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# LIBRARY SQUARE RINGSEND

## PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT AND LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT AND EXTENSION

### ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT

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DMOD ARCHITECTS

SEPTEMBER 2023

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RINGSEND  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

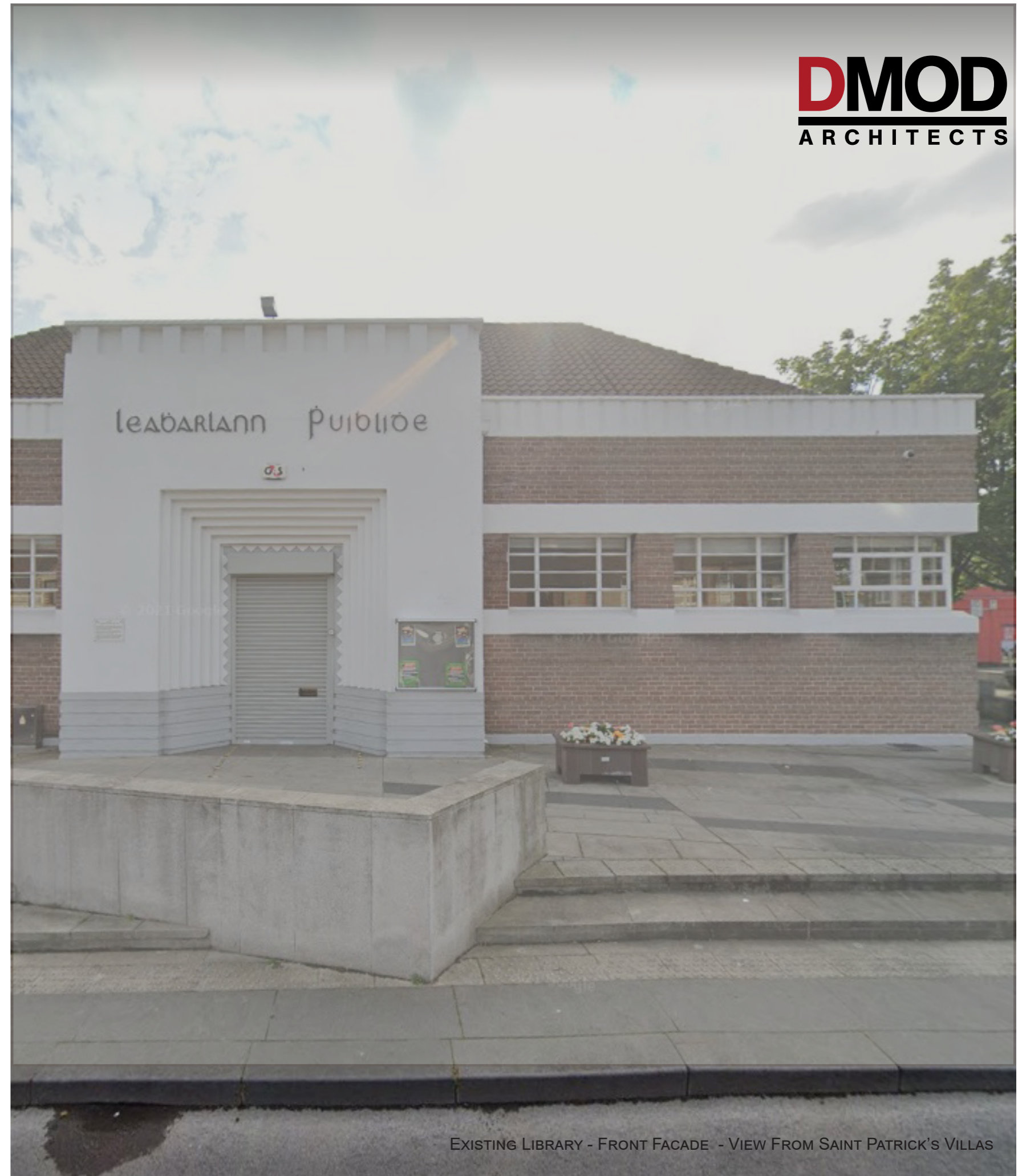
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design Statement has been prepared by DMOD Architects on behalf of Dublin City Council, to accompany the Part 8 application for the development of Ringsend Library Square and the extension to the existing library building at Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin, D04 Y970.

This Design Statement will deal with the proposed library building extension. It describes the site location and history, explains how the proposal has been developed in response to the urban context, the site history and the building programme generated by DCC library's division. It will also outline the key aspects of the proposed design concept, design strategy, conservation strategy, architectural principles, façade design and materials.

This report should be read in conjunction with other reports and drawings from the design team, namely:

- Landscaping Drawings and Reports from Mitchell Associates
- Engineering Drawings and Reports from Roughan & O'Donovan Engineers
- Building Survey Condition Conservation Report from Fergal McGill Architects
- Arborist Drawings & Report from CMK Hort & Arb Ltd
- Mechanical & Electrical Drawings and Reports from JV Tierney & Co.



EXISTING LIBRARY - FRONT FACADE - VIEW FROM SAINT PATRICK'S VILLAS

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed extension and refurbishment of Ringsend Library involves wrapping the existing building on 3 sides using the spaces immediately behind and to the sides for the extension, preserving that front elevation and the axial view. The finished library building will create new street frontages onto Fitzwilliam Street to the south and St Patrick's Villas to the North. The new extension is comprised of public and private spaces and increases the building footprint from -247m<sup>2</sup> to -544m<sup>2</sup>.

The private / staff internal spaces which total -92m<sup>2</sup> are located in the northern half and include office space, meeting rooms, a canteen, stores a WC and various plant space. The public internal spaces are split between the new entrance foyer which includes a buggy store and public disabled access WC to the north – 33m<sup>2</sup> and meeting room, flexible exhibition space, and children's area to southern half of the extension – 200m<sup>2</sup>. When added to the existing library hall internal space (~197m<sup>2</sup>) this will bring the total public library space to -430m<sup>2</sup> which represents a 118% increase in public space.

At roof level a green/blue roof will be introduced in line with the DCC Development Plan 2022 – 2028. Solar panels are also included to comply with best practice energy guidelines objectives regarding Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, for further details please refer to the Climate Action & Sustainability Statement prepared by JVT Engineers included with this submission.

