

Preston Pavilion Extension Working Group

Report to Preston Parish Council

Thursday 3 September 2026

Following meeting #12 of 19 August 2026

Summary

Following 12 meetings of the Preston Pavilion Extension Working Group (PWG), the Group wishes to summarise its findings to-date, and to invite feedback from Preston Parish Council (PPC) at its next meeting.

Feedback is welcomed prior to the PWG's next meeting, noting the PWG's intention to make a recommendation regarding one of two build options or an alternative at its next meeting on 8 September 2026.

Introduction and context

- The PWG is commissioned by and operates under Terms of Reference v2 granted by PPC.
- The current pavilion is not fit-for-purpose and a refurbishment, rebuild or new build is required to offer users a welcoming, modern and inclusive community facility.
- The current and any new pavilion is intended for use by the community and PCC.
- Preston Cricket Club is to all intents and purposes the exclusive user of the current pavilion, although this was not the original or current aim.
 - PCC rents the pavilion from mid-April to early September.
- Given the pavilion has an established and valued current customer in the PCC, new pavilion investigations will incorporate reference to the ECB's pavilion requirements.
 - It is noted that PCC acceptance in to a higher league may be impacted by its lack of facilities.
 - It should be noted that any new pavilion is not considered an alternative to the current arrangement of The Red Lion PH acting as PCC's informal clubhouse.
- It is intended that a new pavilion will be funded through grant applications, fund-raising activities and donations.
 - The PWG is mindful that the wider the potential uses for the pavilion the wider range of funding sources exist (as advised by a NH planning officer) but note that the larger the community space the greater the cost implications and fund-raising requirement.

PWG Actions

- 12 meetings (all at quorum) have been held.
 - All meetings have been minuted for the PWG's reference and written reports have been supplied to every Parish Council meeting, with resolutions included as and when required.

- The PWG would like to thank Voytek Zujla who has attended several PWG meetings as a volunteer technical specialist – sharing his experience and knowledge as a structural engineer.
 - Meetings are open to members of the public as observers.
- The community and cricket club have been surveyed regarding potential future uses of a new pavilion.
 - It was intended that the survey output would inform the PWG's thinking as regards new pavilion layout and scale.
 - The survey was not considered to be statistically significant.
- The PWG's work has adhered to the covenant requiring the ground – and it is assumed the pavilion also – to be available for use for organised sport for adults and children, while not excluding recreational and educational community use.
- The PWG sought agreement from PPC to allow consideration of moving the location of the pavilion. This was declined on 23 October 2025.
- The PWG sought agreement from the PPC to allow consideration of establishing a new access to the recreation ground. This was declined on 22 January 2026.
- The PWG prepared a first report on 'Potential funding sources for the PCC pavilion extension/rebuild' in June 2025.

Professional advice commissioned by the PWG

Professional advice has been taken from:

- Parkinson Partnership - VAT advice from a specialist in VAT for Parish Councils
- Pentangle Design – appointed after a competitive tender process
- The ECB has been consulted as regards any build requirements to satisfy their requirements for new pavilions

Reports on pre-application advice (based on two Pentangle designs) have been received from an NHDC Planning Officer and the Conservation team as well as a briefing note from Pentangle Design.

These are summarised as follows:

The advice received for the proposed new pavilion at Preston Recreation Ground is positive and encouraging.

- North Hertfordshire Council's pre-application advice indicates that a replacement pavilion is acceptable in principle, with no major planning or heritage objections identified.
- The site is in the Green Belt, but the Council considers the proposal to fall within planning policy exceptions for facilities supporting outdoor sport and recreation.
- The pavilion supports an existing recreation and community use.
- The pavilion is separated from nearby listed buildings.
- The recreation ground is already an established feature in the landscape.
- The replacement pavilion is not considered harmful to Green Belt openness and is therefore acceptable in principle.

- The site lies within the Preston Conservation Area and is near listed buildings.
- The Council's Heritage Officer considers the impact on nearby listed buildings to be minimal.
- Heritage impacts on the conservation area are regarded as manageable.
- Demolition of the existing pavilion is considered acceptable – with the current pavilion not considered a heritage asset.

