

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 25 April 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Housing Development Programme - Package Deal at the former Cowbridge Police Station, Cowbridge
Purpose of Report:	To inform Cabinet of a proposal to enter into a package deal contract with Bluefield Land Ltd, for the delivery of 14 new older persons apartments for social rent at the former Cowbridge Police Station, Cowbridge (the Scheme)
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Public Sector Housing and Tenant Engagement
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>Nick Jones, Operational Manager, Public Housing Services</p> <p>Stephen Butler, Principal Planner</p> <p>Carol Price, Housing Strategy Co-ordinator</p> <p>Gemma Jones, Operational Manager – Accountancy</p> <p>Phil Chappell, Operational Manager - Regeneration</p> <p>James Docherty, Principal Lawyer</p> <p>Lisa Lewis, Operational Manager, Strategy and Resources</p> <p>Local Ward Members</p>
Policy Framework:	This report is within the policy framework and budget and is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report brings to the attention of Cabinet, a proposal to enter a package deal contract (which will include both an acquisition of land/buildings and construction works) with Bluefield Land for the delivery of 14 new one-bedroom apartments for older people at the former Cowbridge Police Station, which includes the former Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit, Cowbridge. • The report also includes a proposal to appropriate the former Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit into the Housing Revenue Account to assist in facilitating the package deal opportunity. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes the proposal to enter into a package deal contract with Bluefield Land Ltd for the delivery of 14 new one-bedroom apartments for older people at the former Cowbridge Police Station and Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit, Cowbridge.
2. That Cabinet notes the requirement to take formal decisions on the progression of the above proposal, as part of the wider considerations detailed in the Part II report later in the agenda.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To advise Cabinet of the intention to increase the supply of new Council owned homes.
2. To ensure decisions are made to progress this proposed development of new Council owned homes.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council is seeking to expand its housing stock and satisfy local housing need through the commissioning of new properties as a new development initiative. The principle of developing new homes was established by the Council following a Cabinet meeting on 11th August, 2014 (C2439) and sites across the Vale of Glamorgan were considered for development.
- 1.2 In the context of housing development, a package deal contract is essentially a land plus construction works contract bundle offered by a single developer, who has exclusive rights to a site, by virtue of ownership, legal interest and / or, a valid planning consent for the development and is prepared to develop the site.
- 1.3 In this instance, Bluefield Land Ltd has acquired the former Cowbridge Police Station and is in the pre planning process to obtain planning permission and Listed Building Consent to develop the building and the land containing the former Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit to the rear for affordable housing. Once planning consent is granted, the former Police Station will be transferred to the Council and construction will commence.
- 1.4 The package deal contract with Bluefield Land Ltd proposes the delivery of 14 much needed one bedroom two-person apartments for older people in Cowbridge, with 6 units proposed through the conversion of the former Police Station and 8 units of new build proposed on the site of the former Y Daith Pupil Referral Unit.
- 1.5 Bluefield Land Ltd have appointed a Design Team to evolve the design to the point where a detailed planning application and Listed Building Consent application can be submitted, having specific regard to the Listed Status of the former Cowbridge Police Station.

- 1.6 The Strategic Housing Board at its meeting on 18th October, 2023 agreed to progress the Scheme for a Cabinet approval to enter into a package deal contract with Bluefield Land Ltd.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The need to provide additional one-bedroom apartments for older people is a high priority for the Council and these new homes will be let at rents in line with the Council's rent policy, making the homes affordable for those in need. Consultation will continue with officers from Housing Solutions, Highways, SUDS Approval Body and Planning to ensure that the final Scheme proposals meet objectives of the Council's Local Housing Strategy and Housing Development Strategy.
- 2.2 The Housing Development Team has undertaken an initial Development Viability Appraisal for the Scheme, using a rent for a comparable property type within the Ward and the standard assumptions contained within Housing Business Plan 2024/25.
- 2.3 The Housing Development Team considers the Scheme to be viable, meeting the Council's agreed Development Appraisal Criteria, if Social Housing Grant is secured or, failing that a gap funding contribution is made from the S106 Affordable Housing Contributions secured from developments in the Cowbridge ward.
- 2.4 The Scheme layout, perspectives and contextual elevations are provided at Appendix A.
- 2.5 The one-bedroom apartments have an average gross internal area of 52 M2 and will be constructed to achieve Welsh Government WDQR 2021, Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design standards. Potential residents will be offered accommodation from the housing waiting list via the Council's Homes4U scheme.
- 2.6 Bluefield Land Ltd are currently delivering package deal developments for other local social housing providers, including Trivallis and Coastal Housing Group.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 Looking to the long term - The Housing Business Plan allocates significant resource, some £1 billion, towards the development of new Council homes over the next thirty years. The Council plans to complete a minimum of a 500 new Council homes by 2028. Further homes will be considered for development where development could be made viable by including other tenure models to cross-subsidise the development of homes at social rent. In this way the Council could further add to the overall numbers of affordable homes in the borough without adversely impacting on the Housing Business Plan.

