

# design & access statement

produced by Public Works Group  
on behalf of Queens Crescent Community Centre  
06.02.2024

## QCCA Food Hub & Cafe



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# 1.0 Introduction

**1.1 Introduction**

This report has been produced on behalf of Queen's Crescent Community Association (QCCA) in support of the planning application for a new community food hub and cafe within the existing community centre building.

**1.2 Site Address**

Queen's Crescent Community Centre  
45 Ashdown Crescent  
Belsize Park  
London  
NW5 4QE

**1.3 Proposal**

The proposal looks to replace the existing modular extension with a new food hub and cafe for local people. The space will be used as both a small cafe and a food exchange as part of QCCA's food services programme. The extension will offer a permanent location for QCCA's food bank and give the community centre an increased visual presence within the surrounding area. A new canopy and planter at the existing community centre entrance is also proposed to better define the entrance and increase visibility from Queen's Crescent road.

**1.4 Application**

- The proposal includes:
- Removal and replacement of existing modular building with a new food hub and cafe.
  - New canopy formed over existing entrance.
  - New external planter at entrance.
  - New signage and wayfinding to be introduced at intersection between Ashdown Crescent and Queen's Crescent road.

**1.5 Operation Hours**

- Existing centre operational hours:
- Monday – Sunday: 08:00 - 23:00
  - Staffed / office hours: 08:00 - 18:00

- Proposed Food Hub hours:
- Monday – Saturday: 08:00 - 18:00 to match existing core hours for the centre

**1.6 Existing use & past use**

The existing building houses offices for QCCA and is also used for a variety of activites and programmes, including youth services, a food bank, older people's services and offices. The existing prefab building was initially used as changing rooms for a local sports pitch but is now redundant and only used as storage for the centre. The prefab building is a poor use of space and needs replacing.

**1.8 Change of Use**

The existing use class for the building is D1 (Non-residential Institution), now classified under Class F1 (Learning and Non-residential Institutions).

The proposal is for the relocation of the existing food programme offered on site to another, more prominent area of the building. There is already an existing kitchen on site that offers hot meals to local people and the food hub is run from within the new hall. The kitchen is ancillary to the main use of the hall as a community centre.

The new extension proposes to relocate this service and make use of the existing staff kitchen, and is understood to be ancillary to the main use of the building. It is therefore suggested that no change of use is required for the building as the proposal is only to relocate an existing service within the site.

# 2.0 Existing

## 2.1 Location

QCCA is located on the corner of Ashdown Crescent, accessed via Queen's Crescent road. The building sits on the edge of a housing estate and there are residential flats to the floor above the block. There is an open public square directly outside the centre, with areas of grass, trees and hardstanding. This is a main thoroughfare between the housing estate and the amenities of Queen's Crescent with high levels of foot traffic. The public square is currently not well used and the building occupies a strategic point that could unlock this public space.

## 2.2 QCCA

QCCA was established in 1999 and has since helped thousands of local people across it's 4 centres. Ashdowne Crescent is one of these centres and is the subject of this planning application. QCCA runs multiple programmes from this location, mainly centred around food, education, sports and care for older people. They have run a successful food bank here since 2020 and serves hot meals to local residents that need support.

Taken from their website:

*'Queen's Crescent Community Association's mission is to help the people of Queen's Crescent in Gospel Oak live their best lives, whatever their ages. They support 3000 members a year with our services for older people, young people and families. Over 50% of their members are BAME and they have London's second largest Bangladeshi community after Tower Hamlets.*

*'Because we're in one of England's most deprived areas (not just London's), our services are free or heavily subsidised. We manage to do this thanks to our charitable funders and our trading activities. These include two commercial nurseries - Caversham and Holly Lodge - profits from which support our main work.'*



2.3 Site Photographs

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing prefab changing room block with a new building on the same footprint. The existing building is a modular cabin with aluminium framed obscured glazing and infill panels to the majority of the elevation. The block has timber clad doors and is painted in a dark anthracite grey to match the rest of the glazing on the community centre. The flat roof is capped with an off-white parapet detail that references the balconies above.



Existing changing room block and relationship to public square, existing kitchen and residential blocks above



Changing room block forming corner of building on the ground floor



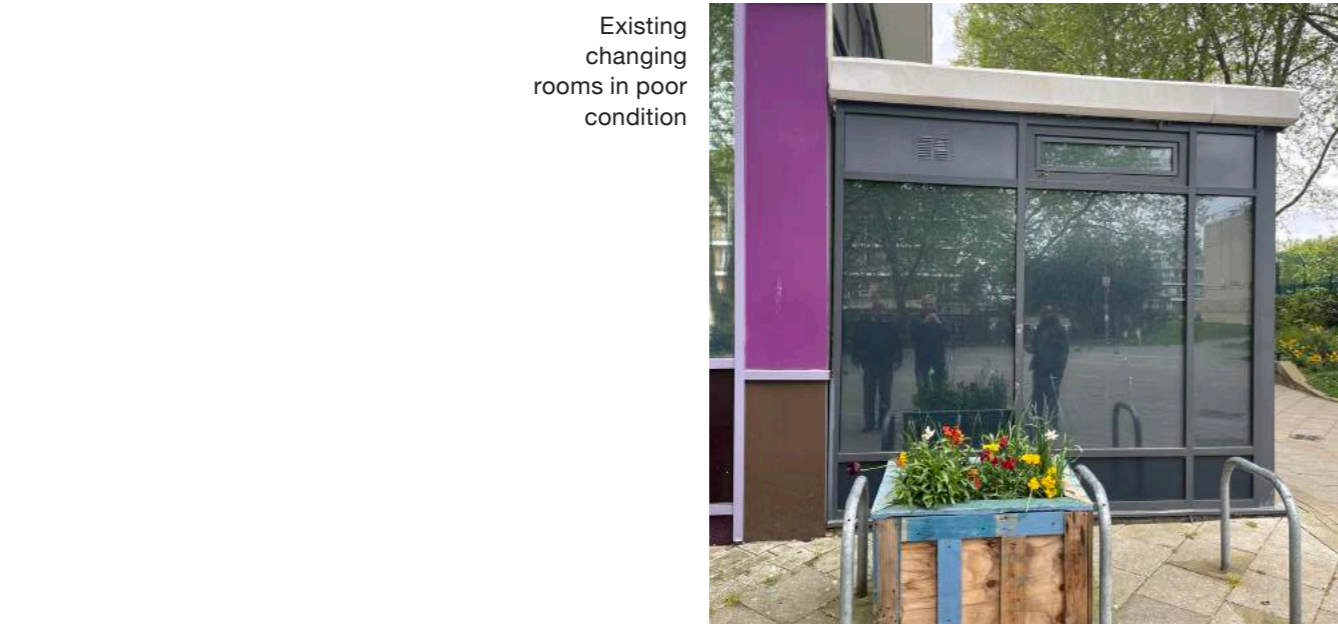
Relationship with grass areas and flats above



