

Connecting You to

Architectural Services Department

Appraisal and Architectural Impact Assessment Report of  
Clondalkin Library, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.



30<sup>th</sup> August 2024

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## 1. Introduction

In June 2023 the Architectural Services department was commissioned by the Library Service of South Dublin County Council to investigate the feasibility of a two-storey extension to Clondalkin Library to address universal access concerns within the library. The proposal requires installing a stairs & lift in a new 2 storey extension to the west of the building to minimise intervention to existing floors and flow of original reading rooms.

The Library Service also requested a more welcoming, naturally lit entrance area, counter areas, staff work areas, integrated storage and more flexible children's reading room that would double as an event space, while upgrading services as required.

The library was surveyed and examined to prepare record drawings of its layout and construction, to identify any defects in the existing building and to establish what interventions could be made with minimal disruption and sensitive design approach to the protected building, to the library service and at minimal cost. The library service has requested that the works would be completed before the end of 2025.

Preliminary historical documentary research was carried out at the same time as the building survey and appraisal to identify the significance, history and use of the structure over time and to support the evidence provided by the building itself.

This report was submitted to the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer for comment.

## 2. History & Architectural Appraisal

### 2.1 Historical Background

Clondalkin Library is a Carnegie Library built in the Arts and Craft style to the designs of T.J. Byrne, one of two such Libraries designed by him in South County Dublin. T.J. Byrne (1876-1939) architect to the South Dublin Rural Council and later Principal Architect to the Board of works. The eighty or so Carnegie Libraries built in Ireland were part funded from the Carnegie Trust which was set up by Scottish businessman Andrew Carnegie. The library was opened in 1910.

The plan comprises of two large open spaces, one each at ground and first floor levels which are used as reading rooms. The stairwell connecting both floors is in the tower. A single-storey former washroom or lavatory which was built attached to the east side of the tower was extended in the 1970's and now accommodates the staff areas. At first floor level there is a staff workroom, store and librarian's office at the eastern end of the children's reading room, which is separated from it by a stud partition plasterboard screen wall. There is a second, single-storey annex attached to the western gable of the library which contains a gas boiler, and which gives access to the land behind and to the north of the library. Extensive alterations were carried out in the early 1970's. The timber wainscot panelling was removed from the walls, the shelving system was replaced, and the walls were repainted.

The fireplaces were removed, the openings blocked up and a new oil-fired central heating system

installed. A dumb waiter was installed in the corner of the reading rooms to move large and heavy deliveries and books up and down.

The fire escape in the western facade at ground floor level was blocked up. The extension to the eastern annexe was built with its ventilated roof lights and roof at a slightly lower level than that over the existing lavatory, now the staff room. In the first floor reading room, a new screen partition was installed creating the librarian's office and workroom. The store must have been partitioned off during site works or later. However, the intervention from this period which is of greatest interest is the redesign of the entrance to the library adjacent to the original entrance that was originally a window.

## 2.2 Architectural Appraisal

The library is a distinctive and rare example of Arts and Crafts architecture and is an important building in Clondalkin and South County Dublin. Although the nature of the library service has changed considerably, the number of customers has multiplied and the area being served has expanded and urbanised in the intervening century, the library still serves its original purpose remarkably well. Its continued use and general good condition are a testament to its designer and builders and to those who use and staff it on a daily basis.

## 2.3 Protected Structure Status

Clondalkin Library is protected under the Planning and Development Acts as follows: the "Public Library, Monastery Road, Clondalkin" is referred to in the Council's Record of Protected Structures (R.P.S.) (Map Ref. No. 149) under the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 – Appendix 3 Record of Protected Structures, referred to as a "two storey library". In the maps of the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 the lands around the library are zoned "to protect and/or improve residential amenity" (pale yellow).

The structure is identified in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) survey of the South Dublin County Area, under Registry Number 11209050. The NIAH rates the structure as being of Regional Rating, and being of artistic, architectural, historical, social and technical interest.



*An extract from the map files in the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. The location of R.P.S. No. 149.*

## 2.4 Conservation areas

Under the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 The library and its site are not part of the Clondalkin Village Architectural Conservation Area (A.C.A.), Special Area of Conservation/Protection area and does not contain a registered Monument on site.

## 2.5 Significant Evaluation

Clondalkin Library is of significant architectural interest. As a fine example of an intact 19<sup>th</sup> century Carnegie Library built in Arts & crafts style. It was constructed of high-quality materials and retains some of its original fittings including a fine example of a beautiful Arts and crafts stairs, and windows. It was designed by Architect TJ Byrne.

### 3. Preliminary examination of the building Condition

#### 3.1 Overview

The relevance of all the above information is that the library appears to have been in continuous use since it was built which in turn explains its general good condition and the changes made to during different periods, particularly the early 1970's and to a lesser extent the mid 1990's-

The exterior of the library was examined from the perimeter at ground level. Parts of the roof, chimneys and rainwater goods were also inspected in greater detail from the small flat roof over the fire escape which can be accessed from the second-floor storeroom.

The assessment begins with the roof and proceeds down the facades and then to the interiors and this section of the report is structured accordingly.

The inspection was based on a visual appraisal only; no floor coverings or boards were lifted and closed parts of the structure and cavities were not opened up for further examination. Where windows were painted shut and cavities were sealed, they were not forcibly opened. No paint, plaster or external render was removed during the examination. Reference was made to previous reports and surveys. No responsibility is accepted for any errors or inaccuracies that may exist in other reference texts.

#### 3.2 Roof

There is a pitched roof over the main body of the library which is dramatically expressed from within the upper reading room by the five expressive roof trusses (of two different designs).

The exposed trusses are made from timber sections bolted together and secured with iron tie bars with adjustable buckle turns. This roof is covered with a grey-green Irish slate, possibly quarried at Killaloe. There is a small dormer roof which connects the southern pitch of the main roof with the northern wall of the tower. There is also a small lead covered flat roof with a slated eaves over the fire exit doors. The slates in the eaves have been lifted by the lead sheet. The "flat" roof over the western single-storey annexe is made from concrete planks covered with a bituminous torch-on felt.

It was not possible to access the roof of the tower which is concealed behind the battlements and

parapet walls. From examination of some of the aerial photographs it appears to be a pitched roof with a central ridge running in a north-south direction.

The roof ridges are dressed with clay tiles bedded on mortar. Some of the mortar bedding has been eroded and washed away. Several slipped slates and “tingles” were noted on the roof, slightly more on the northern pitch. The tingles have been installed to support slates which have slipped from their bearing, either by corrosion of the nail, a.k.a. “nail sickness” or by decay of the supporting batten or where the hole in the top of the slate has been gradually enlarged.

There are three chimneys, one above the centre of each gable and one above the middle of the northern wall. The northern chimney is built of a coarse yellow brick and has been re-pointed recently with a hard mortar. There is one cowl or chimney pot on the western chimney and a space where one is missing. Brickwork has recently spalled from the northern chimney.

The junctions of the slate roof covering, and the chimneys are dressed with lead sheet which has been replaced and generally appears to be in good condition. The gutters and rainwater down pipes are mostly of cast iron. They have not been painted for a long time and properly maintained; peeled paint and pitting of the surface is evident. Others have been repaired with new caulking at the joints. It is recommended that the rainwater goods be repaired, cleaned of all rust, caulked, repaired and repainted.

The roofs and rainwater goods of the annexes are in good condition having been re-roofed with a new bituminous torch-on felt in recent years.

### **3.3 The external walls**

Generally, the external walls appear to be in good condition, no serious cracks, bulges or other defects were noted. Several minor localised defects were noted which should be addressed before they become more serious. These include eroded mortar joints which need to be raked out, brushed and wetted and re-pointed, rusted ferrous pins and nails in joints which need to be removed, drilled holes in the south façade which need to be filled, vegetation growing on the east side of the tower which should be removed, eroded render around the chimneys which should be repaired.

The eastern boundary wall and the external wall of the eastern annexe need more attention; the mortar joints have been extensively eroded and the wall has serious salt damage, probably as a result of the paint or waterproofing finish which was applied to it at some time in the past. The paint on the eastern boundary wall should be cleaned off and the mortar joints re-pointed.

