PORTICO LIBRARY
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
ISSUE 03
NOVEMBER 2025



HERITAGE FUND

THE PORTICO LIBRARY

MAX FORDHAM

PURCELL

PRICE & MYERS

CHAMBERS

Appleyard & Trew

iM2 ltd

PORTICO LIBRARY
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INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

We are delighted to be working with the Portico Library & Newsroom on the realisation of the trustee's vision to refurbish and expand the library, ensuring its long-term sustainable future as a key cultural venue within central Manchester.

The Portico Library is a Grade II* listed building of exceptional significance, located on a prominent corner site at the junction of Mosley and Charlotte Streets. Established in 1806, the Portico Library was founded as a subscription library and reading room by a group of wealthy Manchester businessmen and intellectuals, aiming to promote learning and access to literature during a time of rapid industrial growth.

In 1920, part of the building was leased to the Bank of Athens. To accommodate this new function, structural and interior modifications were made, particularly on the ground floor and infilling the void to the first floor. A separate entrance was added to Charlotte Street, and the internal stair redesigned, to allow bank customers to access the commercial space without disturbing the library above.

Later, in the early 21st century, the ground floor space was transformed again—this time into a bar and restaurant known as The Bank, which continues to occupy the ground floor.

The design proposals described within this report are part of the NLHF funded 'Reuniting The Portico' project, which seeks to bring the ground and basement levels back into use by the library, accommodating enhanced exhibition, retail, cafe, events and archive space together with accessible visitor facilities. The design proposals also seek to resolve accessibility issues, providing level access to all levels via the building's principal entrance on Mosley Street. Other interventions include an holistic approach to enhancing the building's thermal and environmental performance.

The ambition of the Portico Library & Newsroom is to be the most the most accessible, sustainable and dynamic historic library.

1.1 Purpose of the Document

The objective of this RIBA Stage 3 Report / Design & Access Statement is to describe the iterative design process undertaken between Client, Place and Architect. This process has facilitated much thought about the nature of a 21st century library, the aspirations for the use of space and the relationship between activities. The process has enabled a deeper more critical understanding of The Portico Library and the opportunities it presents for as an exceptional and unique cultural venue.

The methodology has been to review all existing material, understand the building and site, understand the historical development and significance of its various parts, and to devise a creative response that brought both together and then continue the iterative process of design development to refine the concept to a viable proposal.

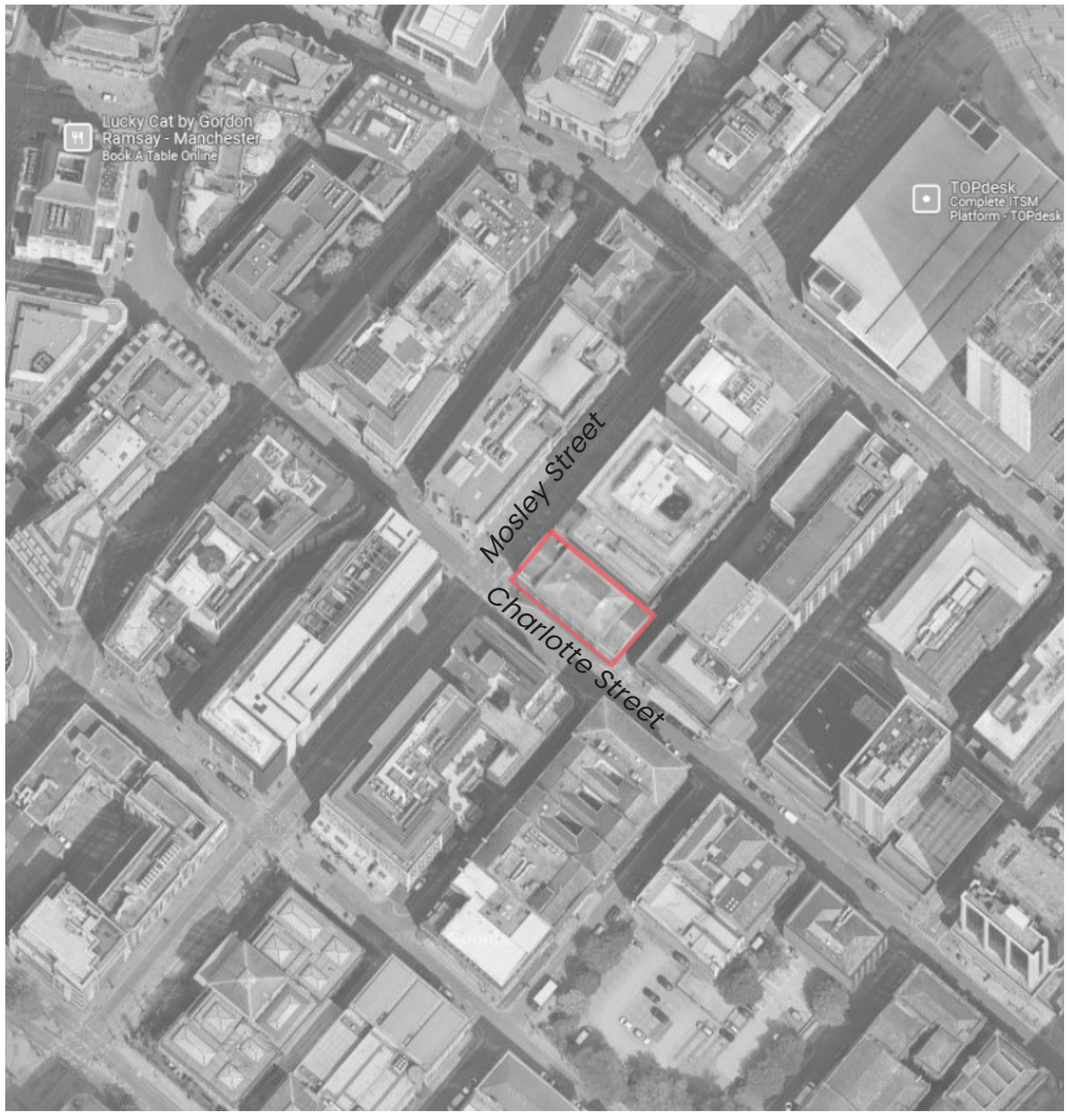
INTRODUCTION

1.2 Site Location and Context

The Portico Library is located on a prominent corner site at the junction Mosley Street and Charlotte Street, in central Manchester. Mosley Street is one of the city centre busiest thoroughfares, with metrolink tramlines running from St Peter's Square (South-West) to Piccadilly Gardens and Market Street (North-East). Charlotte Street forms another important east-west connection towards Cross St and Deansgate. Back George Street is a quiet services street running to the rear of the building.

Mosley Street forms the boundary between the George Street Conservation Area and King Street Conservation. The Portico Library is outside of both Conservation Areas but is a prominent historic building on the immediate boundary of each.

The building is surrounded by streets on three sides, and adjoins a neighbouring building on the fourth side (North-East). Its principal elevations face Mosley and Charlotte Street, are classical in style and faced in dressed ashlar stone. The elevation facing Back George Street (South-East elevation) is constructed in brick with stone cills and other details.



Site location



Looking North along Mosley Street



Looking East along Charlotte Street



Looking West along Charlotte Street



Looking North along Back George Street

INTRODUCTION

1.3 Summary of Proposals

The ambition for the Reuniting The Portico project is underpinned by the Portico Library's Vision, Mission and Values:

Our Vision is to be the most accessible, sustainable and dynamic historic library, where past, present, and future are unlocked through creativity and collaboration.

Our Mission is to work with Manchester's diverse communities and visitors to explore, share, and celebrate their stories and the city's literary and global heritage.

Values:

- Welcoming to all reflecting our city
- Creative: promoting curiosity
- Equitable: reading the past to improve the present
- Collaborative: community making.

It is also underpinned by the NLHF's Investment Principles:

Saving Heritage

Conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.

Protecting the Environment

Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

Inclusion, Access and Participation:

Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.

Organisational Sustainability:

Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

The proposals seek to transform the historic library into an accessible, sustainable, and dynamic arts, learning and heritage hub for all of Manchester's residents and visitors.

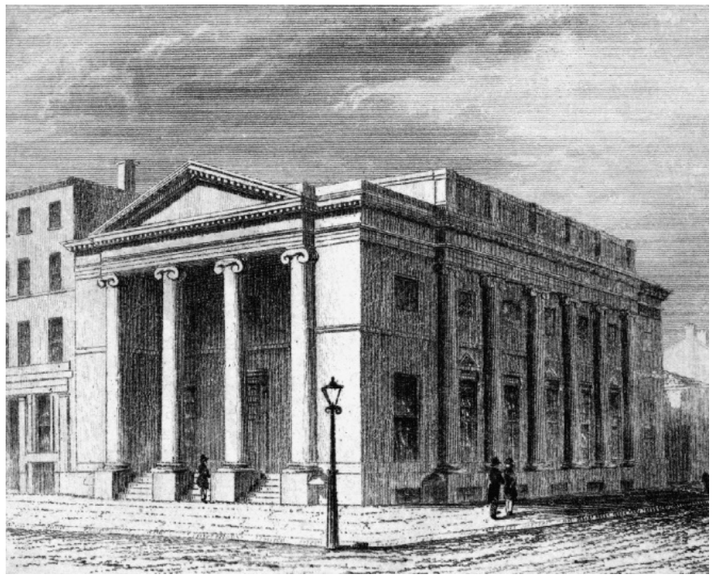
In order to achieve this vision, the proposals seek to reunite the Ground Floor of the building (currently leased out as a pub / restaurant and formerly a bank) with the historic library which is still housed on the upper floor(s) of the building. In doing so, the proposals seek to bring back into use the historic principal entrance and portico, and to resolve issues of accessibility and building regulations compliance.

The proposed design for the library building has the following principal objectives:

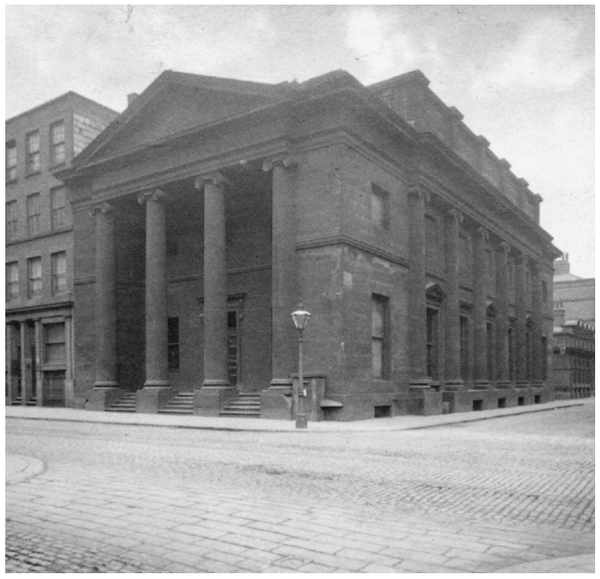
- Work co-creatively with the Portico Library's group of Critical Friends to develop a positive and inclusive visitor experience.
- Improve lift and stair access to all levels within the library.
- Improve the presentation, operation, and circulation of the first-floor library space.
- Contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of the charity by introducing a café/bar, bookshop and meeting rooms on the ground floor together with all the services required to support these.
- Create flexible facilities with appropriate infrastructure to build on the Portico Library's current events programme.
- Continue to drive visitors to the first-floor library space by including a central exhibition space with improved and appropriate infrastructure.
- Provide for sufficient back of house services including plant, kitchen, archives, stores, and staff accommodation.
- Provide updated and appropriate heating, cooling and air handling.
- Deliver a schedule of internal and external building repairs in-line with the sensitive heritage nature of the building, including enhancements to building fabric and rainwater disposal.
- Enhance the environmental performance of the building and the operation of the future library and support the financial viability of the organisation by minimising both the operating and maintenance cost of the future site.

THE SITE AND CONTEXT

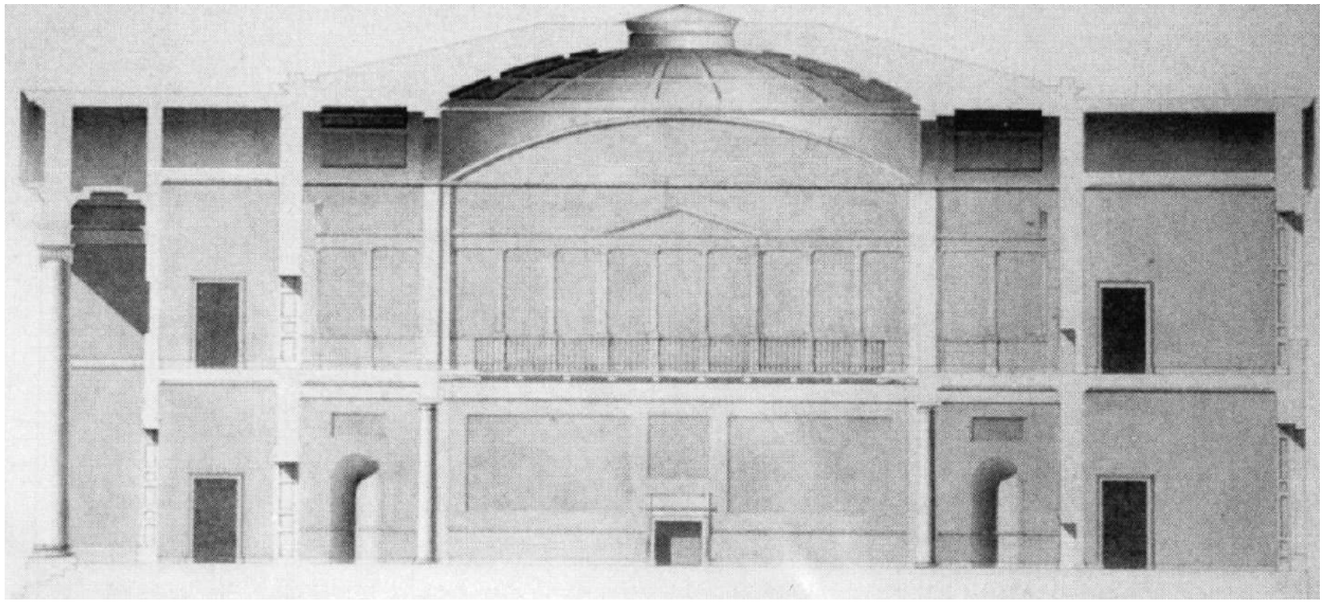
2.1 Site Description



Moseley Street View c. 1839



19th century photograph, showing blind first floor windows



Original concept section by Thomas Harrison

The Portico Library is located in the heart of the city of Manchester, at the corner of Mosley Street and Charlotte Street. Established in 1806, the Portico Library was founded as a subscription library and reading room by a group of wealthy Manchester businessmen and intellectuals, aiming to promote learning and access to literature during a time of rapid industrial growth.

The Grade II* listed building was designed by Thomas Harrison of Chester in the Greek Revival style, a popular architectural trend of the early 19th century that emphasized classical elegance and symmetry. Its striking façade features a sandstone portico with Ionic columns, which gives the library its name. The refined design reflects the aspirations of Manchester's emerging industrial middle class for cultural sophistication.

Inside, the library houses a domed reading room to the first floor, while the basement and ground floors are currently leased out as a pub / restaurant, formerly the Bank of Athens. Today, the building continues to serve as a working library and cultural venue within Manchester's rich and diverse cultural cicuit.

2.2 Brief Historical Description

The Portico Library building underwent significant alterations during the 20th and early 21st centuries as its use evolved from a private subscription library to shared commercial functions.

In 1920, part of the building was leased to the Bank of Athens. To accommodate this new function, structural and interior modifications were made, particularly on the ground floor and infilling the void to the first floor. A separate entrance was added to Charlotte Street, and the internal stair redesigned, to allow bank customers to access the commercial space without disturbing the library above.

Further alterations at first floor level included the introduction of new openings within formerly blind windows and extensive modification and replacement of internal bookshelves and other joinery.

Later, in the early 21st century, the ground floor space was transformed again—this time into a bar and restaurant known as The Bank. This conversion required further alterations to the ground floor interior. Original banking features such as counters and safes were removed and the space remodelled.

TIMELINE

1799
Fundraising commenced, organised by local businessmen Robert Robinson and Michael Ward, reportedly inspired by Liverpool's Athenaeum.

1802
The foundation stone for the new building was laid by Chester based architect Thomas Harrison and Manchester builder Thomas Bellhouse.

1806
The building opened in January 1806, and was first referred to as the Portico Library one month later.

1828
The Portico Library was part of Manchester's 1828 music festival - connected to the Assembly Rooms opposite by a canvas tent ballroom.

1840
The Keeper lived in the front section of the basement. The rear basement was let out in the 1850s.

1844
Gas lighting was first fitted within the interior of the building.

1904
New openings were made in the formerly blank windows of the first floor. The bookcases were also substantially altered and/or replaced. The library was in financial difficulties and already in discussion with the City Corporation around transfer of ownership or conversion to a private club.

1914
The main gasolier was replaced and electric lighting installed.

1919
The library received an offer from the Manchester and Salford Bank to purchase the building and lease it back to them, however the option was rejected following another offer by the Bank of Athens to lease the ground and basement floors.

1920
Major alterations were undertaken to the building to accomodate the Bank of Athens, including the closing in of the double height reading room with a glazed floor and the recofiguration of the entrances.

c. 1930
The Bank of Athens tenancy was replaced with the tenancy of the London Joint City and Midland Bank.

1938
The bank's lease was sold on to Lloyd's Bank (for 42 years).

1941
Part of the basement was converted to form an air-raid shelter, but the building survives the duration of the Second World War almost undamaged.

1952
The building was listed as Grade II*.

1960
A significant part of the ceiling to the first floor reading room collapsed, due to lack of maintenance and repeated reports of extensive roof leaks and dry rot over the decades prior.

1984
The Portico Library Charitable Trust was formed.

1985
Tetley Walker acquired the lease of the ground floor and basement as a cafe bar. Major alteration of the 1920s glazed ceiling to the bank was undertaken for sound attenuation and regulations compliance reasons.

1990-1998
Various works undertaken to enlarge and modernise the kitchen, repair the roof and pediment masonry, to install WCs and repair plaster ceilings (impact of 1996 IRA bomb).

2024
Appointment of Design Team as part of the Reuniting the Portico project.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.1 Existing and Proposed Uses

Existing Uses

Currently, The Portico Library is located on the First Floor of the building. The Ground Floor and Basement levels are occupied by The Bank pub / restaurant and associated kitchen and service spaces.

Proposed Uses

The proposals described in this application are to reunite the Ground and Basement floor levels with the library on the First Floor.

At Basement level, the proposals provide for proper visitor and staff facilities and toilets, secure, dry archive space with roller racking, staff office space, commercial kitchen, kitchen stores and bin store.

At Ground Floor level, the proposals provide for cafe/bar, bookshop and events space, supporting the activities and revenue generation of The Portico Library. Level access is proposed to be provided to the portico, allowing all building users to access the building by its historic main entrance on Mosley Street. The installation of a passenger lift provides level access to all floors.

At First Floor level, the proposals allow for the Reading Room space and bookcases to remain largely unaltered, though with enhanced flexibility, storage and fixed items of furniture such as welcome desk and large study table with integrated lighting.

DESIGN STATUS

3.2 Project Team and Vision, Mission and Values

THE PORTICO LIBRARY

North Star

PURCELL

CHAMBERS

MAX FORDHAM

PRICE&MYERS

MAZE FIRE CONSULTING

iM2 ltd

Appleyard & Trew

Our Vision is to be the most accessible, sustainable and dynamic historic library, where past, present, and future are unlocked through creativity and collaboration.

Our Mission is to work with Manchester's diverse communities and visitors to explore, share, and celebrate their stories and the city's literary and global heritage.

Values:

- Welcoming to all reflecting our city
- Creative: promoting curiosity
- Equitable: reading the past to improve the present
- Collaborative: community making.

DESIGN STATUS

NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND:
4 INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

Saving Heritage
Conserving and valuing heritage, for now and the future.

Protecting the Environment
Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

Inclusion, access and participation
Supporting greater inclusion, diversity, access and participation in heritage.

Organisational Sustainability
Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.3 Concept Proposals

INTERIOR VIEW OF THE CAFE AS PROPOSED



Explore opportunities for introducting renewable energy sources and upgrading building fabric - eg. solar voltaic panels or air source heat pumps, and additional insulation to roof structures.

Provide level access to all floors via new lift, adjacent to remodelled entrance lobby with level access directly to Mosley Street.

Use the portico as an opportunity to interpret / explain the work and values of the Portico Library. Break down the austerity of the architecture and encourage diversity and inclusion of audiences.

Regain access via the portico for all: remove central section of steps to create leval access from Mosley Street.

Open up views to Reading Room and glazed dome over by creating acoustically insulated lightbox.

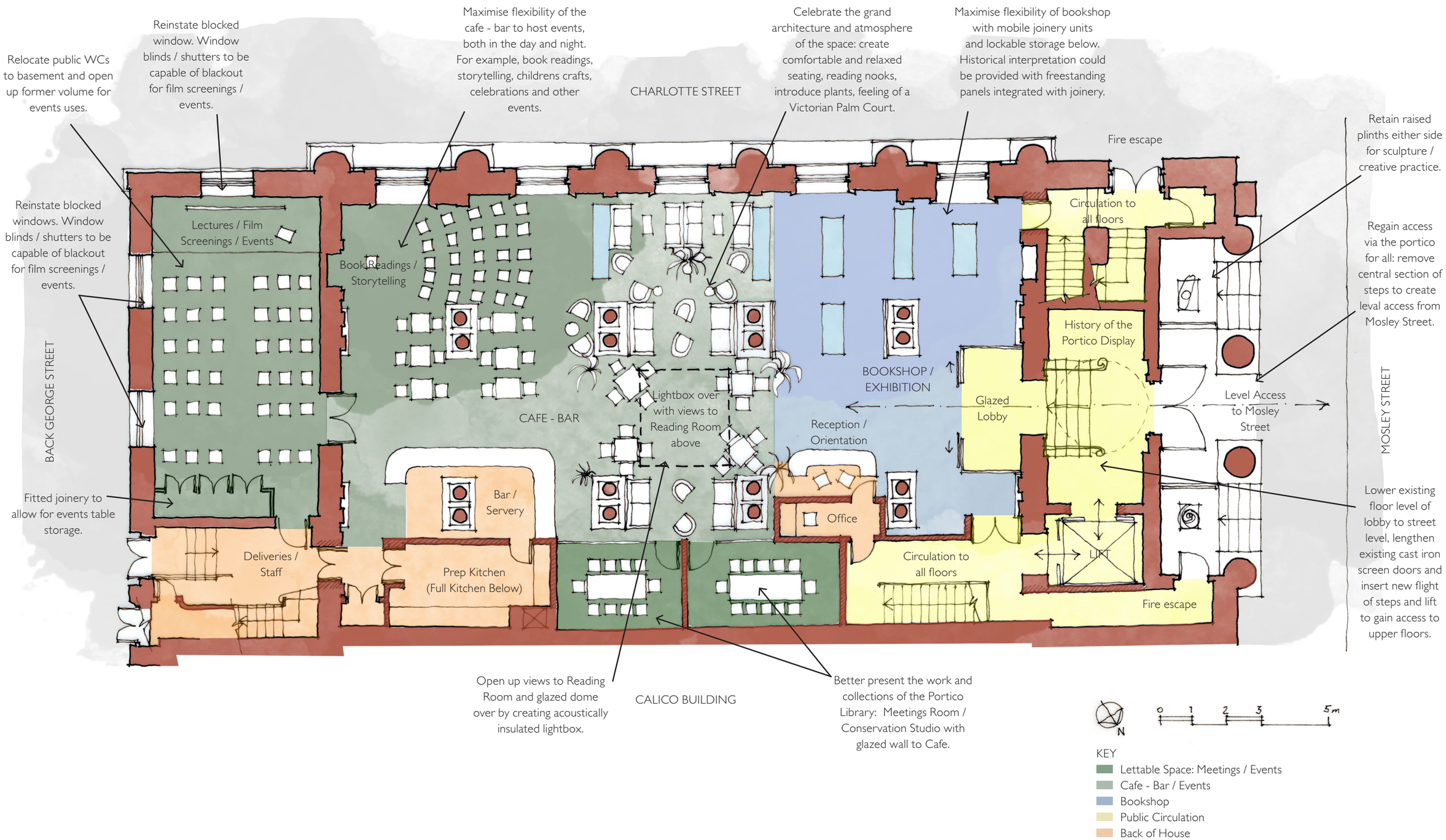
Provide dedicated archive space with stable environmental conditions and roller racking storage system.

Celebrate the grand architecture and atmosphere of the space: create comfortable and relaxed seating, reading nooks, introduce plants, feeling of a Victorian Palm Court.

Maximise flexibility of the cafe - bar to host events, both in the day and night. For example, book readings, storytelling, childrens crafts, celebrations and other events.

Reinstate blocked windows. Window blinds / shutters to be capable of blackout for film screenings / book launches / events.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN: CONCEPT PROPOSAL



CONCEPT PROPOSALS

MOSLEY STREET ELEVATION: AS EXISTING



The existing flight of steps to Mosley Street is off-putting and a physical barrier for many building users, ensouraging poor inclusion and diversity of users.

The austere architecture of the portico can be perceived as intimidating to certain groups, and along with the stepped access, poor signage and lighting, deters many visitors.

The existing entrance is unclear, and opens directly into staircase. Buzzer access deters visitors who cannot locate the entrance.

MOSLEY STREET ELEVATION: AS PROPOSED

Use the portico as an opportunity to interpret / explain the work and values of the Portico Library using graphics / text / artwork. Break down the austerity of the architecture and encourage diversity and inclusion of audiences.



Provide level access to all floors via new lift, adjacent to remodelled entrance lobby with level access directly to Mosley Street.

Retain raised plinths either side for sculpture / creative practice.

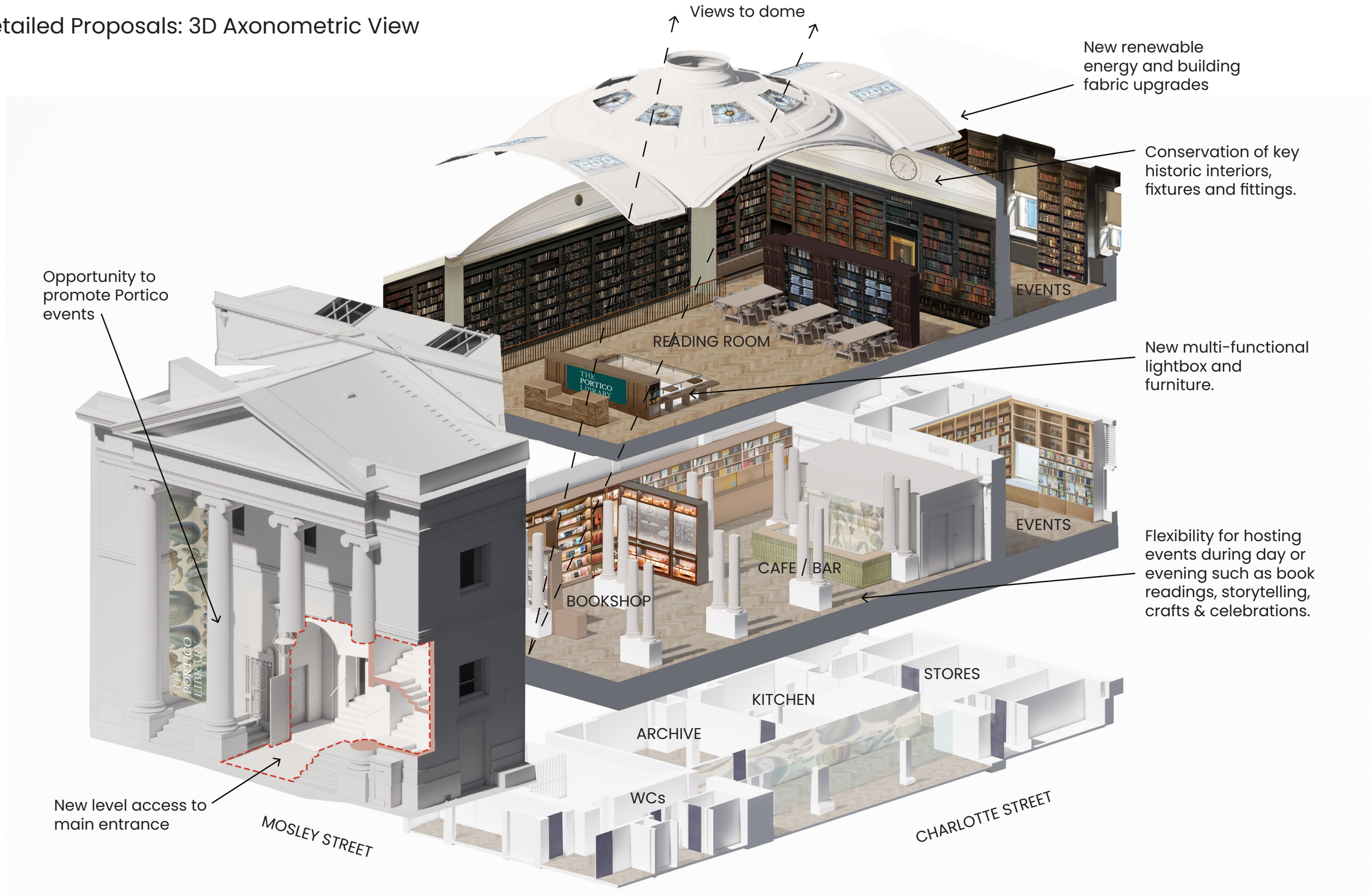
Regain access via the portico for all: remove central section of steps to create leval access from Mosley Street.

Lower existing floor level of lobby to street level, lengthen existing cast iron screen doors and insert new flight of steps and lift to gain access to upper floors.

Explore opportunities for sensistive and integrated signage to Mosley Street.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.4 Detailed Proposals: 3D Axonometric View



DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.4 Proposed Uses: Basement



Staff Space
Workshop Space
Kitchen
Quiet Space
Plant Space
WC
Storage

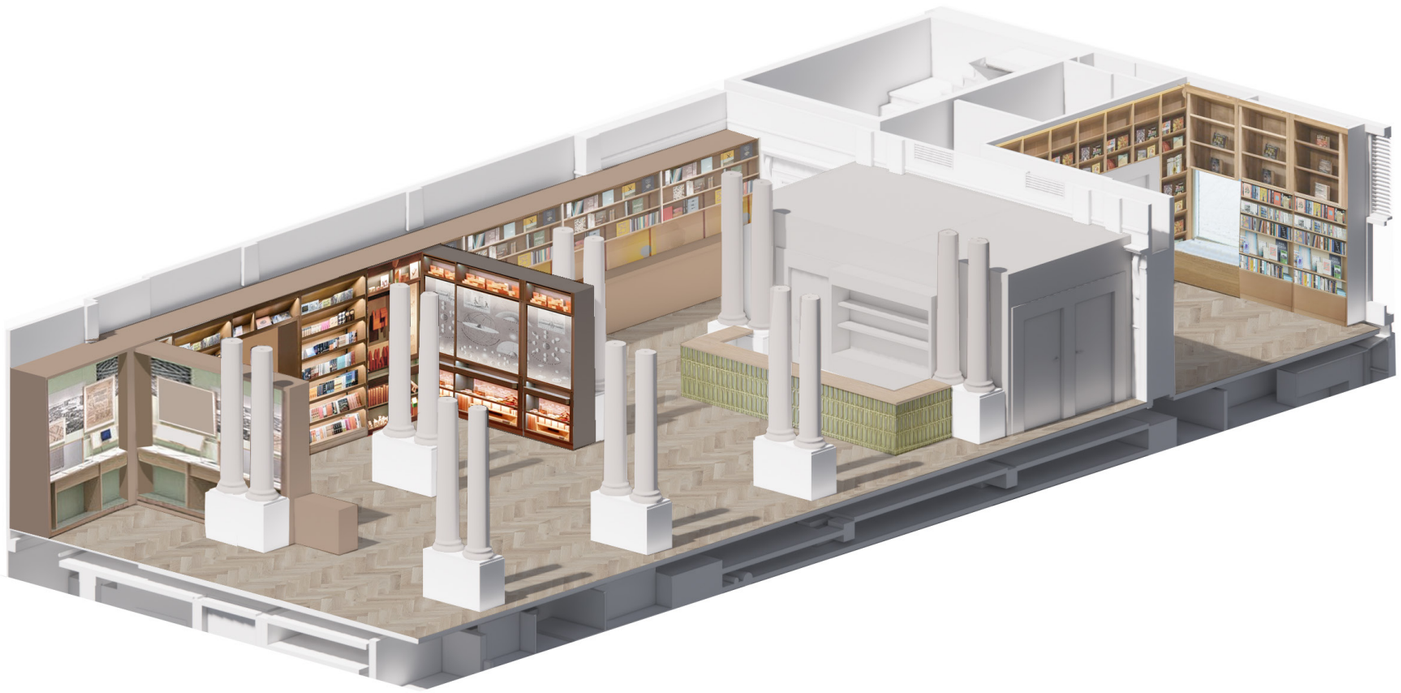
The basement level offers the opportunity to fully realise the potential of the Portico offer, by **creating dedicated staff offices, meeting spaces,** archive and research facilities as well as the functional requirements of the building including a full production kitchen and a range of WC facilities including a changing places WC.







