

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



Client: Hopwood Hall College
Project: Conversion of Former Chapel
Reference: HCO-SEV-XX-XX-RP-A-09010



REVISION

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P05	Amended to show new first floor construction	04/11/25	RS	RS
P06	Details of totem signage added	24/08/26	RS	RS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE OVERVIEW

Hopwood Hall College and University Centre provides a wide range of high-quality vocational and technical training from entry level to Higher Education to learners in the Borough of Rochdale, Middleton and beyond. We continually strive to ensure that all learners achieve their individual, educational and employment goals, whilst meeting the skills needs of the region.

As one of the leading general further education colleges in the region with over 8,000 students (including around 3,300 16–18-year-olds and 5,000 adults), we provide a wide range of full-time and part-time courses across our two campuses including employer responsive courses and Apprenticeships. We work closely with employers, local communities, partners, and stakeholders who form an active part in shaping our curriculum offer and the student experience.

Hopwood Hall College works with our community, we have a restless ambition to raise aspirations by encouraging and enabling people of all ages. We are a values driven organisation living by our values to provide inspiring learning opportunities for all to thrive in life, work, and make a positive impact across the region.

Our Values:

- Integrity
- Nurturing
- Enjoyment
- Ambition
- Sustainability



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

This Design and Access Statement has been created to accompany a Planning and Listed Building Consent Application to Rochdale Local Planning Authority for works to convert the former Chapel which forms part of the Middleton Campus at Hopwood Hall College.

Seven architecture have been commissioned by Hopwood Hall College to develop a scheme to refurbish and re-purpose the existing Chapel to provide much needed teaching space for their Engineering and Manufacturing T-Levels curriculum.

Milnrow Chapel was designed by Frederick Gibberd. The building is Grade II Listed and was constructed in the 1960s as a place of worship for the De La Salle Teacher Training College. It was de-consecrated in the 1990s and has since been used by Hopwood Hall College as a fitness centre and storage facility.

The Chapel is considered as an important local landmark but it has been underutilised for many years due to the issues of accessibility, thermal performance, presence of asbestos to the roof soffit and the need for significant investment to bring the building back into meaningful use.

The College wish to undertake works to convert the former Chapel into a dedicated T-level Engineering and Virtual Reality (VR) learning centre. This project will generate funding for the repair and restoration of the historic fabric, bringing the building back into long-term use as a central part of the college and safeguarding the future of this important heritage asset. The proposed works will include some internal alterations to make the spaces suitable for use by the College as well as improvements to thermal performance, accessibility and repair works to the historic fabric.

This revised Design and Access Statement has been submitted to support an Advertisement Consent Application for the two external totem signs approved in principle under the previous Planning and LBC Applications.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.3 COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

Hopwood Hall College have set out their requirements for the project below:

The College is embarking on a redevelopment initiative to transform the chapel into a dedicated T-level Engineering and Virtual Reality (VR) learning centre. Our existing facilities for VR and immersive lessons and T-Level Engineering classes fall far short of the standards our students deserve, with challenges like cramped workspaces and classes being dispersed across various areas on campus and simply not being able to offer the facilities for enough dedicated learning hours to our students.

The proposed renovation of the chapel into a bespoke IT hub is envisaged to significantly enhance the students' learning experience and broaden and enrich the scope of course content and deliverability. This project directly links to the college's strategy to raise economic prosperity by providing enterprising and innovative delivery of the curriculum which will prepare a skilled workforce for the future.

The primary goal of this renovation is not to increase student enrolment; rather, it aims to optimize the current curriculum offerings to cater to a larger segment of our existing student base. The selection of the chapel as the designated T-Level Engineering and VR/Immersive hub is strategic, driven by the ample space it provides, making it the most suitable location on campus. Seeking to identify another large area of the college would dislodge and negatively impact on another curriculum sector we host at Hopwood Hall College. Importantly, this choice ensures the preservation of the chapel's historical significance as a Grade 2 listed building. The investment in this project not only addresses the limitations of the current facilities but also tackles the repair works required to the chapel.

Once operational, the T-Level Engineering and VR hub will be integrated into the broader campus maintenance strategy, ensuring ongoing preservation of the building's condition. This initiative not only meets the immediate needs of our students but also aligns with our commitment to preserving the architectural heritage of the campus.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.4 AN OVERVIEW OF T-LEVEL FUNDING

WHAT ARE T-LEVELS?

Delivered over a two-year period, T-Levels provide an excellent alternative to A-Levels and are aimed at 16 to 19-year-olds who would rather study work-related courses than traditional academic subjects.

T-Level students have the fantastic opportunity to progress to university or higher-level technical qualifications.

WHAT DO T-LEVELS INVOLVE?

Students spend 80% of their time in the classroom and 20% on an industry placement, giving them the chance to experience a real workplace setting.

Shaped by employers, T-Levels benefit from the unique insights of industry leaders. This means leavers will be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to get ahead in industry.

FUNDING AWARDED

As part of the delivery of the T-Level courses in Engineering and Manufacturing, the College are in need of new and up to date facilities to provide a state of the art learning environment in which to teach the updated curriculum, in preparation for learners to maximise future employment opportunities.

The college has successfully secured Department of Education funding for the repair and conversion of the former Chapel for use as a new dedicated T-level Engineering and Virtual Reality (VR) learning centre.

Hear from our T-Level learners...

I feel so proud of myself – studying a T-Level is a big achievement! The other students in the class are so welcoming and the tutors really recognise you as an individual.

Ludnela Andrade, T-Level Design, Surveying & Planning



T-Levels have felt very fresh and exciting! I've made some great new friends along the way and the tutors have been so supportive.

The best part is that the course is so varied. The practical elements mean that you're rarely sat down – we're always out doing stuff.

Imogen Tudor, T-Level Supporting Adult Nursing



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.5 WIDER PUBLIC BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The provision of a dedicated and improved facility for the Engineering and Manufacturing T-Levels courses is considered to have a number of wider public benefits.

ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

There are currently a number of exciting initiatives aimed at attracting investment to the Rochdale area via the Engineering and Manufacturing sector.

Training young people through access to high quality Engineering and Manufacturing T-Levels courses links directly to these initiatives, responding to the demand for skills in this sector. This in turn will help to create and retain talent within the Rochdale area, attracting further investment.

The provision of a dedicated learning centre will allow the College to deliver the T-Level Engineering and Manufacturing curriculum to the highest possible standard using the latest technology.

AMPI

Based in Rochdale, the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute (AMPI) is an industry led initiative which will drive innovation for the UK’s advanced machinery designers, manufacturers, and users to meet the challenges of developing new technology and entering emerging markets. AMPI will be centred around existing capabilities and research excellence across the North of England and reach across the wider UK.

<https://www.ampi.org.uk/#about>

Atom Valley

Atom Valley, Manchester’s Mayoral Development Zone will be a vast, well-connected innovation cluster, bringing world-class research, manufacturing and materials together to shape the future and level up communities. Covering sites across Bury, Oldham and Rochdale, this vast innovation mega-cluster will focus on advanced manufacturing, materials and machinery, as well as nurturing related start-ups and supply chains. This large-scale project will be a centre for low carbon activity that supports wider net zero ambitions.

<https://www.atom-valley.co.uk/>

CEAMS

In partnership with the Rochdale Development Agency and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Centre of Expertise in Advanced Materials and Sustainability (CEAMS) is a collaboration between key partners to help and support businesses to commercialise sustainable materials and develop innovative ideas to make the materials they use sustainable.

<https://ceams.org.uk/>

LOCAL SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

The new facility will allow the College to deliver the T-Levels courses to the highest standard. The availability of high quality courses in the Rochdale area will help to encourage young people to study and work in the local area, contributing to the wider community and economy.

Hopwood Hall College has links with a number of local employers across the Engineering and Manufacturing sector. Students undertake placements within these companies and many go on to find employment locally.

RE-USE OF IMPORTANT LOCAL HERITAGE ASSET

The project will facilitate the repair and protection of historic fabric, safeguarding a local heritage asset for the future.

RE-USE OF EMBODIED ENERGY

The adaptation and re-use of an existing building for the creation of the new learning hub is inherently lower in embodied energy when compared to a new-build project. Buildings and construction play a major part in the climate emergency, accounting for nearly 40% of energy related CO₂ emissions and having a significant impact on our natural habitats.¹ Bringing this redundant building back into meaningful use will allow the embodied carbon embedded within the building fabric to be retained, contributing to the wider net zero targets which are fundamental in reversing the climate emergency.

1 <https://www.architectsdeclare.com/>



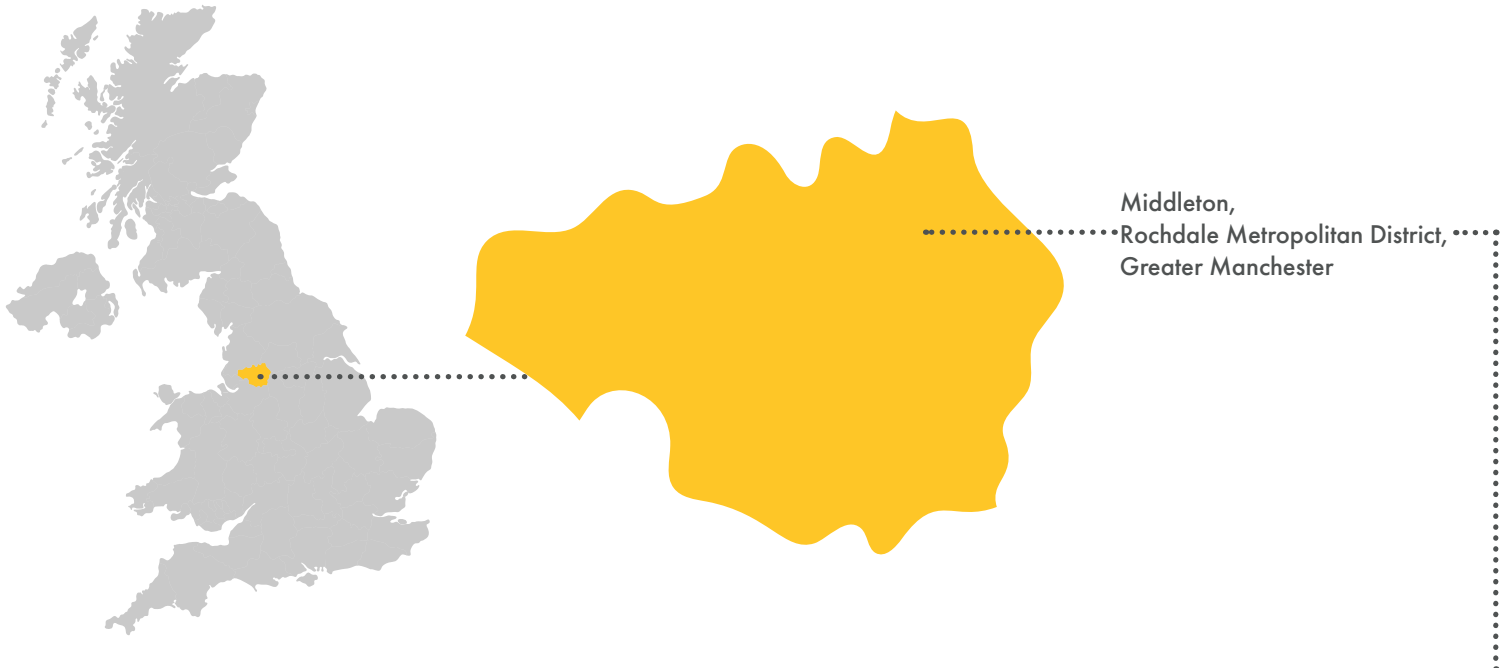
2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.1 SITE LOCATION

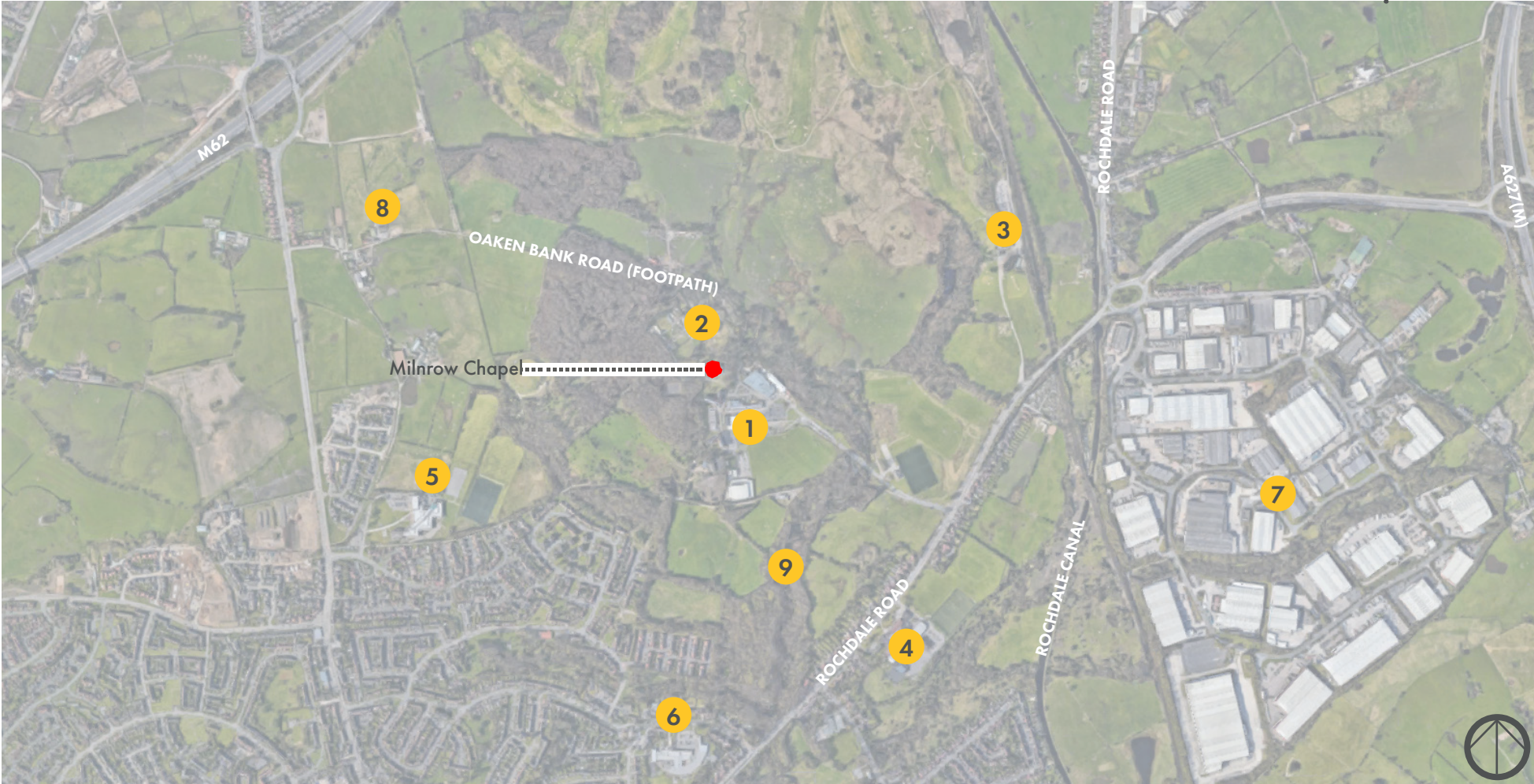
Milnrow Chapel forms part of Hopwood Hall College Middleton Campus, situated on Rochdale Road at the edge of Middleton.

The site is located towards the North-West of the College grounds and elevated on a grassed bank with trees surrounding the site. An existing path leads from the North of the site towards the Grade II* Listed Hopwood Hall.



KEY

- 1 Hopwood Hall College
- 2 Hopwood Hall (Grade II* Listed)
- 3 Manchester Golf Club
- 4 Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School
- 5 St Anne’s Academy Comprehensive
- 6 Hollin Primary School
- 7 Stakehill Industrial Estate
- 8 Yew Tree Farm
- 9 Hopwood Woods
- Site Boundary (Milnrow Chapel)



Location Plan

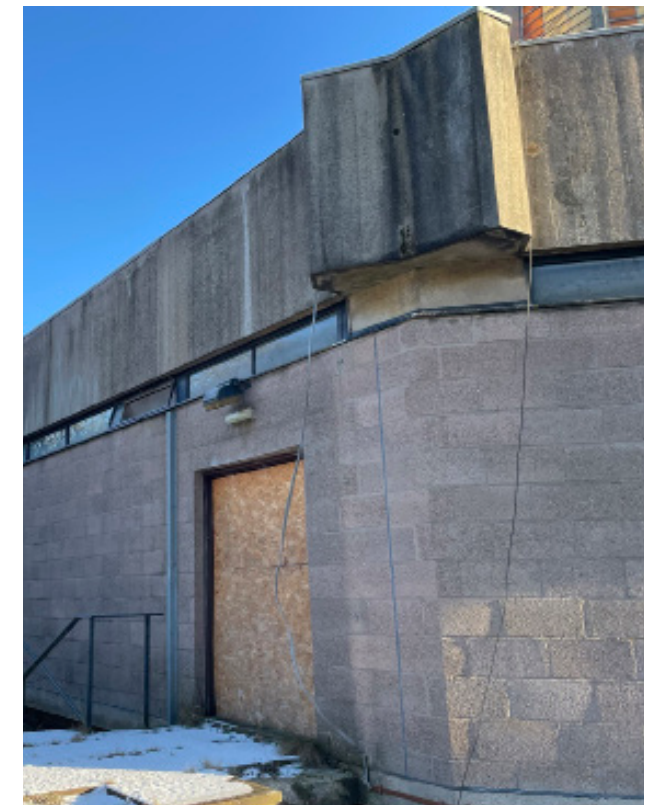
2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.2 SITE SUMMARY

The Milnrow Chapel was constructed in 1965 as a place of worship. It was designed by Fredrick Gibbered as a prototype to Liverpool Catholic Cathedral. It is now Grade II Listed and was previously converted to a fitness centre, used extensively by Skills for Life (LLDD), Sport curriculum (Fitness and Rugby Academies) & Uniform Pre Services curriculum. It is currently in use as a storage facility.

