



Design and Access Statement

Electric Theatre, Falcon Street, Barnsley

Revision *

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This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Stem Architects Ltd on behalf of Barnsley College and accompanies a planning application for the change of use of the Electric Theatre on Falcon Street to a new college medical centre. This proposals include internal alterations to form new mock wards, dentistry spaces, laboratories, teaching spaces and ancillary accommodation for the training of young adults in various medical fields. In addition the proposals include the overcladding of the existing building with a variety of new cladding materials including concrete panels, vertical timber cladding and black metal cladding to improve the outward aesthetics of the building which is currently quite industrial in nature.

The existing building is currently used as a combined theatre and teaching space for Barnsley College performing arts courses; this includes teaching spaces, drama studios and dedicated 180 seat theatre with specialist infrastructure. The theatre hosts curriculum based performances by students as well as a variety of external performances open to the public. It is intended that performing arts courses are to be moved into existing college accommodation at their Church Street Campus in order to allow new dedicated facilities for medical courses.

This statement has been prepared to provide an assessment of the main planning issues raised by this application as well as to cover the key design principles and concepts applied to the proposed development. The planning issues considered include relevant planning policy, both locally and nationally within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This statement should be read in conjunction with other documents prepared and submitted as part of the planning application.



Photograph of Barnsley College Electric Theatre from Falcon Street

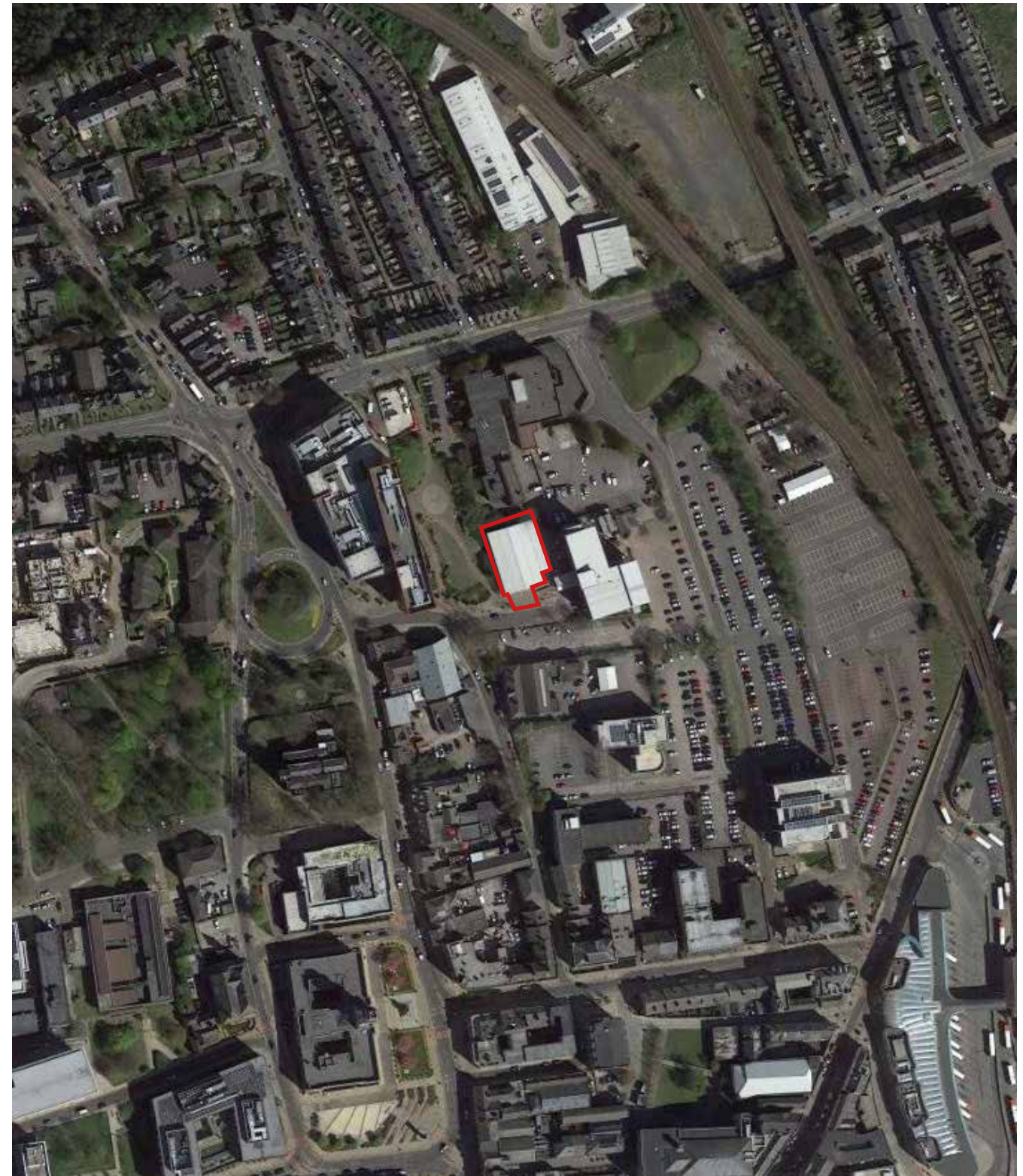


Visualisation of proposed Barnsley College Medical Centre from Falcon Street

2.1 Site Location & Context

The site is located within the town centre of Barnsley immediately to the north of the main shopping area within the town; close to existing college buildings and near to the town's railway station. The site comprises of the two storey Electric Theatre building (former examination hall). The site is located and bound to the south by Falcon Street; with the Barnsley College SciTech Centre immediately to the east and the Barnsley College Old Mill Lane building to the west separated by a small pocket park which forms a student/staff breakout space for the college. Immediately to the north is the Barnsley Telephone Exchange building. The site is located close to the A635 road which runs through the centre of Barnsley. The site is within the administration area of Barnsley Borough Council.

