

Wac Arts - Old Town Hall

Design and Access Statement
accompanying planning and listed building applications

15 August 2019

Ash Sakula Architects



Collaboration and consultation

The development of the project is supported by the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund and is delivered through the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).

This statement has been prepared with the help of contributions from:

Wac Arts

Cragg Management

Civic Engineers

P3r Engineers

Jane Toplis Associates

Martin O'Rourke

Ashmore Arboricultural services

Centre for Accessible Environments



Summary of planning and listed building application supporting documentation

Planning and listed building application form

Drawings, as listed on drawing issue sheets

This design and access statement

Appendices (separate documents)

Heritage Appraisal

Access report

Centre for Accessible Environments Design Appraisal

Arboricultural Report

Structural proposals

M & E proposals, including plant noise

Transport note

Statement of Community Involvement



Contents

	page
Introducing Ash Sakula Architects	5
1. Introduction	6
2. WAC Arts's Vision for the Project	7
3. History of the Old Town Hall	8
4. Old Town Hall as existing	12
5. Overview of the building today and proposed works	19
6. Design proposals	24
7. Planning and conservation pre-application activities	32
8. Environmental strategy and sustainability	33
9. Access	34
10. Consultation and community engagement statement	35

Introducing Ash Sakula Architects

Ash Sakula have successfully converted many existing buildings to new uses, including grade 2, grade 2* and grade 1 listed buildings. Previous projects include:



Merthyr Tydfil Town Hall
Grade II



Boilerhouse Theatre, Egham
Grade I



10 Great James Street, London
Grade II*



Dartington Hall, Devon
Grade I



The Dome, Brighton
Grade I



170 Queensgate, London
Grade II*



Africa Centre, London
Grade II

1. Introduction

Overview

101 This statement accompanies planning and listed building applications for alterations to Hampstead Old Town Hall in Belsize Park, grade II listed and owned by Camden Council.

102 The Old Town Hall has been home to Wac Arts since 2000. The building houses a vibrant, intergenerational community and offers access to the performing arts and life-long learning. Other organisations which operate within the building include, the University of the Third Age (U3A), Akademi, South Asian Dance, KIDS, and the London Gay Men's Chorus. This community supports some of London's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

103 Wac Arts have a Master Plan which provides a coherent overview for the maintenance and development of the whole Old Town Hall site. Inside Out Wac Arts (IOWA) is the first project in the Master Plan. It aims to open up the Old Town Hall in a way which connects the communities currently served with all the other local communities in Belsize and the surrounding wards. IOWA will open up our building to provide better access, more visibility and a wider public welcome.

104 The Old Town Hall has three parts. These proposals mainly affect parts of the Victorian Building at the front, the original Vestry Hall of 1878. They have little impact on the Edwardian Building of 1910, or the New Building and atrium, opened in the year 2000.

105 The proposals create:

Improved accessibility with step free access and better lift provision

A public, social enterprise café with informal performance area and landscaped terrace

A new reception and information area

Restoration of Imperial Staircase with public access to this impressive heritage feature

Refurbishment of the Council Chamber to create a multi-use flexible performance space for wider use by the community

Direct access to new backstage facilities to include a green room, dressing rooms, WC and shower

A new multi-use space providing flexible office, meeting and event space

Upgraded WCs to meet our community's needs

Way finding, signage and dementia friendly layouts

Background

106 Ash Sakula Architects were appointed by Wac Arts in March 2019 as architects and design team leader for these proposals.

107 Following design development of the project through spring and summer 2019, Wac Arts have instructed Ash Sakula to prepare planning and listed building applications, of which this statement forms a part.

2. Wac Arts' Vision for the Project

'Wac Arts has an engaged audience unlike any other arts organisation I know. Our diversity is what makes our work so important. We are constantly challenging our own assumptions in our inclusive practice and it is appropriate to be curating the heritage of our home to meet our needs today.'

