

1. Welcome

Emerging proposals for 16 Bernard Terrace

Thank you for attending our first public consultation for proposals on 16 Bernard Terrace.

We are exploring the demolition of the existing office building to create purpose-built student accommodation, together with improvements to the building and its surrounding environment.

This exhibition presents the emerging proposals and provides an opportunity to learn more about the site, the design approach and the planning process. We welcome your feedback as we continue to develop the proposals ahead of a planning application submission.

About this consultation

- We are at an early stage in the design process
- This is the first of two planned public consultation events
- Feedback received will help inform the ongoing development of the proposals
- Information presented is indicative and subject to further design development

Team

HIFML-HBOS Investment
Fund Managers

shp⁺
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Client

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Architect

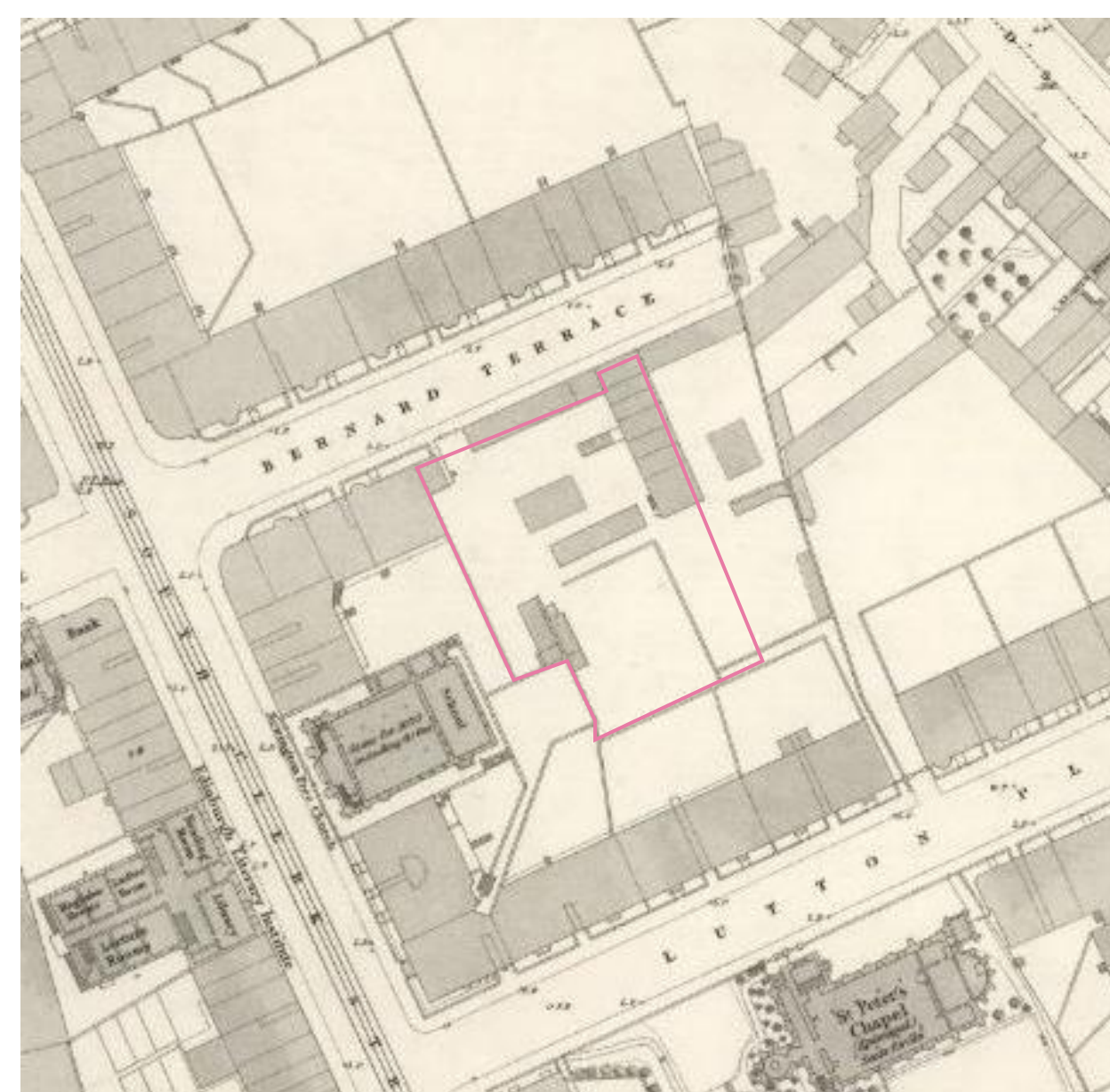
rankinfraser
landscape architecture
Landscape Architect

Site history

How the site has evolved

Prior to the 1930s Bernard Terrace was a dead-end street, accessed only from the west from South Clerk Street.

Previously the site was occupied by a furniture depository built in the 1930s. It was during this period that Bernard Terrace was connected to St Leonard's Street to the east. The depository was closed in the 1980s and was replaced by the current building in 1990. The current building is used as a library, archive and associated office functions.



