

House of Fu Portland Street, Manchester

Design & Access Statement
18-10-22



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Design & Access Statement

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1.0 Site Location

The site is located at 113-115 Portland Street. It is set over two levels - Upper and Lower Ground within a Grade 2 listed former Warehouse

2.0 Listed status

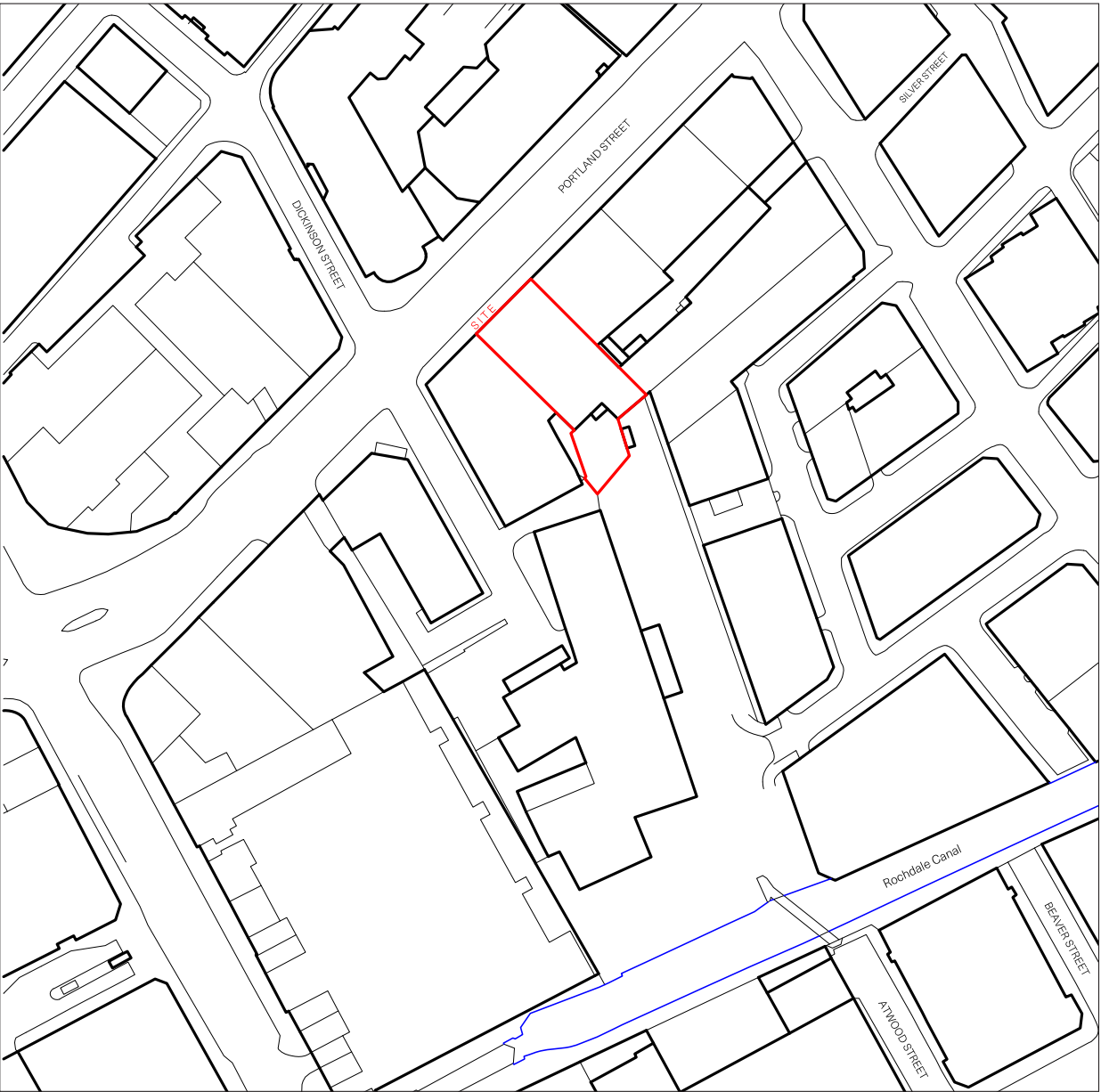
The building is Grade 2 listed, and was built some time between 1876 and 1882. The building was constructed primarily as a warehouse (set within a new warehouse district). The listing is as follows, but records that the interiors were not surveyed:

Manufacturers' home trade warehouse and shipping warehouse, now offices etc. c.1860-70, altered. Red brick with sandstone dressings (roof not visible). Irregular plan on corner site, with loading at rear. Utilitarian design with some Italian Gothic features. Four storeys and basement, 16 windows (some coupled); stone basement with weathered plinth, sill-bands to all floors, simplified Lombard friezes over most windows except the top floor, elaborated Lombard frieze of brick to moulded stone cornice. Basement and ground floor altered except in the last 3 bays (and right-hand return side to Dickinson Street), which have elaborately decorated cast-iron railings to the basement openings and coupled sashed windows with stone mullions and heads; upper floors have single (a) and coupled (b) windows arranged a-b-a-a-b-a-a-b-b-b-a, those at 1st floor square-headed, those at 2nd floor segmental-headed, and those at 3rd floor stilted segmental with stepped heads and linked hoodmoulds. Right-hand return wall, 10 bays in matching style, with wide segmental-headed loading bay entrance in 6th bay. Rear and interior not inspected. Forms group with No.103, Nos 105 and 107, and Nos 109 and 111 to left (q.v.), together comprising a complete block of former warehouses.

Listing Ref: 1246957

Reference should be made to the Paul Butler Associates dedicated Heritage Report and Assessment.

Aerial city context view



Site location plan



Site photographs showing extent of site frontage in red

3.0 Existing & access

3.1 Site

The existing site occupies two levels - upper and lower ground. The Upper ground (entrance) level is set approximately 1m above the level of Portland Street.

3.2 Entrances

The site has two dedicated entrances, that do not provide disabled access into the building. However, the operator has agreed to use of a third entrance (via the upper level office entrance). Within this entrance is a disabled lift with a door linking into the site at the upper level

3.3 Courtyard

The site includes an existing courtyard to the rear of the building. This courtyard is access via steps from an existing circulation stair lobby, and therefore also does not provide any disabled access via this route.

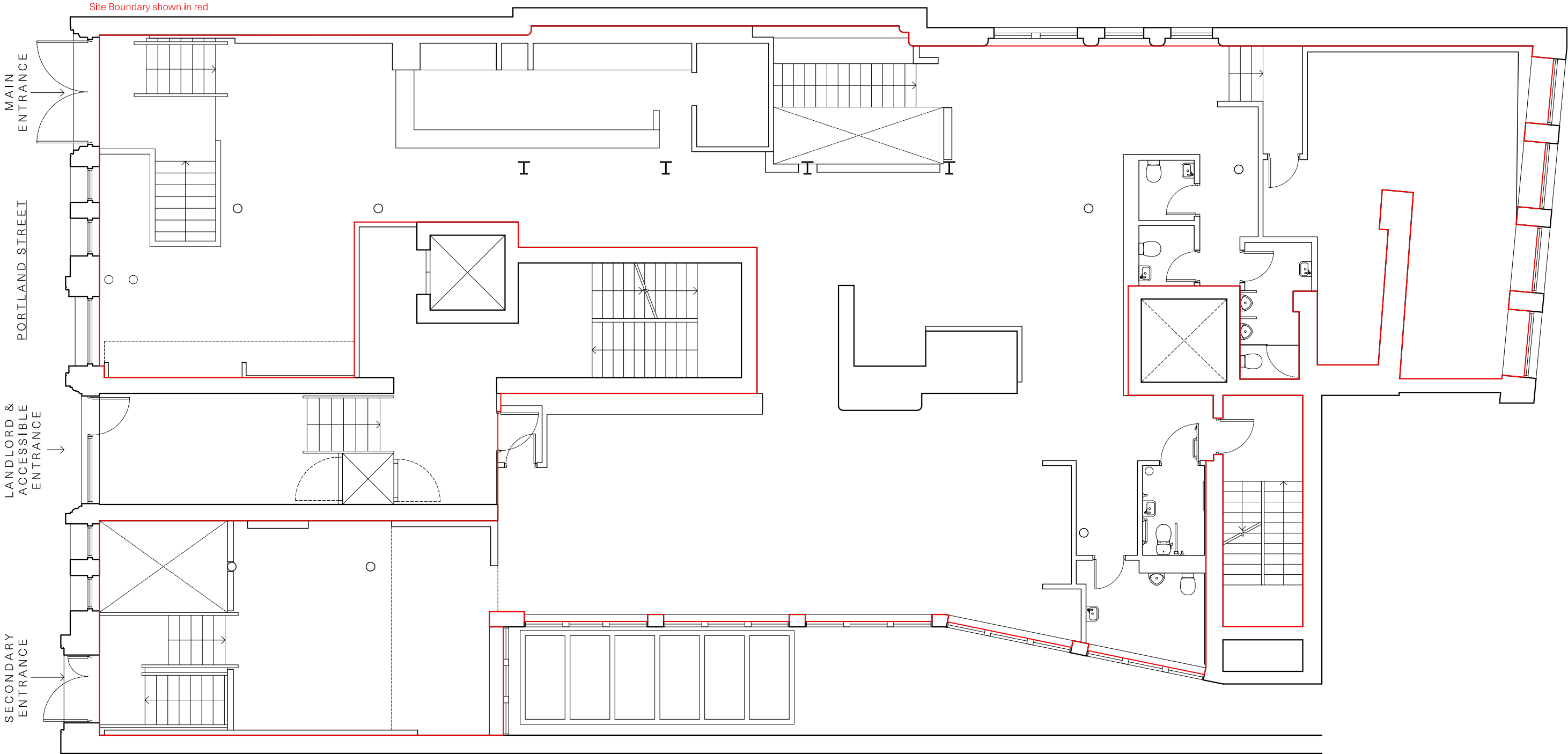
Disabled access to the courtyard is available via Dickinson Street and the vehicular gate.

3.4 Proposed access arrangement

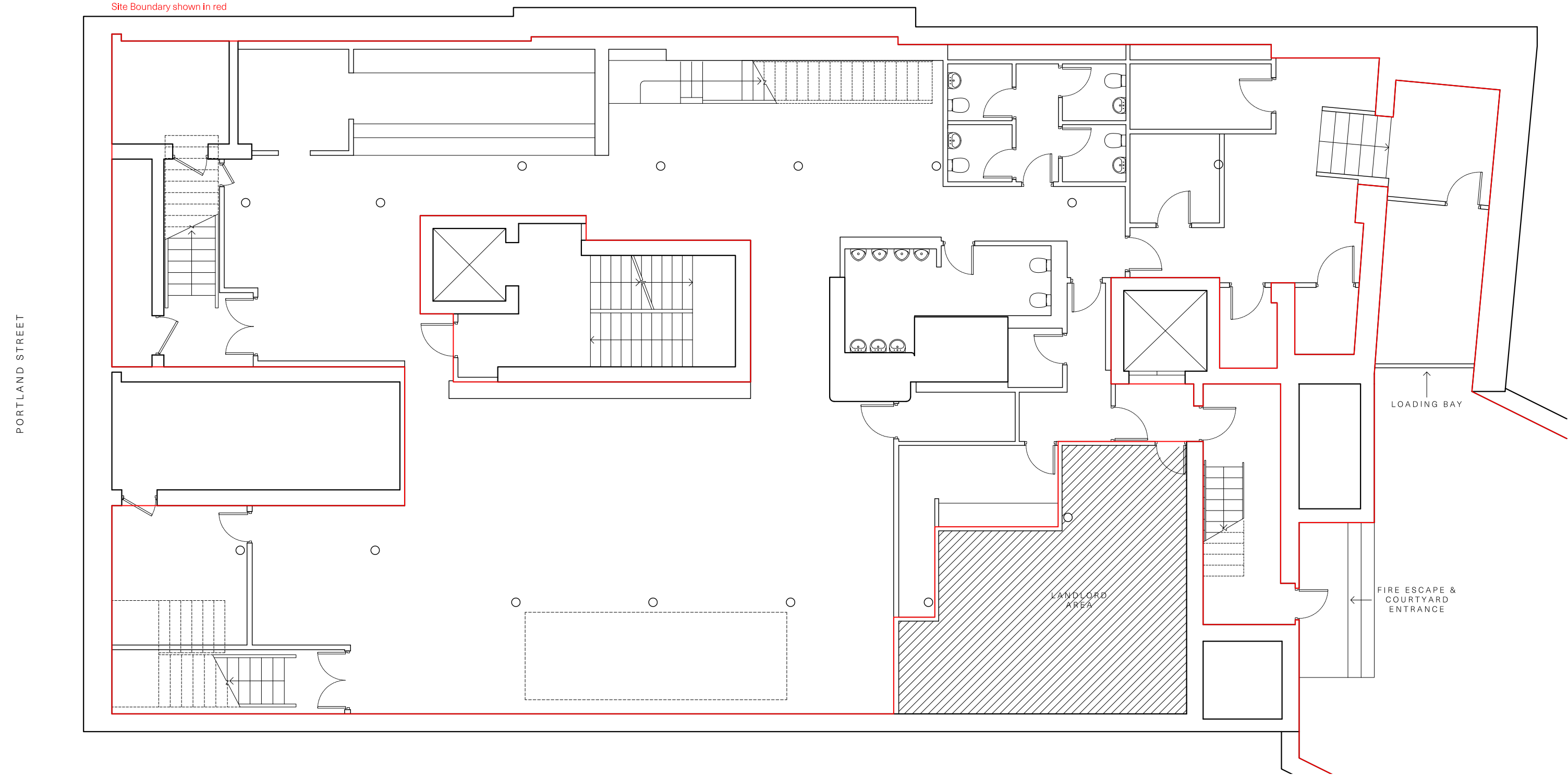
The landlord, Bruntwood, has agreed to the use of the office entrance lift to allow full disabled access into the site. The proposed method of gaining access is as follows:

- Customers requiring lift access into the site can enter via the main entrance which has level access into a small entrance lobby. Customers can press on a call point to alert House of Fu staff to the access requirement
- Venue management will then accompany customers to the office entrance and call the lift. Customers will be accompanied through the door at the upper level, giving access to the venue upper ground floor.

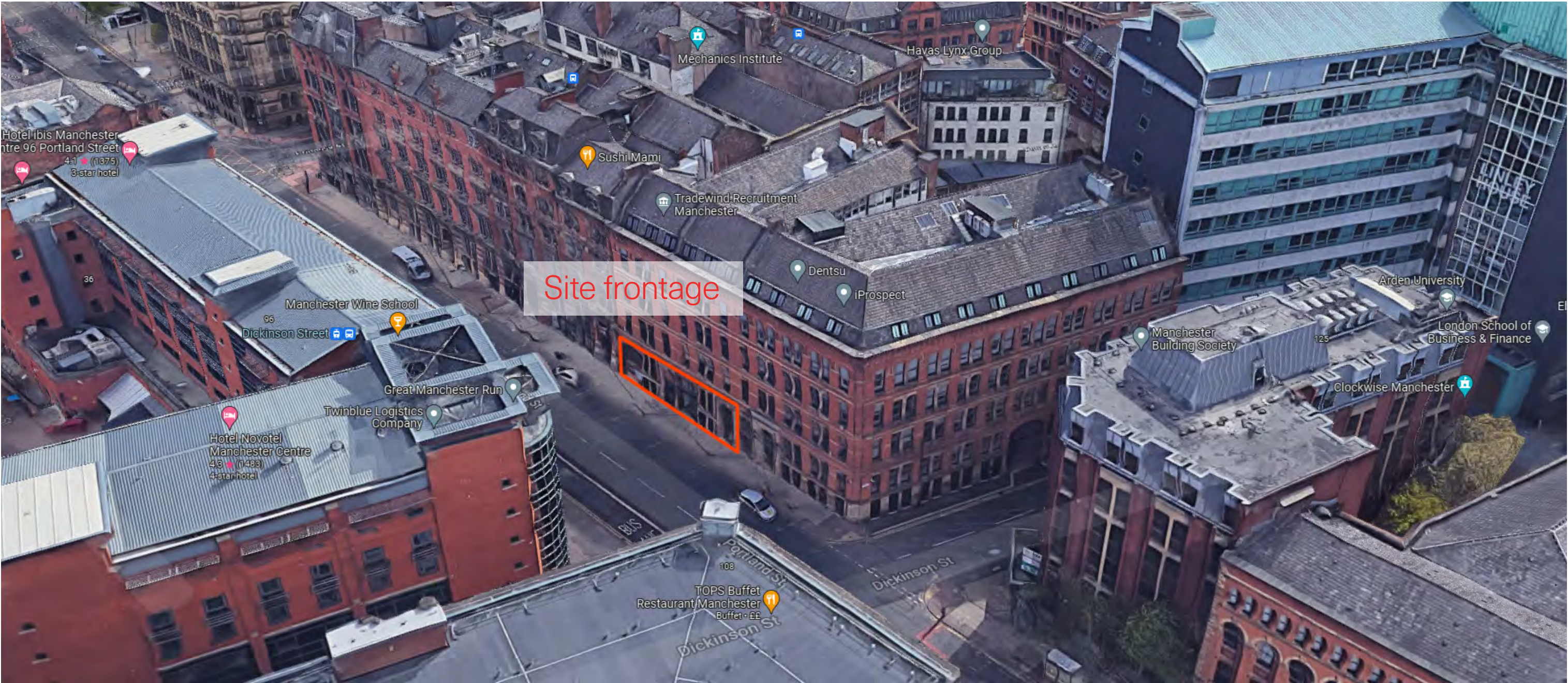
It is not feasible for customers requiring access to the call lift directly in office lobby due to security issues with entrance door from office lobby.



