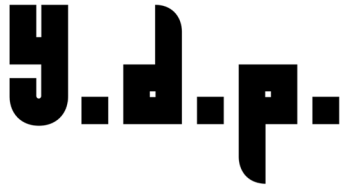


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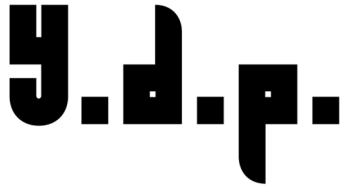


Proposed alterations to 19 Bedford Square
Design and Access statement



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 YDP have taken a ten year lease on No 19 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HH from the Bedford Estates to provide them with a location for their headquarters.
- 1.2 YDP is the most recent non-profit initiative under the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Asymmetry Art Foundation (Charity number 1190437). Founded in 2023 by art patron and philanthropist Yan Du, YDP is an experimental art project dedicated to nurturing contemporary art practices with a focus on artists from and beyond Asia, exploring how art institutions can engage with contemporary issues and shape the future.
- 1.3 YDP aims to establish itself as a leading platform for contemporary art that engages with Asian contexts and diasporic experiences. By focusing on innovative programming, strategic partnerships, and careful financial planning, YDP is positioned to become a vital hub for creativity and cultural exchange, supporting the careers of emerging and mid-career artists and contributing to the global conversation on contemporary art.
- 1.4 This Planning, Design & Access Statement forms part of the Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications submissions for proposed works to 19 Bedford Square, that have been carefully developed to enhance accessibility within this Grade I listed building and to reconfigure more recent accommodation to provide the layout, flexibility and design quality required by YDP.
- 1.5 The history of the building, context within Bedford Square, the Bloomsbury Conservation area and general significance of the structure is detailed within the Heritage Statement and for clarity is not duplicated within this document
- 1.5 The proposed works will upgrade the existing building by -
 - Installing a lift serving basement, ground, first and second floors.
 - Reconfiguring existing toilet accommodation
 - Removal and/or replacement of modern floor and wall finishes
 - Reconfiguring the façade and plan arrangement of the modern link building between main house and conservatory
 - Reconfiguring the façade and internal planning arrangement of the modern link building between conservatory and rear outbuilding
 - Introducing an additional stair between basement and ground level in the modern link building adjoining the rear outbuilding
 - Introducing glazed doors at basement level to provide a visual link between adjoining spaces
 - Reopening original window recess and reformatting steps from main house to link building
 - Replacement of modern partitions in rear outbuilding with glazed screens
 - Partial removal of floor boarding and plaster ceiling in rear outbuilding
 - Detailed amendment of electrical installation and modern light fittings.



1.6 The following drawings and documents should be read in conjunction with this statement:

- 2405 B-30-05 Existing cross section
- 2405 B-110-01 Demolitions plan basement
- 2405 B-110-02 Demolitions plan ground floor
- 2405 B-110-03 Demolitions plan first floor
- 2405 B-110-04 Demolitions plan second floor
- 2405 B-110-05 Demolitions plan third floor
- 2405 B-130-01 Demolitions section
- 2405 B-130-02 Demolitions section
- 2405 B-130-03 Demolitions section
- 2405 B-130-04 Demolitions section
- 2405 B-130-05 Demolitions section
- 2405 B-210-01 Proposed basement plan
- 2405 B-210-02 Proposed ground floor plan
- 2405 B-210-03 Proposed first floor plan
- 2405 B-210-04 Proposed second floor plan
- 2405 B-210-05 Proposed third floor plan
- 2405 B-230-01 Proposed section
- 2405 B-230-02 Proposed section
- 2405 B-230-03 Proposed section
- 2405 B-230-04 Proposed section
- 2405 B-230-05 Proposed section
- 2405 B-240-01 Proposed RCP basement floor
- 2405 B-240-02 Proposed RCP ground floor
- 2405 B-240-03 Proposed RCP first floor
- 2405 X-01-01 Proposed detail
- 2405 X-01-02 Proposed detail
- Heritage Statement
- Photographic survey

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2.0 Access

2.1 YDP considered it essential that if at all possible, the majority of the building should be made accessible to all visitors and staff within the constraints of the Grade I building.

2.2 However, the main access to No 19 is off Bedford Square. The ground level of the building is some 750mm above pavement level with 4 steps to a landing and then a further step up to floor level at the front door. The front door is actually two side hung doors with central meeting stile. Each leaf is circa 625mm.

2.3 This arrangement makes it almost impossible for wheelchair users to access the building. YDP propose to provide a lightweight, foldable ramp that will be put in position when required to provide assisted access into the building for wheelchair users. As the vast majority of visitors to the gallery will be by prior arrangement, any specific requirements for a particular visitor can be pre-arranged.

2.3 Each of the floor plates of the original building are, for the most part, level. The only variations to this are the ancillary rooms to the rear of the staircase at second and third floor levels where there are steps up into these spaces. However, the only current access from basement to the upper floors is via the beautifully elegant stone staircase. It was considered unacceptable to consider any form of addition to the staircase that would provide wheelchair access to the upper floors.

