

# Coram Gregory House Extension Phases I & 2

## Design and Access Statement

May 2020



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The Queen Elizabeth II Centre opened by Her Majesty the Queen in December 2018

## 1.0 Introduction

Coram is the UK's oldest and foremost charity caring for the welfare of vulnerable children and families. For 10 years they have been increasing their capacity to accommodate and deliver important services through a series of additions to Coram Campus the most recent being the Queen Elizabeth II Centre opened by Her Majesty the Queen in December 2018.

The need for space continues and so Coram are now seeking to implement the next phase of the campus masterplan by developing the north-east corner of the which is currently occupied by Gregory House. In order to continue to make use of the existing building of Gregory House which is a valuable asset, Coram have decided to extend and transform it rather than demolish as was originally planned. In doing so, the aim is to increase capacity in line with the total area granted planning permission in January 2014 (ref application 2013/5607/P) whilst minimizing disruption to the existing occupants.

The 2014 planning permission was for a building (the New East Building) to replace the mortuary, old swimming pool and Gregory House. Subsequently it became practicable to only replace the mortuary and swimming pool and so the Queen Elizabeth II Centre was designed, granted planning permission and constructed, in its current form allowing Gregory House to continue in operation throughout. The 2014 permission was implemented giving Coram the capability of constructing to the massing established in that proposal, which they now seek to do through different means and through preserving Gregory Houses continued use.

## 1.1 The Brief

The brief is to optimize the capacity of Gregory House by extending it in a way that allows occupation and operation of the existing office spaces to continue. In doing this, to create a building which complements the other recent new buildings on Coram Campus and to form a distinctive approach and entrance from Mecklenburgh Square. The increase in accommodation should offer flexibility in terms of affordability and fund-raising through the opportunity to phase development, so that the new additions can be implemented in steps leading towards a distinctive and coherent whole in the long term.

Accommodation should include a 'Voices Centre' to provide a safe place for young people to work, relax and socialize - a sort of 'club room' for teenagers, with a character and identity that they can identify with and call their own. In addition there should be a double height library/office space with a gallery to accommodate the Coram archive of printed material which includes historic and more recent publications. A ground floor cafe and informal place to work will provide a social space for staff and visitors which currently doesn't exist on the campus and is seen as a positive addition. Much needed office and meeting spaces will be provided to help Coram increase their important services and optimize capacity within the campus.

Approaches to construction should be considered so that the additions minimize disruption to the existing fabric of Gregory House by adopting a 'light touch' approach, buildings placed outside the curtilage of the existing building and/or light-weight prefabricated construction (MMC) which allows rapid construction on site.





## 2.0 Existing

### 2.1 Coram Campus

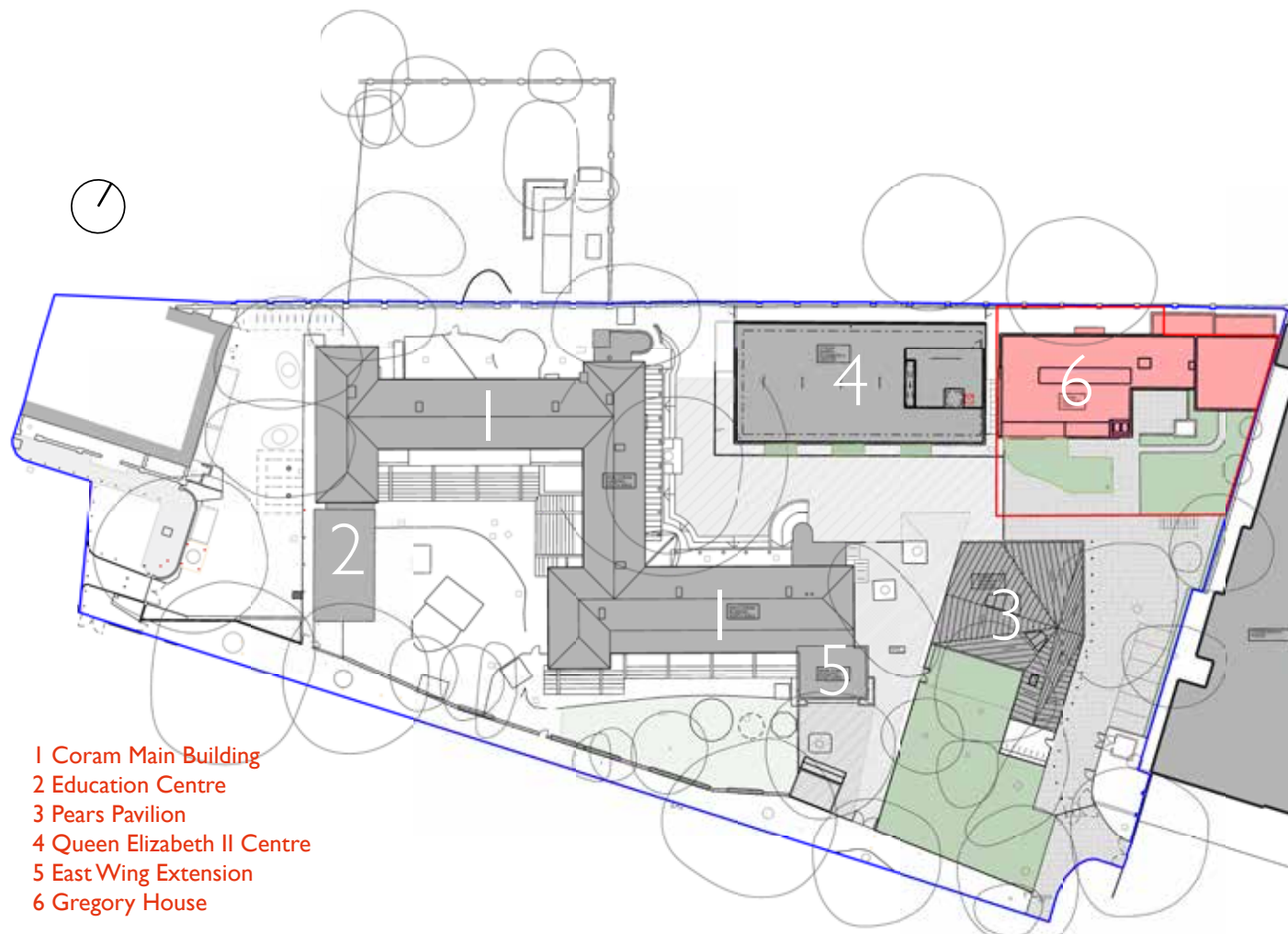
Coram Campus is located in the heart of Bloomsbury between Brunswick Square to the west and Mecklenburgh Square to the east. Historic St Georges Gardens lie to the north and Corams Fields to the south. The area of the Campus and Corams Fields were home to the Foundling Hospital which was located on the site of the current astroturf pitches from 1739 until its demolition in 1926. The original colonnades and entrance buildings still remain.