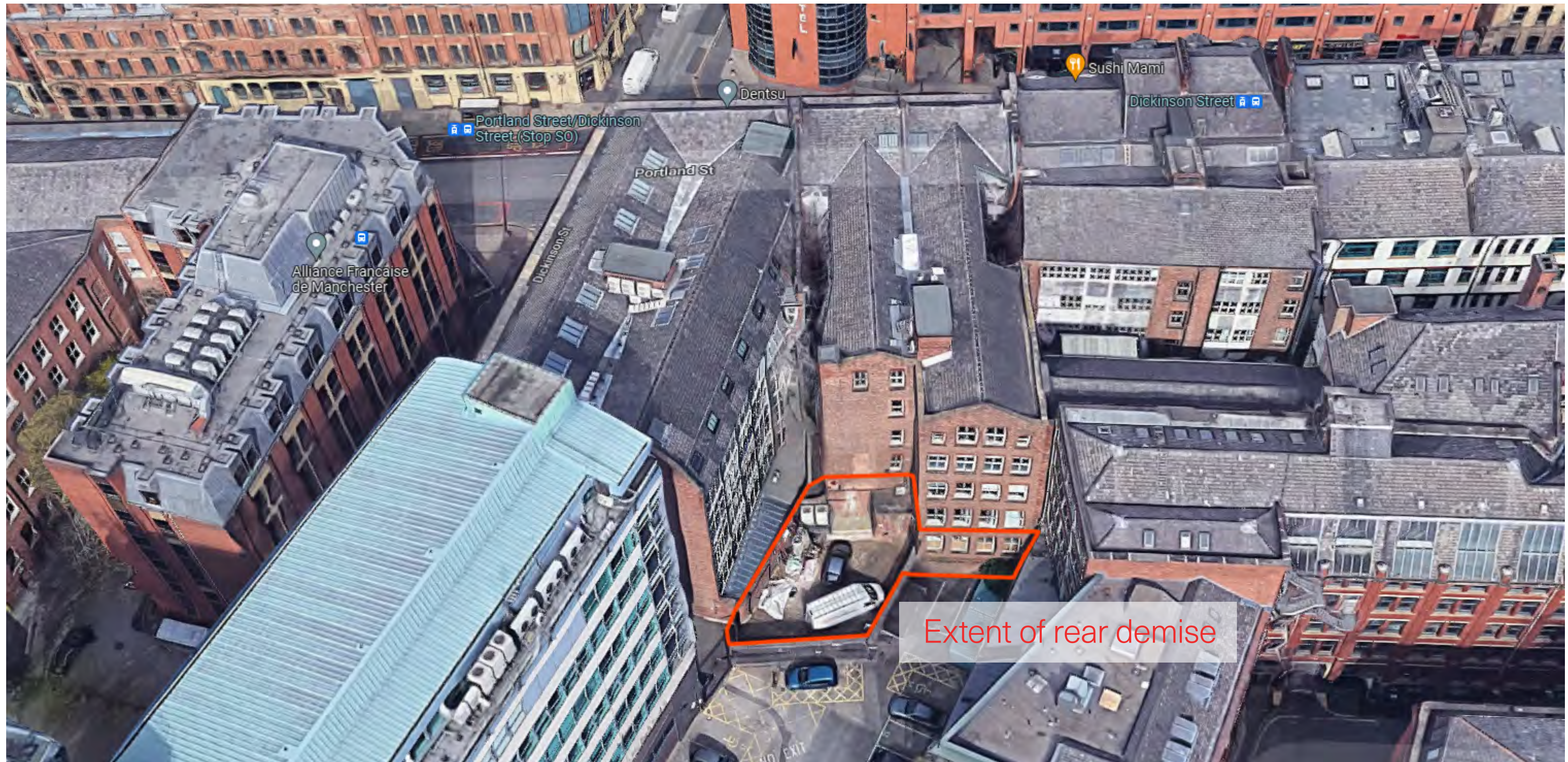
Existing Upper Ground (entrance) plan
showing Main, secondary, and accessible entrances



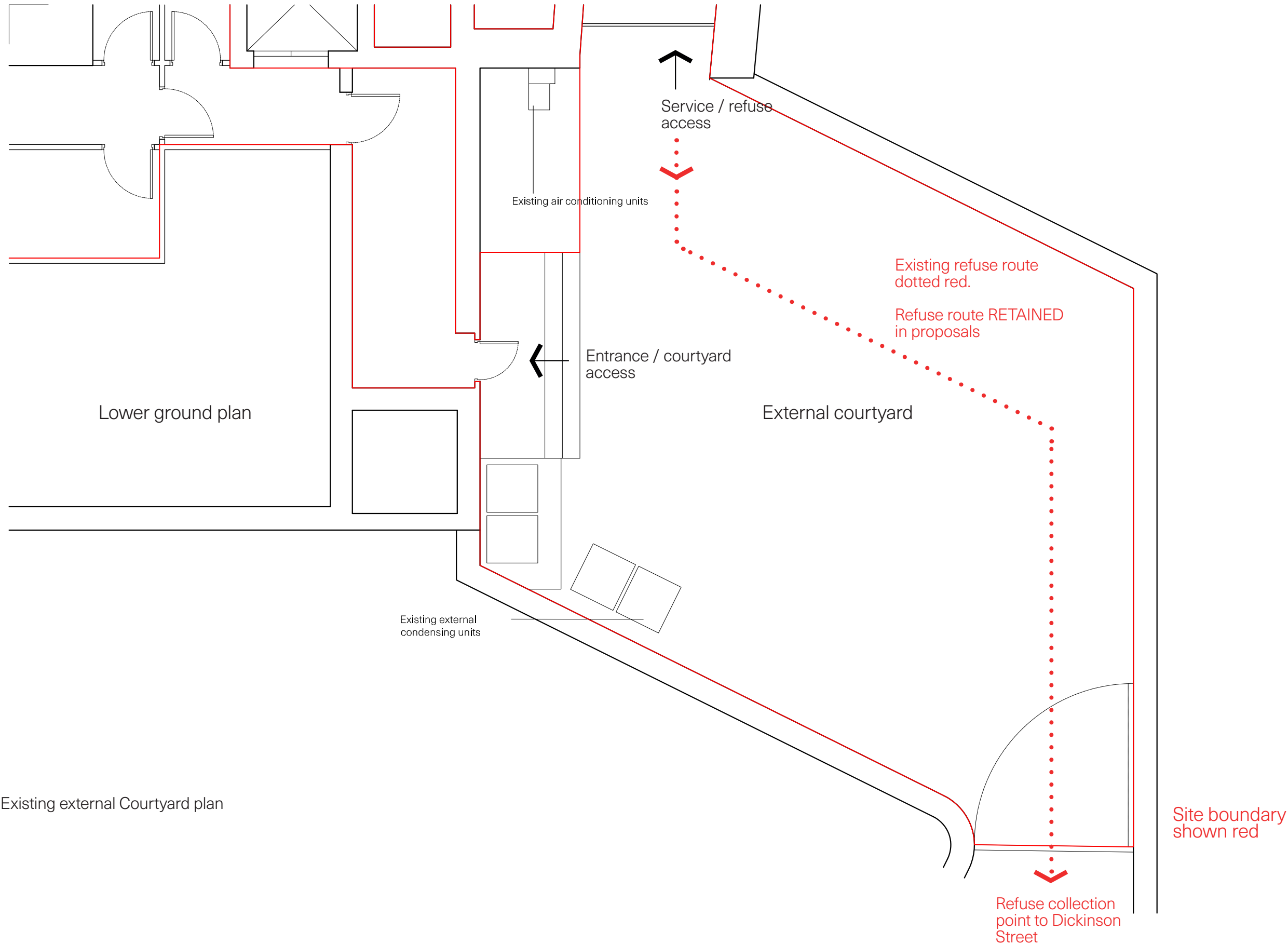
Existing Lower Ground plan



Aerial view of unit frontage to Portland Street



Aerial view to rear of site - showing external courtyard



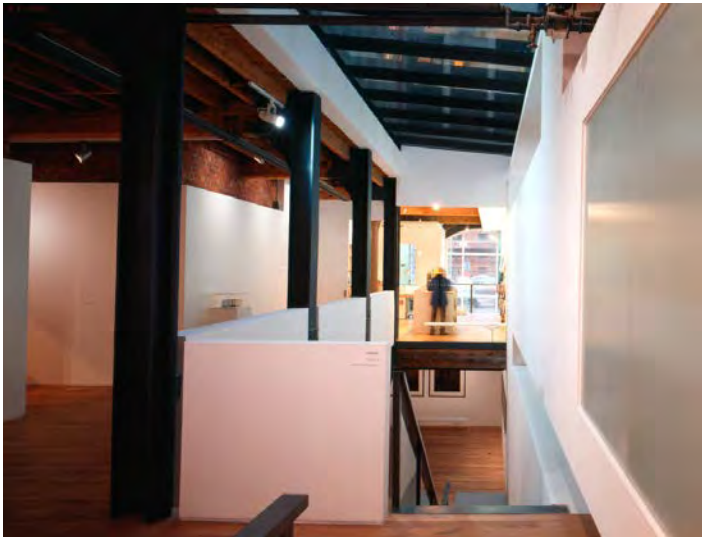
CUBE 1998

View from entrance through into site



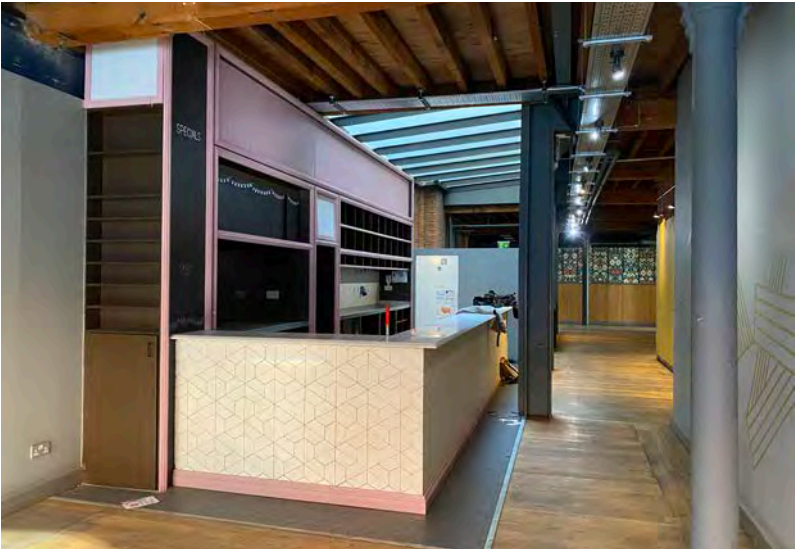
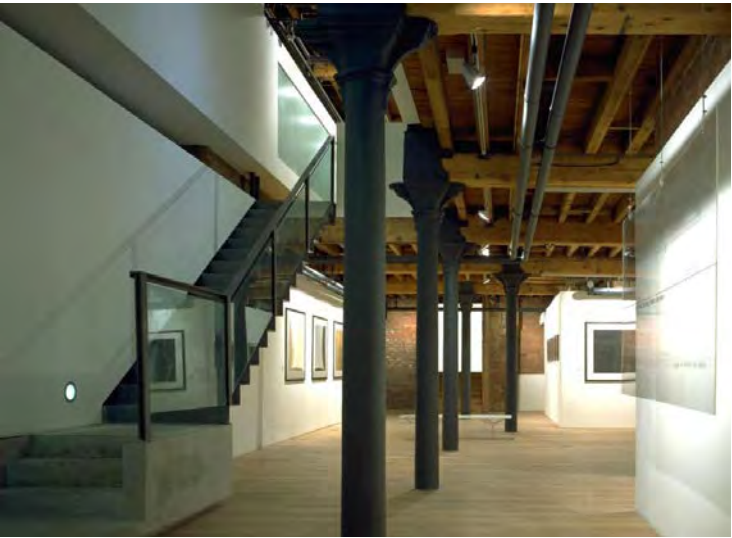
CUBE 1998

View to entrance showing 'long' stair void



CUBE 1998

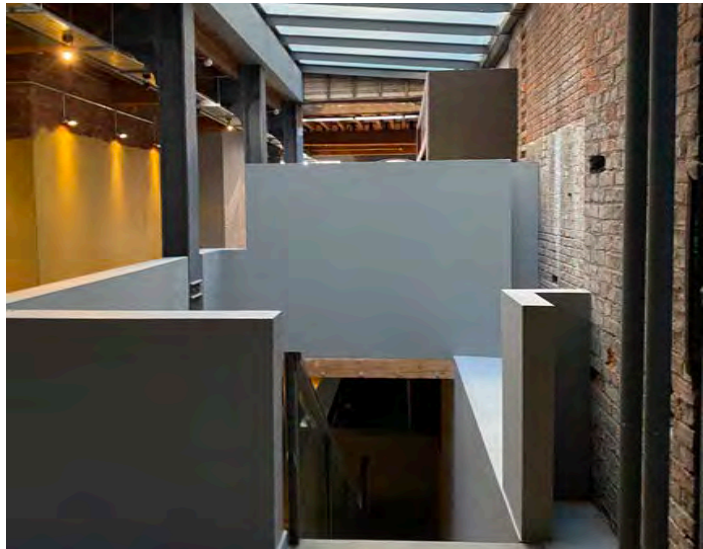
View from lower ground looking towards main stair



Existing 2022

View from entrance through into site

The bulky plywood back bar and far 'potwash' wall block views into the site.



Existing 2022

View to entrance

The 'potwash' wall block views entirely. The stair is almost concealed



Existing 2022

View from lower ground looking towards main stair

The new section of floor restricts the void and the views upwards. The white wall panelling has been partly removed, but the balustrading still restricts views

3.5 The former CUBE gallery project

3.5.1 The former CUBE gallery project (1998)

The CUBE gallery fit-out phase of the site was undertaken by Hodder and Partners in 1998. Some images of this iteration are shown adjacent. The CUBE design included a significant amount of white wall panelling set in front of existing brickwork. There were other key differences (which can provide useful context) to the current condition.

The CUBE scheme was characterised by clean surfaces (it was a gallery), with strong use of natural light (via the existing rooflights at both levels) and contemporary detailing. The central stair - in steel, concrete and glass - was a key feature. The entire stair grouping allowed free flowing movement though the various levels and spaces set in gallery format.

