

# INTRODUCTION

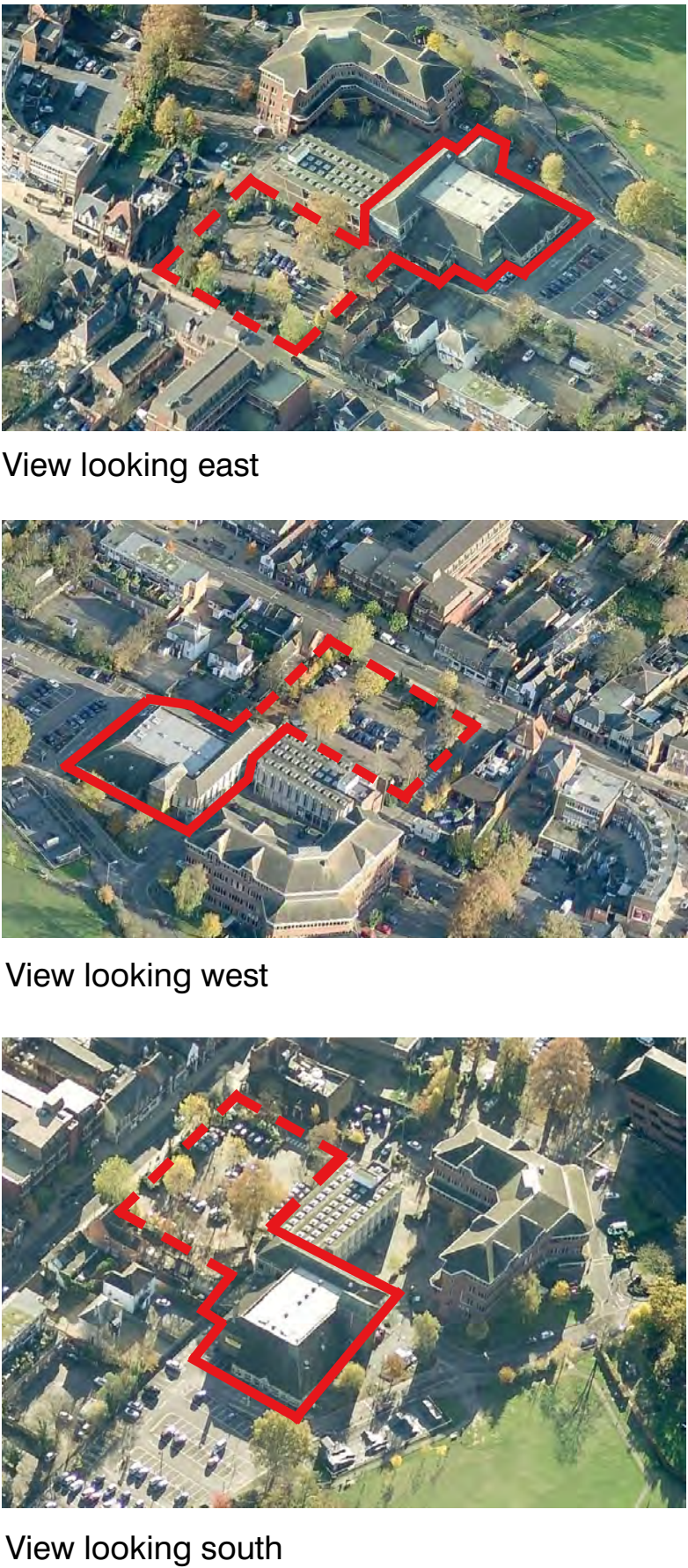
## Context for the Proposal

The Harlington Centre opened in 1972 as a civic complex offering a main hall, meeting rooms and offices. The main hall was originally marked out as badminton courts. A major fire in 1991 destroyed the roof to the main hall. Renovation work included the linking of the library building and the Harlington Centre to create a new reception area and coffee shop. The building was further modified in 1997 to cover the old bin storage area and create a small split level gymnasium.

There was no real focus to the purpose of the building and by 2010 the running costs of the centre had escalated and the usage fallen dramatically.

In 2010 Hart District Council (HDC) transferred the building to Fleet Town Council (FTC), based on a short-term lease because of the potential for a redevelopment of the whole Civic Office area. Following 18 months of concerted efforts by HDC, HCC and FTC in designing a new civic complex, the initiative collapsed with the withdrawal of the developer. FTC took the initiative to employ a professional manager to re-brand, market and run the “Harlington” and bring the facility back to being the entertainment and community heart of Fleet.

The original building and the fit out were not of the highest quality and services are starting to fail. The roof leaks water and the building fabric leaks heat. Users of the Harlington supported the programme of events and community functions, but voiced that the seating, lighting and sound to the theatre were poor, the toilets not up to standard and too small. If no serious investment is made in repairing or refurbishing the building, services will progressively fail and the building will consequently close.



The loss of the Harlington will have significant impacts on the community

- The loss of the only significant entertainment facility in Hart
- The loss of the only major meeting venue for the larger community groups
- A loss of parking revenue to HDC
- An impact on the night economy through loss of trade from Harlington visitors
- Impact on the library that relies on the Harlington for its heating.
- Another empty building affecting the character of Fleet

HDC does not have the financial resources to take back the building and bring it up to modern building standards.

FTC has taken the initiative to explore the options to repair, refurbish or replace The Harlington. These boards set out the options, identify the benefits, the constraints and the cost implications within the framework of the Local Town Council Tax set at £99.81(for band D households) per annum. The additional money raised outside the precept to run the Town Council has been ring fenced for the Harlington. This ring-fenced amount allows the achievement of all three options for the stated period of the loans with no further increase to this element of the Council Tax.

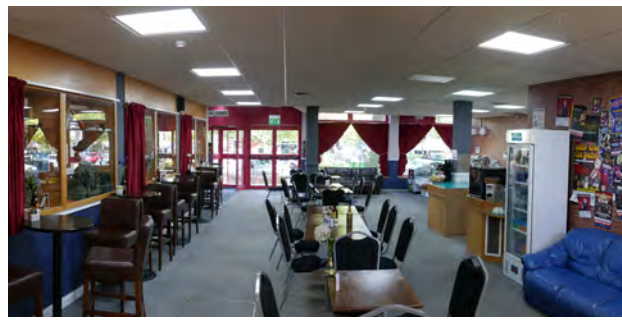
Photography: Google Maps & Bing Maps



# SITE ANALYSIS



The Harlington



Existing cafe and Main Hall



Access issues



Glorious Chestnut tree



Car Parking

- The existing Harlington Centre is set back from Fleet Road and hard to distinguish from its surroundings during the summer months when the trees are in leaf
- The Harlington's frontage tends to be subservient to the Library and therefore tries to compete with a brightly coloured frontage, which is not very attractive
- The approach to The Harlington's main entrance is across a cluttered hard brick car park area rather than a calm civic square
- The War Memorial is similarly surrounded by parking bays detracting from the dignity of the setting
- The approach to the front entrance of the Harlington requires the negotiation of some unsightly steps or a circuitous ramp enclosed by ugly dwarf walls
- There is little direct access to The Views on the North side of The Harlington, except via more hard car parking areas around the far side of the Library and Council's offices
- The Views is a largely hidden amenity away from the life flowing along Fleet Road, although it has a skate board park much enjoyed by younger members of the community
- The external elevations of The Harlington are visually cold and uninviting
- The rear elevations of The Harlington are scarcely recognizable as a cultural centre and stranded in yet more extensive areas of hard car parking
- Fleet Road is relentlessly linear in form with the life of the community coursing mainly along this route. Gurkha Square provides the one opportunity to open up this linearity and create a focus for the community
- Gurkha Square faces South creating a sun trap which could be enjoyed by the public as a place to stop, rest and enjoy



The Skateboard Park



Hart District Council



The Library



War Memorial in Gurkha Square



W.C. Baker & Son Ltd - Context of street

Photography: Burrell Foley Fisher LLP &  
David Fisher, Aldershot, Farnham & Fleet Camera Club (AF&FCC)



# THE EXISTING BUILDING

Existing building fabric and infrastructure slowly decaying as a consequence of an historic lack of preventative maintenance - generally the building is tired and dated



Obsolete and inefficient services and boilers (some have already failed and the rest are in a precarious condition)



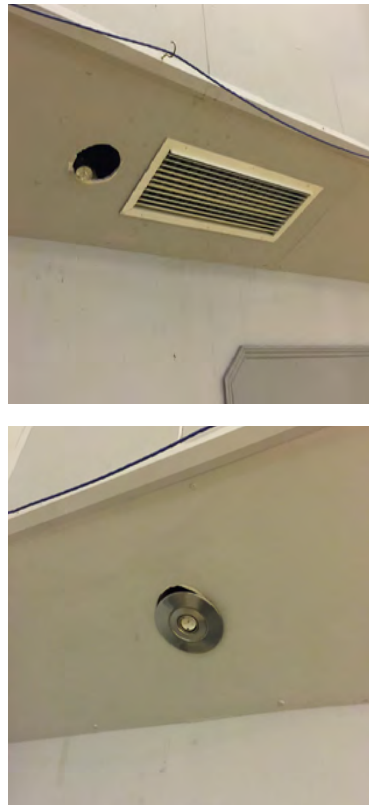
Lack of storage spaces and adequate office facilities for staff



Heating system, pipes, electric wiring, and building fabric finishes need replacement



