



Title of document

Working Men's College Library
Heritage Statement

N°

0589 (03) 900

Date

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Image caption

Cover 2022 Photograph of Bloomfield Terrace

Introduction

Introduction

This report has been prepared to accompany the Listed Building Application for the refresh of the Working Men's College Library.

This document provides the historical background to the building and then proceeds to provide more detailed analysis of the impact of the proposed works.

Summary of the Proposed Works

The college is seeking to refurbish the existing library space and to replace the the outdated and redundant services.

The existing power and data network within the college library is outdated having been installed in a piecemeal fashion over the last few decades. The intention is to remove the existing surface fixed elements and install a new more discrete network of power and data sockets that respect the library's interior.

We are proposing to remove the current non-original lighting with a lighting scheme that reinstates the original library lighting design in its original locations. In addition, we are proposing to reinstate the lighting to the book shelves.

As part of the proposals we will also be cleaning the bookshelves, resanding and finishing the floor and redecorating the library.

Location

Working Men's College Camden is located at:
44 Crowndale Road
London
NW1 1TR

Conservation Area

The working Men's College is located within the Camden Town Conservation Area. The building was statutory listed Grade II in May 1974.

GRADE: II
DATE LISTED: 14 May 1974
ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID: 1067378

TQ2983SW 798-1/83/284

Official List Entry

CAMDEN CROWDALE ROAD (north side) Nos. 44 and 46, Working men's college and attached railings, wall and piers 14/05/74 GV II College. 1904-1906.

By W.D Carøe. Red brick with stone dressings. Slate mansard roof with dormers. Tall brick chimney with louvred lantern (fume extract from chemistry laboratory). Asymmetrical facade in British Free Style.

EXTERIOR: two storeys, attic storey and semi-basement. Sixteen windows and eight window return to Camden Street. Main entrance to right with stone portico having Ionic half columns carrying entablature and segmental pediment with enriched tympanum. All windows with fine gauged brick arches to flush sashes with keystones, glazing bars giving impression of transoms and mullions. Semi-basement, segmental-arched; ground and first floor, mostly flat arched. Plain brick band at ground floor level. Asymmetrically set feature of four windows flanked by brick Doric pilasters carrying entablature (with words 'WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE' in frieze) and pediment with large lunette in the tympanum. To left, bowed bay of three windows rising from semi-basement to eaves and terminating in cornice and parapet. Dormers with alternating segmental and triangular pediments. Gable end of right hand return with Free Style segmental-arched projection having round-arched windows with margin glazing on three sides being a recess to the library. Letters in tympanum read 'FOUNDED 1854'. Return with entrance having moulded stone surround and keystone. Similar sashes to main front; top storey with round-arched windows and large lunette to right hand gabled bay, indicating the library on this floor.

INTERIOR: entrance hall with staircase beyond and corridor to right leading to large Common Room; this with panelled dado and moulded plaster ceilings including national emblems. Two eighteenth-century marble fire surrounds from Great Ormond Street where Working Men's College founded: at west end of yellow and white marble with Ionic columns supporting entablature having central plaque with carved marble flowers; at east end a simple white marble surround with coloured marble inlay.

Camden Street wing, ground floor, has main hall with stage, proscenium and panelling. First floor Library has barrel vaulted ceiling with glazed panel top lighting; five arcaded bays with arch at south end into recess;

oak panelling and bookcases. Oak mantelpiece above marble fire surround. Bronze plaque above to Robert Henry Marks 1912. Marble head in recessed roundel by Alexander Munro to right of fireplace. Top storey: art studio with portrait of Lionel Jacob, 1910, set in oak panelling; shallow vaulted ceiling. Science laboratory with original fitted benches. In the basement the gymnasium, originally for boxing.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings on brick sleeper wall with brick piers.

HISTORICAL NOTE: the Working Men's College was founded 1854 in Great Ormond Street by Rev. F D Maurice, John Ruskin and others to offer non-vocational studies in humanities, history, theology and natural sciences within a collegiate community. Social facilities and gymnasium were key features of its accommodation as much as classrooms, laboratory and library. Art, taught by Ruskin, Rossetti and others was important in the early years and has remained a strong tradition.

Listing NGR: TQ2937883461



Photograph of the newly completed Working Men's College



Location Plan

The Working Men's College is located on the Northwest corner of Crowndale Road where it meets Camden Street in the London Borough of Camden.

The site is situated with the Camden Town Conservation Area.

Planning History

Planning History

Recent 21st century applications relating to Working Men's College Camden.

2021/3821/L & 2021/3199/P

Replacement of existing accessible platform lift to front elevation with similar structure and like for like replacement of windows to rear elevation.

2018/1917/L & 2018/1689/P

External alterations to include the installation of air intake and handling units; installation of replacement extract flues; formation of wall at roof level; alteration/ replacement of fenestrations and installation of louvers; installation of louvers to roof and elevations. Internal alterations to include the installation of mixed mode ventilation ducts and radiant panels, and the replacement of existing radiators

2008/4940/L & 2008/5295/P

Alterations and extensions including erection of new entrance stairs and canopy to Crowndale Road elevation, conversion of loft space with roof extension to rear, increased height of portion of gable parapet between chimneys, replacement of windows and doors, landscaping of front courtyard and internal alterations including new walls, doors and ramps to the existing educational building, (Class D1).