Jolyon Brewis, Architect and Trustee

201 As custodians of their beautiful Grade II listed building, Wac Arts are committed to increasing and enhancing social cohesion in London. Wac Arts will do this through the addition of an accessible, social enterprise cafe and formal and informal performance spaces. The project will combine exceptional design, restoration of original features and refurbishment to transform an existing community asset for wider public benefit.

202 IOWA (Inside Out Wac Arts) will open the doors of the Old Town Hall to provide better access to all intergenerational people and their connected communities, through the creation of the following:

Wac Arts Café and Social Learning Space - this will include a publicly accessible social enterprise cafe with informal performance area, multi-purpose counter, spaces for social learning, acoustic sensibility and an external terraced area.

Council Chamber Venue - refurbishment of the ground floor Council Chamber for wider use by the community and Wac Arts, with installation of flexible seating, sprung floor, specialist curtains, sound and lighting equipment.

203 IOWA goes hand in hand with Wac Arts five year business plan and artistic vision for, with and by the community.

For example:

The new Visitor Reception will provide space for people of different backgrounds and generations to connect with others and share skills and knowledge in accessible community spaces.

The new Council Chamber performance space will provide a professional and well-resourced platform for the community, a space for young people to learn in (tech skills etc), and showcase their work and for older Londoners and local schools to perform in.

The social enterprise café will deliver Wac Arts current obligation to U3A to provide a hot daily meal for older Londoners and to expand healthy food provision for young Londoners and their families'.

204 The project will enable Wac Arts further to promote culture for everyone through a wide range of participation from diverse high-quality arts and specialised programmes to lifelong learning.

205 Wac Arts has a collaborative relationship with Camden Council. The local authority are committed to the Old Town Hall as a community asset. Belsize Park Ward Councillors recently collaborated to secure CIL funding for IOWA. Camden also support their programmes for young people with disabilities and SEN, including residential and overnight programmes. Wac Arts Activities fit with the fourth Camden Cultural Framework theme of Cultural Economic Development and contribute to the following Our Camden Plan objectives: strong growth and access to jobs; safe, strong and open communities; and healthy, independent lives. Their current four year tender is for £500,000. Christine Dove, Senior Valuation Practitioner Commercial and Community, describes Wac Arts as responsible guardians of the Old Town Hall and Martin Olomofe, Head of Asset Strategy and Valuations, views the Old Town Hall as a 'great public asset'. Supported by the Camden Can Innovation Fund, their young people have been researching, testing and developing an interactive video game to counter obesity in the borough. In March 2019 they were awarded a Camden Youth Award 'Best Practice Award for Health and Wellbeing'. IOWA will enable Wac Arts to extend their reach as a key player in Camden's cultural strategy.

3. History of the Old Town Hall

301 The original part of the Old Town Hall, the Victorian Building fronting onto Haverstock Hill, was erected in 1878 as a vestry hall. The architects were H E Kendall and Frederick Mew. Its Italianate style, complete with campanile, won it the plaudit 'handsome and solid' - although a century later Pevsner called it 'crushingly mean': not a judgment we find ourselves in agreement with.

