

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS, DESIGN AND ACCESS

FORMER KITCHEN LINK BRIDGE

SUMMARY

The area in question was originally designed as a link bridge between the Great Hall and main circulation area on level 01. Alongside the corresponding link bridge on the opposite side of the Great Hall, it was designed to accommodate additional circulation to the ceremonial stair necessitated by major events in the main central space. It was formed of an elegant and functional arrangement of three bays over an arch, consistent with the Neo-Gothic architectural style and care of design given to both the courtyard and building as a whole.

This element was substantially altered in the mid-20th century. In response to the need to accommodate catering facilities to serve events in the Great Hall, the link bridge was partially demolished to create open access to the new extensions either side. The first extension to the Cooper Street side of the link bridge was undertaken in 1959, followed by an additional extension the Albert Square side of the link bridge in two phases during the 1960’s. The second and larger phase to the Albert Square side is dated by a building control drawing of 1967. These extensions resulted in the notable loss of historic fabric, including the considerable areas of window tracery, as well as the visual intrusion of a low quality new design not in keeping with the character and qualities of the courtyard area especially in observing the Western bay windows on the Princess Street range. The loss of light to adjacent areas as a result of this considerable additional mass has also had a harmful impact on the intended natural light provision for adjacent spaces. As a result, these 20th century extensions have a detrimental impact on the significance of the Town Hall.

Those elements of the original link bridge which survive represent important survivals of the original design, and are correspondingly of very high significance.

Statement of the Need for Change
The proposed interventions to this area have been informed by the needs arising following principal objectives of the Our Town Hall project;

- To secure the long-term future of Manchester Town Hall, its civic role and its external setting
- To enhance the use of the building, as a visitor destination and increase access to Mancunians
- To transform users’ and visitors’ experiences
- To maximise commercial opportunities and offset costs

The rationalisation of the catering facilities
In order to provide an efficient and viable catering operation to service the projected events capability a considerable rationalisation of the facilities is necessary. As part of this need, a study was conducted into the existing functional arrangements for catering and significant improvements are being proposed, including the relocation and considerable expansion of the kitchen provision which results in the current use of the link bridge extensions being made redundant.

The reasonable provision of WC facilities
In order to achieve the essential aims of the Our Town Hall project as outlined above, it is necessary to provide sufficient WC facilities to support its long-term civic and public use. In order to achieve this positive ambition, the provision of adequate WC facilities is necessary to sustain these uses – whether that be to meet 21st century standards for office use or for hosting numbers associated with events and public meetings.

Similarly, the highly beneficial aspirations to increase visitor access and enhance engagement and experience of this valuable heritage asset requires a proportionate and reasonable level of WC provision to support this outcome.

Taking the positive opportunity to address a current harmful heritage impact
As outlined in the ‘significance’ section of the Heritage Impact Assessment, the modern additions to the link bridge have had a notable detrimental impact in heritage terms. Within the context of the building as a whole, this is one of the most harmful interventions which has taken place in the history of the building. It was therefore a key driver of the proposals to take the positive opportunity to remove the built form of the 20th century extensions (excepting structural elements) to accommodate necessary facilities within the area in a manner which enhances heritage significance through a considered and contextual design approach. The method by which this enhancement will be achieved in design terms is detailed in the following section. A full options appraisal was carried out as illustrated on the previous page.

Description of the Design
The proposal basically involves the removal of the majority of the detrimental 20th century extensions (excepting some of the structural elements) and replacement with contextual new built form on a smaller footprint. The catering facilities most recently accommodated in this area will be relocated to the functional area behind the Great Hall. Necessary WC provision will be accommodated in the smaller area of construction of high quality design.