The building comprises a reinforced concrete frame set out in an octagonal configuration with a spire rising from the centre which incorporates a coloured glass lantern. At low level enclosing walls are finished in fair-faced blockwork.

Roofs are felt finished with a copper coating and drain into perimeter gutters behind parapet upstands. These discharge via hopper heads to the lobby elevations. Windows at low level are single glazed in steel frames with opening casements. Internally the building is open to the main hall which is accessed off an entrance lobby.



The Existing Site - External

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.3 EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



6 Steps into one of two mirroring main entrances.



7 View from approach via existing road to the South.



8 View looking at the existing rear access to the building.



9 View from the existing stepped access up the hill towards the building from the South-



10 View onto the existing parking area to the south.



Key Plan

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.4 INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



1 View looking up towards stain glass window.



2 View into the main hall, currently being used for storage.



3 High level glazing above exposed blockwork walls.



4 Internal view of octagonal roof structure.



5 View into the entrance lobby.



6 Central steps in the hall.

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.5 SITE PLAN

The site is located towards the North-West of the College grounds and elevated on a grassed bank with trees surrounding the site. The Chapel is accessed from an existing external stair leading from the main College campus. There are two existing sets of steps which take you to two separate main entrances into a lobby area.

To the south of the site there is an existing road which takes you to a small parking area. A footpath follows around the full external envelope of the building, although this is in a poor state and has been partially blocked by overgrown vegetation. External access from the rear fire escape is via a set of flying concrete landing and steps with metal handrails to the perimeter.

An existing path leads from the North of the site towards the Grade II* Listed Hopwood Hall.



View taken from Google Earth



Site Plan

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.6 BUILDING PLANS

The building has an octagonal plan form. A small entrance vestibule leads into the open plan Chapel which has a central raised altar platform and a small enclosed area to the north which was originally designed as a sacristy. Low walls to the north western segment form a side chapel with it's own altar and canopy in tact.

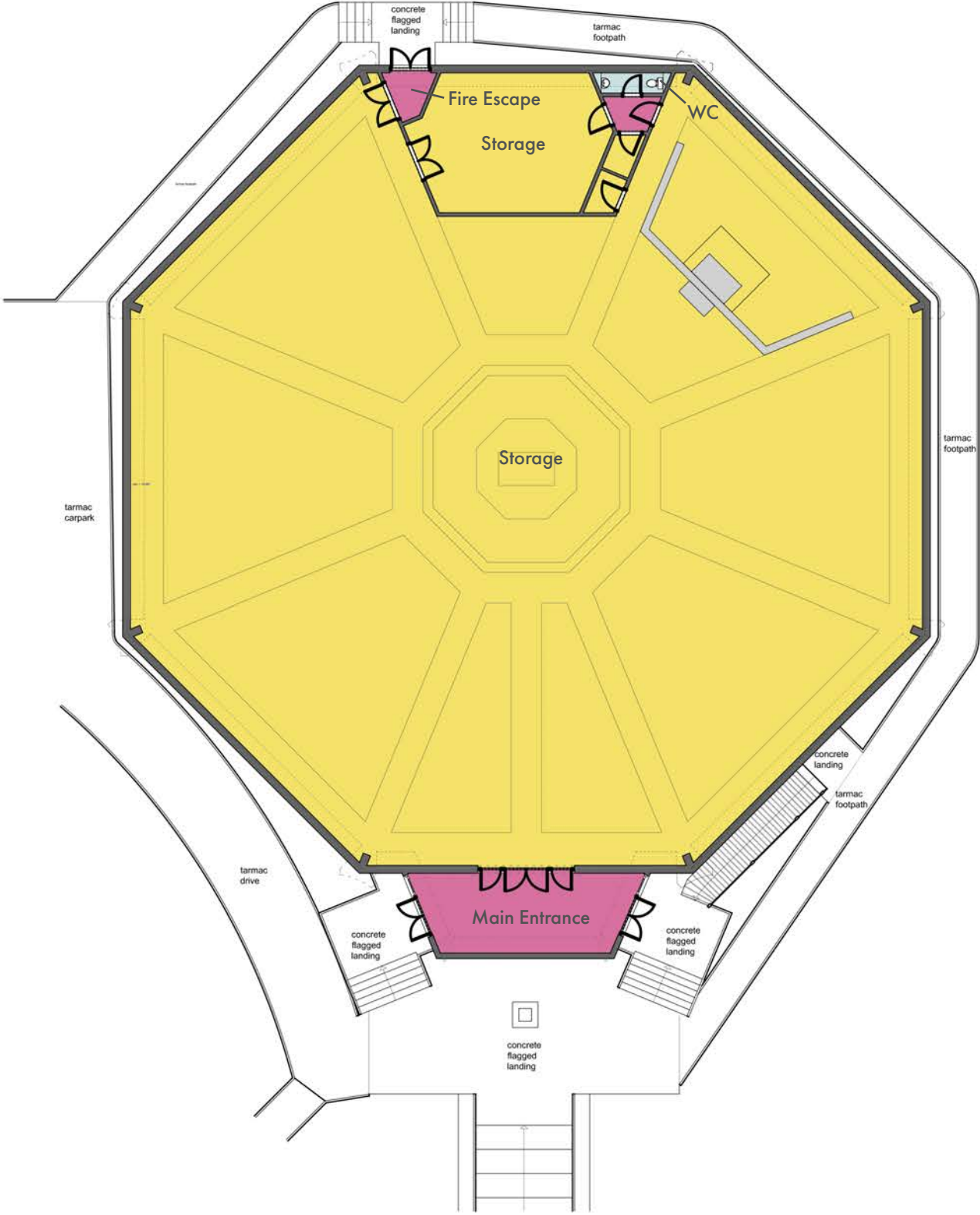
The building is lit via the dramatic coloured glass lantern which rises above the central altar, and there is a narrow band of clerestory windows to the perimeter.

The building is currently in use as a storage facility.

- KEY
- Storage
- Lobby
- WC Facilities



Key Plan



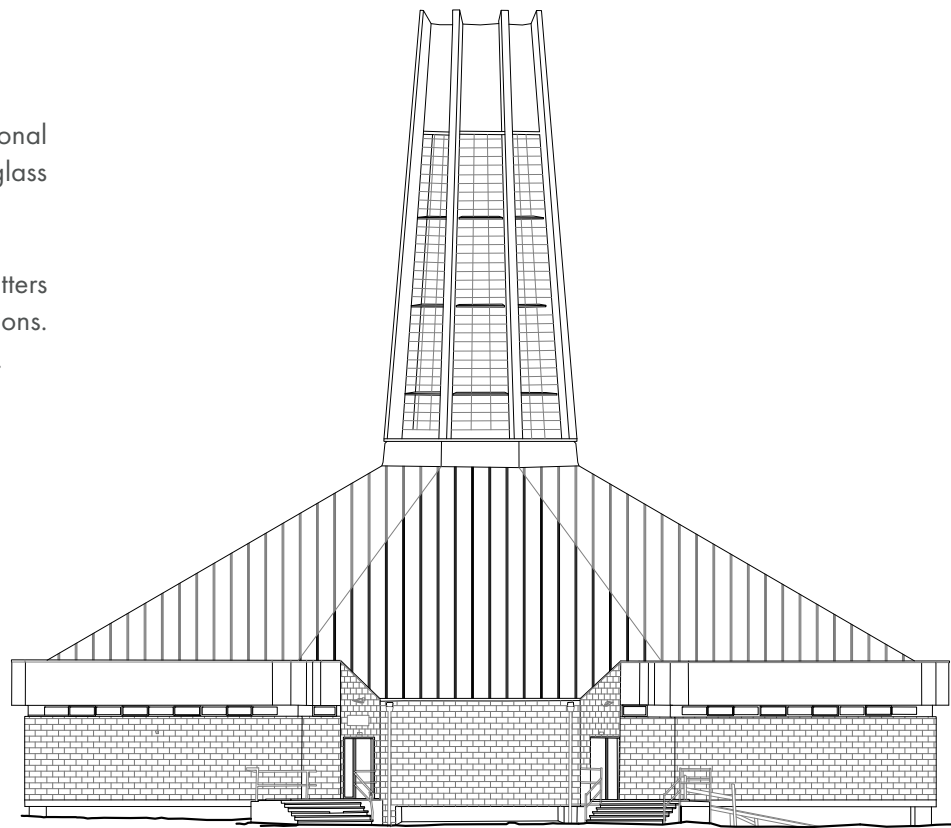
Existing Ground Floor Plan

2.0 EXISTING SITE

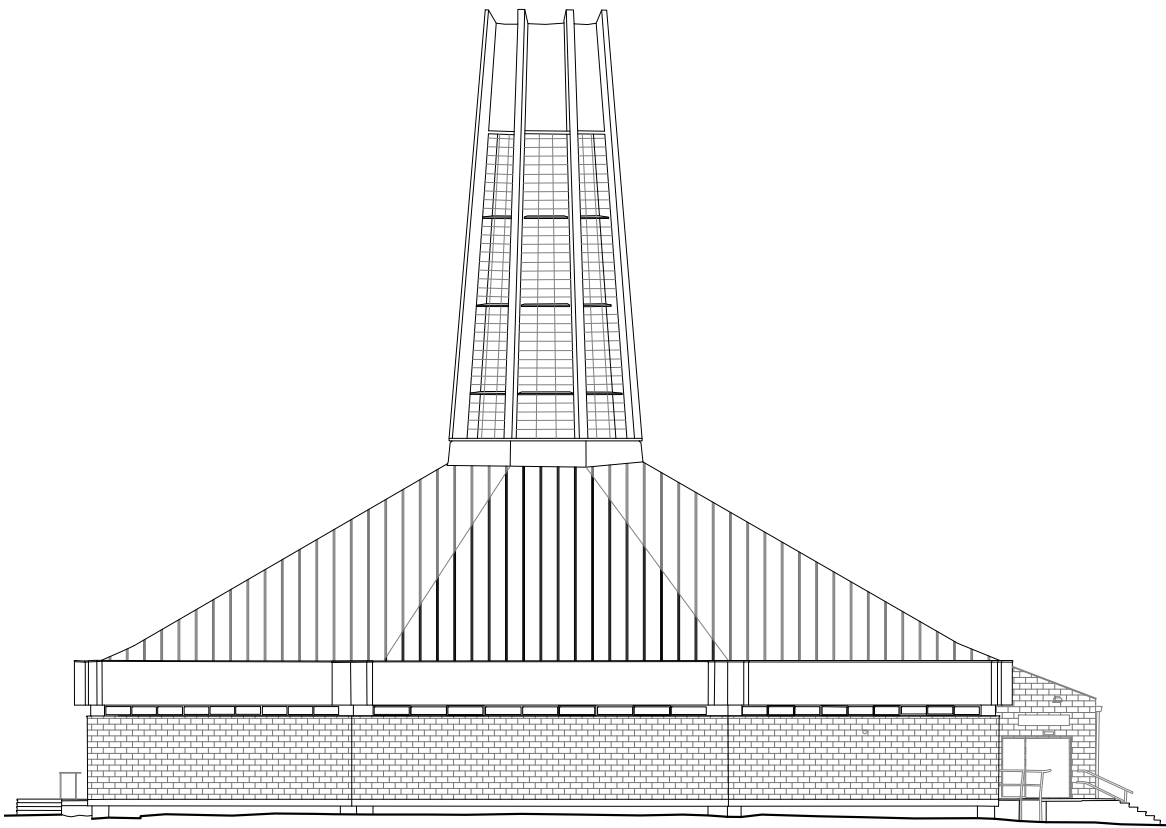
2.7 BUILDING ELEVATIONS

The building comprises of a reinforced concrete frame set out in an octagonal configuration with a spire rising to the middle which incorporates a coloured glass lantern. At low level enclosing walls are finished in blockwork.

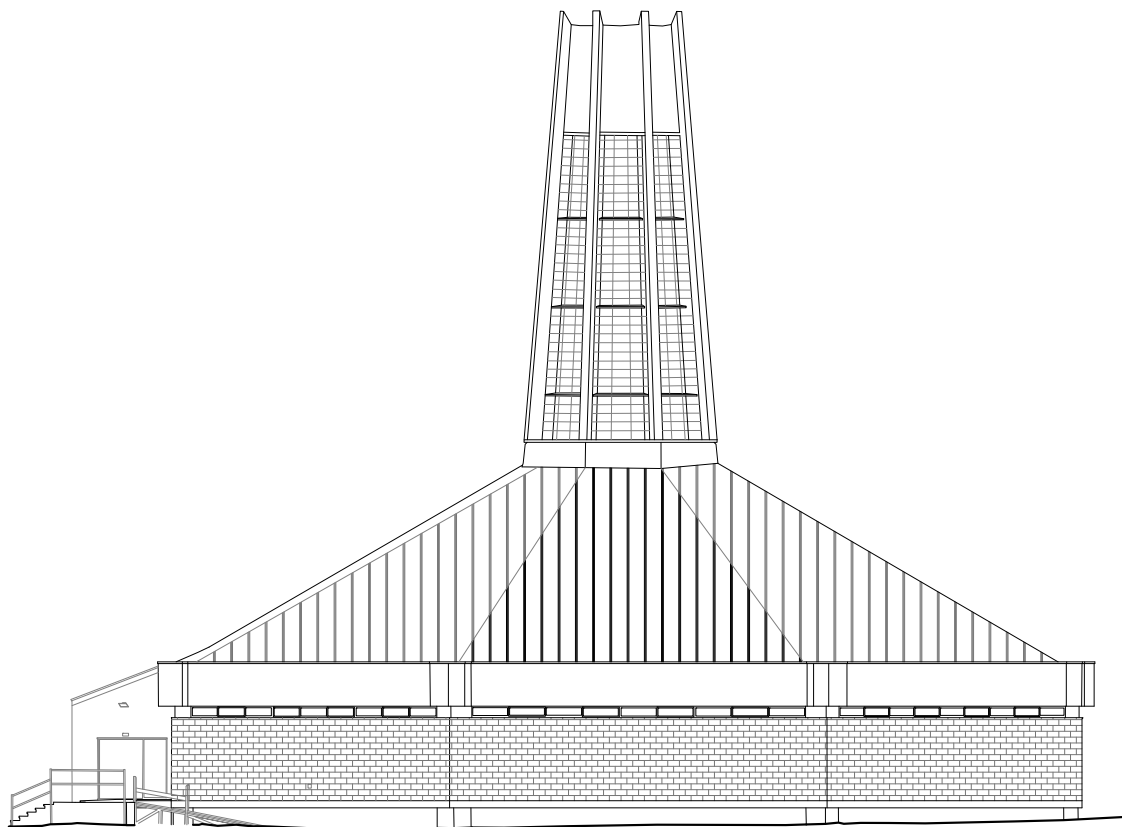
Roofs are felt finished (with a copper coating) and drain into perimeter gutters behind parapet upstands. These discharge via hopper heads to the lobby elevations. Windows at low level are single glazed in steel frames with opening casements.



