

ARDEE CASTLE
DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

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for
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope & Purpose

Part-VIII planning permission (Ref 22229) exists for a programme of refurbishment, alteration and extension to Ardee Castle. Ministerial Consent for the development has been granted, subject to amendments to the materiality and layout of the proposed new-build element. This Design, Access & Heritage Statement has been prepared to detail the full scope of the project inclusive of these amendments to the currently consented scheme.

The proposed works to the castle complex include the removal of the rear-return to the Judges Chambers (a two-storey terrace house to the immediate south of the Tower House) and the construction of a new-build annex containing a stair, passenger lift and sanitary facilities. The Tower House will be lightly refurbished, to include the reversion of some late C20 amendments. Please refer to Section 5 of this document for the full scope and extent of the proposed works.

This Design, Access & Heritage Statement also provides information on the significance of the Castle, its current condition, the legislation and best-practice guidance used to inform the proposals.



Fig 1.1 – Ardee Castle from the north-west

In addition to this Design, Access & Heritage Statement, the documents to support the Part-VIII planning application comprise:

- Architectural Drawings prepared by Alastair Coey Architects
- Heritage & Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Alastair Coey Architects
- Archaeological assessment prepared by Archaeology & Built Heritage

1.2 Site Location

Ardee Castle is located on the east side of Castle Street in Ardee, some 150m north of the River Dee. The castle complex comprises the medieval Tower-House which sits forward of the predominant building-line of Castle Street, the 'Bridewell' to its immediate east – a mid 19th century addition associated with the latter use of the Tower-House as a court, and the 'Judges' Chambers' - a two-storey two-bay house built against the Tower-House to its immediate south. The walled courtyard between the Tower House and Bridewell has been partly filled with a late twentieth century single-storey extension known as the 'Buttery' which fulfilled a role as a cafe.

For the purposes of this report 'Ardee Castle' and 'castle' refer to the complex of buildings – Tower House, Bridewell, Judges' Chambers, Buttery Café and the immediate curtilage.



Fig 1.2 – Location of Ardee Castle in Ardee

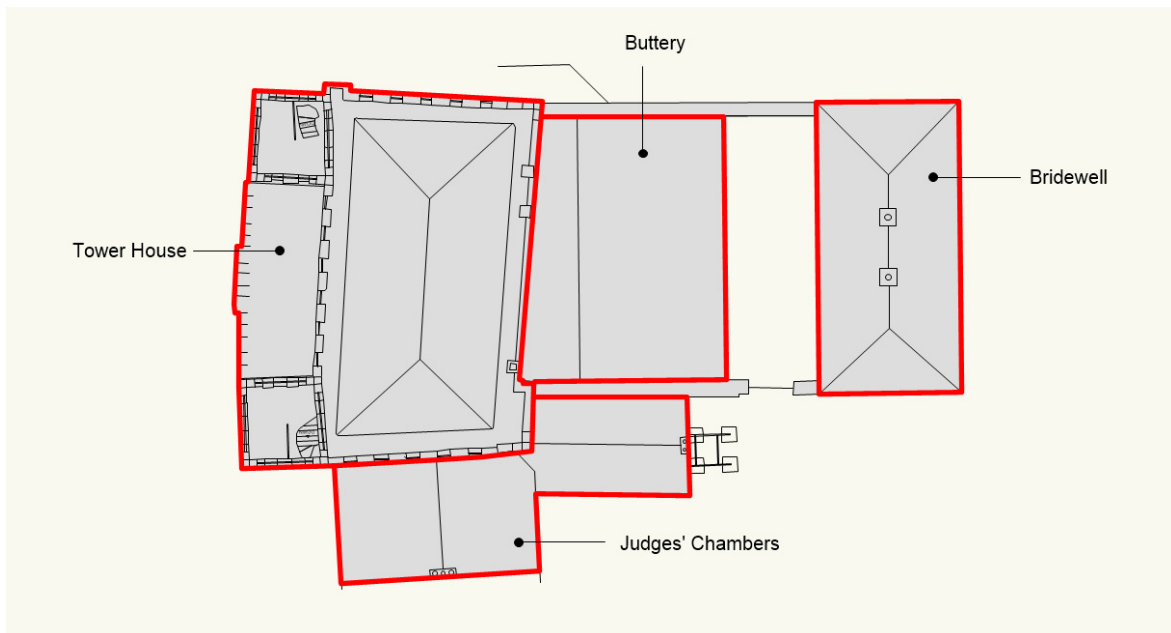


Fig 1.3 – Structures in the Castle complex



Fig 1.4 – The Judges' Chambers



Fig 1.5 – The Bridewell with Buttery in foreground



Fig 1.6 – The Courtroom



Fig 1.7 – The Grand Jury Room



Fig 1.8 – The Buttery Café



Fig 1.9 – The Buttery Café

1.3 Historical Context

Please refer Archaeological Assessment prepared by Archaeology & Built Heritage.

1.4 Recent History

Ardee Castle was taken into the possession of the Ardee Corporation in 1703, and thereafter saw use as both a Bridewell and a meeting place. Purchase by the Grand Jury for County Louth followed in 1805, which saw the castle complex adopt the role of goal/court-house that continued into the mid 2000's. In 2000's the Court Service vacated the complex. Ownership of and operational responsibility for the complex passed to Louth County Council where both currently reside.

Efforts, and expenditures, between 1997 and 2002 saw an attempt to open the complex to visitors based mainly on the 'Buttery' café developed by a Community Development Group, but fire-safety

concerns remained about providing access to the Tower House. Financial viability of the café was not proven and it did not see sustained use.

Since the vacation of the Court Service there has therefore been no general access to the complex and it has provided limited utility, generated no income nor delighted many visitors with its medieval legacy and rich history. Sporadic one-off uses for musical and other cultural events appear to have been facilitated, but rarely.

1.5 Planning Background (post 2005)

1.5.1 Planning Reference – 061415

This Part-VIII application, for the “*construction of new access, external fire escape, residential apartment and goods lift,*” was lodged in October 2006 and withdrawn in September 2007.

1.5.2 Planning Reference – 17137

Part-VIII Planning was granted in July 2017 to carry out a programme of reconfiguration and extension, to designs drawn up by Fingal County Council’s Architects’ Department. These proposed works comprised reconfiguration of the Judges’ Chambers and the construction of a spiral staircase to provide access to the upper floors of the Tower House.

1.5.3 Ministerial Consent Reference – C000926

Ministerial consent was granted on the 30th May 2019 to carry out further survey and investigative works.

1.5.4 Planning Reference – 22229

Planning permission was granted in June 2022 for proposals largely as described in this document, namely the removal of the rear-return to the Judge’s Chambers and the construction of a new-build extension containing a lift and stair, with additional sanitary facilities.

This application differs only from that consented scheme in the materiality of the extension’s elevations and minor changes to the floor layouts of the extension.

1.5.5 Ministerial Consent Reference – C000926

Ministerial consent was extended, on the 19th December 2023, to include the works described in this document.

1.6 Statutory Protections

Ardee Castle is a Protected Structure (ref Lhs 017-073) and is also noted in the Sites & Monuments Record under reference LH017-101018. The Town-house “judge chambers” is also a protected structure (under the same reference Lhs017-073/NIAH13823005).

The Tower House and Bridewell appear in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) under reference 13823004. The Judge’s Chambers appear in the NIAH under reference 13823005.

The site is included in the Zone of Archaeological Potential for medieval Ardee under the general designation LH017-101.

The application site is within the Ardee Architectural Conservation Area as designated in the Louth County Council Development Plan 2021-2027

