

HERITAGE STATEMENT
FOR
THE PHILIPS BUILDING
THORNHAUGH STREET
LONDON
WC1H 0XG
ON BEHALF OF
THE SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



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Date: 24 May 2012

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Job No: 120342-850



HERITAGE STATEMENT

CONTENTS

1.00	INTRODUCTION
2.00	PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 5
3.00	THE BUILDING AND ITS HERITAGE
4.00	THE PROPOSED WORKS
5.00	THE PRINCIPLES AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED WORKS
6.00	THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS
7.00	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
APPENDIX A	PHOTOGRAPHS
APPENDIX B	DRAWINGS
APPENDIX C	BIBLIOGRAPHY



HERITAGE STATEMENT

1.00 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of a listed building consent application, which is submitted by Kendall Kingscott Ltd on behalf of The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which is part of the University of London. The application relates to the Philips Building which is located on Thornhaugh Street and is a grade II* listed building.

This statement comprises a review of the building and its heritage, the principles and justification for the proposed works, what works are proposed and the impact that the works will have on the existing fabric.

This application relates to the proposed second floor office sub-division and refurbishment works to two of the fifth floor teaching rooms and one room on the lower ground floor. The office sub division works will include the installation of new partition walls to be erected in existing larger office rooms to provide smaller rooms to be used as academic offices. These offices are located off a corridor on the second floor and as such are not accessed or visible from the library. The works are to include the creation of one new opening from the corridor and the closing off of four openings between rooms. With regards to the fifth floor and lower ground works to teaching rooms it is proposed to remove the existing interlocking hidden grid suspended ceiling tiles and replace with a new metal furring (MF) plaster board ceiling system as is common through out the fifth floor of the building.





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2.00 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 5

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 : Planning for the Historic Environment was published in March 2010 by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The document sets out the Government's overarching objective is that "the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of the life they bring to this and future generations" (DCLG, 2010).

The document states that "to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions concerning the historic environment recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term" (DCLG, 2010).

As part of formulating this Heritage statement guidance has been obtained from PPS 5 and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide as produced by English Heritage et al.

3.00 THE BUILDING AND ITS HERITAGE

Located on Thornhaugh Street just off of Russell Square is the SOAS Philips Building. The building was listed as Grade II* listed on 20 May 2011 with the following information as the buildings listed description which has been obtained from the Camden Council web site.

"University Library for the School of Oriental and African Studies. It was commissioned in 1960, full planning approval was granted in 1968, the contract began in 1970 and the building was completed in May 1973. Denys Lasdun for London University. Reasons for Designation The Philips Building at SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, a university library completed in 1973 to designs by Denys Lasdun, is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest: while relatively little-known, this pavilion library is one of the most powerful library designs of the post-war period, also of interest for being a work of this major post-war architect * Interior quality: the main library space is remarkable. Through a complex structure of terraces, a skilful employment of natural light via a concrete diagrid ceiling and good-quality finishes throughout, Lasdun created a dramatic and memorable learning environment * Planning: a manifestation of the continuous teaching building which Lasdun successfully explored; it pre-dates his designated University of East Anglia; and also managed to make an architectural set piece out of what was a truncated scheme * Group value: the library groups well with the Grade II Holden building it was built to serve, the Grade II late-C18 terraces of Woburn square (glimpses of which are caught from the impressive windows of the library); and Lasdun's own Grade II* Institute of Education, the striking massing and materials of which it emulates History The Philips Building at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) has its origins in the London University spinal development plan of 1959, devised by the renowned LCC architects Sir Leslie Martin and Trevor Dannatt. It was Martin who recommended Denys Lasdun (1914-2002) as the architect for the new buildings at SOAS which were to form part of the development of the central area of the University's Bloomsbury site. The University had moved its principal headquarters (at Charles Holden's iconic Senate House, now designated Grade II*) and some of the smaller institutes, such as SOAS, to Bloomsbury in the 1930s although the war prevented implementation of the ambitious (and forbidding) masterplan that would have marched a linear spine of buildings north through Bloomsbury. SOAS was established in Finsbury Circus in order to train people working in Asia



