4.5 3 Parson's Court & 2 Wheeler Street

Summary

Given the relatively small foyer space within the Corn Exchange we have taken the opportunity to bring Parson's Court to life.

A space that is currently used to store refuse serving several businesses in the area can be transformed into an external social space, one that visitors to the Corn Exchange can spill out into.

The proposal relocates all waste storage elsewhere, creating the opportunity to transform Parson's Court into an active and inviting space.

A new ground-floor bar at No. 3 will spill out into the courtyard, complemented by a back bar fronting onto Parson's Court to encourage interaction with the Corn Exchange.

The space is envisioned as a lively "run-up" to performances, with potential for a food van, impromptu performances, and other temporary activations that enhance the pre-show experience

Landscaping

The existing surface within Parson's Court is proposed to be removed and replaced. The proposed primary material is Yorkstone, to tie in with the wider Public Realm proposals.

There are opportunities for small quantities of planting within the space, noting that these are limited by fire escape and servicing vehicle access.

For further details of the proposals for Parson's Court please refer to the LDA Landscape report and drawings.



4.5 3 Parson's Court & 2 Wheeler Street

Appearance`

Parson's Court links the Corn Exchange through to 3 Parson's Court, currently occupied by Cambridge Live Tickets and offices for Corn Exchange staff. (See adjacent image showing Parson's Court scope.)

Cambridge Live Tickets is currently accessed via No.2 Wheeler Street. The Box Office is currently open on Corn Exchange performance days only. From 6pm for evening performances, or 1 hour before the start time for matinees.

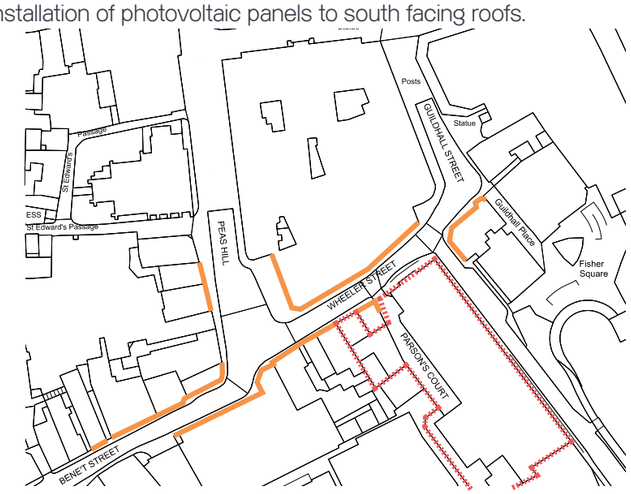
This under utilisation of space provides an opportunity to add to the evening and night time economy in this area.

Cambridge Live Tickets is flanked by Steak & Honour and Pho Vietnamese street food. Sticks 'n' Sushi and Giggling Squid are located on the opposite side of the road. Further food and beverage offers are located on Corn Exchange Street, Peas Hill and Bene't Street.

The Proposals

Our proposals include the following:

- Change of use from Cambridge Live Ticket office and office space (Useclass E(g)(offices)) to Sui Generis (drinking establishment)
- Replacement of shop front
- Alterations to internal arrangements
- Partially infill rear courtyard
- Fabric improvements
- New MEP systems
- Installation of photovoltaic panels to south facing roofs.



Orange lines indicate frontage occupied by food and beverage establishments



Parson's Court & Wheeler Street Scope



With 3 Parson's Court in the scope of the project the council have asked the design team to explore opportunities for a food and beverage or commercial leases in any of the space provided by 3 Parson's Court.

Design Development

Several options for the use of 3 Parson's Court have been reviewed during RIBA Stages 2 & 3.

The ground floor has continuously been shown as a bar to provide additional access to refreshments for visitors to the Corn Exchange.

The use of the upper floors has been tested as commercial office space, additional space to provide food and increased bar area.

The proposed use for the upper floors has settled on a series of VIP rooms which will allow visitors to the Corn Exchange to have upgraded access and amenities beyond a standard concert ticket.

Ground Floor Bars

The primary access to the refurbished 3 Parson's Court will be via Wheeler Street, secondary access is available off Parson's Court linking the venue to the Corn Exchange and the external social space.

The new Wheeler Street frontage will tie in with the other food and beverage offerings that line the road.

Covered Seating Area

The existing external courtyard will be partially in filled with WC and then provided with a transparent covering. This will form a sheltered external space to complement the internal bars and larger Parson's Court social space.

