

# Touchstones

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

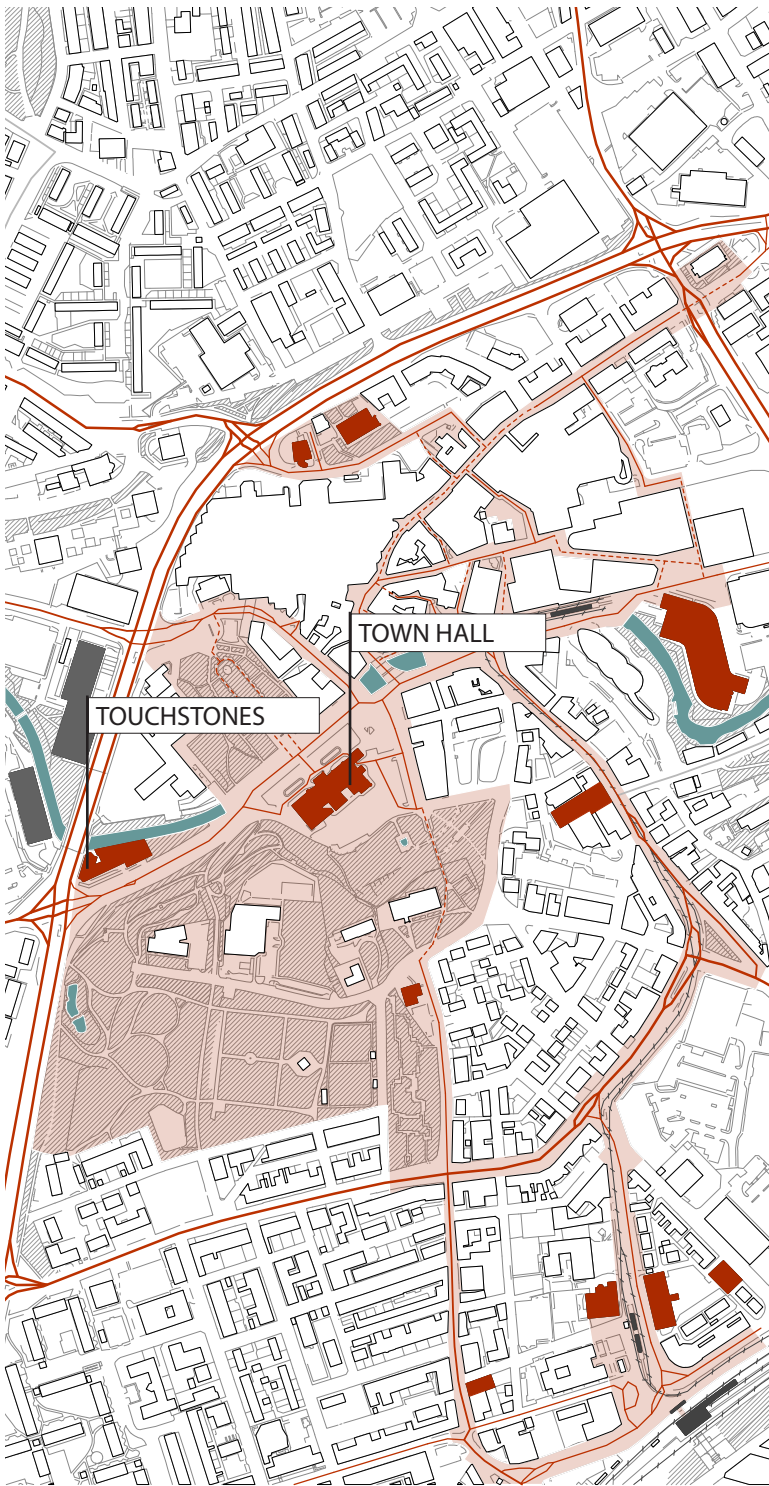
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# 1.0 Executive Summary

**This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Planning and Listed Building Consent application for the proposed refurbishment of Touchstones, Rochdale. It should be read in conjunction with the heritage statement as prepared by BB Heritage and included in the appendix.**

## 1.1 Building Background and History

Touchstones is the Borough's main arts and heritage venue, operated by Your Trust (formally Link for Life). It occupies a Grade 2 listed building understood to be owned by Rochdale Borough Council, It is located within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and is on the edge of the Heritage Action Zone. Originally constructed in 1884 as a public library it has been further developed in 3 main phases in 1903, 1913 and then again in 2002 when it became the facility we see now.

The building currently accommodates; 5 temporary galleries showing a regularly changing programme of exhibitions, a dedicated learning space hosting workshops, talks and special events, a display of the collections telling the story of Rochdale / its people and the local studies centre and a Café / shop selling a range of products.

## 1.2 Location and Context

Touchstones is located in Rochdale Town centre. Sitting at the Southern end of 'The Esplanade' and the corner of St Mary's Gate it acts as a prominent historic 'gateway' to the town centre. At the other end of the Esplanade is the Town Hall and together they make up two of the town's most important cultural facilities.

## 1.3 Project Background

Whilst Touchstones in various forms has been successful for many years, the collections area in particular is looking very tired. This coupled with the changing nature of what is expected from a visitor experience, means the facility is in desperate need of remodelling and revamping. We believe that the building fabric itself is in a very good state of repair, especially considering its age and that with mainly internal changes, the facility can achieve its full potential and long term sustainability.

In tandem to the development of this capital project, Touchstones have successfully gained Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation status, bringing in additional funds to support their work including around engaging and co-creating with communities. This is an important milestone for Touchstones and the wider borough, and

is testament to the Touchstones operation, Rochdale Borough Council's commitment to supporting arts and culture within the borough, and Arts Council England's recognition of their work and commitment to supporting this.

## 1.4 Project Aspirations

The project aims to rebrand, reconfigure and reimagine Rochdale's main arts & heritage venue to create a flagship hub which will form the heart of the newly envisaged cultural district. It will house new flexible spaces for production, enterprise, innovation, education, events, collections, exhibitions & performances. The project will become the driver for promoting culture across Rochdale and the wider borough. The new facility will be more accessible, approachable and engaging, ensuring a more diverse range of visitors can appreciate it. Complimentary uses will allow the building to thrive as a home for the arts whilst ensuring its financial and environmental sustainability.

## 1.5 Project Funding

Following a thorough asset strategy and options appraisal it was decided that Touchstones should be developed to create a flagship multi-disciplinary cultural hub, at the heart of a proposed cultural district.

This combined proposal, which included the Touchstones capital project, the creation of a new Town Hall Square, the development of a Creative Innovation District in Rochdale Town Centre, and an ambitious programme of cultural activity successfully applied for the highly competitive Cultural Development Fund. This represents Arts Council / DCMS's largest ever capital investment in Rochdale Borough, and the second largest funding award through the highly competitive national 'Cultural Development Fund 2' scheme. This funding is matched by Rochdale Borough Council.

## 1.6 Project Team

### Client Team

Rochdale Borough Council, Rochdale Development Agency and Your Trust

### Design and Consultant Team

Project Management – Hive Projects  
Architecture – Architectural Emporium Ltd  
Conservation - BB Heritage  
Quantity Surveyor – Identity Consult  
MEP – Steven Hunt & Associates  
Structural Engineer - Sutcliffe  
Access – Your Trust  
Sustainability – Julies Bicycle

## 2.0 Case for Development

Prior to the designs presented here the team have undertaken an extensive optioneering exercise including the careful consideration of what is the correct level of intervention to maximise the building's potential without detrimentally effecting its historic fabric.

These initial options for redevelopment are identified below.

### Option 1 - Business as usual

(also referred to as the 'do nothing' option)  
No changes would be made. No further intervention required but also improvements to the historic fabric not realised. Current issues not addressed. Potential benefits not realised. Unable to secure the long-term sustainability of the building

### Option 2 - Reconfigure

(reconfigure space in the existing building)  
This could include minor capital interventions (e.g. furniture, fixtures, fittings, installations, partitions, access, branding). Small amount of intervention in historic fabric but many benefits realised. Potential to improve and enhance 'read ability' of the historic building  
Minor disruption to operations/public use  
Some benefits realised / issues addressed  
Ability to better secure the long-term future of the building

### Option 3 - Redevelop (partial)

(redevelop part of the existing building)  
This would potentially include major capital interventions (e.g. extensions, demolitions, structural changes). Potentially large amount of intervention in historic fabric but many benefits realised. Potential to improve and enhance 'read ability' of the historic building  
Moderate disruption (partial closure). Full closure avoided. Ability to better secure the long-term future of the building

### Option 4 - Redevelop (phased)

(redevelop the whole building in phases to avoid full closure)  
This could include major capital interventions (e.g. extensions, demolitions, structural changes). Potentially large amount of intervention in historic fabric but many benefits realised. Long disruption (multiple partial closures). Most benefits realised / issues addressed. Ability to secure the long-term future of the building. Full closure avoided.

### Option 5 - Redevelop (full)

(as option 4, but in a single phase)  
This would require full closure of the building during works. Options to continue elements of delivery off-site could be explored  
Potentially large amount of intervention in historic fabric but many benefits realised.

Major disruption (full closure). Most benefits realised / issues addressed. Lengthy disruption avoided. Ability to secure the long-term future of the building

### Option 6 - Relocate (existing building)

(relocate to another, more suitable building elsewhere)  
This could enable some or even all current issues to be addressed and benefits realised. Potentially no further intervention into historic fabric required. No chance to take this opportunity to improve historic fabric and 'readability' of the historic design.  
Moderate disruption (relocation period). Most benefits realised / issues addressed. Lengthy disruption & full closure avoided. Unknown future for the building and potential loss of major arts and heritage asset

### Option 7 - Relocate (new building)

(relocate to a new, purpose-built venue elsewhere)  
While costly, this could still be less expensive than adapting an existing building and could theoretically enable all issues to be addressed and benefits realised. Potentially no further intervention into historic fabric required. No chance to take this opportunity to improve historic fabric and 'readability' of the historic design. Moderate disruption (relocation period). Most benefits realised /

issues addressed. Lengthy disruption & full closure avoided. Unknown future for the building and potential loss of major arts and heritage asset.

### Option 8 - Relocate (no building)

(deliver the programme without a building, for example through virtual, digital, exhibitions and workshops taking place in homes and community settings)  
Potentially no further intervention into historic fabric required. No chance to take this opportunity to improve historic fabric and 'readability' of the historic design. No dedicated display/event space. More agile/responsive to audience need. Lengthy disruption & full closure avoided. Unknown future for the building and potential loss of major arts and heritage asset

### 1.3.1 Conclusion

In conclusion Option 2 (reconfigure) is the only real way forward and represents a sensible balance between building fabric intervention and securing the building's long-term future as a heritage and cultural asset. It is clear that this was the best and most appropriate option to take forward, and was most likely to attract funding. This fed into a successful application to the DCMS funded and Arts Council administered 'Cultural Development Fund' application, and this is what we have been granted funding to deliver.



# 3.0 Stakeholder Engagement

## 3.1 History

The capital project's history dates back to 2017, where following a long period of underinvestment in culture in the borough, a significant community engagement project 'Revealing Rochdale' was commissioned to understand the relationships our communities have with arts and culture, and their ambitions for how improvements could be made.

Subsequent pieces of work in response to 'Revealing Rochdale' included an Asset Strategy which identified Touchstones as a key cultural asset which should be transformed into a revitalised multidisciplinary cultural hub. This process highlighted the benefits of reusing the historic building within the Civic Quarter of the Town Centre, rather than vacating the building to create a new destination – which would have left the building without a use and risked it falling into disrepair.

## 3.2 Brief requirements and design

development to inform funding application The brief for this cultural hub was further developed in a series of design and business planning exercises, which were used to help inform the successful ACE funding application. These tested how the different

spatial and servicing requirements of: gallery spaces; a curated community dining space; education spaces; a performance / rehearsal studio; and workspaces to support the creative economy, could be accommodated in a way which made best use of the historic building whilst allowing the building to function operationally and efficiently. This process involved close collaboration with the Touchstones team and other key stakeholders.

A key outcome of this work was identifying that the galleries were best retained in the purpose built gallery spaces on the first floor, with the project focusing on reconfiguring the underutilised ground floor spaces to bring these back to life. This will allow key new functions such as the curated dining space and performance studio to be located on the ground floor, where their high capacities can be more easily accommodated, and celebrate the historic spaces in a way which minimises the need for intrusive works.

## 3.3 Stakeholder engagement following successful application

Following the successful funding application to the DCMS funded, and Arts Council England administered 'Cultural Development Fund, a process of intensive engagement with the Touchstones team and a wide range

of stakeholders has been undertaken. This has included a series of 'Specialist User Focus Groups' which brought together a mix of local stakeholders and peer review experts from outside of the borough to test and develop the brief requirements for each of the key space types. Alongside this regular workshops have taken place with the Touchstones and YourTrust team, and their business planning and external advisors 'CounterCulture' to inform the design development towards the submission of this application.

## 3.4 Stakeholder engagement post-application

Following this submission the design team and Touchstones will continue to engage with communities to develop the fit out designs for the building, including a co-creation process to determine how museum collections will be displayed, and spaces in the building will be programmed. Continual engagement forms a core part of Touchstones National Portfolio Organisation activity, and will be an ongoing process beyond the opening of the building.

# 4.0 Proposed Uses and Project Brief

## General

A multifunctional arts and heritage facility with improved access for all. Re imagined spaces which celebrate the historic nature of the building, whilst creating an approachable interactive environment and ensuring its financial sustainability. Improvements to the existing building to ensure ease and efficiency in operation and enhanced environmental performance.

## Gallery

Improved visibility, leading to increased footfall. Improved visitor experience. Improvements to access generally and deliveries wherever possible.

## Studio Space

Increased and enhanced facilities, giving the opportunity for 'artist in residence' space and flexible studios for hire, where possible. Improved visibility and integration with visitor experience.

## Flexible Workshops

Ability to continue to invite large groups, including school children to participate in creative activities in a safe environment.

Improved support and welfare facilities to ensure safeguarding and efficiency in operation.

## Collections / Cafe / Restaurant / bar

Reinvigorate the dated exhibition making it more accessible, visible and user friendly. Find new ways to integrate the collections with other uses such as a food offer to appeal to a wider audience

## Performance

Creation of a dedicated performance venue, capable of accommodating a wide variety of performance / rehearsal uses. Flexible seating and room arrangements are important.

**PLEASE FIND FURTHER MORE DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING THE NEED FOR THE PERFORMANCE SPACE AND ASSOCIATED FEATURES TO FACILITATE IT IN THE APPENDIX**

## Welfare Facilities

Increased and enhanced welfare and toilet facilities to accommodate new users and increased visitor numbers. Increased accessible WC and changing facilities throughout.

## Back of House

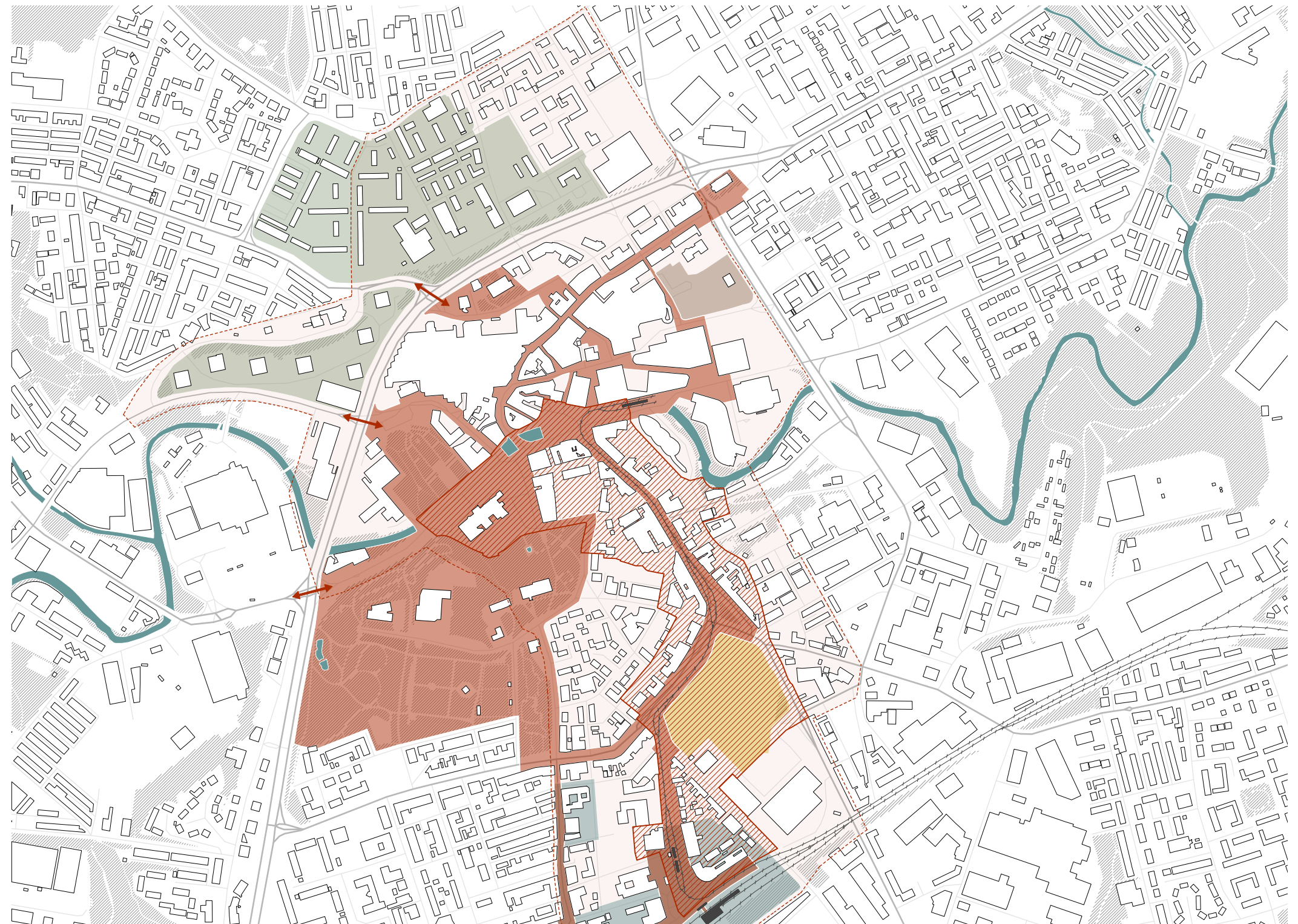
Rationalise and enhance back of house office and welfare facilities to improve staff experience and efficiency in operation.

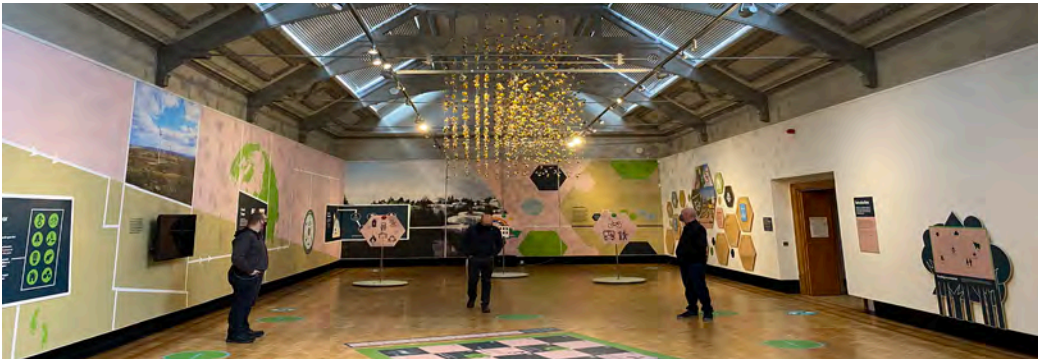
## External

Re imagined use of external space with areas for outdoor dining and external exhibitions. Use of external space to improve connectivity to the Town Hall and wider cultural district. Use of external areas to improve visibility for Touchstones and encourage greater footfall.

# 5.0 Site Context

Touchstones is a crucial part of Rochdale and the proposed Rochdale Cultural District. It sits on one of the town's main gateways, sandwiched between St Mary's Gate and the Esplanade. Alongside the Town Hall, Touchstones is at the heart of the proposed Rochdale Cultural District, on the edge of Rochdale Heritage Action Zone and in the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation area (extended 2011). Over the years its setting has been diminished mainly through major road interventions and it is vital this is addressed as part of the town wide planning strategy. The proposed amendments to the Esplanade and the potential pedestrianisation may assist this.





Photographs of Existing Facility

# 6.0 Planning Context

## 5.1 National Planning Policies

### Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have: special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. and, in respect of conservation areas, that: special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

As set out in the heritage statement, the proposals do not involve significant amendments to the external face of the building. Therefore the presumption against the grant of planning permission within the Act is not engaged and that the benefits of the scheme are clear.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised February 2019), articulates the priorities of the Plan for Growth within planning policy. At the heart of the NPPF lies the 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development, which supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up to date Development Plan. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

The NPPF states that: the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. (Paragraph 7)

It summarises the objective of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that to achieve sustainable development, there are three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued mutually.

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The proposed scheme aligns with the policy ambitions for sustainable development. Reimagining Touchstones as a central cultural and heritage asset with enhanced revenue

generating functions whilst maintaining its public use should be seen as sustainable development. The proposals outlined would also better reveal the building's significance to the public it serves and would reinforce links to local history, character and identity and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Rochdale town centre.

**Section 8** focusses on the promotion of healthy and safe communities, through planning policies and decisions, which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and which enable and support healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities including cultural buildings and other local services, to enhance the sustainability of communities. They should also take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

As outlined throughout the application, in addition to the Town Hall Touchstones can be come the driver for a new Cultural District

throughout Rochdale ensuring art, history and cultural uses are fully accessible for a much great variety of visitors. The proposed studios, workshops and gallery offer huge benefits for the community, whilst the reenvisioned collections combined with the revised food and drink offer will promote Touchstones to a much wider audience.

**Section 14** of the NPPF sets out the need to meet the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Sites should be assessed appropriately for the risk of flooding and take advice from the Environment Agency and other risk management authorities. When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

The application site is in Flood Zone 1; however it is directly adjacent to the River and Flood Zone 3. It is not clear whether an assessment is required at this stage but the client is happy for this to be a condition attached to the planning decision should it be required.

**Paragraph 124** notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to creating better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to

communities.

Paragraph 127 outlines that decisions should ensure good design by ensuring developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users<sup>46</sup>; and where crime

and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The proposals accord with all of these requirements, in particular items a), b), c), d) and f).

**Section 16** of the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment, particularly in the context of sustainable development.

The NPPF states that heritage assets are 'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'. The Glossary to the NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

The Framework, in Paragraph 189, states that: In determining applications, local planning

authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

The heritage statement outlines the assessment of significance and policies that should be applied to the interventions outlined in this scheme.

The Framework also, in Paragraph 193, requires 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The Framework goes on to state at Paragraph 194 that: Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.

The heritage statement provides both clear justification and mitigation measures for the proposals outlined.

The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset', the Framework states, in Paragraph 195, that:

....local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

For harm to be considered substantial the proposal would have to have such a serious impact that the significance of the building would be reduced; when considering there is very little external intervention and internal

changes are clearly justified and the benefits outlined throughout the application, this is not the case with this scheme. Therefore the proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm'.

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in Paragraph 196, that: ...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The re organisation of Touchstones, increased economic viability and appeal it will offer to a wider and greater amount of the general public will secure its long-term future as part of the town centre cultural and heritage offer. These public benefits clearly outweigh any harm caused by the proposal outlined here.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 200 states that: Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or

which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

As outlined throughout the application the desire to link Touchstones with the rest of Rochdale's cultural offer and proposed cultural district is a key aspiration for the scheme. Whilst there is limited external space within the curtilage of the building the grassed area to the East will be reconnected with the Esplanade and brought into public use providing a link between The Town Hall, the street, the river and Touchstones its self. The scheme will significantly contribute to the character of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

## 5.2 Local Planning Policies

### Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (Draft, January 2019)

The Revised Draft of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), 'Greater Manchester's Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment, was published for formal consultation in January 2019, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which closed on 18th March 2019. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according

to: the stages of preparation; the extent of unresolved objections; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework. Policy GM-S 1 (Sustainable Development) seeks to encourage developments to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits and highlights that previously-developed (brownfield) land will be prioritised to meet development needs. Policy GM-P 1 (Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth) recognises the importance of supporting a thriving economy in Greater Manchester, placing an emphasis on the following: maintaining economic diversity; facilitating high value clusters in prime sectors (Advanced manufacturing; Business, financial and professional services; Digital; Health innovation; and Logistics); making the most of major assets including existing and proposed transport infrastructure; and providing the high-quality, sustainable living environments.

