

**K2A**

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UNITY  
THEATRE,  
HOPE PLACE,  
LIVERPOOL  
DESIGN AND  
ACCESS  
STATEMENT

# Document Information

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# Document Content

Background & Context to Proposals .....	6	Sight Lines .....	48
Introduction.....	9	Lighting.....	48
Assessment.....	10	Signage.....	48
The Theatre .....	12		
History .....	14	Summary .....	50
Social & Cultural.....	17	Summary .....	53
Planning Policy .....	19	Next Steps .....	53
Involvement .....	19	Referances.....	53
Existing Layouts .....	22		
Design Statement .....	2		
Design Proposals.....	28		
Proposed Ground Floor .....	30		
Proposed First Floor .....	31		
Proposed Second Floor .....	32		
Proposed Third Floor .....	33		
Appearance.....	34		
Style.....	36		
Material Selection .....	37		
Visual .....	38		
Access Proposals .....	40		
Access Statement.....	43		
Vehicular.....	46		
Servicing .....	46		
Cycle.....	46		
Emergency Services .....	46		
Pedestrian.....	46		
Public/Private Space.....	46		

# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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# Introduction

Chris Bliss, Chairman of the Board, Unity Theatre

This is an exciting time for the Unity, and for Liverpool.

As an organisation Unity Theatre is going through a period of significant change. Changes in leadership are feeding into changes to how we programme, how we work and how we collaborate. Those changes are bringing a new energy and dynamism to the work of the Unity, and its unique role across the city, region and indeed nationally. It's leading to new thinking about the way we programme, the way the various strands of our work integrate and how we relate to the City and Greater North. In short how we can deliver more great art to more people without compromising our programming integrity.

We want Unity to be exploring what it means to be a 21st Century theatre. We think of Unity as place for our artists and audiences to dream, to imagine new futures, new ways of doing. Reconnecting to our political (with a small p) past, working with writers and alternative theatre makers, supporting new talent, collaborating widely, switching on to digital, being family friendly are all key themes for us.

And in these times of austerity, we know that we need to ensure the organisations long term resilience by strengthening our business plan, improving our environmental sustainability, the diversity of our offer and increasing our earned income potential.

# Assessment

## Physical Context

The Georgian Quarter stretches from Liverpool Cathedral, along the aptly named Hope Street, to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King and is home to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Unity Theatre and Everyman Theatre plus many of the city's best eateries including 60 Hope Street and the London Carriage Works. It is also part of the Rodney Street conservation area which maintains high standards of design quality throughout the area. In 2012 Hope Street was awarded 'The Great Street Award at the national Urbanism Awards.

Hope Place connects Hope Street to the east with Pilgrim Street to the west. The street is defined by a large number of Georgian town houses anchored together by the London Carriage Works Restaurant on the corner of Hope Street. Many of the houses on Hope Place are Grade II listed. The theatre itself is situated approximately halfway down the street in a former Jewish Synagogue that has in recent years undergone a series of major modern refurbishments and alterations.

1. Unity Theatre, Hope Place
2. Pilgrim Public House, Pilgrim Street
3. The London Carriage Works, Hope Street
4. The Philharmonic Dining Rooms, Hope Street / Hardman Street (Grade II Listed)
5. Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street (Grade II Listed)
6. Ego Restaurant, Hope Street

## Transport

Located on Eastern edge of the city centre Unity Theatre can be accessed from two train stations, Lime Street and Central Station, both within a 10-15 minute walk of the theatre. Within a five minute walking distance of the theatre are nine bus stops ( ● black dots) along various routes connecting in and out of the city. For private transportation there is on street parking available on the surrounding streets, although parking on Hope Place itself can prove difficult as it is a residential street with resident only parking from 8am till 6pm and double yellow lines on the opposite side of the single lane one way street. Disabled parking is readily available in all streets as blue badge holders are entitled to fee parking throughout the city.

## Ammenties

The location of the theatre means it has an abundance of local ammenties from, bars and cafes located along Hope Street, to restaurants and shops heading into the centre along Hardman Street.





5 MINS WALK

Hardman Street

Myrtle Street

Pilgrim Street

Hope Street

Hope Place

1.

2.

3.

6.

5.

4.

# The Theatre

The Unity name is one of the last reminders of a national theatre movement that played an important role in the theatrical and political life of the country.

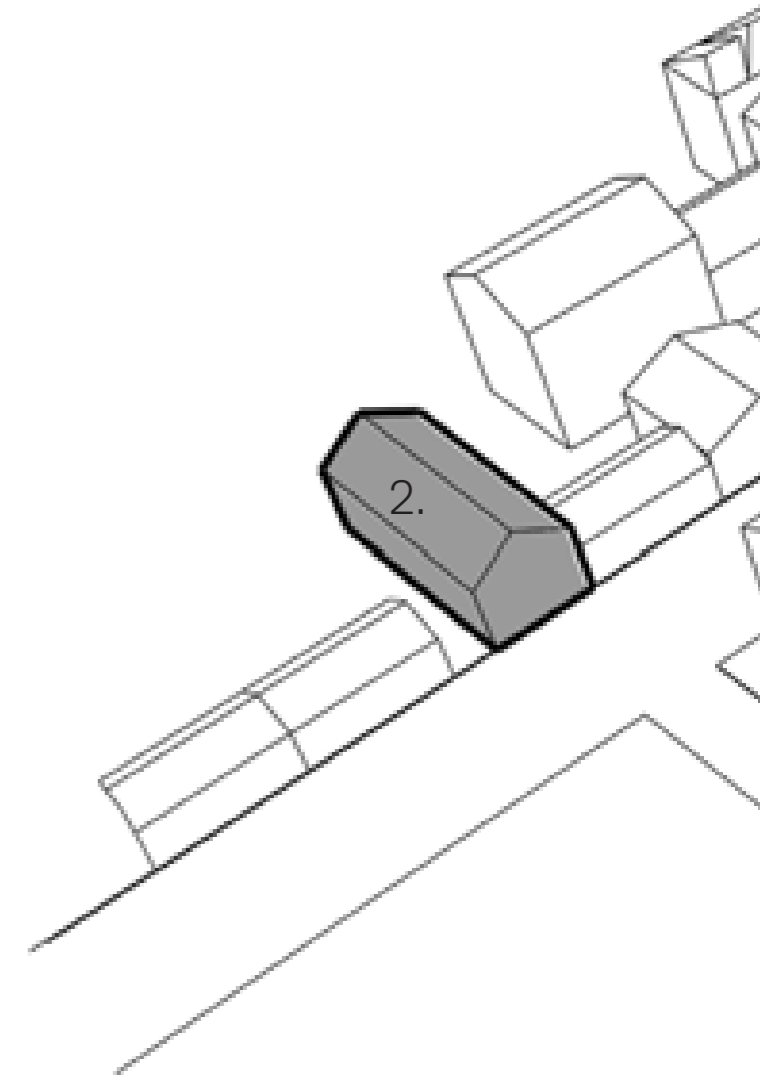
Merseyside Left Theatre was formed in the 1930s and became Merseyside Unity Theatre in 1944. From the start the company was radical and experimental, however, unlike many Unity Theatres, the Merseyside group staged classics alongside contemporary left wing theatre.

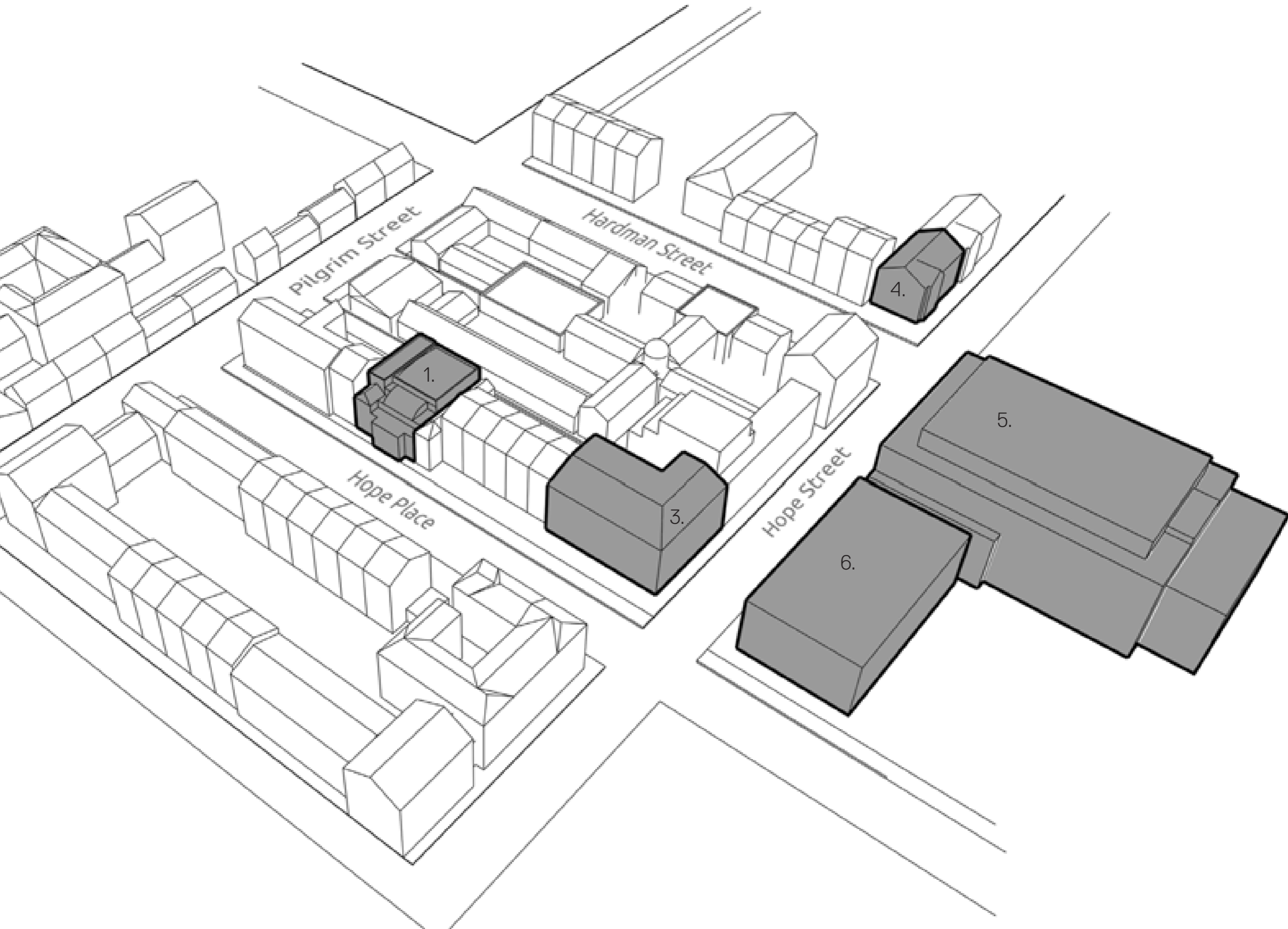
Nationally the Unity Theatre movement, along with many theatre clubs, started to disappear with the abolition of licensing in the 1960s as mainstream theatres met the demand for radical theatre. Merseyside Unity Theatre however survived into the early 1980s. One of their last initiatives was to convert a former synagogue on Hope Street from a photographic studio into their new theatre venue.

