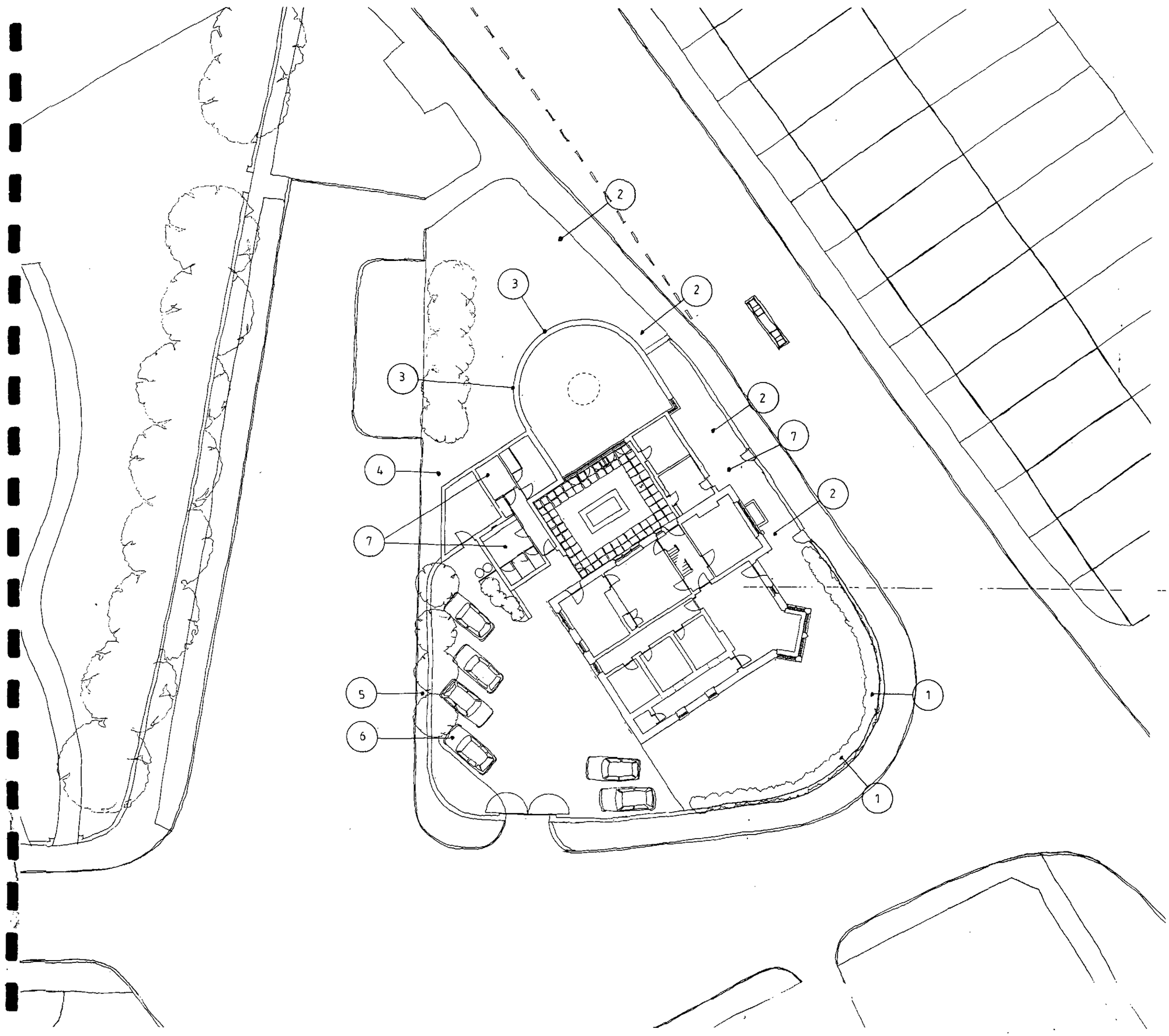
3. Improve the presentation of the north west and south west elevations and outbuildings which were originally designed as the 'private' side of the building.

