

To the Members of Dublin City Council

South East Area Committee

June 2023

For Information Purposes Only

**Notification of initiation under Part 8 Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)
Proposed Development Restoration & Reuse of Newcomen Bank (formally the Rates Office) 16
Castle Street, Dublin 8.**

Dublin City Council wishes to give notice that it intends to initiate the process leading to an application under Part 8 of the Local Government Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the Restoration and Reuse of Newcomen Bank (formally the Rates Office) 16 Castle Street, Dublin 8. The works are required to facilitate the reuse of this significant historic building for public cultural events and programmes.

Context

Since Newcomen Bank ceased use as the Rates Office for Dublin City Council, proposals have been developed to allow for the conservation and repurposing of this significant site to act as a resource for the community, visitors, local enterprise, the city and the state. The concept for the building is to provide a large and flexible public space to be made available with small to medium sized conference/exhibition, venue and meeting space available for public booking and cultural use throughout.



History

Newcomen Bank is one of the finest Georgian townhouses in Dublin, a city that contains hundreds of magnificent houses constructed during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Only surpassed in scale by the great city mansions such as Leinster House, Powerscourt House and Charlemont House, Newcomen is their equal in architectural finesse. Extended twice, Newcomen now boasts not less than three principal facades on Castle Street, Cork Hill and Lord Edward Street. The only Dublin townhouse to be entirely faced in Portland stone, it contains one of the finest hanging stone staircases, sometimes referred to as a 'cantilevered stairs'. Designed by Thomas Ivory, an architect of great note who also designed the former Blue Coats School, or Law Society, it contains superb Neo-Classical interiors and a number of elliptical shaped rooms, one of which has a painted ceiling. This room is thought to have inspired the Oval Office in the White House in Washington, which was designed by James Hoban, who was an architectural student and an assistant to Thomas Ivory.



Extract from the Baquet's survey 1773

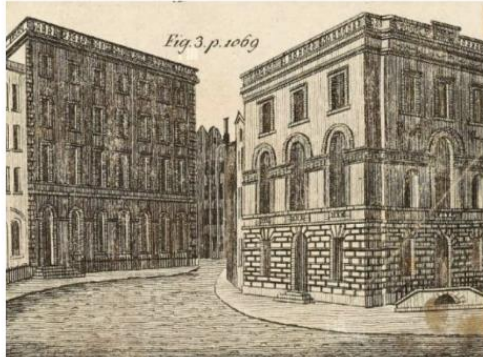


Extract from the 1847 OS Map



Extract from the 1864 OS Map

— Location of Newcomen Bank Building



La Touche Bank and Newcomen Bank, Castle Street, illustration from 'Gentleman's Mag.', Vol. LVIII, 1786, Source NLJ



