

The BRINDLEY



supported by





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The VISION

Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned by Halton Borough Council (HBC) to explore the options to extend the Brindley theatre to accommodate a new café/restaurant and conference/exhibition space.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Brindley is currently closed and a date for re-opening is still at this time unknown. It is increasingly important to re-establish the Brindley re-connecting people to their cultural venue. This project can hopefully facilitate and inspire the aim to win back the trust of people putting culture at the heart of their community.

The Brindley Theatre is a Council asset and over the years has been successful in gradually reducing its operational deficit and the venue seems to have reached a plateau with 60% occupancy rate, 84,000 paying tickets sold and a turn over exceeding more than £1m per annum. The business plan recognises that in order to grow and explore other opportunities it must diversify the offer to increase and support its footfall and develop a more robust visitor economy.

K2 Architects have been commissioned by HBC to work up the feasibility options into an RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design. Working Collaboratively with the council and their strategic project team, this report captures the emerging vision and objectives that explores the opportunities, constraints and options appraisal to extend the Brindley. HBC recognise other consultants such as Structural & Civil engineers, MEP, Quantity Surveyor etc. will need to be part of the design process at a later stage once the funding stream is secured.

The Brindley...

Where you can feel the heartbeat of a community

Where anyone can resonate with the theatre, the event, the green and be inspired to express yourself

Come celebrate the legacy of this unique place as part of a thriving cultural ecosystem



We are The Brindley

*Reinforcing the theatre's sense of
identity at the heart of the community
and Runcorn town centre*

Motivating Future Generations

Reducing social barriers and bringing people together - a place where imagination can flourish



A high-angle photograph of a large, empty theater. The seating area is filled with rows of purple upholstered seats, separated by yellow-painted carpet aisles. The stage area is dark and cluttered with various pieces of equipment, including stacks of black cases, blue and red chairs, a red fire extinguisher, and numerous coiled black cables. A large, curved balcony with more purple seats is visible on the left side of the frame. The overall atmosphere is one of a quiet, prepared space for an event.

Broadening Prospects

*Celebrating diversity and facilitating
collaboration through inclusion*

The image is a vertical composition. The top half features a cable-stayed bridge with a tall pylon and numerous stay cables, set against a cloudy sky. In the background, behind the bridge, are several large, dark, curved industrial cooling towers and a tall, thin smokestack. The bottom half of the image shows a residential area with brick houses and a dense canopy of trees with bright yellow and orange autumn foliage. The text is overlaid on the bridge and the trees.

Designed to Last

*Resilient to future change, promoting health
and well-being - a space that's flexible and
adaptable*

Project Vision

Repositioning the Brindley at the very heart of the town centre, creating an ‘identity’ and ‘front door’ for the theatre. Improving both the visual and physical permeability, legibility and reinforcing the pedestrian linkages from the canal to the town centre.

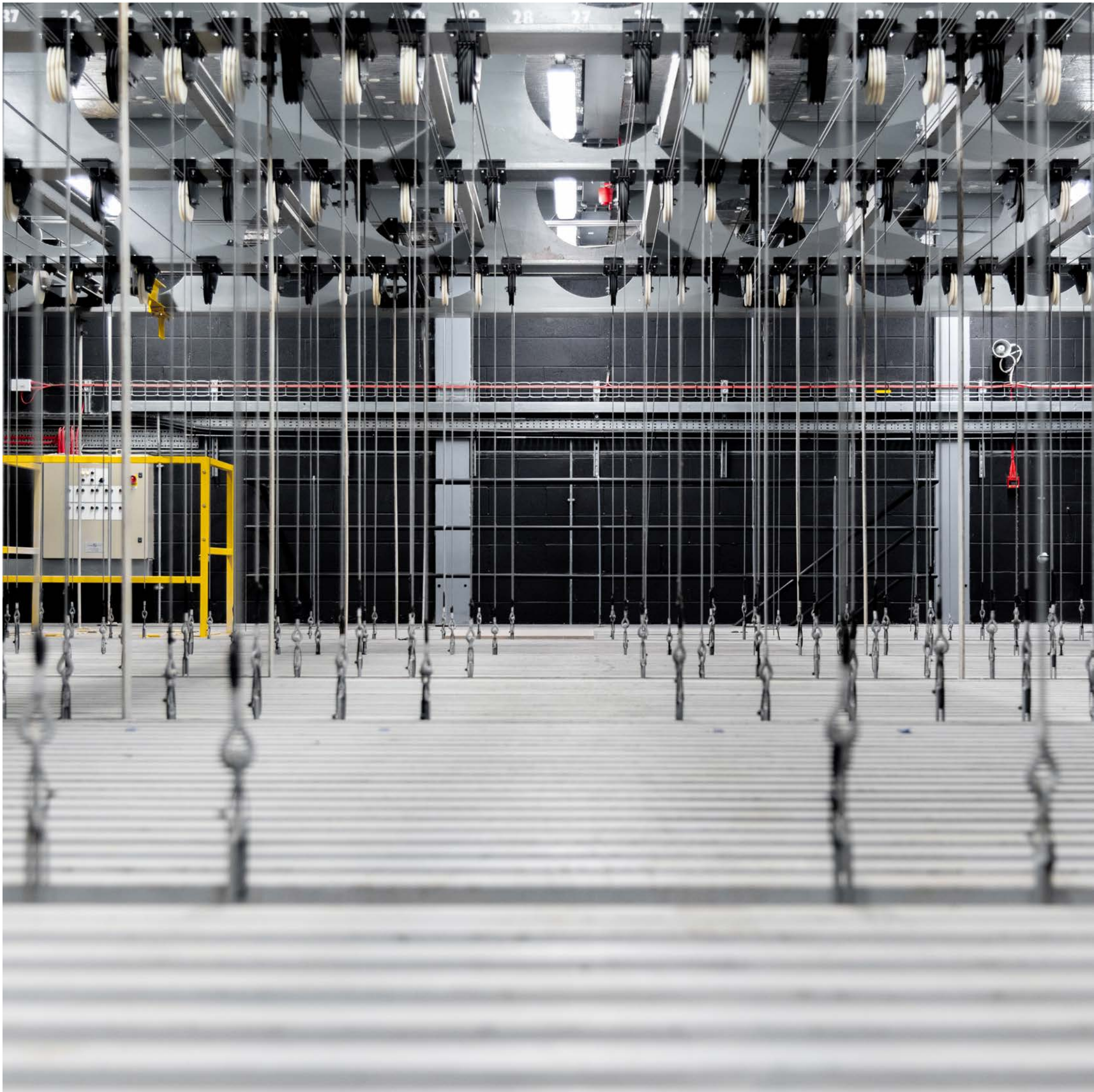
The new ‘green’ will be a shared, open, public space that will draw people in from outside and allow those visiting, working, studying and living in the area to interact and feel connected with the theatre. By creating Inspiring and transformational spaces that encourages multi-disciplinary collaboration with local community groups, this in turn will create a sense of ownership and belonging, nobody will feel like an outsider.

The new spaces should encourage educational learning and play across all age groups through exploration of performance, balanced with the rich cultural heritage of Runcorn, bringing events out into the park with a programme of outdoor performances, supported and managed by the theatres estate management team.

A place with exceptionally high-quality exemplar design, blurring the boundaries between landscape and building, seamlessly integrating the new extension into the DNA of the existing Brindley to mirror the extraordinary work and opportunity that takes place there every day.

The new extension projecting outwards back towards the town centre and the Mersey beyond is a very strong narrative, breaking down those cultural barriers ‘a new window for the theatre’ that is welcoming through its transparency, engaging and feels more inclusive for all.

Striving towards making the new extension as sustainable and carbon neutral as possible, in line with the original theatre’s green ethos, placing health and well-being at its very core.

