

# HARLINGTON FLEET FEASIBILITY STUDY

Rev. P2, 7 July 2025

**BURRELL | FOLEY | FISCHER**  
ARCHITECTS AND URBAN DESIGNERS

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 The Feasibility Study Process

The Burrell Foley Fischer Architects led design team was appointed by Fleet Town Council (FTC) in January 2025 to carry out the refurbishment and re-modelling of the Harlington following a competitive tender process. Fleet Town Council has commissioned the work in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** development of costed options to meet the budget and brief (RIBA Stages 0-1)
- **Phase 2:** development of the scheme through to completion (RIBA Stages 2-6).

This report presents the conclusions of Phase 1 of the process and includes:

- Summaries of site research and analysis;
- The engagement and consultation process undertaken so far;
- The high level brief as developed in the consultation;
- The three primary options that have been explored and their associated costings;
- A route to develop the preferred option;
- A project execution plan for moving forward.

The report has built on the studies already undertaken by Fleet Town Council, including the heating / energy generation report by Skelly & Couch in 2023, the condition survey undertaken by Cooper and Withycombe and Pope Consulting in 2020 and the Charcoalblue feasibility study and Burrell Foley Fischer designs developed in 2015. Fleet Town Council has separately commissioned Stuart Shanks to prepare a business plan in collaboration with the design team and this is being carried out simultaneously.

The design team includes:

- Burrell Foley Fischer: Architect and Principal Designer
- Synergy: Cost Consultant and Project Manager
- Charcoalblue: Theatre Consultant and Acoustician
- SD Engineers: Structural and Civil Engineer
- Skelly & Couch: Mechanical and Electrical Engineer and Sustainability Consultant
- OFR: Fire Consultant
- Keith Garner: Access Consultant

## 2.0 Executive Summary

### 2.1 Key Ambitions

The Harlington is a popular entertainment venue in Fleet in Hampshire. Fleet Town Council has obtained a long lease from Hart District Council and, with funding garnered from long term financial planning, wishes to undertake a project to secure the sustainable future of the venue and improve the offer to the Fleet community. The preliminary brief from FTC has identified the following keywords:

- Cost Control
- Capacity
- Comfort
- Continuity
- Flexibility

These key objectives can be used as measures to review the developed options, which are outlined on the following pages.

The design team has undertaken an on-site review of the existing building and an assessment of the existing archival and survey information. Further dimensional and condition survey information will be required at the next stage and opening up should be undertaken to clarify key existing unknown elements. As noted in the condition surveys, the main auditorium roof is a key area of concern, limiting the potential both for theatre loading and sustainability enhancements. Each of the options proposes major interventions to the roof to address the constraints. The existing fire strategy is based on a fast and easy escape approach, with limited fire protection to the building. We understand that this is the basis of the existing insurance and has been borne in mind in preparation of the new options. The building has limited presence externally and feels constrained internally - challenges which the project has the potential to address.

The Harlington has active and engaged staff and supportive regular hirers. During the study, consultation events have been undertaken with these groups to develop an understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the existing building and ambitions for the future. A wide variety of activity takes place across the building and the consultations have shown an appetite amongst users for more events (including the ability to hold simultaneous events), along with a desire for increased comfort.

The high level brief has been developed for the following critical areas:

- **The auditorium**  
Comfort and capacity should increase and technical installations should be made safer and more flexible. A wide variety of performance types should be supported.
- **Front of house areas**  
The entrance, foyers and WCs should feel more generous and of a higher quality with better opportunities for food and beverage sales.
- **Fleet Town Council and Harlington staff offices**  
The cramped and disjointed offices should be improved to create a more pleasant, collaborative work space. Staff facilities should be enhanced.
- **Back of house facilities**  
The existing back of house dressing rooms are inaccessible to wheelchair users and limit capacity for large events. Improvements should consider capacity, safeguarding and accessibility.
- **Stage Access**  
The existing arrangement is poor, requiring manual handling to lift items onto the stage. The proposed strategies should seek to make the get-in process quicker and less labour intensive.
- **Other spaces**  
The dance studio is well used but cannot be occupied simultaneously with events in the main auditorium as there is limited acoustic separation. The proposals should seek to address this issue so that there is potential for concurrent events. The awkwardly shaped first floor meeting rooms are underutilised at present and so options should be explored to better exploit these spaces.
- **Additional facilities**  
A better meeting space for the Town Council would be welcomed. This could potentially also be hired out to businesses.
- **The Point**  
Fleet Phoenix operates a very successful youth service from The Point but it is tight for space. It operates for a significant number of hours a week.
- **Mechanical and electrical services**  
Full replacement is required, along with a strategy for serving the Library.
- **Sustainability**  
Improving energy efficiency is critical in order to reduce the building's environmental impact and operating costs.
- **Operational continuity**  
Options for maintaining a community space during redevelopment should be considered.

## 2.2 Summary of Proposed Options

### Option 1: Baseline Refurbishment

This option includes the essential work required to address the technical infrastructure, mechanical and electrical services, safety and access. It improves the comfort and quality of the existing spaces without major structural works or remodelling of the external envelope.

Space	Provision
Auditorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retractable seating.</li> <li>Accessible first floor balcony with limited seating and an open control position.</li> <li>In-venue bar.</li> <li>Heightened proscenium opening.</li> <li>Upgraded technical infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p><i>Seated performance: 293 + 6 wheelchairs</i>  <i>Standing performance: 487 + 6 wheelchairs</i>  <i>Cabaret layout: 261 + 6 wheelchairs</i></p>
Front of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refurbished WCs (but without redistribution or quantity increase).</li> <li>Alterations to open up and improve presentation of the entrance area and ground floor foyer.</li> <li>Flexible use of the function room as a standalone space or as part of the foyer.</li> <li>Cosmetic upgrades to the dance studio and resolution of its overheating issues.</li> </ul>
Back of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible dressing rooms on both sides of the stage.</li> <li>Flexible multi-purpose spaces at basement level.</li> <li>A green room in the former WRVS space.</li> </ul>
Get-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New get-in platform lift in front of the stage.</li> </ul>
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor reorganisation and new rooflights.</li> <li>Relocated staff room and new meeting room.</li> </ul>
New spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41m<sup>2</sup> 14-person meeting room at first floor level.</li> </ul>
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention of the existing landscaping, including the steep ramp to the main entrance.</li> <li>New lighting and signage along the approach from the high street.</li> </ul>

### Option 2: Major Alterations

This option includes the baseline work, along with more significant alterations, including remodelling of parts of the external envelope and larger structural interventions. Some wider re-landscaping is also included.

Space	Provision (over and above Option 1 unless noted otherwise)
Auditorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extended wrap-round first floor balcony with good connectivity between the stalls and the first floor.</li> <li>Widening of the proscenium opening (in addition to raising the height).</li> <li>New technical gallery in the stage house.</li> </ul> <p><i>Seated performance: 358 + 6 wheelchairs</i>  <i>Standing performance: 591 + 6 wheelchairs</i>  <i>Cabaret layout: 344 + 6 wheelchairs</i></p>
Front of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new inviting façade onto Gurkha Square.</li> <li>Relocation of the front of house staircase to provide a more open foyer with better circulation flows.</li> <li>Reconfigured, better distributed front of house toilets, including more female cubicles.</li> <li>Introduction of a Changing Places WC</li> <li>Opening up of the first floor foyer space, including connection to the new multi-purpose studio.</li> </ul>
Back of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new internal connection to The Point to allow for occasional sharing of facilities.</li> <li>New emergency battery room.</li> </ul>
Get-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New stage-level external get-in platform and new scene dock* (<i>*instead of the Option 1 platform lift</i>).</li> </ul>
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reorganisation and roof/window alterations to allow for a single floor level throughout.</li> </ul>
New spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large ground floor meeting room with independent access. Suitable for a 20-person Council meeting (boardroom style) with 12 observers.</li> <li>81m<sup>2</sup> flexible multi-purpose studio at first floor level* (<i>*instead of the 14-person meeting room in Option 1</i>).</li> </ul>
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-landscaping around the entrance area to create a compliant wheelchair ramp and more generous steps.</li> <li>Re-paving of the approach from the high street.</li> </ul>

### Option 3: Baseline Refurbishment + New Extension

We have reviewed where it would be possible to locate an extension to provide a first phase new community space that could operate during the main closure period. We assumed that the Option 1 baseline improvements would also be carried out as a second phase once the new space was available.

The study looked at three possible positions and assessed their impact on:

- Get in and deliveries;
- Connectivity to existing front of house and back of house;
- Possible maximum room size.

In summary, Option 3 does not provide an easy solution, with each option either potentially compromising the existing get-in and delivery arrangements or awkwardly separating the new space from the existing front of house facilities.

## 2.3 Summaries of Design Team Reports

A more detailed comparison of the options is given in section 10.0 Summaries of the individual design team members' reports are given below and their full reports are appended.

### Synergy - Cost Consultant

Synergy were engaged to produce a construction cost estimate for refurbishment and alteration works to The Harlington. The works have been costed based on the project being procured on a competitive basis with all works being undertaken concurrently under a single contract with works commencing on site during the 2nd Quarter of 2026. The costs assume that the existing building will be completely vacated for the duration of the works. Costings include allowance for professional and other fees to design, procure and administer a construction contract for the works. VAT is excluded based on Fleet Town Council being able to reclaim VAT.

Two alternative options have been priced, Option 1 (Baseline) option, £9.9m, and Option 2, being a more extensive scope of works than Option 1, £13.9m. The estimated cost of the two options has been shown side by side for ease of comparison.

Furthermore, an Option 3 has been costed for two alternative locations for a potential new-build element within the scheme that would provide a multi-purpose studio space at a cost of around £3.0m.

The costings are subject to the exclusions and assumptions listed in the cost estimate on page 4 of the Synergy report.

### Charcoalblue - Theatre Consultant

Charcoalblue were engaged by Burrell Foley Fisher (BFF) to assist in the development of The Harlington, with specific focus on the technical and operational aspects of the venue. They have worked in conjunction with BFF to develop two primary options that provide improved facilities for both audience and technical staff and bring the main venue to modern standards, ensuring it is suitable for artists and productions for many years to come.

To assist in the operation of the venue, Charcoalblue have proposed a retractable seating system for both options. This will allow for greater use of the venue with the ability to quickly adapt between a fully seated configuration and a flat floor format. This will remove the need

to manually set out seating and reduce the number of crew required to undertake this.

Charcoalblue have worked with Skelly and Couch, the appointed services engineers, to develop a complete replacement of the existing stage lighting and audiovisual infrastructure thus enabling the venue to bring their systems up to modern safety and operational standards. It is anticipated that a large quantity of the existing equipment will be able to be utilised but modern equipment will also need to be integrated into the venue in the future.

There is an allowance for replacement of the over-stage rigging elements. This will comprise of motorised suspension systems, bringing a safer and faster method of rigging to the venue. Over the auditorium, Charcoalblue have proposed a series of rigging 'strong points' for the suspension of chain hoists for a variety of rigging modes along with motorised bars for suspension of lighting and audiovisual equipment.

### SD Engineers - Structural Engineer

The Stage 1 feasibility report by SD Engineers presents an initial assessment of the structural and civil engineering aspects of the options for upgrade to the Harlington Centre, in line with the Burrell Foley Fisher proposals.

The objective of the report and submitted concept proposals is to evaluate the current condition and capacity of the building's structural elements and civil infrastructure, and to provide an indication of structural amendments to aid the cost plan for the options put forward. The report includes:

- A summary of previous condition surveys by Cooper & Withycombe in July 2020;
- Strengthening /replacement options for the auditorium roof;
- An overview of submitted designs for alterations to the peripheral structures;
- Overview of upgrades to the below ground drainage;
- An outline of required surveys which will need to be conducted during RIBA Stage 2.

### Skelly & Couch - M&E Consultant

Skelly and Couch Ltd have proposed M&E strategies for two primary

schemes (Baseline/Option 1 and Option 2) for costing, in line with the BFF schemes. Further commentary for costing has also been provided for a further two schemes – Options 3A, and 3B.

Due to the condition of the current M&E services within The Harlington building, which are generally considered to be beyond their economic life, the baseline proposal for a major refurbishment is suggested as a renewal of services throughout. The Harlington building also currently provides water and heating to the adjoining Library, as well as sharing a fire alarm system. As part of this refurbishment project, one option being explored is to separate the Library and Harlington services, so that the Library no longer relies on the Harlington and seeks independent supplies for water, heating and their own fire alarm system. However, unless there is agreement otherwise (further down the line), the design is to proceed on the basis that the services connections with the Library have to be maintained.

The baseline scheme also proposes to transition the Harlington heating system from gas to all electric, utilising new ASHPs, due to increasing pressure towards carbon neutrality across the nation. The scale of the M&E replacement along with the proposal for thermal upgrades to the building fabric, means this becomes the most appropriate and best value proposal when operating costs are considered. A high level cost difference assessment between replacement gas boilers and ASHPs has been undertaken.

The M&E scope for the Option 2 Scheme is largely as per the baseline scheme, but includes the following further M&E installations/upgrades:

- Drainage stacks (SVPs and stub stacks) stripped out and replaced to suit reconfigured sanitary areas.
- Inclusion of a rainwater harvesting system with buried tank.
- Emergency lighting provided as a central battery system to serve the auditorium.
- Additional PVs included to existing south facing sloped roofs (subject to the adequacy of the structure / additional strengthening).

### OFR - Fire Consultant

OFR have produced a fire strategy report for the options explored in the feasibility study. The fire strategy will be developed based on BS9999: 2017 and be compliant with this guidance document as much as is practicable in an existing building.



It is noted that no change of use is proposed so the strategy approach in terms of Building Regulations will be based upon improving the current situation, noting that full compliance of existing provisions with current codes is not a retrospective mandatory requirement.

Existing fire strategy derogations or shortcomings will be addressed as far as is practicable to ensure a high level of life safety for occupants and fire fighting personnel is provided. Discussions with Building Control will be held at an early stage to agree the principles of the fire strategy to be developed as the design progresses. The Stage 1 document will be developed into a suitably detailed fire strategy report during RIBA Stage 2/3.

## 2.4 Next steps

The options have been reviewed with FTC and the Harlington team and detailed feedback has been received. Some of the more detailed layout comments will be reviewed in further depth at the next design stage.

The costing indicates that Option 1 sits below the available budget while Option 2 exceeds it. Working with FTC and Stuart Shanks, a preferred option is being reviewed. This takes a 'shopping list' approach to which elements of Option 2 could be added to Option 1 to support the business plan. This will be developed in diagrammatic form as an addendum option - Option 4. Once Fleet Town Council has confirmed how they wish to proceed, the following activities will need to be undertaken:

1. Commission the next design stage with additional team members where required - **FTC**
2. Confirm detailed scope - **FTC**
3. Commission full dimensional surveys of the building – **Design Team / FTC**
4. Undertake opening up around the auditorium ceiling and stalls foyer ceiling - **Design Team**
5. Agree potential for extension of the lease area to allow for redevelopment of the front access ramps and an equivalent leasehold of the existing ground floor café zone beneath the first floor library to support non-reversible alterations in this area - **FTC**
6. Discuss potential enlargement of the red line boundary zone with HDC to allow for construction of the new external ramp and steps - **FTC / Design Team**
7. Discuss with HDC the possibility of losing 3 parking spaces in

front of the building to enable a more generous arrival area - **FTC / Design Team**

8. Undertake a review of Fleet Library access and escape strategies to verify that the ground floor and first floor doors linking to the Harlington can be closed off - **Design Team / FTC.**
9. Engage in planning pre-application dialogue with Statutory Authorities – **Design Team**
10. Discuss with Building Control whether a Changing Places WC is required - **Design Team**
11. Develop wider engagement strategies for the community – **Design Team / FTC**
12. Commission a catering study - **FTC**
13. Undertake an access audit for the proposed options - **Design Team**
14. Undertake some visits to precedent venues - **Design Team / FTC**



*The Harlington's current frontage onto Gurkha Square.*



## 3.0 Project History and Site Analysis

### 3.1 Project & Site History

The Ordnance Survey maps on the right show the history of the site during the development and expansion of Fleet town centre. Once straddling the grounds of Chernocke House and rear gardens to properties on the High Street, the site was developed in the 1970s as part of an extensive civic complex including a library, offices, meeting rooms and sports facilities. The Fleet Town Council website sets out a history of the Harlington from opening in 1972 to the extensive fire in 1991 (refer to Appendix K). In 2010, Fleet Town Council took over the running of the building and transformed its operation to bring entertainment and community activity back into the town centre. This involved alterations including enclosing the open alleyway to form a foyer and extending to the sides to provide council offices, the WRVS meals on wheel service and a youth service. FTC has continued to improve the building with the addition of a lift and dance facilities.

In 2014, Fleet Town Council surveyed users on the future of the Harlington. While the facility was greatly valued, cramped seating, poor toilets and a desire for a wider performance programme were identified as critical issues to address. Working with a design team, FTC developed three options: refurbish, extend and replace (refer to Appendix L). At a vote, 'replace' was preferred with a new building proposed in Gurkha Square and agreement reached that the precept be raised to fund the scheme. However planning permission was not granted over a combination of factors, including disabled access and the loss of Gurkha Square.

FTC revisited the project in 2018 and, over a long time period, has successfully negotiated a 99 year lease with Hart District Council under which FTC has taken full repairing responsibility for the building. FTC commissioned the Burrell Foley Fischer led design team to develop the project in 2024, once the lease was signed.

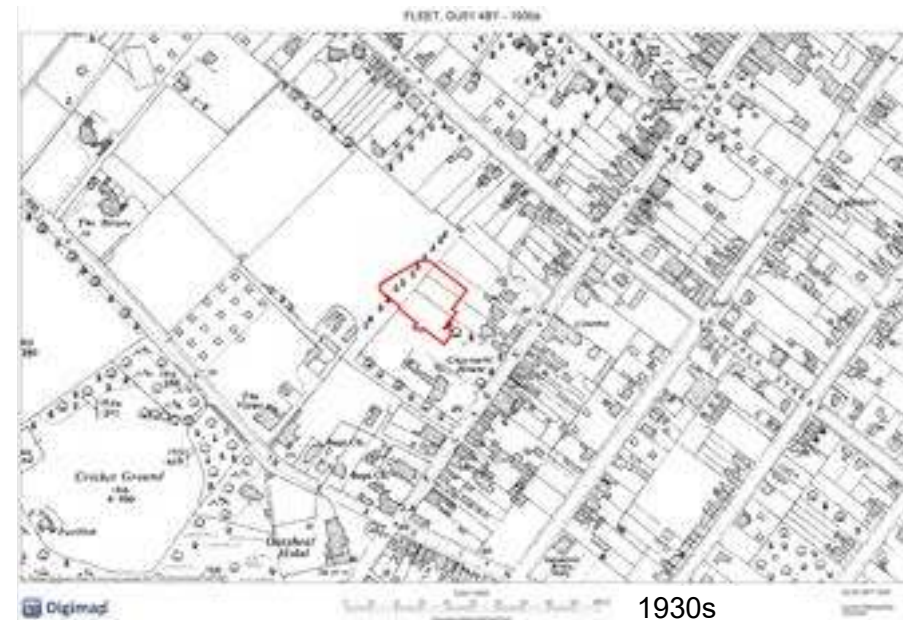
As a consequence, this project has had a nearly ten-year gestation period. Considerable thought has been given by the client body and the user groups to their ambitions for the scheme. Despite compromised facilities, the Harlington has retained and developed its audience and outcomes from the engagement indicate the desire to do even more in the future.



1870s



1910s



1930s



1970s

OS maps illustrating the development of the site from the 1870s onwards

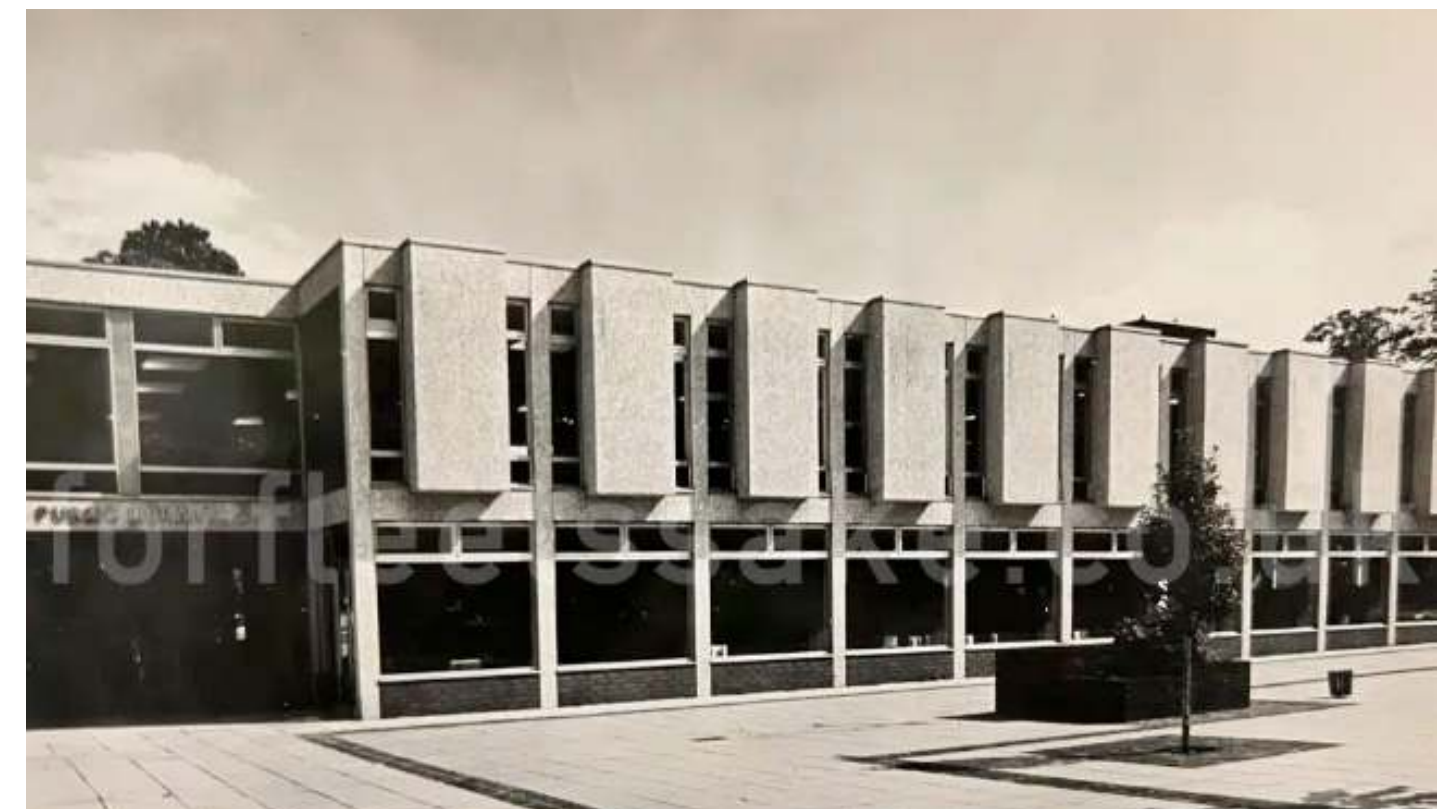


### 3.2 Historic photographs



Top left: Chernocke House before it was demolished, with the new Civic Centre behind it.  
 Top right: The opening of Fleet Library in 1974.  
 Bottom left and bottom right: The Civic Centre complex when it opened in 1972.

Images courtesy of Fleet Hampshire History.





### 3.3 Site Analysis

The Harlington is awkwardly positioned. The 1972 development included a new civic square, adjusting the heart of the town away from the High Street and around a carefully landscaped space connecting the council offices, library and sports activities. The hall fronted onto this square with an open passageway at the rear connecting back towards the shops along Fleet Road. The design of the concrete façades shows this hierarchy with high quality exposed aggregate projecting concrete bays around the civic square and a much plainer panelised brick and concrete façade to the Fleet Road side.

The District Council offices were expanded and redeveloped in the 1980s and the civic square was replaced with car parking. As a consequence the civic heart of the community shifted back towards the High Street and the Harlington was re-fronted to address Gurkha Square. The building now sits in a rather amorphous flow of car parking and the significant set back from the High Street, approximately 40m, makes the building hard to find with almost no street presence. Gurkha Square has some fine trees, but the venue entrance is hidden from the pedestrian route along the side of the car park and visitors currently approach on foot from all directions.

#### Planning Policy Context

The building is not listed and does not lie within the North Fleet Conservation Area. The war memorial in Gurkha Square is listed Grade II. Hart District Council (HDC) is the Planning Authority. The site falls in HDC's planning policy area ED4 Town District and Local Centres, but outside ED5 Fleet Town Centre planning policy areas.

#### Policy ED4 Town, District and Local Centres

*"The vitality and viability of the District's centres, as defined on the Policies Map, will be maintained and improved ... Within the defined centres, developments for town centre uses will be encouraged where they are appropriate to the scale, function and character of the centre. The retail and local service function of local neighbourhood facilities will be protected to provide for local day to day needs. Proposals for main town centres uses that are not in the defined centres will need to satisfy the sequential test."*

Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032, adopted April 2020

Importantly, the adopted Fleet Town Council Neighbourhood Plan (2018-2032) identified the potential for a civic quarter as a major opportunity for change:

*"2.24...the land centred on the Civic Offices, The Harlington, library, and Gurkha Square should be redeveloped for mixed use which might include residential, commercial, community, entertainment and cultural activities, whilst preserving a link to a town square and The Views"*

In reviewing the rejected planning application for the new theatre, the Neighbourhood Plan notes:

*"2.32...The (second) consultation (2018) showed that, whilst people wished to see improvements to The Harlington, they wanted these to be set within the context of the wider regeneration of this Zone and wished the local authorities to work together to deliver these improvements."*

*"2.33 This policy, therefore, retains the community facilities (a performance centre/facility and District and Town Council functions) as part of a comprehensive regeneration plan designed to improve this area as a vital part of the town's economic sustainability and long-term vibrancy."*

Fleet Neighbourhood Plan November 2019

While the proposals for any major redevelopment of the civic centre are subject to a longer term Local Authority strategic review, the plan clearly supports culture at the heart of Fleet.

As an already operational building with the same use, for any future planning application it is the proposed increased capacity and volume that should be assessed against planning policy. Broadly, under planning policy:

- The Harlington is well located in terms of car parking, delivery access and public transport connections. As the project develops, analysis will be undertaken to confirm the impact of the additional capacity. If Option 3 were to be progressed, a detailed study would be undertaken of delivery access;
- There are a limited number of nearby residential properties along Fleet Road. The acoustic impact of the redevelopment will be assessed and acoustic mitigation measures for plant and operation noise will be proposed;
- Option 1 has minimal impact on the building envelope. However, options 2 and 3 both increase the building volume. Option 2 increases the scale of the entrance to Gurkha Square, but is sufficiently far from the High Street properties to have minimal

impact. Option 3 increases the building volume either along The Views or to the Victoria Street car park behind the Fleet Road residential properties. Impact studies for daylight / sunlight would be undertaken;

- The character of any new façade will be carefully reviewed. The design needs to respond to the Library context, while also looking at Fleet's unique identity. There is polychromatic brickwork along Fleet Road and All Saints Church has a lively tiled interior. Proposals for the new entrance will need to enhance the street scene while identifying this as an important public building.

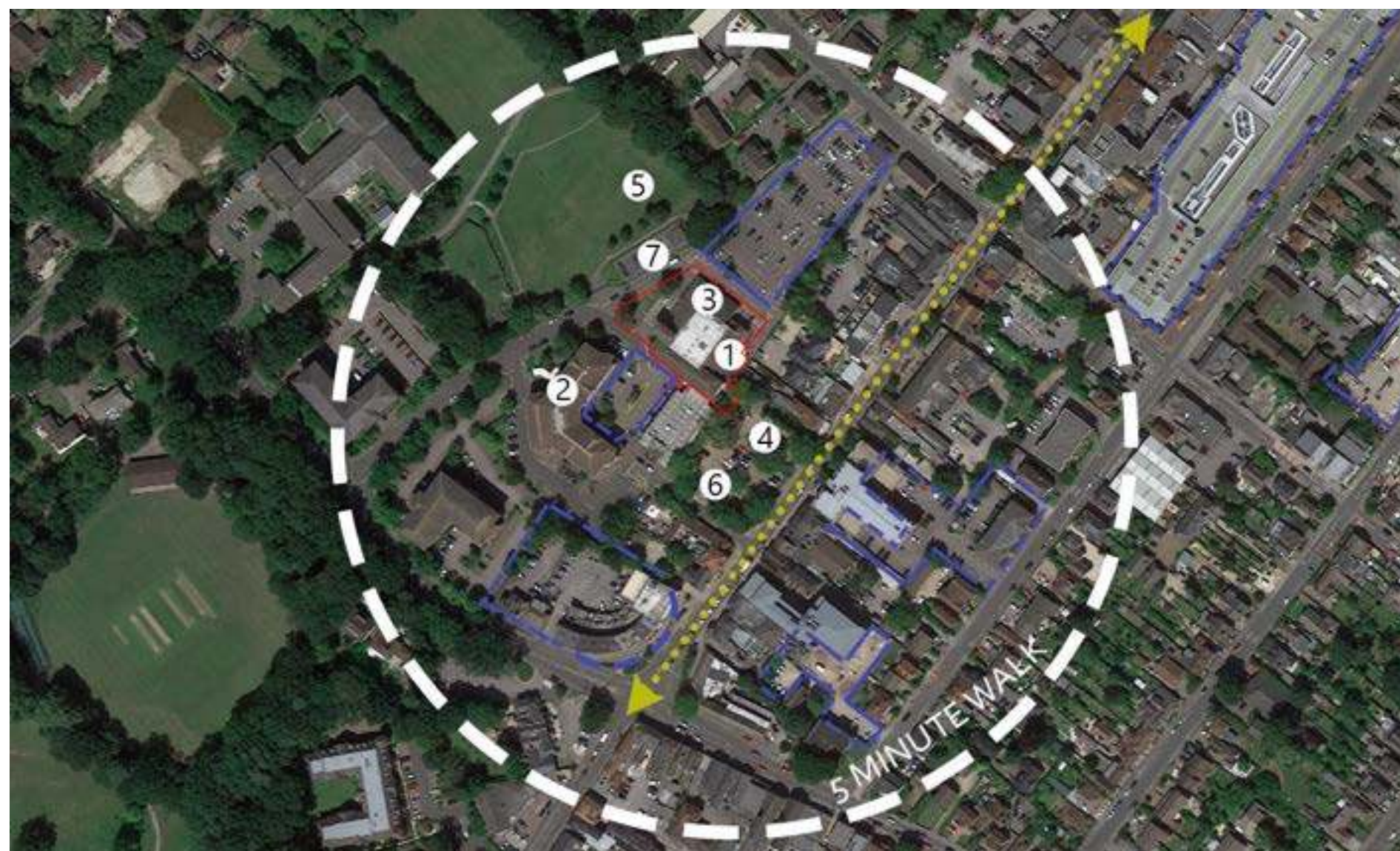
#### Theatres Trust





The Theatres' Trust is a statutory consultee for all planning applications affecting theatres. Their database (Appendix J) identifies The Harlington as 'a simple but effective multi-purpose venue serving the community'. The proposals seek to enhance the offer to the community.



Fleet Carnival poster, 1965 - a symbol of the town's vibrant cultural and artistic foundations.





-  5 minute walk
-  Public car park
-  Fleet Road (high street)
-  Site boundary

1. The Harlington
2. Hart District Council
3. Fleet Phoenix
4. Gurkha Square
5. The Views
6. War Memorial
7. Skate Park

Area plan



Exterior and interior views of the nearby All Saints Church - one of the few listed buildings in Fleet.



The quirky Emporium pub on the high street.



The Grade II listed Fleet War Memorial, Gurkha Square.

