

MILLOM PUBLIC TOILET

TOILET BLOCK
LANCASHIRE ROAD
MILLOM, CUMBRIA

IDK

Design & Access Statement
02.2022

As If By Magic Ltd
Directors: Raymond Towers, Sally Woods,
Gavin Towers, Maria Woods

This Design & Access Statement forms part of a planning submission to Copeland Borough Council on behalf of As If By Magic Ltd. It outlines proposals to renovate the existing disused toilet block at the junction of Lancashire Road and St George’s Road in Millom.

This document has been prepared and submitted by IDK, architects and agents of As If By Magic Ltd, for whom IDK are working on a series of projects across Cumbria.

The primary point of contact for this project will be Mike Lim of IDK

This written appraisal is supported by the following documents:

- IDK_MWC_2202_Location Plan
- IDK_MWC_2202_Drawing Package

4	Project Overview
6	Existing Site
9	Design Proposal
13	Proposed Materiality

Client:

AS IF BY MAGIC LTD
Raymond Towers, Sally Woods,
Gavin Towers (*POC*), Maria Woods

Client Project Manager:

COUNTERCULTURE
Chris Potts
Magda Maculewicz

Authorities & Statutory:

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL
Local Authority

Design Team:

IDK
Architect
Mike Lim, *Partner (POC)*
Roddy Bow, Rachel Leong

M&P GADSDEN
Structural Engineer
Mike Gadsden, *Director*

MILLOM WC, CUMBRIA



54.210243, -3.270577

Public toilets are disappearing across the UK, with estimates of a decrease in these essential services by over 39% over the last 20 years. The demise of publicly accessible facilities is critical and highly problematic, especially when seen in the context of recent increases in urban populations and an overall population increase of over 8 million people since 2000. Those facilities that remain have largely had pay-to-use entry systems applied, effectively creating a tax on a basic human need.

For many members of the population a lack of public facilities has a restrictive effect on the ability to engage in a community, or even leave their home. This phenomenon, termed ‘loo leash’ by the Royal Society for Public Health, has been found to affect almost a fifth of Britons.

Public toilets enable participation in public life, and a lack of accessible, comfortable, maintained facilities risks creating disengagement and isolation. Within this dialogue, As If By Magic Ltd (AIBM) intends to renovate, maintain and operate the existing disused toilet facility at the junction of Lancashire Road and St George’s Road, with an ambition to create a fully accessible, free to use public toilet.

The proposed scheme has been designed with inclusion and accessibility at its heart, creating the optimum environment for all people, as much as practically possible. User experience, the number of units, and operational design have all been driven and informed by this guiding principle. There will be no fee for using the facility, and the space will be open for the maximum time

that is reasonably practicable. User safety is paramount and has been deeply considered during the design process.

All design work has been carried out in line with the client's belief that the community will respond positively to a facility which is all-embracing and welcoming rather than restrictive and controlling. AIBM acknowledges that this will come with an operational cost that they will carry for the foreseeable future. The project will stand as a testament and demonstration of AIBM’s commitment and belief in the area.

1.1 PROJECT DATA

The unique property reference number is: (UPRN) 10000901731
Coordinates 54.210243, -3.270577
Address: Former Toilet Block, Lancashire Road, Millom, Cumbria
Planning Authority: Copeland Borough Council
Town Council: Millom Council
Local plan link: https://www.copeland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/copeland_local_plan_2013_2028.pdf

Flood risk:
The site is located within flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.
The highest risk from surface water within a 20m radius of the property is low, with a 0.1% to 1% chance of flooding each year. The highest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea is very low, with a less than 0.1% chance of flooding each year.

1.2 PLANNING HISTORY

Planning History search;

4/13/2493/0F1
Change of use of redundant toilet block into shop, including 2.4 x 0.6 metre signage board on NE elevation and disabled access ramp. Submitted in October 2013, approved in January 2014 to begin works within 3 years.

4/16/2216/0F1
Change of use of redundant toilet block into 2 shops, including 2.4 x 0.6 metre signage board at each end and level access; proposal to erect 1.8m high wall along southern boundary. Submitted in June 2016, approved in August 2016 to begin works within 3 years.

4/16/0323/3
Building Regulations approval for conversion and alterations to form 2 retail units. Submitted August 2016, approved September 2016.

1.3 SITE CONTEXT

The site sits within the Millom Conservation Area, the most recent conservation area to be created in Copeland, designated in 2003. The following passage is from the Millom Conservation Area Appraisal:

“The centre [of the conservation area] is characterised by predominantly two-storey terraces in a mixture of red brick, roughcast render, pebble-dash, and watershot slate with red sandstone dressings. Roofs are a mixture of slate and tile. The conservation area is surrounded by areas of two-storey detached and semi-detached post-war housing on its west and south sides, and the regimented late Victorian streets of the New Town on its east. The town’s roofscape is relieved from certain angles by the spire of St George’s Church, but is otherwise quite uniformly low.

... Millom’s conservation area is at the town’s centre and takes the form of several core zones in close proximity with streets and avenues radiating off them. This is indicative of the nature of Millom as a place that grew from its connection to the railway line: the station sits at the heart of the conservation area; the railway bisects it.

The conservation area expresses a certain symmetry about the north-east to south-west line of the railway, with the bridge over it and two zones of relatively low-density open ground to either side forming a heart that is composed of distinct halves, with the Station Road area on the north side, its war memorial and the approach to the station, having a different feel from the Lancashire Road side to the south, which is characterised by a Tesco supermarket and its car park occupying the site of former railway buildings.

