



Hastings and Bexhill

An independent self-funded charity for local people

Building Frimley's Bigger Future

Our Vision



Architects image of Performing Arts Studio &
Performing at the Del a Warr Pavilion





Our 2022 show at the Del a Warr Pavilion – The Finale. The new performing arts studio rehearsal space replicates the size of this stage

Working at the Contemporary Arts Gallery in Hastings.

The new visual arts studio will enable all our students to work on large visual art projects and show props.



African Drumming at Frimley.

A popular activity that can be offered to more participants with the development of the new ground floor extension and performing arts studio.

Building on our Strengths

Our Aim

To improve the lives and opportunities of local people with a learning disability and their families and carers.

We work hard to ensure that our activities deliver a high quality service to our members', we endeavour to support our families and carers, involve everyone with our work and continually strive to build and improve on what we do well.

The Arts:

We know from the popularity of our performing and visual arts classes that this is an area of our work that is extremely successful. We recognise the positive effect being actively involved with the arts has on our members' wellbeing, whilst working with professional artists and performers creating work to be exhibited and performed builds confidence and helps create a true sense of achievement.

Performance:

We have staged annual shows for the past 22 years. Held at the iconic De la Warr Pavilion for the last 5 years, and playing to an audience of around 500, this is an area of our work that continues to go from strength to strength. Performers are encouraged to create their own ideas for comedy sketches, dances, and musical theatre pieces to perform on stage.

Smaller productions are also staged, by drawing on the skills of professional tutors and our own staff, members from all our services are given the opportunity to entertain and showcase their work. In house productions and performances in local venues include pantomimes, comedy sketches, singing and African drumming.

Our Musical Makaton group have performed at Hastings Carnival; they also entertained customers at a local retail park as part of our fundraising drive towards building our bigger future. The African Drumming group performed at summer festivals and are regular entertainers at a local night club. The Choir sings carols at a Gateway Club and a local church as well as providing the end of year entertainment at the Frimley Carol Concert.

Visual:

Our members' visual art work is created to exhibit at community events and venues, including Hastings Pier, A Town Explores a Book festival, The Tate Modern, and St Mary in the Castle.

The students produce, on the request of other students and tutors, the props and backdrops for our shows. They work with professional film makers to produce original films which are premiered at the De la Warr show. They work with a local artist to develop artwork into print ready images for our Enterprise merchandise, and produce crafts to sell.

These classes enable our artists to explore a range of mediums, and work with professional artists and community organisations such as Culture Shift, Explore the Arch and Coastal Currents.



Social events and exploring the local area



Our charity shop and fundraising in the community



Westwood our residential care home

Building on our Strengths

Social Activities:

Most activities had to be closed in the spring of 2020, however, we are gradually resuming a programme of social activities, and are pleased to welcome back the Hastings Gateway Club.

Through our team of volunteers and staff, we offer various social events throughout the year including parties, dinner and dances, outings, cinema clubs, and other events as requested by our members.

Community:

We offer a variety of activities within the local community, ranging from sport, local history, Geocaching, orienteering, horticulture, and fundraising, all with a clear aim to develop skills towards independence and encourage good health and wellbeing. Being part of our local community helps to promote our services to the wider public and gives us the opportunity for partnership working.

Activities at Frimley:

In addition to the arts, our day service members enjoy the extra in house activities we offer, having a choice that includes media studies, sport, skills for life, cookery, gardening, sensory, and Makaton. All sessions are carefully tailored to meet individual need, promote new as well as retain existing skills, encourage communication, involvement, and enable people to be as independent as possible.

Residential Care:

Westwood our care home is registered for nine adults and located in the Blacklands area of Hastings. Residents are supported to live as independently as possible and are involved with our charity's services and events. All residents enjoy the social activities organised by us, and most are members or students of our Open Door day service and/or Active Arts visual and performing arts project.

