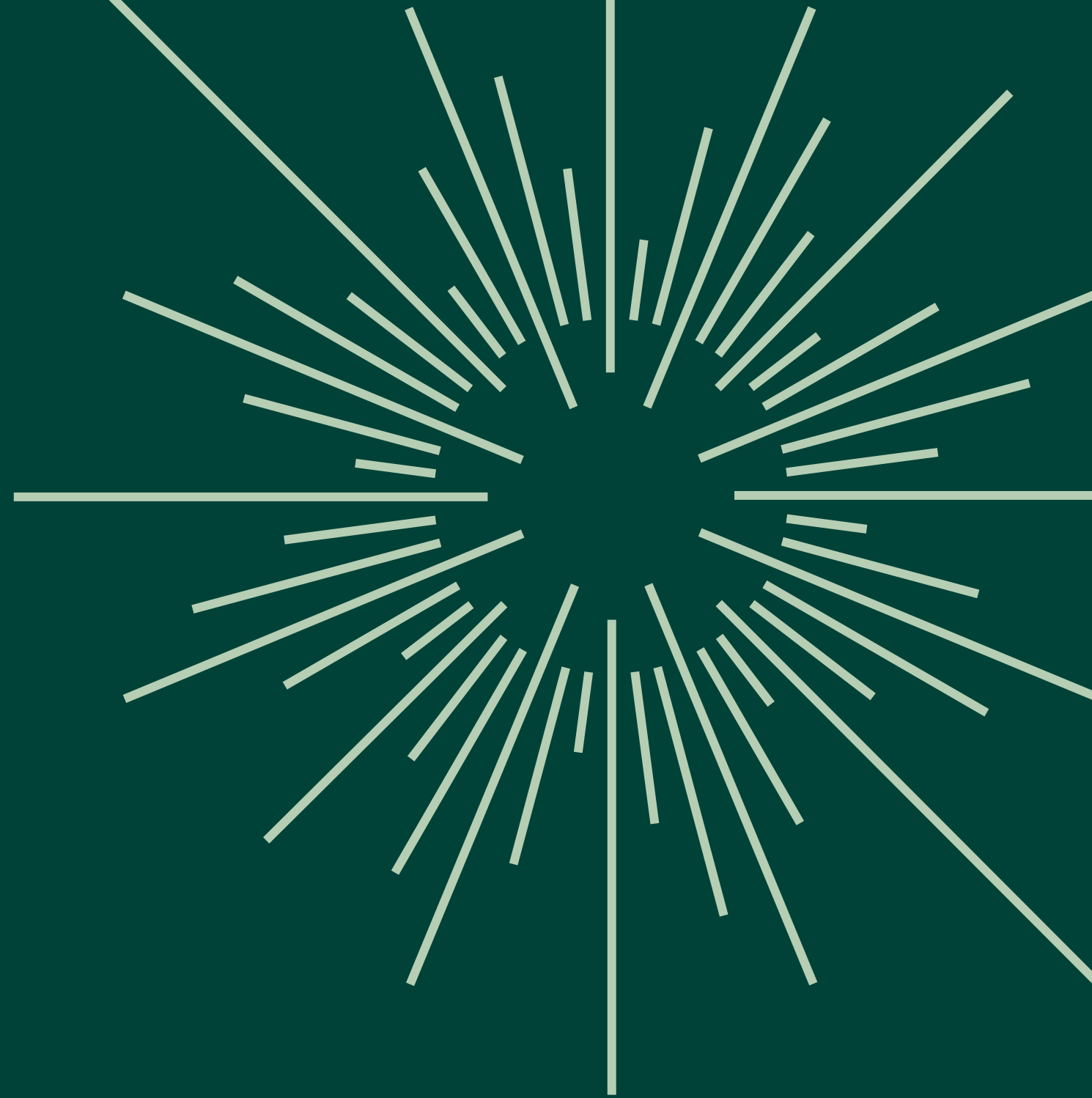


4.0

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

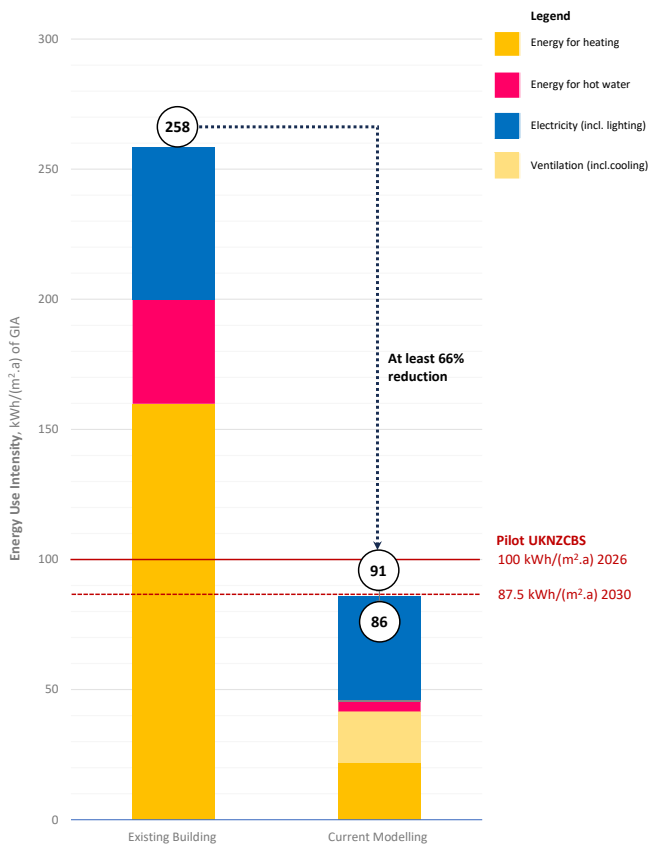
Working with Max Fordham we have established an approach to fabric upgrades. This is primarily influenced by the heritage significance of the different spaces within the building. Areas of lower significance are simpler to upgrade than those with panelling, such as the Committee Meeting Rooms.

The fabric upgrades aim to achieve two main objectives;

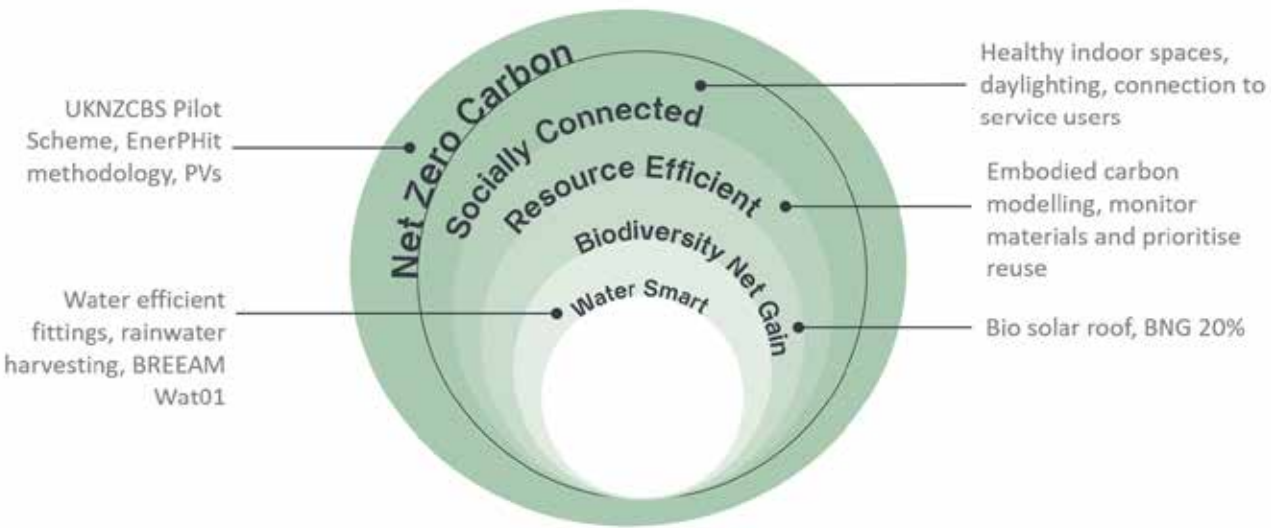
- Improved airtightness
- Increased thermal insulation (lower U-value)