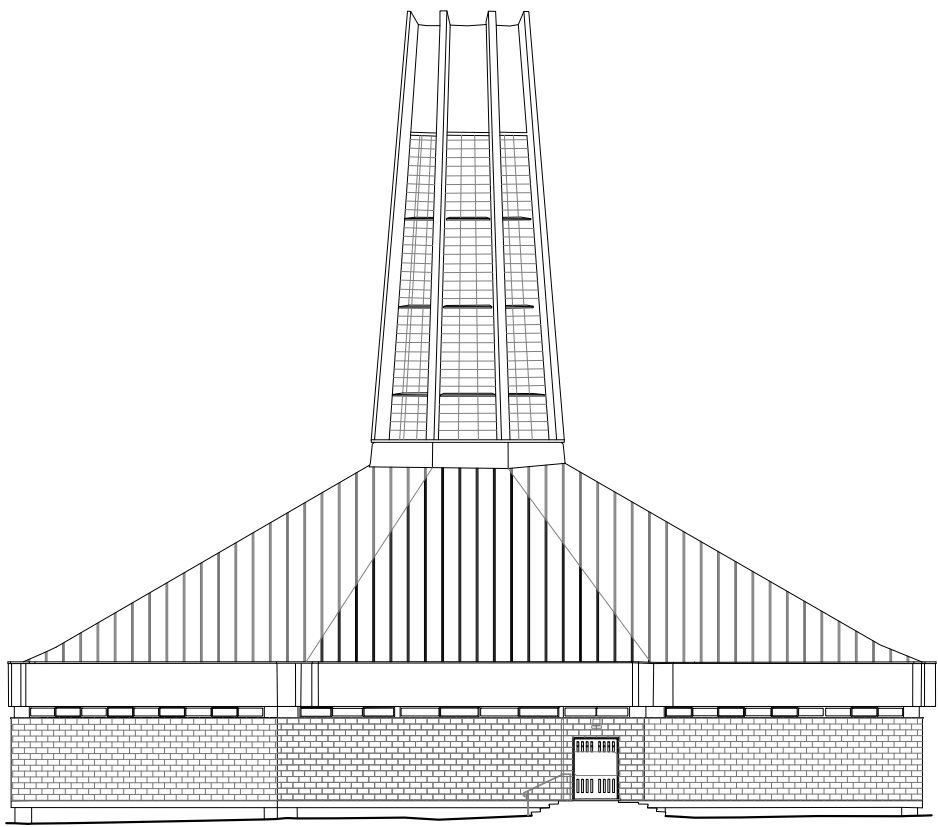
AA Elevation Facing South-East



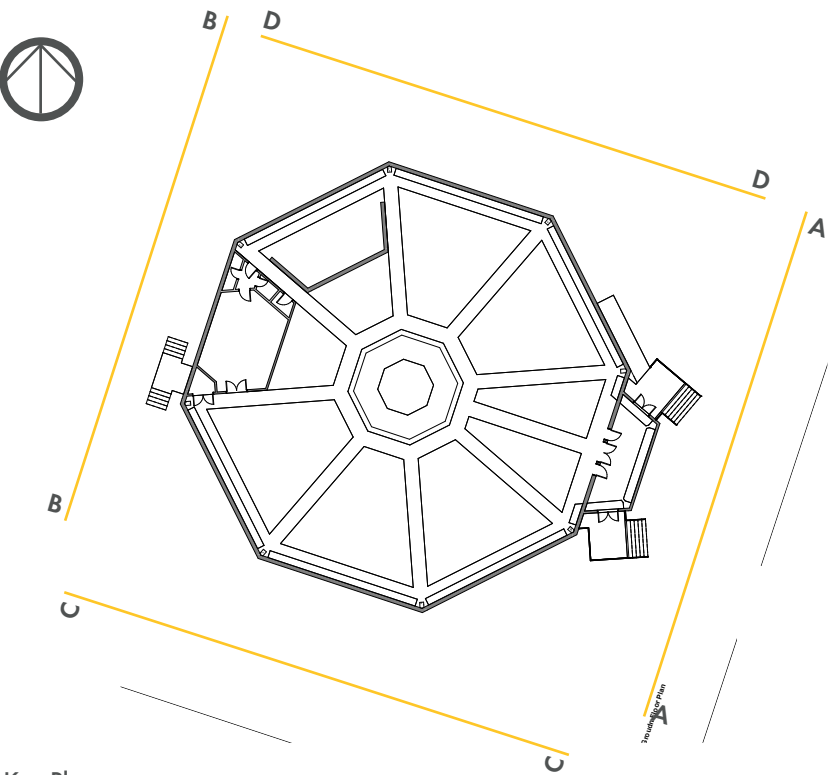
CC Elevation Facing South-West



BB Elevation Facing North-West



DD Elevation Facing North-East



Key Plan

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 PLANNING POLICY

3.1.1 NPPF

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the following design guidance which has been addressed during the design process.

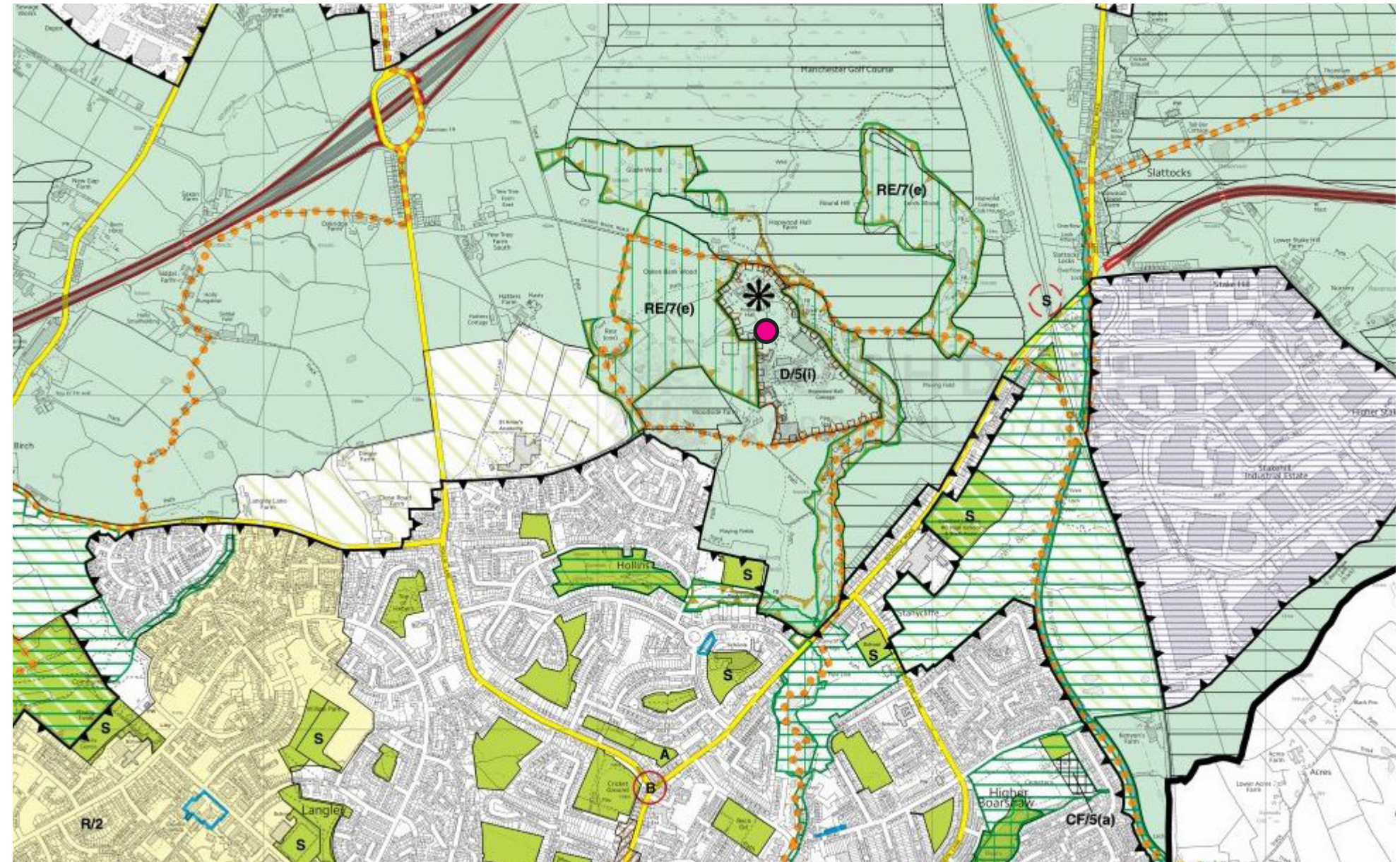
- Paragraphs 7 and 8 – this sets out the overarching objective to deliver sustainable development.
- Paragraph 124 – provides links between Sustainable development and good design.
- Paragraph 127 – identifies national design criteria for developments, local design policies should reflect this criteria.
- Paragraph 154 - sets out the criteria for where new buildings are considered to be appropriate in the green belt (this proposal does not involve new buildings and therefore this is not relevant)
- Paragraph 155 - sets out other forms of development that are considered appropriate in the green belt.
- Paragraph 203 - provides guidance on the need for heritage assets to be brought into viable use in order to help sustain the future of the asset and the contribution that can be made to the economic vitality of an area.
- Paragraph 208 - states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Details of the public benefits of the proposed works are set out within this document.

3.1.2 ROCHDALE UDP

The local plan (UDP) sets out a framework of planning policies that ensure development in the area meets certain criteria. Belows shows how some of the relevant policies have been addressed by this proposal:

Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan Adopted June 2006 (UDP):

- 3.25 Improvement of the skill levels in the Borough is strongly related to educational attainment and training. The subjects taught at the college are skills/ trades based which will help generate good candidates in those employment sectors and the specialism of Engineering and Manufacturing skills will contribute to a number of local initiatives aimed at bringing local investment to the area via this sector.
- Chapter 8 addresses the need for 'employment regeneration uses' - it is assumed that the vocational skills learnt at the College will provide the students the skills to go into employment in the local area.
- 13.1 Community facilities are a major influence on the quality of life for local residents. The redevelopment of the Chapel for use as a specialist learning centre will provide improved education facilities for the local community, with good public transport and walking access.



Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Map

Site Location



3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 PLANNING POLICY

Policy CF4 - The site at Hopwood Hall College is subject to proposals involving the improvement and additions to educational facilities at the college campus.

Within this site, as shown on the Proposals Map, development proposals for the improvement and addition to education facilities will be permitted – provided that: they are consistent with the College’s Green Belt location; do not harm the character or setting of listed buildings; and are in accordance with Policy D5.

- 13.10 - Hopwood Hall College is the Borough’s major provider of tertiary education. College facilities are currently split between two sites, namely Hopwood Campus, Middleton and a town centre campus in Rochdale. Very little room for expansion exists at the Rochdale Campus and, as a consequence, any developments required to meet expanded curriculum needs will have to be accommodated at Hopwood. It is the long-term aim of the College authorities to develop the Hopwood site as a self-contained campus capable of providing high quality academic, technical and vocational training, meeting not only the needs of the local community, but also operating as a facility of regional importance in the field of education and training. This could involve the rationalisation, conversion, redevelopment of, or extensions to buildings and facilities. The Council supports this strategy, recognising the benefits it can bring in terms of both economic regeneration and enhanced social provision, provided that development has no greater impact on the Green Belt or on the local landscape. The Council has therefore identified the campus as a major developed site within the Green Belt under Green Belt policy D5 and will expect all future developments to be carried out in accordance with the criteria in that policy.

The proposal addresses the above planning policy by bringing a currently redundant building back into use to provide additional accommodation to supplement the College’s existing facilities.

3.1.3 GREEN BELT STATEMENT

NPPF Paragraph 155 (d) states that the re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction is considered to be an appropriate form of development within green belt land. This proposal therefore is compliant with this policy.

UDP policy D5 sets out that limited infilling within the major existing developed sites within the green belt (of which this is one) will be permitted provided that the development:

- a) Is related to the continuing use of the site
- b) Is contained within the boundary shown on the proposals map
- c) Has no greater impact upon the purposes of including land in the green belt than the existing development
- d) Does not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site; and
- e) Does not exceed the height of the existing buildings on site.

This development involves the conversion of an existing under utilised building within the Green Belt. Bringing the Chapel back into meaningful use will reduce the need for further new build development across the College campus, and as such is considered to have a positive impact upon the Green Belt.

Minimal external works are proposed to facilitate the safe and inclusive use of the building and enhance the setting of the building.

Given the minimal external works proposed under this development and the existing land allocation (existing developed site within the Green Belt) it is considered that the re-use of the existing building, plus other associated works could be considered as appropriate development under policy D5.

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.2 PLANNING HISTORY

The following previous Planning / LBC Applications are associated with the building:

24/00169/LBC

Listed Building Consent for Investigative works to facilitate repair works removal of damaged building fabric & removal of asbestos

Status: Ongoing

06/D47671

Alterations And Extension To Listed Building Including 2 New Prefabricated Units, Link Porch Extension And New Steps And Access Ramp

Status: Approved

05/D46074

Internal Alterations To Listed Building

Status: Approved



3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.3 PRE-APPLICATION FEEDBACK

3.2.1 LPA FEEDBACK

A meeting was held on site on 23 January 2024 with the Planning and Conservation Officers from Rochdale LPA. Feedback received can be summarised as follows:

- Enabling Works - It was advised that an application is made asap to cover the investigative works and asbestos removal works required to the Chapel.
- The use of pods would be the preferred method of forming new accommodation within the Chapel, subject to design. This is considered less harmful to the original building compared to full height partitions.
- Existing historic features should be retained where possible including the raised altar and side chapel altar and canopy
- Re-use of the existing vestment cupboards should be investigated
- Fabric repairs would be welcomed
- Removal of inappropriate pointing should be considered

A Pre-Application submission was made to Rochdale Local Planning Authority on 08 February 2024. Formal Pre-Application response is still awaited but informal feedback has been received. This can be summarised as follows:

Conservation:

- The principle of using the building as a learning centre is supported
- The insertion of pods would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. To minimise the level of harm the pods should be designed to be lightweight and fully reversible.
- The proposed subdivision of the space will need to be justified and it will need to be shown why other less intrusive uses of the space have been ruled out.
- The proposed wooden structure within the Sanctuary would also result in some less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset. The indicative structure in this space appears relatively heavy and would undermine the simplicity of the Sanctuary and altar. Any structure in this space would need to be robustly justified. If accepted, it should be as lightweight, minimal and reversible as possible.
- The altar should be reinstated as part of the proposals.
- The enclosure of the small chapel would also result in less than substantial harm. The features associated with this chapel should be retained and restored as part of the works. Any new structure would need to be lightweight, so that the legibility of this space is retained as far as possible.
- The proposal indicates that toilet facilities would be installed in the Sacristy. This space includes original dark wood fixtures and fittings and is identified within the heritage statement as being of medium significance. The subdivision of the space and the loss of the original fixtures would result in harm to the significance of the space. The use of this space for toilets needs to be justified and wherever possible original fixtures and fittings should be retained. Where proposed to be lost, existing timber joinery and fittings should be reused elsewhere in the building.

- The raising of the floor level would also result in some harm to the significance of the building. The extent of this harm will depend on the overall height increase and the manner in which the floor is raised. The raised level of the Sanctuary and its central position mark it as the most important space within the building. If the floor level are raised, it is important that the primacy of this space remains. The reasons for the raised floor levels will need to be thoroughly set out. This should include details of the alternatives considered and why they were discounted.
- The proposed works to repair the building are welcomed and would constitute a heritage benefit. As part of any application, a full schedule of repairs and finishes should be submitted.
- Where works are proposed that would result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset, these would need to be thoroughly justified as part of the submission. Opportunities should also be taken to mitigate the harm as far as possible and heritage benefits, such as repair and restoration works should be included as part of the proposal.
- Given that the overall level of harm is likely to be less than substantial, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 208, this harm would need to be weighed against the public benefits stemming from the proposal.

Ecology:

Ecological Assessment Requirements

"As you know, I am already aware that an ecological report has been produced. Potential ecological issues are likely restricted to bats and nesting birds with a historic record of a bat roost for the building. Dusk surveys should be provided as part of any application".

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

"With regards biodiversity net gain, whilst 10% BNG is now mandatory for all developments, assuming less than 25sqm of vegetation is being removed the development would be exempt. If the application is also only for listed building consent, my understating would also be that the development would not be subject to biodiversity net gain, though I recommend this is verified as there is no direct reference to listed building consent in the guidance."

Environmental Health:

"This section would be supportive of the proposals".

Highways:

"Department considers this building to be educational use already and part of the overall college campus. We do not expect any changes to vehicular traffic as a result of these proposals"

3.2.2 HISTORIC ENGLAND FEEDBACK

A pre-Application submission was made to Historic England in February 2024 and written feedback was received on 26 March 2024. This is summarised as follows:

- The Chapel has high evidential and historic value as a liturgically inspired Catholic chapel by Frederick Gibberd with well preserved interior features
- This significance is further enhanced by the prominent location on top of the hill and it's relationship with Hopwood Hall
- Strong communal value as a former place of worship
- Ethos of the design is based around inclusion and communal activity and this is reflected in the large open plan space
- Proposals to repair the building fabric are welcomed
- Enclosed classroom pods change the nature of the internal space, rendering the original volume illegible and harming its significance
- View from entrance towards the Sanctuary is key
- New canopy structure does not cause a high level of harm
- Encourage removal of classroom pods to either side of the main entrance to give a greater impression of the volume of the space and to prevent the sanctuary from becoming enclosed
- High quality materials and finishes are to be used
- New design to draw on the geometric shapes of the existing building
- Further pre-application discussions are welcomed

3.2.3 TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY FEEDBACK

An email containing the Pre-Application proposals was sent to the Twentieth Century Society on 14 March 2024. We are currently awaiting feedback.