In 1994 Unity Theatre received funding from the Arts Council of England for development: A Foundation for Sport and the Arts award and £1.6m from the Arts Council of England Lottery panel and the Government Office of Merseyside. The refurbishment was completed in August 1998. 2010 saw Unity's 30th birthday at Hope Place and still is one of the best loved theatres in Liverpool and has won the Best Performing Venue award at the Mersey Partnership Tourism Awards.

Unity Theatre is Liverpool's small-scale theatre with big ambitions. Their mission is to increase the quality and quantity of the performing arts available on Merseyside by encouraging creativity, participation, innovation and diversity. In September 2015 K2 Architects were tasked with developing a solution to a number of mounting problems with the building infrastructure. We began this commission with a fitness test of the existing building.

1. Unity Theatre, Hope Place
2. Pilgrim Public House, Pilgrim Street
3. The London Carriage Works, Hope Street
4. The Philharmonic Dining Rooms, Hope Street / Hardman Street (Grade II Listed)
5. Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street (Grade II Listed)
6. Ego Restaurant, Hope Street





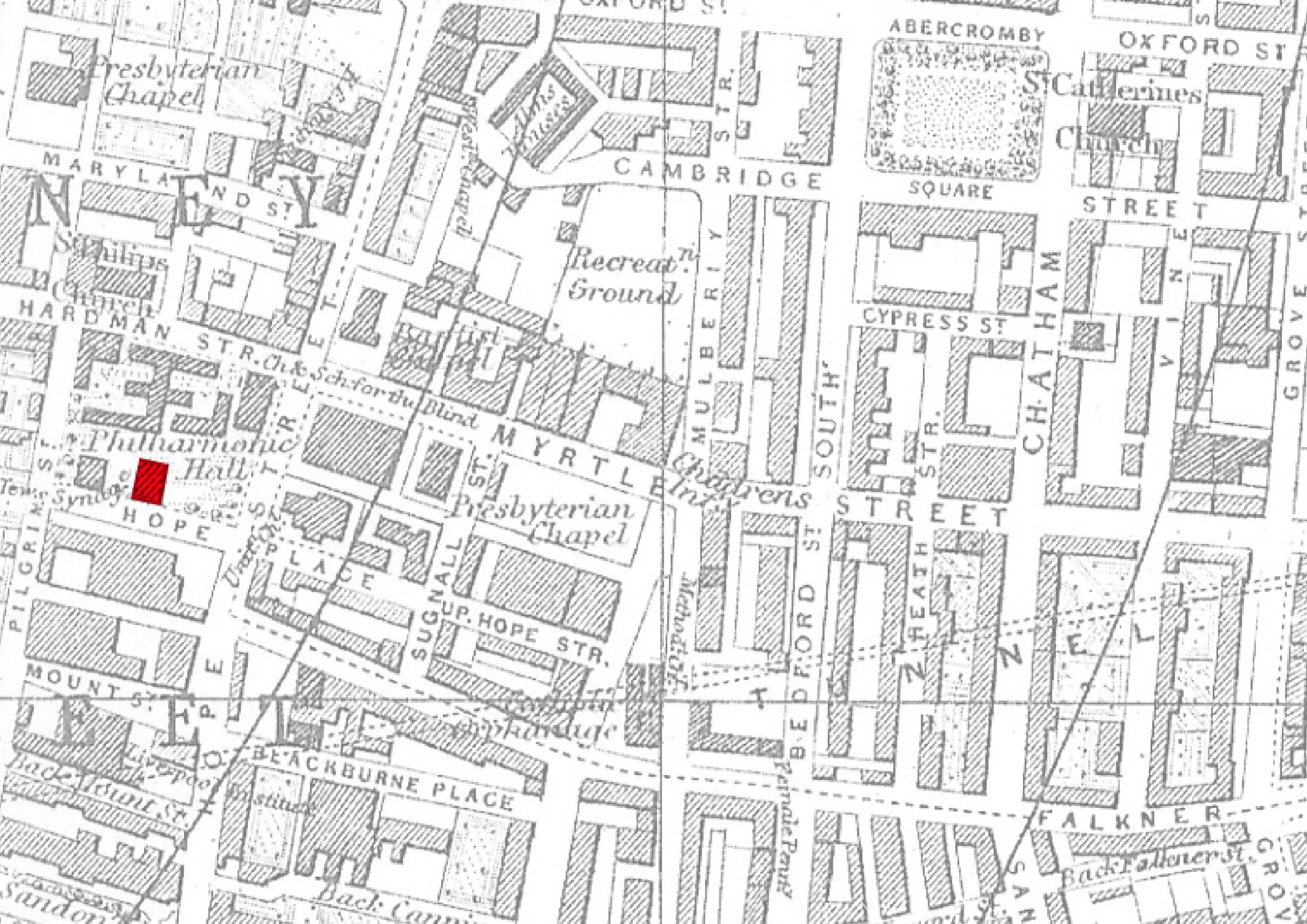
# History

Unity Theatre began life in 1857 as a place of worship for Liverpool's growing Jewish population. Designed by the architect Thomas Wylie in the byzantine style the synagogue was flanked on either side by a Readers House and Vestry. Synagogue architecture often follows styles in vogue at the place and time of construction and the one at Hope Place is no exception.

The front of the building was constructed of white Staffordshire bricks broken up with colourful glazed ceramic brick details. In keeping with Talmudic instructions on how synagogues could be built the buildings windows were among the tallest in the street at that time. The original stained glass windows remain preserved at the theatre but are not in-situ. Soon after the building was completed, a serious defect was discovered in the roof and was declared unsafe, and was replaced by an entirely new ribbed dome that fundamentally altered the buildings character. By 1968 the congregation had moved to Greenbank Drive and the building was occupied by John Mills Photographers as their studio for the next decade.

One of Merseyside Unity Theatres last initiatives was the development of the synagogue into Unity Theatre. Having taken a leasehold on the building, in 1989, Unity undertook a substantial £220k refurbishment.





Presbyterian Chapel

ABERCROMBY

OXFORD ST

St Catherine's Church

CAMBRIDGE

SQUARE

STREET

Recreation Ground

CYPRESS ST

CHATHAM

SOUTH

STREET

MYRTLE

Presbyterian Chapel

Philharmonic Hall

HOPE

SUGNALL

UP. HOPE STR.

MOUNTS

BEACBURN PLACE

FALKNER

Back Falkner St

Back Carr



01/ Hope Place  
03/ Georgian Terraces on Hope Place

02/ Pilgrim Street

04/ Hope Place Terraces  
06/ LJMU Drama Centre

05/ Back Hope Place

## Local Character

The areas surrounding Hope Place is almost entirely made up of Georgian architecture, most of which strictly speaking dates from after the Georgian era. The area was built for and populated by the extremely wealthy of Liverpool. With the city's decline in the 20th century, the area grew unfashionable, and much of it became derelict. Areas along Upper Parliament St and Grove St and Myrtle St were demolished. The tide began to turn noticeably in the 1990s and the area is now much sought after. Nevertheless, the Office for National Statistics finds that it is one of the most deprived districts in the UK

Unity Theatre is located just off Hope Street, a road unique for acting as the connection between Liverpool's two cathedrals, with the Metropolitan Cathedral to the north and the Liverpool Cathedral to the South. The area along Hope Street is one of performing arts and creativity, with the Everyman Theatre, Philharmonic Hall and College of Art all located within close proximity. As well as the Liverpool John Moores Drama School located next door to Unity Theatre itself.

Hope Place is made up of Georgian Terraces homes, surrounding Unity Theatre, all kept in their original layout as single homes.

## Social & Cultural

Hope Place lies on the boundary between Central and Princes Park Wards which paints a broad social profile. The population around Hope Place one of the fastest growing in the city dominated by students working age residents living in single person residencies. A significant proportion of these people are from a BME background. The elderly population in the area is lower than average for the city as are households with children.

The two wards contrast sharply in terms of overall wealth. Princes Park to the south is extremely deprived with almost 95% of the population falling into the most deprived 5% nationally (and 605 falling into the most deprived 1%) and over half the child population living in poverty. By contrast Central Ward to the north shows a low level of deprivation with only 5% falling into the most deprived 5% nationally. This contrast is also reflected in household income, employment, health and education.

In both wards over half the residents are economically inactive. This is mainly due to the high population of students (although Princes Park also has high levels on unemployment). As a result, both wards have a workforce that is composed of well-educated manager and professionals living alongside, lower ranked occupations and inactive persons.