1877 OS Map



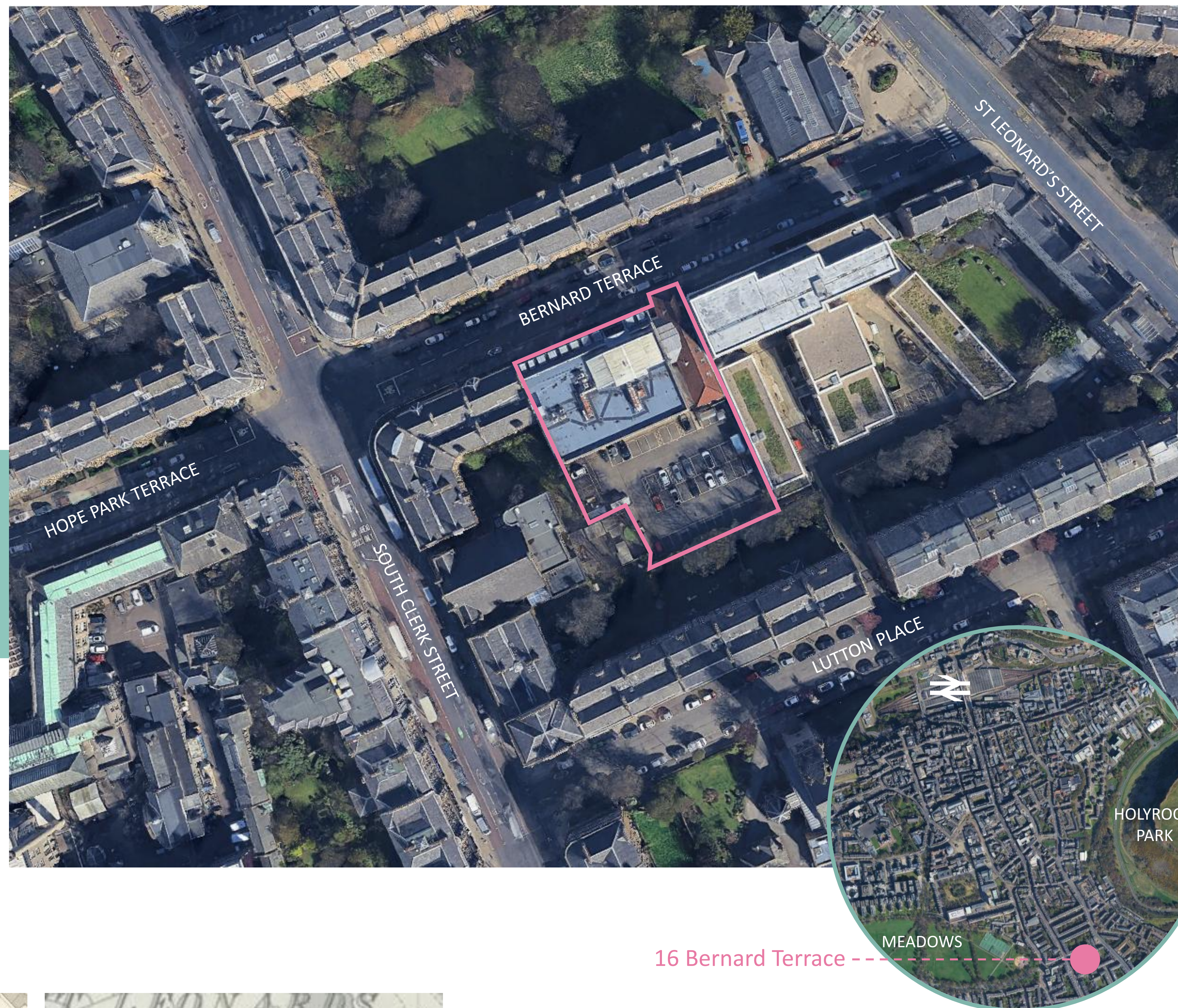
1949 OS Map



Current front elevation



Current rear elevation



2. Site analysis

Understanding the context

The site occupies a highly accessible city-centre location within a mixed-use area of Edinburgh. Its proximity to higher education campuses, public transport connections and a wide range of local amenities has informed the emerging proposals.

Proximity to Higher Education Campuses

The site is located within walking distance of the University of Edinburgh's Central Area, including George Square and the wider academic campus.



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Several additional teaching, research and student facilities can also be accessed easily via established walking, cycling and public transport connections

Local character & land uses

The surrounding area comprises a mix of residential, educational, commercial and civic uses. Active frontages are concentrated along South Clerk Street and key movement corridors, while the surrounding tenement blocks provide a predominantly residential character. Existing student accommodation and university facilities are established features of the local area.

Local movement & connectivity

The primary active travel routes are north-south along South Clerk Street and St Leonard's Street, which are well served by a number of bus routes. Along these routes are commercial at ground floor, with residential use above.



Residential Commercial at ground, residential above Purpose Built Student Accommodation Civic

