



**A1122 Allen Gallery and  
Gardens Project**

Planning, Design and Access Statement  
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## Applicant Statement

This project will revitalise the Allen Gallery and its collections to engage vulnerable and at-risk local groups, while broadening its relevance to wider audiences. 23% of Alton's population is over the age of 65, contributing to social isolation and physical/ mental ill health. Amongst the school-age population issues include poor mental health and wellbeing, compounded by a lack of access to support. The town is wealthy, but with areas of deprivation, bringing disadvantages in education, skills and training, and access to transport. Alton's social housing areas have a high proportion of family households.

Alton is experiencing a wave of housing development, including affordable provision for families and single elderly people. Low-cost leisure opportunities are insufficient for the current population; the Allen Gallery is one of two venues in the town centre with regular opening hours. Extended provision is critical; this project is an opportunity to embed heritage in Alton's community and leisure offer.

The project will support delivery of local strategies including: East Hampshire's 2020-25 Welfare and Wellbeing Strategy, which prioritises mental wellbeing and supporting an aging population; East Hampshire's 2019 – 2036 Placemaking Strategy, which identifies strengthening identity and pride of place as priorities for Alton; and Alton's 2011-2028 Neighbourhood Plan, which prioritises health, community and recreation, and economic sustainability through improving leisure facilities.

Our vision is to transform the Allen Gallery into a thriving hub in central Alton that engages a wide range of people with heritage. Building on the strong foundations of the venue's outstanding collections, its volunteering programme, and established garden, we will involve local people in shaping an offer that is attractive and relevant to people of all ages and backgrounds. The redevelopment will also help the Allen Gallery to become more sustainable and less reliant on subsidies.

These activities will be supported by the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Allen Gallery. These interventions will enable community programmes, improve access and create a strong visitor offer that appeals to a wide audience, realising the Allen Gallery's potential to become a cultural hub at the heart the town and significantly increasing visitor figures to 18,000 per annum by 2026.

## Introduction

Allen Gallery is located in the centre of Alton at 10-12 Church St, Alton GU34 2BW. The site is Grade II listed and set within the Alton Conservation Area. The building is owned by the Allen and Curtis Museum Foundation (charity number 307296-0 (78866)) which is the amalgamation of the W H Allen Bequest, the Mrs A M Allen Bequest and the W H Curtis Bequest and was drawn up on 18th October 1968. Hampshire County Council are Trustees of the Charity and there is an additional Trustee- Mark Breedon, the Allen Family Representative.

The Gallery is managed by Hampshire Cultural Trust, an independent charity established in 2014 to promote Hampshire as a great cultural county and to operate arts and museums facilities previously operated by Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. They directly manage and support 26 arts and museums attractions across Hampshire, including the Allen Gallery and Curtis Museum in Alton, and deliver local and county-wide outreach programmes that bring great culture to local communities.

In 2022 the HCT secured Round 1 funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a project for the Allen Gallery to transform it into a community focused cultural hub in the centre of Alton. HCT are looking to revitalise and transform the Allen Gallery and its collections to engage vulnerable and at-risk local groups while broadening its relevance to wider audiences. The redevelopment will include a new cafe, courtyard, flexible community space, refurbished ceramics galleries, and a new study area for ceramic specialist research.

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support a Planning and Listed Building Consent application for the redevelopment of the Allen Gallery.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Heritage Statement
- Extended Phase 1 Ecological and Bat Roost Assessment
- Air Source Heat Pump- Plant Noise Assessment Report