3.4.2 MODERNIST SOCIETY MANCHESTER FEEDBACK

We met with the Modernist Society (Manchester Chapter) at the Chapel on 19 March 2024.

Their feedback can be summarised as follows:

- The open volume and glazed lantern are key features of the interior
- Ideally it would be preferable to retain the open volume uninterrupted
- The use of pods to create the new accommodation is a logical approach but these should be carefully designed to minimise harm
- The use of glazing where possible to allow the pods to be as lightweight and visually intrusive as possible would be welcomed
- The building fabric is in a poor condition and works to repair and maintain the building are clearly a priority

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 PREVIOUS PROPOSALS

4.1.1 ALTERNATIVE USES

The preference from a heritage perspective would be to retain the Chapel as a single open volume. However, retaining the Chapel as a single space would require significant thermal and acoustic upgrading of the building envelope which would be intrusive to the historic fabric, and would also risk potential condensation / thermal bridging owing to the exposed nature of the existing fabric. Thermal upgrades would also result in the covering over of originally exposed finishes which would be detrimental to the aesthetic value associated with the original Chapel design.

The College have previously considered a variety of other uses for the building which would allow the open volume to be retained but for various reasons these uses have been discounted. These include:

Gym and Leisure Facility

The plan opposite demonstrates how the building could be used as a gym and leisure facility. This proposal was not progressed owing to a lack of funding and the cost and complexity of the upgrading works that would be required to the existing building fabric in order to make the project viable.

Boxing Gym

The building was used for a period as a boxing gym. However, the scale of the building and the associated repair, maintenance and running costs made the project financially unviable compared to the demand for the space.

Examination Hall

The College previously used the Chapel as an examination hall, however it was considered unsuitable owing to the acoustics and thermal properties of the existing fabric. The building was too cold to be used for a prolonged period and the acoustics were distracting to those taking the examinations. This use would require significant upgrades to the existing fabric and the resulting building would only be in use periodically by the College.

Learning Resource Centre

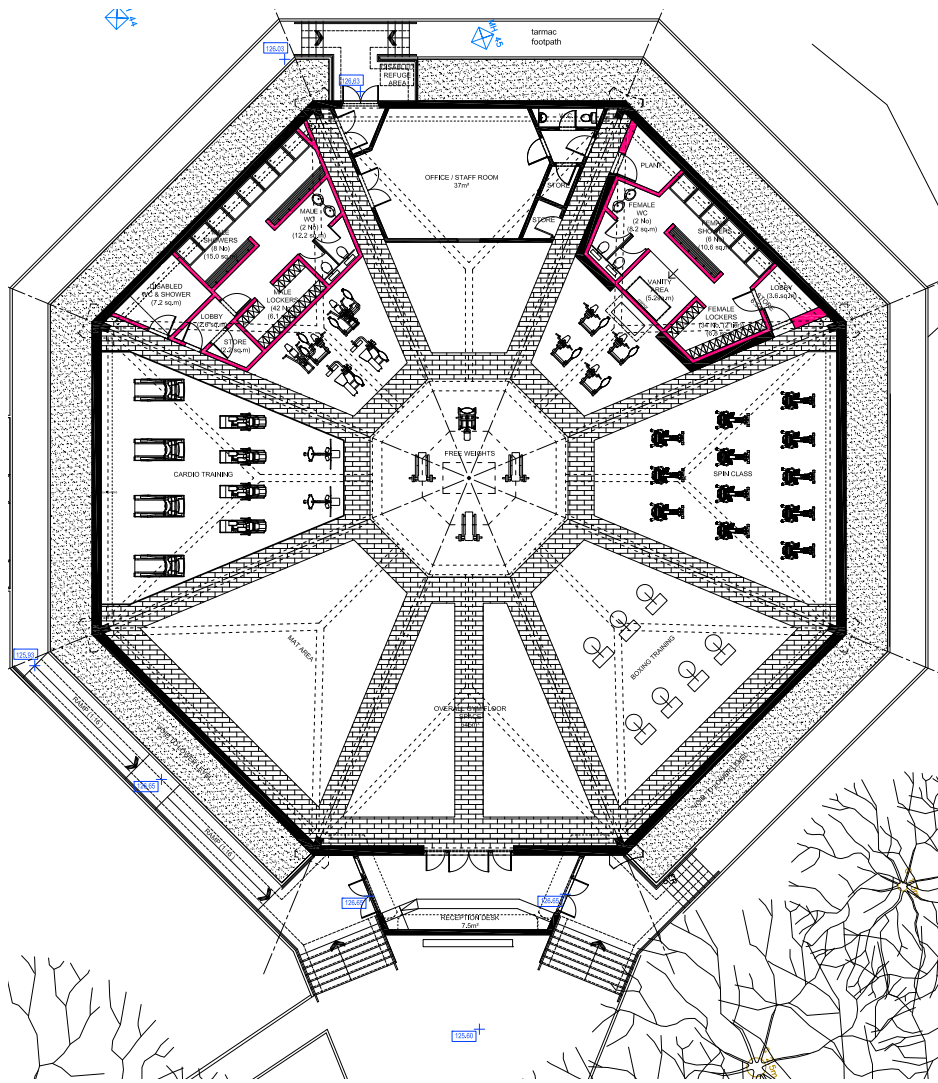
The open plan nature of the building would lend itself to use as a Learning Resource Centre (LRC) but this would require substantial thermal and acoustic upgrades to the existing fabric in order to create a comfortable internal environment. The accessibility constraints owing to the location of the Chapel on a hill above the College campus would also not lend itself well to the creation of an LRC, since this should be positioned at the heart of the campus and easily accessible to all.

Cafeteria

For the building to become used as a cafeteria, although the main volume could be retained as an open plan space, significant alterations would need to be made in order to form new Kitchens and WC facilities. It is considered that this would have a detrimental impact upon the historic fabric and such installations would not be easily reversible. The accessibility constraints of the Chapel would not lend itself well to the creation of a Cafe, since this should be positioned at the heart of the campus and easily accessible to all.

Sports Hall

The College campus has a substantial sports complex. The height of the Chapel at eaves level and the position of the central raised altar and side chapel altar would preclude it's use as an additional sports hall. This use would also involve the installation of a new sports floor. For these reasons the Chapel is not considered as suitable for use as a Sports Hall.



Previous proposal for more open plan use

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

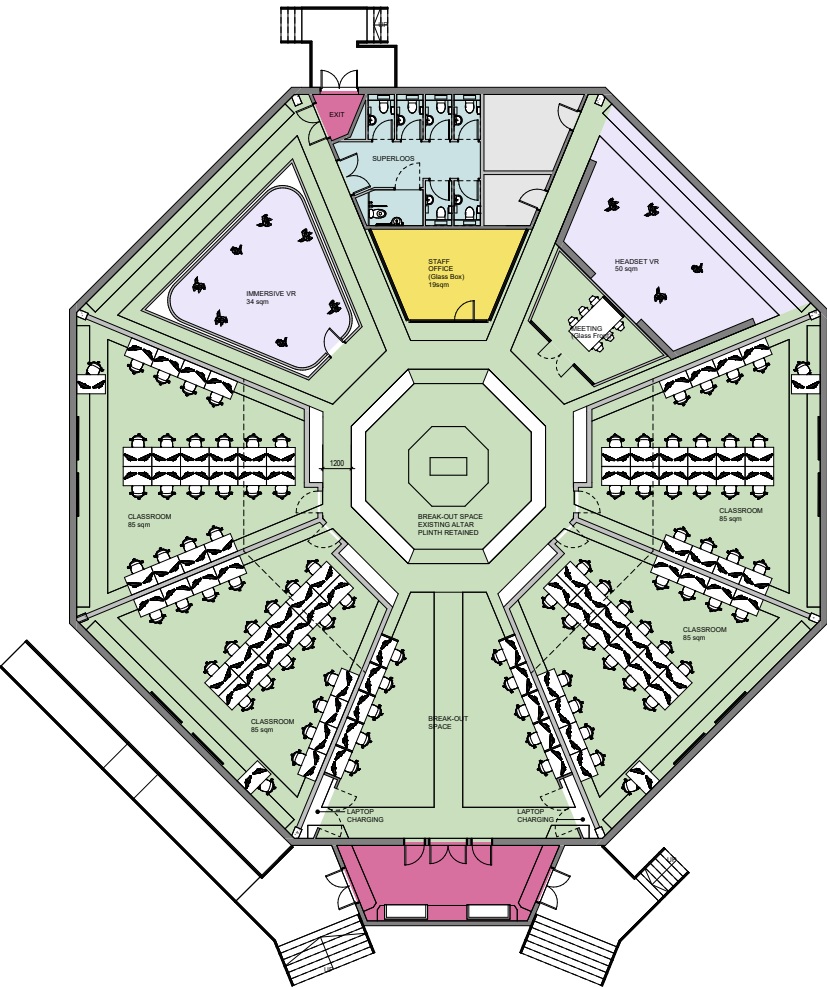
4.1 PREVIOUS PROPOSALS

4.1.2 SUB-DIVISION OF CHAPEL

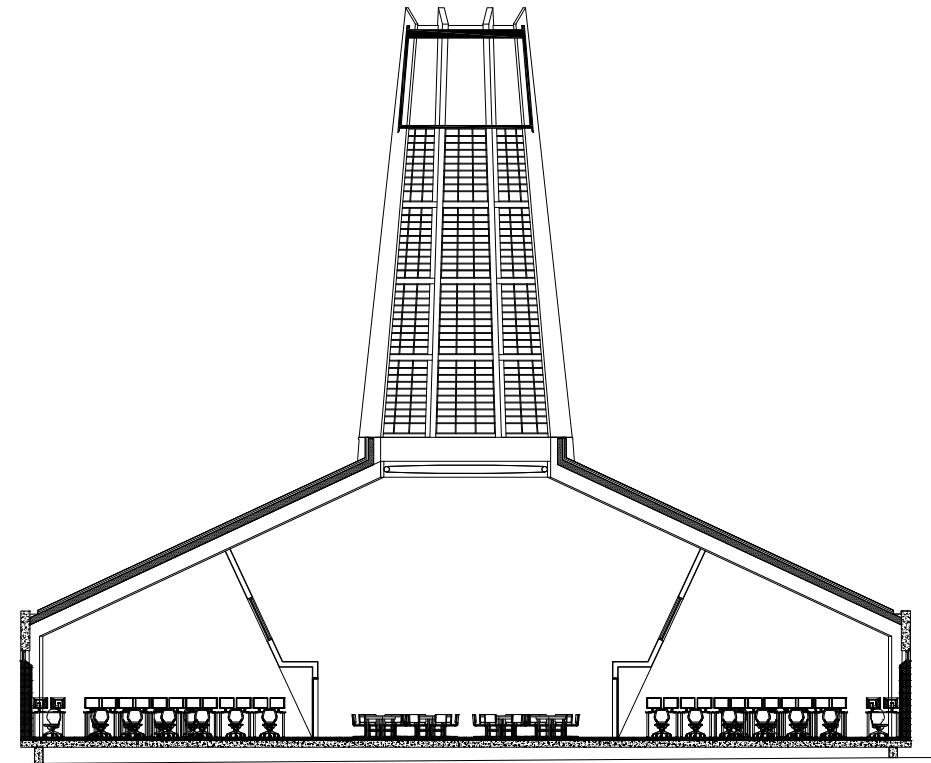
The proposed use as the T-Level Engineering and VR hub requires the cellularisation of the space in order to create the individual teaching and staff spaces required by the College. Retaining the Chapel as a single volume would not meet the College's current and future curriculum needs.

Proposals have been considered which include the creation of new lightweight stud partitions taken up full height to soffit level. This option would require thermal upgrades to historic fabric in order to reduce heat loss through the existing walls, floors and roof. Such a proposal would also have obscured views towards the soffit and would be detrimental to the legibility of the original volume.

This option was discounted following initial conversations with the Conservation Officer at Rochdale LPA since it was felt to be too detrimental to the open plan character of the interior of the Chapel.



Previous proposal using full height partition walls



Previous proposal using full height partition walls

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

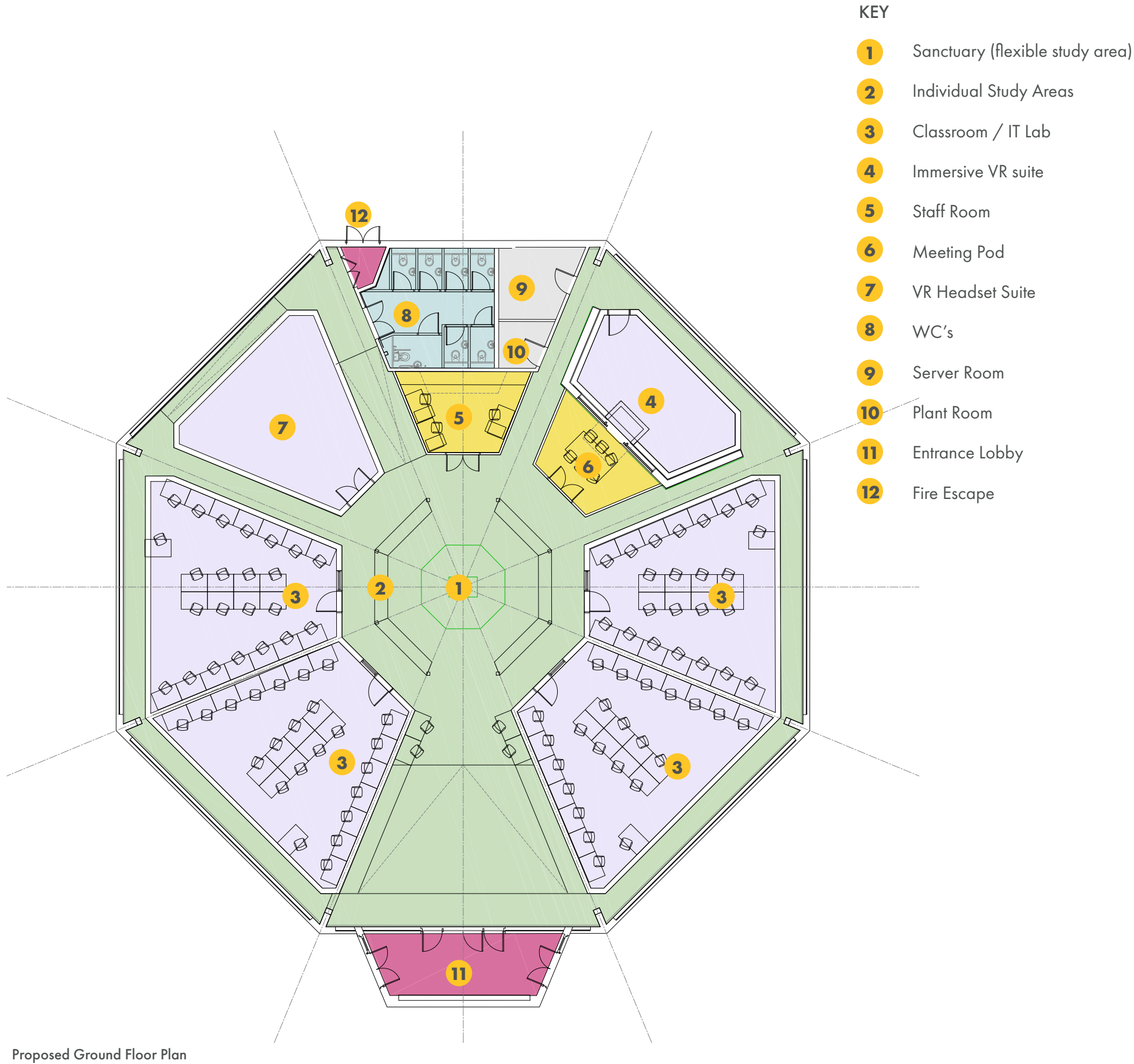
4.1 PREVIOUS PROPOSALS

4.1.3 PRE-APPLICATION PROPOSALS

The plan opposite illustrate the proposals submitted as part of the Pre-Application.

It is proposed to create a series of enclosed teaching spaces in order to support the Engineering and Manufacturing T-Levels curriculum. The ground floor is shown as sub-divided to create four new Classrooms and IT Labs, an Immersive VR Suite, a VR Headset Room, Staff Room, Meeting Room and associated WC and plant space.

The proposals have since been developed in response to the Pre-Application feedback. This is set out in the following pages.



4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.2 DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

The proposed works will follow a strategy of minimal intervention to the existing building, making it suitable for use as a contemporary learning environment whilst retaining and repairing historic fabric and original features.

