

1 Museum Street, York YO1 7DT

Heritage Statement
January 2025



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1 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Mark Wray Architects to accompany the listed building application of 1 Museum Street in York city centre to carefully remove the modern fabric that was installed when the building was converted to house the York Visitor Information Centre in 2010.

The information set out in this document is based on information provided by York Preservation Trust who were the recent owners of the building as well as the Explore York Archive, a measured building survey and multiple site visits to the property.

This application does not seek to alter the original fabric of the building but to remove the incongruous tourist information fit out and dated electrical and mechanical services as part of its future renovation.

It is intended for a separate planning and listed building application to follow this submission to include proposals for the adaption of the building to house a new bookshop, owned and managed by Topping & Company Booksellers.



1 Museum Street, York



1 Museum Street, York as viewed from Blake Street



1 Museum Street, York looking NE towards York Minster

2 Statutory Considerations

Planning constraints

We understand that 1 Museum Street is:

- A Grade II listed building
- In an area of Archaeological Importance
- Located within the Conservation Area

Recent planning history

Change of use of part of ground floor from offices (use class B1) to tourist information and retail (use class A1)

Ref. No: 08/01700/FUL | Status: Application Permitted

Internal alterations including sliding automatic doors and wheelchair platform lift

Ref. No: 08/01707/LBC | Status: Application Permitted

Internal alterations to create visitor centre

Ref. No: 09/01630/LBC | Status: Application Permitted

Display of 2no non illuminated hanging signs and non illuminated window mounted signs

Ref. No: 09/02122/LBC | Status: Finally disposed of

Retention of 2no non illuminated hanging signs and 6 non illuminated window mounted signs

Ref. No: 09/02182/ADV | Status: Finally disposed of

Certificate of lawfulness for proposed internal and external repair works to a listed building

Ref. No: 21/01667/CPD | Status: Grant Lawful Development Certificate



Museum Street in 1853 showing previous Royal Hotel (York Archive)



Museum Street in 1939 showing current building on right (David Lovell)

Historic England Listing

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number:1257106

Date first listed:08-Oct-1986

SE6052SW MUSEUM STREET 1112-1/27/785 (South East side)
08/10/86 No.1

GV II

Register office, now Council offices. 1860 with later alterations. By Rawlins Gould. Orange brick in Flemish bond with moulded stone plinth and dressings; rusticated pilaster strips of faceted blocks on ground floor, ashlar pilasters on first floor: brick parapet with stone piers and coping to slate roof; brick stacks. EXTERIOR: 2-storey 11-bay front, with curved corner bay. Main entrance has round-arched doorcase of 2 orders with sunk-panel pilasters, vermiculated keyblock and panelled double doors with fanlight. Subsidiary entrance at right end has panelled double doors with overlight in eared segment-arched architrave. Windows are segment-headed, in architraves with bracketed moulded sills, set in shallow segment-arched recesses with vermiculated keyblocks: several original 8-pane sashes altered. Ground floor pilaster strips support moulded cornice. First floor articulated in Doric pilasters on sunk-panel pedestals supporting broad frieze and ornate console-bracket cornice: above is open-arcaded parapet incorporating sunk-panel pedestal piers. Generally windows are 4-pane sashes, in stone architraves with moulded sills and cornices, beneath alternately triangular and segmental bracketed pediments. INTERIOR: not inspected.

Listing NGR: SE6012152067

2 Setting & History

1 Museum Street is situated within the historic mediaeval core of the city and to the north of the principal shopping centre. It is a short direct walk from the railway station and bus interchanges across the River Ouse to the south west.

Facing west front of York Minster, the building occupies a prominent corner position, turning from Museum Street into Blake Street to the north east. It resides within the vicinity of the city's other cultural offerings including York Library & Archive, York Theatre Royal and the Yorkshire Museum.

Brief History

It is understood that the construction of the current building began in 1860 and replaced the former Royal Hotel on the site. Built in an Italianate design by York-based architect Rawlins Gould (1821-73) it was commissioned by the York Poor Law Union to house their offices.

The ground floor contained the offices for the clerk to the guardians of the Union and the registrar of births and deaths as well as an application and relieving office. The upper *piano noble* level was directly accessed via a grand central entrance hall with an ornate stone staircase at the rear leading to the double-height board room which is the focus of the building and affords views across to the Minster. Adjoining this were a committee room, audit office, anteroom, and muniment/records room.