## Site and Context

### Site Location

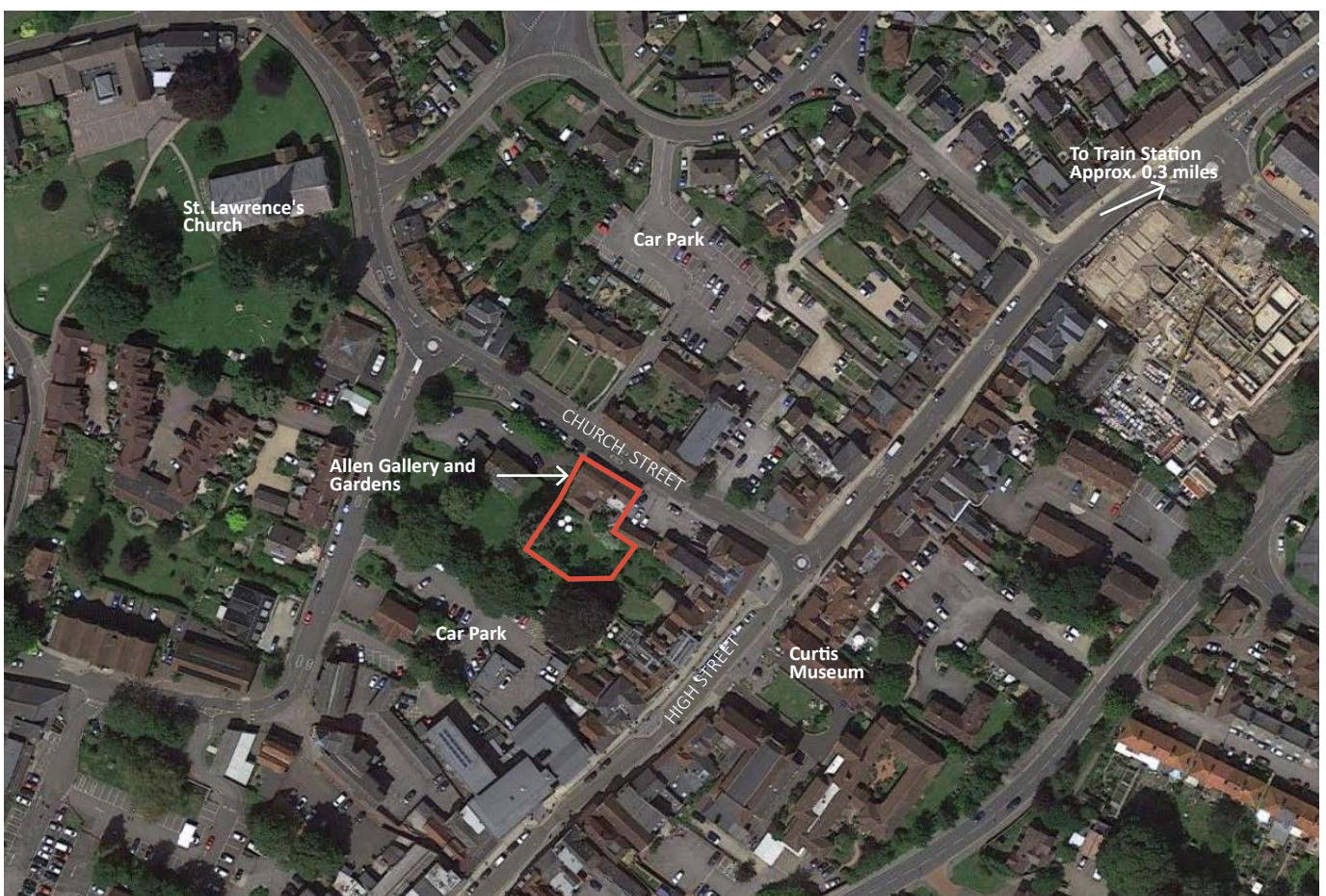
Address:

10-12, Church St, Alton GU34 2BW

*Note:*

*The Allen Gallery's coach house is variously referred to as No. 10a or 12. No. 12 is one of the Geales Alms Houses opposite. Therefore, this document will refer to the former coach house as No. 10a throughout.*

Alton is a town at the heart of Hampshire, about 50 miles southwest of London. The Allen Gallery and Garden is located in the heart of Alton, positioned mid-way along Church Street, just off the main High Street, it is characterised by a range of residential and commercial units. Approximately 50 metres north of the gallery is a public car park, with another located to south west. To the northeast, approximately 0.3 miles from the gallery, is Alton Train Station. To the southwest of the building are the gardens of the Allen Gallery, these are bounded by the adjacent properties gardens.



Aerial Photo

## Site Description

The gallery site comprises a collection of buildings of varying ages and an enclosed garden. The buildings front directly onto Church Street, with the gardens enclosed to the southwest.

No.10 Church Street is a two storey, three bay brick construction in Flemish Bond with headers in a contrasting blue brick and a pitched tiled roof. The four windows and doors are formed with shallow brick arches. The first floor windows are in Gothic style with two casements, each with 12 panes. The ground floor windows are sashes of a later date. The original front door to No. 10 (no longer used) is a timber boarded door with 2 side lights, accessed via two concrete steps. The south east gable end is rendered at ground and first floor level with tile hanging to the gable; there is a single timber framed casement window to the ground floor. To the rear of No. 10 is a two storey flat roofed extension with projecting bay windows. Abutting this, and running at a right angle is a single storey timber framed outbuilding containing WCs.

No. 10a has two bay modern windows with three casements, each with six panes. The old carriageway is now the main visitor entrance to the gallery. The rear of No.10a has been heavily altered and extended with a single story purpose built exhibition space constructed in 1979.

To the rear of the buildings is a small brick paved courtyard with planting, with a central sundial mounted on a baluster from the old London Bridge, presented by A.J. Curtis. An opening in the courtyard garden wall leads to a mature garden with paved seating area and stone built raised memorial garden.

The Gallery houses part of the Hampshire County Council collection of English pottery and porcelain, dating from 1250 to the present day, including examples of Wedgwood, English Delftware and unique studio pottery works which sit alongside Eastern Asian and continental wares. Also housed in the Gallery are some of the paintings by WH Allen, a Parian ware bust of Queen Victoria and a bronze sculpture of a woman known as 'Dolores' by Jacob Epstein.

