Cambridge Civic Quarter
Design and Access Statement
Guildhall

February 2026

CCQ-CPA-GH-ZZ-RP-A-9002
– Revision P02

CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

CARTWRIGHT
PICKARD

Document history

Revision	Reason for Issue	Date	Prepared by	Checked by
P01	Planning and Listed Building Consent Application Submission	31/10/25	CP	DR
P02	Planning Updates	11/02/26	CP	DR

Contents

1.0

Introduction and Context **4**

1.1 Executive Summary 5
1.2 What is the Civic Quarter? 6
1.3 The Brief 7
1.4 The Applications 8

2.0

The Guildhall **9**

2.1 Location 10
2.2 Existing building assessment 11

3.0

Design Evolution **20**

3.1 Guildhall Brief 21
3.2 Public Engagement 25
3.3 Council Engagement 27
3.4 Pre-Application Planning Process 28

4.0

The Proposals **29**

4.1 The Proposals - The Summary 30
4.2 Plans 32
4.3 Civic Function 39
4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity 54
4.5 Council Offices 61
4.6 External Appearance 64
4.7 Supporting Functions 70

5.0

Sustainability **73**

5.1 Sustainability 74

6.0

Heritage **77**

6.1 Heritage 78

7.0

Conclusions **80**

7.1 Conclusions 81



Confidentiality and third party responsibility

This document is confidential to the party to whom it is addressed and their professional advisers for the specific purpose to which it refers. No responsibility is accepted to any third parties, and neither the whole, nor any part, nor reference thereto may be published or disclosed. No responsibility is accepted for the advice of the Client's independent consultants which may be reflected in our own reports. © Cartwright Pickard Architects Ltd.

1.0

Introduction and Context

1.1 Executive Summary



Preserving and modernising historic sites

Modernising the sites will help reduce the council's running costs, and providing space for commercial occupiers would increase the council's income to support frontline council services.



A green, sustainable place

We will target net zero operational carbon in the Guildhall and significant reductions in the Corn Exchange, water neutrality, and a net gain of 20% biodiversity, including trees to provide shade.



A place that works for Cambridge

Improving the experience of residents and visitors will make it easier for people to spend more time in the Corn Exchange, Market Square, and city centre shops, restaurants and bars.



Accessible and Inclusive

High quality public spaces with access for all, through high quality surfaces, the re-use of historic setts, public art and integrated discrete children's play.



Improved visitor experience

Reduce the space for vehicles, whilst maintaining access for servicing, to create attractive and inclusive public spaces.



Biodiversity and ecology

Provide green infrastructure to support biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change and improve people's experience.



150 Council Staff working in the Guildhall

Bringing the Council offices back to the Guildhall will consolidate operations, improving staff productivity and wellbeing



Commercial office space

The proposed works will protect a valuable and much loved Listed heritage asset. The upgraded Guildhall will contribute greater revenue, through the letting of commercial office space, and therefore help protect the Council budgets and front-line services.



Thriving 7 day Market

Creating a bustling seven-day market which is an accessible, attractive, welcoming, exciting and safe place to visit, shop and gather during the day and into the evening.



Flexible spaces

Provide flexible public spaces to support various types of events and uses.



Corn Exchange Increased standing capacity

Improving the experience of visitors to the Corn Exchange by sympathetically modernising the venue and increasing capacity for standing events.



Corn Exchange Acoustics and AV

Improving sound quality and new AV systems for events in the Corn Exchange, ensuring that performances and events meet higher standards for audiences and performers alike.

1.2 What is the Civic Quarter?

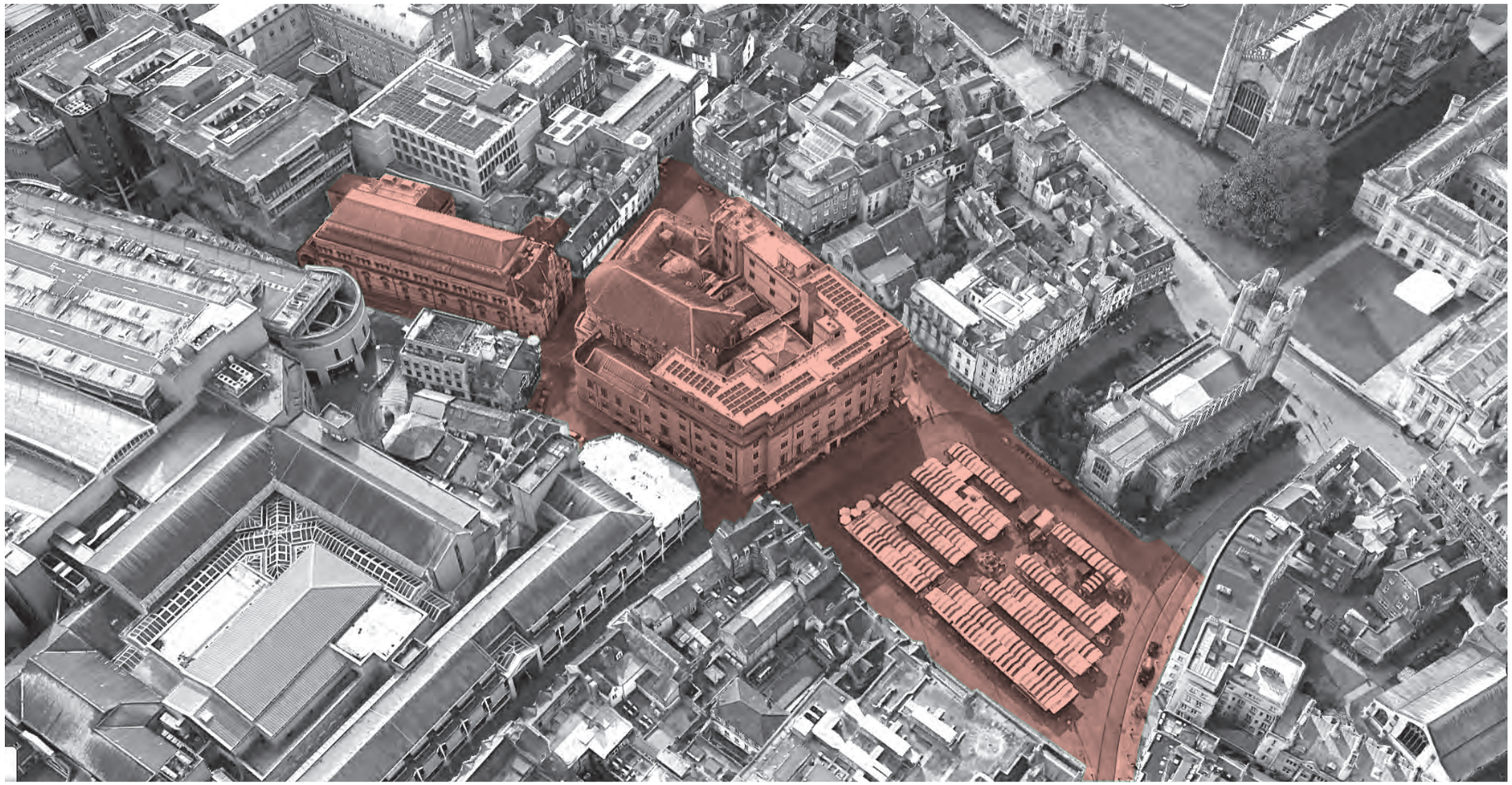
The Civic Quarter is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reconnect the Guildhall, Market Square, Corn Exchange, and surrounding public realm. The project will create an inclusive, attractive destination that enhances the civic heart of Cambridge, increasing visitor numbers and establishing a more vibrant, people-focused city centre.

The ambition is to improve the experience of residents and visitors through more accessible and inclusive buildings, alongside high-quality public spaces for meeting, trading and cultural events. At the same time, the project will conserve heritage assets, achieve water neutrality, reduce carbon emissions and running costs, and generate income to support frontline council services.

The scheme unites three listed assets—the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, and Market Square—linked by enhanced public realm. A coordinated approach to traffic, servicing and movement will strengthen connections between the assets and create a cohesive identity.

As custodians of these heritage buildings and spaces, Cambridge City Council is committed to refurbishing, revitalising, and renewing them for the 21st century. The Guildhall will be retrofitted to EnerPHit standards, enabling Net Zero Carbon operation in line with the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard and the Council's 2030 climate target. Energy use at the Corn Exchange will be significantly reduced, while public realm improvements will encourage active travel and prioritise walking and wheeling.

The Market Square will be transformed into a more accessible, welcoming and flexible civic space, with upgraded stalls, improved services for traders, and a better experience for customers. Designed for flexibility, it will host both daily markets and cultural events, strengthening its role as a key focal point of city life.



Aerial view of the Civic Quarter

The ambition is to improve the experience of residents and visitors through more accessible and inclusive buildings, alongside high-quality public spaces for meeting, trading and cultural events. At the same time, the project will conserve heritage assets, achieve water neutrality, reduce carbon emissions and running costs, and generate income to support frontline council services.

The scheme unites three listed assets—the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, and Market Square—linked by enhanced public realm. A coordinated approach to traffic, servicing and movement will strengthen connections between the assets and create a cohesive identity.

As custodians of these heritage buildings and spaces, Cambridge City Council is committed to refurbishing, revitalising, and renewing them for the 21st century. The Guildhall will be retrofitted to EnerPHit standards, enabling Net Zero Carbon operation in line with the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard

1.3 The Brief

The Civic Quarter

The primary objectives of the Civic Quarter project were agreed at the January 2024 Strategy and Resources Committee as;

1. Creating a more attractive central Cambridge destination for residents that would increase visitor numbers for the market, the Corn Exchange and businesses in the area.
2. Making essential, long-term savings and enhancing revenue to ensure we can preserve services that our residents need and value most.
3. Helping the council to meet its net zero carbon by 2030 target.

The Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Market Square and Public Realm all play key roles in achieving these aims. Collectively they will target Operational Net Zero, water neutrality and Net Gain in Biodiversity of 20%.

The Guildhall

A key goal of the Civic Quarter project is to reinstate the Guildhall as the main civic and office space for Cambridge City Council whilst future proofing it for years to come. This is key in light of Local Government Reform and proposed Unitary Authorities.

The proposals need to address the following four areas:

- Sustainability – the Council will require the Guildhall to be an exemplar project with a Net Zero Carbon aspiration.
- Office – the proposals should demonstrate that the Guildhall is capable of providing sufficient modern office desk space to accommodate current and future needs of the Council.
- Civic function – the proposals should demonstrate how the core civic functions will continue to be met. In addition, the building should accommodate a Customer Service function for the public.
- Commercial use – the Guildhall currently provides a range of commercial income generating uses. Opportunity should be taken to maximise commercial use including office, conferencing and civic functions.

Whilst delivering the above, the Guildhall proposals must consider the Grade II Listed status and the key requirement to make the Guildhall an accessible, inclusive and welcoming Civic space.

Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange is one of East Anglia's largest and most significant concert venues, welcoming around 133,000 visitors annually and generating over £2 million in turnover. Its activity complements a wider network of local businesses, including the Arts Theatre, hospitality, and traders, with economic benefits extending beyond the venue itself.

The Civic Quarter proposals should focus on strengthening the Corn Exchange's competitiveness, accessibility, and sustainability. The brief sets out specific goals, including upgraded acoustics, modernised MEP and thermal systems, and enhanced food and beverage facilities within Parson's Court. These improvements must balance current event capacity with an improved comfort and customer experience, while aligning with the Council's net zero and water neutrality ambitions.

The Corn Exchange should also be designed to operate as a central component of the wider Civic Quarter. Its cultural offer should actively support events and activities which animate the Market Square and Guildhall, drawing visitors into the heart of the Quarter and sustaining local traders, hospitality venues, and the broader city economy. The brief ensures the venue functions as a connected, cohesive element within the Civic Quarter's cultural ecosystem, rather than as an isolated destination.

Market Square & Public Realm

The Public Realm will knit the Civic Quarter together and should set a new standard of quality in Cambridge. There are opportunities to add areas of planting and trees to improve biodiversity, whilst also providing shade.

The proposals should continue to consider the placemaking of the Civic Quarter to ensure that quality of design brings more people to the market by improving the Market Square and reinstating the historic importance of the Guildhall in the public life of the city.

Stakeholder engagement has identified key areas for improvement and the proposals should address the following key points;

- Improved seating and spaces to eat outside.
- A fully accessible market square and public realm with spaces for people to interact at the heart of the city.
- Match the area of existing market stalls whilst improving trader facilities.
- Provide a combination of fixed and demountable stalls.
- Improving opportunities for evening activities.
- Bring water back to the fountain.

The vision for the Market Square remains;

"An inspiring, strategic public realm heart to the city centre, the market square will be welcoming to all to work, visit and spend time here. A 21st century international and local multi-generational and multi-cultural space, celebrating Cambridge's history and heritage, it integrates a thriving, sustainable, accessible, safe and open environment, connecting the surrounding streets with spaces to shop, wander, stop and socialise. A bustling 7-day market, space for seating and eating, additional business and social opportunities and engaging and inclusive cultural events will add to the richness of the area, making this an active day and evening hub in the city centre for local businesses, residents, and the wider community."

1.4 The Applications
Linking the Civic Quarter

Bringing the Market Square, Corn Exchange, and Guildhall forward as one coordinated project creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the heart of Cambridge. Individually these are important places, but together they can form a dynamic Civic Quarter that celebrates heritage while delivering a bold, unified vision for the future.

By combining their development, the city can achieve far more than the sum of its parts: a seamless public realm, stronger connections between key cultural venues, and a distinctive identity that will attract visitors, support businesses, and enrich community life.

A single strategy also allows for coordinated access and servicing, and an outdoor events programme that brings new energy to the city centre — with the Market Square as the natural stage for civic life, cultural celebration, and daily activity.

The plans for the Civic Quarter have been designed holistically, following a very comprehensive pre-application process with detailed engagement provided by many different stakeholders. This holistic design approach has ensured that all aspects of the proposals work in harmony so that the social, economic and environmental opportunities and benefits of this project can be maximised.

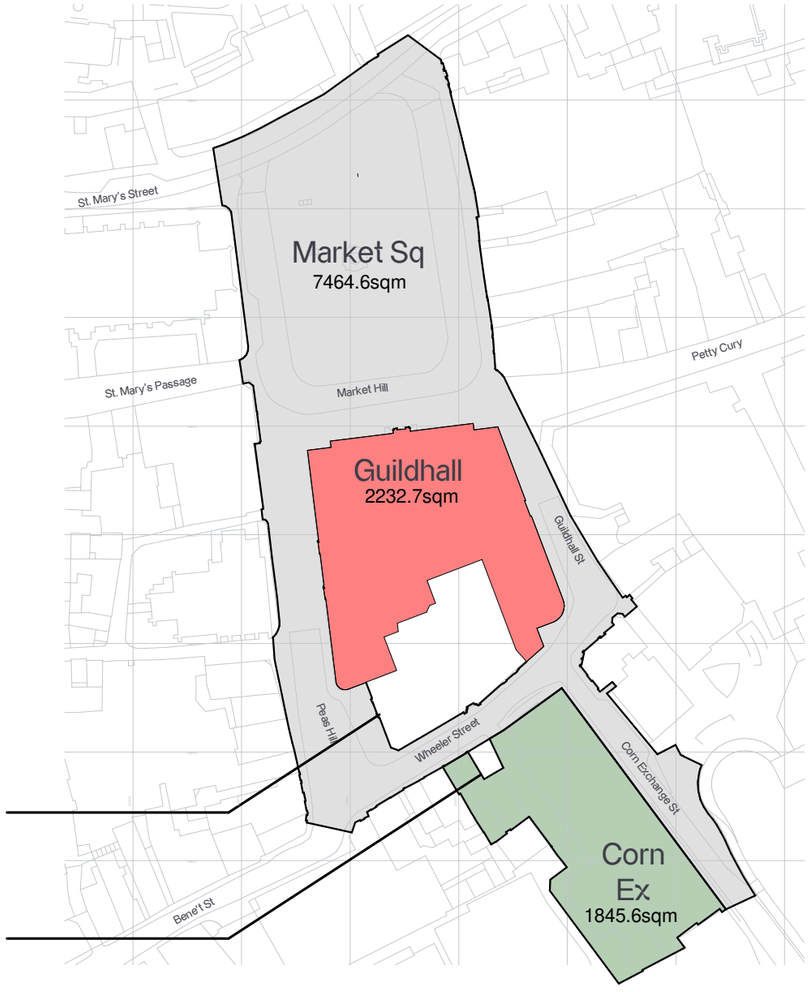
The applications have been designed so that each project (Guildhall, Corn Exchange and/or Market Square) can be implemented either collectively or in isolation. This ensures that the Civic Quarter project is adaptable and deliverable.

