

# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

## Access Strategy

### Accessibility

Accessibility and inclusivity have been highlighted as of the utmost importance to the redevelopment of Cambridge Civic Quarter and its success. We too believe this is key to creating a more attractive central Cambridge destination for residents and visitors of the City.

We must improve accessibility of the whole Civic Quarter to improve Civic facilities within the Guildhall, the cultural offer of the Corn Exchange and the experience of the Market Square.

The Council's accessibility officer has been consulted during RIBA Stage 2 and 3 and his recommendations are being incorporated.

Key areas of concern raised by the accessibility officer was the level access provision to the Guildhall. The officers preference was the provision of ramped access alongside the existing stairs. Several sessions, including on-site reviews, were held with the officer to review suggestions. That said, the constraints of the main entrance to the Guildhall, make a ramped solution problematic.

It is therefore proposed to sensitively install a platform lift into the existing steps and provide alternative access via Peas Hill, through an intercom system.

The key areas to be addressed are:

#### Provision of level access at main entrances -

The provision of level access via platform lifts where currently there are stairs will allow inclusivity for all. We have explored the use of ramps but this option was discounted, please see the following page.

#### Provision of vertical transportation via new

**Approved Doc M or greater sized lifts** - The existing atria lifts are insufficient in size and will be replaced with new Part M wheelchair accessible lifts to provide an inclusive route vertically through the building. Door openings and car sizes will be appropriately sized to allow for greater inclusivity.

**Accessible cycle storage** - To encourage those of all abilities to travel to the Guildhall actively it is proposed to provide 5% of cycle spaces for the storage of larger bikes, hand cycles or recumbent. Spaces are provided at ground floor, plus further basement level provision is accessible via a large cycle lift.

**Council Chambers level access** - proposals to alter the Council Chamber fixed furniture and introduce an adaptable floor will provide level access to this key heritage space. It will also improve the ability of wheelchair users to partake in key meetings that take place in the Chamber. The proposals also include the provision of an integrated platform lift to provide wheelchair access to all levels of the dais. This will allow the unsightly existing platform lift to be removed.

**Public toilets and Changing Places facility** - The proposals include four publicly accessible gender neutral WC's on the ground floor of the Guildhall. One of these is a fully compliant Changing Places facility and another is wheelchair accessible.

**Parents room** - a publicly accessible private room for parents to use is being provided on the ground floor of the Guildhall. The room will provide a private, comfortable and calm space to help parents and will include baby changing facilities.

**Easy to use sanitaryware** - within the toilets the selection of taps, flushing devices and door ironmongery will be carefully selected to allow use by all regardless of ability. This will include sensors to improve hygiene and cleanliness also.

**Hearing support systems** - the inclusion of induction loops and/ or equivalent listening systems within the Guildhall will be carefully considered and reviewed by engaging with disability groups and access consultants.

**Seating and rest points** - will be provided around the Guildhall, especially within the reception area and Customer Service Centre. This will aid visitors and building users with reduced stamina.

**Lighting and Contrast** - careful design of the lighting within the Guildhall will aim to maintain consistent light levels in all areas

**Material Choices and Colour** - the colour scheme will be chosen to both reflect and / or complement the heritage colours originally used in the Guildhall but also carefully selected to maintain required visual contrast but avoid visual overload.

**Wayfinding** - successful wayfinding and signage within the Guildhall is key to making the building more accessible. The proposals will install clear directional signage with high-contrast colours, legible typefaces, and tactile/Braille options where appropriate. Signage will be in keeping with the heritage aesthetic

**Accessible doors** - doors are a major barrier to accessibility and especially in a heritage building. We will be reviewing the opening forces required to operate doors and reduce these where possible. The addition of automatic opening devices will included where required.

**Neurodiversity** - our neurodiversity considerations will focus on making the environment more predictable, less overwhelming, and easier to navigate for people with conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, or sensory processing differences

The provision of **Sensory Calm Spaces** within the Guildhall will allow visitors to retreat to a quiet/ low-stimulation area. A **Wellness room** is provide for Council Staff, with further details on the following pages.

**Working environment** - to maintain occupant comfort it is proposed that controls will be provided to adjust internal temperatures slightly. Those using the office space will also be able to open windows.

**Glare control** - will be provided by the provision of blinds to all windows, these will be controlled by office users.

**Acoustics** - are being carefully reviewed and reverberation/ echo reduced. This will make the spaces more pleasant to occupy and more comfortable for those sensitive to sound.





# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

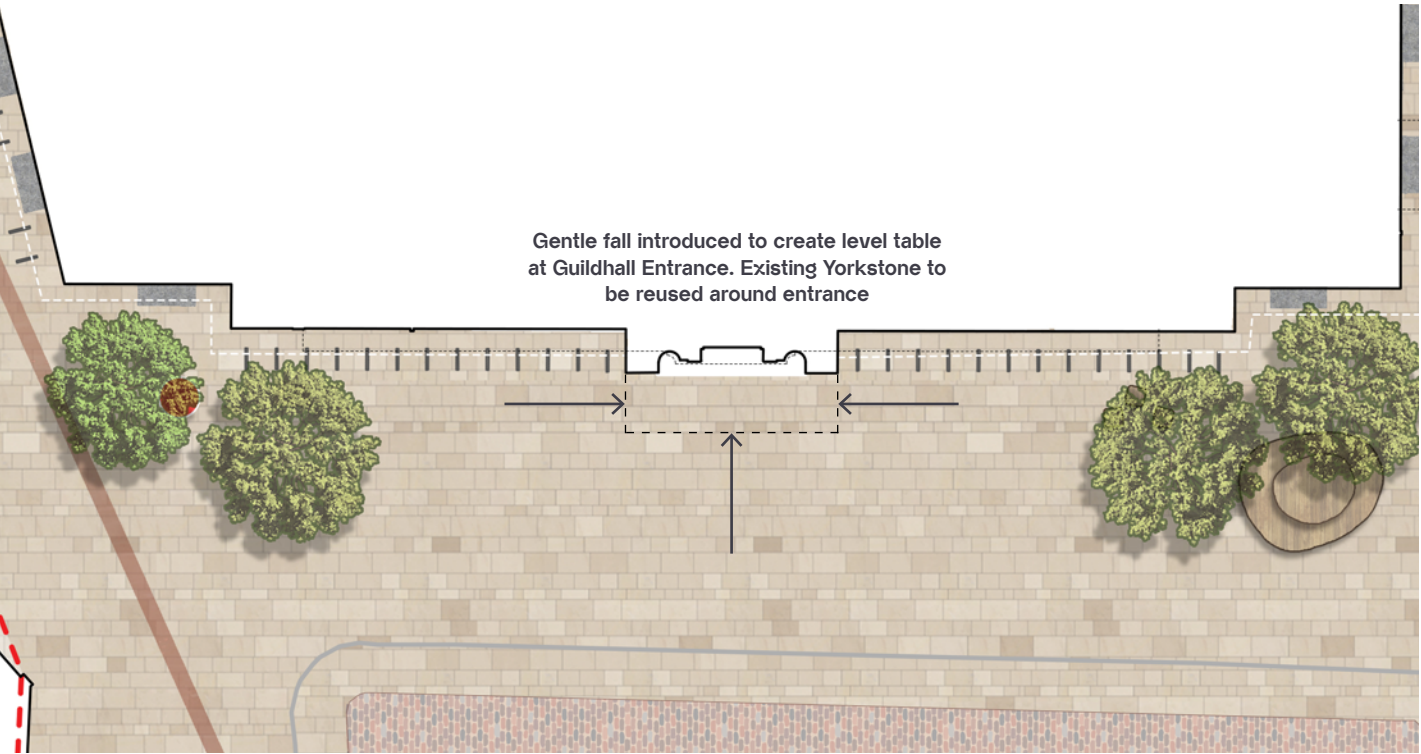
## Market Hill Entrance

### External

The existing main entrance to the Guildhall is accessed via Market Hill. There is a small area of Yorkstone paving directly outside the entrance and a small step up into the building. This step, along with those internally, inhibits access for all.

Our proposals involve adjusting the levels externally to raise the Yorkstone paving and gently ramp away from the entrance. This will remove the external step.

Please see sketch plan and section opposite.



### Internal

Once within the main entrance visitors are then faced with three internal steps - with an overall rise of around 330mm. This again inhibits access..



Existing Steps to Market Street Entrance

### Proposed Solution - Hidden Platform Lift

It is proposed to integrate a hidden platform lift into the steps within the main entrance.

Products are available, as shown below, with an embedded step lift solution that is totally concealed when not in use. The platform lift will be designed and constructed to suit the exacting requirements of the Guildhall.

