



Davidson, Reading



Design & Access Statement
on behalf of



10 November 2017

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of an application for Detailed Planning Permission, made on behalf of Schroders, for the ground floor and basement proposals to Davidson, Forbury Square, Reading, RG1 3EU.

This Design and Access Statement addresses the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The DMPO and the National Planning Practice Guidance requires planning applications, with some exceptions, to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that explains the design principles that have been applied to the development, and illustrates how issues of access have been dealt with.

NOTE: Unless specifically noted, all images and sketches are for illustrative purposes only and represent design intent. They are not presented as verified views.

2.00 PROPOSALS

2.01 Client’s Brief

The brief for the proposals is to improve the current entry into Davidson from Forbury Square and the covered passageway through to Abbey Square, as well as re-activating the ground floor façade on this lower street level to Abbey Square.

The entry into Davidson is currently hard to identify when viewed from Forbury Square and on wetter days, lacks any protection from the elements. The passageway through to Abbey Square is very dark and gloomy, even with the lighting turned on, making the route very uninviting. This gloominess is heightened by the bulky lift enclosure blocking most of the light entering the passageway from the southern end.

2.02 Description of Proposals

The scope of changes will primarily focus on re-defining the existing entry position and the passageway with the introduction of a metal and timber double height portal canopy with warmer coloured paving at its base, expanding from Forbury Square through the passageway and onto Abbey Square. These warmer materials will lift the atmosphere within these areas and create a more welcoming transition under the building. In addition, the latter will also be used as the palette to the upgrade works to the existing reception and atrium internally. The intervention will include the introduction of building signage, located on the facade facing Forbury Square.

To re-activate the lower ground elevations to Abbey Square new glazed façades are proposed either side of the passageway, to form the frontage to new executive showers and cycle storage with entry from this street elevation. The proposal also includes a gym on the right hand side of the southern entrance, requiring a change of in use from class B1 (a) Offices to D2 Assembly and Leisure.

The buildings access provision and security requirements have also been reviewed and updated as part of this process.

The proposal also includes the amendment of the building name from Davidson House to Davidson.

