



St. Bernards

PROPOSALS :

This project is generally considered to be perhaps the most significant and important catalyst in the future success of the urban regeneration program, currently actively being driven by the current government and which will affect the upper town area in particular. An almost surgical intervention of this uniquely valuable site and buildings will be required in order to strike the correct balance between a number of critical and perhaps opposing component requirements, and these include:

1. A facility which is fit for purpose
2. An investment that provides value for money
3. A development which retains some of our history and heritage
4. A new asset for local residents which meets the immediate requirements for new and better schools, together with leisure and amenity areas for the wider community
5. A carefully planned and designed scheme that can function properly within this tight urban environment, particularly in terms of access given the potential number of users to the new facility.



*Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today
Malcolm X*

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11.00 DESIGN PROPOSALS 01:

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards

PROPOSALS :

To achieve these demanding objectives WSRM's proposals breaks down the brief and the requirements set by the client into a few principle key ideas, specifically targeting the overall viability of the project and ensuring a long term view for the use of the site and buildings. These core aims can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. The provision of two separately managed and controlled schools, with the smaller St. Bernard's Infants School to the north and the larger Sacred Heart Middle School to the south
2. The provision of a multi-use indoor sports hall, to be shared by both schools and made available to the wider community outside schools hours. The proposed design and location of the sports hall has made it possible to provide, for little or no additional costs, the added benefit of an open play area on the roof, which can be used by both schools and the wider community after school hours, independently
3. Minimum demolition works and maximum retention of existing structures to reduce construction costs, and safe guard as much of the old heritage as possible. Demolishing and carting away of material from this site location is both disruptive and expensive, so the intention is to re-use as much of the structures as possible. There has already been a significant amount of demolition and stripping away from this site and what has been retained is essentially considered to have some heritage value, and therefore the intention is to retain as much of this as possible. The most significant amount of demolition required for this scheme involves partial demolition to the rear of the existing buildings as shown on the plans, which is perhaps the least sensitive in terms of heritage
4. Little or no demolition work is proposed to the south part of the site, with the lower floors of the building opposite the 'Police Barracks', becoming integral to the overall school accommodation, as can be seen from the plans. This will undoubtedly make refurbishment and building costs a lot cheaper. However, little or no use can be found for the upper floors of this building [commonly known as the ex-nurse's quarters], in terms of school accommodation. Demolishing and rebuilding this structure would be costly, and it is our opinion that the remainder of the site can quite comfortably accommodate the requirements of the client's brief. If need be, an additional floor of this building could be taken up for the extra classrooms to make up the total of 16, as an alternative, to the roof extension currently indicated. This is likely to be cheaper but perhaps not as appropriate for classroom use. However, to help fund the project and reduce construction costs, WSRM is proposing that the 4 upper levels of this building are converted into 2 and 3 bedroom flats, thereby creating around 10 possible units. These new residential apartments can then be either sold off in the private market, offered to the housing rental market or used for the school itself for young teachers or other key workers coming back from training in the UK and setting up to live in Gibraltar. This solution could potentially be the most cost effective one and would add value to the project and the area in general. Please refer to section 16.00—Approximate Budget Construction Costs
5. As the design revolves around minimum structural disruptions and engineering works, almost all the existing staircores and lift shaft are intended to be retained and reused in their current locations. Some modifications to these may be necessary in order to meet modern day buildings standards and regulations, but generally these are considered to be minimal and cosmetic

6. Create a safe and pleasant urban open space between the two schools where parents and children can meet before and after school, rather than be squeezed onto a narrow pavement or road. The scene witnessed at around 15.15 during school days outside Governor's Meadow and Bishop Fitzgerald School is in our opinion something to be avoided. The proposals show a raised podium landscaped deck onto which children and parents can gather before and after school, making the transition of going and leaving school much more enjoyable and safer.
7. Provision of limited car and moped parking within the site, but without being intrusive or adversely affecting the overall user friendly setting. These parking spaces can be shared by teachers and visitors during school hours, or people arriving to use the sports hall outside school time. A limited amount of excavation would provide access to a subterranean car park level, sensitively designed to provide light beneath together with safe and easy access.
8. Maximum light and space to vital rooms within the school building to provide children with positive stimulus. None of the existing openings are planned to be blocked up, and those which are currently blocked will be opened up again. At the same time there are ideas for creating additional openings for light without adversely affecting the architecture or heritage value of the buildings. This includes conservation type skylights on the inclines of the roofs facing the inner 'newly covered patio areas', as most of the classrooms to both schools would be directly beneath.
9. It is assumed that most parents dropping off or picking up children from the infant school would do this straight outside the school gate, and WSRM's recommendation would be to provide a 'drop off or lay by' area directly across the road where some parking spaces have been created. These parking spaces could be used by local residents as overnight parking, as long as they are kept vacant at critical times. The older children in the middle school however, may be able to make their way on their own and the scheme aims to provide a direct route for children to enter the school directly beneath where the nurse's quarters used to be. Not only does this open a more direct and safe route for children arriving from around this area, but it provides a close link to perhaps the most important artery road to the upper town and a regular bus route.
10. A major design feature in the scheme is 'flexibility of use' and multifunctional spaces in accordance with Building Bulletin guides and recommendations for practical school design in the UK. Carefully planned interaction spaces and shared use of common areas would minimise excessive and unnecessary building works and costs. For instance, by covering or partially covering the central courtyard area with a glazed [and possibly openable] roof, this 'internal street' can then become a second playground, a dining area or a 'multi-use' space for other similar functions. Similar ideas could apply to areas like the library and the ICT rooms, dramatically reducing the overall cost of the project.