HERITAGE STATEMENT

and Africa, and it received its London University Charter in 1913. Its original building was housed in the building of 1940, purpose-built also by Holden to hold what was by then a well-established school. This building was designated at Grade II just 29 years after it was built. Lasdun accepted the commission for the SOAS library in 1960 and full planning approval was granted in 1968. The chosen site, to the north of the Holden building, infringed on the small but well-formed Woburn Square. This prompted a conservation fight of the type emerging in London at this time. It was long enough after the war for Londoners to have views on what should be preserved in the face of new building, and students, faculty and local residents protested the demolition of the increasingly-appreciated Georgian town houses. A London University Special Committee narrowly rejected the calls to preserve the square and demolition began in July 1969. The building contract officially began in January 1970 and was completed in May 1973. Lasdun's design changed the concept that Martin and Dannatt had promoted in their master plan for the site. This resulted from his brief to create more pedestrian areas, as well as being a response to the truncated nature of the scheme when financial and conservation issues emerged. He implemented the envisioned dominant 'spine' in his impressive Institute of Education (to the east along Bedford Way, and designated Grade II*) and instead turned the library into a distinct 'pavilion' that formed part of a new pedestrianised square. The library was designed at about the same time as the library in his major scheme for the University of East Anglia (UEA). Denys Lasdun is one of the most distinctive and creative of post-war architects. He is one of the few to have begun practicing before WWII, when he worked for Wells Coates, and after a distinguished military service he joined Lubetkin and Tecton, and Fry and Drew, before establishing his own practice in 1960 when his own style emerged. This was a synthesis of 1930's modernism with a strong horizontality derived from Frank Lloyd Wright (whose planning he came to admire in the 1950s) and an interest in expressing services that makes for comparison with another American architect, Louis Kahn. Perhaps of all British architects, Lasdun's work best demonstrates the cool, four-square and intellectually rigorous qualities of Kahn's work. Most of Lasdun's surviving buildings in England are now designated, many at high grades, such as the Royal College of Physicians at Grade I, and the nearby London University Institute of Education, the UEA Ziggurats, Keeling House and the National Theatre at Grade II*. Details MATERIALS: A reinforced concrete frame of in situ concrete and interlocking structural pre-cast concrete panels with a white cement and Ballidon limestone aggregate mix, with a grit-basted finish. The windows are mostly horizontal sliding sashes with aluminium and bronze anodised finish, set back from the precast panels. EXTERIOR: The Philips Building closes the southern end of Woburn Square, and the leafy trees and late-Georgian terraces were intended to be glimpsed from the building. It is essentially a library, built to house its collection of then half a million books (now grown to over a million), also with teaching rooms and offices. The eight-storey building does not have its own external ceremonial entrance, which was always through the listed Holden block. The roofs are flat, with a series of diagonally-arranged north-facing roof lights, hidden from the outside. The central library dominates and projects on three floors with a set-back range of academic offices and classrooms (totalling 220 separate rooms) above. Each of the facades of this square, pavilion-plan building has nine bays and there are set-back corners on the four lower storeys. The ground floor formerly had projecting balconies, or terraces, but these were glazed in on the north and east elevations around 2007 (also by John McAslan and Partners, and apparently with the blessing of Lasdun, before he died). A service moat around the building provides light to the basement levels and a delivery entrance on the west side. INTERIOR: The set piece is the central, top-lit library. This features three levels of concrete-fronted balconies and natural light comes in through a diagonally-set grid of slender concrete ceiling beams. On the lower floors, rooms lead off to provide study and tutorial space within the library, and computer areas to which the centre of the lower level is now dedicated. Reading areas extend into the former terraces, which are now part of the library's interior, and include a mezzanine level divided by concrete fins. There are other concrete partitions within the stacks that frame openings while supporting the floors. Two original concrete book counters survive: the book issue counter on the lower level of the



HERITAGE STATEMENT

library, and the book return counter, now isolated in a room on the ground floor. The original model for the building is housed in a case in the basement. The main, full-height library stair has a concrete parapet with metal tubular hand rail (currently painted red, but original colour to be confirmed). The concrete here, and in the main stair outside the library, which is nestled into a concrete service core, has a fair-faced horizontal close boarded finish. A further stair from the ground floor down was added near the lifts by John McAslan and Partners around 2000. The upper corridors, which wrap around the central library, largely retain the simple grooved tim." (Camden Council).

Situated within the Bloomsbury area the Philips Building is situated to the north of Senate House, with Birkbeck College to the west and Russell Square to the east.

The Philips Building was designed by Sir Denys Lasden, a eminent English architect, known best for his work designing the Royal National Theatre.