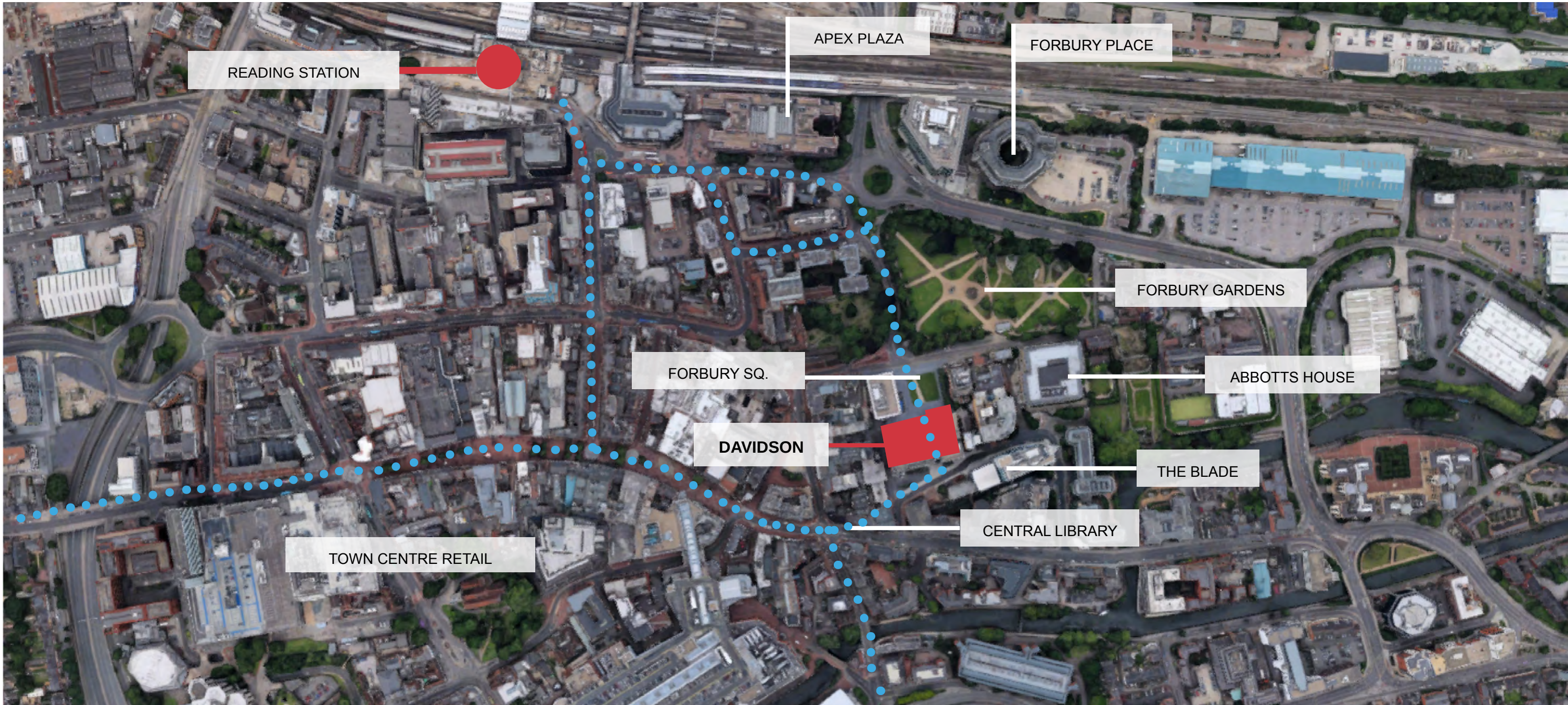
3.00 SITE HISTORY & ANALYSIS

3.01 Location

Davidson is located within the Reading Central Area, the Central Core Area and the Office Core Area, within an air quality management area where several commercial buildings have recently being redeveloped. The main scope of the intervention focuses on identifying the entrances to the pedestrian passageway through the building as part of a key pedestrian route between the station to the Town retail centre. The proposed intervention seeks to improve this important ‘short cut’ between the Office Core and the Town

Centre retail area with the improvements to the south of the building, Abbot Square, reactivating this street frontage to the rear of the building.

Key:
Pedestrian Routes ● ● ● ● ●



Aerial view of Reading

3.02 Local Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

The Market Place/London Street Conservation Area lies to the west of the site, incorporating most of the neighbouring office buildings. Forbury Gardens, to the north of the site, is a grade II listed park and is within the designated area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Reading Abbey. Various Memorials / walls at the gardens are also listed, the Maiwand memorial, the shelter at the north east corner of the gardens, the archway and retaining walls connecting Forbury Gardens and the Abbey Ruins are Grade II and II* listed.

Key:

Market Place Conservation areas

Davidson House

Forbury's Gardens

Building/spaces of significance
(close proximity)