2008/3895/L

Details of glazed screens to the library alcoves pursuant to condition 4(e) of listed building consent dated 25th January 2006 (Ref: 2005/4150/L) for installation of two lifts shafts and associated links at basement, ground, first, second and third floor levels at rear; demolition and replacement of single storey rear extension; erection of dormer roof extension at the rear; installation of new front access ramp at basement level; air conditioning units and extract ducts at roof level of college (Class D1) together with associated internal alterations.

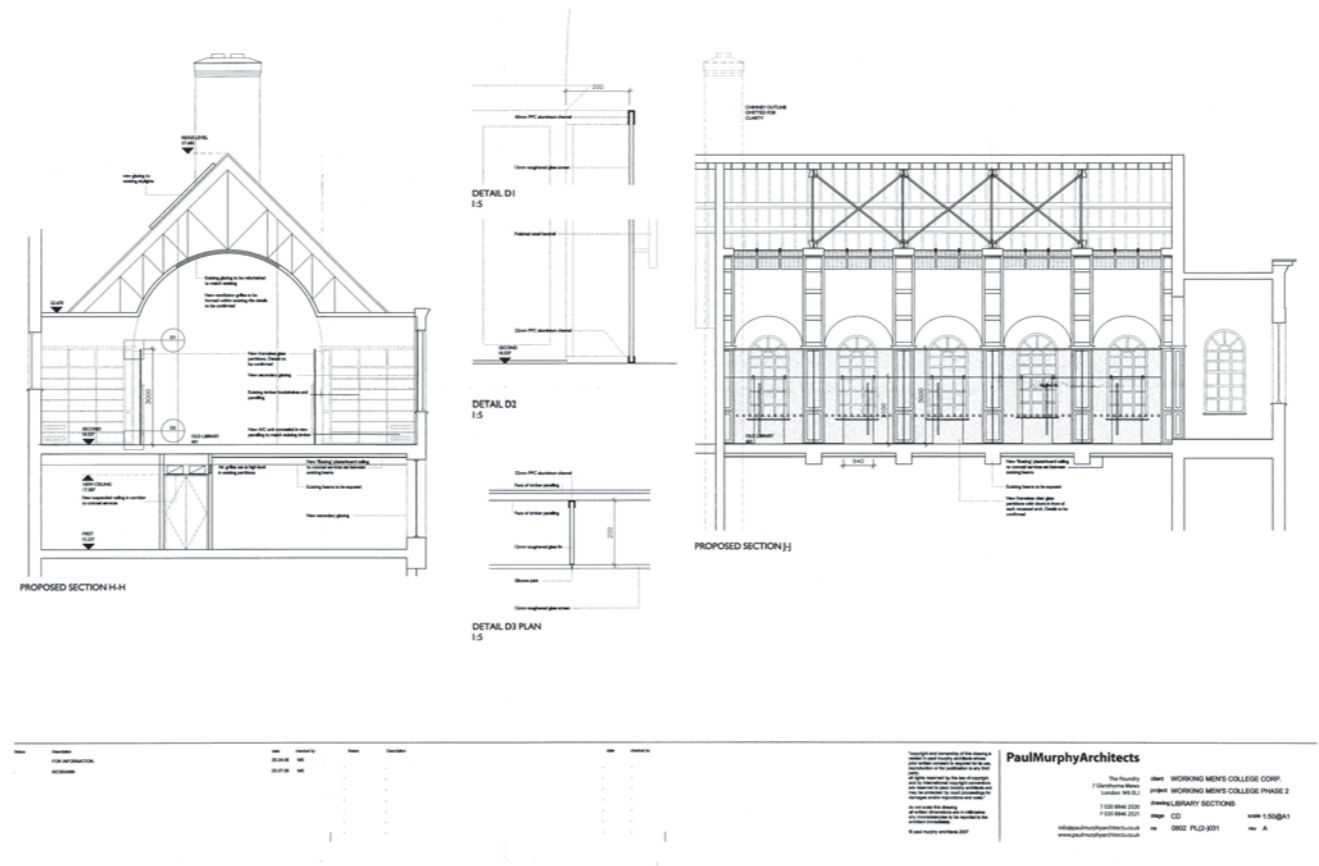
Please note that while this application was granted, the proposals were never carried out.



WM College, following works in 2019



East wing of WM College, following works in 2019. The library is located in the top floor of the building



Drawing showing glazed screens to library (2008/3895/L) - works not implemented

Building History

Architectural Style

The existing college building was commissioned in 1904 and designed by W.D. Caroe, who was known for his work in Cardiff for the South Wales University and his portfolio of ecclesiastical buildings.