Relationship to existing building



Existing entrance and signage



Existing changing rooms in poor condition



Existing signage is hard to read and difficult to see at distance



Inside the main hall where the food programme is currently run



Inside the main hall where the food programme is currently run



Storage area currently used for food bank storage

2.4 Existing Plan

The prefabricated structure, aprox 40sqm, is on the north-west side of QCCA's main building on Ashdown Crescent. It's a self-contained, modular structure that's nearly ten years old and was previously used as two changing rooms and a stationery cupboard. It has two showers and two toilets and a three-phase power supply in the centre of the modular building. It backs the staff kitchen at one end. The changing rooms are now redundant and are now only used for storage.

The staff kitchen is housed within an existing flat roof brick built structure, that is connected to the main community centre. This presents an opportunity to connect the existing kitchen to the new proposal, making use of the existing services, ventilation and access.

The existing changing room block is defensive and does not make use of the strategic position of the site at the corner of Ashdown Crescent, QCCA and the wider public realm. There is a lack of transparency generally across the building elevation and its current layout does not work for the centre. The small footprint of internal rooms does not provide a flexible layout and so prime, useable space with street frontage is wasted as storage. A new replacement building could provide a much better relationship to the exiting centre and the public realm beyond, improving QCCA's connection to the street.



2.5 Existing Elevations



QCCA FOOD HUB AND CAFE

# 3.0 Proposal

## 3.1 Proposed Brief

### QCCA Food Programme

QCCA started its first food-bank on March 23 2020 when lockdown began. It came in response to members who were worried about shopping. Lockdowns have finished but with the rising cost of living, the need is greater than ever to support local people with access to food. Currently run entirely by volunteers, the food-bank is able to support 60 households, with a waiting list. Food is donated by the Felix Project and City Harvest, supplemented by individual donations.

The food-bank is not the only way QCCA fights food poverty. Their youth service fundraises for food whenever it can, especially during school holidays when children on free school meals don't get a hot lunch. Their older people's service also provides a lunch at least once a week and a social lunch with entertainment once a month. As well as ensuring that members don't go hungry, they are a good way of beating isolation and loneliness.

### New Food Bank and Cafe

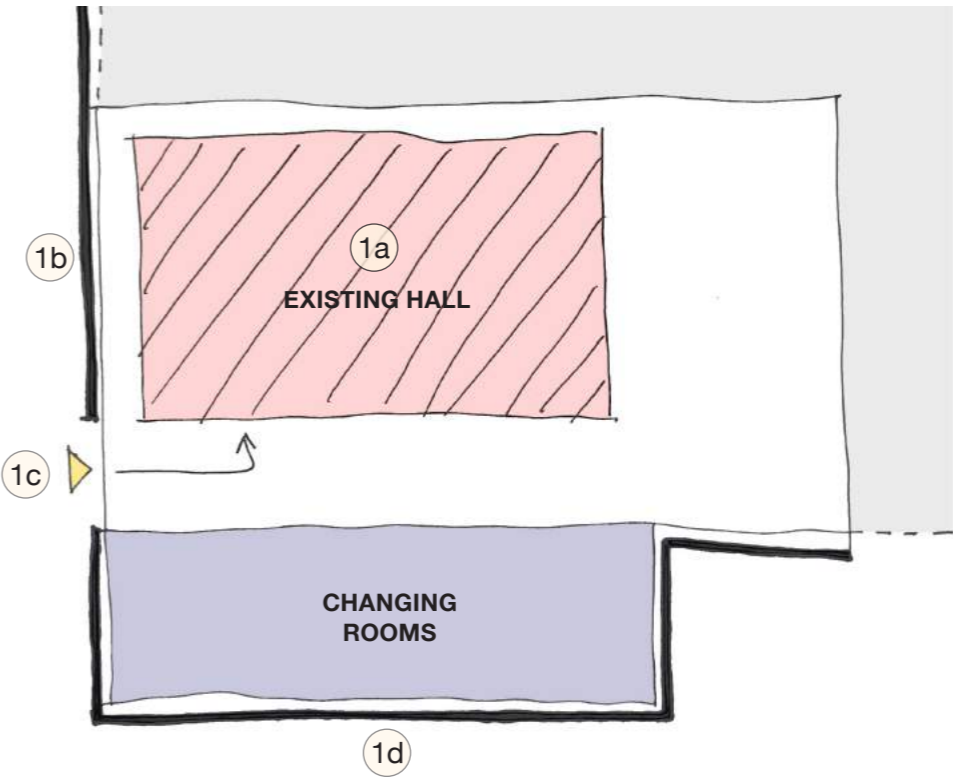
QCCA wants to change the existing staff kitchen and prefab changing room/storage block into a dedicated area for running a foodbank service. The current changing room area would be removed and replaced with a new build extension that could operate flexibly across a food bank and small cafe. It would provide space for processing, storing and serving within the food bank, alongside a small cafe space.

