

## Mayfair Library Kilkeny

### Design Statement

Prepared on behalf of:  
**Kilkenny County Council**

P17-020K-RAU-XX-XX-RP-A-30001

May 2019  
Reddy Architecture + Urbanism

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Perspective view from Irishtown of proposed building

## 1.1 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Reddy Architecture + Urbanism on behalf of Kilkenny County Council for a Part 8 Planning Application in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000- 2018 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 -2018 and B1.1 of Appendix B of Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The report contains details of the historical research of the site, existing building, existing drawings, photographs, proposals, the rationale for the proposed development, conservation philosophy, conservation methodology, and impact assessment.

The design shown in the proposals has been reached after a consultation process with Kilkenny County Council which also included a Pre-Planning Meeting in March 2019.

This Architectural Design Statement has been produced to explain the design rationale for the proposed development and to confirm the appropriateness and validity of the design proposal.

### The Brief

The brief provided by Kilkenny County Council outlined the requirements to renovate, remodel and extend the building to ensure it can respond to its new role as a Kilkenny City Library.

The proposed accommodation includes:

- Non-serviced Reception area to include a RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) area
- Adult, Teenager, and Children’s Library areas
- Exhibition Centre
- Digital Hub / IT Area
- Public toilets
- Staff Offices
- Staff Meeting Room
- Staff Toilets
- Storage,
- Plant area

Part VIII Planning Consent is in place for the redevelopment of the Mayfair building for office use. This application is applying for the change to library use.

The proposed development works to the Mayfair Building to facilitate its new use as a public library consist of:

- Demolition of extensions to the north-east gable of the existing building including removal of a boiler house and steps adjoining the City Wall (a National Monument) (as per original Part VIII Consent).
- Provision of a new two storey extension to the gable ends of the existing building to be externally insulated with a render finish (modified from original Part VIII).
- Remodelling and extension of the existing 2 storey flat-roofed section on the east façade to be externally insulated and clad with a “second-skin” louvred system (modified from original Part VIII).
- Existing northern façade to be externally insulated with a render finish (as per original Part VIII Consent).
- Replacement of the existing roof with a standing seam metal roof (as per original Part VIII Consent).
- Replacement of the existing windows with new double-glazed windows in a powder coated aluminium frame (as per original Part VIII Consent).
- Modifications to the internal layout of the building and provision of a new mezzanine level in the double-height space of the former ballroom (modified from original Part VIII).
- Removal of 14 No. Parking spaces to the front of the building and provision of a public urban square and new access to the building (as per original Part VIII Consent).
- Site works associated with formation of new connections to existing public foul and surface water drainage, and existing utilities as required (as per original Part VIII Consent).



Aerial view of site in 1990

## 1.2 Project Team

In response to the location of the site, the National Monuments adjoining the site, the location of the site within an architectural conservation area and a zone of archaeological potential, and the significance of the proposed development the applicant, Kilkenny County Council, have assembled a design team with a strong record in successfully delivering urban infill developments within city centre environments.

The key members of the design team are:

- Architect: Reddy A+U  
41 Dean Street,  
Irishtown,  
Kilkenny City
  
- Structural Engineer: Martin Peters Associates,  
Consulting Engineers,  
Ormonde Road,  
Kilkenny City
  
- M&E Engineer: Noel Lawler Consulting Engineers  
7 Patrick St,  
Gardens, Kilkenny
  
- Archaeologist: Dr. Richard Clutterbuck  
AMS Consultancy,  
Unit 1,  
Hector Street Mills,  
Kilrush,  
Co. Clare.
  
- Ecologist: Moore Group  
Corporate House  
Ballybrit Business Park  
Galway



Advertising for bands in the Mayfair ca. 1970



Kilkenny County Library Service



Kilkenny County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

## 2.0 History and Site Context

The Mayfair is located at the important entrance to the former St. Francis Abbey Brewery, now known locally as the Abbey Quarter. While not a protected structure the Mayfair Building is located within the City Centre Architectural Conservation Area, an area of Archaeological Potential, and is immediately adjacent to Kilkenny's City Wall and adjacent to St. Francis Abbey (both National Monuments).

To the north of the existing building lies the City Wall, to the east is the former marshalling yard of the brewery. The existing Mayfair Building frames the view of St. Francis Abbey from Parliament Street.

### The Mayfair Building

The Mayfair Building itself was originally constructed as a ballroom and first opened its doors on St Stephen's night, 1943. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s the Mayfair Ballroom was Kilkenny's social hotspot. It was a very good ballroom and the venue for many important events including the Golf Ball, Rugby Ball and the Kilkenny County Council dance with music by many outstanding bands. It continued as such until 1973 when it closed. Shortly after the building was acquired by the St. Francis Abbey Brewery and was used as office accommodation, staff canteen and locker room until 2013. The building has been extended on several occasions over this period.

