

Shaping places that
make a positive impact
for local communities



Princess Royal Theatre

Planning Design Statement

26CC03-AHR-10-TXX-T-A-04202

Neath Port Talbot Council

Oct
2024

Project team

Contractor	Morgan Sindall
Architect	AHR
Landscape Architecture	Urbanists
Structural and Civils Engineer	Hydrock
Building Services Engineer	Hydrock
Fire Consultant	Part B
Flood Consultant	JBA
Acoustician	Formant
Planning Consultant	Urbanists
BREEAM Consultant	Carbon Consult
Theatre Consultant	Stage Electrics

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P01	S2	21.10.2024	TW	VS	Planning Issue



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Introduction

“Fabulous little theatre”

“The building has a bit of a typical council hall feel.... all pine and bricks and red carpets.”

“The building itself is a little dated now, very 80s-esque”

“Visibility of the stage is outstanding, it’s a raised platform and the seating is ever so slightly cambered downward toward the stage, the balcony has the same geometry... it’s a good angle”

[Princess Royal Theatre online comments](#)

1.1 Background

The Design Team produced a feasibility design for the redevelopment and regeneration of the existing Princess Royal Theatre. This formed part of the Neath Port Talbot Council Levelling Up Funding application.

The funding was successfully awarded at the end of 2023. Morgan Sindall and incumbent design team have been engaged to progress the project from Stage 2 onwards.

1.2 Project Aim

The existing Princess Royal Theatre successfully hosts numerous performances throughout the year, though has limited appeal to the community.

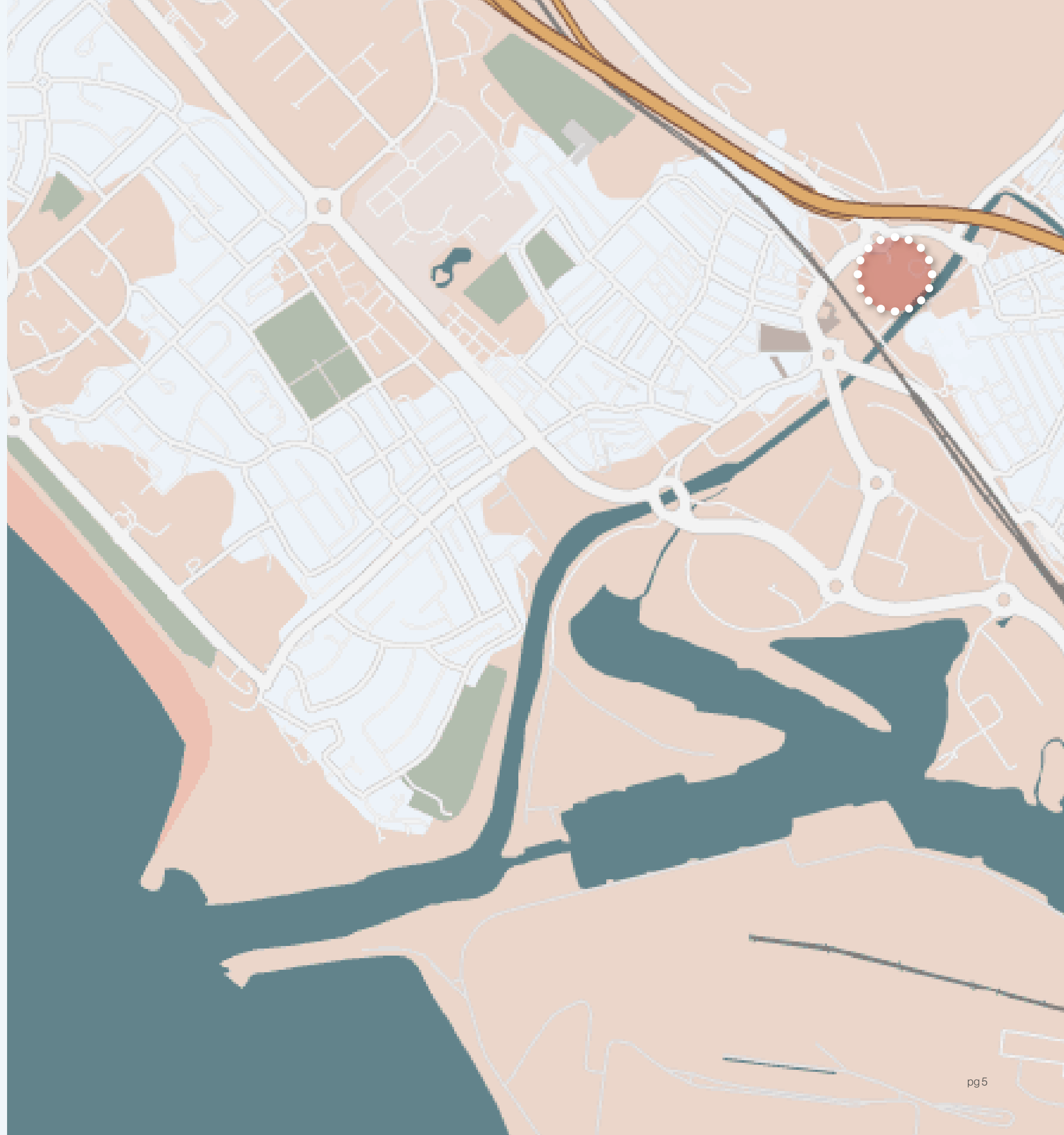
The closed external frontage does not draw in new customers or encourage extensive time in the facilities. The tight spaces within make for poor circulation and do not facilitate accessible use.

The project’s aim is to make the theatre more appealing to the community, encourage a more diverse use and create a strong identity.

Project aspirations:

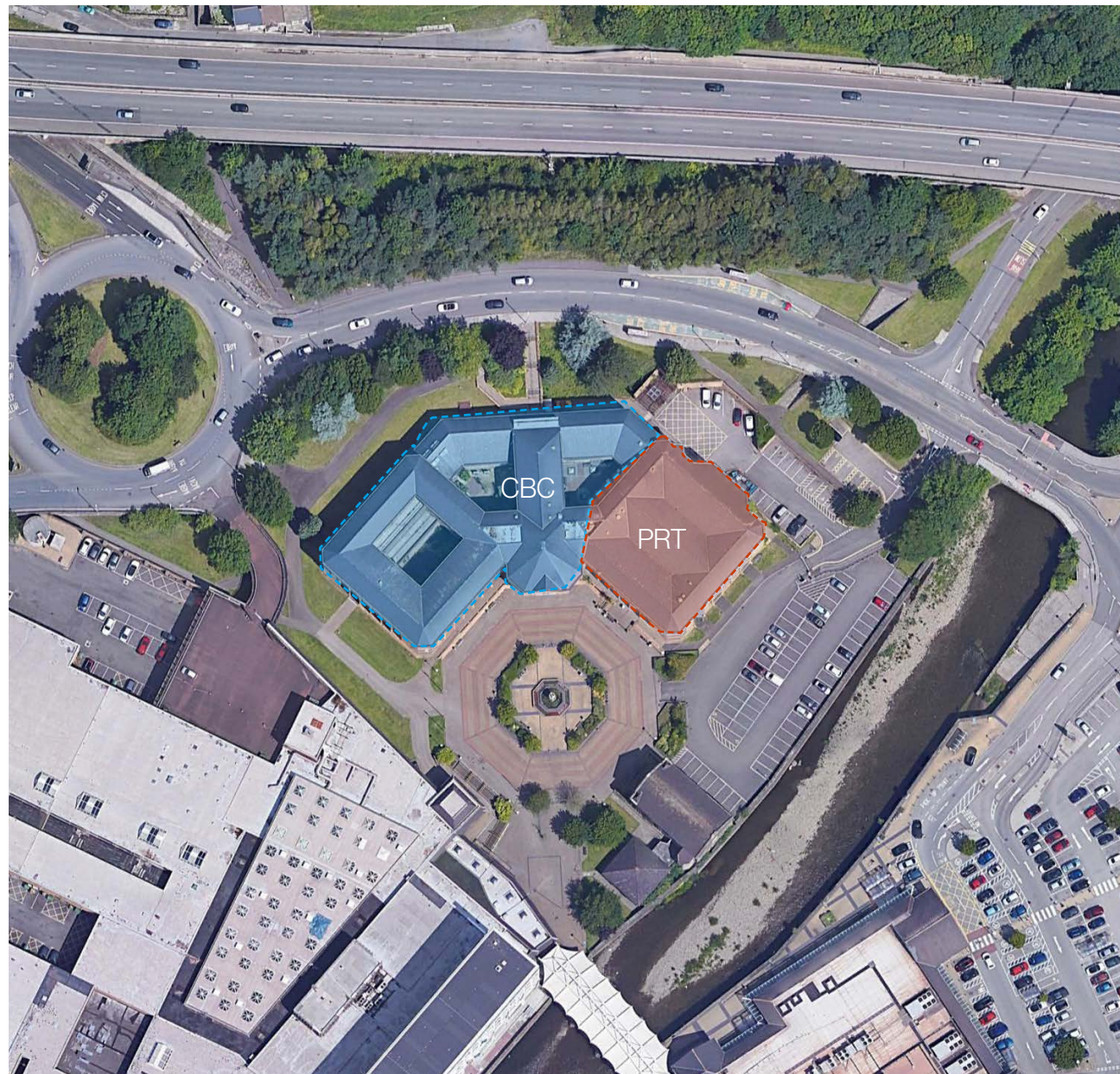
- Focus on improving customer experience
- Creating better accessible facilities
- Encouraging a more diverse user group across the community
- Increasing performance bookings, and a wider variety of show types.
- Enhancing potential for commercial/ retail yield

Existing Site & Building



2.1 Existing Site

The existing Princess Royal Theatre is located within Neath, Port Talbot in South Wales. The site sits adjacent to the M4, connecting Port Talbot with Swansea in the west and Bridgend and Cardiff to the southeast. The northern site boundary is sheltered by a small number of existing trees, slightly screening the site from the main road. The existing building is divided into Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (CBC) to the left and the theatre to the right. The primary scope of the proposal focuses on the theatre portion of the building.



Connections

The Theatre has a central location in the town with easy links from a nearby MSCP, train station (Port Talbot Parkway) and Bus Station (Aberfan Shopping Centre). There are key pedestrian links from the neighbouring shopping centre and across the bridge to the shopping high street.

The Theatre faces onto an existing Civic Square, which is proposed to be developed as part of the Levelling Up Fund. Refer to separate landscape information provided by Urbanists.