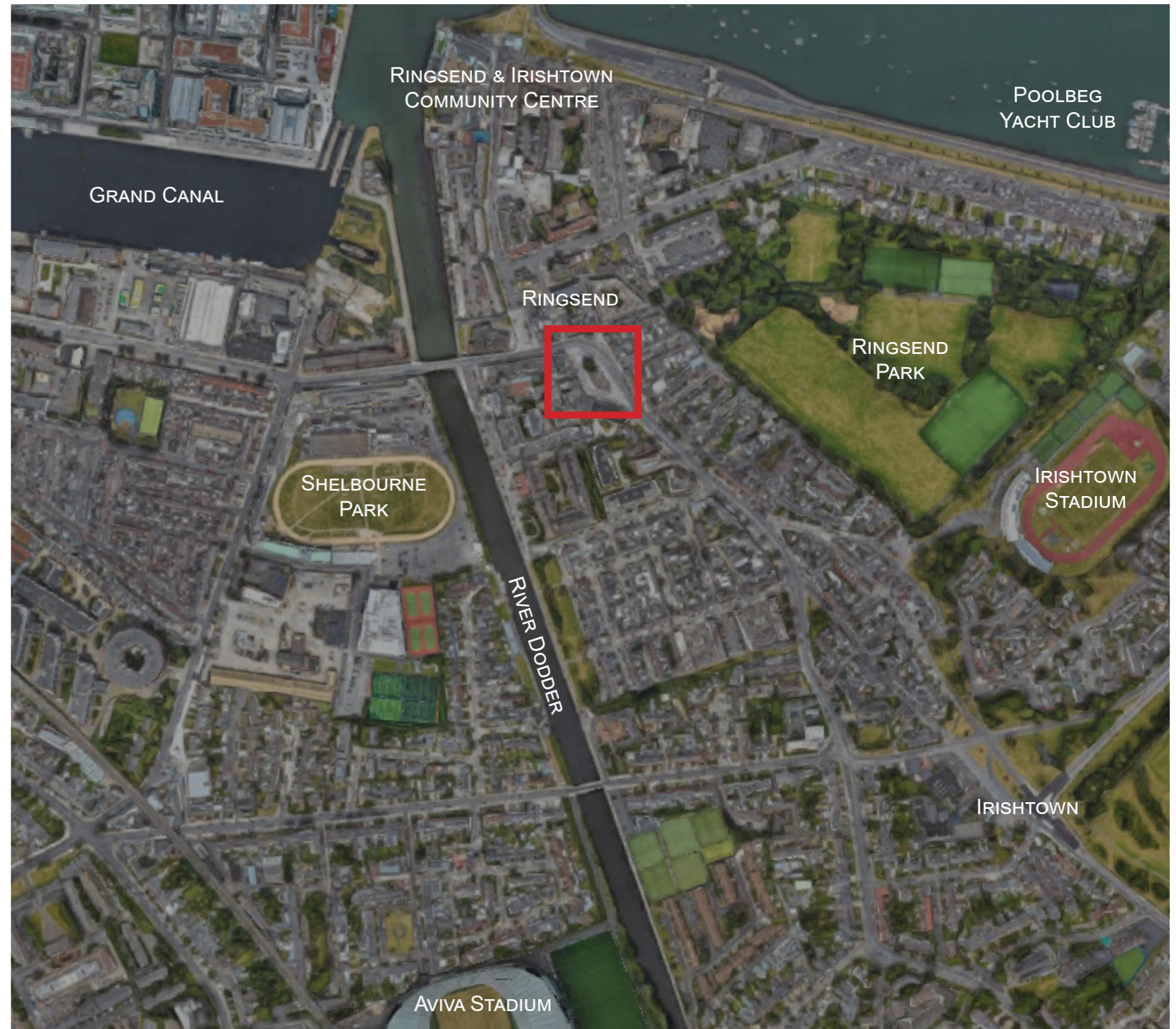


### 3.1 SITE CONTEXT

The application site is located at Fitzwilliam Street, Ringsend, Dublin 4.. The site is at the centre of the village of Ringsend and represents the only public space in the area except for Ringsend park, it is somewhat of an underperforming space in terms of creating a focal point at the centre of the village. The site covers approximately 0.4685 hectares (1.157 acres) and is located within the administrative area of Dublin City Council.

The village of Ringsend is flanked to the west by the river Dodder and to the North by the river Liffey. Ringsend Park is to the east with Irishtown located to the south. The village is relatively well catered for in terms of public amenities with Ringsend Park, Irishtown Stadium and all its sports facilities, and the Ringsend & Irishtown Community Centre to the north of the site. The Library square site and the library itself represent the only other public space within the area.

Ringsend is somewhat isolated from the rest of Dublin despite its close proximity to the city, this is due to its geographical location being separated from the city on two sides by the river Dodder and Liffey. There are two main access routes through Ringsend, from Bridge St to the west and Irishtown Road to the south. Both routes converge at the Library Square site with Bridge St to the north west and Irishtown Road to the south east of the site, further emphasizing the sites central location at the heart of Ringsend.



SITE LOCATION - AERIAL VIEW

## 3.2 THE SITE

Please refer to Mitchell & Associates drawings and report for a full and detailed description of the proposed site arrangements, included the history, site analysis, the landscape proposal and the materials.



## 4.1 EXISTING LIBRARY

The Library is a detached seven-bay, single-storey Art Deco public library, built c.1937. The library was one of three new public libraries opened by Dublin Corporation in 1937 the other buildings were at Inchicore and Drumcondra. All three were essentially the same building design, but set in three very different settings.

The building was designed by Robert Sorley Lawrie, a Scottish architect in the department of the Dublin City Architect, Horace O'Rourke during the 1930s. He designed the Inchicore public library on Emmet Road in 1937 and was probably also responsible for the other libraries at Ringsend, and Drumcondra which were built the same year.

The other two buildings are on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, but this building in Ringsend is not. However, during initial discussions with the stakeholders in DCC we were advised to approach this project as if it were on the list and was a protected structure. Art Deco buildings are rare in Ireland and because of that they are treasured buildings, and it is important that they be preserved. It is generally agreed that the best way to preserve a building is through continued use of the building.

At the same time the current library building in terms of size and services was no longer adequate to meet the needs of general public or the library staff. This was the challenge set out before us, how to create a library building with a new children's area and a new exhibition space for the public and new office, canteen and toilet facilities for library staff, while still preserving the very strong architectural identity of the existing library.

leabharlann puiblí



## 4.2 CONSERVATION STRATEGY

It was very clear from the start of this process that the setting of the library building was going to be very important in how we generated this design for the library extension. The library is set up like a pavilion building sitting in the middle of a public square. The library building programme called for an extension roughly doubling the size of the existing, making it impossible to maintain the pavilion in a public square arrangement. A new design for the site set up would be required.

The library is set out along a very strong axial alignment with the main entrance in aligning with St Patrick's Villa's running perpendicular from the library leading down to Ringsend Park. From a conservation perspective this was identified as the primary elevation and view to be preserved.

At this point a detailed analysis of the site and the quality of the spaces around the building was carried out to determine the best location for the extension. The space to the rear of the library facing onto Fitzwilliam Street with the lean-to staff accommodation was identified as being particularly poor, the library seems to turn its back on the street, it is very much a back of house area elevated up over the street level with a steep concrete embankment separating the square from Fitzwilliam Street. The embankment with a stainless-steel guarding along the top continues around to the south of building. The site to the south is limited in terms of size, shape and the junction between St Patrick's Villas & Fitzwilliam Street. The site to the north of the library represented a much better opportunity to create a quality public square both in terms of space and the quality of light available in that part of the site.

The decision was made in conjunction with the Landscape architects to create a new public square to the north of the library and wrap the library on 3 sides using the spaces immediately behind and to the sides for the extension, preserving that front elevation and the axial view.

While we had decided to wrap the existing building, we still felt it was important to preserve the rest of the original building fabric by expressing it internally so visitors to the library can clearly read the original building inside the new building. In this way the rest of the external walls of the main library hall are now internal walls within the greater library building.



AERIAL VIEW OF LIBRARY - SHOWING AXIAL ALIGNMENT WITH ST. PATRICK'S VILLAS



REAR VIEW OF LIBRARY - SHOWING POOR FRONTAGE ONTO FITZWILLIAM STREET



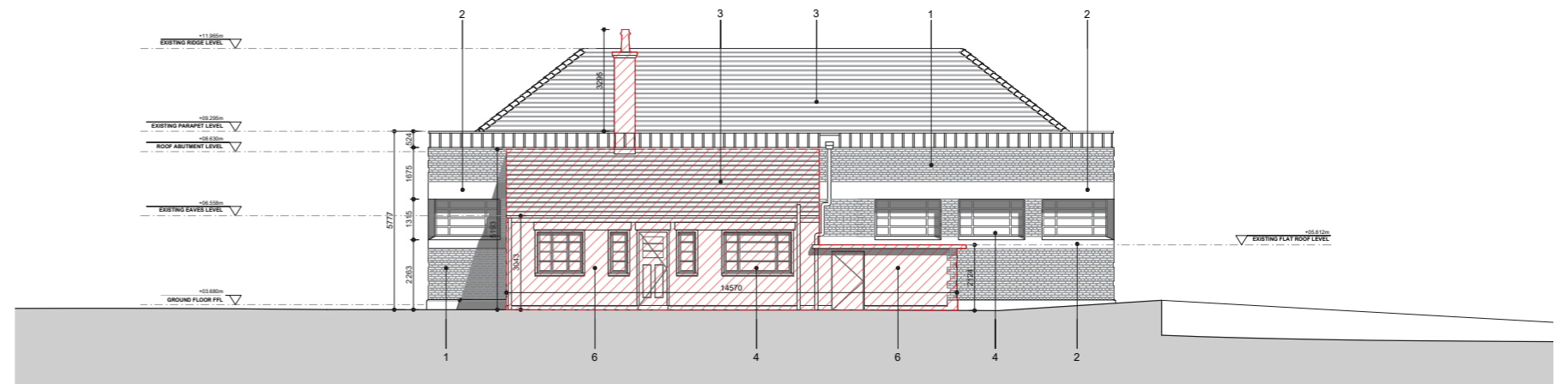
## 4.3 UPGRADES & INTERVENTIONS

Part of the proposed development will entail upgrade works to the existing library building, these have been carefully considered to strike a balance between improving the building performance and respecting the existing building in terms of conservation. It is proposed to insulate the existing roof space to current building regulations, the suspended timber floor is also proposed to be insulated to current building regulations from underneath, there's adequate space under the floor for access to carry out the works.

