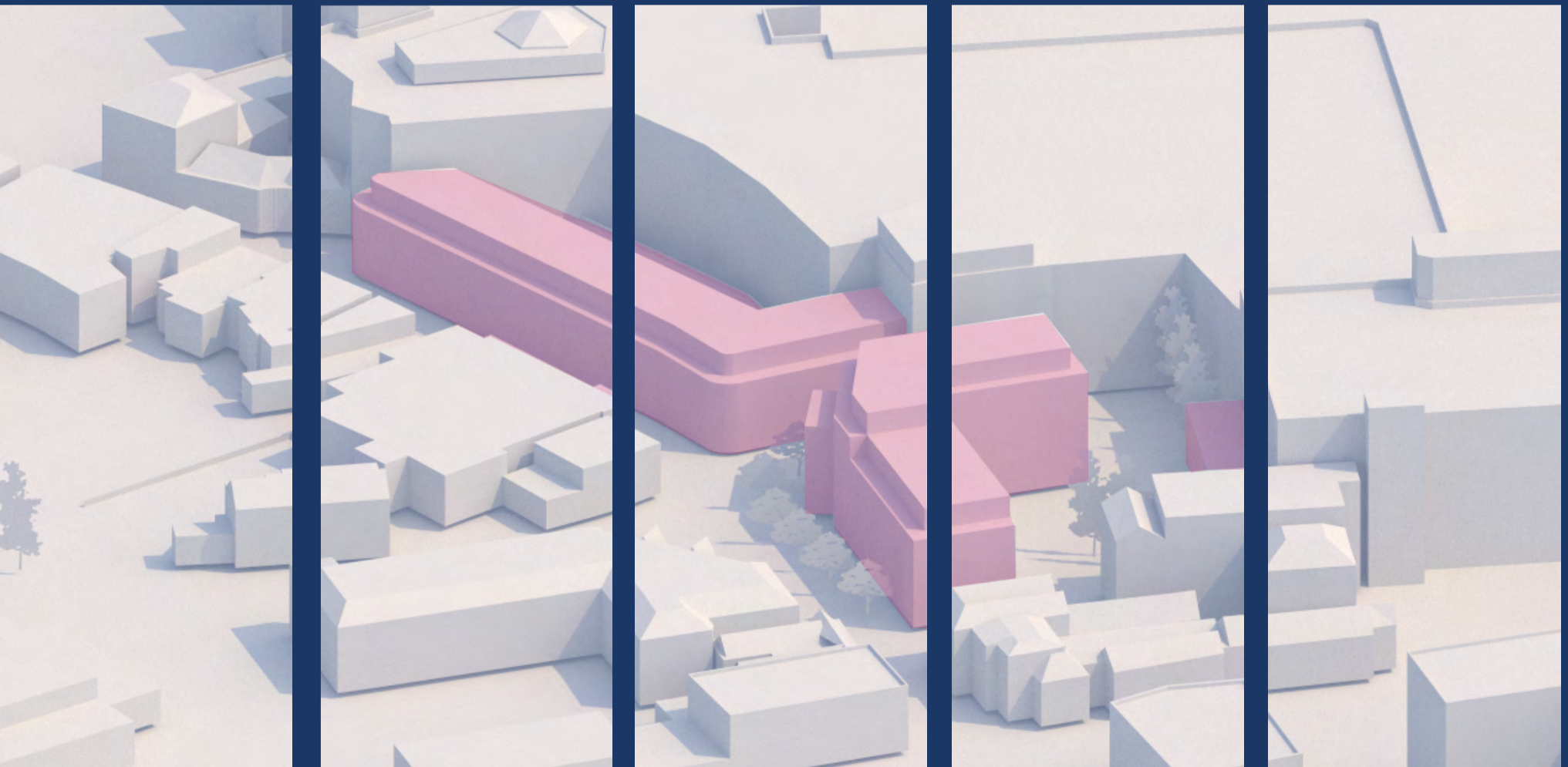




Gala Bingo and Granada House

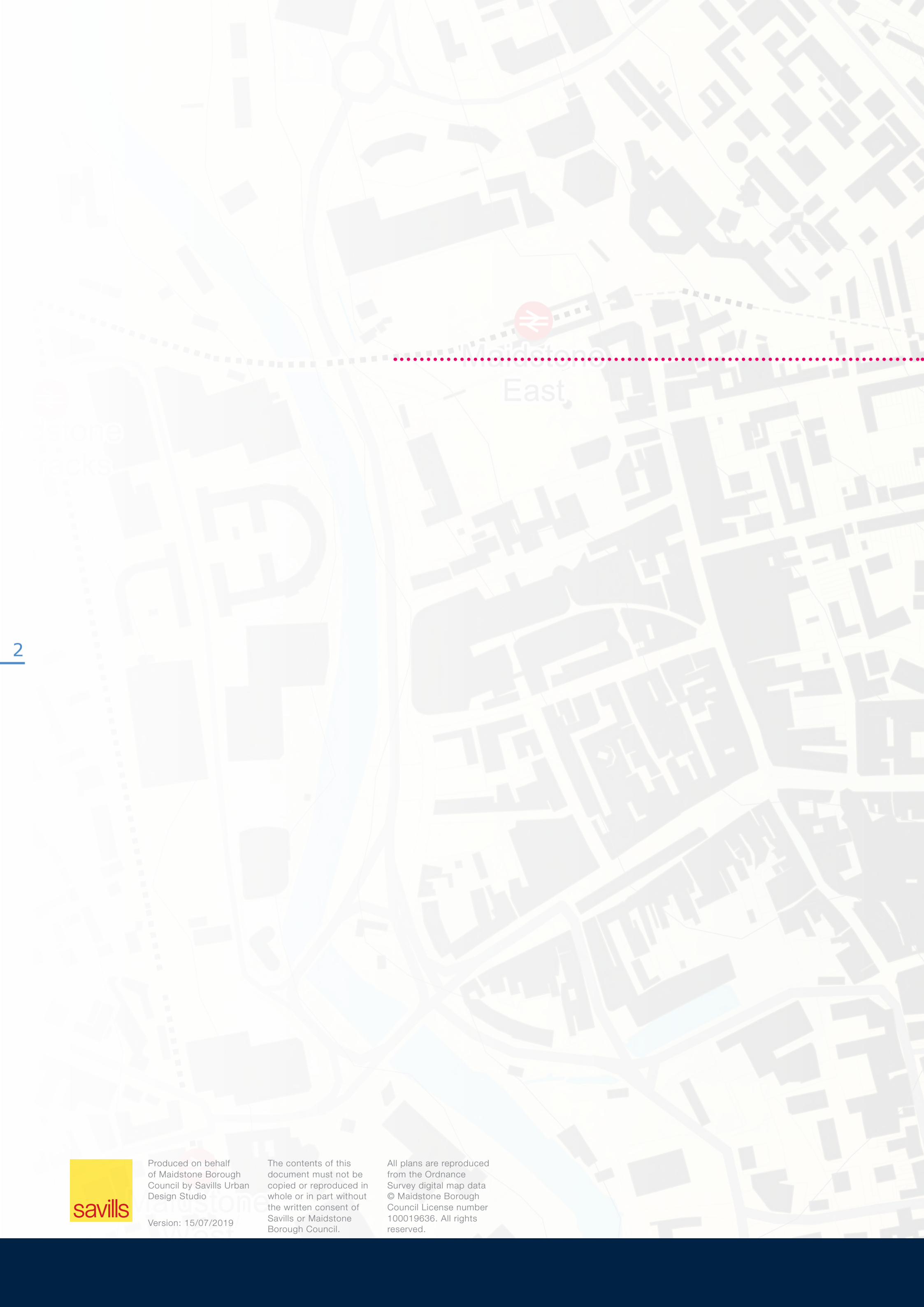
Planning Guidelines | July 2019

OPPORTUNITY SITES



MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE





Produced on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council by Savills Urban Design Studio

Version: 15/07/2019

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Contents

Vision Statement and Objectives for the Site

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Role of the Planning Guidelines
- 1.2 Site Location and Context
- 1.3 Process

Section 2: Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Opportunities and Constraints

Section 3: Overall Development Parameters and Principles

- 3.1 Land use
- 3.2 Scale and form
- 3.3 Building design and materials
- 3.4 Public realm and open space
- 3.5 Access, parking and sustainable travel
- 3.6 Safety and security

Section 4: Illustrative Development Scenario

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Preferred Scenario: Redevelopment of Gala Bingo + retention/expansion of Granada House
- 4.3 Alternative Scenario: Retention and Refurbishment of Gala Bingo and Granada House

Note: See separate supporting Appendices Document



Vision Statement

Granada House and Gala Bingo sites will deliver a high quality variety of new homes as part of a mixed-use opportunity for this landmark town centre site and help enhance the public realm and townscape of Lower Stone Street and Gabriel's Hill.

Objectives for the Sites

To enhance the leisure opportunities provided on the Gala Bingo site

The retention and adaptation of the Gala Bingo building for new leisure uses would be welcomed if a viable operation can be identified.

