

The  
Heritage  
Practice

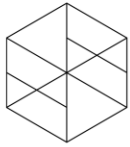
10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL  
+44 (0)20 3871 2951  
www.theheritagepractice.com  
info@theheritagepractice.com

Heritage Appraisal Addendum – Internal Wall Insulation

The Former Italian Hospital,  
Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AJ

July 2018





## 1 Introduction

1.1 A full Heritage Appraisal was prepared and submitted in support of applications for listed building consent and planning permission relating to the former Italian Hospital, Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AJ (application references: 2017/3938/L and 2017/3933/P). The former Italian Hospital is a grade II listed building.

1.2 Since the submission of these applications, an addendum to the Heritage Appraisal was requested by LB Camden to set out the effects of internal wall insulation on the significance and special interest of the listed building. A condition was subsequently applied to the decision notice in relation to 2017/3938/L. The condition stated that:

*'Notwithstanding the approved drawings and supporting information, details of proposed internal wall insulation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include 1:10 plan and section drawings showing typical window details to cover each type of window design present within the building and shall demonstrate how any historically significant cill moulding details will be preserved as part of the work.'*

1.3 An S.73 application is now being made to remove this condition. The reason for this are set out in the cover letter and essentially relate to the fact that it is not possible to create a continuous thermal envelope in the way prescribed and it is not possible to preserve historically cill moulding details as part of the work (even if cill alteration was acceptable, changes here would still represent a technically incomplete solution for reasons set out in the cover letter).

1.4 Internal wall insulation did not form part of the original proposals for the site. As originally submitted, the proposals allowed for insulation above the existing roof structure. This was focussed particularly to the Boswell Street range of the building where the roof was replaced in the 1980s and the existing mansard is modern. The

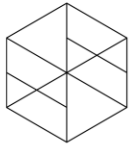
proposal allowed for the raising of the mansard by 450mm to allow for the additional insulation build up. This was considered to be the least intrusive way of insulating the listed building (given that the mansard is a non-original feature). The need to insulate the building is driven by the requirement to achieve certain U-values as set by UK Building Regulations.

1.5 The raising of the mansard by 450mm was considered to be unacceptable by LB Camden. It was requested that internal and/or external wall insulation be considered to see whether gains can be made in respect of the building's external envelop to offset any potential underachievement of U-Values of roof insulation inside the existing roof construction.

1.6 As set out in an email from LB Camden to Sonnemann Toon Architects on 10 August 2017, 'Internal wall insulation is usually not acceptable within listed buildings due to the harm caused to historic interiors/character.' The email went on to say that 'its installation to many of the perimeter walls at the Italian Hospital may be acceptable, given the 1990s alterations and the generally plain finishes to most internal walls (with the exception of the chapel/main stairwell). There may be a need for more sensitivity within the most historic part of the buildings (towards the front facing onto Queen Square).

1.7 LB Camden explained that 'It is important for us to be confident that internal wall insulation won't affect any area of significance, which is why we have asked for an addendum to the Heritage Appraisal to assess its appropriateness across the different areas of the building. A typical detail to demonstrate how this would be detailed around window reveals/sills would also be welcomed.'

1.8 With this in mind, the following addendum was prepared to explain the approach that would need to be taken in respect of internal wall insulation and sets out the likely effect on the significance of the listed building. Although the addendum concluded that internal wall insulation would harm the significance of the listed building,



condition 5 was still applied. Subsequent work to explore the potential for wall insulation has ultimately concluded that it cannot be reasonably and successfully incorporated into the building without there being significant weaknesses that outweigh potential benefits from a sustainability point of view and that the listed building's significance and special interest would be harmed.

## 2 Proposed approach

2.1 At application stage, the proposals allowed for the introduction of insulation where there are new walls and where there is new tile hanging to the courtyard façade. External wall insulation to existing external walls was effectively ruled out as there are only minimal areas of rendered walls to the ground floor courtyard (the rest being in brickwork) and it was considered more appropriate to avoid the piecemeal application of external insulation.