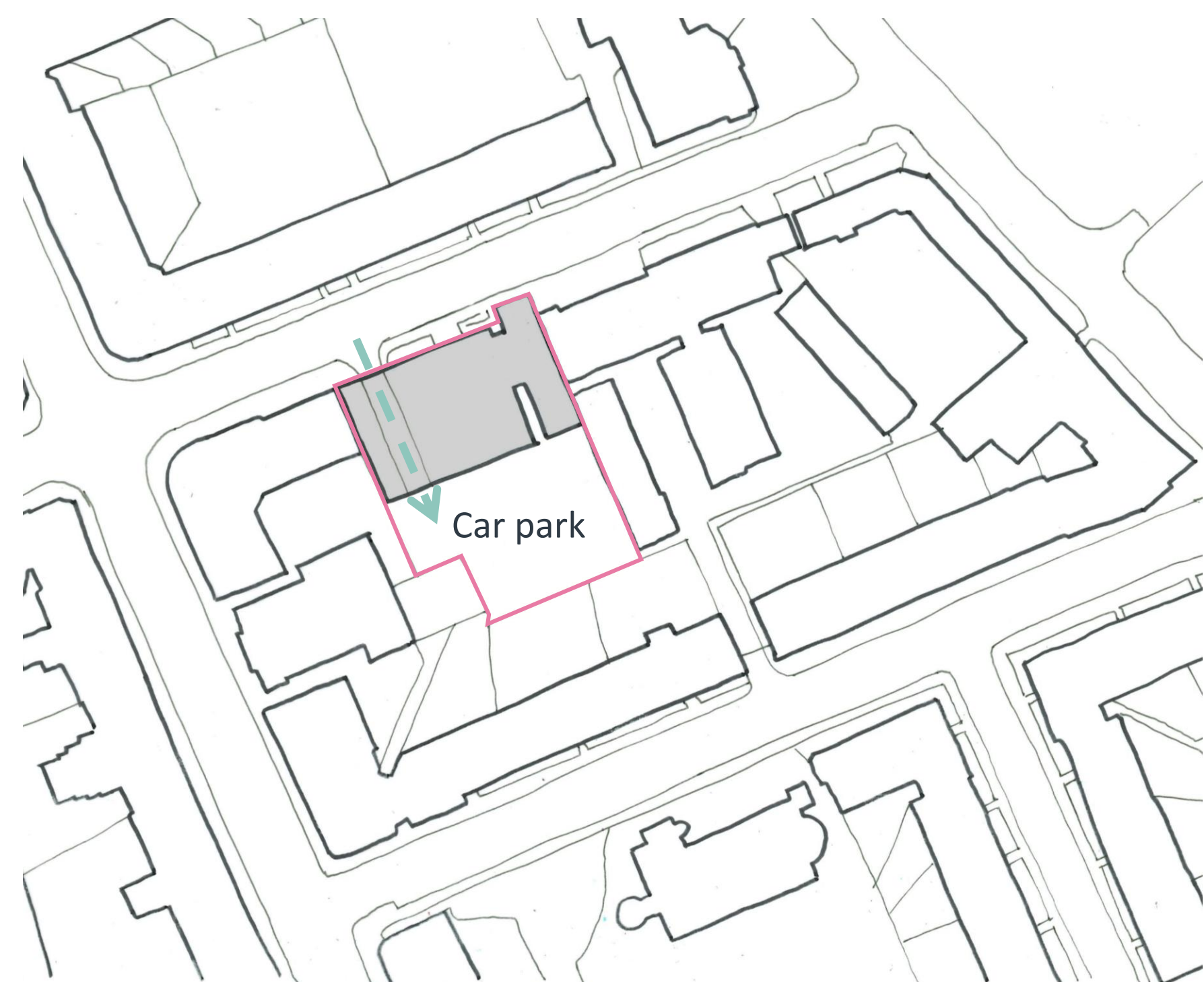


3. Design principles & concept development

A connected green and active place

The emerging proposals seek to demolish the existing office and archive property to create a new build sustainable long-term use that responds to changing workplace requirements and evolving city centre needs. By adapting a previously developed site, the scheme supports the efficient use of urban land while contributing to the continued vitality of the surrounding area.

The concept evolves through four key urban design moves that respond to the site's context, establish a coherent building form and create high-quality amenity for future residents.

