

1. What is today all about?

It is an exciting time for the Priory Centre. Significant funding from the Future High Street Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy means that it is time to rejuvenate the Priory Centre as a location for community and cultural use in the heart of St Neots.

The vision is to:

- Enhance the venues
- Boost capacity
- Enable flexible use
- Provide professional and inclusive facilities
- Become a go-to destination for theatre, music, comedy and community
- Reduce running costs to cope with changing needs

With your help and input, we will be able to shape the next stage of development to make this centre an unmissable place to visit, experience and enjoy.



Days Brewery on the existing site, c.1914



The Priory Centre riverside, 2007

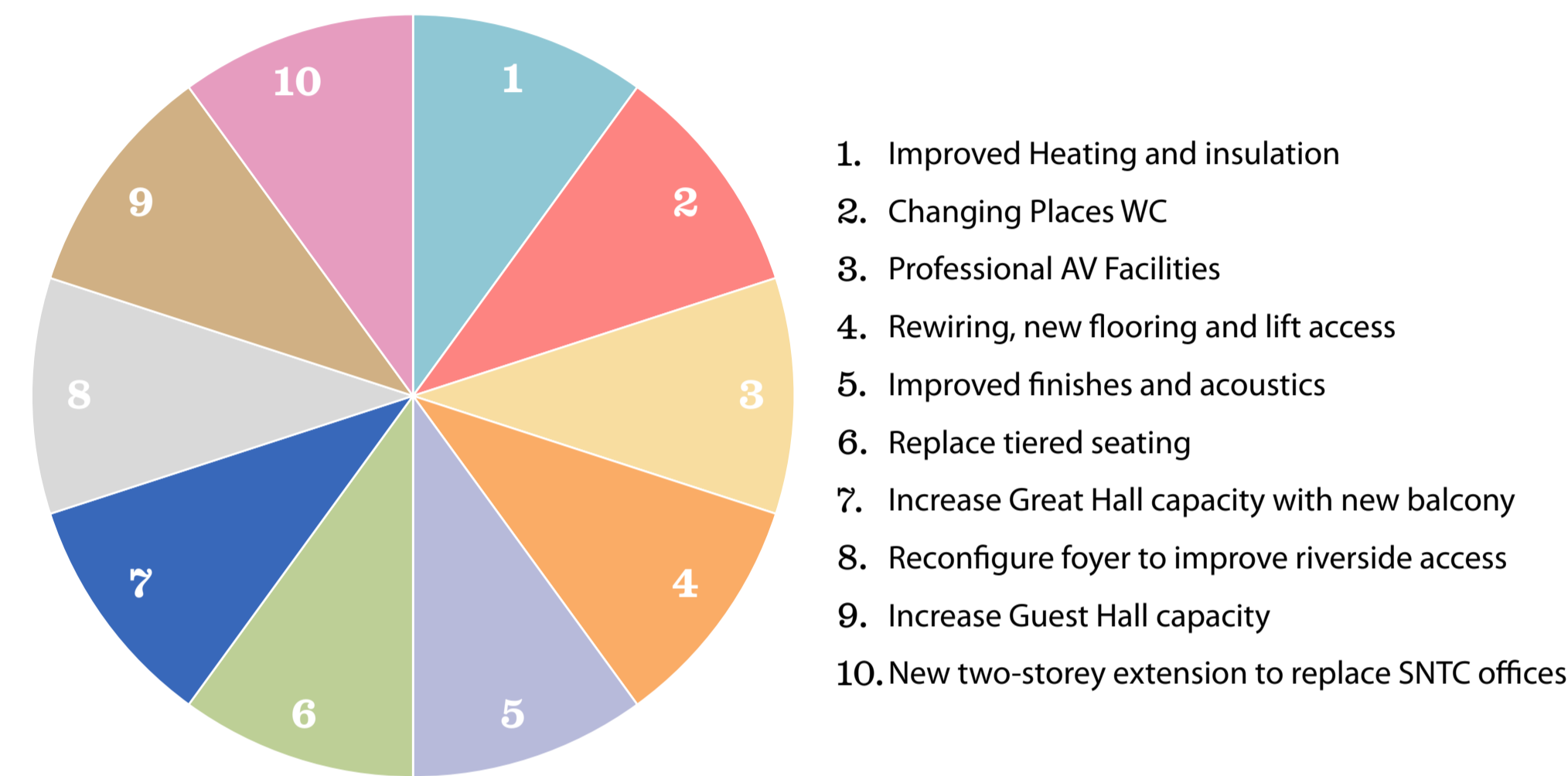


Chitty Chitty Bang Bang performance, November 2023

2. What would you like to see at The Priory Centre?

Initial Engagement

In 2022, a steering group of local councillors, began engagement with a variety of users and groups which regularly occupy with The Priory Centre. This initial engagement remained committed to the initial strategic targets for development set out by Huntingdonshire District Council in 2021.



Key Priorities

In 2023, a Building Development Group was formed to include a group of members from the Priory Centre team, local town and district councillors to inform development of the project with AOC.

They have agreed upon six key priorities for the long term ambitions of the project, which include:

- HIGH**
-
1. Viable Business Plan
 2. Changing Perceptions
 3. Making Flexible Public Rooms
 4. Bigger and Better Range of Performance
 5. Enhancing the Existing Look and Feel
 6. Sustainable and Inclusive Refurbishment

Previous Engagement Feedback

AOC have visited the centre for various functions and events and engaged with the Building Development Group.



Building Development Group workshop



Guest Hall in community use



Bar during performance

Building Development Group Interviews

Individual interviews regarding the future of the Priory Centre took place with the Building Development Group and produced the following outcomes:

75% felt locals would gain from the provision of more bookable rooms

100% agreed the centre needs to improved facilities e.g. cafe & WCs

50% of participants valued improving the streetside visibility

63% felt the look and feel of the interior should be improved

40% use the building weekly

75% wanted proposals to improve the connection to the river

Majority of respondents use the centre to attend events and as a place to work and meet

Majority of respondents agreed the main strength of the centre is its riverside location

What key changes would you make to the Priory Centre?



3. The new Priory Centre

Proposals for the Priory Centre are numbered below. Each number relates to a board which contains more information about the proposals.

4. A New Great Hall

Proposals aim to enhance the interior in terms of performance and character, whilst improving capacity, acoustics and access to stage and facilities.

5. Improved Guest Hall

Proposed open balcony to improve riverside experience. Internal finishes look to improve acoustics and perception.

6. Generous Foyer

Relocating the existing WCs enables increased area for cafe provision and improves connection to the terrace and riverside.

7. New Town Council Spaces

Optimising riverside amenity for a third venue shared with the community.

8. Connection to Riverside

Smaller bookable rooms over external porches and a River Room beside the Great Hall allow further opportunities to experience the riverside. Lowered elements of river wall improving foyer and terrace connection to river.

9. Changing Perceptions

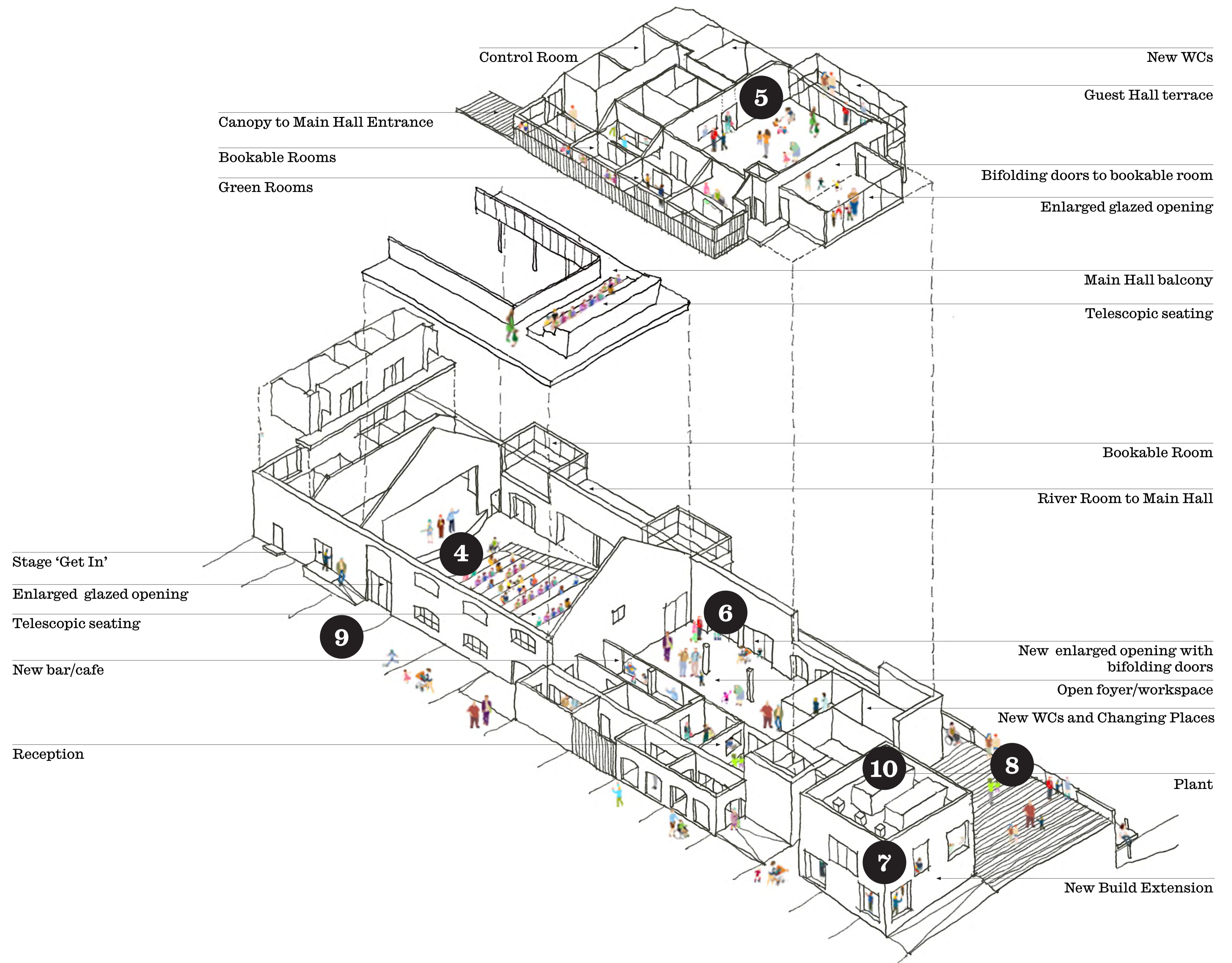
Targeting elements both internally and externally to improve building visibility and access, connection to riverside and terrace, identifies the centre as a key location for culture and community.

10. A Sustainable Building

The proposed enhancement of thermal elements looks to prioritise elements at the end of life or otherwise no longer fit for purpose.

Improvements to make the centre more thermally efficient, with a mixture of both natural and mechanical ventilation will provide an ambient internal environment.

New works will use a palette of bio-genic and climate-responsive materials.