The housing profile matches economic activity with the cities highest concentration of social housing located in the south and private owned and private rented accommodation dominating the north. Crime is high in both wards however as Central is a city centre, the crime rate is significantly higher than the rest of the city.



01/ The Everyman Theatre  
02/ Philharmonic Hall



Mount Pleasant

Conservation Plan

Duke Street

Canning Street

Rodney Street

K2\'

# Planning Policy

Unity Theate is located in an E6 mixed use development zone according to Liverpool City Council UDP.

With no change of use for the building planned and only minor alterations being made to the existing external facade panning policy requirements have very little impact on the proposals.

E6 locations are areas that the council promote the principle of mixed use development and a range of complementary uses are encouraged. Never the less with Unity's purpose and use not being changed or addapted in the proposal this has little impact. With this in mind discussions with Peter Jone's of the LCC Planning Department confirmed that Pre Application discussions for the project for not required.



01/ Unity Theatre Consultation Meeting  
02/ Unity Theatre Consultation Meeting

# Involvement

K2 have been involved with the redevelopment of Unity Theatre from the very earliest stages, visiting the theatre, experiencing it during use to truly understand the needs and requirements of its redesign.

K2 assisted in the co-ordination of consultation meetings, open to the public, to meet and discuss with all involved. Meetings with all levels of staff at Unity also took place to fully understand the requirements and requests of the staff that operate the building on a daily basis.

The application and design have been shared and consulted with neighbours and locals of the theatre with mailshot, articles within Unity leaflets, news emails, the theatre website and other social medias usign the campaign slogan '#buildunitybetter' and a display within the public entrance, as well as the prior mentioned public consultation day.

# Opportunities & Constraints

Upon arrival at the theatre the first issue is the unclear and confusing access to the building. The disabled Ground Floor public access via the ramp on the left edge of the Foyer creates a confusing and unclear route into the building. The escape door on the right hand side of the elevation is seemingly also an entrance on first visit. The small entrance Foyer offers very little front of house space for the capacity of the building and has unclear routes to the lift and WC's (located along small corridor leading to the back of house) and 'Unity 2' (located on the second floor using the stairs on the right of the Foyer). (1) The position and size of the Ticket Booth creates issues with public flow through the Foyer as the queue for the booth blocks the only public entrance, and us perhaps an unnecessary use of space in this digital age of online ticket buying. (2) The Ground Floor Auditorium or 'Unity 1', the larger of the two theatre spaces, with seating for 144 customers, currently suffers with sound issues from the theatre space above this prevents1 performances running in both theatres at once.

The First Floor Bar/Foyer area suffers from a number of issues, mainly concerned with space and access. Customers have to either move up through the tiered seating and exit through the small doors at the back of the theatre, or go back into the Entrance Foyer and up the stairs to access the Bar causing a build-up of people on one of the main emergency escape routes. The Bar Seating Area feel claustrophobic due to unnecessary columns in the centre of the space and two 'peekaboo' voids in the floor slab which also compromise floor space (3). The Bar itself has a very small serving area creating a build-up of customers in the area reserved for seating and also blocking the corridor leading to the lift and WC's. (3) These issues often mean customers stay in their seats during intermissions as they have no space to move freely around the building.



01/  
02/



03/  
04/

The Second Floor also suffers from a lack of clear access routes, the Auditorium or 'Unity 2' seats 90 customers, is entered through two doors, one to the rear right of the seating which is accessed from the right hand stair case and one to the left in front of the seating. (4) The rear right entrance forces customers to pass through the redundant Breakout space to access the WC's and Lift. The use of the entrance to the left side during a show would mean crossing the performance space itself and having to, again, cross through the Breakout Space to access the public stair. The two offices and Breakout Space lack proper ventilation and often over heat due to the large glazing that has no openings or natural ventilation methods.

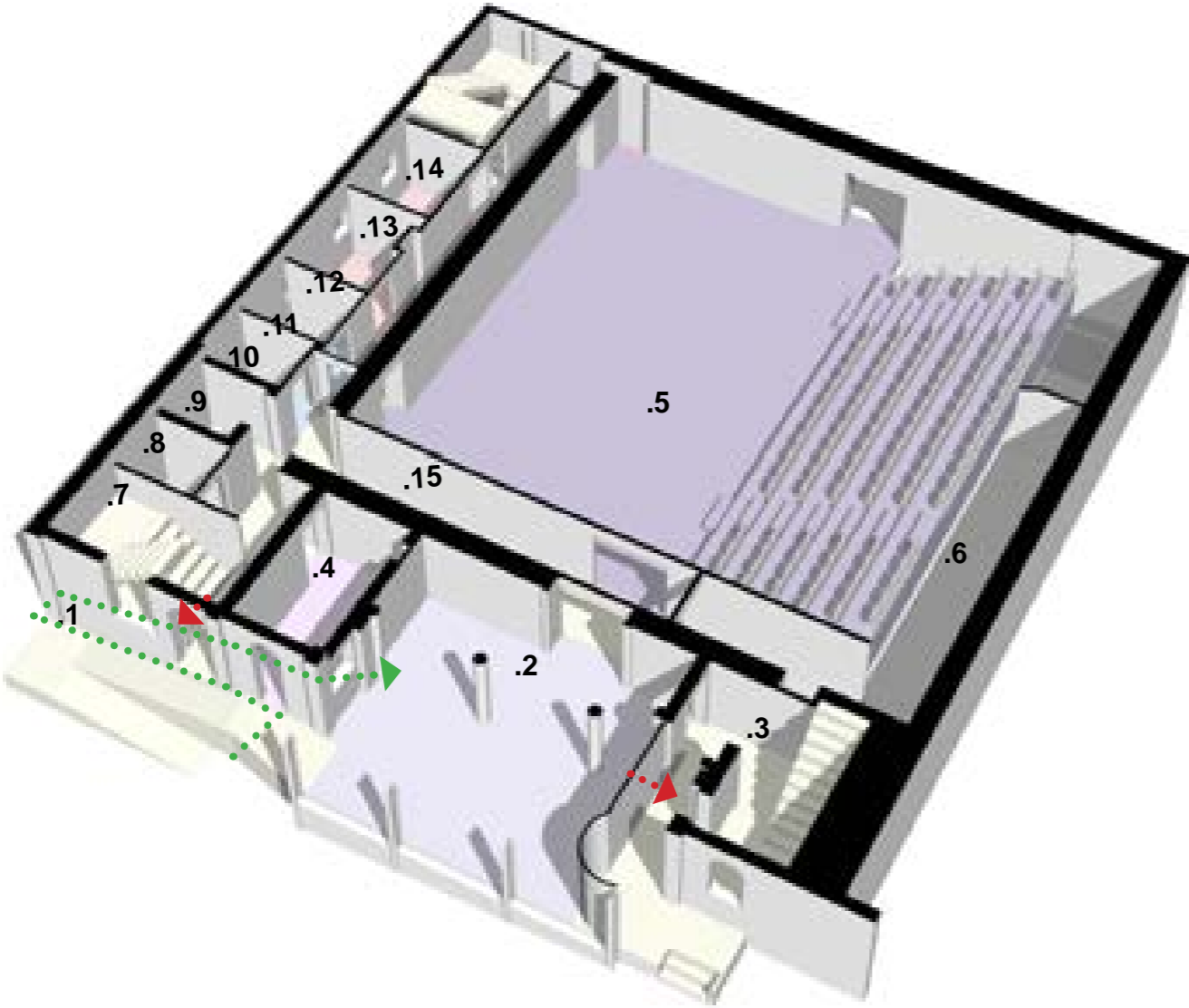


06/

# Existing Ground Floor

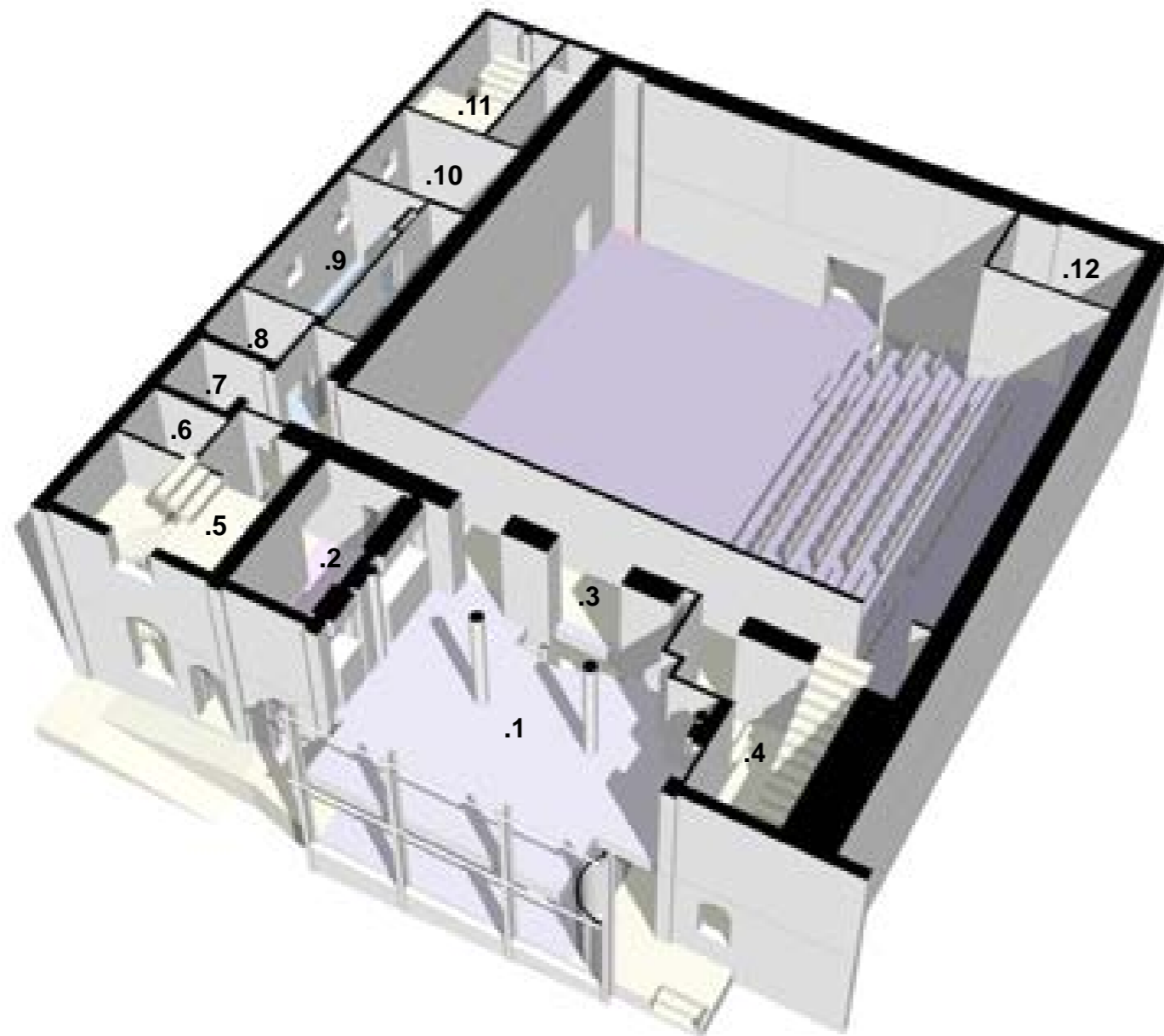
1. Level Access Ramp  
2. Entrance Foyer  
3. Public Stair  
4. Box Office  
5. Auditorium  
6. Store  
7. Stairs & Emergency Exit  
8. Cleaners Store  
9. Lift  
10. Disabled WC