The existing historical features and detailing of the building were allowed to be clearly read, such as column head detailing and robust warehouse timber floor detailing. There were areas of exposed original brickwork, though this was selectively covered to allow white surface to be created for gallery use.

The ceiling structures are clearly expressed with mechanical services and ducts largely concealed, with air supply and extract fed via discrete metal Lighting systems were fed via discretely positioned conduit supply routes, the majority of lighting being simple track spotlights to suit the art gallery use.

3.5.2 The LEAF fit-out phase (2016-existing)

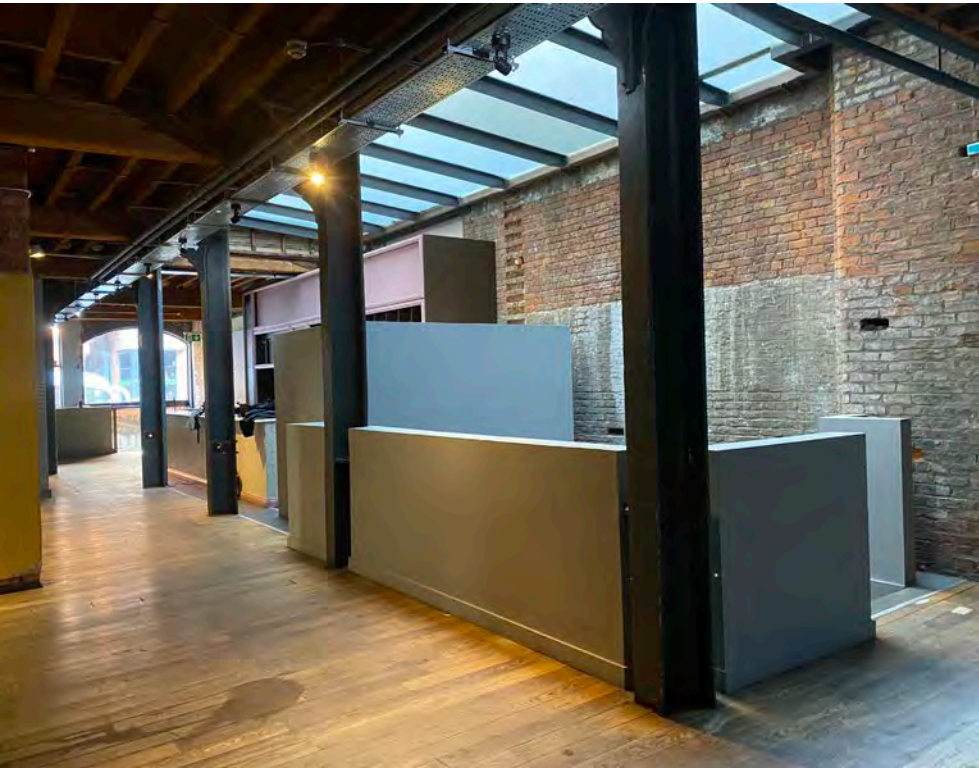
Amendments were made from the CUBE iteration as part of the LEAF fit-out (2016-2021). These changes were:

- Reducing the stair void considerably (by a 'bay-and-a-half'), adding new structure.
- Adding galvanised cable trays below the level of the beams
- The use of darker, painted surfaces

Views from the main entrance through to the rear of the unit were reduced. Natural light was reduced via the introduction of additional floor, and the setting of the floor structures altered via the use of cable trays at ceiling level.

In many ways, the 2016 amendments reduced views and visual continuity through the space, leading to a reduced sense of 'flow'.

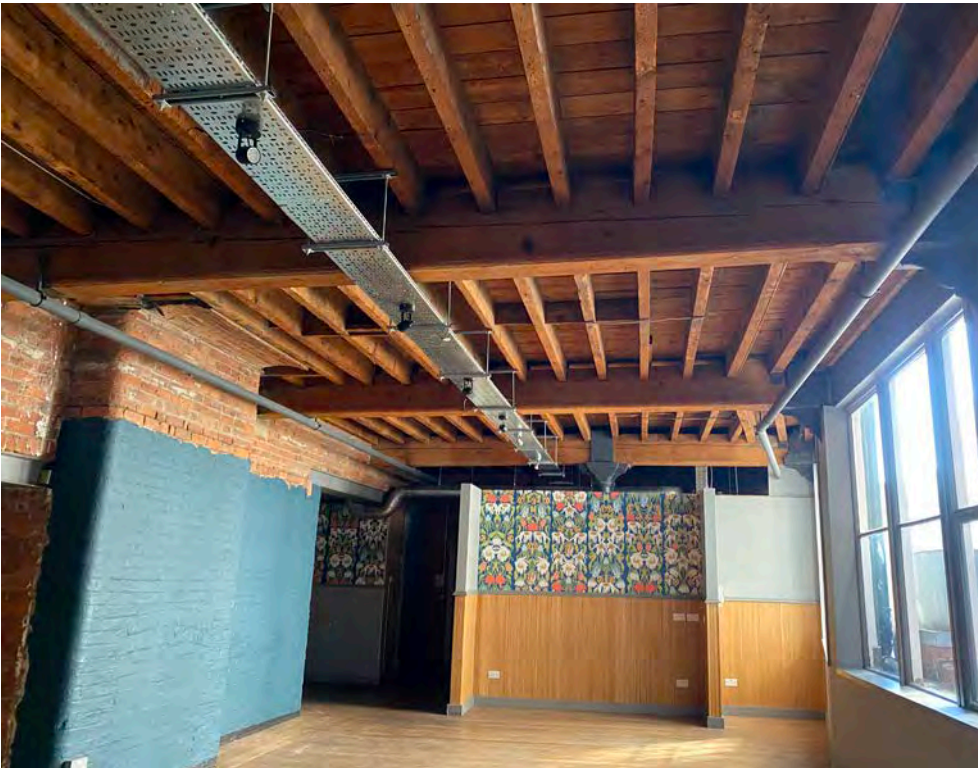
Existing view towards main entrance



Existing view towards main entrance over main stair



Existing view at upper ground in proposed main dining area looking to rear



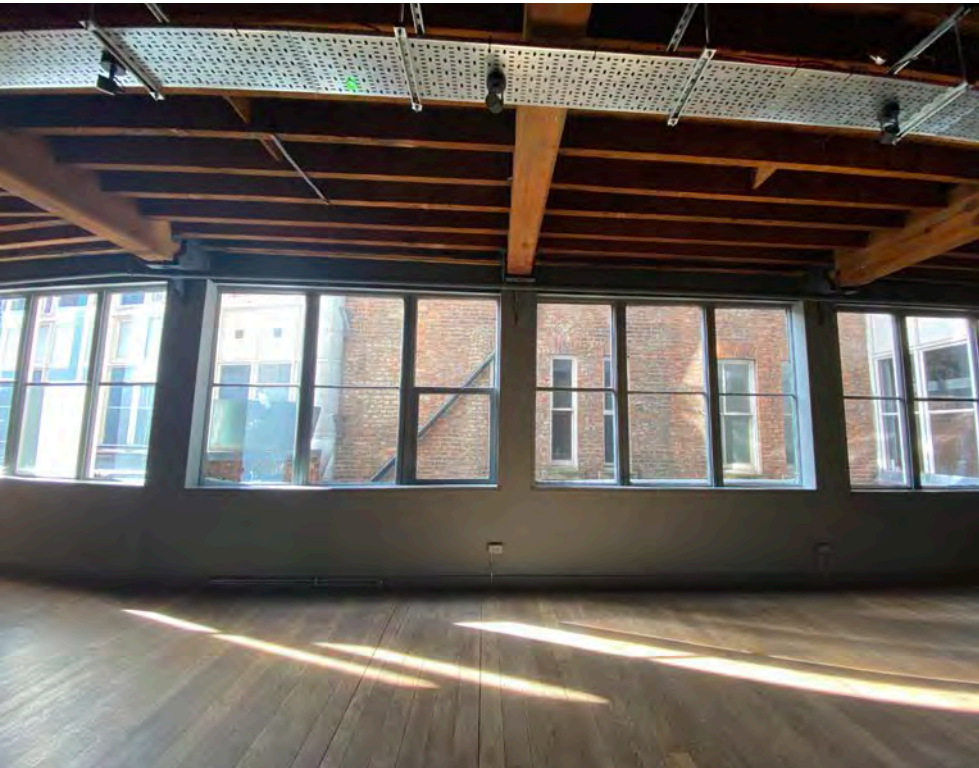
Existing view: Upper ground in proposed private dining area

Existing view: Upper ground in proposed main dining area

Existing view: Upper ground in proposed main dining area

Existing view towards main entrance

Upper ground windows overlooking lightwell



Upper ground view of stair showing existing 'boxing in' reamining from CUBE fit-out



Existing view at upper ground to front section overlooking Portland Street



Existing view: Upper ground looking down main stair



Existing view: Lower gorund showing 'new' section of floor



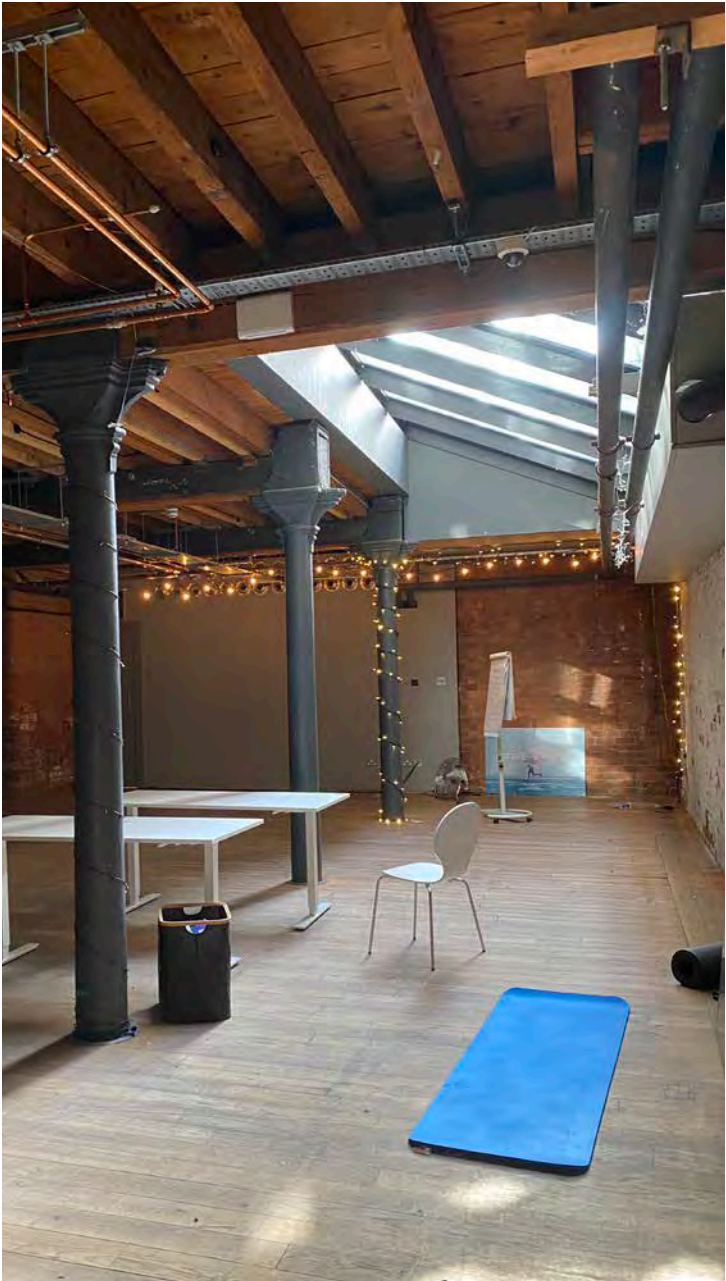
Existing view: Upper ground looking over main stair



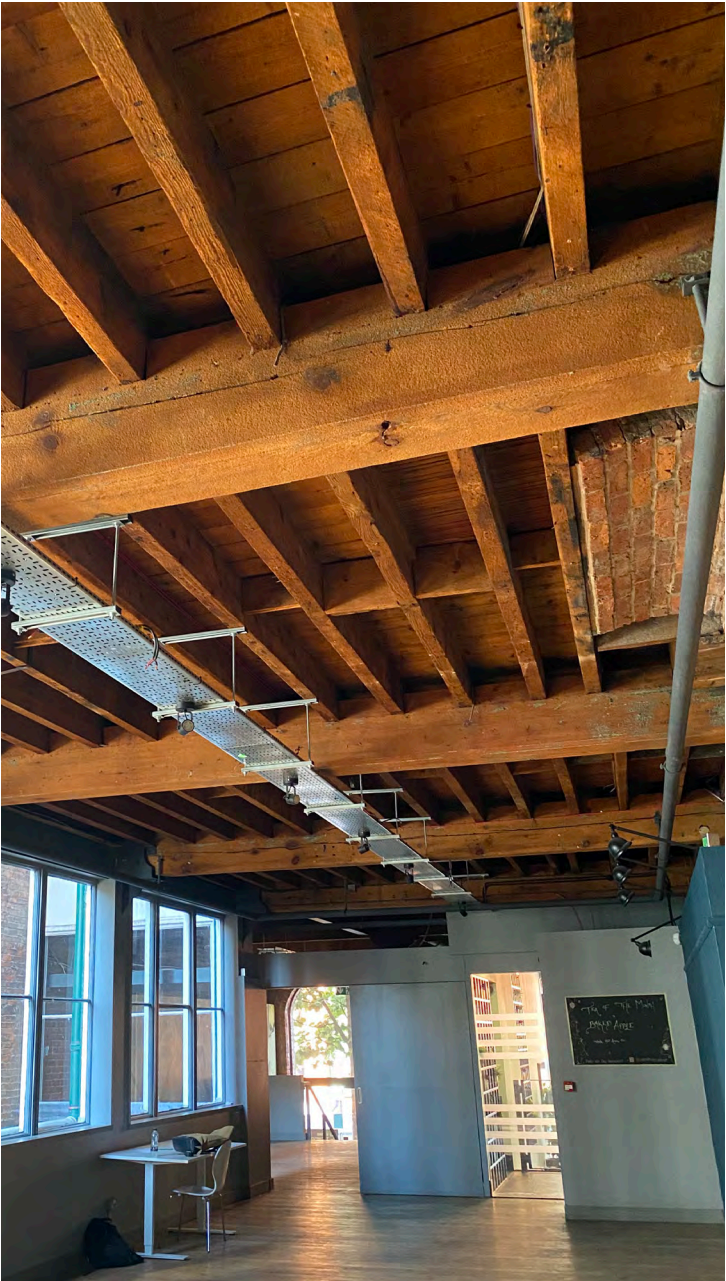
Existing view at lower ground in proposed cocktail bar area



View at upper ground over lower ground rooflight



View at lower ground beneath rooflight



View at upper ground towards secondary entrance

4.0 Design Principles

4.1 Brief

4.1.1 The brief has called for the creation of a vibrant multi-level restaurant, cocktail bar and karaoke experience set over two levels. This includes access to an external courtyard at the rear, which is conceived as a 'secluded garden'.

4.1.2 House of Fu opened its first premises at Headrow House in Leeds. Due to its success, it has led to the team seeking a site in Manchester. The Portland Street site is larger than the site in Leeds, but the brief requires visual continuity with the Leeds premises. The Manchester site is larger and spatially more complex. There is also a requirement to 'extend' the existing visual language, and a desire to expand and develop the brand identity - all whilst celebrating the heritage of the listed building and site at 113-115 Portland Street.