The building was transferred to local government use in 1929 when the Poor Unions were replaced by Public Assistance Committees. From 1949, it was used as a Festival office, council offices, and more recently underwent internal alterations in 2010 to house the Visit York tourist information centre.



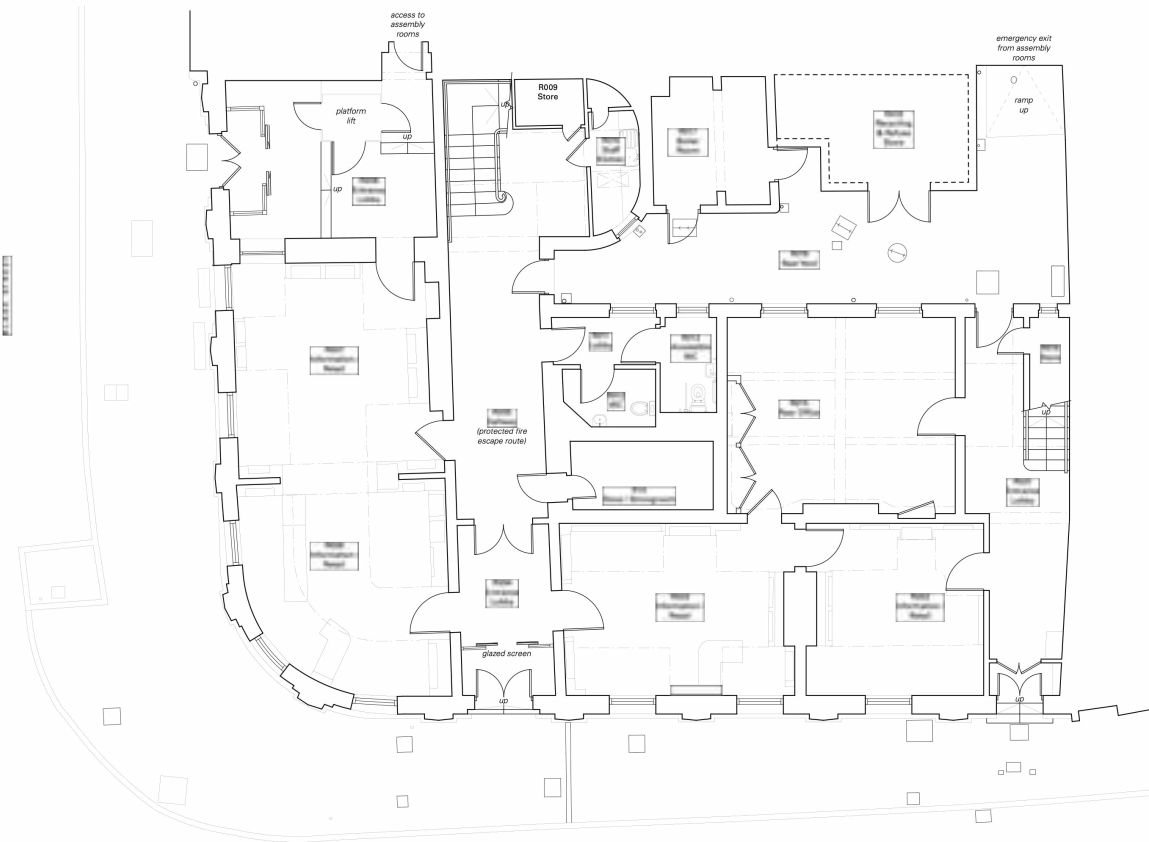
Aerial views - Google maps

2 As Existing Ground Floor Plan

The current layout of the building appears to be largely as per the original design with the primary rooms facing Museum Street and Blake Street still legible despite the introduction of some modern partitioning.

Located off the central entrance hall, the strongroom with its brick vaulted ceiling appears intact. However, adjacent rooms to the rear of the Museum Street range have been altered to accommodate sanitary and kitchen provisions. The downstand beams to the rear office ceiling and absence of any mouldings suggest that this part of the building may have been strengthened to either address ground movement or accommodate the additional second floor within the ceiling void of the rooms above, possibly undertaken in the 1930s when it is advised that the building was altered. To that end these rooms are considered to be of less significance.

