

RESPONSE TO PLANNING FEEDBACK



Client: Hopwood Hall College
Project: Conversion of Former Chapel
Reference: 20765-HCO-TC030
Date: August | 2024



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1.0 HISTORIC ENGLAND FEEDBACK

1.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- Generally supportive of the repair works
- Generally supportive of bringing the building back into use
- Generally supportive of the new structure to the Sanctuary
- Concerns about the proposed sub-division of the chapel interior and the impact this will have on its significance.
- Encourage the removal or reduction in size of classroom pods to either side of the main entrance to the chapel, to give a greater impression of the volume of the space and to prevent the sanctuary from becoming enclosed. The use of high-quality materials and finishes, with design drawing on the geometric shapes will be vital in sustaining the significance of the listed building.



Ms Rachel Carney
Rochdale Borough Council
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
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Direct Dial: +447990339949
Our ref: L01579606
1 August 2024

Dear Ms Carney

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021 & T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 & Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990

**HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE, MIDDLETON CAMPUS, ROCHDALE ROAD, MIDDLETON, M24 6XH
Application Nos 24/00548/LBC & 24/00547/FUL**

Thank you for your letters of 10 July 2024 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Historic England Advice

Significance

Milnrow Chapel was built in 1964-65 as a worship space for De La Salle College, now Hopwood Hall College. It was constructed to designs by Frederick Gibberd in association with Reynolds and Scott. The chapel has an octagonal plan, with a raised central sanctuary containing the altar (now removed). The design of the internal space was influenced directly by the Liturgical Movement, where church design moved away from traditional cruciform designs and towards an in-the-round layout. This was so more people could be close to the altar and all the congregation were within direct line of sight of it.

Directly above the sanctuary is a spectacular roof lantern with coloured glass which provides most of the natural light to the interior space. The chapel is constructed from concrete beams and columns, with concrete blockwork walls. The interior roof has exposed Y-shaped concrete beams with infilled areas sprayed white, creating an iconic geometric design which pulls the design of the interior space of the building together as a whole. The chapel is strongly reminiscent of Gibberd's Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and is thought to be a precursor to it, echoing much of the



architectural language on a smaller scale.

Milnrow Chapel is listed at Grade II reflecting its significance. It is an excellent example of a small, liturgically inspired Catholic chapel by Gibberd with well-preserved interior features, and consequently has high evidential and historic value. The location chosen for the chapel on top of a hill in the designed landscape surrounding Hopwood Hall (listed Grade II*) emphasises its prominence and its relationship to the Hall, which was the original location of De La Salle College, adding to its significance.

Although deconsecrated, the strong communal value of the chapel is linked to its former use as a place of worship. The whole ethos surrounding the design is one of inclusion and communal activity, and the large, open interior space reflects this. Reuse of places of worship can be beneficial in fostering wellbeing and connectivity as people appreciate the peaceful atmosphere and spiritual aspects of the architecture.

Impacts

The proposals seek to carry out repair works to the interior and exterior of the chapel, and re-order the interior space to create individual teaching and staff spaces in the form of enclosed pods.

We welcome the proposals to repair the building and to secure its sustainable future, however the sub-division the internal space will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the chapel. The interior space is key to appreciating the architecture of the building, and the proposals will result in interior finishes being obscured and will reduce the legibility of the space. The proposal drawings, especially the view from the entrance towards the sanctuary, show a very different view from that which was originally intended, with the proposed appearance being that of an enclosed corridor leading to the centre of the building.

The lightweight canopy structure in the sanctuary area is effective in defining this space, and we do not consider this to cause a high level of harm. This is in-keeping with the buildings' original function as a place of worship, with the central sanctuary as its focus. However, the enclosed classroom pods change the natural of the internal space drastically, rendering the original volume of the chapel illegible and harming its significance.

As the majority of the proposed works relate to the interior of the chapel, with external works limited to like-for-like repairs, we do not consider that there will be an impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed Hopwood Hall.

Policy

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic



environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023). These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para.195) and that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, to a level of detail that is proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (para. 200).

When considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be (para. 205). Any harm to significance requires clear and convincing justification (para. 206), which is linked to the requirement for local authorities to seek to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (para 201).

In practice that means that less harmful alternative solutions should be explored through the pre-application and application processes. Para. 208 instructs that the Council should eventually weigh harm against the public benefits of proposals in judging the planning balance.

Position

Based on the information provided we have concerns about the proposed sub-division of the chapel interior and the impacts this will have on its significance.

We would encourage the removal or reduction in size of classroom pods to either side of the main entrance to the chapel, to give a greater impression of the volume of the space and to prevent the sanctuary from becoming enclosed. The use of high-quality materials and finishes, with design drawing on the geometric shapes will be vital in sustaining the significance of the listed building.

The chapel is currently the subject of a list entry amendment, along with the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool. The list entry amendment process routinely considers whether the listing grades of buildings being assessed are still considered correct, and this is something the LPA may wish to bear in mind.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the applications on heritage grounds. We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the applications to meet the requirements of paragraphs 195 and 206 of the NPPF.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)



Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Louise Davies
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
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1.0 HISTORIC ENGLAND FEEDBACK

1.2 RESPONSE

1.2.1 Removal of Classroom Pods

Consideration has been given to the removal of the two pods to either side of the entrance as requested.

The Department of Education funding obtained for the repair and upgrading works has been awarded on the basis of a fixed schedule of accommodation which will allow the College to successfully deliver the T-Levels curriculum. This includes four Classrooms and two VR suites as shown, along with the associated staff office and wc accommodation. The classroom pods are therefore considered essential for the building to become operational as a new T-level Engineering and Virtual Reality (VR) learning centre.

Removing the classroom pods would render the building unsuitable for the proposed use in which case the College would not be able to draw down the DFE funding and the project would become unviable.

1.2.2 Size of Classroom Pods

The size of the Classroom pods has been based upon the minimum areas required to facilitate a class size of 20 learners. This is based upon 20 desks each incorporating a PC with dual monitors which has been identified by the College as the minimum requirement for the successful delivery of the T-Levels curriculum. Guidance has been sought from a desk manufacturer in order to ensure that the classroom sizes are appropriate for the required equipment and detailed layouts are included within this document.

Whilst there is no statutory guidance for classroom sizes in Further Education Colleges, the latest EFA Schedule of Accommodation for Secondary Schools recommends an area of 62sqm for a standard ICT Classroom. The proposed classroom pods measure 64sqm. This is slightly larger than the EFA guidance but is considered reasonable given the unusual shape of the classrooms which have been designed in response to the geometry of the Chapel.