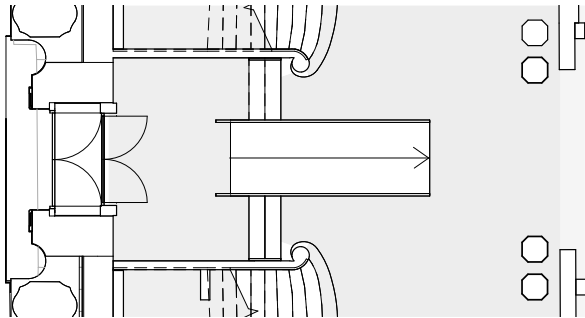
The original steps will be used to ensure the lift ties in seamlessly with the surrounding finishes, thereby limiting the impact on the high heritage entrance foyer.

The platform lift can be embedded into a flight of steps/ stairs and the upper landing, when activated the steps/ stairs fold to a flat surface.



### Design Option - Ramp

A ramp combined with steps would provide access for all. To rise the 330mm a 5m long ramp at 1:15 would be required. This option was discounted due to the significant impact on the usability of the entrance hall.





# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

## Guildhall Street & Peas Hill Entrances

### Guildhall Street - Existing External

The existing entrance from Guildhall Street is level and provides an accessible threshold. Therefore, apart from resurfacing Guildhall Street and replacing the internal set of doors, no material alterations are proposed.



Guildhall Street Existing Entrance

### Guildhall Street - Existing Internal

Once through the external threshold visitors are presented with five steps to access the ground floor. Therefore to make this entrance accessible it is proposed to install a platform lift, as the Market Hill main entrance.



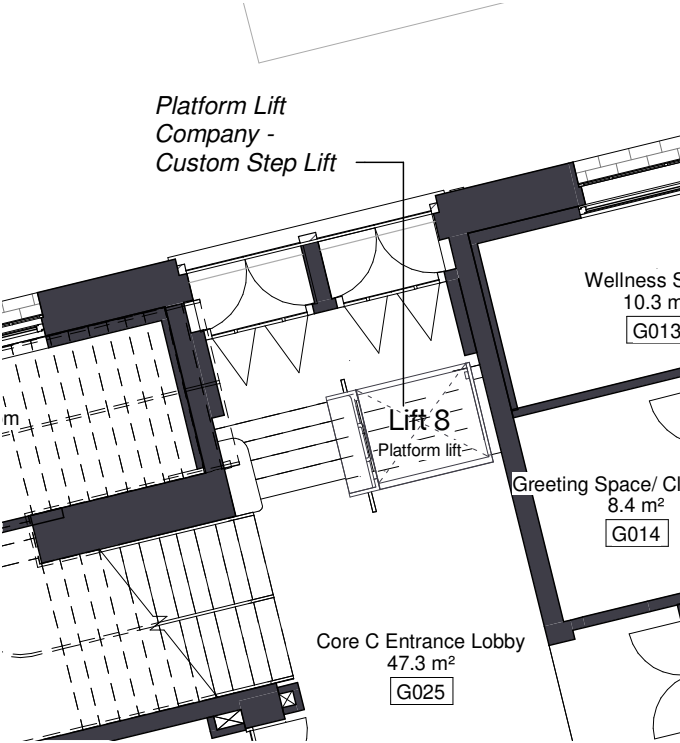
Original plan of the entrance to the halls



Photo of entrance steps

### Proposed Internal Alterations

The rise of this stair is around 770mm, there are currently five steps. Due to the greater rise here than at the main entrance additional guarding will be required. The existing stair has a central handrail and this can be utilised in the future arrangement.



Proposed plan arrangement

### Peas Hill

The current entrance on Peas Hill provides level access into the Guildhall. We are therefore not proposing to make any changes to this entrance.



