Hope Mill Ground Floor
Design and Access Statement

October 2025

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Revision P03

AWOL STUDIOS

CARTWRIGHT PICKARD

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P03	For Planning	23/10/25	CP	RO

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1.0

Scope & Brief

1.1 Introduction
Context

The Site

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Cartwright Pickard on behalf of AWOL Studios to support a listed building application for the remodelling of the ground floor only of Hope Mill, Pollard St, Manchester M4 7JA

The site is located in Ancoats about three miles east of Manchester city centre, perpendicular to the southbank of Ashton Canal. The development sits within the Holt Town Neighbourhood Development Framework.

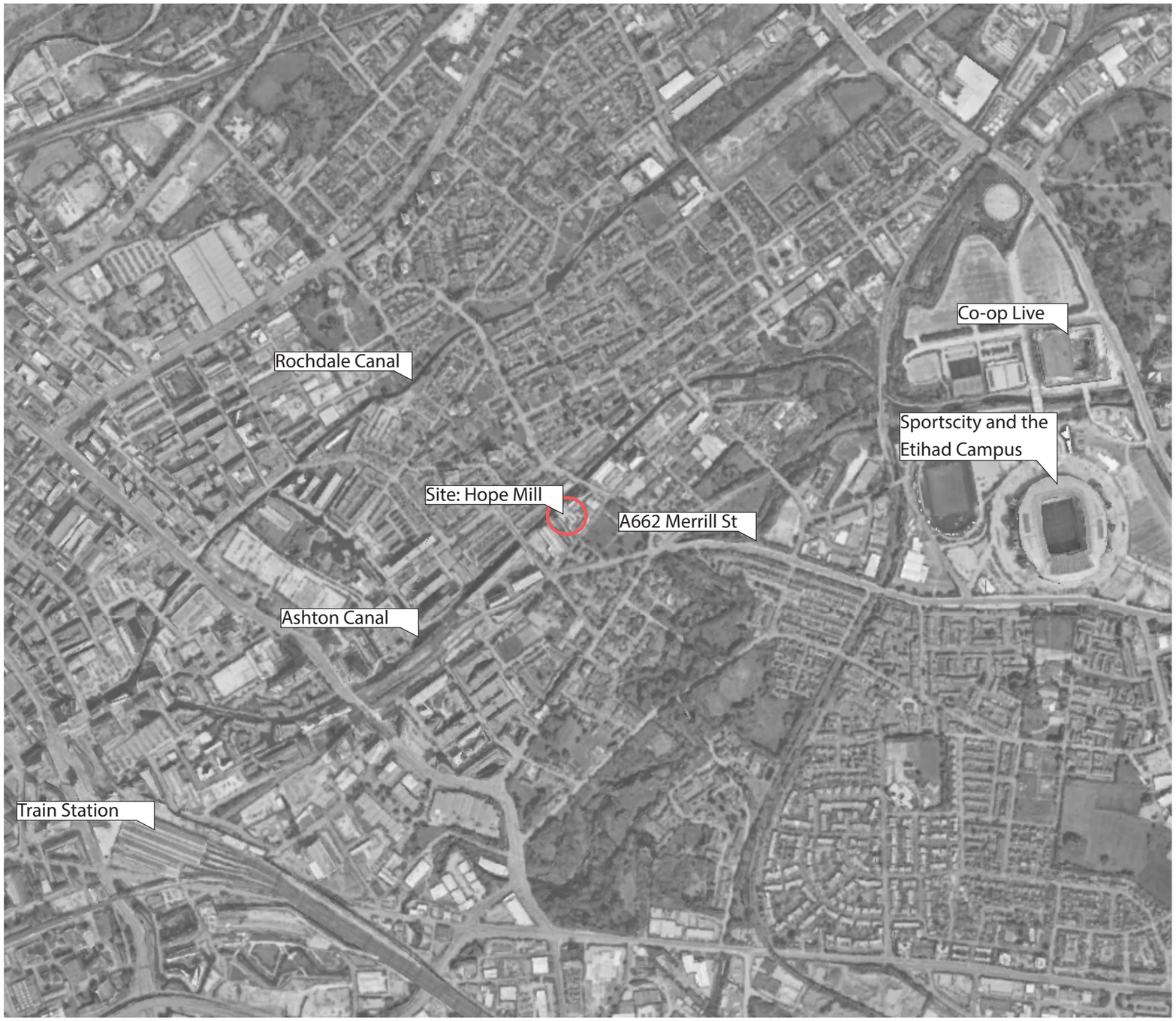
The Aspiration

The proposed works centre on the sensitive remodelling of the ground floor of the Grade II* listed building. The aim is to deliver high-quality spaces for artists and creative businesses operated by AWOL Studios, alongside complementary support areas for Hope Mill Theatre.

Interventions to both the building's exterior and interior will be minimal. This approach seeks to maintain the unique character and heritage of the building while supporting the growth of a creative hub for the local community.

The Scope

- Partial Ground floor works only
- Introduction of 1 No. fire escape door by reinstating an existing opening on the rear yard side elevation.
- Replacement of 1 No. door on the car park side elevation.
- Replacement of internal partitions and doors.
- Installation of suspended galvanised conduit tray for services and associated fire safety systems.



Manchester City Centre

1.2 Scope & Outline Brief

Brief

The project involves the sensitive remodelling of the ground floor of a Grade II* listed building, into high-quality studio spaces for AWOL Studios, catering to artists and creative businesses. The development will also provide new supporting facilities for Hope Mill Theatre. The aim is to expand and enhance the established creative hub at the heart of Ancoats.

Key components of the brief include:

Additional artist and creative business studios

- Additional artists and creative business studio spaces
- Rehearsal space, dressing rooms, green room, and office facilities for Hope Mill Theatre