1.2.3 Position of New Stores

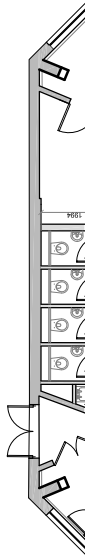
The new stores proposed adjoining the classroom pods either side of the entrance have been shown as re-positioned to help to open up the space as much as possible upon entering the Chapel.

KEY

- 1 Cleaner Store relocated
- 2 Laptop Store relocated

PROPOSED PLAN

Stores re-positioned to increase sense of space upon entering the Chapel



1.0 HISTORIC ENGLAND FEEDBACK

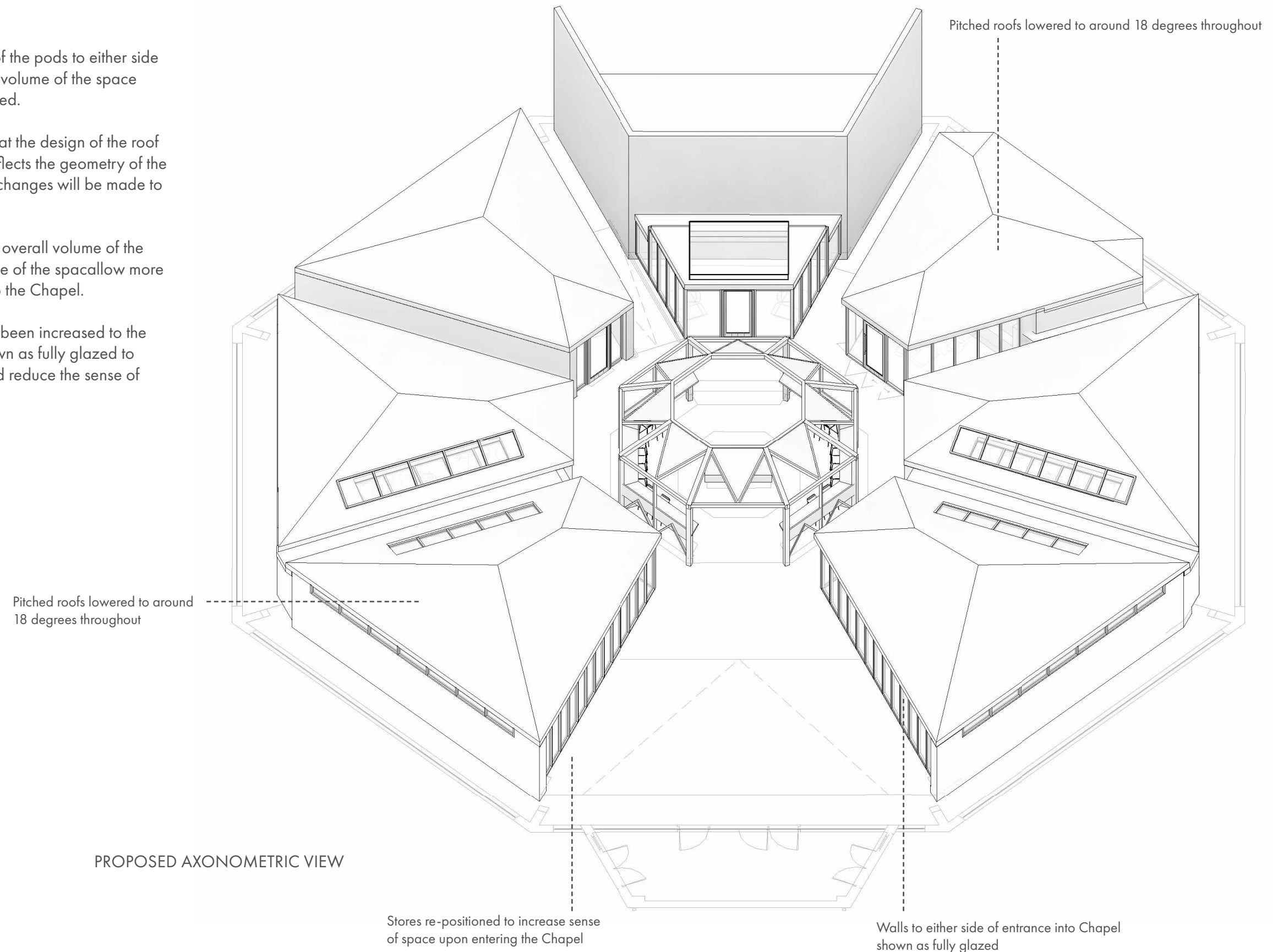
1.2 RESPONSE

1.2.4 Design of Classroom pods

Further consideration has been given to the design of the pods to either side of the entrance, to allow a greater impression of the volume of the space and to prevent the sanctuary from feeling too enclosed.

Having considered several options, it is proposed that the design of the roof remains as a pitched roof system in order that this reflects the geometry of the existing roofscape. It is proposed that the following changes will be made to the design of the pods:

1. The pitch of the roof is reduced to help reduce the overall volume of the pods and to allow a greater impression of the volume of the space allow more of the original fabric to be visible upon entrance into the Chapel.
2. The amount of glazing to the classrooms has also been increased to the walls either side of the entrance. These are now shown as fully glazed to help increase the visual permeability of the pods and reduce the sense of enclosure upon entrance into the Chapel.