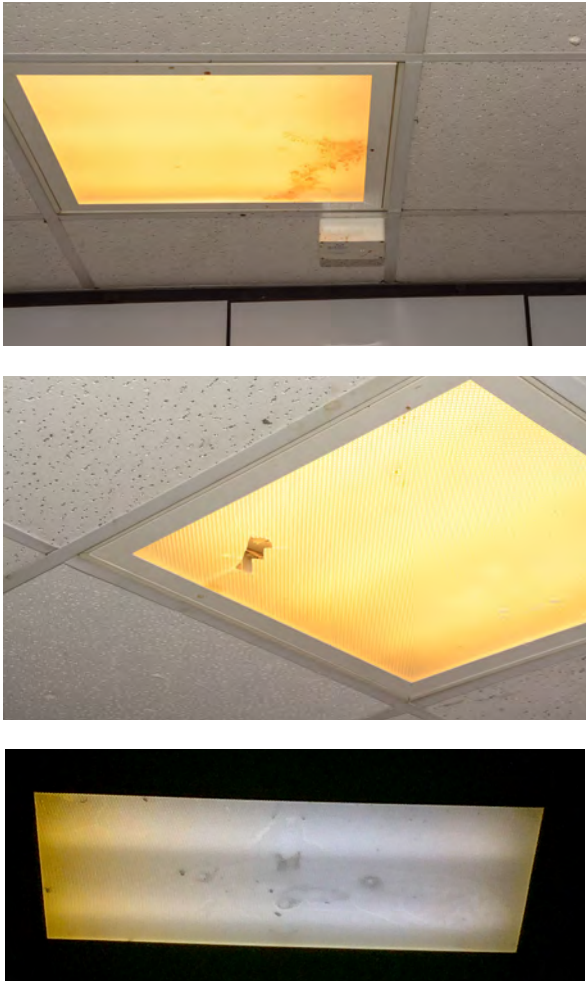
Auditorium lighting damaged



Accessibility issues need to be addressed to meet current legislation



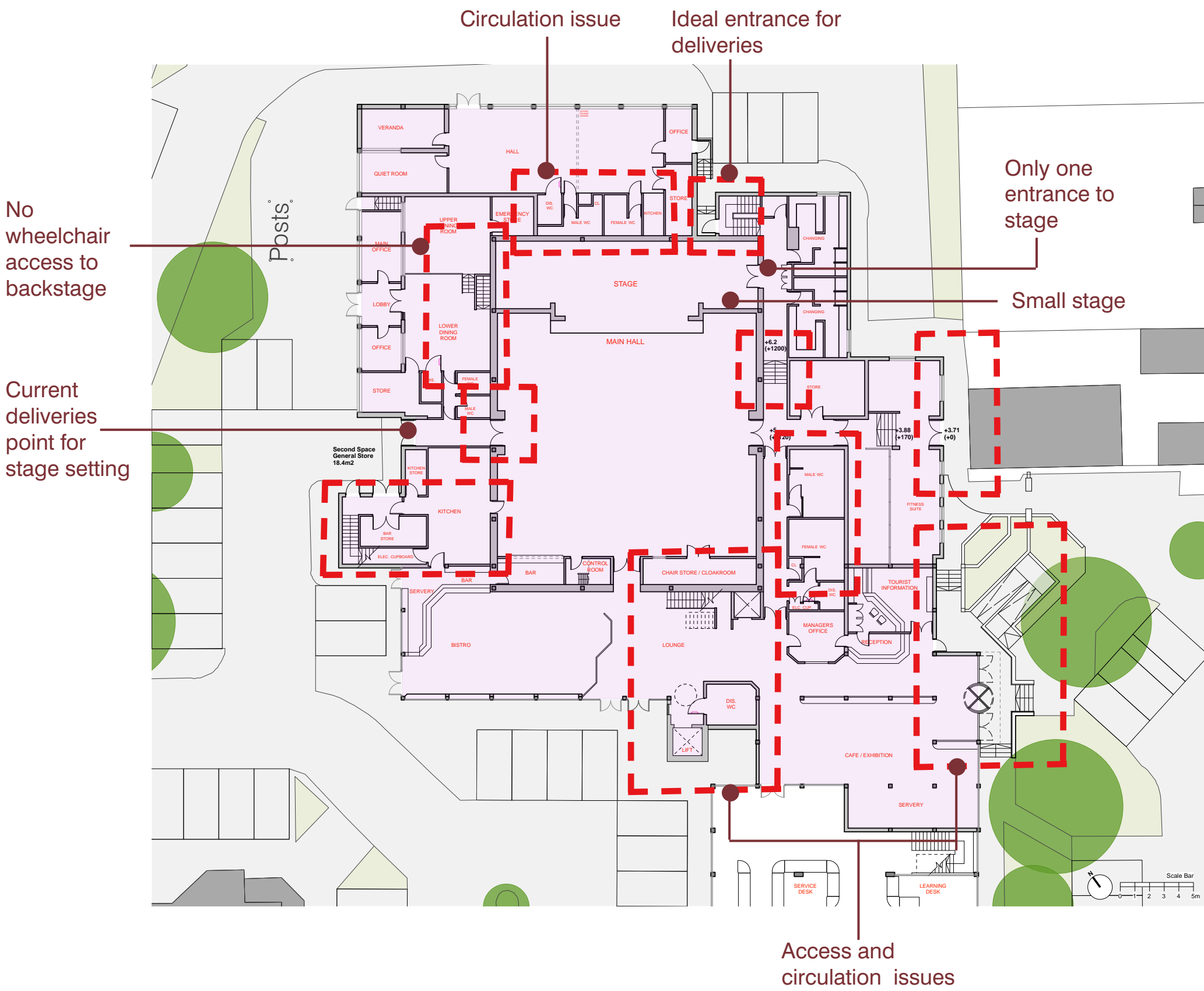
Water damage to lighting from leaking roof



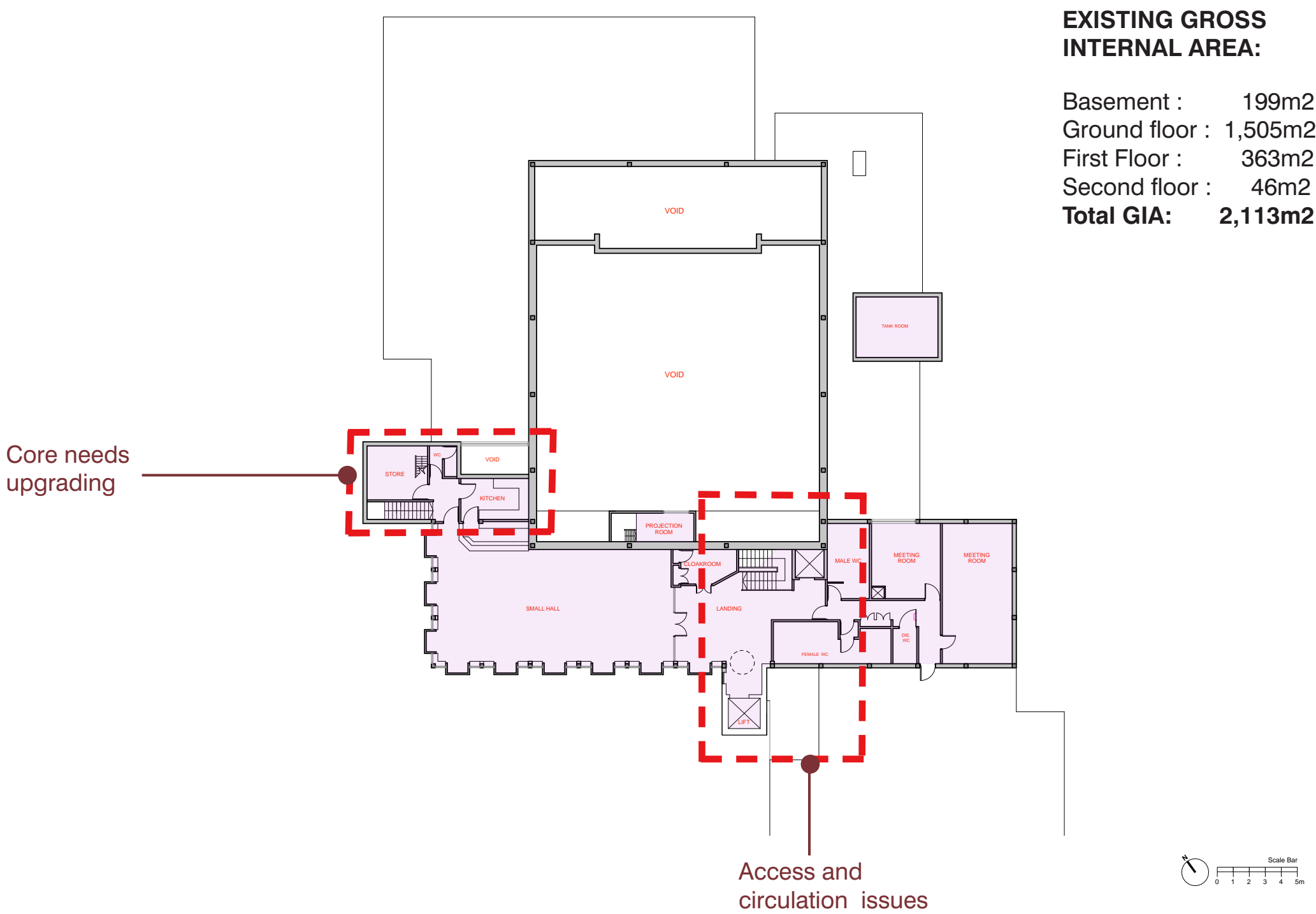
Toilets - in poor condition with damaged facilities, and too small



## EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN



## EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN





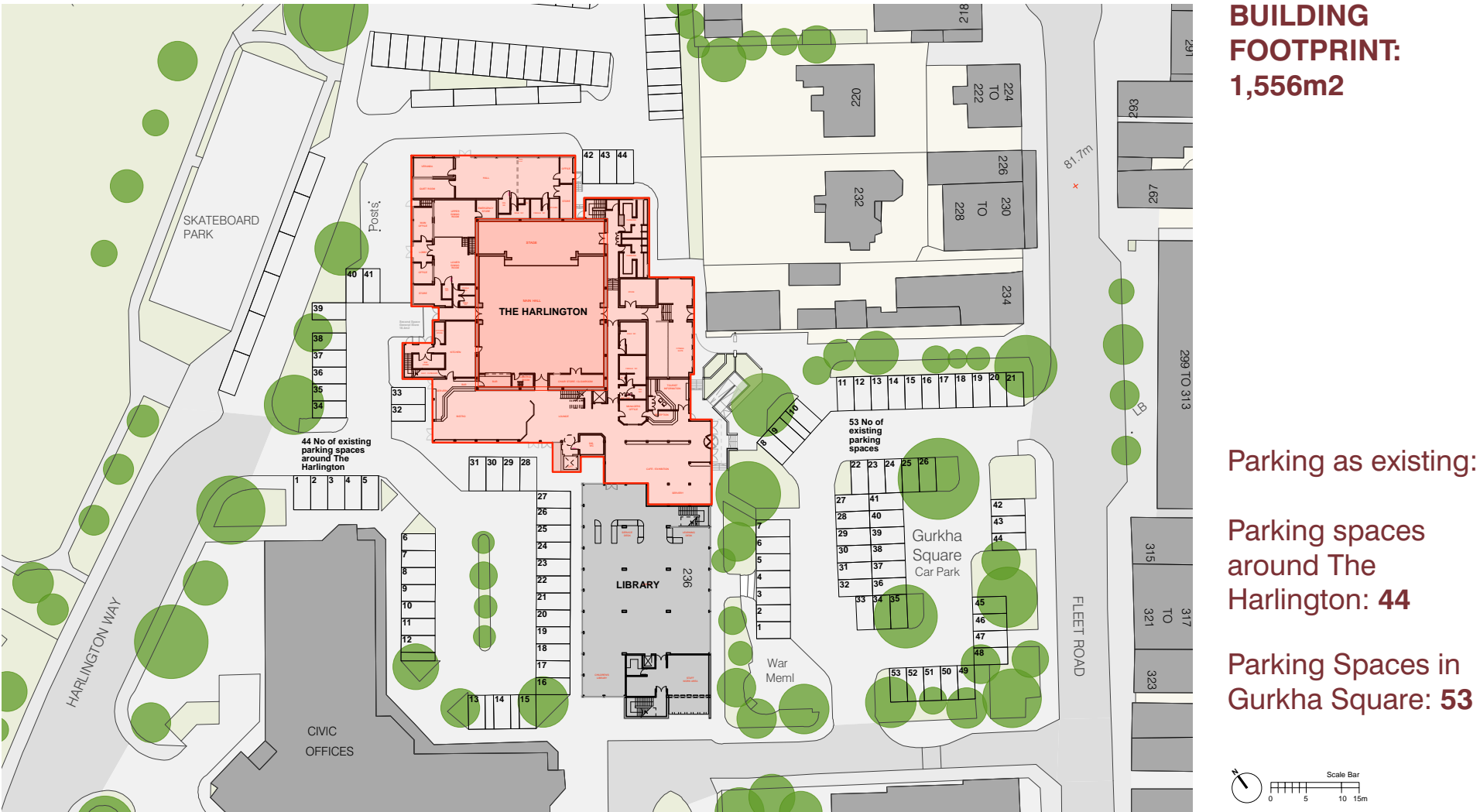
# OPTION 1 - REPAIR

## Essential refurbishment to meet current standards

Leaving the existing Harlington essentially as it is, with replacement of obsolete services (heating and lighting particularly), to bring the complex up to present day standards.

Windows and Roofs will be replaced to achieve current standards of thermal performance and insulation. Toilets and access systems will be updated to meet current accessibility legislation.

The Main Hall is a converted sports hall and in this option will remain as it is: the refurbishment will not bring it up to meet the quality of modern theatres. The Foyer and most backstage areas will also remain as they are now.



Site Plan - Option 1

The Harlington's facade hidden behind trees and vegetation in Gurkha Square



View from Fleet Road



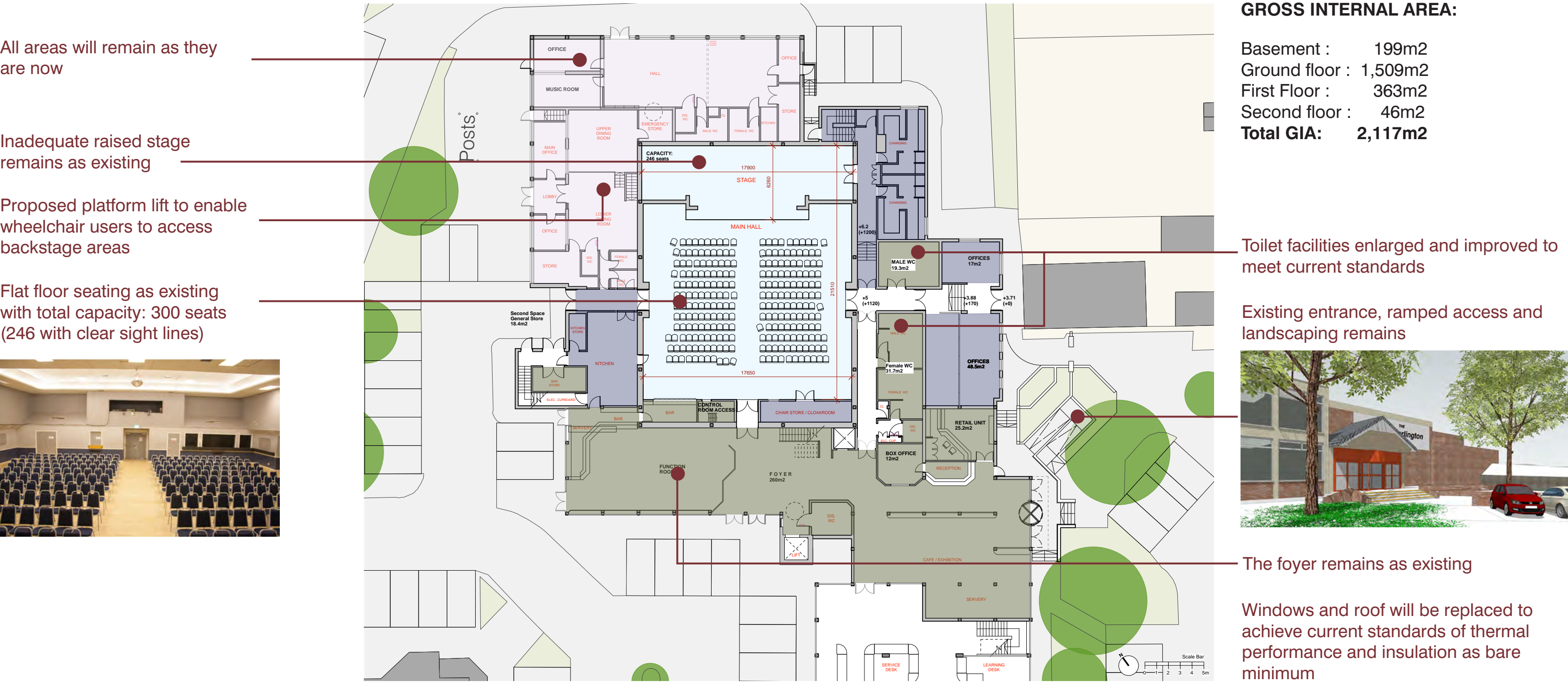
The Harlington's existing facade



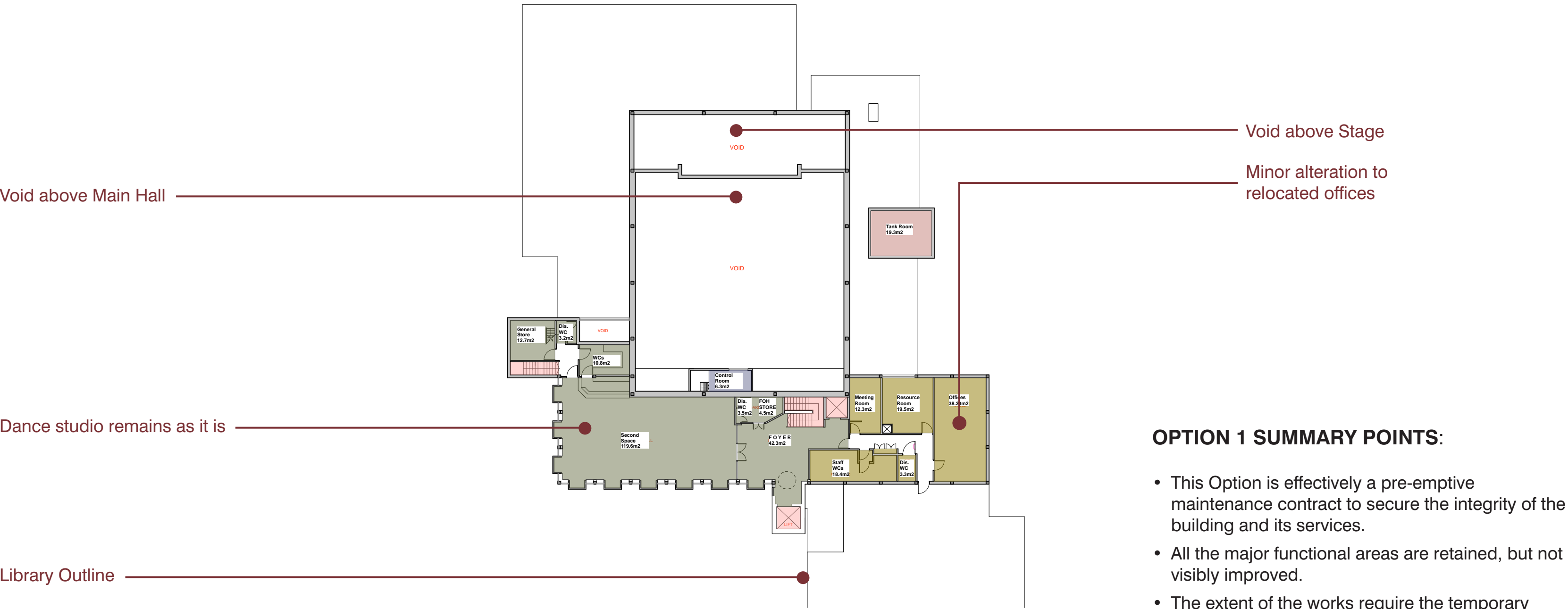
View of existing building

Photography: Burrell Foley Fisher LLP & David Fisher, Aldershot, Farnham & Fleet Camera Club (AF&FCC)

### OPTION 1 - GROUND FLOOR PLAN



### OPTION 1 - FIRST FLOOR PLAN



### OPTION 1 SUMMARY POINTS:

- This Option is effectively a pre-emptive maintenance contract to secure the integrity of the building and its services.
- All the major functional areas are retained, but not visibly improved.
- The extent of the works require the temporary closure of the building.
- There is no external visual impact to the building.
- The total estimated cost of the work including Construction Costs, Contingencies Professional Fees and Inflation is £6.3m.
- The repayment of the loan will be 20 years based upon no increase in the current ring fenced Harlington precept.