Mayfair Ballroom 1960s. Photo: Tom Brett Photographic Collection in the ownership of Kilkenny County Council



Paving insert indicating the location of the City Wall in Irishtown

Area between City Wall and Mayfair building



3.0 Photos of the Existing Building



View of West Facade facing Irishtown

View from Francis Abbey looking west towards Irishtown



View of South Facade from Horse Barrack Lane

View of the North Facade from the bridge at Irishtown



3.0 Existing photos



Former Canteen and half of Ballroom

View from First Floor towards the Brewhouse



Former Locker Room and East half of Ballroom

View from St. Canices



## 4.0 Design Approach and Response

### 4.1 Role of the Mayfair 1943 - Present

- 1943 - 1973: Mayfair Ballroom
- From the 1970s: Used as a canteen, changing rooms and offices by St. Francis Abbey Brewery
- Diageo vacated the site in 2013
- Kilkenny County Council took possession of the site in November 2016
- Abbey Quarter Masterplan: Part 8 Planning Consent for office use was approved in 2016
- 2019: New Part 8 Planning Permission sought to transform Mayfair building into Kilkenny City Library

The Mayfair building has been re-imagined enabling it to function as a Library and Community Facility. This re-use ensures its significant role in Kilkenny's building fabric and preserves the building's social heritage.

The National Library Strategy "Our Public Libraries 2022" states that "A modern and well resourced library contributes to the social, economic and cultural well being of communities. The public library supports people and libraries through its civic presence"

It is proposed that the Mayfair Library will provide civic and cultural space acting as a community and cultural hub for the City and County. This is consistent with the provisions of the Kilkenny City & County development Plans, the Abbey Quarter Masterplan and National Policy.

### 4.2 Planning Policy

Arising from an analysis of the issues identified in the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014 -2020 as well as the Abbey Quarter Masterplan, the following relevant policies and objectives pertain to the Mayfair building and have been taken into consideration for this proposal:

### Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2014 -2020

#### 5.9 Library Service

A new City Library is proposed in Kilkenny City which it is intended will be a flagship building and an accessible community resource for current and future generations, embracing new technologies and services.

#### 7.3.1 Archaeological Heritage

Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sited and designed appropriately so that it does not seriously detract from the setting of the feature or its zone of archaeological potential.

#### 7.4.2 Public Realm

The architectural character of a city is determined not only by the importance of individual buildings and groups of buildings but also by the quality of the spaces formed by the buildings – i.e. the footpaths, streets, squares, parks, views and vistas are all of importance, and are an integral part of the urban structure.

#### 9.10.2.1 Alternative Energy Systems for Large Buildings

For large buildings, SI No. 666 of 2006 requires that due consideration has been given to the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of installing alternative energy systems in the proposed building.

#### 10.1.2.3 Pedestrian Priority

A key element of the Mobility Management Plan is the prioritisation of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic, within the gateways. This priority could take a variety of forms, including pedestrianisation, shared surfaces and the concept of shared space.

#### 11.3 Universal Design

The council require that all future developments used by the public are accessible to and usable by all regardless of age, size, disability or ability.

### Masterplan

#### 4.3.6 Public Realm Strategy

It is proposed to create appropriate new civic spaces as new settings for the existing heritage structures on site to include a new public square at the Mayfair building.

#### 4.3.7 Movement Strategy

Within the Masterplan area, pedestrian and cyclist movements shall take precedence over vehicular traffic.

The Masterplan specifically allows for the retention and reuse of the Mayfair Building. Please refer to 4.3 Re-use of Existing Structures.

The proposed function of the building as a library is consistent with the proposed mix of uses in the Abbey Quarter as outlined in the Abbey Quarter - Urban Design Code (approved by Kilkenny Co. Co. in Jan 2018)

### 4.3 Re-use of Existing Structures

The use of existing buildings not only contributes to sustainability in terms of energy efficiency, but it also contributes to the sustainability of a community as a whole. It maintains the character of the community through the preservation of its architecture. Particularly in areas with empty buildings, the investment often encourages further development in the same area which can lead to revitalization of the neighbourhood.

The Mayfair Ballroom had a very significant role in the Social Heritage and History of Kilkenny City and County. The proposed retention and adapted re-use of the former Ballroom Building as a Public Library, will provide a community use for the building, helping to conserve the social heritage of the building and providing new cultural opportunities for the local community of Kilkenny City & County.

Kilkenny County Council is firmly committed to sustainability; and believes in this principle of reusing existing structures as a method of sustainable design.

From the Abbey Quarter - Brewery Site Masterplan:

#### 4.2.5.2 Mayfair Building

##### Description:

*This is a small two storey concrete structure characterised by the double gabled form. The building was commenced in the 1960's and has had a number of accumulated extensions up to the 1980's.*

##### Status:

*While not a protected structure a detailed appraisal of the existing two storey building suggests that it is of little architectural significance internally or externally. What merit the building has lies in its social heritage.*

##### Recommendation:

*- The refurbishment and extension of the building will create a building of distinction more appropriate to its location at a primary entrance to the new Abbey Quarter precinct.*

*- While it is proposed to replace the roof covering to the existing pitched roofs the proposed building the overall scale of the existing building i.e. the existing ridge height should be maintained.*

*- The overall physical form of the proposed building which consists of a random series of single and two storey extensions to the central double gabled form can be replaced by a more regular two storey form.*

*- External concrete steps and Boiler Room abutting the City Wall to be carefully removed*

*- Remove internal dividing wall and suspended ceiling to reveal original form of the ballroom.*



#### 4.4 Site Context

##### City Wall

The preservation and protection of the City Wall adjacent to the Mayfair was uppermost in our considerations.

Whilst access to the wall is limited along the length of the existing building due to its proximity - particularly in the north-west corner, the visibility has been maintained. It is proposed to lower the sill levels on the north elevation so as to increase visibility of the wall, furthermore a glazed "pod" projecting out from the existing structure will allow visitors to view the wall from a unique perspective inside the building.

