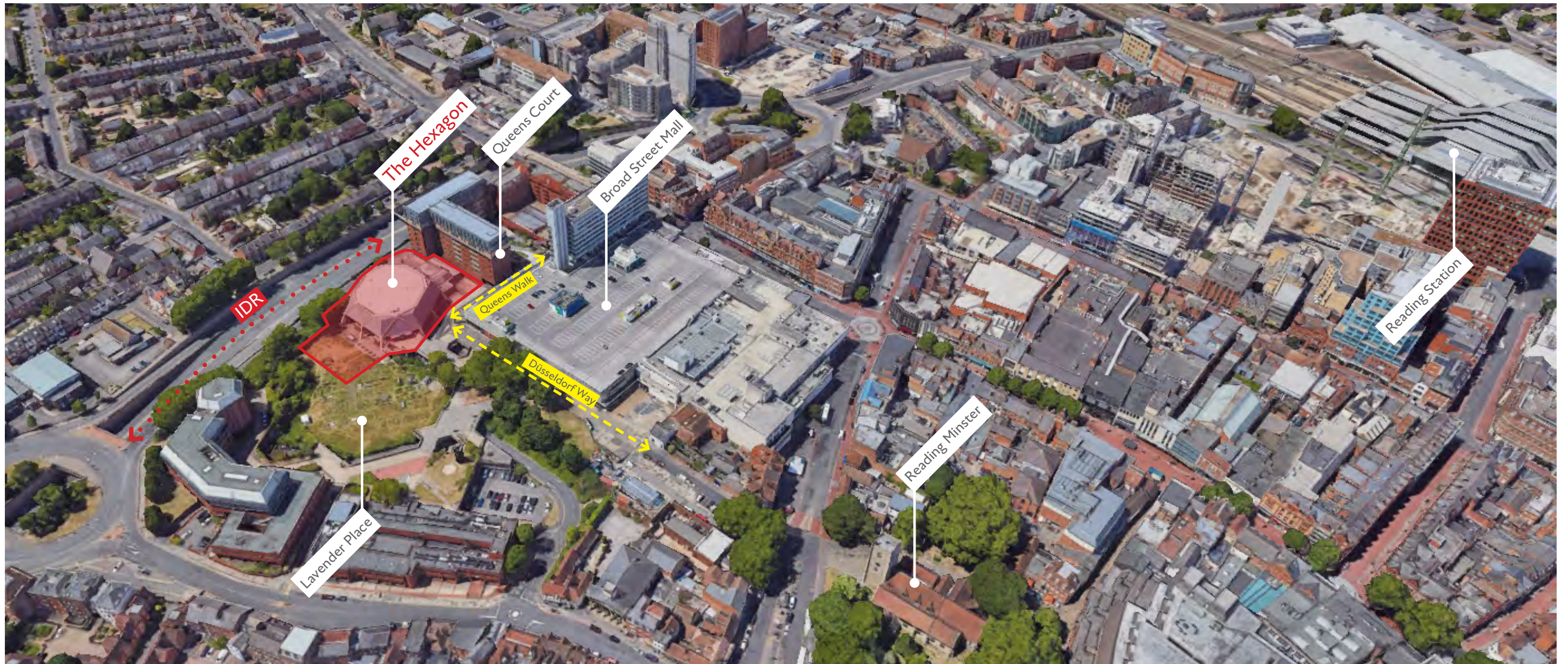




Queens Court student residential block overlooks the site from the north.



East of the Hexagon is the pedestrianised raised podium, and Broad Street Mall.



Vehicle routes and parking for Broad Street Mall are located below the podium.



The IDR and a sliproad from the IDR directly back onto the site from the west.

2.5 SITE PHOTOS

EXTERNAL



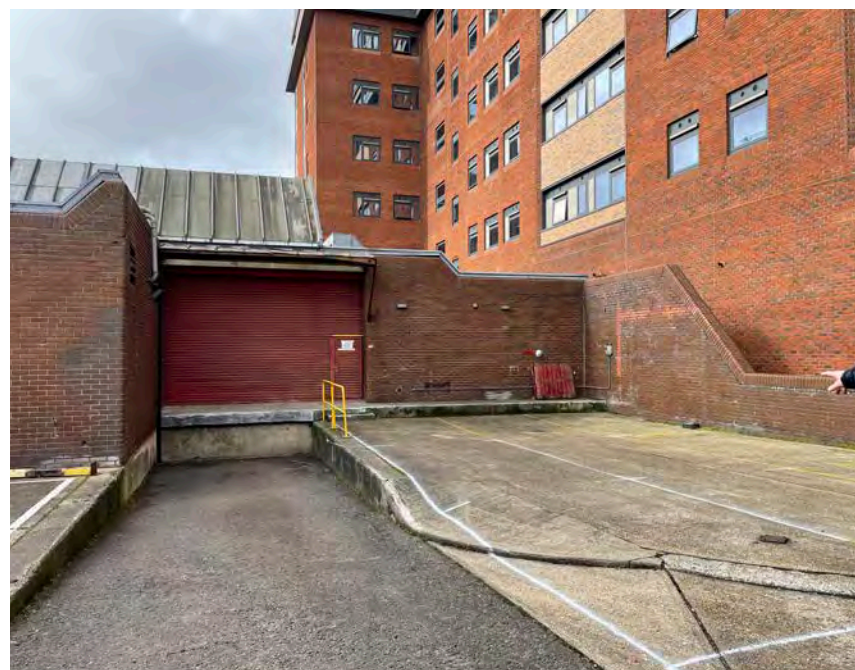
Approach to the Hexagon from podium level, Düsseldorf Way



Approach to the Hexagon from podium level, Queens Walk



Approach to the Hexagon from the below podium service road



Existing loading dock & get-in to the back of house block



Rear of the Hexagon, from the IDR slip-road



Rear of the Hexagon

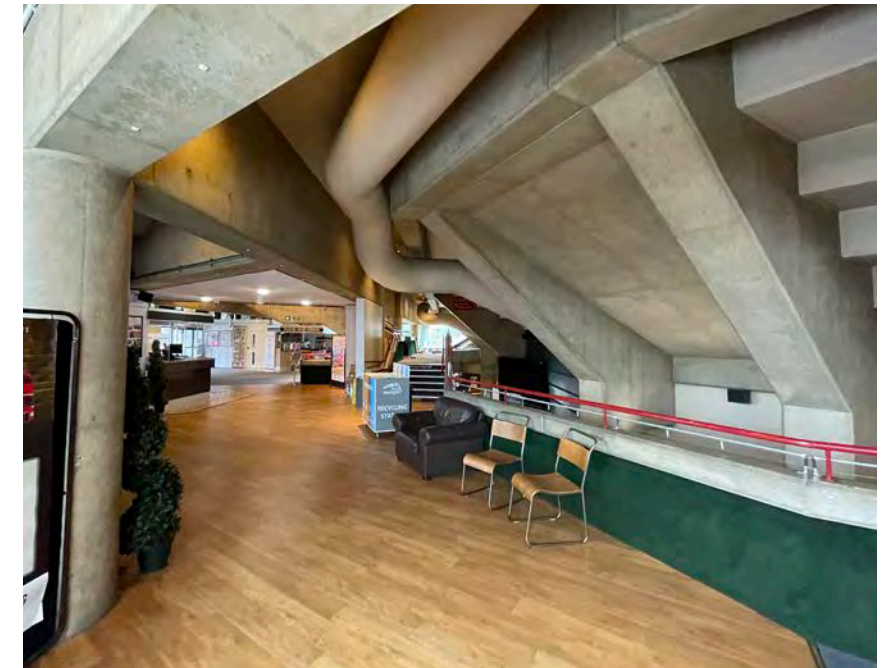
INTERNAL



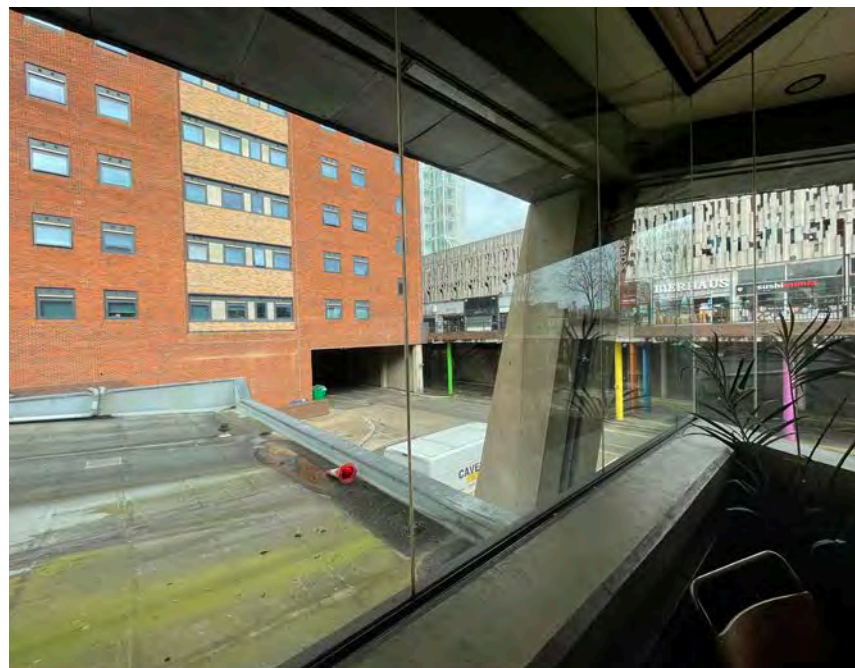
Hexagon auditorium



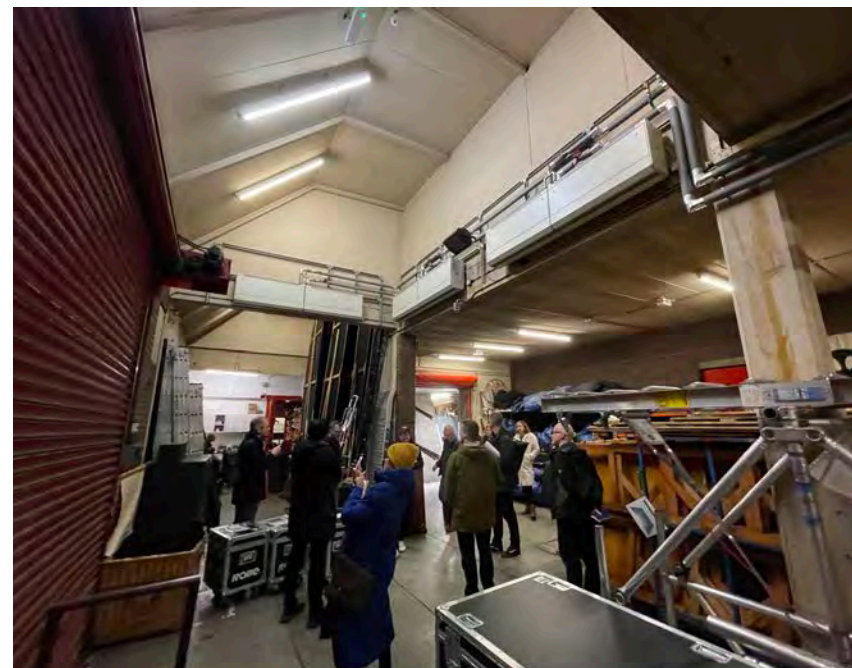
Hexagon foyer and bar



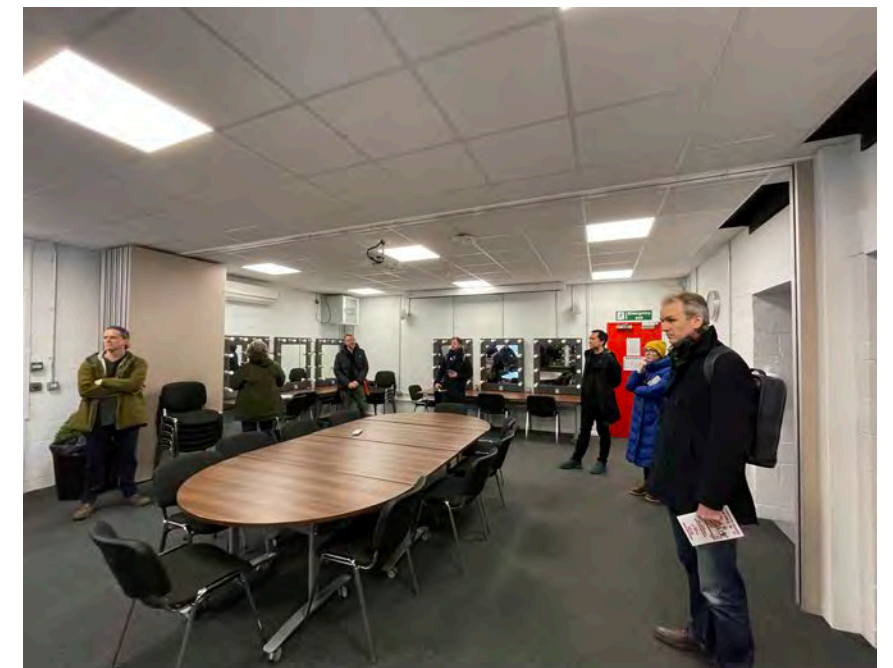
Hexagon foyer



Glazed corridor overlooking the existing back of house roof



Existing workshop



Existing flexible meeting room / dressing room

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 CONSULTATION

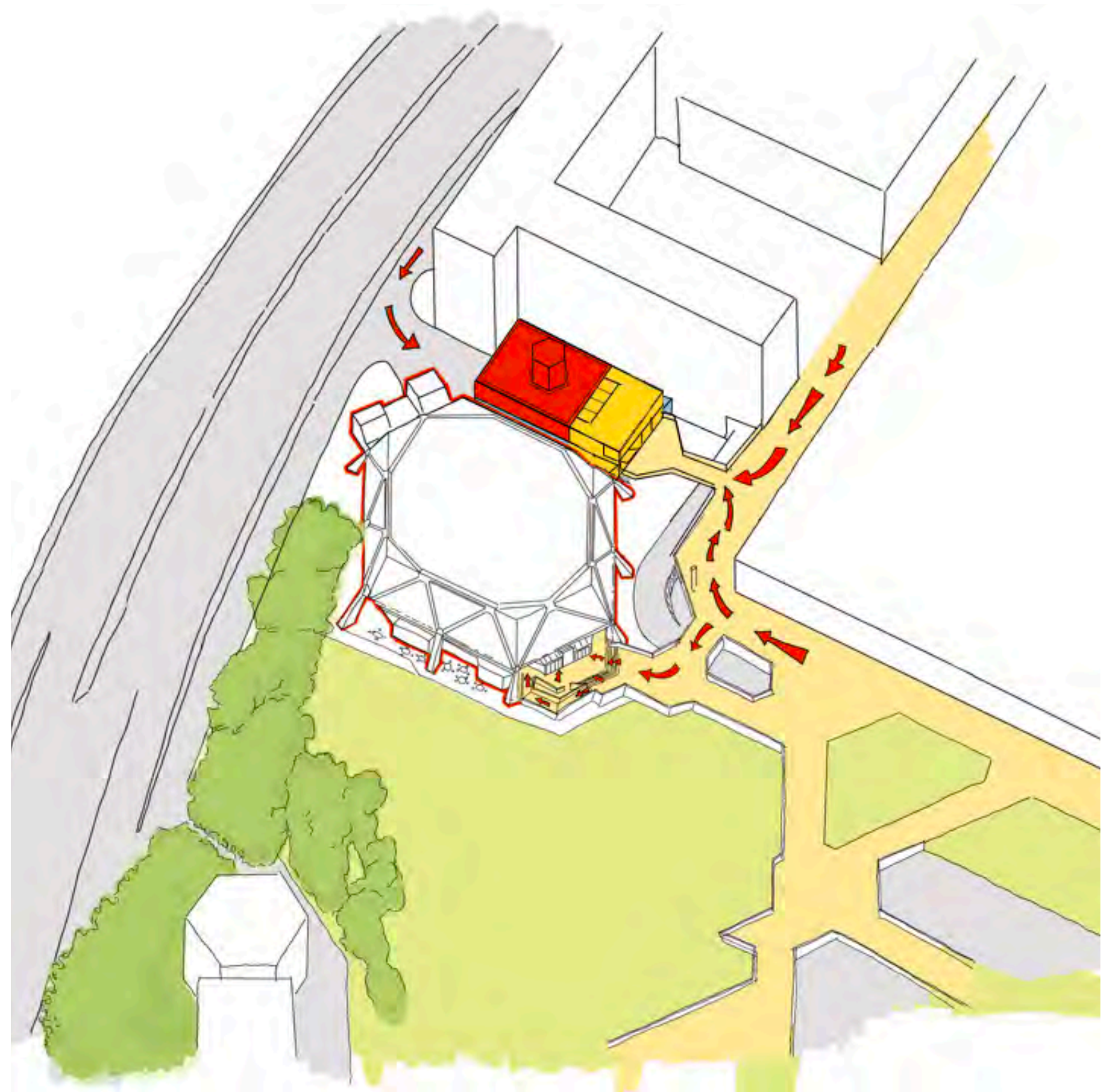
Public consultation was carried out for the original scheme, and was submitted within the Design and Access statement issued in January 2024. The changes to the scheme within this report are not deemed great enough, so no further consultation was carried out.