The architectural style of the building can be categorised in a number of ways. It is described as a 'varied Neo-Georgian Style' in the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, as 'Freestyle Arts and Crafts' and 'Edwardian Architecture'. The Historic England listing description describes the building as follows,

'Red brick with stone dressings. Slate mansard roof with dormers. Tall brick chimneys with louvred lantern (fume extract from chemistry laboratory). Asymmetrical facade in British Free Style.'

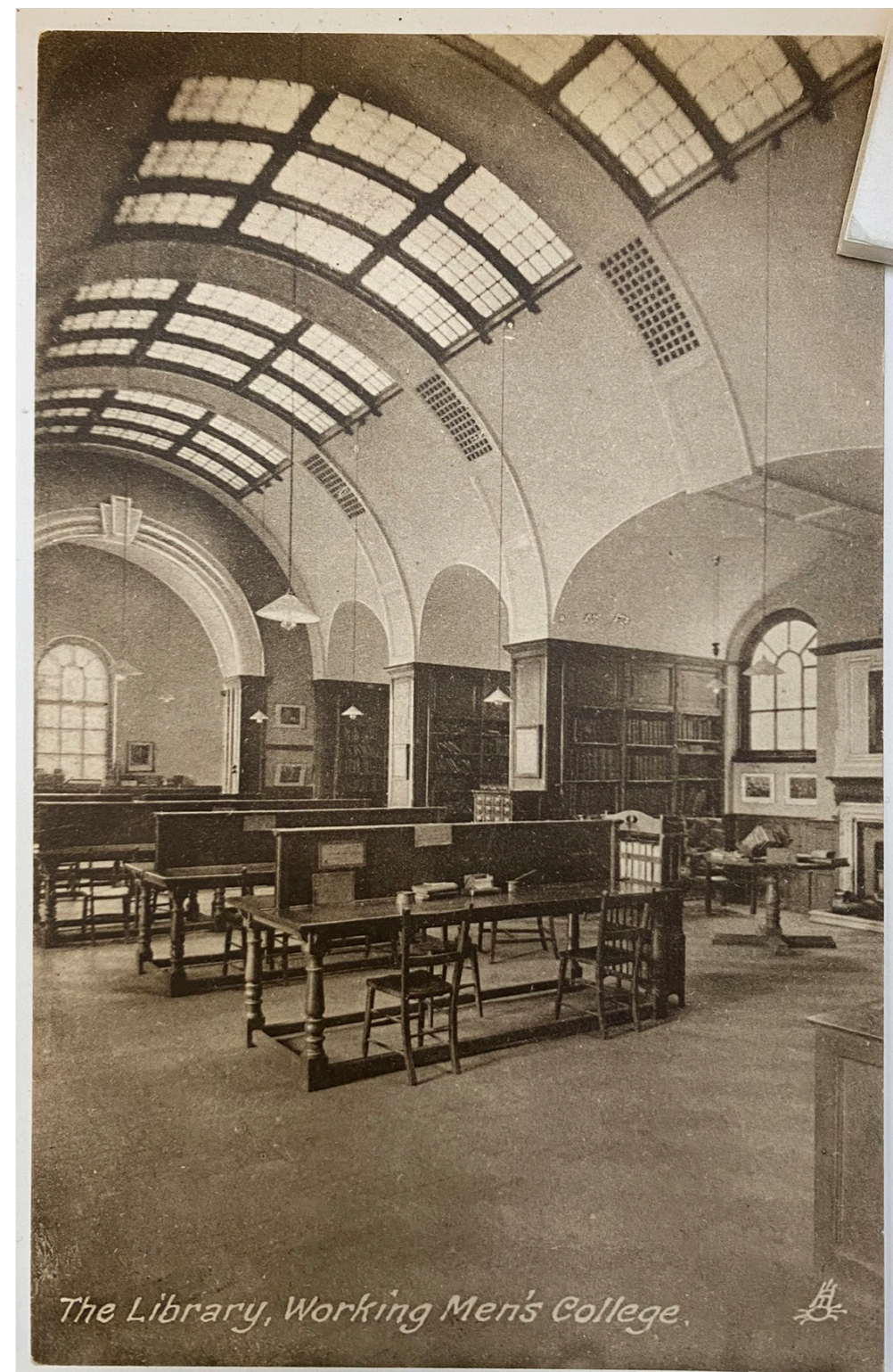
The ambiguity of its architectural style may be due to changing architectural trends at the beginning of the 20th century. However, elements of the building's design were also influenced by a desire to capture some of the atmosphere of the college's original home in the two Queen Anne houses in Great Ormond Street, both in detail and form.

'In the new buildings, which date from 1904 – 1906, there are some reminders of the 18th Century house the college once occupied. His [W.D. Caroe's] block on the corner captures the eye with its bowed brick frontage, Mannerist details and bold segmental arch.'

W.D Caroe: His Architectural Achievement, by Jennifer M. Freeman, 1990.



Image captions (clockwise from top left):
The original library from the college's first home in Great Ormond Street 1854;
Early photograph of the library in Crowndale Road showing original light locations;
Early photograph of the library in Crowndale Road showing glass globe lights.