To enhance the vibrancy and economic vitality of Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street and promote it as an area for commercial activity, including the night-time economy

The development provides the opportunity for high quality retail and supporting uses at the ground floor level, including cafés and restaurants on Gabriel's Hill and leisure facilities such as the continued bingo function or new cinema/theatre facilities within Gala Bingo.

To enhance pavement café culture along Gabriel's Hill

The public realm enhancements and pedestrianised environment provide a perfect opportunity to encourage outdoor dining and café culture along Gabriel's Hill. The Lower Stone Street frontage is less suited to this, due to the presence of heavy traffic and potential air quality issues.

To provide a mix of uses which complement the surrounding area

The redevelopment of the site should attract new businesses and retailers that complement and enhance the setting for existing uses.

To enhance the entrance to The Mall off Gabriel's Hill

If Granada House is redeveloped, opportunities should be taken to open up the public space at this entrance to The Mall to create an attractive open area.

To reduce the visual dominance of The Mall and the Mall car park blank elevations

New buildings or enhancements to the existing buildings should seek to reduce views of these blank elevations, both from the surrounding streets as well as from internal residential units. This could include the closure of Granada Street.

To provide the opportunity for an increased number of apartments

Opportunities should be sought to increase this number, given the central, sustainable location of the site and the economic contribution that an increased town centre population would give to business here. This could be through redevelopment or additional storeys on the existing building(s).

To enhance the setting of listed buildings on Gabriel's Hill and overall character of Maidstone Centre Conservation Area

The development should be a welcome addition to the area, respecting the relatively narrow character of Gabriel's Hill and listed buildings here. Particular attention will need to be paid to the height of any new buildings to ensure they are not visually overbearing.



BINGO



ENTRANCE

ENTRANCE

PLAY & WIN EAT & DRINK

EY MILK

PARRAMATTA GALA BINGO ONLY

CASH MATCH

£500

To maintain a key landmark building on the Lower Stone Street/Palace Avenue junction

The Gala Bingo building is a key local landmark, and, whether retained or redeveloped, any building here needs to continue to act as an appropriate landmark when viewed from the surrounding streets.

To minimise flood risk

Given the flooding history of the site and need to maintain surveillance and vibrancy at ground floor level, residential uses should be restricted to the first floor and above. Ground floor uses should be designed to mitigate potential flood damage.

To provide opportunities to enhance the public realm of the Lower Stone Street/Granada Street/Gabriel's Hill junction

Whilst most of this area falls outside of the site boundary, any redevelopment should respect the continued public realm enhancements that will allow opportunities for this key gateway space to be enhanced, including a new lay-by for drop-offs.

1. Introduction

1.1 Role of the Planning Guidelines

1.1.1 These Planning Guidelines have been prepared by lead consultant Savills for Maidstone Borough Council. Their purpose is to encourage, promote and facilitate the redevelopment of Granada House and Gala Bingo (now known as Buzz Bingo) at the southern end of Gabriel's Hill, Maidstone. This is a significant site at the gateway to the southern part of the town centre for pedestrians. Gala Bingo is also a landmark building, visible to vehicle users on Lower Stone Street. The extent of the site is shown in Figure 1.

8 1.1.2 This document provides an analysis of the existing context of the site, presenting potential opportunities and constraints (Section 2); a clear set of parameters for how the site could be taken forward that would be acceptable to Maidstone Borough Council in planning and urban design

terms (Section 3) and an illustrative scenario (Section 4) which gives an indication of the likely capacity of the site, based on the guidance set out in Section 2 and within a context of improving market conditions.

1.1.3 The document sets out what could be achievable and acceptable in planning terms and would be welcomed by the Council. It is not intended to be a supplementary planning document.

1.1.4 The guidelines are a culmination of an extensive design and feasibility study undertaken by Savills for five Maidstone Town Centre Opportunity Sites during the period April 2018 - July 2019. These opportunity sites are shown on Figure 2 and consist of:

- Site 1. Gala Bingo and Granada House
- Site 2. Mote Road

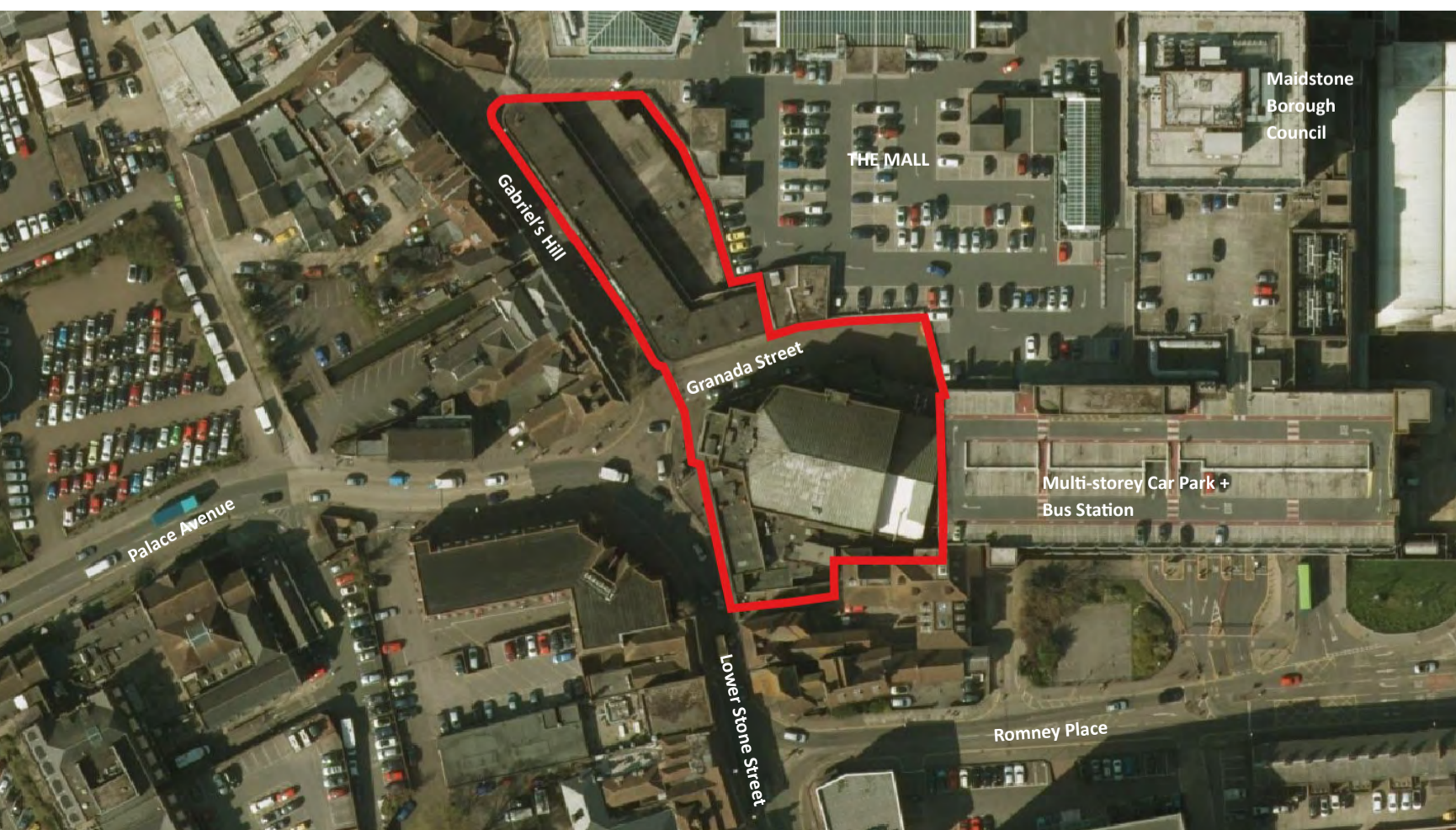


Fig.1: Site Location

- Site 3. Len House
- Site 4. Maidstone Riverside
- Site 5. Maidstone West

1.2 Site Location & Context

1.2.1 The site measures some 0.398 hectares gross (0.98 acres) and is located within the town centre at the junction of Gabriel's Hill, Palace Avenue and Lower Stone Street at postcode ME15. It is bounded to the north and east by The Mall shopping centre multi-storey car park, and by properties on Gabriel's Hill to the west and south.

1.2.2 The site comprises two Art Deco buildings: Granada House to the north and Gala Bingo to the south. Both are situated within Maidstone Conservation Area but are not listed. They are both covered by the Secondary Retail Frontage policy in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP).

1.2.3 The ground floor of the Gala Bingo building is currently operating as a Bingo Hall. Two further storeys above are disused, and incorporate the upper levels of two cinema screens, as well as a further complete cinema screen with associated projection rooms, offices and ground floor ticket office. To the north of the building, Granada Street is a private road also owned by Gala Leisure Ltd and is used for informal car parking. If required, this area could also form part of a wider development associated with the site. A



Fig.2: Opportunity Sites

Key

- 1** Gala Bingo + Granada House
- 2** Mote Road
- 3** Len House
- 4** Maidstone Riverside
- 5** Maidstone West

rear access to The Mall that opens on to Granada Street is not in regular use and, subject to further legal checks, is not known to be required as an emergency access.