11. Wet Room  
12. Dressing Room  
13. Dressing Room  
14. Stairs & Emergency Exit  
15. Corridor



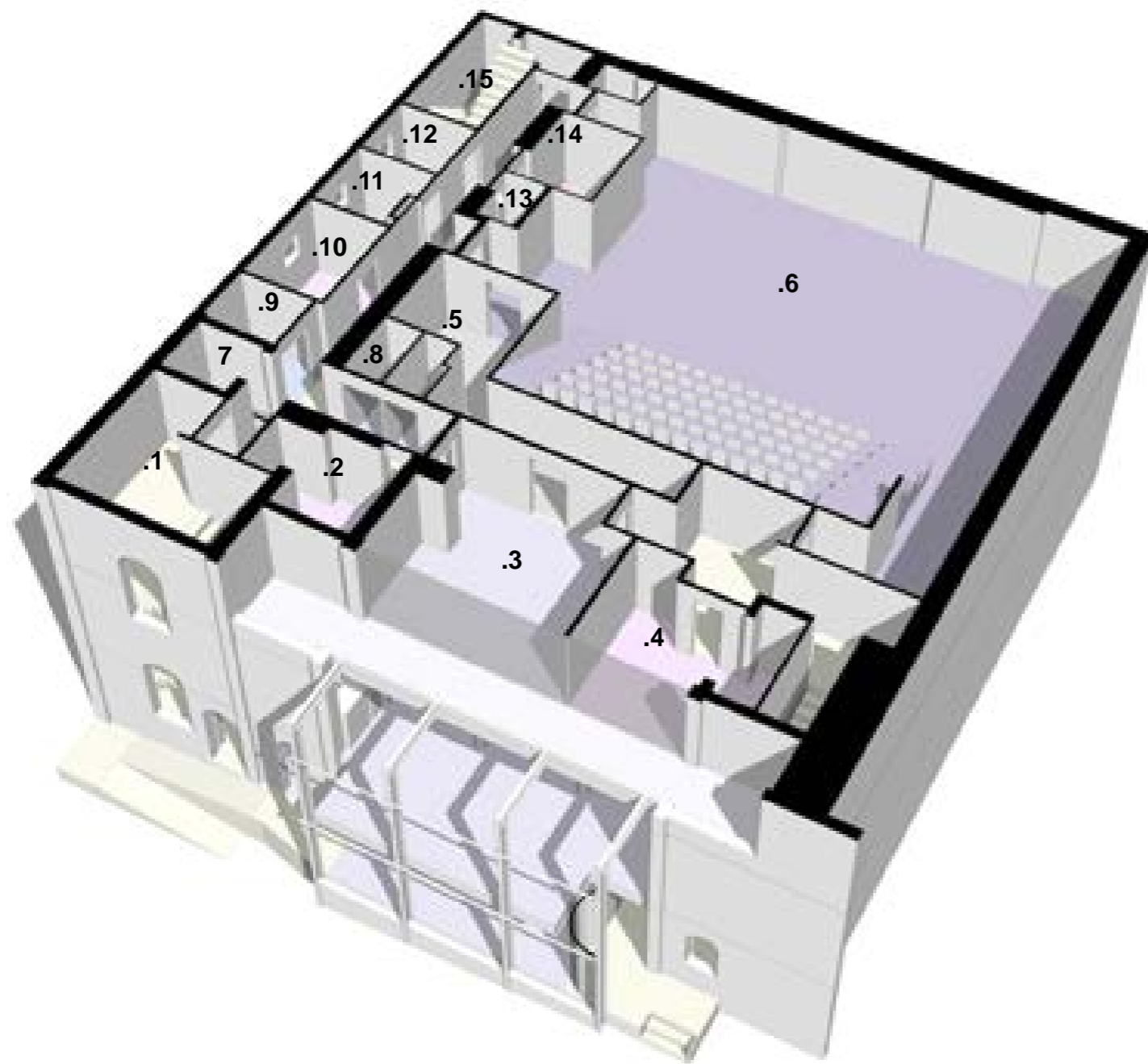
Ground Floor public access via the ramp on the left edge of the Foyer creates a confusing and unclear route into the building due to the fire door on the right side that is seemingly also an entrance on first visit. The small entrance Foyer offers very little space for the capacity of the building and has unclear routes to the lift and WC's (located along small corridor leading to the back of house) and 'Unity 2' (located on the second floor using the stairs on the right of the Foyer). The position and size of the Box Office creates issues with public flow through the Foyer as the queue for the booth blocks the only public entrance. The Ground Floor Auditorium or 'Unity 1', the larger of the two theatre spaces, with seating for 144 customers, currently suffers with sound issues from the theatre space above creating problems with performances running in both theatres at once. The private back of house area holds two large dressing rooms and a wet room, this area functions well in its current layout and requires no real changes.

## Existing First Floor



- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Bar/Foyer                 | 11. Tech Box |
| 2. Bar                       |              |
| 3. Corridor                  |              |
| 4. Stairs and Emergency Exit |              |
| 5. Stairs and Emergency Exit |              |
| 6. Store                     |              |
| 7. Lift                      |              |
| 8. Disabled W/C              |              |
| 9. Female W/C                |              |
| 10. Male W/C                 |              |

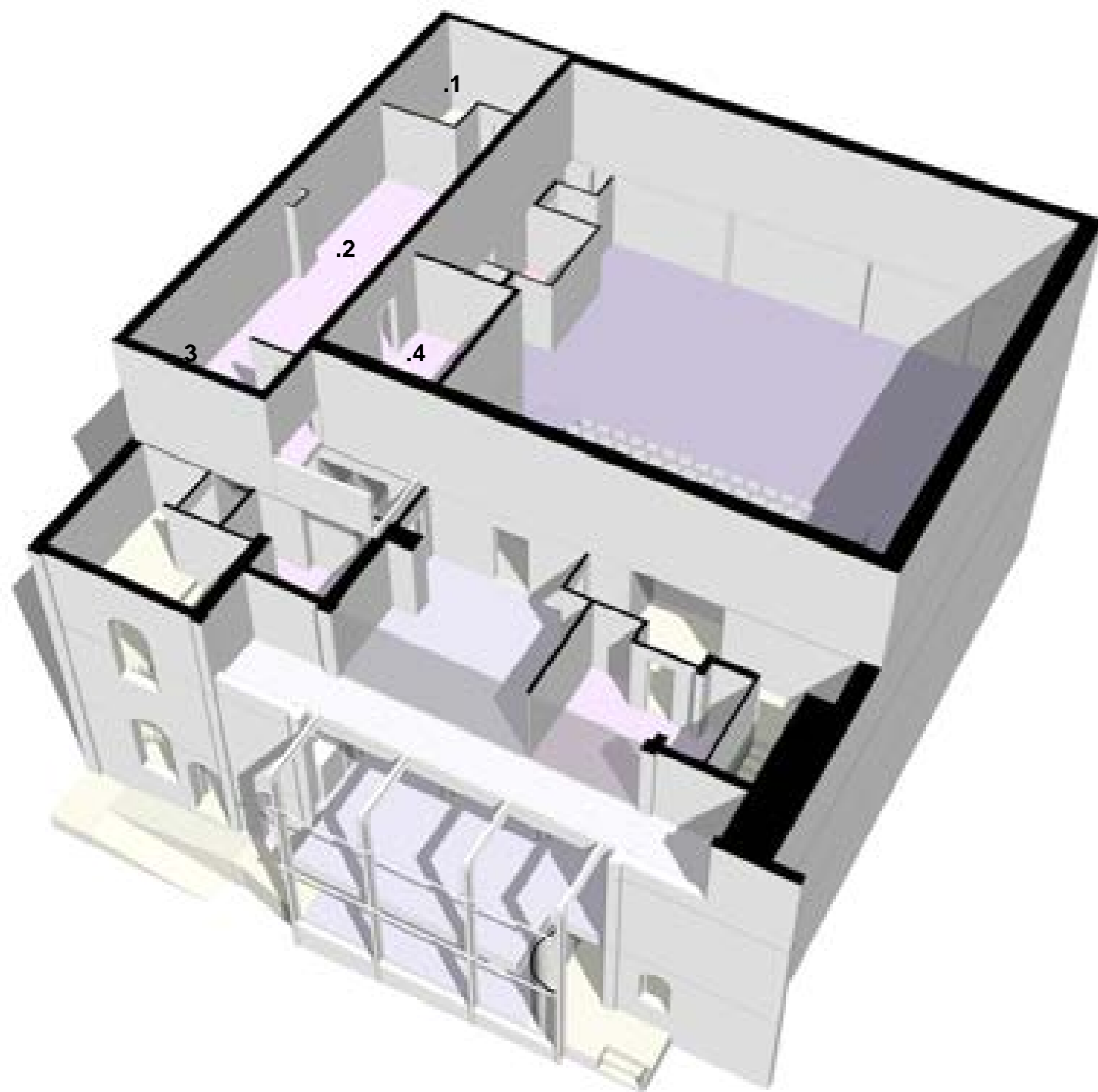
The First Floor Bar/Foyer area suffers from a number of issues, mainly concerned with space and access. Customers have to either move up through the tiered seating and exit through the small doors at the back of the theatre, or go back into the Entrance Foyer and up the stairs to access the Bar causing a build-up of people on one of the main emergency escape routes. The Bar Seating Area feel claustrophobic due to unnecessary columns in the centre of the space and two 'peekaboo' voids in the floor slab which also compromise floor space. The Bar itself has a very small serving area creating a build-up of customers in the area reserved for seating and also blocking the corridor leading to the lift and WC's. These issues often mean customers stay in their seats during intermissions as they have no space to move freely around the building. The large male and female toilets at the Back of House work well and would require very little work



