DOC 01 : DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

- for the refurbishment to create offices on the 3rd Floor, Minshull House

Manchester Metropolitan University

Facilities

1. THE HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

In 2006, Manchester City Council planning department approved a listed building consent application for refurbishment / alteration works to be carried on the first floor of the Minshull building, in order to create incubation units as part of the Innospace project for Manchester Metropolitan University. Its main purpose was to support postgraduate students and staff who had recently left the University to start up a business.

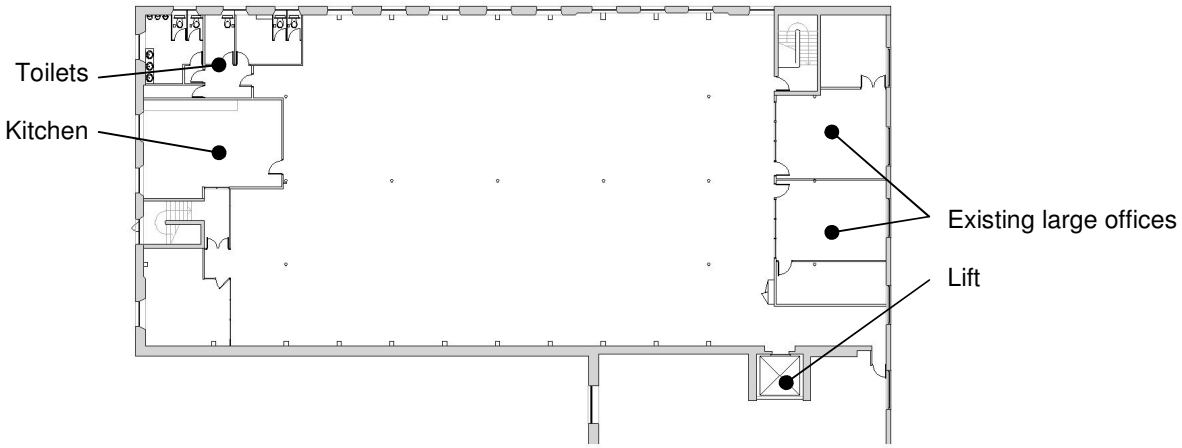
This enterprise has proven to be very successful and a lot of the companies who start literally with a desk and access to communal facilities have now expanded, thus creating a necessity for the availability of larger office space. Various existing rooms within the Minshull Building have already been taken up by the Innopspace venture, which have allowed for offices to house 2 to 3 persons, but there is now a greater requirement for companies who grow quicker or expand larger.

In order for these companies to remain within the vicinity of the Innospace facility with its shared amenities (administration, networking area, lecture room, social area and kitchen facilities) but who also have a need for a more secure private space with their own front door, we are proposing to refurbish / alter the third floor of the Minshull building. This area which is currently being used by the University's Library Support Services has a general open plan office space layout, which is to due be relocated All Saints campus as part of the University's consolidation of its library resources.

The remaining space after the relocation, lends itself as an ideal location for the Innospace project to expand into and provide purpose built larger offices of a practical size which can be let out to growing business with a reasonable high turnover.

2. CONCEPT

The current floor layout has existing toilets and kitchen facilities to the front of the building (west elevation) and a general purpose lift and plant room to the end of the building (east elevation). There are also two large offices to the east elevation which will remain untouched and let as suitable office spaces. The remainder of the area is largely open plan space with an exposed roof structure.

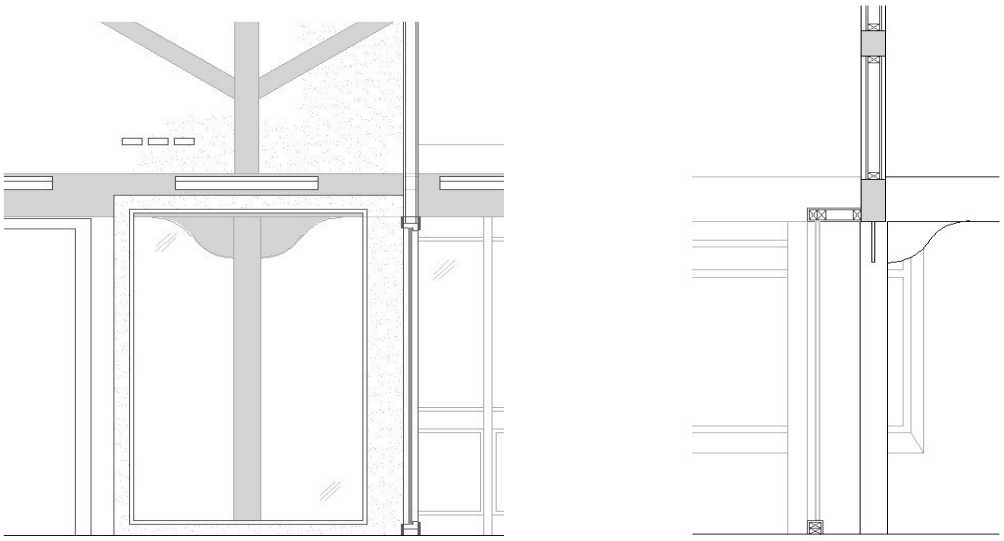


The concept for the segregation of the open plan space is to utilise the existing services which already serve the area, such as fresh air intake, air extraction, electrical services, and sprinklers which have all been added over the years to provide suitable environmental conditions, see layout drawing 1086 / 01. We propose to divide the area using lightweight plaster board and glazed partitioning but look to leave the trusses exposed so their visual impact will be maintained. The newly formed central corridor which will link the east and west sides of the building will be largely glazed to transfer natural daylight, which is only available via the north elevation to deep within the plan along the south elevation as illustrated on the plans.

3. DESIGN

To create the necessary separate offices, the overall proposal is to install an uncluttered crisp partitioning system utilising full height glazed panels and plane white plasterboard walls to compliment the structure. Existing lighting will be retained as far as possible and added to in various locations to increase the lighting levels to potential darker areas, once the space has been divided up. The only other design features are the doors and ironmongery, which will be ash veneered solid core doors with stainless steel ironmongery to match those used in the existing Innospace on the floor below.

The design is aimed at retaining and enhancing the striking features such as the cast iron columns and the main roof structure, by way of careful positioning of new partitions and the application of a sympathetic colour scheme. Most of the new partitions will follow the lines of the existing roof trusses, with sections infilling between the timber memebers that make up the trusses, but will allow the trusses to remain visible. This will be further enhanced by the chosen colour scheme, where the trusses will be painted a mid tone grey colour (colour to be agreed) and the new / existing partitioning will be painted white. All the existing cast iron columns will remain exposed, with new partitioning to be set back from the columns, with a glazed panel to allow a full view of the structure, see sketch below.



The ventilation system will remain in place and balanced as necessary, the sprinkler system will also remain in tact but will be reviewed by specialist engineer to check that the new layout will remain fully covered. Any existing poor quality partitioning will be removed and replaced with the high quality new design as described.

4. ACCESS

Access and egress to and from the floor, and indeed the building will remain untouched. All floors will continued to be serviced by an existing communal lift and stair accesses positioned at both ends of the building. All the new spaces, corridors and doorways formed will be DDA compliant.