Old High Inverness

Feasibility Study & Options Appraisal for Rejuvenating The Old High

February 2026

LDN Architects

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Appendices

1.0

Introduction

‘The Old High SCIO intend to ensure that the story of the Old High is told and continues to unfold through active use of the building. Achieving this will bring lasting benefits to the local and wider community through cultural and educational events, training opportunities and job creation. The Old High has an exciting past and can also have an exciting future.’

Aligning with the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), this architectural feasibility study reimagines the Old High as a vibrant, multi-use, cultural and spiritual hub for Inverness. The vision sees it as a living gateway to the story of Inverness, a centre of interpretation, remembrance, learning and community life operating respectfully within the building’s ecclesiastical, heritage and spiritual character.

1.1 The Brief

'A viability study for the Old High Inverness. The purpose of the study is to enable The Old High Inverness SCIO to make an informed decision about whether to pursue the acquisition of the building, and to support applications for funding thereafter.'

Further detailed facets identified in the brief speak to the acknowledgement that a wholistic strategy, supported by distinct specialisms, is sought to advise on:

1. *An assessment of the fabric of the building*
2. *A preliminary heritage statement*
3. *Identification and engagement with relevant interest groups or "communities"*
4. *A preliminary assessment of physical development needs and options*
5. *A preliminary appraisal of possible future development*
6. *A detailed report on the short-term development options*
7. *A detailed business plan for the first five years*

1.2 The Author

The consultant team, led by LDN Architects and comprising Creative Services Scotland (Strategic Business Planning), McLeod & Aitkin (Cost Consultant), Fairhurst (Conservation Engineer) & Harley Haddow (Building Services and Energy) were appointed in July 2025 after a successful bid to fulfil the outlined needs identified in 1.1

1.3 Previous Reports

In 2018 a study by commissioned by the Kirk Session of Old High St Stephen's and developed by Alan S. Marshall B Arch RIBA FRIAS in an earlier acknowledgment of both the need, and community desire, to rejuvenate the Church. Thanks and appreciation to both the commissioners and author of this report as it provides key background and research information to the consideration given in this document.

1.4 Document Summary

This report is part of set of documents conceived to address the brief. The following documents form the full study:

Strategic Outline Case

- Old High Church, Inverness: Future Redevelopment **Strategic Outline Case** (Creative Services Scotland)

Fabric Condition

- Old High Inverness: **Fabric Condition Survey** (LDN Architects + McLeod & Aitkin)
- **Structural Condition Report**: Old High Church – Inverness (Fairhurst)
- **M&E Services Site Survey Report**: Old High Kirk – Inverness (Harley Haddow)

Feasibility study and options appraisal

- Old High Inverness: **Feasibility study and options appraisal** for rejuvenating The Old High, Inverness (LDN Architects)
- **Estimated Cost: Internal Alterations** to Old High Church, Inverness (McLeod & Aitkin)

1.5 Executive Summary

In 1.0 this report sets out the context and brief for this study.

2.0 provides an outline heritage appraisal outlining the significance of fabric and assessing the suitability of change.

3.0 draws reference to the Building Fabric Condition Assessment in which guidance is given on the prioritisation of emergency and urgent works.

4.0 reviews the stakeholder and community engagement strategies and consultation.

5.0 provides analysis of Architectural Strategy and Approach, identifying needs, constraints and opportunities in relation to the SOC (Strategic Outline Case).

6.0 seeks to inform future development path with regards to funding and procedural wayfinding.

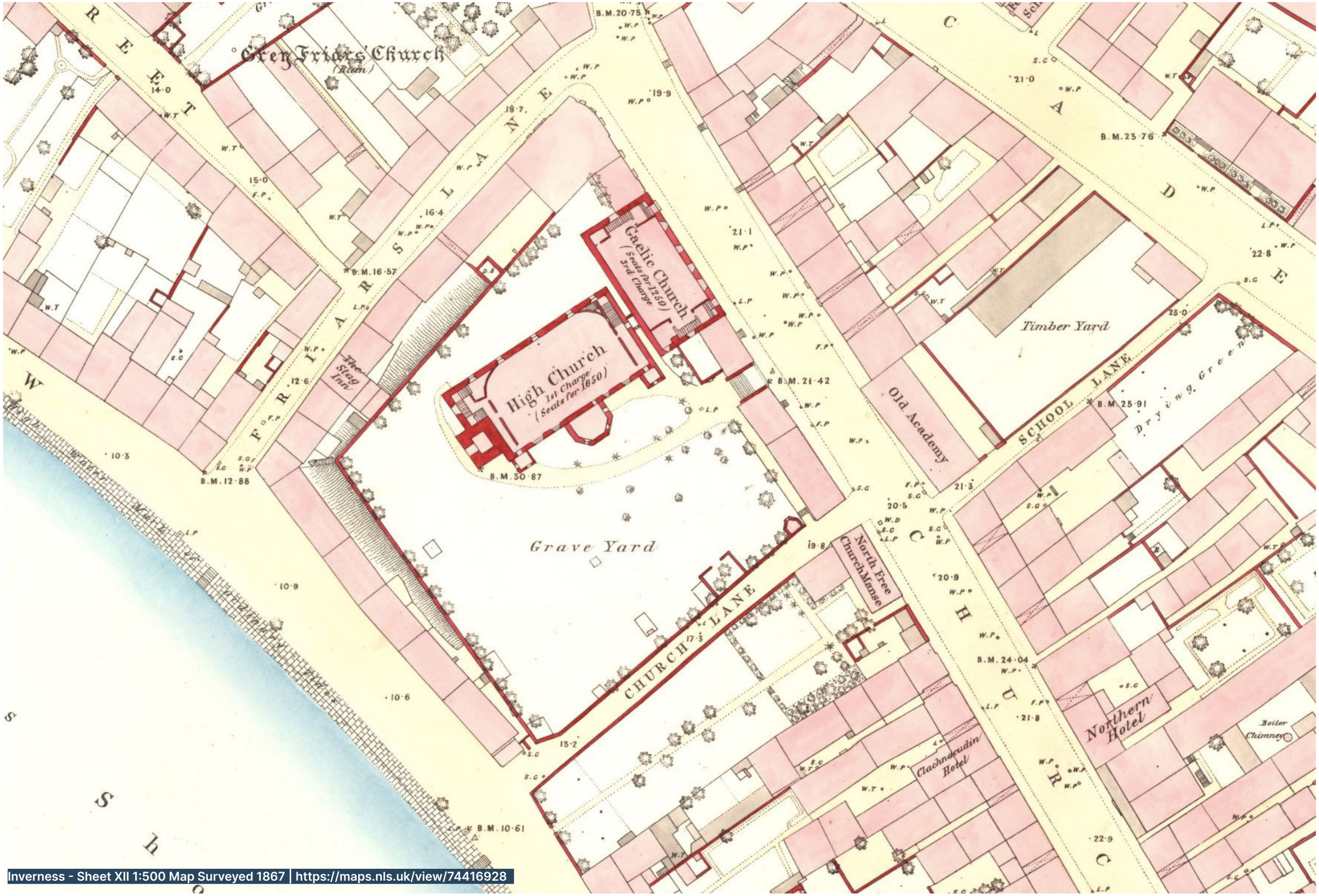
7.0 sets out considerations to the next steps in the first two phases (Enabling of Phase 1 'Immediate Stabilisation' & Phase 2 'Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme') including a summary of minimum works to open the building.

8.0 highlights the summary of project risk approach.

9.0 is the appendix and list the suite of documents making up this study.

2.0

Outline Heritage Appraisal



2.1 General Information

- **Site Name/Address:** Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1EY.
- **Grid Reference/Location:** OS Grid: NH664455

2.2 Description of Heritage Asset

- **Designation Status:** Category A.
- HES Listed Building Reference: LB35179).
- **Description of Asset:** The HES listing describes the building as follows:

Late 16th century tower; church 1769-72; internal alterations, A & W Reid, 1877; additions and internal alterations, W L Carruthers, 1899. Rubble. Tower, square-plan, unbuttressed with small openings, projection for stair at SE, stone-vaulted interior; top of tower probably late 17th century with corbelled balustraded parapet, small octagonal spire, apsidal-ended vestry added at SE
of tower, 1899. Church of 7 bays; SE flank has late 19th century porches at end bays and semi-octagonal apse of 1891 at centre bay; tall round-arched windows; at north-west flank square-headed windows; small dormers added, 1899. INTERIOR: extensively remodelled 1877 and 1899; demi-octagonal gallery, pews of modified box type introduced, 1877; open timber roof, its principals springing from stone corbels, 1899. Stained glass of various dates, by Ballantine & Gardiner, Douglas Strachan and Gordon Webster.

- **Outline timeline of the church and surrounding site:**

The Old High Church is regarded as one of the most important buildings of Inverness. It is category A listed and although the majority of the current structure dates from the 18th century onwards, parts of the tower date back to medieval times.

- **565CE** - Long considered to be the spot on which St Columba preached to King Brude and the Pictish people in 565AD in the mission to convert the Picts to Christianity. The site was then known as St Michael's Mound.
- Records suggest there was a structure on the site **before 1171** although no known evidence of this survives.
- **1171** -The Church of 'St Mary in Innerness' is listed in a Charter granted by King William the Lion to the monks of Arbroath Abbey. It is understood that the Abbey starved the church of funds in the following centuries and this would have contributed to the establishment of side chapels independent of the parish church which were able to manage their own funds and endowments. Hence when the church first appears on illustrations it is seen to have multiple side chapels.
- **1371** – The Bishop of Moray describes the current church as 'a noble and distinguished place' when discussing the need for the thatch roof to be repaired, suggesting a substantial church on the site. By this point the church was substantially larger than the current structure with a nave and north and south aisles, transept and a choir.
- **1428-** Alexander MacDonald, Lord of the Isles burns Inverness to the ground.
- **Tower** (inc. lower two levels surviving today) generally thought to be **14th or 15th Century.**
- **1560-** Following **The Reformation**, when the Papal authority is banished and Mass made illegal, the mention of the Virgin Mary disappears and we see reference to either the Parish Church or High Church and with the move away from Catholicism, the requirement for side chapels would have disappeared.
- **1591-** James VI grants Inverness the Great Charter of the Burgh.
- **1592-** The Golden Act passes through the Scottish Parliament. This abolished Episcopal jurisdiction and places the government of the Church with Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly.

- **1611-** Publication of the 'King James Bible' in English.
- **1638 –** The National Covenant.
- **1641-** As the congregation of the town had outgrown the church at that time and the new form of worship centred on the pulpit did not require aisles and a choir, the decision was taken to take down the transept and choir to make room for a separate church for worship in Gaelic as Scots was used in the High Church. This, referred to as **New Irish or Gaelic Church** was built adjacent to the church, to the northeast, in **1649.**
- **1649 –** Understood to be when **the upper section of the tower and belcote.**
- **1651 -** Cromwell occupies Inverness.
- **1664-5 -** Roberston Mausoleum (located in the churchyard) is built by William Robertson, a prominent citizen, in honour of his mother, itself a category B Listed structure (HES ref LB35180) is built in 1660, described by HES as a fine late 17th century mural monument.
- Over the period **1660 – 1725** the earliest maps and drawings of the church that survive indicate the earlier structure(s) with:
  - A long structure parallel to Church Street still attached to the main church **(The Gaelic Church)** as

the current building dates from 1792-3.
    - A **central pitched roof structure** running on axis with the present-day church
    - 3 number secondary pitched **structures extending out perpendicular from the central axis –** two northwest, one southeast
    - A **prominent belltower** on the river side (southwest) in the location of the present-day church. This tower is depicted with a **castellated parapet** with faceted (assumed octagonal) **spire structure** with **pitched roof and weathervane** atop. Upper section of tower including the **belcote** (above the older lower two levels), dating from 1649.
- **1689 -**The Jacobite Rising places William and Mary on the throne in place of Catholic James VII and Parliament abolishes Episcopacy and establishes the Presbyterian Church (the Kirk).

- **1715-** The siege of inverness during the Jacobite Rising sees the Hanoverians take the city
- **1745-** After Bonnie Prince Charlie's defeat at the Battle of Culloden, it is recorded that the church and tower was used as a prison and Jacobite prisoners were executed in the grounds.
- **1769 –** despite the rebuilding in 1641, and the formation of the Gaelic Church in 1649 by 1769 the current church again proved insufficient and the congregation petitioned the Town Council and Heritors for a new building.
- **1770-72-** Plans were approved and the High Church was **rebuilt** between 1770 and 1772 to a plan by George Fraser of Edinburgh on the site of medieval church
    - The west bell-tower (lowest portion though to be late medieval) was **retained** along with the top of tower dating from the late 17th century with its corbelled, balustraded parapet and small octagonal spire.
    - Further investigation required to establish whether the **southeast façade rebuilt** further to the south (increasing the span / width of the church) during these works. There are burial slabs from at least 1621 under the south-east aisle. As burials within Scottish churches were banned in 1581, it is deduced that the facade has moved south.
- In the period between Lewis Petit's map of 1716 and the OS map of 1821, and in the context of wider urbanisation and industrialisation, changes have evidently taken place
    - The **Gaelic Church** to the northeast on Church Street was rebuilt in 1792-3 with a clearly separate building curtilage
    - A second development of **street fronted** (terraced) **structures**, augmenting the earlier maps have been built clearly **defining** the **streets** of **Friars Lane** and **Bank Street** to the northwest and southwest perimeter respectively
    - The **secondary pitched perpendicular structures** have been **replaced** with a **faceted semi-round structure** on the southeast facade, potentially marking the Apse and signalling an internal 'T' plan arrangement.

- **1843-** The founding of the Free Kirk following the Disruption when nearly a third of the ministers of the Kirk resigned. The High Church remains with the Church of Scotland.
- **1867-** The First Edition OS Mapping provides details of the building's interior layout for the first time.
- **1877-** Alexander William Reid **remodelled the interior** in 1877 including introducing new **pews** and changing the **gallery.**
    - He may have had to alter the rear windows under the gallery to suit at this time. They have wooden 'gothic' tracery in a rectangular opening. However, the OS map of 1867 suggests the basic plan including the access arrangements and position of staircases were in place prior to this remodelling. The fact that there are doorways on the west facade at each end suggest an earlier stair arrangement accessing a different gallery.
- 1881 Greig Street **Suspension footbridge** built nearby, over River Ness
- Alexander Ross and Robert John MacBeth (Ross and MacBeth) **added the two** current **porches** in **1891 and the apse** (including the internal chancel arch) to suit the organ
- **Organ** installed in **1892** by Henry Willis + Sons.
- **1897 -** Founding of **St Stephens Church** in the newly established Crown as a daughter church.
- **1899-** The **vestry** and the **new roof** including its supporting **corbel stones** and **dormer windows** were added by William Laidlaw Carruthers in 1899.
    - It is recorded that the roof had a **ridge level fleche** but no evidence survives of this.
    - The **west porch** was built after **1890 and before 1912** but date unknown. It may even date from the 1891 or 1899 works but is not mentioned in any text covered in the scope of this initial study.

- **1921-** Date of the dedication of the War Memorial attached to the Organ Apse to a design by Samuel G Alexander and executed by W R Cumming, it commemorates the deaths of 70 names from the congregation.
- **1923-** The **organ** arrangement was subsequently altered in **1923** by Henry Hilsdon, Glasgow. It is unclear whether the shorter windows above the two southeast porches date from 1891 or had already been altered to suit the older porches shown on the First Edition OS Map of 1867.
- **1929 –** The Church of Scotland and the United Free Church re-combine, and the High Church is then becomes known as the **Old High** church.

- **2003-** the congregations of the Old High and St Stephen's in Inverness merge but both buildings continue in use.
- **2010-11 -** The Willis organ is restored.
- **2022 -** Restructuring of the Church of Scotland sees the congregation of Old High St Stephens vote to retain only St Stephens.
- **2025 –** The Old High is sold to a charity set up specifically to safeguard the building.

The information has been prepared as a high-level historical overview. In this form it is more appropriate for this preliminary study to establish architectural heritage based on information at the time of writing. As a project proceeds a more exhaustive examination of the documentary evidence, and the evidence of the building itself, may be commissioned. In this abridged form no references have been given at this stage.

2.3 Statement of Significance

The context in which this preliminary statement is prepared is contained within Clause 1.10 of Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement, June 2016, which states that the conservation of any part of Scotland's historic environment should:

a. be based upon sound knowledge and understanding of the particular site, building, monument or landscape, and of its wider context;

b. be founded on full awareness and consideration of its cultural significance and all phases of its development;

c. be carried out in accordance with a conservation plan, which brings together all of the information and research necessary to guide the proposed action;

d. ensure that what is to be conserved is properly recorded before and, if necessary, during and after work

e. make provision for recording where continued preservation is no longer possible or where loss is taking place through change or ongoing decay, and ensure that all records are retained in readily accessible archives

f. incur only the minimum degree of intervention considered appropriate by the relevant authority for the type of site, building, monument or landscape;

g. use appropriate technical knowledge, materials, skills and methods of working;

h. have regard to retaining, or where appropriate enhancing, the setting of the site, monument, building or landscape;

i. ensure that, where change is proposed, it is appropriate, carefully considered, authoritatively based, properly planned and executed, and (if appropriate) reversible;

j. include effective arrangements for monitoring the condition and safety of the historic asset and for delivery of routine maintenance and good housekeeping;

k. take account of the rich biodiversity of many historic sites, buildings and landscapes.