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12.00 DESIGN PROPOSALS 02:

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards



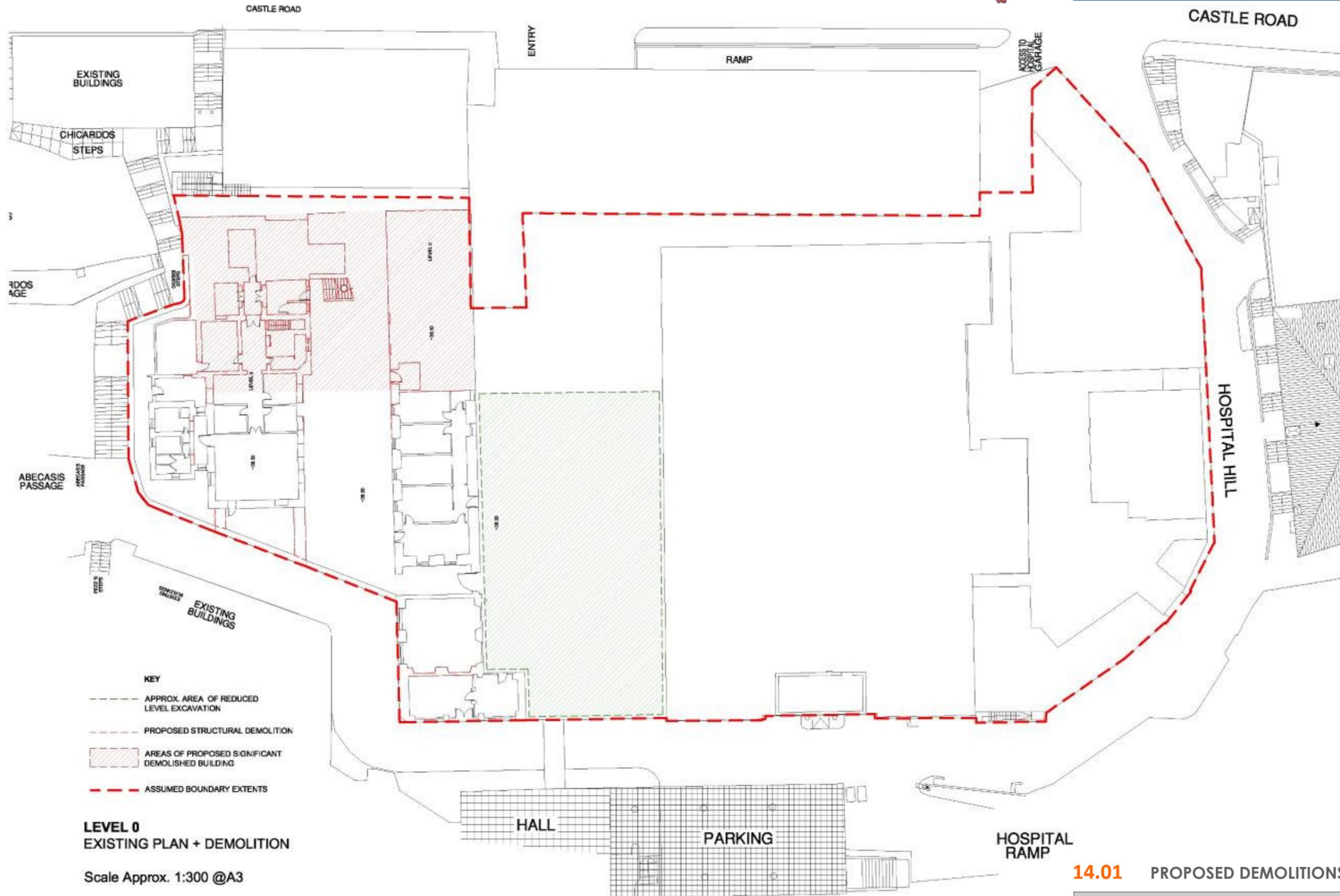
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13.00 DESIGN PROPOSALS 03 :