Raising Funds:

Our main fundraising is achieved through our Charity Shop in Kings Road, St Leonards. Overseen by a manager, a team of volunteers help to ensure a healthy profit keeps our social clubs running and Frimley maintained.

Other fundraising events are held throughout the year with all proceeds going directly to further our work, pay for extra equipment and fund extra activities.



Frimley view from London Rd



Existing patio door to garden



Existing garden & patio



Garden



Existing flat roof



Looking towards Frimley from rear of garden

Identifying the Need

Sustainability:

Using community venues for our performing arts classes to rehearse has enabled us to work in large spaces that can accommodate our needs. Whilst this has been largely successful, we cannot be confident that these facilities will be available into the longer term, and this together with the increasing needs of some of our students, the hired rooms being regularly unavailable, and the transport issues that come with being off-site has encouraged us to seek alternative ways of ensuring the sustainability of our performing arts classes.

We have been running some very successful outreach projects with Glyne Gap Faculty, a specialist college for young people with learning disabilities. Many of these students have expressed a wish to continue their performing studies with us as they move into adult services. As a result we have recognised that for some students with more complex needs, this would only be possible with level access, proper changing and toilet facilities, and room to move around the building without the constant need to reorganise space.

We are also mindful of ensuring our older and less physically active members benefit from exploring new activities as well as continuing to enjoy those we currently offer. We are therefore at risk of losing valuable members because we can no longer meet their physical needs.

Our current visual arts classroom can only accommodate eight students and this number is not financially viable.

Need for more space:

Our current building is not fit for purpose, with much of the working space being on the first floor, accessible only by a single staircase. We have been as inventive as possible with the use of the space we have, but there is no more room for manoeuvre.

Space is very limited for running visual arts classes; particularly challenging when there's a need to produce large props and backdrops for the shows.

Our main hall becomes a constant juggle of time and space shared between our in house performing arts, visual arts and indoor sports classes as well as doubling up as a dining area and club room.

The main office is shared by our administration team and the Active Arts Co-ordinator and Enterprise project. This very busy office is far from ideal especially when there is a need to hold confidential meetings, telephone calls, or the simple need to be able to concentrate undisturbed.

Enjoying the outdoor areas:

Currently our garden is hard to access making it difficult to offer horticultural classes to those with limited physical ability. The uneven ground, large shrubs and low level beds are hard to manage.

We have a tiny strip of concrete area directly off the main hall that is not level access, or big enough for seating, preventing members from enjoying fresh air or the option of having tea and lunch breaks outside.

Planning the Future - Stay or Go?

Moving to a new place?

We have put much thought into moving to new premises. Although there are obvious benefits to moving to premises that are already fully accessible or purpose built, we have not been able to identify a suitable property. The cost implications of moving are high, especially considering we would have to sell our existing property before we could purchase anything new, and would still need to raise considerable funds to meet the shortfall. Moving to an industrial estate is the lower cost option but not one that we or any of our members like the idea of.

Staying at Frimley?

- Location:

Our members, their families and supporters tell us that they find us easy to get to. Situated on London Road in the heart of St Leonards we are easily served by public transport with buses passing every few minutes, are less than five minutes' walk to a main line train station, and within walking distance of several of our members' homes.

One very important advantage of our location is that our more able members have the option to travel to our activities without support, this helps build skills in independence, boosts confidence and aids community integration.

- Familiarity:

Our members feel safe and comfortable at Frimley, its homely and welcoming environment is often commented upon by visitors and new members.

- Opportunity for expansion:

We have a large underused outside space. The garden at Frimley is only accessible by steps. A steep bank and hedge dividing the building and garden creates a feeling of disconnection, so people are reluctant to make the effort to use this area. It therefore makes sense to utilise this space to our advantage with considerable savings being made as no land has to be purchased.

An existing extension to the ground floor has a large flat roof. Extending this upwards to create an extra storey would allow for the development of a new visual arts studio without the need to increase the footprint of the original building.