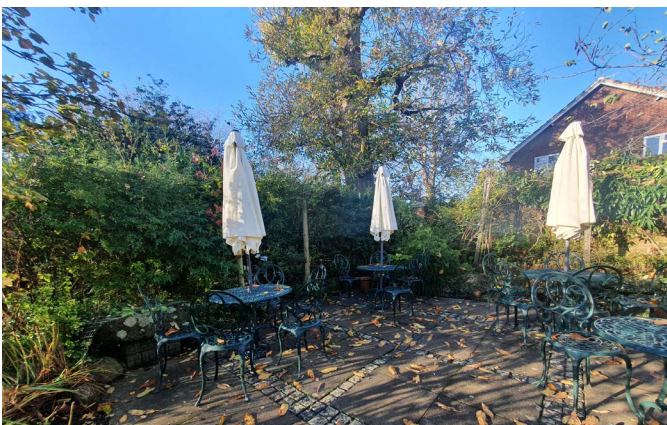
## Site Photographs



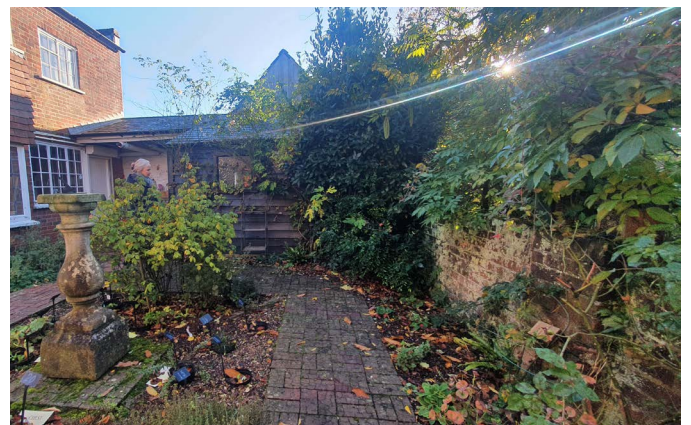
*Principal elevation on Church Street*



*Allen Gallery garden and rear elevation*



*Outdoor Seating Area in the Garden*



*Photo of Outbuilding within the Courtyard*



Rear view of the Allen Gallery



Bay window to rear of first gallery



Existing gallery displays



Purpose built gallery space to rear of No. 10a



Existing ground floor gallery to rear of No. 10



Existing first floor gallery to No. 10a



## Wider Context and Key Designations

The existing Allen Gallery site is Grade II listed and located on Church Street within the Alton Conservation Area.

The main views of the site are from Church Street. The principal gallery elevation makes a key contribution to the historic street which is a key component of the Alton Conservation Area. Other site views are from the adjacent neighbouring residential properties and Vicarage Hill.

The buildings on Church Street are generally two storey, containing dwellings and commercial buildings of varying ages. They have a mixture of rendered red brick and stone facades with pitched clay or slate tiled roofs. There are a significant number of Grade II listed buildings on Church Street, with seven Grade II listed properties within 100 m of the gallery. Directly opposite to the Allen Gallery is the Grade II listed Geales Almshouses, the Grade II listed Crown Hotel is located to the southeast, and further northwest is the Grade I Listed Parish Church of St Lawrence.



Surrounding Listed Buildings



Alton Conservation Area Map

## Movement and Connectivity

The Allen Gallery is on Church Street, which runs perpendicular to the main Alton High Street. There is only one entrance to the museum and visitors arrive by foot along the existing pavement that runs along the front of the gallery. There is no car parking on the gallery site, and visitors arriving by vehicle usually park in Victoria Road Car Park, which is approximately 0.1 miles away from the gallery or in Vicarage Hill Lane car park which is approximately 0.2 miles away from the gallery.

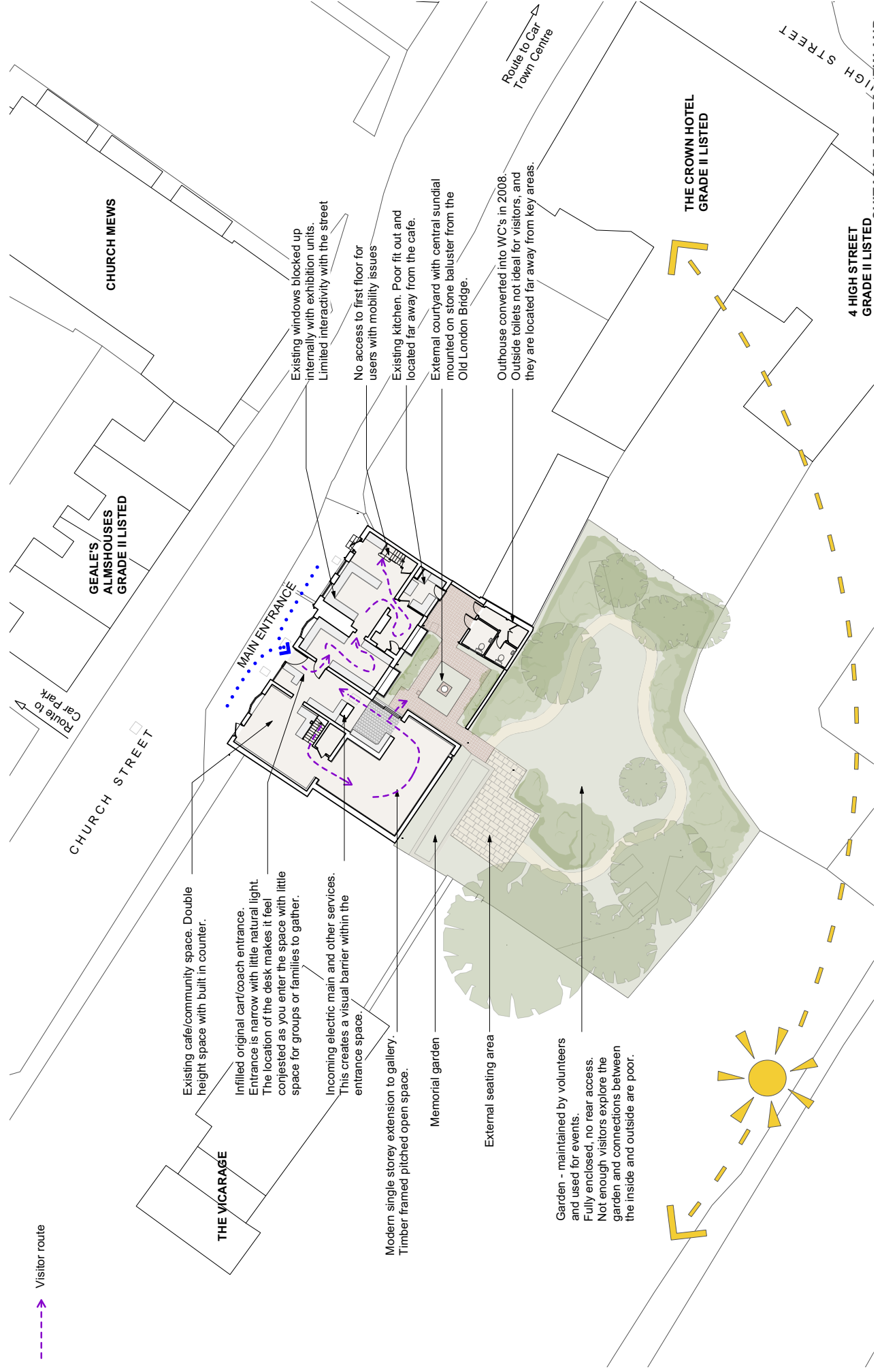
To the west, approximately 0.3 miles from the gallery, is Alton's Train Station, this has a direct rail service into central London, with Alton at the end of the line. Some buses operate between Winchester, Basingstoke, Liphook and Guildford and terminate at the Alton railway station. The buses also act as town services.

