

Dorset Hall

Options Appraisal report
December 2022



Dorset Hall was rediscovered by chance as out of curiosity when Barbara Gorna, political activist and filmmaker drove past this sad looking building during 'lockdown' in October 2020. The name rang some distant bell. She decided to take a look and discovered a forlorn old house full of rubbish. Shocked at its condition she contacted Merton Council, determined to find out who was responsible for the house.

Barbara found out that it had been the home of Rose Lamartine Yates, at one time a well-known suffragette and friend of Emily Wilding Davison, killed by the King's horse at the Derby in 1913. An ardent campaigner for women's rights, Rose had been one of the key organisers at Emily's funeral, 100,000 strong.

Roping in Simon Hood, her husband, she set up Dorset Hall Group (DHG) of seven members to campaign to save and celebrate the importance of the building. It was not an easy task in 'lockdown'. At the same time a Press and Political campaign highlighted the history of the house and its political importance as Rose's home and refuge for suffragettes.

Today, Dorset Hall has a new roof and is wind and watertight. Yet there is more to be done. The inside of the building is damaged and mouldy. One ceiling is down, and we discovered a fine filigree plasterwork ceiling from around 1735; largely undiscovered and not listed but still intact.

We are now at a crossroads. Where do we go from here? Questions have been asked in the House of Lords to DCMS about the policy of saving buildings important to women's history. Barbara co-produced the short film 'The Dark Horse of Suffragettes' which to date, has won 10 international awards and counting.

Visibility matters. Every inch of freedom for women came at huge cost. Each step was fought for and won. Women's places of refuge must not be allowed to fade away.

Dorset Hall is on the map. Rose Lamartine Yates has been recognised as a woman of importance. These places will not be forgotten. It is important for women's history, lives and future.

Barbara Gorna, Co-Chair of Dorset Hall Group

DHG: Barbara Gorna; Simon Hood; Hugh Morgan; Richard Smart; Robin Goodchild and Dr Tom True. David Alfrey and others from the pro bono team at Clifford Chance.

Dorset Hall was acquired by Clarion as part of the 2010 transfer of Merton's housing stock. When Clarion discovered Dorset Hall's importance politically and nationally we decided to work with Dorset Hall Group, National Trust and others to find a secure purpose for the building, ensuring it was repaired to an appropriate standard with approval and agreement from Historic England and Merton's conservation officer. We hope a way forward will be found with more appropriate owners than Clarion to recognise its past and promote its future.

Paul Quinn, Director of Regeneration for Clarion Housing Group

Contents of this report 1/2

Front cover	1
Foreword	2
Contents page	3-4
Appendices list	5
Background	6
Location	7
Site and floor plans	8-9
Strategic context	10
About the project	11-12
Overview of the options appraisal	13
Understanding the Asset – summary of insights	14
Summary of significance	15-17
Summary of key insights from architectural history	18-20
Summary of the building's condition	21
Summary of estimated market value	22
Summary of restrictive covenants affecting the property	23
Summary of initial (Phase 1) consultation by DHG	24
Baseline SWOT analysis	25
Early thinking re: potential future uses	26

Future Visioning – summary of insights	27
Overview	28
1. What might Dorset Hall’s future use be?	29
<i>Summary of insights from Phase 2 stakeholder consultation</i>	30-33
<i>Summary of insights from market research</i>	34-38
<i>Summary of insights from comparator research</i>	39-42
<i>Summary of insights from initial Planning analysis</i>	43
2. How can Dorset Hall be financially sustainable?	44
<i>Summary of insights from income modelling</i>	45-49
<i>Conclusions from income modelling</i>	50
3. Who might be a future owner/operator for Dorset Hall?	51-53
Concept design and options summary	54
Concept design strategy overview	55-56
Options summary	57-66
Fundraising options analysis and next steps	67
Fundraising options analysis	68-70
Organisational and income development	71-72
Key risks	73-74
Conclusion	75-76

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents, available as separate appendices:

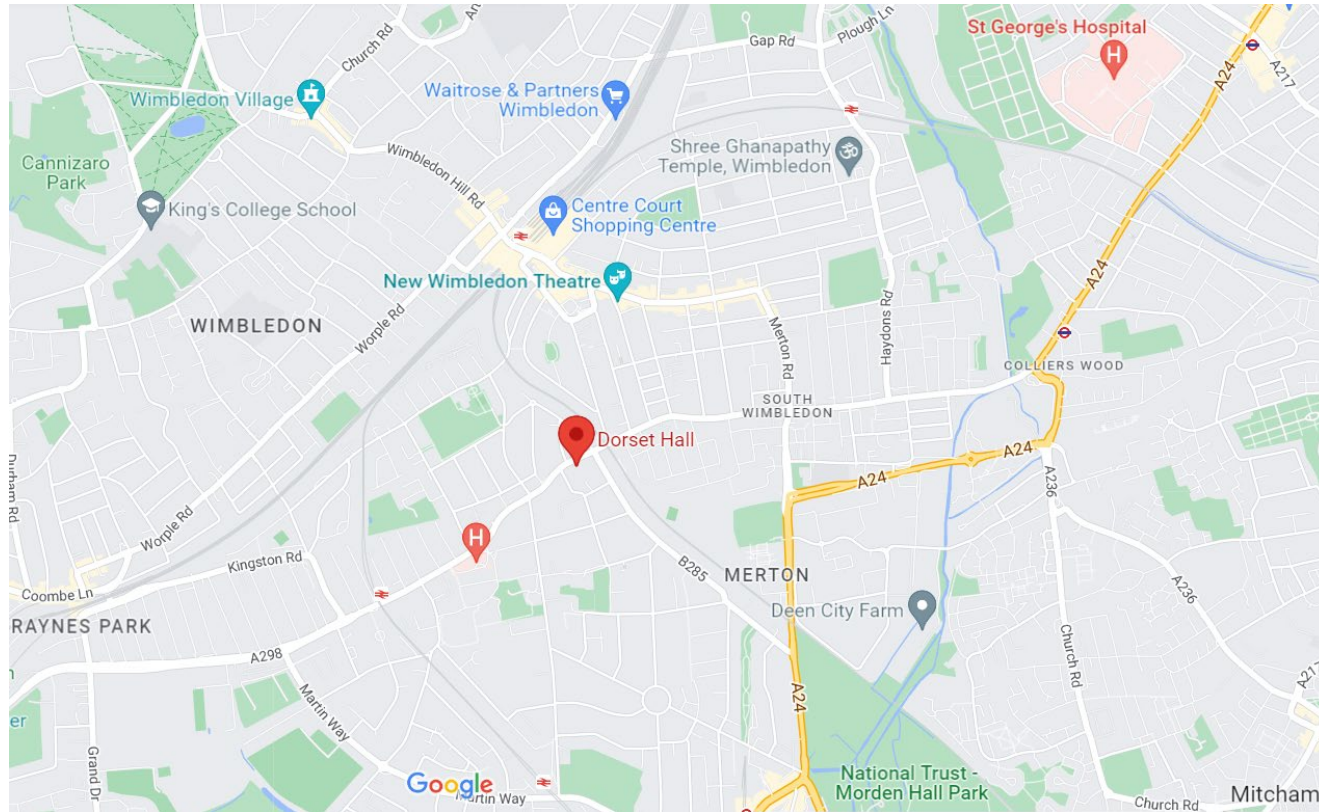
1. **Market assessment report and supporting spreadsheet** by TMGI Consulting Ltd
2. **Heritage summary** by National Trust and Dorset Hall Group
3. **Architectural history** by Hugh Morgan, Dorset Hall Group
4. **Building condition survey** by Stace LLP
5. **2022 property valuation** commissioned by Clarion Housing Association
6. **Concept design report** by IF_DO architects
7. **Indicative cost plan** by Synergy Construction and Property Consultants
8. **Stakeholder consultation report** by IF_DO architects
9. **Cycling opportunities scoping report** by National Trust
10. **Income assessment modelling** by TMGI Consulting Ltd
11. **Initial Planning analysis** by National Trust
12. **Benchmarking comparator operating/maintenance costs** by TMGI Consulting Ltd
13. **Notes re: potential additional minor income streams** by TMGI Consulting Ltd
14. **Fundraising options analysis** by National Trust
15. **Notes re: organisational and income development** by TMGI Consulting Ltd

Background

- Grade II listed C18 house and garden in Merton, south west London
- In the early C20 it was the home of suffragette and women's rights activist, Rose Lamartine Yates (1875-1954)
- Rose sold the house and gardens to Merton and Morden Urban District Council in 1935 – it was subsequently used as social housing for decades
- Part of an asset transfer in 2010 by Merton Council to Clarion Housing Association
- Declared unfit for occupation and has been sitting empty since 2016
- Dorset Hall Group formed in October 2020 to save the house and celebrate its legacy
- New roof put on by Clarion in late 2021 to make the building weather-tight
- Plans to dispose of the building were paused in 2021, and in 2022 this options appraisal was undertaken to explore ideas for a financially sustainable and public-minded future for the building, which would celebrate its important political and architectural heritage.

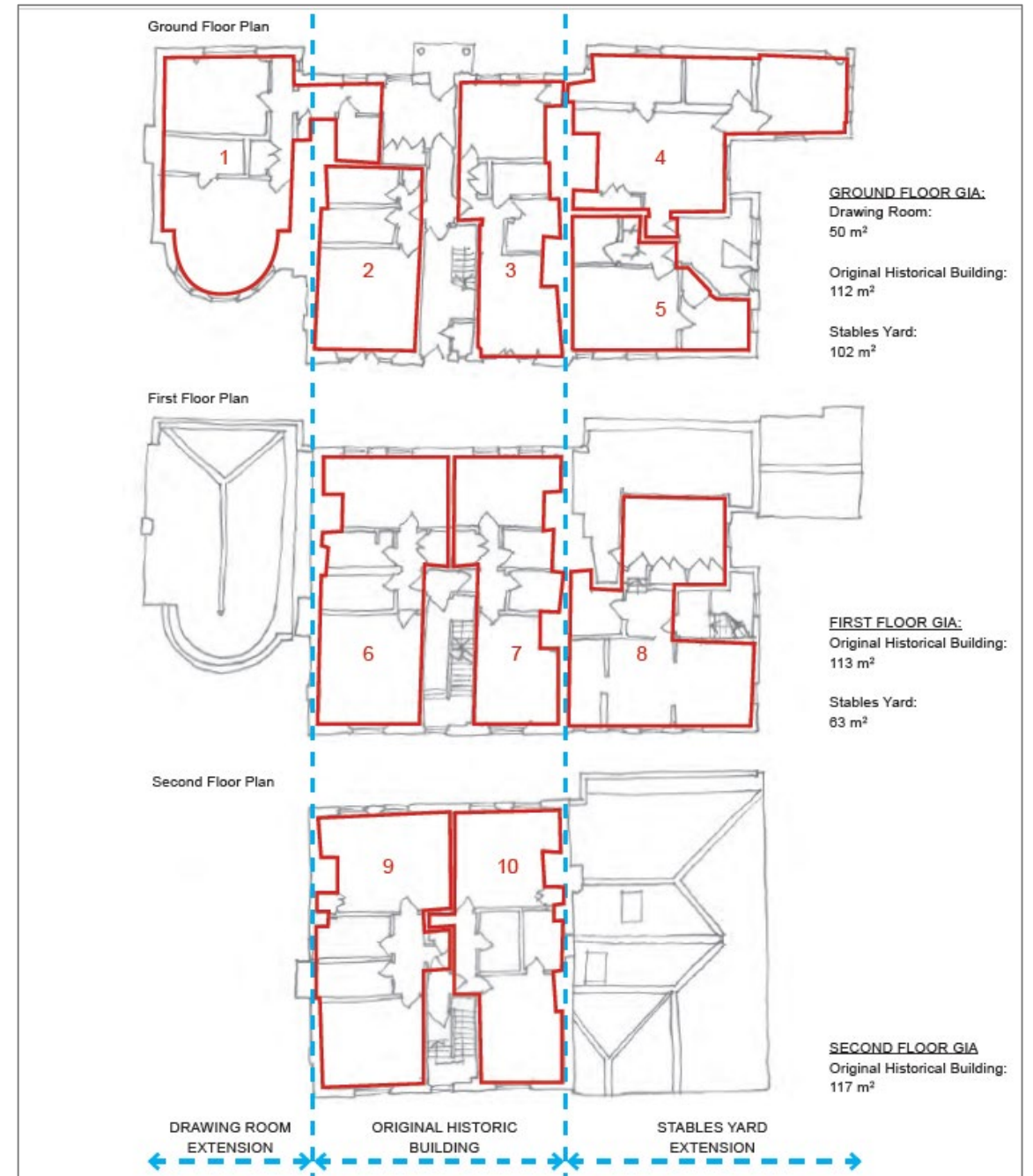
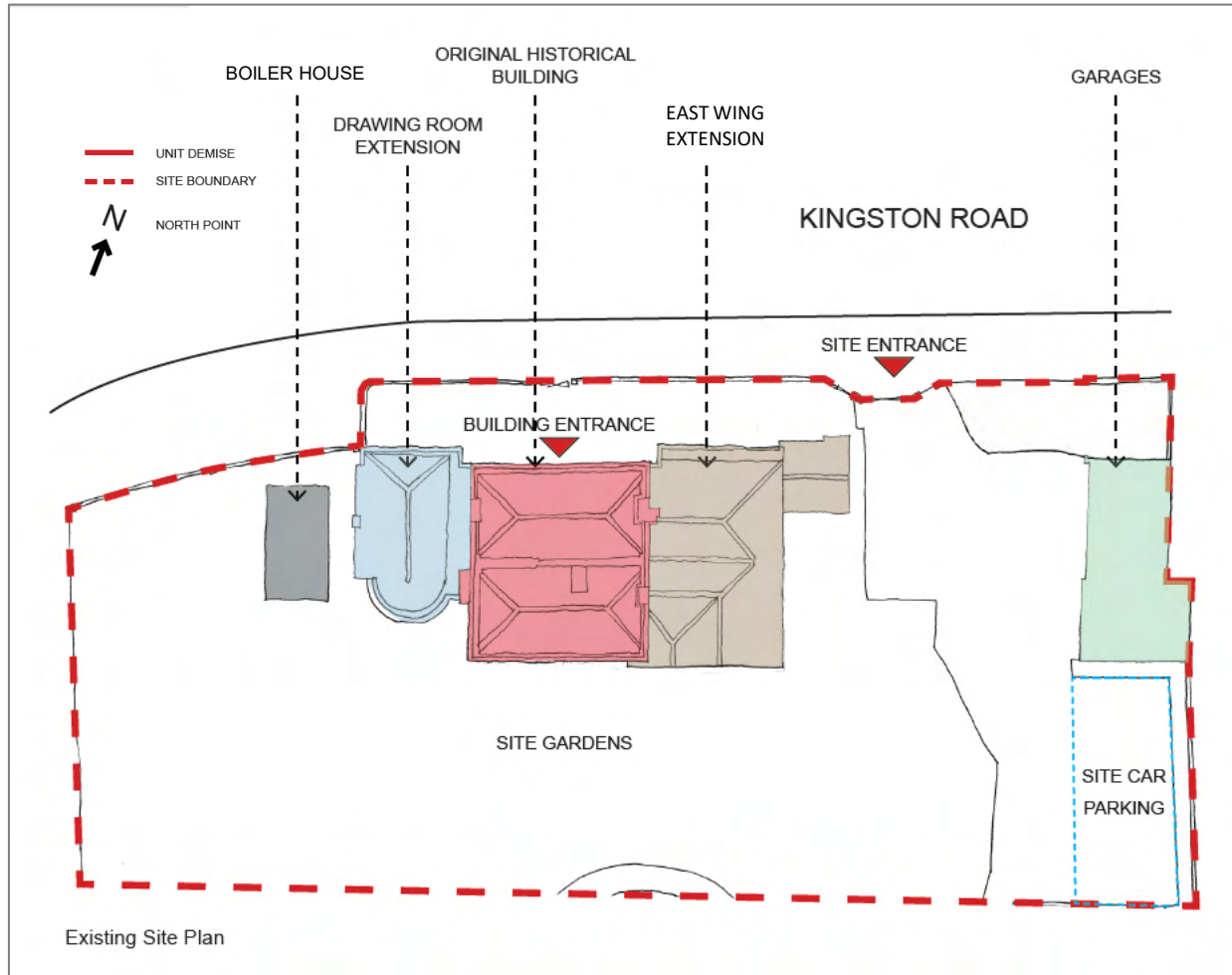


Location: Dorset Hall, 152 Kingston Road, London, SW19 3NQ



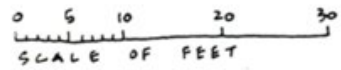
Site plan and current floor plans

(From a Mace/Barr Gazetas Opportunity Study, 2018)



Historic floor plans – c.1910

Reproduced from: Judy Goodman/John Innes Society (1994) Dorset Hall 1906-1935



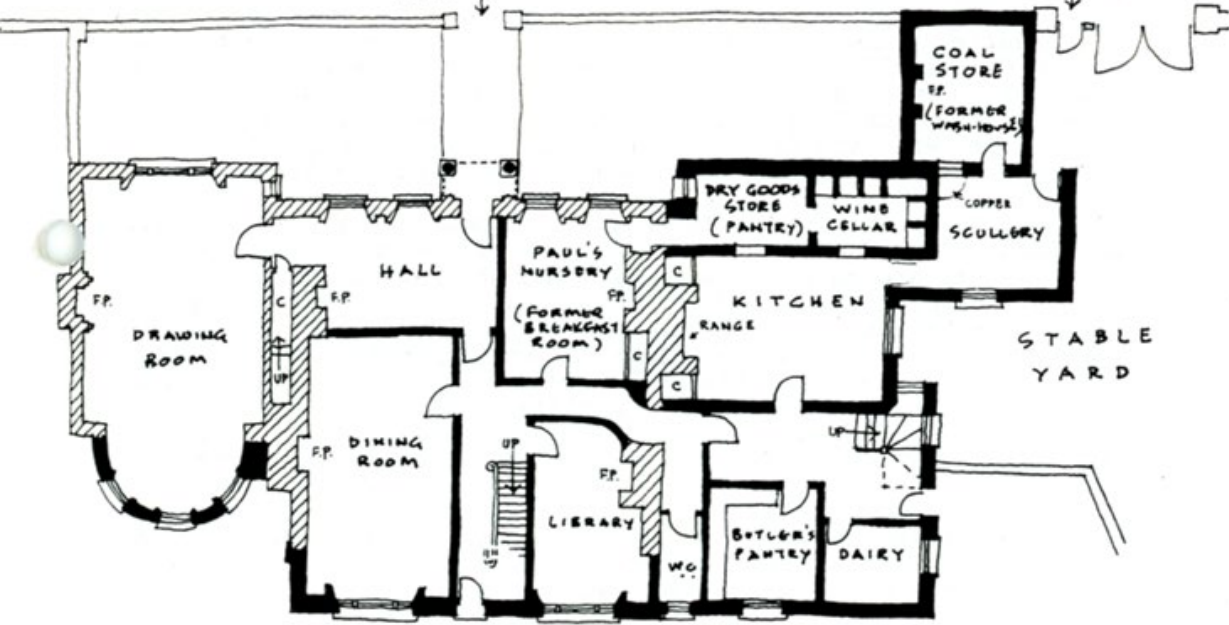
////// = 18TH C. WALLS ■ = 19TH C. WALLS
F.P. = FIREPLACE C = CUPBOARD



K I N G S T O N R O A D

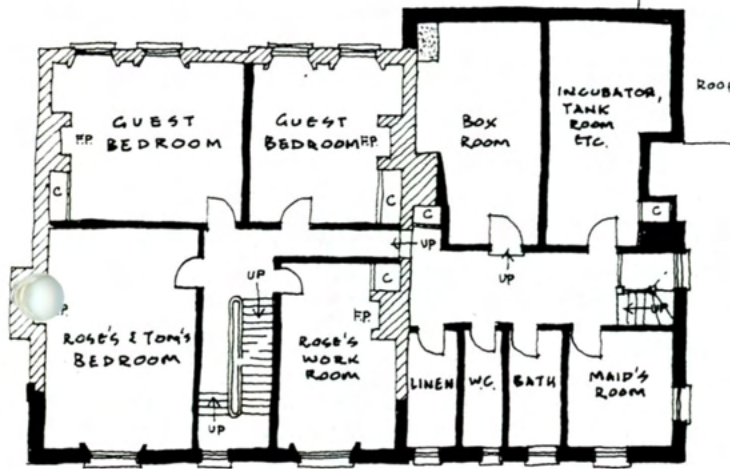
MAIN ENTRANCE

TRADESMEN'S ENTRANCE

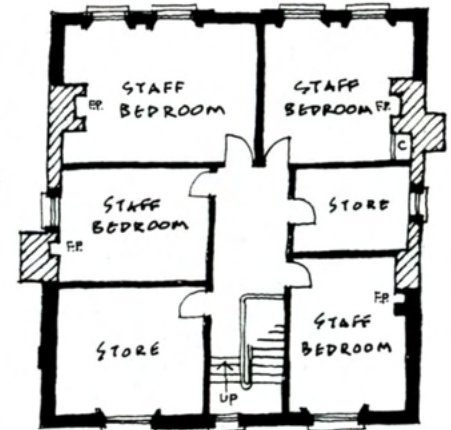


GROUND FLOOR

STREET FRONT



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

COMPILED FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED WITH COURTESY BY P. LAMARTINE YATES

Strategic context

(For detailed area data see Market Assessment report in Appendix 1)

Dorset Hall is located in the London Borough of Merton. One of London's smallest boroughs, it is also one of the greenest, with a well-developed voluntary and civic network and excellent transport connectivity.