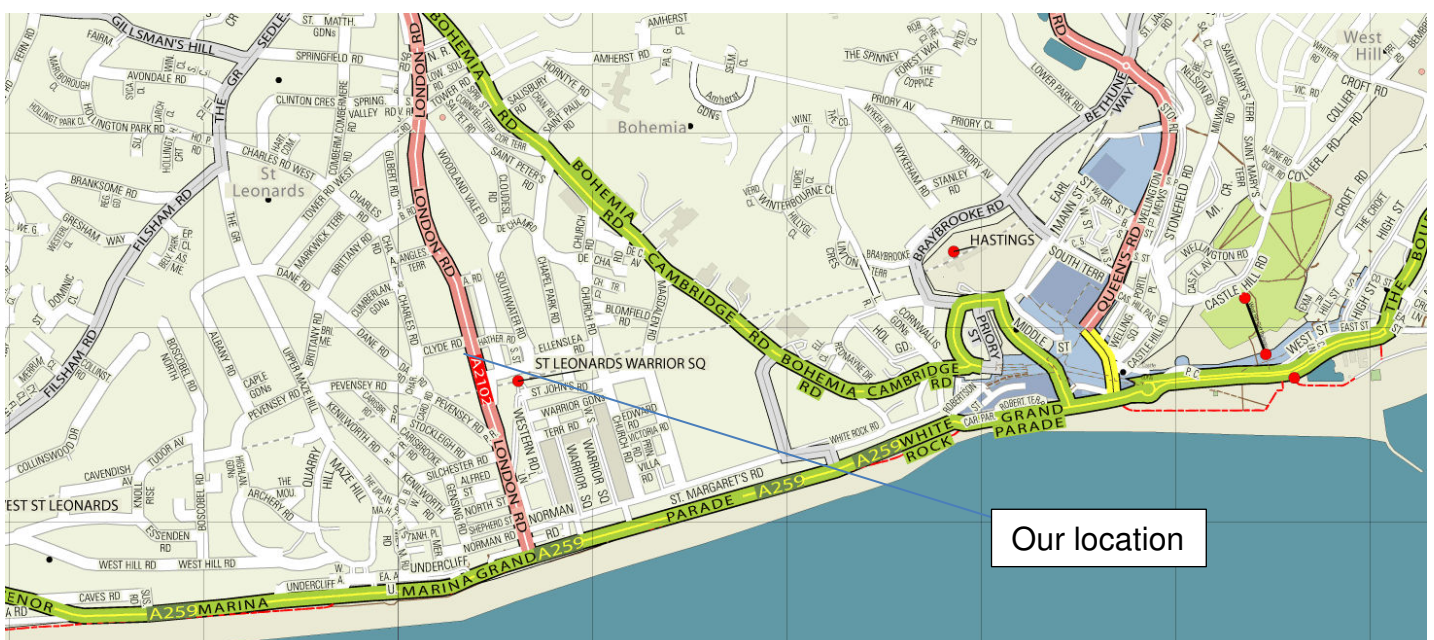


Image of new extension and visual arts classroom



Image of new performing arts studio and bridge taken from Frimley's roof



Ariel image of new performing arts studio



Image of new performing arts studio from the new visual arts studio



Image of new patio area and link bridge



Image of new patio area, extension and link bridge



Our Vision

A purpose built Performing Arts Studio:

Our vision is to build a performing arts studio in the grounds of Frimley. Taking the whole width of the garden and beginning 3m from the rear boundary wall, we can replicate the size of the De la Warr Pavilion stage, together with the wings, and a small audience space. This would have the advantage of allowing students to rehearse for the show in a space that can be taken to the stage with the confidence of knowing sketches would not have to be re-set to allow for a different stage size.

A small audience space would allow students to watch other students rehearse, an important part of learning the art of performance. Bi-fold door to the outside space would also allow for larger audiences to watch small shows in good weather, as well as create a level access area for students to enjoy the garden.