Within its guidance on Listed Building Consent, the same document stresses that "knowing what is important about a building is central to an understanding of how to protect its special interest. Applications should demonstrate that in arriving at a strategy for intervention, the importance of the building has been clearly understood and those features that contribute to its special interest have been identified." (Clause 3.40)

Significance

- **Historical:**
  - Reputed to be St Michael's Mound where St Columba preached to King Brude of the Picts in 565CE.
  - The partly medieval tower is understood to be the oldest surviving structure in Inverness. Interesting in its own right, it contains a Pauper's coffin.
  - Associated with the aftermath of Culloden and the execution of prisoners within the graveyard – evidence remains on two gravestones and the wall beside the tower door.
  - Central to the history of the city of Inverness for 1000 years.
  - Associations with the Burgh Council and Magistrates, when there was normally a commonality between the members of the Kirk Session and Council is retained in the central pews in the gallery which until recently was used for the Annual Kirking Ceremony.
  - The Old High has had a long association with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders up to its amalgamation to become the Highlanders in 1994.

- **Cultural:**
  - The building contains the memorials to many prominent citizens of Inverness and also nationally prominent figures such as Charles Fraser Mackintosh and including Joseph Mitchell, the engineer for the expansion of railways and bridges in the north of Scotland and assistant to Thomas Telford on the Caledonian Canal. It is noted that some of the more transportable brass plaques have been removed.
  - The church furnishings such as the lectern, communion set and choir stalls were gifts to the church in celebration of members of the congregation.
  - It is unclear whether many of the former contents of the building are currently in storage and will be returned in due course. These include:
    - The armchairs and bibles that were once in the front pews of the gallery reserved for the Provost and magistrates.
    - The 6 silver communion cups made by Alexander Stewart in 1802 that replaced the pewter cups now with Inverness Museum.
    - The King James Bible of 1611 that was displayed within the church until 2025; part of the Kirk Session Library that is with Inverness City Library.
    - The colours of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and the associated Martinpuich Cross.
    - Two brass trays dating from 1737.
  - The free pews on the gallery retain historic graffiti (initials etc) of social interest.
  - The association with the tower with the city and cultural importance of the bells and clock should not be forgotten in a time when everyone has access to clocks. The two bells date from 1658 and 1838. The clock is no longer present, but the faces remain. Until recently under the auspices of Highland Council, the curfew bell was rung daily, maintaining a living connection between the building and civic time keeping.
  - The church has and hopefully will continue to have an important cultural importance to Inverness in its new role.

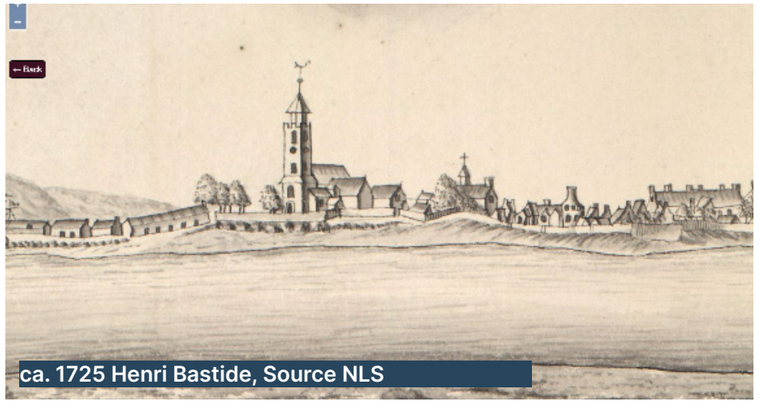
- **Architectural:**
  - The current buildings development is only partially understood and can only be revealed through detailed research and opening up/ removal of finishes to establish the previous form.
  - The box pews within both the church and gallery are an interesting survival.
  - The rebuilding of 1772 was modelled on a historic church in Edinburgh that no longer exists.
  - The various phases of redevelopment from 1877 onwards were carried out by some of the most prominent and important architects of the day in the north of Scotland at the end of the 19th century.

- **Artistic:**
  - The building's listing includes reference to stained glass by Ballantine & Gardiner, Douglas Strachan and Gordon Webster.
  - The building's organ of 1892 by Henry Willis + Sons and Henry Hilsdon is understood to be an important example.
  - The surrounding graveyard contains a fine array of funerary monuments including the Robertson Mausoleum.

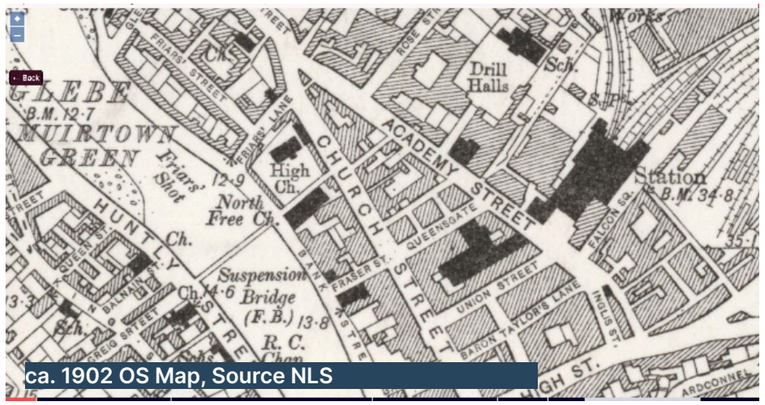
- **Archaeological:**
  - Currently minimal understanding of the Archaeology of the wider site and what if anything of the previous phases of development survives below the graveyard or current church footprint.
  - It is known that the church floor contains burials and grave markers.

- **The setting within Inverness:**
  - The Old High occupies a prominent site on the bank of the Ness where it forms part of a composition with the Castle, tolbooth spire and the other prominent spires arranged along the river side.
  - From the river, the Old High still clearly occupies St Michael's Mound and provides a green space within city. As such it is a significant Townscape element.

ca. 1660, James Gordon, Source NLS

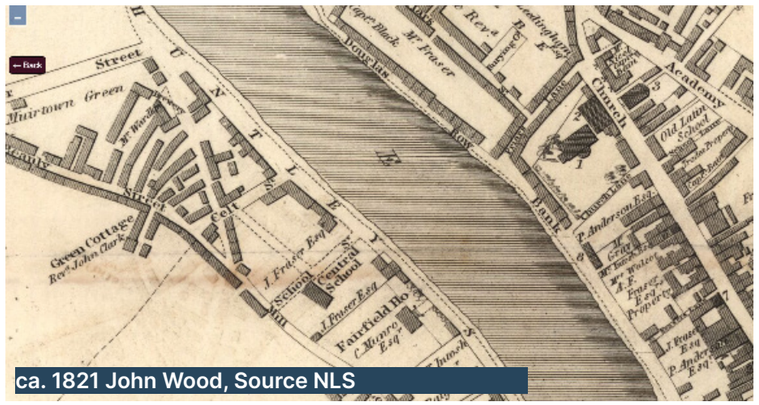


ca. 1725 Henri Bastide, Source NLS



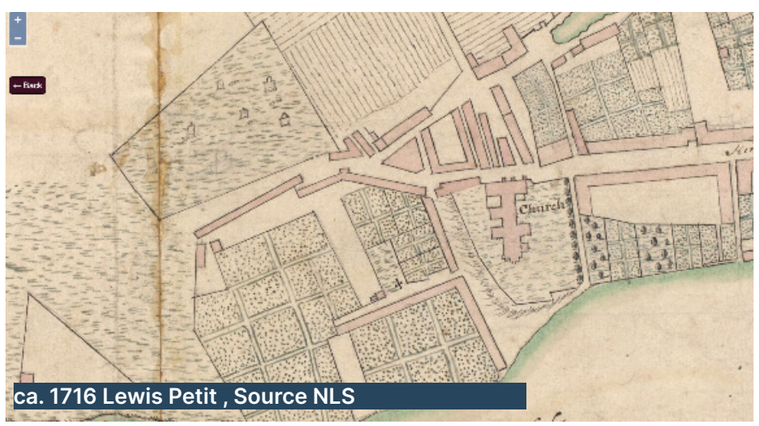
ca. 1902 OS Map, Source NLS

ca. 1714, John Slezer, Source NLS



ca. 1821 John Wood, Source NLS

ca. 1929 OS Map, Source NLS



ca. 1716 Lewis Petit , Source NLS

ca. 1868 OS Map, Source NLS

Drawing Key:

BLUE Tower generally thought to be 14th or 15th century at the lower two levels (up to the canted step where the tower thins) with the upper section dating from 1649 including the belcote.

BROWN: Pre-Reformation* (1560) rear wall altered on numerous occasions particularly in rebuilding of 1770-72 when it is probable the sash and case windows were added. The gallery was altered in 1877 and the wall head was rebuilt in 1899 to include corbel stones supporting new trusses. It is known that there are burials under the church floor which confirms that the footprint of the current church overlaps that of the Pre-reformation Church.

*By using the term Pre-Reformation, the records suggest there was a structure on the site from 1171 and a substantial church from 1371 but that the surviving pre-reformation church post-dates the tower base which is recognised as the oldest structure in the city. Hence there may be 15th or 16th century elements in the walls.

YELLOW: Front facade rebuilt further to the south* in 1770-72 and altered when apse and porches added in 1891 and again when the roof was altered in 1899. It is noted that the 'gothic' tracery within the arched windows on this elevation may be part of the 1891 remodelling. They do not appear consistent with the period (1772).

*There are burial slabs from at least 1621 under the south-east aisle. As burials within Scottish churches were banned in 1581, it is deduced that the facade has moved south.

YELLOW/ GREEN: The adjacent Gaelic Church was first built in 1649 so the east end could date from that point onwards as lieu of further information estimated part of the 1772 rebuild.

CYAN: the current Gaelic Church was built in 1821 so the porch between the two buildings is therefore expected to postdate this.

GREEN: Alexander William Reid remodelled the interior in 1877 including introducing new pews and changing the gallery. He may have had to alter the rear windows under the gallery to suit at this time. They have wooden 'gothic' tracery in a rectangular opening. However, the OS map of 1867 suggests the basic plan including the access arrangements and position of staircases were in place prior to this remodelling. The fact that there are doorways on the west facade at each end suggest an earlier stair arrangement accessing a different gallery.

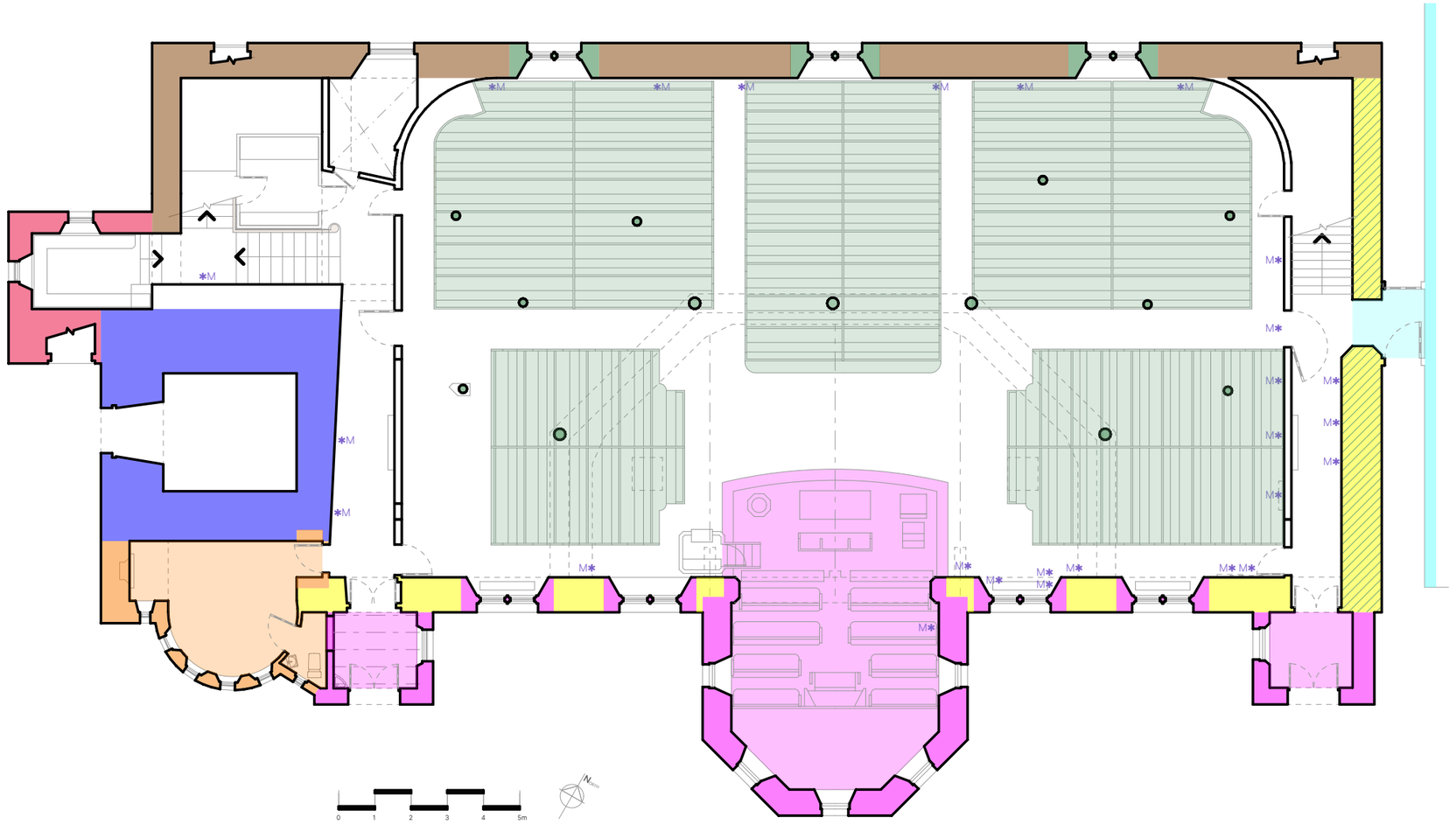
PINK: Alexander Ross and Robert John MacBeth (Ross and MacBeth) added the two current porches in 1891 and the apse (including the internal chancel arch) to suit the organ which was installed in 1892 by Henry Willis + Sons. This organ arrangement was subsequently altered in 1923 by Henry Hilsdon, Glasgow. It is unclear whether the shorter windows above the two porches date from 1891 or had already been altered to suit the older porches shown on the First Edition OS Map of 1867.

ORANGE: The vestry and the new roof including its dormers were added by William Laidlaw Carruthers in 1899. It is recorded that the roof had a ridge level fleche but no evidence survives of this.

RED: The west porch was built after 1890 and before 1912 but date unknown. It may even date from the 1891 or 1899 works but is not mentioned in any text covered in the scope of this initial study.

The document has been prepared as a high-level historical overview. In this form it is more appropriate for this feasibility study to establish significance based on information at the time of writing. As a project proceeds a more exhaustive examination of the documentary evidence, and the evidence of the building itself, may be commissioned. In this abridged form no references have been given at this stage.