### Rochdale Core Strategy

The Core Strategy for the Rochdale Borough Local Plan was adopted on 19th October 2016 and sets out the strategies for the Borough through to 2028. Policy SP2 sets out the Spatial Strategy for the borough, which aims to meet the development needs of the borough. Rochdale will have a transformed and attractive town centre which is highly

accessible to its residents and visitors due to Metrolink, and a new transport interchange. The development of Kingsway will be a huge success providing quality new jobs and new employment opportunities in the Town Centre, Castleton, Stakehill Business Park and South Rochdale will be available. The most deprived areas of the town will be regenerated with better housing, jobs, facilities and environment. New homes will be attracting new residents to the borough as well as matching the needs and aspirations of existing residents. Rochdale station and the adjoining area will be regenerated as a new transport / mixed use hub providing an exciting gateway into the borough.

**Policy SP3/R** is the Strategy for Rochdale the priorities for Rochdale are to transform Rochdale town centre (Policies SO1,SO2,SO3,SO4,SO5) by:

- Focusing growth and major retail, leisure and office developments which will maintain and reinforce the centre as the main town centre (Policies E1,P1);
- Delivering major new retail led development in the Rochdale town centre east area that is well integrated with the existing centre and surrounding area (Policy E1);
- Supporting major transport works and improvements to deliver a high quality public

transport interchange (Policy T1):

- Promoting opportunities to improve and create distinctive local places through in the town centre through excellent design of buildings and the public realm, valuing heritage, identity, cultural assets, the River Roch and the natural environment (Policies E1,P1,P3,T1); and
- Delivering the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding areas in line with the adopted Rochdale Town Centre Masterplan or Rochdale Town Centre SPD (Policies E1 & P1).

**Policy E1** Establishing thriving town centres, with a good range and choice of shops, activities and facilities, will help make the borough an attractive place to live, work and do business. Policy E1/R specifically seeks to establish Rochdale as a thriving town centre – as the main location for major developments attracting a large number of people. In particular, planning permission will be granted for development that supports the vitality and viability, such as major retail, leisure, cultural and office development.

[Two of those major objectives specifically relating to Touchstones are outlined as follows:](#)

- [Promote and support the heritage of the town centre, by maximising opportunities for tourism and culture and related economic benefits;](#)
- [Improve links to, and the use of, Memorial Gardens, the Town Hall, Touchstones, The Butts and promote its potential as a visitor attraction.](#)

**Policy E5** relates to encouraging the visitor economy through enhanced visitor attractions, which will benefit the local economy by broadening its economic base, providing additional employment and improving the image of the borough. To do this, the Council will focus on promoting the following tourism opportunities:

1. Rochdale town centre, where we will:

- a) Promote the heritage attractions of the Town Hall, Broadfield Park and the Municipal Gardens, and the Toad Lane Pioneers Trail linked through to the river and the retail centre (Policy E1/R); and up to the Parish Church; and
- b) Ensure that new development complements and relates well to, and enhances, the above assets.

3. River Roch Valley corridor, where we will:

- a) Promote and enhance a Roch Valley recreational trail and linkages to key visitor destinations; and
- b) Improve and enhance perception and image of, and access to, the river with a focus on delivering this in Rochdale town centre.

[As set out on the following pages this project will significantly improve Touchstones as a commercial venue for hire but also through the new visitor and community offer, increased accessibility and new spaces will enable complementary uses to take place simultaneously. This will significantly enhance the long-term sustainability of Touchstones and enable continued investment ensuring it continues to be an asset to the Borough and beyond. External proposals will also promote more physical connections with the river at a point in the town where levels mean this is not as easy.](#)

**Policy P2** relates to the protection and enhancement of character, landscape and heritage.

1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the

considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

- a) Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;
- b) Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;
- c) Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;
- d) Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and Conserving and enhancing townscape character.

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

- a) Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:

- i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;
- ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;
- iii. The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;
- iv. The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;
- v. The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and
- vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

- b) Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;
- c) Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and
- d) Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

[The heritage statement outlines the impact of the proposals on the heritage assets in detail. The proposals would meet the requirement set out within this policy, particularly according with 1c\) and 2a\), c\) and d\).](#)

**Core Strategy Policy C8** sets out how improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities will help improve resident's health and quality of life and make the borough a more desirable place to live, work and visit. The policy states the vital role of arts, cultural facilities and entertainment facilities, in attracting residents and visitors and in supporting local culture and improving the borough's image. Section 8 also highlights accessibility as a critical issue for community facilities - to ensure they are usable by all groups, including those without access to a car and with restricted mobility.

Section 9 (SO3) Improving design, image and quality of place Improving the 'quality of place' of the borough is a priority if it is to be a place where people choose to live. It will help to:

- Create livelier, more interesting and distinctive town centres, housing areas and public spaces;
- Attract investment and improve prosperity;
- Make people feel good about the place and

improve their health and well being; and

- Make it a destination of choice.

To improve design, image and quality of place, Rochdale's policies seek to:

- Protect and enhance the best aspects of the borough's character and heritage;
- Make development more attractive and sustainable, with a cleaner, greener and safer environment;
- Improve the image of the borough including the most visible, highest profile places such as town centres and gateways; and
- Take a positive role in the promotion of better design.

#### **Policy P1 - Improving Image**

We will require high quality design in all new developments, and this will be particularly important in the following areas, which are crucial to the image of the borough:

1. Key gateways into the borough (see Spatial Strategy key diagram and Township delivery diagrams);
2. Local gateways to centres, communities and attractions;
3. Local Improvement Corridors and those stretches of main transport corridors which are currently characterless or unattractive

4. Town centres; and
5. Prominent sites, regeneration areas and key visitor attractions.

We will ensure new development improves the image of the borough by:

- a) Requiring design which is of a high standard, demonstrating innovation and originality;
- b) Working with developers of major developments to incorporate public art in the design of buildings and spaces or contribute to public art projects as appropriate;
- c) Helping to 'green' the urban environment, for example by securing tree planting on sites and along streets and roads;
- d) Promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image; and e. Creating people-friendly, safe, vibrant, uncluttered public areas.

The Touchstones scheme undoubtedly fully aligns with this policy, especially when considering its position as an important gateway to the town centre. The nature of the scheme and the desire to connect the cultural district through The Town Hall and other assets with the use of public art and historic collections is compatible.

**Policy G1** - tackling and adapting to climate change – new development within the borough should minimise its contribution to climate change, and adapts to its impacts. The Council will ensure the borough plays its part in delivering national targets in respect of climate change by the following measures:

- Expecting all development and regeneration schemes to be well connected to surrounding areas and facilities by sustainable means of transport (Policy T2);
- Promoting the efficient re-use of buildings, especially those of heritage value, and the recycling of construction waste;
- Making the best use of open space to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The scheme is fundamentally one of conserving embodied energy and sensitively adapting, within the constraints of the building's significance, by implementing sustainable and long-lasting repairs and adaptation for reduced energy consumption.

**Policy DM1** sets out the general development requirements, which all development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations; they will be expected to demonstrate that they are:

- a) Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;
- b) Are compatible with surrounding land uses;
- c) Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users;
- d) Mitigate (as necessary) against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access;
- e) Provide satisfactory vehicular access;
- f) Do not have an adverse impact on health;
- g) Provide, or demonstrate the availability of, the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs;
- h) Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property;
- i) Take account of ground conditions;
- j) Incorporate, where appropriate, high quality landscape schemes;
- k) Have assessed whether the development may be affected by ground instability;
- l) Have considered the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure; and
- m) Do not lead to impacts detrimental to the conservation interests of European Protected Sites.

The proposals have been developed to accord with all of the elements within this policy, specifically a), b), c), d), f ), g), h), j),

k) and m). As mentioned in other sections of the report point e) 'Provide Satisfactory Vehicular Access' is one of the most difficult challenges to overcome at Touchstones. There is only limited intervention possible due to its proximity to major roads, however the proposals seek to make the situation as good as possible within the constraints of the site.

#### Rochdale Renaissance Masterplan (2010)

This was developed as a vision document, as part of the Council's LDF, to guide the implementation of development. The Masterplan focussed on delivering 7 key themes:

1. Creating sustainable neighbourhoods
2. Developing 21st century employment sites
3. Establishing thriving town centres
4. Capitalising on our environmental assets
5. Focusing on strategic gateways and corridors
6. Accessible and integrated transport
7. Design and image

As part of Section 3, the Masterplan identified the Esplanade and surrounding area as having the 'potential to become a first class public space and a quality Cultural Quarter'. In Section 7, the Masterplan discusses conservation and heritage, recognising that: 'there is a growing recognition that

conserving and enhancing the Borough's built and natural heritage brings economic and environmental benefits'. The Masterplan also states that the Borough has one of the best architectural and historic heritage bases of any authority in the North West, which helps to define a sense of place and character. Touchstones undoubtedly forms an important part of that vision and works to ensure its long term sustainability should be welcomed.

### 5.3 Pre-application Consultation with Statutory Consultees

Initial ideas and scenario testing were first developed early in 2021. Since then we have developed the proposals further and discussed them in detail with RBC. The following comments were received.

#### Rochdale Borough Council

"The proposed works would require listed building consent, as well as planning permission for change of use (as identified within the supporting documents). The building's significance comes primarily from its architectural and historic interest, as well as its community use as a public library, museum and art gallery. The draft heritage statement indicates that the current facility is poorly configured and

as a result is under-utilised by all types of visitors. The scheme seeks to address this by reconfiguring the existing floor space to make it more flexible.

The proposed scheme includes a number of interventions within the building, as detailed above. Some of these, such as the removal of the mezzanine floor within the local research office, the removal of the ramp and the removal of non-original partition walls have the potential to result in an enhancement to the listed building. When we met on site, we also discussed the possibility of re-instating a stain-glass window to the original design. While this is not mentioned within the submitted information, this would potentially also be an enhancement. Other interventions, such as the installation of a new staircase into the basement, the installation of the mezzanine and the subdivision of the existing café and education areas to create artist workspaces would likely result in some degree of harm. It would be for you to justify this harm, as part of any application, outlining any mitigation and potential public benefits (such as an enhancement of the visitor experience and ensuring the long term viability of the building). To minimise any harm, the new partitions and mezzanine should be lightweight and designed with minimum

fixings into the historic fabric. They should also be designed to be easily reversible. The draft heritage statement suggests that the new studios and workshops would be installed within pods. New partition walls should be kept low level to minimise the loss of internal volumes.

Further information is needed regarding certain elements. Some of the walls marked as non-original, appear to be present on the historic plans submitted. This needs to be clarified and if original, these walls should be retained.

As part of any planning and listed building consent applications, a detailed heritage statement should be provided. This should outline the significance of the affected heritage assets, as well as providing a schedule of the proposed interventions and any repairs. Where there would be harm, this needs to be justified and mitigated as far as possible. The public benefits and the rationale behind the works should also be detailed within the heritage statement. Subject to the above, and any identified harm being kept to a minimum and fully justified, it is likely that I would be able to offer my support for the works. Should you wish for me to provide more detailed advice, once the scheme has advanced further, I would

be happy to do so through the formal pre-application advice service. As the building is owned by the Local Authority, Historic England and the Amenity Societies would be consulted on any listed building consent application. I would strongly advise that you engage with them prior to submitting any application."

[The information required in these comments is now available as part of this application](#)

### 5.4 Preapplication Consultation with Conservation Officer

The client and design team have met and discussed the scheme with Christiana Shovlin from RBC on a number of occasions. Christiana has been extremely helpful in guiding us through some of the more intrusive elements of the proposal. We have discussed the proposed new escape stair in detail and presented options of which both parties have discussed the pros and cons. The solution presented here is as a direct result of that consultation. We look forward to continuing to work with her through the detailed design phases.

## 5.4 Listed Building Descriptions

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1367096

Date first listed: 12-Feb-1985

Statutory Address: ROCHDALE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, THE  
ESPLANADE

Library, museum and art gallery, now library.  
Library 1883, museum and art gallery 1903 and  
1913. Jesse Horsfall. Yorkshire stone with slate  
roof. The 1883 library consists of a central  
porch and entrance hall flanked on either side  
by parallel reading rooms. The 1903 extension  
added a linking passage, porch, hall and  
stairway to the left of the original building  
and a two-storey range with art gallery on  
the upper floor. The 1913 extension involved  
further rooms to the west and a diagonal  
wing, all on two storeys. The original library  
has 3 gables and is symmetrical about the  
smaller central one; it is all of one storey and  
has a low central porch with arcaded parapet,  
elliptical headed door opening with enriched  
spandrels, overlight enriched advanced gablet  
with ball finial and 3-light mullion and transom  
windows to either side with ovolo-moulding.  
The large gables to either side have 5-light  
ovolo-moulded mullion and transom windows  
with segmental heads and dripmoulds,

heraldic and inscribed panels above, and ball  
finials. The linking passage is detailed similarly  
but has elliptical headed 3 and 4-light  
mullioned windows with Art Nouveau stained  
glass. The museum and art gallery has a 4-bay  
central section with a 3-bay gable to the right  
and diagonally-set gable to the left. Detailing  
is again similar but each gable includes 3  
panels of carved figures, one representing  
science art and literature designed by C.J.  
Allan and carved by J.J. Millson. The museum  
was requisitioned in the war and has since  
been used as part of the library.

# 7.0 Summary of Works

## 6.1 Key Spaces

This design identifies 7 key spaces /uses that need to be addressed in order to achieve our aspirations for the project. Our approach to these spaces is highlighted below:

### 6.1.1 Main Entrance /Lobby

During a previous refurbishment, elements such as 'The tunnel' were installed which is particularly intrusive and detrimental to the historic proportions of the space. Therefore, the entrance area will be stripped back to its original proportions and finishes. The existing reception desk will be removed and replaced with a smaller version which will help to invite visitors in. WC facilities will also be improved with fully accessible public toilets, changing facilities and prey room accessible from both adjacent areas. The amended WC facilities allow us to create a new multifunctional space with glazed screen which in turn reveals a former window beyond. The existing floor finish will be retained and refurbished where required.

### 6.1.2 Studios

The facility is currently unable to offer dedicated artist studios and workshops for use by the public which is vital to its ongoing use as an arts hub. A wide variety of these will therefore be created in existing west wing. It is recognised that this area (originally The Museum) was relatively open plan and therefore the main corridor partitions will be fully glazed to ensure the original proportions of the room are not misunderstood.

### 6.1.3 Education Spaces

The education spaces will remain in the same location, however they will be completely re imagined. The existing storage will be relocated allowing the original windows to be exposed internally and the space will be split into two rooms. A services 'pod' will be installed in the centre giving the two spaces access to dedicated WC's, storage, Painting facilities and storage.

### 6.1.4 Civic Dinning Room (CDR)

The current exhibition is dated and significantly under-utilized. The proposal is therefore to reinvigorate the space by combining public and commercial uses with the collections themselves. The day to day cafe / restaurant / bar uses will be combined with exhibitions which will take full advantage of the original height and proportion of

the space. The original proportions and typology of the library will be restored as far as possible and original materials revealed. The main 'kitchen/ bar and ancillary services sits at the rear of the room and will be designed as low as possible and again taking its reference from some of the temporary screens seen in the historic information. Furniture will also take its lead from the original library images so that whilst it is no longer a library, the historic use of the space is easily referenced.

### 6.1.5 CDR Entrance Lobby

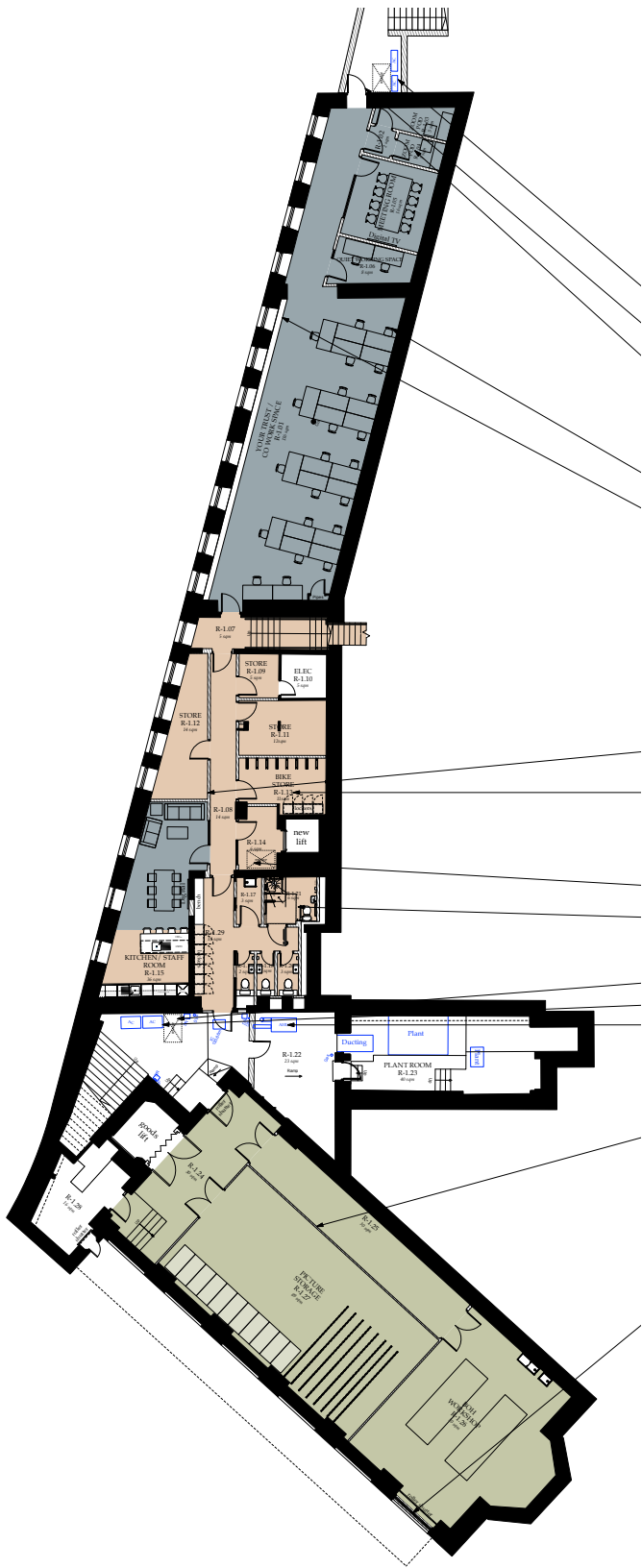
For many years the original library entrance has been completely neglected used only as part of the museum exhibition and for fire escape when required. In this proposal the original door will become an important entrance to the CDR and performance studio beyond. As shown in the landscape information the entrance will restored to its original prominence with new more 'open' access arrangements and an outside seating area.

### 6.1.6 Performance Studio

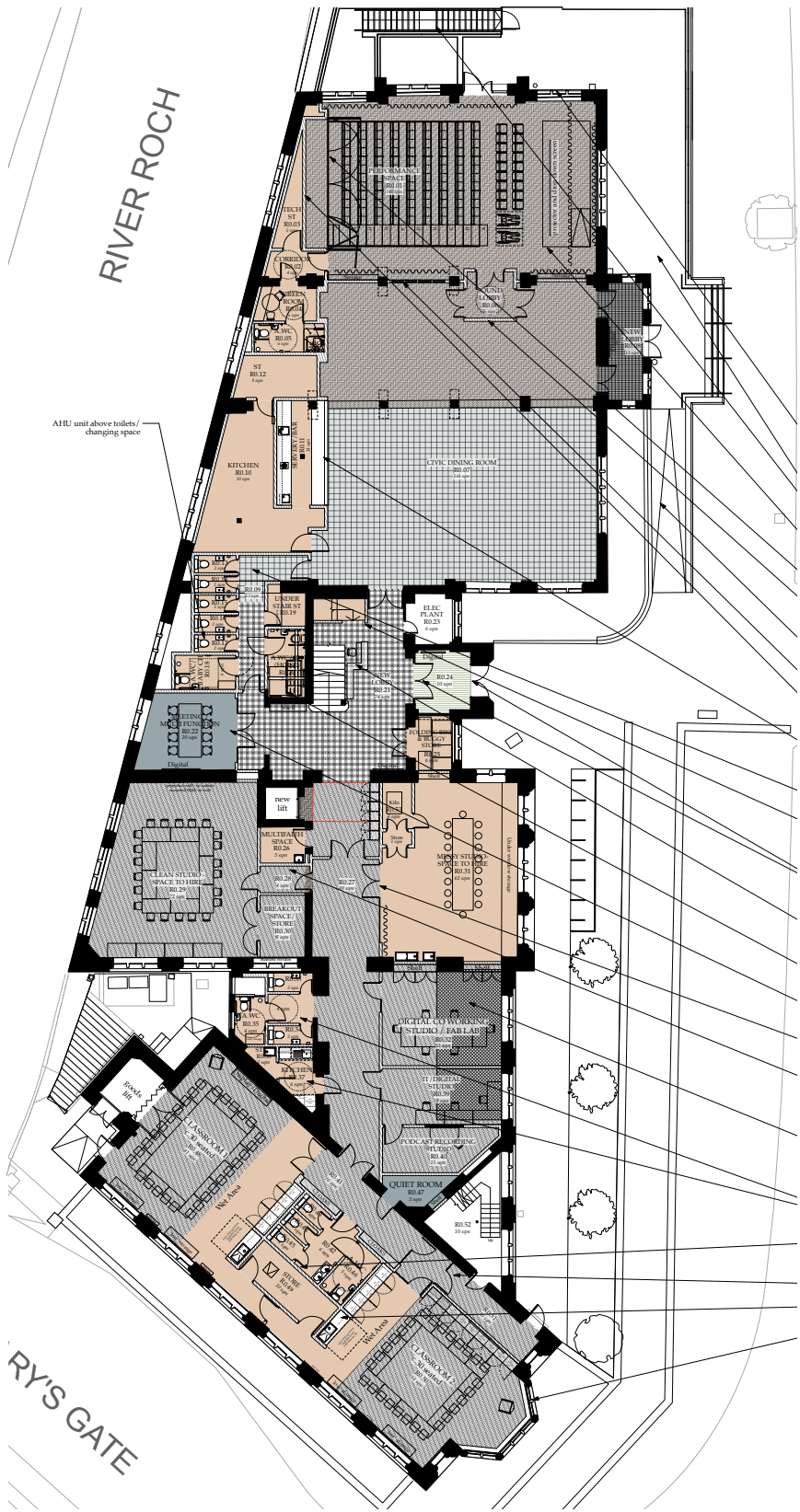
The current resource library will be completely cleared out and striped back to its original proportions, removing the existing mezzanine floor in the process. Retractable bleacher seating will be installed to the rear with w tech store and access to green room facilities. Lighting rigs and curtains in appropriate positions will be suspended from the roof structure using sensitive detailing to ensure there is no detrimental effect on the historic fabric.