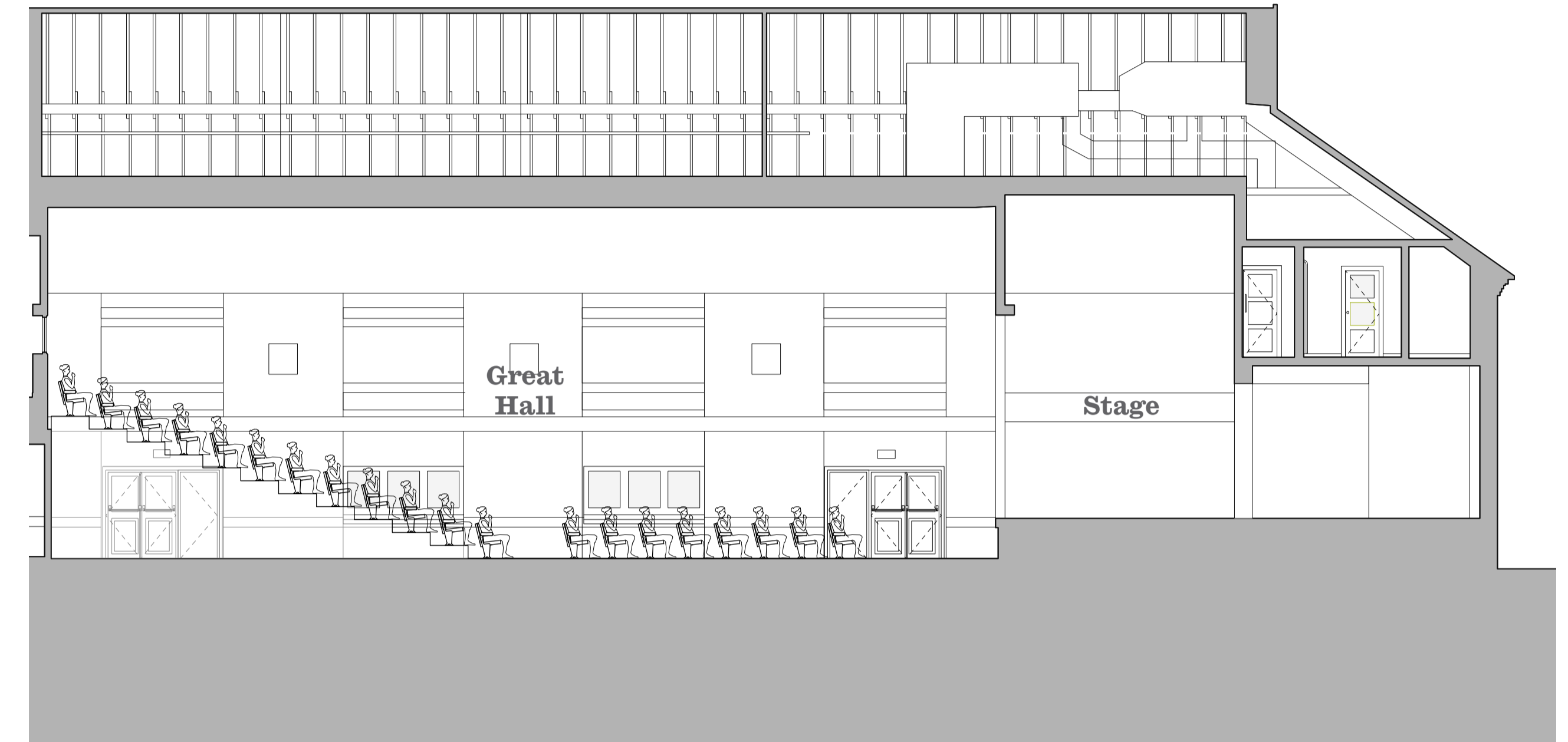


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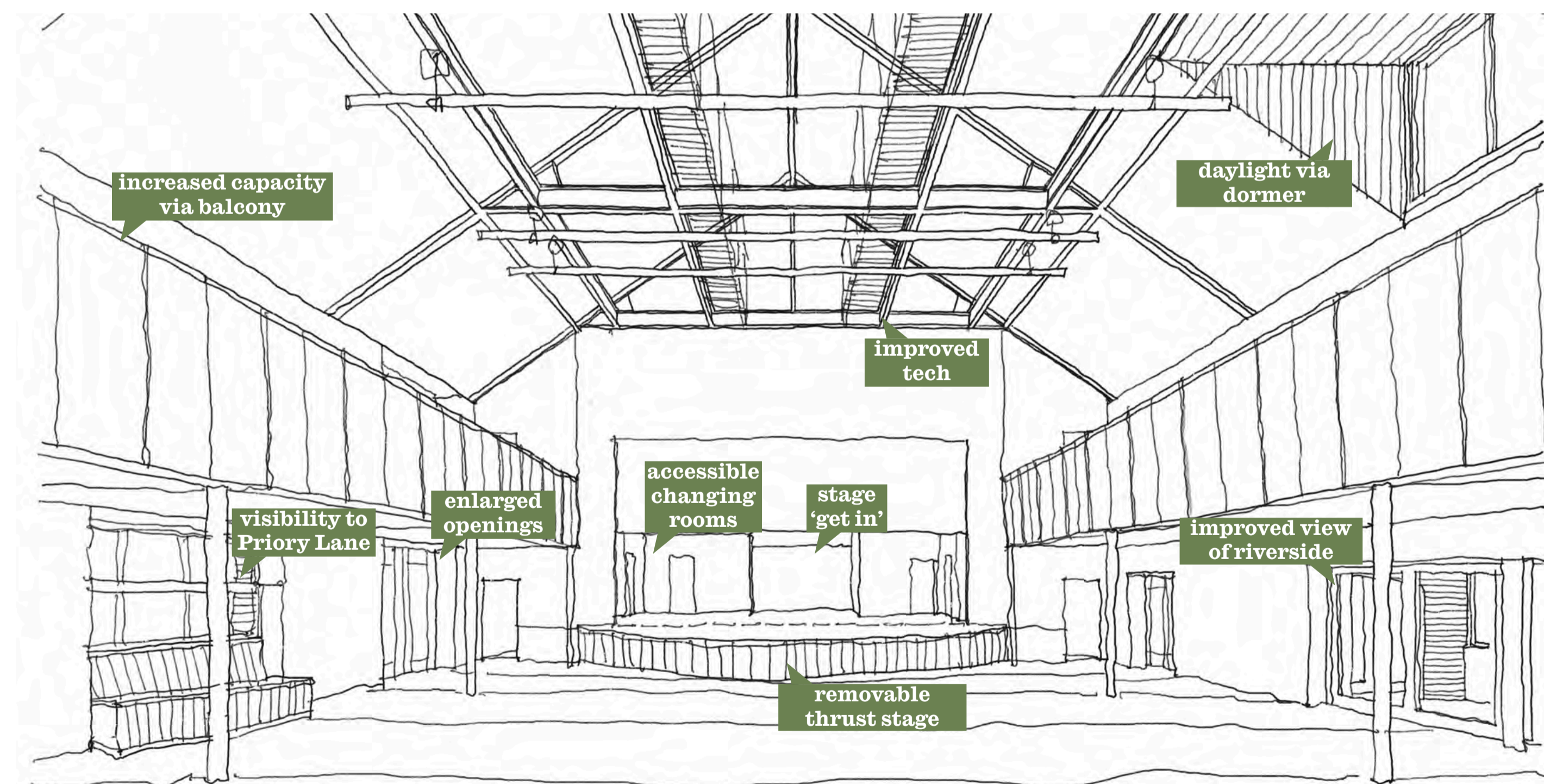
4. A New Great Hall



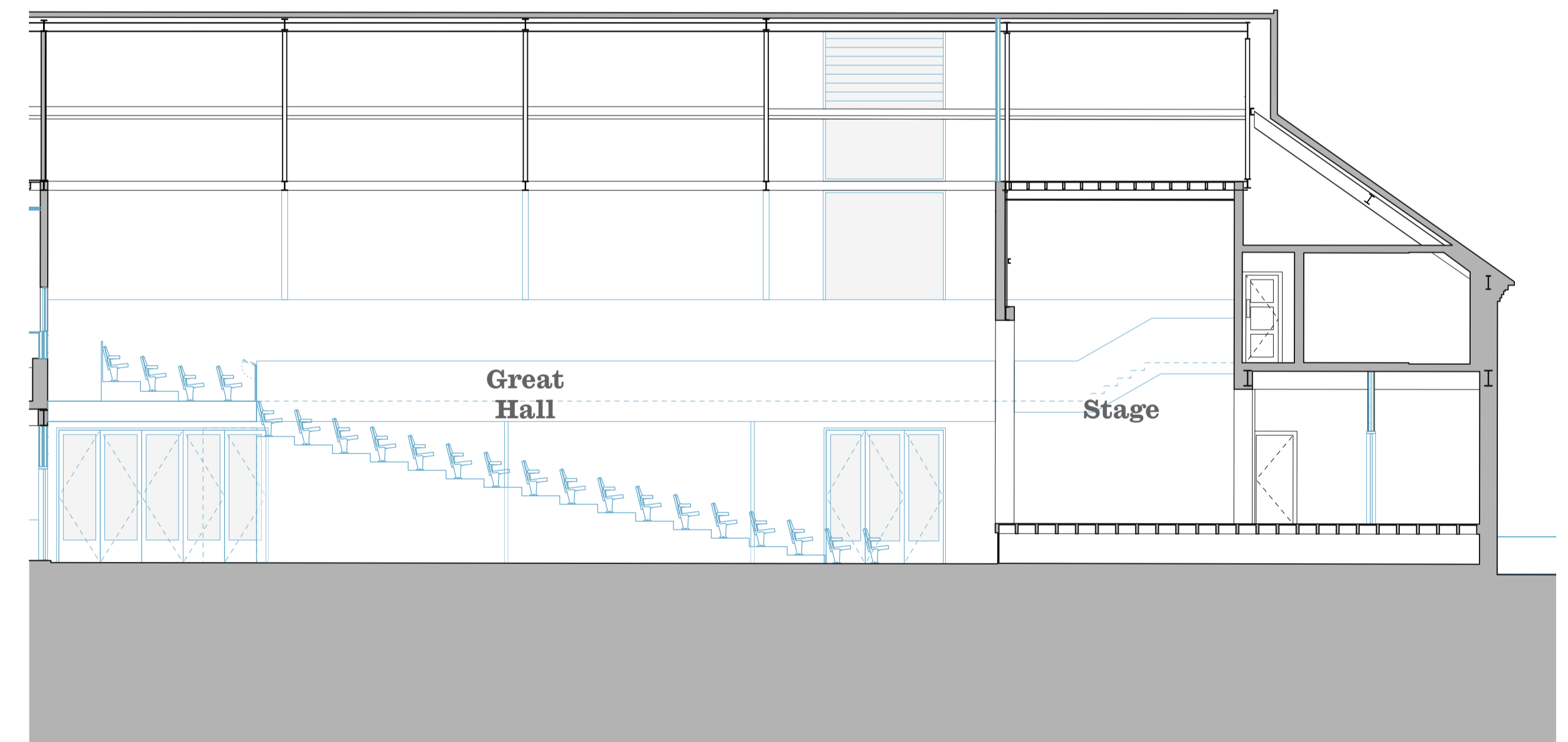
Existing View within Great Hall



Existing Section showing existing retractable and flat floor seating



Proposed View within Great Hall



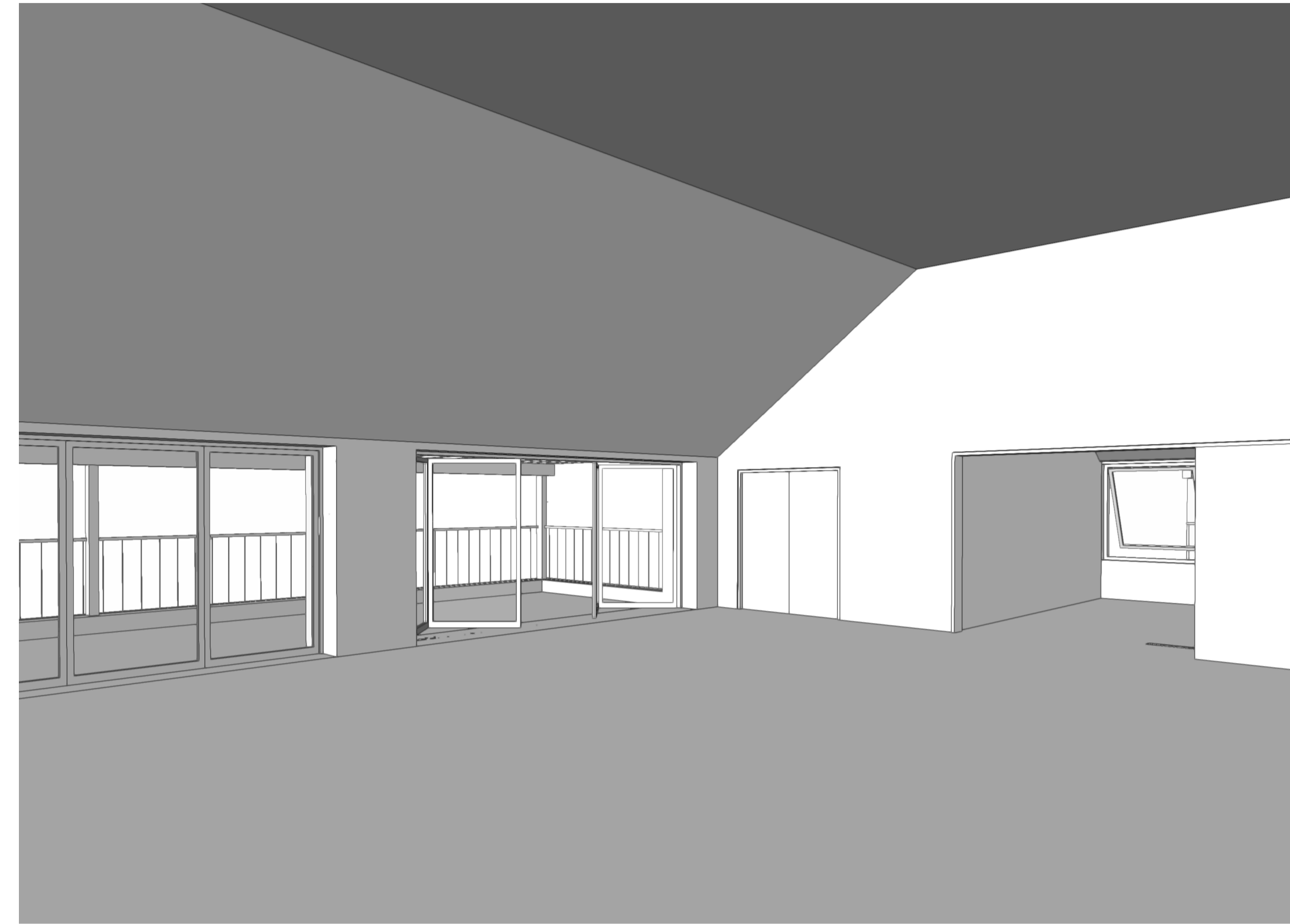
Proposed Section showing retractable seating and balcony