2 EXISTING CONDITION

2.1 Existing Elevations



Fig 2.1 – Existing West Elevation

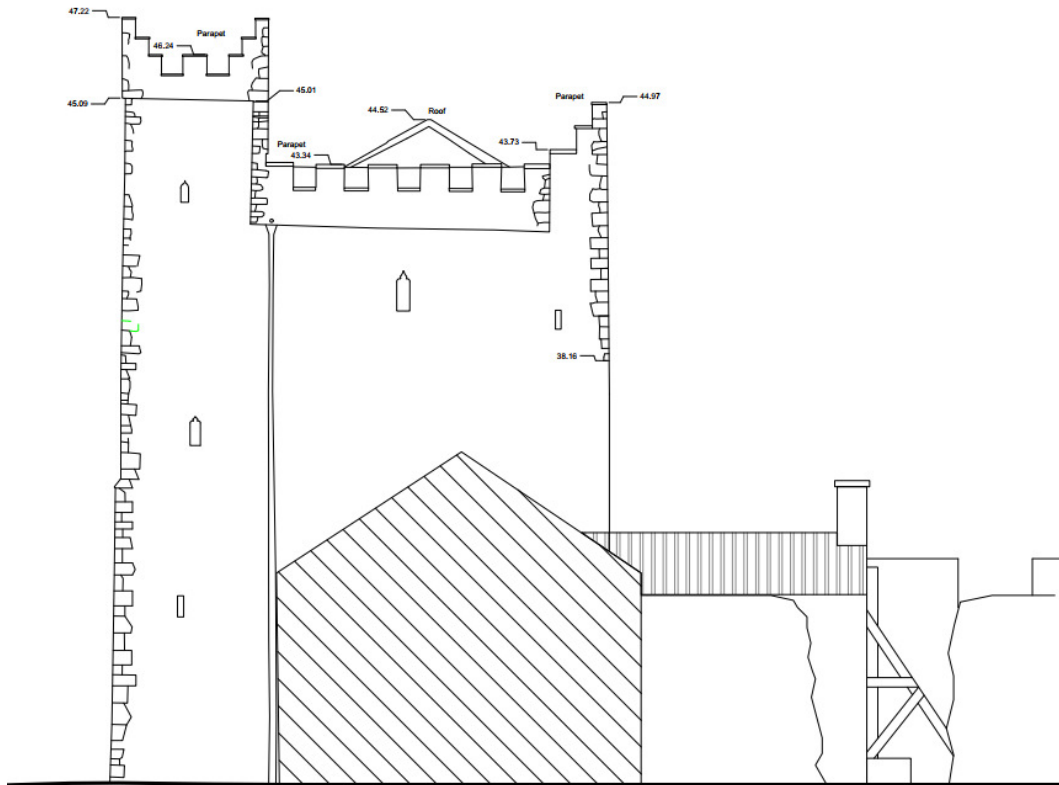


Fig 2.2 – Existing South Elevation

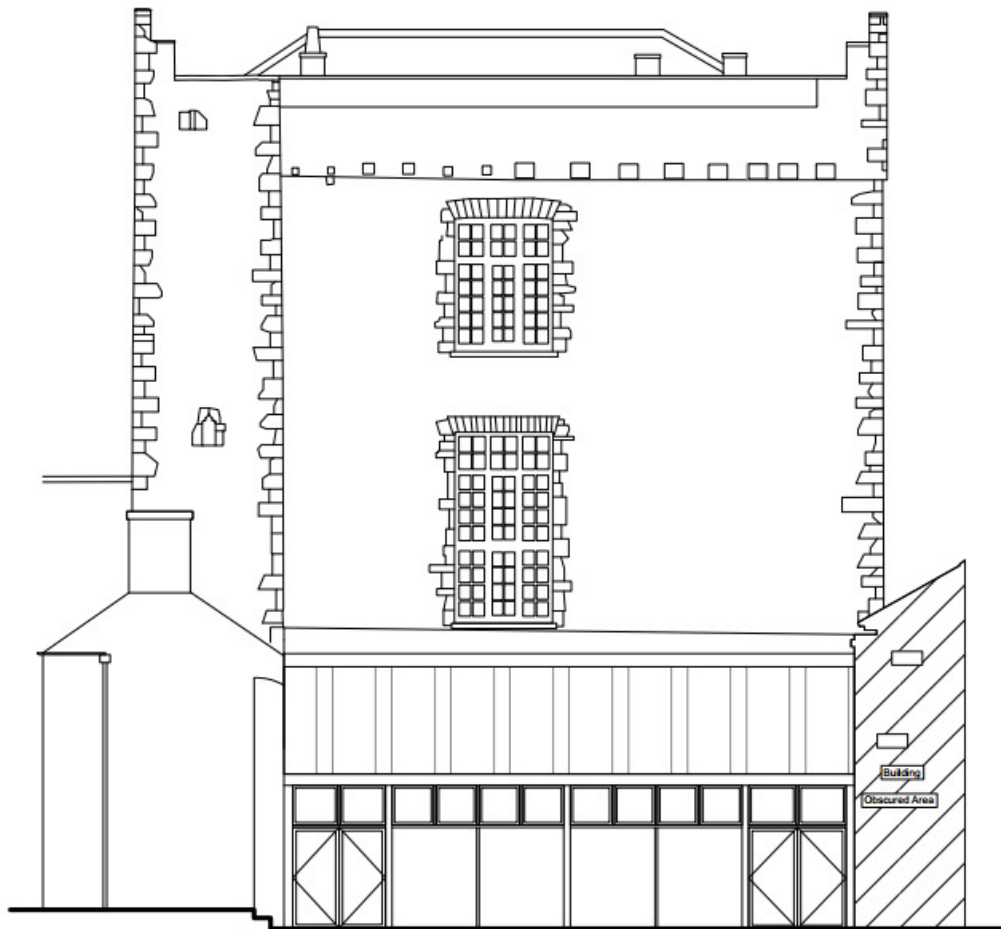


Fig 2.3 – Existing East Elevation

2.2 Existing Plans

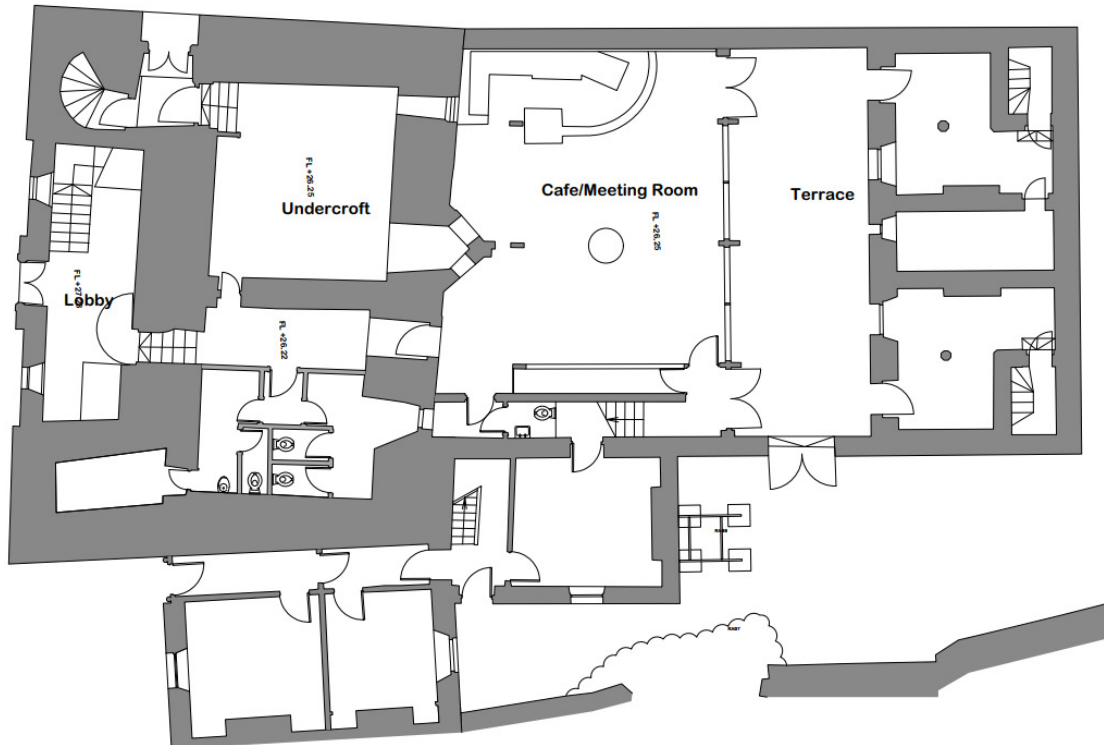


Fig 2.4 – Existing Ground Floor Plan

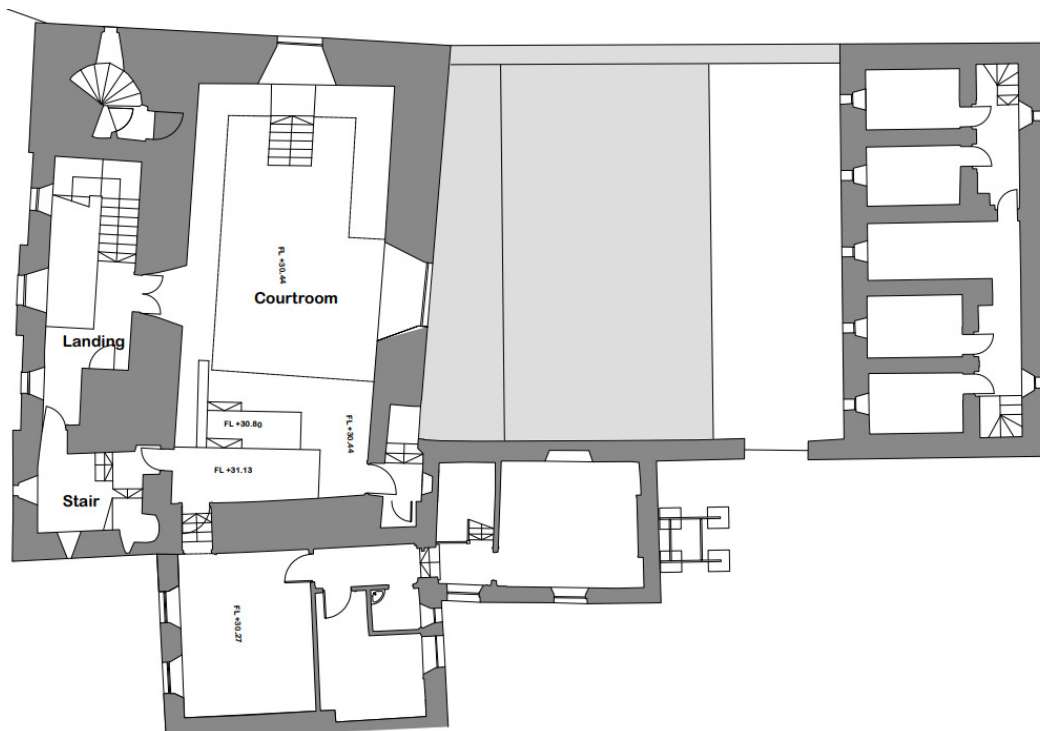


Fig 2.5 – Existing First Floor Plan

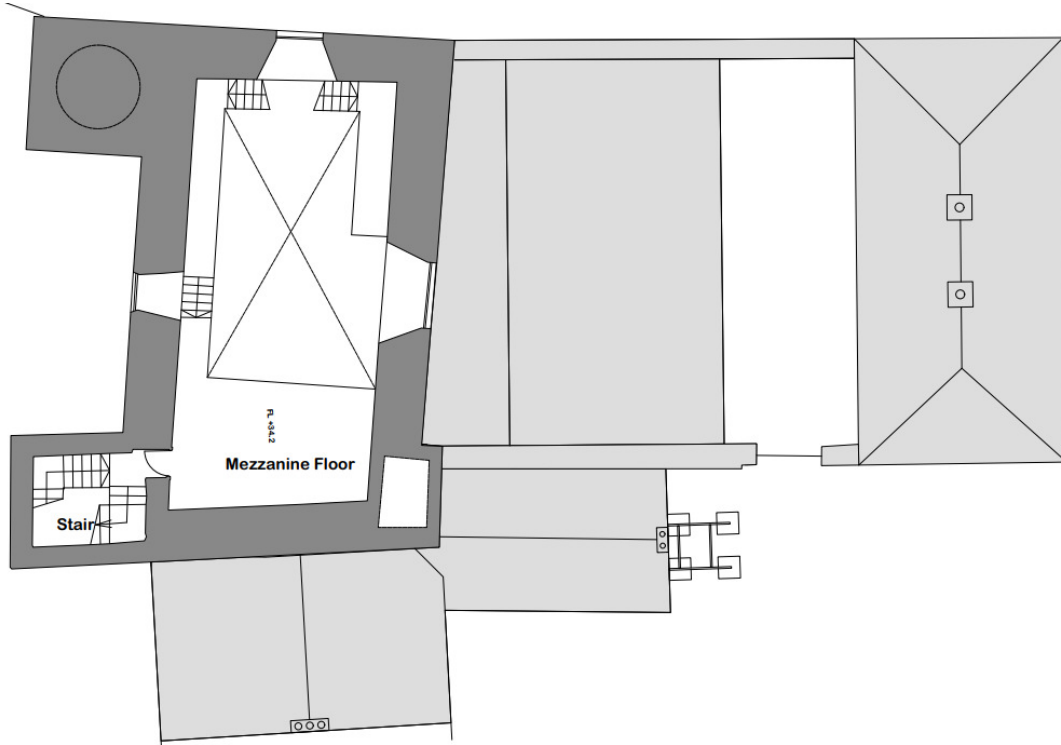


Fig 2.6 – Existing Second Floor Plan

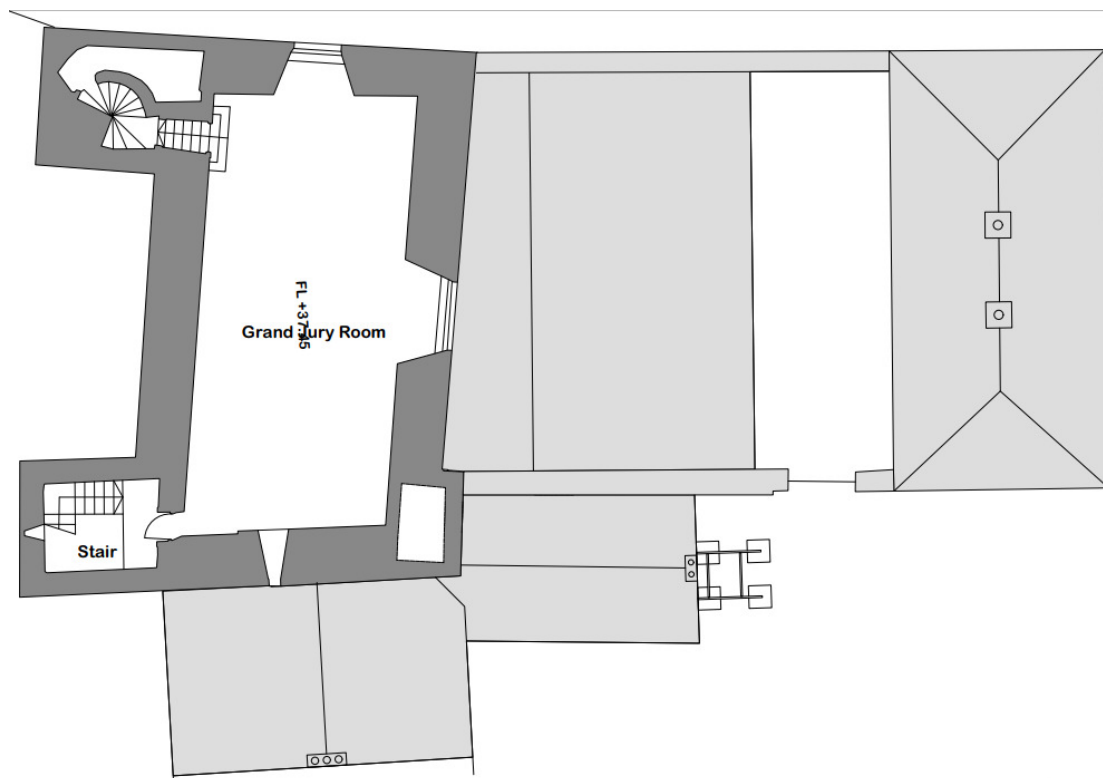


Fig 2.7 – Existing Third Floor Plan

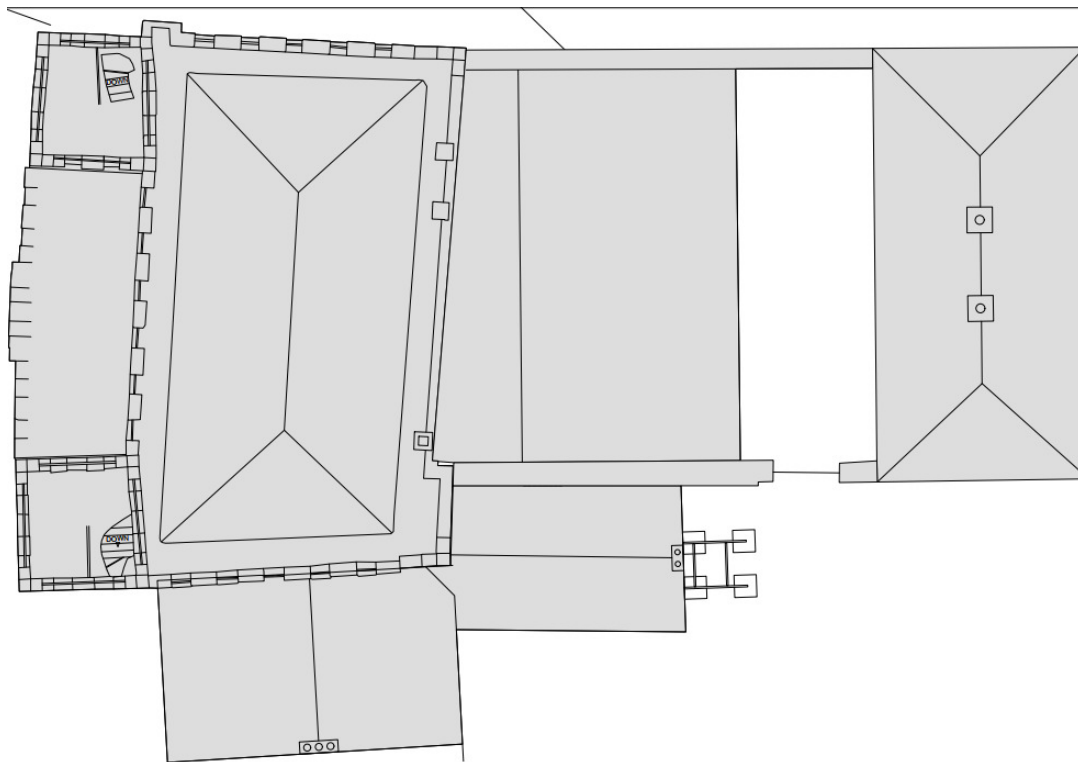


Fig 2.8 – Existing Roof Plan

2.3 Tower House

Externally and internally the Tower House is in poor condition with the following being notable observations in respect of the proposed works:

- Universal access provisions within the Tower House are extremely limited. There is a platform lift providing access to the Courtroom but other spaces are not universally accessible. There are no accessible WC facilities.
- Lack of maintenance is apparent throughout the full extent.
- Damp and mould problems associated with lack of consistent heating and ventilation are apparent throughout the full extent.
- There are recurring vermin problems with a significant pigeon infestation.