### 6.1.7 Co-Working Space

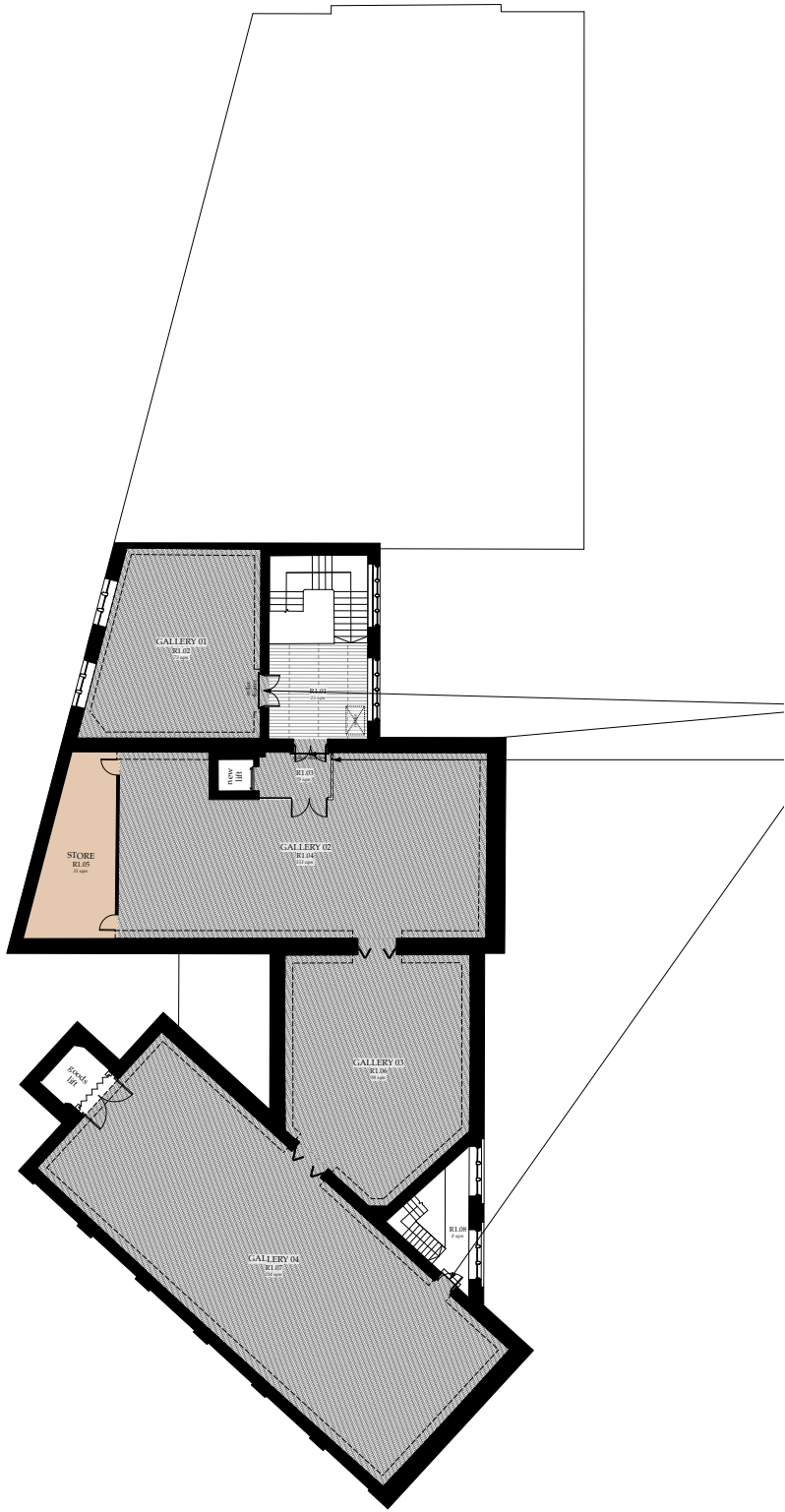
The basement is converted to provide an extensive co-working space with meeting rooms and all other ancillary facilities. This space is a vital part of the aspirations of the new scheme and will provide a facility for local artists and small businesses to co locate and grow within the context of this nationally significant arts centre.



Basement

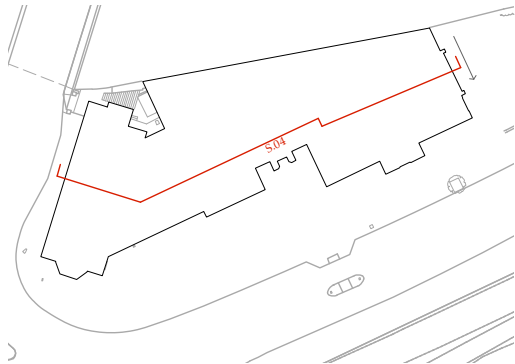
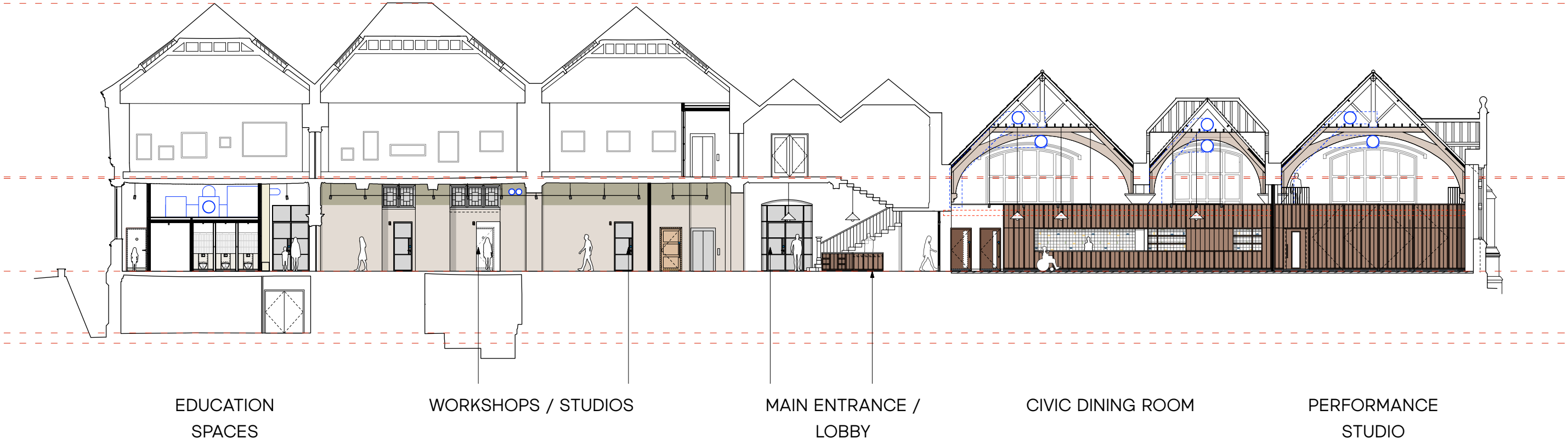


Ground Floor



First Floor

Long Section



### Civic Dining Room

One of the key spaces in the new proposals is the Civic Dining Room which will house the food offer and exhibitions. The adjacent images show how we intend to treat this space. As described previously and again in the heritage statement we will restore as many of the original details and materials as possible so that the space is first and foremost understood as the former library. All other modern interventions will be treated in a sensitive way using materials, colours and details inspired by the original space.



# 8.0 Key Details

Touchstones is in desperate need of significant change, without which it will not survive as an arts institution for much longer and will not deliver the programmes and thrive in the way it undoubtedly can. In order to achieve this, there are changes required to the existing listed building, however every effort has been made to balance the need for new insertions whilst minimizing the loss of historic fabric and in fact (as outlined in the Heritage Statement) in many areas the historic nature of the building has been further enhanced.

One of the key drivers for the project is to increase visitor numbers and to do this the overall capacity of the building also needs to be increased. Due to its historic nature the entrances and exists are not suitable for current fire regulations and therefore the current arrangement is very limiting for a contemporary arts facility.

## 7.1 Proposed Door in East Elevation

Architectural Emporium and the entire design team have spent a long time exploring all options for increasing the building's capacity. Many different proposals have been discussed, however, through extensive consultation it is clear that the only possible solution is to create a new escape door in the Eastern facade.

The team have also undertaken extensive consultation with RBC's conservation officer to discuss this and explore the architectural options which are the most appropriate.

**Since the original issue of this report further options and detailed options appraisals have been submitted.**

The final option sits within the existing opening, in the second bay right of the corner providing a door which both acts as

sufficient escape and also provides a route for larger equipment to be brought into the building. It is designed to be an obviously contemporary intervention yet takes on the proportions of the original window it is replacing.

**The final door location as shown here is a compromise between the usability of the space whilst ensuring it has as little impact as possible especially when considering views to the building from the Town Hall.**

The team fully recognise that this is a significant intervention and as such will ensure it is detailed with extreme care in continual consultation the council's conservation specialists.

A statement of need for this specific item has been including in the appendix from the following parties:

**Rochdale Development Agency** - Client  
**Counter Culture** - Business Planners  
**Jenson Hughes** - Fire Engineering Consultants

## 7.2 Door Design Rational

The new door has been designed to to take on the proportions of the existing windows as much as possible whilst fore filling the widths required for escape.

We intend to use a 'deep bronze' colour as we feel this offers a good tonal match to the existing stone work, whilst offering the contrast required to ensure it is read as a contemporary alteration.

External emergency lighting will also be required, however this will be integrated into the door frame itself so that the fitting is not on show and will be as discrete as possible.



Material Precedent  
'Bronze' coloured metal door set in stone facade.  
Credit: LDArchitects Doria Castle, Italy

# 9.0 Landscape Proposals

## 8.1 Landscape Strategy

### 8.1.1 Existing Condition

The existing landscape approach to the building does not meet current accessibility standards with existing railings acting as visual barriers and obstructing views to the building facade. There is a lack of cycle parking provision for encouraging sustainable travel and there is inadequate useable and flexible outdoor space for the gallery to spill out onto throughout the year. Planting along the building curtilage lacks visual appeal and is in need of renewal.

### 8.1.2 Landscape Proposal

The overall aim of the landscape design is to provide a high quality, accessible and appropriate setting for the listed building. The design seeks to meet current accessibility standards whilst minimising visual impacts on the historic facade.

A flexible terrace space has been established to offer outdoor dining, seating, exhibitions and gathering opportunities. The terrace responds to existing and proposed building entrances and new steps are centred on the

historic building facade. The raised terrace level will partially obscure some of the existing building stone plinth detail. The new stone terrace wall will replicate this detail to lessen the impact of this new addition. A stepped access route to the new door at basement level is integrated within the landscape.

The design seeks to increase tree cover for visual amenity but also as noise, wind and pollution reducing elements. Renewed and proposed planting along the building curtilage aesthetically enhances the historic facade and improves biodiversity.

The location for potential "totem" style signage has been identified and acts as a focal point for pedestrians and users of The Esplanade. The location also signifies and gives prominence to the existing main entrance. New and increased cycle parking provision is proposed close to the main building entrance to encourage active and sustainable travel.

### 8.1.3 Hard Materials

Hard materials will be of high quality and are selected to respond to those used within the adjacent Rochdale Townhall development and as part of the overall vision for the area. The design proposes a combination of natural stone in response to the building facade and high-quality concrete to coordinate with the Townhall Square. New mild steel vertical railings to the terrace will complement existing Victorian railings and provide a visually permeable solution for providing security.

### 8.1.4 Soft Landscape

The proposed planting includes native trees with fastigate form to complement the building facade and for biodiversity benefits. Renewed and proposed shrub planting utilises colourful and evergreen shrubs and perennials for year-round and seasonal interest encouraging users to interact with the landscape.





# 10.0 Structural Summary

## 9.1 Existing Structure

9.1.1 The first part of the building was opened as a library in 1884 (right hand side as viewed from The Esplanade). A museum and art gallery were added in 1903 and extended further in 1913 (left hand side).

9.1.2 A structural walkover of the existing building has been carried out. No major structural defects have been observed but opening up works are required to verify condition of concealed structure. Sutcliffe have prepared a set of plans indicating initial requests for opening up, which are agreed with the conservation officer. Further opening up works are likely to be required.

9.1.3 The building comprises three stories – a partial basement, ground floor, and partial first floor. The museum and local studies rooms are one storey (over partial basement) on the right hand side of the building. There are meeting rooms, workshops and a café on the left hand side of the ground floor, with the art gallery over at first floor. The left hand part of the building is the later extension so we expect there may be some differences in construction.

9.1.4 The exterior of the building is York stone, with a slate roof. It is anticipated that the walls are load bearing masonry, however all are plastered internally so this has not been verified.

9.1.5 Cast iron / steel columns support timber roof trusses within the local studies and museum.

9.1.6 Timber trusses span across the first floor, supported on walls, to form the roof over the art gallery.

9.1.7 The Ground floor is generally anticipated to be jack arch construction, with cast iron beams supporting brick or concrete arches. The Ground floor to the left hand extension is concrete beam and slab, which is visible from the basement.

9.1.8 The basement is expected to be load bearing masonry with a concrete floor.

9.1.9 Sutcliffe attended the archive at Rochdale and viewed record drawings of alteration works carried out in the 1950s and early 2000s. These drawings show replacement of the central columns within the museum / local studies spaces in the 1950s, and the addition of a mezzanine floor in local studies in the early 2000s.

## 9.2 Proposed Structure

9.2.1 The proposals will enhance the space to continue in its use as a community hub, museum and art gallery. There are no structural interventions required at roof or at first floor.

9.2.2 The existing local studies will become a flexible performance area, with moveable bleacher stands. The existing mezzanine floor will be removed.

9.2.3 The existing museum will become an interactive museum and dining area.

9.2.4 A new fire escape will be required on the eastern elevation to facilitate these changes at ground floor.

9.2.5 The remainder of the ground floor will have minimal structural intervention, with one new internal door opening required.

9.2.6 The basement will remain back of house office and workshop space. A new fire escape is required on the eastern elevation to make this area compliant.

9.2.7 Throughout the building non-loadbearing partitions will be removed.

## 9.3 Structural consideration and implications

9.3.1 The existing structure will need to be assessed to verify the change of use, particularly in the new performance area where the loading of a moveable bleacher seating system and an audience will need to be considered. Sufficient opening up works will be required so that the existing structure can be checked and verified, and any potential remedial works / strengthening works specified. It is hoped that as the structure has been functioning as a library for many years that strengthening works will not be required.

9.3.2 The existing mezzanine will be removed within local studies, a structural assessment will be carried out to ensure that its removal will not adversely impact the historic fabric.

**9.3.3 The original position of the new ground floor fire escape would have been located within the frame of an existing window, minimising the structural intervention. However this has now moved to the next bay meaning there are more things to consider including the propping of the window above that remains. Options were considered whereby the top 4 windows were kept,**

**however the structural intervention proved too cumbersome to accommodate this. Therefore the door seeks to go right up to the main lintel as before with only the small window at the top to deal with. This can be done using a relatively small steel angle.**

9.3.4 The new basement fire escape will be formed though the existing basement wall. New lintels will be required, and a new retaining structure to form the access staircase.

9.3.5 Assistance will be provided regarding removal of existing partitions, and construction of new partitions, service routing etc. to ensure that the junctions with the historic fabric are considered.

# 11.0 MEP Strategy / Sustainability

The overall ambition of the client Your Trust and Rochdale Council is to remove fossil fuels from the building. In the long term a district heat network is proposed for the local area and will eventually provide a low pressure hot water feed derived from a sustainable source which can be used to generate heating and hot water.

The proposal for this project is to retain the existing boilers which were installed in 2014 and are in reasonably good condition. However, new distribution shall be installed throughout the building designed ready to accept the district heating supply sometime in the future which would enable the disconnection of the gas supply. Heating shall be provided to each of the spaces via a combination of radiators, and warm air ventilation.

Due to the occupancy of the building, particularly in the performance space and café, these areas shall be heated and

ventilated via mechanical means from a central air handling unit with heat recovery. In other areas such as the classrooms on the St Marys Gate elevation mechanical ventilation is essential as their adjacency to the road prevents the use of opening windows. These areas shall be provided with local mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

The requirement for mechanical ventilation will create the need to introduce louvred openings to the facade but recognising the listed status of the building the interventions have been kept to a minimum and locations have been selected at the rear of the building to minimise their impact.

New LED lighting and power shall be provided throughout the ground floor and basement. Access control shall be provided to key rooms and structured wiring shall be distributed through the building from a new server.

Embodied carbon has been and will continue to be considered throughout the process. There are very little changes to the existing structure and most of our interventions are constructed from sustainable timber sources and will be robustly detailed so that they will last. All spaces are designed to be ultimately flexible which will allow the arts centre to evolve and change without the need for extensive further alterations and interventions.

Refillable water points will be provided for both staff and visitors throughout the building. We will also ensure that where possible items used to serve food and drink within the cafe / restaurant space are reusable or at worst recyclable.

The building operator is also committed to education visitor awareness and sustainability engagement within the facility. A detailed strategy for this will be developed at the next design stage.



# 12.0 Access

## 8.1 Accessibility Policy Summary

Rochdale Arts & Heritage Service (operator of Touchstones) has developed an access policy, reviewed annually, the purpose of which is to provide a framework for maintaining and improving access to their buildings, facilities, displays, collections, associated information, staff and knowledge. It does so by addressing the physical, sensory, cultural, intellectual, attitudinal and financial barriers to access with the overall aim of achieving equality, diversity and inclusion. It aims to create unique opportunities for audiences to learn actively through self-motivated discovery.

The Policy is specific to the Arts & Heritage Service, but supports and reflects the aims of the following local, regional and national strategies:

Pioneering Creativity – A Creative Strategy for Rochdale Borough (June 2019)

Rochdale Borough Council: Rochdale Core Strategy (October 2016)

Greater Manchester Culture Strategy: Grown in Greater Manchester Known Around The World (2019-2024)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport: Culture White Paper (2016)

Arts Council England: Let's Create

The policy and its implementation are monitored and evaluated regularly, including visitor feedback. Data from evaluation and monitoring are used to shape the Service's forward planning. The Service works within the relevant legal framework. In particular this is the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act (2018), the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Child Protection Act, the Equality Act 2010 and the DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains 2005.

## 8.2 Capital Project Access Audit

2 further Access Audits, specific to these capital works have also been undertaken by YT's Inclusion & Disability Coordinator. Access has been at the forefront of all design designs throughout the development of this scheme. The iterative design process taken has allowed many of the current access issues to be addressed ensuring that the future Touchstones can be as inclusive as possible.

A full copy of the latest audit can be found in the appendix.

### 8.3 Wider Town Access

Touchstones is centrally located in Rochdale Town centre and only a few hundred metres from the Town Hall. It is easily accessible on foot, benefiting from excellent pedestrian links both along the Esplanade and via a subway under St Mary's Gate to the college site and beyond. Touchstones therefore benefits from a huge amount of footfall which should be considered a positive and something which the facility maximises through this scheme.

Its central location also means that it benefits from excellent public transport links. It is a 7 minute walk from the major bus hub and a 20 minute walk from the train station.

### 8.1 Highways

Touchstones is bound on two side by roads, one of which is St Mary's Gate. St Mary's gate is part of the Rochdale inner ring road which is in turn linked easily to major national routes and motorway networks. Access by car is therefore extremely easy.

There is a dedicated delivery access to the rear with a goods lift to allow large items to be lifted into the gallery. There will be no change to this arrangement as the highway is outside of the building's demise. A strategy is in place, which is outlined in the Touchstones management plan, of how to best deal with this which will continue to be updated. Deliveries to the front of the building have also been considered as an alternative.

### 8.2 Parking

The current parking arrangements remain unchanged. There is on street parking on The Esplanade in front of the building and Touchstones is within easy walking distance of major public parking located across the centre of Rochdale. There is also proposed improved disabled parking provision as part of the Town Hall Square public realm works which will also be within easy access of the building.

### 8.3 Cycle Parking

The proposal significantly increases the amount of publicly accessible bike parking at the front of the building. Please see attached landscape proposals. Staff cycle parking and shower facilities which are also be made available for the public on request are located in the basement. Lockers for both the public and staff are provided in appropriate locations.

Folding Bike Storage has also been provided inside the main entrance.

### 8.4 Waste management/collection

The proposal does not seek to change current arrangements for waste management and collection.

# Appendix

## HERITAGE STATEMENT





Heritage Statement (Rev A)

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Touchstones

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Doc No: P0237\_HS\_REP001  
Issue: FOR CONSENT  
Rev: A  
Date: FIRST ISSUE MAY 2023 / REV A October 2023

## Contents

- 1) Introduction / purpose of document
- 2) Historical Development of the Site & Heritage Context
- 3) Assessment of Significance
- 4) Proposed Works & Heritage Impact Assessment
- 5) Statutory Requirements
- 6) Conclusions

## 1.0 Introduction / Purpose of Document

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by BB Heritage Studio to accompany the planning and listed building consent applications for the refurbishment of Touchstones Rochdale. This report has been revised (Rev A) to describe and assess design changes that have been undertaken in response to the planning & conservation officers comments.
- 1.2 BB Heritage Studio provides built heritage advice and consultancy services. It is led by Bernadette Bone who is a qualified architect with over 20 years experience of designing in historic environments. Bernadette is an RIBA Accredited Specialist Conservation Architect (RIBA SCA) and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Building Conservation (GradDiplConsAA).
- 1.3 Touchstones is the Borough's main arts and heritage venue within the Grade II listed former public library. It is also located within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and in proximity to other designated and non designated heritage assets. As such this Heritage Statement has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As required by the NPPF, this statement considers the characteristics of the site and the adjacent heritage assets in sufficient detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.
- 1.4 This report consists of six parts. Following this introduction the second section describes the historic background of the proposed site and outlines the heritage context. The third part contains an assessment of significance which is followed in section four by an outline of the proposed works and assessment of impact. The fifth part considers the statutory requirements and section six contains the conclusions.

## 2.0 Historical Development of the Site & Heritage Context

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF ROCHDALE

2.1.1 This Section provides a brief overview of the historic development of the site area, highlighting key events through to the twentieth century.

2.1.2 The Victoria County History entry for Rochdale states that various prehistoric remains have been found and that a Roman Road over Blackstone Edge is still visible. In medieval times Rochdale was a market town which then started to develop due to the textile industry from the late medieval period onwards. In around 1724 Defoe described Rochdale as 'a good market town and of late much improved in the woollen manufacture, as are also the villages in its neighbourhood.'

The Victoria County History account goes on to state;

*'The first stage coach to Manchester began to run in 1790. The canal to Sowerby Bridge was opened in 1788 and the continuation to Manchester in 1804. The Manchester and Leeds Railway opened in 1838.*

*Rochdale led the way in co-operative trading, the Equitable Pioneers' Society having been founded in 1844.*

*The woollen trade has long been the staple industry; coatings, baize, flannel, friezes and carpets being manufactured. Calicoes are also made, as well as silk plush and velvet. There are foundries and machine works. This applies chiefly to the town of Rochdale, and in a smaller degree to Littleborough and Todmorden; but cotton and woollen factories are spread all over the parish, the numerous watercourses having been utilized by manufacturers. Stone is obtained at Blackstone Edge, and Spotland contains extensive quarries of flags and freestone'<sup>1</sup>*

2.1.3 The 1851 map (see Fig. 01) shows the urban form of the town prior to the formation of the Borough of Rochdale in 1856 and shows a town which has developed around the watercourses and greatly influenced by the local topography.



Fig.01: 1851 Map of Rochdale (site of Touchstones circled in red)

<sup>1</sup> 'The parish of Rochdale', in *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 5*, ed. William Farrer and J Brownbill (London, 1911), pp. 187-201. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol5/pp187-201> [accessed 18 April 2023].

- 2.1.4 Following the creation of the Borough of Rochdale the newly formed Rochdale Corporation started to put in place plans to build a new town hall. A design competition was held in 1864 and won by architect W.H. Crossland of Leeds. The works included clearing a large area south of the River Roch to create an Town Hall Square, The Esplanade and Park Slopes as well as the highly elaborate town hall building itself. The maps of 1851 to Fig.01 and 02 show the site area prior to the construction of the Town Hall.



Fig.02 Above: 1851 Larger Scale Town Map prior to construction of Town Hall

Fig.03 Below: Extract from 1851 larger scale map of site area of Touchstones



## 2.2 THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

- 2.2.1 Prior to the construction of the Town Hall and the development of the Town Hall Square and Esplanade the River Roch can be seen to follow a slightly undulating, natural line (Fig. 02 & 03). At the junction of the River Roch with Manchester Road was a property named Willow Grove. This property can be seen remaining extant to the 1892 map which shows the Town Hall and The Esplanade constructed (see Fig's 04 & 05 below). These maps also show the first phase of construction on the Touchstones site which was the Rochdale Free Library.



Fig.04 Above: 1892 Larger Scale Town Map following construction of Town Hall & first phase on Touchstones site

Fig.05 Below: Extract from 1892 larger scale map of site area of Touchstones



- 2.2.2 The Touchstones building as seen today was constructed in three phases. The first phase was designed by Jesse Horsfall (1859-1910) in 1883 in a free-Elizabethan style. It was commissioned after the original library in the Town Hall was damaged by a fire that destroyed the clock tower. The council decided to construct a new library on The Esplanade and it was opened on 30 October 1884. The extent of the first phase can be seen to the photograph to Fig. 06 below and corresponds with the maps of 1892.

