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## Report of the Chief Planning Officer

### *CITY PLANS PANEL*

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**Subject: Pre-application PREAPP/16/00532 Proposal for the repair and restoration of the First White Cloth Hall, Kirkgate, Leeds.**

**Applicant: Leeds City Council**

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Yes Ward Members consulted

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Panel for information. The applicant team will be asked to present the emerging scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals.**

### 1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The First White Cloth Hall (FWCH) was built in 1711 to head off a challenge from Wakefield which had built a cloth hall in the previous year with the intention of becoming the market centre for the trading of white (undyed) cloth in the West Riding. This FWCH was quickly superseded by several larger cloth halls as Leeds became the regional capital of the cloth trade. It was listed Grade II\* in 1983 following its 'rediscovery' as the earliest surviving cloth hall in recognition of its historic importance to the economic history of the region and the nation. Unfortunately, it has been in a poor condition since its listing and is on Historic England's at Risk Register and acknowledged as being the highest category of risk with potential for further rapid deterioration with no solution agreed. In 2010 the

west wing of the building was also dismantled when the adjoining building was demolished due to urgent structural concerns.

- 1.2 In 2012 Leeds City Council were successful in bidding for £1.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme in lower Kirkgate. This scheme makes grants available towards repairs works to those properties between and including 83 Kirkgate to the FWCH. The FWCH is identified as the 'critical project' in the scheme, and accordingly £500k of the HLF funding is ring-fenced for this building. In addition £250k grant funding has been made available by Historic England. After the grant funding was secured, the owners of the FWCH, City Fusion, stated that they do not have the ability to bring a restoration project forward. In response the Council has been seeking to acquire the building from the owners in order to ensure that this important piece of Leeds heritage is not lost. Despite initial agreement to transfer ownership of the building to the Council, they have not been able to acquire the building.

## **2.0 Site and Surroundings:**

- 2.1 The First White Cloth Hall is a Grade II\* Listed Building located on the south side of Kirkgate, facing the junction of Kirkgate and New York Street. Kirkgate is within the City Centre Conservation Area. The south side of Kirkgate consists of late 18th century and early 19th century three storey-houses which have had shopfronts inserted at ground floor. Due to the dangerous condition of the FWCH building it is surrounded by hoardings from Kirkgate and by fencing from Crown Street car park.
- 2.2 Kirkgate is known as Leeds' oldest street, and the lower part of Kirkgate lies at a strategically crucial point in the City Centre between Victoria Gate, Kirkgate Market and the Riverside area. Despite its central location and historic character, it has not benefited from the recent success of the rest of the City Centre, and a number of properties are vacant. It has a unique character that has huge potential to kick start a revitalisation that could have wider benefits for the City. The townscape of the Kirkgate area contains some of the most architecturally and historically significant buildings in the city, being the historic core of Leeds and the site of continuous development since at least the Anglo Saxon period, running from Briggate to the Parish Church. Kirkgate is flanked by continuous and varied building frontages rising to the west to later Victorian buildings, which create a sense of enclosure and verticality. This is accentuated by the narrow width of individual building frontages, reflecting the medieval layout of crofts along the street. To the rear of the frontage on the south west side of Kirkgate a large open space has been created by the clearance of buildings. There is a car park to the rear of the properties, which is accessible from Crown Street and by narrow through-passages from Kirkgate.

## **3.0 Proposal**

- 3.1 Conservation-accredited architects, Buttress, were appointed in September 2014 to develop a Conservation Management Plan and subsequent design option appraisal for the building. The Conservation Management Plan contains policies to provide a framework for the detailed design of the building. These are based on the detailed assessment of the significance of the building undertaken in the plan. The plan has led to a specific approach for each part of the building, and each are subject to a

number of factors such as the information available, the significance of that part of the building, and the need or opportunity for intervention or enhancement. The Conservation Management Plan has been shaped using current conservation philosophy and principles. These advocate a cautionary approach to changing a place, doing no more than necessary to repair and adapt a building to a sustainable use. There is a presumption against speculation or conjecture in restoration works, and that changes to a heritage asset should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest or significance of the building, rather than keeping it unchanged.