1.2.4 Granada House is owned by Maidstone Borough Council. It comprises 12 retail units at the ground floor and 19 no. 2-bed flats and 1 no. 1-bed flat above. All flats are let and managed on shorthold tenancies.

1.2.5 To the east of the site, The Mall is a large retail/commercial property including a multi-storey car park rising to the equivalent of five storeys. This presents blank façades to Granada House and Gala Bingo.

1.2.6 All buildings are located within an area of high flood risk (Flood Zone 3).

1.3 Process

1.3.1 The planning guidelines and proposals for all five Opportunity Sites have been developed through a collaborative process involving extensive stakeholder engagement. This has included two landowner/officer consultation workshops, a site walkabout and two roundtable meetings with Maidstone Borough Council Members.

1.3.2 Savills team has included masterplanners, landscape architects, development consultants and heritage consultants. Markides Associates has provided transport advice.



Images: Gabriel's Hill and Granada House

2. Issues for Consideration



2.1 Opportunities and Constraints

2.1.1 A thorough analysis of the site and its context, has also been carried out, which is summarised in the separate supporting appendix document. The analysis and engagement process highlighted a number of issues to consider/address in taking the site forward for development. These can be summarised as follows:

- The opportunity to create a landmark building at this important and sustainable location within the town centre.
- The night-time economy/cultural/community benefits of continued leisure uses within the Gala Bingo building/site.
- The opportunity for increasing the residential population of Maidstone town centre and its associated benefits to the vibrancy of the area.
- The art deco heritage/townscape contribution made by both buildings, despite not being listed by Historic England.
- The heritage/townscape benefits of retaining the corner facade of Gala Bingo building. If the building is removed, any new building will still need to address Lower Stone Street, Gabriel's Hill and Palace Avenue.
- The derelict nature of the upper storeys of Granada Bingo and the costs of ongoing maintenance/restoration.
- The costs of redeveloping the Gala Bingo site, due to its constrained site/access (especially for buildings over four storeys in height,

requiring cranes).

- The site lies within Flood Zone 3, meaning that a Flood Risk Assessment will be required as part of the planning process. This will also limit how the ground floors of buildings are used.
- The importance of conserving/enhancing the vibrancy of Gabriel's Hill through the incorporation of retail/employment/leisure uses at the ground floor level of both Granada House and the Gala Bingo building.
- The adverse visual presence of the western elevation of The Mall to the east.
- The opportunity to enhance the poor quality elevations of Gala Bingo and The Mall along Granada Street, which currently has no active surveillance and no coherent fenestration.
- The opportunity to enhance the derelict appearance of Granada Bingo's Lower Stone Street elevation, with the narrow pavement and busy traffic further detracting from the public realm.
- The potential to enhance the relatively low key entrance to The Mall shopping centre adjacent

to the northern end of Granada House.

- The poor air quality along Lower Stone Street due to slow moving traffic and concentration of built form could limit built form here, preventing the incorporation of balconies for example.
- The lack of parking for existing/future Granada House residents.
- The cost of potentially relocating the relatively successful Buzz Bingo business.
- The relatively high risk of flooding to ground floors of both Gala Bingo and Granada House.
- The importance of retaining a 'dropping-off' point for pedestrians at the southern end of Stone Street.
- The lack of space for public open space provision within the site and limited space for usable private amenity space. Paragraph 6.89 of the MBLP allows for a financial contribution to be made to improve existing open spaces in such cases.
- The existing vehicular access to the rear of The Mall, via Granada Street. This is not utilised, however, and subject to legal confirmation, need not be retained.



Gala Bingo from Gabriel's Hill



Gala Bingo from Lower Stone Street



Granada Street



Granada House, from Gabriel's Hill

3. Overall Development Principles

This section of the document provides guidance to potential developers as to how the site should be developed. This guidance is supported by precedent images and the design rationale plan at Figure 3. The key design requirements are set out as follows.

3.1 Land use

3.1.1 The buildings and open space here will need to create a strong gateway for visitors entering the southern end of the town centre. The Gala Bingo building is of some architectural and historic interest but is not listed. If a viable use can be found, there is council and public support for its retention, especially if it can be brought back into a cultural or leisure use such as a theatre, cinema or gallery. However, the desire for this should not preclude the partial/wholesale demolition of the building if funding cannot be found to restore the building and profitably manage it as a cultural destination.

3.1.2 Development should complement the existing uses and enhance the viability of Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street and animate the public realm. Given the history of flooding in the area, it is unlikely that the ground floor would be suitable for residential use and commercial units on the ground floor would instead be encouraged. Whether Granada House is refurbished or totally redeveloped, this site should retain its current uses of retail/leisure/restaurants and cafés at the ground floor with apartments above.

3.1.3 If redeveloped, the Gala Bingo site should also have these uses at ground floor (and possibly first floor levels), providing an active, vibrant frontage to the street. Above this, the site should provide apartments. This will have the benefit of enhancing the vibrancy and economy of the town centre, as well as providing a sustainable location for new homes within the Borough.

3.1.4 If retained, the Gala Bingo building provides an opportunity to create a new cultural venue for the town, such as a theatre or cinema. If its bingo function is retained, there could still be the potential to provide an arts/music/cinema venue above, however this would be subject to

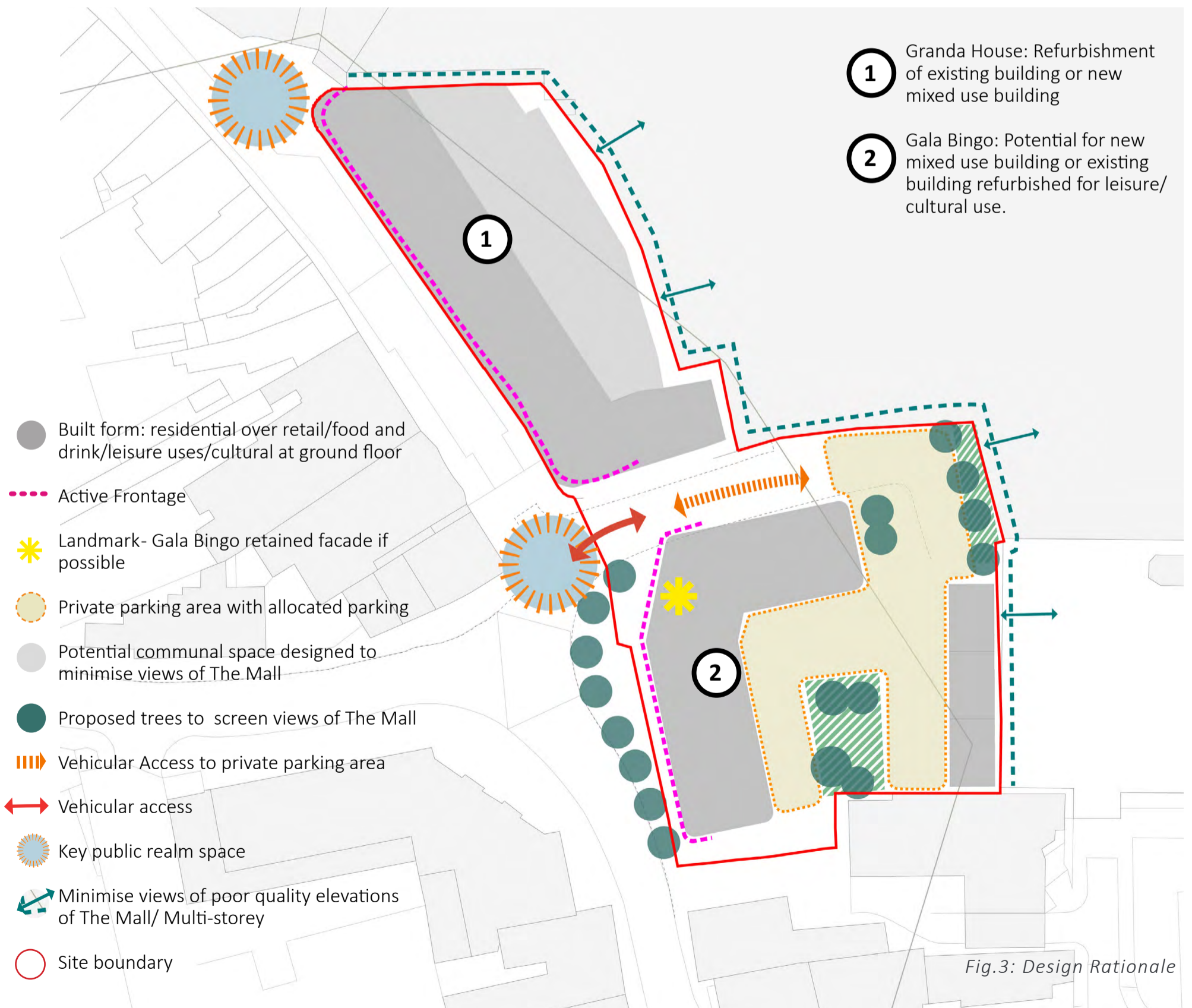


Opportunities for medium-rise redevelopment with active street frontages

public subsidy. The building also provides the opportunity for other leisure and recreational uses, such as a gym or night club.