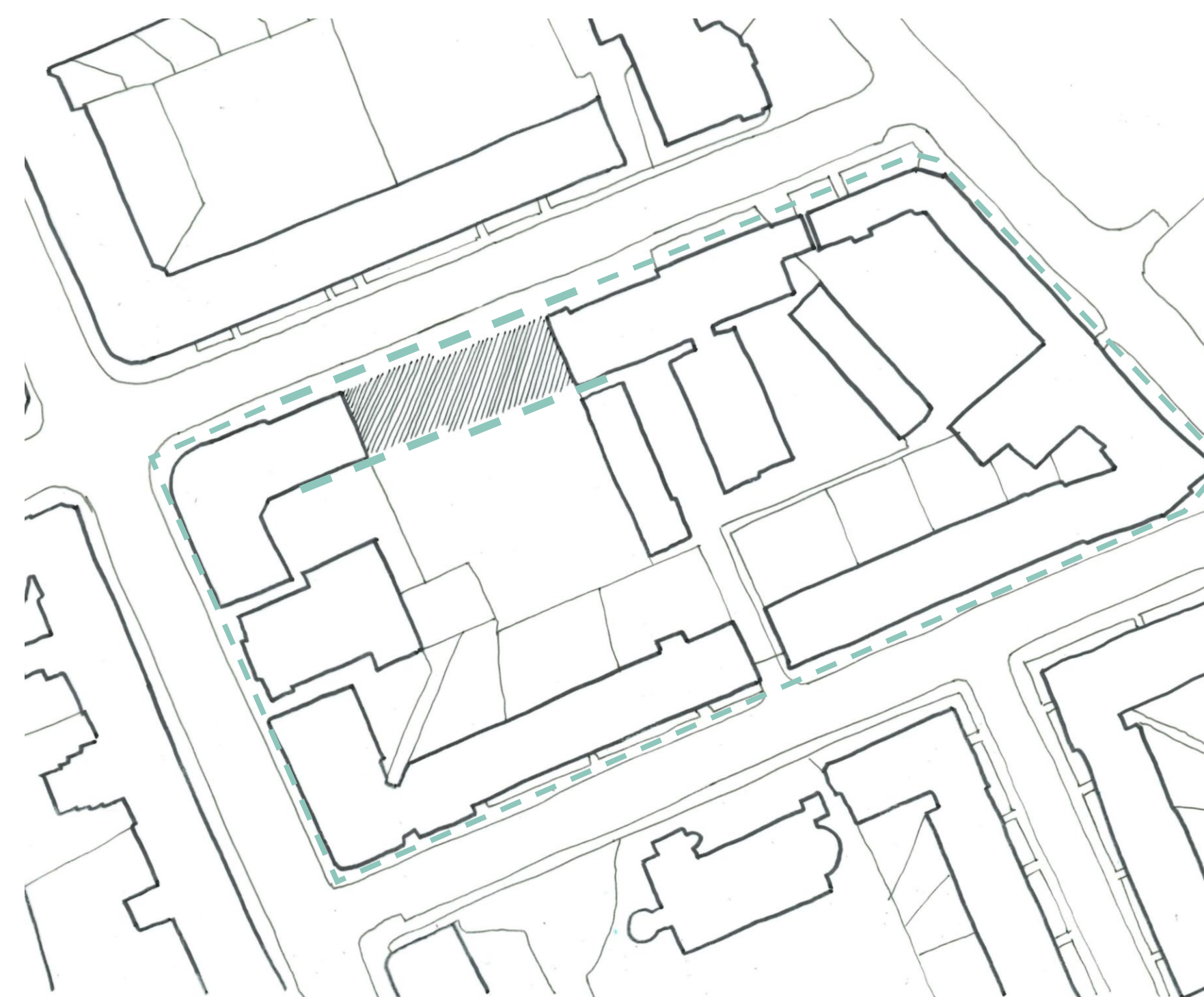


a) Reuse & regeneration

The proposals seek to repurpose an existing office and archive property to create a sustainable long-term use that responds to changing workplace requirements and evolving city centre needs. By adapting a previously developed site, the scheme supports the efficient use of urban land while contributing to the continued vitality of the surrounding area.

Existing conditions:

- Fragmented building form
- Car-dominated rear court
- Poor street connection
- Deep plan form

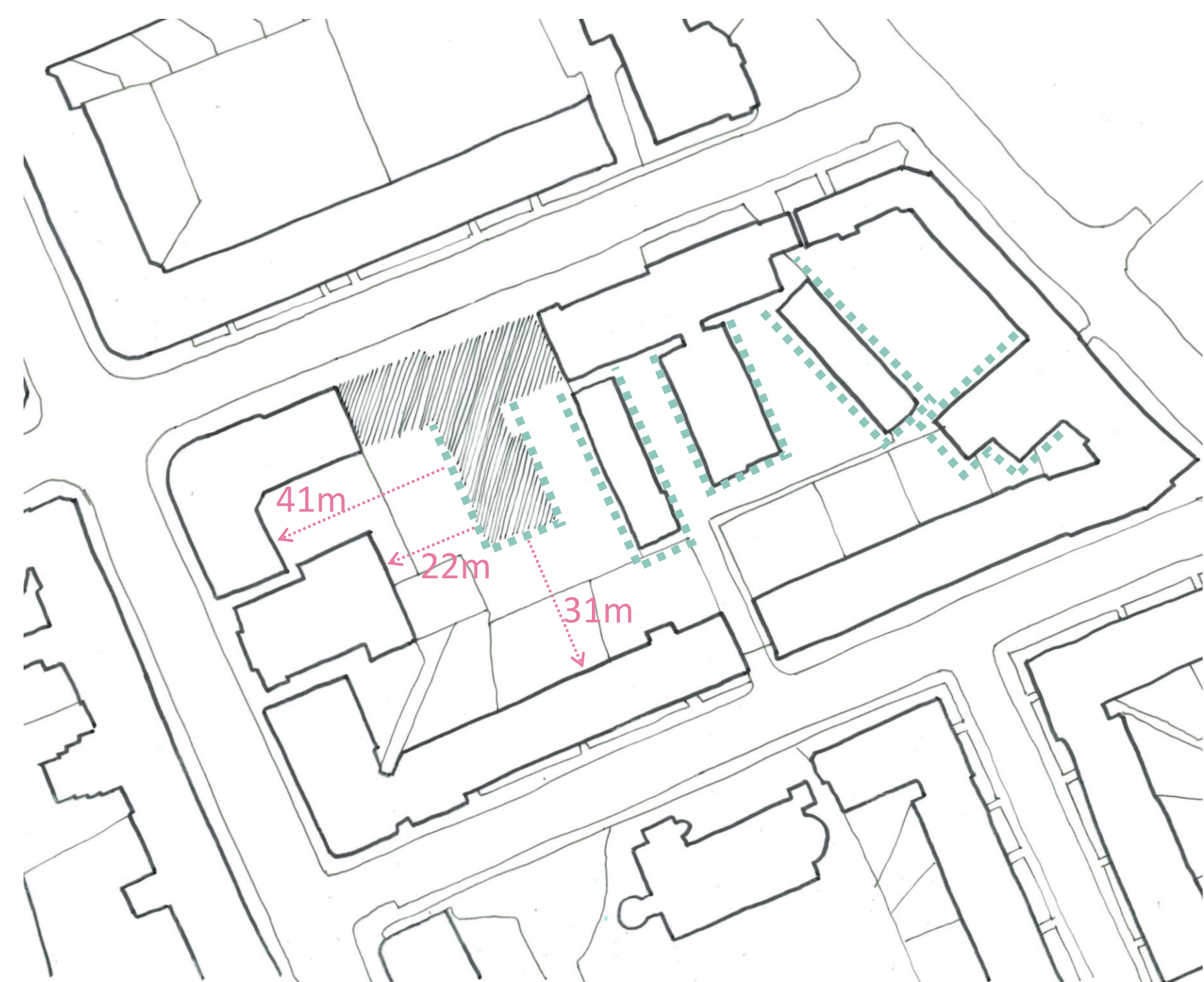


b) Reinforce the urban block

The concept strengthens the existing street frontage and responds to the established urban grain of the surrounding area. This approach helps define the street edge, improves enclosure and creates a building form that responds positively to the established streetscape and surrounding tenement pattern.