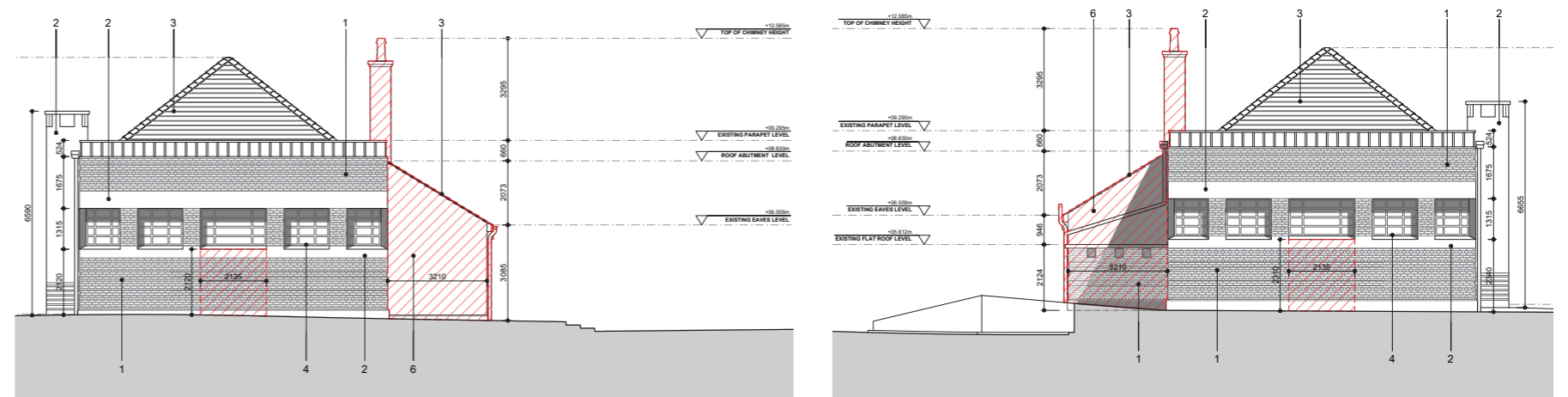
It is not proposed to insulate any of the existing walls as 3 of them will be internal and insulating the one remaining external would compromise the historic character of the building. All of the existing windows will also be retained. The existing heating system will also be upgraded and the whole building will be heated via the new system. Please refer to JV Tierney's drawings and report for further details.

There are a number of interventions to the existing building in the proposed works, these include the demolition of the lean to staff area to the rear of the library to facilitate the library extension and the demolition of wall panels beneath the central windows at each end of the building along the main axis, to form the new circulation routes in the building, and the widening of the existing door into the staff area to form the circulation route into the exhibition space.

Lastly it is proposed to introduce a new linear roof light into the existing pitched roof this will provide additional light into the depth of the existing reading hall and to maintain the natural ventilation strategy by using the rooflight upstands to naturally ventilate the space.



EXISTING REAR ELEVATION SHOWING THE PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS



EXISTING GABLE ELEVATIONS SHOWING THE PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS



PROPOSED SECTION SHOWING THE NEW ROFFLIGHT INTO THE EXISTING LIBRARY PITCHED ROOF

## 5.1 SITE STRATEGY

At this stage in the design process we had a rough plan on where to locate the extension on the site, we would wrap the library on 3 sides but the massing, scale, and exact form of the extension was still an unknown. The historic maps of the site gave us some insight and suggested a strategy for how the new library might sit on the site and its relationship with the neighbouring buildings.

The 1888 – 1913 map of the site showed that the library square site had for the most part been fully built upon, with back to back houses creating defined street frontages onto Fitzwilliam Street to the west and what was then Thomas Street to the east. An island of development surrounded by streets, with an open space to the south.

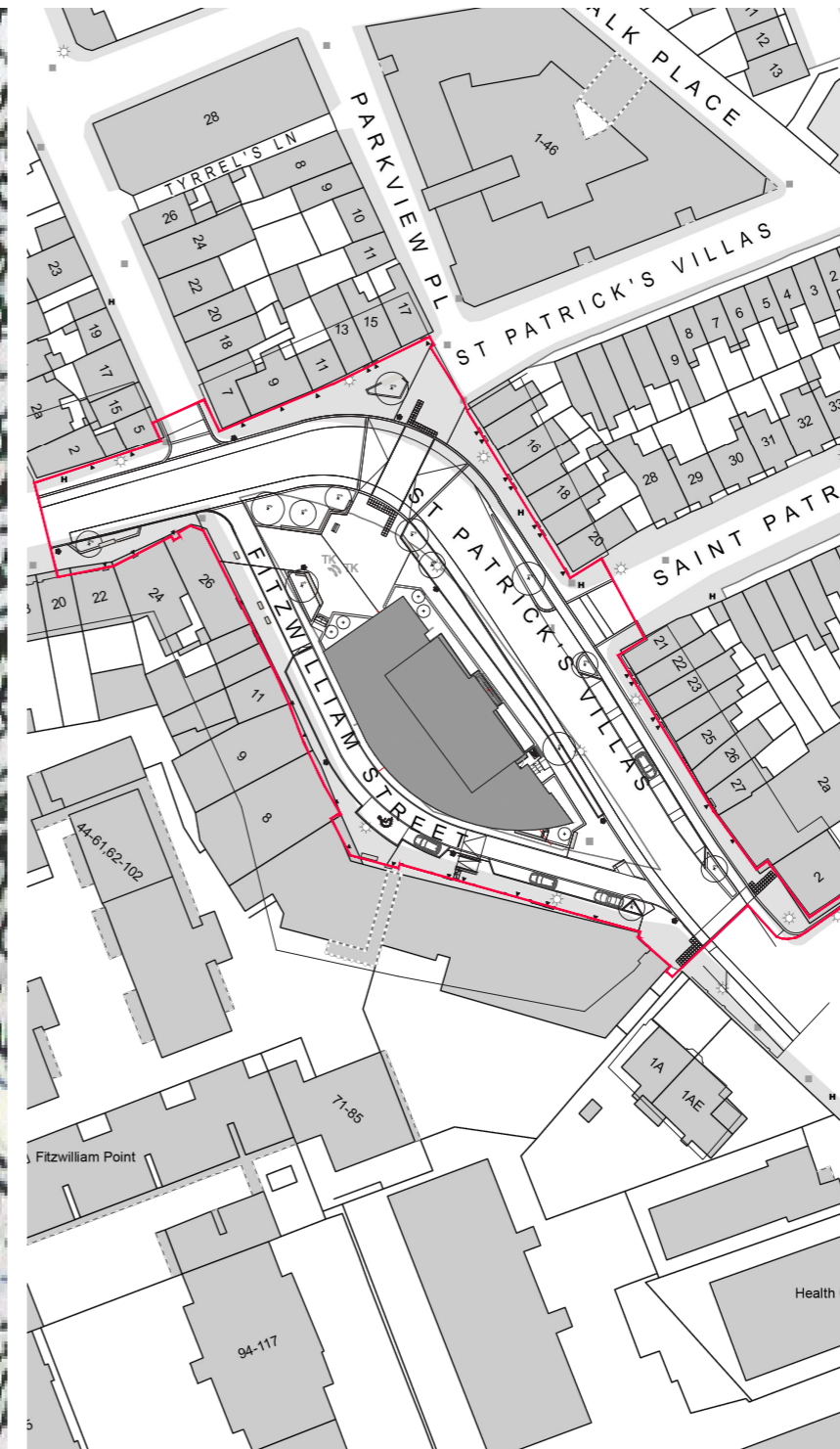
The library building could be expanded, stretched and widened to create a defined street frontage essentially recreating a new version of the historic street format. An island building but now with an open space to the north. This proposal is in keeping with the historic grain of the city, and we feel is a natural evolution of the site.