- 3.2** Taking an integrated approach - In April 2018, Welsh Government announced an independent review of affordable housing supply in Wales. The purpose of which was to examine whether more can be done to increase the supply of affordable housing in Wales, maximising the resources available to meet the clear commitment to deliver 20,000 affordable homes during this term of Government. The Council is committed to working with Welsh Government, its housing partners, communities, and the private sector in maximising the delivery of affordable housing in the Vale.
- 3.3** Involving the population in decisions - In arriving at a decision to provide new affordable housing, the Council will fully consult with its tenants and residents on development proposals and consider their responses, from the feasibility stage through to the determination of the planning application and when the Scheme is being delivered.
- 3.4** Working in a collaborative way- The Council has strong established links with several Housing Associations which make a significant contribution to housing supply in the Vale. It is important that this continues, and it is not the Council's intention to compete with Housing Associations. Therefore, the Council intends to work alongside our partners and envisages a complimentary approach to the delivery of affordable homes.
- 3.5** Understanding the root causes of issues and preventing them - The 2019 Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) highlighted the chronic shortage of affordable housing in the Vale of Glamorgan. In assessing the housing market as a whole, the LHMA calculates the net need for affordable housing, including social rented housing, intermediate rented housing and low-cost home ownership housing products, over the coming years. This assessment projects the headline annual need for affordable housing in the Vale of Glamorgan to be units per annum between the years 2019 and 2024. The LMHA identified an overwhelming need for all types and tenures of affordable housing in the Vale. The Council has recognised this and is acting to invest significantly in new council homes and enable housing association development.
- 3.6** This proposal:
Meets the relevant Strategic Objective 3 of the Corporate Plan 2020-25
Meets the Objectives 1-5 of the Well Being Plan 2018-23
Meets all the Strategic Aims 1-4 of the Local Housing Strategy 2015-20
Meets Strategic Objectives 1-4 of the Housing Development Strategy 2019-24

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** The Scheme will also achieve the Association of Environment Conscious Building (AECB) Carbon Lite standard for new build homes, which seeks to create high-performance buildings using widely available technology.

- 4.2** It is estimated that this low-risk option will reduce overall CO2 emissions by 70% compared to the UK average for buildings of each type – a highly significant result given the relative ease and low cost with which this standard can be met.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** Full financial details will be addressed in the Part II Report included on the Agenda.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no other resource issues to report at this time.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** In general terms, section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to acquire land for either (a) the benefit, improvement or development of its area or (b) for any of its functions under any enactment and section 17 Housing Act 1985 enables the Council as local housing authority to acquire properties or land for housing accommodation.
- 5.4** In order to deliver this particular Scheme it will be necessary for the Council to enter into a package deal contract with Bluefield Land Ltd which will involve agreeing and completing a contract for the purchase of the land to be developed and entering into back-to-back JCT Design and Build 2016 edition contract for the Scheme works. It will also be necessary to enter into other forms of agreement with statutory undertakers etc. The package deal contract will be conditional on Bluefield Land Ltd obtaining planning permission for the development.
- 5.5** Generally, a land plus works package will be considered a public works contract and will therefore be subject to the Public Contract Rules 2015 (PCR 2015) unless an exemption applies, or the value of the contract is below the de minimis threshold which applies to public works contracts. As at 1st January, 2024, the revised threshold for public works contracts for the purposes of the PCR 2015 was £5,372,609.
- 5.6** The Council has previously taken external specialist legal advice regarding its overall approach to this type of scheme and has been advised that the Council can lawfully enter into a package deal type contract, without advertisement or competition, in circumstances where the Scheme remains below the public works contract threshold or where an exemption applies to the Scheme in accordance with Regulation 32(2)(b)(iii) of the PCR 2015. Both criteria apply to this Scheme.
- 5.7** Furthermore, and for completeness and to mitigate the risk of challenge, it is advised that the Council publish a voluntary ex-ante transparency ("VEAT") notice in respect of the proposed package deal contract.