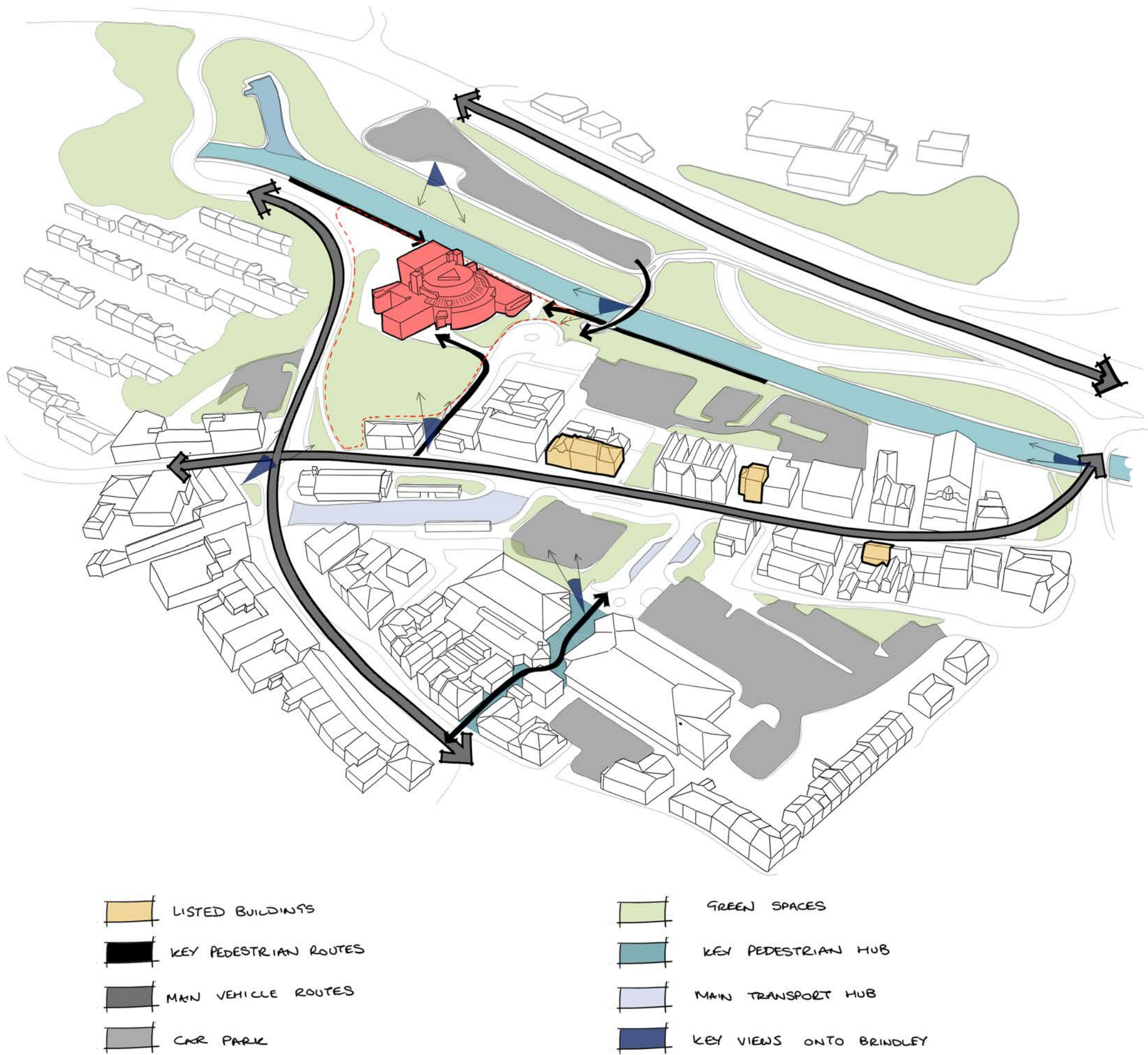


The SITE

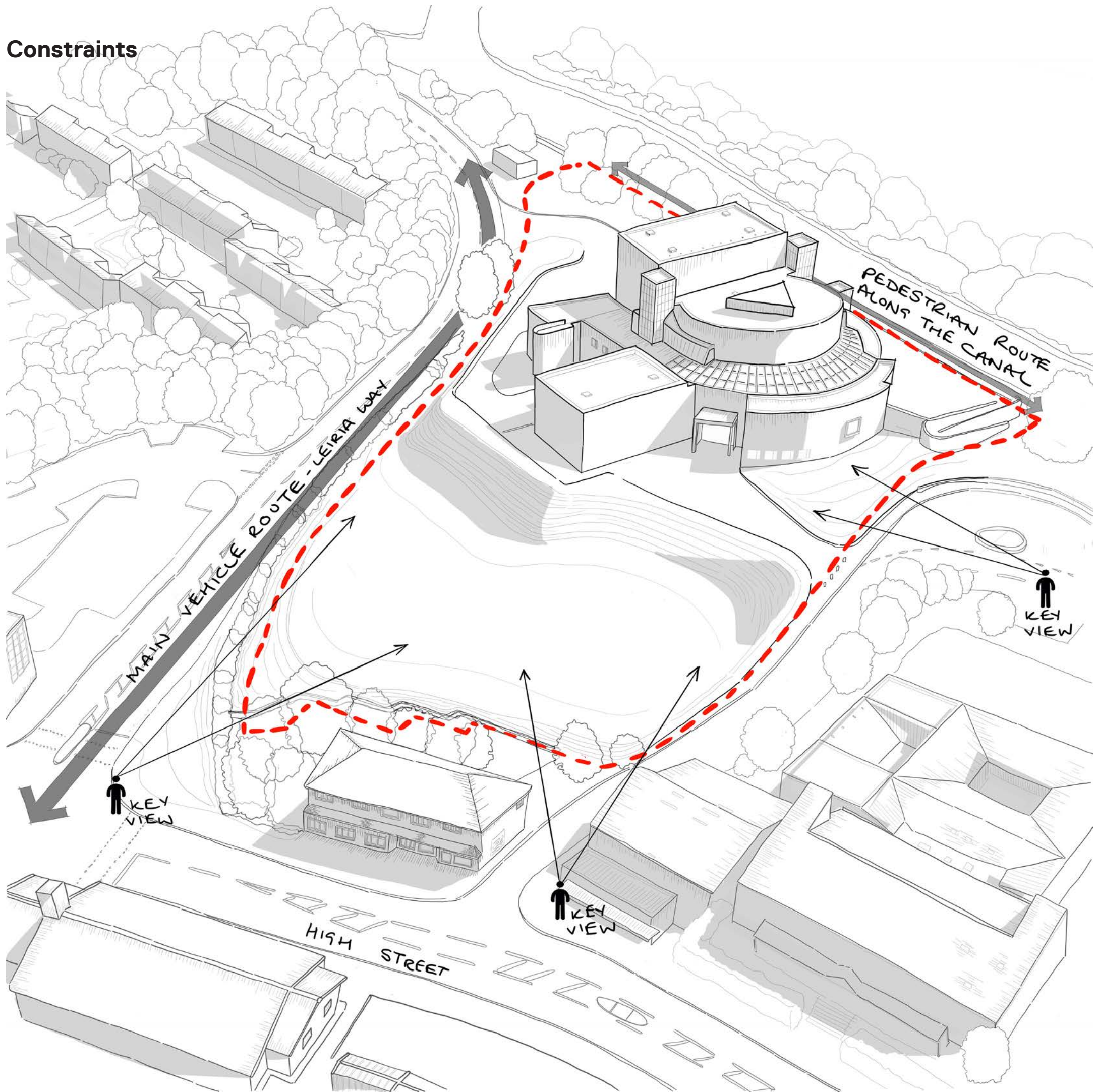
Site Location



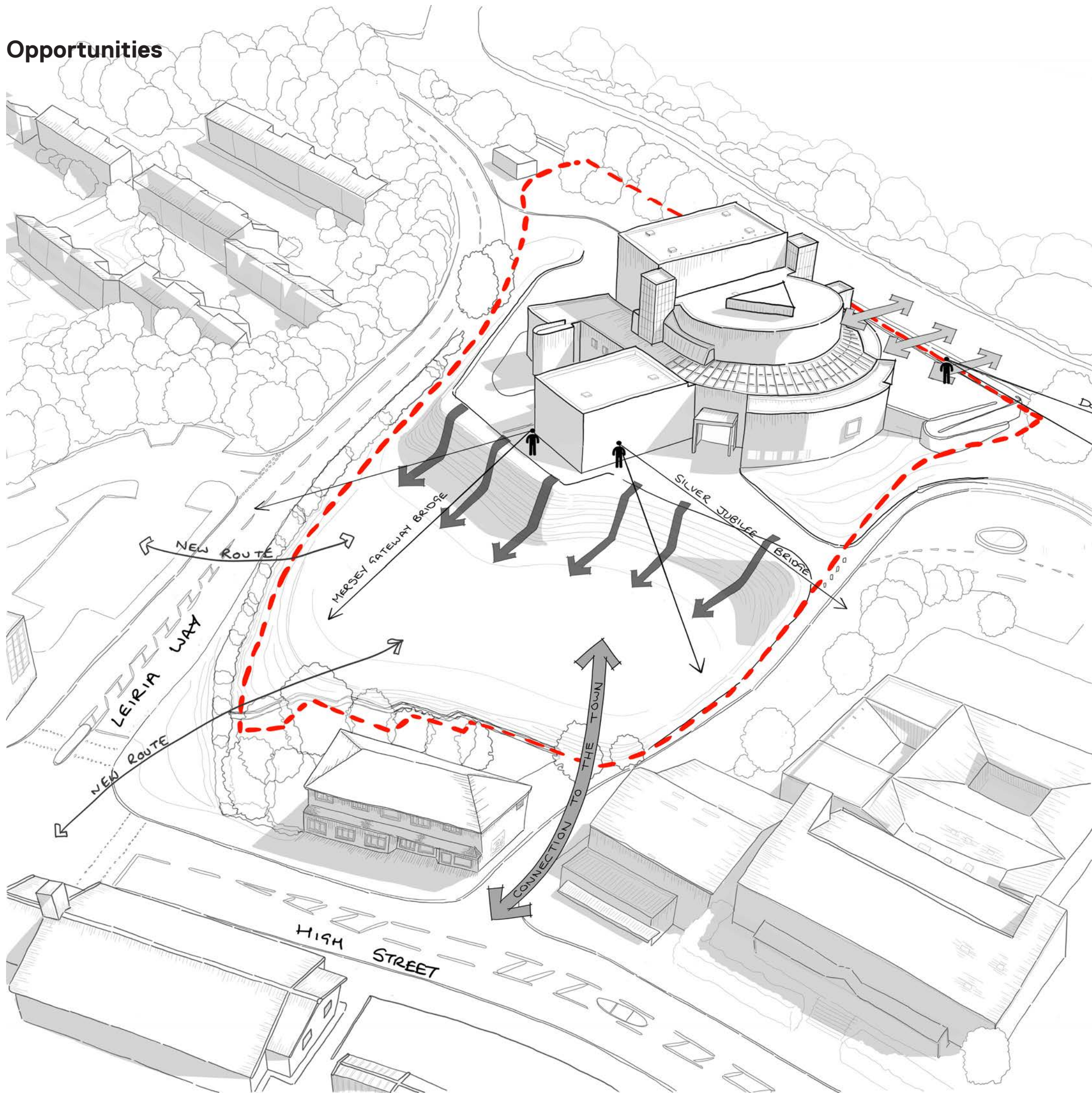
Contextual Analysis



Constraints



Opportunities



The PRINCIPLES

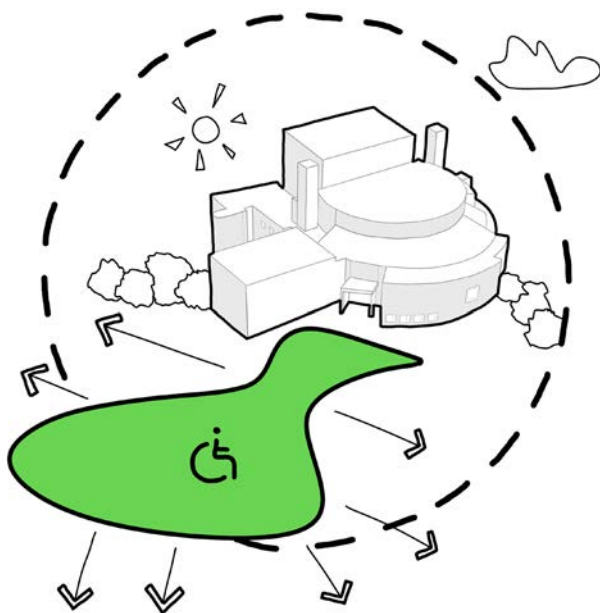
The Objectives

01 - Sense of Identity



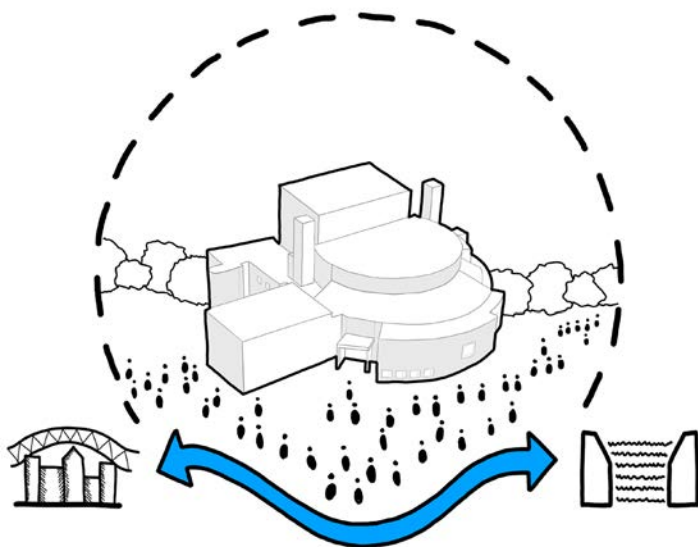
Reinforcing the theatre’s sense of identity, by creating a sense of community that brings people together, breaking down the cultural barriers and broadening the Brindley offer to develop a visitor economy.

02 - Health & Well-being



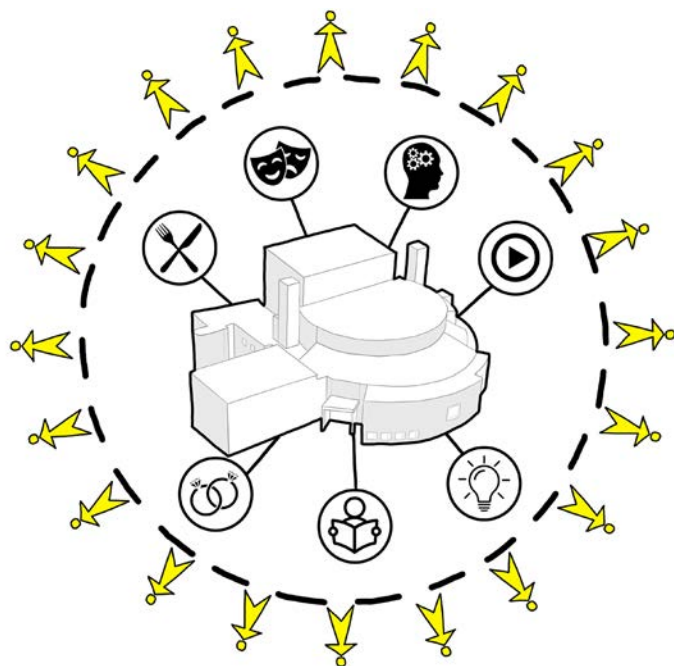
Make Brindley Green a distinctive, accessible and inclusive public space, placing health and well-being at its core.

03 - Making the Connections



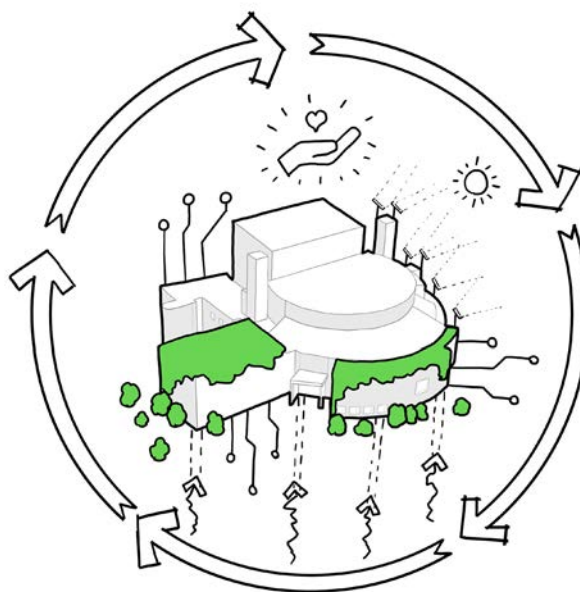
Increasing the Brindley’s legibility, permeability, support footfall, and contribute to a more pedestrian friendly connections to the Old Town and the canal.

04 - Inclusive for All



A cultural ecosystem that is inclusive for all, a platform for creativity, educational learning and the Arts as a resource for the local people, the wider borough and the City Region.

05 - Sustainable and Adaptable

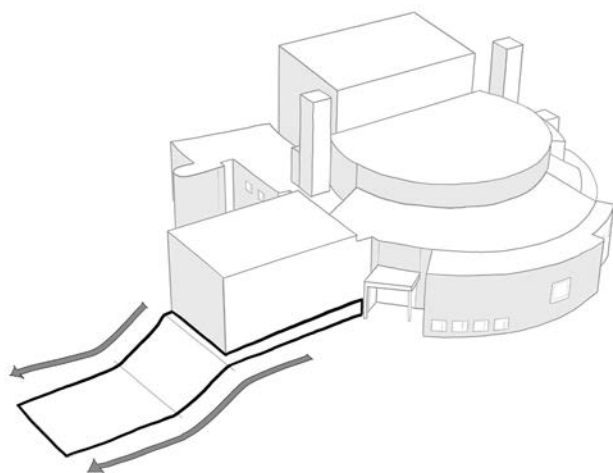


A flexible, adaptable and sustainable building that embraces the latest in digital technologies to future-proof the building.

The STUDIES

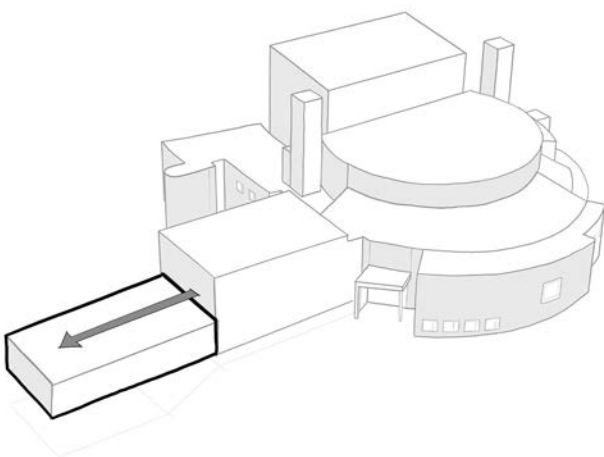
The Box - Design Progression

01 - Location



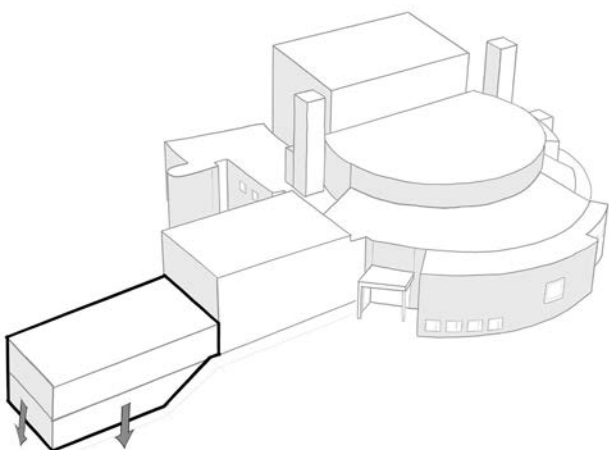
Extended out from the existing studio.

02 - Extruding



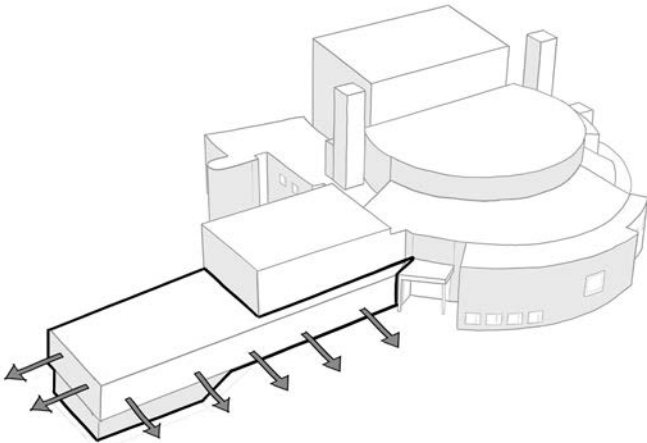
Linear form, reaching out towards the old town.

03 - Grounding



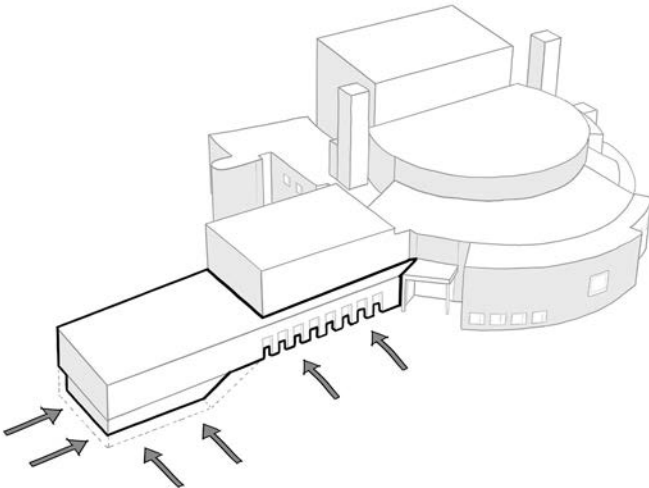
Cemented in its landscape.