The gallery has a 'How to get here' section on The Hampshire Cultural Trust website, informing visitors of the different ways to get to the gallery and promoting public transport where possible.

Alton is well connected with a network of local footpaths that provide good permeability in much of the town. Alton has been accepted as a 'Walkers are Welcome' town, and there is an annual walking festival which encourages visitors to explore the area and places of importance to the town. There is currently no cycle parking provision on the existing gallery site.

## Site Analysis

This analysis summarises the opportunities and constraints of the existing site, highlighting current key issues that are to be resolved by the proposed development.



## Design Proposals

### Brief

This project aims to revitalise and transform the Allen Gallery and its collections to engage vulnerable and at-risk local groups while broadening its relevance to wider audiences. The Gallery's key aspirations for the project include:

- Building on the Gallery's important links with the local community and providing new opportunities for creative volunteer engagement
- Increased visitation with a stronger visitor offer that appeals to a wider audience
- Improved legibility through better configuration of public areas
- Creation of thematic and visual links between the buildings, garden and collections
- Providing an enhanced reception and shop area with clearer and more visible access to ground floor galleries and garden
- Provide better cafe facilities with better links to the courtyard and garden
- Improved viewing environment and interpretative narrative of the core collections
- Creation of a new multi-use community space
- Relocation of lavatories inside the building including a new accessible lavatory
- Improved street visibility and presence of the Allen Gallery
- Provision of a staff/volunteer room
- Improve the overall environmental sustainability of the gallery to be in-line with Hampshire Cultural Trusts overall environmental policy.
- Repair and enhance the historic buildings to protect the historic fabric in the longer term.

### Key Plan



## Design Proposals

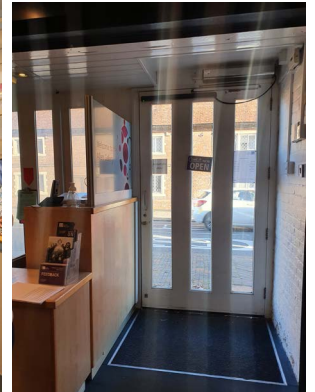
### 1. Entrance, Shop and Café



Existing carriageway entrance to gallery



Existing entrance/shop area



Existing main entrance doors

The scheme looks to improve the visitor entrance to the building, improving visitor flow and making the space feel more welcoming and open.

The visitor route into the site will remain via the existing historic carriageway opening. The existing entrance door and screen is proposed to be replaced with a new glazed door and side panel that are welcoming and open, meet access requirements and improve thermal efficiency.

Internally, it is proposed to open up the entrance space by forming a new large opening in the existing wall to the left as you enter the building. This creates a much larger space that can house a new reception desk, cafe and retail area. It also brings the existing bay window into the space, bringing in more natural light and opens up key views from the entrance space out to the courtyard and garden beyond. An existing services cupboard in the centre of the current entrance area creates a visual and physical barrier and it is proposed that this is removed and the incoming services relocated to a new cupboard to the right hand side of the new entrance door and screen.

To allow the cafe to function effectively it is proposed to relocate the kitchen from the back corner of the building into a new space created within the existing cafe seating area. To provide access directly from the cafe counter a new opening is proposed within the wall.