Other college buildings are located close to the site. Approximately 200 metres to the south are the Church Street and Sixth Form College buildings; with the STEM Centre and MVT building located approximately 150 metres to the north. The wider Barnsley College Honeywell Campus is located approximately 250 metres to the north.



Aerial map showing location of Electric Theatre, Falcon Street, Barnsley

2.2 Site Photographs



Photograph of South Elevation of Electric Theatre from Falcon Street



Photograph of East Elevation of Electric Theatre from Sci-Tech Building



Photograph of East Elevation of Electric Theatre from Old Mill Lane Building



Photograph of East Entrance of Electric Theatre from Old Mill Lane Building



Photograph of existing ground floor theatre space



Photograph of existing entrance lobby into building



Photograph of existing ground floor dance studio space



Photograph of existing first floor control room space

2.3 Site Context

The Electric Theatre is located in an area to the north of Barnsley town centre where several of Barnsley College's main academic buildings are located. This includes both the Old Mill Lane building and as the SciTech Centre which are both considerably larger than the Electric Theatre which is located between.

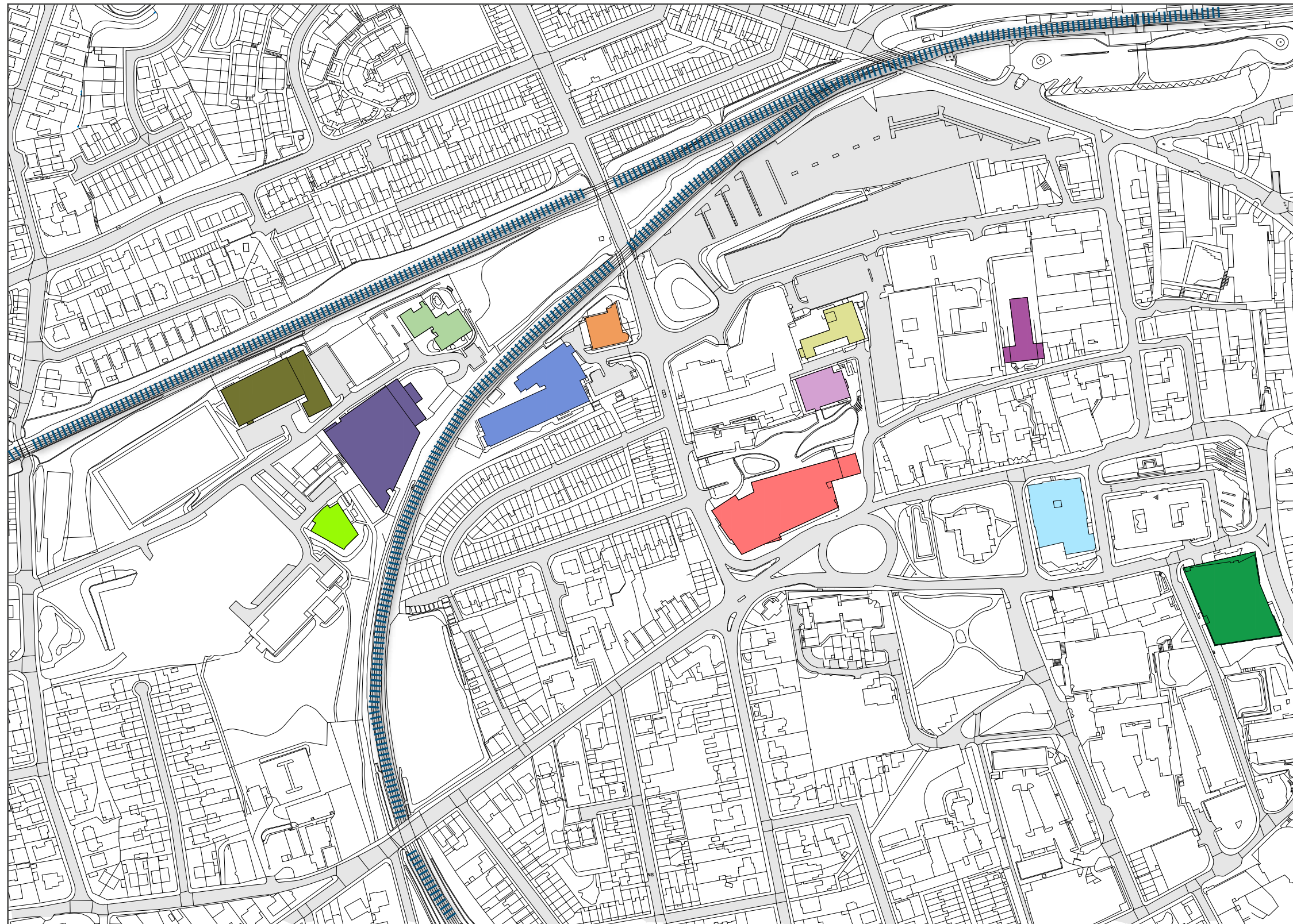
Both of these buildings are relatively modern; with Old Mill Lane being clad in a striking red cladding in an elevated position in the town's skyline. The SciTech Centre has recently been refurbished which has also included the re-cladding of the existing building giving a contemporary appearance. The Electric Theatre is located very close to the entrance of the SciTech Centre and as such is in a very prominent position adjacent the building. In addition the Electric Theatre also lies next to an area of park land associated with the Old Mill Lane building which provides an outdoor breakout space for staff and students; the building therefore also sits in a prominent position in relation to this.