3.4 Proposed Uses: Ground Floor



Dynamic Floor Space

Lending Library / Events

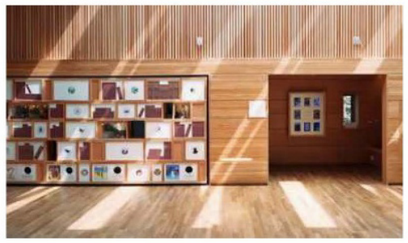
Kitchen

Plant Space

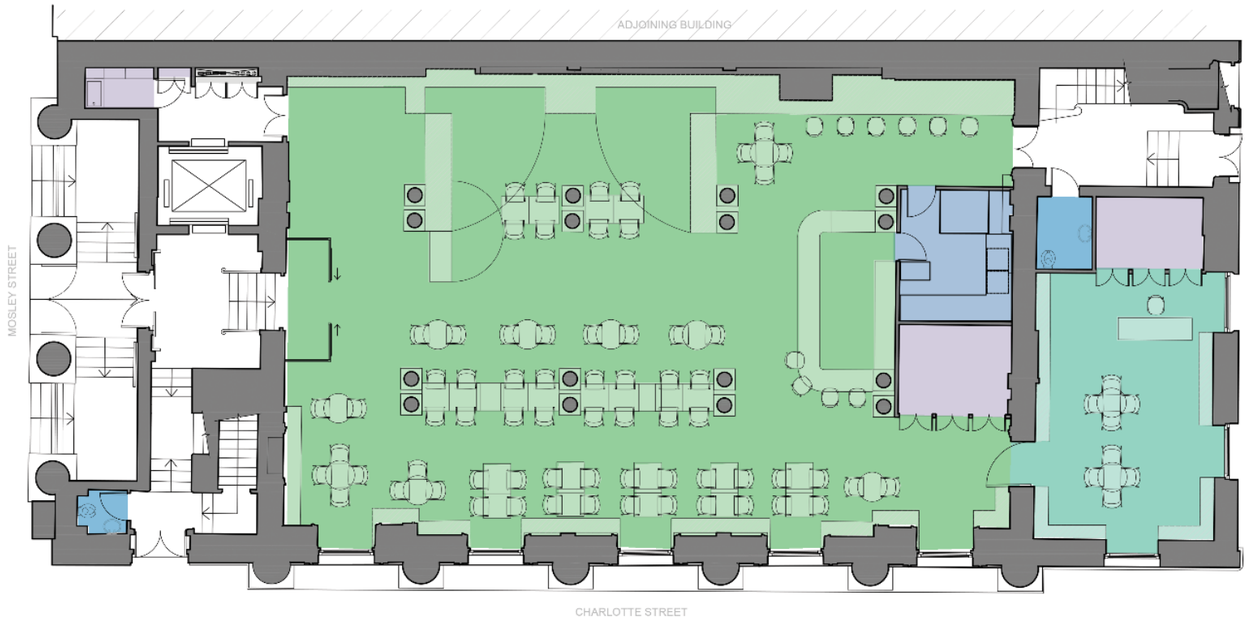
WC

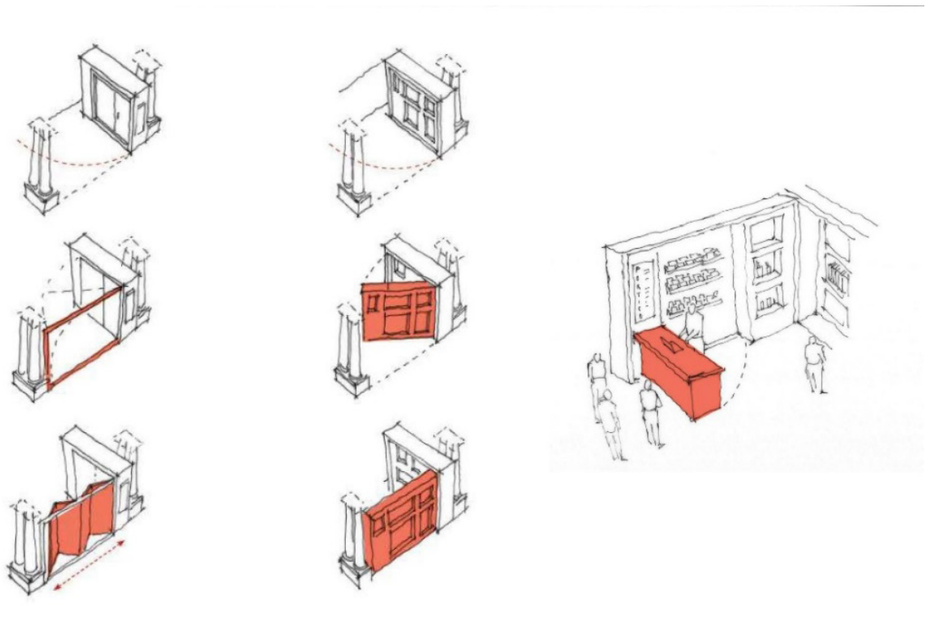
Storage

Agile Bookcases: Precedent & Design Thinking









3.4 Proposed Uses: Ground Floor



Open Bookcase - Cafe



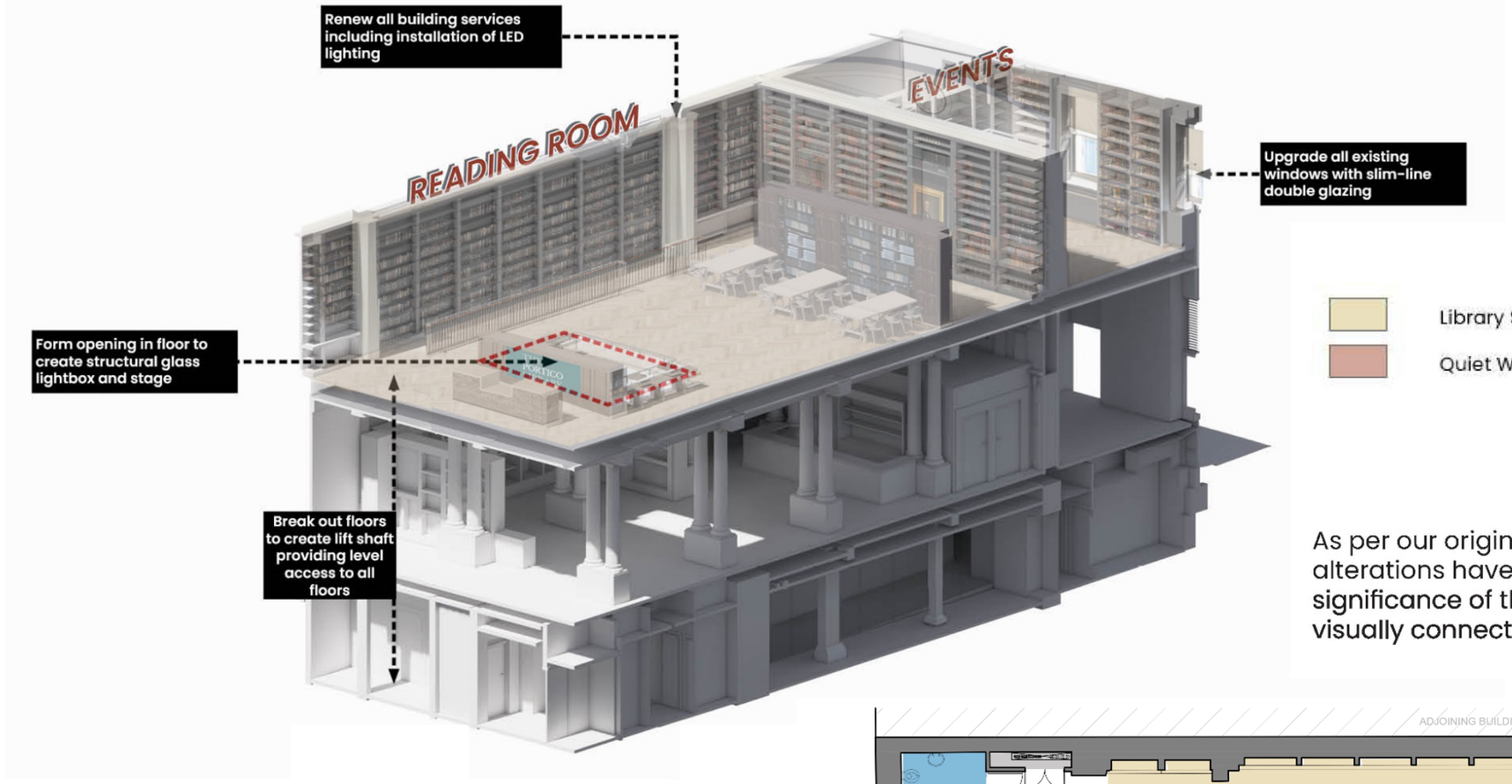
Closed Bookcase - Dining

The design team have worked with the client, project manager and business planner to understand the additional offers that the Portico can make over in terms of events, business and conferencing facilities.
By maximising flexibility in the plan and servicing strategy, we have tested a number of scenarios that demonstrate that these events can take place during and outside the core opening hours, allowing the building to work hard across all floor levels.

Organisational Sustainability

Strengthening heritage to be adaptive and financially resilient, contributing to communities and economies.

3.4 Proposed Uses: First Floor



Library Space

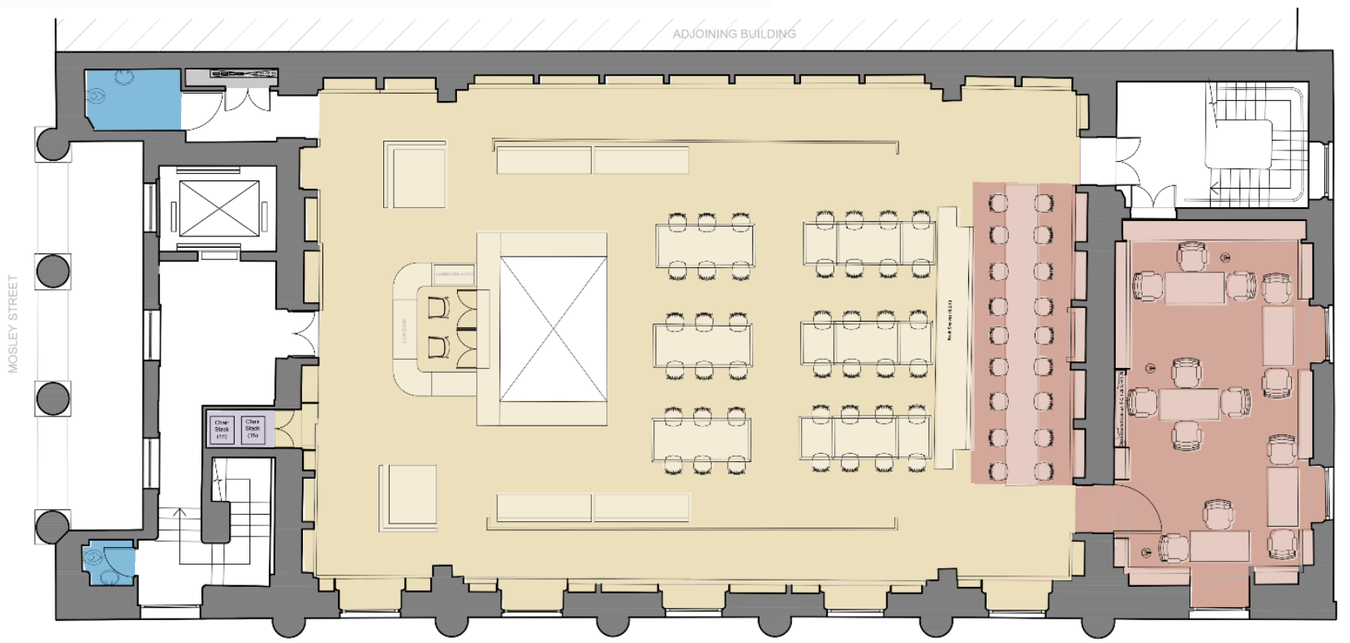
Quiet Working

Plant Space

WC

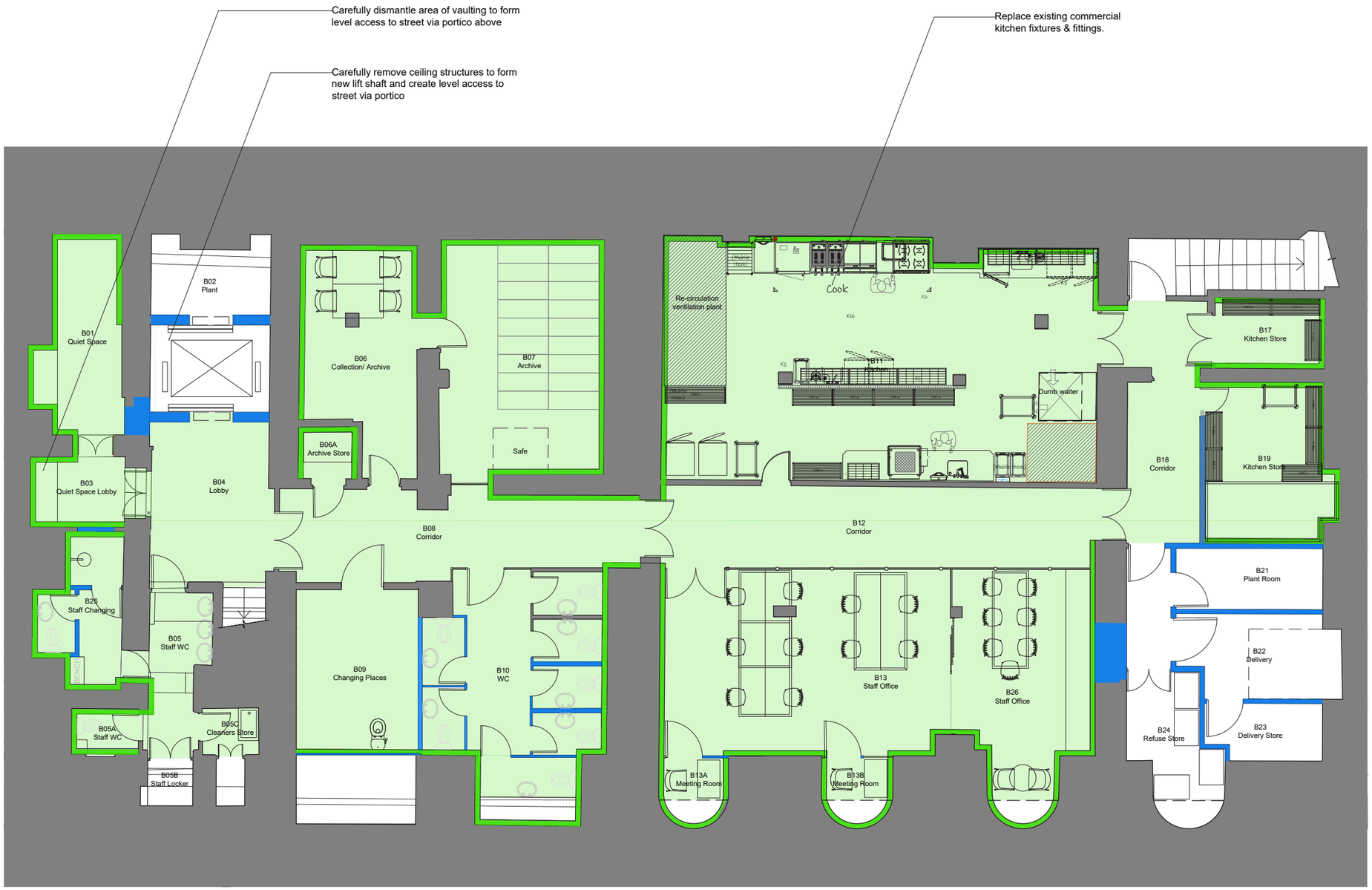
Storage

As per our original proposal for the building, any alterations have been introduced to enhance the significance of this historic library space as well as visually connecting the two floors together.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.5 Detailed Proposals: Basement



1 2100 Basement Plan as Proposed
1:50 @ A1

0 500mm 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m

of measurement.

All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.

Purcell shall be notified in writing of any discrepancies.

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KEY

- Existing Walls
- Proposed Walls
- Extent of waterproof cavity drainage tanking system to floors.
- Extent of waterproof cavity drainage tanking system to walls.

NOTES:

PAVEMENT LIGHTS
Replace all pavement lights with new cast iron and glass pavement lights.

SERVICES
Replace all electrical systems, CCTV, Wifi, lighting, and controls.

WATERPROOFING, FLOOR & WALL FINISHES
Install waterproof cavity drainage tanking system to walls and floors where indicated. Painted insulated plasterboard finishes to inner face, except to walls within the kitchen which should be Whiterock hygienic cladding. Screed and vinyl floor finishes to floors.

Where waterproof cavity drainage tanking system is not installed to floors, allow for screed finish to floors. Where waterproof cavity drainage tanking system is not installed to walls, remove existing paint and plaster finishes from existing solid masonry walls, undertake minor brick repairs and repointing as required and apply three coat breathable lime plaster and breathable paint finish.

Within plant and bin store spaces allow for screed finish to floors. To walls allow for removal of existing paint finishes and redecoration with 3 coat breathable limewash finish.

CEILINGS
Allow for new 60min fire rated suspended plasterboard ceilings throughout, mounted on MF metal frame system. Allow for service penetrations to have 60min fire rated collars.

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
C03	09.07.25	TB	TB	Stage 3 Issue
P01	16.06.25	HW	TB	Stage 3 Issue

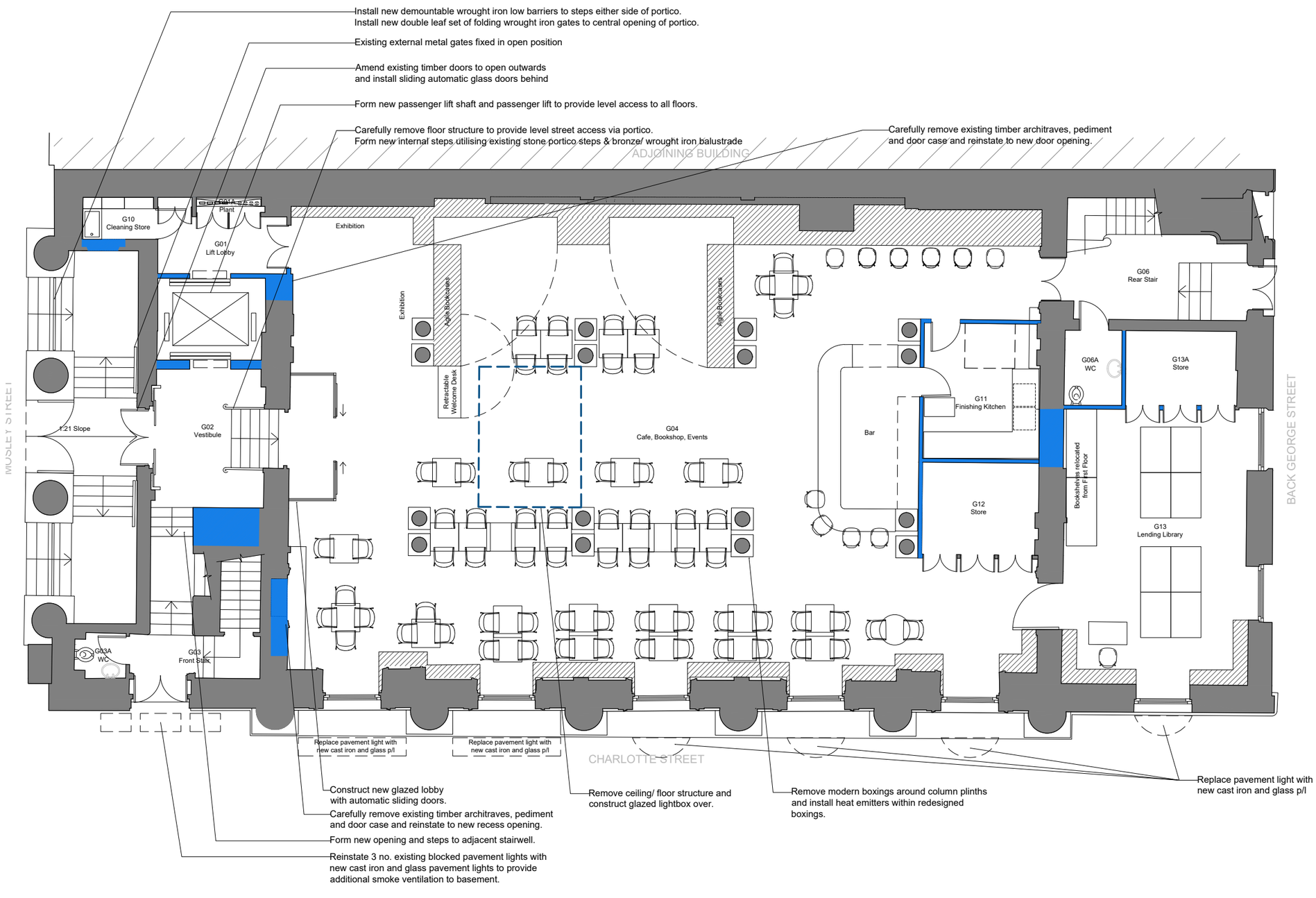
CLIENT
The Portico Library
PROJECT
Portico Library
JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
Basement as Proposed

SIZE A1L
SCALE 1:50
REV **C03**
SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **A3 - Spatial Coordination Approved**
DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-B1-DR-A-2100

3.5 Detailed Proposals: Ground Floor Plan



1 / 2101 Ground Floor as Proposed
1:50 @ A1

Notes:
Drawings are based on survey data however any discrepancies. should be notified to Purcell in writing.

Due to the scales used any measurements from this drawing should include an appropriate level of tolerance.
Where appropriate site dimensions should be taken to verify accuracy of measurement.

All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.

Purcell shall be notified in writing of any discrepancies.

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Key Plan
not to scale

Existing Walls

Proposed Walls

Contemporary Bookcase Fittings

NOTES:

Upgrade all existing windows with slim line double glazing eg. Histoglass or similar.

Replace all electrical systems, CCTV, Wifi, lighting, and controls.

Install underfloor heating system as per MEP engineers information.

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
C03	09.07.25	TB	TB	Stage 3 Issue
P01	16.06.25	HW	TB	Stage 3 Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library

PROJECT
Portico Library

JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

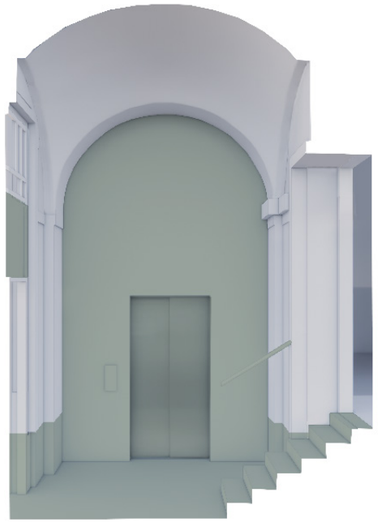
TITLE
Ground Floor as Proposed

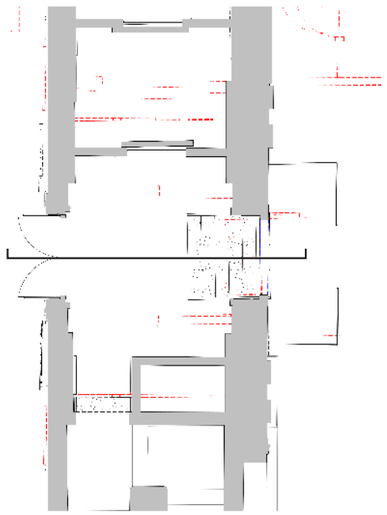
SIZE A1L SCALE 1:50

REV **C03** SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **A3 - Spatial Coordination Approved**

DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-00-DR-A-2101

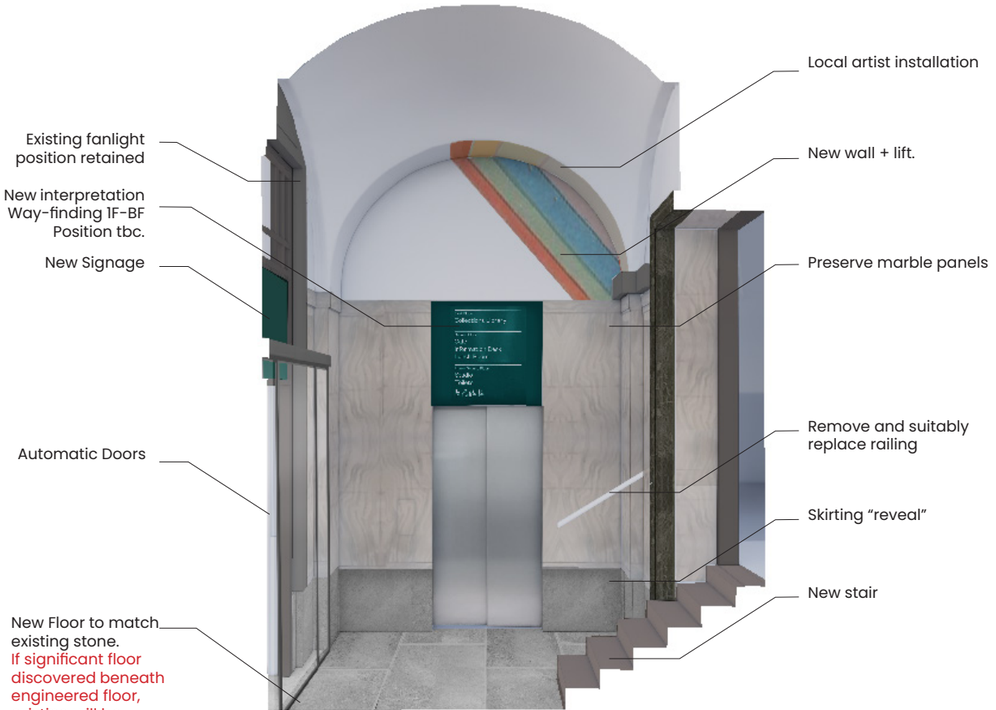
3.5 Detailed Proposals: Vestibule





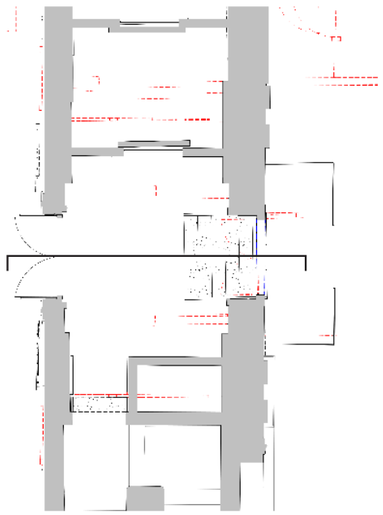
New Fabric

Proposed Vestibule Layout



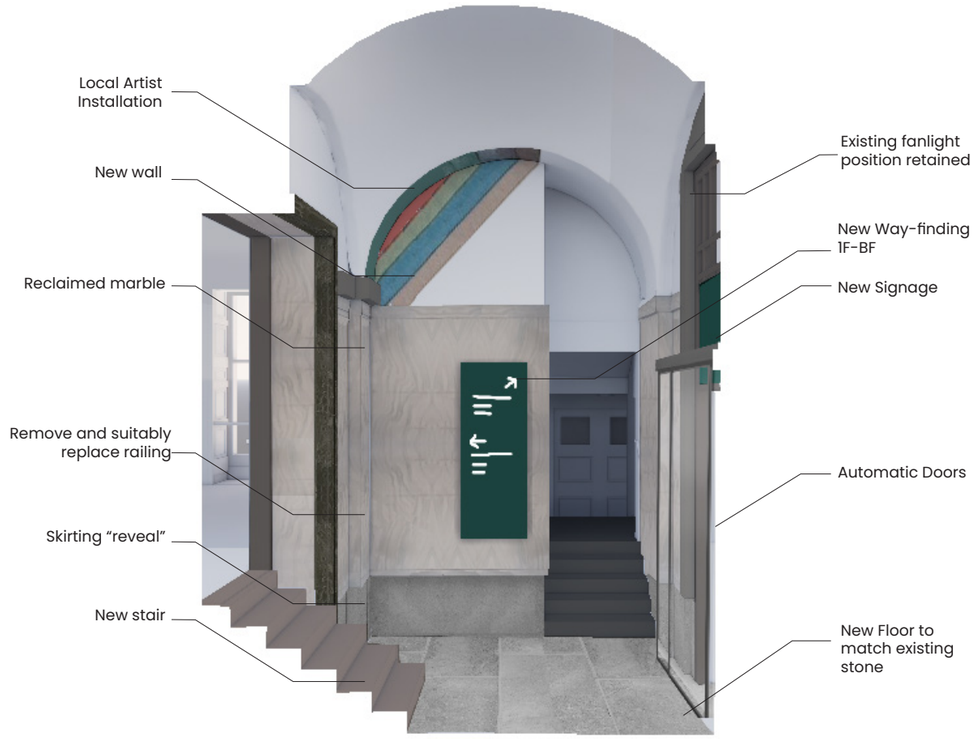
Part-levelling the Portico entrance and installing new lift and stair circulation into the entrance requires a sensitive refurbishment of the vestibule.





New Fabric

Proposed Vestibule Layout



3.5 Detailed Proposals: Ground Floor

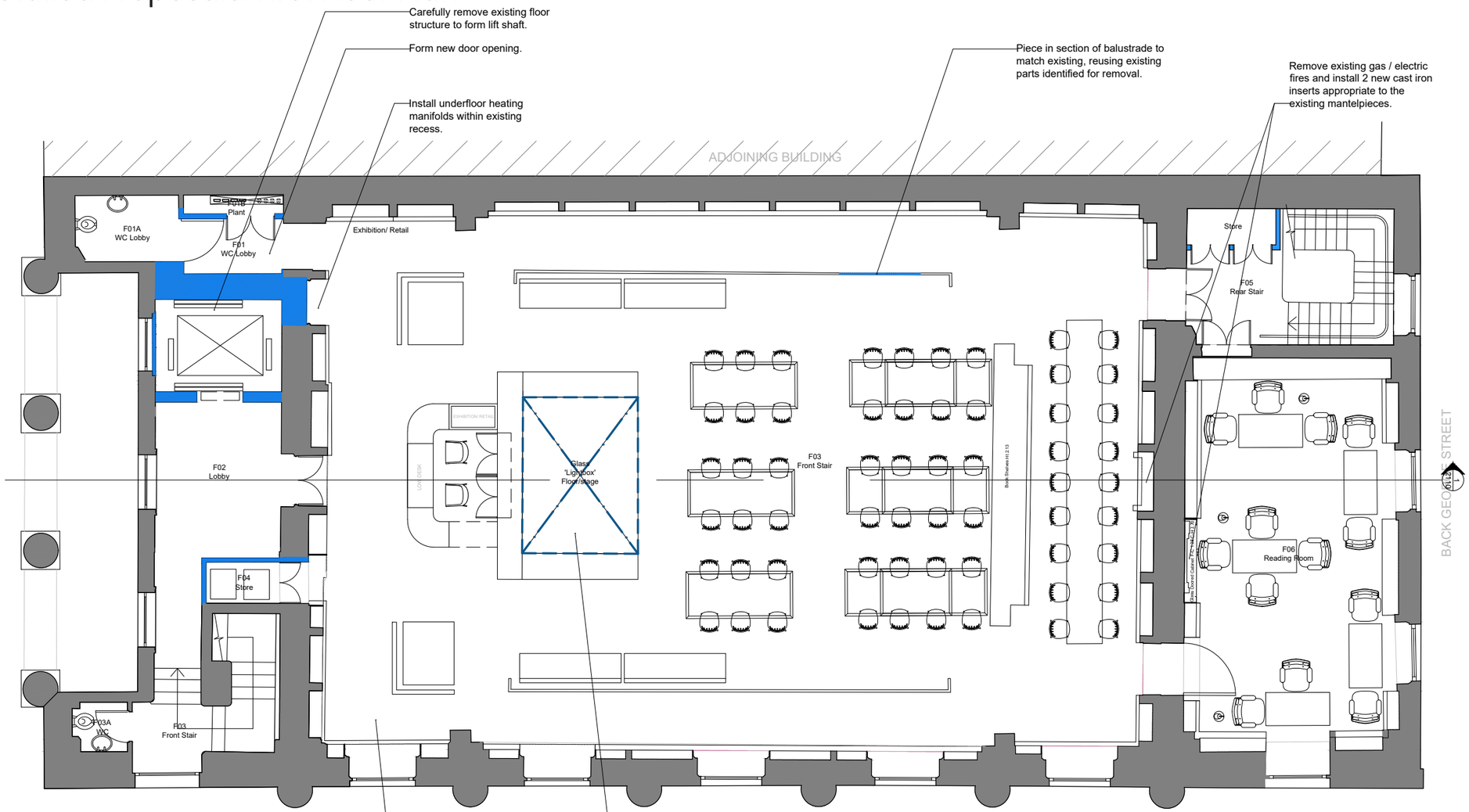
Opposite and Overleaf: Visualisations of the proposed Ground Floor cafe/bar and bookshop, showing glazed ‘lightbox’, opening view to the First Floor and Reading Room dome above.



3.5 Detailed Proposals: Ground Floor



3.5 Detailed Proposals: First Floor Plan



1 / 2102 First Floor as Proposed
1:50 @ A1

of measurement.

All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.

Purcell shall be notified in writing of any discrepancies.

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Key Plan
not to scale

Existing Walls

Proposed Walls

NOTES:

Upgrade all existing windows with slim line double glazing eg. Histoglass or similar.

Replace all electrical systems, CCTV, Wifi, lighting, and controls.

Install underfloor heating system as per MEP engineers information.