Approach

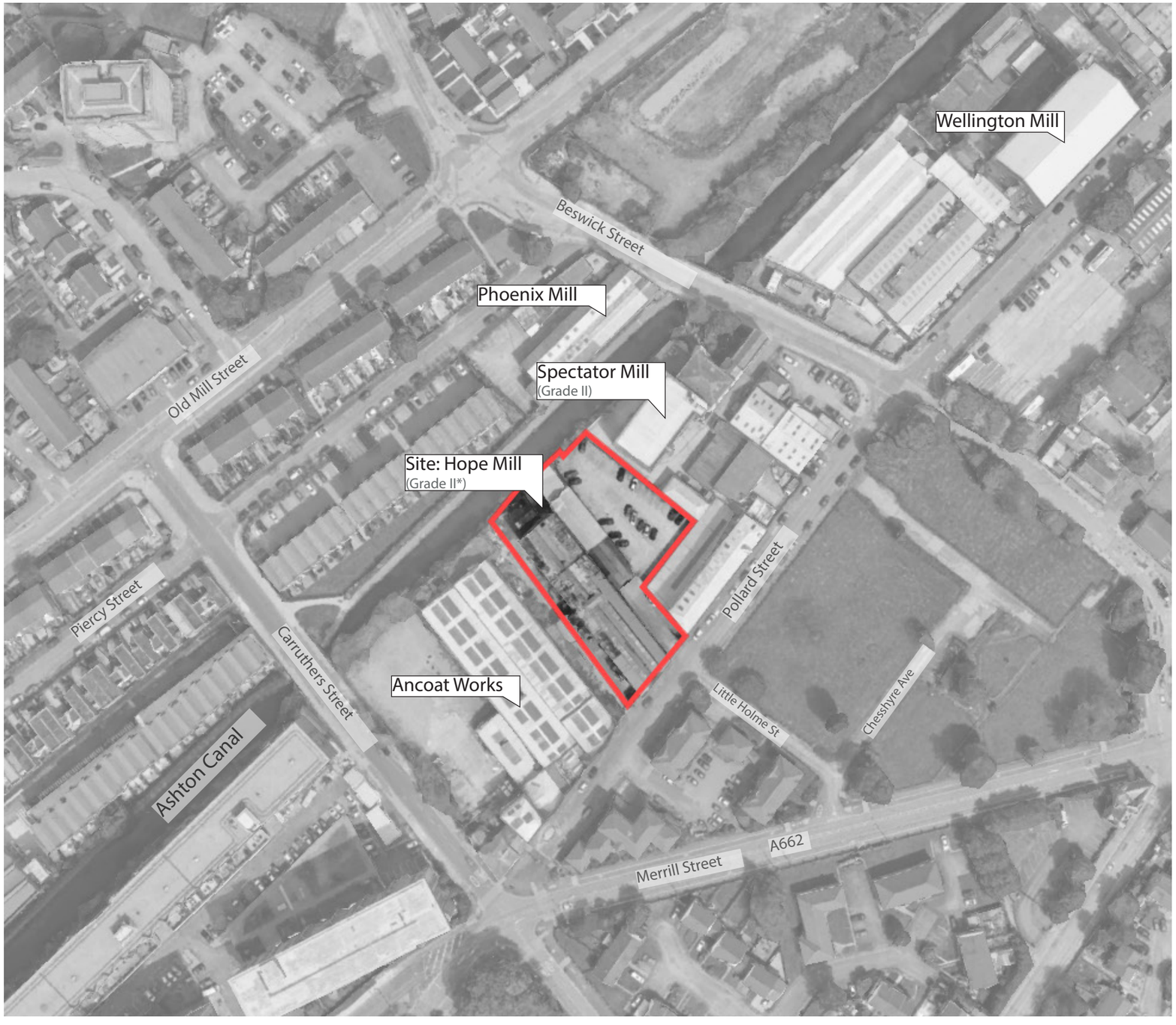
Our approach to the design proposal is outlined as follows:

- introduce an additional fire escape.
- Sensitive introduction of additional partitions at ground floor that maintain the form of the vaulted brick ceilings and beam arragement wherever possible.
- Efficient layouts that maximise the quality of the existing building,

Building Use

Currently, the building is home to Hope Mill Theatre and AWOL Studios, providing vibrant spaces for performance and creative enterprise. The planned work will focus on the ground floor, keeping these vibrant uses at the heart of the project and adding new support spaces to help them thrive.

Historically, the entire building operated as a steam-powered textile factory. The ground floor originally functioned as a card room, an essential area for preparing cotton fibres, as recorded in Boulton and Watt's 1824 drawings. This rich industrial heritage shapes our careful approach to the building's ongoing adaptation.



2.0

Building

2.1 Building Listing

Listing

The existing building is Grade II* Listed (ref: 1246950) since June 1994.

"A steam-powered textile factory of c.1824, one of the best-preserved examples of its type in Manchester one which retains extensive evidence for the evolution of successive power systems, and which includes an innovative prefabricated iron roofing system."

"Built for Joseph Clarke and Sons, cotton spinners and fustian weavers. Red brick with ashlar sandstone dressings, double pitched roofs with Welsh slate coverings."

Key Elements

Key heritage items are evident on the external facade and internally in the form of architectural features:

- Internally the mill is of fire-proof construction, with cast-iron columns and cross beams supporting shallow brick vaults
- The exterior is constructed from Flemish-bond red brick, with sandstone copings and sills. The façade has regular vertical rectangular windows, most of which have splayed stone lintels typical of early fireproof mills. However, the original glazing bars have not survived, several windows display timber lintels and evidence of later rebuilding beneath their sills

2.2 Building Heritage Summary

Hope Mill was constructed in 1824, likely as an integrated fustian mill, by the firm Joseph Clarke and Sons. The main block of the mill stands as one of the best-preserved examples of early 19th-century textile mills in Manchester. This seven-storey structure is set back a few metres from the Ashton Canal. Its scale, massing, and architectural character are typical of Manchester's pioneering textile mills and contribute to the area's internationally significant industrial landscaper.

External Elements

The mill is built in Flemish-bond red brick, with sandstone copings and sills. The brickwork is characteristic of early 19th-century industrial buildings in Ancoats, sharing similarities with contemporary housing and mills in the district. The brick was hand-made, in some cases in local 'brick fields' and in others using clay which was dug from the building site itself.

Vertical rectangular windows, of typical size and proportions for the period, are set throughout the façades. While none retain their original glazing bars, most are topped with splayed stone lintels, a distinctive feature of fireproof mill design.

On the east elevation, an original arched doorway with rusticated voussoirs remains intact, while many windows on this side have been fitted with timber lintels.

Evidence of rebuilding beneath several sills indicates phases of repair and adaptation over the mill's long history

Internal Elements

Internally, Hope Mill employs a fireproof construction system typical of advanced mills from the early 19th century. The floors are formed by brick-vaulted ceilings supported on robust cast-iron beams and cylindrical columns.