4.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

4.1 ARCHITECTURAL PROPOSAL

Located on the site of the existing back of house block, the new studio theatre will be arranged over three levels. The primary get-in is at the rear of the building, accessed off the A329 slip road, and the main visitor entrance is accessed directly off the Queens Walk podium.

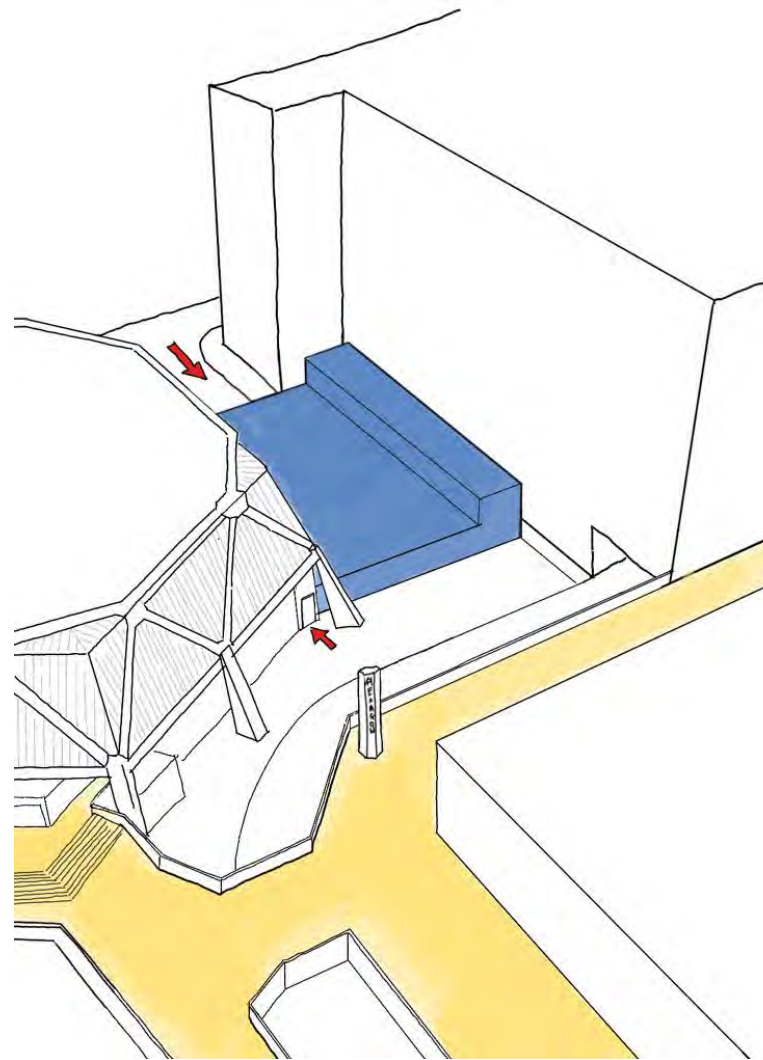
- Studio Theatre
- Foyer & Rehearsal Room
- BoH



4.2 PRIMARY DESIGN MOVES

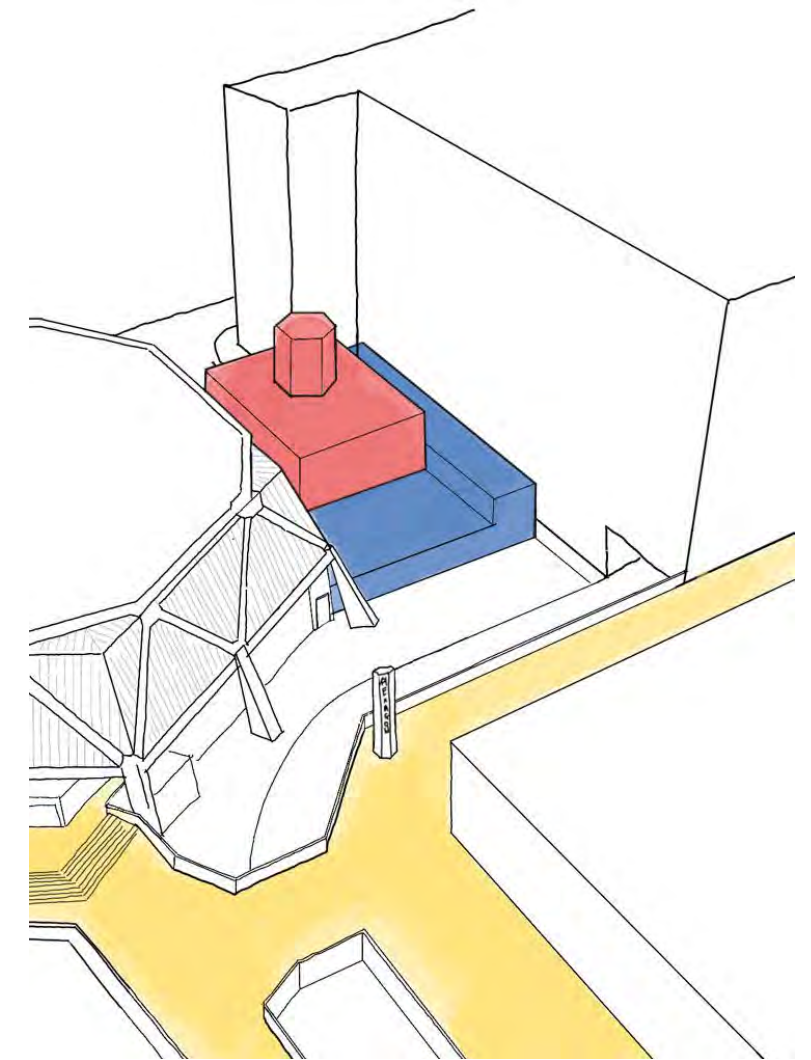
The new studio theatre will be located on the site of the existing back of house block, north of the Hexagon Theatre, and will be connected via a new footbridge to create an extension to the podium and public realm. An inviting foyer will front onto Queens Walk, and draw people into the building, whilst the back of house spaces are accessed from the rear. At the heart of the building is the intimate and adaptable auditorium, seating up to 200 people, defined externally by its distinguishable hexagonal natural ventilation stack.

In such a prominent location, next to the architecturally significant Hexagon Theatre, the new studio must be respectful of its context, whilst being architecturally striking, to re-energise the site as a destination in Reading's Cultural Campus.



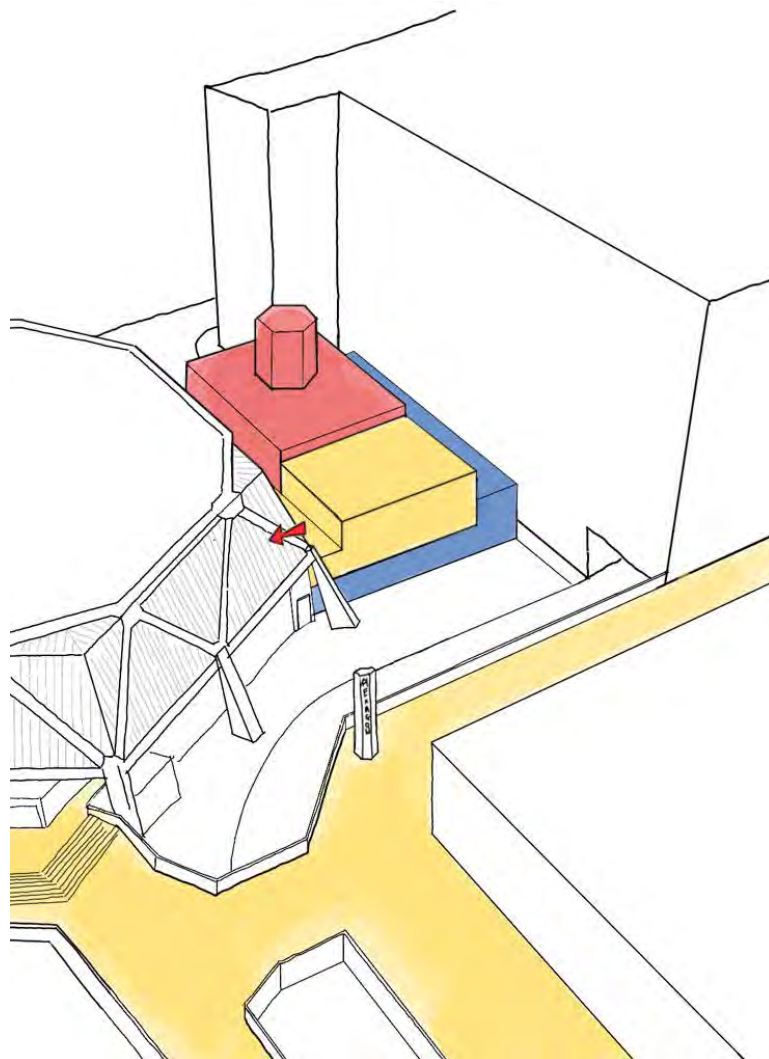
DEMOLISH & RECONFIGURE THE BOH

The new studio will be located on the site of the existing back of house block, which will be demolished and reconfigured to offer a more efficient floor plan for both venues. The location of the existing stage door entrance will be retained. One shared get-in off the A329 improves access for articulated lorries at the theatre, and creates a more generous and less disruptive parking arrangement at the front.



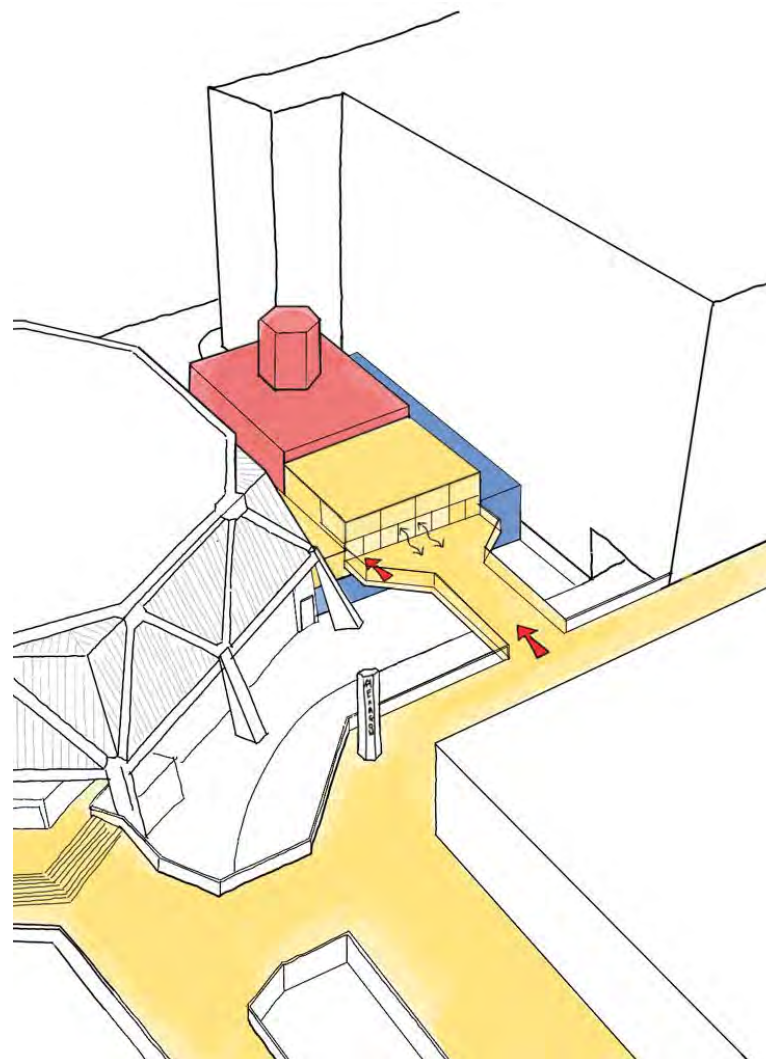
NEW STUDIO THEATRE

Located at the rear of the building, on top of the BOH block, the new studio theatre is an enclosed box, signposted externally by a distinctive hexagonal stack, which provides natural ventilation to the space.