The Library, Working Men's College.



Heritage Statement

Internal Fixtures and Finishes

The internal finishes are fairly simple and reflect the number of changes and modifications that the building has undergone over the last 117 years.

There are still some original features and there are some features that were transposed from the Great Ormond Street Building such as the fireplaces in the Common Room and Coffee Room (now teaching and administration rooms).

The Library is the room that remains the most unchanged and is arguably the singularly most impressive space; with its barrel-vaulted roof, timber shelving and marble fireplace.

Level Changes

One of distinctive features of the building is the arrangement and staggering of the internal levels. It is understood that this internal arrangement was to instil a feeling of adventure and discovery in the students. The introduction of multiple levels has continued over subsequent additions and adaptations of the building, more as a way of maximising available space, as the college thrived and expanded rather than continuing the original design intention. However, the changes of level are intrinsically part of the building's unique identity and character. There are in total around 30 level changes across the whole building.

Principally, the teaching accommodation was located either side of a central corridor running East/West with the main stairs located at the knuckle at the junction between the main teaching areas to the west and the Maurice Hall Library and art studio to the East.

Library

The library remains fairly original and intact. Over the decades some elements have been changed and added to. The accumulation of layers of services, some redundant and some still active



View of the Library today from the Reception Desk



View of the Library today looking towards the Reception Desk

Heritage Statement

Library

Many of the original features within the library remain intact. However, over the decades some elements have been damaged, changed and added to.

Redundant Services

The accumulation of layers of services, some redundant and some still active has been necessary to deal with the changing requirements within the library. However, there is now an opportunity to remove redundant services and integrate new services that are more sustainable, discrete and provide more long term flexibility.

Missing Elements and Unsympathetic additions

There are elements that have been added or removed on an adhoc basis over the years. These elements add to the visual clutter within the space and reduce the eligibility of the library provision.

Walls, Floors and Ceiling

Finishes to the walls floors and ceilings are tired and require some repair, treatment and finishing.



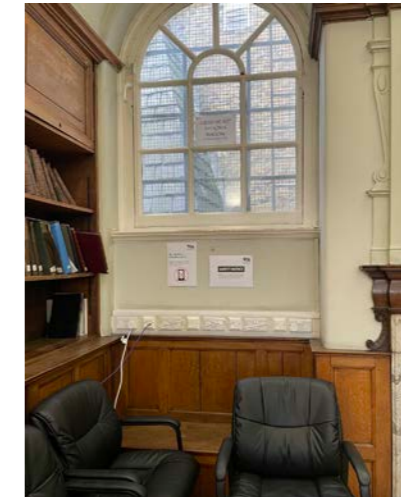
Surface-fixed services



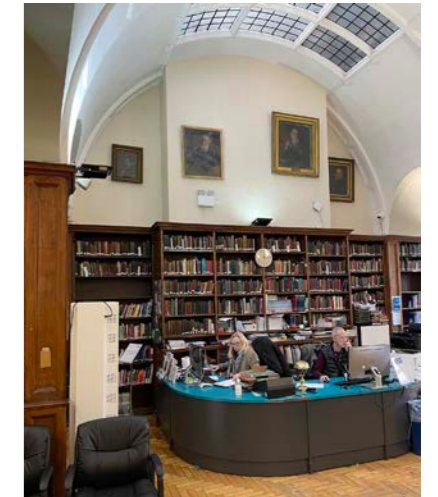
Layers of different services



Unsympathetic additions



Surface-fixed trunking & trailing cables



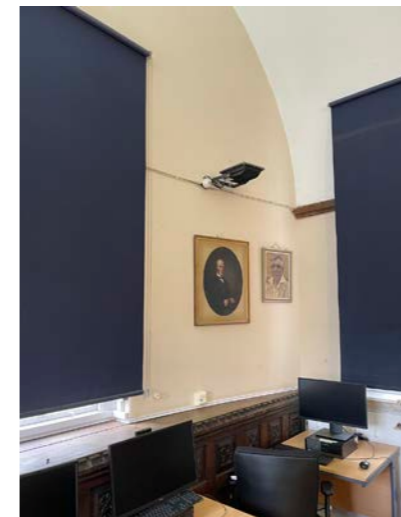
Lack of legibility



Doors and signage



Services at end of life



Unsympathetic fitting and cabling



Power and data not integrated



Missing elements



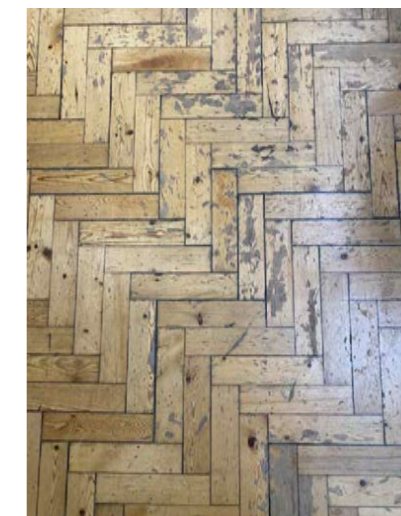
Existing windows let in noise and sunlight



Existing windows in need of repair



flooring needs repair



flooring to be repaired



Tired decoration

Heritage Statement

Statement of Significance

The Working Men's College Library remains largely as it was when the building was constructed. It retains much of W.D. Caroe's original architectural aesthetic and features. Perhaps more importantly, however, the library is still being used for its original purpose 120 years after it was first conceived. The fact that the library has been able to adapt to the changes to the college and its outreach is perhaps surprising, particularly with the advent of digital information technologies in recent decades.