The space will have a complete new fit out with new seating area, retail displays and reception/cafe counter that are co-located allowing them to be manned by fewer members of staff/volunteers on quieter days.



Sketch view of new entrance to the Allen Gallery

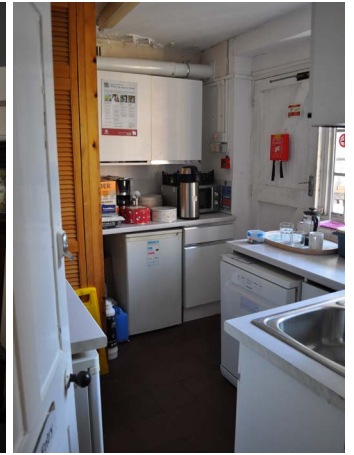
## 2. Galleries 1 and 2



*Existing ground floor of No.10*



*Existing cupboard in Gallery 2*



*Existing kitchen*

To the north east of the new enlarged entrance space will be Gallery 1, this space will largely stay as existing except for a new fit out, redecoration and new floor finish. Accessed off Gallery 1 will be Gallery 2; which is formed by removing the existing kitchen, boiler and modern partition wall and door to create one large gallery space than the existing. It is also proposed to remove the existing external door and window and create a wide opening into the new Gallery 3. As with Gallery 1, this will have a new fit out, redecoration and floor finish.

## 3. Gallery 3



*Existing historic roof structure*



*Existing open recessed area of lean-to*

To the rear of No. 10 it is proposed to convert the existing outbuilding into a new gallery space. The new building will retain the existing footprint but infill the open space between the rear of the No. 10 and the existing toilets. The new building will retain a slate mono-pitched roof, with timber cladding to the front and side elevation. In the existing recessed section of the roof a new flat roofed area will be created with a glazed entrance door and screen inserted to create a visitor route directly into the courtyard and bring natural light into the building. The new structure will retain the historic roof timbers and brick rear wall, but will have new insulation on the inside face of the walls and roof to meet current standards, exposing the historic roof where possible. The conversion of the outbuilding will create much needed gallery space, improve visitor flow and connection to the courtyard and garden.



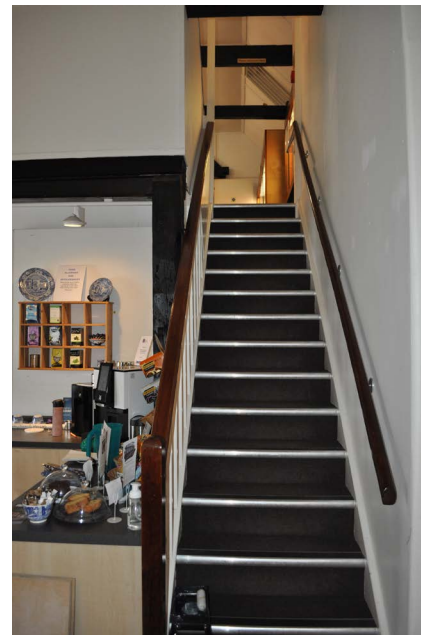
*Sketch view of converted outbuilding*

#### 4. Gallery 4

The proposals look to relocate the existing cafe into the new open entrance area. This allows for the existing cafe area to be converted into another gallery space. A new partition wall will be built to the south of the gallery space to create the cafe kitchen, and the bottom of the existing modern stair altered to have tapered treads so the stair finishes facing into the new gallery space, improving visitor flow and allowing enough space for the cafe kitchen. The existing hardboard ceiling and wall finishes will be removed and new plasterboard finishes installed, there will be a new fit out, redecoration and new floor finish.



*Existing cafe space*



*Existing stair*

## 5. Flexible Gallery/ Community Space and Adjacent Spaces

It is proposed to create a circulation lobby, with access to the flexible/community space, entrance, cafe and retail space and new toilets within the existing area to the rear of the entrance space, currently used as part of the shop. The existing glazed metal automatic external door will be replaced with a new glazed door and side screen that will be in the same architectural language as the other new external doors and windows being installed as part of the project to ensure a coherent approach where new elements are clearly modern. The lobby will be created by adding a new glazed door to the opening between the lobby and the new flexible gallery/community space, and a partition wall added to the other side at the rear of the cafe counter, to create separation. The lobby will retain the existing stable block flooring. Directly accessed off the lobby will be two new toilets, one of which will be an accessible toilet, which will be created by forming two new openings, and adding new partition walls and doors.

The scheme proposes to create a new flexible gallery/community space within the existing modern gallery space to the rear of No. 10a. There is an existing slot window to the rear elevation of the space and it is proposed to replace this with a new wider window with opening casement to improve ventilation, natural light and connection with the garden. A wet area and store will be created behind the toilets to support the various uses of the new flexible space. The existing spaces will have a new fit out, redecoration and floor finishes.

It is proposed to locate two new air source heat pumps and bin store (currently there is no bin store on site, and rubbish is taken home by volunteers) to the rear of the new flexible space, within the gap between the stone memorial garden and the rear brick wall. A new timber gate and fence will be installed to conceal these and make them secure from members of the public. It is felt this is the most appropriate place as it is located away from the more significant parts of the building.



