

cover

A
Proposal
for the re-beautification of
an area of
CHICHESTER
opposite the Cathedral and
bounded by West Street, Tower Street,
The Woolstaplers and Chapel Street
by
Caleb O'Connell
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The Woolstaplers

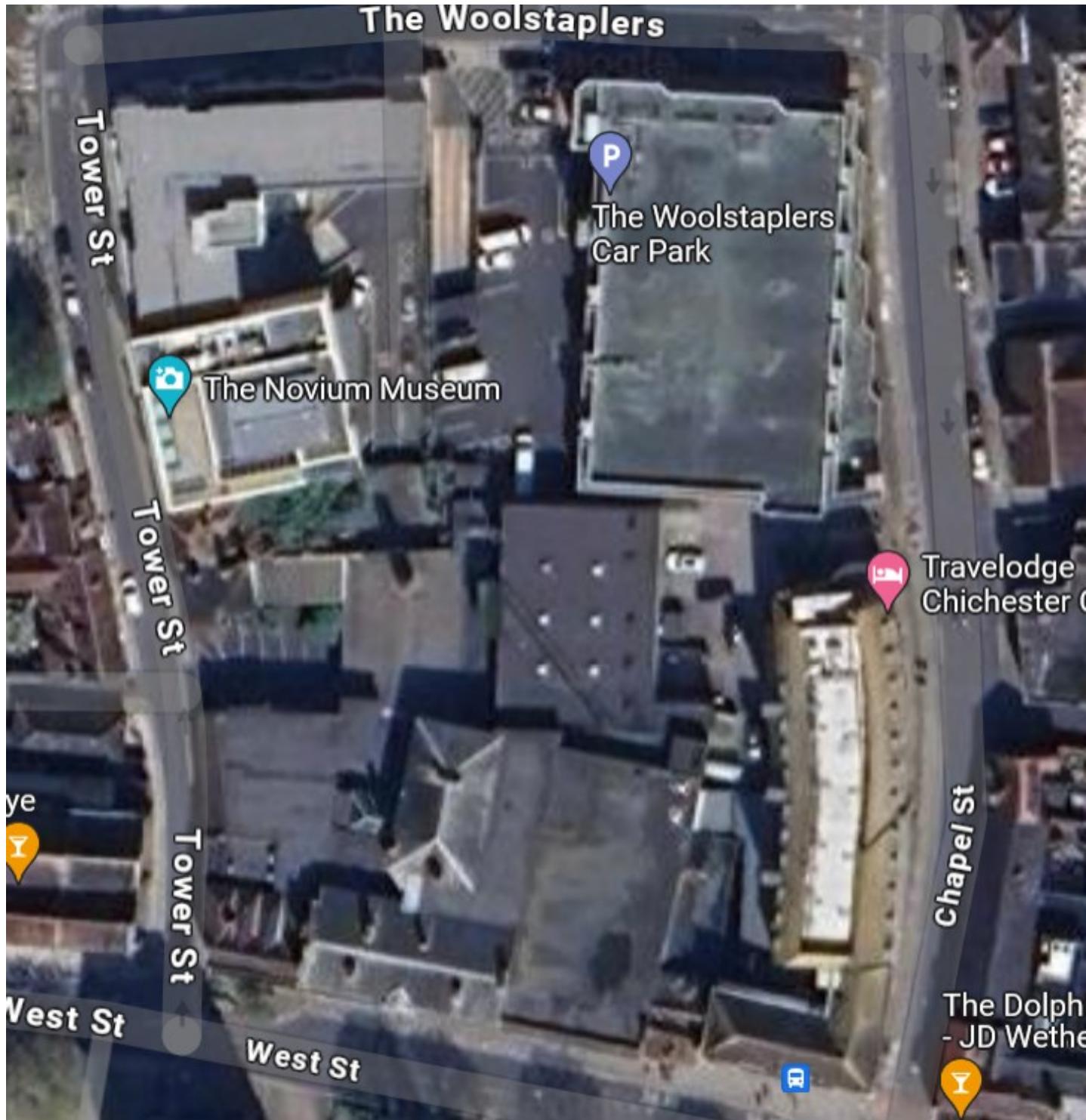


Fig. 1: a satellite image showing the entire site, including the *Former House of Fraser*, currently on the market with Savills (Google Maps Imagery).