- 5.8** The Housing Development Team will continue to liaise with Legal Services and Procurement on all legal and procurement aspects and matters concerning the Scheme.
- 5.9** In terms of equalities, there will be training opportunities offered as part of the main works contract and in accordance with the Welsh Government's 'Value Wales Toolkit'.

6. Background Papers

None.



**COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE**

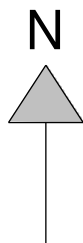
DESIGN CONCEPT

DECEMBER 2023

0 5m 10m
1:200

Existing vehicle access retained

Existing parking rationalised to provide 9 No. Spaces



Residential Parking & Right of way to rear properties

Entrance 1:
Access to individual flat

Entrance 2:
Access to individual flat

Existing Building:
Conversion into 6
No. 1 Bed Flats

Stair Core 1:
Access to ground
and first floor flats.

New Build:
Total of 8 No. 1 Bedroom
walk up Flats to WDQR
standards

Feasibility Design Notes:
This drawing is a concept design, test to fit feasibility study. All subject to confirming, proposed levels, Boundary & all retaining wall locations, and full consultation with: Local Planning authority, Local Highways dept, Structural Engineers, M&E Engineers, services suppliers and performance specifications for all specialist design elements. Trees are indicatively positioned TPO status and locations subject to detail survey. All Levels shown are indicative given existing site topography and are subject to confirmation following detail design.