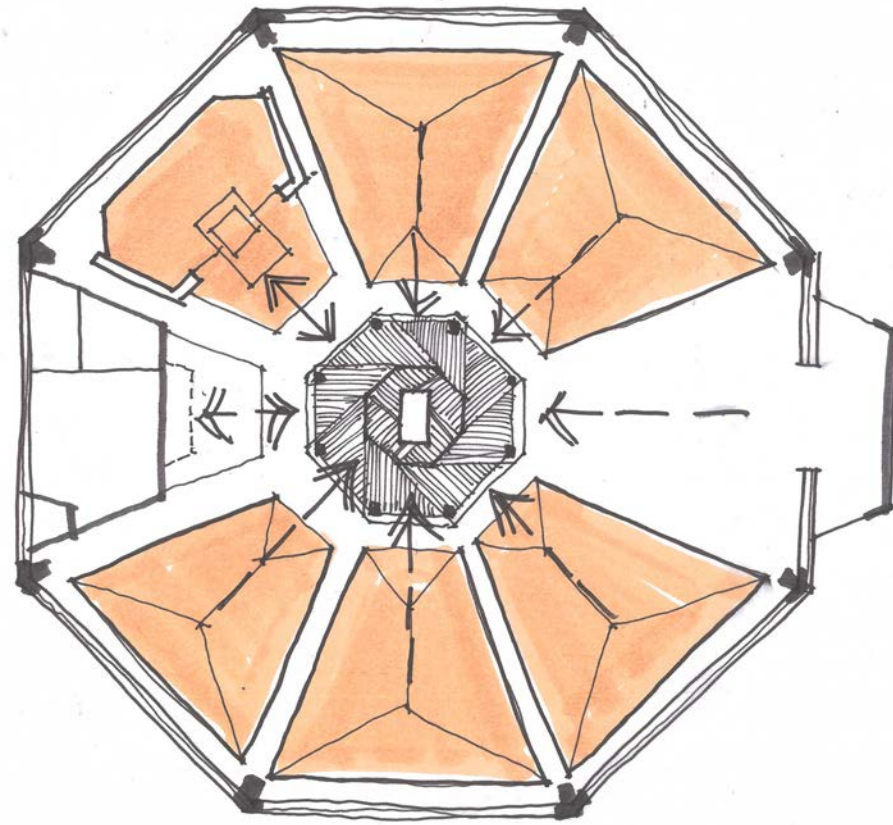
The proposals aim to minimise impact on and contact with the historic fabric. The new spaces will be created as a series of pods which will be thermally insulated and serviced separately to provide a comfortable internal environment, removing the need for insulation and heating to the entire building. This will allow the historic fabric to remain unaltered as far as possible.

The new pods are designed as contemporary insertions to allow a clear distinction between original and new elements, allowing the roof form and glazed lantern to remain as the dominant visual features and ensuring that a sense of the full height and volume of the Chapel remains legible. The pods will be designed to be lightweight and reversible to help mitigate the impact upon the historic space.

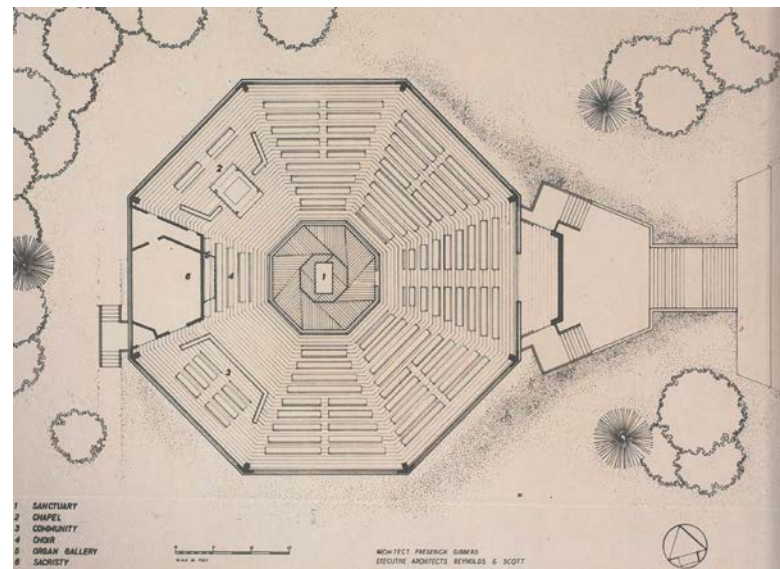
The proposed plan will work with the symmetry of the existing octagonal plan form, reflecting the geometry of the roof structure above.

The central Sanctuary and raised Altar will be retained as the focal point within the space, and this area will be used as a new independent learning zone. A new lightweight timber structure is proposed to the Sanctuary with localised task lighting and heating to be incorporated into this open space. The octagonal form of the raised altar platform and the geometry of the concrete frame will be used to inform the design of this new installation.

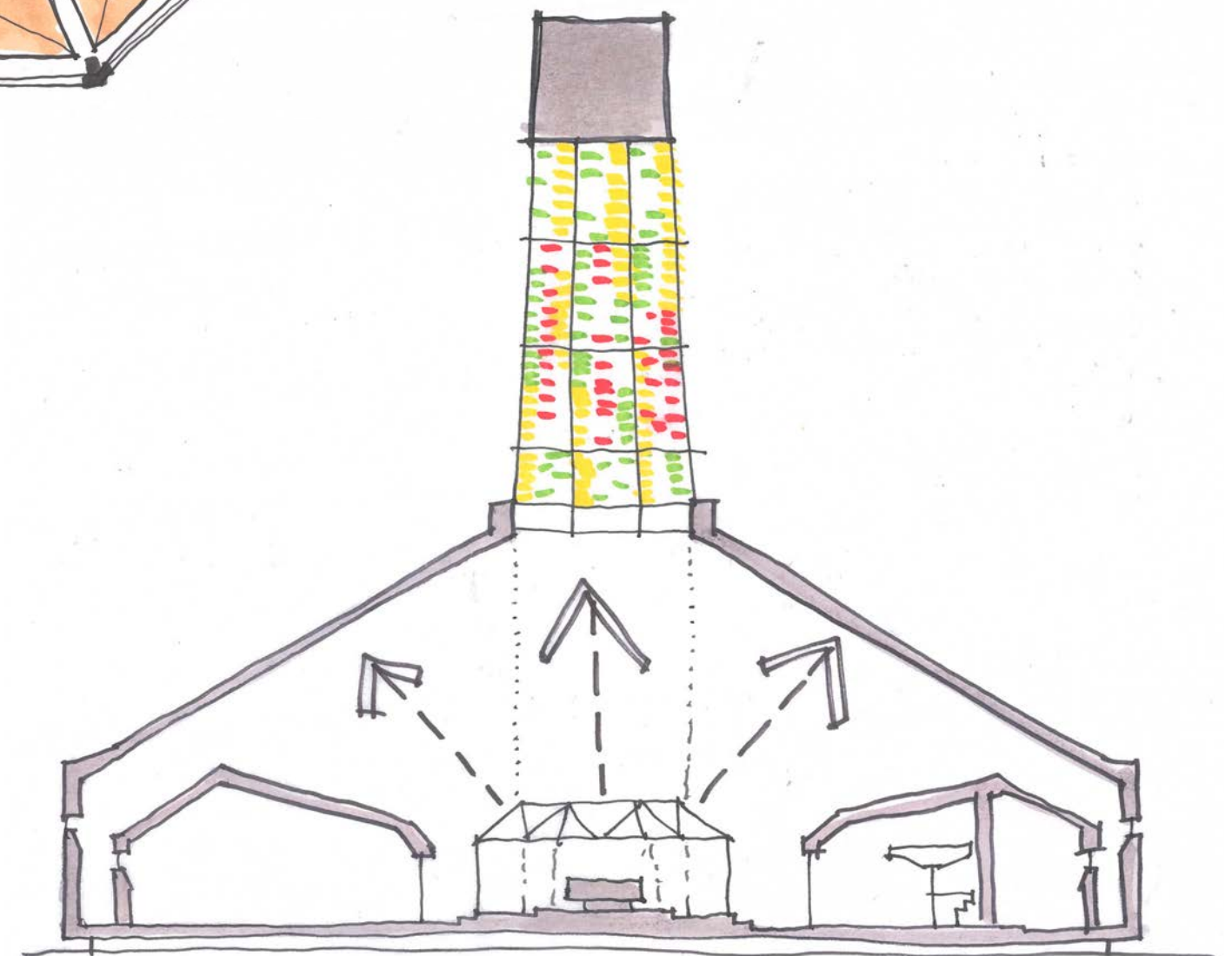
A carefully designed servicing strategy will incorporate new low energy systems in a sensitive manner. Services will be either concealed within new construction or designed as surface mounted wherever possible to minimise disruption to the historic fabric.



CONCEPT DIAGRAM - LAYOUT



Hopwood Hall Chapel, plan, 1963
(Source: 'Twentieth Century Architects: Frederick Gibberd' by Christine Hui Lan Manley. Published by Historic England, 2017)



CONCEPT DIAGRAM - SECTION

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.3 POD DESIGN

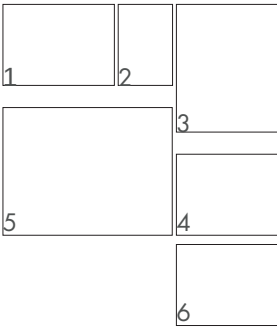
A condition of the DfE grant funding to bring the building back into use is to provide appropriate teaching and learning spaces.

The proposed use as the T-Level Engineering and VR hub requires the creation of individual teaching and staff spaces. An open plan learning environment would not meet the College requirements for a number of reasons:

- The reverberation across the Chapel and the lack of acoustic separation would not achieve current standards for a learning environment. Acoustic panels would help to absorb some sound but would be unsightly within the main volume of the Chapel and would not prevent sound transfer between spaces
- Heat loss through the building fabric would make the space uncomfortable for learning and would require thermal upgrading works to the historic fabric
- An open plan approach would create significant health and safety risk to learners utilising VR equipment
- Individual classroom spaces allow segregation of IT assets which can be controlled more effectively by the staff member supervising a smaller space. An open plan approach would serve to mitigate the logical breaking down of this environment which ensures adequate safeguarding and technical control.
- Open plan environment would result in higher energy use. Individual classroom spaces allow the zoning of controls to facilitate automated control of equipment when not in use in a particular space, reducing energy consumption.

The installation of new pods is considered the least invasive method of converting the building for use as a learning centre:

- The new pods can be thermally insulated and serviced separately to provide a comfortable internal environment without the need for insulation and heating to the entire building fabric
- Thermal upgrades would also result in the covering up of originally exposed finishes which we consider to be more detrimental to the aesthetic value associated with the original Chapel design. The introduction of independent pod structures will impact upon the aesthetic value of the original design but will be reversible and will allow more of the historic fabric to remain unaltered.
- Pods can be clearly visually separated from the historic fabric, maintaining views across the space and allowing legibility of open plan volume to be maintained
- Lightweight self-contained pods minimise fixing into historic fabric
- Reversible pods will allow future re-instatement of the open plan volume



1. St. Laurence Church Glass Pod
2. St. George's Church Manchester Timber Pods
3. St. Mary's Church Manchester Timber Pods
4. Church in Bowden, Pods Inserted for residential use.
5. Barn Conversion with circular sleeping pods inserted.
6. St Grwsts Church Timber Pod

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.3 POD DESIGN

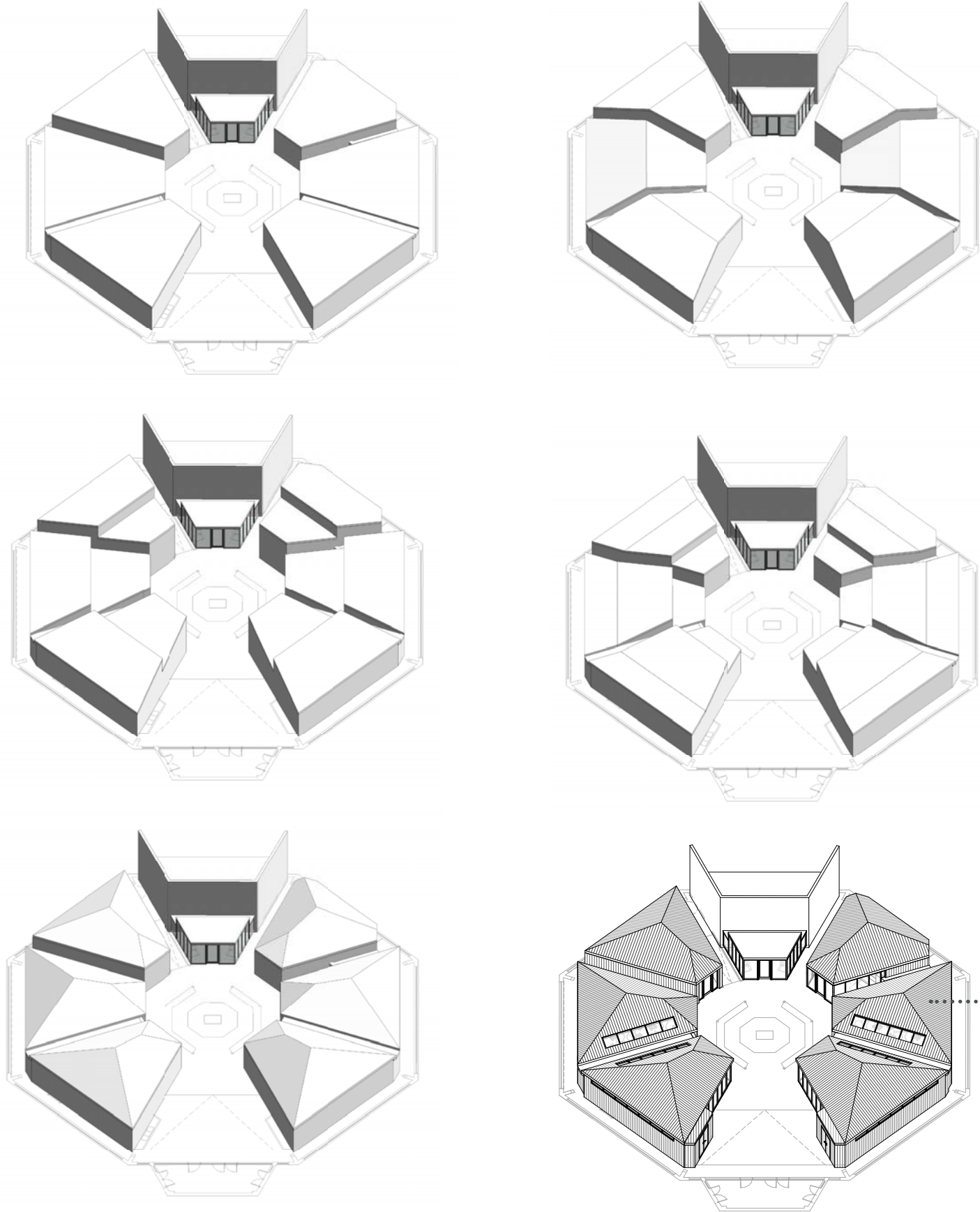
The pods have been carefully crafted and the following measures have been adopted to help reduce the impact upon the interior of the Chapel and helping to mitigate any harm to the significance of the listed building:

FORM AND MASSING

- The proposed pods have been designed in direct **response to the existing geometry** of the Chapel, with **roof forms carefully articulated** to reflect the roof geometry above. This has helped to reduce the massing of the pods and allows views towards the existing fabric to be retained as much as possible
- The **eaves levels** have been kept as low as possible to minimise visual impact and maximise views towards historic fabric
- The **scale of the pods** has been reduced as far as possible in plan to reduce visual impact, whilst still allowing for the minimum classroom sizes required by the College
- The pods are designed to be **clearly differentiated from the rest of the Chapel** through their materiality, but have a direct relationship with the space through their layout and geometry

LAYOUT

- Pods have been carefully positioned to align with the roof structure above
- Set back from the existing walls and roof to allow a **clear understanding of the original volume and historic fabric**
- The pods closest to the entrance have been reduced in plan in order that these are set further back from the entrance, allowing a greater impression of the **volume of the original space**



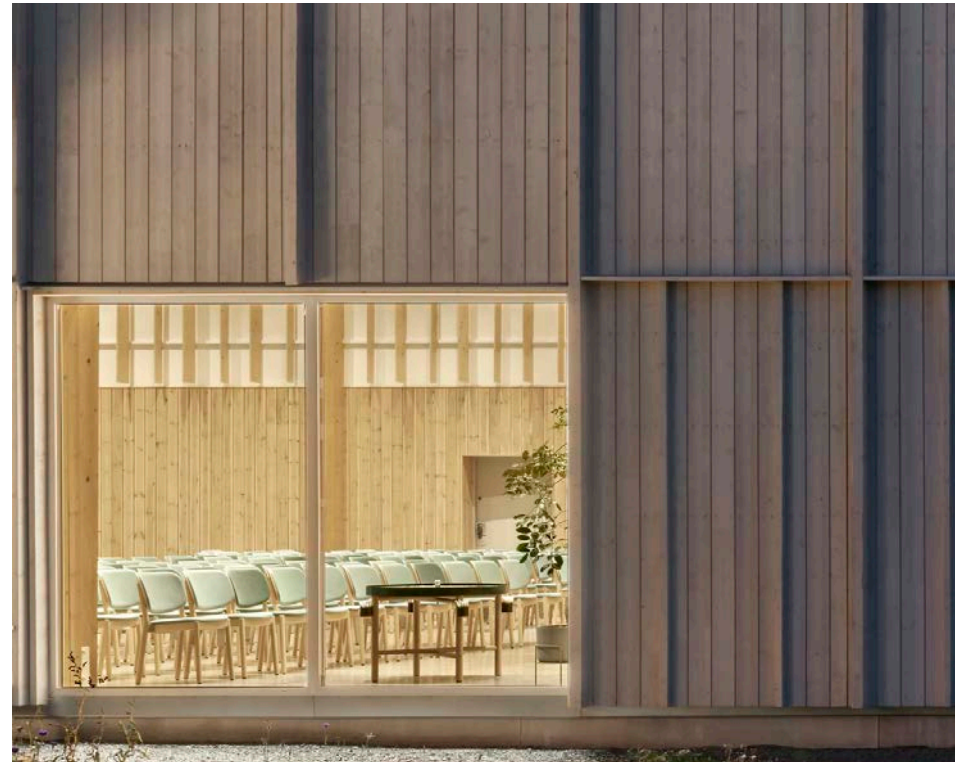
DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATING HOW THE FORM AND MASSING OF THE PODS HAS DEVELOPED