Progressing into the “south” half, the Market Square, a late 19th and early 20th century collection of civic buildings asserts itself as a consciously styled and scaled node, an attempt to create a centre for the town. At the juncture between this area and the south end of the bridge is a gateway formed by the projecting end of the former West County Hotel (now flats) and

the entrance to St George’s Church precinct.

The entrance and view into the precinct, combined with the entrance and view of Market Square, and the view back along St George’s Road over the railway bridge, make this junction a characterful and important component of Millom’s conservation area in expressing three key components of its formation: religion (and “enlightenment” more generally; in this sense the church has as much to do with the library as it does the town hall), civic integrity and industrial progress.

... Much of the fabric of Millom’s town centre dates from a relatively narrow window of time between the 1860s and 1900s. Since then, the main changes to Millom’s built area, aside from the loss of the iron-related industrial sites in the 1960s-70s, have been the creation of areas of housing on the edges of the Victorian settlement.”

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the Public Loo, and the area that it sits within, as “one of the less successful locations in the conservation area.” It goes on to note that

“The wall from the corner at Lancashire Road is a detractor composed of grey brick and render, although fortunately small. At the time of survey, it was untidy and served only to separate two expanses of tarmac (the road and the car park).

Behind the wall is a WC block that, despite being useful, makes a negative contribution and also somewhat obscures the only remaining historic building on the site, the former goods shed. The combined effect of the car parking, section of wall, enclosure by the roads and railway, and extension to Tesco, is to create an isolated rectangle of space that divides the conservation area. More could be made of it, although the fixed topography of the railway and the road bridge are unlikely to ever allow this to be a transitional space.”

Currently the Millom WC has been highlighted by the authors of the Millom Conservation Area Appraisal as making a negative contribution to the character of the conservation area. It is our ambition to resolve this condition, and realise the positive civic potential of this humble but essential building.



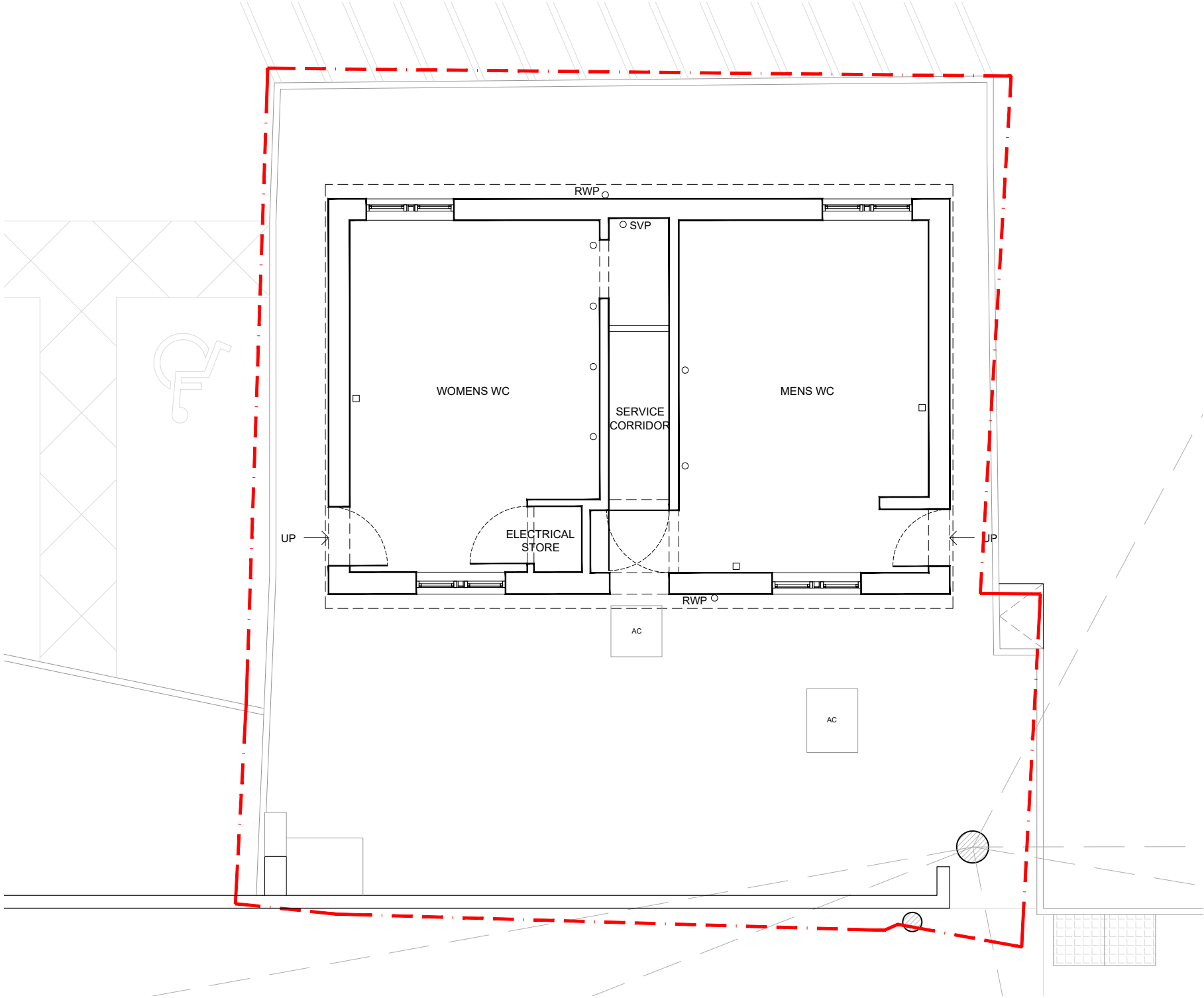
The building, a former unused and derelict public toilet acquired by AIBM directly from the Copeland Borough Council, is located on the north west side of Lancashire Road in central Millom. It occupies a prime position near the Market Square, and sits on the main pedestrian route between Millom Railway Station and the town's primary supermarket on land once occupied by railway buildings. It follows the line of the railway and Lancashire Road and is oriented on a south-west to north-east axis.