The Woolstaplers

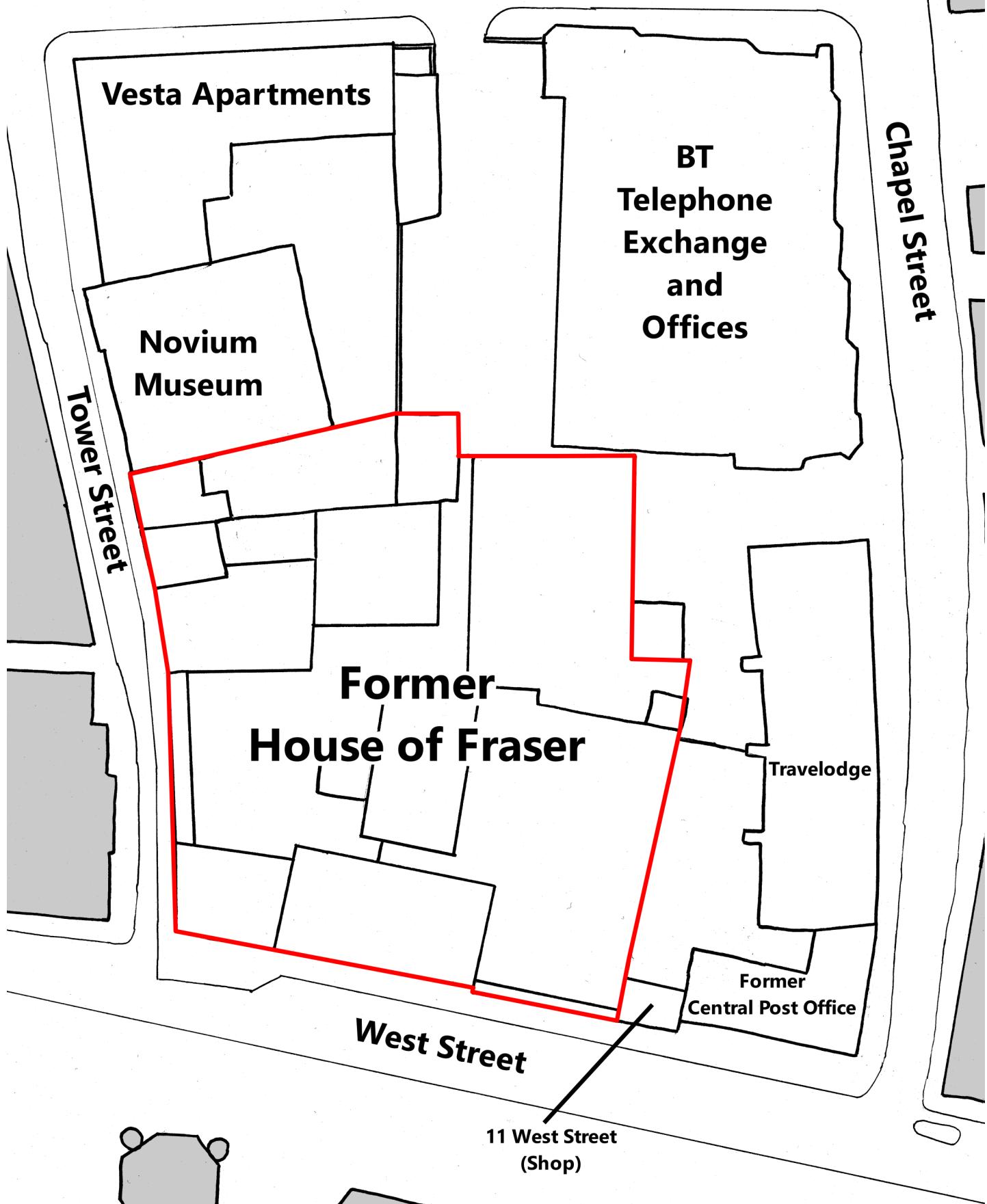


Fig. 2: a plan showing the entire site, including the *Former House of Fraser*, currently on the market with Savills.

BT Telephone Exchange



Former House of Fraser

This property, spanning Nos. 12-18 West Street and 51-52 Tower Street, consists of numerous buildings built for different purposes. It began in its current form as an independent department store (J.D. Morant's) which was later bought out by Army and Navy Stores—itself later bought out by House of Fraser. It has stood empty since House of Fraser closed in 2020.

The most prominent of these is the Oliver Whitby School (later merged into Christ's Hospital). Oliver Whitby's arms and the school motto can still be seen over the door.

Adjacent to the left is the former Eagle Inn, a pub which closed in 1903.

L: Aerial view of the site (Savills imagery)

Along Tower Street is a terrace of listed cottages, now only façades from the expansion of the department store and 51 & 52 Tower Street, townhouses previously used as offices. The whole site (indicated red in fig. 2) is currently for sale with Savills for approx. £8 million. The proposals in the sales brochure does not, in my opinion, go far enough towards preserving the perfectly usable and sound buildings currently there and is incredibly ugly—not at all suitable for a prominent position next to the Grade I listed Chichester Cathedral.

I love Chichester and I believe it deserves better—which is why I have prepared these alternative plans. I have also planned how to expand my ideas beyond the House of Fraser if the adjacent sites could also be purchased. For that reason, I have designed the plans to be built piecemeal so that it would not feel unfinished if the other sites could not be purchased. Also for that reason, I have placed the House of Fraser site first in this document as it is the most achievable.