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
C03	09.07.25	TB	TB	Stage 3 Issue
P01	16.06.25	HW	TB	Stage 3 Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library

PROJECT
Portico Library

JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
First Floor Plan as Proposed

SIZE A1L | SCALE 1:50

REV **C03** | SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **A3 - Spatial Coordination Approved**

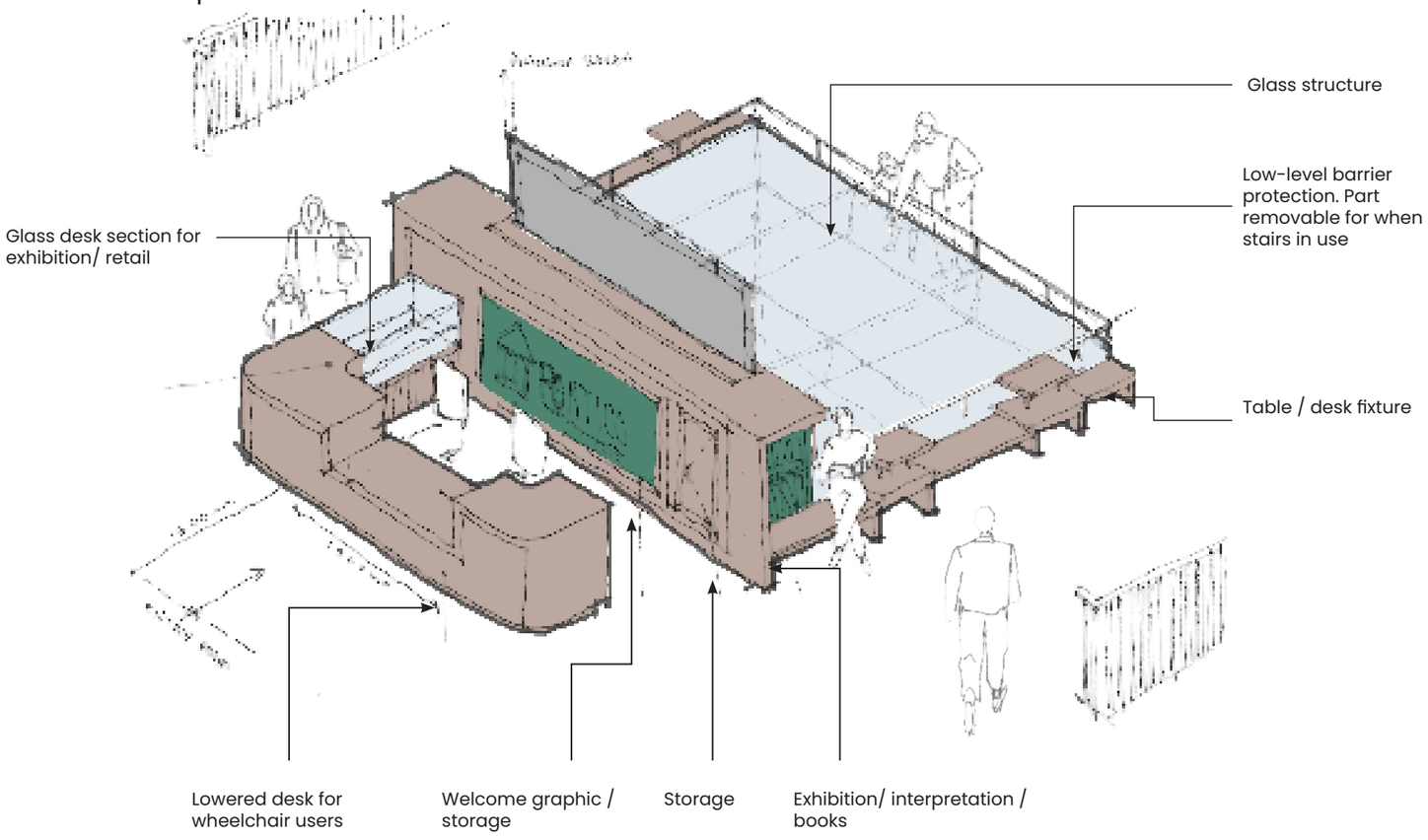
DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-01-DR-A-2102

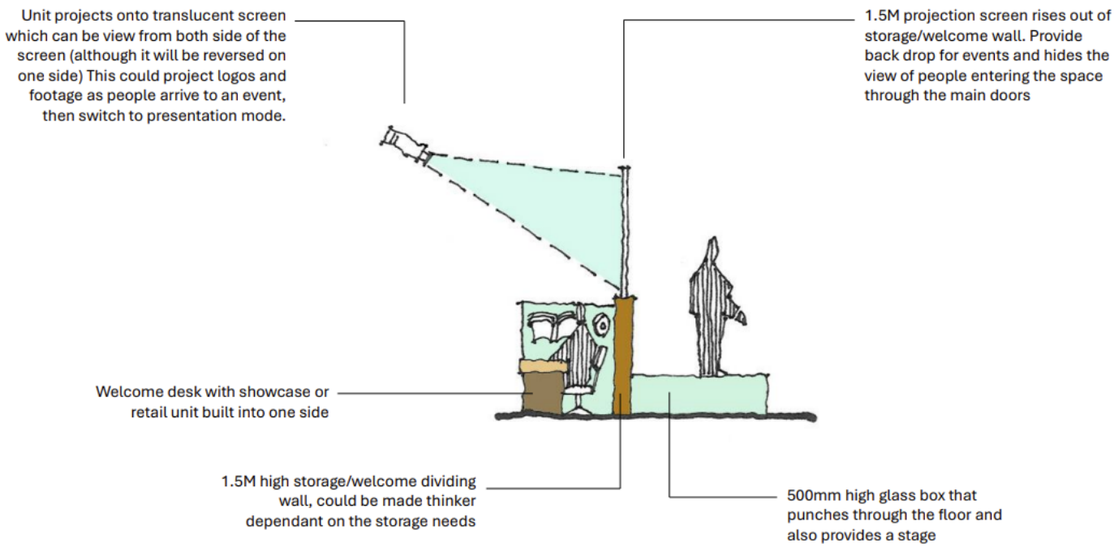
3.5 Detailed Proposals: First Floor

Visualisation of the First Floor Reading Room showing glazed lightbox / stage.

3.5 Detailed Proposals: Glass Box

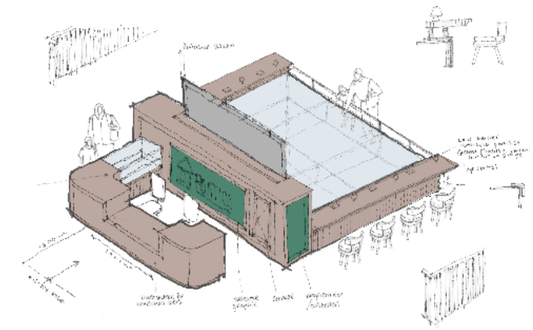
Preferred Option:



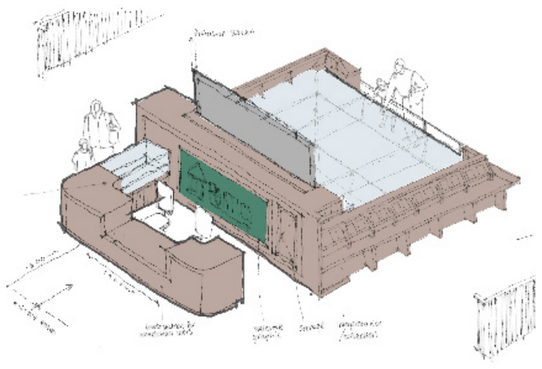


The glass box feature comprises a low-level structural glass stage for use during events. Facing the entrance is an upstand containing a projecting screen and a wrap-round fitting to form a welcome desk. Either side are low-level seating for use by exhibition-goers.

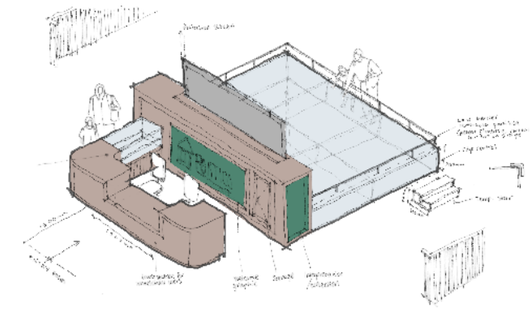
Design Process: Discounted Options:



Desk Upstand Option



Exhibition Upstand Option

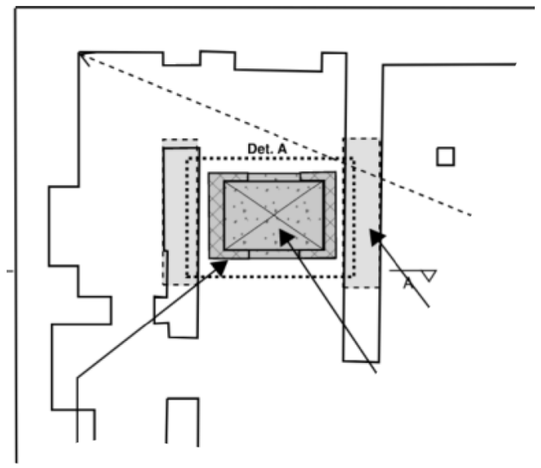


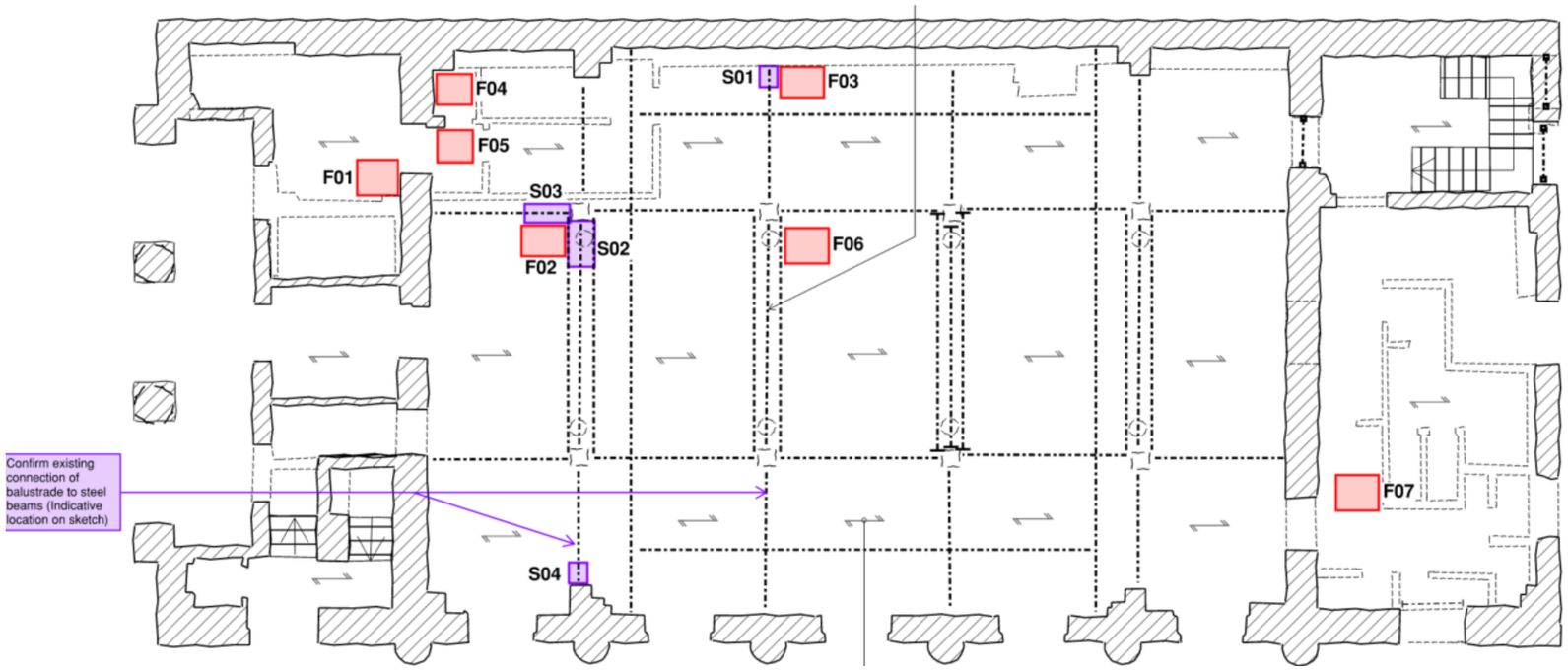
No Upstand Option

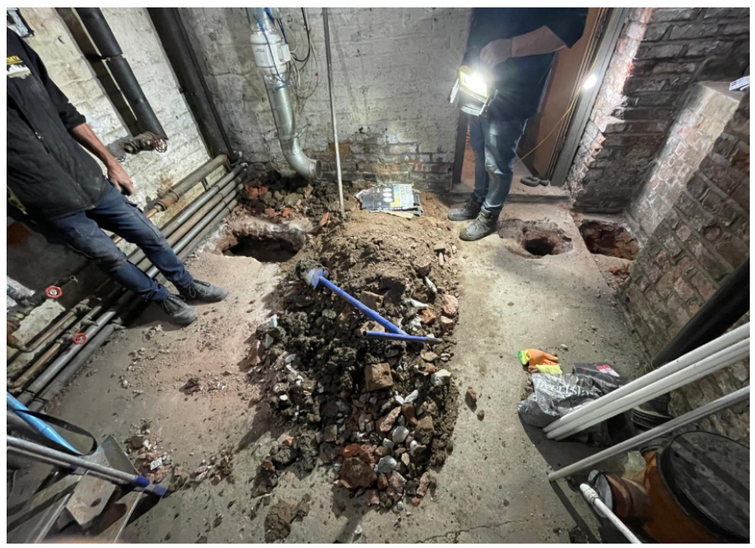
DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.5 Structural Proposals

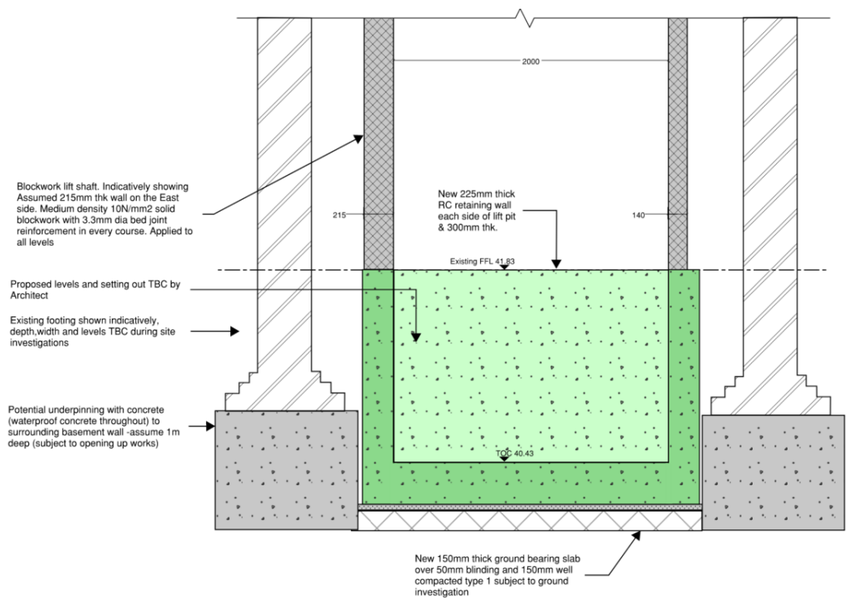
Understanding of existing fabric:
Opening-up works to Basement and First Floor









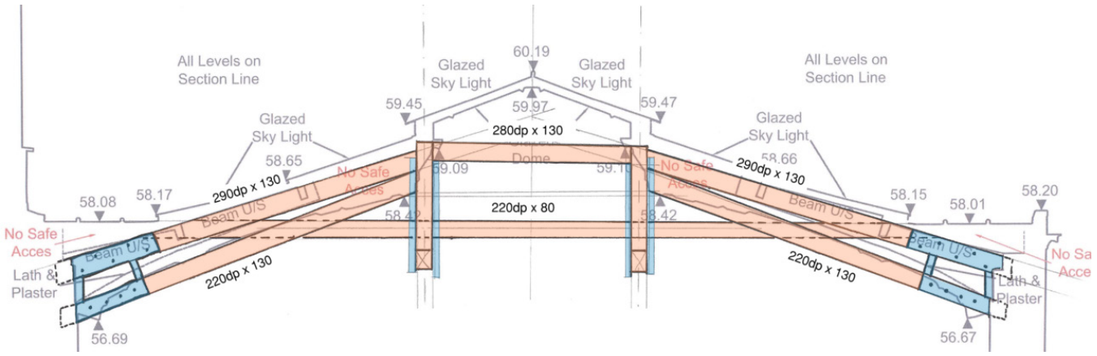


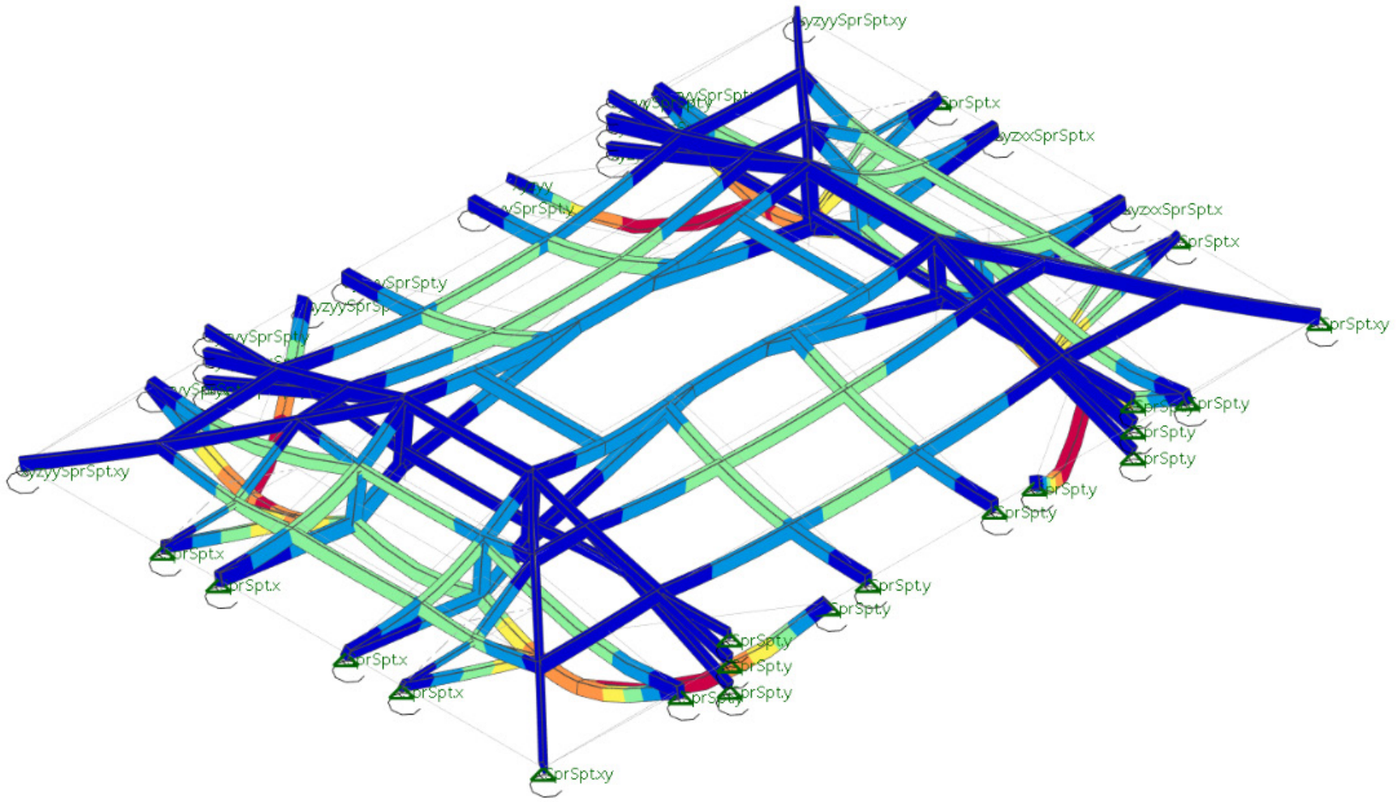
Understanding of existing fabric:
Roof survey and analysis

PRICE & MYERS



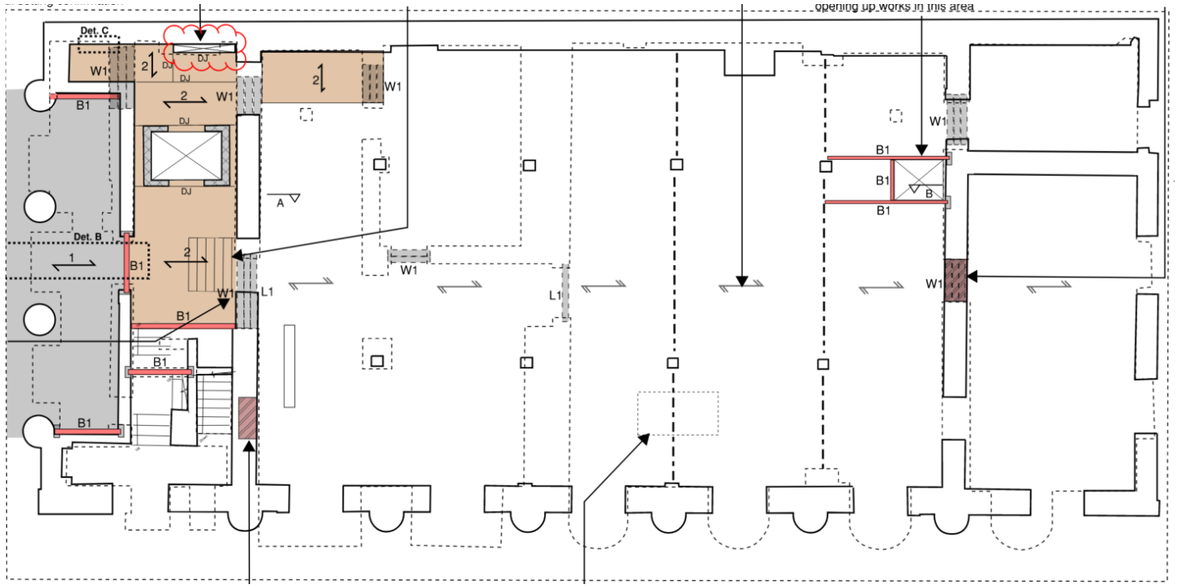


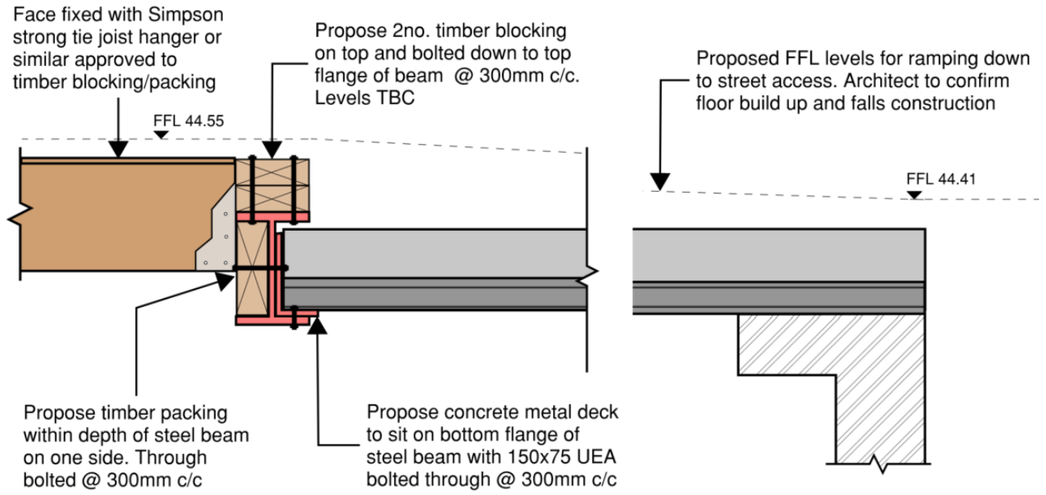


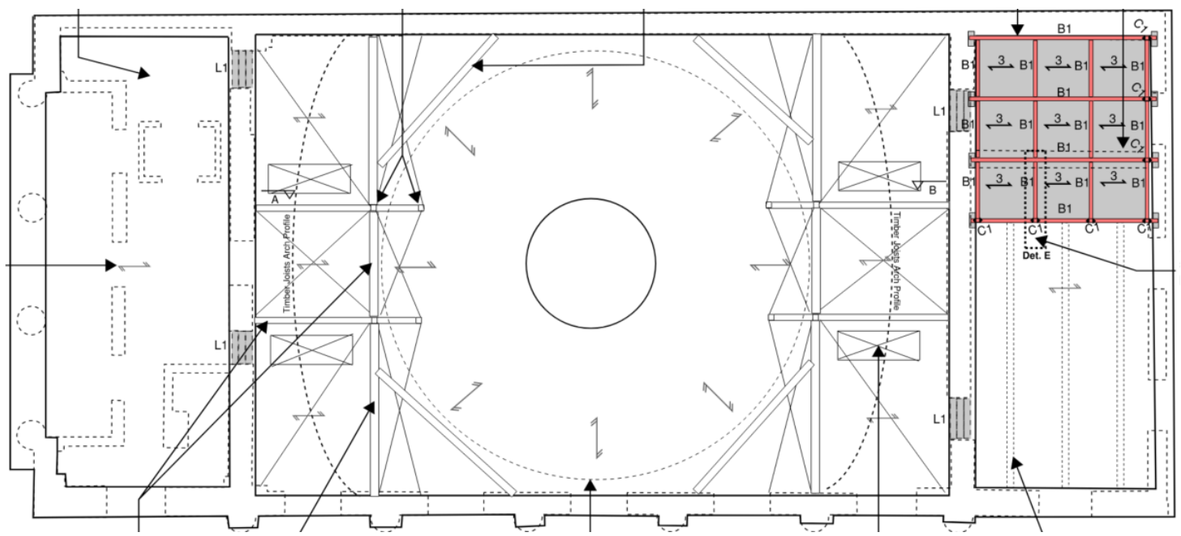


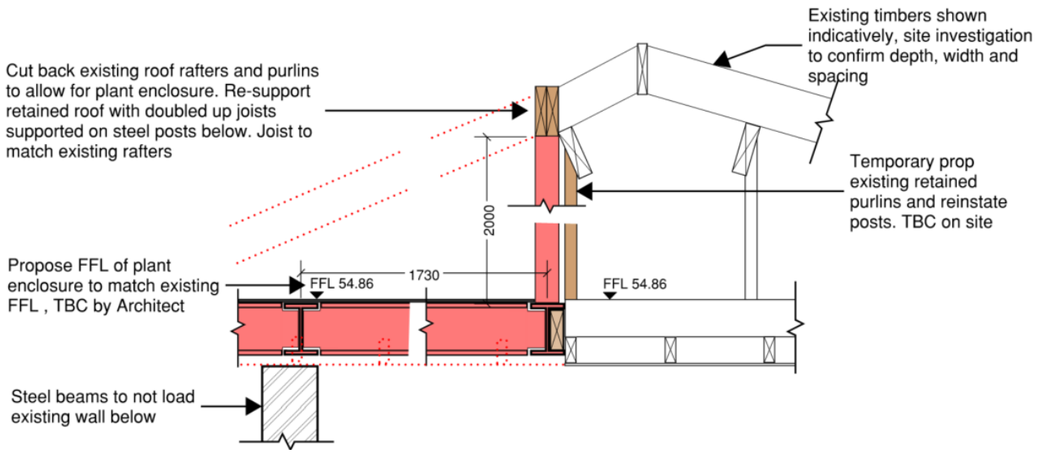
Spatial Coordination:
New entrance, plant, lift, door openings, BWICs, risers and dumbwaiter

PRICE & MYERS





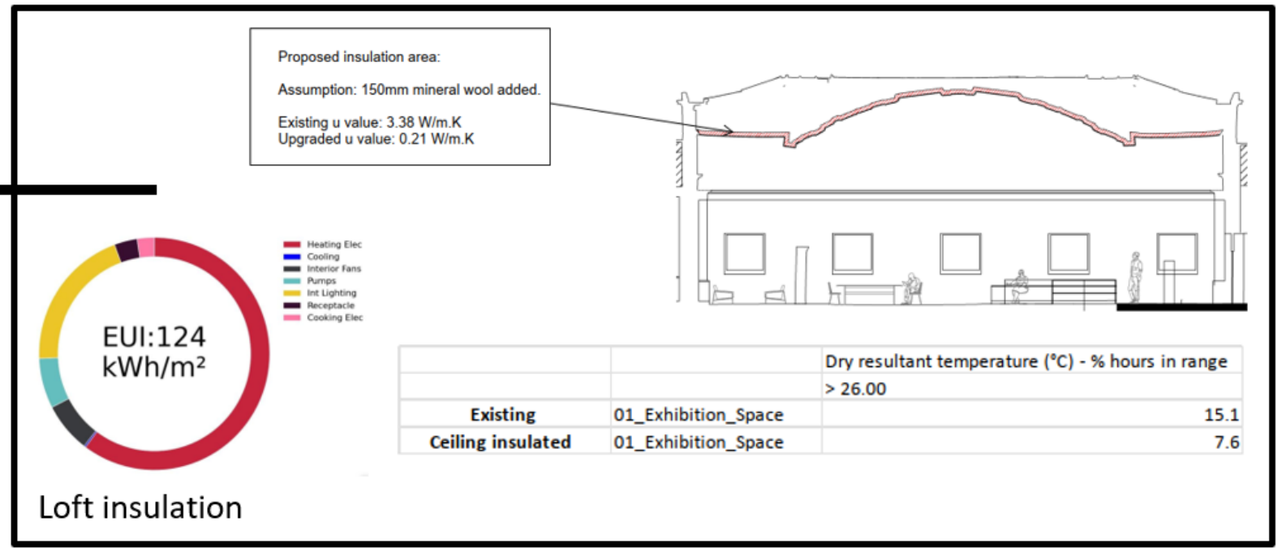




Protecting the Environment
Supporting nature recovery and environmental sustainability.

Fabric Upgrades

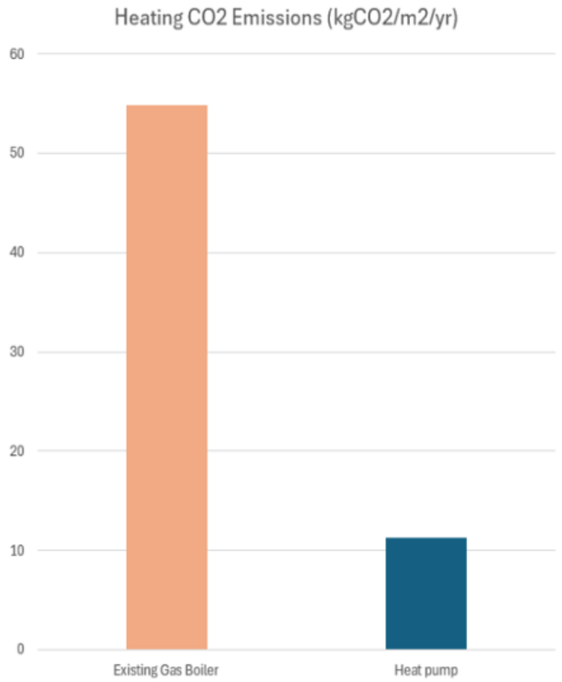
- Assessed
  - Roof level insulation
  - Loft level insulation
  - Rooflight improvement
  - Window improvement
- No material improvement in thermal performance
- Huge improvement in stability and comfort

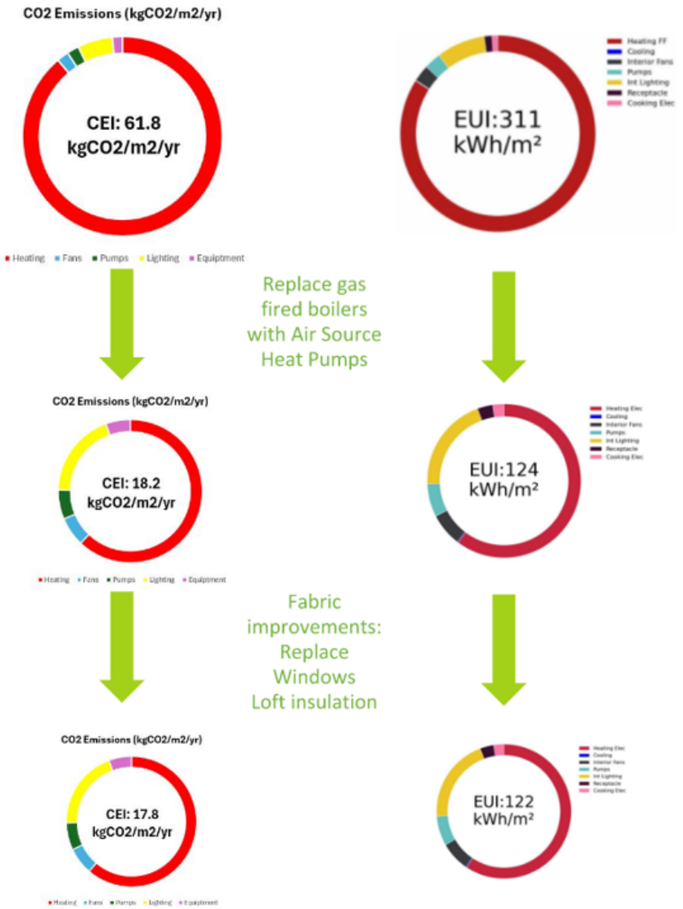


MAX FORDHAM

Carbon Reduction

- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Zoned heating with better control
- Better controlled natural ventilation
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- Fabric improvements
- Recirculating kitchen ventilation



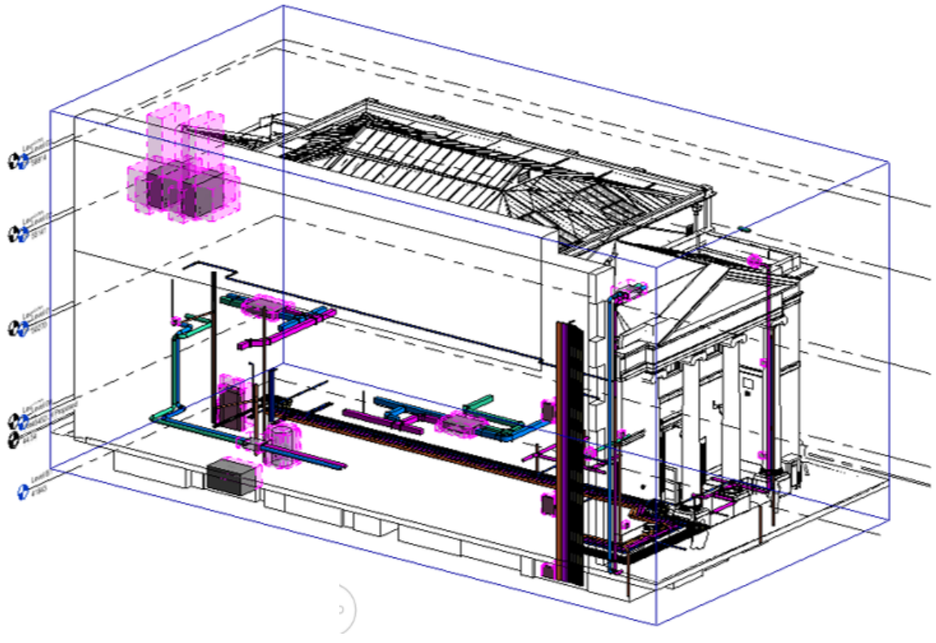


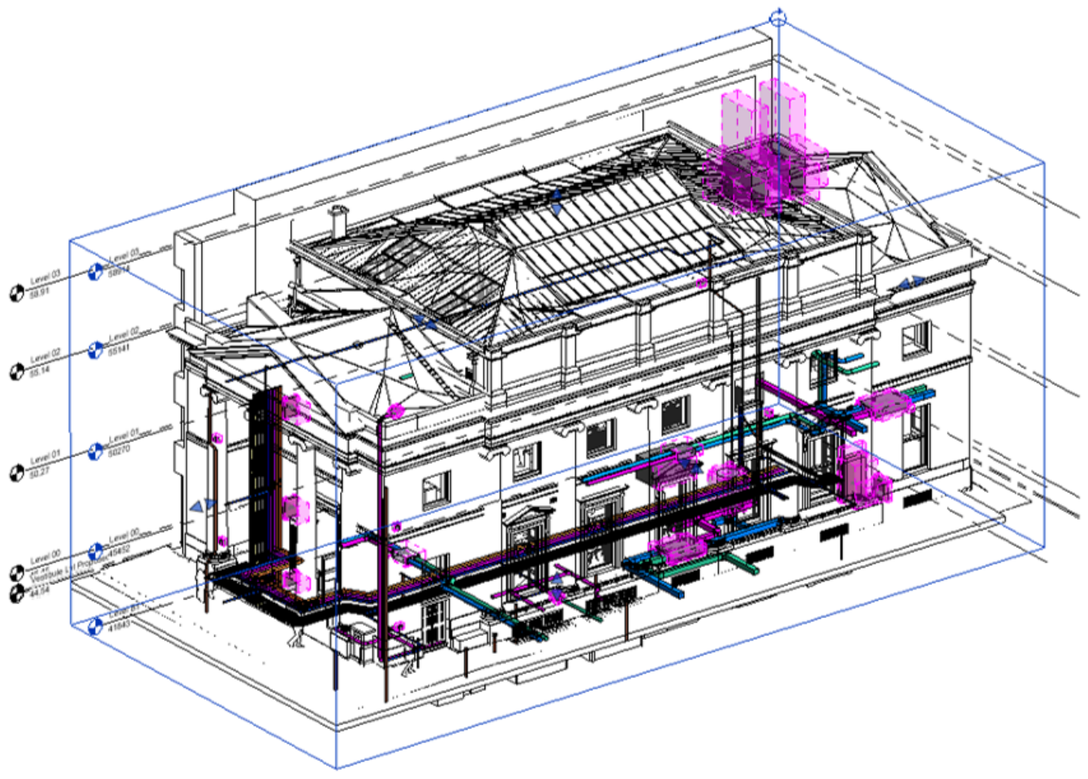
	Food and Beverage	Culture - collections	Area Weighted target	
NZCBS Target (construction commences 2027)	425	96	133	kWh/(m2.yr)
Assessed EUI (current assessment)			**122**	**kWh/(m2.yr)**

MAX FORDHAM

3D Coordination

- Air Source Heat Pumps and other plant
- Consolidated utility supplies
- Basement horizontal distribution
- Vertical riser using existing flue



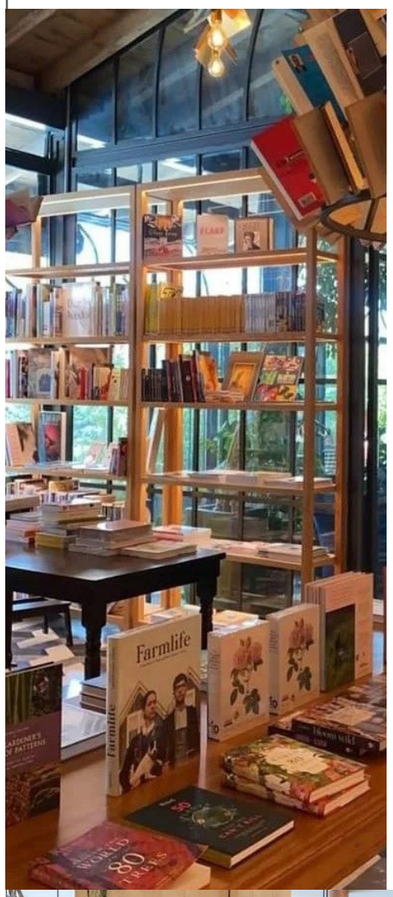


DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

3.7 Interior Look and Feel / Materiality

Overleaf: Concept Interior Character / Look and Feel and Materiality Mood Boards. The intention is to use warm, natural materials wherever possible, and to utilise high recycled content materials and furnishings. Such materials are both appropriate to the historic significance of the building - since it demonstrates craft skills in traditional materials such as timber joinery and plasterwork - and in-line with the Portico Library's Mission, Vision & Values to be "the most sustainable historic library."