2.2 With regard to insulating the internal face of the external walls of the building, it is understood that in order for such insulation to be effective a continuous thermal envelope is desirable. This means that no break is proposed in the insulation that would act as weak points and reduce the efficiency of the insulation as a whole. This means that insulation would need to return into window reveals and also be applied to internal walls.

2.3 The original Heritage Appraisal set out that the building was heavily altered during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that its special architectural and historic interest has consequently been diminished. The key spaces of the chapel and original stair were perhaps the last identifiable areas of interest within the building and despite later alterations at least retained a degree of integrity.

2.4 As original and legible areas of the building, the chapel and stair have been excluded from internal wall insulation proposals and this has been discussed previously with LB Camden.

2.5 The internal wall insulation would need to be applied to all levels of the building and would include windows and door openings and a minimal number of internal walls around the main stair.

2.6 It is estimated that the insulated plasterboards that would need to be applied to the walls affected would be no more than 100mm. Secondary glazing would be applied to the windows with associated insulation (appendix A shows a typical detail). Changes to the depth of the window sill boards will be required, the openings will be narrowed by 80mm and the reveals would become 80mm deeper. This would have a noticeable effect on the proportions of the existing building.

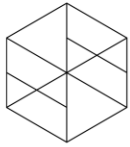
## 3 Effects of internal wall insulation

3.1 As noted above, it is not usual to see internal wall insulation applied to listed buildings because of the effect it can have spatially and also on more detailed elements such as windows, doors and other joinery. In a building of the size and scale of the hospital, ensuring improvements to U-values in this way will necessitate extensive works to external and internal walls at every level of the building.

3.2 The listed building in this case has been substantially altered internally and there appear to be new wall, ceiling and floor finishes throughout. In this regard, internal wall insulation would not necessarily effect or obscure decorative or special walls of architectural or historic interest. Doors, skirting and other details are modern replacements.

3.3 There are however windows within the building which are very much part of its character and which add to the historic and architectural interest of rooms and areas which are otherwise lacking in detail.

3.4 Dealing with the window openings in the way proposed will involve changes to the width of existing openings and the depth of



reveals. The window openings will become slightly narrower and the reveals slightly deeper to allow for the accommodation of insulated plasterboard. The building's windows are generally of large proportions and the effect of the insulation would be perceptible. The windows themselves would not be affected but evidently, there are a large number of window openings that would be affected. The intention would be for the internal wall insulation not to be perceptible when viewing the building externally, the most likely experience of changes to internal walls will be from within particular spaces and rooms inside the building.

#### **Effect to individual floors**

3.5 At basement level, internal wall insulation would have the least effect. The only external windows face onto Queen Square and the character of this level has been completely transformed through later alterations. Introducing internal wall insulation will have a low impact on the significance of the listed building, particularly as the interest of this area has already been substantially diminished.

3.6 At ground floor, insulation would be required again as a complete thermal envelope and would involve upgrading the whole of the original floor and proposed additions. As noted above, the main stair would be excluded. This upgrade would however be required to door and window openings. Internal wall insulation would clearly have an effect on window and door openings. The proposals would affect original features of the building.

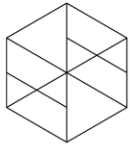
3.7 This similarly applies to upper levels of the original hospital building and its later extensions and additions. The existing third floor to the Boswell Street wing is not original and therefore there are no windows, openings or other features of historic interest that would be affected by the proposals. In this vein, there are other parts of the building's external envelope which are not original or are part of the proposed building's new structure (particularly in the area to the west of the main stair).

3.8 Therefore, internal wall insulation will have an impact on both original and later external walls. There would be no harmful affect caused by insulating later internal walls but the proposals to insulate the original external walls, adapting original window openings, will cause a level of harm to the listed building.

3.9 It is considered that this harm would be less than substantial in policy terms but it is an alteration not usually seen in listed buildings because of its known effects. There is the argument that the building has already been significantly altered to the point that internal wall insulation would have a negligible effect on its significance. Conversely however, steps have been taken by LB Camden during the pre-application and application processes to ensure that the significance of the much-altered existing building is not diminished further and this very much formed the basis of LB Camden's decision making. The internal wall insulation would have the effect of diminishing the significance of the listed building further.