4. Introduce measures in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 11 - Design to Avoid Crime.

5. Introduction of improved landscaping and planting in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 - Landscape Design.

6. Provision of dedicated car parking spaces for disabled visitors.

7. Improve access and facilities for wheelchair users.



Design

1. Introduction of additional planting to provide year round colour and enhance the main southern approach into Birdwell and on to Barnsley

2. Introduction of improved landscaping and planting to enhance the main southern approach into Birdwell and on to Barnsley, in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 - Landscape Design.

3. Improve the presentation of the north west and south west elevations and outbuildings, which were originally designed as the 'private' side of the building.

4. Introduction of measures in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 11 - Design to Avoid Crime.

5. Introduction of improved landscaping and planting in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 - Landscape Design.

6. Provision of dedicated car parking spaces for disabled visitors.

7. Improved access and facilities for wheelchair users.

Appendices



Above: Photograph 1
The Society's Headquarters
from the south east



Right: Photograph 2
the west boundary

Below: Photograph 3
The Society's Headquarters
from the north



THE AETHERIUS SOCIETY
FOUNDED IN 1955 BY GEORGE. KING D.D. ThD.
Northern UK Branch
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Tel: 01226 744659 Fax; 01226 351085 Email: nukb@orbworld.net

September 2007

Dear Householder,

We are having an Open Day at our Healing and Yoga Centre on Saturday, 22nd September from 10.00am-5.00pm when we will be giving healing and displaying many of our books and tapes. As well as the opportunity to experience many alternative therapies, there will be a numerologist to give readings and there will be demonstrations of dowsing techniques.

Tea, coffee and home-baked cakes and a bric-a-brac stall are other attractions in what is always a busy and popular event.

Because of our expanding healing and teaching activity and increasing numbers of volunteer staff, members and patients we are frequently unable to accommodate everyone in the present building.

We have had preliminary discussions with Barnsley MBC concerning the possibility of acquiring some of the adjacent land in order to extend our building and improve the present landscaping scheme.

A plan of our proposals will be on display and our architect will be attending to answer any questions. We hope you will take the opportunity to visit us, enjoy our Open Day and see what we believe will enhance this important approach into Barnsley.

Please bring this letter with you to ensure that you will not have to pay the £2 entrance charge (£1 concession).

Yours sincerely,

David W. Trimble

Service is the Jewel in the Rock of Attainment

Design

The existing access from Sheffield Road to the entrance on the north west elevation is to be retained, for those travelling to the site by public transport and to provide convenient access for local residents. The access will be level, leading to the reception opening onto to a courtyard arranged as a cloister with a glazed roof. The courtyard is intended as a tranquil place, the glazed roof insulating the space from traffic noise.

The place of worship is proposed to the north of the courtyard, having a semi-circular form of plan which is intended to form a harmonious link to the landscape to the north. The place of worship is to be top lit, with glazed doors onto the courtyard, again to insulate the interior from traffic noise. A corner window is proposed as a means of creating an eastern orientation to the space.

Toilets, including facilities for the disabled, and a boiler room are located to the west, connected to a secondary entrance from the existing car park and designated car parking spaces within the extended site boundary. A ramped access will be required.

The reception and adjacent vestry, and the toilets and boiler room will be single storey and quite low, with pitched roofs similar to those of the existing building and external walls finished with render. The place of worship will be a higher structure, extending above the ridges of the vestry and toilet buildings, having a flat roof behind a parapet and external walls of stone and render.

South-west facing roofs to the proposed toilets are to be fitted with solar panels and external areas to the south, west and north will be used as a source for heating the interior.

The west boundary and the rear entrance to the site are to be repositioned to enable designated car parking spaces for the use of the disabled to be introduced; the new boundary wall will be of stone and railings, with landscaping designed in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 25, Landscape Design.

The landscaped areas to the north, south and east are also to be landscaped in accordance with the above document, with emphasis on the introduction of planting which will provide year round colour, in order to enhance the main approach into the town.

To the north west, provisions will be introduced in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance 11, Design to Avoid Crime.