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.3 POD DESIGN

MATERIALITY

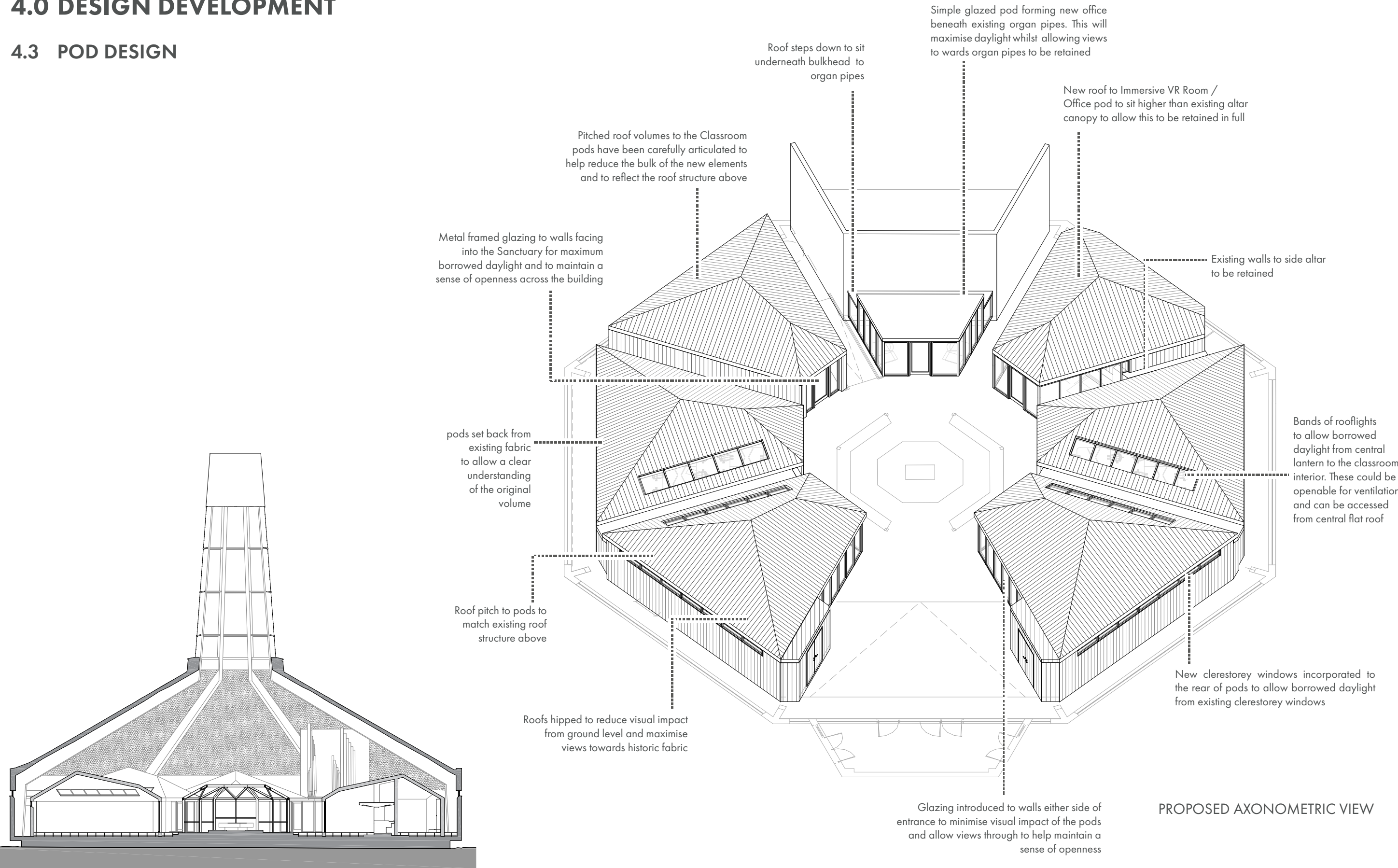
- The pods are to be constructed using SIPS panels. They are designed to be **lightweight and fully reversible** in order that the original volume of the Chapel can be re-instated in tact in the future. The pod walls can be constructed from the existing floor slab, utilising minimal fixings and avoiding the need for new foundations which would be invasive to the historic fabric.
- A **high quality timber cladding** is proposed to the pods. This will be carefully crafted and detailed to provide visual interest within the space but without detracting from the character of the historic space
- Careful consideration has been given to the extent of glazing used. Glazing has been incorporated where feasible to help **open up views towards the existing fabric** as much as possible. However, this has been balanced with the need for acoustic and thermal separation and also visual separation to help prevent distraction.
- The walls to the pods either side of the main entrance are shown as largely glazed to help **reduce the sense of enclosure and open up views** across the space
- The walls to the pods which face into the Sanctuary area have been shown as largely glazed to allow views through, **reducing the sense of enclosure to the Sanctuary area**



Examples of timber cladding and timber framed glazing

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.3 POD DESIGN

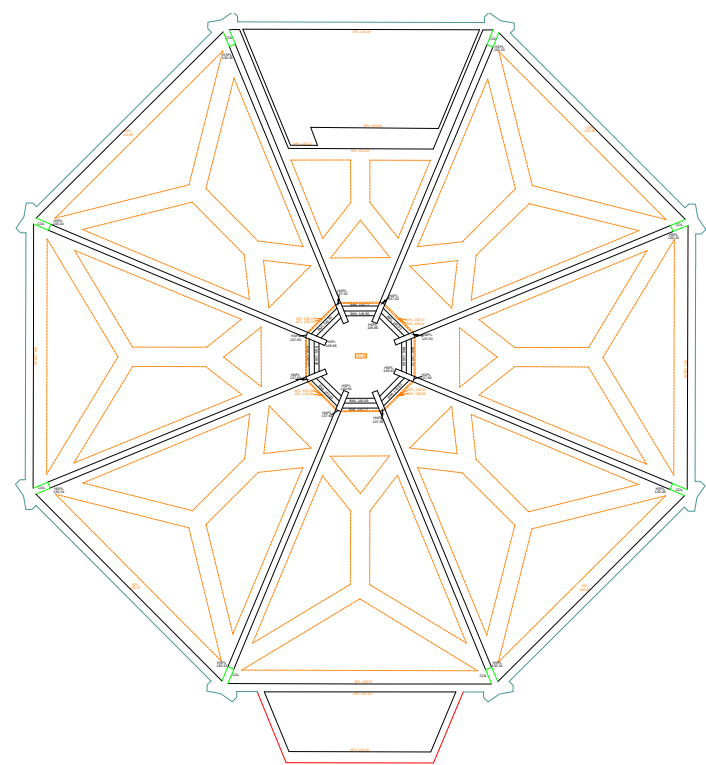


PROPOSED SECTION VIEW

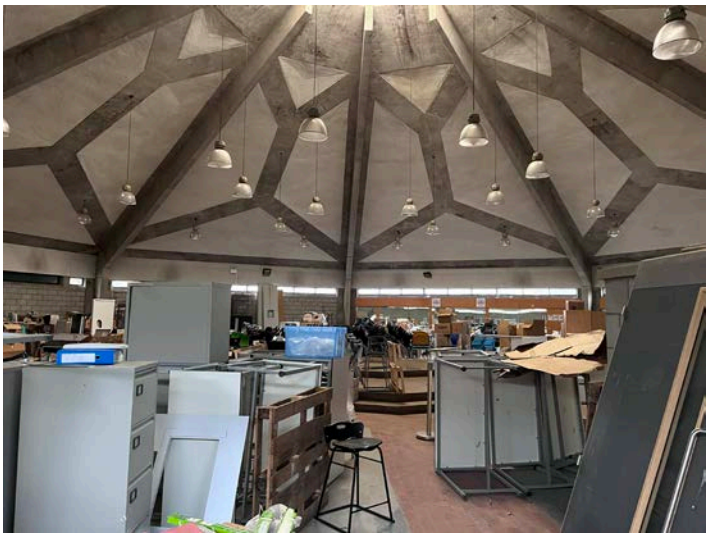
PROPOSED AXONOMETRIC VIEW

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

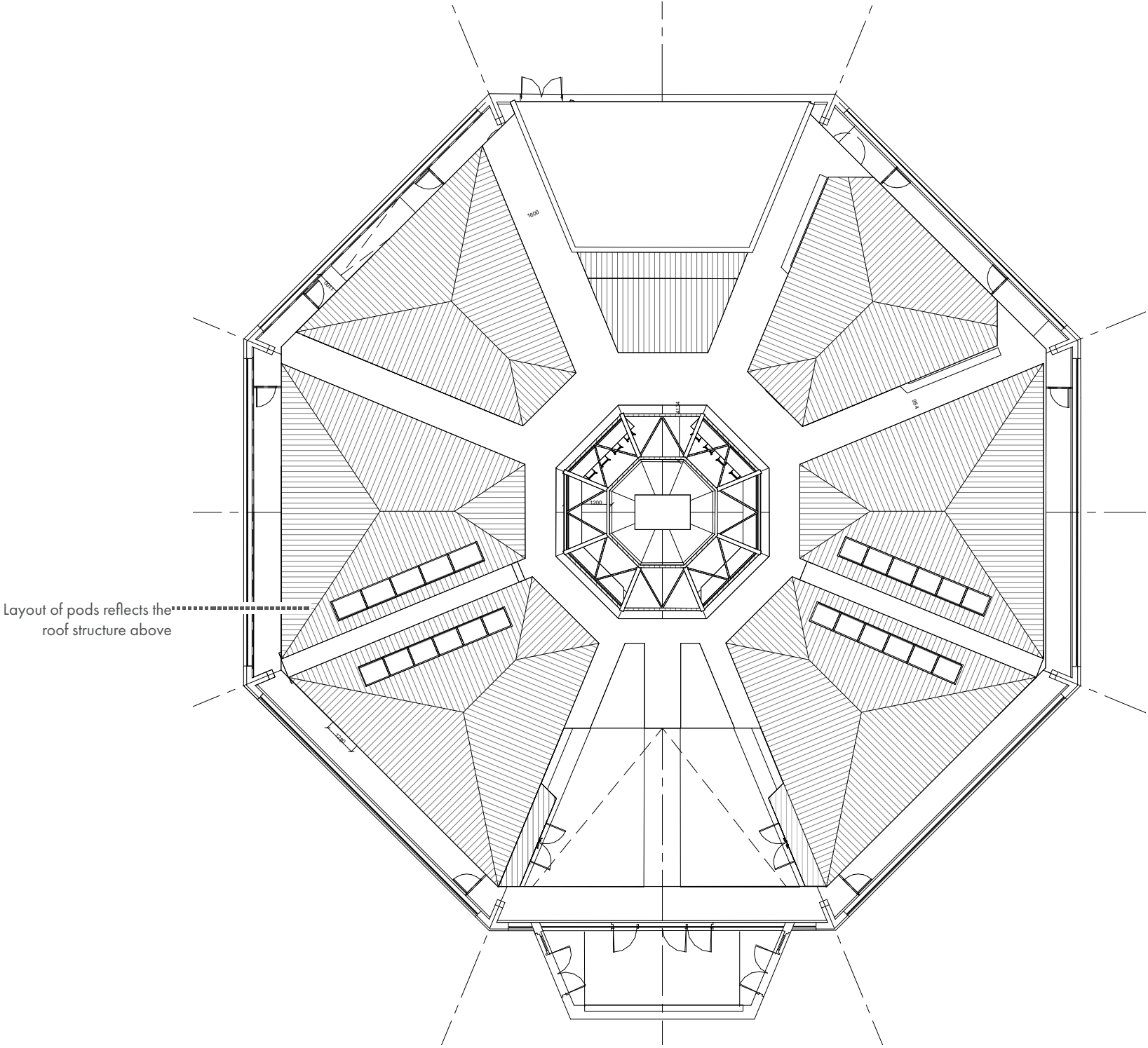
4.3 POD DESIGN



EXISTING REFLECTED CEILING PLAN



View towards existing roof structure



Layout of pods reflects the
roof structure above

PROPOSED PODS ROOF PLAN
The roof form of the pods has been developed in response to the
geometry of the existing roof structure