4.00 THE PROPOSED WORKS

4.01 Proposed Second Floor Office Sub-Division

SOAS have identified that they require more academic office space and as such are proposing to sub-divide existing offices into smaller academic offices.

The works are to consist of:

- The construction of new MF stud partition walls.
- The closing down of 4 no redundant openings between rooms.
- The creation of a new opening from the corridor into the proposed new office.

The installation of new MF stud partitions will allow the creation of the proposed sub-divided offices. It is proposed to use 75mm metal studs centred at 600mm with metal stud head and sole plates. It is proposed to fix plywood sheeting to both faces and then fix plasterboard. It is the intention that all finishes are to match the existing finishes.

Where openings are to be closed in walls these are in concrete blockwork and it is proposed to use dense concrete blockwork to block up these openings. It is proposed to have two coats of plaster with a skim finish to marry in with the adjoining plaster work.

The proposed new opening is to made through a dense concrete blockwork wall and not through part of the concrete structure. Works are to be carried out in accordance with all structural engineers instructions and it is to be finished to match the other openings along the corridor.

4.02 Proposed Teaching Room Refurbishments

As part of the teaching room refurbishments it is proposed to remove the existing interlocking hidden grid suspended ceiling tile ceilings and replace them for MF plaster boarded ceiling system.

It is also proposed as many of the tiles have deteriorated over time and many are water damaged. It is proposed to use a MF Plaster board ceiling to match the other teaching rooms within the Philips Building fifth floor.



HERITAGE STATEMENT

These proposed works are to be carried out within rooms 559 and 563 on the fifth floor and to room L67 on the lower ground floor.

5.00 THE PRINCIPLES AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED WORKS

Justification for the proposed works can be briefly summed up by stating that the works are to be carried out to meet the changing demands of the University, which the building was built and designed to be. We do not feel that any of the works will compromise the importance of this heritage asset.

6.00 THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

The impact on the historical significance of the building will be extremely limited by the proposed works. In terms of visual impact all works are to be undertaken and finished in a 'like for like' basis and as such will have minimal visual impact. In respect of the proposed use of MF partition walls it would be possible to revert rooms back to their original status should this be required at a latter date with minimum disruption to the existing finishes.

7.00 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

All of the proposed works take into account the principles set out within PPG5 and fully consider the impact of the proposals to the building in terms of the impact to the significance of the heritage and the appearance of the building in terms of context with adjacent buildings.

The proposed works will not impact on the buildings important significance.



APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPHS



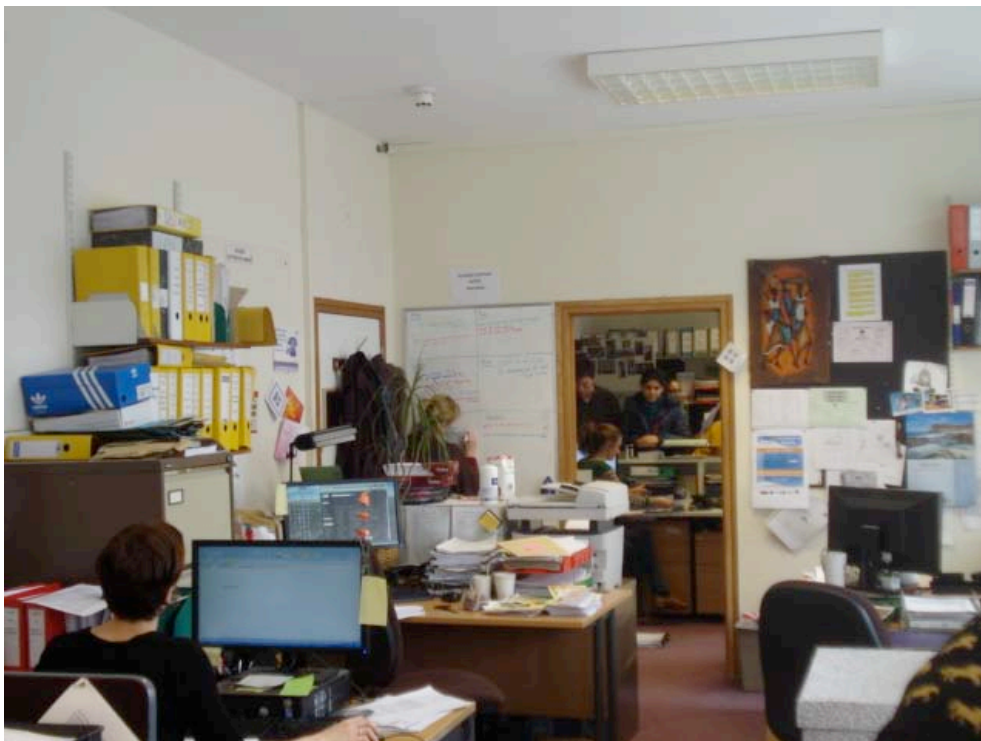
Photograph 01 – The Philips Building.