Continuing down the right hand boundary wall to form an L shape the new building would also house a designated office for our arts project co-ordinator, storage facilities, toilets and a small kitchen.

A useful Garden:

The main lawn area of the garden, some trees and mature shrubs would remain, but be landscaped to provide level access, with raised beds that would enable all our members to enjoy the grounds as well as taking an active part in maintaining the garden.

The development of a Visual Arts Studio:

Rebuilding the current extension, increasing to develop a first storey, would create a classroom big enough to double our current intake of student numbers as well as offering the space to create large props and backdrops. The plans allow for much natural light, essential for artists to produce quality work as well as saving on energy costs.

Developing a Changing Places Toilet:

Meeting the increasing needs of our members and students is essential. Redeveloping our existing TV lounge we intend to install a fully accessible toilet and changing facility in line with the requirements of a Changing Places Toilet, complete with hoist and shower facilities.

Essential Extras:

Within the first floor development we will also re-site the Chief Executive's office, install two extra W.C.'s, create a small staff area, and the development of a hot drinks station will prevent the need of those working and studying on the first floor having to carry trays of hot drinks up from the ground floor kitchen.

The existing ground floor shower room will be replaced by a cloakroom area.

The existing ground floor classroom will become a multi-purpose room with optional uses as a sensory room, classroom or meeting room.

Good Access:

A wheelchair friendly lift from the ground floor will provide access the all areas of Frimley for our less able members and students.

A link bridge will be installed to allow easy access from the first floor to the new building in the garden.

A level access bi-fold door will be installed from the main hall to the outside space which will be extended by removing part of the existing bank to create a large patio area.

Making it Happen

What we have done so far.

Appointed an Architect and other professionals:

We interviewed three architects and chose a locally based company, Casper Cummins Architects. Our architect will work with NuPlanet on the mechanical design aspect of the project, Carley Construction structural engineers, and Page Robson quantity surveyors.

We have employed other professionals to carry out ecological, topographical, and arboriculture surveys.

Informed our membership and interested parties:

We held a launch event in May 2018, at which we showcased our outline plans, held a bridge building ideas table, gave information about projected costs, asked for fundraising ideas and offers of support in-kind and marked out the new building site to show the footprint of the new building.

The event was attended by our members, their families, supporters, our staff, volunteers, president, life vice president, borough councillors, local authority representatives, and local business.

We had a stall at a local festival.

We presented our plans to local Rotarians and businesses.

Worked on the plans:

A pre-planning application to Hastings Borough Council was submitted in April 2018, a subsequent site visit by our designated planning officer was very positive. In January 2020 we received full planning permission from the Council. Following some investigative work we revised part of the plans that received planning permission in June 2020.

Involved our members:

We have held service user forums to keep our members informed of the plans and involve them in ideas for design and fundraising.

Our architect facilitated a bridge building workshop for our members, and took them on a site visit to see a bridge similar to the one we will have as part of our new development.

Worked on fundraising:

We have held a sponsored walk, an auction night, fashion show, held a 24 hour challenge event, collected money at a local supermarkets, have started a new cinema club for members, held fundraising dinners and coffee mornings.

We hold regular fundraising meetings and will employ the expertise of a professional fundraiser to support our bids for grants.

Help in Kind:

An ecologist has carried out our ecological survey free of charge.

A team from Hastings Direct has helped clear the garden.

We have an offer of help from Avco / Alfa Electric to develop the new patio area and install accessible bi-fold doors.

Dan Pearce, local artist for our artist impression, front cover.

Making it Happen

Next stages:

Working with the Architect:

We are currently working closely with our architect, Casper Cummins, to finalise technical plans to satisfy Building Control and to be able to seek tenders for work.

Casper Cummins will hold the role of Principal Designer as required by The Health and Safety Executives Construction Design Management (CDM) regulations 2015. We will work closely with him to ensure all aspects of health and safety management for the project that may affect our services are met.

Keep our membership and interested parties informed:

Hold an update event to show approved plans.