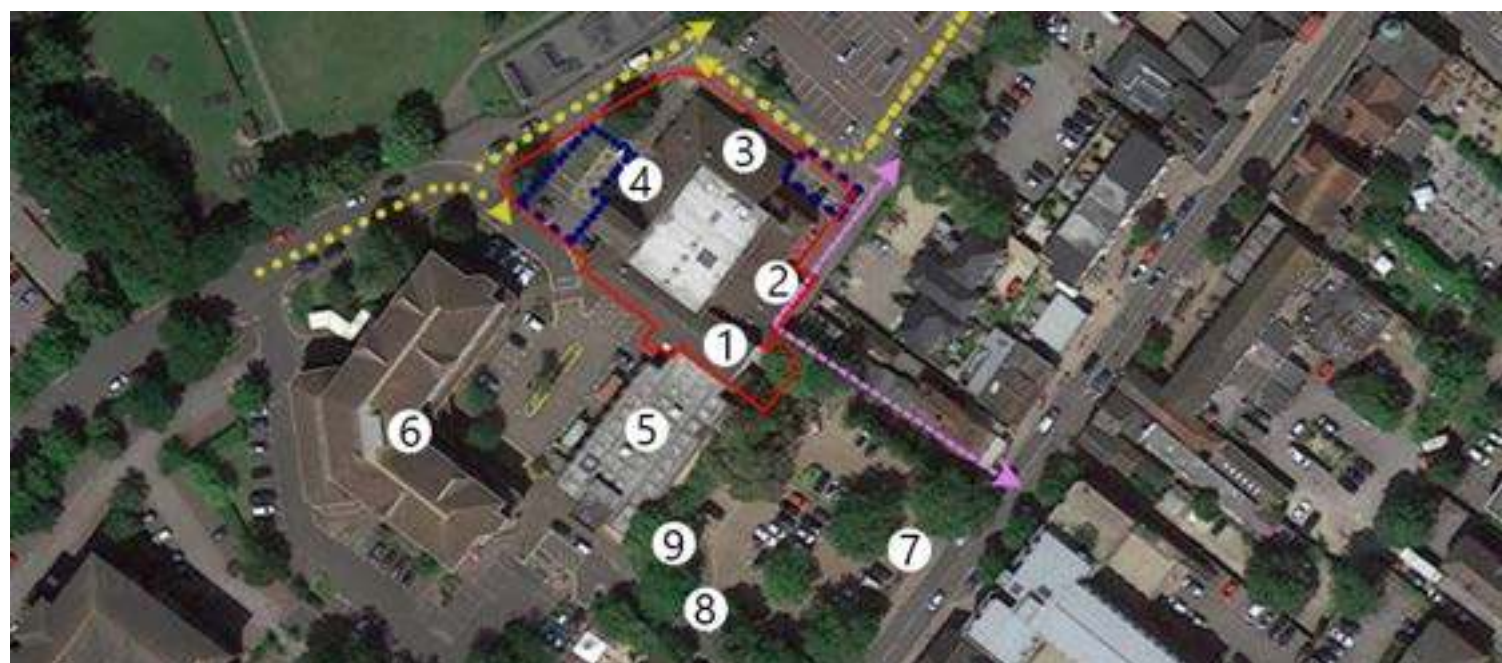




Aerial site view



View from the Harlington looking towards the high street (Fleet Road). This pedestrian approach route runs along the northern edge of Gurkha Square.



Site plan

- ..... Harlington / FTC parking
  - ..... Vehicle flow
  - ..... Pedestrian route
  - Site boundary
1. The Harlington Entrance
  2. Fleet Town Council Entrance
  3. Fleet Phoenix Entrance
  4. Auditorium Get In
  5. Library Entrance
  6. District Council Entrance
  7. Gurkha Square Car Park Exit
  8. Gurkha Square Car Park Entrance
  9. War Memorial





*Main entrance to the Harlington (adjoining Fleet Library), Gurkha Square.*



*View from the Harlington towards the high street (Fleet Road)*



*Attractive planting and mature trees, Gurkha Square.*



*Plainer panelised facade to Fleet Library (Gurkha Square side).*



*Projecting concrete bays and more recent brick lift shaft to the north-west facade of the Fleet Library facade and the south-west facade of the Harlington.*



*The domestically scaled WRVS block, formerly used by the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and now used as a back of house space by the Harlington.*



## 4.0 Existing Building Analysis

## 4.1 Overview

The Harlington is a multi-purpose arts and entertainment venue operated by Fleet Town Council (FTC).

The building is composed of a number of different elements. The main entrance is on the east side, adjacent to Fleet Library. The underutilised cafe / servery area south of the entrance is sub-leased from Hart District Council with a one year break clause, although initial discussions suggest that it will probably be possible to amend this. The freehold is owned by Hampshire County Council.

The southern portion of the Harlington is dedicated to the front of house spaces and a rectangular auditorium occupies the centre of the plan. The north-east corner of the building contains the back of house accommodation, whilst the south east zone is given over to front of house toilets and the offices of Fleet Town Council. The council currently has its own external entrance, but there is an aspiration to change this arrangement so that public access to the FTC offices is via the Harlington front of house spaces (where access can be more securely managed).

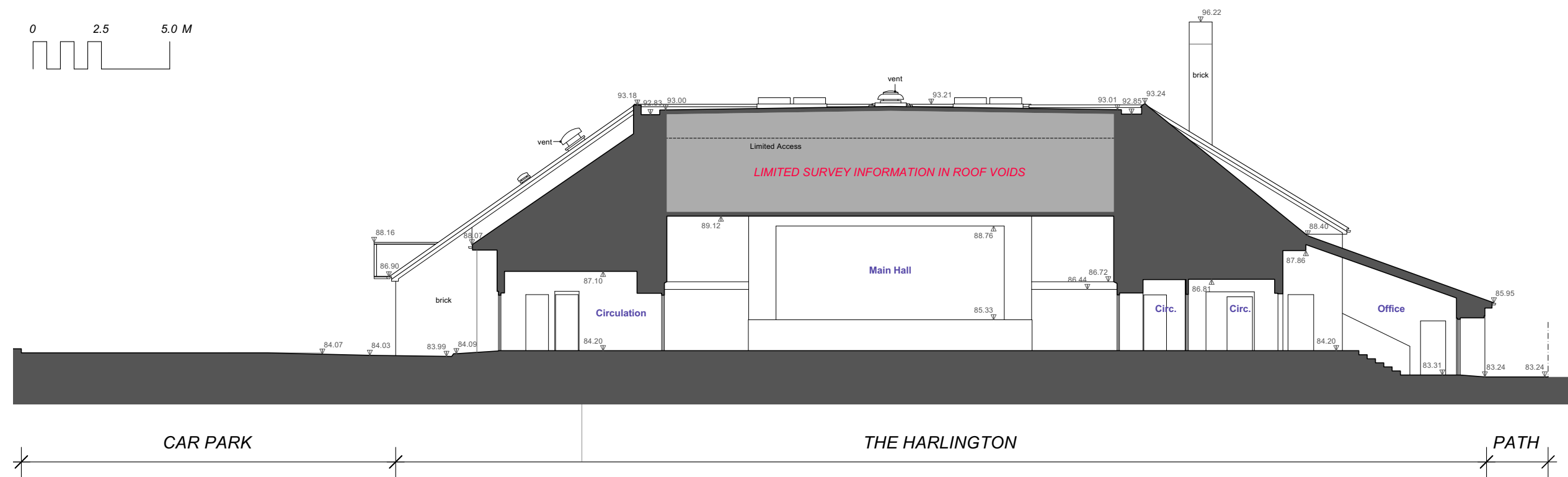
On the western side of the building is a block formerly used by the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS). However, this is now part of the Harlington, with the spaces used as informal back of house areas.

The northern part of the site is occupied by The Point Youth Centre, which adjoins the Harlington (but without an internal connection between the buildings). This is the home of Fleet Phoenix, a charity which offers support and mentoring services to vulnerable young people.

Drawings of the existing building are included in Appendix A.



*Zones of the existing building (ground floor plan)*



EXISTING CROSS SECTION (BB)



## 4.2 Auditorium

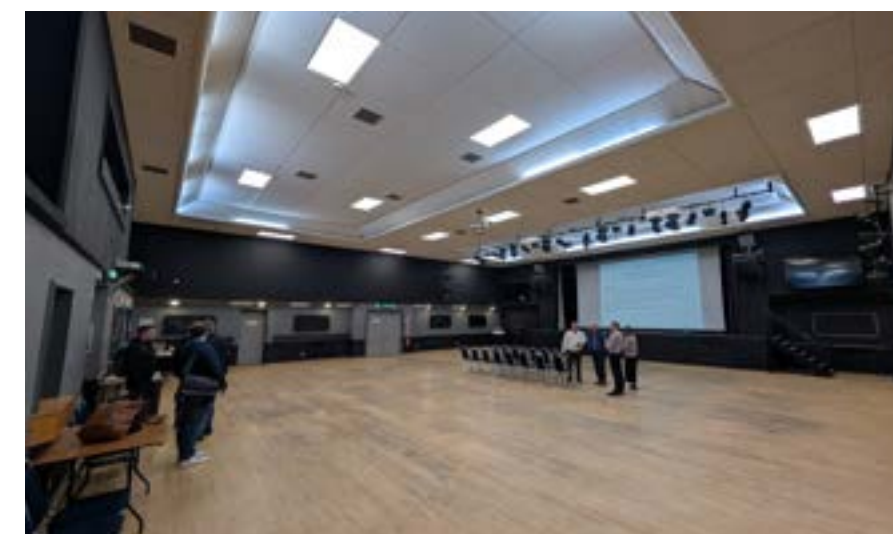
The existing auditorium is a versatile, well-used space. It is a rectangular, flat floored room, 17.5m wide and 16.7m long (measured from the stage front to the rear wall). The stage is 1130mm high and quite shallow in depth at only 6.3m. The overall width of the stage house is around 17.7m (inclusive of the wings). The auditorium is separated from the stage by a proscenium wall with a relatively small proscenium opening, 8.35m wide x 3.4m high.

The venue hosts a number of different event types, from live music, to comedy, pantomime, film screenings, lectures, and a comparatively modest amount of drama. A large proportion of the events – particularly the live music gigs – have a standing audience. For seated events, there are two primary configurations – in rows as an end stage format, or in a cabaret arrangement with rectangular tables of varying sizes and a small standing zone.

Whilst the venue is clearly very popular, the current auditorium space does have a number of shortcomings:

- The ceiling feels relatively low for the proportions of the space. It gives a clinical, utilitarian feel, at odds with the types of events being hosted.
- The space is very wide, meaning that it can lack a sense of intimacy for seated events.
- The existing seating is uncomfortable. The only options are to have this on the flat floor, compromising the quality of the sightlines, or to build a seating rake (as is the case for the pantomime), which is time consuming and labour intensive. The requirement to set out rows of flat floor seats slows the turnaround time for the space, limiting the number of different events which can be hosted on the same day.
- Although the flat floor configuration does have the benefit of step-free access, provision for wheelchair users is relatively poor. There are no dedicated spaces for patrons in wheelchairs, and during standing gigs in particular, their view is likely to be severely impaired by those in front.
- The proportions of the proscenium opening give quite a 'letterbox' view of the stage. The combination of the relatively narrow and low proscenium opening and the shallow stage place major limitations on shows with sets, such as the pantomime.

- The stairs in the stage right wing get in the way and present a trip hazard in low lighting.
- The technical infrastructure is very limited – both in terms of rigging options and lighting, sound, AV and communications capabilities. The bars over the stage are fixed, limiting flexibility and meaning that lighting etc. has to be rigged at height, which always presents a health and safety concern.
- The control booth can only be accessed by a ladder, making it inaccessible to those with mobility issues. Carrying equipment up to the control booth is hazardous. Furthermore, space within the booth is extremely limited and there is a persistent problem with overheating.
- There is no scene dock and limited storage for technical equipment. The get-in is at the auditorium floor level and there is no way of raising equipment to stage level, except through manual handling.
- There is noise transfer from The Point (drumming etc.).



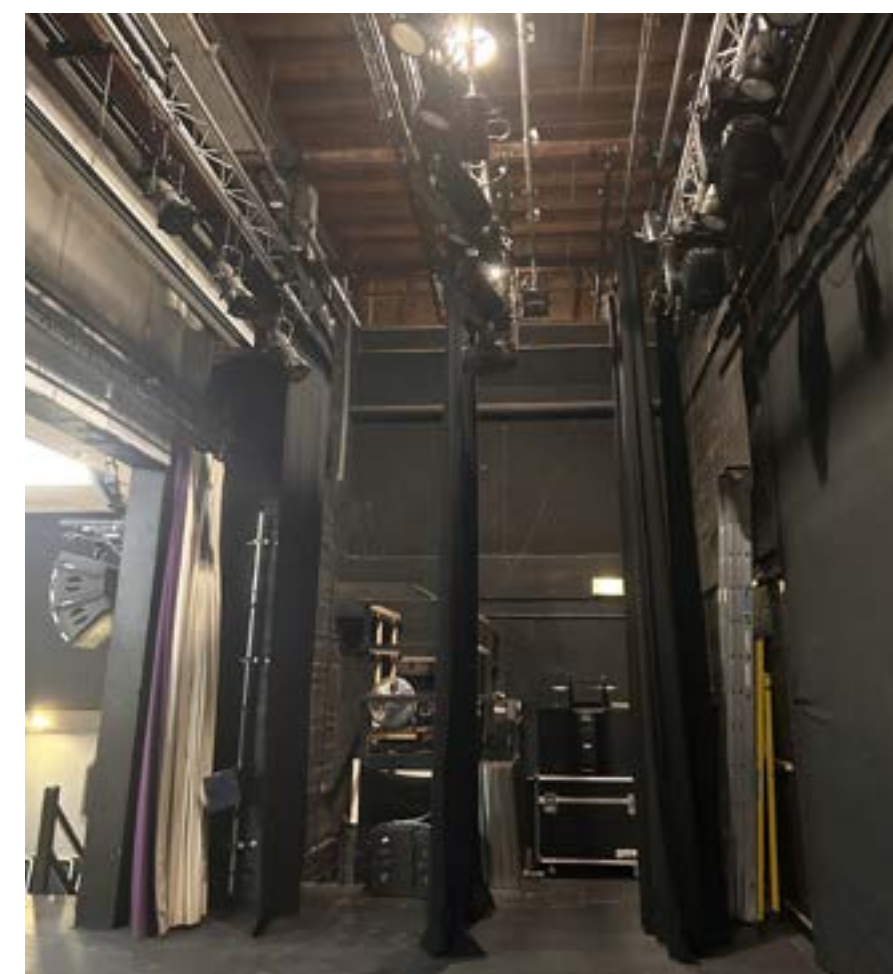
*Auditorium*



*Auditorium bar*



*Control room*



*Stage house*



### 4.3 Arrival experience

The Harlington enjoys an excellent location on Gurkha Square, in close proximity to the high street. It is well served by car parks and within relatively easy reach of Fleet Station. The landscaping around the immediate entrance boasts plenty of greenery and several mature trees, but the venue's visibility is compromised by parking spaces surrounding the front door. The approach to the building from the High Street is poorly lit and relatively narrow, meaning that it is not an especially pleasant or easy to find route at night.

A key challenge is that the building is not instantly recognisable as a performance venue, and is indeed often confused with Fleet Library. It lacks identity externally – a symptom of the piecemeal alterations and additions over time. The main entrance has a stepped approach and whilst there is also a ramp for wheelchair users and those with buggies, it is very steep and thus does not meet the requirements of Approved Document M. Similarly, the primary entrance is via a relatively small revolving door, which is not conducive to easy access.



*Existing Gurkha Square frontage lacks identity as a performance venue.*



*Steep external entrance ramp.*

### 4.4 Front of House spaces

The Harlington benefits from a reasonably generous front of house footprint. However, the way in which this is subdivided makes the ground floor foyer feel constrained. The entrance area, in particular, becomes something of a bottleneck, whilst the adjacent café/exhibition space is underutilised. There is a lack of visibility from one side of the foyer space to the other – in part due to the awkward position of the main front of house staircase, which 'clogs up' the circulation routes. Whilst the ground floor Function Room is able to act as part of the foyer for larger events in the auditorium, the architectural style of the room's glazed screen makes it feel quite separate – giving the sense of lots of smaller, relatively cramped individual spaces, rather than one expansive public foyer. The Function Room is well-used as a space in its own right, but it does have a tendency to overheat.

The bland colour scheme and prevalence of dropped tiled ceilings make the front of house spaces feel quite institutional and many of the finishes are beginning to look dated. The spaces are fairly corporate, lacking the character that one would expect to find in an exciting entertainment venue - particularly given the Harlington's desire to build its younger audience.



*Constrained entrance area.*



*Underused café / exhibition space adjacent to the entrance.*





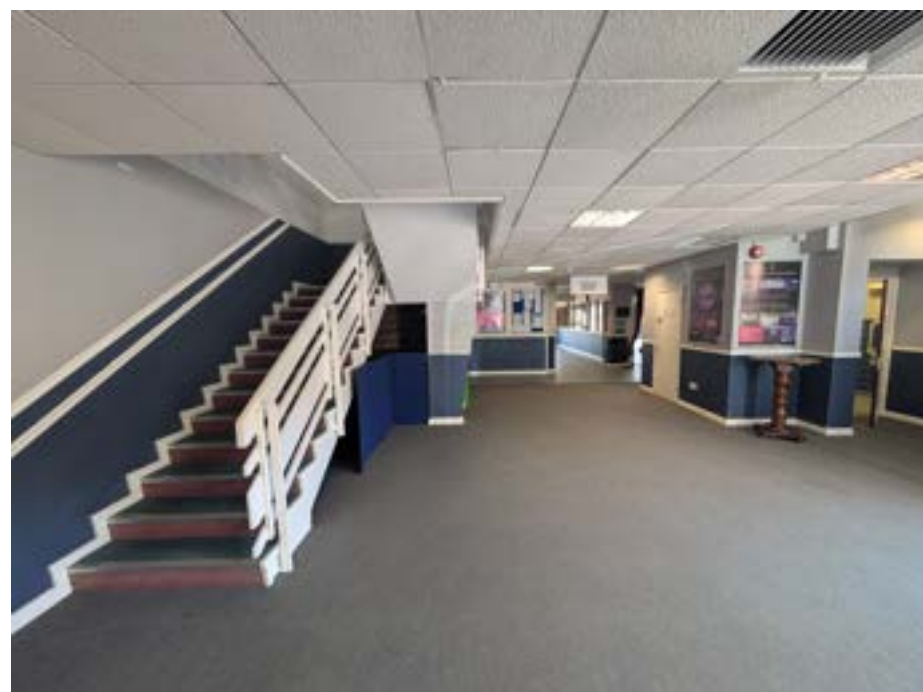
*The revolving entrance door hampers accessibility.*



*The box office creates a bottleneck near to the entrance.*



*The stalls foyer is reasonably generous but disjointed and utilitarian in feel.*



*The front of house staircase clutters the foyer space.*



*The ground floor function room tends to overheat.*



*The first floor foyer feels insular with little natural light.*

4.5 Front of House WCs

Toilet requirements for performance venues are typically based upon the guidance in ‘The Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment’ (i.e. the ‘yellow book’) and on British Standard BS 6465-1:2006. There are subtle differences between these two documents. The yellow book is slightly more demanding (in terms of toilet quantities) in some scenarios, whilst BS 6465 is more demanding in others. For the purposes of this report, we have therefore based the assessment of the toilet provision on a combination of these two documents, taking the most onerous aspects of each.

For a standing gig, the Harlington advertises a capacity of up to 500 (but more typically sells 450 tickets). The review of the existing WC provision is based upon:

- A maximum capacity of 500 for standing gigs. These are assumed to be continuous performances (without an interval).
- A maximum capacity of 316 for seated performances. These are assumed to be non-continuous performances with an interval.

The male provision is achieved (and in fact exceeded) at ground floor level. The female provision is slightly below the requirements of BS 6465-1:2006. It is worth noting that the female provision would, however, comply with the yellow book’s slightly lower requirement of 9 cubicles and 6 washbasins.

Clearly, in terms of the female WC provision, the ground floor toilets alone are inadequate to cope with the audience numbers. There is therefore a heavy reliance upon these being supplemented by the first floor WCs. When all of the audience is at stalls level, directing patrons to the upper floor is not always easy, particularly when they have already ‘committed’ to the ground floor toilet queue. Insufficient female cubicles at ground floor level can be problematic.

The fit out of the front of house WCs is fairly institutional. The fixtures and finishes are looking tired and in need of an upgrade.

WC type	Statutory provision	Existing provision
Male WCs	4 urinals, 2 WC cubicles, 3 washbasins	Ground floor: 6 urinals, 2 WC cubicles, 3 washbasins  First floor: 6 urinals, 1 WC cubicle, 3 washbasins
Female WCs	11 WC cubicles, 7 washbasins	Ground floor: 5 WC cubicles, 2 washbasins  First floor: 5 WC cubicles, 3 washbasins
Accessible WCs	1 near to main entrance  1 adjacent to ground floor FOH WCs  1 adjacent to first floor FOH WCs	Accessible WC / shower near to the FOH lift  Accessible WC adjacent to ground floor FOH WCs (slightly undersized)  Accessible WC adjacent to first floor FOH WCs (slightly undersized)

Comparison Table of Statutory Requirements with Existing Provision



The existing front of house WCs are dated and institutional in their appearance.

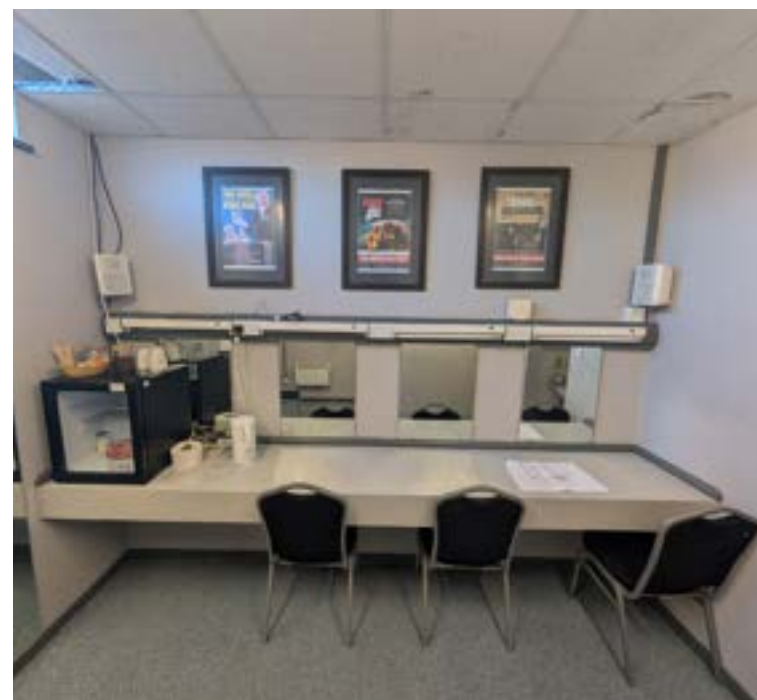


## 4.6 Back of House spaces

The Harlington currently has 2 formal 7-person dressing rooms on stage left. These have en suite shower and WC facilities, though these are looking dated and in need of renewal. The dressing rooms are not properly accessible since the corridor leading to them is stepped. Although there is a chairlift, this requires a disabled building-user to transfer out of their wheelchair, which is less than ideal. Furthermore, the dressing rooms do not have an associated accessible WC/shower facility.

On stage right, some of the spaces within the former WRVS building are often colonized as additional dressing rooms. The open area at the lower level is frequently used as a green room, but lacks natural light (save for a small rooflight), and as such, can be a slightly dreary space. Meanwhile, perimeter spaces which do benefit from windows are 'wasted' as makeshift storerooms due to the venue's storage shortcomings. The individual WCs within the WRVS block are in need of upgrade.

At basement level, the redundant kitchen previously associated with the WRVS meals-on-wheels service takes up a sizable footprint. This is currently a wasted space. Whilst limited in terms of floor-to-soffit height, there is also a reasonably large multi-purpose space at basement level. This is useful as an overspill dressing room or a space for read-throughs / workshops etc. Makeshift plywood partitions are used to create storage rooms at basement level, along with an office for the Harlington's Technical Manager.



*Typical dressing room.*



*The dressing room sanitary facilities are a little dated and lack privacy.*

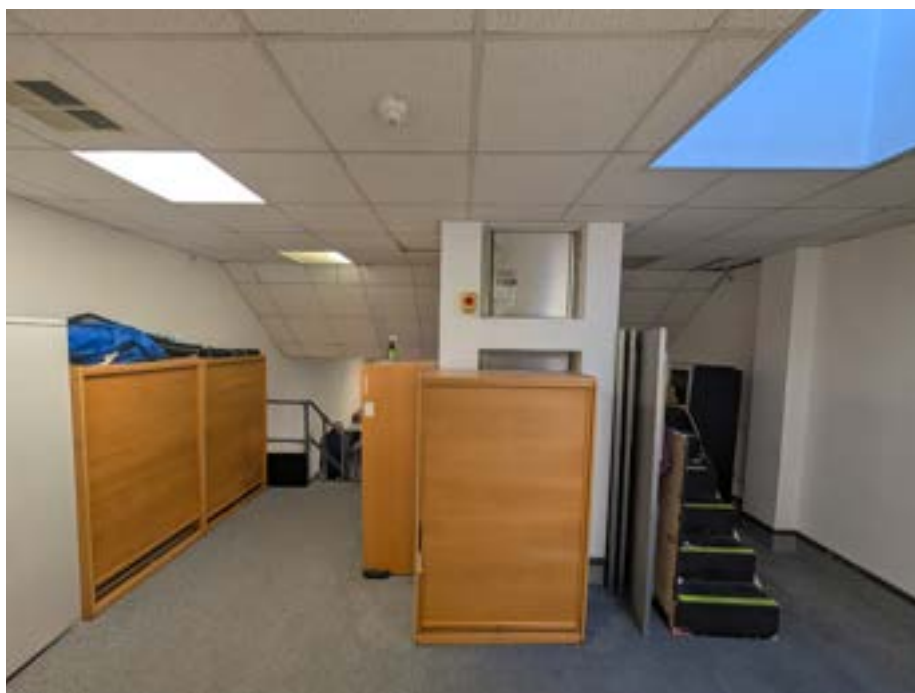


*The makeshift green room in the former WRVS space lacks natural light.*



*Daylit spaces are wasted due to storage challenges.*





*The dumb waiter in the former WRVS building is now redundant.*



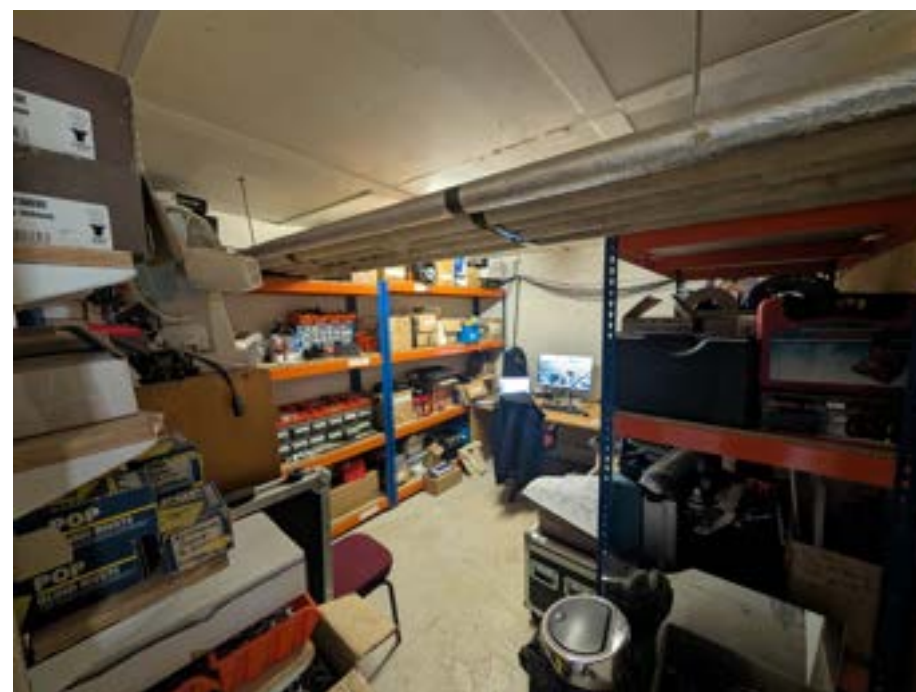
*The former WRVS building has a large footprint with underutilised spaces.*



*The basement kitchen is no longer required.*



*The large multi-purpose space below the stage is a valuable asset.*



*The technical manager's basement office is a little remote from the stage.*



*There is an opportunity to rationalise the existing ground floor kitchen layout.*



## 4.7 Dance Studio

The Harlington's first floor Dance Studio is a major asset. It is in high demand with local dance and exercise groups, having the benefit of a sprung floor, mirrored wall, ballet barres and plentiful natural light. The space is a pleasant one and the zone on the first floor landing is convenient for waiting parents.

The dance studio, does, however, have some issues to address, including a tendency to overheat and a problem with noise bleed to and from the auditorium, preventing concurrent programming of events in the two spaces. There isn't presently any dedicated storage for outdoor coats, shoes and bags. Furthermore, the fixed bar counter at the north-west end of the studio is redundant, taking up valuable floor space.



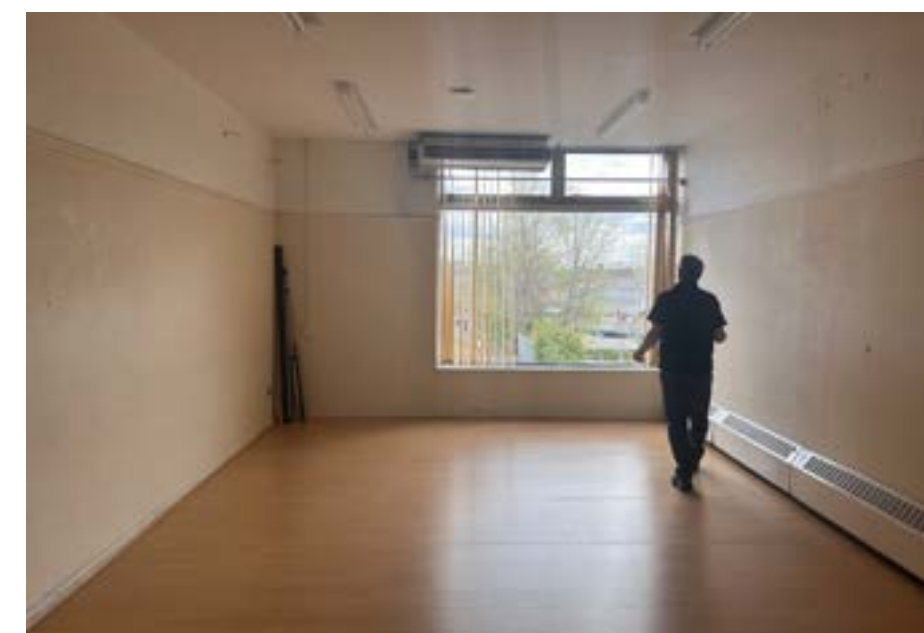
*The dance studio is well equipped but has issues with overheating.*

## 4.8 First floor meeting rooms

Considering the demands on the Dance Studio, it is somewhat surprising to learn that two of the venue's other spaces – the two first floor meeting rooms – are comparatively underused. This is perhaps due to their slightly awkward proportions and the fact that the poor acoustic performance of the walls and doors allows meetings to be overheard from the first floor foyer.



*The smaller meeting room is well proportioned but lacks acoustic privacy.*



*The larger meeting room has a good quality of light but a long, narrow shape.*



## 4.9 Fleet Town Council Offices

The Harlington as a venue is in the unique position of sharing the building with the offices of Fleet Town Council. One of the challenges associated with this is the steady flow of people who come into the building in search of the Council entrance (which is currently accessed from an external footpath). There is a sense, however, that this existing problem could be turned to the venue's advantage. By improving internal connectivity to the offices and capitalising on the idea of a combined box office/council reception, the Harlington could benefit from FTC's location within the building as another way of bringing people through the door and raising the venue's public profile.

The existing offices have a number of shortcomings – primarily the fact that staff members are quite separate from one another, making collaboration difficult. This is due to the collection of individual offices, the split level arrangement, and the fact that the offices awkwardly straddle a flight of steps which forms one of the primary escape routes from the auditorium. The positioning of the windows means that the spaces can lack sufficient natural light and they also have a tendency to overheat. There is no direct connection between the offices and the front of house spaces at present. The FTC archive room is inconveniently located away from the offices, accessed off the first floor foyer. Furthermore, staff have commented on the lack of a private meeting room to have confidential discussions – often resorting to having such conversations in a parked car.

## 4.10 Connections to the Library

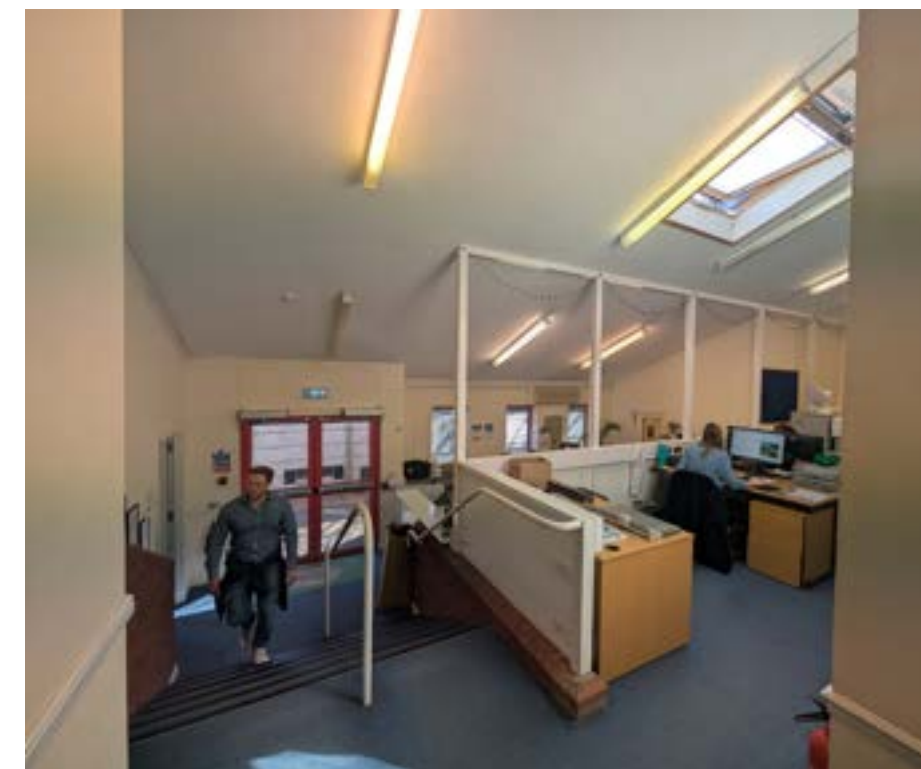
As the basis of the proposed options, an assumption has been made that the existing internal links with Fleet Library can be closed off at the ground floor level and the first floor level. Studies by the fire consultant have shown that the escape strategy for the Harlington is workable without these exits. Our understanding is that these are not required as part of the Library escape strategy but this should be verified at the next design stage.