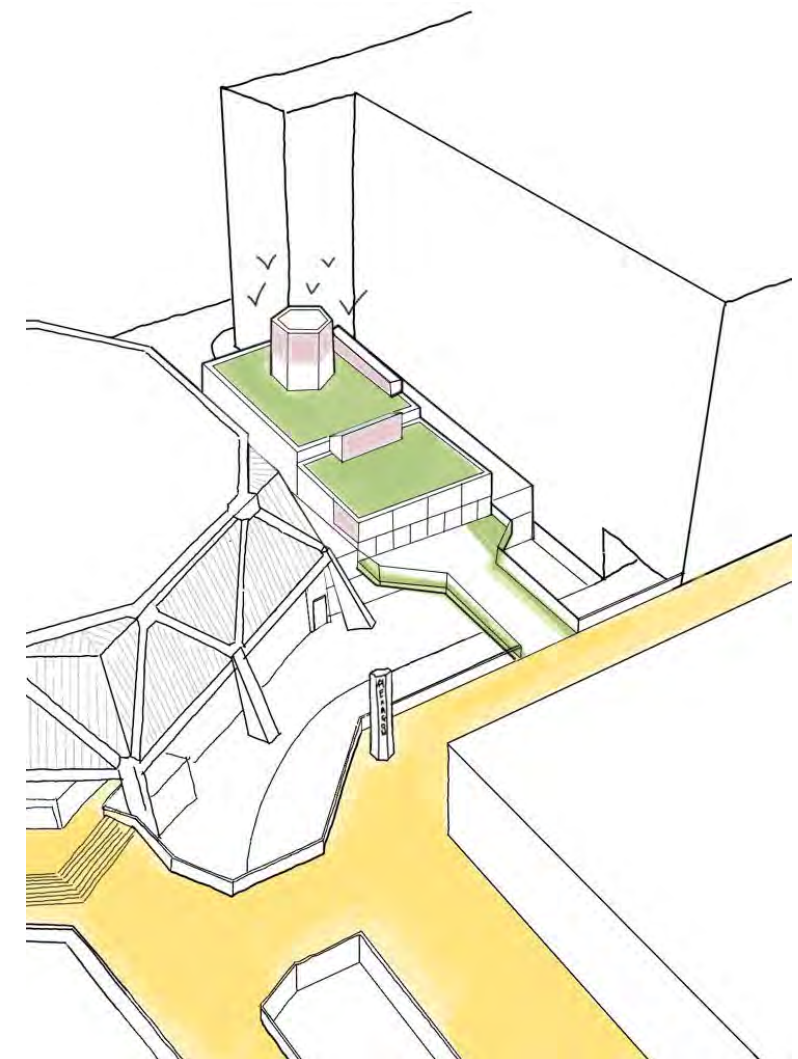
NEW MULTI-LEVEL FOYER

A new split level foyer will sit at the front of the building. Constructed from an expressive timber structure, with voids and a roof light, the foyer will be light and inviting. The foyer steps in section in order to connect to the existing levels of the Hexagon foyer. Internally, this will be resolved via steps and a lift, to create one flowing and accessible space between the Hexagon and new studio theatre.



FOOTBRIDGE FROM THE PODIUM

A steel footbridge will extend the podium to connect the new studio theatre to Queens Walk, thus extending the public realm to the new building's entrance. This will create a clear and accessible entrance for patrons and will draw visitors in, regardless of whether they are coming to see a show or not.



SUSTAINABILITY

Green roofs will increase biodiversity on the site, filter rain water and create visual interest for the overlooking buildings. Natural ventilation louvres on the facade will reduce the operational carbon of the building. Bird boxes located on the ventilation stack and planting along the footbridge will contribute to the overall building's biodiversity net gain and aesthetic appeal to passers by.

4.3 SUMMARY OF CHANGES

As outlined in the introduction of this report, this scheme was previously submitted for planning approval in January 2024, under application no. 240173, and approval was granted in April. The scheme was then developed to Stage 4 detail and issued for tender in May 2024, which unfortunately came back over budget. Consequently, since August, the design team and client, have undertaken a redesign of the original proposal and brief, and have now developed a more compact and energised scheme, which still delivers on the key aims of the original proposal.

The key changes to the original scheme have been summarised below:

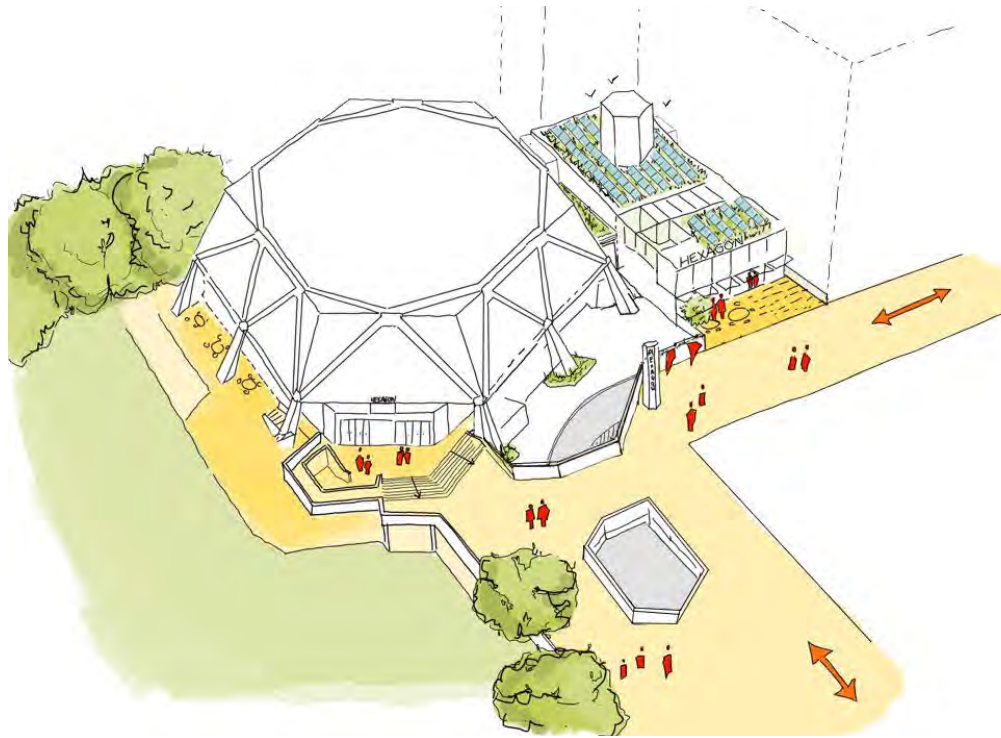
- Omission of the G+2 level, including;
 - Staff office
 - Community studio
 - AWC
 - External terrace
 - External escape stair
- Merging of the foyer and rehearsal room into one space, with a more flexible and provisional feel. This assumes use as a foyer or use as a rehearsal space/community space, subject to performances in the studio theatre.
- Staff offices have been re-provided in the G+0 back of house.
- Omission of the BOH lift, and the addition of G+0 to the FOH lift, providing efficient step-free access from ground floor to foyer for staff and performers.
- Pushing of the auditorium mass west to condense the scheme and accommodate the foyer within the footprint of the existing building. In turn, this reduces the load on the podium bridge link, simplifying the bridge to a pedestrian footbridge.
- Reduction in the size and capacity of the auditorium, from 230 to 200 seated; plus the simplification of the theatre tech, including the replacement of adjustable rostra with static deck.
- Omission of the internal bike store, secondary get-in and green room.
- Replacement of the existing WC block, to create a more efficient arrangement, giving more space back to the scene dock.
- Omission of PVs on the roof, due to the overshadowing of the proposed BSM development.
- Addition of two extra staff parking spaces, and the introduction of an external covered bike store for staff and visitors.



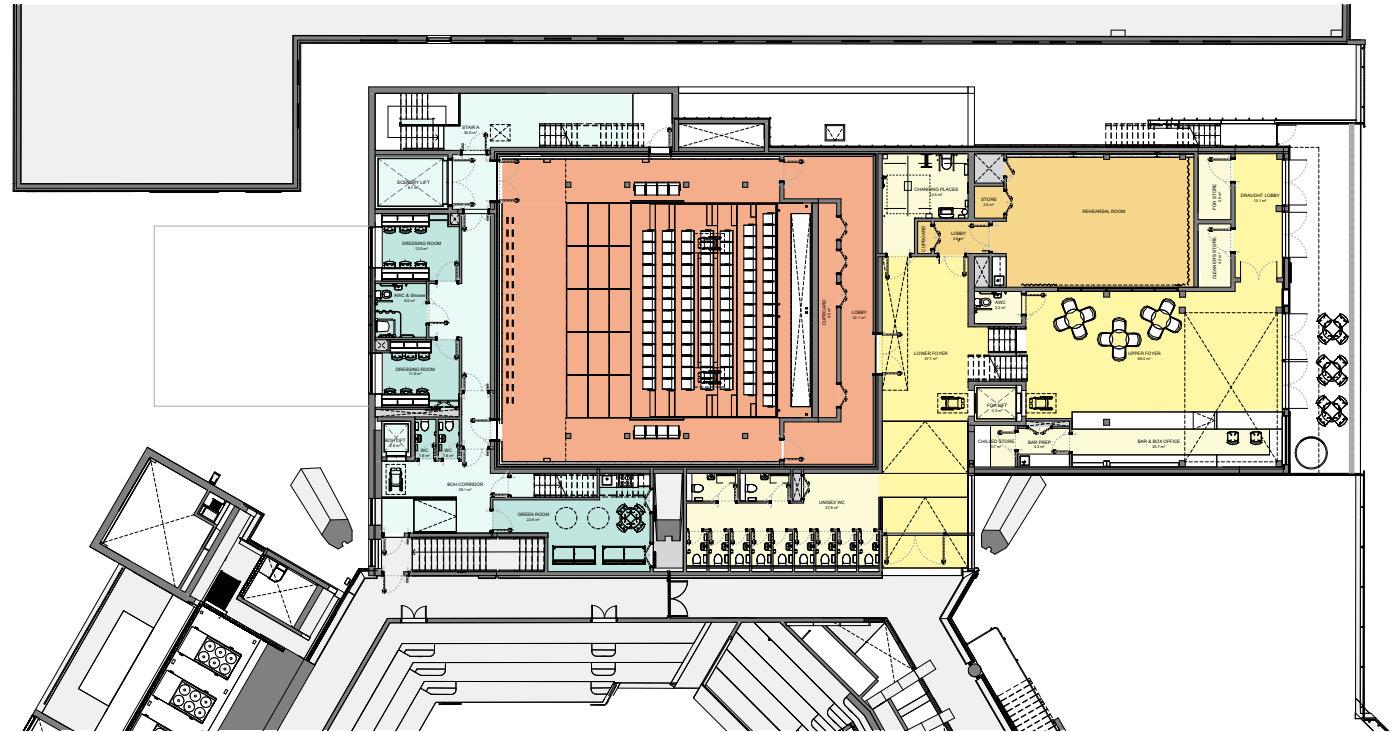
Approved scheme – Approach from podium level



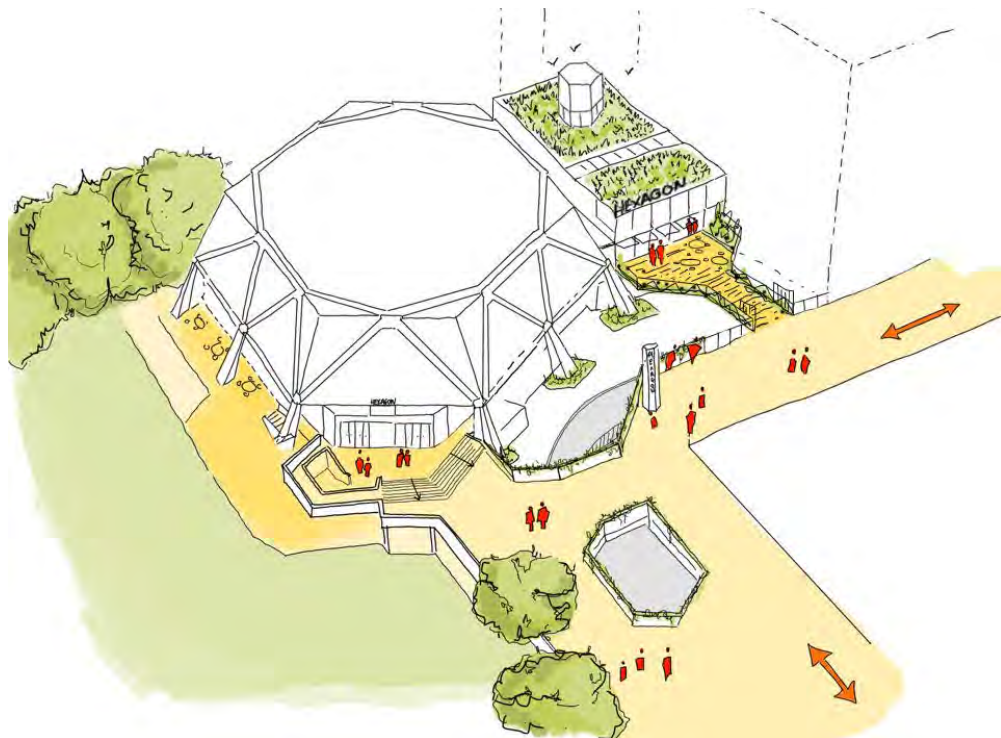
Revised scheme – Approach from podium level