The building is a free-standing single storey structure with rendered masonry walls beneath a double pitched slate roof. The internal area of around 60sqm is split into three principle spaces - a male WC to the eastern side, a female WC to the western side and a service corridor running in between. Existing openings comprise narrow entrance doors on the gable ends, which face north-east and south-west, and pairs of small high-level casement windows on the long elevations. A narrow service door sits centrally on the south-east elevation. All fittings and internal partitions have been removed and cleared during previous ownership, and overall the building is in a poor state of repair with extensive damage within.

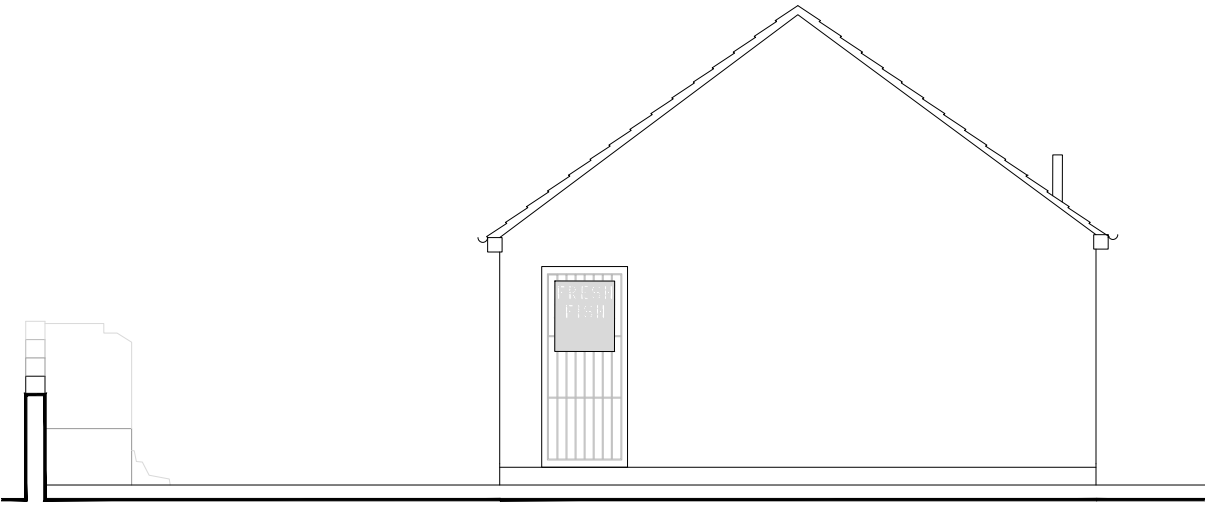
1-2 External images of existing Millom WC