The building was constructed by T. Berry and Son of Milnrow Road, Rochdale. A detailed description of this first phase of construction is included in a newspaper article in The Rochdale Observer of 01 Nov 1884 (see Appendix A). Notably the facades included extensive stained glass containing portraiture of well-known male and female authors but this has now been removed. This was removed in 1955 and replaced with plain glazing, when alterations to the interior were made in order to allow more light into the lending section. Only one large quatrefoil of the scheme remains over the original doorway which contains the arms of Rochdale.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of construction of the first phase the future aim for the site to include an art gallery and museum had already been established (also see extracts from the newspaper article of 01 Nov 1884 in Appendix A).



Fig.06 Above: Photograph of Rochdale Free Library c.1890 Image courtesy of Rochdale Local studies, Touchstones  
[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Photograph-of-Rochdale-Free-Library-c-1890-depicting-mills-and-housing-in-the\\_fig1\\_343451136](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Photograph-of-Rochdale-Free-Library-c-1890-depicting-mills-and-housing-in-the_fig1_343451136)

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Veronica 'Stained Glass and the Victorian Town: Rochdale Library, Museum and Art Gallery'



Fig.07: Archive Drawings of First Phase constructed 1884 courtesy of Rochdale Local studies, Touchstones



Fig.08 Above: Photograph of Rochdale Free Library, women's reading room c.1920.

Image courtesy of Rochdale Local Studies, Touchstones

Fig. 09 Below: Photograph of Rochdale Free Library, men's reading room c. 1920.

Image courtesy of Rochdale Local Studies, Touchstones



- 2.2.3 Rochdale Corporation had been receiving gifts and donations for the museum since 1874 and funding from the town's wealthy mill owners led to the construction of the museum extension in 1903, again designed by Horsfall. The two-storey extension proudly displayed the cultural benefits being funded through the town's cotton wealth, in three carved panels representing science, art and literature (see photo to Fig. 10). This second phase again included stained glass which contained symbolic representation of the elements and countries of the Union.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.2.4 A further extension was added in 1913 which incorporated additional museum space and two further galleries. A photocopy of a newspaper article held in a file at Touchstones (noted as RO 8 Feb 1913) provides a short description of the extension and states that it was designed by Mr P.W. Hathaway, the Corporation architect (see Appendix B).
- 2.2.5 An archive plan of circa 1912 shows the three phases (refer to Fig.12 which follows). The first phase is noted as 'Free Library 1884', the second phase as 'Extension to Free Library New Museum and Art Gallery 1903' and the third phase as 'Extension to Art Gallery in Progress'.
- 2.2.6 The Listing Notice contains the following information

|                           |                                                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Name:</b>              | <b>ROCHDALE CENTRAL LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY</b> |
| <b>Grade:</b>             | <b>II</b>                                               |
| <b>List entry Number:</b> | <b>1367096</b>                                          |
| <b>Date first listed:</b> | <b>12-Feb-1985</b>                                      |
| <b>District:</b>          | <b>Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)</b>                |

List entry description:

*Library, museum and art gallery, now library. Library 1883, museum and art gallery 1903 and 1913. Jesse Horsfall. Yorkshire stone with slate roof. The 1883 library consists of a central porch and entrance hall flanked on either side by parallel reading rooms. The 1903 extension added a linking passage, porch, hall and stairway to the left of the original building and a two-storey range with art gallery on the upper floor. The 1913 extension involved further rooms to the west and a diagonal wing, all on two storeys. The original library has 3 gables and is symmetrical about the smaller central one; it is all of one storey and has a low central porch with arcaded parapet, elliptical headed door opening with enriched spandrels, overlight enriched advanced gablet with ball finial and 3-light mullion and transom windows to either side with ovolo-moulding. The large gables to either side have 5-light ovolo-moulded mullion and transom windows with segmental heads and dripmoulds, heraldic and inscribed panels above, and ball finials. The linking passage is detailed similarly but has elliptical headed 3 and 4-light mullioned windows with Art Nouveau stained glass. The museum and art gallery has a 4-bay central section with a 3-bay gable to the right and diagonally-set gable to the left. Detailing is again similar but each gable includes 3 panels of carved figures, one representing science art and literature designed by C.J. Allan and carved by J.J. Millson. The museum was requisitioned in the war and has since been used as part of the library.*

- 2.2.7 A number of alterations are known to have been carried out in various stages through the later C20th. In particular alterations circa 1955 which involved the removal of the stained glass to the original Free Library building, also including significant alterations to the interior with the columns having being totally remodelled structurally (see archive drawings in Appendix C). The ground floor museum room, which was originally conceived as a single room was later subdivided (see Fig. 13).

Further in the later C20th works to Manchester Road and the creation of the underpass changed the immediate setting of the building, particularly the later phase.

Then in 2003 the building was converted into an art and heritage centre which mostly focussed on ground floor alterations and the addition of lobbies to the galleries at first floor. These works also included alterations to the external hard landscape for the provision of level access with the addition of ramps, alterations to the external low boundary walls and alterations to the railings.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Veronica 'Stained Glass and the Victorian Town: Rochdale Library, Museum and Art Gallery'



Fig.10 Above: Photograph Showing First & Second Phases

Fig.11 Below: OS Plan circa 1912 Showing First & Second Phases



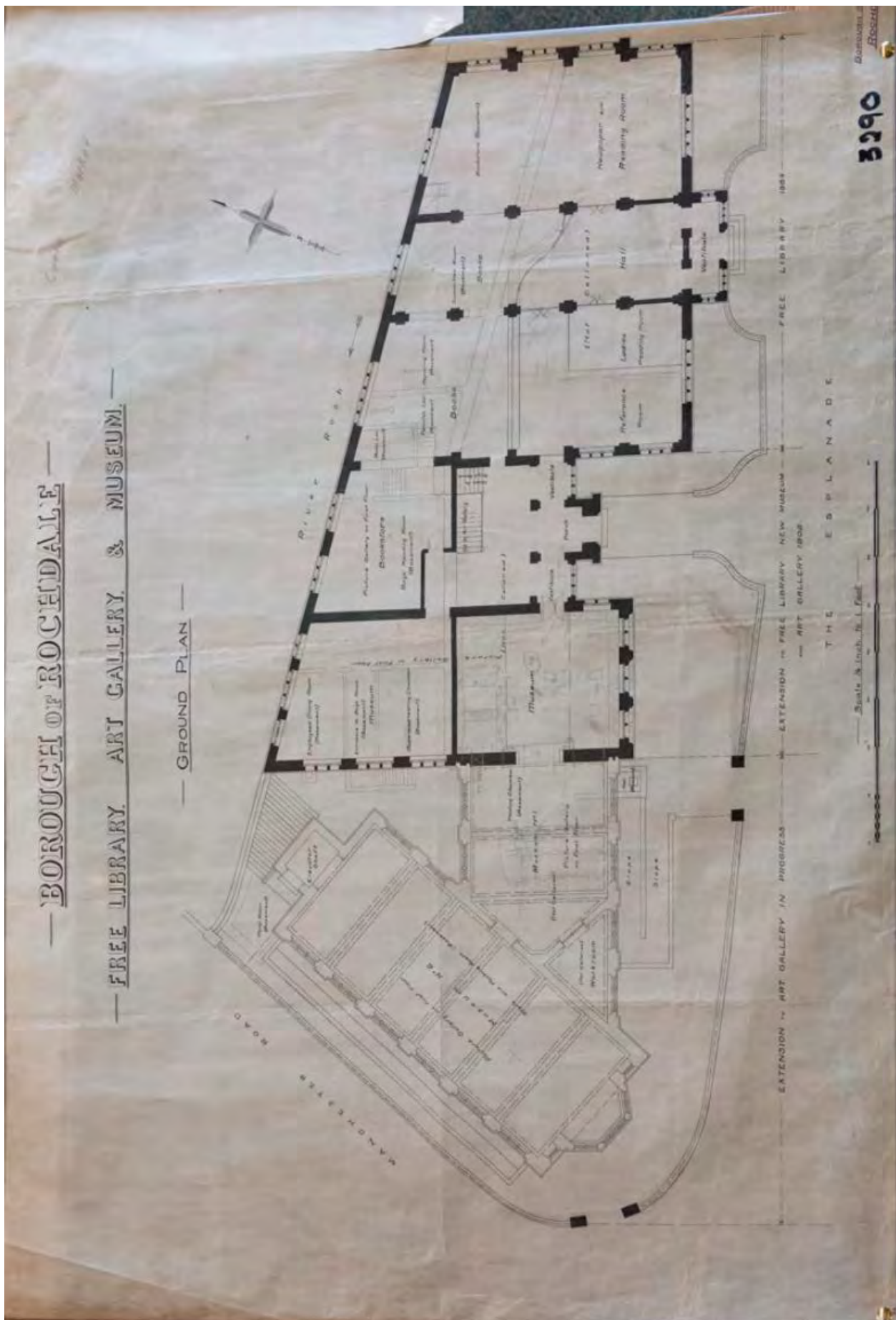


Fig.12: Plan Showing Three Phases of Construction (date c. 1912)

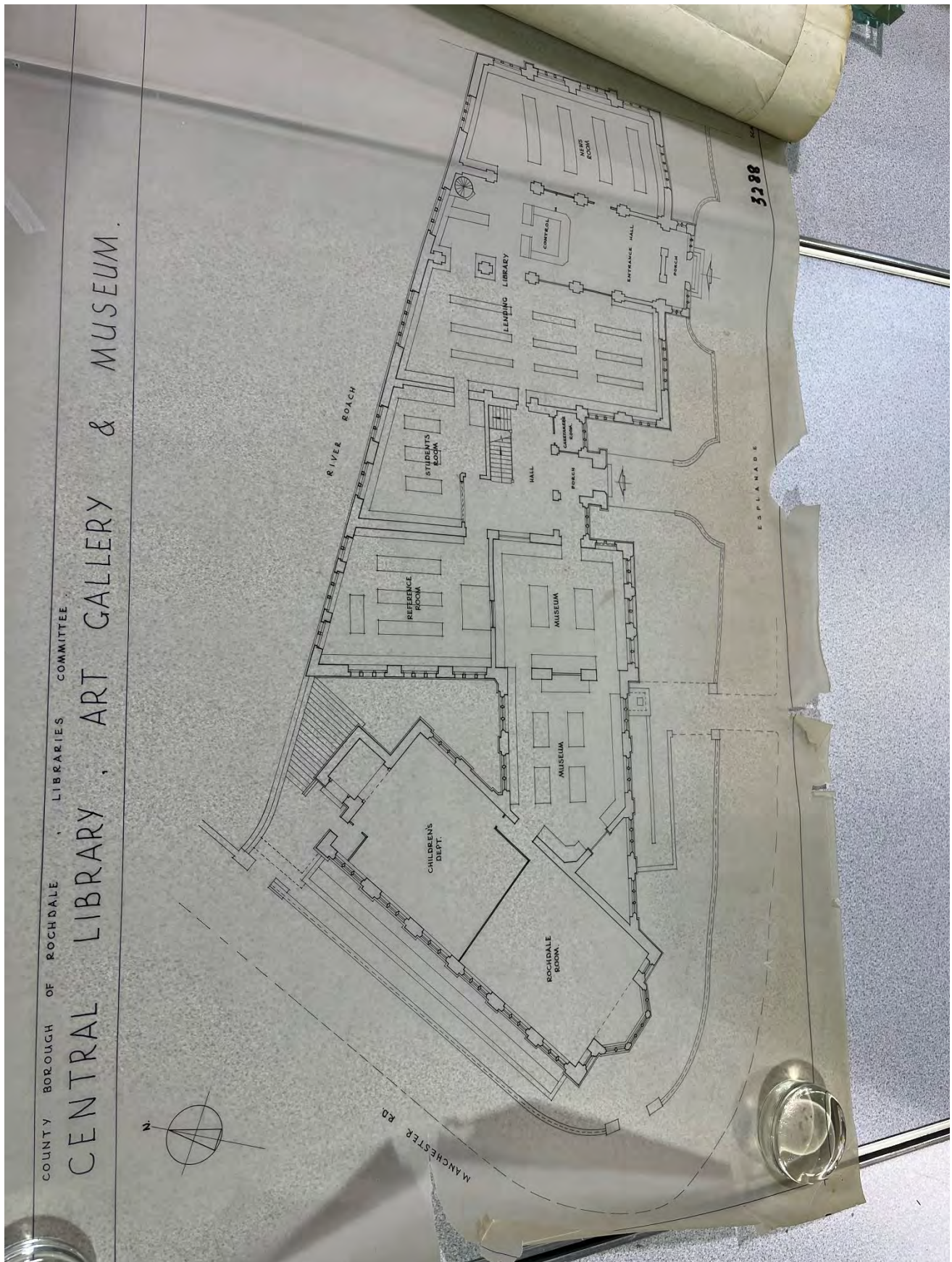


Fig.13: Plan Showing C20th alterations

## 2.3 HERITAGE CONTEXT: CONSERVATION AREA & ADJACENT HERITAGE ASSETS

- 2.3.1 Touchstones is an important heritage asset within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and is experienced as part of a grouping of heritage assets along The Esplanade. It is located within the Town Hall, Square & Esplanade Character Area of the Conservation Area.

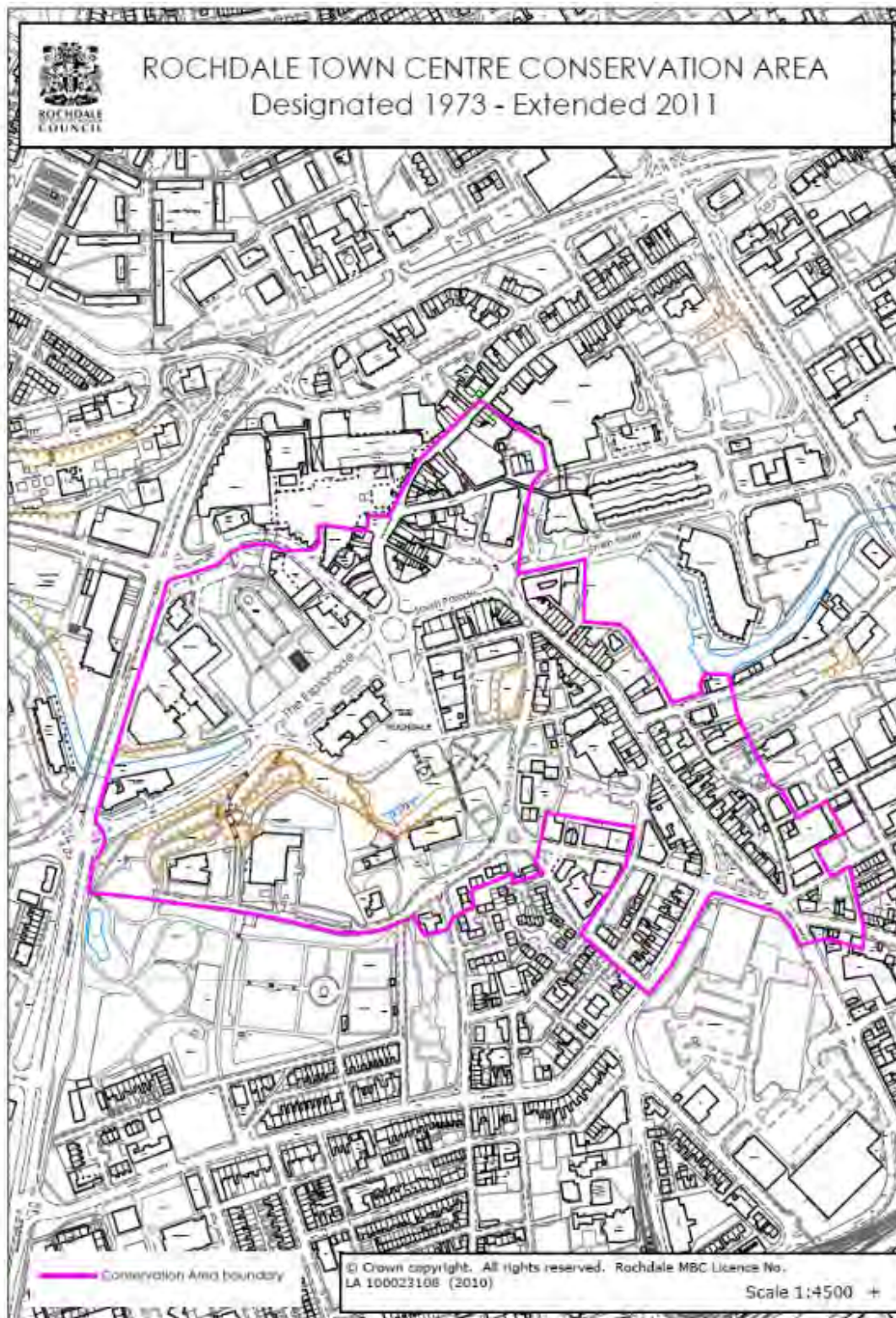


Fig.14: Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary

2.3.2 There are a number of designated heritage assets in proximity to the proposed site (as shown in Fig. 15 below).



Fig.15: Site Location and location of adjacent heritage assets - extract from Historic England's online National Heritage List for England (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>)

#### Key

- 1: Touchstones, Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery (Grade II Listed)
- 2: Broadfield Park (GII Park and Garden)
- 3: Statue of John Bright (Grade II Listed)
- 4: Town Hall (Grade I Listed)
- 5: Former Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 6: Former Union Bank of Manchester (Grade II Listed)
- 7: Rochdale Bridge (Grade II Listed)
- 8: The Former Oldham Joint Stock Bank (Grade II Listed)
- 9: Former Blue Bell Inn (Grade II Listed)
- 10: The Old Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 11: Rochdale Cenotaph (Grade I Listed)
- 12: Lamp posts at each corner of War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

## 2.4 HERITAGE CONTEXT: SETTING

2.4.1 Within the NPPF glossary the setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

2.4.2 Historic England recommends the following approach to assessing development affecting the setting of a heritage asset. The approach is undertaken as a series of steps as follows<sup>4</sup>;

- **Step 1:** Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.
- **Step 2:** Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.
- **Step 3:** Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.
- **Step 4:** Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.
- **Step 5:** Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

### STEP 1: IDENTIFY WHICH HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE AFFECTED

2.4.3 *'The setting of a heritage asset is 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced' (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary). Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset. The starting point of the analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the development proposals.'*<sup>5</sup>

2.4.4 For the proposed site the extant heritage assets which have potential to be affected by the development proposals in their setting are;

- 1: Touchstone, Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery (Grade II Listed)
- 2: Broadfield Park (GII Park and Garden)
- 3: Statue of John Bright (Grade II Listed)
- 4: Town Hall (Grade I Listed)
- 5: Former Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 6: Former Union Bank of Manchester (Grade II Listed)
- 7: Rochdale Bridge (Grade II Listed)
- 8: The Former Oldham Joint Stock Bank (Grade II Listed)
- 9: Former Blue Bell Inn (Grade II Listed)
- 10: The Old Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 11: Rochdale Cenotaph (Grade I Listed)
- 12: Lamp posts at each corner of War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

<sup>4</sup> Historic England 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)

<sup>5</sup> ibid

## STEP 2: ASSESS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THESE SETTINGS MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET(S) OR ALLOW SIGNIFICANCE TO BE APPRECIATED

- 2.4.6 *'The second stage of any analysis is to assess whether the setting of an affected heritage asset makes a contribution to its significance and the extent and/or nature of that contribution; both setting, and views which form part of the way a setting is experienced, may be assessed additionally for the degree to which they allow significance to be appreciated.'*<sup>6</sup>

Following is an extract from the Historic England guidance which shows the recommended checklist for assessment.

### Assessment Step 2 Checklist

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

#### The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design eg hierarchy, layout
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time

#### Experience of the asset

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point
- Noise, vibration and other nuisances
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'
- Busyness, bustle, movement and activity
- Scents and smells
- Diurnal changes
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy
- Land use
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public
- Rarity of comparable survivals of setting
- Cultural associations
- Celebrated artistic representations
- Traditions

<sup>6</sup> ibid

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

- 2.4.7 The Esplanade forms a level promenade running adjacent to the revealed sections of the River Roch. The level topography affords some views between Touchstones and the Town Hall and the other heritage assets to the eastern end of the Esplanade. The land then rises dramatically to the south forming Broadfield Park and more gently to the northern side of the river. The adjacent pocket of landscape immediately to the east side of Touchstones is raised from the pavement level of the Esplanade but then falls towards the balustrade forming the river edge protection. There is a mound within the wider area closest to the building the origins and functions of which are not known (as such site investigations are to be carried out to rule out any underground structure).

## **ASPECT & ORIENTATION**

- 2.4.8 The Esplanade provides an open aspect to the north of the Town Hall which meets the east end and frontage of Touchstones. Touchstones is directly orientated onto the Esplanade facing south where the main entrances are located.

## **OTHER HERITAGE ASSETS**

- 2.4.9 The heritage assets have been identified at Step 1 as follows;

- 1: Touchstone, Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery (Grade II Listed)
- 2: Broadfield Park (GII Park and Garden)
- 3: Statue of John Bright (Grade II Listed)
- 4: Town Hall (Grade I Listed)
- 5: Former Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 6: Former Union Bank of Manchester (Grade II Listed)
- 7: Rochdale Bridge (Grade II Listed)
- 8: The Former Oldham Joint Stock Bank (Grade II Listed)
- 9: Former Blue Bell Inn (Grade II Listed)
- 10: The Old Post Office (Grade II Listed)
- 11: Rochdale Cenotaph (Grade I Listed)
- 12: Lamp posts at each corner of War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

## **DEFINITION, SCALE AND 'GRAIN' OR SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AND SPACES**

- 2.4.10 This part of the Conservation Area has a more open scale and grain compared to other parts of the Town Centre Conservation Area due to the civic nature of the buildings and public spaces.

## **FORMAL DESIGN, HIERARCHY, LAYOUT**

- 2.4.11 Touchstones has a formal relationship with the Esplanade and the hierarchy between this building and the Town Hall is evident in the layout and the scale & massing of the building. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the Esplanade as *"the picturesque equivalent of a long symmetrical vista to a classical town hall and square. However, unlike classical design, nothing is perfectly straight, symmetrical or 'on axis' and everything appears informal and accidental. For example, from the west, the gently curving Esplanade never quite frames the Town Hall."*

Touchstones acts as a gateway onto the Esplanade from Manchester Road / St Mary's Gate, enhanced by the way in which the later phase of the building formally responds to and directly faces the line of the road.

#### **HISTORIC MATERIALS & SURFACES**

- 2.4.12 The historic building materials of the heritage assets, in particular the stonework to the Town Hall and Touchstones, provides the predominant characteristic to the area. Historic surfaces have been lost or significantly altered over time. In the immediately setting of Touchstones some stone walls and paving remains in localised areas however the original configuration has been changed through works in the later C20th century to widen Manchester Road and create the underpass and then works in 2003 to create level access at ground level.

#### **GREEN SPACE, TREES & VEGETATION**

- 2.4.13 Broadfield Park forms a southern boundary and provides a significant green setting to Touchstones. The adjacent pocket of landscape to the east side of Touchstones also provides a positive setting for the building. The strong influence of the river which forms the northern boundary to Touchstones and the adjacent pocket of landscape is also a positive element in the setting of the building.

#### **OPENNESS, ENCLOSURE & BOUNDARIES**

- 2.4.14 There is a sense of openness adjacent to Touchstones although there are some definitive boundaries such as to the river and also to the underpass and the adjacent dual carriageway.

#### **FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- 2.4.15 The civic nature of the buildings and public spaces provides a functional relationship

#### **HISTORY & DEGREE OF CHANGE OVER TIME**

- 2.4.16 The historical development of this part of Rochdale is still strongly evident in the built form and spaces between the buildings. There has been some negative change over time with increased parking becoming more dominant in the setting of the public buildings and overbearing the public spaces.

#### **SETTING CONCLUSIONS**

- 2.4.17 As can be concluded from the analysis above, the key positive elements of the setting are;
- The relationship of the Touchstones building to the Esplanade and adjacent pocket of landscape
  - The relationship of the Touchstones building to the river
  - The relationship of the Touchstones building to Broadfield Park
  - Long distant views between Touchstones and the Town Hall and other heritage assets along the Esplanade
- 2.4.18 Step 3 of the assessment of setting which assesses the effects of the proposed development , whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or the ability to appreciate it, is detailed within Section 4.0 of this report.