3.10 National and local historic environment policy seeks to avoid causing harm to the significance of listed buildings. Proposals that do cause harm need to be justified and where necessary or appropriate, outweighed by public benefits. Although the effects of the proposals would cause less than substantial harm, they would clearly cause some harm to the original design concept of the building, manifested most clearly in its effects on window openings.

3.11 Environmental improvements via lower U-Values can be taken as a public benefit and in this regard, the sustainability improvements may be balanced against the level of harm caused to the existing building. The justification for the internal wall insulation is based on the policy need to improve the building's environmental performance and this is also in theory the resulting benefit. In practice, and as set out above, achieving such benefits are not technically possible.



The  
Heritage  
Practice

10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL  
+44 (0)20 3871 2951  
www.theheritagepractice.com  
info@theheritagepractice.com

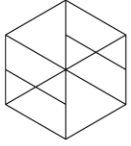
Heritage Appraisal Addendum – Internal Wall Insulation

The Former Italian Hospital,  
Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AJ

July 2018

---

3.12 Given that alterations to the modern mansard to Boswell Street have been ruled out by LB Camden, internal wall insulation had originally appeared to be the only logical option in this case. However, as a listed building, the former Italian Hospital could be exempted from the extensive and comparatively intrusive works that would be necessary in order to create the most efficient thermal envelope. Internal wall insulation would cause harm to the special interest of the listed building and therefore it makes good sense for the S.73 application to be granted in this case.



The  
Heritage  
Practice

10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL  
+44 (0)20 3871 2951  
www.theheritagepractice.com  
info@theheritagepractice.com

Heritage Appraisal Addendum – Internal Wall Insulation

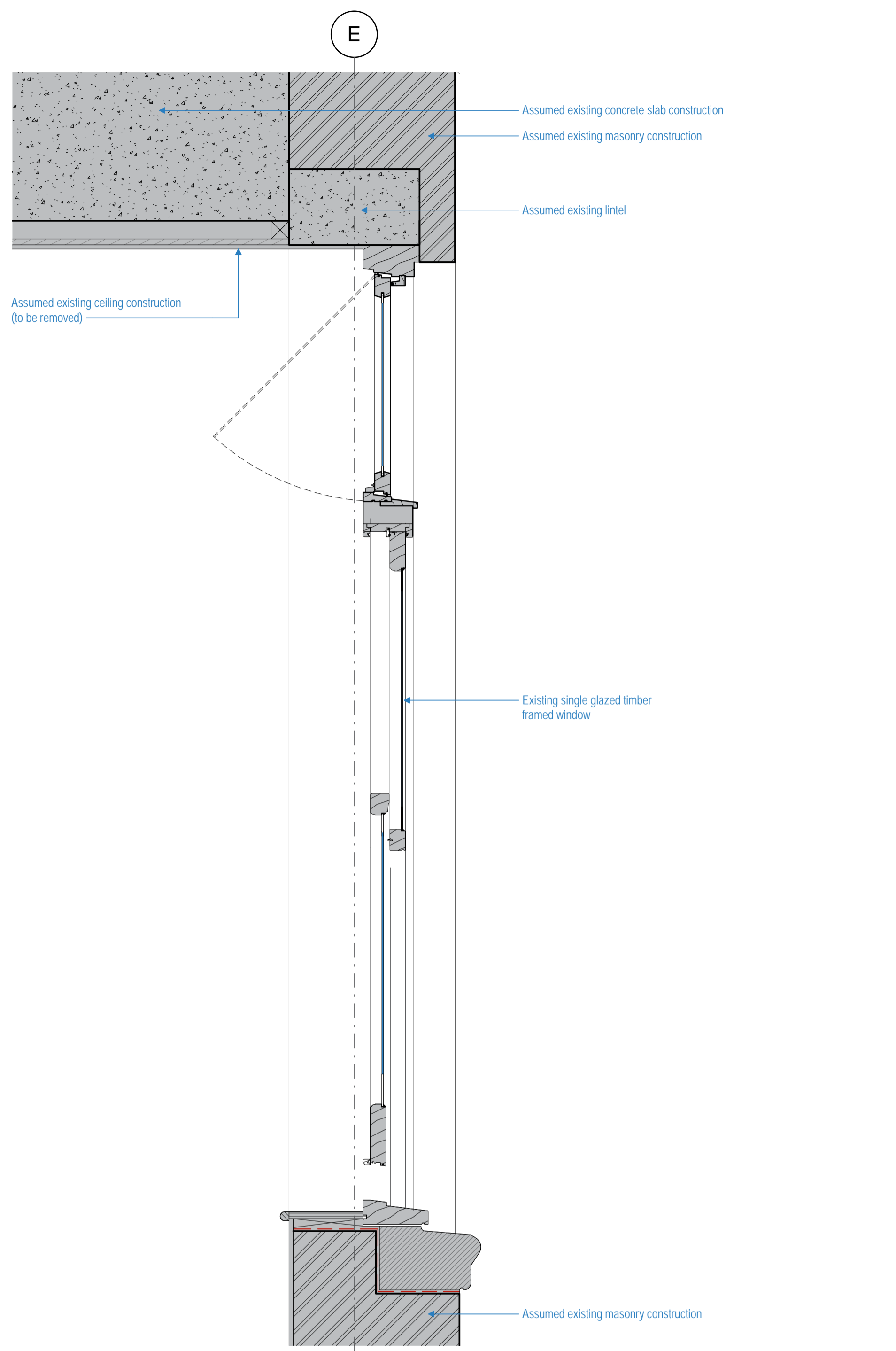
The Former Italian Hospital,  
Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AJ