★

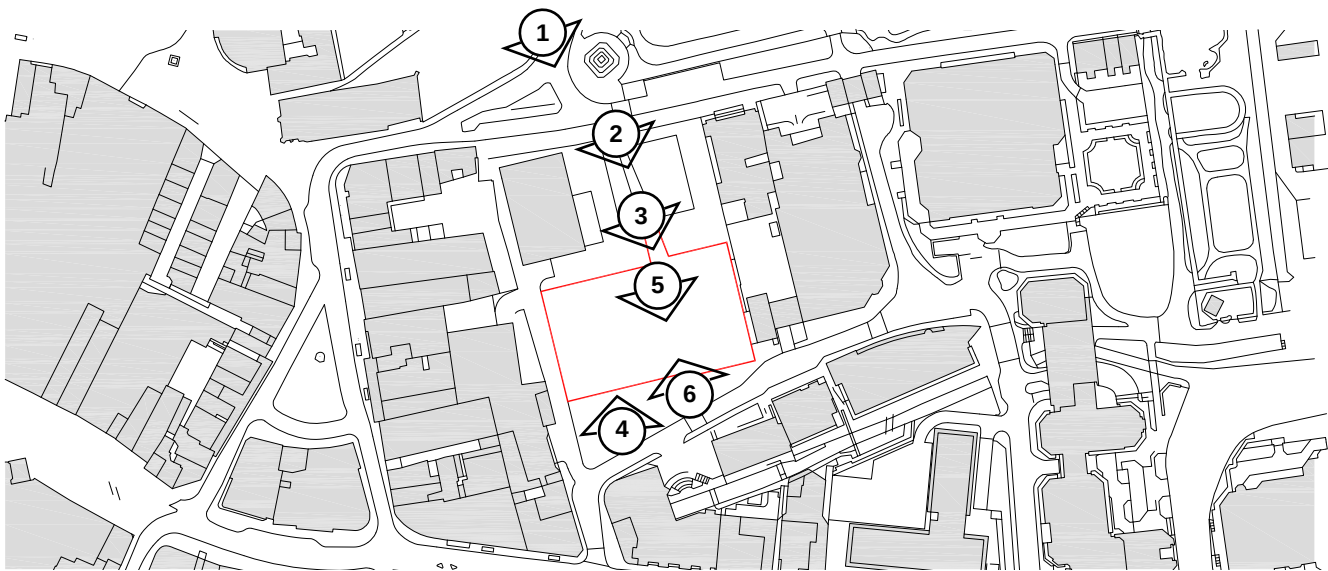


Aerial view of Reading

3.03 Existing Site/ Building Analysis

The site lies at the southern side of Forbury Square, which extends to the north up to The Forbury, adjacent to the Grade II listed Forbury Gardens. The Square boast buildings of similar office and other uses including the Forbury Hotel and various A3 Units. Within Davidson, the north-west elevation is currently leased to Carluccio's which is widely used both by the public and by the building users. These valuable amenities represent a key asset to the square outside office hours with Carluccio's peak times being at the weekends, especially in the summer.

The building, built in 2000, looks well maintained yet the entrance lacks visibility from the opposite side of the square and does not offer any protection to the users against adverse weather conditions. In addition, the dark existing paving within the passageway and the disabled lift at the southern entrance, makes the space feel very oppressive. The back of the building, although south facing, is scarcely used at present.