Royal Exchange from Castle Street 1784, Source NLJ



The Castle Gate 1787-1829, Source NLJ



View of the Castle Gate and Royal Exchange 1810-1858 Henry Brocas, Source NLJ

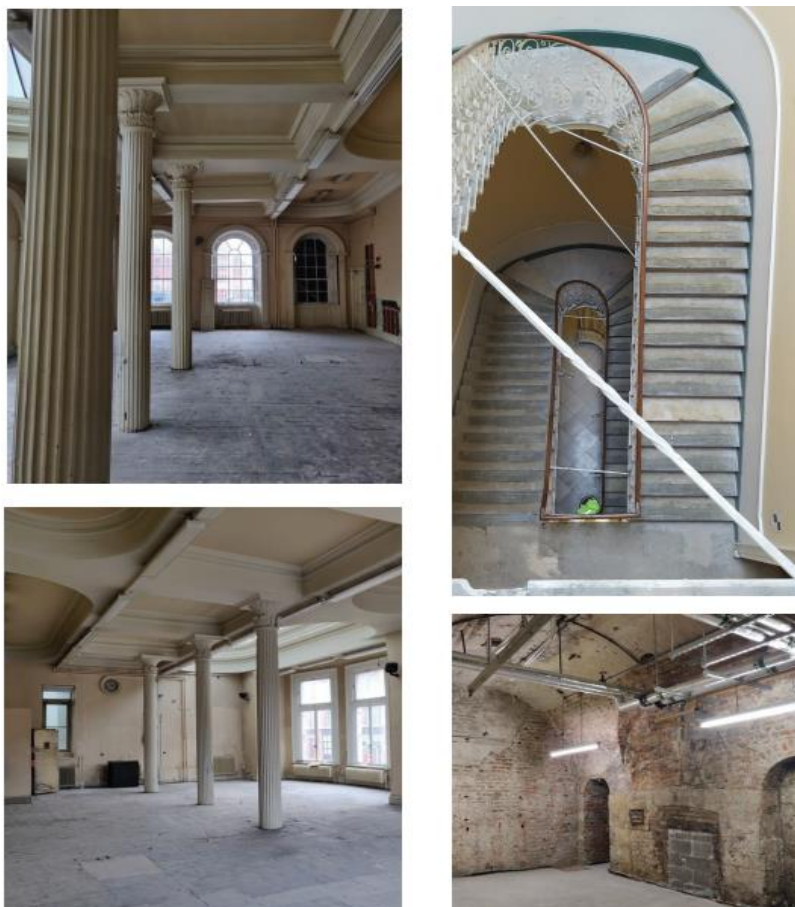
Design Development

Newcomen Bank is a protected structure (RPS 2050), in the ownership of Dublin City Council and the building most recently functioned as the Dublin City Rates Office, until it closed in 2018. In 2020 a multidisciplinary design team, led by Howley Hayes Cooney Architecture, was appointed by Dublin City Council to develop and oversee proposals to conserve and repurpose the building to become a suite of civic rooms, for cultural, commercial, ceremonial and social uses, both by the council and the public. This team includes experienced conservation engineers, quantity surveyors and experts in fire safety and accessibility design.

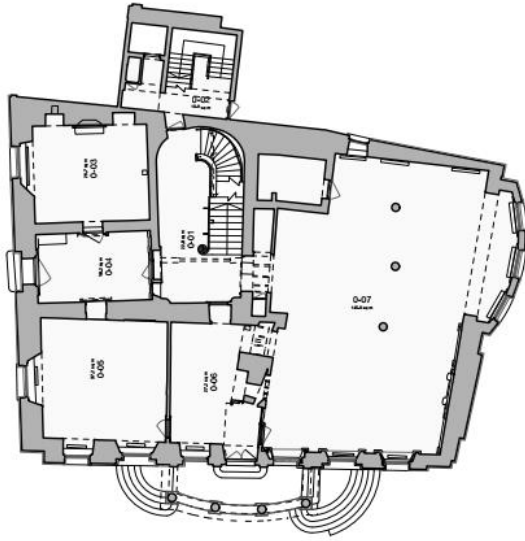
The stage 1, feasibility design process, which is now complete, included carrying out significant research, detailed surveys and investigation and strip out works. This information was collated and examined in detail informing the reuse proposals which were presented to a range of stakeholders, including the elected representatives, relevant departments of Dublin City Council including the Conservation Office, Government Departments, heritage interest groups and NGOs, neighbours and the general public.

The conservation and repurposing of the building will bring with it a number of challenges, particularly in the fields of fire safety and accessibility; the integration of modern services for heating, lighting, IT and data; the repair of damaged or compromised historic fabric, particularly the stone staircase, chimneypieces, historic joinery and decorative ceilings.

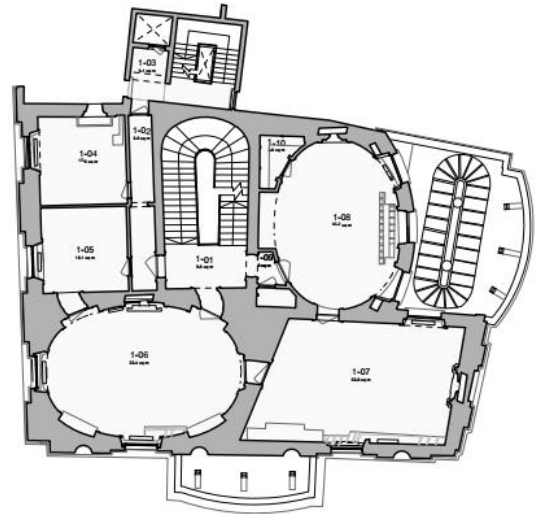
The stage 1 process tested the building itself to establish the constraints - due to fire safety requirements, protection of historic fabric, occupancy number restrictions and universal access throughout the building. As these are now clear, a defined user brief has now been established.