2.4 The only practical solution was to consider and look at the possible insertion of a lift into the building. To enable it to access the majority of the floor levels within the building, and avoiding the construction of an external lift shaft, it would need to be located within the footprint of the existing building.

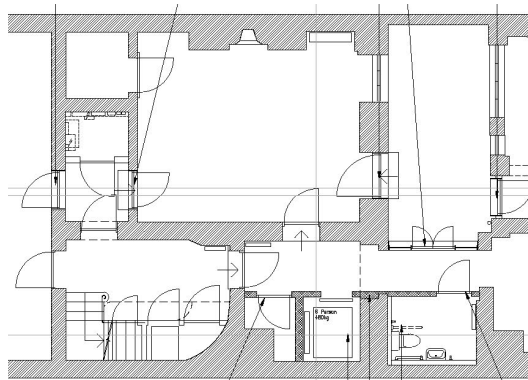
2.5 On review, the only location where a lift could possibly be located was in the ancillary room located to the rear of the main staircase. This space is underused on each floor, contains no significant historic detail and provides a vertically consistent space that could accommodate a lift shaft that serves from basement level to the second floor. It was decided that the lift would not extend to the third floor as this would require the over run of the lift to project out through the roof. This was deemed to have too significant an impact on the external appearance of the Grade I building.

2.6 Following consultation with several lift manufacturers, and looking at the sizes of a lift and shaft that would comply fully with Part M of the building regulations and the physical dimensions of the space available, it became clear that a smaller lift would be the only practical solution given the restrictions imposed by the listed structure and existing service risers. The 6 person lift will accommodate a wheelchair user but not accompanied.