The interventions associated with this element of the proposal can be summarised as follows;

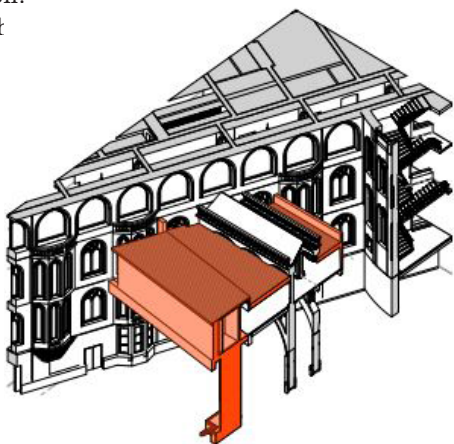
- The substantial removal of detrimental 20th century extensions to the footbridge including modern lift and detrimental services
- Retention modification and re-use of some of the existing 1960s structural elements, including beams and floors
- The retention of remaining historic fabric to the link bridge and revealing this as part of the interior design
- Insertion of new contextual façade and building envelope to both sides of the bridge on the reduced footprint formed principally of articulated terracotta cladding of contextual design
- Fitting out the space to form male and one female WCs facilities accessed from the great hall along the route of the original bridge
- Restoring former linking bridge to a circulation route as per the original intended design, including removal of existing modern door to main area corridor and exposure of historic materials and layout
- Original arches to be articulated with recessed infill, with the exception of openings/doors which will be of contextual design

Detailed Design Considerations

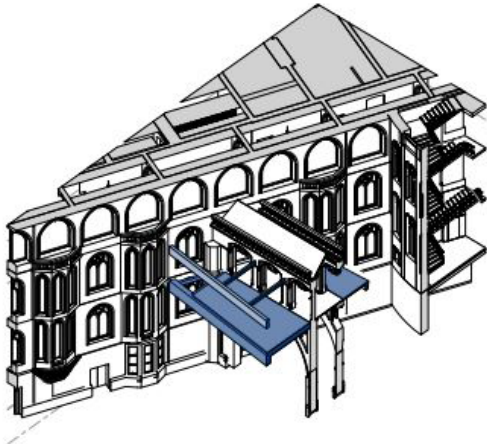
Fabric Upgrade
Having the opportunity to remodel the extension will allow for the stripping back of unsightly plant on the roof, and also upgrading the technical performance of the roof fabric. Further to this, any proposed dismantling will provide an opportunity to enhance the architectural juxtaposition of historic and new fabric.

Drainage
The existing drainage was designed to service a catering kitchen, but is in poor condition causing ongoing maintenance issues. Undertaking works to the extension will allow for the redesign of above and below ground drainage that is fit for purpose and sympathetic to the courtyard setting. The proposal to have WCs within the space means that new drainage can be sensitively and reversibly accommodated externally, rather than requiring more new internal drainage pipes with associated builders works alterations to the fabric of the building.

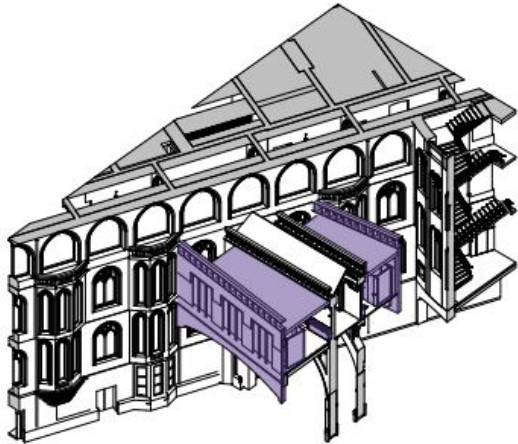
Design Philosophy
The substantial removal of 20th century extensions which have been identified as harmful to the significance of the Town Hall is a considerable heritage benefit. While the proposal is to insert a new contextual design flanking the footbridge, this will be of a smaller footprint than the existing arrangement and of high quality contextual design. The lesser footprint will reveal more of the original courtyard elevations and particularly will reinstate the view of the canted bay window. It will also allow more light to reach the interior spaces of the adjacent corridor and central block, and thus reinforcing the important role of the courtyard and corridor areas in terms of light distribution in the building.