My plan is designed for a single estate or entity to retain ownership of the whole site, renting or leasing houses within the development. The income from this should be used in part to subsidise retail units within the development and keep Chichester's West Street alive.



ABOVE: Looking down Tower Street from next to the former Eagle Inn (Google Streetview Imagery). Everything on the righthand side up to the white square building (the Novium Museum) is part of the House of Fraser site. On the left is the former St. Peter's Church (now a bar).

L: main front of the former Oliver Whitby School (Savills imagery).





Rest of Tower Street

The remainder of Tower Street within these plans consists of the Novium Museum (Above Left—image from thegreatsussexway.org), a modern museum covering a Roman bath-house which takes its name from the Roman name for Chichester (a rather out-of-place building for the historic centre) and Vesta Apartments (Below Left—image from Rightmove), a new-built group of sixteen spectacularly generic and fairly unattractive flats, built on the site of the Fighting Cocks Inn and cottages.

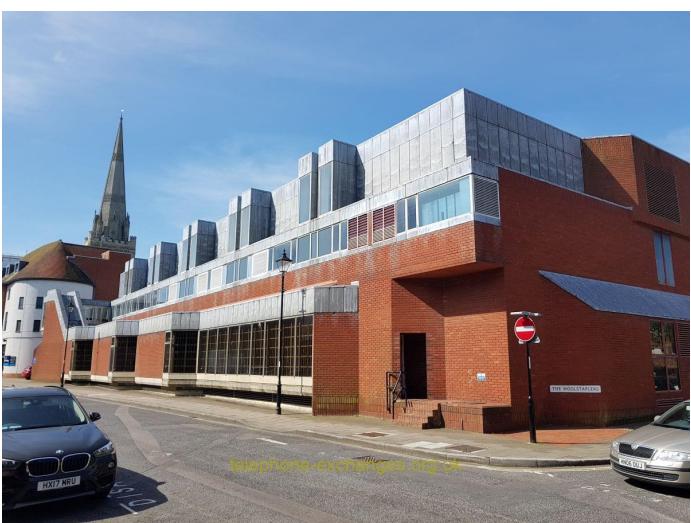


Goods Yard off The Woolstaplers

Off Woolstaplers is the goods yard, access to the Novium Museum and Vesta Apartments parking (Above—my labels on Google Streetview Imagery). The small part attached to the former House of Fraser is included in the site for sale.

The Woolstaplers

There is little on the side of The Woolstaplers which this plan concerns; only the back of the Vesta Apartments, the entrance to the former House of Fraser Goods Yard and the rear of the Telephone Exchange (see left — photo from telephone-exchanges.org.uk).



Buildings on West Street not part of the former House of Fraser

On the corner of West Street and Chapel Street is the former Central Post Office, an attractive unlisted Edwardian building. It closed a few years back but has not found a use since.

To the left of the old Post Office is a semi derelict building that was part of the House of Fraser but not included in the sale.



Chapel Street

Apart from the Telephone Exchange, the only other building on the Chapel Street side of the site is a Travelodge of fairly inoffensive design which abuts the former Central Post office (see below—image from hotelmix.co.uk).

It was previously a café and prior to 1903 a pub called The Royal Oak. It is small and currently has planning permission for the construction of a dwelling and retail space. In the picture above (By Keith Edkins, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13489918>) it is rendered white to the left of the old Post Office.