04 - Articulating



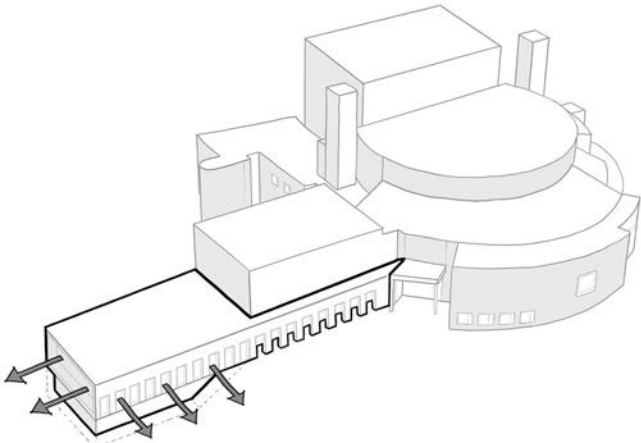
Creating the space.

05 - Arriving



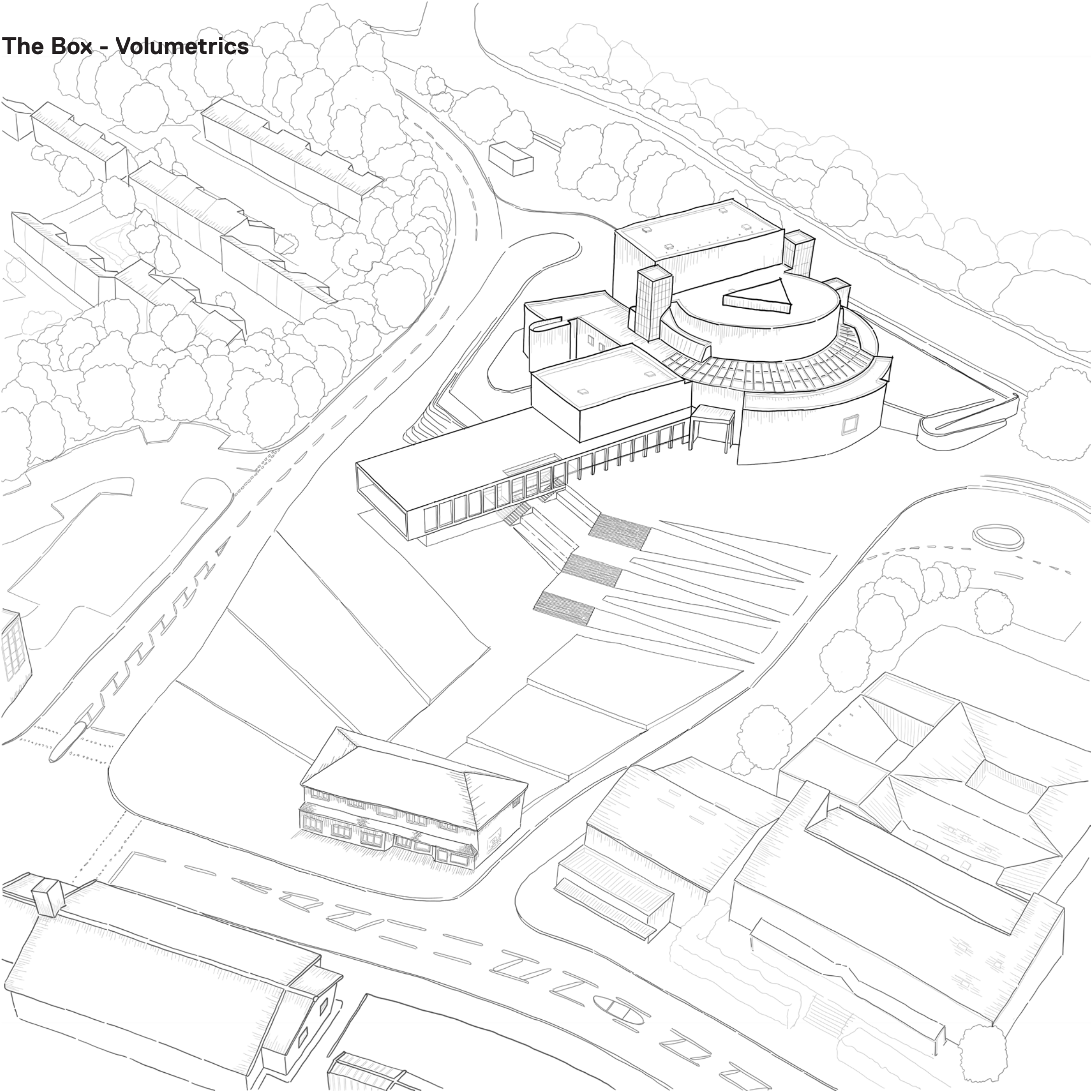
Sense of arrival.

06 - Framing



Long and short views.

The Box - Volumetrics



The Box - Material Palette



Portland Stone



Glazed Facade

The Box - Evaluation

Pros

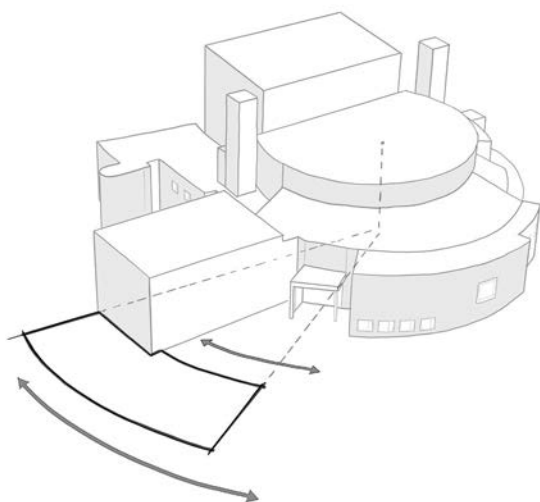
- Simple form with a clean geometry that is both respectful and complementary to the architecture of the Brindley, timeless and will not date.
- Proposed extension screens the service yard and does not dominate on the new green.
- West elevation creates a beautiful colonnade that interacts with the green and extends outwards to address the town and old bridge beyond.
- Easy to read plan and elevation that links well into the existing Brindley
- Confident in its modernity with classical proportions that creates rhythm, depth and interest.

Cons

- Needs to be well detailed, quality materials otherwise could feel like a pastiche.
- Does not engage with the canal.
- Limits future expansion in its location and composition.

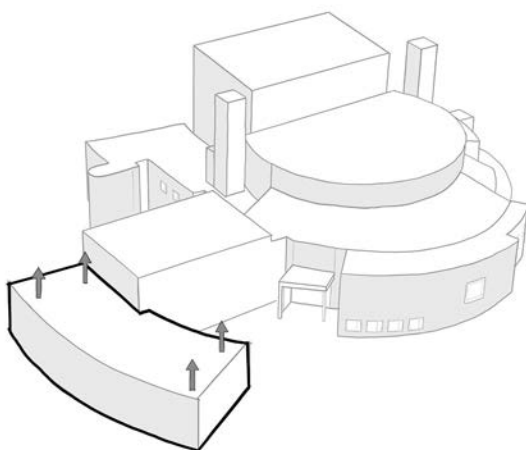
The Arc - Design Progression

01 - Location



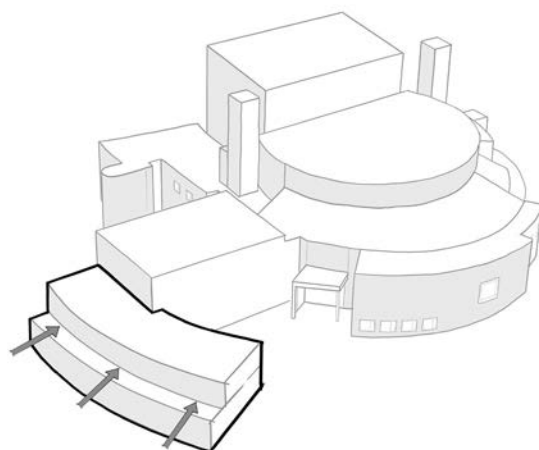
Radiating out form the existing theatre.

02 - Extruding



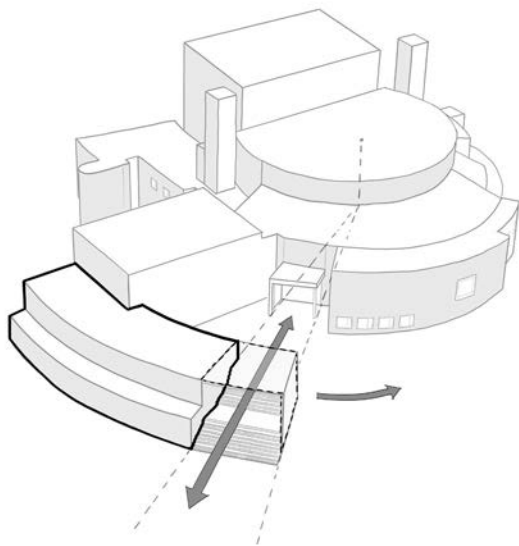
Creating the arc.

03 - Articulating



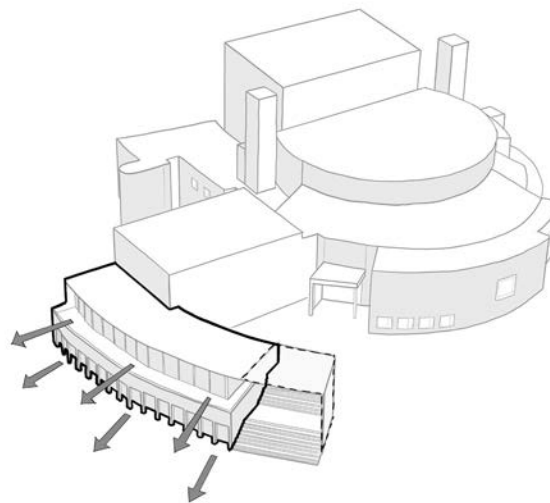
Creating the space.

04 - Arriving



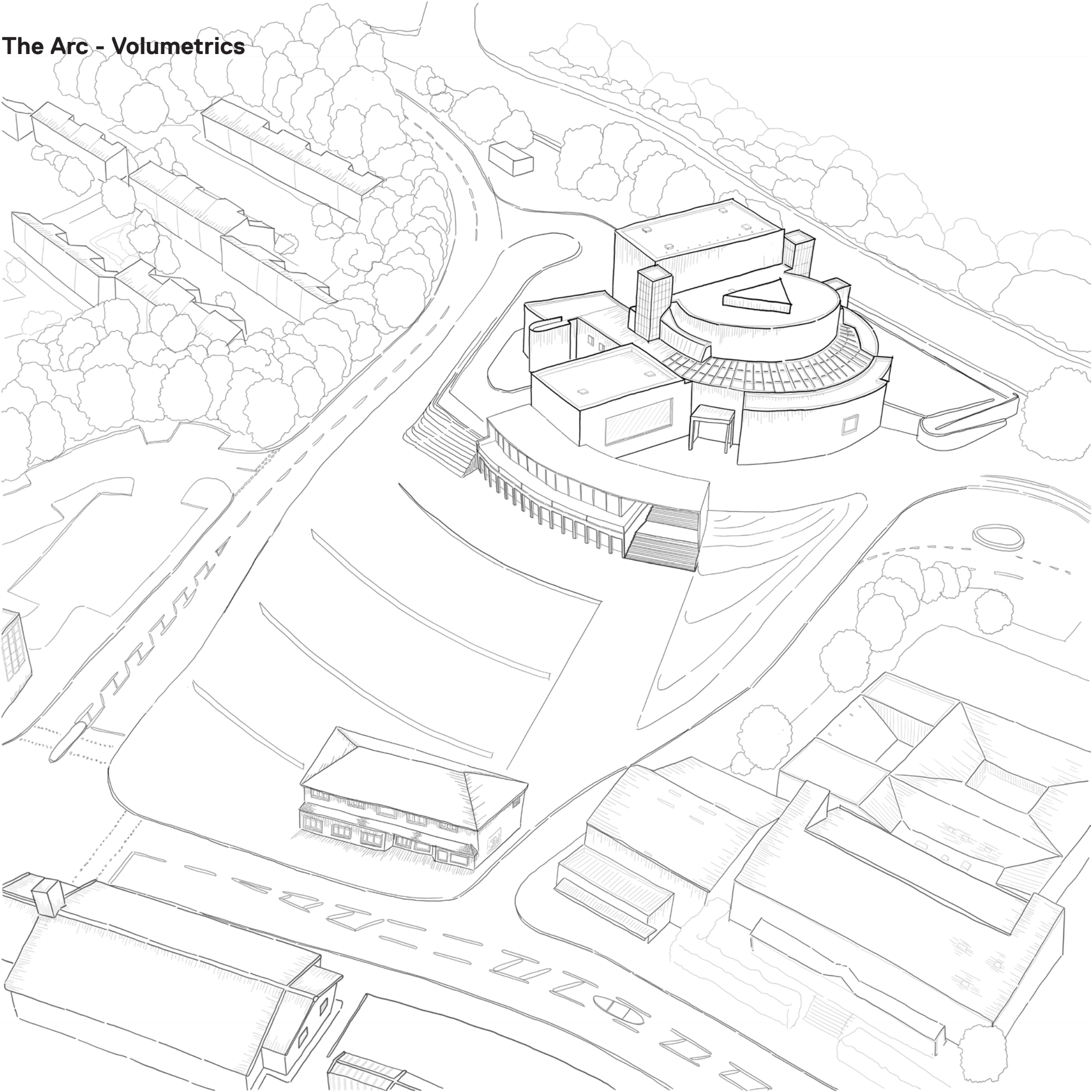
Sense of arrival, creating the threshold.

05 - Framing

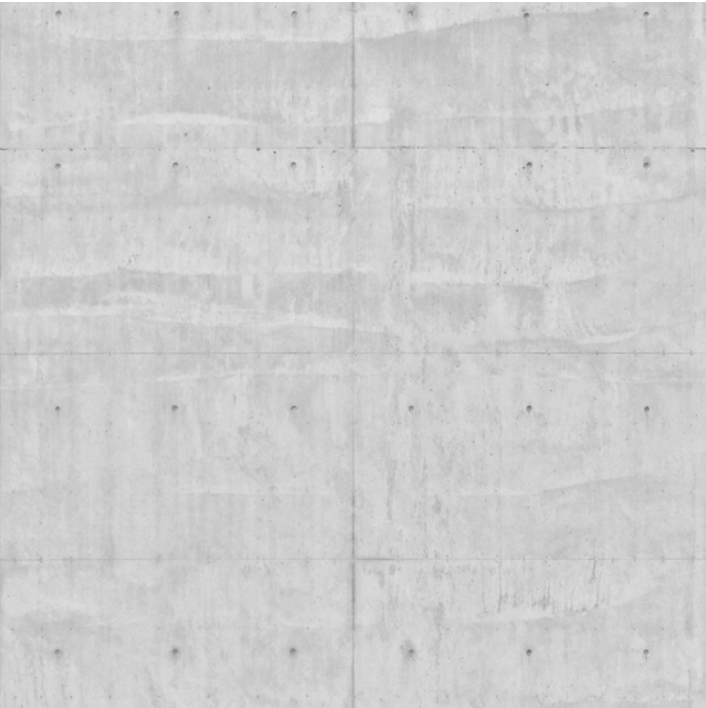


Long and short views.