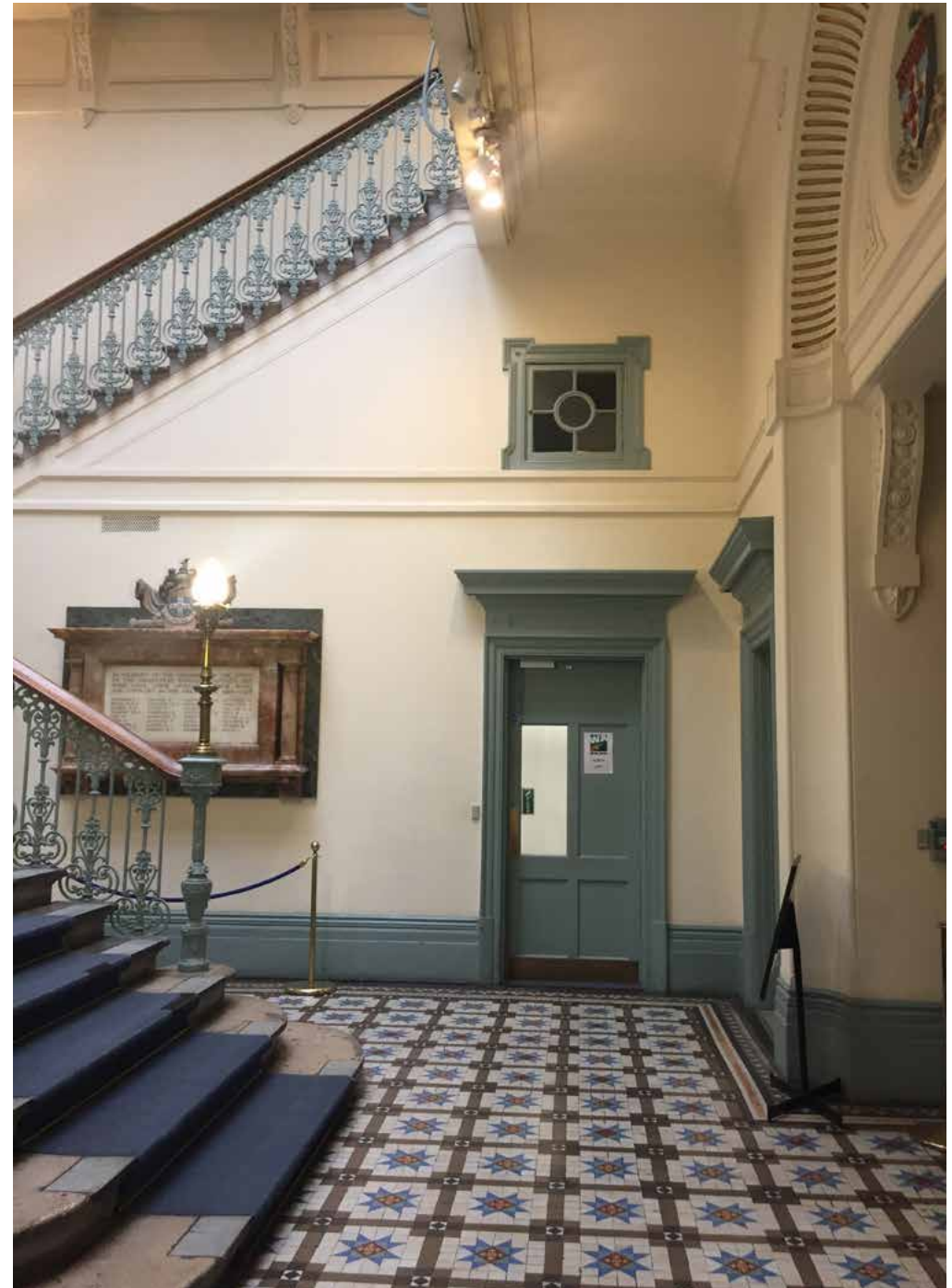
302 The building stands on the corner of Haverstock Hill and Belsize Avenue, on a site which was once part of the grounds of Hillfield, a large house which survived until the early 20th century when it was demolished to enable the expansion of Belsize Park suburb.

303 In 1910, the building was expanded with an Edwardian baroque extension along Belsize Avenue by architect John Murray to support its change of use into Hampstead's Town Hall.