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5. Improved Guest Hall



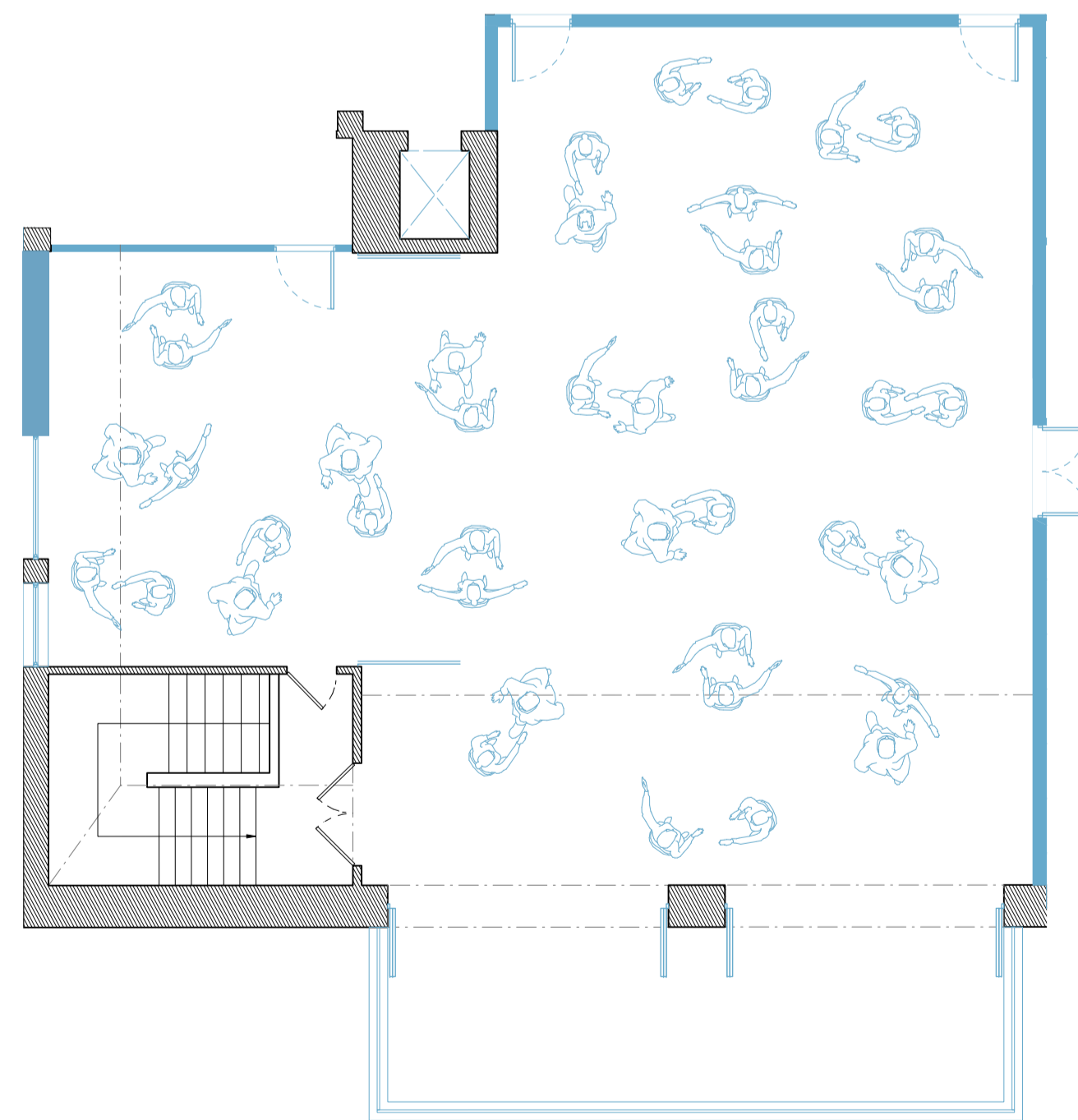
Existing View from within Guest Hall



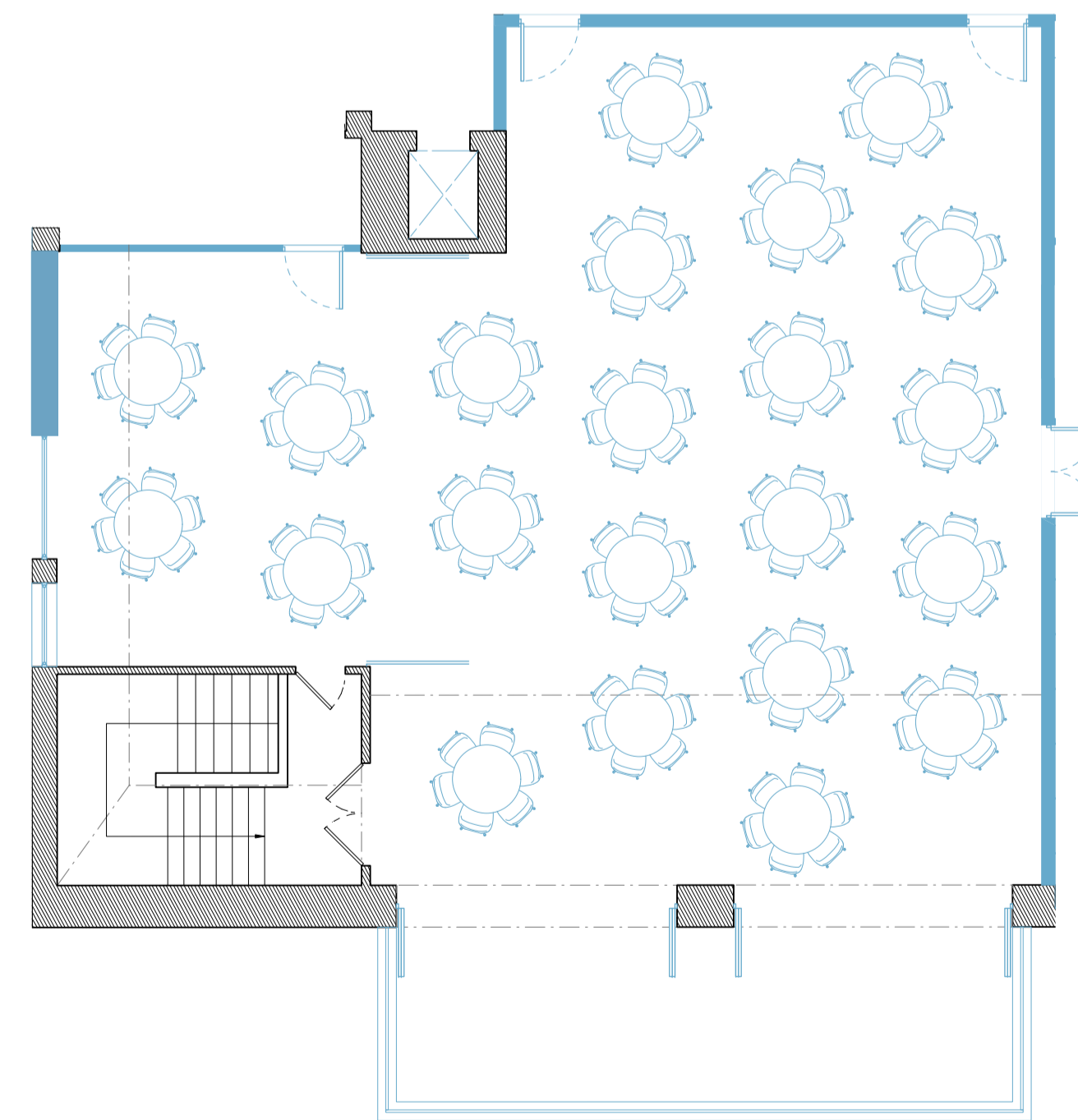
Proposed View within Guest Hall towards riverside

Proposal

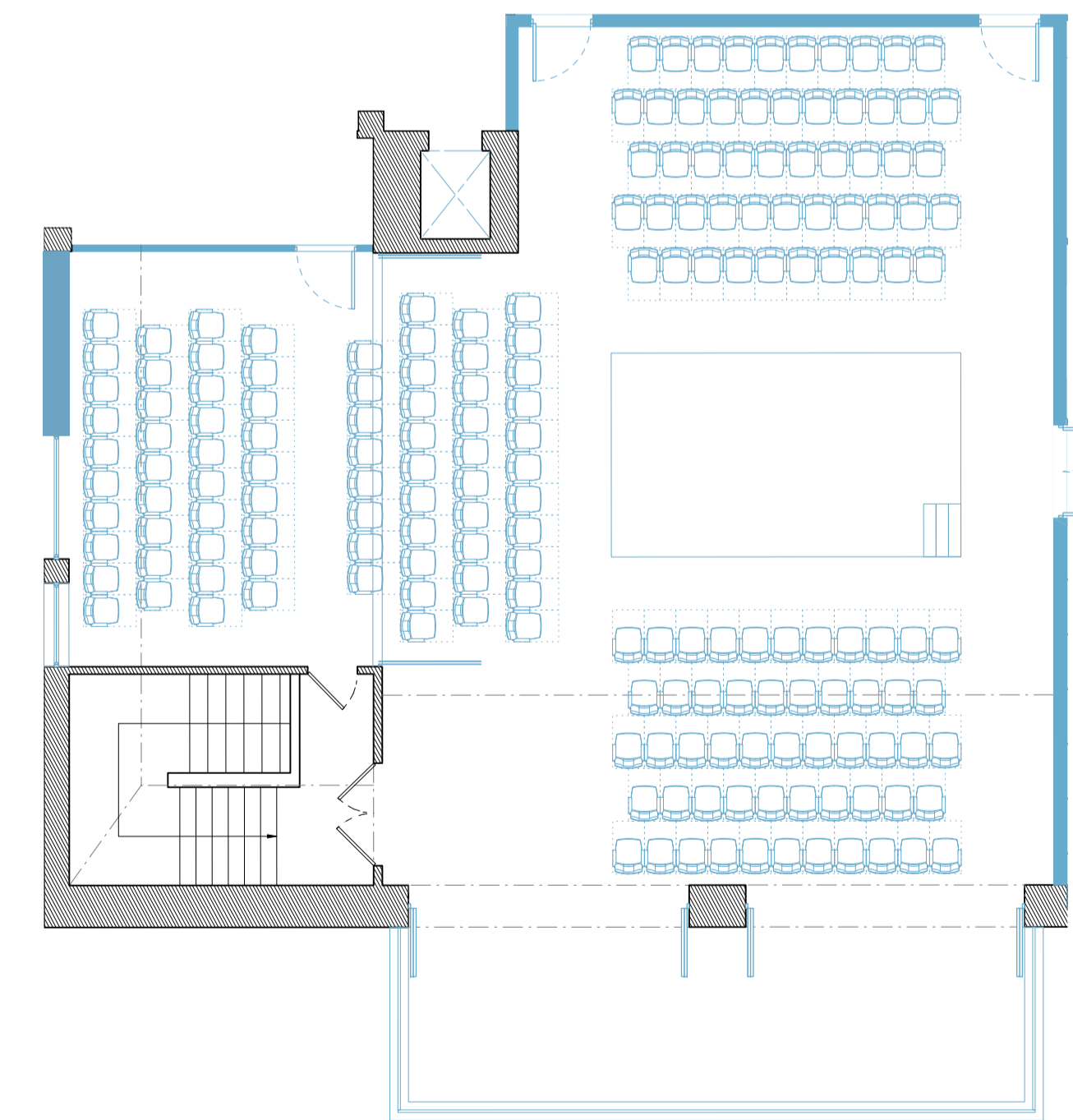
- Improve visibility and access between Guest Hall and Riverside through enlarged openings and external balcony
- Provide more natural daylight and mechanical ventilation
- Existing Moot room to be made accessible via Guest Hall as a bookable space
- Improve technical provision for performance and events
- Remove dropped ceiling tile to provide acoustic treatment



Proposed Venue Use - Dance Class



Proposed Venue Use - Seated Dinner



Proposed Venue Use - Performance

Existing
Proposed

Drawings for illustration purposes only. Final proposal subject to change.