St Georges Gardens to the north are a de-consecrated cemetery of historic importance and are grade 2 listed along with the brick wall which separates them from Coram Campus. They form part of the sensitive historic context to which any new building must respond.

The aerial photograph shows Coram Campus set within a swathe of green open space in the heart of London, populated by some of the UK's oldest and tallest plane trees which give a strong natural character to Coram Campus and adjacent gardens. Although the campus has a high proportion of open space the presence of trees restricts the amount of space for buildings which means that Coram needs to make best use of all available land in order to accommodate the requirement to increase delivery of vitally important services in support of children and families. A number of sites within Coram Campus have been developed in recent years to increase capacity but the site in the north east corner of the campus which accommodates Gregory House, remains under-utilised with potential for development as one of the few remaining sites available.

The plan on the left of the next page shows the current

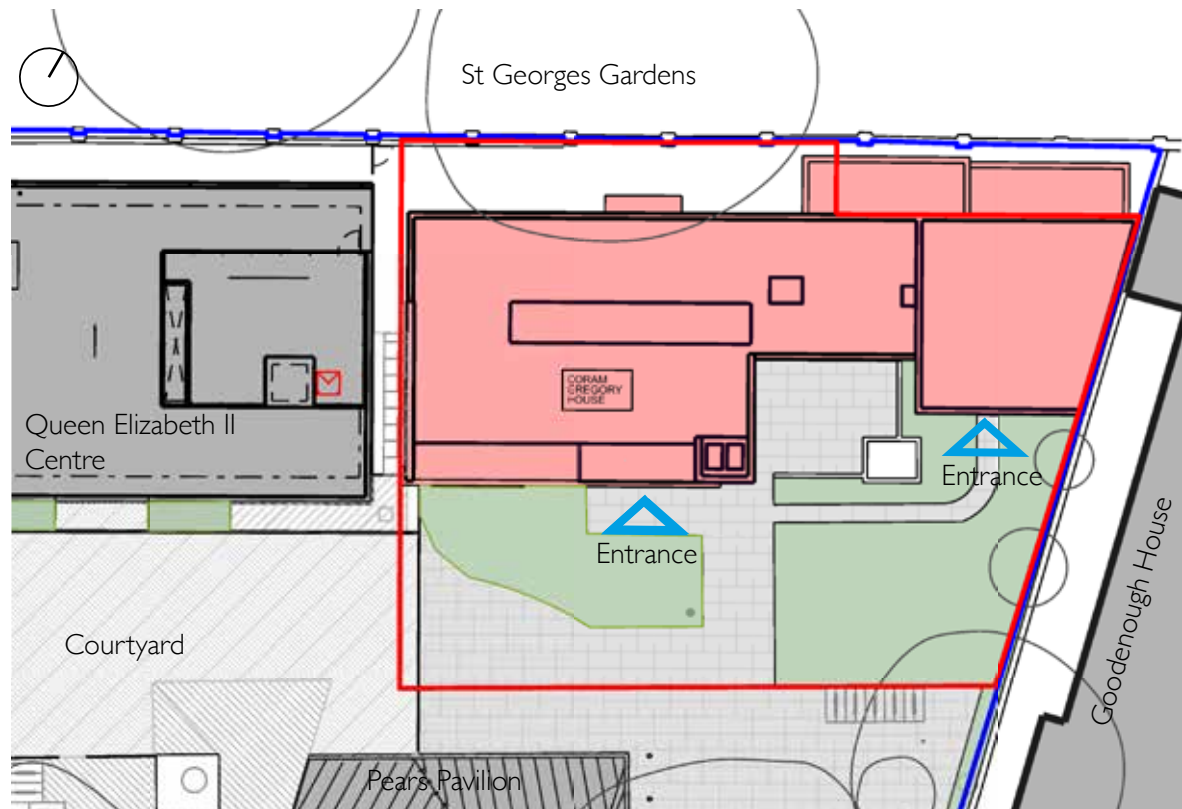




layout of Coram Campus which has developed in phases over recent years and consists of the following:

- 1 Coram Main Building (north and South wings): A 'Z-shaped' building constructed in the 1950s and extended in the 1990s, used as offices and education facilities and Sir Thomas Coram Nursery.
- 2 The Education Centre: Phase 1 of recent development completed in 2014. Coram's 'front door' entrance and reception along with a range of education experiences including Coram Life Education for children.
- 3 Pears Pavilion: Phase 2 completed in 2015 home of adoption support and Creative Therapies.
- 4 Queen Elizabeth II Centre: Opened in 2018 by Her Majesty the Queen. Dedicated to the promotion of children's rights and best practice.
- 5 New East Wing Extension: Completed 2019. Phase 4 extends main building office space.
- 6 Gregory House: Built in 1950s as a performance space and accommodation for Old Coram Associates. Currently offices including Coram Voice which offers support to children and young people in care and care leavers.





## 2.2 Gregory House

Gregory House is a two storey post war building constructed from a combination of concrete frame and load bearing blockwork with a combination of brick and render on the exterior. It is characterised by strip windows and a balcony on the first floor which served residential accommodation which was once provided in the building for Old Coram Associates (OCAs). Until recently OCAs could stay in Gregory House. It is now being used mainly as office space in support of Coram services. Most notably Coram Voice which occupies a space at the eastern end of the building.

*"Coram Voice is a leading children's rights organisation. We champion the rights of children. We get young voices heard in decisions that matter to them and work to improve the lives of children in care, care leavers and others who depend upon the help of the state."*

In 2014 planning permission was granted for Gregory House to be demolished and replaced by The New East Building - see description that follows. Since then, Gregory House has expanded in terms of its use and importance within the campus in continuing to offer functioning work space.

The eastern end of Coram Campus is currently a car park and until recently has been used for storing construction site materials. It is a well used route into the campus from Mecklenburgh Square gates. At the moment its character and quality does not match its significance as an entrance to the campus and it doesn't present Coram to the public in an appropriate way. Navigation into the campus is difficult for visitors who arrive for the first time - it is not clear where to go.