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

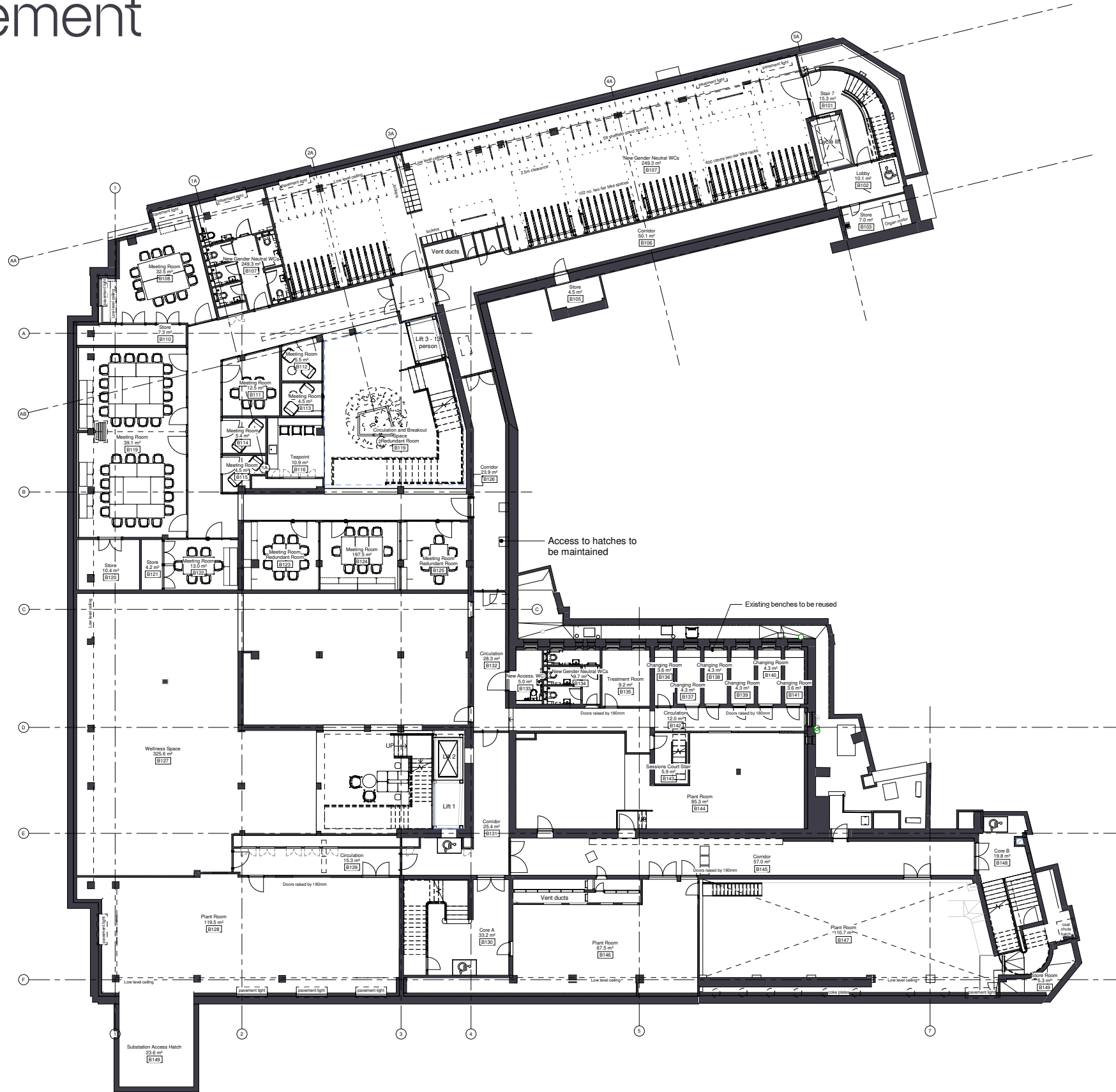
The Guildhall - Transformation



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

4.2 Plans

Basement



Drawing Original Size A0

Notes

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Drawing Revisions
Date: Rev: Note: Check:

CARTWRIGHT
PICKARD

Client
Cambridge City Council

Project
CCQ | Cambridge Civic Quarter

Building Name
Guildhall

Drawing Title
Basement 1 Floor Plan - DAS

Scale 1: 100 @ A0	Drawing Created 07/31/25
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Revision

Drawing No. CCQ-CPA-A-XXXXXB1

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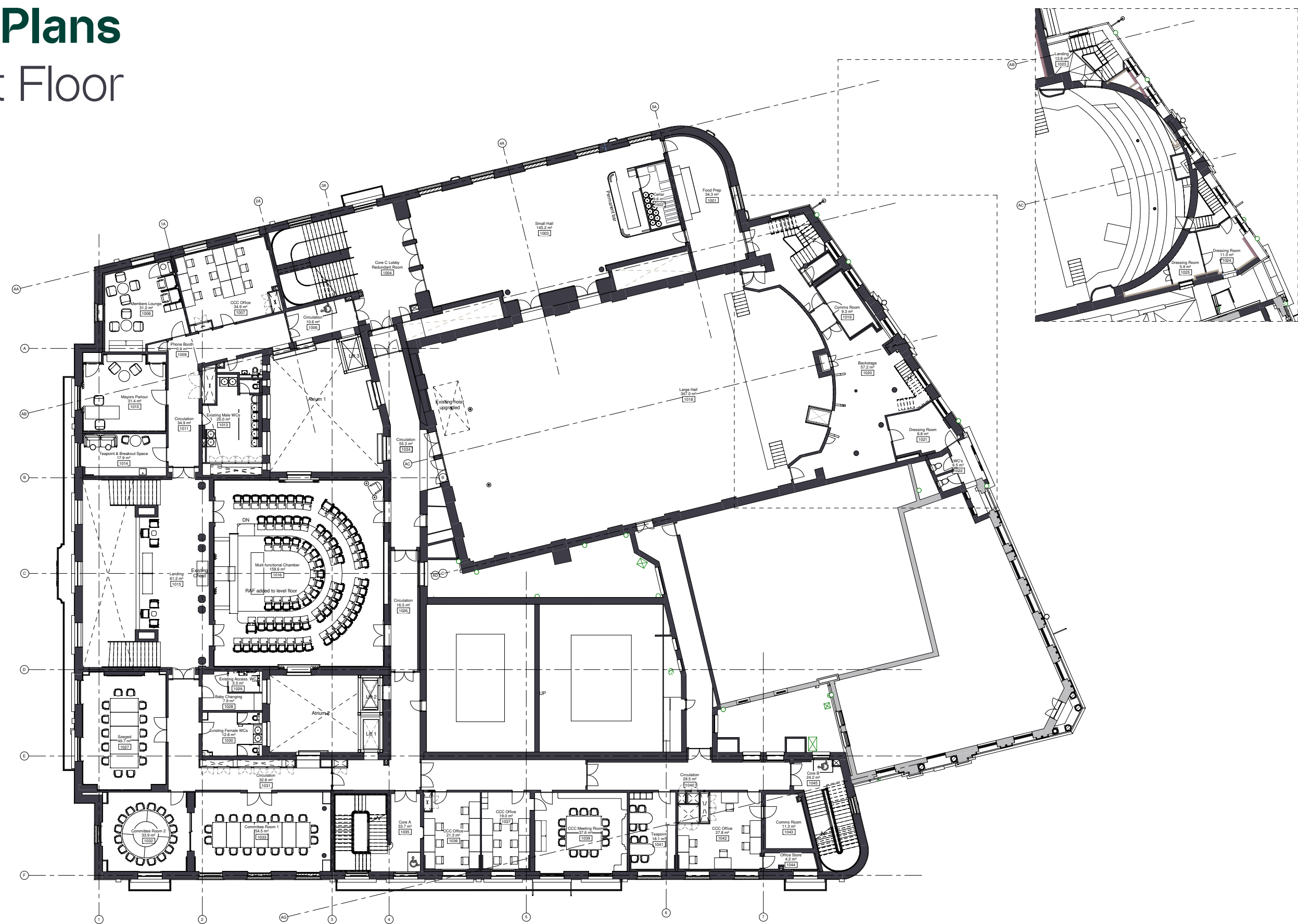
4.2 Plans