The principal interior details and finishes are largely intact; the glazed rooflight, oak bookshelves, internal layout, original artwork and features. However many of these finishes are tired and require some repair. The original lighting has been lost, as has the original floor.

Use Value

The library is very much alive and is host to a number of user groups. It is still a source of knowledge and learning for members of the community that have visited the college for many years, whilst providing the valuable learning resource for the current cohort of the college's students. The space also provides assisted learning provision for students with a wide range of learning abilities and needs. In order to respond to these changes, the space has been adapted in an ad hoc manner; the current library usage is far more multilayered and complex to meet current learner's needs than its founding generation could ever have imagined.

Cultural Value

The library has been host to many generations of learners and the space would be recognisable to its original alumni as it would to today's learners. There is greater significance to this space in that it was the first purpose-built adult education college in the UK and perhaps Europe.

Approach to Conservation

The Working Men's College Library is a thriving resource for their staff and learners. It is a working library and not a museum to a bygone era, but the building's history is an integral part of the college's mission and history.

The build up of today's multilayered building services and uses has arguably led to a loss of legibility and clarity within the space. The library hosts an impressive collection of books, but these compete with the space required for today's students and their course literature. The library and the college also rely on online resources to aid student's learning.

Brief

The college's brief consists of a number of aspirations:

- The conservation of the library interior;
- The removal of redundant and inefficient services;
- The introduction of new, more energy efficient, services;
- improve the noise and solar gain through the treatment of the windows internally;
- the integration of technology that is sympathetic to the interior of the space;
- a new reception desk;
- create a space that integrates better with other aspects of the college's education provision;
- improve the legibility and clarity within the space to make the library more inviting and user-friendly experience;
- the ability to easily adapt the space (book-readings, talks, community events).

Concept

To achieve this brief the college is looking at a number of actions simultaneously.

Firstly, there is an ongoing audit of all the resources within the library to ensure that the library contents best reflect the needs of the library users. In parallel, there has been a review of what the library needs to provide to support its curriculum and students.

The vision for the library is to retain and enhance the interior by stripping away much of the visual clutter and unsympathetic additions. To future proof the library the new power and data infrastructure will be integrated in a more strategic way by feeding the services from the floor below into locations that can support a number of different configurations. This approach will avoid the trailing cables, but allow the space to be adapted easily.

We are proposing to re-instate the luminaires with the globe lights visible in the early 20th century photographs and in their original locations. In addition, new book shelf lighting will utilise existing redundant holes within the shelf construction. Uplights will be added to the ends of the shelving to illuminate the ceiling. Task lighting will be integrated into the desks.

We are keen not to lose the aesthetic of the library through over-restoration and are proposing to clean and repair the shelving where it is damaged. The flooring was replaced in the mid 20th century, but is in relatively good condition. We are proposing to sand the parquet flooring back, make local repairs and reseal. The internal decorations will follow the original colour scheme.

Within the design space will be made to exhibit the college's collection of paintings and artifacts from current and former staff and students; adding some interpretation to strengthen the connection and relevance between current students and past alumni.

Precedent

Precedent

The images on this page illustrate some of the precedent that we have looked at with regard to our approach to the library interior.

Captions to be read left to right, top to bottom:

Lighting

The subtle integration of lighting into the shelving to enhance the books and the appreciation of the space.

Fixed Furniture

The approach to the new fixed furniture will be to create clear separation between the old and new. It is important that the new elements are stand alone items that don't require permanent adaptation of the original fittings.

Colour

The barrel vault will remain white, but the end walls and alcoves could benefit from the use of well chosen colour blocks help define the spaces and add legibility to the library as a whole.