HISTORIC MAP 25 INCH 1913



CASSINI 1930



PROPOSED 2023

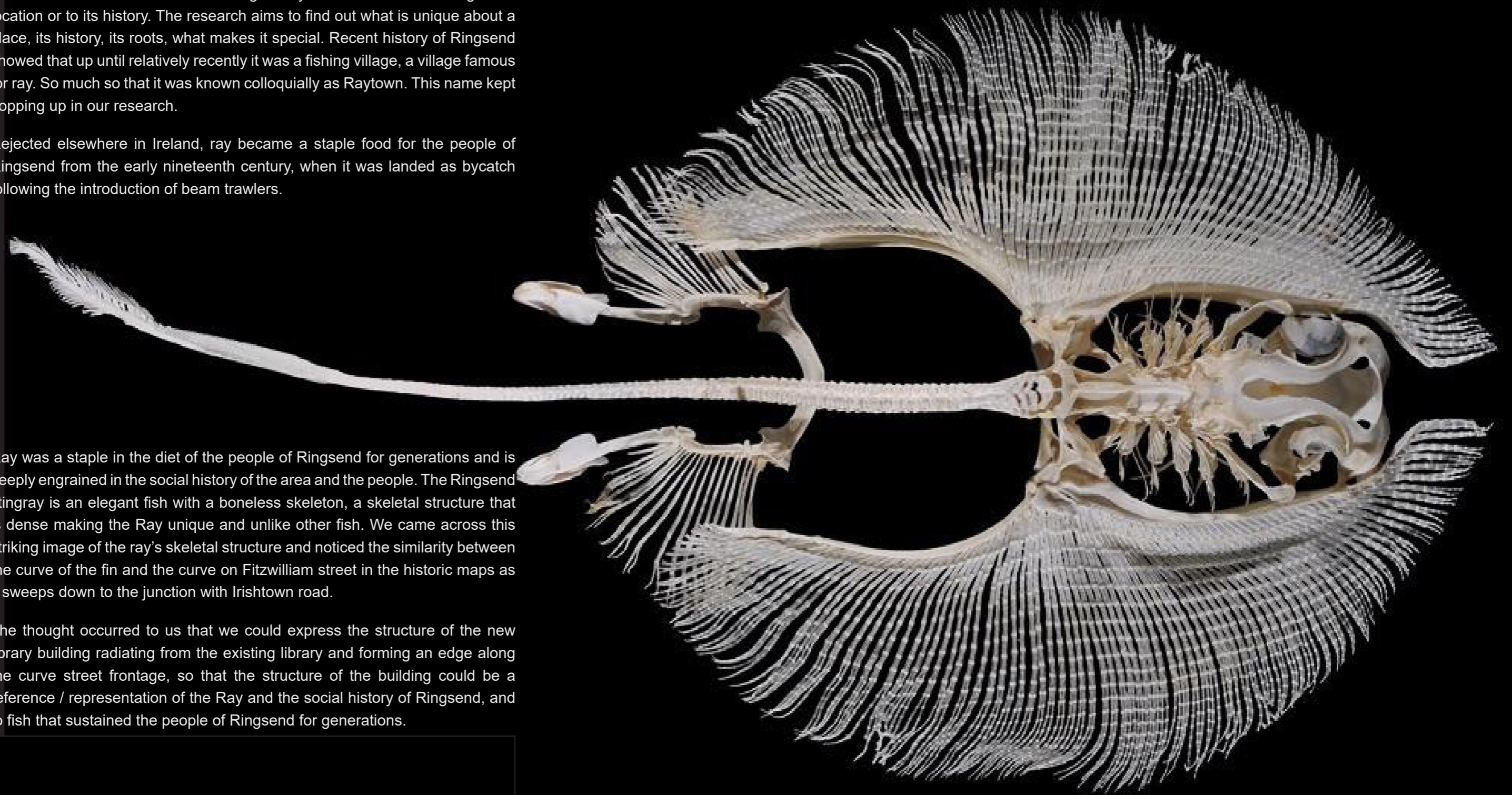
## 5.2 DESIGN CONCEPT

Part of our design process is to carry out research on the history of the site and the location with a view of finding a way to link the new building to its location or to its history. The research aims to find out what is unique about a place, its history, its roots, what makes it special. Recent history of Ringsend showed that up until relatively recently it was a fishing village, a village famous for ray. So much so that it was known colloquially as Raytown. This name kept popping up in our research.

Rejected elsewhere in Ireland, ray became a staple food for the people of Ringsend from the early nineteenth century, when it was landed as bycatch following the introduction of beam trawlers.

Ray was a staple in the diet of the people of Ringsend for generations and is deeply engrained in the social history of the area and the people. The Ringsend stingray is an elegant fish with a boneless skeleton, a skeletal structure that is dense making the Ray unique and unlike other fish. We came across this striking image of the ray's skeletal structure and noticed the similarity between the curve of the fin and the curve on Fitzwilliam street in the historic maps as it sweeps down to the junction with Irishtown road.

The thought occurred to us that we could express the structure of the new library building radiating from the existing library and forming an edge along the curve street frontage, so that the structure of the building could be a reference / representation of the Ray and the social history of Ringsend, and to fish that sustained the people of Ringsend for generations.

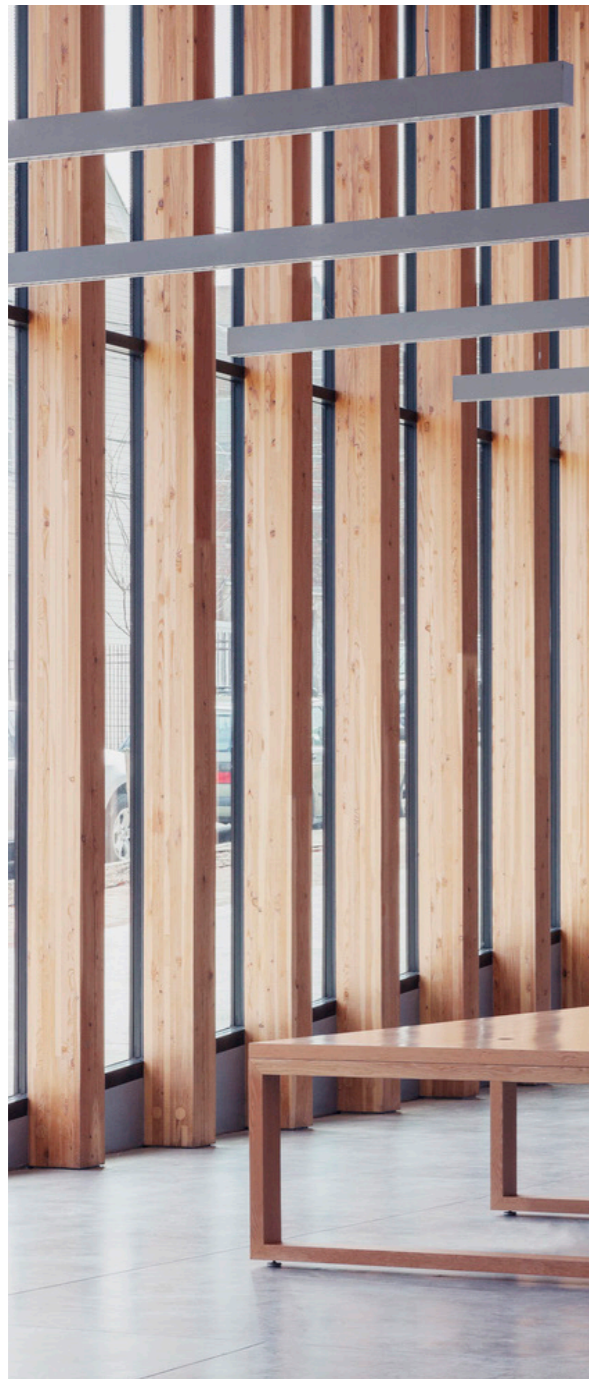


## 5.3 PRECEDENTS

This design concept was quiet exciting in terms of the kind of quality internal space it had the potential to create. With this design concept in hand, we looked for precedents where that had been done before, some notable precedents we came across were Kirkkonummi Library in Finland, The Stapleton Library in Stanton Island USA and St. Benedict's Chapel in Switzerland, not library but an example of particular interest because of the curve, you can see how the rhythm of the structure along the curve exaggerates the perspective and generates a wonderful space.