While the detailed phasing and delivery programme will be determined in due course, each of the projects have been designed so if needed, they can come forward in isolation as part of an initial phase of the wider Civic Quarter development. Each individual application will not prejudice the delivery of any other planned improvements across the Civic Quarter.

Guildhall: Planning and listed building consent is being sought for the refurbishment and extension of the Guildhall, installation of roof plant and screen, and landscaping of Peas Hill and Guildhall Street.

Corn Exchange: Planning and listed building consent applications are being lodged for refurbishment and extension of the Corn Exchange; changes to public realm; and alterations to 3 Parsons Court/2 Wheeler St and change of use to drinking establishment

Market Square: Planning and listed building consent is being applied for seeking approval for the refurbishment of Market Square, Peas Hill and Guildhall Street, including: provision of cycle parking; erection of replacement market stalls and covered seating area; refurbishment of Grade II listed setts; works to listed fountain and railings; and additional landscaping and street furniture.



2.0

The Guildhall

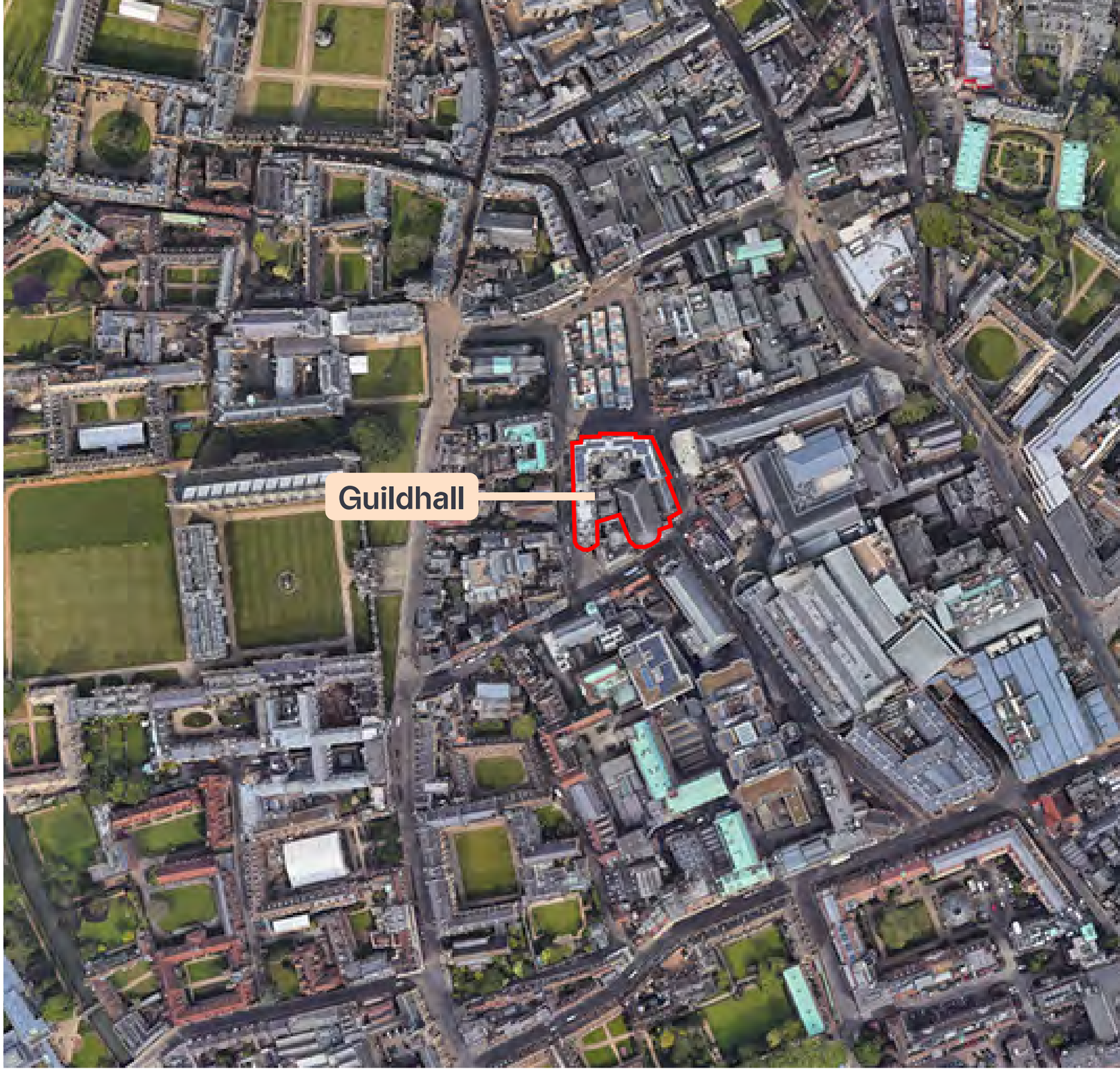
Context

2.1 Location

Cambridge Civic Quarter sits in the heart of the historic city centre.

The Cambridge Guildhall is centrally located on Market Hill, directly facing the Market Square, and serves as the civic heart of the city. This Grade II listed building houses Cambridge City Council and is a key venue for council meetings, public events, and civic functions. Its position at the intersection of Market Street, Peas Hill, and Guildhall Street places it at the centre of pedestrian routes through the historic core. The Guildhall is flanked by major landmarks including Great St Mary's Church, the University of Cambridge colleges, and sits adjacent to both the Grand Arcade shopping centre and the Cambridge Corn Exchange. The Cambridge Arts Theatre is also just a short walk away, reinforcing the Guildhall's role within a concentrated hub of civic, cultural, and commercial activity.

Transport links to the Guildhall are consistent with the wider city centre context. Cambridge Railway Station is approximately 20 minutes away on foot, and accessible via regular bus services and cycle routes. Drummer Street Bus Station is located within a five-minute walk, providing connections across the city and region. Due to its central location within a largely pedestrianised area, direct vehicular access is limited, but servicing is facilitated via nearby Corn Exchange Street and Bene't Street. The Guildhall benefits from high footfall, with surrounding streets forming key routes for shoppers, visitors, and those accessing nearby venues and institutions.



Aerial view of the site and surrounding context

2.2 Heritage building assessment

Site and building history

The island site is a collection of historic buildings culminating in the current arrangement forming what is collectively referred to as Guildhall.

In the 1930's, the whole of the island site was redeveloped. In 1933, a design by Charles Cowles-Voysey with assistants, Robert Ashton and John Brandon Jones, was chosen. In order to reduce costs, the existing 1862 Assembly Hall with the Peck & Stevens-designed Reference Library beneath, was retained and integrated into the new Guildhall arrangement.

George McDonnel's 1884 Reading Room extension to Peck & Stevens' library with its conical roof was retained and is currently a restaurant. This does not form part of the Guildhall.

The site also retains the two-storey building to the junction of Wheeler Street and Peas Hill, possibly by W.M. Fawcett, that was built in 1915-16 to replace the corn merchants gutted by fire in 1904. The building is of creamy buff Cambridge gault brick and Portland stone, with round-headed and roundel windows, first floor balcony on chamfered corner. The building is currently a restaurant and does not form part of the Guildhall.

For the council to continue operations during construction, the building was built in two contiguous phases, the range along Peas Hill being completed first. Phase 1 took place between 1936-37 and Phase 2 in 1946-48. The construction joint is visible in the brickwork to the right hand side of the northern elevation entrance to Market Square.

Description of the 1939 building from the Guildhall Conservation Plan May 2003:

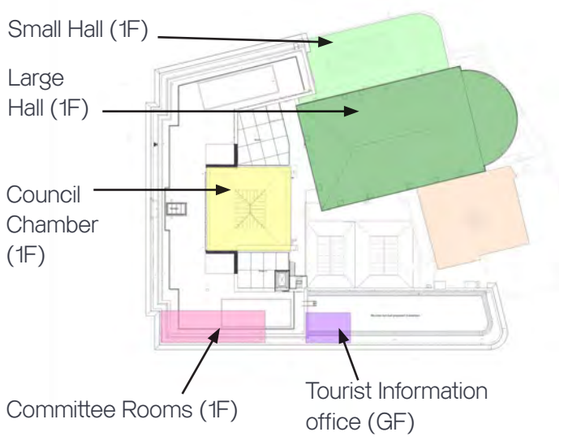
"The new Guildhall is built largely of Williamson Cliff brown-grey bricks from Stamford, setting a precedent for a large proportion of the modern buildings in the City centre. Clipsham stone is used for the rusticated ground floor storey, set on a low granite plinth, and Clipsham is also used for the surrounds to the bronze-framed windows. The fine panelling in the committee rooms is English walnut while Ancaster stone was used to line the Entrance Hall. Maquettes for the bronze reliefs and sculptures were modelled by Lawrence Bradshaw and John Brandon Jones. The Council Chamber is lined with pale leather panelling with joinery in Australian Oak. Oak was also used in the court rooms and the Small Hall. Floors are generally of teak block with those in secondary staircases and lavatories in terrazzo. Furniture was designed by the architects and made by Messrs White of Bedford.

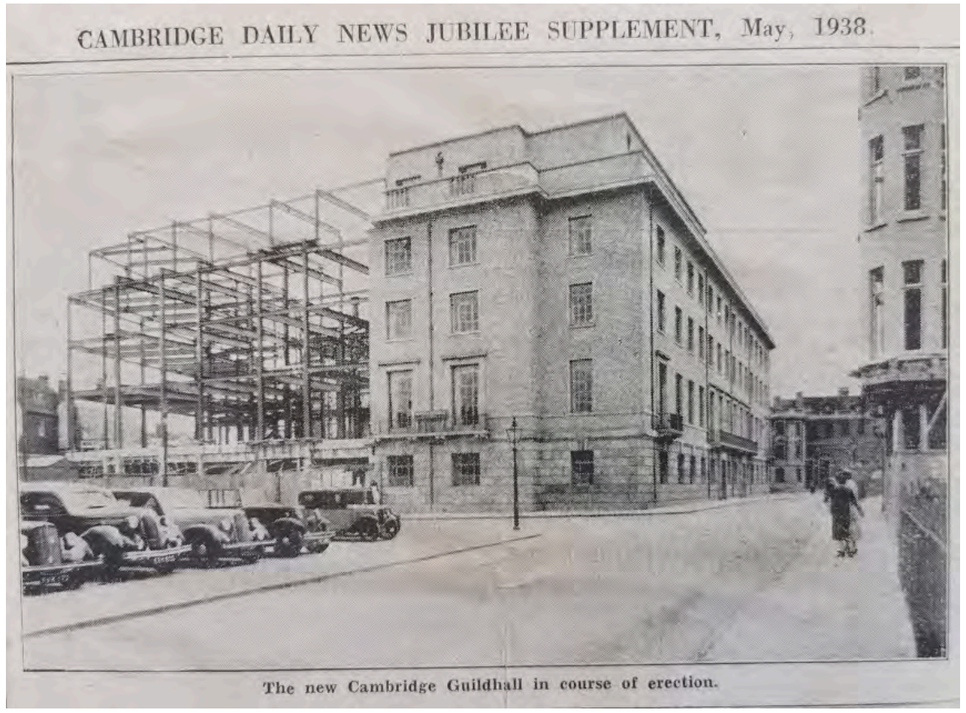
The building is steel framed with floors, roof and stairs formed in reinforced concrete. The basement is tanked with asphalt.

The structure, under-floor heating and ventilation system were designed by Oscar Fabers, the engineers who had just-completed the new Bank of England. The large amount of ground water encountered during the excavations for the basement hampered progress but eventually, in the summer of 1939, the building was completed. The official opening was planned for October 9th 1939 but this had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II.

Since 1939 the building has remained largely unchanged. The Library moved to the Lion Yard development in the 1970s and the vacated space converted to a Tourist Information Office. The reception area opposite the main Market Hill entrance has been remodelled and a few other minor alterations to offices on the upper floors carried out, but essentially the 1862 to 1939 buildings, both externally and internally, are preserved in their original form."

The Guildhall is Grade II-Listed.




CAMBRIDGE DAILY NEWS JUBILEE SUPPLEMENT, May, 1938.

The new Cambridge Guildhall in course of erection.

The Guildhall under construction
Source: https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/



Fig 7. The first phase complete in 1936

The first phase completed in 1936
Source: THE GUILDHALL, CAMBRIDGE – CONSERVATION PLAN, FREELAND REES ROBERTS ARCHITECTS (2003)

2.2 Heritage building assessment

Site and building history

Assessing the Guildhall's potential for change needs to be undertaken within the context of the Listed Building status. Justification for change will be assessed against the significance of each change and its impact on the heritage value of the space.

Assessing Significance

Significance, in terms of heritage-related planning policy, is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as "the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest".

Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context, heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural/ artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

Archaeological interest
As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest
These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture and ornament.

Historic interest
An interest in past lives and events. Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Historic and social significance

"In 1224, Henry III gave permission for the burgesses of Cambridge to use a house next to the market place as a town gaol. Soon after they began using an adjacent building to collect tolls from the surrounding market stalls and this began a municipal use of the site that has continued unbroken for well over 700 years.

To begin with the Guildhall site was not at the true centre of Cambridge - that was on Castle Hill - but, as the University began to dominate in the 14th and 15th Centuries, Market Hill became the heart of the city and the significance of the area as an administrative hub grew. The Municipality nearly lost the gaol to the University in 1601 but, having had their ownership confirmed, they went on to steadily develop and expand their site, building a larger Town Hall, designed by James Essex, in 1782 and taking over the county-owned Shire House in 1842.

In the late 1800s, they were able to add to these by building an Assembly Hall, Library and additional office space on the south side of the site.

By the 1930s, the Corporation owned all the buildings on the "island site" bounded by Market hill, Guildhall Street, Wheeler Street and Peas Hill. In 1936 this enabled them to build the substantial building, designed by Charles Cowles-Voysey, that now dominates the Market Square...

The 1930s Guildhall is a fairly rare example of a Listed Building of this period and most of the interiors remain as they were originally conceived, the principal rooms being fitted out to an extremely high standard."

— Extract from the Guildhall, Cambridge Conservation Plan, Freeland, Rees, Roberts Architects, 2003.

The greatest significance of the site is its long tenure of continuous municipal use in a very central location. Its use is strongly linked with the market place, which has been in the same area for at least as long. The proposals seek to make the future of the Guildhall sustainable as a civic site, maintaining this historical significance. The regeneration of Market Square would further enhance the setting of the Guildhall and support its strong link with Market Place.

Architectural and artistic interest

The Cowles-Voysey building was built in two phases between 1936 and 1939 and includes a large balcony at the front from which important proclamations could be made.

The Guildhall occupies a prominent presence over the Market Square and illustrates the role of the space as the historic focus of civic administration in Cambridge. The construction is steel frame, concrete floors, low granite base, rusticated clipsham stone ground floor storey, grey-brown Stamfordstone brickwork upper stories, bronze balconies and window frames with Clipsham stone surrounds. Rainwater downpipes are made of lead.

Either side of entrance stand large decorative bronze blocks with aquatic scenes on granite bases. Bronze doors depicting agricultural scenes create an imposing entrance. These elements are considered of high artistic interest.

Street elevations to the Guildhall are considered to be of high architectural significance. The proposals will retain and enhance this significance with the repair and maintenance of the facades and windows.