6. Generous Foyer



Existing View from Entrance



Existing View to Great Hall Entrance



Proposed View to Great Hall Entrance

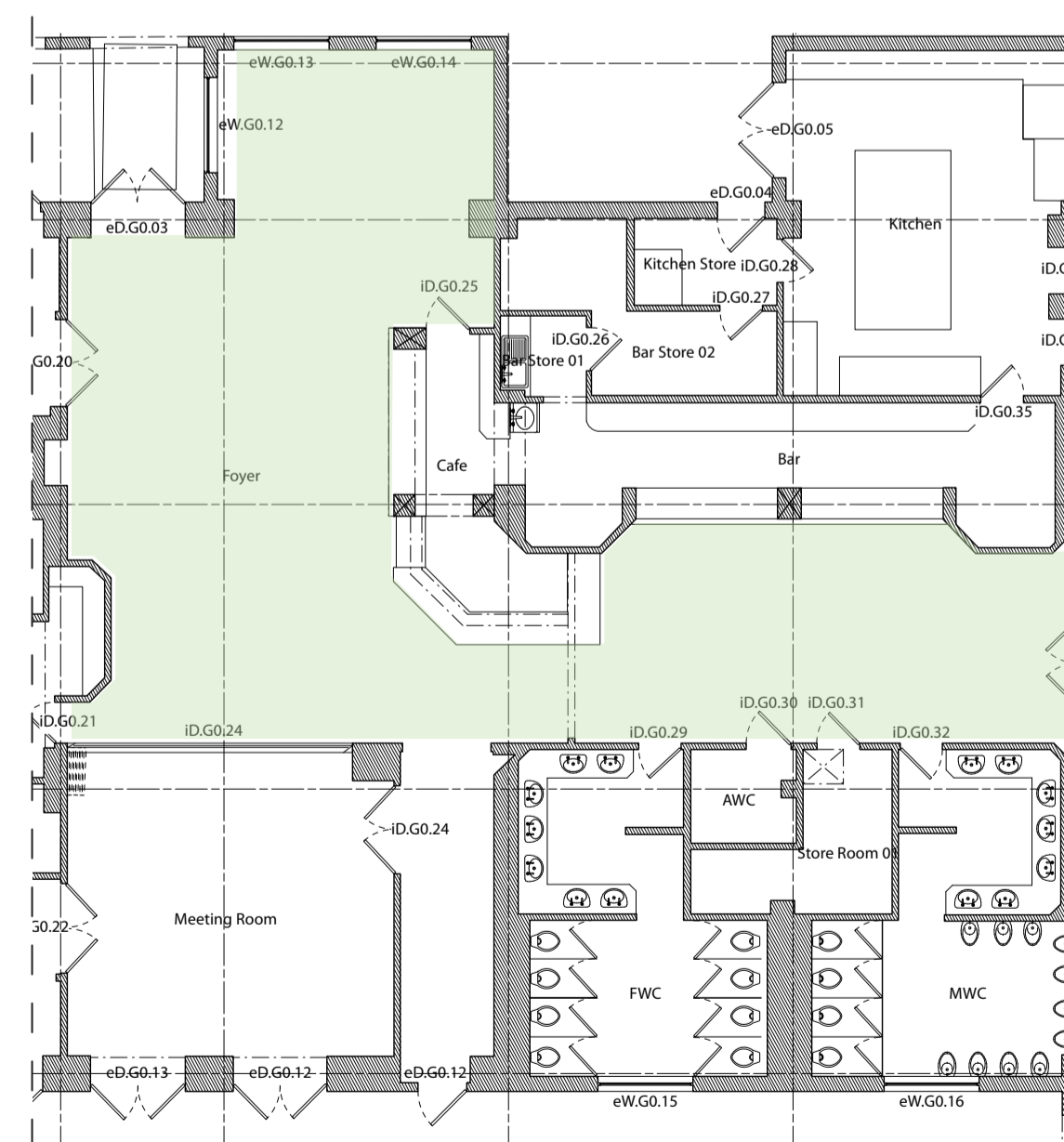
Proposal

- Improve visibility and access between foyer and riverside
- Provide more natural daylight and natural ventilation
- Reduce bottle neck to bar during performance
- Improve cafe facilities
- New Changing Places WC
- Relocate WC block between Foyer and North End extension
- New lift
- Remove dropped ceiling tile to increase head height