Merton is a relatively affluent borough, although there is a noted east-west divide with some severe pockets of deprivation in the eastern side of the borough. An [electoral map](#) illustrates the divide. A comparison of data between the more affluent side of the borough and the areas of deprivation in the eastern side shows that in the latter there are comparatively fewer people with higher education qualifications, there is a more even mix of social grades, and the population is more ethnically diverse. Age-wise the population is fairly even in both halves of the borough with the majority of the population being aged between 25 and 60.

Dorset Hall sits in the middle of the borough on the boundary of the two halves and at a junction between three distinct neighbourhood areas: South Wimbledon, Wimbledon Chase, and Merton Park. It also sits within the John Innes (Merton Park) Conservation Area, designated in 1968, which has a distinctive garden suburb feel.

There is major development planned in parts of the borough focussed on the main town centres, with regeneration intended for several key arterial routes, including the busy Kingston Road on which Dorset Hall is located. The immediate area (under an easy 10 minute walk) around Dorset Hall is largely residential with a number of schools but relatively few cafes, shops or other facilities. A notable exception to this is the Nelson Health Centre, a key local facility which is located just over 5 minutes' walk away where there is also a small parade of cafes and shops.

Dorset Hall's immediate neighbour to the south is a retirement home (Pantiles House operated by Housing 21) which was built in the 1960s on an area of land that used to be part of Dorset Hall's gardens, to the east a children's nursery (Wimbledon House Day Nursery), as well as several private homes.

Dorset Hall is extremely well-connected for public transport, being 2 minutes' walk from Merton Park tram stop, 10-12 minutes' walk from Wimbledon and Wimbledon Chase train stations, as well as being on several bus and cycling routes. There is limited on-site parking which is currently used on an informal basis by staff and residents at Pantiles House.

About the project

In 2020 a local group – the [Dorset Hall Group](#) (DHG) – formed with the twin aims of restoring Dorset Hall and finding a sustainable future.

In late 2021 a new roof was put on the building and in 2022 a coalition of organisations including DHG, Clarion Housing Association, National Trust, Merton Council, and the Architectural Heritage Fund, worked together on an options appraisal to explore ideas and identify a set of options framed by the following principles for how Dorset Hall might be used in the future:

- **To celebrate and harness its important heritage around women’s activism, empowerment and social reform, and to reimagine and embed this into the future use of the building**
- **To deliver strong public benefit**
- **To enable Dorset Hall to be financially self-supporting into the long-term.**

The purpose of this work was to identify one or several viable early concept stage options to provide a springboard for the next stages of project design and development. This report sets out the findings of that work.



About the project team

The project team comprised the following four organisations:

- [Dorset Hall Group](#)
- [Clarion Housing Association](#)
- [National Trust*](#)
- [London Borough of Merton](#)

The project received funding from National Trust, Clarion, and the [Architectural Heritage Fund](#).

In addition to the core project team, a consultant team provided input on several areas of the project:

- **Business planning consultants** (TMGI Consulting Ltd as the lead) – market research and modelling around income generation potential for possible future uses and operating models
- **Architect** ([IF DO](#)) – stakeholder consultation and concept design
- **QS** ([Synergy LLP](#)) – outline costings for restoration costs and future use options

(*The National Trust project managed the options appraisal on behalf of the coalition.)

Overview of the options appraisal

The options appraisal had two workstreams:

1. **Understanding the Asset** – *to increase our understanding of Dorset Hall both in terms of its heritage and significance, and the condition of the building's fabric.* The main outputs from this workstream included:
 - A heritage summary, collating existing research on Dorset Hall and Rose, and highlighting the key aspects of significance for both (as a foundation for a Statement of Significance at a later stage)
 - An architectural history of the house (authored by Hugh Morgan of Dorset Hall Group), as a precursor to a full historic buildings analysis at a later stage
 - Collation and review of existing documentation on the building's condition and ownership
 - RICS Type 3 condition survey
 - An up-to-date valuation of the building and site (commissioned by Clarion)
 - A review of initial (Phase 1) local consultation undertaken by Dorset Hall Group during 2020-21.

2. **Future Visioning** - *to explore ideas for Dorset Hall's future use and income generation potential, which may also provide insight on suitable future ownership and operating options.* The main outputs from this workstream included:
 - Phase 2 stakeholder consultation insights and report
 - Market assessment insights and report
 - Income assessment modelling
 - Concept design options and report
 - Indicative capital cost plan for the three most viable options
 - Fundraising options analysis for next stages.

Understanding the Asset – summary of insights

DH
Dorset Hall



Rose pictured with her parents, Elphège and Pauline Janau, her sister Anne-Louise and brother Henry.

Summary of significance

Rose Lamartine-Yates (1875-1954)

Suffragette and women's rights activist



As leader of the Wimbledon Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), Rose spans the two realms of the well-known figures of the suffragette movement, such as Christabel Pankhurst and Emily Wilding Davison, and the legions of lesser known or unrecorded women whose contribution was nevertheless important and influential in the decades-long campaign for equal suffrage.

Her involvement in the suffrage movement and women's rights beyond 1918 when she became involved for example in the Women's Consultative Committee of the League of Nations, offers insight into women's activism in the first half of the C20 within domestic, political, and social spaces, and in regional, national and international contexts.

Through Rose, we are given a perspective into female relationships, friendships, allyship and comradeship within the women's suffrage movement, as well as familial relationships, media impact, and the fractures and factions within a single movement, for example through her involvement in setting up the national organisation – the 'Suffragettes of the WSPU' - when the Pankhursts disbanded the original WSPU in favour of supporting the war effort.

Almost every aspect of Rose's remarkable life was played out against the backdrop of Dorset Hall, her home in Merton, which became both **a place of action** for the local suffragette movement and **a place of recovery** for suffragettes released from prison.

Based on the full heritage summary in Appendix 2. Thanks are due to Alison Cousins, Vice-Chair of the John Innes Society for facilitating access to the important archive of material the Society holds on Rose, and to Dr Alexandra Hughes-Johnson for sharing her PhD thesis on Rose.



Rose was a keen gardener and used Dorset Hall's large gardens to grow produce to sell at the WSPU shop.



Rose (centre) at a WSPU event celebrating the release of suffragette hunger-strikers in the gardens of her home, Dorset Hall, June 1912.

“A place of action and a place of recovery”



Rose and her husband, Tom. Rose was a keen cyclist and made history in 1907 by becoming the first female councillor of the Cyclists Touring Club, which had a membership of 40,000.

Rose speaking at a women's suffrage meeting on Wimbledon Common, 1913.



Rose (left) at an international meeting with other women's rights activists.



Suffragette hunger-strikers resting in the gardens of Dorset Hall, June 1912.

SCENE AT GENEVA (SWITZERLAND) HEADQUARTERS OF COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY, U.S.A. - Left to right: Mrs. Jane Lovell (London), Officer of the Suffragette Fellowship Movement and Miss Alice Paul (Washington), Chairman Committee on International Relations of National Woman's Party, U.S.A.

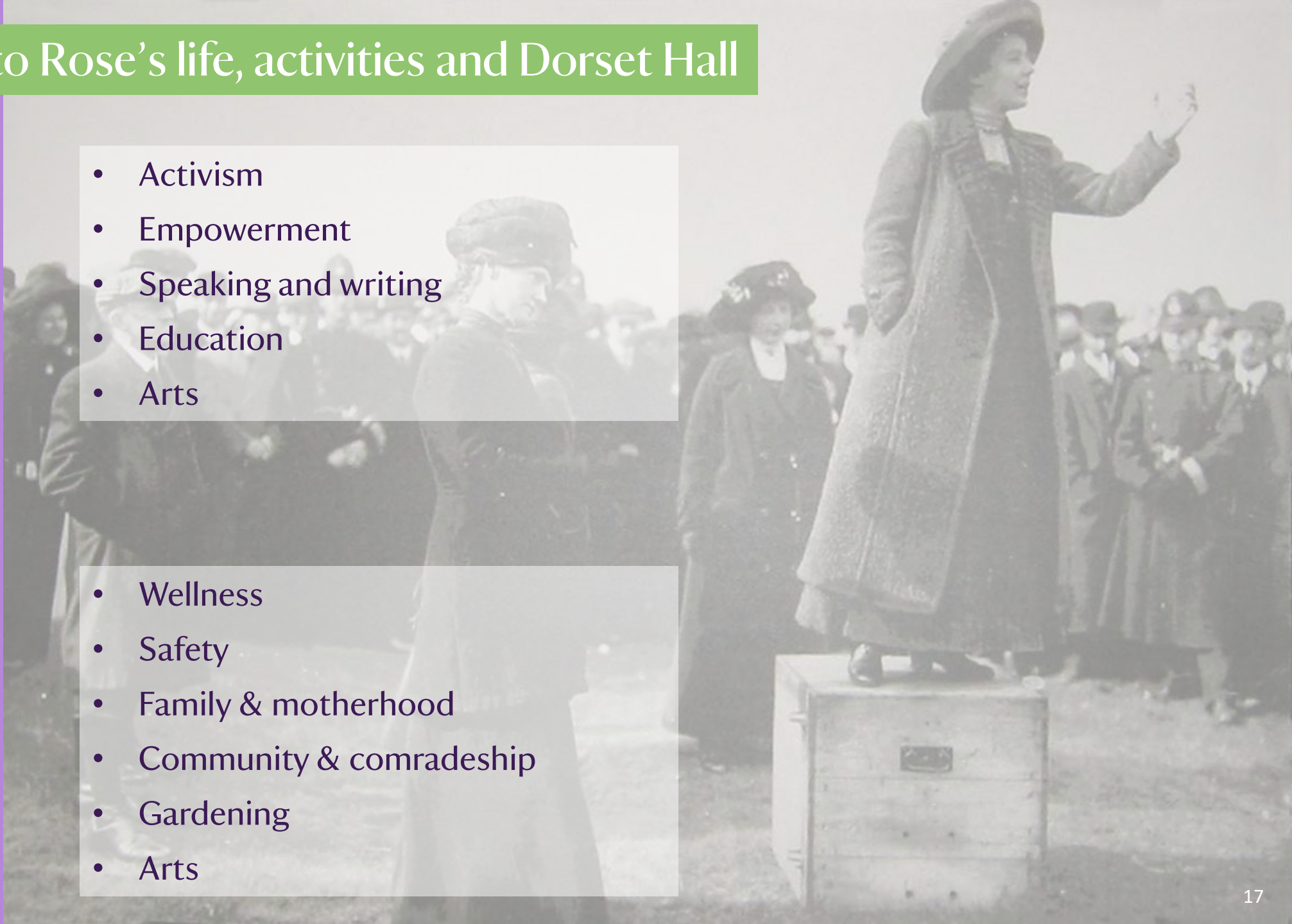
Themes relating to Rose's life, activities and Dorset Hall

A place of
action

- Activism
- Empowerment
- Speaking and writing
- Education
- Arts

A place of
recovery

- Wellness
- Safety
- Family & motherhood
- Community & comradeship
- Gardening
- Arts



Summary of key insights from architectural history (1/3) (See Appendix 3 for detail)

- Beyond Dorset Hall's important social history relating to Rose, it is also a **precious surviving example of one of London's Georgian small country houses**.
 - Its history as a building reflects the evolution of Merton, and that of the area and its inhabitants' relationship with London as the city expanded over time.
 - The 'original' Dorset Hall (see Figure 1 below) was built at a time when Merton was a village surrounded by farmland on the edge of a bustling and expanding metropolis. Outlying rural areas within easy reach of the city such as this became popular locations for gentry and wealthy merchants to build themselves London country houses, giving them the best of both town and country.
 - Architecturally, Dorset Hall is **underneath a Queen Anne House** (see Figure 1 below), **later remodelled (in the 1830s) to take on Georgian characteristics**, such as the parapet on the front façade replacing the former second storey dormer windows.
 - The **coming of the railway** to this area of London in the early 1830s not only permanently changed the character of Merton, but also **shaped Dorset Hall's future**. By the 1860s a new rail line (now part of the Croydon-Wimbledon tram route) ran along Dorset Hall's eastern boundary. Merton transformed from an outlying village to a busy suburb, with former farmland disappearing under extensive new housing. Many of Dorset Hall's peers, other small London country houses, disappeared during this time, but **Dorset Hall was saved it seems though the vision of developer John Innes**, who sought to draw on Dorset Hall's heritage to give an air of 'refinement' and 'rurality' to his new Arts and Crafts inspired garden suburb – today recognised as the John Innes Conservation Area. Dorset Hall endured, albeit with reduced grounds (see Figure 2, p19).
- It remained in this state as a small suburban mansion with 2 acres of gardens up to and during Rose's time. Her home from 1906, in 1935 Rose sold it to Merton Council, who initially used it as office space and latterly as sheltered housing for older people until it was transferred in 2010 to Circle Housing (now Clarion). The southern part of the gardens were sold during the 1960s for the building of additional sheltered housing (now Pantiles retirement home), with further development of the site in the early 2000s.
 - Its important social history was recognised in **1954** when it was **listed Grade II**.



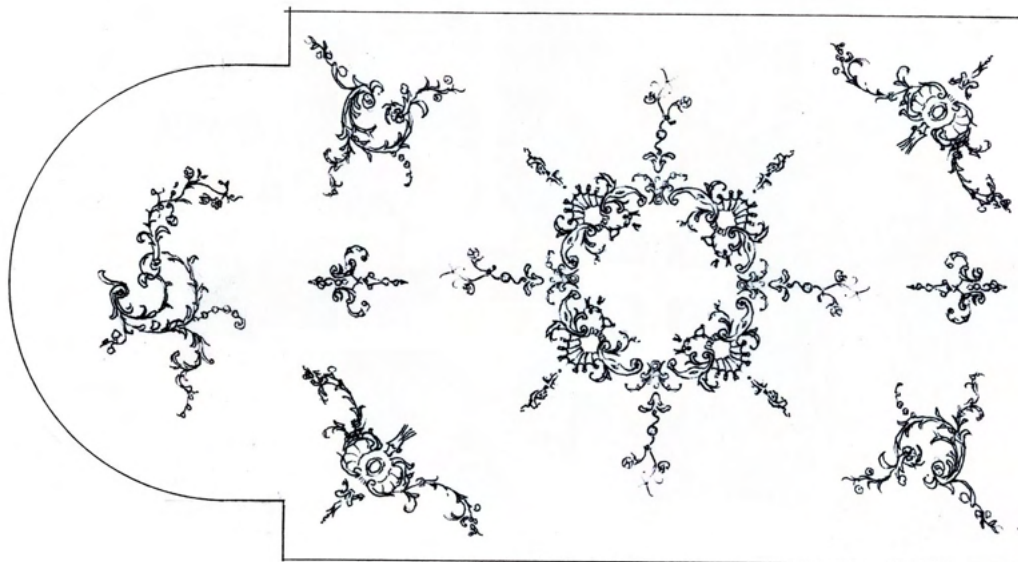
Figure 1 (right). Illustration of the 'original' C18 Dorset Hall (Hugh Morgan, DHG)

Summary of key insights from architectural history (2/3) – evolution of Dorset Hall from mid C19 to present



Figure 2. Illustrations by Hugh Morgan of Dorset Hall Group showing the evolution of Dorset Hall and its surrounds from the coming of the railways in the mid C19 (left-most drawing) which paved the way for the increased development of housing in the area, as well as a reduced footprint for the Dorset Hall estate. The middle drawing shows Dorset Hall in June 1912, during an event hosted by Rose and well-photographed, to celebrate the return of suffragette hunger-strikers from prison. The right-hand most drawing shows Dorset Hall in its current, modern-day context.

Summary of key insights from architectural history (3/3)



An important surviving historic feature in the interior of the house, which otherwise has been much altered in the C20 to make room for flats, is the ornate plaster ceiling in the west wing drawing room (see detail in image above left). It is believed to date from c.1735, when the house was occupied by a family called Medcalfe. It was possibly commissioned at the behest of Anne Medcalfe, daughter of Huguenot refugees, who married into the Medcalfes. The ceiling only partially remains and the drawing above (Figure 3) is an attempt at recreating what it may have looked like as a whole. The ceiling is in a delicate condition and will require further expert analysis and sensitive conservation if it is to be restored.

Figure 3 (above, right). Recreation of the layout of the Rococo-style C18 plaster ceiling which only partially survives. The central pattern is assumed (by Hugh Morgan, DHG).



Historically, Dorset Hall's frontage featured an ornate set of railings, including an elaborate arched entranceway (see images above and below). Melted down for the war effort between 1939 and 1945, a restoration of the site might look to reinstate these.



