Construction of Office Building

Introduction

The existing offices at DR Baling Wire Manufacturers Ltd are located upstairs in one of their industrial buildings. Although functional, they are small and were only ever intended as a temporary solution until the original offices were replaced.

The original offices for the company, pictured here, were damaged by floods in 2012, and have since been demolished to prevent risks of intrusion and to tidy up the site.

A planning application for a new office building was approved in 2013, but this scheme turned out to be too large, and so the planning permission was allowed to lapse.

DR Baling Wire have now decided to redesign this previously approved building to make it smaller and more appropriate for the company. This will provide flexible modern space to current standards and be resilient to the risk of flooding.

The building will reflect the forward thinking attitude of the company and will be the latest investment in this important industrial site.

The original building

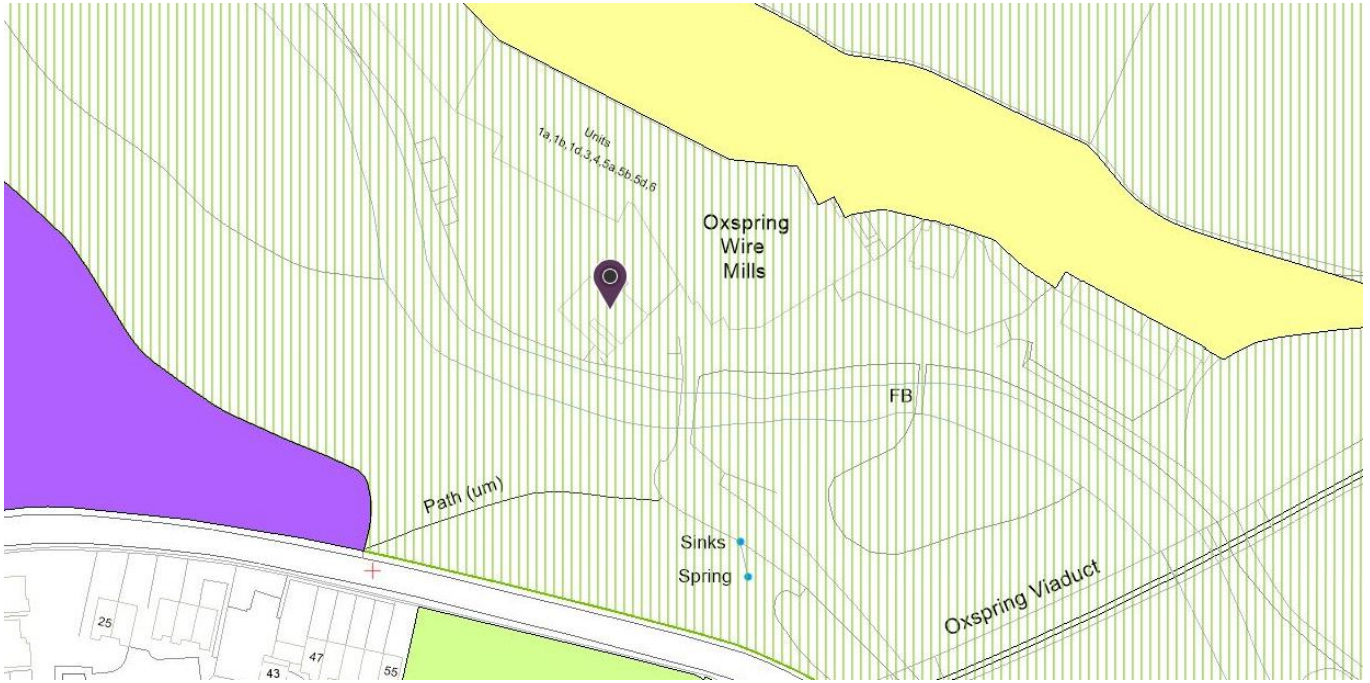
The site now this building has been demolished

Design Process

Physical Assessment – The original office building was located at the end of the bridge accessing the site. The site is currently a yard, with the river to the rear beyond an area of tanks. The site generally has older industrial buildings of red brick, modern industrial buildings of buff brick with metal cladding above and an old house (blocked up) which is of stone.