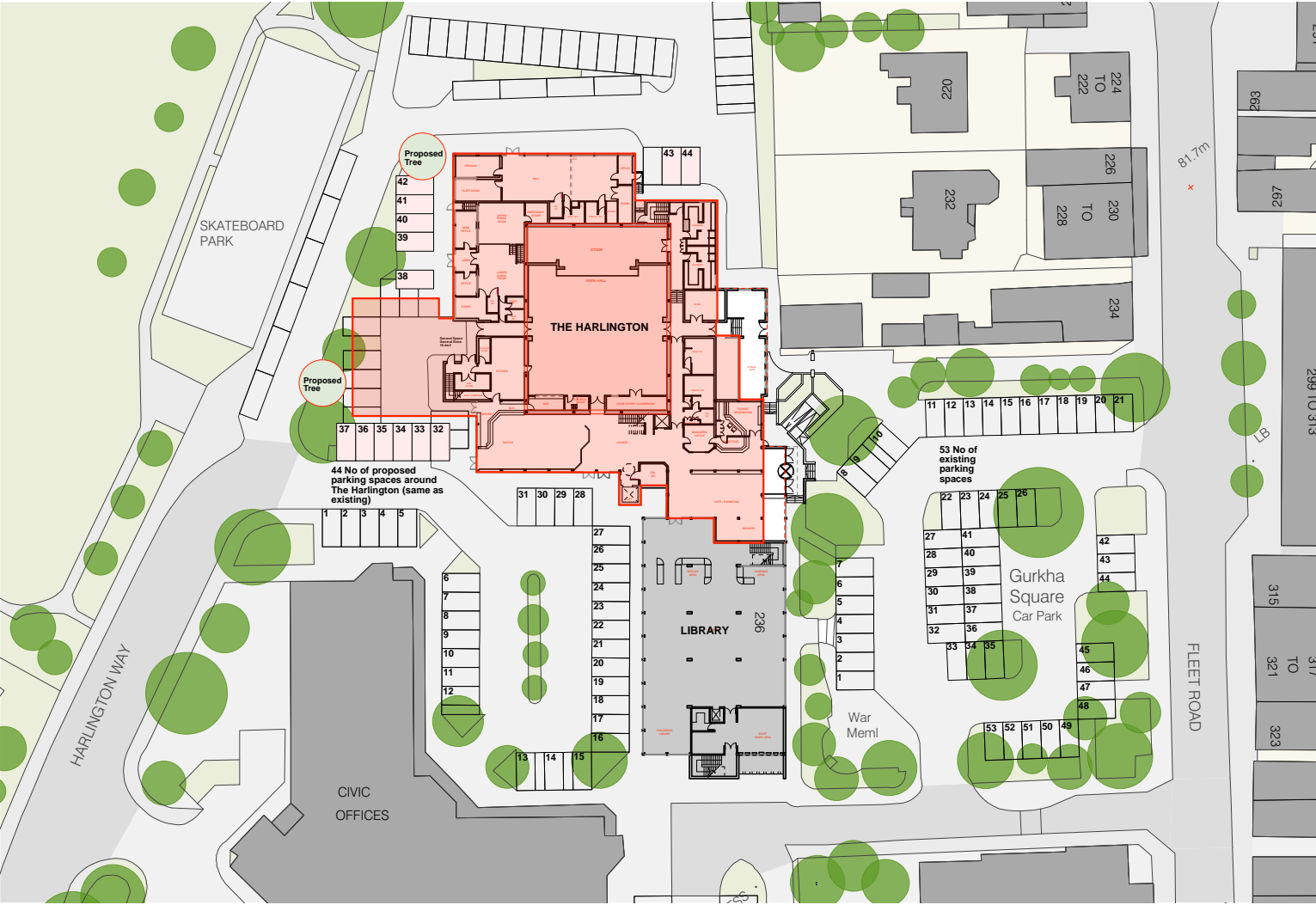
# OPTION 2 - REFURBISH

## Major Refurbishment

Leaving the outside envelope of the existing Harlington essentially as it is, with a major refurbishment inside to provide a significantly enhanced public facility.

As with Option 1, there will be replacement of obsolete services (heating and lighting particularly), to bring the complex up to present day standards. Windows and roofs will be replaced to achieve current standards of thermal performance and insulation.

The configuration of The Main Hall will be updated with the inclusion of a new balcony level. A new Second Space is proposed to the west of the site. The foyer and all back stage areas will be comprehensively refurbished.



Site Plan - Option 2



Refurbished front elevation to The Harlington, projects a welcoming face to Gurkha Square



View of proposed Option 2

### OPTION 2 - GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Windows and roof will be replaced to achieve current standards of thermal performance and insulation

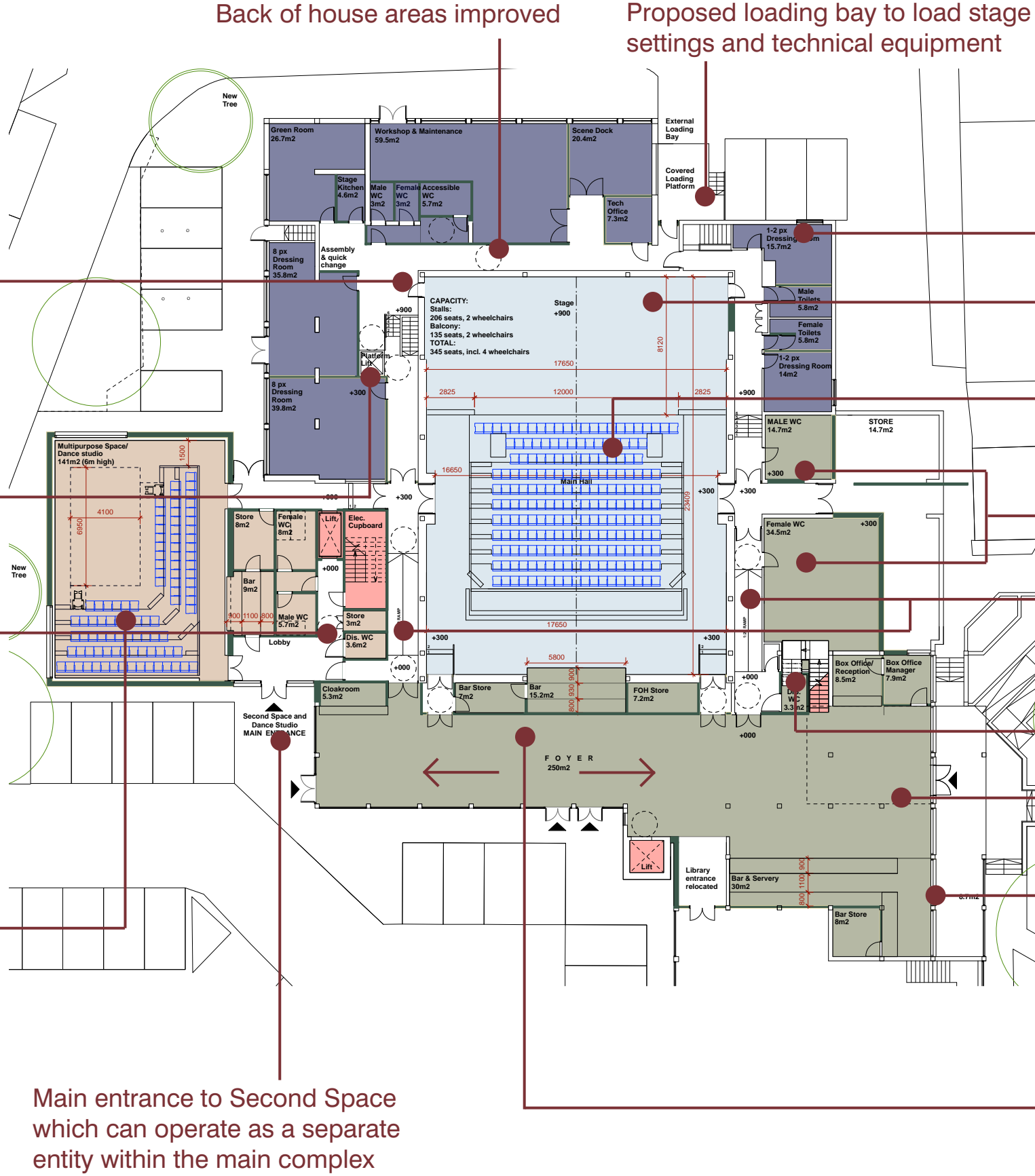
Proposed new second entrance to the main stage

Proposed platform lift to enable wheelchair users to access backstage areas

Re-configured circulation core with lift

New multipurpose Second Space with capacity of 150/200 people (140m<sup>2</sup> and 6m high). This is a flexible area to be used by the public for community and commercial hires.

This addition can be built in a first phase of construction to allow for a variety of activities to run during the refurbishment of the Main Auditorium.



#### GROSS INTERNAL AREA:

Basement :	196m <sup>2</sup>
Ground floor :	1,587m <sup>2</sup>
First Floor :	546m <sup>2</sup>
Second floor :	46m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total GIA:</b>	<b>2,329m<sup>2</sup></b>