Ground Floor



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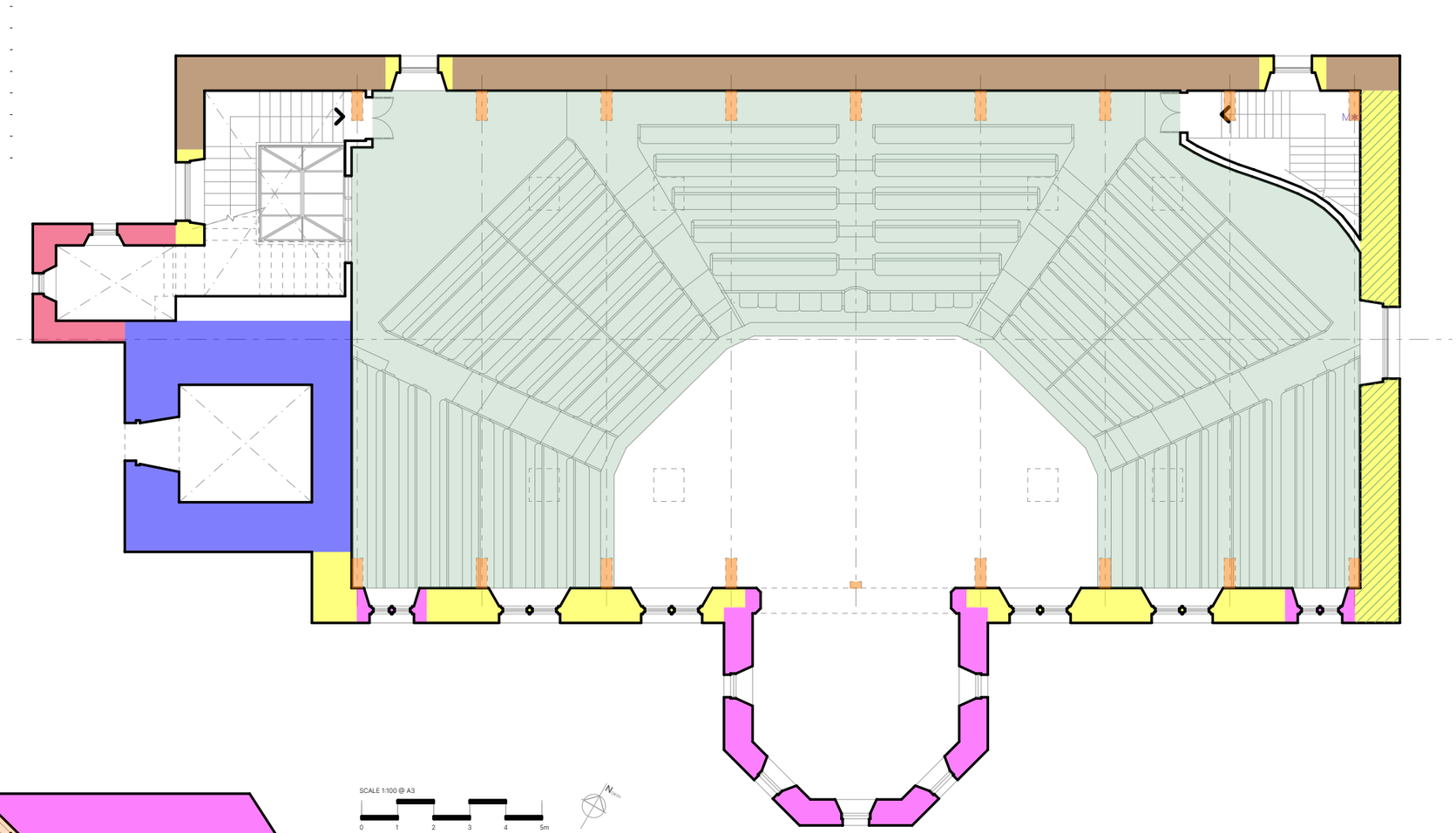
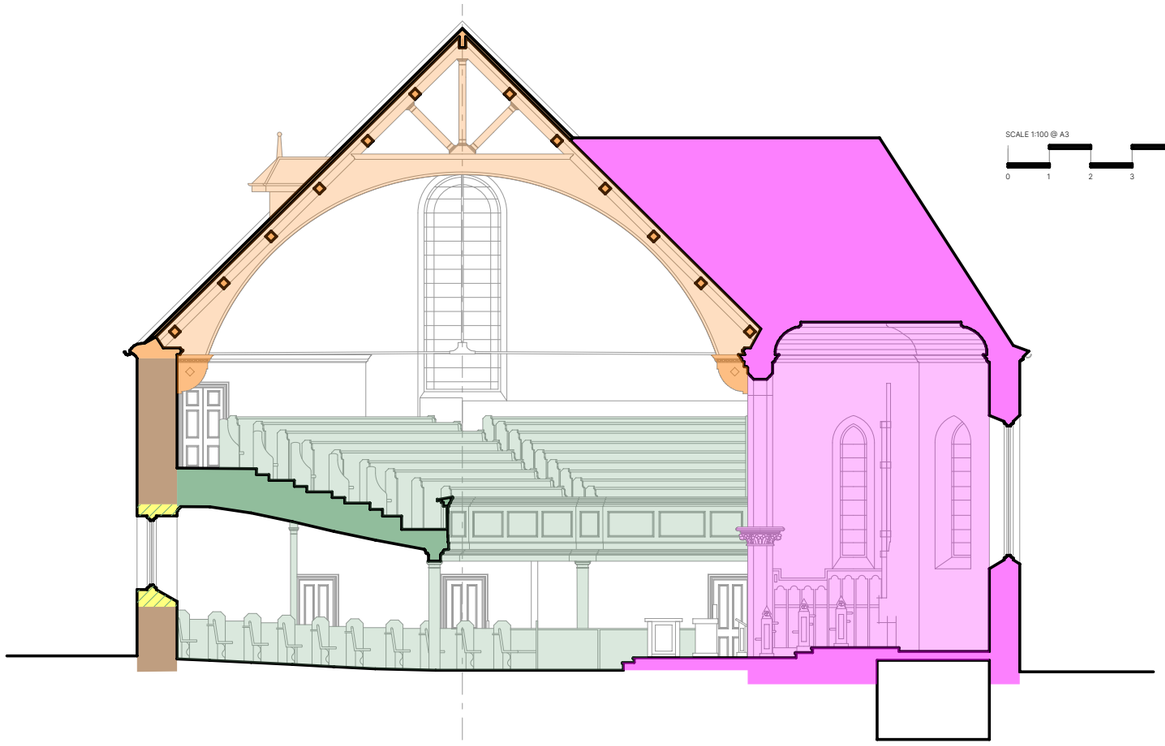
First Floor Gallery





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Cross Section

2.4 Schedule of Works & Proposed Changes

Description of Proposal: This study reimagines the Old High as a vibrant, multi-use, cultural and spiritual hub for Inverness. The vision sees it as a living gateway to the story of Inverness, a centre of interpretation, remembrance, learning and community life operating respectfully within the building's ecclesiastical, heritage and spiritual character. The operating model is a social enterprise providing tours and learning, ticketed performances and events, weddings and venue hire, retail and hospitality. As such it must provide adaptation for multi-use operation including improved accessibility, upgraded mechanical and electrical services, enhanced WCs and modest back of house storage (for furniture), kitchen, office, green room provision. The study includes two options but these share many of the same elements.

Impact on Significance:

Historic: if handled sensitively the changes envisaged should have very little effect on the historic significance of the building as described above.

Cultural: The proposals have been designed to limit the effect of the main interventions such as the introduction of the freestanding toilets and sales point on the funerary monuments etc and other internal features although the required flexibility will see some ecclesiastical items such as the communion table having to be to be stored away when the use-mode dictates the need to. It is hoped that the tower bells are brought back into operation and clock is reinstated. It is unclear but hoped that many of the objects previously within the church can be returned for safe keeping in future.

Architectural: See impact on fabric below. The church has been subject to incremental change over 3 centuries, many of these major in terms of the new apse, new gallery access, new roof, new vestry. The building is not the one unified architectural vision of a single mind. It is argued that this gives scope for change.

Artistic: the current proposals retain all the decorative windows and the organ. There should be little diminuation of the architectural setting within the context of the comments on the changes to the fabric below.

Archaeology: at a later stage a desk study is required to begin to understand the archaeology. The introduction of services, toilets etc will inevitably have implications for the archaeology that still need to be understood both inside and in relation to fabric improvements to external drainage etc. It is a given that archaeological supervision and research will be part of any consent process.

Impact on Fabric:

The fabric alterations will inevitably result in historic fabric being removed and HES in its Guidance on the Principles of Listed Building Consent set out how change should be considered. It both recognises that a building's special interest can be lost through inappropriate alteration but recognises that the building can equally be lost if alteration is unduly constrained and encourages compatible new use and sensitive and informed change.

Flexible space, Access and Accessibility

1. Constraint: The box pews (predominantly part of the Alexander William Reid remodelling of the interior in 1877) significantly constrain the extent of flexible space for a wider variety of functions such as community events, performances, or multi-purpose gatherings. Furthermore the current arrangements, in part, place a degree of restriction on circulation patterns and equality of access.

2. Consideration: The historic box pews are not only part of the historic fabric, they contribute significantly to the reading of the building heritage. Intrinsically part of the character, careful consideration has been given to the extent of the adaptation of pews when seeking to improve the Church's use potential.

3. In the two options, the immediate appearance of the ecclesiastical space has been considered, opening up and enlarging the central 'performance' space to counter a lack of accessibility due to the retention of the raised marble dais in front of the organ and removing pews for access while still retaining the impression of pews on 3 sides of the ground floor.

Provision of sanitary accommodation tea points and storage.

1. Constraint: The limited sanitary provision significantly constrains a church's capacity to host community events, performances, and/or multi-purpose gatherings, potentially limiting the scale and duration of events.

2. Consideration: There is at present only one WC in the church and its access is through the Vestry. This vestry design is a highly choreographed design by the architect William Laidlaw Carruthers but this strong semi-circular form is not diminished by altering the access to the public corridor side.

3. The two options show differing approaches to introducing aesthetically 'free-standing 'pods under the balcony within the main church volume. One option pulls this to the front of the church; the other sets them in the rear corners. Both involve the loss of box pews but respect the current box pew layout. The first lacks the symmetry inherent in the church volume but is more practical. The second could subjectively be argued is less intrusive.

Audio/Visual venue facilities

1. Constraint: The traditional gallery layout does not offer clear sight lines to the dais (or stage when considering the church as a multipurpose community venue).

2. Consideration: Without a dedicated projection system, the gallery may struggle to support contemporary performances, public programs, or multi-functional gatherings. This limits the viability and sustainability of the (re)use strategy, as the space cannot fully meet modern technical demands.

Vestry

1. Constraint: The existing vestry designed in 1899 has a strong form both inside and out.

2. In option 1, this is shown as a radiused kitchen in front of the windows. It is believed that if detailed as a piece of furniture, the overall volume of the original architectural composition can be maintained.

Fire Strategy

1. Constraint: The current design does not fully meet more modern (stringent) standards for escape

2. Consideration: In this initial feasibility stage context, and from a generalist perspective, it is observed that the gallery escape routes merge with the ground floor escape and there may be scope to balance the need for betterment in this regard within the context of limited and sensitive fabric intervention. At this stage, and subject to a Fire Engineering review, the options show recessed lobbies to prevent fire escape doors from the ground floor spaces opening across escape routes used by visitors on the galleries. In one instance this will impact on a wall plaque depending on how the final detailing is resolved.

The Counting House

1. Constraint: The existing counting house is an unusual top lit space within the stairwell. We do not see its use as a volunteer base or interpretation space impacting on the architectural quality.

Impact on Setting: The current proposal will have very limited impact on the setting of the building in its graveyard. It is hoped that the fabric improvements will have a positive contribution to the townscape in terms of appearance.

2.5 Mitigation and Justification

- How have proposals been designed to minimize harm?
    - The current proposals are limited in scope. They have explicitly been designed to try to retain the ecclesiastical feel of the nave and limit change at balcony level, avoiding any subdivision of this upper space that might disguise parts of the trussed roof. Similarly, the introduction of structures under the balcony would be intended to include recessed planes at their junctions with existing fabric to suggest that they are/ would appear to be free standing structures.
    - External fabric repairs will be undertaken in like for like materials following best conservation practice.
    - No work will be undertaken until a better understanding of the buildings history and archaeology are known to avoid unintended harm.

- If harm is caused, why is it justified? (e.g., securing the future of the building).
    - Inevitably equipping the building for what we believe is a compatible new use will involve change but this is to be understood in the context of securing beneficial continued use for a category A listed building of large importance to Inverness.

- Are there any public benefits? (e.g., removing later, unsympathetic alterations).
    - The public benefits include a wider audience to this recently underused heritage asset.
    - Accessible access to the building.
    - Increased understanding of the asset and its role in Inverness.
    - The Old High is already a tourist destination and a viewpoint within the townscape of inverness. Reintroducing public access is a contribution to the overall strategy for the city.
    - Only this sympathetic new use will be able to allow the match funding and in future generate the funds necessary to carry out the required maintenance to this important Inverness landmark.

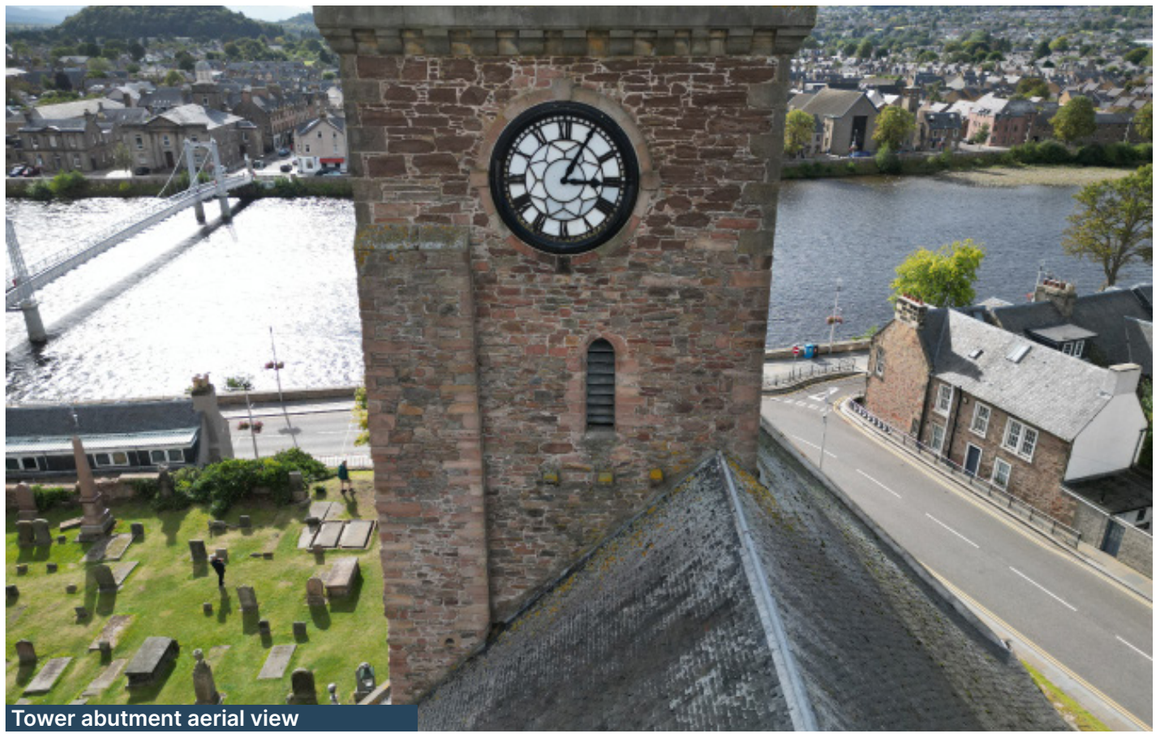
3.0

Building Fabric Condition Assessment

3.1 Refer to the information contained in the document ‘Old High Inverness: Fabric Condition Survey (LDN Architects + McLeod & Aitkin)’

Aerial view

View of apse with organ



Tower abutment aerial view

View of first floor gallery

4.0

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

4.1 Summary

4.1 For implementation & alignment with the Strategic Outline Case items:

- *2.9 Consultation Ideas*
- *3.5 Stakeholders and Partnership Potential*
- *7.9 Stakeholder, Community and Joint Working*

Furthermore, and by way of further context the preliminary consultation on the future of The Old High has included:

Highland Council, HIE (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), High Life Highland, ICHT (Inverness City Heritage Trust), Society of Antiquaries, Culturlann, Coronach, MacGregors Bar, Leakey's Bookshop, NLHF (National Lottery Heritage Funding), St Stephens & Old High (Church of Scotland), Crown and City Centre Community Council

5.0

Architectural Strategy and Approach

5.1 Existing Use Constraints

Statements on the challenges to a new or reimagined use the existing fabric may pose are replicated (and/or adapted in alignment with the SOC) from the earlier section 'Impact on Fabric' for heritage considerations. The purpose of (re) recording these in the Architectural Strategy and Approach section of this report is to group them in distinct building enhancement headings which can be demonstrate in their relevancy to each of the architectural interventions in 5.2 Feasibility Options.

Flexible space, Access and Accessibility

Constraint: The box pews (predominantly part of the Alexander William Reid remodelling of the interior in 1877) significantly constrain the extent of flexible space for a wider variety of functions such as community events, performances, or multi-purpose gatherings. Furthermore the current arrangements, in part, place a degree of restriction on circulation patterns and equality of access.

Consideration: The historic box pews are not only part of the historic fabric, they contribute significantly to the reading of the building heritage. Intrinsically part of the character, careful consideration is required to evaluate any adaptation of pews when seeking to improve the Church's use potential.

Provision of sanitary accommodation (welfare provision)

Constraint: The limited sanitary provision significantly constrains a church's capacity to host community events, performances, and/or multi-purpose gatherings, potentially limiting the scale and duration of events.

Consideration: There is at present only one WC in the church and its access is through the Vestry. This vestry design is a highly choreographed design by the architect William Laidlaw Carruthers but this strong semi-circular form is not diminished by altering the access to the public corridor side.