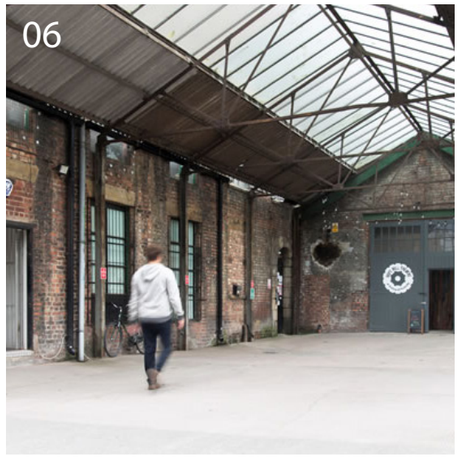
The mill's walls are of 'pier and panel' construction, featuring splayed step-in bays separated by substantial piers. The thickness of these piers varies from approximately 33 inches at ground level to about 24 inches on the upper floors. This wall type, adopted for fireproof mills by around 1820, is considered a forerunner to the load-bearing pilaster walls used in later multi-storey industrial buildings.

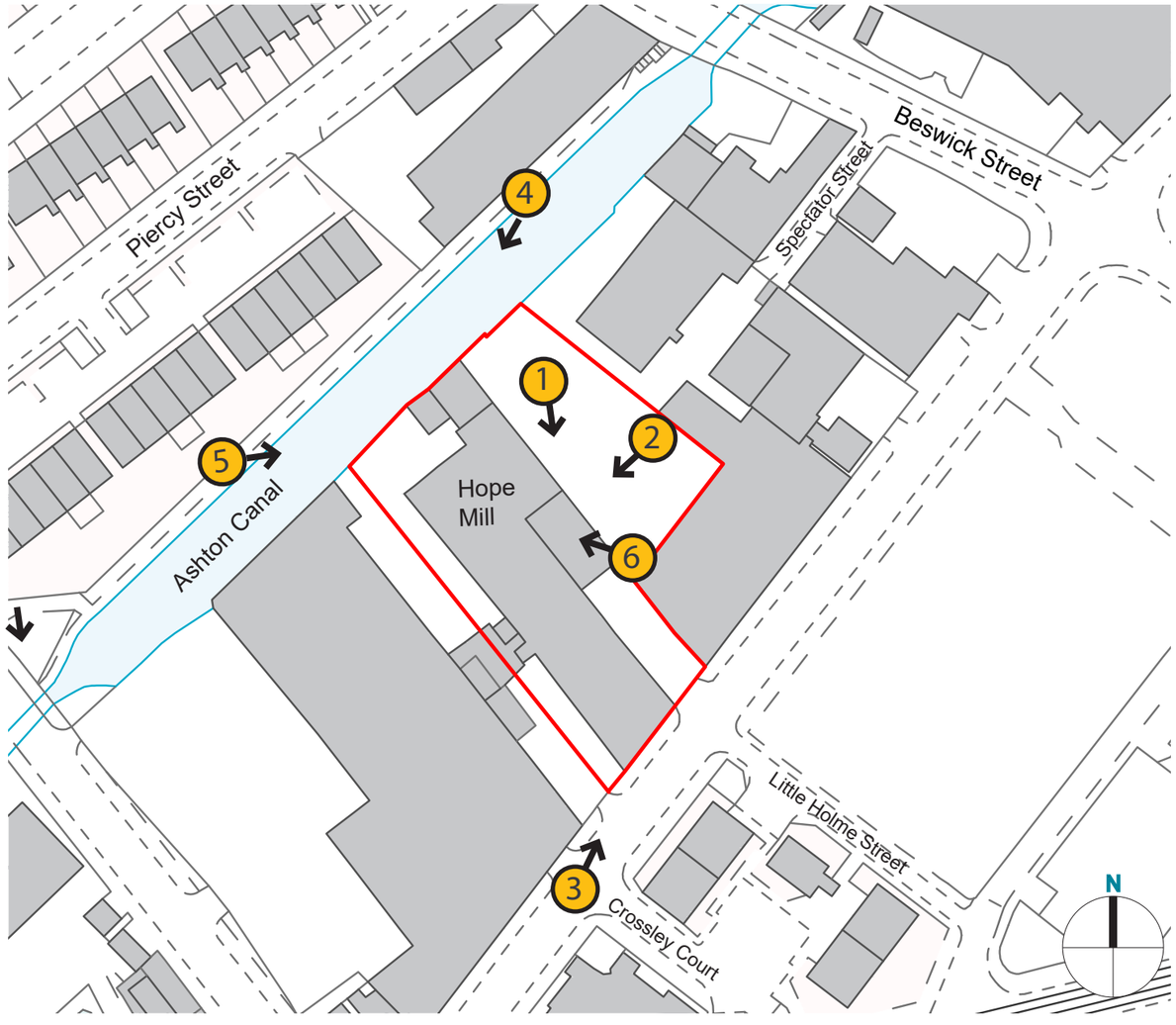
The cast-iron columns and beams are closely comparable to those found in other Manchester-area fireproof mills, such as Sedgwick Mill (Rochdale Canal, 1818–20), suggesting they may have originated from the same foundries.

- Exposed beams exhibit an inverted T cross-section, with webs and flanges approximately three-quarters of an inch thick.
- The brick ceiling vaults spring directly from the beam flanges and are constructed around exposed tie-rods, which can be seen near the apex of the vaults.
- Beams are joined above the columns using shrink rings on horizontal spigots—a typical jointing method for early to mid-19th-century cast ironwork.

Most of the floors in the mill have been replaced, and in different parts comprise of wooden boards, cement or bitumen.