### 3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 An assessment of significance is a requirement for any planning application that affects a heritage asset. This section of the report provides an assessment of the heritage merit of the application site based on desk based research and site visits. The assessment has been carried out with reference to the heritage values as defined in the English Heritage document *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidelines* which can be summarised as follows;

- Evidential value – the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (i.e. archaeological interest)
- Historical value – the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life are connected through a place.
- Aesthetic value – the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (i.e. architectural and artistic interest)
- Communal value – the meanings of a place for the people that relate to it.

3.2 A statement of significance follows uses the following ‘grades’ of significance:

- Exceptional – the elements of the heritage asset which are of exceptional value (equivalent to Grade I)
- High – the elements of the heritage asset which are of high value (equivalent to Grade II\*)
- Considerable – the elements of the heritage asset which are of moderate value (equivalent to Grade II)
- Some – the elements of the heritage asset which are of some value (equivalent to local listing status)
- Neutral – the elements of the heritage asset which have neutral value
- Negative – the elements of the heritage asset which have a negative impact or are visually intrusive
- Undefined – any elements which could be of heritage value but have yet to be determined due to lack of available information

#### 3.3 Evidential Value

As noted above, evidential values are those that derive from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (Conservation Principles para.35). These values will usually comprise physical remains inherited from the past and tend to be primarily archaeological in form. Consequently, the ability to understand and interpret the evidence is diminished in proportion to the extent of its removal or replacement (Conservation Principles para.36).

The site and building of Touchstones have potential to yield some evidential value, this is considered to be limited to evidential value relating to the three phases of construction of the library, art gallery and museum. The historic maps show that there was previous built form on the site but due to the extensive nature of the later phases of construction which included basement excavation and rebuilding of the river wall then any evidence of earlier activity is likely to be very limited. The building itself has potential to yield evidential value relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century phases of construction, this have been diminished slightly by later alterations and the evidential value is considered to be limited to revealing construction materials, methods and past finished for example.

The adjacent pocket of landscape is also considered to have the potential to yield some evidential value. The origins and function of the mound is not currently know. As such it is recommended that investigations under watching brief are undertaken.

#### 3.4 Historical Value

As noted above, historical values derive from the ways in which people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present day (Conservation Principles para.39). The evidence may be either illustrative or associative.

The site and building of Touchstones have considerable illustrative and associative historical value. The building is an important example nationally of the free public library movement and also regionally and locally significant in representing the wealth and ambition of the area at the time. There is further historical value in the ambition to

provide a significant public cultural building in the original and realised aim to include the art gallery and museum extension. It is also an important part of the historical fabric of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and a key component of the Town Hall, Square & Esplanade Character Area showing the historic development of this part of the town centre.

### **3.5 Aesthetic Value**

Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (Conservation Principles para 46), in particular architectural and artistic interest.

The site and building of Touchstones have considerable aesthetic value both externally to the building fabric and setting and also internally. Externally the aesthetic value is principally derived from the original building materials and historic detailing, key elements of the setting also contribute to the aesthetic value. Internally the principal plan form and phases of construction remain highly legible. The aesthetic value has been diminished in areas where later alterations have been made which have removed or concealed historic detailing or finishes. However there are still key elements of historic value in the interiors including stained glass to the later phases, historic floor finishes, the principal staircases and the predominantly intact gallery spaces.

### **3.6 Communal Value**

Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory (Conservation Principles para 54).

As a building which was intended for public use and has been in constant public use since its original construction in 1884, the site of Touchstones has considerable communal value.

### **3.7 Conclusions & Capacity for Change**

The site and building of Touchstones has been assessed to have some evidential value and considerable historic, aesthetic and communal value. The values are derived from its construction as an important public asset, its continual use as a public asset, the historic materials and detailing and its expression of its region and locality.

There have been some changes made to the building over the C20th and C21st centuries which have removed some of the historic fabric (principally the changes made in the 1950's which removed the stained glass and altered the interior of the first phase). These have informed the significance plans which follow and guide the assessment of capacity for change.

The significance plans use the following assessment criteria;

High heritage significance = low capacity for change

These areas are original historic fabric which remains predominantly unchanged.

Medium heritage significance = medium capacity for change

These areas contain or relate to the original historic fabric but have been altered

Low / no heritage significance = high capacity for change

These areas are predominantly later / modern interventions

SIGNIFICANCE PLANS: BASEMENT



SIGNIFICANCE PLANS: GROUND



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SIGNIFICANCE PLANS: FIRST



## 4.0 Proposed Works & Heritage Impact Assessment

### 4.1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 4.1.1 The proposed scheme is described in full in the accompanying Design & Access Statement. As such the proposed works are summarised here in sufficient detail to provide the context for the assessment of impact.
- 4.1.2 Working in partnership. Rochdale Borough Council, Rochdale Development Agency and YourTrust have secured Arts Council (ACE) Cultural Development funding to support the refurbishment of the Touchstones Gallery into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century multidisciplinary cultural hub.

The project aims to reconfigure and reimagine Rochdale's main arts and heritage venue to create a flagship hub which will form the heart of the newly envisaged cultural district. It will house new flexible spaces for production, enterprise, innovation, education, events, collections, exhibitions and performances. The project will become the driver for promoting culture across Rochdale and the wider borough. The new facility will be more accessible, approachable and engaging, ensuring a more diverse range of visitors can appreciate it. Complementary uses will allow the building to thrive as a home for the arts whilst ensuring its financial and environmental sustainability.

The design proposals have undergone significant development to test how the different spatial and servicing requirements of: gallery spaces; a curated community dining space; education spaces; a performance / rehearsal studio; and workspaces to support the creative economy, could be accommodated in a way which made best use of the historic building whilst allowed the building to function more efficiently.

A key outcome of the design development was identifying that the galleries were best retained in the purpose built gallery spaces on the first floor, with the project focusing on reconfiguring the underutilised ground floor spaces to bring these back to life. This will allow key new functions such as the curated dining space and performance studio to be located on the ground floor, where their high capacities can be more easily accommodated, and celebrate the historic spaces in a way which minimises the need for intrusive works.

This approach strongly accords with the assessment of significance and capacity for change that was undertaken which show that the gallery spaces remain predominantly unchanged whereas the ground floor area has seen a level of change to date.

Following feedback from the planning & conservation officer further design development has been undertaken which further seeks to minimise the extent of intrusive works and the impact on the historic fabric and / or key views from the wider setting and conservation area.

## 4.2 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.2.1 The project requirements do require a series of alterations / interventions to be made. The following impact assessment is structured as follows;

- assessment of changes due to physical alterations / interventions to the built fabric
- assessment of changes to the setting

### 4.2.2 Assessment of changes due to physical alterations / interventions to the built fabric

The following section provides a description of the physical alterations / interventions that are required to enable the reconfiguration of the building to meet the new uses.

#### 4.2.2.1 Basement

Alterations are required to the basement area to facilitate the following;

- Creation of new co-working spaces within current office and store area including reorganisation of current staff areas
- Provision of new fire escape and stairs leading from basement up to ground floor level into the eastern garden area
- Reorganisation of current picture store to create smaller store and back of house workshop area

The resulting physical alterations that are required include some limited areas of fabric removal which is shown to the demolition drawings. This includes;

- Creation of a new external opening on the eastern basement wall for escape purposes and adjacent excavation of the landscape to form the escape stair. This is to the external fabric which is of low capacity for change as such all alternative options for enabling the use in the basement have been assessed and ruled out. The escape is necessary for the occupancy of the basement areas, there are currently insufficient means of escape from the basement area and ensuring that this area can be suitably occupied in the future is important to the viability of the site. The fabric removal proposed is to be kept to the minimum necessary and will have **a very minor negative impact** on the historic fabric.
- Removal of the existing spiral staircase and adjacent infill to the arched opening. The existing spiral staircase is a later addition, not shown on the plan circa 1912 (Fig. 12) which shows a different configuration of staircases accessing the basement (as described to the newspaper article in Appendix A). The infill to the arched opening is also a later addition therefore these alteration works are assessed to not have any harmful impact.
- Removal of subdividing walls and doors. Predominantly the subdividing walls which are to be removed are later modern additions, and the doors in the basement are all modern replacements which are not of heritage value. Therefore these alteration works are assessed to not have any harmful impact.

#### 4.2.2.2 Ground

The following alterations are required to the ground floor spaces;

##### Education Spaces

- Removal of fixed storage units to reveal the internal face of windows on to St Mary's Gate. These storage units are all of modern construction and their removal will have **a beneficial impact** revealing currently concealed historic features.
- Removal of existing partitions, WC area, sink and counters. The existing subdivisions and fixtures and fittings which are to be removed are modern insertions of no heritage value and their removal will therefore not have a harmful impact. The works will have a **beneficial impact** as they seek to reinstate the historic proportions of the room – with the services pod being kept at a lower height.

- Creation of welfare 'pod' including WC and 'west area' facilities. This increases the WC provision in this area and relocates it centrally enabling it to be accessed by two adjacent classroom / education spaces. This also allows sink areas to the adjacent spaces to back on to the WC's simplifying the drainage arrangements. As previously noted this room was originally conceived as a single museum space but was subdivided in the C20th to form two rooms. The proposals will therefore not have a harmful impact and seek to reinstate the historic proportions of the room – with the services pod being kept at a lower height.
- Revealing of existing floors in some areas or provision of new floor surface. Existing later / modern floor finishes are to be removed, the substrate and any historic floor finishes will be inspected to determine if they can be repaired. Where the proposals require a new floor finish, such as in the 'wet areas' then the original floor will be retained, protected and then covered with the new floor finish.

#### Proposed Studios

- Removal of lobby into western section of the building. This is a recent addition and its removal is therefore not considered to cause harm.
- Reopening of a blocked archway to create new circulation route. On the later plan (Fig. 13) there are 3 openings in the wall between the two museum rooms to the western section. Only one central opening is shown on the earlier 1912 plan (Fig. 12) as such the blocked up opening appears to have been inserted later. Reopening this archway assists in simplifying the circulation and the creation of the new studio spaces. This is not considered to cause harm to the heritage asset.
- Removal of current raised café seating and C21st fixtures and fittings associated with the café use. As these are all relatively recent interventions their removal is not considered to cause harm.
- Addition of new partitions (some glazed) to create studio spaces. The new partitions will be carefully detailed so as not to obscure the original features at ceiling level. **The final location of the partitions has been revised as part of the latest design development to further reduce any intervention to the historic detailing.** The partitions will subdivide a space which was originally conceived as an open museum room and as such will lead to some change in legibility of the original plan layout. **This includes the creation of the quiet space which is an essential element of the brief for the educational functions. The subdivision of this area retains the historic joinery which is then located within the podcast recording studio with the location of the partition carefully located to avoid any conflict. As part of previous alteration works this door no longer provides access to the small ancillary room (which now houses a fire escape). An additional door opening required in the masonry wall to access the quiet room provides the necessary access and is a reversible alteration with minimal loss of historic fabric.** This intervention will have **a very minor negative impact** on the historic fabric. As previously noted the detailed assessment undertaken at design development stage has determined that this area is the most viable and suitable space for these room, causing the least harm to the heritage asset. As such the harm is considered to be outweighed by the benefits of providing the new viable use.
- Creation of a new opening below an existing window to create new accessible WC facilities. This will require the removal of an existing leaded light window which has stained glass medallions over. A similar intervention has previously been carried out to the adjacent window. The removal of the window and provision of a door opening in this area will have **a minor negative impact** on the historic fabric. The proposals seek to minimise any impact by ensuring that the original opening can still be understood through careful detailing.
- Reopening and refurbishment of previously block up windows in 'clean studio'. The currently blocked up windows are part of the original layout and opening these up will have **a beneficial impact** on the historic fabric.
- Revealing of existing floors in some areas or provision of new floor surface. Existing later / modern floor finishes are to be removed, the substrate and any historic floor finishes will be inspected to determine if they can be repaired. Where the proposals require a new floor finish, such as in the 'wet areas' then the original floor will be retained, protected and then covered with the new floor finish.

#### Lobby Area

- Removal of current 'tunnel' partitions to further reveal the staircase. The existing partitions which form the entrance into the existing permanent exhibition area are all modern insertions and not of heritage value. Therefore their removal will not cause harm. The works will have a **beneficial impact** as they seek to reveal the original intent for the staircase.
- Adjustment of the top step of the basement stairs. The stairs are of concrete construction and as such their alteration will not be harmful to the heritage asset.
- Removal of current reception desk and office area. The current reception desk and doors into the office area are all modern construction and their removal is therefore not harmful to the heritage asset.
- Revealing and restoring the original tiled floor throughout. Existing later / modern floor finishes are to be removed, the substrate and any historic floor finishes will be inspected to determine if they can be repaired. Where the original floor finishes can be revealed this will have a **beneficial impact**.
- The existing partitions which create the current WC area are all to be removed to allow for this to be reconfigured. These are all later partitions and therefore their removal is not considered to cause harm.
- Partitions to create new meeting room and welfare area with deck above used to house air handling units. The subdivision of this area to provide these functions follows a similar principal to that existing, this is not considered to cause harm to the heritage asset. There is **beneficial impact** from revealing one of the original windows.

#### Proposed Civic Dining Room

- Removal of current permanent exhibition. The existing permanent exhibition is a modern insertion and not of heritage value, therefore its removal is not considered to cause harm. The ramped access up to and down from the exhibition and the raised floor build up is to be investigated to determine that this can be removed. This may enable the revealing of historic floor finishes if they remain extant (note the article to Appendix XX suggests different floor materials in this area) which would have a **beneficial impact**. The removal of the permanent exhibition provides the open space to facilitate the proposed civic dining room.
- Potential revealing of original roof structure and ceiling. Subject to some initial investigations and opening up there is an opportunity to reveal or reinstate original roof structure detailing which would have a **beneficial impact**.
- Creation of new c.3m high 'pod' to accommodate bar/café/kitchen and welfare facilities. The creation of the new civic dining room requires the necessary kitchen / bar / café facilities. Various alternative options for how best to accommodate these functions within the existing historic fabric have been considered. The most sensitive is considered to be to locate these to the northern side of the building, enabling the main space to be retained as openly as possible and meaning that the servicing is a continuation of the existing WC facilities. The height will partly conceal the existing fenestration which are currently completely blocked. As such on balance it is considered that the change from the current permanent exhibition scenario to the open civic dining room scenario allows for a greater appreciate of the quality of the space and that the addition of the pod will not have a harmful impact on the heritage asset.
- Opening up of final archway between bays (2 arch ways to be reopened). The archways to either side of the original library entrance hall appear to have always been infilled (see plans to Fig.'s 12 & 13). The removal of these will greatly enhance the connectivity to the civic dining hall and performance space. The removal will be limited to the arch infill only and ensure that the existing modulation in the fabric remains legible. As this area has been altered previously as part of the works in the 1950's then the removal of this fabric is not considered to cause harm to the heritage asset.
- New partitions / glazed screens between the civic dining room and the performance studio. The new glazed screens are predominantly to where there would have been timber & glazed screens historically into the newspaper and reading room. As such the new glazed screens are not considered to cause harm to the heritage asset.

- New acoustic lobby 'pod' between civic dining room and performance studio. This is necessary for acoustic separation between the performance space and the civic dining room. It will be detailed in a lightweight manner and is not considered to cause harm to the heritage asset.

#### Performance Studio

- Removal of existing mezzanine. The existing mezzanine was constructed as part of the works in 2003, its removal seeks to reinstate the historic proportions of the room. The mezzanine structure is not of heritage value and therefore its removal is not considered to cause harm.
- Creation of a new c.3m high 'pod' to match the intervention in the civic dining room, housing tech store and retractable bleacher seating. As with the pod within the civic dining room the most sensitive option is considered to be to locate these functions to the northern side of the building, enabling the main space to be retained as openly as possible and meaning that the servicing is a continuation on this side of the building. The height will partly conceal the existing fenestration. However on balance it is considered that this change from the current mezzanine arrangement will not have a harmful impact on the heritage asset.
- Addition of secondary glazing as required by acoustic engineer (secondary glazing is also required in the education rooms and the clean studio). This will also have a beneficial impact on the environmental sustainability of the building and will be detailed such that it is not visually intrusive internally or externally. This is therefore considered to not cause harm to the heritage asset.
- Provision of new escape door (see external elevations interventions). This will have a very minimal impact on the character of the internal space and is considered in more detail to the external elevations section, which details the revisions to the location that have been led by planning and conservation officer feedback and consideration of the external views.

#### 4.2.2.3 First

The following alterations are required to the first floor spaces;

- Removal of internal roller shutters to gallery entrances. These were added as part of the works in 2003, they are not of heritage value and their removal will have a **beneficial impact**.
- Removal of lobby to gallery 1, refurbished original doors or new fire doors to match the originals (TBC as dependent on final fire strategy).
- Replacement of lobby in gallery 2 for more 'lightweight' construction. The lobby was added as part of the works in 2003, it is not of heritage value and a more lightweight construction would have a **beneficial impact**.
- Resurfacing of existing gallery display walls. The existing gallery walls have all been lined out at a later date and it is this later wall structure that requires resurfacing. This will not have a harmful impact on the heritage asset.

#### 4.2.2.4 External Elevations

The following alterations are required to the external elevations;

- Removal of window in the eastern façade and masonry to F.F.L. to create a new escape door to the east elevation. The assessment of viability of the new spaces has included an assessment of the capacity needs of the curated dining space and performance space. These will need to hold 90-100 and 150 people respectively. This part of the building is the only area which can accommodate these number and these functions. This then brings with it a requirement for provision of emergency escape purposes. Following detailed consideration the most suitable location for this additional means of escape is to the eastern elevation. The proposal initially submitted for planning and listed building consent was to adapt the existing window which is closest to the Esplanade. A series of options were considered prior to this initial submission and then following feedback from the planning and conservation officers following

submission the options have been further interrogated. These are detailed to the supplementary information and are summarised here;

Option 1: the 1<sup>st</sup> window bay closest to the esplanade as first submitted

Option 2: the 2<sup>nd</sup> window bay from the esplanade as the revised submission

Option 3: the 3<sup>rd</sup> window bay from the esplanade

Option 4: the 4<sup>th</sup> window bay from the esplanade, the bay closest to the river

Option 5: a new door opening into existing solid masonry to the front elevation.

Due to the various design constraints which are detailed to the supplementary information the only viable locations are options 1 and 2. The design constraints have been detailed and reviewed with the planning and conservation officers and on balance it has been determined that option 2 is preferred as although this is more complex to adapt to a door opening (due to the existing detailing) the location set back from the esplanade leads to this being a comparably less prominent location.

This revised location has also required a minor revision to the landscaping layout immediately adjacent to this area.

Overall this alteration is considered to have a minor negative impact on the building which is outweighed by the benefits of enabling the viable use of the space.

- New front door in the main entrance and new front door in 'Old Library Building' entrance, both doors are modern replacements and therefore the provision of a new door will not cause harm to the heritage asset.
- M&E requirements as noted below

#### 4.2.2.5 M&E Interventions

The M&E proposals include the following works;

- New distribution throughout the building ready to accept the district heating supply in the future. Wherever possible the new distribution will follow existing routes to minimise new builderswork openings.
- Exposed M&E duct work at high level through the civic dining room and performance studio. Due to the occupancy of these spaces heating and ventilation is required by mechanical means. The detailing of the M&E will be carefully considered to minimise the visual impact.
- New louvred vents are required for the new mechanical ventilation system, these have been kept to a minimum and wherever possible located to the rear elevation to minimise the visual impact.

Overall the M&E interventions will have some physical impact on the fabric of the building but this is being kept to the minimum necessary to enable the future sustainability of the site.

#### 4.2.2.6 External Works / Landscape Interventions

The landscape proposals include the following works;

- Removal of the existing low level wall, railings, ramp and steps in front of the 'Old Library Building' entrance
- Removal of existing ground mounted signage
- Creation of a new more approachable stepped / ramped access leading directly from the Esplanade pavement to the entrance
- New railing to compliment retained railings
- Cycle racks
- Creation of new terrace area around the eastern end of the building to serve the new escape door and external stairs to the basement that will include works to the mound
- New external signage
- Tree planting to the front elevation

Overall the landscape proposals will have some physical impact on the existing fabric of the site. However because of the alterations undertaken in 2003 the frontage of the building has already been altered from its original intent. Therefore the landscape proposals are not considered to cause harm and will improve the visual appearance, use and accessibility of the external areas.

#### 4.2.3 **Assessment of changes to the setting**

4.2.3.1 As the works are predominantly to the interior of the building the scope of works which has the potential to change how the building is viewed in its setting and in relation to the adjacent assets are limited and are as follows;

- Alterations to the external fabric – in particular the creation of the escape stair from the basement and escape door from the new performance space.
- Landscape works to the east and south elevations of the building.

4.2.3.2 As previously assessed the key positive elements of the setting are;

- The relationship of the Touchstones building to the Esplanade and adjacent pocket of landscape
- The relationship of the Touchstones building to the river
- The relationship of the Touchstones building to Broadfield Park
- Long distant views between Touchstones and the Town Hall and other heritage assets along the Esplanade

4.2.3.3 The alterations required for the viable operation of the building which have the potential to affect the setting are not considered to have a negative impact on the key positive elements of the setting noted above. The relationship of the building to the Esplanade, the river, Broadfield Park and the long distant views between Touchstones and the other heritage assets along the Esplanade will remain predominantly unchanged. The main impact is the immediate relationship of the Touchstones building to the adjacent pocket of landscape but this change is necessary to enable the means of escape. The escape requirements have been designed in a way to minimise the intervention and allow the building still to very much be read alongside this pocket landscape.

## 5.0 Statutory Requirements

5.1 The aim of the following statement is to demonstrate that the proposed works meet the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### 5.2 PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

5.2.1 Section 66 of the Act requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent special regard should be given to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and that 'considerable importance and weight' should be attached to any harm to a designated heritage asset.

5.2.2 Response: The proposals seek to locate the functions which require the greatest level of change and intervention to the ground floor areas of the building which have already seen phases of change. They have given careful consideration to retaining the gallery spaces with minimal intervention and wherever possible to better reveal the heritage features to all areas of the building. In their careful consideration of the features of special architectural interest that both the building and the site as a whole possess, the proposals have therefore given special regard to the desirability of preserving those elements. Similarly the external landscape works seek to improve and enhance the appearance, use and accessibility of the external areas whilst retaining the key positive elements of the setting.

### 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3.1 Section 16 (paras 189-208) of the NPPF is specific to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.3.2 Para 197 states; *'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

Response: The project seeks to reconfigure the building to enable it to house new functions ensuring the future viability of the heritage asset. The new functions seek to enhance the positive contribution that Touchstones, as a cultural hub and heritage asset, can make to sustainable communities including economic vitality.

5.3.3 Para 200 states; *'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'.*

Response: The proposal do require areas of reconfiguration to the ground floor which will necessitate some physical intervention and removal of historic fabric. There are a limited number of areas which will lead to very minor or minor harmful negative impact. Clear justification has been provided within this Heritage Statement and the accompanying planning and listed building consent documentation for these interventions.

- 5.3.3 Para 202 states; *'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.'*

Response: The proposals will overall lead to a very low level of harm. This low level of harm is considered to be significant outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The NPPF requires planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess and understand the particular nature of the significance of heritage assets which will be affected by proposed development. Such assessment of heritage asset significance is necessary to understand the potential impact of proposed development.
- 6.2 This report considers the nature of the significance of the proposed site, adjacent heritage assets and their setting.
- 6.3 The analysis shows that Touchstones is a designated heritage asset of considerable historic, aesthetic and communal value. Working in partnership Rochdale Borough Council, Rochdale Development Agency and YourTrust have secured Arts Council (ACE) Cultural Development funding to support the refurbishment of the Touchstones Gallery into a 21<sup>st</sup> Century multidisciplinary cultural hub. The project includes gallery spaces; a curated community dining space; education spaces; a performance / rehearsal studio and workspaces to support the creative economy. These have been accommodated within the existing building in a way which makes best use of the historic fabric whilst allowing the building to function operationally and efficiently.
- 6.4 The proposed development requires some physical alterations to the proposed site, the extent of which is considered to be limited and will lead to a very low level of harm. This low level of harm is considered to be significantly outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.
- 6.5 Therefore, the proposals are considered to meet the requirements of the NPPF.