View of approach from Mecklenburgh Square



## 2.3 Site photos.



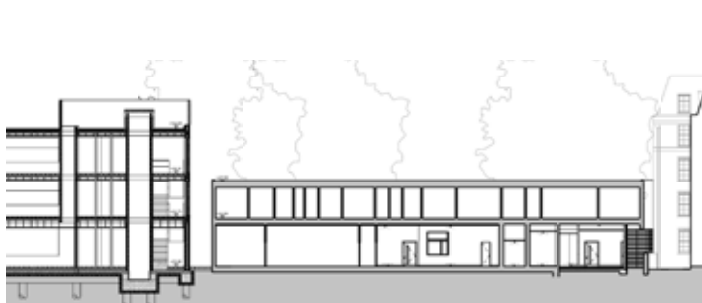
## 2.4 Existing elevations and sections



Existing south-east elevation



Existing north-west elevation



Existing section AA



Existing section BB

The drawings on the left show the south-east and north-west elevations (not to scale) of Gregory House, the Queen Elizabeth II Centre and Goodenough House along with sections.

These drawings show the relative scales of the buildings and highlight the difference in height and scale between them. With the construction of the Queen II Centre Gregory House now appears incongruous, like a 'missing tooth' - discordant in scale in relation to the adjacent buildings.





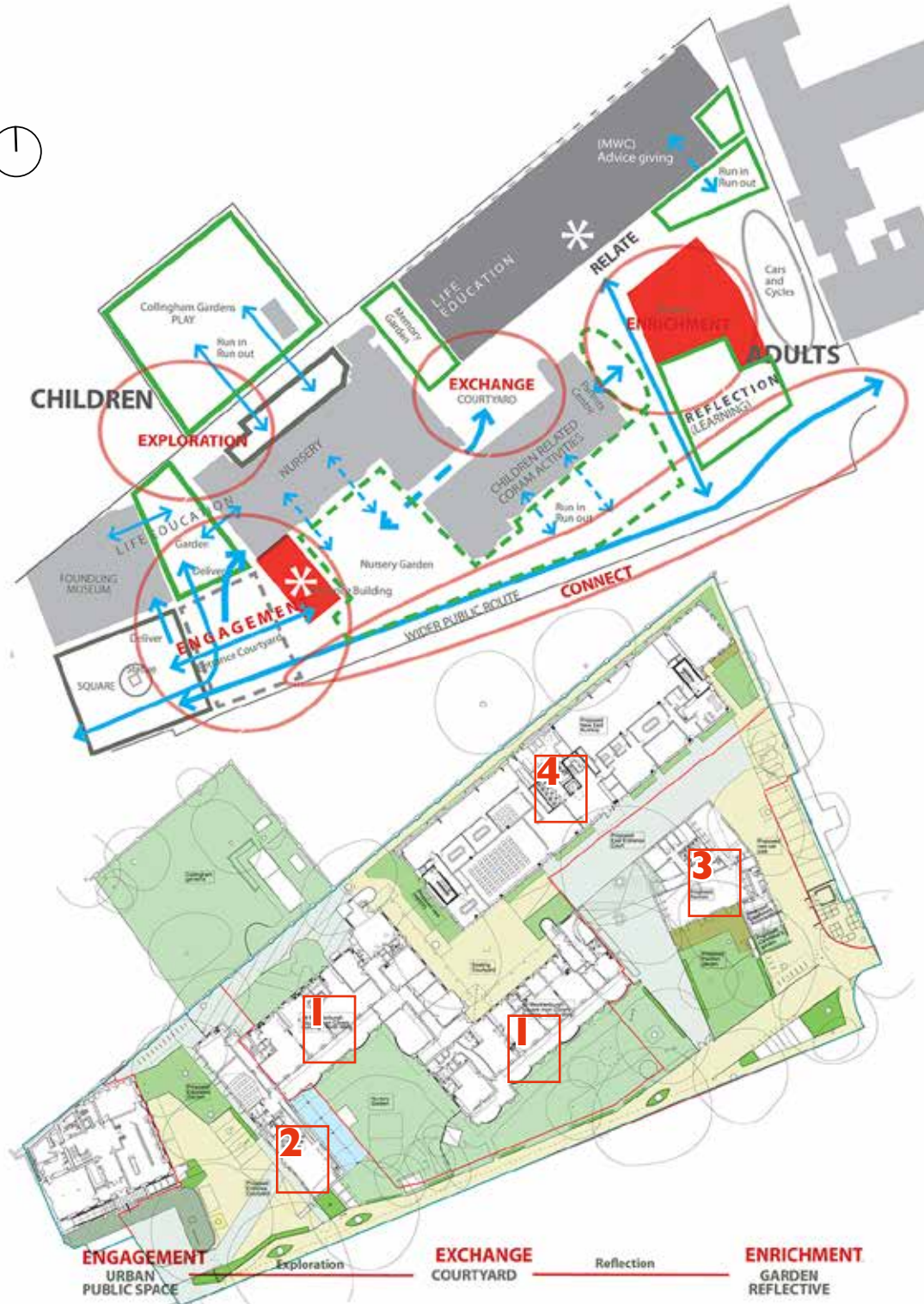
## 3.0 2010 Masterplan

In 2010 we were commissioned to prepare a vision and masterplan for Coram Campus to set out how the campus could grow over time in response to increasing need for space to support vital services.

The diagram, above left, shows the proposed thematic structure for the campus from a new distinct entrance facing Brunswick Square to reflective garden next to Mecklenburgh Square.

The drawing, bottom left, shows the proposed masterplan with ground floor layouts of all buildings that were proposed at that time. Over the last ten years, all of these have been constructed except for the north-eastern half of the New East Building. The plan was later revised in the light of funding practicalities to construct only the south-western half which became the Queen Elizabeth II Centre.

The vision for the masterplan remains as a reference with the ambition to redevelop the north-east corner to fulfil its potential for increased density of accommodation.



- 1 Coram Main Building
- 2 Education Centre
- 3 Pears Pavilion
- 4 New East Building



Proposed south-east elevation



Proposed north-west elevation



Proposed ground floor plan

## 4.0 Planning

### 4.1 2014 New East Building Approval

Following an intensive design process involving extensive consultation this design for the New East Building (now the Queen Elizabeth II Centre) received planning approval in January 2014 (planning reference: 2013/5607/P). The design was later revised so that it could be constructed in 2 phases to reflect Coram's funding aims. The first of these was constructed as the Queen Elizabeth II Centre.