Internally, primary spaces include the Ancaster Stone entrance foyer, the Council Chamber, Committee Rooms, Members' Room, Mayor's Parlour, Chief Executive's Office, Sessions Court and Peas Hill stair case. These spaces contain largely unaltered ornate interiors with English Walnut panelling and original fittings, such as lighting, bronze toggle switches, fireplaces and clocks. The Peas Hill Stair comprises terrazzo floors and fine brass balustrade.

The Small Hall and Large Halls also are largely unaltered with interiors intact. The 1862 Large Hall/ Assembly Hall by Peck & Stevens' is complete with round-headed windows with heraldic stained glass. The organ was built by William Hill in 1882 and rebuilt by Hill, Norman & Beard with modern electrics in 1925 and remains in situ today.

A 1782 foundation stone, possibly from an early mediaeval synagogue with latin inscription by the antiquary William Cole is set within the first floor stair lobby to Guildhall Street. It commemorates the building of a new town hall in 1782 by James Essex. The stone was rediscovered in the 1936 building work and set behind glass in the current position representing the historical and social significance of the site.

The Guildhall is of high architectural and artistic significance in the interior primary spaces and rooms. The proposals seeks to enhance and rejuvenate these spaces with a light-touch approach to preserve their character while enhancing their use.

Secondary spaces within the Guildhall are currently underutilised as they do not meet modern use demands. These spaces include the typical offices to the upper floors, corridors with original cross-corridor double doorsets complete with original ironmongery and copperlights.

Secondary spaces within the Guildhall are of medium significance. The proposals seek to retain as much architectural character from these secondary spaces as possible while creating modern, flexible spaces that give the building a viable future.

Modern partitions, light fittings, secondary glazing and doors are of no significance and many detract from the Guildhall interiors. The proposals will remove these elements.

Extensive basement areas to 1936-39 building are largely used for plant and storage. There is little architectural character within the basements which are considered of low significance. The proposals seek to maximise the use of the basement as a commercially viable space that releases the full potential of the Guildhall.

Significance has been translated to a set of plans — please see Appendix iii.

Heritage category	Listed, Grade II
List entry #	1268372
Date first listed:	02 October 1996
List entry name:	Guildhall
Statutory address:	Guildhall, Market Place, Cambridgeshire

2.2 Existing building assessment

Key observations — sense of arrival



Market Square entrance
This is the primary face of the building however, the sense of arrival from Market Square is underwhelming. There is a distinct lack of footfall through the main entrance doors. The primary entrance doors were in a closed position, detracting from a sense of openness and welcome.

The reception area is uninviting and lacks natural light. This detracts from the impressive stair and foyer to first floor. The film to the foyer first floor windows blocks views out and daylight in, creating a closed and gloomy feeling.

The entrance is not accessible. Accessibility from Market Square needs to be addressed to make the Guildhall's main entrance fully inclusive.



Guildhall Street entrance
The current entrance for the Assembly Halls. The sense of arrival is underwhelming once inside, undermining the building as a premium events space.

There is no obvious reception point and no sense of arrival, grand foyer or drinks forum commonly needed for large organised events.

The entrance is not accessible.



Peas Hill entrance
The entrance previously serving the Tourist Information Centre, gift shop and coffee shop. Originally the entrance to the sessions court.

This is a more intimate entrance to the building leading to an independent set of rooms from the main Guildhall.

There is some sense of arrival, provided by the character and materials of the foyer, however, there is no obvious reception point.

The entrance is accessible.

2.2 Existing building assessment

Key observations — accessibility & vertical circulation



To improve inclusivity, wheelchair access should be provided at the primary entrance from Market Square.

As a public sector organisation, the Council will be required to anticipate access needs under the Equality Act and should make provisions where possible within the constraints of the listed building.

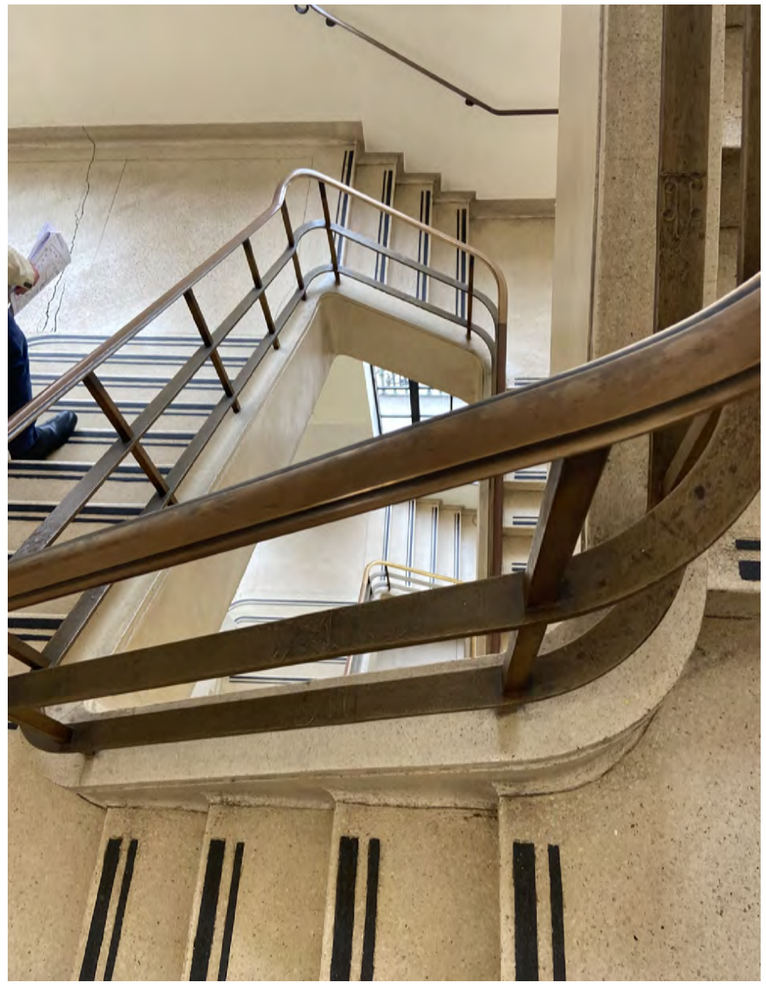
A sympathetic platform lift could be accommodated in this area.



Vertical circulation is provided with two lifts and a good distribution of stairs.

The lifts are provided in strategic locations on the building plan arrangement adjacent to stairs and serving both side of the building. They run from the basement to the fourth floor, serving all levels of the building.

The lifts do not appear to be Part M compliant and should be replaced with fully accessible lifts.



The building is well served through generous, high quality stairs strategically placed around the building.

The use of the stairs should be encouraged to promote health and well-being.

2.2 Existing building assessment

Key observations — horizontal circulation and wayfinding



Internally, there are many long corridors with little connection to the outdoors or natural daylight. Many feel like service corridors.

Artificial lighting is poor. The corridors feel dimly lit and tired.

The use of unsympathetic modern floor finishes detract from the character of the original building in several corridors.



The corridors are of a generous width and provide good levels of accessibility for wheelchair users.

There are numerous cross-corridor doors that are heavy and awkward to operate for those with mobility or accessibility issues.



Many of the windows have film applied, or a stippled glass that obscures views and daylight and get in the way of navigation.

The corridors lack connectivity to the outside, and the repetitive nature results in a loss of orientation. Removing stippled glass and internal walls will provide stunning views out across the skyline of Cambridge whilst improving orientation and wayfinding.

2.2 Existing building assessment

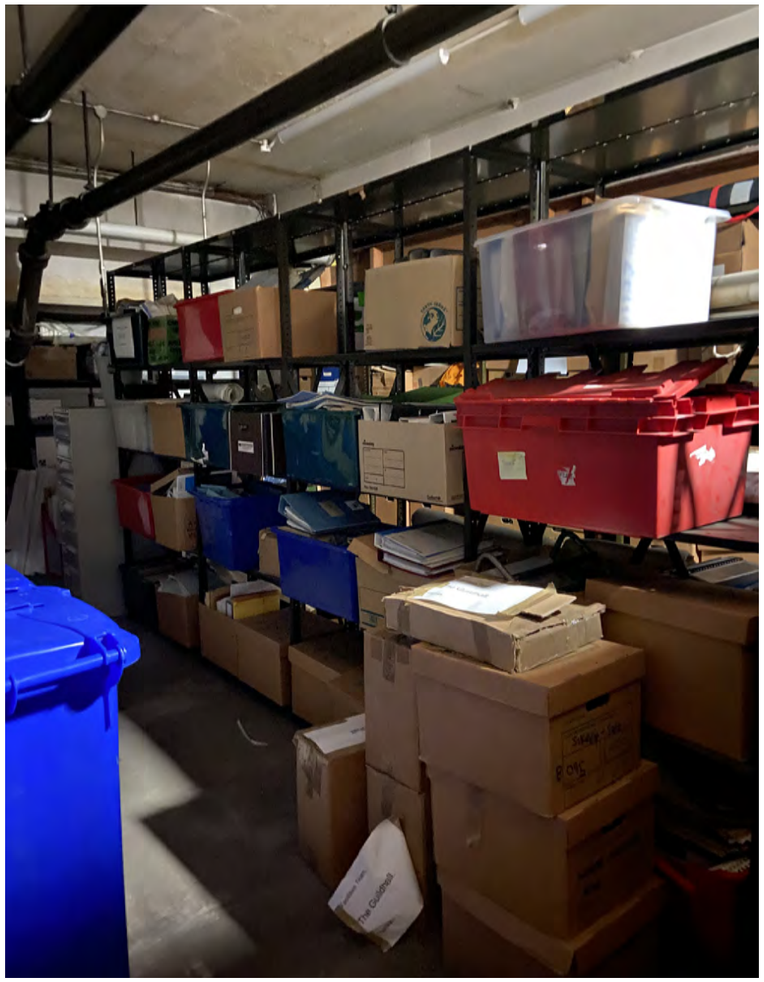
Key observations — underutilised and undervalued spaces



The two atria serving the ground to fourth floor do not provide benefit to the internal spaces of the Guildhall. They are overlooked, naturally lit spaces which could be activated to provide amenity, interest, break-out spaces and improve the general outlook.

As the atria do not extend to the basement, the opportunity for providing natural light here has been lost.

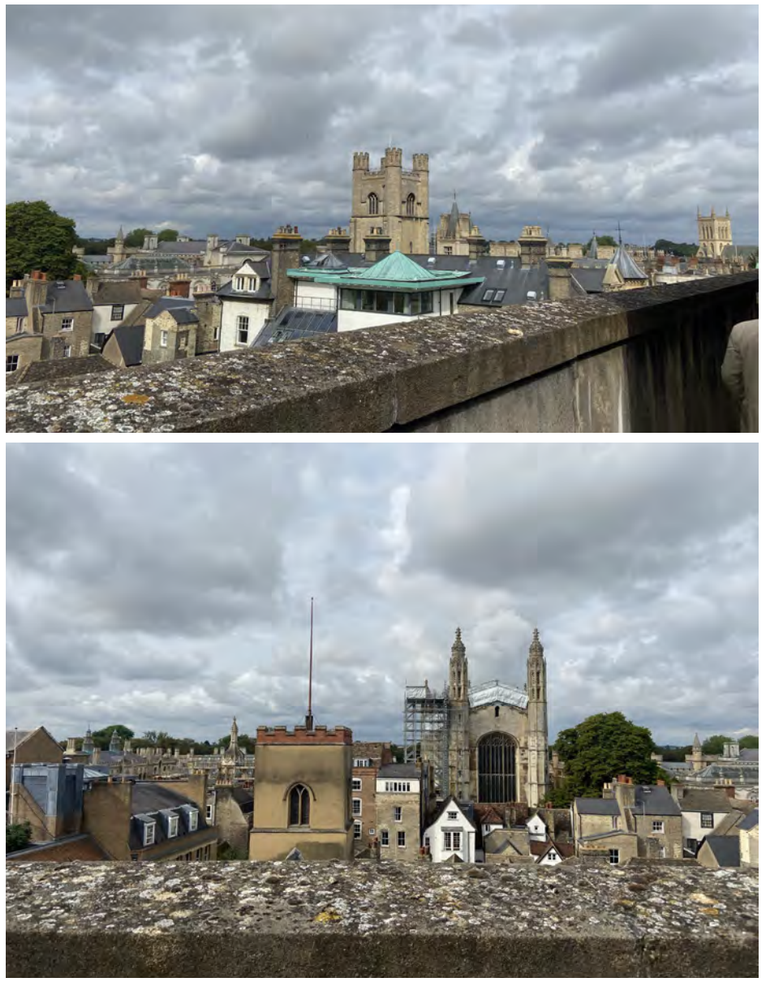
The existing atria are fitted with unsightly pipework from the WCs.



The basement is vast and occupies the full building footprint. As it is poorly lit with little to no natural light, it is unusable in its current form for office accommodation.

The generous soffit/ceiling heights and structural column grid provide ample opportunity for creating quality, flexible commercial office accommodation with the additional of natural light.

Some of the basement is occupied by plant areas and a large section is given over to archive storage. A CCTV room and Streets Team welfare area is provided.



The rooftop over the western elevation benefits from vistas over the Cambridge skyline. With it's height and central location, the Guildhall provides a unique opportunity in this respect.

The rooftop currently carries telecommunications equipment and plant serving the restaurants however, there is significant opportunity to relocate some of this and free up space for a rooftop intervention that provides additional area, value and commercial opportunity.

2.2 Existing building assessment

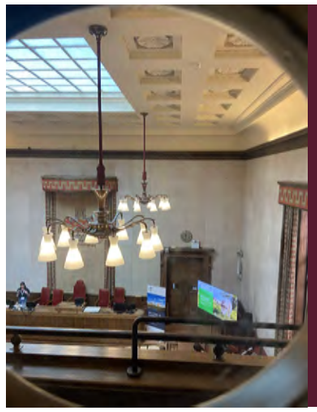
Key observations — historic spaces



The Session's Court, former Tourist Information Office and gift shop are of historic architectural value, with timber marquetry and original light fittings and finishes.

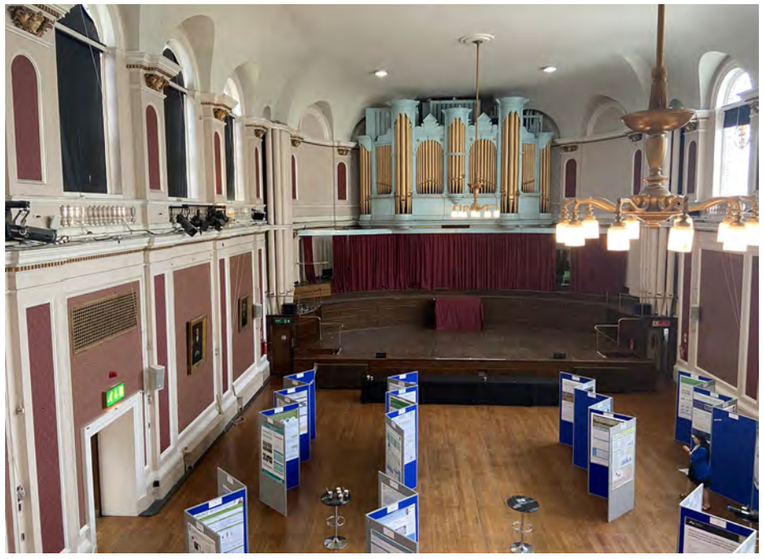
The Sessions Court in particular is difficult to re-purpose in its current state due to floor level changes and a fixed seating arrangement.

The adjoining former Tourist Information Office has been cleared of internal fixed furniture and the floor has been raised to provide level access from the corridor, giving more opportunity for reuse.



The Council Chambers are of high architectural, social and civic interest, however the fixed nature of the furniture restricts the flexibility of use of this space and prevents fully inclusivity or use of the space for a range of functions and events.

This space remains, largely, untouched since the 1930's. Modern interventions will need to be sensitively incorporated.