The existing staff kitchen is to be converted into a small cafe kitchen/servery to be used by the cafe serving teas, coffees and simple meals. The new building would occupy the same footprint as the existing changing room block, with improved connections to the existing building and a much improved external appearance.

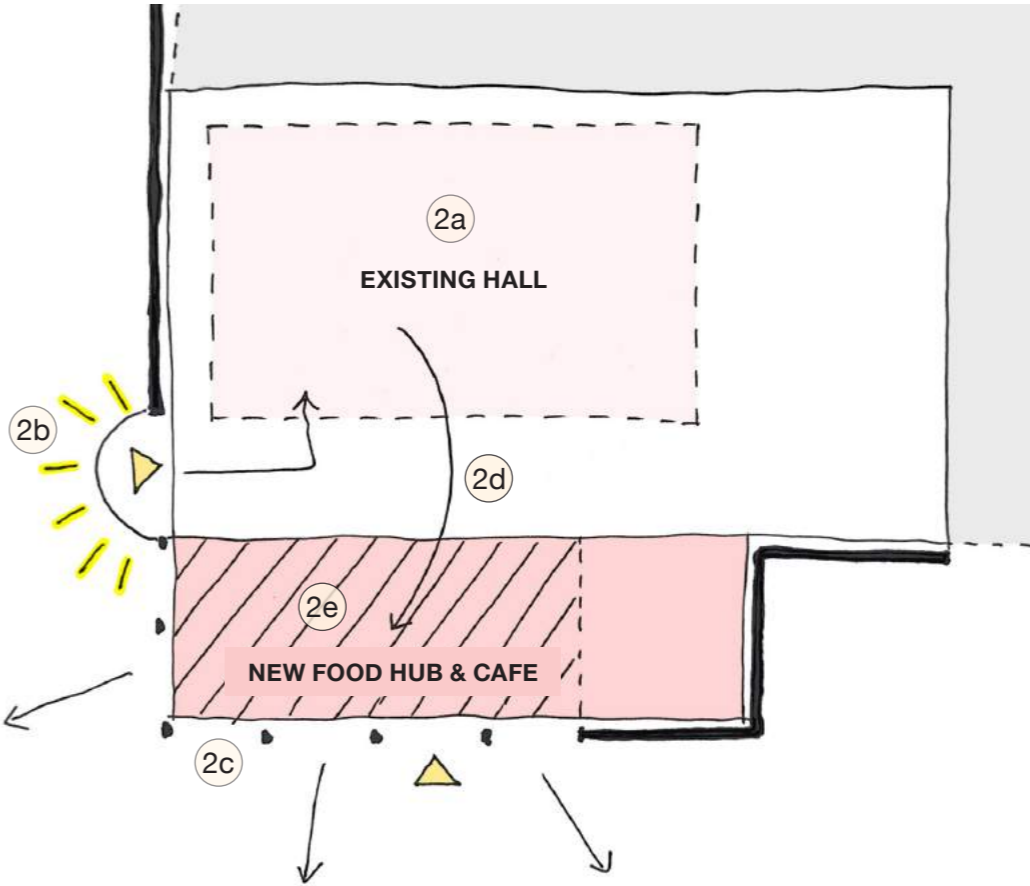
The existing food bank and hot meal programme runs within the main hall of the centre, but is not visible from the public square outside of the centre. Moving these uses to the external edge of the building will help activate the area and increase visibility for the centre and the services it provides. It will also free up space internally and allow the main hall to be used for a wider programme and events.

Existing scenario	
1a	The existing hall and its activities are hidden from the street and public square
1b	Existing elevation is solid and impermeable, showing no signs of the activity within the centre
1c	Existing entrance is hard to see
1d	Existing changing rooms are a poor use of space and are now redundant
Proposed scenario	
2a	Existing hall space freed up for other programmes
2b	New entrance canopy helps to define entrance from the road and increase visibility of centre
2c	New open elevation to cafe connects centre to the street and wider context
2d	Existing food programme relocated to the new food hub / cafe space, foregrounding the centre and its activities
2e	New food hub / cafe to utilise existing footprint and volume of changing rooms