It is assumed that the Harlington's front of house lift is not required by Library users.

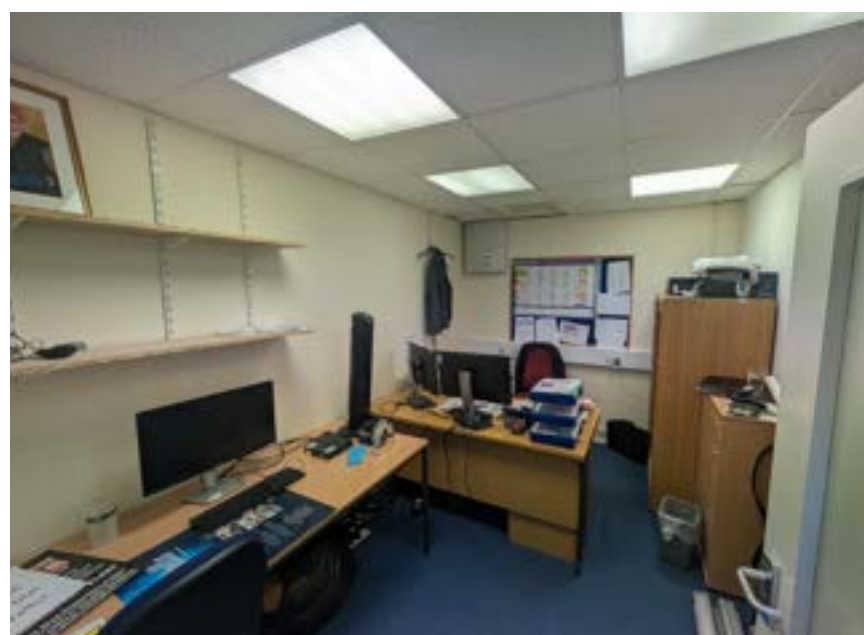
As detailed in the services report (Appendix G), while one option being explored is to separate the Library services from the Harlington, the design at this stage needs to proceed on the basis of having to maintain these services connections.



*The external access to the FTC offices presents a security issue.*



*The escape stair and split level arrangement break up the office space.*



*The individual cellular offices are not conducive to collaboration.*



*There is little natural light into the staff room.*



## 5.0 Engagement and Consultation

### 5.1 Feedback from User Groups

During the feasibility process, there have been a number of engagement workshops with both staff and regular hirers of the Harlington. These sessions were intended to gather feedback on the positive and negative aspects of the existing building and to gain a better understanding of the way in which the spaces are used.

Consultees during the feasibility process have included representatives from:

- FTC and Harlington staff
- The Arts Society Hart
- Exercise / aerobics groups
- Dance groups and dance schools
- Fleet Film
- Fleet Repair Cafe
- Fleet U3A

Preliminary versions of Option 1 and Option 2 have been shared with staff members at various points during the design process and feedback has been incorporated into the design where possible. Naturally all building-users have slightly different priorities and finding the right balance between competing requirements will be a process which continues into subsequent design stages (guided in part by the preliminary costings).

The table on the right broadly outlines the main feedback for each area of the building.

Space	Feedback
Auditorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The limited stage dimensions and narrow, low proscenium opening are problematic (particularly for performances involving a set such as the pantomime). The existing stair in the stage right wing presents a major constraint and a hazard.</li> <li>• The existing over-stage rigging capabilities are limited since the bars do not move. The ability to rig at stage level would be safer and easier and any increase in flying height would be welcomed.</li> <li>• The technical infrastructure in the auditorium is very limited, meaning that incoming productions have the labour intensive and time consuming task of installing all of their own cabling/patching etc. The building is frequently running at its maximum power limit.</li> <li>• The existing seating is uncomfortable and the sightlines are limited by the flat floor nature of the space. The seating is slow to set out, hampering opportunities for a quick turnaround of the space.</li> <li>• Access to the control room is dangerous and difficult and connectivity between the control room and the stage is poor.</li> <li>• Better front of house lighting positions are required to eliminate 'dead spots' on the stage.</li> <li>• The relatively high stage is beneficial for standing gigs, giving a good view of performers.</li> </ul>
Exterior and landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The building is regarded locally as part of Fleet Library rather than as a performance venue.</li> <li>• Access is poor with a steep ramp and doors which are difficult to negotiate in a wheelchair or with a pram.</li> <li>• Large digital screens and / or illuminated poster panels would be helpful to enable the showcasing of upcoming events.</li> </ul>
Entrance area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area south of the entrance is an underused space, while the zone around the box office is a bottleneck due to the columns.</li> </ul>
Front of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ground floor Function Room often overheats and so the curtains have to be drawn prior to events.</li> <li>• The first floor foyer feels more like a stair landing - but is often used by parents waiting for children having dance classes.</li> <li>• More sales points for the bars would be welcomed.</li> </ul>
FOH WCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional female toilets are needed to reduce queuing issues. Not everyone is able to find the first floor toilets and so there is a reliance upon staff members to direct patrons upstairs to ease ground floor congestion. The ground floor WCs have drainage issues.</li> </ul>
Dance Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dance studio is in high demand and is a well-liked space but overheating is an issue.</li> <li>• The bar counter and kitchenette are redundant and can be removed.</li> <li>• There are issues of sound bleed between the dance studio and auditorium, limiting concurrent use of the spaces.</li> </ul>
Back of house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More dressing room space would be welcomed with upgraded sanitary facilities. Other back of house spaces should be laid out in such a way that they can double up as dressing rooms when required.</li> <li>• Accessible dressing room provision is required.</li> <li>• A connection into the Point would be useful for potential sharing of facilities when the Harlington is hosting large dance groups etc.</li> </ul>
Get-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing get-in is challenging due to the need for manual handling to raise items to stage level.</li> <li>• Although the get in door is just a standard double door, this is not usually too much of an issue. Of course, larger doors would be welcomed if possible.</li> </ul>
Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a shortage of storage generally. Stores are frequently poorly located - e.g. the FTC archive off the first floor foyer.</li> </ul>
FTC offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The offices are often dark and tend to overheat</li> <li>• The split-level arrangement and the scattering of individual offices makes it hard for different staff members to work together. It would be preferable if staff could be brought together in a more open plan space.</li> <li>• There is a lack of space for confidential meetings.</li> <li>• The current external access door presents security and management issues. Public access should be from the Harlington foyer instead, with the box office doubling up as a reception desk for the offices.</li> </ul>



## 6.0 Preliminary Brief

### 6.1 Key Aspirations

There are a number of primary ambitions which are driving the brief for the renewal of the Harlington:

- Provide the Harlington with a clear identity so that it is instantly recognisable as a performance venue and able to better showcase upcoming events.
- Upgrade the external landscaping so that it is more befitting of a public building. Notable areas for attention include the stepped and ramped approach to the front door, along with the route from the high street.
- Enhance the character and ambience within the auditorium so that even before the lights go down, it is an enjoyable space in which to spend time.
- Improve the overall audience experience for performances – e.g. more comfortable seating, better sightlines, good thermal control, better provision for wheelchair users in both seated and standing formats etc.
- Increase the capacity of the auditorium (for all event types) wherever possible.
- Speed up the turnaround time for events in the auditorium so that the venue can work to its full potential.
- Improve the lighting, sound, AV and communications infrastructure in the auditorium (and the connectivity throughout the wider building), enabling a wider range of performances.
- Create a larger number of more flexible rigging points in the auditorium, including bars over the stage which can be flown down to stage level.
- Create an accessible (and less cramped) control booth.
- Increase the proscenium opening size to avoid the current 'letterbox' view of the stage.
- Maximise opportunities for food and beverage sales.
- Create a better arrival experience (as the existing box office etc. currently forms something of a bottleneck).
- Improve the audience experience in terms of the foyer space. The intention would be to transform the fragmented existing foyer into a more generous and welcoming public space.
- Enhance the quality and distribution of front of house WCs and increase the number of female cubicles.
- Improve accessibility throughout for audiences, performers, staff and regular hirers. The building should be welcoming to those with physical and sensory impairments and neurodiverse needs.
- Improve energy efficiency within the building envelope to reduce the building's environmental footprint and running costs.
- Replace end of life mechanical and electrical services with energy efficient systems.
- Make get-ins easier and safer with less manual handling (to raise objects up to stage level). This will also address the objective of reducing the turnaround time so that the auditorium space can work as hard as possible – key to the financial resilience of the Harlington.
- Enhance the legibility of the building so that it is as easy to navigate as possible.
- Create better cohesion between the spaces forming the Fleet Town Council offices, as these are currently disjointed in their layout.
- Link the FTC offices with the stalls foyer and box office zone so that public entry to the offices can be via the Harlington (rather than via the existing external door) – an upgrade in terms of staff security and management of visitors.
- Upgrade backstage dressing room and sanitary facilities (including the provision of accessible dressing rooms) and introduce a dedicated green room.
- Create additional hireable spaces to supplement the Harlington's income stream – e.g. a large studio and/or meeting room.
- Maximise storage, including, if possible, a scene dock to act as a temporary holding area during the crossover between incoming and outgoing events in the auditorium.
- Explore opportunities for the Harlington to share some of the facilities of The Point in certain instances - e.g. when there is a large dance event requiring additional dressing room space.



## 7.0 Option 1 - Baseline Refurbishment

### 7.1 Option 1 Overview

Option 1 is the most 'light touch' approach. It is primarily geared around ensuring compliance, making the building more efficient to run, and dealing with some of the most pressing operational issues. The building layout remains broadly as existing, with some modest internal interventions to improve the experience of the Harlington for both audiences and other building users. The external envelope of the building is generally unchanged, with the exception of the upgrades to doors and windows noted below.

General measures throughout the building would include:

- Replacement of all floor finishes
- Replacement of all ceilings
- Redecoration of all internal walls
- Replacement of all sanitaryware
- Replacement of all windows
- Replacement of all internal and external doors (subject to the fire

strategy). Where the layout is unchanged, new doors are to fit within existing structural openings.

- An improved security strategy with access control provided on the relevant doors and the CCTV and burglar alarm systems upgraded/modified to suit the amended layout.
- Replacement of outdated mechanical services and plant.
- Thermal and acoustic upgrades wherever possible.
- Essential fire safety upgrades (as detailed in the OFR report)

The Point youth facility does not form part of the scope of works, with the exception of envelope upgrades, i.e.:

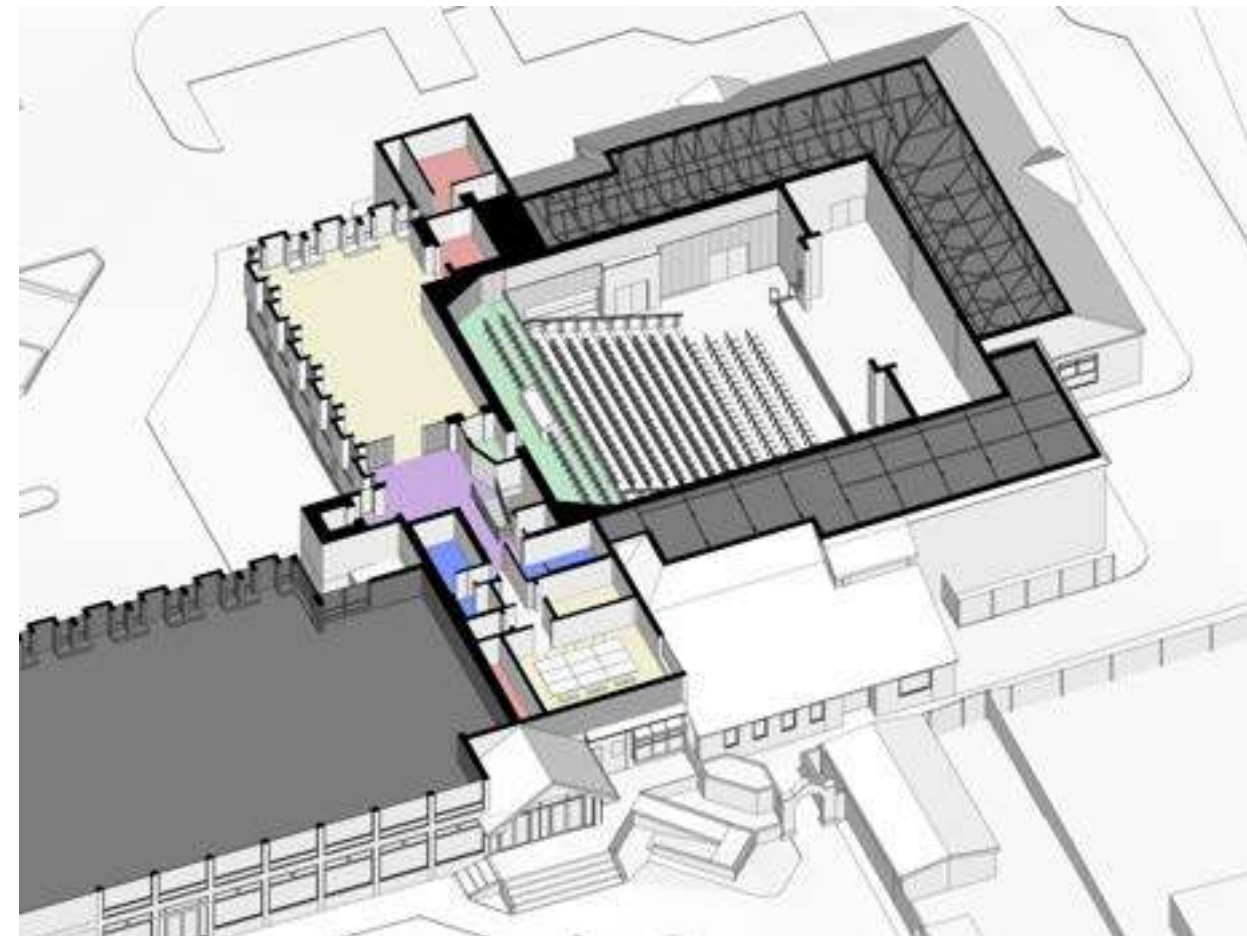
- Replacement of external doors and windows
- The additional of insulation within the pitched roof void (and the associated making good of the ceilings below).
- Any services upgrades as part of the building-wide services replacement.

### 7.2 External works and landscaping

As noted above, Option 1 primarily consists of light touch interior interventions. The façades and external landscaping are therefore broadly unchanged, albeit that the overall appearance will be significantly enhanced by the new windows and doors. The existing steps and entrance ramp are retained but the entrance doors are replaced. The Hart District Council parking spaces surrounding the building are unaffected by the proposal.



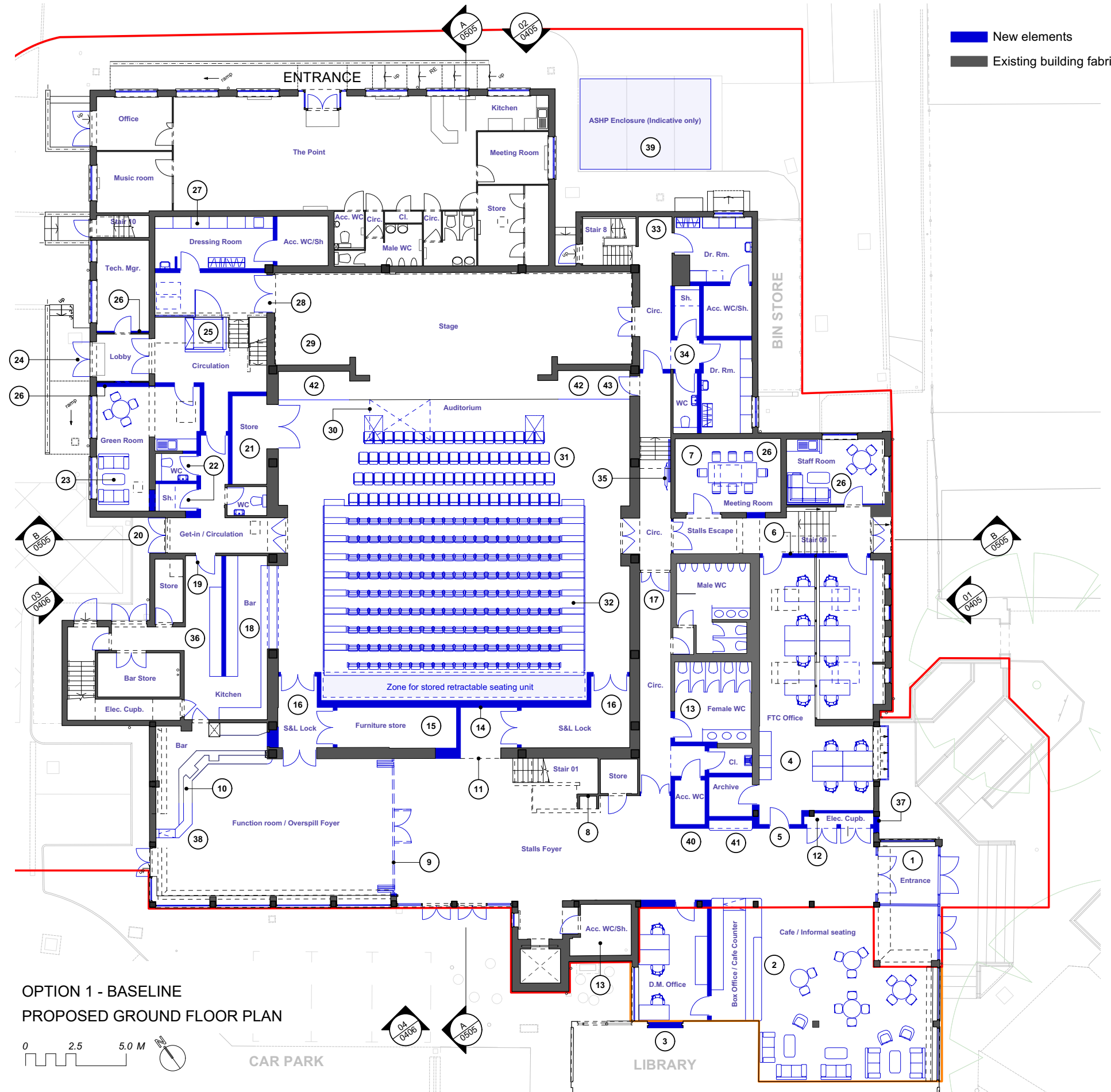
Option 1 - 3D cutaway - Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Option 1 - 3D cutaway - Proposed First Floor Plan

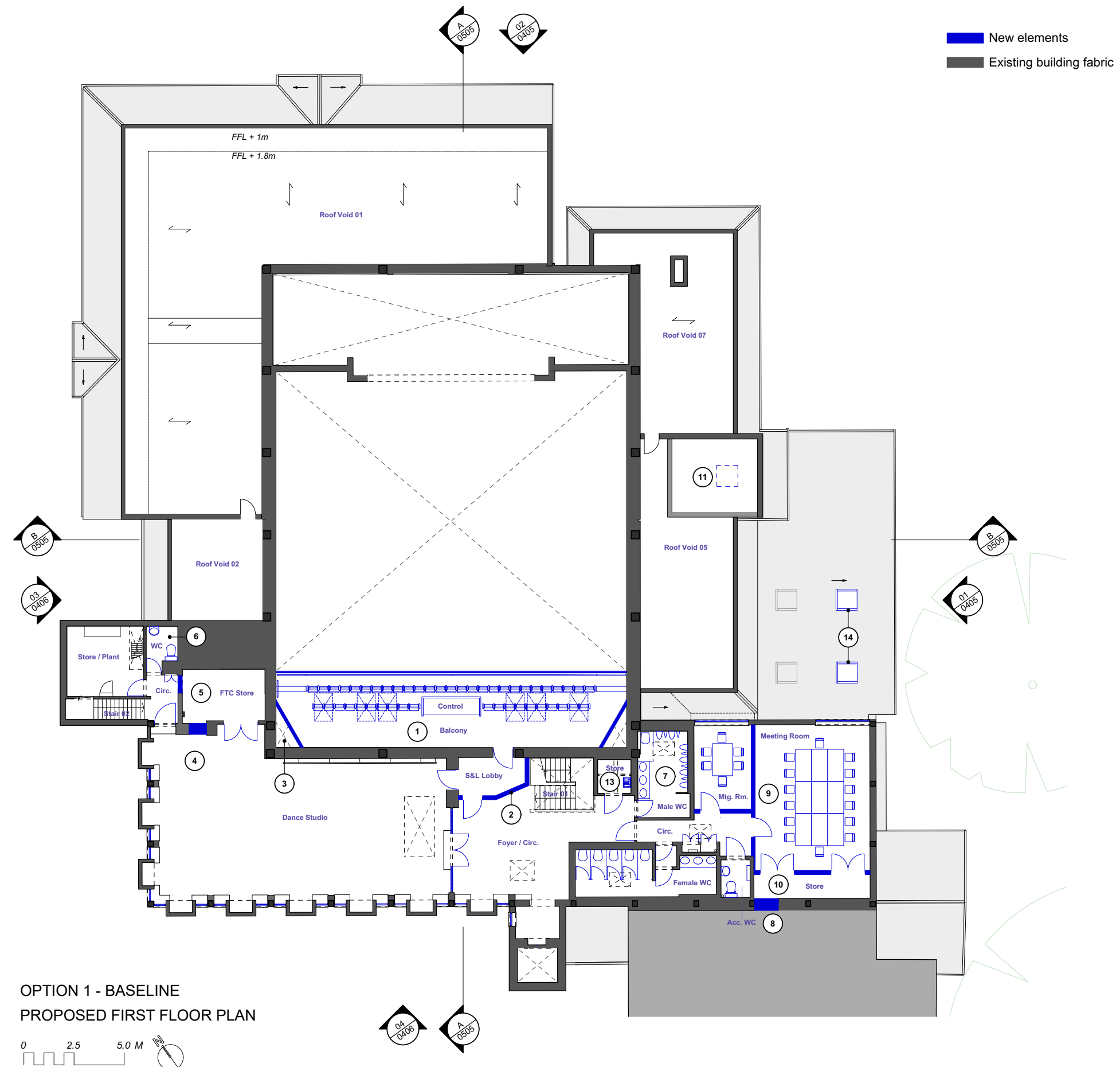


1. New entrance lobby with powered door for improved accessibility and environmental control. Adjacent unlobbied door intended as exit only (for escape).
2. Combined box office / informal cafe counter. The box office also acts as a reception desk for visitors to the FTC offices. Library link closed off.
3. Office space opened up and reconfigured. 2 no. extra rooflights added.
4. New FOH entrance to FTC office. Glazed door for visual connection with the box office.
5. New wall to separate the escape route from the offices.
6. New meeting room with new rooflight above.
7. Water bottle filling station added in the existing recess.
8. Folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
9. Bar counter retained but refurbished with new frontage (including integrated lighting) and countertop. Back bar display / rear counter also refurbished.
10. Wall opening position modified.
11. Services cupboard relocated.
12. Male & Female FOH WCs are fully refurbished (including new sanitaryware, cubicles, vanity units, ceilings and wall/floor finishes) but the layout is unchanged to make use of existing drainage.
13. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
14. Furniture store relocated.
15. Sound & light locks introduced for improved acoustic separation from foyer.
16. Pass door between FOH / BOH.
17. Auditorium bar for use during standing gigs. Acoustic roller shutter closed for more acoustically sensitive performances.
18. New door from kitchen.
19. Existing get-in route retained.
20. Seat store relocated to provide direct access from the auditorium.
21. Accessible WC replaced by an individual WC and an individual shower (wet room).
22. New green room with tea point. An opening (approx. 2.5m wide) is made in the existing wall.
23. Stage Door.
24. New platform lift to provide wheelchair access to stage level and to the new accessible dressing room.
25. New linings to existing walls for improved acoustic performance. Ensure walls continue to soffit level.
26. New 5-person dressing room with accessible WC/shower room. Existing rooflight boarded over.
27. New door upstage right.
28. Existing on-stage stair removed.
29. New lifting platform within existing pit - to assist with raising flight cases and equipment to stage level.
30. Loose (linkable) seating on flat floor to front 4 rows. These chairs can also be used to form part of the cabaret seating provision.
31. New powered retractable seating unit.
32. Kitchenette removed (wheelchair refuge).
33. Dressing rooms & associated sanitary facilities reconfigured. The WC and shower open off the corridor so that they can also be used by staff.
34. New wheelchair platform stairlift (to replace existing chairlift) subject to agreement with fire consultant. Door relocated to top of stair.
35. Kitchen layout rearrangement (extent TBC).
36. Existing door opening infilled.
37. Store removed and end of bar counter remodelled accordingly.
38. Indicative air source heat pump enclosure.
39. Accessible WC reconfigured to accommodate archive alongside (accessed from the office).
40. Built-in banquette seat for visitors waiting to go into the FTC office.
41. Stage front extended to side walls (with possible integration of storage) to work with side wheelchair plinth in the standing gig format.
42. New door onto stage front.
- 43.



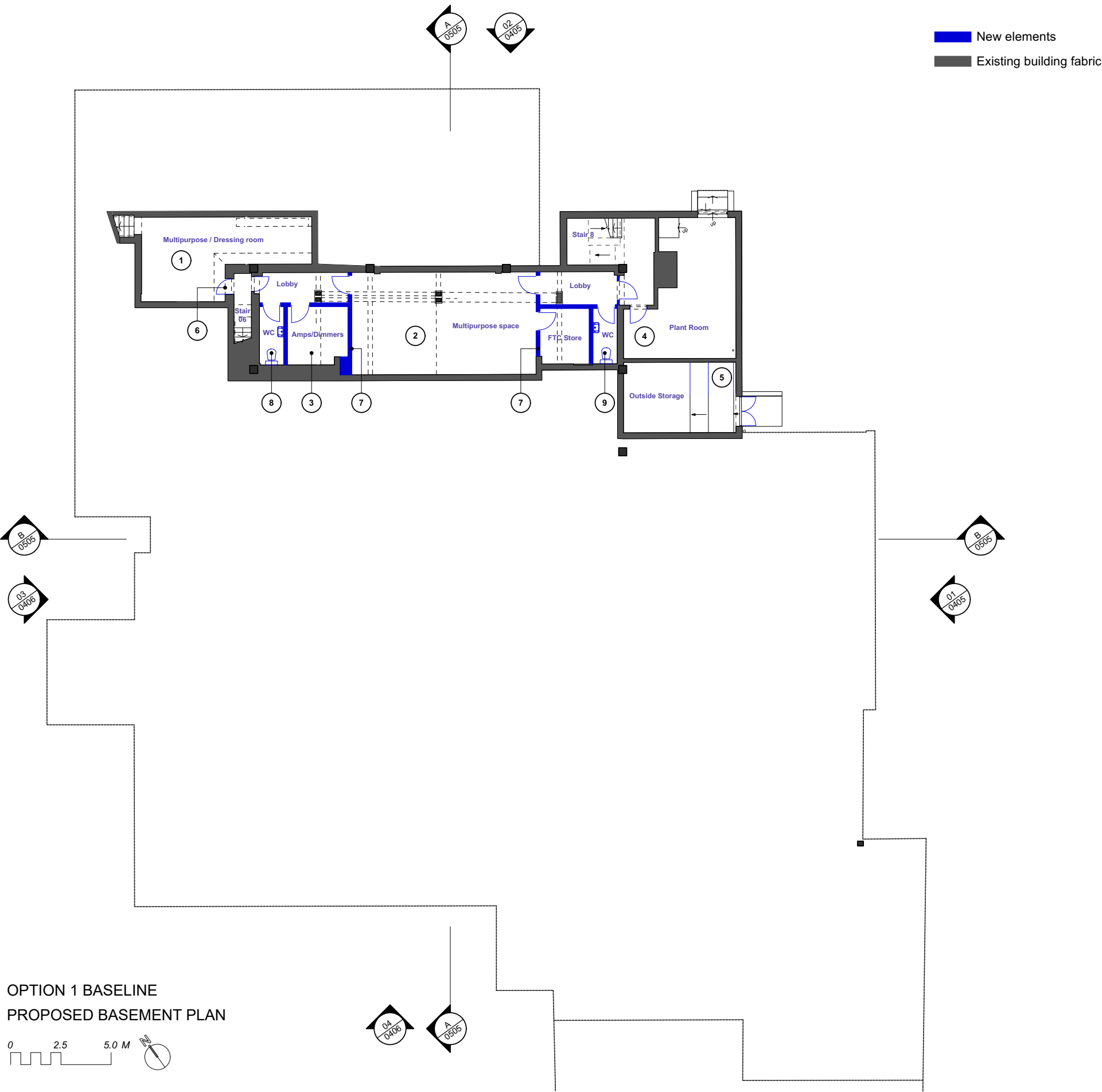


1. New balcony accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.
2. New sound / light / fire lobby. Secondary escape from the auditorium is provided via the Dance Studio in the event of a fire in the foyer.
3. Ventilation risers feed supply air into ceiling void plenum below.
4. Bar counter removed
5. New store in former kitchen. Mobile bar counter within store. Allow for power and data to set counter up within Dance Studio. New double doors enable counter to be wheeled out easily.
6. WC dividing wall removed. The fixtures remain in their existing positions (but the sanitaryware is replaced).
7. All FOH WCs are fully refurbished (including new sanitaryware, cubicles, vanity units, ceilings and wall/floor finishes) but the layout is unchanged to make use of existing drainage.
8. Library link closed off.
9. Meeting room walls rebuilt to create more usefully sized / proportioned spaces.
10. New store, enabling flexible use of the large meeting room.
11. New rooflight above (to meeting room).
12. Existing Dance Studio screen retained but redecorated
13. Former archive repurposed as general store / cleaner's cupboard.
14. 2 new rooflights over the FTC offices.