2.2 Existing Views



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



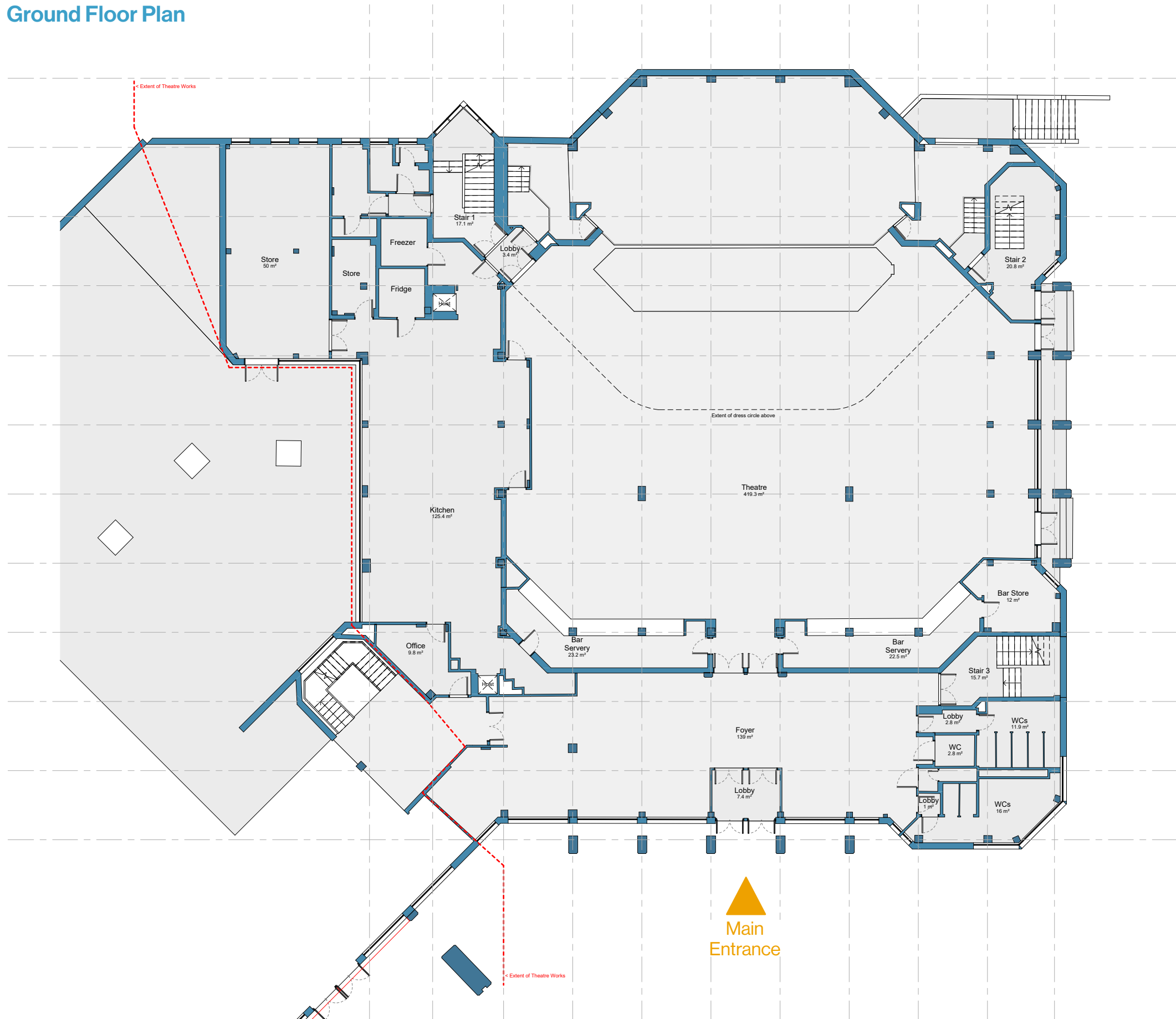
9

Views

1. View towards the Civic Centre entrance with square in the foreground
2. Theatre entrance
3. Delivery and back of house entrance to Theatre
4. Civic Centre and Theatre entrances
5. View of Civic Square
6. View across square towards the pedestrian bridge
7. View of the stage from the upper circle
8. View from the lower seating looking up towards the upper circle
9. Entrance space

2.3 Existing Plans

Ground Floor Plan

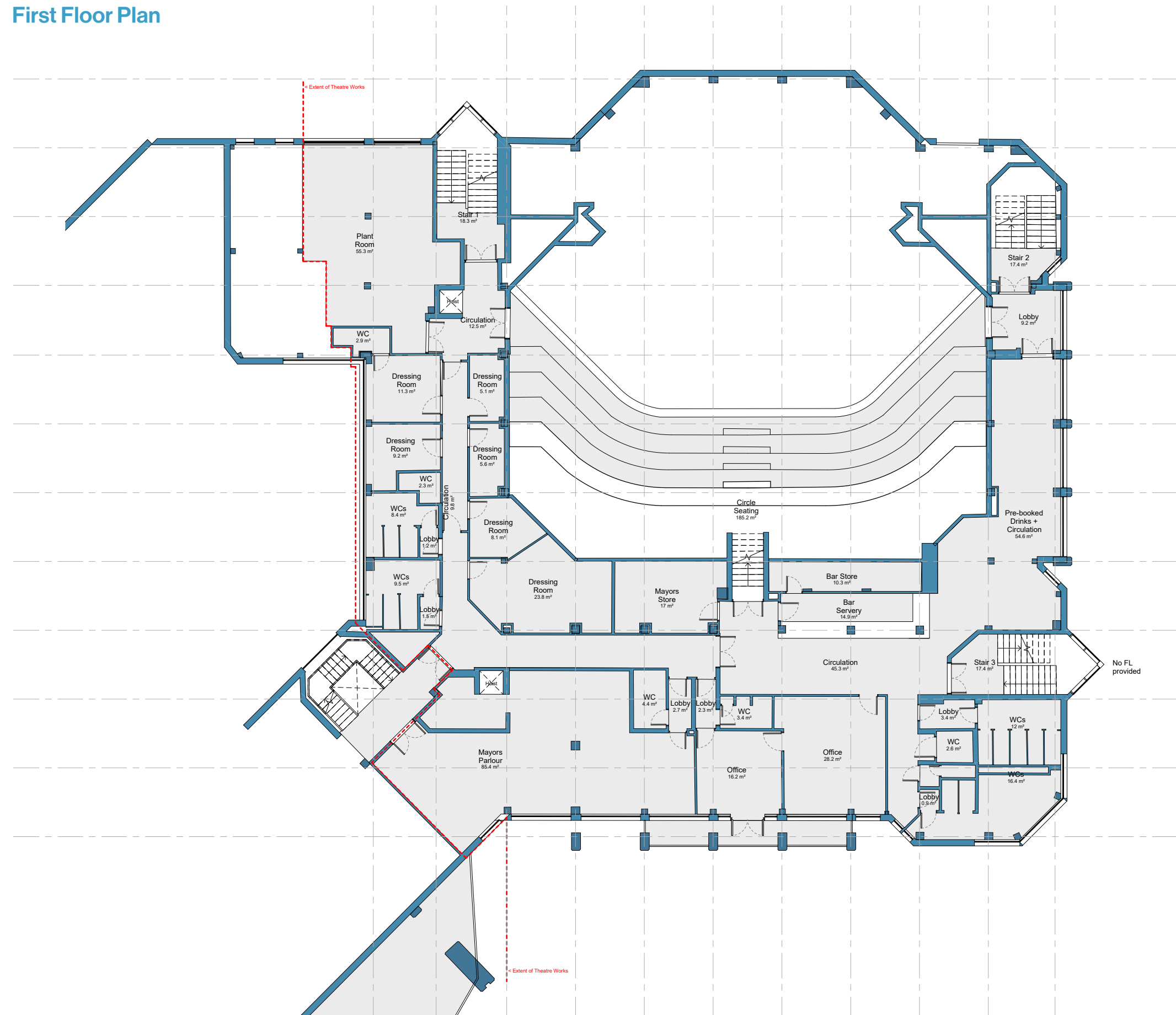


Ground Floor Accommodation

- Entrance
- Bars
- Theatre and stage
- Kitchen & associated storage
- Limited WC facilities.



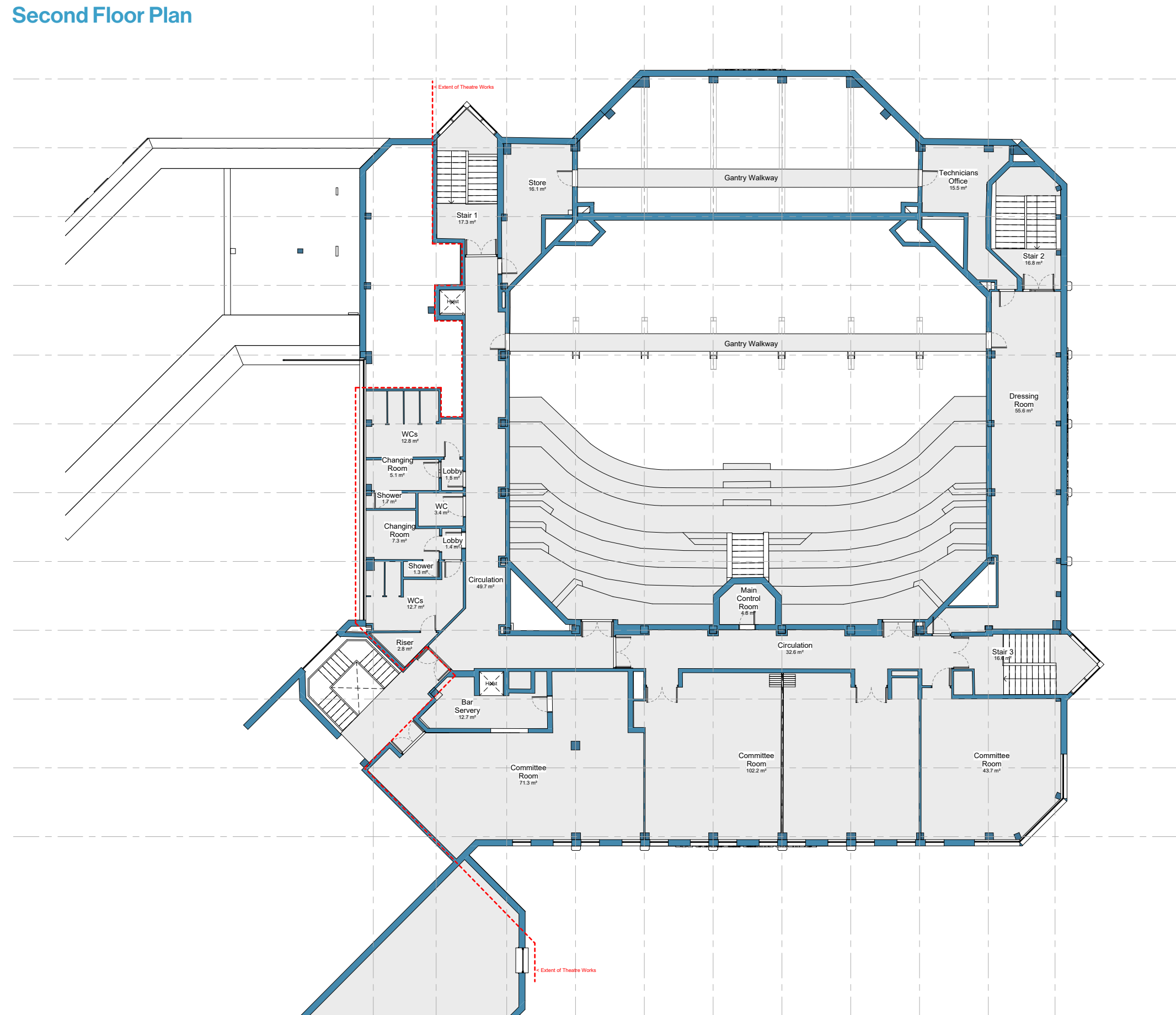
First Floor Plan



First Floor Accommodation

- Upper circle
- Small bar
- Limited WC facilities
- Dressing/ changing rooms
- Constrained circulation
- Mayor's parlour