Existing scenario



Proposed scenario



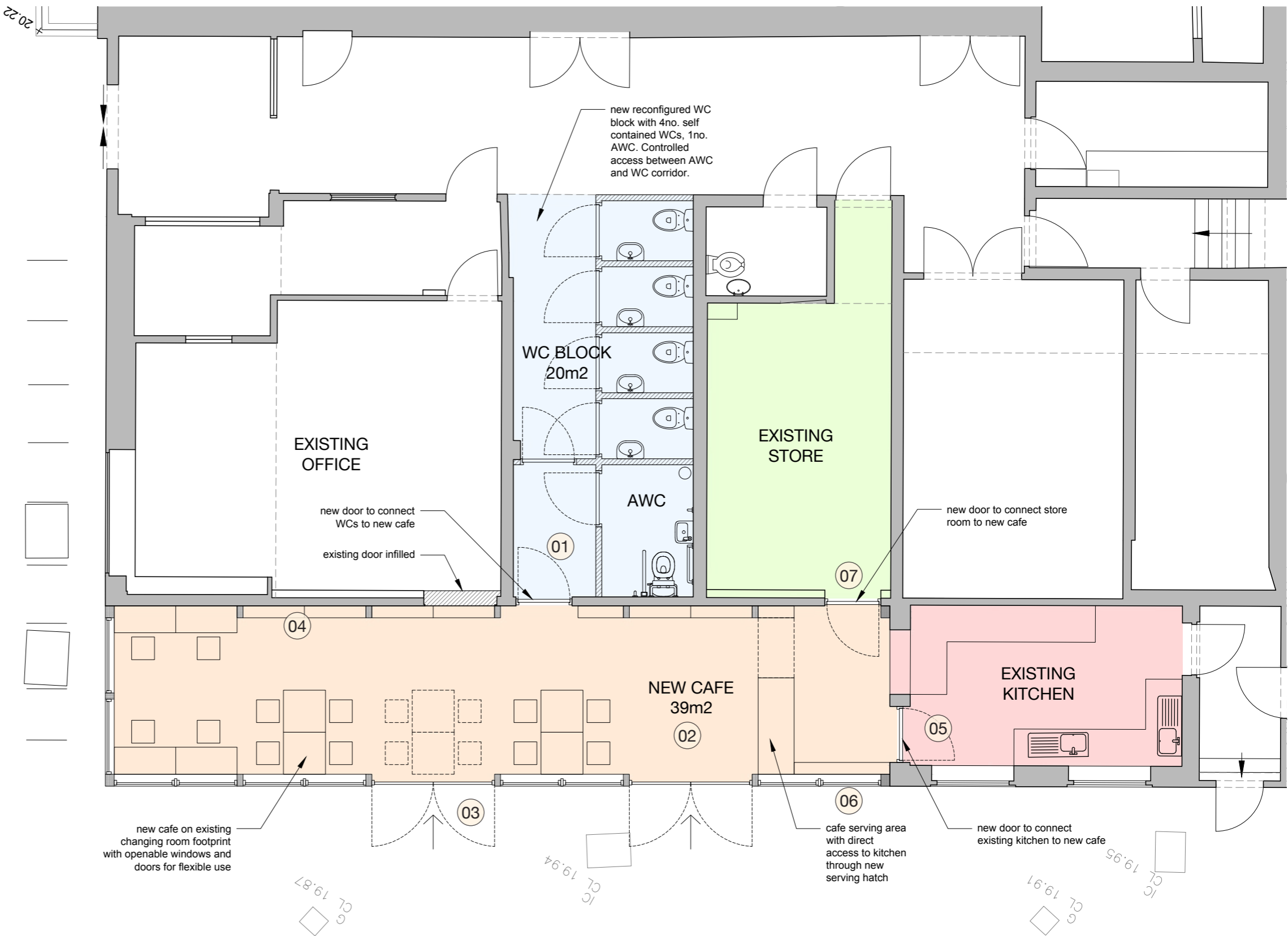
3.2 Proposed Plan

The proposed plan looks to bring the new food hub and cafe to the front of the building, replacing the existing prefab changing block with a new, open and more permeable frontage to the street. Increasing the permeability towards the street will benefit the local context and help to activate the area.

The existing staff kitchen will be used as the kitchen for the cafe, serving into the new space beyond the cafe counter. A new door opening will be inserted into the existing store room, where surplus food is stored for the food hub exchange. A new door will also be formed into the WC block, offering access to WCs shared between the cafe and the centre. The existing door between the office and changing rooms will be infilled.

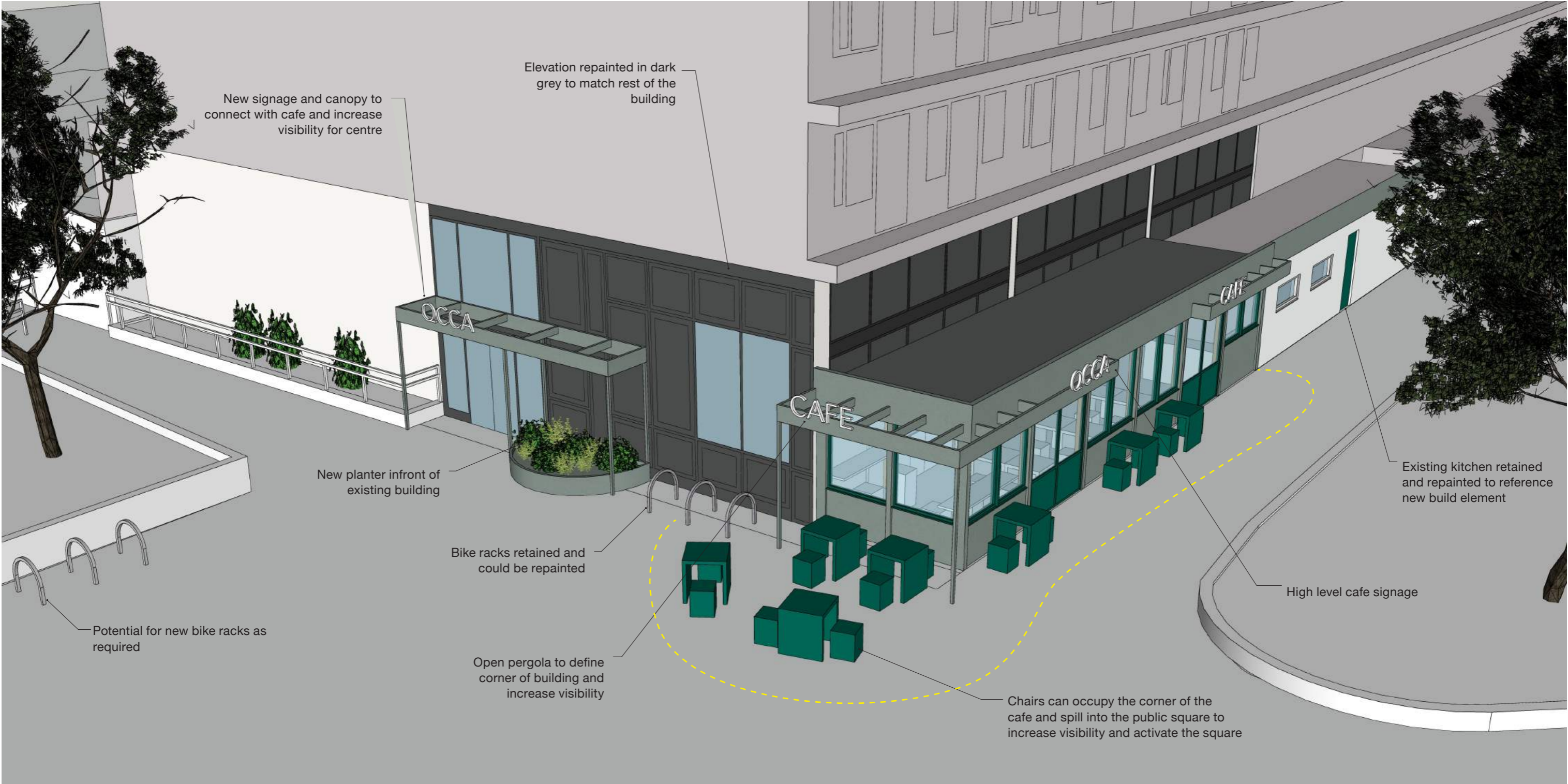
The new cafe will have an open structure with infill glazing and doors, allowing the space to spill out onto the public square. This connection to the surrounding area will help to foreground the centre within the square and wider area.