INTERIOR: Concept Character, Look & Feel























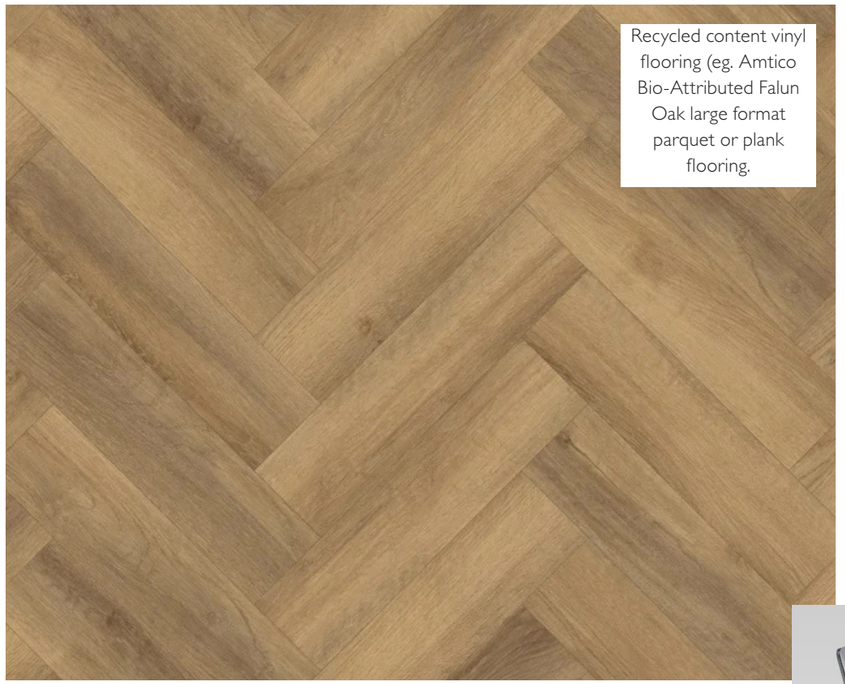


PURCELL

INTERIOR: Materiality

GROUND FLOOR

Flooring:

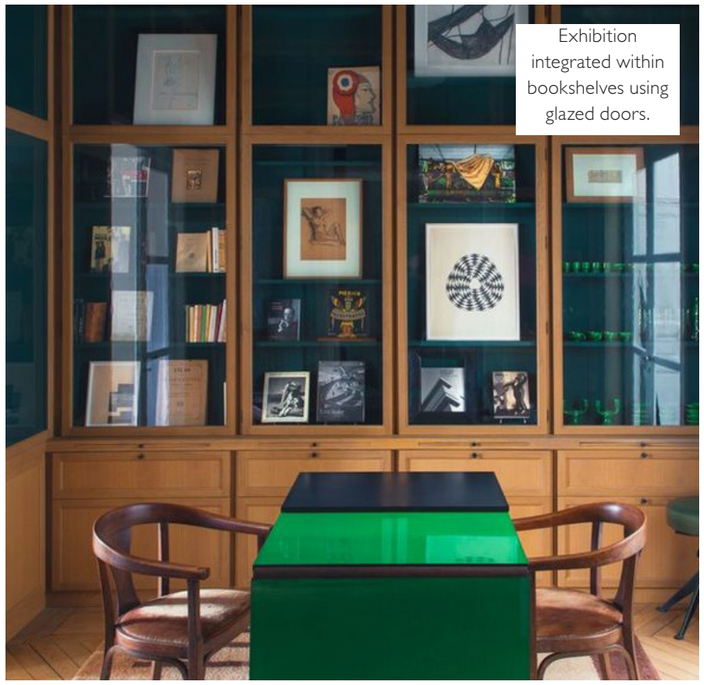


Recycled content vinyl flooring (eg. Amtico Bio-Attributed Falun Oak large format parquet or plank flooring.

Ceiling:



Contemporary mural to ceiling of lobby. Opportunity for contemporary graphics to lightwell upstand.



Exhibition integrated within bookshelves using glazed doors.

Furniture:





Mix of furniture including vintage, new and recycled content furniture (eg. Vepa Infinite recycled hemp seat, or SolidWool recycled wool seat), some stackable.



Treske Howe 25 stackable chair or similar.



Folding tables eg. Ypsilon flip top dining table base. Available in mix of colours and with



Natural finish birch plywood fixed and folding retail / exhibition furniture

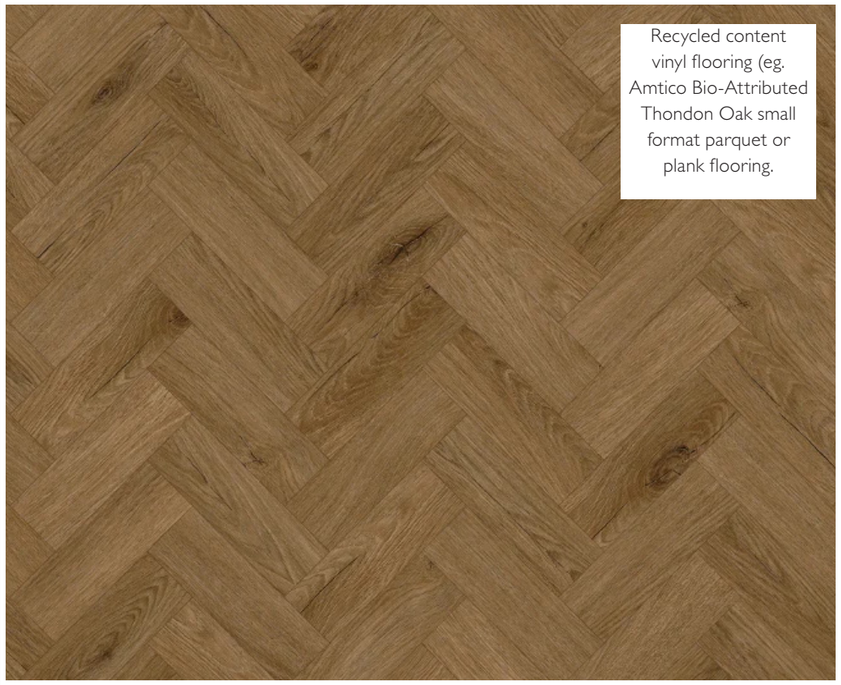


Locally made (eg. Darwen Terracotta) tile faced or timber slatted bar / counters. Quartz / corian counter tops.

INTERIOR: Materiality

FIRST FLOOR

Flooring:



Recycled content vinyl flooring (eg. Amtico Bio-Attributed Thondon Oak small format parquet or plank flooring.

Welcome Desk / Light Box:

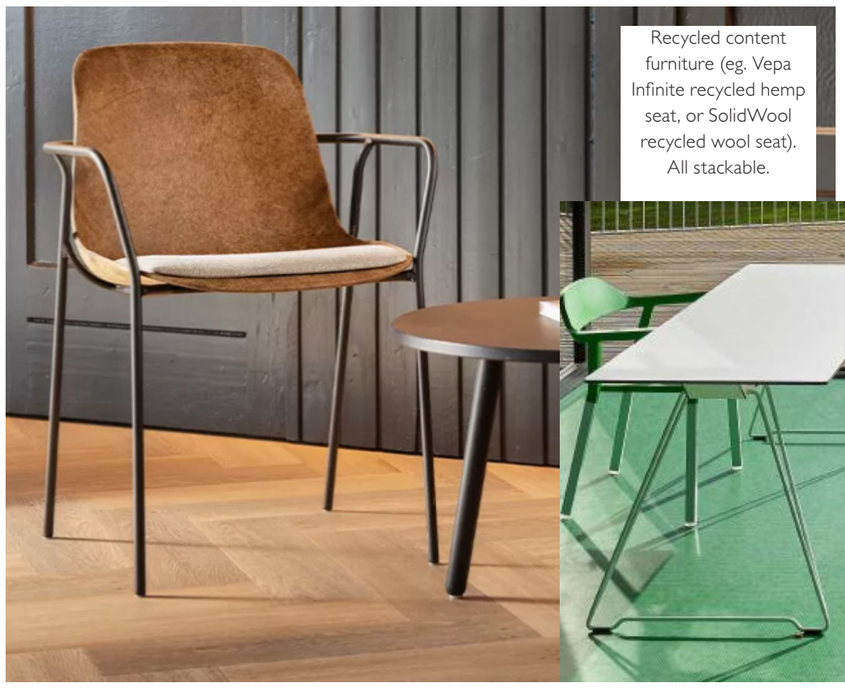


Printed / etched welcome desk.



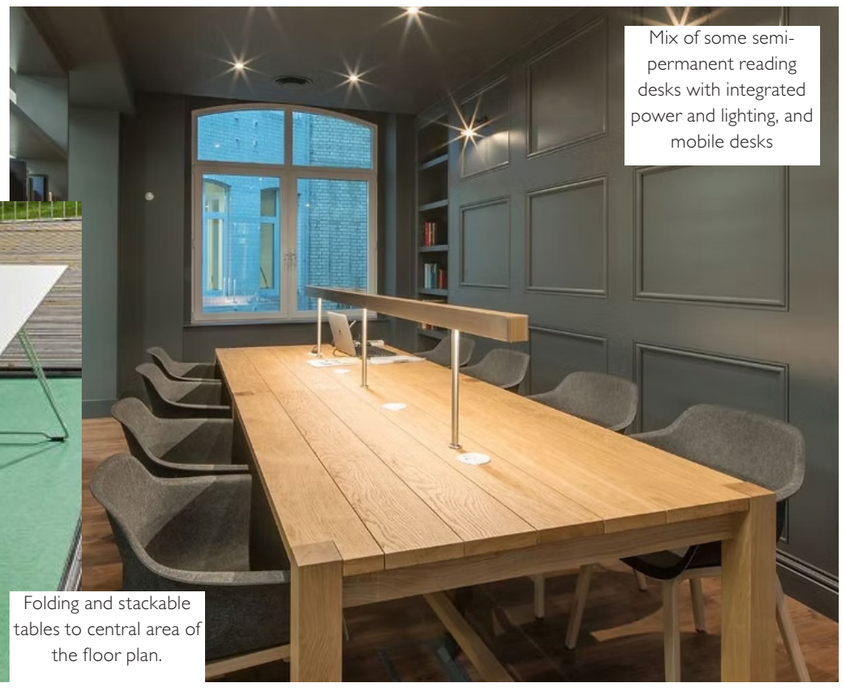
Glass box with structural glass beams.

Furniture:



Recycled content furniture (eg. Vepa Infinite recycled hemp seat, or SolidWool recycled wool seat). All stackable.

Folding and stackable tables to central area of the floor plan.



Mix of some semi-permanent reading desks with integrated power and lighting, and mobile desks

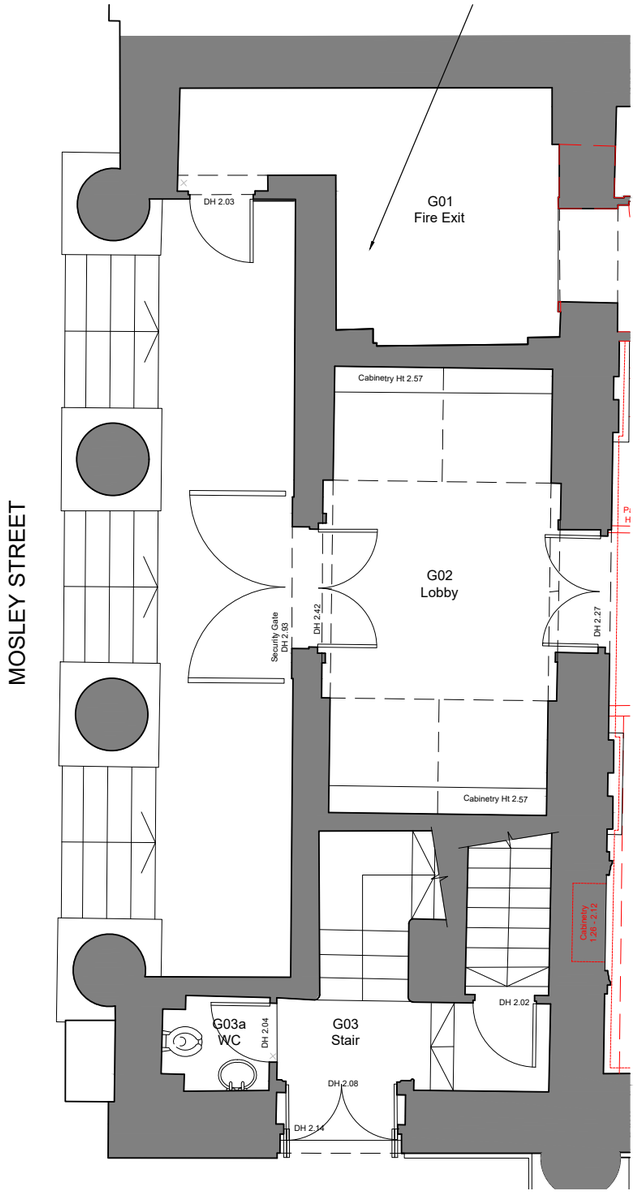


Exhibition integrated within historic bookshelves.

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Existing Access Arrangements

Existing:



Existing Access Arrangments:

During the development of these design proposals and via consultation with members of the Portico Library and the general public it was found that the current access arrangements discourage equality, diversity and inclusion.

The existing entrance is located on the Charlotte Street corner, and is poor in terms of intuitive wayfinding. Currently, users of the building must use an intercom system to gain access to the building, and on entering, are immediately confronted by the narrow existing stair.

There is currently no level access at all to any of the three floor levels, with no lift provision within the building. Level access is not possible to the principal elevation of the building and the portico on Mosley Street due to the existing steps.

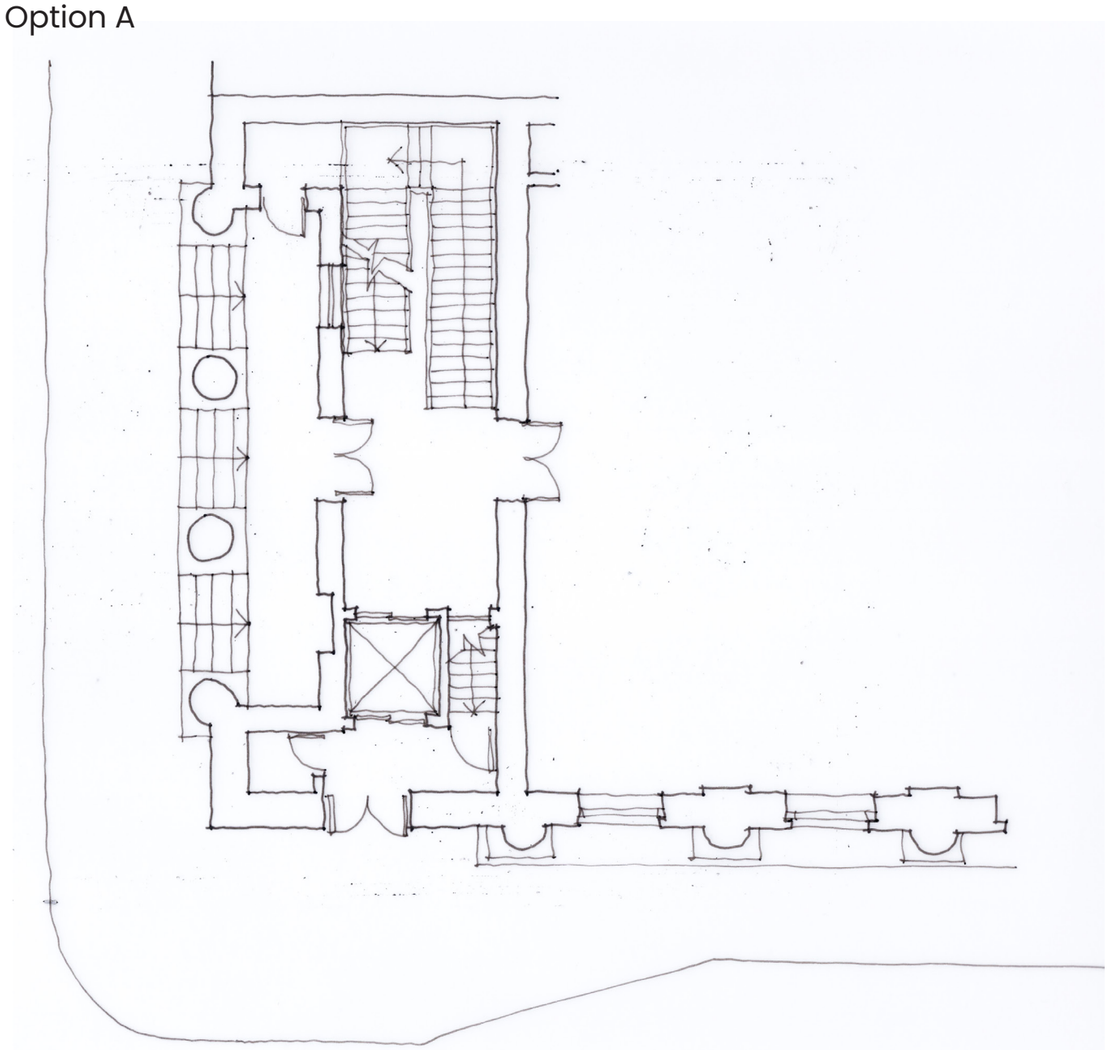
The ground floor pub / restaurant use is confusing to visitors, and there is no obvious access to the Portico Library from the Mosley Street portico.

As a result, the existing access arrangements are off-putting to many members of the public, actively discouraging users. The sense of arrival is unwelcoming, or even intimidating to certain demographics, and it is unclear that the building is open to the public.

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

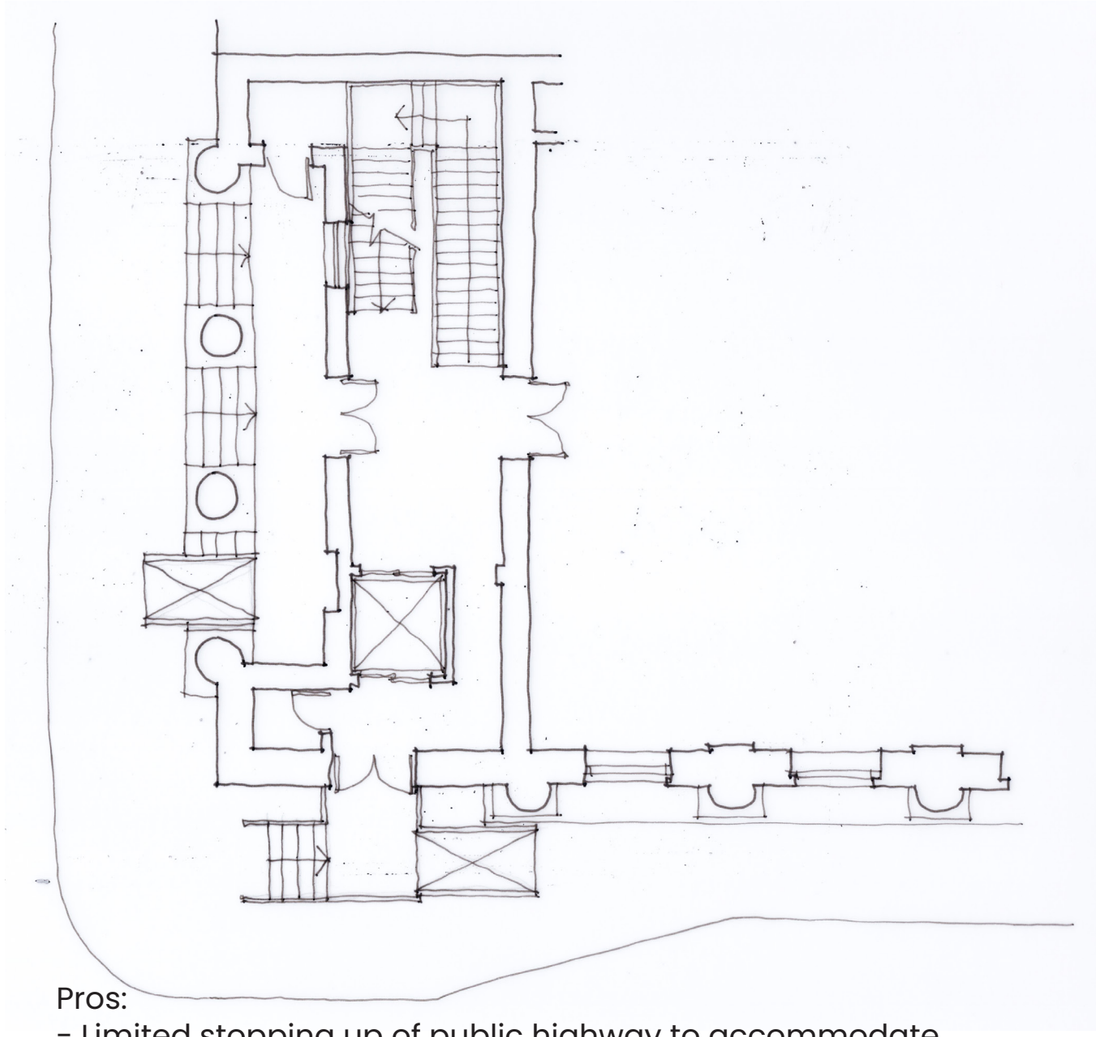
Option A



Pros:
- No external alteration of the building

Cons:
- Demolition of existing staircase
- Major alteration of the existing bank lobby
- Level access only via Charlotte Street
- All users do not use the same entrance

Option B



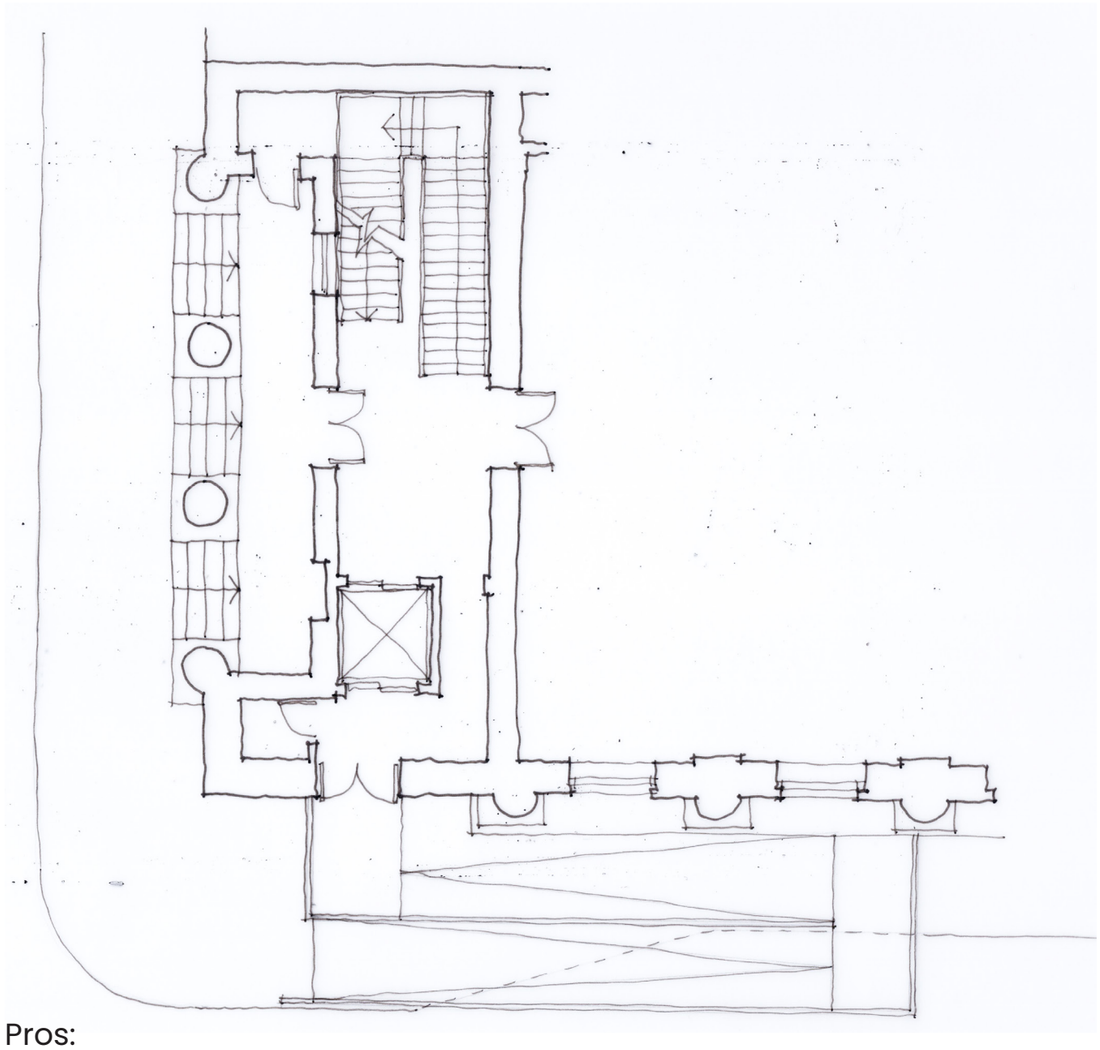
Pros:
- Limited stopping up of public highway to accommodate external stair and platform lift

Cons:
- Demolition of existing staircase
- Major alteration of the existing bank lobby
- Stopping up of public highway (lenghty, costly, consent not guarenteed
- Visual impact to external elevations
- External platform lifts prone to malfunction
- Unable to pass wheelchair around lift

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

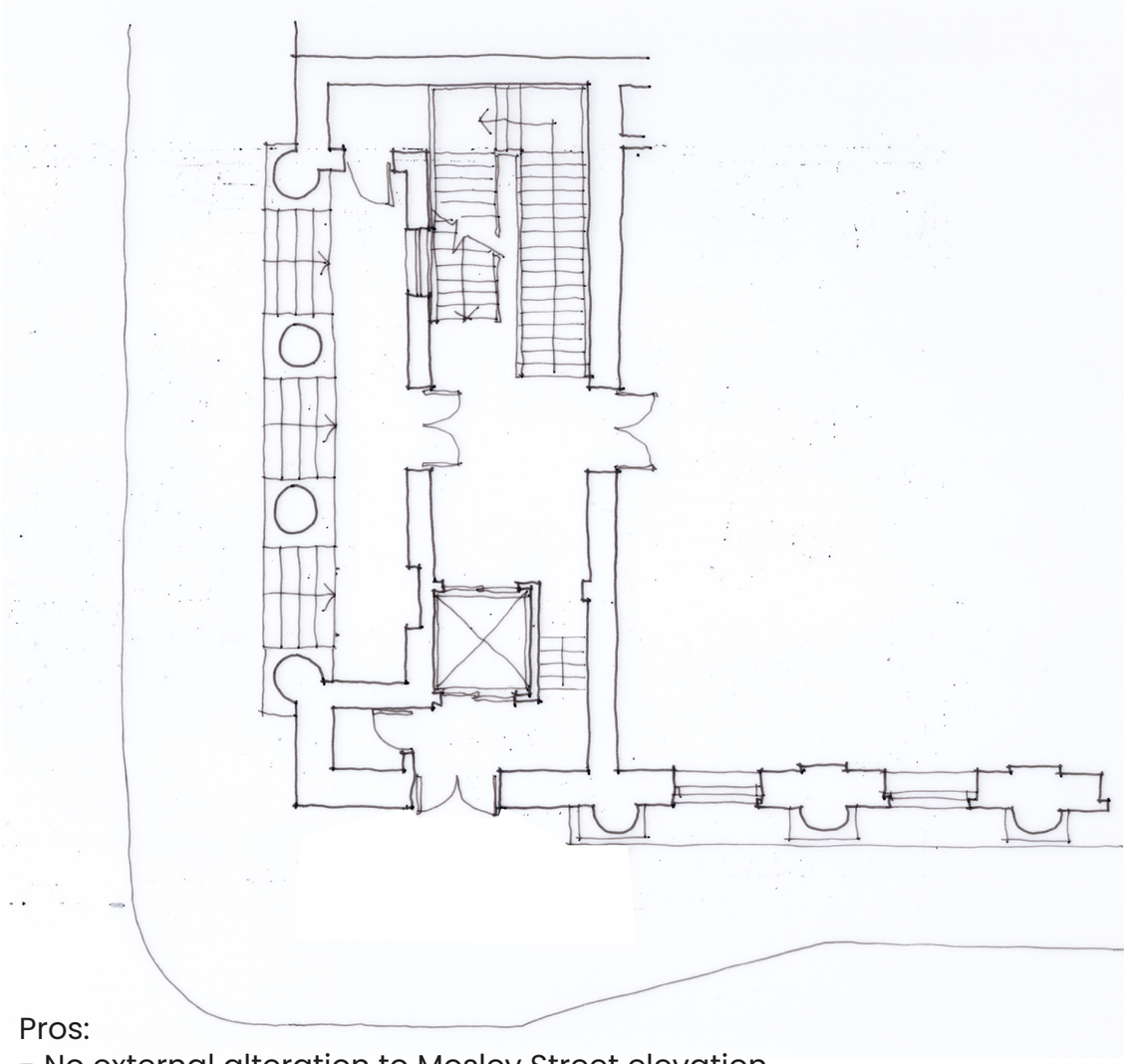
Option C -Not Feasible



Pros:
- No external alteration to Mosley Street elevation

Cons:
- Demolition of existing staircase
- Major alteration of the existing bank lobby
- Level access only via Charlotte Street
- All users do not use the same entrance
- Visual impact to Charlotte Street elevation
- Stopping up of public highway (and major clash with lay-by)
- Unable to pass wheelchair around lift.