Condition *(based on RICS Type 3 survey by Stace LLP, May & Aug 2022 – see Appendix 4)*

- The building has previously been sub-divided into 10 self-contained apartments and let out for social housing. It is currently unoccupied with no mains utilities. The building has a security system in place which is managed remotely.
- The building has been neglected and suffered severe water penetration from the roofs. The roof coverings have been renewed recently (2021) but the property is still in a state of disrepair and in need of extensive repair and improvement internally and externally.
- Damp is a particular cause for concern with further investigations required. Recommendations have been made to remove loose floor coverings and damp ceiling insulation, and to increase ventilation, to allow the building to dry out.

Additional insights *(based on older reports deposited with the Local Authority and London archaeological archives)*

- Enquiries made to the Local Authority, Museum of London Archaeology Service, and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS – part of Historic England), after any reports/ surveys deposited for archiving from previous works undertaken at Dorset Hall turned up just one report, relating to an archaeological assessment undertaken in 2008 on the site of Wykeham House (Pantiles) to the immediate south of Dorset Hall, built on part of its original gardens. The assessment, undertaken after redevelopment works at Wykeham House had already begun, revealed little of significance.
- Beyond very limited planning records on Merton's website post 1983, there are a number of C20 planning records held in the archives at the Civic Centre. These relate to war damage repairs and then conversion of Dorset Hall to an old people's home in the 1950s, and later flats in the 1970s. As the project proceeds, a full historic buildings analysis should be commissioned, for which these records would be an important source for understanding more fully the C20 development of the site.

Based on reports commissioned by Clarion from Strettons in 2020 and 2022 – see Appendix 5

- Residual value estimated to be c. £600k, based on an assumption of conversion to private flats (between 8-12 units) and a GDV* rate of £240/ sq ft.
- Market value based on this, plus £400k for the 2021 roof replacement plus some extra gives a total of c. **£1.1M-1.2M**.
- However, good comparators are hard to find and there are a number of unknowns (excluding external market factors) including asbestos, fire risks and restrictive covenants which could affect the value of the site if auctioned on the open market (see next page).

*GDV = Gross Development Value. This is the forecast revenue or sale that is anticipated from the completed development scheme.

Based on a title review undertaken for DHG by Clifford Chance in 2021

Dorset Hall is subject to a number of restrictive covenants and rights, with the key ones dating from Rose's purchase of the property in 1926, and the 2010 transfer from Merton Council to Circle Housing (now Clarion). Some of these are likely to conflict with any proposed community/public use of the site and uses which would enable the site to generate an income. An assessment of the options available to deal with the restrictive covenants will need to be undertaken as the project proceeds to next stages. The approach on this will depend on the nature of any future owner and their appetite regarding risk, as well as the time and cost implications of each option. Key things to note in the restrictive covenants include:

- The 1926 conveyance contains restrictive covenants which seek to limit development of the site including the number and nature of buildings which might be erected and the uses to which they can be put (with anything other residential use by single families being largely prohibited). It also contains a restriction which requires that any use of ancillary buildings be for private purposes in connection with Dorset Hall.
- The 2010 transfer from Merton Council contains a restriction on using the property other than as a private dwelling house, and the consent of Merton Council is required for any proposed alterations to the exterior, design, character, or elevation of Dorset Hall.

Summary of initial (Phase 1) local consultation by Dorset Hall Group (2020-21)

- DHG engaged with a range of individuals and organisations in the Wimbledon and Merton area during 2020-21 to gauge the level of interest in and support for regenerating Dorset Hall as a community asset.
- Key stakeholders spoken to during this initial consultation phase included local councillors, Merton's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board, Merton Park Ward Resident's Association, the John Innes Society, Merton Connected, Merton Citizens, Salvation Army and Merton Faith in Action, St Mary the Virgin C of E Church, and the Wimbledon Society.
- Feedback from this initial consultation indicated that there is support locally for restoring the building, putting it to community use, and for harnessing its heritage around women and girls' activism and empowerment and using this to inform its future use.
- In addition to the local consultation, Barbara Gorna, Founder & Co-Chair of Dorset Hall Group and an award winning political filmmaker approached Women in Film and TV (WFTV) to make a short documentary on Dorset Hall and Rose Lamartine Yates . The film has been screened at multiple international film festivals in 2022, winning five awards and 10 Laurels demonstrating that the cause for acknowledging women's history and the importance of preserving buildings associated with it have broad appeal.

Baseline SWOT analysis

Based on insights from the outputs of the Understanding the Asset workstream and the review of the strategic context for the site (see p10), key baseline strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified as shown opposite.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project is demonstrably saving heritage at risk with a clear urgency to save the building before it is lost • The building is Grade II listed • Inspiring historic legacy with a strong relevance today, providing a powerful foundation for a future function for the site and future fundraising campaign(s) • Legacy of written material relating to Rose • Rose was associated with some well-known suffragettes (e.g. Emily Wilding Davison) and was part of the wider leadership of the WSPU • One of very few built places remaining with links to the suffragette movement which could be put to community/public use • Site has excellent public transport links • Building was re-roofed in 2021 and is structurally sound • Initial local consultation by DHG indicates interest and support for restoring Dorset Hall and putting it to community/public use, including cross-party councillor support • DHG raising political profile of Dorset Hall and Rose via written question to DCMS • Site has potential to bring commercial and social benefit to that area of Merton. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently no obvious future owner/operator, which is a major point of uncertainty • Rose’s name and legacy, although inspirational, are not well-known among the general public today. Her legacy, which has growing recognition, will need strong confirmation to make the most of any future fundraising campaign • The house’s interior is severely dilapidated and will need restoration before even meanwhile use could take place, which constrains engagement and income opportunities in the short-medium term • Given the extent of restoration required, the initial level of investment required for capital works is likely to be high.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration and opportunities for public engagement & cultural partnerships could be derived from further research and cataloguing of historic material related to Rose held in various archives, as well as research on other notable women from the area • Project could provide added momentum to the long-running campaign for a Blue Plaque for Rose which would in turn enhance both her profile and that of Dorset Hall • Centenary of universal female suffrage is six years away in 2028 • House’s interior is already sub-divided into units which may prove helpful • Poor condition of the house’s interior, its vulnerability, and threat of loss via auction, adds urgency to any fundraising campaign • Proposed development of the wider Wimbledon/Merton area may enhance the attractiveness of the locality further and make certain commercial opportunities more viable. • Partnership potential with neighbours (Housing 21 and Bright Horizons nursery) • Potential international resonance and significance of Rose’s story – could this be <i>the</i> place in London to focus attention on the continuing need for women’s empowerment. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damp issues in the house’s interior pose a serious medium-long term risk for the building’s integrity and condition unless dealt with. The continued decline of the building will make it increasingly expensive to restore. • The house is unoccupied and vulnerable to arson/ vandalism • Various restrictive covenants pose a challenge in terms of the site being put to community use • Site has been unoccupied and quiet for a number of years – any change to the status quo may result in local opposition unless there is considered engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Early thinking re: potential future uses for Dorset Hall – a spectrum of options

Women's refuge/ housing

Women's Centre type offer – range from specialist frontline support services and refuges for women experiencing difficult circumstances to more holistic community-based support

A multi-use centre/hub themed around contemporary women and girls' empowerment, activism & collaboration

Dorset Hall – a space for women & girls
A place of action and a place of recovery

Examples of women's refuges/ social housing

- [Women's Pioneer Housing](#)
- [Housing for Women](#)
- [Amy's Place](#), Southwark

Examples of women's centres

- [Pankhurst Centre/Manchester Women's Aid](#)
- [Sutton Women's Centre](#)
- [Crossroads Women's Centre](#), Kentish Town
- [Baytree Centre](#), Brixton

A community space/place for women and girls –

Co-locating of services and local groups and activities (e.g. mum & baby groups, training and skills)

Learning/ training programmes –

lots of options (e.g. from EFL and literacy through to wellness, creative skills, confidence-building, business skills, campaigning and advocacy, public-speaking & debating)

Co-working space for hire for like-minded orgs and campaign groups

Membership model for income generation

Space for hire for events, conferences, training

Creative programming incl. **heritage/ exhibition space** for showcasing relevant touring exhibitions and projects (art, social/contemp. history, archival material, literary), **creative residencies, events, workshops**

Possible comparators

- [The Observer Building](#), Hastings (mixed use community hub)
- [Arlington House](#), Camden (mixed use homeless hostel and conference/meeting centre)
- [Trafford Hall](#), Chester (Owned by a housing association and operated by YHA and a social justice charity as a hostel and training centre)

Future Visioning – summary of insights

DH
Dorset Hall



Rose (far left) pictured at a WSPU exhibition and sale at the Portman Rooms, Baker Street, 1911.

The purpose of the 'Future visioning' element of the options appraisal was to explore ideas for Dorset Hall's future use and income generation potential, which could additionally provide insights on suitable future ownership and operating options. The work started by exploring the following key questions:

1. *What might Dorset Hall's future use be?*
2. *How can it be financially sustainable?*
3. *Who might its future owner/operator be?*

The insights gained from the work above helped to inform the development of a series of concept design options. Work was also commissioned to understand what the development cost for each option would be. A summary and analysis of the options is presented on pp 54-66. For more detail on concept design and development costings please see Appendices 6 and 7.

An important caveat to note is that this is early concept stage work and is thorough but not exhaustive in detail so will require further investigation and development as the project moves to later stages.

1. What might Dorset Hall's future use be?

In exploring answers to this question the following areas of work were undertaken:

- Further (Phase 2) stakeholder consultation
- Market research
- Research into a range of comparator organisations and sites
- Analysis of initial Planning considerations

Insights on each of these areas are summarised on the following pages.

The purpose of this phase of consultation work was to build on and refine thinking to date around potential future uses for Dorset Hall, based on the project's principles (see p11), by seeking further insights from a targeted set of organisations and individuals, including a number focussed on women and girls (both local and national), as well as several key local stakeholders including neighbours to the site. It was anticipated that these conversations might also start to identify organisations who could become potential future partners and collaborators. In addition, Dorset Hall Group undertook to maintain and build engagement for the project with local politicians and other key local stakeholders. A report of the consultation by IF_DO can be found in Appendix 8.

An overview of the organisations spoken with and an analysis of the specific insights gained from each follows on pp 31-33.

However, at a high-level, key insights emerging from the consultation are that:

- There is **broad interest and support for a regenerated Dorset Hall having a community function**, ideally focussed on women and girls.
- **A 'space for women' is missing in Merton and Dorset Hall is the perfect backdrop for a new women's centre.**
- There are **potentially several local women's charities/ groups looking for a dedicated space** which could make use of a women's centre in Dorset Hall. None are big enough to be a main owner/operator in their own right, but one or more of these **could be key in helping to activate Dorset Hall as a space focussed on women and girls.**
- There may be potential for one or two national women and girls' charities to be occasional users of space in the building, but there is no large women/girls' specific operator/main partner emerging from consultation to date.
- There **may need to be a mix of local women's charities/ groups using the building** as not all require a lot of space and/or can pay much rent.
- A **cafe** at the heart of the women's centre/site is attractive.
- There is interest in the site being able to host **range of functions** including: events spaces, counselling rooms, co-working workspaces, and activities spaces (e.g. for arts & crafts workshops and fitness classes).
- There should be a **space at Dorset Hall for Rose's story** to be told.

Merton-based women and girls' organisations

Summary of insights from Phase 2 stakeholder consultation 2/4

Organisation	About	Notes
Inner Strength Network	Focussed on providing training, coaching and specialist support for women and girls during difficult moments in their lives.	Potential for growth. Small organisation, about 10 years old, but well-respected and connected locally, with a track record of securing funding and delivery. Aspirations to grow bigger and have strong resonance with Dorset Hall's women and girls' theme. Too small to be a sole social partner, but could be part of a joint venture. Interested in keeping in touch to see how things go.
Go Inspire Wimbledon	Young start-up, aiming to provide both digital and physical space to support and bring women together, with a focus on topics such as wellness, mental health, and sustainability.	One with 'fizz', but early days. Aiming to secure CIO status by the end of 2022. Have spent the past year or two focussed on testing and developing a digital platform and in-person events. Now looking to find a physical home to grow into and expand their activities further. Given their nascent status, not suitable as a main social partner but the team have a lot of energy, appear to be well connected with women locally and on social media, and if given a bit of space to allow them to grow, could become a viable and relevant partner in the future.
Merton Council – VAWG work and women's commissioned services	The Council's current focus in this area is around safety of women and girls in the public realm, especially at night. Have two commissioned service providers, offering support for survivors of domestic abuse.	Potential end-user, for co-locating services (already have one hub for this at the Civic Centre), as well as counselling and workspace for domestic abuse workers. Interest in expanding activity into this area of the borough (most work to date has been focussed on the southern half). Site has good transport links which is helpful. Direct income from this use likely to be zero. Supportive of project and noted that there is a growing trend for women-only spaces and groups. Keen to stay in touch.
Muslim Women of Merton	Community organisation focussed on supporting and empowering Muslim women to positively impact society through community leadership across south west London.	Potential for growth/end-user. Organisation is volunteer-led and run by a core team of 10. Rely on grant funding to support their activities. Aspiration to grow their activities and events and establish a formal HQ. Strong resonance with the themes of the Dorset Hall project and are keen to stay in touch.

Further local consultation

Several local organisations were identified as being important to engage with during this phase of consultation. DHG have held preliminary discussions with senior management of Housing 21 and Bright Horizons. Management of both adjoining neighbours are open to exploring ways of working together on a partnership basis for expansion into Dorset Hall or for use of part of the facilities. In addition, The White Hart Pub site, which is in close proximity (2 minutes' walk) has submitted a Pre-Planning Application for several hundred units with Wimbledon College of Art and offers potential for working together following initial approaches. DHG will continue to engage with these organisations and others listed below as the project develops.

- Housing 21/ Pantiles House retirement home (neighbour)
- Bright Horizons/ Wimbledon House Day Nursery (neighbour)
- St Mary the Virgin CofE church (nearby church and community centre)
- Merton Faith in Action, Merton Citizens and Merton Connected
- Salvation Army's 'The Link Café' domestic abuse support project.

Heritage organisations

Two London-based heritage focussed organisations were approached as part of the Phase 2 consultation to explore appetite/interest for involvement with Dorset Hall. These two organisations were the [London Historic Buildings Trust](#) (LHBT) and [Habitats and Heritage](#). Due to organisational capacity, Habitats and Heritage were not in a position to get involved, although they have offered volunteer support on historic research and community engagement as and when that may be of use. LHBT have indicated that they would like to keep abreast of project developments and are open to discussion once the options appraisal stage is complete.

National women and girls' organisations

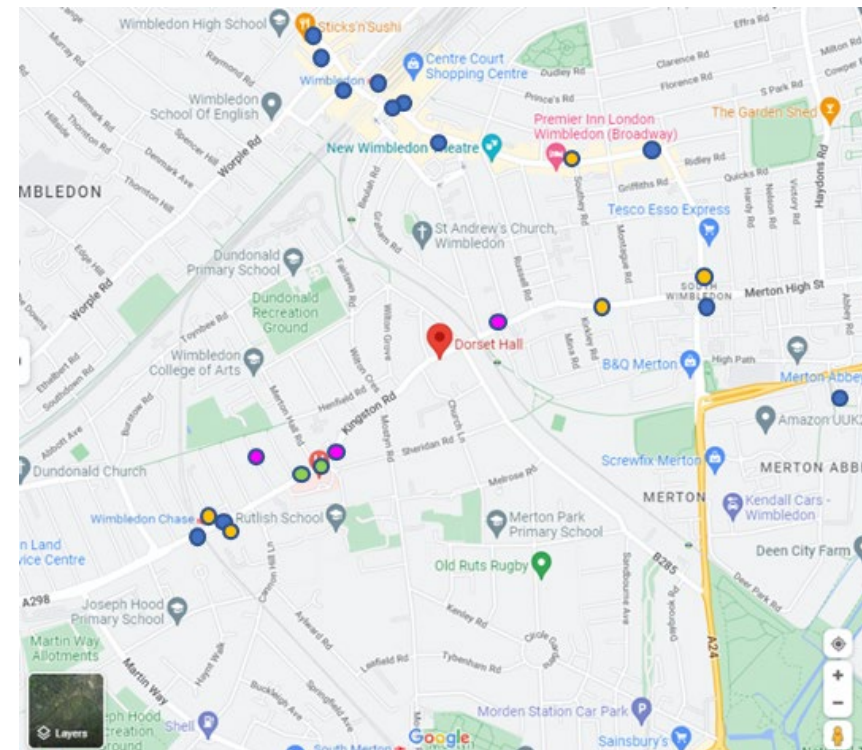
Organisation	About	Notes
Women for Refugee Women	National charity with a focus on empowering refugee women to rebuild their lives.	Potential as an occasional/regular end-user. Strong resonance between their activities and themes/ options being explored for Dorset Hall. Interest in space hire for events. Open to follow-up.
The Girls' Network	National charity seeking to empower teenage girls (14-19 yos) from the least advantaged communities by connecting them with a mentor and a network of professional role models who are women.	Potential as an occasional but not permanent/ resident social partner (e.g. may rent space for events etc). They are interested in the thematic connection and see an opportunity to link into their graduate support programme. Open to follow-up.
Girlguiding	Leading UK charity for girls and young women	There was some initial interest but Girlguiding concluded that it was not a suitable opportunity for them. Not interested in further discussion.

In addition to the organisations listed above, two others were contacted – [The Young Women's Trust](#) and [Girls Out Loud](#). No response was been received in time to include in this report, however, further follow-up may be useful as the project moves to next stages and if additional social partners for the women and girls' centre are needed.

Overview

The purpose of the market assessment work was to explore the attractiveness of a range of likely income generating activities which could enable Dorset Hall to cover its ongoing operational and maintenance expenses by reviewing relevant competition in the local (Merton) and wider London market. Below to p38 is a summary of a longlist of potential income generating activities considered, including key insights gained. For further detail please see the main Market Assessment report in Appendix 1.

Potential income stream	Market assessment insights
Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively limited catering offer in the immediate vicinity of Dorset Hall - catering clusters near other transport stops but little near Merton Park – see map opposite and Appendix 1 for more detail, which offers a potential opportunity. • Cafes or catering on site would likely need to attract customers through complementary site uses, although there is a possibility to pull in customers from the local area on its own merit.



- Coffee
- Café
- Casual restaurant
- Sandwich shop / Bakery

Potential income stream	Market assessment insights
<p>Flexible office space (Co-working with membership structure. Could be themed to support local female businesses or other themes to link with heritage.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs a distinctive offer with clear target group. There are routes to market for ad hoc office space via online aggregators, but competition is moderate to high. • There are three large co-working spaces/ hubs within 31min walk of the centre offering a mix of flexi, fixed desk and dedicated office space. Local offers also need to compete with numerous options in central London. • Trends that may be of interest as models for developing a possible offer in Dorset Hall include thematic co-working spaces, where membership is targeted to organisations and freelancers working in a particular industry or theme. Research indicates there are currently just two women-oriented co-working spaces in London, both in the north of the city. • A thematic co-working space would need to be particularly attractive in its events and support offering to offset its location – most thematic spaces are located centrally and if targeting start-ups, they usually prefer to be in proximity of potential funders, other events, and “buzz” of the start-up scene and London nightlife. • Depending on the target member, fit-out costs could be high to bring the space up to the standards of central London competition • Competition in the area and from central London, would require an office-space based use to have clear differentiation and added services, which could be catering to a particular business theme, having a robust events programme, distinctive look and amenities, opening hours, etc.
<p>Event space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of online platforms have listings for rooms and venues in the area for corporate and private parties. Local hotels and sporting clubs also offer rooms and venue hire, often with catering. • Similar to flexible office space, given competition locally an event space would need to be distinctive, e.g. through design and offer.