The Arc - Volumetrics



The Arc - Material Palette



Polished Concrete



Glazed Facade

The Arc - Evaluation

Pros

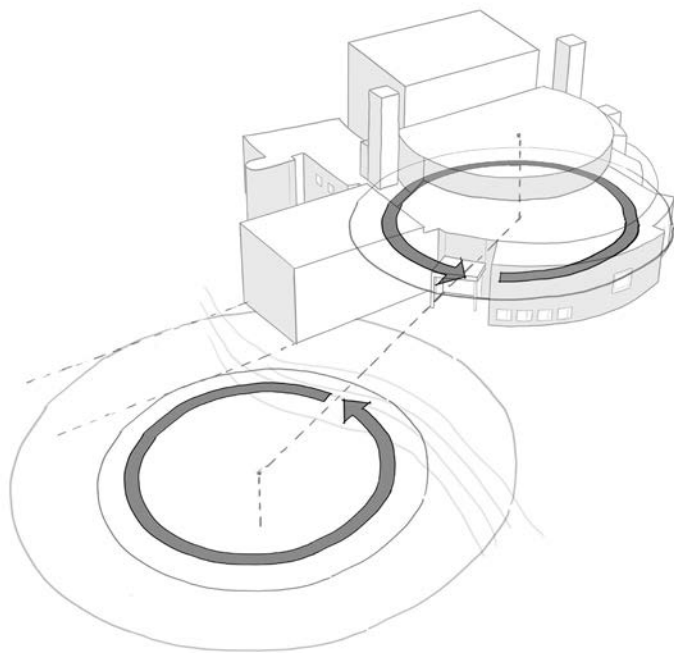
- Classic type pavilion, crisp and contrasting that feels contemporary.
- Connects well with the canal.
- Good vistas over the green, stepping down in scale whilst taking advantage of distant views. across the town and the Mersey.
- Framed canopy gives the sense of arrival, passing through a threshold.

Cons

- Extension feels defensive and perhaps not as welcoming as the other options.
- Expensive build cost in its curved form.
- Encloses and infringes on the existing entrance.
- Architectural plan and form difficult to marry in with the existing Brindley.

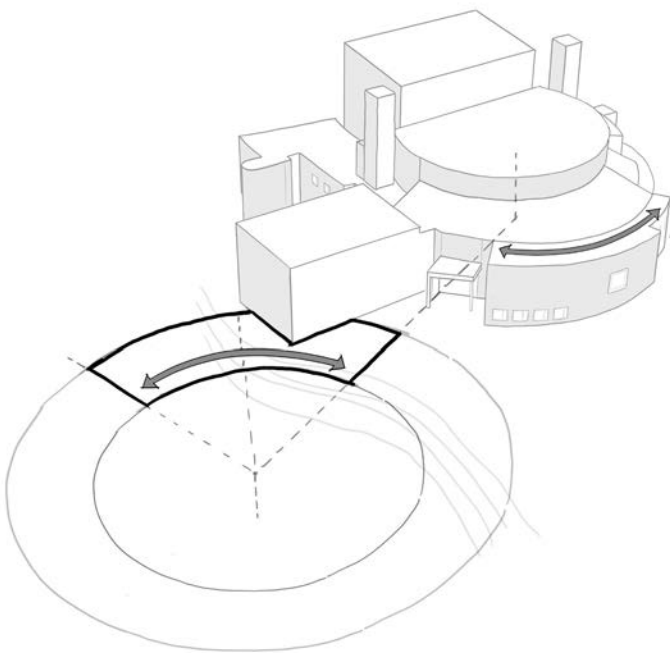
The Circle - Design Progression

01 - Location



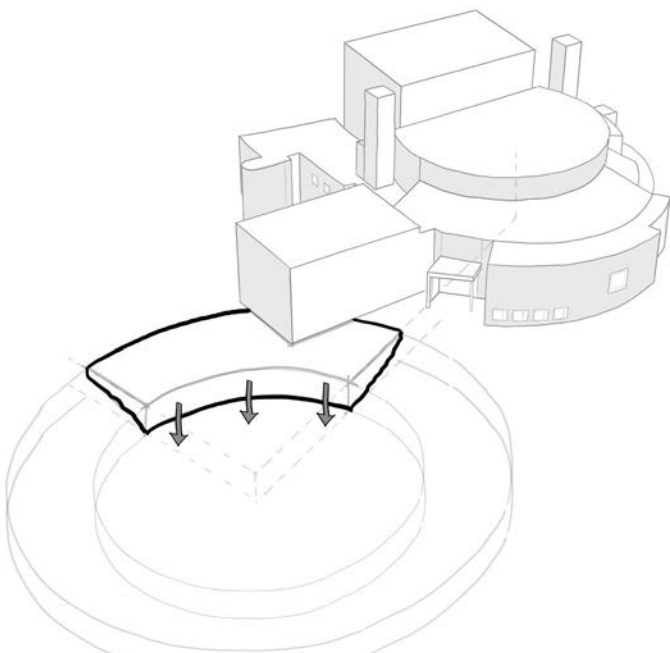
Yin and Yang.

02 - Extruding



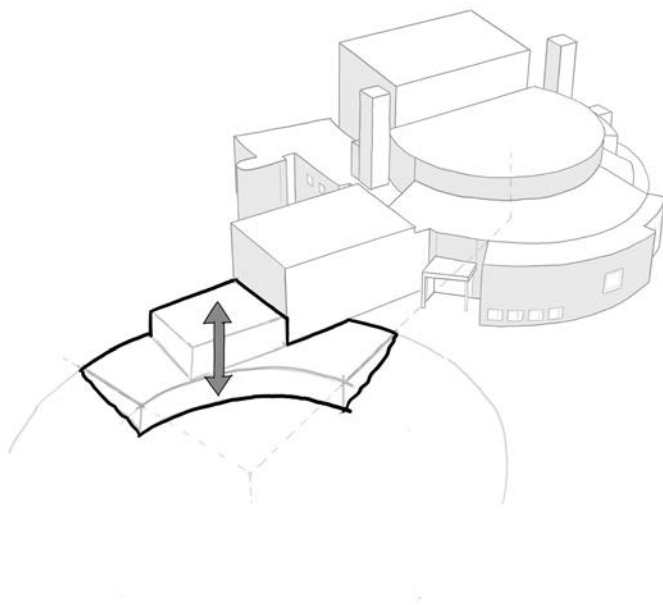
Creating the circle.

03 - Grounding



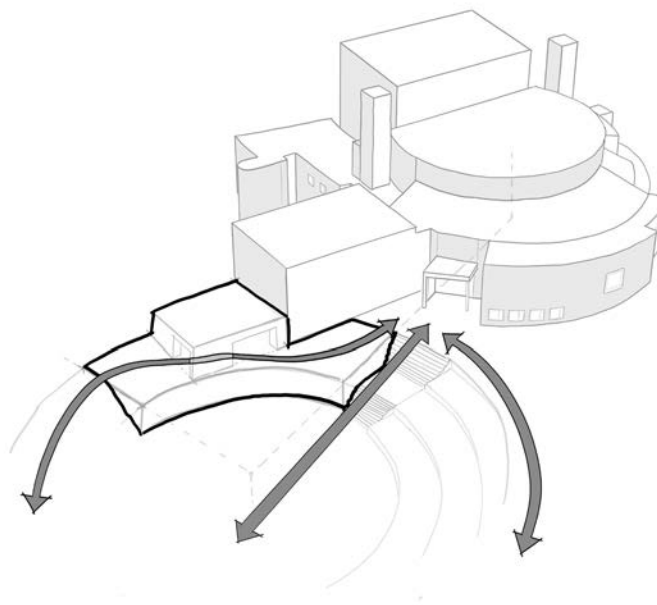
Embedding the building in its landscape.

04 - Articulating



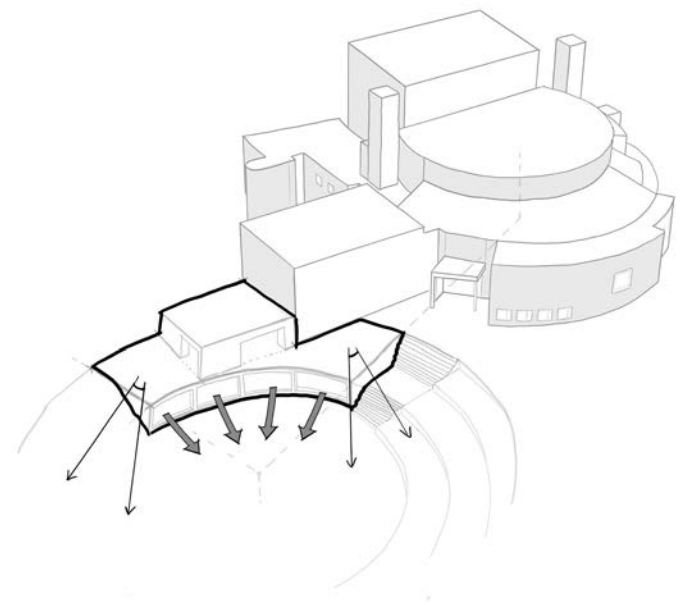
Creating the volume.

05 - Arriving



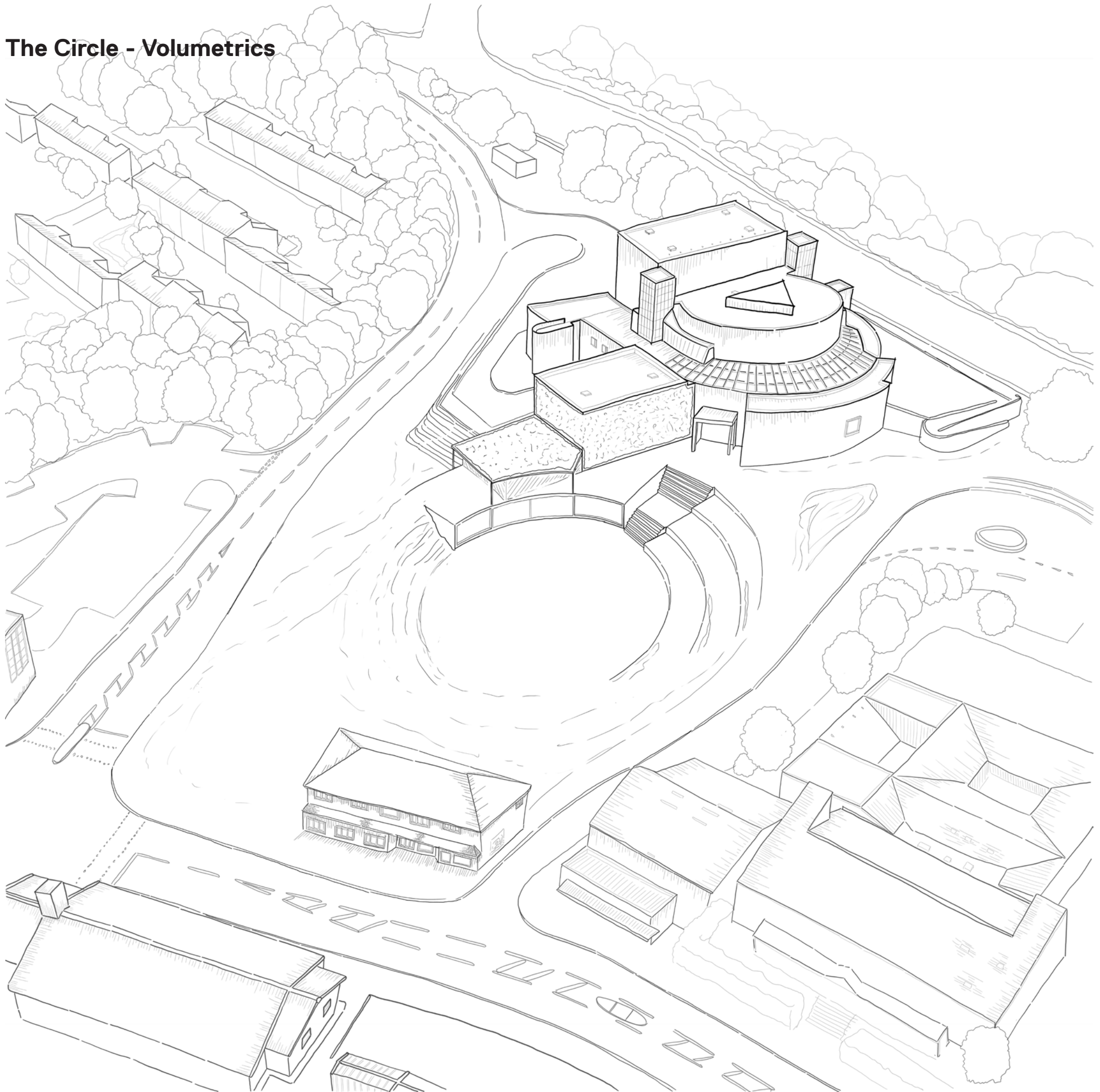
Sense of arrival.

06 - Framing



Long and short views.

The Circle - Volumetrics



The Circle - Material Palette



Corten Steel



Green Landscape

The Circle - Evaluation

Pros

- Strong narrative, taking the external theatre and mirroring it in the landscape, yin and yang.
- Blurs the boundaries between landscape and built form.
- Sustainable and green.
- Strong interaction between lower ground and the green.

Cons

- Extension feels like it competes and does not complement the existing theatre.
- Expensive build and landscape costs.
- Difficult flow through the building and tying it back to the existing Brindley.
- Encloses the green and perhaps too inward facing.
- Architectural plan/form difficult to marry in with the existing Brindley.

The DESIGN

The Box Design Narrative

The box option explores a simple, rectilinear, pavilion form. The sitting of the extension extends out from the studio and its orientation takes advantage of the views across towards the town, the old bridge and the Mersey beyond. Its linear form also screens the existing back of house deliveries, allowing for servicing along its eastern elevation, with its western facade addressing the new green and landscape.