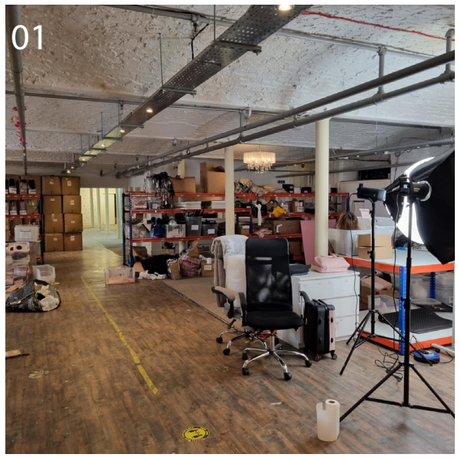
2.3 Existing Photos - External

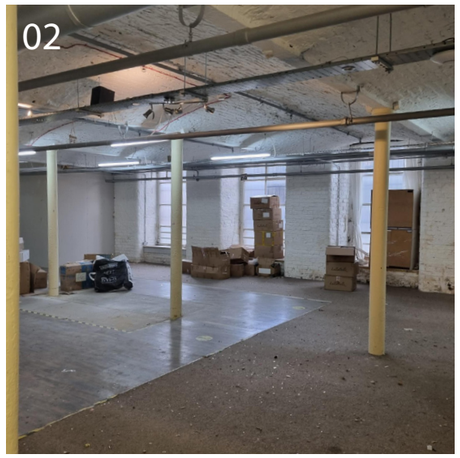


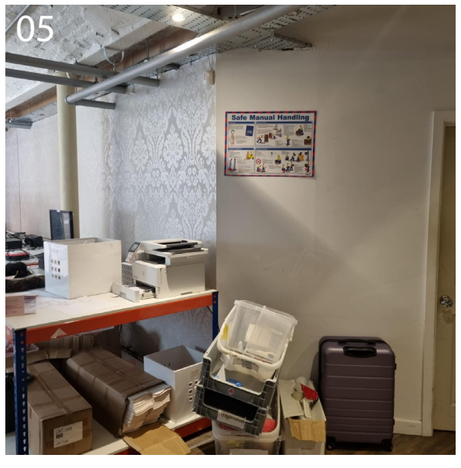


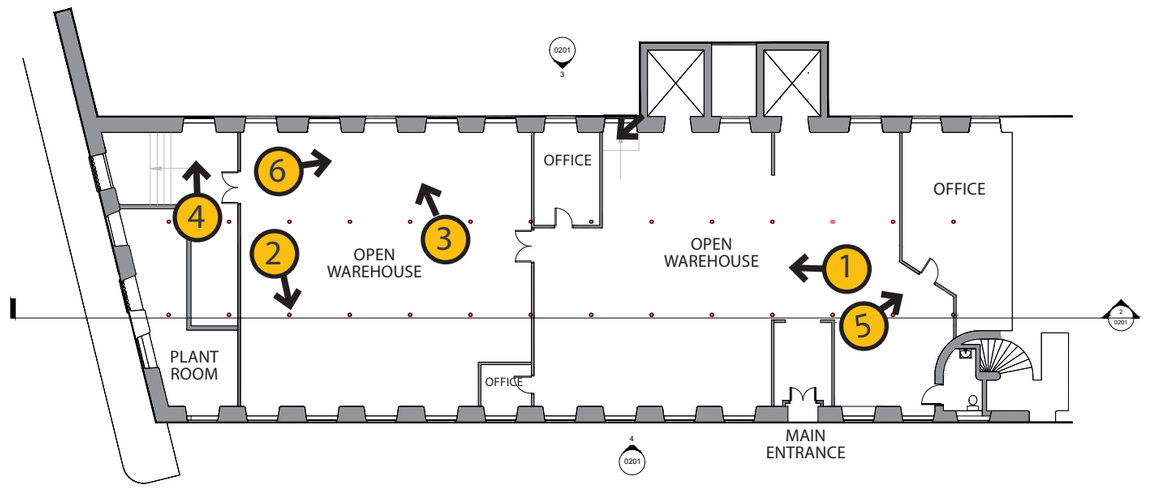
1. Elevation view of Hope Mill from the south corner of the car park
2. Elevation view of Hope Mill from central car park area
3. View looking northeast along Pollard Street towards Hope Mill
4. View from Ashton Canal looking northeast towards Hope Mill
5. View from Ashton Canal looking southwest towards Hope Mill
6. View from the car park towards the main entrances of AWOL Studios and Hope Mill Theatre

2.4 Existing Photos - Internal



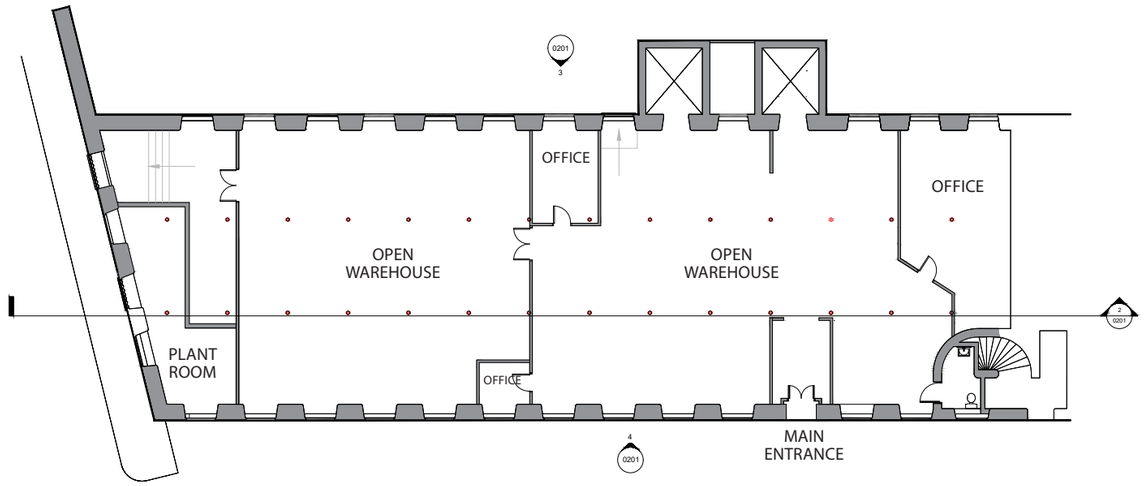




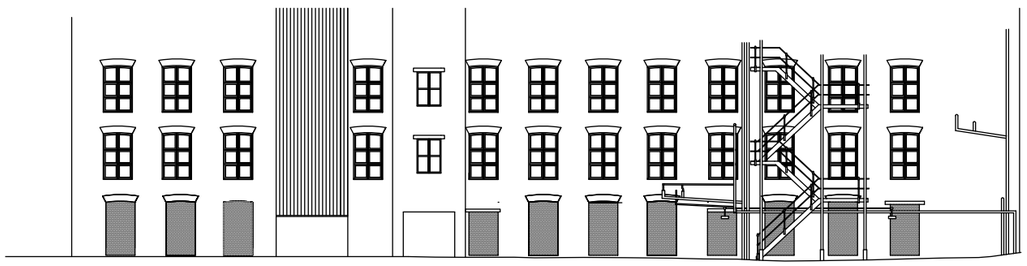


1. View from entrance – looking south-east down the open warehouse space
2. View looking north-east towards the car park side elevation at retained windows
3. View of brick-infilled step-in window bays
4. View of brick-infilled fire escape to the yard
5. View looking north towards the existing office
6. View of brick-infilled step-in window bays

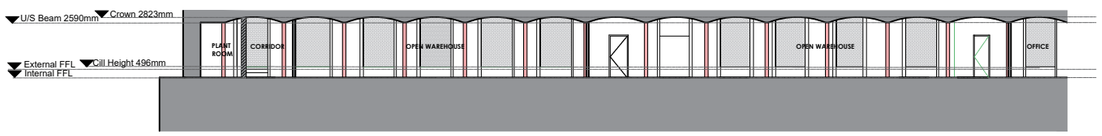
2.5 Existing Ground Floor Plan, Elevations & Section



