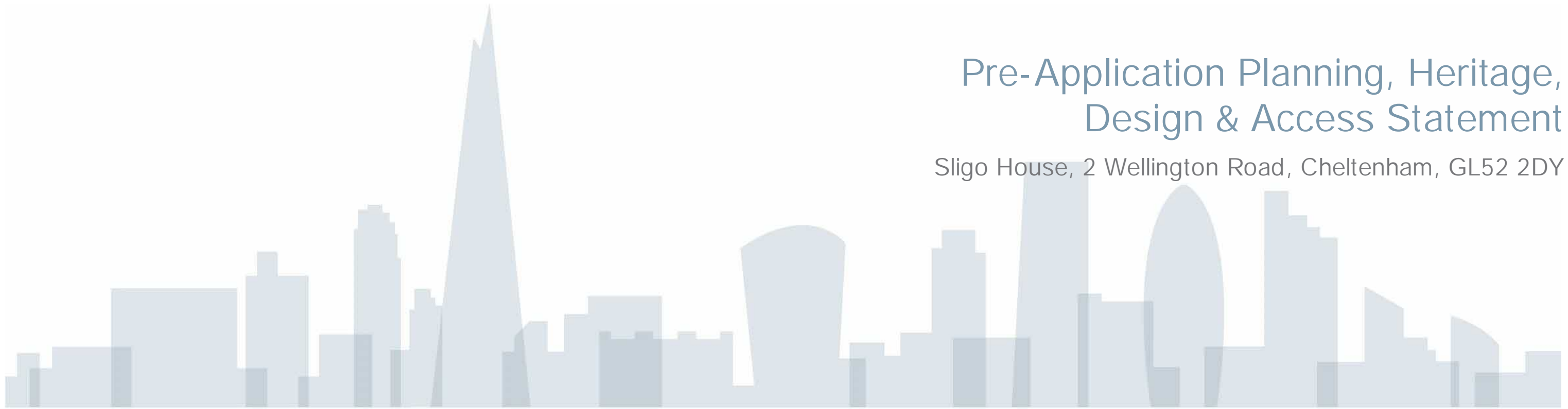


Pre-Application Planning, Heritage,
Design & Access Statement
Sligo House, 2 Wellington Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2DY



London



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Contents

- 1. Introduction 2
- 2. Pre-Application (23/02037/PREAPP) Feedback 3
- 3. Heritage Significance 4
- 4. Proposals 6
- 5. Planning and Heritage Assessment 10
- 6. Conclusion 12

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Heritage Potential (a trading name of Planning Potential Ltd) to assess the proposals for "New buggy and bin stores, forecourt works, and internal works associated with the existing nursery use" at Sligo House, 2 Wellington Road, Cheltenham (Grade II).
- 1.2. The Statement has been prepared by Niall Hanrahan of Heritage Potential. Niall has a MSc in Historic Conservation and is also MRTPI accredited. This joint heritage and planning specialism allows him to effectively balance the public benefits of proposals against any identified harm to heritage assets.
- 1.3. Overall, this statement provides an assessment of the proposals in relation to the relevant national and local planning policies and demonstrates that the proposals would enhance the safety and efficiency of the nursery with limited impact on the building. Following pre-application feedback, and acceptance of the works in principle, it is considered that the proposals would not be harmful to the significance of the building.

Application Site



Source: Holloway Foo

Sligo House



Source: Heritage Potential

Existing Buggy Store



Source: Heritage Potential

2. Pre-Application (23/02037/PREAPP) Feedback

- 2.1. A site meeting was held on 11 January 2024 with pre-application feedback received on 29 January 2024.

Sligo House, 2 Wellington Road is a grade II listed Regency villa, adjacent to a number of villas and townhouses that are also grade II listed. The area is located within the Central Conservation Area.

Given the sensitivity of the site and its context, regard needs to be given to the legal and policy context as it applies to heritage assets.

The cornerstone of heritage legislation is the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 of which para 72(1) states, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area and para 16(2), which requires local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings and their setting.

A core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) is heritage assets be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Chapter 16, sets out the approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This assessment takes account of the relevant considerations in these paragraphs, including paragraph 203 of the NPPF, which requires the significance of heritage assets to be sustained and enhanced, with paragraph 205 requiring great weight be given to the asset's conservation.

External

External car parking adjacent to the east elevation to create x2 parking spaces. External car parking adjacent to the north elevation to create x1 parking space raises potential concerns. These elevations are prominent within the streetscene and form part of the 'formal front elevations' of the listed building, an important part of its setting. Excessive hard surfacing, with the resultant vehicular parking, and the loss of soft landscaping to this part of the curtilage will detract from the setting of the listed building. It is advised the soft landscaping is reinforced in this location.

The proposed bin and buggy storage acceptable in principle, addressing the existing issue of storage without compromising the setting of the listed building.

Lower Ground floor

The proposed works to the lower ground floor do not affect the special interest of the listed building, affecting later, modern fabric in Room 20 and reintroducing a wall in the proposed Children's WC loosely along the location of where an historic wall appears to have been.

Ground floor

The proposed opening up works in Room 4 are acceptable in principle. As was noted on site and confirmed by opening up works there was an opening in this location previously. It is advised the opening be limited to this existing opening rather than being as large as is shown in the submitted pre-application floor plans.

The proposed new wall to create New Nappy change and New Milk kitchen is considered acceptable. This room is within a later extension with no features of significance.

The proposed works to the children's WC are considered in principle. It is advised the stalls are lightweight type.

First Floor

The loss of historic door and opening off landing to the unnumbered room raises concerns. The historic door and opening located here forms part of the significance of

the listed building. It is advised this door is not blocked but fixed or locked shut if required, as was briefly discussed on site.

Subdivision of a room to create a New WC room and Room 16 is not objected to. It appears historically this was two rooms, possibly along the line of the existing steel (?) Also there are not historic features that would be affected by the proposed new wall.

It is advised all new openings and doors on all floors are modern and simple in appearance so as to not be mistaken as historic openings and doors.

Conclusion

Generally with a few exceptions the proposed pre-application works are considered to sustain the affected designated heritage assets and would therefore comply with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and Policy SD8 of the Joint Core Strategy 2017.

The aspects of the proposed works where concerns have been raised will need to be more carefully considered prior to the submission of any application.