##### Archaeology

Works in this area will be undertaken by way of Ministerial Consent as provided for under the National Monuments Act. Conservation and construction work near the City Wall will be carried out under archaeological supervision and in accordance with a methodology agreed with Kilkenny County Council and the National Monuments Service, under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act.

A rigorous monitoring regime and protocol shall be implemented to ensure that set ground borne vibration limits are not exceeded. Monitoring devices shall be fitted to the monuments in a non-invasive manner.

##### View from Irishtown

Reddy Architecture were cognisant of the importance of preserving the view of St. Francis Abbey from Irishtown.

The Mayfair is a landmark building marking the entrance onto the Abbey Quarter site. Approaching the Abbey Quarter site from Irishtown, the view of St. Francis Abbey is currently framed between the Brewhouse and the Mayfair. The proposed extension to the Mayfair does not affect this view as the extension will be limited to the front and the rear of the building. A dynamic new facade to the south elevation improves the building's appearance and draws our eyes into the Abbey Quarter site and the proposed park.



View of existing building from Irishtown



View of proposed from Irishtown

#### 4.5 Design Approach and Form

##### Layout

The design presented in this report corresponds to the most appropriate design and layout for the building.

The main entrance to the proposed library is located on the south facade facing Irishtown and accessed via a public plaza.

A RFID area is located adjacent to the lobbied entrance and accords visitors the possibility of checking books in and out themselves. The double-height space has a large picture window with views towards Horse Barrack Lane.

Also adjacent to the lobby is the Exhibition Centre which can be accessed independently from the public plaza.

The building's lift and stairs are designed to improve public access to the building in accordance with the Disability Act and the Building Regulations.

The main part of the library is located within the existing structure of the building. The adult section is located along the south-east facade and the children's area is housed in the former ballroom. This space will appear bright and airy by virtue of the increased window area on the north facade, generous rooflights, and the retention of original roof trusses.

The staff area is located towards the north on both floors and houses offices, sanitary facilities, storage areas, and a staff canteen.

The first floor continues to accommodate the main library spaces within the envelope of the existing structure and a new mezzanine has been created in the former ballroom. The IT area / Digital Hub is located over the Exhibition Centre facing the public plaza and Irishtown.

A generous meeting room is located at first floor level, this is a flexible space that can accommodate a range of uses for staff and public alike.

During the design process RAU carefully analysed the space and brief requirements to inform the layout of the building. All four facades of the building face onto very different public spaces (Irishtown, River, park, Horse Barrack Lane), and the challenge was to rationalise the location of the varying internal functions with the space they engaged with externally.

It was therefore decided that the best location for the Exhibition Centre was adjacent to the main entrance of the building which faces Irishtown and therefore asserts a very public presence, particularly since it features an individual access.

The Meeting Room is the counterpart of the Exhibition Centre and will become another dynamic activity space used for public meetings and group activities. This room addresses the park and features a large picture window with prime views of St. Francis Abbey.

##### Existing Form

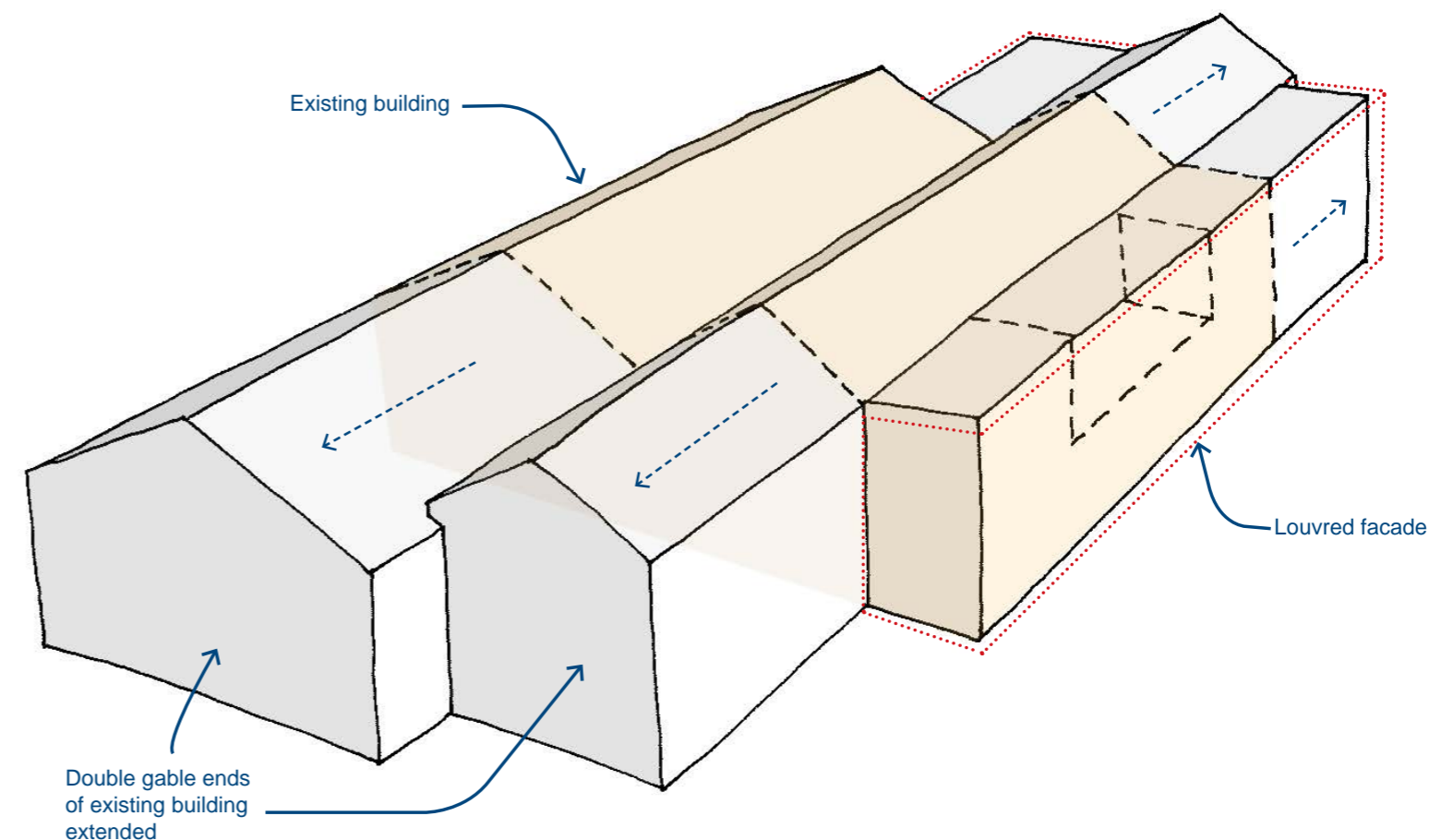
The existing building is two storeys with a painted render finish. The original building can be identified by the pitched roofs to the two gabled forms. The later extensions to the building facing Horse Barrack Lane are flat roofed. The fenestration to the building is varied in design and material and without pattern. The combination of varied forms and varied fenestration types and pattern results in a confused building with little architectural merit.