Photograph of adjacent Barnsley College Old Mill Lane building to the west



Photograph of adjacent Barnsley College SciTech Centre to the east

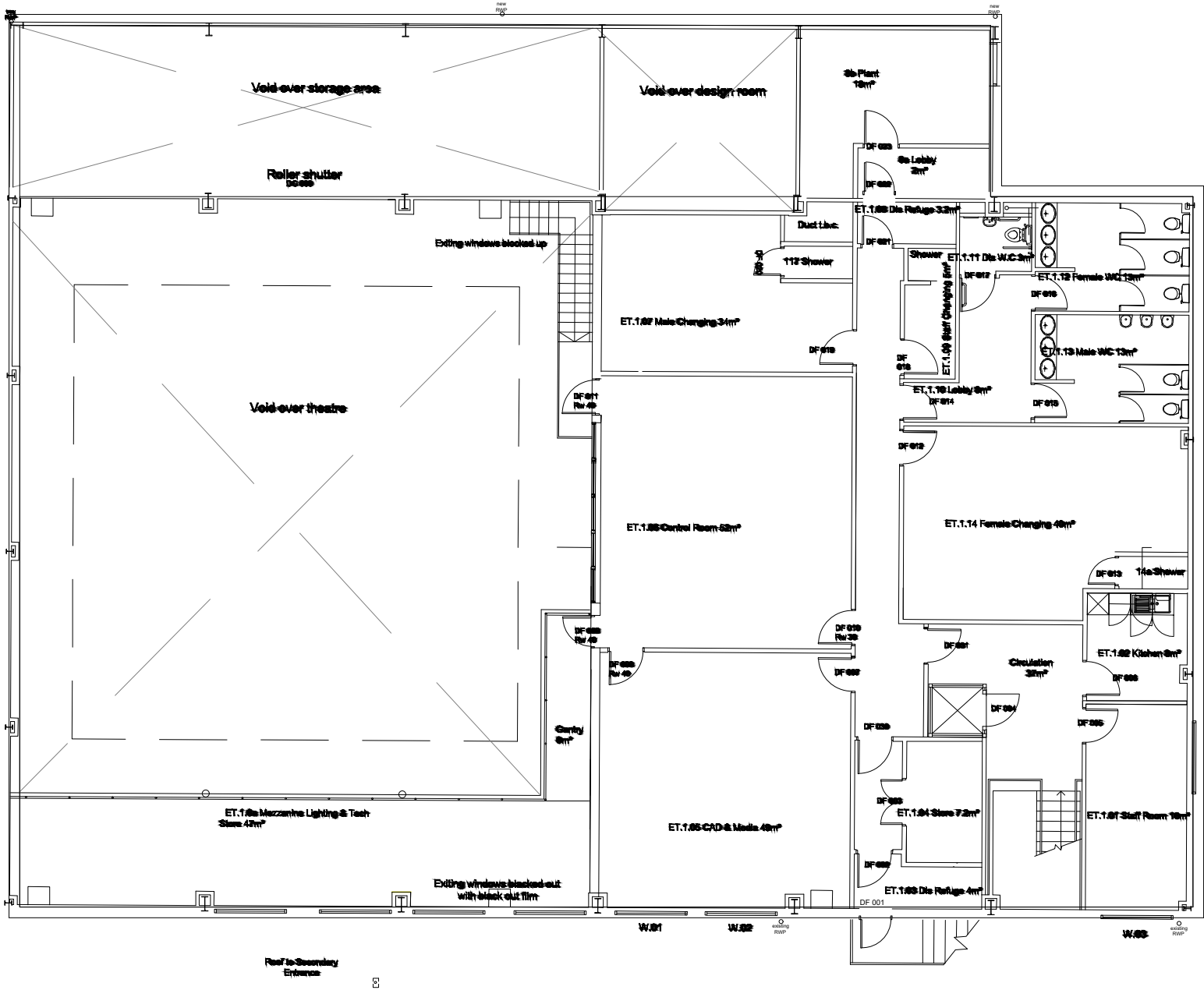


EXISTING BARNSELY COLLEGE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

2.4 Barnsley College Masterplan

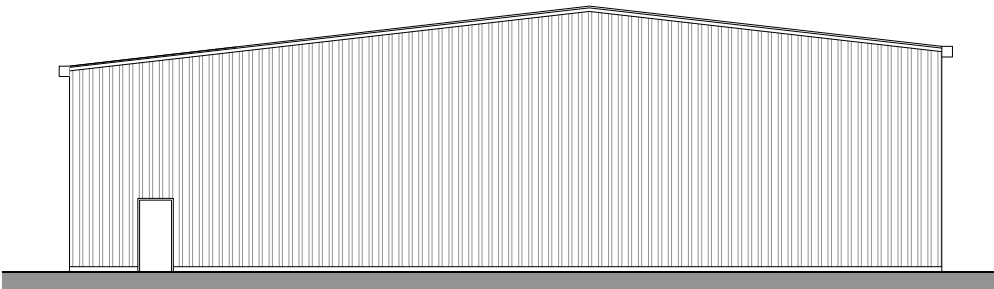
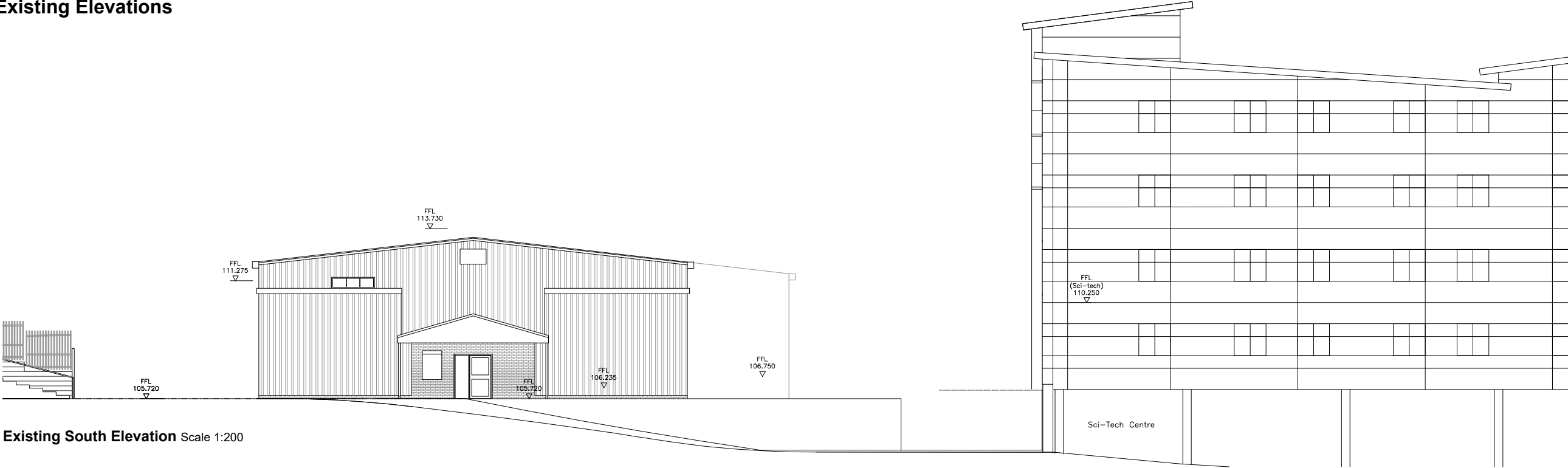
Diagram (left) showing the various Barnsley College buildings in relation to the wider context of Barnsley

- = Old Mill Lane
- = Church Street
- = SciTech Centre
- = Electric Theatre
- = Sixth Form Centre
- = Eastgate House
- = STEM Centre
- = MVT
- = Think Low Carbon
- = CUBE
- = Zest
- = Sports Academy