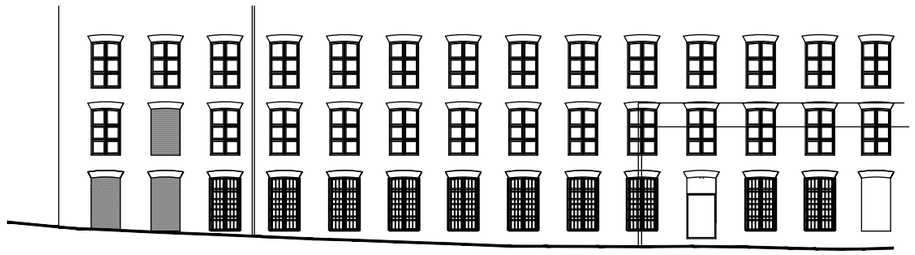
Ground Floor Plan - As Existing



Side Elevation Yard - As Existing



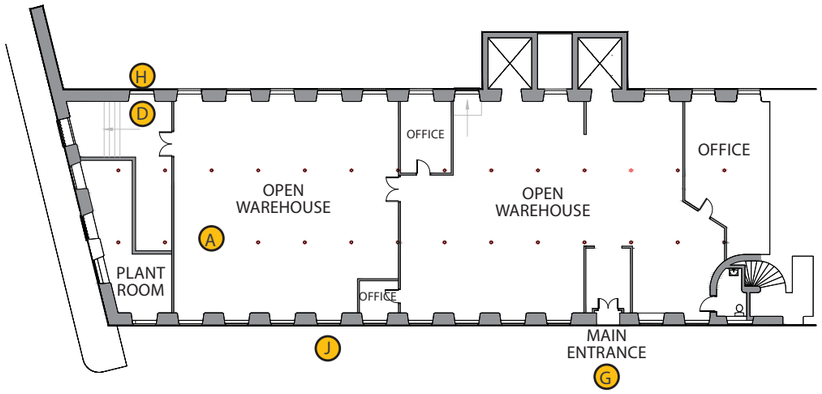
Section - As Existing

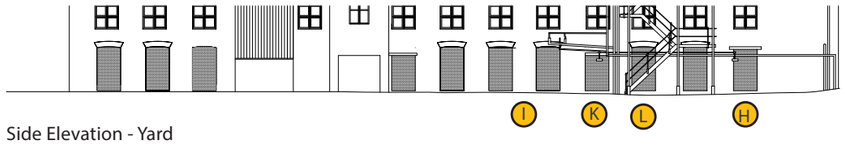


Side Elevation Car Park - As Existing

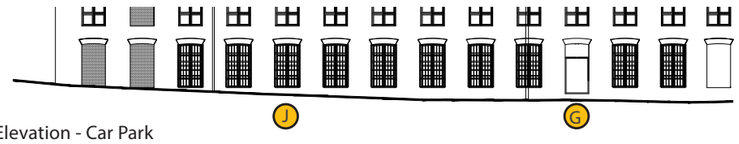
2.6 Existing Heritage Appraisal

Location Plan





Side Elevation - Yard



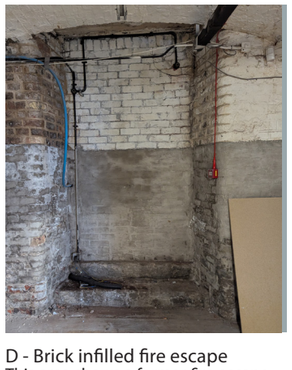
Side Elevation - Car Park

Internal Visual Heritage Analysis

A - Cast-iron beams and columns
Cast-iron inverted T-section beams and cylindrical columns support the brick vaults, with exposed tie-rods visible near the beam connections

B - Typical step-in window bay
This bay demonstrates the 'pier and panel' wall construction, with a typical step-in window opening now infilled with brick.

C - Internal Masonry Wall
Exposed existing brickwork,. Surface discoloration may be due to trapped moisture, potentially caused by non-breathable paint preventing proper evaporation.



D - Brick infilled fire escape
This area shows a former fire escape that has been infilled with brick,

E - Floor Finishes
Most of the floors in the mill have been replaced comprising of wooden boards, cement or bitumen. Floor finishes have already been stripped.

F- Brick Vaults
Shallow brick ceiling vaults spring directly from the flanges of cast-iron beams

External Visual Heritage Analysis

G - Main Entrance
The main entrance retains its original lintel. The doorway is infilled with matching brick above a non-original iron door, marking later adaptation.

H - Fire Escape (Yard Elevation)
No original lintel. Replaced with timber lintel. Previous fire escape door infilled with brick

I - Windows (Yard Elevation)
Original windows have been lost and infilled. Splayed stone lintels remain as key heritage features.

3.0

Herritage Appraisal

3.1 Heritage Strategy

Main Entrance Door

The main entrance retains its original stone lintel. The doorway is now fitted with a non-original steel door, with brick infill above, reflecting later alterations to the historic opening

Design Strategy:

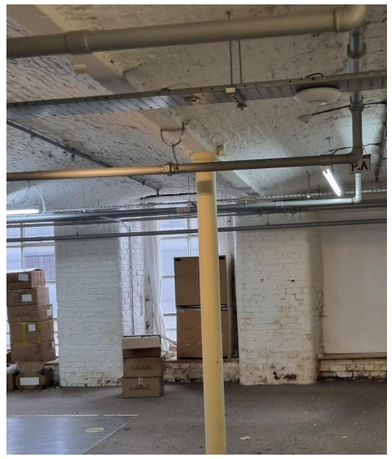
Replace the current iron door with a new timber door set within the existing opening. The new door will feature tongue and groove panelling, a large robust pull bar handle, and hardwood edging to the perimeter. It will be finished in black to match the ground floor windows on the car park side. The original stone lintel will be carefully retained.

Fire Escape Door

The timber lintel, indicates later alteration. Previously used as a fire escape, the opening has now been in-filled with brick.

Design Strategy:

Reinstate the existing opening and fire exit. Install a new fire door featuring tongue and groove panelling, with an overhead panel in matching panelling. The door will be finished in black to match the ground floor windows on the car park side.



Partitions

Some existing none-original partitions to be demolished.

Design Strategy:

New partitions will be aligned with the existing columns and beams to celebrate and reveal the historic shallow brick vault ceilings, ensuring the building's original structure remains a prominent and appreciated feature.