Existing



Retained



Proposed

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS, DESIGN AND ACCESS

The proposal will also be a considerable improvement in design terms in comparison to the existing arrangement. The design has sought to achieve a high quality aesthetic and detail, taking visual clues from the original building whilst being clear that it is a 21st century accretion. This has been achieved principally by reflecting the original composition of three bays, each with three lights with metal grille detailing and overall proportions in keeping with Waterhouse’s established aesthetic. These lines will be simpler than the original neo-Gothic design, and executed in unglazed terracotta chosen to be sympathetic to the texture and tones of the surrounding stonework. The result will be a high quality, contextual design which avoids a ‘pastiche’ approach however one which responds to the forms and “language” of the surrounding courtyard. The interior design will reveal the arches and original roof along the interior of the original bridge and where possible within the WC’s will express the extent forms of the original bridge façade by reversing later linings.

As a result of the above, in relation to the existing arrangement, the proposed works to the former catering facilities will be highly beneficial.

Consistent with the Heritage Impact Assessment methodology, the proposed alterations on the former kitchen link bridge is assessed against its current state, including the detrimental modern additions seen today.

All original fabric remaining of the footbridge will be retained as part of the proposed works.

The proposed interventions to the existing kitchen link bridge area have been identified as high beneficial with respect to their heritage impact. There is therefore no need to justify these proposals against public benefits.

The heritage benefits associated with this element of the works can therefore be summarised as follows;

- Considerable heritage benefit associated with improving an identified current detrimental heritage impact
- Considerable heritage benefit associated with avoiding intervention to more intact areas to provide essential facilities.
- Heritage benefit associated with contribution to sustainable use and increased public engagement
- Reinstatement and partial restoration of the original link bridge as a public corridor.

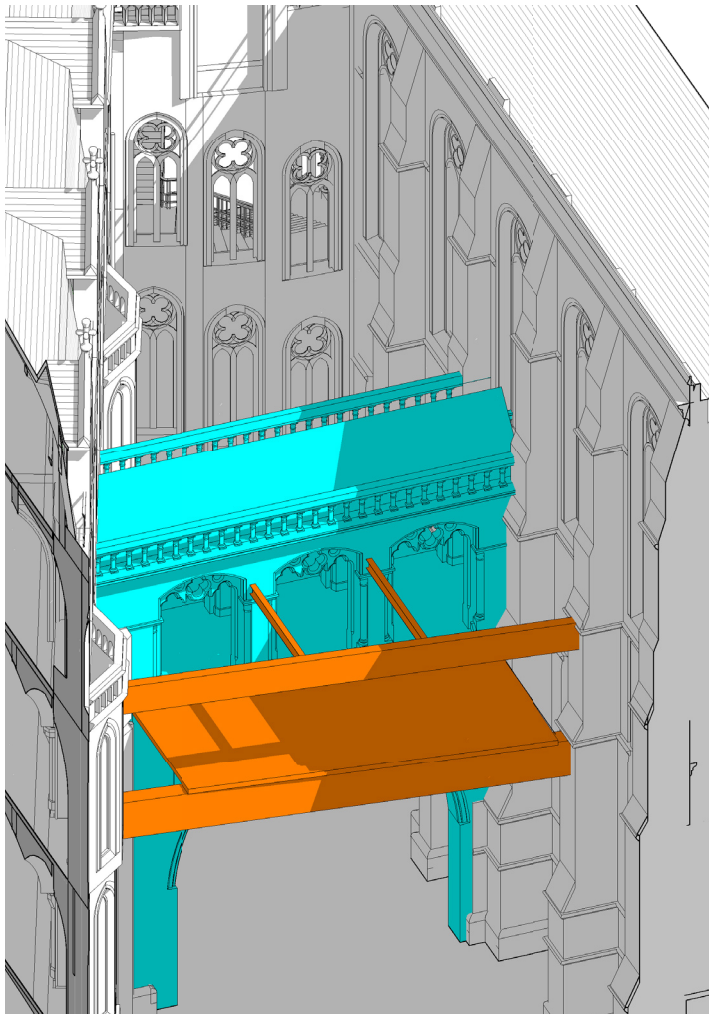
And the wider public benefits of the proposed intervention include;