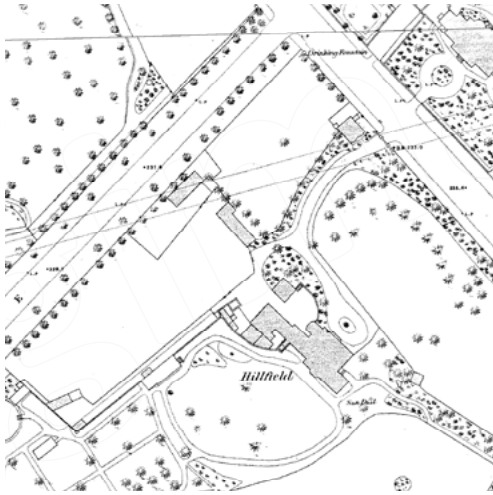
304 When Hampstead was merged with Camden in the 1960s the building became a registry office. It was listed in 1994 and a campaign by the Friends of Hampstead Town Hall saved the building to become an arts centre. A third phase of building was completed in 2000 by architects Burrell Foley Fischer, enlarging the building again in a contemporary style, and linking its constituent parts with a glass roofed atrium.

305 Over the years the building has undergone many other changes. Large rooms have been sub-divided, and smaller rooms knocked into larger ones. An addition was made to the north corner to house an escape stair, and subsequently demolished. Air raid shelters were built and then re-purposed or demolished. The building reportedly took three direct hits during the war, with the campanile tower being partially destroyed and later rebuilt.

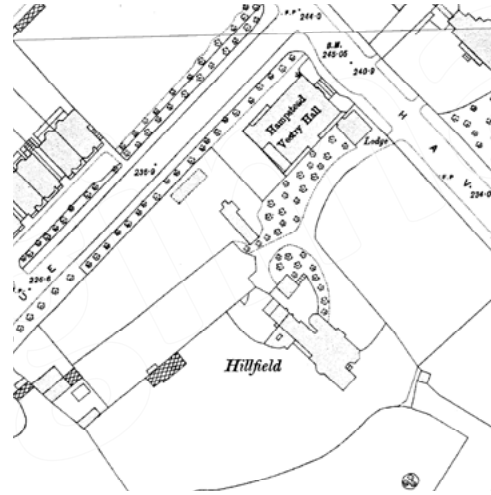
306 Notwithstanding all these changes, the four main spaces of the Victorian Building, the Council Chamber, the Imperial Stair, the Main Hall and the Small Hall, have survived relatively unscathed.



The Old Town Hall site through history (note pre-existing Midland Mainline railway tunnel from St Pancras deep under the building)