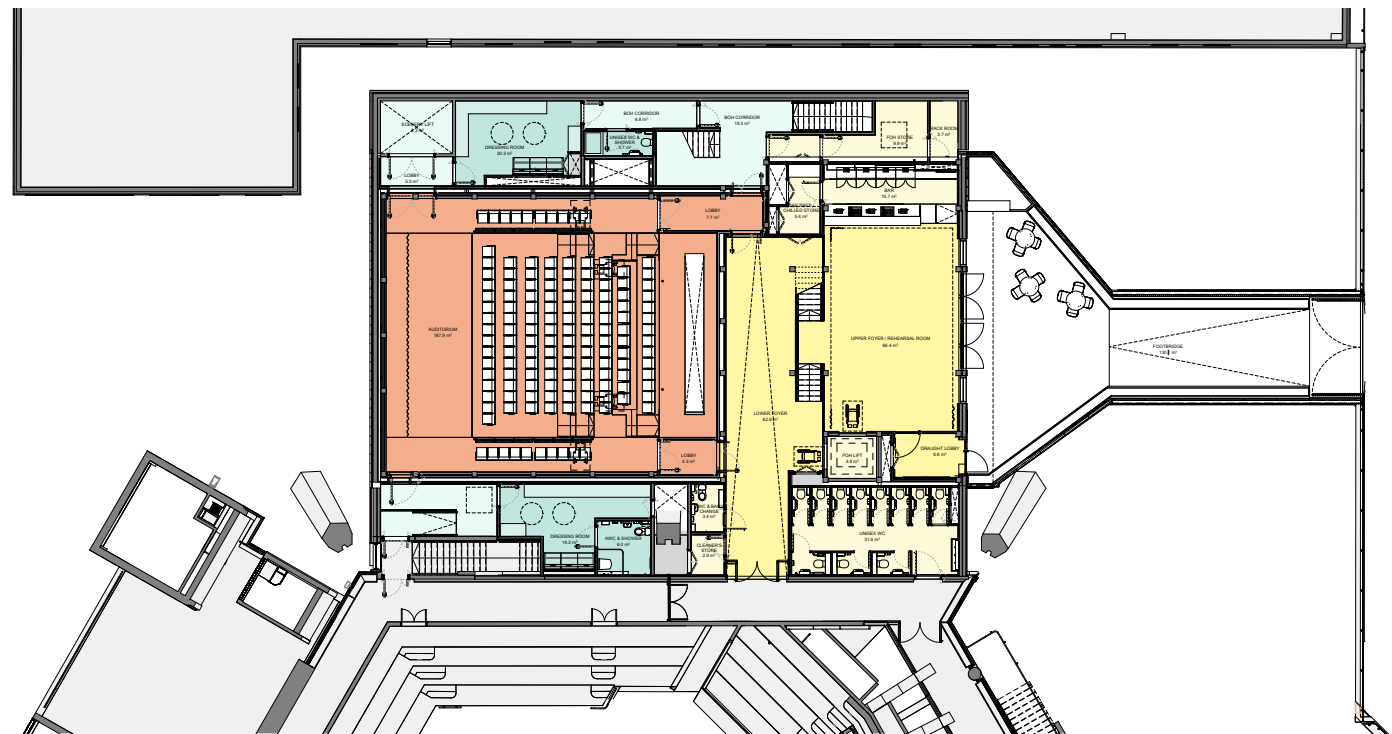
Approved scheme - Axo view



Approved scheme - G+1 plan

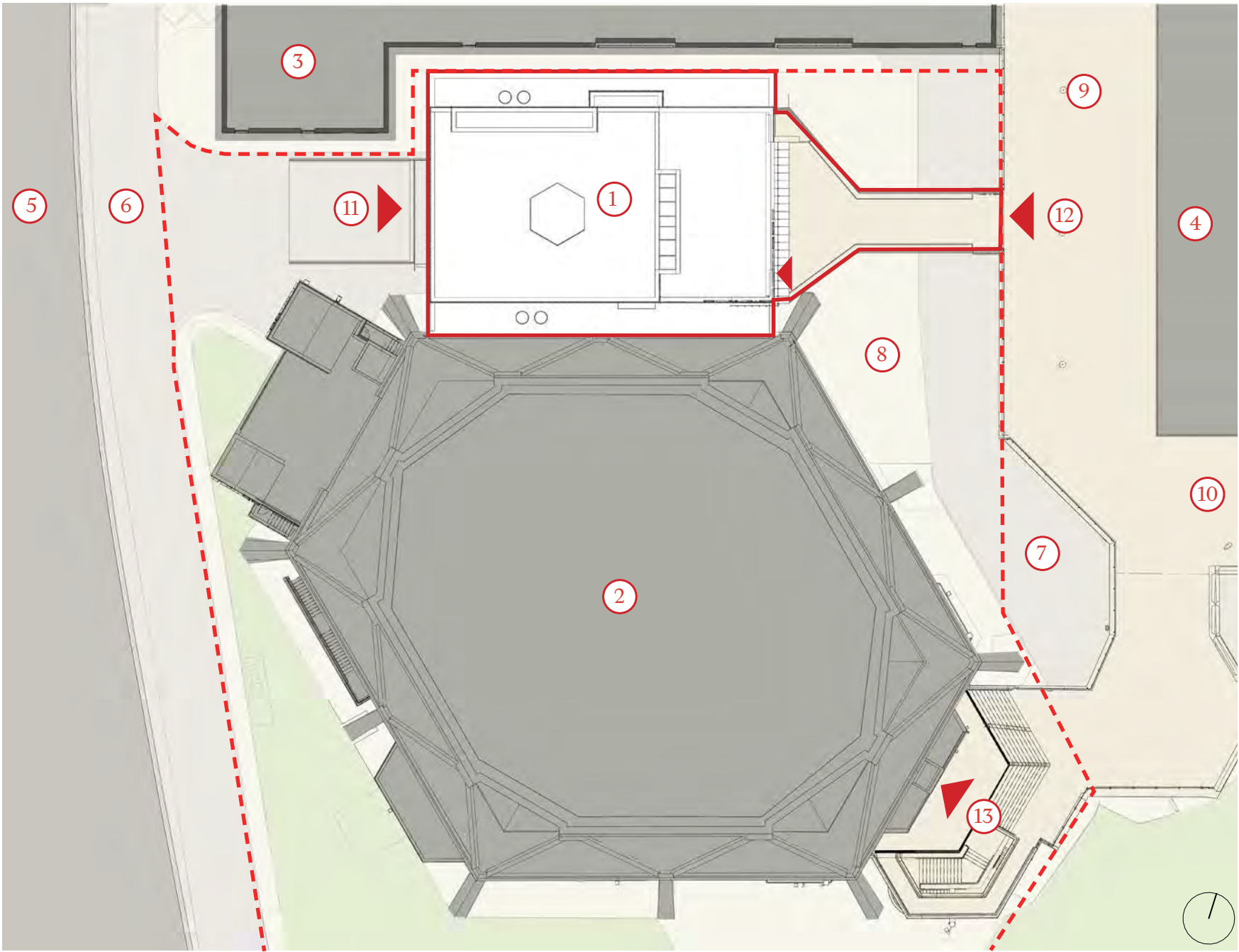


Revised scheme - Axo view



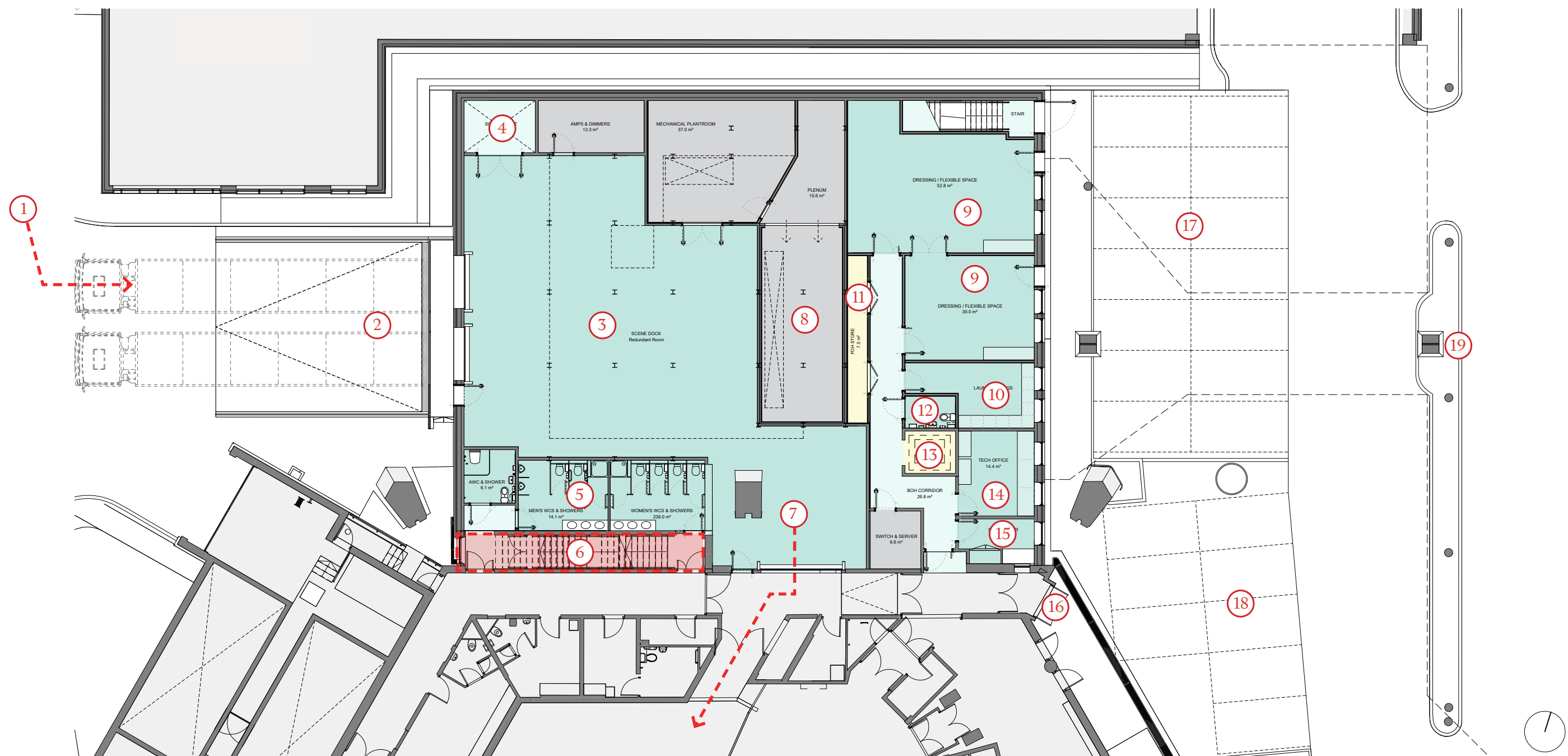
Revised scheme - G+1 plan

4.4 ARCHITECTURAL LAYOUTS



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

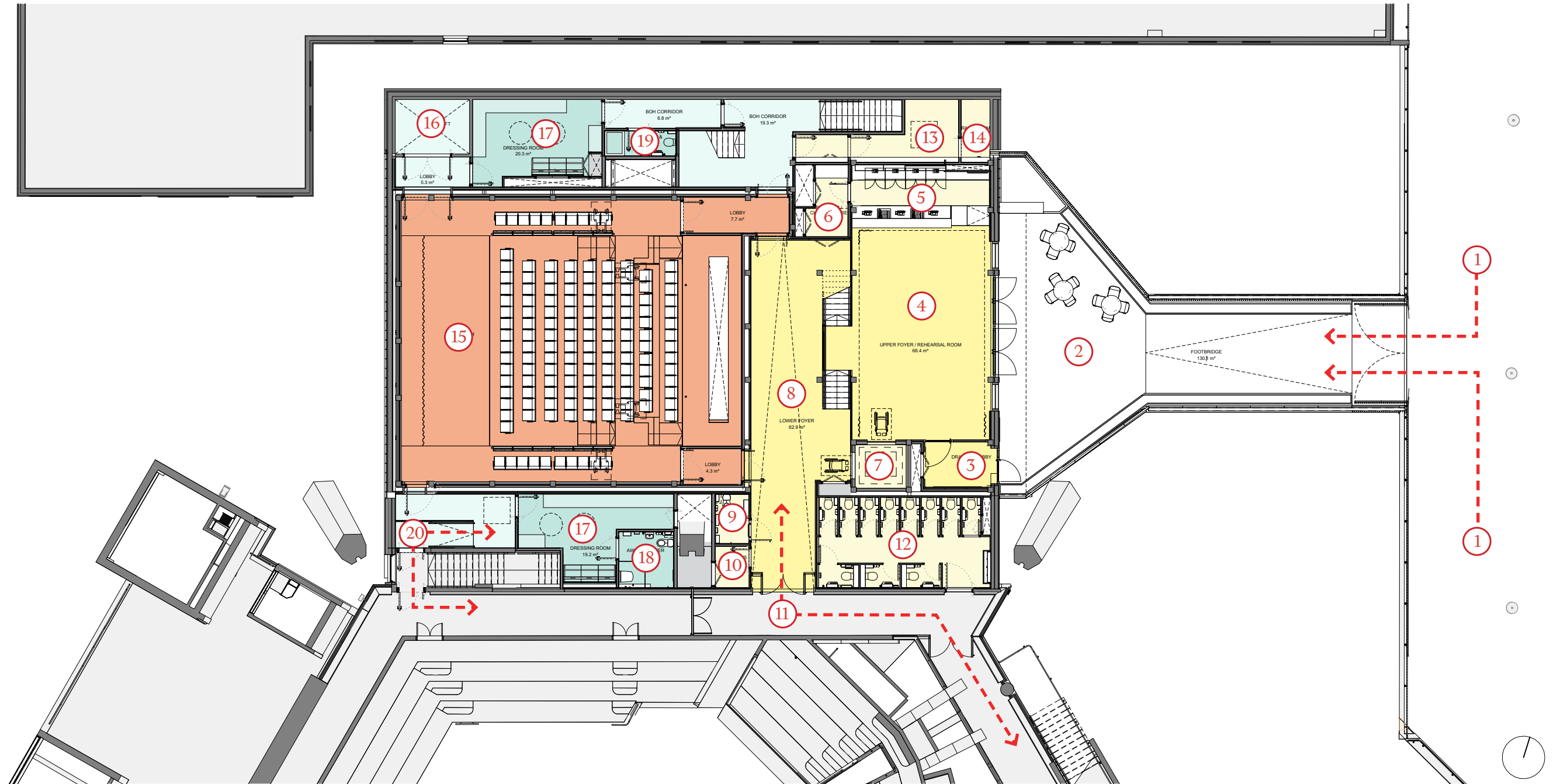
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Proposed Hexagon Studio Theatre | 8. Staff & disabled parking bays |  Proposed studio theatre |
| 2. The Hexagon Theatre | 9. Queens Walk (the podium) |  Site boundary |
| 3. Queens Court - student accommodation | 10. Düsseldorf Way (the podium) |  Building Entrance |
| 4. Broad Street Mall | 11. Proposed get-in entrance | |
| 5. A329 - Inner Distribution Road (IDR) | 12. Proposed studio theatre entrance | |
| 6. IDR slip road | 13. Existing Hexagon entrance | |
| 7. Service road & car park entrance (below podium) | | |



PROPOSED G+0 PLAN

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. One unified get-in directly off the A329 slip road | 8. Plenum and sub-stage for natural ventilation to the auditorium | 15. Stage door rebuilt in its current location |
| 2. Loading dock ramp for 2 x 45" artics for efficient offloading | 9. Dressing / flexible rooms for large groups and crew catering | 16. Existing stage door entrance retained |
| 3. Shared scene dock for the Hexagon and new studio theatre | 10. Laundry and wigs | 17. Staff parking bays |
| 4. Scenery lift up to the studio theatre stage | 11. FOH store for foyer tables and chairs | 18. Blue Badge holders parking bays |
| 5. New BoH WC block | 12. Accessible staff WC | 19. Realigned islands to accommodate new structure |
| 6. Existing stair to Hexagon sub-stage retained | 13. Passenger lift up to the foyer | |
| 7. Get-in route to the Hexagon main house | 14. Tech office | |