In order to preserve the planning permission, this proposal was implemented through construction of foundations to the south-west corner:

The footprint of this building is approximately 63 metres x 18 metres. The Queen Elizabeth II Centre has a footprint which has been reduced to approximately 16 metres in width.

It is assumed that implementation of the 2014 planning permission allows development of the north-east corner within the volume of the permitted scheme subject to receipt of planning approval for a revised design.

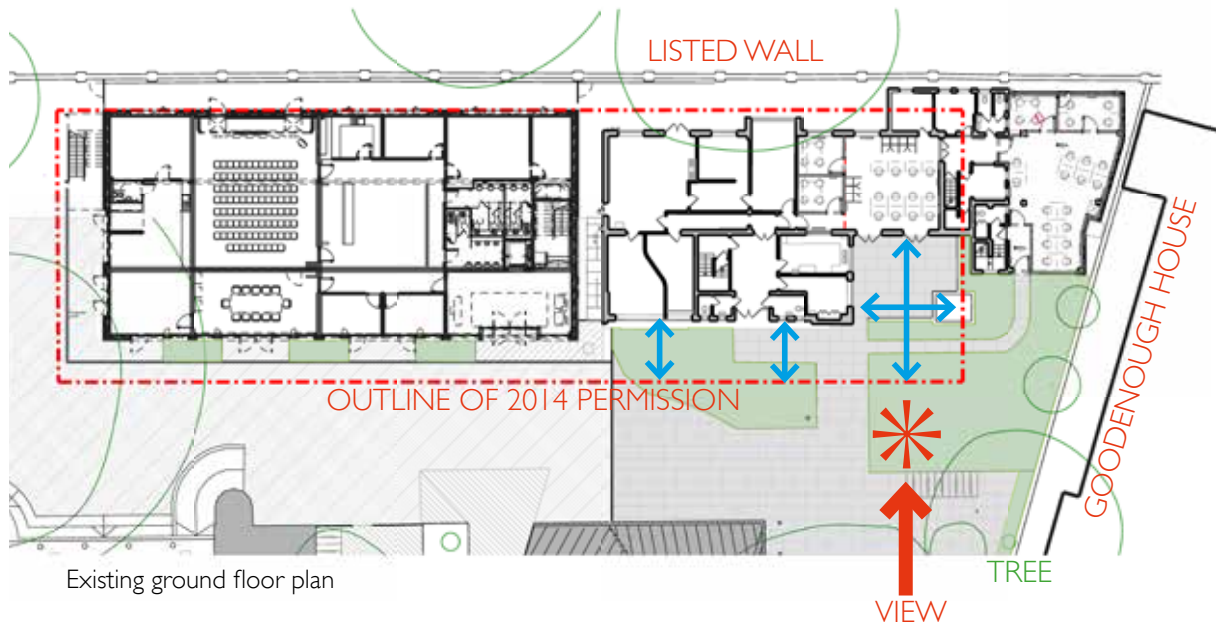


## 5.0 Design

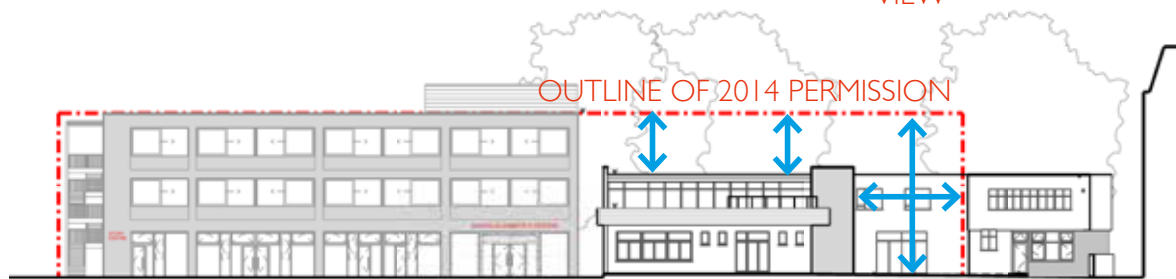
### 5.1 Opportunities and constraints

Gregory House is currently occupied and is a valuable asset to Coram in that it already provides much needed functioning office space. It is not practicable to decant occupants out of the building and so after careful consideration Coram have decided that it should not be demolished to make way for the other half of the Queen Elizabeth II Centre (the 2014 planning permission), but should be extended to provide the equivalent additional floor space. The diagrams to the left show opportunities and constraints to doing this:

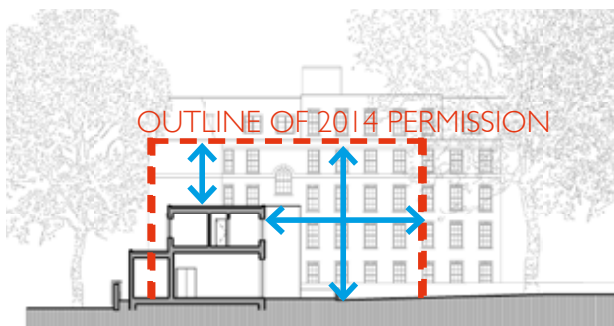
- Opportunity to extend to the 2014 planning permission line. It is assumed that it is possible to extend Gregory House to an equivalent mass of the implemented scheme.
- The recessed space to the east of Gregory House main entrance provides a good location for a distinctive extension which will be highly visible from the Mecklenburgh Square gate. Building here will minimize disruption to occupants.
- Proximity to Goodenough House is an issue in terms of overlooking and daylight. However these issues were examined and proven not to impinge detrimentally under the 2014 approval.
- Proximity to the listed wall requires careful design of any foundations that come close to it.
- The areas within the 2014 permission outline are a sufficient distance away from significant trees for this not to be an issue.