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

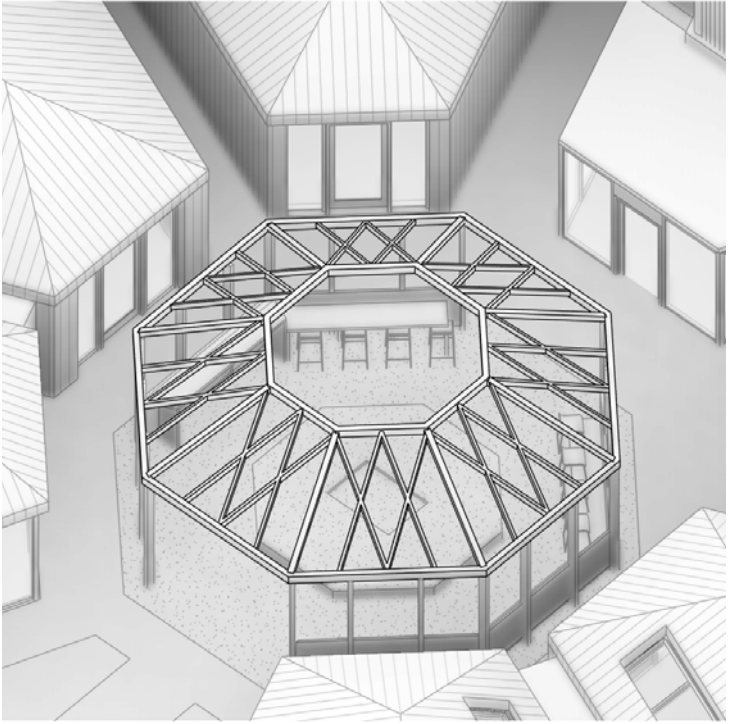
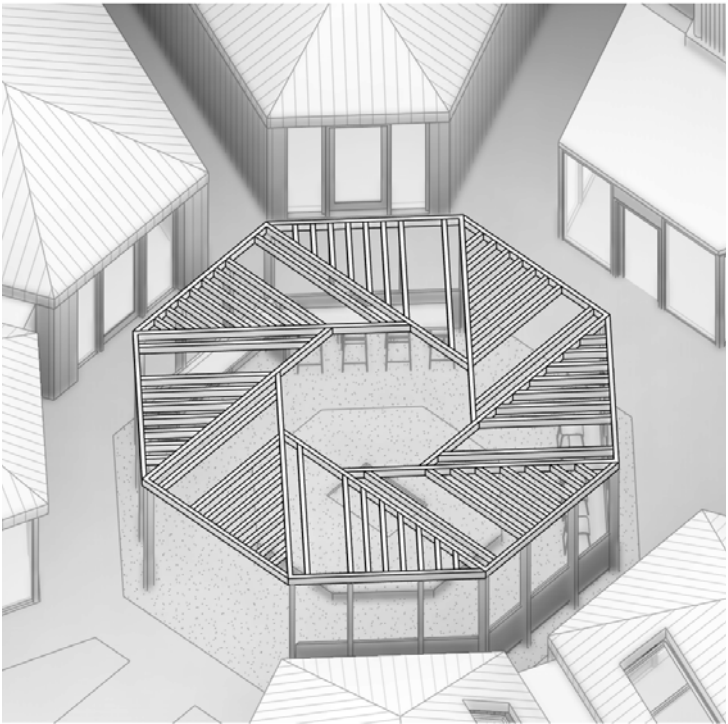
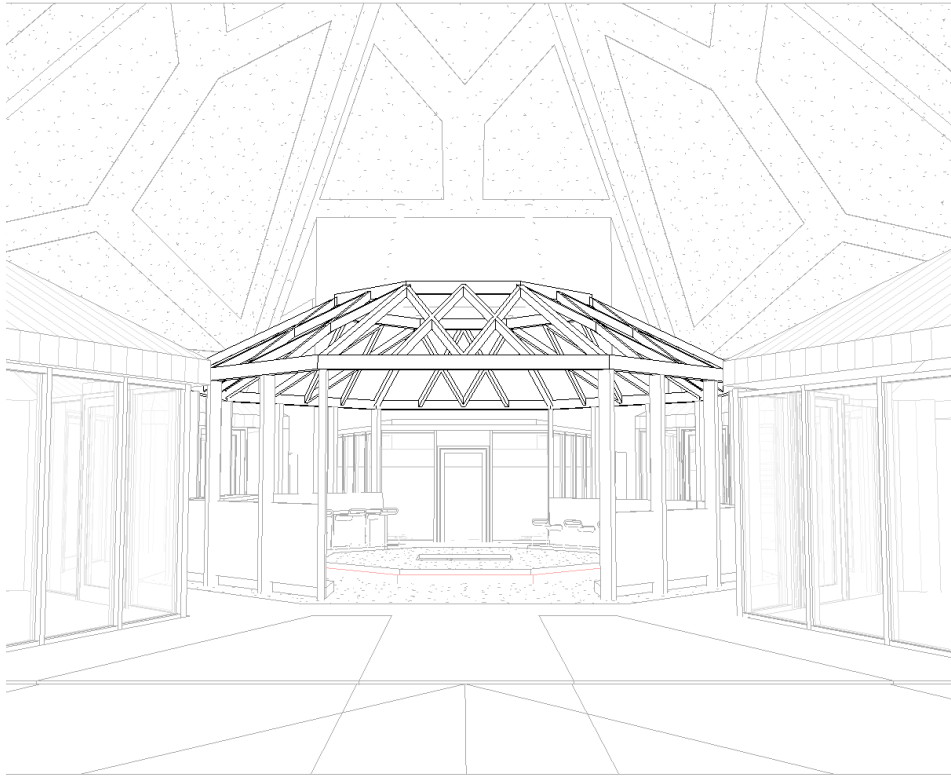
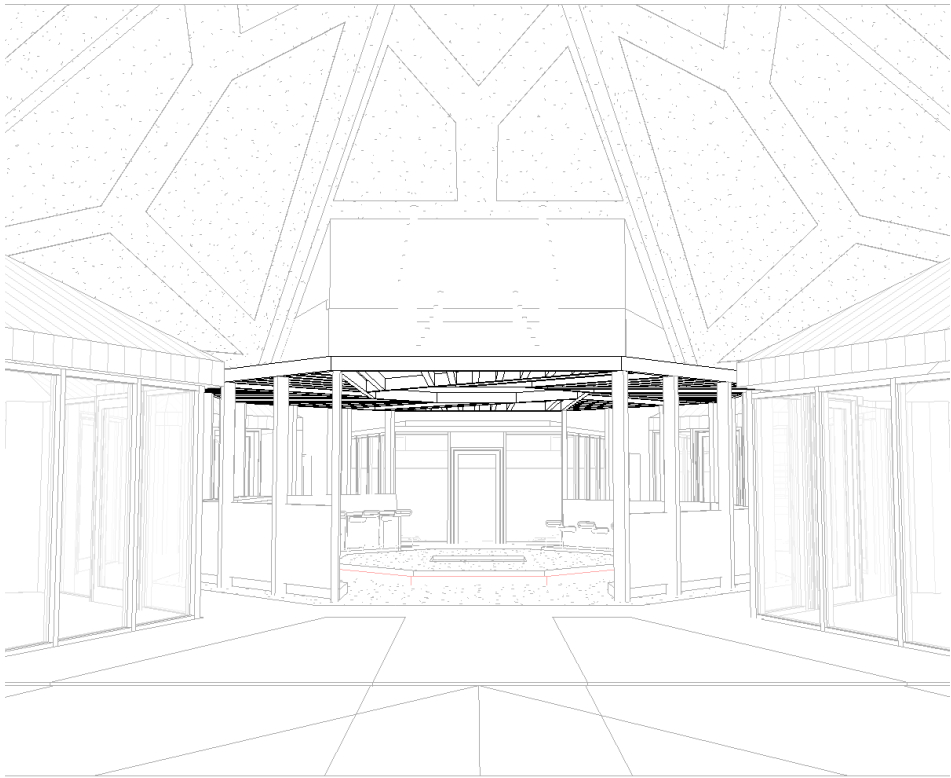
4.5 SANCTUARY AREA

It is proposed that the Classrooms, VR Rooms and staff spaces will be thermally insulated and separately heated, cooled and ventilated. The circulation areas are to remain uninsulated with a low level of heating in order to minimise works undertaken to the historic fabric. In the centre of the building it is proposed to use the original Sanctuary to create an independent learning area.

A new lightweight and reversible canopy structure is proposed to define the Sanctuary area, incorporating new work benches as well as task lighting and heating in the form of radiant panels. This will help to create a more usable and comfortable area within the larger volume of the Chapel.



Existing Raised Altar Platform



DIAGRAMS SHOWING THE EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN OF THE SANCTUARY AREA

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.4 SANCTUARY AREA

The design of the Sanctuary area has been developed in response to the existing geometry and the following strategy proposed to help reduce the visual impact on the interior of the Chapel:

LAYOUT

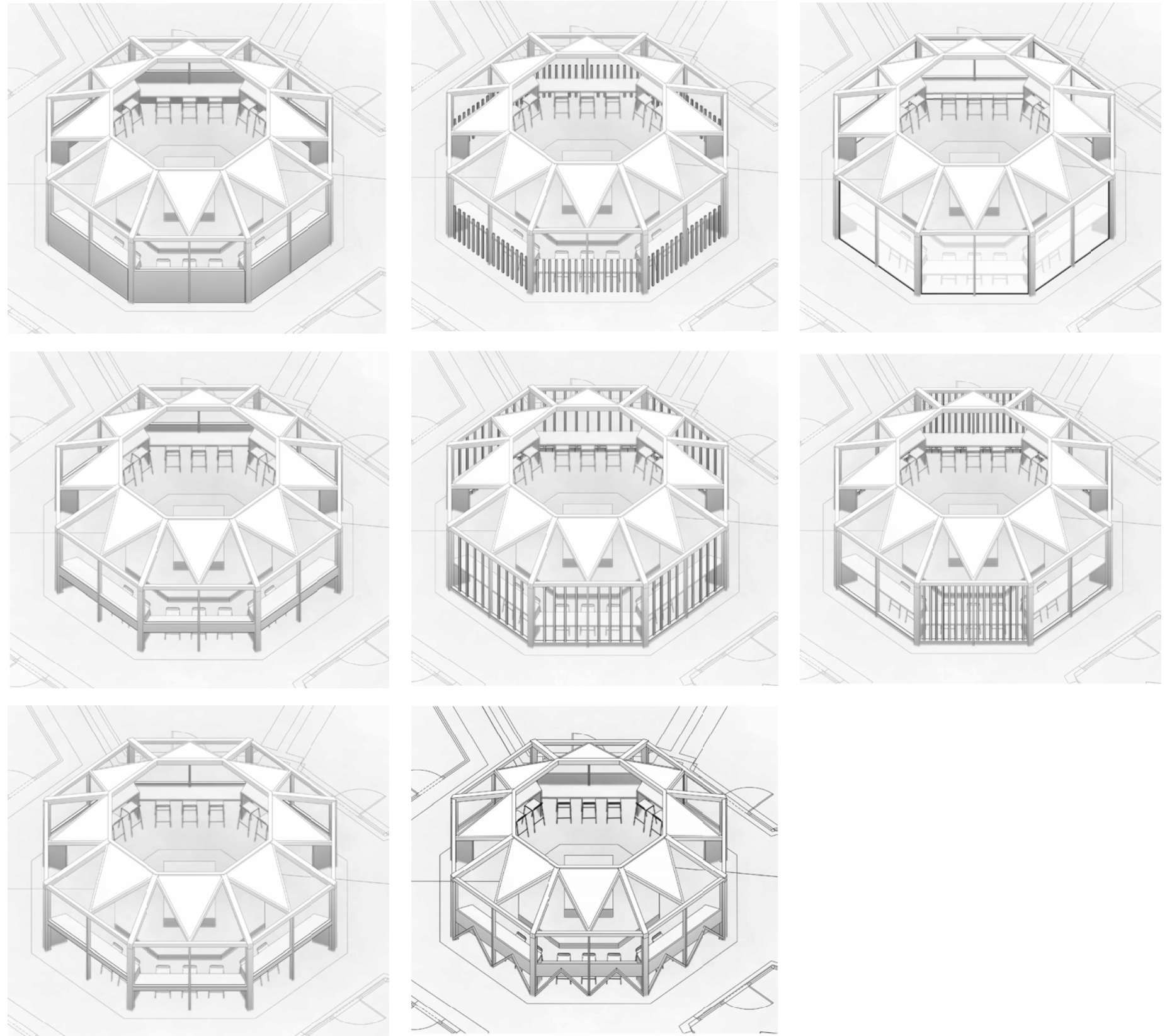
- New structure reflects the extent of the raised altar step beneath to celebrate the importance of this space within the original Chapel
- Work benches positioned symmetrically to the space to retain the symmetry of the existing Chapel

FORM AND MASSING

- The new structure has been designed in response to the roof geometry above, with the central ring beam positioned directly beneath the concrete ring beam above, helping to draw the eye upwards towards the glazed lantern as per the original design intent
- Primary structural members are emphasised in response to the original concrete frame
- Framing members have been designed as minimal as possible and adopted triangular geometry to reflect the existing concrete frame

MATERIALITY

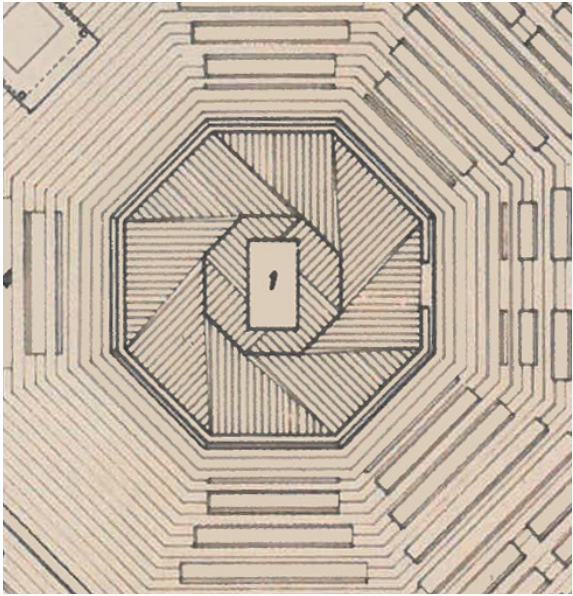
- Lightweight timber structure - natural material to contrast with the concrete structure
- Floor finishes will be hard wearing and will be designed to reflect the radial floor pattern to the raised altar beneath



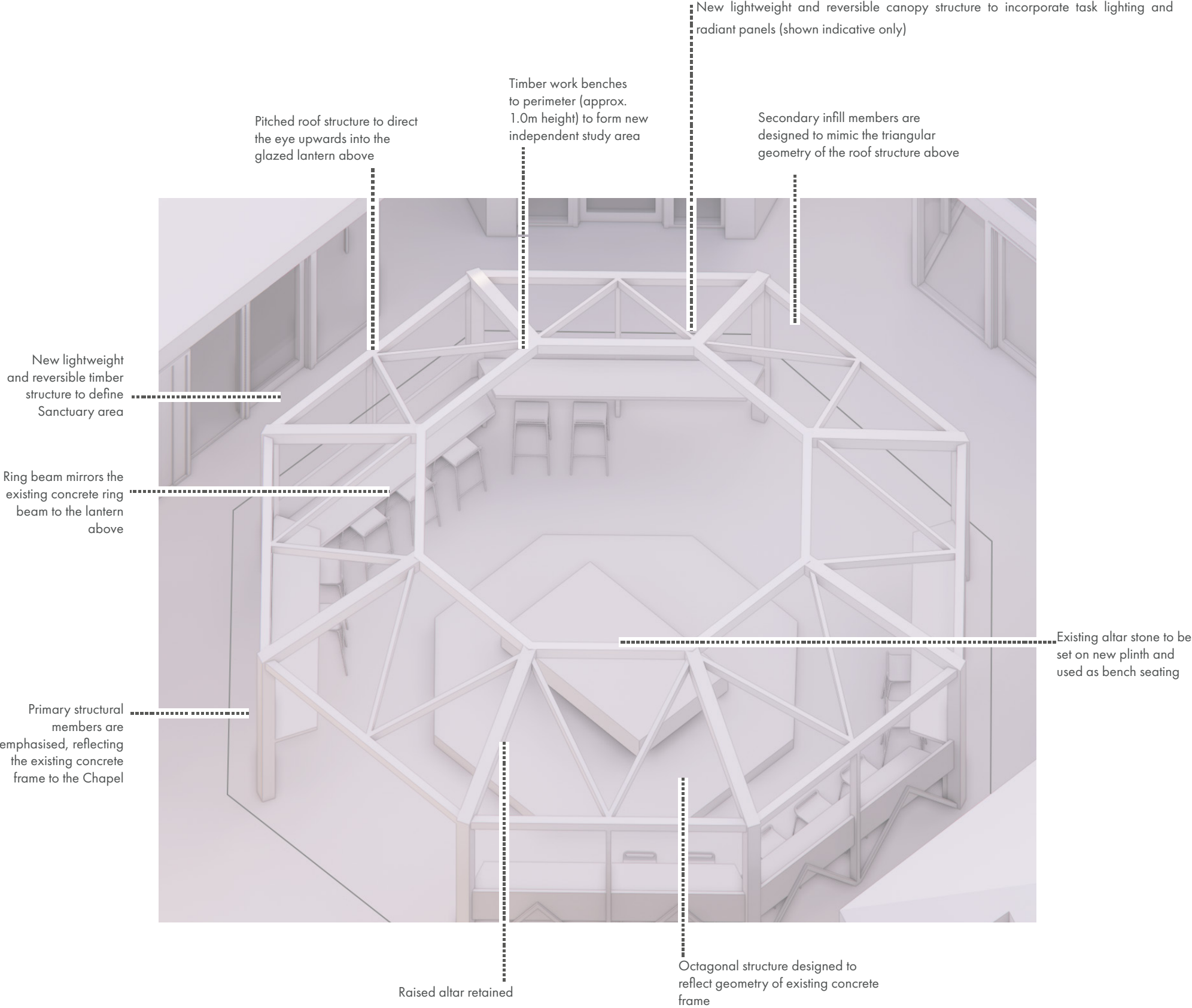
DIAGRAMS SHOWING THE EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN OF THE SANCTUARY AREA

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.4 SANCTUARY AREA



Existing floor tiles retained with radial tile pattern of original altar platform



PROPOSED VIEW OF SANCTUARY AREA

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.5 NEW RAISED FLOOR

It is proposed that a new lightweight and fully reversible raised floor will be incorporated into the Chapel.

The new floor will be raised a total of 280mm above the existing floor in order that this sits level with the outermost step of the existing stepped altar in the centre of the building. This will allow the Sanctuary area to be a fully accessible space for all users. It is proposed that the central raised step and altar stone will be retained in order to help mitigate the impact of the new raised floor by allowing an understanding of the primacy of the central Sanctuary space.

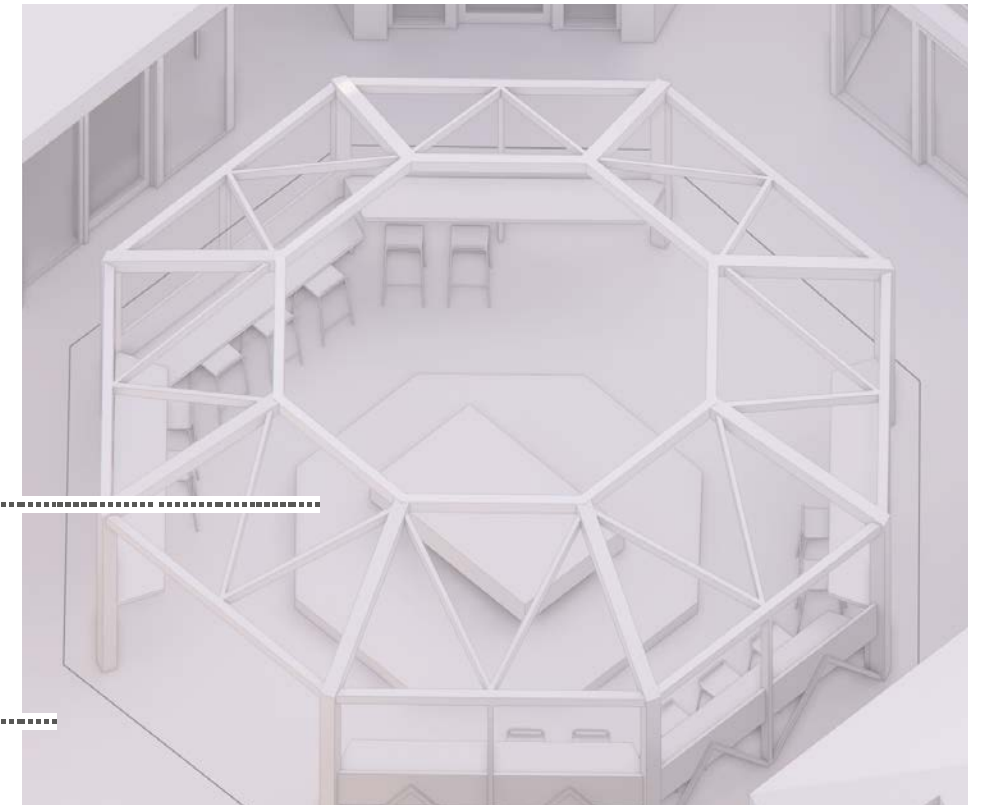
The new floor will be accessed internally via a sloping floor rising up from the main entrance with a maximum gradient of 1 in 21 (avoiding the need for new handrails to minimise visual impact within the space).