- 01. New WC block with 4no. cubicles and 1no. AWC. New access into cafe with controlled access between AWC corridor and cafe.
- 02. Flexible layout food hub / cafe space
- 03. Openable doors and windows to spill outside
- 04. Storage/shelving built into rear wall
- 05. Cafe counter with direct relationship to existing kitchen
- 06. External service hatch
- 07. Controlled access to store room

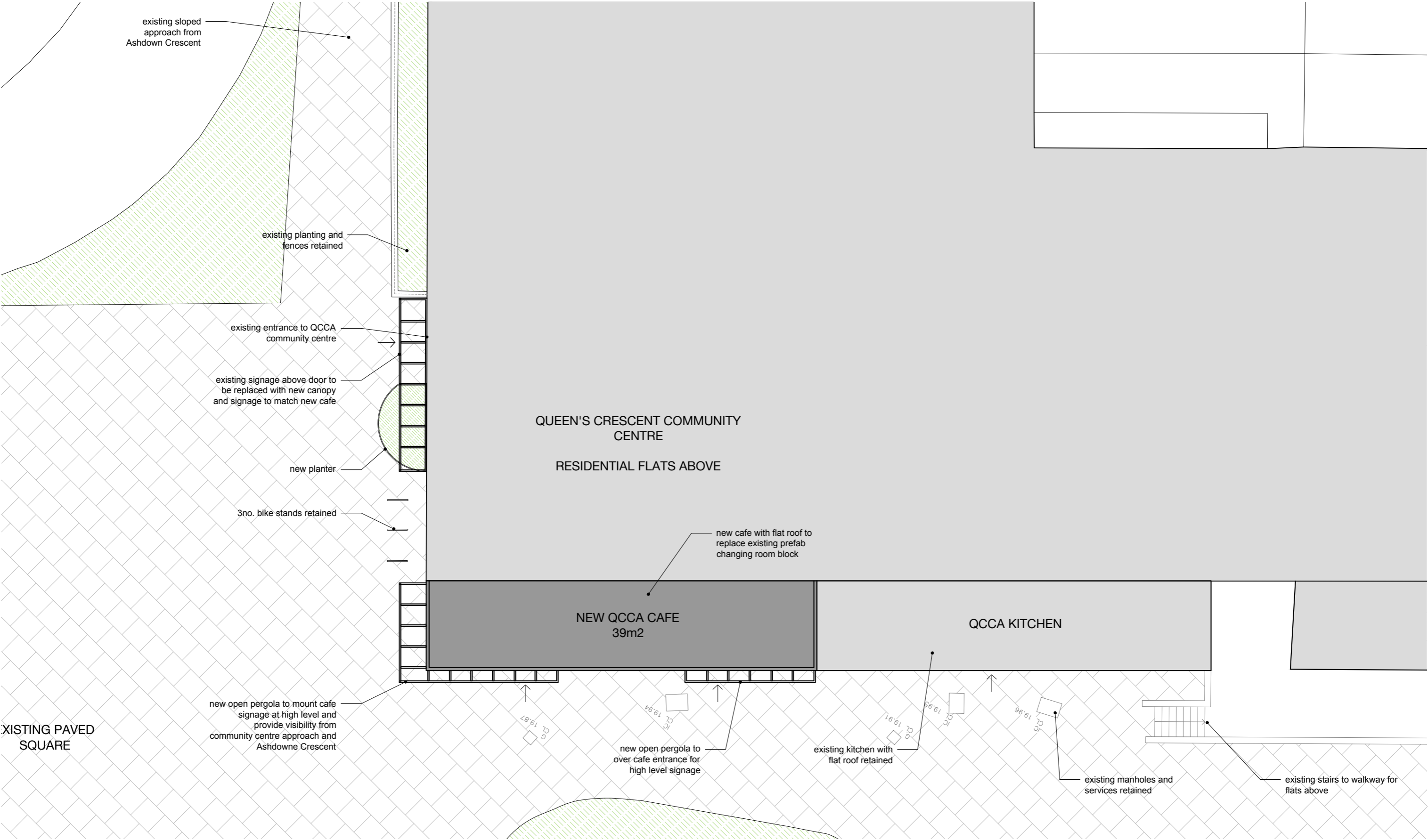


3.3 Proposed 3D Sketches

- + new canopy connects new and old to create a holistic design
- + increased visibility from the street and across public square
- + planter helps bridge the two elevations and connect new and old, adds green planting to the area
- + bike racks retained and potential for additional if required
- + cafe can open into the street and bring activity into the square



