Annex A

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF THE REVITALISATION OF THE FORMER LAU FAU SHAN POLICE STATION

BACKGROUND

Under Batch V of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (the "Revitalisation Scheme"), the Secretary for Development granted approval-in-principle in 2018 for the proposed conservation and adaptive re-use of Former Lau Fau Shan Police Station ("FLFSPS") (please refer to Figure 1 for the location plan) as "Former Lau Fau Shan Police Station – Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy" ("The Academy") submitted by Hong Kong Guide Dogs Association Limited.

2. Former Lau Fau Shan Police Station Site ("the Site") comprises a three-storey police station constructed in 1963 ("the Main Building"), two later built storage shelters and outdoor open spaces. The police station ceased operation in 2002 and was accorded a Grade 3 status in March 2014 by the Antiquities Advisory Board. The Site will be converted and revitalised to comprise A) heritage interpretation areas, B) guide dog training areas, C) therapy rooms, D) live-in training rooms, E) offices and back of house areas, F) open spaces including a memorial garden, and G) a new annex block. Part of the Site, including the existing Storage Shelter No. 2 and the Control Tower on the roof of the Main Building will continue to be occupied by the Hong Kong Observatory ("HK Observatory") for their continuation of weather station operation. The existing Storage Shelter No. 1 will be demolished to make room for a new annex block to house new fire services water tanks and other supporting facilities.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A. Historic and Contextual Significance

3. Situated on a hilltop of Lau Fau Shan Village and along the shore of Deep Bay, the Site had been a strategic point of defense towards pirates, illegal immigrants and smugglers together with other police posts stretched along the coast. These police establishments formed a defense line on the northwest

border of the New Territories. Among these establishments, the Site was constructed in the largest scale as a sub-divisional station, reflecting its strategic importance over the others.

4. To enhance the connectivity of the Site to other spots along the defense line, new roads (Lau Fau Shan Road and Deep Bay Road) were constructed at the same time back in early 1960s. The enhanced road system improved the accessibility of Lau Fau Shan as a whole that became a contributing factor to its tourism development.

5. The story of the Site transforming from an observation tower to a police station helps illustrate the history of Hong Kong police combating against pirates in early days around 1920s to 1940s, and against illegal immigrants since around 1950s. Originally, all the police establishments in Deep Bay area together narrate a comprehensive history of fighting illegal immigrants during colonial period and demonstrate a remarkable contextual value. However, with only the Site and the Tsim Bei Tsui Police Post remaining, the Site became the major site / source to glimpse into this piece of history, while the cluster's contextual value diminished.

B. Architectural Significance

6. The Main Building is an exemplar of Modern utilitarian architecture that carries almost no ornaments. The building form is a result of juxtaposition of building volumes while the layout shows efficient spatial planning. Nonetheless some worth-noting features (but not many) to reflect the nature of a police station and design/ materials of the era still exist.

C. Social Significance

7. The Site was important to the Lau Fau Shan neighbourhood in maintaining the public order and safety. It is also a local landmark due to its prominent location on the hilltop.

8. To the local community, the establishment of the Site and the two roads was a driving factor to the development of Lau Fau Shan's tourism industry and oyster cultivation business, although such value may only be pereceived by the older generation.

Annex A

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9. In accordance with Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) No. 6/2009, a Heritage Impact Assessment ("HIA") has been carried out with the objective of drawing up a Conservation Management Plan and assessing the heritage impact of the proposed project scope and design. Based on Antiquities and Monuments Office ("AMO")'s Conservation Guidelines contained in the Resource Kit of the Revitalisation Scheme, the HIA sets out the mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on the historic building in the course of revitalisation works and outlines the future interpretation, maintenance and management strategies.

A. Project Proposal

10. The Site is proposed to be transformed into a guide dogs education and training centre of Hong Kong as well as South East Asia region, in order to provide guide dogs breeding and training for visually impaired people in Hong Kong. To train service dogs to provide outreach services for people in need including children who suffer from autism, persons with disabilities and the elderly, etc. Activities including exhibitions and guided group tours will be organised to promote public understanding towards the architectural merits and cultural significance of the Site, the history of Lau Fau Shan area and the guide dogs services.

11. The following functions are required to be accommodated in the revitalised site:

(a) The Main Building:

- LG/F: parking, dog isolation rooms, plant rooms and back of house;

- G/F: Visitor Centre, interpretation areas including the existing Cell, Cell Corridor, existing Armoury, existing Armoury Loading and Unloading Area, therapy room and pantry, live-in training rooms and lavatories;

- 1/F: office, therapy rooms, training rooms, outdoor training area on roofs, existing Balcony as interpretation area and lavatories;

- R/F: existing Control Tower reserved for Hong Kong Observatory's use, existing Turrets (also known as Scout Towers) reserved for interpretation, plant room and building services installation; and

- In general, a new internal lifting platform to connect LG/F to 1/F and a new external staircase to provide escape route from 1/F to G/F.

(b) Storage Shelters:

- No. 1: to be demolished to make way for new fire services and sprinkler tanks and pumps as well as dog isolation rooms; and

- No. 2: to be reserved for Hong Kong Observatory's use.