We will hold regular service user forums to keep the members that use our services informed, and to give them the platform to be involved in design and fundraising.

We will take every opportunity to inform the wider community of our plans.

Raise the funds:

We have employed a team of professional fundraisers to support our bids for grants.

We will continue to promote the project to potential donors and outside fundraisers.

We will continue with our own fundraising efforts.

We will continue to seek further opportunities for new funders.

How much will it cost?

The total project cost (estimated) is £1,413,380

This is made up of:

Extension and works to existing building to include:

Visual arts studio

Installation of changing places toilet and associated building work

Alterations to existing building

Installation of platform lift, extension and associated building work	£ 436,566
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New building to include performing arts studio and additional areas	£ 475,693
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Bridge and covered walkway	£ 47,850
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Consultants and professional fees	£ 202,191
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Groundworks and external works	£ 174,080
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Furniture & equipment	£ 16,500
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Partial redecoration & re-tarmac of drive	£ 22,000
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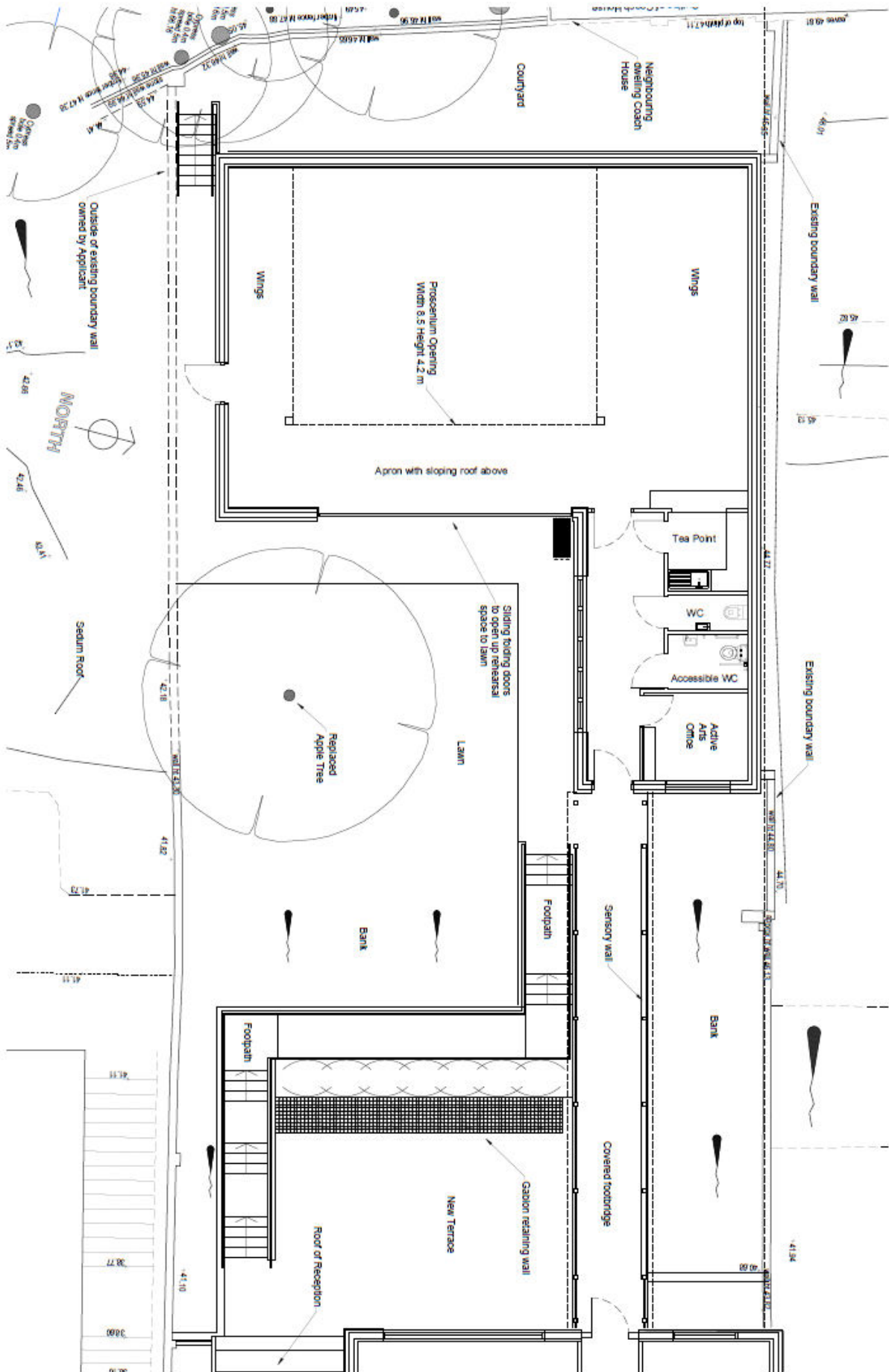
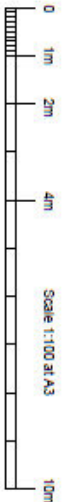
<u>Relocation costs</u>	£ 38,500
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Total estimated costs	£1,413,380
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Plan of new development