The proposed raised floor will have the following benefits:

- Level access will be available throughout in order that the building will be fully inclusive to all users
- The existing raised altar can be retained beneath the floor, in order that this is preserved for the future but without compromising the use of the building as an inclusive learning environment
- Existing floor finishes can be retained and protected beneath the floor in order that these are preserved
- A raised floor provides the opportunity for new thermal insulation to be added at ground level to help reduce heat loss and contribute to a more comfortable internal environment. This is considered to be one of the less invasive means of introducing thermal insulation to the existing building.
- The proposed use of the building will be heavily serviced owing to the nature of the technology required to deliver the ICT and Virtual Reality curriculum. One of the benefits of a raised access floor is that a 150mm void will be created which will allow the new services installation to be accommodated within the floor void. This will help to minimise the visual impact of new services upon the open plan character of the historic space.

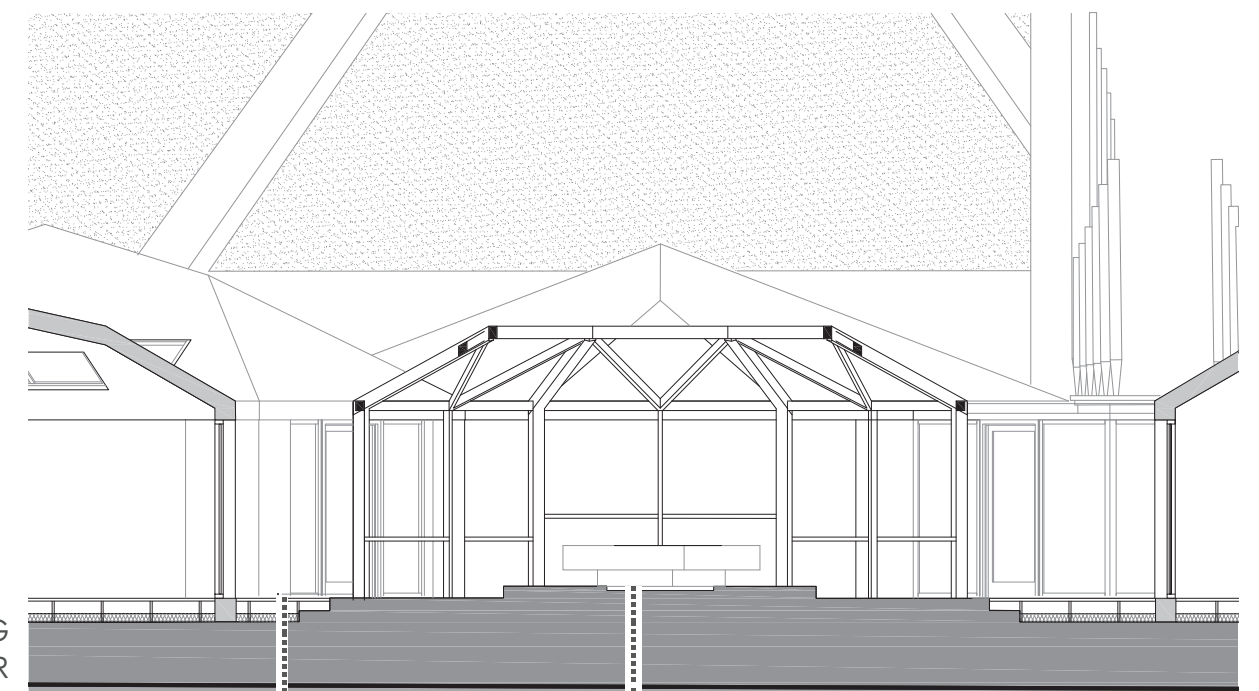
central raised step and altar stone retained to allow understanding of the primacy of the central Sanctuary space

New raised floor will sit at the same level as the existing step to form level access throughout the Sanctuary area



PROPOSED VIEW OF SANCTUARY AREA SHOWING RAISED ALTAR

PROPOSED SECTION SHOWING RAISED ACCESS FLOOR



New raised floor will sit at the same level as the existing step to form level access throughout the Sanctuary area

The central raised area will still be legible and the altar stone incorporated into the design to allow the primacy of the space to remain legible

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.5 NEW RAISED FLOOR

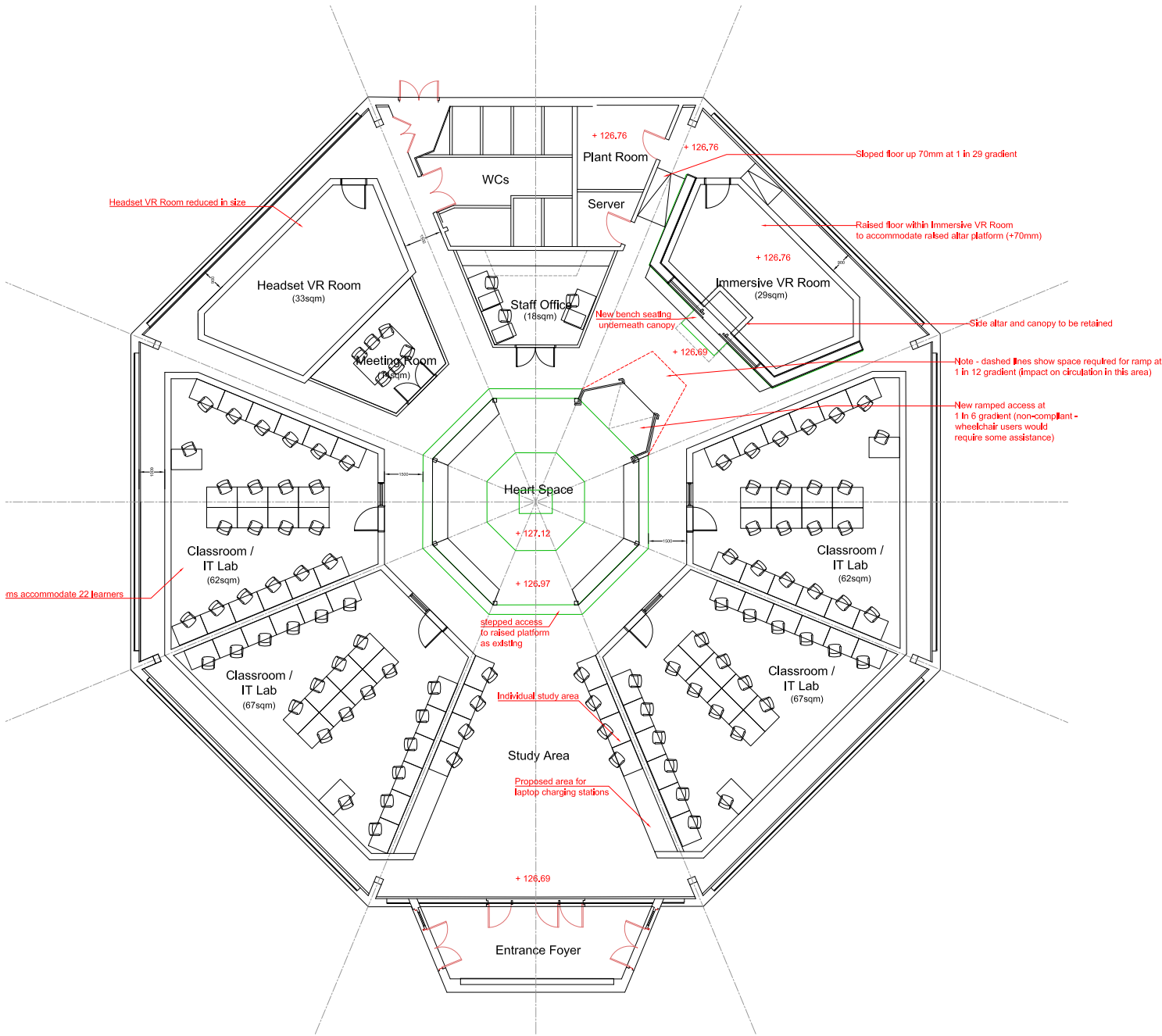
Other alternative options were considered to allow the retention of the stepped altar:

OPTION A

Retain existing stepped access and accept that the central space is inaccessible to some users. The College would incorporate measures to manage this into their management strategy for the building and would assist users as required, for example using a temporary ramp. This option was discounted on the basis that the College are a fully inclusive campus and so the optimum solution is to make all learning facilities equitable and accessible to all wherever possible.

OPTION B

Create a new short ramp down from the raised altar to allow this space to be accessed by most users with assistance. This option was discounted on the basis that the new ramp from the raised altar would detract from the simplicity and symmetry of the original layout. Owing to the available space, the new ramp could not be designed fully in accordance with current regulations and so wheelchair users would still require assistance when using this space. This option is illustrated opposite.



ALTERNATIVE LAYOUT
(OPTION B - INTRODUCTION OF NEW SHORT
RAMP TO ACCESS RAISED ALTAR)

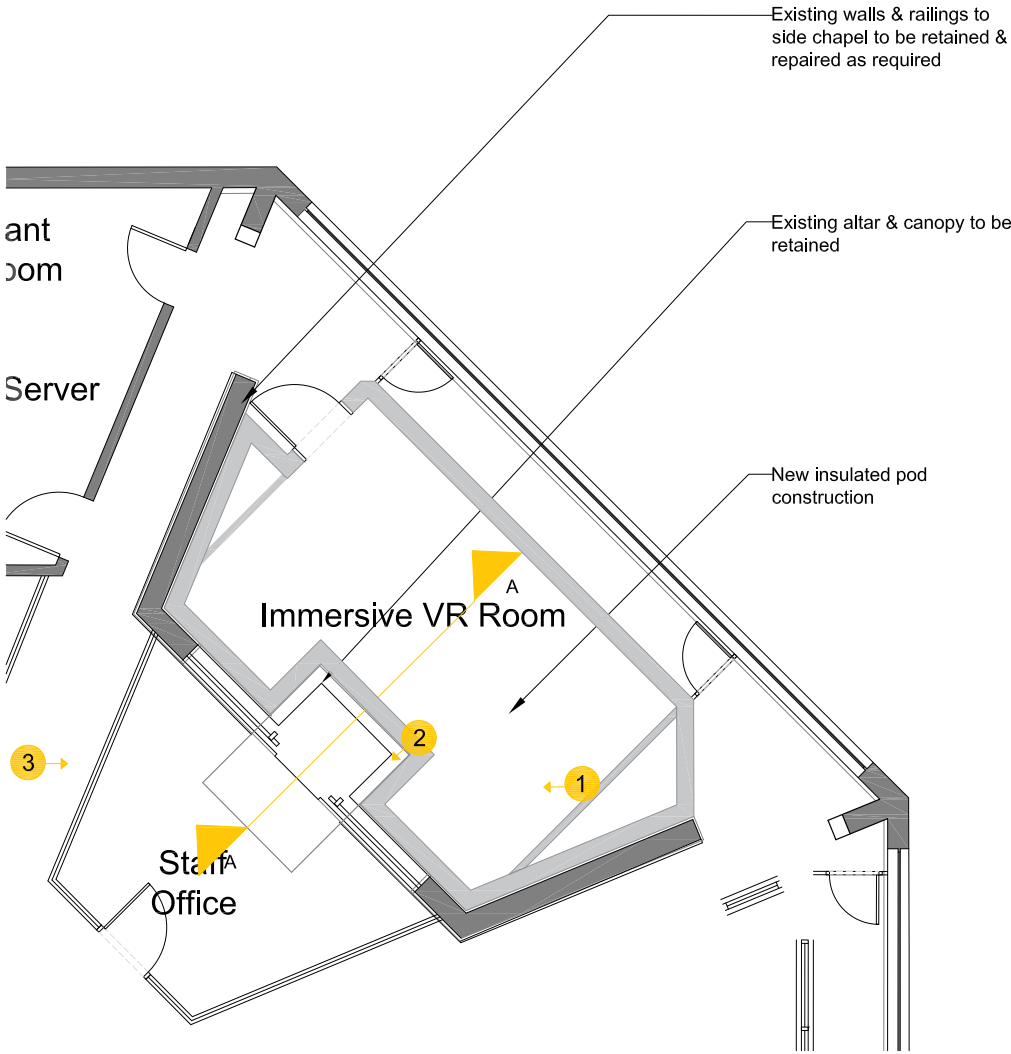
4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.6 WORKS TO EXISTING SIDE CHAPEL

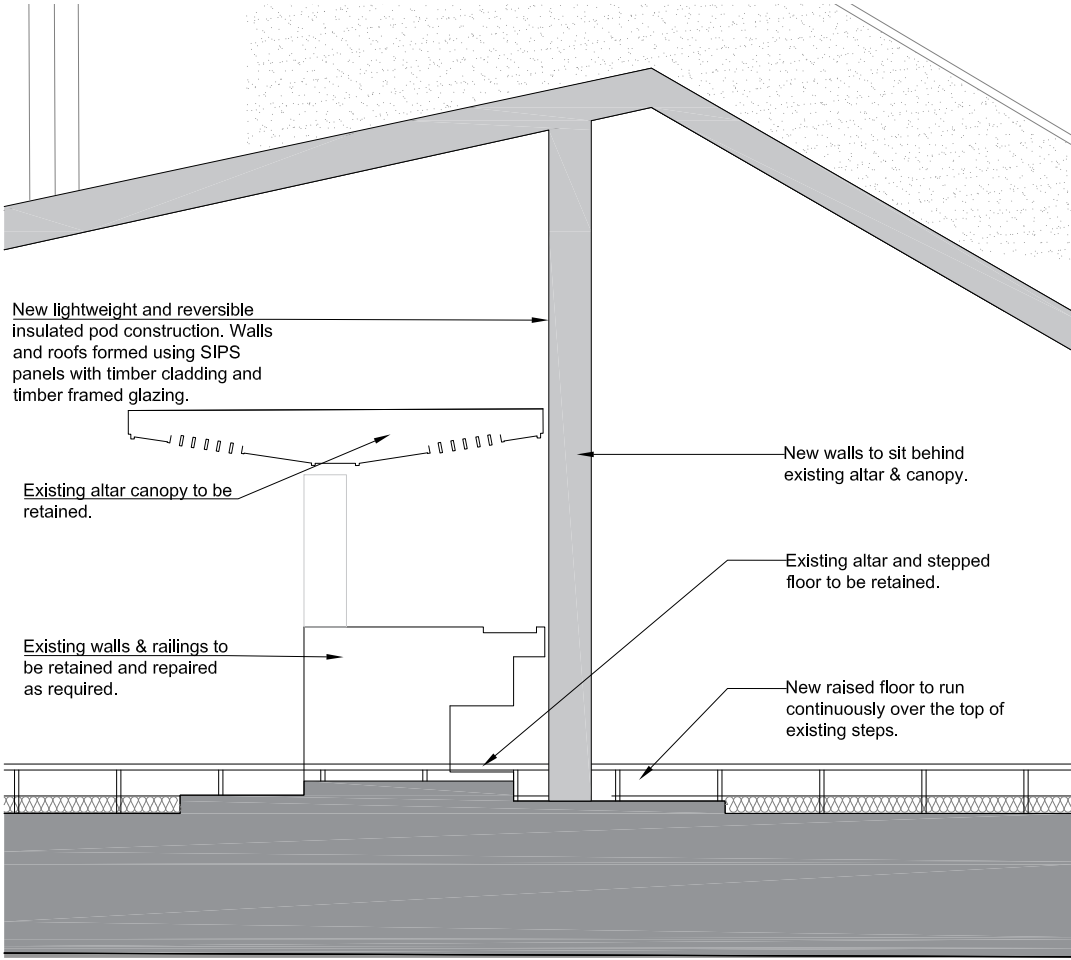
It is proposed that the existing Side Chapel is retained in its current configuration. The altar, canopy and walls will all be retained and restored as part of this project.

It is proposed that the Side Chapel will be incorporated into the design of the new staff office, and will be enclosed by one of the new pods. This work is considered necessary to create the level of accommodation required by the College for the building to perform effectively as a learning environment.

Although the views towards the original features will be impacted by the proposals, they will be retained and protected for the future. The pod construction will be lightweight and reversible to help mitigate the impact on the historic building.



Ground Floor Plan



Section A



Existing Side Chapel Altar and Canopy

