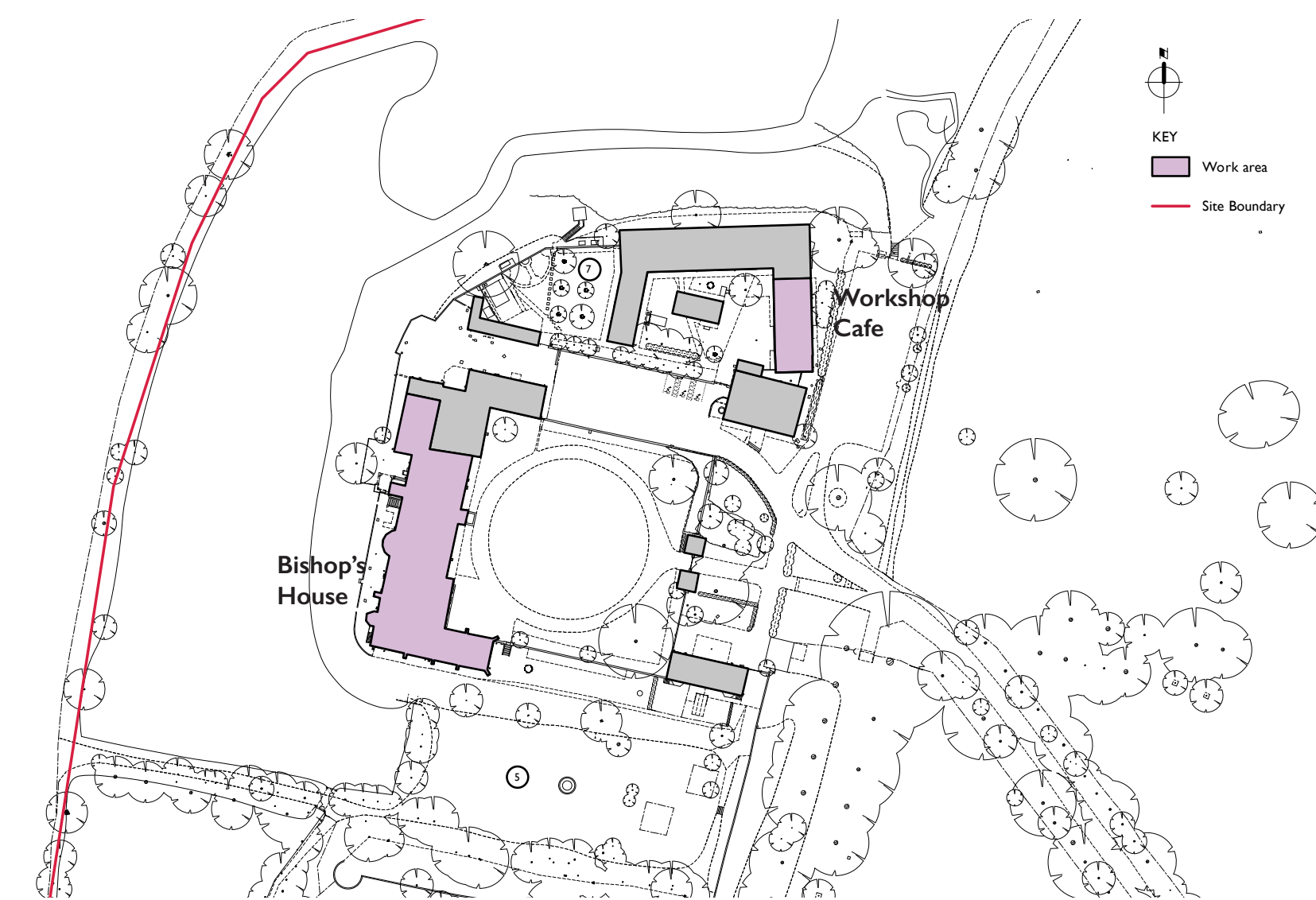




# HARTLEBURY CASTLE BISHOP'S HOUSE AND WORKSHOP CAFE



Hartlebury Castle, a Grade I listed building, was built the 13th century as a fortified manor house on land given to the Bishop of Worcester by King Burgred of Mercia. A medieval manor house, remodelled in the C17th and C18th. It is U-shaped in plan, comprising two three-storied ranges to the north and south, connected by the single story central range, which houses the Great Hall and Saloon.

In the 1960s the house was divided into three. The North Range was leased to Worcestershire County Council who constructed a series of contemporary buildings within the curtilage and made alterations to the interior to create a Museum. The South Range (Bishop's House) was reconfigured to form family, staff and office accommodation. The State rooms, except the Long Gallery were unchanged. The See House was vacated by the Bishops of Worcester in 2007. This prompted the sale of Castle and its estate.

Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust (HCPT) was formed with the purpose of preserving Hartlebury Castle and its historic contents including The Hurd Library. In March 2015 on receipt of a £5 million grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) the building was purchased enabling its redevelopment.

The scheme was developed to carefully alter and repair whilst sensitively adding new elements to provide facilities that visitors now expect. Within the Bishop's House, there was a unique challenge to minimise the impact and features of the building as to not detract from its Grade I setting. The ground, mezzanine and first floors have been made accessible via a platform lift and opened for visitors to experience dressed rooms, costume display and interpretation rooms for the highly significant Hurd Library. The works reinstated the Long Gallery from a previous domestic arrangement in order to install a timeline display as part of the museum route. A Conservation Statement and Conservation Management Plan provided excellent background on the building's construction and development. The alterations to the building now allow for functions such as weddings to be better accommodated to allow income for the building to maintain itself into the future.

Within the wider park, a new café has been formed from an existing 1960s dilapidated unit and the landscaping has begun to be restored to its former glory. Using the existing footprint the existing structure has been altered and upgraded to provide a contemporary structure that sits well in its setting. Siberian larch cladding cloaks the building to reduce impact. The existing workshop building was un-insulated, overglazed with poor air tightness.

A comprehensive visitor survey has been in use since May 2018. The results have demonstrated a positive response to the works and the new interpretation of the Bishop's House. Half of visitors have never visited before, but three quarters are spending up to and over hours at the Castle during their visit. Two thirds of visitors said that they thought the way the story of the Castle is told exceeded expectations. Over half of visitors strongly agree that they have gained a better understanding of the history of the Hartlebury Castle.

The works are an investment which marks the start of a renewed future for an important local building. This has been achieved by collaborative working between design team and the appointed conservation contractor.