NOTES:
Do not scale the drawing.
All dimensions and conditions to be confirmed by the Applicant.
Any dimensions shown must be verified before proceeding.

REVISIONS:
A
B



Ground floor plan showing development of lift, cloakroom & terrace

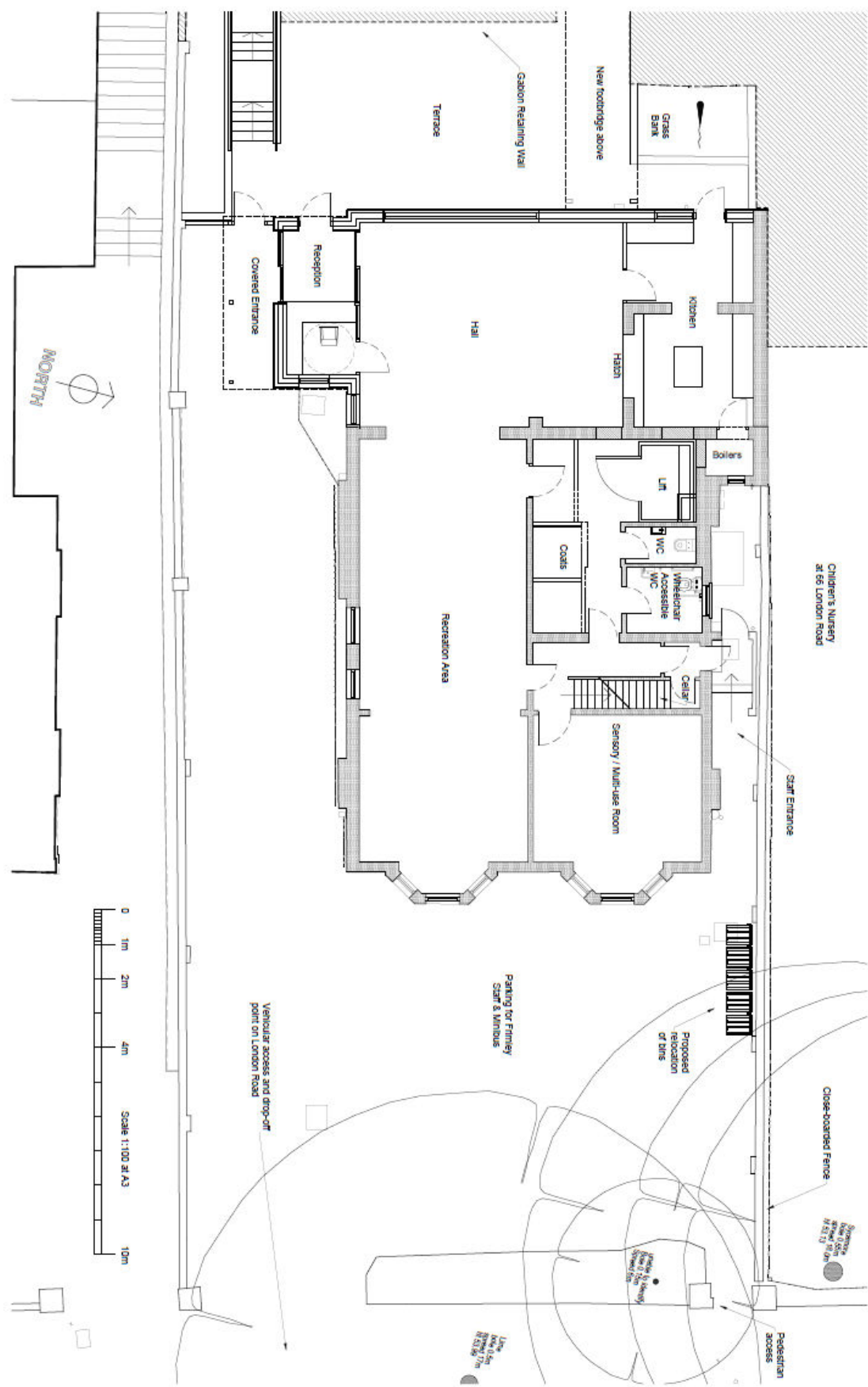
NOTES:
Do not scale this drawing.
All dimensions are to be
checked on site before any work
commences. Any discrepancies must
be notified before proceeding.