Reception Desk

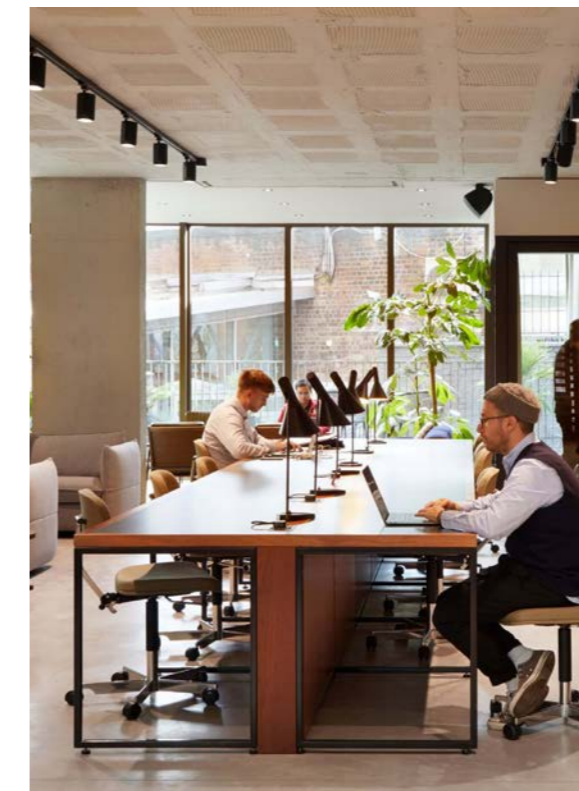
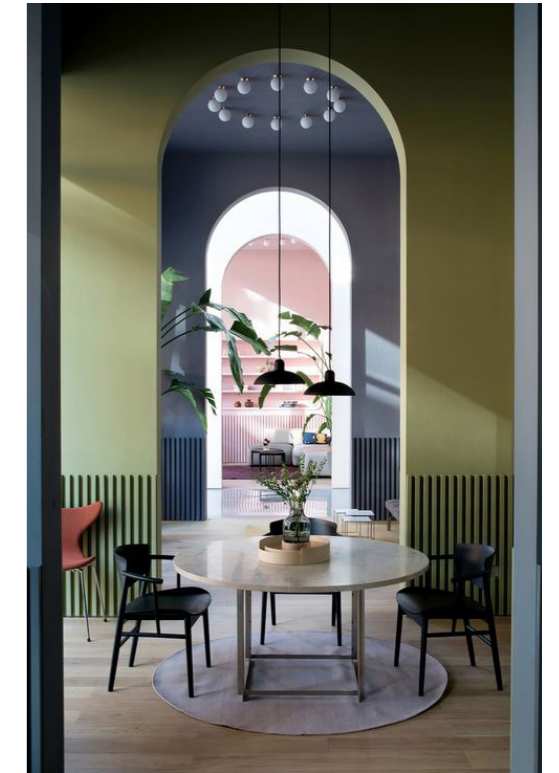
The reception desk will assist with display but also form a more secure space for lone working within the library.