Reinforce street edge:

- Continuation of primary frontage
- Strengthens existing street edge
- Extension of tenemental form

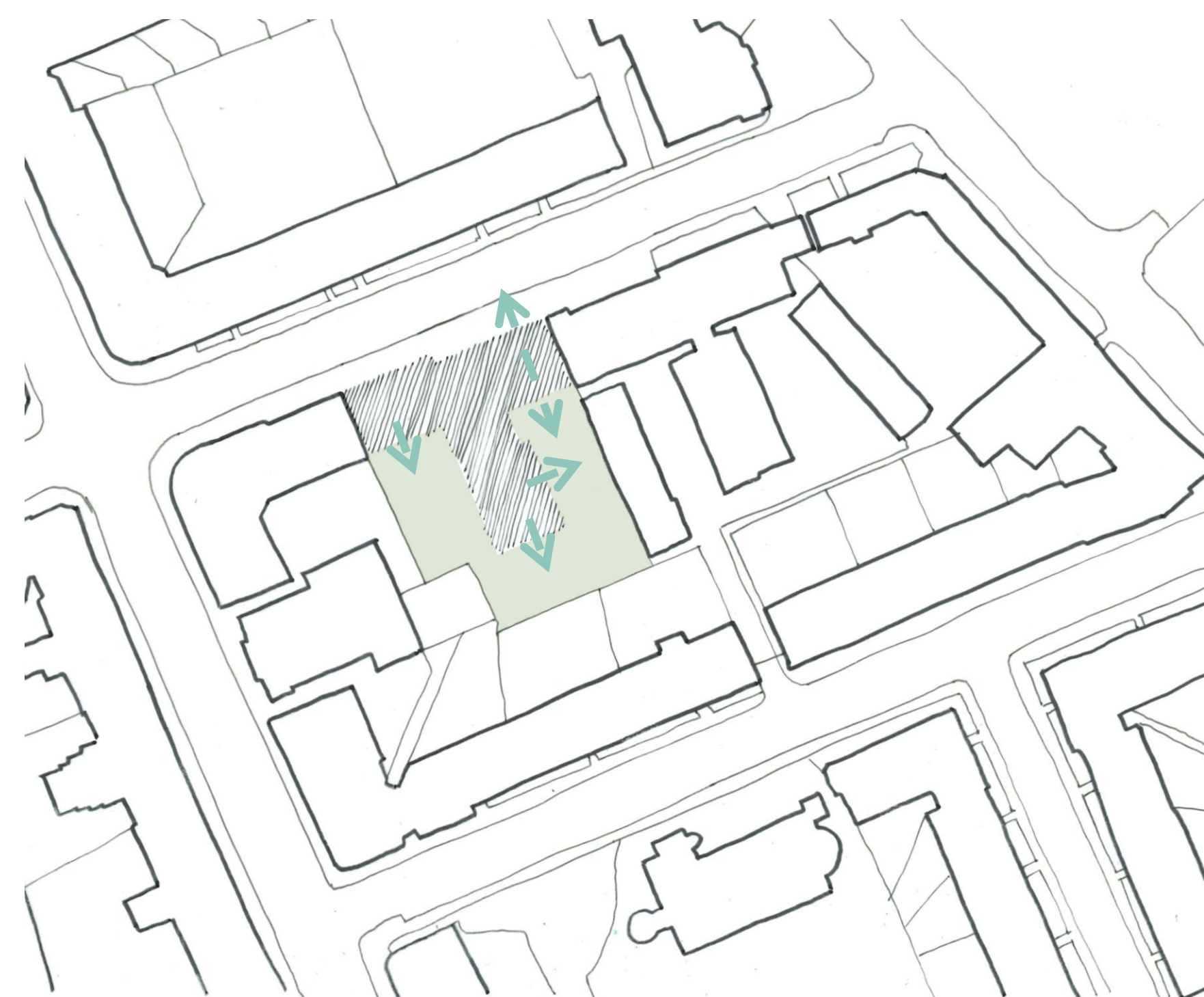


c) Courtyard building

The proposed courtyard building form responds to the site's historic pattern of development and the wider urban grain. Historic mapping demonstrates that a variety of building arrangements have occupied the site over time. The proposed form seeks to establish a coherent development block that creates an appropriate relationship between buildings and open space.

Courtyard building:

- Secondary volume reflects contextual grain
- Retained open space
- Privacy / overlooking distances respected



d) High-quality amenity

The courtyard building arrangement creates opportunities for attractive communal amenity spaces, enhanced outlook and improved access to daylight. Landscaping, seating and shared external areas would contribute to a positive residential environment and support resident wellbeing.