Ground Floor



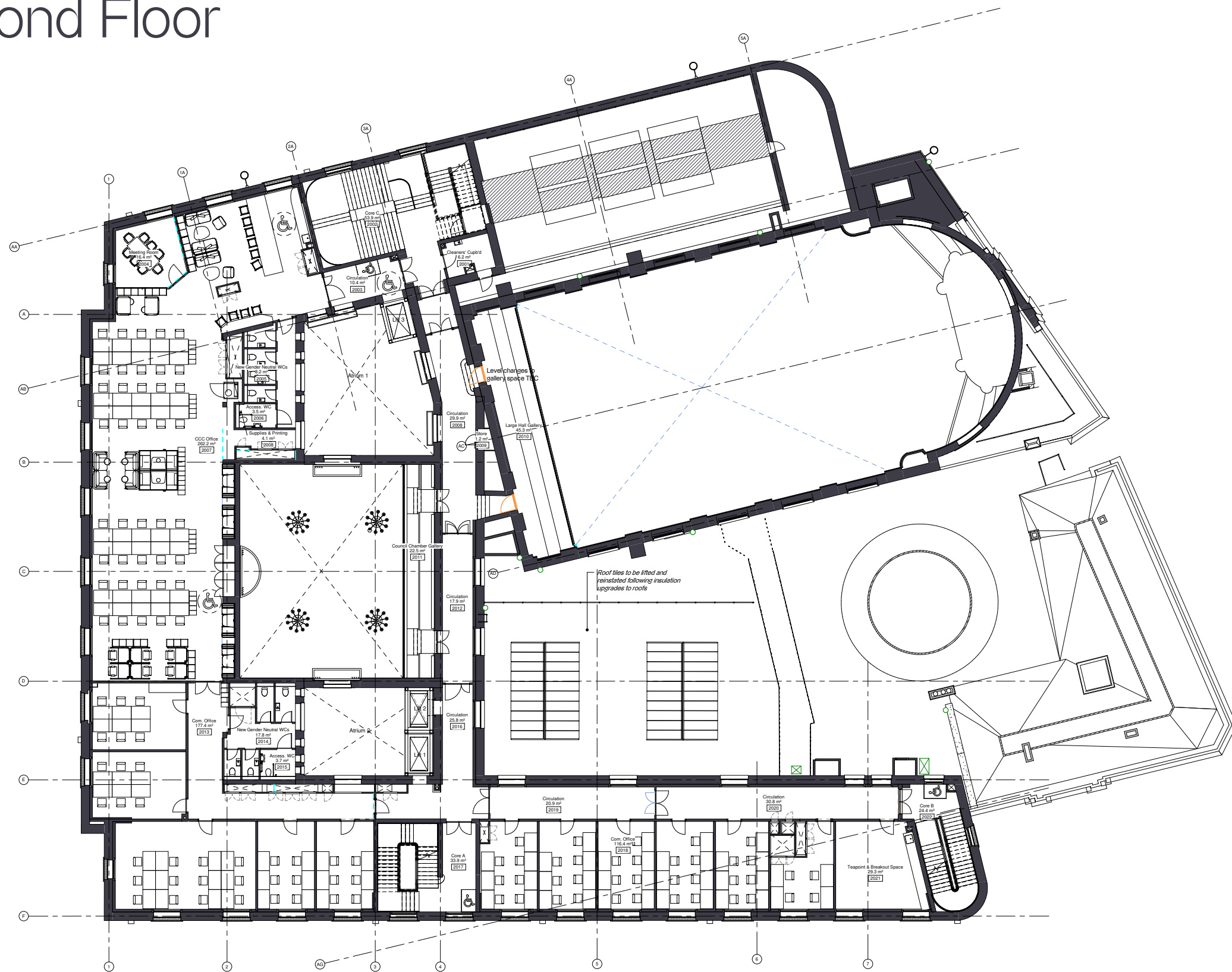
4.2 Plans

First Floor



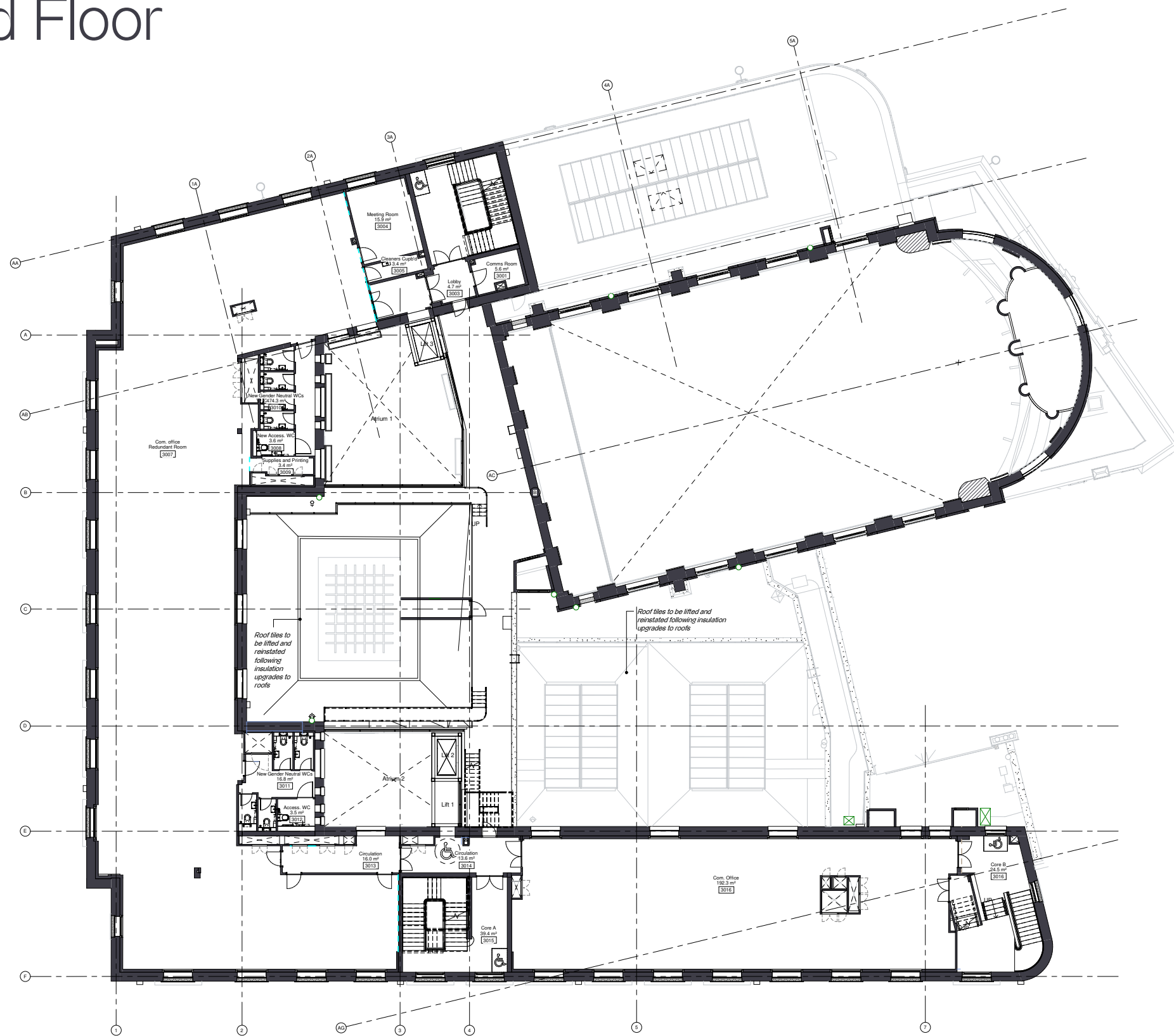
4.2 Plans

Second Floor



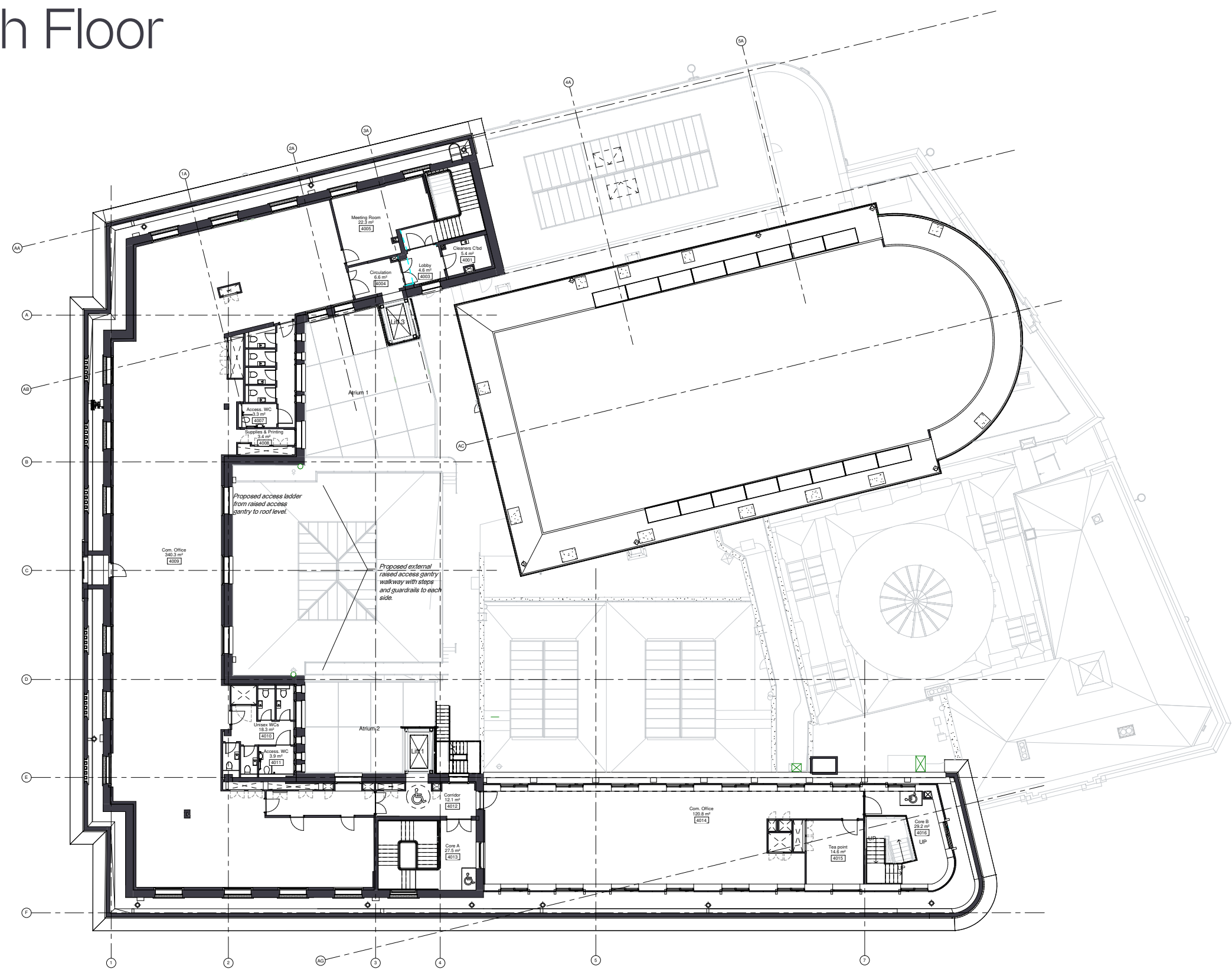
4.2 Plans

Third Floor



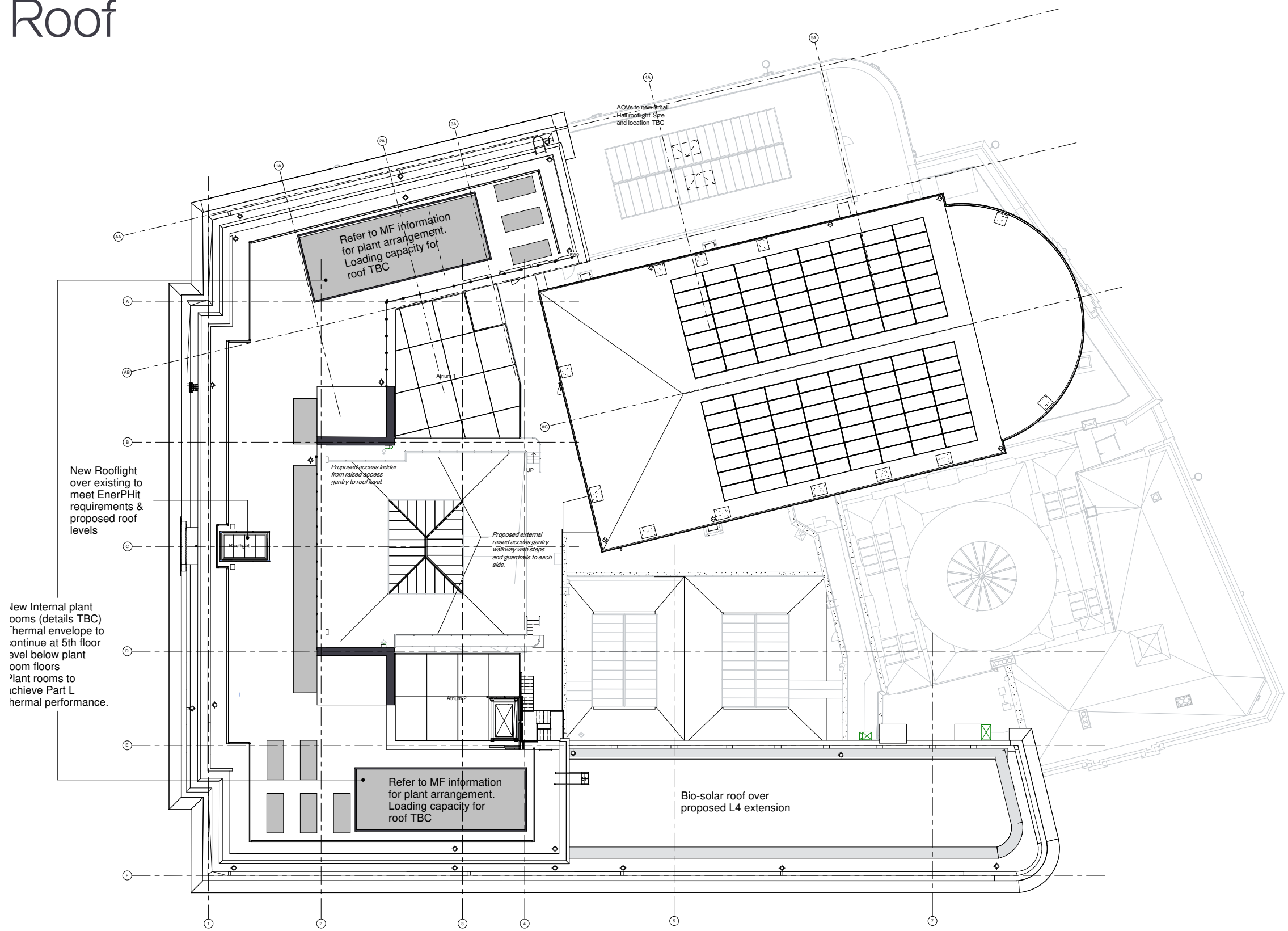
4.2 Plans

Fourth Floor



4.2 Plans

Roof



4.3 Civic Function

The 'Heart' and Atria

The 'Heart'

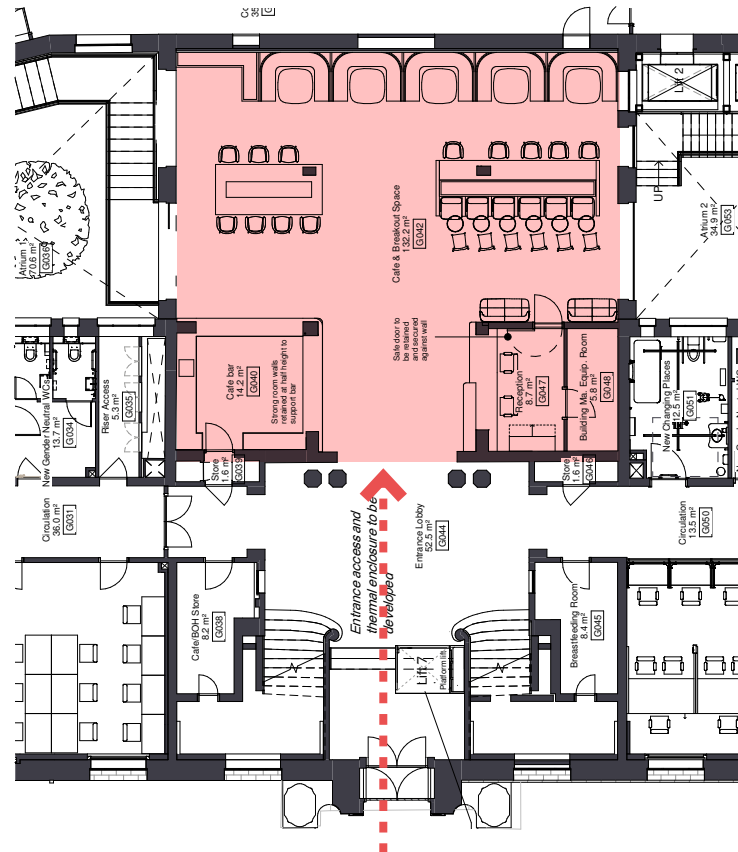
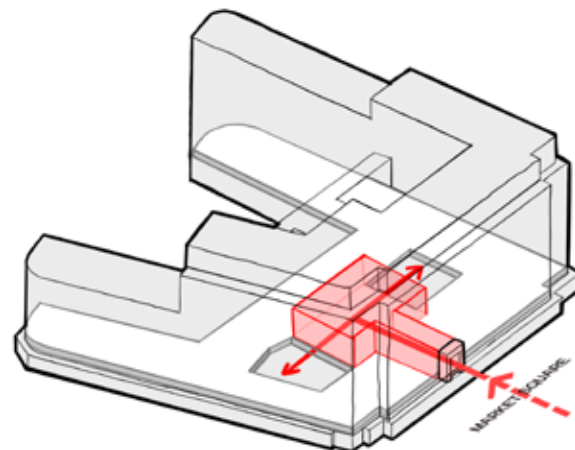
One of the key design proposals within the Guildhall is the newly created 'Heart' space on the ground floor, a publicly accessible vibrant centre of the Guildhall offering a coffee bar & soft seating.

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 heartspace to the Guildhall.

Within the heartspace 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 heartspace 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



Sketch to be updated

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 reasons;

- 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 wayfinding 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



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://lorengroup.com/our-hotels/riggs/>

4.3 Civic Function

The 'Heart' and Atria



Atrium 1 - View looking down into basement office space



Office atria examples
Sources (top down):
Paul de Ruiter Architects, Polak Building
<https://architazer.com/idea/1566239/www.archdaily.com/782555/>
31 West 27th Street <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/03/12/fogarty-finger-architecture-new-york-office/>

4.3 Civic Function

The Council Chamber - Historical Photographs

The Council Chamber holds significant architectural, social and civic value to the community of Cambridge.