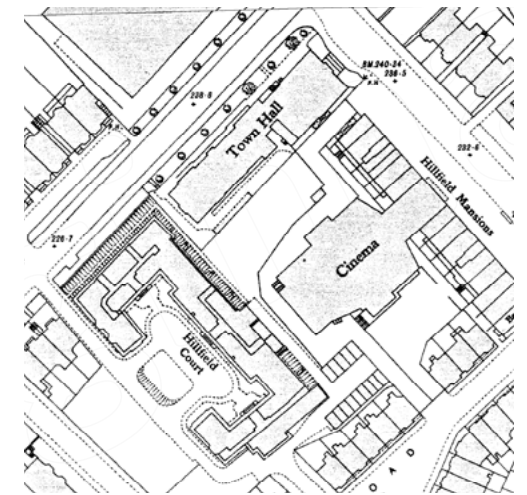
1870s



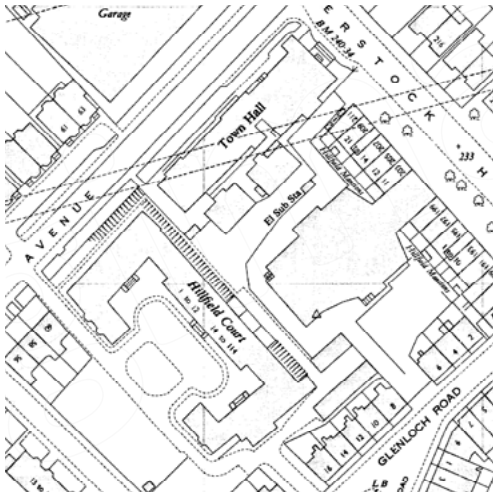
1890s



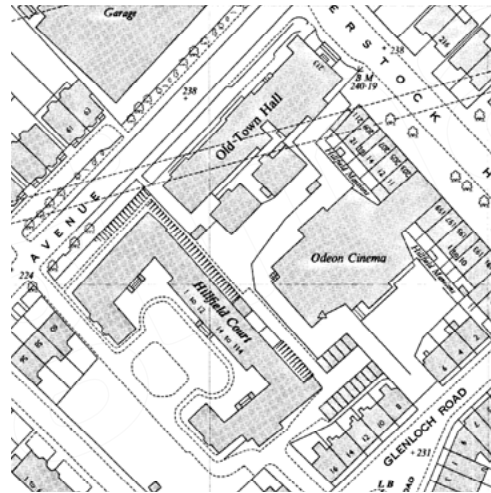
1910s



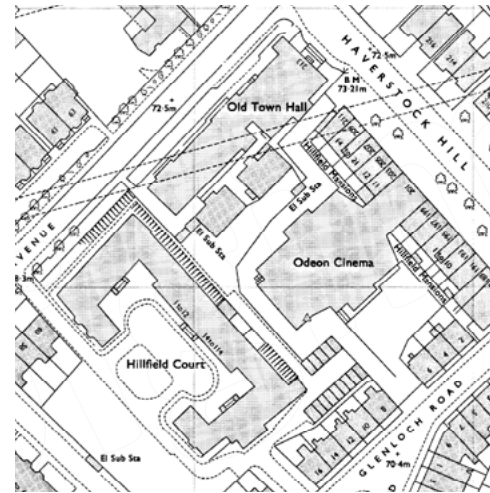
1930s



1950s



1960s



1970s



Present day

The Old Town Hall through history



1877, architect's drawing of how it will look



Late c19, Hillfield Lodge in foreground



Late c19, Hillfield Lodge in foreground



1905



1926



1950, campanile and roof turrets chopped, after WW2 bomb