THE WOOLSTAPLERS

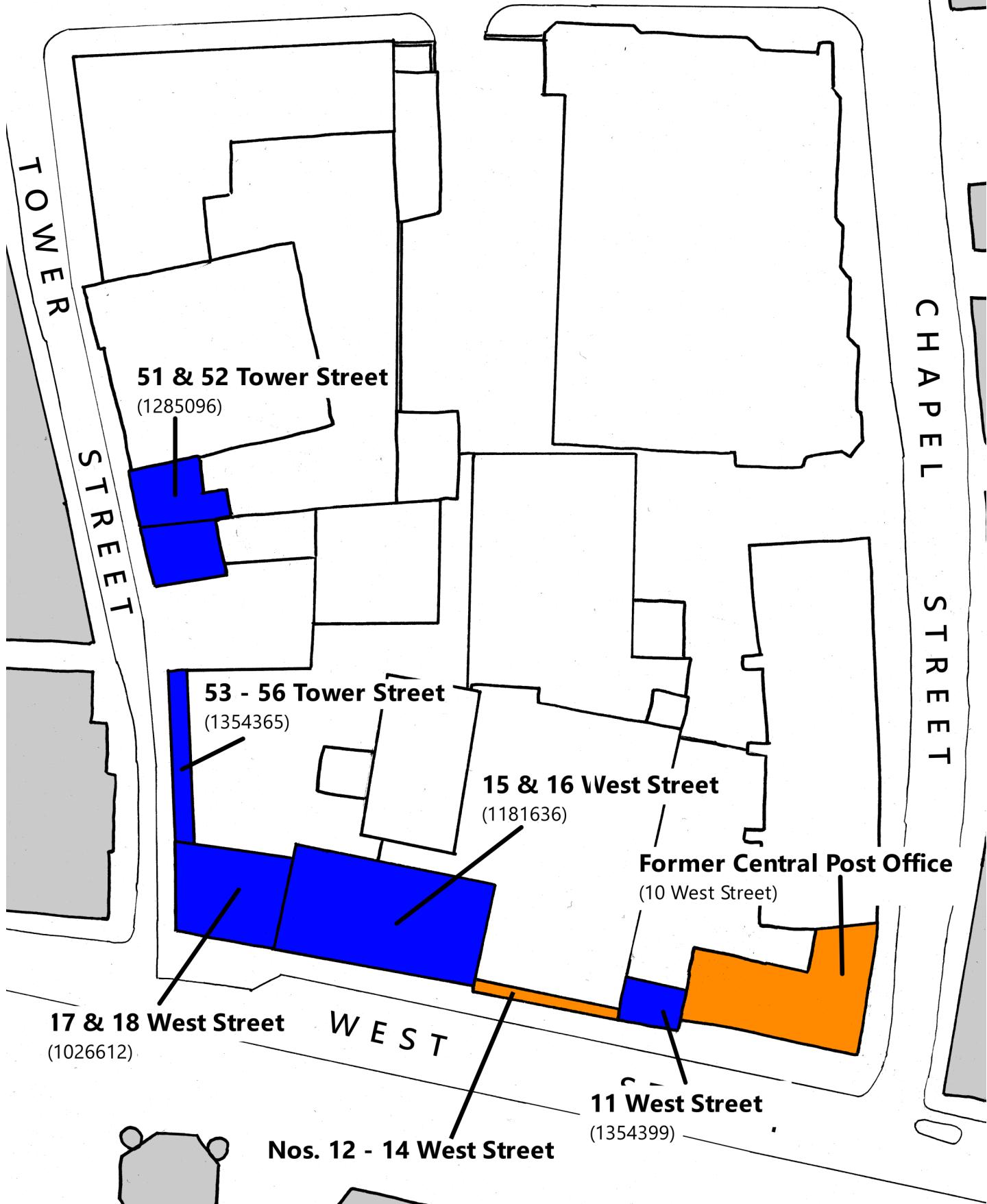


Fig. 3: a plan showing listed buildings (indicated in blue and including listing number) and notable buildings (indicated in orange).

Notable nearby buildings to the site

The site lies in a historic context, surrounded by listed and notable buildings. Any new buildings must reflect and blend into this rich mix of styles and designs, something which

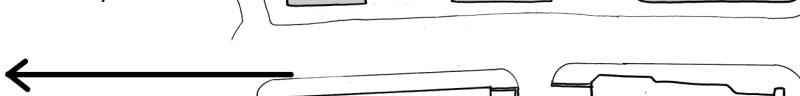
The sales proposals fail to do.

Image of County Hall by David960, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82149482>

County Hall

Edwardian Council Chambers.

approx. 350ft away



18th & 19th Century terraces

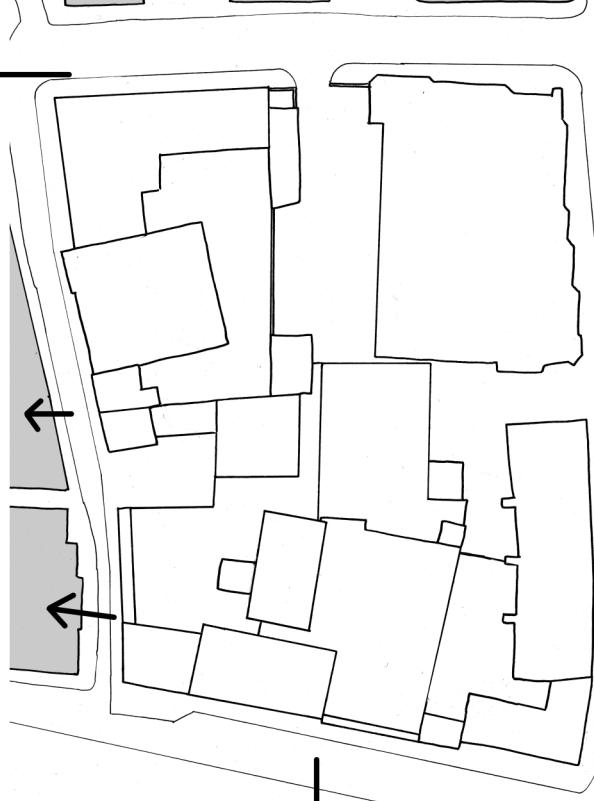
Largely unspoilt terraced cottages.

approx. 25ft away

Former St. Peter's Church

Mediæval Church of St. Peter-the-Great, now a bar.