Additional WCs

At ground floor seven additional WC's will be installed, including one wheelchair accessible facility. These WC's will serve both 3 Parson's Court and the Corn Exchange before, during and after shows.

VIP Rooms

On the first and second floors six VIP/ members lounge spaces have been created. These spaces will allow visitors to have upgraded access and additional amenities.

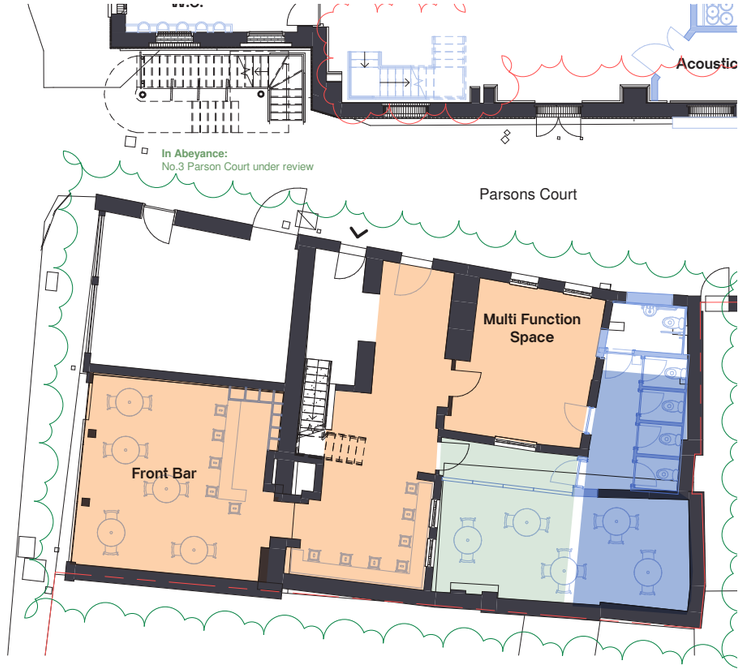
VIP packages vary by venue and details will be developed as part of the business plan. The spaces will be designed as comfortable lounger type spaces to allow VIP guests to enjoy a drink and something to eat in the confines of rooms that accommodate 6-8 people.

No.2 Wheeler Street

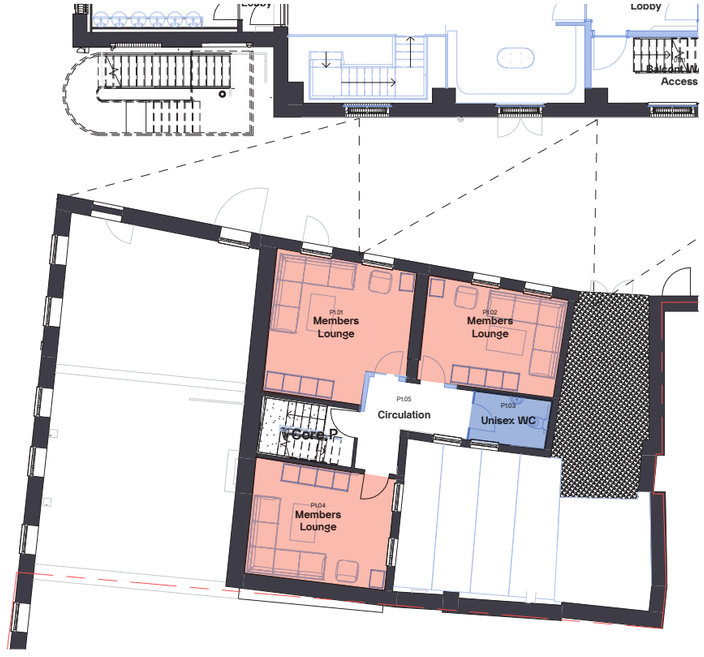
The Upper two floors of No.2 Wheeler Street are remaining as existing, accessed through a neighbouring door on Parson's Court, next to Steak & Honour.