The Large Hall is of high architectural interest, with the original organ in-situ and original light fittings. The current route from the street to the hall is underwhelming and devalues the spaces as primary venues, reducing the revenue opportunity the halls provide. There is no sense of arrival or reception from the entrance from Guildhall Street. There is no level access at the Guildhall Street entrance.

The connection to the Small Hall provides flexibility for larger events.

Heating, cooling and ventilation to both halls requires review and updating.



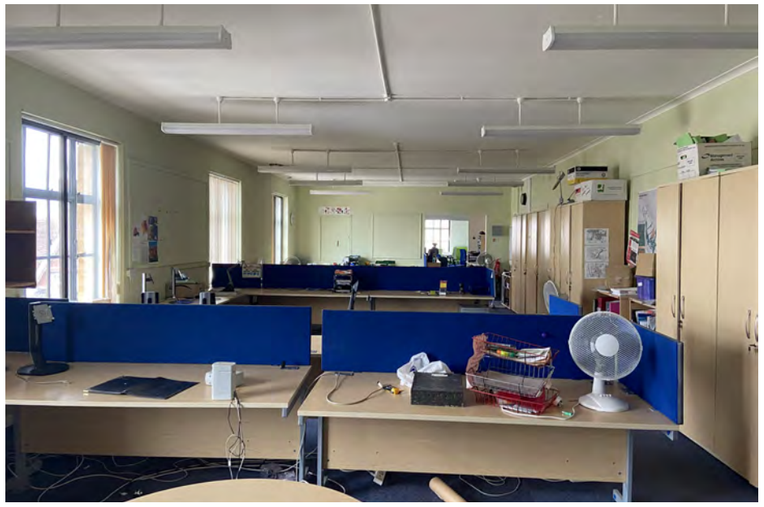
The Small Hall is of architectural interest with roof lights and timber flooring. However, like the Large Hall the current route from the street to the hall is underwhelming and devalues the spaces as primary venues.

The association with the catering kitchen and bar to the hall is beneficial however, the bar in particular is dated and requires updating and relocating to better serve the hall.

The Small Hall can act as a refreshments area for the Large Hall, supporting its use.

2.2 Existing building assessment

Key observations — office accommodation





The office accommodation within the Guildhall varies in quality.

The highest value heritage spaces, such as the Chief Executive's timber panelled office and the Mayor's Parlour, may better serve communal uses, such as meeting rooms.

The majority of office accommodation to the upper floors is tired and drab with poor lighting quality and lack of daylight. Fittings and furniture require updating to make the spaces appealing.



Wide uninspiring corridors serve the office accommodation at the upper levels of the building. These corridors prevent cross-ventilation, making the use of natural ventilation more difficult. They also reduce the benefit of natural daylight to the office accommodation.

Underutilised space contribute to a poor net-to-gross.

Locker and storage provision to the perimeter offices spills out into these space, further adding to its unappealing nature.



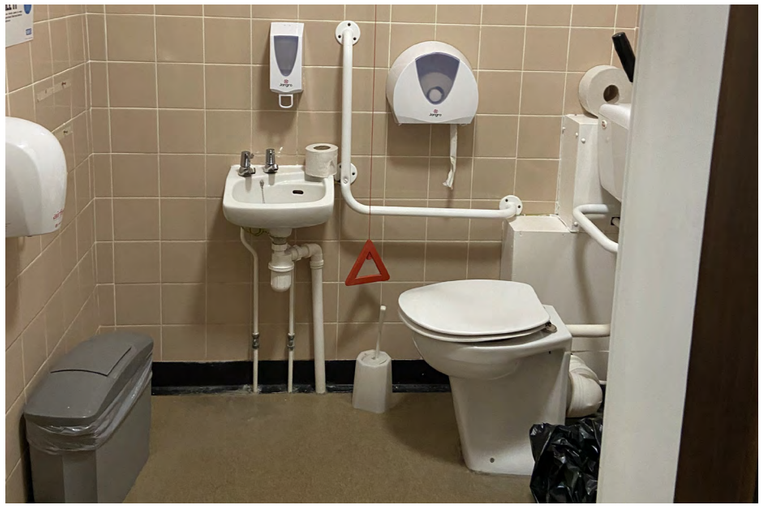
Original features are undervalued in some of the office accommodation, detracting from the special interest of the building.

All the existing office spaces benefit from a concrete ceiling, which provides high levels of thermal mass, helping to reduce peak temperatures in summer.

Modern floor finishes conceal the potential of original timber flooring.

2.2 Existing building assessment

Key observations — provision for cyclists, staff amenity and refuse





WC provision is provided with a combination of historic terrazzo and modern fit-outs. The quantum and accessible provision is inadequate by modern standards and will require increasing in number and quality.

Tea points and kitchenettes are provided in a range of individual rooms and corridor standpoints. Neither provision is desirable, and the corridor provision in particular detracts from the historic character of the building.



Cycle storage and changing provision is provided in the lower ground level of the Guildhall with changing at ground floor.

Access to these areas is difficult with numerous steep ramps and steps.

The current cycle storage and changing provision is inadequate for the future use of the Guildhall. It does not meet modern standards or the requirements of the council.



On site refuse is accommodated within the Guildhall stair core. The location is compromised and detracts from the quality of use of the entrance for other purposes.

The refuse storage provision is inadequate to accommodate the refuse and recycling requirements of the Guildhall.

3.0

Design Evolution

3.1 Guildhall Brief

Key Drivers

The proposals need to address the following four areas:

1. **Sustainability** – the Council will require the Guildhall to be an exemplar project with a Net Zero Carbon aspiration.
2. **Office** – the proposals should demonstrate that the Guildhall is capable of providing sufficient modern office desk space to accommodate current and future needs of the Council.
3. **Civic function** – the proposals should demonstrate how the core civic functions will continue to be met. In addition, the building should accommodate a Customer Service function for the public. This is currently provided at Mandela House.
4. **Commercial use** – the Guildhall currently provides a range of commercial income generating uses. Opportunity should be taken to maximise commercial use including office, conferencing and civic functions.

Further clarity was added to the project brief following discussions with the Council.

Workspace Requirements

The Council workspace requirements can be summarised as follows;

- 150 worksettings required for Council staff
- Meeting rooms - a range of sizes
- Breakout spaces and tea points
- Support accommodation such as cycle storage, showers, changing rooms, refuse storage and plant space.

The fit out and furniture should be modern and appropriate for the way in which the council operates. Given the hybrid working arrangements in place at the Council, collaboration space will be very important, along with work settings to enable those that need to focus or touch down for short periods. Existing furniture will be reused where possible, in line with the Council's Use of Space principles

Customer Service Centre Requirements

The Customer Service Centre (CSC), currently provided at Mandela House, is to be located in the Guildhall and provide the following facilities;

- Space for 15 CSC staff
- Waiting seating for visitors (within the CSC demise)
- Access to WC's
- Customer service desks
- Private, acoustically sensitive, meeting rooms for confidential conversations

Dialogue with the team operating the CSC has made it clear that the entrance to the CSC can be shared with others. With the CSC open three days a week it would be beneficial for partner organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureau, to be able to use the space as well. It can also be beneficial to have users of the CSC visit the same reception as other users.

Staff working in the CSC should have easy access to welfare facilities as they have short, structured breaks throughout the day.

Civic Function Requirements

Access to the existing civic functions within the Guildhall is to be maintained and improved. The civic functions make use of the Council Chamber, Small Hall and Large Hall. Committee meeting rooms and members spaces are also used by members and officers and access to these should be maintained and improved.

Accessibility within the Council Chamber should be improved along with more significant changes for the following reasons

- Council chamber desking is not fit for purpose
- Power and data at seats within the Council chamber is required
- Changes to the historic furniture could be beneficial but will come with heritage challenges
- The chamber cannot currently accommodate a Unitary Council Meeting due to a lack of seats

Large and Small Halls

The large and small halls are in need of an upgrade. Given the heritage nature of these spaces the works will be sensitively done, including;

- New MEP (ventilation, cooling, lighting, AV, power and data) systems within the halls
- Re-decoration and repair as required
- New kitchen facilities provided behind the small hall are required to cater for more events
- New improved bar facilities

Commercial Revenue Generation

The remaining spaces within the Guildhall are available for commercial income to be generated for the Council. Opportunity should be taken to maximise commercial use including letting office space, hotel, conferencing, corporate events, exhibitions, weddings and other such events. The development of the commercial proposals is outlined on the following two pages.



Historic Photograph of the Council Chamber - remaining largely untouched since the 1930s
Source: https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-Cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/



Historic Photograph of the Large Hall
Source: https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/

3.1 Guildhall Brief
Design Development

Summary

During RIBA Stages 2 & 3 the response to the clients brief has been through several iterations, the key areas of design development are as follows;

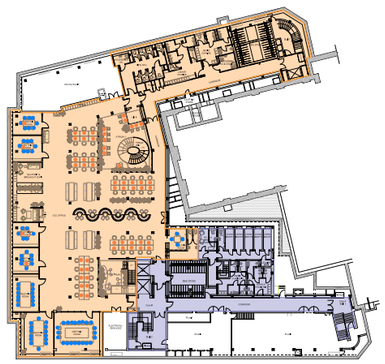
- Commercial Use Class
- Location of Cambridge City Council Staff
- Location of Customer Service Centre

These three options were all closely interlinked, the hotel proposal required bedrooms to be located on the upper floors pushing Council office accommodation into the basement.

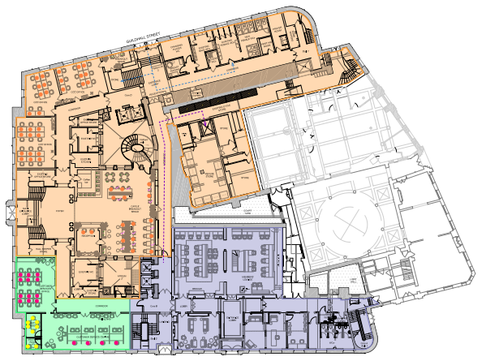
The provision of extensive Council accommodation at basement level ultimately led to the hotel option not being progressed.

A further iteration of Stage 2 design can be seen overleaf.

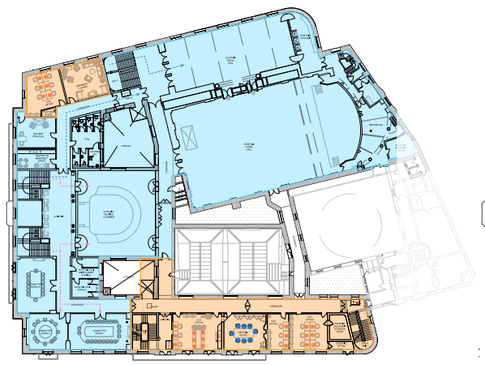
Hotel Proposal



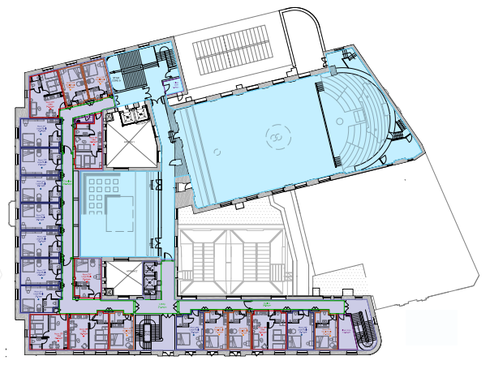
Basement



Ground Floor



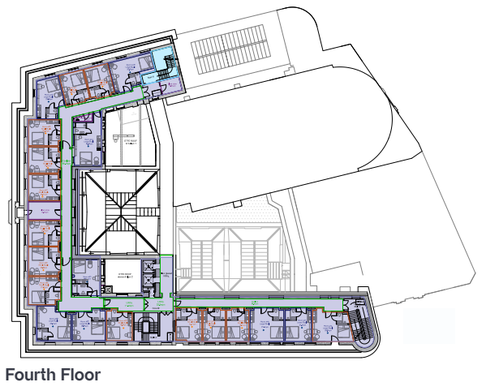
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

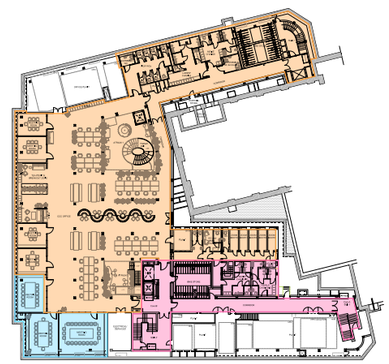


Fourth Floor

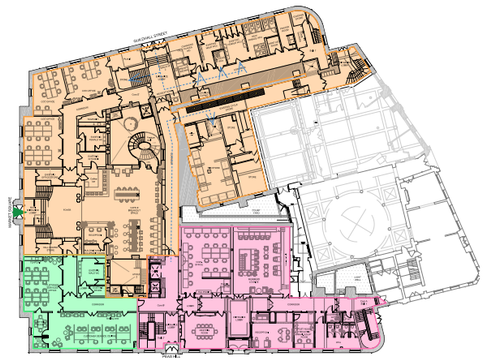
The proposal provides an appropriate mix of room types for an Aparthotel scenario, including small studios, large studios, and one-bedroom units.

	Small Studio	24
	Large Studio	28
	1 Bed	12
	TOTAL: 64	

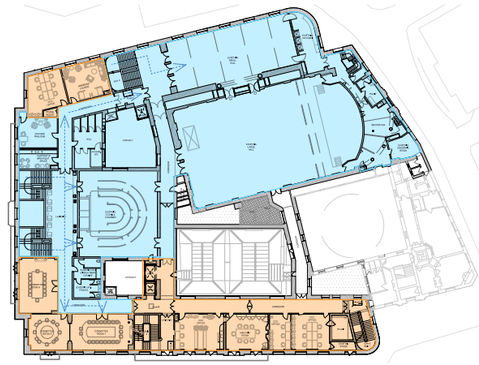
Office Proposal



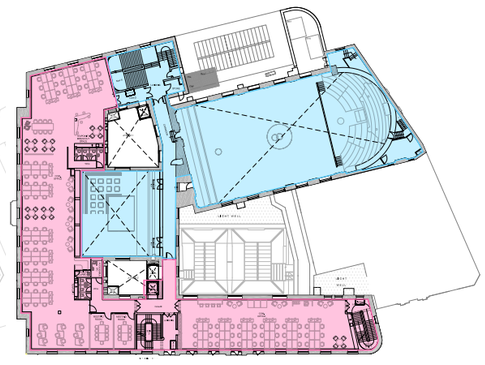
Basement



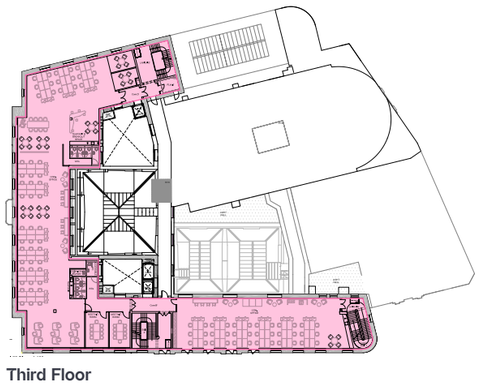
Ground Floor



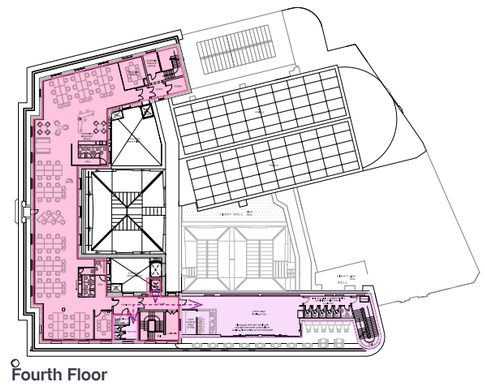
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor

Within this option, the commercial office provision is primarily located on floors two to four whilst Council workstations are located on basement, ground and first floors.