The Council Chamber is still active for democratic purposes and it is important that the chamber continues to function in this manner as well expanding its use and inclusivity to expand its appeal and use for today.

The photographs opposite depict the original fit out of the chamber, the furniture arrangement and the lobby and entrance stair leading the chamber. There is a clarity of architectural expression and materials which is evident from these black and white historic photographs.

The rigid arrangement of fixed furniture is also clear from these photographs and depict the largely singular historic function of the chamber.

However, in present day, a multifunctional hard working space which is flexibility and adaptable is required in order to remain relevant and valuable to the widest breadth of the community of Cambridge as possible.



Guildhall first council meeting (1939)

Source: <https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/guildhall/>



First floor landing and entrance to Council Chamber (1939)

Source: https://www.ribapix.com/Guildhall-Cambridge-the-first-floor-landing_RIBA73664?ribasearch=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cucmliYXBpeC5jb20vc2VhcmNoP3E9Y2FtYnJpZGdlK2d1aWxkaGFsbA==



Council Chamber (1939)

Source: https://www.ribapix.com/Guildhall-Cambridge-the-council-chamber_RIBA73666?ribasearch=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cucmliYXBpeC5jb20vc2VhcmNoP3E9Y2FtYnJpZGdlK2d1aWxkaGFsbA==



Main entrance staircase leading to the council chambers (1939)

Source: https://www.ribapix.com/Guildhall-Cambridge-the-staircase_RIBA73663?ribasearch=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cucmliYXBpeC5jb20vc2VhcmNoP3E9Y2FtYnJpZGdlK2d1aWxkaGFsbA==

4.3 Civic Function

The Council Chamber - Existing Condition

The interior remains largely unchanged since 1939 with the original design featuring minimal ornamentation, dark furnishings at the lower level of the space and lighter tones higher up. The city's coat of arms behind the raised dais still remains intact. The historic wall panelling, drapes, timber panelling and pendant lights are present adding interest and detail to the space.

Any proposals aim to strike a balance between flexibility and conservation of the architectural significance and character of the chamber. The intention is to enhance the chamber and elevate it's value to the community of Cambridge by increasing inclusivity and accessibility, use and function.

The opposite photographs highlight some of the original features including fixed joinery and wall panelling, furniture, light fittings and the Dais as well as show the current condition of the interior fit out.

Key features identified:

1. **Australian Oak furnishings:** largely in very good condition, will require minimal refurbishment.
2. **White leather panelling to walls:** a light touch clean of the panels is proposed and where staining is evident, panels are to be carefully addressed.
3. **Red leather upholstered seating & carpet:** The leather upholstery is cracked in areas and will require reupholstering. The carpet is wearing and will be replaced with a new quality carpet and underlay.
4. **Coffered decorative plaster ceiling with ventilation cowl:** The condition of cowl to be assessed and form part of the proposed ventilation strategy.
5. **Original Clock:** The clock will be assessed to determine functionality. If not operational, it will be restored to working condition.
6. **Original light pendant fittings:** in working use and in good condition. These will be relamped with energy efficient lamps where required to reduce operational energy and carbon usage.
7. **Items within / surrounding the recessed display cabinet:** Items are in good condition and will be retained on display.



1



2



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4



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7

4.3 Civic Function

The Council Chamber - Existing Limitations

Although the chamber is currently able to function to host a number of civic events, there are limitations to widening the use of the space which the proposals for the Council Chamber seek to address. The key limitations include:

- Accessibility & Inclusivity - The chamber is not fully inclusive with floor level changes as well as restricted circulation within the chamber due to the fixed furniture layout. The seating is arranged over a series of levels that create significant issues with accessibility, particularly for those less mobile. The stepped floor is highlighted with unsightly hazard markers and presents a possible trip hazard. Greater accessibility within the chamber is required to improve inclusivity and welcome a wider communal use and enjoyment of the space
- Limitations on Wider Public Use - The chamber can not accommodate a wide range of uses due to the restrictions associated with the existing stepped floor and fixed furniture arrangement. Greater flexibility of layout and furniture type would allow greater use of the chamber expanding the enjoyment and inclusivity of the chamber.
- Limitations on Civic Functions - The chamber cannot currently accommodate a Unitary Council Meeting due to a lack of seats. The seating numbers and supporting furniture to host larger council meetings is restricted by the existing fixed furniture layout.
- Modern Ways of Working - Existing furniture does not allow for easy use of modern IT such as laptops. The current fixed seating and sloping worktops are not conducive to modern ways of working. The drawers designed to hold paper are no longer of use for those using laptops or tablets. Adaptations or replacement would facilitate modern usage making it more relevant and attractive to modern uses.
- Modern IT/AV/Power/DATA Provision - Not being able to charge electronic devices is a regular issue for those in the Chamber over long periods of time. Cabling is currently provided above the surface level causing trip hazards where flexibility

is required. The existing IT/AV/power & data infrastructure within the chamber needs to be improved to greater facilitate uses of the chamber.

- User Comfort - Numerous users have raised issues with the comfort of the existing seats, particularly over a long period of time. The provision of modern seating and laptop desking which is designed in a more ergonomic way would improve user comfort. Additional types of modern furniture which could be rearranged easily to create a range of room uses would improve user comfort for a wider range of uses.
- Internal Environment - The existing ventilation systems are to be reviewed for improved function to service the chamber as well as improved environmental efficiency and operational energy usage making the space a more economical space in use. Heating will be reviewed and provision improved where required. An adequate heating and ventilation arrangement within the chamber will improve the user experience of the space, particularly for longer use functions as well as aid the long term costs of using and maintaining the chamber in use.
- Supporting Spaces - The gallery space is stepped with a low existing balustrade presenting a possible hazard. The furniture is rigid in this space and access limited for those with accessibility issues.

Currently, the Chamber is only used by a limited number of people for limited periods of time due to the lack of flexibility. Addressing these issues will allow more public access into this significant historic space and will help to ensure its long term use and retention as a core civic and multifunctional public space.



Council Chamber with exposed cabling and hazard tape evident. Floor level changes visible and restricted access into and around the fixed furniture arrangement.



Left: Council Chamber seating in poor repair rendering it uncomfortable for users. Right: The gallery with step access and low balustrade.

4.3 Civic Function

The Council Chamber - Proposals & Benefits

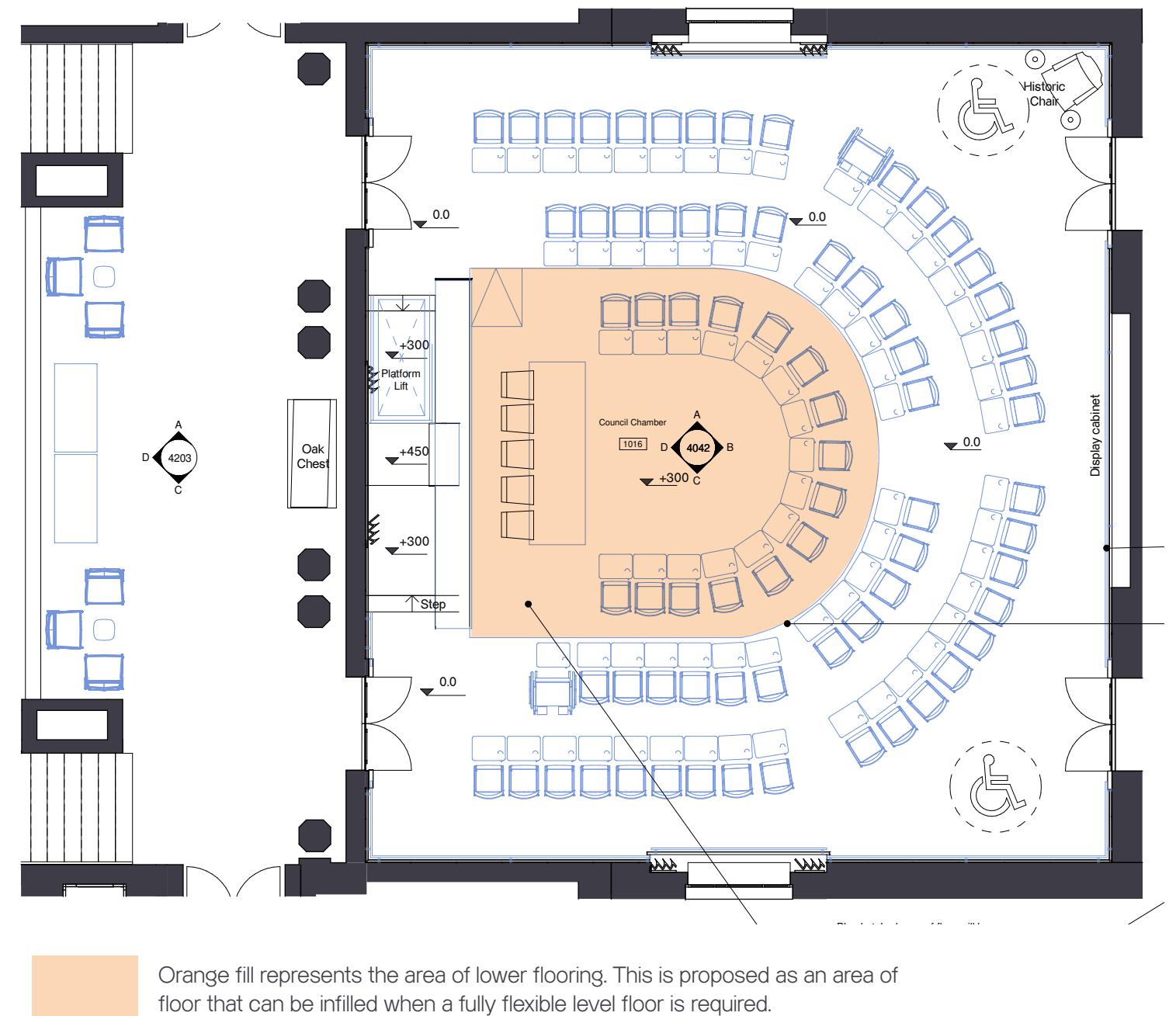
The key proposals to address the current limitations of the chamber include:

- Improving accessibility and flexibility - By installing a raised access floor to level the existing raked floor will greatly improve accessibility across the chamber. The access floor will be designed to allow visibility across the chamber when required as well as providing a fully level solution. A fully level flooring solution will be enhanced by removing and refurbishing the existing furniture to allow for a range of flexible furniture arrangements supporting a wider range of uses. The existing historic furniture will be refurbished and relocated to specific areas within the Guildhall including the Police Court where it can still be appreciate and used. A number of items will be retained within the chamber itself. These proposals will greatly improve accessibility and inclusivity and welcome a wider range of communal uses and enjoyment of the space.
- Facilitating Wider and Greater Public Use - Greater flexibility of furniture layout and type enabled through the levelling of the floor and removal of the existing historic fixed furniture would allow greater use of the chamber expanding the enjoyment and inclusivity by the community of Cambridge.
- Expanding Civic Functions - The above proposals for a level floor and modern furniture will facilitate a Unitary Council Meeting due to the ability to accommodate a greater number of seats within the chamber. The plan opposite shows 75no. seats including two wheelchair users.
- Enabling Modern Ways of Working - The provision of a level floor with void beneath above the existing stepped floor will allow for service routes to be included facilitating power & data to a range of furniture arrangements. Adaptations to the existing furniture during refurbishment will make it more accommodating of modern uses in its new location.
- Provision of Modern IT/AV/Power/DATA - As mentioned above modern IT/AV/power & DATA will be provided within the chamber.

- Improved User Comfort - The provision of modern seating and laptop desking which is designed in a more ergonomic way will improve user comfort.
- Improved Internal Environment - The existing ventilation routes will be surveyed for retention or replaced where required with connections to new efficient modern services aiding the long term costs of using and maintaining the chamber in use. The provision of an adequate heating and ventilation arrangement within the chamber will improve the user experience of the space, particularly for longer use functions.
- Reviewing Supporting Spaces - The low existing balustrade to the gallery will be retained with a higher balustrade set behind it improving health and safety in this area.

The above proposals aim to strike a balance between flexibility and conservation of the architectural significance and character of the chamber. The intention is to enhance the chamber and elevate it's value to the community of Cambridge by increasing inclusivity and accessibility, use and function.

Addressing these issues will allow more public access into this significant historic space and will help to ensure its long term use and retention as a core civic and multifunctional public space.

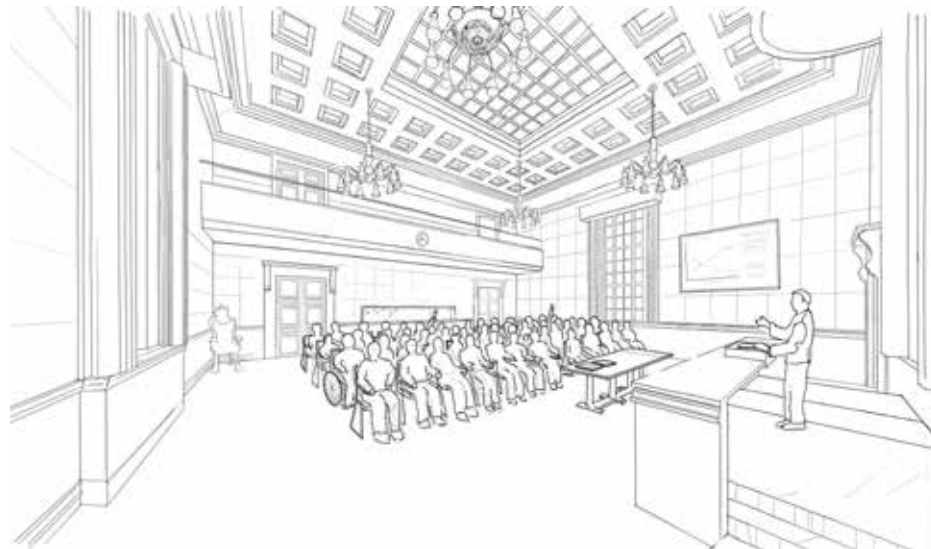


4.3 Civic Function

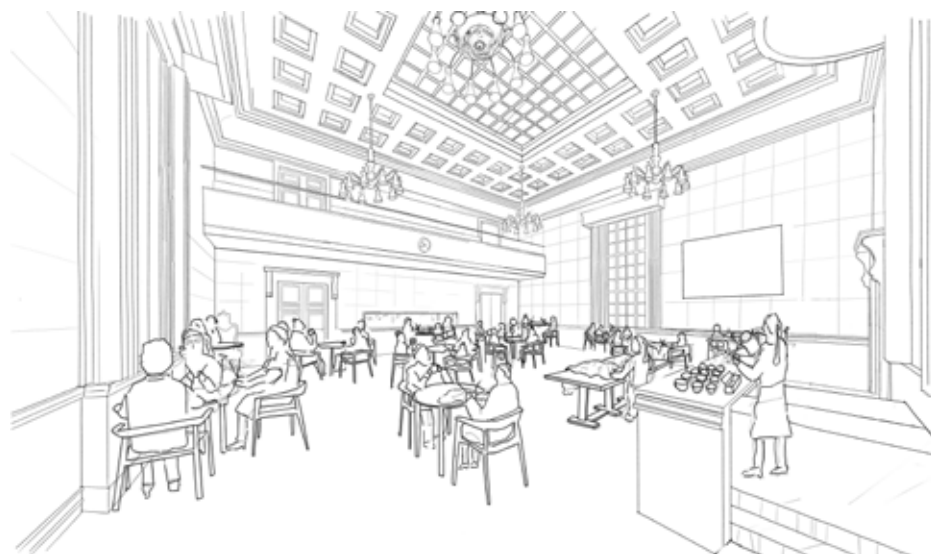
The Council Chamber - Wider and Greater Public Use

Greater flexibility of furniture layout and type enabled through the levelling of the floor and removal of the existing historic fixed furniture would allow greater use of the chamber. These changes will accommodate a multitude of furniture arrangements with accessibility addressed through the levelling of the floor. Through these changes we hope to bring new faces into the Guildhall and into the Chamber allowing greater connectivity and enjoyment of this historic building in the heart of Cambridge.

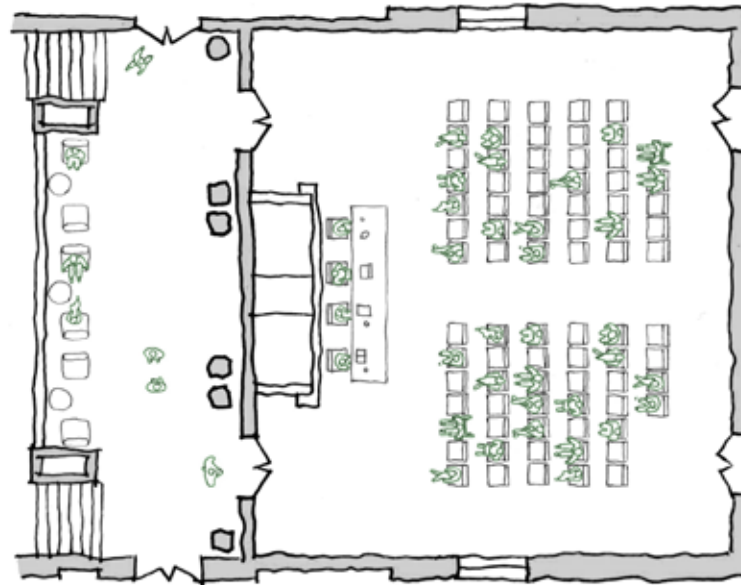
The following diagrams describe a range of layouts which could be accommodated.