Peas Hill Existing Entrance

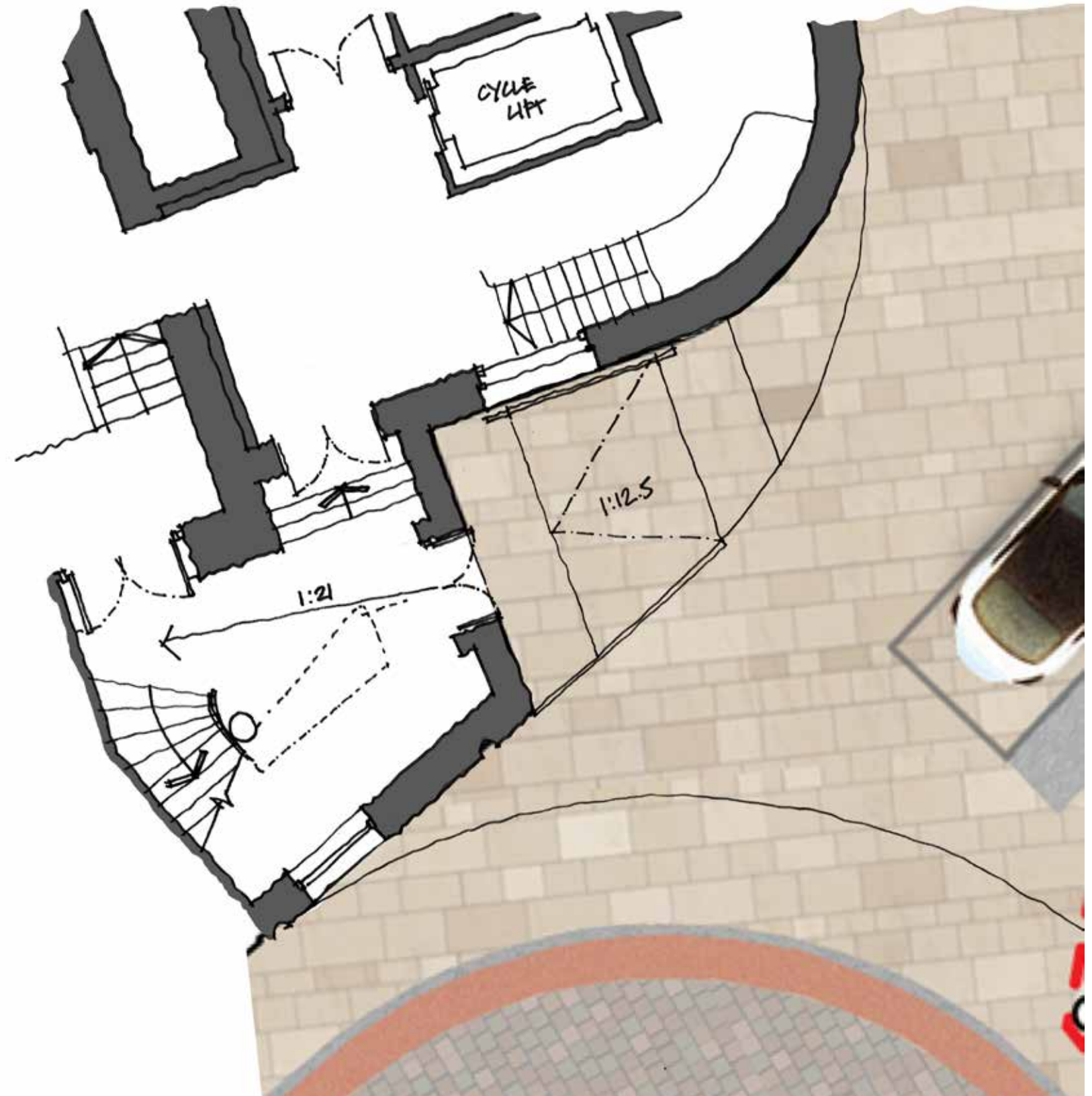
## 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

### Wheeler Street Entrance

To facilitate better access to the rear of the Guildhall, via the Wheeler Street entrance, it is proposed to locally raise external levels. Currently there is a steep level change across the threshold of the double doors, see photo below.

These proposals will ease access and egress for both cyclists and refuse containers. This is especially important as the refuse containers are large and there are spaces allocated for users of cargo bikes, hand cycles and recumbents.

The proposals will provide an external 1:12.5 ramp, with a handrail on the building side and a small retaining edge to the street side.



Existing Wheeler Street access



# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

## Lifts

### Existing Lifts

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 are not to be Part M compliant and are proposed to be replaced with fully accessible lifts.