Summary of insights from market research 3/5

Potential income stream	Market assessment insights
<p>Community classes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The major provider of recreational as well as vocational classes is Merton College (29min walk), and a variety of arts classes are available from Wimbledon College of Arts. A distinctive attractive offer may be possible but surveys of local residents would be needed to identify gaps/demand. Classes could be a part of an events programme for the space, but will take ingenuity and creativity to develop a compelling offer, and would need to be combined with other income sources.
<p>Health and wellbeing offer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is good competition for yoga and Pilates in the area. Two studios offering hot and other formats of yoga are located within a 13min walk of Dorset Hall, each with generally good availability for their classes. One Pilates studio is also located within a 13min walk. There is also good provision of other health and wellbeing offers including counselling and other mental health provision in the area (see Appendix 1 for details). High-risk to develop the building's use with health and wellbeing as a main income stream given the competition.
<p>Cycling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rose's passion for cycling provides a good basis on which to explore a cycling offer for the site. The initial market assessment identified that the area is reasonably well served to promote cycling, with commuter cycling routes and recreational cycling activity. There are also several commercial bike repair shops in the area and two organisations offering drop off and collection services. Further scoping around a potential cycling offer (see Appendix 9 for full report) added some nuance to this. Based on data available it appears most cycle journeys are made by commuters, with the cycling provision for leisure riders and families being relatively poor. In addition, the majority of regular cyclists in the area seem to be male, the majority of whom appear to come from the north and west of the borough. A number of the local cycle repair shops have closed down, are expensive and/or have long waitlists. Opportunities identified from further research, which could form the basis of a potential cycling offer, include offers aimed at helping people overcome barriers to cycling, especially those aimed at women which could be a good fit. Initial conversations indicated interest and appetite for developing a women-focussed cycling offer of this nature, possibly incorporating storage for bike hire, cycle training and maintenance. A café for refreshments would be an attractive feature for any cycling offer. The busyness of Kingston Road may be a limiting factor, such as for using Dorset Hall as a start/end point for led rides.

Potential income stream	Market assessment insights
<p>Accommodation – holidays lets*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of properties in close proximity to Dorset Hall are listed on Airbnb, ranging from rooms to flats to whole houses. • Other residence-type short to long term accommodation is available on various booking platforms for slightly higher nightly rates. • With the exception of nearby Holiday Inn Express, hotels in the area are typically small (<30 beds), often attached to restaurants or pubs. • Full-time holiday let (over 90 nights pa) would require planning permission from the local Planning Authority
<p>Accommodation – residential*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average long term residential leases average £1,582 pcm for 1 BR and £2,340 pcm for 2 BR. • Average sale price for 1 bed flats in Wimbledon is £385k (£165k - £595k), and average sale price for 2 bed flats is £578k (£350k - £950k). Many properties on the market in the area offer some form of outside space, either balconies or private gardens.
<p>Corporate retreat</p>	<p>Corporate retreats were considered but not reviewed in detail considering refurbishment costs and competition from retreat locations in countryside settings short train rides away.</p>

*Further exploration around the income potential for both types of accommodation was done as part of income modelling work which followed on from the market assessment (see Appendix 10 for details).

In addition to the income generating activities already covered, research was done into two further potential income generating options – women’s centres and women’s social housing – given their thematic resonance with Dorset Hall’s history.

Potential income stream	Market assessment insights
<p>Women’s centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many women’s centres across the country, typically offering information, advice, support and training or education in safe, women-only spaces to women who are dealing with one or more challenges such as health, violence and abuse, employment, education, rights, and criminal justice issues. • They are often charitable and/or community-based organisations and often dependent on grant-funding. • The closest women’s centre to Dorset Hall is the Sutton Women’s Centre. Other ones of interest/note are the Baytree Centre in Brixton and the Crossroads Women’s Centre in Kentish Town. • A high-level analysis of the income for FY2021 for the three women’s centres noted indicates a variety of income sources including grants, donations, service provision for women and girls, and more generic commercial activity e.g. room hire. However, income models tend to be very reliant on grants. This creates an uncertain context in which to operate long-term. See Appendix 1 for detail.
<p>Women’s social housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights based on feedback from discussions with Tracey Downie, Chief Executive at Women’s Pioneer Housing, and Denise Fowler, Chief Executive at Phoenix Housing and former Housing Ombudsman for England. • Intrinsically the model of delivering public benefit alongside residential accommodation fits well with community-led housing providers. There are just two women-only housing providers, Women’s Pioneer Housing (WPH) and Housing for Women, both London-based and both have their origins in the women’s suffrage movement. • <u>However</u>, the social housing sector faces significant challenges around making properties compliant with an array of strict standards, added to which there are now extremely challenging environmental targets to meet. Older properties are problematic in this context and new builds are usually more economical. It is unlikely smaller housing providers like WPH will be able to make somewhere like Dorset Hall pay. Also worth noting that rents from social housing are well below market rate. • Contact was made with Housing for Women but no response was received. • Conclusion is that as an option it is probably unviable. See p47 for outcome of income modelling.

Summary of insights from comparator research (1/4)

Research into a range of relevant and comparator organisations and projects was undertaken to complement insights from the market research and stakeholder consultation, and to provide some broader context around places and spaces which celebrate the history of the fight for gender equality and the right for women to vote, as well as mixed use models for historic buildings more generally.



Pankhurst Centre, Manchester – *the only dedicated museum telling the story of the women's suffrage movement*

- Grade II listed Victorian villa. Former home of Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, and the birth of the suffragette movement.
- Owned by an NHS Trust, the site is the **HQ of Manchester Women's Aid (MWA)**. It also houses the **only museum dedicated to telling the story of women's fight for the right to vote**.
- The heritage centre is run as a joint trust with MWA being the major player. The **women's centre operation heavily affects the heritage operation**:
 - The museum is only open one-two days/week – the rest of the week the building is used by the women's centre
 - It **can be difficult to secure funding** because of the link with MWA (which has significant resources)
 - The **heritage team are responsible for the upkeep of the building** which places an additional burden on their budgets, especially as their operations are constrained
 - **Policies and procedures for the women's centre operation can be restrictive for heritage offer.**
- There has been a lot of discussion and ideas about integration of the women's centre and the heritage offer but the reality is more difficult. Consultation by the heritage team revealed that for many of the women who use the centre it is a source of shame and necessity that they are there at all and they wouldn't want to come back for leisure.
- In 2017/18 the heritage centre received 6,000 visitors, in 2019 this went up to 7,000 (lots of events helped to drive this). These numbers are based on opening one-two days/week.
- There is a **small garden and cafe** which makes all the difference in terms of the visitor offer. There is also a small shop.
- **Volunteers are key** in enabling the heritage centre to open as the staff team is very small (1.5FTE).
- A weakness for the heritage centre is that the Board of Trustees for the Pankhurst Centre as a whole mostly all have social care backgrounds so have little understanding of the heritage operation. (CF: *Elizabeth Gaskell House next page*).

Summary of insights from comparator research (2/4)

Elizabeth Gaskell House, Manchester – *example of an independent historic house themed around a woman*

- Grade II* Victorian villa which was the home of Victorian writer, Elizabeth Gaskell.
- Manchester Historic Buildings Trust was established in 1998 with the aim of saving the house. After a long campaign, the trust acquired the freehold in 2004. Following fundraising efforts, in 2012 the team secured a substantial grant from Heritage Lottery Fund along with support from other funders. The house opened to the public in 2014.
- The House now relies on the **income gained from admission fees** (open three days/week for visits), **group visits, room hire, weddings** and **online events** in order to cover running costs. The shop and café don't bring in much. **Demand for weddings has gone up post-Covid** as there is **more demand for smaller venues**. Online events are also popular since the pandemic and bring in c. £10k pa based on approximately three events/month. Online events enable them to cater for a large international audience (possible due Gaskell's profile) and a new audience of women who cannot make in-person events in the evening but can make time for 1 hour online. Extras including exhibitions are fundraised for.
- Small staff team (3FTE). **Volunteers and a very active Board of Trustees** (many of whom volunteer in the house as well) are **critical to the successful operation of the site**.



Key points to note from the Pankhurst Centre and Elizabeth Gaskell House

- Apart from the Pankhurst Centre and some museum exhibitions (see next page) there are not many places which celebrate the story of the women's suffrage movement
- Partnership with a women's centre/charity brings operational challenges if seeking to run a visitor-facing offer, and can restrict income for other activities on site, so a mixed offer involving a women's frontline service provider would need to be planned carefully and dedicated space created away from the women's centre area for income generation to help ensure financial viability
- An independent historic house/museum model is viable, but income is tight and it relies on having enough material to programme around into the long term, and a figure with a very strong (preferably international) profile to build the offer around.
- An engaged Board of Trustees with time to give and with a skill-set relevant to the whole site's operation is key
- Volunteers may be important to help operate any public-facing offer
- A café and outdoor space can enhance other offers and drive additional income but the income for the cafe needs to be carefully modelled to make sure it does generate a profit.

Summary of insights from comparator research (3/4)

A wealth of material relating to the women's suffrage movement is held by various museums and archives, some of whom have permanent displays. A number of these also hold material relevant to Rose. **There is potential in the future to explore cultural programming or other partnerships with one or more of these, especially the John Innes Society:**

- **Museum of London** - houses the Suffragette Fellowship Collection which contains some of Rose's papers.
- **The Women's Library at LSE** – holds a collection that tells the story of the campaign for women's rights and women's equality from the beginnings of the suffrage movement to the present day. Some of Rose's papers are stored there.
- **Royal Holloway archives** - Rose was a student at Royal Holloway and they have material about her in their archive.
- **People's History Museum, Manchester** – hold a collection related to the women's suffrage movement, including Rose's tea-set.
- **John Innes Society, Merton** - the Society, which was set up to safeguard and enhance the John Innes Conservation Area within which Dorset Hall is located, also holds a large archive of items and documents of Rose's donated to them by Rose's granddaughter, Yolande Yates. They have also produced two publications about Dorset Hall. Their base is close to Dorset Hall.
- **Wimbledon Museum** – hold two items of Rose's (her Holloway brooch and Votes for Women banner) in their collection.

This phase of research also identified two artist-led projects which celebrate the suffragette's legacy and which demonstrate **other potential opportunities for cultural partnerships and awareness raising in the future:**

- **[Emily Davison Lodge](#)** - closed since the 1940's, The Emily Davison Lodge was reinstated by artists Olivia Plender and Hester Reeve in 2010 as a conceptual institution which produces collaborative artworks, exhibitions and hosts meetings inspired by the figure of the suffragette as a militant artist. They have collaborated with amongst others the Women's Library at LSE.
- **[Walking Forest Project](#)** – A collaboration between three female artists involving a 10-year art project taking place in sites across the UK exploring links between women, activism, and the environment. It was inspired by Annie's Arboretum at Eagle House in Batheaston – a former rest house for suffragettes released from prison where a number of trees were planted by suffragettes who stayed there, including Rose. The site was developed but Rose's tree remains today, the sole survivor of the suffragette's arboretum.

Rose (right) planting an Austrian pine in 1909 during her stay at Eagle House to recuperate from being imprisoned.



A further project important to note is 'Mapping Women's Suffrage', led by the University of Warwick. It is aiming to create a snapshot of the lives and activities of the women and men involved in the campaign across the country by gathering data to create a suffrage map. Dorset Hall Group have created an entry for Dorset Hall and met with the project coordinator, Tara Morton.

The following sites were looked into as examples of historic buildings with mixed use operating models:

Observer Building, Hastings

- A 1920s former newspaper office and printworks which fell into dereliction.
- Focus of a regeneration project led by a locally-rooted social enterprise developer, White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures (WRNV), as part of a wider community-led regeneration scheme for that area of Hastings. They transform difficult and derelict buildings, such as the Observer Building, into **blended spaces for living (with capped-rent homes), workspace, and community use**.
- WRNV acquired the site and is taking a **phased approach to renovation** – activating part of the site to generate income to fund the remaining work.
- **Funds come from a wide variety of sources**, including various government departments, Homes England, NLHF, and assorted trusts and private funds. **The track record they have built up over many years across their portfolio of assets and their strong track record of community involvement has been key to securing funding** and making the assets successful once operational.
- They have a **lean staffing structure, costs are tight**, and they seek to **make all their assets work hard** for either (mainly) rental income or social benefit focussed on the local community.



Arlington House, Camden

- A homeless hostel that opened in 1905 to provide low-cost accommodation to working men. George Orwell is believed to have stayed there.
- Transferred to housing association, One Housing, by Camden Council.
- One Housing undertook extensive refurbishment of the site in the early 2000s and now operate it as a conference centre alongside accommodation for 100 homeless people, as well as sub-market rental space for social enterprises and businesses, and flats for young professionals or other low-income workers.



Trafford Hall, Chester

- C18 country house outside Chester.
- Owned by a Liverpool-based housing association, the Regenda Group, and operated by the YHA as a hostel and training centre.
- The site is also the home of a social housing charity - the National Communities Resource Centre who work with housing providers and communities to provide training, support and resources for people living in the lowest-income neighbourhoods to help them tackle community, environmental and social problems.

- There is very little available from recent history in terms of records from previous planning applications and permissions –just three consents granted for works to boundary walls since 1983. Older planning records are held in the Merton archives.
- This **lack of records means there is uncertainty about the lawful planning use of Dorset Hall. Based on the recent use of the building, it is likely that the lawful planning use is for a residential institution (Use Class C2)** but this cannot be verified from available information. Use Class C2 includes residential accommodation and care to people in need of care; residential schools, colleges or training centres; residential accommodation for hospitals; and nursing homes.
- **Early engagement with Merton’s planning team will be important** to gauge reaction on any emerging scheme(s), and to clarify the lawful planning use for the site. Any future use falling outside the current lawful use will represent change of use, for which planning permission will be required.
- N.B. Planning for any new use will be required if the Local Planning Authority deem that any prior use has been abandoned.

Relevant planning policies which any future development of the site will need to take account of include:

Heritage

- Policy HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth) of The London Plan (adopted March 2021) and Policy CS14 of the Merton Local Development Framework Core Planning Strategy (adopted July 2011).
- **In summary these policies require that any development should conserve the significance of Dorset Hall as a heritage asset, and conserve and enhance the character of the surrounding conservation area.**

Housing

- Policy H8 of The London Plan and Policy CS9 of the Merton Core Planning Strategy.
- These policies seek to preclude the loss of housing. If therefore the lawful use of Dorset Hall is as a house for multiple occupation, then any redevelopment proposals should seek to include housing provision.

Other matters

- Dorset Hall is located within the Merton Village Archaeological Priority Area, and as such any development proposals will be scrutinised for potential impact on archaeological resources. An archaeological survey should be undertaken of the site as part of next project stages.
- There are many other planning and design policies in the London Plan and Merton Core Planning Strategy which will influence the design of any future scheme at Dorset Hall, but at this stage they should not be regarded as major planning constraints.

2. How can Dorset Hall be financially sustainable?

Insights gained from market research enabled the longlist of potential income generating activities to be refined as follows:

Potentially viable	Unviable/ not as a stand-alone/main income streams
Accommodation – long term residential or short term (holiday) let	Community classes (could incl. as part of events offer)
Catering	Health and wellbeing (could incl. as part of events offer)
Events	Corporate retreat
Flexible office space	Women’s social housing
Women’s centre (as tenants/ rental income -but not on its own)	
Cycling	

To help answer the question of how Dorset Hall can be financially sustainable, modelling was used to assess the likely income range for each of the potential income options in the shortlist above, with a view to identifying an income model for the site which could help to inform concept design. Partial sale of the site was also investigated. A summary of insights gained follows on pp 45-50. For more detail please see Appendix 10.

Benchmarking was undertaken to establish a target annual income threshold for Dorset Hall based on a range of similar-sized historic properties in the London area which have mixed-use offers. This work gave a target annual income of £160k, inclusive of operating and cyclical maintenance costs. Further work will be required to refine this estimate at future project stages. See Appendix 12 for detail.

Potential income stream	Estimated annual income	Key notes & assumptions
Accommodation	<p>Long-let resi: £11.5k per unit (net of costs)</p> <p>Short-term let (e.g. holiday): £14.8k per unit (net of costs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modelling initially looked at the option of five 1-bed flats on the top floor of the historic house. However, due to incoming new fire regulations it was agreed a more viable solution would be to seek planning permission for new build on part of the site for accommodation which would seek to replicate or increase the number of residential units. Cost per sq. m. is more favourable for short term (e.g. holiday) lets (c.£475 versus £270 for residential let) but holiday lets are higher risk occupancy-wise. Holiday lets will require planning permission. If an Airbnb style accommodation offer, would need to think about how that might work alongside other uses to avoid potential conflict. Long term let assumes vacancies 2 months out of 24, and short term let estimates based on revenue ranges from management company operating in the area (see Appendix 10 for detail). Estimates include fees for property marketing, property management, and lifecycle costs for long term lets and marketing, guest management and cleaning for short term lets.
Catering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> £14k £18k £33k £51k 	<p>Initial modelling considered locating a catering offer inside the historic house but it was agreed that it would be a stronger offer if it were located in a more visible and accessible location outside the main house in a new purpose-built space. This would also provide an easier fit-out than an existing historic space. Options for catering considered included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic café offer, run in-house by volunteers, 9-5, 7dpw, SPH* £3.75 Average café offer, run in-house, 9-5, 7dpw, SPH £7 Restaurant offer, run in-house, 6-9.30pm 4nights/wk, SPH £30 Average café offer, run in-house, 9-5, 7dpw, plus restaurant offer 4 nights/wk, 6-9.30pm <p>Numbers based on 30 covers (minimum needed to make the offer viable). Assume all options are run in-house. Given the small scale of the offer, profit levels likely to be too low to be of interest to an external commercial operator on some options. Estimates inclusive of staffing costs. See Appendix 10 for further details.</p>

*SPH = Spend per Head. A calculation used in the catering industry to measure people's spending in the catering outlet

Potential income stream	Estimated annual income	Key notes & assumptions
<p>Flexible office space (Mix of meeting rooms, flexi and fixed desks and private offices – see Appendix 10 for details)</p>	<p>£91k (revenue without costs deducted)</p>	<p><i>Scenario 1</i> If the historic house was mixed use with space for flexible office space on first and second floors only and use of the west wing drawing room as a dedicated events space, estimated net profit is £22k</p> <p><i>Scenario 2</i> As above plus ‘average’ café offer 9-5, 7dpw: £40k</p>
<p>Events</p>	<p>£139k (revenue without costs deducted)</p>	<p><i>Scenario 3</i> As above plus restaurant 4npw (as well as café offer as above): £73.5k</p> <p><u>Key assumptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All scenarios assume uses are compatible and run in conjunction with each other, in-house, so no rent/commission amounts applied to revenue. • Estimated profits allow for staffing (1FT General/Ops Mgr plus 2FT support posts, marketing, cleaning, bank charges, insurance, licences. See Appendix 10 for details). • Fixed and flexi desks assume 75% occupancy, and private offices assume 67% occupancy at rental rates benchmarked to the area • Estimates assume that users of the private office spaces and fixed/flexi desks have use of common areas (kitchenette, breakout spaces) and are inclusive of business rates, utilities, internet, cleaning, access and security. Tenants would be responsible for contents insurance and printing costs. • Events – a mix of types and sizes allowed for (see Appendix 10 for details). Also included in revenue total is £10k of outdoor events. Based on a modest number of typical outdoor events – the nature and number will need reviewing at later stages. Any outdoor events will need to be compatible with the main use(s) of the site, respectful of neighbours, and be carefully and creatively programmed to accommodate different site users.