Accessibility

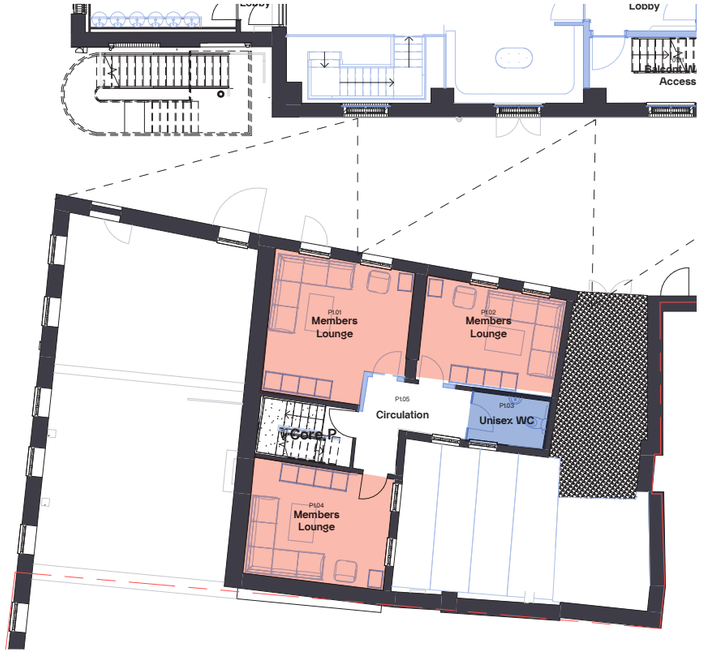
Note it is not possible to make the upper floors wheelchair accessible, due to space constraints



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance

With the constraints of the existing building form and the higher significance of the main auditorium, the original part of the Corn Exchange, it is proposed to extend and infill the southern portion.

The proposed new infill at the rear of the scheme allows for reconfigured green room space, kitchen and dressing rooms for performers. Further space will be allocated to plant equipment.

The extension is proposed to be formed in a lightweight construction to modern standards. High levels of insulation and airtightness will be applied, reducing the energy consumption of this new element.

Rear Extension

The rear extension will provide accommodation for a kitchen, to provide refreshments for touring acts, dressing rooms, a green room and additional plant space.

Plant Enclosure

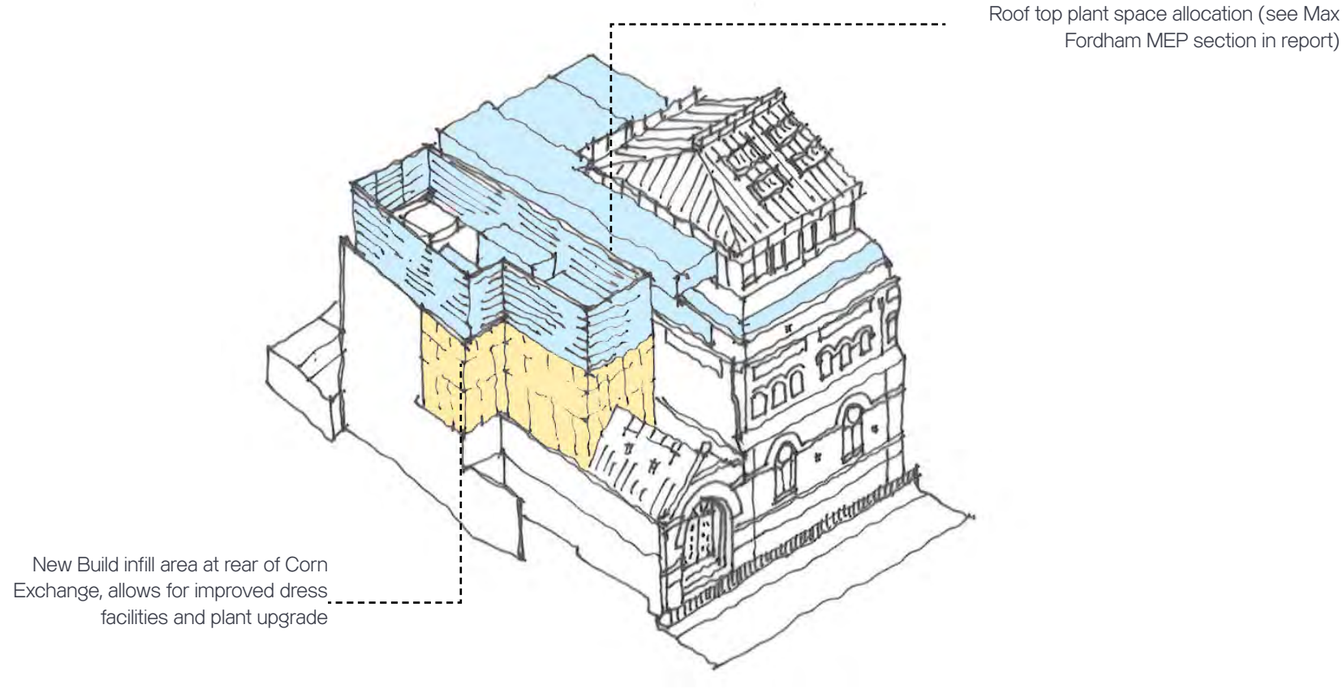
To accommodate the new equipment proposed to provide heating, cooling, hot water and general ventilation a larger amount of equipment is required than is currently housed in the Corn Exchange.