Floor Finishes

Most of the floors in the mill have been replaced comprising of wooden boards, cement or bitumen. Floor finishes have already been stripped.

Design Strategy:

A consistent approach is proposed throughout with a the use of luxury vinyl tiles on a levelling base.

3.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposals

The existing building is Grade II* Listed (ref: 1246950) since June 1994. The proposals are limited to a number of minor external modifications at ground floor that are designed to work with the original structural openings incorporating heritage style timber doors.

Interior proposals are also limited to part of the ground floor and designed to improve facilities for the theatre and create additional office and studio spaces. A new floor finish throughout to provide safe and level access, new plasterboard partitions and door access to improved accessible WCs, new rooms and installation of associated power and data cabling, light fittings and necessary fire safety systems.

The proposals are considered to comply with the general policies contained in the legislation and guidance, listed below, all of which are designed with the intention to protect the history and significance of the heritage asset whilst ensuring that the new use for the building is viable, consistent and compatible with its conservation and ongoing maintenance.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990

The listed designation of the building enables the planning process to protect the heritage asset and its significance. The Grade II* listing of Hope Mill signifies that the building is of special interest. In light of this every effort needs to be made to preserve and conserve it.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPFF) 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied to achieve sustainable growth and development.

Paragraphs 202-214 are concerned with heritage. Paragraph 203 requires the local authority to set strategies in their Local Plan for conservation and the enhancement of the historic environment which take into account the desirability to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage assets and putting them to viable uses that are consistent with their conservation.

In determining the application Paragraph 207 states that the local authority should require the applicant to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected including any contribution made to their setting. Paragraph 208 requires the local authority to assess the significance of the heritage asset which might be affected by the proposal. Proposals where less than substantial harm will occur are required to justify how this harm is outweighed by the wider public good. (Paragraph 215).

Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance (English Heritage) 2008:

These conservation principles and guidance provide a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment including the understanding of the significance of a place and its management to ensure its heritage values are sustained. Principle 4.2 defines conservation as the 'process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

Summary of interior proposals:

The guiding principle which informs the interior proposals is 'reversibility' - where the proposed additions to the existing building could be removed in the future without being of detriment to the remaining existing fabric within the building. The proposals for the minor changes at ground floor predominantly work around the existing building fabric, vaulted brick soffits expressed steel column and beams on the ground floor. New stud partitions are to be sensitively inserted within the existing fabric. New floor finishes are required to create a safe , level and accessible floor.

Summary of exterior proposals:

Original window and door openings have been lost and in-filled within the external fabric, but splayed stone lintels remain as distinctive heritage feature. One new timber fire door on the yard elevation is to be installed within an original door opening that has been bricked up. A replacement timber door is proposed to replace an existing steel door on the entrance elevation.

Positive Impacts

• Retention, repair and refurbishment of the external façade. (NPPF 2024Paragraph 210a)

• Retention and incorporation into the proposals of original architectural features and details wherever feasible. (NPPF 2024 Paragraph 210a)

• Ongoing repair and maintenance of the building. (NPPF 2024 Paragraph 210a)

Negative Impacts:

• Forming of new internal partitions within existing ground floor space to accommodate the new development proposals. (NPPF 2024 Paragraph 215).

• Introduction of new internal floor finish within existing ground floor space to accommodate the new development proposals. (NPPF 2024 Paragraph 215).

Summary and conclusions:

The general intention is for the repair, refurbishment and restoration works to be carried out sensitively and in a manner which respects the special quality and significance of the heritage asset. Alterations and other adjustments which come to light during the course of the construction works would be fully discussed and agreed with the city council's conservation team before implementation.

It can be summarised that following Paragraph 210 of the NPPF 2024 considered overall the proposals would constitute less than substantial harm to the heritage asset - this judgment is predicated on the minimal alterations proposed to the exterior appearance of the building elevations. In addition the light touch nature and reversibility of the interior proposals which work around the existing fabric and layout of the building.

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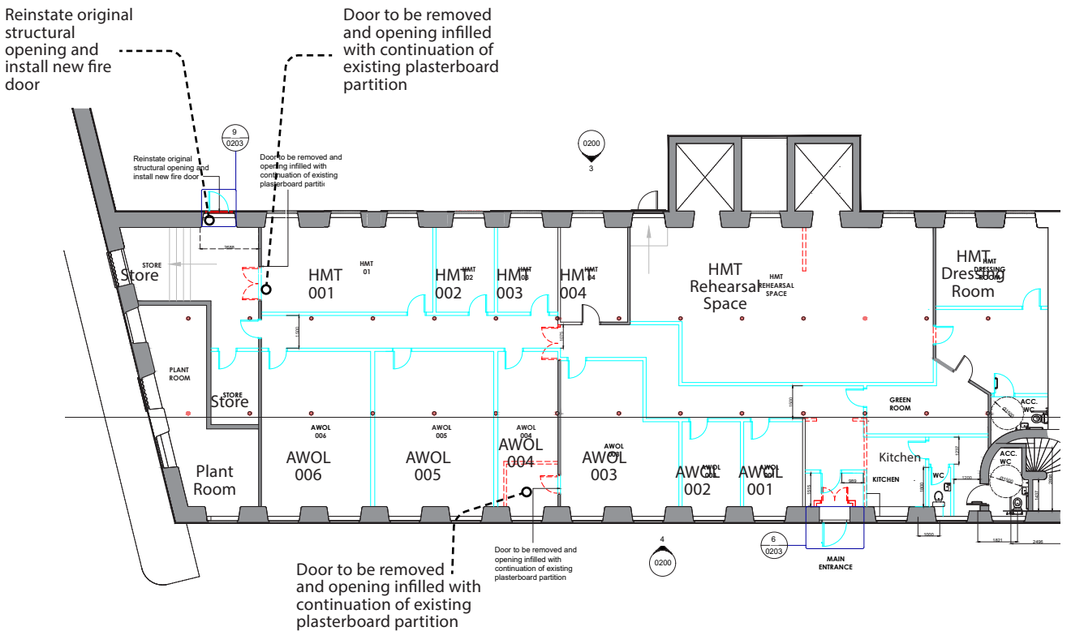
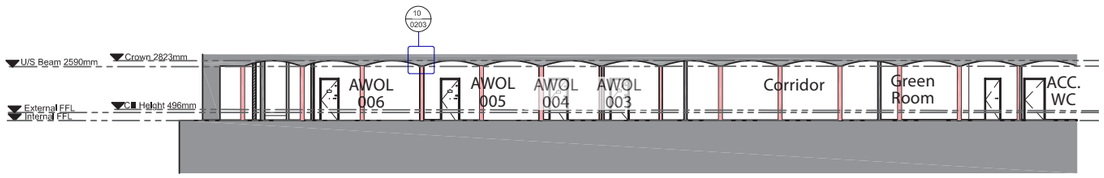
Proposed Drawings