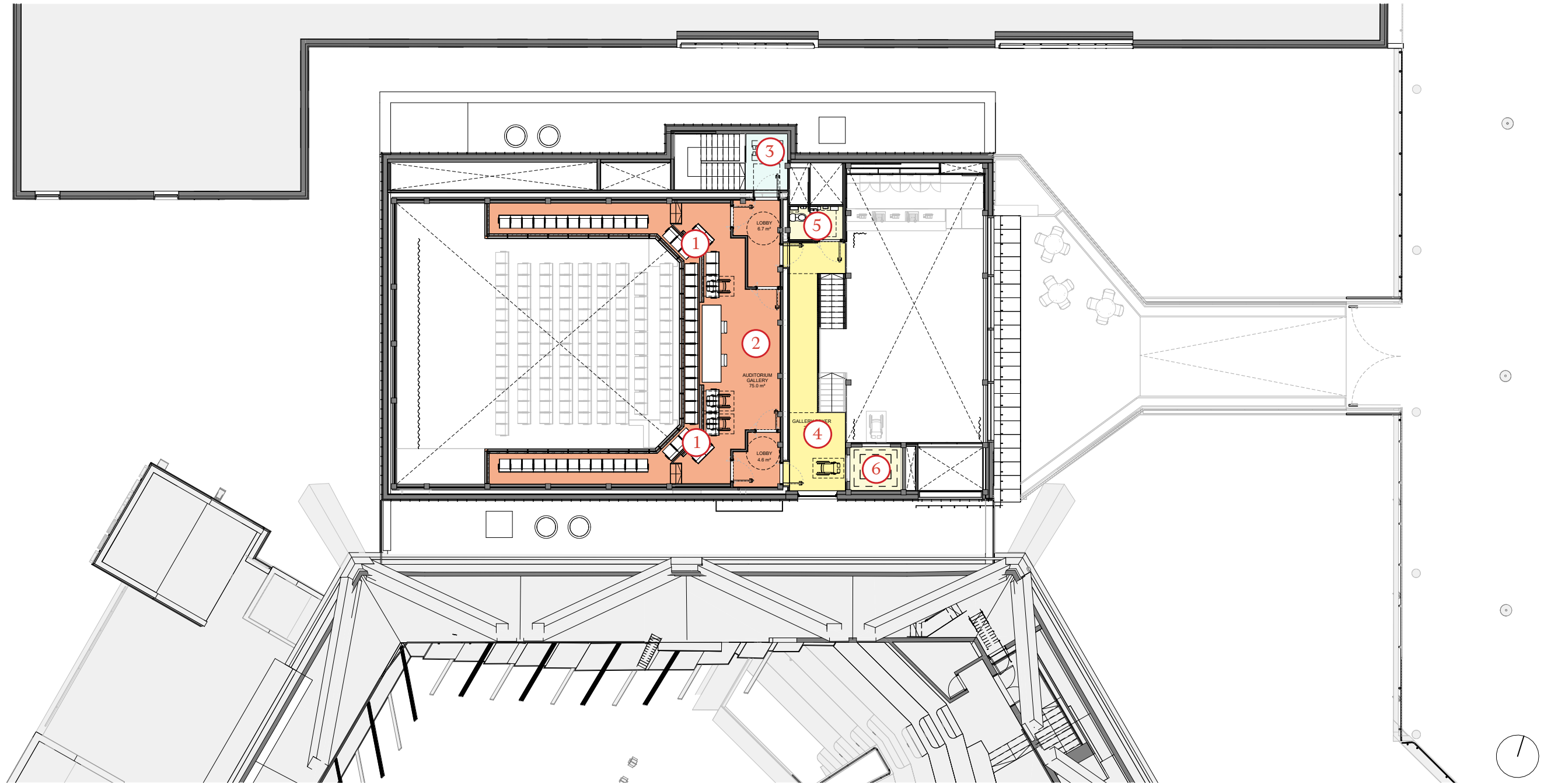
- Auditorium
- Studio
- FOH
- FOH Support
- BOH
- BOH Circulation
- Plant



PROPOSED G+1 PLAN

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Main entrance off the podium | 8. Lower foyer providing access into the stall of the auditorium | 15. Auditorium stalls level, utilising bleachers and removable rostra |
| 2. External terrace | 9. Accessible WC for the main foyer | 16. Scenery lift connecting to the workshop at G+0 |
| 3. Draught lobby | 10. Cleaner's store | 17. Dressing rooms |
| 4. Flexible foyer and rehearsal room | 11. Level, direct access to the Hexagon foyer | 18. Accessible WC and shower for performers |
| 5. Foyer bar | 12. FoH WCs and baby changing facilities | 19. WC and shower for performers |
| 6. Bar prep space and chilled store for draught beer | 13. FOH store for foyer tables and chairs | 20. Accessible link to the Hexagon BoH corridor |
| 7. Passenger lift connecting the foyer to all levels | 14. Rehearsal room / Foyer rack room | |

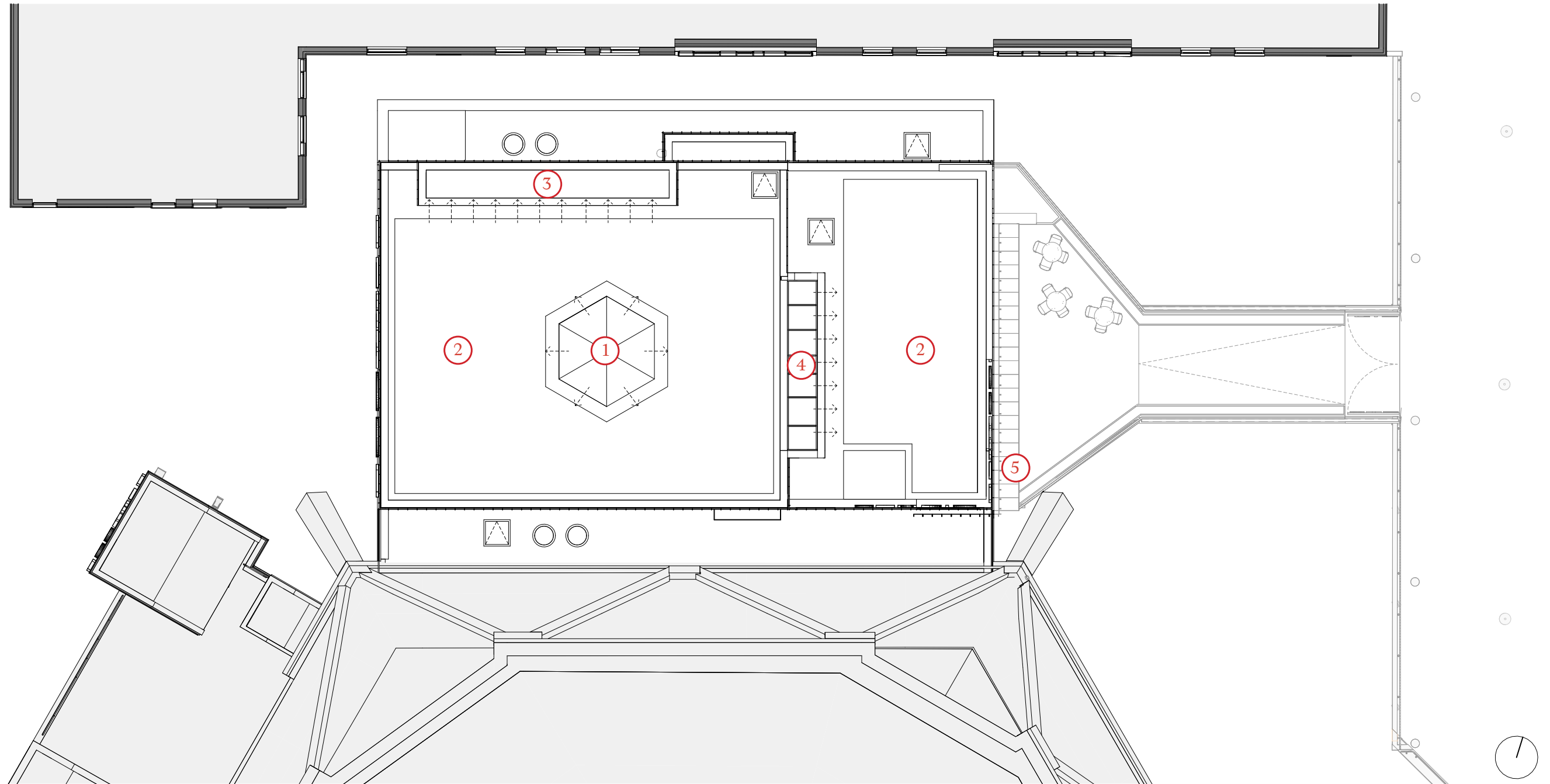
- Auditorium
- Studio
- FOH
- FOH Support
- BOH
- BOH Circulation
- Plant



PROPOSED G+1M PLAN

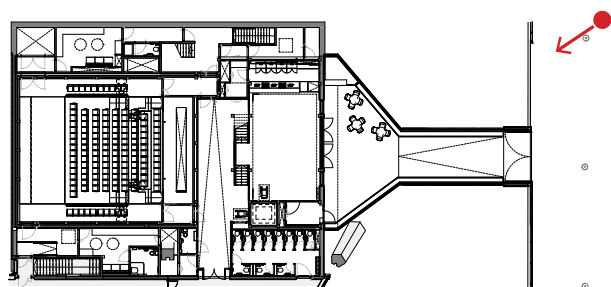
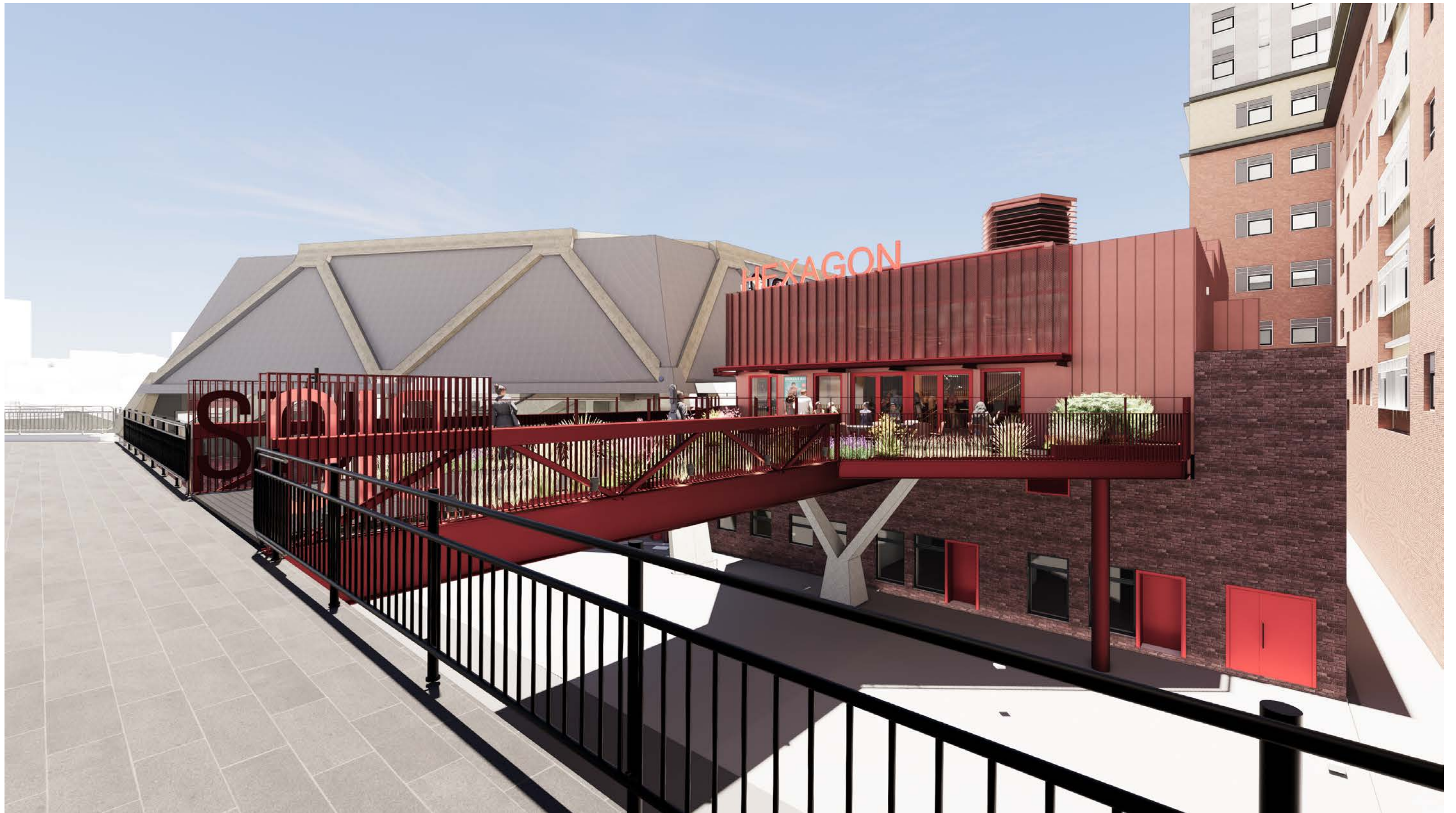
1. Studio theatre gallery level, with fixed tip up seats
2. Open control position
3. Gallery level escape stair & wheelchair refuge
4. Gallery level foyer
5. Accessible WC
6. Passenger lift providing wheelchair access to the gallery level

- Auditorium
- Studio
- FOH
- FOH Support
- BOH
- BOH Circulation
- Plant



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN

1. Hexagonal natural ventilation extract stack for the auditorium
2. Green roof
3. Fresh air intake for the auditorium ventilation
4. Roof light to the foyer & natural ventilation extract louvres for the foyers
5. Canopy over studio entrance



Illustrative view of the external approach from Queens Walk

4.5 APPROACH TO STREETSCAPE

The 1970's Hexagon Theatre, presents a handsome, geometric facade to Queens Walk and Düsseldorf Way, but in recent years has become increasingly isolated as its context becomes derelict. Prior to the demolition of the Civic Centre in 2016, many daytime users of the Hexagon were not theatregoers, but would make use of the cafe facilities and public spaces. Yet now, owing to decreased footfall and its increasingly neglected surroundings, the experience of the Hexagon from the podium, is that of a building that is closed and uninviting. Visible signs of life and activity are crucially important in altering this perception of the Hexagon, which can be achieved through the new studio theatre extension.

Therefore, the extension of the podium to connect the new studio to the public realm and the activation of the Queens Walk frontage have been considered an essential move to not only provide an entrance to the new studio, but also to revitalise the podium and Hexagon site. The use of distinctive paving, glazed façades signalled by a vibrant canopy and striking signage will make the theatre more legible to the public, increase footfall towards the Hexagon, and enliven the podium with activity.