Plan view of site + photograph positions

4.00 SCHEME DESIGN

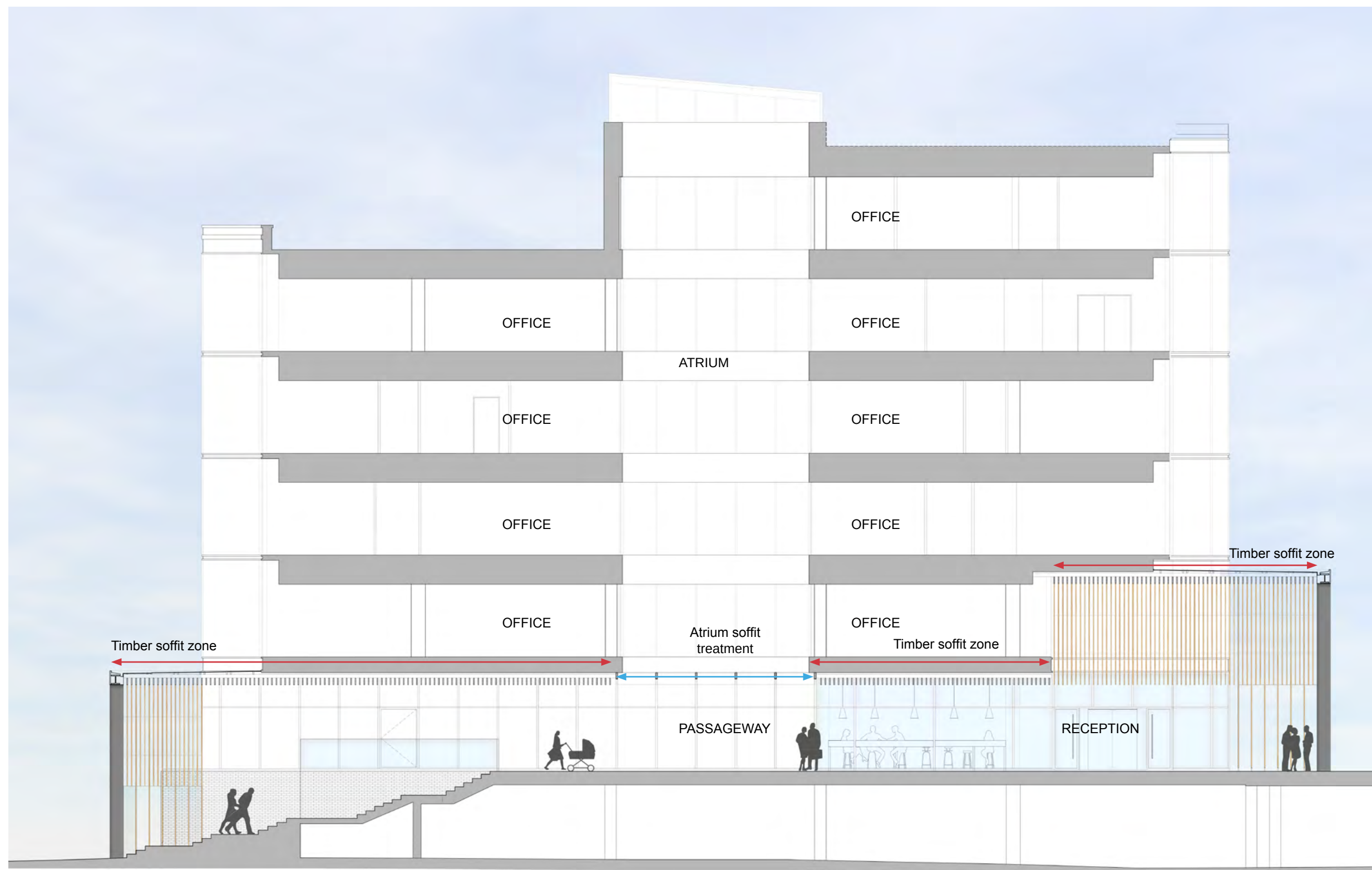
4.01 Entrance canopy and passageway

The intervention seeks to align with the modern aesthetic of the existing building. The portal canopies will add visual interest to the entry point of the building offering a focus to the passageway and with the interior improvements will enhance the environment and provide shelter against adverse weather conditions for the building users and public. The intervention