An accessible entrance has been created to the east end off Blake Street with the introduction of a platform lift and steps which also serve the adjoining Assembly Rooms. Both this and the main entrance on Museum Street have been fitted with modern glazed door screens. The third access is to the eastern extent of the building that also contains a secondary staircase that runs up to the second floor, and providing an emergency escape route from the Assembly Rooms.



2 Photographs Ground Floor



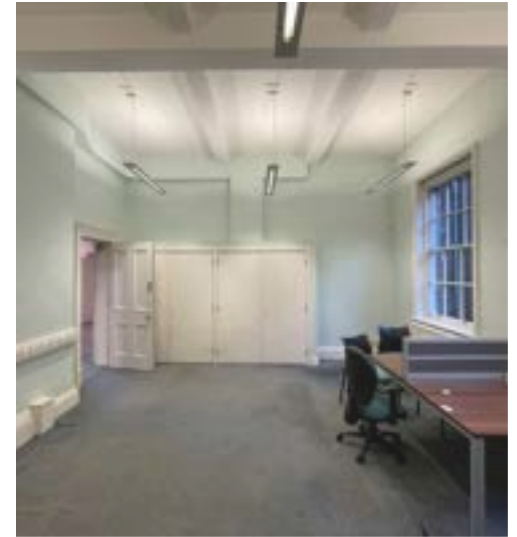
R002 Information / Retail



R003 Information / Retail



R006 Information / Retail



R015 Rear office



R004 Entrance Lobby to Museum Street



R007 Information / Retail



R008 Shared entrance lobby to Blake Street



R011 Lobby

2 As Existing First Floor Plan

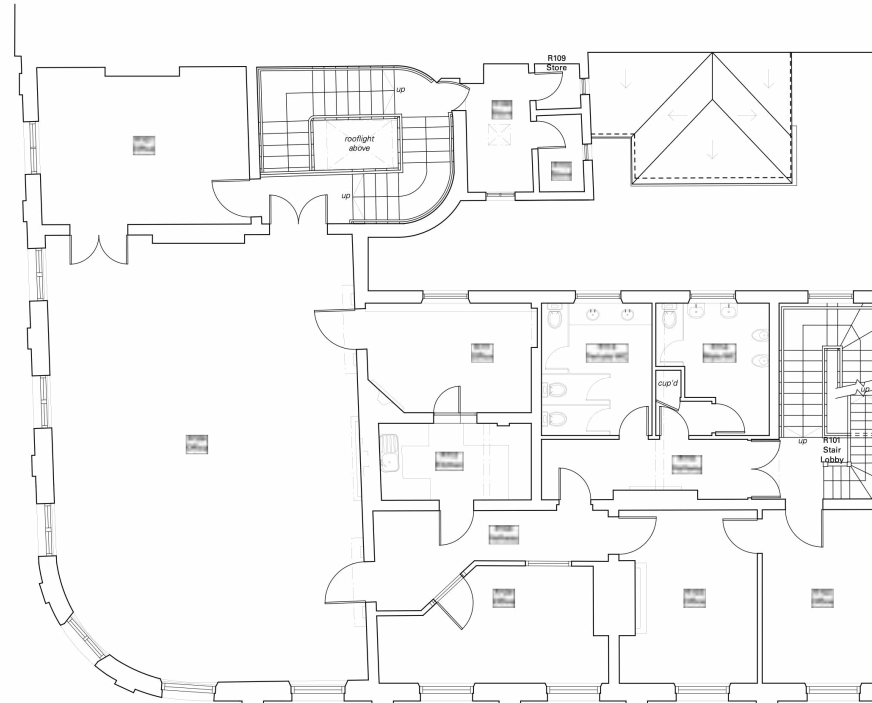
The principal rooms to the east of the building remain largely as the original design with minimal modern alterations introduced in the form of secondary glazing and plumbing and electrical services.

The west of the building has undergone more significant alterations in the form of partition walls which we understand were added during the late C20 works to convert the building into offices for York City Council.

These partition walls and modern door-sets were constructed to create additional office spaces, separate toilets and protected fire corridors. Additionally, a new door opening was created to provide access to a spiral staircase leading to the second floor (subsequently removed).