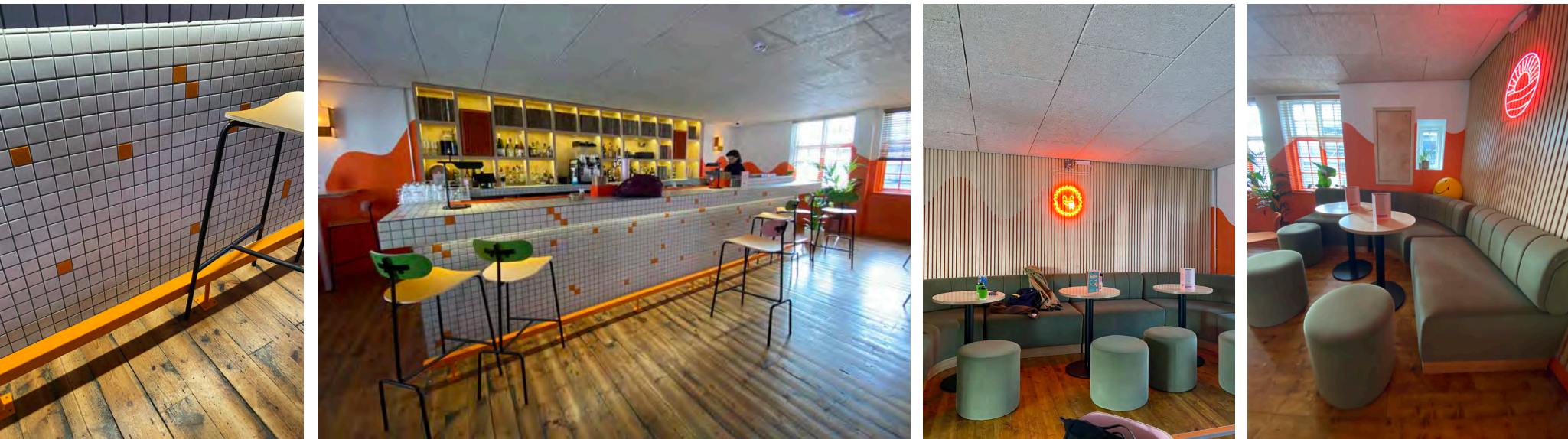
4.1.3 There is a strong desire to bring the space back into use in a way which activates the spaces and deals with the unusual and, in places, awkward plan. The brief calls for the space to naturally 'flow' so that customers feel confident and excited about exploring the space on both levels. This recognizes the dual challenge of both activating the 'front' areas, which are separated and 'disconnected' from Portland Street via a change in level and stair voids, and also of connecting and linking into the deeper, and darker, parts of the plan to the rear of the site on both levels.

4.1.4 There is an existing outdoor courtyard to the rear of the site, accessible via a rear escape stair. The challenge of the brief here is to make this route navigable, and to create an appropriate outdoor setting. It is recognized that outdoor spaces are now critical in providing resilience for food and beverage uses post covid, and therefore a vital part of any design where it is possible.

A. Kitchen & restaurant aesthetic



B. Cocktail Bar aesthetic



B. Karaoke rooms aesthetic (Hello karaoke)



C. WC aesthetic



4.2 House of Fu - existing visual language

4.2.1 House of Fu already has a sophisticated visual language. The venue kitchen is based around the production of the highest quality Japanese Ramen. This is supplemented by a wider menu, where authenticity is combined with freshness and vibrancy. This approach is therefore to be reflected in the design, where Japanese design principles of background simplicity are combined with an edge of brightness, colour and surprise within various foreground elements.

4.2.2 The elements of the House of Fu language which the brief has ask to be included and, critically, be expanded upon and developed, include:

A. Kitchen & restaurant

- A background palette of pale tiling and light timber for the kitchen and restaurant
- Coloured metal elements, mainly light pink
- Seating colours, mainly pale pink and orange
- A warm timber ceiling
- High quality illuminated artwork and illuminated features

B. Cocktail bar & karaoke rooms

- A tiled white bar with orange highlight
- Curvilinear booth and banquette seating in fabric, often on platforms
- Vibrancy within the karaoke space - via colours and lighting
- Coloured metal elements, mainly orange
- General use of colour in painted surfaces and fabric
- High quality illuminated artwork and illuminated features (inc disco ball)

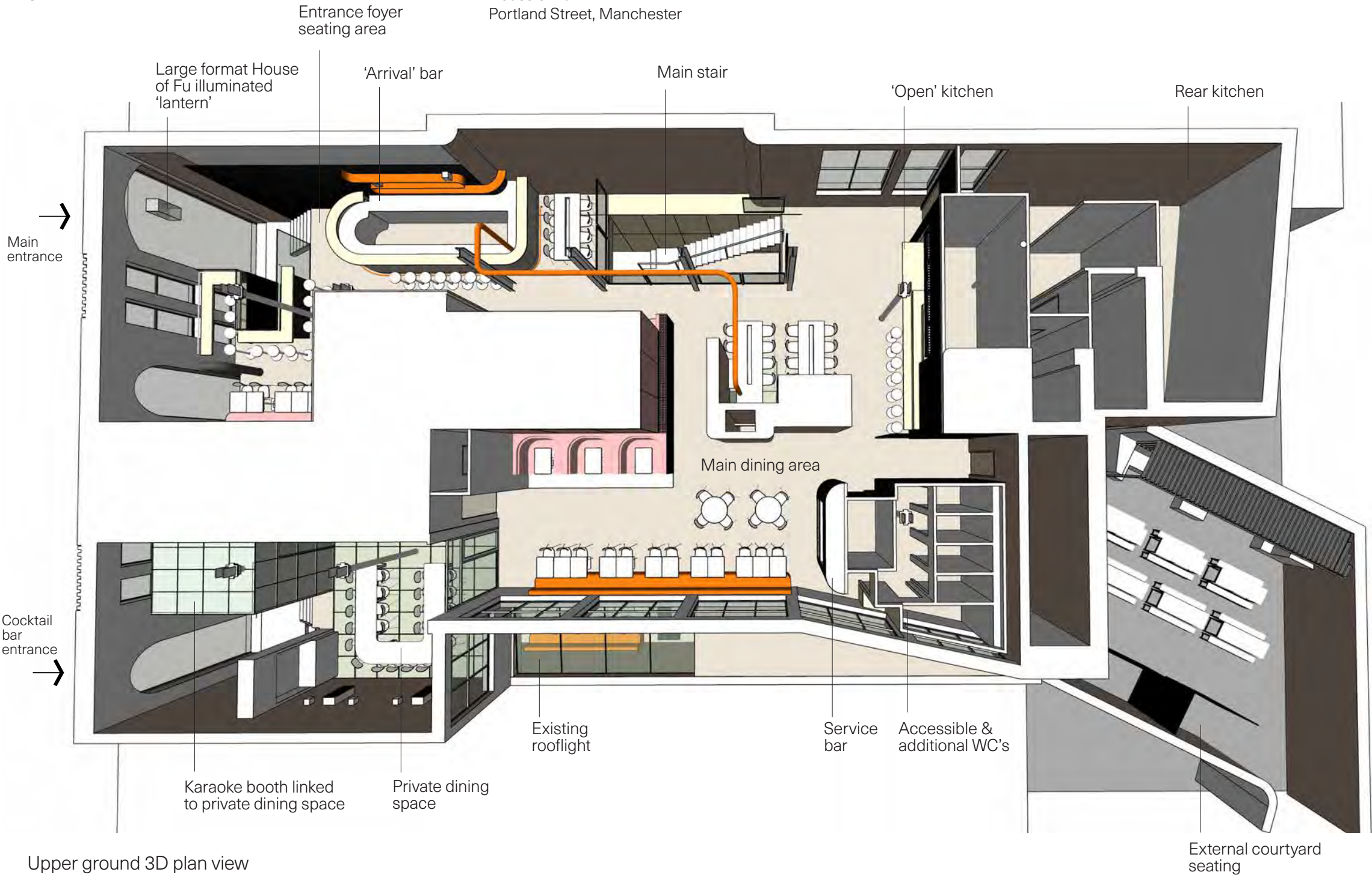
C. Washroom areas

- Vibrant tiling, orange and blue
- Illuminated signage and branding
- Recognizing that WC areas are now a vital part of any vibrant venue and often photographed

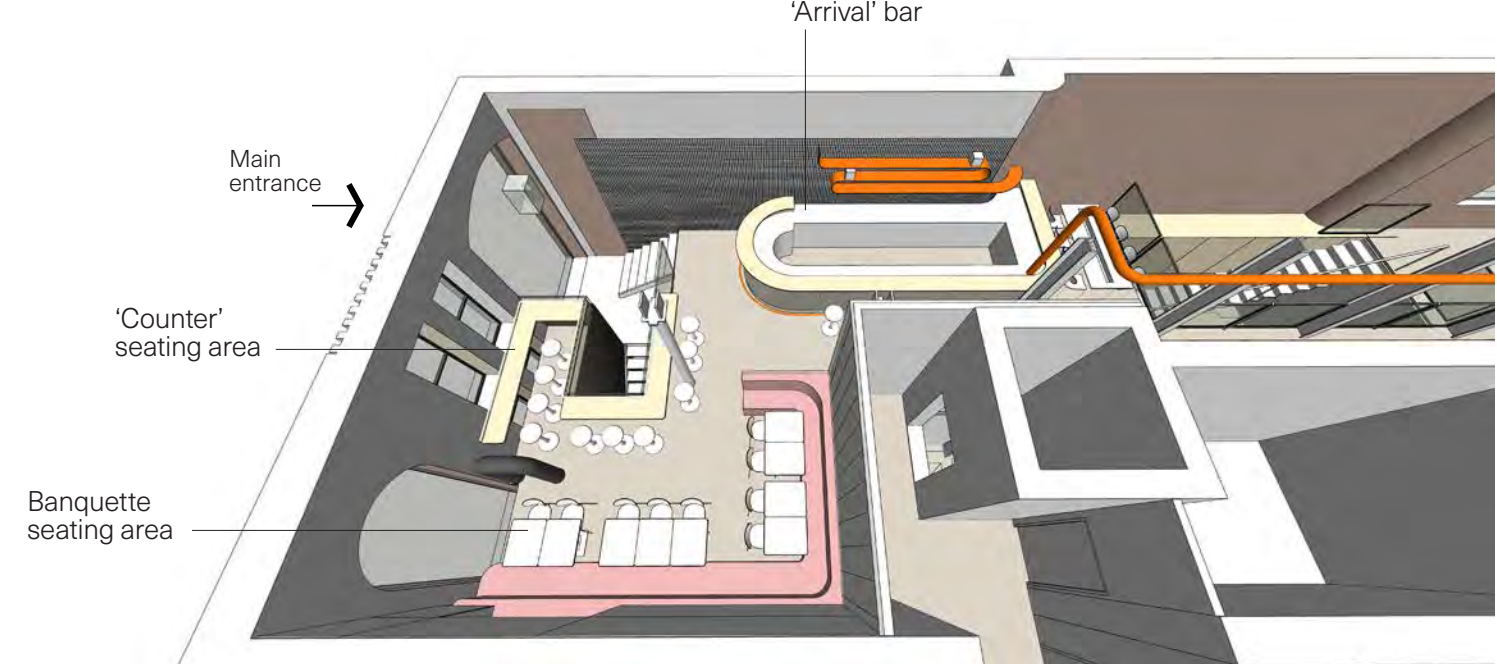
4.2.3 The overriding aesthetic requirement is for a restrained background palette (with a strong focus on existing brickwork, cast iron structure and timber ceilings) to be combined with a series of vibrant interventions. These would be carefully positioned within the plan to maximise their impact, and to create the functionality and flow through the venue on both levels, and throughout the entire site.



House of fu precedent: strong use of colour and atmospheric lighting



Upper ground 3D plan view



4.3 Plan diagram

The following represent the key character areas within the proposed plan:

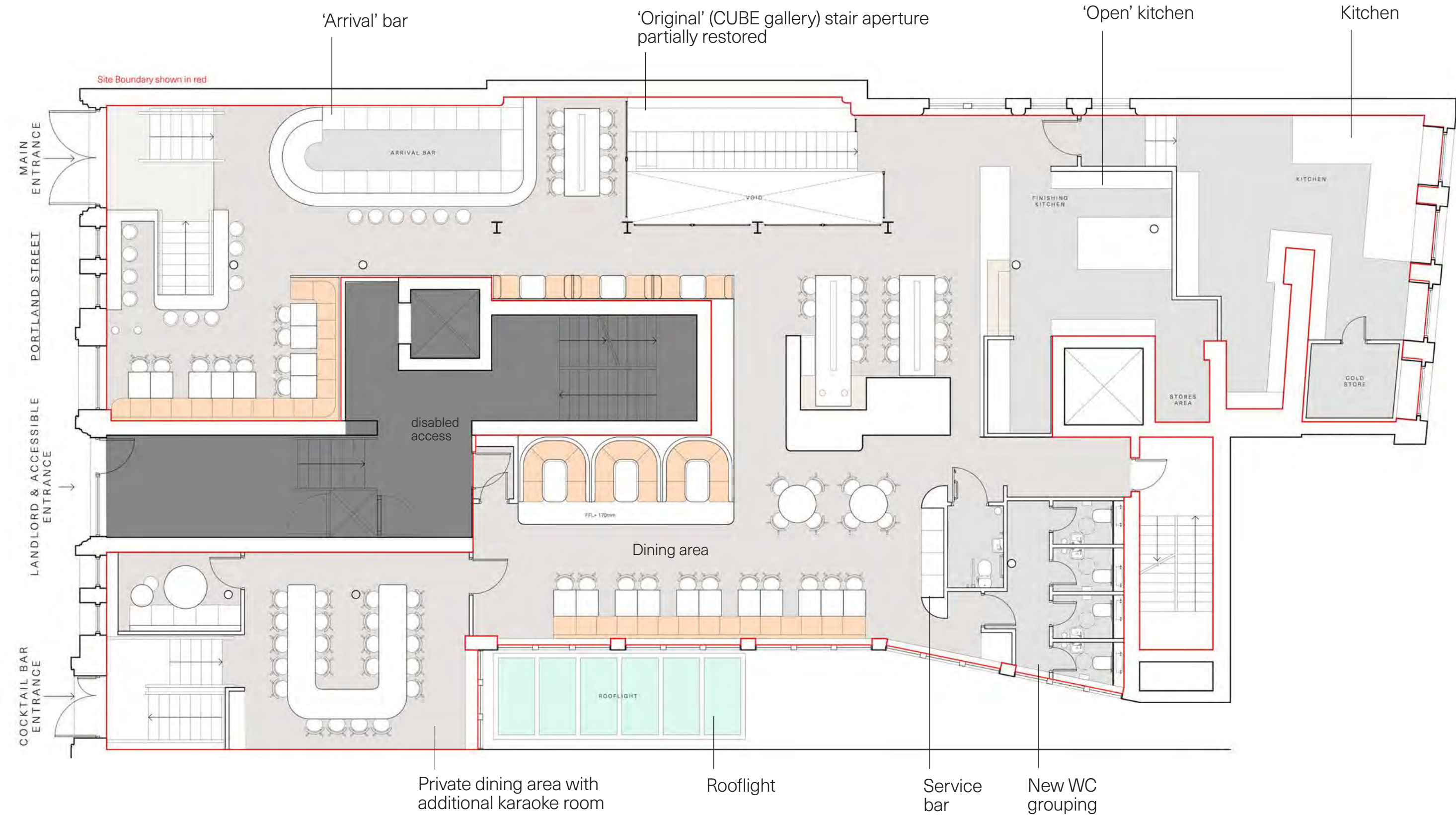
- Arrival bar / dining space
- Kitchen and main dining area
- Private dining area
- Karaoke rooms
- Cocktail bar
- External courtyard