KIRKKONUMMI LIBRARY FINLAND



STAPLETON LIBRARY STATEN ISLAND USA



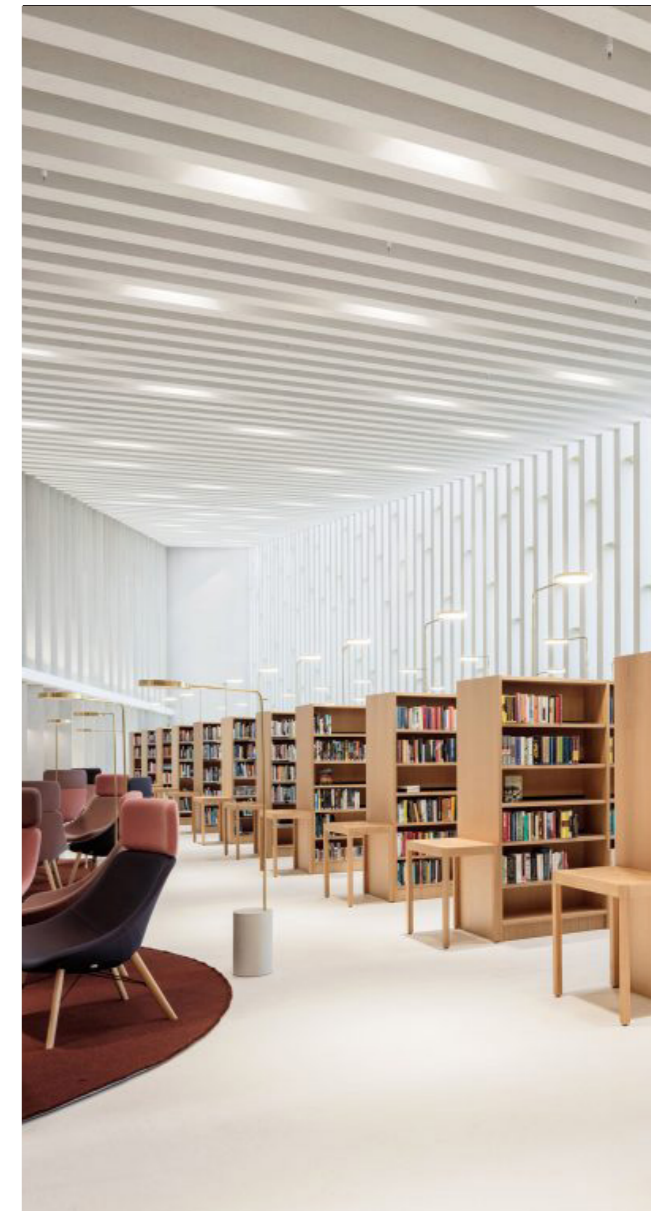
STAPLETON LIBRARY STATEN ISLAND USA



SAINT BENEDICT CHAPEL SWITZERLAND



SAINT BENEDICT CHAPEL SWITZERLAND



KIRKKONUMMI LIBRARY FINLAND

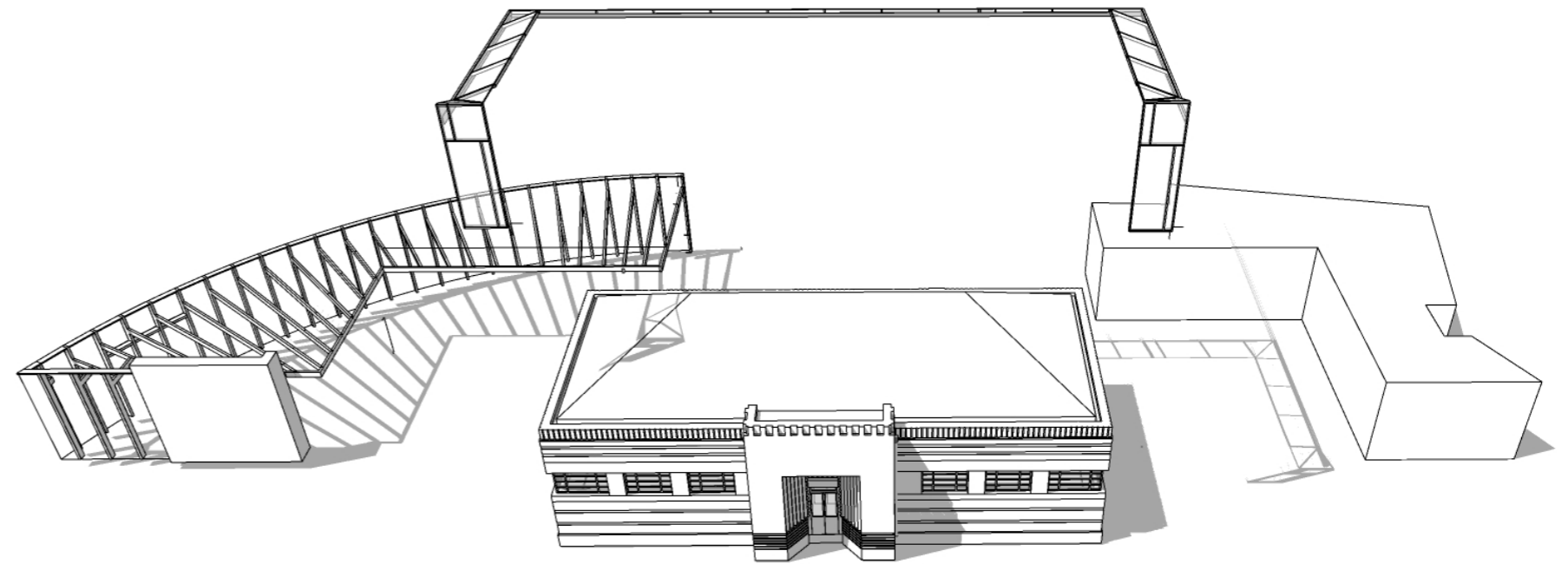
## 5.4 DESIGN STRATEGY

This diagram shows the design strategy for the building and its integration into the existing building. The public and private areas of the building are separated and expressed in different ways to make their use legible in the design. The public areas will express the structure and have lots of glazing to allow light in, and to make visual connections between the library and Fitzwilliam street and Irishtown road. They will be grouped to the south and south west of the building to avail of the best natural light.

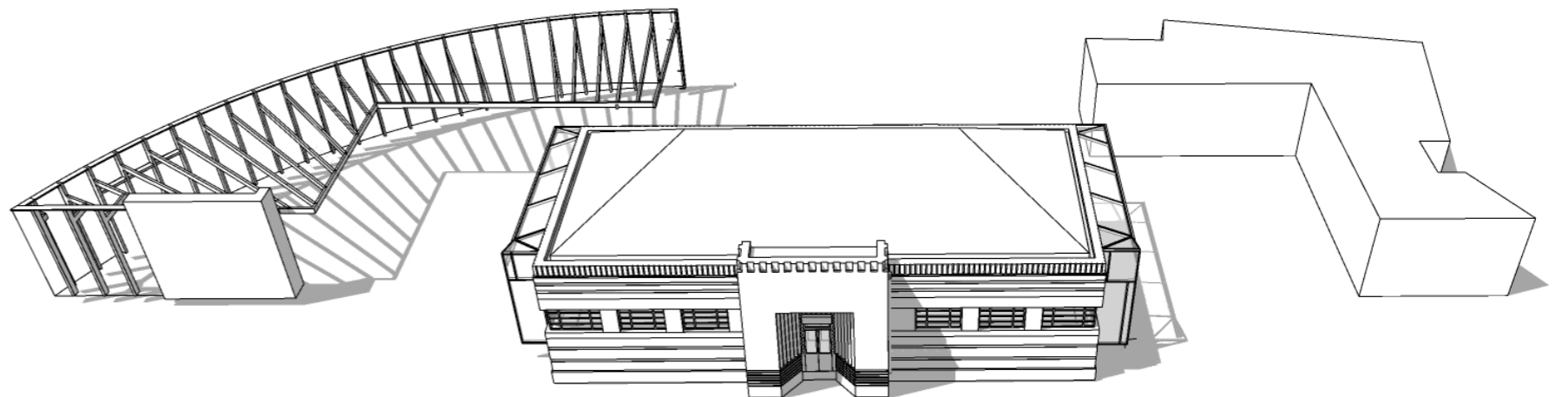
While the private areas would be more solid with only punch windows for the offices and canteen. They would be grouped to the north and north west and form the solid element through which the new library entrance would be located. Both elements taking an L shaped form, joining together to create a U shaped extension wrapping the existing library.