3. Heritage Significance

3.1. This Section assesses the significance of the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed works. These are considered to be:

- Sligo House (Grade II listed).
- Central Conservation Area

Sligo House

3.2. Sligo House is a Grade II listed building. The building was listed on the 5th of May 1972 (List Entry 1387603) with the listing describing the building as:

Villa. 1839-40. Edward Cope, builder. Stucco over brick with hipped slate roof with 2 rear stucco stacks. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys on basement, 3 first-floor windows. Stucco detailing includes tooled architraves to ground-floor windows with broken segmental pediments on corbel brackets; first-floor sill band; wreath above each first-floor window; crowning cornice on paired console brackets. 6/6 sashes throughout, all in plain reveals and with sills; renewed 8/8 sashes to basement. Central entrance, flight of 5 renewed roll-edged steps to 4-raised-and-fielded-panel door with sidelights and divided overlight in tooled architrave. Left return: 3 first-floor windows, each in stepped-forward range and that to right in full-height bow. 6/6 sashes, those to bow are curved on section and similar stucco detailing. INTERIOR: noted as having retained original joinery including panelled shutters. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: to sides of steps a stuccoed balustrade with blind oval motif and cylindrical end piers. HISTORICAL NOTE: the NW side of Prestbury Road was built upon first as part of the development of this area undertaken for Joseph Pitt in 1835-42, the general layout being designed by the architect John Forbes. Built by Edward Cope, a leading local builder and speculator who was responsible for laying out the area around Pittville Circus, it was sold in March 1847 to John Bird of the East India Company for »2060. Originally known as Alwington Villa. One of a good group of villas, along with Southend House (No.32) (qv), and Tower House (qv), Prestbury Road and Nos 1 and 2, Pittville Circus (qv), at the important junction of Prestbury Road, Wellington Road, Albert Road and Pittville Circus.

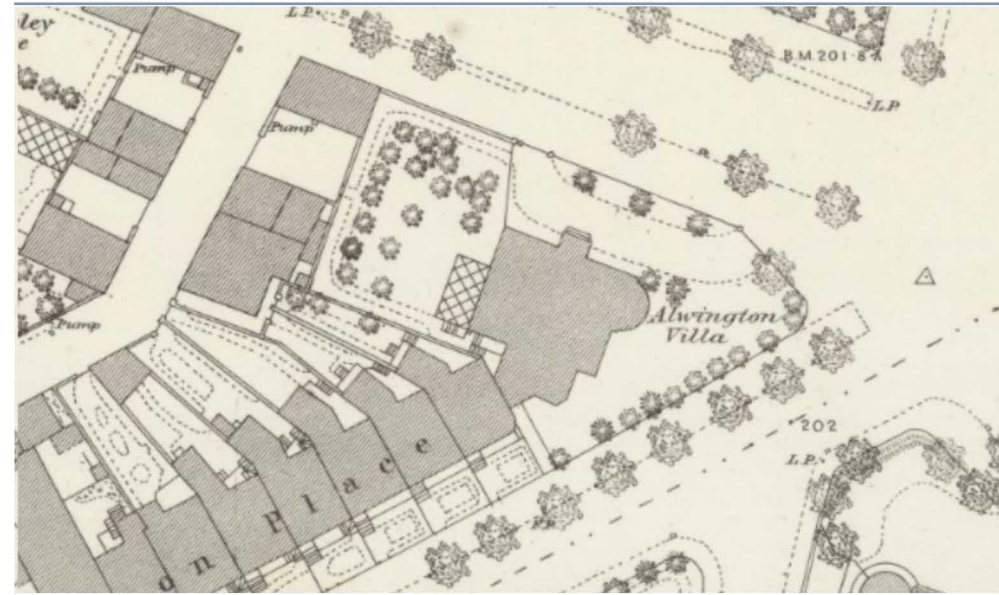
1850s Map



Source: NLS

3.3. The 1884 OS map shows the property, which at that time was known as Alwington Villa, with its familiar rounded north easterly elevation. Of note is the glazed structure, most likely to be a conservatory, to the western end of the building. This has since been replaced with a poorly constructed flat roof extension.

1884 OS Map



Source: NLS

3.4. Alwington Villa (1844 – 1889) would later become Christie College and known by the name Sligo House from c.1900. There is also a reference to the house once being called Tidmington House for a short period in the late 19th Century (1889-1895).

Existing Extension to Western Elevation



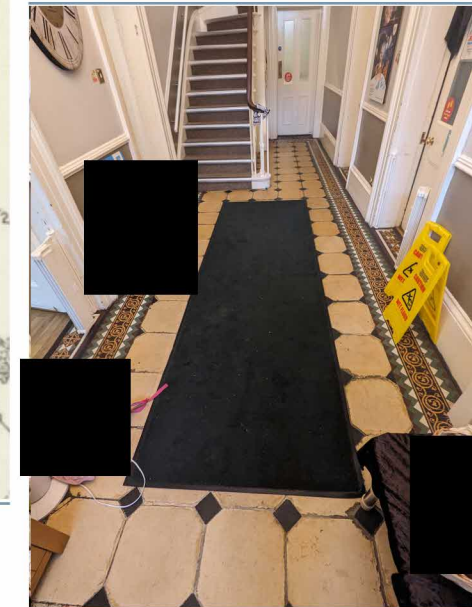
Source: Heritage Potential

Historical and Architectural Significance

3.5. Sligo House was one of the first buildings to be erected on the Pittville Estate and sits on a prominent corner plot of land. The general form of the corner and its stucco façade has remained largely consistent since the building's conception.

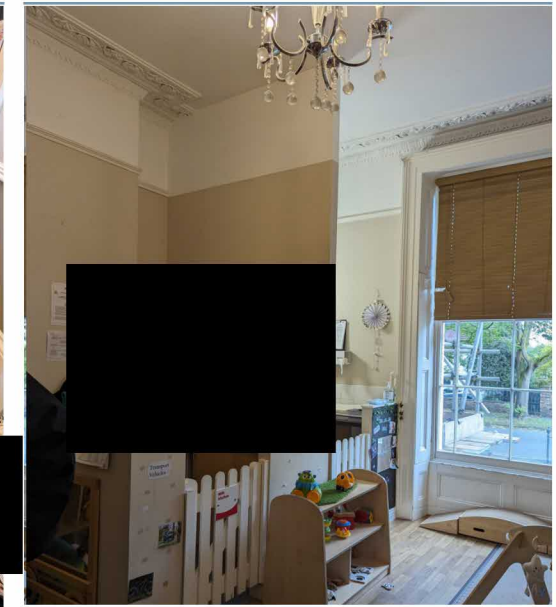
3.6. The interior of the property has mixed significance with an attractive tiled floor and cornice detail to the entrance hall. The western rooms to the ground floor have an attractive cornice detail.