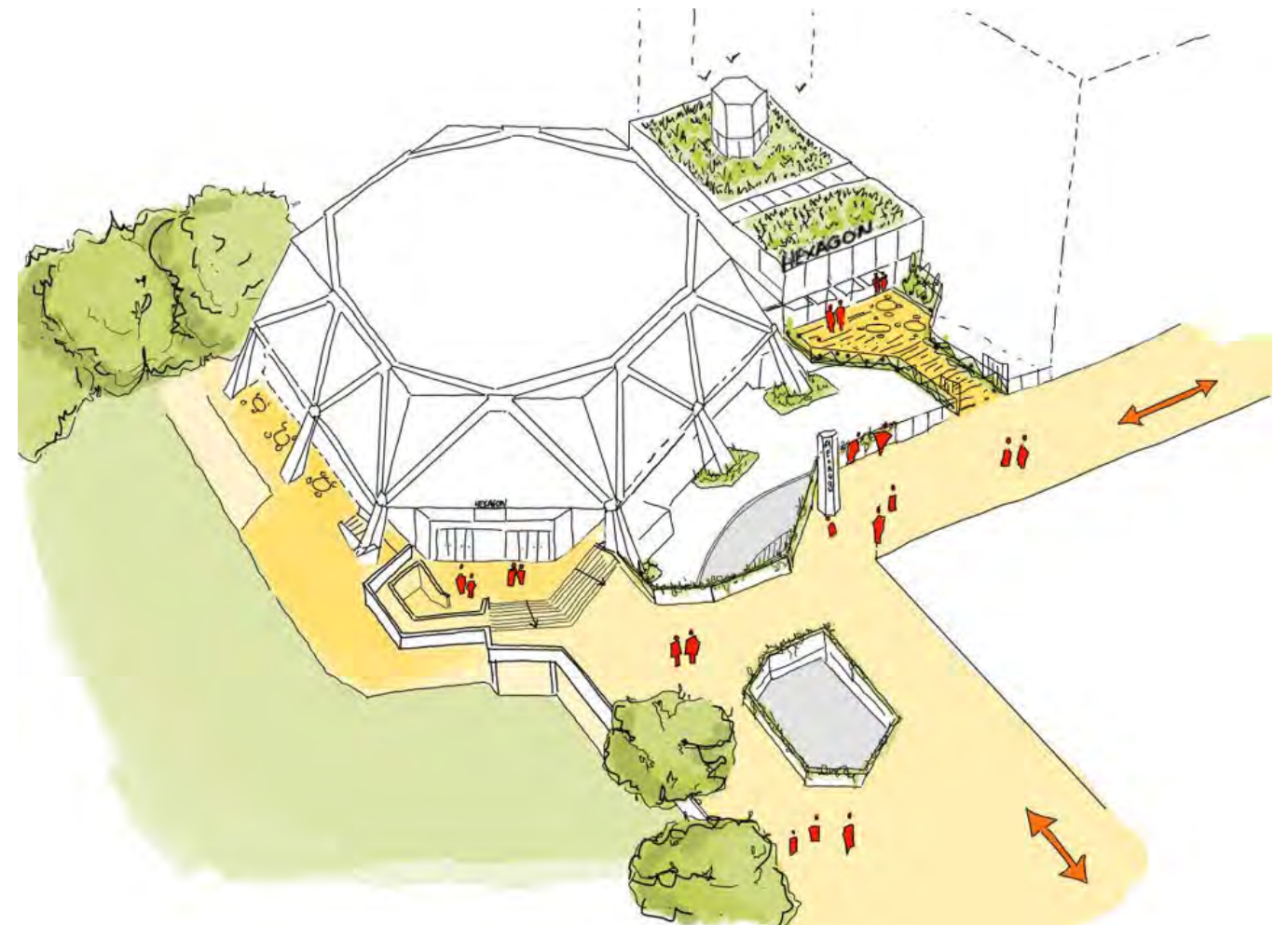
During the day, the facade to this theatre terrace will be activated by the rehearsal space. If appropriate, and the drapes are open to the public, passers by will be able to catch glimpses of the activities happening within. Glazed doors along the facade that can be fully opened up during warm weather will offer an insight into the activities taking place, and highlight the building's offerings and availability to the community. In the evening, this will transform into a lively extension to the foyer before shows and during the interval; it will also be utilised by patrons dropping by for a drink without even seeing a show, helping to diversify audience appeal.

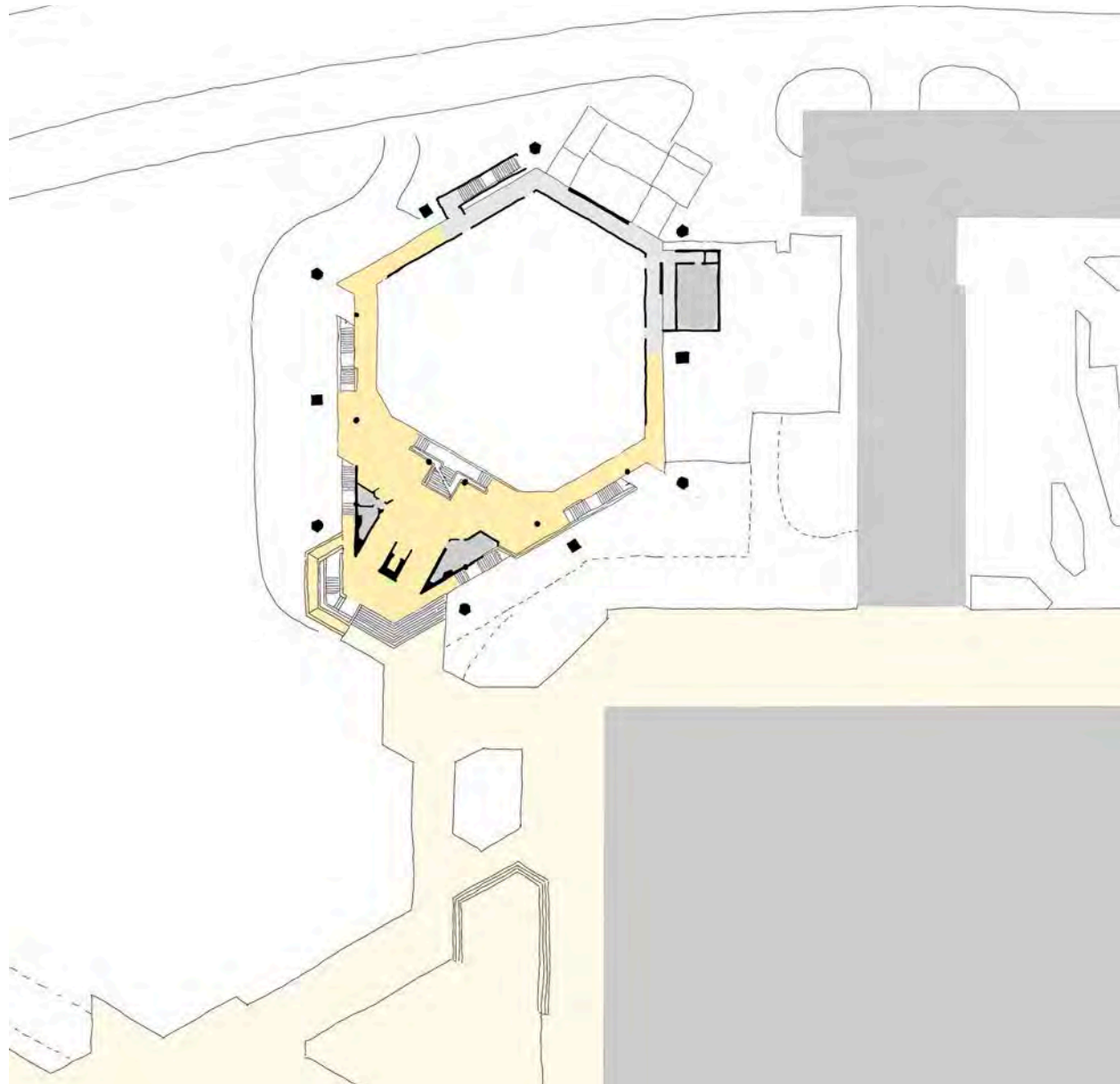
The hexagonal ventilation stack will become a signifier that announces the studio theatre to visitors as they approach from afar. This will also be visible from the A329, enhancing the connection between the theatre and the wider town.

The setting of the theatre will be further improved by lush green roofs and planting along the footbridge.

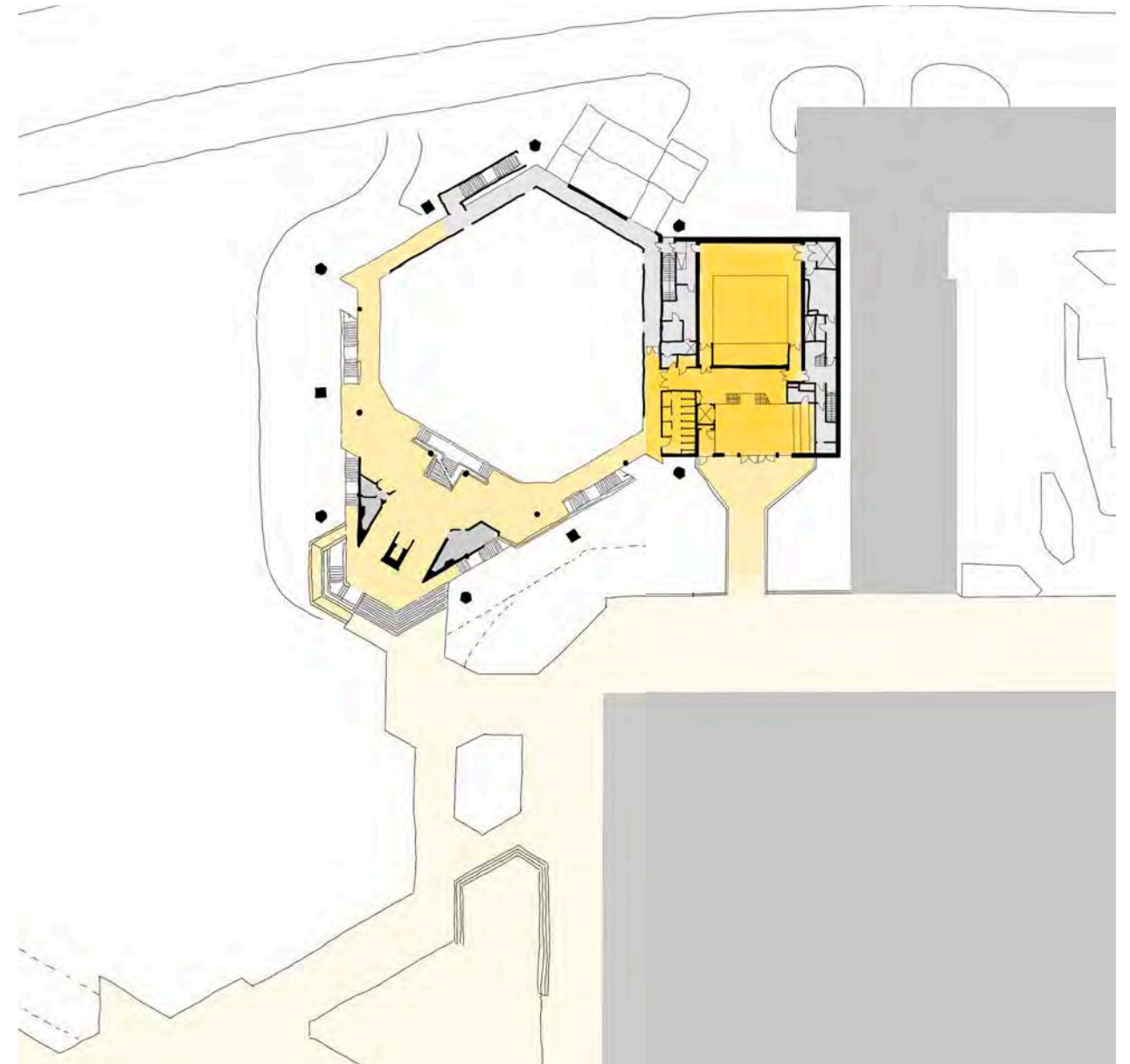
The existing stage door is located at street level, in what is quite an unpleasant and unwelcoming environment. Unclear zoning, a lack of lighting and a heavy vehicular presence, makes the pedestrian experience disjointed. At present, this space also provides the Hexagon's get-in, as well as vehicle parking, making the site congested.

In relocating the get-in to the rear of the building to create one unified loading dock for the back of house operations for both theatres, the need to park articulated lorries at the front of the Hexagon is eradicated, and the setting of the Stage Door is instantly improved. Whilst there are still requirements for vehicular parking, new greenery and seating will create a destination and a sense of arrival for performers.





Diagrammatic existing plan - since the Civic Centre's demolition, the theatre has become increasingly isolated and disconnected from the podium



Diagrammatic proposed plan - connecting the proposed studio to the podium reconnects the theatre with its context and creates a new frontage on Queens Walk.



Grade 2* NT Future service yard on the South Bank



Haworth Tompkins transformed this service yard into a vibrant and popular riverside cafe and bar



Grade 1 listed Bristol Old Vic's former solid, defensive facade



Haworth Tompkins transformed the foyer arrival sequence, remodelling the foyer as an extension of the public realm

4.6 APPROACH TO FACADE

The materiality of the new studio theatre has been carefully considered. Whilst the Hexagon is not a listed building, it is architecturally significant within Reading, and the new extension must be respectful of its materiality and scale. Key datum lines have been referenced into the elevations of the new studio theatre to embed it within its context. It must remain the ‘younger sibling’, both physically and programmatically.

The materiality of the scheme can be broken into four distinct parts:

1. *A brick plinth;*

The base of the building, which contains the BoH spaces, will be constructed from brick. This will create a continuation of the brick base that forms the ground floor of the Hexagon. Brick will also create a robust and strong facade to the new theatre at street level, which is especially important at the get-in and loading bay. The tone and texture of the brick will complement the existing.

2. *A standing seam zinc cladding, pigmented red oxide;*

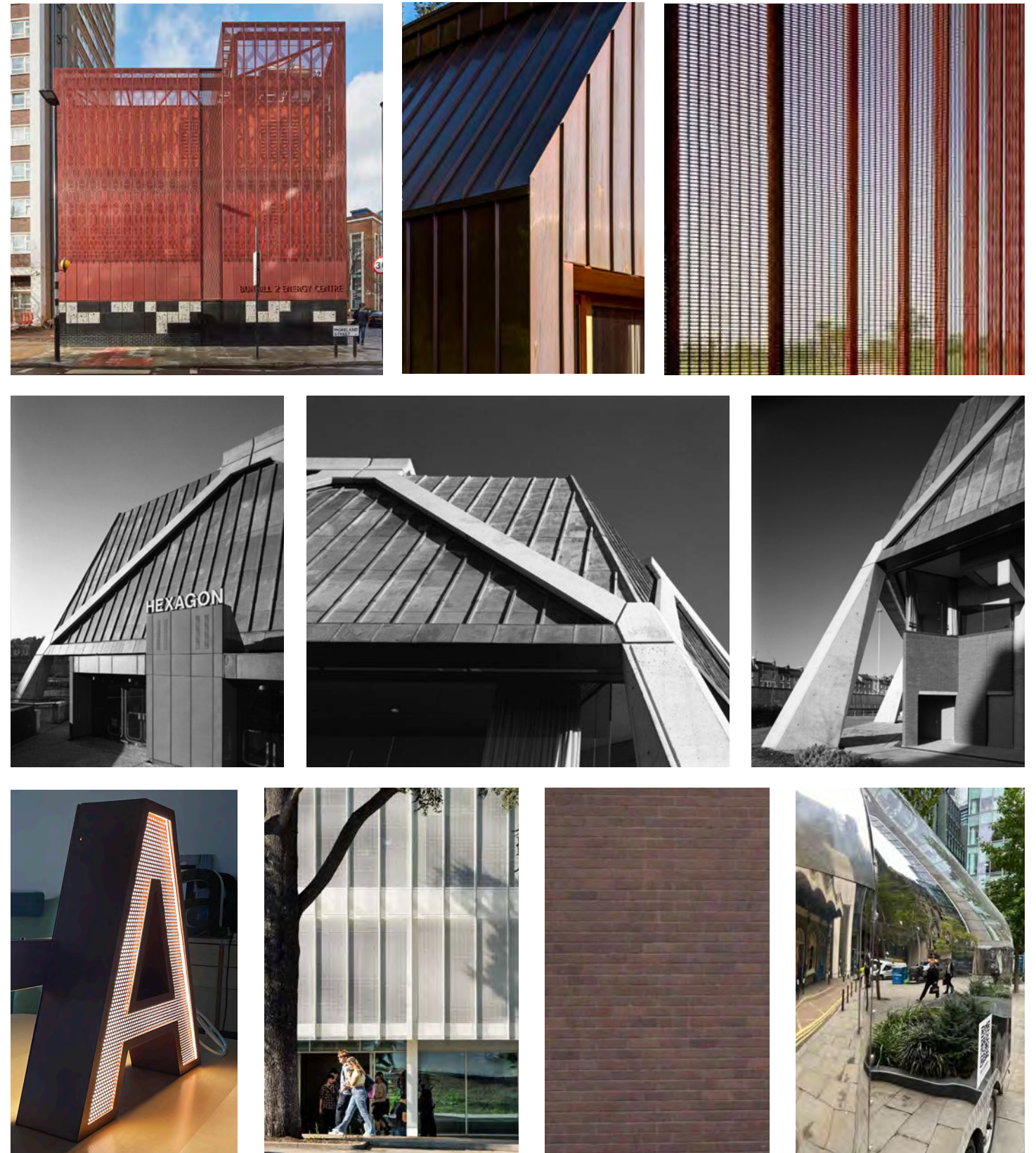
Above the brick base, the main mass of the building will be wrapped in a standing seam zinc cladding, to match the standing seam rhythm of the Hexagon’s roof. The zinc will be pigmented red oxide, to give the new studio its own unique character and warmth. Zinc has been chosen for its high sustainability properties. It is a natural material with low manufacturing energy expenditure when compared to other principal metals. Zinc is also 100% recyclable and has a low corrosion rate, therefore an inherently long lifespan.