The principal defect in the external walls of the library is localised dampness at one distinct location: the chimney in the centre of the northern wall and the immediate surrounding area. This is evident on the external facade by the extensive staining of the render on both sides of the chimney, particularly in the upper half of the façade. It is evident on the inner surface of the chimney where the internal paint has blistered and peeled from the wall. It is likely that this defect is caused by three, maybe four concurrent

conditions:

1. Two rainwater gutters and soil vent pipes congregate at this point. The pipes and hoppers are generally in poor condition and the fall toward the down pipe is questionable.
2. The brickwork has been re-pointed with a hard, dense and impermeable OPC mortar which has altered the normal drying cycle of the brickwork, trapped moisture and led to spalling of the upper bricks during the recent cold winter.
3. There are insufficient vents in the flue. Formerly this would have been extensively ventilated by the open fireplaces.
4. The leadwork at the junction of the roof and the chimney may be defective. Further investigation is recommended here.
5. The condition of the top of the chimney is unknown. Further investigation is recommended here.

### **3.4 The windows**

The variety of windows is a distinctive feature of this building. Those at ground floor level are steel-framed with infill leaded glazing containing small panels of cylinder or drawn glass – most now incomplete and substantially replaced with translucent plastic.

The original and now irreplaceable glass which remains should be conserved; the rippled reflections of the glass cannot be reproduced in modern replacement glass.

On the southern façade each fixed central light has a side-hung, opening casement on either side. The windows are framed with large blocks of granite. Each of the three windows in the southern façade is surmounted with a small, fixed-light lunette window. There are small steel-framed windows to the tower and eastern annexe with modern replacement casements of varnished hardwood within. The windows of the ground floor reading room are secondary-glazed internally with varnished hardwood, side-hung casements with brass fittings and a single pane of modern float glass. These were probably installed during the works in the 1970's.

The windows are generally in good condition. Some of the casements have been painted shut in the past, are stiff with age and dust and can no longer be operated. One window in the north-eastern corner of the ground floor has been distorted as a result of mechanical damage, probably after being forcibly pried open in the past. Most of the windows still have their original ironmongery including their decorative scrolled handles. The steel framed window in the staff room is in poor condition; the plaster around its edge having fallen away and the window poorly re-fixed to the wall opening with plastic lugs in the recent past.

The timber in the first-floor windows which can be easily accessed appear to be in reasonably good condition and have been regularly re-painted. However, those in the tower are much worse probably because they are harder to access. The paint has blistered and peeled and exposed the wood to the elements for too long. Some parts of these windows have decayed locally, typically above the sill where

water can collect. Approximately 5 windows are so affected. In these cases, the badly decayed sections of timber will need to be cut out and replaced with new heartwood timber spliced in. The paint will have to be sanded down and the windows repainted.

### **3.5 External Doors**

The main entrance doors are twin, inward opening, solid, heavy timber doors with a boarding finish and brass hinges. They are probably not original. The external doors from the tower / staircase are varnished, solid timber twin doors, opening outward, probably not original. They now act as emergency exits operated internally by a push-bar mechanism. The doors are substantial and appear to be in good condition. The fire exit door was a little stiff in operation and should be lubricated and adjusted slightly so it opens more easily.

### **3.6 The Interior, joinery, masonry and fireplaces.**

The walls of the original library are finished internally with smooth, plaster (probably lime based) and gypsum plaster to the 1970's extension, painted in different colours with modern plastic emulsion paints.

Only two original doors remain, one which now separates the under-stair storeroom and the staff room. The other is the small door which opens to the very small store under the first half-lading. They are in good condition. It is important that both doors are retained.

The main stairs are made with either concrete or granite treads built into the external wall and a distinctive Arts and Crafts steel balustrade. Unfortunately, the stairs have been recently covered with a green carpet tile with black plastic nosings which makes closer examination difficult. The secondary stairs which connect the first and second floors is built from and finished with timber. It has open risers and is much steeper than the main stairs. No obvious defect was noted in either stair.

### **3.7 Mechanical and electrical fittings and fixtures and services**

The library appears to have been in continuous use, so it is serviced with the necessary water supply, electrical supply and telecommunications.

Some of the services are rather antiquated and have been incrementally developed in an ad-hoc way. Exposed cable runs, boxed out corners for ducts and pipes and a plethora of chases, holes and cuts in partition walls and ceilings are evidence of this.

The central heating is provided by a gas boiler in the western annexe which provides heated water to radiators through exposed wall-mounted pipe runs. The system appears to date from the early 2000's. There are minimal controls on this heating system. During the inspections of the building, it was noted that the reading rooms overheated within 1 hour of the library opening to the public and that windows were opened while occupancy levels were relatively low. Therefore, occupancy was probably not a major contributory factor. Consideration might be given to removing the existing gas boiler and fitting a

more efficient boiler in the east of the library kitchen area.

The route of the underground pipes is not known with certainty. The architectural drawings from the early 1970's show them in the yard space to the east of the library and a foul water manhole cover is on the pavement outside the library. It would appear that the 1970's extension was built over two Armstrong Junctions which are concealed below the floor covering. The runs and destination of the foul and surface water drainage and their condition should be investigated further.

#### **4. Description of Proposed works & Architectural Impact Assessment**

##### **4.1 Summary of Proposal**

The proposed works will be completed in a sensitive manner as not to undermine or adversely affect the original built fabric. Innovative solutions, combined with high quality design and materials will be used to avoid conflicting with the existing features while adding to the richness of the historic interior.

The proposal considers best practice principals in conservation.

Please refer to the Photographs & drawings in Appendix A and B.

The proposed development primarily consists of:

1. The introduction of a new vertical circulation route to manage universal access, by means of a lightweight 2 story extension and the demolition of single storey boiler house/ bin store for this proposal.
2. Internal works include 3no. new openings & 1no. opening of existing door, in external fabric to provide access for circulation. New staff work/storage room to ground floor reading room. New glazed entrance Lobby & external door, including upgrading of External fire door, and fire lining of stairs & opening of original door opening to relocate public WC to original location.
3. Upgrade of internal finishes including floor coverings, joinery, shelves, stair nosing's, & paint work.
4. Conservation and repair work to existing fabric, Windows, and replacement where necessary.
5. Conservation and repair work to Roof, gutters, facias/ soffits & Chimneys where required.
6. Upgrading of Mechanical & Electrical services.
7. Upgrading of external area to front/rear of Library, including, Lighting, signage & soft Landscaping.
8. All associated ancillary works required to carry out above works.

##### **4.2 The ground floor boiler room (1970's addition) & bin store**

Proposal to demolish the one storey western annex, to build a two-storey lightweight metal clad & structurally glazed extension including stairs, lift and emergency exit. The extension will be set back from the front façade & be supported by a separate structure & pinned back to existing Library using minimum fixing points.

**Impacts:**

This proposal includes a material alteration to the character of the building and involves creating openings in the external structure. A holistic approach will be taken in all aspects of the building extension design, so as not to interfere or detract from the external character of the protected structure. The impact should be seen as positive as this intervention allows the library to be used to its full extent and be universally accessible.

**4.3 The ground floor reading room (original)**

An existing opening blocked up in 1970's to be re-opened and to be used as access to stairs @ ground floor. Proposed new opening in western external wall for lift access as shown on drawings. The existing public desk location will be moved from its current position as shown on the attached drawings.

The existing computer points and electrical points will be closed off and the floorboards repaired locally as necessary, using suitable materials & techniques. New computer points and electrical points will be mounted to service the repositioned public desk. New storage and shelving will be installed. The existing carpet floor covering will be replaced as necessary.

All new electrical cables will be surface mounted onto the existing plaster on the walls to avoid damaging the existing fabric and will be concealed behind the new shelving and storage behind the counter. New lighting will be installed over the public counter.

**Impacts:**

The new openings/ joinery and finishes have been designed to be modest in form and scale. The impacts will be positive allowing for universal access and brighter, more welcoming interior space highlighting the original features of the existing ground floor reading room.

**4.4 Staff workroom**

Proposal for new staff working room as shown on attached drawings.

**Impacts:**

Relocating the staff workroom to the ground floor reading room – with lower ceiling level frees up the first floor reading room to its original scale and keeps all staff facilities together.