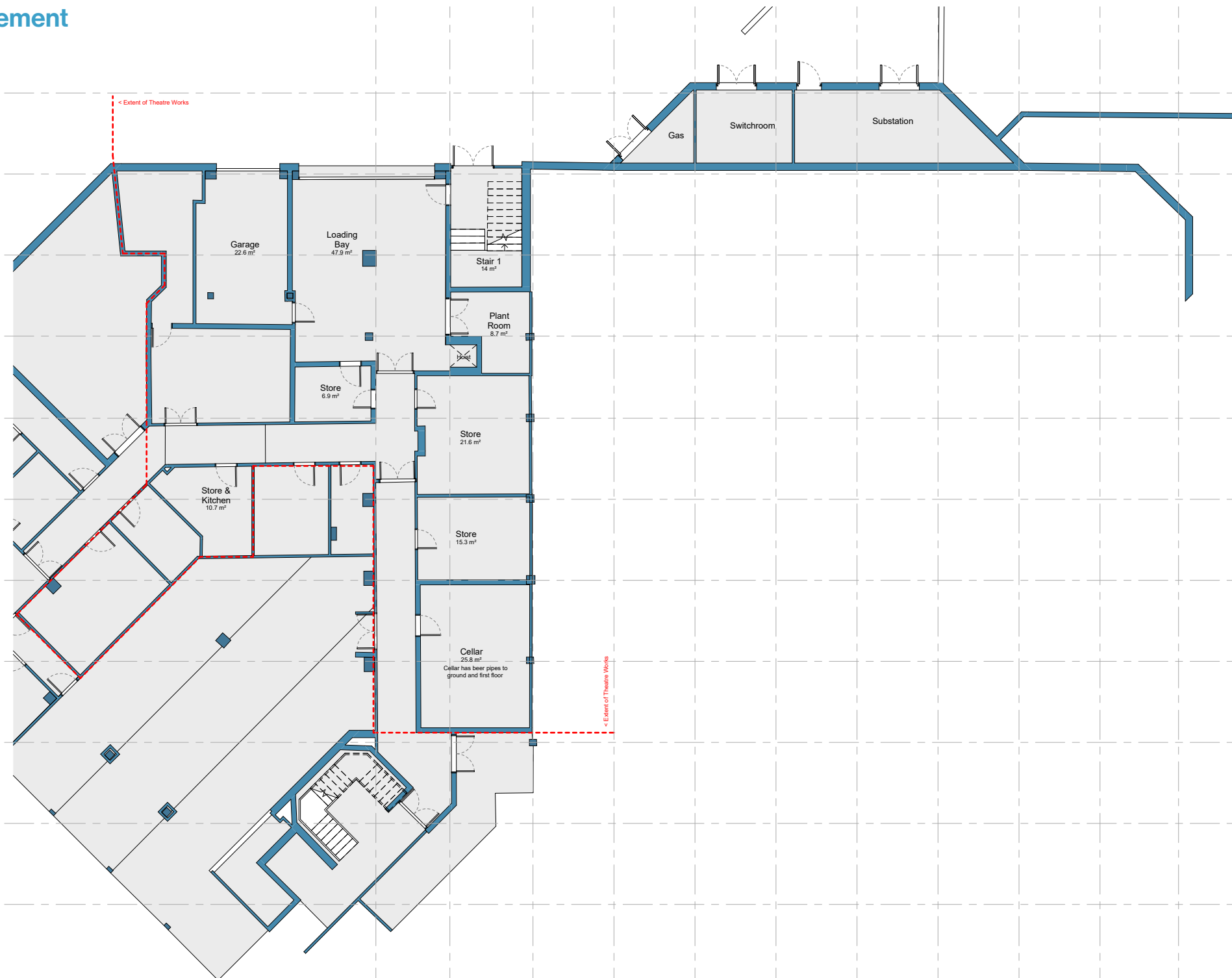
Second Floor Plan



Second Floor Accommodation

- Tech booth
- Back of house facilities
- Committee rooms

Basement

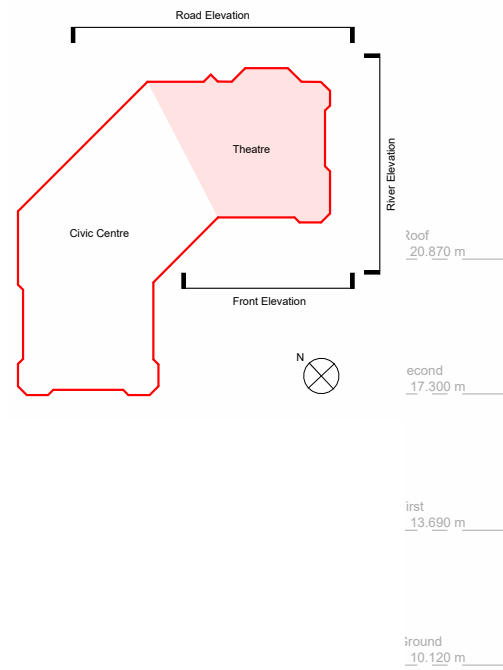


Basement Accommodation

- Stores
- Cellar
- Plant Room



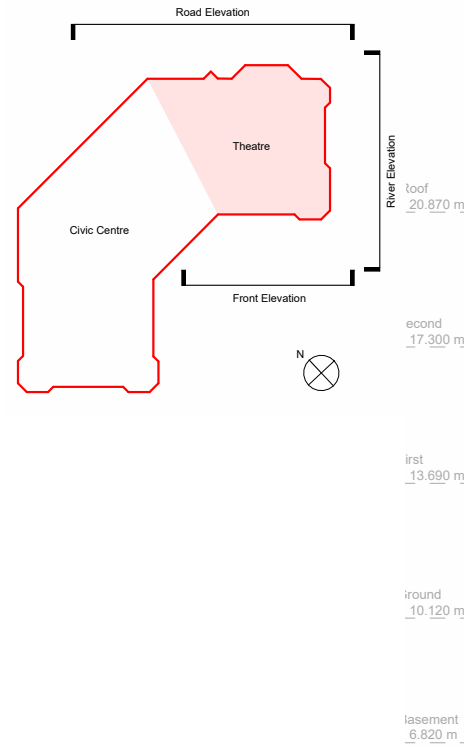
2.4 Existing Elevations



1. Existing Front Elevation

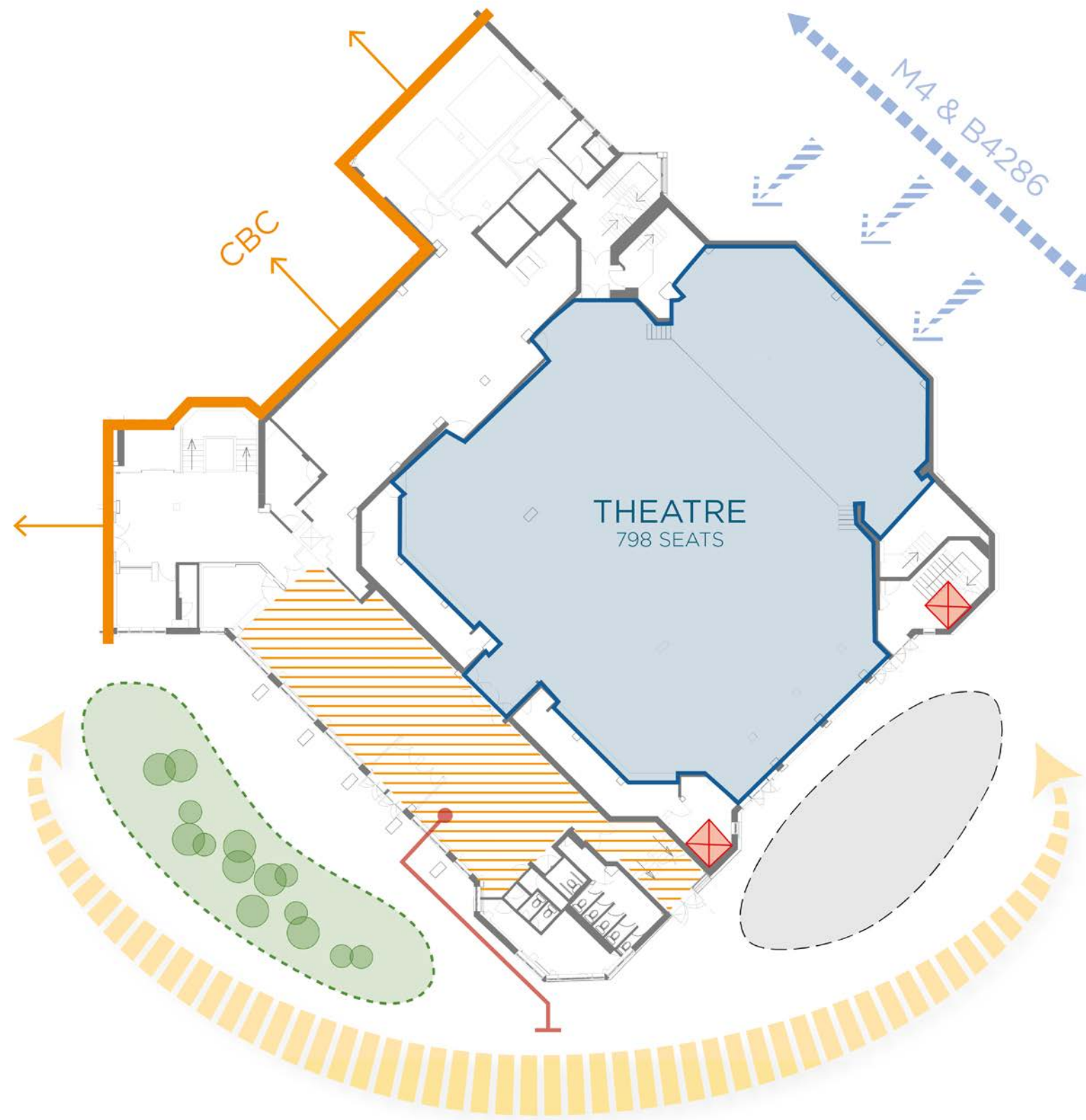


2. Existing River Elevation



1. Planning - Existing - Road Elevation

2.5 Constraints & Opportunities

**Key**

-  Poor pedestrian access routes
-  Neighbouring buildings
-  Noise disruption
-  Lack of green space
-  Sun path
-  Insufficient circulation space
-  Parking
-  Lack of disabled access points (inc. lifts)