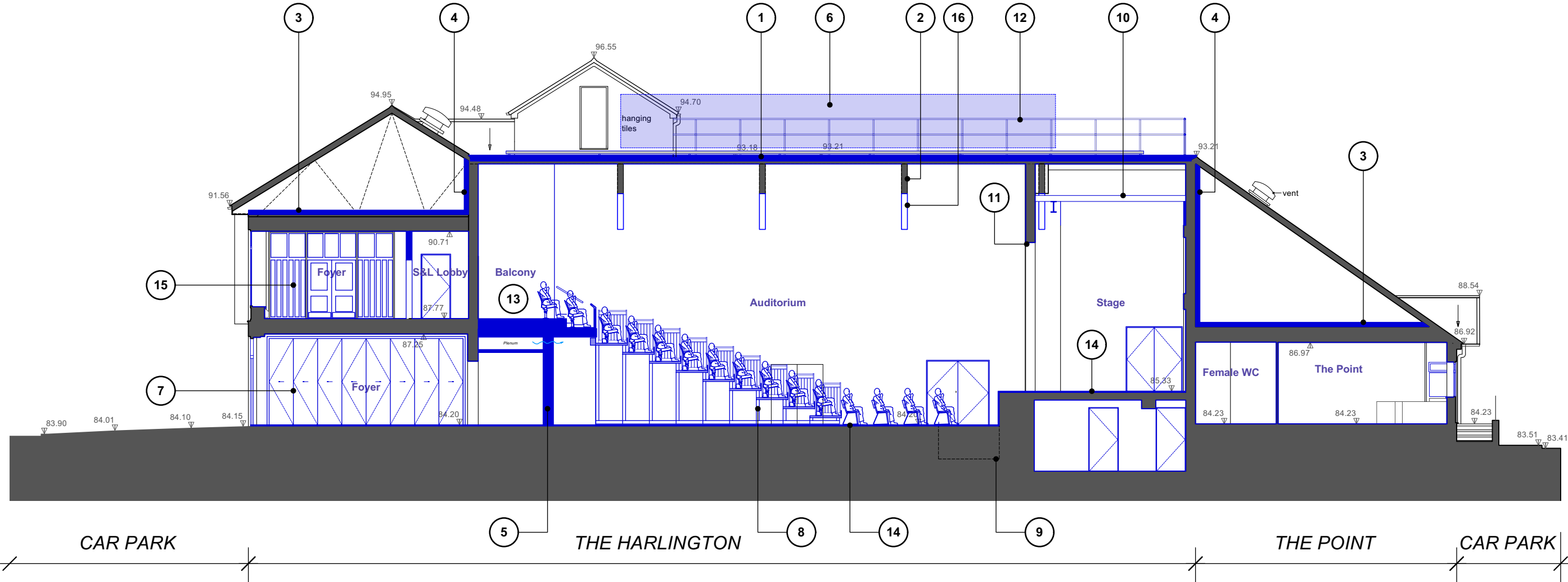




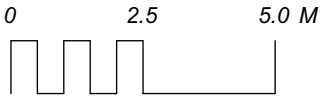
1. Multipurpose space - sometimes used as a dressing room or as an informal media suite (digital connectivity to be provided for this purpose).
2. Multipurpose space / workshop / chorus room (no more than 60 people due to inward opening doors).
3. New amps/dimmers/comms room (with cooling).
4. Fire consultant to advise whether the existing plant room needs to be lobbied.
5. Market square WC removed. Staff bike rack incorporated in the space gained.
6. Fire curtain could be installed over door opening here if required - fire consultant to advise (as a lobby here would encroach into the usable space).
7. New partitions.
8. New WCs supporting the multipurpose spaces.  
**IN ABEYANCE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION OF DRAINAGE OPTIONS.**







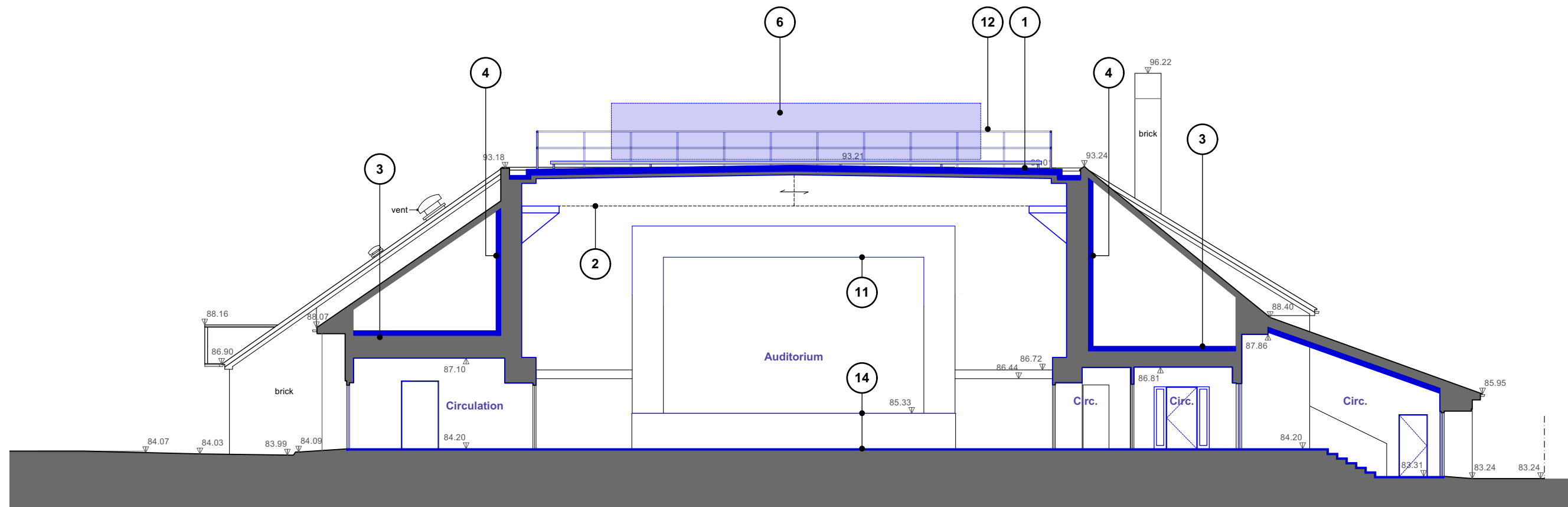
1. New insulation layer on new roof deck.
2. Strengthening works to existing roof structure TBC by SE.
3. New insulation within roof void. Ceiling below replaced.
4. New insulation layer to existing auditorium walls to enhance acoustics and thermal efficiency.
5. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
6. Indicative new plant equipment on plant deck.
7. Indicative folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
8. Retractable seating unit with linked flat floor seating in front.
9. Existing pit - extent TBC.
10. Existing steel rigging grillage retained and raised in accordance with new
11. Height of existing proscenium opening increased
12. Safety guard rails for maintenance access to roof.
13. New balcony accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.
14. New multi-purpose auditorium and stage flooring.
15. Dance studio screen retained but redecorated.
16. New structural supports to existing Glulam beams.



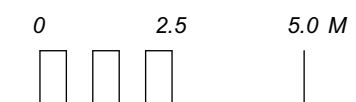
■ New elements  
■ Existing building fabric

OPTION 1 BASELINE  
PROPOSED LONG SECTION (AA)





1. New insulation layer on new roof deck.
2. Strengthening works to existing roof structure TBC by SE.
3. New insulation within roof void. Ceiling below replaced.
4. New insulation layer to existing auditorium walls to enhance acoustics and thermal efficiency.
5. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
6. Indicative new plant equipment on plant deck.
7. Indicative folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
8. Retractable seating unit with linked flat floor seating in front.
9. Existing pit - extent TBC.
10. Existing steel rigging grillage retained and raised in accordance with new
11. Height of existing proscenium opening increased
12. Safety guard rails for maintenance access to roof.
13. New balcony accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.
14. New multi-purpose auditorium and stage flooring.
15. Dance studio screen retained but redecorated.
16. New structural supports to existing Glulam beams.



■ New elements  
■ Existing building fabric

OPTION 1 BASELINE  
 PROPOSED CROSS SECTION (BB)

### 7.3 Auditorium

One of the most commonly expressed views in consultation sessions with regular hirers of the building was that the auditorium seating is uncomfortable. The proposal is therefore to introduce a new powered retractable seating unit, which will offer significantly enhanced audience comfort and improved sightlines. A small amount of flat-floor seating will sit in front of the retractable unit. New sound and light lobbies at the rear of the auditorium will improve acoustic separation from the foyer and give a better flow of people into the auditorium, feeding into the space on either side of the seating. From an operational perspective, the introduction of the retractable bleacher offers the significant benefit of reduced turnaround times.

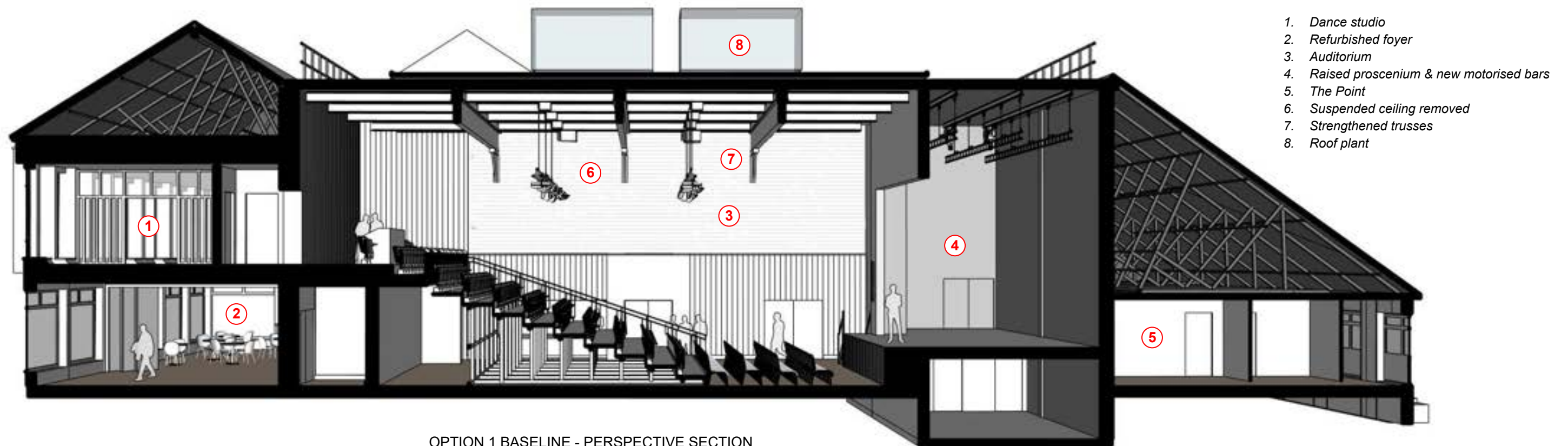
A new 2-row balcony is introduced, made possible by the removal of the existing suspended ceiling to lend the space some additional height. The rear of the balcony ties through with the first floor foyer level, accommodating improved wheelchair positions (each with an adjacent companion seat) and an accessible open control booth. The balcony level wheelchair spaces provide an excellent view of the

stage even when there is a standing audience at stalls level. During primarily standing gigs, it is useful to be able to offer a seated zone at this level for those who would prefer to sit down.

When stowed, the retractable seating unit tucks neatly into the recess beneath the new auditorium balcony. The introduction of the retractable unit means that there is a requirement to relocate the auditorium bar counter. A portion of the existing kitchen is therefore given over to the bar, which serves directly into the auditorium for standing gigs (as per the current set-up). The kitchen equipment would be reconfigured accordingly. A more detailed catering brief will be required at the next design stage to establish exactly what kitchen equipment is required. Due to the positions of the existing columns within the auditorium wall, the new bar counter is unlikely to accommodate more serving points than the existing bar counter. However, there is the opportunity to increase the amount of rear counter space and to provide more manoeuvring space for staff members between the front counter and the rear counter.

The proposal in Option 1 is to raise the height of the proscenium opening – a structurally slightly simpler undertaking than making it both taller and wider (as is the case in the Option 2 proposal). This will reduce the feeling of a ‘letterbox’ opening and is considered particularly important given the introduction of the new balcony level and retractable seating.

As detailed more fully in the Charcoalblue report, the auditorium technical infrastructure will be upgraded with more flexible rigging positions and improved lighting, sound and AV capabilities. Within the stagehouse, the stage right stair will be removed to create a better wing space and a new door will be introduced in the upstage right corner. Tying in with raising the head of the proscenium opening, the over-stage beams would also be elevated to a slightly higher level (within the constraints of the existing envelope). New motorised hoists will allow for bars to be raised and lowered and rigged at stage level – a much safer and more flexible set up than the current fixed bars. The intention would be to strip out all of the existing ventilation



OPTION 1 BASELINE - PERSPECTIVE SECTION  
RETRACTABLE DEPLOYED



ductwork and to introduce some new ventilation risers at the rear of the space to supply air to a ceiling plenum in the zone behind the retractable seating unit. In removing the wall linings associated with the existing ductwork, there is an opportunity to re-think the wall finishes (e.g. potentially exposing the existing brickwork) to create a more atmospheric space, with an aesthetic which is more in keeping with the programme of events hosted by the Harlington.

The existing laminated timber roof beams within the auditorium are to be retained but strengthened. New steel cross beams will support the overhead rigging. The roof joists and roof deck will be replaced, as will the insulated build-up and roof finishes. New mechanical plant will be located on the auditorium roof on a plant deck or 'Big Foot' system to provide acoustic isolation. The requirement to strengthen the existing glulam roof beams (which will be exposed with the removal of the ceiling) presents the opportunity to make an architectural feature of the roof structure, adding character to the space.

The intention is that the Harlington will continue to host a broad range of different event types. When the retractable seating is stowed, the flat floor space can be used for standing gigs and cabaret. To support the flexible use of the auditorium, furniture stores are proposed to the side of the space (in the former WRVS building) and at the rear (in the zone behind the retractable seating). With the introduction of the retractable unit, the amount of loose seating will reduce significantly, but enough must be retained to fulfil the cabaret requirement. The cabaret tables will also still need to be stored. To avoid doubling up on storage requirements, the intention would be for the loose flat floor seating (for the end-stage format) to also form a portion of the cabaret seating provision. A priority will be to select a chair model which stacks efficiently so as to minimize the storage footprint. More detailed studies of numbers of trolleys etc. will be carried out in subsequent design stages to verify that the proposed storage designation is sufficient. Hold-opens will be incorporated to store doors so that it is easier to bring items in and out.

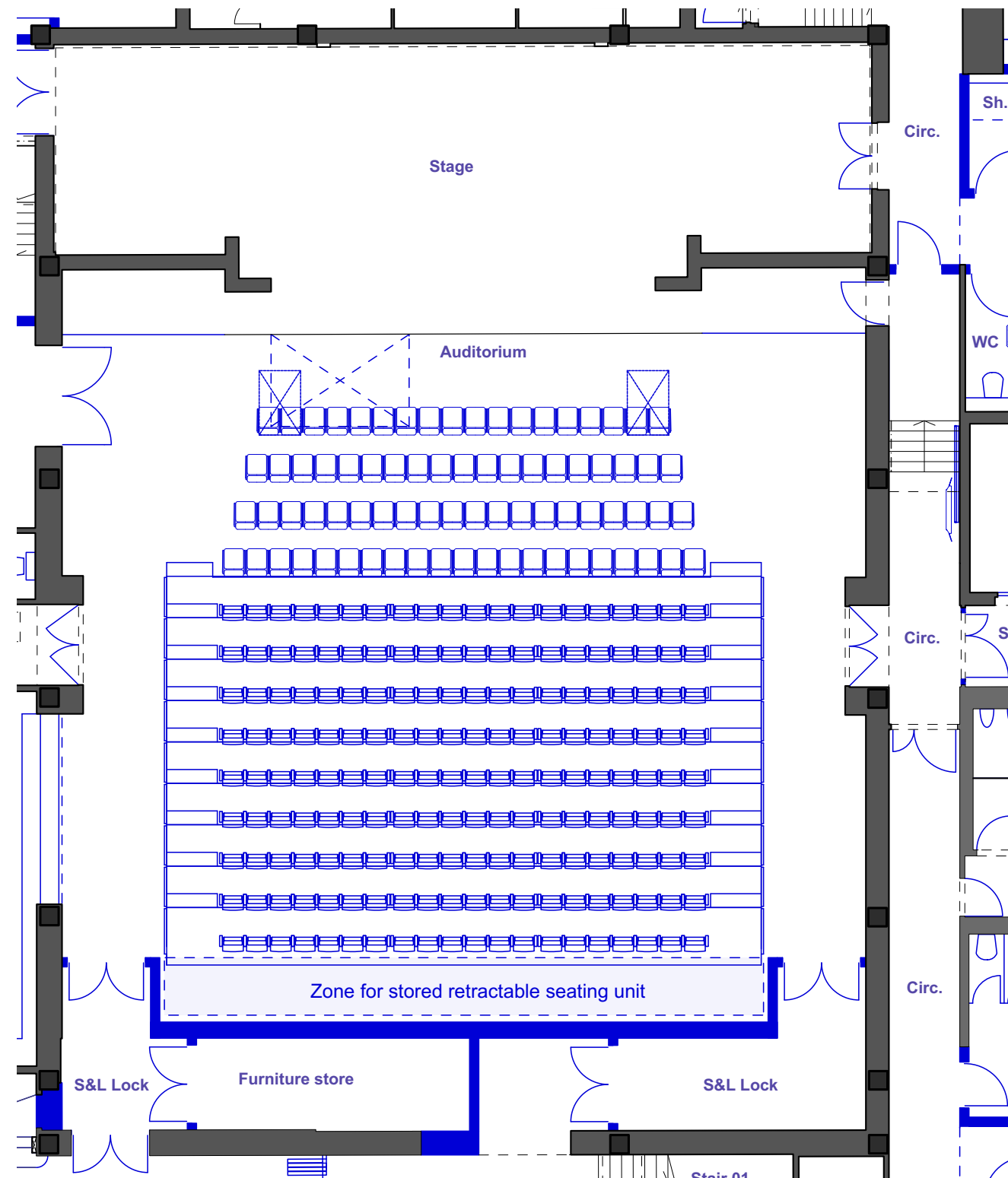
Maintaining good audience numbers in cabaret mode was a key briefing requirement. The balcony seating helps to compensate for the slight loss of available floor area to the retractable seating unit. When in cabaret mode, the intention would be for all wheelchair users to be at stalls level, creating the opportunity for a standing zone at the rear of the balcony, which also helps with audience numbers. The cabaret layouts illustrated in this report are based upon 8-person tables as these are more efficient, maximising capacity. This does, however, have the drawback of less choice for patrons compared to the existing

variety of different table sizes. Discussions around the optimum balance between efficiency and audience preference can be continued in more detail at the next design stage.

An important aspiration in the auditorium refurbishment is to improve the quality of the wheelchair positions for standing gigs. The new balcony naturally helps with this, but to offer patrons a choice of viewing options, it is important that good wheelchair positions are also provided at stalls level. In Option 1, a couple of alternative approaches have been explored. The first of these creates a (ticketed) less densely occupied wheelchair / VIP zone at the front of the space, separated by a demountable rail. The second option extends the apron stage to the side walls (potentially incorporating some storage within these extended portions) and adds a new door from the stage left corridor. A demountable Steeldeck platform can then be constructed on house right for standing gigs, accessed from the extended stage. There are pros and cons with each option. The first option offers a front-on view of the stage but the viewing angle is relatively steep due to the stage height. The second option gives more of a side-on view and involves use of the inclined platform lift within the corridor. It does, however, have the benefit of being eye level with the performers. These options will be evaluated in more detail at RIBA Stage 2.

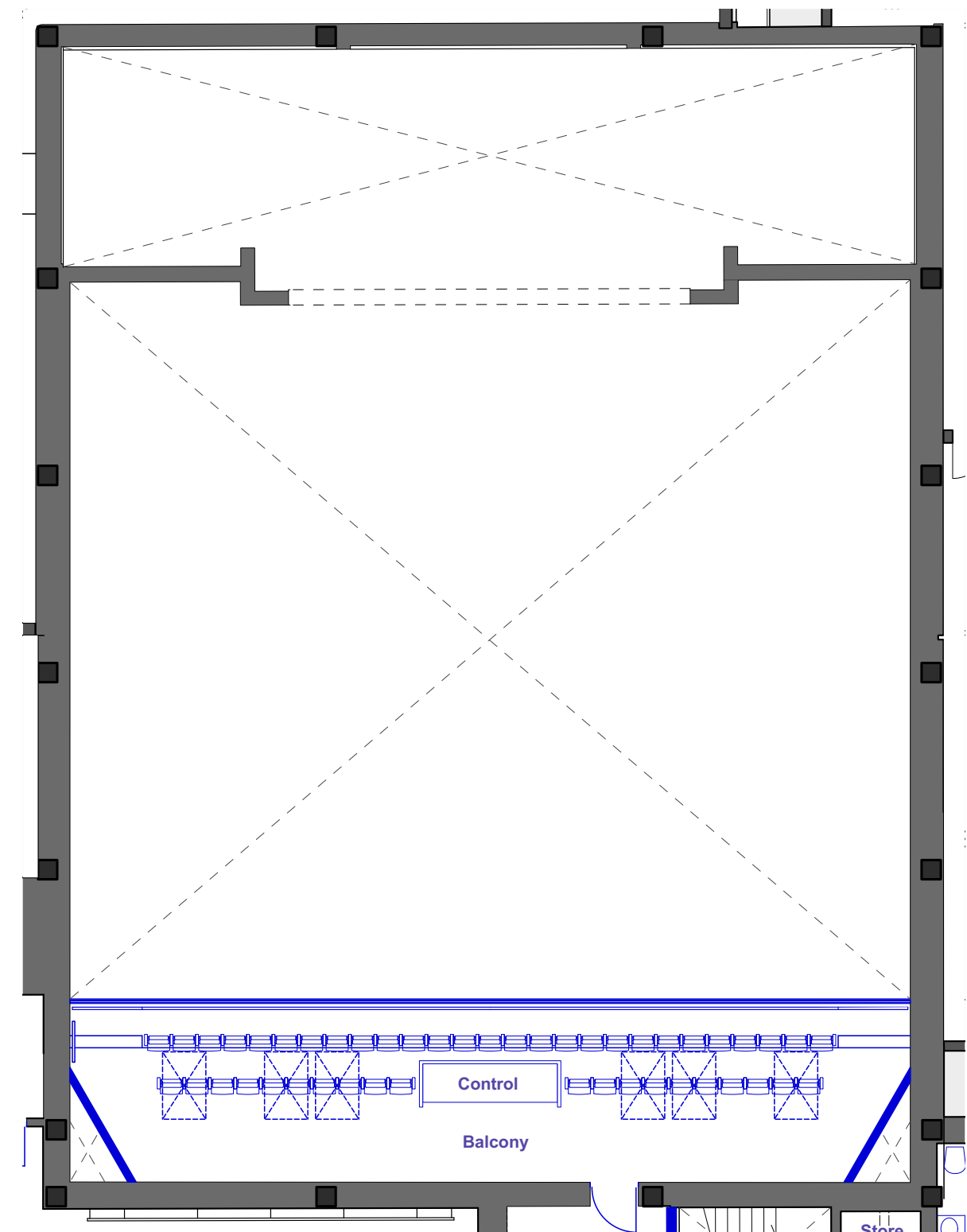
In the various different configurations, the auditorium capacities for Option 1 are as below:

- **End stage format with a seated stalls audience:**  
293 plus 6 wheelchairs
- **Music gig with a standing stalls audience:**  
487 plus 6 wheelchairs
- **Cabaret layout (with a small standing zone):**  
261 plus 6 wheelchairs



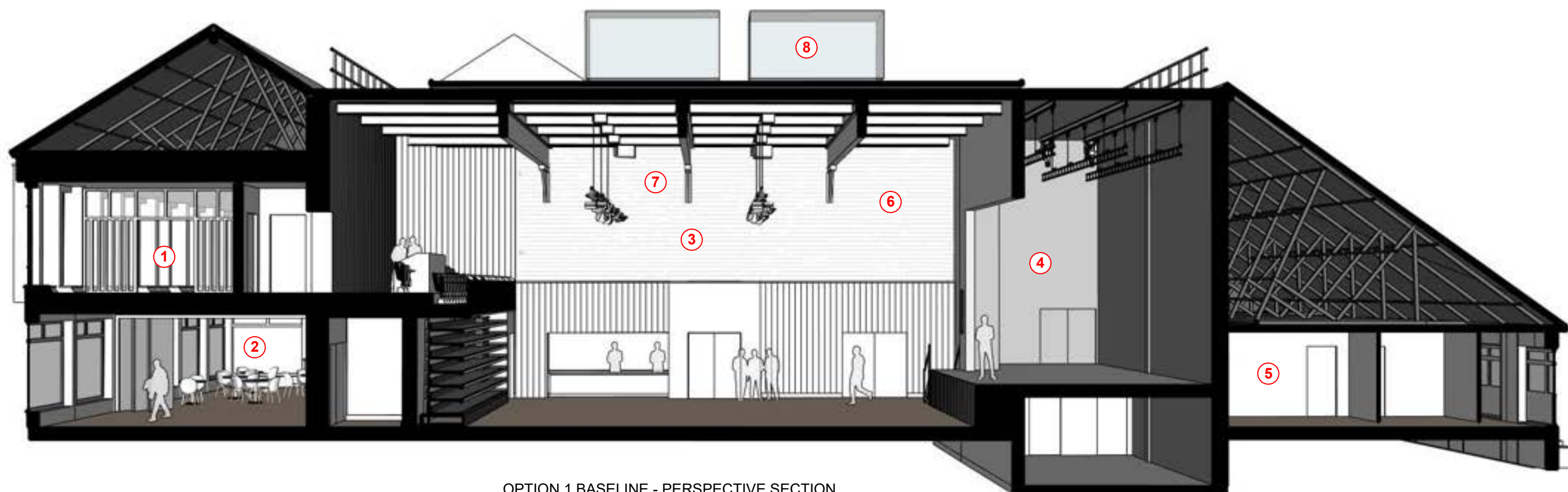
OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN (STALLS) - RETRACTABLE DEPLOYED

*Option 1: Seated performance with the retractable seating unit deployed*



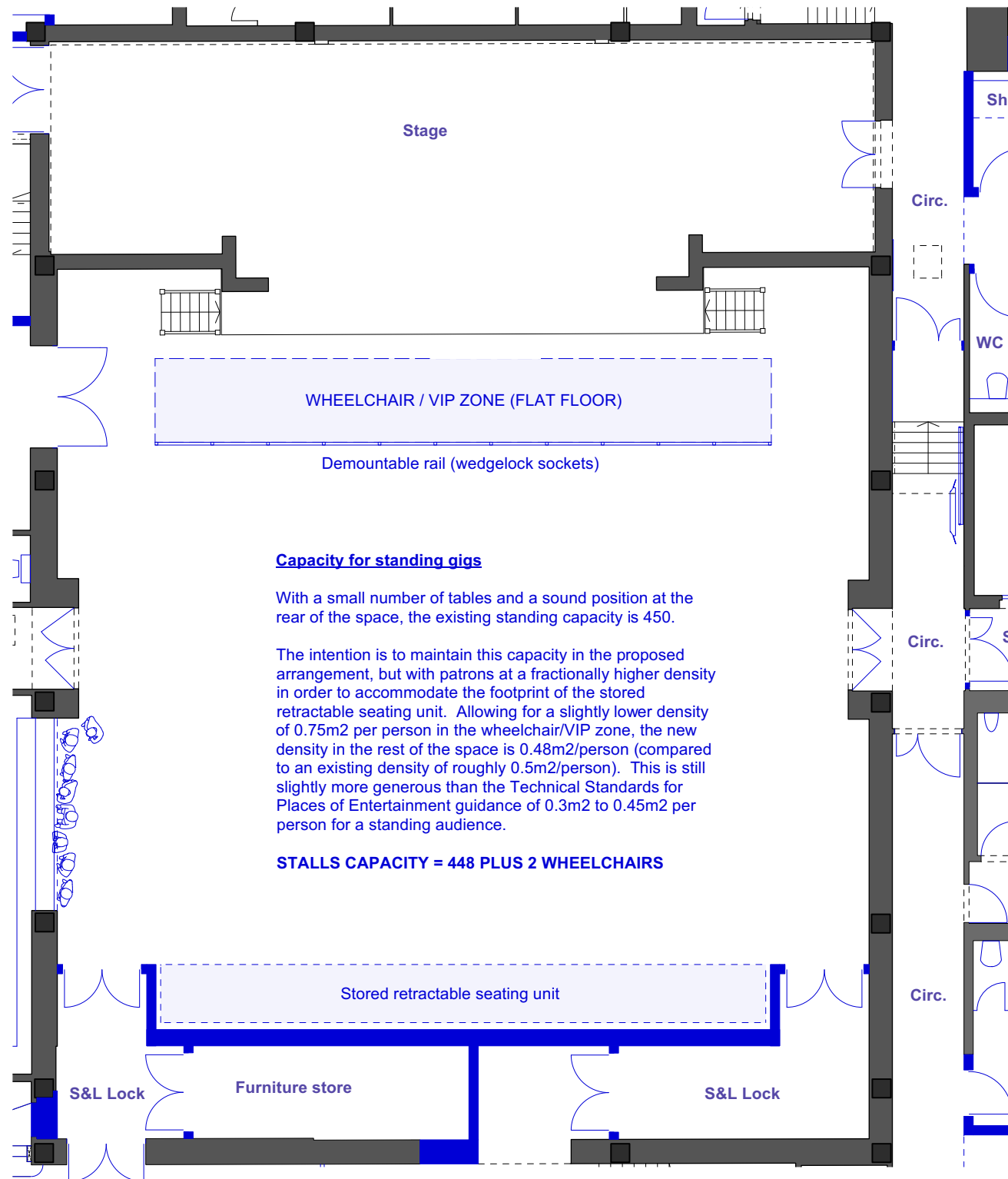
OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN (BALCONY)





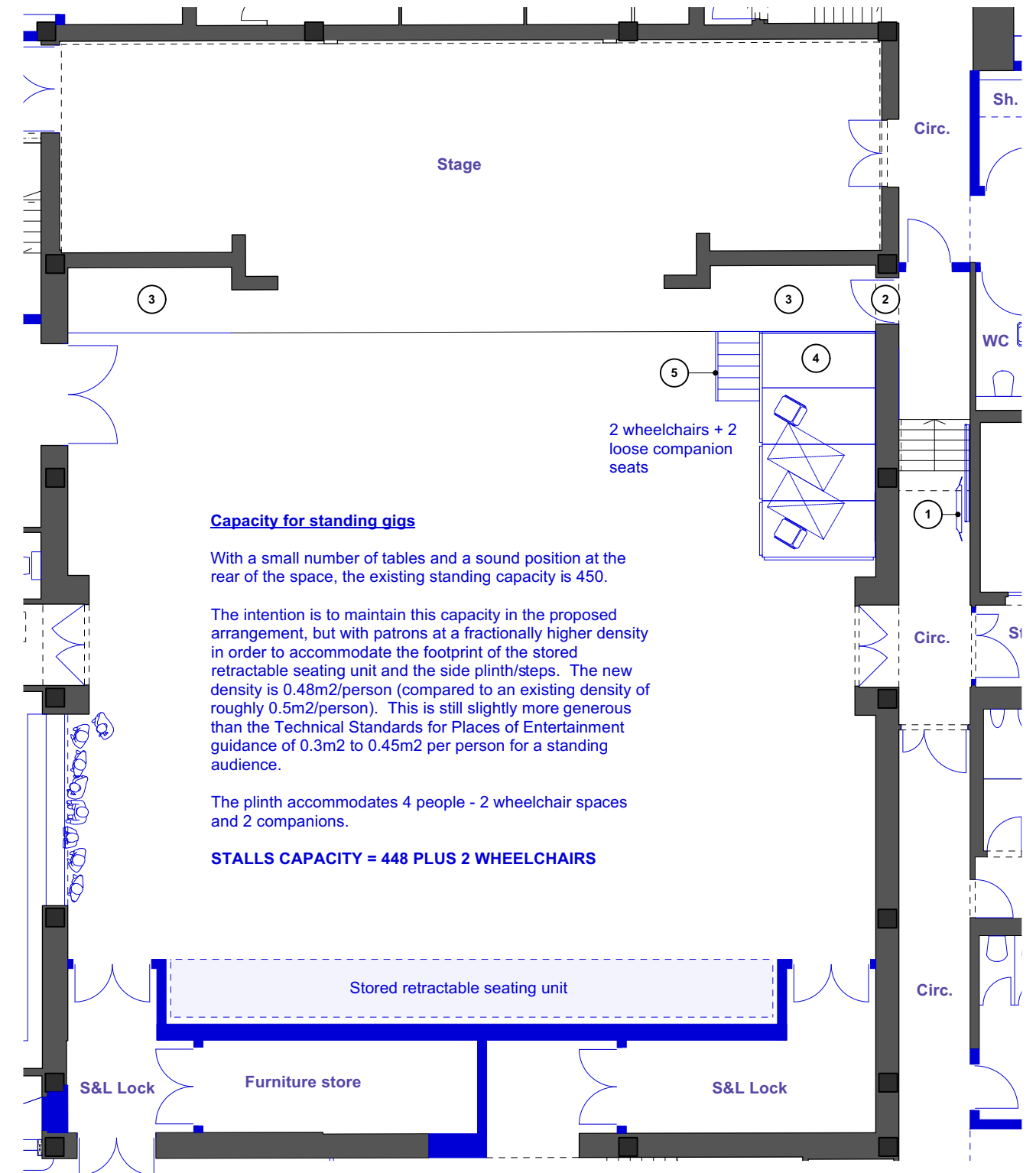
OPTION 1 BASELINE - PERSPECTIVE SECTION  
RETRACTABLE STORED, FLAT FLOOR

1. Dance studio
2. Refurbished foyer
3. Auditorium
4. Raised proscenium & new motorised bars
5. The Point
6. Suspended ceiling removed
7. Strengthened trusses
8. Roof plant



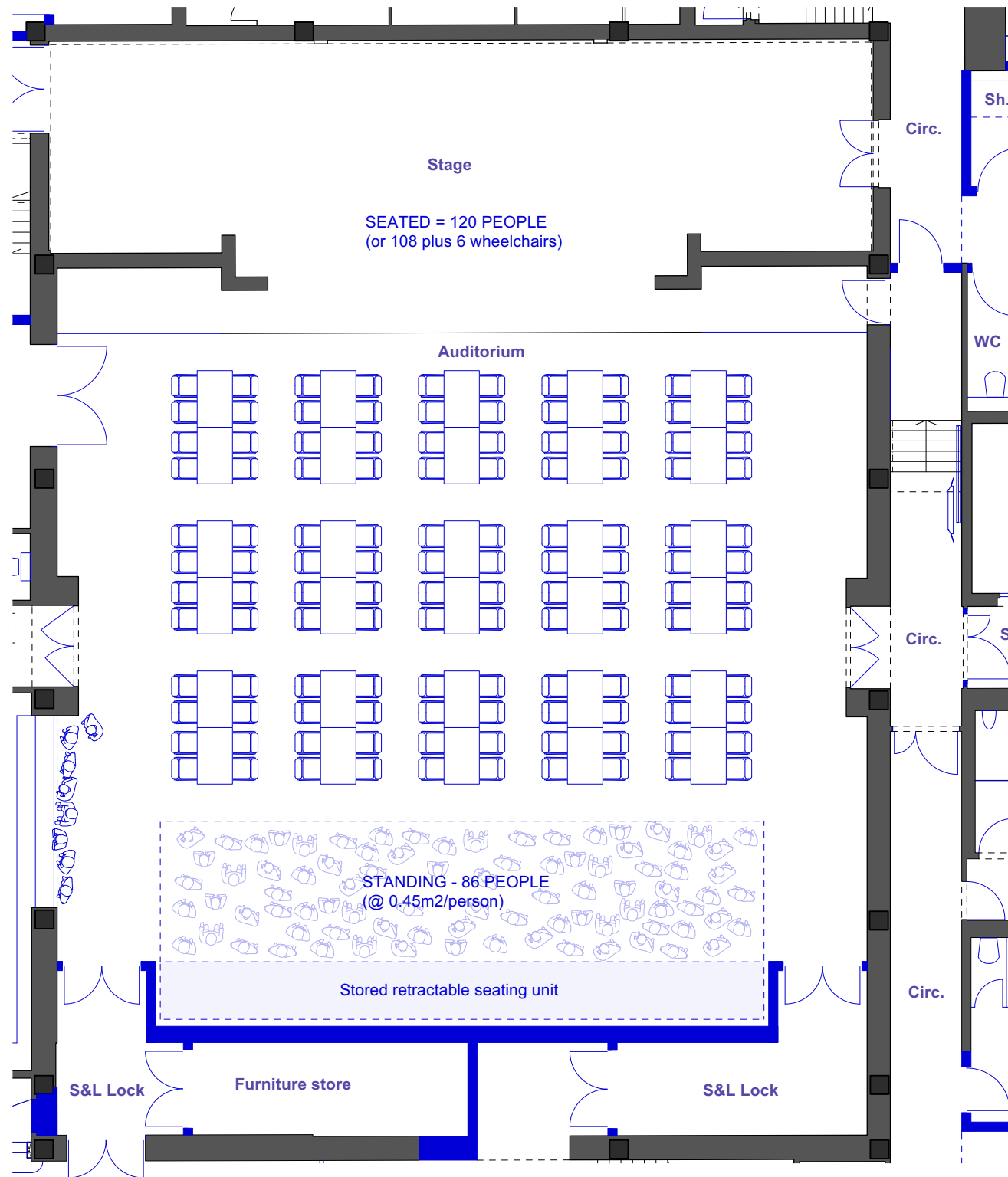
OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
RETRACTABLE STORED, FLAT FLOOR  
FRONT VIP / WHEELCHAIR ZONE