The move to an all electric solution requires the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps on the roof. This then requires visual and acoustic screening.

Extension Form

Through extensive dialogue with Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and Historic England our approach to the extension and plant enclosure has been to keep it as a recessive element. Keeping the form as crisp and simple as possible and then adding visual interest in the cladding.

On the right are a series of design studies looking at colour and pattern.





Extension design options

4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance

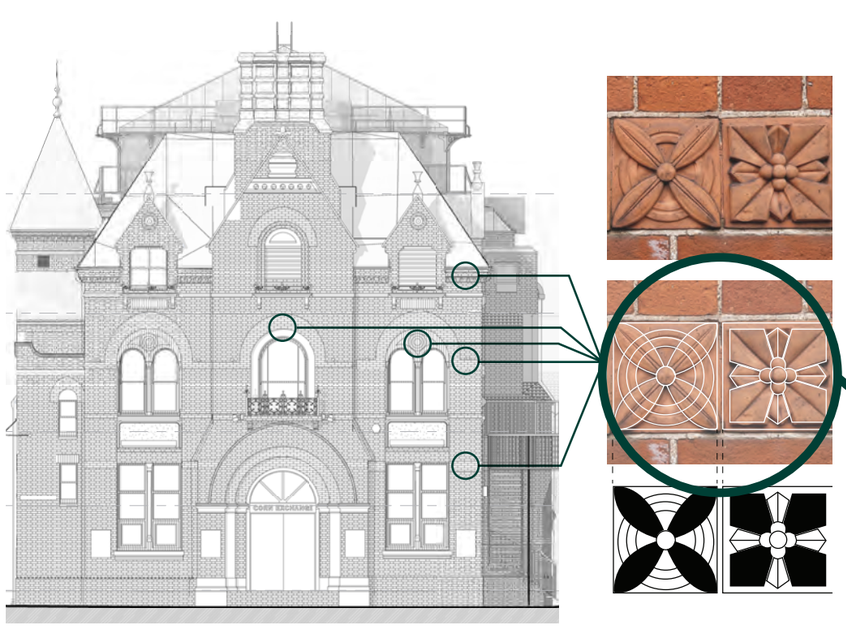
Venetian Gothic patterns of polychromatic brickwork, a defining feature of Richard Reynolds Rowe's 1875 design, have been studied across all elevations of the existing building.

Key motifs have been selected and reinterpreted in a contemporary form, preserving their rhythm and character while adapting them for modern construction.

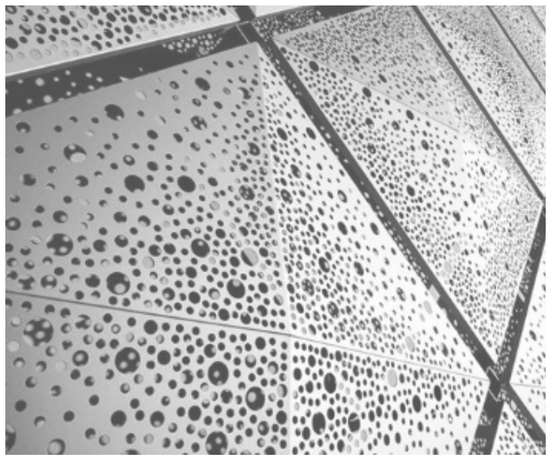
These patterns are expressed in warm-toned metal, chosen to complement the surrounding brickwork, and are realised through perforations, embossing, and de-bossing to create depth and texture.

The treatment wraps the proposed infill extension as a unified, monolithic surface, while a clear material and expression break is maintained between the wall and the roof above.

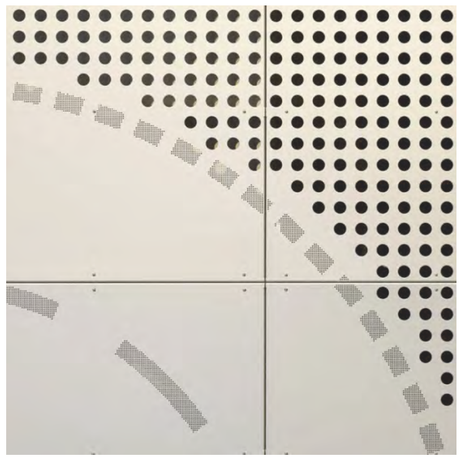
This approach ensures that the new intervention reads as both a respectful response to the heritage context and a piece of contemporary architecture.