Potential income stream	Estimated annual income	Key notes & assumptions
Women's centre	£7.7k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights from market research indicated that a women's centre model for the entire site would risk relying heavily on grant income. Given the uncertainty this would create as a long-term operating context, and the ambition to make Dorset Hall financially self-sustaining, a better approach seems to be to incorporate a women's centre as part of a mixed use approach for the site. Assuming one or more social third party operators/ partners could be found (as indicated in Phase 2 consultation outcomes) to operate and activate that space, then that space would provide rental income, albeit likely at lower social rates – see Appendix 10 for detail on likely rental rates.
Women's social housing	£41k	<p>Market research indicated that this option was likely unviable. Given the house's previous use for social housing, the income modelling included some estimates to double-check this assessment. The modelling identified several issues which reinforced the earlier conclusion that this is an unattractive offer to pursue any further.</p> <p>Using the main historic house's current layout, with eight accommodation units, and taking a benchmarked monthly social rental rate of £430, an estimated annual income of c. £41k was calculated, which is low compared to the target threshold of £160k, particularly bearing in mind the lack of interest from some obvious social housing partners, and the fact it would involve giving over the entire historic house to this purpose, which would significantly limit the level of public benefit which the site could offer.</p>

Potential income stream	Estimated annual income	Key notes & assumptions
Cycling and other minor income streams	tbc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main income potential for a cycling offer is likely to be limited to rental income, but it could be a good use of ancillary buildings and be a draw of customers to the site for other services and drive secondary spend (e.g. in the café, at events etc.). As it is likely to be a more minor income stream whose scope may rely heavily on an external operator, detailed modelling was not carried out this stage as this income analysis focused on the most significant sources of income which additionally could be reliably benchmarked to local and typical averages for those business types. However, a cycling offer along with a number of other potential more minor income streams should be investigated at future project stages. Further options with potential are listed below (see Appendix 13 for more detail).

Potential additional minor income streams recommended for investigation during future project stages:

- Charges for registering a business at Dorset Hall
- Storage lockers (for users of the workspace)
- Retailing
- Social prescription services
- Classes (linked to theme of women and girls)
- Lecture and concert series
- Membership or Patron/Supporter of Dorset Hall programmes and appeals

Partial sale of the site

Partial sale of the site for commercial or residential development was explored but due to early numbers indicating it was not looking as profitable as other options being considered, in addition to the important point that once sold that element of the site is permanently lost as an area for income generation and impacts opportunities on the rest of the site, it was not pursued further as an option at this stage. A caveat though is that if the project progresses, and financing is secured for new build, further investigation around the merits of a partial or other sale of those units should be re-examined.

For reference, options looked at are summarised below. The estimated annual income is based off of a projected endowment value for each option, with a 5% rate of return, and allows for management fees. See Appendix 10 for details.

Option	Estimated endowment	Estimated net yearly interest
First and second floors of historic house sold for development, sale proceeds used as endowment	£509,731	£20,389
First and second floors of historic house refurbished and sold, sale proceeds used as endowment	£1,196,000	£47,840
Sale of land - area east of building to property line sold as development land	£763,790	£30,552
New build - Seven 1B2P flats built and sold on land east of the house on leasehold basis	£1,857,128	£74,285*

*Ground rent included here due to legislation coming into effect in 2023, which may or may not apply, but if so would typically add £100-£500 per year per unit

Based on insights from market research and income modelling, an outline mixed use income model and concept for the site's use was identified, which involves part of the site being operated on a commercial basis to enable other areas to be used to deliver social/community benefit, focussed around women and girls. Insights from conversations as part of the Phase 2 consultation with a range of local and national women's and girls' charities indicate potential for one or more social partnerships to be formed which could operate and activate the community area of the site as a women's centre. As far as possible, the aim was to identify an integrated economic and social model linking back to theme of women and girls, but it is recognised that in some cases (e.g. residential accommodation) a thematic link may not be possible. The key components of the income model identified are as follows and have been incorporated into the concept design (see pp 54-66):

Target annual income: £160k	
Proposed income stream	Estimated annual income
Accommodation (income dependent on number of units and is higher but more risky for short lets, and lower but less risky for long residential lets)	£55k-£130k
Meeting, events and flexible office space, including catering offer (either café, or café plus restaurant)	£40k-£73.5k
Women's centre (rental income)	£7.7k

3. Who might be a future owner/operator for Dorset Hall? (1/3)

Current situation

- Dorset Hall is owned by Clarion Housing Association who are looking to dispose of the building as soon as possible. It is understood its previous owners, Merton Council, have no interest in taking the building back. There is also a claw-back provision in place (not public knowledge) which means that Merton Council will receive 75% of the proceeds from any onwards sale of Dorset Hall by Clarion.
- There is as yet no future owner/operator identified.
- Phase 2 of the stakeholder consultation had as an aim, to identify if there were any existing local or national organisations who might be interested in and capable of taking on an ownership or major partner/operator role. Conversations to date have not yet identified a suitable candidate.
- Given this context, alongside a concern around safeguarding Dorset Hall as a heritage asset into the future, a model involving the establishment of a new entity, backed by an existing or existing organisations with relevant capacity and resource to mentor/support the new organisation, is proposed (see next page).
- Once the ownership situation is clearer, Bright Horizons and Housing 21 (neighbours) are open to discussing partnership options for use of all or part of the site.

Proposed future ownership/operating model for Dorset Hall

- The current thinking is that the freehold and the commercial elements of the site would be best managed by a new entity, likely a charity or social enterprise – the ‘Dorset Hall Charity’ as a working title - established explicitly for the purpose of safeguarding Dorset Hall as an asset into the future.
- This entity would be responsible for the long-term management and maintenance of the site on a charitable basis. This includes management of the residential accommodation (suggested via an outsourced management contract as accounted for in the income modelling), as well as the catering, events and flexible office space businesses including associated cultural/events programming via an in-house operations team (also accounted for in the income modelling).
- Based on feedback from Phase 2 consultation, there is potential for one or more social partnerships to be formed and managed by Dorset Hall Charity with women and girls’ organisations to operate and activate the proposed women’s centre.
- The rationale for creating a new charitable entity whose purpose is the safeguarding of Dorset Hall, is to enable the commercial activation/income of the site to be directed towards the building’s maintenance, thus helping to better protect the building in its own right into the long term. It would also hopefully make partnership for third parties a more attractive proposition if they do not need to contribute towards building upkeep, which could conflict with their own commercial or charitable purposes.
- It is recommended that the new entity – ‘Dorset Hall Charity’ – secures a relevant partner/mentor organisation with a strong track record in delivery around this kind of asset/project with the capacity to support DHC as it establishes itself as a new organisation, and to provide confidence to other partners and potential funders.

Governance

The Dorset Hall Charity (DHC) will in essence be a small business operating for the preservation of a historic building. Whilst there should be strong elements of the operation that promote the interpretation and potentially catalyse new activity in the spirit of Rose Lamartine Yates and Dorset Hall's historic legacy, the bulk of day-to-day operations for the in-house team will likely be with management of the commercial operations and site programming.

Thus **DHC will require a strong, commercially-minded Board of Trustees. The time commitment, cost and complexity of setting up and managing a new charity should not be under-estimated.** As the project progresses to next stages, governance should be looked into in more detail as a priority to ensure the right set of skills are identified against need, and to explore how to recruit a diverse set of talent. As part of this, it would be worth researching similar organisations to understand better what time commitment and skill-sets might look like.

At this stage, and as a starting point, it can be said that due to the likely small size of the in-house operations team, the **Board members should be recruited with an expectation that they will need to give significant time to actively supporting the team** through strategic reviews, targeted advice, and **in the case of the Treasurer, a good chunk of hands-on support with the accounts and financial plans.** The Chair should have a background working with small businesses. If more work is needed on advocating for DHC long term, DHC could investigate creating an advisory board that could support the charity on this with a lighter touch.

Suggested key skills for the Board of Trustees: (it is suggested that the Board be no larger than seven, so ideally at least one role will double-up on some of the skills/expertise suggested below, and as above, further thinking should be done to refine the skills-sets required):

- Chair – background in running/working with small business(es)
- Treasurer – support DHC operational lead in analysis of monthly accounts, preparation of Companies House and Charity Commission filings, preparation of annual budgets
- Catering expertise
- Flexible office space expertise
- Marketing and communications expertise
- Fundraising in the cultural/third sector
- Expertise around women and girls' issues
- Expertise around heritage, culture, events programming, and engaging communities.

Concept design and options summary

DH
Dorset Hall

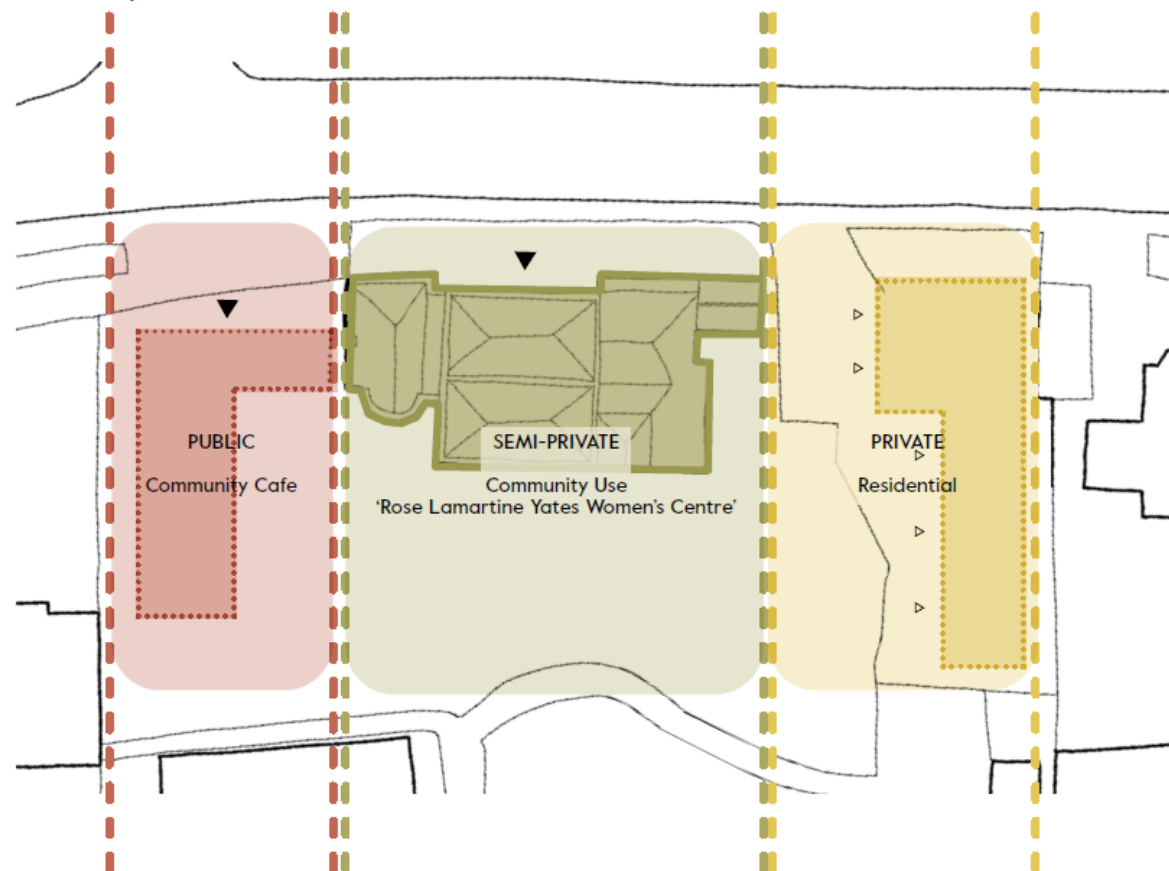


WSPU event
in the gardens
of Dorset
Hall, possibly
June 1912.

The concept design work builds on the insights and conclusions drawn from the stakeholder consultation, market research and income modelling. The premise underpinning the concept design is that the site will be used as ‘**a place of action and a place of recovery**’ for women and girls. To support this social purpose, which it is proposed would be delivered through one or more social partners via the **Rose Lamartine Yates Women’s Centre**, the site will have a mixed use with some areas being operated on a purely commercial basis to enable others to be used to deliver social benefit in line with the historic legacy and themes of the site. See Appendix 6 for full concept design report.

5.5 Site Strategy Following Stakeholder Input

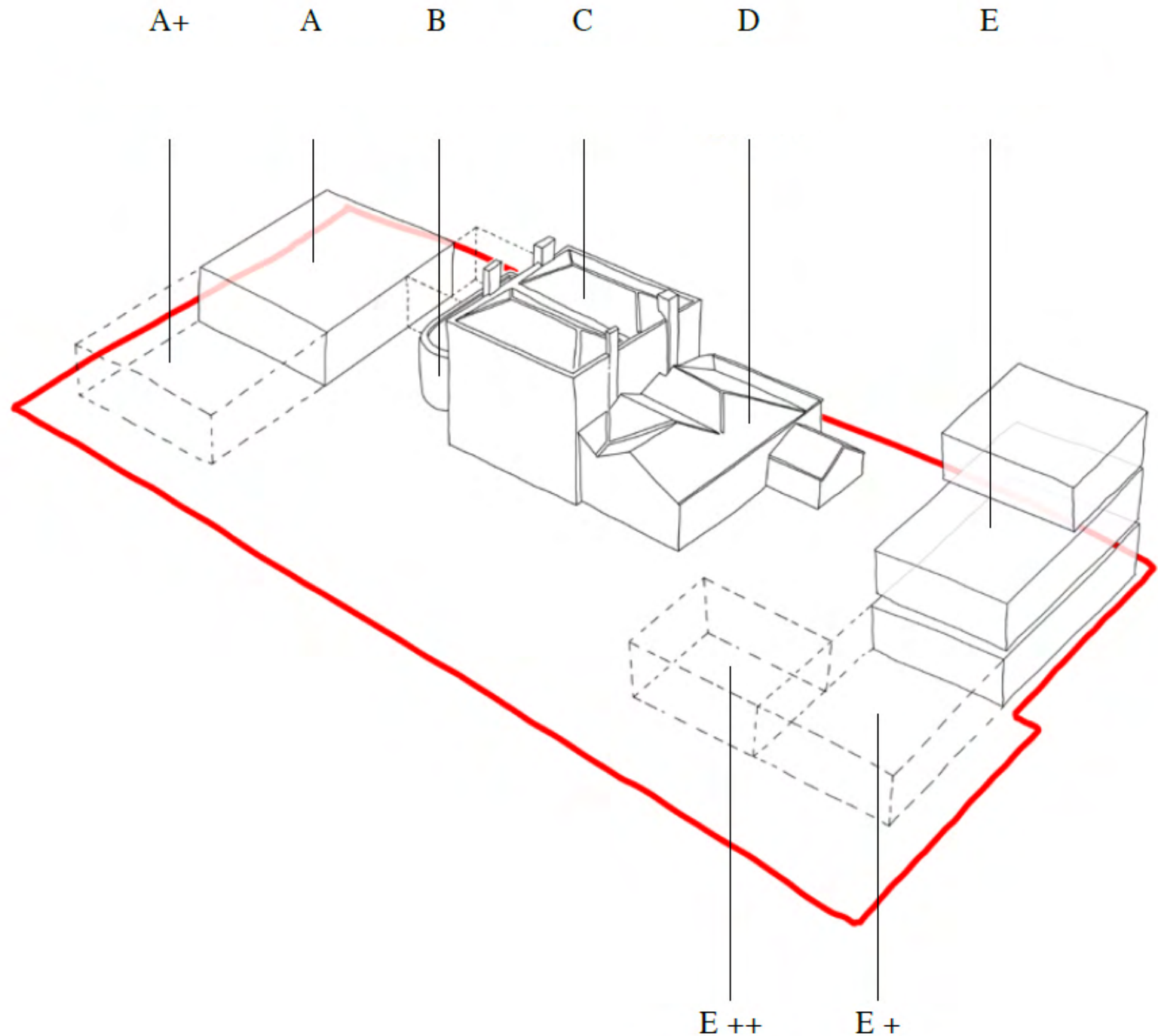
Please note massing shown below is indicative only.



A high-level overview of a proposed division of the site with broad areas for the different uses indicated.

Concept design strategy overview (2/2)

A number of options exploring different variations of the model described on the previous page were considered, taking into account for each the income potential, the development cost, and the potential merits or weaknesses from a planning and design perspective. The sketch opposite provides an overview of the different massing options considered for the catering and residential accommodation components. In all options 'A' is the café/restaurant, 'B' is a lettable events and heritage space where Rose's story is told, 'C' and 'D' are respectively the flexible workspace comprising private offices, flexi and fixed desks and bookable meeting rooms on the first and second floors, and the women's centre occupying the ground floor of the historic house, and 'E' is private residential accommodation.



Schematic area plan produced to support income modelling and showing a potential layout for the interior of the historic house, based on schemes shown in Option 2, 3 and 4 (see pp61-63). Note that this layout is indicative only and will need further development at later stages, especially once relevant operator(s) and/or partners(s) are on board.

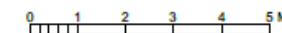
The ground floor (shown here) shows an indicative layout for:

- A **women's centre** – indicated by rooms marked as 'multi-use space'
- A **lettable events space** which can also be used to tell Rose's story via information panels and visuals on the wall
- A **communal breakout area** for the women's centre and possibly users of the flexible workspace (the latter tbc depending on the nature of the women's centre operators and the degree of safe space they require/ if they want to create a women only space - a small communal kitchen for the workspace may need to be created on the first floor otherwise)
- Suggested **office space for the Dorset Hall Charity team**
- **Main entrance/reception** for the women's centre. This may or may not be available to workspace users – it will depend on the requirements of the operators of the women's centre. There are two further entrances available to consider, on the east wing and at the rear. There will also be access via the café/proposed arrival pavilion, although that option will depend on the events space not being in use.