The conservation of the existing library and its integration into the greater library building is a key driver in the design, whereby we aim to preserve as much of the existing building as possible. As outlined in the previous section on Conservation Strategy we would be wrapping the building on 3 sides, however, butting a new building up against the old was too strong handed from a conservation and design perspective.

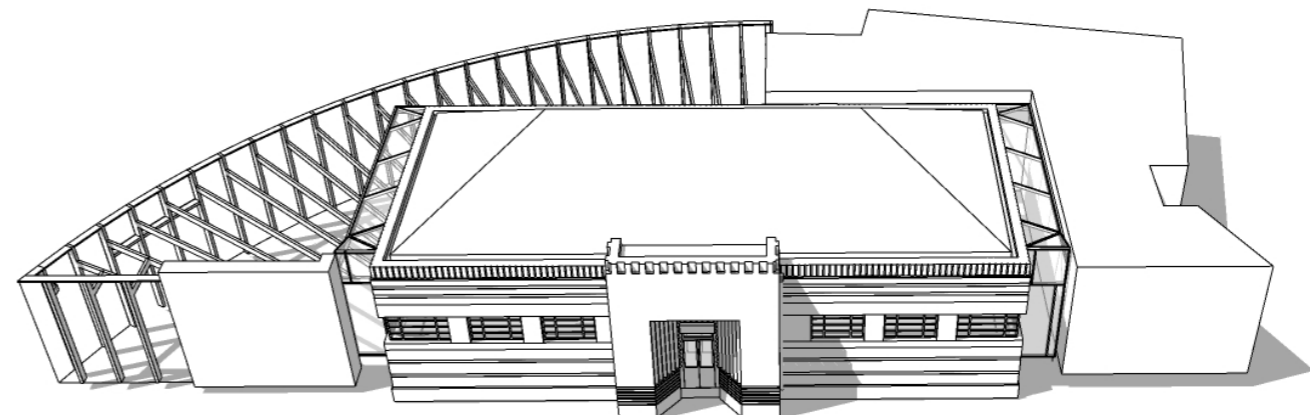
The solution was to introduce a glazed link between the existing and the proposed, so the new building never actually touches the old. This link takes the form of glazed wall panels either side of the front façade, these wrap up and create a roof light running around the 3 enclosed sides of the existing library. This solution works on multiple levels, it creates a lightness of touch between the new and old buildings, it floods the walls of the existing library in light emphasizing their importance in the design, and it allows light reach the existing library windows and therefore light into the existing library hall.



DESIGN STRATEGY DIAGRAM



DESIGN STRATEGY DIAGRAM - GLAZED CONNECTION



DESIGN STRATEGY DIAGRAM - THE FRAME & THE SOLID

## 5.5 LIBRARY LAYOUT & FINISHES

The existing library building as previously discussed has strong symmetry and strong axial alignments running through the centre of the building. The existing entrance is located on the short axis and represents the start of the main circulation route. The first big move we made was to move the main circulation route through the building, from the short axis to the long axis. This moved the new entrance to the north elevation facing out onto the library square helping to activate the space, and make stronger links between the external & internal public spaces, with the building axis extending across the square. This elevation also creates a strong backdrop and sense of enclosure for the square.

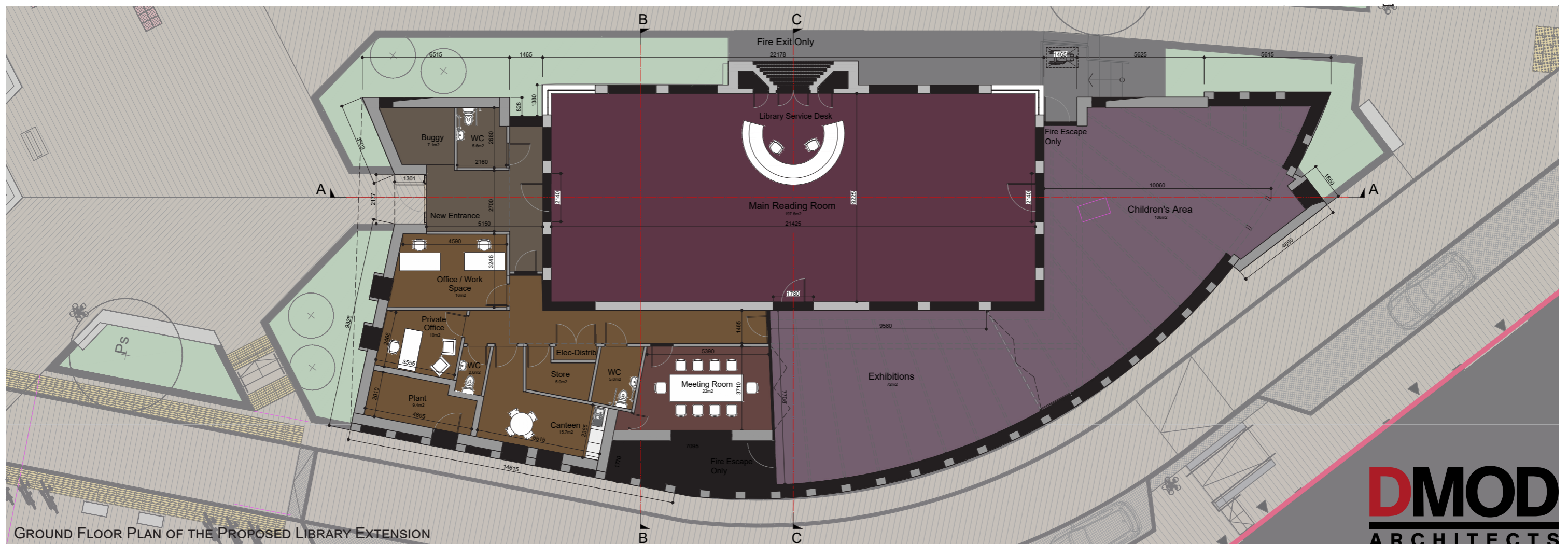
Within the building it allowed us to elongate the entrance and locate practical services along the entrance before reaching the main reading hall. The entrance will now have a level threshold with a matt well for people to dry their feet, a buggy storage area for families with young children and a public toilet located to the left, with the staff entrance to the right.

Toward the end of the elongated entrance are the new doors into the main reading hall, this new door will be formed by removing the portion of wall underneath the centre window of the north gable elevation. These doors will be illuminated by the large roof light overhead, again using light to emphasize and highlight circulation. This arrangement also allowed us to create a sense of compression in scale with a reduced ceiling height as people pass through the threshold and down the short corridor, then the sense of release as people enter the main reading hall with its 4.5m high ceilings.

The main reading hall of the library will still be the dominant space in the library, it will also act as an orientating space for users of the library. It is proposed to add a new long roof light to the existing building to help with any deficiency in light through wrapping the building on 3 sides and to allow ventilated upstands to the roof light maintaining the natural ventilation strategy of this space. Respecting the very symmetrical nature of the existing library we located the entrances to the new public areas on those axis's. On the short axis the door into the exhibition space and on the long axis the door to the children's area. Both these spaces are linked but can be separated with a folding wall partition. This allows the most flexibility for different uses and events.

The long axis through the building ends in the children's library with the focal point of a projecting box bay window, the picture window faces down toward Irishtown. The idea here is to create a visual link down the street both for people in the library and people traveling up the street toward the library. As well as creating a focal point and an interesting spot for kids to sit and read. Both the children's library and exhibition space will have the structures exposed and a wall of glazing between the columns allowing lots of natural light in and the visual connection to street, the shops and the community.