Entrance Hall (GF)



Source: Heritage Potential Research

North Western Room (GF)



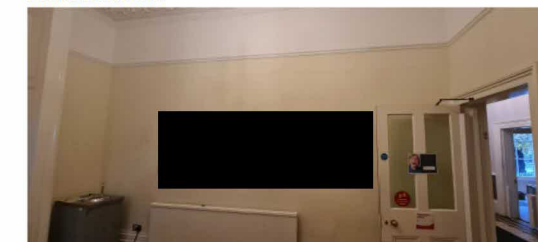
Source: Heritage Potential Research

3.7. Investigative works undertaken post pre-application meeting in January 2024 have uncovered evidence of an historic arched opening between the western rooms on the ground floor.

Evidence of Historic Opening to GF



Photos from room 4



Photos from room next door



Existing Archway revealed behind plaster

Source: Heritage Potential

3.8. The first and lower ground floors have limited interest with the lower ground floor having seen notable disturbance to the original floor plan. Rooms are otherwise plain with no cornice or rail details.

Existing Amalgamated Rooms to Western Side of First Floor



Source: Heritage Potential

3.9. There is evidence of a previous opening to one side of the chimney breast to the first floor and the room has evidently been modernised with no original detailing.

North Eastern Corner Room of First Floor



Source: Heritage Potential

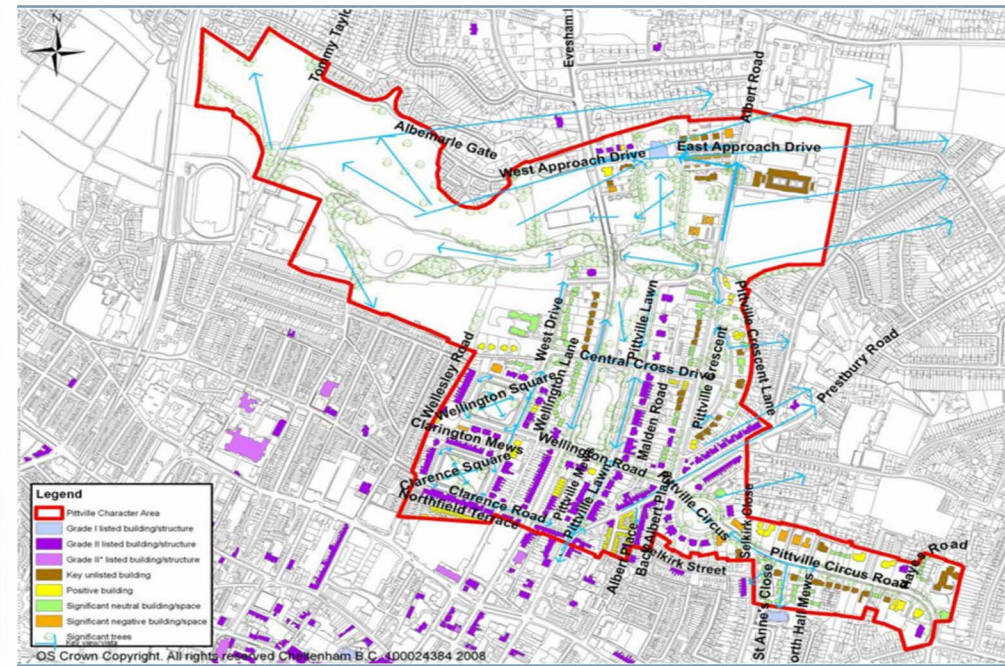
3.10. There are a number of windows with attractive timber panelling and shutters found throughout the property.

Central Conservation Area

3.11. The property sits within the Pittville Character Area of the Central Conservation Area. The CA Character Appraisal identifies the area as being special due to:

- a) The extensive open green spaces and the well established tree-lined streets form the structure of Pittville’s character and appearance and the setting of its buildings;
- b) Pittville Park creates a parkland setting for the character area and takes up approximately 50% of the total space of the character area. The park is a quintessential component of the character area;
- c) The pattern and layout of streets, the spaces between buildings, the mass and style of the buildings and use of quality building materials all complement each other. They combine together to give the area grandeur, elegance and spaciousness;
- d) Robin Brooks believes Pittville is among the finest estates of its period within England;
- e) The area contains large numbers of Regency and early Victorian formally laid out terraces and grand villas which form a distinct identity for the area;
- f) This character area contains over 150 statutory listed buildings (some of which are grouped under the same listing) and some locally listed buildings and structures, allowing it to have a rich architectural and historic interest;
- g) Pittville character area contains the Grade I listed Pittville Pump Room which dates from 1825. The building is seen by Bryan Little as being “the supreme architectural masterpiece of Cheltenham”.