3.1.5 The predominant use classes will be:

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial and Professional Services
- A3 Restaurants and Cafés
- A4 Drinking establishments
- C3 Residential (upper floors only)
- D2 Assembly and Leisure (includes cinema, concert hall, bingo hall, dance hall, swimming bath, skating rink, gymnasium or area for other sports or recreations)
- Sui generis (includes theatres, night clubs, casinos)





Opportunities for medium-rise redevelopment with active street frontages

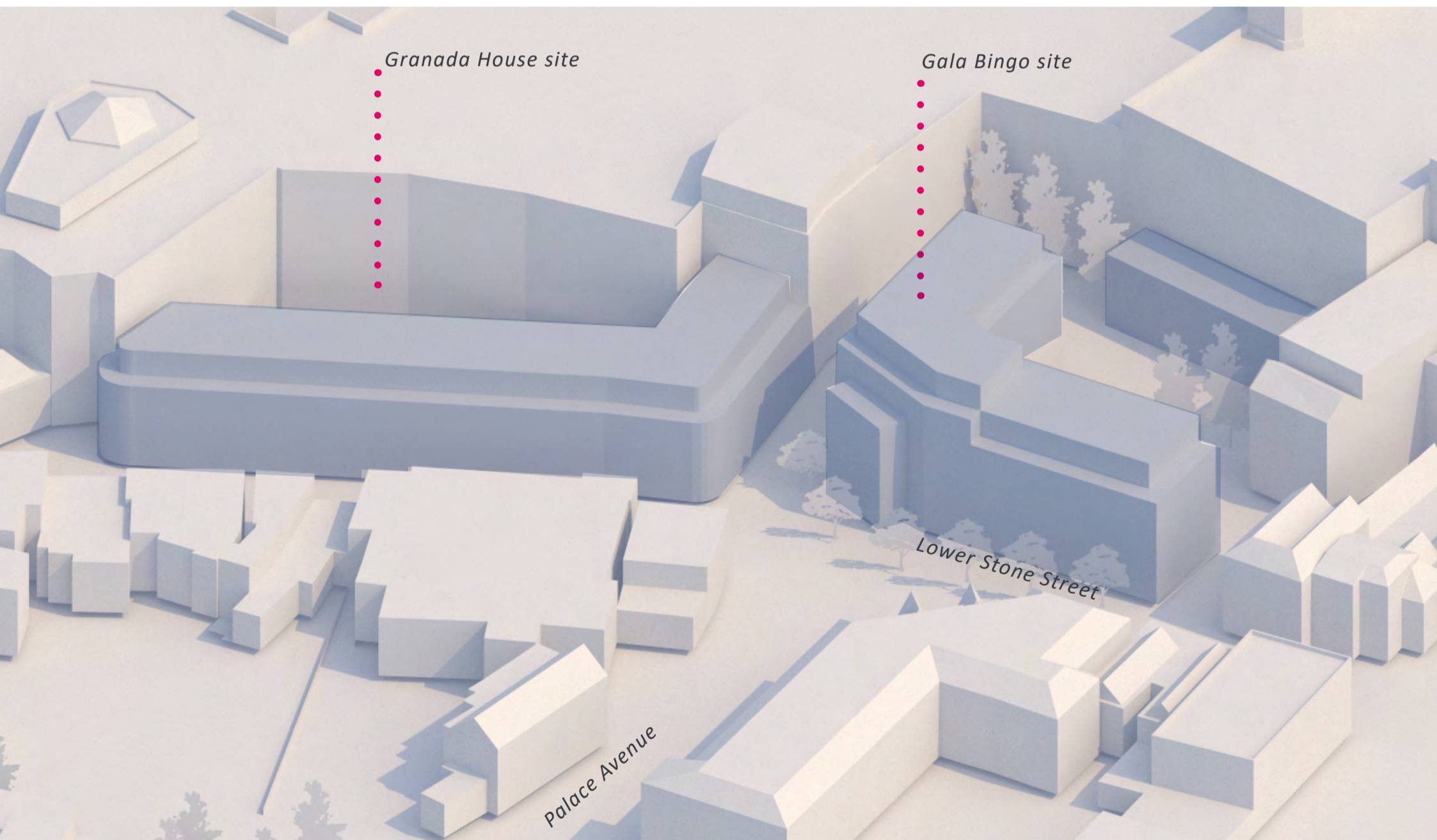


Fig.4: Illustrative massing model: Gala Bingo & Granada House - scenario shows new lightweight upper floor on Granada House site

3.2 Scale and Form

3.2.1 The layout of the development should create a block structure which clearly defines public fronts and private backs. Buildings should provide active frontages and surveillance to pedestrian routes and open spaces. Continuous frontages are encouraged to provide enclosure to the streets and spaces.

3.2.2 Given the site's location in the town centre and access to local transport links, there is an opportunity to maximise residential density. Given the urban setting and nearby tall buildings to the south-east, it would be appropriate to consider a building up to approximately six storeys in height on the Gala Bingo site, or no higher than The Mall multi-storey car park to the rear of the site. A taller building may also be acceptable if it can be demonstrated that this is acceptable in planning terms (especially in relation to the setting of the Conservation Area). The depth and location of any building of this scale would need to pay particular consideration to overshadowing and effects on the air quality of the Lower Stone Street/Palace Avenue area.

3.2.3 Given the relatively narrow, historic scale of Gabriel's Hill, any redevelopment or vertical extension of Granada House should not exceed approximately three storeys with a fourth storey set back as a penthouse storey.

3.2.4 Any redevelopment of the Gala Bingo site should step down to the south to no more than four storeys plus a set back penthouse at its southern end. This will respect the massing of adjacent

buildings on Lower Stone Street which are three storeys high. If both the Granada House and Gala Bingo sites are redeveloped, the proposals could consider developing across the existing Granada Street access, helping to screen The Mall multi-storey behind and creating a private parking area. Access to the rear parking area could be via an archway across the current entrance to Granada Street.

3.2.5 The Gala Bingo site should continue to present a high quality landmark building to the local area, whether through the retention of the existing building or creation of a new mixed use block. This could be achieved in a number of ways including the retention of the main façade at the junction of Granada Street and Lower Stone Street, an increased set back from Lower Stone Street with public realm enhancements and an increase in height.



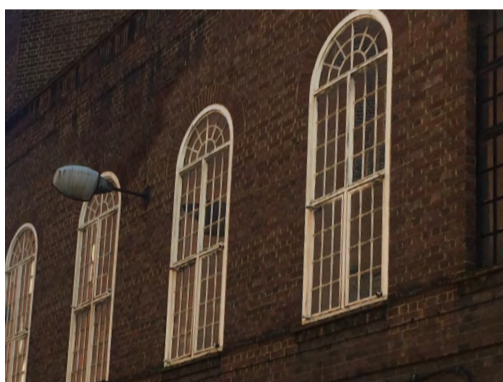
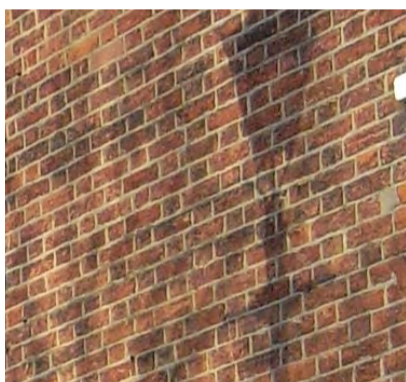
3.3 Building design and materials

3.3.1 The design of the development across the site will need to respond to the context of the site and the key buildings in the local area. The architectural style and materials should be respectful to the settings of the heritage assets within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area and Gabriel's Hill listed buildings.

3.3.2 It is intended that a limited palette of materials will be utilised, with architectural detailing and design providing the richness in character rather than a large variation in texture and colour. The key emphasis in design terms will be to provide buildings which will not age by virtue of their design. An appropriate use of traditional materials and simple design will ensure that the longevity of the buildings' appeal.

3.3.3 It may be appropriate for any new buildings to take cues from the art deco history of the site, however these should not be pastiche. As described above, if possible, part of the elevation of Gala Bingo should be retained even if the rest of the building is removed.





3.3.4 If redeveloped, any new building on the site of Granada House should have an internal layout that focuses habitable rooms on the Gabriel's Hill frontage, to enhance natural surveillance and avoid views towards the rear wall of The Mall. Opportunities should be taken to include both indented and full balconies along the Gabriel's Hill frontage. If the Gala Bingo building is redeveloped, open balconies would not be appropriate given the noise and air quality issues in this area.