## Existing Second Floor

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Stairs & Emergency Exit | 11. Office        |
| 2. Office                  | 12. Kitchen       |
| 3. Breakout Space          | 13. Dressing Room |
| 4. Office                  | 14. WC            |
| 5. Stairs                  | 15. Dressing Room |
| 6. Auditorium              |                   |
| 7. Store                   |                   |
| 8. WC's                    |                   |
| 9. Lift                    |                   |
| 10. Disabled WC            |                   |

The Second Floor suffers from a lack of clear access routes, the Auditorium or 'Unity 2' that seats 90 customers, can be entered through two doors, one to the rear right of the seating that can be accessed from the right hand stair case and one to the left in front of the seating. The rear right entrance means customers must pass through the Breakout space to access the WC's and Lift, passing through a rather redundant looking breakout space. The use of the entrance to the left side during a show would mean crossing the performance space itself and having to, again, cross through the Breakout Space to access the public stair. The two offices and Breakout Space lack proper ventilation and often over heat due to the large glazing that has no openings or natural ventilation methods.



## Existing Third Floor

1. Stairs & Emergency Exit
2. Office
3. Lift
4. Tech Box

The Third Floor offers very little floor space only housing the Tech Box for the Auditorium and the larger staff Office. Owing to the lack of enough office space elsewhere in the current layout, the office suffers from over-crowding.

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## Design Statement

Unity Theatre has a unique position within Liverpool's Arts and Culture scene. Our proposals will create a much enhanced audience experience, from the point of arrival in Hope Place through the café/bar area to the performance itself. By creating these enhancements we will secure the sustainable future of one of the cities most loved cultural landmarks.

The physical barrier to growth that we have identified have an impact on both the organisation and its customers. Our approach will be to enhance accessibility for all, to improve sight lines and presence create a more inviting and legible entrance into a new ground floor café bar.

We have chosen to focus our efforts on improving the front of house experience to maximise revenue generation from incidental sales and the surrounding daytime economy. The theatres themselves are fit for purpose but are undersold by the current front of house experience.

Environmental efficiency is also an important aspect of our proposals. The audience comfort in the front of house is currently poor and our proposals, through a series of minor interventions to the current strategy are designed to significantly improve the audience experience. This will be backed up by a year long programme of monitoring to help the theatre improve on their energy efficiency targets.

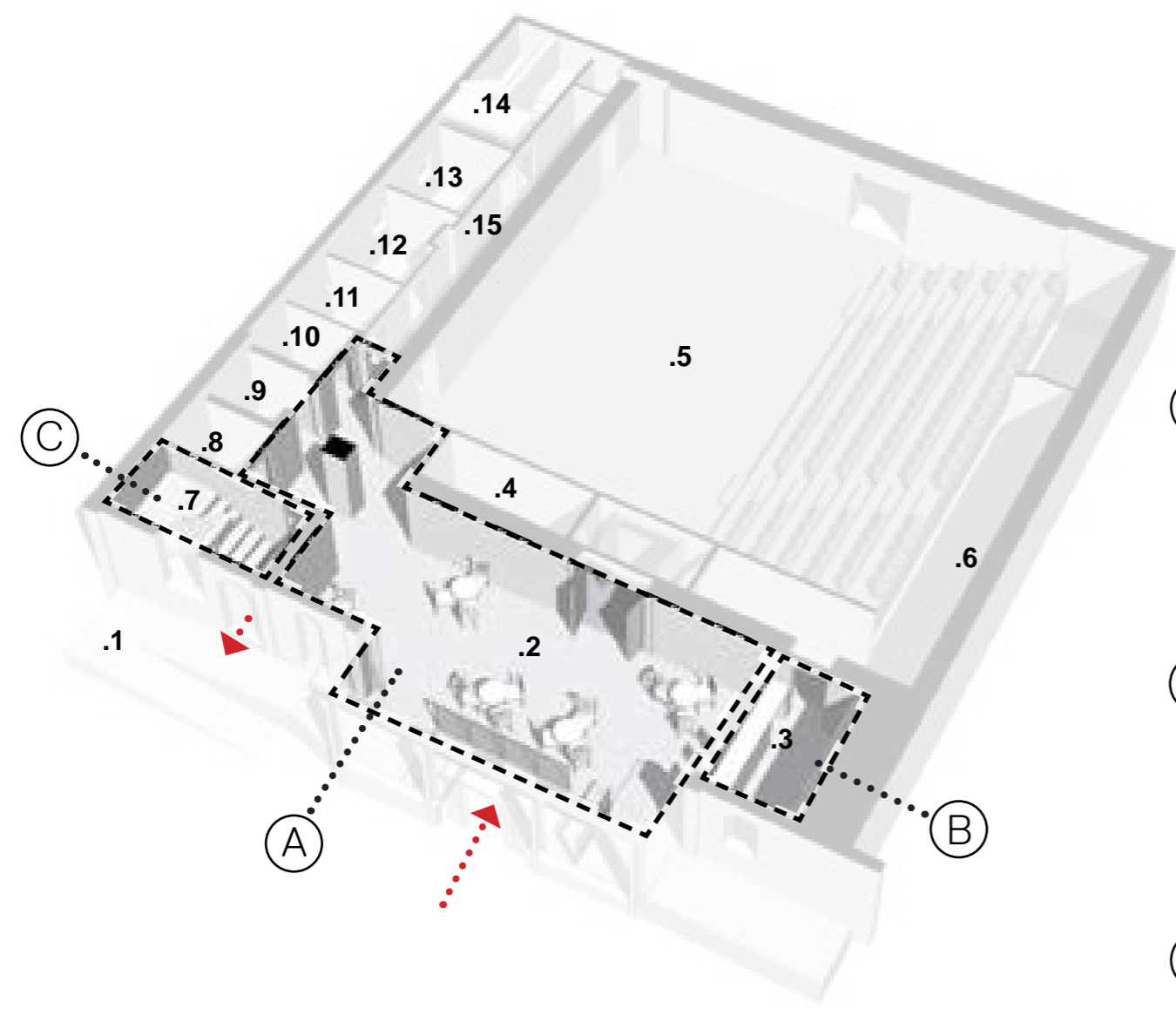
# DESIGN PROPOSALS

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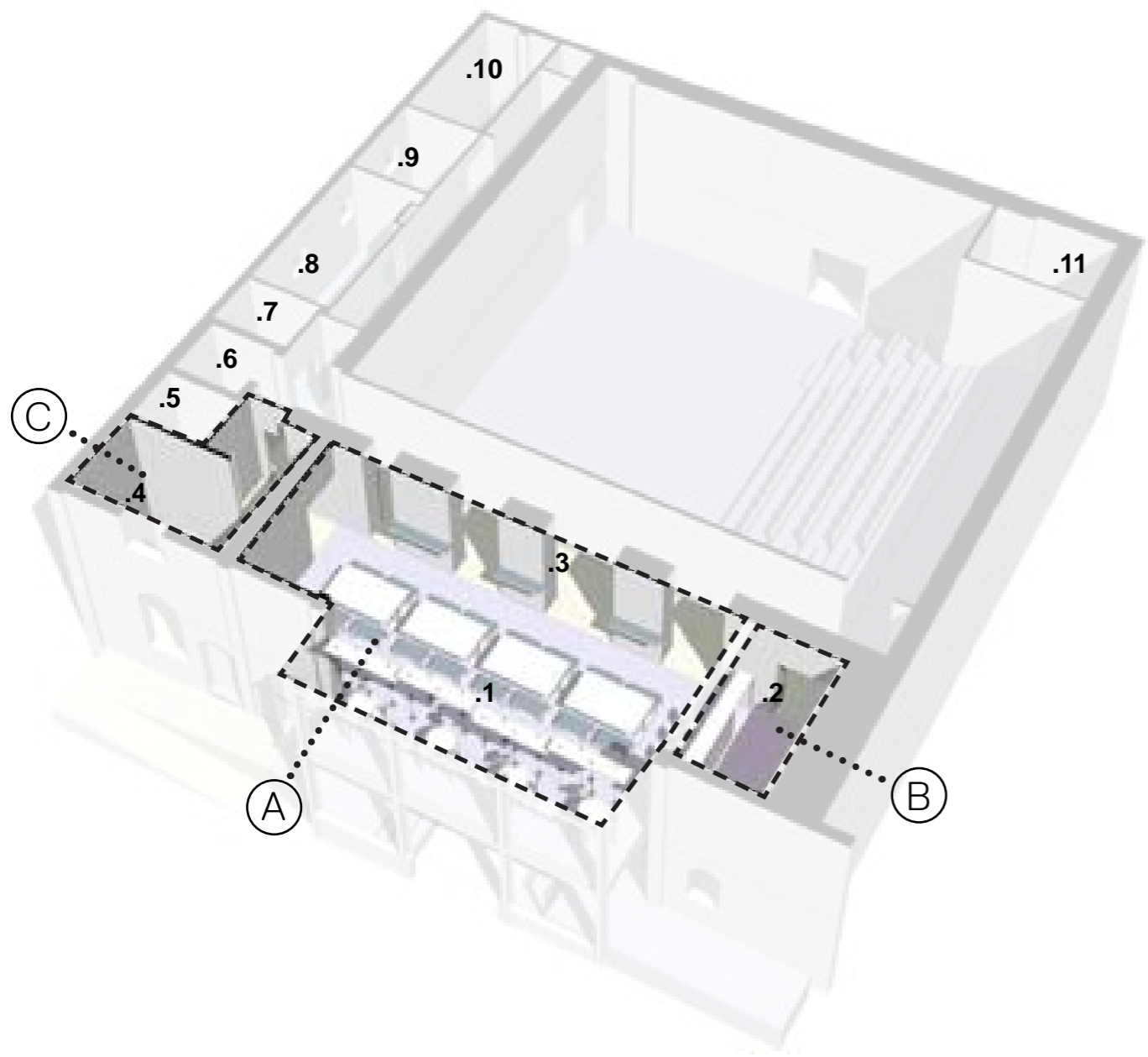
# Proposed Ground Floor