The staff areas are grouped in an L shape around the existing library, this area is accessed off the entrance or the exhibition space and all the rooms, offices, canteen, toilets, & meeting room are accessed off the corridor between new and old which is top lit by the roof light wrapping the whole building.



## 5.5 BUILDING LAYOUT & FINISHES

It is very important to us that the proposed internal spaces create a warm and inviting atmosphere, a place where people want to come and feel comfortable staying, material selection is key to achieving that goal. The exposed structure internally which is key to the design concept is proposed to be constructed of rectangular hollow steel section beams and columns, giving the structure a sense of order. The internal walls are to be a light buff / reddish coloured brick to complement the exposed brick of the existing library walls. The brick as a material finish has a warmth and a tactile nature which will help to create the desired atmosphere. Coupled the above with the quality of light these spaces will have from the curved glazed wall facing onto Fitzwilliam Street the resulting spaces have the potential to be of a very high quality.



INTERNAL VIEW OF CHILDREN'S AREA

## 5.5 BUILDING LAYOUT & FINISHES

In this image you can see what was set out earlier in the conservation strategy regarding the preservation of the outside of the existing building internally, you see here that the old external walls will be left exposed internally with the roof light directly over flooding the walls in light. You can see here the rhythm of the structure as it sweeps around the curve and how it creates a very strong and ordered perspective, again the resulting spaces have the potential to be of a very high quality.



INTERNAL VIEW FROM THE CORNER OF THE CHILDREN'S AREA



## 5.5 BUILDING LAYOUT & FINISHES

This image is of the exhibition space, taken from the corner of the existing building, you see here how the rectangular hollow steel sections extends out under the roof light wrapping the existing library but stops just short of the existing building, again new doesn't touch the old, only the glazed link. To the back of the room you can see the internal bifold glazed wall of the meeting room which can open up to extend the space offering more flexibility of use.



INTERNAL VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE

## 5.5 BUILDING LAYOUT & FINISHES

This last image is from the meeting room looking back up toward the children's area. What you see in these images is the light pouring in through the glazed wall along Fitzwilliam street, the light falling onto the existing building through the roof light, the exaggerated perspective of the structure sweeping around the curve. What isn't so obvious from this angle is the visual connection with Fitzwilliam street. The existing library turned its back on this street creating a very poor quality of space, the proposed exhibition space & children's library through its glazed elevation, will have a very strong visual connection with the street and the shops. This will help to integrate the library building into the street scape, reinforcing the idea that the library is a public space open and welcoming to the community.



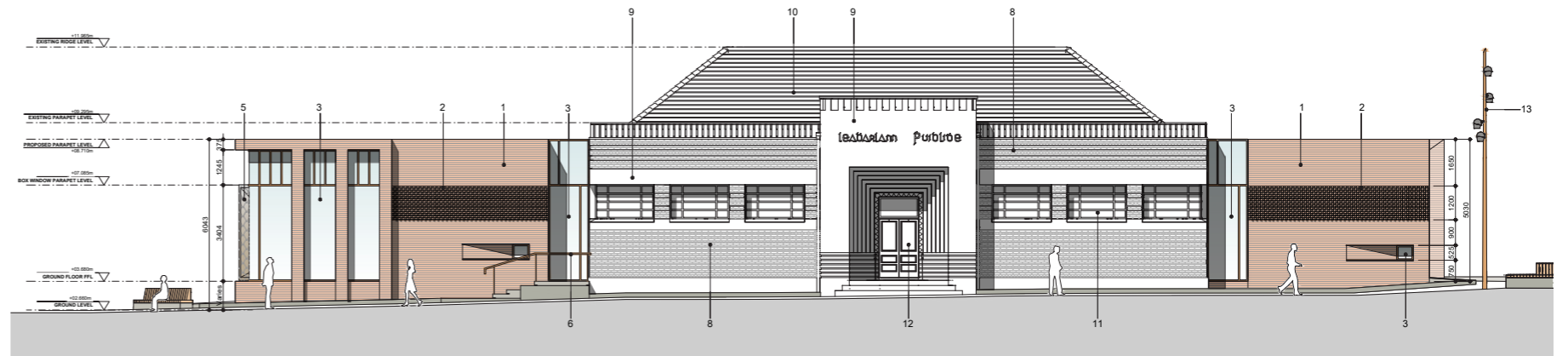
INTERNAL VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE

## 5.6 FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS

The goal of the design for the library extension was to create a building that was different from the original building so that (in terms of good conservation practices) the history of the building would be legible through its architecture, but it was important that the proposed design was harmonious and respectful and in part informed by the existing building.

In much the same way as the building form was generated as a response to the site conditions and the local history, the building facades have been designed as a response to their surroundings and the spaces they interact with. As I mentioned material choice was very important and in choosing a material finish for the proposed extension, we chose brick taking our cues from both the existing library building but also from many of the surrounding buildings in the square. Brick as a material has an inherent integrity and robustness making it a suitable material for a public building of this nature. The brick will be of a similar and of a complementary tone to the existing. Through the continuity of material, the existing and proposed buildings will share a common language.

The old front elevation is the most important in terms of conservation, in this elevation we have tried to pick up the features of the existing building and use them as generators for the proposed façade treatments. The existing building has a very linear elevation with the bands of brick, painted concrete, and horizontal windows. We have taken the existing window line and introduced a projecting brick pattern to the walls either side of the existing building, and within the line of the existing brick bands we introduced small windows with long chamfered reveals to the walls either side. The brick pattern was generated from the chevron pattern surrounding the library entrance, we took this pattern and extruding it in a projecting brick course set at 45 degrees to the wall. To the right of the old entrance the brick pattern turns the corner towards the new entrance and frames the Ringsend Public Library sign. To the left the brick pattern is terminated by the brick columns an external expression of the timber structure. This façade composition is very much about framing the existing library elevation and creating a transitional architectural expression that links the existing building to the other elevations of the building. The parapet height of the proposed building was carefully chosen to maximise the internal ceiling heights but to remain well below the existing building, so that the new structure reads as being subservient to the existing. The existing head height of the linear windows is used as a ruling datum point that extends the whole way around the new library building, setting the heights for the projecting bay window, the window transoms in the Fitzwilliam Street elevation, the brick banding height and the new entrance door height on the library square elevation.



IRISHTOWN ROAD ELEVATION



CGI SHOWING BRICK & WINDOW DETAIL



CGI SHOWING BRICK & WINDOW DETAIL



IRISHTOWN ROAD CGI STREET VIEWS

## 5.6 FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS

The Fitzwilliam Street façade is very much an external expression of the design concept in which the structure is exposed, in continuing this expression onto the façade it generates a very ordered architecture with a rhythm of column and glass along the curve generated by the street itself.

The expression is that of a stripped back classical architecture, very much a contemporary version of the classical forms and as such the columns have been generated with a ratio of column height to diameter of 10:1 aligning itself with the Corinthian Order, the building assumes through this expression somewhat of a civic presence appropriate for a library building.

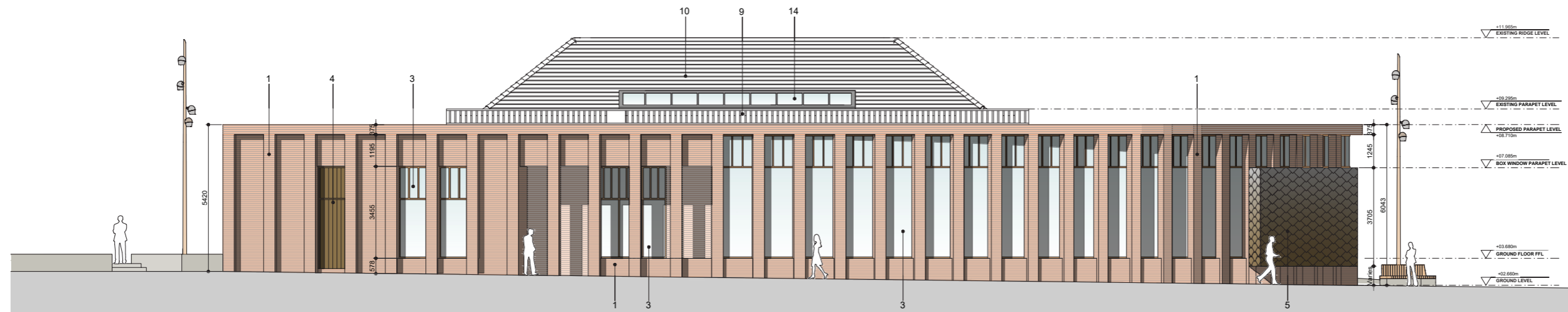
This expression of the columns to the public areas of the library is extended over the private areas of the library to the north west, which is expressed as a solid, at this point the columns become pilasters that sit within the wall. What this creates and continuity of expression for the glazed public and solid private spaces.