3.2 In accordance with this approach the preferred scheme seeks provide a space for a new bar or restaurant use or other similar commercial and leisure operation as follows:

**a) Reinstate the west wing to its pre-demolition form**

The pre-demolition form of the wing has value architecturally as it offers symmetry to the extant building. It is possible to detail the building in such a way that it reflects the form and materials of the east wing but is identifiable as a modern addition.

**b) Reinstate the arcading to the inner courtyard**

This is based on remaining physical evidence. It is possible to repair existing and replicate missing elements to the original design without conjecture. Reinstating the colonnade would enhance the significance of the building.

**c) Retain and repair the Kirkgate frontages**

The Kirkgate façade has heritage value as it demonstrates the evolution of the building and the re-facing of the Kirkgate façade. Removing this historic fabric and replacing it with a conjectural design informed by speculation, for which no evidence exists, would be harmful to the significance of the building and contrary to the policy framework.

**d) Introduce high quality modern design in the form of a glazed atrium**

The addition of a glazed atrium to the yard would make the building more attractive to tenants, both aesthetically and commercially, by introducing flexibility to the circulation and extending the trading hours for the internal courtyard. This would be able to be used throughout the year and in poor weather. Commercial consultants have provided advice to suggest that such an approach would be beneficial as potential occupants are likely to prefer a larger floor area in an enclosed “square” form to operate from, rather than an open ‘U’ shape which can make practical use more difficult. High quality modern, “honest”, interventions are also an accepted conservation practice.

**e) Introduce a modern rainscreen treatment to the southern elevation**

Only a small proportion (two and a half bays) of the fenestration of the original southern elevation remains. Whilst it is possible to arrive at a probable window pattern based on this and the likely symmetrical nature of the rear elevation it would involve a small element of conjecture. Therefore, it is proposed to introduce a corten rain screen to cover the rear elevation. This approach would enable a possible historic window pattern to be designed without adding speculative features to the actual building.

3.3 It is intended to secure access rights from the car park area to the rear to help serve and maintain the premises and uses.

3.4 The next stage would be to undertake detailed design which would develop the preferred option to full planning/listed building consent application stage.

#### **4.0 History of Negotiations and Consultation**

4.1 As part of the option process a number of consultation workshops were held with relevant stakeholders by the applicant team. These workshops were facilitated by Buttress Architects.

4.2 The first workshop with the applicant team, conservation officer and City Fusion sought to reduce a 'long list' of potential design options to a smaller number that could be considered further by a wider stakeholder group. The design options ranged from repair only to the rebuilding of the west wing in an overtly modern style. The meeting agreed to reduce the options to four in number.

4.3 The second workshop involved a wider stakeholder group which included:

- Applicant team officers
- Conservation officer
- City Fusion
- Leeds Civic Trust
- Historic England
- Leeds Minster
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
- Council for British Archaeology
- Leeds Historical (Thoresby) Society
- Mood Developments (a neighbouring Kirkgate property owner - all Kirkgate property owners were invited)
- Prince's Regeneration Trust

4.4 This meeting reduced four options to an agreed preferred option, with the agreement that an atrium would be acceptable if justified in viability terms. A further meeting was requested, to test the more detailed design approach to the form i.e. a "1711" conjectural approach towards potential original design, or a repair and reinstatement scheme in line with Conservation Management Plan policies.