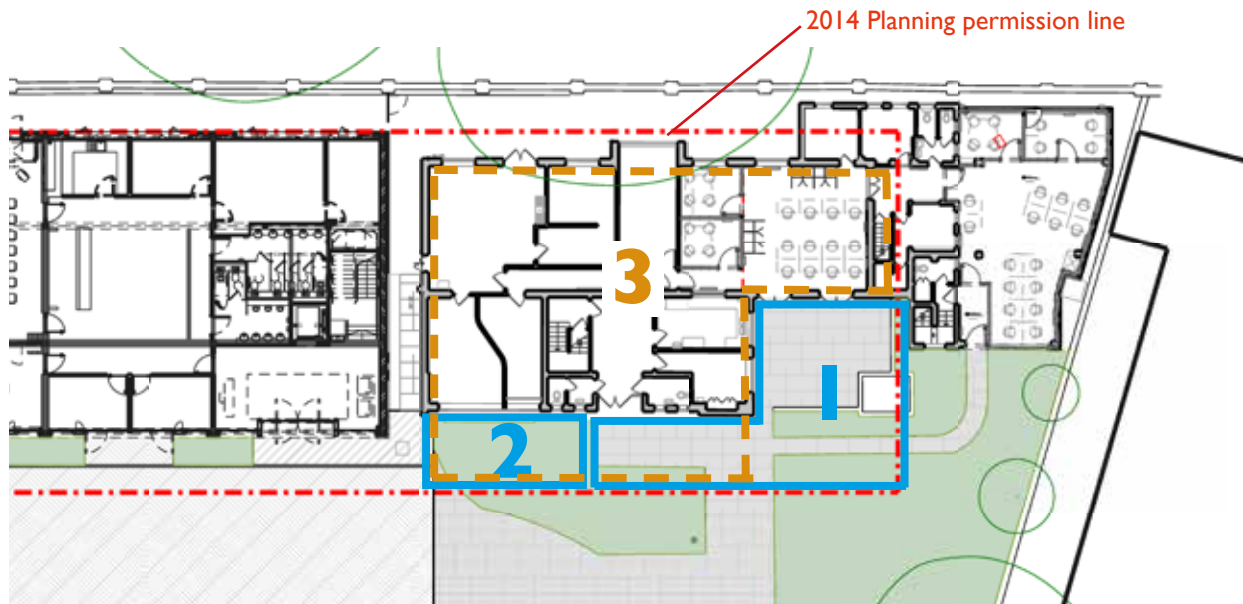
Existing ground floor plan



Existing south-east elevation



Existing section BB



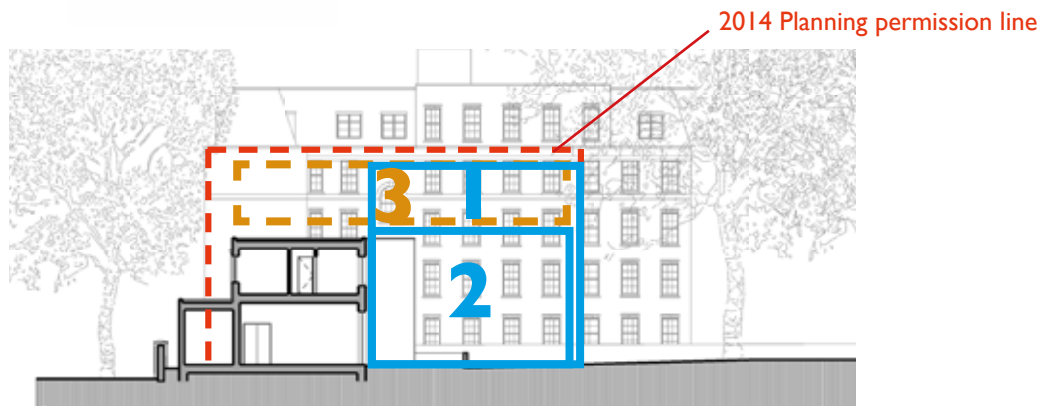
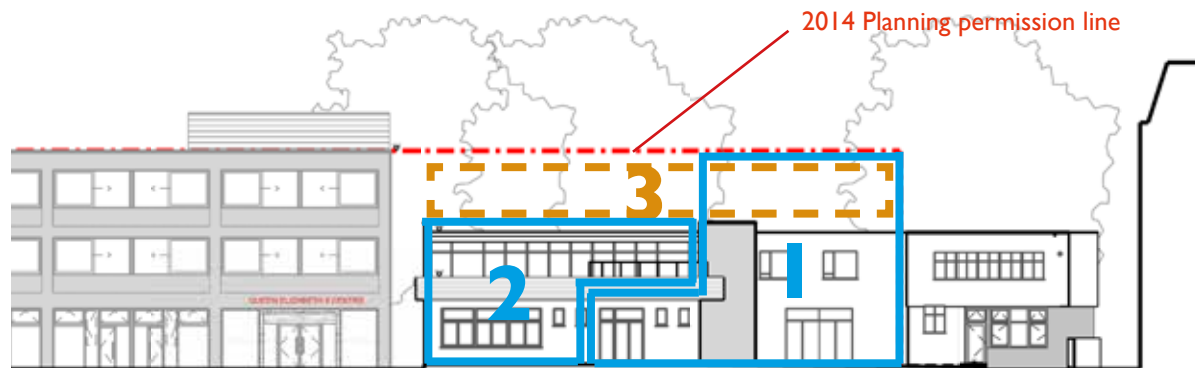
## 5.2 Phasing

Coram are considering the potential for extending Gregory House in phases to:

- Respond to prioritisation of spatial requirements.
- Reduce disruption to existing occupants
- Respond to fund-raising through a step-by-step approach which allows construction as funds become available - it is easier to fund-raise when a tangible benefit is seen earlier on.

The requirement for a new large room to accommodate the 'Voices Centre' on the ground floor and double height library/archive above is seen as the priority. The recessed space to the east of the main entrance allows a room of the appropriate dimension if extended to the 2014 planning permission line and so this has been identified as the first phase (1) along with provision of a new distinctive main entrance. This would also give a prominent new facade visible from Mecklenburgh Square gates to announce an early transformation of the eastern end of the campus, provide an inviting focus and backdrop to the entrance space. Phase 2 extension along the rest of the south-east facade on 2 storeys would give space on the ground floor for a cafe in a prominent location accessed from both the Mecklenburgh Square entrance and the courtyard. These two phases are the subject of this application.

There is enough room to add another storey within the 2014 planning permission volume and so a longer term aim is to construct a light-weight prefabricated new floor as Phase 3 which will be the subject of a separate application to follow.