7.1.1 Ground Floor Plan

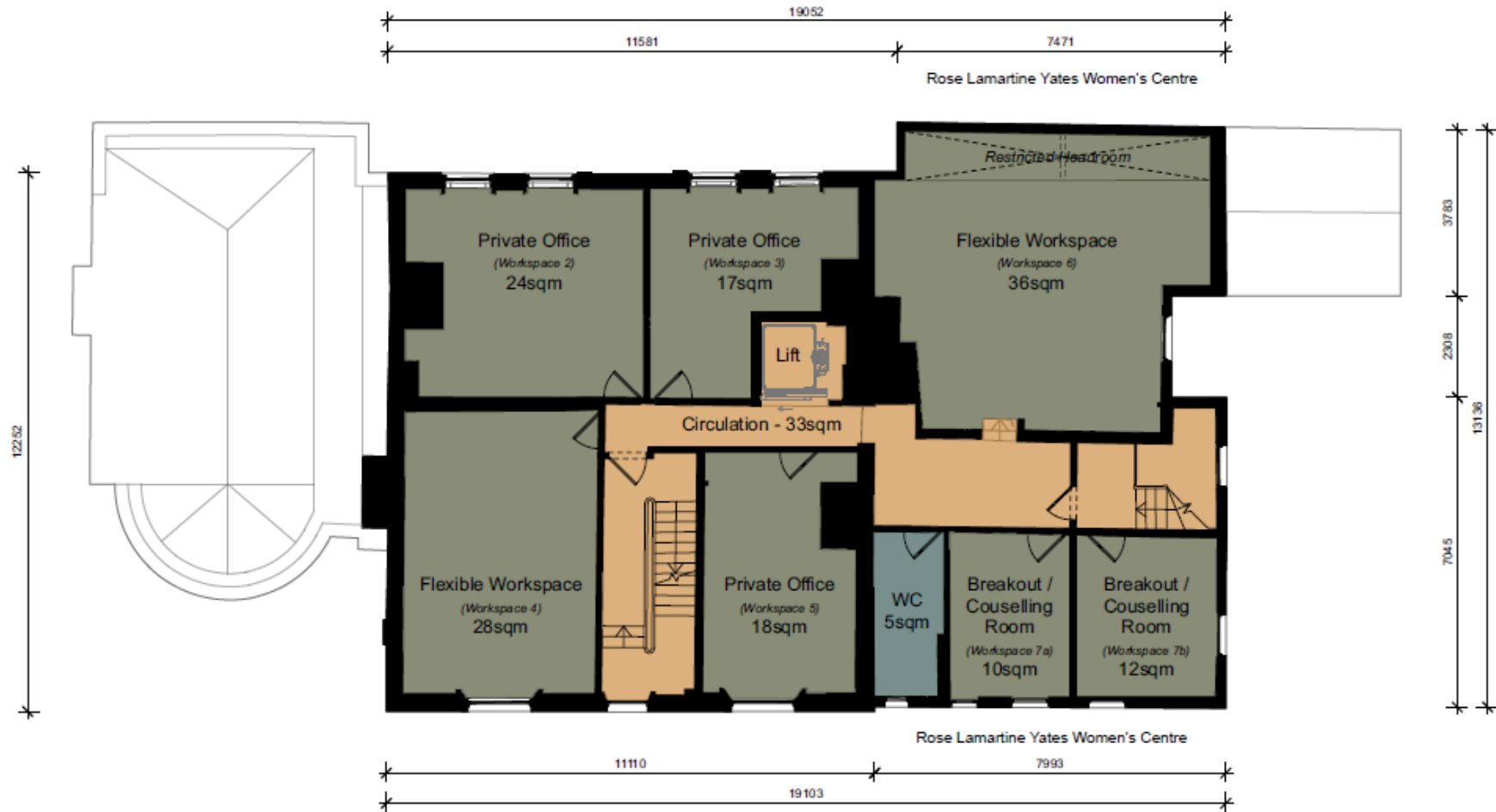


1 Ground Floor - Proposal Plan
GA-01 Scale: 1:100



Schematic area plan for the first floor showing an indicative layout for a flexible workspace including bookable private offices, space for flexi and fixed desks, and two smaller bookable meeting rooms which could double-up as counselling rooms for use by women's support workers, such as council-commissioned domestic support workers who require a confidential space to work from.

7.1.2 First Floor Plan

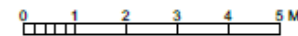


Schematic area plan for the second floor showing an indicative layout for a flexible workspace with further private office space, bookable meeting rooms, and space for flexi/fixed desks.

7.1.3 Second Floor Plan



1 Second Floor - Proposal Plan
GA-03 Scale: 1:100



Option 1

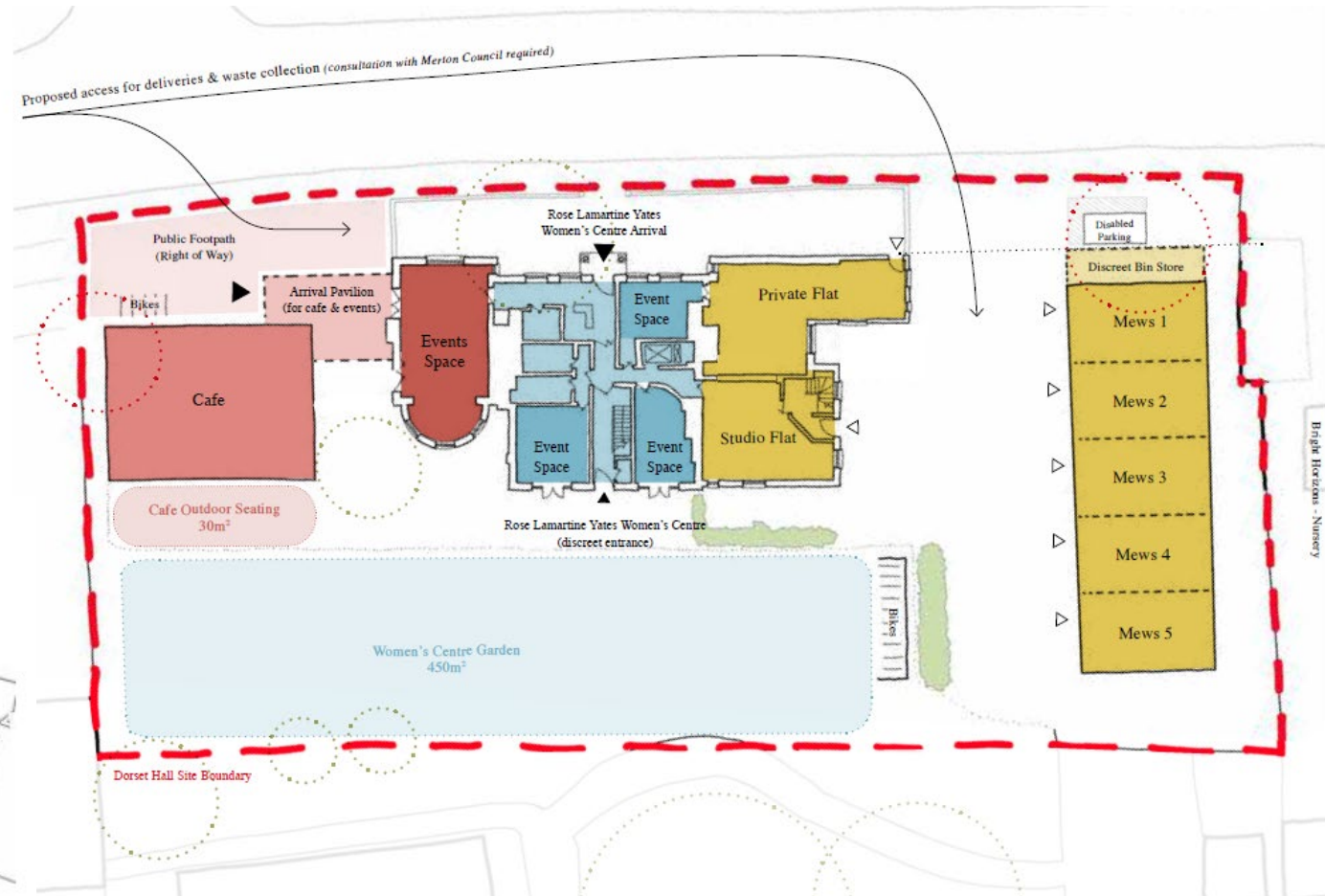
Income potential: £112,607 - £135,645

Development cost: Not costed as income potential falls well under the target threshold of £160k

Total GIA:
915m²

Gross Income:
not inclusive of costs, wages & other expenses

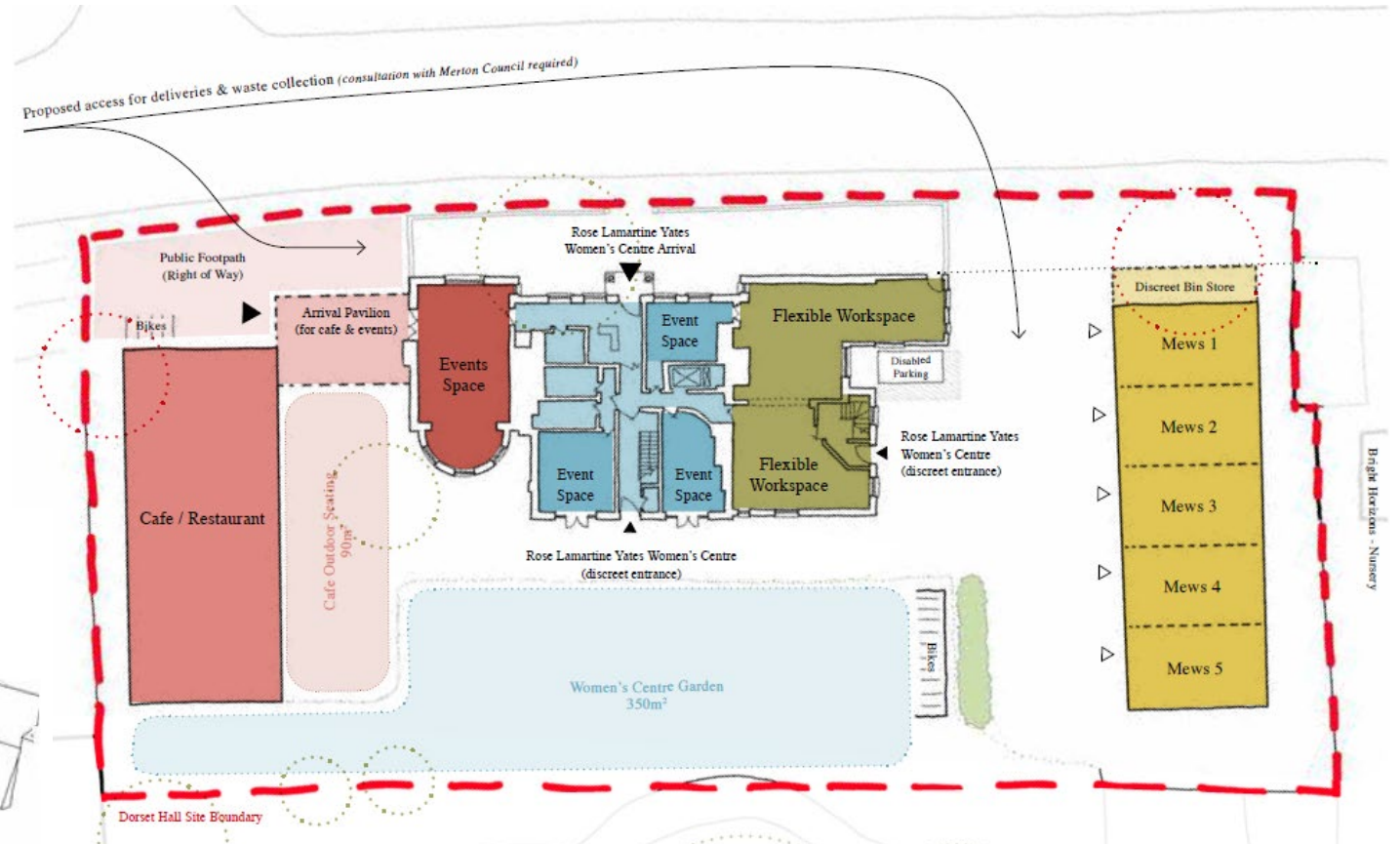
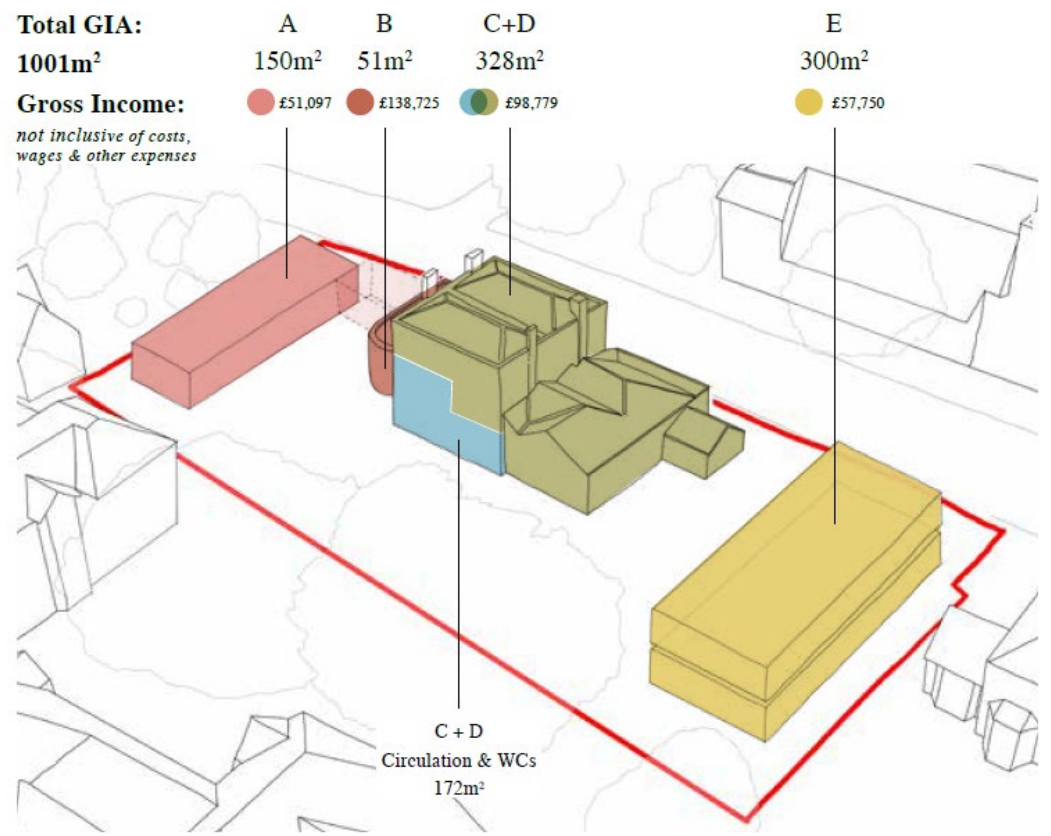
	A	B	C	D	E
Area (m ²)	95m ²	51m ²	223m ²	144m ²	300m ²
Gross Income (£)	£17,904	£138,725	£76,279	£33,000	£57,750



This option is the most minimal in terms of enabling development. It includes five one-bed mews houses, and a small café that would provide a daytime café offer but no restaurant offer. The Lamartine Yates floor of the main historic house is the women's centre, with flexible workspace on the first and second floors. The East Wing has two residential flats, which reduces the floorspace in the main house reducing communal areas, such as breakout and kitchen space, which will likely reduce income for the workspace as it will be less attractive. There is a larger garden/outdoor space which offers potential for users of the women's centre and events.

Option 2

Income potential: £144,180 - £155,614
Development cost: £7,064,000 (see Appendix 7 for detail)



Like Option 1, this option also features five one-bed mews houses, but the café space has been expanded to enable it to operate a daytime café offer (9-5, 7dpw) and an evening restaurant (6-9.30pm, 4npw, likely Thurs-Sun). The ground floor of the historic house is the women's centre, with flexible workspace on the first and second floors. The East Wing is as per the indicative layout on p57, with an office for the Dorset Hall Charity, communal space and kitchen area which enhances the offer for the women's centre and possibly the flexible workspace. There is still a reasonable-sized outdoor space for café seating and as a garden/events space for the women's centre. The mews housing generates less income than some other accommodation types featured in later options, so the overall income potential of this option is lower, but if the upper estimate of £155,614 is used (based on the housing units being run as short term holiday lets) then it only falls just short of the £160k threshold. It has the lowest development cost of any option where this has been costed.

Option 3

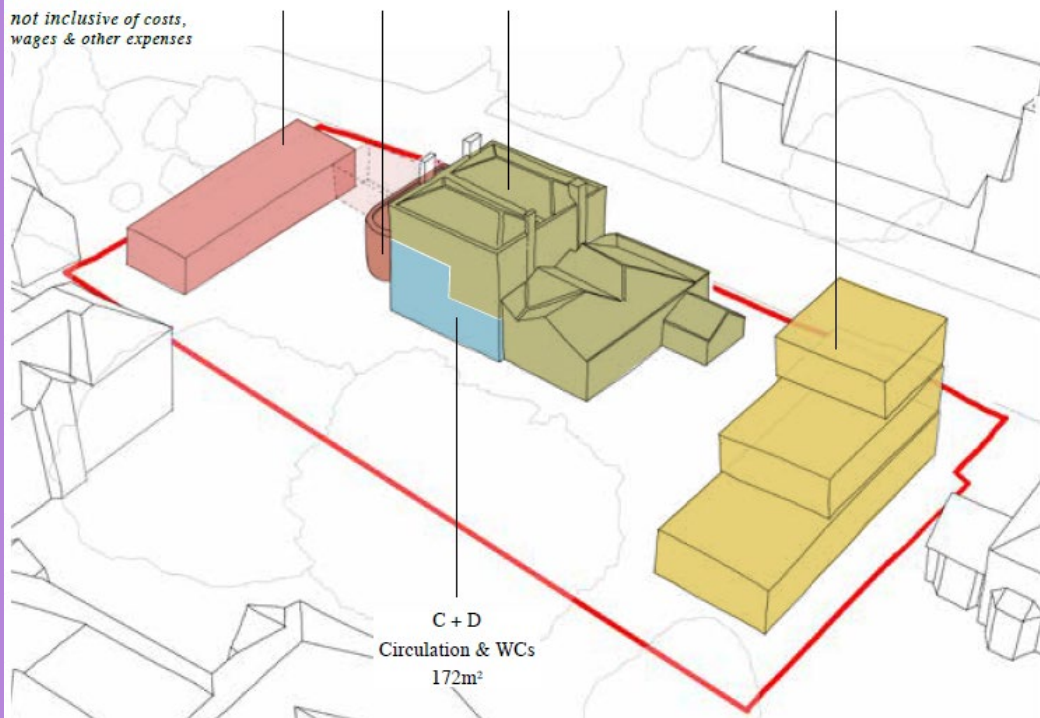
Income potential: £150,574 - £170,482

Development cost: £7,166,000 (see Appendix 7 for detail)