Economic Assessment – The original building was empty before it was demolished, as DR Baling temporarily moved into another unit on site when the office was flood damaged. The new office building will mean that DR Baling can carry on their business without the risk of disruption and cost caused by flooding. The unit currently occupied by them, which is not suitable long term, can be offered back for let (as it was previously), expanding economic provision in the local area.

Planning Policy– The site is an existing industrial enclave within the Green Belt. Planning policies restrict development to that which does not affect the openness of the green belt, has very special circumstances, and is sympathetic to the area. This proposal is for a replacement of the original office building, which was vulnerable to flooding. The size of the proposal is very similar to the original building, and much smaller than a previously approved scheme.



Extract from the UDP map

Previous Scheme
Planning permission was granted for a two storey office block on the 15th of May 2013, application number 2013/0009

The building had brickwork walls above a stone plinth, which was to raise the building above flood water level, as advised by a flood risk assessment. It had a pitched roof with large overhangs and aluminium windows. The entrance to the building didn't face on to the car park due to the required internal layout, which wasn't ideal. The main elevation faced north, onto the access road within the site

Evaluation and Design
The new office building will be single storey and with a similar footprint and ground floor layout. The opportunity has been taken to amend the entrance so that it faces the entrance to the site, with the external staircase under cover.

The style of the building is similar to the previous scheme, with the same materials used in the same way. It should therefore be acceptable in terms of its relation to the rest of the site.

Use

The proposal is to replace the now demolished office building with a new, modern and resilient office building for the same client. This is a straightforward replacement building on an existing site all to be on a single storey.

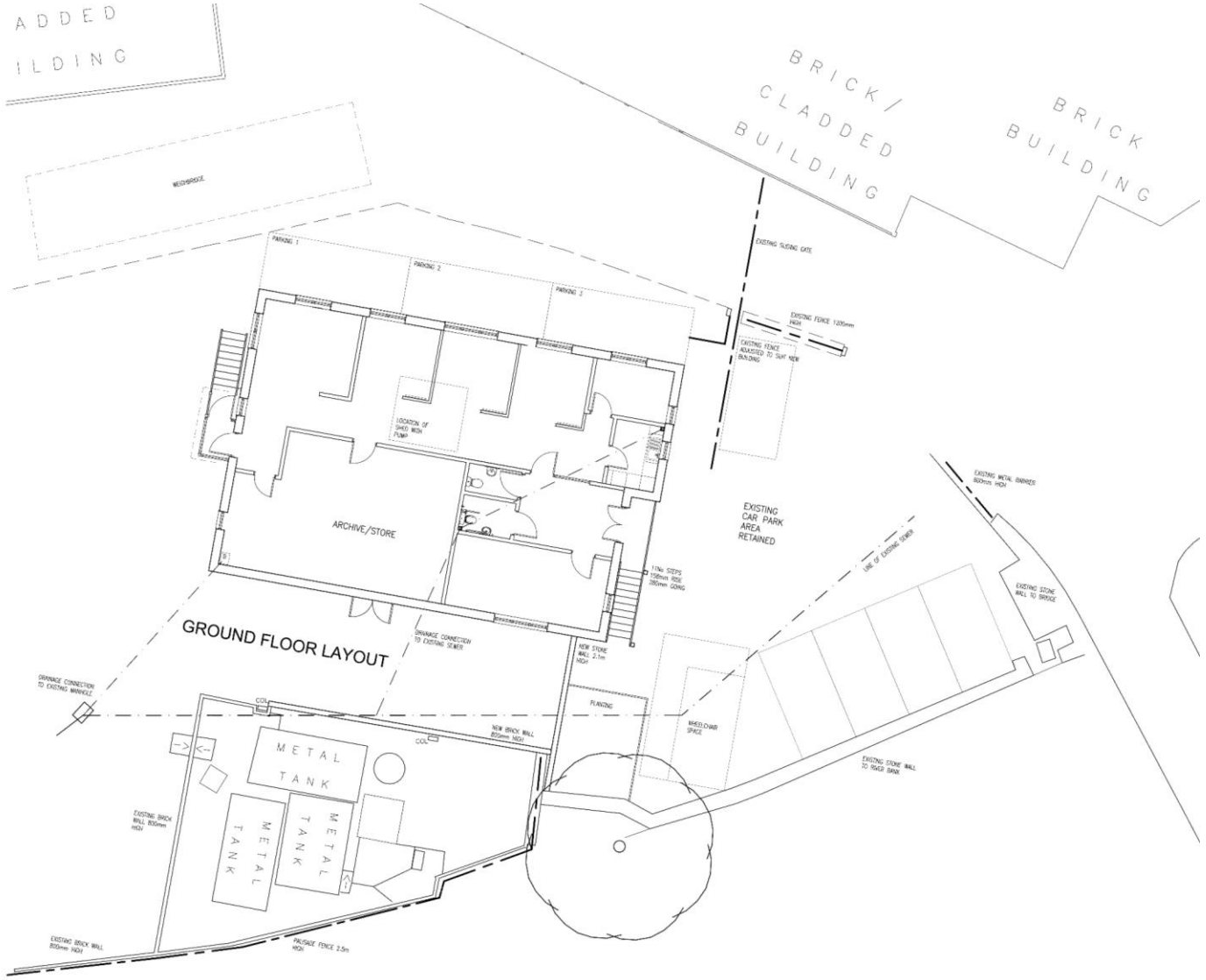
The new office building will mean that the client can carry on business without the risk of the cost and disruption that flooding can bring bring. This investment will mean that the site will continue to improve and the existing employment on site will be reinforced.