1962, Ronald Saxby sketch showing 1950s escape stair extension



1996, stair extension still there, campanile still missing



2019, showing 2000 alterations and campanile rebuilt

The Old Town Hall through history: some significant moments



1941 ARP on steps



1961



1961 Spike Milligan



1961 Leo Abse



1946 Hampstead Parliament



1994 Four Weddings and a Funeral

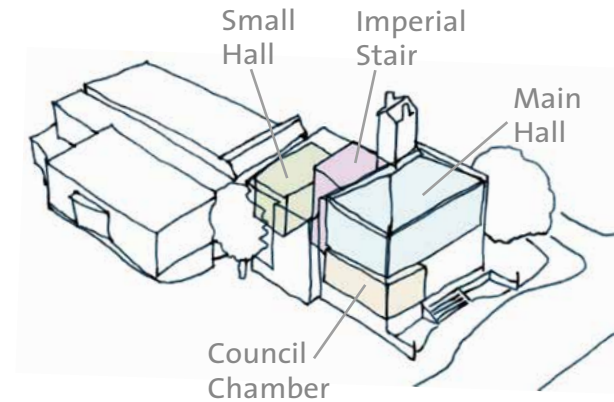
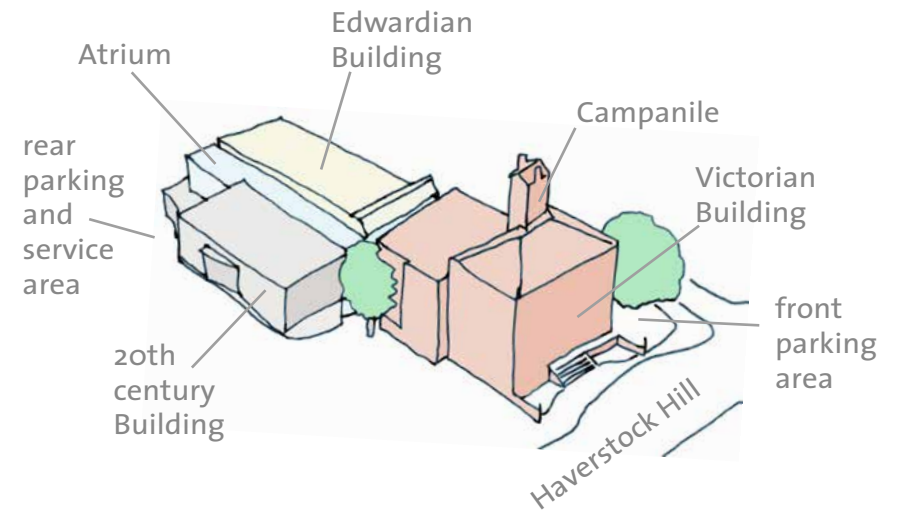