*Existing opening between lobby and gallery*



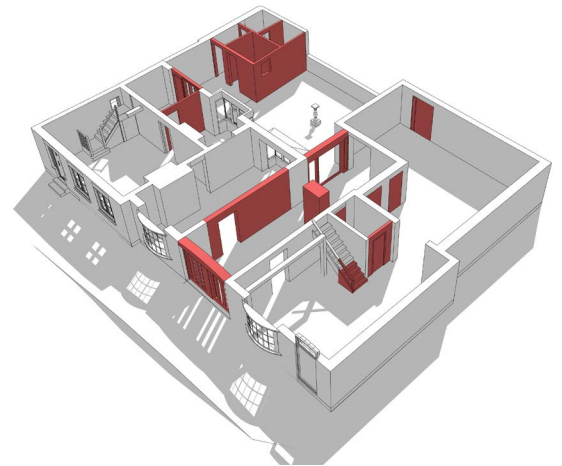
*Existing stable brick floor finish to lobby to be retained*



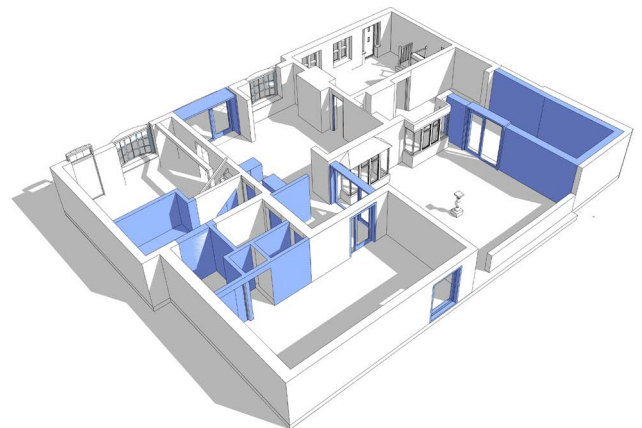
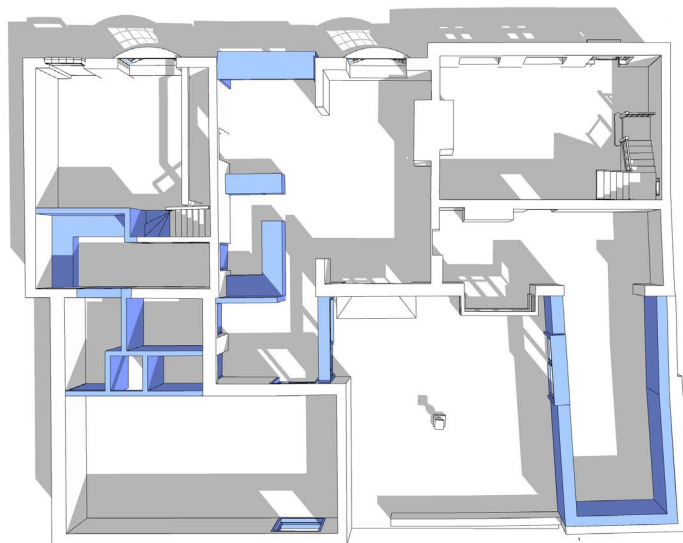
*Existing purpose built gallery space to rear of No. 10a*



*Rear elevation of purpose built gallery space*



*3D Model - Ground Floor showing fabric removal in red*



*3D Model - Ground Floor showing new works in blue*



## 6. First Floor

There are minimal alterations proposed to the first floor. The largest change proposed is to insulate the existing roofs to improve thermal efficiency. Currently there is a small amount of poor quality insulation to the roof and the proposal is to remove the modern hardboard and plasterboard ceilings, install new breathable insulation and install new plasterboard ceilings to all the spaces at first floor. On top of this it is also proposed to add secondary glazing to all the existing single glazed windows again to improve thermal efficiency and consequently improve the ongoing sustainability of the museum.

There is currently no existing staff or volunteer room in the Allen Gallery. The project looks to convert the existing small gallery in the 19th 20th century flat roofed part of the buildings into a new volunteer and staff room. This requires blocking up one door opening and fitting a new door frame and leaf to an existing adjacent opening.

The other two existing galleries and the store room will be retained with new fit out, redecoration and floor finishes.

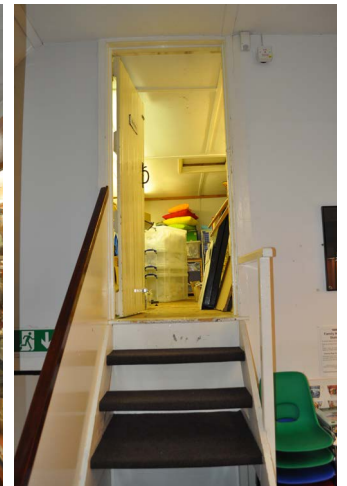
Access to the first floor of the building is via the two staircases at either end of the building. There is no level access to the first floor of the building, and following a review of providing a lift to facilitate this it was deemed unfeasible to provide level access due to the level of intervention required and the consequently impact on the building. It is therefore proposed to not make the gallery space at first floor level key to the visitor route, and to ensure there are other ways that elements of the collection are made accessible to those not able to get up to the first floor.