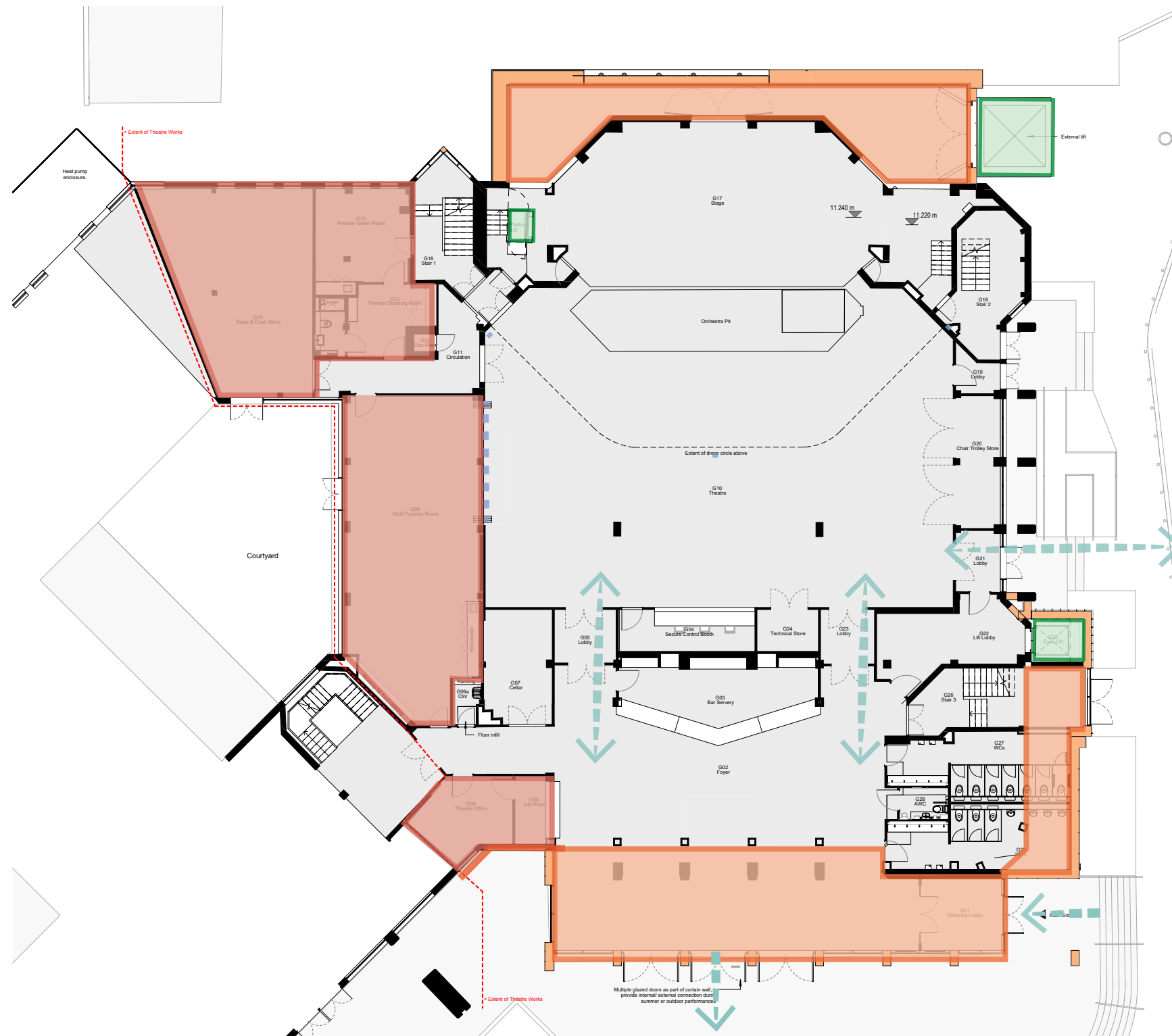
Project Brief

3.1 Brief

Key project driver is to improve the sense of arrival externally and internally

- The existing **seating capacity** is 798. A slight reduction to around 700 would be considered to accommodate the scope of work. Retractable seating to the existing ground floor should be investigated to help limit the time of setting theatre style seating up.
- **Conference capacity** of up to 250 people is important and should be considered within the design proposals
- The height of the stage as existing would be acceptable however the need for the creation of wing space is a project requirement. Any change to the stage layout / height should be checked for line of sight
- The orchestra pit is a functional part of the theatre and should be considered within the overall remodelling. As a minimum a lightweight orchestra pit cover should be considered. The existing condition involves manually removing the floor that covers the pit.
- **DDA access** should be considered within all design proposals
- The existing ground floor bar location requires housing within the proposed entrance circulation space. The bar should serve as a coffee shop and have the facility to sell tickets. Ticket sales are generally online however a small number of venue sales occur.
- **Circulation, access, and egress of users during an event** must be considered to the proposed foyer including movements to and from toilets and bar
- Bar modernised at first floor
- Remodelling to consider Green Room facilities
- Sound and lighting room made bigger to align with stage extension
- In relation to winch systems and rigging etc. A review of condition is required; however, it is thought that these elements would need replacing.
- Dividing sliding / folding screens within the main area are not required No fly tower is required within the proposal
- Car park and entrance must talk to theatre and provide a sense of arrival. Facilities within the external civic space for Christmas markets etc. Thought to be given to the connectivity of the theatre entrance area to the civic centre and potential future upgrades such as library facilities.
- Explore the potential to have external electronic advertisement facing the road on the proposed stage extension.
- **Interior design to consider localism**, such as famous actors from Neath Port Talbot. The theatre refurbishment should provide the wow factor through the design proposals and interior design proposals
- The NZC proposals have been clarified as a consequential improvement by replacing energy-efficient plant. Consultation with Building Control will ensure compliance with energy efficiency requirements.
- BREEAM Very Good

3.2 Key Alterations

**Legend**

- New lift access points
- Space extensions
- New spaces/change of use
- Canopy
- Flexible partitions
- Building access routes

Key Alterations

Three new lift access points are included in the proposal, along with more accessible routes into and through the building. This addresses the accessibility issue, making the theatre more suited to a range of users of all levels of mobility. The front entrance of the building is extended to accommodate more customers and allow for cafe space, encouraging greater commercial and retail yield.

Accessibility is prioritised through widening corridors and entryways.

Alterations including the addition of spacious dressing rooms, a bar and coffee area and meeting and storage facilities better utilise the building's available space. This leaves the Theatre equipped to accommodate a wider range of users and improving the overall customer experience.

4.0

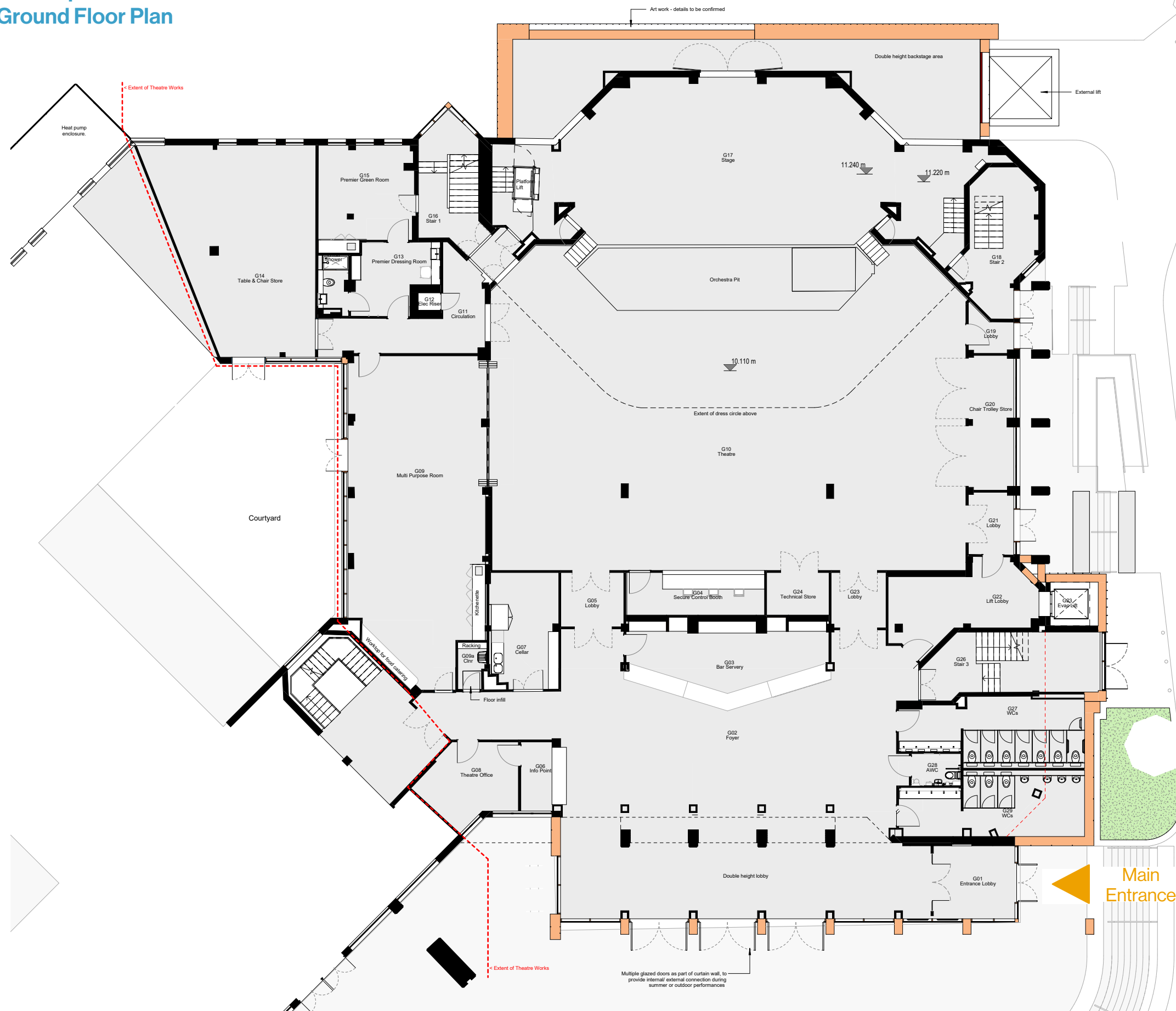
Princess Royal
Theatre

Layout and Internals



4.1 Proposed Plans

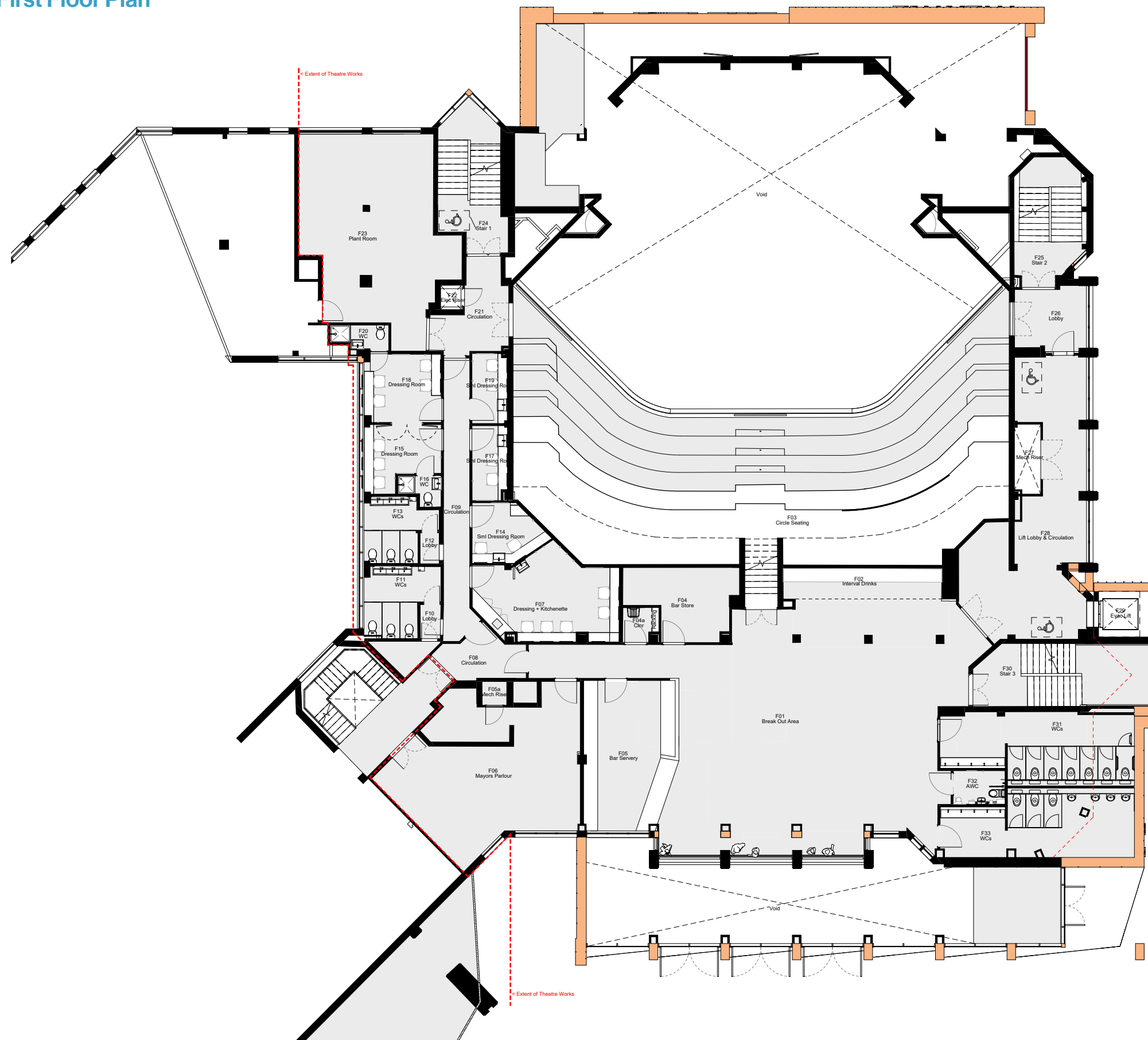
Ground Floor Plan



Ground Floor Accommodation

- Highly glazed extended foyer area, suitable for seating for daytime café and evening bar use. Improves customer experience and encourages a more diverse user group
- New passenger lift, to be sized to ensure accessibility for all
- Remodelled bar and coffee facility to provide retail provision to foyer area, enhances potential for commercial yield
- Better access routes into the auditorium
- Stage re-proportioned with extension to create cross over corridor and better wing space
- Green room and dressing rooms added
- Sliding partitions to create conference room facilities
- Breakout room / meeting room to support conference use
- Scene delivery area with external lift to allow for change in level
- New tech booth to provide better health and safety use
- Toilets remodelled and extended