Townscape Analysis Map of Pittville Character Area



Source: Cheltenham BC

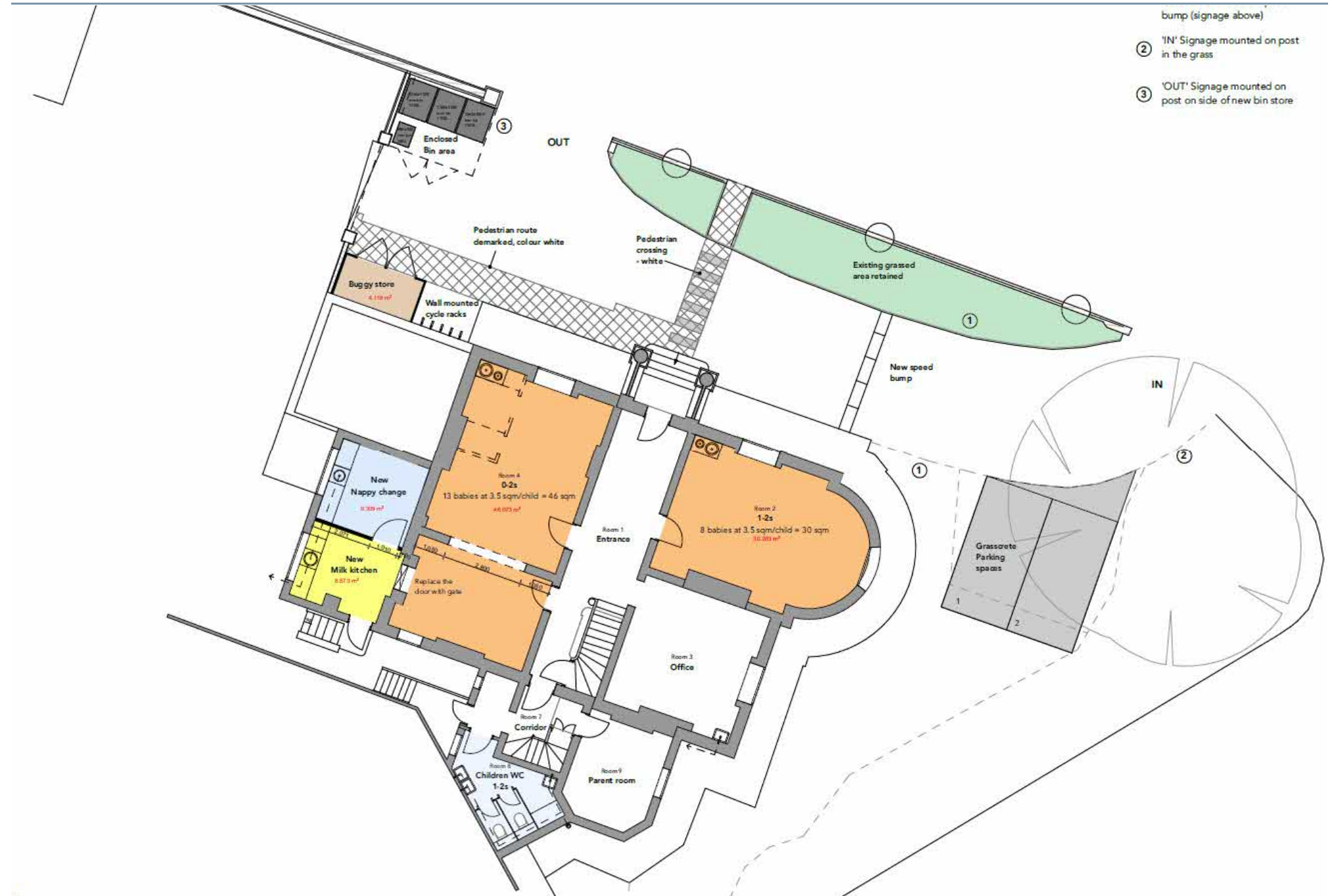
4. Proposals

4.1. The proposed changes to enhance the nursery include:

External

- Enclosed bin store;
- Buggy store;
- Wall mounted cycle racks;
- Speed bump;
- Pedestrian crossing and demarcated pedestrian area;
- Grasscrete parking areas (2 spaces);
- Grass mounted signage located either side of speed bump;
- 'In' signage mounted on post in grass; and
- 'Out' signage mounted on post on side of new bin store.

Site Plan

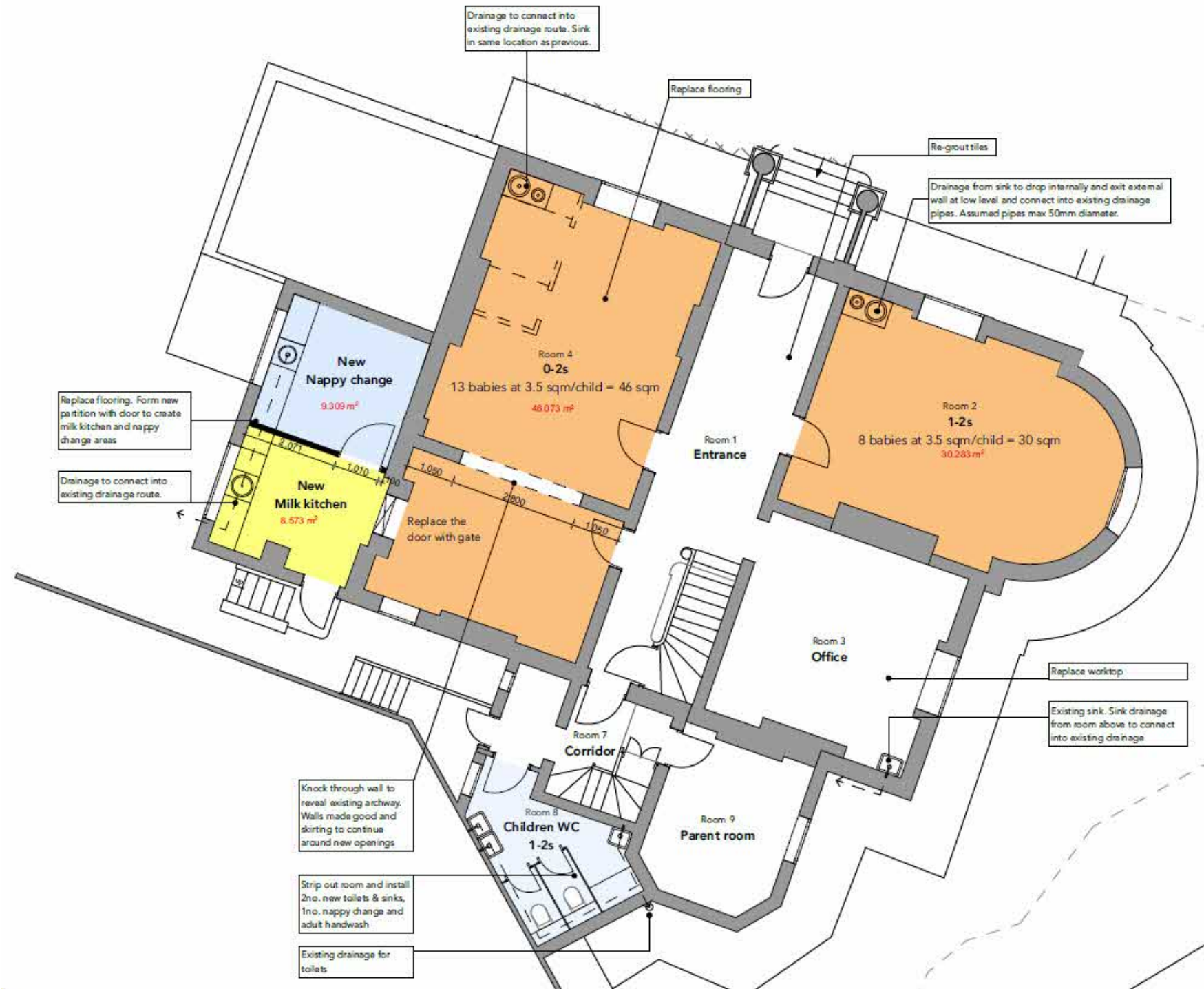


Source: Holloway Foo

Ground Floor

- New partition within extension;
- Replacement of door to extension with gate;
- Creation of opening in wall to create one large space; and
- Installation of 2 new toilets in rear extension.

Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Source: Holloway Foo

First Floor

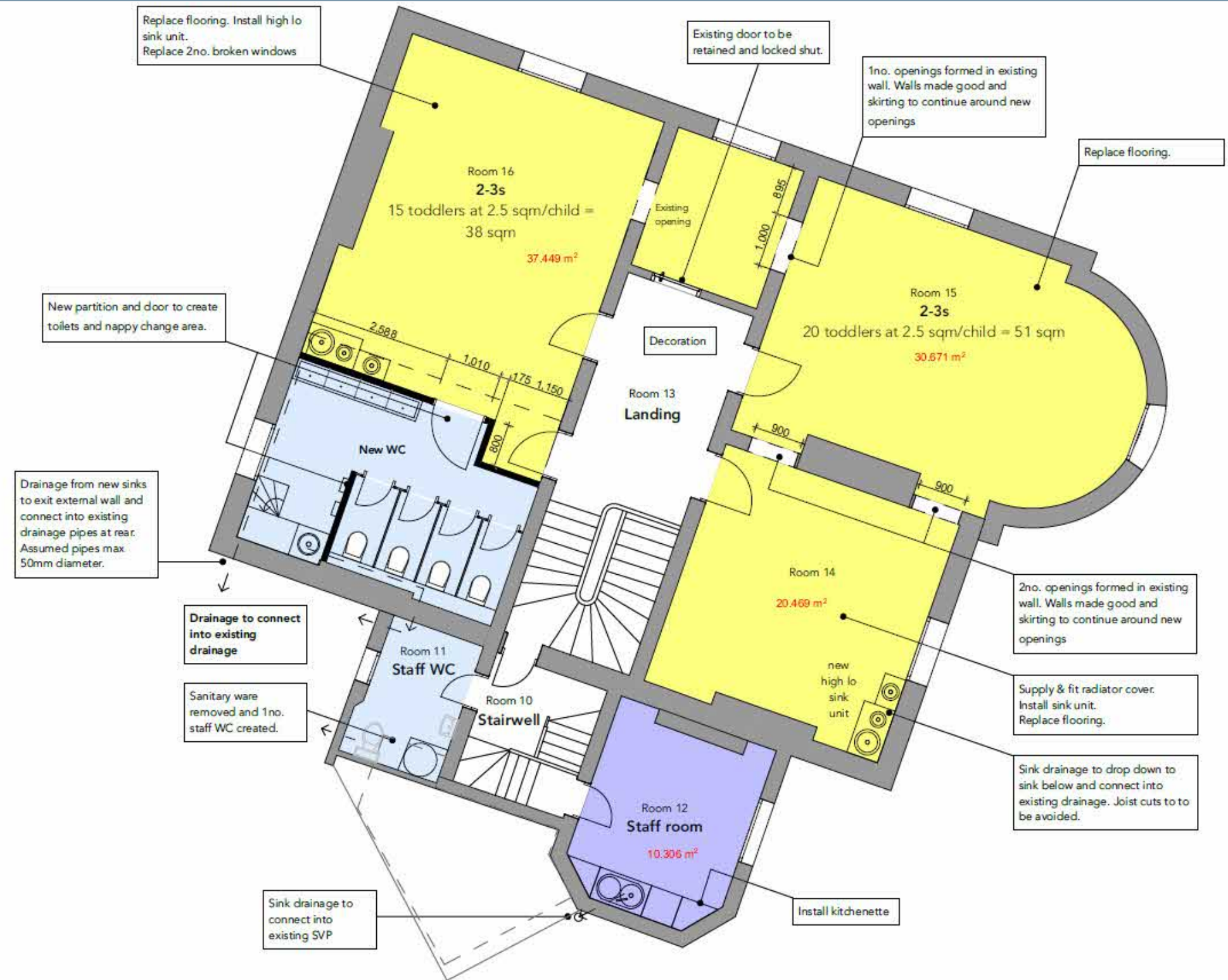
Installation of new partition for toilet facilities;

Installation of kitchenette;

Creation of 2 new opening either side of chimney breast; and

Creation of 1 new opening in existing wall.