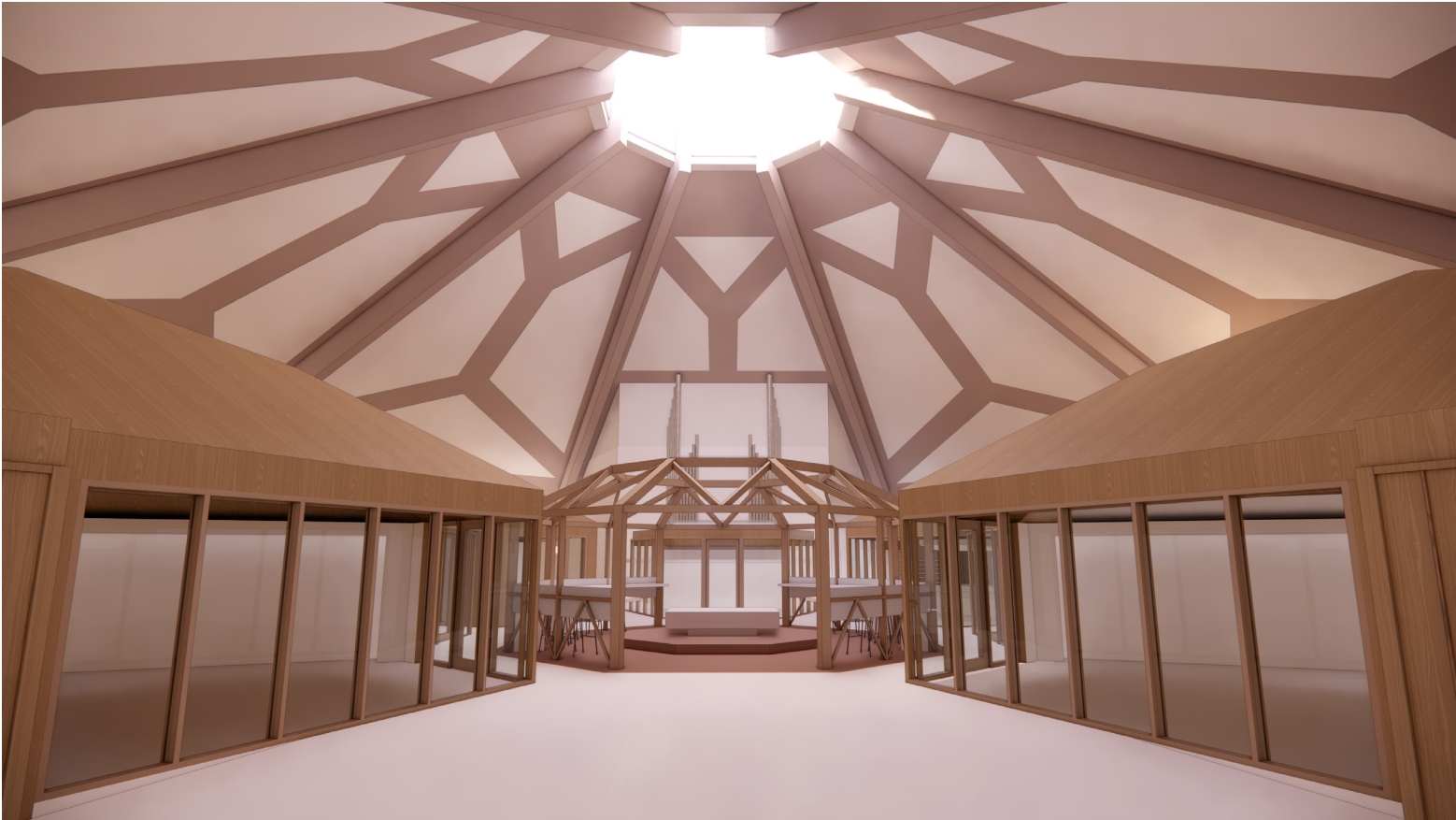


1.0 HISTORIC ENGLAND FEEDBACK

1.2 RESPONSE

The two images opposite compare the originally submitted proposal and the revised design.

These are intended to illustrate the impact of the revised pod design to allow a greater impression of the volume of the space, revealing more of the original fabric in the view from the entrance into the Chapel.



INDICATIVE VIEW FROM ENTRANCE TOWARDS SANCTUARY - AS PER PLANNING SUBMISSION

Pitched roofs lowered to around 18 degrees to allow increased views towards the original roof structure

Increased glazing to improve visual permeability



INDICATIVE VIEW FROM ENTRANCE TOWARDS SANCTUARY - REVISED PROPOSAL WITH LOWER ROOF PITCH AND ADDITIONAL GLAZING

2.0 CONSERVATION OFFICER FEEDBACK

2.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- New long term use for the Chapel is welcomed.
- Overall they consider that the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to its significance. This harm needs to be thoroughly justified and weighed against the public benefits arising from the scheme.
- Requested that we make changes to the scheme / provide further justification to satisfy Historic England Comments regarding the pods near the entrance
- Requested further information / justification for the removal and replacement of the copper roof and cladding

CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE		
Conservation Officer	Catherine Fenghour	
Date	2 August 2024	
Application Reference	24/00547/FUL and 24/00548/LBC	
Address	Hopwood Hall College, Rochdale Road, Middleton, M24 6XH	
Proposal	Conversion of former chapel to provide education/teaching facility including internal and external repairs and internal works to provide classrooms and associated facilities, alongside external landscaping and the addition of one accessible parking space	

Heritage Assets Impacted

Designated Heritage Assets	☒	- Hopwood Hall Chapel (grade II) - Hopwood Hall (grade II*)
Non-Designated Heritage Assets	☒	- Ashworth and Littleborough Buildings

Summary

The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and this should be weighed against any public benefits. However, there are a couple of matters, which require further justification / amendment and this needs to be provided prior to determination.

Significance Assessment

<u>Description of site</u>
In 1946 the De La Salle brothers purchased Hopwood Hall to establish a teacher training college for Catholic men. The De La Salle College opened in 1947. By the 1950s a need for a purpose built chapel was recognised. Fredrick Gibberd designed the Chapel and it can be seen as a prototype to Liverpool Catholic Cathedral. It was opened in 1965.

The building is constructed of a reinforced concrete frame, set out in an octagonal configuration with a central, glazed spire. The roof is felted with a copper coating. The building is predominately open plan with an entrance lobby.
The building was deconsecrated in the 1990s, and the cross and pews were removed. The building is currently used for storage, but has previously been used as a Fitness Centre and Skills for Life accommodation for the college.
The Chapel is also within the grounds of the Grade II* listed Hopwood Hall. There are important visual links between the two buildings, including a path leading from the Hall to the Chapel.
The Chapel is currently listed at grade II for its special architectural and historic interest. That being said, Historic England are currently undergoing a listing review of the Chapel along with the grade II* listed Liverpool Cathedral, also by Gibberd. This reassessment needs to be taken into account, when processing the current applications.
<u>Proposal</u> As noted above, the Chapel is now used for informal storage associated with the College. The proposal seeks to refurbish the building and subdivide the space to create learning spaces. The supporting statement advises that the building is largely underutilised due to issues of accessibility, thermal performance, the presence of asbestos and the need for significant investment to bring the building back into use.
The proposal seeks to use convert the chapel into a T-level Engineering and Virtual Reality learning centre. To achieve this, a number of internal changes are proposed. These include: - The subdivision of the space through the insertion of individual classroom pods, - Raising of the floor levels throughout - The installation of an open-timber framed structure within the sanctuary - Conversion of the sacristy into toilets - New access path around the Chapel, including new railings, ramp and steps. - Repairs and replacement of railings and paving - New external plant enclosure - New accessible parking bay - New lighting and signage - New doors - Repairs to existing fabric and replacement of roof on like-for-like basis
Initial discussions took place on the scheme as part of the Council’s pre-application advice service and it understood that the applicant also engaged with Historic England and Amenity Societies, prior to submitting this application. The supporting heritage statement outlines the comments received and states that the scheme has been revised to take on board the advice given.
<u>Relevant policy and legislation</u> Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