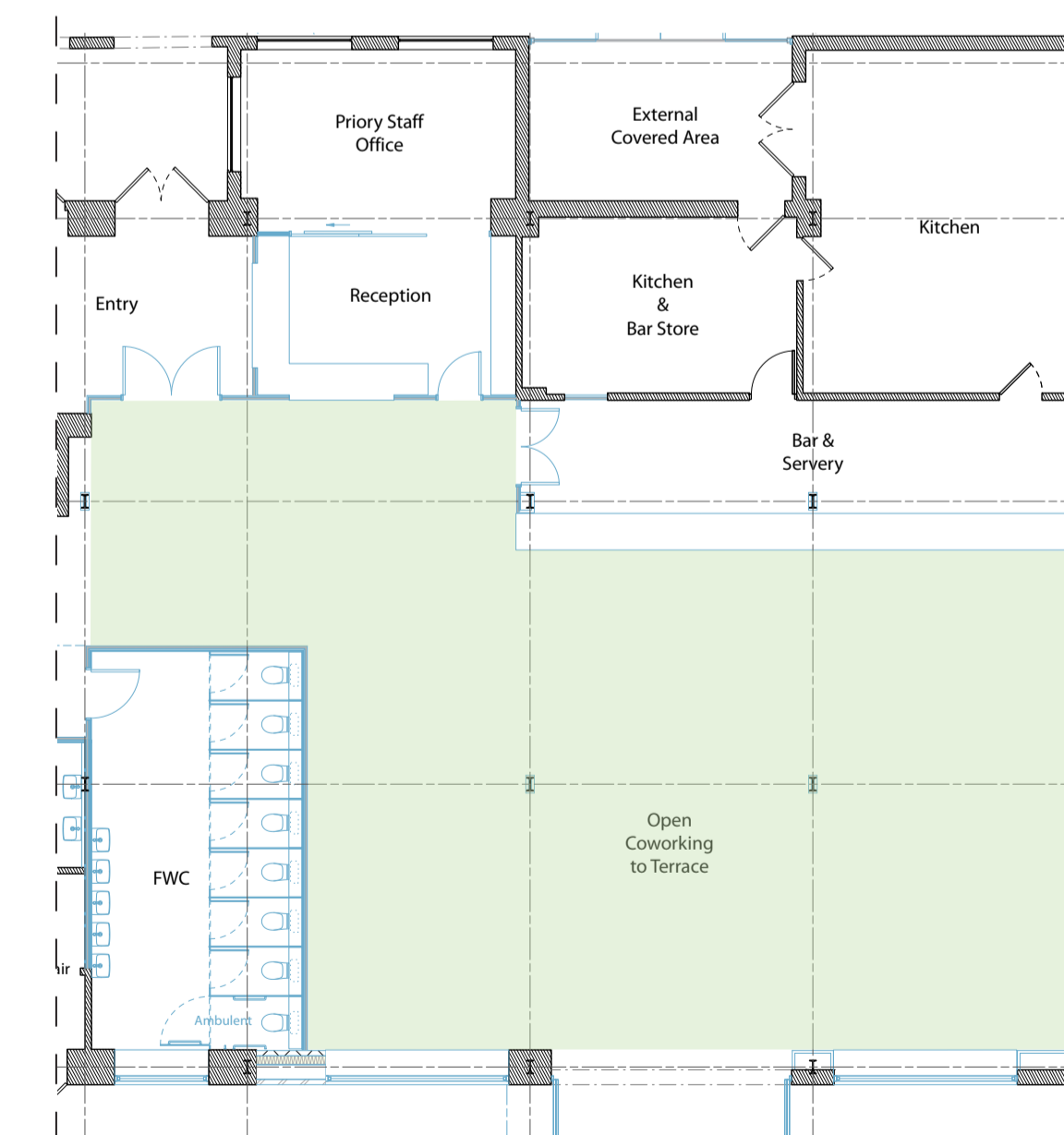
Proposed View from Entrance

135sqm



Existing Foyer Plan

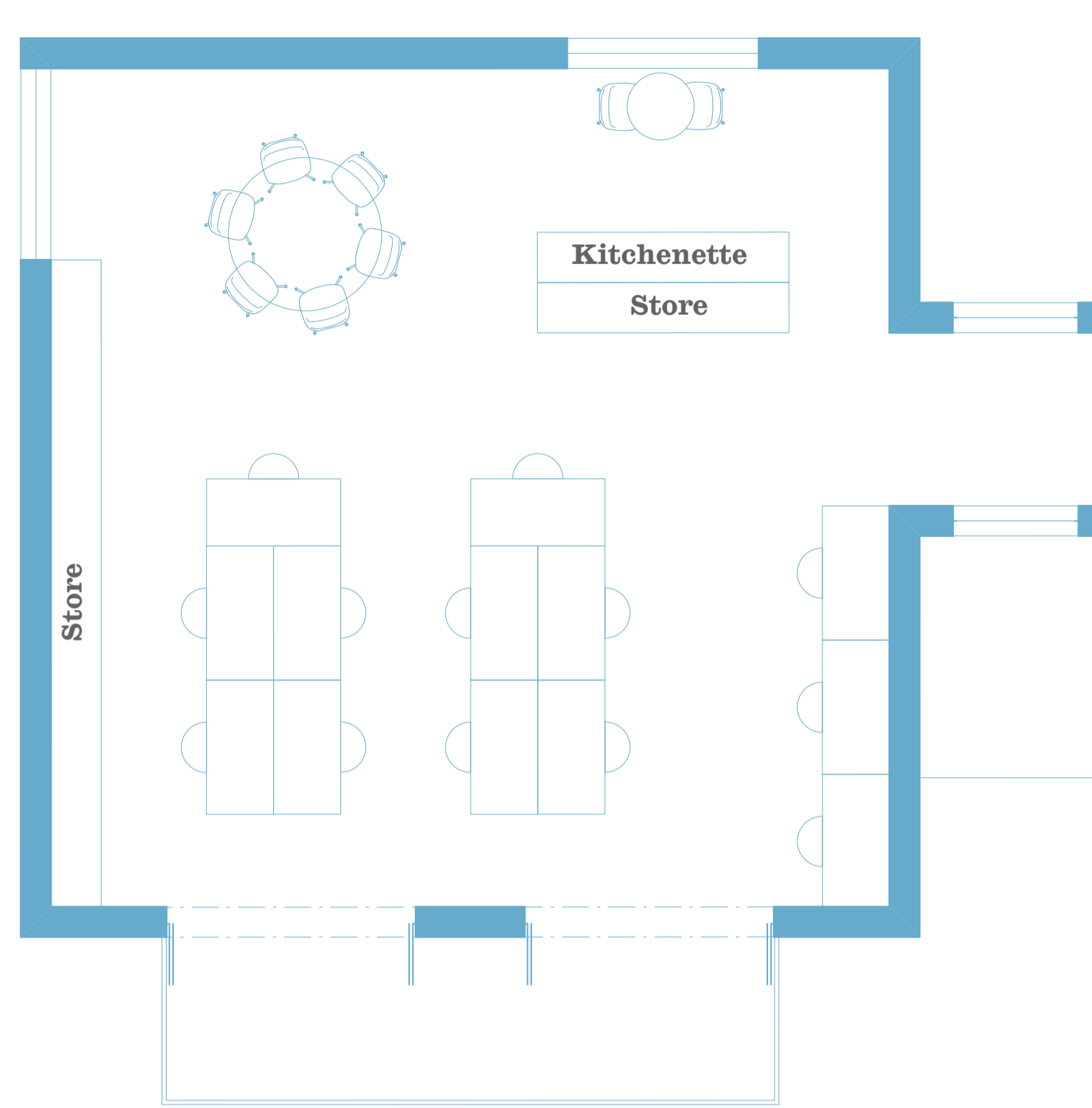
200sqm



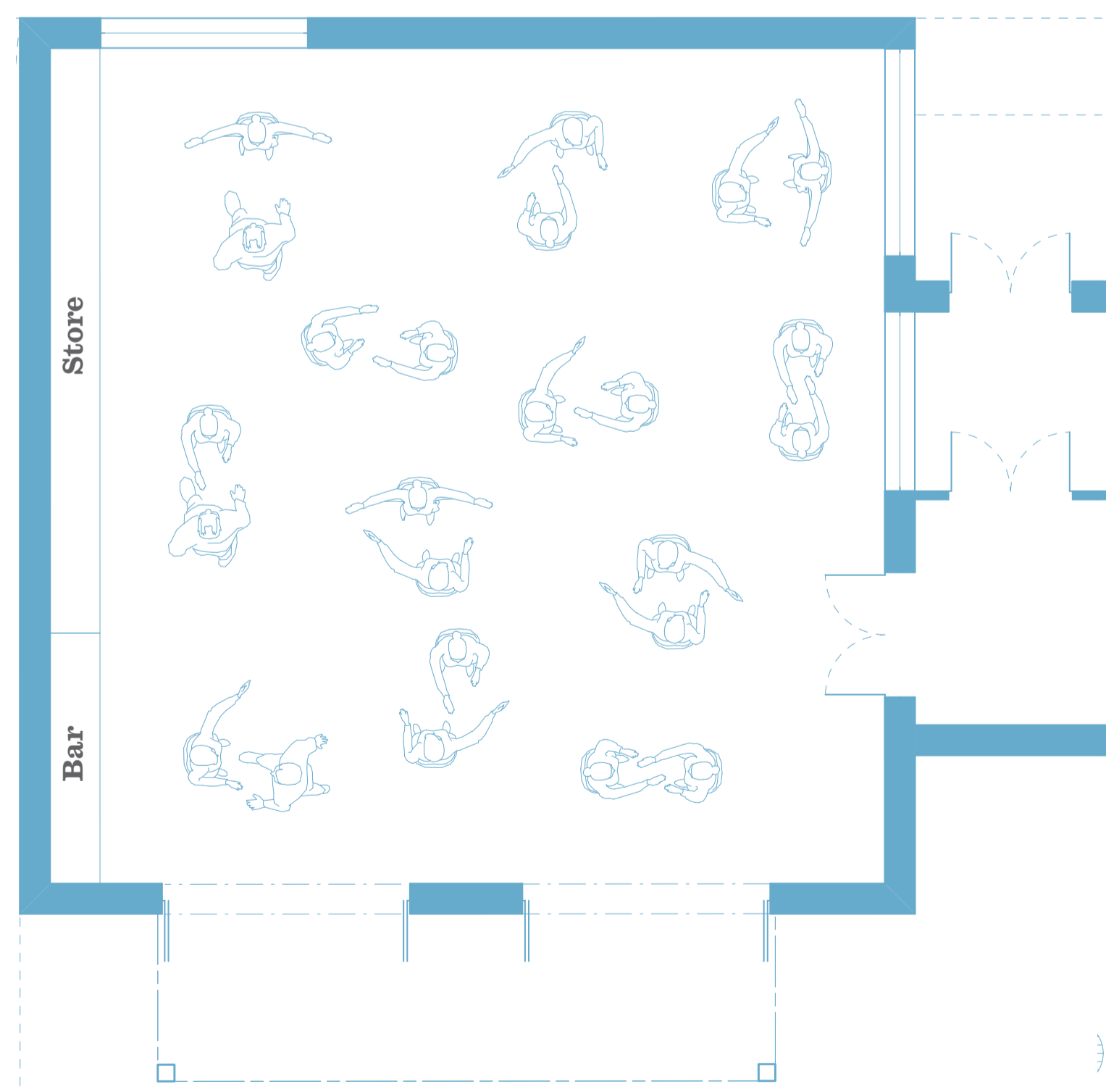
Proposed Foyer Plan

- Existing
- Proposed
- Foyer

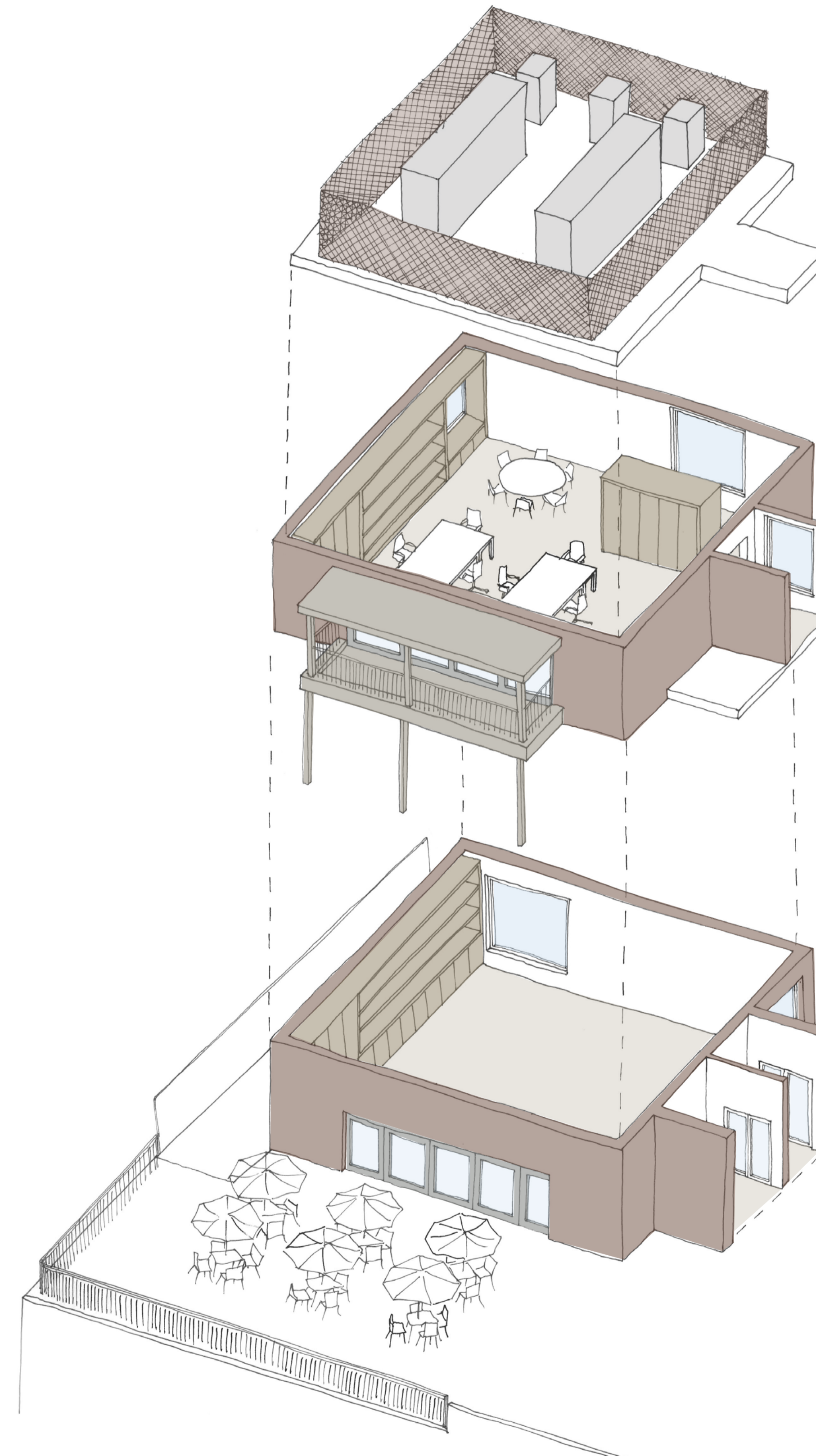
7. New Town Council Spaces



Proposed First Floor - St Neots Town Council Office



Proposed Ground Floor - Community Venue Space

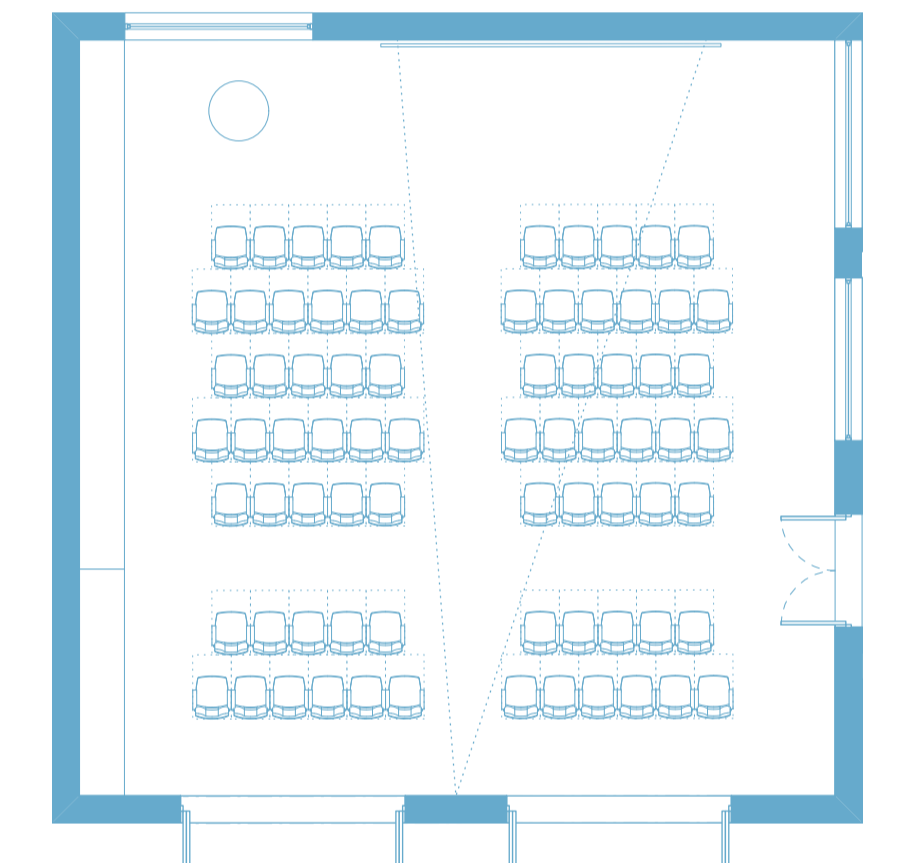


Sketch isometric showing proposed Town Council Spaces over multiple levels

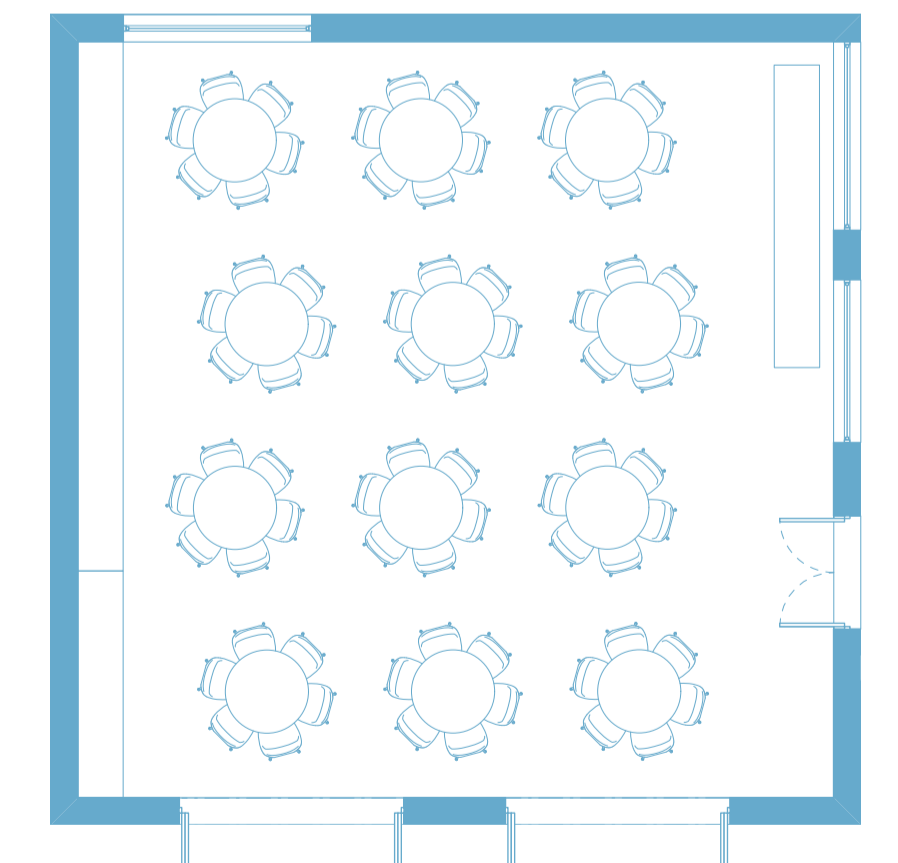
Proposal

- Provide two-storey north end extension for both Town Council and community use
- Covered external terrace to improve connection to riverside
- Plant to be screened at roof level
- New glazing to provide connection and visibility to Priory Lane