**4.5 Entrance lobby**

Proposal to remove 1970's entrance lobby construction and replace with new glazed entrance Lobby with automated sliding door to main entrance.

**Impacts:**

The proposal is designed avoid heavy partition walls, that block natural light and to create visual oversight of main entrance door from the control desk, therefore creating positive impact and a more welcoming and accessible entrance.

**4.6 The public WC (built 1970's as a store & refurbed in 2016 as a WC):**

The existing window will be modified & replaced with a door to maintain access to the rear of the

building for maintenance purposes only. This will become staff WC due to access required.
<b>Impacts:</b> This impact is therefore positive as it keeps access for building maintenance to rear.
<b>4.7 The staff room:</b> The existing original doors to the under-stair area will be retained and reopened and will not be affected by the works. This will be converted into a public WC as per original use of this location.
<b>Impacts:</b> The proposal allows for original access doorway to be used, this will enhance stairwell lobby as it removes seating/storage, and allow for central location of public WC, the impact will therefore be a positive impact.
<b>4.8 The first floor reading room:</b> Two proposed openings in western external wall for access to proposed accessible stairs & lift. Remove the partition screen wall to the staff workroom and office to allow access to full plan for children's Library & proposed events for the library. The partition walls do not return to ceiling level, and were a later addition in 1970's. The floorboards will be repaired locally as necessary. The existing carpet floor covering will be replaced as necessary using appropriate materials & techniques, and new public counter, and standalone office pod for staff meetings, and fitted joinery for storage/ seating areas. Suitable materials & techniques will be applied.
<b>Impacts:</b> The proposed openings are modest in form and scale and in keeping with original opening in external wall that was blocked up, therefore the impact will be minimal and allowing access to the proposed circulation route but retaining character of the space. The existing partition screen impacts on the scale and form of the original first floor room, by removing and replacing with multi-use storage/seating will have a positive impact on the character of the room.
<b>4.9 Windows &amp; External doors</b> Repairs, and /or partial replacement of windows & doors. (separate survey and method statement will be carried out prior to compilation of tender documents)
<b>Impacts:</b> The proposal is driven by the need to retain & conserve the existing windows that are remaining. The design also allows for preventive measures, a need for more natural light/ ventilation into the building.
<b>4.10 External works</b> Upgrade of external lighting, planting, signage & removal of stainless-steel rails to gentle slope &

associated works. Proposal for Corten steel signage & trim to proposed planting bed, and contemporary LED light fittings fixed from planting bed to uplight façade.

**Impacts:**

The proposal has been designed to draw visitors & users into the building. Due to over development of the area, the external works will make a positive impact by being well lit, more open with removal of rail and softer planting approach. The impacts are expected to be positive.

**4.11 Mechanical & Electrical works:**

Upgrade of heating system & associated works as required.

**Impacts:**

These upgrade works will have a significant effect on the thermal comfort & useability of the building; therefore, the impact is expected to be positive.

**4.12 Protective measures**

Measures will be taken during the works to protect the building from damage by the works themselves. Safety measures will be put in place to protect and safeguard the protected structures original fabric and all architectural features.

A method statement will be provided and agreed and approved by the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer. No cutting welding or other hot works will be permitted in the interiors without a hot-works permit.

The contractor will be required to clean the works area on a daily basis and to carry out the works in an orderly fashion, in order to minimise the potential damage to the building fabric. Library management will be required to prepare a special emergency evacuation plan and building protection plan for use during the works if/when existing detection and alarm systems may be temporarily disabled.

**5. Conclusion**

All future interventions in Clondalkin Library under this proposal will be guided by and carried out in accordance with the principles of good conservation practice. In addition, for the purposes of the Part 8, proposals and methodology have been discussed with the Councils Architectural Conservation Officer and have been assessed with regard to being in line Architectural conservation principles and best conservation practice.

Reported amended in August 2024 by Lorraine Byrne MRIAI  
Architectural Services Department,  
South Dublin County Council.

Original report prepared by Feargal Ó Súilleabháin MRIAI

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Clondalkin Library, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

**Appendix A- Photographic Survey**

Please read in conjunction with Architects Impact assessment Report.



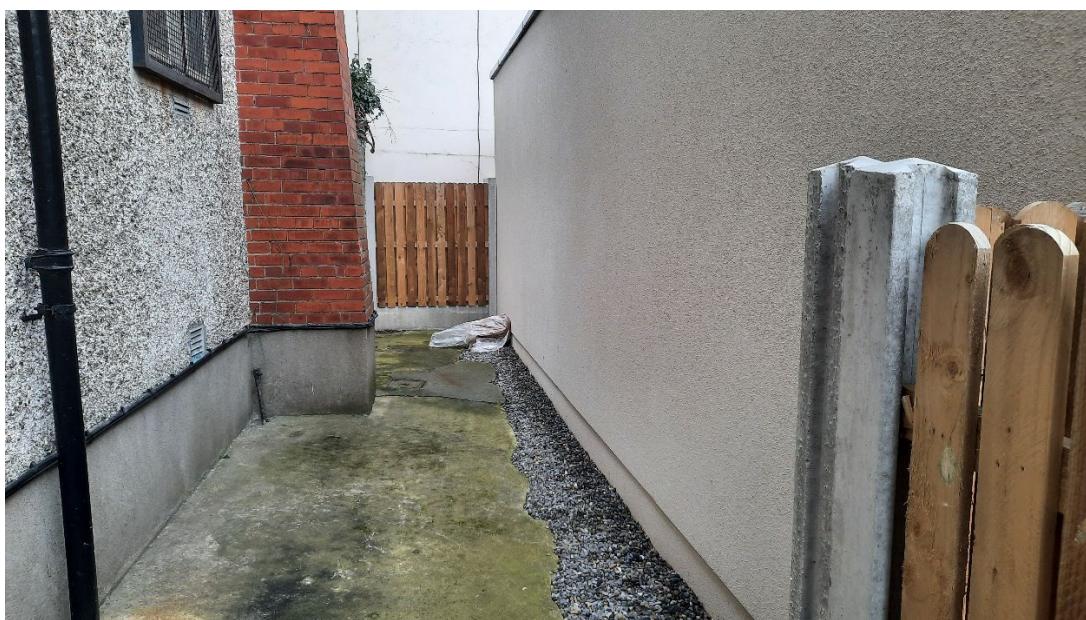
The library from the south-east and a close-up view of the bricks in the south façade.

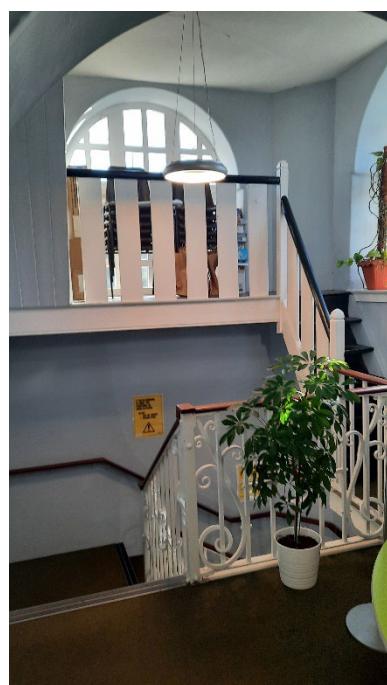


The granite hood over the entrance. Note the different texture, colour and finishing profile of the OPC binder mortar in the joints between the bricks in this area and the lime bonder mortar elsewhere. the fire exit.



A view of the roof & northern chimney. Note the decorative pattern and the bright coloured patches of recently spalled brickwork.