2.3.1 Judges' Chambers.

Externally and internally the Judges' Chambers is in poor condition with the following being notable observations in respect of the proposed works:

- There are no universal access provisions.
- The original roof covering has been replaced in plastic-coated profiled steel decking.
- Extensive dry-rot problems have been addressed but with the significant loss of original fabric.
- The rear-return is structurally unstable and has been braced to prevent collapse.
- Walling that separates the Judge's Chambers from the neighbouring property has collapsed.



Fig 2.9 – Remedial buttress to the Judges' Chambers



Fig 2.10 – Replacement roofing to the Judges' Chambers



Fig 2.11 – Significant loss of internal joinery-work at the Judges' Chambers.

2.3.2 Bridewell

Externally and internally the Bridewell is in reasonable condition with the following being notable observations in respect of the proposed works:

- There are no universal access provisions within the Bridewell. The spatial constraints posed by the building make this a situation that could not be remedied without extensive and unreasonable loss of original fabric.

2.3.3 Buttery Cafe

Externally and internally the 'Buttery' cafe is in reasonable condition with the following being notable observations in respect of the proposed works:

- Lack of maintenance to rainwater gutters and outlets has caused damage to the glu-lam structure of the extension. At the time of writing the damage has been assessed as being non-structural.

3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In line with the guidance set out in BS-7913:2013 '*Guide to the conservation of historic buildings*' the cultural significance of Ardee Castle can be codified into four main aspects as set out below:

Evidential value

Little is known about the early history of Ardee Castle, with no depictions of it before 1758. Borough records of Ardee are unavailable before 1661. The physical remains of the castle are therefore an important source of evidence about its evolution, and indeed about the evolution of Ardee as a town. In absence of written records these evidential records are of particular significance.

Historic Value

Ardee Castle is a cultural asset of immense historical importance. It provides a tangible link to the very earliest development of the town of Ardee. Saving the presence of the similarly significant Hatch's Castle it is a very rare surviving example of a large medieval Tower House in Ireland. The castle has enjoyed a varied history, including its later use as a courthouse. It provides a significant resource for interpreting and connecting to the experiences of past communities by providing a shared experience of a place. The associations that the castle has with notable historic persons, as described in the Archaeological Assessment, give its historical value particular resonance. The degree to which the castle has undergone changes through its history – substantial in the case of its adaptation for the Grand Jury, provide a direct and authentic record of the responses of past communities to changing circumstances and needs.

Aesthetic Value

Ardee Castle is a striking and defining presence in Ardee, contributing to the character and identity of the place. It provides a unique reference point in the town, with its scale, massing and materiality lifting it above the surrounding context.

Communal Value

Ardee Castle's communal value, whereby it occupies a position of importance in people's collective experience or memory, derives principally from its historic and aesthetic values. It does however have additional significance through its latter role as a courthouse. Whilst these associations may not always be affirmative, they do exist and are an important part of the collective memory.

3.1 Threats to Significance

The following threats to the continuing significance of Ardee Castle have been identified:

Continuing Redundancy & Failure to identify a Sustainable Future

The Castle complex has been vacant for some considerable time and is beginning to show signs of significant distress. This is evidenced by the significant work necessary to stabilise the Judge's Chambers, the decay to the glu-lam structure of the Buttery café extension, and the deterioration of the modern interventions to the Tower House.

Continued lack of use of the complex will inevitably lead to further decay. This could conceivably include significant damage to the roof structures of all buildings due to un-noticed and un-treated dry-rot outbreaks, loss of the floor to the Grand Jury Room for similar reasons.

With no use attached to the complex, no security system in place and low observability into the buildings and spaces, vandalism and arson are significant and ongoing threats.

The continued redundancy of the building is additionally a threat in terms of the communal will to pursue a new use. The failure of previous schemes to deliver universal access, and a sustained use, acts to diminish public interest in the building.

Incremental repairs, alterations and additions.

Ad-hoc work to the complex to address deterioration or to facilitate meanwhile use could result in loss of original fabric or obscure/confuse the historical and evidential record.

Loss of original fabric

The lack of use (due to accessibility and means of escape issues) invites deterioration/decay, vandalism and can lead to inappropriate repairs and alterations carried out in an ad-hoc fashion. These can lead to the loss of original fabric, which is a threat to the significance of the complex.

4 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Development Approach

The development approach that has been applied has been to:

- a) Identify key planning policies that are applicable.
- b) Define the Conservation Principles that will be applied.
- c) Understand and respond to the archaeological considerations.
- d) Identify the outcomes that are to be achieved.
- e) Consult with relevant statutory bodies.

4.2 Regional and National Policy Framework

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 contains applicable planning policies as below:

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC1
<p>To protect and enhance archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and/or the Register of Historic Monuments and seek their preservation (i.e. presumption in favour of preservation in situ or in exceptional cases, at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process and having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the principles as set out in the 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999)</p>
Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC2
<p>To protect the built heritage assets of the county and ensure they are managed and preserved in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal and sustainable development.</p>
Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC3
<p>To protect known and unknown archaeological areas, sites, monuments, structures and objects, having regard to the advice of the National Monuments Services of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>
Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC4
<p>To promote awareness and knowledge of the archaeological resources of the County and support initiatives where appropriate that provide better access to the historic built environment.</p>
Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC20
<p>To ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a protected structure and / or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, is compatible with the special character and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, density, layout, and materials of the protected structure.</p>
Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC21
<p>The form and structural integrity of the protected structure and its setting shall be retained and the relationship between the protected structure, its curtilage and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, designed views or vistas from or to the structure shall be protected.</p>

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC22

To prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds of a protected structure. Any proposed development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds must demonstrate that it is part of an overall strategy for the future conservation of the entire complex including the structures, demesne and/or attendant grounds.

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC23

To require that all planning applications relating to protected structures contain the appropriate documentation as described in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) or any subsequent guidelines, to enable a proper assessment of the proposed works and their impact on the structure or area

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC24

To require the retention of original features such as windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, and other significant features which contribute to the character of protected structures and encourage the reinstatement of appropriately detailed features which have been lost, to restore the character of protected structures as part of development proposals

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC25

To promote best conservation practice and the use of skilled specialist practitioners in the conservation of and for any works to protected structures.

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC26

To encourage the retention, sympathetic reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their settings where appropriate and where the proposal is compatible with their character and significance. In certain cases, development management guidelines may be relaxed in order to secure the conservation of the protected structure and architectural features of special interest.

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC27

To permit the demolition or significant modification of a protected structure, only in exceptional circumstances.

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC28

To ensure the protection of architectural features of special interest as part of any proposed re-development where there is conflict with other development plan requirements such as open space, car parking etc.

Built Heritage & Culture Policy Objective BHC31

To require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout, and materials. All development proposals shall have regard to the Architectural Conservation Area objectives in Appendix 11, Volume 3 and objectives contained in applicable Character Appraisals where available.

In the National Planning Framework, a number of objectives are stated which have particular relevance to the proposals:

National Policy Objective 6

Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.

National Policy Objective 14

Protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish rural landscape that make Ireland's rural areas authentic and attractive as places to live, work and visit. The Action Plan for Rural Development will support this objective up to 2020; thereafter a review of the Action Plan will be undertaken to ensure continued alignment and consistency with the National Policy Objectives of this Framework.

National Policy Objective 16

Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.

National Policy Objective 17

Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations

National Policy Objective 18a

To support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.

National Policy Objective 60

Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

4.3 International Policy Framework

A substantial body of international policy exists to guide the approach to be taken to the conservation of Ardee Castle and the proposals to make changes to the complex:

**International Charter for the Conservation of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter)
ICOMOS, 1966**

A landmark Charter providing the international framework of standards for conservation of historic buildings, defining its guiding principles. Emphasis on importance of setting, respect for original fabric, documentation of intervention, and the maintenance of historic buildings for a socially useful purpose.

**Convention of the Protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention)
Council of Europe, 1985**

Promotes an integrated approach and common policy for the conservation and enhancement of architectural heritage, which underpins the current statutory and policy framework relating to built heritage.

**Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter)
Australia ICOMOS, 1981**

A major charter developing the principles of the Venice Charter for use in an Australian context, but widely adopted as the benchmark of good practice in the conservation of places of cultural and heritage significance. It defines items such as place, fabric, conservation, maintenance, reconstruction, adaptation and compatible use. It also introduces the concept of cultural significance, the 'aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present and future

generations', requiring that this be defined for each place in the form of a Conservation Plan, which will be used to guide interventions.

Resolution on the Conservation of Smaller Historic Towns

ICOMOS, 1975

Considers potential threats to smaller historic towns such as lack of economic activity, outward movement of population, and measures to adapt to modern activities. Methods to counteract these threats are considered.

International Charter on Cultural Tourism

ICOMOS, 1976

Considers the positive and negative aspects of cultural tourist activities, whose object is the discovery of historic monuments and sites, or architectural heritage. It calls for integration of cultural assets into the social and economic objectives which are part of the planning process.

4.4 Conservation Principles

Seven key conservation principles have been identified and codified to inform and direct an approach to development of the castle complex:

Conservation Policy 1 – Keeping the Castle in Use

P1.01 While a degree of compromise will be required in adapting the complex to allow it to recapture a role of utility and availability, and to address the significant accessibility challenges present, it is important that the special interest of the complex is not unnecessarily affected. Where changes and additions are proposed / approved, every effort should be made to minimise change to, and loss of, significant fabric and the special interest of the structures should not be compromised

Conservation Policy 2 – Researching and Analysing

- P2.01** Before formulating proposals for works to a protected structures, the developer should research its historical development and understand thoroughly the present condition of the structure.
- P2.02** The research should include an analysis of the physical fabric of the site, and any available documentary or other evidence. The work should only be undertaken by those with the appropriate knowledge and skill. The results of the research should be analysed in order to understand the reasons for any decay and to inform future proposals.
- P2.03** The resulting Statement of Significance will be accepted as the basis for all future planning and work related to Ardee Castle.
- P2.04** There should be a presumption in favour of retaining historic fabric where possible to ensure that significance is not adversely affected. Impact assessment methodology will be used to mitigate adverse impacts where some reduction of significance is necessary to achieve the overall objectives of the works.

Conservation Policy 3 – Using Expert Conservation Advice

- P3.01** Building conservation is a specialised discipline and the method of work needs to be specified by experts with a knowledge and experience of historic buildings.
- P3.02** Appropriately qualified, experienced and accredited conservation advisors should be engaged for the consideration and execution of all proposals dealing with the consolidation, repair, maintenance of, and in consideration of interventions to, the site.

- P3.03** All personnel with responsibility for undertaking capital works to the site should be appropriately trained and experienced.
- P3.04** Conservation guidance will be included in all contracts and tenders. Appropriately experienced personnel should be engaged in the repair and maintenance of the site, and, where necessary, training should be provided.
- P3.05** The basis of all repair should be an understanding of the element to be repaired, its condition and its contribution to the greater significance of the whole. All personnel should be required to demonstrate a sound understanding of the potential risks of any proposed repair techniques, through detailed written methodology, summarising the work to be carried out, processes and materials.

Conservation Policy 4 – Promoting Minimum Intervention

- P4.01** The principle of promoting minimum intervention is best summed up by the maxim 'do as much as necessary and as little as possible'.
- P4.02** Historic structures not subject to statutory protection will only be removed or substantially altered on the basis of a supporting options appraisal.

Conservation Policy 5 – Protecting the Special Interest

- P5.01** The blanket application of standard solutions to historic buildings is not appropriate, nor can old buildings be expected to perform in the same way as modern buildings in terms of structural strength, durability of materials or thermal insulation.
- P5.02** In order to appreciate the integrity of a structure, it is important to respect the contribution of different stages of its historical development. Concentration on whether or not various parts of a building are 'original' can obscure the fact that later alterations and additions may also contribute to the special interest of the structure.
- P5.03** Later additions that are unsympathetic and do not contribute to the special interest of the protected structures should, wherever possible, be removed.
- P5.04** Later buildings in the context of the protected structures that are unsympathetic and do not contribute to the special interest of the protected structures should, wherever possible, be removed.
- P5.05** Unsympathetic or inappropriate modifications to the protected structures should, wherever possible, be reversed.
- P5.06** Principal sightlines to the historic structures should be maintained to preserve their dominance.

Conservation Policy 6 – Repair Rather than Replace

- P6.01** It should be the aim of good conservation practice to preserve the authentic fabric which contributes to the special interest of the structure.
- P6.02** Materials selected for repair should be of appropriate conservation standards, selected on the basis of avoiding possible damage to the site, or negatively impacting its appearance or special interest.