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Level Access Ramp       | 11. Wet Room                |
| 2. Entrance Foyer/Bar/Cafe | 12. Dressing Room           |
| 3. Bar/Box Office          | 13. Dressing Room           |
| 4. Store                   | 14. Stairs & Emergency Exit |
| 5. Auditorium              | 15. Corridor                |
| 6. Store                   |                             |
| 7. Stairs & Emergency Exit |                             |
| 8. Cleaners Store          |                             |
| 9. Lift                    |                             |
| 10. Disabled WC            |                             |



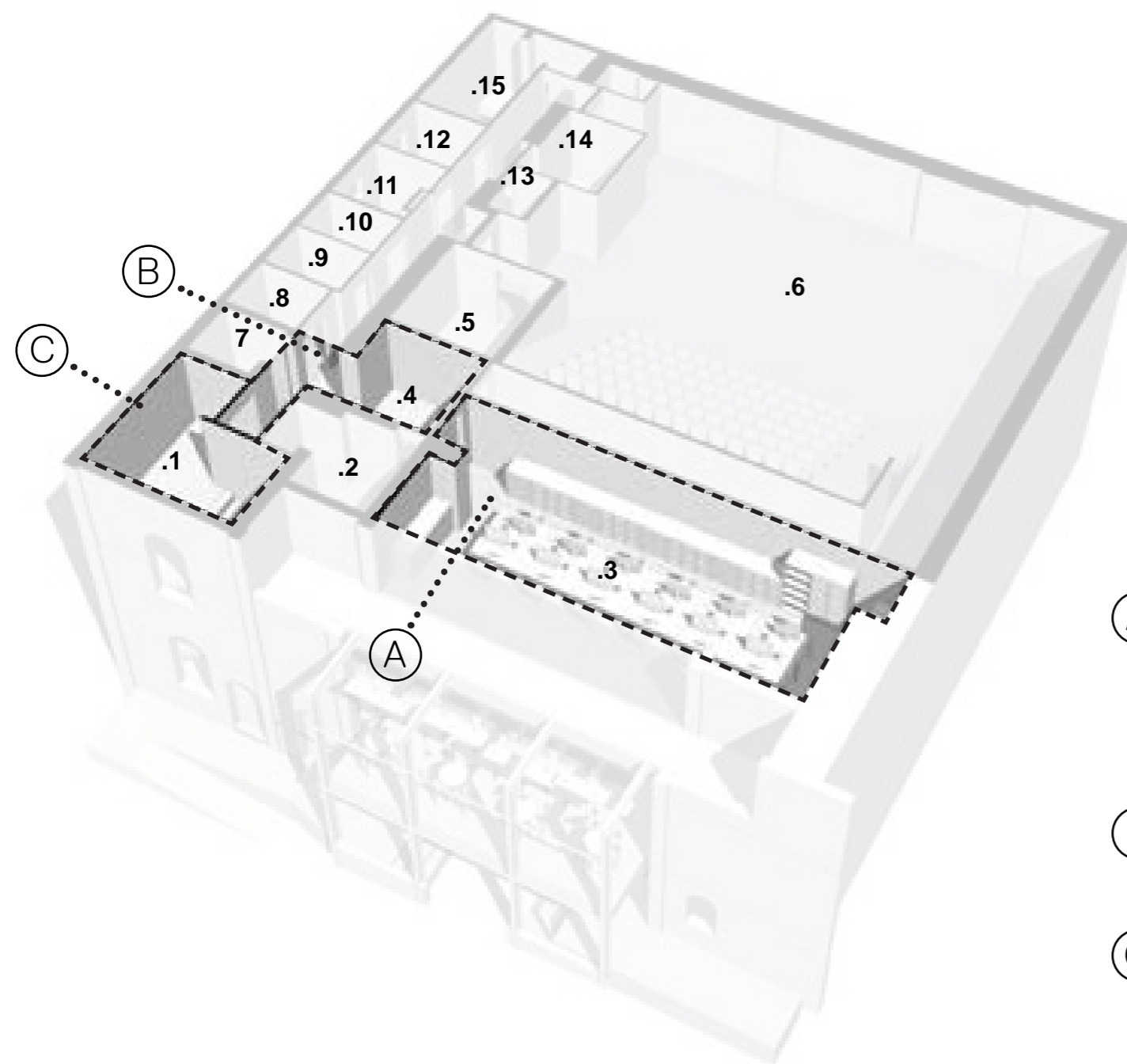
- (A) Ground Floor main access rerouted through new power assisted sliding double doors located in the front face of the glass atrium. The Level Access Ramp to the left will be retained as a secondary means of access for wheelchair user's and the entrance to the right side will be closed off. These moves will help clarify the route and access into the building for the public. As part of the new street level entrance located at the front of the Foyer a small DDA platform lift has been added to allow for easy wheelchair access. The Foyer area refurbished into a Bar/Box Office area with Cafe seating to bring a new use to the space during the day.
- (B) The Foyer has been made larger with the removal of the existing Ticket Booth. By opening up the space the approach to the Lift and WC's becomes more accessible and identifiable. The existing stairs to the right of Foyer have been identified by Building Control as unnecessary and have been removed to create more space for a Bar/Box Office area serving the foyer/café the bar also acts as a passive observation security line for the building. The removal of the stairs allows for a much larger holding area to be created more suited for the buildings capacity.
- (C) The existing stairs to the left will now become the main access and egress route to Unity 2. By opening up into the Foyer it will make the route to Unity 2 from the entrance very clear for first time visitors. In emergency situations, fire shutters will create a secure environment for escape.

# Proposed First Floor



- 1. Bar/Foyer
- 2. Bar
- 3. Corridor
- 4. Stairs and Emergency Exit
- 5. Store
- 6. Lift
- 7. Disabled W/C
- 8. Female W/C
- 9. Male W/C
- 10. Stairs and Emergency Exit
- 11. Tech Box