## Appendix A

The Rochdale Observer 01Nov 1884

### OPENING OF THE NEW FREE LIBRARY

The new Rochdale Free Public Library, which has been erected on the Esplanade, was formally opened on Thursday by the Mayor (Alderman Schofield)....

The resolution of the ratepayers, by which the Public Libraries Act was adopted in Rochdale, was passed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1870 ...

After the passing of the resolution adopting the Act, early steps were taken by the Council to give effect to it. A "Free Library Committee" was added to the divisions into which the Council is composed, and under the chairmanship of the late Alderman Booth, who had been one of the most consistent advocates of the movement, the collection of books was begun. This proceeded so rapidly that when, on September 18, 1872, the rooms at the easterly end of the Town Hall which had been appropriated for the purposes of the Library were formally opened, there were 11,770 volumes from which readers could make their choice. For more than 10 years the rooms originally set apart for the Library were used as such. The accommodation for the storage of books was a first ample, and the reading room very commodious and convenient – when it was reached; but the difficulty of getting to the Library – the steepness and tortuosity of the ascent – was found to be a real hindrance to its usefulness, and ladies, elderly people and those whose lungs are not so strong as formerly, were to a great extent debarred from taking advantage of it. Before the fire at the Town Hall the question of a new Library had been mooted in the Council, and another reason besides those we have mentioned operated in the same direction. It was found that the continually increasing weight of the books – amounting to many tons, and placed upon a flooring two storeys high, was seriously imperilling the safety of the building. The committee were looking out for suitable sites for a new library, when the disastrous fire of April 10, 1883 came, and materially damaged the portion of the Town Hall in which the institution had hitherto been located. This expedited matters, and plans having been prepared by Mr. Platt, the borough surveyor, for a building which, by its site, beauty and commodiousness satisfied all critics, the Council gave consent to its erection. The work has progressed with considerable speed, and we have now the pleasure to record its opening last Thursday.

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW BUILDING

As the new building has progressed in erection it has become increasingly apparent that it would when finished form quite an ornament to the town. This is now the universal opinion, and we hear from all sides the same expressions as to its handsome character, and as to the congratulations which are due to its designer and architect, Mr. Platt, of course public experience is as yet confined to its outside appearance and proportions, but we venture to think that when fully got into use the internal arrangements will be found equally satisfactory by those who use the Library. The façade extends along the Esplanade for about 87 feet. The building is of one storey with a basement, and is divided into three bays. The style is domestic Gothic, the materials used being Yorkshire pierpoints with Yorkshire stone dressings, green Buttermere slates which red Staffordshire ridging and finials. Any appearance of "squatness" which might be expected from such a large one-storey building, has been cleverly obviated by the architect's skill. The entrance is set back some feet from the line of the footpath, and the building is nicely lifted up by being elevated two or three steps above the ground..... The device over the principal entrance comes out exceedingly well, and the carving just above the entrance with conventional ornaments running round and about it, in the corners of which the date of the building is cleverly introduced. The Corporation arms are also carved in one of the panels, and on the east, or Town Hall side, the termination of the label moulds of the two small gables has been ornamentally carved. The front of the building is straight, and the two sides are at right angles to it, but at the back the line of the river has been followed, and as it is not at this point parallel with the Esplanade, the building is about 21 feet wider at the westerly than at its easterly side. The putting in of the foundation on the river-side has been more expensive than it was at first thought would be the case. It was found necessary, before a proper foundation could be got, to go down level with the river bed. Such large excavations being necessary, it was considered desirable to modify somewhat the original plan in regard to the basement, and it was thought well to enlarge some-what the original estimate

in order to increase the size of the rooms below the library, and so almost double the accommodation for storage purposes. By this means some excellent apartments have been secured. Damp has been effectually provided against by cavity walls and an abundant use of cement, so that the rooms are perfectly dry, and are not by any means what one would understand by cellars. They are excellently well lighted by windows overlooking the river. As to the prospective uses of these rooms we shall have something to say further on.

Through the handsome oak door from the Esplanade, the visitor enters a vestibule which is laid with marble mosaic tiles. The roof of this apartment is formed of handsome pitch-pine panelling, with a cove of Lincrusta-Walton, a sort of oil-cloth specially adapted for decorative purposes. This ante-chamber of lighted by two lamps, in the panes of which the fleece forming part of the borough arms is introduced. From the vestibule the visitor may enter the library through doors, wither to the right or left. These doors are of American walnut, and are good specimens of the joiners' art. The Library itself is divided into three bays. The central one forms an entrance hall to the reading rooms to the right and left, and about half way in its depth it is intended to place a long counter across, where the borrowers will obtain their books from the lending department. The floor of this bay, as also of that to the right, is paved with wood blocks. These have been placed upon a concrete foundation and laid in asphalt, the latter acting not only as an adhesive medium, but also as useful to prevent the wood being in any way affected by moisture, although it is not expected that any can arise through the concrete foundation. The wood blocks have been planed, and provide a flooring at once noiseless and warm to the feet. This is an expense which at one time it was thought desirable to avoid, but the interest of the increased outlay will be amply repaid by the saving in oil-cloth or matting which would otherwise have been necessary and which would have had to be periodically renewed.

The first door to the right of this central room leads into the general reading-room and reference department, which occupies the easterly bay, or that nearest the Town Hall. This is a spacious room and lofty, it being 16 feet from the floor to the spring of the roof, and 24 feet from the floor to the apex. The principals, which spring from moulded and carved stone corbels, are of pitch-pine, varnished, the ironwork being picked out with black. Technically it is called a king-post roof, with collar beam and elliptically moulded rib in each principal, and the room is ceiled to the top side of the collar beam. The ventilation arrangements have received special attention, as the depressing effects of ill-adapted contrivances in this respect have often been experienced in the old library, especially in the evening when the room was crowded. An ornamental perforated grid has been introduced into each bay of the roof. These are connected by a trunk above, and in the upper part of the roof the shaft is also connected with one of Boyles' patent exhaust ventilators, which are free from down-draught. Round the room there are a number of air inlets. The interior division walls, and also the interior of the two side walls, have been arranged in a series of arches on pilasters with projecting piers, every angle of which has been relieved by ornamental mouldings. These have been tastefully decorated, the mouldings being picked out so as to give effect to their projection.

The two large windows at the front of the building, which has a southern aspect, are glazed with ornamental cathedral glass, and in them, as also in the windows on the eastern side, are inserted a number of medallion portraits. We have previously given a full description of these windows and medallions, for which the public are indebted to the generosity of Mr. James Ogden, a member of the committee. Suffice it now to say that the designs in the large windows are of conventional floral character, and the colours, ruby and green, harmonise very well. The general effect, whether viewed from the inside by day or from the outside at night, when the room is lighted with gas, is very beautiful. The medallions in the window in the reading room we have been referring to are Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth. In the corresponding window on the other side of the entrance the medallions are devoted to the five greatest authoresses of the Victorian era: "George Eliot," Mrs Browning, Mrs Somerville, Mrs Jameson and Charlotte Bronte. The medallions in the side windows of the large reading room are Macaulay, Gibbon, and Grote, the historians; Bacon, Addison, and Defoe as typifying periodical literature; Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, and (in an upper window) Fielding, the novelists; and as representing local literature Lord Byron (who was baron of Rochdale) "Tim Bobbin", John Roby, and Edwin Waugh. Some of the medallions are not yet finished, but it is hoped they will all be in their places in the course of a few weeks. The reading rooms are exceedingly well lighted, there being windows on three sides of them. We may say that the architect in his original design had intended to have some cathedral glass introduced on the south side to modify the glare of the sun, but the expense stood in the way of the realisation of this idea until Mr. Ogden came forward with his generous

offer. The artificial lighting arrangements are also excellent, perfect illumination of every corner of the room being secured by a series of pendants from the ceiling and brackets from each pier. The metal work of the pendants is worthy of notice. At the northerly end of the principal reading room it is intended to place a counter for the distribution of books in the Reference Department, one portion being sloped so as to enable readers to fill up the necessary application forms. The back of this counter is fitted with shelves for the purpose of holding the bound volumes of the Illustrated London News, Punch, and other books frequently called for. Behind this counter is a staircase leading into that room of the basement wherein will be stored the Specifications of Patents.

The heating is on the low pressure principle, and it has been arranged so as to give command over every portion of the system. The pipes are exposed where possible, and when that can not be the heating is effected by a system of coils, the cases of which have marble tops. The hot water boiler is an upright cylindrical and tubular one, by Wagstaff. Coming now to the central bay we find there is an arrangement of clerestory windows to give additional light. They also act as ventilators. In the rose window over the front entrance the borough arms have been introduced, and in the niche underneath, between the entrance doors, a brass plate commemorating the erection has been inserted. The remaining bay now claims notice. It is not much different from the one on the other side, but instead of the floor being covered with wood blocks it is concreted. This room will be divided by the principal serving counter, and will be used as a ladies' reading-room by day and for boys at night. Behind the counter is a staircase, leading into the basement, for the use of the attendants. Behind this counter the bookcases of the lending department will be placed. Immediately on reaching the bottom of the staircase we get to a room intended to be used as a repairing and attendants' room, that to the left being for the hearing arrangement and for lumber. These are under the western bay. The room under the central bay is intended to be used as a librarian's room and for the meetings of the committee. That under the eastern bay is for the Specifications of Patents and, as the library increases, for the storage of long series of books sometimes required for reference but not often enquired for.

The fittings in the reading-room are entirely new, the old ones having been destroyed in the fire at the Town Hall, and they have been specially designed for this building. The tables have pitch-pine legs with walnut tops, and are covered with leather cloth. There are to be no chairs, only forms. Four tables have been made as a novelty, with sloping sides for the convenience of readers with large books. Two of the recesses on the side nearest the Town Hall have been filled with slopes for the reading of newspapers. It is intended to have similar arrangements in the boys' reading room, but the boys' tables are to have partitions down the centre to prevent too free communication with one another and minimise talking. It is to be hoped that the ladies using this room will understand that the arrangement is not to be taken as reflecting in any degree upon them.

There is a side door from this bay leading into a paved court yard, where necessary conveniences are placed. The Waterworks Committee have laid a main along the Esplanade to opposite the Library, and water has been laid on inside the building at the town's pressure, with a length of hose necessary to reach any part in case of fire.

The total cost of the building will be about £5,000. This is about £500 more than it was originally proposed to spend, but as the work has progressed the committee have made several modifications of the original designs – more particularly in increasing the basement accommodation and covering part of the floor with wood blocks.

The whole of the work has been carried out from the designs and under the superintendence of Mr. S. S. Platt, A.M.I.C.E., borough surveyor. Mr. Parnell, clerk of the works at the operations going on at the Town Hall, has also acted in a similar capacity for this building. The contractors for the whole of the work, except the furniture and heating, were Messrs. T. Berry and Son, of Milnrow Road, who also executed the foundations for the Corporation. The following were the sub-contractors:- For carpentry and joiners' work, Messrs. Halstead Bros., of Eastwood; for the slating, Messrs. J. and R. Woolfenden; plumbing and lighting, Mr. John Tonge, who has also carried out the heating arrangements; plastering, Mr. John Ross; decoration, Mr. S.S. Ford; and furniture Messrs. E. Shore and Co. – all of Rochdale.

## EXTRACTS FROM 'THE OPENING CEREMONY'

Mayor

Mr. Ogden is, I understand, the owner of a very valuable collection of objects which would form a very rich addition to a museum if we happened to be fortunate enough to possess the nucleus of one in this town. I believe I am betraying no confidences in saying that Mr. Ogden is not merely willing but wishful that this valuable collection should become the property of his native town. An while on this subject I may say that twelve months ago I had the privilege of opening an exhibition in Molesworth Street – an exhibition of works of art and science and natural curiosities, which formed a very valuable collection indeed. I happened to say something on the subject to several of the exhibitors, and notably to one gentleman who was the owner of a very large collection. He expressed a hope that a museum would at no distant date be formed in the town, and said he would be willing to contribute liberally to it. I say this because gentlemen who have looked round this building will see that our place admits of very ready extension, and if any wealthy citizen or citizeness – for I suppose it is equally open to the ladies – will come to the help of the committee and do what they are unable to do out of their scanty rate, provide us with a building in which we could house these things, we should very soon get together a collection which would not only gratify the curious, but be helpful towards the technical and other education of our working class people.

Mr James Ogden, who was heartily cheered, rose for the purpose of moving a vote of thanks to the Mayor, but before doing so he should like to say a few words. The first remark he wished to make was that in dedicating those windows to the use of the public it must not be looked upon merely as his idea, but rather the idea of many. It would be presumption for one man to claim an idea of that kind. It was only by the kind sympathy of numerous friends, and by referring to the literature which they fortunately had not only in their own library but in the large library connected with another department in the town, that he had been able to make a selection which he hoped was satisfactory. That the selection had been made hastily he trusted none of them would think, but that after constant application and study, and after various modifications, alterations and additions, a result had been arrived at which he hoped would be considered a fair typification, so far as it went, of English literature. So much had been said in these latter days of evolution in science that perhaps as they were a literary gathering that afternoon it might not be uninteresting to them to find the evolution of a literary idea, and that he would try to give them the reasons which resulted in the designs for the two front windows being chosen – in the one case a purely original idea and in the other one almost so. For a reasons which the Mayor had kindly alluded to, and also from the fact that a portion of that room would be devoted to the purpose of a ladies' reading room, he thought the best idea to typify in that window would be the influence of woman as represented in the literature of England. Commencing in the year 1830, which went back fifty years, he was astonished to find that the action of woman on literature before that time was so spasmodic that when the names he selected were brought together there seemed such a strange union, such a strange companionship, that nothing could explain it but the word eccentric. That was an idea he did not wish to perpetuate, so then he took the opposite course and came forward into our own time. Then he found that in pursuing the path of literature the names of women came so greatly in excess of all that has been the case in previous times that it was something marvellous. But there came also this, and it was an unpleasant idea, that if woman was to be typified by her greatest influence in literature it would be that of fiction. That was an idea he did not wish to personify, for it would never do for wits, not only of the present day but wits yet unborn, to point that the hidden sarcasm behind those windows was that in this age at least woman was greatest when drawing upon her imagination or engage in telling long stories. But he soon found on going deeper into the subject that dating from the commencement of the reign of our present Queen there had been such an emancipation of the intellect of women as expressed in literature that it seemed to him the most remarkable incident in the literary history of the last half century. During that time she had placed herself on an equality with man, and now shared with him the whole realm of knowledge. And now the idea crystallised itself in his mind and resolved itself into the thought, confine yourself to the age of Victoria and let the selected names be of those who trod the different paths of the field of literature. And the result was this: In Charlotte Bronte they had one who told the story of a life in prose; in Elizabeth Barrett Browning one who attained the highest position in poetry. To Mary Somerville belonged the whole realm of science, and to Anna Jameson the credit of making art popular to a people only just beginning to appreciate it, while in George Eliot, perhaps the greatest of all, we had one who under a man's name possessed not only all the strength of a man's nature, but all the susceptibility of her own sex, and who rose to the highest flights of ethics and philosophy. That window he hoped satisfactorily typified the greatness and the versatility of the genius of woman, as expressed in the literature of the Victorian era. Leaving that room and going to the other he

thought that as the one typified to the best of his ability the influence of literature during the reign of Victoria, the most proper, indeed the only, thing he could do, was to devote the other window to the period of another English Queen, Elizabeth, during whose reign there was a literary epoch which had never been surpassed. To choose five names from such a list was an easy task, but before the idea was fully developed there came a supplementary and, he was afraid, selfish idea to monopolise the windows on the eastern wall, and to devote each compartment to a separate and distinct branch of literature. On this account it was necessary to withdraw some Elizabethan names from the front window. As England was greatest, not only in her own country but all of Europe in her poets, he thought that window should be devoted to the five great poets in English Literature. The names of the first four came almost unbidden to his mind. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton – they were not by his choice but by their commanding eminence: but the fifth caused him great anxiety and considerable trouble. There once came to his mind the name of Byron. He was led to that because of his association with Rochdale, but there came afterwards this thought that at some future time a stranger looking at it would think, in the face of Byron's depreciating popularity, that the selection was questionable. Then came the name of Tennyson. But he was modern; he was alive, his fame was too recent for judgment to be formed upon it, and he could not think of him. After constant perusal of books, and the best literary criticism of America and England he had decided that Wordsworth was the fifth name – and he thought that was a judgment which the present generation of critics was fully endorsing. Public opinion was rising above the prejudices of Wordsworth's own day, and would in the future place him in the position which he (Mr. Ogden) had ventured to assign to him. The speaker went on to say that if any intelligent boy in walking along the Esplanade would only use his eyes and employ his thoughts he could learn from the stained glass in the Town Hall something of the history of England in its kings and queens, and in the medallions in the Library something of the literary history of his country.

## Appendix B

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### THE ART GALLERY EXTENSION.

of the same size as those above. A doorway has been cut between the two old rooms, thus rendering them more easy of access by visitors. The new apartments are entered through three archways, and there is a small workroom provided. All the windows are in leaded lights, the upper lights in each case being panelled with reproductions of printers' designs on antique glass, the work being representative of both English and foreign printers in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. The flooring is as in the galleries. The building is lighted throughout by electricity.

The extensions were designed by Mr. P. W. Hathaway, the Corporation architect, who had, unfortunately, not sufficiently recovered from a recent operation to attend yesterday's opening of the new premises. The general contract has been carried out by Messrs. R. and T. Howarth of Rochdale, the other contractors being: Carpenter and joiners' work, Messrs. Ashworth and Woolfenden; wood block floors, Messrs. Hollis Brothers, Hull; slating, Mr. John Whitworth; plumbers' work, Mr. H. Tattersall; plasterer, Mr. F. S. Ross; painter, Messrs. Brook and Whitworth; electric lighting, The Rochdale Electric Company; heating apparatus, Mr. J. A. Mills.

The older portion of the gallery was opened on April 3rd, 1903, by Colonel Fishwick, and the Library building dates from 1884, having been opened on October 30th of that year by the late Alderman Schofield, J.P., Colonel Fishwick presiding.

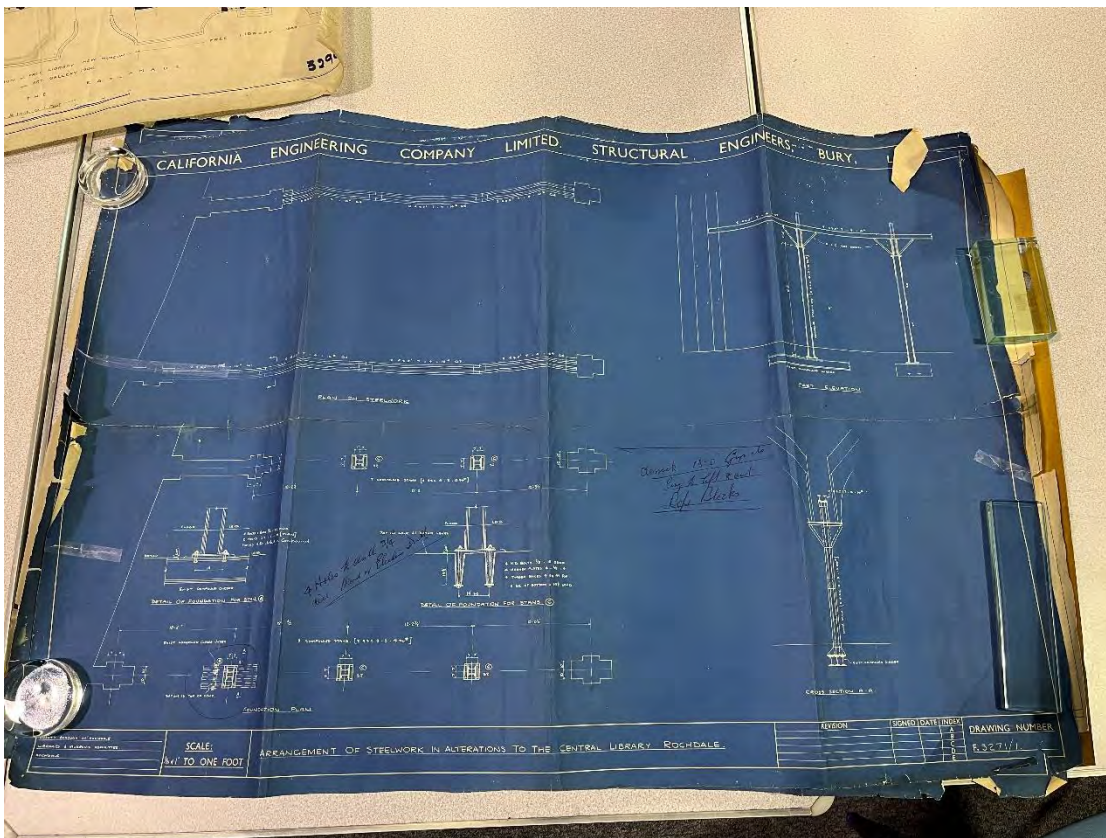
### THE SPRING EXHIBITION.