##### Proposed Form

The double gabled forms could reasonably be described as the predominant form of the existing building. The front elevation has been designed to emphasise the original double gabled feature to ensure the Mayfair building is still recognisable as a local landmark.

The proposed building retains the overall two storey scale of the existing building. The height of the new parapet to the existing south elevation and the flat roof extensions proposed to the east and south match the height of the eaves level of the existing pitched roof.

Massing diagram of proposed building



**Form and internal spaces**

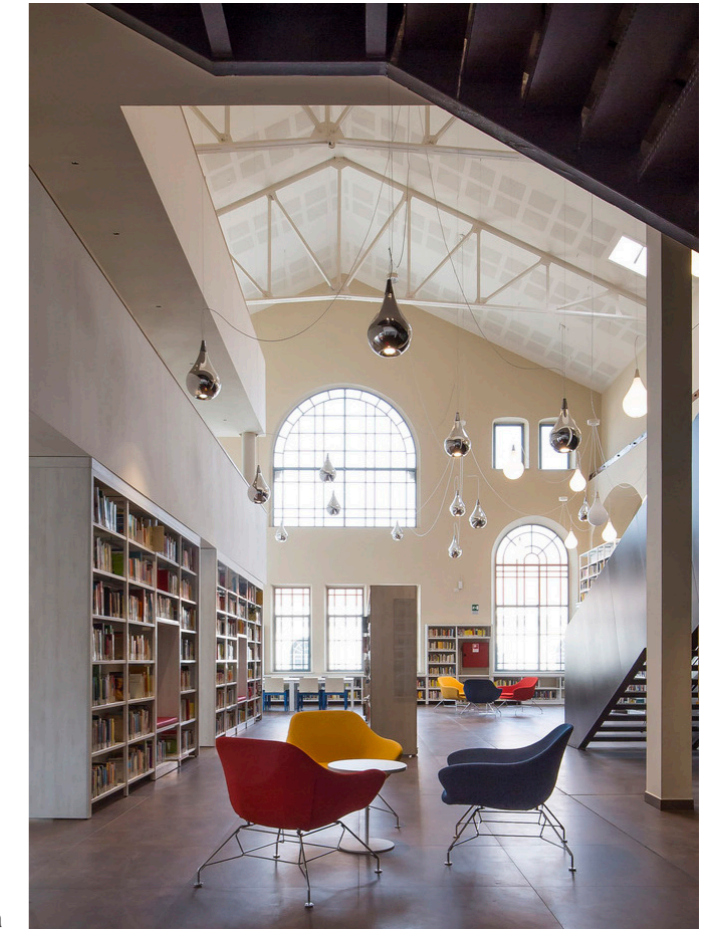
The main library and reading spaces are located within the existing structure of the building. The spatial qualities of the former ballroom will be evident in the children's area. The original trusses and pitched roof form will be reinstated lending a bright and airy aspect to the space. A mezzanine level will be constructed within this space to house part of the adult library section, this mezzanine is connected to the ground floor via a secondary feature stairs.