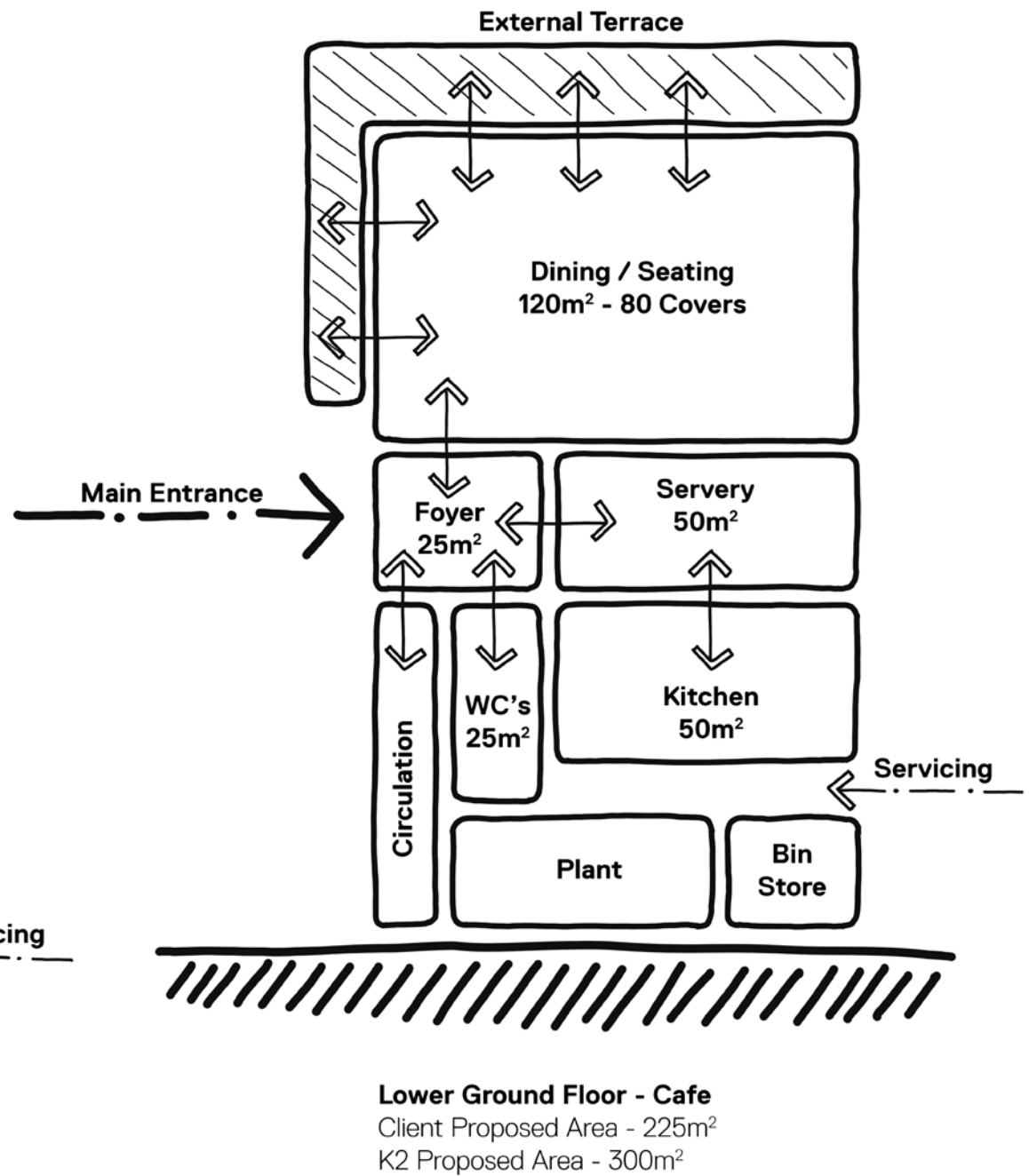
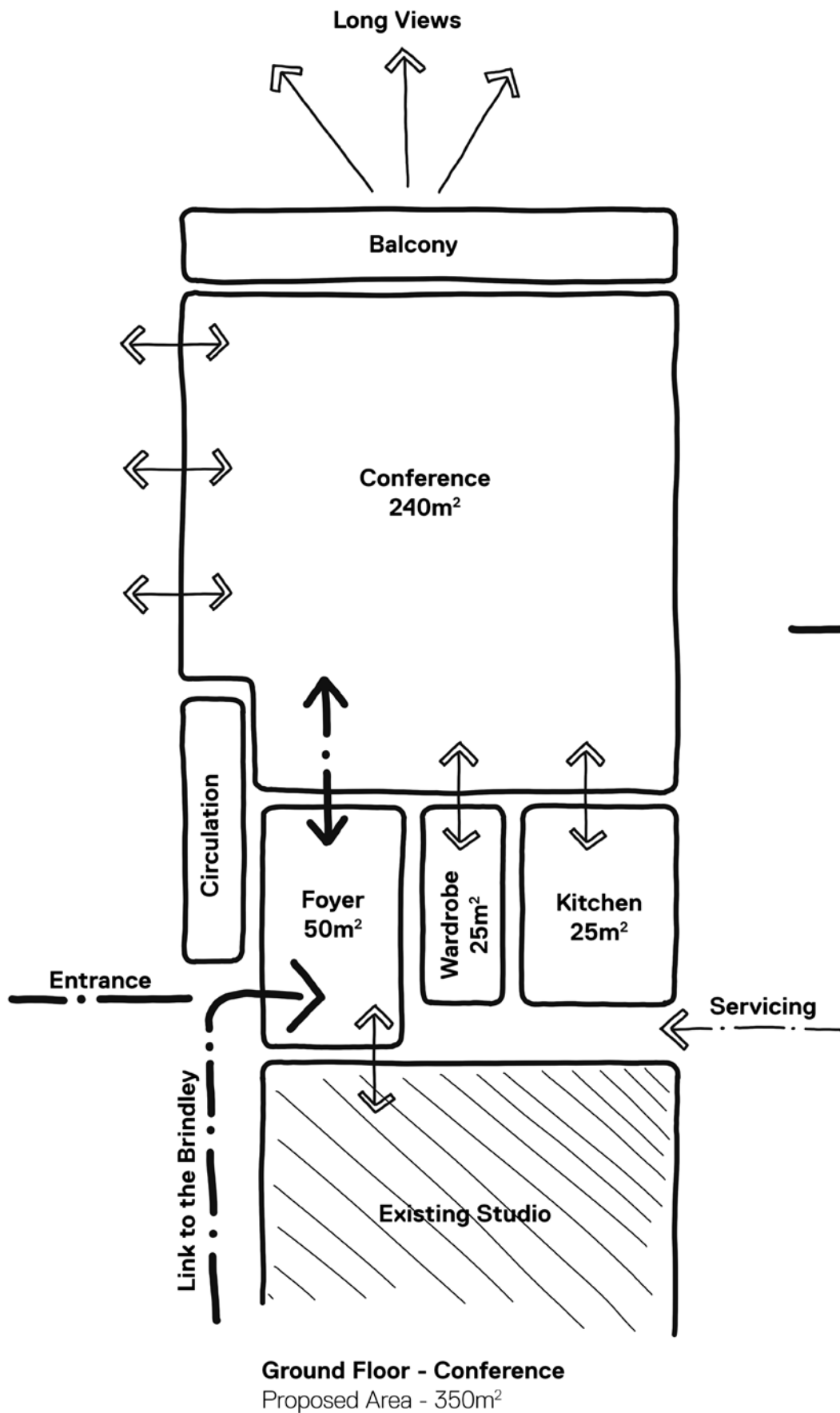
The mass and scale of the extension is broken down by creating two interconnected volumes, a more masculine, harder outer shell, with a softer, more transparent inner façade, with a green roof above to reduce the visual impact of the building on the landscape and promote biodiversity.

The outer materiality explores a white concrete or cast stone, which forms a semi covered colonnade, linking the existing Brindley to the new conference and down to the lower ground which houses the café and the green. This classical colonnade pays homage to the original work of John Miller and Partners who designed the Brindley theatre, with its strong geometric volumes and proportioning. The canopy also offers some protection from the elements whilst providing solar shade to the western facade, this space opens up to a cathedral like volume as it steps down the bank and on to the green. This creates an external space for dining to spill out from the café and onto the green, before the colonnade continues around the northern façade to link with Leiria way and the car park opposite.

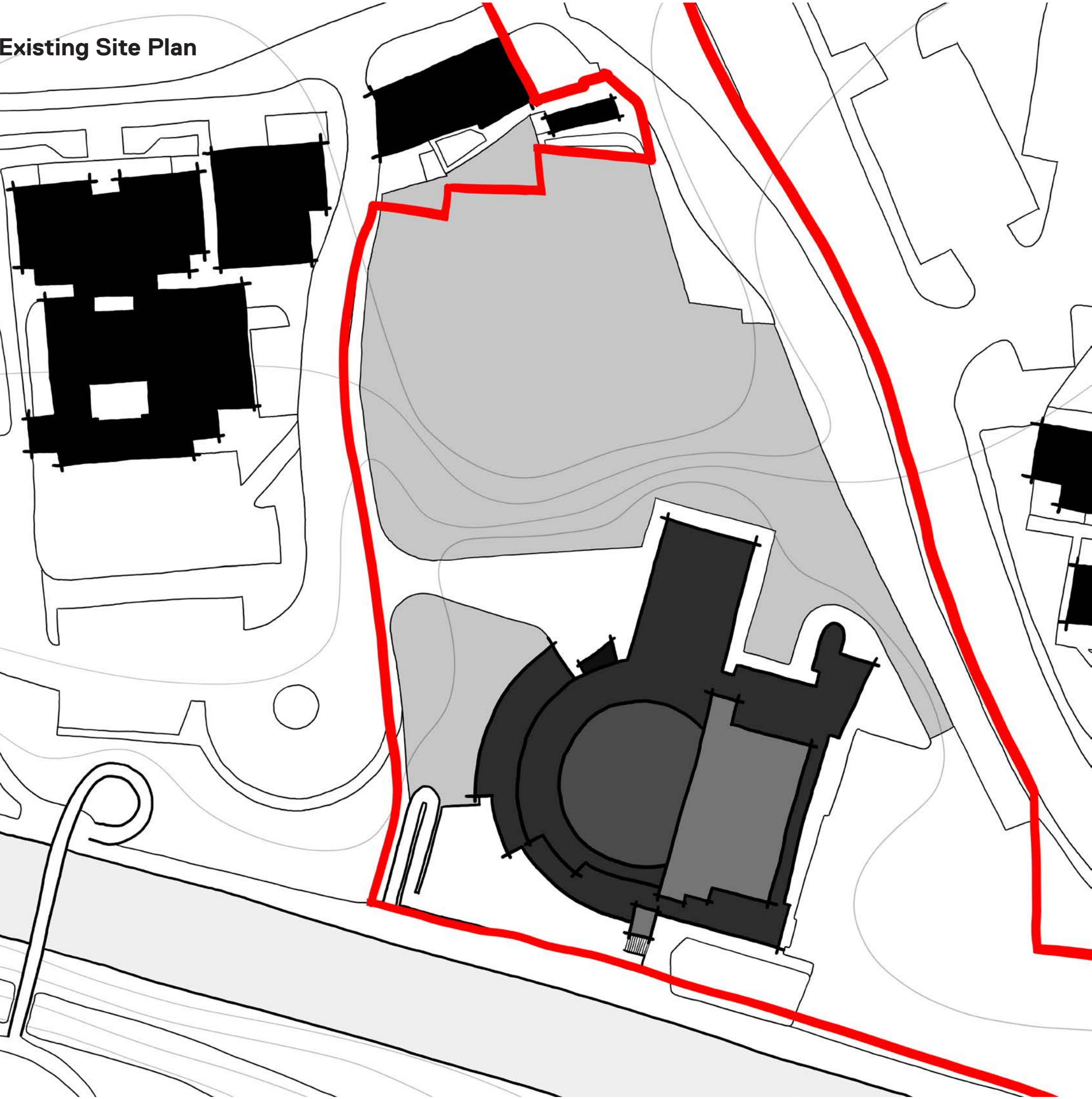
The main glazed façade is set back circa two metres and is expressed as light, transparent box to contrast against the verticality and hardness of the concrete. Glazing areas will be further explored and set into modular framed portrait windows, strengthened by areas of solidity and semi transparency to keep rhythm through the façade. This juxtaposition and depth between the colonnade and façade will create a real sense of drama through the texture of light and shadows cast by the moving sun.

The lower ground floor houses the café and open plan seating to give a calm, rational architectural language, that addresses the landscape, regular and rhythmic in both plan and elevation, again respecting the architectural language of the existing theatre. The upper ground houses the new conference space and external balcony that looks down onto the green and takes advantage of those distant views across the town.