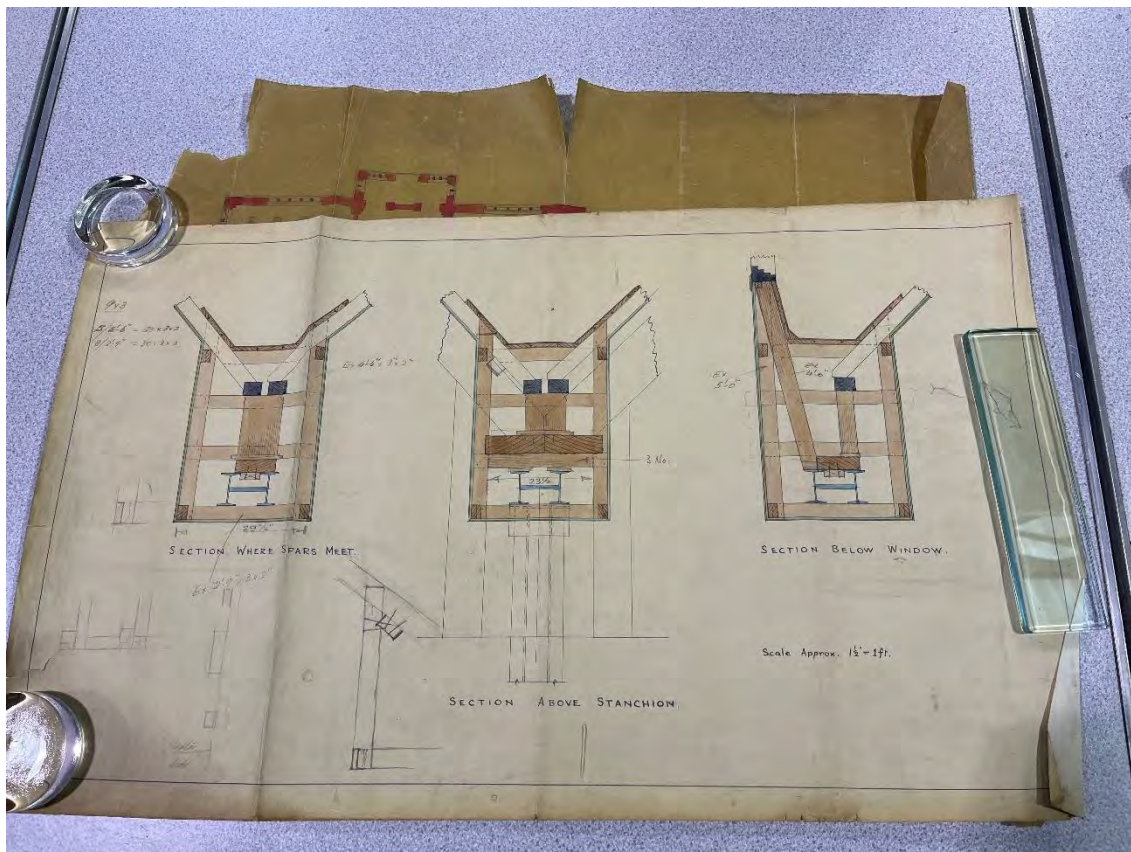
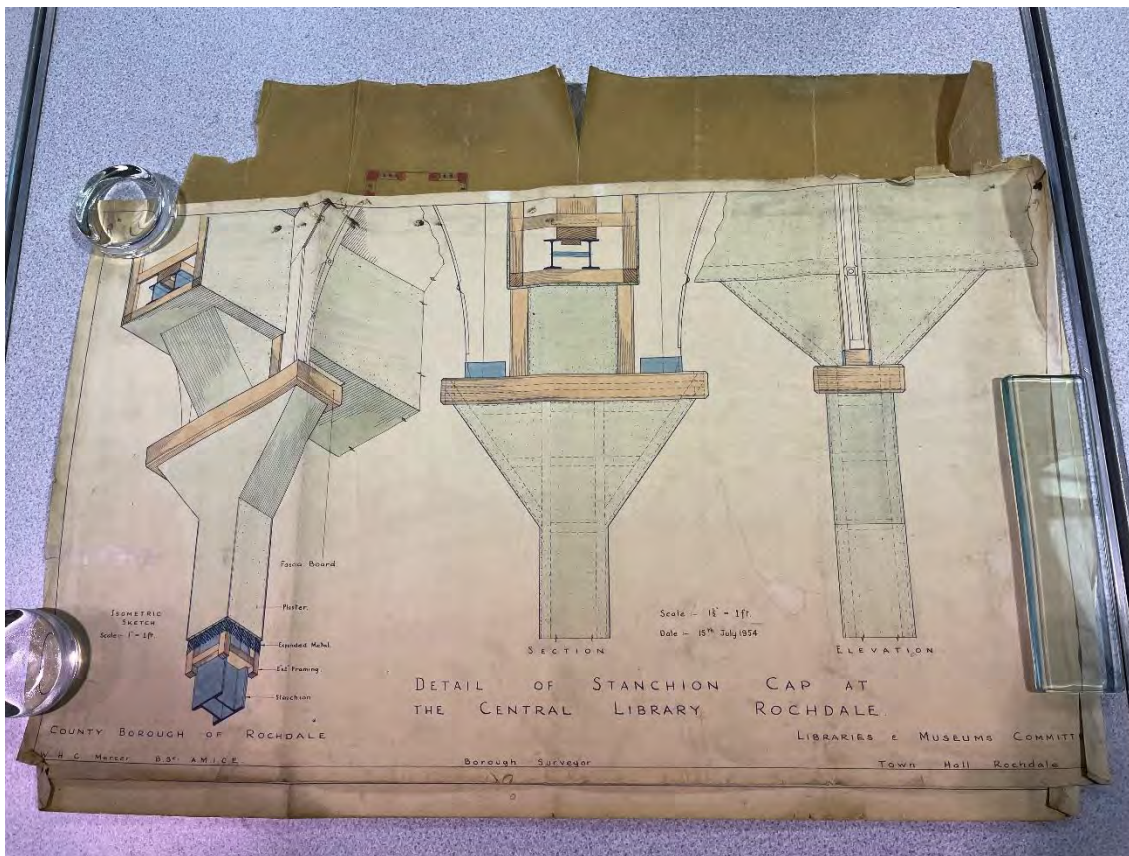
South and North rooms.

The first storey is approached by a fine staircase, the walls of which, in the excellent light obtained, afford good space for hanging pictures. From the top landing one walks into the principal gallery, a splendid room stretching the whole length of the west end of the building; its dimensions are 68 feet by 30 feet. We are inclined to think that it is the best lighted room of the size in Rochdale. The light comes, of course, from the roof. Wednesday, when the representatives of the press were there, was extremely dull, and it was an agreeable surprise to find the pictures in such an excellent light. The wainscotted walls are painted sage green.

To the right of the landing and adjoining this handsome room, is the Small Gallery (30 feet square) also available for art purposes. Here also the light is excellent, there being two fine windows overlooking the Cattle Market and a large dome filled with pleasantly coloured glass. In the upper part of the windows are pictures that are worth more than passing notice. They are the trade marks of famous early printers—Froben, Aldus, Plantin, Andrew Myllar, Robert Copland, and Caxton. Having arranged for cases of early specimens of printing to be placed under these windows, Colonel Fishwick, who is keenly interested in mediæval typography, secured copies of the marks of the craftsmen named, and they are

## Appendix C (archive drawings from 1954)





# Appendix

## JUSTIFICATION STATEMENTS - NEW DOOR IN NORTH EAST FACADE



Date: 12 April 2023

Dear Christiana Shovlin

I am writing to you following our meeting on site at Touchstones on 21/03/2023, to formally provide the context and justification for the need for a new fire escape door to the east of the building, and express the project teams desire to engage to the most appropriate way this can be incorporated.

### **Introduction**

Working in partnership, Rochdale Borough Council, Rochdale Development Agency and YourTrust have secured Arts Council (ACE) Cultural Development funding to support a £6m refurbishment of the Touchstones Gallery into a 21st Century multidisciplinary cultural hub. This project is currently working towards a planning submission in May, to meet our tight funding deadlines which require the refurbished facility to be open in early 2025.

The project aims to reconfigure and reimagine Rochdale's main arts & heritage venue to create a flagship hub which will form the heart of the newly envisaged cultural district. It will house new flexible spaces for production, enterprise, innovation, education, events, collections, exhibitions & performances. The project will become the driver for promoting culture across Rochdale and the wider borough. The new facility will be more accessible, approachable and engaging, ensuring a more diverse range of visitors can appreciate it. Complimentary uses will allow the building to thrive as a home for the arts whilst ensuring its financial and environmental sustainability.

### **History**

The capital project's history dates back to 2017, where following a long period of underinvestment in culture in the borough, a significant community engagement project 'Revealing Rochdale' was commissioned to understand the relationships our communities have with arts and culture, and their ambitions for how improvements could be made.

Subsequent pieces of work in response to 'Revealing Rochdale' included an Asset Strategy which identified Touchstones as a key cultural asset which should be transformed into a revitalised multidisciplinary cultural hub. This process highlighted the benefits of reusing the historic building within the Civic Quarter of the Town Centre, rather than vacating the building to create a new destination – which would have left the building without a use and risked it falling into disrepair.

### **Brief Requirements and Design Development**

The brief for this cultural hub was further developed in a series of design and business planning exercises, which were used to help inform the successful ACE funding application. These tested how the different spatial and servicing requirements of: gallery spaces; a curated community dining space; education spaces; a performance / rehearsal studio; and workspaces to support the creative economy, could be accommodated in a way which made best use of the historic building whilst allowing the building to function operationally and efficiently.

A key outcome of this work was identifying that the galleries were best retained in the purpose built gallery spaces on the first floor, with the project focusing on reconfiguring the underutilised ground floor spaces to bring these back to life. This will allow key new functions such as the curated dining space and performance studio to be located on the ground floor, where their high capacities can be more easily accommodated, and celebrate the historic spaces in a way which minimises the need for intrusive works.

### **The Need for a New Fire Escape**

The business planning work which has been running in parallel to the design has identified the need for the curated dining space to have a capacity of approximately 90-100 people, whilst the performance space needs to accommodate around 150 people – each with significant service space requirements. Both spaces also need to be able to operate in tandem as an evening venue when the rest of the building is closed. A thorough design study has identified that the only spaces that can accommodate these spaces are the eastern section of the building, which will be able to reopen the closed off former entrance to form a new route into the dining and performance spaces. However, in order to get even close to the occupancies required to meet the projects ambitions and business plan requirements, our design team (which includes fire and heritage specialists) have identified that it is unavoidable to create a new fire escape in the eastern section of the building.

To make sure this is the case, we have revisited the alternative ground floor layouts that were previously developed to see if these could help avoid the need for a new door. However this process has re-confirmed that the previous conclusions were correct, and the only way to accommodate their spatial, operational and business planning requirements for the project is the proposed configuration and the new door as recommended. We are therefore keen to engage with the planning and conservation authority as to the most sensitive way this can be incorporated in order to support our aims of creating a more sustainable and better used facility which safeguards the buildings use for future generations.

Kind regards,

Oliver Boaler

Economic Development Manager  
Rochdale Development Agency



## **Touchstones Post-Reburbishment Capacity Requirements Briefing Note to Design Team, 6 April 2023**

Counterculture Partnership LLP ('Counterculture') has been appointed by Your Trust to help develop a new commercial business plan for Touchstones, in the context of the transformational capital project currently in development. As an initial output of this work we have been asked to provide a briefing note to the client and design team regarding the capacity requirements of two key income generating spaces in the east wing of the building, on which our work is primarily focused:

1. Civic Dining Room – an innovative and dynamic space exploring the rich and diverse food heritages/culture of Rochdale through co-created collections displays, learning resources/facilities and a complementary food and beverage (F&B) offer, to be situated in that part of the building previously occupied by the museum.
2. Performing Arts Space – a dedicated studio space capable of accommodating a wide variety of workshops, creative activities, performances, rehearsals and events, to be situated in that part of the building previously occupied by the local studies library.

### **1. Civic Dining Room**

The current indicative direction of the food and beverage offer in the Civic Dining Room (CDR), although not yet fully formed, does highlight clear mandates that will be required to achieve its future strategic and commercial objectives.

The new F&B offer at Touchstones will need to be inclusive and appeal to audiences of all types including young people and residents of disadvantaged local communities with limited financial resources. It can therefore be assumed that a "democratic" pricing policy (which provides wide appeal, affordability, and value for money) will be at the heart of the offer.

In the context of market pressures and strong competition in this sector at the proposed level in Rochdale, sales/product margins will necessarily be limited and insufficient to be the primary driver in delivering commercial objectives. Rather, the need for a high volume of footfall and heavy turning of tables will be the fundamental requirement to its success and sustainability.

Furthermore, the CDR will need to be busy in its own right (as a space in which to access the F&B offer and museum collections) but also able to provide additional capacity and overspill for other elements of the Touchstones programme (e.g. artists and creative practitioners, school and community groups, visiting exhibition and event audiences etc).

The design process should therefore seek to deliver the maximum number of covers that can feasibly be accommodated (our working assumption from initial drawings and business modelling being a seated capacity of 90-100) along with sufficient standing and circulation space for (i) kitchen and waiting staff to facilitate a high-footfall F&B offer, (ii) those visiting the collections or purchasing refreshments without sitting down, and (iii) those briefly passing through the space as a conduit between the main entrance, the performance studio and the adjacent welfare facilities. At peak times – for example, during weekend events

that coincide with meal-times – we estimate that the space will need to be capable of safely and comfortably accommodating at least 150 people in total, ideally closer to 200.

## **2. Performing Arts Space**

The current high-level business plan for Touchstones Performing Arts Studio is based on a commercial model with external and internal promotions, commercial arts hire, and corporate and community hires. Whilst audience forecasts and event numbers are modest to allow for audience and partnership development, financial projections suggest a seated capacity of 150 will be required to break-even. As seated capacity reduces below this point, the ability to operate the space becomes increasingly challenging without significant subsidy. Below 100, the space is likely to be entirely unfit-for-purpose for the proposed use.

In addition to the above audiences, the space will also need to accommodate performers, front-of-house staff, and technicians. Numbers will vary depending upon the nature of the event or performance (typically we estimate no more than 10 individuals in total at any one time).

It is highly likely that we will be developing a mixed funding model for the Performing Arts Space with a programme that attracts grant funding and other subsidy, but it is highly recommended that designs allow for maximum seating capacity in the auditorium.

This will ensure that the performance space is both:

- i) financially sustainable, flexible, and able to respond to the economic challenges faced by the arts and culture sector.
- ii) able to serve multiple audiences and deliver a high-quality programme.

It is worth noting that ticketed community and amateur productions generate significant income for venues across the UK and have an important role to play in connecting communities and reaching new audiences; capacity would be a priority for a subsidised model as well as a more commercially driven music programme.

We recognise that maximising capacity whilst ensuring there is sufficient green room and back-stage space for community/ education use is challenging and look forward to supporting the client and design team to find a workable solution.

## TOUCHSTONES, ROCHDALE REVIEW OF MEANS OF ESCAPE IN PERFORMANCE SPACE

HM2225/jr/01  
31/03/2023

### INTRODUCTION

Touchstones Rochdale is Grade 2 listed building, first opened to the public in 1884. The building is in use as a museum, café/bar and art gallery. It has two storeys and a basement.

It is now proposed to extensively refurbish the building. A key part of the refurbishment will be introduction of a performance space at the East end of the building. The lay-out of the ground floor is shown in Figure 1, with the performance space on the right-hand side of the figure.



**Figure 1 Proposed Ground Floor Lay-Out**

The purpose of this technical note is to determine the minimum requirements for means of escape from the Performance Space. The current proposal is that the space could accommodate at least 130 occupants, potentially increasing to 200.

The advice in this technical note is based on the drawings by Architectural Emporium Ltd. (*Touchstones – Proposed Ground Floor Plan Rev 20.011\_Rev*) received on 13/03/2023 and (*Touchstones – Existing Floor Plans Rev 0.101\_Rev*) received on 02/02/2023.

The proposals have been assessed against the guidance in the Approved Document B

## BUILDING REGULATIONS GUIDANCE

Currently the room that will form the Performance Space is accessed only via the adjacent café area. It is therefore classified as an 'inner room', because the only route for escape is via a single 'access room'. The implication of this is that in the event of a fire in the access room (café), escape from the inner room (performance space) becomes very difficult.

For this reason, Building Regulations guidance (both in the Approved Document B and BS9999) limits the occupancy of the inner room to 60. In the case of Touchstones, the Performance Space could therefore only be used for up to 60 occupants.

## ASSESSMENT OF OCCUPANT SAFETY

Following Building Regulations guidance is not mandatory and limits such as the 60-occupant maximum are often exceeded through a fire engineering assessment.

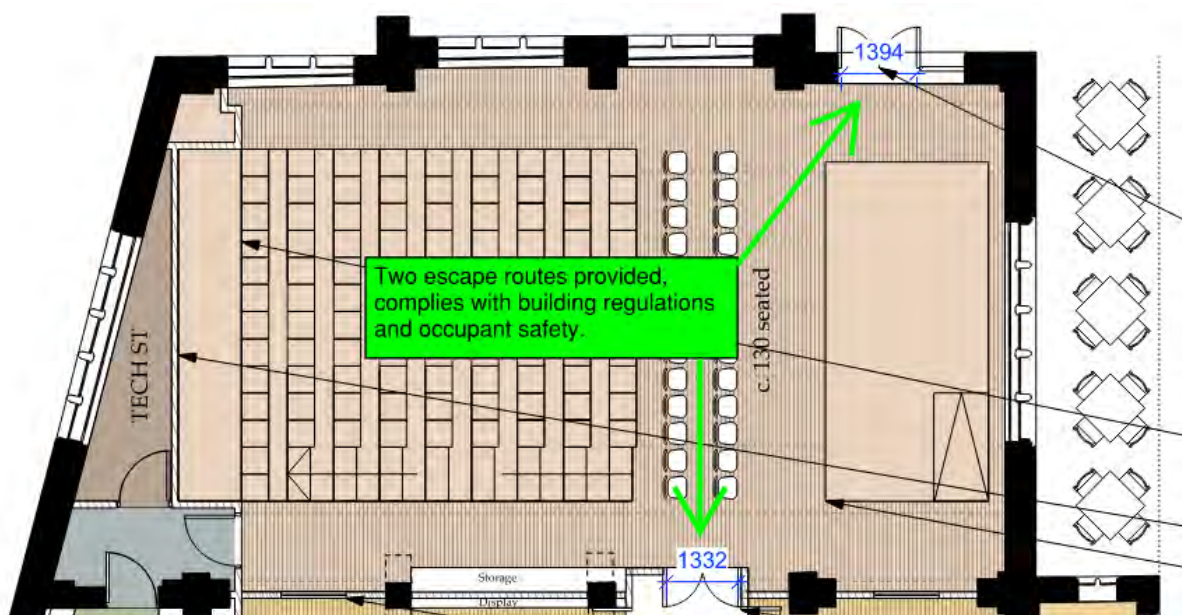
However, options to increase the 60-occupant limit for the Performance Space at Touchstones are limited. The room will be filled with members of the public who are not familiar with the building and who may include older people, wheelchair users, and families with very young children. If there is a fire in the café area, it cannot be guaranteed that they would evacuate rapidly enough to avoid the hazardous conditions that would soon occur.

Jensen Hughes's view is that the 60-occupant limit is appropriate in this instance if the only exit is through the café, but that even with this limit applied there would have to be a robust standard of management to ensure that occupants could leave the building quickly. A fire in the café area could potentially leave occupants with no escape route from a building where a fire is occurring, and where the fire could soon affect conditions in the performance space itself.

## SOLUTION

If the intention is to use the Performance Space for more than 60 occupants, an alternative escape route is needed. The alternative escape route should be directly to outside, so that it does not pass through the café area. Without an alternative exit, the standard of fire safety will be inadequate. Not only would the layout conflict with Building Regulations, but it would present a significant threat to occupants of the Performance Space.

Exits have been suggested as shown in Figure 2 below. The exits provide suitable alternative escape routes.



**Figure 2 Proposed Performance Space with two exits**

## CONCLUSION

If the intention is for the Performance Space to be used by more than 60 occupants, an alternative exit direct to outside is required.



# Appendix

## ACCESS AUDIT



# Touchstones Rochdale

## Access report

29th April 2023

By Catherine Szymanskyj,  
Inclusion and Disability Advisor for Your  
Trust.

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Examination of proposed changes – Page 5

Access statement with proposed changes – Page 5 -8

Other aspects of inclusion – Page 8

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About the author of this report – Page 10

## **Introduction.**

I was asked to visit Touchstones and audit the current accessibility of the building, and then look at the new proposed plans for redevelopment of the building layout, with a view to ensuring due consideration is given to accessibility of the building for individuals with a wide range of disabilities and needs. I have now looked at the newest plans for the building with the proposed changes.

## **Initial findings.**

### **Basement level (staff only area)**

- The floor is uneven with lots of level changes within the floor surface. These make it very difficult to navigate in a wheelchair, and impossible to navigate unaided as some of these changes are close to door thresholds. These would also be unsuitable for any staff member with visual impairment or walking difficulties.
- Doors are very heavy
- Doorways are narrow (some at 75cm, with very little turning circle).
- Corridor layout is narrow and not particularly wheelchair accessible due to the number of doors
- No current accessible toilet facilities
- Small kitchen area in staffroom is not accessible by wheelchair or persons of restricted growth (no lowered surface)
- No current fire exit for wheelchair user from this level. No identified refuge.

### **Ground floor (public area)**

- Lots of double doors, which make access a lot easier in a wheelchair.
- Predominantly level, and the changes are very manageable with shallow slopes.
- Floor surface is smooth and easy to propel a chair along.
- No hearing loop available within the building.

## Upper floor (public area)

- Lots of wide double doors make access easy
- Level and smooth surface of gallery floors
- The Zone 10 Fire refuge point (from Gallery 4) is not wheelchair accessible, and given that the vast majority of people unable to go down stairs in an emergency would be wheelchair users who couldn't transfer into an EVAC chair (usually people who are hoisted, or an additional person above the number of EVAC chairs available), this means it is completely unfit for purpose. I state this because I couldn't access it in my own streamline active-user manual chair. It might be suitable for a child in a narrow chair, but due to the angle and layout of the stairs, this would be incredibly dangerous with a risk of accidentally falling. The same applies to someone trying to access it with a walking frame. If I couldn't access it in a manual chair, an average adult powerchair would be impossible.
- Zone 11 refuge is large and appropriate for a wheelchair.
- No lift access to the mezzanine level (this isn't a big problem as this area is not open to the general public)

## Toilets

- The one accessible toilet (ground floor) at the moment is much too small for purpose. It allows no space at all for someone to have a carer assisting them, and limited space for safe transfers for a wheelchair user due to layout.
- A larger powerchair is unlikely to fit into the space currently available within this facility.

## Lifts

- The current lift is only large enough for most standard manual chairs or smaller powerchairs. It is too small to turn any chair, and has no mirror

to aid exiting backwards, which makes it unusable for a significant proportion of independent wheelchair users.

- The hoist is suitable for a large powerchair and has plenty of turning space, and so although this would require a staff member to assist someone using it, it does offer a suitable and viable alternative to trying to replace the current lift and all the work, cost and planning that that would entail. It is therefore important that in any planned changes, this is kept accessible to the public where needed for use by request and with staff support.

### **Examination of proposed changes**

I sent the initial access report through to Architectural Emporium Ltd, and met with director Luke Cooper along with Darren Grice of Your Trust, to look at the planned changes and how we could address identified issues.

A lot of issues were already naturally resolved by the proposed changes to the building, but we discussed additional changes that could also be accommodated to greatly improve accessibility.

This included looking at an option for toilet facilities for those accompanied by a carer who may require the use of a hoist to access facilities, as well as wheelchair access to the stage in the proposed auditorium area.

### **Access statement with proposed changes (as of April 2023)**

Basement.

The proposed work would automatically resolve the issues with the basement level floor surface. The heavy doors which would be replaced with new fire doors, and these would be wider where needed to comply with at least Part M requirements, making access easier. The layout would be changing, and so access would be via a much wider and more accessible corridor which would be central, meaning access from the lift through to the office or meeting areas,

would flow better, making it much easier to navigate in a wheelchair or with a visual impairment.

The new staff room would be large enough to accommodate a lowered surface in the kitchen area suitable for wheelchair users and persons of restricted growth. There will also be an accessible toilet on this level complete with shower facilities, and shelving to help those who need to change stoma bags or self-catheterise.

It isn't possible to have a fire exit at the basement level for those unable to use the stairs in an emergency, but a refuge is planned, with a call system, to ensure a safe place is available in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.

Ground level.

The new garden area that will be created outside at ground floor level will be wheelchair accessible via a ramp, and will have suitable surfaces throughout to facilitate easy access.

The planned new stage should have a step-free access built in through a ramp or other design, and there will be spaces for wheelchair users or other people with mobility impairment created using space for free standing moveable chairs within that auditorium area, in addition to retractable bleacher style seating.

A hearing loop will be installed at the reception/help desk, and options for a loop system within the new auditorium area will be considered (fixed or mobile).

There will be a new accessible toilet created on the ground floor to serve the studio area, and another within the classroom area. The existing ground floor accessible toilet in the corridor behind the access area will remain, and a second larger accessible toilet with a ceiling-mounted hoist and a changing bed. While this may not meet the full changing places specification, this will nevertheless greatly enhance the visiting experience for individuals with more complex needs who require the assistance of carers and the use of a hoist to access the toilet or change continence products. At the present time there are

no suitable facilities and these individuals would have to cut a visit short, or may avoid visiting completely due to the lack of a suitable toilet, so this will have a huge impact on making Touchstones accessible to a wider range of people while allowing them the dignity and comfort of appropriate and accessible toileting facilities. The creation of the additional toilets throughout the ground floor also mean that there are more options if a toilet is out of use for any reason, as currently there is only one accessible toilet for the whole building. I would recommend considering a radar lock for the larger toilet with hoist and changing bed, both for security against damage and also for safety to prevent people playing with the hoist and injuring themselves.

The existing lift cannot be enlarged, and will still require entry and egress through the same door as it is too small to allow a turn to exit from another angle if it is replaced. However, mirrored surfaces will be considered to aid in reversing out in a wheelchair. The larger goods hoist will be kept available for assisted use by members of the public in larger wheelchairs, and this will be written into the Access Policy and Building Operations and Maintenance Manual.

A medical area/quiet room area is being created within the education area. This will give a safe space for a child or young person experiencing sensory overload, and will also offer a private space for anyone requiring tube feeds or medications in private. The use of beanbags rather than a sofa, makes this small space accessible to wheelchair users if needed through easy ability to move things around.

The education area will have sinks and worktop space, and coat hooks. Consideration will need to be given to the height of these to ensure access for everyone, including children who use wheelchairs, and children with conditions which restrict growth.

The planned double doors within the new studio areas will be changed to a wide door format, so that wheelchair users can enter and egress more easily if the doors are closed by only needing to open one door.

A green room planned for the new auditorium space is very small and unlikely to be accessible once furniture is in place. Is the green room necessary, or would a more flexible space for changing and breaks (maybe with folding chairs, and clothing hooks on the wall) be more appropriate? The toilet and shower area for performers would be accessible, and I would recommend

wetroom flooring, but this whole space would only really work for a single performer who required accessible facilities. However, this would be hard to change as there is limited space available.