APARTMENT MIX

Existing Building	UNITS
1 Bed Apts	6
New Build 1 Bed Apts	8
TOTAL	14

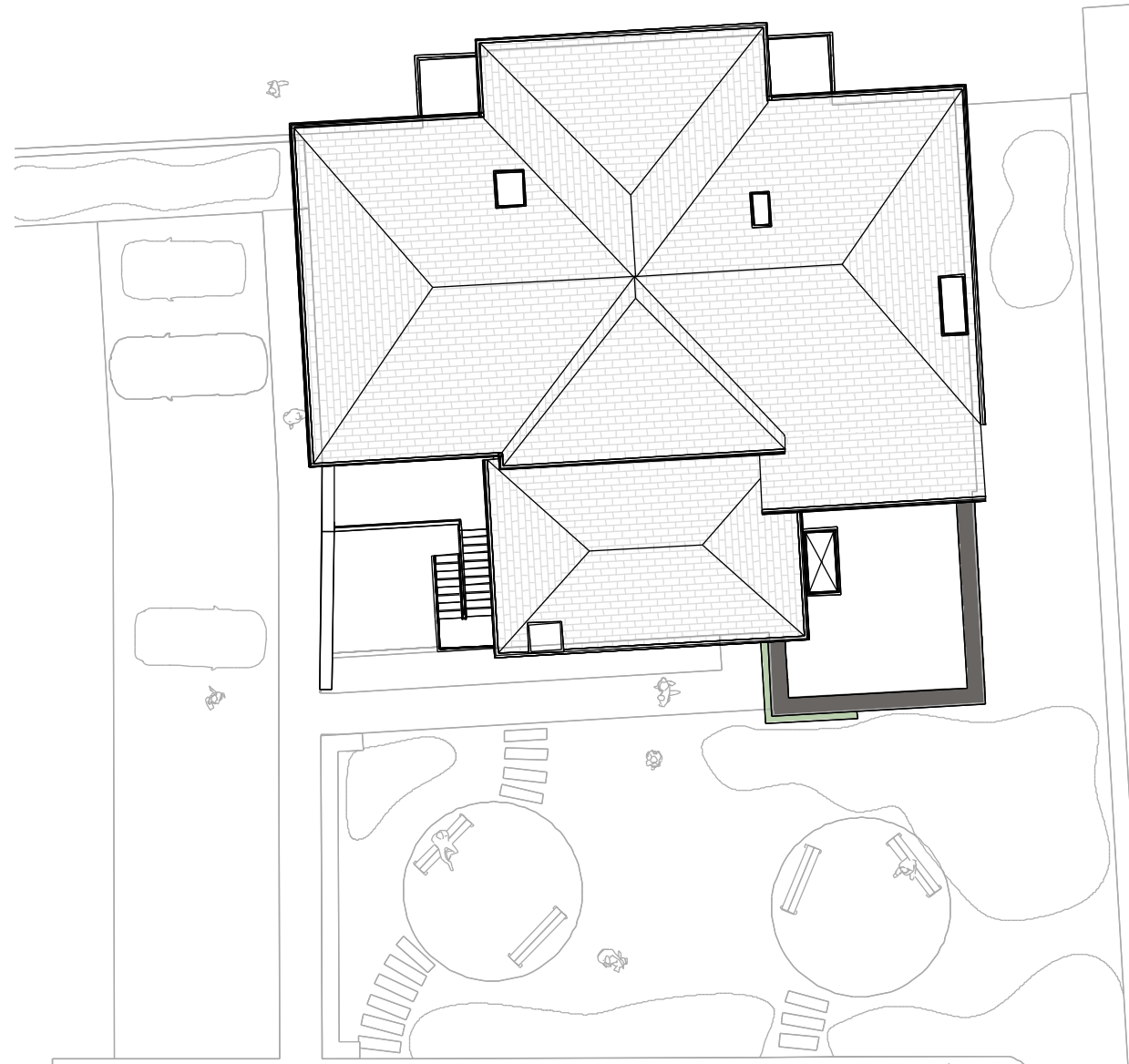
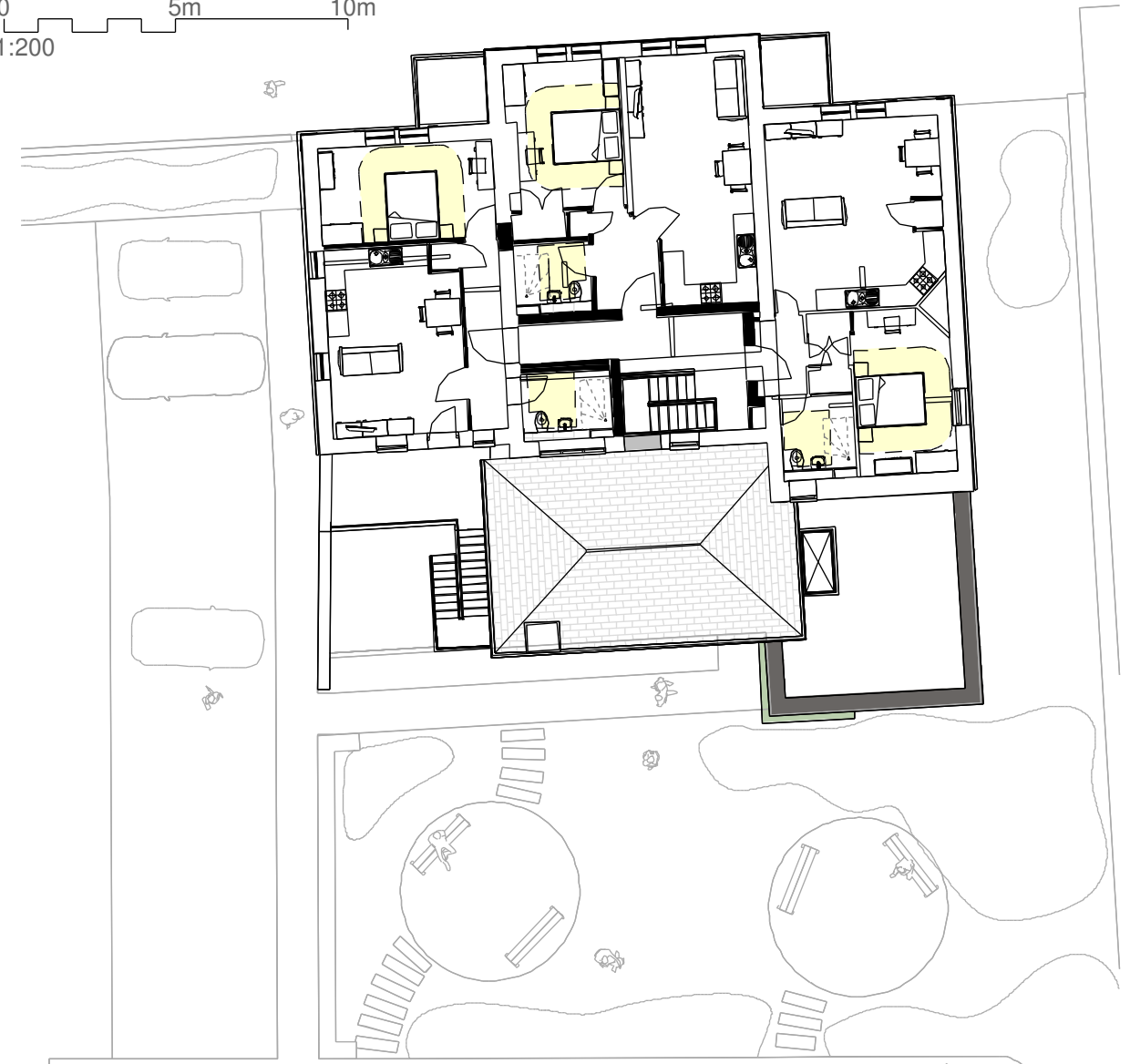
Amenity Area