approx. 25ft away



St. Peter-the-Great from sussexparishchurches.org

The Dolphin & Anchor Inn from jdwetherspoon.com



The Dolphin & Anchor

Victorian hotel—now a pub.

approx. 25ft from site

Market Cross

Mediæval Market Cross.

approx. 250ft from site



Chichester Cathedral

Mediæval Cathedral and belltower.

approx. 50ft from site

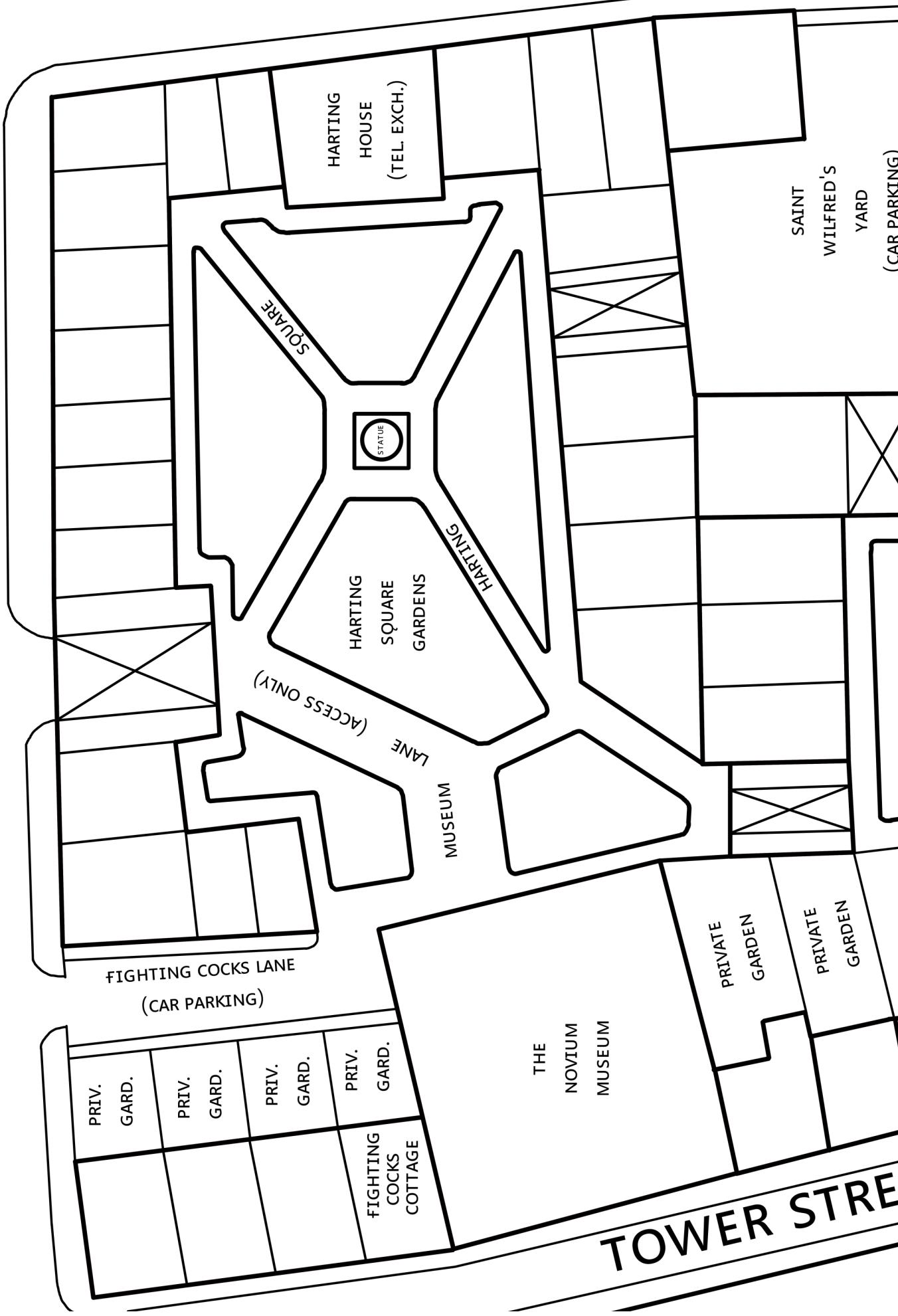
Chichester Cathedral by Evgeniy Podkopaev - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=28171159>

Image of Tower Street cottages (near top left of page) from Google Streetview Imagery.