1-3 Internal images of existing Millom WC

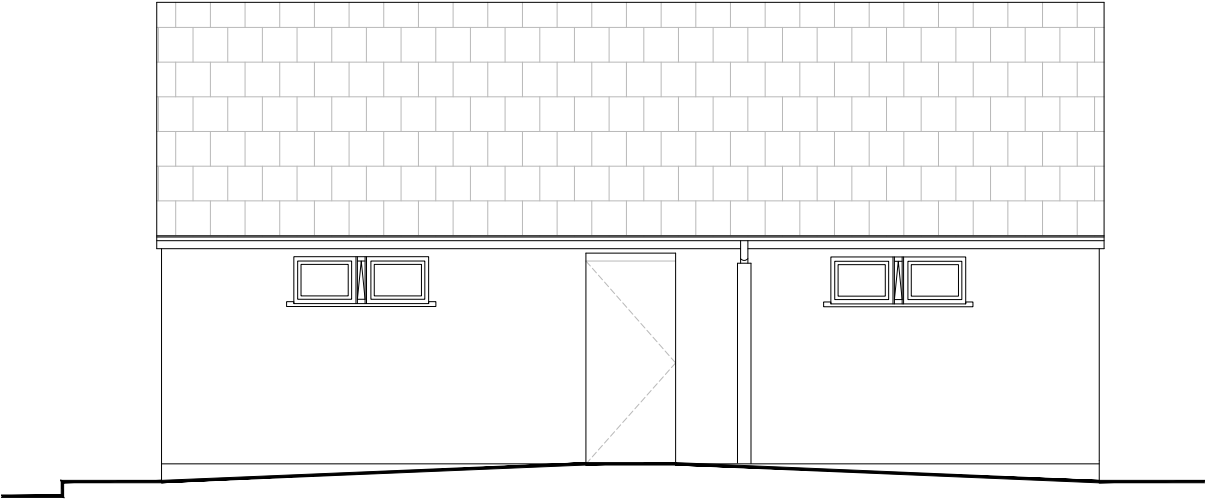




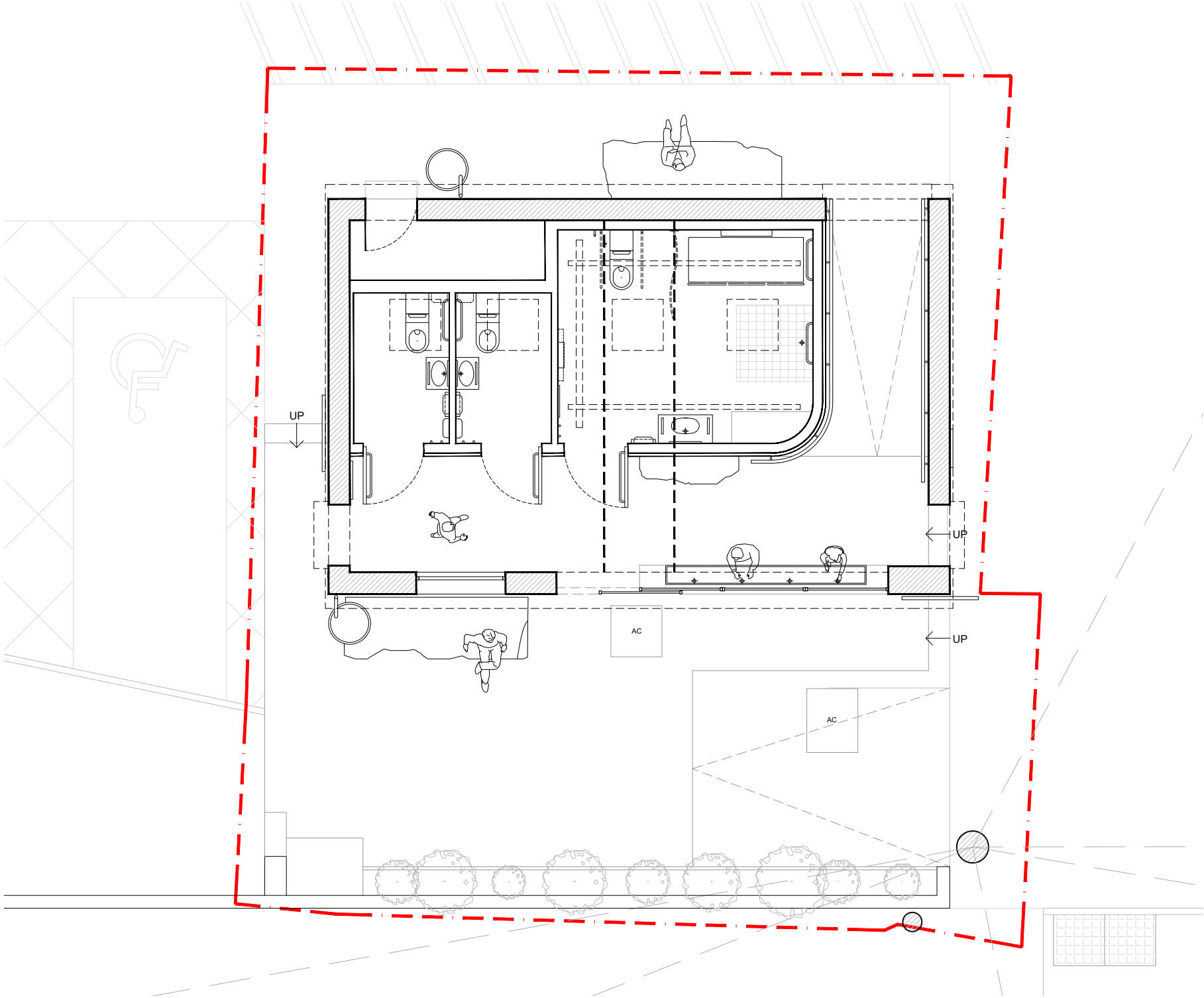
Existing Ground Floor Plan



North-East Elevation



South-East Elevation



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

The Design Proposal can be considered in two parts, external & internal works.

3.1.1 EXTERNAL WORKS

Works to the exterior and shell of the building include:

- Removal of existing kerbs and raised ground level to increase and improve level accessibility
- Creation of new openings to the facade to shape a more open common area that will improve visibility and consequently benefit security and safety within the building
- Widening of existing openings to facilitate universal access
- Creation of a new landscaped area between the building and Lancashire road to elevate the overall quality and presentation of the space
- Re-rendering the exterior shell to improve building performance, waterproofing and appearance
- Introduction of rainwater harvesting and photovoltaic systems