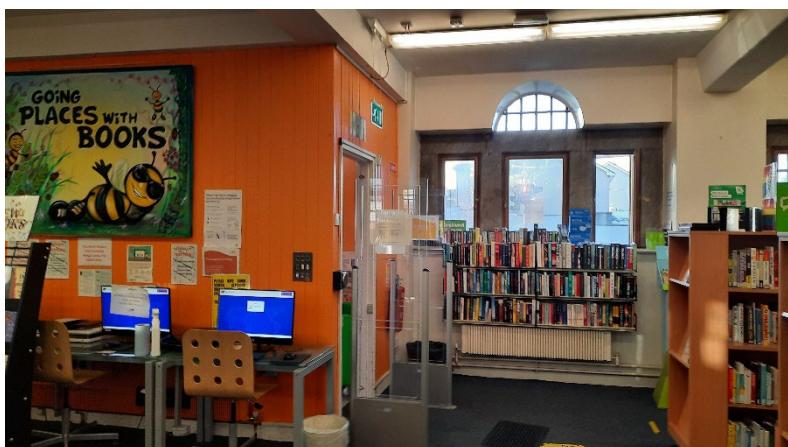


Views of the stairs and its Arts and Crafts balustrade



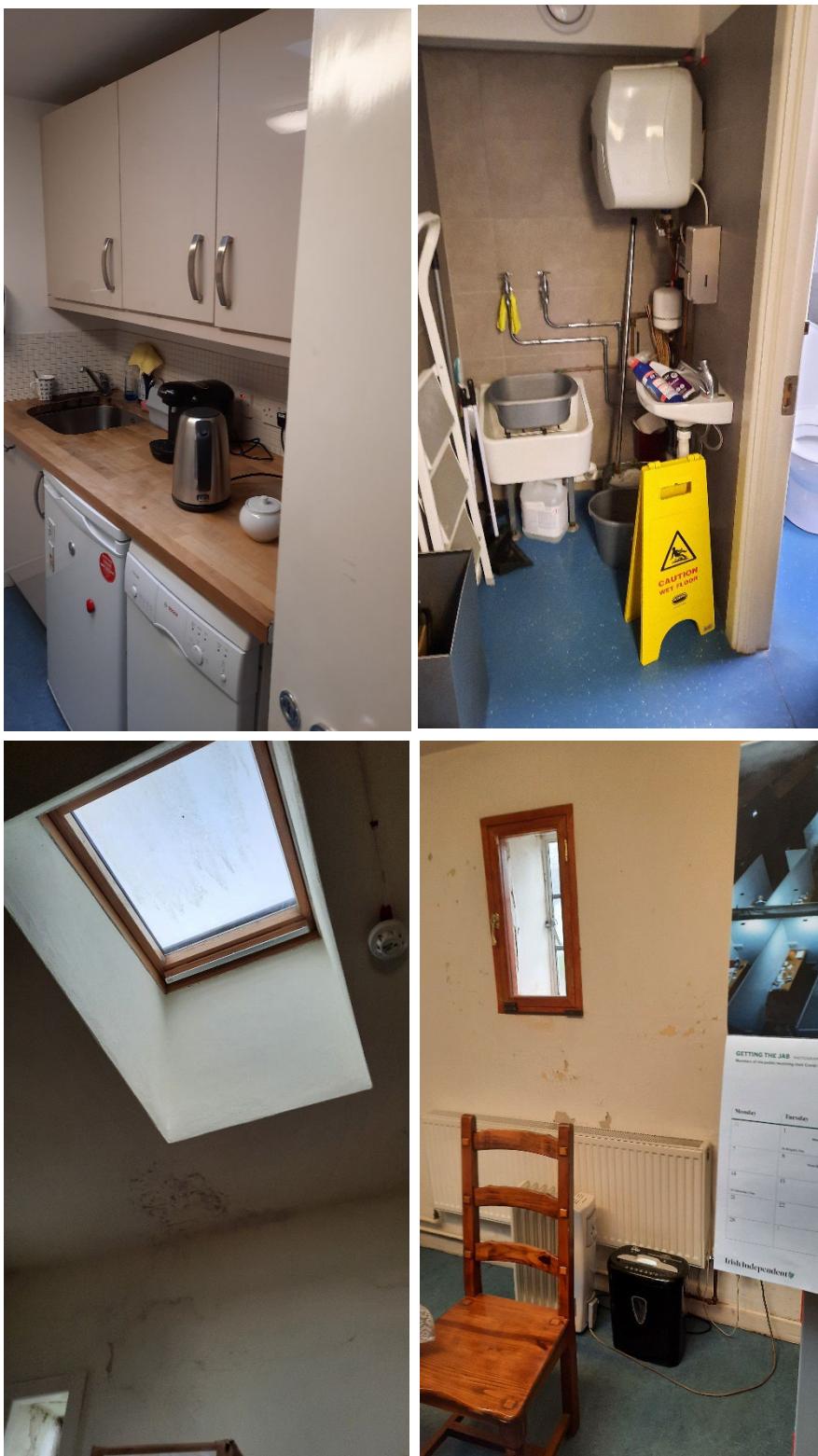


Views of the ground floor Reading room





First floor reading room, viewed from the west. Note the heavier roof truss and the new screen partition



Staff kithen area / cleaner store & WC

Rooflight / window in one storey tower room.