3.3.5 Specific materials will need to be agreed directly with the local planning authority, although the primary colour palette should be:

- Walls and elevations: predominantly dark red or yellow stock bricks, glass, high quality metal cladding and stone to reflect the local Ragstone found in the Maidstone area.
- Roofing: monochrome/plain colours, including clay tiles/slates/zinc or similar high quality metal roof.

3.3.6 Signage should be integrated into the design of the building and lit externally.

Images: Examples of architectural materials, styles and features inspired by the 1930s character of Granada House & Gala Bingo, traditional Kent materials and contemporary use of traditional materials.



3.4 Public realm and open space

3.4.1 Maidstone Borough Council places great importance on maximising opportunities for providing functional green spaces within the town centre. Any scheme for the site should deliver good living environments for those living in and using the revitalised site as well as improved biodiversity. Whilst this is a compact site, green space may be provided in the form of roof terraces as well as space for tree planting on Granada Road and adjacent to The Mall. In addition, the MBLP allows for a financial contribution to be made to improve existing sites and enhance the capacity of existing provision, if suitable opportunities for new open space cannot be identified within the specified accessibility standards due to site constraints.

3.4.2 Opportunities should be taken to continue and reflect the recent public realm enhancements to Gabriel's Hill along Lower Stone Street and Granada Street. If the Gala Bingo building is removed, this could allow for pavement widening and tree planting along Lower Stone Street to enhance the pedestrian environment and reduce the visual dominance of vehicles. If the Gala Bingo building is retained, enhancements such as street tree planting, high quality paving and more active frontages should be incorporated in and around the entrance to Granada Street to provide visual

enhancement as well as improved surveillance. If underground utilities are a constraint, tree planting within planters, or the use of fastigate trees should be considered.

3.4.3 The demolition and redevelopment of Granada House would allow for the incorporation of enlarged pedestrian spaces at the entrance to The Mall and Granada Street/Gabriel's Hill junction, suited to public seating and outdoor café dining. Given recent enhancements to the public realm of Granada Street and lack of vehicular access during the working day, opportunities for outdoor café dining and the display of wares should particularly be encouraged in this area.

3.4.4 Opportunities should be taken to enhance the private space behind both Granada House and the Gala building. If redeveloped, the new buildings should allow sufficient space for tree and shrub planting adjacent to the rear wall of The Mall to soften views. Given the density and condition of underground utilities in this area, it may be necessary to use planters to achieve this. If Granada House is retained and refurbished, opportunities should be taken to enhance the rear roof terrace.



Images: Examples of public realm treatments designed to encourage cafe culture and use of the street. Columnar tree planting suited to constrained sites may be suitable.

3.5 Access, parking and sustainable travel

3.5.1 There should be active pedestrian entrances to both the commercial and residential units from the main street frontages, enhancing activity within the street and improving surveillance and safety.

3.5.2 Vehicular access to the Granada House part of the site will be via Lower Stone Street/Granada Street. Given that Gabriel's Hill is restricted for car access at all times, allowing servicing and disabled access between the hours of 5:30pm – 10:30am, access to this part of the site will continue to remain limited.

3.5.3 If redeveloped, the Gala Bingo site provides the opportunity for some private allocated parking to the rear, to be accessed via the current route of Granada Street. If the existing building is retained, Granada Street can continue to provide some parking, however public realm enhancements and tree planting should be a priority here, with parking rationalised, allocated and vehicular access controlled via a barrier.

3.5.4 Due to the central location of this development site within Maidstone, the provision of parking should reflect the good accessibility of the site by public transport, i.e. parking provided as part of development reduced as far as possible. This development may be expected to provide an

individual travel plan, to ensure full developer commitment to encourage sustainable travel and provide real sustainable alternatives to the end user of the development. This should include secure bicycle storage on the site for residents.

3.5.5 Parking standards are set out in Policy DM23/ Appendix B of the MBLP. These propose a maximum of one parking space per residential unit in the town centre, probably within gated/ controlled garages or parking court.

3.5.6 If both parts of the site are redeveloped for residential use, it is likely that there would be space for no more than approximately 0.4 spaces/ apartment, assuming residents of the Granada House site had parking within the Gala Bingo site. If the buildings are developed independently, there would be no parking space on the Granada House site.

3.5.7 The Council recognises the growing capacity issues for residents parking in the town centre. Given that the town centre is such a sustainable location, for the five opportunity sites, a parking ratio of below 1:1 is appropriate. However, the Council will ensure that there is not a detrimental impact of this policy on existing neighbourhoods, inasmuch residents that move into new homes on the sites that do not benefit from an allocated

parking space/s, will not be able to apply for residents parking permits to be used in the surrounding streets. Furthermore, in terms of the overall quantum of parking that is provided on site, adequate provision will be held back for the use of visitors, and these arrangements will be enforced. In addition, the restrictions on access (such as controlled entry) together with the type, size and mix of homes will be taken into account.

3.6 Safety and security

3.6.1 Development on the site should deliver the following key principles to create a safe and secure environment by:

- Ensuring natural surveillance and human presence including active uses at ground floor on both Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street, buildings fronting onto the public realm and locating parking in a safe and secure courtyard to the rear of the redeveloped Gala Bingo building.
- Minimising conflict by providing safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, especially where vehicles cross the public realm area to and from Granada Street.
- Ensuring that secure access is given to the private spaces at the rear of both Granada House and Gala Bingo if redeveloped.
- Secure cycling parking areas to be provided within apartment block(s).



Building fenestration designed to allow informal surveillance of adjacent streets

4. Illustrative Development Scenarios

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section sets out two alternative scenarios for how the site could be developed, reflecting the parameters set out in Section 3. The scenarios are presented as an illustration as to how the site may be developed based on good place-making principles and an understanding of the local property markets, although they should not be seen as the only solution to developing the site. The scenarios include opportunities for apartments, retail, food and drink and leisure/cultural uses. Whilst the scenarios do not allow for any integration of built form within The Mall, the general massing and land use proposals need not preclude this option, should this area also come forward for redevelopment.

4.2 Preferred Scenario: Redevelopment of Gala Bingo + retention/ expansion of Granada House

4.2.1 Whilst it is appreciated that the Gala Bingo building is an iconic building, with improved market conditions, it is likely that a preferred approach to the site would be to redevelop it as a residential-led mixed-use development.

4.2.2 This approach is illustrated below, with a new 6 storey building and three 'flat over garage' (FOG) units. This provides the opportunity to offer approximately 42 new apartments on th Gala

site. Consideration would need to be given to the relocation of the Buzz Bingo function, which could relocate to The Mall or the ground floor of the new building on the Granada House site.

4.2.3 If this scenario is pursued, a key aspect will be to consider the retention of the existing façade on the corner of Granada Street and Lower Stone Street, or its replacement with a similar façade that addresses both of these streets as well as Palace Avenue. The overall building line should be maintained, however opportunities for widening the pedestrian pavement of Lower Stone Street should also be considered.

4.2.4 The illustration provided at Figure 5 shows a 6 storey building with approximately 527 sq.m. (NIA) commercial or leisure uses on the ground floor (including the potential for shops, cafés, restaurants, gym, a new bingo hall), with up to 5 storeys of apartments above (approximately 2,862sqm NIA/39 units). The Lower Stone Street frontage could be set back from its current alignment, allowing for a wider pavement with space for street tree planting.

4.2.5 As Granada Street is owned by Gala Bingo, and no access is required along this street from The Mall (subject to legal confirmation), the street could be closed and incorporated within a wider development area between Gala Bingo and Granada House. This allows for pedestrian enhancements between the two streets and a

larger, more private parking area to the rear of the Gala Bingo site.

4.2.6 The main disadvantages of this scenario will be the loss of the iconic buildings of 20th century historic interest and the viability/practicalities of delivering the scheme, given the costs of relocating Gala bingo and demolishing the buildings and the relatively constrained site size/access.

4.2.7 Subject to structural surveys, and improved market conditions, it may also be possible to extend the residential capacity of Granada House with the

addition of a further storey. This should be set back from the existing frontage to minimise any visual intrusion on Gabriel's Hill, and take an alternative architectural approach to ensure that the extension is subservient to the original building. This approach could give a total of approximately 29 apartments within Granada House.

4.2.8 In total, the scenario below shows an approximate density of 178 dwellings per hectare, based on 71 dwellings across the 0.40 hectare site.