Proposed First Floor

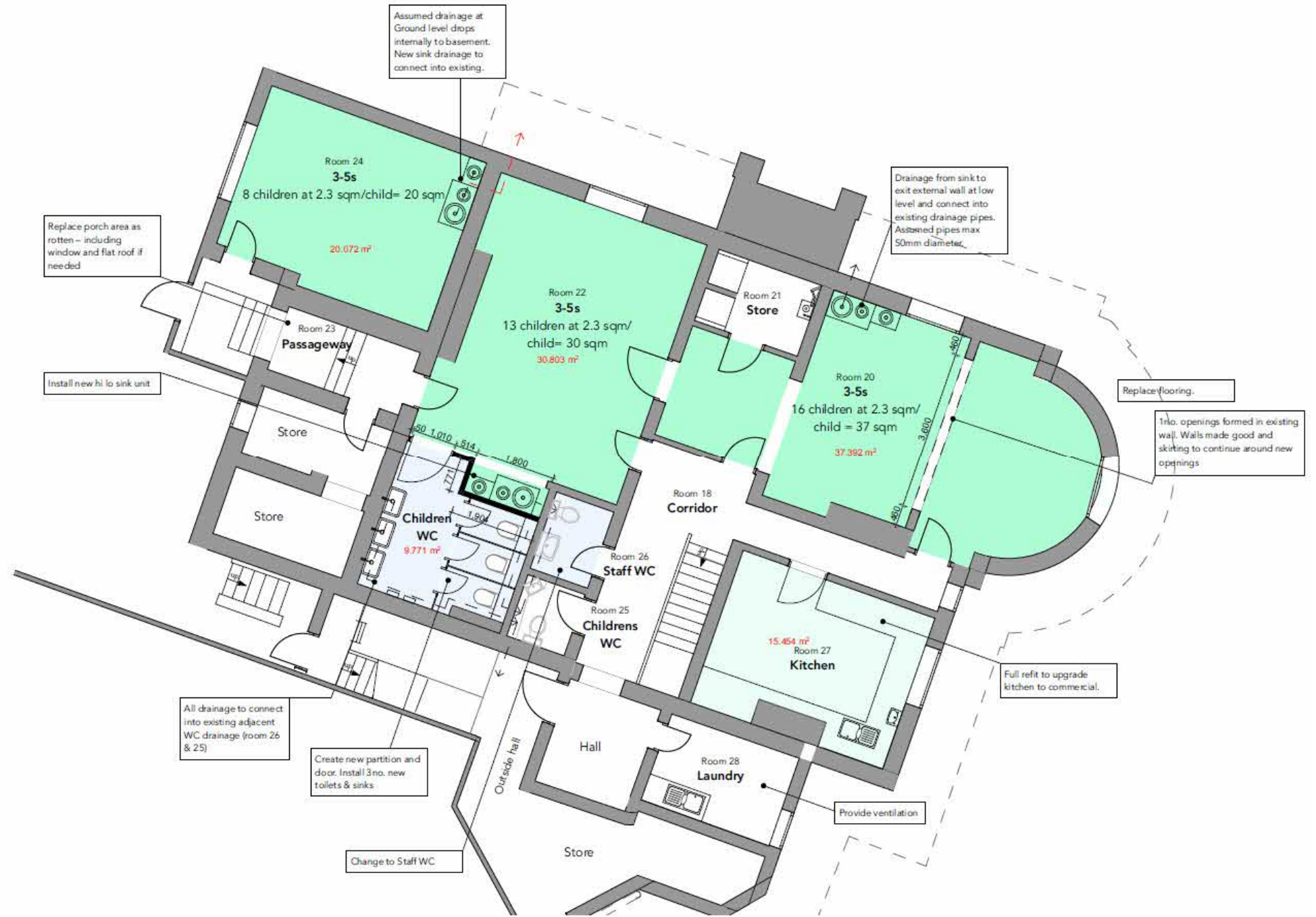


Source: Holloway Foo

Lower Ground Floor

- Replacement of rotten porch area;
- Creation of new toilet area;
- Full kitchen upgrade; and
- Creation of opening to north eastern room.

Proposed Lower Ground Floor



Source: Holloway Foo

5. Planning and Heritage Assessment

Impact on Sligo House (Grade II listed)

5.1. Following positive pre-application discussions, further justification for the group floor opening has been provided to show the existence of an historic arched opening. Concerns were raised over the use of resin-bonded gravel and so this has been entirely removed from the grass crescent and changed to grasscrete where the informal parking is located; this offers a suitable compromised position which will protect the grass. The unused door to the first floor hallway is to be simply locked shut rather than blocked up. These changes are designed to ensure that the application is uncontroversial and that no harm would result from the proposals.

Alterations to the Front of the Property

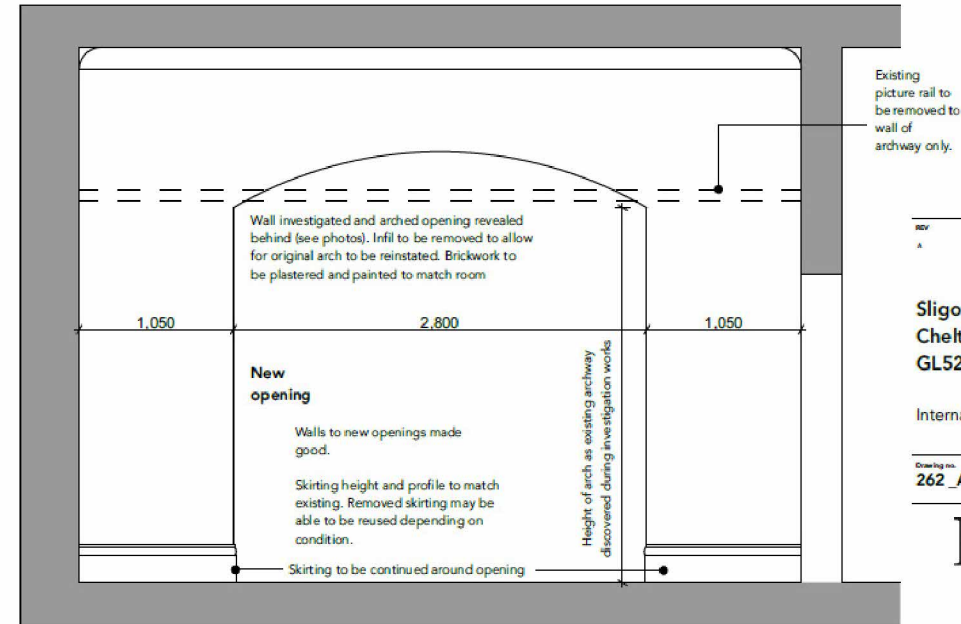
- 5.2. The proposals to the front of the property are proposed to enhance the safety and appearance of the nursery. At present, parking pressures are pushing cars onto the grassy areas which is wearing away the grass and leaving areas of mud. With no safety features or warnings immediately outside the entrance to the nursery, and with open bins and a dilapidated buggy store, there is scope for notable enhancement to the appearance alongside creating a much safer environment for young children and parents.
- 5.3. The proposed grasscrete parking area will replace a small section of worn garden and will ensure that the grassy area avoids being worn down by tires. Grasscrete surfaces have been favoured on other Heritage Potential projects involving forecourts to listed buildings and allow for a practical solution to maintaining greenery in areas used by vehicles.
- 5.4. A speed bump is proposed with soft signage informing drivers that the speed limit in the area is 5mph. This will vastly improve the safety of nursery users and ensure that cars slow when entering the forecourt. The impact is considered to be minimal.
- 5.5. The proposed pedestrian crossing and pedestrian area will be demarcated using white paint so as to ensure the minimum necessary to be visible to drivers but without being garish in the context of the building. The proposals allow for a clear route from the pavement to the front entrance and over to the newly established timber buggy store.
- 5.6. Overall, it is considered that the proposals will make a significant impact in terms of safety and order within the forecourt without having a negative impact on the listed building itself. The higher quality installations using traditional materials and the hiding of the bins are notable enhancements. No historic fabric would be affected.

Alterations to Ground Floor

- 5.7. The proposals to the ground floor are principally of redecoration. Two new toilets are proposed within the secondary/servants wing (south) of the property and the replacement modern rear extension (west) is proposed to be partitioned. Neither of these changes are considered to impact the significance of the building.
- 5.8. The proposals allow for a new opening to be created between the front and rear western rooms. Visibility is essential for the nursery and any lack of vision restricts how a space can be used, the number of staff required, and the number of children that can be accommodated. Whilst it is understood that the building cannot be completely opened up, one key area which has the potential for amalgamation can be found on the western side of the ground floor. The rear room is particularly small, and it has now been demonstrated through investigative works that the two spaces were historically connected via an arched opening.