There is an abundance of ducts and cabling which are visible throughout the building both at high and low level which distracts from the buildings elegance.

It is proposed to remove the majority of the electrical and mechanical equipment to allow for the building services to be renewed (as part of a subsequent application) with more appropriate alternatives, improving the quality of the spaces. Minimal electrical services will be retained to enable fire protection and emergency lighting to be maintained.



2 Photographs First Floor



R101 Stair lobby



R102 Office



R103 Office



R104 Office formed from modern partition walls



R105 Fire corridor created with modern partitions



R106 Office



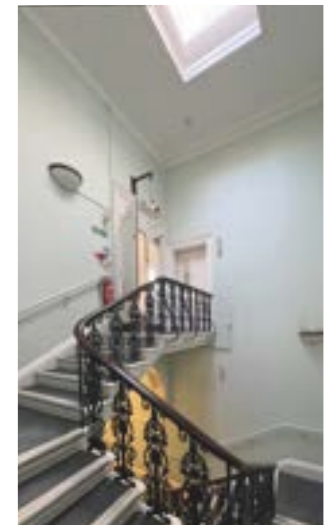
R107 Office



R111 Office with original door infilled



R112 Kitchen



Principal stair with modern tread covers and secondary handrail

2 As Existing Second Floor Plan

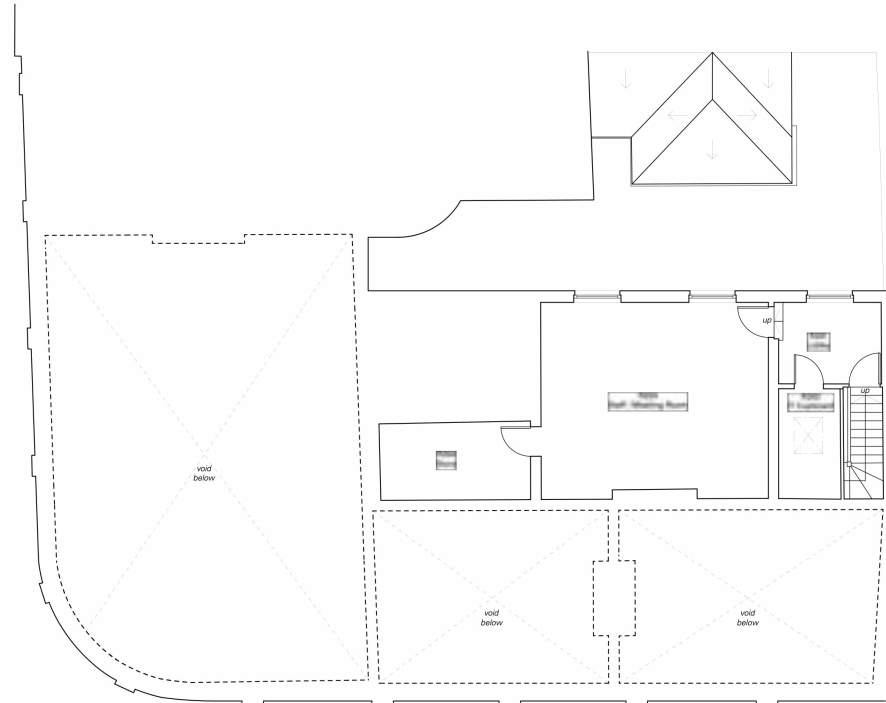
It is our understanding that the second floor of the building was introduced when the building was renovated in the early C20. This is evident in the lower quality of the spaces. This application seeks to remove the modern electrical and plumbing equipment as well as the modern carpet floor finish to these spaces.

On the roof, the natural slate tiles and ridges appeared to be in good condition with the bituminous underlay generally intact. The small area of roof space observed appeared to be dry however the crawl boards around the brick chimney stack were damp.

The rainwater outlets in the parapet gutter will need to be cleared regularly to prevent blockages.

The rear pitched roof was not accessible but has overhanging eaves and surface mounted gutters.

The existing building fabric appears on the whole to be in a fair condition, however there are signs of water and damp penetration at low level to some ground floor rooms and the ceilings on the first floor, which could be due to failed / blocked rainwater pipes or abutment flashings.