Conservation Policy 6 – Interventions and Managing Change

- P7.01** Proposals should be subject to Impact Assessment prepared by an experienced qualified professional including justification, assessment of heritage impact and proposals for mitigating and minimising adverse impact. Where the impact on significances is assessed as high, alternative solutions should be sought.
- P7.02** The principle of reversibility should be applied in all interventions in accordance with conservation best practice and should be capable of being altered or removed without lasting impact on the significance of the site.

P7.03 All replacement fabric should be clearly distinguished from old

4.5 Archaeological Considerations

Please refer to Archaeological Assessment prepared by Archaeology & Built Heritage.

4.6 Design Outcomes

4.6.1 Overarching Goal.

Efforts to exploit the opportunities for Ardee Castle to fulfil its potential as a resource for the local community and as a historic attraction for domestic/international visitors have not yet met with success.

This continued condition of being unavailable for sustained use and appreciation runs counter to **Conservation Policy 1** as noted above. As noted in Section 2.3 '**Threats to Significance**', deterioration of the structures is invited and accelerated by the lack of occupation and maintenance, and the semi-derelict nature invites anti-social behaviour including arson.

The castle complex is a critically 'at-risk' historic asset.

The overarching goal is to make changes to the physical configuration and resources of the Castle complex such that it can be brought into viable use. This will address its 'at-risk' status and create the conditions necessary for it to contribute to the town of Ardee and wider region.

4.6.2 Preserving the Significance of the Castle

This scheme has the goal of both preserving the significance of the castle as described in Section 2.2, addressing the Threats to Significance as described in Section 2.3, and not in itself constituting a threat to the significance of the castle.

4.6.3 Enhancing accessibility.

Previous schemes of refurbishment and reconfiguration, both realised and unrealised, have not successfully addressed the issue of making the castle complex an accessible one. These proposals are therefore based on achieving an outcome where:

- a) All significant areas of the Tower House, including the existing 'Buttery' café area and the Judges' Chambers, will be fully accessible to disabled visitors.
- b) Disabled visitors to the castle will be provided with facilities that fully meet their needs, preserve their dignity and support their appreciation and enjoyment of the castle.

4.6.4 Providing compliance with Building Control Regulations

Previous unrealised schemes of refurbishment and reconfiguration have not successfully demonstrated compliance with Building Control regulations. These proposals are therefore based on achieving an outcome where:

- a) Regulations with respect to Means of Escape are either complied with or compliance by other means is demonstrated. Use of the whole complex, subject to statutory limitations, will be possible.

4.6.5 Preserving the streetscape

The existing Judges' Chambers, although in a parlous state of repair, makes a positive and cohesive contribution to the streetscape on Castle Street. The proposals are based on an outcome where this contribution by the Judges' Chambers is preserved and enhanced. This is consistent with **Conservation Policy 5** and **Conservation Policy 6**.

4.6.6 Providing a high-quality new-build extension

Achieving the design outcomes of providing full accessibility and compliance with the Means of Escape provisions in the Building Regulations requires significant new vertical circulation routes to be added to the castle complex.

In line with **Conservation Policy 4** as noted above, providing this vertical circulation externally to the Tower House is necessary to retain the maximum amount of historic fabric. Providing an external new-build element is also consistent with **Conservation Policy 7**, as it will be clearly distinguishable from the old and a reversible addition to the complex.

The proposals are based on achieving an outcome where this necessary addition to the castle complex is to a high standard of both design and detail.

4.6.7 Enhancing the visitor experience of the Tower House

The Tower House, as can be seen in Appendix A, has undergone significant changes at various points in time, the most significant of these (from a modern perspective) being the conversion for use by the Grand Jury. Preserving the aspects of that use are consistent with **Conservation Policy 5**, which recognises that later additions and alterations can be of significance and worth preserving.

Conservation Policy 5 also states that opportunities to reverse later and unsympathetic interventions should be taken where these interventions have no significance. In that context the following steps will be taken.

- The new-build extension will contain sufficient WCs (as defined by BS 6465-1) to serve the whole castle complex. This will provide scope at a future date to remove the WCs provided in the basement of the Tower House, these being retained in the medium-term to provide the greatest flexibility in bringing the castle complex back into permanent use.
- The new-build extension will contain sufficient plant-room space such that it can service the whole castle-complex, and there not be the immediate or subsequent need to create additional plant-room space within the Tower House (noting that current ESB incoming mains switchgear is located in the undercroft).

5 THE PROPOSALS

5.1 Basis of Application

Part-VIII Planning Permission is sought on the basis that:

“Louth County Council hereby gives notice of its intention to carry out refurbishment and extension works to Ardee Castle, a Protected Structure comprising the Castle, Bridewell building to the rear and modern courtyard extension (Reference Lhs 017-017, NIAH 13823004 and a National Monument, Reference LH 017-101018) and the adjoining house (Reference LHS -017-073, NIAH 13823005). The proposed works are to a National monument and Protected Structures and are within the Ardee Conservation Area as designated in the Louth County Council Development Plan 2021-2027.”

5.2 Form & Massing

It is proposed that the front section of the Judges’ Chambers will retain its current form and massing. Its façade and much of its existing fabric will be retained and re-used. The current and existing pitch-line of the roof will be retained. Fenestration patterns on the façade will be retained. Existing windows will be refurbished and reinstated or replaced with replicas faithful to the originals in material and detailing.

Behind the front section of the Judges’ Chambers the existing rear-return (noted in section 2 to be structurally unstable) will be taken down to facilitate the creation of a four-storey extension containing an access stair and lift serving all floors.



Fig 5.1 Form & Massing

The four-storey extension will present on the skyline, but as a secondary and subservient mass to the tower-house. In line with Conservation Policy 7 the extension will identify clearly as a contemporary addition to the castle complex. Materiality and detail will be contemporary and ‘faux’ details such as crenulations, arrow loops and other pastiche features do not form part of the design.



Fig 5.2 – Relationship between proposed extension and existing Tower House.

The relationship between the proposed extension and the Tower House is most pronounced on the eastern view from the east on approach along Tierney Street, as illustrated in Fig 5.3. This is however a secondary view of the Tower House.

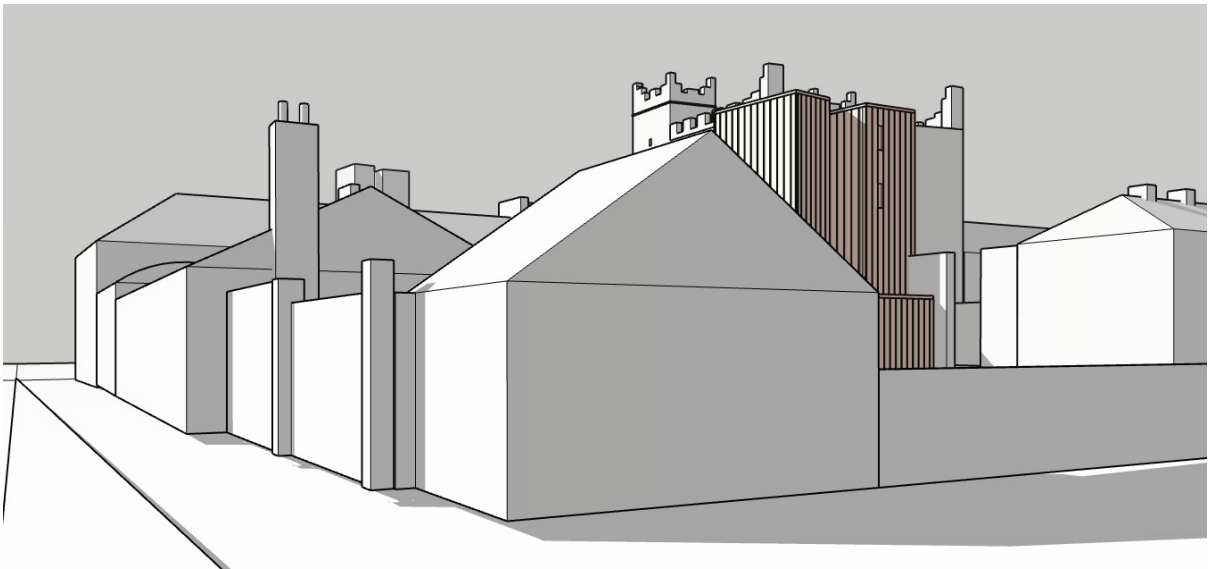


Fig 5.3 – East approach along Tierney Street

5.3 Materiality

The Retained Judges' Chambers will be rendered in a sand:lime render with a floated finish and painted in a mineral-based paint. Its roof will receive a covering of natural Welsh slates and terracotta ridge-tiles. Rainwater goods will be in painted cast-iron to traditional profiles. Windows will be in painted timber with slim double-glazed units fitted with a putty fronting. The main entrance will be a painted timber door manufactured to a traditional pattern.

The new-build element will be clad in standing-seam zinc. A section of aluminium-framed, glazed curtain-walling will sit between the Tower House and the part of the extension containing the stair (on the west elevation).



Fig 5.4 – Standing-seam zinc cladding and aluminium-framed curtain walling

New openings in the Tower House walls will be framed with heavy-gauge iron plate to the reveals. The introduction of a metallic element to frame these new openings in the otherwise masonry construction will clearly identify and demark them as modifications made to facilitate the new access routes, and remove any perceived confusion about the date of their introduction.