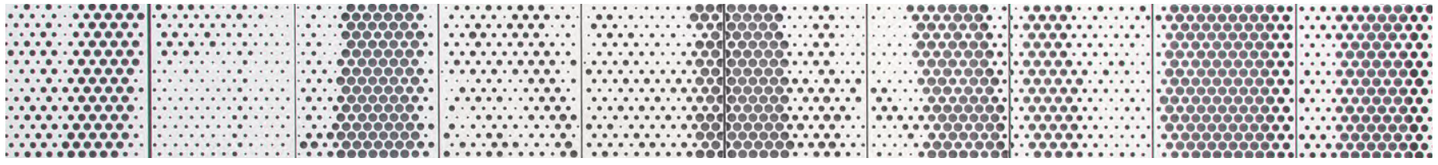












4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance



4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance



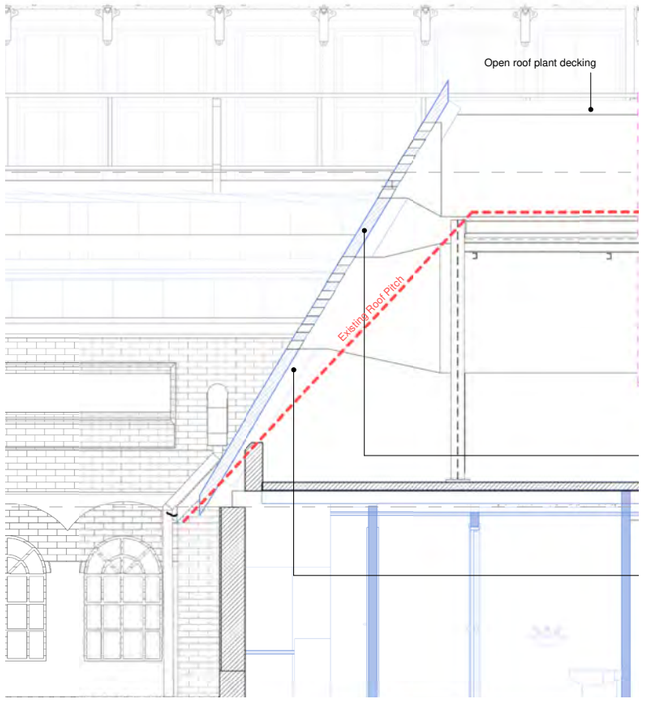
4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance

To improve thermal comfort and air circulation within the auditorium, and working within the constraints of the listed building, new MEP plant equipment (including air handling units, air source heat pumps, and associated ducting) are proposed at roof level on the south-west end of the site, atop the more modern 1980s addition. This location ensures minimal visual impact from Corn Exchange Street.

The proposal removes the existing concrete plant roof at the end of the Parson's Court block, allowing stacked air handling units to sit lower within an open-air enclosure. To further obscure plant above the existing roof ridge, the roof is extended and its pitch re-raked to a steeper angle, efficiently screening the equipment while maintaining key views from Wheeler Street.

This approach preserves the original building's architectural language while meeting functional needs. Roof slates are to be removed, refitted, and reused where appropriate. A louvred element on the Parson's Court elevation provides necessary air intake, integrated sensitively with the existing form and surrounding historic context.