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards



14.01 PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS :

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards



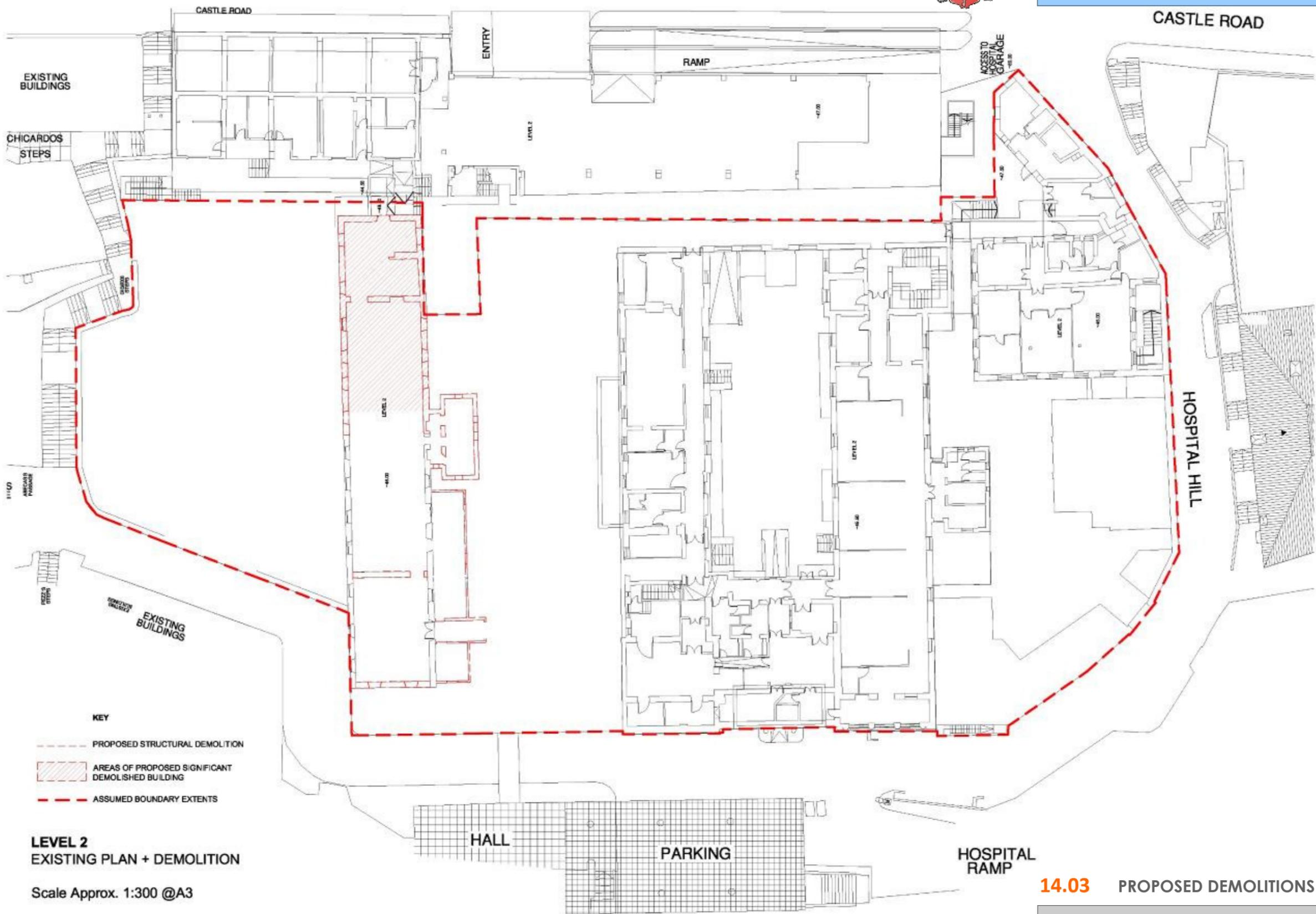
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14.02 PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS :

OUTLINE PLANNING



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KEY

- PROPOSED STRUCTURAL DEMOLITION
- ▨ AREAS OF PROPOSED SIGNIFICANT DEMOLISHED BUILDING
- - - ASSUMED BOUNDARY EXTENTS

LEVEL 2
EXISTING PLAN + DEMOLITION

Scale Approx. 1:300 @A3

14.03 PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS :

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards



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LEVEL 1
MAIN ENTRANCE TO SCHOOLS FROM PODIUM LEVEL

Scale Approx. 1:300 @A3

15.02 DESIGN PROPOSALS :

OUTLINE PLANNING



St. Bernards



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16.00 AERIAL VIEW :

OUTLINE PLANNING