Architectural Services Department

Clondalkin Library, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

**Appendix B – Architectural drawings**

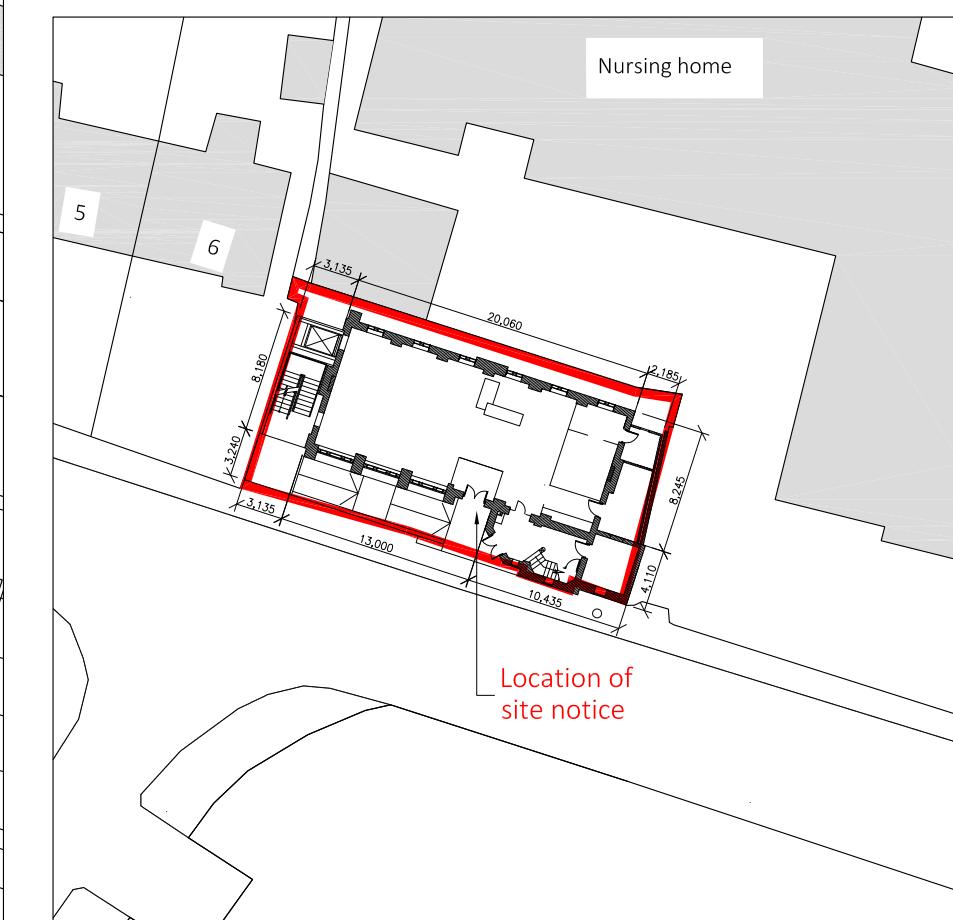
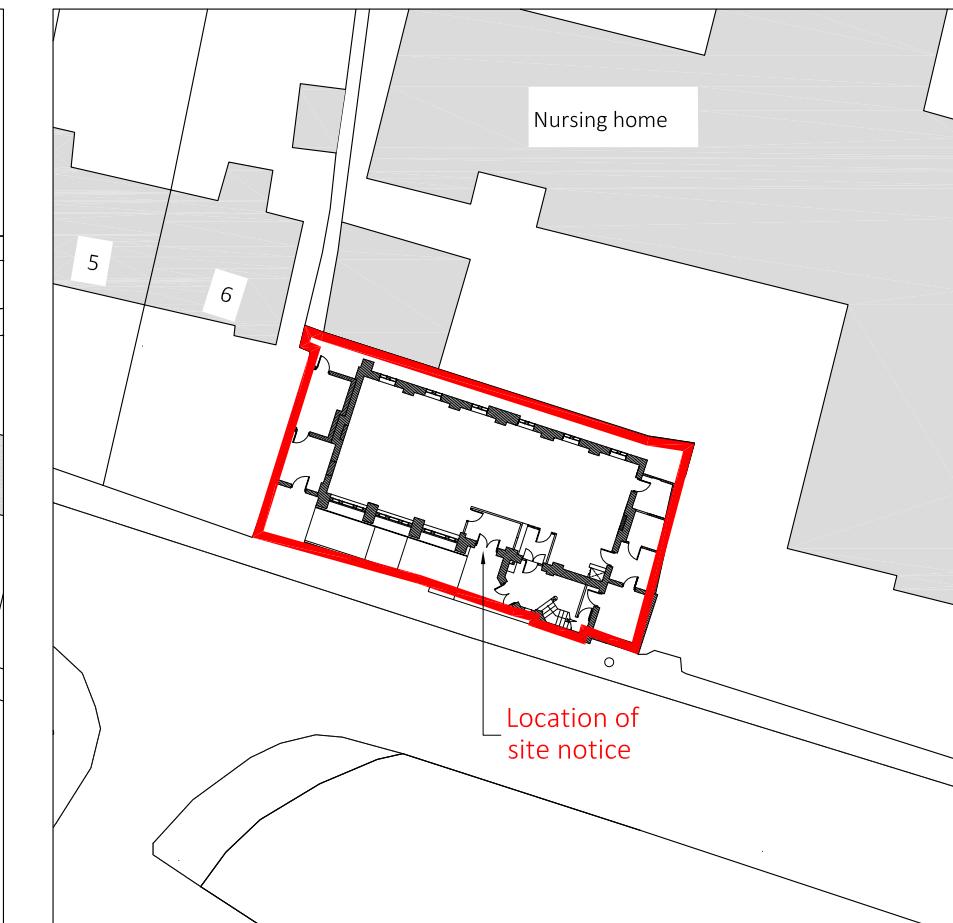
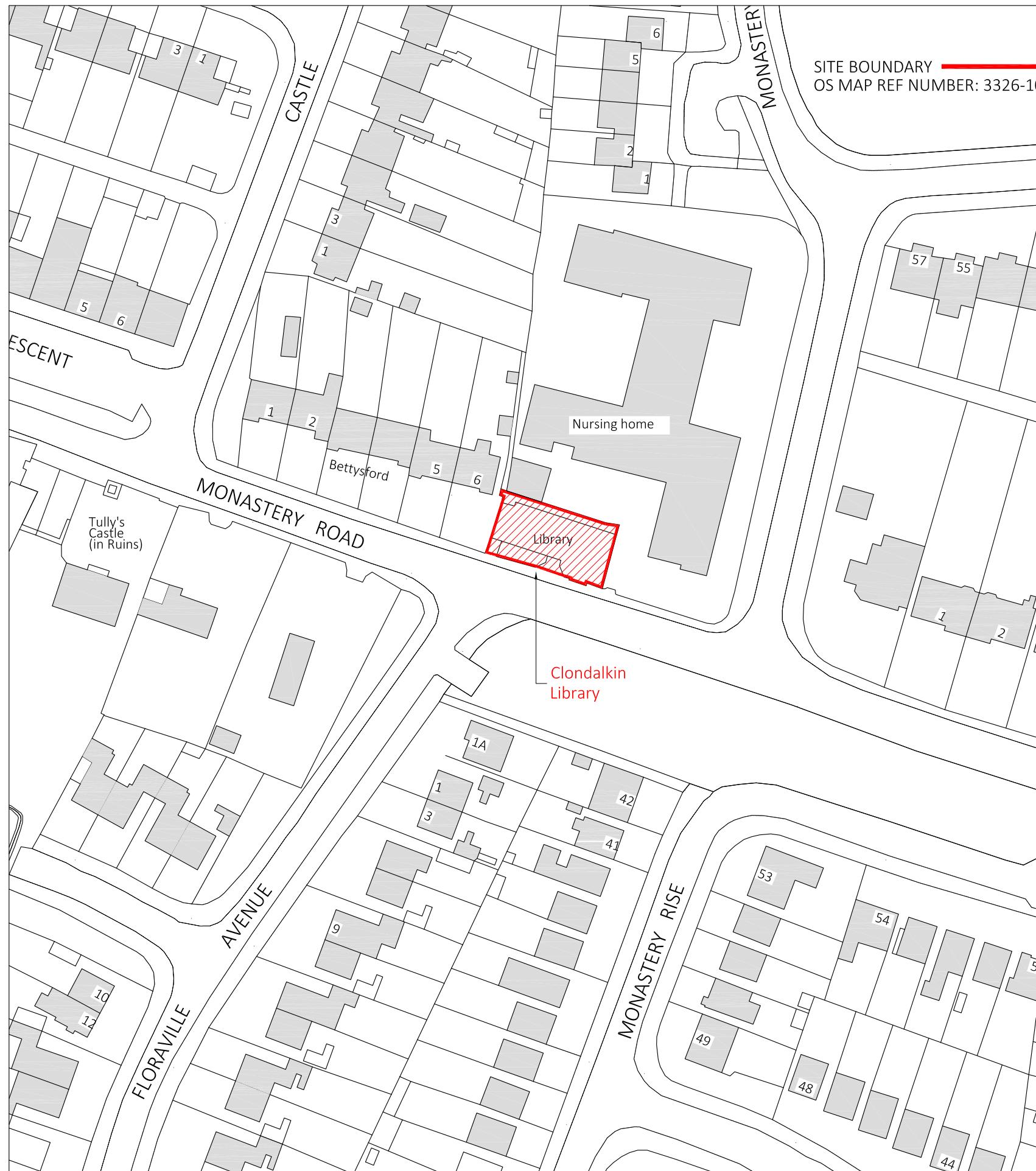
Please read in conjunction with Architects Impact assessment Report.