Amount and Parking

The proposed building is a similar size to the original offices, and much smaller than the previously approved scheme.

The new building will provide enough space to cater for all current uses, which are currently in more than one location on the site, and will have the flexibility to cope with future changes to the working practices of the client.

The building is to be set back from the access road in order to provide 3 extra spaces along the north elevation of the building. These will be in addition to the spaces in the existing car park.



Layout

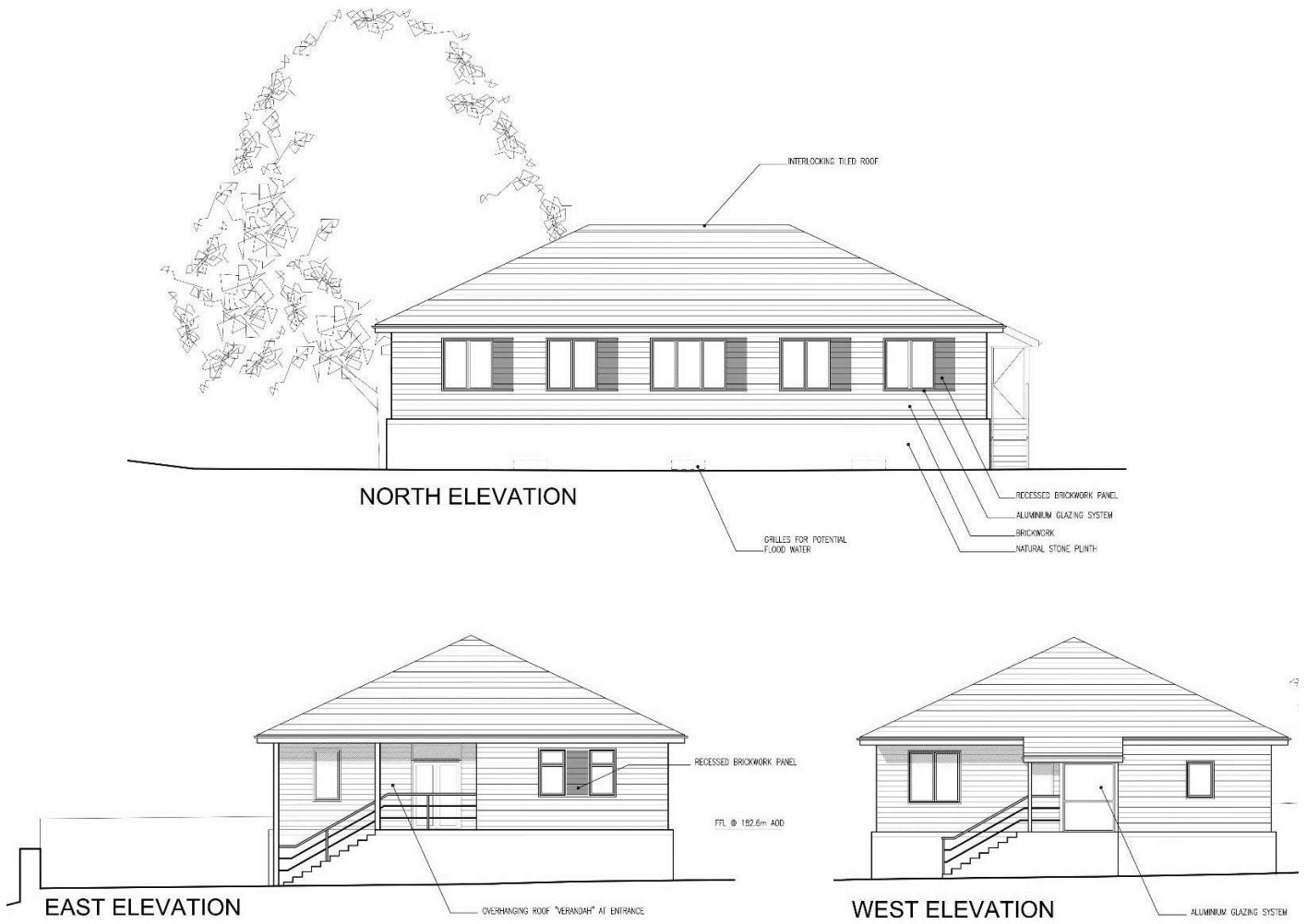
The original building was located midway between the access road through the site and the river bank. Part of the building had been constructed at some point over a mains sewer. The opportunity has therefore been taken to locate the new building closer to the access road, allowing a 3m easement to the sewer to be maintained. The new building is therefore also located much further from the river bank.

The location closer to the existing other buildings on site also means that the new building will affect the green belt less, with a more concentrated built form than the original situation.

Scale

The proposed building is a similar size to the original building on site, but it taller so that its ground floor is higher than the potential flood level on site.

It is much smaller than the previous approved scheme, and should fit easily into the general built form of the industrial complex.