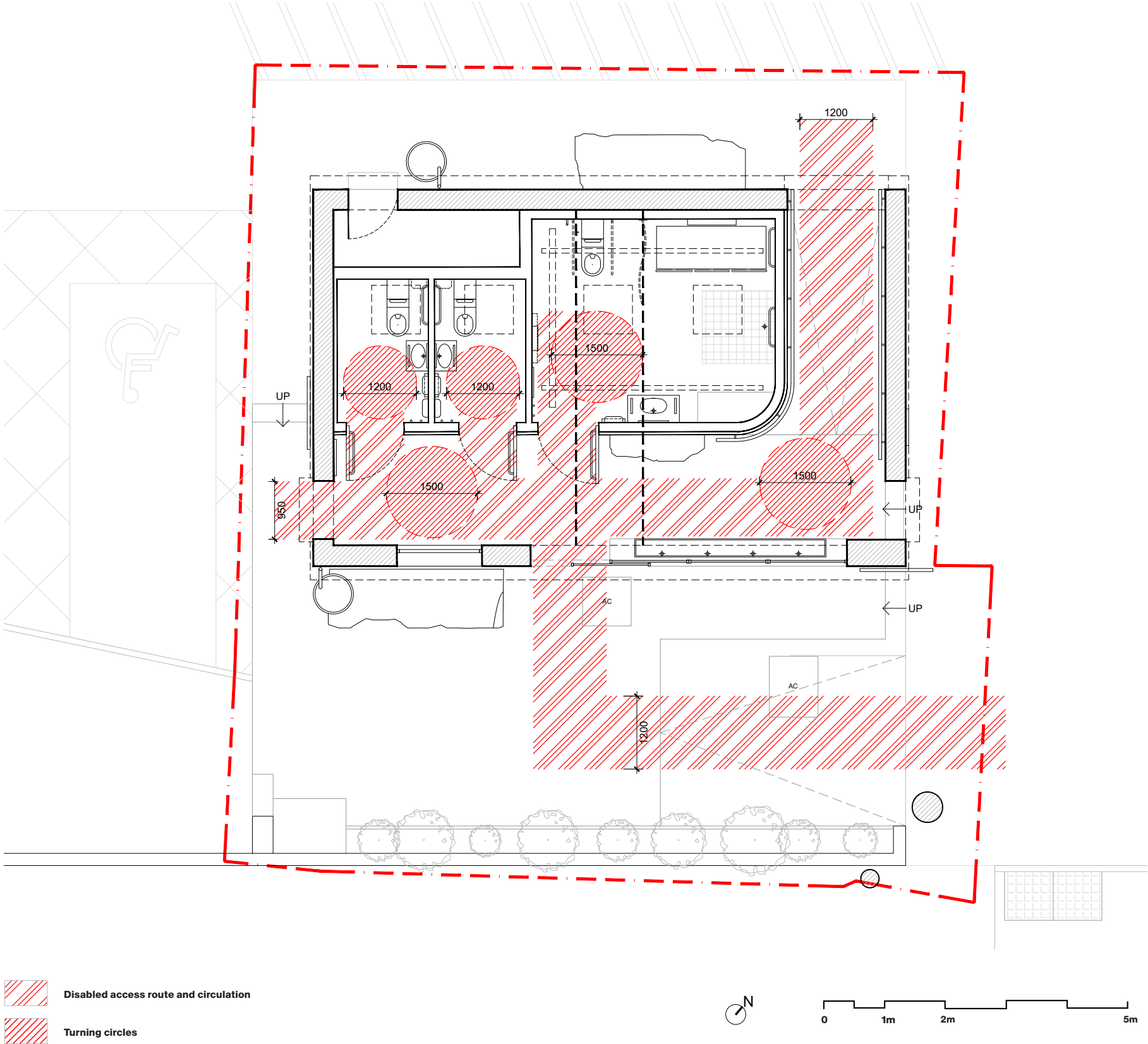
3.1.2 INTERNAL WORKS

Works to the interior of the building include

- Reconfiguring the existing WC layout to provide a fully inclusive and accessible experience for users with the most complex and nuanced needs and requirements
- Provision of baby changing facilities
- Provision of drinking water facilities within a new lobby space

3.1.3 PROGRAMME & LAYOUT

The proposed renovation will provide a fully accessible inclusive environment which will contain one Changing Places WC, two Accessible WCs, and a common wash area. All units will be unisex and gender neutral.