Facilities complementing light touch hospitality – (tea point, catering base, sales point)

Constraint: Limited facilities to support light-touch hospitality - such as a tea point / basic catering base and small sales point - constrain the viability and quality of events in the envisaged use of the church as a sustainable multi-purpose community venue.

Consideration: Without the introduction of key complementary amenities, hosting receptions, interval refreshments, community markets, or ticketed performances becomes operationally more difficult, reducing revenue potential, dwell time, and overall user experience.

Audio/Visual venue facilities

Constraint: The traditional gallery layout does not offer clear sight lines to the dais (or stage when considering the church as a multipurpose community venue).

Consideration: Without a dedicated projection system, the gallery may struggle to support contemporary performances, public programs, or multi-functional gatherings. This limits the viability and sustainability of the reuse strategy, as the space cannot fully meet modern technical demands.

Building escape (fire escape strategy)

Constraint: The current design does not fully meet more modern (stringent) standards for escape

Consideration: In this initial feasibility stage context, and from a generalist perspective, it is observed that the gallery escape routes merge with the ground floor escape and there may be scope to balance the need for betterment in this regard within the context of limited and sensitive fabric intervention. At this stage, and subject to a Fire Engineering review, the options show recessed lobbies to prevent fire escape doors from the ground floor spaces opening across escape routes used by visitors on the galleries. In one instance this will impact on a wall plaque depending on how the final detailing is resolved.

5.2 Feasibility Options

Methodology – itemised approach to enhance the old high by addressing the identified building use constraints

In the exploration of design options, two variations of a core scheme are described in this report. The architectural interventions are specifically aligned to address one or more of the identified building use constraints. It is envisaged that a selection of these interventions may be assessed, explored and developed and categorised to align with aspiration of the SOC stages (Phase 1 – Immediate Stabilisation, Phase 2 – Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme, Phase 3 – Capital Investment and Adaptation, Phase 4 – Steady-State Operation) and the 'Emerging Preferred Way Forward (For Further Development)' strategy for calibrated multi-use:

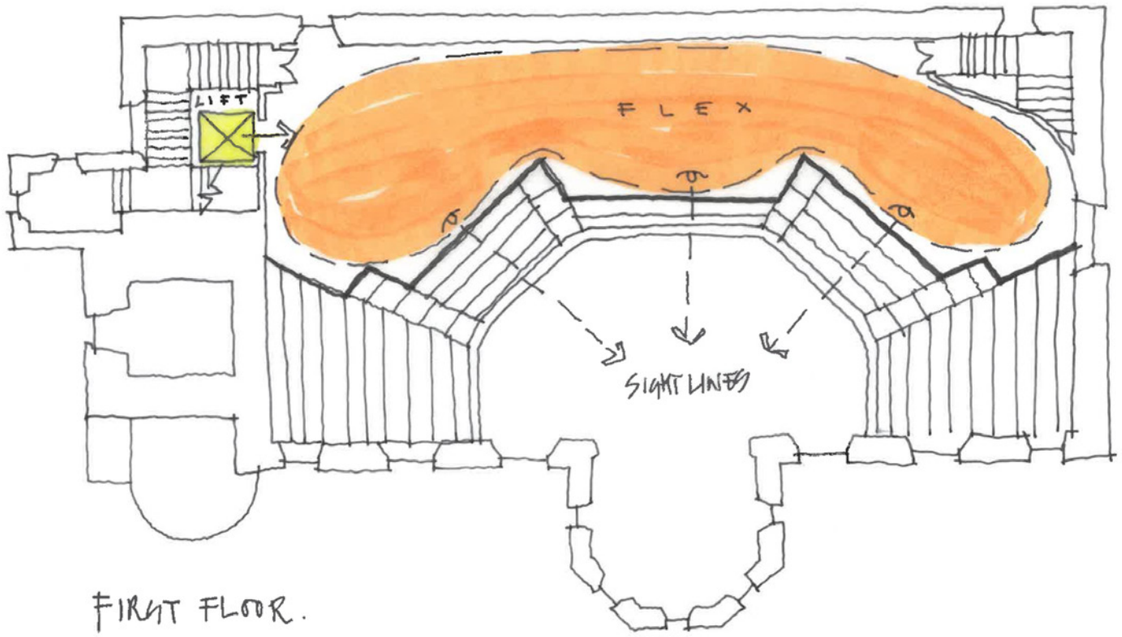
'5.8 Emerging Preferred Way Forward (for Further Development)

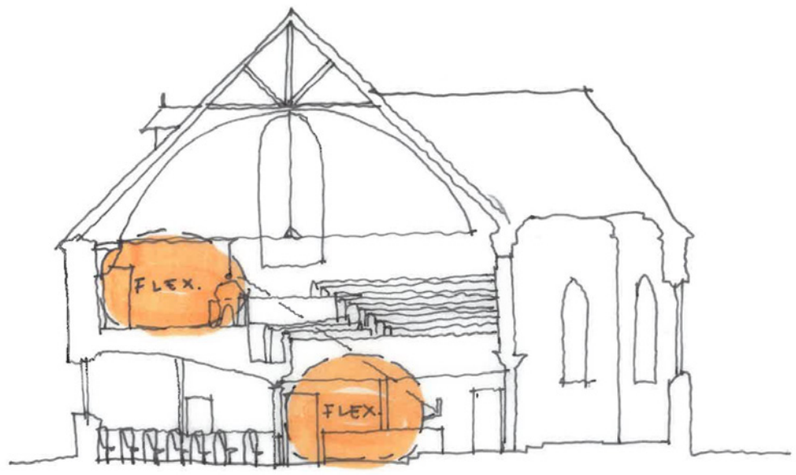
5.8.1 At SOC stage, the recommended strategic direction is to:

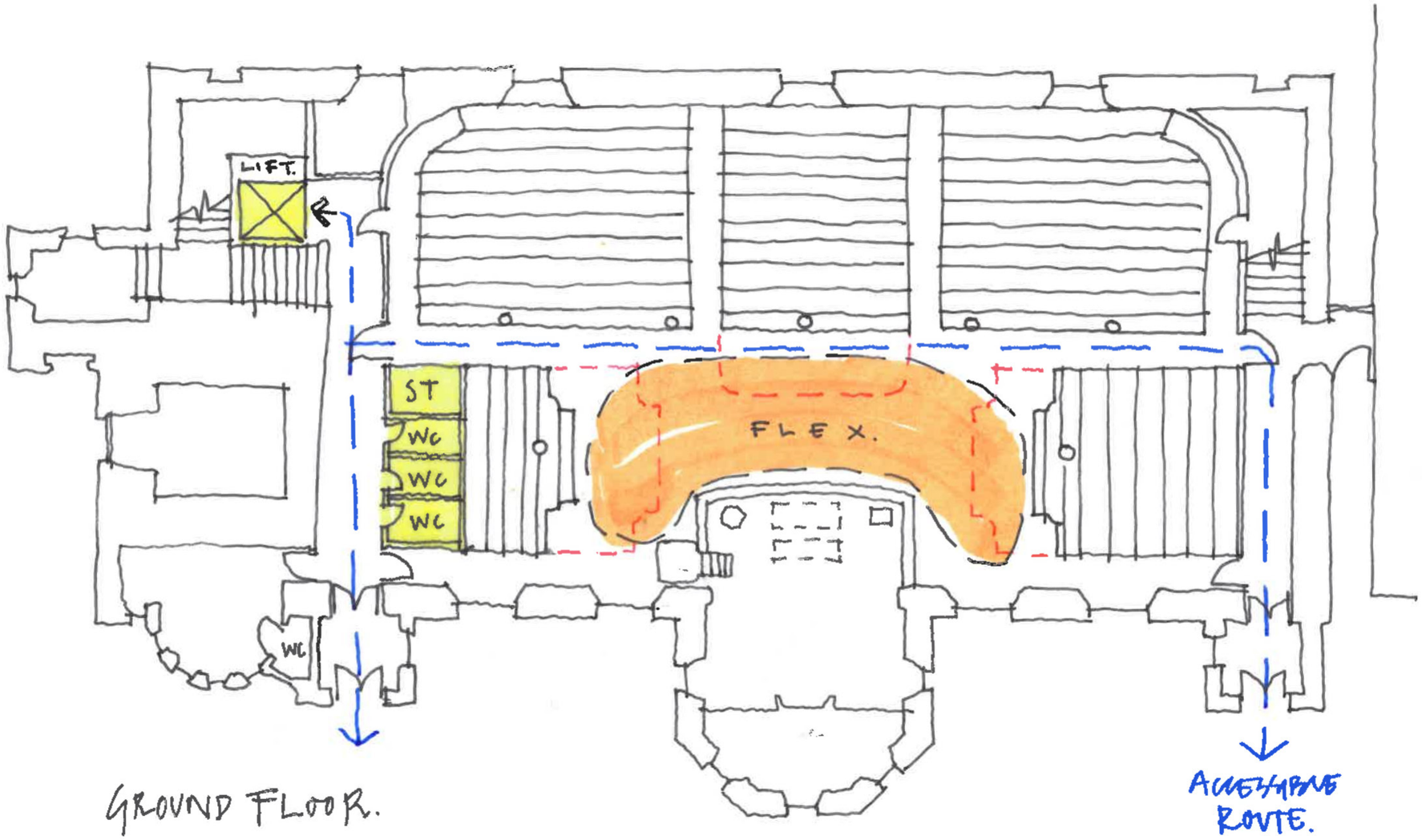
- **Pursue a blended model closest to Option 2**, *anchored in:*
  - *A robust* **heritage interpretation and performance core;**
  - *A clearly defined* **21st-century "sang scuil"** *role;*
  - *Integrated but carefully scaled* **hospitality and retail functions;**
  - *A measured level of* **weddings and private events** *as part of the income mix, governed by strict guidelines.*
- *Use the* **two-year activation phase** *explicitly to:*
  - *Test the balance between public/open, cultural, and private/commercial use;*
  - *Gather data on spend, attendance, and community sentiment;*
  - *Refine operating assumptions and room-use policies;*
  - *Develop and trial partnership models (e.g. with an F&B operator, promoters, festivals).*

5.8.2 The preferred way forward is not a rigid blueprint, but a **strategy for calibrated multi-use**, *guided by clear values:*

- *Heritage and spiritual* **respect** *as the primary requirement;*
- *Cultural and community* **purpose** *as an important secondary requirement;*
- *Commercial activity as an* **enabler**, *not the driver.'*







Preliminary sketches
Hand sketches capturing the first exploration of the brief. These were presented to obtain feedback and gauge opinion. Although these are now superseded, they retain many of the key principles explored in the detailed internventions overleaf

Architectural Interventions

Intervention 1: **New access to existing WC**

Existing constraints eased:

- **Provision of sanitary accommodation**
- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- Flexible space, **Access and Accessibility**

Opportunity identified: Access from west porch to the existing WC to provide greater convenience and public access. Improved flexibility of use of the vestry space as it no longer has a lobby function to the WC.

Preliminary design aim: Alterations envisaged to be clearly distinguished as a new opening. Existing opening on vestry side existing door retained and fixed in position, on WC side panelling to match existing.

Intervention 2(a): **Existing Vestry refurbished** (Option 1)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: This space to offer a kitchen and meeting space for the building management team. Improved flexibility of use of the vestry space as it no longer has a lobby function to the WC.

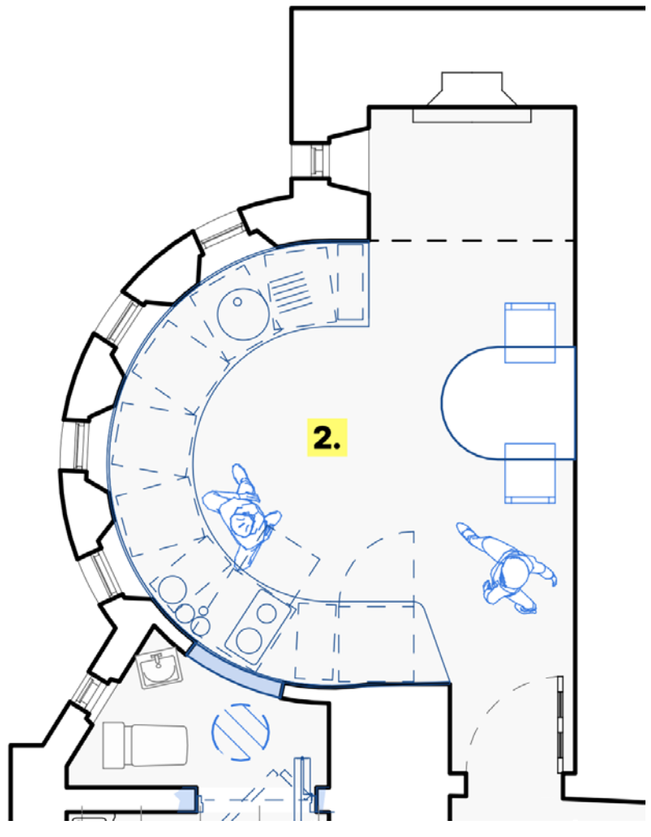
Preliminary design aim: Kitchen installation envisaged to be clearly distinguished as new, while complementary to the space. Existing opening on infilled on vestry side with panelling to match existing.

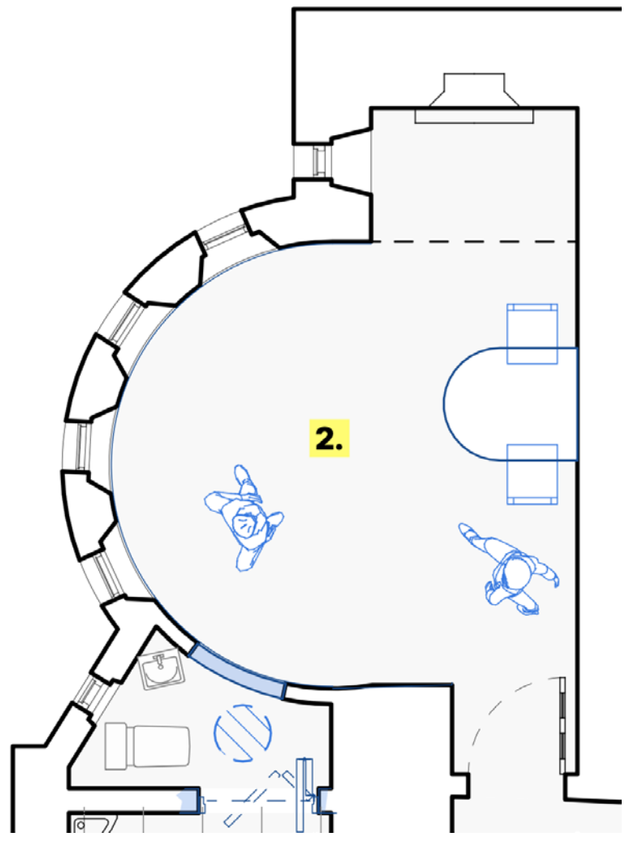
Intervention 2(b): **Existing Vestry refurbished** (Option 2)
Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: This space to offer a quiet room as part of pilgrimage and can be flexibly used. Further flexibility improved as the space no longer has a lobby function to the WC.

Preliminary design aim: Kitchen installation envisaged to be clearly distinguished as new, while complementary to the space. Existing opening on infilled on vestry side with panelling to match existing.





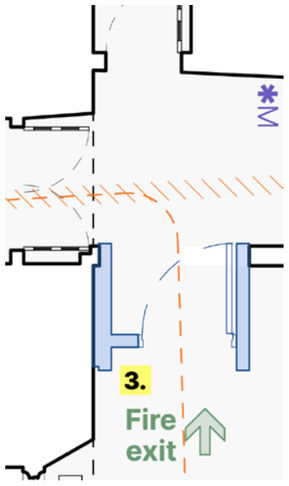
Intervention 3: **New access doors formed**

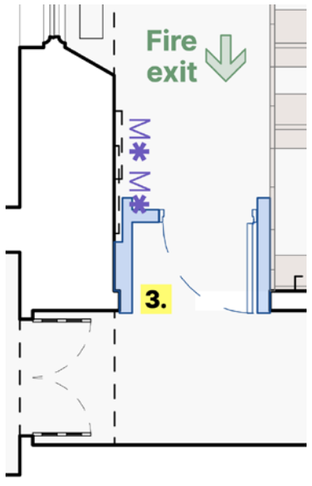
Existing constraints eased:

- **Building escape**
- Flexible space, **Access and Accessibility**

Opportunity: New access and escape doors allow more generous circulation and to ensure that these doors do not impinge the emergency escape route from gallery above.

Preliminary design aim: The portal surround structure to allow the offset in the door position from the existing internal partition and express a clear delineation between new and old.