3.1 Guildhall Brief

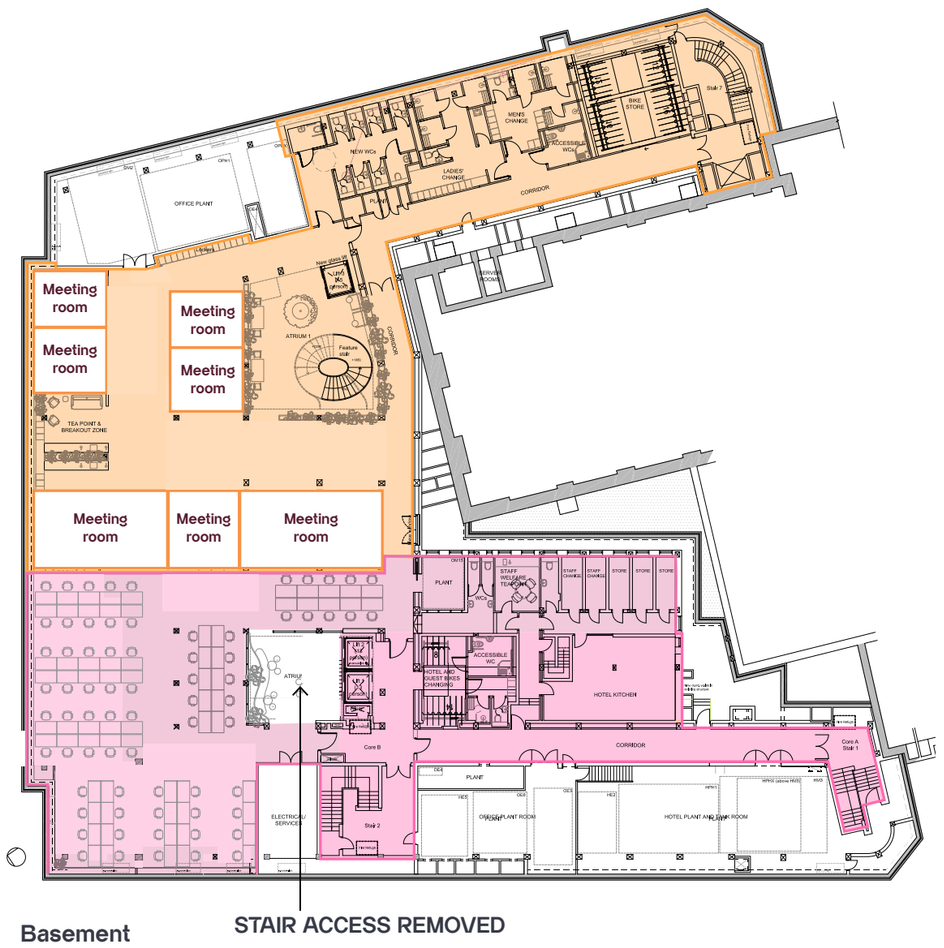
Design Development

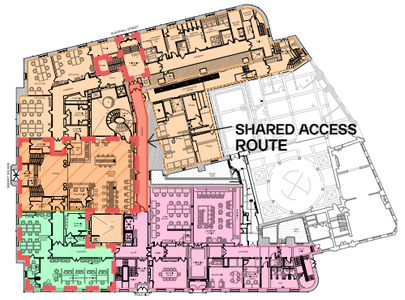
Commercial Office - Leased & Management Agreement

The plans on the right outline show the design at the end of RIBA Stage 2, the option to include a Hotel within the Guildhall has not been taken forward.

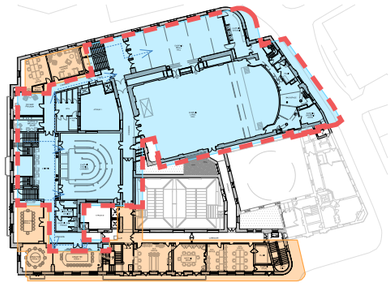
This concept design has been developed further during RIBA Stage 3. In summary the concept was to provide;

- 150 Council desks at ground, 1st and 2nd floors
- No Council workstations at basement level, only meeting rooms and informal meeting spaces
- Increased leased office provision at basement level
- Half of 2nd floor given back to the Council

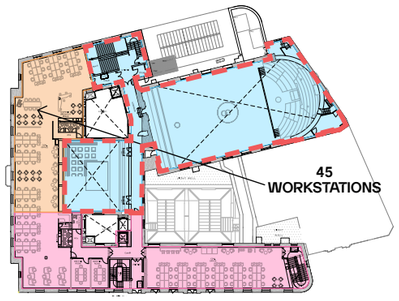




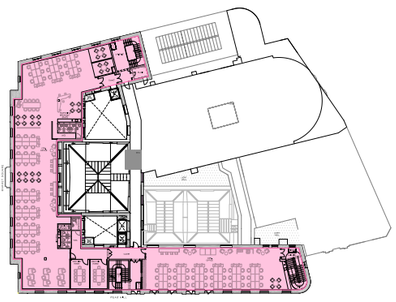
Ground



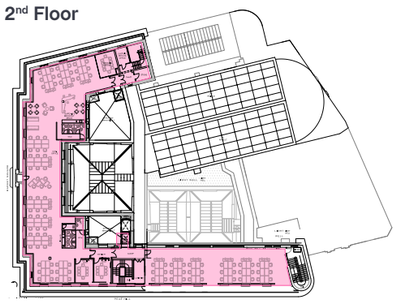
1st Floor



2nd Floor



3rd Floor



4th Floor

- Council office
- CSC office
- Commercial office
- Democratic Rooms & Halls
- Public Access Areas

3.1 Guildhall Brief

Heritage Assets and Strategy

Key assets

The Guildhall is a Grade II Listed Building. It was erected in two phases, either side of the Second World War to the designs of the architect Charles Cowles-Voysey (1889-1981). He was an accomplished designer of public buildings (including town halls in Watford, Bognor Regis, Bromley and Worthing). The job architect was John Brandon-Jones (1908-1999) who had joined the practice in 1933.

The historic interest of the Guildhall derives from its standing on a site which has been occupied by municipal buildings probably since the C14. The building and its predecessors have been at the heart of matters affecting the City for many centuries.

The architectural interest of the Guildhall derives from its stripped-Classical 1930s form and symmetry (particularly the north elevation and despite its two-phase construction, visible in the slight change in brick colour). The rather austere external detail is enlivened by the entrance doorways, rusticated plinth and balconies and the attic storey with deep cornice and partly balustraded pediment. The homogeneity of the building materials (Clipsham stone, Williamson Cliffe brick and bronze windows) adds to the architectural quality of the building.

The interior adds much to the architectural interest of the building, as reflected in the list description and identified on the plans of heritage significance (see Appendix 3). Of particular note are the entrance / stairhall with its accomplished use of marble and bronze and the Council Chamber which leads from it. The Committee Rooms, Members' Rooms and also the Chief Executive's office all have walnut used for wall panels and in the furniture (not part of the listing). The small hall with its barrel-vaulted roof and Neoclassical detailing is also of note. The furniture in some areas has remained unchanged since the spaces were originally constructed.

The building was designed with a clear hierarchy and with an eye on the level of use. The principal entrance and rooms are therefore of the highest quality materials. The secondary entrance and other spaces, rather than having marble, therefore have terrazzo, whilst the Guildhall Street entrance and stairs, which gave access to the public halls, were covered with rubberised finishes by Dunlop.

Whilst the building retains may of its original features, there are areas which have been altered and are of little architectural interest. These include the ground floor reception area, which has been altered several times, some of the altered WCs, the lifts (added later) the atria and basement areas. Although the latter has not been particularly heavily altered, it was never built with any architectural pretension. Exceptions in the basement, which are of higher significance include the steps down from the dock in the Sessions Court and surviving cells.

The exterior of the Guildhall, its principal rooms and stairs and lobbies to the civic spaces are considered to be of high heritage significance. The service areas and much altered spaces are of low significance whilst the general offices, secondary areas are considered of moderate significance.

Our Approach

Our approach to working on the Grade II listed Guildhall can be summarised as follows;

- Preserve and restore areas of high heritage significance, limiting works to these spaces which could cause harm to the heritage asset.
- Modernise areas of lower heritage significance, e.g. through the removal of walls, to allows spaces to be better utilised.
- Remove later, low quality, additions to the space which detract from the Guildhalls use and appearance.
- Insert high quality, beautifully designed, modern interventions that can be read as such.



Source (top down):
Large Hall in 1902 https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/,
Council Chamber https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/

3.2 Public Engagement
Summary

Why is engagement so key?

We believe every person in the local community, no matter their background, should have the ability and the right to create positive change and influence the decisions that impact their lives. That means engaging beyond the usual suspects and providing the opportunity for harder to reach groups to get involved and shape the future of their Civic Quarter.

Cambridge has a unique and complex stakeholder environment. High profile individuals, and organisations, take a keen interest in the development of the built environment.

The design team have been tasked with producing a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process and putting this into action, working closely with the Council's communications team.

ECF are fulfilling the communications consultant role, bringing strong institutional knowledge of the Cambridge stakeholder environment to the project. Our approach has been based on the following:

- Strong collaboration with key internal stakeholders within Cambridge City Council, and particularly the council's communications team, to deliver a best practice, engagement plan.
- Front loading engagement in the process to ensure the feedback is properly used by the project team to shape the proposal, and communicating changes back to those who participate.
- A focus on ensuring harder to reach groups, including young people, and those with disabilities, are heard throughout the engagement process.
- A commitment to open, transparent, and regular communication to help close the feedback loop.
- A robust, hybrid approach through website updates, social media campaigns, mailshots and webinars.
- The use of a mixture of tools including 1-2-1 meetings, workshops and GoVocal consultation survey platform to derive feedback from as wide a range of people as possible

Engaging the City: Local Voices Shaping the Future of Cambridge Civic Quarter

Between 12 May and 22 June 2025, the City Council and project team carried out the second phase of public engagement for the Cambridge Civic Quarter (CCQ) project. This phase built upon the engagement undertaken in 2024, presenting updated design proposals for the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Market Square, and surrounding public spaces.

Who Took Part?

- 543 survey responses were received via GoVocal—506 from individuals and 16 from organisations (21 did not want to provide an answer).
- 70+ interactions were recorded with market traders, including 7 meetings, 4 pop-ups, and 3 surveys.
- 111 children aged 9 to 16 participated in youth workshops at 3 local schools.
- Over 100 people engaged via pop-ups across Cambridge.
- 4 written submissions received from stakeholder organisations.
- 3 themed 1-2-1 stakeholder meetings were held, in addition to informal discussions with residents, traders, and staff.

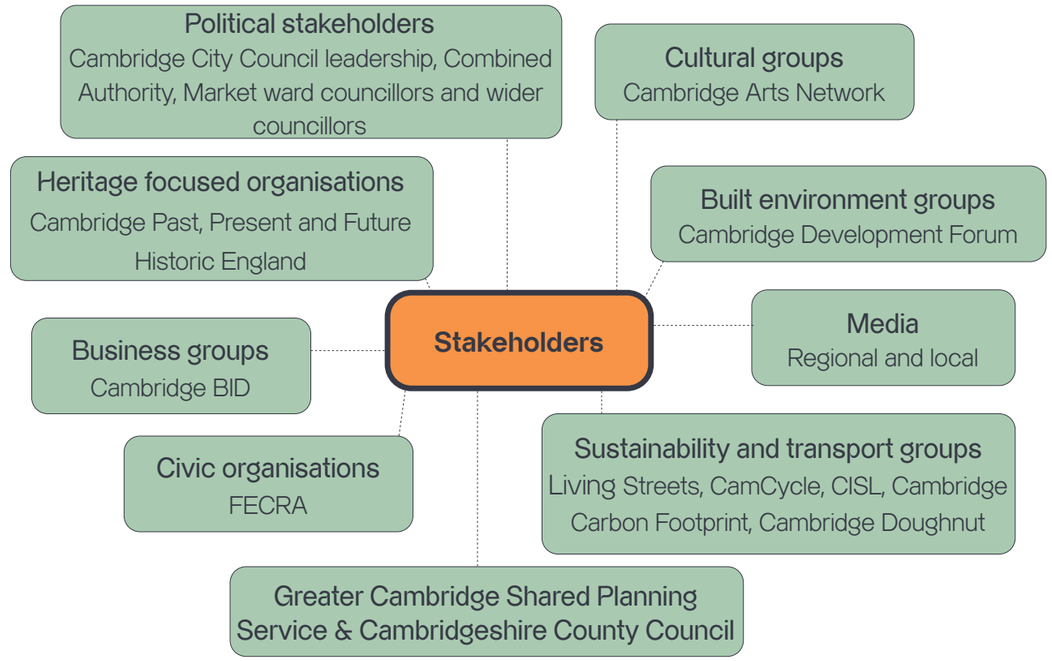
Diverse Methods of Engagement

This phase employed a multi-layered approach to reach different audiences:

- Workshops and drop-ins were hosted at the Guildhall and local community halls.
- Targeted sessions engaged council staff, youth groups, market traders, and accessibility stakeholders.
- Digital engagement included over 5,675 unique visits to the consultation site, social media campaigns, and local media coverage.

Key Messages from the Community

- A strong appetite exists for a more accessible, inclusive and vibrant civic space.
- There is enthusiasm for civic reuse of the Guildhall—including co-working, events, and exhibitions.
- Market traders and residents expressed a desire for proposals to maintain the market's traditional role while enabling improvements.
- Accessibility, heritage, affordability, and safety were recurring themes across all locations.



3.2 Public Engagement
Headline Responses

A Re-imagined Civic Heart: Flexible, Welcoming, and Community-Led

Guildhall Findings

The Guildhall emerged as a focal point in the feedback, with residents calling for a transformation that respects its civic role while opening it up for inclusive and modern use.

What People Want the Guildhall to Be

- 91.5% of survey respondents support hosting public talks, exhibitions, and community group meetings.
- 67.7% support the introduction of co-working areas such as hot desks and small tables for informal use.
- 53.8% favour comfortable communal seating and relaxed spaces that invite public use throughout the day.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Accessibility was a top priority. 41.5% of respondents called for improvements such as:

- Step-free access at the main entrance.
- Hearing loops in public spaces.
- Accessible toilets across the building.
- 37.9% were in favour of adding a platform lift for the Guildhall, with 52.9% unsure.

Civic Function and Flexible Space

The Council Chamber and committee rooms are seen as key assets.

- 54.7% support flexible layouts for diverse uses.
- 49.4% want up-to-date technology and simplified booking systems.

The design brief should consider transforming these rooms into spaces that can support civic duties, community hire, cultural programming, and even business use.

Affordability and Welcoming Design

Affordability was frequently cited—especially by voluntary and community groups who stressed the need for low-cost or free hire to ensure inclusivity.

Respondents also called for:

- A brighter, more attractive interior.
- Cleaner, more welcoming facilities.
- A comfortable café with seating areas, ideally offering affordable, locally sourced options.

Culture, Heritage and Identity

The Guildhall's civic and historical significance was strongly affirmed.

- 89.3% of respondents expressed interest in art and culture exhibitions in the building.
- Suggestions included bringing the Museum of Cambridge into the Guildhall and creating a permanent platform for community storytelling and interpretation.

Key Headlines

Strong support for transforming the Guildhall into a more open, inclusive civic space.

Participants want a brighter, more welcoming interior with a café and improved reception.

Accessibility is a priority: step-free access preferred, with support for platform lifts; and accessible toilets.

54.7% support for flexible layouts for the Chamber with up-to-date technology and better accessibly.







3.3 Council Engagement
Summary

Internal Stakeholders

A series of workshops with internal stakeholders have been undertaken during RIBA Stages 2 and 3. Given the nature of the activities carried out by different departments within Cambridge City Council it has been a very important and informative process.

Structured workshops have been held with the following groups;

- Customer Services

- Civic and Democratic Services

- Office User Group

- ICT and CCTV

With each user group at least two workshops were held with chance for users to comment on the proposals and make suggestions for changes, whilst also advising the project team about specific needs of the group.