Option 1: Exploration of options for stalls wheelchair positions during standing gigs



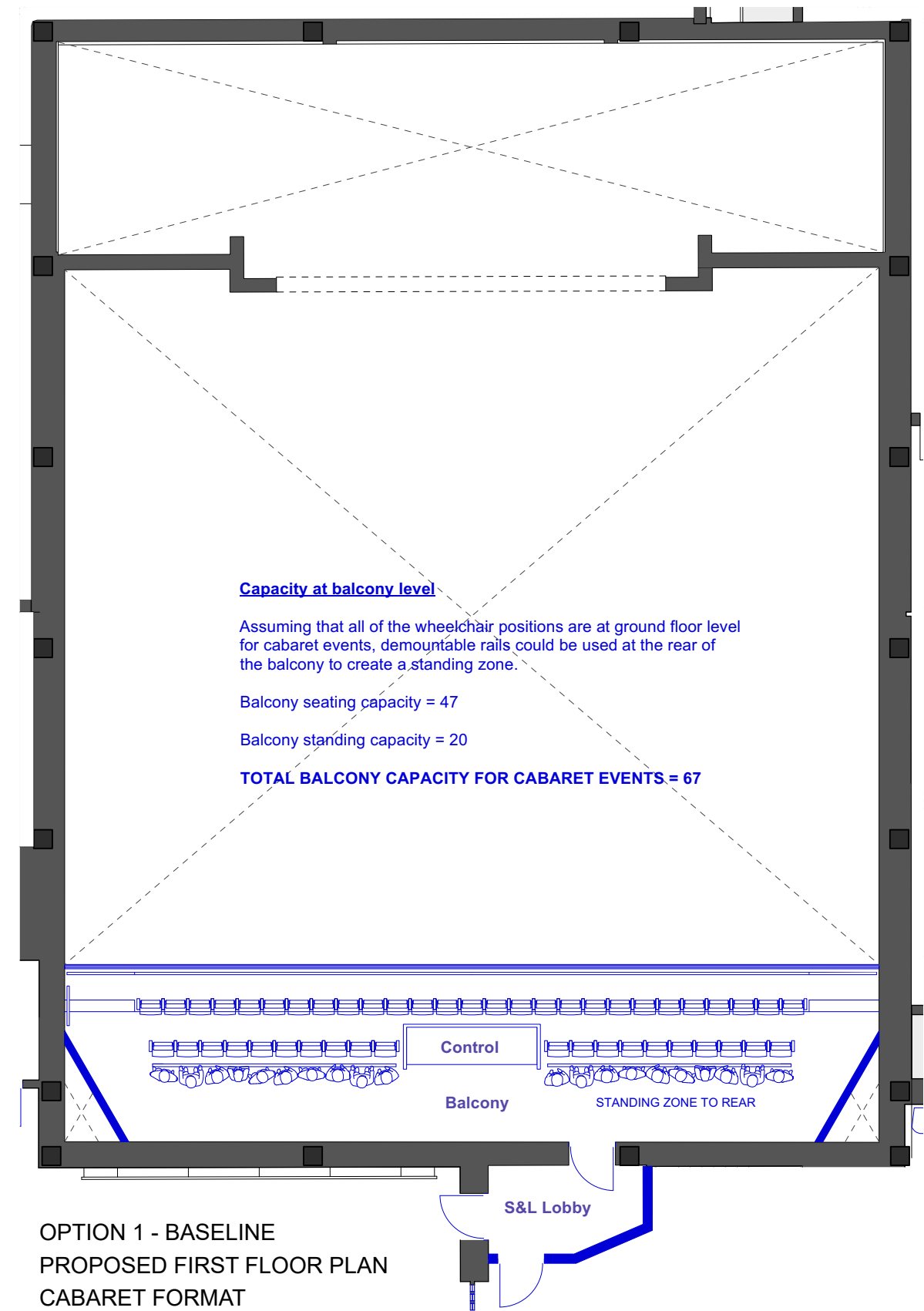
OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
RETRACTABLE STORED, FLAT FLOOR  
DEMOUNTABLE SIDE PLINTH FOR WHEELCHAIRS





OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
RETRACTABLE STORED, CABARET FORMAT

*Option 1: Cabaret format*



OPTION 1 - BASELINE  
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
CABARET FORMAT  
STANDING ZONE TO REAR

## 7.4 Front of House Spaces

The existing revolving entrance door presents a barrier to those in a wheelchair or with prams. Whilst there are hinged doors either side of this, these are heavy and narrower than required by Part M, and so they too are difficult to negotiate in a wheelchair. Option 1 therefore removes the revolving door and replaces this with a powered hinged door. A new draught lobby is also introduced to reduce heat loss and to improve thermal comfort within the foyer. The unlobbied door alongside the main entrance is envisioned as an escape-only exit.

Stopping short of major structural interventions (i.e. the removal of columns), another key move is the ‘de-cluttering’ of the arrival area. The display cabinets and drapes between the columns are removed, opening the space up. Furthermore, removing the protruding duty manager’s office and reconfiguring the accessible WC helps to alleviate the current ‘pinch point’ so that the entrance area feels more generous, with a clearer view through to the foyer space beyond.

In Option 1, the box office counter is reorientated. This is primarily in order to widen what was a slight bottleneck between the box office and the row of structural columns. However, it has the added benefit that the counter faces patrons as they enter the building. This makes for a welcoming arrival experience and helps to make the building easy to navigate. The box office counter doubles up as café servery and a reception desk for the council offices. The counter could potentially also act as an additional bar or merchandise stand for some events, or as a registration desk for conferences. This combined role should help with efficiency of staffing. The exact fit-out of the counter will be developed in more detail in later design stages to accommodate this flexible use. There is an office for the duty managers behind the box office, made possible by closing off the doorway between the Harlington and the adjacent Library. From a security perspective, this office forms a place of safety for box office staff to retreat to should they feel threatened.

Adjacent to the main entrance is an informal daytime café, which could be used by parents waiting for their children in dance groups etc. Visitors waiting to go into the Council Offices could also take a seat within the café. The café space provides a seated zone within the foyer, which will be useful for both daytime and evening events.

As the baseline scheme, Option 1 does not relocate the existing front of house staircase. This remains in its existing position, but the spaces around it are opened up to make the stalls foyer feel more generous and legible. The faceted wall of the function room is removed and replaced with a more elegant folding glazed screen,

which can be fully opened up when required so that the function room seamlessly becomes part of the foyer.

The Function Room bar counter is retained in Option 1, but the counter is given a facelift with a new frontage and enhanced lighting. The back counter zone is also to be given a cosmetic upgrade.

## 7.5 Front of House WCs

As the most light touch of the three proposals, Option 1 does not drastically change the front of house WCs. At ground floor level, the male and female WCs remain in their current configuration (but are fully refurbished, with new floor, wall and ceiling finishes and upgraded sanitaryware and cubicles). This offers the benefit of utilising existing drainage (although the current issues with blockages will need to be addressed). Only the layout of the accessible WC changes (offering the opportunity to enlarge this slightly to regulation dimensions).

The WC provision for Option 1 is based upon:

- Up to 305 (or 293 plus 6 wheelchairs) for seated performances with an interval.
- Up to 495 (or 487 plus 6 wheelchairs) for gigs with a standing stalls audience and no interval.

The seated configuration with an interval dictates the more onerous requirements in terms of WC provision. In Option 1, the audience size for this type of performance is not increasing compared to the existing audience size. Based upon BS 6465-1:2006, the female WC requirement is 11 cubicles with 7 washbasins. Retaining the existing WC configuration means falling slightly short of this (with 10 cubicles and 5 washbasins across the 2 floors). However, the case could be made that the pressure on the WCs is not increasing in terms of audience numbers (except for standing gigs, where the requirements are met anyway). Furthermore, whilst it is slightly below the BS 6465 requirements, the number of cubicles is compliant with the Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment (which requires 9 cubicles with 6 washbasins).

Clearly, one of the compromises with Option 1 is that there is a heavy reliance upon the first floor female WCs, in addition to those at ground floor level. Whilst workable (with assistance from staff to direct people upstairs), this distribution isn’t ideal when the majority of patrons are at stalls level.

The male WC requirement is for 4 urinals, 2 cubicles and 3 washbasins, which is comfortably achieved (and exceeded).

Along with the works to reconfigure ground floor WC near to the box office, the first floor accessible WC is retained and refurbished. Unlike Option 2, Option 1 does not introduce a new Changing Places WC, which would be required for any new venue above 350 capacity. However, the existing accessible WC/shower room (next to the lift) would be retained and upgraded.

## 7.6 Back of House Spaces

A key discussion during the design development was whether a stage level corridor could be incorporated to allow performers to cross from one side of the stage to the other without needing to go via the basement. However, it was concluded that the impact of this would either be major reconfiguration of the toilets within The Point, or loss of depth on the Harlington’s already shallow stage. Neither of these compromises were considered palatable.

Without a backstage crossover, the feeling was that accessible dressing room facilities ought to be provided on both sides of the stage. The existing stage left dressing rooms are therefore retained, but reconfigured so that one of the spaces has an en suite accessible WC / shower room. An individual WC and an individual shower room are also provided off the corridor. These could be used by office staff as well as performers. As the back of house corridor on stage left is stepped, the existing chairlift is replaced by an inclined platform lift, allowing wheelchair users to negotiate the level change without needing to transfer out of their chair.

On stage right, the former WRVS building is reconfigured to incorporate a stage level en suite accessible dressing room, with a new platform lift incorporated to enable wheelchair users to negotiate the existing level change. The auditorium store is repositioned directly off the auditorium, freeing up the daylight perimeter spaces for a new green room. The technical manager’s office is relocated from the basement, allowing more convenient access to the stage and better supervision of get-ins. Two individual WCs are retained in the WRVS, along with a new individual shower (wet room).

At basement level, the proposal is to strip out the redundant kitchen and associated dumb waiter. The 2 large multi-purpose spaces could



be used as additional dressing rooms or spaces for read-throughs / workshops / podcast recordings etc. The provision of drape tracks would be useful to allow for the subdivision of these spaces when required. Good digital connectivity is also essential. As available back of house space is limited, 2 individual WCs are proposed at basement level (to support the overspill dressing room function of the multi-purpose spaces), subject to further investigation into the viability of providing drainage at this level. A storeroom and a dedicated dimmer/amps room are also provided. The existing plant room is retained but all of the existing mechanical plant is stripped out and replaced. The outdoor store remains for use by market stallholders. However, the small WC is removed as it has been suggested by FTC that this facility is not required. This creates space within the room for the provision of staff bike storage.

## 7.7 Get-in

As previously mentioned, Option 1 aims to avoid costly interventions to the external envelope of the building. The proposal is therefore to retain the existing get-in route in this option (via the side doors of the auditorium). However, a new lifting platform is introduced in front of the stage to enable equipment to be raised up to stage level without manual handling. This should make the get-in process both quicker and safer. The intention would be for the new lifting platform to make use of the existing pit in order to avoid below ground excavations. The exact extent and condition of the existing pit is unknown and so further investigations will be required at the next design stage.

## 7.8 Fleet Town Council Offices

Option 1 deals with the most pressing challenges for the FTC offices in a way which avoids more major remodelling of the external walls and roof. As such, the split level arrangement is maintained in this option, but the office spaces are reconfigured and opened up so that there is more opportunity for collaboration. Relocation of the staff room means that the offices no longer need to straddle the stepped auditorium escape route. Additional rooflights flood the space with natural light to create a more pleasant working environment.

A small meeting room is introduced, since a point raised by FTC staff was the absence of anywhere to hold confidential discussions. This room could be used by internal FTC staff or as a space in which

council staff could meet with members of the public (who could be led to the room via the corridor so as to avoid passing through the offices). Although the external door to the offices is retained in this option, the intention is that the public would no longer use this as an entrance to the FTC offices. Instead, a new entrance to the offices is proposed near to the box office. Members of the public would 'check in' with the box office staff, who would notify the relevant council member of their arrival.

Dedicated staff WCs could be incorporated into the Option 1 scheme if this was deemed a client priority. These would likely consist of 2 self-contained fully enclosed cubicles. The implication would be a reduction in the size of the meeting room in order to create the space to accommodate these. As it stands, separate staff WCs have not been shown on the drawings at this time given the close proximity of the front of house toilets to the offices.

## 7.9 Access strategy

As touched upon in the specific area descriptions, the ambition is to make the Harlington as accessible as possible for those with particular mobility requirements, sensory issues and neurodivergencies.

Within the auditorium, the previously ladder-accessed control position would now be accessible to an operator in a wheelchair. A larger number of better quality audience wheelchair positions are provided at both stalls and balcony level in each format (seated, standing and cabaret). This allows disabled patrons a choice of vantage point. We would propose making all of the seats removable in the back row of the balcony to allow the Harlington flexibility in the positioning of wheelchair spaces.

The ABTT's Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment ('Yellow Book') guidance recommends that the number of wheelchair spaces provided within an auditorium should be at least 1% of the seating capacity or 6 spaces, whichever is the greatest. This is in alignment with Approved Document M. ABTT guidance recommends that for auditoria up to 600 seats, a number of these wheelchair positions should preferably be permanent (1% of the capacity). To minimise instances of unsold seats, we would propose the compromise that all 6 of the designated wheelchair positions are held for wheelchair users until very shortly before the performance. If, at this point, they have not been sold then they will be infilled with removable seating and will go on sale as ordinary seats. It will be critical that the transition between

wheelchair positions and ordinary seats can be made quickly and readily.

For the loose flat floor seating, no armrests are proposed (as this will also make it easier for the seats to double up for cabaret use). This will make it easier for a wheelchair user to transfer into a seat should they find this more comfortable. Suitable locations for transfer seats will be defined at the next design stage, including balcony level seats with transfer armrests.

In addition to the measures implemented for those with mobility difficulties, the auditorium proposals seek to improve accessibility for those with sensory impairments. A new assisted listening system will provide a relay of show sound for the hearing impaired and a description channel for the visually impaired.

We would recommend implementing an access scheme for those with special assistance requirements to be able to record their needs when purchasing a ticket. This will mean that they need not go through the inconvenience of filling in this information for future visits. It will also make it possible for the venue to provide advanced notice of ticket sales for those who require wheelchair positions and for those interested in, for example, relaxed performances. The flexibility for those with particular access requirements to book tickets online, over the phone (ideally via a dedicated access helpline) or in person will help to make the process as user-friendly as possible. Similarly, the publication of programmes, publicity materials and online information in different formats will help to ensure that it can be accessed by all.

As previously described, wheelchair accessible dressing rooms are proposed on either side of the stage. While there is no backstage crossover (due to the need to avoid losing stage depth), this could be created with drapery if needed. The 'first choice' accessible dressing room would be that on stage right to give wheelchair access to the green room.

A few access challenges remain in the Option 1 scheme (the majority of which are addressed by the more significant Option 2 works):

- The staff office remains split level, with wheelchair access to the upper zone only.
- There is no lift access to the basement. This is considered beyond the achievable scope of this refurbishment given the limited accommodation at basement level.
- While the entrance doors are made more accessible, the existing



- steep external entrance ramp is retained in this option.
- No changing places WC is provided. However, the existing accessible WC/shower is to be refurbished. Although this does not have the full hoists etc. associated with a changing places toilet, it is an improvement upon the standard accessible WC found in many existing venues.
- The existing first floor accessible WC is slightly undersized.
- Whilst the 6 auditorium wheelchair spaces proposed are in alignment with the Yellow Book and Approved Document M, they fall short of the more onerous recommendation in the more recent British Standard document, BS 8300-2:2018, which requires 2% (rounded up) of the total seating capacity to be permanent wheelchair positions, with an additional 1% (rounded up) available with removable seats. The loose flat floor seating to the front of the stalls does give scope to increase the number of wheelchairs but the stance with regard to BS 8300-2:2018 should be discussed with Building Control at the next design stage in order to adopt an approach which strikes the right balance for an existing building.

## 7.10 Sustainability

A ‘fabric first’ approach is adopted in the proposals to reduce the environmental impact and running costs of the Harlington. Option 1 incorporates upgrades to the building envelope wherever possible. These include:

- Replacement of windows and external doors.
- A new insulated build-up to the auditorium roof.
- Additional thermal / acoustic insulation within the pitched roof voids over the original flat roof (i.e. at the lower level of the void).
- Additional thermal / acoustic insulation at high level on the auditorium walls (again within the pitched roof voids).

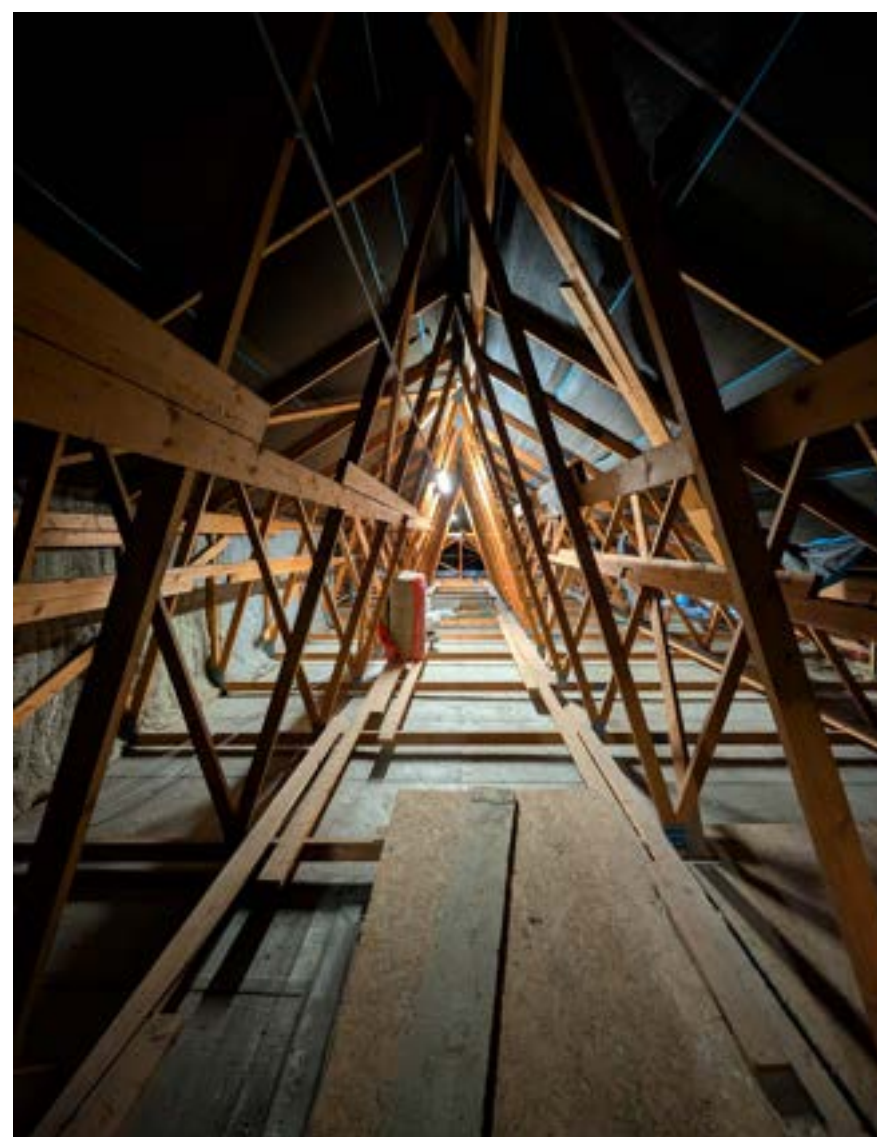
Alongside the upgrades to the building fabric, new services are proposed throughout, including the replacement of the gas boilers (subject to budget) with air source heat pumps, significantly reducing the building’s carbon footprint. More energy efficient electrical fixtures and low-flow sanitaryware (sensor operated wherever possible) will also contribute to a reduction in energy and water usage. Similarly, modern mechanical plant and ventilation systems will operate much more efficiently than the Harlington’s existing services.

More sophisticated metering and building management systems will allow operators to better understand and control the building’s energy

use, with different modes to suit numbers of people and time of the day /year etc.

Installation of photovoltaics on the roof will enable the building to generate a portion of its own clean energy.

As a requirement for biodiversity net gain is likely to be required by the planning authority, a strategy for improving habitats on the site will be developed with specialist input from an ecologist in subsequent design stages.



*Opportunities for insulation upgrades within existing pitched roof voids.*



*Gurkha Square already boasts attractive planting. The proposals should seek to enhance the biodiversity of the site further.*



## 8.0 Option 2 - Major Alterations

### 8.1 Option 2 Overview

Option 2 goes a step further than Option 1 in terms of the level of intervention. All of the general building upgrades described in section 7.1 still apply. However, the proposal goes beyond the minimal compliance upgrades and small scale layout changes which characterise Option 1. In Option 2, there is a more dramatic remodelling of the auditorium resulting in a more tangible uplift in capacity. Furthermore, there is a broader reconfiguration of the layout in order to create additional hireable spaces and to address key issues such as the challenging get-in and the lack of front of house female toilet provision at ground floor level. The building's underwhelming frontage is tackled, with transformative proposals for a new facade and associated re-landscaping works.

### 8.2 New entrance facade & landscaping

The existing Harlington does not look like a performance venue and is frequently mistaken as being part of the adjacent library. There is very little indication of the activities which take place inside. A key move in Option 2 is therefore to remodel the frontage onto Gurkha Square to make the venue more inviting and recognisable and to provide opportunities for it to showcase upcoming events. The reworking of the frontage includes a two-storey extension which helps to free up the spaces around the entrance, but crucially, also allows for the creation of a new large studio space on the first floor.

The preliminary proposal for the new facade draws on the square gridded design of the adjacent library and original civic centre, while providing a richer materiality referencing the colourful polychromatic brick and tiled façades that can be found around Fleet. This colour palette would be reinterpreted in a contemporary way using different materials such as bronze finish metalwork and glazed brickwork or ceramic tiles. These vibrant, textured materials would then be set against the more 'serene' lightly coloured plinth in a crisp, smoothly finished fairfaced concrete.

The studio volume of the new extension is deliberately higher than the adjacent library. This helps to lend the Harlington prominence and to improve visibility of the building across Gurkha Square. Internally, the studio floor to ceiling height exceeds 4m, making it suitable for dance activities etc. The large glazed area and clerestory windows will flood this space with natural light. In addition to providing solar shading, the louvres further add to the sense of verticality. The rusty reddish brown hue of the louvres against the crisp cream outer frame of the studio volume mirrors the idea of the red brick infill panels to the

Library's concrete frame. The degree of transparency at the upper level (i.e. the profile and spacing of the louvre fins) will be explored in more detail as the design is developed. The intention would be to perhaps give a sense of the activity within the first floor studio when viewed from outside.

A large illuminated 'Harlington' sign sits above the entrance canopy and at ground floor level, A0 illuminated poster panels alongside the entrance provide a prime location in which to advertise upcoming events. The proposals for the new facade will be developed in more detail at the next stage and discussed with HDC Planning.

A key ambition in Option 2 is to improve the approach to the building in terms of accessibility. The steep, non-compliant ramp is therefore replaced with a relocated, shallower equivalent in line with Approved Document M. Powered hinged doors are much easier to negotiate in

a wheelchair than the building's existing revolving door. The canopy over the entrance and the generous glazed zone at ground floor level make the route into the building clear and help to make the Harlington feel open and welcoming with glimpses through to the foyer beyond.

The proposal is to enhance the route along the northern edge of Gurkha Square (with better lighting and signage (e.g. digital totems). If the budget allows, it would also be beneficial to re-pave this route and to add street furniture. The existing freestanding brick arch is to be removed but a new interpretation of this is to be incorporated in a continuation of the facade wall. By extending the wall of the facade plinth into the landscaping, one's eye is naturally drawn towards the main entrance from the high street approach.

It is to be noted that these proposed new landscaping works extend beyond the FTC red line boundary onto Hart District Council land.



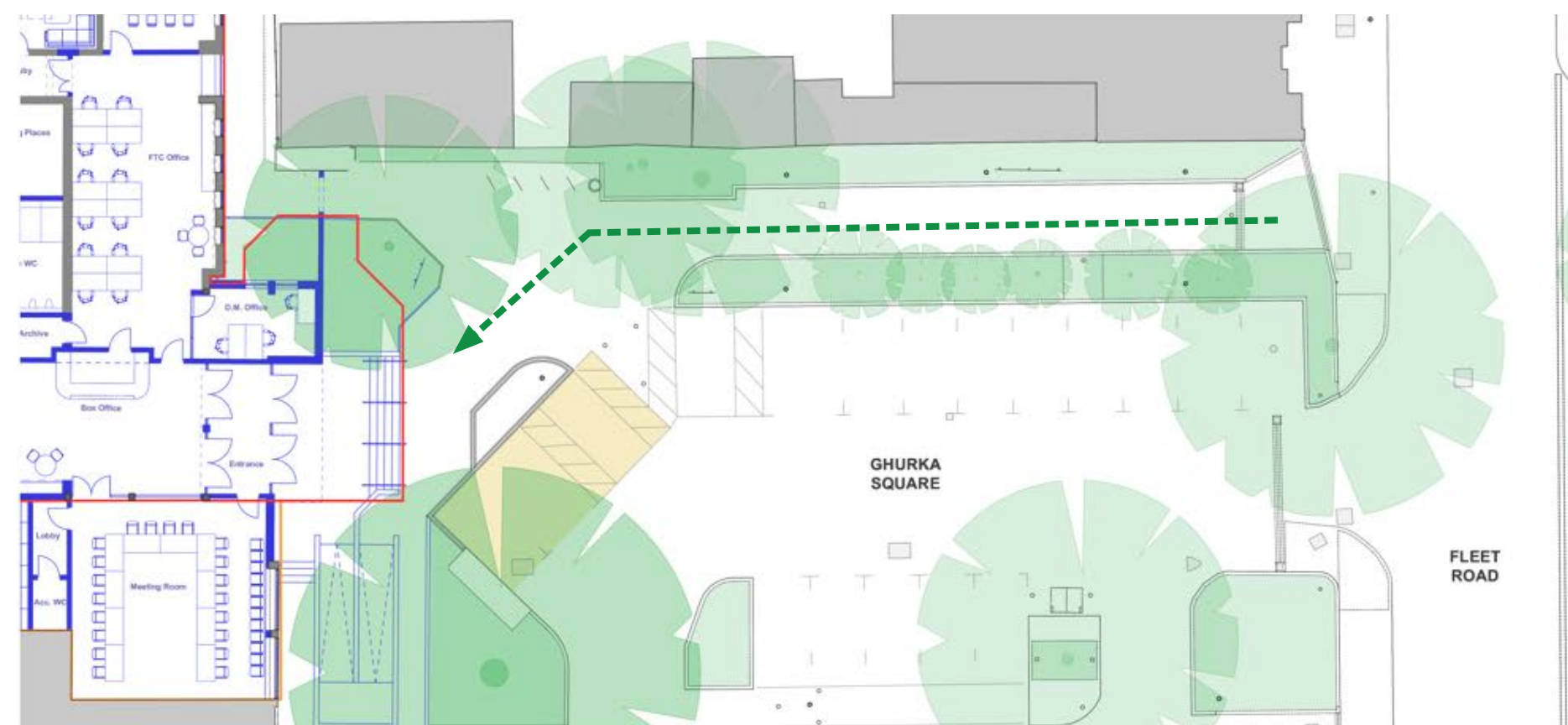
*Indicative illustration of the new frontage viewed from the pedestrian route from the high street (N.B. removal of trees is for visualisation purposes only).*



Whilst initial discussions with HDC have been encouraging, this currently remains as a risk item which will need to be addressed early in the next design stage. The current proposals seek to minimise this encroachment. The rebuilt steps are within the boundary, but the necessary length and width of the ramp to achieve compliance means that it is not possible to constrain this element within the red line. The footprint of the ramp has, however, been designed to avoid any loss in parking spaces and to retain the two mature trees.

Further options for the ramp and step design will be developed in the next design stage. These could explore, for instance, the impact of angling the steps on plan to relate more strongly to the pedestrian approach from the high street - but this would again be dependent upon negotiations with HDC since this would project further beyond the red line extents.

If it were deemed palatable to HDC to lose the three parking spaces immediately in front of the Harlington, this could create a much more generous arrival area more appropriate to a public building. However, as some of these are disabled bays, they would likely need to be reinstated elsewhere. Discussions at the next stage will help to better define the detailed design constraints with regard to the landscaping works.



Option 2 landscaping strategy - Gurkha Square approach



← Pedestrian approach from Fleet Road.  
Proposed re-paving, improved lighting and  
signage and new benches along this path

— Red line boundary

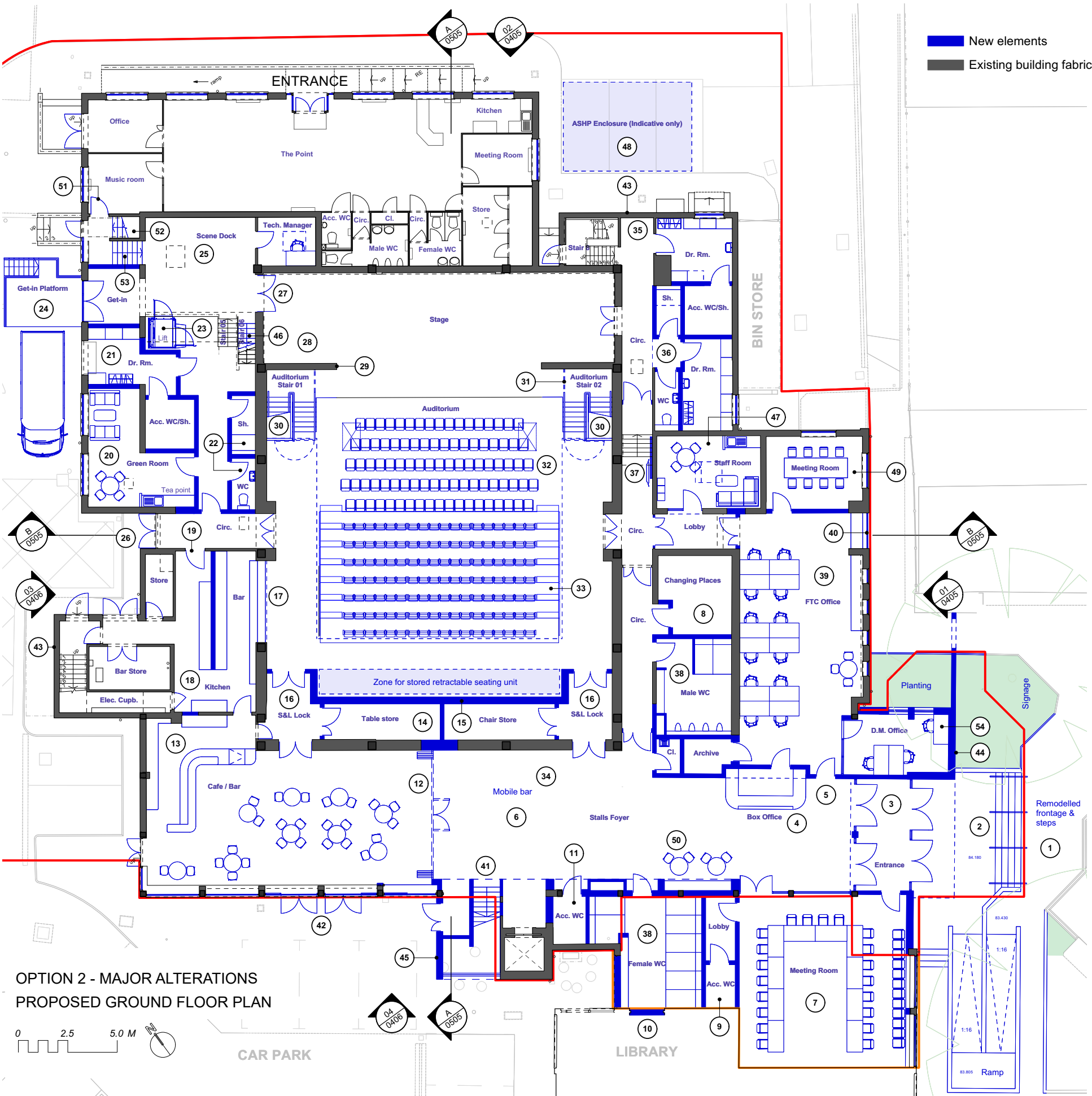
■ Parking spaces for review with HDC



Google Street View image - the  
existing underwhelming approach  
from the high street (Fleet Road).