Alternative Venue Use for Conference



Alternative Venue Use for Dinner



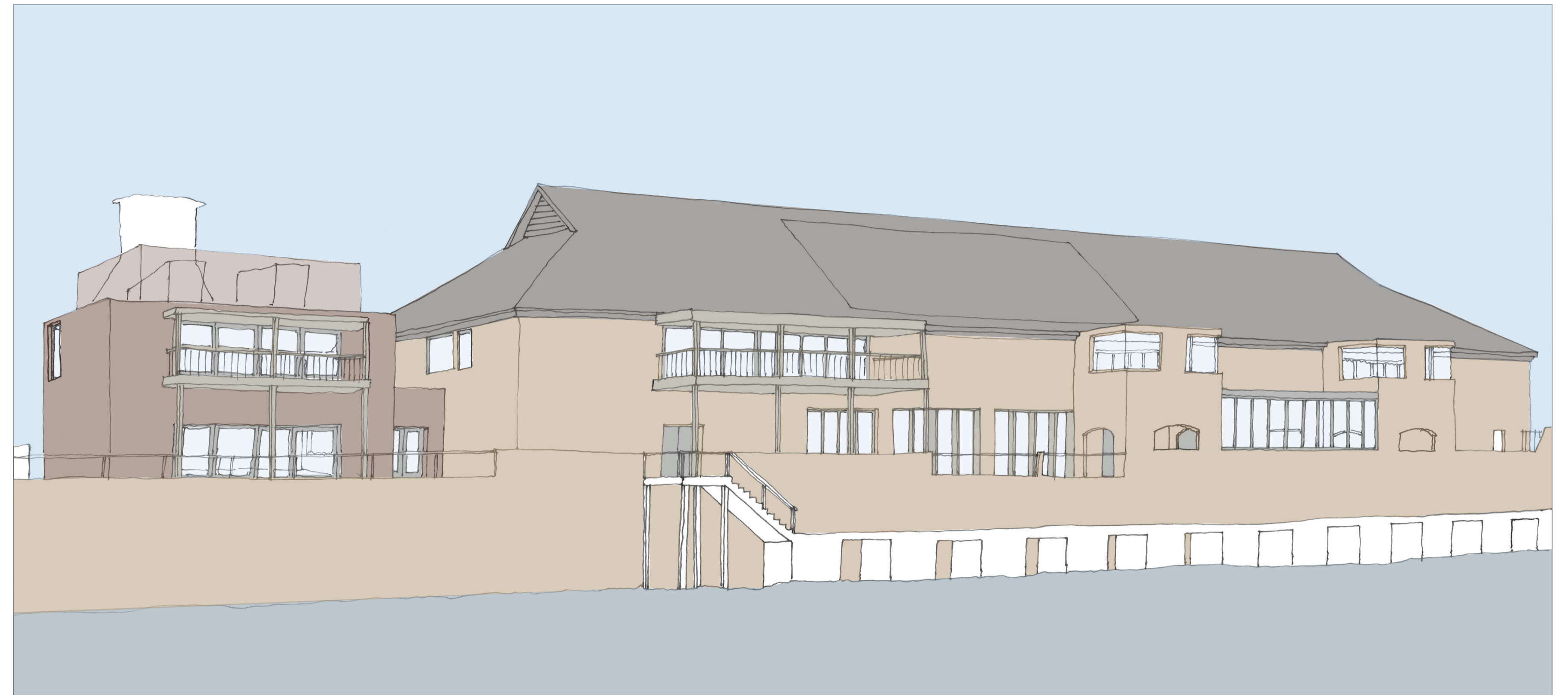
Existing
Proposed

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8. Connection to the Riverside



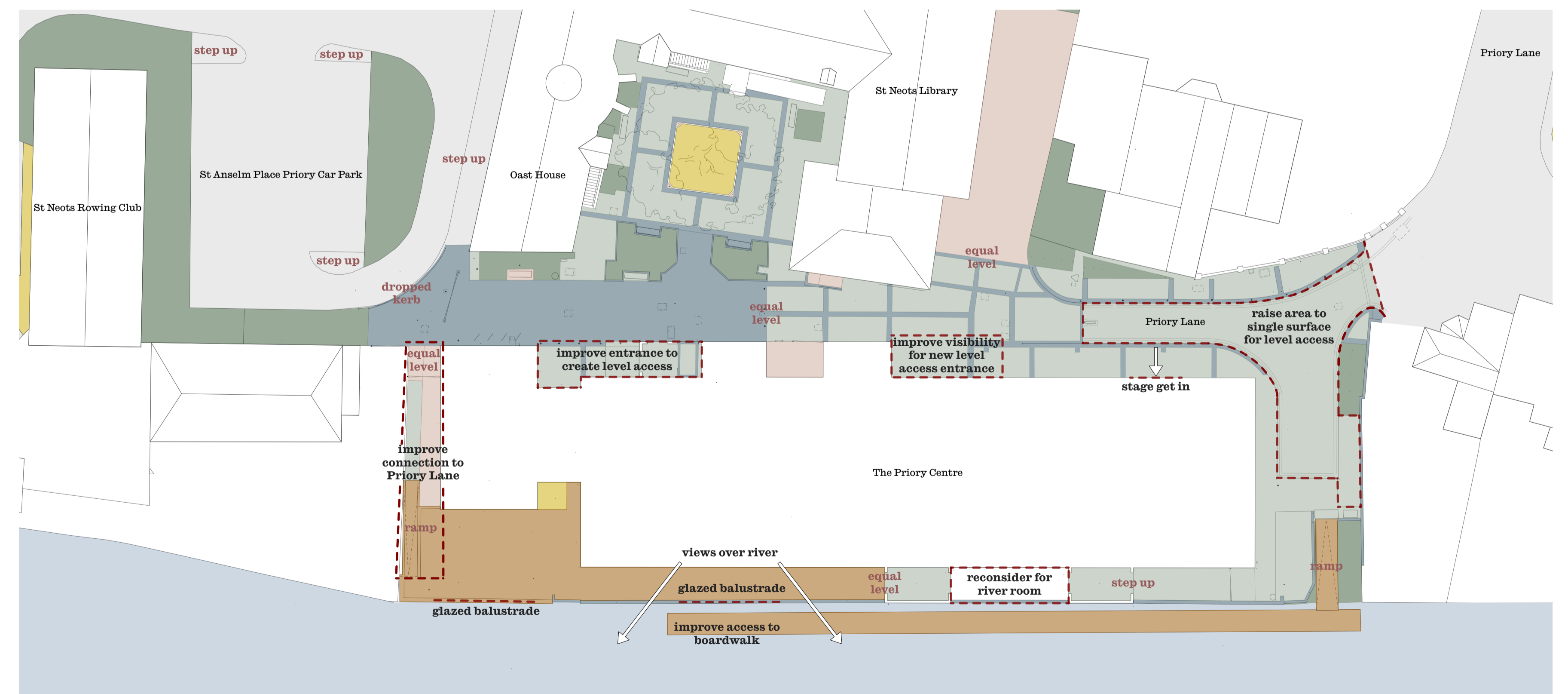
Existing view from Regatta Meadow to Priory Centre



Proposed view from Regatta Meadow to Priory Centre

Key changes

- Creating further connection to riverside from Great Hall via River Room
- Provide direct access to boardwalk from terrace
- Two storey North end extension with plant above
- Solar panels on Priory Centre roof
- Dropped wall on terrace to provide increased visibility to riverside
- External terrace to Guest Hall and New Hall to engage with riverside
- Provide bookable rooms over existing canopies
- Optimise openings for glazing and ventilation



Plan showing proposals to improve the surrounding landscape

Drawings for illustration purposes only. Final proposal subject to change.

9. Changing Perceptions

Key changes

- Bookable rooms over existing canopies to unify the sequence of entry
- External graphics and enlarged openings reveal internal activity
- Increased engagement and participation through activities made visible at street level
- Connection between riverside and Priory Lane
- New entrance canopy highlighting the Great Hall as a directly accessible venue

1 View showing approach from Car Park



Existing



Proposed

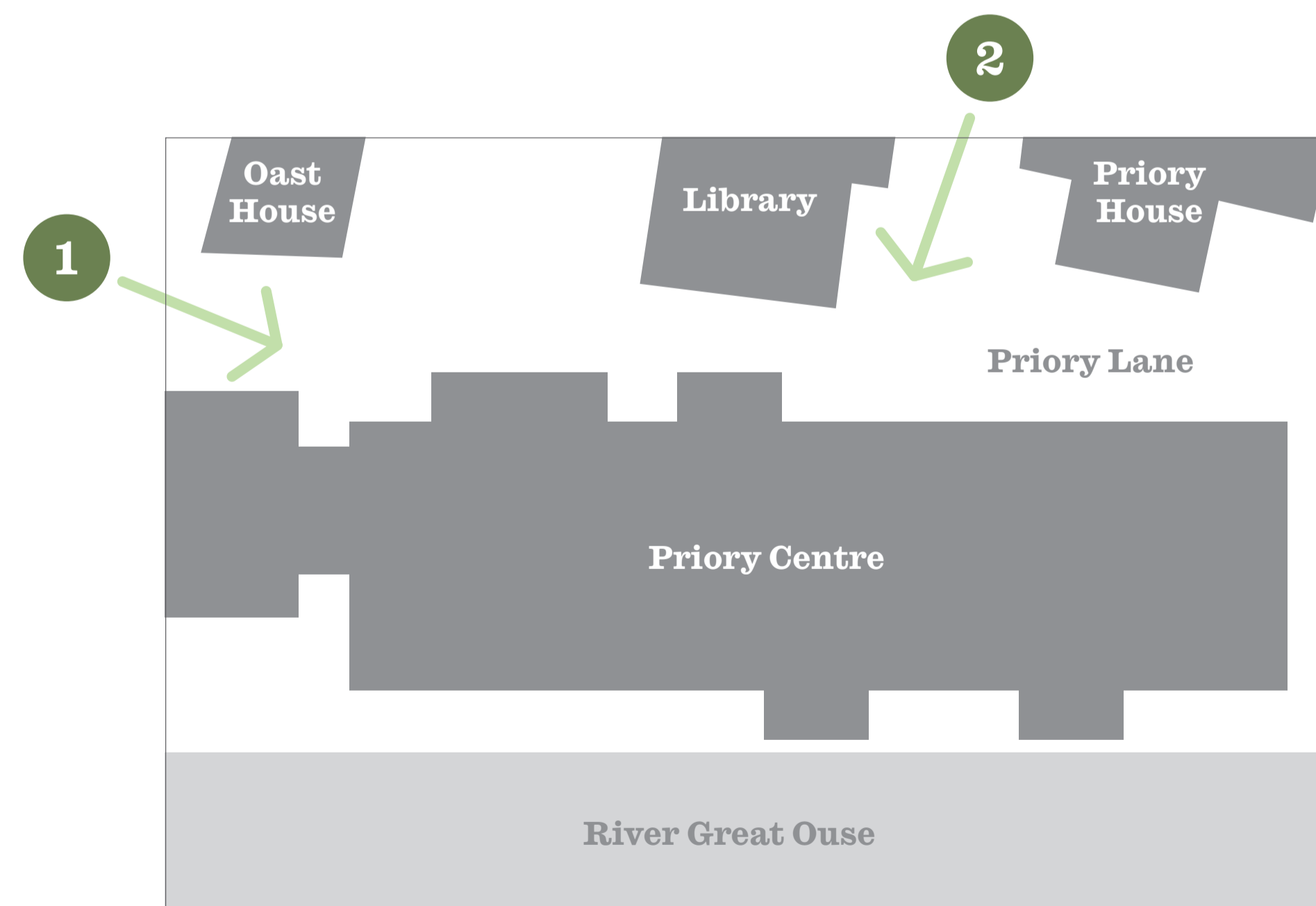
2 View showing approach from Library



Existing



Proposed



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9. Changing Perceptions

Key changes

- Stage 'get in' to offer easier access for running of performances and events.
- Bookable rooms over existing canopies to unify the sequence of entry
- External graphics and enlarged openings reveal internal activity
- Increased engagement and participation through activities made visible upon approach
- Large dormer window to act as a beacon to guide visitors to the centre from all three key approaches