will also include linking the entrance paving to the existing walkway segmenting the lawn areas of Forbury’s Square, joining the building to the public realm with light paving tones to lift the passageway.

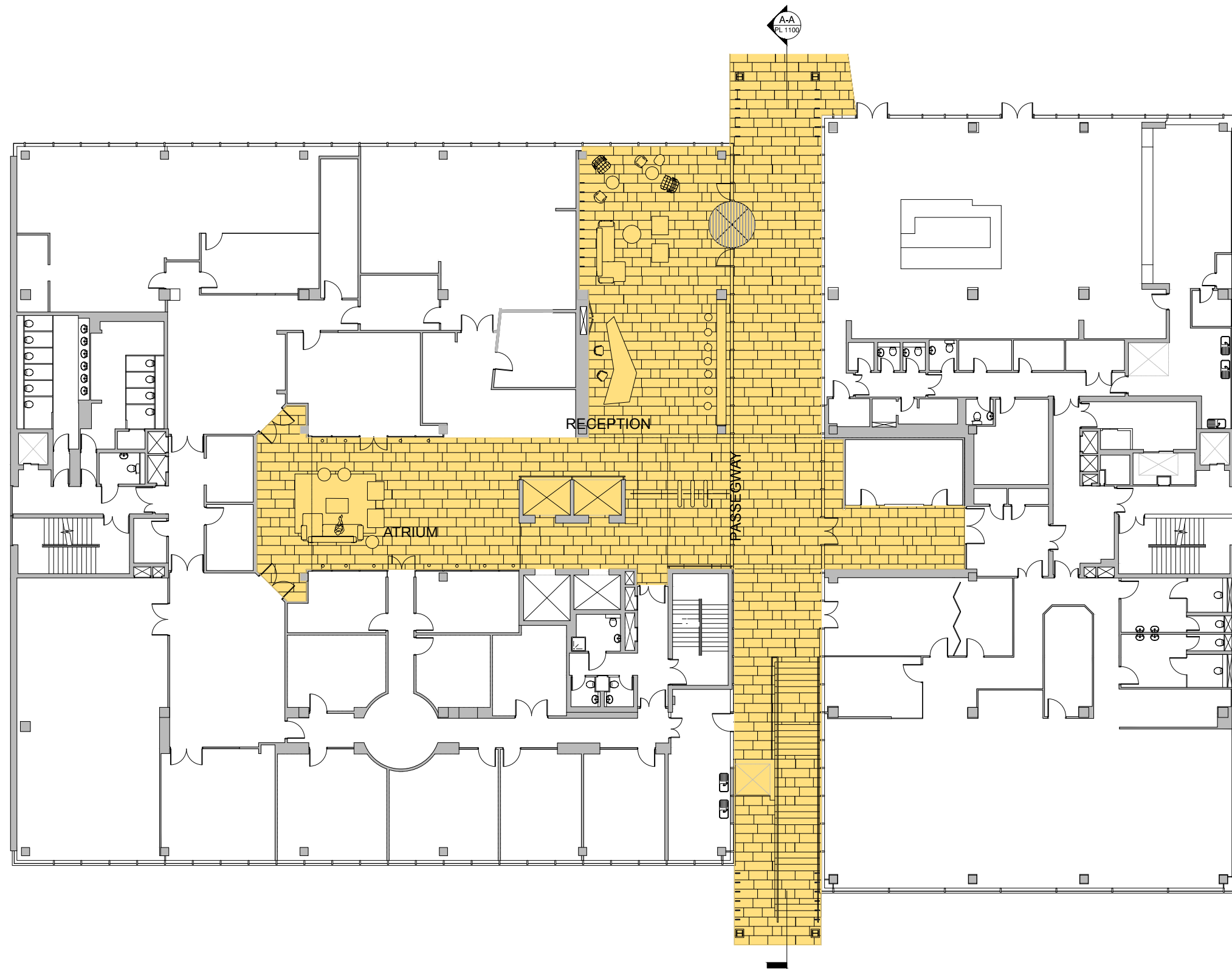
The proposals seeks to animate the journey through the building. The design introduces timber slats on the soffit and a diffused lighting approach to the length of the passageway, creating a warm and more comfortable route for the people to use at all times.