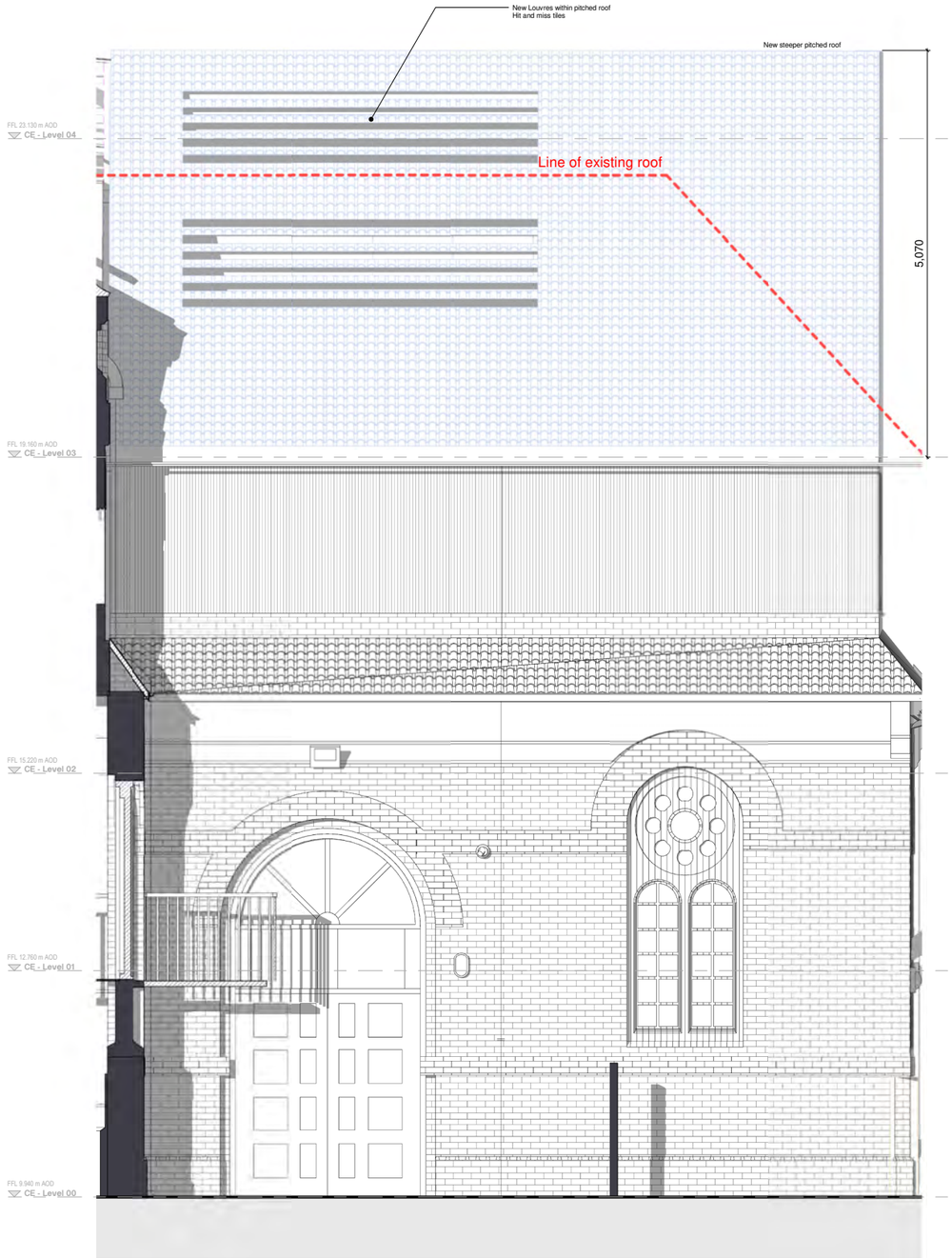




Existing view along Parson's Court



Proposed update roof profile



4.6 Extension & Plant Enclosure

Visual Appearance



4.7 Supporting Functions
Refuse and Cycles

Refuse

To unlock Parson's Court and improve the public realm experience around the Corn Exchange refuse is proposed to be dealt with in a new manner.

Waste containers located in Parson's Court currently serve the Corn Exchange, Giggling Squid and Sticks 'n' Sushi.

The waste containers for Giggling Squid and Sticks 'n' Sushi, which occupy parts of the Guildhall building, waste containers will be located within the newly formed refuse store within the basement of the Guildhall. The store will be provided with a large lift to bring waste to street level.

For full details please refer to the Guildhall Design and Access Statement.

Waste generated by the Corn Exchange will be stored externally in a newly created storage area. To facilitate refuse collection the waste containers will be moved, temporarily, to the Wheeler Street end of Parson's Court, facilitating collection by the waste teams.

Waste Storage Calculations	
BS5906:2005 - Entertainment Complex - 5 litres/m²	
Space	**Area**
Bars	526m²
Auditorium	876m²
Members/ VIP lounge	146m²
Back of house	352m²
Total areas	**1,900m2**

Waste Volume	9,500 litres
no. of 1100L eurobin	8.64
Required no. of bins	9
Twice Weekly Collection	5 bins

Should further waste containers from other restaurants and bars need to be stored within this area there is flexibility in how often bins are collected. For example, collecting 4 times a week would double the refuse storage capacity. Further review to be undertaken with Cambridge City Council.



Cycles

Staff from the Corn Exchange will have access to the cycle storage and end of journey facilities located within the Guildhall ground floor and basement.

The number of staff working in the Corn Exchange varies but the following figures have been used for the purposes of fire evacuation, and are therefore considered worst case.