4.5 The third meeting was attended by:

- Applicant team officers
- Conservation officer
- City Fusion
- Historic England
- Prince's Regeneration Trust
- Leeds Civic Trust
- SPAB
- Mood Developments

- 4.6 There was disagreement between stakeholders on the second issue of how to approach the detailed design. Some preferred rebuilding in a “1711” style despite accepting there is no remaining or documentary evidence of the approach. This approach would be contrary to the philosophy of the Conservation Management Plan, and would not be in accordance with accepted conservation philosophy. Other stakeholders, such as Historic England, preferred a repair and reinstatement approach which was based on the developed conservation approach and meets current best practice conservation principles.
- 4.7 Following the stakeholder workshops Buttress presented their recommended design approach to the applicant team, which was a repair and reinstatement scheme with the introduction of a glazed atrium. This is the applicant team’s preferred approach.
- 4.8 Historic England have confirmed that they are satisfied with the principle of the proposal, which they consider will bring the building back into viable use, but that the detailed design for the glazed atrium requires further work.
- 4.9 City and Hunslet Ward Councillors were consulted by email on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016. At the time of drafting this report no comments had been received.

## **6.0 Relevant Planning Policies**

### **6.1 The Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making, the Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

1. The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
2. Saved UDP Policies (2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
3. The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013)
4. Any Neighbourhood Plan, once Adopted

These development plan policies are supplemented by supplementary planning guidance and documents.

### **6.2 Leeds Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. The most relevant policies are set out in the paragraphs below:

Policy CC1 outlines the planned growth for the city centre and supports the provision of town centre uses such as bar and restaurant uses as part of this planned growth.

Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design and enhancing existing landscapes and spaces. Proposals will be supported which protect and enhance existing historic assets.

Policy P11 states the historic environment will be conserved and enhanced. Where appropriate the significance of assets, impact of proposals and mitigation measures will be required to be considered through a Heritage Statement. Innovative and sustainable construction which integrates with and enhances the historic environment will be encouraged

Policy P12 requires the quality, character and biodiversity of Leeds' townscapes, including their historical and cultural significance, to be conserved and enhanced.

### **6.3 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR) Saved Policies**

The site lies within the designated City Centre. Saved policies that are relevant to this scheme are:

GP5 All Planning Considerations

N14 Listed Building and Preservation

N15 Listed Buildings and Change of Use

N16 Listed Buildings and Extensions

N17 Listed Buildings Character and Appearance

N18A Conservation Areas and Demolition

N18B Conservation Areas and Demolition

N19 Conservation Areas New Buildings

N20 Conservation Areas and Retention of Features

BD2 Design of New buildings

BD6 Alterations and extensions

BC7 Building conservation

### **6.4 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

#### **Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement 2011**

The Lower Kirkgate Planning Statement 2011 was adopted by the Council as site specific informal planning guidance for development management purposes, following public consultation in 2009 and 2011. The document was used to inform the successful Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) bid, and is used to guide development proposals within the Lower Kirkgate THI area. In particular, states that the centrepiece and focal point of Lower Kirkgate should be the careful and sensitive repair and restoration of the First White Cloth Hall, which has the potential to act as catalyst for the wider regeneration and re-connection of this part of the City Centre.

### **6.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Section 7 (paras 56-66) states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important that design is inclusive and of high quality. Key principles include:

- Establishing a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

- Respond to local character and history;
- Reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also includes policies relating to heritage assets and states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 17 of NPPF states that “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”.

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. In particular paragraph 131: 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.

Paragraph 132 would be relevant in determining an application, namely 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

## **7.0 Key Issues**

### **7.1 The principle of the proposed uses**

At this stage the intention is to plan for a bar and/or restaurant use as the most likely viable option. Notwithstanding this the Council is not wedded to any particular use provided it is viable.

With regard to a possible bar or restaurant use, the wider area is characterised by a mixture of uses including existing bars and restaurants. It is considered that new bar and restaurant uses can be accommodated on the site with suitable controls without creating an amenity problem in the area and would be compatible with the vibrant

mixed use character of the wider city centre area. The intention is to secure access from the rear to ensure that suitable servicing arrangements can be provided.