NPPF paragraph 205 states that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation [...] This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”
In accordance with NPPF paragraph 206, any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. NPPF paragraph 208 states that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”
<u>Assessment of proposals</u> The Chapel is currently used for storage and is not open to the public or college students. There are also areas of concern in terms of the condition of historic fabric, as noted within the heritage statement. The proposed T-Level teaching space would bring the building back into an active use, would address the condition issues and would also enable a degree of access, for students of the college. The principle of using the building as a learning centre is therefore supported in heritage terms.
The proposal includes a number of repairs to the existing building. These include repairs to the windows, lantern structure and blockwork. Subject to appropriate details, these repairs would help to restore the structure and prevent its further deterioration.
Repairs to the roof and the replacement of the existing copper cladding are also proposed. I The schedule of works notes that the roof and cladding have progressed have exceeded their serviceable life and are beyond economic repair. Generally speaking, copper roofs, when laid properly can last for 80 to 100 years and in heritage terms. Repair (or where not possible replacement of individual sheets) is almost always preferable to wholesale replacement.
Replacement copper is unlikely to achieve the same patination as the existing, as this depends on climatic conditions, which have changed over time. This could affect the aesthetics of the building. The copper roof is highly significant and makes the building a landmark within the vicinity. With this in mind, the survey works carried out should be provided, so that the extent of maintenance issues can be properly understood. The wholesale replacement of the roof and cladding will only be acceptable if it is demonstrated that the roof is beyond repair. In this case, large scale details, samples and a methodology for the works should be requested by condition.
Internally, the scheme proposes to subdivide the space into classrooms. These would take the form of individually serviced pods, which would not extend up to ceiling height. The Chapel was originally devised as a largely open space, with the Sanctuary as the centrepiece. The insertion of pods into this space would undermine the legibility of the space, and little would remain of its open plan character at ground floor level. It would no longer read as the originally devised open plan space, although it is acknowledged that the relatively low height of the pods, would still enable the volume of the building above the pods to be appreciated. It is considered that the insertion of the pods would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
The heritage statement outlines why the subdivision of the space is required and why the pod solution has been chosen. It also sets out the challenges with the existing space why this does not readily lend itself to an active use. The reversibility of the pods is also acknowledged.

However, the concerns of Historic England must be highlighted and taken on board particularly with the concerns around the pods at the entrance to the Chapel. It is agreed that these are the most harmful to significance, as they limit the legibility of the open space on entering the Chapel. The supporting statement states that these are smaller in plan form, but this doesn’t seem apparent from the plans? Opportunities should be taken to mitigate harm wherever possible and it needs to be thoroughly justified. Has the applicant looked at removing or reducing these pods so that they are less prominent on entry, as this would help to address the level of harm? If this option has been considered but discounted, the reasons should be set out as part of the justification, so that the impact can be fully assessed.
The proposal includes the installation of a wooden structure within the Sanctuary. This would be relatively lightweight, but nevertheless, would also result in some less than substantial harm, although the proposals to reinstate the altar slab, are welcomed.
The enclosure of the small Chapel would also result in some harm to significance. However, the plans indicate that the existing features would be retained and incorporated into the design. Large scale details of the new enclosure and its interactions with the retained features should be required by condition.
The proposals include the creation of new toilets within the Sacristy. It is acknowledged that this space is currently the only enclosed space within the Chapel. Within the Sacristy there are original dark wood fixtures and fittings. The heritage statement assesses this space to be of medium significance. The subdivision of the space and the loss of the original fixtures would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset. This harm would be partially mitigated by the reuse of existing joinery where possible. A photographic record of the Chapel should be carried out prior to commencement and a schedule of joinery and its reuse should also be provided.
The raising of the floor level would also result in some harm to the significance of the building. The raised level of the Sanctuary and its central position mark it as the most important space within the building. The plans indicate that this would remain the case in terms of floor levels. It is also confirmed that existing floors would be protected and retained beneath the new finishes. It is accepted that the raising of the floor levels would enable servicing to be screened from view.
Externally a new path is proposed along the exterior. Original steps and railings are proposed to be retained and refurbished, while heavily altered elements would be replaced. A schedule for these works and large scale details should be required by condition. Subject to these details, it is considered that this element would have a neutral impact on significance.
There would be some harm from the plant room, but this would be mitigated by its position to the rear of the building. Its positioning external to the building would also minimise the need for intrusive plant to be sited internally. Details of the cladding should be required by condition. I would suggest a dark coloured timber, perhaps echoing the woodwork internally, which would appear more recessive when viewed in the context of the Chapel.
The plans indicate new signage and lighting, but no details have been provided. Details of lighting should be required by condition. A separate application for advertisement consent and listed building consent would need to be made for the signage, once the details are known.
Conclusions

The proposal would provide a new long term use for the Chapel and this is welcomed. However, overall it would result in less than substantial harm to its significance. This harm needs to be thoroughly justified and weighed against the public benefits arising from the scheme.
Nevertheless, there are a couple of matters which need to be resolved prior to determination. These are: - The roofing and cladding works – more information /justification is needed if wholesale replacement continues to be proposed - Historic England have raised concerns with the pods at the entrance. These comments need to be taken on board and either the plans amended or further justification provided.

2.0 CONSERVATION OFFICER FEEDBACK

2.1 RESPONSE

2.1.1 Historic England Comments

Refer to section 1 for response to Historic England Comments.