2.7 Extracts from the proposed plans show the proposed location of the lift at each floor level

Basement

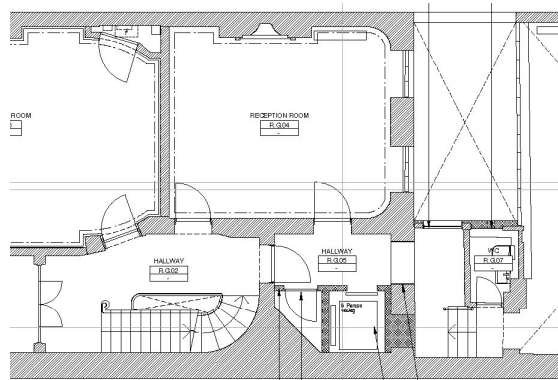


NEW DOOR

NEW PASSENGER LIFT

NEW UNISEX WHEELCHAIR-ACC TOILET

Ground floor

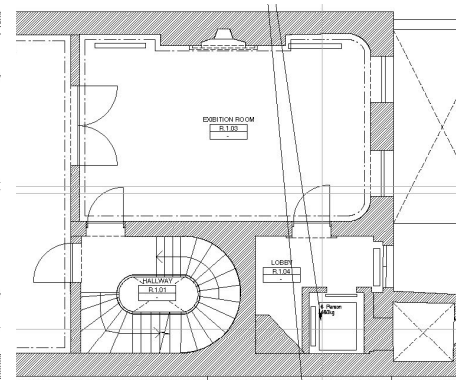


NEW CONCRETE BLOCK PARTITION

NEW DOOR

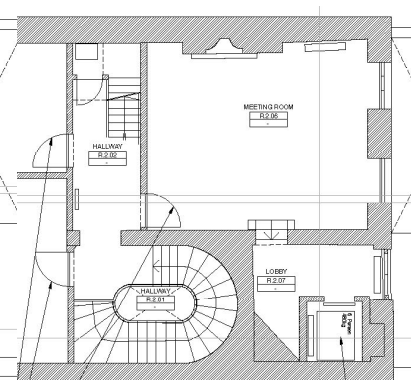
NEW PASSENGER LIFT

First floor



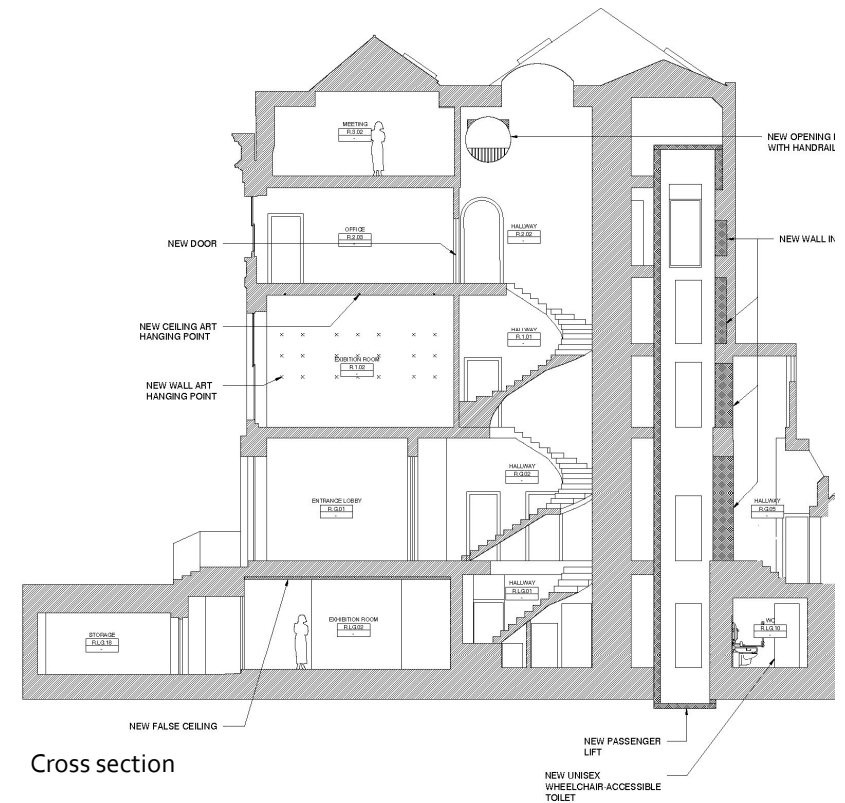
NEW PASSENGER LIFT

Second floor



NEW PASSENGER LIFT

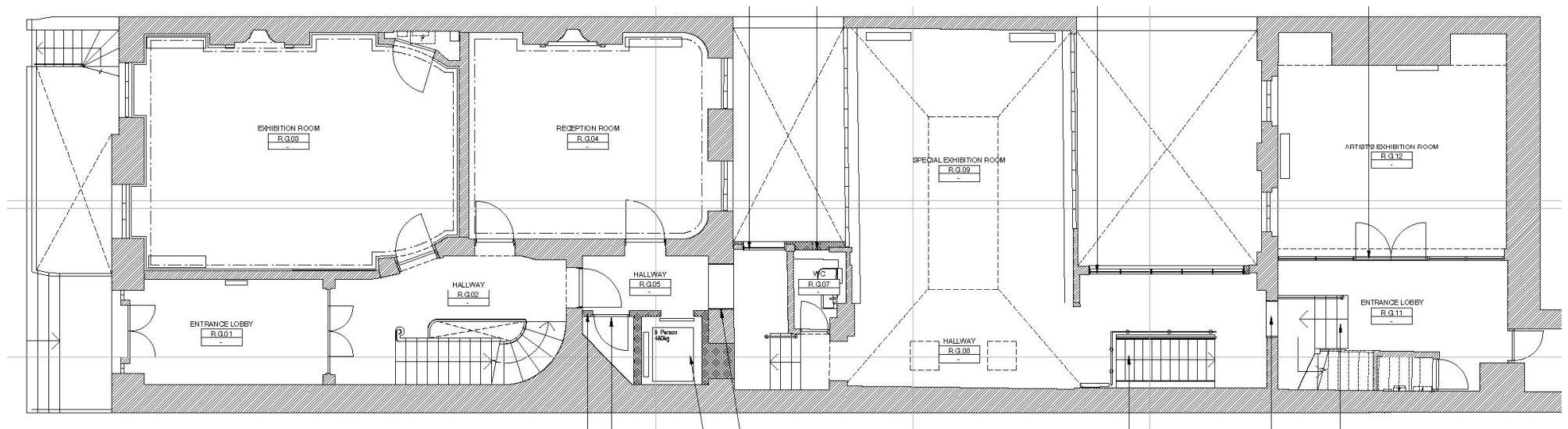
- 2.8 The lift provides access to all but the third floor. At each floor level, the arrangements would be in place to provide full access where changes of level exist.
- 2.9 At basement level there is a single step at two points across the whole floor plate. A lightweight removable ramp will be available as and when required.
- 2.10 At ground level, there is a significant change of level between the floor level in the main building and the adjoining link structure similar to that found on the front entrance steps. The lightweight foldable ramp will be stored adjacent to the lift for use when required.
- 2.11 At first floor there is full, unhindered access across the floor plate.
- 2.12 Exhibitions to which guests would be invited will be located at basement, ground and first floors only. Access beyond these levels will generally be restricted to staff.
- 2.13 At second floor level, the floor level at the lift is approximately 450mm above main floor plate level and again, a lightweight removable ramp would be installed when required to provide access to all accommodation on the floor.
- 2.14 As the lift does not extend to the third floor, access would be limited to ambulant members of staff
- 2.15 This would also be the case for the first floor of the rear outbuilding which is only accessible from the staircase located along the party wall.
- 2.16 The reconfiguration of existing toilet accommodation at basement level includes the modification of one of the toilet spaces to an accessible toilet complying with Part M.