3 View showing approach from Priory Lane



Existing



Proposed

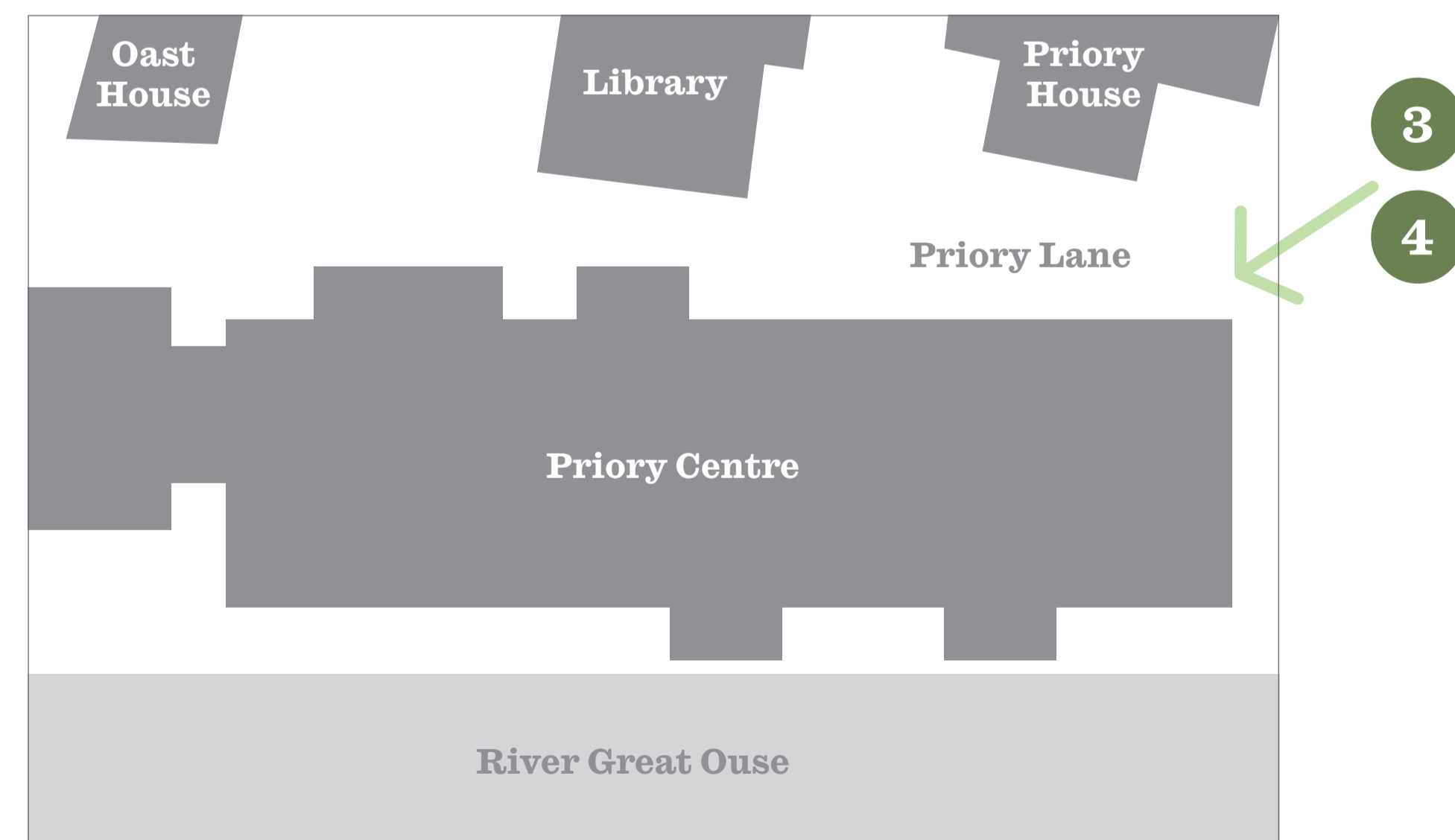
4 View showing approach from Town Square



Existing



Proposed



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10. A Sustainable Building

The Priory Centre will contribute to Huntingdonshire's Climate Strategy for achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2040 through:

Ambient Environment

- Installing insulation within the auditorium roof to reduce heat loss
- Improve perimeter doors and glazing where necessary to enhance efficiency

Efficient Heating and Cooling

- Air source heat pumps for eliminating carbon intensive gas systems, integrated above the new North end extension will be screened from Priory Lane.
- Natural ventilation will be used throughout with the support of mechanical ventilation as necessary.

Energy Use

- Photovoltaic panels, to provide zero carbon energy, will be added to both the West and East faces of the main centre.
- The installation of new services will support the efficient use of energy.

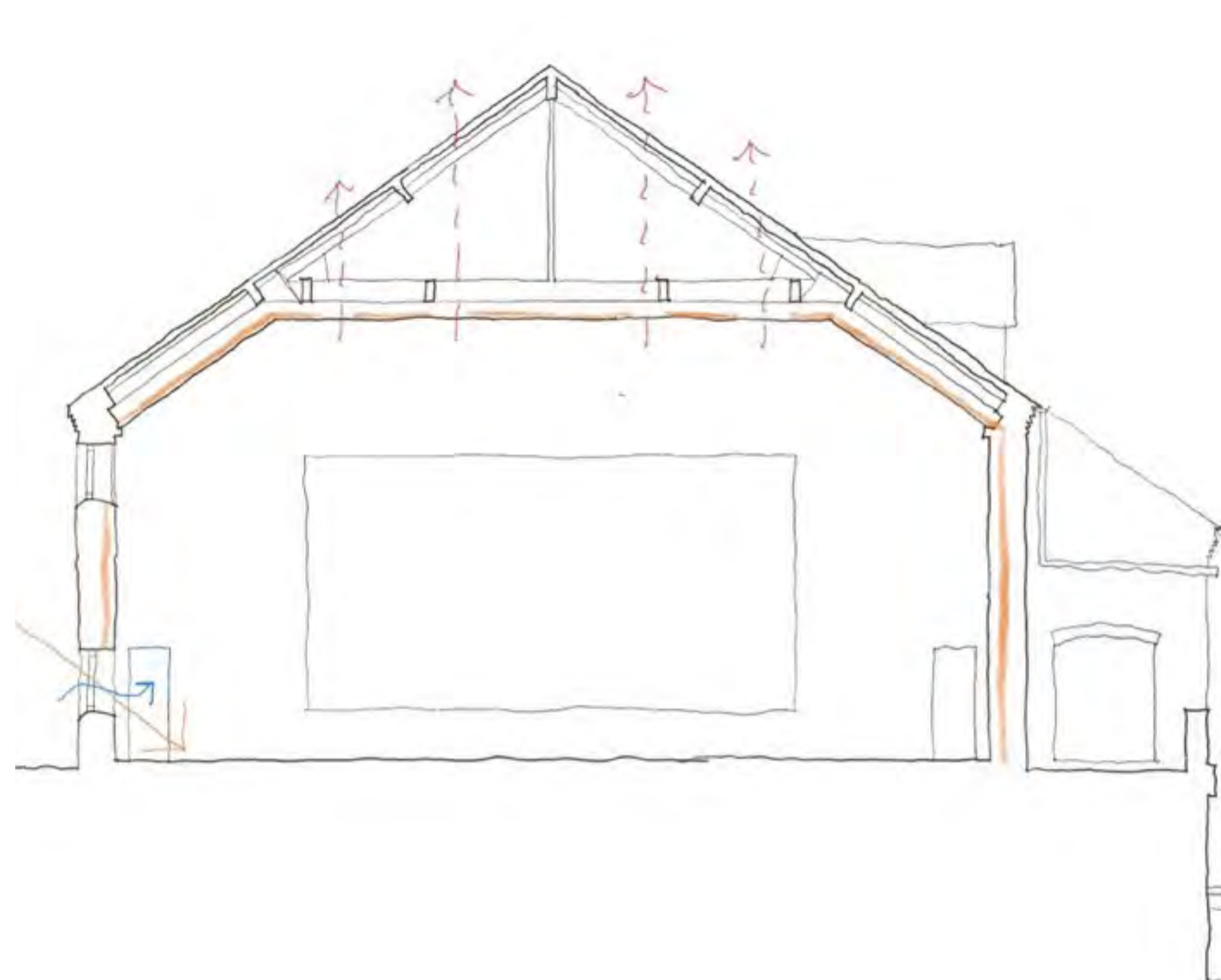
Sustainable Materials

- The existing fabric will be retained where possible to minimise demolition and waste.
- The proposed new extension and bookable rooms will be constructed from biogenic-focused materials with a low embodied carbon which can be demounted in the future.

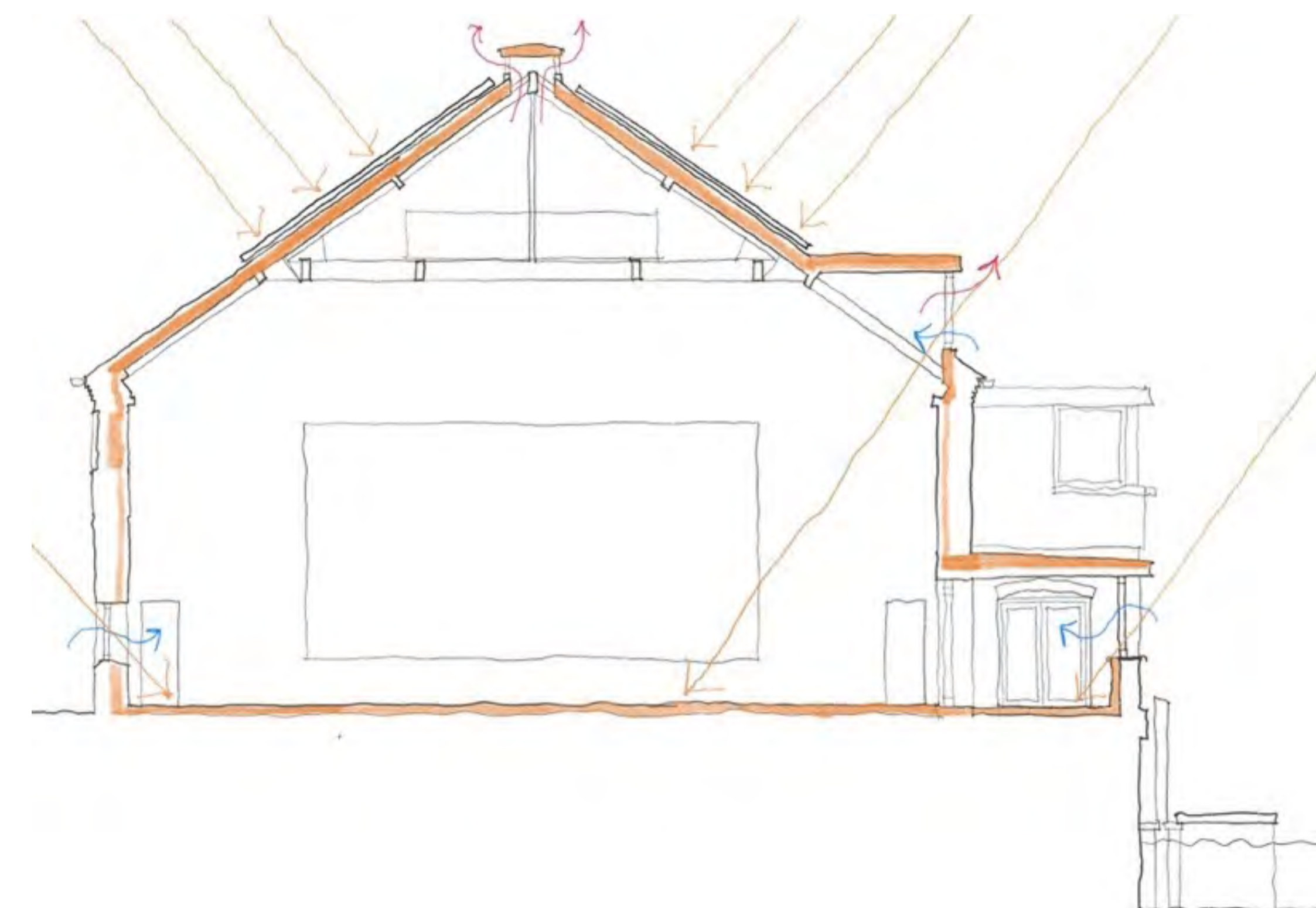
Proposals will exceed current standards by achieving carbon emissions substantially below Building Regulations targets

KEY:

- daylight
- thermal envelope
- natural and artificial conditioning
- heat loss



Existing Short Section Through Great Hall



Proposed Short Section Through Great Hall

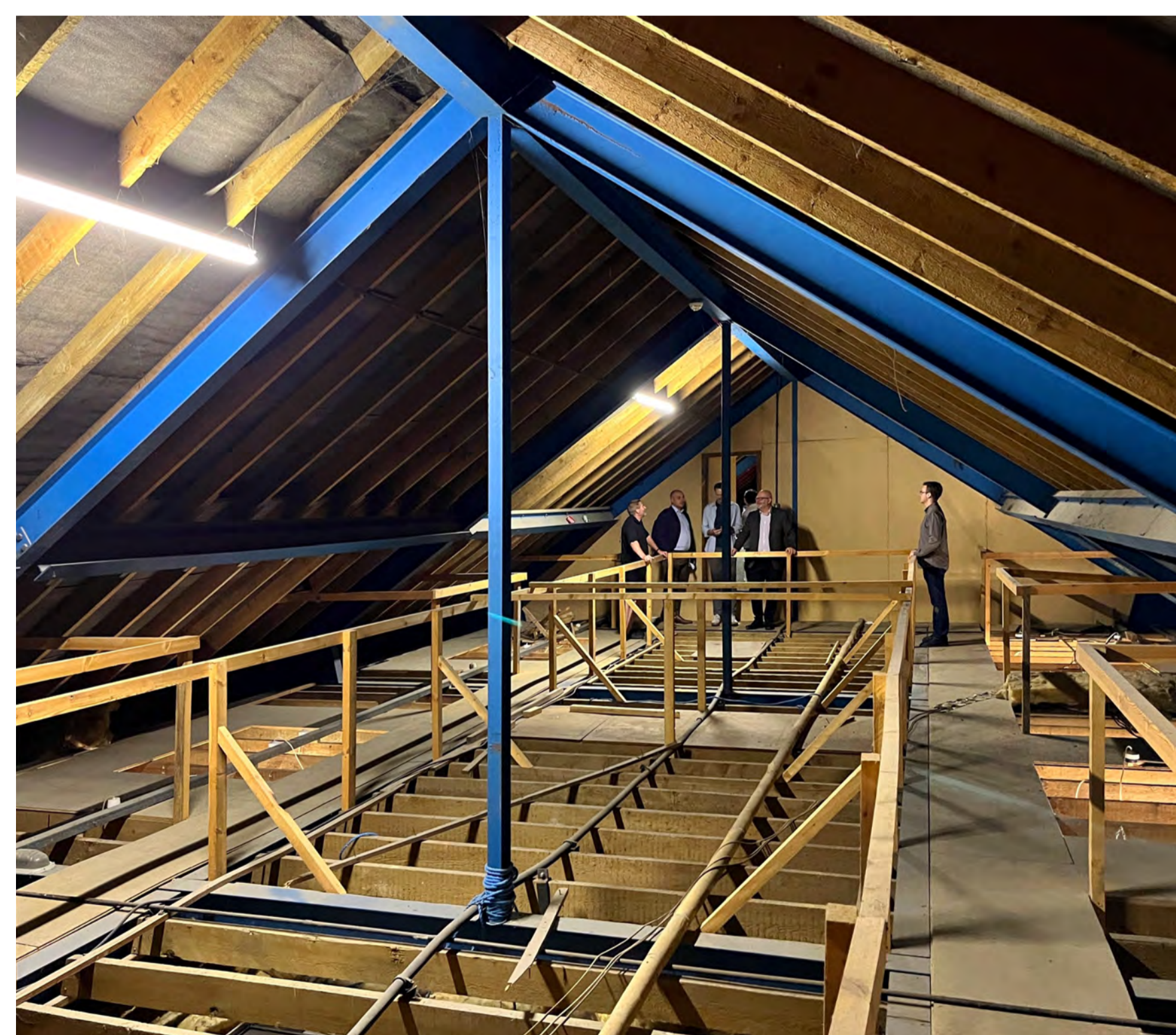
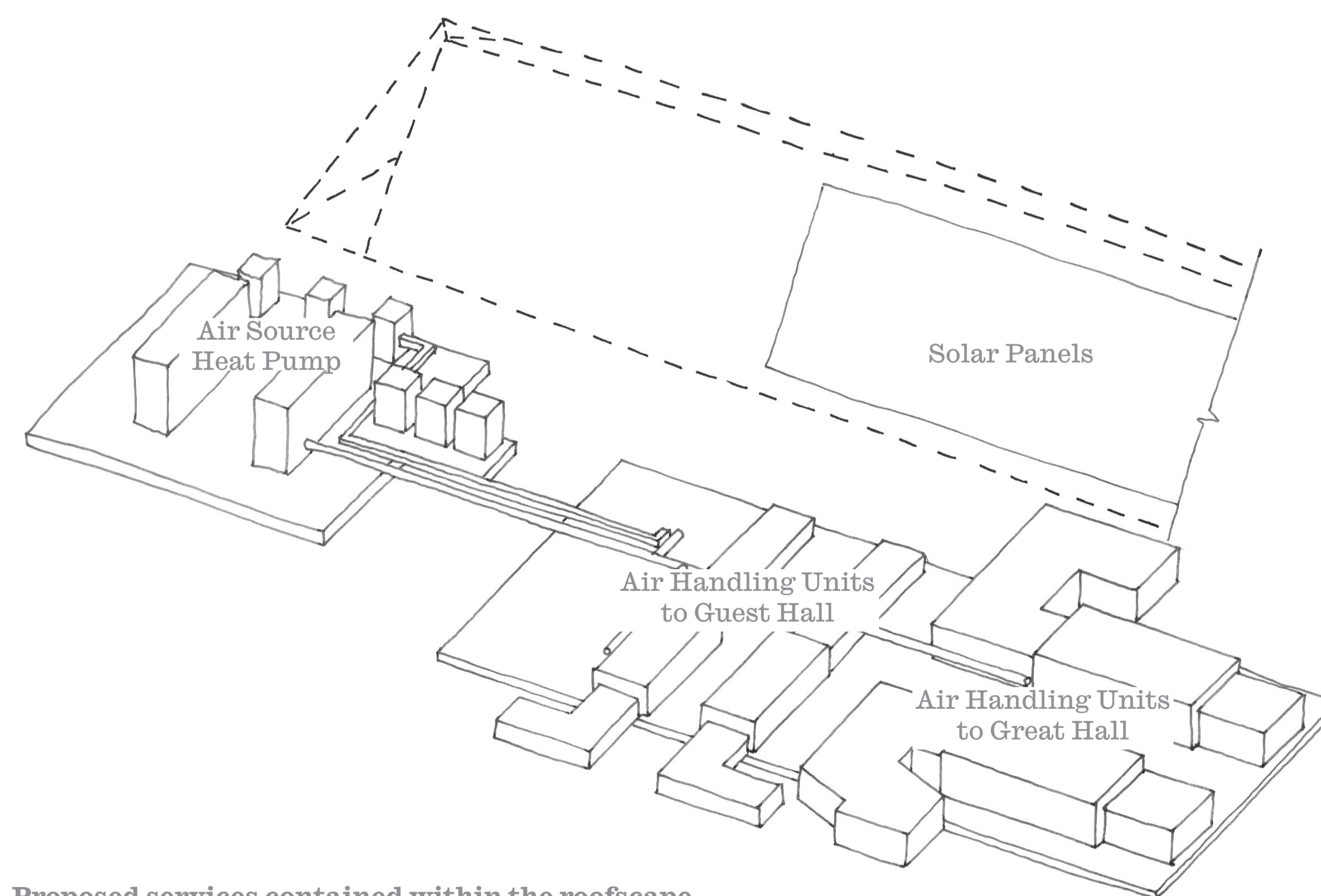


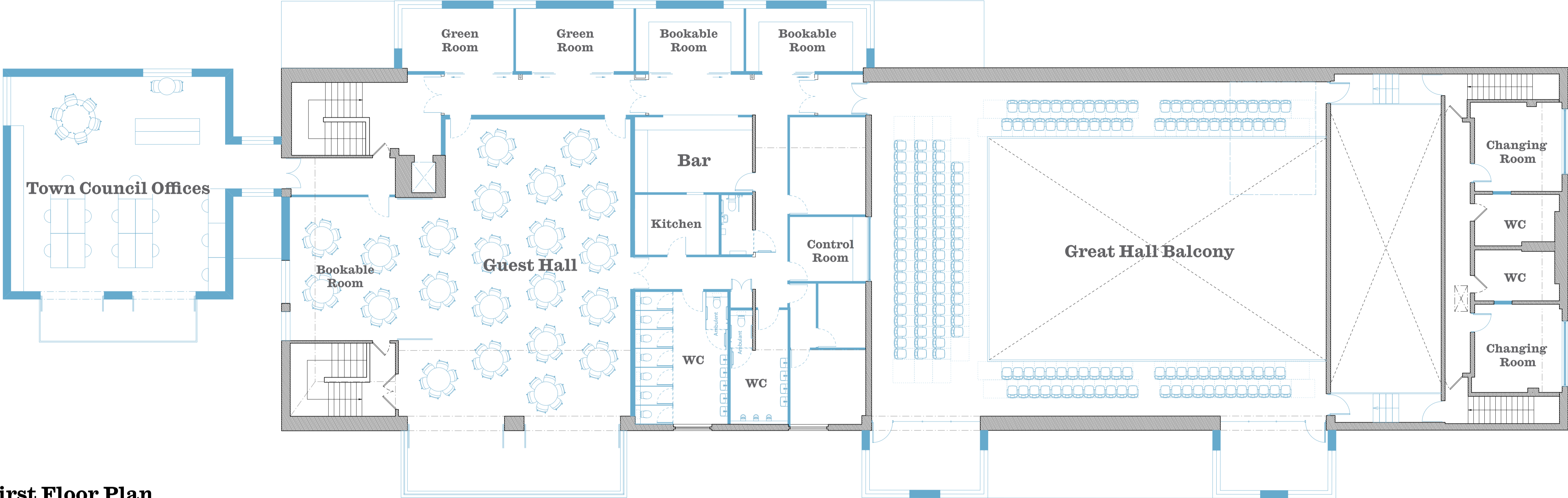
Image of existing attic space over Great Hall



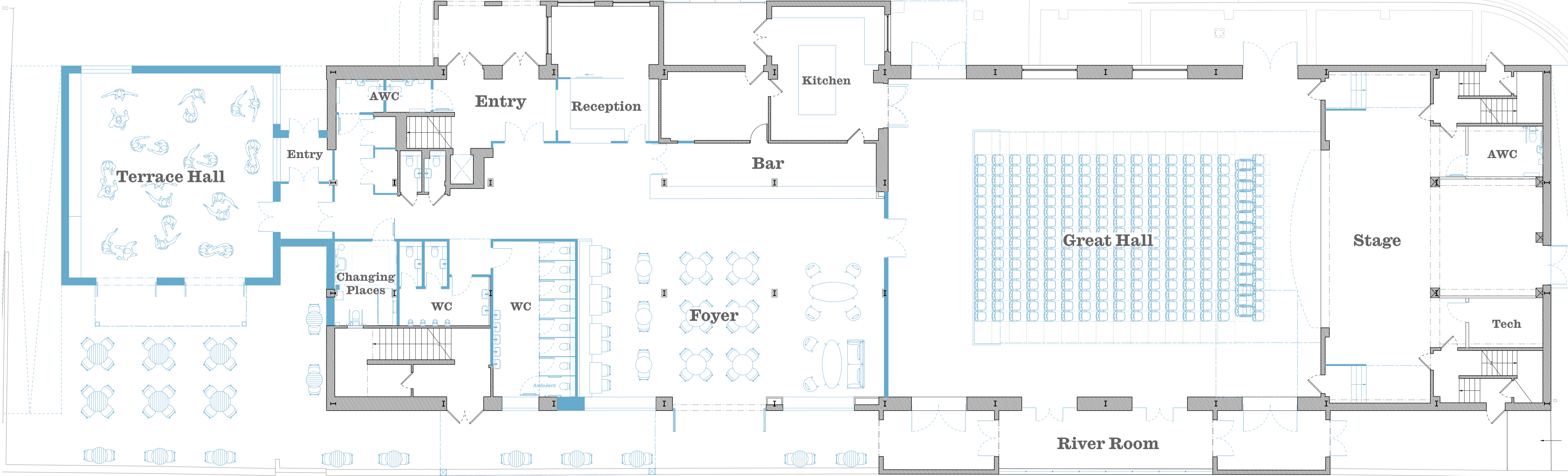
Proposed services contained within the roofscape

Drawings for illustration purposes only. Final proposal subject to change.

11. Current Proposed Plans



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawings for illustration purposes only. Final proposal subject to change.

12. What happens next?

Next steps

1. We'll use your feedback from this public consultation event and the questionnaire to refine the designs for The Priory Centre.
2. Alongside this public consultation we are testing the designs with a Building Development Group
3. We will apply for planning permission.

Project timeline

October 2023
BDG Co Design Workshop



November 2023
Public Consultation
BDG Co Design Workshop



January 2024
Planning application
submission



August 2024
Work starts on site



2025
Priory Centre reopens

Give us your feedback!

If you don't have time to fill in a questionnaire you can visit our online consultation website below or you can email us any feedback or questions you may have.

 **Return Address**
Priory Centre
Priory Lane
St Neots
PE19 2BH

 **Email**
priory.centre@stneots-tc.gov.uk

Get involved!

You can stay up to date with the project by following the project's social media pages:

 **Facebook**
@thepriorycentrestneots

 **Instagram**
@the_priory_centre

13. What have we missed?

Is there anything else you would like to see at The Priory Centre?

Do you have any further comments on the building proposal?

Stick
post-it notes
here