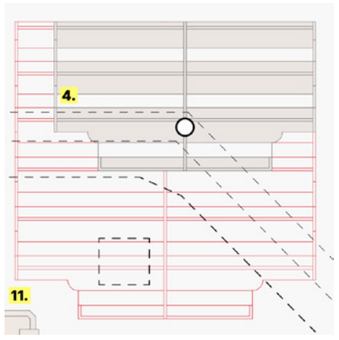
Intervention 4: **Existing box pews reconfigured on axis with gallery columns**

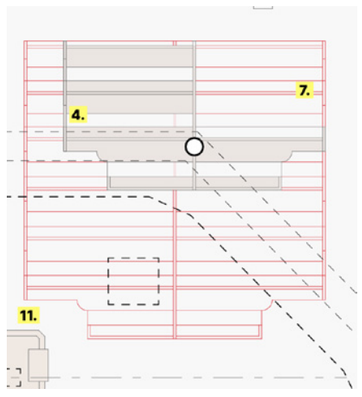
Existing constraints eased:

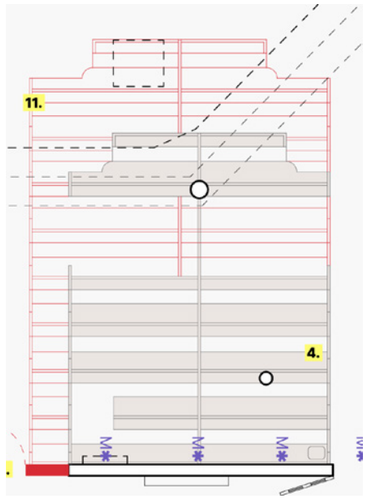
- Flexible space, **Access and Accessibility**
- **Building escape**

Opportunity: Box pews reduced in width to form more generous circulation. Coupled with the new access doors (3.) this realignment creates an (improved) ground floor public circulation axis in proximity with the east and west entrance porches. To the east bank, two pews are reconfigured into one enlarged space to facilitate the integration of accessible seating spaces.

Preliminary design aim: Where historic pews are altered, fabric no longer in use is to be recorded, set aside and retained to ensure alterations are reversible in so far as can be practicable.







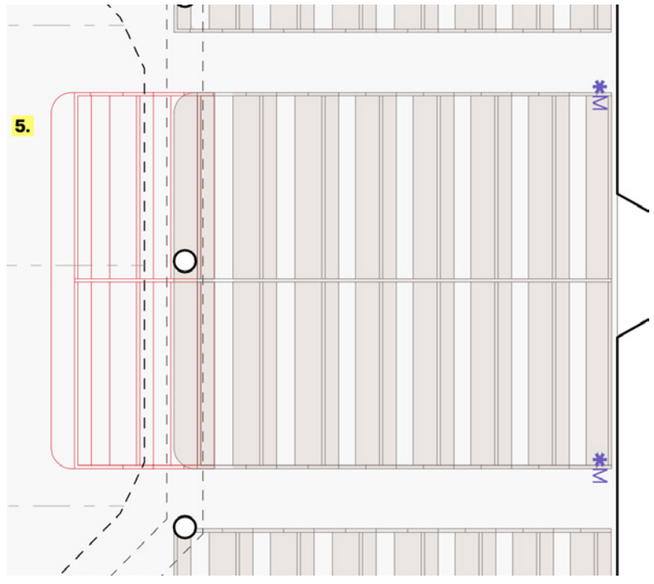
Intervention 5: **Existing flexible space enlarged**

Existing constraints eased:

o Flexible space, **Access and Accessibility**

Opportunity: Central floor space in front of Dias envisioned to provide greater flexibility to accommodate different modes of use. To create this, the alteration of the north, east and west pews is required.

Preliminary design aim: See previous note on item (4.) on the importance of the future ability to reverse fabric changes (e.g. record, set aside and retain).



Intervention 6: **New accessible and unisex WC accommodation** (Option 1 and 2 explore different locations)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Provision of sanitary accommodation**
- Flexible space, Access and **Accessibility**

Opportunity: Located in relative proximity with the existing WC drainage arrangement. These new facilities can be used independently of an event or ceremony taking place in the main body of the church. The footprint identified seeks to identify a space which aligns with the width/ rhythm of a bank of pews and limits the removal of pews.

Preliminary design aim: The material design of new fabric will need to be sensitive and considered in reverence to the historical significance, character and composition of the church interior. For example, partitions may be panelled and/ or slatted with hardwood veneered and lipped ply to a fixed furniture level of specification, and drawing inspiration from a detailed design evaluation of the existing box pews and weighing up a sensitive level of interpretation, complement and contrast so as to enhance the character of the historic space and avoid detracting from it.

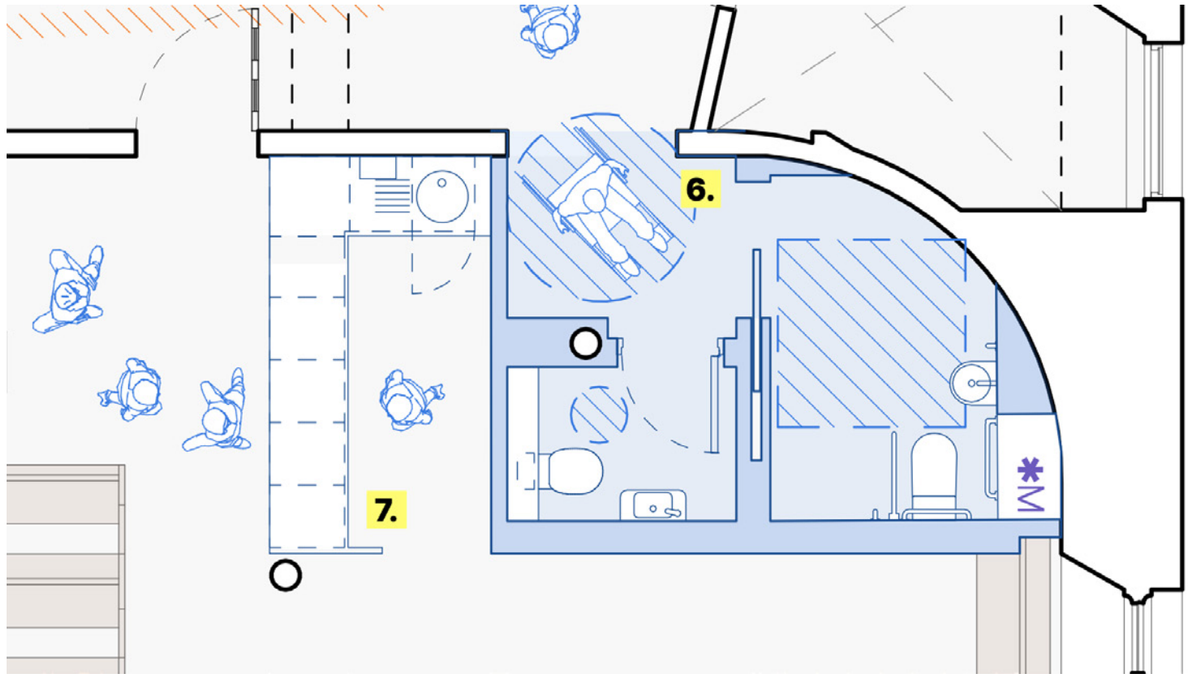
Intervention 7: **New tea prep and with flexibility for sales point** (Option 1 and 2 explore different locations)

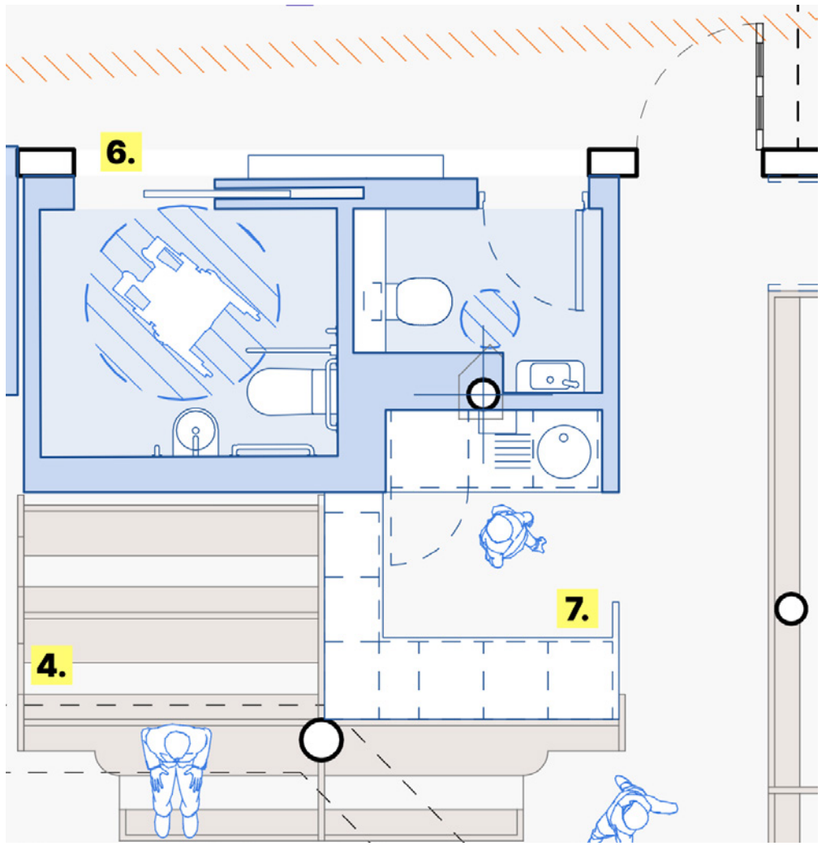
Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: To provide greater flexibility and serve different modes of use and significantly enhance the (light touch) hospitality potential.

Preliminary design aim: For material design qualitative considerations see item above.





Intervention 8(a): **Existing box pews reconfigured to store loose chairs and tables** (Option 1)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: A new chair and table store area formed in existing pews to northwest corner. This alteration to facilitate greater flexibility in the uses of the ground floor. Stackable loose chairs for audience/seminar/meeting seating or paired with tables as appropriate.

Preliminary design aim: To limit the visual impact and reading of these box pews in the space, this storage area proposes an open enclosed floor space within existing pews. See previous note (4.) on the importance of the future ability to reverse fabric changes (e.g. record, set aside and retain). In anticipation of tight space constraints and sensitive historic fabric, sacrificial bump rails to be considered in this area to protect chair stacks/tables from damaging fabric in transit.

Intervention 8(b): **Existing box pews reconfigured to store loose chairs and tables** (Option 2)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: A new chair and table store area formed in the footprint of the existing pews to northeast corner. This alteration to facilitate greater flexibility in the uses of the ground floor. Stackable loose chairs for audience/seminar/meeting seating or paired with tables as appropriate.

Preliminary design aim: See previous note (4.) on the importance of the future ability to reverse fabric changes (e.g. record, set aside and retain). For material design qualitative requirements see item 6. above.

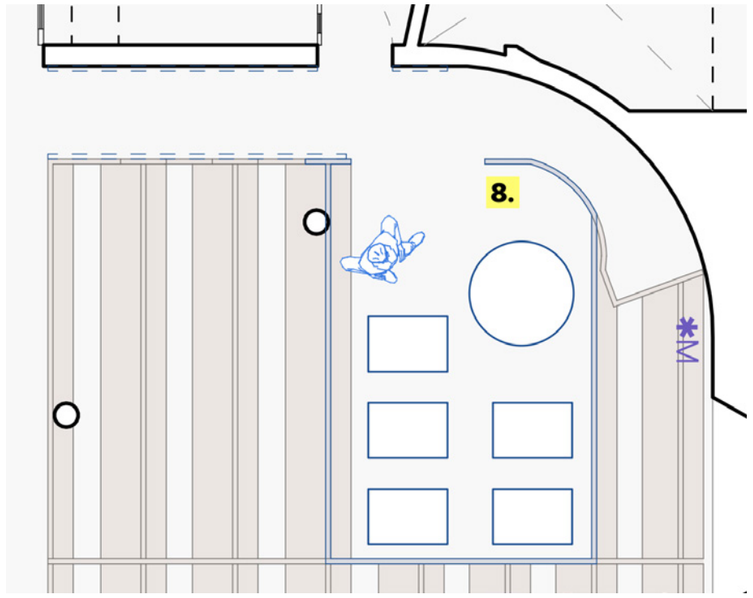
Intervention 9(a): **Existing counting house reconfigured as interpretation space** (Option 1)

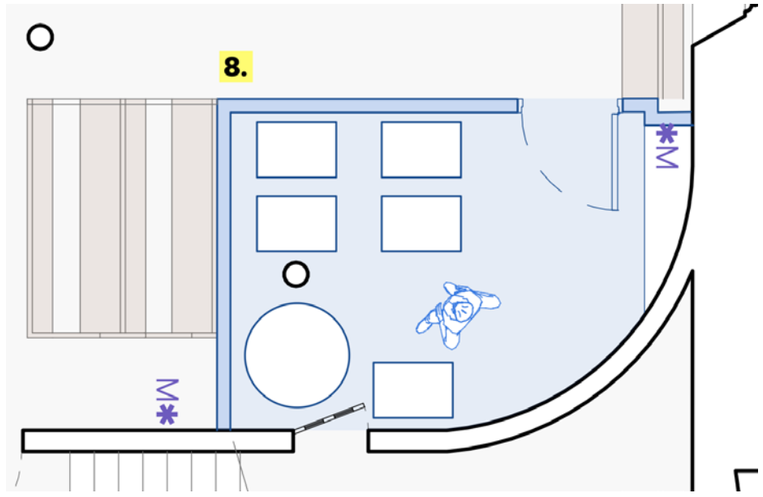
Existing constraints eased:

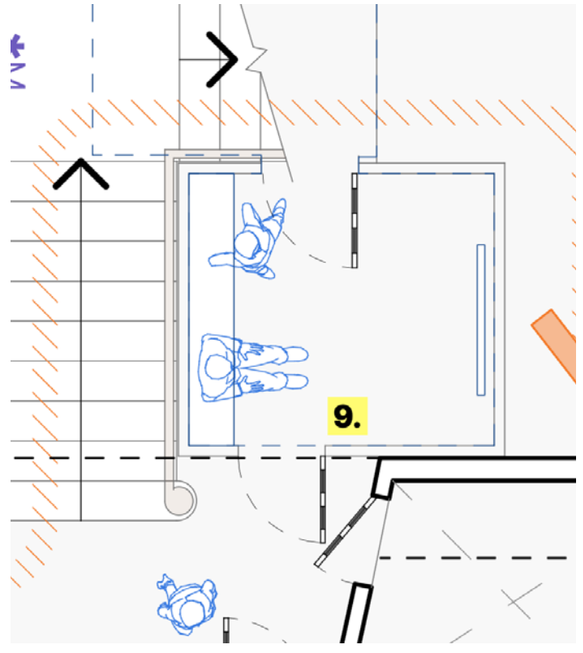
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: This internal space at the centre of the west stair to display artefacts, information boards and/or provide a small space for an interpretation video.

Preliminary design aim: Existing furniture to be recorded, set aside and retained, similar to previous note (4.)







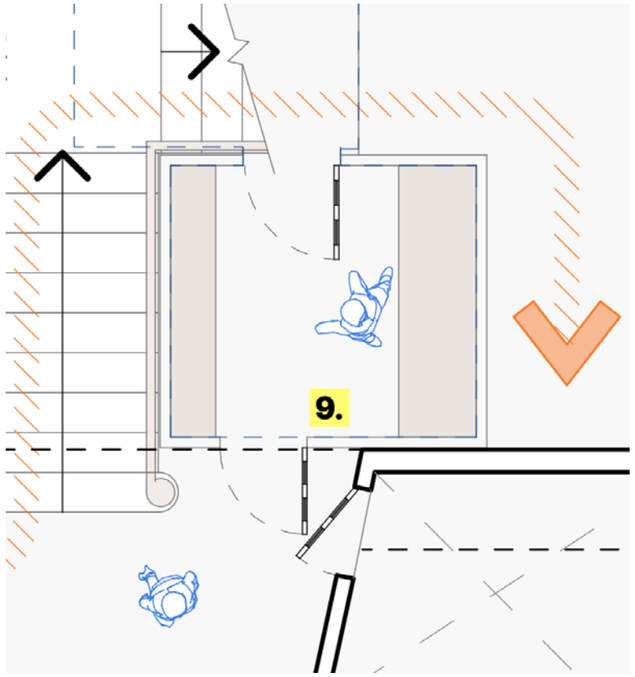
Intervention 9(b): **Existing counting house reconfigured as volunteer base** (Option 2)

Existing constraints eased:

- Facilities complementing light touch hospitality
- Flexible space, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: This internal space at the centre of the west stair to provide a small space for use as the volunteer base.

Preliminary design aim: Existing furniture retained.