Cross section

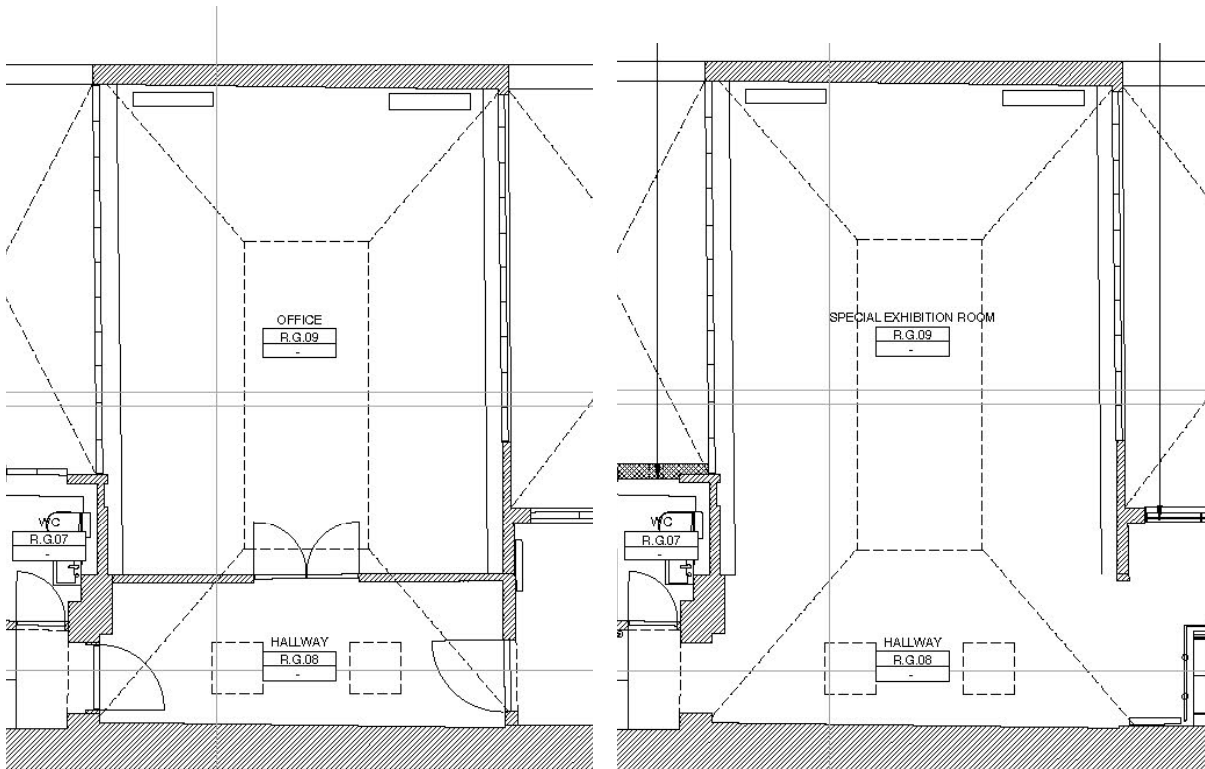
3.0 General design concept

- 3.1 As an art foundation, YDP will hold a wide range of temporary exhibitions in the building in addition to having permanent exhibits and installations. These will be held at basement, ground and first floor levels. The design that has been developed has recognised the importance of the historic interiors and will require minimal change to achieve the flexibility they will require. Where possible, interventions have been designed to be completely reversible.
- 3.2 The layout has been developed to allow visitors to easily transit from one exhibition space to another and to form a substantially circuitous route through the exhibition spaces to avoid passing back through one space to reach another.
- 3.3 The proposed introduction of the new stair in the rear link building helps achieve this by removing the dead end that would exist at both ground and basement level without it. This is located in a very recently constructed area of the building.
- 3.4 The introduction of the lift forces a reconfiguration of the circulation system from the main building into the link structures at ground floor level. The original window opening in the rear wall of the main building adjacent to the lift has been closed off in the past. This will be re-opened as the doorway into the link building. The link building was reconstructed recently to accommodate two toilets. One will be removed and the floors and steps reconfigured to connect back to the circulation route alongside the party wall.



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3.5 The conservatory, once designed as a single space has been subdivided to create a passageway through to the rear outbuilding. The design of the original roof structure fully exposed within the original volume of the room is to be restored by removal of the partition wall and suspended plasterboard ceiling over the passageway.



Existing conservatory plan with passageway.