2.1.2 Copper Roof and Cladding

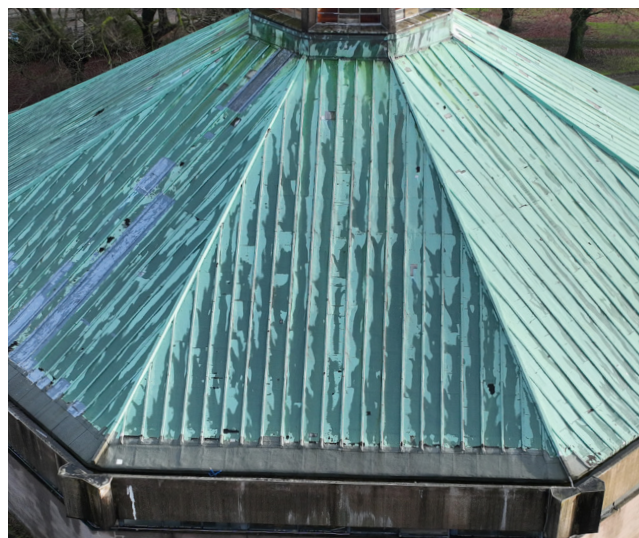
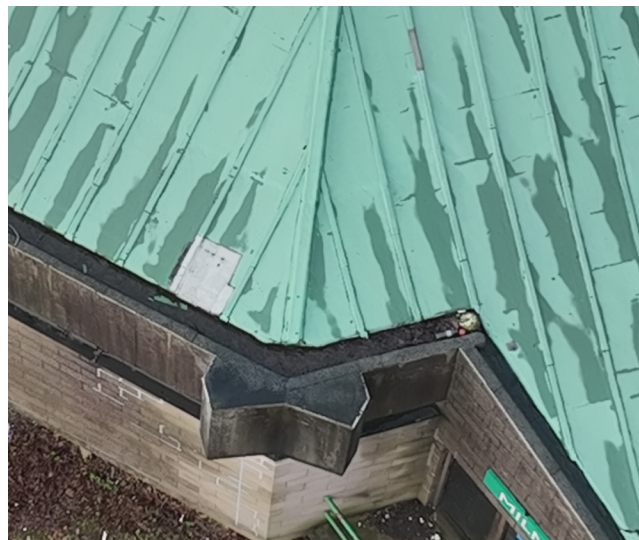
Our preference from a heritage and cost perspective would be to retain and repair the existing copper roof and cladding. However, it is proposed to replace the existing copper roof covering as this is considered to be beyond economic repair.

Advice has been sought from two independent roofing contractors with experience of working with copper roofing. Their comments have been summarised below:

- *Reviewing the images we think the copper has passed its sell by date and would not be suitable for reuse.*
- *There are a number of failures and repairs over the sheets and this would indicate there would be little benefit in trying to save some sheets.*
- *In addition the removal process is likely to cause some further damage if the material has hardened and splits as it is lifted.*
- *Its not clear if it has been fitted correctly in the first place which could lead to some wear underneath from either condensation of inadequate/incorrect fixings.*
- *Looking at the photo's there are dozens of patches all over the roof and there are also large areas that have been coated with liquid roofing products.*
- *This indicates to me that the copper is split in many places and has reached the end of its serviceable life. I can't see the laps so the copper may have been installed in far too long lengths and if I had to hazard a guess, I would saying the fixing method utilised does not allow for expansion.*
- *It is my opinion that the roof is in need of complete replacement.*

Consideration has been given to the retention of the existing copper and overlaying this using a new copper roof in order that the historic fabric is preserved. However, it is felt that the retention of the copper in it's current condition could potentially cover up ongoing issues with moisture ingress which would be detrimental to the building fabric going forwards.

A series of images are included opposite which illustrate the current condition of the roof, taken from Drone Survey footage in January 2024.



3.0 C20TH SOCIETY FEEDBACK

3.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- Proposals are considered acceptable in principle and they are in support of the repair and re-use of the building
- Accept the need to sub-divide the building and are in support of the design of the pods
- Support the raised floor to provide level access to the Sanctuary but would like further information on the fixing of the floor to minimise damage to the historic concrete and tiled floor
- Concern regarding the enclosure of the Side Chapel Altar and Canopy (Blessed Sacrament Chapel) to form the Staff Office and Immersive VR Room. Prefer for this to remain open to the front of the altar to maintain the relationship to the central Altar. Seven to consider whether the office can be re-positioned to allow this. Discussion held around the potential for the office to be retained but design amended to incorporate more glazing to increase views towards side chapel altar



Emailed to: ruth.sienkiewicz@sevenarchitecture.co.uk

12 June 2024

Dear Ruth Sienkiewicz

SITE: Chapel at Hopwood Hall College, Greater Manchester

Thank you for consulting the Twentieth Century Society on the pre-application proposals to convert the Grade II listed chapel at Hopwood College into a T-level engineering and virtual reality learning centre. This case was reviewed by the Society's advisory Casework Committee at their meeting on 10 June and the comments below reflect the committee's response.

Built in 1964-65, the chapel was designed by Frederick Gibberd (in association with Reynolds and Scott) as a place of worship for the De La Salle order's teacher training college at Middleton. Gibberd was commissioned on the back of his winning the competition to design the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral in 1960 (which was then built in 1962-67). Reflecting changing liturgical practices, the chapel has an octagonal plan with a central sanctuary top-lit by a lantern with colourful glass by the artist David Atkins, an arrangement intended to bring the clergy and laity closer together. The Middleton chapel was Grade II listed in 1996 in recognition of the building's historic and architectural significance.

The Twentieth Century Society welcomes proposals to bring this important building back into proper use. We also welcome the proposed repair work to the building's fabric, which is much needed. While we would prefer to see the building's interior retained as an open and unobstructed space, we accept that some subdivision is needed to create the required staff and teaching spaces. We also appreciate the consideration that has gone into the design of the proposed 'pods' to make these respond as much as possible to the spatial qualities and character of the chapel's interior. We therefore do not object to the proposed 'pods' in principle. We also have no objections to the proposed canopy to the central sanctuary.

We do however have concerns about proposals to enclose the Blessed Sacrament chapel to create an immersive VR space and staff office. We feel that this chapel should be left unenclosed and remain

The Twentieth Century Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no 05330664

Registered office: 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ
Registered Charity no 1110244

visible from the centre. The section of the new canopy around the altar could be opened up to that side too. This would allow the interesting existing canopy feature over the Blessed Sacrament altar to appear in its intended relationship with the main altar.

Committee members also discussed the proposed raising and covering over of the floor. Members appreciated the desire to achieve level access and had no objections to the proposal in principle. Members asked for reassurance however that the raised floor would be fixed in a way which does not cause damage to existing original floor finishes.

Overall, the Twentieth Century Society has no objections to the proposed work but encourages the applicant to revise their proposals for the Blessed Sacrament chapel.

I hope that these comments are of use to you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Coco Whittaker

Head of Casework

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Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent

The Twentieth Century Society, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ – Tel 020 7250 3857

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www.c20society.org.uk

3.0 C20TH SOCIETY FEEDBACK

3.2 RESPONSE

3.2.1 Side Chapel Altar and Canopy (Blessed Sacrament Chapel)

Consideration has been given to the relocation of the office as requested to allow the pod enclosing the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to be removed.