First Floor Plan

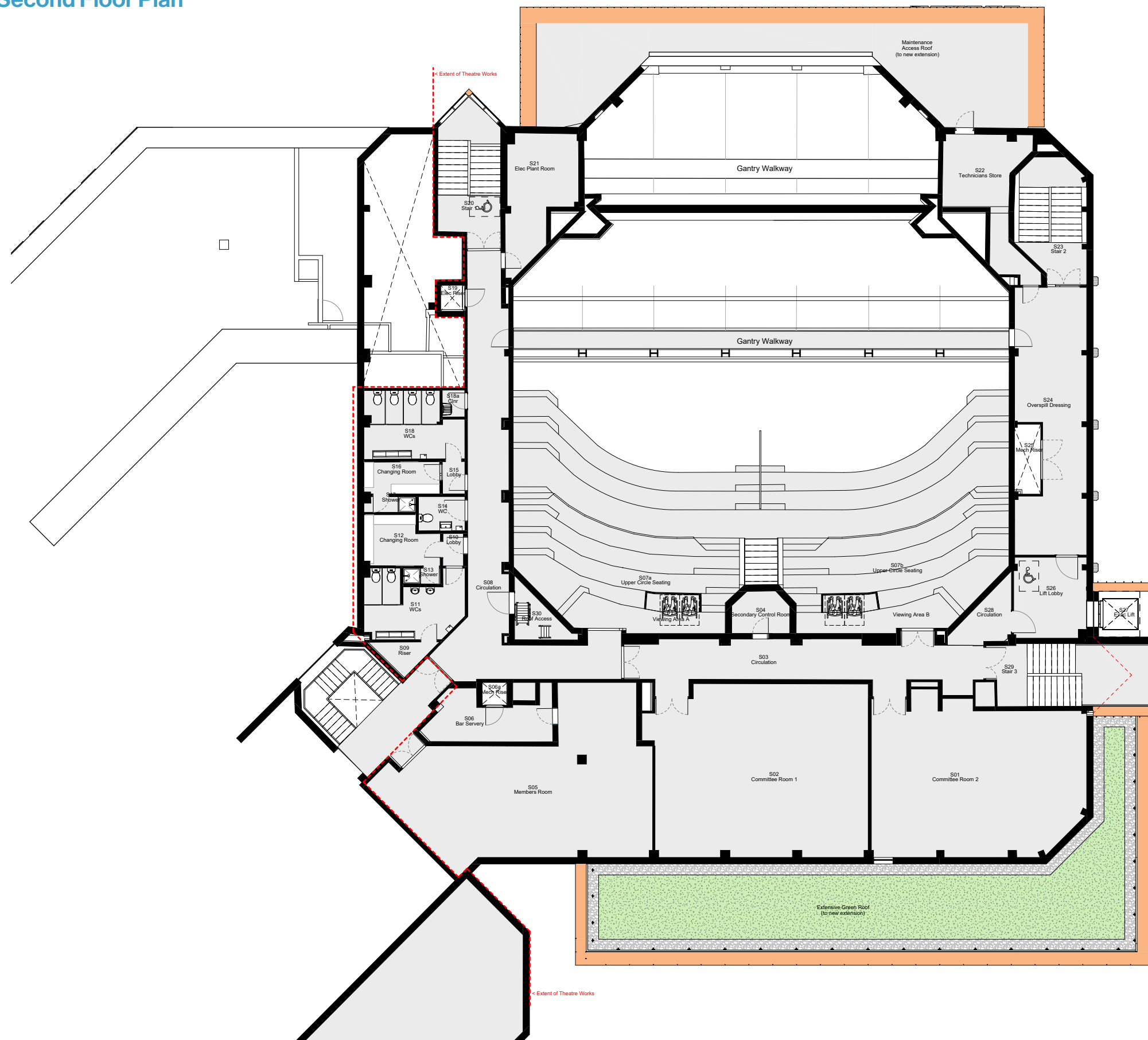


First Floor Accommodation

- New extensive break out area encouraging social activities and enhancing commercial yield and flexibility of use.
- Double height void into glazed entrance, visual connections to civic square. Creating a strong identity for the theatre
- New passenger lift, to be sized to ensure accessibility for all
- Toilets remodelled and extended



Second Floor Plan



Second Floor Accommodation

- Minor upgrades to reduce acoustic break out from theatre to adjacent committee rooms (especially important during sensitive family committee meetings)
- New passenger lift, to be sized to ensure accessibility for all
- Green roof to front extension, visible from Committee Rooms.

Basement Floor Plan

Basement Accommodation

- Minor internal works to basement
- Staff locker room
- Stores
- Cellar
- External plant enclosure