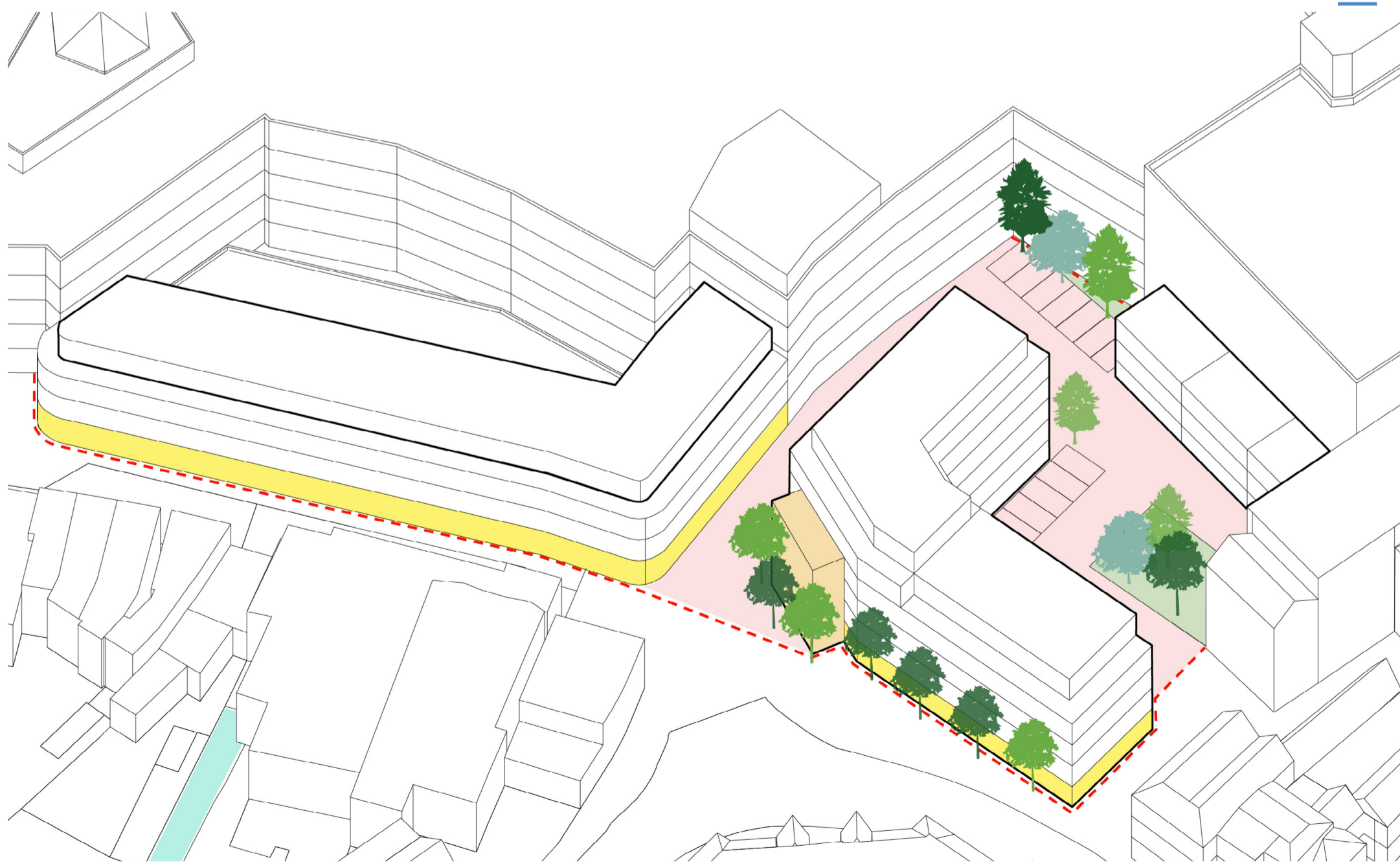
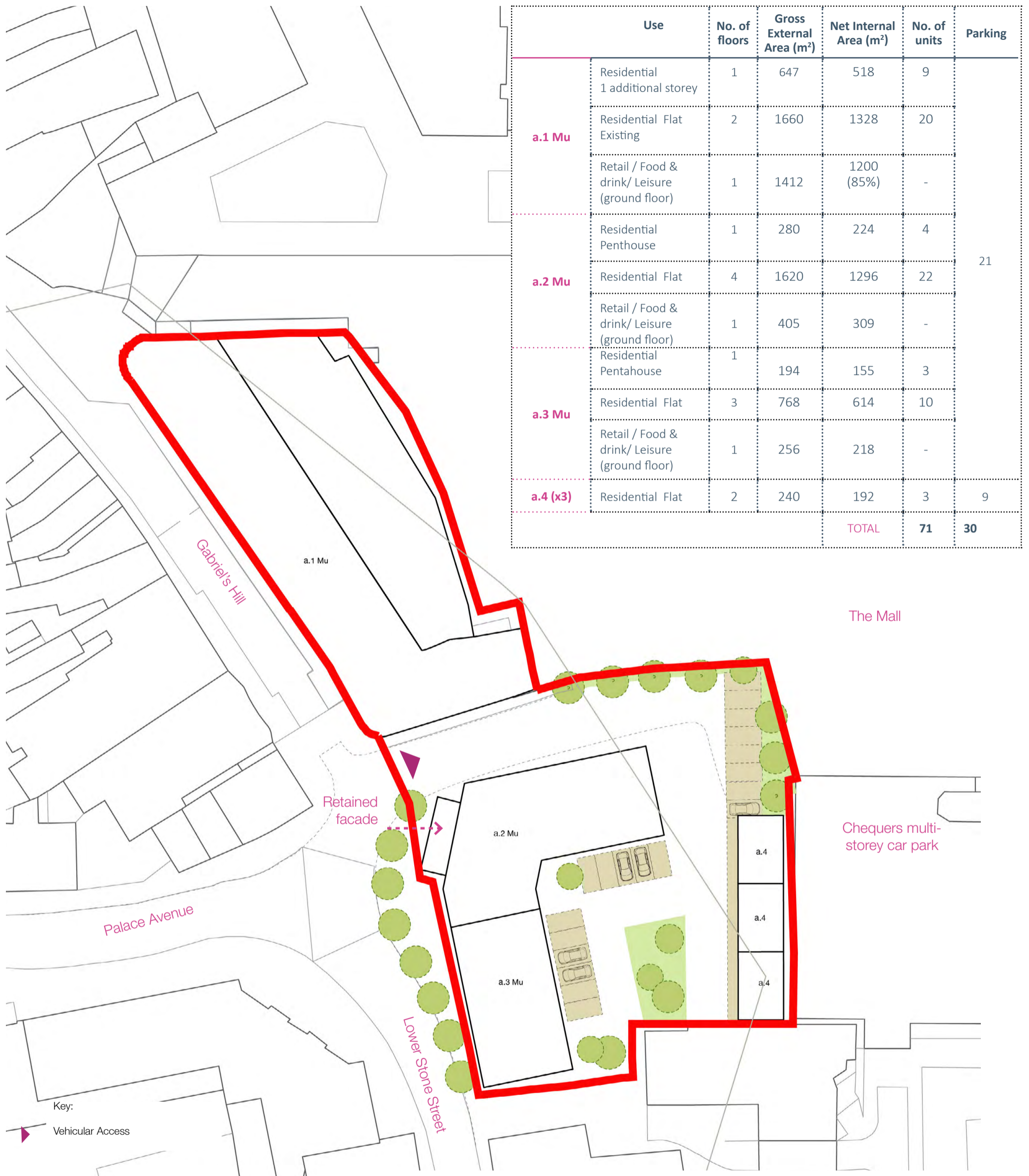


Fig.5: Illustrative massing model: Preferred scenario showing new 6 storey block on Gala Bingo site and an additional storey on top of the existing Granada House building, viewed from south-west



* Indicative residential mix

	min. GIA	mix	average unit size
1bed	50m ²	40%	60
2bed sml	61m ²	45%	
2bed lrg/ 3bed sml	86m ²	15%	

Fig.6: Illustrative Scenario: Capacity Plan

4.2.9 A variation of this scenario could see the redevelopment of Granada House, with a new building rising to three storeys plus a penthouse storey, with the potential to connect to a new development on the Gala Bingo site incorporating a vehicular route at ground floor level. A new building here could allow for a wider area of external space between the rear of the building and The Mall, allowing trees or other landscape interventions to be used to help screen the wall.

The apartments could be laid out internally so as to ensure that the main habitable rooms would front on to Gabriel's Hill rather than The Mall. Inset balconies along the Gabriel's Hill frontage could provide external amenity space for residents, as well as opportunities for informal surveillance of the street. The footprint of the building can be designed so as to retain a larger public space at the entrance to The Mall.