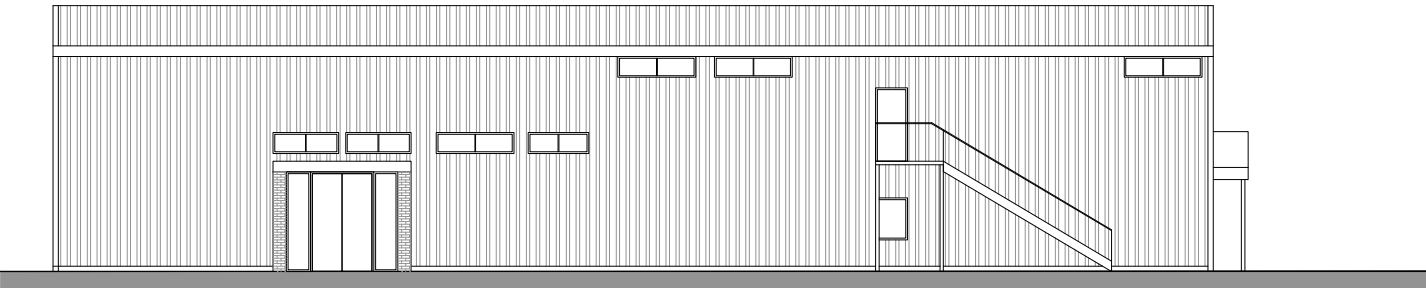


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN - FIRST FLOOR

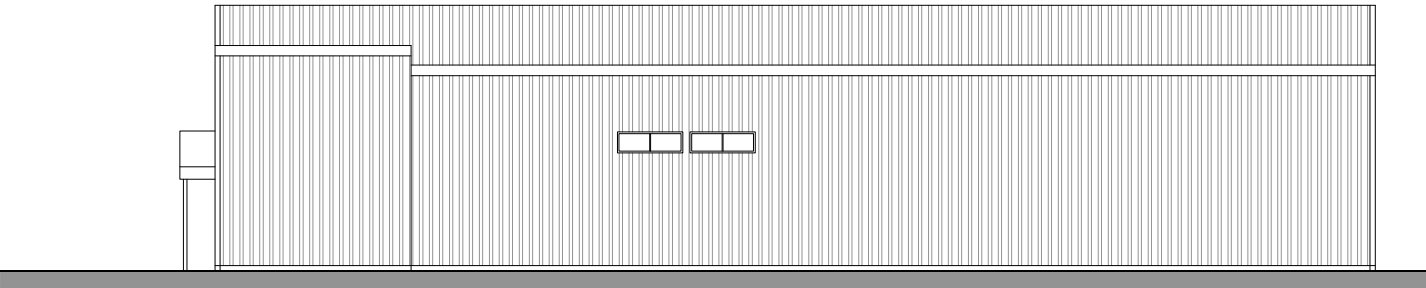
2.6 Existing Elevations



Existing North Elevation Scale 1:200



Existing West Elevation Scale 1:200



Existing East Elevation Scale 1:200

The building has been subject to several planning applications over the lifespan of the building. Below are listed historic planning applications for works to the building with the earliest being in 1987 in relation to the original erection of the current building on the site. Earlier planning records for the site prior to the current building are not available on the Barnsley Borough Council Planning Explorer.