2 Photographs Second Floor & Roof



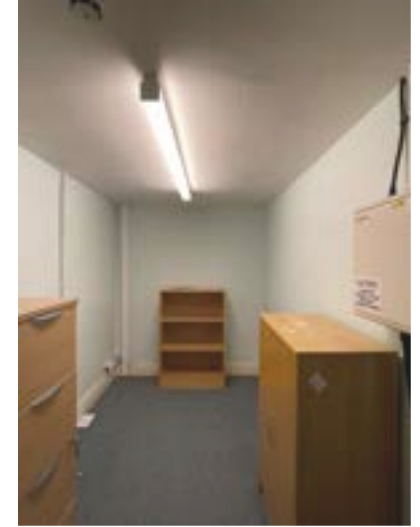
R201 Lobby



R202 IT Cupboard with access to roof



R203 Staff / Meeting room



R204 Store



Roof void



Parapet and associated lead work



Parapet Roof facing Museum Street



Brick chimneys

4 Historic Development Plans

First Floor

Like the ground floor level, the overall plan form of the property remains predominantly as the original layout with stair access to a new second floor, likely constructed in the 1930s, added over the secondary staircase to the west.

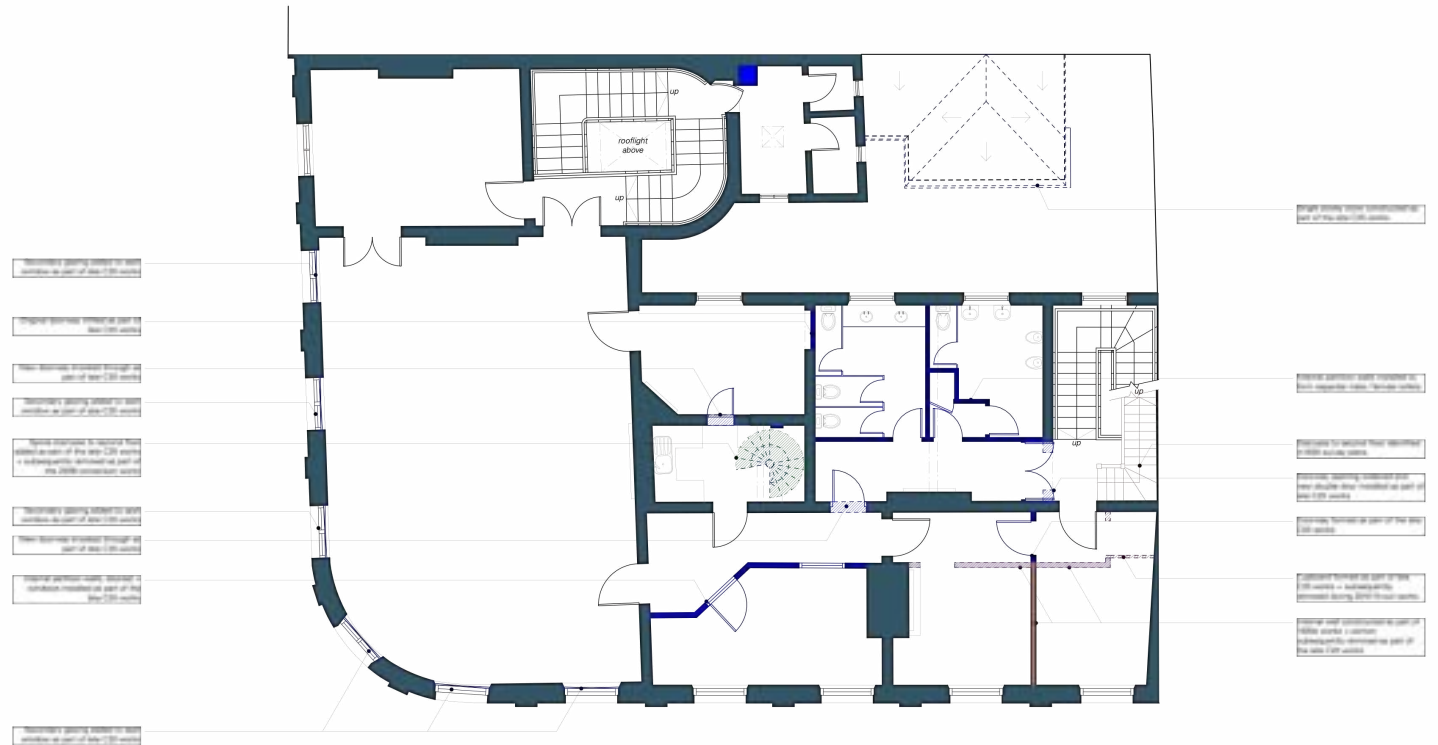
New partition walls, added during the late C20 works, were installed to provide additional office space and toilet provisions while creating fire protected corridors for emergency escape from the building.