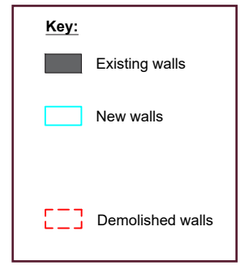
4.1 Proposed Ground Floor Plan, Elevations & Section

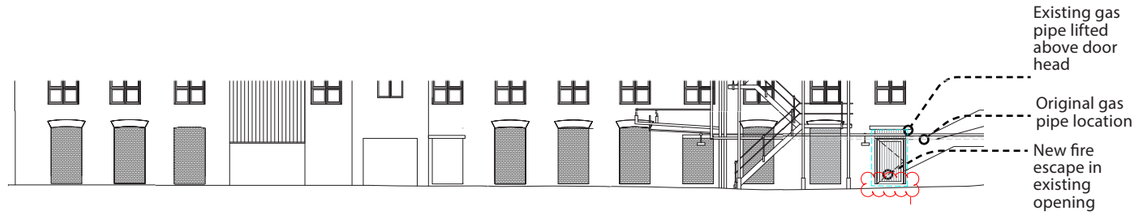


Ground Floor Plan - As Proposed

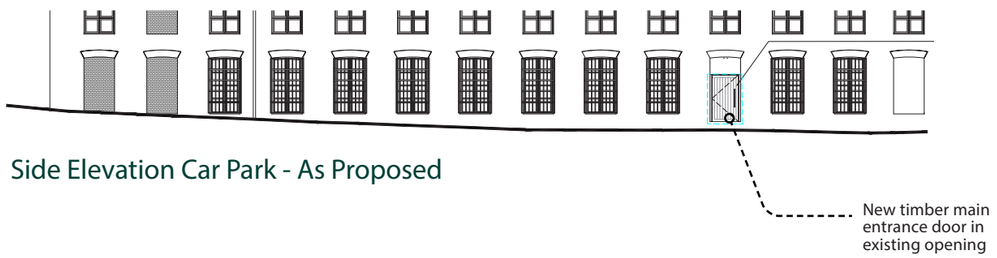


Section - As Proposed



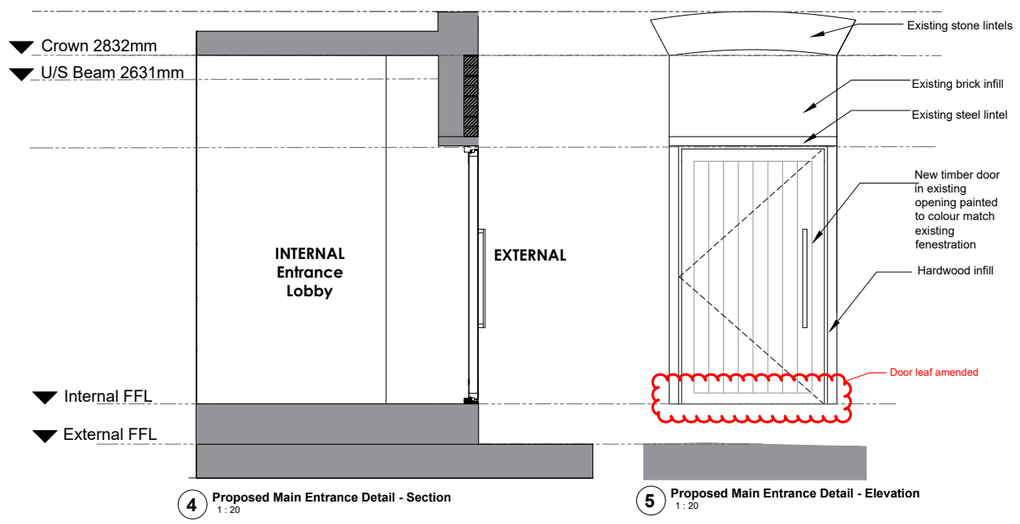


Side Elevation Yard - As Proposed



Side Elevation Car Park - As Proposed

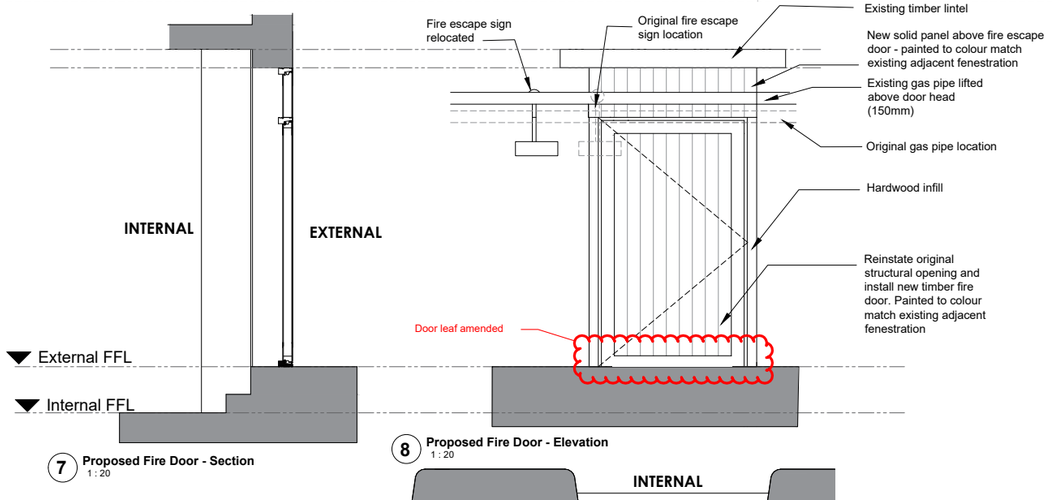
4.2 Proposed Details



4 **Proposed Main Entrance Detail - Section**
1 : 20

5 **Proposed Main Entrance Detail - Elevation**
1 : 20

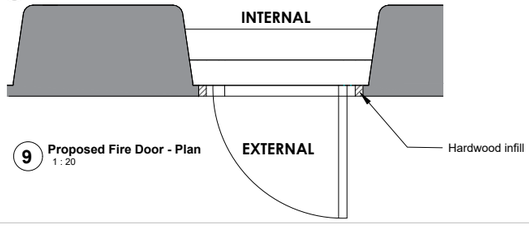
Proposed Window Detail



7 **Proposed Fire Door - Section**
1 : 20

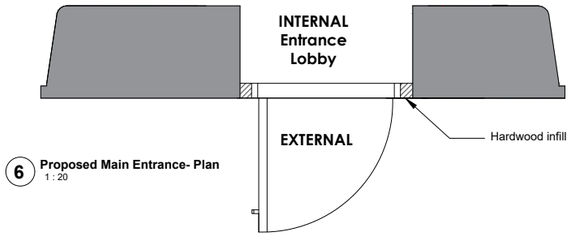
8 **Proposed Fire Door - Elevation**
1 : 20