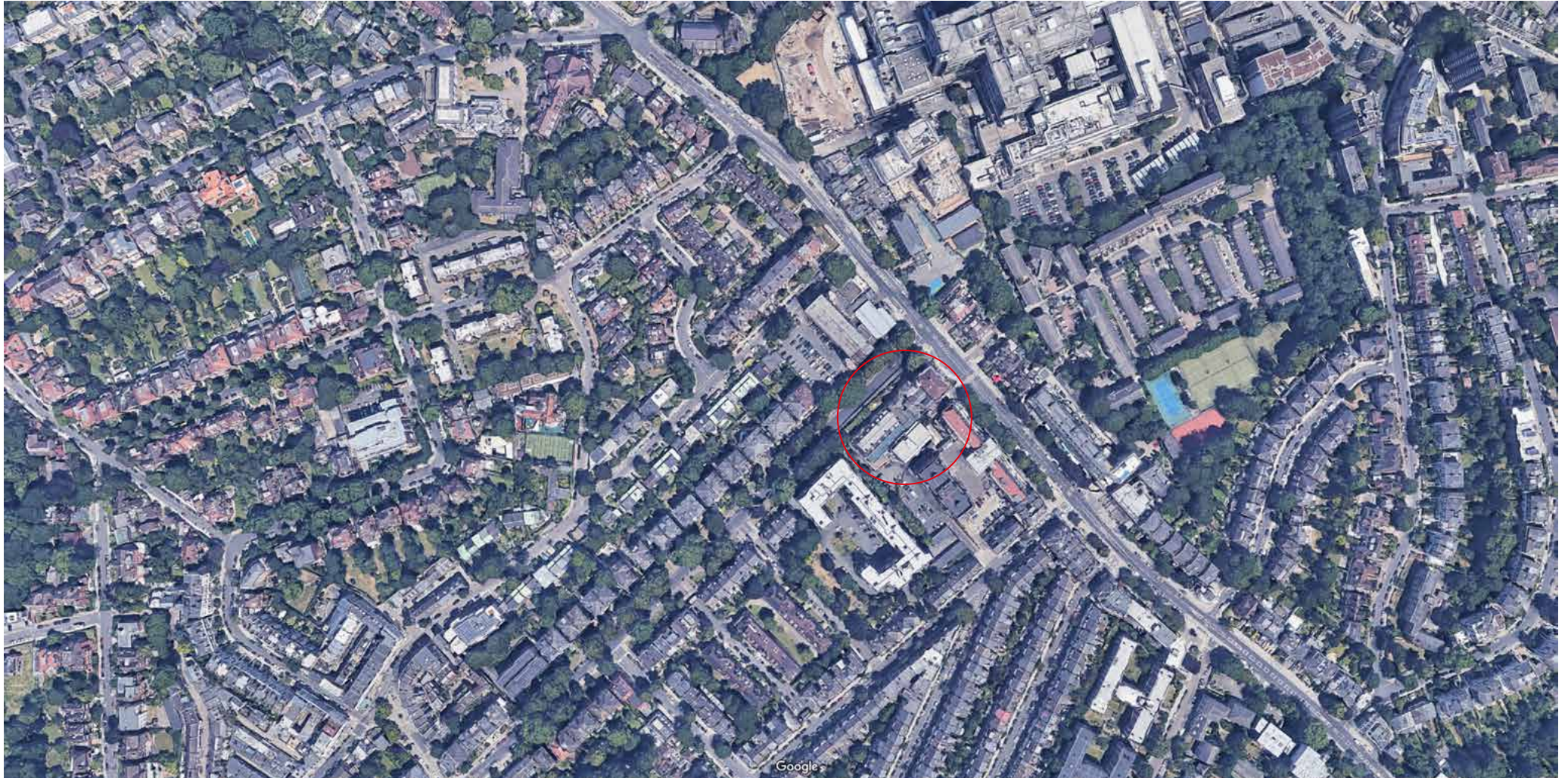
2000 Prince Charles

4. Old Town Hall as existing

401 The Old Town Hall comprises three main elements: the 1878 Victorian Building, the Edwardian extension behind, and the 20th Century building completed in 2000. All three elements are linked by an atrium, part of the year 2000 buildinging works.

402 The four major (and most architecturally significant) spaces within the complex, the Council Chamber, the Imperial Stair, the Small Hall and the Main Hall are all in the original Victorian Building.