The two Pentangle design options were assessed as follows:

Option 1 – New replacement pavilion

- Preferred by the heritage officer
- Delivers modern facilities in a single-storey building
- Regarded as the least harmful option from a heritage perspective
- The building increase is not considered significant
- No fundamental objections raised
- 50+ year design life with new fabric throughout
- Initial costings, including 10% contingency but excluding VAT: £1,051,280.00
- Plans and perspective views on pages 5 and 6

Option 2 – Two-storey extension

- Not favoured
- Considered visually awkward and overly dominant
- Seen as having greater impact on the conservation area
- Extends life of existing fabric by an estimated 25-30 years
- Initial costings, including 10% contingency but excluding VAT: £1,134,160.00
- Plans and perspective views on pages 7 and 8

Recommended design improvements

The officer suggests enhancing the pavilion's traditional cricket-club character by:

- Adding supporting posts/verandas.
- Considering a cupola or clock tower.
- Introducing more variation in roof heights.
- Breaking up the long, linear appearance.

These are recommendations rather than requirements.

Work required with Pentangle Design before any planning submission

The following matters still need to be addressed:

- Bat surveys (next survey season: May 2027)
- Tree survey and impact assessment
- Access and parking proposals, including surfacing materials and highway approval
- Footpaths
- Cycle parking
- Biodiversity/ecology assessment
- Heritage, transport and landscaping reports
- Operating hours and building use schedule
- Drainage and sustainability information

VAT advice has been provided by Parkinson Partnership and is summarised as follows:

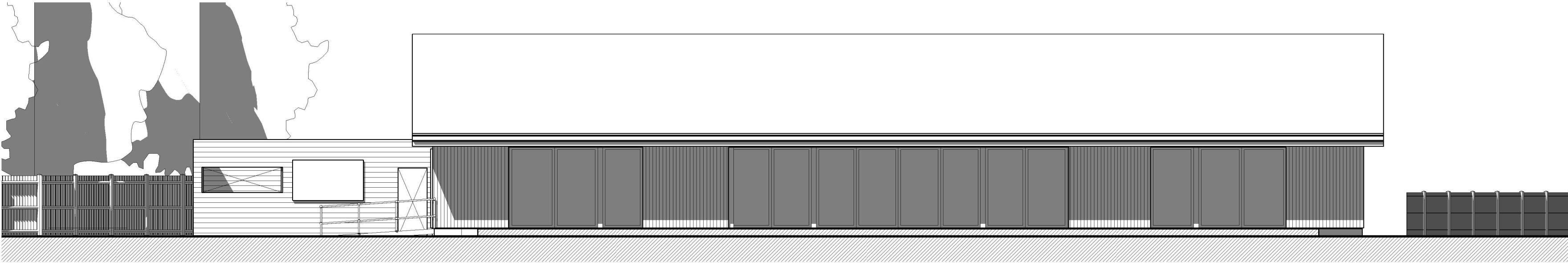
- Construction of either a new pavilion or an extension will attract 20% VAT; there are no reduced or zero-rate reliefs available.
- The main issue is how much VAT the council can recover, which depends on how the building will be used.
- VAT can generally be reclaimed where facilities are used for non-business activities, including certain public sports facilities and changing rooms associated with pitch hire.
- The report estimates that around 55% of VAT on a new-build option may be recoverable because of the changing-room/sports-use element.
- Room hire and leasing arrangements can affect VAT recovery. Charging rent or hiring out rooms is usually treated as a VAT-exempt business activity, which can restrict VAT recovery unless additional VAT planning measures are taken.
- The council should first decide the intended purpose and operating model of the clubroom (eg community use, sports club base, income generation) before choosing a VAT strategy.
- Several VAT structuring options are suggested, including:
 - Leasing to a sports club for a nominal rent.
 - Council-managed sports lettings.
 - Limited council involvement in the clubroom.
 - VAT registration and a possible option to tax.
- If construction costs exceed £600,000 (excluding VAT), the project may fall within the VAT Capital Goods Scheme, requiring VAT recovery to be reviewed for up to 9 years if building use changes.

Conclusion: The extension-versus-replacement decision is not driven by VAT rates. The council's ability to recover VAT depends primarily on the future use, management, and leasing arrangements of the building, so a clear operational plan is needed before adopting a VAT strategy.

Costings

- The following costs have been incurred by the PWG, all with prior agreement from PPC, paid from section 106 ring fenced funding from the Oakfields development. Preston Cricket Club has contributed 50% of all payments to date. VAT has been reclaimed.

Date	Contractor	Amount
11.05.26	Maytree Landscapes	£1380.00
20.05.26	Pentangle Design	£6557.78
02. 06. 26	NHDC	£2039.00
26.06.26	Building Estimates	£720.00
Payment not yet due	Parkinson Partnership	£1450. 00 + VAT



Proposed South Elevation
1 : 100

DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE BEFORE ANY WORKS.
ANY QUERIES REGARDING DIMENSIONS TO BE TAKEN UP WITH
PENTANGLE DESIGN GROUP.