- Security Staff - 18
- Management - 2
- Stewards - 10
- Bar Staff - 18

A max. number of staff being 48 at any one time.

With the general timings of shows at the Corn Exchange being in the evenings peak staffing at the Corn Exchange will occur during periods of lower demand in the Guildhall.

Cycles Storage Calculations

Based on 48 staff the required number of cycle spaces is 20 (2 spaces for every 5 members of staff).

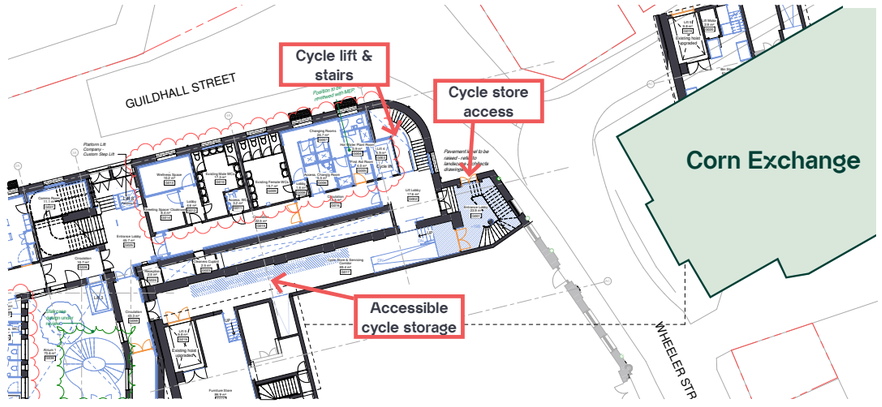
Within the Guildhall we have a total of 159 spaces

- Double stackers - 102
- Sheffield stands - 49
- Accessible spaces - 8

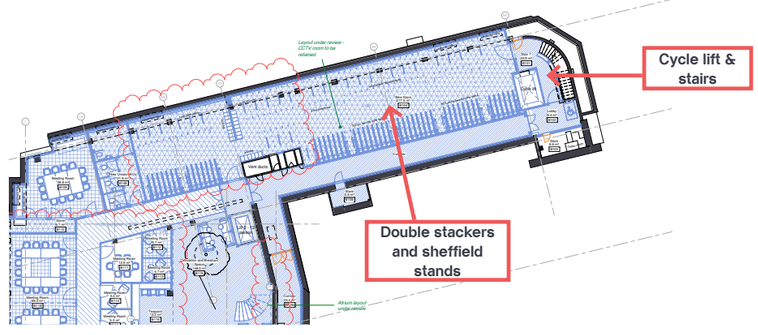
Please refer to the Guildhall Design and Access Statement for full details of these facilities.

Alternative Cycle Storage Strategy

If the redevelopment of the Guildhall doesn't come forward concurrently space in the Guildhall, could be utilised for the 20 bikes required by Corn Exchange staff.



Ground floor



Basement

4.7 Supporting Functions
Fire and Evacuation

Existing Conditions

The Corn Exchange is currently subject to a prohibition notice issued by Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service which limits the occupancy of the venue.

Current occupancy limits

Standing - 1586

Seating - 1365

Project Aims

A key aim of the project has been to look to increase the allowable occupancy of the Corn Exchange. Doing this would have numerous benefits, including attracting a wider range of performers and increasing revenue generation through ticket and bar sales.

Methodology

Due to the complex nature of escape from venues like the Corn Exchange a full evacuation model has been produced to allow a range of scenarios to be tested. This model allows the Fire Engineer, Arup, to assess the number of occupants that can safely be evacuated from the venue.

This exercise is separate to the actual venue capacity. Working with the Theatre specialist, Theatre Plan, and the Corn Exchange team we have developed layouts for the following scenarios:

1. Seated - 1332 persons
2. Standing* with Stage +2 extensions - 1628 persons
3. Standing* with Stage +1 extensions - 1780 persons
4. Standing* - no extensions - 1989 persons

**Standing events include some seated occupants, located on the balcony (484), mezzanine (42) and in the boxes (12).*

Allowable evacuation time

In the worst-case scenario, all occupants must be able to evacuate the Main Auditorium compartment within 3 minutes 47 seconds, this is based on a code compliant time in accordance with BS 9999 for a B2 risk profile with a category L1fire detection and alarm system with voice alarm, as well as 5.5m high ceilings. Occupants of the auditorium can either exit directly to the outside or move to a place of relative safety, such as the entrance lobby, bar areas, or protected stairwells, where queuing is acceptable until they ultimately exit the building.