Proposed Elevations

Landscaping

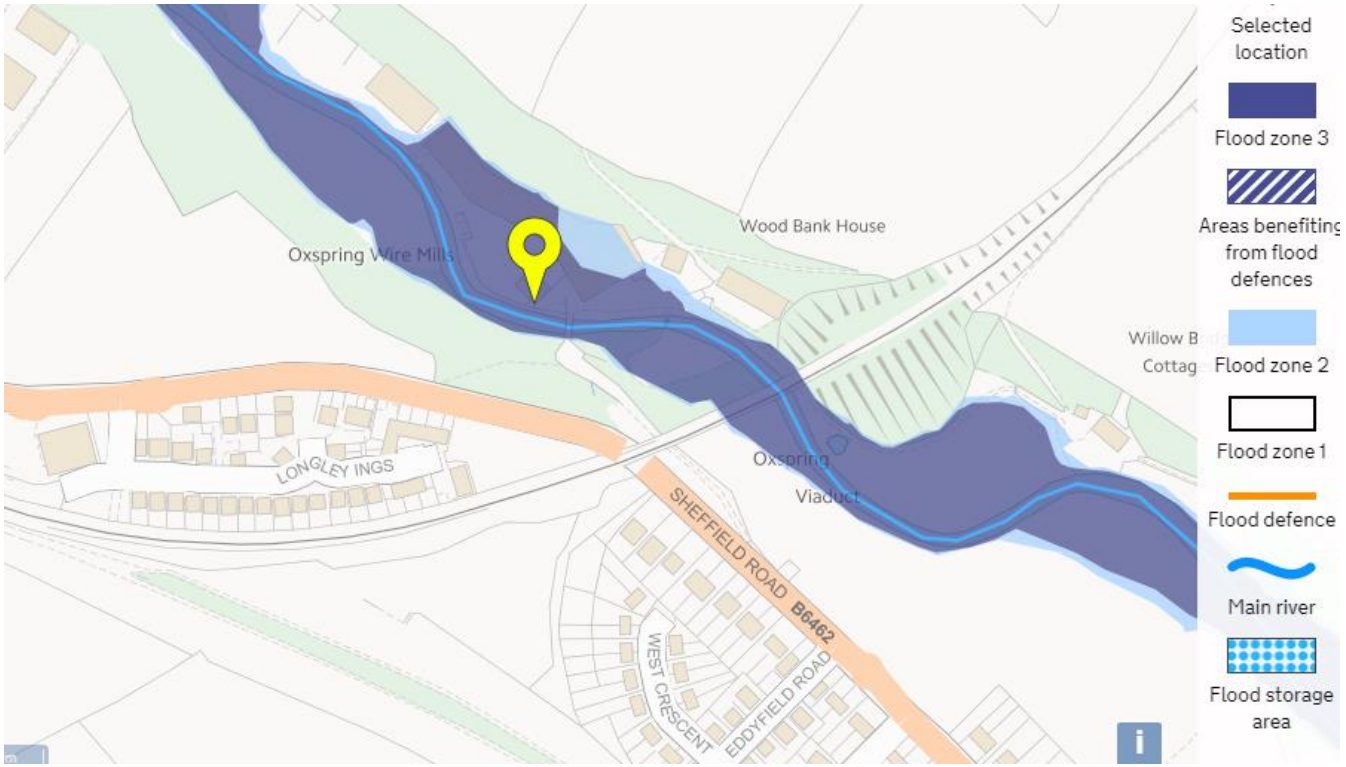
The client has spent a considerable amount of effort in improving the landscape of the site generally, planting shrubs, hedges and replacement trees and resurfacing some areas. This approach will be continued in the new development, with a landscaped area adjacent to the entrance. The rear of the building will have a yard protected from view which will be used to store bales which are currently in full view. This will improve the general appearance of the site.

Drainage and Flooding

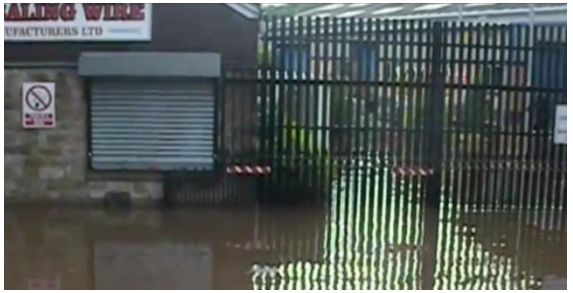
The new building is located next to an existing mains sewer, and so all foul drainage will run to this.

The building will be located in flood zone 3, and so a flood risk assessment has been carried out. We have used this to set the ground floor level of the building and to inform the design generally. The plinth will have grated apertures to allow flood water to pass underneath the building.

The landscaping will increase the ability of the site to absorb water, and surface water will be sent to a soakaway to reduce run-off from the site.



Extract from the EA Flooding map



Photographs from the flood on 06/07/12

Appearance

The building has been designed in a similar style to the previously approved scheme.