(c) Open spaces and lawns will be kept open with landscape enhanced.

B. Conservation Principles

12. The Conservation Policies and Guidelines to conserve and interpret the Site are as follows:

(a) Use

- The new use should be compatible with the Site. Therefore, it is the best to keep the building as institutional use that serves the public, in order to continue its social mission.

- The allowable structural loading of the existing historic building should be taken into account when choosing the new use. In view of the constraints given by the original design loading capacity, the new use for upper storeys should be chosen such that extensive structural strengthening can be avoided.

(b) Setting

- The setting of the Main Building as the highest point of the localised region should be retained. Higher new structures in the Site or on top of the Main Building main roof should be avoided.

- Elements in the Site that also support such function for observation should be kept and their vista to be observed should be kept unobstructed. These include: the Control Tower on the Main Building R/F, the Turrets on the Main Building R/F and the Balcony on the Main Building 1/F.

(c) Interpretation

- Interpretation in the form of guided tours and displays should be provided to promote the cultural significance of FLFSPS to the general public. The possible topics for interpretation include:

    - The historical values of the Site given by its relation to border defense and illegal immigrant control after 1949, which was a significant history of Hong Kong.

    - The architecture of the Site as one of the examples of Modern buildings in Hong Kong.

    - History of Lau Fau Shan and the cultural landscape of Lau Fau Shan in relation to its oyster cultivation history.

- Rooms and character defining elements ("CDEs") with very high and high significance should be reserved for interpretation that allows public accessibility as far as possible.

(d) Preservation of Building Fabrics

- In general, CDEs of significance listed in HIA should be preserved or restored in any future adaptive re-use for the Site as far as possible. Examples of CDEs of very high and high significance are:

(i) Site setting: strategic location of the Main Building to oversee activities in Lau Fau Shan, Deep Bay and the border with Shenzhen, the central court, the northwest lawn and the external staircase;

(ii) Exterior of the Main Building: the volumetric building form, reinforced concrete grids on façades, the main entrance with canopy, Armoury Loading and Unloading Area, original window metal guard bars and sill boards, external steel doors with door viewers, precast concrete grilles, Turrets, the Control Tower and the steel mast on roof and all guarding post numbers; and

(iii) Interior of the Main Building: the internal staircase, reinforced concrete column and beam structure, ventilation wall openings on LG/F, defensive steel window shutters, the Cell, the Cell Corridor, the Armoury, the open plan layout of the Mess and Recreation Room on G/F, the Balcony and cat ladders to the Turrets on 1/F.

- In general, CDEs should be preserved, repaired or restored as much as possible in any future adaptive re-use for the Site.

- Previous intrusive later alterations and additions should be removed to restore the hidden/ disturbed CDEs as far as possible.

(e) Intervention to Building Fabrics

- In general, alterations and additions to the FLFSPS to suit new use and safety enhancement is acceptable, in order to keep the building in appropriate use. However, they should be well planned with minimum intervention approach so as to minimise impact to the cultural significance of the building. CDEs of lower significance and of less authenticity can allow more flexibilities to suit adaptive re-use.

- The design of any alteration and addition works should follow the following principles:

  (i) Reversible alterations / additions;

  (ii) Compatible with but distinguishable from the original fabrics; and

  (iii) Minimum visual impact to the Main Building, as well as from the Main Building especially its strategic vistas to the surroundings and Deep Bay.

- Building services should be well planned to avoid visual impact to the historic building.

(f) Documentation

- A documentation mechanism should be set up. All the studies, researches, investigation findings, mock up results should be kept in proper filing. Cartographic and photographic surveys to properly record the historic building shall be conducted before and after the alteration works. Any future repair works during operation of the new use should be properly documented. All these records should be kept in appropriate means and media.

C. Key Design Proposal

13. The key proposed works for the revitalisation project are listed below:

(a) Overall site approach

(i) The project intends to adaptively re-use the Site as Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (i.e. a guide dogs education and training centre) with a visitor centre, heritage interpretation areas, guide dogs training areas and supporting facilities;

(ii) Some areas in the Site will be occupied by Hong Kong Observatory, including the Control Tower on the roof of the

Main Building, Storage Shelter No. 2 and the nearby lawn area;

(iii) The existing Storage Shelter No. 1 will be replaced by a new annex block that houses the new fire services and sprinkler water tanks and pumps as well as dog isolation rooms;

(iv) A new external staircase will be added to the northeast end of the Main Building as a means of escape from 1/F to G/F; and

(v) Landscape will be enhanced with a guide dog memorial garden and puppy activity areas introduced.

(b) Conservation and Conversion Works for transforming the Site into Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy

(i) Main Building exterior

No major works will be carried out on the façades, except:

- To change the colour of reinforced concrete grids on façades from the current pale blue to army green, making reference to the façade colour in the 1970s to be verified by paint analysis if possible;

- To change some of the existing windows to louvres and fire-rated fixed light, and to enlarge some to form door openings for means of escape provision;

- To enclose G/F utility platform by frost glass partition to convert the space into a toilet;

- To replace all window type air conditioners by split types air conditioners;

- To repair all roofs to ensure water-proofing, to add fall arrest systems, solar panels and AC outdoor units on main roof, and to convert the two roofs on 1/F into guide dog training

areas and outdoor toilet areas for dogs with balustrades added; and

- To install new signage of The Academy at the existing entrance gate and a new wall at LG/F near the accessible parking space.