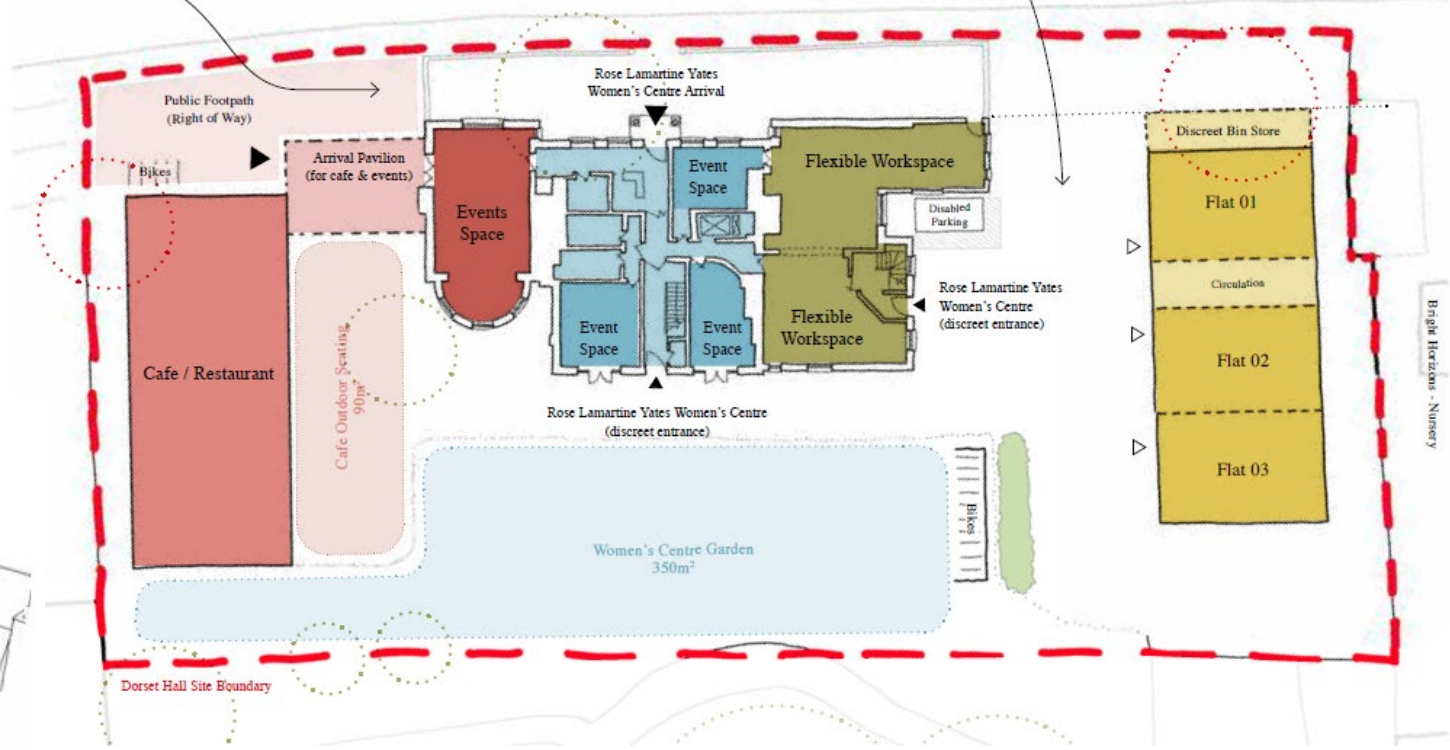
Total GIA:
1001m²

Gross Income:
not inclusive of costs, wages & other expenses

Area	Area (m ²)	Gross Income (£)
A	150m ²	£51,097
B	51m ²	£138,725
C+D	328m ²	£98,779
E	300m ²	£69,300



Proposed access for deliveries & waste collection (consultation with Merton Council required)



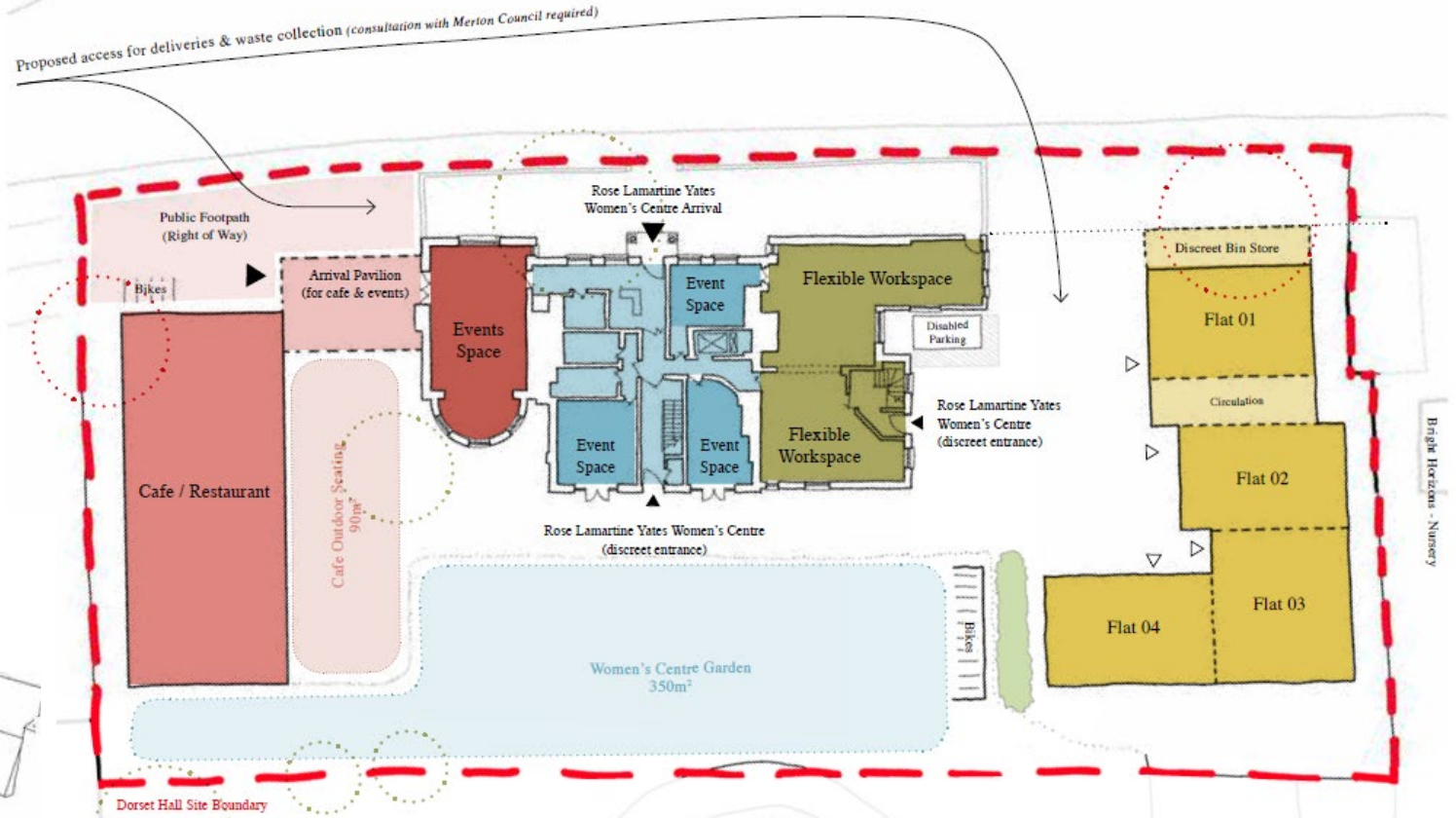
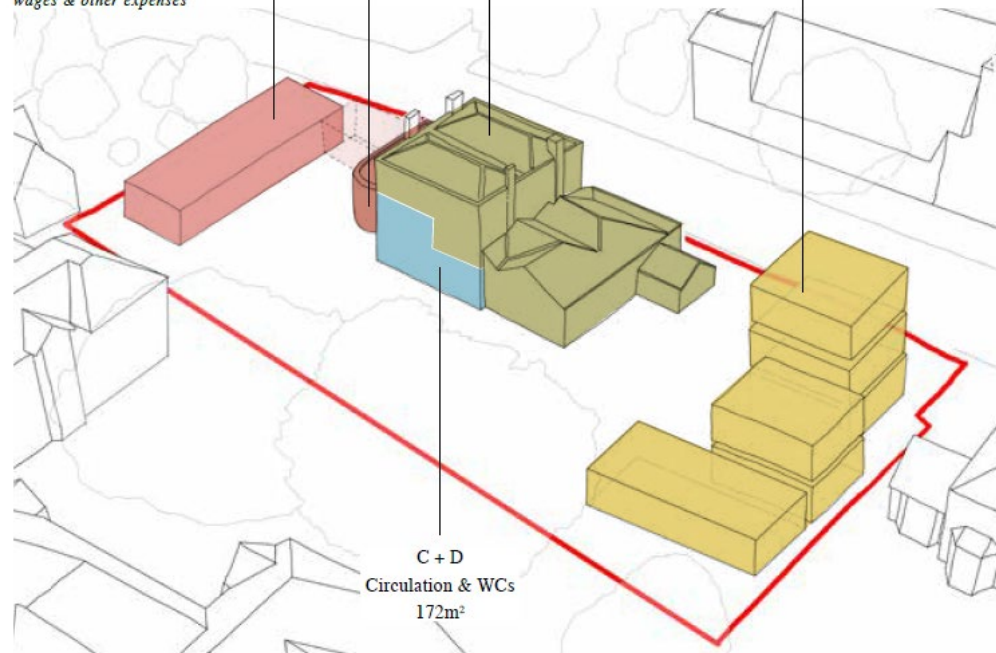
This option features six one-bed flats in a stepped development to maximise units whilst being sensitive to neighbouring properties. Like Option 2, it also includes the larger café providing the daytime café offer and part-week evening restaurant offer. The ground floor of the historic house is the women's centre, with flexible workspace on the first and second floors. The East Wing features office space for the Dorset Hall Charity, and communal space and a kitchen for the women's centre and possibly the flexible workspace. The housing in this option meets the income threshold of £160k if operated as short term holiday lets, but falls short if a long let approach is used. The development cost is higher than Option 2, but not significantly so given the overall total.

Option 4

Income potential: £162,124 - £185,350

Development cost: £7,419,000 (see Appendix 7 for detail)

Total GIA:	A	B	C+D	E
1051m ²	150m ²	51m ²	328m ²	350m ²
Gross Income: <i>not inclusive of costs, wages & other expenses</i>	£51,097	£138,725	£98,779	£80,850



This option features seven one-bed flats in an L-shaped stepped development. It includes the larger café providing the daytime café offer and part-week evening restaurant offer. The ground floor of the historic house is the women's centre, with flexible workspace on the first and second floors. The East Wing features office space for the Dorset Hall Charity, and communal space and a kitchen for the women's centre and possibly the flexible workspace. The housing in this option meets the income threshold of £160k if a long or short term approach is used. The development cost is the highest of those costed.

Option 5

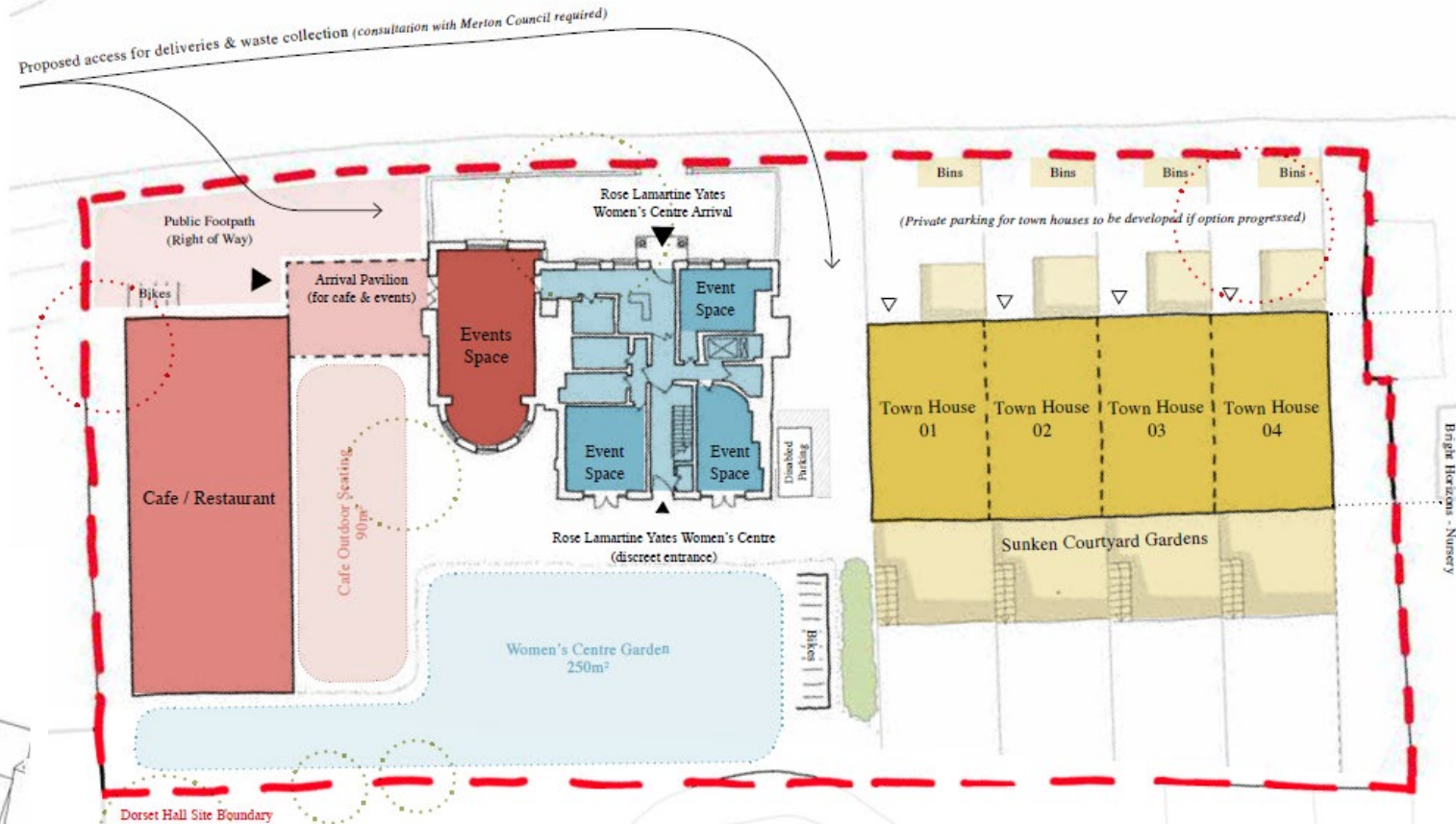
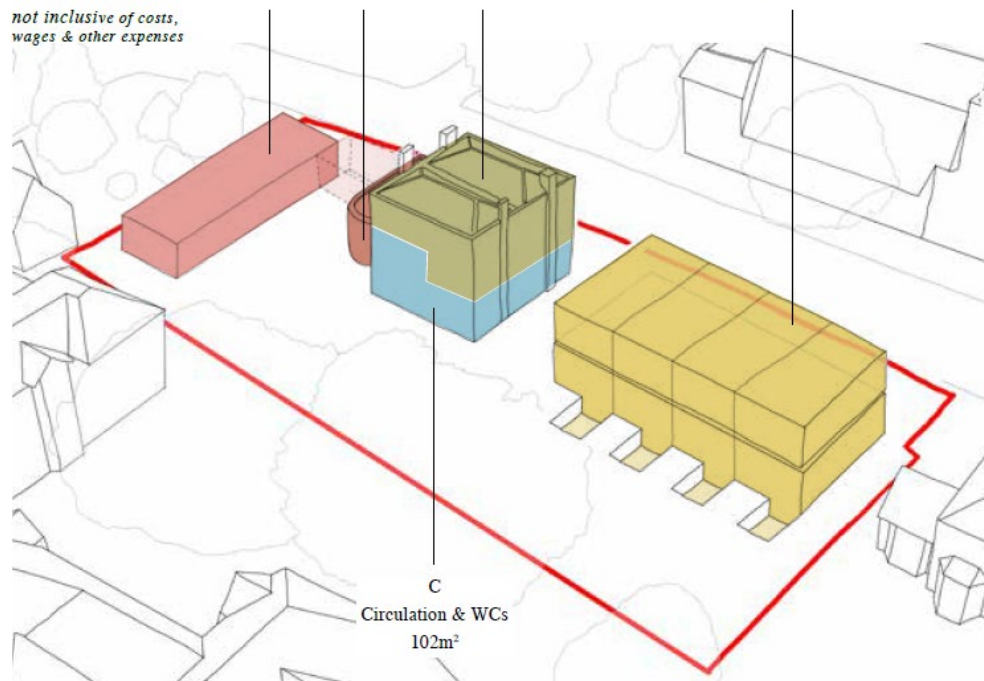
Income potential: £152,269

Development cost: Not costed as income potential falls under the target threshold of £160k

Total GIA: 934m²

Gross Income: not inclusive of costs, wages & other expenses

Area	Area (m ²)	Income (£)
A	150m ²	£51,097
B	51m ²	£138,725
C	223m ²	£76,279
E	408m ²	£136,500



A more radical option which involves demolition of the East Wing extension of the historic house to create space for the development of high-value housing to financially support the project. The housing comprises four three-bed townhouse with basements. Like Option 2, 3 and 4, it also features the larger café providing the daytime café offer and part-week evening restaurant offer. The ground floor of the main historic house is the women's centre, with flexible workspace on the first and second floors. With the East Wing gone there is less space for communal areas, as per Option 1. The projected income falls below the target threshold of £160k. For this reason, along with the likely controversy demolishing the East Wing would cause, the development cost for this option was not calculated. However, it is assumed that it will likely be higher due additional funding required for building demolition, additional expenses in planning and approvals, and additional expenses in excavation to build the basements.

Options summary (9/10)

An overview of the income potential, development cost, and key pros and cons for each option is opposite.

See Appendices 7 and 10 for details of development costs and income potential respectively for relevant options.

Option	Income potential	Development cost	Key pros	Key cons
1	£112,607 - £135,645	Not costed due to income viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing of new build is smaller which may be attractive to planners and leaves a larger garden area for the women's centre and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorest income generation profile that falls a long way short of the target income threshold Less common space available for users of the workspace in this option due to the East Wing not being available, making it a less attractive offer. Income estimates priced as per Options 2, 3 and 4, but in reality income may be lower. Smaller café will limit related income potential
2	£144,180 - £155,614	£7,064,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better flexible workspace offer Residential units have a smaller footprint and proposed mews house units may be more attractive to planners given historic setting Lowest development cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls short of income threshold but only just on short let approach (may be worth further investigation) Less residential space = less income than on Options 3 and 4
3	£150,574 - £170,482	£7,166,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets income threshold (£160k pa) if short let approach is used for accommodation units Better flexible workspace offer Proposed flats are stepped to maximise units whilst being sensitive to neighbours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet income threshold if long let approach is used for accommodation units
4	£162,124 - £185,350	£7,419,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the income threshold using either the short or long let approach for the accommodation units Better flexible workspace offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential development might be deemed as over-development by planners Highest development cost
5	£152,269	Not costed to due to income viability and planning concerns		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls short of income threshold Likely higher development costs due to building demolition, additional expenses in planning and approvals, and additional expenses in excavation to build the basements Controversial due to proposed demolition of part of the historic structure that was in use in Rose's day Less attractive workspace offer due to East Wing being demolished

Options summary (10/10)

Following consideration of each of the options, **Options 2, 3 and 4** appear to be the most viable/ have the most potential from an income perspective, and are recommended for further investigation and development as the project progresses to next stages.