## PART 8

### Clondalkin Library Monastery Road

Proposed Extension &  
Refurbishment | 2024



SHEET 1

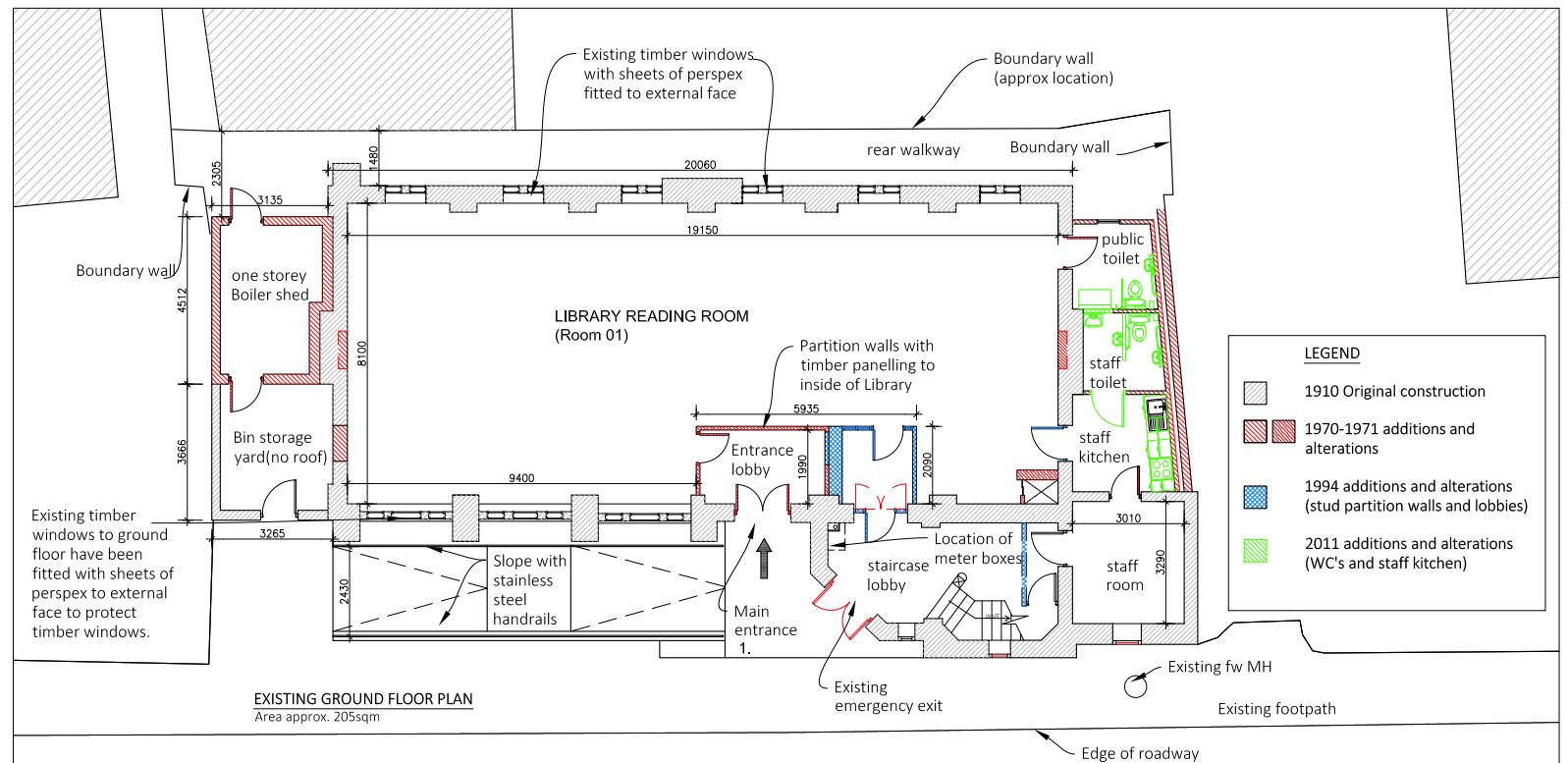


# PART 8

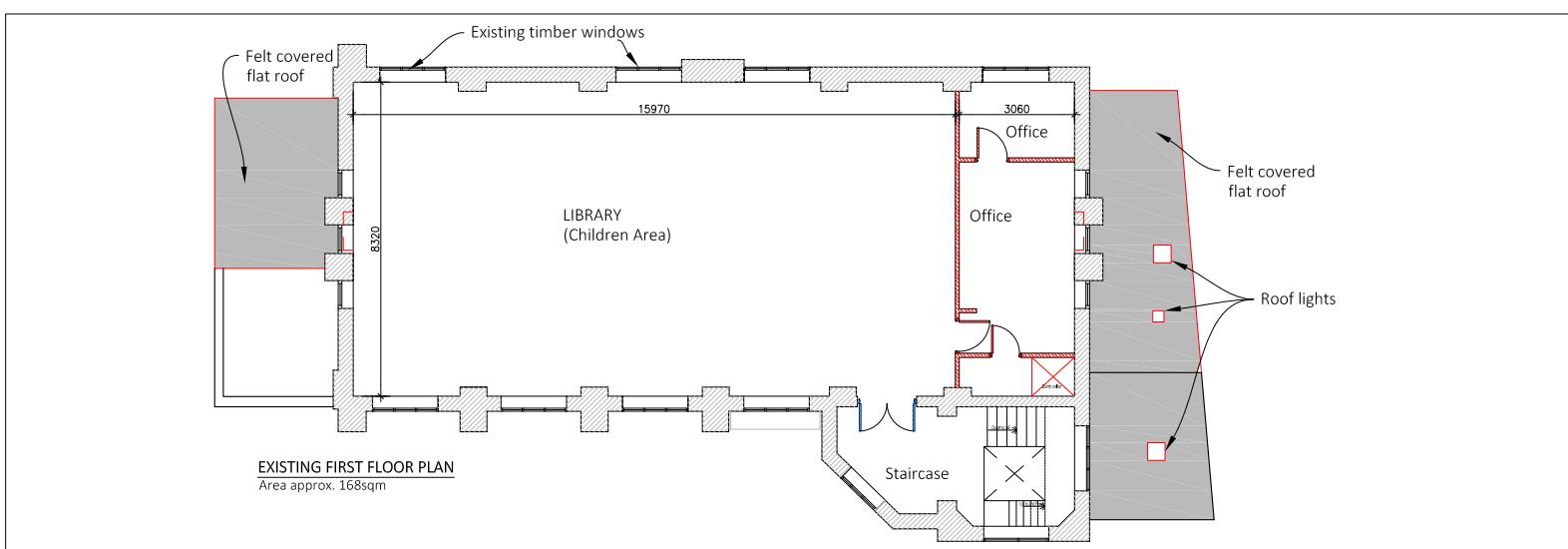
# Clondalkin Library

Monastery Road

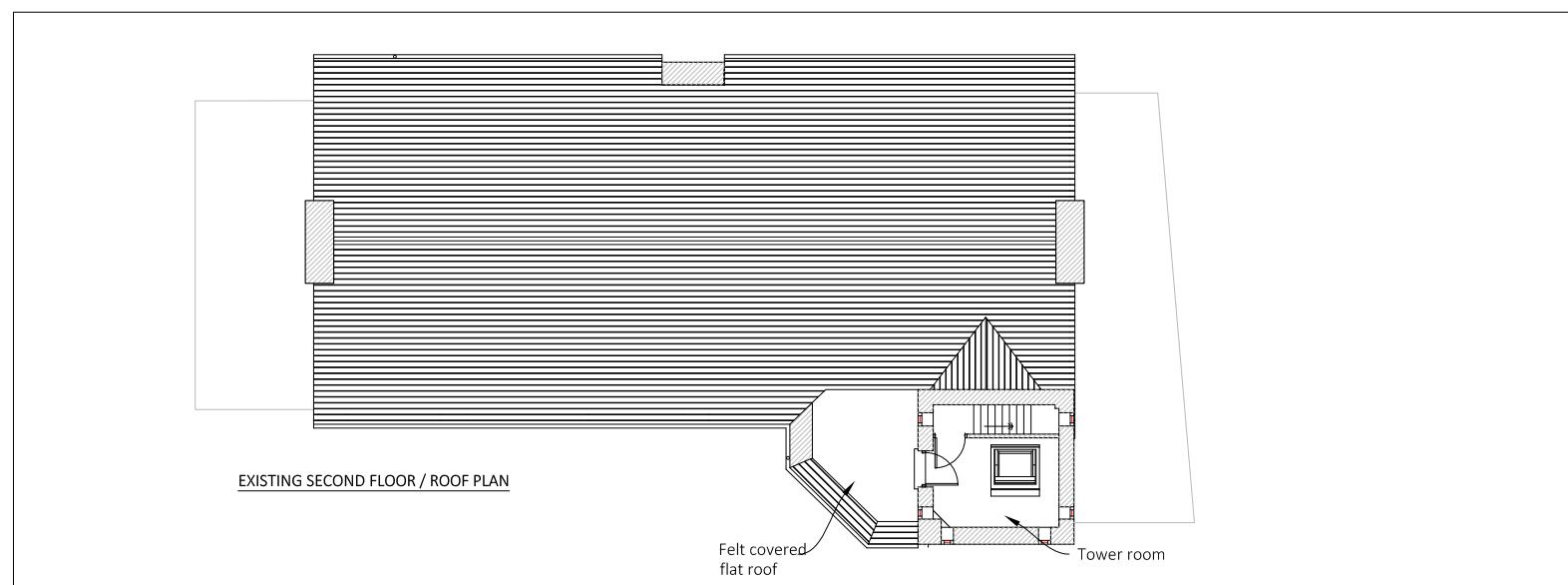
## Proposed Extension & Refurbishment | 2024



### EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION FROM MONASTERY ROAD



## EXISTING GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS (with perspex outerframe)



#### EXISTING BIN STORAGE AREA (no roof)

## EXISTING FLOOR PLANS

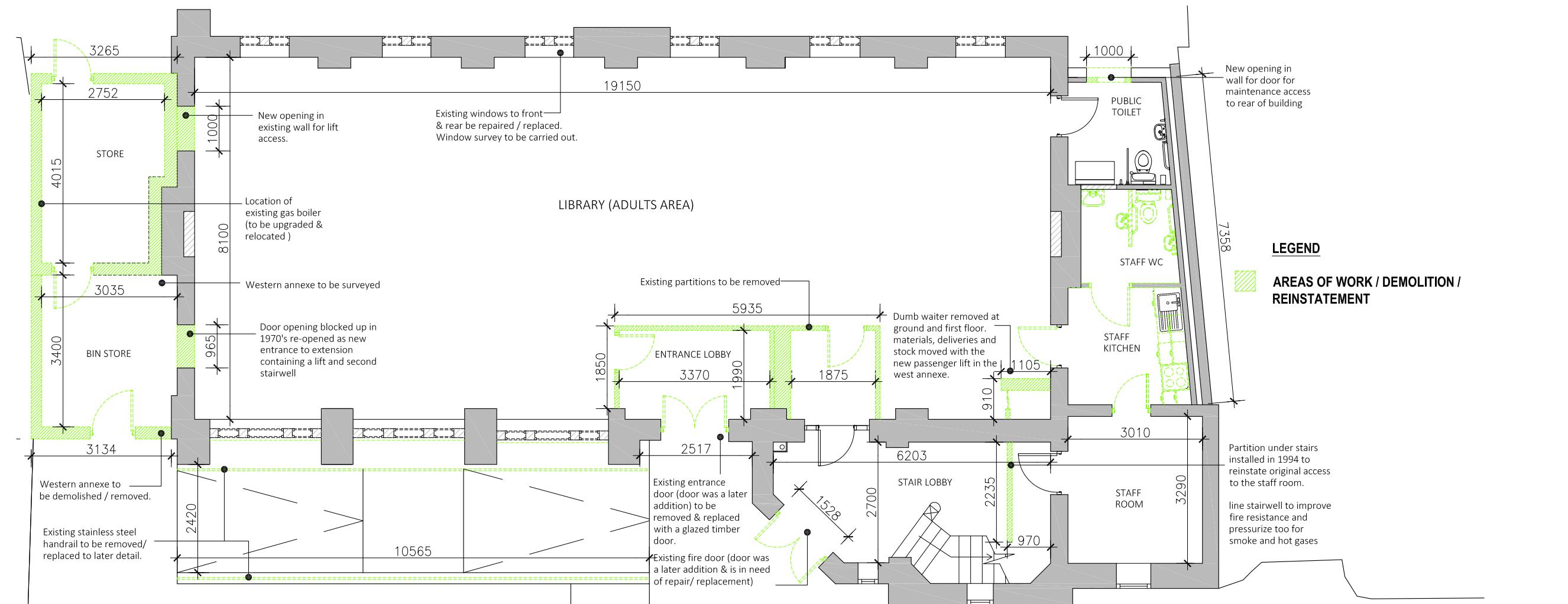
SCALE = 1:200 @ A3



# PART 8

## Clondalkin Library Monastery Road

Proposed Extension &  
Refurbishment | 2024



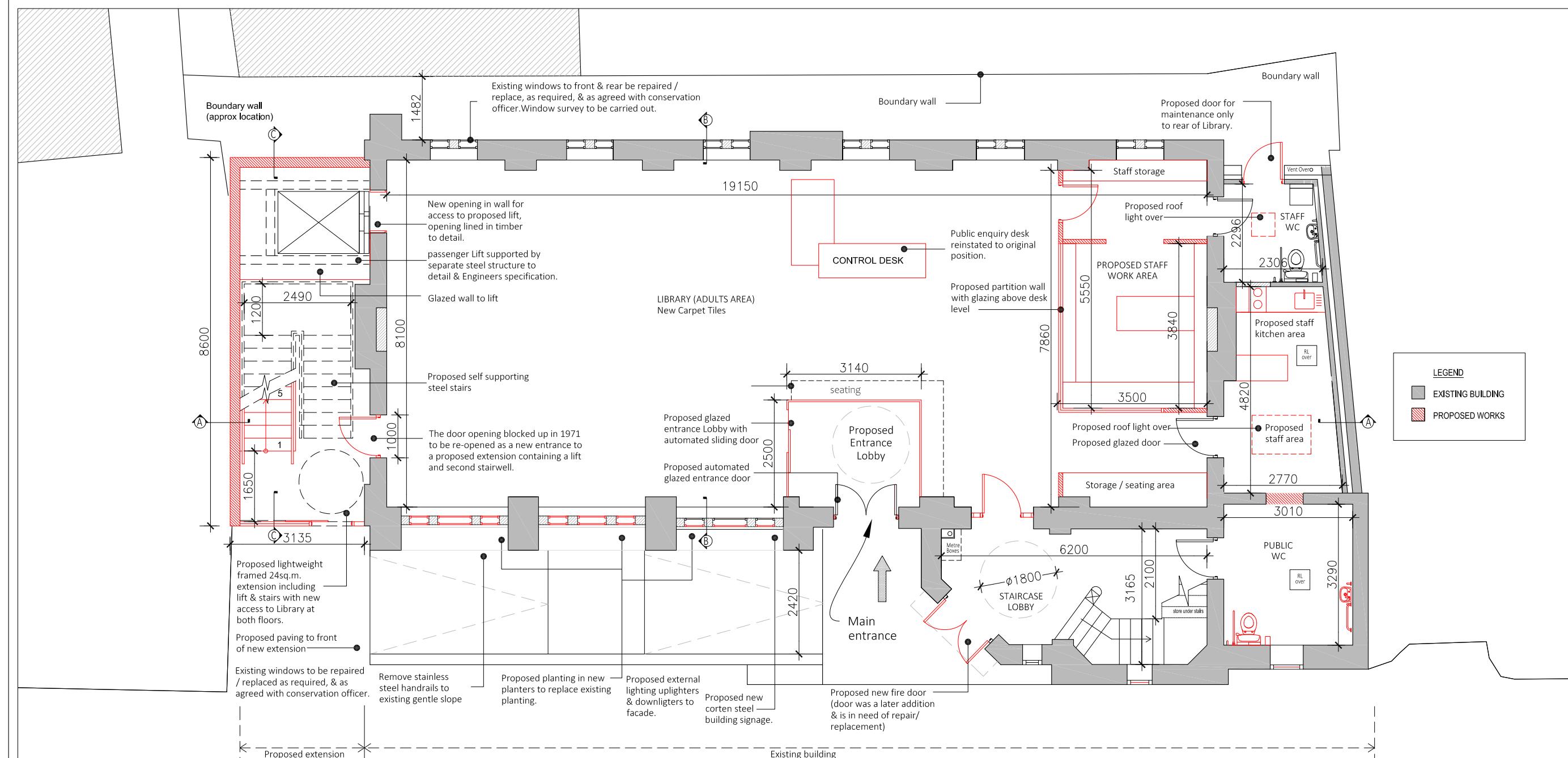


NORTH

# PART 8

# Clondalkin Library

## Proposed Extension & Refurbishment | 2024



## PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR

PIAN 1:100 @ A3

SHEET 4



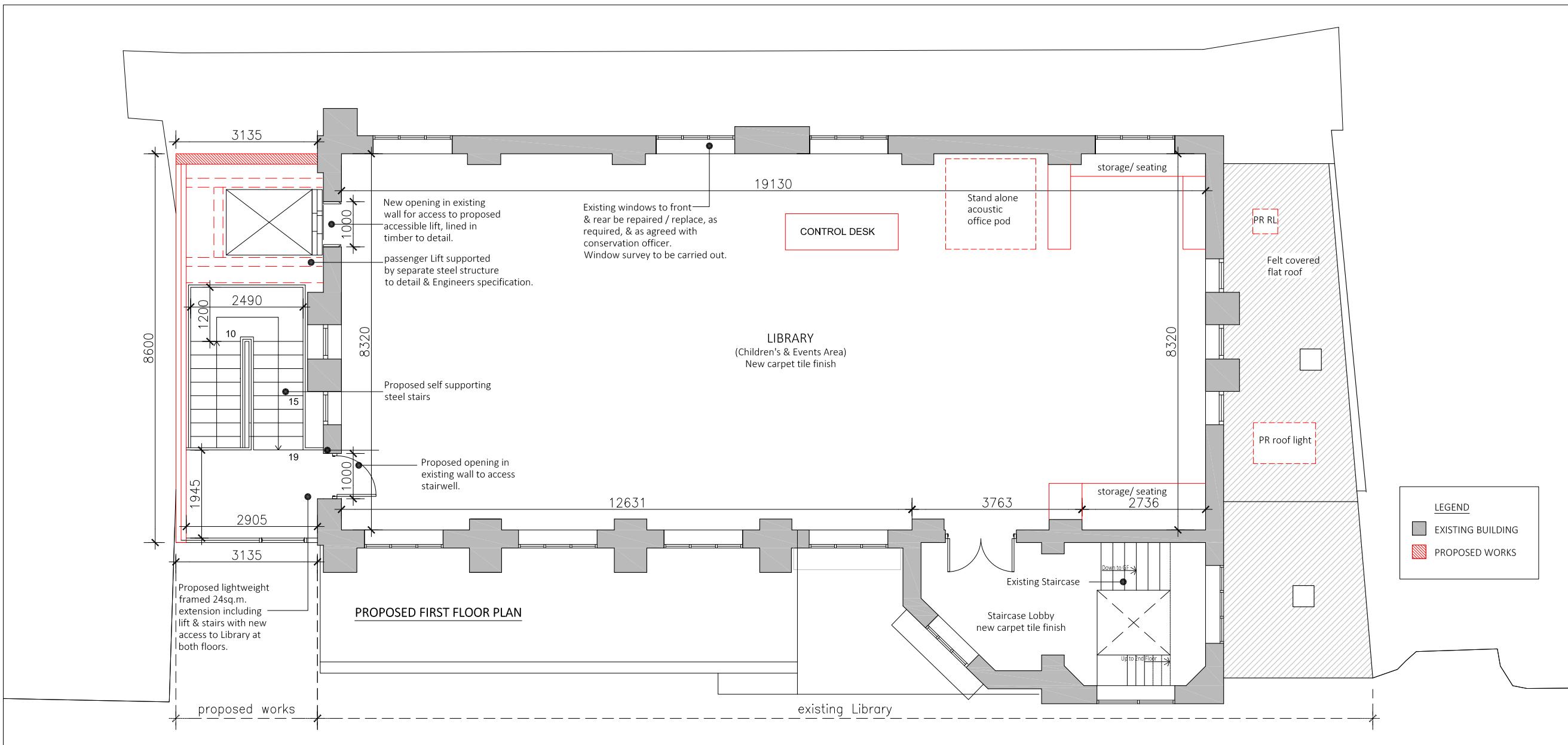
## NORTH

# PART 8

# Clondalkin Library

## Monastery Road

## Proposed Extension & Refurbishment | 2024



## PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE = 1:100 @ A3

SHEET 5

EXISTING ELEVATIONS & SECTION

SCALE = 1:100 @ A3



PART 8

Clondalkin  
Library  
Monastery Road

Proposed Extension &  
Refurbishment | 2024

SHEET 6



NORTH

## PART 8

Clondalkin  
Library  
Monastery RoadProposed Extension &  
Refurbishment | 2024

## PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION &amp; SECTION A-A

SCALE = 1:100 @ A3

Existing windows to front & rear  
be repaired / replace, as required,  
& as agreed with conservation officer.  
Window survey to be carried out.

Aluminium clad Lift shaft

Proposed lightweight extension  