(ii) Main Building interior

The layout and setting of the interior will be largely retained, except:

- The Report Room with the Interview Room demolished, as well as the ADVC Office and Sub-unit Commander Office on G/F will be converted into a Visitor Centre and display areas. The timber parquet in the original Quarters will be salvaged and reused in these areas, subject to the amount of salvaged timber;

- The original Quarters will be converted into live-in training rooms with minor layout adjustment;

- Rooms on 1/F will be converted into training/ therapy rooms, offices and other supporting facilities with layout adjustment; and

- All original door openings will be preserved and reused as much as possible. New doors, in particular sliding doors in "live-in training" areas (original Quarters) to be installed to suit guide dog training use;

(iii) Preserved features for interpretation

The following will be preserved and interpreted by guided tours:

- LG/F: external staircase, concrete grille screen walls & ventilation wall openings;

- G/F: main entrance, former Report Room (with defensive steel window shutters), former Cell No. 1, former Armoury, former Armoury Loading and Unloading Area, internal staircase and concrete grille screen walls;

- 1/F: the cat ladders to R/F Turrets and Balcony; and

- R/F: the two Turrets and the Control Tower (only viewing from G/F Visitor Centre by CCTVs).

(iv) Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements of the Buildings Ordinance or other modern day requirements

- A lifting platform will be added next to the internal staircase inside the Main Building for barrier free access ("BFA"). Existing layout at the south corner of Main Building on LG/F to 1/F will be altered to house the lift shaft;

- Existing internal staircase will be used as an escape staircase and upgraded with partial replacement of windows to fire-rated fixed lights, railing addition, fire-rated enclosure, shutters addition and existing balustrade upgrade;

- Existing toilets and bathrooms will be rearranged to give adequate sanitary fitment provisions and universal toilets;

- Raised decks will be added at Main Building entrances for BFA provision;

- The later-altered metal balustrades of the existing external staircase will be replaced by a new one to comply with the statutory requirement for protective barriers;

- Allowing public access to the 1/F Balcony up to an approximate depth of 1.6m only and fencing off the edge of slab (with inadequate loading capacity and with sub-standard balustrades) by a new access barrier with minimal

visual impact;

- Retaining walls between the external staircase and the entrance gate will be upgraded, with balustrades at the top of the walls replaced as well; and

- The existing reinforced concrete structural elements may need fire-rated construction upgrade, subject to the Buildings Department's decision.

D. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works

14. For areas where impact of the conversion works could not be avoided, the following mitigation measures are to be implemented based on the conservation principles stated above:

(a) The new annex block that houses the new fire services and sprinkler water tanks and pumps as well as dog isolation rooms will be hidden at the rear of the Main Building on LG/F to minimise visual impact. The roof of the new annex block will match with the northwest lawn on G/F level to give an extended outdoor area. Safety precautionary, protective and monitoring measures will be carried out, such as the installation of tilting, settlement and vibration monitoring check points before works to monitor impacts during the construction period as per the Buildings Department and related government authorities' requirements;

(b) The new external staircase will be located at the northeast end of the Main Building to ensure the least visual impact to the Main Building. It will be built of independent and reversible structure that does not affect the existing foundation of the Main Building. The design and material of the staircase shall be compatible with and distinguishable from the Main Building;

(c) The 7 no. of trees to be added to the west and east corners of the Site on G/F for tree compensation will be kept away from the existing buildings, especially 1/F Balcony and R/F Control Tower to ensure no disturbance to the existing buildings as trees grow and no blockage of view out to

Deep Bay from strategic locations;

(d) The existing windows, which are later replaced aluminum ones and do not carry values will be altered as necessary to suit the layout change or statutory requirements for fire resisting construction and natural ventilation. However, original window parts including all metal guard bars, timber window sill boards will be repaired/ restored (especially restoring those previously disturbed by window type air conditioners), while original insect screens, if exist in full set, will be repaired to conserve original fabric. On the other hand, those original/ aged timber or steel framed louvres and hatch in Cell, Cell Corridor and Armoury will be preserved;

(e) Enlargement of windows to provide doorways for means of escape will be planned and implemented carefully to avoid any disturbance to the existing reinforced concrete grid on facades, and will be properly recorded before works. Window sill boards will be salvaged and reused as far as possible;

(f) The frost glass partition to enclose the G/F utility platform will be designed in a way to avoid disturbance to the existing metal balustrade and steel door, and constructed with access opening for regular maintenance and inspection to the metal balustrade;

(g) The fall arrest systems, solar panels and air conditioning outdoor units on the main roof and the new balustrades and raised decks / ramps added on the 1/F flat roofs will be set back from the façades to avoid visual impact. Any necessary steel frame and plinth for the air conditioning outdoor units and solar panels on roof slab and metal decks and ramps on 1/F will be installed in a reversible manner;