Erection of a new examination hall
Ref: B/97/0131/BA | Approved with Conditions

Variation of Conditions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9 of application 2010/1465 - Refurbishment and extension of existing college building including new atrium to form performing arts centre
Ref: 2011/1428 | Approved with Conditions

Refurbishment and extension of existing college building including new atrium to form performing arts centre
Ref: 2010/1465 | Approved with Conditions

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

It is a legal requirement that decisions on planning applications must follow the policies set out in the adopted development plan, unless other material considerations indicate that a different decision should be made. The above principle was set out in Section 54A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and subsequently taken forward through Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (which amends and supplements the 1990 Act).

In this instance the local adopted development plan is the Barnsley Borough Council Local Plan, with the implications of policies within this plan explored below. First however, it is useful to consider the national policy context which sets out the overarching planning policies and guidance on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.

The Government published the NPPF on 27th March 2012 which sets out the overarching policy priorities for the planning system, against which local plans will be prepared and decisions made on planning applications. The purpose of the planning system, as recognised by the NPPF, is to “...contribute to the achievement of sustainable development” (Para 6). The framework replaces most of the Planning Policy Statements (including PPS1 and PPS4).

A presumption in favour of sustainable development embodies the NPPF, being seen as “...a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision making” (Para 14). The NPPF confirms that development proposals, which accord with the development plan, should be approved without delay. Where the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date; permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits or specific policies within the Framework indicates that developments should be restricted.

Two of the key elements for delivering sustainable development are building a strong, competitive economy and ensuring the vitality of town centres. Para 18 states that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.

Para 56 states that the Government attaches great importance to high quality design since this is a key aspect of sustainable development. Decisions should aim to ensure that developments are high quality and achieve the following (Para 58):

- Function well and add to the overall quality of an area;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Are visually attractive with good architecture and landscaping.

Para 92 of the NPPF suggests that planning policies and decisions should “...plan positively for the provision of... local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments”. This ties into the viability of town centres and ensuring that they prosper and continue to provide the services the community requires to develop skills in young people.

Para 193 of the NPPF details how Local Authorities should consider the impact of proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets. Great weight should be given to the conservation of assets. Para 196 details that when “...proposals 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”. A Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) will be provided as part of this planning application in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

4.2 Barnsley Local Plan

The Barnsley Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and replaced the Barnsley Borough Council Core Strategy and Unitary Development Plan. The plan is now the main relevant planning policy document for Barnsley and the surrounding borough.

As part of the design process we have reviewed the proposals against the above document and consider that the main policy relevant to the proposals are as follows:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy GD1: General Development
- Policy LG2: The Location of Growth
- Policy E1: Providing Strategic Employment Locations
- Policy E4: Protecting Existing Employment Land
- Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making
- Policy TC1: Town Centres
- Policy CC1: Climate Change
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy I2: Educational and Community Facilities

Policy SD1: A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

This policy reiterates the overarching policy priority within the NPPF of delivering sustainable development and refers to development being required to improve economic, social and environmental conditions. The proposals will improve existing education facilities within the centre of Barnsley by streamlining existing facilities to make them more functional to the college. It creates the opportunity to improve the viability of the building and ultimately social and cultural opportunities to young people in Barnsley. The existing building is sustainably located in the centre of the town and will potentially serve to ultimately increase job opportunities as well as developing skills in young people. The proposals will give an opportunity to improve sustainability aspects of the existing building.

Policy GD1: General Development

This policy sets out general policy for the approval of development proposals. This includes whether proposals are compatible with neighbouring land uses, whether they will adversely impact on future potential development and the existing environment; as well as providing adequate access and landscaping to ensure assimilation with surrounding context. Broadly speaking the fact that the proposals comprise alterations to an existing building already within an appropriate context suggests that the general principle of these proposals would be acceptable under this policy.

Policy LG2: The Location of Growth

The priority of locations for development is defined within this policy with the urban core of Barnsley being at the top of this hierarchy accommodating a significant amount of growth in the area.

Policy E1: Providing Strategic Employment Locations

This policy primarily relates to the allocation of employment land in sustainable locations. Whilst this does not directly relate to the proposals the policy encourages Barnsley town centre as the focus for employment in new technologies such as that being provided within the proposed scheme.

Policy E4: Protecting Existing Employment Land

In this policy, it suggests that premises currently used for employment purposes should be retained in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs. The proposals aim to improve existing college resources, thus improving the viability of the building to serve Barnsley College in the 21st Century and retaining the building for education and educational employment purposes.

Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making

This policy is concerned with ensuring that proposals reflect a high quality design and generally respect local character. This includes protecting views to important buildings and landmarks and considering heritage and townscape character. It also includes contributing to place making by complimenting and enhancing existing context, making proposals accessible and inclusive, using high quality materials and good architectural quality. The proposed design is discussed in more detail in later sections; however the proposals intend to significantly improve the outlook of the existing building and give the building a more positive aesthetic more reflective of the surrounding area. It is generally considered the proposals will mark an improvement to the building's context; particularly in this location at the edge of the town centre.

Policy TC1: Town Centres

This policy encourages new town centre development towards the centre of Barnsley maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town. The improvements to the building will aid in maintaining the viability of educational services within the town centre.