Two new doorways were formed within the existing masonry walls as part of these works to provide additional access routes through the building.

Records also show that a spiral staircase leading to the second floor was fitted as part of the late C20 works and subsequently removed during the 2008 / 2010 alterations.

Historic Development Key

	1860 Survey plans - remaining		2008 Conversion for visitor information centre - removals
	1930 Survey plans - removals		2008 Conversion for visitor information centre - alterations
	1930 Survey plans - alterations		2010 Fit-out for visitor information centre - removals
	Late C20 conversion to city council offices - removals		2010 Fit-out for visitor information centre - alterations
	Late C20 conversion to city council offices - alterations		



5 As Proposed Strip out

Ground Floor

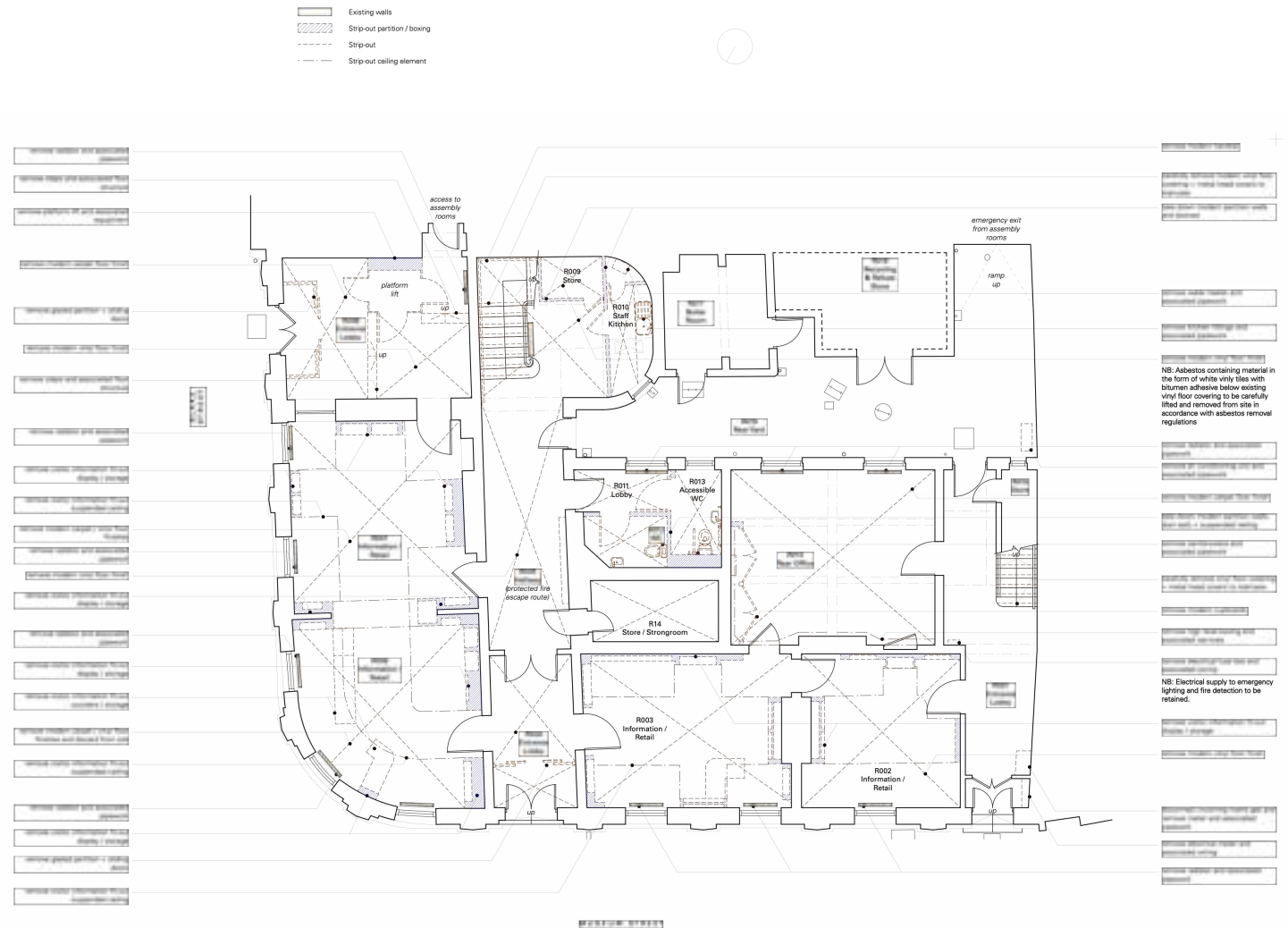
This Listed Building application seeks permission to remove the modern fit-out elements added to the building as part of the Late C20 works to convert the property into council offices and subsequent alterations in 2008 / 2010 when Visit York took over the premises for use as a tourist information centre.