to be supported by separate  
steel structure & clamped to  
existing building. (to engineers  
detail)

Proposed powdercoated self  
supporting steel stairs with  
separate

Frameless structural glazing  
system to facade to detail.  
Glazing to high level only on  
west facade.

Proposed level access glazed  
emergency sliding door.  
Door only used in emergency -  
Location of main entrance to  
Library to be retained.

Remove stainless steel railing to  
inside of gentle slope.

Proposed lower level planting  
under window, new uplighters,  
wall lights & building signage  
all to detail.



Existing Library

Main entrance door

PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

Scale 1:100

Existing windows to front & rear  
be repaired / replace, as  
required, & as agreed with  
conservation officer.  
Window survey to be carried out.

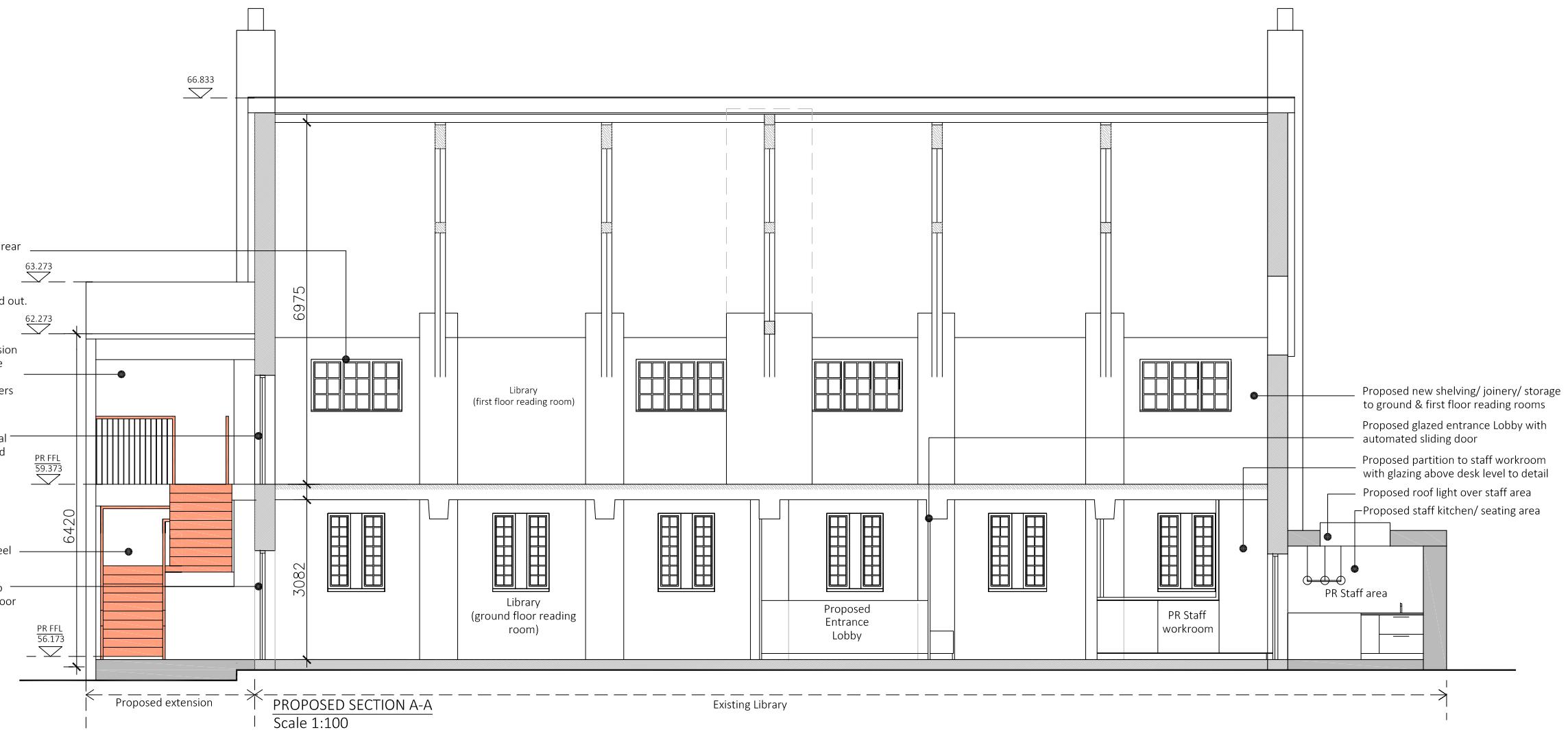
Aluminium clad Lift shaft

Proposed lightweight extension  
to be supported by separate  
steel structure & clamped to  
existing building. (to engineers  
detail)

Proposed opening in external  
fabric for access to proposed  
stairs

Proposed self supporting steel  
stairs

Proposed access doorway to  
stairs - in original external door  
opening



Existing Library

PROPOSED SECTION A-A

Scale 1:100

## SHEET 7



NORTH

## PART 8

Clondalkin  
Library

Monastery Road

Proposed Extension &  
Refurbishment | 2024

SHEET 8