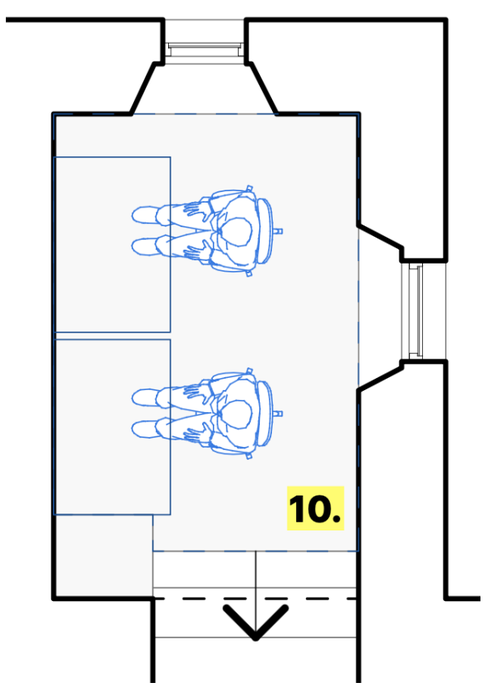
Intervention 10(a): **Existing choir assembly reconfigured as flexible office /meeting /store** (Option 1)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Facilities complementing light touch hospitality**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: The space used previously for choir robe changing/assembly to be repurposed as flexible office space for building management.

Preliminary design aim: This use takes advantage of natural light (windows have southwest and northwest aspect), however consideration is be required to manage thermal comfort in the colder months. (The current stepped arrangement does not lend itself well to a new draught proof door) A thermal fabric curtain is envisaged to mitigate heat loss. The curtain is also to provide privacy to the office space, allowing independent office use from the wider building function. Unlike the vestry (2.), this space cannot be lockable.



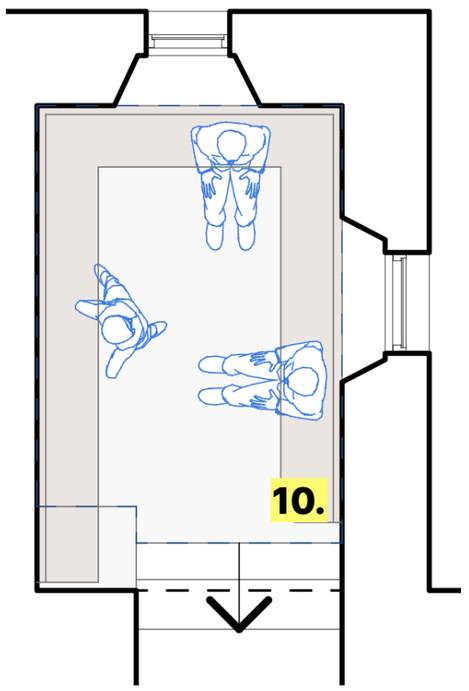
Intervention 10(b): **Existing choir assembly reconfigured as tour guide stop off space** (Option 2)

Existing constraints eased:

- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: The space used previously for choir robe changing/assembly to be repurposed as tour guide stop off space. This use takes advantage of natural light (windows have southwest and northwest aspect)

Preliminary design aim: This use takes advantage of natural light (windows have southwest and northwest aspect)



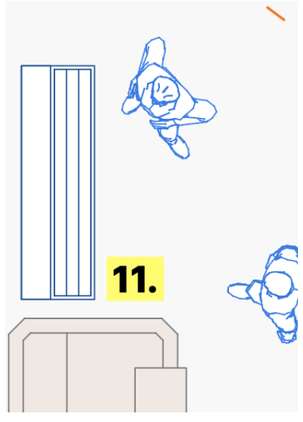
Intervention 11: **New movable display units**

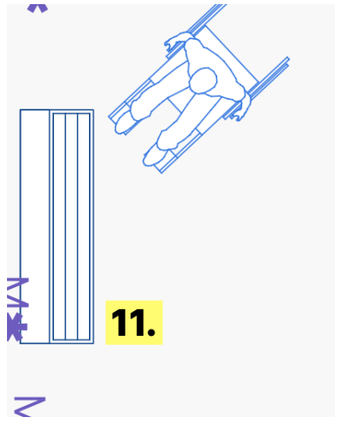
Existing constraints eased:

- **Flexible space,** Access and Accessibility
- **Audio/Visual venue facilities**

Opportunity: Interpretation display to be facilitated with movable furniture display unit(s) to suit the function of the space

Preliminary design aim: The material design of new fabric will need to be sensitive and considered in reverence to the historical significance, character and composition of the church interior. For example, movable display units may be hardwood veneered and lipped ply to a fixed furniture level of specification, and drawing inspiration from a detailed design evaluation of the existing box pews and weighing up a sensitive level of interpretation, complement and contrast so as to enhance the character of the historic space and avoid detracting from it.





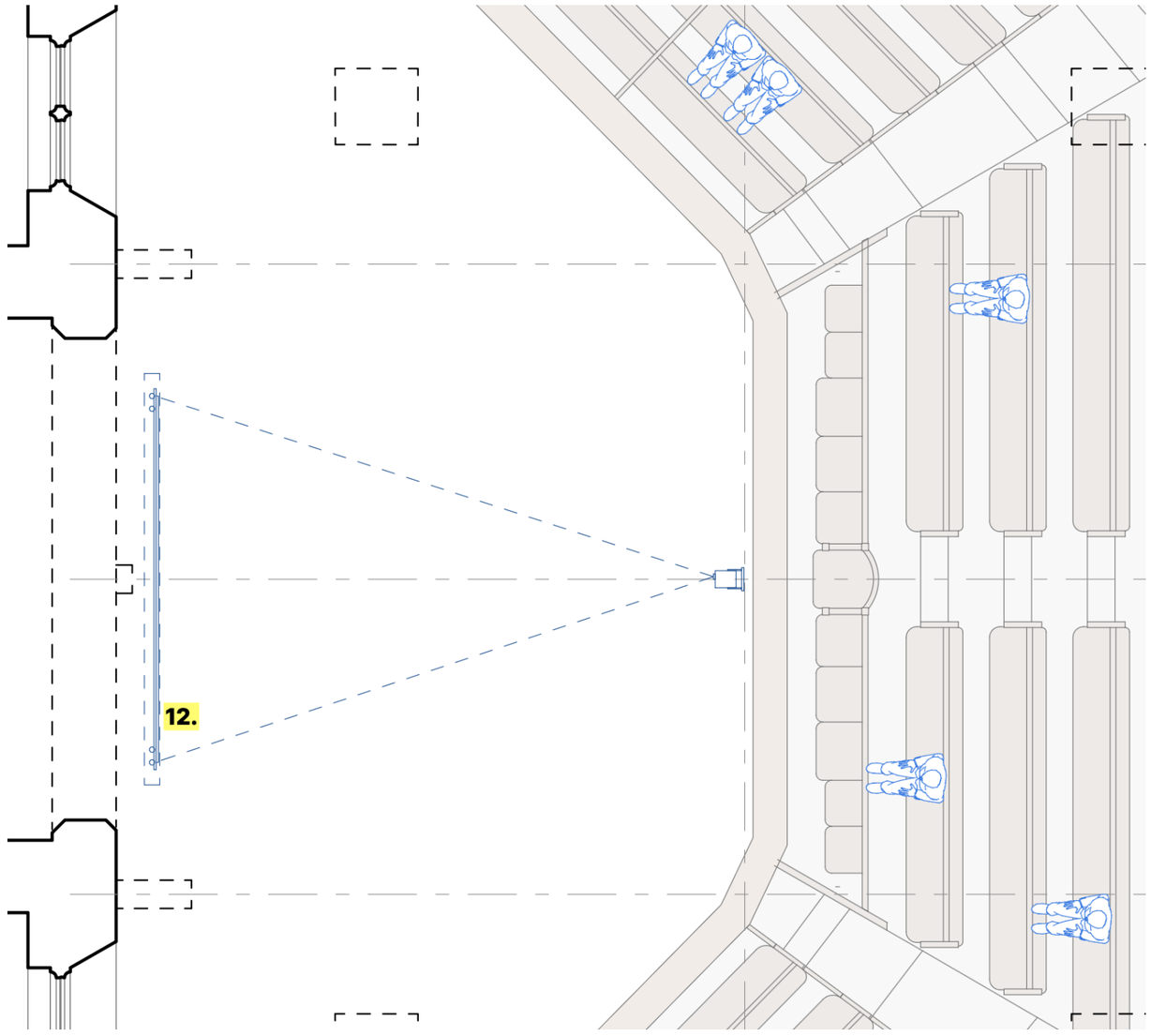
Intervention 12: **New drop-down adjustable height screen + projector**

Existing constraints eased:

- o **Audio/Visual venue facilities**
- o **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: A new screen and projector combination to give greater flexibility in different modes of use, providing a technological solution to the historic gallery sightlines constraint.

Preliminary design aim: A two-motor electric projection screen allows the independent operation of the case (housing the rolled-up screen) and the hoist suspending the case. This gives the advantage that the overall assembly can be parked/housed as a relatively modest sized bar at high level. In the location illustrated on the drawings, this is envisaged to the underside of the historic roof truss tie rods (just above the pointed arch over the apse, and in front of the diminished depth corbel stone) so as to maintain the full reading of the arch and decorative script when not in use. When in use the two-motor screen can be positioned at any level to suit the building use – ground floor only, gallery only or both. While there are naturally limitations of the pre-existing viewing angles, a new adjustable height screen is envisaged to significantly improve the versatility / flexibility of use. A new projector to be positioned in front of the existing gallery panelling and project an image approx. 200 inch size. An AV specialist or consultant can advise further should this idea be developed. For maximum effect use in the hours of natural darkness, and with internal lighting level adjustable in the church.



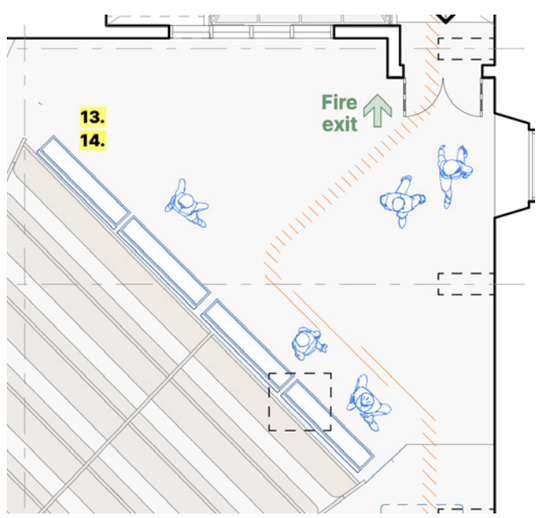
Intervention 13: **Existing gallery box pews reconfigured (at first floor)**

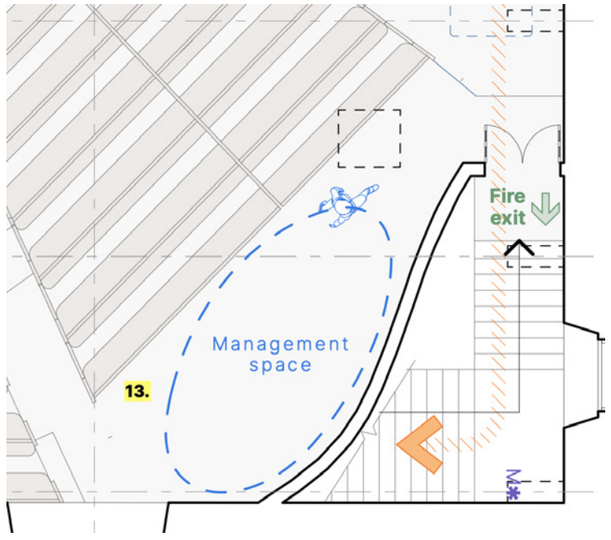
Existing constraints eased:

- **Building escape**
- **Flexible space**, Access and Accessibility

Opportunity: Removal of the rear rows to the three central bays to offer both practical and interpretive benefit.

Preliminary design aim: The rear circulation running east west is restrictive in height due to the corbel stones supporting the roof trusses. By removing the last row pews, the head height restriction can be significantly alleviated. Further removal of the back row in the pew banks set at 45 degrees to the apse to improve the existing fire escape pinch points (widths). Design development of fire strategy with specialists and authorities (Fire Engineers / Building Control / Conservation Officer) is anticipated in future. See previous note (4.) on the importance of the future ability to reverse fabric changes (e.g. record, set aside and retain).





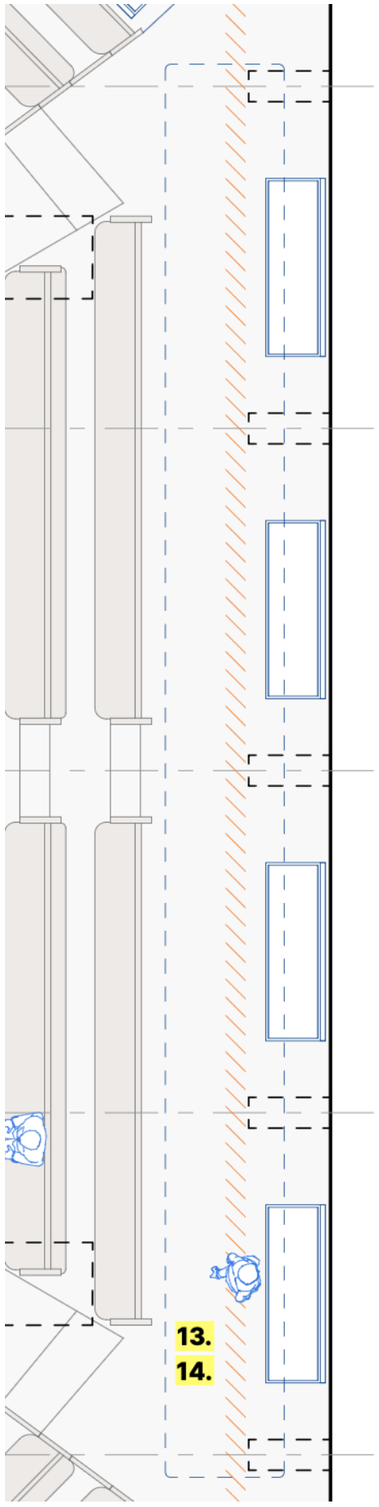
Intervention 14: **New display units (at first floor)**

Existing constraints eased:

- **Flexible space,** Access and Accessibility
- **Audio/Visual venue facilities**
- **Building escape**

Opportunity: Interpretation boards / artefacts / digitally interactive material (I-pad/tablet) to form part of a building tour, with display units following a natural sequence as the tour makes its way across the gallery.

Preliminary design aim: Strategic positioning of display units to mitigate this risk of collision with corbel stones at high level in this area. The material design of new fabric will need to be sensitive and considered in reverence to the historical significance, character and composition of the church interior. For example, movable display units may be hardwood veneered and lipped ply to a fixed furniture level of specification, and drawing inspiration from a detailed design evaluation of the existing box pews and weighing up a sensitive level of interpretation, complement and contrast so as to enhance the character of the historic space and avoid detracting from it.



5.3 Feasibility Drawings

A sample of selected drawings illustrating feasibility options 1 and 2. For full drawing set, refer to individual drawing PDFs issued alongside this report.