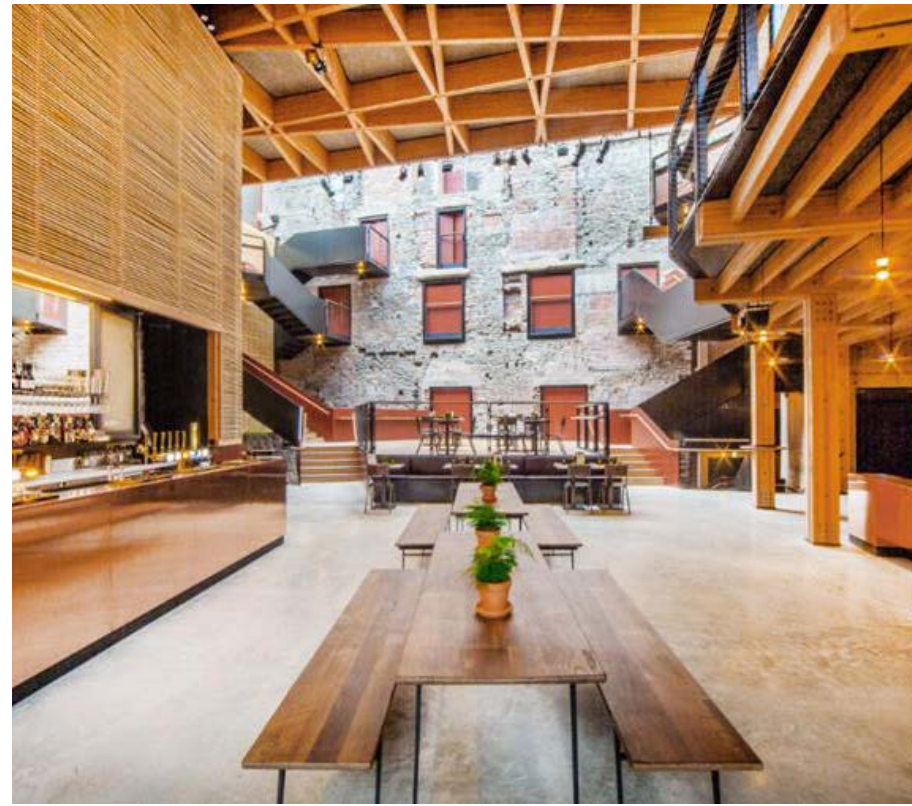
4.2 Precedents - Entry and Bar Area

Flow of People

Passive Wayfinding



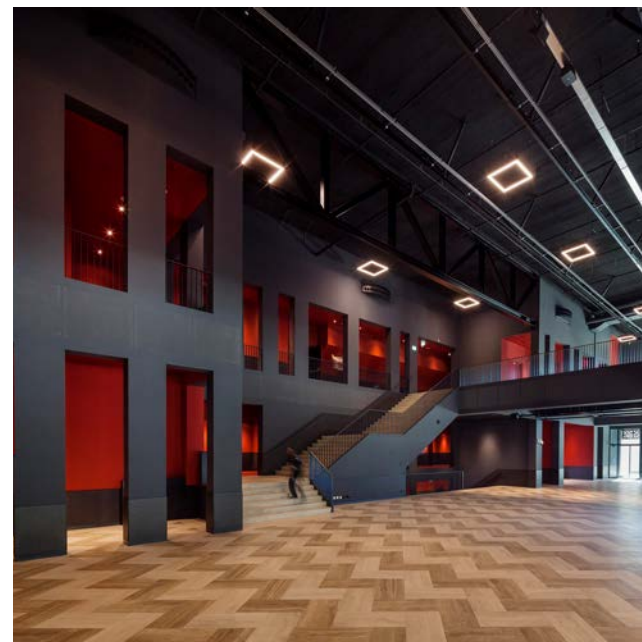
Bristol Old Vic



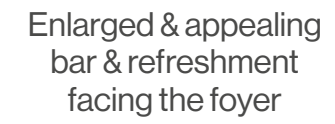
Bristol Old Vic



The Spine - AHR



Zuidplein Theatre



Precedents - Atrium and Bar Area

Materiality - reuse to maintain identity

Colour & artwork

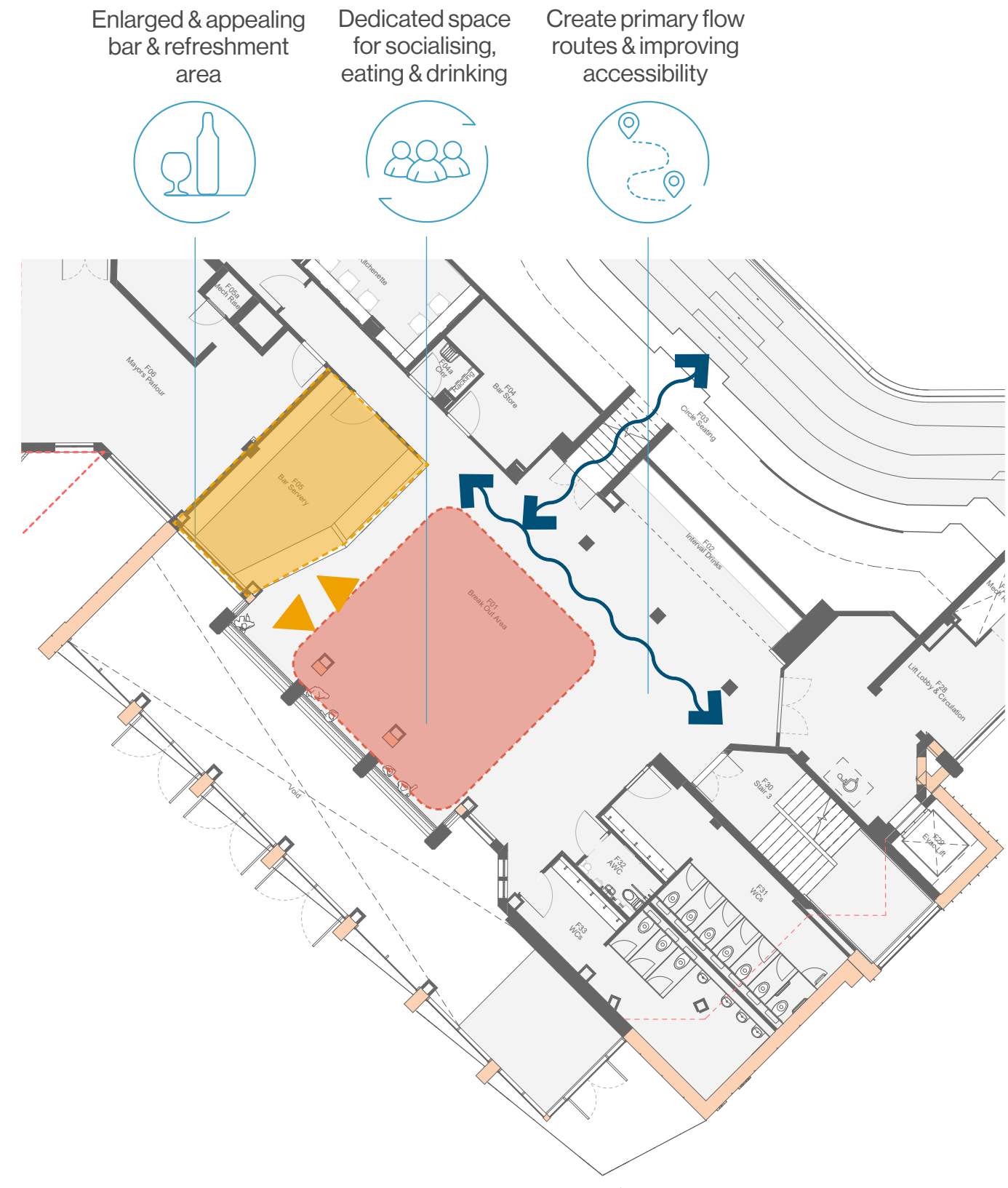
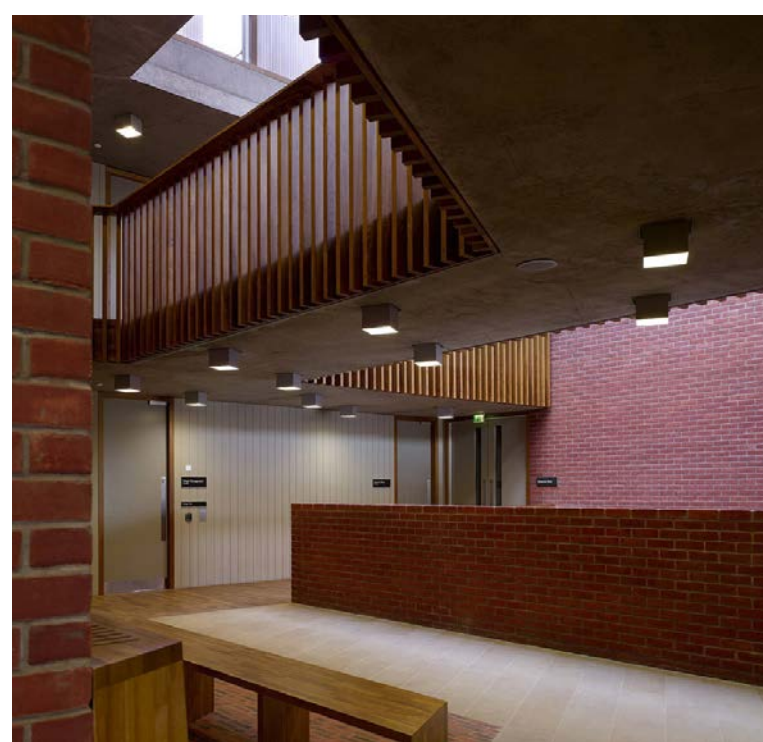


Wiper & True Taproom



Bristol Beacon Artwork (Giles Round)

Lyric Theatre Belfast





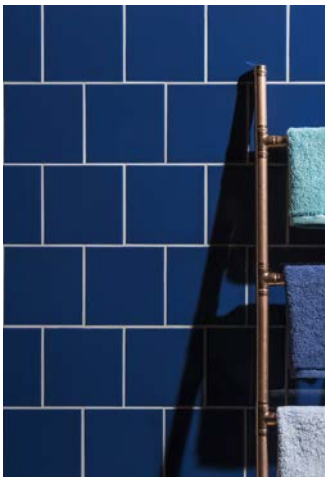
4.3 Illustrative Visual - Internal

View from the entrance lobby of the double height foyer and bar area

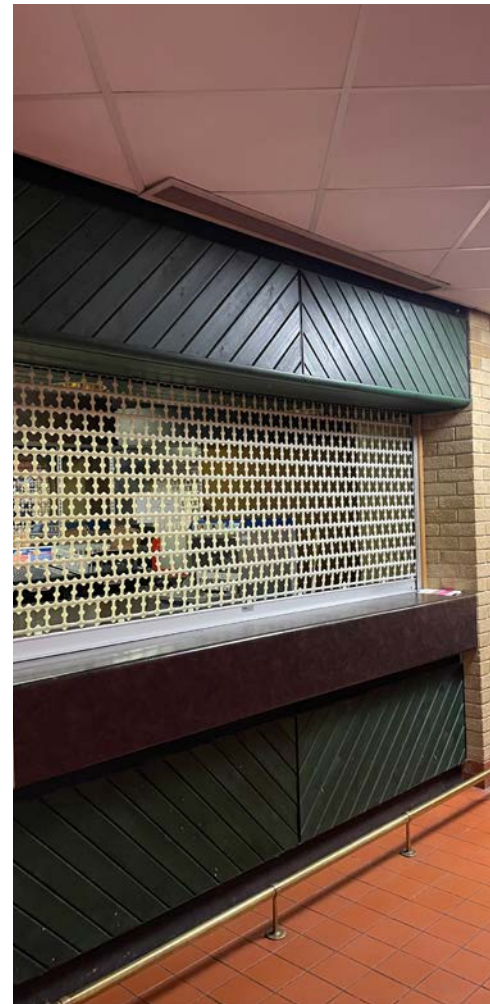
4.4 Internal Finishes Wall & Vertical Finishes