Proposed conservatory plan with original space restored

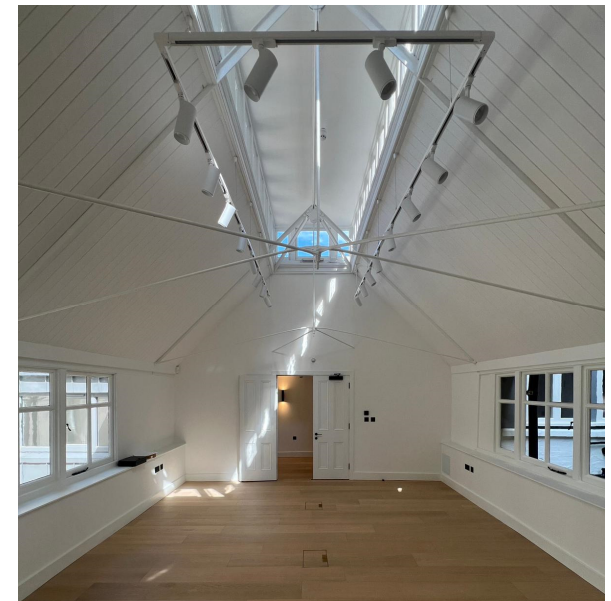
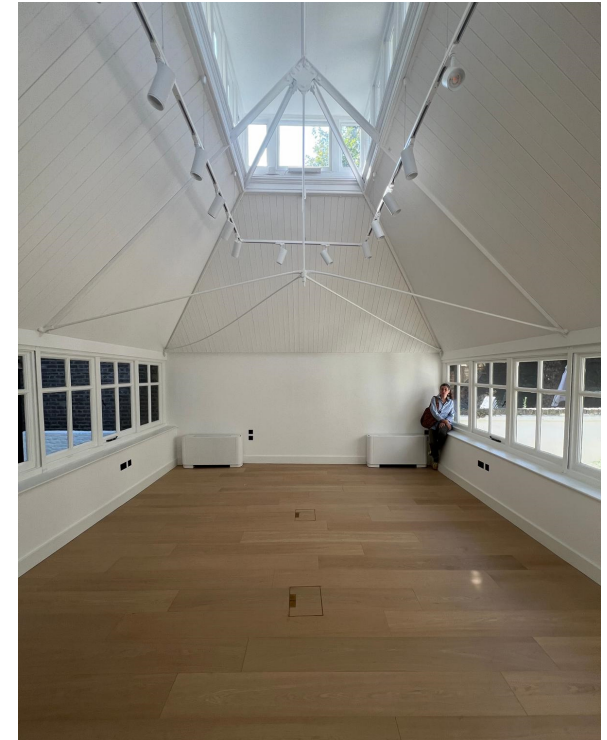
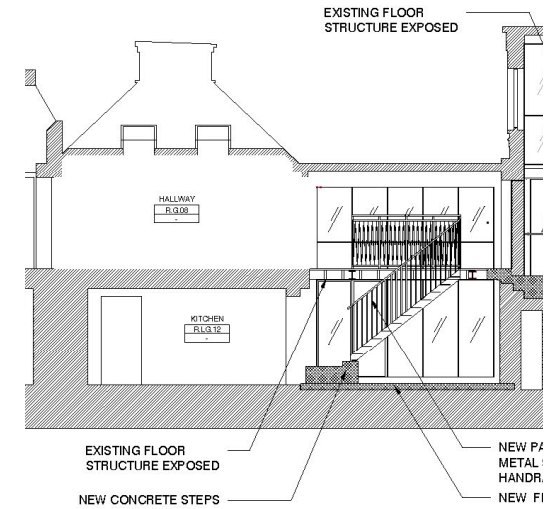


Photo showing later partition with door

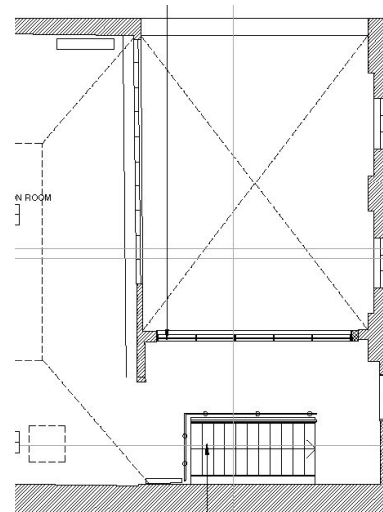
- 3.6 The introduction of the new stair connecting to basement level in the rear link building is coupled with a number of other associated design proposals that are intended to improve the visual and physical connection of this internal space with the courtyard area.
- 3.7 The ground floor elevation of the link building is a solid wall to circa 1.0m height with a series of casement windows over. At basement level it is currently a fully glazed elevation with sliding glass door. The intention is to replace the full elevation with glazed panels that will provide full views of the delightful outbuildings, let in substantially more daylight and provide views of, and access to, art installations exhibited in the courtyard through glazed double doors.
- 3.8 The link structures are much later additions as insertions into the once open courtyard and appear to have been progressively altered over time. The party wall was an external wall as were the walls below the conservatory. The designers wish to restore some of the original character of these spaces by carefully removing much of the recently applied plasterboard wall linings etc. to expose the original brickwork along the main circulation route.