4.3.1 Arrival bar / dining space

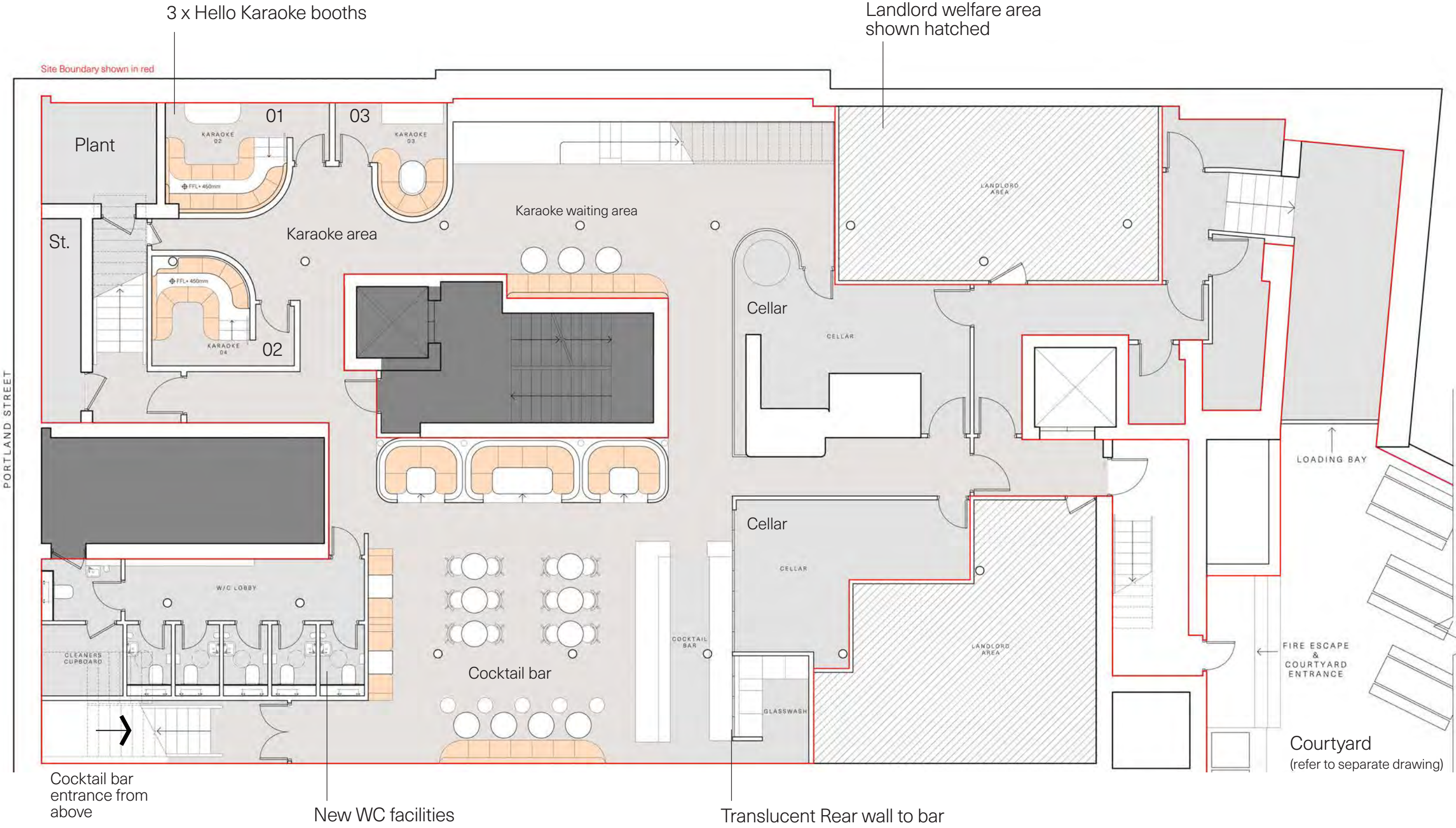
One of the key issues with the existing space, at the main entrance to the venue, is 'disconnection' from the street scene. The challenge is how to immediately engage with customers entering off Portland Street. The doorway is separated from the interior by a void, a set of steps, a change in level of 1m and a distance of just over 2m where 'nothing commercially happens' other than a 'neutral' entrance lobby.

The vista into the scheme is therefore critical. Some of the main moves to activate the entrance, engage with customers and deliver sufficient brand presence and identity are as follows:

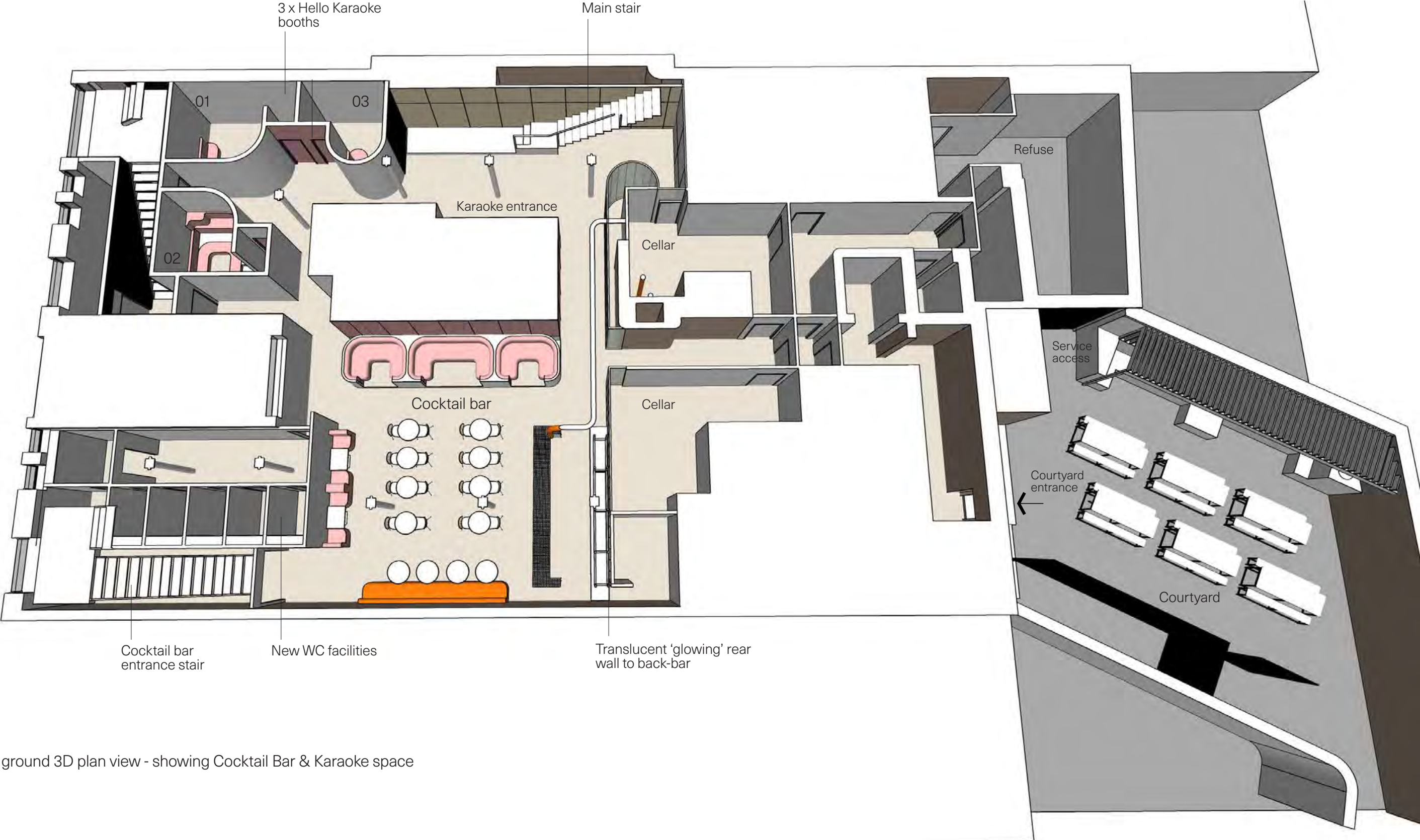
- (a) Position an arrival bar 'front and centre' with a strong welcoming curvilinear form
- (b) Utilise glass balustrading and vertical timber slats to the stair void area to transform the visual language
- (c) Illuminate the existing brick wall to the flank wall at the immediate entrance, supplemented by high a quality illuminated sign
- (d) Provide sufficient seating to create a 'buzz' right at the front of the unit. This area is almost conceived as a small 'restaurant within a restaurant', as the main dining area is set further into the space at upper ground floor level.
- (e) Provide a glowing wall and mirror panels to non-brickwork walls to create visual interest and brand identity
- (f) Allow views through to the rear of the unit through the form and design of the bar. This vista leads to the main stair and kitchen pass elevation, and is therefore critical in inviting, welcoming and encouraging customers into the main part of the site. The former LEAF bar counter did not do this being 'boxy' and visually bulky.



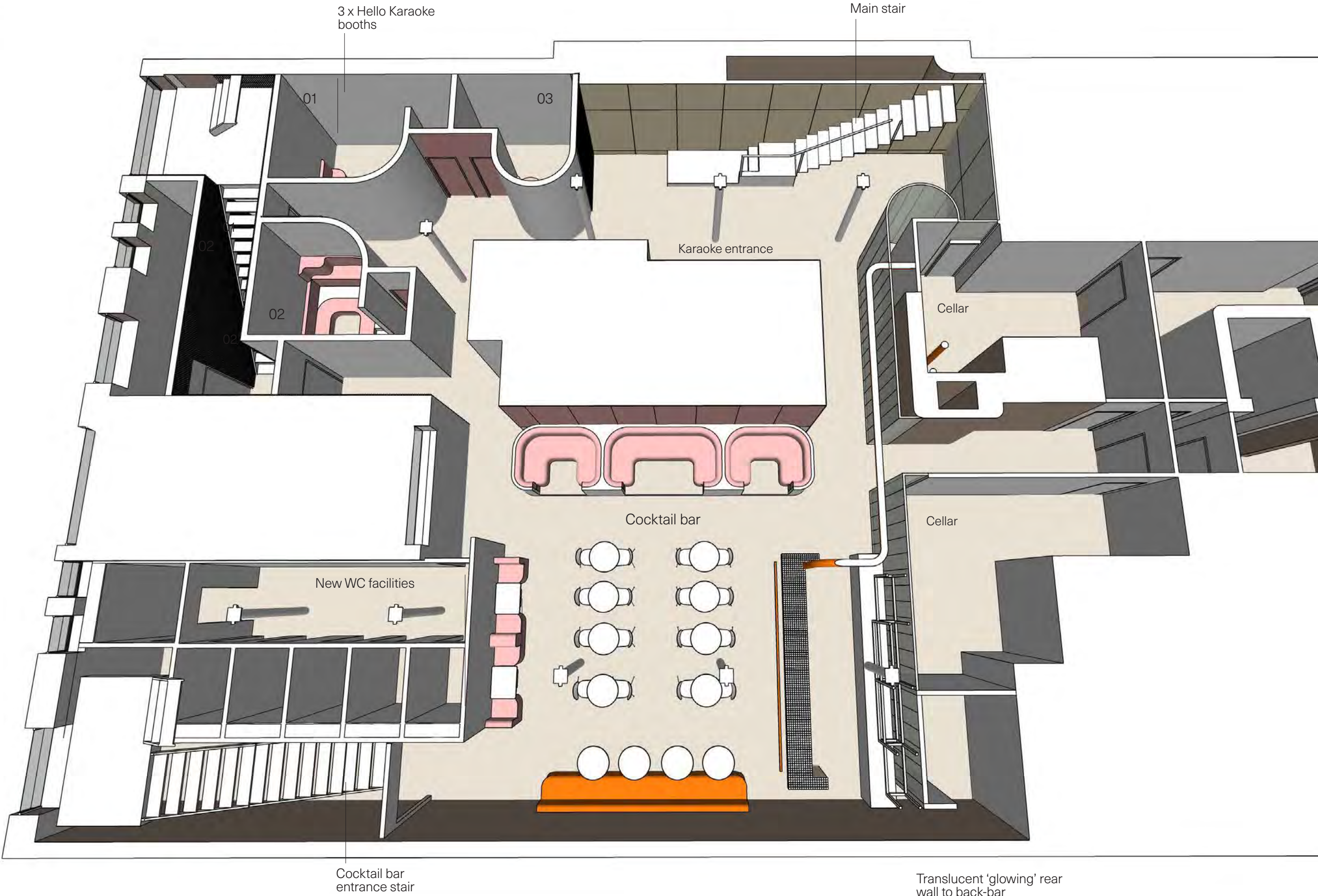
Proposed Upper Ground (entrance) plan
showing Main, secondary, and accessible entrances