First floor.

The fire refuge accessed from Gallery 4 must be replaced with a new door and enlarged refuge area accessed from Gallery 3. The fire service should also be consulted to create a rescue plan for this area of the building, as a result of the pinch point from the refuge area to the stairwell. These combined measures will make those galleries much safer for anyone unable to use the stairs or an EVAC chair in the event of a fire or other emergency evacuation of the building. Without the changes, the fire refuge point is inaccessible for most wheelchair users and the upper galleries 3 and 4 would be unsafe for wheelchair users.

### **Other aspects of inclusion**

The creation of a new multi-faith space will improve accessibility of the building to those of a variety of faiths. While space is limited, some consideration should be given to the fact that people accessing this space may use mobility aids, wheelchairs, and may have conditions restricting growth, so sink height should consider this and maybe a split-height sink could be considered.

The creation of a specific baby change space for parents, including a toilet, is a great idea and reduces pressure on the accessible toilets by separating the baby change. However, it should also be remembered that some wheelchair users and individuals with conditions that restrict growth are also parents, and so access to a lower fold-down changing table in the standard accessible toilet would be beneficial for those parents if this could be incorporated.

The inclusion of a quiet space within the education area is essential to facilitate Touchstones and Pinc College's work, especially with neuro-divergent groups. The space needs to be within the secure line of the education space to meet child protection requirements.

The kitchen and bar areas are small and so may not be suitable for use by staff who use a wheelchair or other mobility aid. However, within the space that is available, I think this is not unreasonable as there is no realistic way that more space could be created without impacting on other areas of the building.

I would recommend ensuring that at least some of the toilet facilities are not gendered, to improve inclusion for non-binary individuals.

## **Summary**

The proposed plans for the redevelopment of the Touchstones building will greatly enhance the ability of individuals with a variety of disabilities and impairments to access the building and enjoy the events and exhibitions that it houses. This includes those with more complex physical disabilities requiring support from care staff and enhanced access options for toileting.

This will have a further positive impact on a wider scale for several reasons:

- Those who care for and support individuals with a disability are often family members who may be in that caring role full time, so enabling the individual with a disability to access the building also allows the individual in a caring role to attend.
- Services who may be supporting a number of individuals with a variety of needs, will only bring their group to areas that meet the needs of all service users within that group, so enhanced accessibility means that these groups are able to attend.
- Independent individuals with a disability will often attend things with friends, and so better building accessibility means that Touchstones becomes a viable option for more people choosing venues to visit.
- Schools using the building for education will be able to bring students with additional needs.

The addition of the accessible toilets within the studio and educational area also helps to make that area more inclusive and accessible to those with a disability, and this also means that the studio space is accessible to a wider range of potential groups.

The one issue that cannot be improved is accessible parking (particularly for those who require access to the back of their vehicle for ramp or tail lift access). This is unavoidable, but must be kept in mind as regardless of building

accessibility and facilities, those who require travel in adapted vehicles or close-by parking, are unable to access buildings where this cannot be provided.

### **About the author of this report**

I was born with a genetic condition which has increasingly affected my physical abilities, and I have been a full time wheelchair user for the last 12 years. I also have some hearing loss and use bilateral hearing aids. In addition to this, I grew up with a younger brother with profound learning disabilities, visual impairment, and a variety of care needs. As a result of this, I have lived experience of a variety of disabilities, as both a disabled individual and also someone who has been in a caring role for another person. This has given me first hand insight into the wide variety of issues that exist around access, and the unconsciously flawed assumptions that are regularly made around access needs by those without specialist knowledge. It has also given me the passion and drive to educate people and work with businesses and individuals to improve access and understanding wherever possible. I have then taken time to study and learn more in this area to increase my knowledge and allow me to see the situation from a variety of viewpoints, rather than solely that of an individual with access needs.

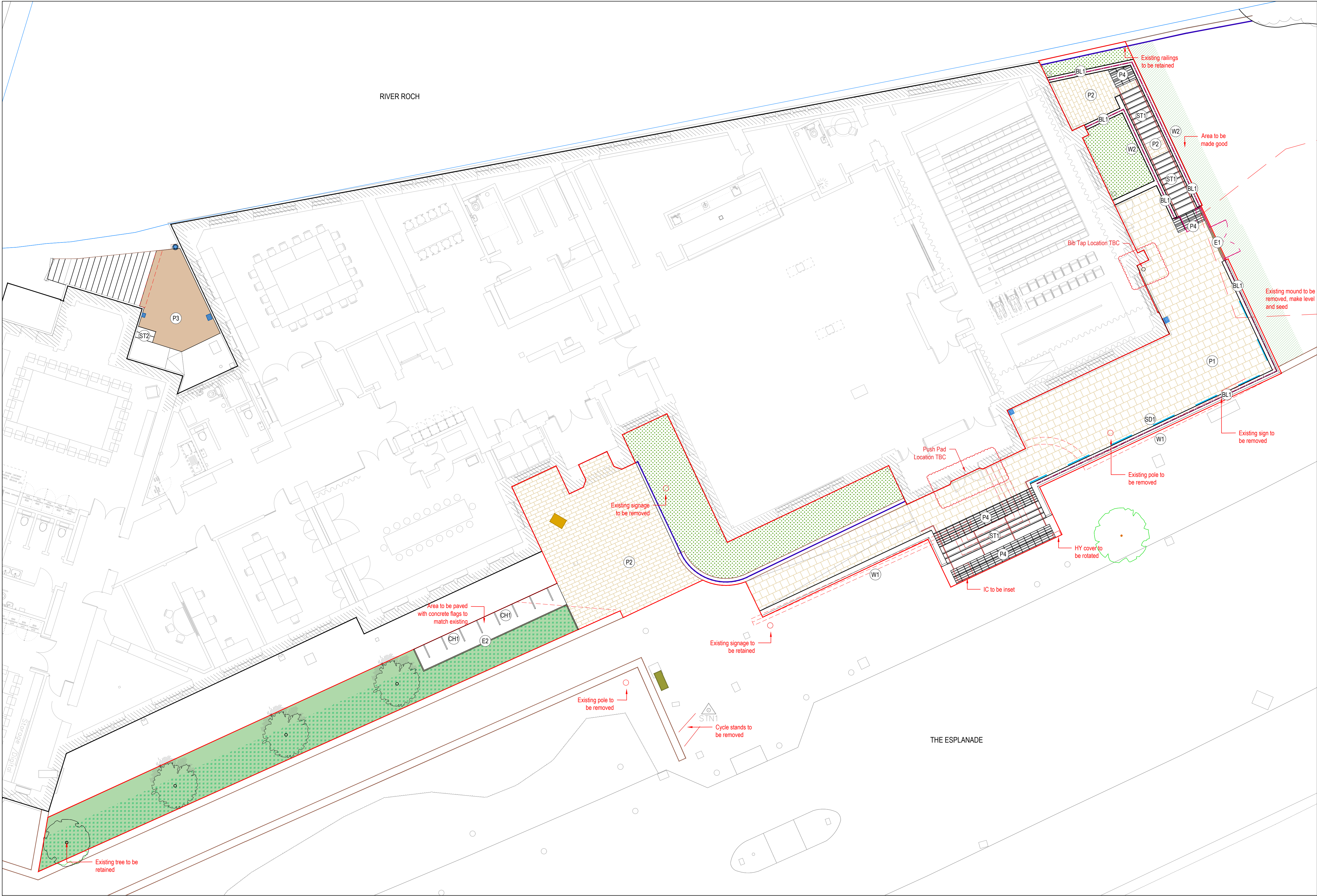
Alongside other work, I have spent the last 12 years working on a self-employed basis delivering disability awareness training to businesses and groups, as well as advising a number of businesses on improving accessibility of their buildings and services.

My current role within Your Trust involves working with managers and other staff to ensure that all of our services and buildings are inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible, as well as developing programmes of physical activity for those with disabilities who require specialist sessions. I also work on a wider inclusion basis ensuring that everyone has equity when accessing Your Trust sites, and that staff are trained in a wide range of areas relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

# Appendix

## LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS AND VISUAL SPECIFICATION





LEGEND

- Site Boundary**
- Yorkstone Paving**  
Size: 450xRLx35mm thick  
Finish: Flamed
- Modal Concrete Setts**  
Size: 300x400x80mm, Colour: Oatmeal granite  
Finish: Smooth
- Resin Bound Gravel**  
Size: 25mm depth, Colour: 'Brittany Bronze'
- Tactile Hazard Warning Paving**  
Size: 400x400x50mm, Colour: Charcoal Grey Granite  
Raised Striped Profile
- Yorkstone Flush Edge**  
Size: 150x900x250mm  
Finish: Diamond Sawn
- Concrete Pin Kerb**  
Size: 50x915x200mm
- Natural Stone Clad Wall to Terrace**  
Profile to match existing building plinth detail
- Natural Stone Clad Retaining Wall**  
To Basement access
- Existing Wall**  
To be retained
- Existing Wall to be Removed**  
To be removed
- Yorkstone Step Units**  
Size: 1000x1200x300 (400 top step) x 160-170mm With dark grey inlaid visibility strip
- Prefabricated Concrete Steps**  
Size: 975x300x150mm
- Handrails to Steps**  
Type: Hot-dip galvanized, powder coated steel, Colour: Black,  
Size: 1000mm above landings, 900mm above treads
- Wall-Top Balustrade and Gate**  
Type: Vertical bar, hot-dip galvanized, powder coated steel,  
Colour: Black, Height: 1100mm
- Existing Historic Balustrade**  
To be retained
- CH1 Cycle Stand**  
Type: Sheffield Cycle Stand  
Size: 800mm height x 750mm length
- Existing Memorial Statue**  
To be retained
- Signage Totem**  
Indicative Touchstones totem location  
Size: 2.1m height x 1m width
- Slot Drain**  
To Engineer's Specification
- Gully Cover**  
To Engineer's Specification
- Existing Tree**  
To be retained
- Proposed Tree**  
Refer to P21522-00-001-0400  
Size: 18-20cm girth, double staked
- Proposed Planting**  
Refer to P21522-00-001-0400
- Proposed Wildflower Verge**
- Existing Grass**  
To be retained

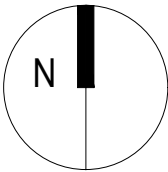
01 TOUCHSTONES GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

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|-----|---------------------------|----|------------|-----|---------|----|------|
| 00  | FOR COMMENT               | BK | 26.05.2023 |     |         |    |      |
| 01  | FOR COMMENT               | BK | 01.06.2023 |     |         |    |      |
| 02  | ISSUE FOR PLANNING        | BK | 07.06.2023 |     |         |    |      |
| 03  | DRAFT STAGE 4 ISSUE       | BK | 22.09.2023 |     |         |    |      |
| 04  | RESUBMISSION FOR PLANNING | BK | 06.10.2023 |     |         |    |      |
|     |                           |    |            |     |         |    |      |
|     |                           |    |            |     |         |    |      |
|     |                           |    |            |     |         |    |      |

Notes

- Do not scale from drawing, use figured dimensions only
- All dimensions to be checked onsite
- This drawing to be read in conjunction with all other Gillespies drawings and specifications



Project title  
TOUCHSTONES  
STAGE 4

Drawing title  
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

Drawing number  
P21522-00-001-GIL-0100

Drawing Status  
PLANNING

Date  
24.05.2023

Scale  
1:100 @ A1

Drawn  
BK

Checked  
WC

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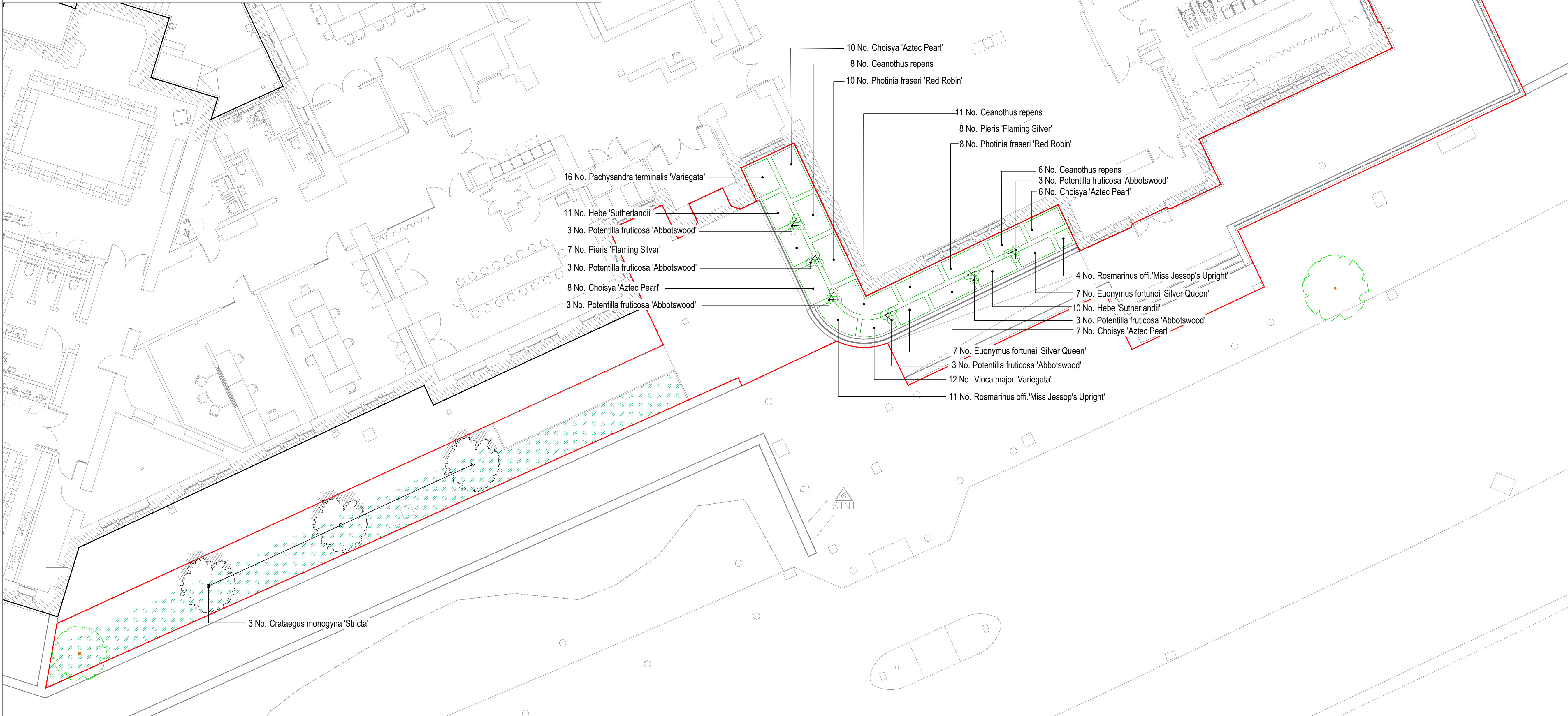


Planting Schedule

| Trees                        |                                                   |               |         |          |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|----------|
| Species                      | Specification                                     | Supply Height | Girth   | Number   |
| Crataegus monogyna 'Stricta' | Extra Heavy Standard :Clear Stem min. 200 :3x :RB | 450-500cm     | 18-20cm | 3        |
|                              |                                                   |               |         | Total :3 |

Shrubs

| Species                                 | Specification | Pot Size | Density          | Number     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|----------|------------------|------------|
| Ceanothus repens                        | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 3/m <sup>2</sup> | 25         |
| Choisya 'Aztec Pearl'                   | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 3/m <sup>2</sup> | 34         |
| Euonymus fortunei 'Silver Queen'        | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 4/m <sup>2</sup> | 32         |
| Hebe 'Sutherlandii'                     | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 5/m <sup>2</sup> | 27         |
| Pachysandra terminalis 'Variegata'      | 3/5 brks      | 2L       | 7/m <sup>2</sup> | 20         |
| Photinia fraseri 'Red Robin'            | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 3/m <sup>2</sup> | 18         |
| Pieris 'Flaming Silver'                 | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 3/m <sup>2</sup> | 15         |
| Potentilla fruticosa 'Abbotswood'       | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | Counted          | 24         |
| Rosmarinus offi.'Miss Jessop's Upright' | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 5/m <sup>2</sup> | 33         |
| Skimmia japonica 'Rubella'              | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 3/m <sup>2</sup> | 9          |
| Vinca major 'Variegata'                 | 3/5 brks      | 3L       | 7/m <sup>2</sup> | 18         |
|                                         |               |          |                  | Total :255 |



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Existing Tree
- Proposed Tree
- Proposed Planting Area
- Proposed Specimen Shrub
- Proposed Wildflower Verge

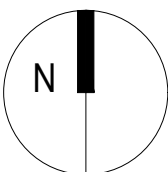
01 TOUCHSTONES PLANTING PLAN

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|-----|---------------------------|----|------------|-----|---------|----|------|
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Notes

- 1.0 Do not scale from drawing, use figured dimensions only
- 1.1 All dimensions to be checked onsite
- 1.2 This drawing to be read in conjunction with all other Gillespies drawings and specifications



Project title  
TOUCHSTONES  
STAGE 4

Drawing title  
PLANTING PLAN

Drawing number  
P21522-00-001-GIL-0400

Drawing Status  
PLANNING

Date  
24.05.2023

Scale  
1:100 @ A1

Drawn  
BK

Checked  
WC

Revision  
02

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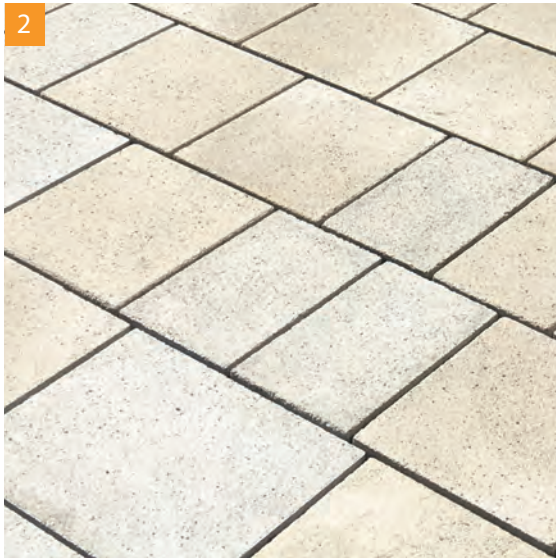
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# Touchstones - Visual Specificatio

| Rev | Description               | Date     | Edited By | Checked By | Approved By |
|-----|---------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 00  | FOR COMMENT               | 01.06.23 | BK        | WC         | JG          |
| 01  | PLANNING ISSUE            | 07.06.23 | BK        | WC         | JG          |
| 02  | REVISED PLANNING<br>ISSUE | 09.10.23 | BK        | WC         | JG          |
| 03  | REVISED<br>ANNOTATION     | 10.10.23 | BK        | WC         | JG          |

# Materials Specificatio



## Surface Materials

**1. Scoutmoor yorkstone paving**  
To terrace and sloped access path

Size: 450xRandom Lengthsx35mm  
Finish: Flamed texture to match existing paving

**2. Marshall's modal concrete paving**  
To existing entrance and basement access

Size:300x400x80mm  
Finish: Smooth  
Colour: Oatmeal granite

**3. Yorkstone clad retaining wall with yorkstone capping detail**  
To basement access steps

**4. Raised stone edge**  
To terrace, to match existing building plinth detail

**5. Yorkstone step units**  
With inlaid visibility strip

Size: 1000&1200x300&400x160&170mm

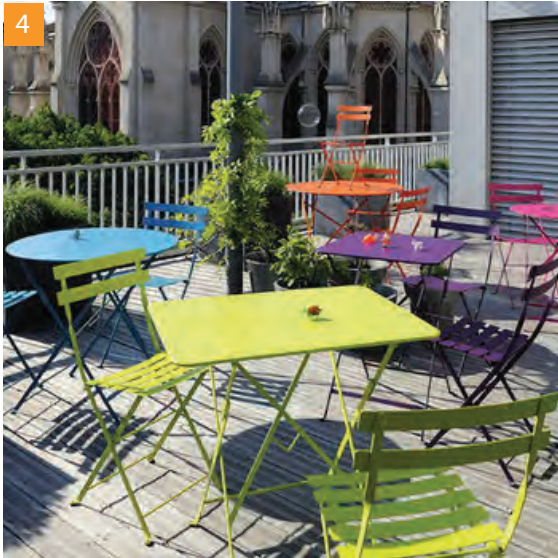
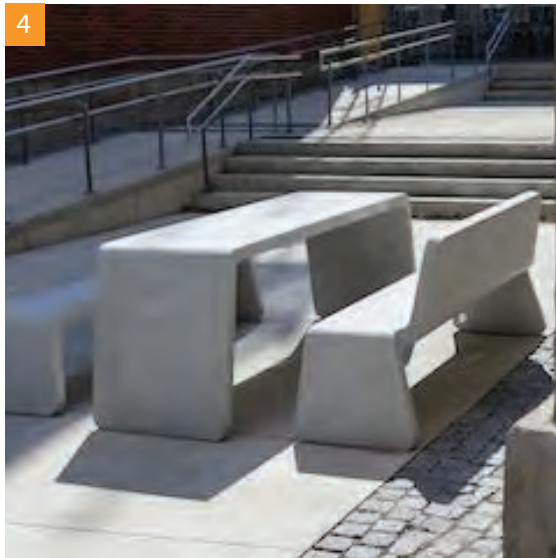
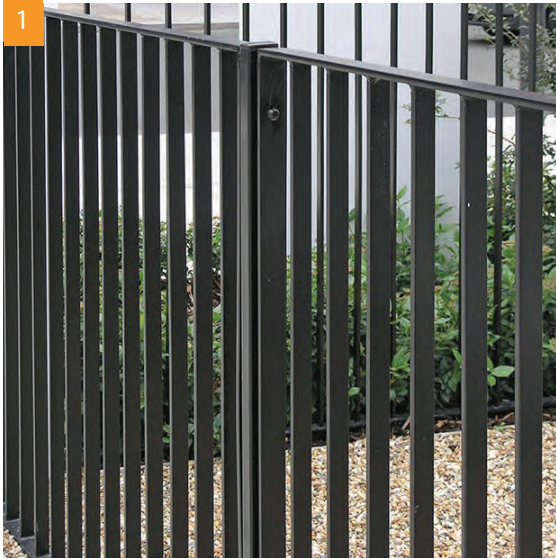
**6. Tactile hazard paving**  
To steps

Size: 400x400x50mm (double row)  
Colour: Charcoal

**7. Resin Bound Gravel**  
To rear

Size: 25mm depth  
Colour: Brittany Bronze

# Furniture Specificatio



## Furniture Materials

### 1. Vertical metal balustrade and gate To terrace

Finish: Powder coated galvanised steel  
Colour: Black

### 2. Handrails To steps

Finish: Powder coated galvanised steel  
Colour: Black

### 3. Cycle stands To existing entrance

Finish: Powder coated galvanised steel  
Colour: Black

### 4. Outdoor seating To Terrace

Specification TBC

### 5. Signage Totem To existing entrance

Size: 2.1m height x 1m width

### 6. Existing historic railings To be retained

All visuals are indicative only

# Planting Palette: Ornamental Border 01



## Mixed Planting

1. *Choisya x dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl'
2. *Hebe pinguifolia* 'Sutherlandii'
3. *Ceanothus repens*
4. *Photinia x fraseri* 'Red Robin'
5. *Pieris japonica* 'Flaming Silver'
6. *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Miss Jessop Upright'
7. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Silver Queen'
8. *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Abbotswood'
9. *Pachysandra terminalis*
10. *Vinca major*

# Planting Palette: Ornamental Border 02



## Mixed Planting

- 1. *Euonymus fortunei* 'Silver Queen'
- 2. *Skimmia japonica* 'Rubella'
- 3. *Choisya x dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl'
- 4. *Hebe pinguifolia* 'Sutherlandii'
- 5. *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Miss Jessop Upright'
- 6. *Potentilla fruticosa* 'Abbotswood'
- 7. *Pachysandra terminalis*
- 8. *Vinca major*

# Planting Palette: Trees



## Tree Planting

1. *Crataegus monogyna* 'Stricta'



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