5.9. The proposed opening has been designed to allow for visibility between the two spaces and follows the line of the historic opening. Importantly, the cornice would be retained. The opening would sit well below the existing picture rail and the skirting is proposed to be reused to follow around the nibs.

Proposed Opening at Ground Floor



ELEVATION 5: Internal elevation of room next door



Photos from room 4



Photos from room next door



Existing Archway revealed behind plaster

Source: Holloway Foo

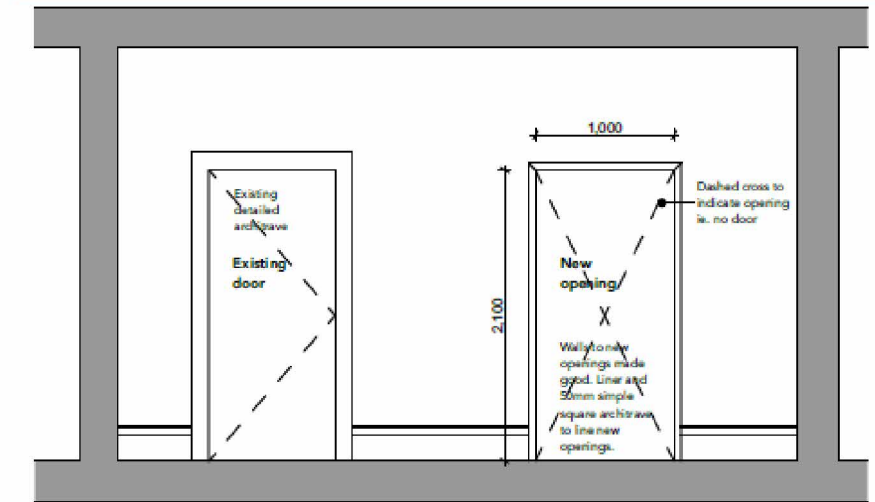
Alterations to First Floor

- 5.10. The proposals at first floor level seek to provide new toilet and nappy changing facilities in addition to enhancing the circulation and visibility through the rooms.
- 5.11. The room to the western side of the first floor is currently one large basic space with two doors from the hallway. Clearly, this room has been amalgamated from two rooms into one. The proposals seek to recreate a partition to divide this room once again. Although

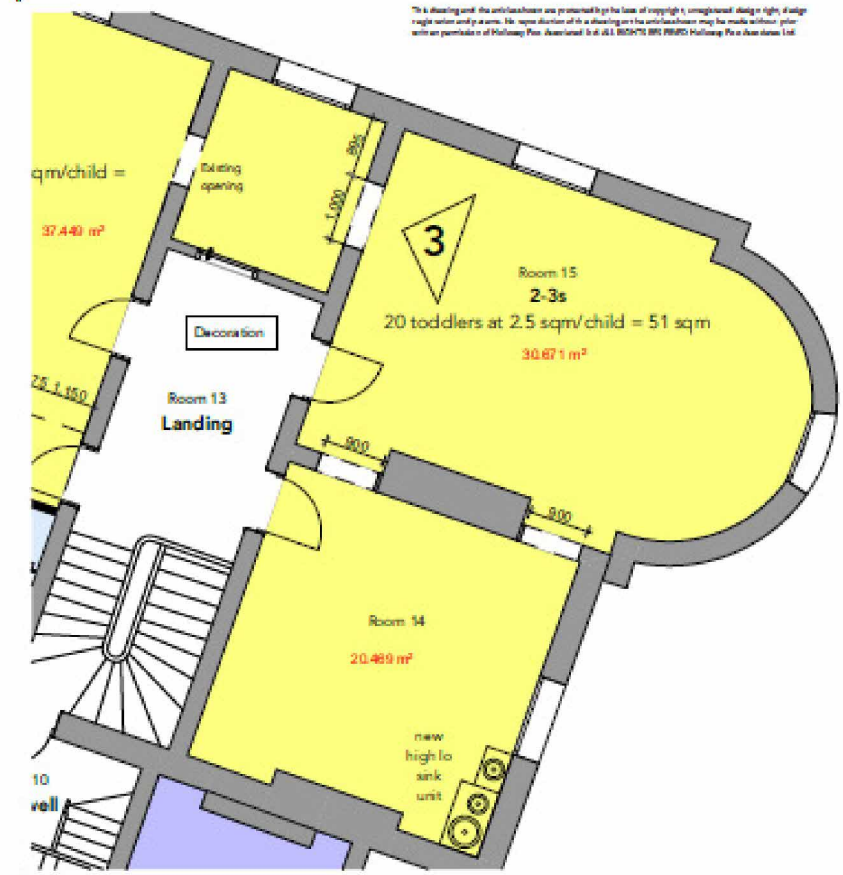
not exactly aligned with what may have been seen historically, the concept remains familiar and there would be no impact on historic fabric.

- 5.12. The door to the end of the landing is unused and is proposed to either be infilled or kept locked shut.
- 5.13. To the eastern side of the first floor, it is proposed to insert a new opening to create a link through the spaces on the northern side of the building.

Proposed Opening at First Floor (Elevation 3)



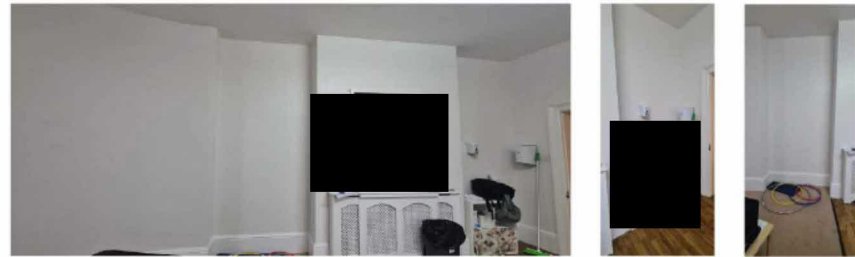
ELEVATION 3: Internal elevation of Room 14



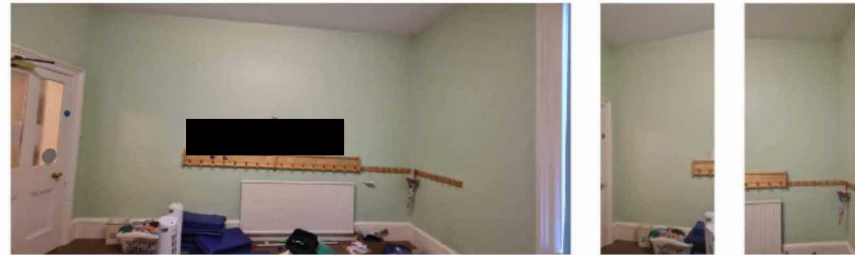
Source: Holloway Foo

5.14. The two rooms on the eastern side are divided between a wall with chimney breast located centrally. It is evident that one side of the chimney breast has historically been open (as indicated by the plasterboard construction). This is proposed to be opened up, along with the opposite side, to allow for a physical connection between the two spaces. As per the ground floor, the increased visibility allows for enhanced safety and efficiency for the nursery.