Proposed Phase I site plan



Proposed Phase I south-east elevation

## 5.3 Phase I

The proposal for Phase I includes infilling the recessed area with a new three storey extension along with a single storey entrance lobby. This can be constructed easily without disrupting the interior of existing Gregory House and creates a series of important spaces: The Voices Centre; First floor Library/office; Mezzanine archive. A new lift serves all floors providing disabled access to all floors of Gregory House which it currently does not have.

The extension extends to the approximate line of the 2014 Planning permission in plan and is within its height. It will tie in with existing floor levels of Gregory House with the top floor designed in anticipation of the eventual third phase.

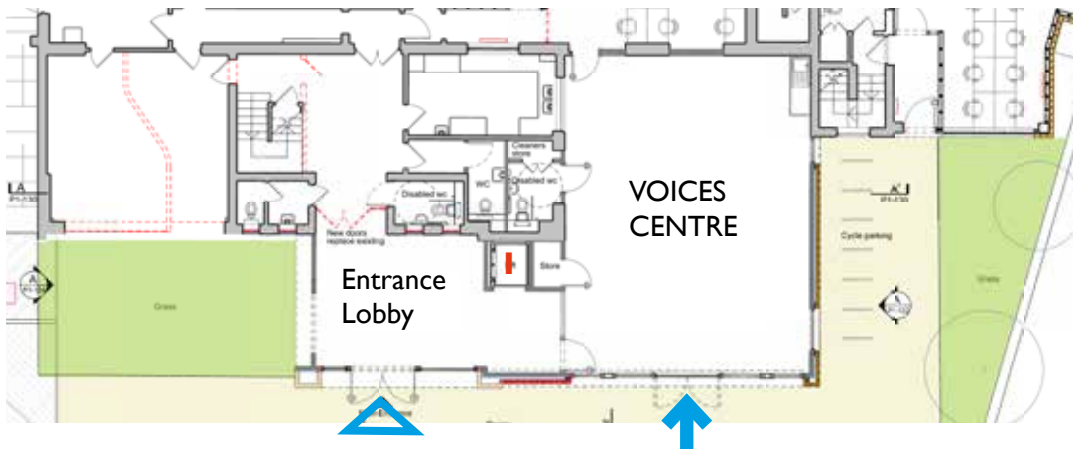
External spaces will be adapted to include areas of grass and planting along with a new paved threshold to the main entrance and pathway to 'Coram Voice' entrance. The paving will match that which has been used on other new paved areas of the campus. New cycle parking is located to the east of the new extension providing space for 14 cycles.

A new green roof (3) will be added to the existing roof of the eastern end of Gregory House to support ecology.

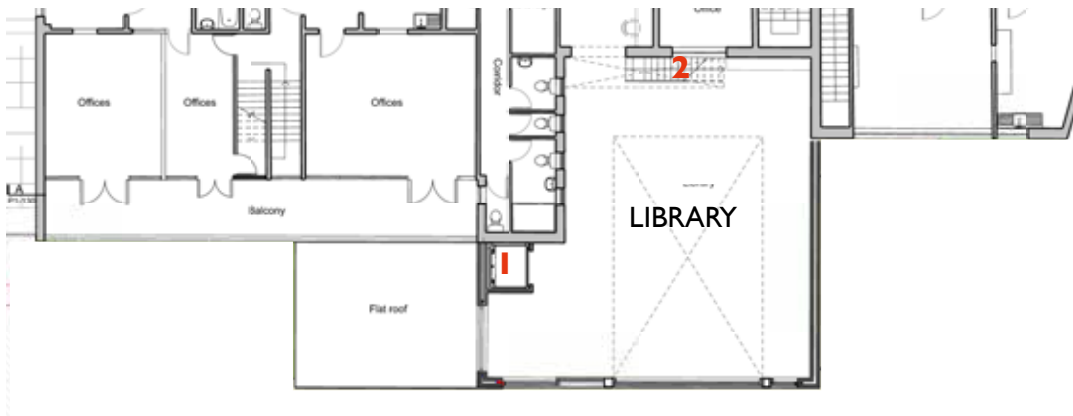
### 5.3.1 Phase I accommodation

Ground floor:

The Voices Centre: A comfortable 'living room' type space for young people to identify with and use as a social space and space for relaxation. Where they can feel empowered and supported. Accessed from the main entrance foyer or separately via its own set of double doors.



Proposed Phase I ground floor plan



Proposed Phase I First floor plan



Proposed Phase I Second floor plan

- 1 Lift
- 2 Library Stair
- 3 Green roof

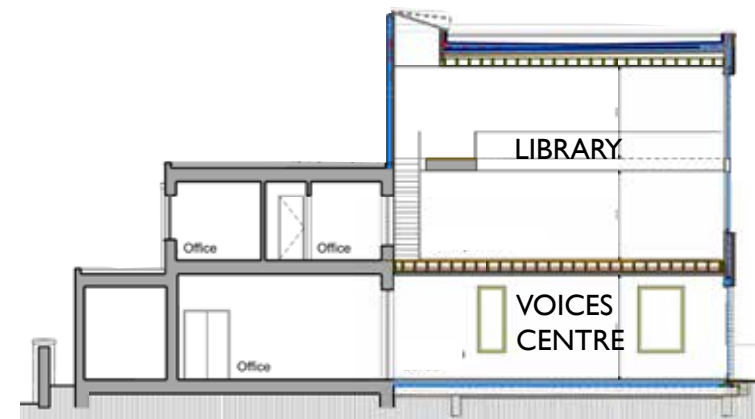
Main entrance, foyer and lift: New main entrance doors and foyer giving secure access into the existing Gregory House building into the 'Voices Centre' and to the lift which serves the new extension as well as the rest of the building which currently does not have lift access.

First and second floors:

Library, offices and mezzanine archive: A galleried double height space arranged in a similar way to a traditional library space with 'reading' room on the first floor and a mezzanine gallery lined with bookshelves to hold printed material from the Coram archive, much of which is of historic value. An internal staircase (2) connects the 'reading' floor to the gallery as well as having lift access. A rooflight brings light into the back of the space and provides good natural ventilation.

### 5.3.2 Phase I extension areas

GEA	G+0	140 sq m
	G+1	109 sq m
	G+2	109 sq m*
GIA	G+0	125 sq m
	G+1	101 sq m
	G+2	101 sq m*



Proposed Phase I Section AA



### 5.3.3 Phase I elevations

The challenge for the design of the extension elevations in terms of scale, proportion and materiality has been to:

- Create a distinctive new addition which serves and expresses the function of spaces within.
- Create a strong focal point from the Mecklenburgh Square entrance.
- Be sympathetic to the character of Gregory House and is also clearly part of the 'family' of new buildings within the campus.
- Create a coherent whole at each phase.