View of banking hall, cantilevered staircase and basement, following strip out and investigative works

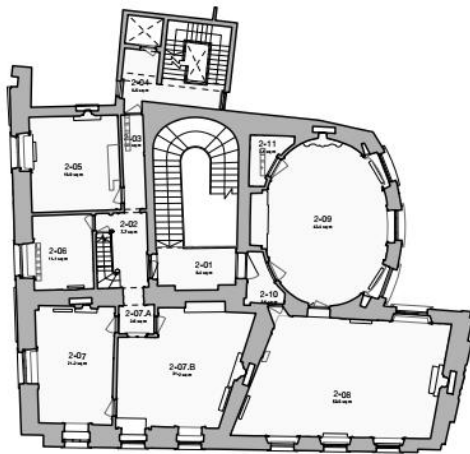


Ground Floor Plan

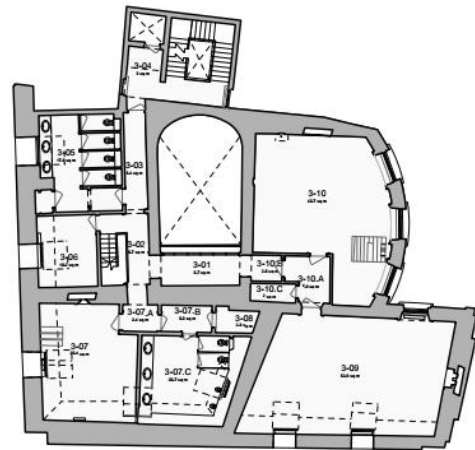


First Floor Plan

Existing Ground Floor and First Floor Plans



Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

Existing Second Floor and Third Floor Plans

Proposed Development:

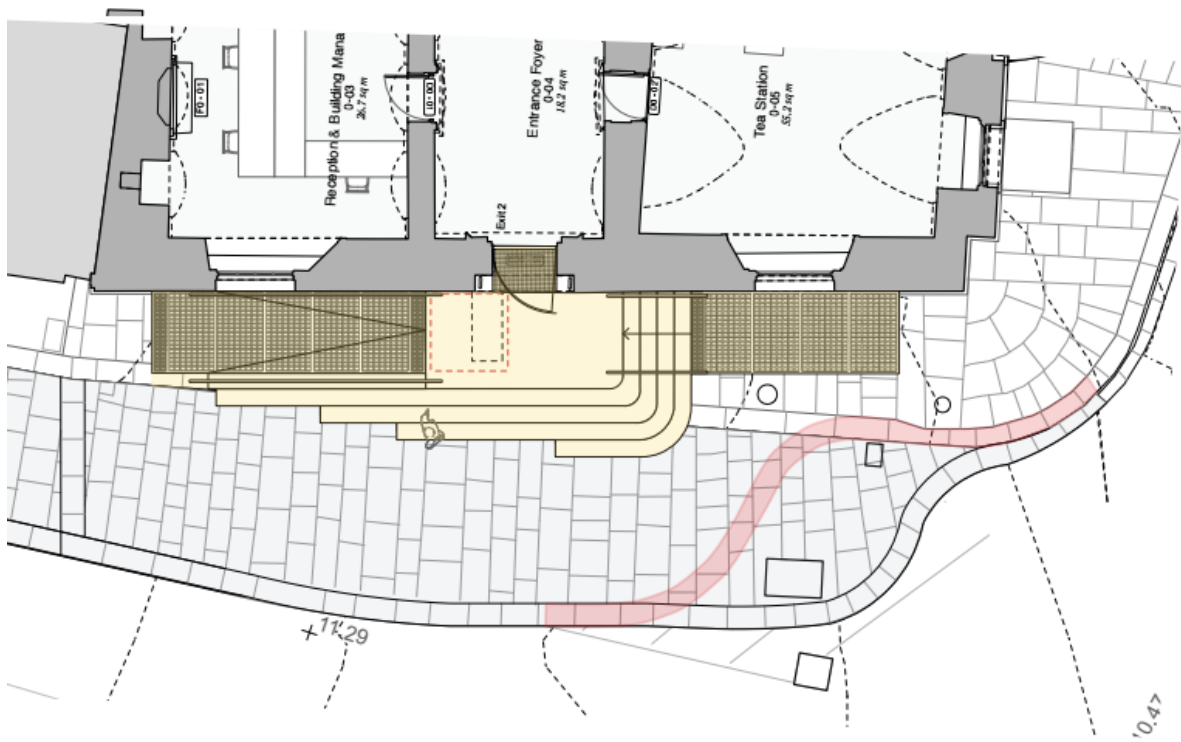
Having decided that the building merited a more civic and public use, DCC decided to repurpose the building as a flexible suite of rooms that could be used by both the public and the council for a range of activities ranging from cultural to commercial uses, and civic to social uses. To achieve this aim, the design concept is a very simple one – to return the building as far as is possible to its original layout, by removing those later accretions and finishes that detract in any way, from the beauty and historic character of the building.