Birds eye views



View looking west



View looking south



View looking east



View looking north

Haverstock Hill frontage



Haverstock Hill elevation



View north west up Haverstock Hill



View south east down Haverstock Hill

Belsize Avenue frontage



Rebuilt campanile and central projecting bay date from year 2000 works



Side and rear frontages



Pedestrian way leading from Haverstock Hill to atrium entrance



Existing opening to become new external lift entrance

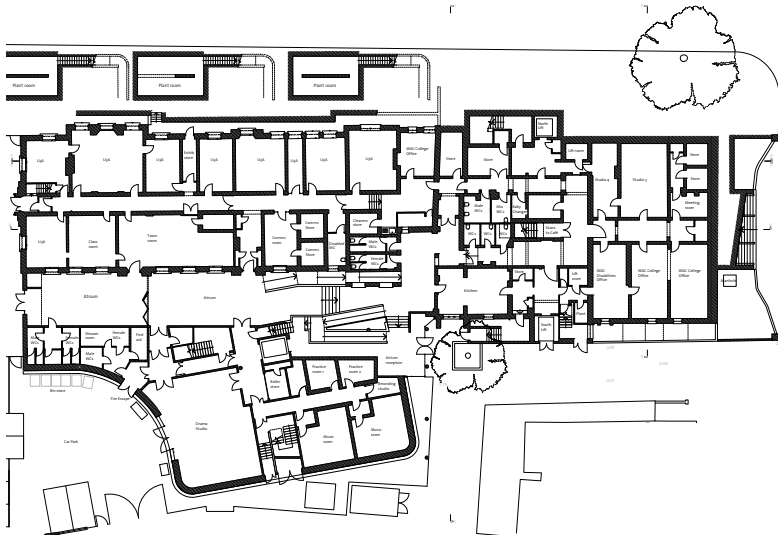


Alley alongside south east elevation of the building

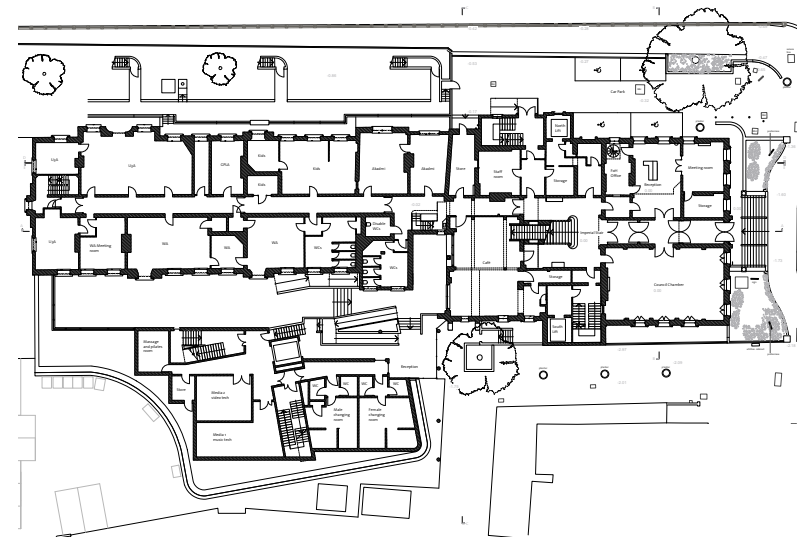


Rear service yard

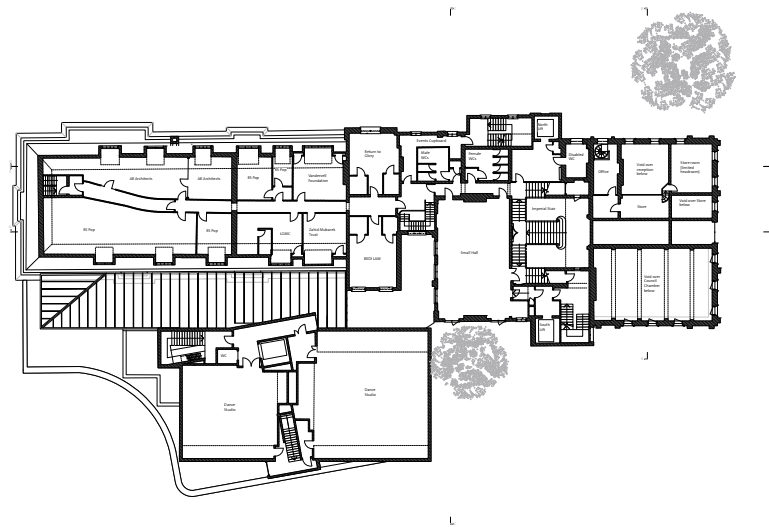
Existing floor plans



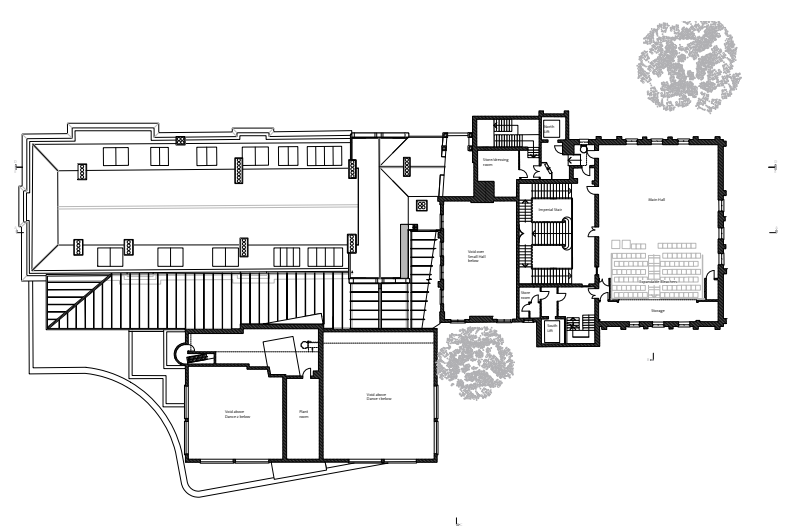
Existing Level 1 Plan



Existing Level 2 Plan



Existing Level 3 Plan



Existing Level 4 Plan