3. *A profiled perforate zinc screen, pigmented red oxide;*

The third component to the external facade, is a perforate zinc cladding system, fixed to a glazed curtain wall. The zinc will be folded into a series of pressings, which when mechanically fixed to one another, will create a vertical rhythm on the facade, which again references the Hexagon’s standing seam roof. During the day, this perforate screen will provide solar shading to prevent overheating internally. At night, light will spill out of these perforations, creating a welcome frontage, which will activate Queens Walk and invite people in.

4. *A polished metal cladding;*

The final element of the facade, is a polished metal cladding, located on the east and west elevations, where the new studio theatre connects to the existing Hexagon. Aligned with the existing band of glazing around the perimeter of the Hexagon, this polished metal will reflect the surrounding site, creating an invisible connection and the illusion of space between the two masses.



Precedents for the proposed materiality of the new studio theatre

4.7 SOUTH ELEVATION

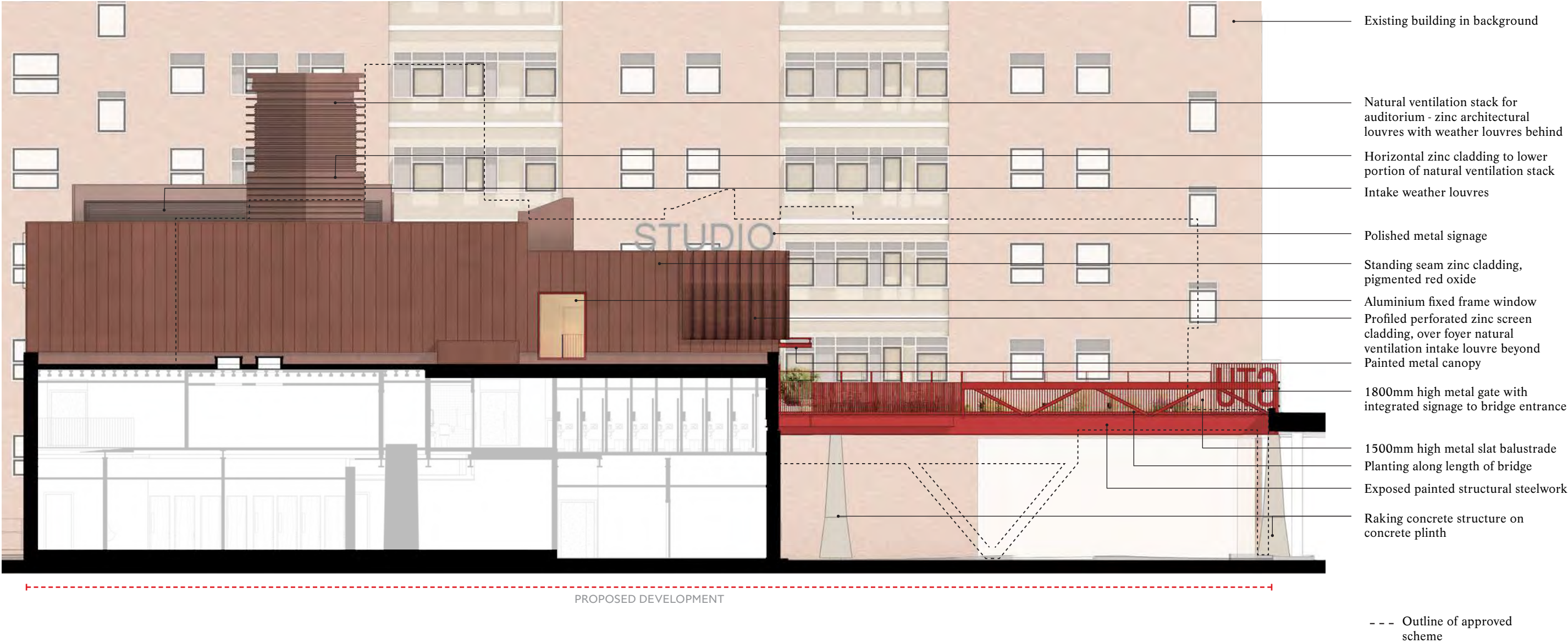
PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation doesn't exist for the existing building, as it is single storey and connects to the Hexagon on the south.

For the proposed studio, the south elevation is largely defined by the expressive red painted steel structure spanning the access road, creating a bridge link between the Hexagon theatre and podium. Raking concrete columns reference the warren truss of the Hexagon, and the honesty of the exposed steelwork is in keeping with the visible structure of the podium. A critical dimension of 4.5m has been maintained over the service road for safe movement of service vehicles and coaches. Linear planters along the bridge will improve the setting of the studio and the approach for visitors.

The rest of the south facade is largely unseen, only visible at a skewed angle from street and podium level. It is a simple linear form, wrapped in red oxide standing seam zinc cladding. This is broken up by a large window into the gallery level foyer, overlooking the Hexagon standing seam roof beyond, and a natural ventilation intake louvre for the foyer, screened with a red oxide perforated metal cladding. Above this screen, on the parapet, is a polished metal signage zone, wrapping the corner of the building to signal the entrance to the studio theatre for pedestrians coming from the Minster Quarter.

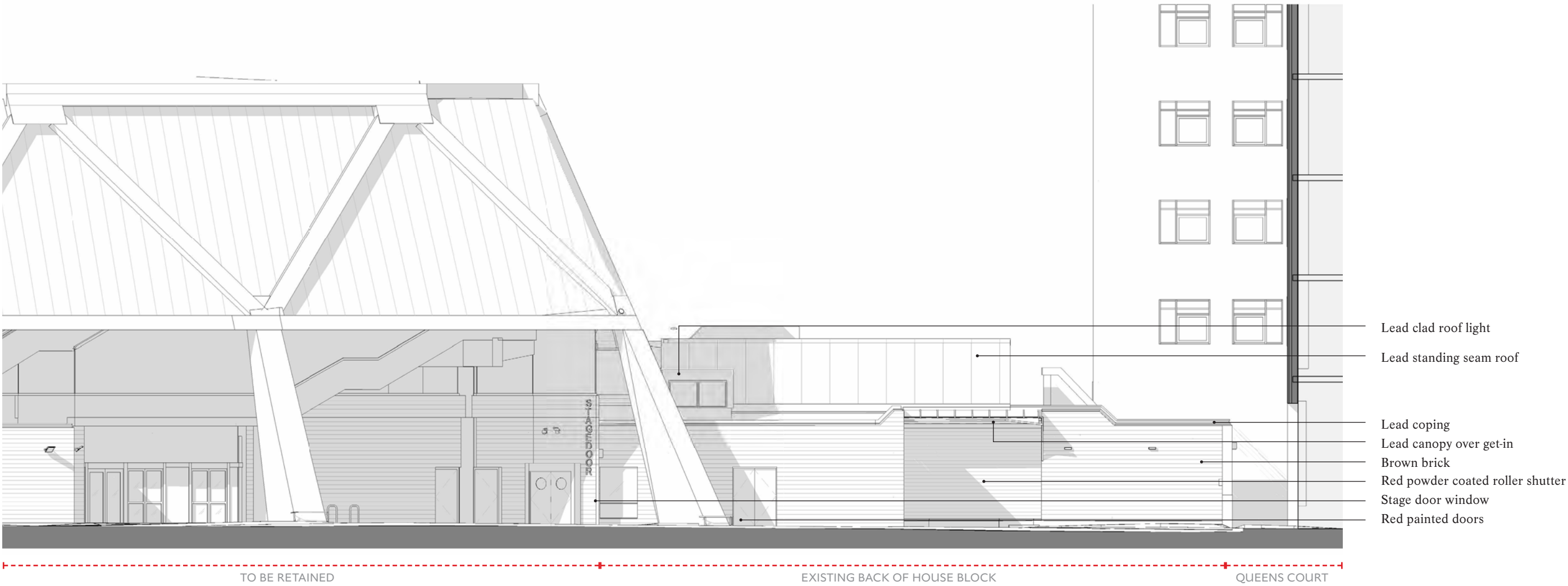
In the background of the elevation, the massing of the ventilation stack, roof light and auditorium intake plenum are visible, all clad in a red oxide metal.



4.8 EAST ELEVATION

EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

The east facade is the primary entrance to the new studio theatre, and forms the front facade. Sitting beside the main Hexagon, it is a low mass, which aligns with the brick base of the theatre. The roof line is undulating, with lead clad roof light pop-ups, giving height and light to the workshop below. The facade is punctuated with bold red doors. The most significant are the red roller shutters at the get-in.



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

The new studio plans propose to replicate the same language of a low brown brick base, accented with red thresholds. At street level, this facade will also have a number of windows with red oxide frames to provide daylight into the rooms beyond.

At podium level, an illuminated sign on the parapet will announce the building from afar. Glazed doors with red metal frames and digital signage mounted next to the entrance, will advertise upcoming shows and provide general building information, whilst activating Queens Walk and animating the facade. Slimline frames for the entrance door and thicker frames for the summer doors will subtly communicate the main entrance. This zone is protected by a red canopy, declaring the theatre entrance and referencing the Hexagon's character of red thresholds.

At high level the foyer is characterised by glazed curtain walling, screened by a perforate zinc cladding to provide solar shading. Through the screen you can read the timber structure beyond, and the red oxide metal framing of the curtain wall. The twinkling lights of the foyer will be visible beyond, and during the evening, light will leak through these perforations, and make the building glow.

A reflective polished metal link aligned with the glazed band around the existing Hexagon, connects the new massing of the studio theatre to the existing theatre, creating the illusion of space between the two masses. The parapet of this link aligns with the top of the concrete ring beam of the existing hexagon, and a break in the cladding reinforces the datum produced by the underside of the beam.



PROPOSED ENTRANCE GATE



EXISTING HEXAGON

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

QUEENS COURT

Existing building in background

Foyer natural ventilation louvres at roof level
Illuminated signage

Red oxide standing seam zinc

Glazed curtain wall behind profiled perforated zinc screen cladding

Painted metal canopy

Illuminated show poster/ digital display

Aluminium framed glazed doors

Planter

Brickwork

Exposed painted structural steelwork

Concrete raking columns and plinth

Polished metal cladding

Aluminium windows with opening vents

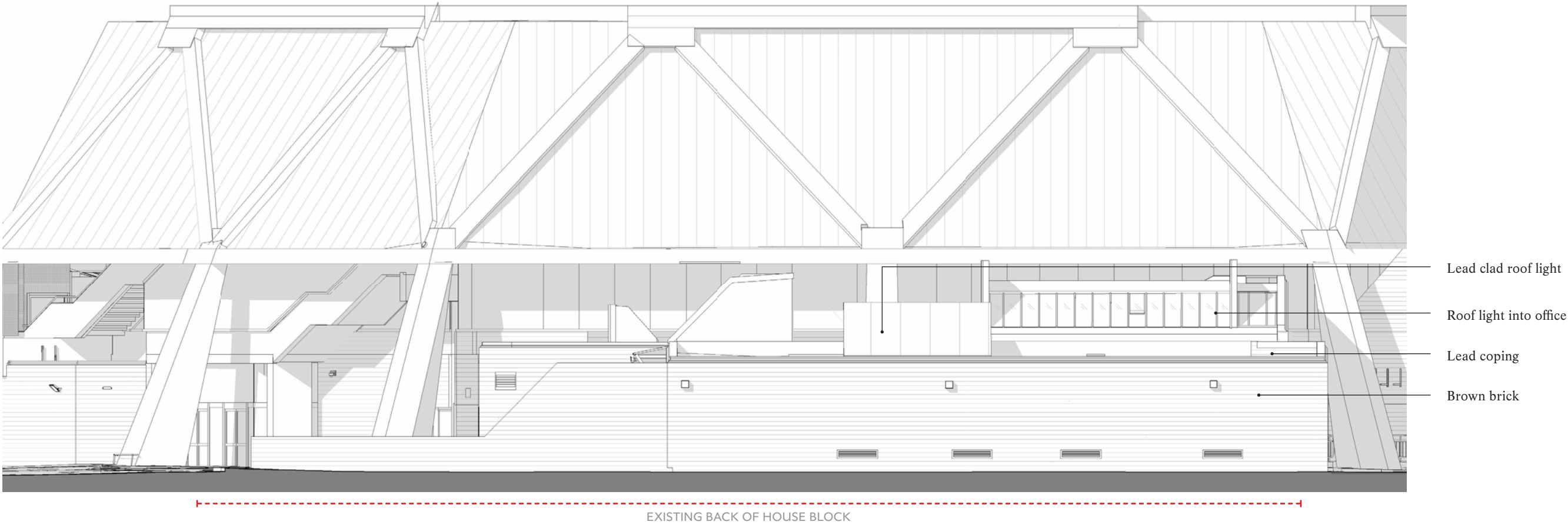
Solid external doors

--- Outline of approved scheme

4.9 NORTH ELEVATION

EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation is on the site boundary, offset 2m from the neighbouring student accommodation block, Queens Court. Consequently, it is a blank brick wall, with no fenestration.



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

Like the existing, the north elevation has limited fenestration to provide privacy to both the theatre and students.