Evacuation Modelling Summary

We have carried out evacuation modelling of the building to simulate worst-case scenarios under full occupancy. The simulations allow us to:

- Visualise the likely evacuation routes taken by occupants
- Identify potential congestion points
- Estimate the times required to evacuate different zones

The four scenarios outlined above have been modelled, full occupancy of other areas of the Corn Exchange have been allowed for, including staff, performers and additional patrons in the bars.

Geometry inputs

The models are based on Revit models and architectural drawings, including door and stair clear widths taken from site measurements and supplemented from measurements taken from the drawings where no site measurement was taken. The models focus on the following key areas:

- Main Auditorium (including stage and tiered seating)
- Main Bar (including mezzanine level)
- Johns bar
- Back of House areas
- The office and backstage area

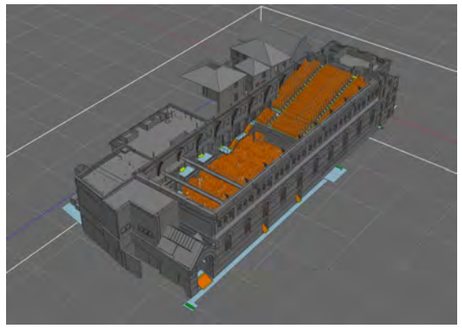
Fire Service

The design team have met with the Fire Service, on two occasions prior to the planning submission, to discuss the modelling approach, proposed occupancy and evacuation capacity.

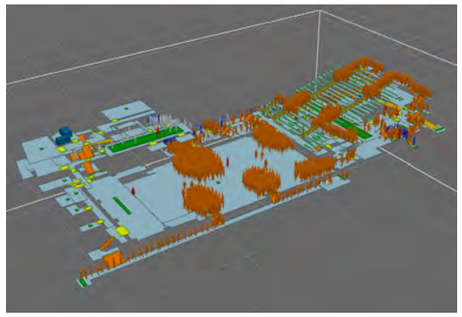
Standing

Modelling shows that a scenarios 2 & 3, (1628 & 1780 persons) can evacuate the main auditorium within the required time.

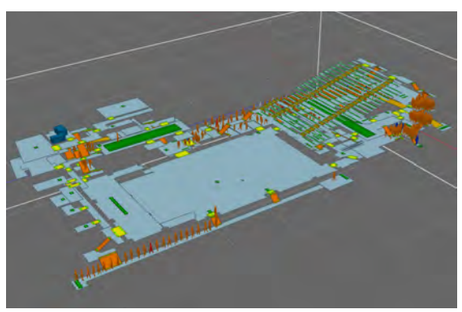
Scenario 4 did not meet the requirements.



Full standing model



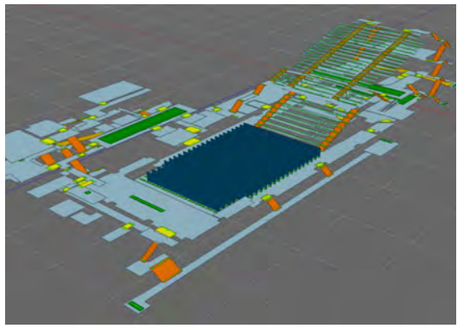
Standing scenario 1 minute into evacuation



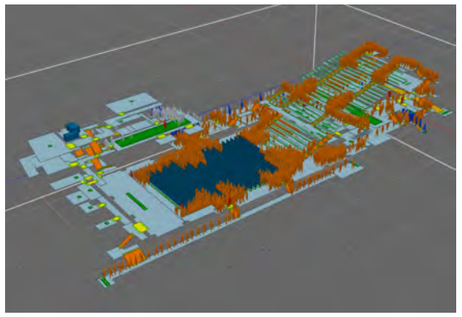
Standing scenario - auditorium fully evacuated

Seating

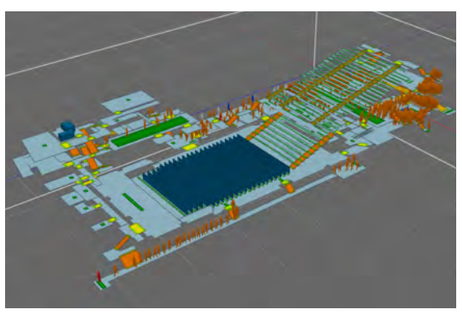
Modelling shows that a seated capacity of 1332 people can evacuate the main auditorium in around 3 minutes and 1 second. Well within the required time.



Seating model



Seating scenario 1 minute into evacuation



Standing scenario - auditorium fully evacuated