Integration of Technology

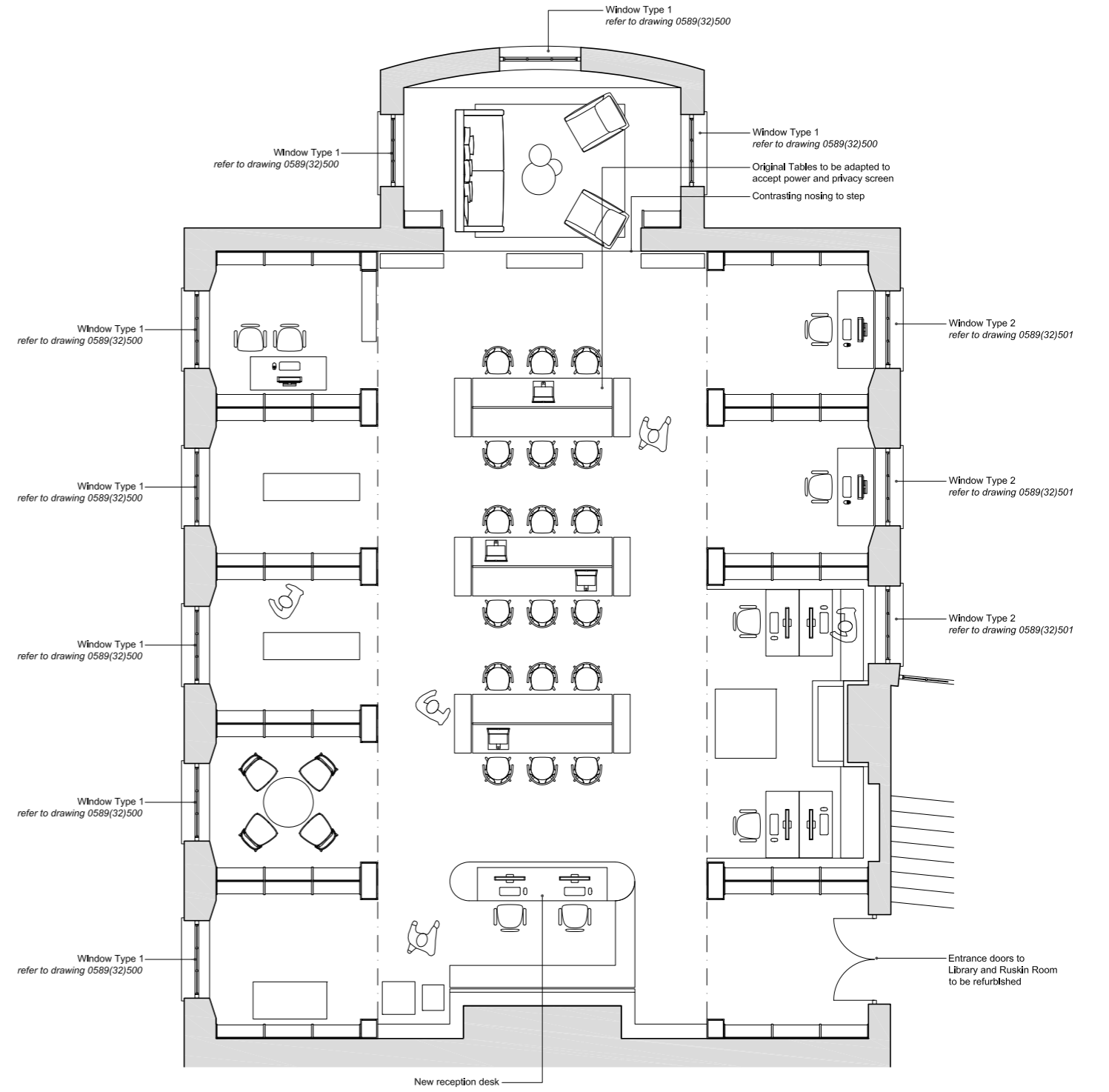
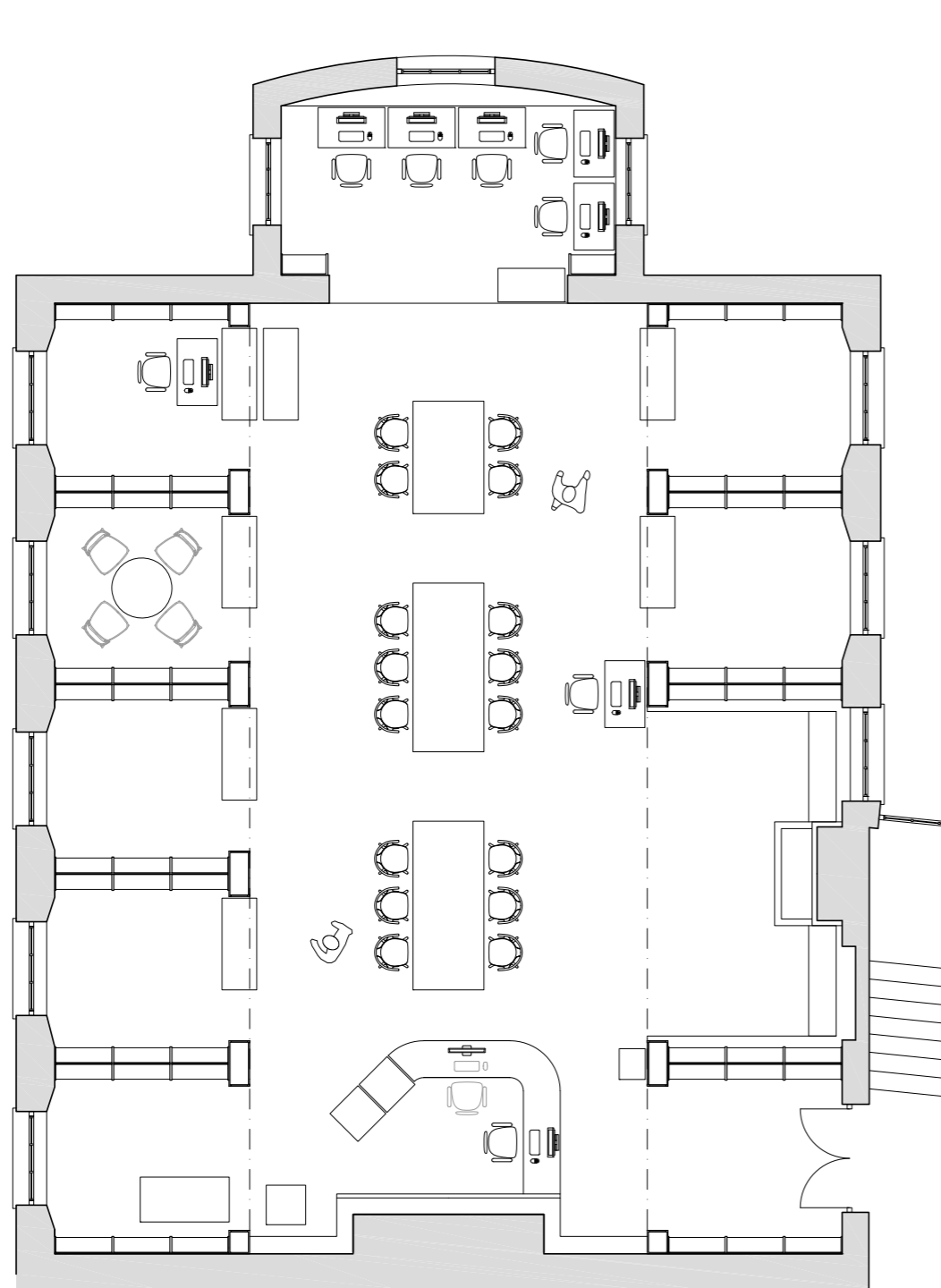
By integrating power and data into the existing library tables users will be able to control their own study environment and be able to utilise the college's lap tops.