Key to informing further development of these options will be identifying a future owner and operator(s), consulting on emerging ideas with the local Planning authority, as well as identifying a viable financing mechanism for the residential units.

Dorset Housing

Dorset Hall: Rose Lamartine Yates Women's Centre & Workspace

Arrival Pavilion

Cafe



Fundraising options analysis and next steps



Rose, date and location unrecorded.

Based on the insights and outputs from this options appraisal, an initial analysis of fundraising options and initial consideration regarding organisational and income development have been undertaken.

The fundraising analysis considered potential options for fundraising from grant-making bodies and private individuals (philanthropy). The conclusion is that:

- There is an opportunity to build on the existing local support for saving Dorset Hall and to develop a fundraising campaign with a **strong philanthropic narrative** and ‘call to action’.
- There will be **limited grant funding opportunities for the capital costs of the project** as the primary driver is not to provide broad public access (see Appendix 14 for more detail on grant funders).

Important next steps identified for fundraising are:

1. **Identifying and confirming a partnership with a future owner/operator** with a strong track record in delivery. This will provide certainty for the years ahead and will demonstrate the building’s social impact and benefits to prospective donors.
2. **Undertaking a full fundraising feasibility study** which, through further research, will help to establish a full fundraising plan. The feasibility study would identify potential supporters, benchmark this campaign against other similar examples, as well as provide an itemised fundraising target for each income stream (Grants, Individuals, Charitable Trusts, Corporates, as well as what is not fund-raisable for and needs to be financed in other ways such as via social investment or other repayable finance options). Securing the support of a specialist fundraising resource/ consultant to support this work would be beneficial.
3. Based on the insights from the feasibility study, **establish a fundraising plan/campaign which seeks to secure at least one (more likely two or three) exceptional large lead gifts, which make significant (c.75%) headway into securing the large renovation costs.** Most capital fundraising campaigns follow a defined structure. First is a private phase in which lead and major gifts are secured, before then moving to a public phase whereby a much wider number of people are solicited for smaller gifts. This model gives stability to a campaign by prioritising larger gifts first, avoiding loss of momentum and burnout, and increasing the likelihood of success (see Appendix 14 for more detail).
4. **Raising awareness of Rose** – her work and her legacy.

Next steps – fundraising options analysis (2/3)

The fundraising options analysis (Appendix 14) identified some initial suggestions for potential grant funders and philanthropists – these are summarised opposite. As recommended, further research should be done as part of a full fundraising feasibility study before any potential funders are approached.

Potential funders	Potential Ask
National Lottery Heritage Fund	Up to £250,000
Community Ownership Fund	£500,000
GLA	£50,000 (depending on programme)
Architectural Heritage Fund	Up to £100,000
Heritage of London Trust	£15,000
City Bridge Trust	£5-£150,000 depending on grant programme
Wimbledon Foundation Community Fund	£10,000
Tudor Trust	c. £50,000 (see Appendix 14 for details)
Oak Foundation (international)	c. £100,000-£200,000
Sigfrid Rausing Trust	No more than 30% of project costs
Rosa UK	£30,000
Parasol Foundation	Six-figure grants available for a wide variety of projects supporting women and girls across a range of fields including health, education and heritage
Comic Relief	Currently reviewing strategy so will depend what their new programme supports
National Lottery Community Fund	Not for capital costs, but might support women's' centre – approx. £10,000
Historic England 'Heritage At Risk Repair Grants' (<i>only if Dorset Hall were placed on the Heritage At Risk Register</i>)	Capital grants of up to 80% of the value of works that directly address the reasons for the building being at risk
Children's Investment Fund Foundation	See Appendix 14 for details

Philanthropy

- The top priority here would be to identify through prospect research a number of high-profile individuals (possibly female businesspeople) with the potential to make a lead or major gift.
- Looking closely at female high-profile networks in the corporate world could yield a pool of possible prospective donors. For example, groups such as 'City Women', 'Women in Banking and Finance', and others with membership including C-level executives. London's new Allbright Women's private members' club would also be worth considering. Networks of female philanthropists such as a UK equivalent to the USA 'Women Moving Millions' could also be interesting to research, as could successful businesswomen known to have made substantial donations recently.
- Using the services of professional prospect researcher is recommended, but one helpful resource to research further potential funders is the [Get Grants](#) website.
- It is also worth noting that the potential size of any grant/gift will depend on forecasts of the social impact that a transformed Dorset Hall could have, which would include data about projected beneficiaries. Recruiting specialist expertise to help model this data would be useful in next steps.

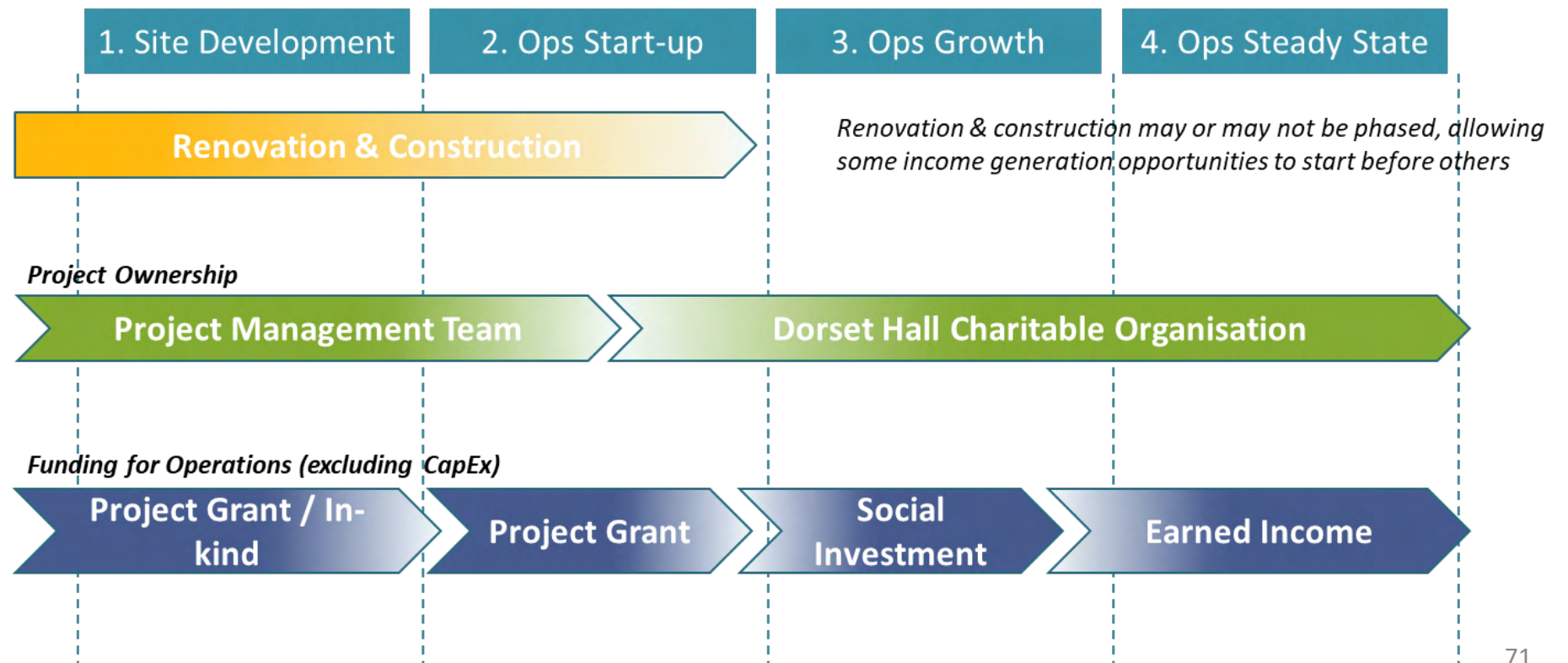
Other financing options and related next steps

Given that grants and philanthropy cannot be looked to for all the project costs – particularly the residential development – other forms of financing will need to be considered. Suggested next steps on this are below should the project progress to the next stage and a future owner (such as the suggested Dorset Hall Charity) is identified:

- **Via the fundraising feasibility study, define what elements of the project can potentially be funded through grants/philanthropy.** Identify any specific requirements and restrictions these funding streams would have on the project, and evaluate whether the project scope/ definition can accommodate them.
- **Investigate development models** such as land-led schemes (whereby DHC would acquire the land and then choose a consultant / building contractor) or an “enabling development” model (where a developer acquires the land upfront, with DHC being the end purchaser). To note – at this stage it does not feel that the latter would be feasible. It seems more likely DHC will need to purchase the land, and possibly partner with a developer that may offer some funding for construction in return for the right to sell some of the units on site. This would still leave a substantial sum for DHC to raise. DHC could look at foundations that would guarantee a mortgage, or crowdfunding for a deposit.
- **Crowdfunding** could also be investigated to raise deposits for the purchase of the building and land – companies such as [Spacehive](#) might be able to link the organisation to pots from funders already established.
- **Social investment** might be available to help with start-up costs for operations, although most lenders will want to see some history of operation before investing so it may be a better option once operations begin and project funding starts to tail off.
- **Look at development costs and likely mortgage / ongoing debt servicing** that the a future owner such as DHC would need to cover against the options. Verify that the additional debt burden for building additional residential units can be justified against the additional income generated.
- The income generation estimates need to be developed into a **full financial plan** – both for BAU but also to estimate time needed for start-up and scale-up – both of which take time - along with any associated costs. The financial plan should include assumptions to model balance sheets and cash flow on a month by month basis.
- Along with a detailed financial plan, a more specific **business plan** will be needed, to take the directional income estimates generated in this phase and progress them to define the services and marketing approach. This may require more detailed market/ user research, pre-sales activity, etc.

Alongside the fundraising options analysis, some initial outline consideration around organisational and income development was done and is summarised in the diagram below and on the following page, and indicates where other forms of income (e.g. social investment and/or other forms of repayable finance, and earned income) might be used to help finance the work as it transitions from project to steady state. Further work will be needed to develop these outline suggestions, as well as identifying appropriate timescales, if the project moves to next stages. For more detail, please see Appendix 15.

Dorset Hall Execution – Indicative Phases



Next steps – organisational and income development (2/2)

Phase	Dorset Hall Charity – key activities	Partners/Suppliers – key activities	Income – key activities	Funding – key activities
1. Site Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Trustees forms “Hands on” in developing partnerships / managing finances Works alongside Development Project Team Recruit Ops post to develop launch of rental/let offer developed by paid project post & other partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify outsourced management/marketing for rental/lets Meeting space/offices – either run in-house or through partners Catering – run in-house – ramp-up prepared in this phase 	<p>Develop initial offer/target customer for meeting/space offices and events</p>	<p>Project funding required (philanthropy, grant, repayable finance, and in-kind support from Trustees and volunteers) to cover project posts and activities, as well as capital works.</p>
2. Ops Start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHC take over management of the property Trustees oversee social investment process If possible, trustee involvement in financial day to day recedes, picked up by Ops team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of partners dependent on final concept / partner discussions Social programming – may be partner-led, DHC-led, or a mix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might start with launch of rental options, or short term rentals converting to holiday lets once construction finished Catering options launched with meeting space / offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding required to support project posts and activities as well as capital works. Investigate potential for social investment to cover funding gaps in operational building maintenance costs once project funding ends and whilst business ops mature
3. Ops Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social investment may allow further expansion of team ahead of income generation Social investment period to be managed closely to meet funder milestones 	Ibid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refinement of holiday let, catering offers Expansion of commercial events Launch of restaurant Etc. 	<p>Social investment to fund posts / working capital through to the point where the building can operate “steady state”</p>
4. Ops Steady State	<p>DHC able to meet payroll for its operational team and meet repayment obligations on CapEx (if any) and social investment</p>	Ibid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial plan achieved (with changes along the way) Income mix will likely continuously evolve 	<p>Fundraising no longer needed for core activities or building maintenance so can be focussed as needed on enhancement activities such as social engagement or cultural programmes.</p>

Overall project key risks (NB – non-exhaustive)

Key risks (1/2)

Risk	Description	Mitigations
No future owner/ lead operator yet identified	Currently no clear future owner/lead operator. Without this there is no client for the project going forwards, and no legal entity for the property to be transferred to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a priority, explore option of establishing a new entity along the lines of Dorset Hall Charity (see pp51-53) and explore options for a favourable transfer of the site from Clarion Continue to research/ reach out to existing organisations who might be willing to act as a supporter/mentor for a new entity such as DHC
Strong project partnership needed for the project to progress	Without a strong partnership of relevant organisations there is uncertainty about who will lead the project and provide confidence to funders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the ownership/lead operator situation develops, continue to engage with potential partners already identified and reach out to others to build a project partnership that covers the skills, expertise and 'heft' needed to move the project forwards.
Identifying the right mix of operators for the building	The proposed operating model will depend on attracting the right set of social and commercial operators to the site, and may take some trial and error, as well as strong, well-networked and visionary leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of a strong Ops lead with a background in running a small business and with links into at least one or more of the core thematic areas of the site's proposed business model
High project costs/ ambitious fundraising target	The scope of works include very high upfront investment for enabling development as well as restoration to make the historic house usable again. Funding required to cover the various elements is complex and will require sourcing from multiple income streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to secure funding for a specialist expertise to lead fundraising and financing work and plan project timescales accordingly. Focus should be on maximising income from non-grants income streams including philanthropy and repayable finance Investigate options for financing residential build with developers (DHG have connections which could be useful) A phased approach (CF: Observer Building – see p42) may be required
Planning consent not given	One or more aspects of a future proposed scheme fails to secure planning permission, which could jeopardise the financial viability of the whole, especially if it concerns the enabling development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early and continued engagement with Merton Planning Authority is critical to gauge reaction and modify proposals if necessary Continued engagement with key local stakeholders will be key for identifying issues and building support
Further deterioration/ damage to the historic house	Although the house is structurally sound for now, there are damp issues which pose a serious medium-long term risk. The site is also vulnerable to arson/vandalism as it is unoccupied. If realised, one or both risks could increase restoration costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with Clarion regarding addressing damp issues Update Merton Council and Historic England if there is further deterioration As and when a new owner is found, ensure security is installed immediately and seek to establish regular on-site checks.

Key risks (non-exhaustive) regarding future operating options considered in the income analysis (se Appendix 6 for concept design risks):

Key risks
(2/2)

Risk	Description	Mitigations
Competition	<p>Events spaces, meetings rooms, office space and flex working spaces are all competitive businesses</p> <p>For café / restaurant – these businesses are inevitably high risk</p>	<p>Defining the target customer</p> <p>Defining a compelling and distinctive offer that meets target customer needs</p> <p>For café / restaurant, defining target customer and offer in the local market context, along with collaboration on marketing with the other aspects of DH to drive foot traffic (e.g. from women’s centre users, co-working users, events, etc.). E.g. loyalty card or discounts for DH users, polling users for feedback on what offer should be, etc.</p>
Market for flexible office space shifts	Demand for flexible office spaces could drop if ways of working change significantly	It is possible that DHC will need to reconfigure its business offering in the future if there is a major shift in market demand
Management team capability & capacity	A small team (1 Manager and 2x support staff) will have a lot to manage – flexible office, meeting rooms, event hire (w/ coordination with catering from the café), overseeing café / restaurant performance, outsourced management for residential, in addition to any events or charitable activities the charity wants to take on themselves. This will require entrepreneurial flair and even with this, there could be various team risks – recruitment, retention, burnout, etc.	<p>Team needs to be supported by a strong Board of Trustees able to provide as much hands-on support as possible (e.g. strong Treasurer able to take on much of a finance manager role essential, strong Chair with small business experience, experts in each business area, etc.)</p> <p>Recruitment of a strong Manager/ Ops Lead is essential</p> <p>Investigate how volunteers and grant funding can be used to increase the capacity of the team</p>
Conflict between women’s centre users and other paying tenants of Dorset Hall	A number of different risks from safeguarding to practical operations, to bias and prejudices that might make certain combinations of “women’s centre” lead organisations and the commercial aspects of DH hard to combine, or cause problems after operations are up and running.	<p>Clear communication on expectations and needs of users during any contracting</p> <p>Smart orientation design, for all users, that sets expectations around uses of space</p> <p>Management team have the strength to be realistic and say no where appropriate – some target market users may just not fit together</p>

In addition, many assumptions have been made in the income modelling. Although these were thought to be conservative at the time of writing, there is risk that pricing, occupancy, costs could be adverse to these projections, leaving a gap for the team to fill.

Conclusion (1/2)

This work set out to explore if a future for Dorset Hall that encompassed the three guiding principles for the project (to celebrate and harness its important historic legacy, to deliver strong public benefit, and to enable the site to be financially sustainable into the long-term) could be found.

Below is a high-level summary of the report's key findings, but in short the answer is yes, **there is an exciting and inspiring future for Dorset Hall if the will, tenacity, and funds to make it happen can be found.**

- It is clear from stakeholder consultation to date that there **is strong interest and support across a range of Merton-based organisations and individuals to see Dorset Hall restored and converted to community use, with a focus on women and girls.**
- There is **appetite for a dedicated space for women and girls in the borough**, and there are **potential local partnership opportunities** to help realise this.
- **Rose's legacy provides a powerful foundation for a regenerated Dorset Hall**, which provides support and services for women and girls, reimagining its historic legacy for the C21.
- Dorset Hall is **for now in structurally sound condition**, but **damp presents a serious risk over the medium-long term** unless addressed in the short term. In addition the **building is vulnerable as it is unoccupied** which presents an ongoing risk.
- **Restrictive covenants present a complexity** which will need overcoming as part of key next steps.



Summary of report's key findings continued...

- **Market research and income modelling has identified a workable model** (subject to consultation with Merton Planning team and others as appropriate) which aligns with the three guiding principles of the project. It relies on part of the site being operated on a commercial basis with two/three core income streams to enable the women's centre to be operated on a capped social rent basis.
- **Engagement with Merton's planning team will be important** as a key next step to gauge reaction on the initial proposed schemes.
- **Identifying a credible future owner/main operator and strong project partnership are critical** to enable the project to move forwards. There is urgent need to identify a legal entity for the site to be transferred to when Clarion come to dispose of it, as well as to steer the development of the next project stages, recruit relevant partners and trustees, and to coordinate a funding campaign.
- **Funding required for restoration as well as enabling development is high** and will be complex to secure as the commercial elements, especially the residential development are not easily fund-raisable for, so other options such as repayable finance will need to be explored and built into future financial planning. However, Rose's inspiring legacy, the urgency and clear need around saving the building, as well as the contemporary resonance of the women and girls' theme, provide **strong planks from which to build a funding campaign**. Building greater profile around Rose and her legacy will be important in helping to ensure the success of this. The lead-up to 2028 and the centenary of universal suffrage being granted should provide additional momentum. **Securing specialist fundraising support would be highly beneficial** for driving forward the funding aspect of the project as it moves to next stages.





CLARION
HOUSING



National
Trust



Dorset Hall



AHF Transforming
Heritage
www.ahfund.org.uk



IF_DO



Image credits

Barbara Gorna p6

Edward Foley pp7, 11

Hugh Morgan pp1, 18, 19, 20

John Innes Society pp2, 14, 15, 16, 27, 54, 67, 76, 77

London Borough of Merton pp16, 17, 20, 75