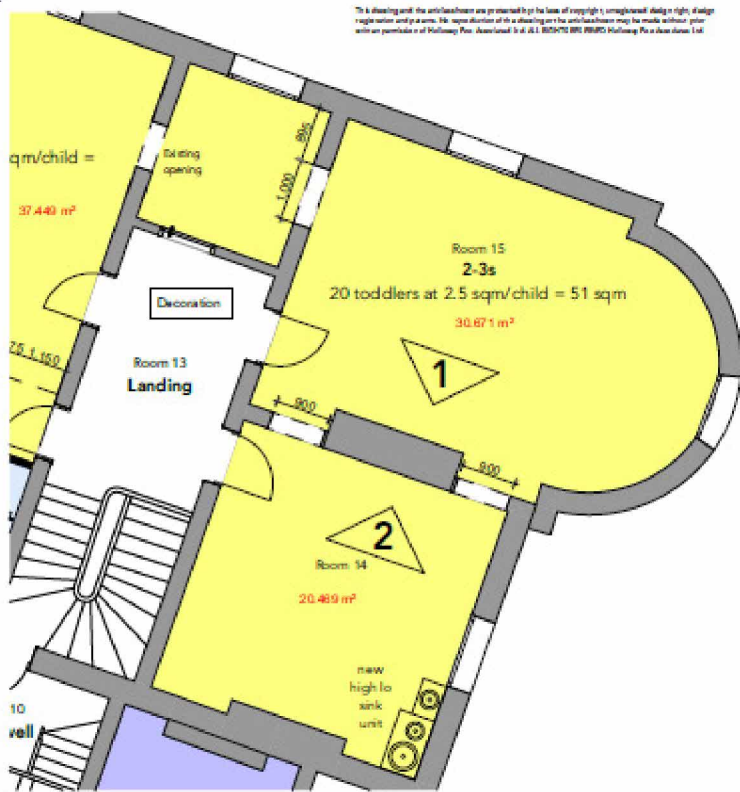
Proposed Opening at First Floor (Elevation 1 and 2)



Photos from room 14



Photos from room next door



Source: Holloway Foo

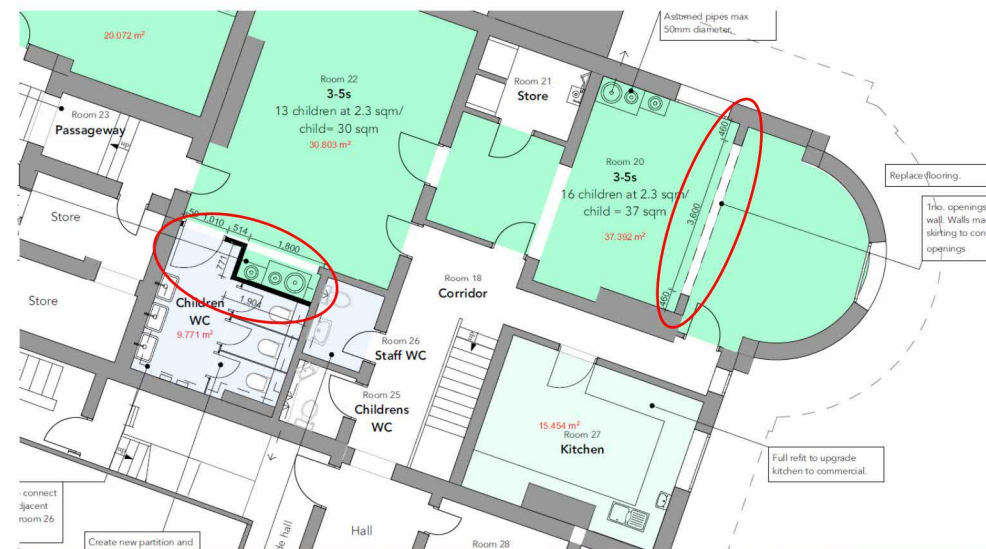
5.15. The staff room is proposed to be upgraded with the insertion of a kitchenette. This will be fitted away from the chimney breast and avoids the window.

Alterations to Lower Ground Floor

5.16. The proposals at lower ground floor level include the replacement of the rotten timber porch as well as the reinstatement of the single room to the north eastern corner of the floor. The existing partition crudely cuts across the chimney breast and its removal is considered to be a heritage benefit.

5.17. Other works include the creation of a new toilet area with a partition in the location of an historic wall. The existing kitchen will also be upgraded. Given the secondary status of this floor, the works are not considered to have an impact on significance.

Proposed Lower Ground Floor and Wall to be Removed (Below)



Source: Holloway Foo

Summary

5.18. It is evident that the proposals allow for some modern partitions and the division of spaces, however this is proposed alongside the removal of existing modern partitions and the reinstatement of historic proportions to a number of rooms. Where openings are required, these have been designed to minimise the impact on historic fabric and retain legibility of the original floor plan. This simply speaks to the changing requirements of educational uses and the need for enhanced visibility between spaces to ensure efficiency and safety of the important use.

5.19. The proposals have been assessed against the significance of the heritage asset and are considered to minimise the impact on the building. The enhancement of the efficiency of the use in addition to enhancing the safety of the property for young children are considered to be important public benefits to support the proposed change.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The proposals ensure that the property can continue to be used safely and viably as a nursery. The proposed works have been designed to be the minimum necessary to achieve the proposed benefits and, where possible reverse previously harmful works.
- 6.2. For the above reasons, the works also considered to be compliant with local and national policy and guidance. Positive revisions have been made following pre-application discussions and, as a result, no harm is concluded. Paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF need not be engaged.