Formal and Informal Space

The library will reintroduce more informal spaces to create different hierarchies and the opportunity to display learning material in more accessible ways.



Existing and Proposed Plans



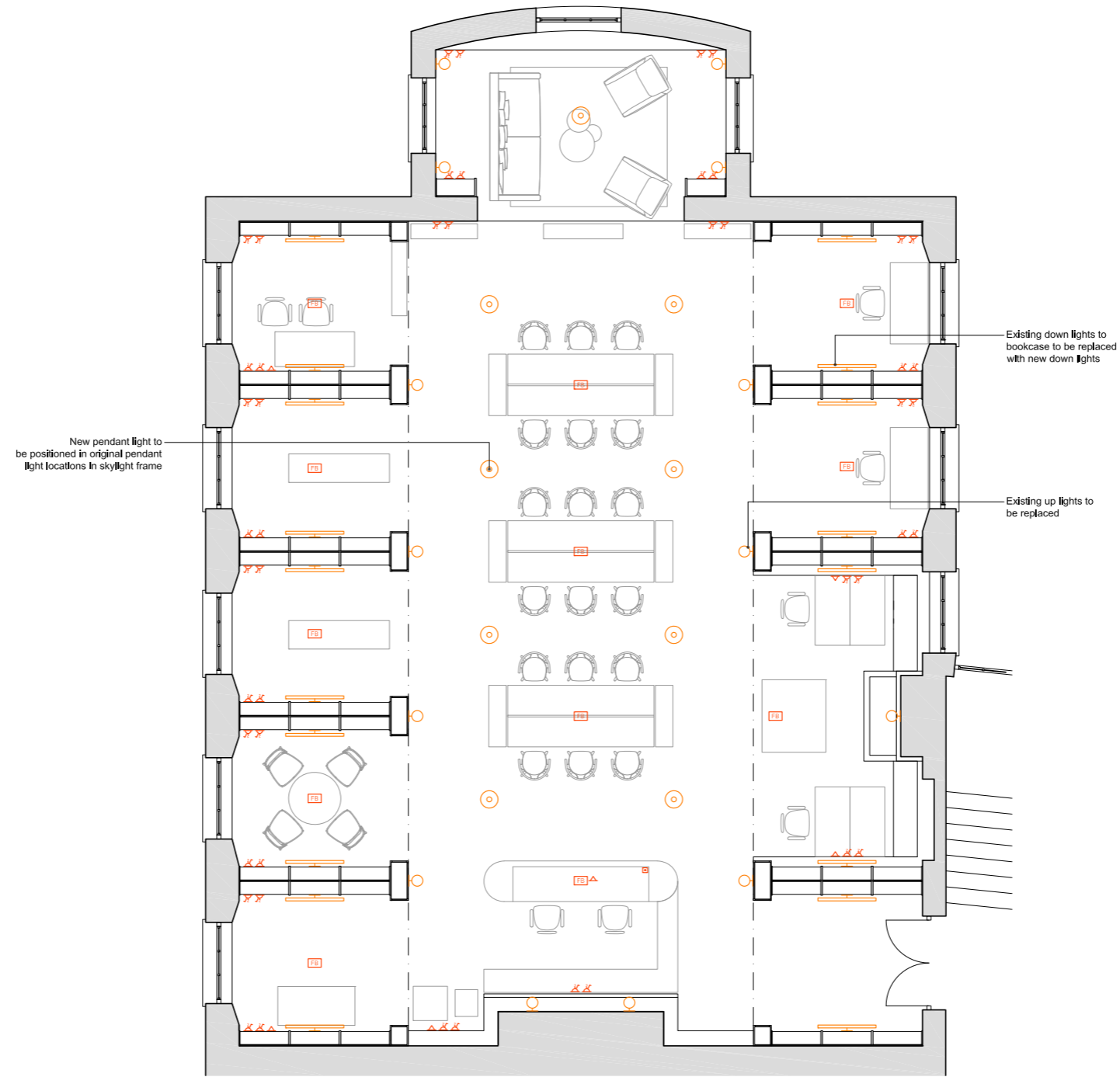
Lighting Plan

GENERAL NOTES:

1. All redundant electrics (sockets, wires, lighting) to be removed
2. CCTV locations to be reviewed
3. WIFI network to be upgraded
4. Smoke detectors to be reviewed

KEY:

- WALL MOUNTED UP LIGHT
- ◻ WALL MOUNTED DOWN LIGHT
- PENDANT LIGHT
- ⊙ SMOKE DETECTOR
- ⊕ DIMMER SWITCH
- ⊖ SWITCH
- ⊗ TWIN 230v SOCKET
- △ CAT 6
- ⊞ FLOOR BOX
- ⊠ PANIC BUTTON



Visuals



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