Policy CC1: Climate Change

This policy seeks to reduce the causes and impacts of climate change. Preferences towards previously developed land, the reduction of emissions and the delivery of renewable energy. The proposals will prevent the need for college resources to be allocated elsewhere and maintain and improve the efficiency of an existing building. It also prevents the need for demolition of the building or construction of a new building.

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Further to Policy CC1, this policy encourages sustainability standards on non-residential development where technically feasible.

Policy I2: Educational and Community Facilities

This policy supports the provision of the development of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities including the existing and proposed use of the building. It also suggests that this provision should be centrally located close to the communities they serve. The upgrading of existing facilities across the college will ensure that the provision of college educational facilities in the town centre into the future, rather than consideration of alternative suitable premises to run these facilities.

5.1 Design Ethos

The proposed change of use of the existing college building from a performing arts centre to a medical centre serves as an opportunity to ultimately improve the general aesthetics of the building. The existing building is relatively unassuming, tired in appearance and has more in common with a industrial unit than a contemporary college building. Compared to neighbouring college buildings it has a negative impact on the immediate vicinity and the proposed works ultimately aim to improve the building to be more in keeping with the nature of these surrounding buildings; giving an opportunity for the building to have a positive impact contextually.

It is proposed to over-clad the original building with new materials; thus providing the opportunity to undertake the above without the unsustainable demolition of the existing building and construction of a new building. It creates the opportunity for a wholly new building in appearance; a new identity for the building's new use. The new cantilevered cladding overhang to the main elevation will create interest to the building's vernacular.

The new material palette will include a dynamic new facade consisting of lightweight concrete panels, vertical timber cladding, black metal cladding panels and new sections of aluminium framed glazing. The contrast of materials will provide a striking aesthetic with a mix of horizontal and vertical accents in the various cladding types. The new sections of glazing will create opportunities for views both into the building and out from the building; helping to create a more welcoming and friendly atmosphere to the building, rather than the previous building which has limited openings and a small entrance. A new prominent glazed entrance lobby with a revolving door will also help to create a defined and welcoming entrance point, as well as improving the sustainability of the building in terms of heat loss.

Ancillary elements such as the fire escape have been shrouded within the building's new fabric to aid in improving aesthetics and making the building generally more appealing from all angles. Finally new pressed metal signage will help to brand the building as part of the college and be the final element which brings the proposals in line with other contemporary college buildings within Barnsley town centre.



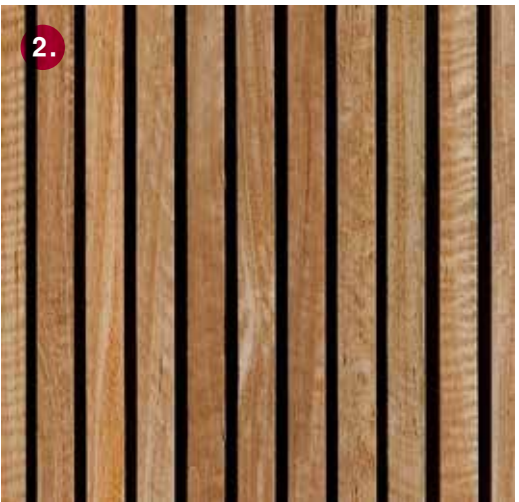
5.2 Proposed External Materials

The design of the proposals includes the following new external materials to be included within the scheme:

- 1. Lightweight concrete panels
- 2. Vertical timber cladding
- 3. Black cladding panels
- 4. Aluminium framed curtain walling
- 5. Aluminium framed glazed doors
- 6. Aluminium capping to parapet
- 7. Glass spandrel panels
- 8. Aluminium framed glazed revolving door
- 9. Stud fixed metal signage
- 10. Existing plant room louvres replaced with new aluminium louvres



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION



5.3 Proposed Floor Plans

The design of the proposed concept plan arrangement includes the following key points:

1. Existing main theatre space to be subdivided into two double height spaces to be used as mock wards.
2. Additional circulation space to be created to access new mock wards and LRC space.
3. Existing dance studio to be amended to form new meeting room and extended reception and waiting area within central foyer.
4. New entrance lobby to be created with revolving entrance door and access gates.
5. Existing toilets and other ancillary spaces to be retained.
6. Existing dance studio to be converted into dentistry and flexible teaching space.
7. New and altered windows openings allowing light into the building and views out.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

The design of the proposed concept plan arrangement includes the following key points:

1. Existing main theatre space to be subdivided into two double height spaces to be used as mock wards.
2. Existing mezzanine to be used as new viewing gallery and breakout space on first floor.
3. Existing control room to be converted into classroom space.
4. Additional circulation space to be created to access viewing gallery and breakout space.
5. Existing media room to be converted into laboratory space.
6. Existing changing rooms to be converted into department office and meeting space.
7. Existing toilets and other ancillary spaces to be retained.
8. Existing changing rooms to be converted into prayer room.
9. New and altered windows openings allowing light into the building and views out.
10. Existing fire escape to be clad in vertical timber boarding to obscure existing unsightly staircase.
11. New feature cantilevered cladding element to front of building.