(h) The installation of the new signage will not physically disturb the entrance gate and will be constructed in a reversible manner to be agreed with AMO. The new wall on LG/F will be in simple render finish and so will be subtle and keep visual impact to façade minimal;

(i) Existing layout of the Main Building will be recorded before any layout adjustment. Cat ladders to Turrets will be incorporated in the layout,

preserved and repaired;

(j) Before installation of new doors, all existing doors will be recorded before removal. New doors will be of design compatible with and distinguishable from the historic fabric. Selected existing doors still inscribed with room names will be salvaged for interpretation;

(k) A lifting platform, instead of a lift, will be constructed inside the Main Building. It will be located at the south corner of the Main Building, which are now accommodating back of house facilities or toilets, and away from the existing beam / column frame to avoid impact on CDEs and existing building structure. It will be rest on ground with lift pit depth 200mm, which is above the existing footing of the Main Building, again to avoid structural impact on the existing building;

(l) New fire-rated enclosure to the existing internal staircase will be either provided by glass enclosure or fire shutter to minimise visual impact. For the balustrade upgrade, liaison with Buildings Department for regulation modification without alteration works will be first carried out before deciding to add a new wire mesh partition in the staircase well in a reversible manner as an alternative;

(m) Raised decks added to Main Building entrances will be installed in a reversible manner;

(n) For the 1/F Balcony, public access will be restricted by management approach to avoid physical and visual impact caused by strengthening the structurally inadequate slab and adding a new up-to-standard balustrade behind the existing one. Public will still be allowed to enter the Balcony up to a depth 1.6m and enjoyment of viewing out to Deep Bay will not be compromised;

(o) Retaining wall upgrade between the external staircase and the entrance gate will be carried out in a minimum extent with precautionary measures so as to reduce its physical disturbance and visual impact on the adjacent fabrics and structures, including the external staircase and its retaining wall (CDEs);

(p) All new balustrades introduced at the external areas will be compatible with but distinguish from the Main Building. The new balustrades for the upgrade of external staircase will be of design, material and style which respect the original balustrade design, but distinguishable from the original. Existing balustrades will be recorded before removal; and

(q) Subject to Building Authority's approval, no upgrade is proposed to the existing reinforced concrete structural elements. Otherwise, reversible fire resisting construction coating e.g. promat board will be added to all columns, beams and slabs.

CONCLUSION

15. The HIA has concluded that the impact of the proposed revitalisation works at the Site is considered acceptable and manageable with the proposed mitigation measures. Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy Limited will ensure that all works carried out for heritage conservation strictly comply with the requirements stipulated in the HIA as endorsed by AMO.

Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy Limited
December 2020

Annex A

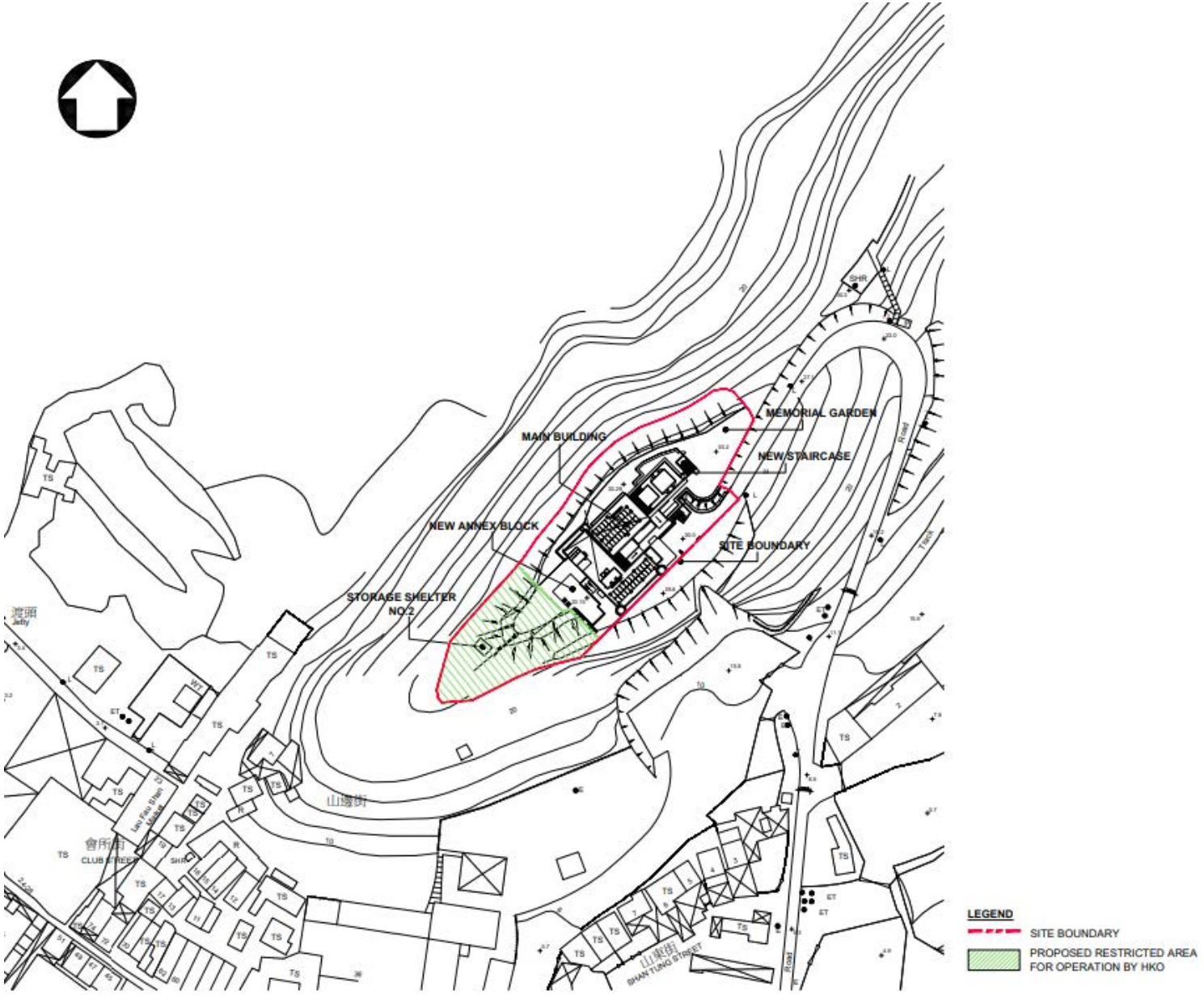

Figure 1. Location Plan (not to scale)

Annex A

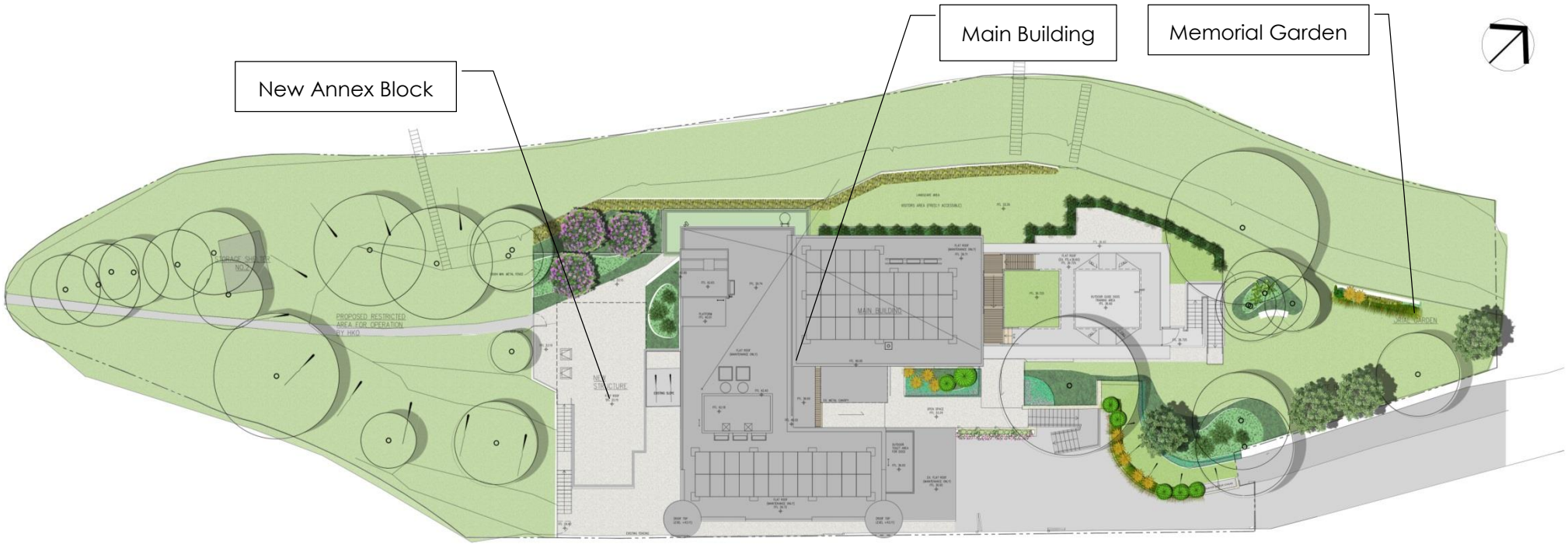

Figure 2. Proposed site layout and landscape plan (not to scale)