Enclosed
Amenity Area

Width of existing vehicle access retained. No change to existing right of way

COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
1-SITE LAYOUT PLAN

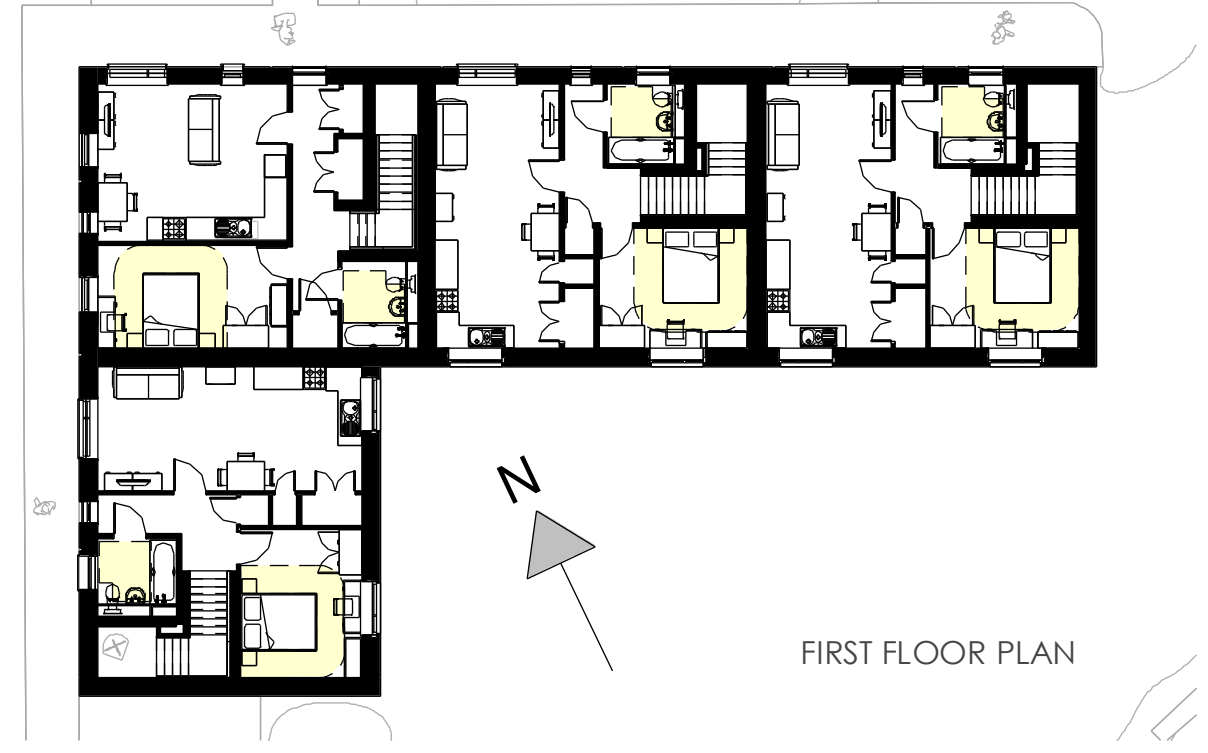
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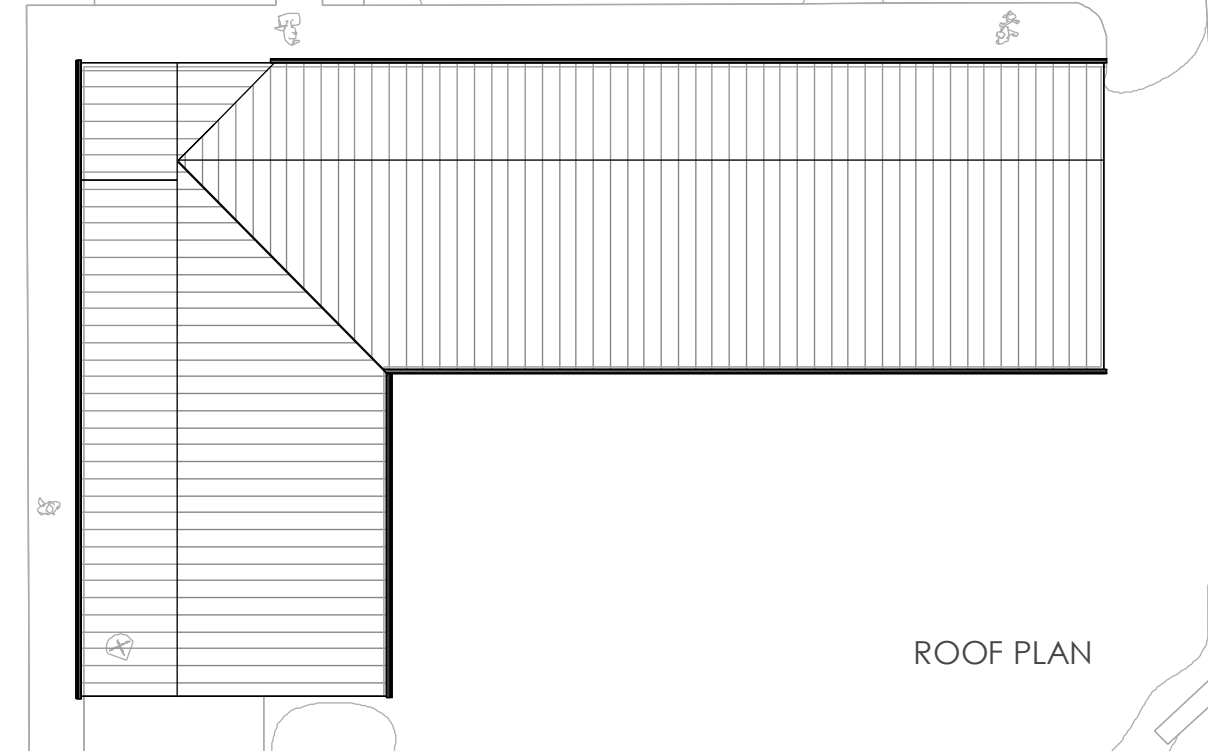
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN

2-FLOOR PLANS

COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE

COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION

HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE

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Old Police Station
 2 Storeys
 6 No. 1 bed flats
 Small extension to rear providing communal access.