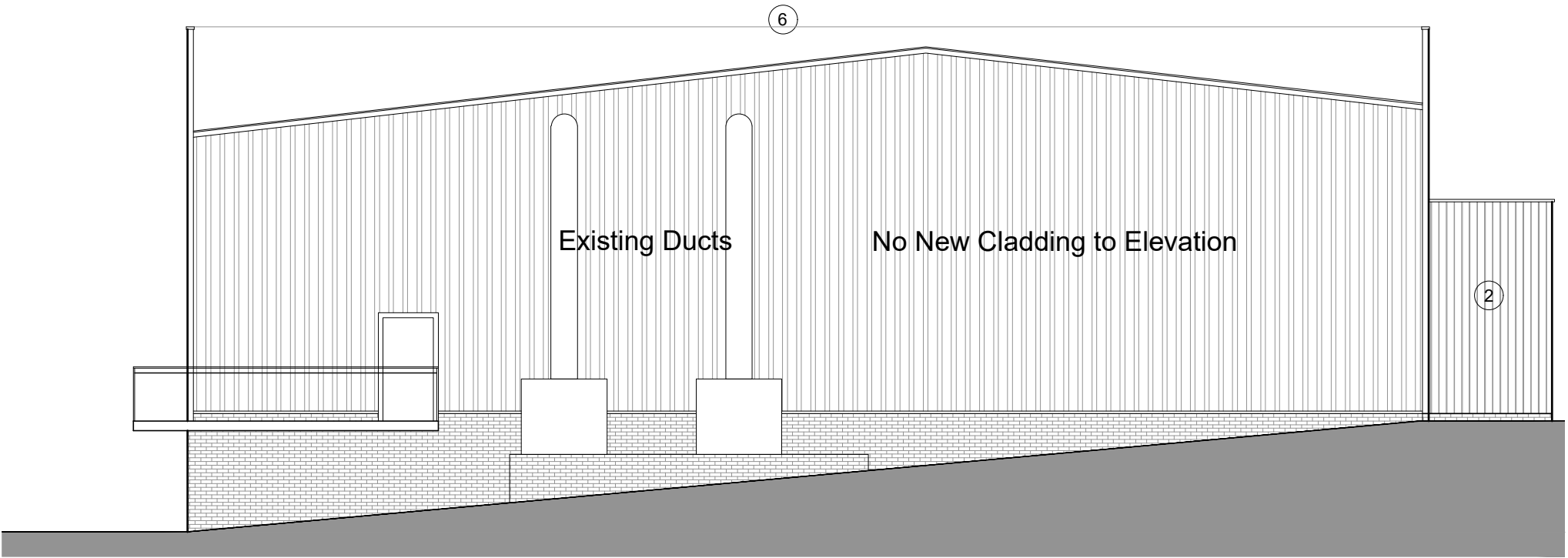


PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

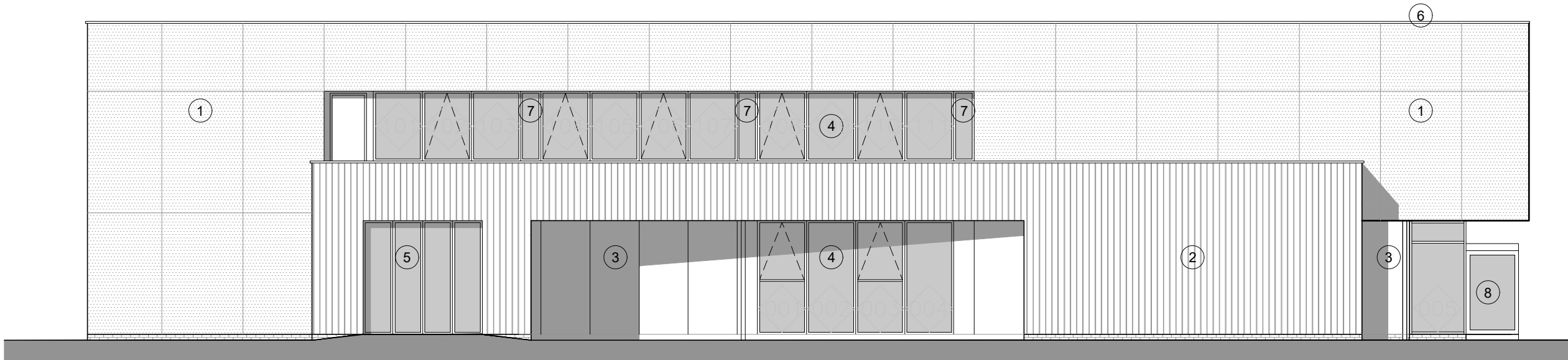
5.4 Proposed Elevations



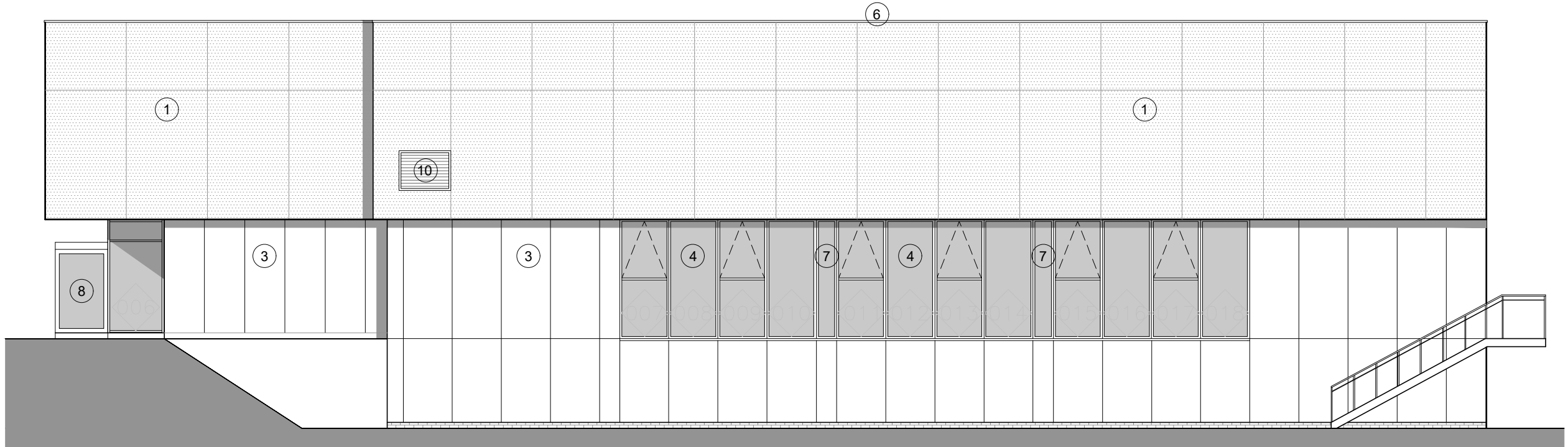
PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