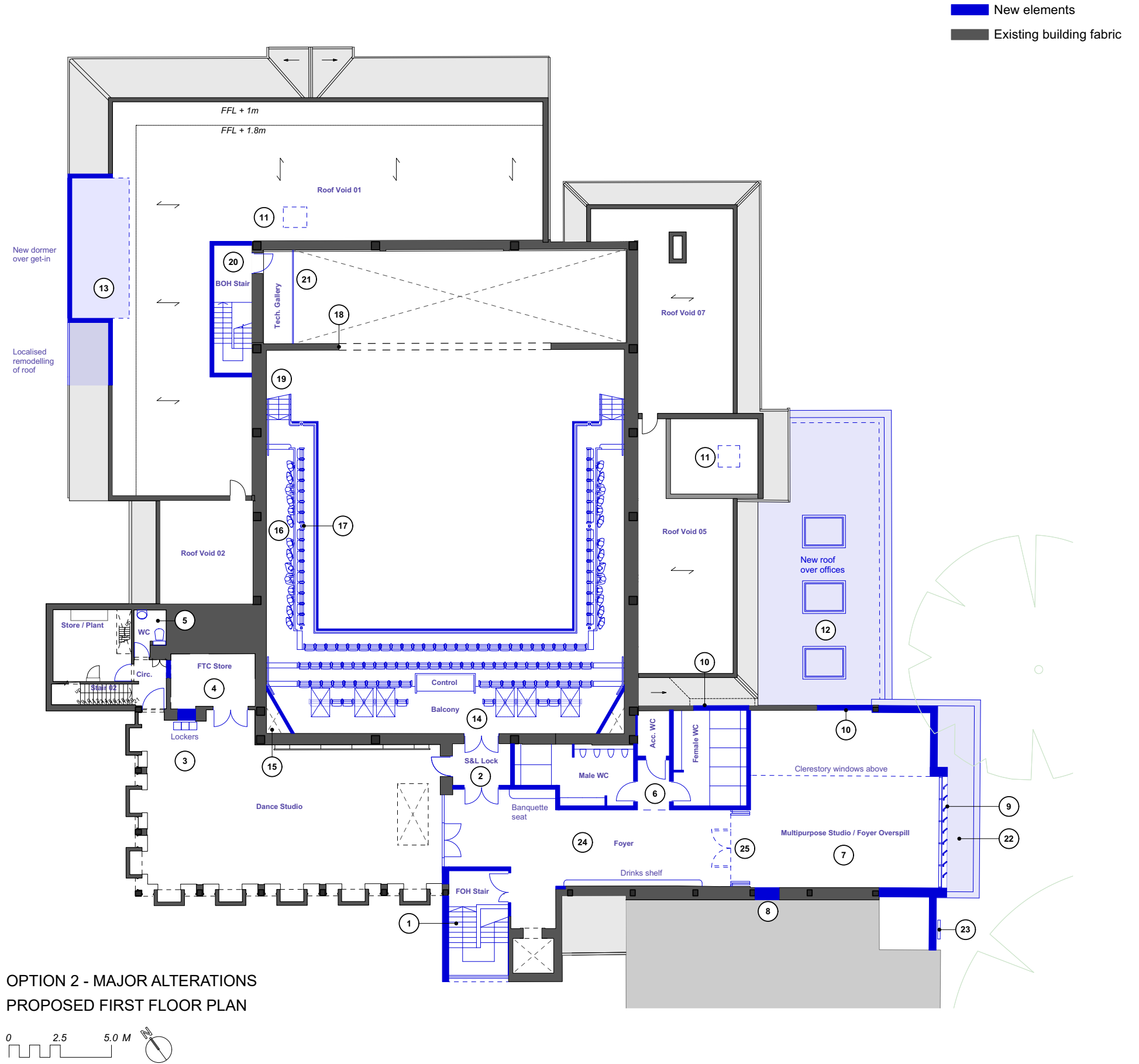


1. Re-landscaped external area with shallower Part-M compliant ramp and re-built steps.
2. Remodelled and extended frontage including canopy.
3. New entrance lobby with powered doors.
4. Box office / FTC office reception.
5. New entrance to Fleet Town Council Offices.
6. Stalls Foyer 'decluttered' and stair removed.
7. Meeting room with independent access (and accessible WC). **N.B. Requires the removal of 2 existing columns.**
8. New Changing Places WC.
9. Lobbied accessible WC off the meeting room.
10. Library link closed off.
11. Acc.WC/shower reduced to standard accessible WC.
12. Folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
13. New cafe/bar counter with integrated lighting. Back bar display / rear counter also replaced. Store removed.
14. Suite of storage spaces introduced. Electromagnetic hold-opens on store / lobby doors for ease of furniture trolley access.
15. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
16. Sound & light locks introduced for improved acoustic separation from foyer.
17. Relocated auditorium bar (for standing gigs). Acoustic roller shutter closed for more acoustically sensitive performances.
18. Kitchen layout rearrangement (extent TBC).
19. New door from kitchen.
20. New daylit Green Room with tea point.
21. 4-person dressing room with ensuite accessible WC/shower.
22. Individual self-contained WC and individual shower room.
23. New platform lift to provide wheelchair access to stage level.
24. New stage level get-in with external platform.
25. Scene dock.
26. Stage Door (BOH entrance for performers)
27. New door upstage right.
28. Existing on-stage stair removed.
29. Proscenium opening widened and height increased.
30. Staircases to balcony level & stage. Gate at bottom of stair which can be closed when balcony is not in use.
31. Removable barrier (or gate) between stair landing and stage.
32. Loose (linkable) seating on flat floor to front 5 rows. These chairs also form part of the cabaret seating provision.
33. New powered retractable seating unit.
34. Mobile bar counter - indicative dims 2020mm(W) x 640mm(D) based on Servaclean double unit. Folded dims (for storage): 2060mm(W) x 250mm(D).
35. Kitchenette removed (wheelchair refuge).
36. Dressing rooms & associated sanitary facilities reconfigured.
37. New wheelchair platform stairlift (to replace existing chairlift). Door relocated to top of stair.
38. Front of house WCs fully reconfigured (with additional cubicles provided for females).
39. Office space opened up and reconfigured. Infill floor over the sunken zone to give a single consistent floor level. Windows and roof raised to suit amended floor levels.
40. Escape doors removed.
41. New escape stair. Red dashed line indicates 3-sided fire curtain if required (fire consultant to advise).
42. New glazed escape doors.
43. Potential locations for illuminated digital display screens.
44. Potential locations for illuminated poster panels.
45. Potential locations for illuminated external signage.
46. New stair to technical gallery via the existing pitched roof void. Roof truss alterations required.
47. Staff room with tea point, seating and lockers (FTC & casual staff). New rooflight above.
48. Indicative air source heat pump enclosure.
49. FTC meeting room.
50. Banquette seating with tables and chairs.
51. New door into The Point (with access control).
52. Bottom flight of Stair 10 modified (new build-up on top of the existing treads) to create space for new door off landing.
53. New stair flight.
54. Office for Duty Managers



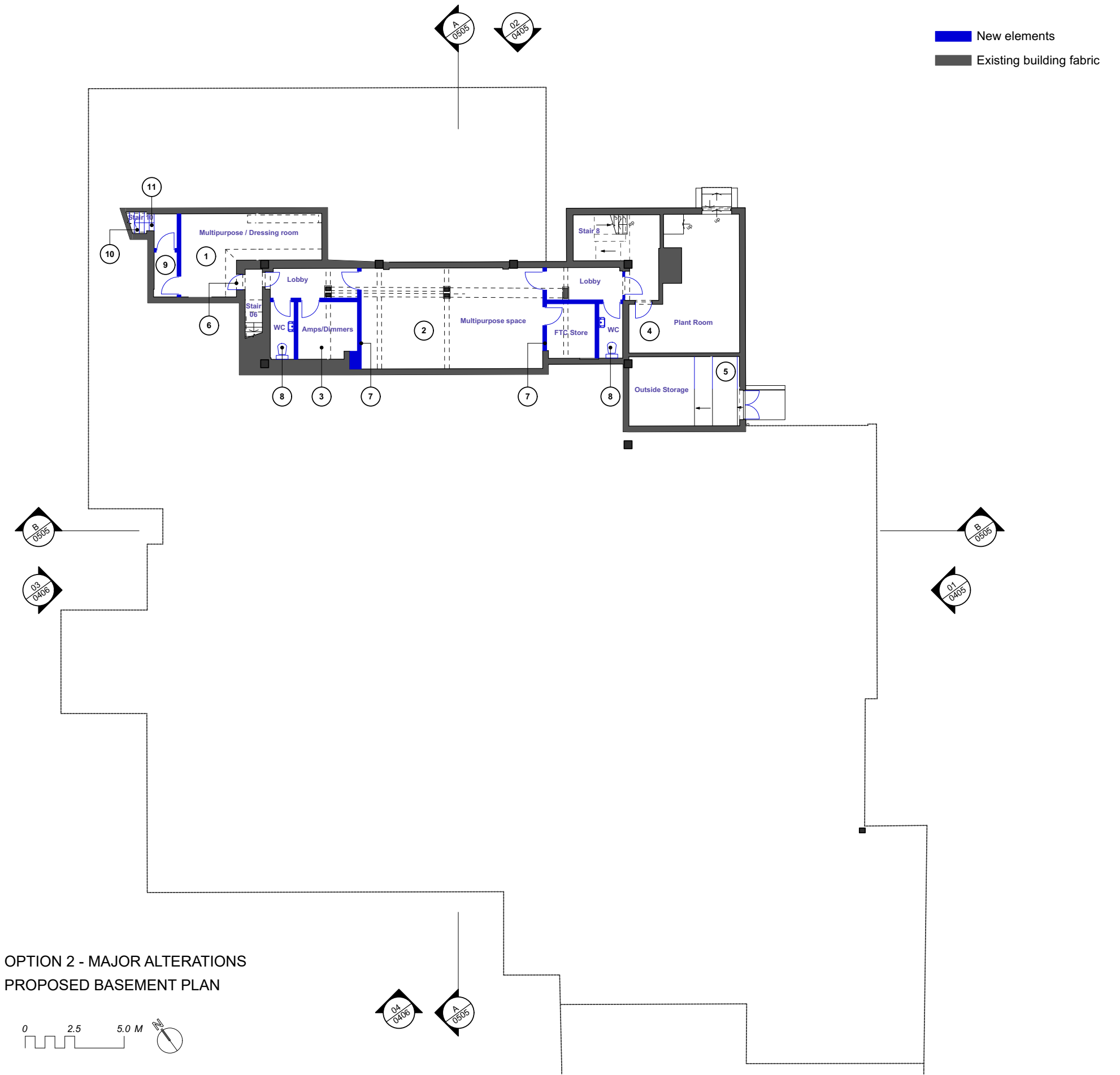
Drainage strategy for new / modified roofs to be developed in next design stage.

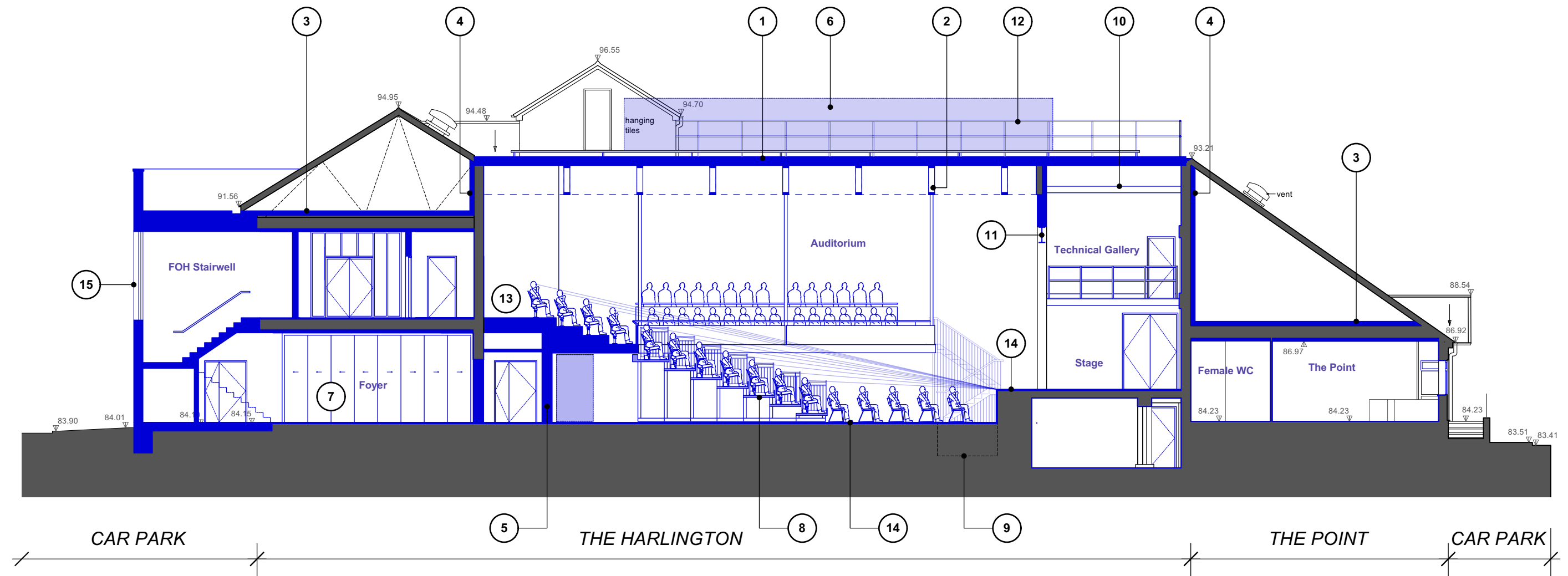
1. New escape stair. Assumed face of wall based upon removing existing outer leaf (single skin of brickwork) and retaining the inner leaf (assumed to be 215mm blockwork).
2. Shared sound and light lock between auditorium and dance studio (subject to agreement with acoustician). Allows for secondary escape from auditorium via dance studio.
3. Bar counter removed
4. New store in former kitchen. Mobile bar counter within store. Allow for power and data to set counter up within Dance Studio. New double doors enable counter to be wheeled out easily.
5. WC dividing wall removed. The fixtures remain in their existing positions (but the sanitaryware is replaced).
6. Front of house WCs reconfigured (male, female and accessible).
7. New multipurpose studio (with the same extended footprint as the ground floor entrance area below).
8. Library link closed off.
9. New frontage - glazed with vertical louvres (TBC - facade design to be developed further at next work stage).
10. Window infilled
11. New rooflight above
12. New roof (with rooflights) over the offices (to suit the modified floor levels in this space).
13. New dormer over stage-level get-in. Localised remodelling of adjacent roof.
14. New balcony accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.
15. Ventilation risers feed supply air into ceiling void plenum below.
16. Side slips - shown as part-seated / part-standing - but fully standing could also be considered.
17. Hangers supporting side slips (maintaining a column-free stalls level). Indicative only - strategy to be developed by structural engineer. Hangers set back from floor edge to optimise slips sightlines.
18. Proscenium opening widened (to optimise sightlines from new side slips) and height increased.
19. Staircases within the auditorium linking stalls and balcony level.
20. New technical stair in new insulated enclosure within existing pitched roof void. New door opening in stage house wall (onto new plugging gallery). **N.B. Vertical alignment of stage house wall (between ground and first floor) to be verified through site investigation.**
21. New technical (plugging) gallery in stage house.
22. Roof over remodelled entrance area below.
23. Potential location for illuminated building name signage.
24. New foyer connecting the two studios and the auditorium balcony.
25. Glazed folding screen, allowing the studio to become part of the foyer when required. Acoustic rating TBC.





1. Multipurpose space - sometimes used as a dressing room or as an informal media suite (digital connectivity to be provided for this purpose).
2. Multipurpose space / workshop / chorus room (no more than 60 people due to inward opening doors).
3. New amps/dimmers/comms room (with cooling).
4. Fire consultant to advise whether the existing plant room needs to be lobbied. Emergency battery room to be incorporated into existing plant room space - exact position / division of the room TBA.
5. Market square WC removed. Staff bike rack incorporated in the space gained.
6. Fire curtain could be installed over door opening here if required - fire consultant to advise (as a lobby here would encroach into the usable space).
7. New partitions.
8. New WCs supporting the multipurpose spaces.  
**IN ABEYANCE SUBJECT TO INVESTIGATION OF DRAINAGE OPTIONS.**
9. New lobbied entrance to Stair 10 (due to new connection with ground floor spaces).
10. Bottom flight of Stair 10 modified (new build-up on top of the existing treads) to create space on the ground floor landing for a new door into The Point.
11. Lintel raised over opening to suit Stair 10 modifications.





1. New roof over auditorium.
2. New roof trusses (indicative zone only - to structural engineer's design).
3. New insulation within roof void. Ceiling below replaced.
4. New insulation layer to existing auditorium walls to enhance acoustics and thermal efficiency (insulation line steps out around tech. stair enclosure)
5. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
6. Indicative new plant equipment on plant deck.
7. Indicative folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
8. Retractable seating unit with linked flat floor seating in front.
9. Existing pit - extent TBC.
10. New overstage beams raised to higher level (subject to further site investigations).
11. Height and width of existing proscenium opening increased (beam size indicative only - TBC by SE).
12. Safety guard rails for maintenance access to roof.
13. New balcony (and hung side slips) accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.

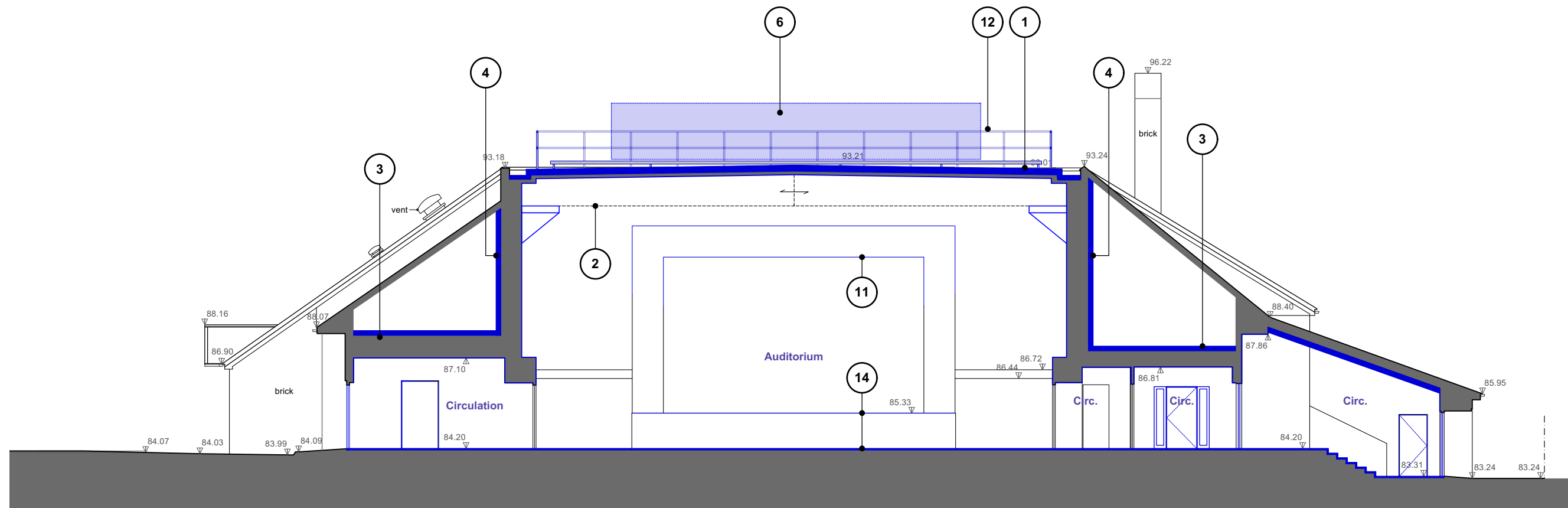
14. New multi-purpose auditorium and stage flooring.
15. New stair enclosure.
16. New roof over office space.
17. Infill floor over lower portion of office space (to give a consistent floor level).
18. Existing external wall to staff office increased in height and window openings raised. N.B. Section BB cuts through the existing escape doors, so the whole wall is new in this bay.
19. New dormer over stage-level get-in
20. External get-in platform
21. New stair to technical gallery in localised insulated enclosure within pitched roof void beyond (existing trusses modified accordingly). Allow for penetration through existing lower roof. Stair ideally supported from roof structure to maintain column-free scene dock.



■ New elements  
■ Existing building fabric

OPTION 2 - MAJOR ALTERATIONS  
 PROPOSED LONG SECTION (AA)





■ New elements  
■ Existing building fabric

#### OPTION 2 - MAJOR ALTERATIONS PROPOSED CROSS SECTION (BB)

1. New roof over auditorium.
2. New roof trusses (indicative zone only - to structural engineer's design).
3. New insulation within roof void. Ceiling below replaced.
4. New insulation layer to existing auditorium walls to enhance acoustics and thermal efficiency (insulation line steps out around tech. stair enclosure)
5. Wall rebuilt to incorporate structural columns supporting the new balcony above.
6. Indicative new plant equipment on plant deck.
7. Indicative folding wall (fully or partially glazed). Acoustic rating TBC.
8. Retractable seating unit with linked flat floor seating in front.
9. Existing pit - extent TBC.
10. New overstage beams raised to higher level (subject to further site investigations).
11. Height and width of existing proscenium opening increased (beam size indicative only - TBC by SE).
12. Safety guard rails for maintenance access to roof.
13. New balcony (and hung side slips) accommodating audience seating (including wheelchair positions) and an open control booth.
14. New multi-purpose auditorium and stage flooring.
15. New stair enclosure.
16. New roof over office space.
17. Infill floor over lower portion of office space (to give a consistent floor level).
18. Existing external wall to staff office increased in height and window openings raised. N.B. Section BB cuts through the existing escape doors, so the whole wall is new in this bay.
19. New dormer over stage-level get-in
20. External get-in platform
21. New stair to technical gallery in localised insulated enclosure within pitched roof void beyond (existing trusses modified accordingly). Allow for penetration through existing lower roof. Stair ideally supported from roof structure to maintain column-free scene dock.

### 8.3 Auditorium

Option 2 seeks to increase the capacity of the auditorium with a more substantial balcony level than Option 1. With 4 rows of seating at the rear, the balcony also wraps along the side walls. These side slips help to animate the space, enhancing the sense of intimacy. They provide 1 row of seating, with a single row of standing spaces behind. In order to keep the ground floor level column-free (and therefore as flexible as possible), the intention is to hang the side slips from a new roof structure, replacing the existing glulam beams with new trusses and installing a new roof deck and build-up.

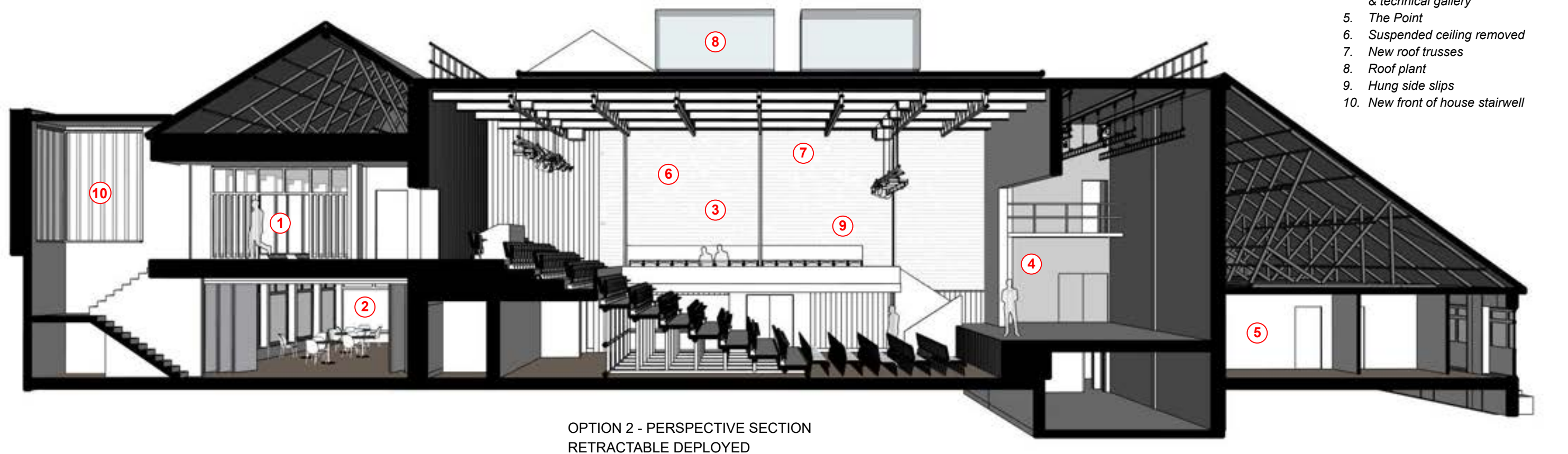
As with Option 1, the stalls seating is provided by a new retractable seating unit with some loose (but linked together) flat floor seating at the front. New staircases either side of the auditorium provide an internal link between the stalls and balcony levels. This interconnectivity within the space provides secondary escape from the side slips without the need to run corridors alongside the outer walls of the auditorium. Being able to pass between the levels easily is also

desirable from an audience perspective – simplifying wayfinding and fostering a sense of a shared experience with one audience, rather than separate stalls and balcony zones. Gates at the bottom of the stairs will allow them to be closed off should the Harlington choose not to open the balcony level for certain events. The mid-level landing of the staircases ties in with the stage level, meaning that they double up as get-on treads. Again, the stage access from the landing can be gated off when needed.

Similar to the Option 1 strategy, all of the existing ventilation is removed (and in fact the proposed design is reliant upon stripping out the side wall ducts and associated linings in order to achieve sufficient width for the side slips). The suspended ceiling is also removed, with the intention being to opt for a more raw, characterful aesthetic with exposed brickwork, timber linings and visible roof trusses. The auditorium floor and stage floor will be replaced. The proposal for the auditorium floor would be for this to have sufficient 'give' / impact

absorption for the various dance and exercise groups which use the space, without being a fully sprung floor. Localised reinforcement may be required where the highest point loads of the retractable seating unit occur.

The Option 2 approach with wheelchair positions is similar to Option 1, with spaces accommodated on the flat floor at the front of the stalls and at the rear of the balcony (with level access from the first floor foyer). For standing gigs, wheelchair users can choose to be at the rear of the balcony, or in wheelchair / VIP zone at the front of the stalls. This front zone would be separated by a demountable barrier for standing events, and access would be controlled (e.g. via a wristband or stamp) so that it can maintained at a lower density, more comfortable for patrons in a wheelchair.



1. Dance studio
2. Refurbished foyer
3. Auditorium
4. Raised and widened proscenium, new motorised bars & technical gallery
5. The Point
6. Suspended ceiling removed
7. New roof trusses
8. Roof plant
9. Hung side slips
10. New front of house stairwell



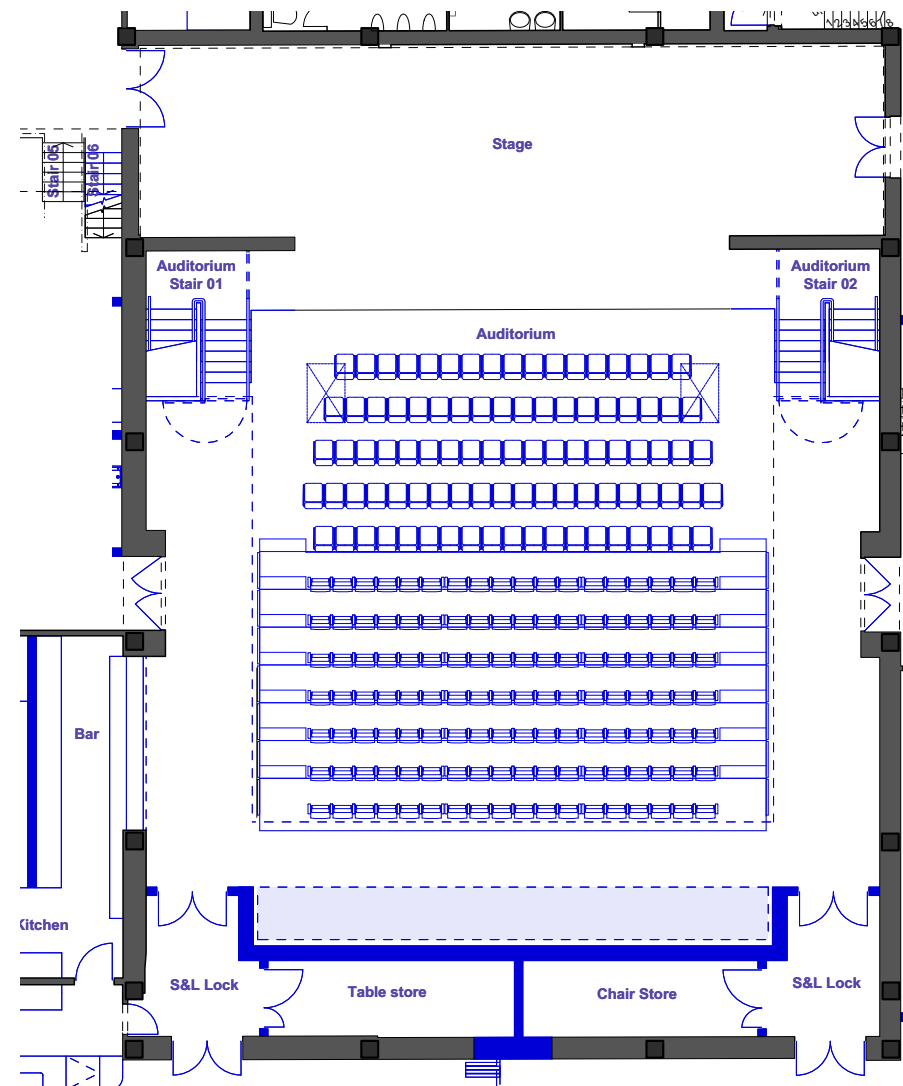
The works to the stage house and proscenium opening are more extensive in Option 2. The staircase in the stage right wing is removed as in Option 1 and a new door is again introduced in the upstage right corner (in this case opening into the new scene dock). In the Option 2 proposals, in addition to raising the height of the proscenium opening, the opening is widened. This is particularly important given the introduction of the side slips as it helps to improve the sightlines from these new seats. As with Option 1, the over-stage steelwork is reinstated at a higher level in response to the heightened proscenium opening.

Option 2 also involves the introduction of a stage right technical gallery for plugging up and access to high level facilities panels. To provide access to the new gallery, the proposal is to extend Stair 06 into the pitched roof void of the former WRVS building and then to form a new high level doorway through the stage right wall. The Stair 06 extension will be housed in a new insulated enclosure within the existing roof void. Modification of a number of the existing pitched roof trusses will be required in order to accommodate this. Intrusive investigations will be required at the next stage of design in order to develop the staircase proposals further.