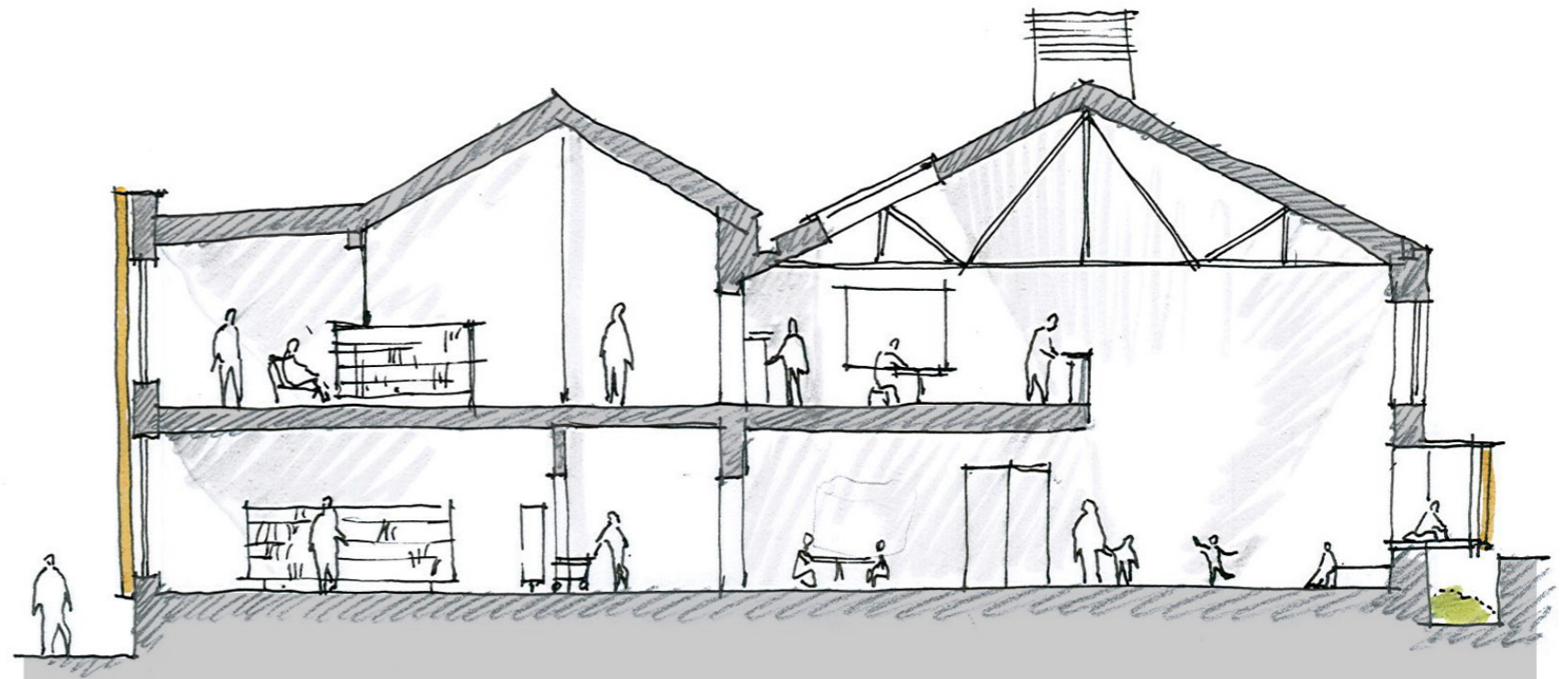
Proposed west elevation facing Irishtown



Mayfair Ballroom on opening night in 1943



Biblioteca La Spezia by Atelier Femia



Sketch section through library areas

#### 4.6 Materiality

##### Existing building

The facades of the existing building are finished with a painted render. The pitched roofs are clad with profiled concrete cladding panels which given their age will probably contain asbestos. Existing windows are a mixture of single and double glazed in timber and aluminium frames. The window frames are not thermally broken and are creating condensation on the internal face of the frames which has contributed to the deterioration of the fabric of the building.

##### Proposed

The Mayfair in terms of its location presented a unique opportunity for its revitalisation as a landmark at the gateway into the Abbey Quarter.

The front and rear gable ends of the building will be externally insulated with a self coloured render finish. The pitched roofs will be finished with zinc standing seam roofing. All windows will be double glazed in powder coated aluminium frames.

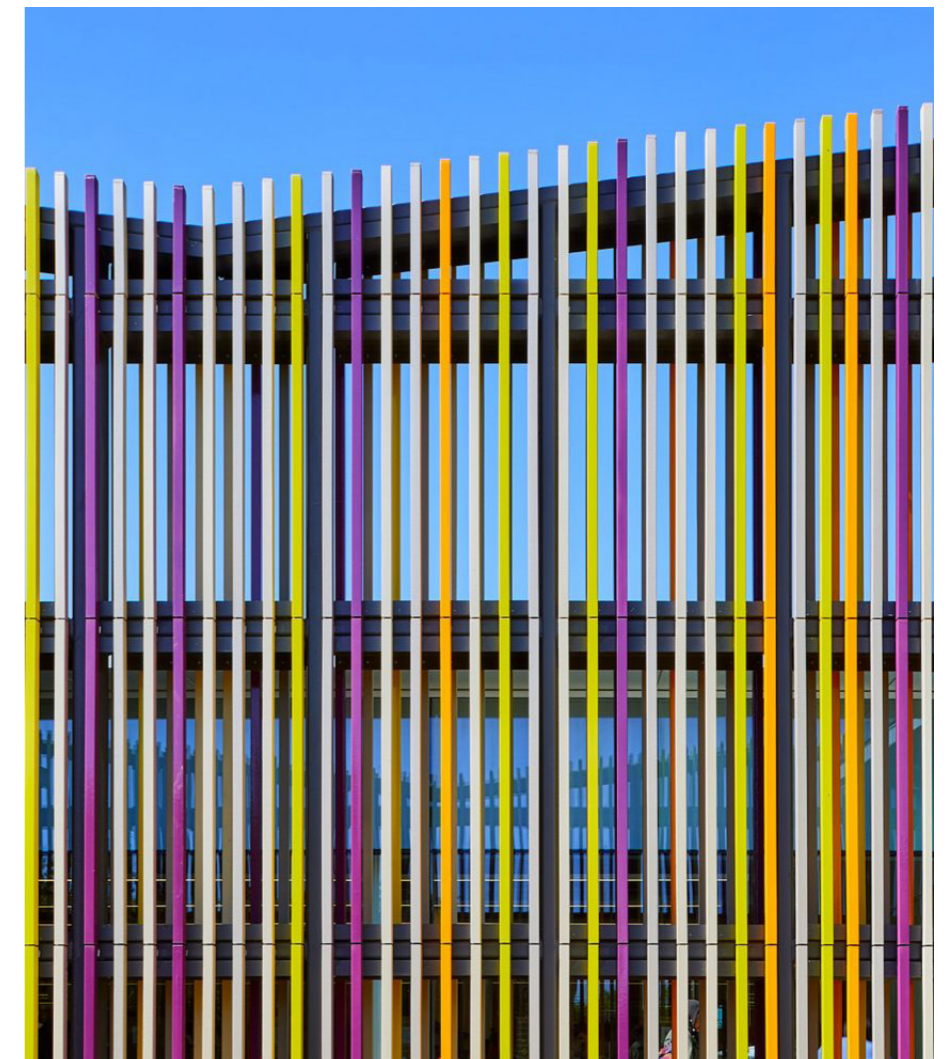
The decision to retain and extend the existing facade raised the design challenge of producing a cohesive facade that would simultaneously respond to the internal functions and address the external spaces. The choice of a double-skin made of colourful vertical louvres helps to confer this coherence to an otherwise disjointed facade.