Photograph 02 – Existing suspended ceiling to be replaced with new plasterboard ceiling.



Photograph 03 – Suspended ceiling in L67 to be replaced for plaster boarded ceiling.



Photograph 04 – 2nd Floor Office with opening to be blocked up.



Photograph 05 – 2nd Floor Corridor where proposed new opening is to be formed.



Photograph 06 – Existing 2nd Floor academic office.



APPENDIX B

DRAWINGS

Site Address:-
The Philips Building,
School of Oriental and African Studies,
London,
WC1B 5EA

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APPLICATION SITE

ADJOINING LAND OWNED BY
APPLICANT

Project
SOAS – REFURBISHMENT &
OFFICE SUB-DIVISION

Client
SOAS

Drawing Title
SITE PLAN

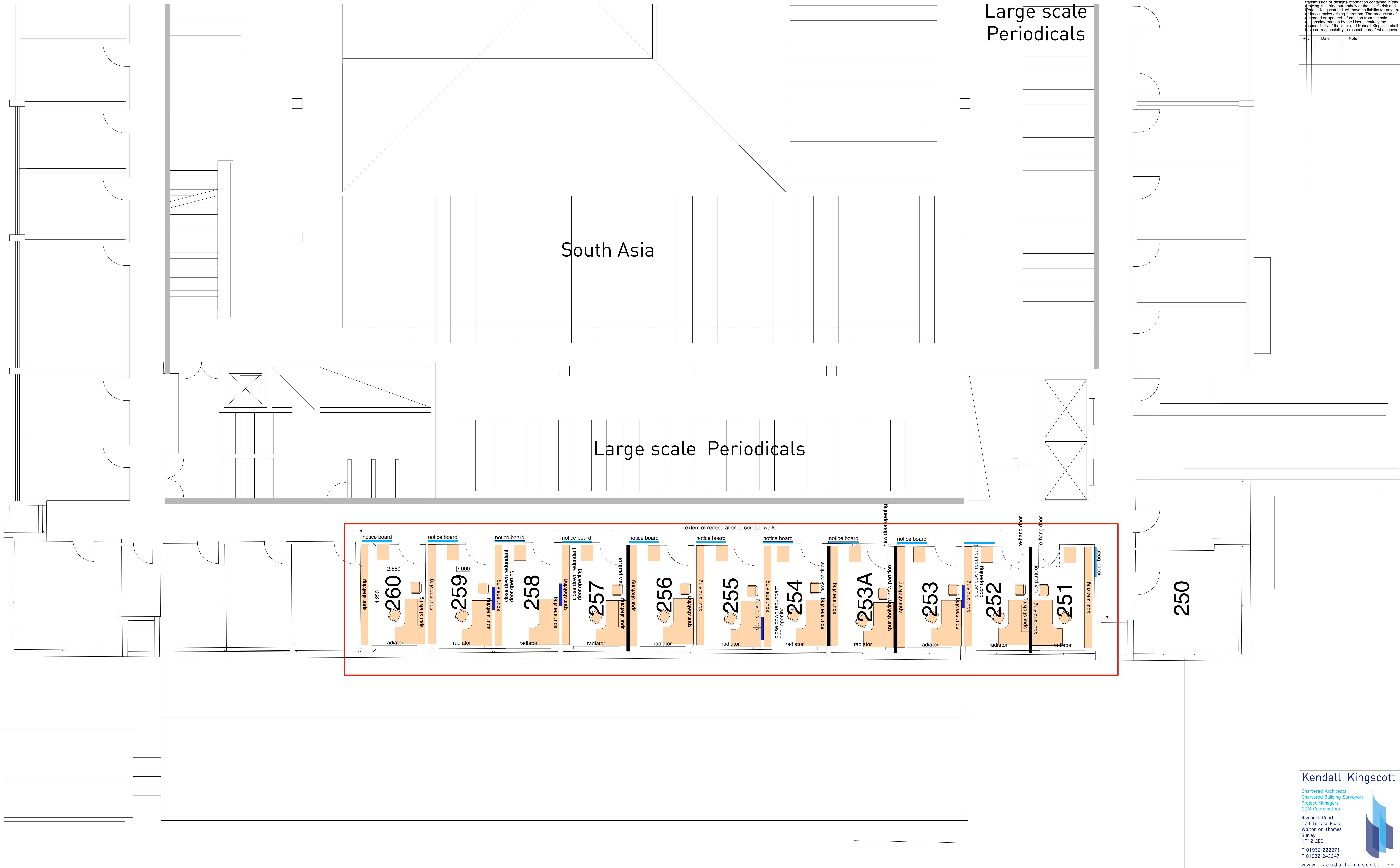
PHILIPS BUILDING

CAD Ref:1

Status

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Date MAY 2012 Checked GC



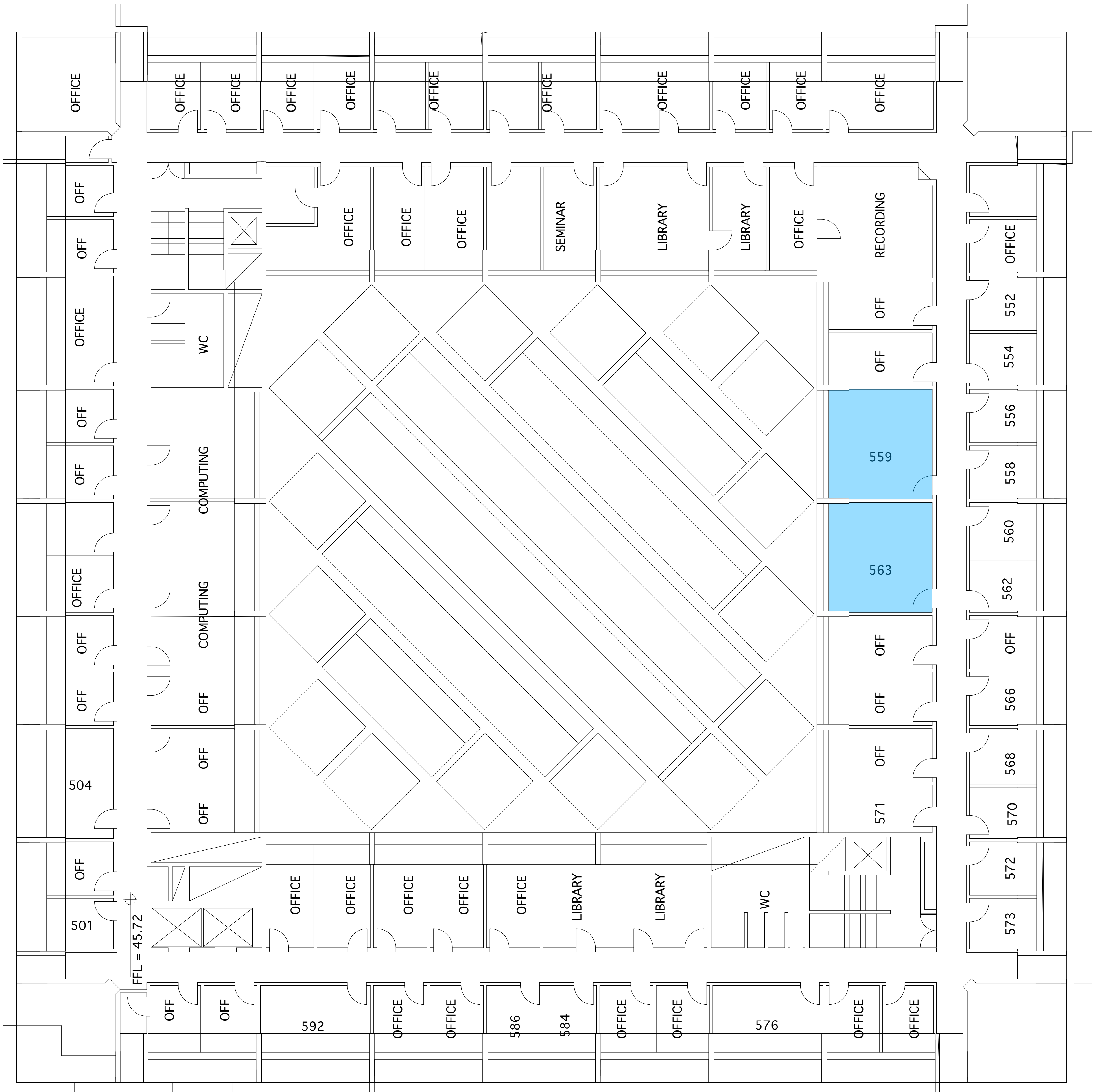