Existing Private Parking for dwellings

New Build.
 2 Storey flats
 8 No. 1 bed flats

New build is contemporary counterpoint to local context

1 No. Parking spaces

Right of way maintained

Private Amenity

Amenity

2 Storeys
 2 Storeys

Access to individual flats

9 No. Parking spaces

Vehicle Flow
 Right of way

2 Storeys

High street

Pedestrian flow

Existing Vehicle Access

Existing public footpath

2 Storeys

2 Storeys

2 Storeys

3 - AERIAL VIEW

COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION

HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE



4-PERSPECTIVE KEYPLAN



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
STREET SCENE 01



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
STREET SCENE 02



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
STREET SCENE 03



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE

STREET SCENE 04



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
STREET SCENE 05



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
STREET SCENE 06



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
AERIAL SCENE 01



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE
AERIAL SCENE 02



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE

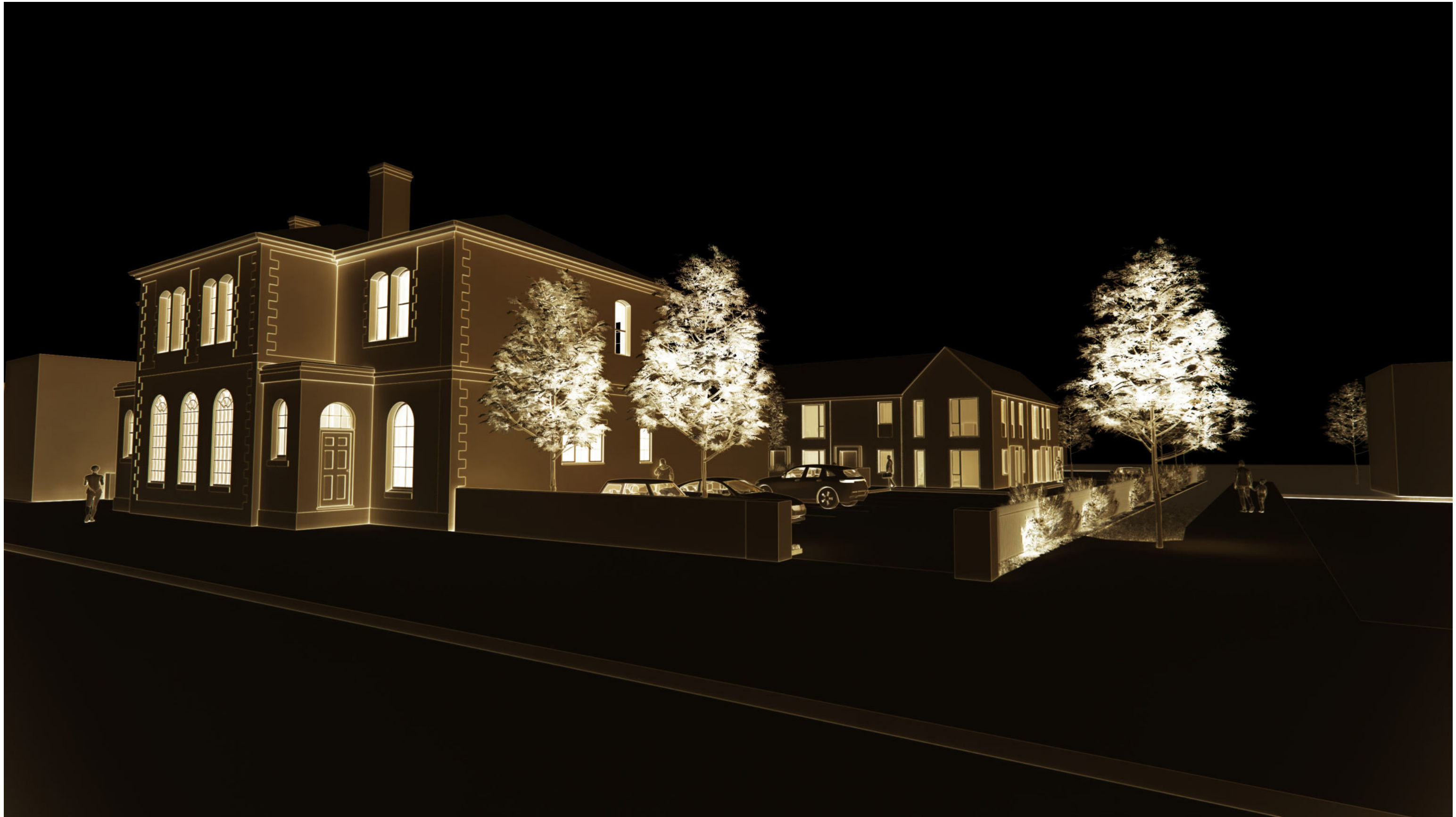
AERIAL SCENE 03



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE



COWBRIDGE POLICE STATION
HIGH ST, COWBRIDGE