The double-skin facade will consist of vertical elements placed at regular intervals, occasionally punctuated to allow the creation of feature windows and privileged views of the Abbey. The passer-by who wanders along the front of the library and looks up at it will be accompanied by a kinetic impression created by the rhythm of the louvres. The facade will be animated and will embody the movement and evolution from the Irishtown entrance into the heart of the Abbey Quarter.

It is intended to use rear mounted ceramic “baguettes” to form the louvred facade. This materiality and colouring will be reviewed at detail design stage with the Client.

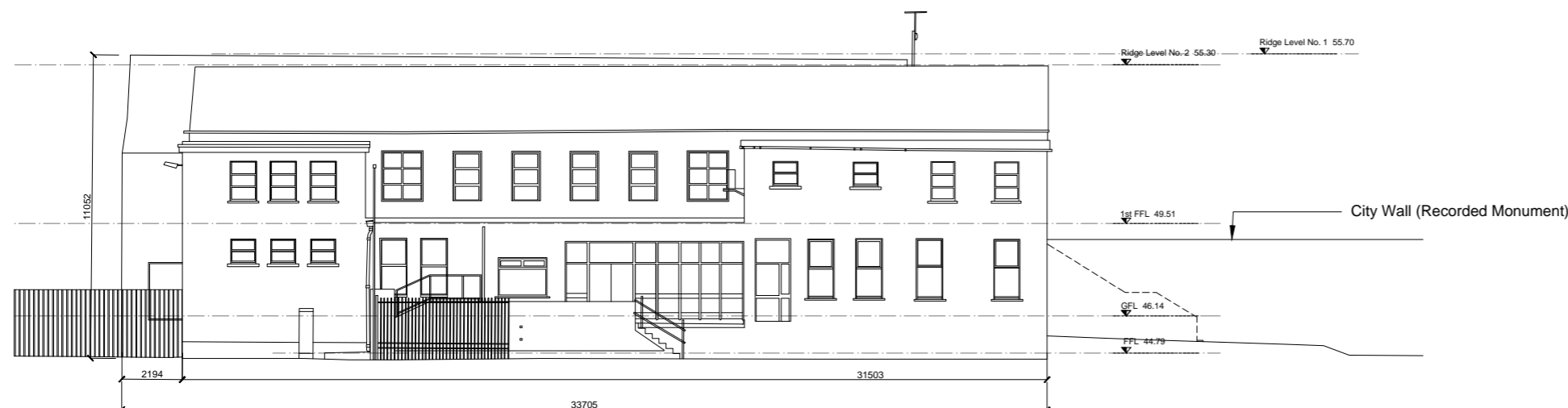


Example of library shelving, Athy Library



Facade detail Albion Library, Toronto by Perkins Wills

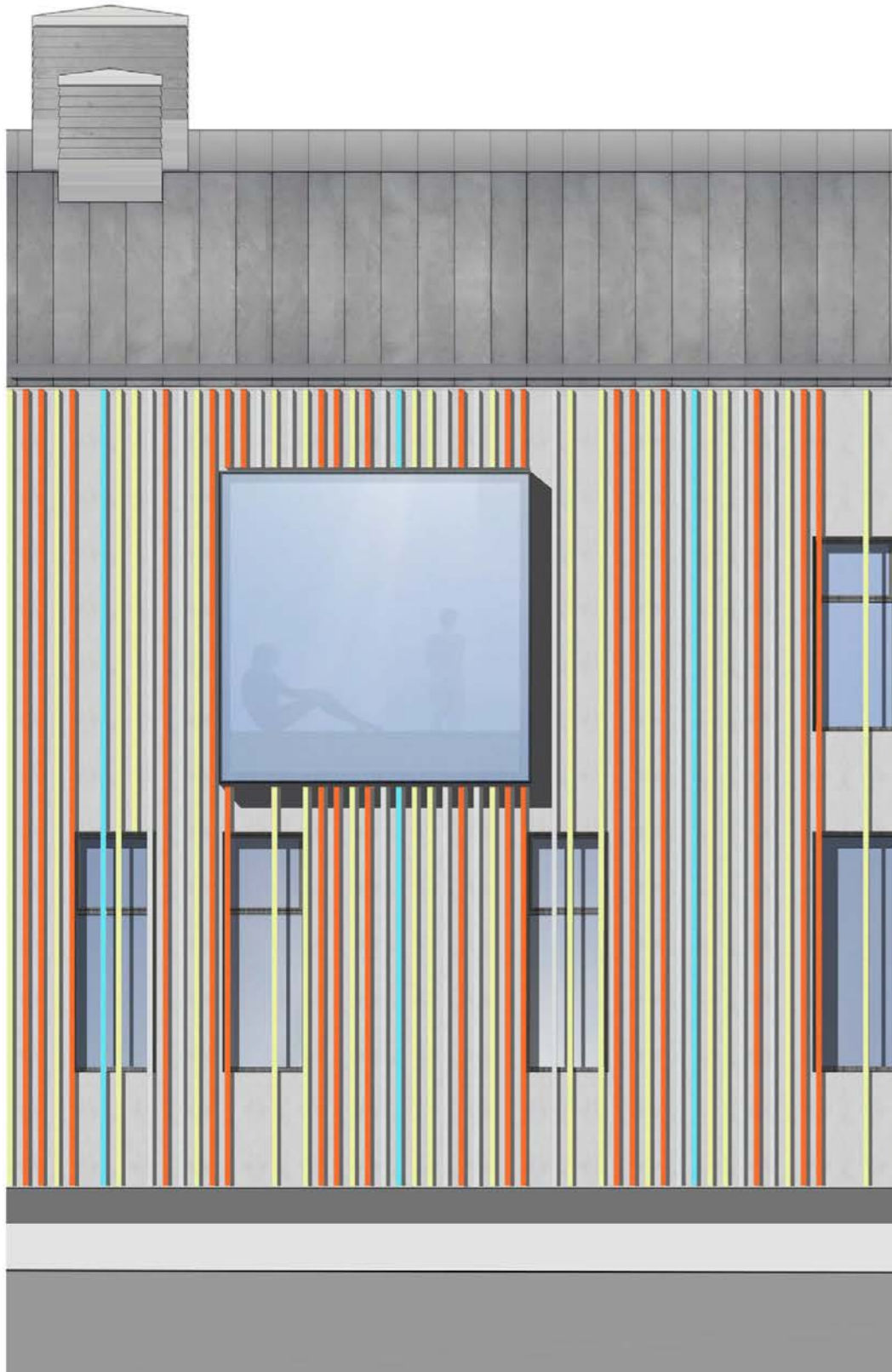
Existing south elevation showing varying window styles, dimensions, lintel and cill heights



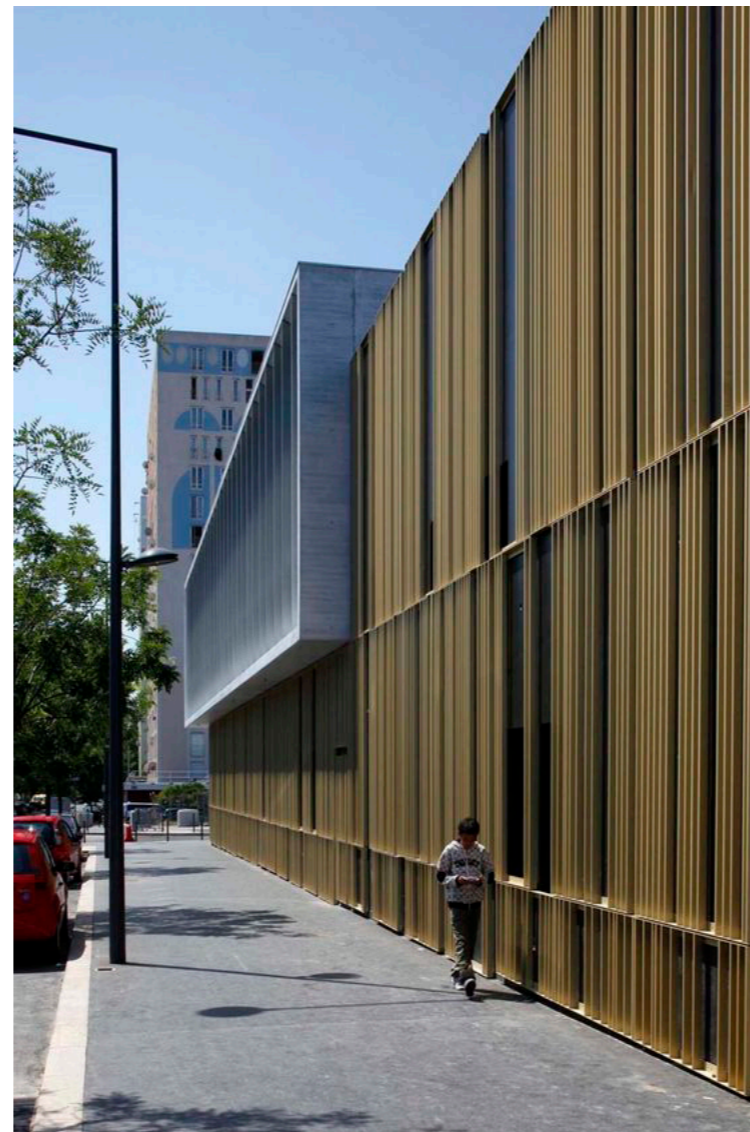
Albion Library, Toronto by Perkins Wills