- OPENING TO BE BLOCKED IN
- NEW METAL FURRING STUD WALL

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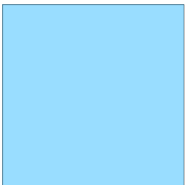


Project SOAS - Summer Moves	
Client Second Floor Philips Building	
Drawing Title Proposed Arrangement Plan	
CAD Ref: 1	Status
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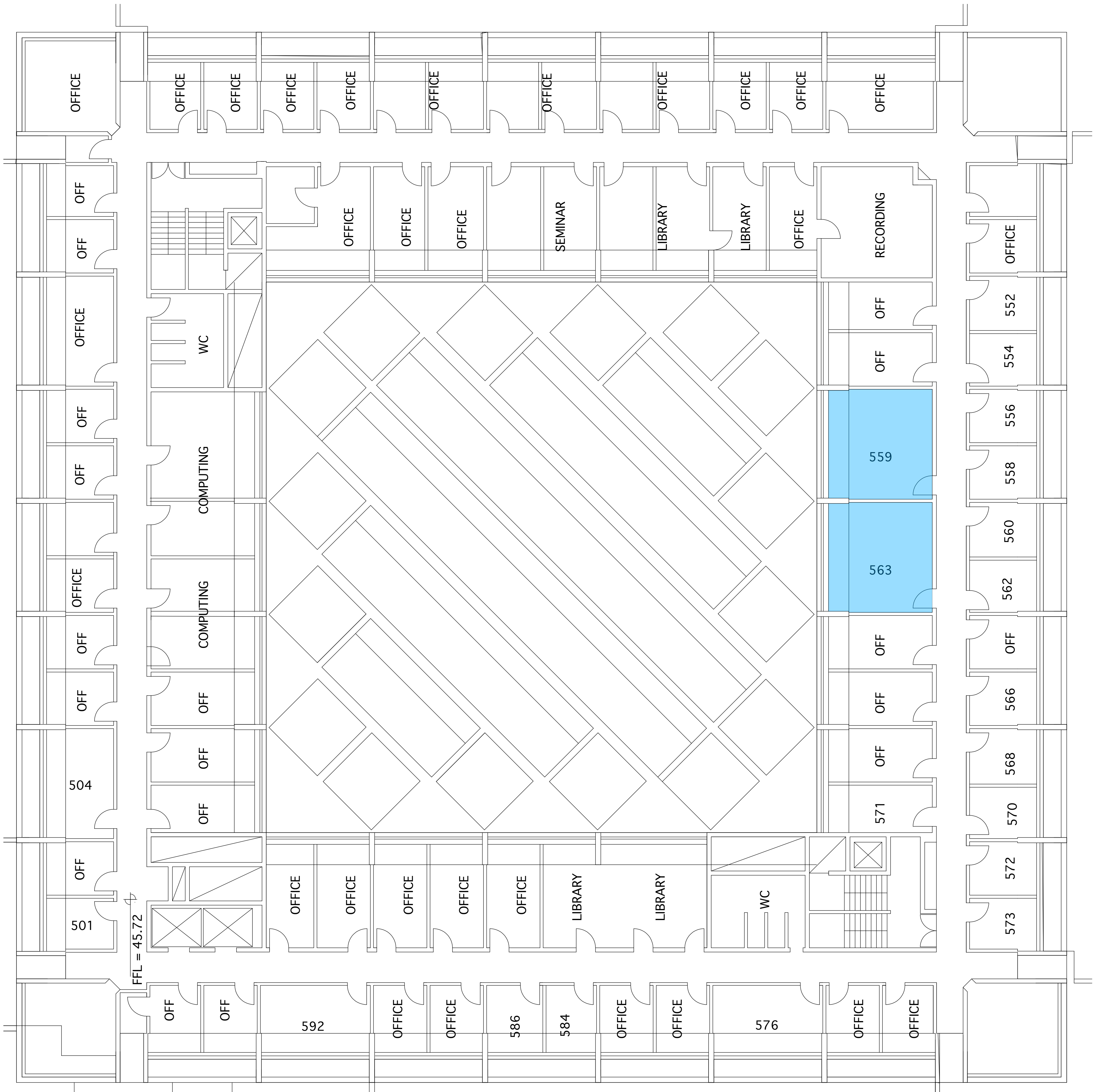
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SOAS