In the various different configurations, the auditorium capacities for Option 2 are as below:

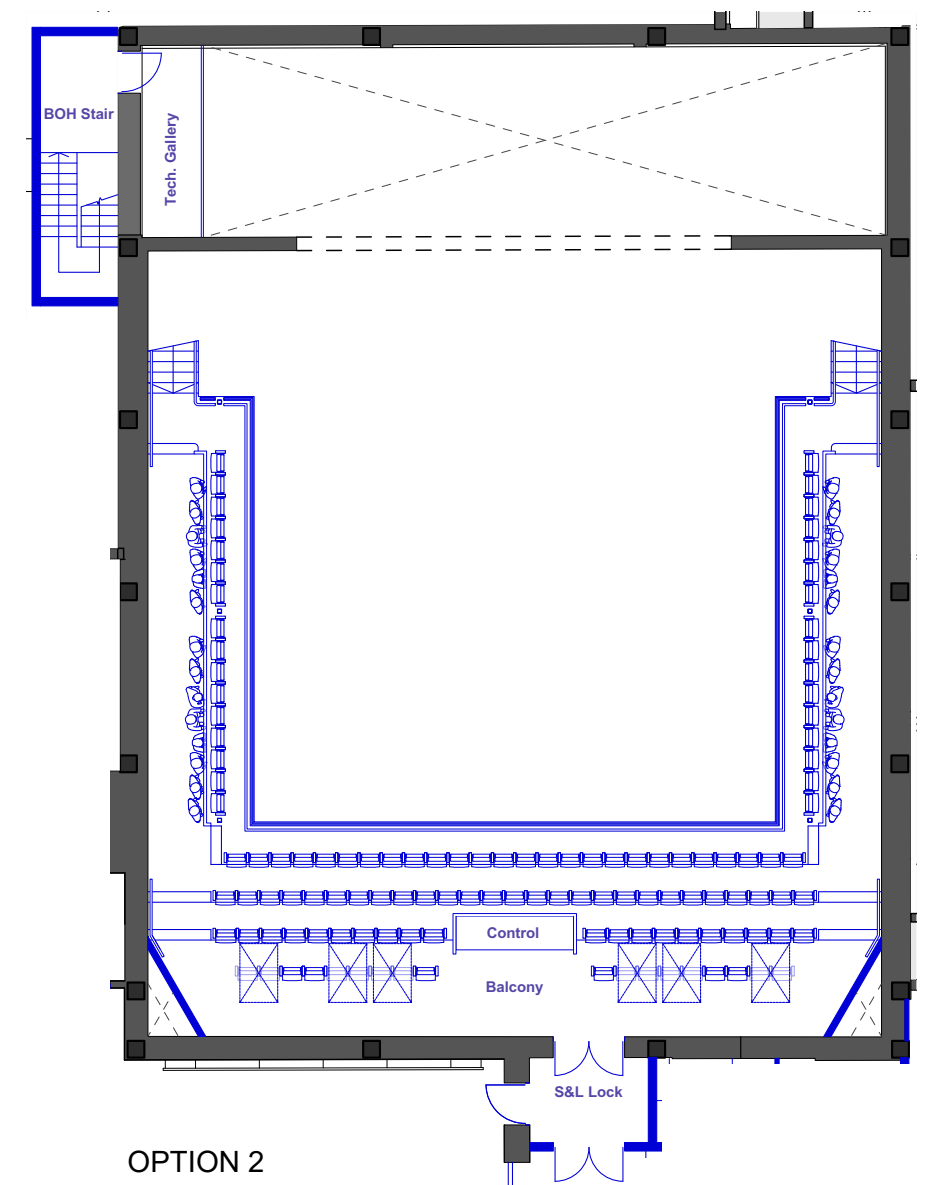
- **End stage format with a seated stalls audience:**  
358 plus 6 wheelchairs
- **Music gig with a standing stalls audience:**  
591 plus 6 wheelchairs
- **Cabaret layout (with a small standing zone):**  
344 plus 6 wheelchairs

The format with the seated stalls audience is illustrated on the right. The other configurations are shown on the following pages.

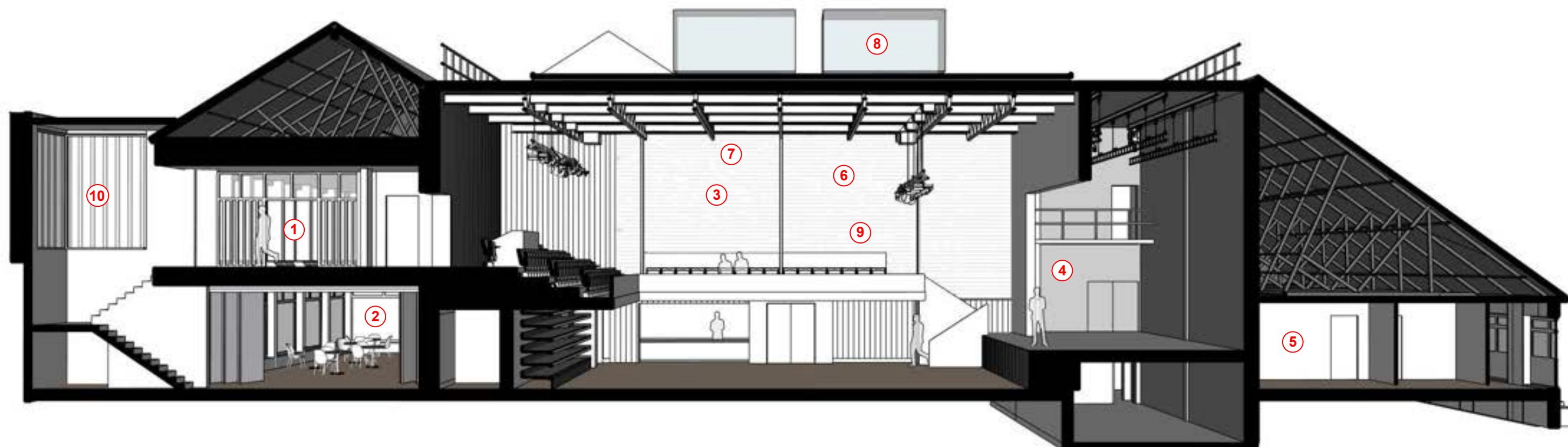


OPTION 2 - RETRACTABLE DEPLOYED  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

*Option 2: End stage format with a seated stalls audience*



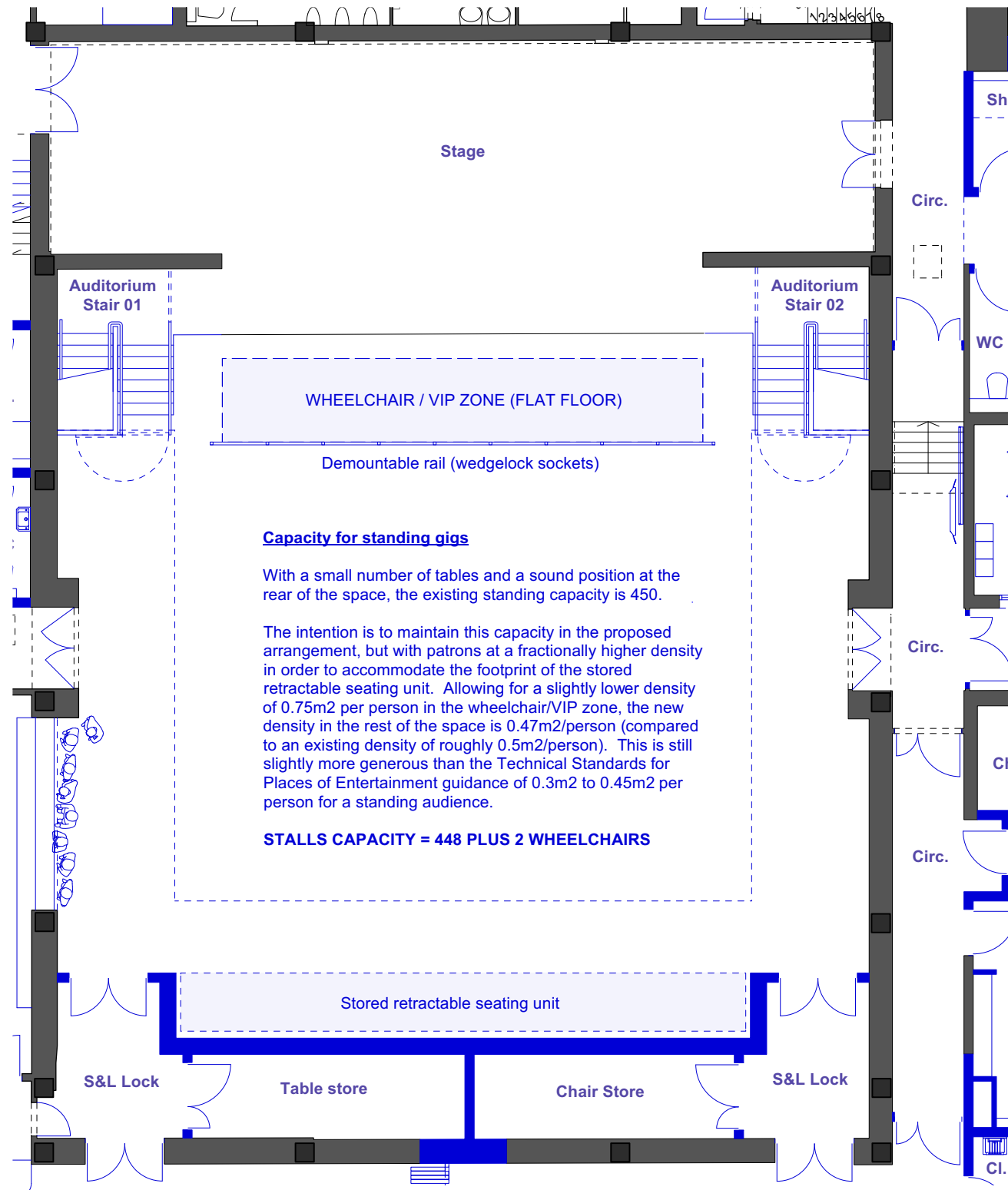
OPTION 2  
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



OPTION 2 - PERSPECTIVE SECTION  
RETRACTABLE STORED, FLAT FLOOR

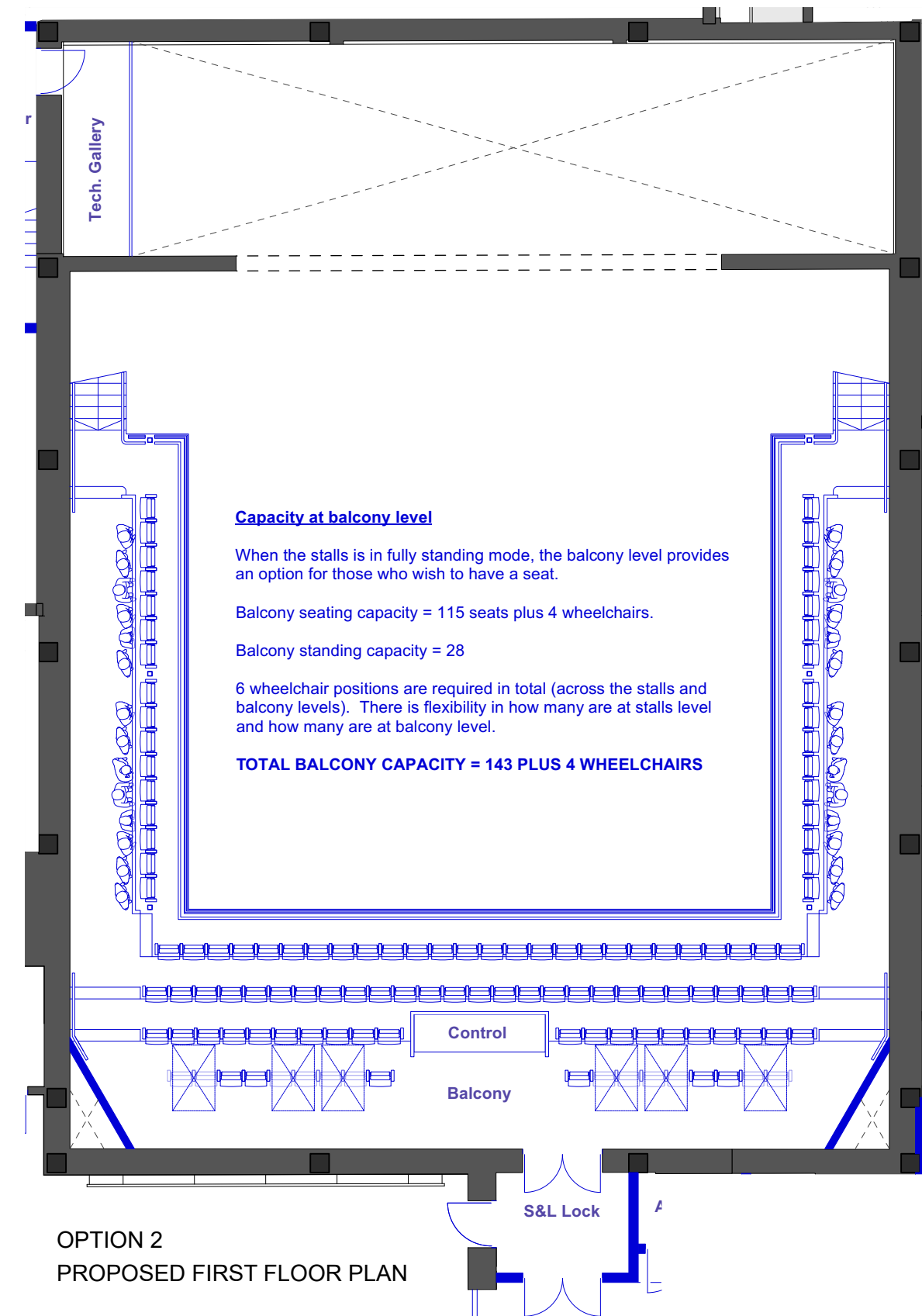
1. Dance studio
2. Refurbished foyer
3. Auditorium
4. Raised and widened proscenium & new motorised bars
5. The Point
6. Suspended ceiling removed
7. New roof trusses
8. Roof plant
9. Hung side slips
10. New front of house stairwell



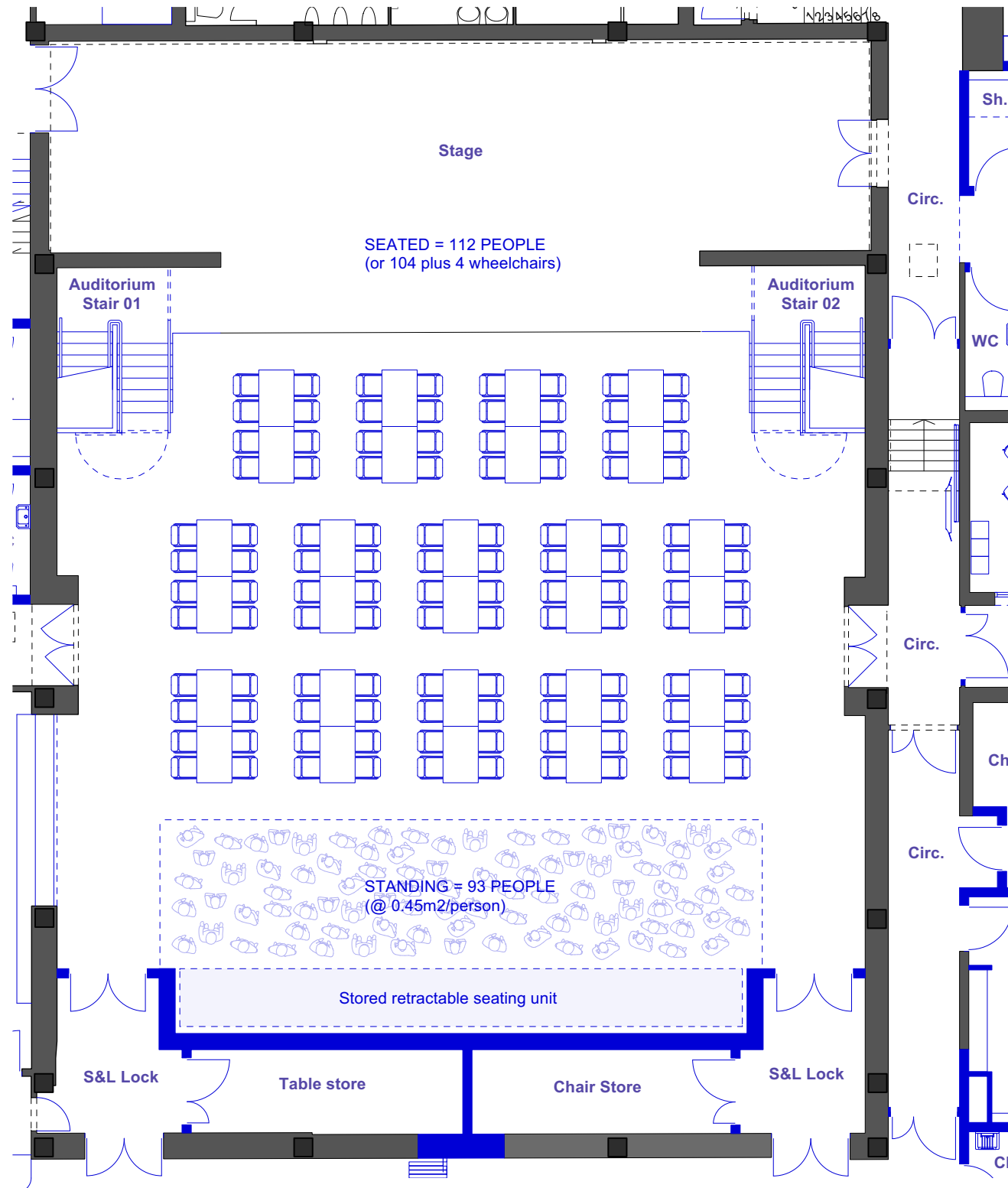


OPTION 2  
RETRACTABLE STORED, FLAT FLOOR  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Option 2: Standing gig

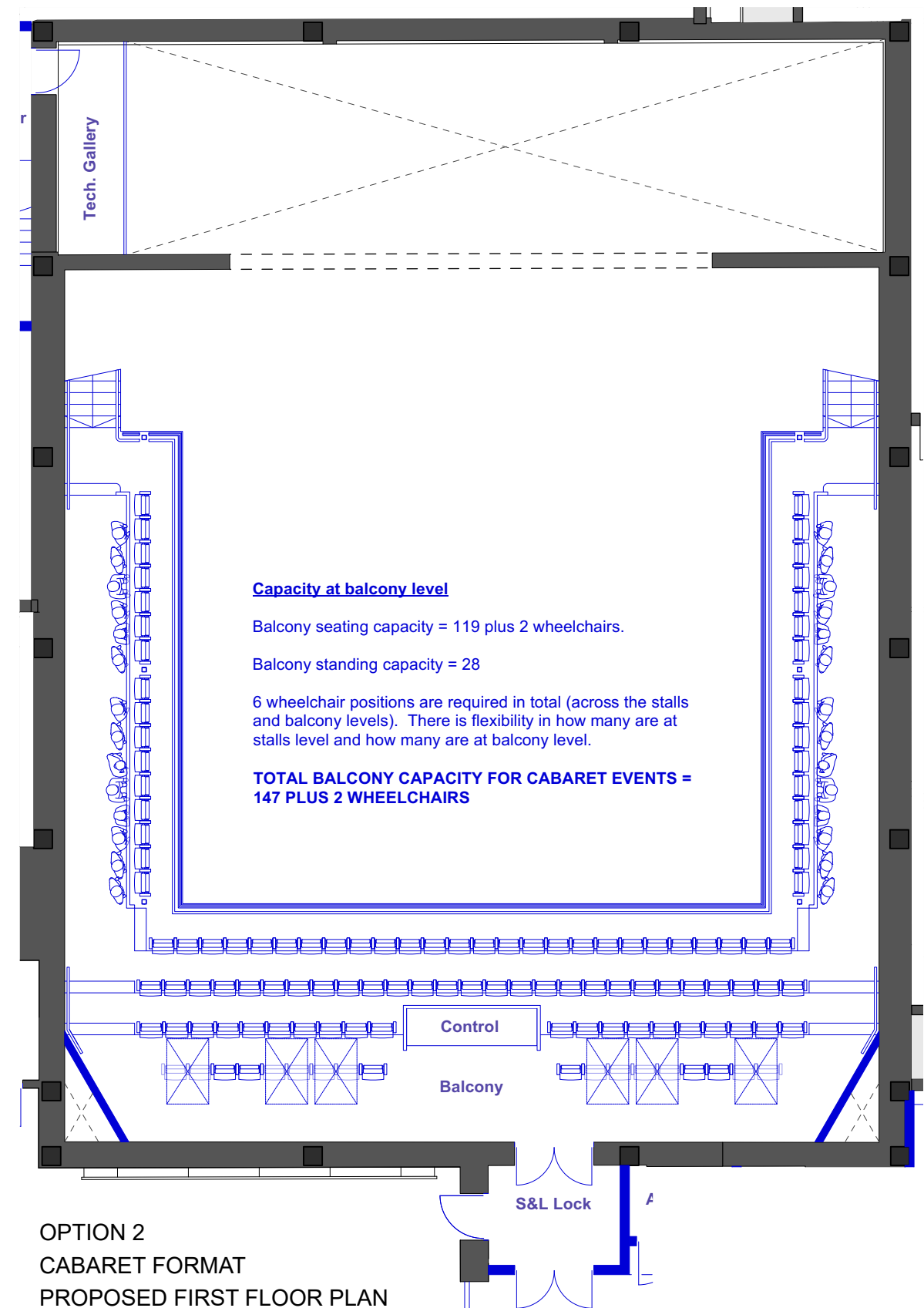


OPTION 2  
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN



OPTION 2  
RETRACTABLE STORED, CABARET FORMAT  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Option 2: Cabaret format



OPTION 2  
CABARET FORMAT  
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN



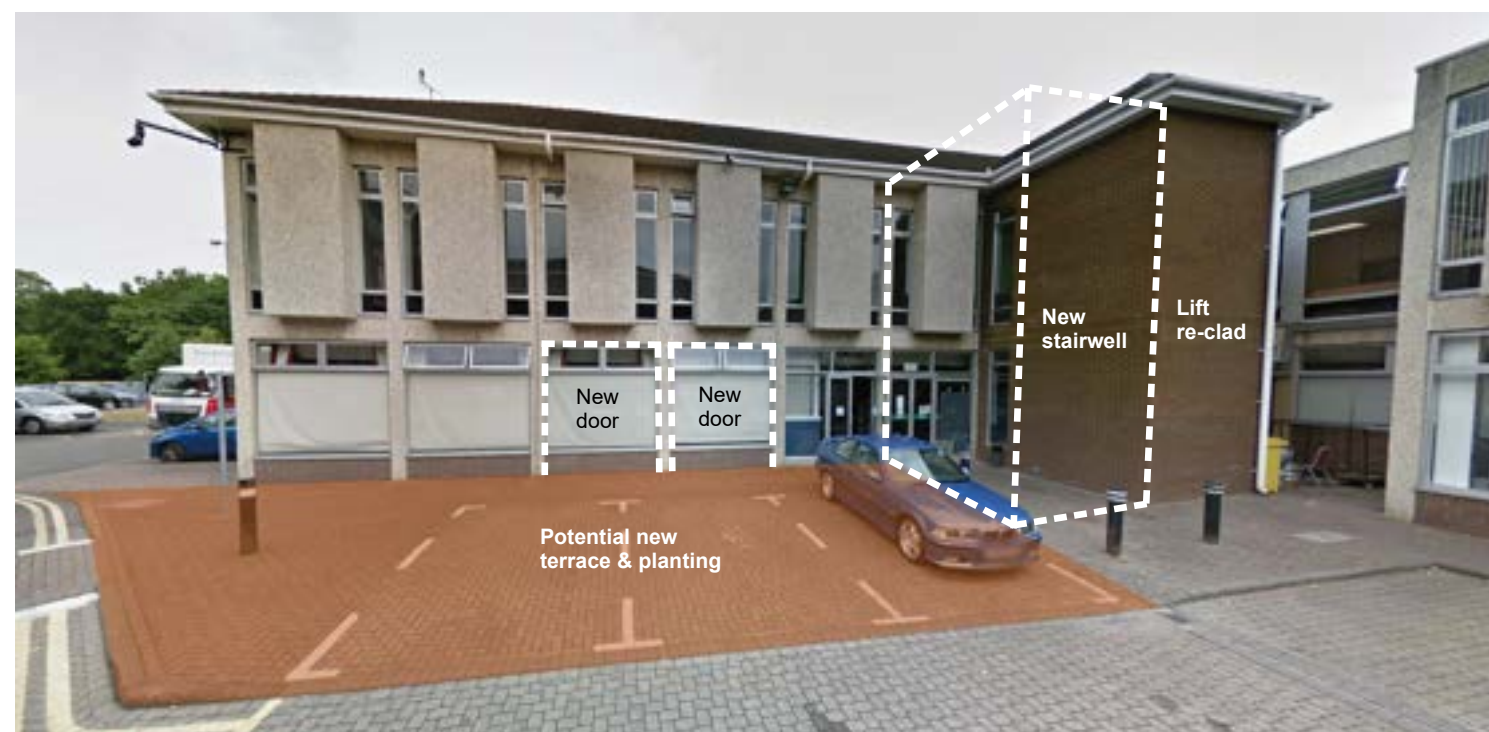
## 8.4 Front of House Spaces (Ground Floor)

The remodelling of the frontage in Option 2 brings an opportunity to create a generous entrance lobby, providing a welcoming arrival point. With both the external and internal doorsets being glazed, patrons are able to see right through to the foyer beyond. The box office is located in close proximity to the entrance to welcome both Harlington patrons and visitors to the FTC offices. A doorway directly into the FTC offices allows box office staff to reach a place of safety if needed. The degree of enclosure for the box office counter will be reviewed in more detail as the design develops.

Option 1 sought to open up the foyer space. Option 2 takes this one step further through the relocation of the main front of house staircase. This is repositioned alongside the lift in a new stairwell. The effect of this is to 'unclog' the foyer space, creating a wider, more usable zone in which to mill around, without the sense of always being on a 'through route'. The grouping together of the staircase and lift makes the building easy to navigate, creating a clear point of orientation. From an escape perspective, it also brings the benefit of discharging directly to outside (unlike the existing staircase).

Record drawings suggest that the envelope of the existing lift shaft is a cavity wall with a 215mm blockwork inner leaf and a half-brick outer leaf. The intention would be to retain the blockwork leaf and then re-clad and re-roof the lift shaft and stairwell as one holistic element. As a prominent volume on the southern side of the building, there is the opportunity to make a bold architectural feature of this new intervention and to potentially include some large scale illuminated signage on the western face of the new shaft. The external treatment of the new shaft would tie in with the materials and aesthetics proposed for the new Gurkha Square frontage, helping to give one visual language to the Harlington so that members of the public can read it as one building.

As with Option 1, a folding glazed screen is proposed so that the western end of the stalls foyer can be separated off as an independent function room for smaller events. It is anticipated that this space would always be opened up as part of the foyer to support large events in the auditorium, allowing for access into the performance space via both of the sound and light lobbies. Subject to ongoing development of the business case, the stalls foyer bar counter could potentially also function as a daytime café when the separate function room arrangement is not required. With its south facing orientation, there could be the opportunity to open this space up to a tree-screened external terrace with tables and chairs. This external zone falls outside the current red line boundary and would therefore need to



*Existing photograph of the south-west facade of the function room. The zone shaded in orange denotes a potential site for an external terrace with new paving. This would be screened from the car park by new trees. This landscaping element would be subject to agreement with Hart District Council.*



*Indicative illustration of the new lift shaft as a visual connection with the front facade.*



## 8.5 New meeting room

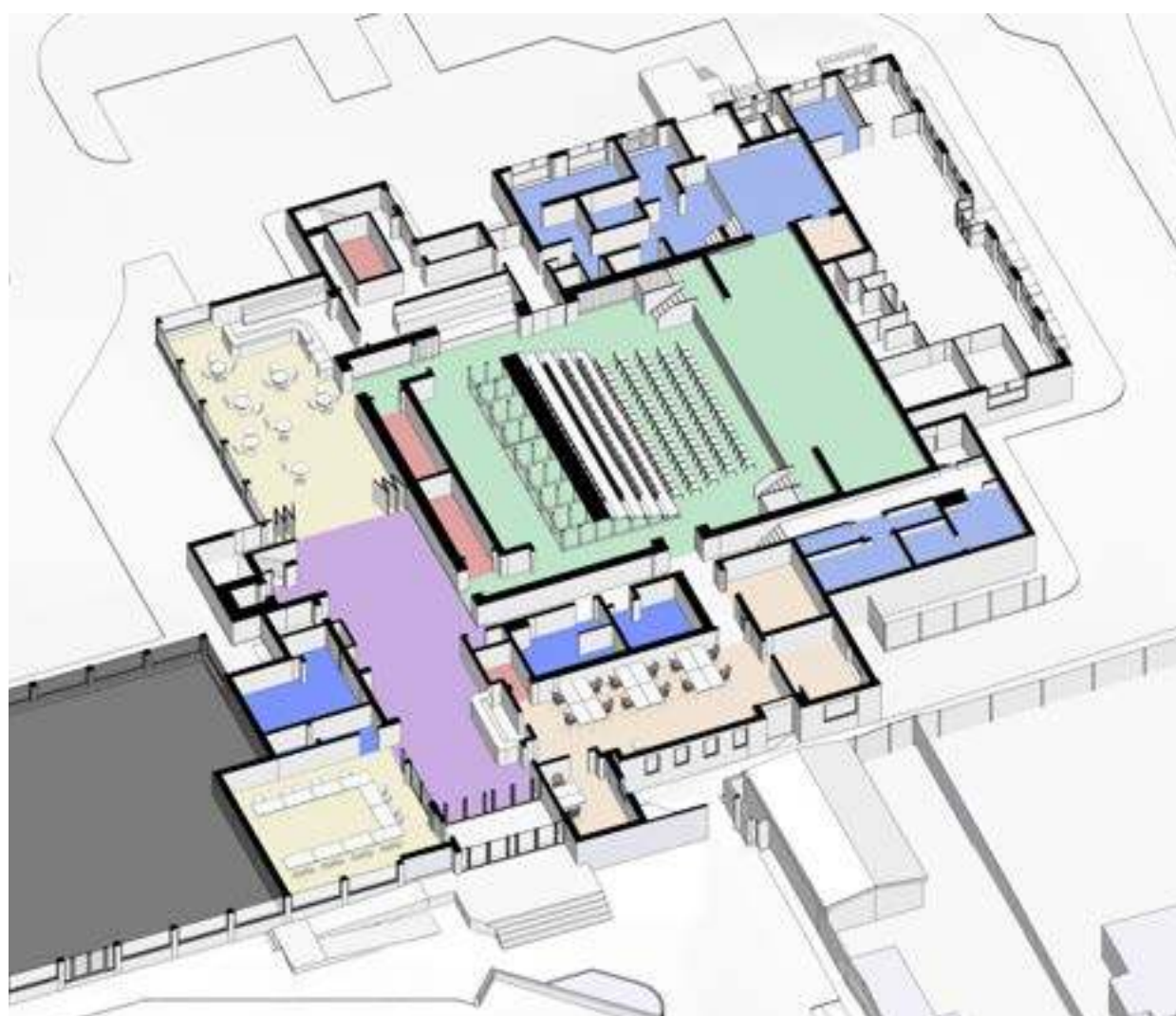
be negotiated with Hart District Council. It would result in the loss of 3 car parking spaces but has the potential to really animate this side of the Harlington. We understand that this area is sometimes used for the Beer Festival.

A mobile bar counter could be used to add an additional sales point within the stalls foyer when required. Indicative dimensions for a double unit (by Servaclean or similar) would be 2020mm(W) x 640mm(D). For compact storage, this would fold to 2060mm(W) x 250mm (D).

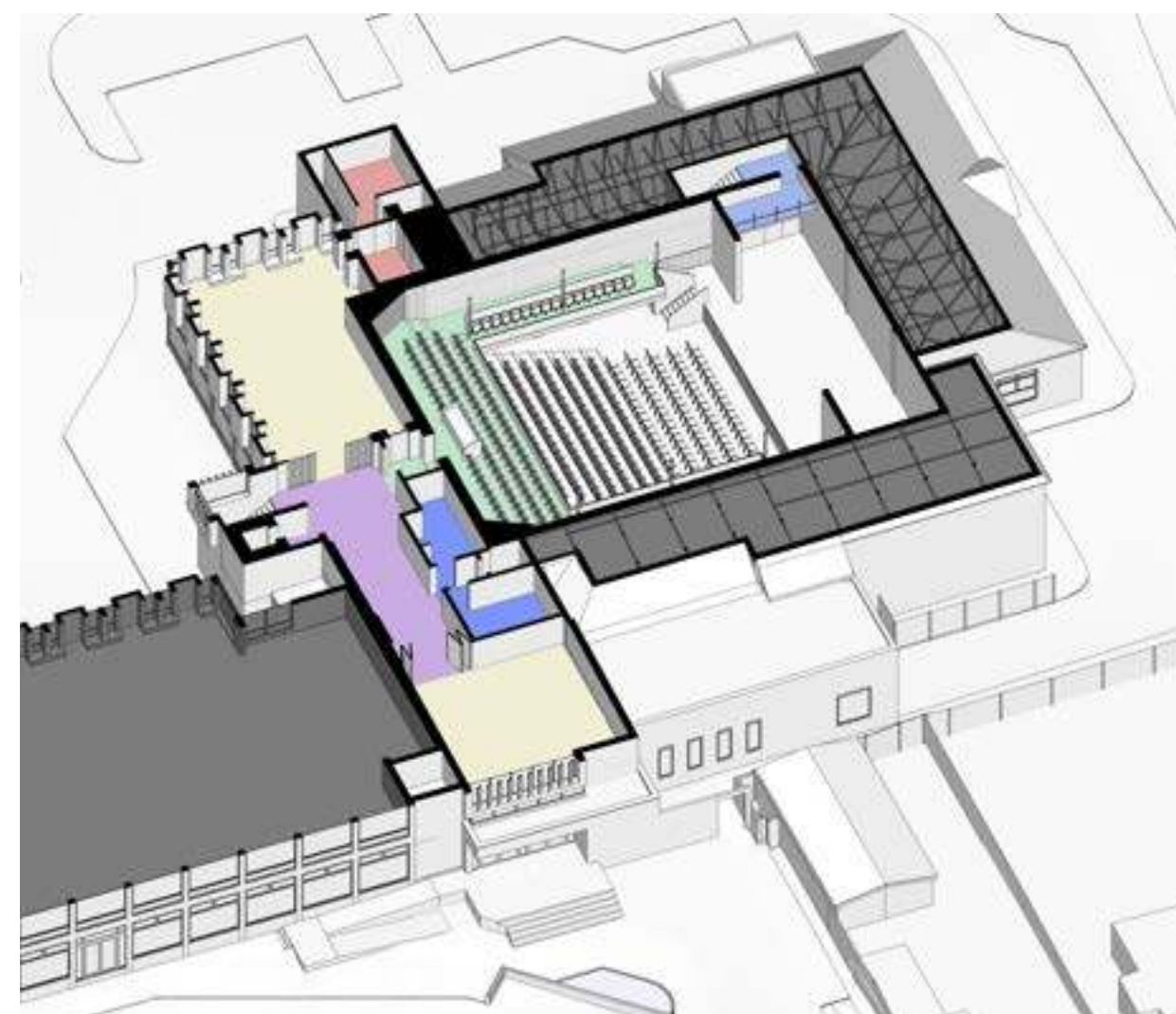
Option 2 transforms the underutilised space alongside the main entrance into a new meeting room. This space is large enough to accommodate a 20-person Council meeting plus a small public audience of around 12. The room could be fully kitted out with a high quality projector (and window blinds) etc., making it a desirable space for private hires to help boost the Harlington's financial resilience. For evening meetings when it is not always viable to open the full building, there is the option to only open the entrance lobby and the meeting room, since a dedicated accessible WC is provided off the meeting room. In order to transform the space into a successful meeting room, there is a requirement to remove a couple of columns and so the floor structure of the Library above will need to be resupported accordingly.