Detailed facade study



Maison du Temps Libre by Le Penhuel Architectes



Facade inspiration: book ends



Ceramic "Baguettes" used in Parkhaus am Noor by AX5 Architekten



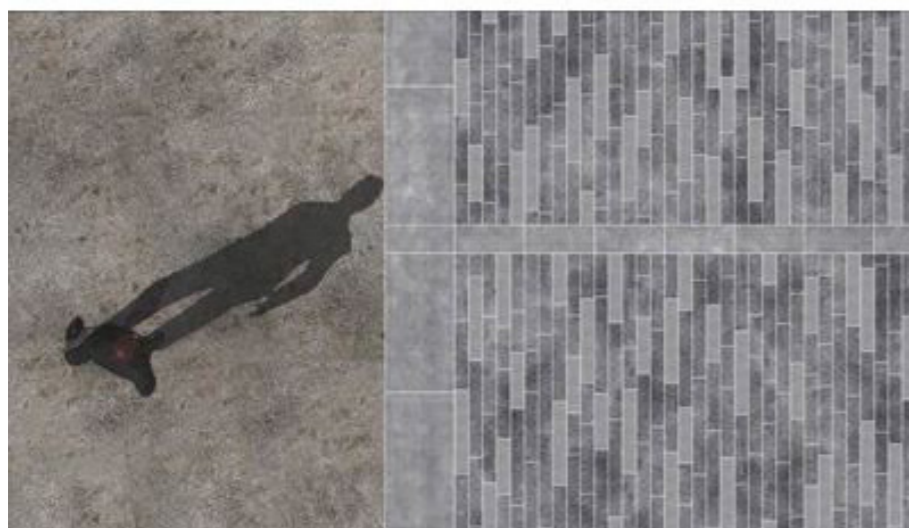
#### 4.7 Landscaping & Lighting

The new pedestrian urban square facing Irishtown and the new footpath along its southern and eastern sides will be constructed from a combination of varying lengths of Kilkenny Limestone with a hammered finish and varying lengths of Granite with a sawn finish.

The small enclosed landscaped area to the north east will feature a soft landscaping and seating area. Planting and associated roots will be offset and kept free from the City Wall to retain visibility.

External lighting of the building will play an important role and a sensitive approach will be required to accentuate the distinctive gable ended form and unique south facade. It is envisaged to use uplighters and downlighters to subtly articulate the coloured fins of the facade. Lighting and landscaping will be specified to later detail and in consultation with lighting and landscaping professionals.

Examples of paving to public space



#### 4.8 Signage

Considering its location adjacent to the historic City Wall, it is envisaged that interpretive signage similar to that of Talbot's Tower would be located within the curtilage of the Mayfair site. The nature and dimensions of this signage would be confirmed at a later stage.



#### 4.9 Service Strategies

##### Drainage

Gutters will be concealed and downpipes will be located within the building envelope to ensure the clean lines of the building are maintained.

Please refer to the Civil Structural Report (Appendix 4) for more details.

##### Security & Access

The main entrance to the building is located on the West facade facing the public square and Irishtown, this entrance is accessed via stairs or wheelchair accessible ramps. Three No. emergency exits have been provided on the north east facade and on the south facade.

The library has been envisaged as a 24 hour facility, the public will be able to take and return books when the libraries are unmanned using RFID scanners. Security will be ensured with the use of member cards with codes, and a monitoring system.

The Library will continue to be fully staffed during normal working hours.

#### 4.10 Car Parking and Cycle facilities

As provided for in the original Part VIII proposal for the redevelopment, the loss of the existing parking in front of the Mayfair is offset by the new public car park that is immediately adjoining the Watergate Theatre.

Ample bicycle parking has been provided on Horse Barrack lane as part of the overall Masterplan strategy and to serve both the Brewhouse and Mayfair buildings.

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**Appendix 1: Architectural Drawings**

<b>Drawing Title</b>	<b>Drawing number</b>
Site Location Plan	P17-020K-RAU-00-00-DR-A-31102
Existing Ground floor plan	P17-020K-RAU-XX-00-DR-A-31001
Existing First floor plan	P17-020K-RAU-XX-01-DR-A-31001
Existing Elevations N/E	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-32002
Existing Elevations S/W	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-32001
Demolition Ground floor	P17-020K-RAU-XX-00-DR-A-31201
Demolition First floor	P17-020K-RAU-XX-01-DR-A-31202
Proposed Site Layout Plan	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-31002
Proposed Ground floor plan	P17-020K-RAU-00-00-DR-A-31101
Proposed First floor plan	P17-020K-RAU-00-01-DR-A-31100
Proposed Roof plan	P17-020K-RAU-XX-02-DR-A-31002
Proposed Sections AA and BB	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-33002
Proposed Elevations N/E	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-32004
Proposed Elevations S/W	P17-020K-RAU-XX-ZZ-DR-A-32003

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**Appendix 2: Conservation Statement**



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**Appendix 3: Archaeological Impact Assessment**

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**Appendix 4: Civil Structural Report**

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**Appendix 5: M&E Strategy Report**

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**Appendix 6: Appropriate Assessment Screening (Habitats Directive) and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**