July 2018

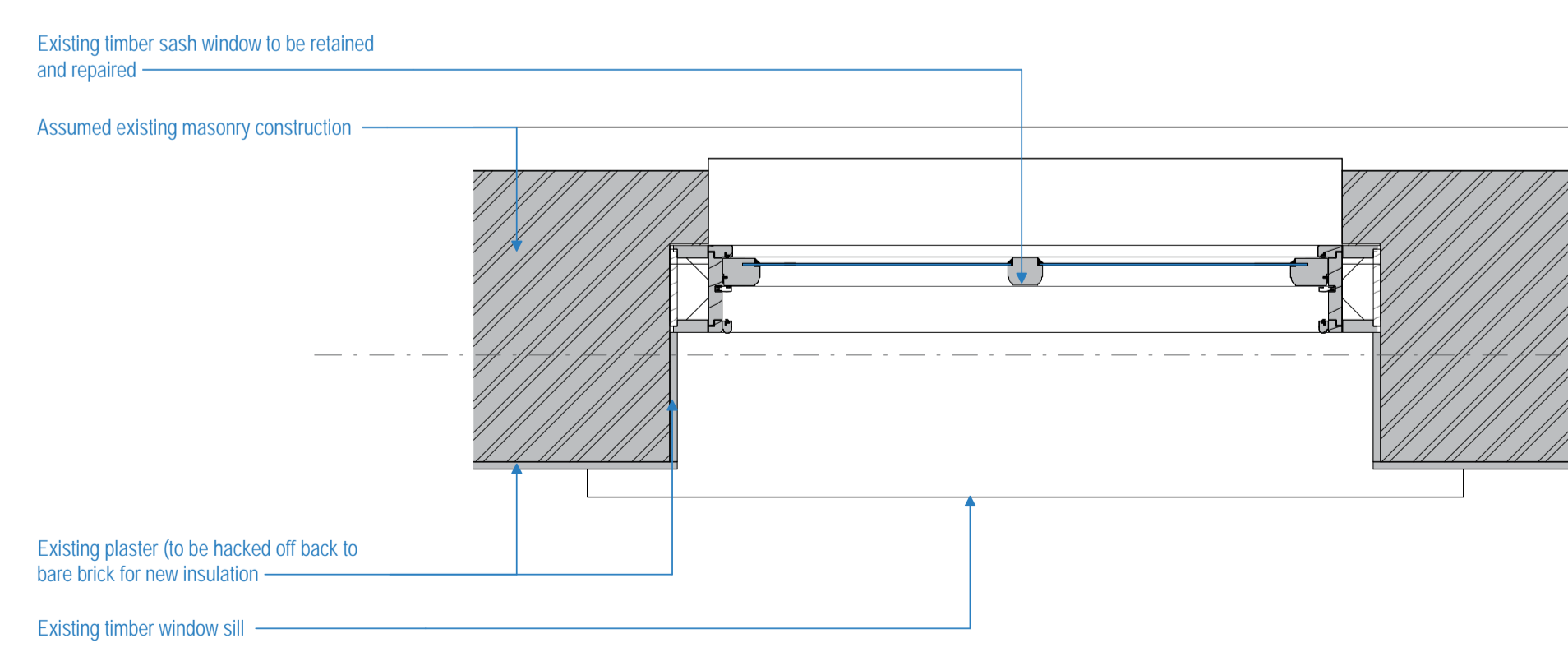
---

## Appendix A