### OPTION 2 - FIRST FLOOR PLAN

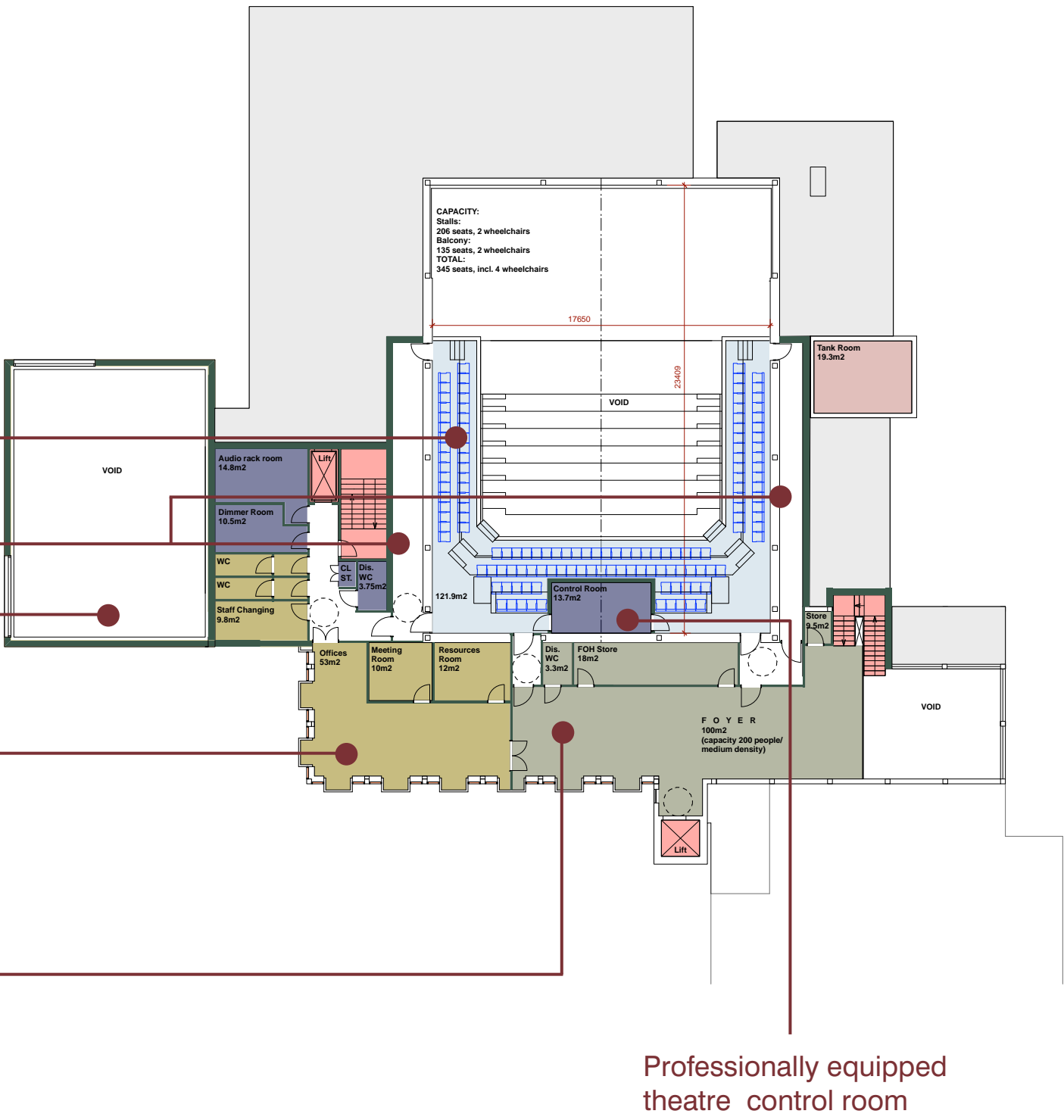
New balcony seats including wheelchair provision.

Additional access and escape corridors

Void over double height multipurpose Second Space

Administration offices located in the former dance studio

Proposed Foyer area 100m<sup>2</sup> capacity for 200 people. This is now larger and connects with the ground floor double height entrance and has a direct view onto both Gurkha Square and the Views.



#### OPTION 2 SUMMARY POINTS:

- This option introduces two major new elements into the facility a new purpose designed theatre within the structural space of the Chernoke Hall and stage area and a new Multi-Functional Secondary Space that can be re-configured to accommodate a broad range of events and uses.
- The new auditorium introduces a highly flexible floor space with tiered retractable seating and a balcony providing a total seating capacity of 346.
- The Second Space can be built as an early phase of construction to provide accommodation for a limited range of events while the major part of the structure is re-configured and renovated.
- Much improved front of house and back stage facilities will occupy the remainder of the footprint of the existing building.
- The total estimated cost of the work including Construction Costs, Contingencies Professional Fees and Inflation is £9.0m.
- The repayment of the loan will be 37 years based upon no increase in the current ring fenced Harlington precept.

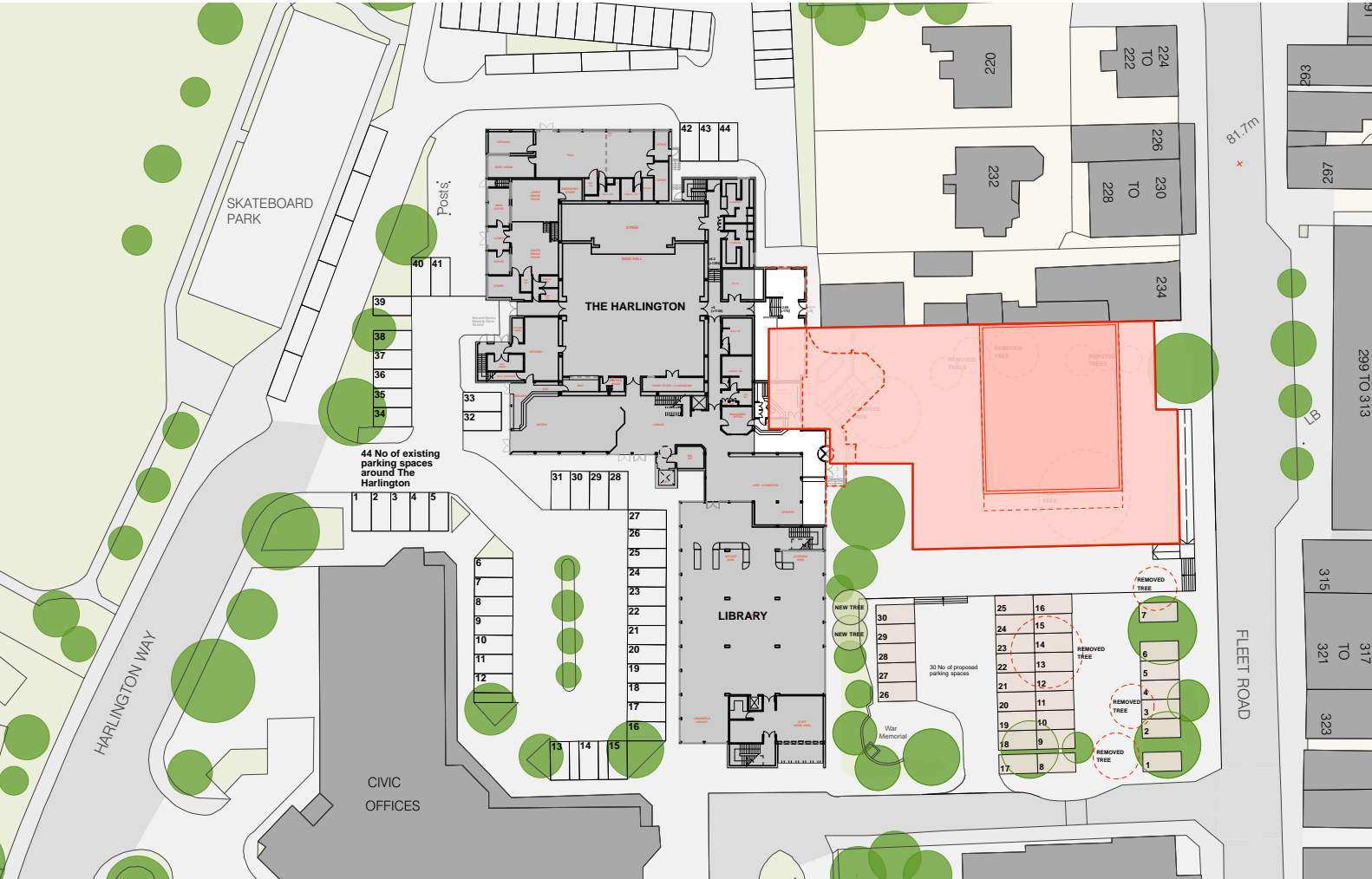


OPTION 3 - REPLACE

New Build scheme including re-imagined Gurkha Square

Replacing the existing Harlington with a purpose built structure along the north side of Gurkha Square. The building will include a state of the art theatre supported by a second space which are designed to complement each other.

Both are accessed from a spacious airy foyer space which makes a strong contribution to Fleet Road. The new building will define a remodelled Gurkha Square, creating a formal civic space for the community of Fleet, capable of being used for civic ceremonies, special events and markets, as well as functioning as a parking area on a day to day basis. The proposal will also include a south-facing cafe terrace raised above the level of Fleet Road.



Street level view of the new Harlington



View of proposed Option 3

OPTION 3 - GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- Dedicated rear entrance for deliveries
- New multipurpose Second Space with capacity of 150/200 people (140m2 and 6m high). This is a flexible area to be used by the public for community and commercial hires.
- Passenger lift
- Main entrance to Second Space and offices, which can function as separate entities within the main complex
- Main entrance to theatre
- Gurkha Square re-imagined as a new public space for the community. The new design of the square emphasises its openness and accessibility.
- New landscaping includes re-paving with different textures including a mix of paving, gravel and planting.
- New entrance to Library
- War Memorial retained and landscaping improved



GROSS INTERNAL AREA:

Basement : 168m2  
Ground floor : 1,112m2  
First Floor : 470m2  
Second floor : 338m2  
**Total GIA: 2,088m2**