Lecture Sketch View

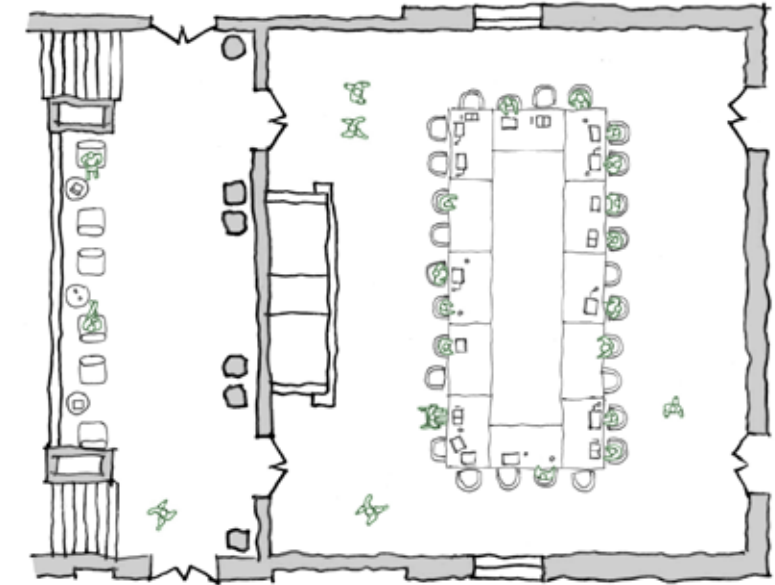


Community Event Sketch View



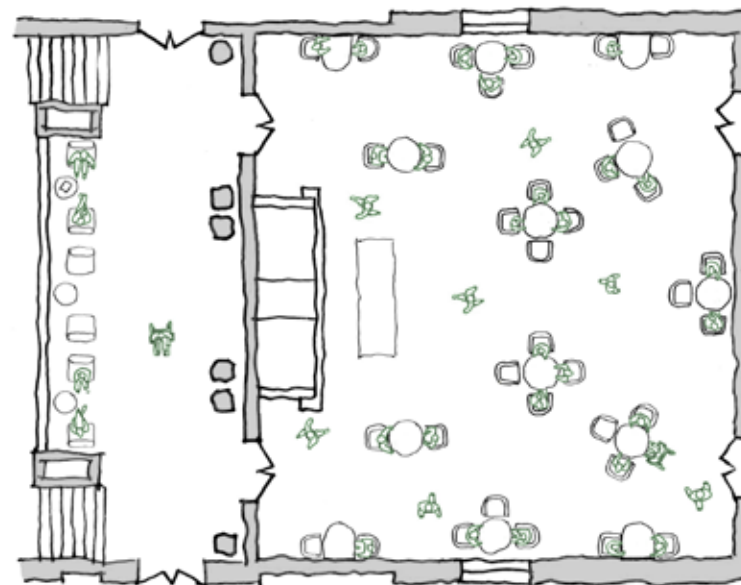
Lecture

The chamber could provide a space for lectures seating upwards of 78 seats



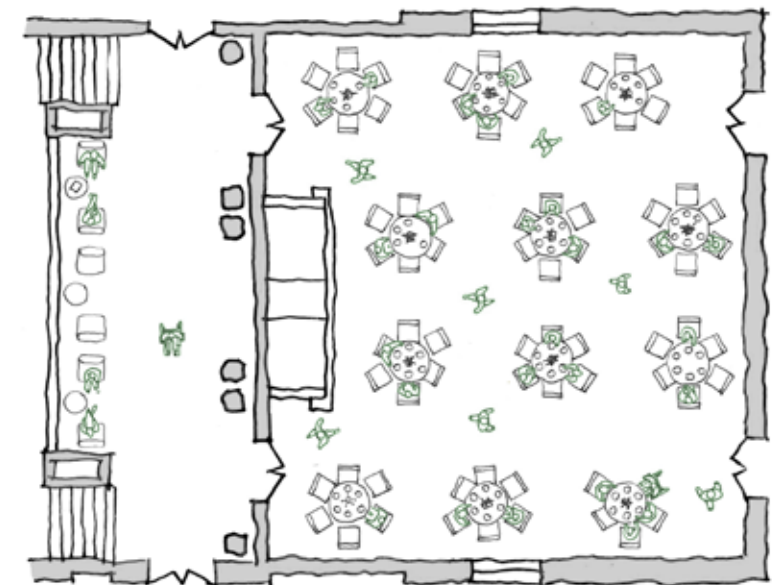
Committee in the round

Smaller committee meeting could be held in the round within the civic space



Community Event

A flexible chamber would provide a beautiful, welcoming and grand space for community events bringing a wide cross section of residents into the space

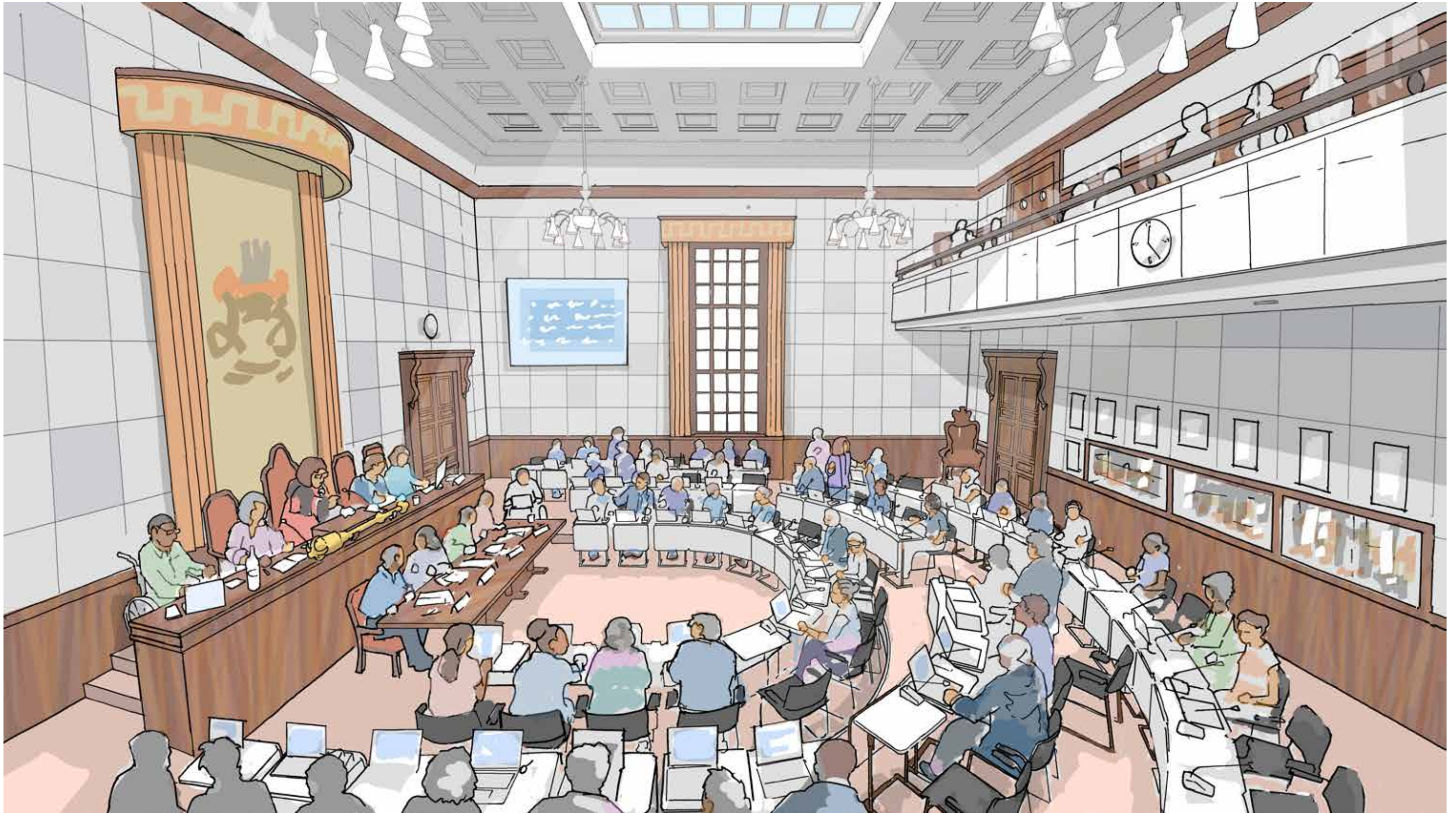


Banquet, dinner or celebration

A flexible chamber would seat around 72 people for a range of events

4.3 Civic Function

Council Chamber Proposals



Council Chamber seating in a horse shoe arrangement with tiered floor

4.3 Civic Function

Council Chamber Furniture Reuse

Our proposals aim to strike a balance between flexibility and conservation of the architectural significance and character of the chamber and its contents. Key to creating the flexibility of use within the chamber is the relocation of the existing furniture. This furniture will be carefully documented in its original location and condition, tagged and relocated with refurbishment, to new locations within the Guildhall. A number of pieces will be retained within the chamber itself and the majority will be located in publicly accessible areas.