A new accessible entrance will be provided to Castle Street allowing for ambulant disabled and wheelchair access to the building. To the rear of the building the existing escape stair and lift will be demolished and a new fully compliant lift and stair will be constructed to allow access to all floors of the building. Internally the basement will provide WCs, storage, plant rooms and two large multipurpose spaces for flexible use. The ground floor banking hall will serve as the largest event / exhibition space in the building, accommodating up to 180 people, with two adjacent vaulted rooms serving as support spaces. The first and second floor rooms are more intimate spaces, but highly decorative, with the potential to host 80 people on each floor. A tea-station facility will be provided on the ground floor, to allow for a limited catering provision on site, with external caterers required for larger offerings on site.

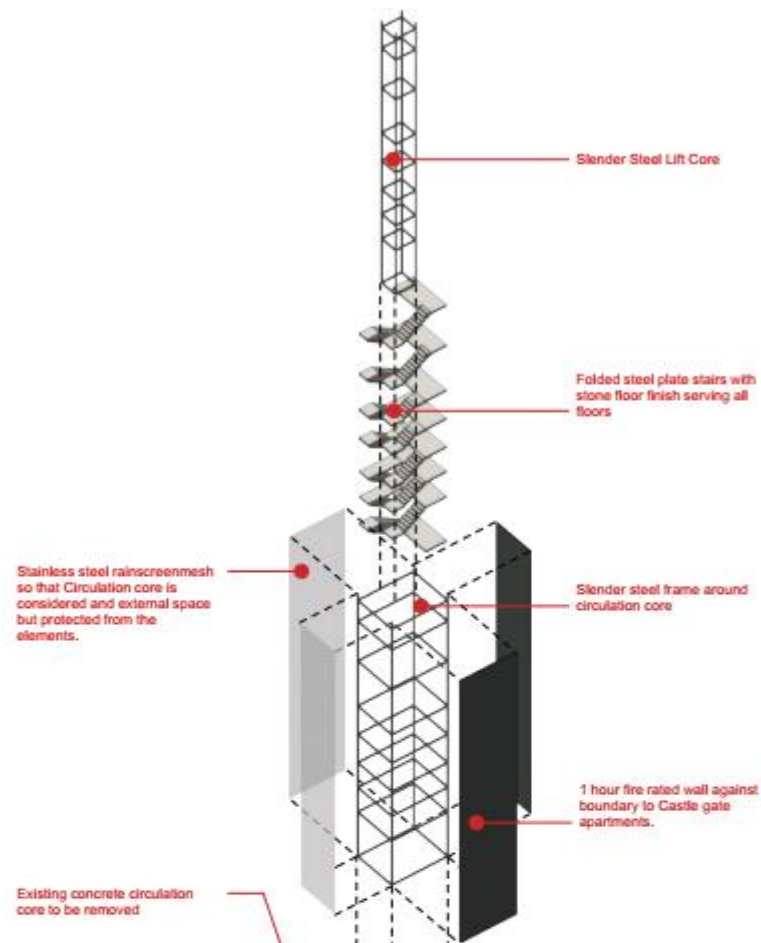
The third floor will serve as an office space, for longer term tenants such as festival or cultural groups or charities, with a dedicated tea-station and WC provision. With lower, but still acceptable floor to ceiling heights at third floor level, these spaces are better suited to office use.

The conservation and new public purpose of the former Newcomen Bank will enhance its two historic neighbours in Dublin Castle and the City Hall and enliven the surrounding area, bringing this wonderful historic structure back into use.