## **7.2 Impact of the proposal on the special architectural character and historic interest of the Grade II\* Listed First White Cloth Hall and the City Centre Conservation Area (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990)**

The architect has produced a preferred option based on the conservation management plan and general conservation good practice, as set out at paragraph 3.2 of this report. In summary the emerging scheme would feature:

- the reinstatement of the west wing to its pre-demolition form
- the reinstatement of the arcading to the inner courtyard
- retention and repair of the Kirkgate frontages
- introduction of high quality modern design in the form of a glazed atrium
- the introduction of a corten rainscreen treatment to the southern elevation

### **7.2 Do Members support the preferred option prior to its detailed design?**

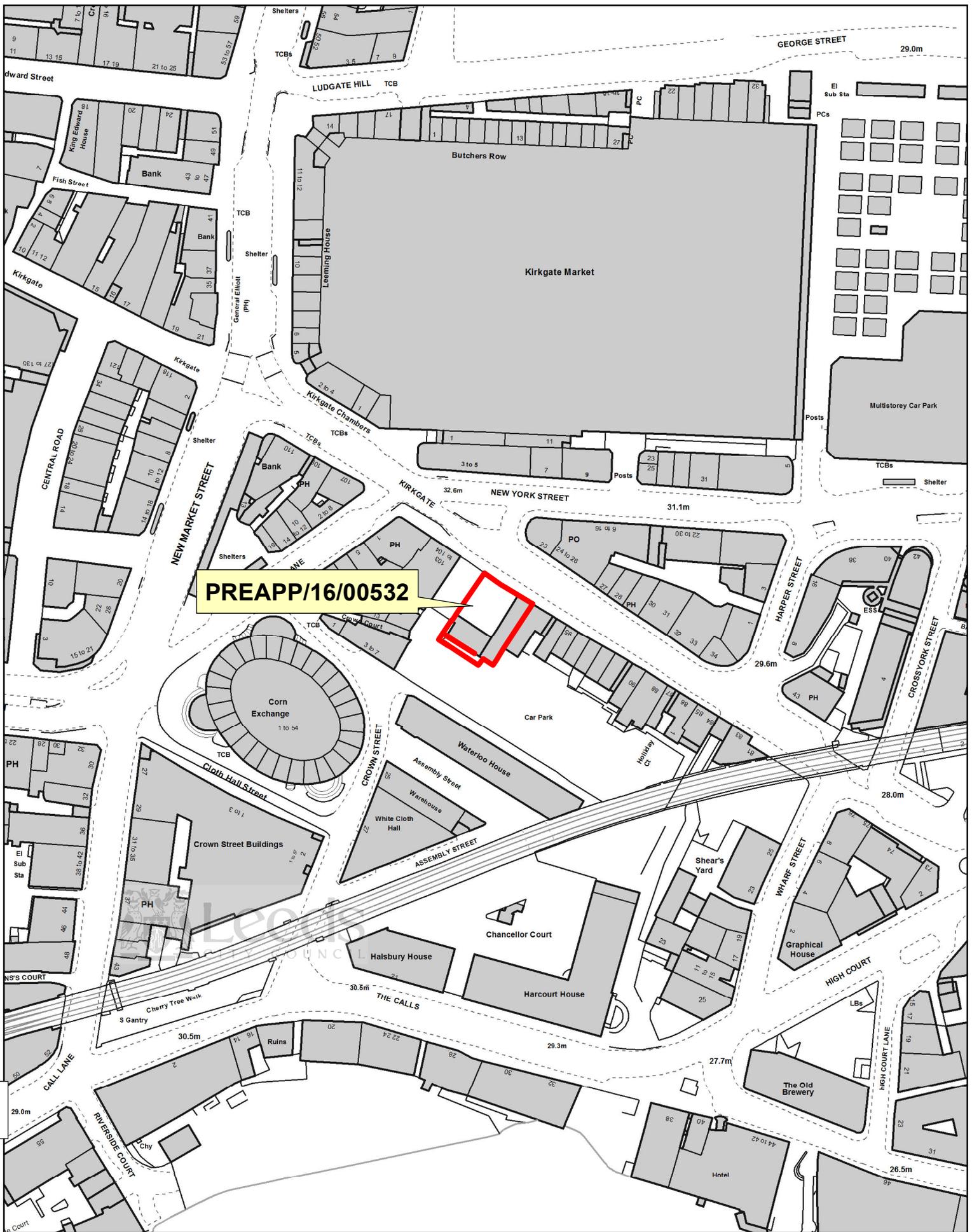
## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.1 Members will be advised of the details of this emerging scheme and are asked to provide responses to the following:

### **8.2 Do Members support the preferred option prior to its detailed design?**

#### **Background Papers:**

Pre-application file: PREAPP/16/00532



# CITY PLANS PANEL

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SCALE : 1/1500



Levelled access from street level, with gates potentially opening out via sliding doors.