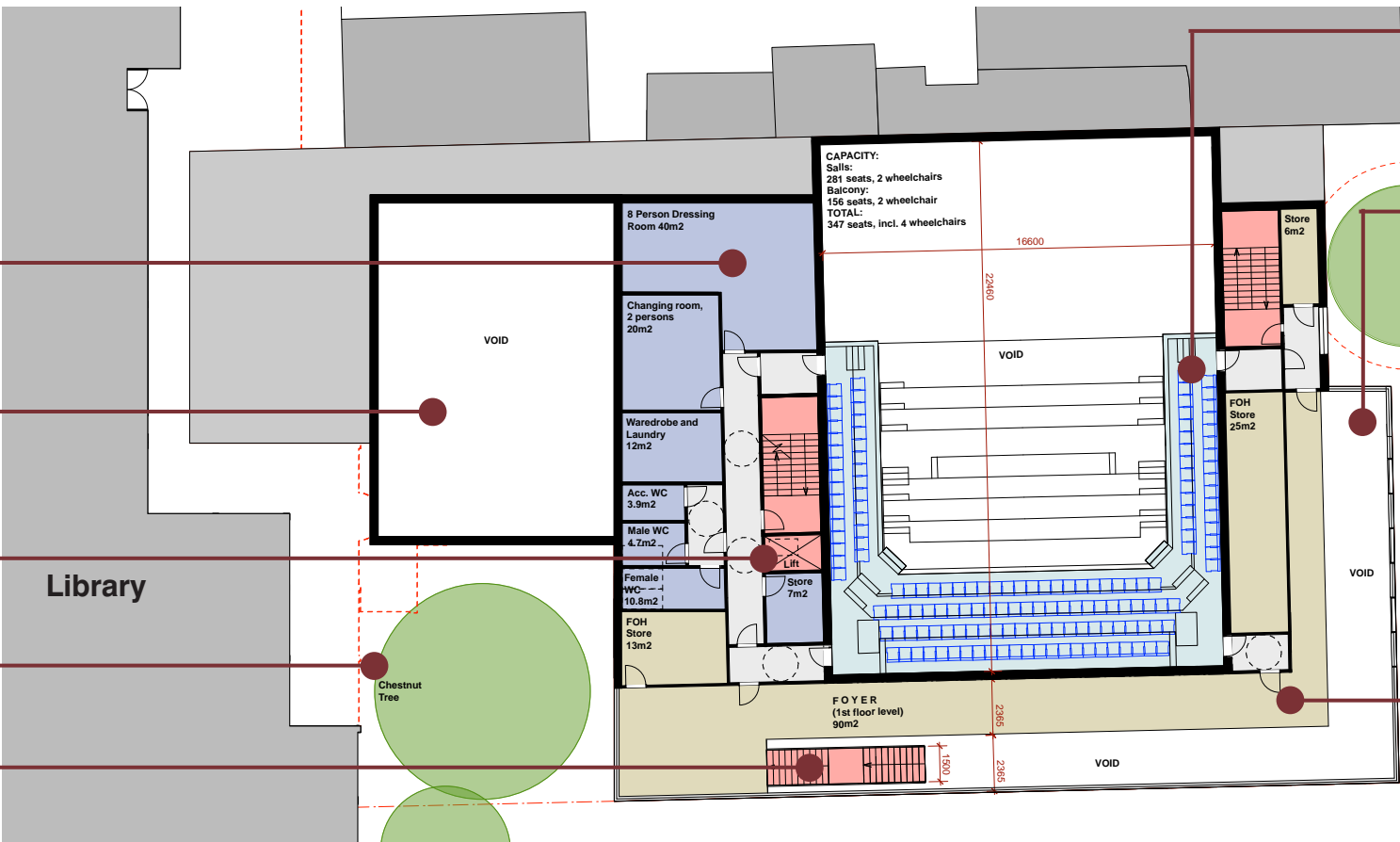
- New larger stage to accommodate a variety of performance types
- Link to lower ground level toilets
- Tiered retractable seating providing a full capacity of 347 including 4 wheelchair spaces
- Double height fully glazed foyer/ cafe
- Existing pavement width retained
- Ramped access to raised terrace
- Elevated terrace providing an alfresco cafe area and an extension of the public space facing Gurkha Square



The re-configured Gurkha Square layout features up to 30 parking spaces including disabled provision.

OPTION 3 - FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- Dressing rooms and back of house services
- Void over double height Second Space
- Passenger lift
- Retained mature chestnut tree
- Main Staircase to upper level

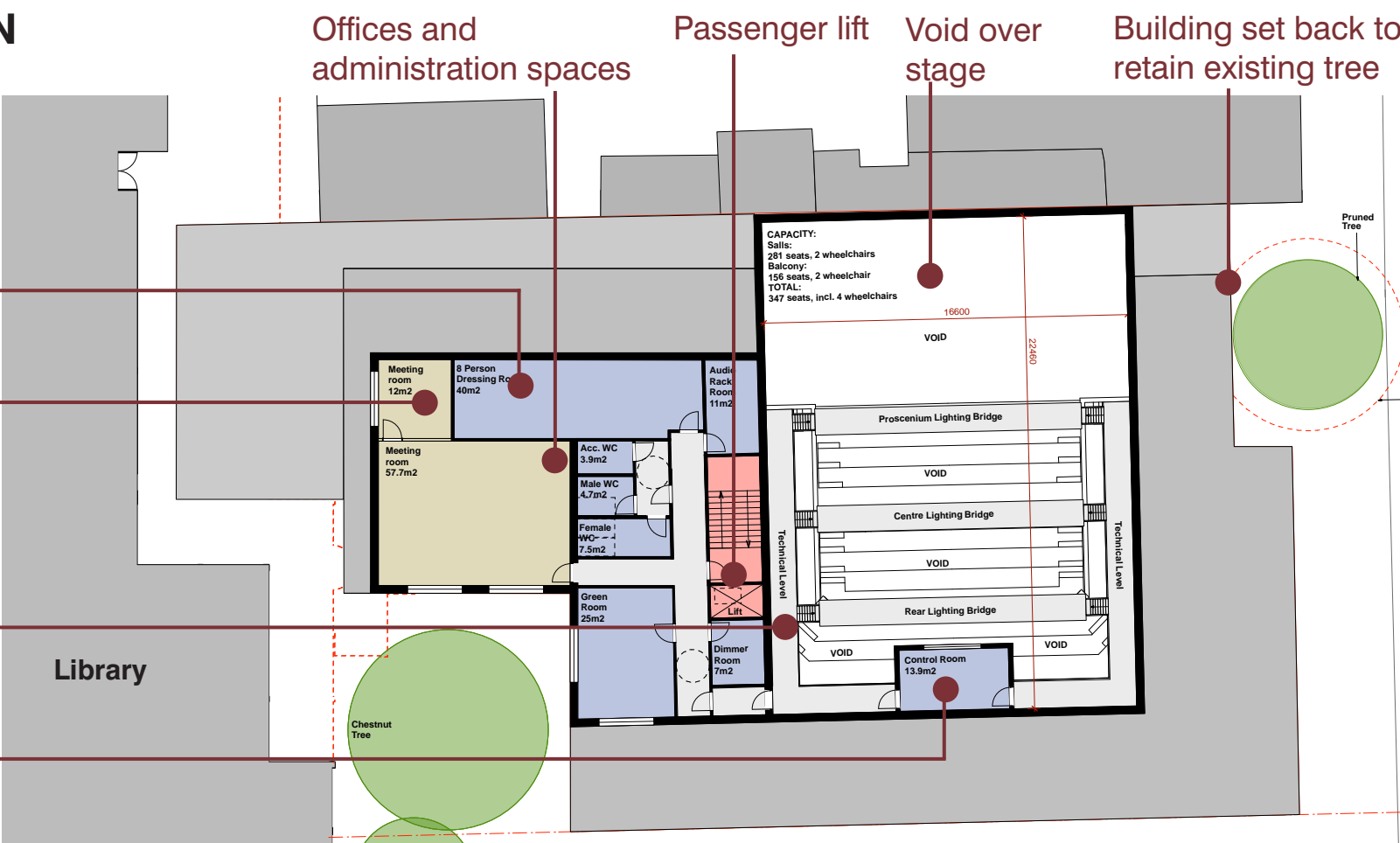


- Balcony level
- Retained tree
- Double height Foyer/ Cafe/ Bar
- Foyer balcony overlooking lower foyer and panoramic view of Gurkha Square



OPTION 3 - SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- Dressing rooms and back of house services
- Meeting room
- Technical galleries
- Proposed control room at second floor level



OPTION 3 SUMMARY POINTS:

- This option represents the opportunity to develop a multi-functional theatre and community building: designed for purpose.
- The main auditorium is proportioned to meet optimum design for both performers and audience with the added bonus that the floor design in combination with tiered retractable seating provides a versatile multi-functional space.
- The second multi-functional space allows another more intimate venue for a broad range of activity.
- Building independently of the existing Harlington structure means there is no disruption in availability of facilities.
- Building out onto Fleet Road creates the opportunity to reimagine Gurkha Square and create an open civic space.
- The fully glazed airy café/bar can be opened onto a terrace giving another dimension to Gurkha Square and a vantage point to watch community events.
- The contemporary glass facade adds a new dynamic to the Town.
- The total estimated cost of the work including Construction Costs, Contingencies Professional Fees and Inflation is £9.9m.
- The repayment of the loan will be 45 years based upon no increase in the current ring fenced Harlington precept.



DESIGN OF THE THEATRE

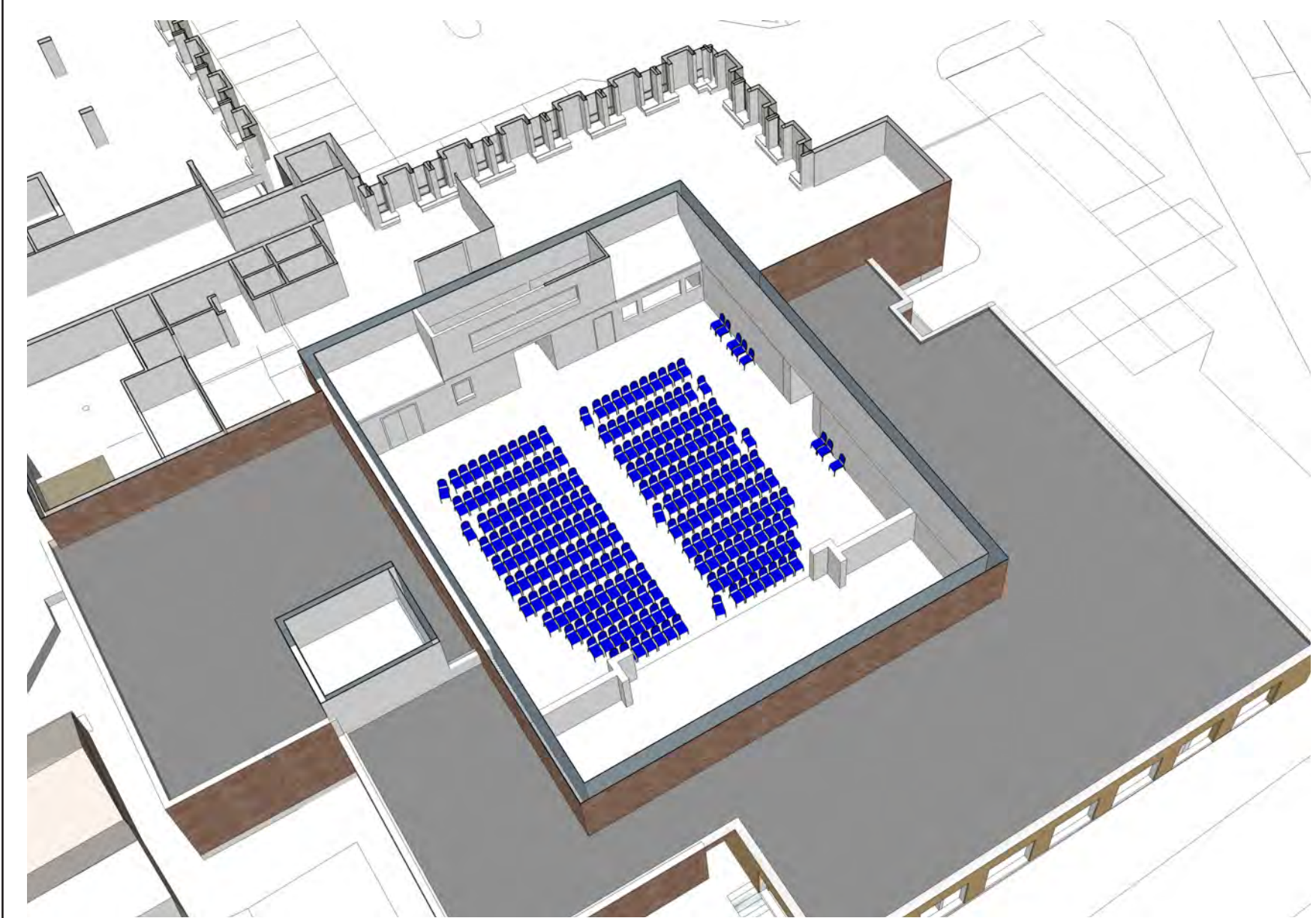
The Auditorium

REPAIR

OPTION 1	
	Issues remaining
✗	Not designed as an auditorium
✗	Low quality flat floor seating
✗	Seating capacity below requirement. 300 seats (246 with clear sight lines)
✗	No balcony seating
✗	Uncomfortable seats/poor sightlines
✗	Inflexibility of auditorium
✗	Stage size limits programming options
✗	Acoustic quality compromised
✗	Sound transmission through building
✗	Limited backstage facilities
✗	Limited stage size
✗	No backstage load in / delivery
✗	Lighting/sound infrastructure needs updating for future
✗	No technical zone for rigging equipment
✗	Limited backstage accessibility