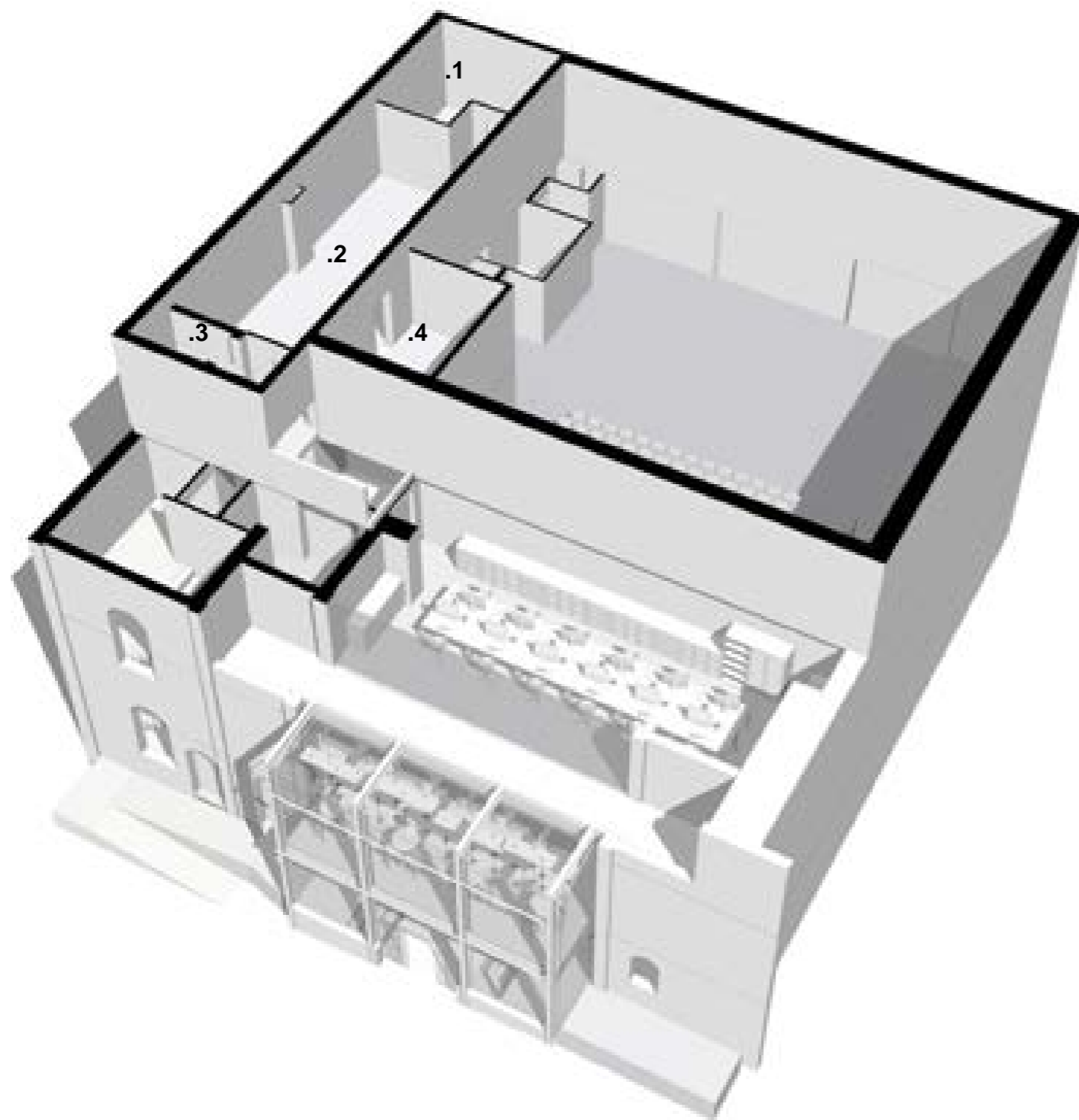
- (A) The existing First Floor Bar has been enlarged to better suit the capacity of the building via a number of moves. The two existing voids have been filled in and the columns and archways removed to create more floor space. The Bar is to be furnished with tables and benches that can be moved and organised to accommodate the use of the space for a public bar, or for family friendly activities, workshops, private events and community meetings.
- (B) The removal of the right side stairs to the first floor allows for the bar to be moved from its existing position and repositioned in the old stair location. This creates space for a much larger seating area within the bar and will reduce congestion issues during show intervals.
- (C) The at top of the stairs to the left side we propose a small foyer leading into the bar area as well as the corridor leading to the WC's allowing an easier route to navigate through the building.



## Proposed Second Floor

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Stairs & Emergency | 11. Kitchen                 |
| 2. Store              | 12. Dressing Room           |
| 3. Office             | 13. WC                      |
| 4. Corridor           | 14. Dressing Room           |
| 5. Store              | 15. Stairs & Emergency Exit |
| 6. Auditorium         |                             |
| 7. Lift               |                             |
| 8. Disabled W/C       |                             |
| 9. W/C's              |                             |
| 10. W/C's             |                             |

- (A) The old under used breakout space is to be transformed into the main office, holding up to twelve staff members. This large office would also have enough space for admin storage and reprographics. The large glass window will also have alterations made to allow for natural ventilation into the space. With the addition of the new corridor behind the office to access Unity 2 it will create a clear divide between the public and private realm. This new large office allows for more store space to be created in the neighbouring room.
- (B) The new corridor lobby area leading off from the stairs creates an easy and clear route to either Unity 2's entrance or the lift and WC's making public movement through the second floor as simple as possible for first time visitors.
- (C) The refurbished stairs end on the Second Floor this helps create a clear route to Unity 2 and stops any chance of the public accidentally go up to the private realm of the Third Floor.



## Proposed Third Floor

1. Stairs & Emergency Exit
2. Office
3. Lift
4. Tech Box

The Third Floor is to receive very little change as it is in working order. With the addition of the new larger office on the Second Floor it will allow the office on the Third Floor to become lettable space.

# APPEARANCE

# 3



# Style

The changes in style and appearance will nearly entirely be taking place inside the building. With the removal of the existing stair allowing for much larger public spaces inside the building this is where the main focus of the style changes will be.

Whilst the plan is to remove the original, now non structural columns, the aim is to still relate to the original building by exposing the brick work of the old synagogue walls to create an exposed backdrop for the social and public spaces. The images opposite represent a range of materials, lighting ideas and finishes that aim to be achieved within the new appearance.

The use of reclaimed and recycled furniture and materials to create a contemporary yet rustic and earthly tone as well as exposed low level lighting to add a welcoming warmth to the spaces.

The style represented in the images opposite will be achieved with a use of a mixture of exposed materials, new and reclaimed as well as sourced furnishing to add a ‘miss match’ styling.



01/  
02/



03/



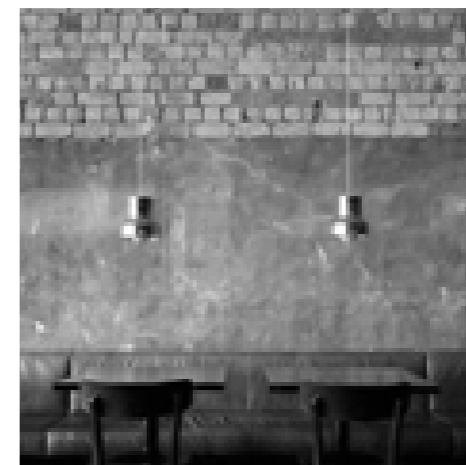
## Material Selection

Existing Victorian synagogue brickwork, exposed steelwork, frameless glass are all materials that are currently part of the Unity Theatre and shall remain. Adding to this we want to expose more of the original brickwork currently hidden away behind plaster and board to create a stripped back 'raw' appearance. To add to this we want to add more 'raw' materials internally with the use of timber, chipboards, brick work, exposed concrete, as represented in the images opposite.

Many of these materials may be recycled and reclaimed to not only reduce cost but also add to the desired distressed and rustic appearance. These rustic earthly materials will be contrasted with flashes of colours and large graphics against the brickwork and glass to act as signage for the theatre.

Externally the existing glass extension with its exposed steelwork framing is to be kept and added to with new brise soleil made of anodised aluminium or similar. As well as new entrance doors within the facade made of glass and aluminium or similar.

Any signage intended to advertise Unity Theatre to the street will be part of a separate planning application to display an advertisement which will be submitted at a later date.







Artist's impression of the new external style, showing new illuminated external signage, anodised aluminium brise soleil as well as the new central entrance.

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# ACCESS PROPOSALS

4



Unity is a theatre for everyone, they strongly believe in building a warm, safe and friendly environment. A crucial part of this is to design their buildings that do not discriminate any facet of society, whether that is through age, gender, disability, ethnicity or economic background etc.

As a result of this complimentary philosophy between K2 and Unity Theatre we've adopted a range of design decisions that will make the new Unity easy to enter and easy to use throughout.

The entrance and route into the building was one of our first considerations. Currently the two doors on either side of the extension create for a confusing and over complicated route to enter the space. By creating a new street level entrance at the front of the building it will allow for quicker and easier access into the building for all users not separating disabled users to use a separate entrance. The entrance into the building will be level, negating the need for steps and ramps.

After consulting with Unity's accessibility consultants the existing access ramp will be retained in order to allow a variety of access options for people with disabilities.

Once through the new entrance there will be a small single person DDA lift and stairs to allow all visitors to step up to the ground floor level 950mm above street level. This system allows all everyone to access the foyer and cafe area from the same entrance.

Navigation through the building will be reinforced by clear signage designed in line with Liverpool City Council's (LCC) Design for Access for All supplementary planning document (SPD). Colour contrast between walls and doors and other points of interest will suit Part M of the Building Regulations to ensure that Light Reflectance Values (LRV) are adequate for partially sighted visitors to clearly distinguish points of use. WCs and circulation points will be particularly highlighted as these will be the areas of most footfall.

Circulation, whether stairs, lifts and/or corridors are above and beyond the required sizes set out in the Building Regulations and British Standards to ensure that any visitor

of any size, posture and mobility is comfortably allowed to move throughout the building.

## Access Statement

Accessibility for all is a critical aspect of ensuring that our design proposals are fit for purpose. For the building and organisation to be truly successful it needs to address physical and psychological issues. As part of the initial information gathering period, we conducted an accessibility audit that covered all these areas identifying the theatres current strengths and weaknesses.

Inclusive design and ease of access for all is not a decision we make after designing a scheme, but a philosophy we adopt throughout all of our proposals at K2. Therefore, inclusive entrances, circulation and building use are moves that we implement inherently.

All relevant guidance and policies have been utilised to inform our proposals ensuring we're not only meeting modern standards, but exceeding them to provide a pleasurable building to visit and use.

Working with an existing building can prove difficult, particularly with regard to access, but by reconfiguring the interior we have the opportunity to create a proposal that meets the modern criteria whilst retaining the charm of the original theatre.

The design process has by no means finished at this stage and we will endeavour to ensure that the construction of the scheme stays true to the intent of this document.

# Policy Approach

Local and regional policies and government legislation will help speed up the process of full inclusion of disabled people within society. They also provide necessary guidance when designing public buildings, the acts and policies we have adopted are as follows;

## Acts

- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 / 2005
- Equality Act 2010

## National and regional policy

- Planning Policy Statement 1 - ‘Delivering Sustainable Development’
- Planning Policy Statement 6 - ‘Town Centres’

## Local policy

- The Council’s Unitary Development Plan (2002) provides the statutory framework to guide development and protect and enhance the environment of the City. Policy HD19, ‘Access for All’ sets out the Council’s commitment to achieve a fully accessible environment for everyone.

All of the above have provided crucial guidance for the developed design of Unity Theatre and will continue to do so during the technical and construction stages.

# Consultation

The design team have worked alongside comedian and disability rights campaigner Laurence Clark who has reviewed the proposal with both the Unity and the design team to enhance operational improvements and ensure the venues accessibility to all.