Option D



Pros:
- No external alteration to Mosley Street elevation

Cons:
- Demolition of existing staircase
- Major alteration of the existing bank lobby
- Level access only via Charlotte Street
- All users do not use the same entrance

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

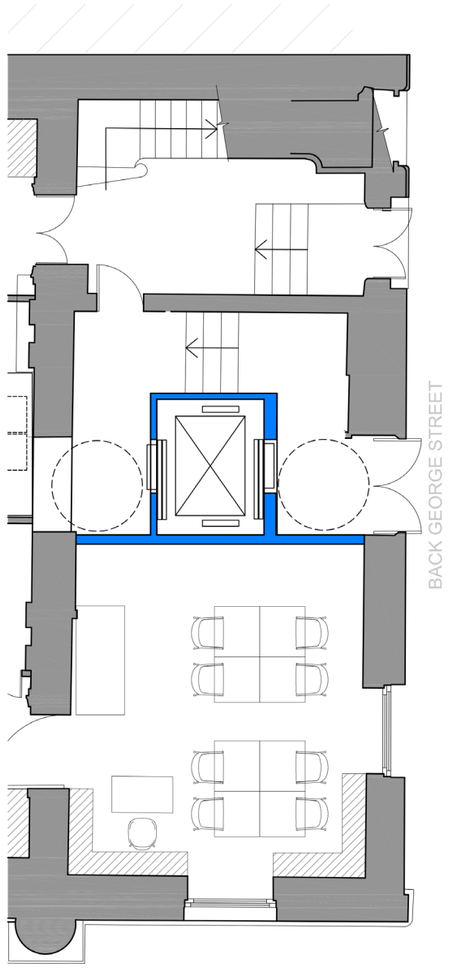
Option E: Entry Through Window -Not Feasible



Pros:
- No external alteration to Mosley Street elevation

Cons:
- Major alteration of highly significant Charlotte Street elevation
- Level change requires major internal alteration of high significance ground floor space (installation of lift and ramp)
- Impinges on available floorspace at Ground Floor level
- Alternatively, level change requires external ramp and steps (not feasible - stopping up of the public highway, and high impact on the elevation).
- All users do not use the same entrance
- Visual impact to Charlotte Street elevation

Option F: Entry Through Rear Exit



Pros:
- No external alteration to Mosley Street elevation

Cons:
- Major alteration of high significance Members Room at First Floor level
- Demolition of existing floor construction at ground and first floor level
- Impinges on available floorspace
- Smaller lift car space (does not provide for all wheelchair users)
- Accessible entrance only via rear alleyway (intimidating / off-putting and unequal)
- All users do not use the same entrance

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

Option G: Entry Through Left Part of Mosley Street Steps



Pros:
- N/A

Cons:
- Alteration of the left hand steps only is not possible, as either it would necessitate a new door opening in the Mosley Street elevation, or if using the existing central door, it would necessitate the removal of the central steps as well.
- A new door opening would be of greater visual impact on the highly significant Mosley Street elevation

Option H: Entry Through Right Part of Mosley Stret Steps



Pros:
- N/A

Cons:
- Alteration of the right hand steps only is not possible, as either it would necessitate a new door opening in the Mosley Street elevation, or if using the existing central door, it would necessitate the removal of the central steps as well.
- A new door opening would be of greater visual impact on the highly significant Mosley Street elevation

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

Option I: ‘Sesame’ Type retracting platform lift to Portico

A ‘Sesame’ type retracting platform lift has been considered as an option but ruled out for the following reasons:

Why a Sesame Lift Is Not an Appropriate Access Solution for the Portico Library

1. Inclusive Design must prioritise equal, dignified entry — Not segregated access

A Sesame lift, while technically discreet, still creates a separate and unequal mode of entry. Feedback from our access consultations and best practice in the heritage sector confirm that segregated solutions, including platform lifts, risk deterring disabled visitors.

The 2025 Historic England / Direct Access report emphasises that:

‘Separate entrances, poorly designed lifts, and needing to ask for assistance all create a feeling of exclusion. True inclusion means arriving through the same front door as everyone else.’

Sesame lifts require waiting, activation, and — crucially — depend on someone else enabling entry. This denies independent access, contradicting principles in BS 8300, the Equality Act 2010, and guidance from Historic England, which stress:

- Dignified, equitable access over functional compliance
- Designs that reduce or eliminate the need for adaptation or staff assistance
- Entry routes that are intuitive and direct — not via hidden mechanisms

By contrast, our preferred scheme, removing the central steps and lowering the floor of the entrance lobby, reinstates architect Thomas Harrison’s original inclusive vision while delivering level access for everyone, through the main entrance.

2. Disabled people consistently express preference for independent, integrated access

The Direct Access 2025 sector survey found that:

- 75% of disabled visitors avoid heritage sites where access requires staff help or special arrangements
- A significant number described platform lifts as “undignified” or “intimidating”
- Visitors cited frustration at the unreliability of platform lifts, and delays or anxiety from having to wait for assistance

This is echoed in case study feedback from sites such as:
- Wellcome Collection, where integrated, level access was cited as ‘gold standard’
- St. Paul’s Cathedral, which opted for a permanent, gently sloped external ramp to preserve dignity and visibility over a mechanical lift

Inclusion cannot be retrofitted mechanically. True access, especially in a civic building, must be architectural, instinctive, and welcoming.

3. Operational Limitations: A sesame lift requires staff presence and is not always available

Sesame lifts (and other platform systems) are not designed for independent, self-service use. Operation typically requires:

- Key activation by a trained staff member
- Manual guidance during lift deployment
- Regular maintenance and testing by specialist engineers
- As the Georgian Group mention in relation to the proposed internal lift there is also the operational limitation that multiple users have to wait for the lift to become free. This is less of an issue internally, but would be a huge issue externally, if users

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

were forced to wait within the public highway. This introduces several major risks:

- No staff present = no access
- Breakdowns = building becomes non-compliant
- Health and Safety concerns
- Increased staff training burden and operational costs

In a small heritage organisation like the Portico Library, this creates an unacceptable dependency loop: if a single front-of-house staffer is unavailable, a disabled visitor could be literally left outside. Given the location of a sesame type lift in the location of the portico steps, any disabled user waiting for assistance (and even waiting for the deployment of the lift, which is a very slow mechanism) would be forced to wait within, and partially blocking, the busy public footpath, as well as waiting in all weathers (no possibility to form a covered waiting space at this location).

The *Access Audit for the Portico* (2018) noted similar concerns with temporary ramps and stairlifts, warning that '*portable solutions… require staff presence and cannot be considered satisfactory long-term solutions*'.

4. Maintenance and heritage risk: Sesame lifts are mechanically complex and externally exposed

Sesame lifts are highly specialised machines. Their outdoor installation, often built into stone steps, brings the following challenges:

- Exposure to rain, frost, debris, and vandalism
- Risk of mechanical failure or corrosion
- Specialist maintenance contracts that exceed the cost and simplicity of an indoor lift

In the Portico Library's context:

- The Mosley Street elevation is a high-traffic, exposed city-centre facade
- Embedding a mechanical platform lift into these steps would likely require more structural intervention than the proposed regrading of the floor. This is because a larger lift pit and mechanical equipment would be required below street level.

Given the immediate adjacency of the footings of the portico's columns this presents more serious structural risks than regrading of the central steps.

- The lift mechanics would be below street level and subject to risk of flooding in this location
- Although a sesame lift is often considered to be 'invisible', in reality, the existing paving of the portico and steps would likely need to be replaced throughout in order to have this desired visual effect. This would actually be of greater impact to existing fabric that the regrading proposals.
- The lift would immediately border (and potentially extend into) the footpath (public highway). This is not within the ownership of the Portico Library and would be subject to complex legal and access issues (stopping up of public highway and/or temporary stopping up of highway for ongoing maintenance).

Historic England guidance supports adaptation 'only where it creates enduring, usable access with minimal disruption to fabric and maximal dignity to users'. A sesame lift risks failing both tests.

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

5. The preferred design aligns with national best practice and heritage precedent

The RIBA Stage 3 design:
- Achieves step-free access through the principal entrance
- Preserves Harrison's original intent: a prominent, open civic frontage
- Avoids mechanical vulnerability

Similar solutions have been approved and celebrated at:
- Lincoln Castle (Grade I) – Regrading walkways for full perimeter access
- People's History Museum, Manchester – Integrated step-free design praised for simplicity and dignity
- St. Saviour's Church, Leeds (Grade II)* – New level entrance created through modest step removal

This evidence underscores that sensitive physical alterations, rather than mechanised interventions, are increasingly preferred by both access and heritage experts.

6. Health and Safety: A sesame lift is a supervised system with risks

Health and safety considerations weigh heavily against a platform lift in this context:

- Limited edge protection on a Sesame platform requires the user to be always supervised, particularly on busy public streets where distraction, imbalance, or obstruction is likely
- There is a fall risk for unaccompanied users, especially those using powered chairs, visual aids, or mobility devices
- Staff supervision is a legal requirement, not an operational preference
- Should the lift fail mid-use or be partially deployed, it may obstruct the main steps, creating hazards for others and blocking emergency egress

In short, a Sesame lift introduces new, avoidable hazards into a public-facing Grade II* heritage site.
By contrast, the proposed access route is:
- Passive and low-risk
- Fully visible to all users
- Maintains clear fire exit routes at all times

Conclusion: Architectural inclusion outperforms mechanical workarounds

While a Sesame lift may appear to offer a reversible or 'less visible' solution, it does not meet the ethical, practical, or operational standards required for a public-facing institution in 2025.
- It cannot be used without staff
- It poses real health and safety concerns
- It creates exclusionary experience for users
- It introduces mechanical risk to a highly visible listed elevation
- It is not aligned with modern inclusion policy, access data, or Historic England guidance

The preferred design, by contrast:
- Delivers universal dignity, autonomy, and safety through level, intuitive access
- Resolves access without relying on staff assistance or mechanical systems
- Minimises long-term maintenance risks and operational burden
- Achieves step-free entry via architectural means, in line with Historic England and BS8300 guidance
- Respects the building's significance by retaining key historic features, including the portico and side staircases
- Reinstates the civic function of the principal entrance, enabling all users to share the same route in
- Is supported by Historic England's comments, and is HE's

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Design Options

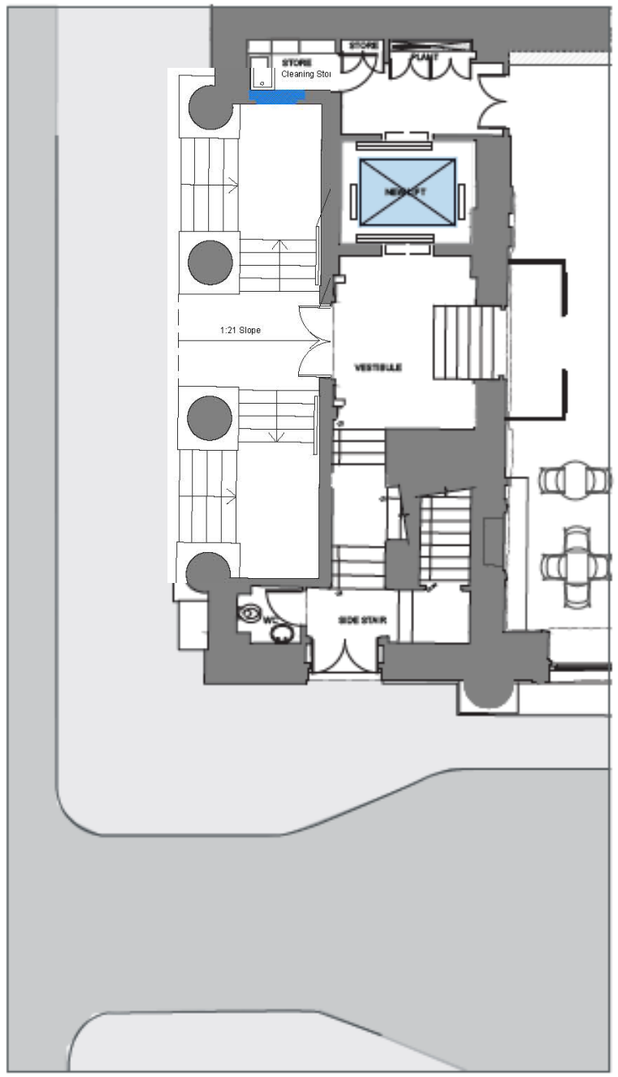
preferred arrangement of the portico steps

For these reasons, we strongly reject the platform lift as a viable or desirable alternative. We are committed to architectural access that welcomes everyone in together through the front door.

ACCESS

4.1 Inclusive Access: Preferred Option

Preferred Option:

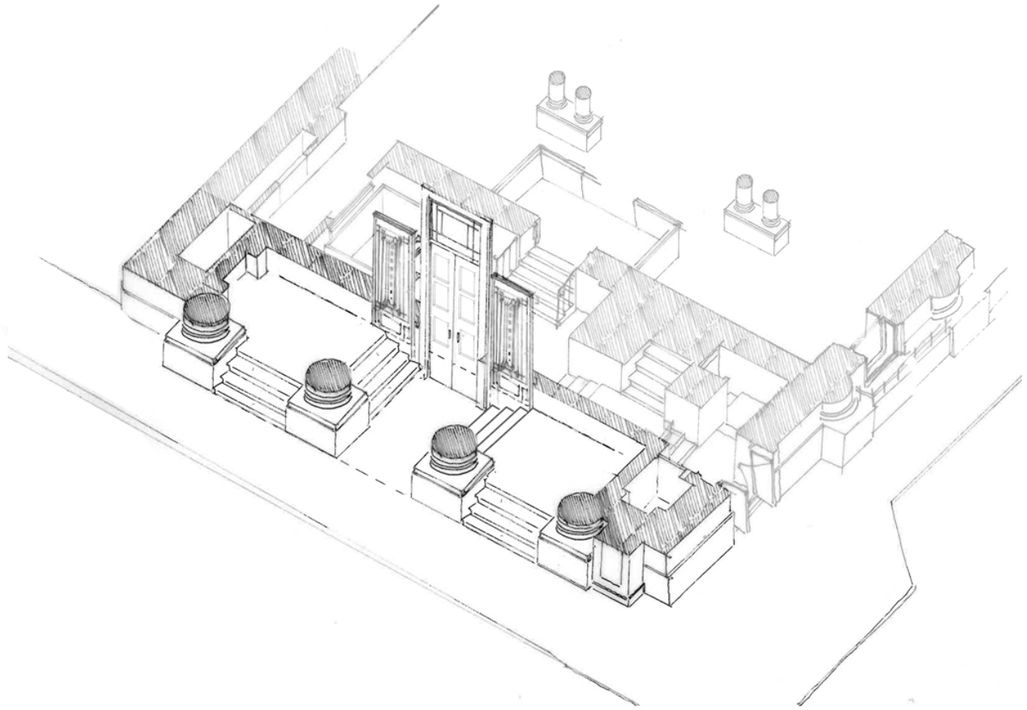


The preferred option achieves level access for all building users through the principal entrance on Mosley Street. This reinstates architect Thomas Harrison's original design intent and makes access to the building both intuitive and welcoming.

This is achieved through the removal of the central set of steps to the Mosley Street elevation and the lowering of the existing lobby floor. From here, a passenger lift provides level access to all three levels of the building.

A further advantage of the preferred option is that it retains the existing staircase and lobby, reducing the amount of major structural alterations within this part of the listed building.

Further options explored the removal of all three flights of steps to the portico, though this has been discounted following the advice of statutory consultees. It was felt that removal of the central steps only would be of reduced heritage impact, allowing Harrison's original design to continue to be legible.





ACCESS

4.2 Transport Statement

Impact of the Development

The proposals detailed in this planning and listed building consent application are likely to have minimal impact in terms of transport. The existing building already houses The Portico Library at First Floor Level and a busy public house/restaurant at Ground Floor level. The proposed scheme is very similar, with the main library functions continuing at First Floor level and the replacement of the Ground Floor pub/restaurant with a cafe-bar.

Although the re-development of the building is likely to increase the number of visitors to The Portico Library, it is unlikely this will significantly exceed the existing combined usage of the building in its current form.

Public Transport Provision

The Portico Library is well served by Manchester's public transport network. Metrolink trams pass in front of the building along Mosley Street. The nearest tram stops are at St Peter's Square (3 minute walk) or Piccadilly Gardens (3 minute walk).

The existing building is immediately adjacent to a GM Bee Network bus stop on Charlotte Street. This stop is served by the free-of-charge city centre bus (Route Number 2), giving frequent, easy access to all major transport nodes (including Victoria Station, Piccadilly Station, Piccadilly Gardens and Shude Hill Interchange.

Vehicle Access & Parking

There is currently no parking provision within the ownership boundary of The Portico Library. However, there is paid meter parking (3 no. spaces) available immediately adjacent to the building in Charlotte Street and a further 14 no. spaces a short walk to the South-East along Charlotte Street (1-2 minutes). Public multi-storey parking is available a short walk North-West along Charlotte Street (1-2 minutes) or at City Tower (3 minutes).

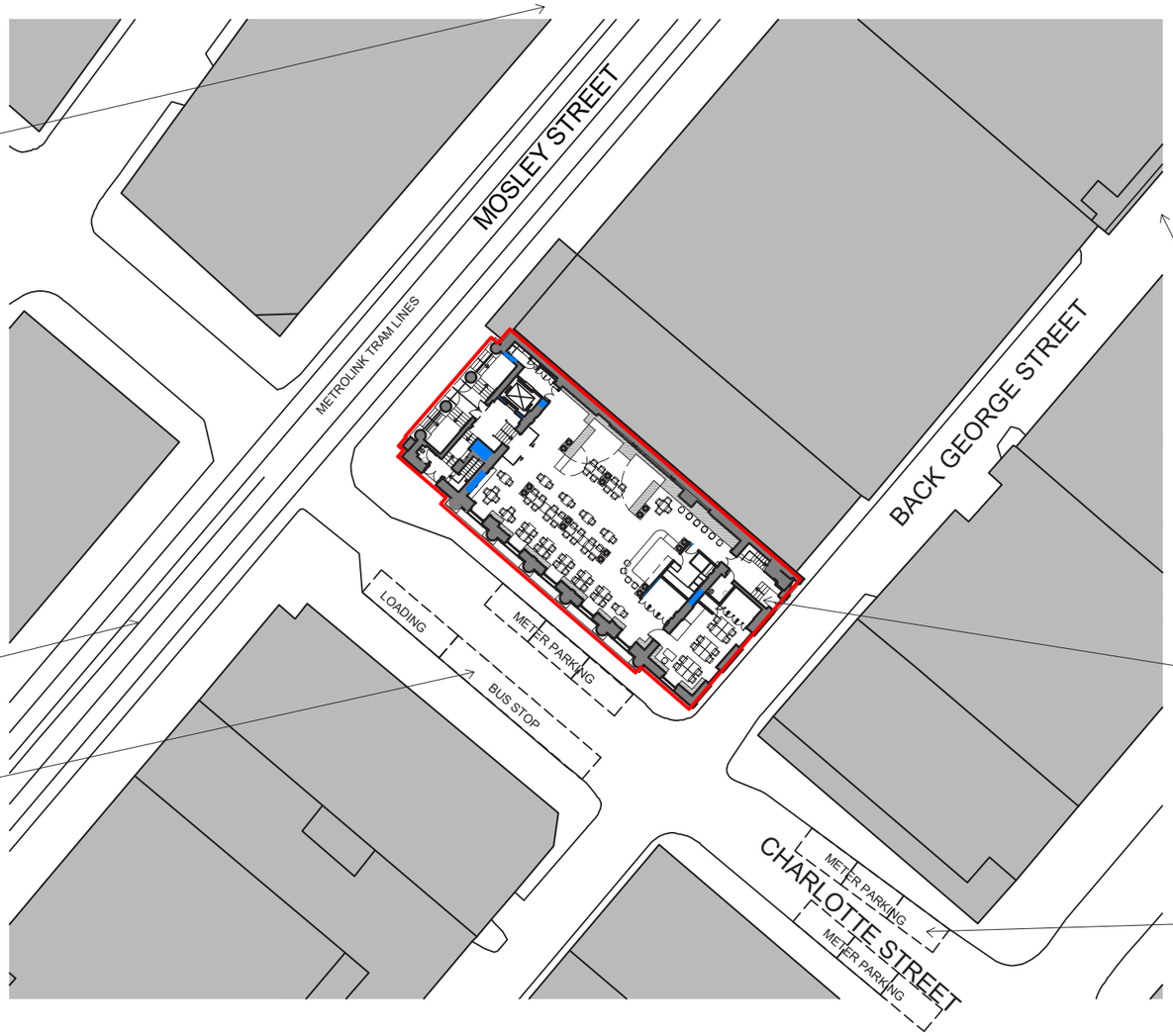
Cycle Storage

There is currently no provision for cycle parking / storage within the building, nor is there space within the ownership boundary to provide cycle hoops. However, public cycle hoops are available at the corner of Mosley Street and York Street (2 minute walk). Secure cycle parking/storage is also available a short walk away at Transport for Greater Manchester's City Tower Cycle Hub (3 minutes).

Under the proposals detailed within this planning and listed building consent application, secure storage for 3 cycles (for staff use) is proposed within the basement (Room B23), a significant improvement upon existing arrangements for staff.

4.2 Transport Statement

Public cycle hoops are available at the corner of Mosley Street and York Street (2 minute walk).



TfGM's City Tower Cycle Hub is a short walk away (3 minutes).

Metrolink trams run directly in front of the building. The nearest tram stops are at St Peter's Square (3 minute walk) or Piccadilly Gardens (3 minute walk).

The free city centre Route 2 bus stops immediately adjacent to the building in Charlotte Street.

Secure cycle storage (for staff) is proposed to be located at basement level within Room B23. Access is via the Back George Street doors.

Additional paid on-street meter parking is available along Charlotte Street and at a number of nearby multi-storey car parks (eg. City Tower NCP, 3 minutes walk).

3 0118 Transport Provision 1:500

N

0 5m 10m 15m 20m 25m 50m

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KEY

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
P01	11.09.25	TB	TB	Stage 3 Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library

PROJECT
Portico Library

JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
Transport Provision

SIZE A3L SCALE 1:500

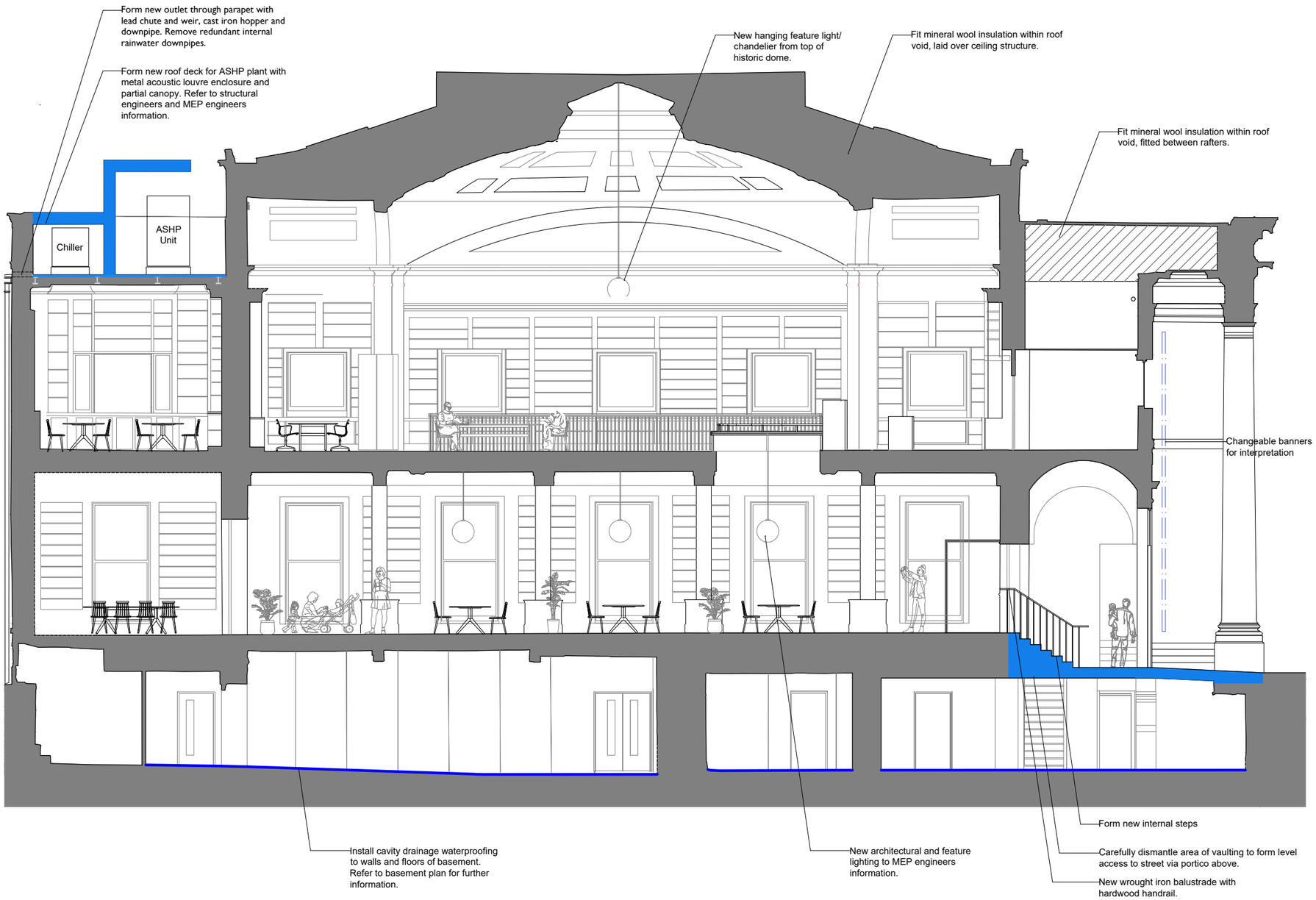
REV P01 SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **A3 - Spatial Coordination Approved**

DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-0118

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Energy Efficiency:

Air Source Heat Pumps & Plant Roof Deck



1 / 2110 Section as Proposed
1:50 @ A1

The proposals include the alteration of a section of roof to the rear elevation (Back George Street) in order to create a rooftop plant deck. This is required in order to house the Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and chiller units, as well as to create safely accessible maintenance access to them.

Acoustic modelling has shown that due to the proximity of other commercial and residential buildings, the plant should be enclosed by a metal acoustic louvred screen enclosure, and partial canopy.

The acoustic screen and canopy have been set back from the rear parapet wall in order to ensure that the plant deck is of minimal visual impact within views along Back George Street and from Charlotte Street (see analysis of visual impact overleaf).

Air Source Heat Pumps & Plant Roof Deck: Visual Impact Analysis



View West along Charlotte Street: Area of plant deck completely hidden from view by new building to right.



Further West, looking towards intersection of Charlotte Street and Back George Street: Area of plant deck still completely hidden from view by new building to right.



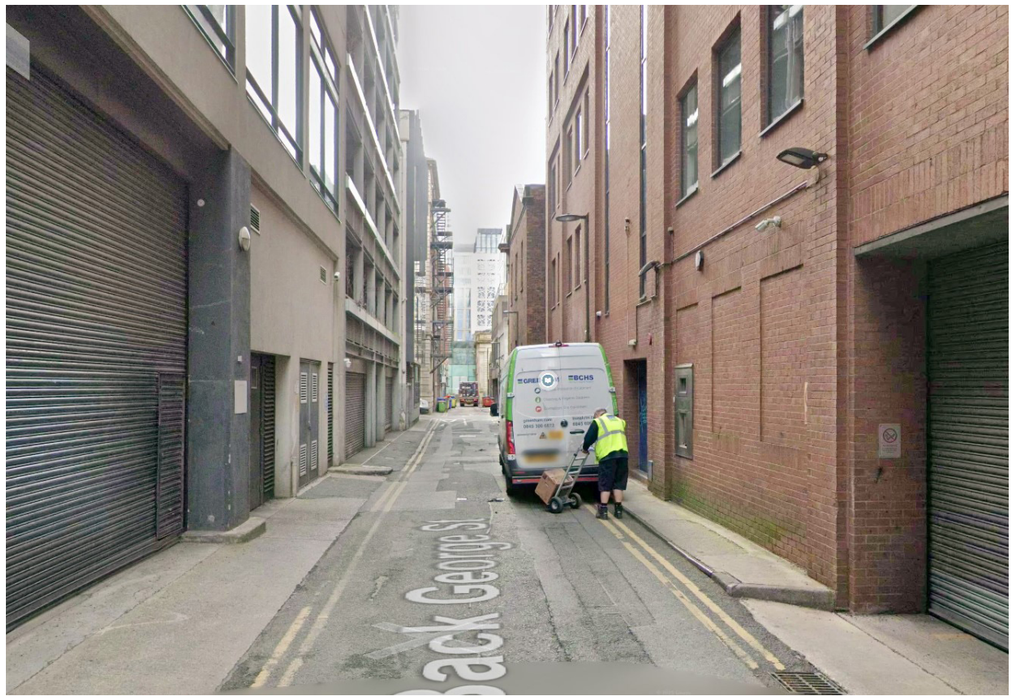
View North along Back George Street: angle of view means the plant deck area is completely concealed.



Back George Street looking directly up: As the acoustic screen is set back from the parapet there is no visibility of the screen. It's not possible to stand further away from the building due to the narrowness of the street.



Looking South along Back George Street: As the acoustic screen is set back from the parapet there is no visibility of the screen.



From the far end of Back George Street looking South: As the acoustic screen is set back from the parapet there is no visibility of the screen.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.2 Servicing Strategy: Deliveries, Collection & Maintenance

Deliveries & Collection

The proposal is to continue with much the same arrangement as existing, with deliveries and collections handled via the existing entrances on Charlotte Street and Back George Street. Please refer to site plan overleaf for all vehicle loading and maintenance access proposals.

Regular (weekly) food deliveries can be made via Back George Street and the rear entrance, giving direct access to the basement. Weekly Bin lorry collections are from Back George Street (as existing).

Retail deliveries (monthly) and delivery of library / exhibition collection items (ocassional) can be made via the existing Loading Bay on Charlotte Street and the Charlotte Street entrance.

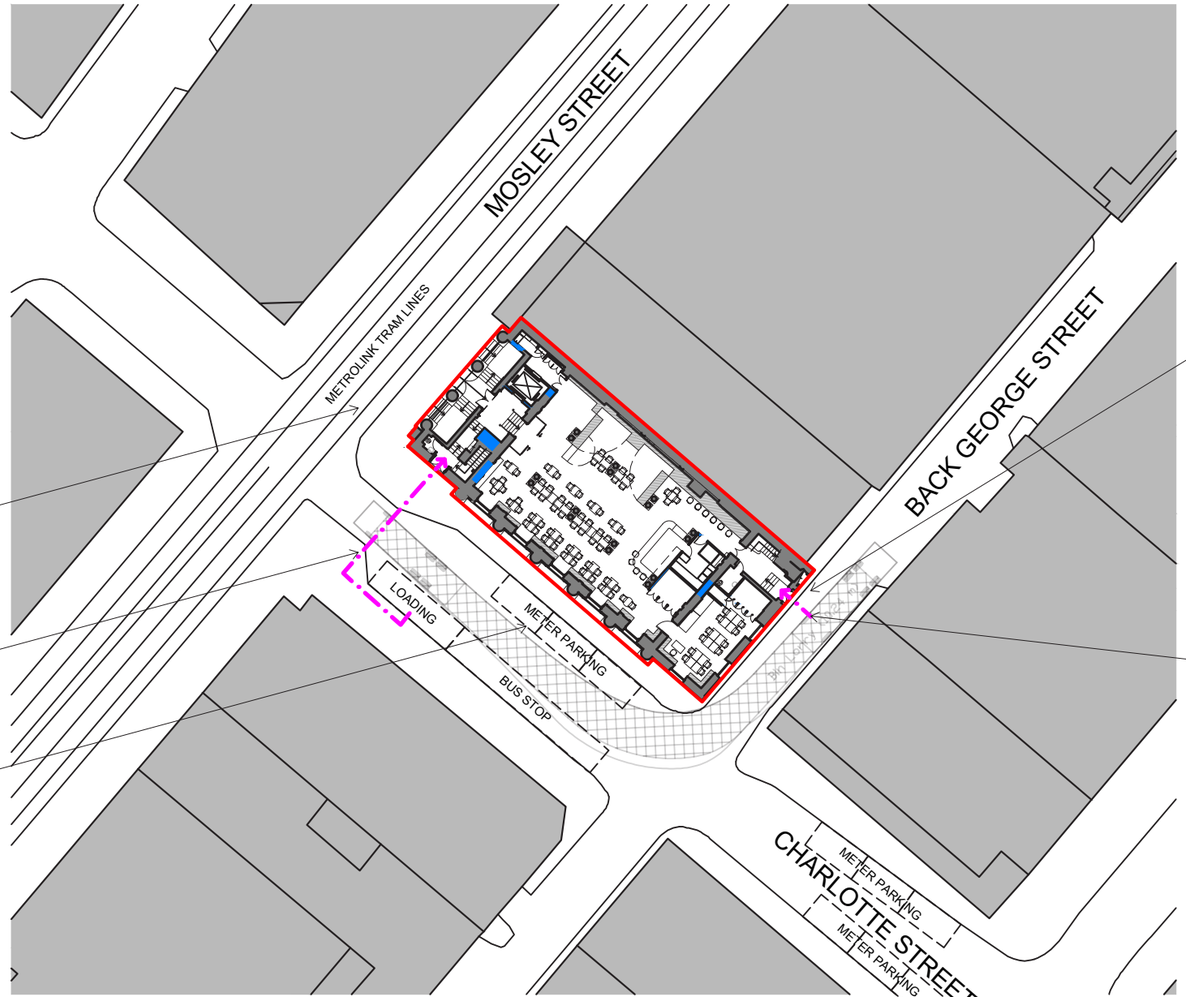
Maintenance Access

Maintenance visits (eg. annual PAT testing, monthly window cleaning etc.) can be made via the paid meter parking spaces in Charlotte Street (as existing arrangements).

Regular annual maintenance access to the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps on the roof of the building will be via internal stair and roof access. The ASHP units specified have a lifespan of at least 10-15 years. However, in the unlikely event that units require replacement within this period, these would require craning into place from Back George Street. Back George Street can be accessed from either end and has limited traffic. In the event a crane is required to access the ASHP units, this could be achieved through localised temporary closure of Back George Street.