Option 1 Ground Floor

LDN Architects

The Treehouse, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX
T: 01463 423380
E: architects@ldn.co.uk

Project: **Old High Inverness** | Project No: **2528**

Client: **The Old High Inverness SCIO** | SOHI Save Old High Inverness

Information Set: **Feasibility Study**

Dwg No: **2528-LDN-SK-00-DGA-A-100-S2-P03**

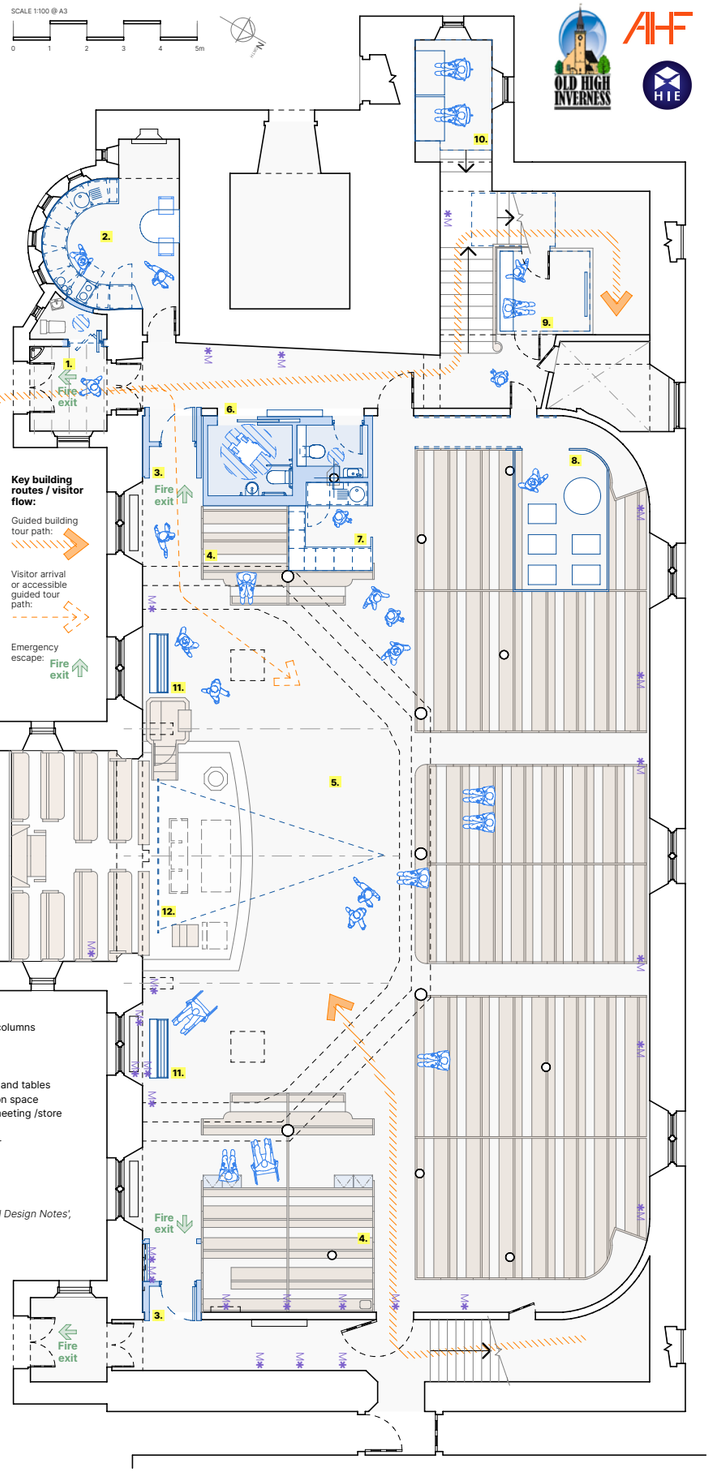
Drawing: **Option 1 - Proposed Ground Floor**

Date: 09.01.2026
Scale / Format: 1:100, @A3
Drawn By: ND on external base drawings
Reviewed By: SM

Status: **S2 - INFORMATION ISSUE** | Revision: **P03**

Revisions:

Rev	Date	By	Ref.	Change
P02	02.02.2026	ND		Visitor tour routes indicated.
P03	23.02.2026	ND		Logo update.



Drawing Key

Blue tone and lines show proposed and altered fabric

M✱ M* symbol denotes the location of wall memorial indicatively

1. New access to existing WC
2. Existing Vestry refurbished
3. New access doors formed
4. Existing box pews reconfigured on axis with gallery columns
5. Existing flexible space enlarged
6. New accessible and unisex WC accommodation
7. New tea prep and with flexibility for sales point
8. Existing box pews reconfigured to store loose chairs and tables
9. Existing counting house reconfigured as interpretation space
10. Existing choir assembly reconfig. as flexible office /meeting /store
11. New movable display units
12. New drop-down adjustable height screen + projector
13. Existing gallery box pews reconfigured (at first floor)
14. New display units (at first floor)

Refer to drawing:
'2528-LDN-SK-01-TSP-A-103-S2-P02 Option 1 - Proposed Design Notes',
for descriptions of architectural proposals.

NOTES:

DRAWING ACCURACY
These drawings are based on source drawings by others. The dimensional accuracy will need verified with an accurate measured survey as part of the design development phase (pre planning/LBC applications).

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING
The contractor shall verify all dimensions on site and report any discrepancies in writing to LDN Architects before proceeding works.

ELECTRONIC DATA ISSUE
This drawing is read only and should not be interrogated for measurement. Use only figured dimensions and levels. All dimensions are shown in millimetres unless otherwise stated. This is a CAD produced drawing - do NOT alter manually.

Option 2 Ground Floor

LDN Architects

The Treehouse, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX
T: 01463 423380
E: architects@ldn.co.uk

Project: **Old High Inverness** | Project No: **2528**

Client: **The Old High Inverness SCIO** | SOHI Save Old High Inverness

Information Set: **Feasibility Study**

Dwg No: **2528-LDN-SK-00-DGA-A-110-S2-P02**

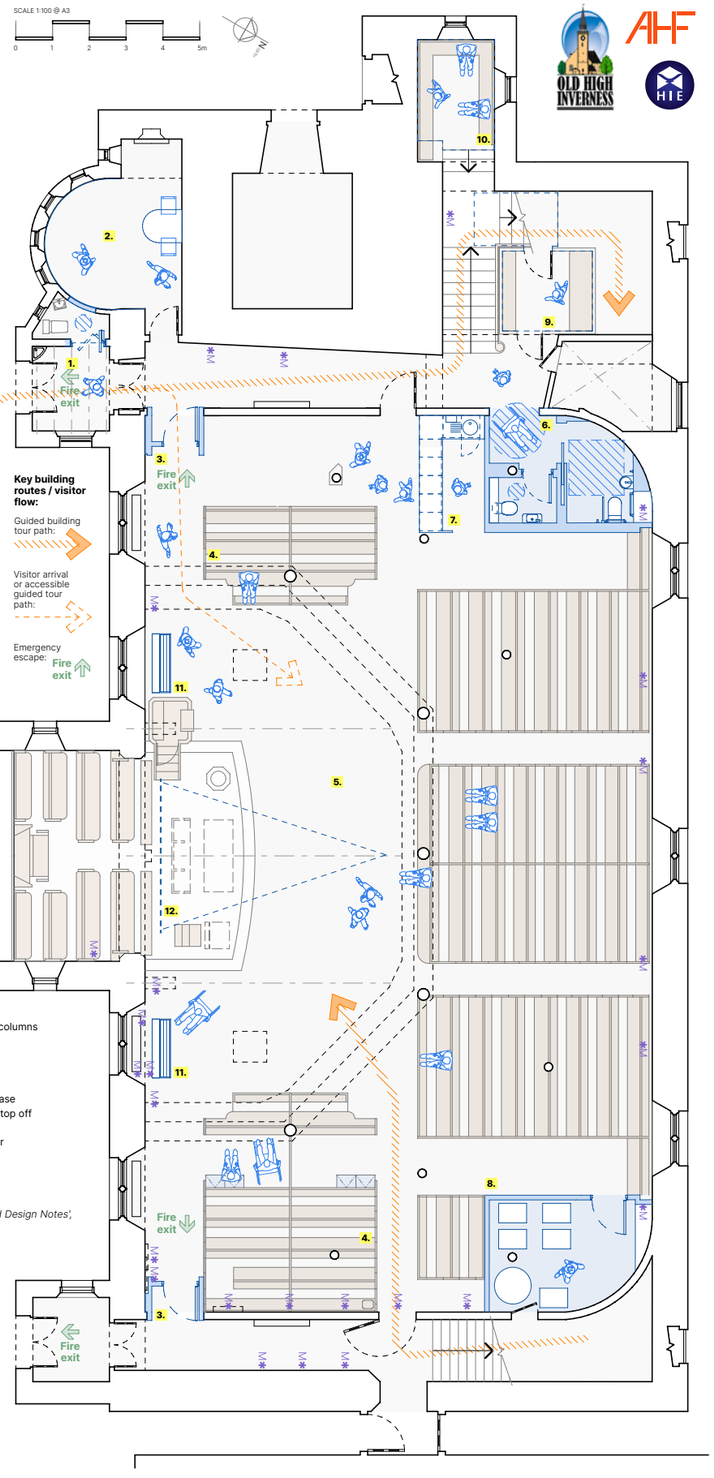
Drawing: **Option 2 - Proposed Ground Floor**

Date: 02.02.2026
Scale / Format: 1:100, @A3
Drawn By: ND on external base drawings
Reviewed By: SM

Status: **S2 - INFORMATION ISSUE** | Revision: **P02**

Revisions:

Rev	Date	By	Ref.	Change
P01	02.02.2026	ND		Feasibility of alternative locations for items 6, 7, & 8 explored.
P02	23.02.2026	ND		Logo update.



Drawing Key

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8. New loose chairs and tables store
9. Existing counting house reconfigured as volunteer base
10. Existing choir assembly reconfigured as tour guide stop off
11. New movable display units
12. New drop-down adjustable height screen + projector
13. Existing gallery box pews reconfigured (at first floor)
14. New display units (at first floor)

Refer to drawing:
'2528-LDN-SK-01-TSP-A-113-S2-P01 Option 2 - Proposed Design Notes',
for descriptions of architectural proposals.

NOTES:

DRAWING ACCURACY
These drawings are based on source drawings by others. The dimensional accuracy will need verified with an accurate measured survey as part of the design development phase (pre planning/LBC applications).

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Option 1 First Floor Gallery (**Option 2** is identical at the First Floor Gallery)

LDN Architects

The Treehouse, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX
T: 01463 423380
E: architects@ldn.co.uk

Project: **Old High Inverness** | Project No: **2528**

Client: **The Old High Inverness SCIO** | SOHI Save Old High Inverness

Information Set: **Feasibility Study**

Dwg No: **2528-LDN-SK-01-DGA-A-101-S2-P03**

Drawing: **Option 1 - Proposed First Floor Gallery Level**

Date: 09.01.2026
Scale / Format: 1:100, @A3
Drawn By: ND on external base drawings
Reviewed By: SM

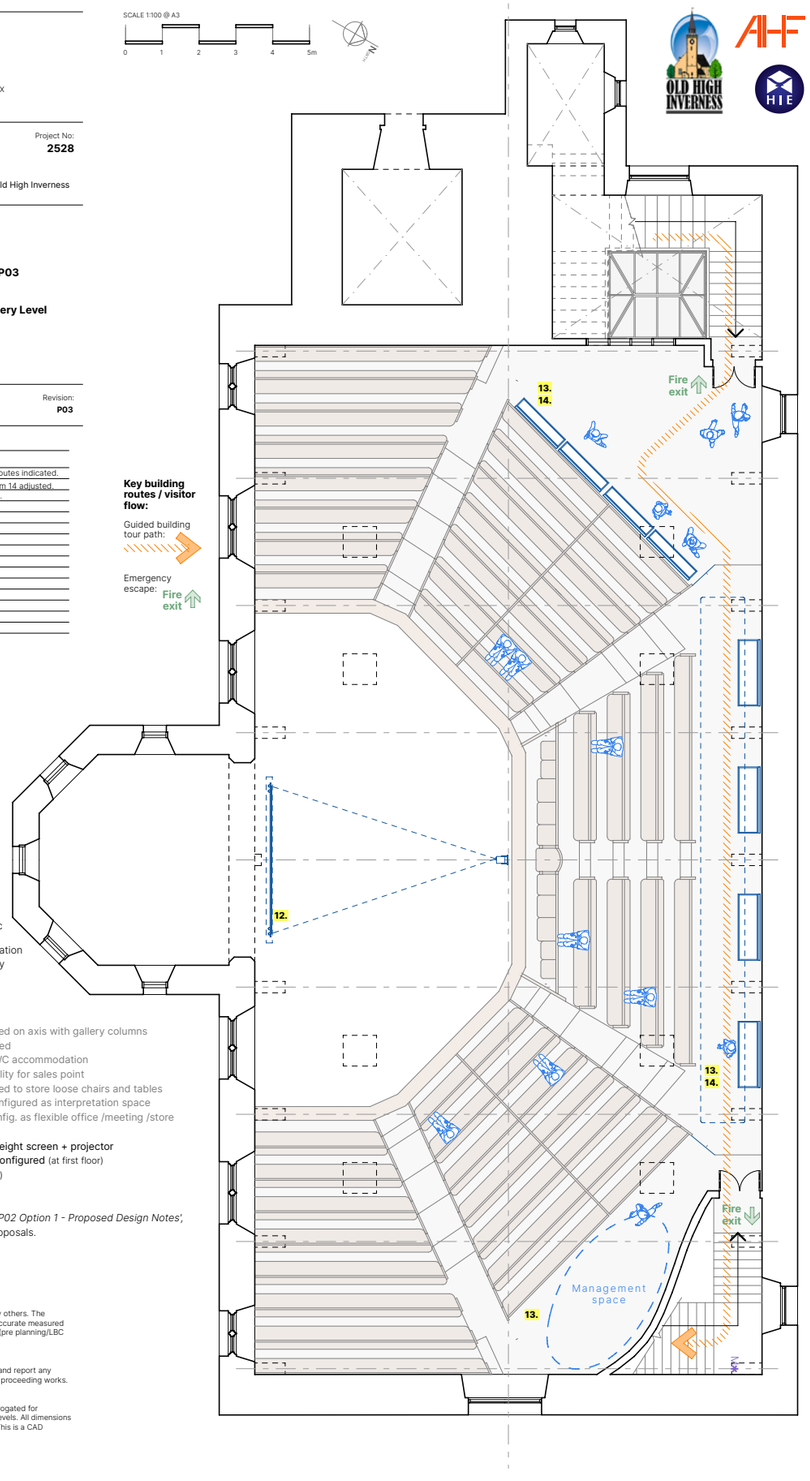
Status: **S2 - INFORMATION ISSUE** | Revision: **P03**

Revisions:

Rev	Date	By	Ref.	Change
P02	02.02.2026	ND		Visitor tour routes indicated.
				Layout of item 14 adjusted.
P03	23.02.2026	ND		Logo update.

SCALE 1:100 @ A3

0 1 2 3 4 5m



Drawing Key

Blue tone and lines show proposed and altered fabric

M* M* symbol denotes the location of wall memorial indicatively

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6. New accessible and unisex WC accommodation
7. New tea prep and with flexibility for sales point
8. Existing box pews reconfigured to store loose chairs and tables
9. Existing counting house reconfigured as interpretation space
10. Existing choir assembly reconfig. as flexible office /meeting /store
11. New movable display units
12. **New drop-down adjustable height screen + projector**
13. **Existing gallery box pews reconfigured** (at first floor)
14. **New display units** (at first floor)

Refer to drawing:
'2528-LDN-SK-01-TSP-A-103-S2-P02 Option 1 - Proposed Design Notes',
for descriptions of architectural proposals.

NOTES:

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Option 1 Section

LDN Architects

The Treehouse, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX
T: 01463 423380
E: architects@ldn.co.uk

Project:
Old High Inverness Project No: **2528**

Client:
The Old High Inverness SCIO | SOHI Save Old High Inverness

Information Set:
Feasibility Study

Dwg No:
2528-LDN-SK-01-DSE-A-102-S2-P03

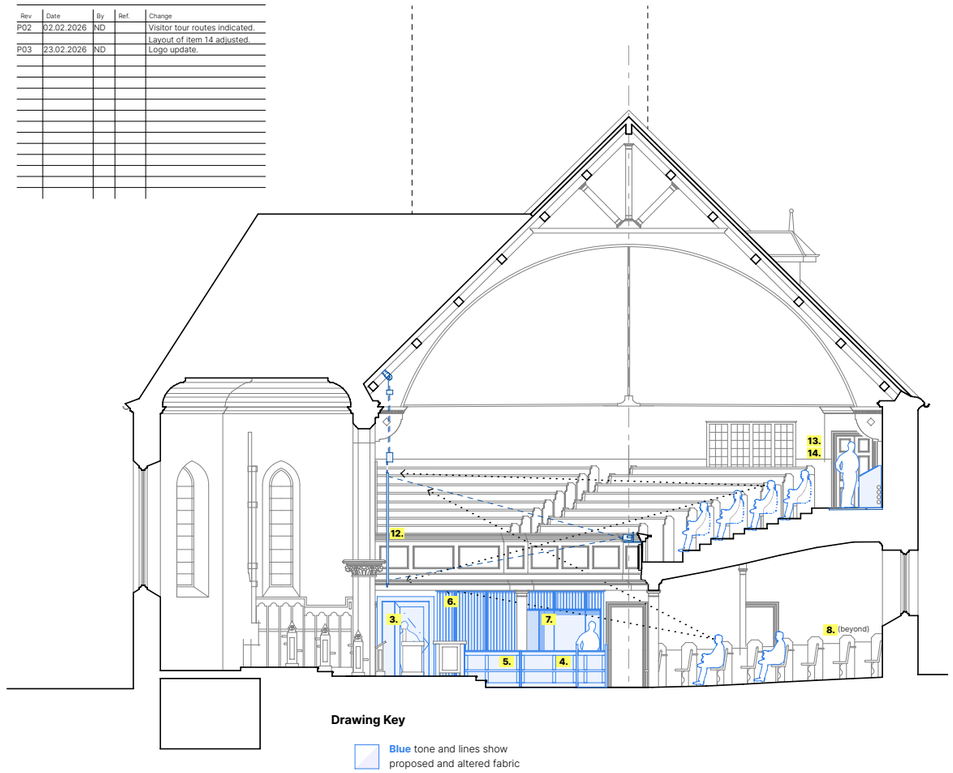
Drawing:
Option 1 - Proposed Section Looking West

Date: 09.01.2026
Scale / Format: 1:100, @A3
Drawn By: ND on external base drawings
Reviewed By: SM

Status: **S2 - INFORMATION ISSUE** Revision: **P03**

Revisions:

Rev	Date	By	Ref.	Change
P02	02.02.2026	ND		Visitor tour routes indicated. Layout of item 14 adjusted.
P03	23.02.2026	ND		Logo update.