REVISIONS:
A Check - Reception area added to enlarged lobby
B Check - Reception area added to enlarged lobby

Casper Clements RIBA
Chartered Architect
07966 234915
casper@ccarchitects.co.uk

Project: Frimley
Client: H & B Mencap
Drawings: Old Building Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Scale: 1:100 @ A3
Date: April 2015
Dwg No: HBM037-10B draft



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How to Donate

If you would like to help Build Frimley's Bigger Future here is how to donate:

- Online:** Go to our website and click the "donate" button
- By BACS:** Our bank details are: Lloyds Bank, sort code 30 97 66, account no 54103460, Hastings & Bexhill Mencap Building account, reference: BFBF donation
- By Phone:** Give our office a call; we'll be pleased to take your donation by debit or credit card
- By Post:** Cheques made payable to *Hastings & Bexhill Mencap* can be sent to the address below. Please do not send cash though the post
- In Person:** Donations can be handed to any member of staff. Please make sure they are aware it's for the building project.

It would be really helpful if you could put a note or reference with your donation stating: *for B.F.B.F.*

If you would like your donation to be for a specific purpose e.g. you can buy a brick for just £5.00, or a sedum roof panel for £10.00, you may like to contribute towards the lift, or one of the studios, that's great just let us know and we will make a record of your request.

We would love to be able to say thank you, and record your contribution in our donation book, so unless you would prefer to remain anonymous, please include your name and a contact number, postal or email address with your donation. All personal information will be retained in accordance with our privacy statement, please let us know if you would like a copy.

Can you gift aid it? Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1.00 you donate.

If you are a UK taxpayer and would like to gift aid your donation please call or email us for a gift aid form.

Thank you! Every penny really does count; we promise that any donation you make towards Building Frimley's Bigger Future will go directly towards the cost of this exciting project.

Contact us

- Our address:** Frimley, 64 London Road, St Leonards on sea, E Sussex, TN37 6AS
- Our phone number:** 01424 424813
- Our email address:** hello@hastings-bexhill-mencap.org
- Our Website:** www.hastings-bexhill-mencap.org
- On Facebook:** Hastings and Bexhill Mencap
- We welcome visitors:** If you'd like to pop in and see the plans and how they're progressing or find out more about our work please give us a call and we'd be happy to meet with you.

Thank you for your support