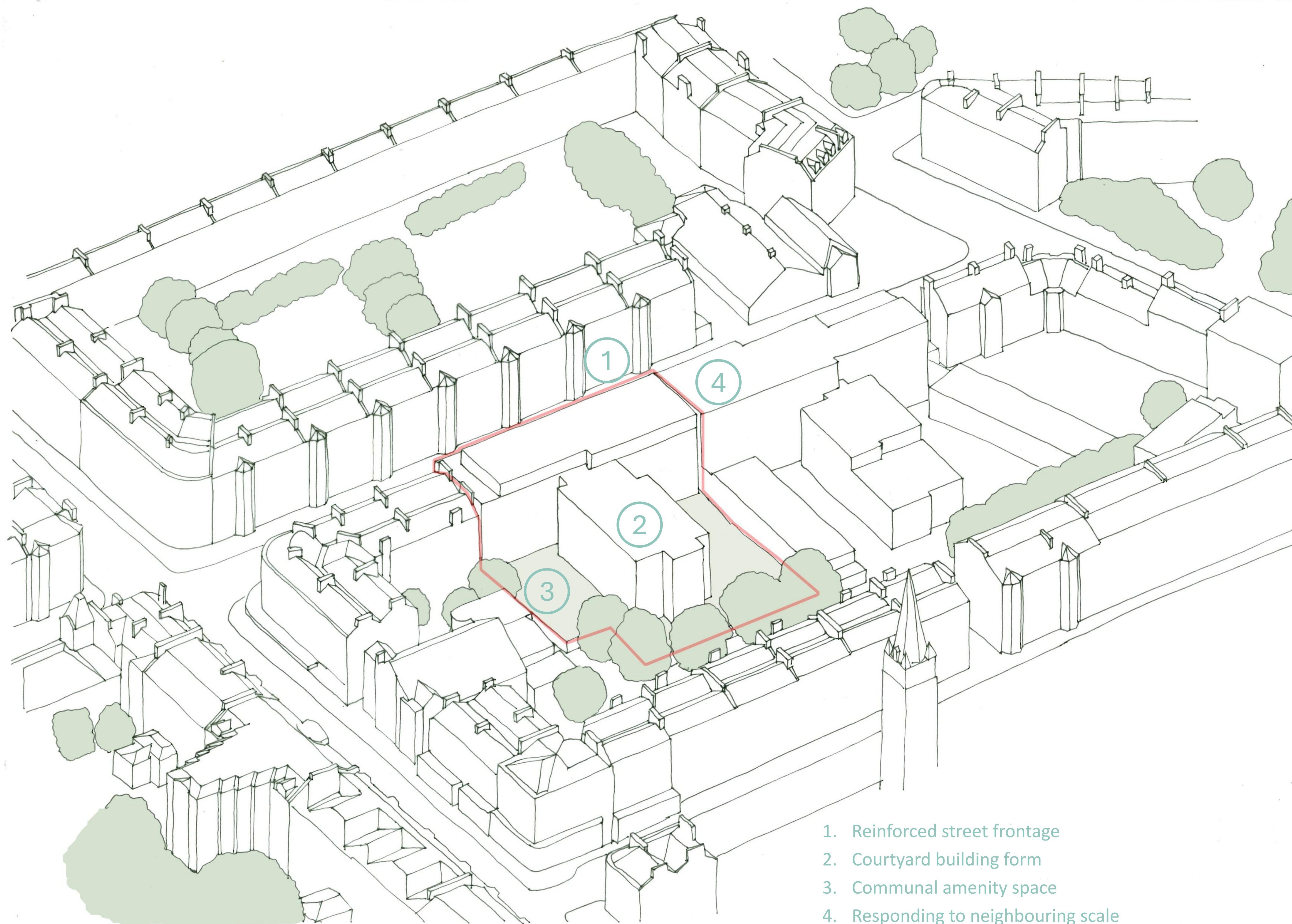
Open space & circulation:

- Landscaped amenity
- Visual permeability
- Passive surveillance of communal spaces
- Active and passive surveillance along the street
- Level access from the street

4. Indicative massing

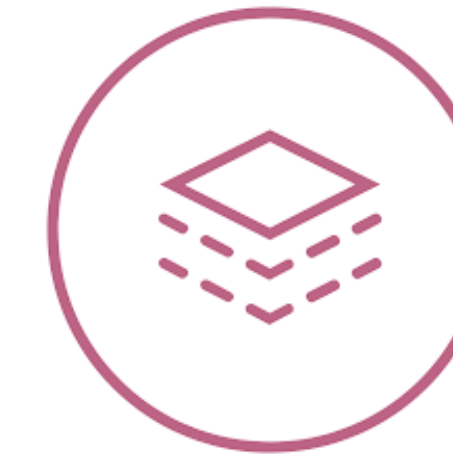
A context-sensitive approach to scale and form

The proposed massing has evolved through careful consideration of the site's context, opportunities and constraints. The emerging approach seeks to reinforce the surrounding urban structure, create a high-quality living environment and promote a sustainable pattern of development within this well-connected city-centre location.



1. Reinforced street frontage
2. Courtyard building form
3. Communal amenity space
4. Responding to neighbouring scale

Brownfield site



- Reuse of a previously developed city-centre site
- Brings a previously developed urban site forward for a new long-term use
- Makes efficient use of previously developed land
- Reduces pressure for development on greenfield locations

Landscape & biodiversity



- Introduction of new landscaping and planting
- Creation of high-quality communal amenity space
- Opportunity for biodiversity enhancements
- Increased urban greening within the site
- Improved outlook for future residents

Sustainable movement



- Walking distance to University of Edinburgh campuses
- Strong pedestrian connections to surrounding amenities
- Excellent public transport accessibility
- Secure cycle parking provision
- Reduced reliance on private vehicles

Sustainable performance



- Adaptation of an existing city centre site
- Opportunities for improved energy performance
- Potential for low-carbon technologies
- Efficient building layout and operation
- High-quality, future-ready accommodation

5. Planning context

Guidance that shapes the proposals

Every planning application is considered against a set of national and local planning policies. These policies help ensure that development is appropriate for its location and contributes positively to the surrounding area. The following section summarises the key policy considerations relevant to the emerging proposals.

Accommodation will be delivered through a considered mix of cluster flats, studios, and accessible studios, complemented by inclusive internal and external amenity space, landscaping and access arrangements.