Annex A

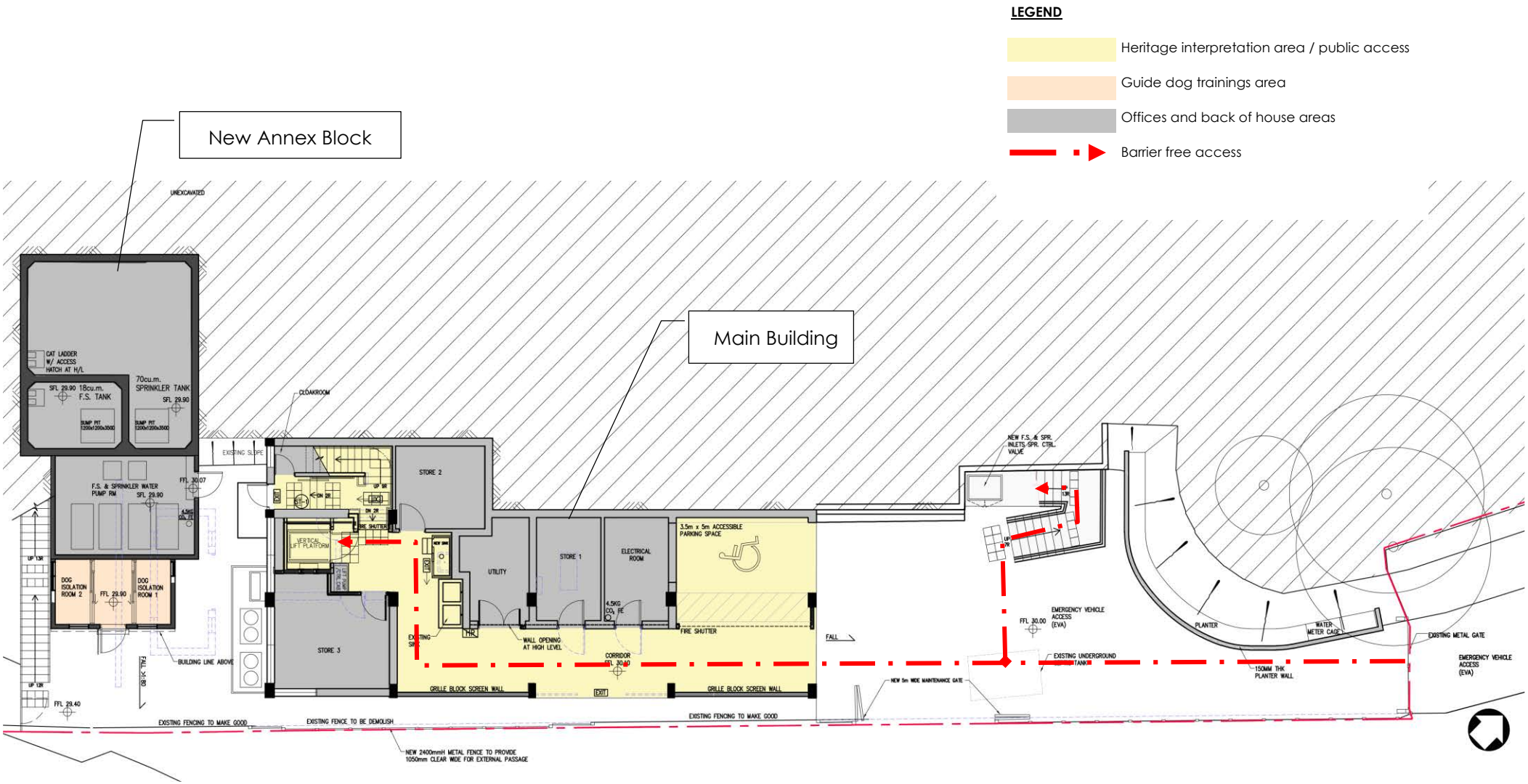

Figure 3. Proposed lower ground floor plan (not to scale)