Proposed Fire Escape Door Detail

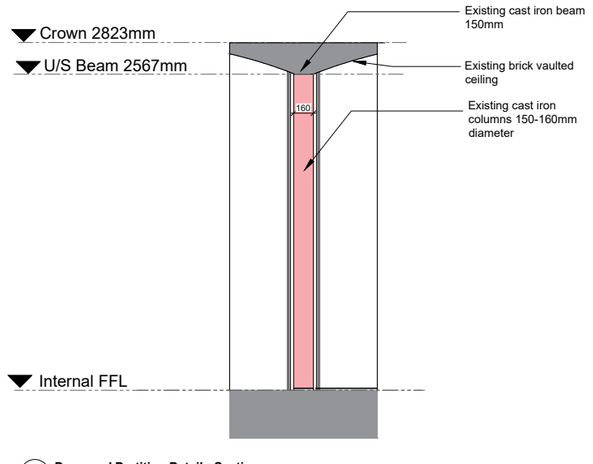


9 **Proposed Fire Door - Plan**
1 : 20

Proposed Main Entrance Door Detail



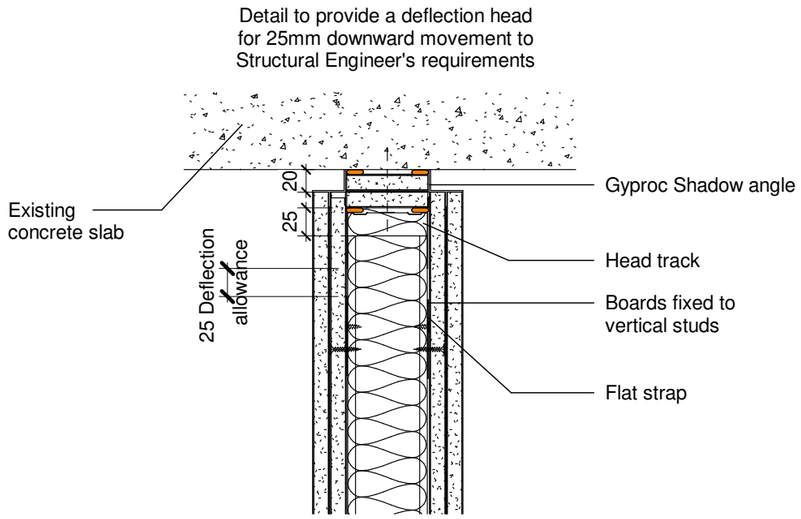
6 **Proposed Main Entrance- Plan**
1 : 20

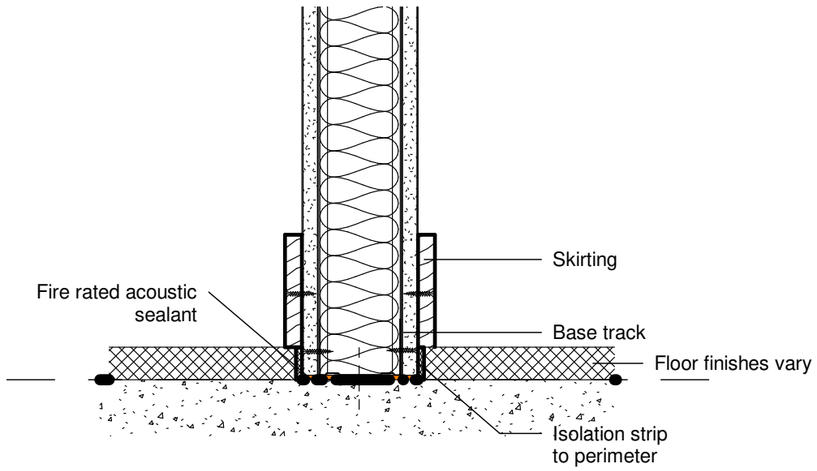


10 **Proposed Partition Detail - Section**
1 : 20

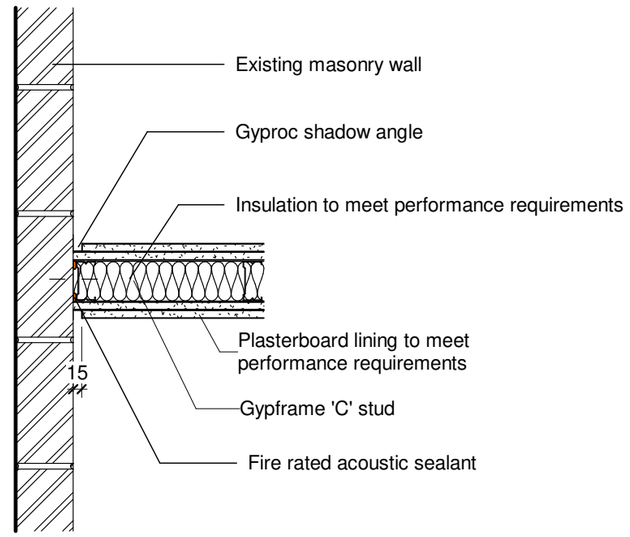
Proposed Partition Detail

4.3 Proposed Details





1 **Typical head & base detail - section**
1 : 5



2 **Typical abutment detail - plan**
1 : 10

Proposed partition abutment Detail

4.4 Schedule

1050 HOPE MILL GROUND FLOOR, MANCHESTER AREA SCHEDULE					
Room	**HMT NIA (sqm)**	**AWOL NIA (sqm)**	**Ancilliary NIA (sqm)**	**Total NIA (sqm)**	**GIA (sqm)**
HMT 001	33				
HMT 002	11				
HMT 003	11				
HMT 004	14				
HMT Rehearsal Space	95				
HMT Dressing Room	20				
HMT Green Room	13				
AWOL 001		11			
AWOL 002		11			
AWOL 003		33			
AWOL 004		20			
AWOL 005		40			
AWOL 006		37			
Kitchen			5		
Store 001			6		
Store 002			7		
TOTALS	**198**	**153**	**19**	**369**	**544**

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