5.4 Elevations

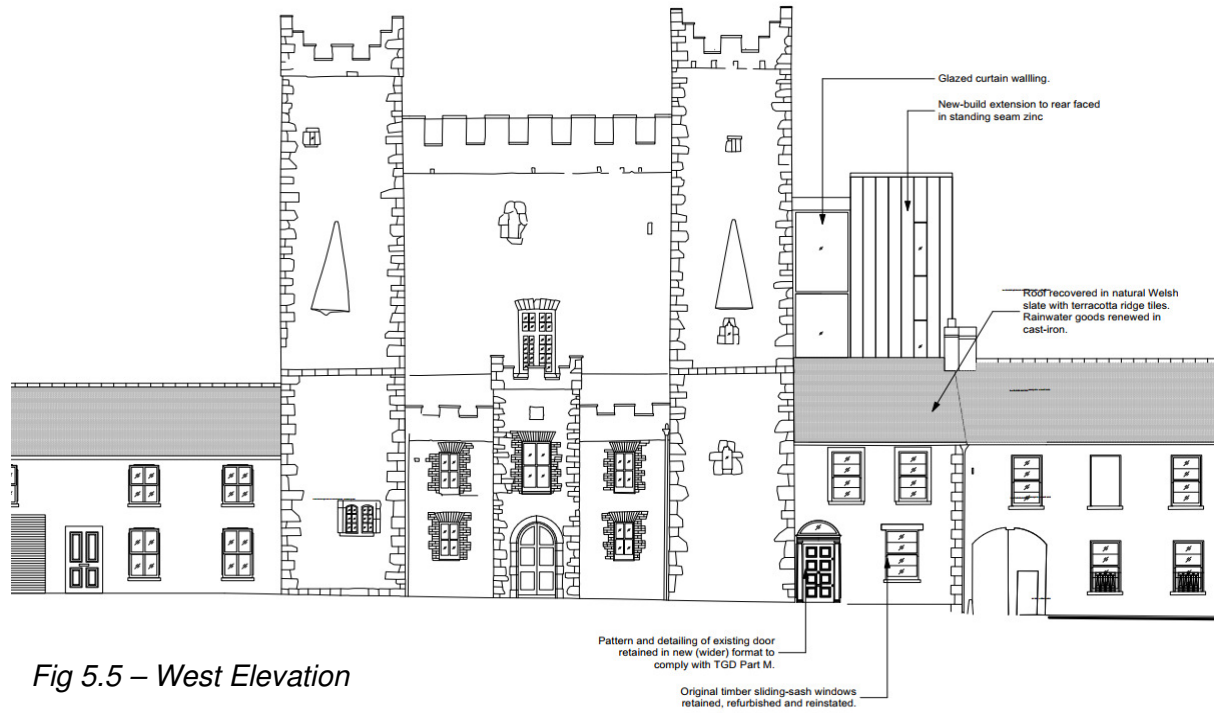


Fig 5.5 – West Elevation

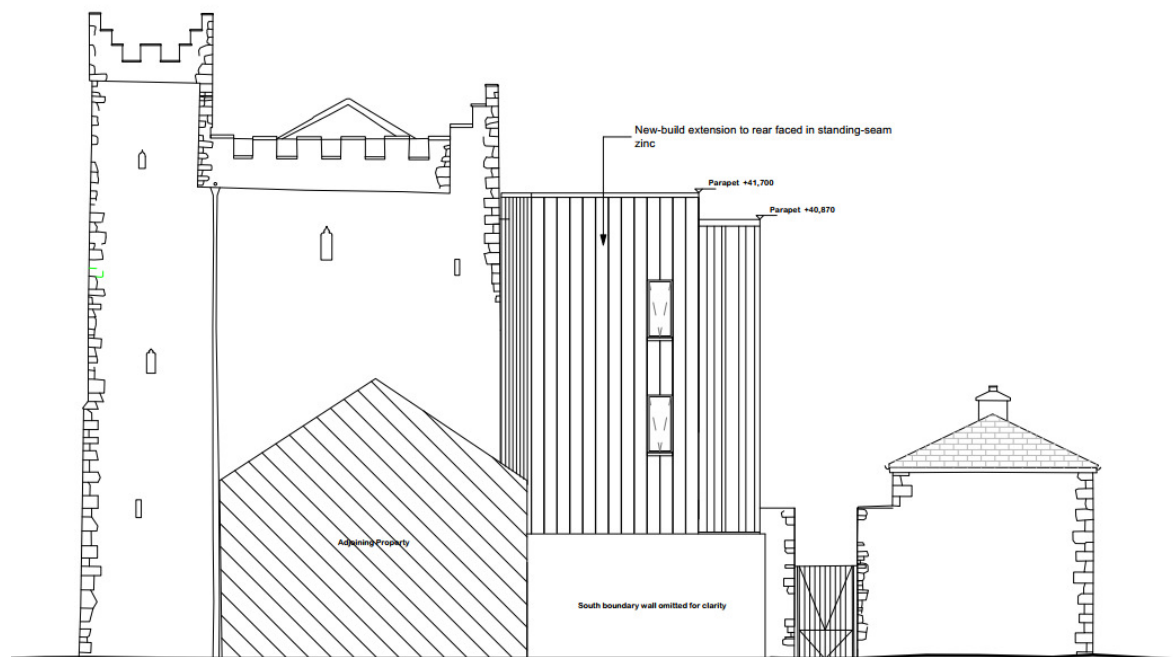


Fig 5.6 – South Elevation

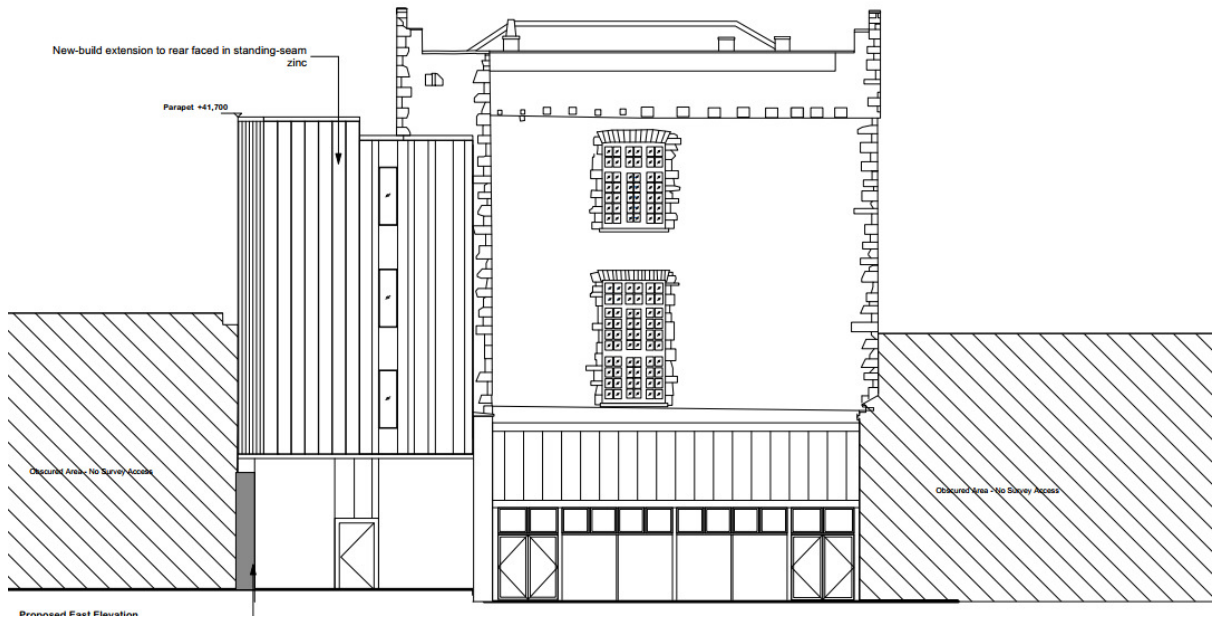


Fig 5.7 – East Elevation

5.5 Plans

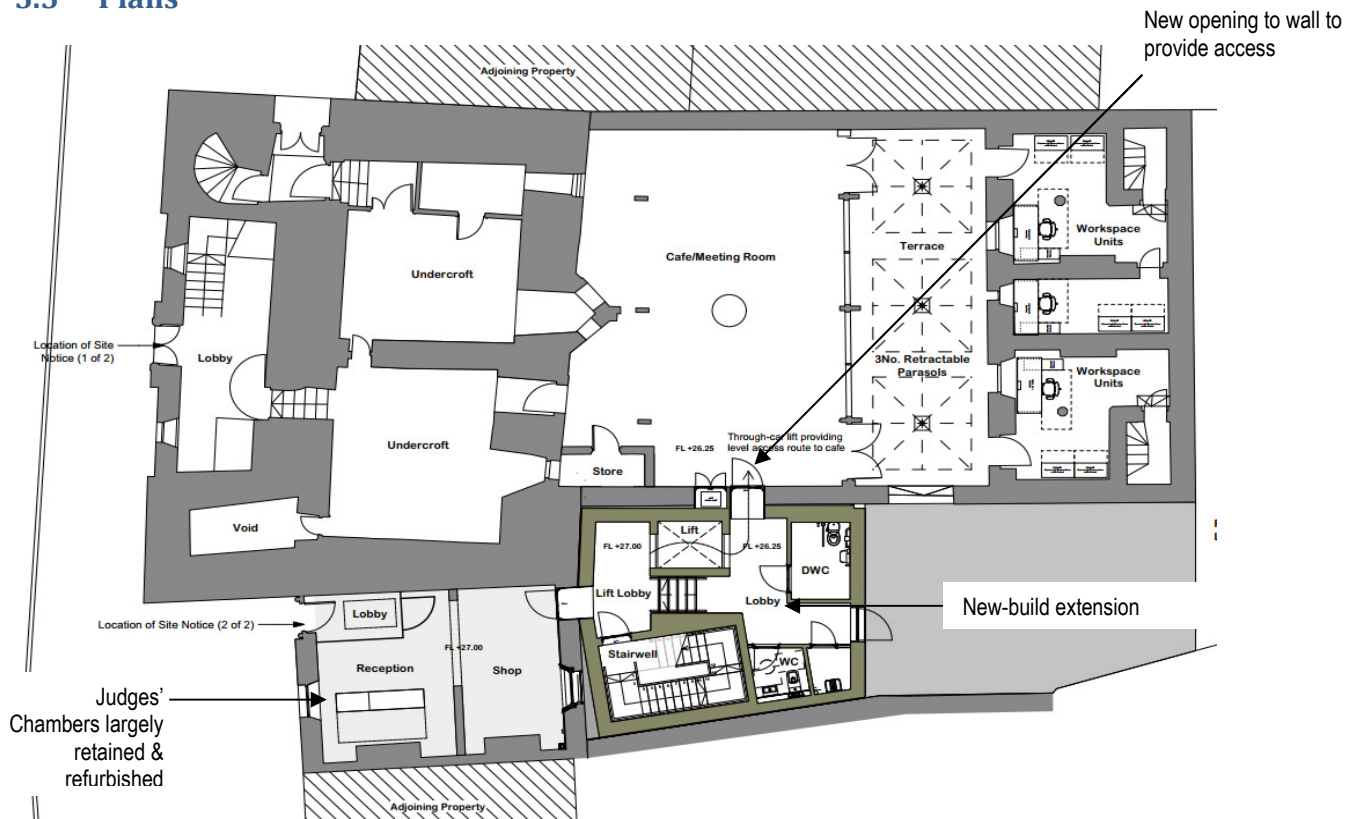


Fig 5.8 Ground Floor Plan

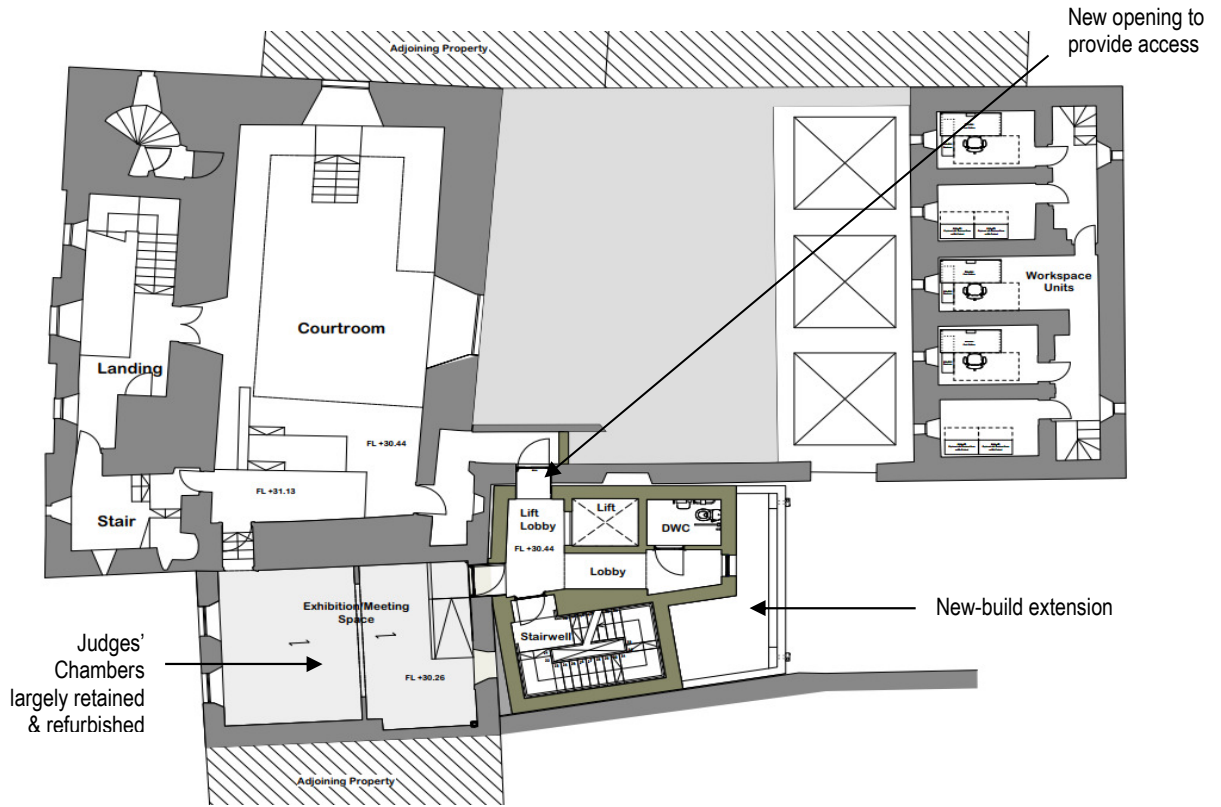


Fig 5.9 First Floor Plan

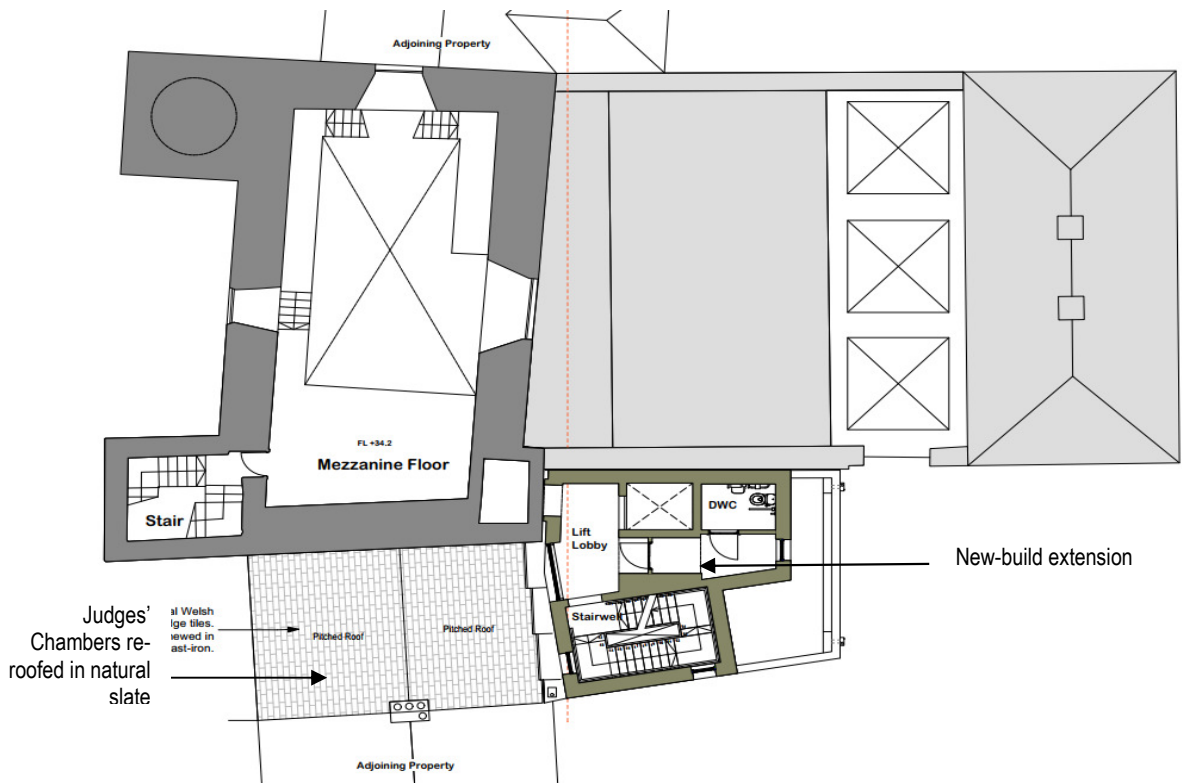


Fig 5.10 Second Floor Plan

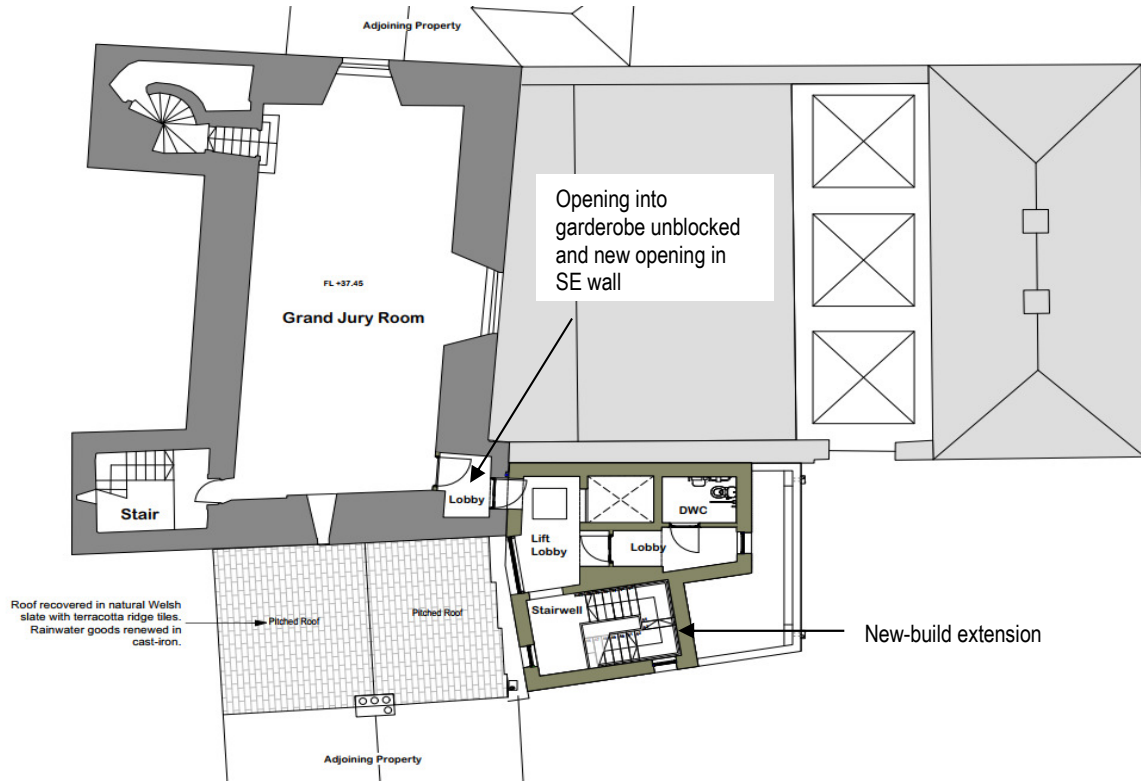


Fig 5.11 Third Floor Plan

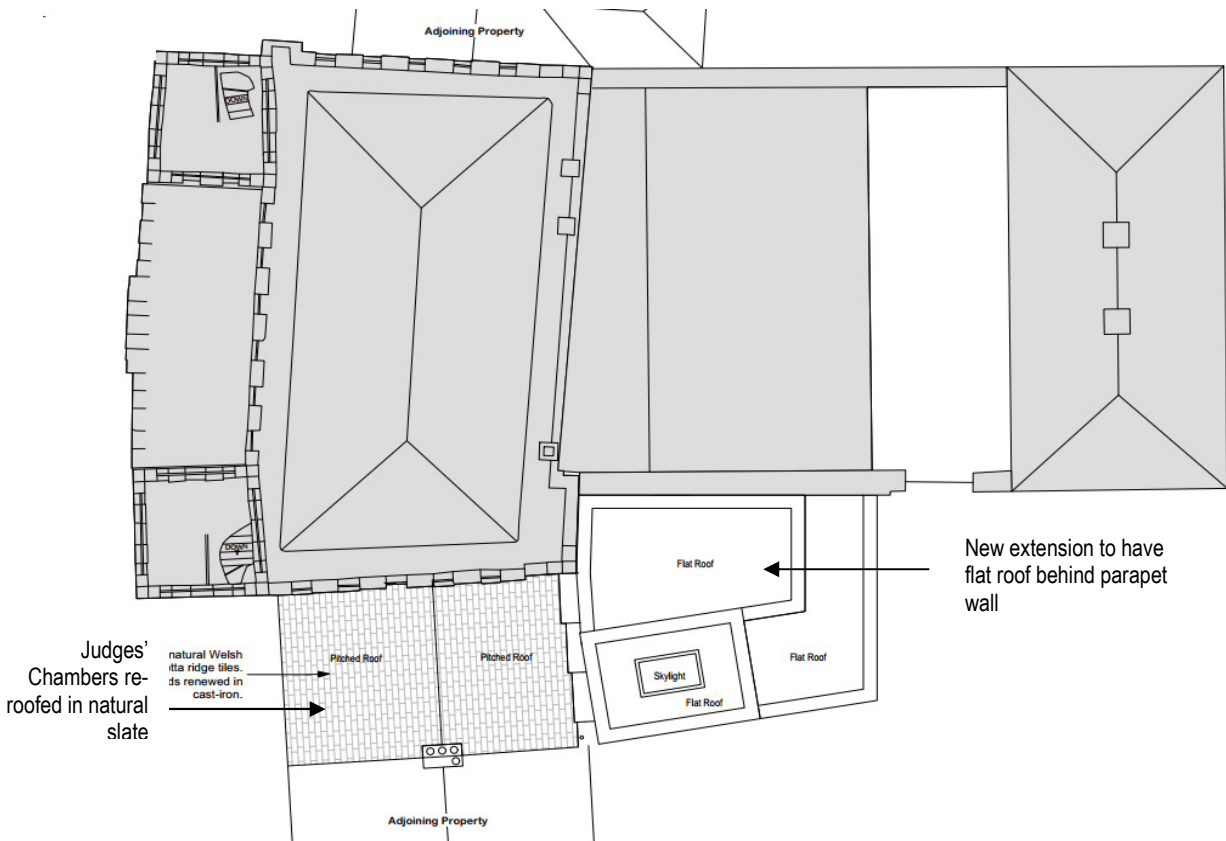


Fig 5.12 Roof Plan

5.6 CGI Visuals



Fig 5.12 – View on Castle Street



Fig 5.13 – View on southerly approach on Castle Street



Fig 5.14 – View on easterly approach on Tierney Street

5.7 Proposed Interventions to Existing Buildings

The proposed works will see the following interventions to the existing buildings:

5.7.1 Refurbishment of the front section of the Judges' Chambers

So far as is practical, given the need to make accessibility modifications and address the significant deterioration to the Judges' Chambers, its original fabric will be retained and refurbished. Materials and details employed will be traditional and conservation-led, following best practice.

5.7.2 Modification of the front door to the Judges' Chambers

The existing entrance door to the Judges' Chambers building will be re-built to its current form and detail, but with the wider clear opening necessary to provide Universal Access.

5.7.3 Removal of the rear return to the Judges' Chambers

The rear return to the Judges' Chambers building has deteriorated to a point where it is structurally unstable and would require significant re-building to continue in use. This existing return will be taken down to facilitate the creation of the new-build element.

5.7.4 New openings in the southeast corner of the Tower House

New access points into the Tower House will be co-ordinated with the position of original garderobes, minimising the amount of structural intervention and fabric loss. The garderobe spaces, presently inaccessible, will be fully surveyed once access is achieved through the making of the proposed openings. Fabric removed to make the openings will be fully recorded on a stone-by-stone basis.

5.7.5 Provision of Heating, Lighting and Power to the Bridewell

To provide flexibility for future uses, the Bridewell will be provided with basic provision of lighting and power, including electric heating. The cellular arrangement cannot be altered, but would be suitable for small traders or artisans.