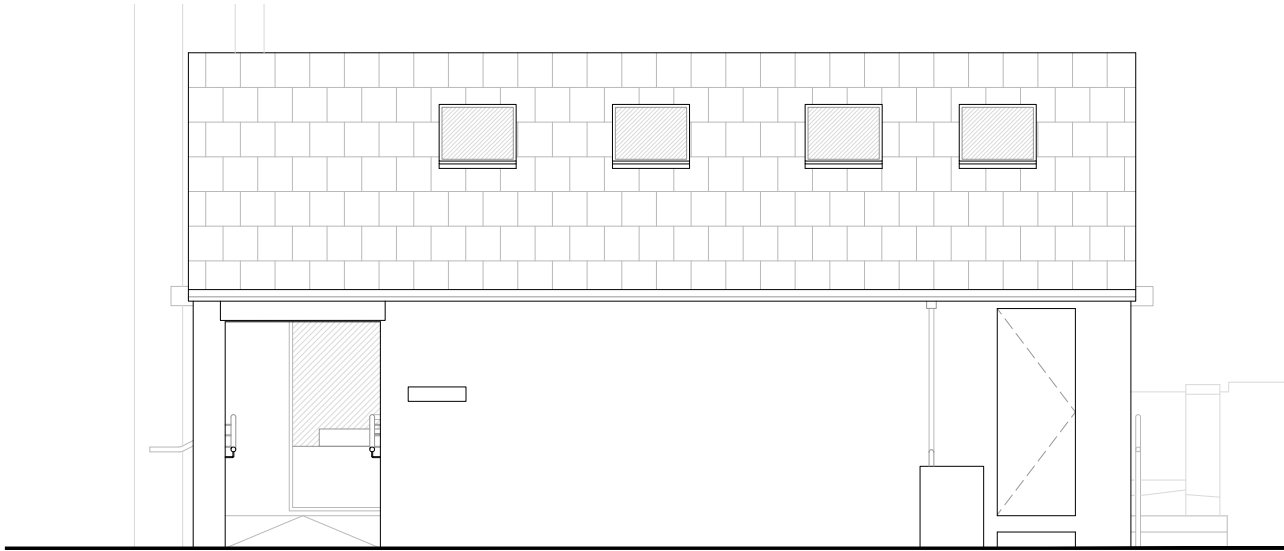


A regulation-compliant accessible toilet can be seen as emblematic of access, however it is surprisingly limited in its consideration of disabilities other than a mobility-impaired wheelchair user. The proposed alterations have been developed to comply with Changing Places, a campaign and design standard for an all-inclusive toilet, designed for people who are unable to use regular accessible toilets. The design takes into account persons with profound and multiple learning disabilities, with muscular dystrophy or neuromuscular conditions, with cerebral palsy, MS, and all those with specific needs that are un-catered for through traditional design considerations.

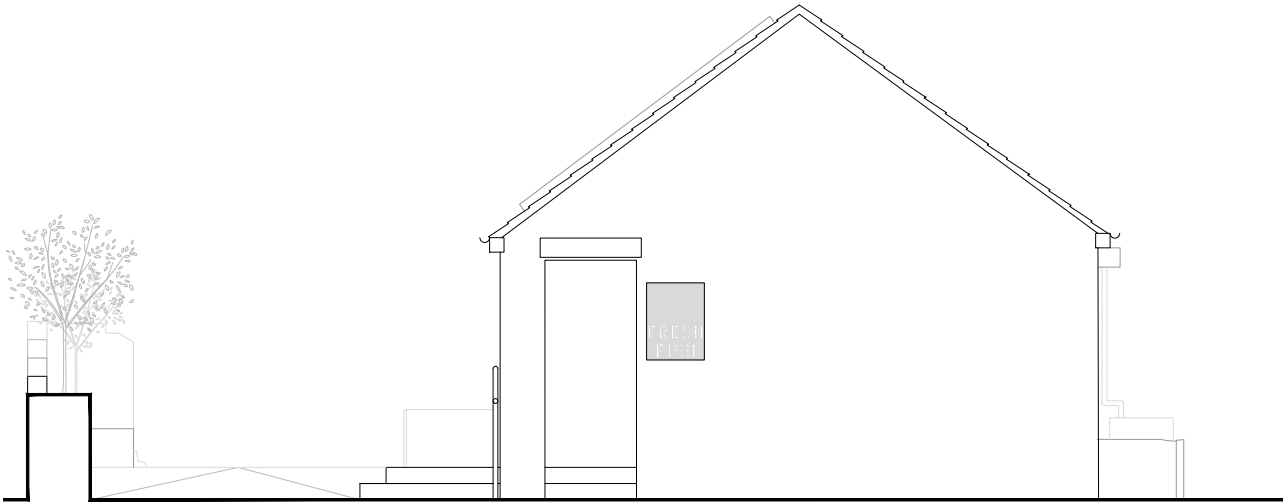
- A Changing Places facility must include the following:
- Height-adjustable, adult sized changing bench
 - Ceiling track hoist system
 - Adequate space for the disabled person and up to two assistants
 - Centrally located toilet with space on both sides for assistants
 - Privacy screen
 - Wide paper roll
 - Large waste disposal bin
 - Washbasin, preferably height adjustable

The nearest regional Changing Places facilities can be found at Furness General Hospital, Barrow Library, Fell Foot in Windermere, Copeland Pool and Fitness. Further information on Changing Places can be found here: <https://www.changing-places.org/>

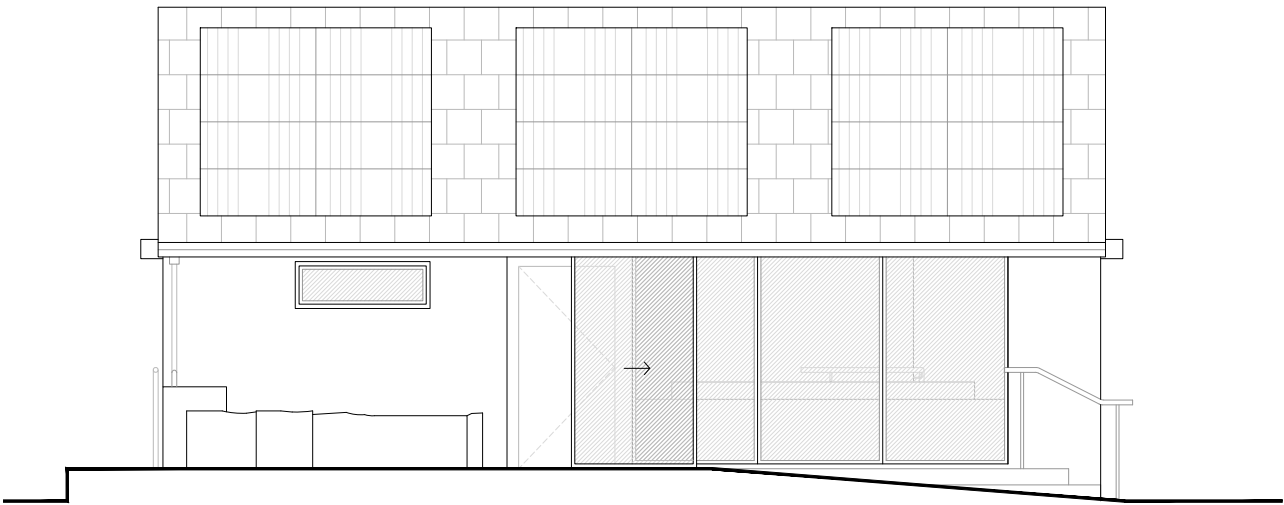
In developing this proposal, consultation has been sought from Prof. Jo-Anne Richard, Professor of Accessible Design and Co-lead of The Public Toilets Research Unit at the Royal College of Art Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design. The unit specialises in addressing the key issues surrounding publicly accessible toilets across the UK focusing on the primary concern of providing adequate safety, comfort and accessibility, as disabled individuals can be discouraged from using public facilities if their experiences leave them feeling vulnerable or humiliated. Research has indicated that the majority of disabled people would limit their social activities due to limited provision of public toilets, and equally many do not feel confident or comfortable enough to leave their homes. This concerning trend has been further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as local councils continue to close public toilets in an attempt to limit the spread of the virus, despite being an essential facility. This application will continue to be supported and delivered in partnership and with Prof. Richard's guidance in best practice and expertise.