3.4 Proposed Site Plan

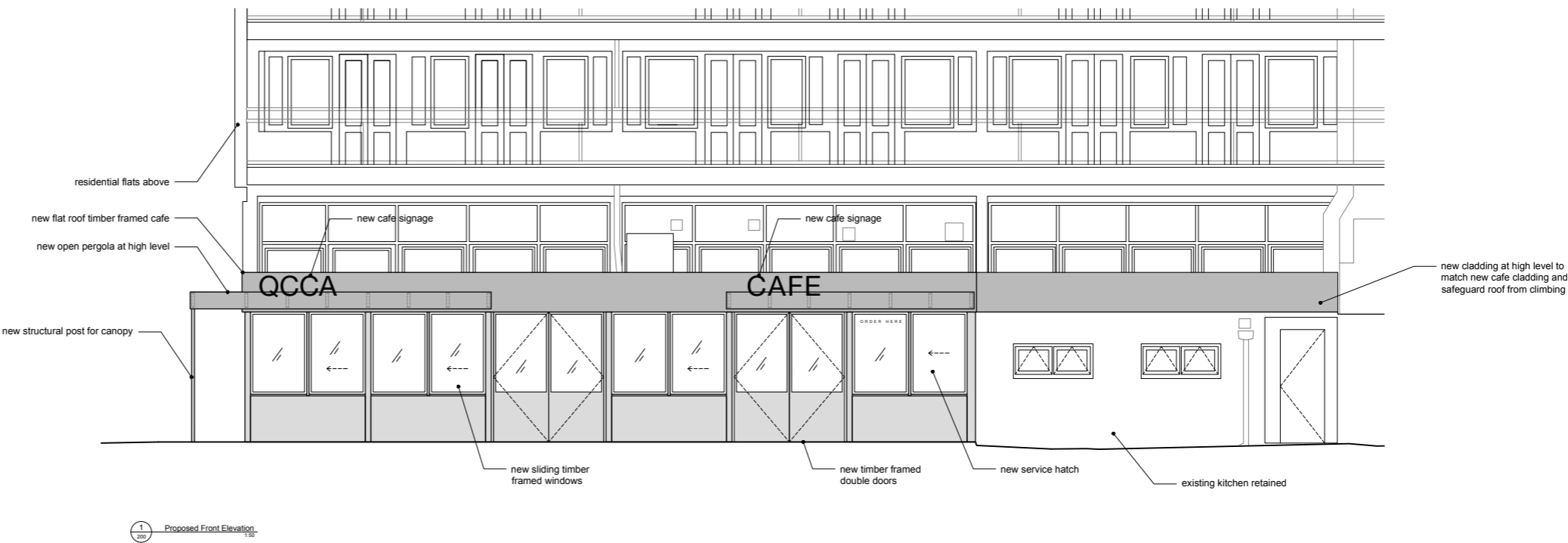


3.5 Proposed Elevations

The proposed elevation of the new food hub and cafe looks to reference the rhythm of the existing building elevation, with an exposed structure and large windows. The height of the building is single storey and subservient to the existing elevation, echoing the form of the previous changing rooms. It is modest in height, form and volume, reusing the existing building footprint.

The lightweight and transparent structure uses double doors and windows to connect the internal activity to the public realm. Double doors offer flexibility, allowing users to flow through the building and to spill out into the square.

New open pergolas at high level help define the corners and show the food hub entrance and service hatch. This language is mirrored in a new canopy and signage to the front of the centre, creating a coherent elevation and identity for the building.



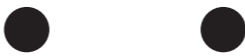
# 4.0 Materiality

## 4.1 Proposed External Materiality

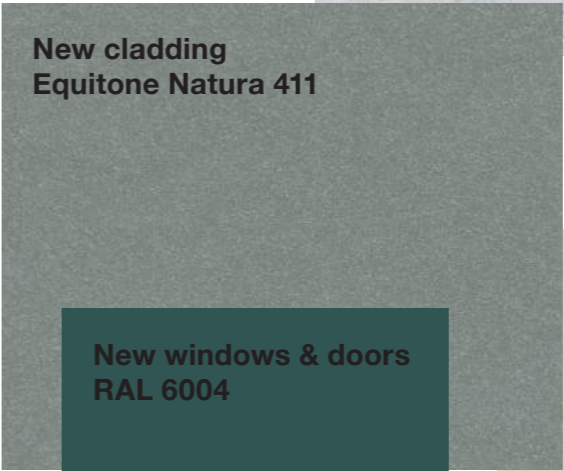
The proposed design uses natural tones that relate back to the adjacent green spaces and to both complement and contrast to the existing materials of the building. The new green clad building will be more visible from the street and surrounding area, contrasting against the dark grey backdrop of the existing windows. The new colour will be matched at the existing building entrance, through a new canopy and signage. This will tie the scheme together and make for a much more coherent addition than the existing changing room block.

The proposal uses a low-carbon composite panel as a cladding material, which is cost-effective and easy to install and maintain. The hard wearing nature of the material makes it ideal for use in public buildings, where levels of wear and tear could be high. It has inherent fire resistant qualities, reducing issues around fire safety with the neighbouring flats above and is recyclable at end of life.

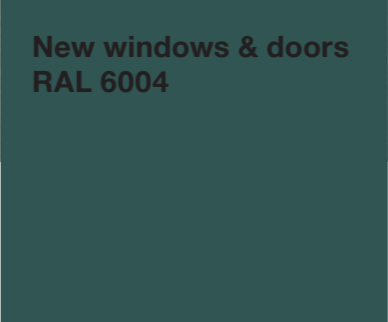
The building will be built with a lightweight timber frame, allowing the elevation to have large openings for windows and doors. The windows and doors will give a large area of glazing across the elevation, connecting the activities within to the street and public square. Double doors will allow the cafe to have chairs outside, making use of and activating the surrounding public space. The doors and windows will be painted a dark shade of green to complement the cladding colours.