Fig 5.15 – View into the (blocked up) garderobe



Fig 5.16 – Garderobe can be seen on the RHS where it was concealed behind plasterboard lining.

5.7.6 New openings in the south flanking wall

New access points between the proposed extension and the existing Buttery café will require making new penetrations in the flanking walls. These walls are currently obscured by the rear-return of the Judges' Chambers and the internal staircase in the café.

5.7.7 Removal of dry-lining in Grand Jury Room

During previous refurbishments the Grand Jury Room was dry-lined in plasterboard over a vapour-impermeable membrane. This has obscured the masonry walls and caused condensation problems. This dry-lining will be removed.



Fig 5.17 – Dry-lining of Grand Jury Room – to be removed.

5.8 Landscaping

The castle complex includes a substantial garden plot to the rear which represents a significant resource not exploited to its fullest potential in previous schemes. It is proposed that the garden plot, currently heavily over-grown, be substantially thinned or cleared to allow the creation of a number of outdoor amenity areas including a herb-garden.

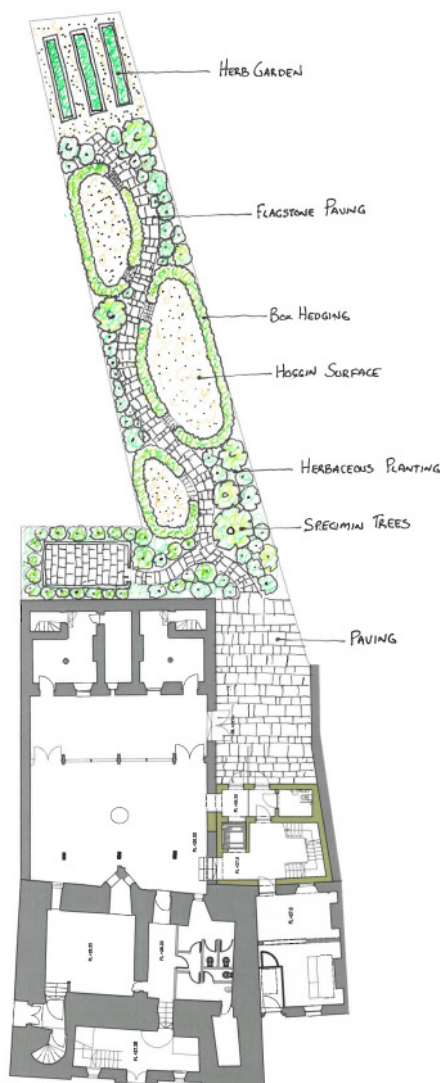
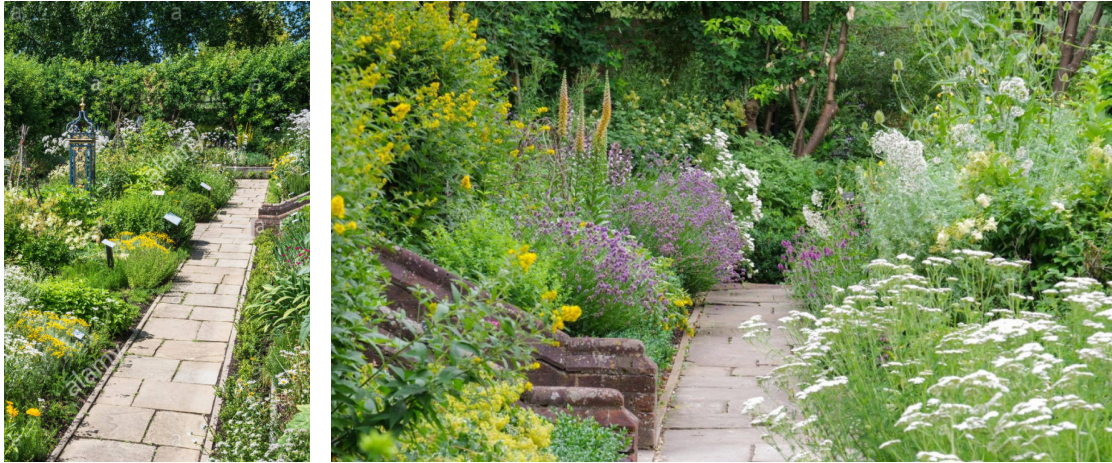


Figure 5.18 – Indicative Landscaping Proposal

5.9 Accessibility

To the limits possible with respect to the historic nature and protected nature of the complex, proposed works are designed for compliance with Part IIIB of the Building Control Regulations 1997 to 2009. It will be demonstrated that the proposed work, if constructed in accordance with the proposed designs, will be compliant with the requirements of Part M 2010 of the Building Regulations as follows:

Access and use	M1	Adequate provision shall be made for people to access and use a building, its facilities and its environs
Application of the Part	M2	Adequate provision shall be made for people to approach and access an extension to a building.
	M3	If sanitary facilities are provided in a building that it is to be extended, adequate sanitary facilities shall be provided for people within the extension
	M4	Part M does not apply to works in connection with extension to and material alterations of existing dwellings, provided that such works do not create a new dwelling

The approach taken by the design team in developing the proposed scheme is that all spaces (excluding, for spatial constraint reasons, the Bridewell and turret rooms) should be fully accessible to everyone.