Emergency vehicles are able to access three full elevations of the building along Mosley, Charlotte and Back George Streets.

5.2 Servicing Strategy: Deliveries, Collection & Maintenance



Emergency vehicles are able to access three full elevations of the building along Mosley, Charlotte and Back George Streets.

Retail deliveries and delivery of library / exhibition collection items can be made via the existing Loading Bay on Charlotte Street and the Charlotte Street entrance.

Maintenance visits (eg. PAT testing, window cleaning etc.) can be made via the paid meter parking spaces in Charlotte Street.

Regular annual maintenance access to Air Source Heat Pumps on roof via internal roof access. The ASHP units specified have a lifespan of at least 10-15 years. However, in the unlikely event that units require replacement, these would require craning into place from Back George Street. Back George Street can be accessed from either end and has limited traffic. In the event a crane is required to access the ASHP units, this could be achieved through localised temporary closure of Back George Street.

Regular food deliveries can be made via Back George Street and the rear entrance, giving direct access to the basement. Bin lorry collections are from Back George Street (as existing).

2 Site Servicing Strategy
0118 1:500

N

0 5m 10m 15m 20m 25m 50m

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KEY

Loading access for deliveries.

Swept path of bin lorry / delivery truck.

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
P01	11.09.25	TB	TB	Stage 3 Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library

PROJECT
Portico Library

JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

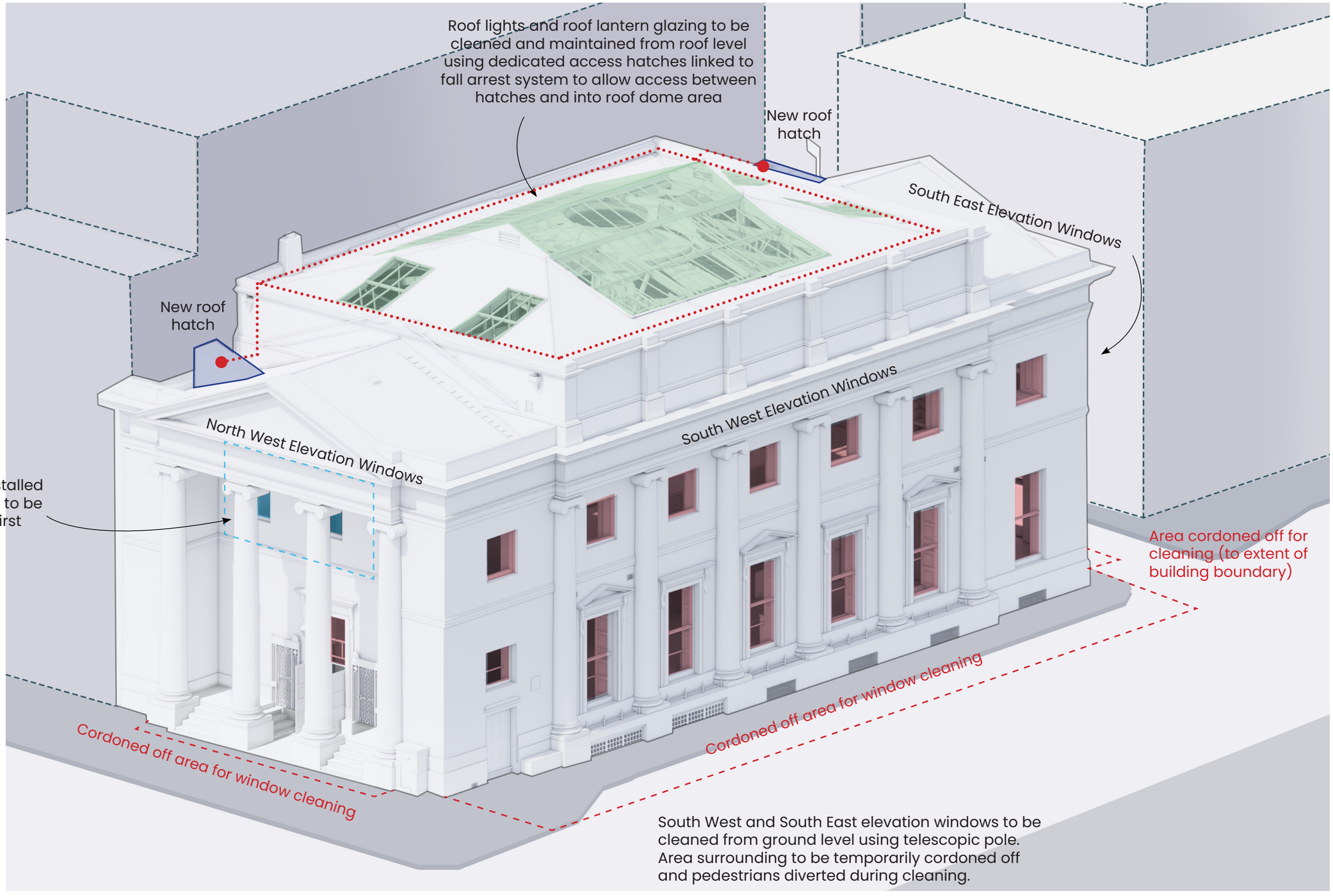
TITLE
Site Servicing Strategy

SIZE A3L SCALE 1:500

REV **P01** SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **A3 - Spatial Coordination Approved**

DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-0118

5.2 Servicing Strategy: Deliveries, Collection & Maintenance



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.3 Waste Management: Basement

Existing Waste Management

Currently, bin stores for the Ground Floor pub/restaurant are located within stores at basement level and there are permanent dedicated large wheelie bins located within Back George Street.

The movement of bins from basement to street level is currently via the stairs to the rear door on Back George Street.

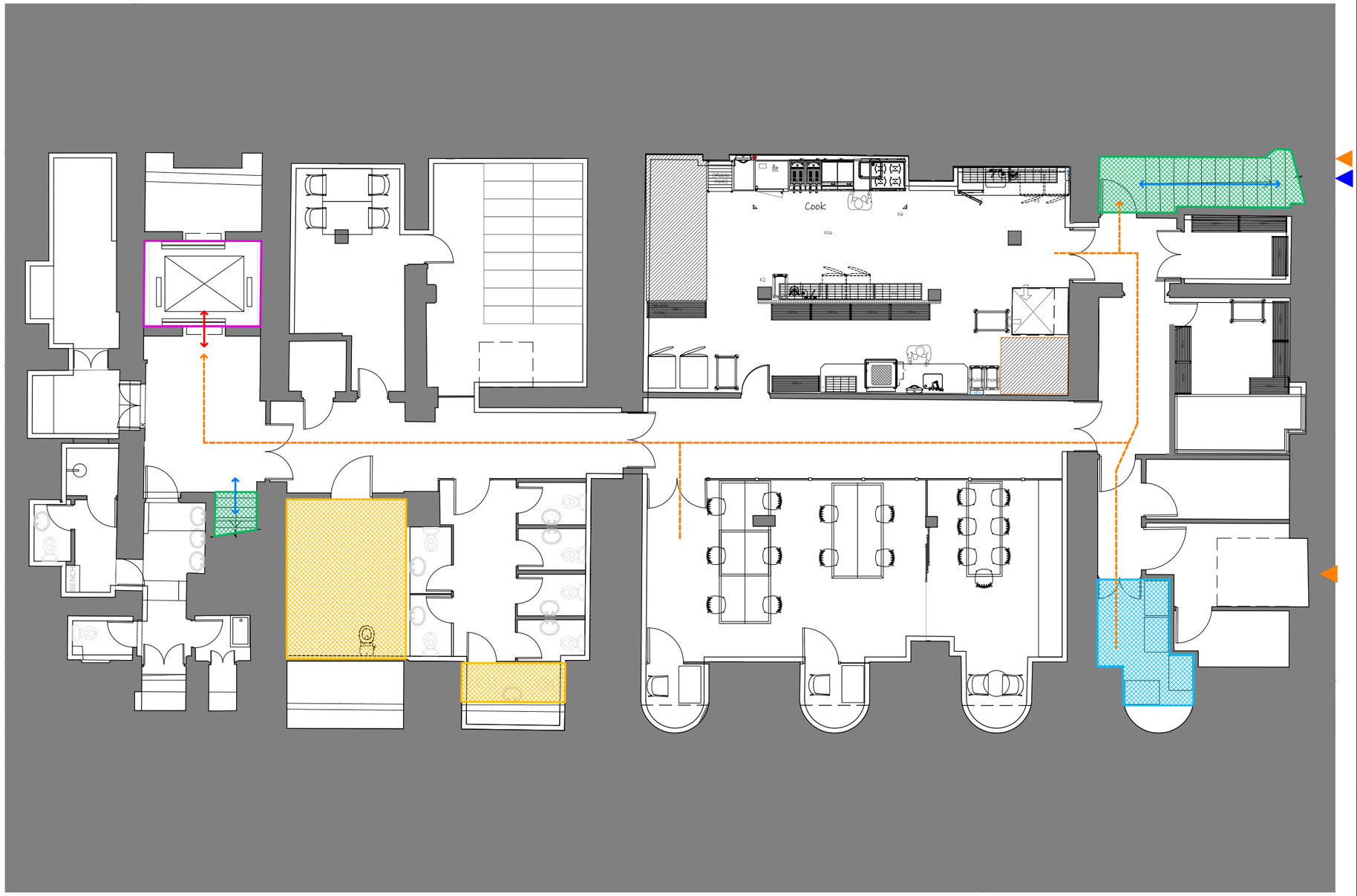
Proposed Waste Management

The proposal is to continue with much the same arrangement as existing, with a dedicated basement level bin store and permanent large bins located in Back George Street.

Internally, the movement of waste from basement to street level is to be via the stairs as per the existing arrangement. However, larger or heavier items of waste can also be transported via the proposed internal lift outside of operating hours, which is a significant improvement upon the existing arrangement.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.3 Waste Management: Basement



include an appropriate level of tolerance.
Where appropriate site dimensions should be taken to verify accuracy of measurement.

All dimensions are in millimetres unless noted otherwise.

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Key Plan
not to scale

Access and Servicing Key

- Proposed Lift
- Existing Stairs
- Waste Collection Points
- Accessible WC
- Bin Store
- Level Access
- Stepped Access
- Waste Out
- Deliveries In
- Main Entrance Access
- Access
- Managed with Portable Ramp

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
P01	XX.XX.XX	XX	XX	First Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library
PROJECT
Portico Library
JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
Basement Waste Management Plan

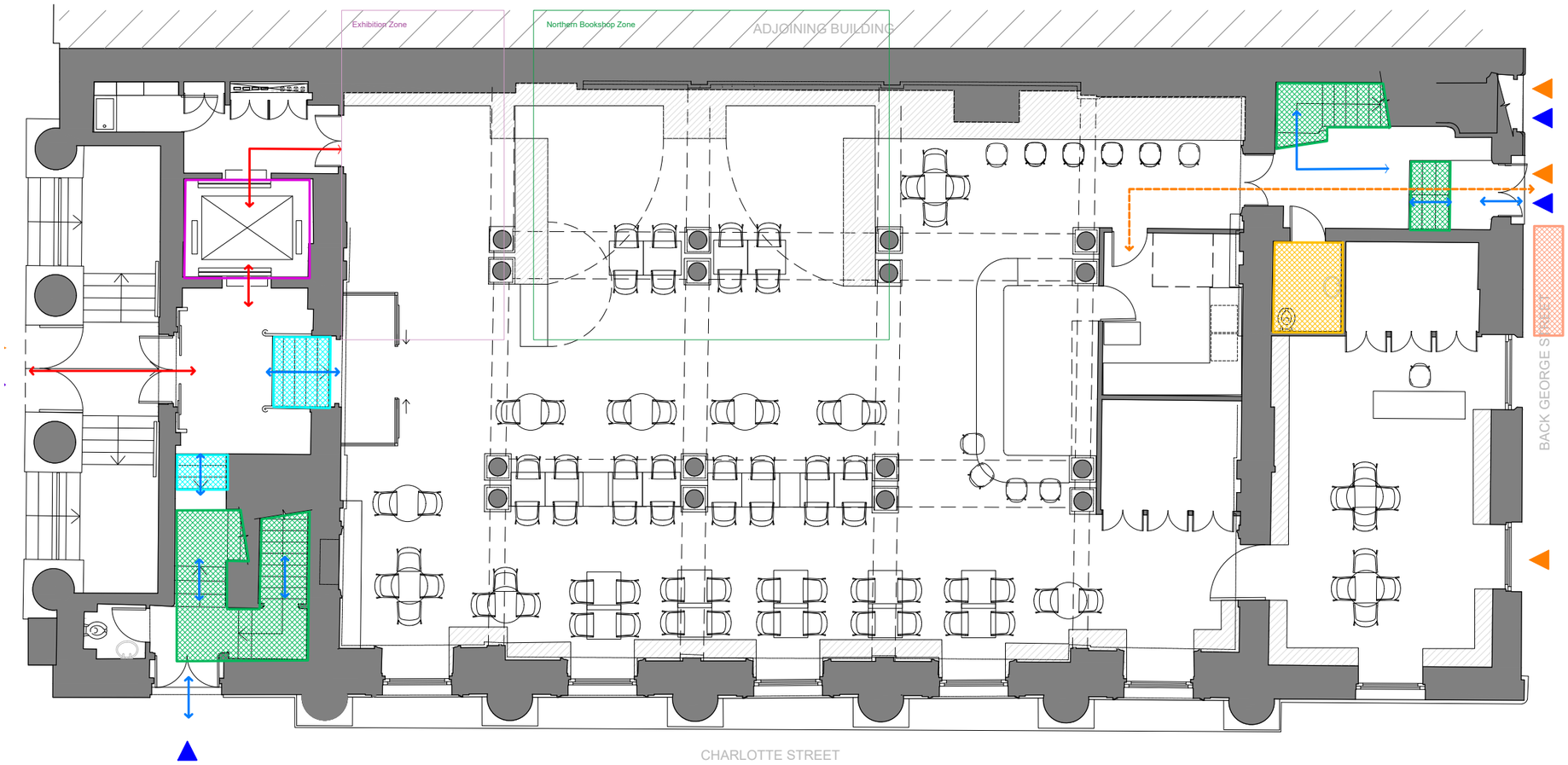
SIZE A1L | SCALE 1:50

REV **P01** | SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **S2 - For Information**

DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-B1-DR-A-9200

1/9200 Basement Waste Management Plan
1:50 @ A1

5.3 Waste Management: Ground Floor



1 / 9201 Ground Floor Waste Management Plan
1:50 @ A1

0 500mm 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m

include an appropriate level of tolerance.
Where appropriate site dimensions should be taken to verify accuracy of measurement.

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Key Plan
not to scale

Access and Servicing Key

- Proposed Lift
- Existing Stairs
- Proposed Stairs
- Waste Collection Points
- Accessible WC
- Bin Store
- Level Access
- Stepped Access
- Waste Out
- Deliveries In
- Main Entrance Access
- Access
- Managed with Portable Ramp

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
P01	19.06.25	HW	TB	First Issue

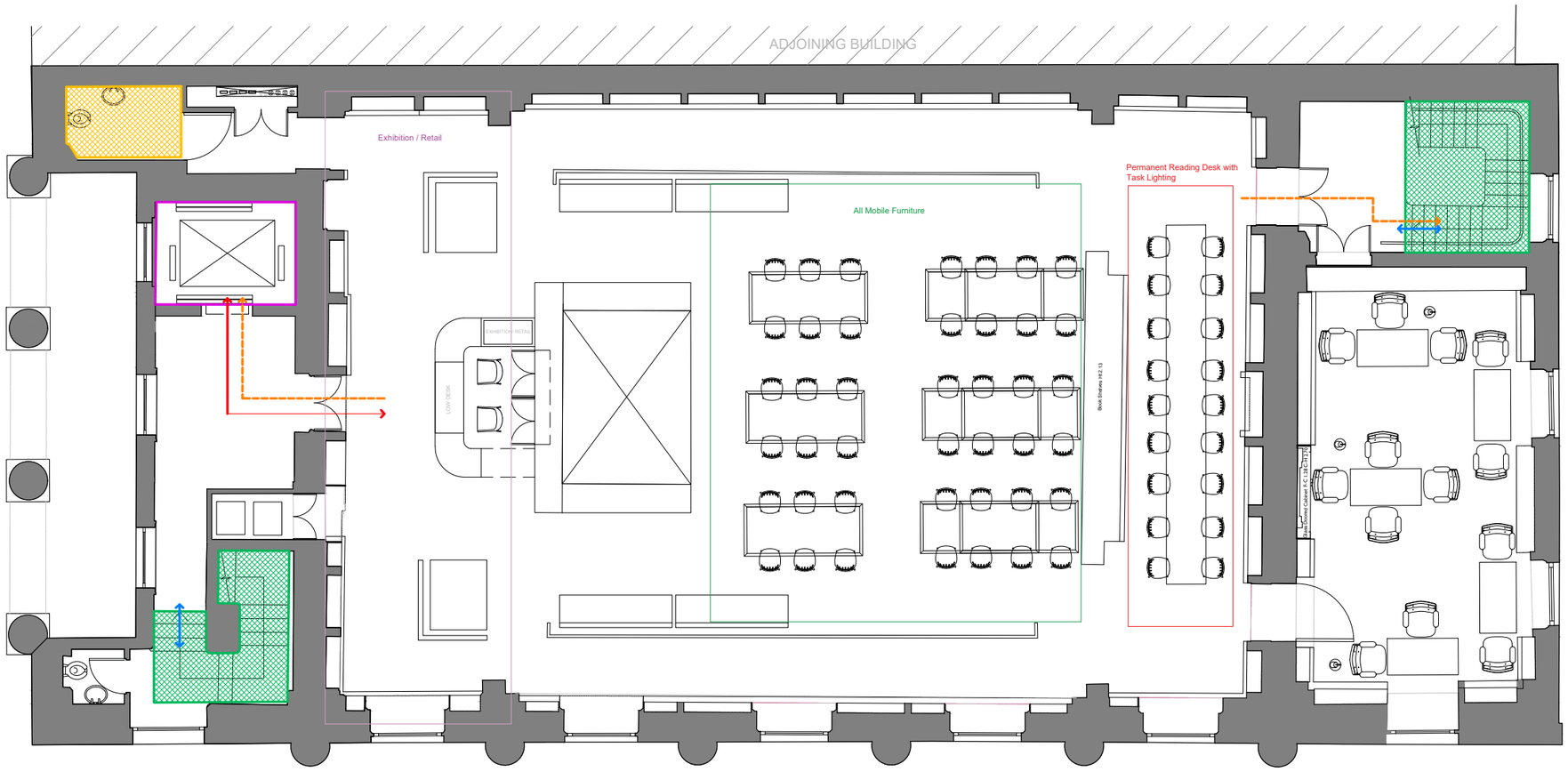
CLIENT
The Portico Library
PROJECT
Portico Library
JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
Ground Floor Waste Management Plan

SIZE A1L
SCALE 1:50
REV **P01**
SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **S2 - For Information**
DRAWING NUMBER
243337-PUR-ZZ-00-DR-A-9201

5.3 Waste Management: First Floor



1 / 9202 First Floor Waste Management Plan
1:50 @ A1

include an appropriate level of tolerance.
Where appropriate site dimensions should be taken to verify accuracy of measurement.

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Key Plan
not to scale

Access and Servicing Key

- Proposed Lift
- Existing Stairs
- Proposed Stairs
- Waste Collection Points
- Accessible WC
- Bin Store
- Level Access
- Stepped Access
- Waste Out
- Deliveries In
- Main Entrance Access
- Access
- Managed with Portable Ramp

REV	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION
P01	XX.XX.XX	XX	XX	First Issue

CLIENT
The Portico Library
PROJECT
Portico Library
JOB NUMBER
243337

PURCELL

TITLE
First Floor Waste Management Plan

SIZE **A1L** SCALE **1:50**
REV **P01** SUITABILITY/REASON FOR ISSUE **S2 - For Information**
DRAWING NUMBER **243337-PUR-ZZ-01-DR-A-9202**

5.4 Ecology

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 The basement was not surveyed but there is no potential access from the exterior. No constraints limited this survey. A high degree of confidence is placed on the assessment.

3.2 Habitat Appraisal

3.2.1 The site is in an urban area in the middle of Manchester. There is very little vegetation and consequently there will be a low abundance of insects. The site and its surroundings will be subject to high levels of artificial light. Surrounding habitats offer poor quality foraging habitat for bats.

3.3 External Survey

3.3.1 The site is a three-storey building with a basement level, originally built in 1806. The walls are stone and brick (see Photograph 1).

4. Assessment

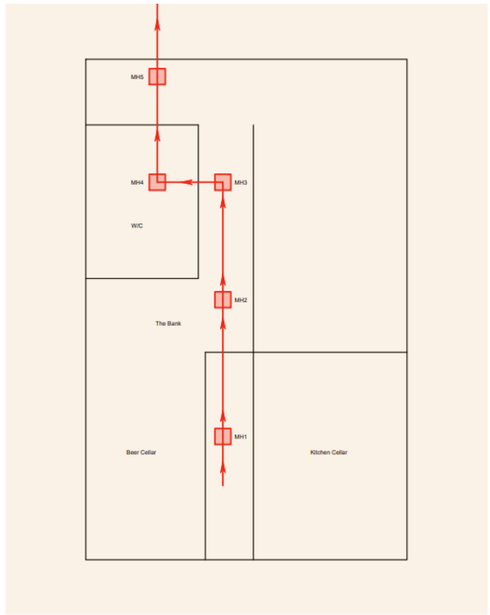
4.1 Interpretation of Results

4.1.1 The site is located in poor quality bat foraging habitat. No suitable access points were identified. The site offers negligible potential to support roosting bats.

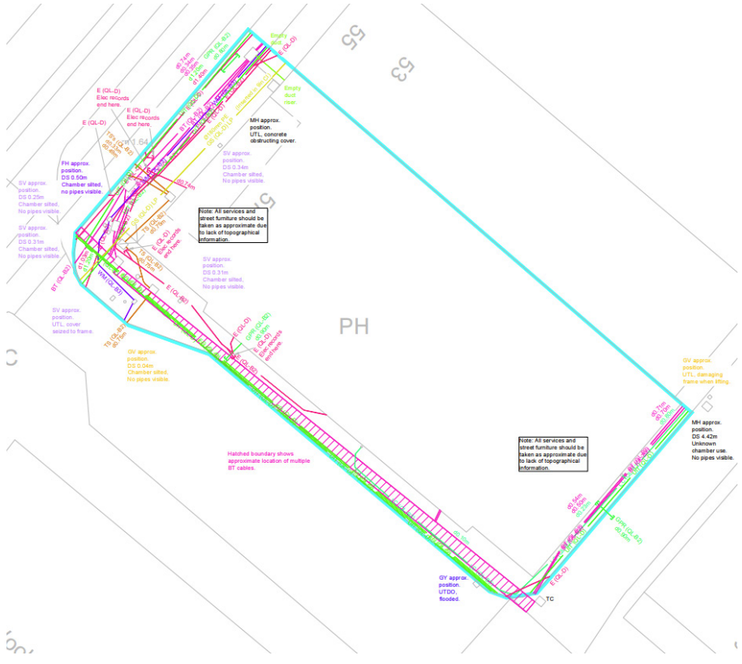
4.2 Potential Impacts

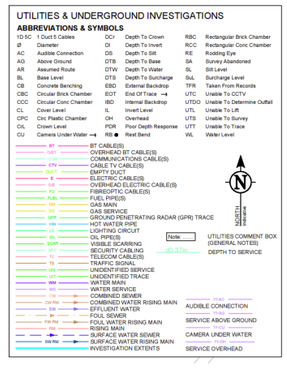
4.2.1 The proposed development does not require removal of roof coverings and is unlikely to result in any impacts to bats or their roosts.

CCTV DRAINAGE









SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.5 Surveys & Investigative Works

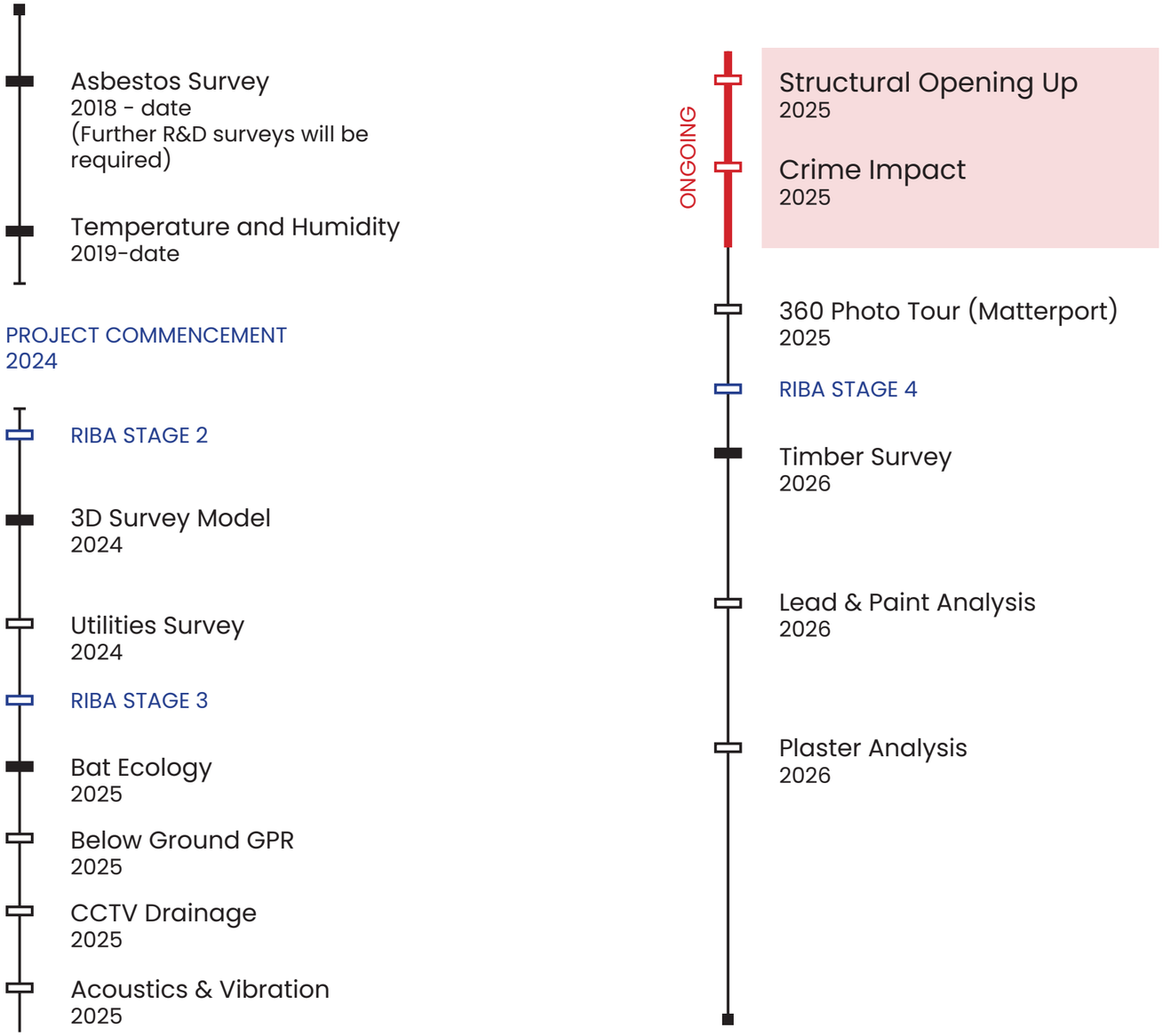
Asbestos: Ongoing surveys and repeat analysis

In order to develop the team's understanding of the building, a survey tracker has been developed from the outset of the project. This has identified where existing survey information exists and can be reviewed and where new surveys need to be commissioned.

This has been ordered in terms of priority and funding. One of the key surveys that was commissioned in 2024 was the 3D survey model. 3no. suppliers were approached for quotation to ensure best value and a supplier was selecated in Autumn 2024. This model has proved invaluable where we have had to test the impact of design proposals on the historic fabric.

A further series of surveys have been commissioned and undertaken enabling the team to gain a much clearer definition of issues.

We have also identified a series of further surveys that would be required during the Stage 4 works to further inform this process.



SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.6 Air Quality Management Strategy

Proposed Kitchen Extraction System

The fully electrical kitchen is to be provided with a Recirculating Filtration System rather than an typical extract system. This means there are no kitchen exhausts to atmosphere and no negative impact on the local air quality.

Further to this, the proposals include the removal of existing gas fired boilers, to be replaced with electric air source heat pumps (ASHPs). This will therefore be a further improvement upon the existing local air quality, since it includes the removal of gas fired boilers that currently emit combustion gases to atmosphere.

Odour Impact Assessment

As previously stated, the fully electrical kitchen is provided with a Recirculating Filtration System rather than an extract system and so there are no kitchen exhausts to atmosphere and no negative impact in terms of kitchen odours, or impact to local air quality.

Location and Appearance of External Equipment

There is no external ductwork proposed as there is no kitchen extract system, it is a Recirculating Filtration System.

Kitchen Extract Noise Levels & Acoustic Assessment

As previously stated, the fully electrical kitchen is provided with a Recirculating Filtration System rather than an extract system and so there are no negative acoustic impacts related to kitchen ventilation. An Acoutic Report has been provided with this application assessing the noise impact of the rooftop ASHPs, and an appropriate acoustic enclosure has been designed to mitigate acoustic impact.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Stakeholder Engagement

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSERVATION PANEL

The team have commenced early stage discussions with the local authority during the Stage 2 works in order to gauge feedback on the emerging proposals.

AN initial meeting was held with the Manchester City Council Conservation Officer Paul Mason and Jackie Whelan on 5th of December 2024 where we presented the key themes of accessibility, sustainability and re-connecting all floors of the historic library again.

These proposals were received positively and we were invited to present the scheme to Manchester City Council conservation panel on 11th of February which, again, the proposals gained favourable feedback from the panel.

A further pre-application meeting and presentation was then held with the Manchester City Council planning case officer Emily Booth and conservation officer Jackie Whelan on 24th March. A formal pre-application submission was then made following this meeting and an initial list of information and requirements for validation were provided by MCC in response.

A full formal response is anticipated in due course.

INITIAL MEETINGS WITH HISTORIC ENGLAND

A initial meeting was held with Historic England Officer, Ross Brazier on 6th March where the developed proposals from the end of RIBA Stage 2 were shared.

The feedback on the proposals was positive and a formal pre-application was then made, including further information compiled by Chambers Conservation. This information was acknowledged and initial feedback given.

Historic England stated that they were broadly supportive of the scheme, and recognised the ambition and importance of achieving level access to all levels of the building, as well as reinstating public access for all via the Mosley Street portico. It was suggested that removal of the central portion of the portico steps would likely be more acceptable to Historic England than removal of the full width of the steps, and the current proposals were amended in line with this advice.

A copy of Historic England’s advice letter is appended to this report.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Mr John Piercy Holroyd
Purcell
Manchester

Direct Dial: 0161 2421417

Our ref: PA01203251
4 July 2025

Dear Mr Piercy Holroyd

Pre-application Advice

THE PORTICO LIBRARY, 57 MOSLEY STREET, MANCHESTER, M2 3HY

Thank you for seeking our advice on this exciting project.

Advice
Significance
The Portico Library is a striking building, constructed between 1802 and 1806 as a subscription library. It is a prominent element within the surrounding street scene, occupying a conspicuous corner site, and with a commanding portico fronting onto Moseley Street. The building exhibits a high quality of design and craftsmanship, with the grand nature of its external architecture being a deliberately designed element in order to make it eye-catching and to emphasise its function as an exclusive club.

The interior of the building is also of considerable architectural interest, particularly at first floor which is lit from above by an attractive glass dome. While the building has been altered and restored the first floor has a valuable survival of early nineteenth century fixtures and fittings. Other areas of the building have been more greatly altered, including the ground floor which has been converted into first a bank, and more recently a public house. While this is identified to have impacted on its significance, these areas do retain important evidence of the evolution of the building, including fixtures and finishes associated with the building's use as a bank, and the columns which allow an understanding of the originally galleried nature of the first floor

Its historic function as a subscription library also contributes to the significance of the building, as this building typology allows an interesting historic insight into the culture and lifestyle of the upper and middle classes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The continuation of this use contributes to the significance of the building, as does the evidence for the evolution of uses at ground floor, as this offers an interesting insight into changing societal tastes and requirements.

The building also derives considerable historic value from its association with some of the foremost minds of the day, including P.M. Roget (the author of the first thesaurus), Reverend Gaskell (husband of the celebrated author, Elizabeth Gaskell), John Dalton (a prominent scientist, famous for his work on atomic theory in chemistry) and Robert Peel (a Tory politician, who was twice Prime Minister between 1834 and 1846).

The architect, Thomas Harrison is also of historic interest in his own right, as he was involved in a number of high-status commissions, including the Lyceum Club in Liverpool, and major building works at both Chester and Lancaster Castles. The front elevation of the Portico was probably based on the north elevation of the Temple of Minerva in Athens which Harrison is known to have drawn.
Harrison's portico is a fine example of neo classical architecture it is listed at grade II* and is a particularly important building of more than special interest, only 5.8% of listed buildings are Grade II*.

Impact
The proposals seek to reunify the building into a single multiple use functional venue with the library use at its core. The proposals would see the removal of the pub fit out at ground floor and replacement with flexible floorspace, kitchen and event space, the basement floor would be used to provide toilets, staff space, commercial kitchen and archive storage. The first floor would retain its current use with some configurations.

The proposals will seek as part of the unification to undertake vital repairs, introduce energy efficiency measures and provide level access to the building.

Energy Efficiency upgrades
We consider that given the design of the building, particularly the roofscape there is potential for energy efficiency measures to be introduce to the building without causing harm to its significance. We would expect this to be demonstrated as part of any application and following our guidance in HEAN 18.

Change of use and associated alterations
The proposed change of use to the ground and basement floors are unlikely to result in harm to the significance of the building given the alterations that have previously occurred and the nature of the proposals. we would expect the proposals at detailed stage to look to retain and preserve those surviving elements which do contribute to the special interest of the building and the strategy for the required M&E to also follow this approach. The proposed alterations to the first floor which will include an opening up of a section of the previously open gallery, would not cause harm to the building's significance, likewise the reconfiguration of the gallery railings, that are not in their original location.