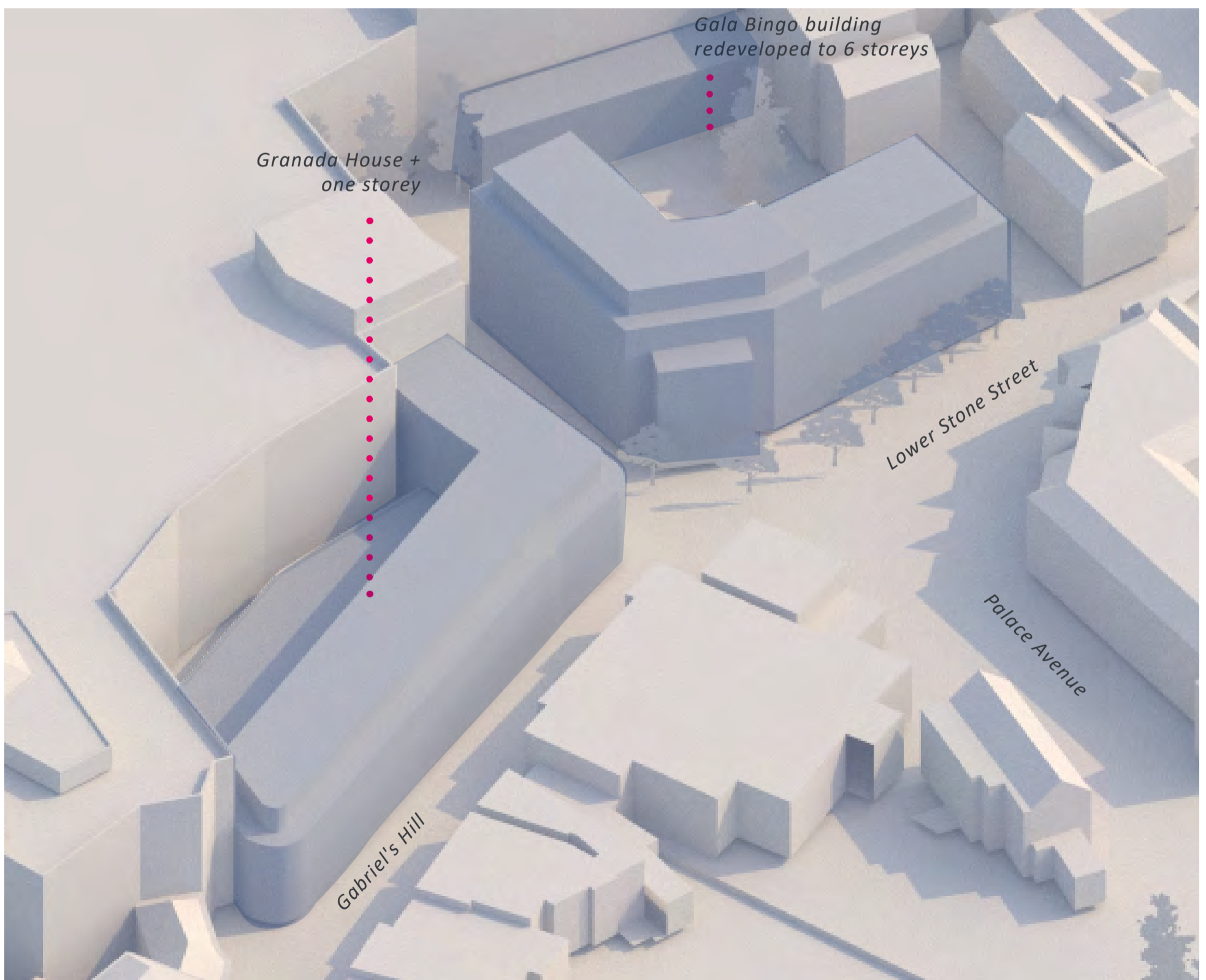


Fig.7: Illustrative massing model: Preferred scenario showing new 6 storey block on Gala Bingo site and an additional storeys on Granada House, viewed from north.

4.2.10 Whilst such a scheme would provide the potential to enhance the pedestrian environment and vibrancy of Gabriel's Hill, it would require improved market conditions to be deliverable and

would have the disadvantage of resulting in the loss of a distinctive building that contributes to the heritage and character of Gabriel's Hill.

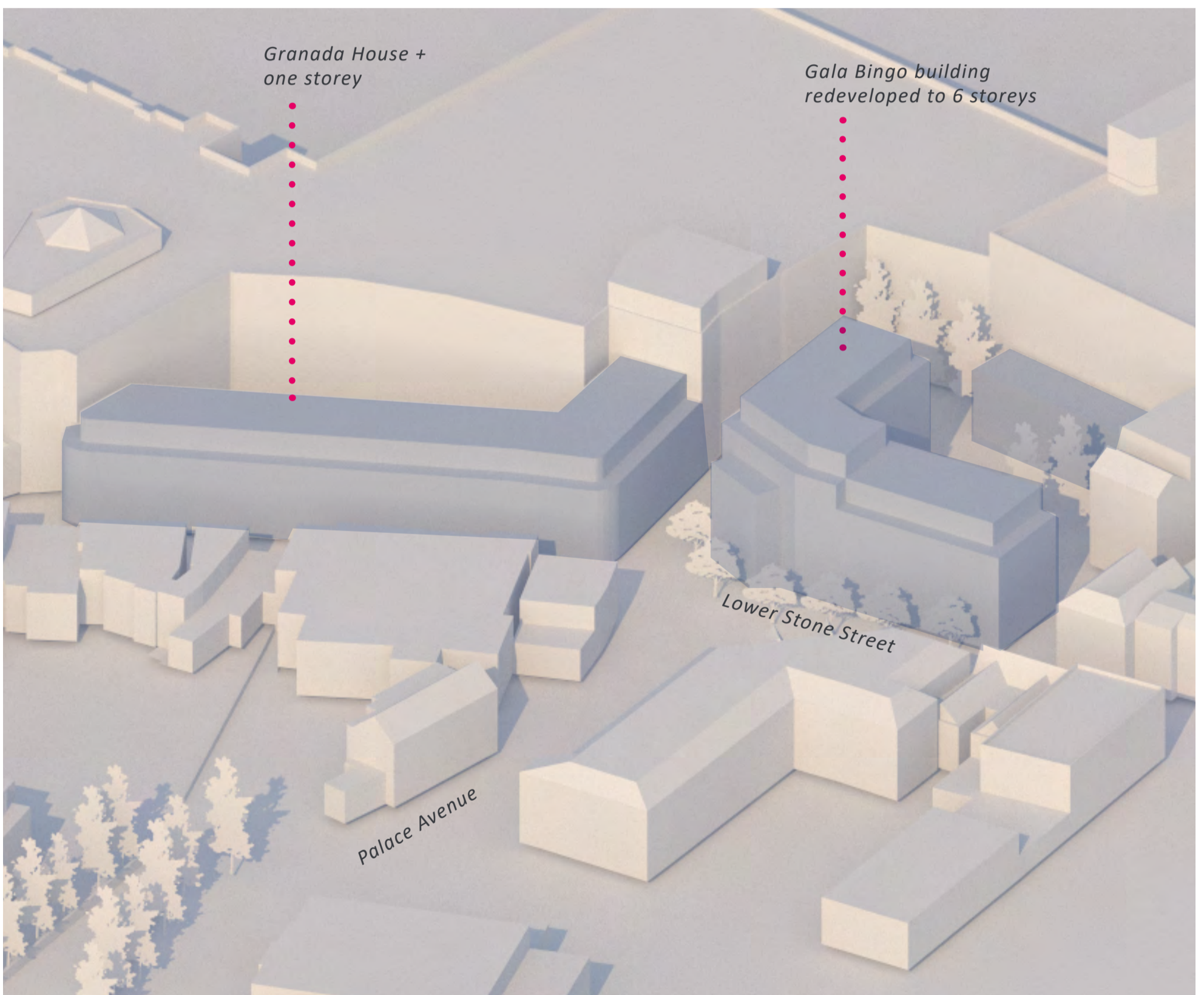


Fig.8: Illustrative massing model: Preferred scenario showing new 6 storey block on Gala Bingo site and an additional storeys on Granada House, viewed from south-west.