Laurence will work with us through to the completion of the project (including work on signage connected to the rebrand), review plans and the work as the scheme progresses.

K2 attended consultation meetings, open to the public, to meet and discuss with all involved. Meetings with all levels of operating staff at Unity also took place to fully understand the requirements and requests of the staff that operate the building on a daily basis.

Consultation identified accessibility issues for consideration surrounding mothers with babies as well as the need to retain the existing wheelchair ramp to complement the new level access entrance.

The application and design have been shared and consulted with neighbours and locals of the theatre with mailshot, articles within Unity leaflets, news emails, the theatre website and other social medias usign the campaign slogan '#buildunitybetter' and a display within the public entrance, as well as the prior mentioned public consultation day.



01/ Existing ramped access  
02/ Existing entrance



03/ Consultation Meeting  
04/ Consultation Meeting



05/ Public Conference Day

# Vehicular

Access via car other motorised vehicle to the entrance of the theatre is difficult with only a one way single lane road leading from Hope Street that then leads onto Pilgrim Street which is a cobbled road in poor condition. Unfortunately the theatre has no private parking area and only on street parking is available which because it is a residential street is often difficult to find often leading to parking further away from the theatre. Disabled parking is readily available in all streets as blue badge holders are entitled to fee parking throughout the city.

# Servicing

The plant room/dry riser/ lift pit can all be accessed via fire door leading out into Back Hope Place making it easy to access for maintainance. The bin store is located to the rear of the theatre and can also be easily accessed from Back Hope Place, this entrance also acts as a delivery drop point.

# Cycle

Cycle routes will be the same as vehicular approaches, easily accessed from Hope Street, with the theatres city centre location the Council's CityBike scheme is also located near by, with the nearest bike station outside the Philharmonic Hall only a few minutes walk from the theatre.

# Emergency Services

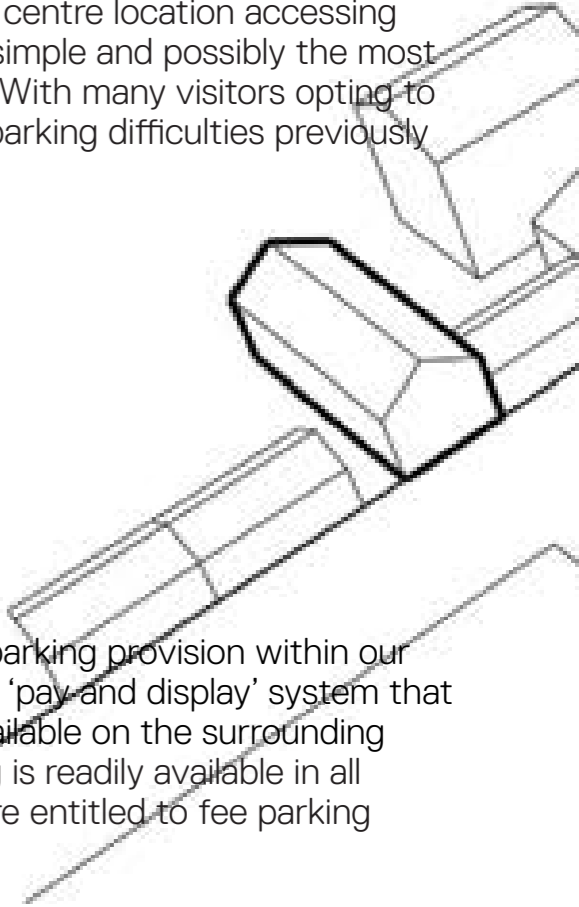
Emergency services can easily access all elevations facing Hope Place. The rear of the theatre and side elevations would be difficult to accessed via Back Hope Place, as it is a small access road leading behind the theatre that could be too small for a large emergency servies vehicle. The proposed alterations to the internal layout have been reviewed by an approved building inspector to ensure that they comply with all regulations relating to fire fighting and means of escape.

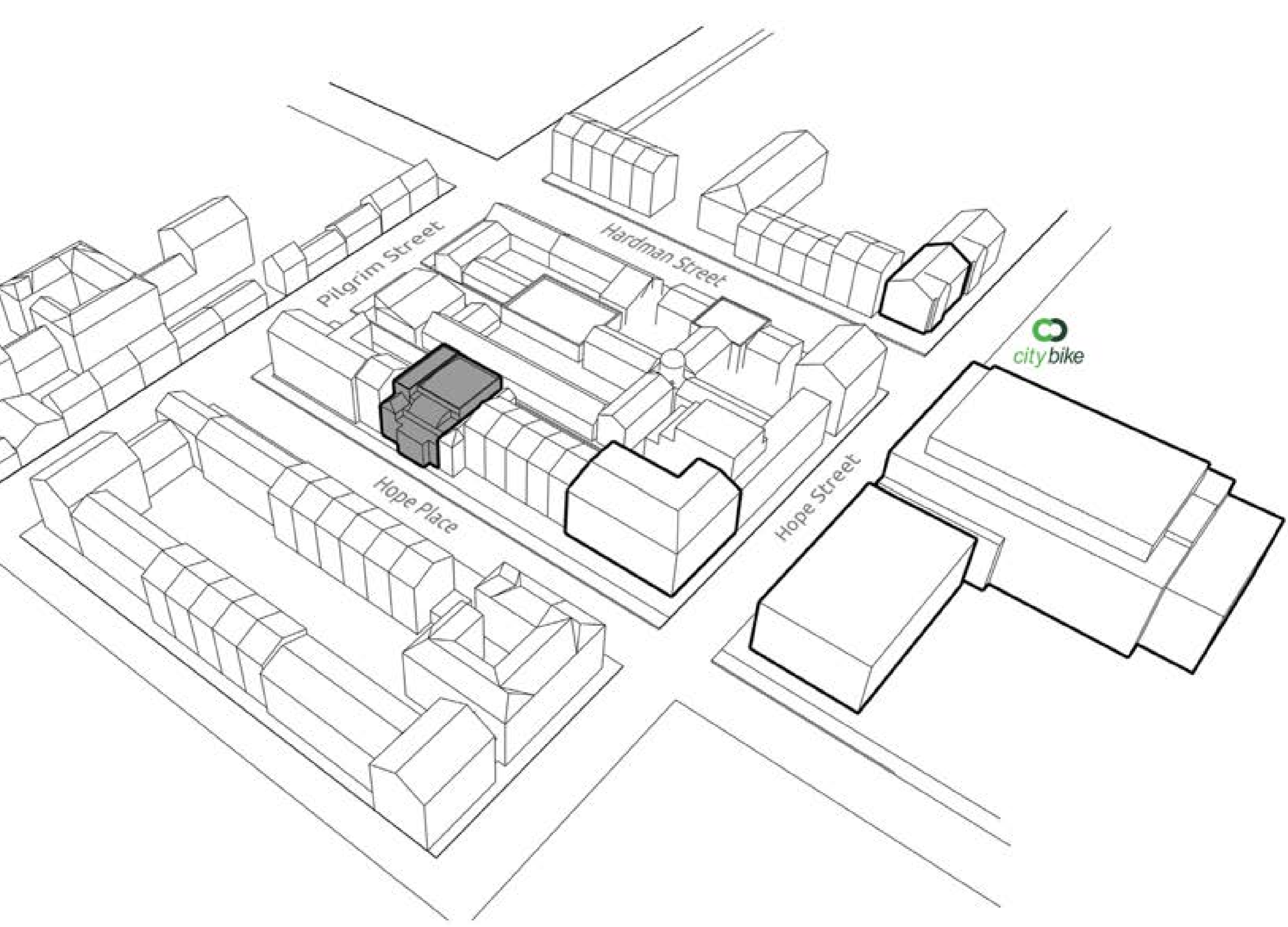
# Pedestrian

As previously shown and mentioned pedestrian access to the site is simple with it only being a 10-15 minute walk from Lime Street Station and several bus stops within a 5 minute walk of the theatre as well as its city centre location accessing the site as a pedestrian is very simple and possibly the most effective way to reach the site. With many visitors opting to walk to the theatre to save on parking difficulties previously mentioned.

# Parking

We will not be introducing any parking provision within our proposal, on street parking with 'pay and display' system that are often free after 6pm are available on the surrounding nearby streets. Disabled parking is readily available in all streets as blue badge holders are entitled to fee parking throughout the city.





# Sight Lines

The sight lines to and from the site on the corner of Hope Street and Hope Place, as seen in the image opposite are very prominent mainly due to the existing glass extension that brings the building line out much further than its neighbouring buildings. This allows the building to be easily seen from Hope Street and Pilgrim Street and even further beyond along Upper Hope Place. This makes finding the theatre much easier for first time visitors. From inside the building the first floor extension allows great views out across the south west of the city and during evenings when the building is at its busiest allows for dramatic views of the setting sun.

# Lighting

The most obvious source of light externally will be from the existing glass extension, with the space proposed as a bar on the first floor, as it is currently, A new cafe/foyer area on the ground floor this space will be heavily lit during evening performances when the spaces are at their most used. This glass 'illuminated' box is another feature that makes the theatre so easier to find for first time visitors.

Externally there are currently some existing outside wall lights to illuminate the entrance and emergency exit area at the front of the theatre, these will be kept to create a well lit, safe and inviting entrance area. The proposed light levels will be similar to existing light levels.

# Signage

Externally we plan to expand on Unity Theatre's currently limited signage, with new brise soleil being put across the glass the use of on glass graphics would be lost. A new externally lit sign in front of the brise soleil would make the signage easily seen and legible from a distance, as illustrated in the image opposite. The existing small internal signs on the returns of the glass facing toward Hope Street and Pilgrim Street will also be kept.

Unity Theatre is currently undergoing a rebrand. Therefore it is envisaged that any signage proposals will be part of a seperate application to display an advertisement.



K2\

# SUMMARY

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K2\



K2\



# K2A

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