- Provision of essential WC provision to reasonably accommodate the needs of those engaging with the Town Hall

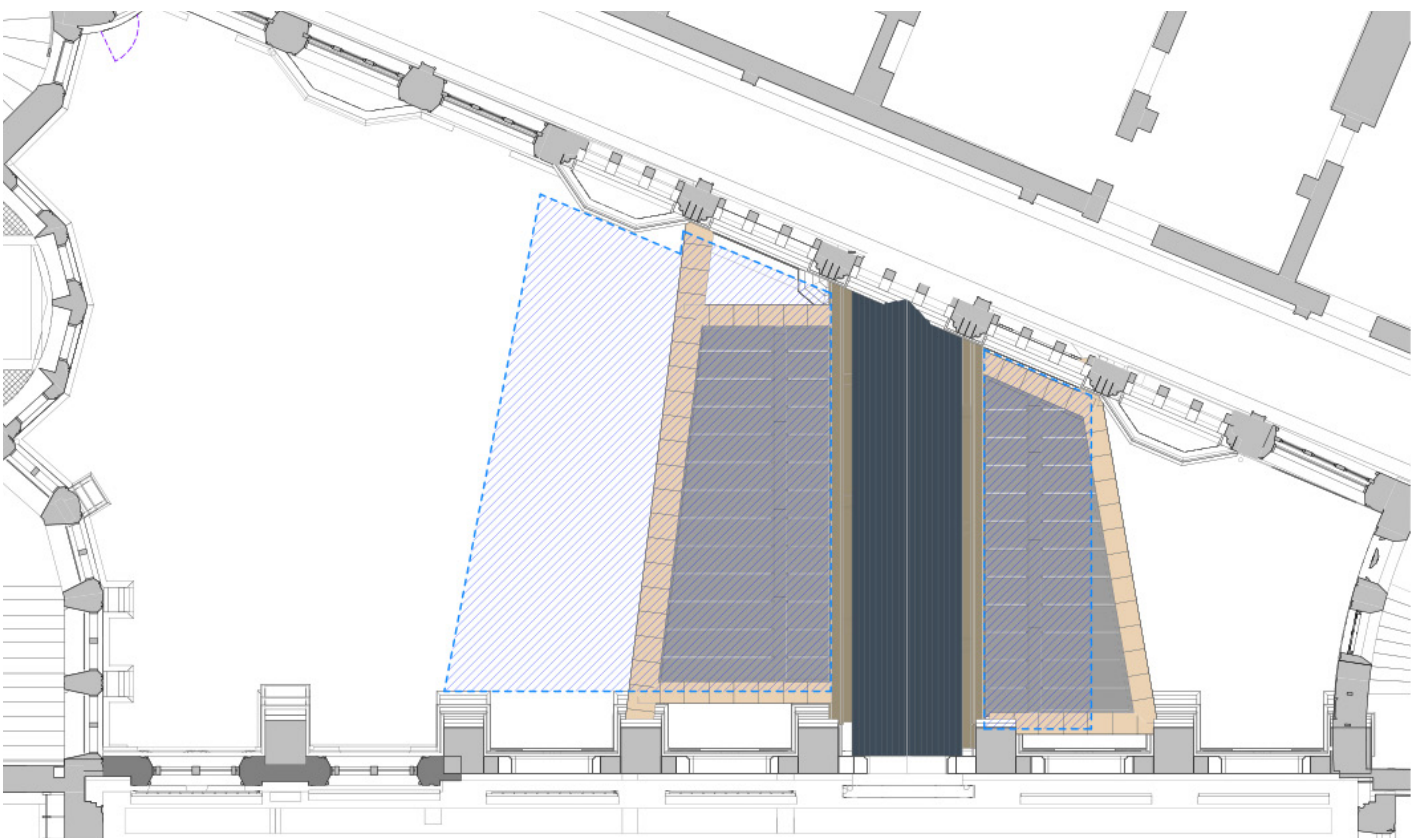
The final design proposal was developed to provide a restrained façade which sat comfortably within the courtyard setting and avoided becoming a feature. The design therefore picked up on the forms and features already in the courtyard such as three bay windows form recessed from the front façade with emphasised sloping cills.