### Proposals

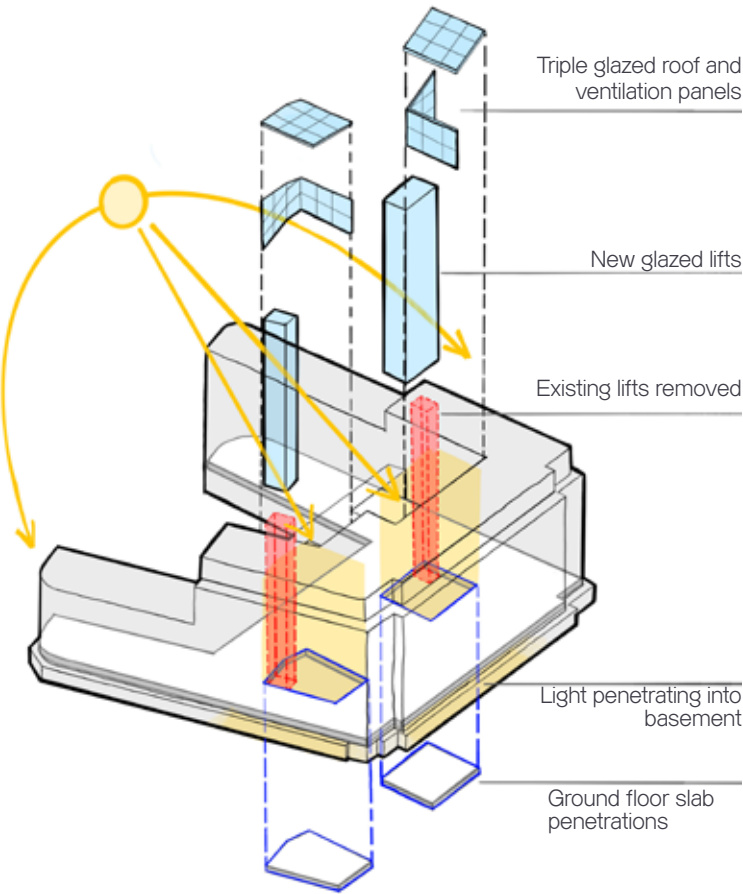
It is proposed to remove the existing lifts, keeping new lifts in the same locations. With the enclosure of the lightwells to form atria there is an opportunity to both improve accessibility and create a distinct