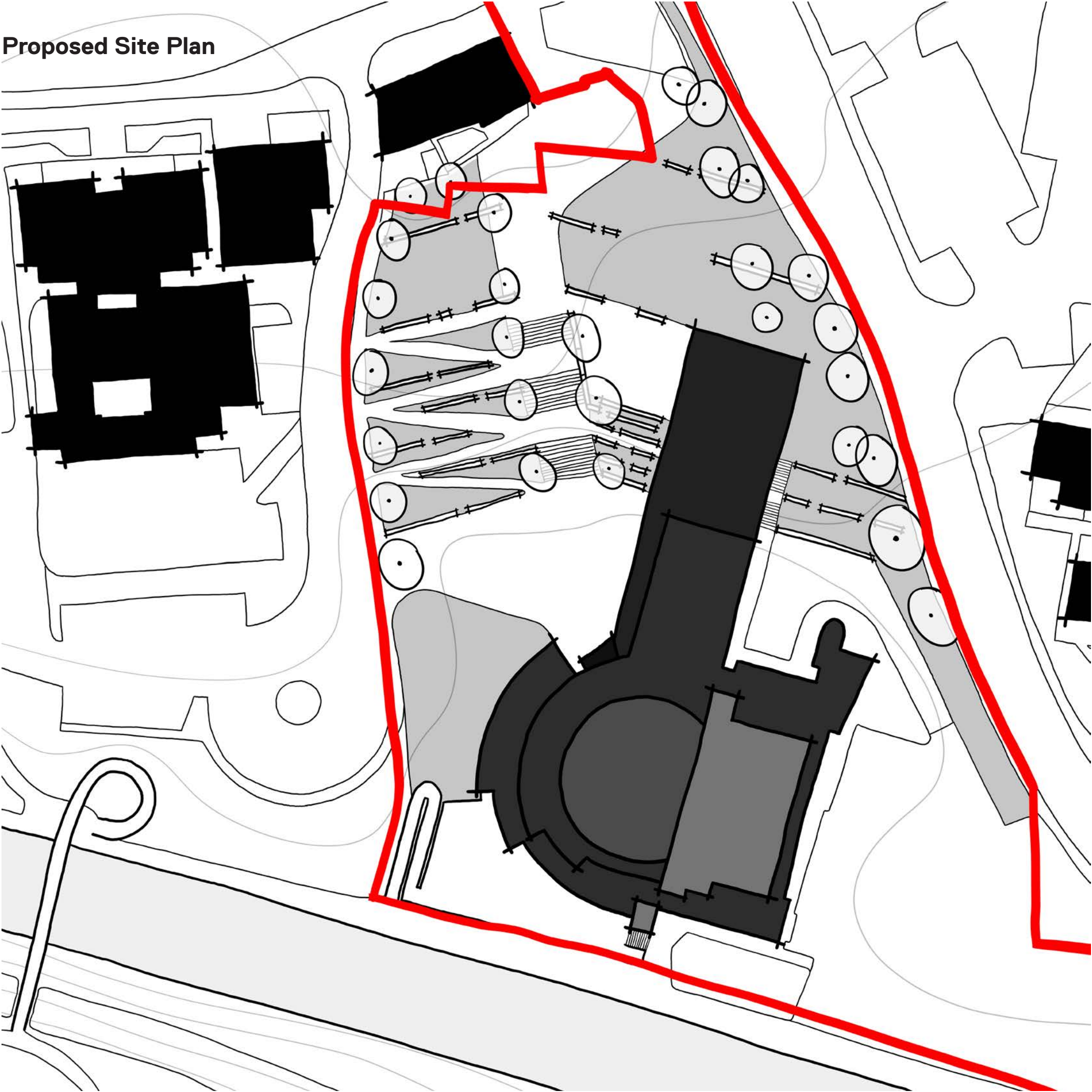
Spatial Adjacencies



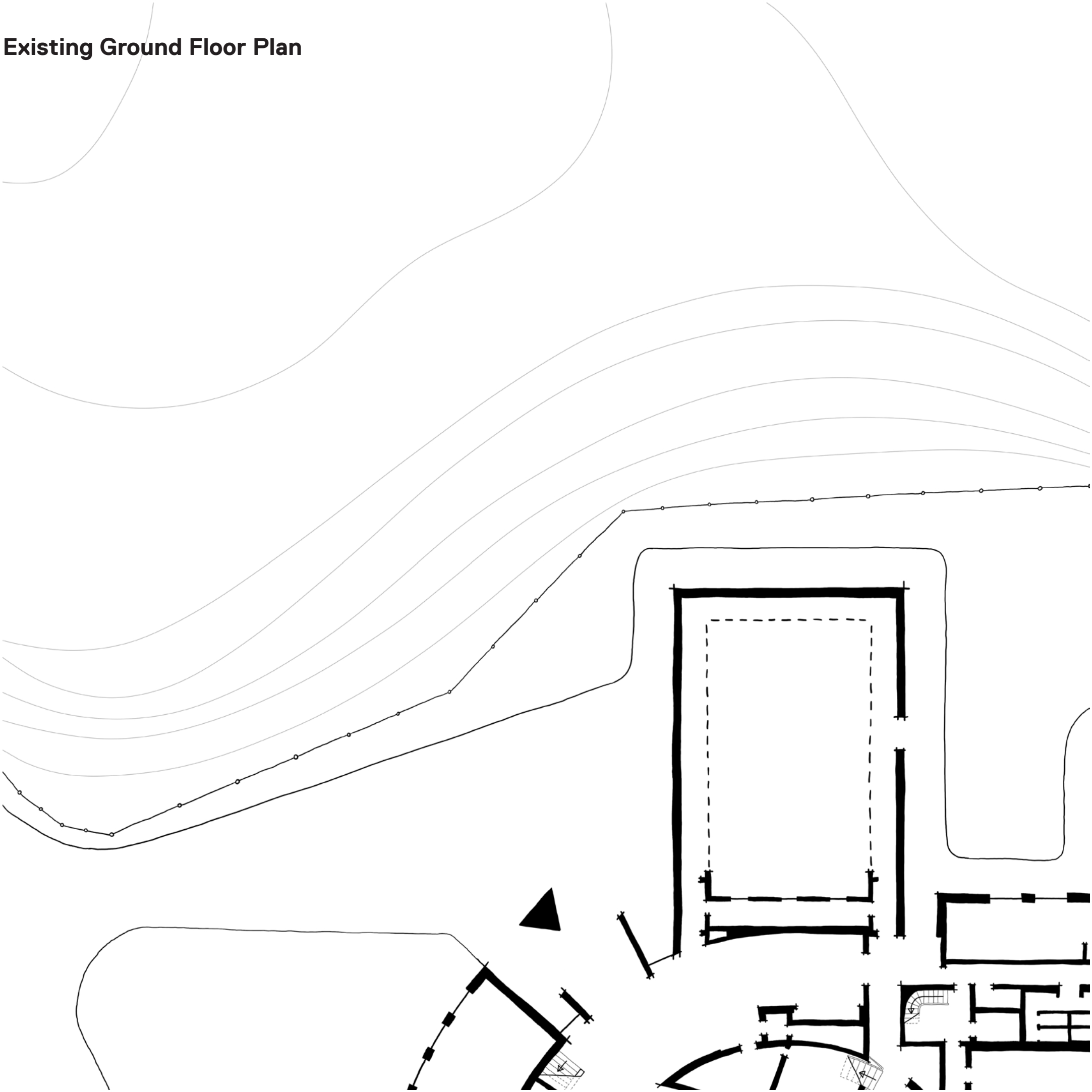
Existing Site Plan



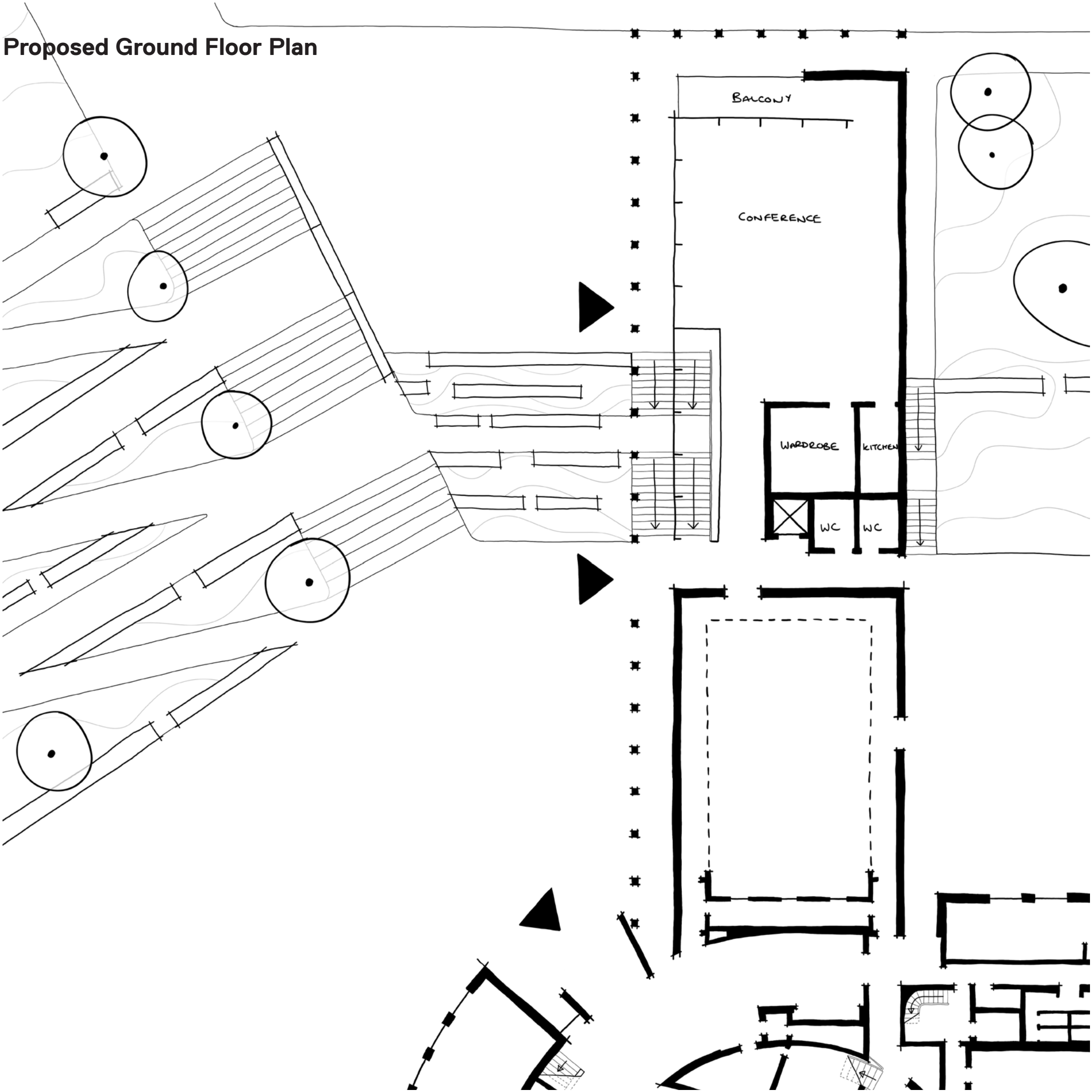
Proposed Site Plan



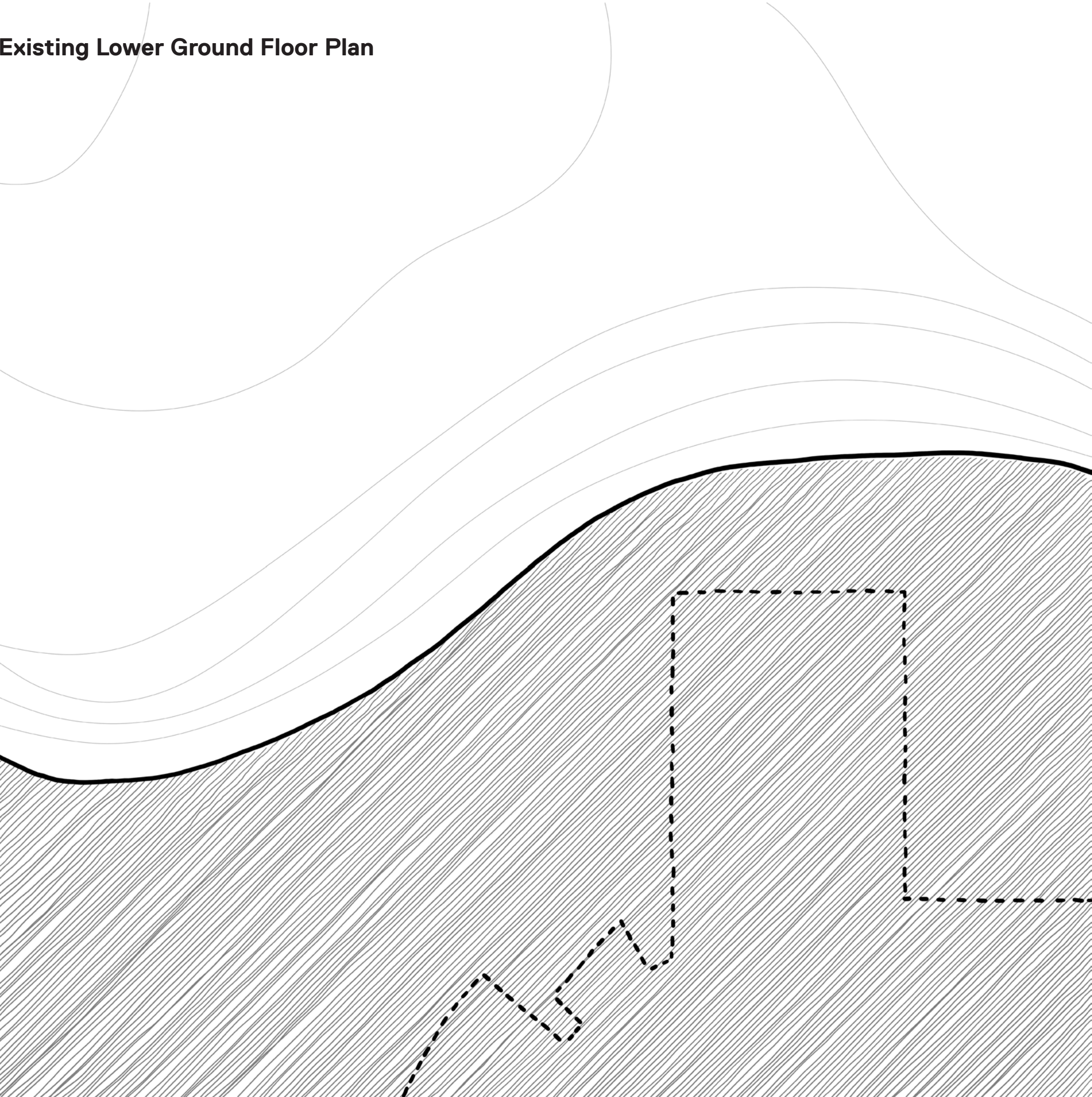
Existing Ground Floor Plan