A low arch was introduced in the design to soften the lines of the existing flat bridge and be more in keeping with the existing stone arches in the courtyard. Ornate metal grilles were integrated into the window reveals to reflect the use of the service facility nature of space within the building behind and to provide a opportunity to incorporate a further level of craft and detail.

Parapets were incorporated again to continue the language of the lower level roofs within the courtyard. Materials with a tone and texture were carefully selected to blend with the existing building elevations and roof and avoided reflective finishes to continue the intention of the façade design as a calm and neutral intervention complementing the existing surroundings.



Elements of structure to be retained for the preferred option



Plan showing reduction in footprint

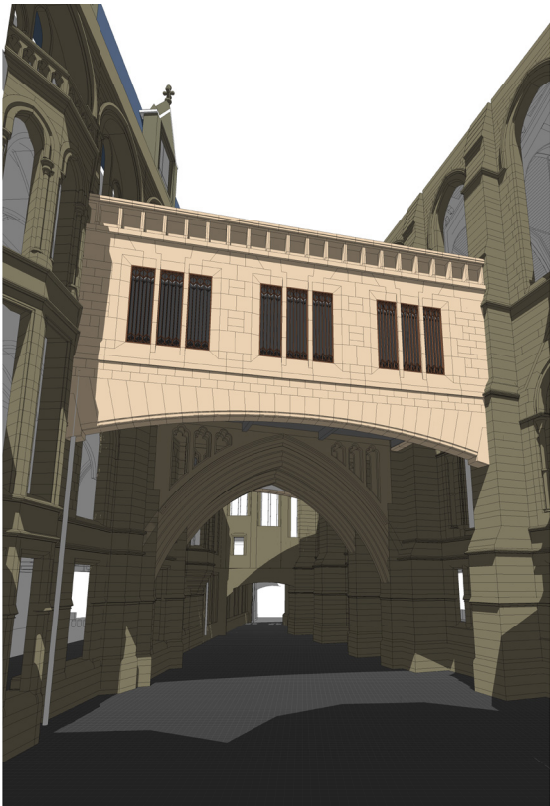
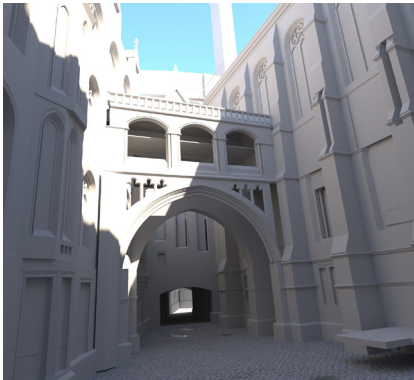