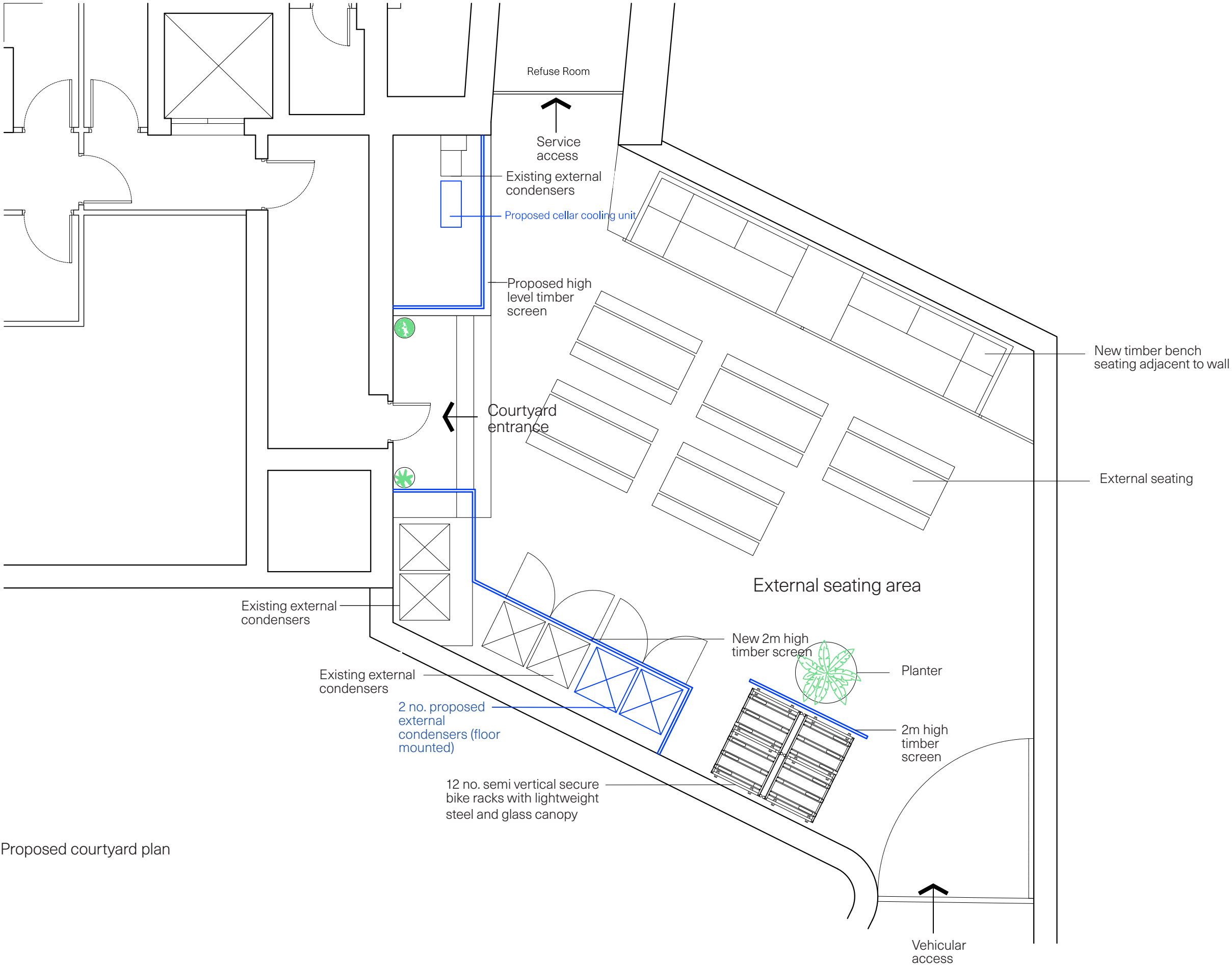
Proposed lower ground floor plan



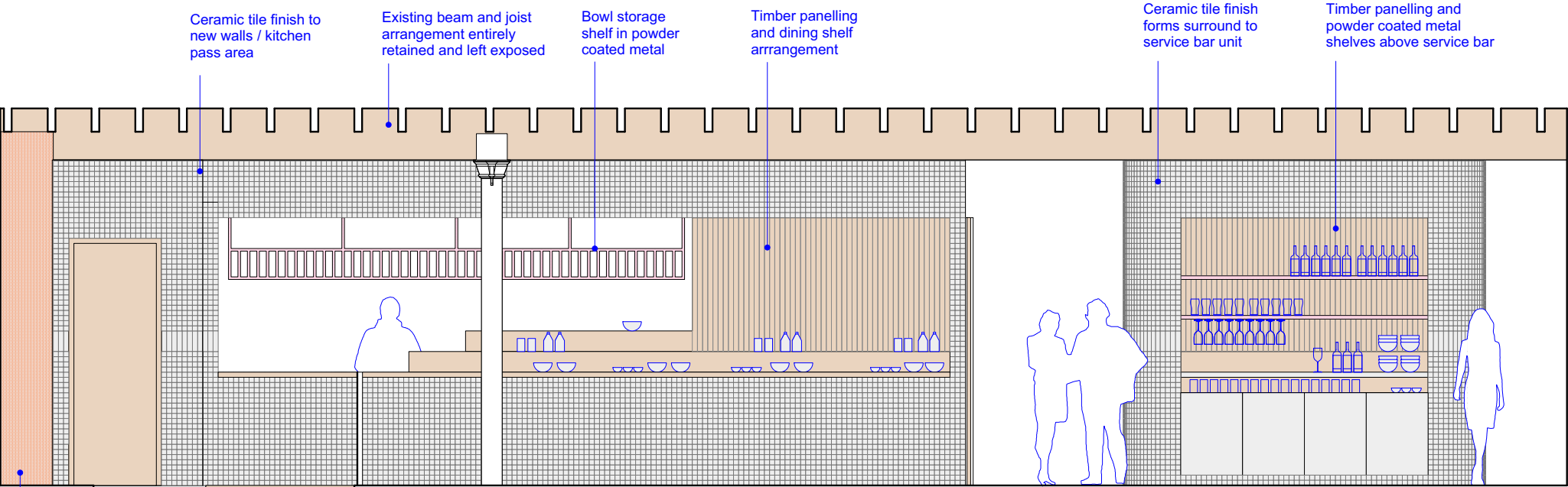
Lower ground 3D plan view - showing Cocktail Bar & Karaoke space



Lower ground 3D plan view - showing Cocktail Bar & Karaoke space



Proposed courtyard plan



Excerpt from Section GG - showing kitchen pass and service bar frontage facing main dining room

4.3.2 Kitchen and main dining area

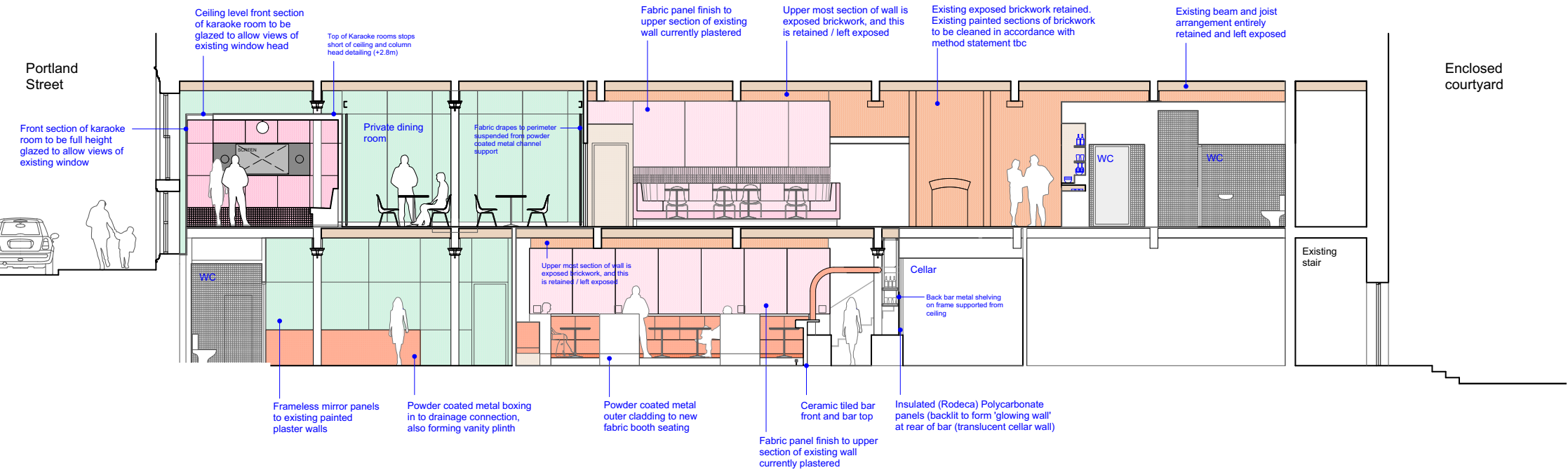
The kitchen pass presents a public face to the kitchen operation, and is positioned to the rear of the plan. It is a requirement of the brief that a welcoming and inviting design is presented at the 'kitchen pass' facing the restaurant seating area. Adjacent to the kitchen is the main dining space, and a 'service' bar in this positions has been designed to match the kitchen pass, creating a unified backdrop.

The main dining area is set against a run of existing full height windows. This elevation gives views of the neighbouring building and overlooks a rooflight below - looking down into the cocktail bar space below. The challenge at the upper ground level is to create the right 'flow' and sense of activity leading to the dining area from the entrance area and past the main stair.

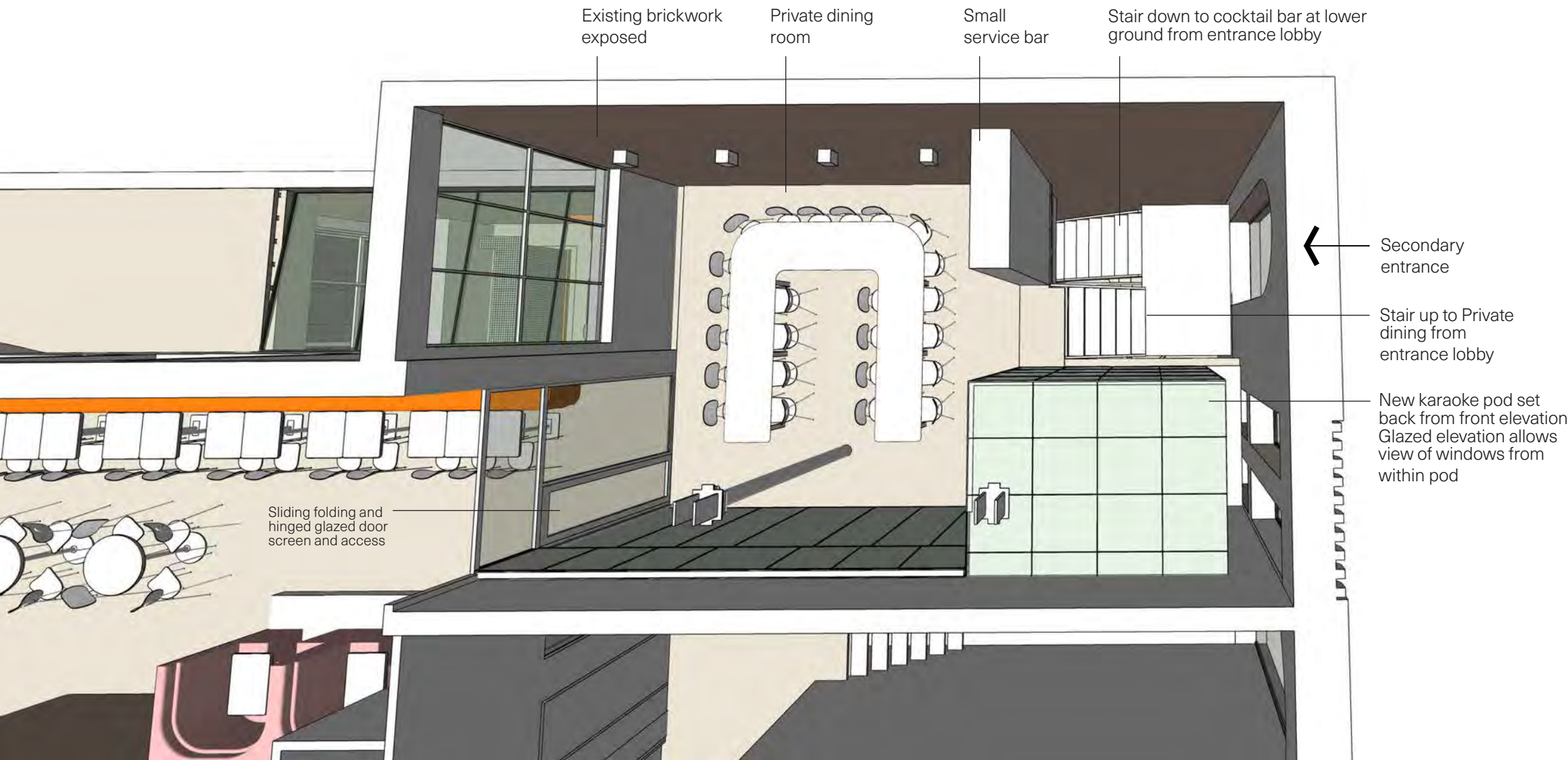
Key features of the main kitchen and dining area at ground floor include:

- (a) Provision of kitchen pass that is open and allows for high seating, and timber detailing (refer to drawing 68 Section GG) alluding to traditional Japanese design.
- (b) Creation of a dedicated high table dining area directly adjacent to the kitchen pass. This ensures a 'critical mass' of seating and activity at the head of the main stair
- (c) Creation of a service bar facing into the main dining room which relates to the kitchen pass elevation, forming a suitable backdrop to the dining space (also shown on drawing 68 Section GG).
- (d) Provision of WC facilities that are discretely positioned behind item (c)
- (e) Provision of a range of a range of seating types and heights to create character and visual interest:
- (f) Banquette seating beneath the existing run of external windows
- (g) Fully upholstered curvilinear booth seating elevated by one step
- (h) 'Loose' dining height tables and chairs





Excerpt from Section BB - showing Private dining area and linked karaoke room to the top left



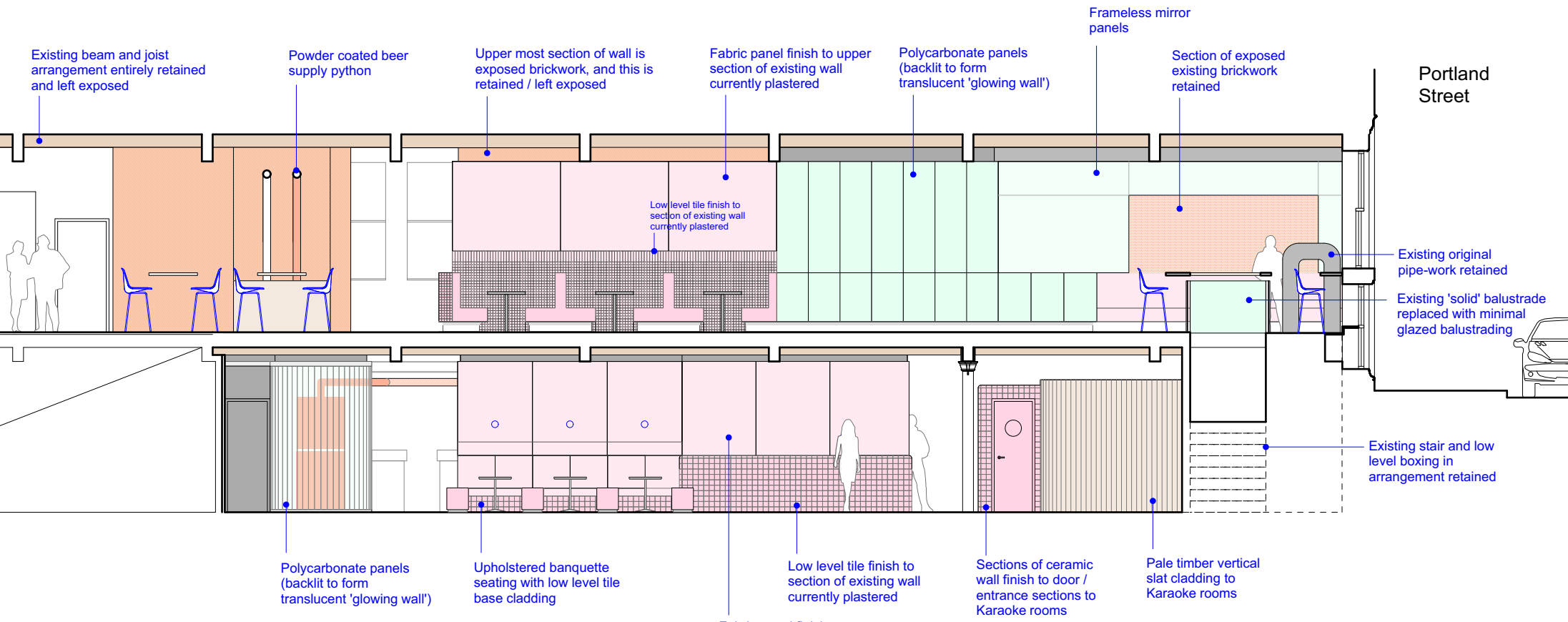
4.3.3 Private dining area

The brief for the private dining area was for it to be one of the most interesting and engaging spaces within the scheme, rather than the least. A common problem with private dining areas within commercial food and drink venues is that they are usually 'left over' spaces, where there is no clear alternative for its use.

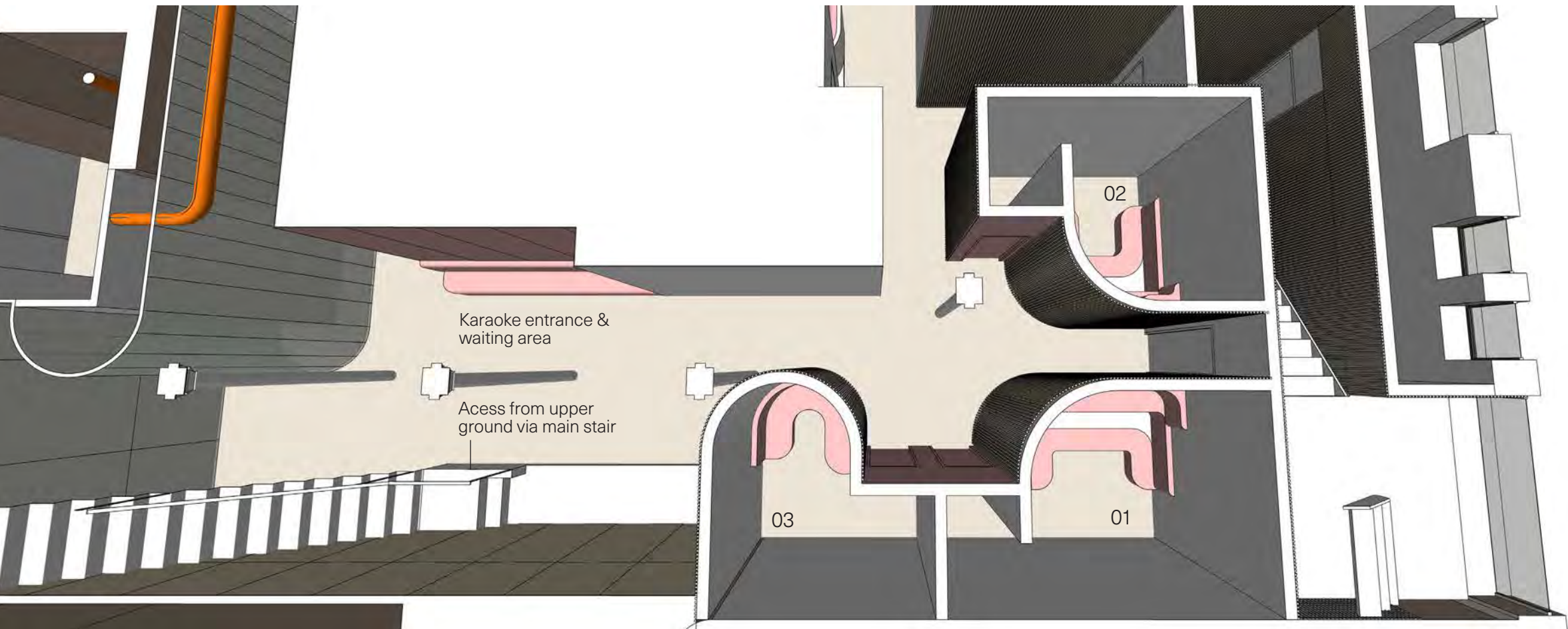
Our proposals have positioned a private dining area to the front of the scheme, which has proximity to the main elevation onto Portland Street and also to the secondary entrance leading to the Cocktail Bar at the lower ground.