Foyer & Bar Areas

Glazed wall tiles

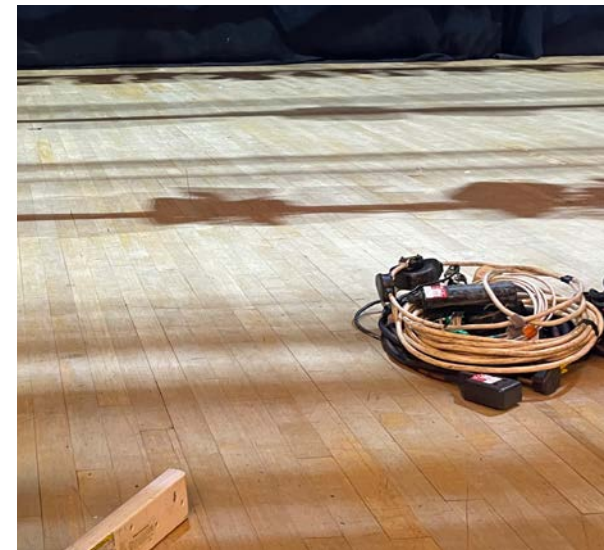


Re-use of Existing Green
Timbers



Art Work & Decorative

Re-use of maple wood from stage to
provide wall lining & art feature

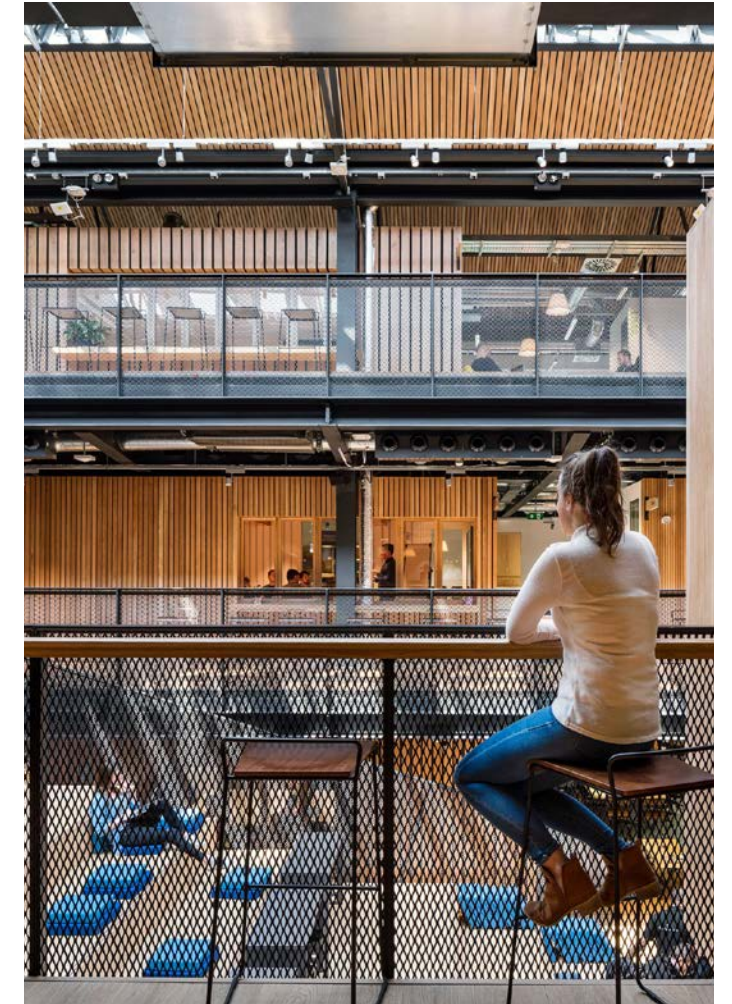


Foyer - Main Entrance - Social Spaces



Balcony Balustrade

Expanded mesh balustrade with framing
and wooden perch bar





Wall & Vertical Finishes

Wall Panels

Acoustic Panels

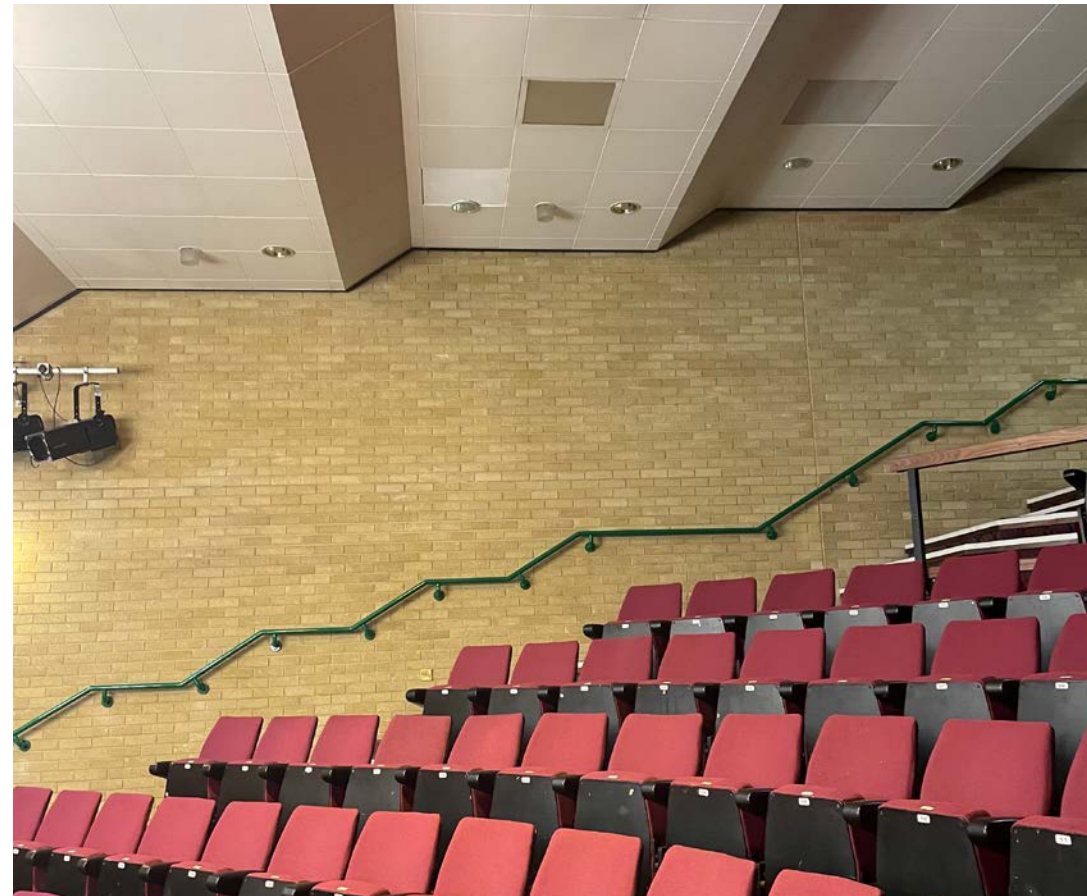
Microperforated Wood Veneer Panels



Brick Walls

Retain existing brickwork walls

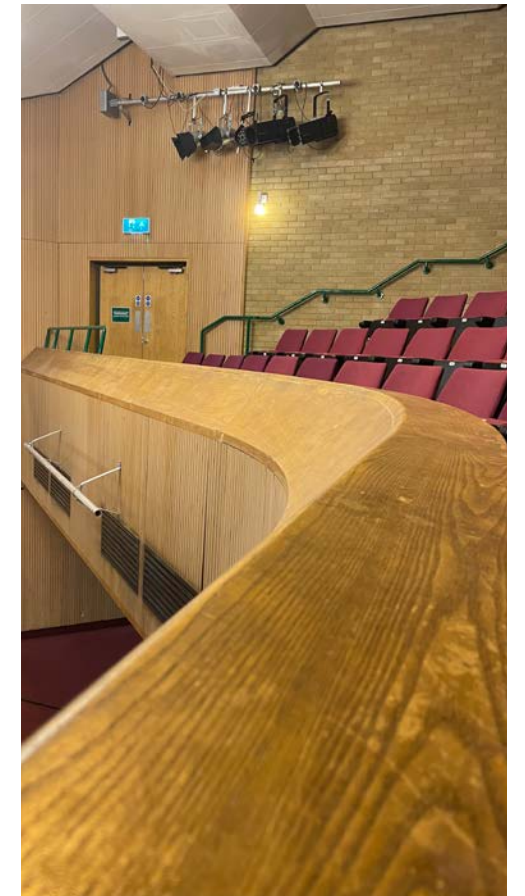
Clean and retain as existing



Circle Balustrade

Retain & make good existing balustrade, replace vertical finish to match wall panels.

Re-profile top of balustrade.



5.0

Princess Royal
Theatre

Facade and Envelope

Facade proposals and external
materials



5.1 Cladding Proposals Shading Devices



Material Palette



Anodised aluminium



Existing brick colour



Civic paving



Fibre cement cladding

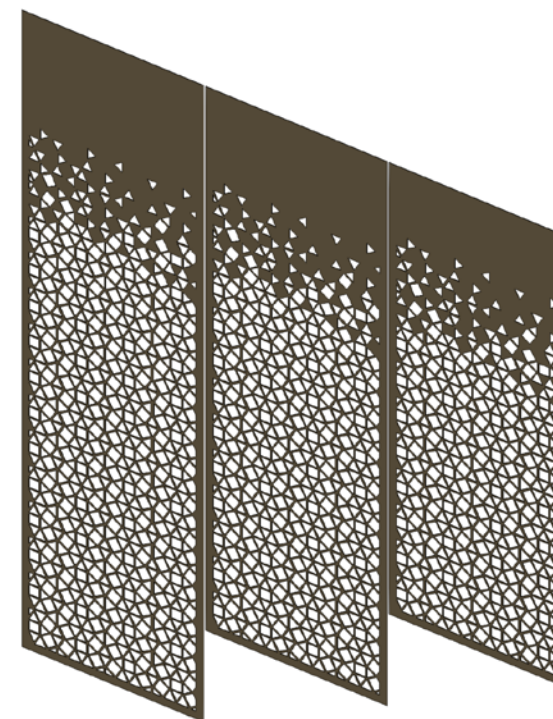
Cladding Pattern Design



The main building facade is south-oriented, creating a potential issue with excessive solar gain. A facade design involving the use of a solar-shading device minimises this whilst providing a striking appearance to the building.

With reference to the Grade II listed Aberavon Bridge, located in close proximity to the theatre, a triangular pattern is used to create perforations in the cladding screen on the south-facing facade. The pattern forms shadows inside the main entrance hall, creating a memorable atmosphere for users enjoying the bar area.

The material has been chosen to complement the adjacent cladding while providing a high quality and durable cladding.