Historic view 1877 from Princess Street Courtyard



Current condition from Princess Street Courtyard

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS, DESIGN AND ACCESS

Options Appraisal			
OPTION	VISUALISATION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Preferred Option (as discussed with statutory consultees); Partial dismantle of the most recent extension by: -Removing the relevant superstructure and inserting new façades. -Removing 1no. concrete encased steel beam and make good the pocket. -Partially reinstate the bridge internally, to expose the arches and ceiling line. -Reconstruct superstructure on retained beams to accommodate toilet facilities. -Design façades to reduce mass and respect scale of existing bays.		-Enhancement of the heritage significance of the space by restoring the courtyard and making the original bridge more visible internally. -Architectural enhancement of surrounding spaces by increasing natural light and solar heat gain. -Opportunity to enhance the aesthetics of the extension through new façade and pitched roof design using materials that are sympathetic to the original intent. -Removal of some modern deteriorating fabric. -Retain some functional space on level 0. -Mitigates the impact of requirement for WCs elsewhere internally in the building, with the associated infrastructure.	-Retention of some modern fabric in a deteriorating condition could have harmful impact to the historic building. -Reduction in functional space for level 01. -The retention of an element of modern structure is harmful to the significance and character of the space as it obscures a significant original feature.
Discounted alternative approach 1; Dismantle all extensions by: -Removing superstructure -cut concrete clad steel beams (removing pocket and infilling). -Restoring the bridge as per the original.		-The maximum enhancement of the heritage significance of the space by restoring the courtyard and restores the bridge to its original architectural design. -Architectural enhancement of surrounding spaces by increasing natural light and solar heat gain, which was key to the original Waterhouse design intent. -Removal of modern deteriorating fabric.	-Reduction in functional space for level 01. -Increased impact on the requirement for WCs elsewhere internally in the building, with the associated infrastructure. -Displaces the impact of requirement for WCs on level 01 elsewhere internally in high significance areas of the building, with the associated infrastructure.
Discounted alternative approach 2; Retain all extensions including: -The retention of structural beams. -The retention of partial superstructure. -Provision of necessary upgrades to the roof and façades to function as proposed use.		-Maximising the space on level 01. -Mitigates the impact of requirement for WCs elsewhere internally in the building, with the associated infrastructure.	-Due to the layout of the space as a kitchen, the functionality of the available space now has limited options. -Retention of modern fabric in a deteriorating condition could have harmful impact to the historic building. -Missed opportunity to enhance the current detrimental heritage impact to the courtyard areas. -Limited opportunity to restore the bridge as less will be visible externally due to higher extension and obscured sight lines.

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS, DESIGN AND ACCESS

Justifying the Chosen Approach to Design Development and Evolution

This section provides a succinct overview of the mitigation measures and careful design development of this element of the proposed works. For further detail, please refer to the accompanying application documents.

Identifying the ‘reasonable minimum’ level of WC provision

Mitigation of heritage impact was considered at an early stage. The number of WC provision has been based on a robust analysis of the facilities needs associated with the positive long-term use of the Town Hall as the principal civic and public building of the city. This analysis is fully described in this document in the sanitary installation section.

Avoiding harm in less altered areas

Given the need to provide a reasonable level of WC facilities within the Town Hall to secure its enhanced engagement and sustainable use, there was a significant design challenge in accommodating these needs while conserving the building in a manner appropriate to its significance. Great care has been given to the selection of rooms for conversion to additional WC facilities, particularly with respect to reinforcing the characteristic hierarchy of Waterhouse’s original design, the individual character of spaces, associated services provision and fit-out.

Having established the necessary number of WCs to support the civic uses of the building (please refer to the previous section and Sanitary Appliances Provisions Report), options were considered in order to establish how to provide necessary facilities in the manner least harmful in heritage terms.

Options were explored for the accommodate of the necessary WC facilities to support the Great Hall on areas of comparatively lower significance, however these were too far from the Great Hall to be reasonably practicable, and additionally caused accessibility and security issues.

The alterative of accommodating the WCs in three additional rooms on the Princess Street corridor was also explored, however these are areas of high significance - historically the town Clerks office and more recently the leadership offices. These offices are intact heritage spaces with dado panelling and ornate fireplaces and are proposed to be valuable public meeting / breakout spaces in the present RIBA stage 4 layout. This previous proposal was assessed to be highly detrimental to heritage interests due to the level of alteration and servicing required.

By accommodating WC provision in the location proposed, the significant heritage enhancement can be achieved whilst simultaneously avoiding the more harmful alternative of locating the WCs in an area less altered.