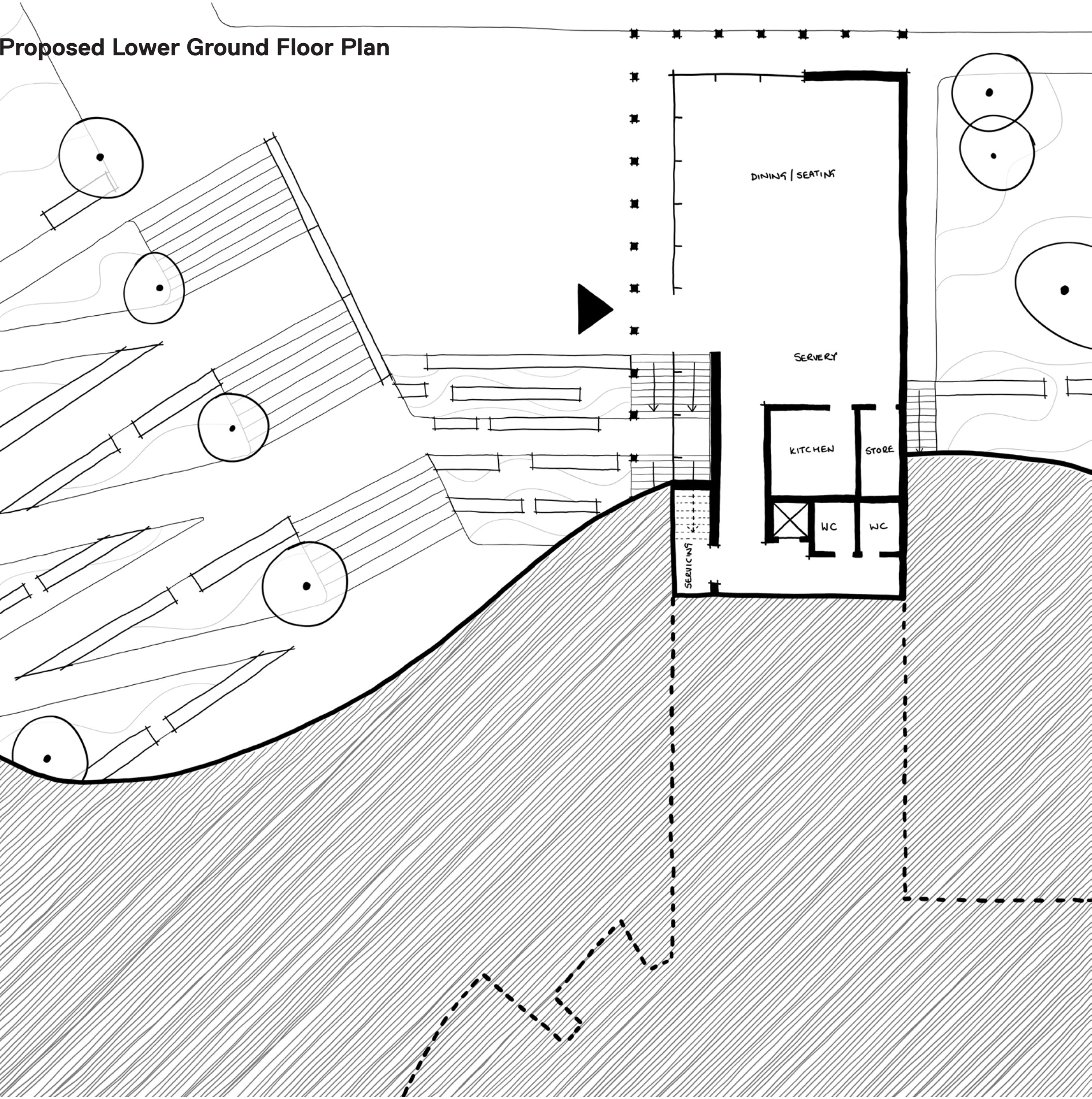
Proposed Ground Floor Plan



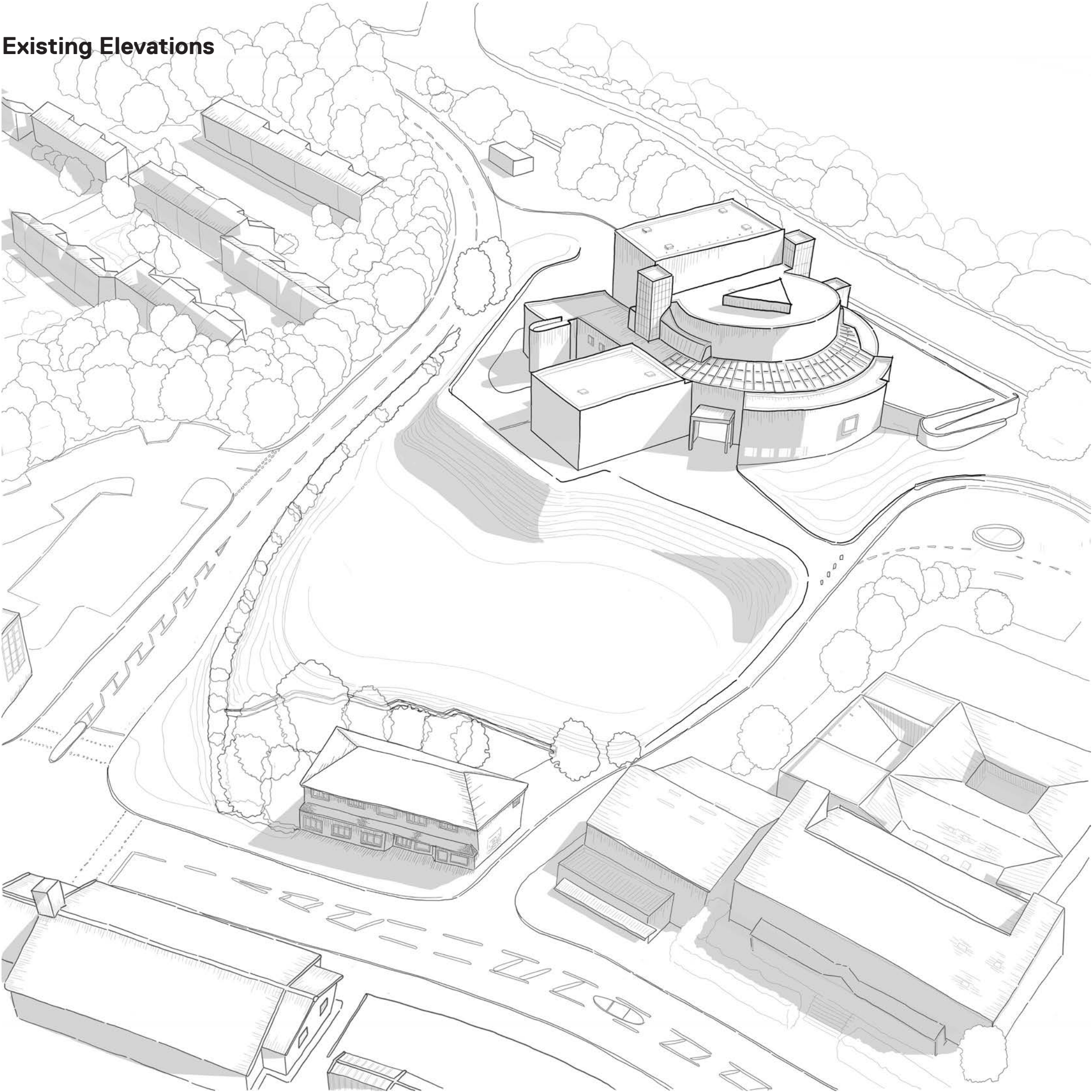
Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan



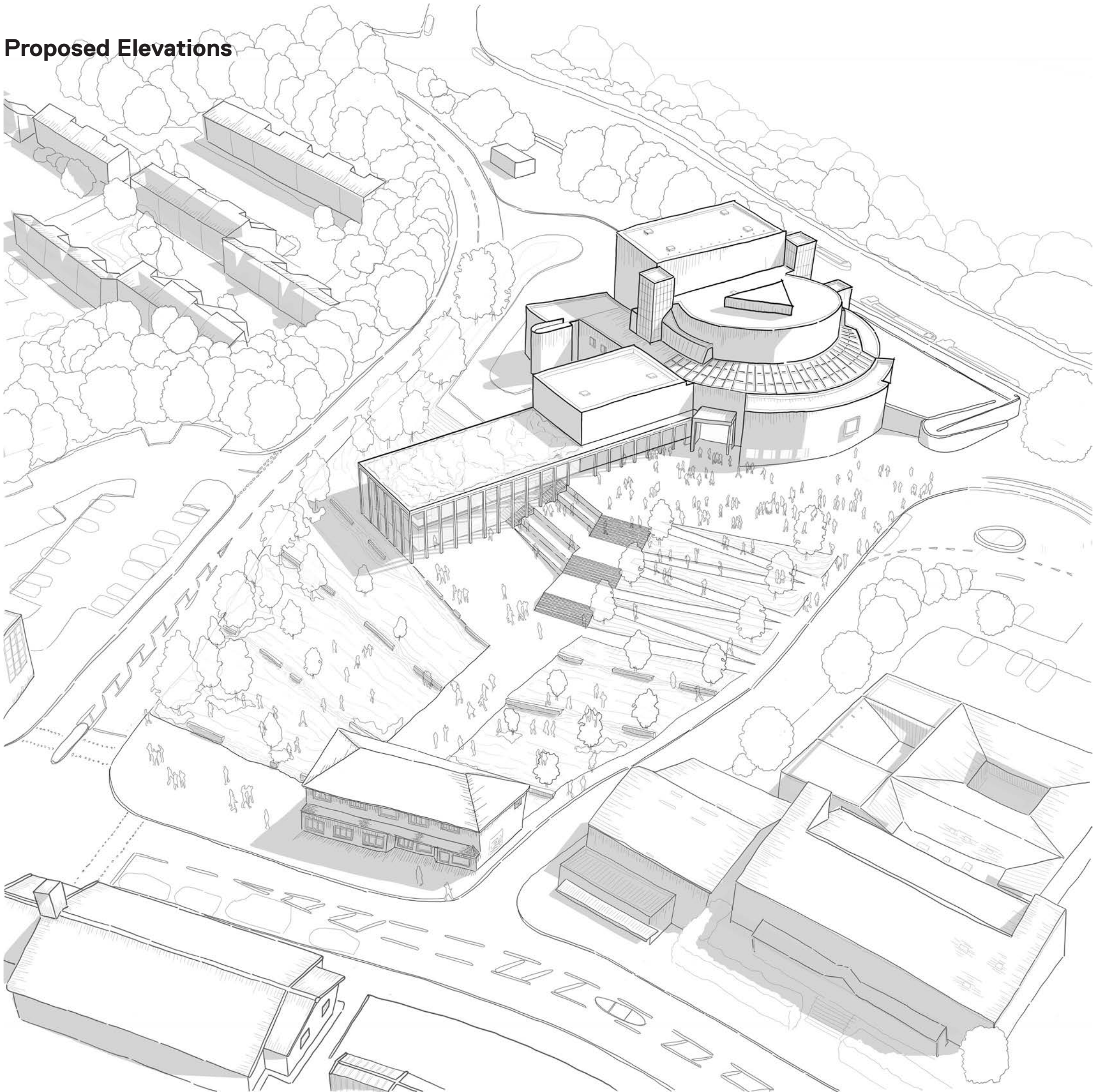
Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan



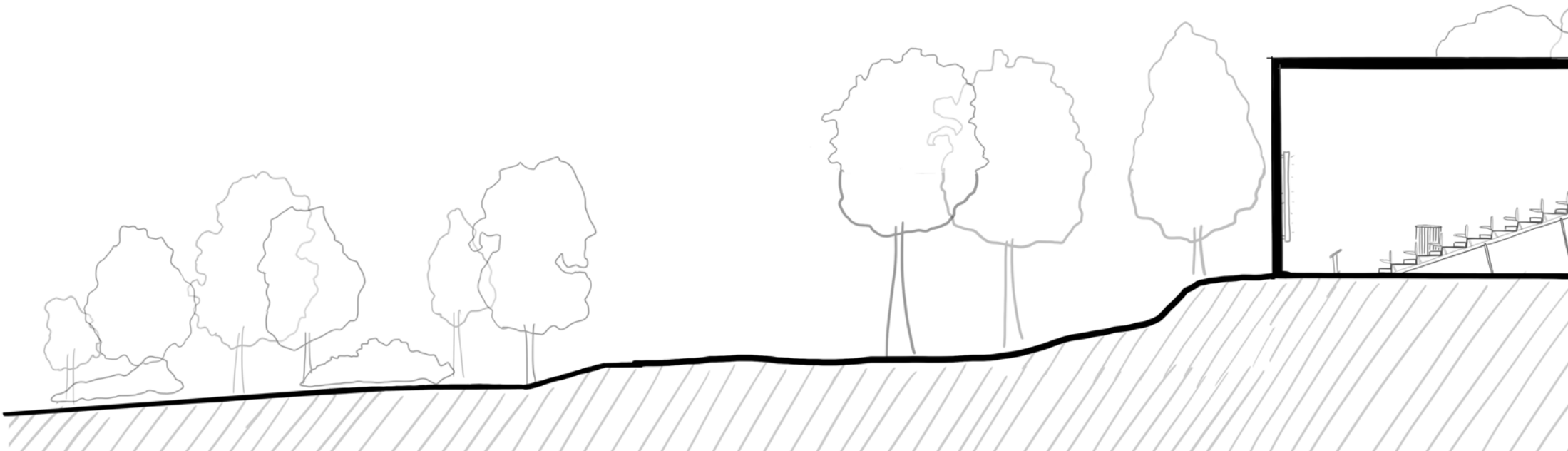
Existing Elevations



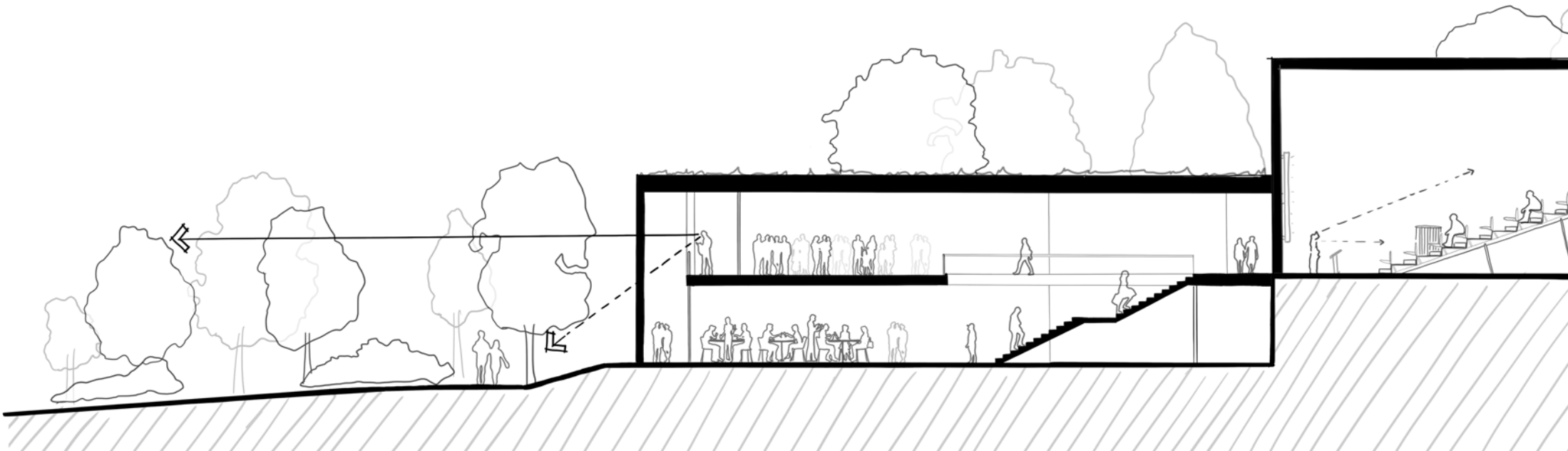
Proposed Elevations

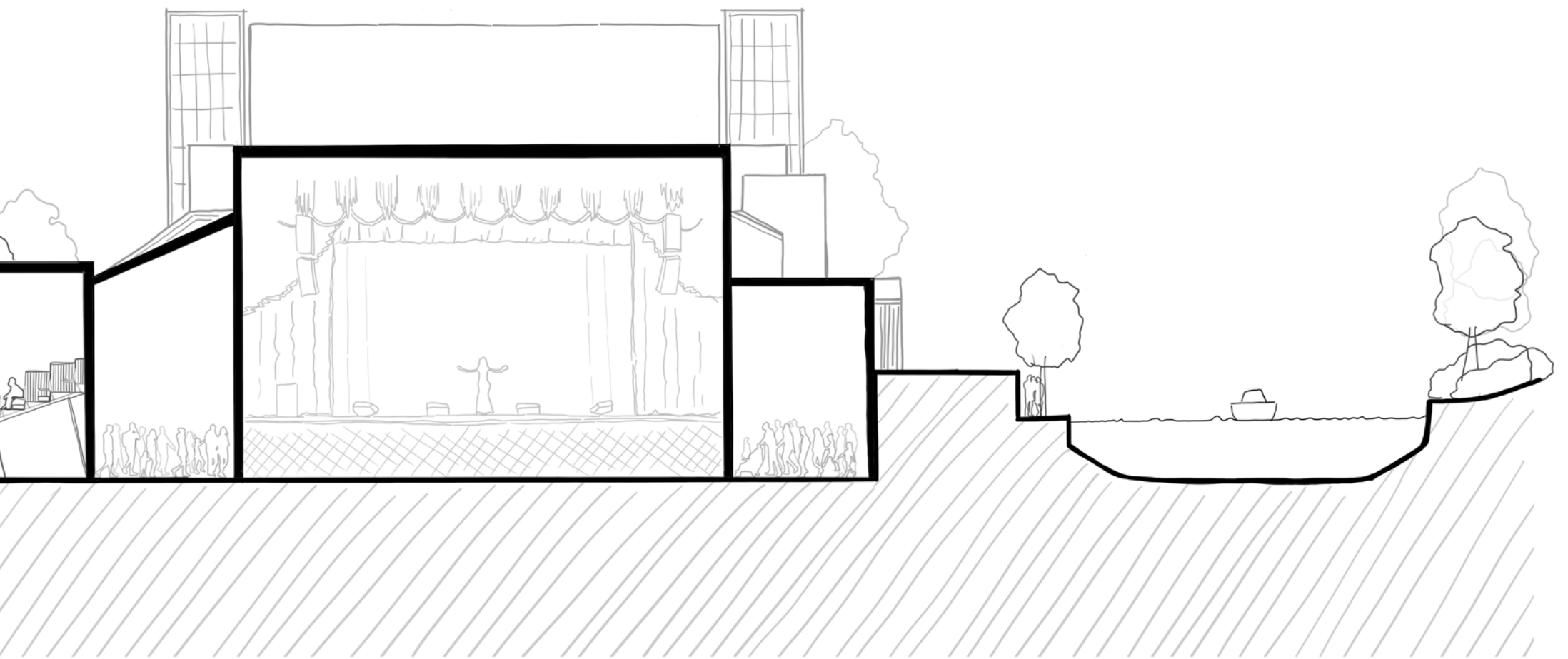
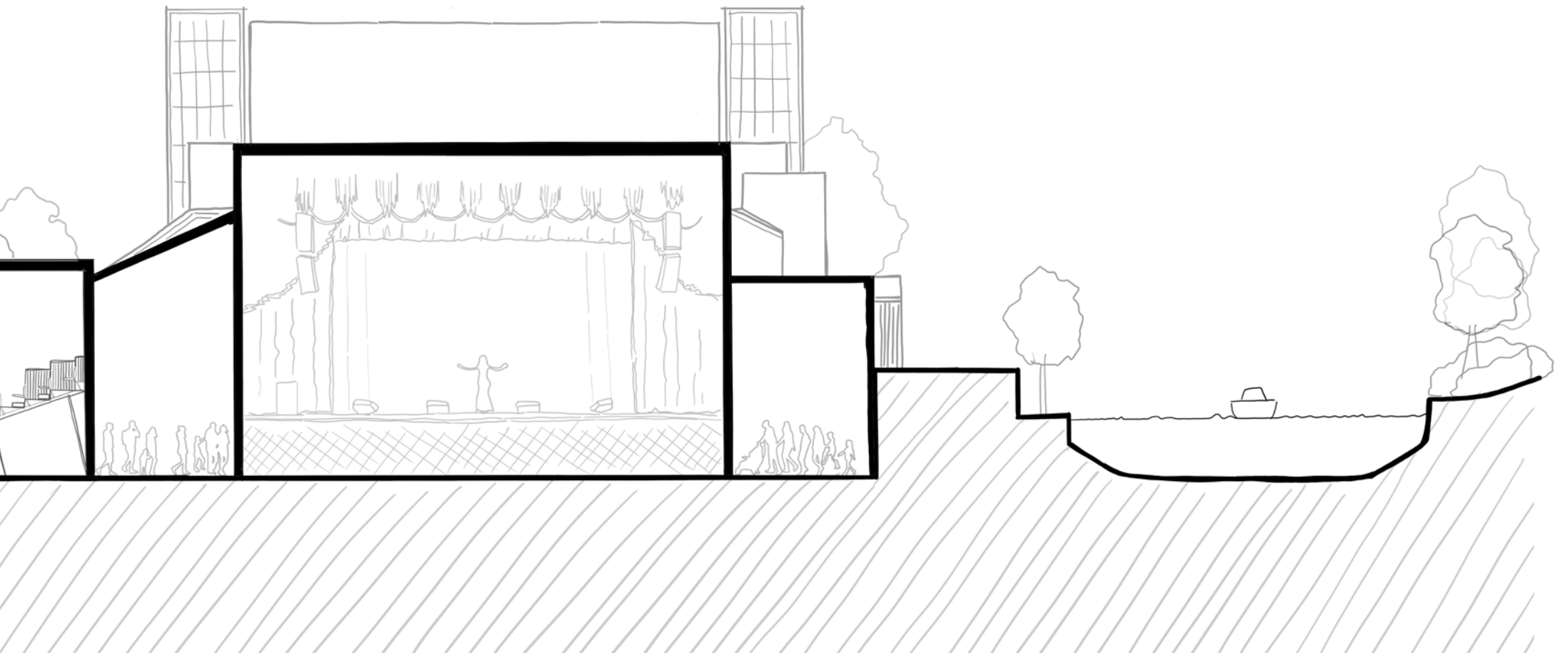


Existing Section



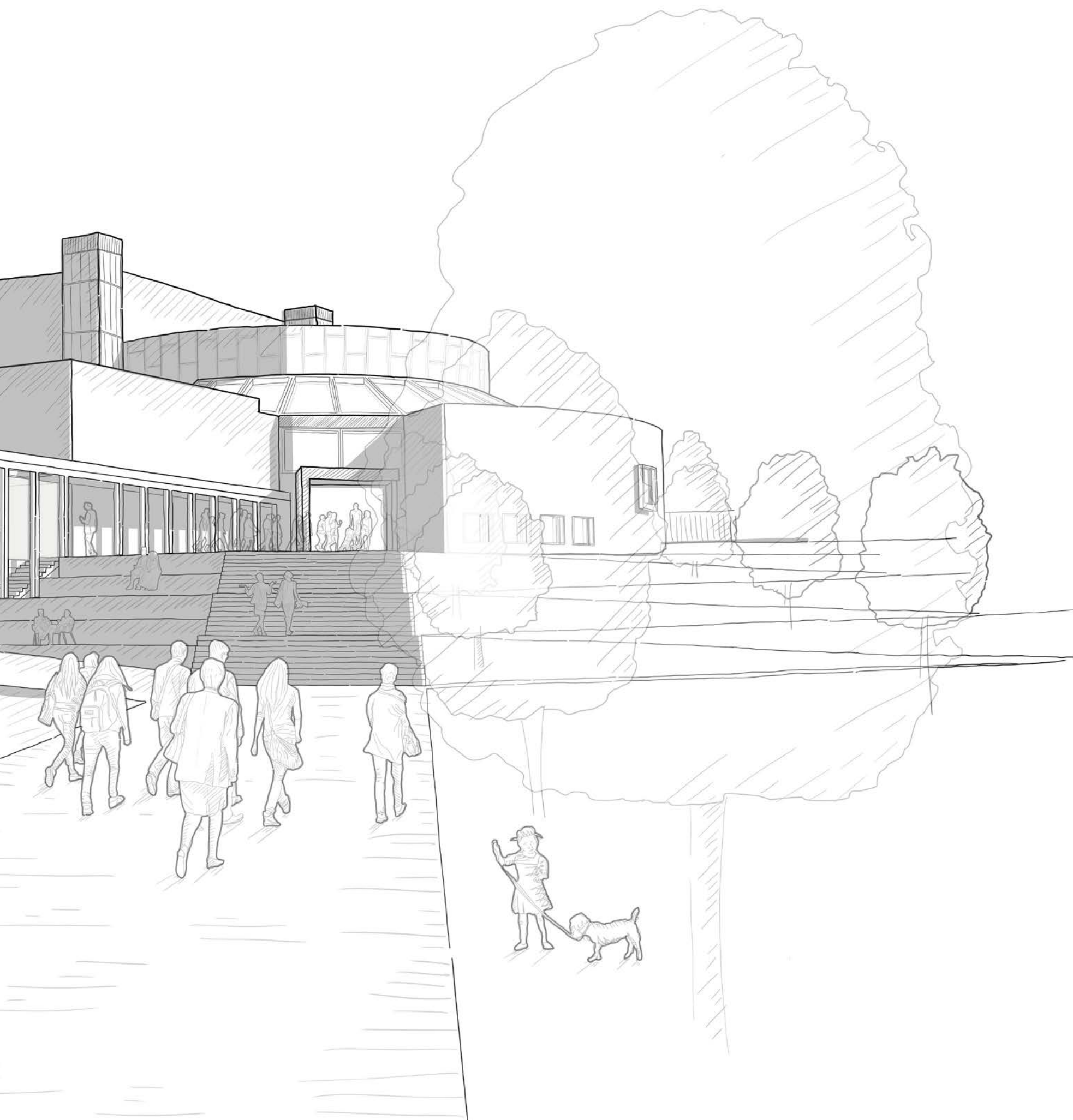
Proposed Section



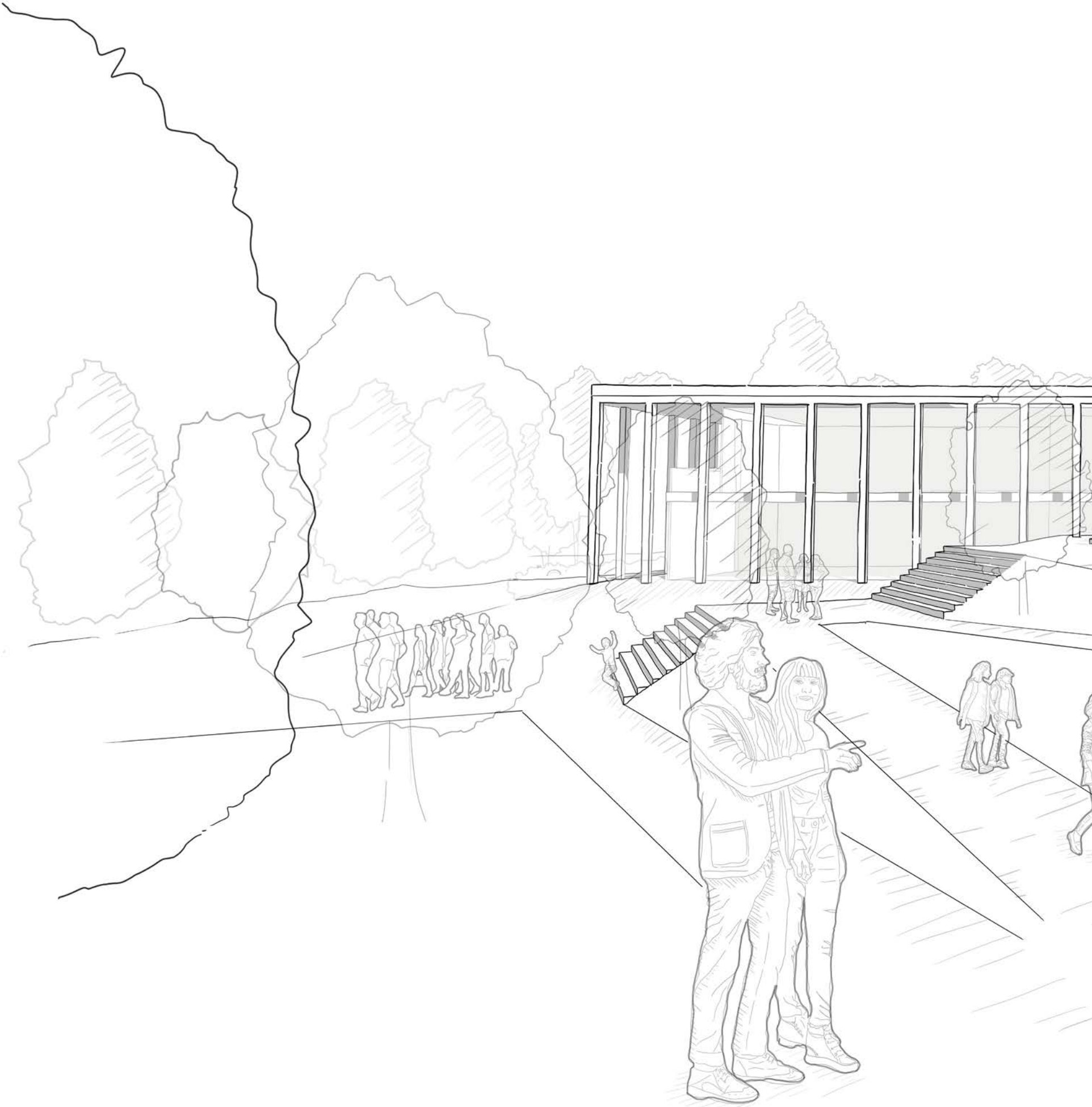


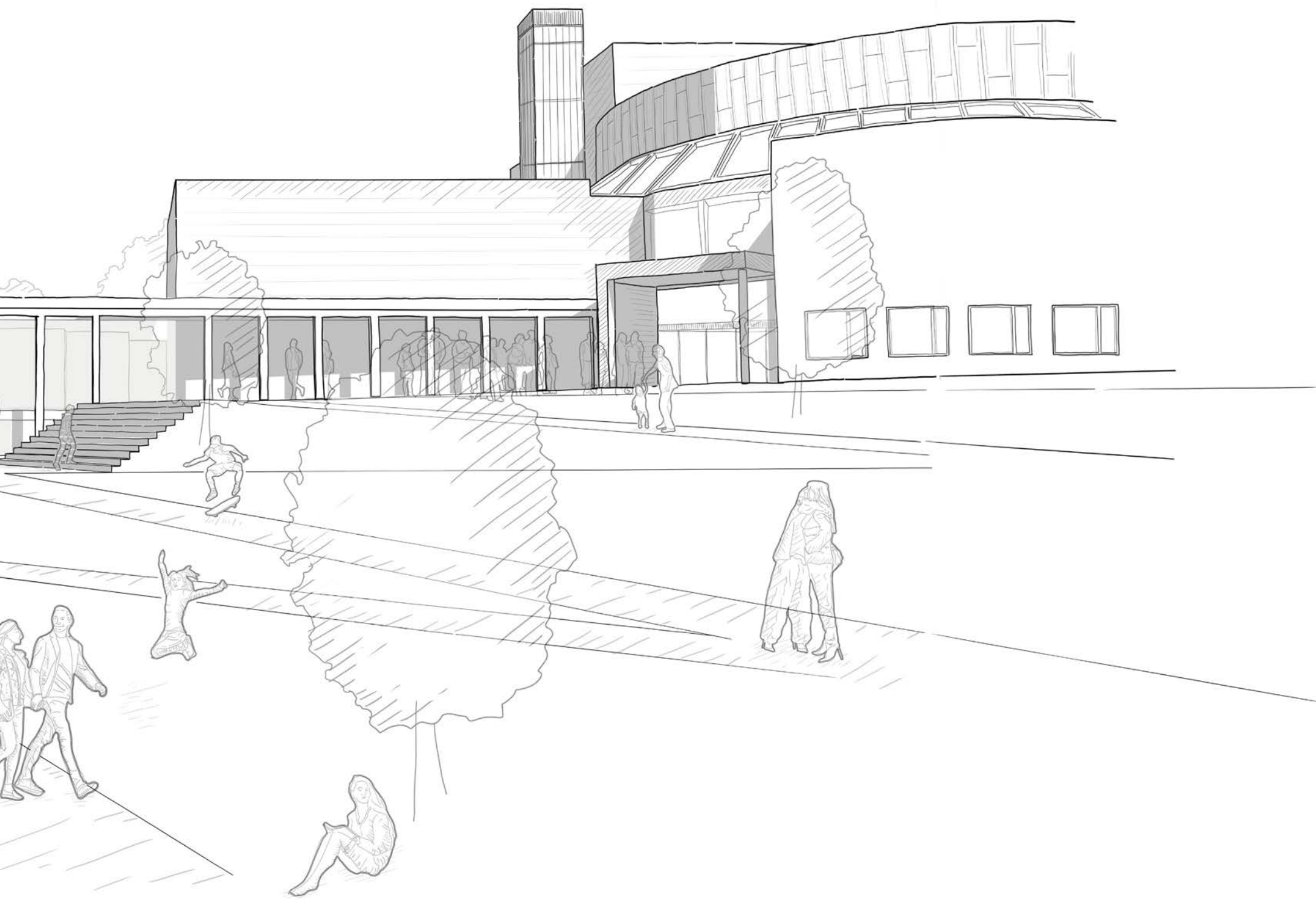
Visual 01





Visual 02





For further information, please contact:

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