South and North elevation



Section though the passageway



Ground floor plan



View of proposed entrance works from Forbury Square



North entrance front view and proposed signage

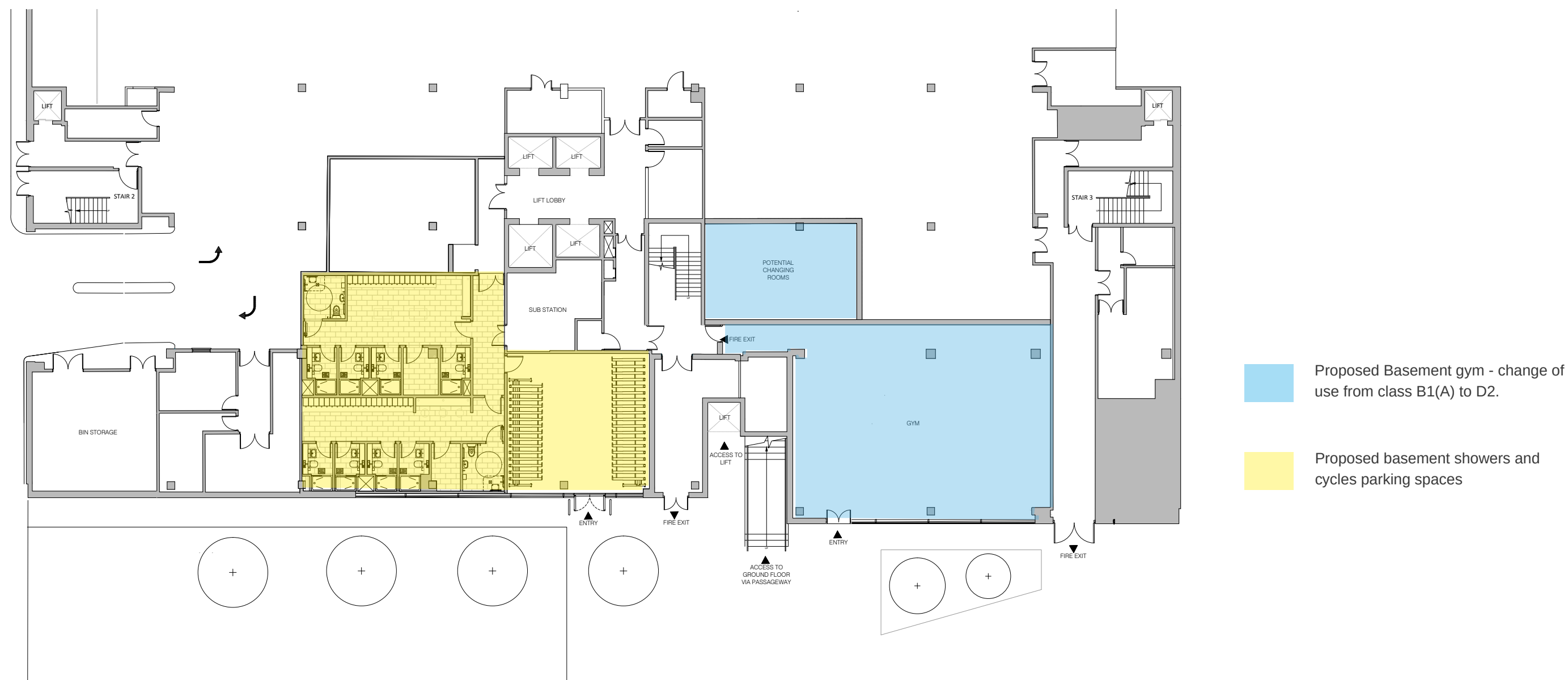


North Entrance side view

4.02 Basement gym

The existing facade to Abbey Square is currently lacking in activity given its current use - car parking behind the hoarding. The introduction of the basement showers & cycling parking space, accessible from the street and the proposal for a gym on the right side of the entrance, will activate the frontage in conjunction with the new portal intervention.

The proposal includes introducing new glazing and spandrels into the existing openings in the brickwork plinth, which will create life for the lower section of Davidson. The intent is to rejuvenate this side of the building and transform this aspect from “ the back” of the building into an integral part of Davidson for the public realm activities.



Proposed basement intervention

5.00 ACCESS STATEMENT

The proposals will retain the existing pedestrian, vehicular, servicing, emergency and refuse access methods to and from the building with any improvements designed in accordance with best practice guidance on inclusive design. The new proposals are designed to be accessible in accordance with part M of the Building Regulations as a minimum.

Pedestrian

Pedestrian access to the building will be maintained via a grade level entrance from Forbury Square. Upon arrival, staff and visitors will enter into the refurbished lobby and straight into the main reception area where they will be directed to the lifts and all floors. The new paving to Forbury Square and the passageway will form the grade level entry into the building and stepped access through to Abbey Square. The lift provision will be retained to negate no separation of disabled and non-disabled users.

Cycling

A new area for 60 cycle storage spaces will be provided as part of this development. The cycle store will benefit from being undercover, lit and located within the secure basement area. Access into the cycle store is via controlled door access in the new frontage at lower ground level on Abbey Square. Access up into the main building from the cycle store is via the internal central core stair and lift provision .

Shower & Changing Facilities

Showers, lockers and changing facilities are also proposed as part of these works within the building; separate male and female showers with accessible provision are to be provided. These facilities will encourage cycling to and from the site, diminishing the use of private vehicles.

Amenity Space

The existing building boasts a large paved square with raised lawn square in front of it, linking the building with Forbury Gardens and providing a valuable green urban setting for the Davidson office users to experience.

Vehicular Access & Parking

Vehicular access to the basement car park will be retained via the access road from Abbey Square. The existing parking provision and layout have been retained.

Drop Off / Pick Up

No drop off / pick up facilities are being provided on site.

Servicing & Refuse Access

Servicing, delivery and refuse collection will continue to take place via the car park access from Abbey Square. The existing bin store is located inside the basement car park. Deliveries and servicing arrangements will continue to be scheduled to ensure no clash of arrival times. Refuse collection will be at agreed times, in order to collect the anticipated waste generated from the site.

Fire Access / Strategy

There is no change to the existing fire safety strategy for the building. Emergency vehicles will continue to gain access to the perimeter of the building from Station Road and the private side road on the site. All means of escapes from the building will be retained.

External accessible lift

There is no change in the provision of lift access at the southern end of the passageway. However the proposals will be to remove the existing bulky lift enclosure at ground level and retain / replace existing lift system, protected by a glazed balustrade at the higher level.



External accessible lifts examples

5.00 APPENDIX - LIGHTING PROPOSAL