*Existing first floor gallery space*



*Existing first floor gallery space*



*Existing first floor store room*

## 7. Courtyard/ Gardens

The proposals see very limited changes to the courtyard and gardens. The path between new converted outbuilding and the circulation lobby will be widened with brick pavers to match the existing to provide a level access between the two doors suitable for wheelchair users. Elsewhere, the courtyard and garden will be retained as existing except for the new bin store and air source heat pump enclosure to the rear of the flexible space as outline previously.

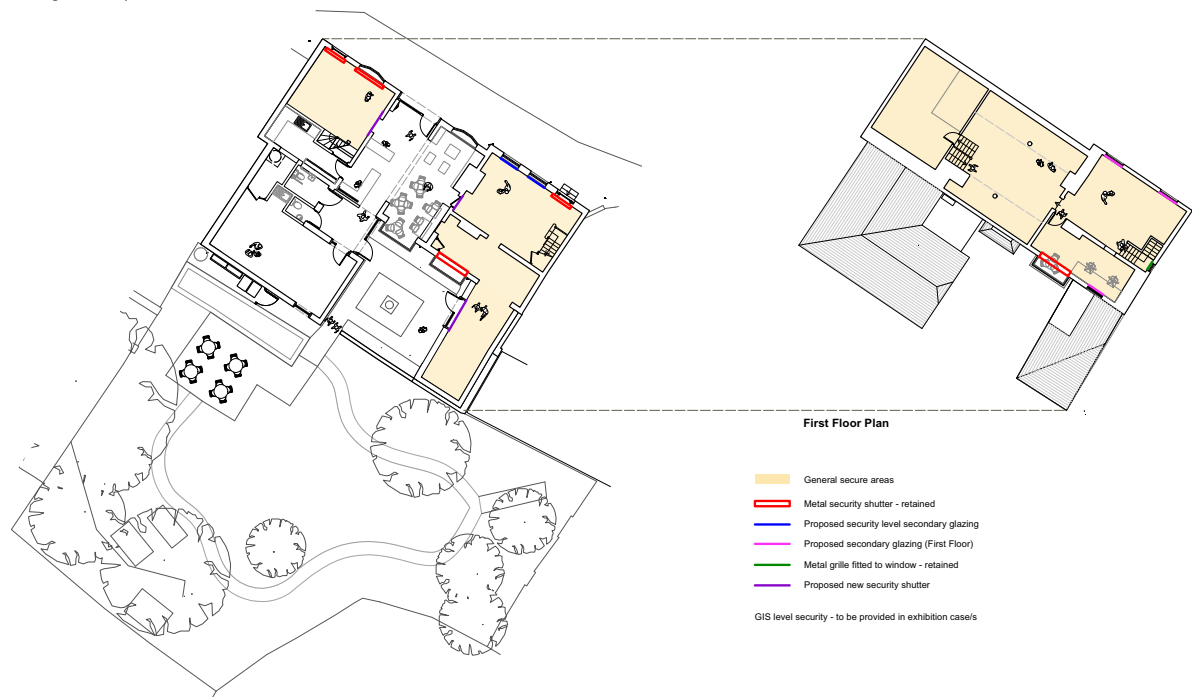
## Security

The existing gallery has various measures in place to ensure the security of the collections, these include metal security shutters, metal grilles and blocking windows up with exhibition cases. There have been previous incidents of the theft from the gallery, so security is vitally important to the gallery. However some of the existing security measures are visually detracting from the quality of the gallery spaces. The metal security shutters are large and unsightly, and the exhibition cases blocking up the windows means there is no there is limited interaction or visibility from the street, which makes the frontage less dynamic and limits the possibility of the gallery engaging with passers by.

To improve this it is proposed to minimise the security to gallery spaces only; this allows for six of the existing security shutters to be removed. Three new security shutters will need to be installed to facilitate this. The new security shutters will be more discreet than the existing and will be boxed in and incorporated into the fabric of the building where possible- such as in the altered outbuilding. The retained existing shutters will be improved by adding new housings to better incorporate them into the building and make them less visually intrusive. Where exhibition cases are removed from windows new security level secondary glazing will be added to maintain security whilst ensuring better visual engagement with street.



Existing Security Measures



Proposed Security Measures

## Waste, Refuse and Recycling

The existing gallery does not currently have a bin store and waste is taken home by staff and volunteers. The proposed scheme will locate a new bin store within a new fenced area to the rear of the new flexible gallery/community space. There will be provision for separate collections of recycling and refuse.

## Services

The existing service systems are generally life-expired and not running efficiently. It is proposed to replace all the services with new systems with better control to improve the environmental sustainability of the gallery. This includes two new air source heat pumps located within the bin store area outlined above.