A sensitive and contextual approach to design

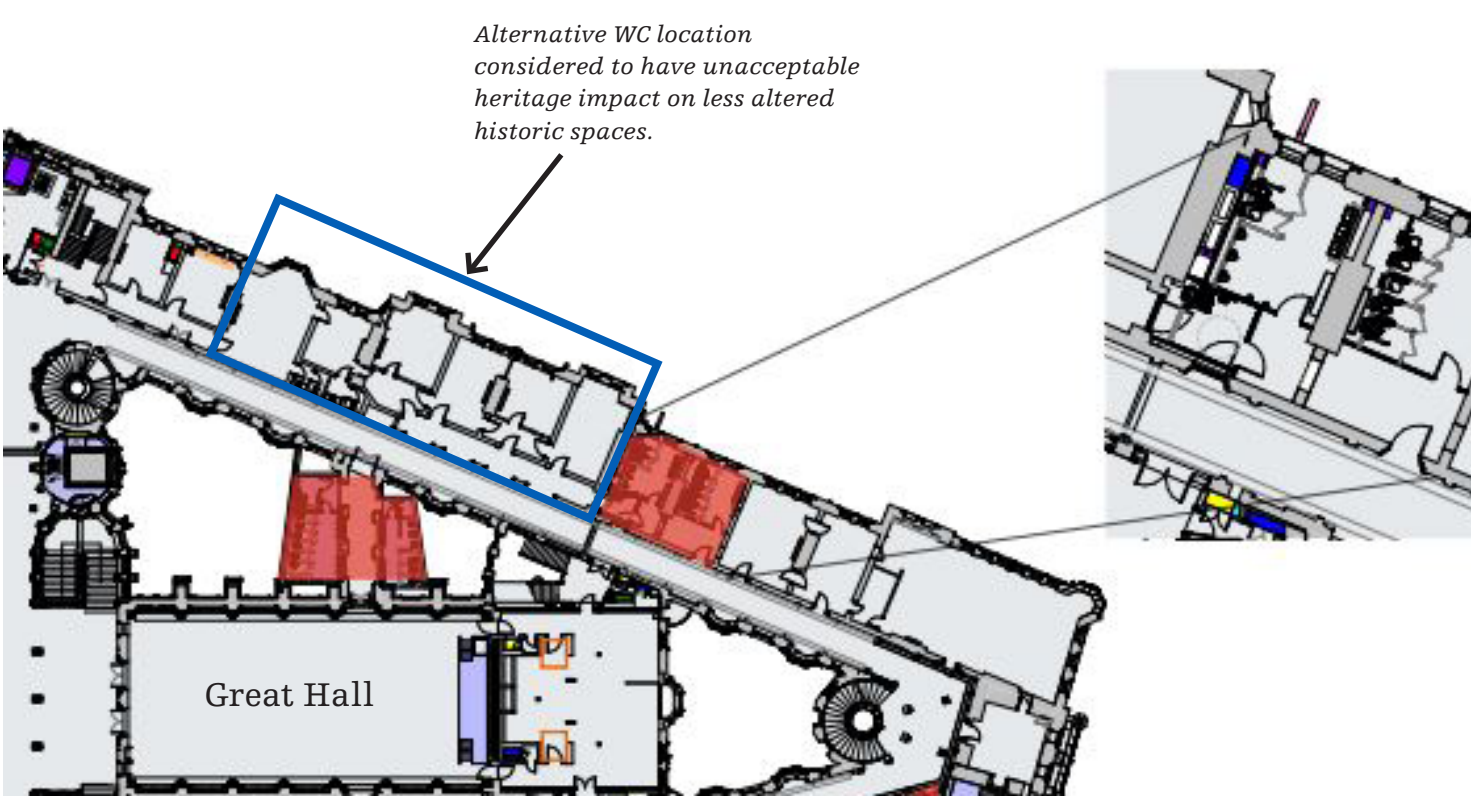
Great care has been given to ensure that the new design intervention in this area takes every opportunity to enhance the link bridge and its environs through quality of design. In particular, the following steps have been taken to ensure a design intervention which is in keeping with the quality and characteristics of the Town Hall;

Minimise the footprint of the extension area in order to maximise the opportunity to reveal previously obscured historic fabric and re-introduce natural light into the adjacent corridor area in line with Waterhouse’s original design.

Take a contextual design approach driven by an understanding and reinforcement of Waterhouse’s design intent, characteristics of the courtyard and historic significance. This approach enables a high quality and contextual intervention which is clearly a 21st century intervention.

The method of best achieving this design challenge was tested through robust design development process. The expertise of Historic England and the Victorian Society were engaged to help inform this process, and their preferred options were taken forward.

The result of the these investigations has resulted in a high quality and contextual design approach which contributes positively to the significance of the building.



Level 01 WC Provision Locations