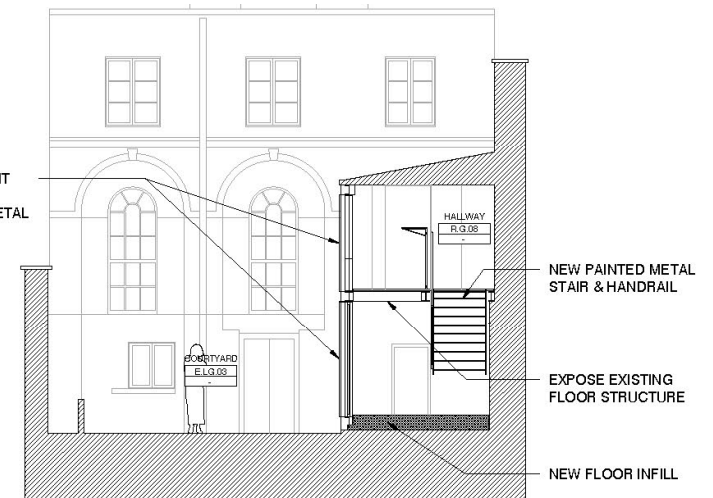
Elevation of rear link building



Elevation of front link building



Proposed plan of rear link building

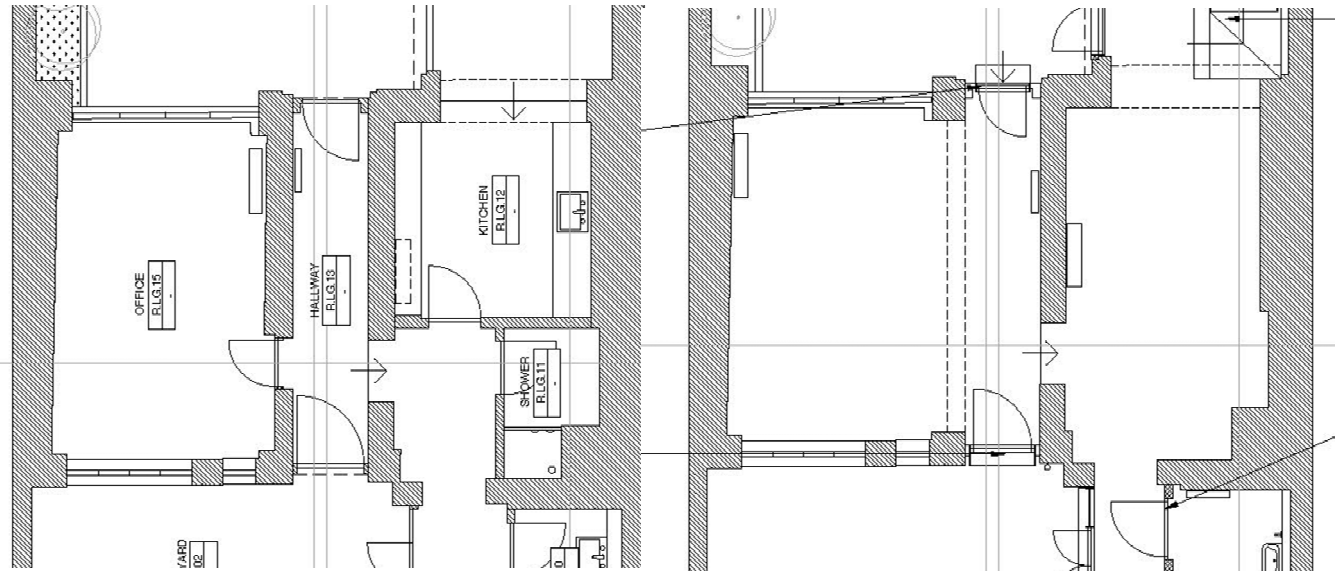


Proposed cross section of rear link building

- 3.9 The original and existing plan of the building under the conservatory area at basement level shows a central passageway with toilets and rest rooms either side. The passageway still exists but is now an anachronism and serves no real purpose. The proposals remove the wall located under the conservatory to unify the space and create a single open room off the main circulation route. The wall, ceiling and floor finishes in this area are all modern.