The private dining space can be 'closed off' for private functions or 'opened up' to the main dining area. Neither format has an effect on the accessibility of the cocktail bar below. The key features of the private dining area are:

- (a) Removal of the various 'boxing in' and plasterboard bulkheads to reveal all existing brickwork and structure.
- (b) Provision of a 'sliding folding door' to allow the space to open up to the main dining area, or be closed off. One panel will be capable of operating as a hinged door.
- (c) Provision of large format drapes to the sides of the space to allow privacy. The drapes will be fixed to a robust commercial guide rail suspended below the existing timber roof structure
- (d) Provision of a small service bar within the space
- (e) Provision of a 'mirror wall' to the non-brickwork existing elevation to visually 'double up' the space and celebrate the volume and existing materiality.
- (f) Creation of a karaoke room dedicated to the private dining area (the remainder are at lower ground as described in 3.3.4). The karaoke room is critical to the operation, functionality and commercial viability of the private dining operation.
- (g) The karaoke room is conceived as a 'pod', set back from, and not adjoining the existing external walls and windows. Its elevation facing the external windows and also part of the ceiling are fully glazed to allow clear views of the external wall. Its position adjacent to the Portland Street elevation allows it to act as a 'glowing lantern' to help engage with the street.



Excerpt from Section CC - showing Karaoke Room 2 to bottom right



4.3.4 Karaoke Rooms

The karaoke room operation at the House of Fu Leeds site, and its inter-relationship with the cocktail bar (item 3.3.5) is successful. This exists as a sub-brand ('Hello Karaoke') and it is therefore deliberate that the karaoke rooms can either be accessed via the main House of Fu entrance (via the main stair leading to the lower ground), or via the secondary cocktail bar entrance off Portland Street.

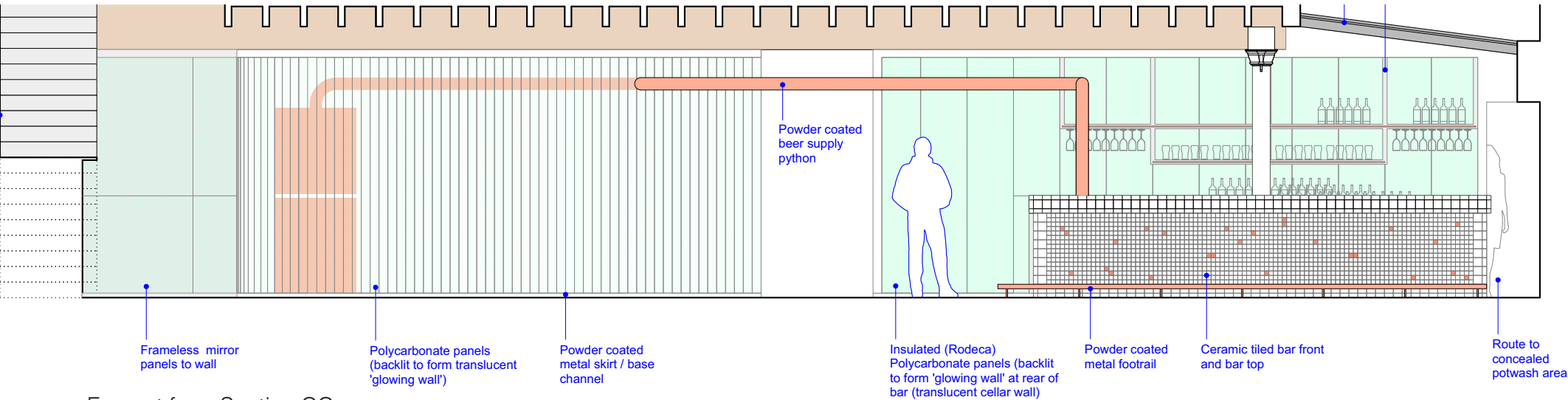
The Karaoke rooms are positioned at lower ground level to have proximity to the cocktail bar, from where they are supplied with drinks. There are three karaoke rooms at the lower ground level set within new curvilinear walls.

Elements associated with the karaoke operation include:

(a) The karaoke room walls are set at 2.45m, well below the existing cast iron column head detail. These existing architectural details can therefore be seen as far as possible above the karaoke rooms. The existing timber ceilings will be up-lit, so they can also be seen extending over the karaoke rooms.

(b) There is a small waiting area set facing the main stair. This will have banquette seating and be supplemented with small circular loose tables

(c) The karaoke rooms are positioned on the plan to reveal the existing and original extent of the concrete bottom tread to the Hodder and Partners stair which formed part of the CUBE gallery iteration. This is considered to be a high quality architectural feature which was 'covered up' but the LEAF plywood lower bar (removed).



Excerpt from Section GG



4.3.5 The Cocktail Bar

The cocktail bar has been positioned to activate the lower ground floor as a destination drinking and dining venue in its own right. It works in combination with the karaoke operation, and this is positioned to the opposite flank of the building on the same level. The cocktail bar can be accessed via the main stair, or from the secondary venue entrance on Portland Street (which can be separately staffed).

Critical elements required to create the setting for this destination bar are as follows:

(a) A fully tiled bar counter. This emulates the bar design in the Leeds venue, but employs curvilinear tiles to create a more distinct iteration of the bar more appropriate to a listed building.

(b) A translucent 'glowing' back bar. The materiality is described in more detail in section 3.4.4, however an insulated polycarbonate cellar wall forms a glowing backdrop to the space. The back bar shelving is a metal frame system suspended from the ceiling structure set in front of the glowing wall.

(c) Provision of new WC area adjacent to the entrance space. The existing quantum of WC's are not sufficient for a new Food and Beverage venue. We have been limited by existing drainage positions and the new WC block is positioned adjacent to a drain in this area. The WC closets themselves will have a lowered ceiling, but the perimeter walls and main circulation space will be full height to allow appreciation of the existing columns, column head details and ceiling structure within the space.

(d) A fully upholstered curvilinear booth seating platform. This is elevated by one step and has been designed to be 'plush' as appropriate for a bar of this type.

(e) Cellar and ancillary spaces have all been positioned towards the rear of the site. The cellars occupy a large area as there are two bars within the scheme – the lower ground cocktail bar and the upper ground 'arrival bar'. Beer python delivery tubes are formed from radiused powder coated metal.

(f) All existing brick that is painted in this area will be cleaned and returned to a brick finish in accordance with a heritage approved method statement (tbc). The materiality strategy in general and detail terms is the subject of section 3.4



4.3.6 External Courtyard

The external courtyard annexed to the site is being utilized as an external seating area. As described in section 3.1 that it is recognized that outdoor spaces are now critical in providing resilience for food and beverage uses post covid, and therefore a vital part of any design where it is possible.

The courtyard is conceived as The House of Fu garden (or secret garden), representing a tranquil haven. The design of screens and planting (as below) will follow the design theme of the interior, having Japanese influence in terms of calmness and simplicity.

Below are the design features required to create a 'navigable' path to the garden, and an attractive courtyard setting:

(a) The route to the courtyard garden via the rear stair has been 'signposted ' via design interventions, particularly at lower ground (cocktail bar) level via the use of glowing walls (refer to 3.4.4)

(b) The introduction of new vertical slatted timber screens to hide existing and proposed externally mounted external condensing units. These are situated at ground level and at an upper level atop an existing non original single story brick structure (refer to separate courtyard drawings).

(c) The provision of new bike racks

(d) The provision of a new timber banquette seat along the flank wall. This includes a simple timber framed 'pergola' type shelter with a translucent sheet roof. The rainwater from this can be collected and used to water the garden planters.

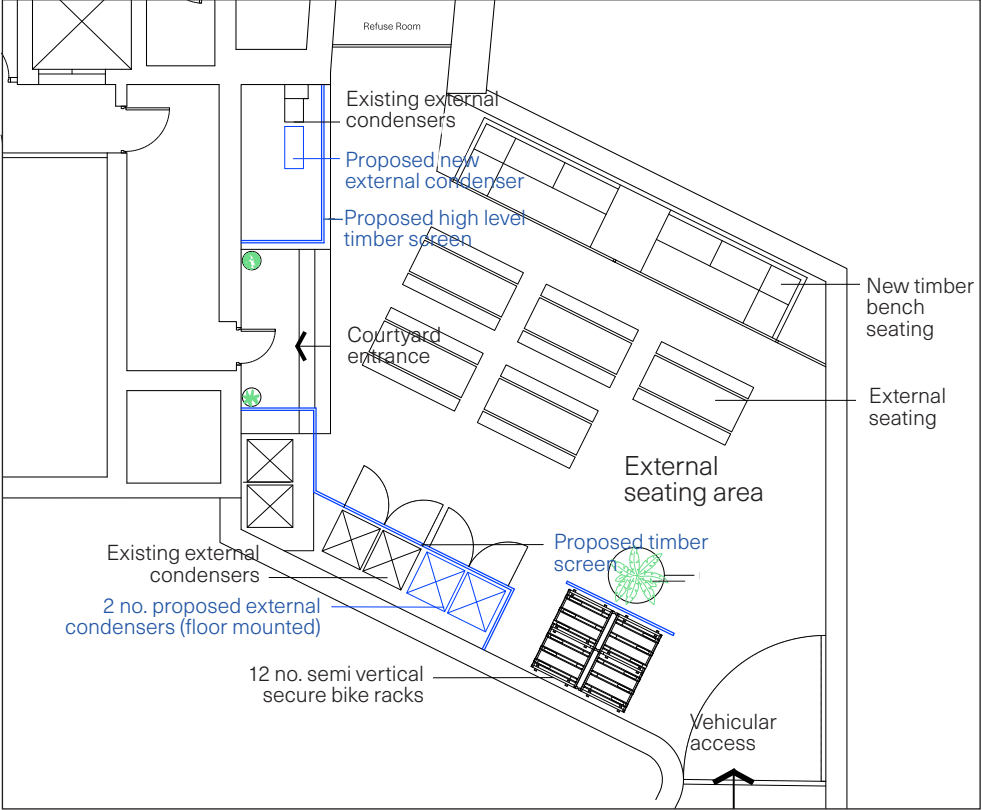
(d) Planting will be introduced to transform the feel and microclimate of the courtyard. These would all be in pots, rather than in the ground.

(f) The existing cobblestones will all be retained and be unaffected by the proposals

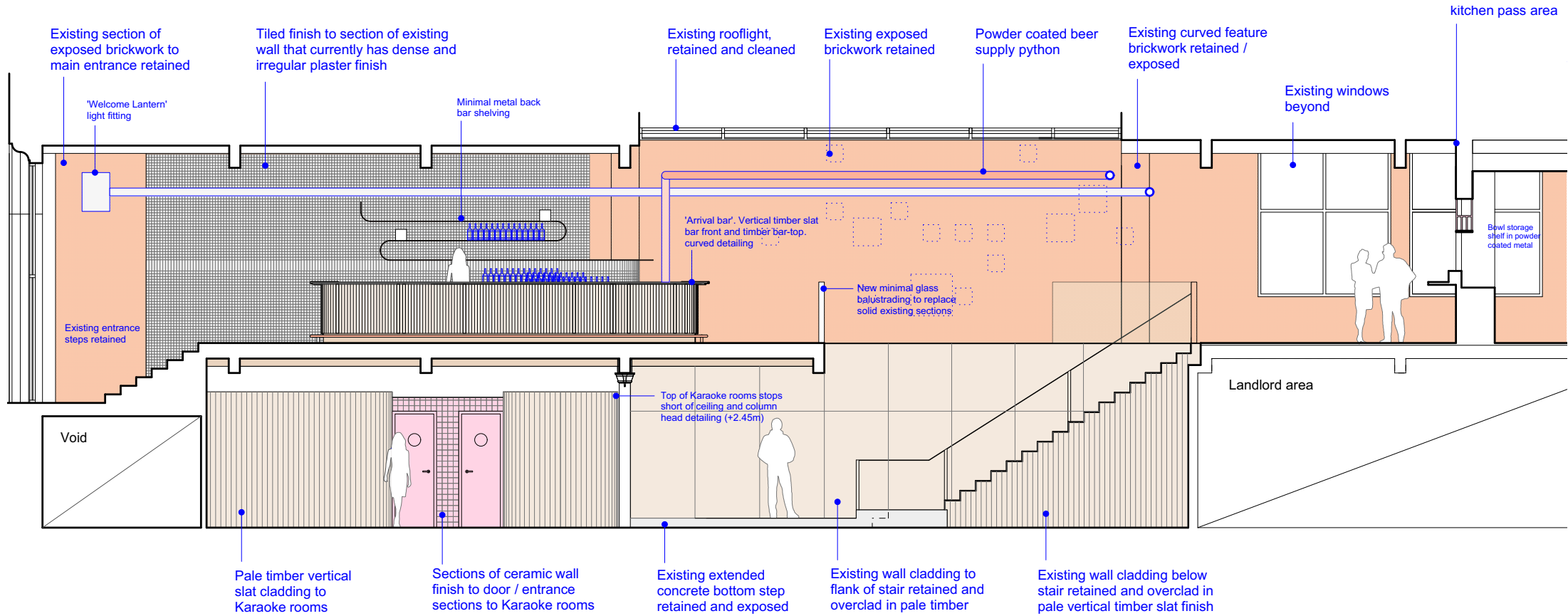
(g) New external lighting will be provided to create an intimate atmosphere after dark. This lighting will be small particle / 'pop up' lighting rather than overly illuminated overhead lighting.



Existing view of courtyard towards rear of building



Proposed courtyard plan



Excerpt from Section AA - showing large areas of existing brickwork exposed to flank wall to unit



FLANK WALL 1 upper ground: brickwork exposed & lightly cleaned



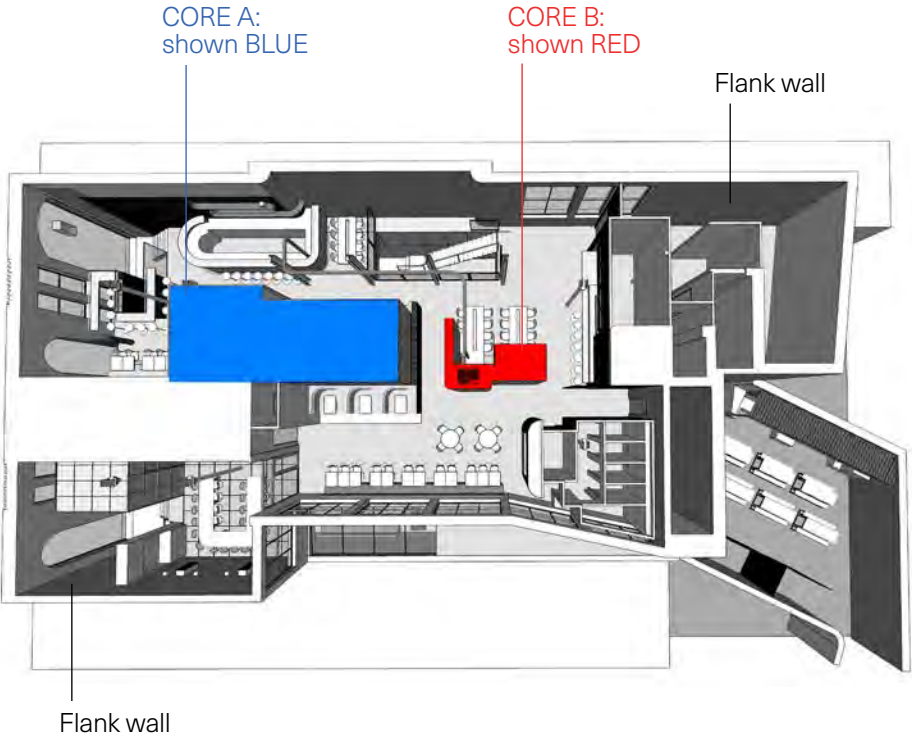
'CORE A': plastered wall to receive fabric panels, high level brickwork left exposed



FLANK WALL 2 lower ground: paint to be removed and brickwork exposed



'CORE B' - paint to be removed and brickwork exposed



4.4 Materiality strategy

4.4.1 The key focus of the materiality strategy is to celebrate the existing historic fabric of the building – something that strongly attracted the operator to this site.