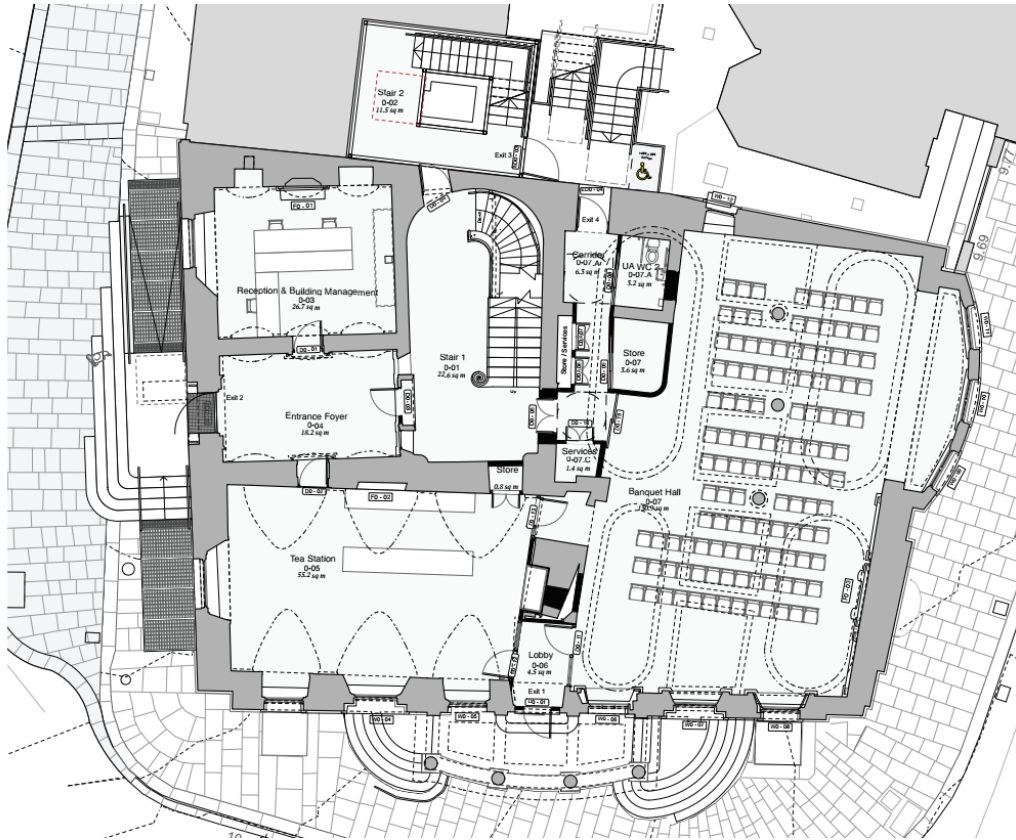
It is the intention to submit the Part 8 Planning Application in July and bring the project to detailed design and appoint a contractor to undertake the works beginning in late 2024.



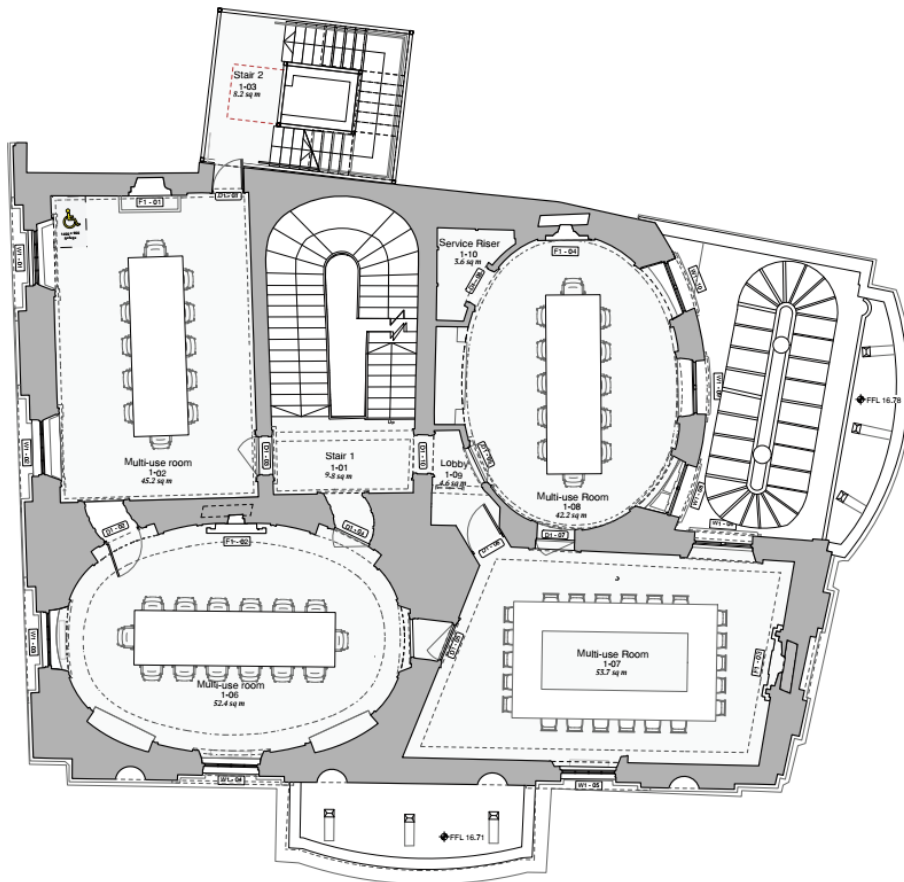
Proposed New Accessible Entrance at Castle Street – Elevation & Plan