Plan from circa 1920

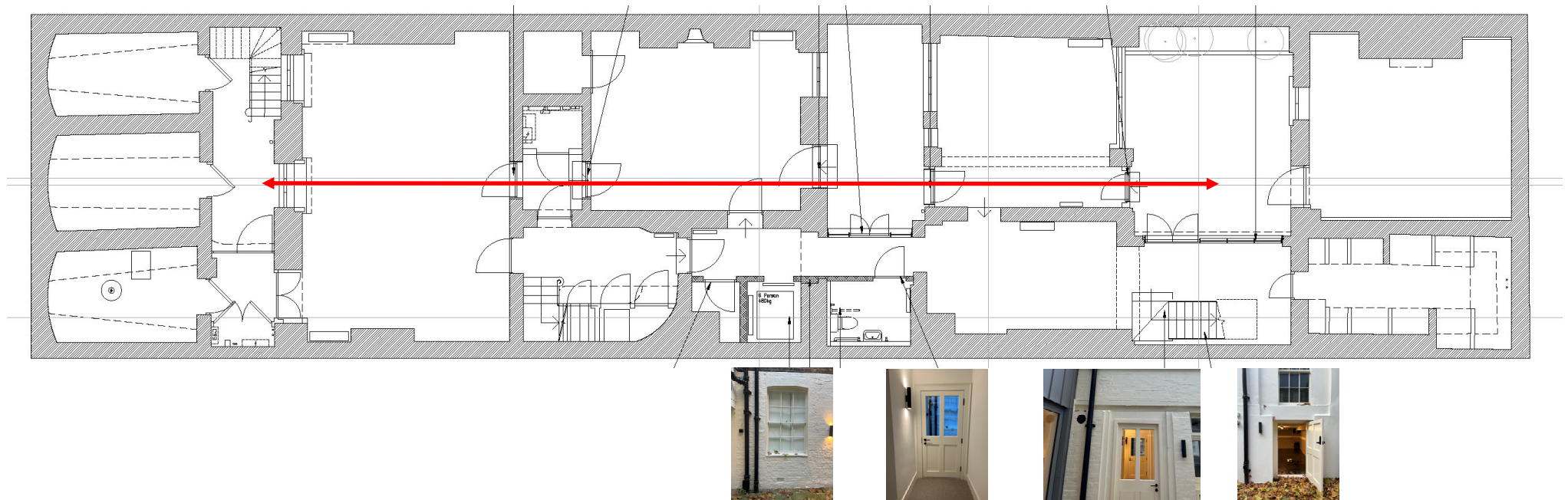


Existing plan

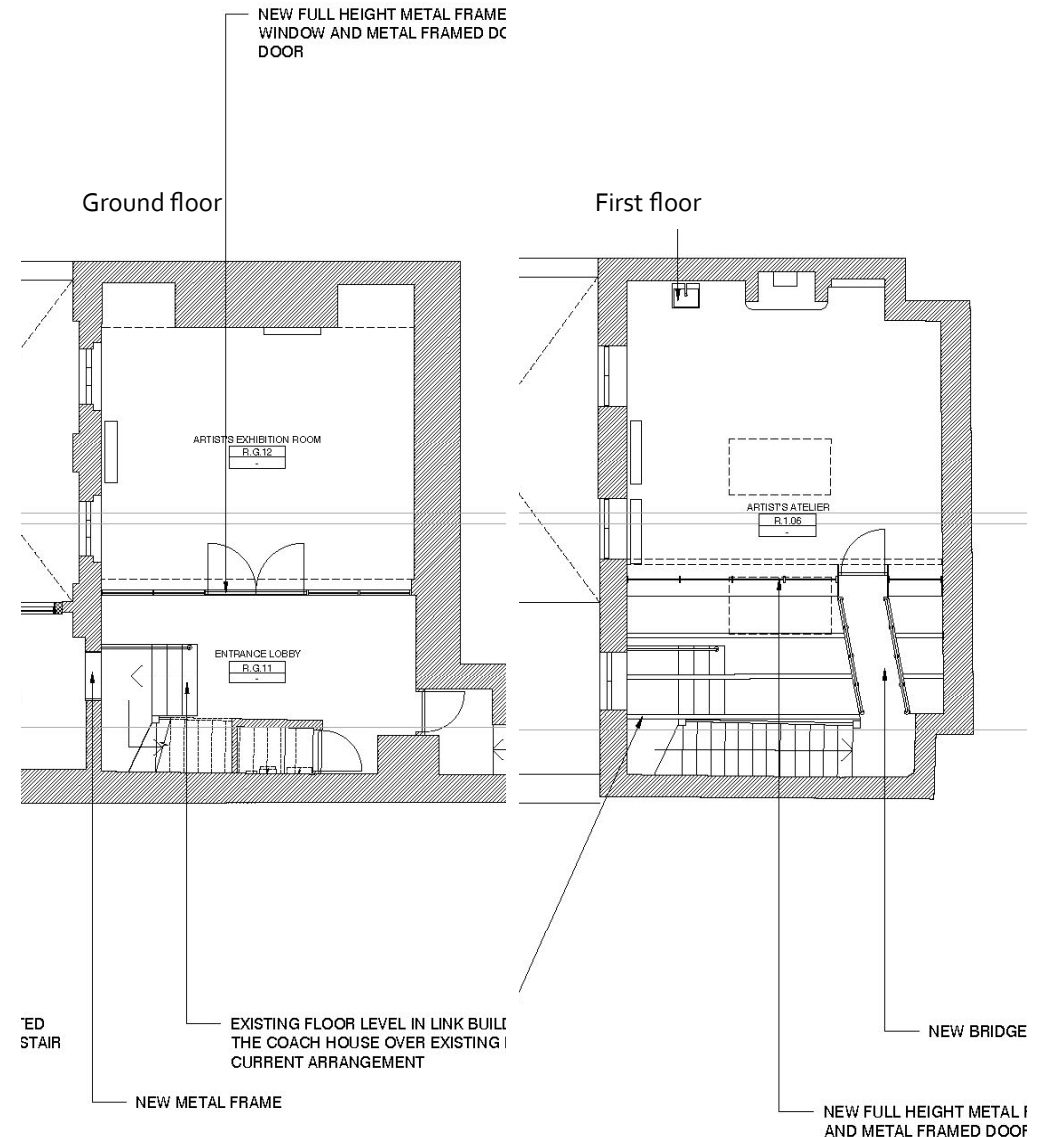
Proposed plan

3.10 As part of the design strategy, and to improve the visual connection of the main spaces at basement level, the proposals include the introduction of a series of full height glazed panels.