5.2 Precedents - Facade

Embracing Industrial Materials

Overlaying Textures & Shading Devices



Bristol Old Vic



Bristol Old Vic

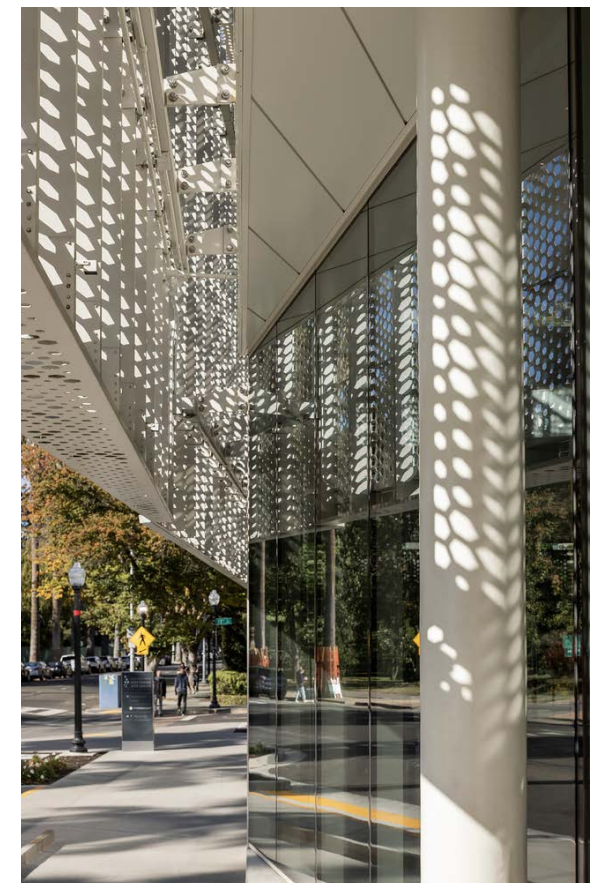
Regents Park Open Air Theatre



Kvifr Park Pavilion



SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Centre



SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Centre

Wapping Wharf - AHR



Framing of the Building

Solid & Grounded Materials



Keynsham One Stop Shop - AHR

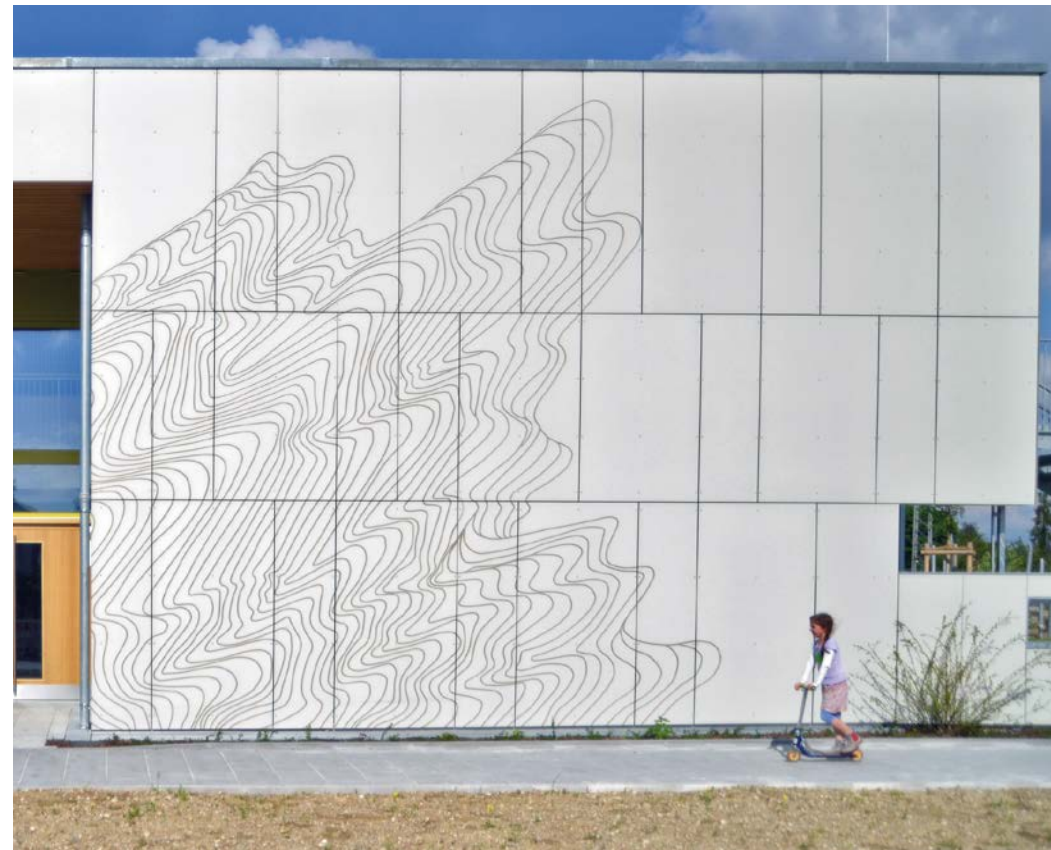
Port Talbot Plaza Cinema



Zuidplein Theatre



Andon Zako Cajupi Theatre

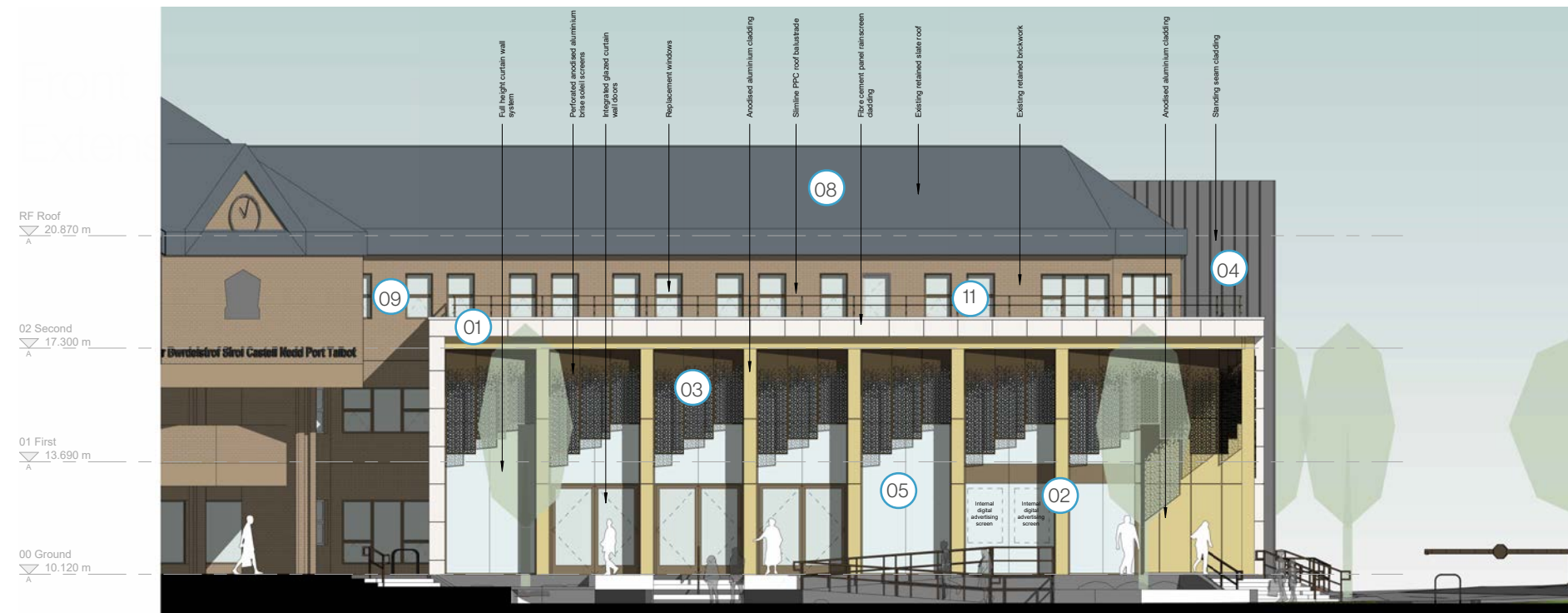


Nursery in Munich - Equitone



University of Bath - AHR

5.3 Proposed Elevations



Key:

1. Fibre cement panel rainscreen cladding
2. Anodised aluminium cladding
3. Perforated anodised brise soleil screens
4. Standing seam cladding
5. Full height curtain wall system
6. Integrated artwork (to be confirmed)
7. Existing retained brickwork
8. Existing retained slate roof
9. Replacement windows
10. Replacement doors
11. PPC roof guarding



01 Fibre Cement Cladding
Chalk



11 Extensive Green Roof and PPC Roof Guarding



02 Aluminium Cladding
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Regency Gold)



03 Perforated Brise Soleil Screens
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Dark Umber, Anolok 545)



05, 09, 10 Curtain walling, windows, doors
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Umber, Anolok 543)

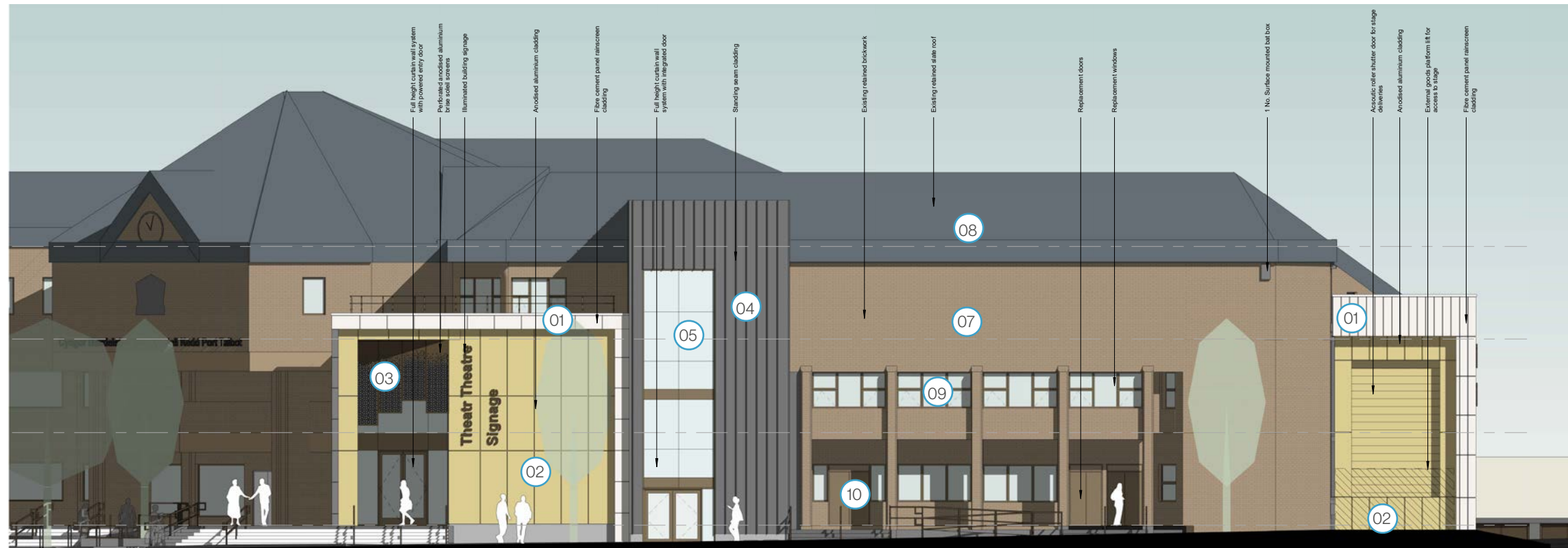


07 Existing Brickwork



08 Existing Slate roof

River Elevation



Key:

1. Fibre cement panel rainscreen cladding
2. Anodised aluminium cladding
3. Perforated anodised brise soleil screens
4. Standing seam cladding
5. Full height curtain wall system
6. Integrated artwork (to be confirmed)
7. Existing retained brickwork
8. Existing retained slate roof
9. Replacement windows
10. Replacement doors
11. PPC roof guarding



01 Fibre Cement Cladding
Chalk



02 Aluminium Cladding
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Regency Gold)



04 Standing Seam Cladding
PPC aluminium (colour: anthracite)



05, 09, 10 Curtain walling, windows, doors
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Umber, Anolok 543)

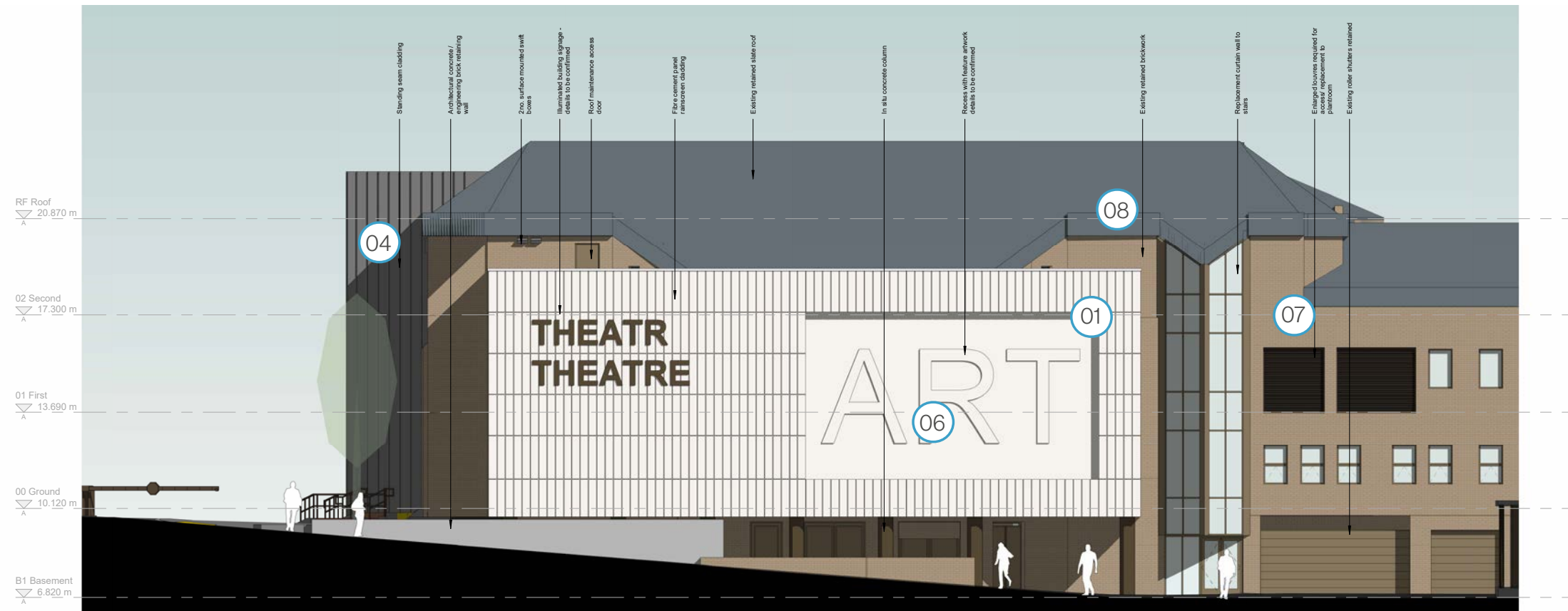


07 Existing Brickwork



08 Existing Slate roof

Road Elevation



Key:

1. Fibre cement panel rainscreen cladding
2. Anodised aluminium cladding
3. Perforated anodised brise soleil screens
4. Standing seam cladding
5. Full height curtain wall system
6. Integrated artwork (to be confirmed)
7. Existing retained brickwork
8. Existing retained slate roof
9. Replacement windows
10. Replacement doors
11. PPC roof guarding



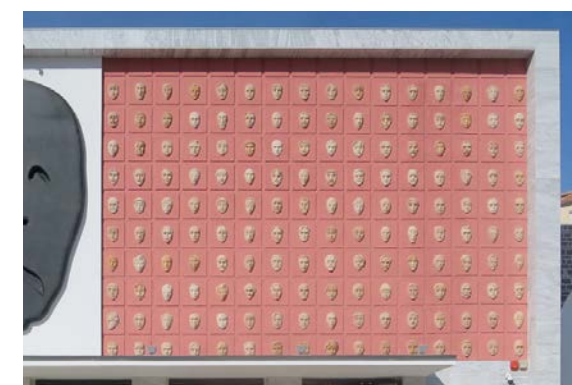
01 Fibre Cement Cladding
Chalk



04 Standing Seam Cladding
PPC aluminium (colour: anthracite)



05, 09, 10 Curtain walling, windows, doors
Anodised Aluminium (colour: Umber, Anolok 543)



06 Integrated artwork (to be confirmed)
Details to be developed



07 Existing Brickwork



08 Existing Slate roof



5.4 Illustrative Visuals - External

View from Heilbronn Way, with illustration of artwork (artwork to be confirmed)



View of the main entrance with the civic centre in the background



View of the double height glazed foyer with connections to the civic square

We approach every project with the same commitment to quality, excellence and integrity in all we do. Led by the principles of creating social value and promoting sustainability, we work to connect people, places and the environment.