Market Cross by Tony Hisgett from Birmingham, UK - Market Cross ChichesterUploaded by Magnus Manske, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21109533>



THE WOOLSTAPLERS



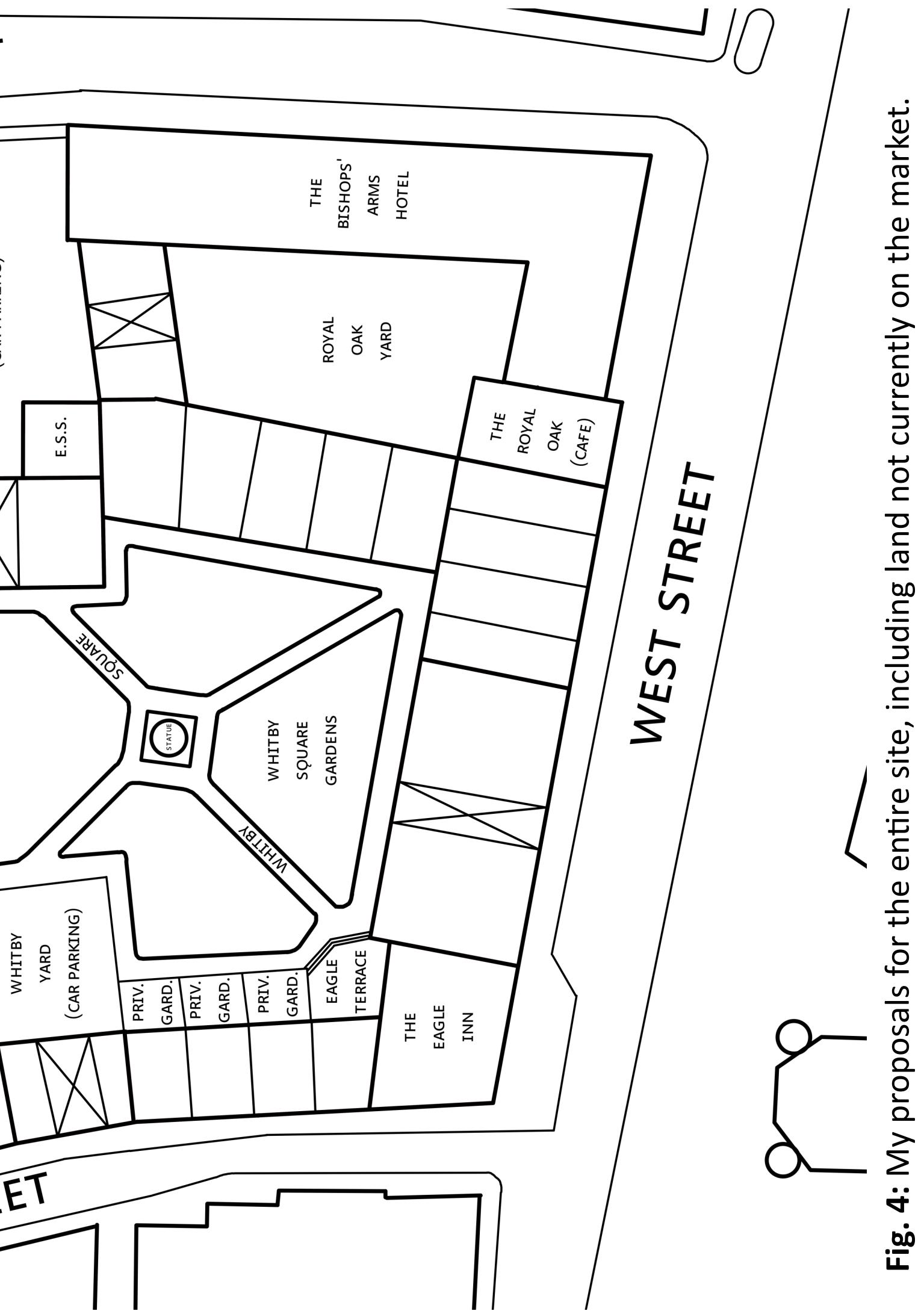


Fig. 4: My proposals for the entire site, including land not currently on the market.