SCALE 1:100 @ A3
0 1 2 3 4 5m

Drawing Key

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M* M* symbol denotes the location of wall memorial indicatively

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11. New movable display units
12. New drop-down adjustable height screen + projector
13. Existing gallery box pews reconfigured (at first floor)
14. New display units (at first floor)

Refer to drawing:
'2528-LDN-SK-01-TSP-A-103-S2-P02 Option 1 - Proposed Design Notes',
for descriptions of architectural proposals.

NOTES:

DRAWING ACCURACY
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Option 2 Section

LDN Architects

The Treehouse, Carsegate Road, Inverness, IV3 8EX
T: 01463 423380
E: architects@ldn.co.uk

Project:
Old High Inverness Project No: **2528**

Client:
The Old High Inverness SCIO | SOHI Save Old High Inverness

Information Set:
Feasibility Study

Dwg No:
2528-LDN-SK-01-DSE-A-112-S2-P02

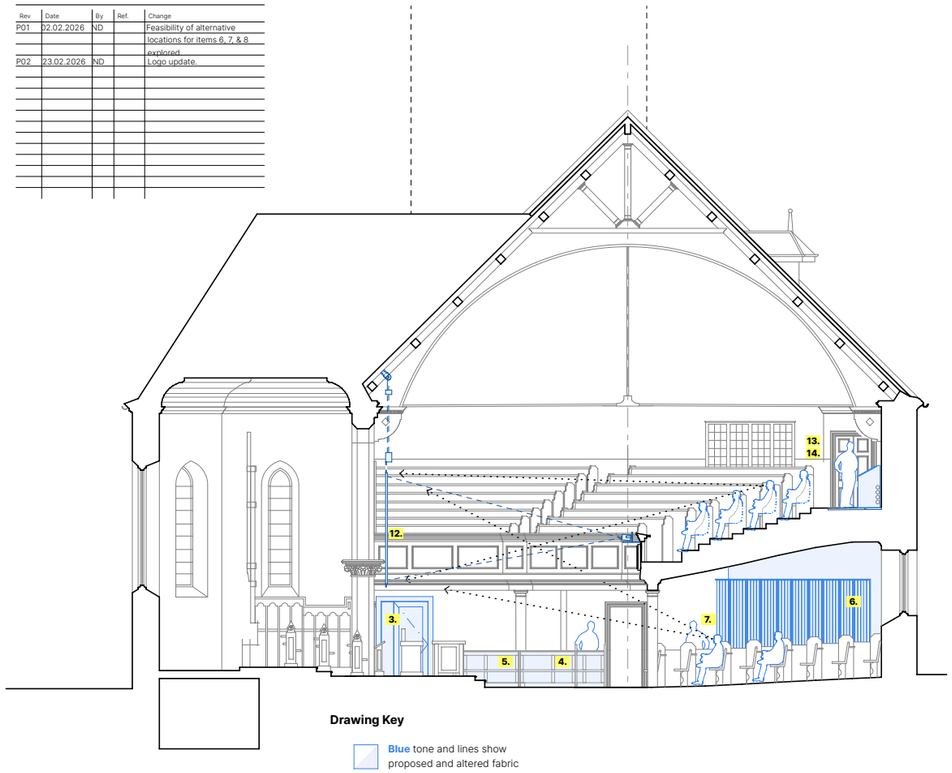
Drawing:
Option 2 - Proposed Section Looking West

Date: 02.02.2026
Scale / Format: 1:100, @A3
Drawn By: ND on external base drawings
Reviewed By: SM

Status: **S2 - INFORMATION ISSUE** Revision: **P02**

Revisions:

Rev	Date	By	Ref.	Change
P01	02.02.2026	ND		Feasibility of alternative locations for items 6, 7, & 8 explored.
P02	23.02.2026	ND		Logo update.



SCALE 1:100 @ A3
0 1 2 3 4 5m

Drawing Key

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Refer to drawing:
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5.3 Intervention Strategy

Selective upgrades can be considered to facilitate the appropriate activation of phases and aligning with *'Emerging Preferred Way Forward'* and **calibrated multi-use**, guided by clear values:

- Heritage and spiritual **respect** as the primary requirement;
- Cultural and community **purpose** as an important secondary requirement;
- Commercial activity as an **enabler**, not the driver.

Each intervention is envisaged to align with these values in the easing of constraints which the existing building places on the vision. It is envisaged a that the 14 interventions identified can significantly enhance and improve the **Flexible space, Access and Accessibility, Provision of sanitary accommodation, Facilities complementing light touch hospitality, Audio/Visual venue facilities, Building escape provision.**

Selecting a carefully assessed, and complementary, collection of these induvial but mutually supporting changes it is envisaged to offer the church the a collection of high level feasibility options/enhancements which can be selected and developed to meet the needs and funding of the distinct four phases (Phase 1 – Immediate Stabilisation, Phase 2 – Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme, Phase 3 – Capital Investment and Adaptation, Phase 4 – Steady-State Operation)

It is envisaged that the level of intervention (e.g. the number of identified areas of alterations pursued) for each phase can be aligned with greater or lesser prioritisation of capital investment:

1. **Prioritisation of activation and testing feedback**= more economical allowing a longer evidence led selection and development in the evolution of future upgrades,

1. **Prioritisation of architectural interventions** = If it is felt helpful to expediate greater building aptitude and sampling during the 'activation & testing phase' by the introduction of key interventions, these can be developed in parallel with the activation and testing phase

At this moment, and in the context of feasibility the alterations identified are set out as an expansive range of complementary options to be developed as necessary to meet the *'Emerging Preferred Way Forward'* and **calibrated multi-use** vision and further development in thinking and consultation will take place prior to, and during, the consents dialogue (planning & LBC)

5.4 Strategy Development

Furthermore, and looking ahead to a long-term future (Phase 4 – Steady-State Operation) and beyond, the feasibility reaches an acknowledged limitation. As the phases progress it is envisaged the evidence led approach will directly influence the path ahead informed by the projects successes and experience to guide the direction of consideration to the possibility of further capital enhancements to evaluation and means drive this path. These may or may not include discussions as to whether there is demand for universal access to the gallery level or whether aspects of the bell tower could be made accessible to public.

5.5 Design Quality

When the time is right it is key that the design development progress in tandem with a well-considered heritage statement will form a core document in successful Listed Building and Planning Consent applications, demonstrating careful evaluation and policy led justification for change. It is helpful to view this is as quality control, a process which can ensure:

1. Understanding the historic heritage, cultural significance and identify qualities / character
2. Consideration of any change in needs in this context
3. Analysis of potential impact, and mitigation (where change is proposed)
4. Justification of design measures / adaption to meet needs with consideration to the heritage, cultural significance, character and conservation policy

6.0

Future Development Path

6.1 Introduction

This section is intended as wayfinding outlining considerations going forwards into the next stages

6.2 Funding Applications

Fabric Repairs - applying for funding for historic fabric repair in a charity- or trust-led public project generally involves identifying an appropriate grant programme (such as Historic Environment Grants from Historic Environment Scotland Grants Programme https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/historic-environment-grants-programme/ or local heritage trust schemes), submitting an initial expression of interest, and then, if invited, a full application with detailed project information, conservation plans and cost estimates. Applicants must demonstrate eligibility, how the work meets conservation priorities, evidence of match funding and value for money, and ensure proposed repairs follow recognised conservation standards. Successful bids are assessed competitively and, if approved, grant offers are formalised prior to works. Consents (planning and LBC) where appropriate are also required.

For details of fabric condition assessment, the prioritisation of works and outline cost refer to the accompanying report.

Building enhancements - funding for building enhancements and alterations within a charity- or trust-led public heritage project typically requires securing consent (e.g., planning and listed building consent, where applicable) before submitting grant applications. Funders such as Historic Environment Scotland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Architectural Heritage Fund generally require a clear statement of need, conservation impact assessments, detailed drawings and specifications, cost plans, and evidence of community benefit. Applications must demonstrate that proposed changes are sensitive to the historic fabric, enhance long-term sustainability and access, and align with conservation best practice. Grants are awarded competitively, with formal approval required before works commence.

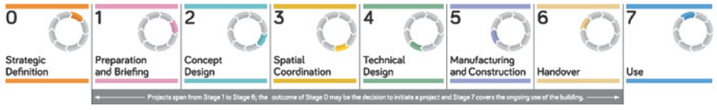
Design Development - funding for architectural development within a charity- or trust-led public heritage project typically supports early project stages such as feasibility studies, options appraisals, conservation plans, and detailed design development. Funders including Historic Environment Scotland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Architectural Heritage Fund often require a clear project brief, governance and financial information, evidence of community benefit, and confirmation that proposals align with conservation best practice and statutory requirements. Development funding is usually awarded competitively and may be staged, enabling projects to progress to technical design, consents, and capital fundraising phases.

6.3 Surveys

Refer to item 4.0 Recommendations for Specialist Input at a Future Stage, contained within the 'Old High Inverness: Fabric Condition Survey' (LDN Architects + McLeod & Aitkin) document.

6.4 Procedural Wayfinding

RIBA Plan of Works - following the Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA Plan of Work provides a clear, structured framework for delivering successful heritage led adaptive use projects in Scotland. For a charity- or trust-led scheme, it supports strong governance, transparent decision-making, and effective risk management across each project stage—from strategic definition and conservation planning to technical design and construction. Aligning with the Plan of Work also strengthens funding applications, ensures statutory and conservation requirements are properly integrated, and helps safeguard the historic fabric while delivering long-term community value.



LBC (Listed Building Consent) - any alterations that affect the character of a listed historic building require Listed Building Consent under the Planning legislative framework. For a charity- or trust-led heritage led adaptive use project, this means securing formal approval from the local planning authority (and backing from their statutory consultee HES) before works commence, supported by detailed drawings, specifications, and a heritage impact assessment. Early engagement with conservation officers and HES is essential to ensure the project develops in parallel with insight, overview and ultimately support of the local authority and statutory consultees.

Planning – similarly, successful planning applications are supported by drawings, design statements, and relevant technical reports with early engagement key. Securing planning approval is a critical step not only to ensure compliance with national and local planning policy and align with conservation objectives but often to also satisfy funder requirements before works can proceed.
It is noted for reference purposes, that this project would not currently in the category of National or Major development as defined by 'Scottish Statutory Instruments, 2009 No. 51, TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009' This means that a formal 'PAC - Pre-application consultation with communities under section 35B of the 1997 Act' will not form part of the legislative planning path.

Building Warrant – Once Planning and LBC are secured, a further statutory application to demonstrate technical compliance must be made in accordance with the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 and associated Building Regulations. This requires submitting detailed technical drawings and specifications to the local authority verifier to demonstrate compliance with standards for structure, fire safety, accessibility, energy performance, and services. Approval must be obtained prior to commencing works, with a Completion Certificate accepted on satisfactory inspection on completion of works, before the building can be (re) occupied.

Tender and Procurement Route – it is essential to clearly define and justify the proposed tender and procurement route at an early stage in line with funders requirements and relevant legislation. The approach must demonstrate transparency, fairness, and value for money. Funders and stakeholders typically require confirmation of the selected procurement strategy—such as traditional tendering—along with details of how suitably experienced (and conservation-led) contractors will be assessed. A clearly articulated procurement route supports good governance, risk management, and accountability in the delivery of works in the context of sensitive historic fabric.

7.0

Next Steps in the Enabling of Phase 1 ‘Immediate Stablisiation’ **& Phase 2** ‘Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme’

7.1 Next Steps Summary

‘Phase 1 – Immediate Stabilisation

Essential enabling works to secure safe access, mitigate urgent fabric risks, and support early public use.

Phase 2 – Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme

A structured programme of:

- Music performances, choral workshops and a 21st-century “sang scuil”
- Heritage-focused exhibitions and interpretation pilots (“Layers of Inverness”)
- Markets, pop-ups, community events and schools’ programmes
- Light-touch retail and hospitality trials

This phase generates real data on:

- Audience demand
- Income potential
- Operational requirements
- Community expectations

It provides a low-risk, evidence-led foundation for longer-term decisions and builds public and funder confidence.’

The SOC provides detailed description of ‘**Programme, Phasing and Key Milestones**’ under item 7.6.1 and 7.6.2.

Additionally, is envisaged that building management/duty holder discuss the building management with their insurers, as the following preliminary list of relevant items is envisaged as a starting point as seen from the architectural perspective as a prerequisite to opening the building (e.g. Phase 1 ‘Immediate Stabilisation’ works prior to Phase 2 ‘Two-Year Activation and Testing Programme’ commencement)

Physical Intervention

- Securing of ceilings over staircases in the interests of public safety
- Temporary demarcation of public routes and highlighting of hazards (trips and bumps)
- Carrying out of all “Emergency (E)” category repairs recommended by the Fabric Audit*
- A review of all “Urgent (U)” category repairs, to be potentially carried out in whole or part.
- The boiler and heating system is beyond is life-expectancy and it would be prudent to allow for an emergency budget for replacement parts and maintenance to keep it functional in the short term
- The building is without a fire alarm system, and one will need to be installed as part of any redevelopment project. In the interim, a Fire Risk Assessment (see below) should be commissioned to determine minimum compliance requirements for meantime use.

*NB: It should be noted that most relate to water ingress and therefore the protection of the Listed fabric, so it is possible that these could be carried out with appropriate safety measures in place when the building is open to the public.

Surveys and Investigations

- Asbestos Management Survey
- Fire Risk Assessment - this would inform any fire safety measures to be implemented. When we spoke, we talked about the widening of escape routes and adjustments to the South exit doors from the Sanctuary (as proposed in Options 1 and 2), however, a qualified Fire Risk Assessor would be best placed to advise on best practice for legislative compliance in the short-term. This would involve a review of escape distances, signage, emergency lighting, detection and alarm systems, management strategies, firefighting equipment etc. It may go so far to recommend physical alterations. It would be wise to budget for this survey and the implementation of short-term recommendations.
- Physical testing, and associated repairs/maintenance/commissioning to Mechanical & Electrical installations including heating, electrical, lighting, fire detection, alarm, and water.

Design team appointment:

In Phase 1, it is recommended to appoint a design team (Conservation Accredited Architects, Conservation Accredited Structural Engineers, Cost consultants and MEP Engineers if required) to manage surveys, consents and the tender of works based on detailed specification and drawings of fabric repairs.

During Phase 2, it is recommended to appoint a design team (Architects inc. specialists with Conservation Accreditation, Conservation Accredited Structural Engineers, Fire Engineers, Cost consultants and MEP Engineers) Bearing in mind that the lead time between appointment of services (Assumed RIBA Stages (1)*, 2, 3 & 4)and site works with sensitive historic structures is more protracted due to the importance of consultation, funding and complex design. It is not uncommon this phase to stretch over 12-months.

(*Aspects of RIBA stage 1 – Preparation and Briefing envisaged, not the full stage)

8.0

Architectural Project Risks

8.1 Risks Summary

The SOC document provides an outline Risk Framework in 7.7 along with Key Project Risks (Summary) in 7.8. Included in these the following risks are found particularly common in the context of heritage assets from an architectural perspective, and as such are repeated below.

Statutory Consultations and Consents

preliminary mitigation strategy:

- early engagement, familiarity with policy and statutory expectations
- evidence, judgment and needs justification leading to appropriate levels of intervention
- design quality and clarity of narrative
- architectural precedent identification

Funding, Cost Control and Funders Needs (compliance with funders needs)

preliminary mitigation strategy:

- early engagement, familiarity with requirements and expectations
- prudent financial planning aligning with best practice
- core document recording needs, to be used in design, specification and inclusion of requirements with tendering information setting the context for any construction phases

Public Engagement (lines of commutation and building a strong community support)

preliminary mitigation strategy:

- early engagement
- clarity of narrative and purpose in consultation
- frequent and consistent public updates

Archaeological discoveries in works

preliminary mitigation strategy:

- early engagement
- develop approach strategy

General approach - Continual update of risks as project progresses to give best chance to foresee, approach and mitigate as best possible

Appendices

Appendix A Old High Church, Inverness: Future Redevelopment **Strategic Outline Case** (Creative Services Scotland)

Appendix B Old High Inverness: **Fabric Condition Survey** (LDN Architects + McLeod & Aitkin)

Appendix C **Structural Condition Report:** Old High Church – Inverness (Fairhurst)

Appendix D **M&E Services Site Survey Report:** Old High Kirk – Inverness (Harley Haddow)

Appendix E **Estimated Cost: Internal Alterations** to Old High Church, Inverness (McLeod & Aitkin)

Appendix F **Architectural Drawings** (LDN Architects)

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