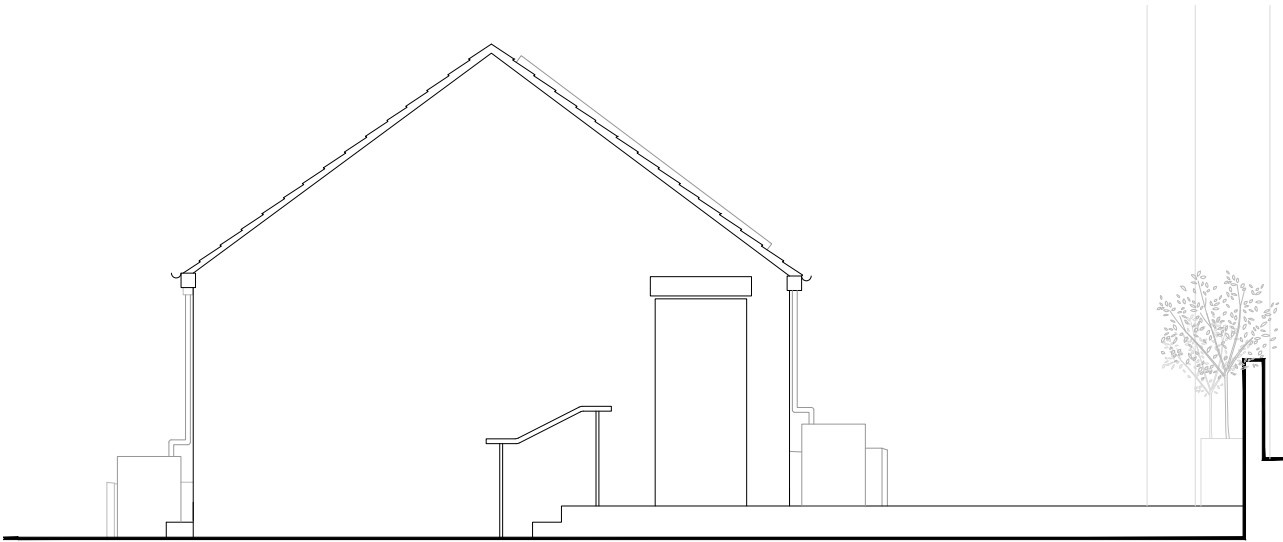
North-West Elevation



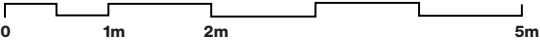
North-East Elevation



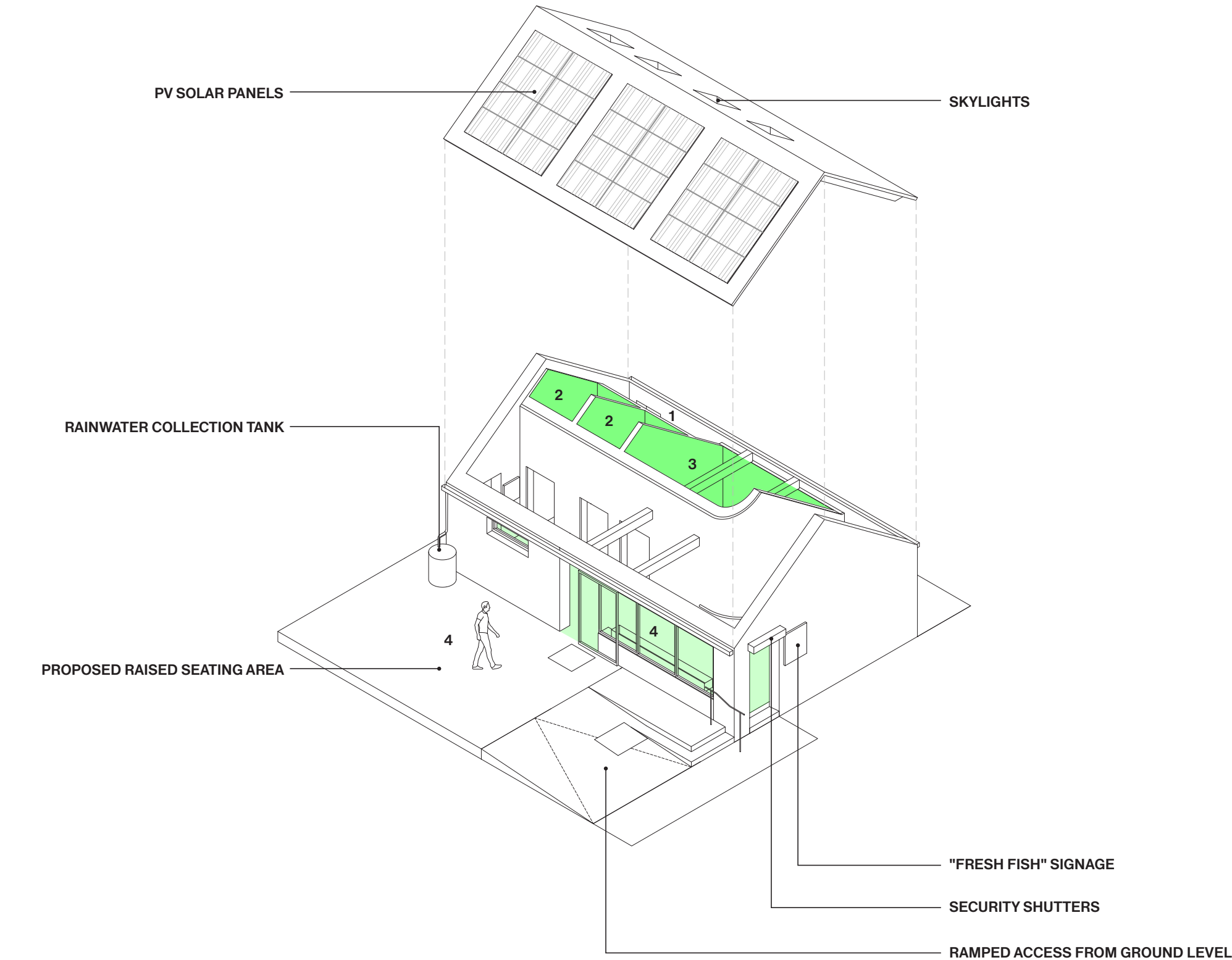
South-East Elevation



South-West Elevation



- 1 Technical and store
- 2 Accessible WC's
- 3 Changing Places Toilet
- 4 Communal space



3.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL

Regenerative sustainable practices are core to AIBM’s philosophies and approach.

The refurbishment and operation of the new Toilet Block will demonstrate AIBM’s commitment to this thinking and the proposal includes the following steps:

- The refurbishment will ensure that the heated areas of the building are well insulated and therefore consume less energy whilst maintaining a comfortable welcome environment, according to the Council’s sustainability aspirations.
- We feel that the most sustainable building is one that already exists - by refurbishing and renewing this building, rather than demolishing it, we are continuing its story as a small but key community asset to the town of Millom in the most economically and energy efficient means possible.
- All materials and workmanship will be sought, first from within the local context and then further afield where the technical requirements demand it.
- Introduction of renewable energy sources including PV array to the roof.
- Introduction of rainwater collection tanks for on-site grey water reuse.

3.4.2 SECURITY & SAFETY

It is widely acknowledged that concerns over safety and security are considerable challenges facing public toilets.

User safety is of paramount consideration and importance. The renovated proposal introduces increased glazing to the street frontage, to ensure that the common spaces of the facility are visible, well lit and draw the focus and attention of passers-by. We aim to discourage the continuation of anti-social behaviour and other acts of vandalism by creating a more prominent space. Additionally, existing openings have been connected and widened to ensure that nobody feels trapped or hemmed in at any point; a seemingly imperceptible sense of security which is critical to ensuring that users feel safe and comfortable.