It is proposed to remove the electrical and plumbing services, including light fittings and radiators, that have been installed intermittently during the major renovations to the property.

Modern vinyl and carpet floor finishes are to be removed as well as all kitchen fittings and sanitary-ware.

It is not intended for the original historic fabric to be altered as part of this application and all timber and plaster finishes are to be retained.

The shared access routes to the adjoining Assembly Rooms will be maintained throughout the work phases.



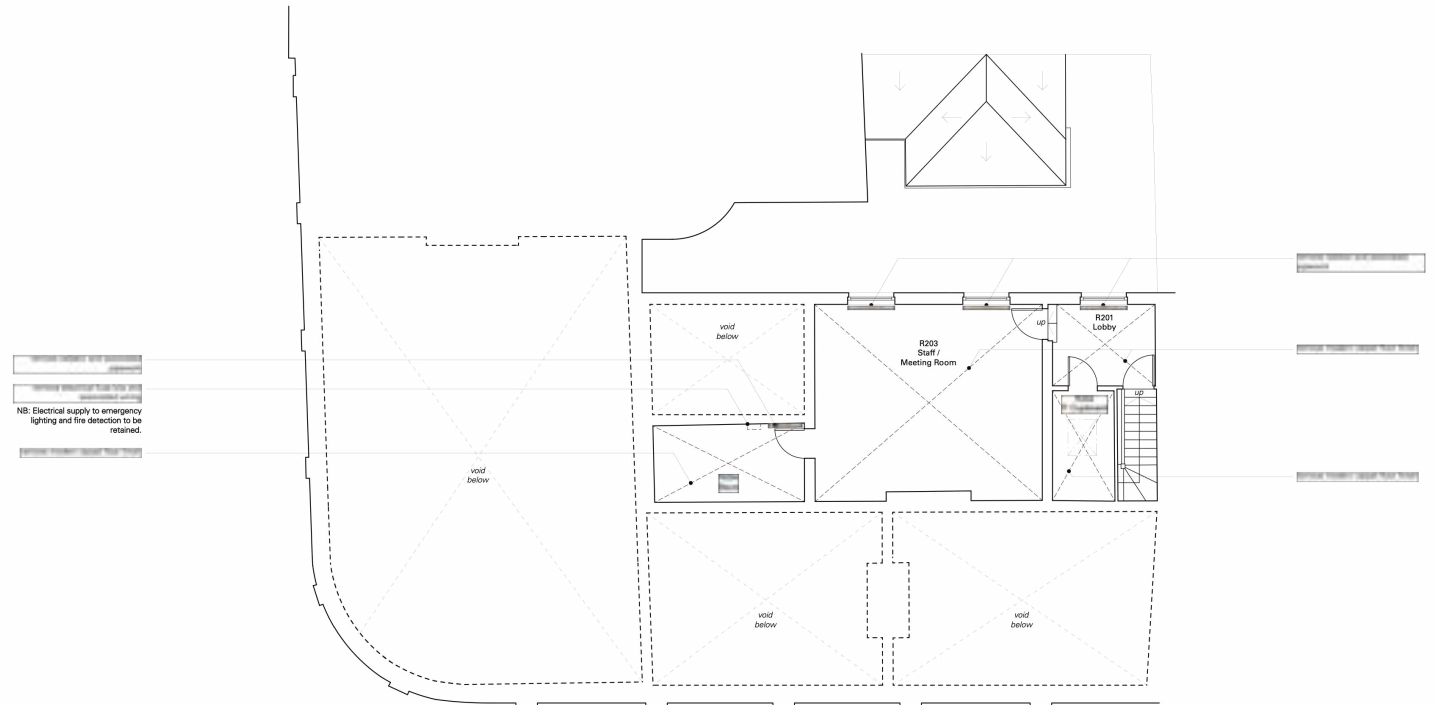
5 As Proposed Strip out

Second Floor

It is understood that the second floor was constructed during the 1930s conversion of the building and therefore there are less architectural features of merit.

Strip-out works to this floor are minimal, focusing on the removal of the electrical and plumbing services and floor finishes.

- Existing walls
- Strip-out partition / boxing
- Strip-out
- Strip-out ceiling element



3 The Heritage Asset

Significance

1 Museum Street is a grade II listed building which occupies a prominent corner location within the historic core of York. The Italian style building was designed by York-based architect Rawlins Gould and constructed in 1860-61 as the purpose-built headquarters for the York Poor Law Union.

The building underwent renovations in the 1930s, when the York's Public Assistance Office took over the building, and then again in 2010 when it was purchased by the York Conservation Trust and occupied by Visit York as the city's tourist information centre.

Since 2020 the building has remained unoccupied and has recently been purchased by Topping & Company booksellers who wish to restore the original building and adopt it as a new bookshop. The proposed strip-out which forms the basis of this listed building application is deemed to have no adverse affect on the Heritage Asset of the building or its setting.

Evidential value - Medium

The building was purpose-built to house the York Poor Law Union and was later adopted by the council for a variety of functions. The original plan form is largely unchanged with two of the original three entrances retained. The original strong room, constructed to protect important documents, remains in the centre of the building whilst a decorative wooden tablet situated over the fireplace in the principal room on the first floor provides written insight into the history of the building and its use.

Historical value - Medium