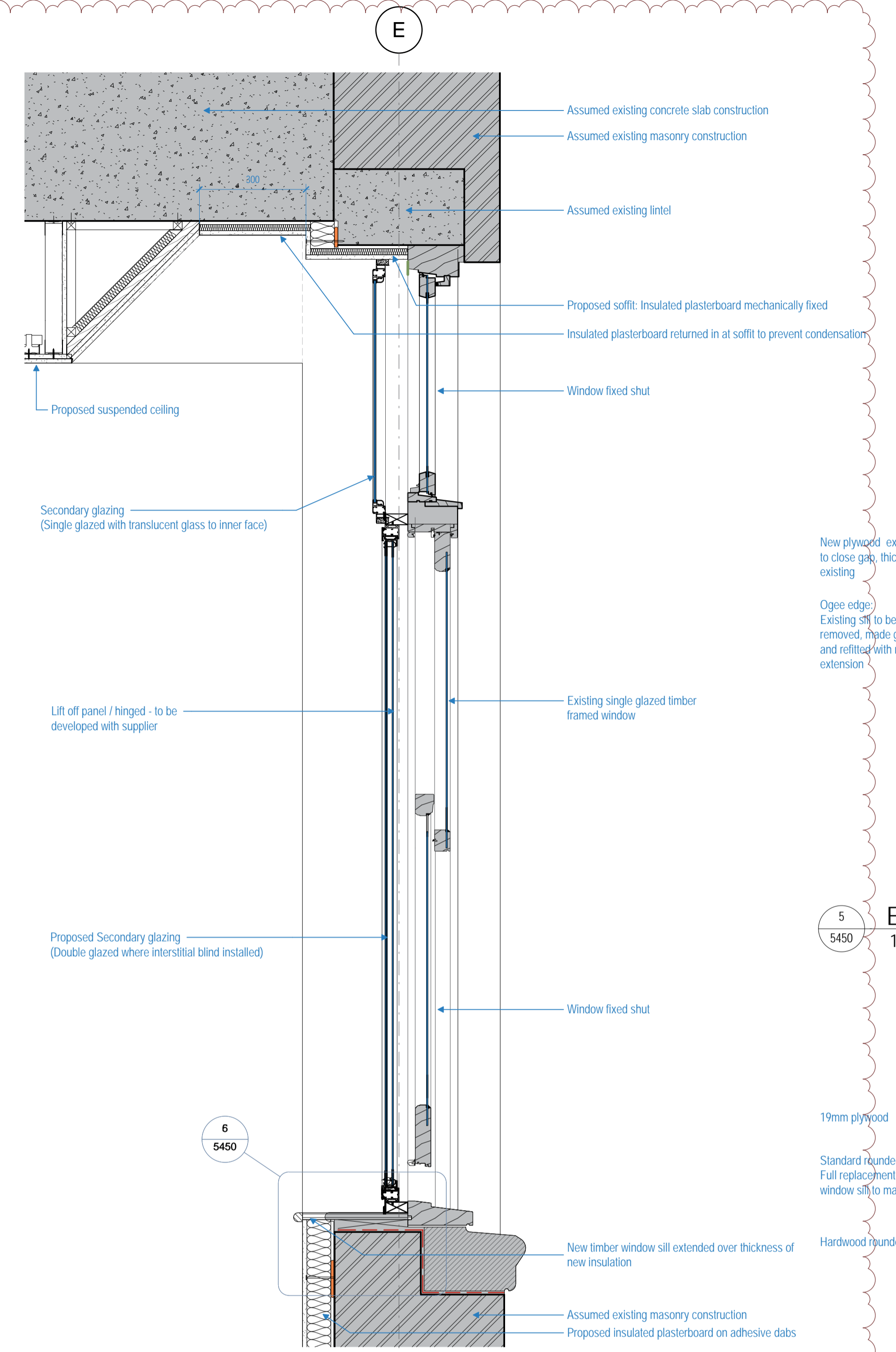
### Typical window detail



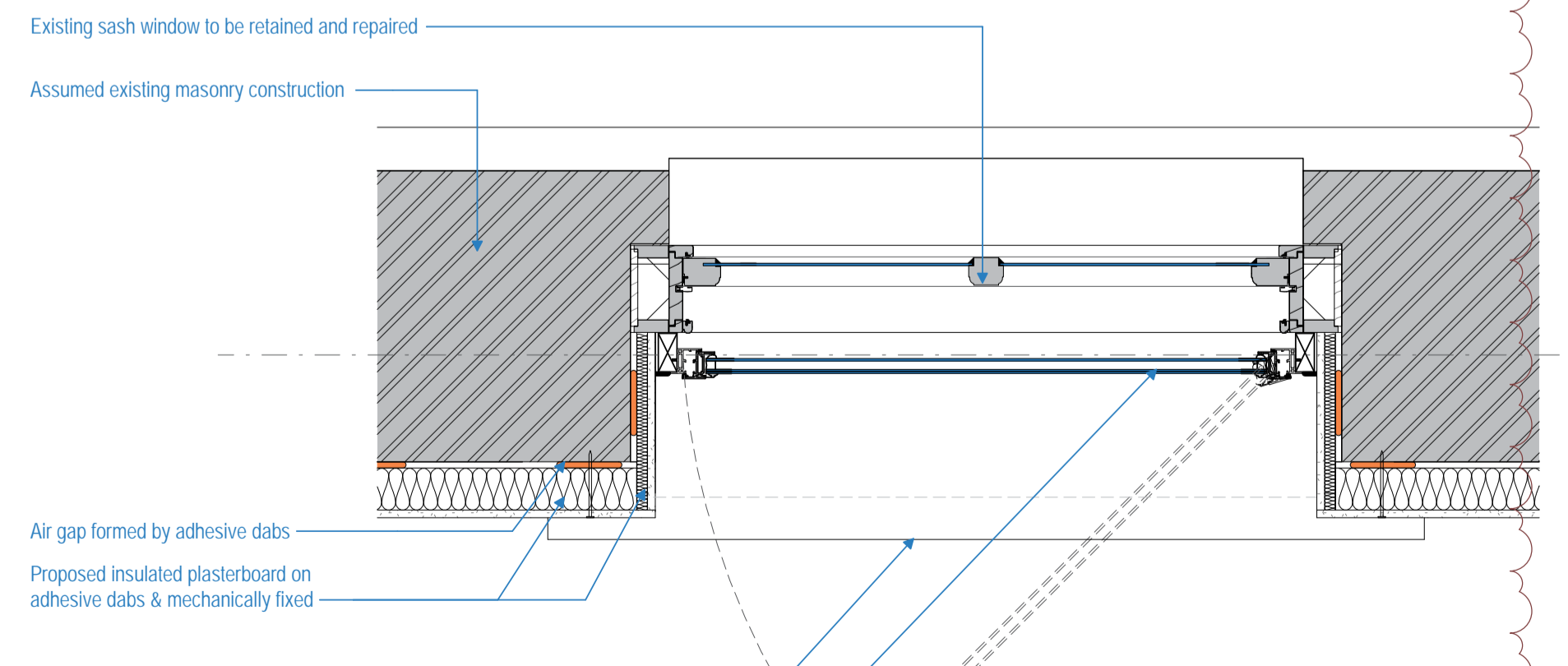
1  
5450  
Typical Existing Masonry Walls - Window Section  
1 : 10