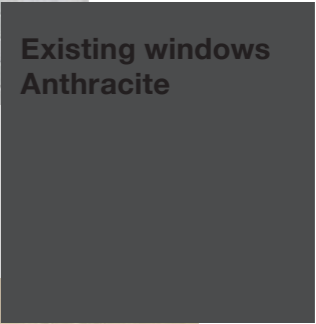
Existing brick



New cladding  
Equitone Natura 411



New windows & doors  
RAL 6004



Existing windows  
Anthracite



Timber structure

# 5.0 Wayfinding

## 5.1 Proposed Wayfinding

Currently the QCCA is hard to find and not visible from Queens Crescent Road. The existing building is dull, painted in dark grey and the entrance is undefined. When approaching the site it is hard to read the entrance against the rest of the building, with no differentiation in colour or material and no defined canopy. The existing changing room block has no relationship to the public square and offers nothing to the corner of the building. The new proposal would act as a beacon, visible from all main sightlines from Queens Crescent, Ashdown Crescent and the wider estate, pulling people towards the centre.

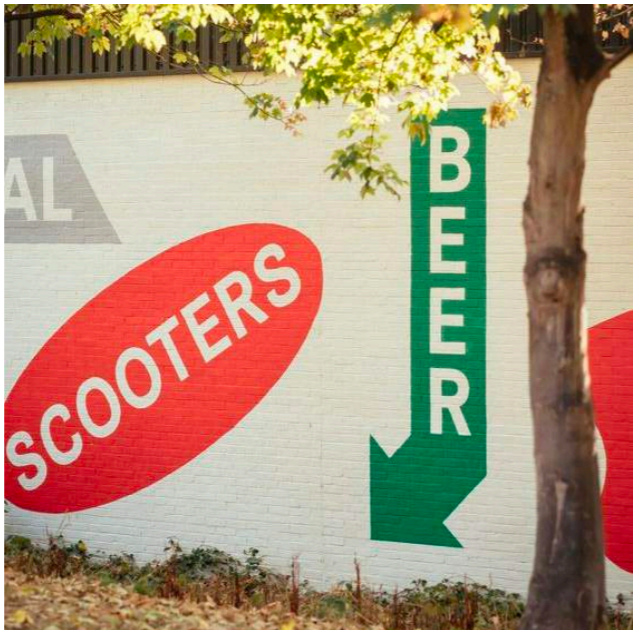
A new entrance canopy in contrasting colour and material would greatly improve the legibility of the building and make access easier for users of the centre. It presents an opportunity for improved signage and branding, tidying up the building's appearance for a more coherent elevation.

The proposed canopy borrows from the language of the open pergola of the cafe, creating continuity between the new element and the existing. At the base of the canopy, a new planter brings new greenery to the square and helps soften the existing elevation.

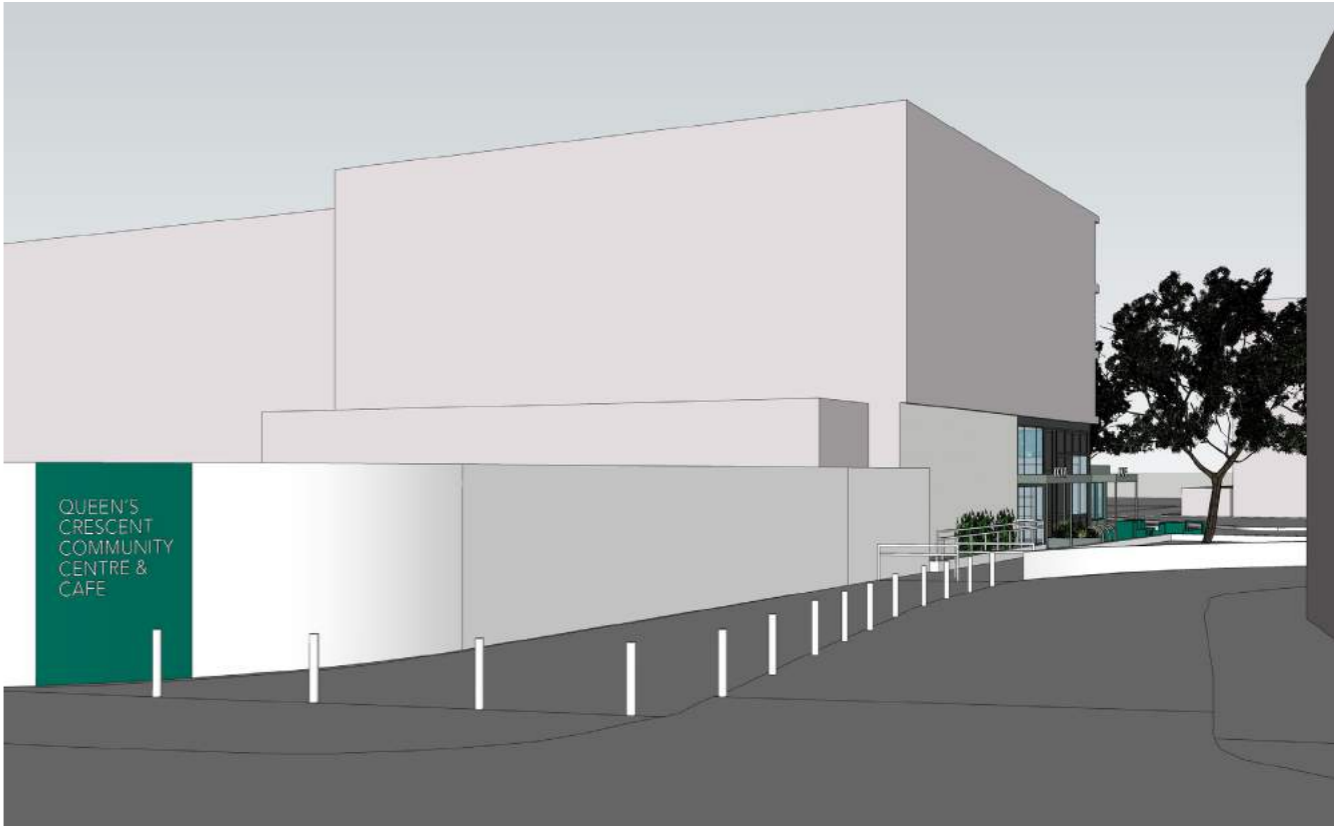
The new wayfinding scheme also proposes new signage at the intersection between Queen's Crescent and Ashdown Crescent. A new painted signage piece would point people towards the centre via Ashdown Crescent and bring a presence to the street. The signage design is to be developed, but would borrow from the colours of the new proposals.