THE WOOLSTAPLERS

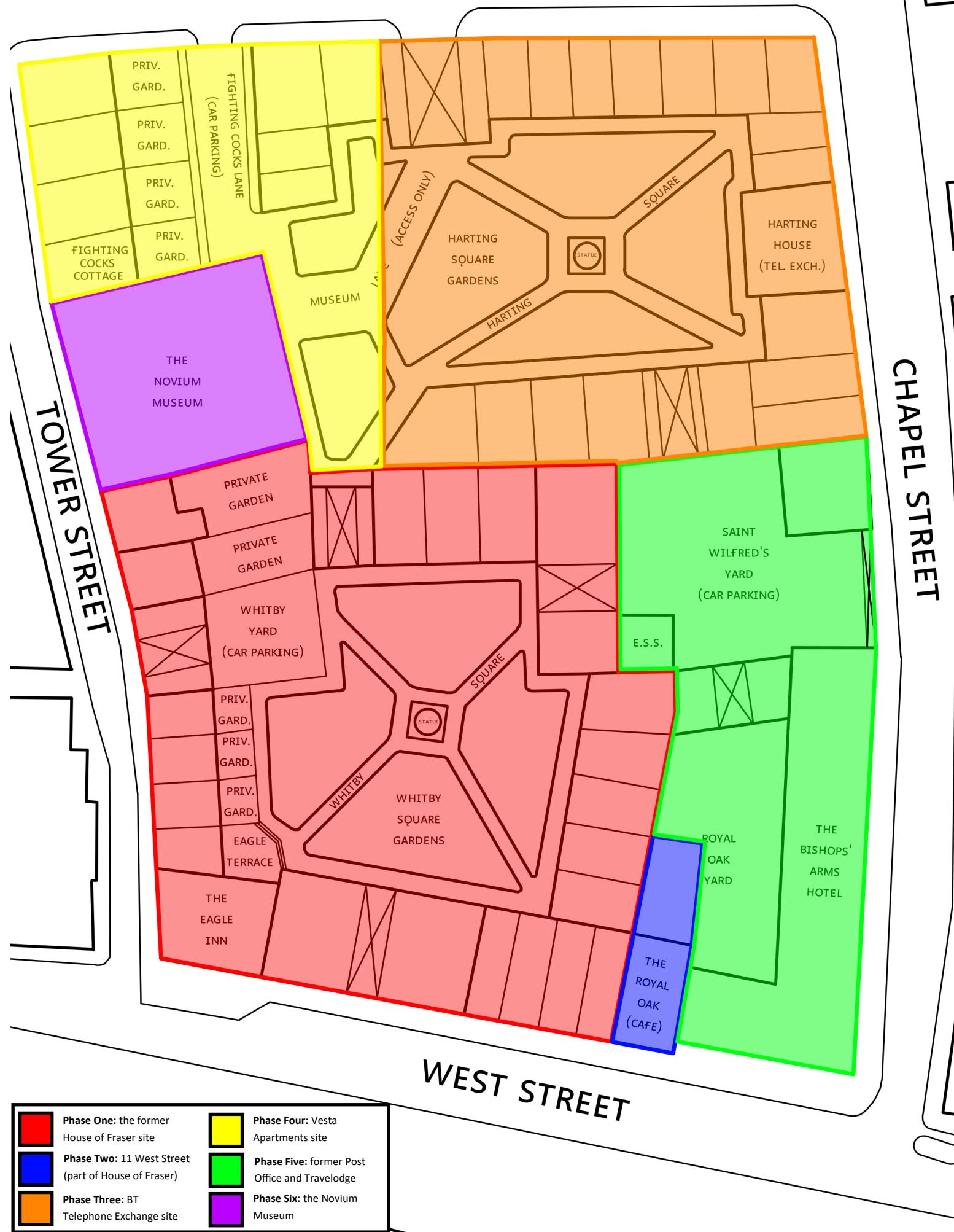


Fig. 5: The phases of construction of the site. Only Phase 1 is currently possible (subject to Planning Permission); all other Phases rely on acquiring further land.



Photo: Savills

Phase One: the former House of Fraser site

Phase one covers all of the House of Fraser site currently for sale. The plan aims to allow for future growth, but also to feel complete in itself. The development is centred on a formal garden, to include a statue of Oliver Whitby, the man for whom the Square is named. Ample covered and uncovered parking is provided on the site of the former goods yard, and the retail units are brought back into use, aiming to use the rental income from the rest of the Square to subsidise rent for these units. Visually to match the main front on West Street.

Phase Two: No. 11 West Street (part of former House of Fraser)

Adjoining the site of Phase One is No. 11, which formed part of the House of Fraser but is not for sale with it. The site currently has planning permission for re-development, but if phase one were completed, negotiation with the owners could allow for its purchase. It would become a Café on two floors, with owner's flat above and a Mediterranean-style rear yard for outdoor eating.



Photo: Historic England

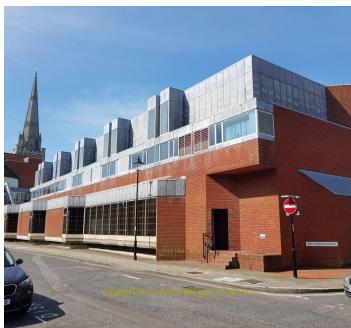


Photo: telephone-exchanges.org.uk

Phase Three: the BT Telephone Exchange Site

The BT Telephone Exchange forms the next largest part of the site; the building contains offices, which Google would suggest are currently vacant and the remains of the telephone exchange. In today's post-COVID world, demand for office space is shrinking, and telephone exchanges have been computerised and need far less space. If BT could be persuaded to sell the site, a new smaller Telephone Exchange could be built, using the building on my plan and as many of the adjacent houses as necessary. The terraces would match Whitby Square.