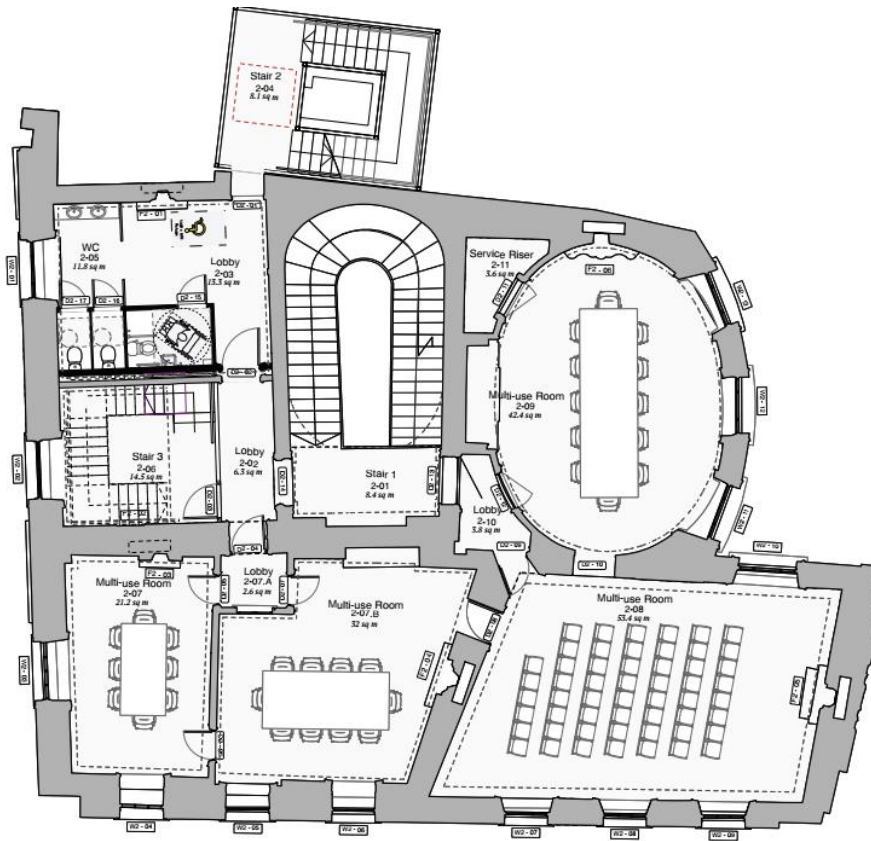
New fully compliant lift & stair allowing access to all floors.