Consideration has been given to the relocation of the office, however given the constrained nature of the plan, and the curriculum needs which require four classrooms and two VR suites, we do not feel that there is any alternative location for this.

The two offices are required to provide facilities for the staff who will be managing the building and overseeing the learners. Office accommodation is required for the following staff members:

- 2no. members of staff to manage the Immersive VR Room
- 3no. Engineering Lecturers

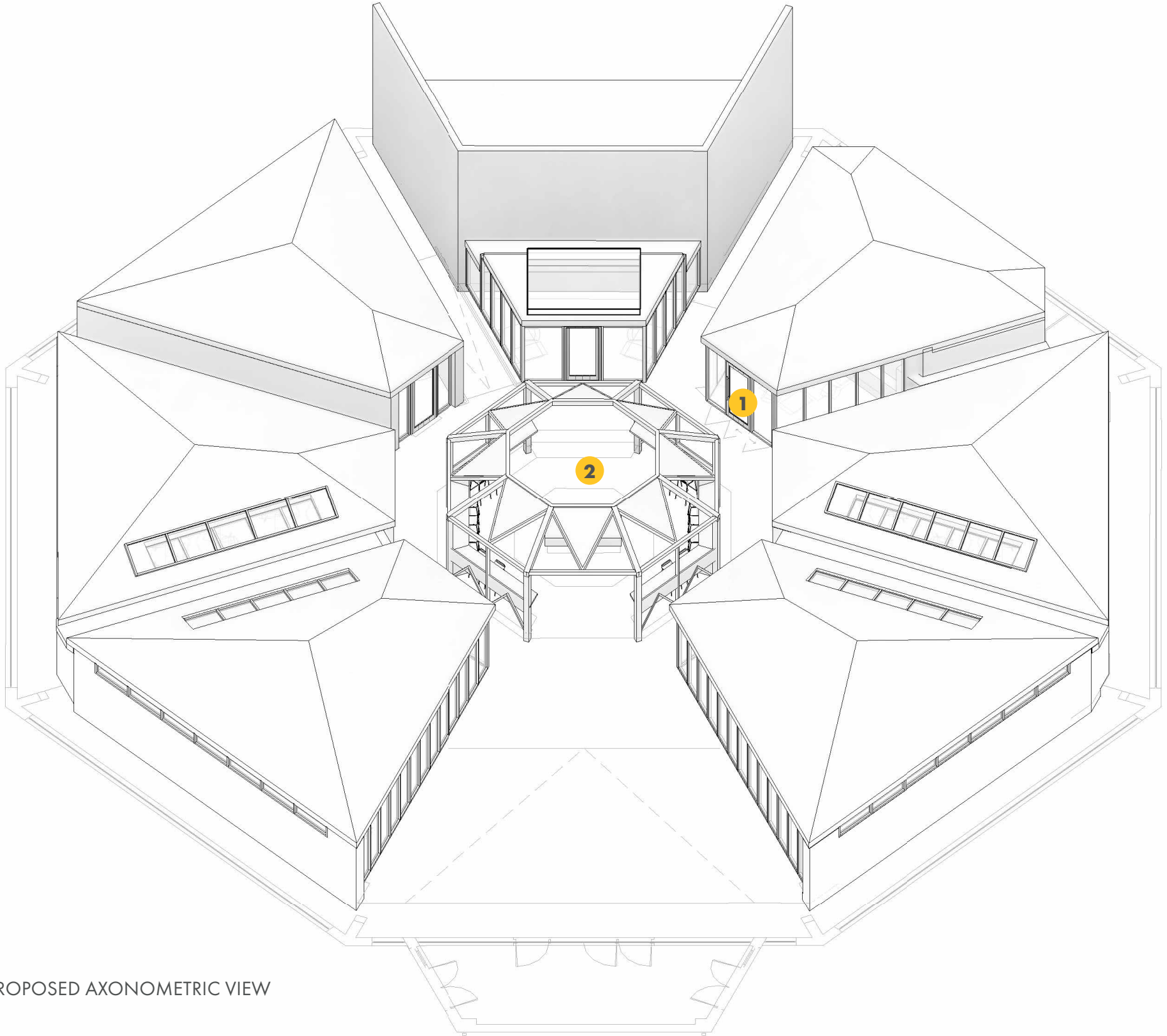
The Department of Education funding obtained for the repair and upgrading works has been awarded on the basis of a fixed schedule of accommodation which will allow the College to successfully deliver the T-Levels curriculum. Removing either of the offices would render the building unsuitable for the proposed use in which case the College would not be able to draw down the DFE funding and the project would become unviable.

It is therefore proposed that this pod is retained but that the design is amended to increase views towards the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and to help preserve the relationship between this and the central altar. The following amendments are proposed:

1. Glazed walls to the office pod are amended to bi-folding doors system to allow these to be fully opened up to minimise the enclosure of the altar and canopy.
2. Sanctuary area amended to re-position the entrance into the Sanctuary area to sit opposite the side chapel - helping to reinforce the historic relationship between the central Altar and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

KEY

- 1 Bi-folding doors to Office to reduce the sense of enclosure to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel
- 2 Amendments to Sanctuary area to reinforce the relationship between the central altar and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel



PROPOSED AXONOMETRIC VIEW

3.0 C20TH SOCIETY FEEDBACK

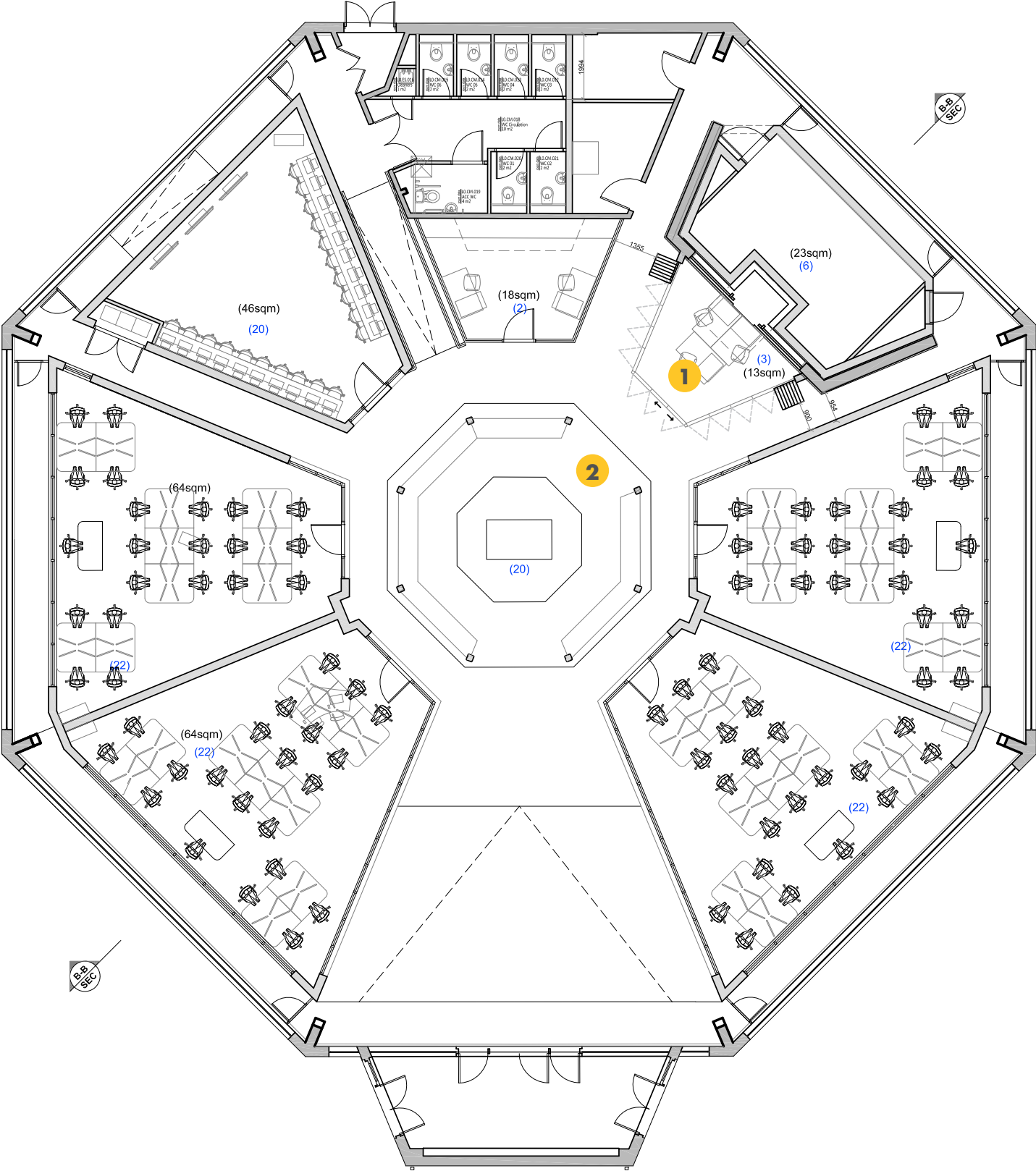
3.2 RESPONSE

3.2.2 Raised Access Flooring

Detailed consideration has been given to the method of fixing the raised access flooring and advice has been sought from a number of raised access flooring manufacturers.

The majority of manufacturers will only provide a warranty for a floor which is either mechanically fixed or adhered to a suitable sub-floor.

It is proposed that the new raised access floor will be adhered to the existing sub-floor on the basis that this will result in less damage to the historic fabric when compared to mechanical fixings.



KEY

- 1 Bi-folding doors to Office
- 2 Sanctuary area amended

PROPOSED PLAN

4.0 GMEU FEEDBACK

4.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Summary

Further bat surveys are recommended. Clarification on the area of vegetated habitat lost is also recommended. Other ecological issues relating to gcn, badger, nesting birds and invasive species can be dealt with via condition and or informative.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Section 180 of the NPPF 2023 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. 10% BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

The development appears to be primarily refurbishment and conversion of the existing building and refurbishment of the hard landscaping with only a minor loss of vegetated habitats being permanent. (eg disabled parking bay). It is however unclear from the proposals whether the refurbished hard landscaping ie access ways will be of the same width. Therefore, whilst I note the applicant has stated the development is exempt from mandatory BNG under the de minimis exemption, from the information supplied this is not 100% clear as some habitat loss is occurring.

I therefore recommend that prior to determination, more detailed information on the habitats present before and after the development is provided including accurate measurements of these habitats. If more than 25sqm of vegetated habitat will be permanently changed, a defra metric should be provided.

With regards wildlife, I recommend measures for bats and nesting birds. It is likely (subject to the findings of the dusk surveys, that mitigation and enhancement can be achieved on the site.

4.2 RESPONSE

4.2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

We can confirm that the proposed paths are to be generally the same width as existing paths to facilitate access to the perimeter of the building for amenity, cleaning and maintenance.

Areas of new hardstanding have been kept to a minimum to reduce impact upon the character of the Heritage asset and to minimise any impact upon the surrounding habitats.

The path to the rear of the building is to be increased to facilitate the construction of a new external plant compound.

The sketches on the next page illustrate the following:

Area of existing developed area around the Chapel = 583sqm.

Area of proposed developed area around the Chapel = 608sqm.

The amount of habitat to be permanently changed is therefore calculated as 25sqm.