Photo: Rightmove



Photo: Keith Edkins, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13489918>

Phase Five: former Central Post Office and Travelodge

The former Central Post Office would be relatively easy to acquire, since it is currently disused and empty, but the Travelodge would be much harder. Perhaps the only way to achieve this would be to provide a new site nearby. If this were able to be completed, Royal Oak Yard could be completed, with new buildings to finish the fourth side, and the Travelodge could be rebuilt to match the former Central Post Office. It would share outdoor space with the Royal Oak—before acquiring the Travelodge, perhaps the Post Office could simply be used as flats.

Phase Six: the Novium Museum

The final phase, assuming the whole site were rebuilt in a beautiful historic style, would be to work with the Novium Museum to put a new Façade on each side. The front, given that it is a museum of Roman archaeology, would be pillared and Roman Classical; the rear would be a functional Victorian red brick to match the rest of Harting Square. This could potentially provide additional space for the museum when rationalising the front.



Photo: thegreatsussexway.org

THE WOOLSTAPLERS

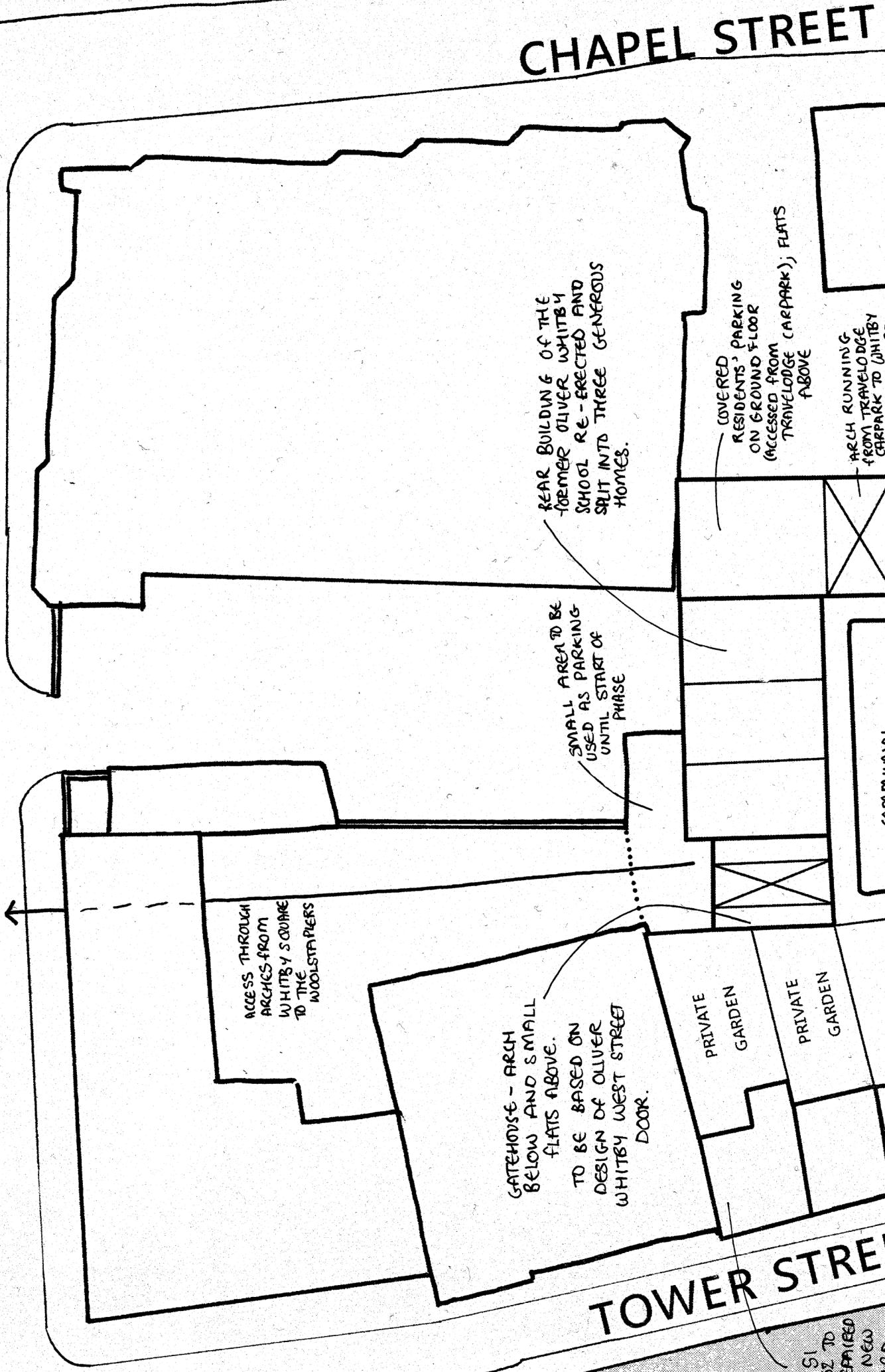




Fig. 6: a plan showing the site should Phase One be completed, with notes detailing the changes to be made.