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Creation of level and DDA compliant access
The building currently is unable to provide DDA compliant access to the library at first floor. The proposals currently seek to remove the central portion of the entrance steps to the building to create level access from the street, the building would then be accessible at all floors via lift access. We consider that the proposed removal of part of the portico steps will result in harm to the significance of the building, this is through the loss of an important element of the principal elevation that contributes to the architectural composition of this architecturally fine building. We would consider the level of harm to be less than substantial, as such, a clear and convincing justification needs to be made demonstrating that less harmful options are not achievable and that the proposals are both necessary and proportionate to the viable use of the building.

Policy
National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024). These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF, 202).

Local authorities should take the significance of an asset into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (NPPF, 208).

When considering the impact of proposals on the significance of an asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be, irrespective of the level of potential harm (NPPF, 212). Any harm to, or loss of significance requires clear and convincing justification (NPPF, 213).

Where it is identified that harm will be caused, the decision maker should be satisfied that this is supported by a clear and convincing justification (NPPF, 213) and that the public benefits that it would bring about would outweigh the harm and where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (NPPF, 215).

Position
We welcome the exciting opportunity that currently presents itself for the library to regain use of the entire building. We are supportive of the principle of the proposals and consider that most of the works are unlikely to cause harm to the significance of the building. We acknowledge that the form and constraints of the building will limit the options available to minimise potential impacts in relation to providing more inclusive access but consider that any application will need to provide robust evidence that solutions that would minimise harm have been explored and are not achievable.

We understand that the planning balance of benefit and harm is complex in this case. A more concrete set of proposals and supporting documents would be needed to support the necessary application(s) required.

We would be happy to advise further should less impactful alternatives to provide inclusive access

Next Steps
Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. We are broadly content with your proposals, subject to you addressing the issues as outlined above before any statutory approval is sought.

Yours sincerely

Ross Brazier
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: ross.brazier@HistoricEngland.org.uk

THE PORTICO LIBRARY, 57 MOSLEY STREET, MANCHESTER, M2 3HY
Pre-application Advice

List of information on which the above advice is based
HE presentation and Stage 2 report and appendicies

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HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Statement of Significance
(extracted from Chambers Conservation Conservation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Evidential Value:
Evidential value is the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
The Portico Library is a rare example of a Neo-Classical building built in the north-west at the turn of the 19th century. The exterior survives almost entirely intact and a large percentage of the original internal fabric is still present.
The Library as a whole is important and rare in that it consists of historic evidence in such a number of forms, from the building itself to the physical contents in terms of both fittings and books, records etc.

Historical Value:
Historical value is the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
The building is a variation on the 18th century fashion for coffee houses, book clubs and commercial libraries and distinctly reminds us of the character of middle-class Manchester Georgian society. It is a very rare survivor of an early 18th century library that remains today in its original use, with a very large part of the building clearly recognisable in its original form.
The Library is important for being one of the first Greek-revival buildings to be completed in the city. The Portico is also highly significant from its association with prominent architect Thomas Harrison and for being the last surviving building he designed in Manchester. Architectural historian Giles Worsley described Harrison as 'the first English Architect to grasp the full potential of the Greek Revival.... [he had a] thorough, but unpedantic, understanding of Greek architecture' and that he 'created some of the finest neo-classical architecture of the Regency'.
The Portico has an interesting connection with architect Joseph Sunlight, who had designed the 1920s conversion of the ground floor and basement - he went on to become a millionaire and design Sunlight House on Deansgate, Manchester's first skyscraper.
The Portico has a large number of highly significant connections to the literary world –Elizabeth Gaskell (together with her husband Reverend William Gaskell, who had been chairman) was a frequent user and referred to the building in a letter to Charlotte Bronte. She was a vocal critic of the 19th century rule prohibiting women from entering the newsroom. P.M. Roget, author of the Thesaurus, was the Library's first secretary and Thomas De Quincey mentions the building in his book "Confessions of an English Opium Eater". Also a member was Dr John Dalton, famed for introducing atomic theory. Dalton had superintended the going of the clock on the basis he was offered free admission.
The Portico is not an unaltered relic of Georgian Manchester but instead the building today is a visual history book, which helps to document some of the key changes in Manchester's economy and society in its two centuries of history. The key changes to the building's fabric reflect shifts, firstly towards the area becoming more commercial and part of the financial centre of the city, and then the transition towards a more entertainment and leisure focus. Looking more carefully, there is evidence of more subtle changes that reflect other important historical transitions such as the inclusion of ladies' toilets or the changes of technology that brought in new forms of lighting or heating.
The Portico is unusual for having a well-minuted set of written records that, together with the physical fabric, helps to tell a fascinating story of the past two-hundred years.
The building is of high significance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aesthetic Value:
Aesthetic value is the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
The Portico is an elegantly simple building – its design is particularly important as an early example of the Greek Revival movement in Manchester – it is thought to have been based on the Temple of Minerva in Athens, although the Temple of Minerva Polias, Priene is more likely and suggested by others7, being of the ionic order – it was meticulously measured and recorded in 1769, therefore it is possible Harrison studied it).
The building is a bold composition, with ionic columns supporting a classical pediment - deliberately heavy to give a character of earnestness, whilst the considered detailing provides a scholarly reference.
Inside, the building is particularly significant from having a large unsupported dome and from the sizeable, airy expense of the main library, which would have once been even greater when the ground-floor newsroom was part of the principal space. A strong sense of balance and symmetry is important to the primary internal spaces which retain much of their original character from the Harrison concept images.
The building contributes greatly to the character of both Mosley Street and Charlotte Street as it stands prominently and proudly on the corner. It adds to the texture of materials and building styles that visually characterise Manchester and fairly represent the wideness of its cultural influences and history. Despite being just outside of the George Street Conservation Area, it contributes to its setting.

Communal Value:
Communal value is the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.
The communal value of the Portico has inevitably changed through time and it was important for different reasons in the past. When built, the prestigious nature of the space was important and it was a place to be seen and to socialise. It was significant in the development of the Manchester enlightenment. Its communal value has, in the past century, changed to something quieter, with more emphasis on learning or its being a place to take a tranquil break from city life.
The Portico sits within, as is valued as part of, a collection of cultural buildings in Manchester that, together, make the city a world leader in art and culture. The library established the Portico Prize in 1985, to celebrate the strong regional and literary identity of the North of England, with the aim of raising awareness of the diversity of its cultural, literary and historical heritage. The Prize is awarded biennially to the highest quality book set wholly or mainly in the North of England. It has been described as the 'Booker of The North', with previous winners including Anthony Burgess, Val McDermid & Sarah Hall. The Prize is itself now part of the significance of the Portico.
More locally, the Library is valued for its work with schools and young people - each year The Portico awards prizes to young people in book review and creative writing categories. The Library works with authors to deliver workshops across Greater Manchester and promote essential skills in communication, creativity and critical thinking but to most importantly encourage a life-long love of literature. It is used for both a formal learning tool (in terms of it work with literature) but also more informally through its series of exhibitions, housed within the central space under the dome.
The Library's current community work is supported by the historical backdrop of the building together with the institution's connections with figureheads such as Elizabeth Gaskell.
The building is of high significance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance of the Exterior:
As stated previously, the exterior of the Portico is significant for being an early example of the Greek Revival movement in Manchester that has seen relatively few changes over its history.
The Mosley Street elevation is the most important (in particular as it features the architectural feature of the 'portico' itself. The main features of this façade remain entirely intact – namely the columns and pediment. One of the only minor exemptions is the addition of the gold-coloured lettering on the entablature. Later changes are largely hidden within the area that is set back behind the columns in a much less prominent shaded area – these include the blocking in of windows at ground floor level and alterations to the main door, changes to the first-floor windows and the addition of railings and simple signage for the pub. These changes have had limited detrimental impact but this elevation has retained its original very high level of significance.
The external post box, also on the Mosley Street elevation, is significant for being the oldest posting point on its original site in Manchester – it was installed in 1882 and is the largest of its type.
The side Charlotte Street frontage also remains largely as Harrison envisaged, but there have been changes to the fenestration. To the ground floor, the windows which originally would have been 9-over-9 multipaned sashes, are now much simpler, with a plain piece of glass top and bottom. It is not exactly known when this change took place, but most likely was at the time of the conversion into a bank. The stone recesses on the first floor were also changed to windows. These windows seemed to have been inserted at different times – three were documented to have been put in in 1904 and all were present by the time of the 1920s changes. The other key alteration was the creation of the new entrance to the Library, following the occupation of the ground floor by the Bank of Athens. This would originally have been a sash window, mirroring that at the other end of the elevation. Despite these changes, the robustness of the composition and the primary elements of the stone work detailing are retained.
The elevation, can be said to have a very high level of significance.
The elevation onto Back George Street has always been very much a rear façade – it is built of brick with stone features limited to very simple cills, a plain plinth and a modest pediment to the gable end. This elevation has suffered with some detrimental changes and ground floor level, generally relating to the provision of ventilation or fire escapes. The addition of an escape door on the far right-hand side (date unknown, but possibly 1920s) has further unbalanced the composition and elemental simplicity of this elevation. The loss of what would have been the multi-panes windows, makes the elevation plainer still. Despite this, the façade does keep its early 19th century character and therefore it can be described as having moderate significance..

Significance of the First Floor Interior:
The first floor is undoubtedly the most significant area of the interior as it retains the most surviving features.
The large, unsupported dome is the most striking feature in the main space – it is in its original form, but the glazing dates from 1856. Running around the circumference of the raised lantern are a series of decorative vents. The remainder of the large dome (where not glazed), has coffered panels. The dome spans across the full width of the room – the areas to each end (where it does not reach) have shallow-arched vaulted ceilings, again with small laylights. The ceiling has been painted with a series of subtly varying shades of stone-coloured paint, which give its form greater depth whilst adding to the airy-feel of the space. This is the most significant part of the interior of the building.
Immediately below the ceiling on each of the four sides is an arched section of wall –

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

the front side features a clock and the rear has a wind-dial. Both were made by John Twaites of Clerkenwell – the wind-dial is connected to a weathervane on the roof. Beneath is a modest cornice with dentils – it appears that it would have originally been more elaborate, featuring a regularly repeating pattern of roundels indented with possibly a floral motif. The surviving features are considered highly significant.

Beneath, the bookcases rise almost to the springing point of the ceiling all around the room. Documents held at the Library state that the bookcases were originally painted white, then straw coloured with graining, with the shelves themselves lined with green baize. It is known that there was work undertaken to the bookcases in the early 20th century, but the extent of the alterations is not known. The current bookcases show some evidence of having been painted a much lighter colour in the past, therefore it is likely that a large extent of the bookcases seen today are early in origin. There would, however, have been some alteration to accommodate the windows onto Charlotte Street and therefore it might be this that the document is alluding to. The bookcases as a whole have a high level of significance as they are a vital part of the character of the building and clearly elucidate the original and intended use. Individually, each section may vary in significance, depending on the age and quality of construction – it is recommended that an additional level of study would benefit the understanding of the bookcases and aid the process of repair work in the future.

The free-standing bookcases are of a different construction and character to those on the outside walls and almost certainly date to the 20th century alterations, not being visible in earlier photos. With this in mind, some may be considered to be of limited significance to the building, although the unit facing into the main space is clearly a high-quality piece – of mahogany and fitted with sliding doors – this is much more of a bespoke piece of furniture that may have been reused from elsewhere in the building or made for a very specific purpose and therefore likely to be of a higher level of significance. Further research into its original location would be beneficial.

On the rear wall of the main space there is a simple fireplace of moderate significance that is recessed flush into the bookcases – it has a plain surround with no lining or grate, other than a modern log-burning stove.

Around what would have been the old balcony, is an iron balustrade with a polished timber handrail. This seems to correspond to that shown in the older photos of the interior in terms of the pattern of plain and decorative elements. Assuming, this is the case (there is some speculation that it is a 1920s replica), it has a high level of significance as it is a reminder of the previous form of the space, although it is not very visible in places, being obscured by bookcases and displays.

Also, with the ground floor are a number of large pieces of furniture. The main desk is understood to have been made using panels reclaimed from the old bank counters from the ground floor during the 1980s and the unit with 50 or so small drawers was also thought to be from there as well.

The reading room is a very attractive and relaxing space, but it has been altered over the years e.g. following a number of roof leaks. The bookcases onto Charlotte Street and the ceiling are modern (c. 1980s) and the remaining bookcases are distinctly different from those in the main library and possibly were installed at the time of the 1920s changes. The fireplace is again simple and presumably dates from the early 20th century, with a simple marble surround – the insert has been replaced in recent decades to accommodate a modern electric fire.

The Kitchen is small and simple with no significant features visible except the window (frame) and door. All fittings appear to date from the 1990s and beyond and are somewhat basic in nature.

The Work Room also lacks significant features, with no historic joinery visible within the space. The room is visually dominated by an abundance of exposed services, such as the boiler, electrical distribution board and several pipes, plus fittings / equipment such as metal shelving and a photocopier. It should be noted, however,

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

that an original cornice is understood to exist above the Work Room and Kitchen ceilings which is of significance to the building and should be considered in any proposals for this area.

Significance of the Ground Floor Interior

The ground floor, despite its conversion into use by a pub, has many surviving older elements, but many, if not all, seem to date from the 1920s works. These include: Pairs of columns supporting a ceiling with decorative downstand beams, Cornice, Window architraves and panelled lining, Pairs of pilasters.

The only older elements, from the use of the ground floor as a newsroom, are the door cases.

The main space still has much of the character of the bank space due to the visual dominance of the paired columns and large sash windows. There is some confusion caused by the recent insertion of 'replica' finishes and fittings – including: anaglypta wallpaper on the ceiling, ceiling roses, heavily-gilded picture frames, etc.

There is also a slight detrimental incursion into the otherwise uninterrupted rectangular space – this is to form a protected staircase into the basement. Despite of a large number of changes, the space still has an overall high level of significance, retaining the proportions and some detail from the Hall of the Bank of Athens.

At the rear end of the ground floor is a space that would have once been the magazine room, which is now subdivided and greatly altered to provide toilets and a fire escape. These rooms are apparently devoid of any historic features, sadly, although some still may survive above the lowered veiling.

At the front end of the ground floor (NE corner) is a small 'L' shaped space that would have been the porter's room and scullery. This of some significance for having a few earlier elements including a Georgian doorcase, glazed brick at high level (presumably 1920s or late Victorian) and a plastered cornice. Also, visible from the late 20th century staircase to the basement, is a section of raised and fielded panelling that is likely to be a remnant from the 1920s bank.

The main entrance vestibule appears to have retained its 1920s form generally intact. It has a domed (vaulted) ceiling with arched recesses either side. This, together with the doors and the marble lining make for a highly attractive space, which has a high level of significance relating to the development of the ground floor as a banking hall.

Significance of the Basement

The basement is almost entirely devoid of older features and therefore can be said to have a low level of significance. It was subject to numerous attempts at waterproofing and various changes of use that would have stripped out most finishes, but the greatest impact would have been the replacement of the ground floor structure in the 1920s – the shuttered concrete finish which is exposed shows no potential hidden cornices or other interest. Any features of slight interest are to the northern end. These include: A barrel-vaulted ceiling to a narrow space underneath the main steps, a beaded, ledged and braced double door to the above space (with architrave), an old metal security door, the metal bars across the room at the foot of the stairs, an area of older plasterwork including a beaded corner detail.

Significance of the Staircases and Toilets

The main staircase serving the library dates from the 1920s and is very much reflects the characteristics of that period, with smooth curving corners and a distinct absence of timber mouldings or other plaster details. Visual interest is provided by simple lines painted on the walls that reflect the flow of travel and the Greek key on the outer wall – this detail, together with the colour scheme, are not original, however, as photographs from the 1980s show pink-red walls (also in an eggshell finish) with white

lines. Sadly, now missing from the top of the stair is the bronze figurine that held a simple light fitting – it is understood that this was stolen. In summary this staircase

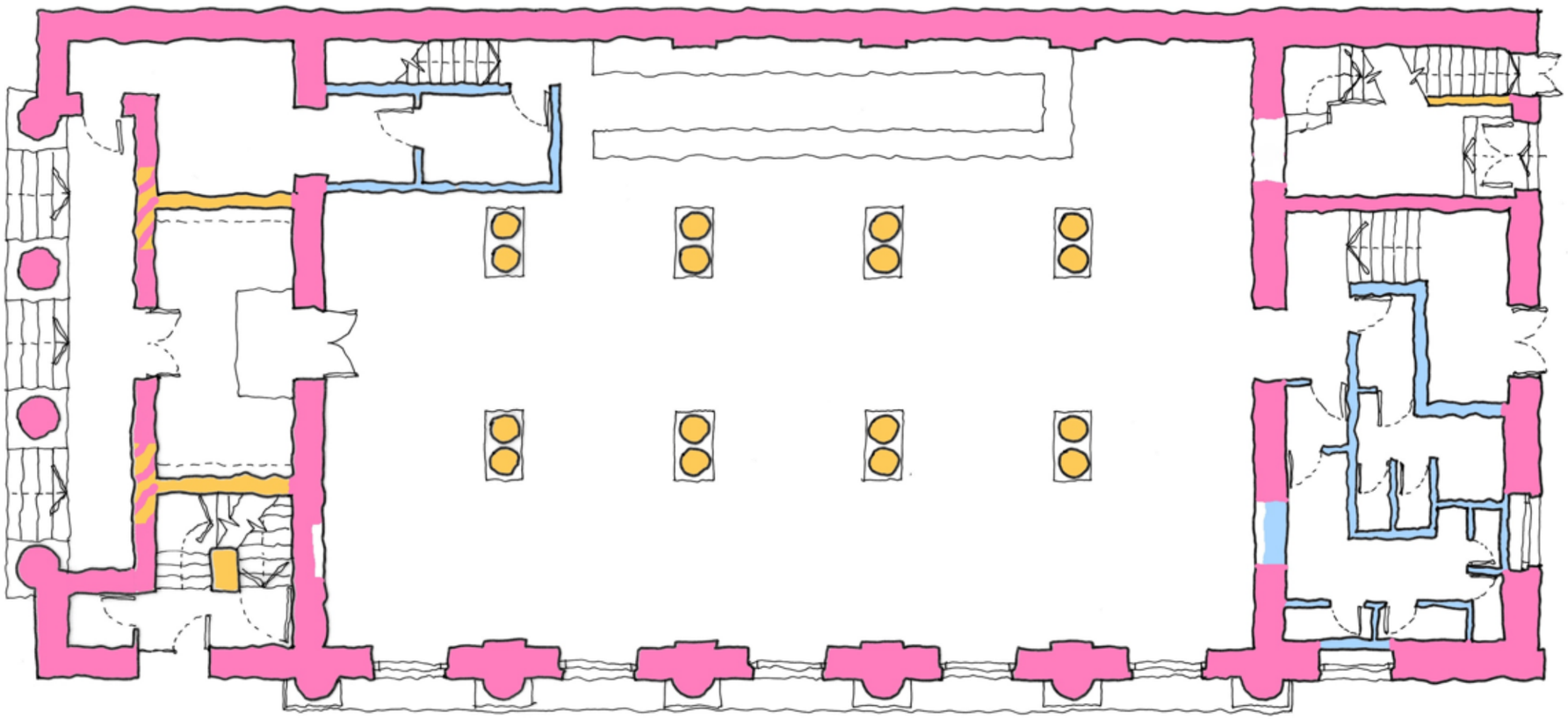
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

has a high level of significance as it as it represents a key component of the 1920s changes and has some architectural features.

Situated off this staircase on three different levels are single toilet cubicles. The rooms themselves also date from the 1920s, but the only original elements are the doors, which were modified to replace the glass panels in painted MDF. This was undertaken at the same time as the general refitting, which included replica fixtures and fittings.

In summary, these toilets have little historic interest, but contribute to the overall character of the stair therefore they moderate significance.

The rear staircase is likely to date from the original construction of the building. It is constructed from timber with a simple projecting detail under each tread. Balustrading is plain, but is topped with an attractive polished timber handrail. Sadly, this simple stair is visually dominated by the relatively recent addition of a stair lift and vinyl coverings / nosings, which adversely affect the appearance of the space. However, the space is still considered to be of high significance, as one of the surviving original library components.



Ground Floor Plan -
Showing Ages of Building Fabric and Annotations of Changes

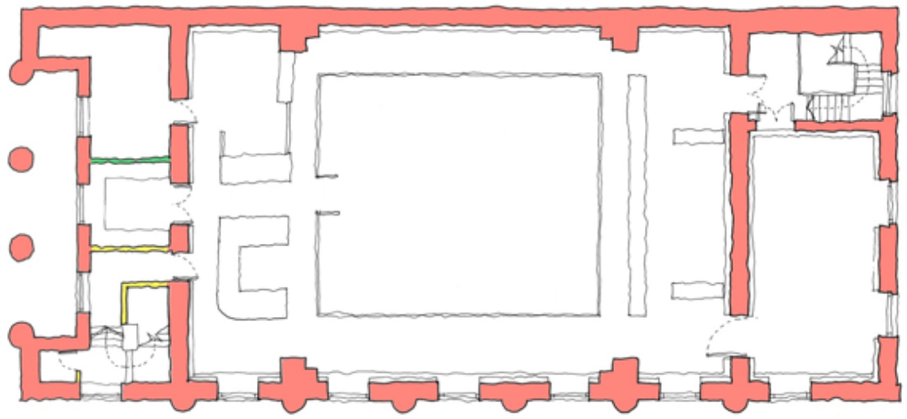
Original or early fabric

Fabric relating to 1920s alterations

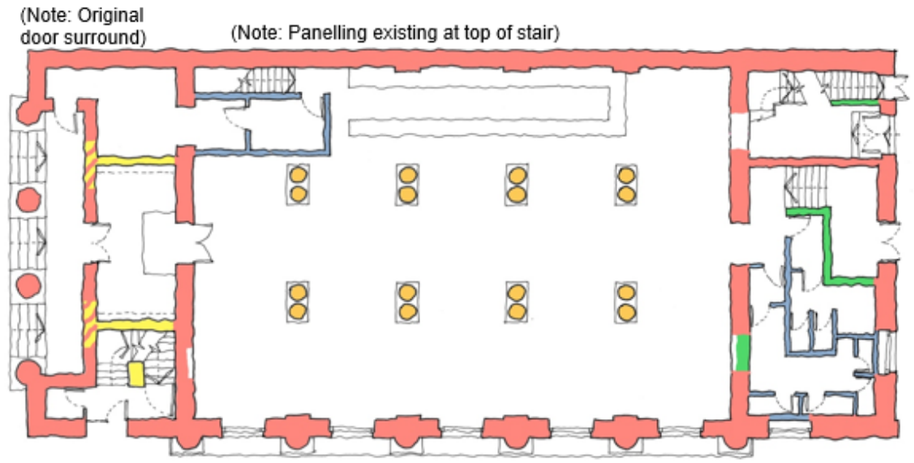
Mid 20th century

1980s or later

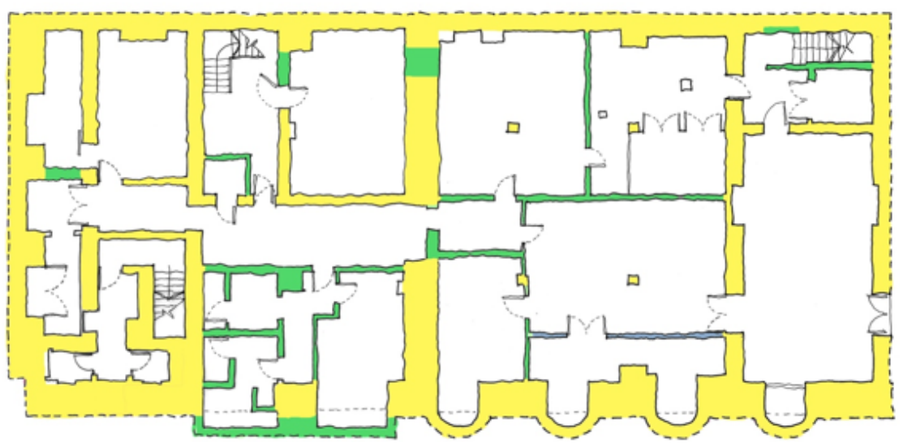
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First Floor Plan –
Significance of Fabric



Ground Floor Plan –
Significance of Fabric



Basement Plan –
Significance of Fabric

Very High Significance

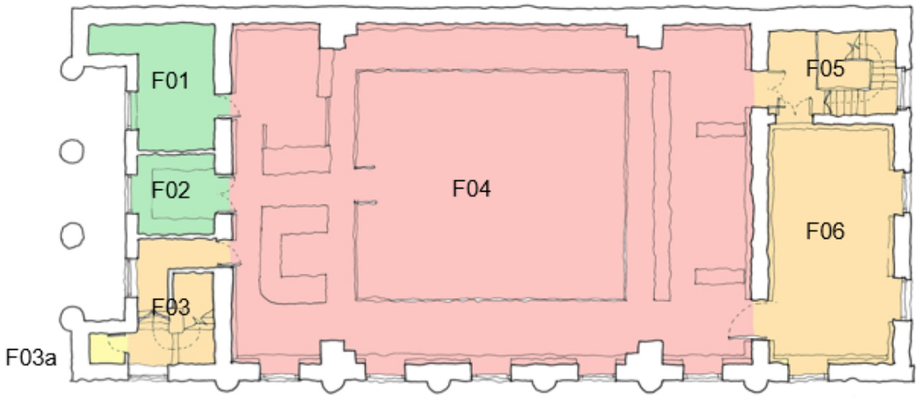
High Significance

Moderate Significance

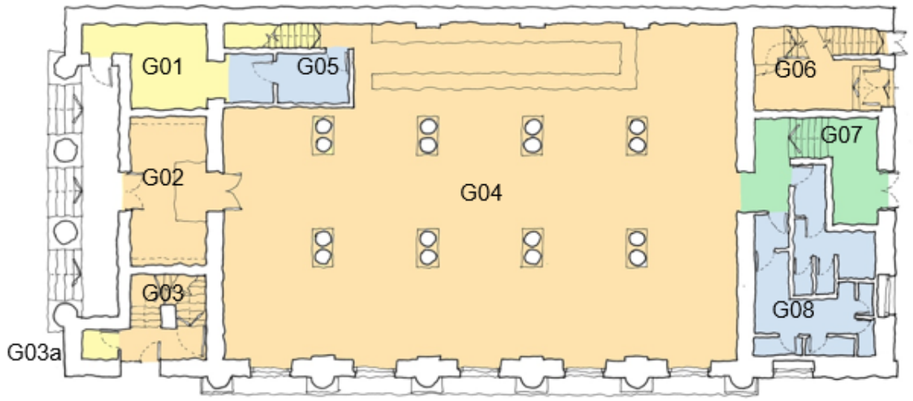
Neutral

Detrimental

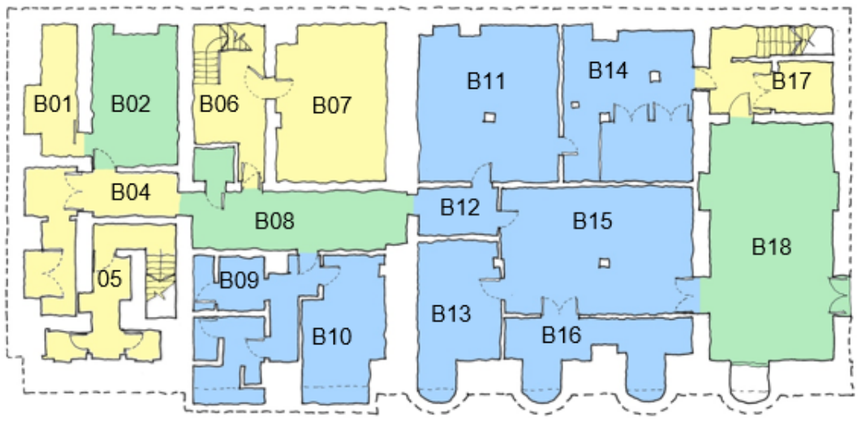
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First Floor Plan –
Significance of Spaces



Ground Floor Plan –
Significance of Spaces



Basement Plan –
Significance of Spaces

- Very High Significance
- High Significance
- Moderate Significance
- Neutral
- Detrimental

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Impact Assessment has been prepared by Chambers Conservation as part of the NLHF funded *Portico Reunited* project, and the consequent planning and listed building consent applications. The project seeks to unify the whole building as the Portico, reuniting it for the first time since 1920, when the ground floor and cellars were first separated and sub-let to a bank.

1.2 The Portico Library is a Grade II* listed building, located on a prominent corner site at the junction of Mosley Street and Charlotte Street. Established in 1806, the Portico Library was founded as a subscription library and reading room by a group of wealthy Manchester businessmen and intellectuals, aiming to promote learning and access to literature during a time of rapid industrial growth.

1.3 In 1920, the Ground Floor and much of the Basement was leased to the Bank of Athens. To accommodate this new function, structural and interior modifications were made, particularly on the ground floor and separation from the First Floor, necessitating the in-filling of the substantial central atrium. A separate entrance was added to Charlotte Street, and a new staircase inserted. From this point bank customers (and subsequently pub users) access the commercial space from Mosley Street, Library members and visitors accessing the building from the side entrance on Charlotte Street. By the 1980's the bank had closed, and the space was let to a pub. This necessitated further changes, the first-floor was made solid (having previously had lay-lights to the space below), kitchens and other facilities were created in the basement. This is the configuration of the building today.

1.4 The document should be read together with the detailed Conservation Management Plan which has also been prepared and submitted with this application. This document fully defines the significance of the Portico, including a spatial gazetteer and has been used as the benchmark to assess the impact on individual elements.

1.5 In summary, the Impact Assessment has been prepared to consider the potential impact of the scheme on the significance of the Portico, including its wider setting and context.



Front Entrance Portico, 2025.



Current Entrance to the Portico Library, stepped access only from Charlotte Street.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Together with the CMP, this Impact Assessement has been prepared to comply with the tests and requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF: 2024), specifically paragraphs 207 and 208, under which a description of the significance of a site, including any contribution made by its setting, must be provided to support any planning applications to assess the effect on significance of any proposed changes. There is also a requirement for applicants to make an informed assessment of heritage significance as part of a staged approach to decision making.

2.2 In the case of the Portico, the building is of such significance that a separate Conservation Management Plan has been prepared in order to fully understand the building and its individual component parts. This consequently enables a more comprehensive assessment of impact.

2.3 The approach to the assessment of impact is described more thoroughly in section 5.0.



View c. 1824

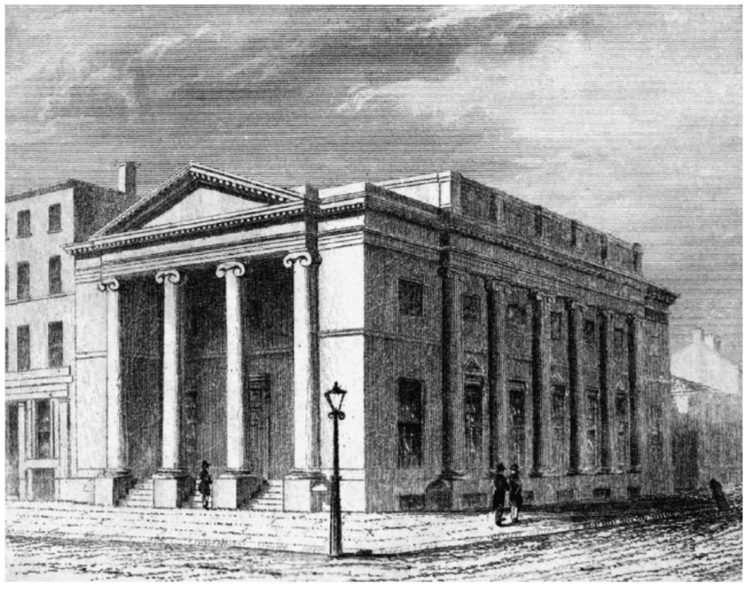
3.0 The Scheme & Principles

3.1 The design proposals are part of the NLHF funded *'Reuniting The Portico'* project, which intends to bring the ground and basement levels, currently occupied by the Bank pub, back into use by the library.

3.2 The intention of the project is to conserve and repair the building, provide suitable and sustainable accommodation for the long-term, as well as being able to accommodate enhanced exhibition, retail, cafe, events and archive space. The design proposals also seek to resolve the significant accessibility issues, providing level access to all levels via the building's principal entrance on Mosley Street.

3.3 In summary, the Cellar/Basement will provide archive, office, meeting and WC spaces, including Changing Places toilet provision, plus a catering kitchen and storage.

3.4 The Ground Floor will provide a multi-purpose space, book shop, lending library, café and main entrance. The primary entrance reinstated to Mosley Street through the original Portico, this necessitates alterations to the entrance steps.



View c. 1839

3.5 The First Floor, which current houses all the Library's accommodation will be allowed to become a reading room and study space, with flexibility for events. The Members Room remains largely as is, but with more flexible use.

3.6 Accessibility is a major issue for the Library. No level access is currently available to the first floor, which has resulted in the inability of the Portico to host key events such as the Manchester Literature Festival. This has consequently placed the library at risk, both financially and in context of the Equality Act. Some of the most significant changes, therefore, seek to address the issues of access for the long-term.

4.0 Significance, an Overview.

4.1 The Portico Library is a building of a high level of significance that is valued highly as both a fine example of Neo-Classical, and in particular Greek revival architecture, in the north-west. It is also a well-respected source of inspiration in the world of literature and home to a highly significant historic book collection and archive.

4.2 A comprehensive assessment of significance is provided in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Below is a brief summary only and the Impact Assessment should be read in context (and refers to) the CMP and spatial gazetteer which considers the significance of the whole, and individual elements.

4.3 The summary below provides an overview only, split into Evidential Value, Historical Value, Aesthetic Value and Communal Value.