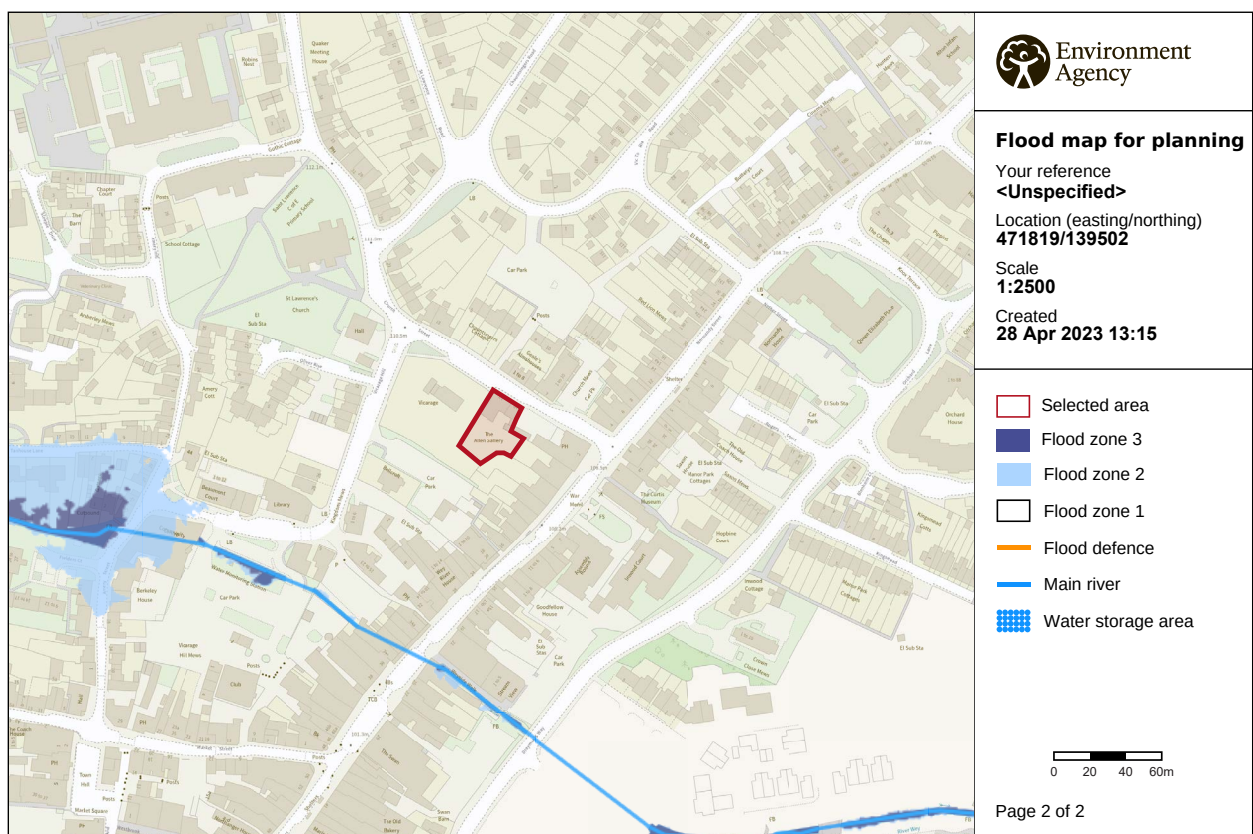
## Sustainability

This project has been developed in line with RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guidance to be as sustainable as possible within the limitations of the existing site. The key sustainable measures the project is looking to implement are:

- Heating will run from air source heat pumps, and the whole building will be run on electricity.
- Installation of secondary glazing to existing single glazed windows to reduce heat loss
- Insulating the roof to reduce heat loss
- All new services throughout the building will be more efficient, including LED light fittings.
- Water saving device fitted to toilets
- New windows and doors will meet modern building regulation standards

## Drainage and Flood Risk

The site is in flood zone 1 with a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. It is also at very low risk of flooding from surface water. The site is also less than 1 hectare and consequently it is deemed that no Flood Risk Assessment is required for planning purposes.



Flood Risk Map

## **Noise Impact Assessment**

An assessment of the noise impact of the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps has been prepared by F1 Acoustics Company Limited, and this accompanies this application. The recommendations within the report have been incorporated into the proposals.

## **Ecology**

Philips Ecology has undertaken an Extended Phase 1 Ecological and Bat Roost Assessment, which accompanies this application.

## **Impact on Heritage**

A heritage statement that outlines the significance of the heritage and assesses the impact of the proposals has been prepared and accompanies this application.

## **Consultations**

Pre application advice has been sought prior to the submission of this application (Ref 22966/999), and feedback from the consultation incorporated into the proposals.

Hampshire Cultural Trust have held consultation events with the public, local community and volunteers. Feedback from these events has been considered and incorporated into the proposals where appropriate.

## Conclusion

The project seeks to redevelop the Allen Gallery site to create a vibrant cultural hub in the centre of Alton with a long term sustainable future. The existing fit out is largely from the original conversion into a gallery in the 1970's and is consequently now outdated and life expired, particularly the services installation. The venue has outstanding collections of international significance that are currently poorly displayed and interpreted which alongside outdated facilities means the existing gallery doesn't meet modern visitors expectations.

The alterations proposed as part of this development will create modern visitor attraction that will enable community programmes, improve access and create a strong visitor offer that appeals to a wider audience. This will realise the Allen Gallery's potential to become a cultural hub at the heart the town and significantly increasing visitor figures to 18,000 per annum by 2026. The proposals have been developed to respond to the unique historic site and be sensitive to its context. They aim to meet the client's brief with a high quality design whilst respecting the listed status of the site. The design incorporates improvements to the fabric of the building, including insulating the roof and adding secondary glazing, to improve thermal efficiency and the overall environmental sustainability of the building.