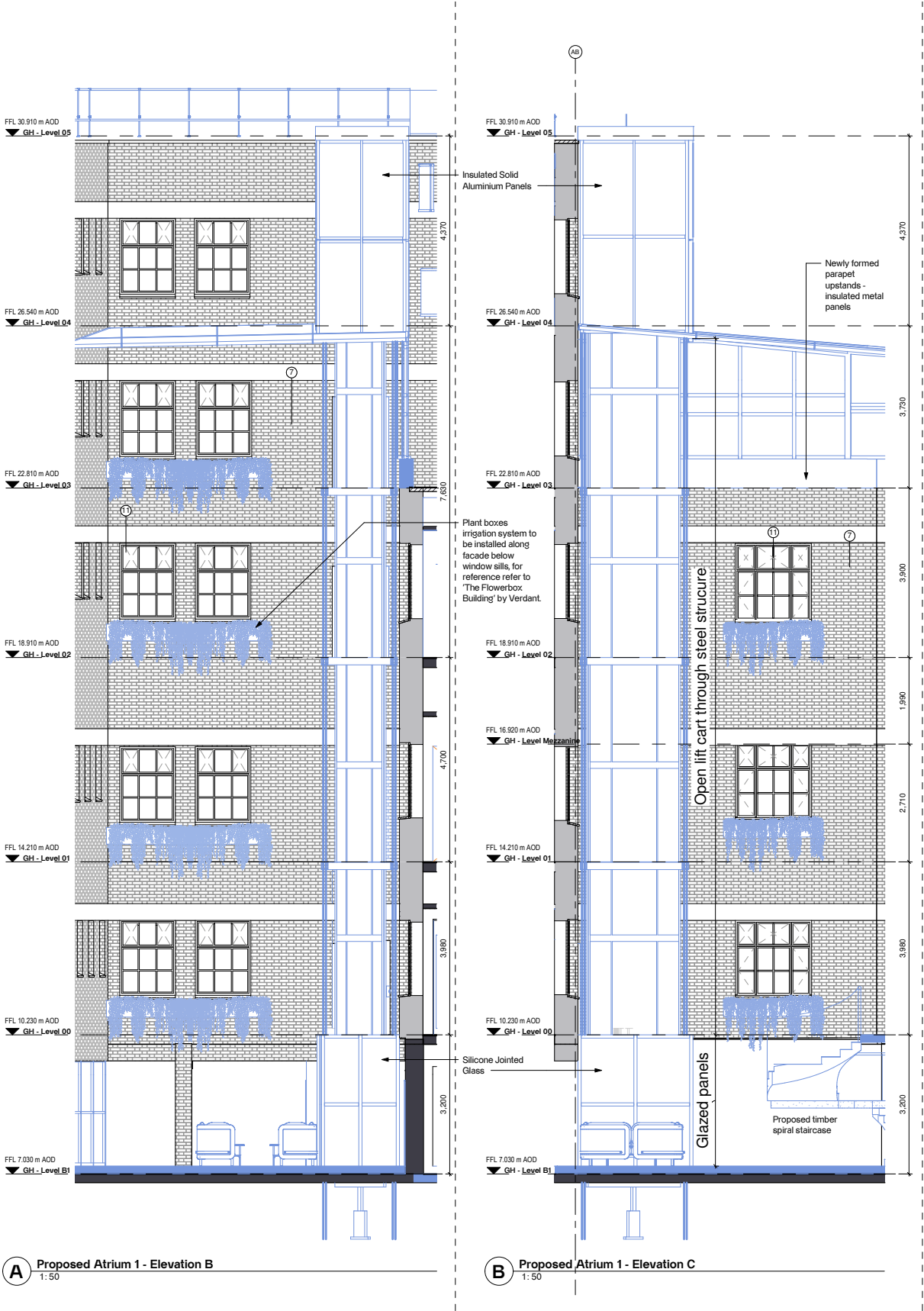
Existing and original lift locations



Existing lift door      Existing brick clad lift shaft



Concept diagram





# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

## Lifts



Top image source  
Paul de Ruiter Architects, Polak Building <https://architizer.com/idea/1566239/>, [www.archdaily.com/782555/](https://www.archdaily.com/782555/)



# 4.4 Accessibility & Inclusivity

## Changing Places & Parents Room

### Changing Places Toilet

"People with profound and multiple learning disabilities or with physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably.

These needs are met by Changing Places toilets. Changing Places Toilets enable anyone, regardless of their disability, to go to the shops, attend hospital appointments, enjoy community life, socialise and travel. All the things that most of us take for granted every day. Changing Places toilets should be provided in addition to standard accessible toilets."

<https://www.changing-places.org/pages/view/what-are-we-campaigning-for>

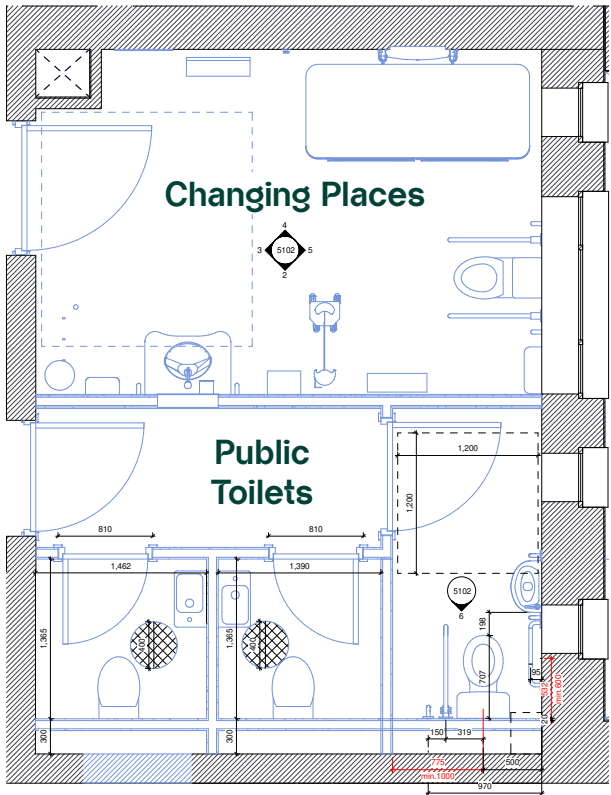
We are therefore incorporating a Changing Places Toilet within the ground floor of the Guildhall. This will sit alongside public toilets including a standard accessible WC.

### Parents Room

A publicly accessible private room for parents to use is being provided on the ground floor of the Guildhall. The room will provide a private, comfortable and calm space to help parents.

Sometimes known as a mothering, lactation or nursing room it will provide a comfortable and hygienic environment for mothers to maintain their breastfeeding routine whilst working or visiting a public space.

Baby changing facilities will be provided within the space.



Proposed public toilets and Changing Places Toilet