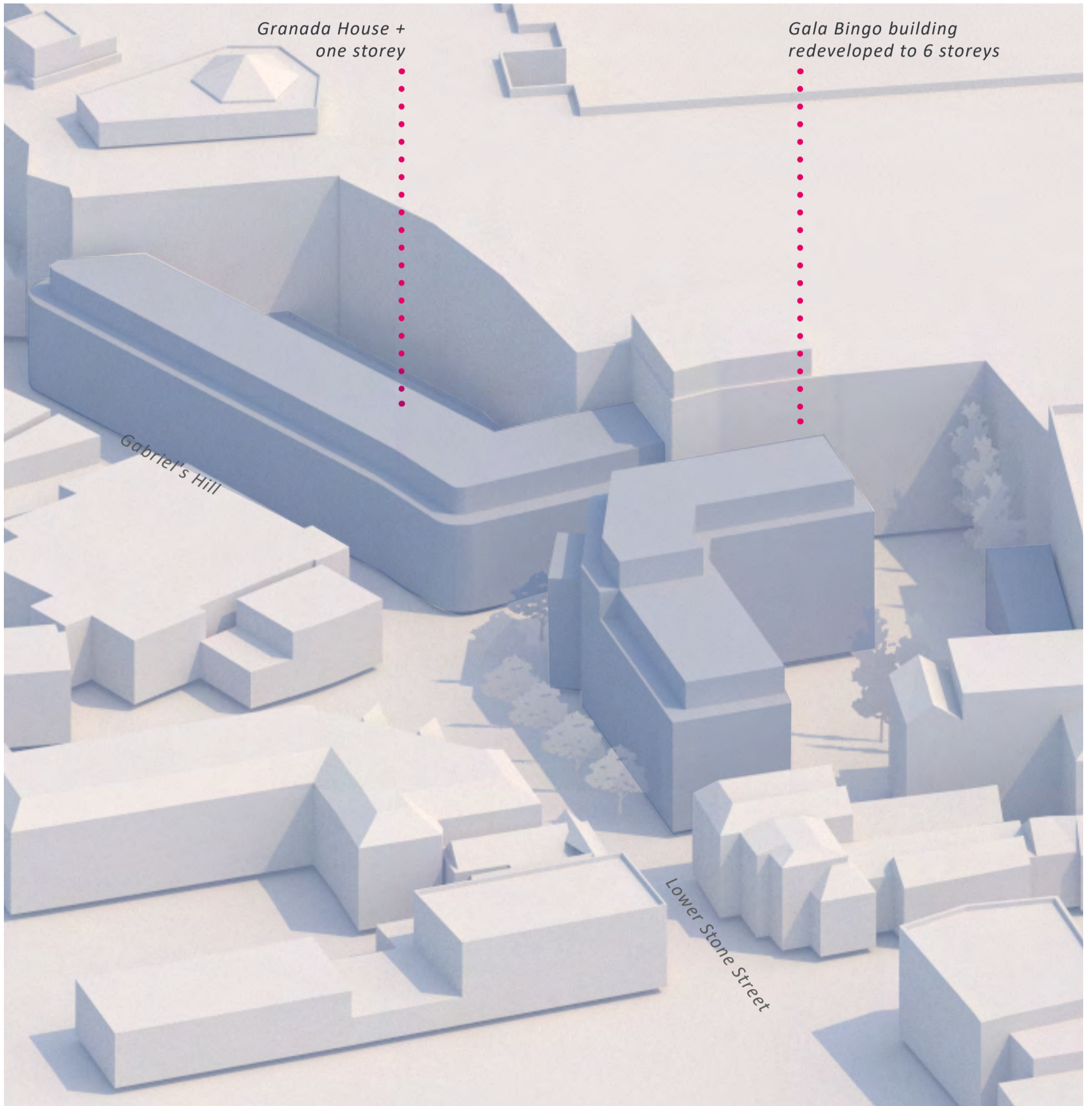
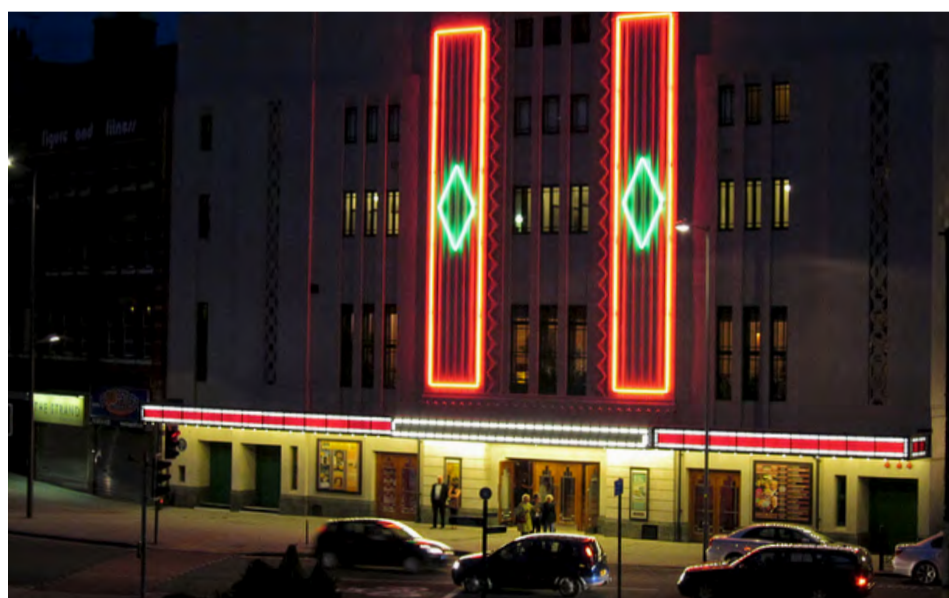
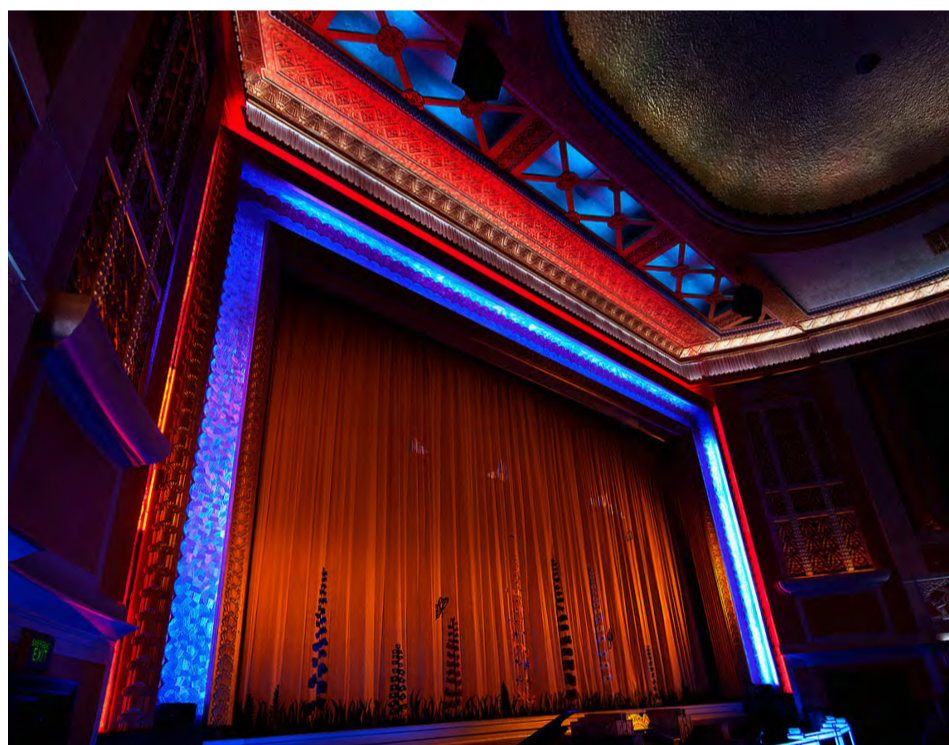


Fig.9: Illustrative massing model: Preferred scenario showing new 6 storey block on Gala Bingo site and an additional storey on top of the existing Granada House building, viewed from south



Contemporary alternative to auditorium design,



Images: Stockport Plaza Theatre: successfully restored art deco cinema/theatre

4.3 Alternative Scenario: Retention and Refurbishment of Gala Bingo and Granada House

4.3.1 Maidstone Borough Council would welcome the retention and re-purposing of the Gala Bingo building for a leisure use if there is an end user operator. Similarly, the retention and refurbishment of Granada House is supported.

4.3.2 This option allows the heritage value of both properties to be retained and offers the most viable opportunity in the current market.

4.3.3 This scenario retains and refurbishes the existing Granada House and Gala Bingo buildings. This provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of existing apartments and retail units (20 flats and 12 retail units) within Granada House and rejuvenate Gala Bingo as a theatre/cinema/arts, or as a leisure/recreation use such as a gym or night-club.

4.3.4 One version of this scenario would be for Buzz Bingo to remain on the ground floor, with cinema screens/performance venues above. Preferably, however, the bingo function could be relocated to another location within the town centre, such as The Mall, allowing the building to be restored to its original theatre layout. This could accommodate one large (approximately 600-800 seat) cinema screen/theatre, or three smaller screens. Space

could also be included for a bar and restaurant. A similar successful example of such a renovation is the Plaza Super Cinema and Variety Theatre, Stockport, which was built as a cine-variety venue before operating as a bingo hall. This was restored by a Charitable Trust with further Heritage Lottery Funding.

4.3.5 This scenario provides the opportunity to refurbish the apartments and retail units within Granada House. There is also the potential to introduce another storey to the top of the building, and up to two storeys on top of Gala Bingo, subject to structural surveys/engineer's advice, however this approach would not be viable in the current market.

4.3.6 One of the main advantages of retaining both buildings is that the architectural interest and shared cultural history provided by the Gala Bingo building would remain, with the potential to restore the building's internal historic features' assets. Both buildings are Art Deco in character and their retention would enable their continued contribution to an Art Deco presence in the town centre, as reflected in the nearby Len House and Powerhub buildings.

4.3.7 This scenario could make a notable contribution to the evening economy of this part of Maidstone, with performance spaces provided for a variety of comedy, music and cinema events.



Images: Opportunity for redevelopment of Gala Bingo Building as an arts centre/theatre/cinema, such as The Point, Eastleigh