1 Museum Street provided an important role in society during its function as the York Poor Law Union by helping the disadvantaged and impoverished inhabitants of the city before providing administrative services to the public as the site for the registrar of births, deaths and marriages. With its final use as premises for the Visit York tourist information centre, the history of the building is such that it has always had some form of public facing role however its most historically significant space, that of the principal room on the first floor with views to the Minster, has not been readily accessible for members of the public. This is something the new owners of the building are keen to change and enable the buildings to be appreciated by a wider audience.

Aesthetic value – Medium High

The building situated on the principal street leading from the railway station to the West entrance of York Minster and will therefore be observed by residents and visitors to the city alike. The Italianate style design is well executed, utilising red stock bricks and stone details (some of which were recently repaired by the previous owner) and was designed with a curved corner that is uncommon to the area.

Internally the building benefits from its original plaster cornices and ceiling roses as well as examples of detailed joinery work surrounding doors. The original principal staircase also retains its original ornate cast iron balusters.

Communal value - Medium

While the use of the building has changed over time, it has always had a function that benefited the inhabitants of the city, whether as the York Poor Law Union or more recently as the Visit York tourist information centre and therefore would be seen to have a noteworthy level of social value.



Wooden tablet situated within the principal room at first floor level with examples of the detailed plaster cornice and timber joinery.

6 Summary

1 Museum Place is a significant historical building within the mediaeval centre of York with noteworthy heritage values.

This application seeks to remove the incongruent modern layers of fabric, added in multiple phases of conversion, in order to re-establish the original plan forms of the building in preparation for its adaptation into a high-quality bookshop.

This proposed new use of the property will allow inhabitants and visitors of the city to appreciate fully its elegant spaces, including the principal room at first floor which for its history has been used as a private workplace.

This application does not propose to remove, demolish or alter any of the original fabric of the building and the proposed strip-out works present a positive beneficial impact to its heritage value.

The proposed strip-out works were also supported by the Conservation Officer as noted within the pre-application feedback received in December 2024.



1 Museum Street, York

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