OPTION 1 Capacity:

TOTAL: 300 flat floor seats (246 with clear sight lines)  
Standing: 380-520



OPTION 1 - View of main auditorium - This will remain as existing

REFURBISH

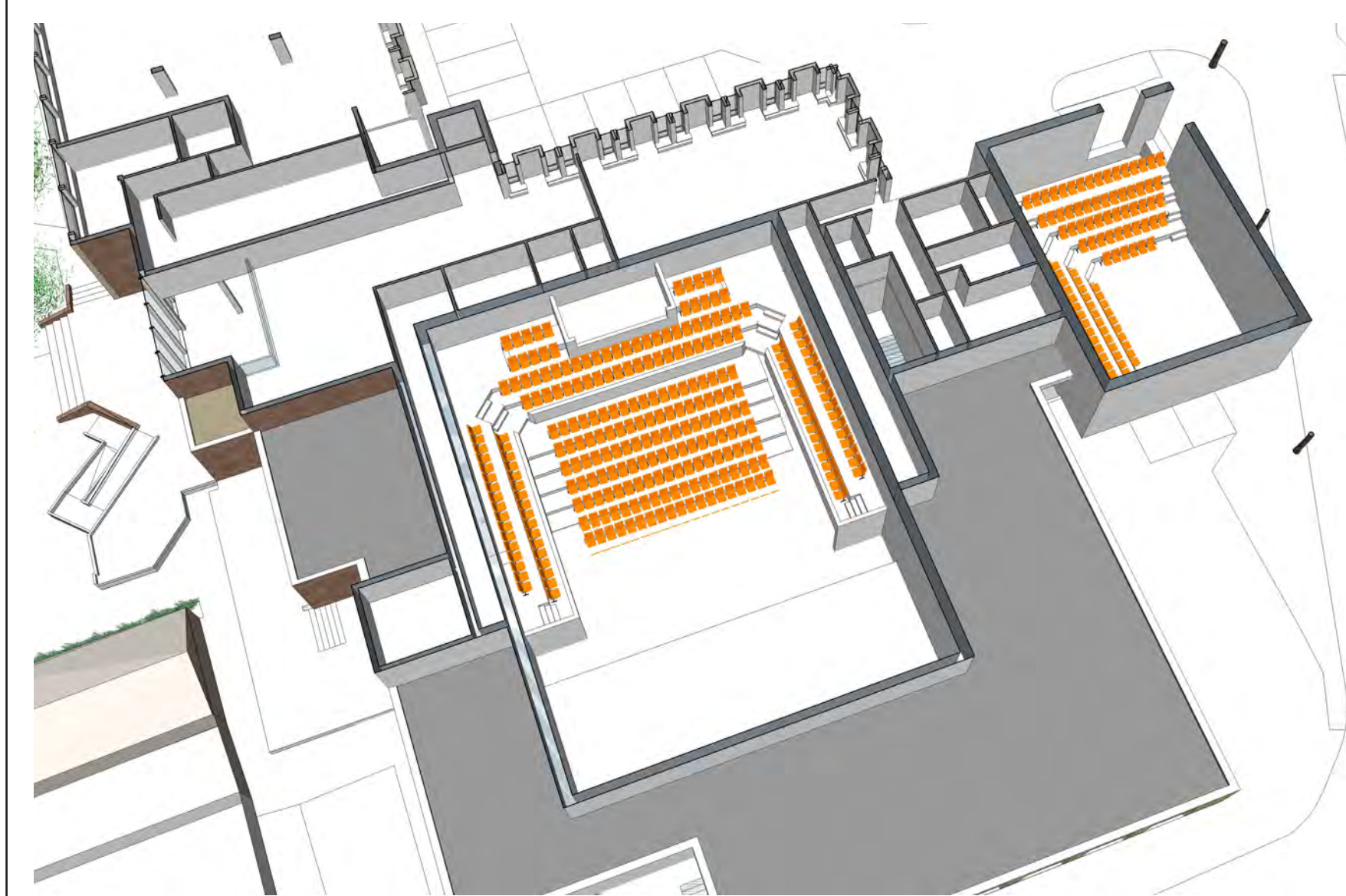
OPTION 2	
	Level of improvement
✓	Improved, but some restrictions remain
✓	Retractable tiered seating, but restricted by current dimensions
✓	Capacity increased to 346, but layout restricted by current dimensions
✓	Balcony installed, but layout restricted by current dimensions
✓	Comfortable seating installed. Sightlines improved
✓✓	Flexible stage height/floor levels to optimise standing events & cabaret seated shows
✓	More options due to larger stage and improved stage facilities
✓	Improved but Level of improvement restricted by current building frame
✓	Improved, but issues remain with fabric of the building
✓	Improved, but restricted by current building footprint
✓	Stage size increased to take bigger more varied shows
✓	Load in area created
✓	Re-designed to fit current building structure
✓	Improved, through adjustments to roof
✓	Meets minimum requirements

OPTION 2 Capacity:

**Theatre:**  
Stalls: 206 seats & 2 wheelchairs  
Balcony: 136 seats & 2 wheelchairs

**Second Space:**  
Round: 133 seats  
End stage: 123 seats  
Corner Stage: 98 seats  
Standing Capacity: 150-200

**TOTAL: 346 seats, incl. 4 wheelchairs**  
**Standing: 290-536**



OPTION 2 - View of main auditorium space illustrating the proposed tiered retractable seating, and balcony with control room at first floor level

REPLACE

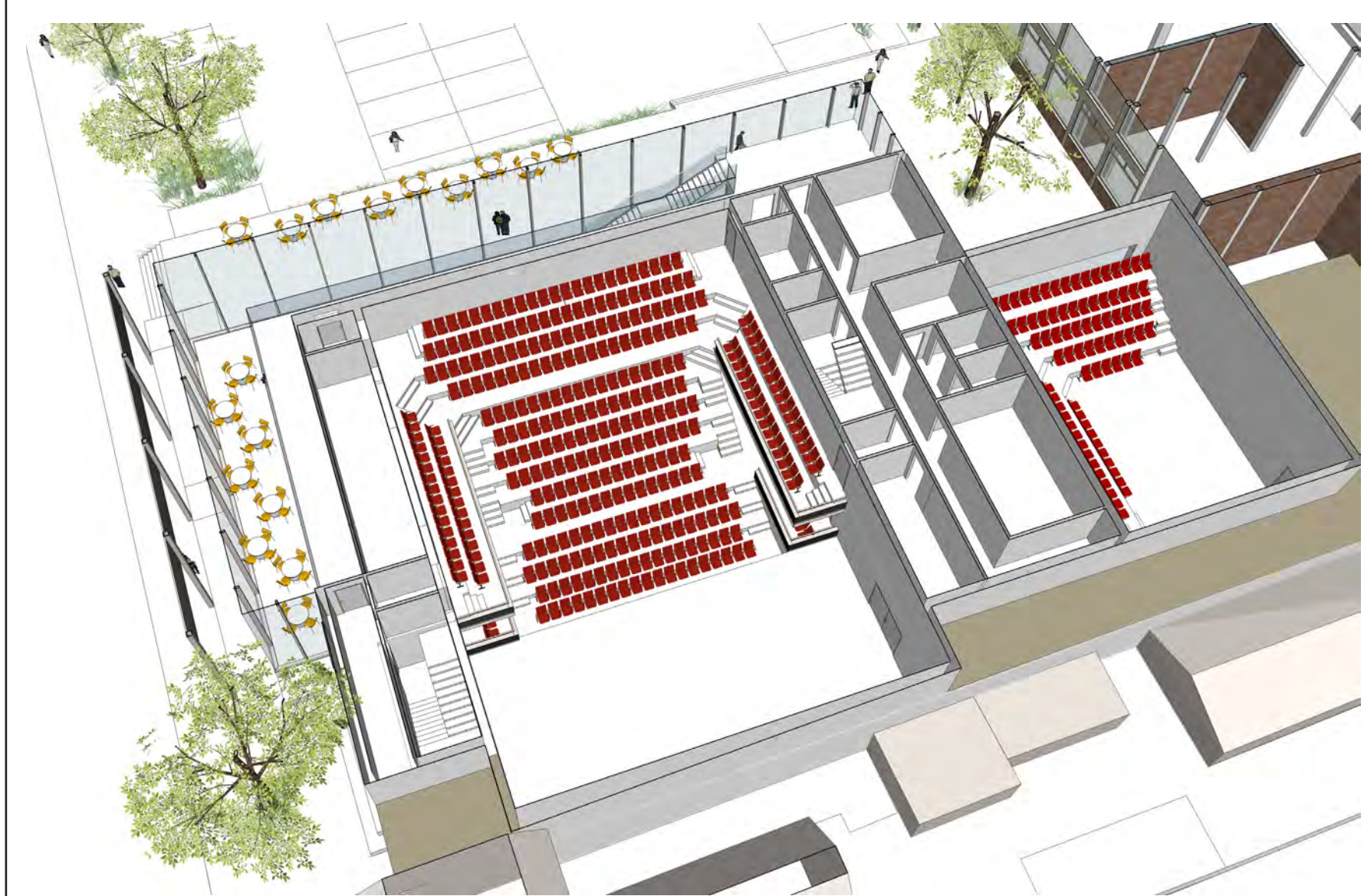
OPTION 3	
	Level of improvement
✓✓	Designed to exact specifications
✓✓	Retractable tiered seating. Designed to exact specifications
✓✓	Capacity designed to seat 347 in optimal layout
✓✓	Balcony designed to specifications. Stage view optimised
✓✓	Comfortable seating installed. Layout designed to optimise sightlines
✓✓	Flexible stage height/floor levels to optimise standing events & cabaret seated shows
✓✓	More options due to greater capacity & significantly improved stage facilities
✓✓	Theatre designed to achieve maximum acoustic quality
✓✓	Acoustically designed sound containment
✓✓	Designed to exact theatre specification
✓✓	Stage size increased to take bigger shows. Flexibility to change size and capacity
✓✓	Load in area incorporated into design
✓✓	Designed integrally with new auditorium
✓✓	Fully accessible technical level for equipment rigging
✓✓	Designed to requirements