Glazed infill to arch to additional access.

Curtain wall of glazed atrium with main entrance from Kiltgate.

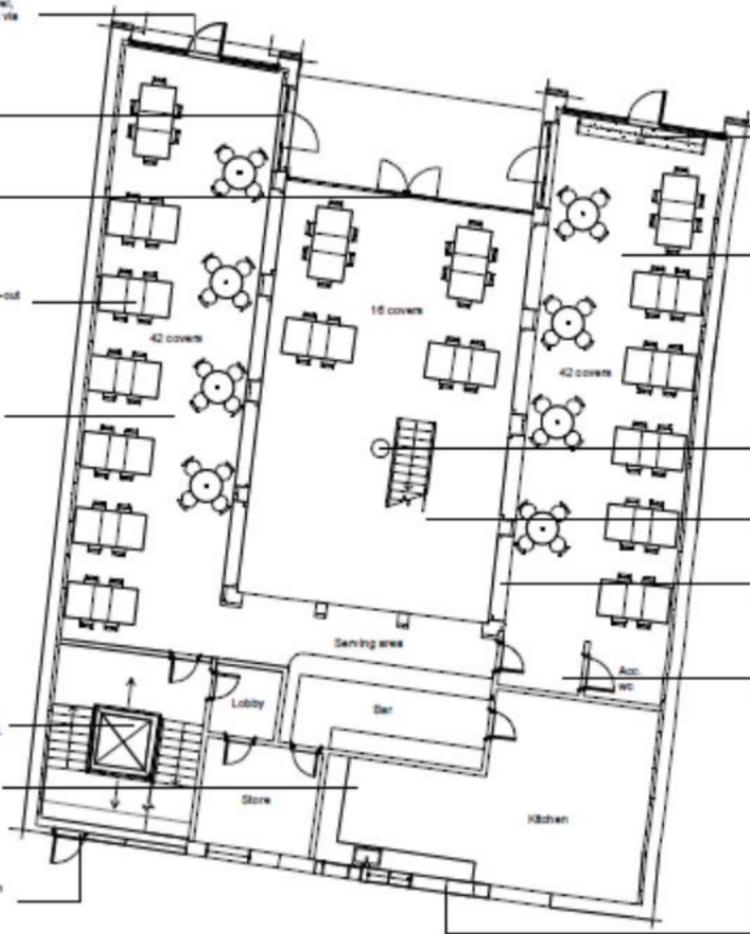
Large areas of seating through-out with approx. 130-170 covers.

New level wing to mirror the restored east wing.

New vertical circulation core to serve all floors with platform lift.

South wing to be used as a potential area for the location of a kitchen/bar layout.

Rear entrance within circulation core for out-of-hours and staff access to upper floors.



New steps to meet adjusted floor level.

Floor raised by 250mm to provide level transitions from east-wing to adjoining spaces.

Large structural column to support atrium roof structure. Also used to channel rainwater internally to basement.

Central vertical circulation core with light-well for basement.

Reinstated arcade opening into glazed courtyard.

Floor raised to provide level transitions to adjoining spaces.

Wall to be structurally secured with new windows to replace existing. Potential scope to clad this elevation with curtain panels (or similar).

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Project No: 10000000000000000000

Client: 10000000000000000000

Location: 10000000000000000000

Drawing No: 10000000000000000000

As Proposed: 10000000000000000000

Scale: 1:100

Date: 16/01/2010

Checked: 10000000000000000000

Drawn by: 10000000000000000000

Developed by: 10000000000000000000

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