Annex A

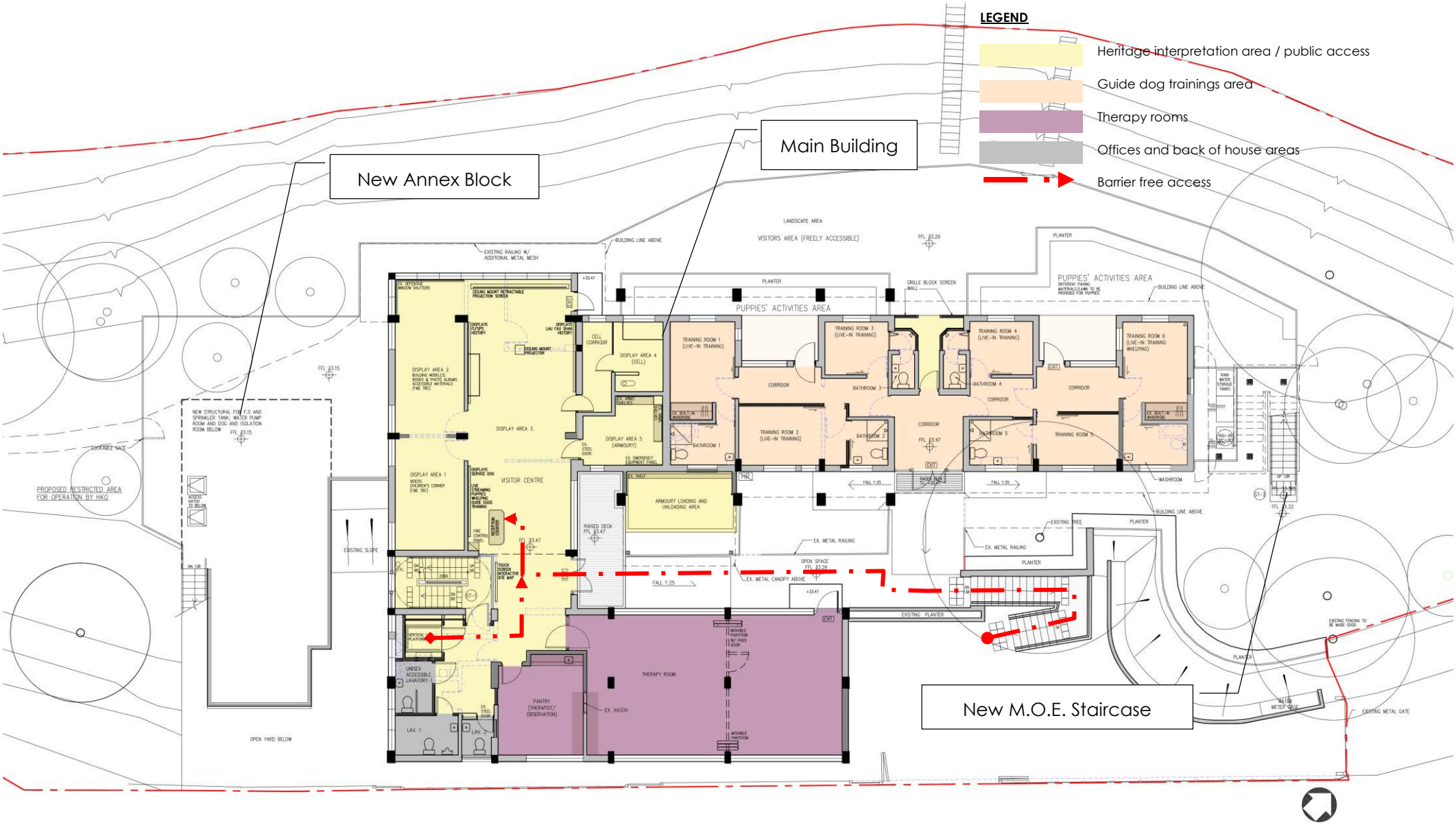

Figure 4. Proposed ground floor plan (not to scale)