These workshops have helped shape the proposals for the Guildhall as well as helping with the production of a series of 'Day in the life' diagrams to help staff visualise how they would use the Guildhall in the future. We find this to be a very helpful exercise to allow staff to see how the changes to their routine can be beneficial to them, colleagues and Cambridge City Council.

Data Capture

To further assist the design development the Council have been capturing data on the number of users coming into the office and meeting room bookings.

Data showing the trends of staff coming into the office is based on access key card use in Mandela House and the Guildhall.

Meeting room use is based on the internal booking system used by the council. Analysis of proposals also uses room metrics - size, AV equipment, seating numbers etc.

It is accepted that neither of these data capture techniques give data that is 100% accurate but do provide a good baseline to analyse the proposed designs against.

Tracy's Day at the Guildhall

1. Arriving at the office
Tracy cycles to the Guildhall and enters through the Wheeler Street entrance, taking the cycle lift to the basement store and then the staircase up to the 'Heartspace' in the atrium

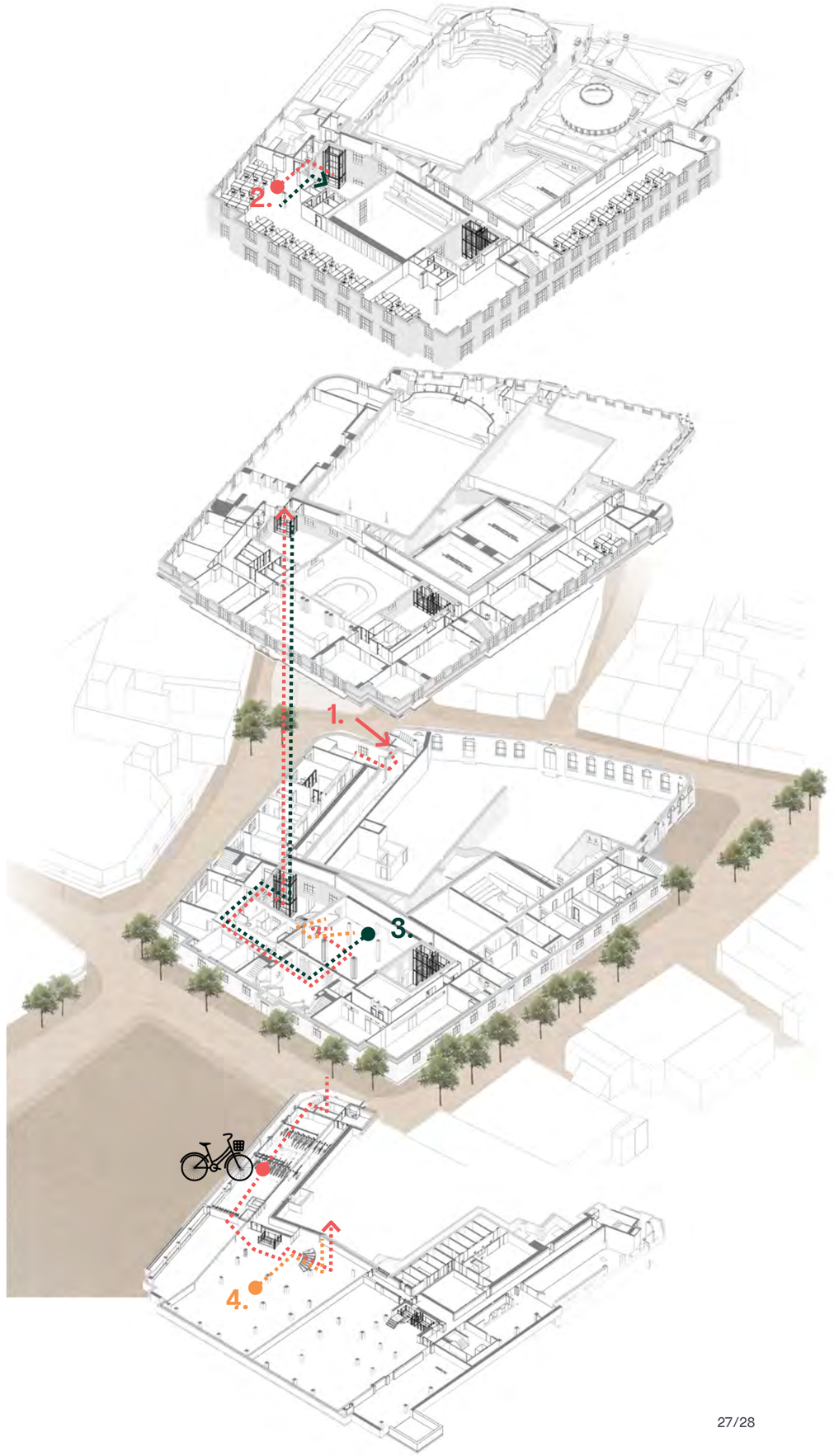
2. Starting the day
She collects her things from the locker, visits the loo, makes a coffee, and turns on her computer. Then she joins a team member at a collaborative table for a quick discussion.



3. Lunch
Although she often eats in one of the breakout spaces, today she and a colleague head to the 'Heartspace' to prepare for a meeting. The space's relaxed setting and desk facilities suit their needs. Later, Tracy visits the market for a coffee and some fresh air.

4. Afternoon meetings
Tracy has a couple of meetings this afternoon in the dedicated meeting room suite. Between meetings she grabs a drink in the teapoint and catches up on emails on her laptop whilst sitting below the atrium tree.

5. Packing up
Before leaving, Tracy checks in with the Housing Advisors, stops by the loo, then locks away her computer for the day.



3.4 Pre-Application Planning Process
Summary

Pre-application Process

Early engagement with the Planning Authority and Historic England has led to Planning Performance Agreements being put in place during both RIBA Stages 2 and 3.

Given the scale of the Civic Quarter project significant engagement has been undertaken, please see programme opposite.

Summary of Historic England Comments on Proposals

In relation the Cambridge Civic Quarter proposals:

"Overall, we welcome the amount of work and positive evolution of the scheme in line with feedback. We reiterate our support for the principle and aims behind the proposals, which have the potential to bring considerable enhancement to a significant assemblage of key civic buildings and spaces in the city of Cambridge."

Specific to the Guildhall:

"We are supportive of the aims and ambitions of improving the efficiency and functionality of the building, as this would improve its resilience and help ensure its long-term conservation needs are met. We have no objections either to the key interventions proposed - the extension of level 4 and creation of a roof plant, the roofing over of the courtyards and opening up towards basement level, or the creation of a civic heart at ground floor. We consider these are acceptable in principle, subject to detail.

We are concerned however about the manner in which some of these interventions would be materialised..."

Key impacts and recommendations from Historic England relate to the following areas of the proposals:

Strong Room, Small Hall, Roof Plant, Office Extension and Council Chamber.

Our responses to these areas have been captured throughout this document in the individual sections.

Stage 2	
Meeting	**Date**
Project introduction	08.05.24
Site walkaround	15.05.24
Sustainability discussion	21.05.24
1st Pre-application meeting	28.05.24
Breakout 1: Guildhall	02.07.24
Breakout 2: Movement	02.07.24
Breakout 3: Corn Exchange	18.07.24
Breakout 4: Market Square	18.07.24
2nd Pre-application meeting	12.09.24
Pre-app 'Mop Up'	26.09.24

Stage 3	
Meeting	**Date**
Market Square Pre-Application 1	06.03.25
Market Square Pre-App Historic England	06.03.25
Guildhall/ Corn Exchange Pre-App 1	12.03.25
Market Square Pre-App 2	07.05.25
Guildhall/ Corn Exchange Pre-App 2	14.05.28
Sustainability Workshop	22.05.28
Highways Workshop	12.06.25
Civic Quarter Workshop	18.06.25
Design Review Panel	26.06.25
Civic Quarter Pre-App 3	06.08.25

Key Guildhall Discussions

Council Chamber and Gallery

Proposals to make changes to the Council Chamber have been presented and discussed. A key part of the project is to make the Guildhall more accessible and inclusive, opening the building up to welcome the public in and protect the future use of a key Listed Heritage asset.

The proposals therefore include adaptations to the fixed furniture in the Council Chamber and a proposal to install an adaptable floor, which allows both level access to be provided and two tiered levels when required.

Extent of demolitions

To open up the Guildhall a range of elements are planned to be demolished. The extent of demolitions is typically limited to areas of low historic significance. The area of highest significance are typically located at Ground and first floor level, these areas have the least amount of demolition proposed.

Fourth Floor Extension

To increase the lettable area of the Guildhall and complete, the believed, unbuilt part of the fourth floor, a new extension is proposed.

The visual impact of this extension on the form of the Guildhall has been adjusted and reduced, particular focus around views from the end of Bene't Street and Peas Hill have been considered.

Plant Screen

To screen the additional plant equipment required to move the operation of the Guildhall to Net Zero a plant screen is proposed.

The location, height and visual appearance of this screen has been reviewed with officers and adjusted.

Sessions Court

Limited works are proposed to the Sessions Court.

Building Fabric Upgrades

To meet the Net Zero Operational Carbon aspirations of the client upgrades to the existing building fabric need to be made.

Secondary Glazing

To improve the performance of the glazing elements existing secondary glazing is to be removed and replaced

Photovoltaic Panel installations

The above points are discussed in further detail within Section 4 of this Design and Access Statement.

4.0

The Proposals

4.1 The Proposals - The Summary

Use

As a testament to the Council's commitment to achieving a Net Zero Carbon in operation Guildhall, the project is taking part in the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard Pilot study.

Summary of approach

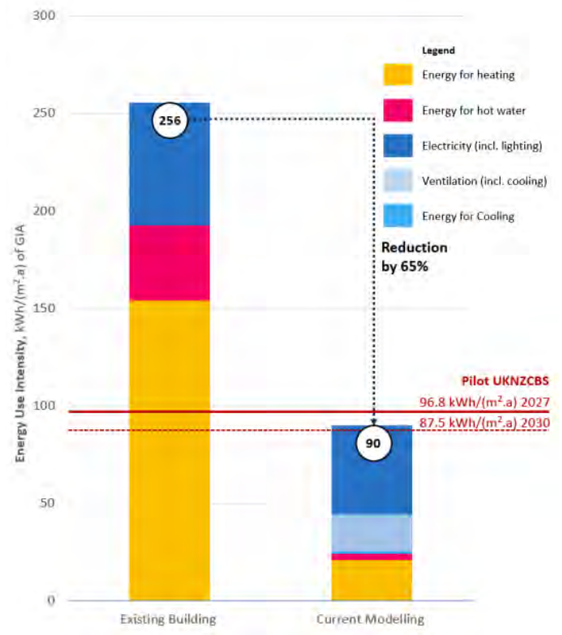
Working with Max Fordham we have established an approach to fabric upgrades. This is primarily influenced by the heritage significance of the different spaces within the building. Areas of lower significance are simpler to upgrade than those with panelling, such as the Committee Meeting Rooms.

The fabric upgrades aim to achieve two main objectives;

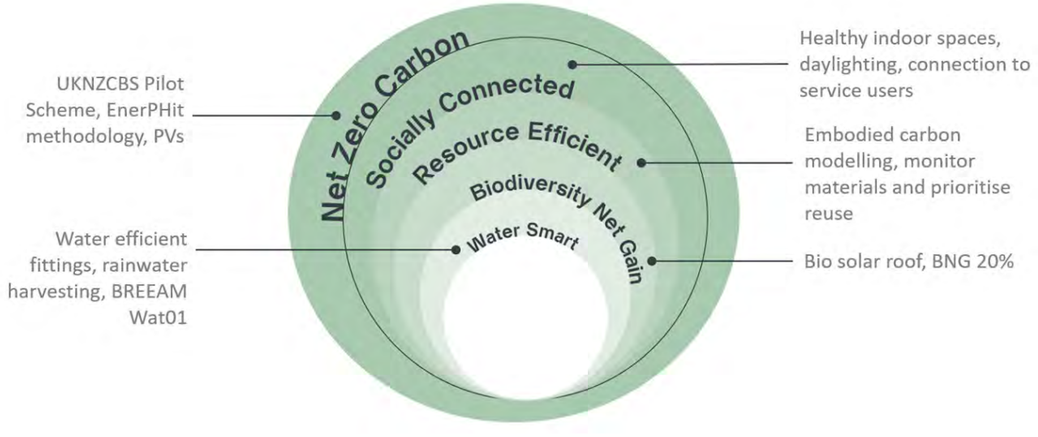
- Improved airtightness
- Increased thermal insulation (lower U-value)

Enerphit – High Level Outcomes

Through the application of Enerphit principles it has been shown that it should be possible to reduce the energy consumption of the Guildhall by approximately 66%. Based on the definition contained within the, UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard, the Guildhall would be defined as a Net Zero Carbon (in operation) building without the need for any Carbon offsetting. Please refer to section 5 of this document for further details.



Energy Use Intensity Graph



Guildhall Proposals Summary

- Extensive fabric upgrades are proposed as a key part of creating a net zero carbon in operation Guildhall, aligning with the Council's Net Zero 2030 aspiration.
- As part of these works new MEP systems will be installed, with modern plant equipment providing heating and cooling. Equipment will be housed within the basement and at roof level, resulting in a new plant screen being proposed.
- The Guildhall will be transformed into an accessible and inclusive public building and opened up to welcome the community in. A new 'Heart space' will form the centre of the customer experience, offering a cafe, reception desk and comfortable seating.
- The Customer Service Centre is incorporated on the ground floor.
- Proposals for the Council Chamber will future proof the Guildhall, allowing it to remain as a seat of democracy, as it has for the last 800 years.
- In doing so this will protect a key heritage asset in the centre of Cambridge.
- Upgrades to Council Chamber, Large and Small Halls and back of house kitchen and bar will make the Guildhall a more attractive venue.
- The Removal of lower heritage walls will allow the creation modern open plan workspaces, whilst upgrading welfare facilities - cycle storage, showers, changing room etc. - will make the Guildhall an exciting place to work.
- Opening up the basement with two atria and adding a 4th floor extension will maximise the useable space in the Guildhall.
- All of these actions will allow the Guildhall to have significantly reduced running costs whilst generating higher levels of revenue, thereby protecting the Councils ability to deliver frontline services.

Guildhall: New Content and Operational Strategy Summary

The redevelopment of the Guildhall will unlock a step-change in the building's event and conference functionality, audience appeal, and commercial performance, enabling it to operate as a premier, flexible, inclusive, and sustainable city-centre venue that complements and extends the cultural offer of the Corn Exchange.

The renewed strategy will deliver:

A flexible, multi-use entertainment and event programme, designed around a reconfigured Large Hall and associated spaces capable of hosting talks, live music, community celebrations, light entertainment, conferences, and civic events – creating a new platform for cultural and commercial use.

A significantly enhanced customer experience, with improved circulation, upgraded toilets, accessible layouts, and a refreshed visual identity – helping the Guildhall better meet modern expectations while respecting its historic character.

New hospitality and commercial opportunities, including café-bar service, premium event hire, and corporate functions, enabling the Guildhall to drive new revenue streams, increase dwell time, and diversify its customer base.

Improved access and inclusivity, with step-free routes, upgraded facilities, clear signage and enhanced acoustics – ensuring the Guildhall is a more welcoming, comfortable, and inclusive space for all audiences, performers, and hirers.

Growth in community and civic use, enabled by improved layouts and booking systems, clearer pricing models, and better co-ordination with Corn Exchange programming – reaffirming the Guildhall's role as an accessible and vibrant civic space for Cambridge residents.