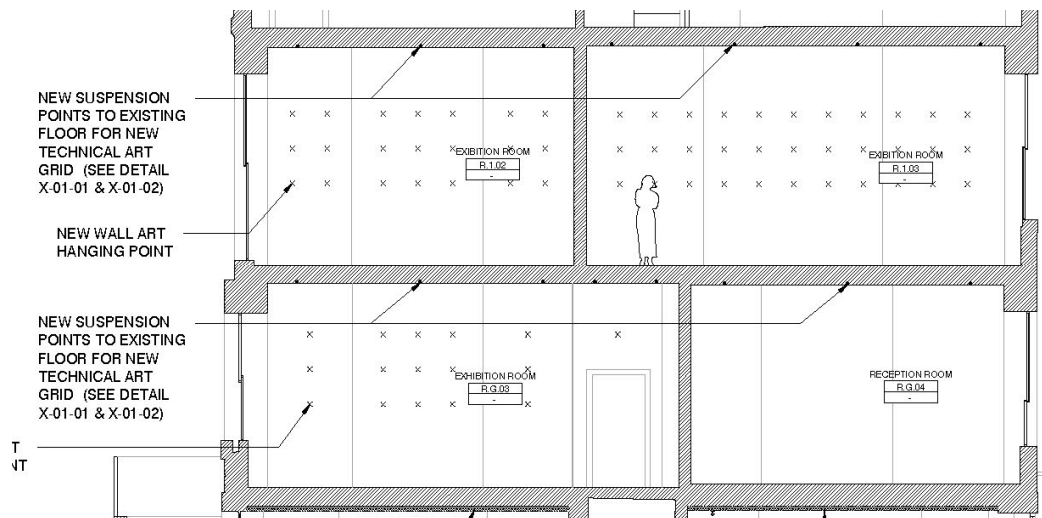
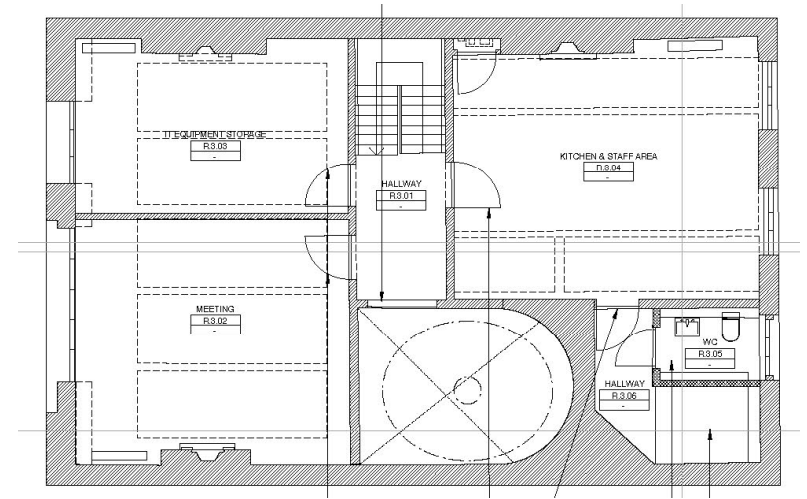
- The recent door in the rear wall of the front basement room would be removed and a glazed door inserted.
- An equivalent opening would be formed in the wall to the rear room of the original building and a glazed door inserted.
- The existing window opening in the rear wall opposite these appears to have extended to ground level at some stage in the past. It is proposed that this is reinstated and a glazed panel introduced here.
- The two doors at each end of the current passageway would also be changed to fully glazed panels.
- Collectively, they would provide a visual link through basement level to each of the principal spaces and courtyards and in addition, let more natural daylight into the rooms.



- 3.11 The location of the lift at first floor level means that the space, originally part of the closet wing, would no longer be physically accessible. The intention is to remove the floor of the closet wing at first floor level and then introduce a rooflight at in the existing lead roof located at second floor level, hidden behind the existing brick parapet walls.
- 3.12 The lift passes through the existing toilet accommodation at mezzanine level accessed directly off the stairs at half way between first and second floor levels. This requires the re-planning of the remaining area to form a small storeroom.
- 3.13 The intention is to provide studio, workshop and exhibition space for a revolving 'artist in residence' to be located in the rear outbuilding. To visually connect the spaces, but provide a level of privacy, a new glazed screen is proposed to replace the existing recent stud partitions at both ground and first floor levels. These would generally be on the line of the existing ground floor level partition.
- 3.14 The existing first floor structure at this end of the building has been substantially amended in relatively recent works and again in 1998 when the existing timber stair was introduced. To enable the visual connection between these to artists spaces the proposal is to remove the floor boarding and plaster ceiling between the existing stair and the line of the new glazed screens leaving the existing floor structure exposed. A bridge would then be constructed between the top landing of the existing stair and the retained first floor studio.



- 3.15 The lift requires a safety over run space. The lift is to stop at second floor level. The lift over run however will project through third floor level by some 450-500mm. This entails a reconfiguration of the existing toilet accommodation at this level. The top of the lift shaft will be designed as a floor and the space used for general storage.
- 3.16 The existing modern ceiling light fittings in the main rooms at basement, ground and first floors will be removed and will be replaced by a suspended lighting and power grid that requires minimal suspension points at ceiling level. This will allow light fittings to be moved or power fed to suit a particular exhibition. The number will not be dissimilar to those that exist at present and will be formed using threaded rod fixed to plates located within the depth of the new floor finishes that overlay the existing floor boarding.
- 3.17 To avoid the need to relocate picture or sculpture suspension points on walls, the proposal is to insert a grid of small, discrete peg fixings into the masonry walls which would then have the capacity to support or hang a full range of artworks.



U.d.p.

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Williams Architecture

4th November 2024