Annex A

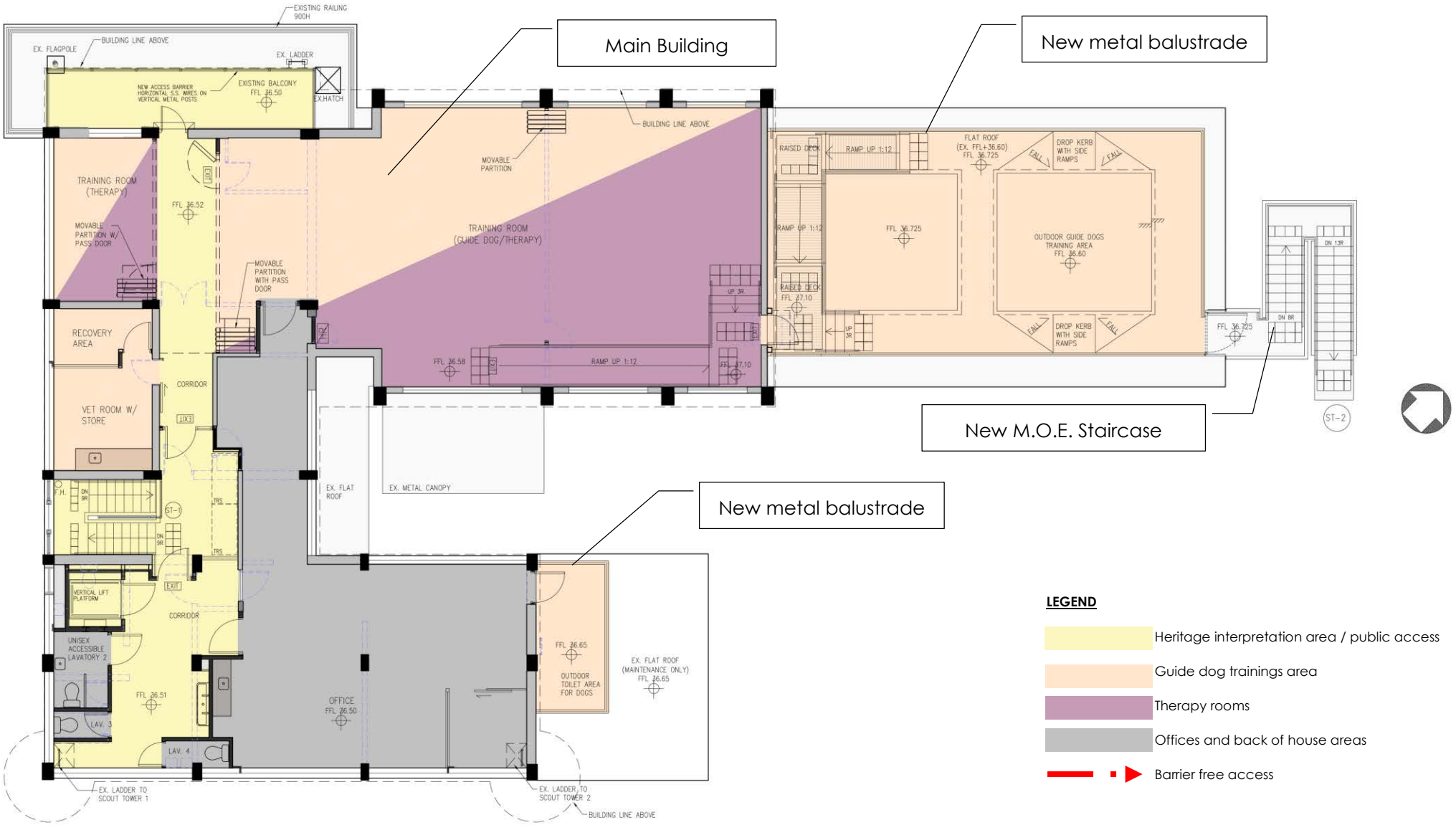

Figure 5. Proposed first floor plan (not to scale)

Annex A

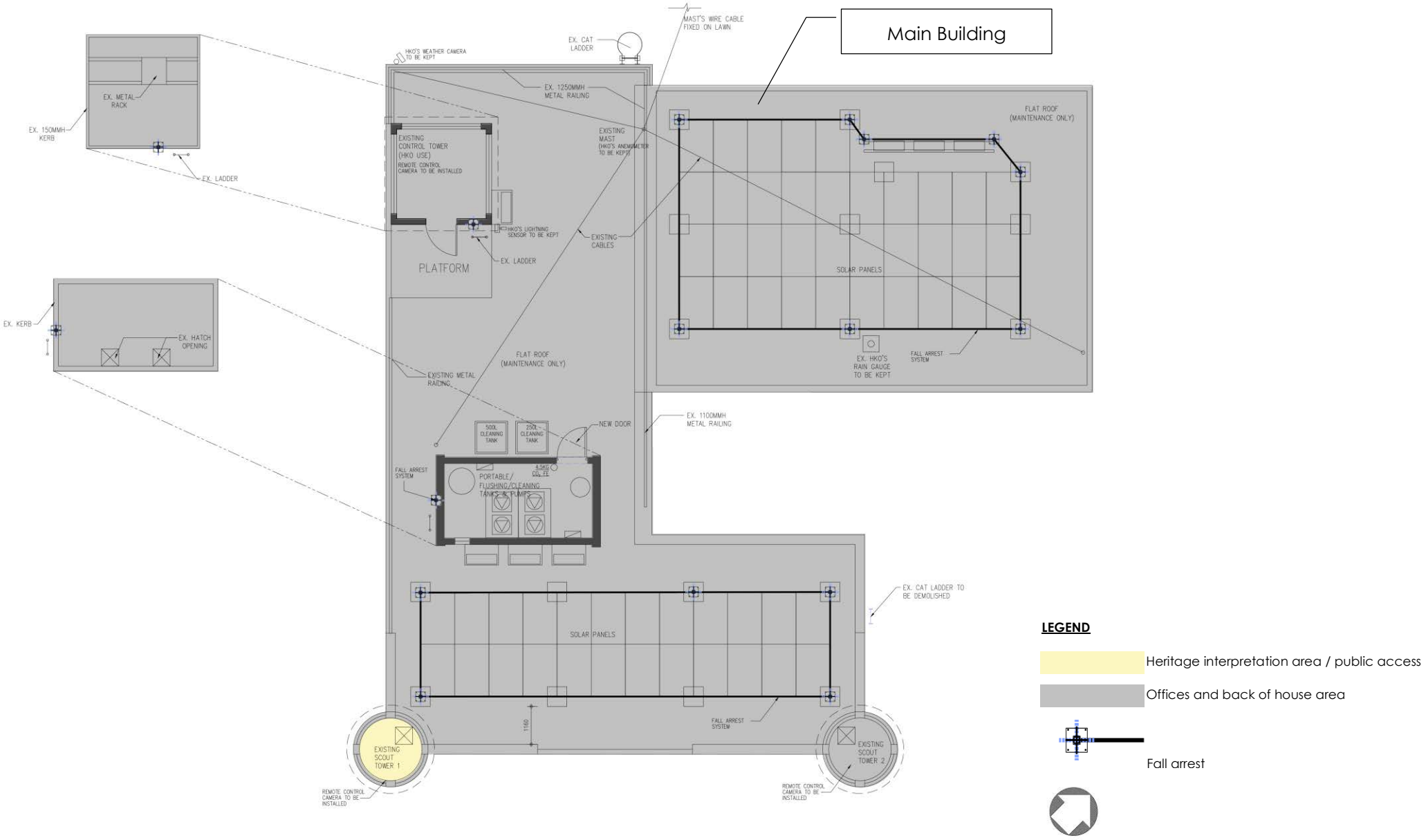

Figure 6. Proposed roof plan (not to scale)

Annex A

Figure 7. Artist impression of Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (Aerial view)

Annex A

Figure 8. Artist impression of Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (View from main entrance gate)

Figure 9. Artist impression of Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (View from southwest)

Annex A

Figure 10. Artist impression of Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (View from Shan Tung Street)

Figure 11. Artist impression of Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy (View of Visitor Centre)