Painted wall signage/wayfinding references



New wayfinding to guide people from Queen's Crescent via Ashdown Crescent



5.2 Existing and Proposed Entrance



Existing entrance



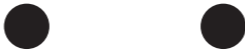
Proposed entrance with new canopy and new food hub / cafe

# 6.0 Design References

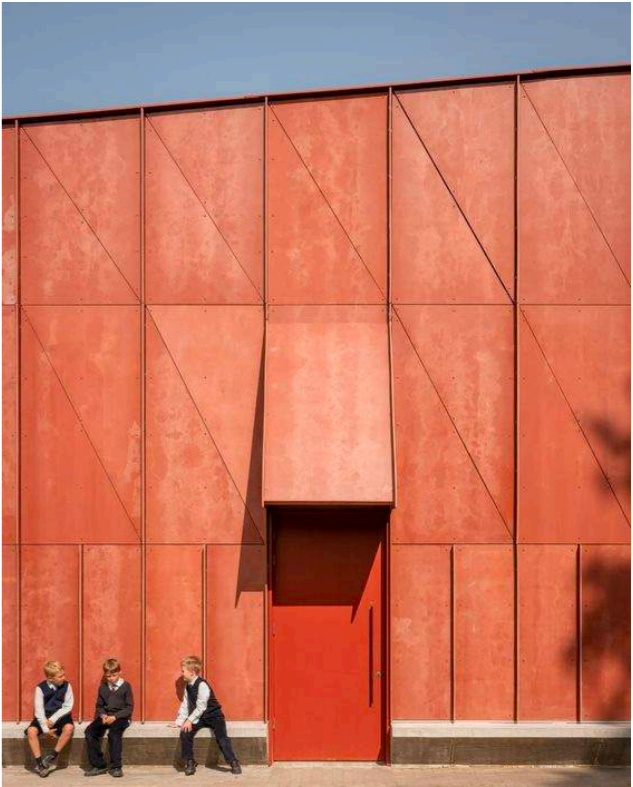
## 6.1 External References



Colourful timber structure with large opening windows



Colourful, durable and cost effective cladding



A beacon on the corner of QCCA

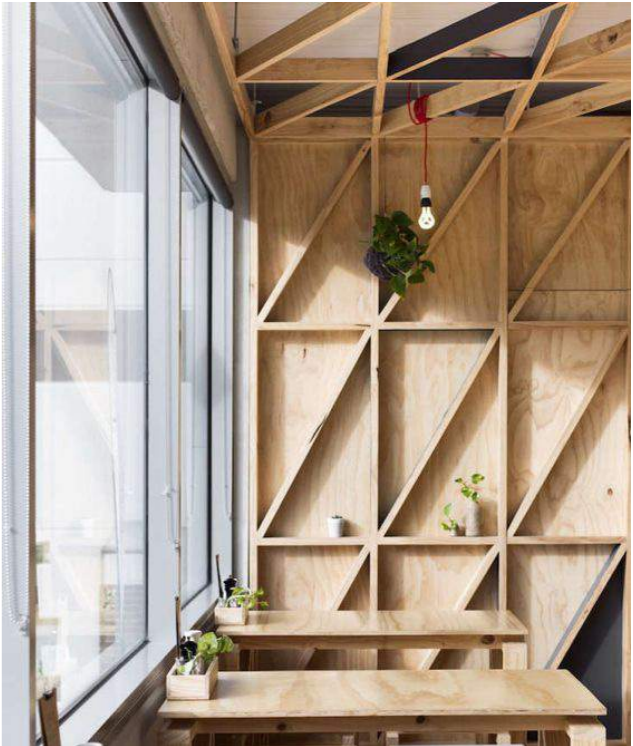
6.2 Internal References



Exposed timber frame with glazed infills



Integrated storage within exposed structure



Colourful structure with large openings



Bright interior with large format glazing and high level workspaces

# 7.0 Additional Information

## 7.1 Inclusive Access

The scheme will meet the statutory standards set out in the Building Regulations Approved Documents Part M unless stated otherwise.

Inclusive design in the physical structure includes: accessible WC's within the scheme, existing access ways and levels maintained and new fixtures/ fittings mounted at a accessible heights.

For any signage in the building, easily recognisable visual symbols are proposed in preference to large amounts of text, especially for key facilities such as toilets. Bold wayfinding signage, with the addition of braille signage, will be placed in clear locations as required, with care taken not to clutter the visual appearance of the space. Colour, lighting, markings, surface finishes and handrails will be designed and specified to aid inclusively.

## 7.2 Ashdown Crescent Residents

Considerations for residents above the new food hub and cafe space include lighting strategies, noise and wayfinding.

- lighting: the external lighting should not be directed upwards towards the flats. The estate already has lighting that will secondarily provide light to the site when its dark.
- noise: roof and all elements of the build will be well insulated for acoustics.
- wayfinding: the signage should be clear in it's direction, guiding people to the food hub/cafe only and not to the residential area above.

## 7.3 Refuse Strategy

Any new waste generated through the food hub and cafe will be incorporated into the exisitng waste management strategy for the building. As the proposal is to move existing services that are already offered (hot meals scheme, food hub) to a new location within the building, it is not seen that there will be significantly more waste generated.

## 7.4 Bike Storage

There is provision for at least 6 bike storage stands on site to promote cycling to and from the site as shown on the site plan.