## 8.6 New Multi-purpose Studio and Dance Studio

The Harlington's existing layout includes 2 reasonable-sized but awkwardly proportioned meeting rooms at first floor level. These are relatively underused. The Option 2 scheme takes these spaces back and, in conjunction with a modest extension to the footprint, turns them into a single large multi-purpose studio with over 4m floor to ceiling height (since a new roof is proposed over this space as part of the frontage remodelling). The space incorporates a generous portion of glazing and ribbons of clerestory windows to flood the room with natural light, whilst vertical shading is incorporated to prevent overheating.



Option 2 - 3D cutaway - Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Option 2 - 3D cutaway - Proposed First Floor Plan



The aspiration would be for this to become a desirable space for hire, given that the dance studio is already in high demand. A sprung floor could potentially be incorporated, or a solid floor suitable for tap. The first floor escape to the Library is closed off and the scheme assumes that the existing lift within the Harlington is only used by Harlington users.

The proposals for the existing dance studio are effectively the same as in Option 1, keeping the space broadly as it is but replacing finishes, addressing overheating issues and removing the permanent bar counter and kitchenette. A new glazed screen means that there is still a view into the Dance Studio from the foyer as visibility of the various activities taking place within the building is important, helping to promote the different spaces to all of those using the Harlington. Avoiding a fully ‘closed off’ room was also an issue raised by one of the building’s regular dance teachers as an important safeguarding measure. Lockers are added in the dance studio to provide a storage space for outdoor shoes, jackets, bags etc.

## 8.7 First Floor Foyer

The relocation of the front of house staircase helps to ‘unlock’ the first floor foyer. This is a connection point between the dance studio, the auditorium balcony and the new multi-purpose studio. The reconfiguration of the first floor WCs helps to create a more usable foyer space and allows for borrowed natural light from both of the studios. New rooflights also help to draw daylight into the space.

A glazed folding screen is proposed for the new multi-purpose studio, allowing this space to be opened up as an extension of the foyer when required. The acoustic and fire performance of this screen will need to be carefully specified in subsequent design stages.

A drinks shelf along the long wall of the foyer provides a place for people to linger, whilst a built-in banquette seat replaces the loose chairs which are currently used by waiting parents etc.

## 8.8 Front of House WCs

Unlike Option 1 where the layout of the front of house WCs is broadly unchanged, Option 2 fully reconfigures these in order to increase the number of female cubicles at ground floor level (so that the provision

is in line with the size of the stalls audience, without a reliance upon the first floor toilets to fulfil the demand).

The first floor front of house WCs are reconfigured to give more space within the female WC and to allow for a second cubicle to be incorporated into the male WC (in place of a few of the urinals). The opened up foyer layout makes the first floor WCs less tucked away and therefore easier to find.

The WC provision for Option 2 is based upon:

- Up to 370 (or 358 plus 6 wheelchairs) for seated performances with an interval.
- Up to 599 (or 591 plus 6 wheelchairs) for gigs with a standing audience and no interval.

As with Option 1, the seated configuration with an interval dictates the WC provision. BS 6465-1:2006 is more onerous than the yellow book in this instance, requiring 13 cubicles and 8 washbasins for the female WCs. This is achieved in the Option 2 layout, with 8 of the cubicles at ground floor level to correspond with the larger stalls audience.

The male WC requirement is for 4 urinals, 2 cubicles and 3 washbasins, which is comfortably achieved (and exceeded).

The reworking of the WC layout also allows for the introduction of a Changing Places WC instead of the existing accessible WC / shower room. This will mean that the Harlington can be enjoyed by those with more profound disabilities. The new toilet layout also means that the 2 standard accessible WCs will be regulation size (an improvement upon the existing accessible WCs, which are slightly smaller than guidance dictates).

*It is worth noting that there is currently a break clause in the lease for the ground floor zone where the new female WCs are proposed. Early discussions with Hart District Council suggest that it will be possible to amend the lease to eliminate this issue, but it should be recorded as a risk item at this stage. Should it prove impossible to modify the lease terms, then the fallback option would be to avoid having permanent built-in fixtures (i.e. WCs) in this particular zone. This option has been explored but it would result in a slightly compromised layout. The proposed first choice layout has a better flow and more logical spatial adjacencies.*

## 8.9 Back of House Spaces

As with Option 1, an accessible dressing room (with an en suite accessible WC/shower) is provided on each side of the stage to compensate for the lack of a stage level crossover corridor. This allows wheelchair users to enter onto the stage from either side. There is a 4-5 person dressing room on stage left, along with a 5-person dressing room. On stage right, there is a 4-person dressing room. On both sides, there is also an individual shower room and an individual WC. As with Option 1, a new platform lift negotiates the back of house level change on stage right, whilst an inclined platform lift deals with the stepped corridor on stage left.

The new green room within the former WRVS building is conveniently located for access to the stage and, being on the perimeter, it benefits from natural light. The space incorporates comfortable seating and a tea point which would be equipped with a sink, fridge, kettle and microwave.

The spaces at basement level are broadly as per Option 1 (as described in section 7.4), with 2 large multi-purpose spaces which double up as extra dressing rooms, along with some associated individual WCs. The dimmer / amps room is as per Option 1, but the store is replaced in this case by a new emergency battery room.

Option 2 seeks to capitalise upon the Harlington’s adjacency to The Point by creating an internal link between the two facilities. The existing western escape stair from the basement is modified to give sufficient space for a new door off the landing into The Point. The stair is then also extended with an additional flight up to stage level. Given the floor level difference between the former WRVS building and The Point, this connection off the stair landing is considered the least obtrusive location in which to make the link between the buildings.

The connection with The Point is intended to allow for it to become an additional overspill dressing room space when there are particularly large events in The Harlington. Clearly, the operational logistics of this occasional sharing of facilities will need to be carefully planned and discussed with Fleet Phoenix, given the round the clock operation and often sensitive nature of their youth work. The access control strategy for the doors will also need to ensure that the buildings only work in tandem at certain times. Similarly, in some instances, it may be that only the small room directly off the stair is accessible to Harlington performers (with the rest of The Point continuing to operate as a youth centre), whilst at other times, it may be possible for the Harlington to use the full facilities of The Point. Given the challenge associated with incorporating very many toilets within the Harlington’s modest

backstage footprint, the potential to use The Point's WC facilities would certainly be beneficial when accommodating larger casts / dance competitions etc. The viability of this from an operational perspective will need to be investigated further at the next design stage as careful programming would be required to avoid conflicts.

## 8.10 Get-in and Scene Dock

A key benefit of Option 2 over Option 1 is the provision of an enhanced get-in and a generous scene dock in the northern end of the former WRVS building. Vans or lorries will be able to back up to the new external plinth, align their tail lift with this platform and then unload directly at stage level. From this point, equipment / scenery etc. can easily be transferred into the new scene dock (as a holding/storage area) or directly onto the stage.

The new get-in will require the introduction of a localised dormer roof. In carrying out this remodelling of the external envelope, there is the opportunity for the new get-in doors to be taller than a standard doorset – more suitable for bringing in larger scenic elements. The new doorset between the scene dock and the stage will be similarly tall (potentially inset with a smaller pedestrian door, subject to the final dimensions of the larger doors).

The scene dock has the potential to make a significant difference to how the Harlington is able to operate, providing a very valuable storage zone for incoming events whilst the previous (outgoing) event is still set up in the auditorium. The resulting reduction in turnaround time is likely to be of major benefit to the ongoing financial viability of the venue.

The technical manager's office is located off the scene dock (relocated from the current position in the basement) – close to the activities on the stage and in a prime location to oversee get-ins and get-outs. Whilst there is unfortunately insufficient space along the perimeter of the building to accommodate this office, a new rooflight is proposed to in-part compensate for the lack of window.

## 8.11 Fleet Town Council Offices

Option 2 involves a more substantial reworking of the FTC offices compared to Option 1. In this scheme, the level change within the

offices is eliminated, with the lower floor zone infilled to create a consistent level throughout (flush with the foyer level). As a result, there is a requirement to raise the level of the windows and the roof. A new flat roof is proposed, with large glazed rooflights to flood the space with natural light. With the installation of the new roof, the ambition is to be able to also eliminate the existing square hollow section columns which otherwise heavily dictate the layout of the desks.

Similarly to Option 1, the cellular offices are eliminated, with staff grouped together in one larger open plan workspace to foster collaboration. The removal of the columns allows the desks to be arranged in bays, creating privacy within this more open layout. The meeting room and staff room are swapped over compared to Option 1 in order to enable the sharing of the staff room with front of house staff (without needing to pass through the office space). As with Option 1, staff WCs could be incorporated into this layout, but at the expense of some of the space within the staff room and meeting room. The archive is relocated from the first floor so that this can be more conveniently accessed directly off the FTC office space. With the levelling of the office floor within Option 2, the external door to the offices is closed off. This removal of the escape route is made possible by the fact that the proposed scheme introduces a second exit at the rear of the auditorium - one either side of the retractable seating unit. Public entry to the FTC offices would therefore be via the door alongside the box office / reception (after signing in with box office staff). The banquette seating and tables near to the entrance provide a comfortable place for office visitors to linger whilst waiting to be called in. The back of house entry into the offices is beyond the pass door which forms a secure boundary between the front of house and back of house spaces.

An office for the Duty Managers is located in close proximity to the box office and connected to the main FTC office.

## 8.12 Access Strategy

Option 2 incorporates all of the access measures from Option 1, while also addressing some of the issues which are not resolved in the baseline scheme. The additional Option 2 measures include:

- The levelling of the floor in the staff offices, giving step-free access throughout.
- The rebuilding of the external entrance ramp to comply with the

gradients and lengths outlined in Approved Document M.

- The replacement of the accessible WC / shower with a full Changing Places WC.
- The enlargement of the first floor accessible WC as part of the wider reconfiguration works.

## 8.13 Sustainability

The approach to sustainability in Option 2 is broadly the same as Option 1. A few additional measures are proposed, over and above those in the baseline scheme. These include:

- An opportunity to optimise the thermal performance of the envelope for the new-build elements, including the entrance facade remodelling and the new stairwell.
- Provision of a rainwater harvesting system with a buried tank.
- An increased quantity of photovoltaic panels to existing south facing sloped roofs. There may also be an opportunity for additional PVs on the roof of the new multi-purpose studio.



## 9.0 Option 3 - New Build Extension

### 9.1 Overview

As part of the feasibility study, a third option was considered which provided an additional new-build space for The Harlington. While the specific brief for this space would be developed further as the business case and cost plan evolve, it is currently envisaged as a robust, multi-purpose studio suitable for meetings, dance, rehearsals, and small-scale performances. To ensure the studio could operate independently from the main theatre, the new building would also need to include essential ancillary facilities such as dedicated WCs, a separate entrance, and other supporting infrastructure. This would enable the new space to be constructed in advance of the main works as a first phase and to be operated during the build of phase 2 thereby ensuring the Harlington does not have to close completely.

Several potential locations on the site were assessed, with two identified as the most viable. These were selected based on factors including vehicle access, connectivity to existing facilities, and the availability of sufficient space to accommodate a worthwhile new addition. For the purposes of this feasibility study, a studio footprint of 10m by 12m was used as a benchmark, providing flexibility to host a variety of event types. Additionally, the footprint of the existing stage was referenced, as feedback from multiple meetings with hirers and staff highlighted a desire for a dedicated rehearsal space that mirrors the dimensions of the main auditorium stage. For both option 3A and 3B it is assumed that Option 1 is also carried out.

### 9.2 Option 3A (210m<sup>2</sup>)

This option proposes constructing the new building to the east of the existing building, currently occupied by a bin store and three parking spaces. A key advantage of this location is that it preserves the existing access route for unloading equipment into the main auditorium, consistent with the baseline proposal (Option 1) discussed earlier in the report. Additionally, it presents an opportunity to introduce a new entrance from the car park, which would improve the visibility of the theatre - currently difficult to identify when approached from this direction.

Furthermore, this location is considered the most suitable for a studio that could operate independently from the rest of the building. Its placement does not rely on existing circulation routes or shared facilities, and users of the main building would not need to pass through the new structure to maintain current operations. However, this location is also the most inaccessible for larger vehicles, which would need to access the studio via the narrow car park roads. The

studio would have good access to the stage left dressing rooms, but it would be remote from the foyers.

Should this area be considered for further investigation during the next design stage, alternative locations for both the existing bin store and the proposed air source heat pumps (ASHPs) will need to be identified, as they are currently situated within this zone. Additionally, there are three manhole covers located within the proposed footprint. These drainage systems would need to be investigated prior to progressing with the development of this option. A cost appraisal for relocating the manholes should be undertaken.

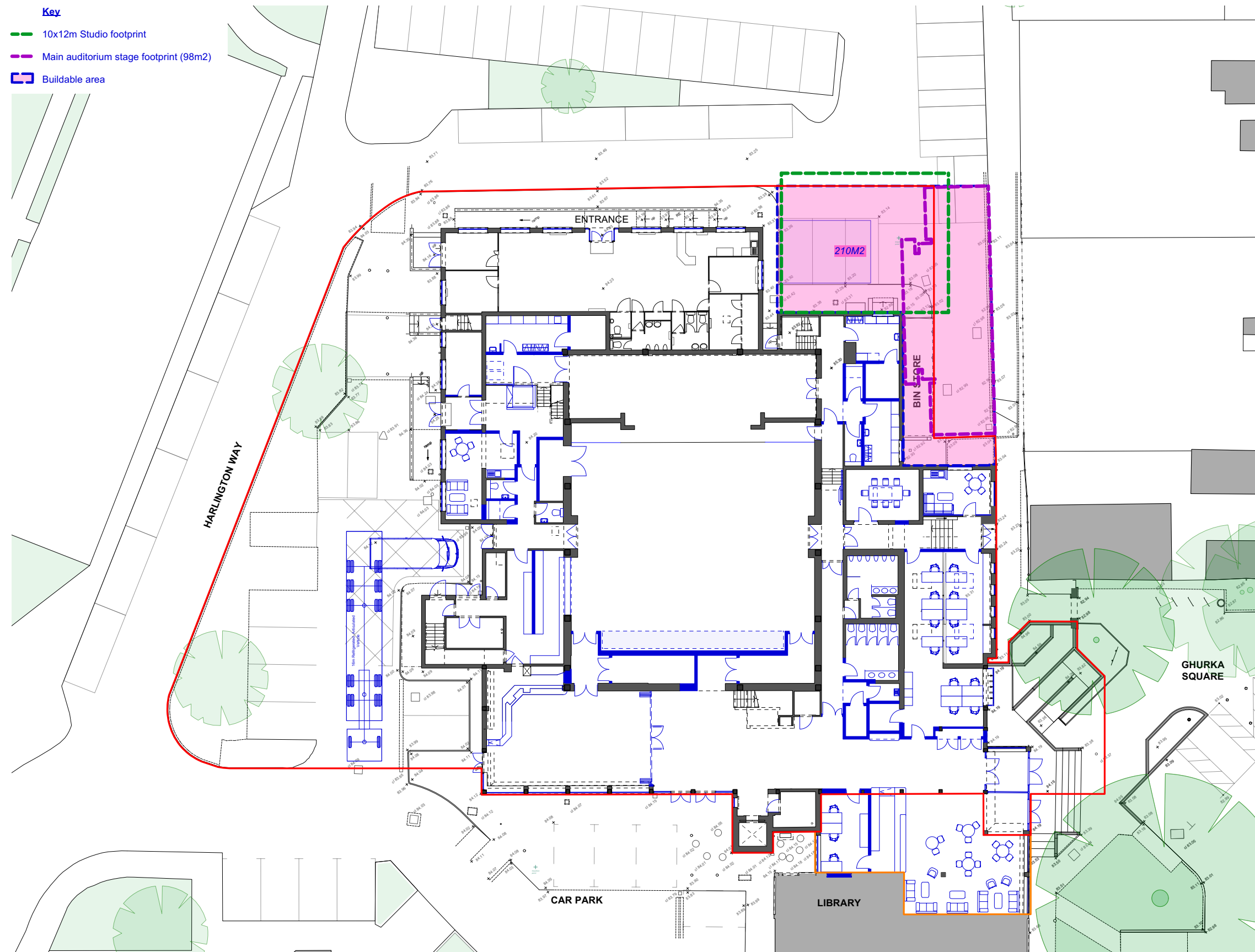
### 9.3 Option 03B (230m<sup>2</sup>)

The second option positions the new building to the west of the existing building, adjacent to Harlington Way. This configuration offers greater integration with the existing building, allowing the new addition to share key facilities such as the proposed green room and stage right dressing rooms as well as connecting to the main foyer bar. While the studio in this location could still function independently from the main venue, it obstructs the current get-in route to the auditorium. Consequently, an alternative access route through the new studio building would need to be established, or unloading operations would have to be redirected through the bar/foyer area.

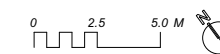
Advantages of this option include the ability to accommodate a 10m x 12m studio comfortably within the available footprint, along with sufficient space for the required ancillary areas. Additionally, there may be suitable space for a large articulated lorry to park adjacent to the venue. This aspect would require further assessment including vehicle tracking analysis, should this option be pursued. The potential impact on the existing trees along Harlington Way would need to be reviewed.

### 9.4 Option 3 Summary

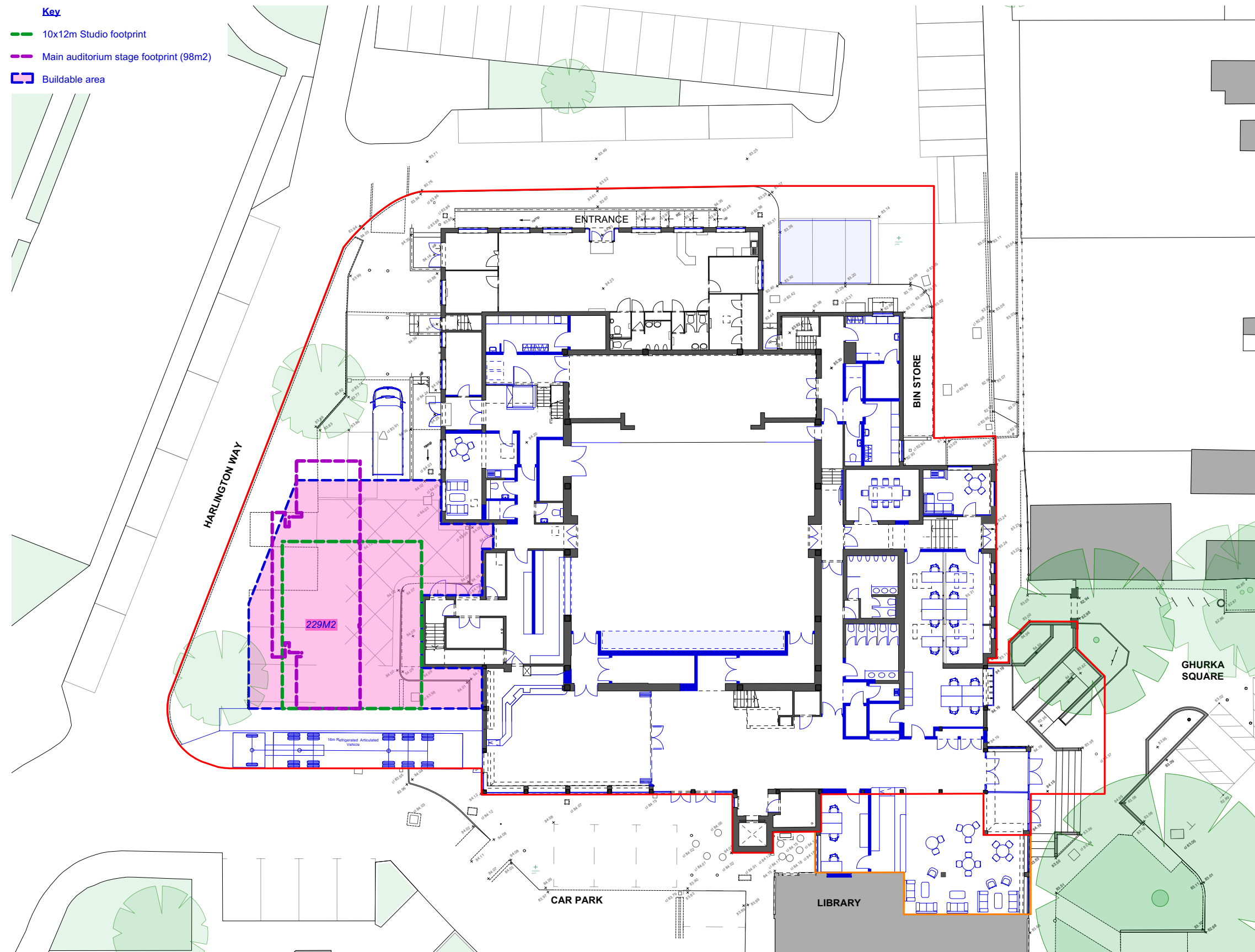
The cost plan indicates that the standalone cost of Option 3 is approximately 75% of the uplift cost between Options 1 and 2. The value of this option would be the continuity of operation, with the long term benefit of an additional lettable space similar to that provided in Option 2. However, the additional benefits of Option 2 in the presentation of the new Gurkha Square façade and the internal improvements to the public foyers and offices are not provided.



OPTION 3A - NEW BUILD EXTENSION  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN







OPTION 3B - NEW BUILD EXTENSION  
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

## 10.0 Conclusions

### 10.1 Option 1 vs. Option 2

The proposed interventions in Options 1 and 2 can be broadly categorised as below:

- Auditorium remodelling
- Front of house upgrades (to foyers etc.)
- Front of house toilet improvements
- Back of house enhancements (to dressing rooms etc.)
- Get-in / scene dock improvements
- FTC office improvements
- Creation of new hireable spaces
- Remodelling of the entrance facade (and associated re-landscaping)

#### Auditorium remodelling

Option 2 offers a number of key advantages over Option 1 in terms of the auditorium works - the most notable of which is the higher capacity, which has positive implications in terms of revenue. The table below compares the capacities in each format.

Format	Option 1	Option 2
End stage format with seated stalls audience	293 plus 6 wheelchairs	358 plus 6 wheelchairs
Music gig with standing stalls audience	487 plus 6 wheelchairs	591 plus 6 wheelchairs
Cabaret layout (with a small standing zone)	261 plus 6 wheelchairs	344 plus 6 wheelchairs

Aside from the uplift in numbers, the side slips and deeper balcony proposed in Option 2 would provide a much more immersive, intimate audience experience than Option 1's modest rear balcony. The wider proscenium and the addition of the stage house technical gallery open up the artistic capabilities of the space.

#### Front of house upgrades

In terms of the front of house upgrades, the most significant difference

between Option 1 and Option 2 is the relocation of the front of house staircase in Option 2 - which then has knock-on implications 'unlocking' the rest of the spaces to improve circulation flows and to make the foyers feel more spacious. Moving the staircase also has the benefit of allowing for more compact sound and light lobbies at the rear of the auditorium, thus maximising the available space for storage in this zone.

#### Front of house toilet improvements

Whilst both Option 1 and Option 2 propose front of house WC enhancements, only Option 2 offers the uplift in female WC numbers and the improvement in the distribution of these (allocating more WCs at stalls level to accord with the largest portion of the audience). The additional WC provision really becomes non-negotiable with the higher capacity of the Option 2 version of the auditorium.

The other primary difference between Option 1 and Option 2 is the Option 2 inclusion of a Changing Places WC. The guidance in Approved Document M is that this facility should be included in 'assembly, recreation and entertainment buildings...with a capacity for 350 or more'. Given the lower level of intervention in Option 1 (and the fact that this is an existing building), it may be acceptable not to include a Changing Places WC - but this is a risk item which will need to be discussed with building control at the next design stage. From an accessibility perspective, the inclusion of this facility would clearly be preferable, allowing those with more profound disabilities to enjoy the Harlington.

#### Back of house enhancements

For the ground floor dressing rooms on stage left, there is no difference between the Option 1 and Option 2 proposals. On stage right, the layout differences are dictated by the get-in configuration. Option 1 benefits from a slightly larger dressing room, an additional individual WC and a better positioned technical manager's office - but at the expense of not having the scene dock and stage level get-in which is proposed in Option 2.

Similarly, at basement level, the Option 1 and Option 2 layouts are very similar. In general, the back of house differences between Options 1 and 2 are fairly minimal.

#### Get-in / scene dock improvements

Option 1 and Option 2 both seek to eliminate the problematic manual handling issues which characterise the existing get-in. However, Option 2 does this to a much greater extent by allowing for unloading directly at stage level. The scene dock in the Option 2 scheme has the potential to be a real 'game changer' in terms of speeding up get-ins and get-outs. The storage zone provided by the scene dock enables more overlap between the incoming and outgoing shows, meaning that the Harlington's programming team will be able to work the auditorium space as hard as possible.

The connection into The Point (and the associated opportunities to share facilities) is only really possible in Option 2, as the extension of Stair 10 would eat into the dressing room space if this approach were to be adopted into the Option 1 layout.

#### FTC office improvements

The works to the offices are much more substantial in Option 2 due to the knock-on facade and roof implications associated with rationalising the floor levels. However, there are a number of benefits brought about by the consistent floor level. In a part of the building where space is at a premium, the floor area gained back by the removal of the escape stair enables the office desk layout to effectively shift further north. This in turn pulls the box office further north, which is what allows for the creation of the large new meeting room south of the main entrance. The opportunity to create this new hireable space is an indirect benefit of the office reconfiguration.

Furthermore, in terms of encouraging collaborative working and providing an accessible environment for staff members with mobility issues, having a single consistent floor level for the offices is a highly desirable feature of Option 2.

#### Creation of new hireable spaces

A key point of difference between Option 1 and Option 2 is that Option 1 generally focusses on improving the existing spaces. Whilst this is positive for the user experience, it doesn't bring in any clear additional income streams. Option 2, on the other hand, enhances the venue's financial resilience with the introduction of two new hireable spaces:

- The large ground floor meeting room in the previously underused space near the entrance. With independent access and a dedicated accessible WC, this could be used for evening council meetings and other events without necessarily needing to open



- (and staff) the rest of the building.
- The spacious multi-purpose studio at the first floor level. This space could help to satisfy requests from dance and exercise groups for additional space, given the high demand on the existing dance studio. With its dual role as an overspill foyer, the new studio could really help to ease pressure on the front of house circulation space at first floor level.

Remodelling of the entrance facade

The remodelling of the entrance facade is the single most significant way in which the venue can ‘announce itself’ to the town. Whilst there is, of course, plenty of scope for bold external signage in Option 1, it is unlikely to ever have quite the same impact as the more holistic redesign of the frontage which is proposed in Option 2.

The opportunity to create the large multi-purpose studio at the first floor level is also born out of the wider remodelling of the entrance frontage, so the advantages of rebuilding this portion of the facade are multi-faceted.

With the reworking of the entrance steps and ramp in Option 2, the approach to the building is more inclusive and accessible compared to Option 1 (where changes to the existing landscaping are minimal). Furthermore, the more extensive external works in Option 2 offer an opportunity to better respond to the approach from the high street so that the new landscaping is a wayfinding ‘tool’, helping to direct the public to the building entrance.

10.2 Hybrid scenarios

This report outlines 3 distinct options. However, the available budget will likely dictate some sort of hybrid scenario which takes elements from each of the options. For instance, the decision may be to pursue the Option 1 scheme but incorporating some of the highest priority elements from Option 2. There are, of course, some interdependencies between certain elements of the design. The higher capacity Option 2 auditorium scheme goes hand-in-hand with the need to provide additional front of house toilets for example. The table on the right is not exhaustive and small modifications to each enhancement may be required in order to integrate it into the Option 1 scheme. However, it broadly outlines how different hybrid scenarios might work, taking the Option 1 scheme as the baseline.

Enhancement  (in conjunction with the Option 1 baseline scheme)	Dependencies	Associated approximate cost uplift  (over and above the Option 1 scheme)
Option 2 auditorium with hung side slips  Cost includes the Option 2 scheme for the ground floor FOH WCs in order to increase the number of female cubicles to suit the extra capacity.		£1.40m  N.B. For the version of the auditorium with hung side slips, this uplift figure includes the associated increase in roof works - i.e. installing new steel trusses rather than purely strengthening the existing glulam beams.
Option 2 remodelling of frontage including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creation of first floor multi-purpose studio</li><li>Reconfiguration of the first floor FOH WCs and relocation of the FOH stair to create a good relationship between the new studio and the first floor foyer</li><li>Creation of the ground floor meeting room</li><li>Associated re-landscaping (steps and ramp)</li></ul>	The Option 2 scheme for the FTC offices would need to be pursued alongside this in order to provide a ground floor meeting room of the size drawn (since this is reliant upon the removal of the office stair to shift the office desk layout northwards). A smaller meeting room could likely be provided if the Option 2 FTC office changes are not pursued.	£1.60m
Option 2 layout to FTC offices	Likely reduction in the achievable size of the ground floor meeting room if the Option 2 office layout is not pursued.	£0.55m
Option 2 get-in / scene dock and internal connection with The Point	The internal connection with The Point is optional (but is reliant upon the creation of the scene dock).	£0.45m
Upgrades to the pedestrian path from the Fleet Road (along the northern side of Gurkha Square), to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Street furniture (benches)</li><li>Improved lighting</li><li>Improved signage (digital totems)</li><li>Re-paving</li></ul>		£80k
Option 3 new build extension to create a ‘second space’		£3.0m

### 10.3 Preferred option

Of the three options developed, Option 2 represents the optimum solution from an operational and audience experience perspective, incorporating all of the key building enhancements developed with the client team. Option 1 on its own undoubtedly improves the building, but many of the upgrades are less 'glamorous' and wouldn't necessarily be immediately visible to audiences.

Option 3 does not seem to represent the best allocation of funds since it is driven more by the desire to provide a facility for the closure period, rather than by the best long-term solution for the Harlington. There isn't a particularly natural location for the extension as the possible sites are either difficult to connect efficiently to the existing front of house areas, or problematic in terms of manoeuvring for get-in vehicles.

Option 1 comes in under the available budget whilst Option 2 exceeds it. Working with FTC and Stuart Shanks, a preferred option is being reviewed. This takes a 'shopping list' approach to which elements of Option 2 could be added to Option 1 to support the business plan. The possible combinations of 'bolt-ons' are outlined in the table on the previous page. An addendum option - Option 4 - will be developed in diagrammatic form to incorporate the 'shopping list' elements once these have been agreed.

The highest priority Option 2 enhancements are likely to be:

#### 1. The larger capacity auditorium

Within this option there are cost nuances which could be explored further at the next design stage. For instance, the Option 2 auditorium proposal currently shows hung side slips to enable a column-free stalls level for ultimate flexibility. As a result, new auditorium roof trusses are currently allowed for in the Option 2 cost plan. A slightly lower cost version of the Option 2 scheme would support the side slips with columns, effectively allowing for the Option 1 version of the auditorium roof, where the existing glulam beams are strengthened, rather than being replaced with new trusses. It is important to note that the larger capacity auditorium would require the Option 2 reconfiguration of the ground floor WCs in order to provide sufficient female cubicles.

#### 2. The new entrance frontage and first floor multi-purpose space

From a commercial and community perspective, the large hireable studio at the upper floor would be a very desirable asset. This generous additional space and the dramatic external facelift provide the sort of transformational change that the public would

expect to see when the Harlington re-opens at the end of its closure period. To use the multi-purpose studio to its full potential with connectivity to an improved first floor foyer, it would make sense to carry out the first floor WC reconfiguration and the relocation of the front of house staircase alongside the remodelling of the frontage.