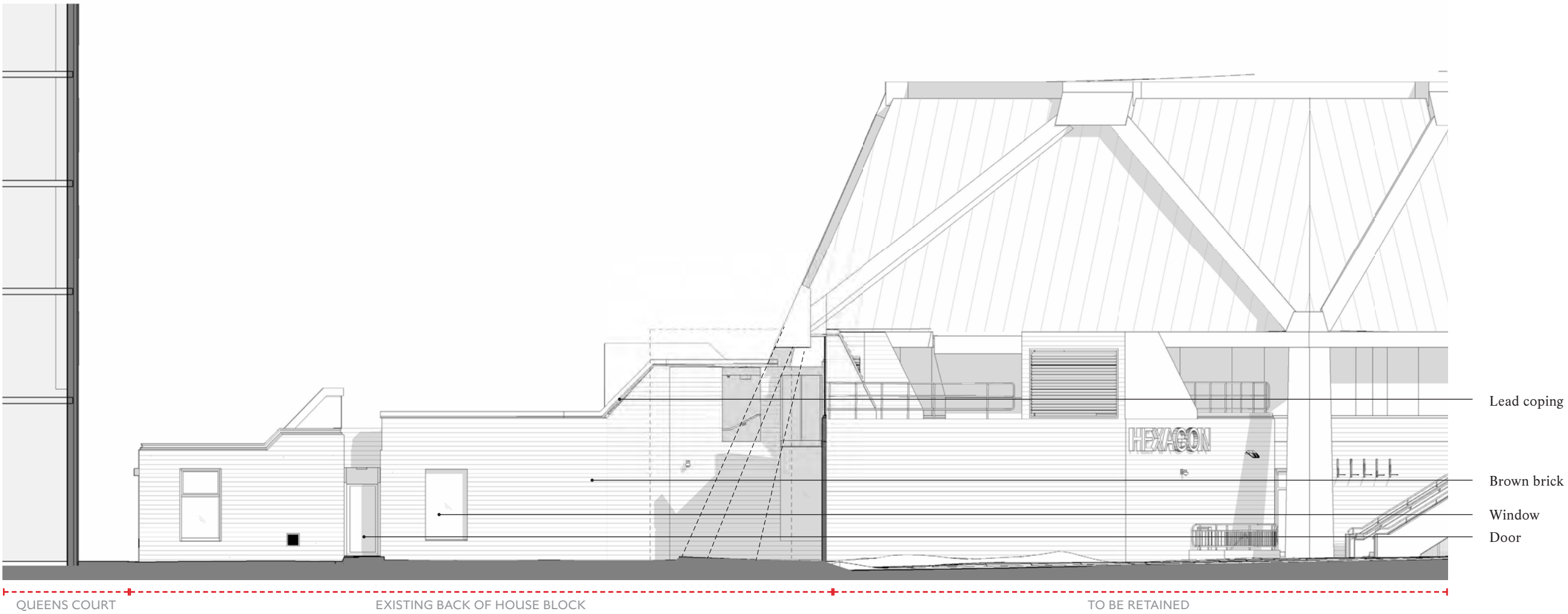
The base of the building is a two storey brick block, housing the studio theatre's back of house facilities. Set back from this mass, the zinc clad front of house block sits on top.



4.10 WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

The west elevation is the rear of the Hexagon, and faces the A329. Directly in front of this elevation is a tarmacked area used for staff and crew parking. The elevation itself is a brick facade with lead coping, and a number of windows. The roof line steps from north to south, where it becomes a two storey block, accommodating a staff office. There is a single door providing access to the back of house corridor.



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

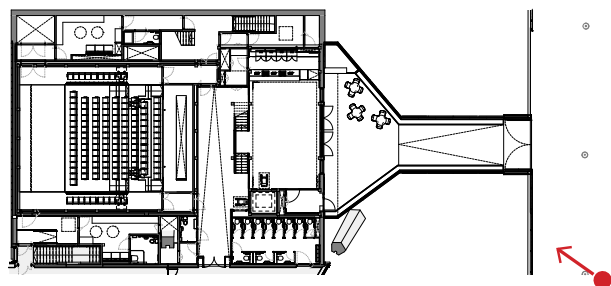
The larger scale and less detailed nature of the west facade responds to the context of the A329, as opposed to the more detailed east elevation fronting the building on Queens Walk.

This side of the building will be a hard-working service yard, directly facing the A329, a major distribution road running through Reading. Artic lorries will reverse up to the facade daily to offload at the get-in, so the palette of materials at street level is resilient. Aligned with the brick datum of the existing Hexagon, a brick plinth provides a robust base to the elevation. Red powder coated roller shutters and an external pass door provide direct access to the scene dock.

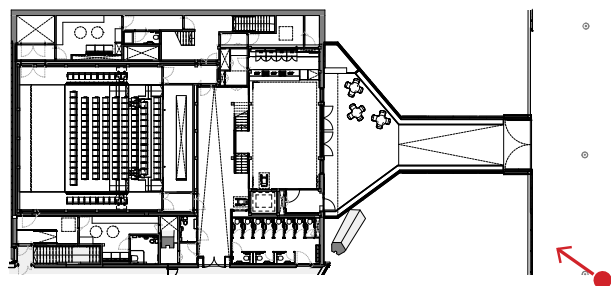
Above the brick wall, the auditorium is clad in standing seam red oxide zinc, referencing the Hexagon Theatre next door. As the most visible facade to the rest of Reading, the building must showcase the theatre from afar. So high-level signage below the parapet, will signal the building to those travelling through Reading.

Mirroring the east elevation, a reflective polished metal link connects the new massing of the studio theatre to the existing theatre.





Illustrative view of the external approach at night



Illustrative view of the external approach during the day

4.11 TEMPORARY WORKS

Before construction can commence, a series of relocation works will need to happen, to ensure that the Hexagon can remain operational whilst the current BoH is demolished and replaced. Drawing on our experience of working on projects with similar operational challenges, we have proposed the following phasing:

- *Relocated kitchen*; there is an operational advantage to permanently relocating the kitchen to the main Hexagon foyer in a more centralised position. This would streamline operations with better connectivity between the preparation and sale of food.
- *Temporary BoH*; the proposal to demolish the existing BoH relies on these facilities being temporarily replaced, in order for the Hexagon to effectively operate during construction. Briefing from the client, outlined the need for the following spaces:

Dressing Room	70 sqm	10 x 7 m	Ability to sub-divide
Studio	36 sqm	6 x 6m	Used for crew catering - requires a double sink and 32 amp 3 phase power
Storage	132 sqm	15.5 x 8.5m	Min. height 3m
Wardrobe	15 sqm	6 x 2.5m	2 washing machines and 4 driers required
Technicians Welfare			Kitchen facilities required
WCs & Showers			Based on existing BoH toilets and showers

These will be located in temporary cabins south of the site, where direct access off the A329 slip-road can be attained. The transport consultant has confirmed that with some minor pruning of the existing vegetation, there will be room for one articulated lorry to park and offload equipment into the new temporary storage cabin. This parking will be temporary as to not obstruct emergency vehicle access.

This land on which the temporary cabins are proposed is banked, with a level change of around 1m - this will need to be graded.

We are also proposing a hoarding line east of the temporary cabins, ensuring that the foyer terrace can remain as a usable space for visitors.

The details of these cabins will be further developed in collaboration with the contractor, when appointed.

- *Temporary get-in*; a temporary get-in is also required during construction. An existing set of doors to the south of the Hexagon could provide the new get-in for performers, but a new opening will need to be formed adjacent to stage right. A temporary overhead cover will be required between the cabins and Hexagon, to protect the scenery and props from damage, and actors’ costumes and make up during bad weather.
- *Temporary stage door*; a temporary stage door is proposed to be cordoned off in the Hexagon foyer.

PROPOSED PHASING DIAGRAM



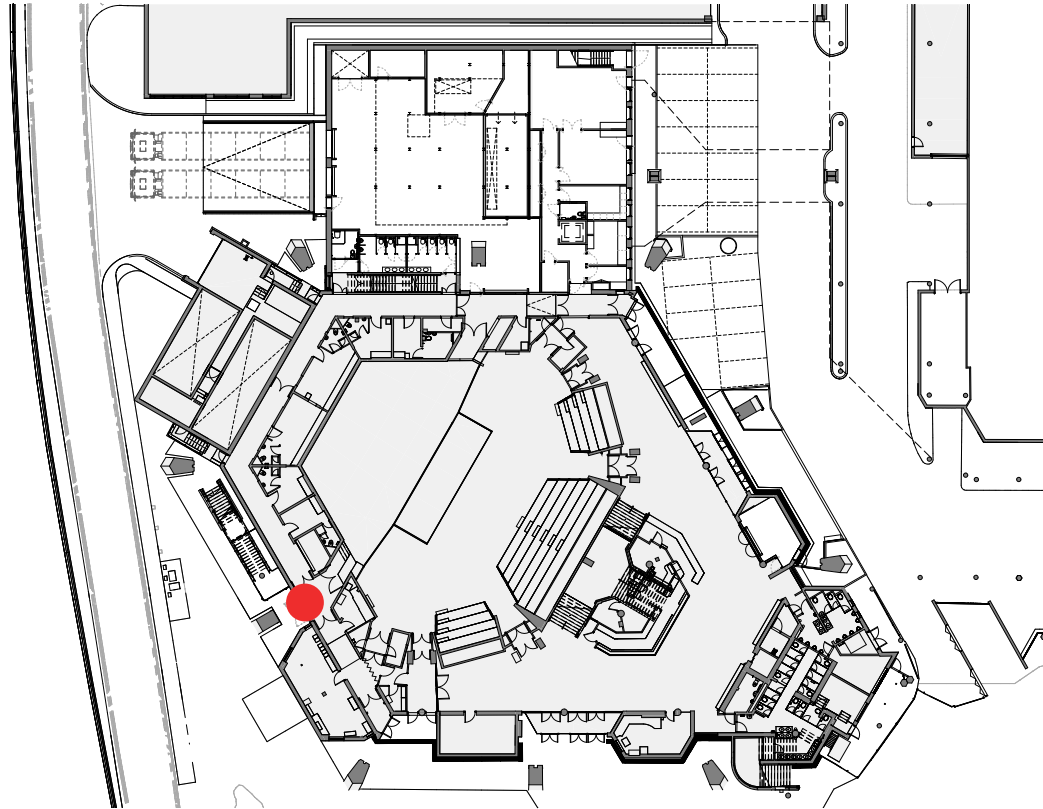
4.12 BUILDING ALTERATIONS

GET-IN DOORS

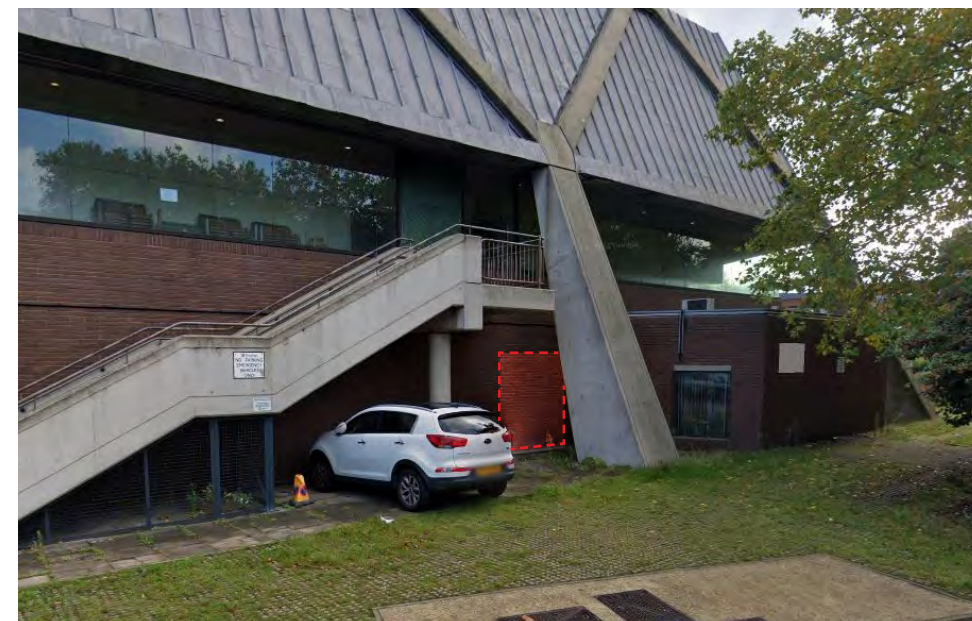
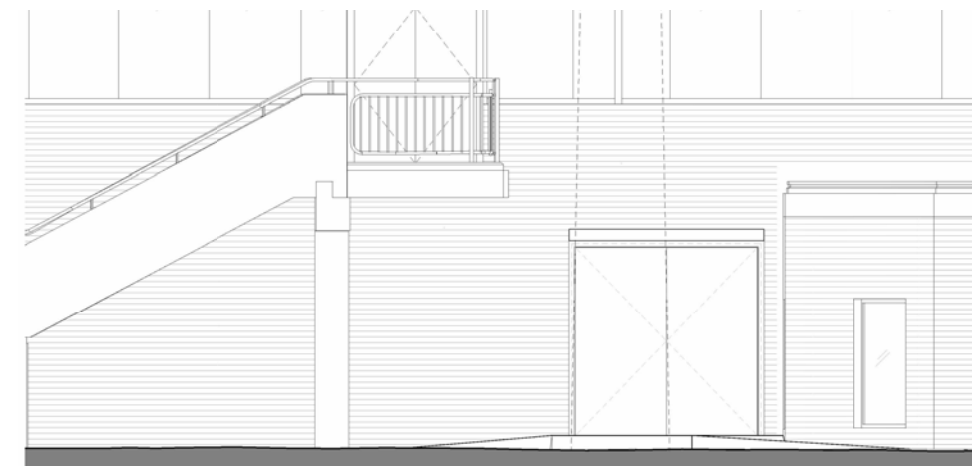
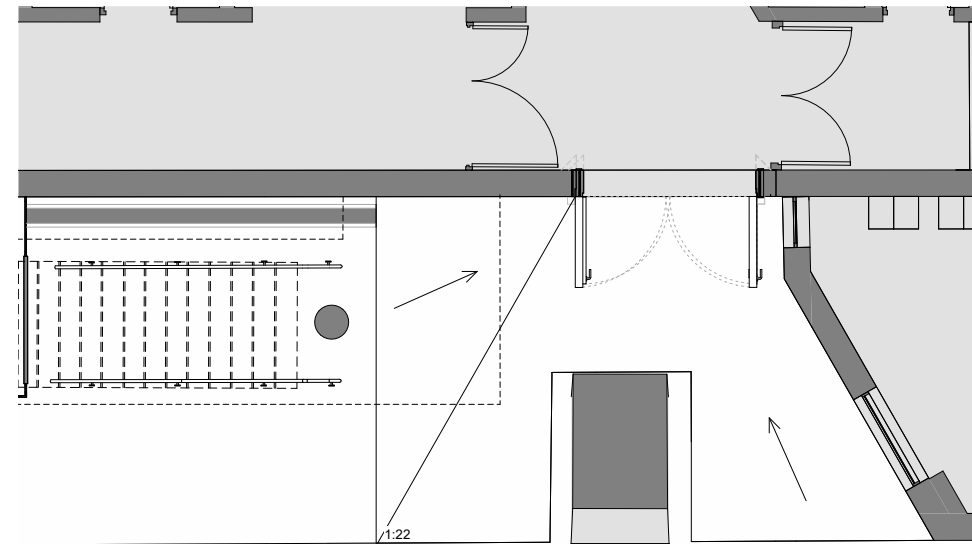
A new steel acoustic double door set will be installed on the south elevation of the existing Hexagon, to create a get-in during construction. Directly opposite and aligned with stage right of the Hexagon stage, this door will function as a temporary get-in, but will be a permanent alteration to the existing fabric.

To create the new get-in, the existing brick wall will need to be partially opened up, and the new double door installed. The doors will be painted red, to match the existing external doors on the Hexagon. The door size will be determined based on brick course setting out on site, but will be circa 2500(h) x 2500(w).

In order to deal with the level changes between the internal finished floor level, and external floor level, there will be a concrete ramp installed.



Location of proposed get-in door



Plan, elevation and indicative view of proposed get-in door