Security shutters will also be installed across the facade to securely close the facility overnight.

3.4.3 MAINTENANCE & OPERATION

As If By Magic will maintain, clean and manage the facility. It will operate for limited hours during the day and close at night for security and safety purposes.

AIBM strongly believes that the community will take pride in and look after the space if it has been designed with care and consideration. It is hoped that the new facility, being a public asset, will naturally engender constructive social interaction and engagement between residents of the area, which in turn will have long-lasting benefits on the community. Furthermore, the finishing, materials and spatial approach has all been carefully designed to be robust, hard wearing and easily cleaned. It is hoped that the proposals will create a positive and enduring amenity for the community, as well as making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.



1
EXTERNAL FACADE
Painted brick with metallic finish
Spec. TBD



2
ROOF MATERIAL
Corrugated galvanised metal sheets
Spec. TBD



3
GLAZING FRAMES
Anodised metal frame
Spec. TBD



4
RAINWATER GOODS
Galvanised steel
Spec. TBD



5
SOLAR PANELS
PV Arrays
Spec. TBD



6
EXTERNAL HARDSCAPING
GGBS Concrete pavers
Spec. TBD

Paris Studio
1A5, 55 Boulevard de la Villette,
75010, Paris

This report is for the private and confidential use of the clients for whom the report is undertaken
and should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any use
whatsoever without the express written authority of IDK-O LLP
© IDK-O LLP

London Studio
21 Iliffe Yard,
SE17 3QA, London

idk-o.com

IDK is the trading name for IDK-O LLP
IDK-O is a Limited Liability Partnership.
Registered in England & Wales
Number 0C403689