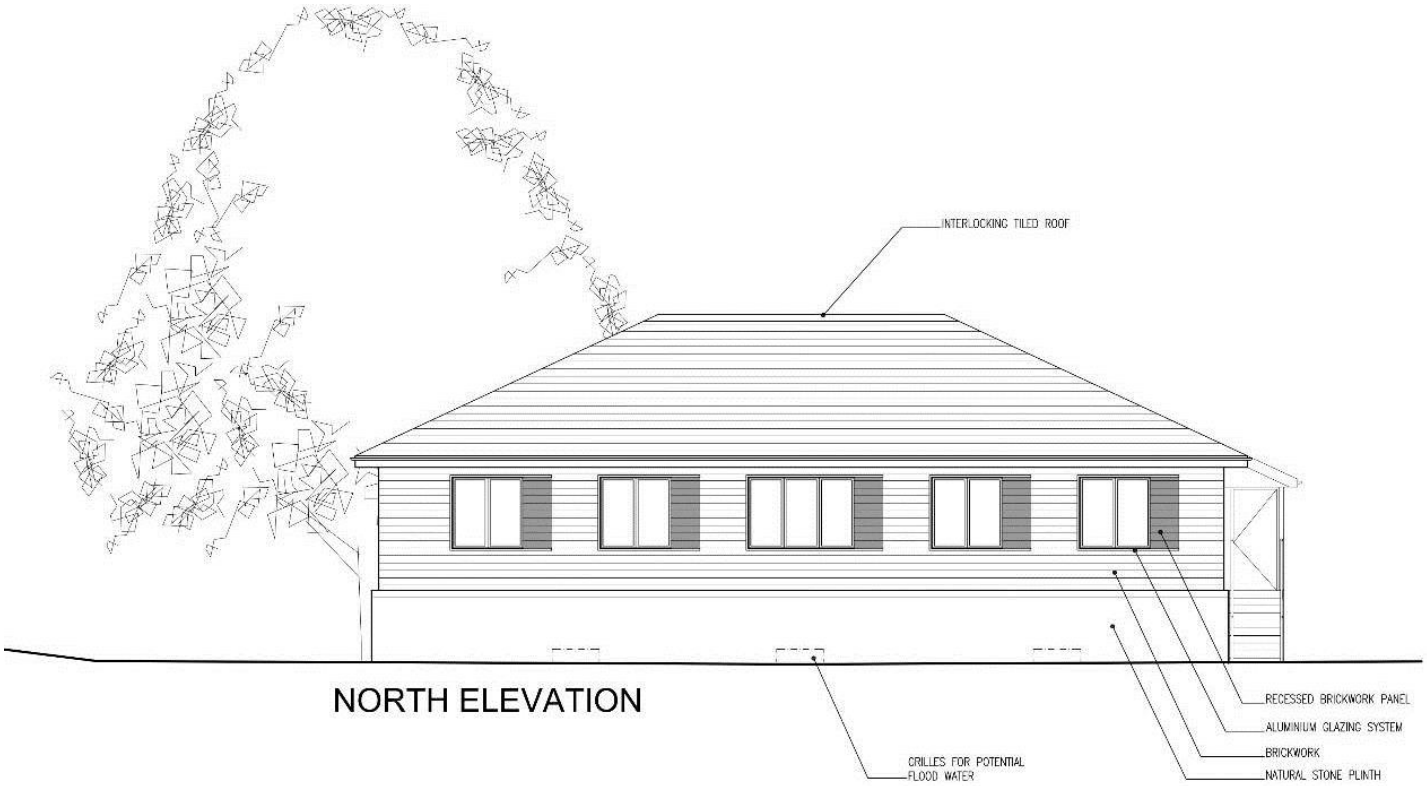
The building itself will be of brick to match the existing buildings elsewhere on site. The building is raised up on a plinth to get above flood level – this is of natural stone to break up the visual height of the building. The roof will be of dark grey tiles.

The overall effect will be of a polite and sympathetic new addition to the existing scene, largely invisible except from within the site due to the high surrounding hills and viaduct.

Access

Generally the building will be accessible to building regulation requirements, with parking directly outside the main entrance.

The raising of the ground floor above flood levels presents an issue with wheelchair access however, as a ramp would have to be in the region of 35m long. As this would be unsatisfactory, the client has made arrangements to accommodate visitors or staff in wheelchairs elsewhere on site where there is existing level access. This will be subject to ongoing management.



NORTH ELEVATION