ALL DIMENSIONS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS TO BE VERIFIED ON SITE.

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THEIR PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT.

NOTES



- Changing
- Circulation
- Social
- Storage Plant and Cleaner
- WC's

Proposed Gross Internal Areas		
Name	Area	Area SF
Ground Floor	252 m ²	2712 SF
Grand total	252 m ²	2712 SF

PRELIMINARY

PENTANGLE

D E S I G N G R O U P

SUITE 1, 21 BANCROFT HITCHIN HERTS SG5 1JW
T:01462 431133 E:pdg@pentangledesign.co.uk

JOB TITLE
Proposed New Pavillion
Preston Recreation Ground, Preston, Hitchin

for Preston Parish Council

DRAWING TITLE
Proposed Plan and Elevation - New Build

SCALE 1 : 100	DRAWING NUMBER 06	REVISION
DATE May '26		
SHT SIZE A2		
JOB NUMBER 3990		

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Proposed Ground Floor
1 : 100

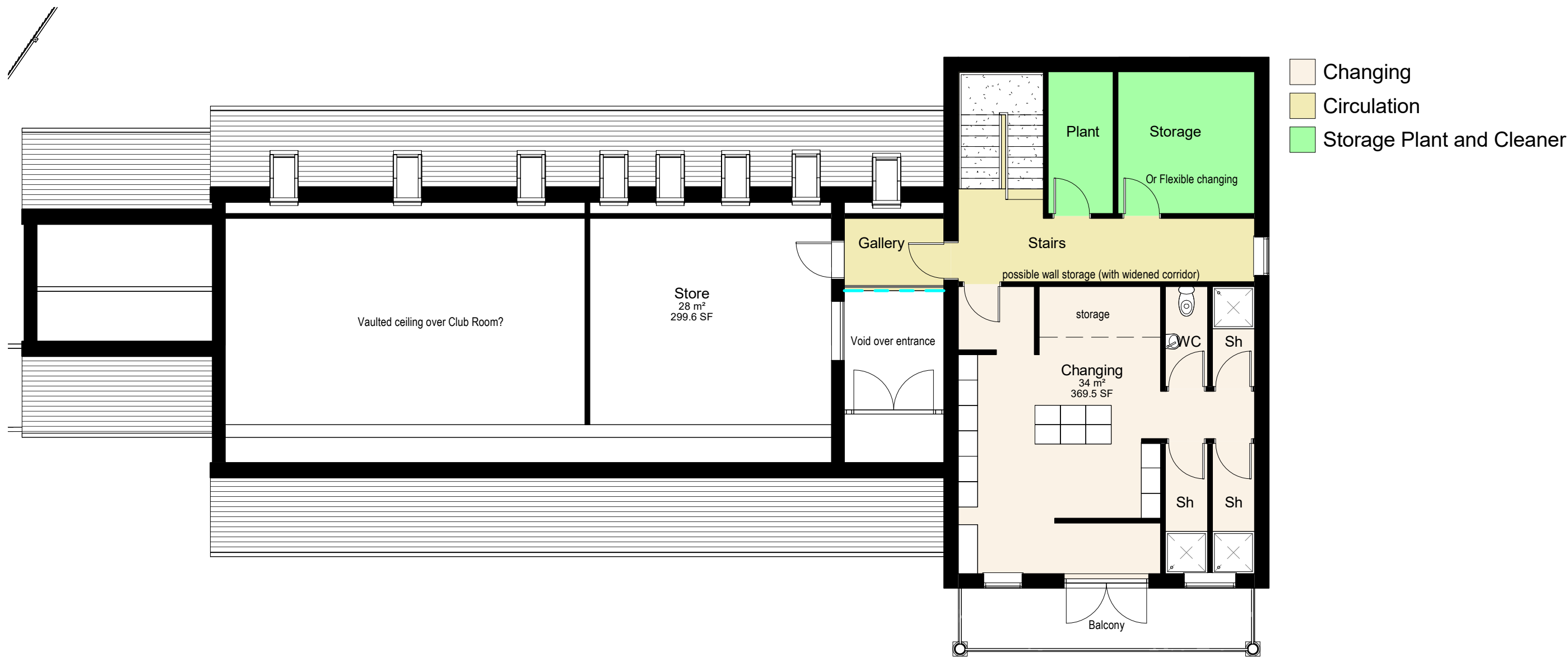
0 5 10 m

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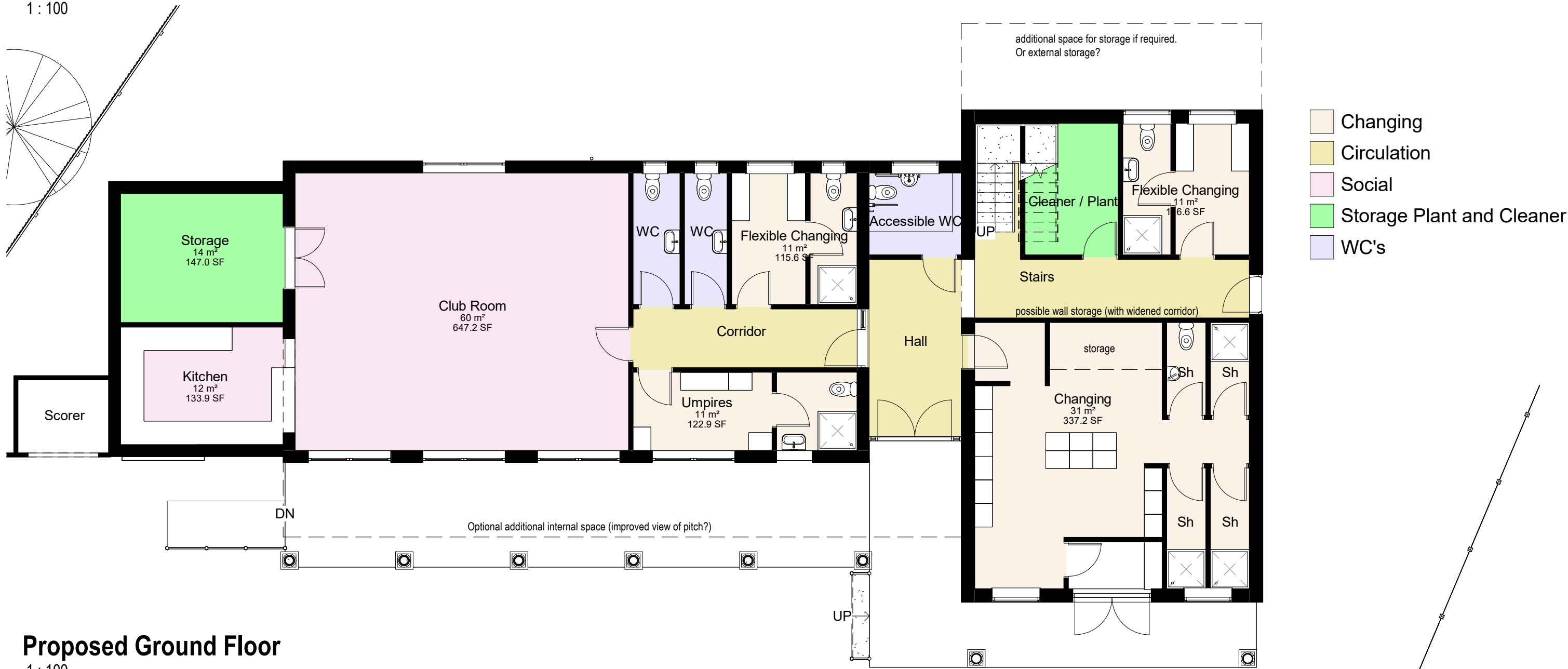
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NOTES



Proposed First Floor

1 : 100



Proposed Ground Floor

1 : 100

- Changing
- Circulation
- Social
- Storage Plant and Cleaner
- WC's

Proposed Gross Internal Areas		
Name	Area	Area SF
Original Clubhouse	101 m²	1090 SF
Extension Ground Floor	98 m²	1050 SF
Kitchen and Store	28 m²	306 SF
Extension First Floor	90 m²	967 SF
Loft Storage	30 m²	318 SF
Grand total	347 m²	3732 SF

PRELIMINARY

PENTANGLE
DESIGN GROUP

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JOB TITLE
Proposed New Pavillion
Preston Recreation Ground, Preston, Hitchin
for Preston Parish Council

DRAWING TITLE
Proposed Floor Plans - Extension

SCALE 1 : 100	DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION
DATE April '26	03	A
SHT SIZE A2		
JOB NUMBER 3990		

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

0 5 10 m



PRESTON CRICKET PAVILION

OPTION 1 – EXTENSION

May 2026

PENTANGLE
DESIGN GROUP



PRESTON CRICKET PAVILION

OPTION 2 – NEW BUILDING

May 2026