The existing arrangement provides level access only to part of the first-floor of the Tower House (the Courtroom) and no other space.

The following accessibility features are part of the proposals:

Approach to the Building

The approach to the building is fully within the public realm and outside the control of these proposals. However, the existing approach is level. Public realm improvements are proposed for this area withing the scope of the 'Ardee 2040' project.

Access to the Building

The proposed building entrance will be independently accessible and avoid segregation based on a person's level of ability. An accessible entrance door will be provided, opening onto an internal lobby appropriately sized and detailed for both assisted and unassisted use by wheelchair users and compliant with TGD Part M.

Circulation within the Building

The reception area will be placed immediately adjacent to the entrance lobby and easily identifiable as such. It will contain a reception desk and hearing enhancement system compliant with TGD Part M.

Dimensions, details and positioning of internal doors will be compliant with TGD Part M.

Internal lobbies within the new-build element, where present, will provide a 1500mm clear turning circle.

Vertical Features

A new vertical circulation core will be created in the four-storey new-build extension. This will include a passenger-lift and stairwell serving all principal floors of the Judges' Chambers, the Tower House and the Buttery Café. The lift will be fully compliant with TGD Part M and the stair fully compliant with TGD Part K.

Sanitary Facilities

The new-build extension shall contain independently accessible sanitary facilities to meet the needs of people with a wide range of abilities. Wheelchair accessible unisex WCs, alternately handed, are provided at ground and first floors of the new-build extension.

5.10 Consultations & Design Development

5.10.1 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

DHLGH have been consulted on the proposals, and feedback has been received leading to a number of amendments to the scheme design. These have included:

- A minimisation of the openings to the walls of the Judges' Chambers and wall separating it from the 'Buttery' café. These openings have been reduced in size to the minimum dimensions consistent with meeting the goal of providing Universal Access and providing compliance with Technical Guidance Document M of the Building Regulations (Access and Use).
- Removal of existing WCs in the basement of the Tower House.
- Adopt standing seam zinc as the material for the extension.
- Introduce a glazed element on the front façade to provide a visual break between the Tower House and extension.
- Omit access to the mezzanine floor to permit the medieval window at the access point to remain. The access point has been ramped and lowered to permit this window to remain.
- Reduce the level of internal modification to the Judges' Chambers.

5.10.2 National Monuments Service

NMS have been consulted on the proposals, and feedback has been received indicating a number of suggested amendments to the scheme design. These have included:

- Further consideration of the visual impact of the proposed extension building.
- Further consideration of the cumulative impact of the proposed changes.
- Further consideration on the materiality of the new-build extension.

Ministerial Consent C000926 has been granted for the works described in this document. The consent has been given conditionally on the basis of changes to the elevations and materiality of the proposed extension (changes embodied in this current design and giving rise to this Part-VIII application)

5.10.3 Design Development

As an outcome of the above-noted consultations and internal review, the design has developed and been refined from its initial form. This development process, in addition to those considerations noted above, has involved:

- Reducing so far as practical the massing of the new-build element.
- Introducing, within the limitations of the site, an L-shaped plan to the new-build extension. This has been done to mitigate the massing of the building when viewed on the approach along Tierney Street.
- Retaining the front section of the Judge's Chambers intact.

6 Impact of Proposed Interventions on Built Heritage

6.1 Assessing Impact

Weighing up the pros and cons of any proposal that materially affects the setting of a heritage asset must necessarily consider the following:

- Do the proposals cause 'harm' to the asset and is the harm 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'? Proposals which comply with the stated Conservation Policies can be assessed to not cause harm.
- Does the legislative framework provide support or discouragement for the proposals? Proposals which can be assessed positively with respect to national policy objectives will, by inference, provide public benefit.

Within this framework proposals can be assessed as ranging from being highly beneficial to being highly detrimental as follows:

Impact	Description
Highly Beneficial	The proposals significantly enhance the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Moderately Beneficial	The proposals clearly enhance, to a measurable extent, the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Slightly Beneficial	The proposals enhance, to a subjective extent, the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Neutral	The proposals neither positively nor negatively affect the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Slightly Detrimental	The proposals harm, to a subjective extent, the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Moderately Detrimental	The proposals clearly harm, to a measurable extent, the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.
Highly Detrimental	The proposals significantly harm the heritage asset and the ability to appreciate its values as defined in the Statement of Significance.

Within the overall scheme, proposals which are deemed to have a beneficial effect have been explored for any and all ways to maximise those benefits.

Within the overall scheme, proposals which are deemed to have a detrimental effect have been explored for any and all ways to mitigate the potential harm or to find alternative proposals.

6.2 Impact of the Proposals

The proposed works have been assessed to have the following impacts on the Significance of the Castle as outlined in Section 2.2

Refurbishment of the front section of the Judges' Chambers – Highly Beneficial

The Judges' Chambers building has deteriorated to a point where the lack of timely intervention will see it deteriorated to a point of being unsalvageable. The refurbishment of the front section will both preserve and enhance the contribution that the building makes to the streetscape, but also re-animate the street in the immediate area of the castle.

Modification of the front door to the Judges' Chambers – Slightly Detrimental

This modification involves a degree of loss to the original fabric, and alters the original elevation, which are assessed as being slightly detrimental though mitigated by the use of traditional details and materials, and adoption of the form and detail of the existing entrance. The provision of a universally accessible front entrance to the complex is however assessed to be Highly Beneficial and a significant mitigating factor.

Removal of the rear return to the Judges' Chambers - Neutral

The rear return to the Judges' Chambers building has deteriorated to a point where it is structurally unstable and would require significant re-building to continue in use. The rear return has no architectural or aesthetic significance, and it is not visible from Castle Street. It makes little functional contribution to the castle complex in its current configuration.

Construction of an extension to the rear of the Judges' Chambers – Beneficial

The castle complex, as has been seen above, is primarily threatened by continuing lack of use. Furthermore, this lack of use has been directly attributed in a large part to a lack of universal access and appropriate means of escape. By providing appropriate access and escape measures, the extension will allow the castle to achieve full and sustained use. The extension is, through its materiality and detailing, clearly a contemporary addition and does not confuse a any reading of the site's historical development.

Additional new opening in the SE corner of the Tower House – Slightly Detrimental

The loss of original fabric to create this opening (additional to those within the consented scheme) is assessed to be slightly detrimental, mitigated by the fact that it brings the original series of garderobes back into being an accessible part of the castle. The benefit of facilitating universal access to all floors of the Tower House is assessed as being a significant mitigating factor and Highly Beneficial.

Additional new opening in the south flanking wall – Neutral

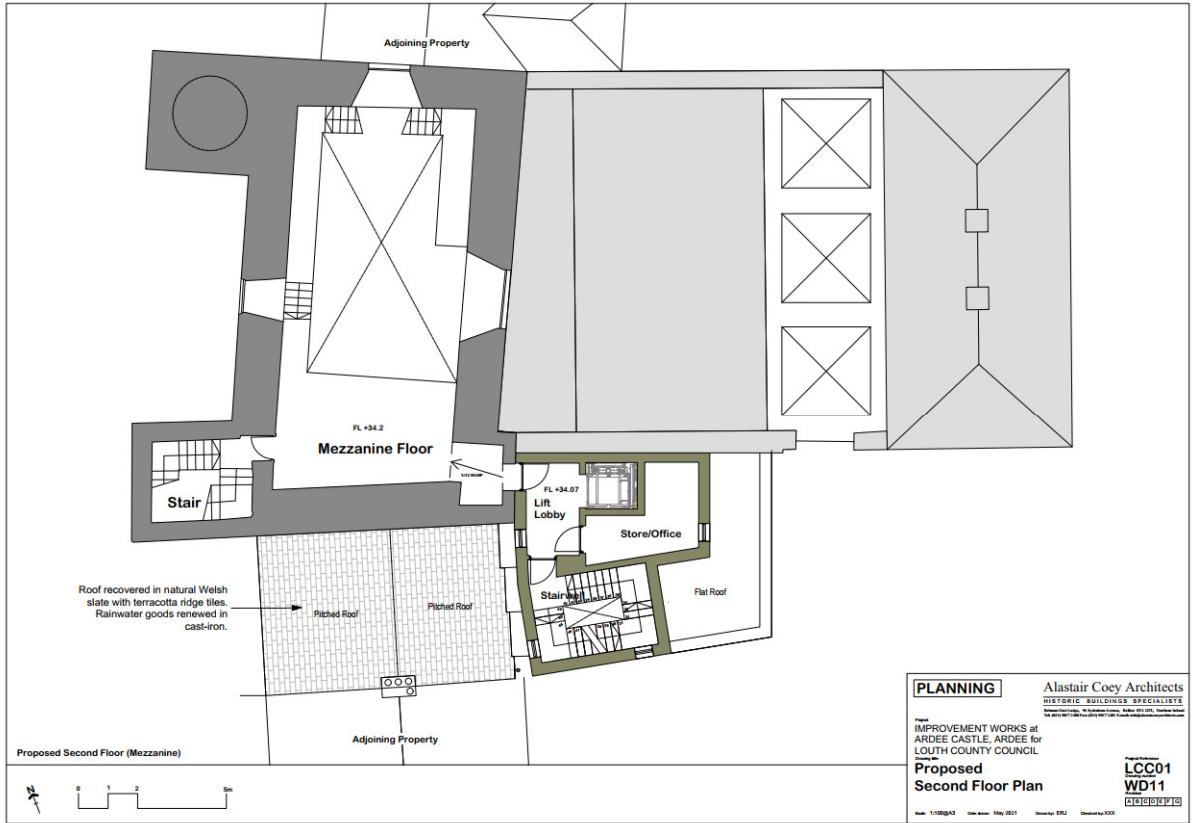
Universal access between the proposed extension and the existing Buttery café will require making one additional opening in the walls flanking the castle yard. These walls are currently obscured by the rear-return of the Judges' Chambers and the internal staircase in the café. The impact is therefore neutral.

6.3 Impact Statement

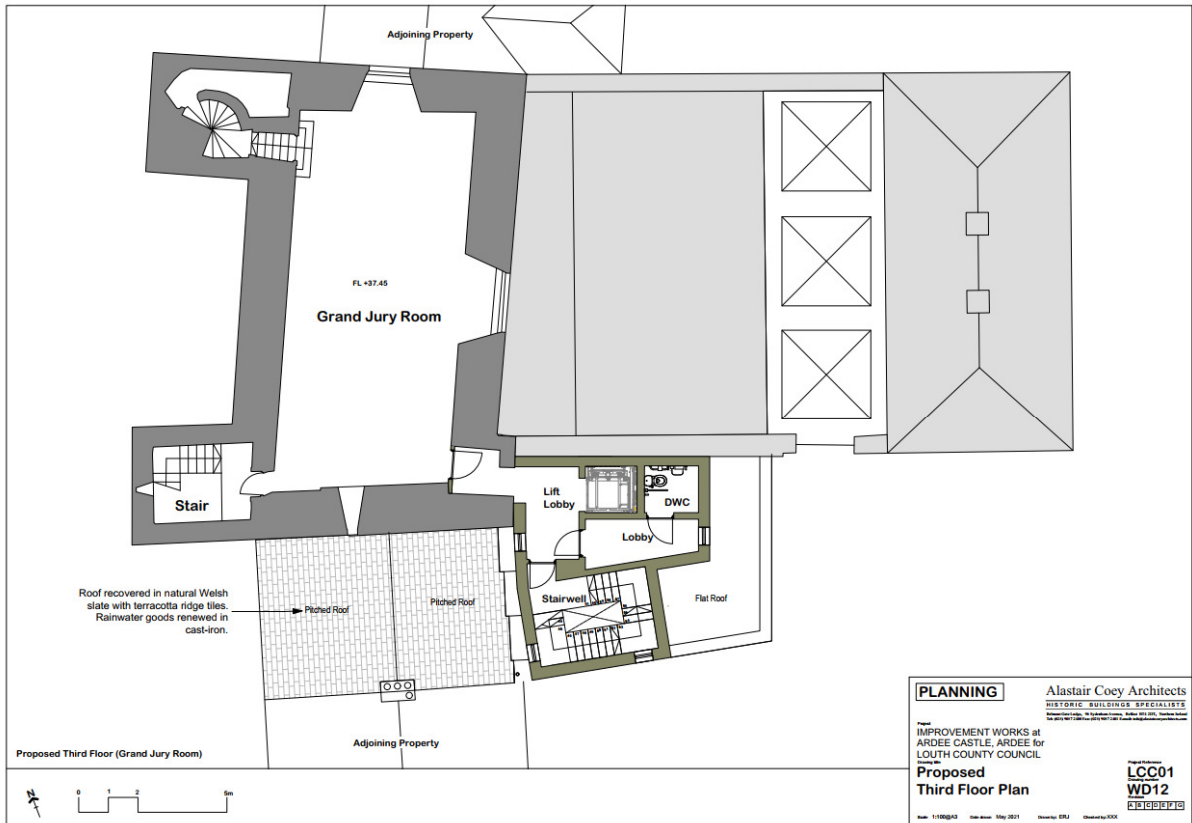
The policies referenced in Section 3 require that any interventions that are detrimental to the significance of Ardee Castle be given great weight. However similar weight needs to be given to the fact that without these works, which have been proven to be necessary and proportionate to bringing the complex back into full and sustained use, the deterioration of the complex will continue. Its 'at-risk' status will continue and worsen at an accelerating rate.