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LAYOUT
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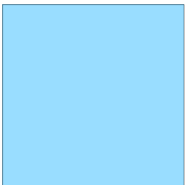
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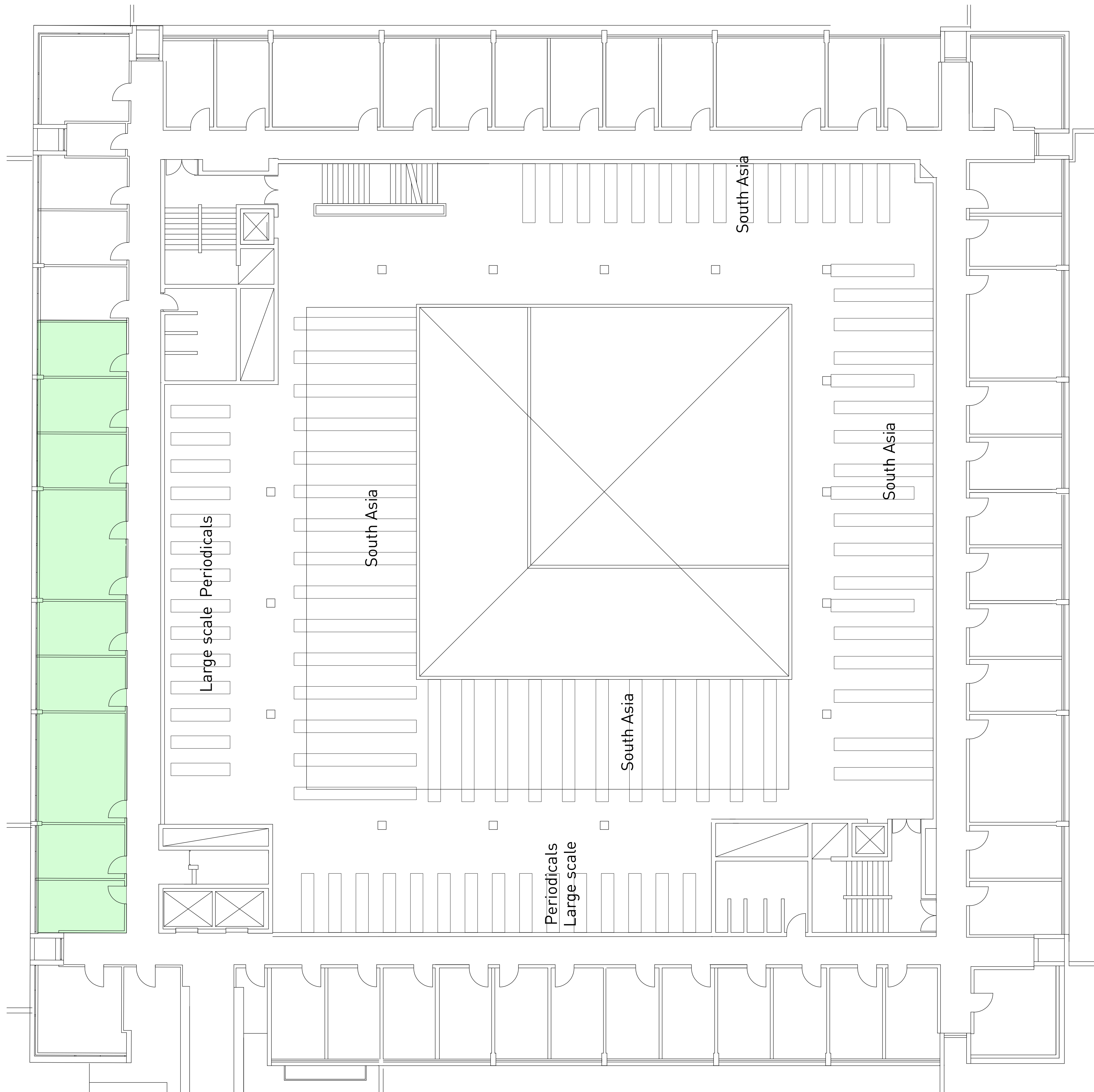
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LAYOUT
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Drawing Title
LAYOUT
2nd Floor