The site is located within the South Side Conservation Area. The site does not contain any listed buildings, however, there are B and C listed buildings in the vicinity to the south and east of the site.

NPF4 Policy 9 (Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings) – The proposal seeks to develop a vacant, brownfield site to provide a new high-quality, efficient and environmentally sensitive development which reduces the need for greenfield development. The existing building is not suitable for conversion as it was purpose built for archive records and presents significant practical and commercial constraints that hinder any viable reuse.

The site is not allocated for housing. PBSA is a specialist form of housing which contributes to meeting the housing requirements. The proposed development would deliver a dual benefit: providing specialist housing in response to the ongoing student homelessness crisis, while also easing pressure on the wider housing market by helping to release existing housing stock for general residential use

In line with policies **Policy Env 7 (Sustainable Developments)**, a Whole Life Carbon Assessment will be submitted with the planning application. This will seek to demonstrate the inability of the existing building and its internal spaces to accommodate any future uses whilst providing sufficient daylight, sunlight and amenity to the future occupiers. The existing building was built in the early 1990s and is not listed. The construction is a mixture of steel frame and traditional blockwork and stone – with combustible insulation within the cavity. The building has a weak relationship to the street, with a raised ground floor requiring stairs/ramp access and limited openings. The building is 4 storeys in height with very high floor to floor height from ground to first floor (5-6m) due to it’s design for use as an archive. This height is much greater than typical floor-floor heights for residential use (including student residential) and therefore limits the efficiency for conversion.

The proposed redevelopment makes efficient use of a brownfield site and will deliver a high-quality, energy-efficient, and environmentally sensitive scheme. The rear hardstanding will be replaced with a landscaped area improving the biodiversity and providing sustainable drainage arrangements.

Policy Hou 5 (Student Accommodation) requires developments to be in accordance with four criteria:

a) there is good access by public transport and active travel routes to further and higher education institutions - As shown within the earlier maps, the site is located in a highly accessible location, well placed to meet the accommodation needs of students, particularly those enrolled at the University of Edinburgh. The site is approximately an 8-minute walk to the University of Edinburgh’s Old College to the north and a 30-minute walk (10-minute bike ride) to the King’s Buildings campus to the south. Edinburgh Napier University Merchiston campus is also around 10-minute bike ride. Heriot-Watt University; Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College are also easily accessible by bike or public transport.

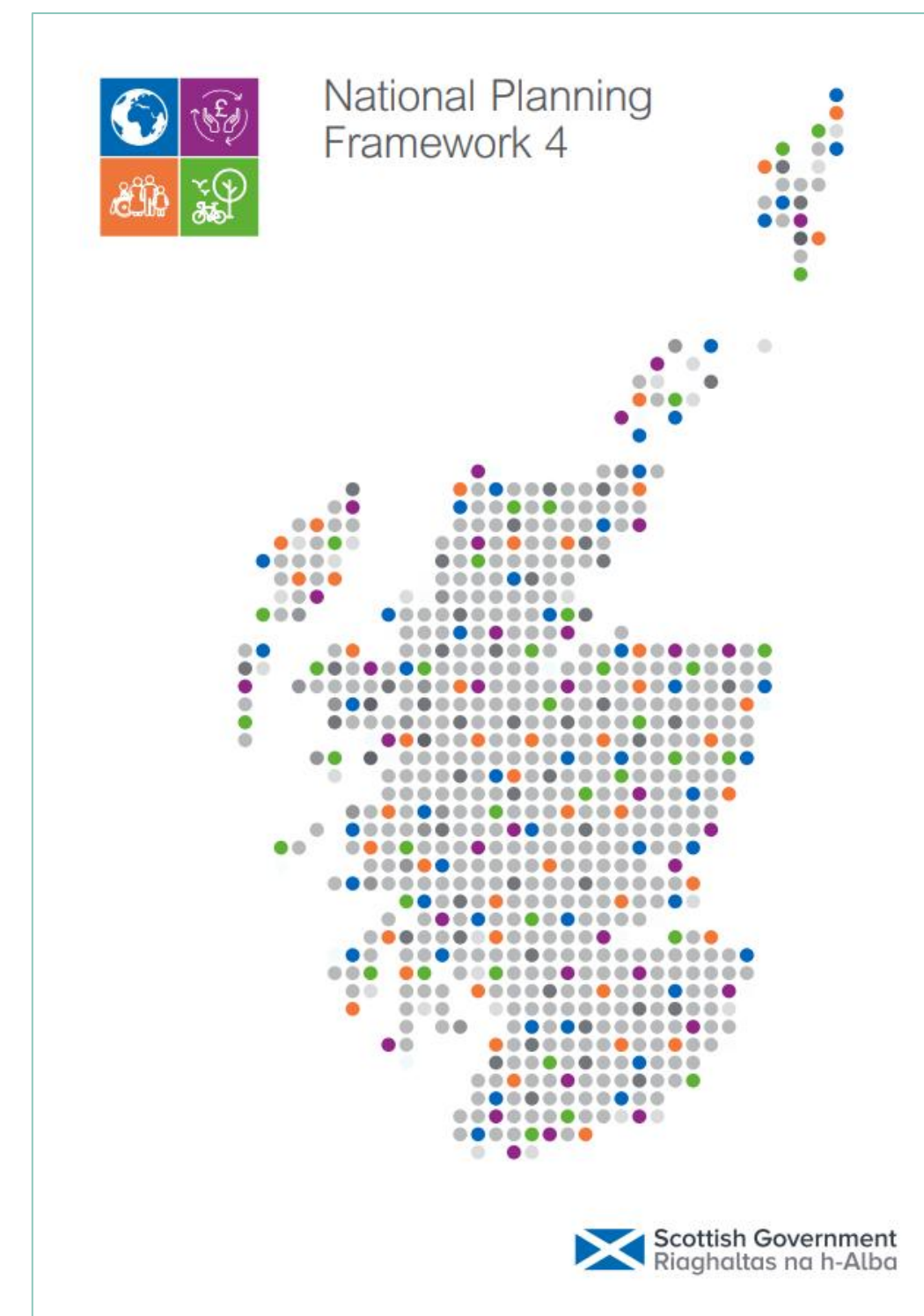
b) it provides suitable amenity to students, including open space - The proposal will provide accessible internal and external amenity space. At least 20% of the site will be provided as Useable Open Space and additional shared internal amenity space is provided on the ground floor level facing Bernard Terrace which will provide an active street frontage.