The extension is articulated and given distinctive presence by a large double height glazed opening on the south-east facade to bring light and views into the double-height library space. The scale of opening expresses the importance of the library space and acts as a 'gateway' focal point into the campus. The north-east facade has two windows at ground floor level only in response to proximity to Goodenough House and to mitigate overlooking issues. The windows give natural surveillance to the cycle parking area and entrance to 'Coram Voice.' The south-west facade is designed to be removed when Phase 2 is constructed.

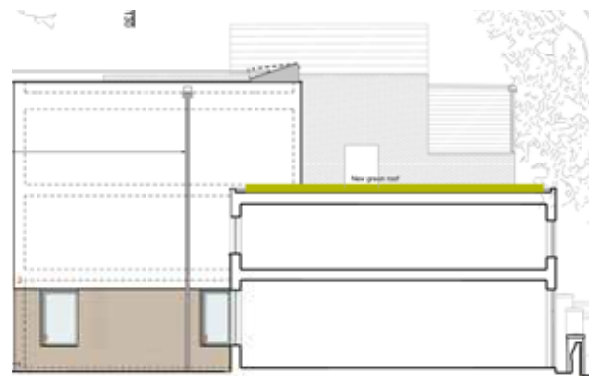
Materials reflect those of Gregory House and of the other recent buildings on Coram Campus: Brick to the base to connect with the 'family' of other brick buildings; white render to relate to Gregory House; ppc aluminium framed fixed and sliding windows of proportion and colour to match the Queen Elizabeth II Centre. The main entrance is surrounded by stone to give it prominence and resonate with the QEII Centre entrance.



Proposed south-east elevation



Proposed south-east elevation



Proposed south-east elevation



Early concept collage

### 5.3.4 Elevation studies

The collage to the left was prepared early on in the design process to establish the 'vision' for Phase I and the view from Mecklenburgh Square gate into the campus. This established the concept for a large upper window to the double height library space and the arrangement of materials - brick base, rendered upper.

The watercolour sketches are examples of the many studies that have been carried out in the design process in 'finding' an appropriate character. The right hand sketch is a study for Phase I, the bottom sketch shows a study for all three phases together.

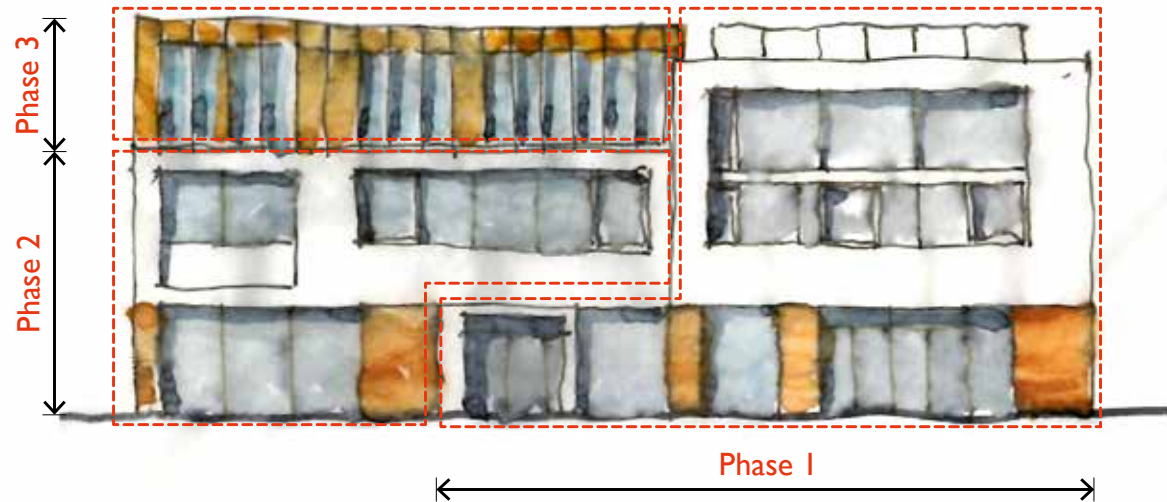


Facade study



Facade study





These are earlier watercolour studies which were prepared as part of a presentation to Coram for discussion, in particular regarding how phasing can be dealt with in both practical and visual terms. This looked at making Phase 3 higher than Phase 1 to articulate the roof line. It was at a time when the library mezzanine floor to ceiling height was very low. In the end the height difference has been reversed by making Phase 1 taller than Phase 3 and increasing the visual prominence of the most important space within the building. At the same time the height of the main mass of building does not exceed that of the 2014 planning permission scheme.