OPTION 3 Capacity:

**Theatre:**  
Stalls: 187 seats & 2 wheelchairs  
Balcony: 156 seats & 2 wheelchair

**Second Space:**  
Round: 133 seats  
End stage: 123 seats  
Corner Stage: 98 seats  
Standing Capacity: 150-200

**TOTAL: 347 seats, incl. 4 wheelchairs**  
**Standing: 270-500**



OPTION 3 - View of main auditorium space. Tiered retractable seating and wheelchair spaces at ground floor level and balcony at first floor level. Technical galleries and lighting bridges at second floor level will allow for higher quality performances.



# THE FUTURE OF GURKHA SQUARE



Option 3 - View looking north illustrating the new improved design and landscape of the square

- Option 3 scheme proposes the re-modelling of Gurkha Square
- The south-facing alfresco cafe is located on the raised terrace facing both Fleet Road and the re-imagined Gurkha Square
- Gurkha square has been improved as a civic space to be used by the community for public events and activities
- The re-imagined design promotes openness and accessibility



Option 3 - View looking south-west down Fleet Road

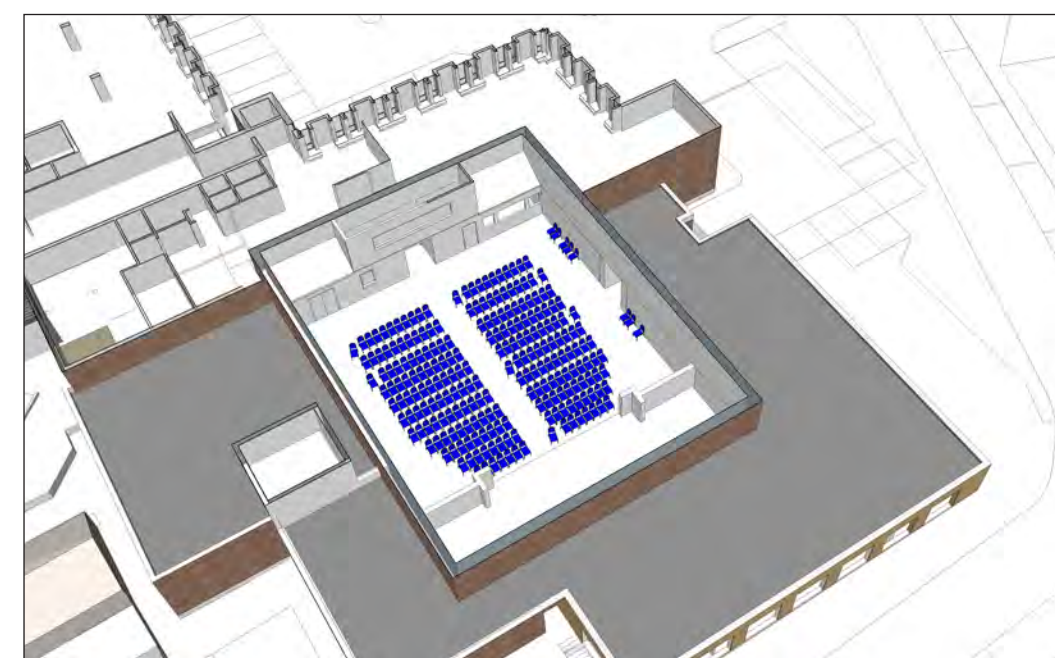


Option 3 - View looking north-east into Gurkha Square

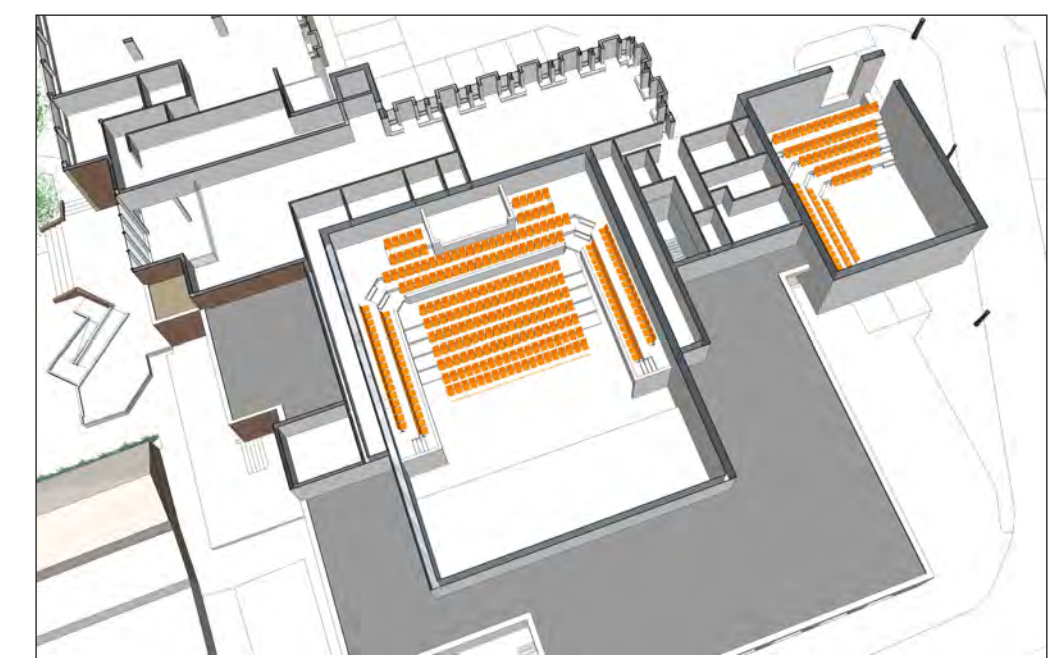


OPTIONS SUMMARY

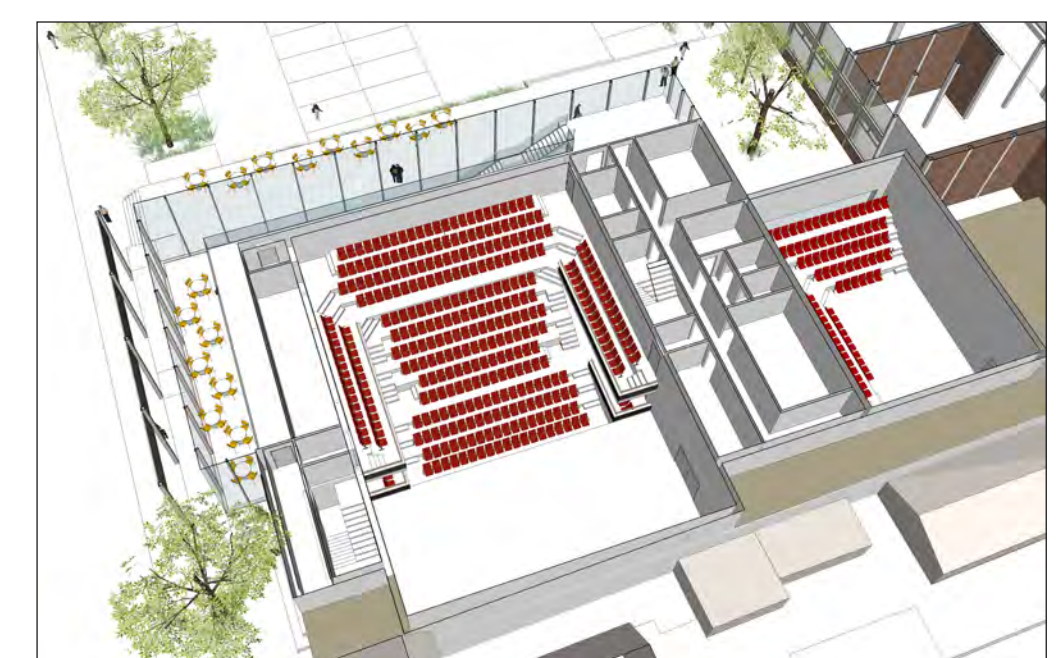
REPAIR



REFURBISH



REPLACE



Parameter	OPTION 1 Repair	OPTION 2 Refurbish	OPTION 3 Replace
Enhanced theatre	No	Significant improvement	Major Improvement
Tiered Retractable Seating	No	Yes	Yes
Balcony Seating	None	Limited	Good
Multi - functional facility	Poor	Improved	Good
Flexible Second Space	Dance Studio	Yes multi-functional	Yes multi-functional
Catering Facilities	Redecorated Coffee Shop	New Foyer Café/bar	Flexible Café/bar/terrace
Accessibility	Meets minimum standards	Improved	Good
Maintenance of services during construction	Closure during repair work	Better: some continuity using second space	Full availability
Opportunity to Access Public Grants (Arts Council etc.)	Minimal	Good	Very Good
Retention of youth services within the building	Yes	Temporary Extension	No
Retention of RVS within the building	Yes	No	No
Retention of Parking in Gurkha Square	100%	100%	57%
Impact on Townscape	None	Minimal	Significant
ESTIMATED PROJECT COST (1)	£6.3m	£9.0m	£9.9m
Repayment Period (2)	20 years	37 years	45 years

(1) Project Cost all inclusive of Construction Cost, Contingencies, Professional Fees and Inflation.  
(2) Repayment Period based upon no increase in the current ring fenced Harlington Precept.