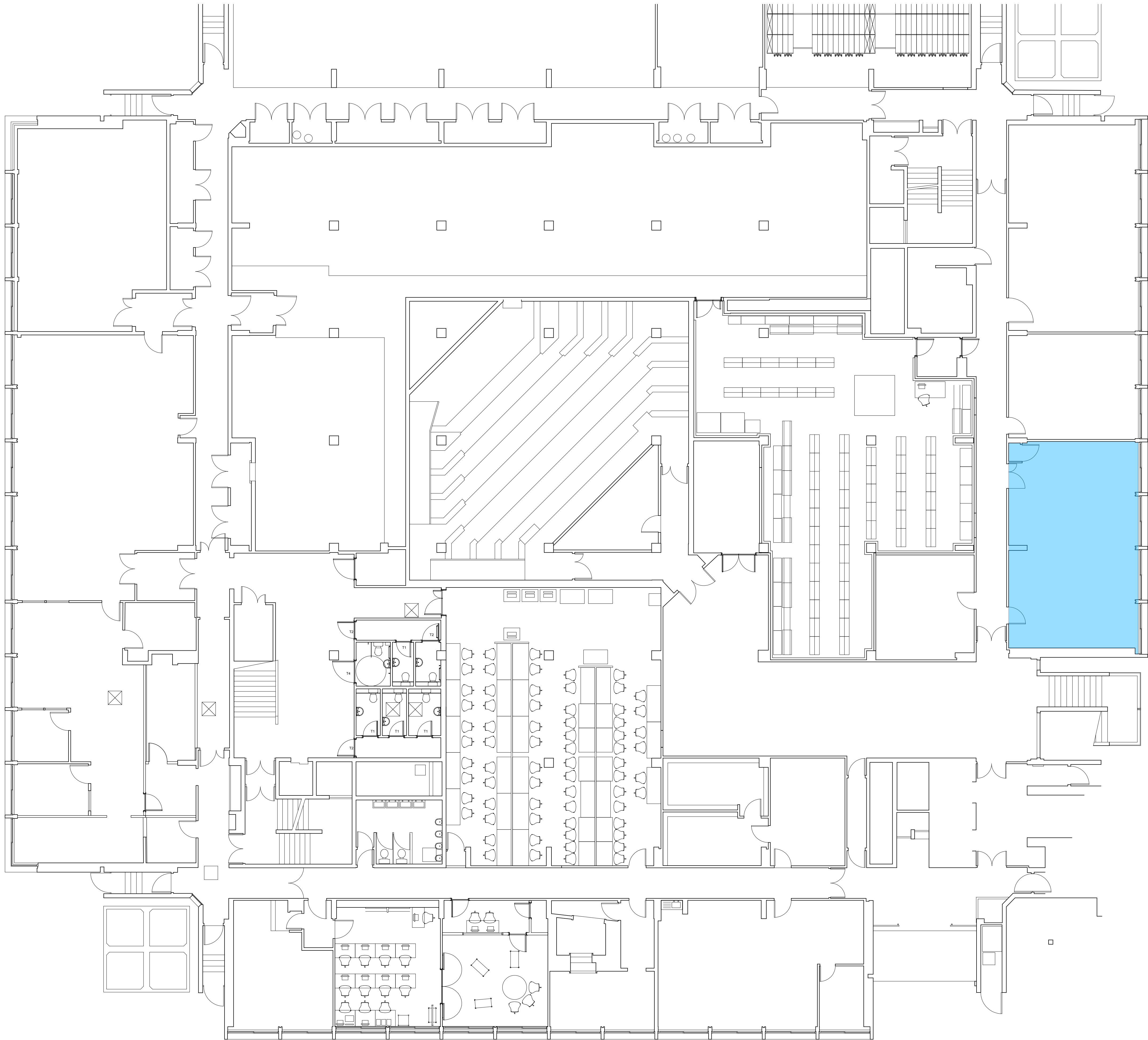
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Client
SOAS

Drawing Title
LAYOUT
Lower Ground Floor

CAD Ref: 1 Status
AS DRAWING NO. PRELIMINARY

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APPENDIX C

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