It is our view, this fundamental aspect of the scheme in itself balances the weight which the identified 'Detrimental' aspect attracts, regardless of the other public benefits identified. When these are considered in total then the proposed works are clearly justifiable.

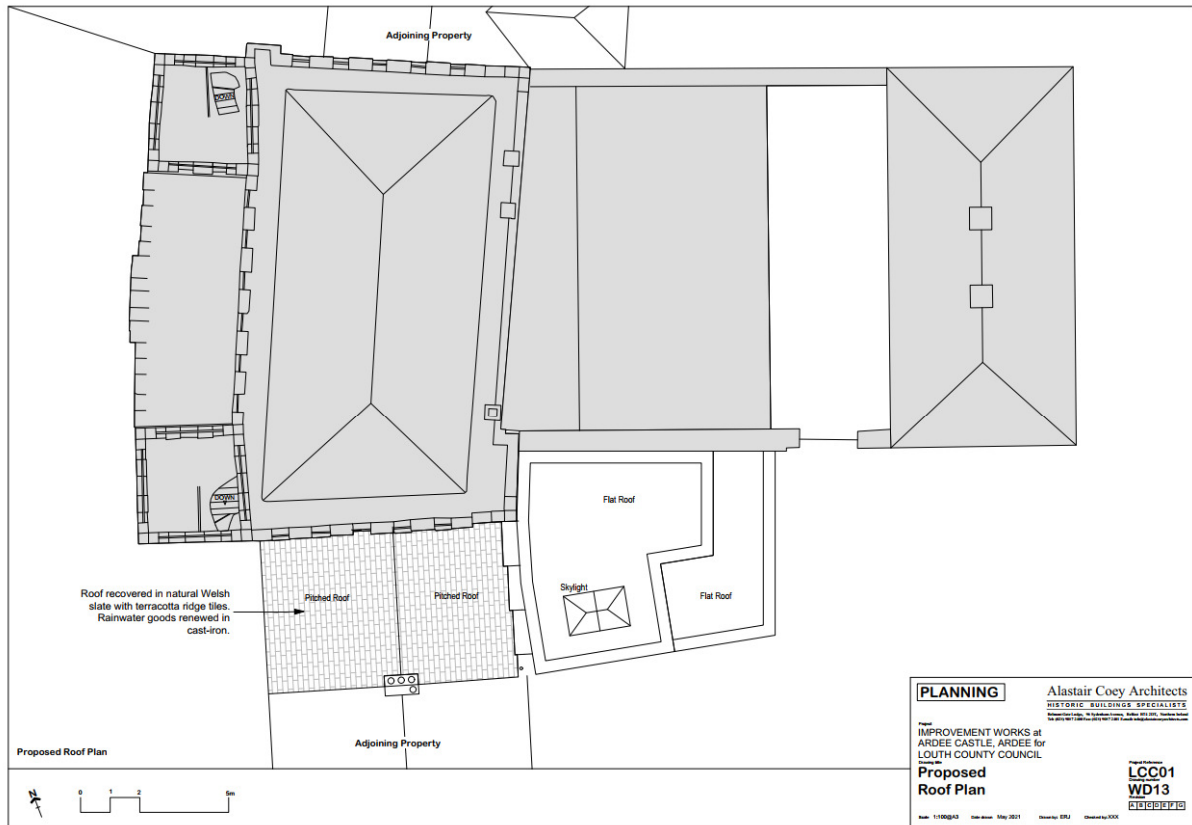
7 APPENDIX A Currently Consented Scheme



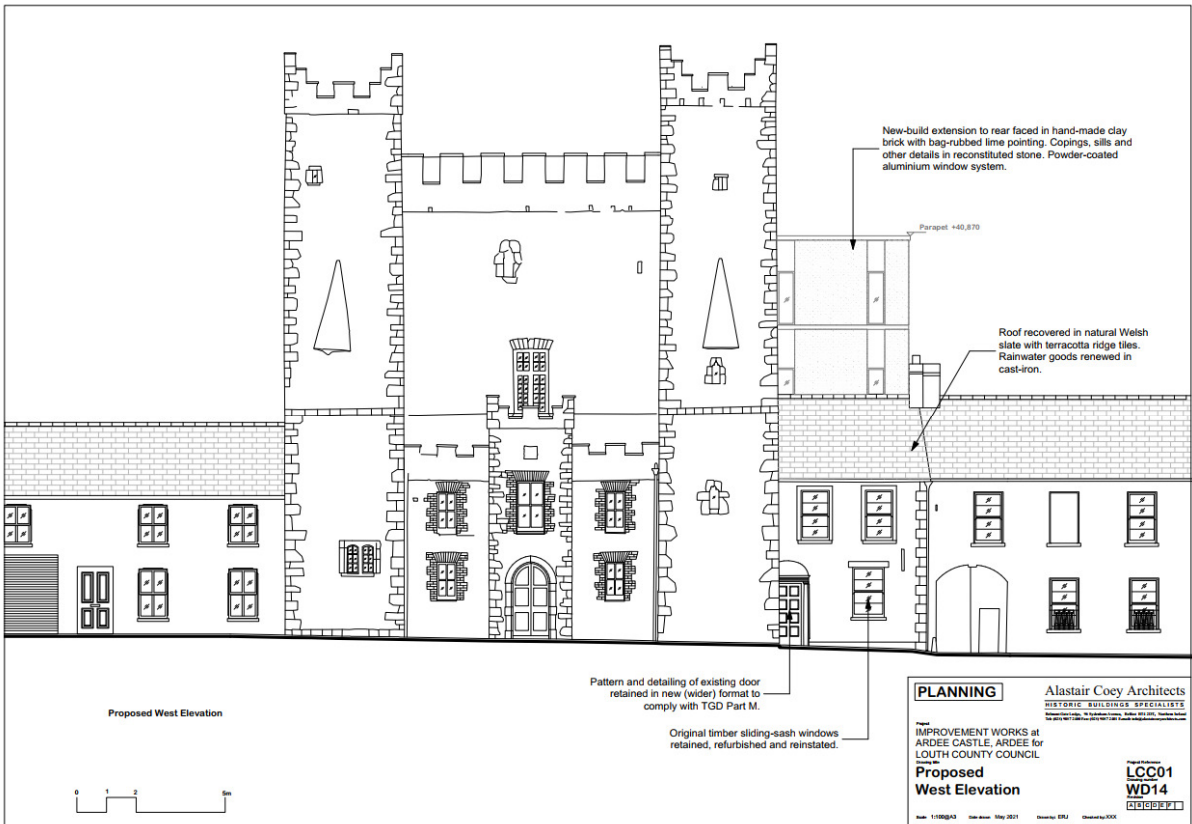
Second Floor



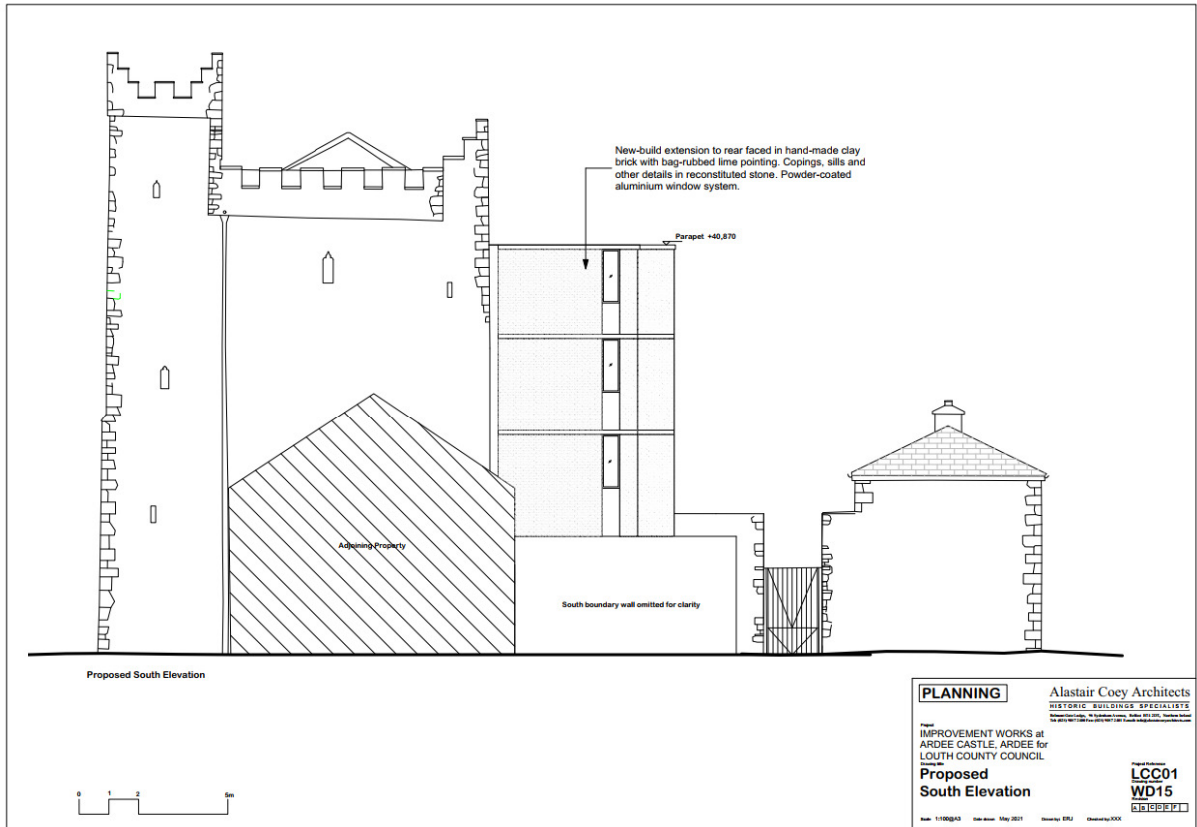
Third Floor



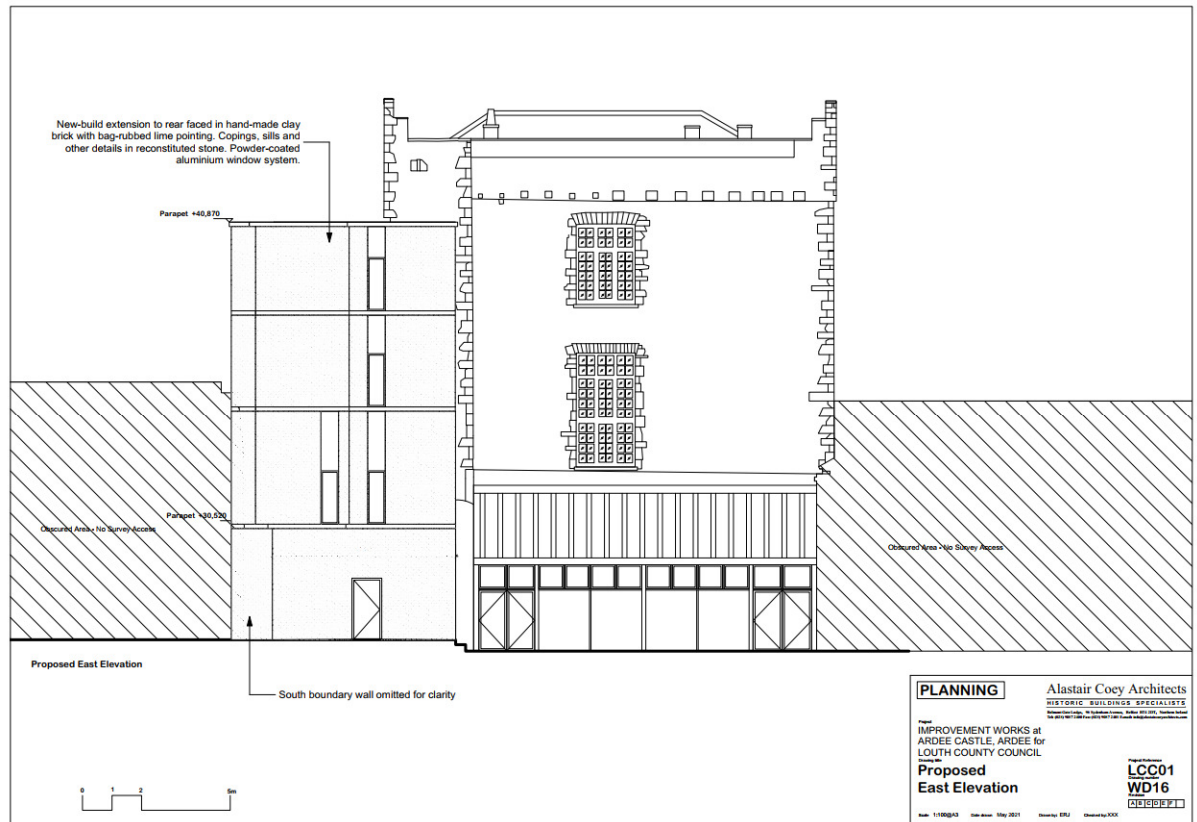
Roof Plan



West Elevation



South Elevation



East Elevation

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