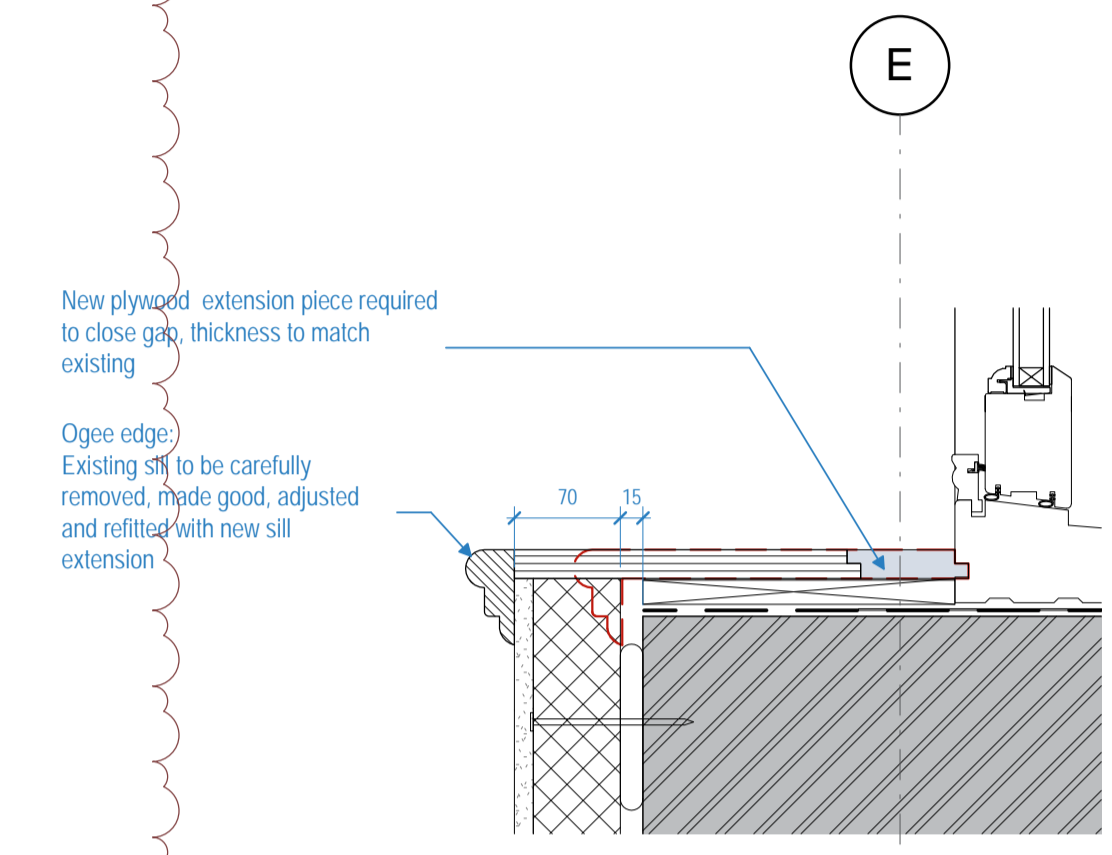
3  
5450  
Typical Existing Masonry Walls - Window Plan  
1 : 10