4.1 The Proposals

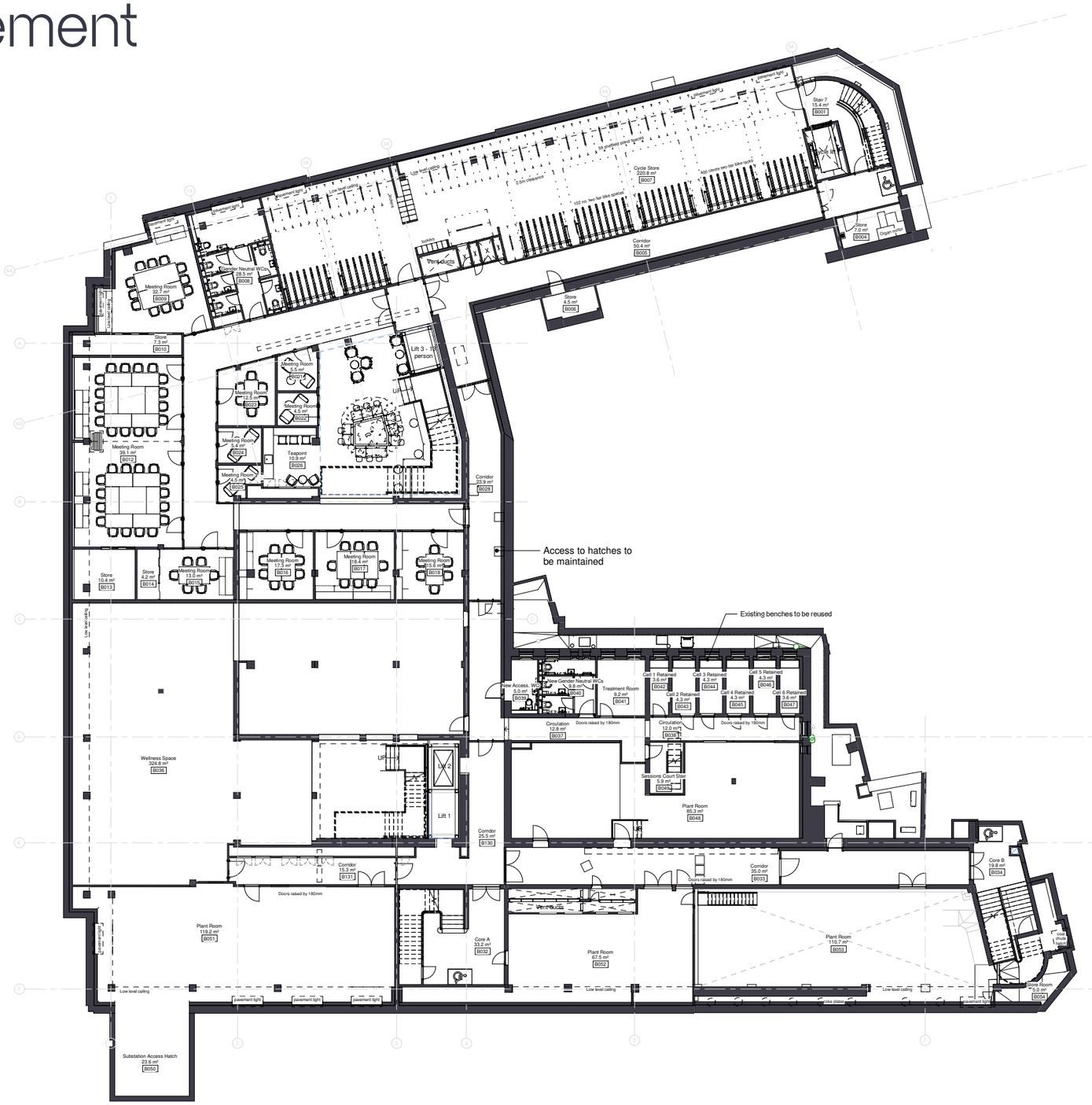
The Guildhall - Transformation



Cross section through 'Heart' Space and Atria to illustrate overall concept (internal fittings are indicative)