c) no more than 10% studio flats are provided - The proposal provides a mix of 90% cluster apartments and 10% studio apartments.

d) there will be no adverse impact on the established character of the area - The site is set within a diverse urban environment, characterised by a mix of uses in the immediate vicinity. Notably, the Nicolson Street/ Clerk Street Town Centre is located directly west of the site offering a variety of services and amenities that meet local needs.

It is acknowledged that the surrounding area contains other student accommodation schemes. However, given the mixed-use character of the locality and its proximity to the University of Edinburgh, the proposal would not give rise to any adverse impact on the established character of the area.

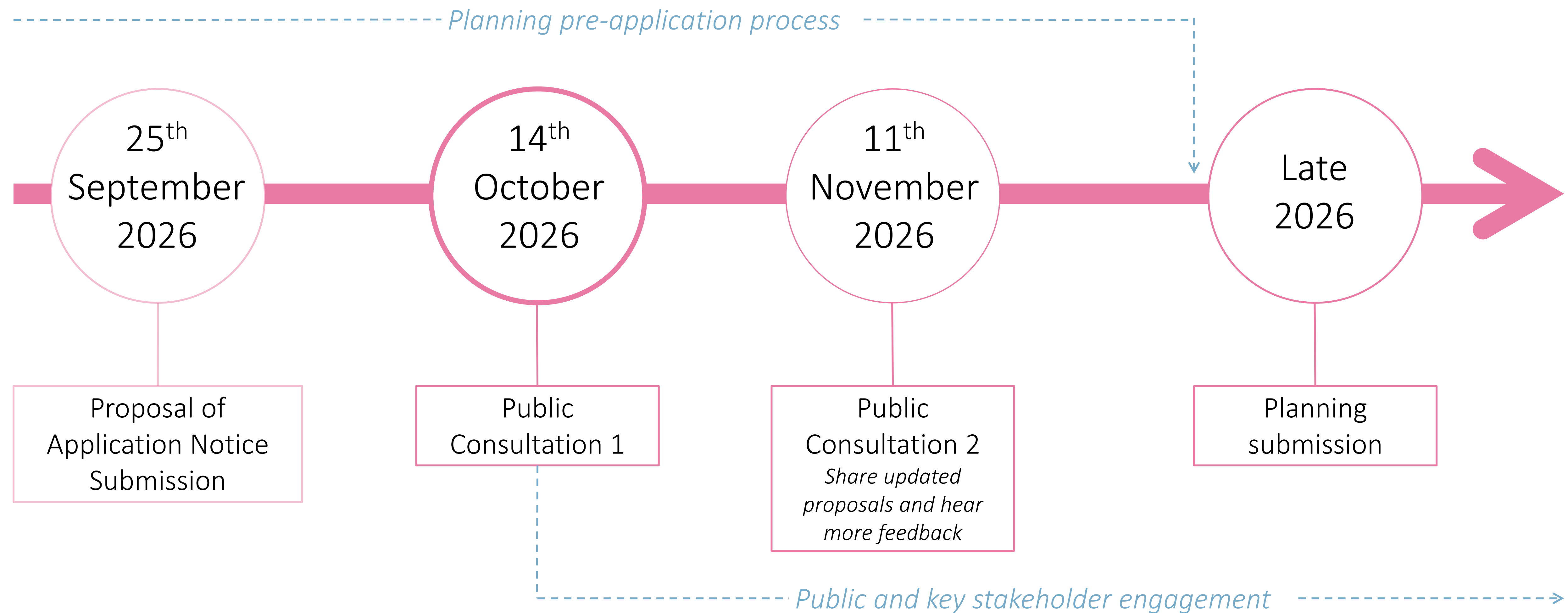
Econ 5 (Employment Sites and Premises) - The development will contribute to the regeneration and revitalisation of the area, while supporting surrounding businesses. The site is well-served by a range of existing facilities that meet the needs of both the development and the surrounding community. Furthermore, the proposed student accommodation would generate employment opportunities for management and operation of the development.



6. What happens next?

Your feedback helps shape the next steps

This consultation marks the first stage of engagement on the emerging proposals for 16 Bernard Terrace. We are keen to hear the views of the local community, stakeholders and interested parties as the design continues to evolve. Feedback received through this consultation will help inform the next stage of project development ahead of a second public consultation and the submission of a planning application.



Please take the time to complete our feedback forms



Or comments can be made via email to consultation@scotthobbsplanning.com with the subject "Bernard Terrace".

Comments should be received by Wednesday 28th October 2026



Information will be available at:
www.16bernardterrace.com

Second public consultation

When: 11th November 2026

Where: Library Gallery, Summerhall

Why: We will gather feedback from this first exhibition and present more detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the site