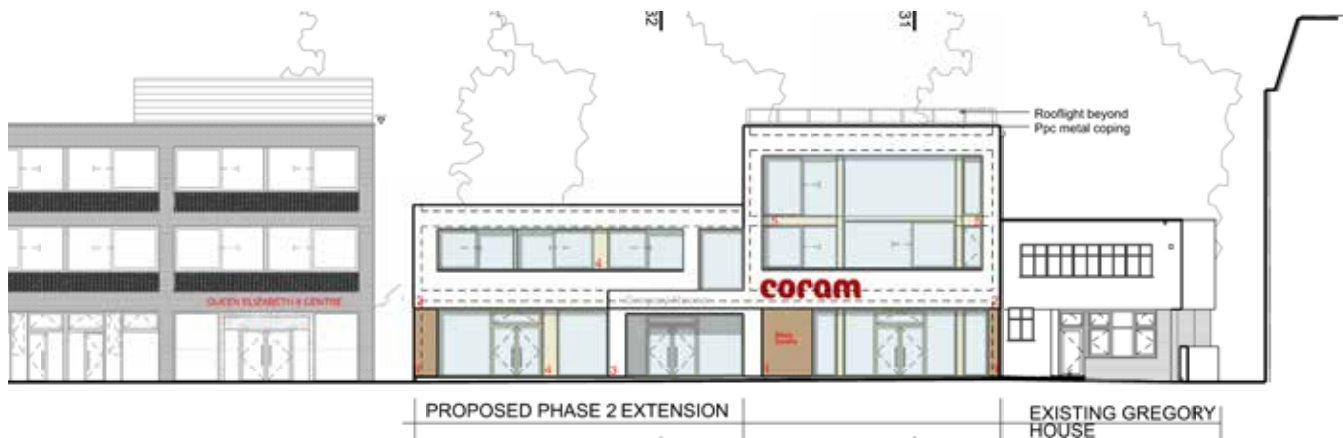
Proposed Phase 2 site plan

## 5.4 Phase 2

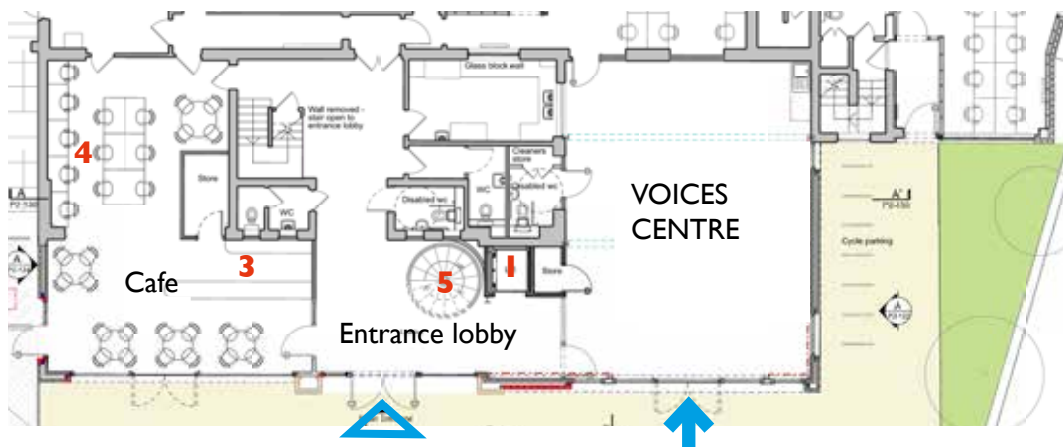
The proposal for Phase 2 includes extending the south-east facade to the approximate line of Phase 1 to provide additional space for a cafe on the ground floor. The cafe is positioned so that it is accessible and visible from both the Mecklenburgh Square entrance and from the main campus courtyard. It has a door facing west into the courtyard and also double doors facing south-east with the potential for chairs and tables to be placed outdoors on the paved area when weather permits. It can also be entered from within Gregory House via the main entrance foyer.

The first floor is extended to the same alignment including over the top of Phase 1 entrance foyer.

A new spiral staircase has been introduced next to the lift to connect the entrance foyer to the first floor library space and also potentially to the first floor offices.



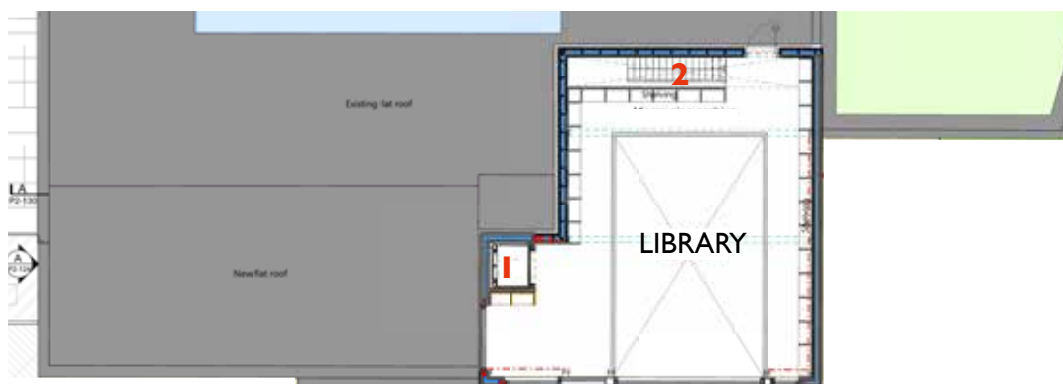
Proposed Phase 2 south-east elevation



Proposed Phase 2 ground floor plan



Proposed Phase 2 first floor plan



Proposed Phase 2 Second floor plan

- 1 Lift
- 2 Library Stair
- 3 Servery counter
- 4 Work area

## 5.4.1 Phase 2 accommodation

Ground floor:

Cafe: To serve coffee, tea, soft drinks and uncooked food (cakes, sandwiches etc) for staff and visitors with tables and chairs and also places for informal work at desktops or laptops. (4) A servery counter (3) is located immediately next to the entrance foyer.

First floor:

The additional space provided by extending at first floor level will be used for office space

## 5.4.2 Phase 2 extension areas

GEA	G+0	42 sq m
	G+1	72 sq m

GIA	G+0	37 sq m
	G+1	66 sq m

## 5.4.3 Phase 1 + 2 extension areas

GEA	G+0	182 sq m
	G+1	181 sq m
	G+2	109 sq m
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>472 sq m</b>

GIA	G+0	162 sq m
	G+1	167 sq m
	G+2	101 sq m
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>430 sq m</b>



### 5.4.3 Phase 2 elevations

The Phase 2 facade follows the same palette as Phase 1 with the introduction of perforated panels which are of the same design as those of the Queen Elizabeth II Centre.

A large glazed opening, similar in design to that of the Voice Centre gives good light and views in and out of the cafe with double doors to give access to the outdoor paved area.

On the first floor, windows have been articulated as long strips which reflect the character and proportion those of existing Gregory House. The arrangement of sliding metal framed windows and fixed panes mirror the design of the Queen Elizabeth II Centre.

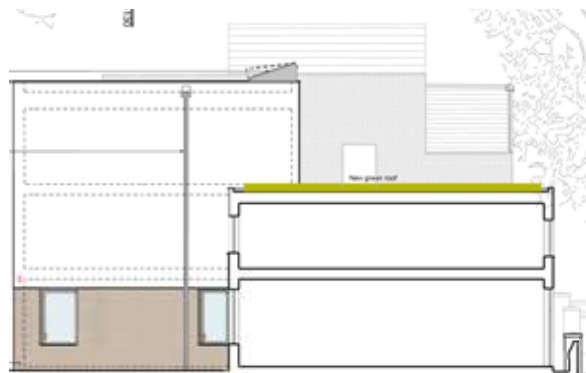
Phase 2 facade is set back from Phase 1 by 300mm to express the difference between the two phases and to ease construction, allowing a construction and movement joint between the two.



Proposed south-east elevation



Proposed south-west elevation



Proposed north-east elevation