Evidential Value

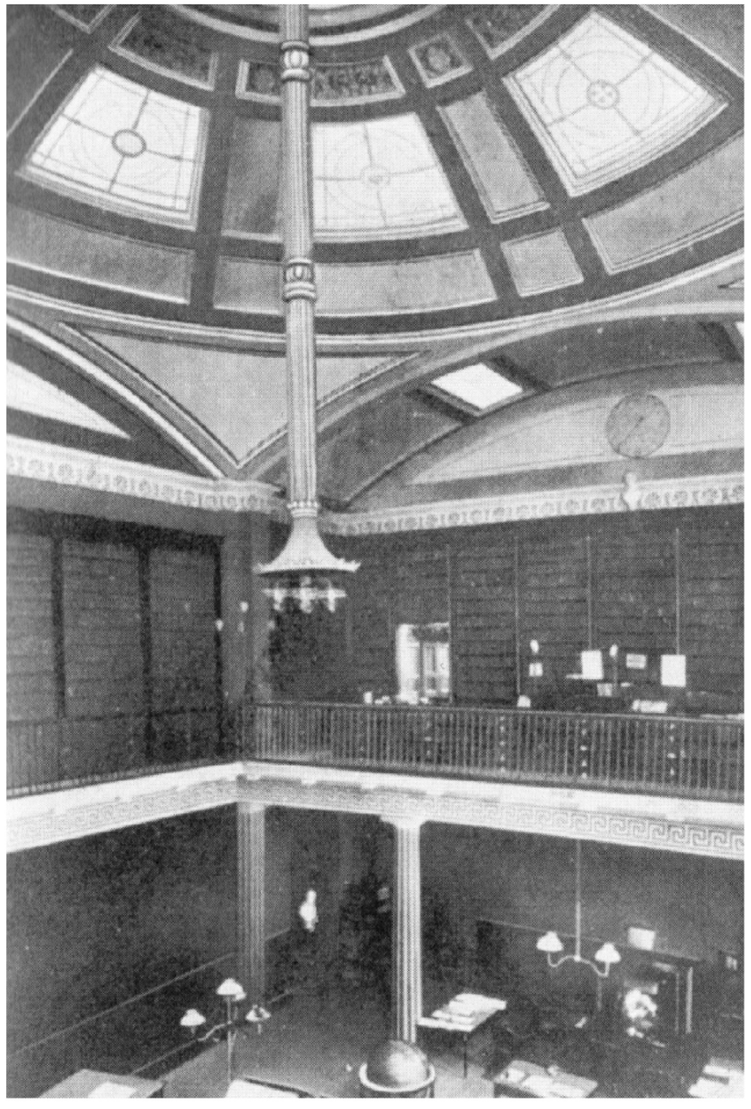
4.4 Evidential value is the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

4.5 The Portico Library is a rare example of a Neo-Classical (Greek revival) building built in the north-west at the turn of the 19th century. The exterior survives almost entirely intact and a substantial amount of internal fabric is still present.

4.6 The Library as a whole is important and rare in that it consists of historic evidence in such a number of forms, from the building itself to the physical contents in terms of both fittings and the collections of books, records etc.

Historical Value

4.7 *Historical value is the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present*.



Interior before the 1920s alterations, showing the gasolier of c.1875. The floor aperture was subsequently infilled to accommodate the bank to the ground floor.

4.8 The building is a variation on the 18th century fashion for coffee houses, book clubs and commercial libraries and distinctly reminds us of the character of middle-class Manchester Georgian society. It is a very rare survivor of an early 18th century library that remains today in its original use, with a very large part of the building clearly recognisable in its original form.

4.9 The Library is important for being one of the first Greek-revival buildings to be completed in the city. The Portico is also highly significant from its association with prominent architect Thomas Harrison and for being the last surviving building he designed in Manchester. Architectural historian Giles Worsley described Harrison as *'the first English Architect to grasp the full potential of the Greek Revival…. [he had a] thorough, but unpedantic, understanding of Greek architecture' and that he 'created some of the finest neo-classical architecture of the Regency'.*

4.10 The Portico has an interesting connection with architect Joseph Sunlight, who had designed the 1920s conversion of the ground floor and basement - he went on to become a millionaire and design Sunlight House on Deansgate, Manchester's 'first skyscraper'.

4.11 The Portico has a large number of highly significant connections to the literary world – Elizabeth Gaskell (together with her husband Reverend William Gaskell, who had been chairman) was a frequent user and referred to the building in a letter to Charlotte Bronte. She was a vocal critic of the 19th century rule prohibiting women from entering the newsroom. P.M. Roget, author of the Thesaurus, was the Library's first secretary and Thomas De Quincey mentions the building in his book "Confessions of an English Opium Eater". Also a member was Dr John Dalton, famed for introducing atomic theory. Dalton had superintended the going of the clock on the basis he was offered free admission.

4.12 The Portico is not an unaltered relic of Georgian Manchester but instead the building today is a visual history book, which helps to document some of the key changes in Manchester's economy and society in its two centuries of history. The key changes to the building's fabric reflect shifts, firstly towards the area becoming more commercial and part of the financial centre of the city, and then the transition towards a more entertainment and leisure focus. Looking more carefully, there is evidence of more subtle changes that reflect other important historical transitions such as the inclusion of ladies' toilets or the changes of technology that brought in new forms of lighting or heating. The Portico is unusual for having a well-minuted set of written



Design for the interior of the Bank of Athens within the ground floor of the Portico.



General view of the Portico from Charlotte Street, the first floor windows were inserted into formerly blank panels c. 1920. The ground floor windows had lost their original glazing bars by the late C19.

records that, together with the physical fabric, helps to tell a fascinating story of the past two-hundred years.

Aesthetic Value

4.13 Aesthetic value is the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

4.14 The Portico is an elegantly simple building – its design is particularly important as an early example of the Greek Revival movement in Manchester – it is thought to have been based on the Temple of Minerva in Athens, although the Temple of Minerva Polias, Priene is more likely (being of the ionic order).

4.15 The building is a bold composition, with ionic columns supporting a classical pediment - deliberately heavy to give a character of earnestness, whilst the considered detailing provides a scholarly reference.

4.16 Inside, the building is particularly significant from having a large unsupported dome and from the sizeable, airy expense of the main library, which would have once been even greater when the ground-floor newsroom was part of the principal space. A strong sense of balance and symmetry is important to the primary internal spaces which retain much of their original character from the Harrison concept images.

4.17 The building contributes greatly to the character of both Mosley Street and Charlotte Street as it stands prominently and proudly on the corner. It adds to the texture of materials and building styles that visually characterise Manchester and fairly represent the wideness of its cultural influences and history. Despite being just outside of the George Street Conservation Area, it contributes to its setting.

Communal Value

4.18 Communal value is the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

4.19 The communal value of the Portico has inevitably changed through time and it was important for different reasons in the past. When built, the prestigious nature of the space was important and it was a place to be seen and to socialise. It was significant in the development of the Manchester enlightenment. Its communal value has, in the past century, changed to something quieter, with more emphasis on learning or its being a place to take a tranquil break from city life.

4.20 The Portico sits within, as is valued as part of, a collection of cultural buildings in Manchester that, together, make the city a world leader in art and culture. The library established the Portico Prize in 1985, to celebrate the strong regional and literary identity of the North of England, with the aim of raising awareness of the diversity of its cultural, literary and historical heritage. The Prize is awarded biennially to the highest quality book set wholly or mainly in the North of England. It has been described as the 'Booker of The North', with previous winners including Anthony Burgess, Val McDermid & Sarah Hall. The Prize is itself now part of the significance of the Portico.

4.21 More locally, the Library is valued for its work with schools and young people - each year The Portico awards prizes to young people in book review and creative writing categories. The Library works with authors to deliver workshops across Greater Manchester and promote essential skills in communication, creativity and critical thinking but to most importantly encourage a life-long love of literature. It is used for both a formal learning tool (in terms of it work with literature) but also more informally through its series of exhibitions, housed within the central space under the dome.

4.22 The Library's current community work is supported by the historical backdrop of the building together with the institution's connections with figureheads such as Elizabeth Gaskell and exploring contemporary issues through the use of the book collection.

Refer to **Conservation Management Plan**, *Section 4.0, Statement of Significance and Appendix A Gazetteer of Internal Spaces for fully detailed assessment.*

5.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 Heritage impact is defined as the potential level of harm or benefit to the special architectural or historic interest caused by a proposed development. The NPPF does not prescribe a format for analysis of heritage significance and/or impact.

5.2 Scale or severity of impacts or changes can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are temporary or permanent, reversible or irreversible. The cumulative effect of separate impacts should also be considered. Change can be either harmful or beneficial to heritage significance.

5.3 The following methodology is based on the guidance set out by ICOMOS (2011) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties,

although intended for World Heritage Sites it provides a sliding scale of impacts that can be applied to assets on all significance levels.

5.4 Works are assessed and consequently graded/categorised in the following way:

Heritage Impact:

- **High Beneficial**. Comprehensive changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a major enhancement of significance.
- **Medium Beneficial** Significant changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a notable enhancement of significance.
- **Low Beneficial** Modest changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a slight enhancement of significance
- **Neutral.** Works will have no impact on the significance an aspect, or aspects of the significance of the site/building. *NB an element may have beneficial and impactful elements, resulting in a neutral assessment overall.*
- **Low Adverse.** Modest changes to an asset or its setting resulting in slight harm to significance. Works may be required in order to justify the need for the change and why alternatives are not possible.
- **Medium Adverse**. Significant changes to an asset or its setting resulting in notable harm to significance. Can be justified where significant other benefits can be seen to outweigh the impact of the changes.
- **High Adverse**. Comprehensive changes to an asset or its setting resulting in major (substantial) harm to significance. Works should be reconsidered and alternatives proposed.

5.5 In considering potential impacts arising from the development there must be a consideration of the direct or physical impacts upon significance such as works to an asset in relation the impact upon key views.

5.6 This section will consider the impacts upon individual assets of the direct works relating to their conversion followed by a separate narrative around impacts relating to setting.

Ref	Location/Scope	Objective	Aspects of Significance	Condition	Significance of Affected Fabric	Assessment of Heritage Impact	Mitigation/Approach/ Comments
1.0 Overall Proposal							
1.1	**Reinstatement of the Library to a Single Entity and Use.** Bring the whole library back into a single use, focussed on the books, collections	Enable the Library to survive for the long, term, provide space for expansion of the community programmes, literature programmes and commercial activities of the Portico.	Very High, the Portico is listed Grade II* and the overall significance of the building	Fair. The building is generally structurally sound, but issues with water ingress, life expired services, etc.	High.	Reinstatement of the Portico as a single entity, broadly as originally intended enhances Aesthetic, Historic and in particular communal values. Retention of the legibility and the interpretation of later change enhances evidential values. **High Beneficial.**	Mitigation/Approach elements relate more to specific elements, refer to commentary below.
2.0 Exterior.							
2.1	**Entrance Portico, Removal of Steps**	Essential to create level access. Reinstates original entrance to the library.	Steps are part of Harrison's design to echo the Temple of Minerva Polias at Priene. The Portico is an early example of Greek Revival architecture in Manchester. Significance detrimentally affected by in-filling of windows and later addition of door to the NE end.	Fair, Steps are in-situ, if heavily laminated in places. Some damage through pub adaption. Heavy soiling (carboniferous staining) to ashlar.	High.	Works are essential to allow full level access for all and reintegration of the Library enhancing communal and evidential values through re-engagement with the main entrance, *however* there is a resulting in loss of some significant historic fabric. **Medium Adverse**	Works are <u>essential</u> to allow full level access for all. Through discussion with key stakeholders (HE, MCC) the retention of the side steps retains the sense of a 'podium' and enables the original design intent to be understood. High quality materials, detailing and workmanship are essential to ensuring the change is successful.

2.2	**Entrance Portico**, **Modification to door opening** – drop threshold to create level access route.	Essential to create level access.	Door case (stone) is original to Harrison's design (adjacent windows removed 1920). Gates, fanlight arrangement etc are all c.1920.	Fair. Doors are likely not original (late C19 modified 1920). Can be repaired and re-used.	High (stone), Medium (door).	Works are essential to allow full level access for all and reintegration of the Library, however the result in modest loss of fabric below retained door surround. **Low Adverse**	Doors to be retained and re-used at adjusted level. Great care and detail is required in final detailing of fanlight and stone to plinth below door case and retained ashlar.
2.3	**Entrance Portico** – **Other works** associated with reinstating the original entrance. Detrimental features including metal door, signage, bracketry, poor lighting etc all to be removed. Stone repaired etc.	Reinstatement of original entrance (associated with level access provision).	Detrimental features including metal door, poor lighting. High quality ashlar work with sharp detail remains.	Poor/Fair. Some damage through pub adaption and changes, exposed services, heavy soiling (carboniferous staining) to ashlar.	High. (detrimental additions)	Reinstatement of original entrance greatly enhances significance and understanding. Removal of detrimental features and repair also greatly enhance the entrance area. **High Beneficial.**	Detail required for new lighting and signage to ensure sensitivity and appropriateness.
2.4	**Entrance Portico** – Reinstatement of Fenestration Pattern – modern alterations removed.	Reinstate original (c.1920) appearance to fenestration, part of reinstatement of main entrance to Portico and Mosley Street.	The NE and SW first floor windows were inserted either side of the original central window, all three windows were then pivot-lights. That to the office has been replaced with a poor casement, the central window has ventilation. Adversely affecting the significance.	Fair/Poor. Limited decay but poor quality changes and pivots are fixed shut.	Openings high, important to treatment of entrance façade. Windows (as existing) low.	Reinstatement of original fenestration pattern will enhance the aesthetic value. **High Beneficial.**	Window details will need to be precisely considered to ensure a cohesive appearance.
2.5	**1920 Entrance, removal of later shutters.** To enable use as escape, removal of later shutters, revealing original 1920's doors. Removal of	Former Portico Entrance (after 1920 subdivision). Now to become a fire escape/secondary route.	Door case and surround modified in the 1990's with external shutters. Original doors are of good quality and medium significance,	Good. Doors relatively recently repaired.	Medium. Not original but part of Sunlight's high-quality alteration work of 1920.	Generally reinstatement of 1920 appearance. **Low Beneficial.**	Ensure detailing of any ironmongery required for fire-escape purposes does not detract from the doors and stone door case. Consider retaining signage above the door.

	services associated with current entry point (intercom etc).		reflecting Sunlight's alterations of 1920.				
2.6	**Repairs to Windows, reinstate to operation and reglaze** (Charlotte St). Most of the ground floor windows are fixed shut. Reinstatement to operation is essential for ventilation. Replacement of the (modern) glazing with fine double glazing or vacuum glass. Integration of draught seals. First floor windows are 1920's pivot lights (generally modern glass).	Improve conditions in the library space for the highly significant and vulnerable collections. Ensure natural ventilation is achieved. Works will make a significant improvement to heat-loss.	Sashes are (mostly) original, albeit without the original glazing bars (removed by 1890). Pivot lights are c.1920, replacing recessed stone panels to bring more light to the first-floor reading room.	Sashes are painted shut, some decay to cills and bottom rails. Pivot lights generally sound (need redecoration).	Sashes - Medium as part of the original on key facade, albeit altered and of fairly conventional type. Pivot lights to first-floor, Medium, part of Sunlight's changes (and intent to reflect classical simplicity). Also reflective of the relocation of the library.	Repair works ensure original fabric is retained. Upgrading protects the Library by providing more sustainable conditions for the highly significant collections and limits other alterations through provision of natural ventilation. Minor adjustment to rebate depth is necessary however (no fine glazing bars) for vacuum glazing or fine DG units. Principles follow HE advice note 18 (HEAN 18) and para 81. Retaining original frames and replacing modern glass. **Low Beneficial**	Ensure detailing of rebate is fully considered. Selection of glazing type is also an important consideration. Paintable putty should be used to the sashes to maintain traditional appearance.
2.7	**Remove Modern Door and Reinstate Window** (Back George Street). Window previously removed during pub conversion to provide means of escape. Window will be reinstated to match adjacent, with associated repairs to brickwork etc.	essential to enable sustainable heating of the building and provision of heat pumps.	Current configuration adversely affects proportion of this secondary elevation.	Poor quality modern doors. Cementitious pointing.	Current configuration and detail is detrimental to the appearance of this secondary elevation.	Replacement enhances significance, especially through improvement to aesthetic value. Enables a greater appreciation of the original configuration and use. Insertion of two modern extract covers minor adverse to the overall beneficial impact. **Medium Beneficial**	Ensure detailing of sash, cill etc all match adjacent exactly. To be associated with lime repointing of brick etc.
2.8	**Creation of Plant Deck at Roof Level**	To enable sustainable heating	Slope is away from key views, most of	Fair/Poor. Roof slope and slating	Low (materially) generally replaced	Creation of the plant deck to achieve reduced	Enclosure for ASHP to be set-back from parapet to

	(Back George Street). Removal of rear slope of roof to create plant deck for heat pumps necessary for low-carbon heating. *Reconfiguration of gutters covered below.*	of the building and allow space for provision of heat pumps. Works will make a significant contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the building.	the structure was renewed c.1994, including roof-line insulation and new rafters. Ceiling below is also modern having collapsed following water ingress during the same period. Maintains generally original configurations however.	are good. Parapet gutter drains to a siphonic drainage system which has caused significant issues internally.	in c.1994. Low/Medium as retaining original configuration.	carbon consumption is a critical part of the Library's future, and maintaining its significance overall, beneficial in this context. Loss of (relatively modern) fabric, however alteration to original roof configuration. No impact on key views. Principles follow HE advice note 18 (HEAN 18) **Neutral**	ensure protection of key views. Must be kept below ridge-line for same reason. Retained original ceiling lines (current ceiling below is modern).
2.9	**Reconfiguration of Parapet Gutters to Rear Roof** (Back George Street). Reversal of parapet gutters (in lead) to new chutes and hoppers.	Enables removal of damaging siphonic system and suitable adaption to deal with heavy rainfall events due to climate change.	Not visible from ground level. Gutter details and linings are from the 1990s repairs.	Fair/Good (linings) Poor, siphonic drainage (leaks).	Current configuration is causing damage to highly sensitive internal detail and putting collections at risk.	Replacement protects significance of interior and reflects future rainfall. Appropriate use of external cast-iron pipes and hoppers should not adversely affect aesthetic value of rear elevation. **Low Beneficial**	Previously discussed with conservation officer to alleviate water ingress, risks to collections and interior. Detailing through parapet critical to appearance.
3.0 Interior							
3.1	**Entrance Portico Works to Vestibule.** Lowering floor to new level, new steps through to primary ground floor space. New opening to connect 1920's stair. Lift dealt with separately, below.	Essential to create level access. Reinstates original entrance to the library. Enables removal of later pub fittings.	Vestibule retains Sunlight's original proportions, domed ceiling and marble wall linings (in part). Adversely affected by later pub flooring, furnishings and doors.	Fair. Linings remain, later fittings of basic quality.	High (as CMP) retaining original general configuration (architectural form), but with detrimental later change and added fittings/features.	Works retain strong architectural form (see CMP gazetteer) Some change to create new connections has minor adverse affect, fully mitigated by removal of later fittings and reinstatement of marble linings to side walls. **Low Beneficial**	Once access is possible, works should seek to understand if any original flooring survives below modern engineered boards and consider potential for re-use in new space.

	Removal of modern fittings.						
3.2	**Entrance Portico Lowering of Floor/Ceiling (Cellar)** Removal of cellar vault (part) to enable connection to be created at ground floor level.	Essential to create level access.	Broadly retains original form. Areas retain brick vault.	Poor. Significant water ingress, friable brickwork.	Low, basic space in poor condition.	Works essential to create level access (beneficial). Impact on space of low significance (minor harm). **Neutral**	Vault to side of new, lowered, floor above should be retained where possible and repaired.
3.3	**New Lift** Insertion of new lift and shaft to entrance vestibule.	Current lack of lift access puts the whole future of the library at risk. Rendering primary reading room unusable.	The lift links to Sunlight's entrance vestibule (see above). Shaft generally though basic, low significance spaces (back of house or from later change).	Fair, basic spaces only. Pub back-of-house space and basement spaces in poor condition (failing plaster, poor modern paint etc).	Low generally, new door opening and wall into Sunlight's entrance lobby (high).	Critical to protecting the future of the library and all aspects of its significance, highly beneficial. Minor harm through intervention in Sunlight's entrance vestibule. **Medium Beneficial.**	Treatment around lift door is critical in the entrance vestibule (G02). Proposed treatment of marble linings to match, should ensure impact is positive (replacing low-quality pub fittings).
3.4	**Removal of Modern Pub Fittings**, The former Banking Hall (G04), has a range of modern fittings relating to the pub use from 1980's onwards.	Reinstate quality of the space, enable flexible use.	G04 is a significant space, retaining the general proportions and details of the 1920's banking hall. Later pub fittings are detrimental to this significance.	Good/Fair. Front of house spaces to the Bank pub are generally reasonably well maintained.	Fittings are neutral/detrimental. G04 (Banking Hall, formerly lower part of Library) is of high significance.	Removal of the modern fittings which are ill proportioned and of poor quality will (with high quality replacements enhance the aesthetic and heritage values. **High Beneficial.**	Removal should be undertaken with due care for any concealed earlier features. Replacements (See below) will need to be of high quality.
3.5	**New library shelving, bar and forward kitchen space**. Replacement of pub fittings with new adaptable shelving and furnishings, new bar and forward kitchen.	New furnishings to 'bring the library downstairs' enable flexible and viable use and support catering function.	G04 is a significant space, retaining the general proportions and details of the 1920's banking hall. Later pub fittings are detrimental to this significance.	Good/Fair. Front of house spaces to the Bank pub are generally reasonably well maintained.	Existing fittings are neutral/detrimental. G04 (Banking Hall, formerly lower part of Library) is of high significance.	Bringing books and literary functions back to the ground floor will enhance communal and historical values. Better quality fittings will also enhance the historical value of the early features which remain. Minor detrimental through the insertion of	The design of the new fittings will need to be of exceptional quality to sit comfortably within the sensitive historic setting.

						the forward kitchen. **Medium Beneficial.**	
3.6	**Modification of door cases for lift,** In order to provide access for the lift, adjustment to existing opening is required. Door case proposed to be relocated to suit new opening (slightly further across).	Current lack of lift access puts the whole future of the library at risk. Rendering primary reading room unusable.	G04 is a significant space, retaining the general proportions and details of the 1920's banking hall. Door cases pre-date the banking Hall, but have been modified during the pub use.	Good/Fair. Front of house spaces to the Bank pub are generally reasonably well maintained. Door cases have some damage but generally intact.	High/Medium High, earlier features of the pre-bank space.	Lift is critical to protecting the future of the library (highly beneficial). Relocation (not loss) of door case has medium adverse impact on understanding through historic value (door case retained and conserved). **Neutral**	Extreme care and a detailed methodology required for and during relocation.
3.7	**Insertion of Glass Box (Ground Floor),** It is proposed to reinstate the visual connection between the ground and first floors (see below for first floor impact assessment).	To reinstate the visual connection between the ground and first floors, 'reunite' the Library, encourage visits to the Reading Room.	G04 is a significant space, retaining the general proportions and details of the 1920's banking hall. Section of ceiling where the light box proposed is modern (c.1986) dating from the pub conversion.	Good/Fair. Front of house spaces to the Bank pub are generally reasonably well maintained.	Low. Modern ceiling and structure (c.1986) dating from the pub conversion.	Reinstatement of the visual connection between ground and first enhances historic, aesthetic and communal values bringing the components of the Portico together. Affected fabric is low significance and modern. **High Beneficial.**	Careful detailing of the light box, connection and interrelationship with the adjacent downstand beams, columns and plasterwork will be essential to the enhancement and success of the intervention.
3.8	**Removal of WCs Creation of New Lending Library** (Ground Floor).	Create space for new Lending Library to Ground Floor.	G08 has been badly subdivided into low quality WC spaces, detrimental to the aesthetic and historic value.	Fair. Modern pub WCs.	Low. Modern ceiling partitions and structure (c.1986) dating from the pub conversion and later alterations.	Reinstatement of the Library at the ground floor, enhances communal and historic value. Removal of modern WC partitioning and reinstatement of (broadly) original proportions enhances aesthetic value. **High Beneficial.**	Careful consideration of ceiling treatments, window linings and other features will be key.
3.9	**Provision of New Accessible WC to first floor** (in current office). To achieve	Provide accessible WC provision for the Reading Room.	F01 Staff Office/Workroom has neutral/low significance as	Fair. Generally well maintained.	Low/Neutral (F01) Much altered, back-of-house space. High,	Accessible WC provision is essential to the Library, enhancing communal value.	Care will be needed to the treatment of the door and opening through the bookcase (although it

	access, it is proposed to relocate the opening through the bookcase across a bay.		space altered, leaving little in the way of historic features.		Bookcase, but impact limited, replaces existing opening through bookcase adjacent.	Limited impact on space of little significance. Bookcase opening replaces existing (adjacent). **Medium Beneficial.**	effectively mirrors that which exists).
3.10	**Insertion of Glass Box (First Floor),** It is proposed to reinstate the visual connection between the ground and first floors (see below for first floor impact assessment). At first floor this forms part of a new reception, replacing the existing.	To reinstate the visual connection between the ground and first floors, 'reunite' the Library, encourage visits to the Reading Room.	F04 The Reading Room is the most significant space in the library. Originally open to the ground floor, the aperture was in-filled in 1920 (with glazed laylights) and solid floor in 1986.	Good/Fair. Space is generally well maintained if tired decoratively and with poor quality services.	Low (Materials). Modern ceiling and structure (c.1986) dating from the pub conversion. High, overall space F04.	Reinstatement of the visual connection between ground and first enhances historic, aesthetic and communal values bringing the components of the Portico together. Affected fabric is low significance and modern. Visual impact of the projecting section is balanced with removal of the existing counter, neutral overall. **Medium Beneficial.**	Careful detailing of the light box, counter, plinth and seating are all critical to the positive impact. Also consideration to retain/reuse elements of the existing counter (made from elements of the bank counters in 1986) on site.
3.11	**Modifications to C19 Balustrade**. Removal of sections of the C19 balustrade to enable viable and flexible use of the space.	Create a usable space for events, study and exhibitions.	F04 The Reading Room is the most significant space in the library. Originally open to the ground floor, the aperture was in-filled in 1920 (with glazed laylights) and solid floor in 1986. The balustrade originally protected the aperture. It was heavily modified and repositioned in 1986 (bottom fixing details modified), including various new	Good/Fair. Space is generally well maintained if tired decoratively and with poor quality services. Balustrade generally sound.	High, overall space F04. Medium/High, balustrade defines the extent of the aperture in Harrison's original design. Significance adversely affected by relocation in the 1980s, modern alterations and fixings.	Enabling the use of the space flexibly for events is important for the viability of the library and to enhance access to the collections through exhibition and study, enhancement of communal value and historic value (overall). Medium Adverse impact through loss of front and rear sections of balustrade (to be retained on site and reversible). Infilling of two later openings with original elements	Options explored included partial and full removal. Partial removal balanced flexibility, significance and definition of the original configuration. Floor coverings should be designed to reflect the original aperture, relate to retained balustrade sections and interpretation of the aperture provided. Approach to be reversible and sections removed retained on site.

			openings into the central area.			maintain continuity to sides. **Low Adverse.**	
3.12	**Create Offices, Archive, WCs, Kitchen and Study Areas (Cellar).** Modifications and partitioning to make usable spaces in the cellar.	Create essential staff, archive and service spaces for the Library. Kitchen refitted in current location.	Some areas of moderate significance where bank vault features (strong room doors etc) survive. Cellars were largely reconstructed in the 1920's bank conversion.	Poor (some fair), water ingress, poor, outdated services, poor decorative condition and other issues.	Some areas of moderate significance where bank vault features (strong room doors etc) survive. Otherwise low.	Retains and interprets main remaining historic detail. Enables full use of Cellar spaces, some of which were original Library spaces (Smoking Rooms etc). Enhancement of both historic and communal values. Benefits library as a whole, allowing better management of the building, collections and greater access. **High Beneficial.**	Detailing of linings (see below) and modern interventions should allow expression of remaining features.
3.13	**Dry Lining to Outer Walls (Cellar),** Drained tanking to the perimeter proposed to make spaces usable and dry.	Enable the creation of essential staff, archive and service spaces for the Library. Kitchen refitted in current location.	Some areas of moderate significance where bank vault features (strong room doors etc) survive. Cellars were largely reconstructed in the 1920's bank conversion.	Poor (some fair), water ingress, poor, outdated services, poor decorative condition and other issues. (hence dry-lining/tanking requirement).	Some areas of moderate significance where bank vault features (strong room doors etc) survive. Otherwise low.	Enables usage of spaces as outlined above (High Beneficial) Minor loss of exposed brickwork and appearance of detail in localised areas (low adverse). **Medium Beneficial.**	Usage of the right system (drained, not 'tanking') appropriate for historic structures is key.
4.0 Setting and Context (refer also to narrative which follows)							
4.1	**Introduction of ASHP enclosure and Plant Deck.** (material impact discussed above) (Back George Street). Removal of	To enable sustainable heating of the building and allow space for provision of heat pumps. Works will make a significant	Most of the structure was renewed c.1994, including roof-line insulation and new rafters. Ceiling below is also modern having	Fair/Poor. Roof slope and slating are good. Parapet gutter drains to a siphonic drainage system	Low in terms of key views, away from primary elevations, low significance of adjacent buildings (modern).	Creation of the plant deck to achieve reduced carbon consumption is a critical part of the Library's future, and maintaining its significance overall,	Ensure that ASHP enclosure is set back from the building line as per the proposed roof plan, and does not exceed the ridge line.

	rear slope of roof to create plant deck for heat pumps necessary for low-carbon heating. *Reconfiguration of gutters covered below.*	contribution to reducing the carbon footprint of the building.	collapsed following water ingress during the same period.	which has caused significant issues internally.		beneficial in this context. No impact on key views as demonstrated in the illustrations which follow. Principles follow HE advice note 18 (HEAN 18) **Neutral**	

Impact on Setting

5.7 The setting of the library as existing is highly urban, the library is surrounded by buildings of significantly larger scale, mostly of more recent date. Recent developments have, unfortunately, adversely affected the setting of the Portico, including the extension to the upper floors of the adjacent Calico building.

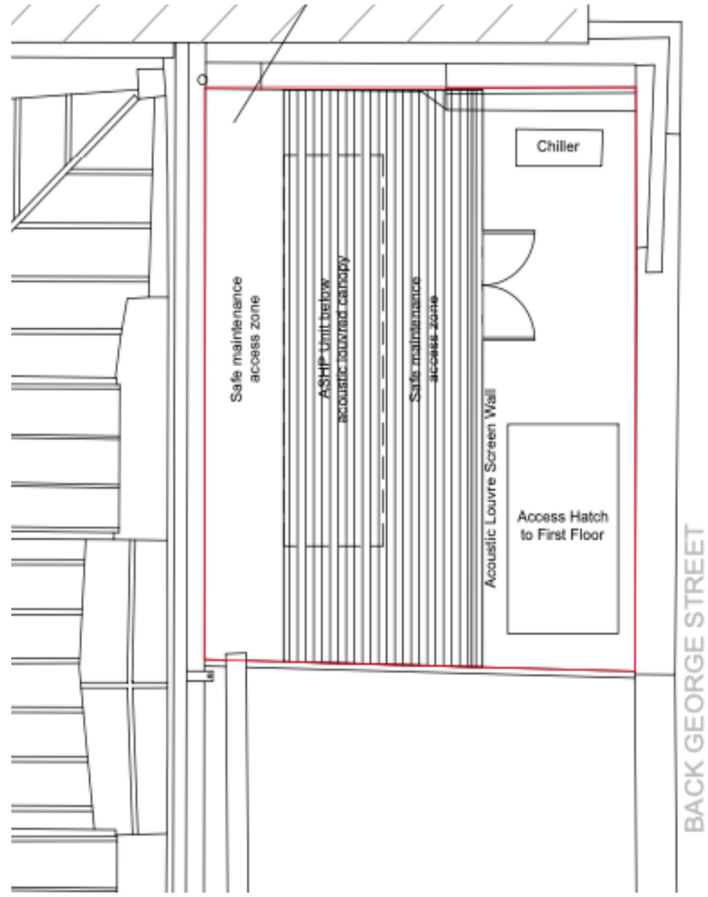
5.8 This said the library retains a presence on key views and as such the setting is still vulnerable to change. The changes to the Portico entrance on Mosley Street will have a negligible impact in terms of the setting (the impact on the building and historic fabric is more significant and discussed above).

5.9 The primary potential impact is the introduction of the new plant deck on the roof. At design stage a number of options were considered for the integration of Air-Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) to enable the Portico to be heated sustainably.

5.10 The proposal is to remove a section of the roof to the rear to create a new plant deck. The impact of this in the building fabric is discussed in the table above. The potential impact on setting has been assessed, looking at views towards the Library from adjoining streets.

5.11 These views demonstrate that the introduction of the plant deck will have no impact on the setting of the Library or adjacent historic assets, minor changes such as the reinstatement of the window to Back George Street and removal of intrusive services penetrations will enhance the setting in this area.

5.12 On the following page are a number of key views, which illustrate the points made above.



Extract from Purcell's proposed roof plan, showing proposed new plant deck.



View 01 Looking north-west along Charlotte Street. Rear elevation concealed by the Bank of China.



View 02 Closer view from Charlotte Street. The setting back of the ASHP enclosure ensures it is not visible, or barely discernible from this viewpoint.



View 03 Looking South-west along Back George Street. Oblique angle screens any ASHP enclosure from view.



View 04 Narrow Character of Back George Street prevents views of ASHP enclosure. Note extent of extract vents, removal will enhance setting on Back George Street.

6.0 Summary of Harm

6.1 The works entail the repair of the Portico and its reinstatement as a single entity, and focussed on the original use of the building as a house of books, knowledge, learning and debate. This has a highly beneficial impact on the significance overall. However the scheme necessitates change, especially around the integration of level access, which has been a very significant issue for the Portico for many years.

6.2 As a consequence there are some instances of less than substantial harm. These are primarily to the entrance to facilitate level access. A dialogue with Manchester City Council, Historic England and other stakeholders has been undertaken, with a particular focus on these impacts. A mitigation strategy, removing only the central set of steps was agreed in principle as a balance between the access and the consequential harm.

6.3 In summary, the benefits of the proposal include the reinstatement of the Portico as a single entity. This not only *significant enhancement* of the Library in the context of its use and Communal Value, but protects the long-term future of both the library and its highly significant collections of historic books.

6.4 Each instance of harm is considered justified and necessary for the sustainable long-term and viable use of the Portico and the scheme should, therefore, be supported.

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