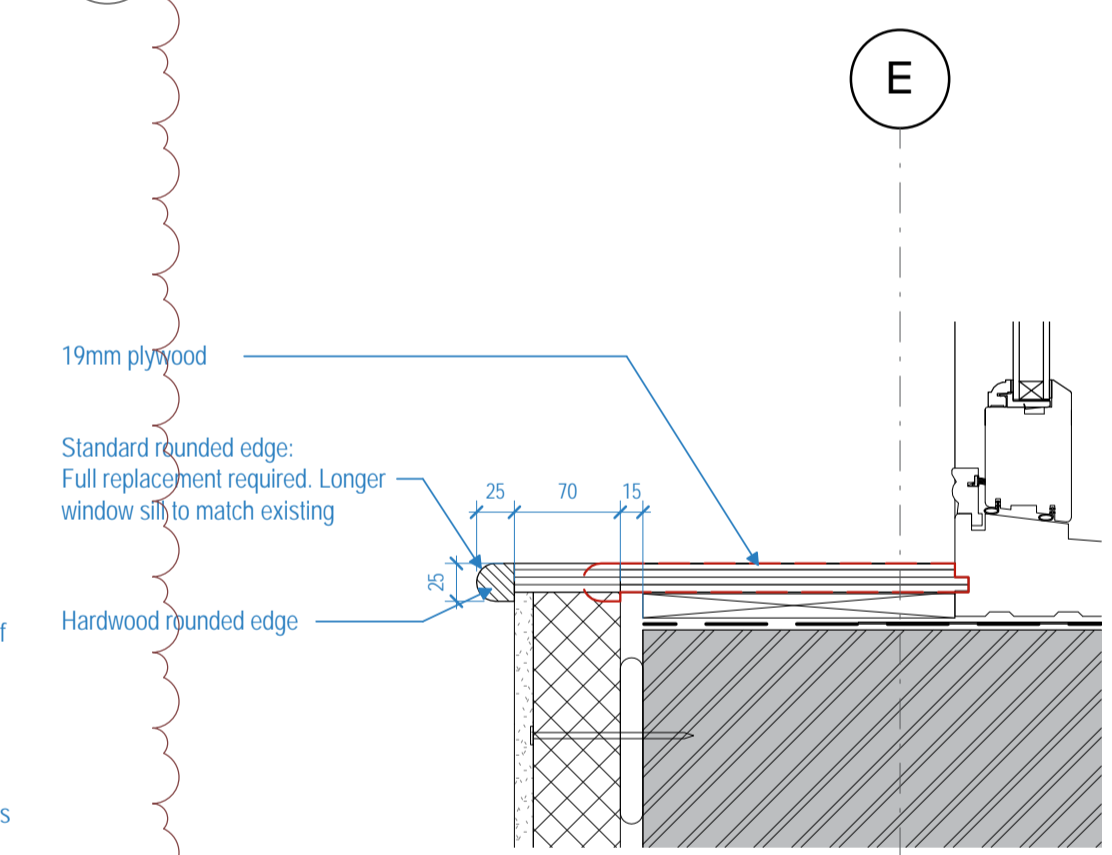
2  
5450  
Typical Upgraded Masonry Walls - Window Section  
1 : 10  
Specification Ref: Insulated plasterboard lining to existing masonry walls 25-85-45/140



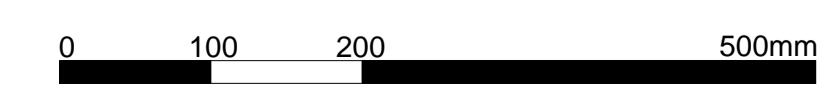
4  
5450  
Typical Upgraded Masonry Walls - Window Plan  
1 : 10  
Specification Ref: Insulated plasterboard lining to existing masonry walls 25-85-45/140



5  
5450  
Existing window sill altered - Ogee edge (Sill Type 1)  
1 : 5



6  
5450  
Window sill replacement - Standard rounded edge (Sill Type 2)  
1 : 5



Rev	Date	Details/Amended by	Sign
A12	25.06.18	REVISED STAGE 4 ISSUE / LM / MJF	LM
A7	07.02.18	STAGE 4 SUBMISSION/ LM	AML
P1	27.11.17	Draft Stage 4 Issue / GV	AML
A1	21.08.17	PLANNING: Additional drawings following Camden feedback.	LM

**sonnemanntoon**  
architects

Quality House  
6-9 Quality Court  
Chancery Lane  
London WC2A 1HP  
United Kingdom

tel: +44 (0)20 7580 8881  
email: info@st-arch.co.uk  
web: www.st-arch.co.uk

© This drawing is copyright

Do not scale this drawing. Architect to be informed of all discrepancies in dimensions. Contractor to check all dimensions on site.

Project title  
**ITALIAN HOSPITAL**

Drawing title  
**DETAILS: WALLS & PARTITIONS  
Internal Wall Insulation Upgrade-Detail**

Scale	Status	Revision
1:5 @A1	APPROVAL	A12
1:10 @A3		

Drawing number  
**1615-ST-Q1-ZZ-DR-A-5450**