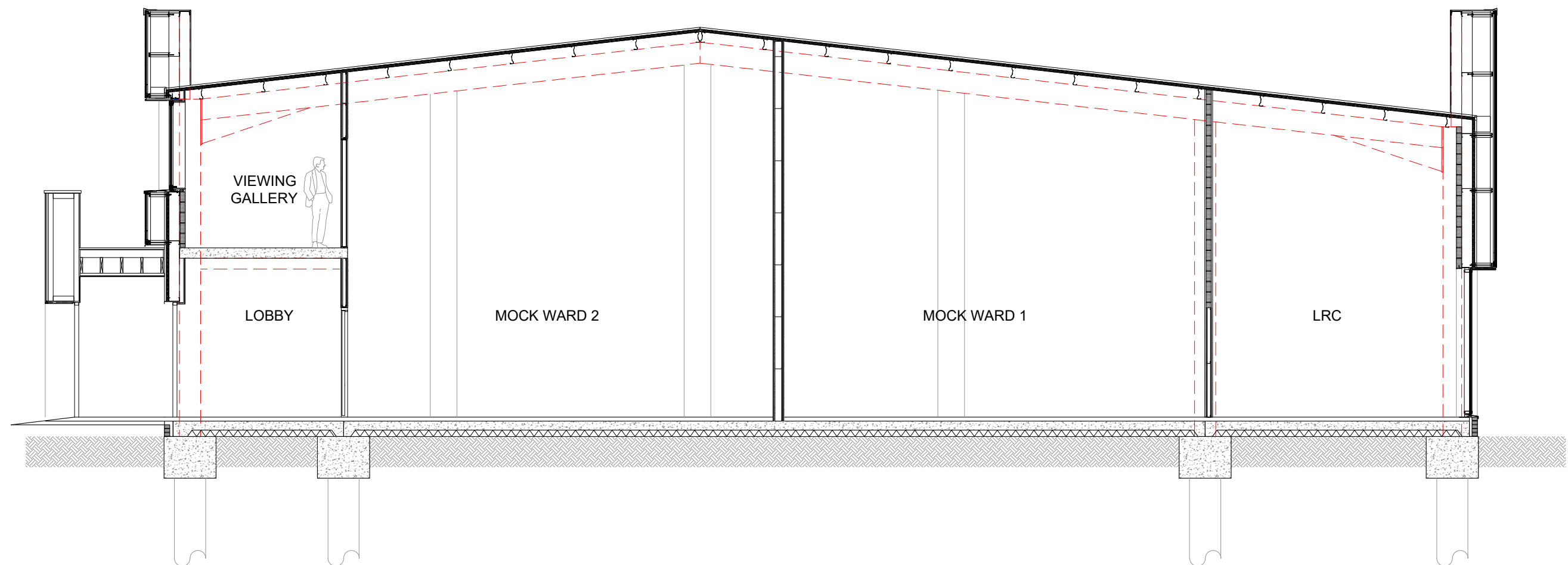


PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

5.5 Proposed Section



**SECTION THROUGH NEW
MEDICAL CENTRE**

5.6 Proposed Visualisations



VISUALISATION OF PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION OF NEW MEDICAL CENTRE



VISUALISATION OF PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION OF NEW MEDICAL CENTRE

The existing Electric Theatre building is a former examination hall turned theatre used for the teaching of performing arts courses as well as being open to the public for performances. The building itself, particularly from the outside, is not attractive and has a negative impact on the surrounding area. It looks particularly poor in contrast to new contemporary and refurbished college buildings alongside it. There is an opportunity to relocate performing arts courses elsewhere within college buildings and in doing so free up the space for a new dedicated medical centre for the teaching of medical based courses. This also serves to make better use of under-utilised buildings elsewhere.

The proposals therefore have a two-fold purpose; to provide a new medical centre in the most sustainable way possible by making use of an existing building that can re-purposed for this function, and secondly use this opportunity to improve the external building fabric in terms of aesthetics by over-cladding the building with new cladding materials along with new windows, thereby improving the overall vernacular of the building in line with it's context. These purposes appear to conform with requirements set out within both national policy within the NPPF and local policy within the Barnsley Local Plan and will result in securing the building for the future use of the college within the town centre of Barnsley adjacent to other college buildings. In addition it provides the opportunity for the college to provide new medical courses improving the opportunities for young people in the area.



Photograph of Barnsley College Electric Theatre from Falcon Street



Visualisation of proposed Barnsley College Medical Centre from Falcon Street