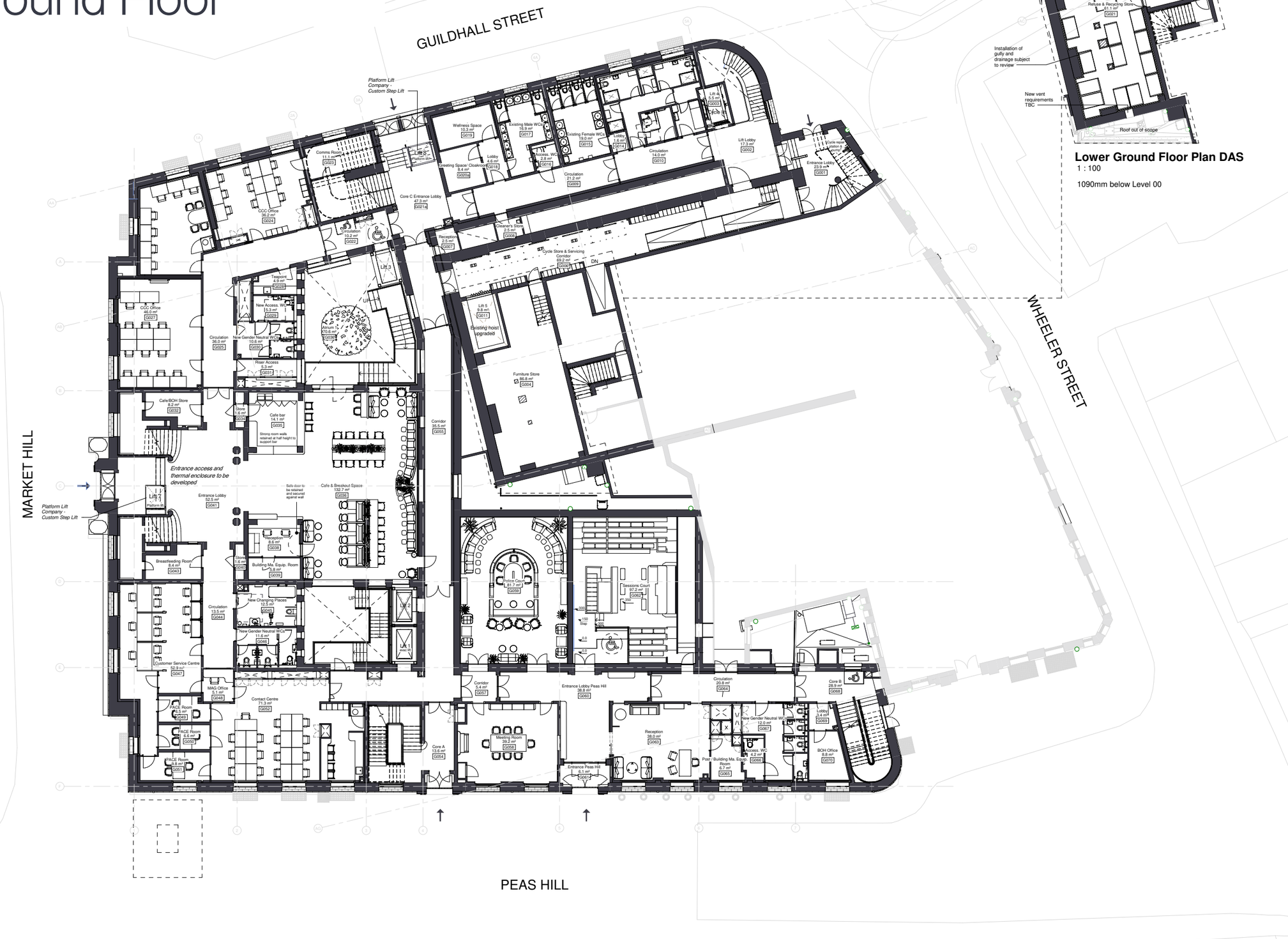
4.2 Plans

Basement



4.2 Plans

Ground Floor

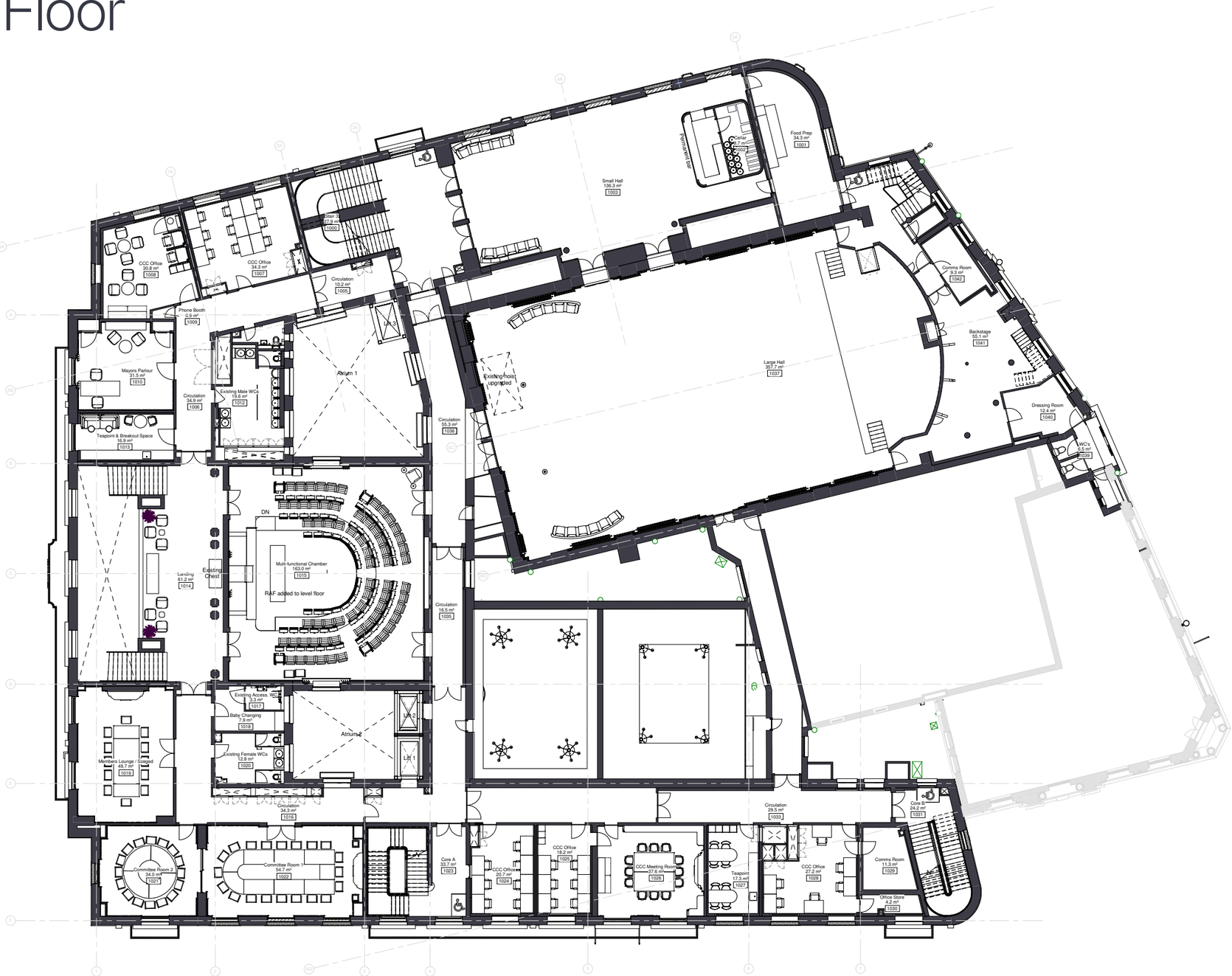


Lower Ground Floor Plan DAS
1 : 100

1090mm below Level 00

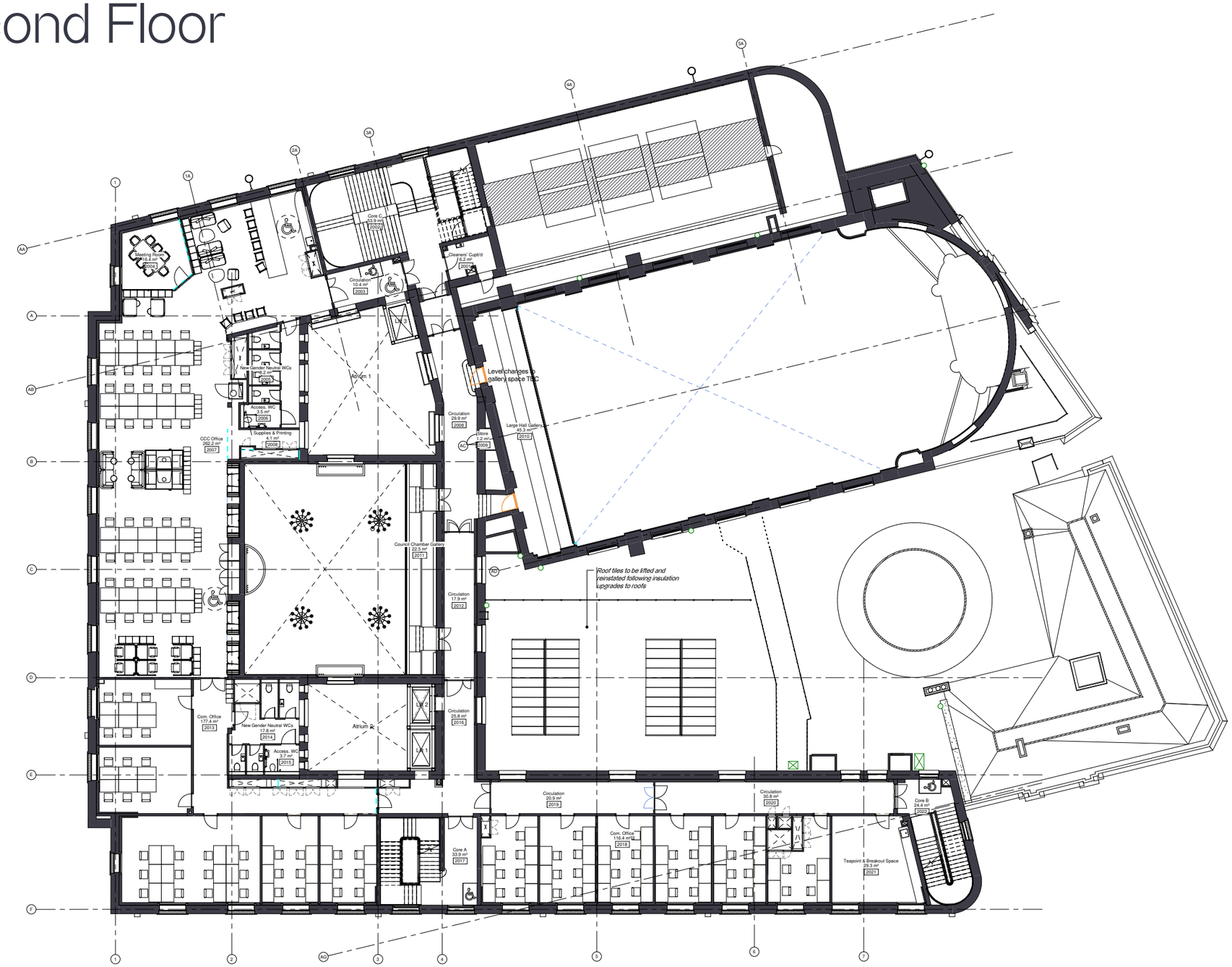
4.2 Plans

First Floor



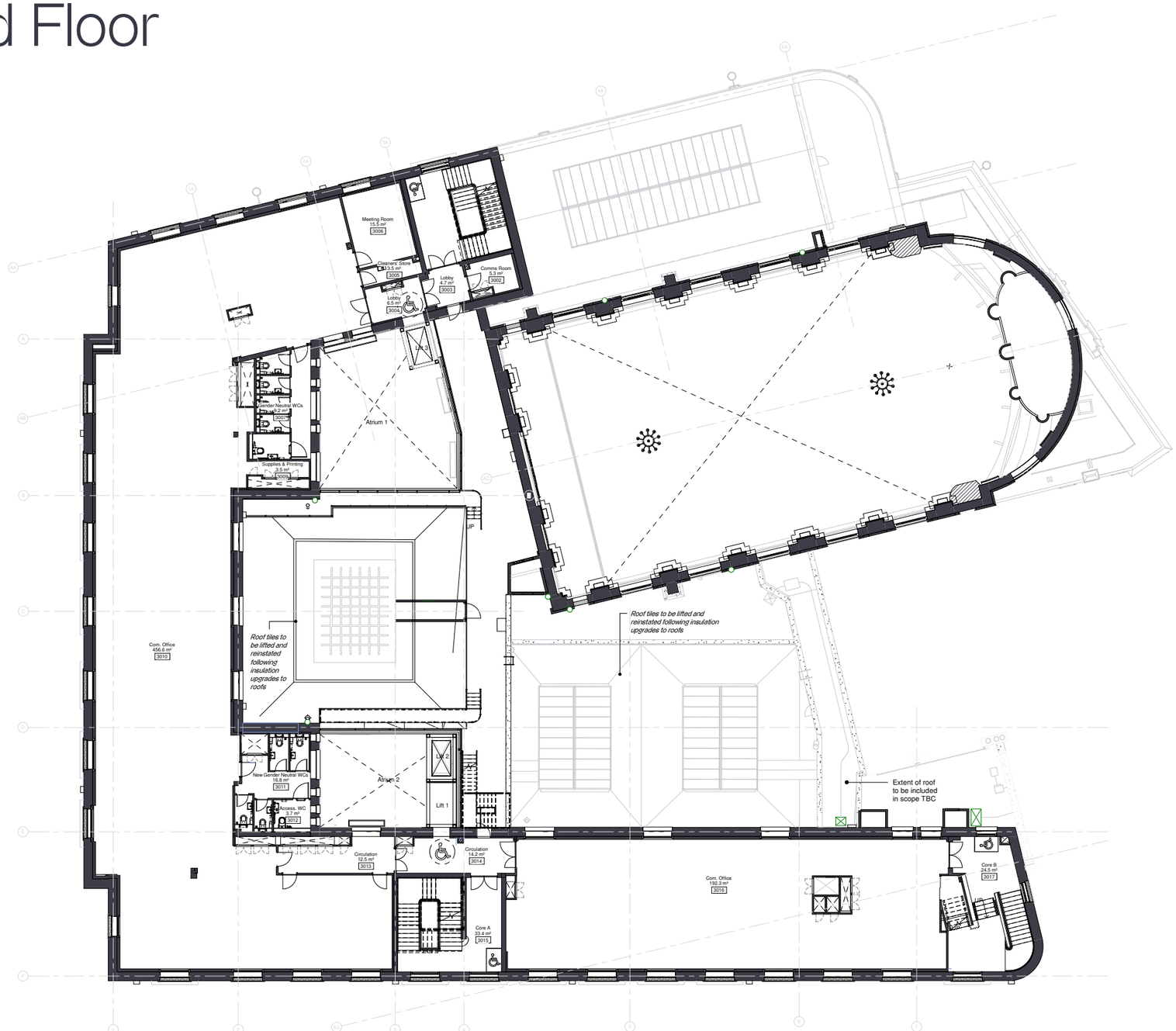
4.2 Plans

Second Floor



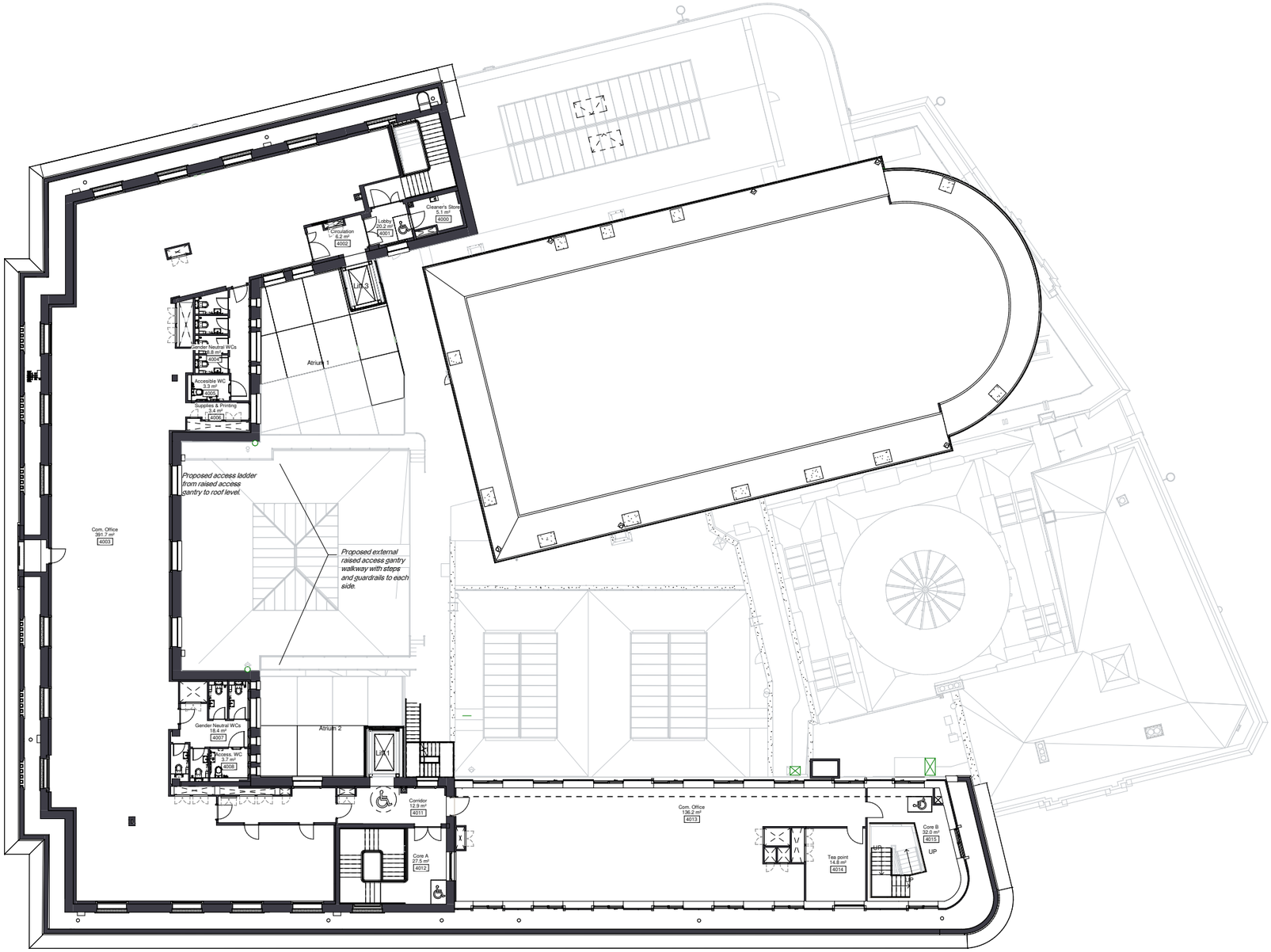
4.2 Plans

Third Floor



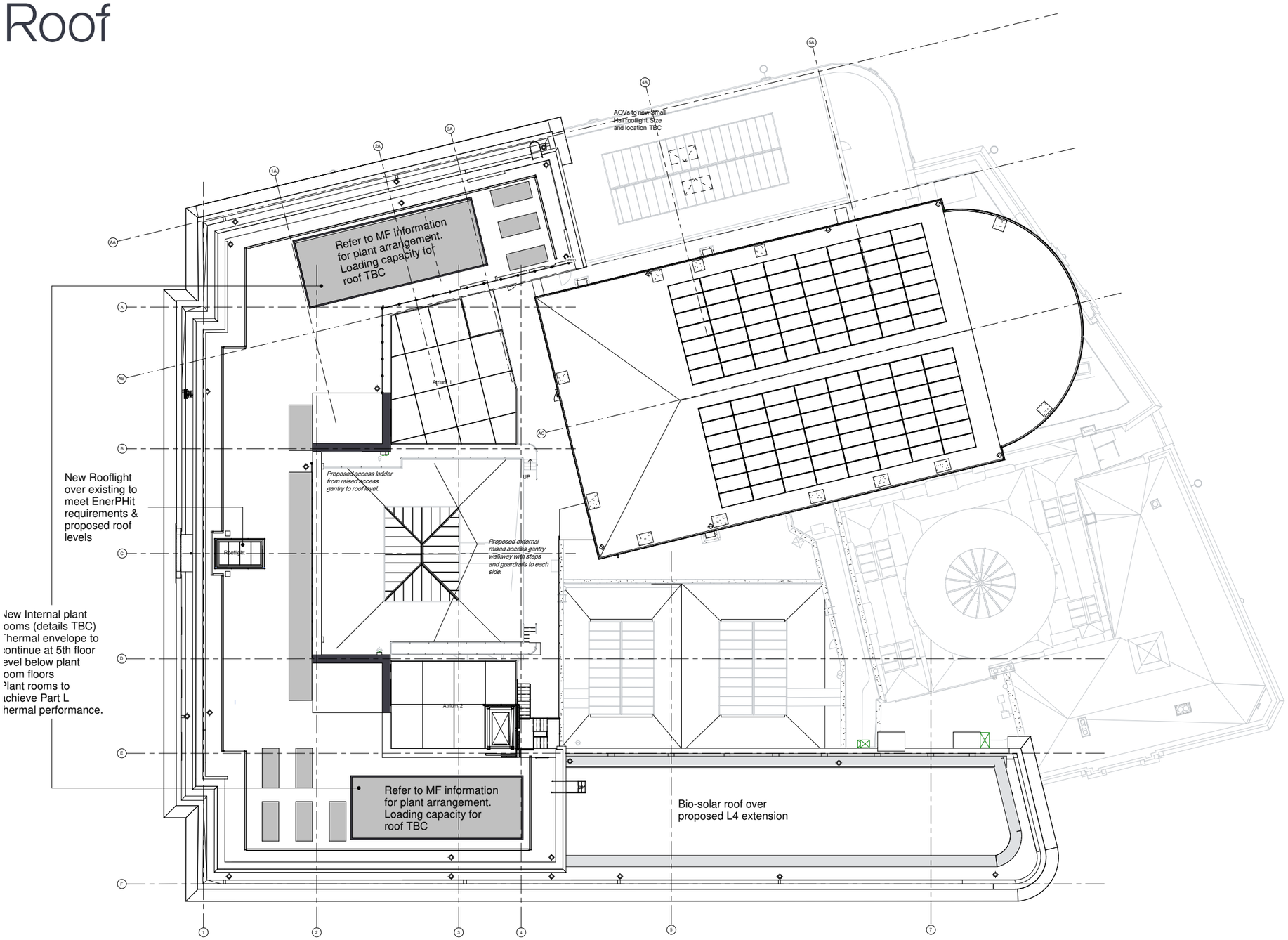
4.2 Plans

Fourth Floor



4.2 Plans

Roof



4.3 Civic Function

The 'Heart' and Atria

The 'Heart'

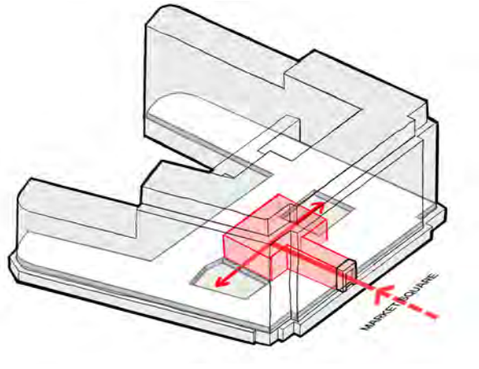
One of the key design proposals within the Guildhall is the newly created 'Heart' space on the ground floor, a publicly accessible vibrant centre of the Guildhall offering a coffee bar & soft seating.

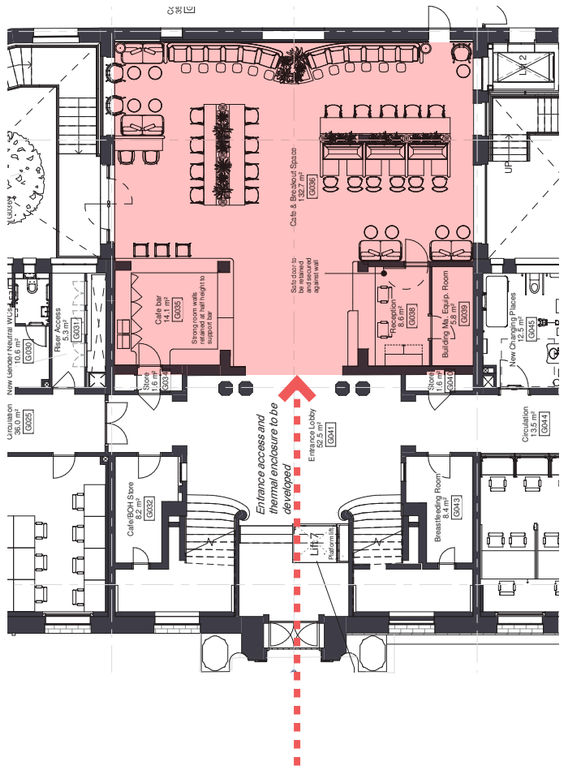
This area is currently occupied by the Allia reception and is the first space which the visitor is greeted with upon entering from Market Hill. The space has had several unsympathetic interventions inserted into it over the life of the Guildhall which have detracted from the sense of arrival and greatly detract from the experience of this beautiful and historically significant building.

Our concept is to open the space up, removing later additions, and create a multifunctional and welcoming entrance for the Guildhall. This will create a space that can be used by all, being publicly accessible as well as accessible to Council staff creating a communal, inclusive and warm heart space to the Guildhall.

Within the heart space we are proposing the Council reception and BoH space, a café/ coffee bar with adjacent storage / prep areas and seating areas for all to enjoy. A range of seating, tables, chairs and high benches will provide different opportunities for interaction and working. This would allow the public to get a coffee or Council staff to have an informal meeting or work on a laptop for short periods.

The heart space will be opened up to the two existing lightwells which will be transformed into covered atria spaces providing natural light and interest whilst activating the currently underutilised basement spaces of the Guildhall.





The Atria

Directly linked to the 'Heart' space are the two newly created atria, these are formed from the existing lightwells. The ground floor slab of the lightwells will be removed to provide access and light to the basement and activating this previously underutilised space. To enclose the lightwells a triple glazed roof is proposed.

The creation of two atria is beneficial for several reason;

- Bring daylight deep into the Guildhall and allowing the basement to be opened up and space utilised as lettable area.
- Reducing the extent of external wall, by making the walls of the atria internal rather than external, and therefore reducing heat lost and energy use
- Creating spaces flooded with daylight that can incorporate biophilia (planting) into the Guildhall, benefiting staff well-being and mindfulness.
- Improvements to way finding in the building

We have successfully delivered a similar proposal at the Grade II Listed Lambeth Town Hall - see photos opposite.





Lambeth Town Hall - atrium created from lightwell



Lambeth Town Hall - basement use unlocked

4.3 Civic Function

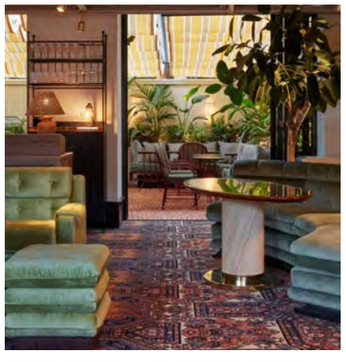
The 'Heart' and Atria

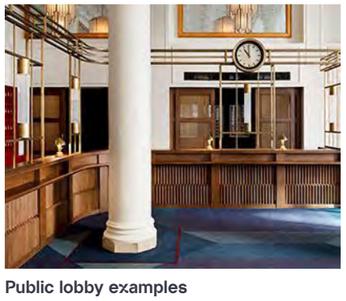


View - Proposed Heart Space with Atria beyond









Public lobby examples

Sources (top down): (top two images) Cartwright Pickard, Louie London https://www.venuescanner.com/gb/venues/london/london/book/louie-london/alligator-bar-terrace, Riggs Washintdon DC https://loregroup.com/our-hotels/riggs/