The specific locations for the furniture relocations are:

The Council Chamber - the Dias and historic chair will be retained within the council chamber and will have refurbishment, adaptations and reupholstering undertaken where required.

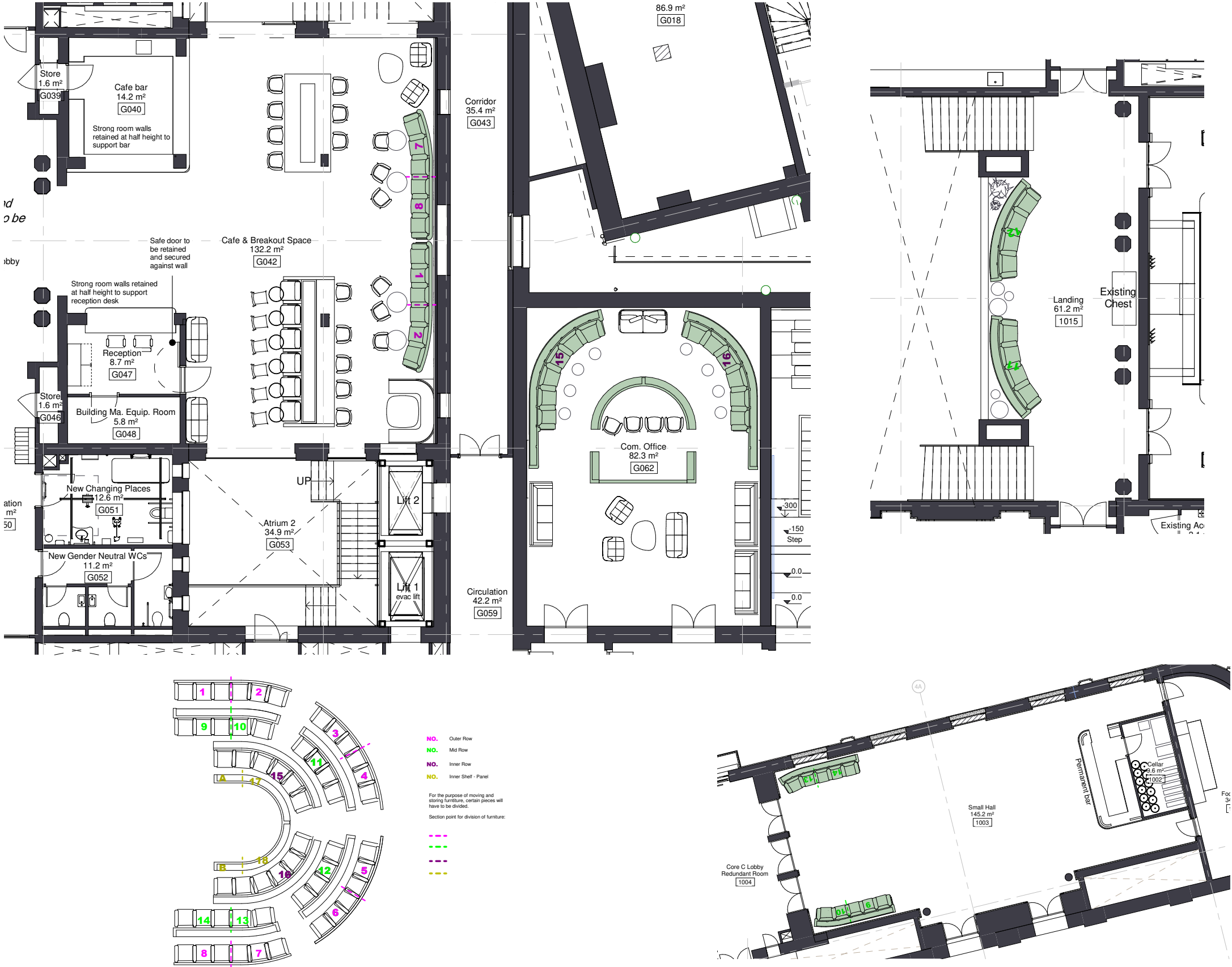
Council Chamber Landing - two parts are proposed to be located on the landing outside the Council chamber

'Heart Space' - parts will be relocated to the newly created, publicly accessible space on the ground floor of the Guildhall. General public will therefore be able to use the historic furniture whilst visiting the cafe or waiting for a meeting with the Council.

Halls - several elements will be located in the Small and Large halls, providing comfortable seating to support the functions of these spaces.

The Police Court - parts will be relocated to the historic Police Court. This space is proposed for use as a lounge for short term working, networking and socialising throughout the working day. These pieces will have refurbishment, reupholstering and some adaptations undertaken where required. They will be largely arranged in a similar format to that of the existing council chamber to greater reflect their historic past within the chamber.

It is proposed that all parts of furniture will be refurbished in a manner that allows the Council Chamber horseshoe arrangement to be reassembled. This will mean the inclusion of castors, or similar, sympathetically into the furniture to allow it to be moved around the Guildhall as required.



4.3 Civic Function

Council Chamber Furniture Reuse

**Image showing
Council Chamber
furniture in use**

4.3 Civic Function

Sessions Court

The Sessions Court is a space of high historical and architectural significance, particularly noted for its original built-in furniture arrangements, light fittings and finishes. However, as the space no longer serves its original purpose, it has become less practical for contemporary use and is currently not utilised.

A potential use for the space could be a Members working Lounge as shown here. A Members Lounge is a space that is accessible to persons subscribed to the management agreement operators offer. It is often used to work informally with amenities such as drinks and refreshments.

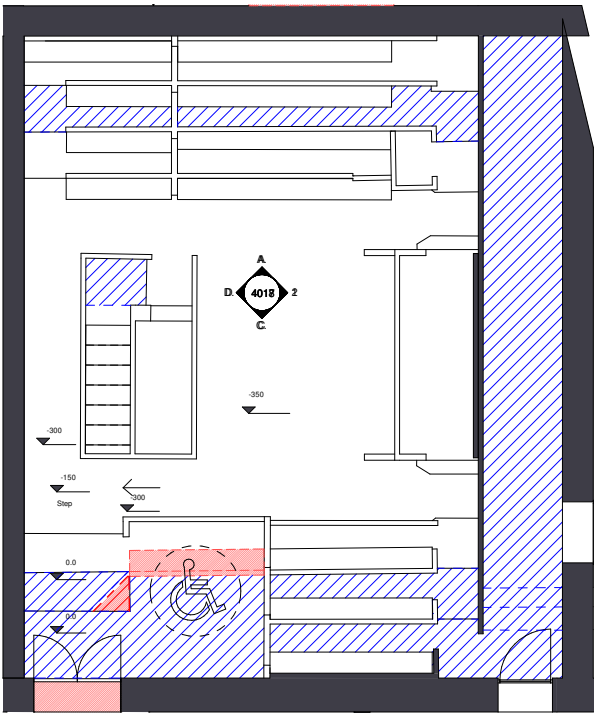
The proposal aims to preserve as much of the existing furniture as possible while incorporating contemporary enhancements to ensure the space remains functional for present-day needs.

A section of the stepped floor will be levelled (with the existing floor retained underneath) to provide an accessible area, however the majority of the space will remain in its current inaccessible but historical format.

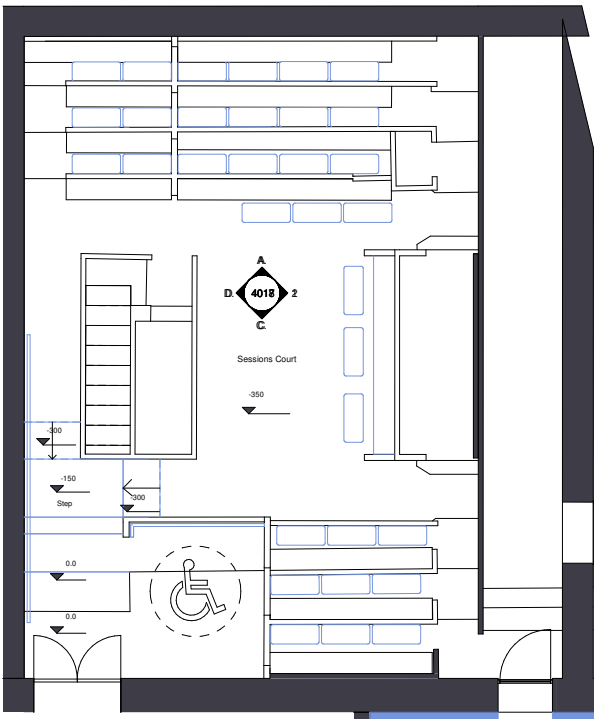
The provision of the council chamber furniture to the adjacent Police Court, will form a similar fully accessible working lounge.



Sessions Court



Proposed demolition Proposed carpet removal
Sessions court existing with proposed demolitions



Existing Proposed
Sessions court proposed



Proposed conversion of the Sessions Court into a members lounge with upgrades to the fixed furniture