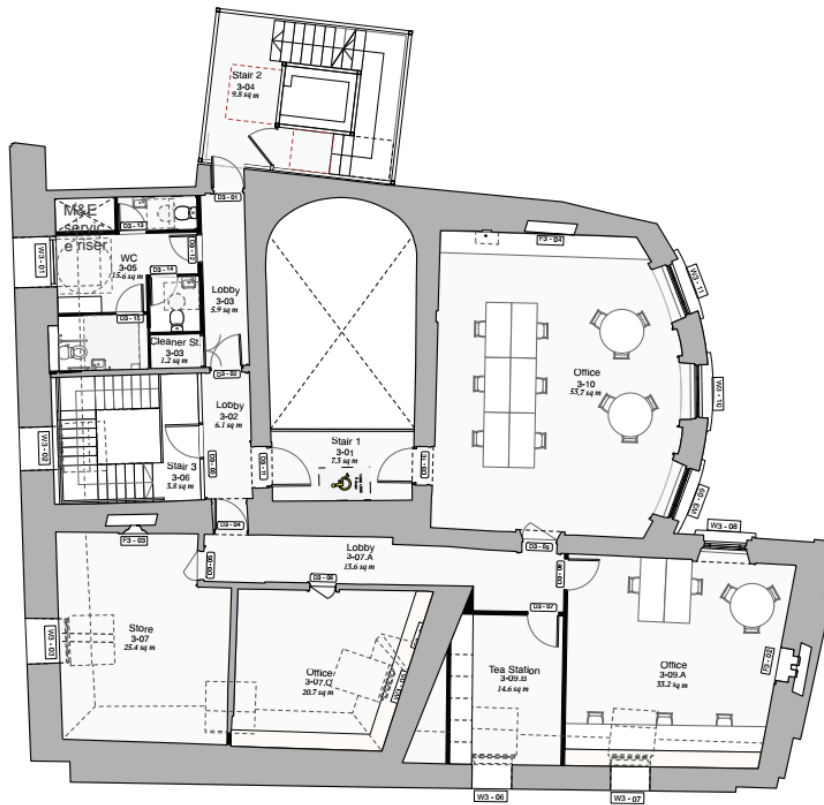
Proposed Ground Floor Layout – Indicative Seating arrangement



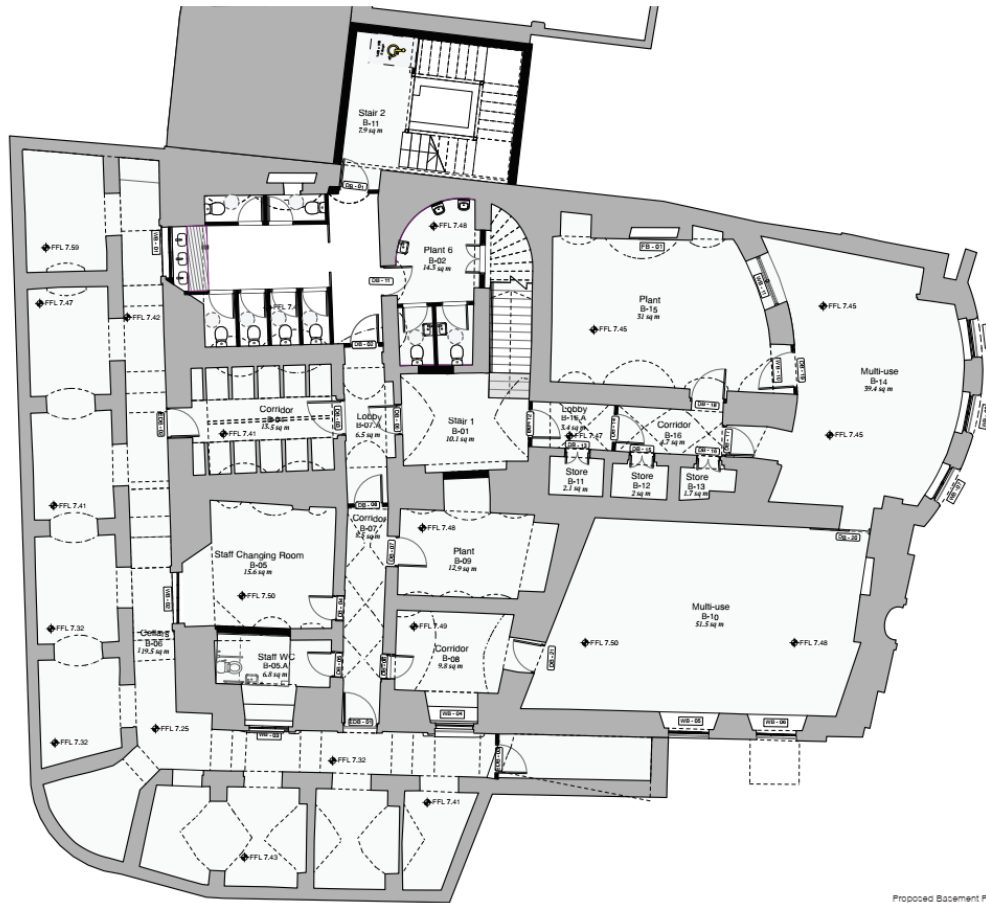
Proposed First Floor Layout – Indicative Seating arrangement



Proposed Second Floor Layout – Indicative Seating arrangement



Proposed Third Floor Layout – Indicative Seating arrangement



Proposed Basement Layout

Proposed Basement Plan

Donncha Ó Dúlaing
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