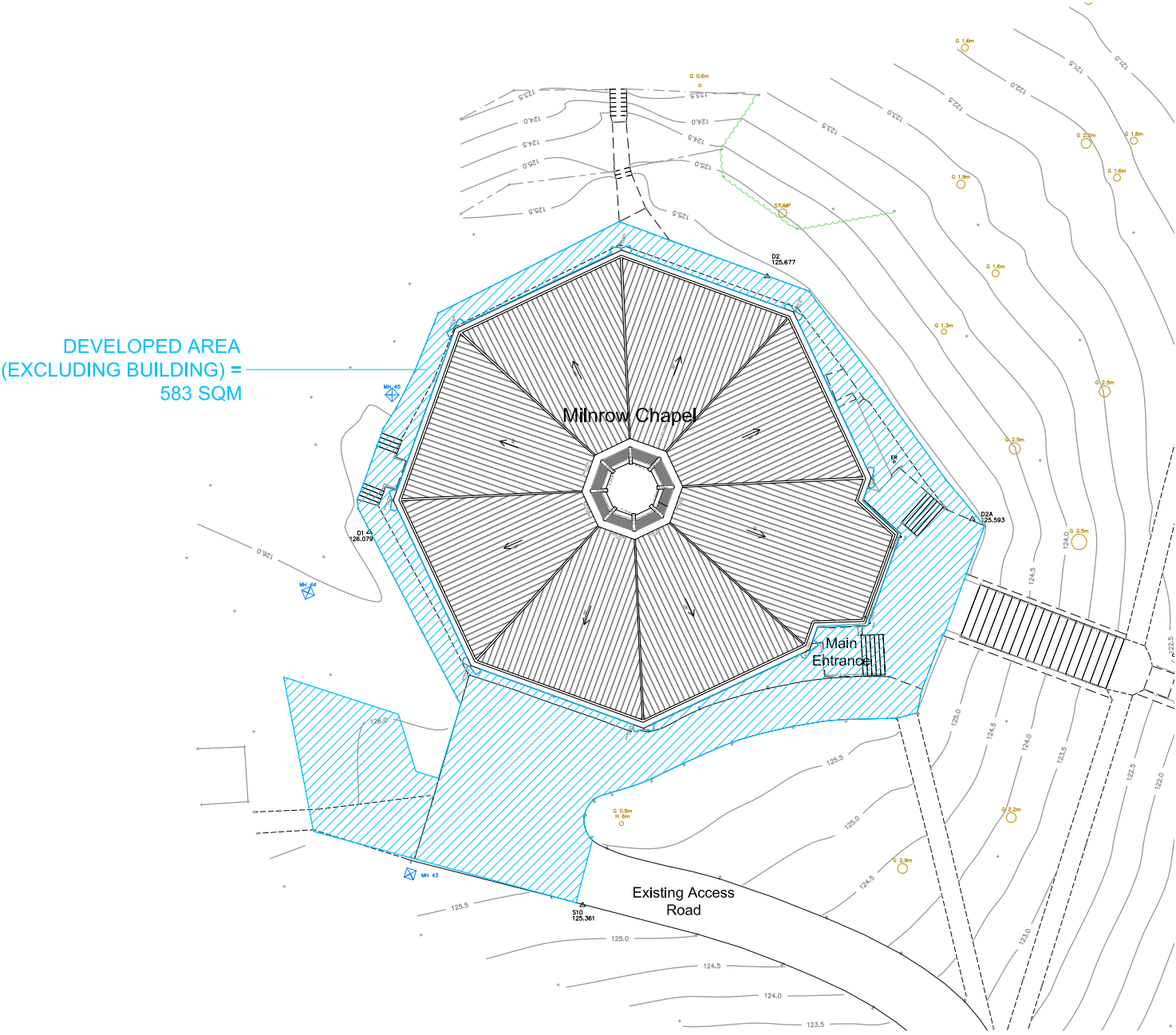
On the basis that the proposed development will not impact more than 25m² of habitat, it is considered that the following exception is relevant to this application:

“Development subject to the de minimis exemption. Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows.”

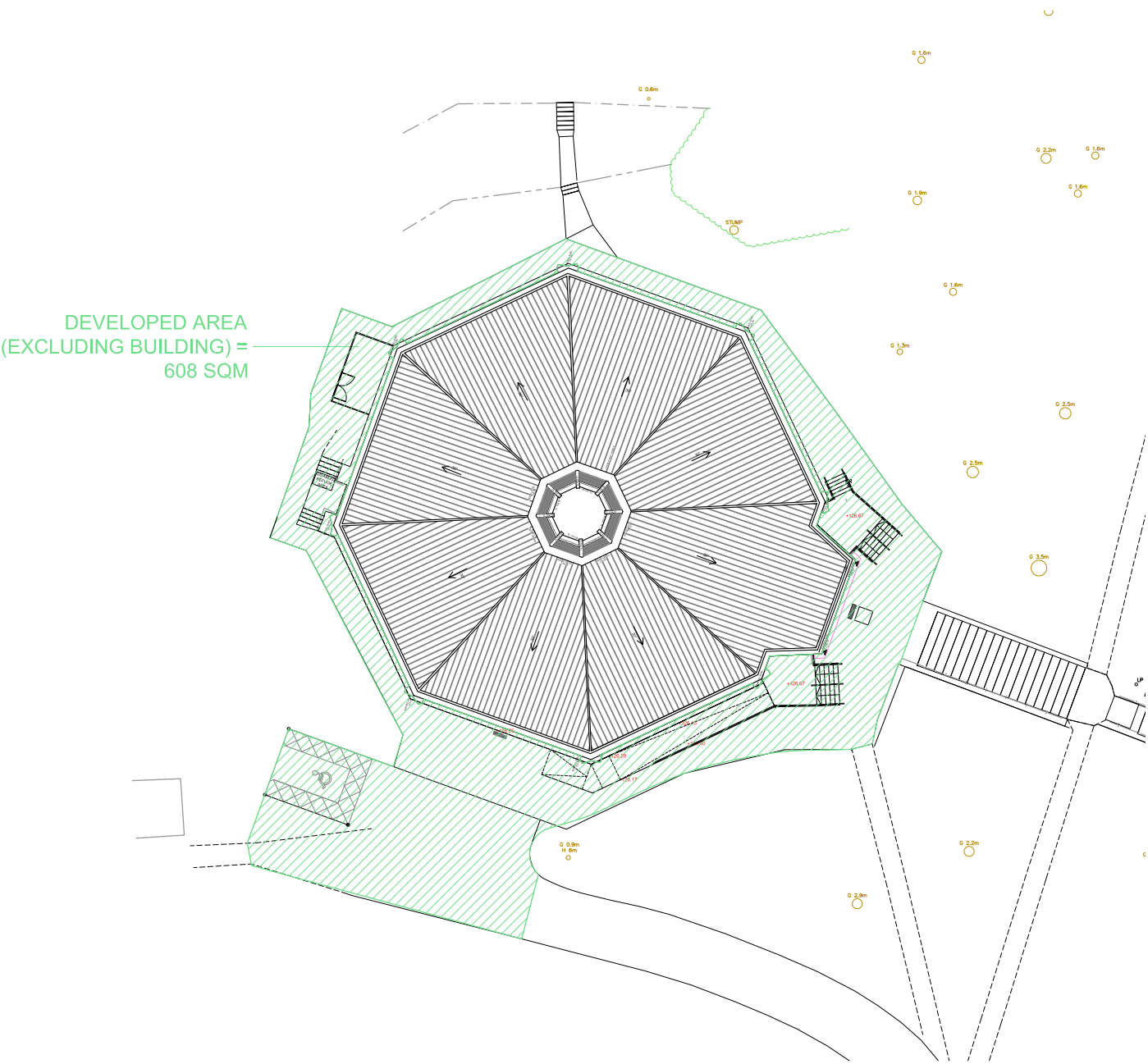
As such, the development is considered to be exempt from a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment as set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Letter of Exception from Seed Arboriculture Ltd dated 11.06.2024 and submitted as part of the Planning Application.

4.0 GMEU FEEDBACK

4.2 RESPONSE



Site Plan Illustrating Existing developed area around the Chapel



Site Plan Illustrating Proposed developed area around the Chapel