The operator providing these proposals views some of the critical opportunities for the current site as being down to interventions made during the CUBE gallery fit-out phase of the site - undertaken by Hodder and Partners in 1998 (some photography of this iteration is included in this report). The CUBE design included a significant amount of white wall panelling set in front of existing brickwork.

4.4.2 Existing brickwork

The design proposed in this application exposes a greater amount of brickwork than the CUBE scheme left exposed - some of the CUBE wall panelling having since been removed in the subsequent LEAF café / music venue fit-out of 2016.

In this proposal we have 'targeted' areas of existing plastered wall as a place to utilise and install new finishes such as ceramic tiles, pale timber slats or fabric panels.

The majority of the 'flank walls' to the space at both levels are retained as exposed brickwork and existing windows. This is more widespread than in the CUBE gallery fit-out.

The two central 'cores'
The site has two central masonry 'cores', one towards the front (Portland Street), and one towards the rear of the site. Core A and Core B are annotated on the adjacent diagrams.

Core A (towards the front) is largely plastered, and this has been utilized to provide upholstered panels and booth seating to create a welcoming 'soft heart' at the centre of the scheme. This helps considerably to soften the acoustics within the space. There is a strip of unplastered brickwork at high level on parts of Core A, and this has been left exposed as per the proposed sections.

Core B is existing exposed brickwork, but with large areas with layers of historic paint. Rather than paint over this again, the proposal here is to remove the paint (in accordance with a heritage brick cleaning method statement to be confirmed). This then, would be retained as brickwork with limited artwork fixed into the mortar joints only within the wall.



System 1



System 1

4.4.3 Materials / wall surfaces

The surface materiality systems below relate mainly to wall surfaces, as the existing timber floor finish is being retained.

There is some variance, as the site is large and a complex plan form, but the basic strategy of each area is:

System 1: Kitchen & main dining area (upper ground)

Pale grey tiles, pale timber surfaces and counters, with limited pale pink metal work and shelving. Blended pink fabric seating and wall panelling. Some orange metalwork and fabric.

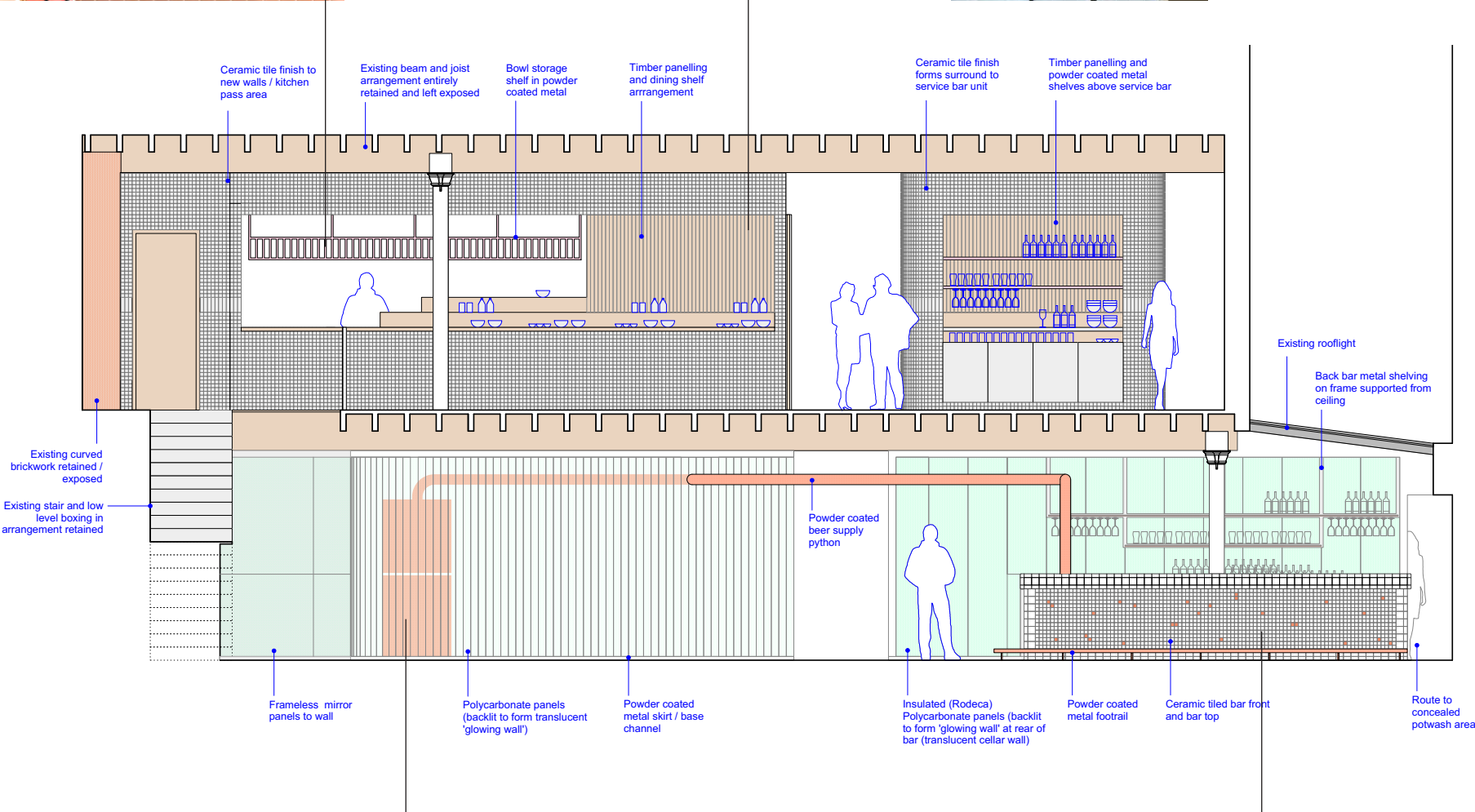
System 2: Cocktail bar (lower ground)

White ceramic tiles with orange highlights to the bar. 'Glowing' insulated polycarbonate wall to cellar and back bar. Orange fabric banquette seating. Limited powder coated metal elements (orange and white). Some 'backdrop' wall finishes of pale timber slats.

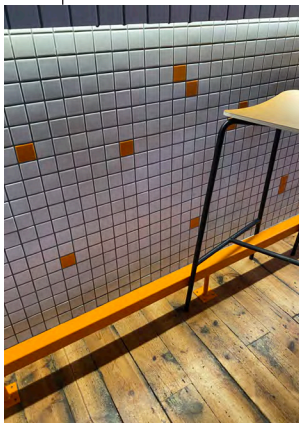
System 3: Karaoke room area

Pale timber slats to the curved walls to the exterior of the karaoke rooms. The top of the karaoke rooms are set below the level of the existing column heads, having a roof / ceiling at approximately 2.45m above floor level. Curvilinear ceramic tiles are provided to the 'flat' sections of wall adjacent to the curved elements.

Internally, the karaoke rooms are clad in acoustic fabric and pale timber, with curvilinear upholstered banquette seats.



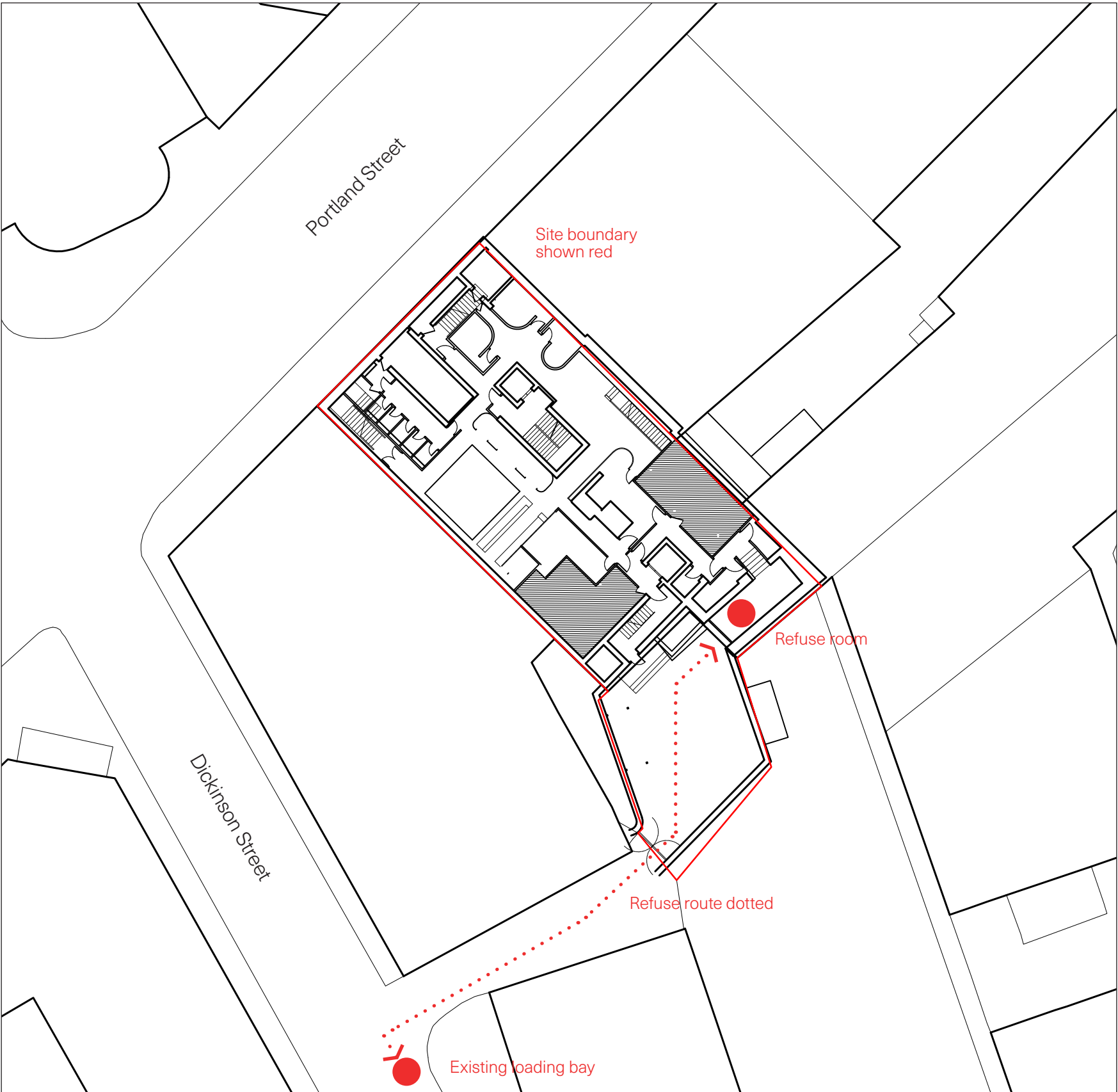
System 2



System 2

System 3





Location plan

5.0 Refuse strategy

5.1 Refuse room

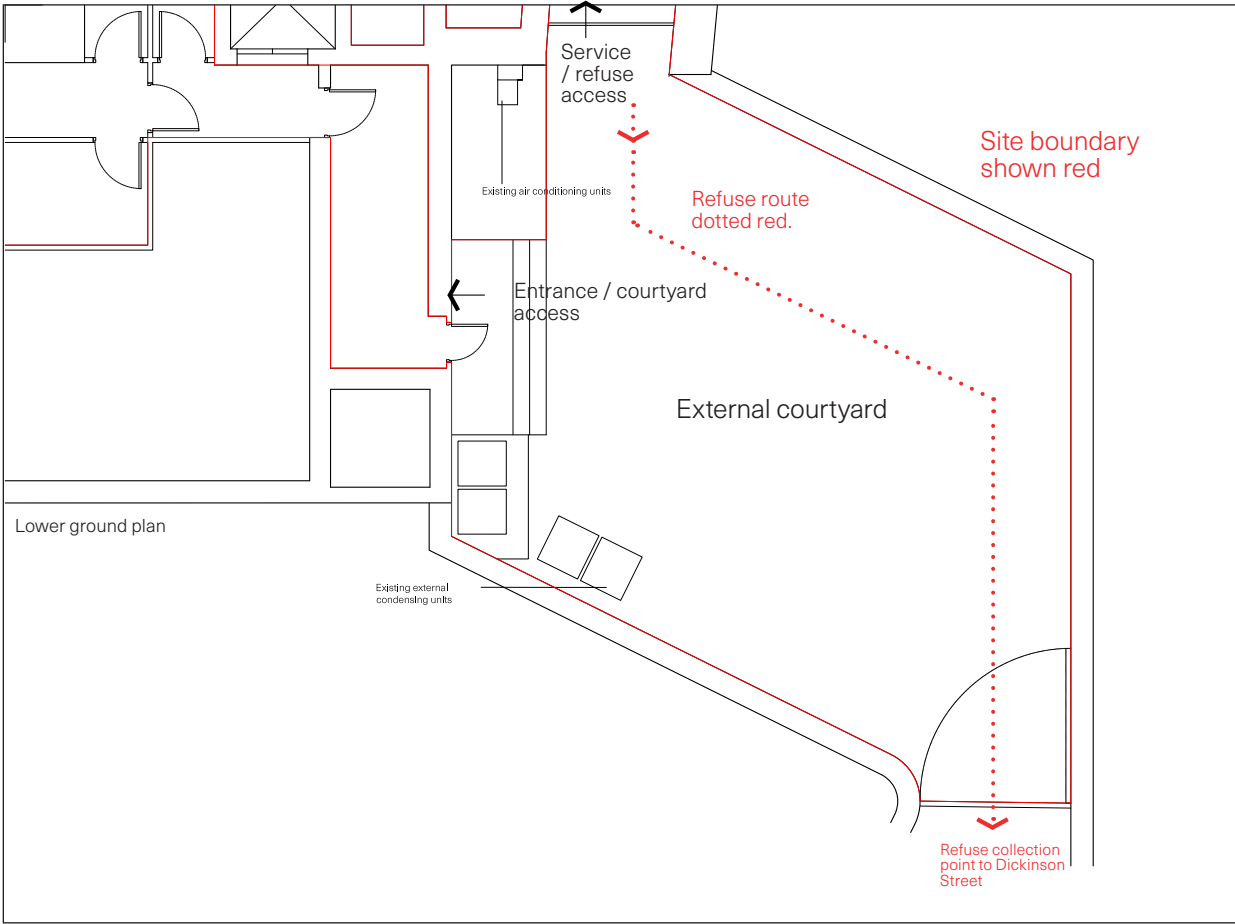
The GA plans show a refuse area located directly off the rear external courtyard, accessed via a roller shutter.

5.2 Collection route

Refuse collection vehicles will park in an existing loading bay on Dickinson Street. If this is not available, it should be noted that smaller refuse vehicles can drive directly into the external courtyard.

Refuse can then be taken from the bin room, across the courtyard to the refuse collection vehicle.

Reference should be made to the Waste Transfer Note and other documents forming part of this application.



Courtyard plan