FITZWILLIAM STREET CGI STREET VIEWS



FITZWILLIAM STREET CGI STREET VIEWS



FITZWILLIAM STREET ELEVATION

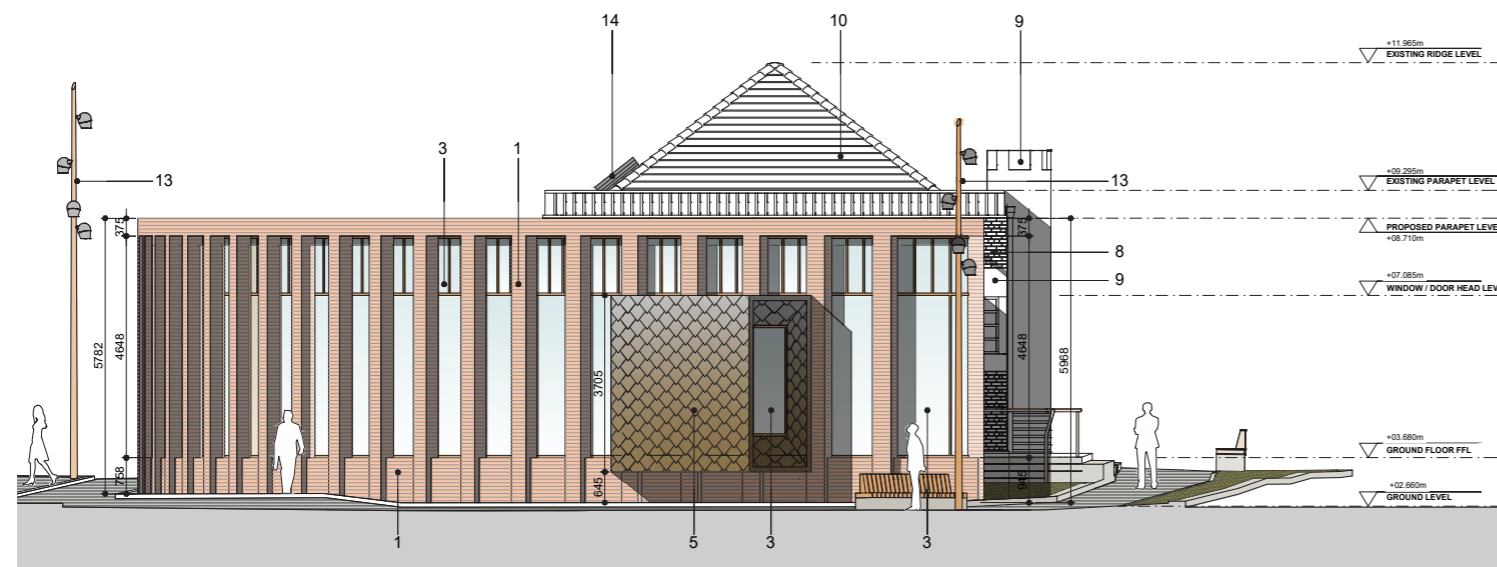
## 5.6 FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS

The southern tip of the building where Fitzwilliam Street and Irishtown Road meet is perhaps the most dynamic part of the proposed building. The building form is generated in response to the site, taking the wedge shape created by the diverging roads and using it to generate the building form. The architectural expression is still that of the paired back classical architecture with a glazed corner window where both elevations meet.

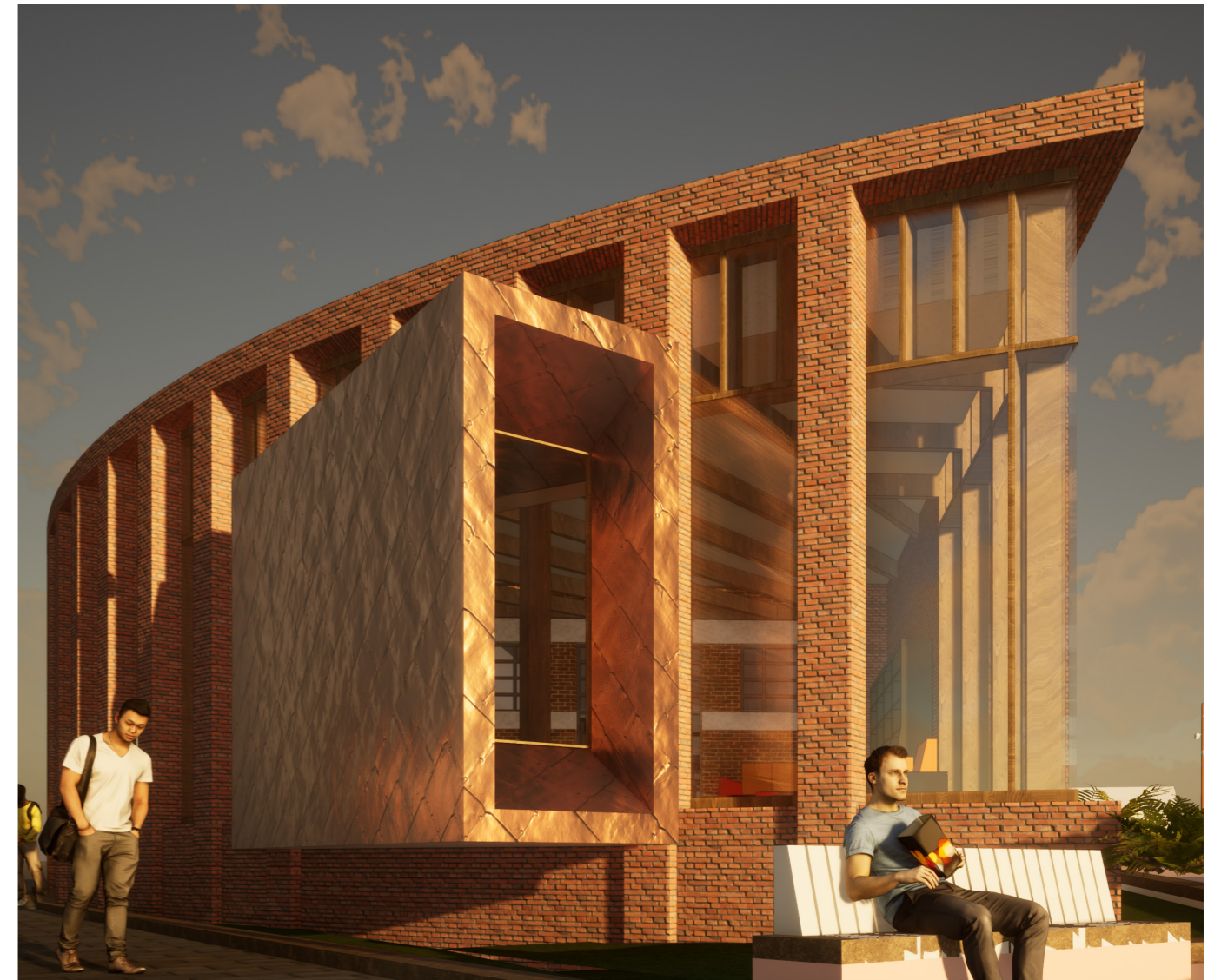
This elevation is punctuated by the projecting bay window in the children's library. It is envisioned that the window will very much read as an oculus looking down the street toward Irishtown. The bay window is proposed to be clad in a selected metal panel arranged in a diamond shaped shingle pattern, a reference to fish scales and the design concept.



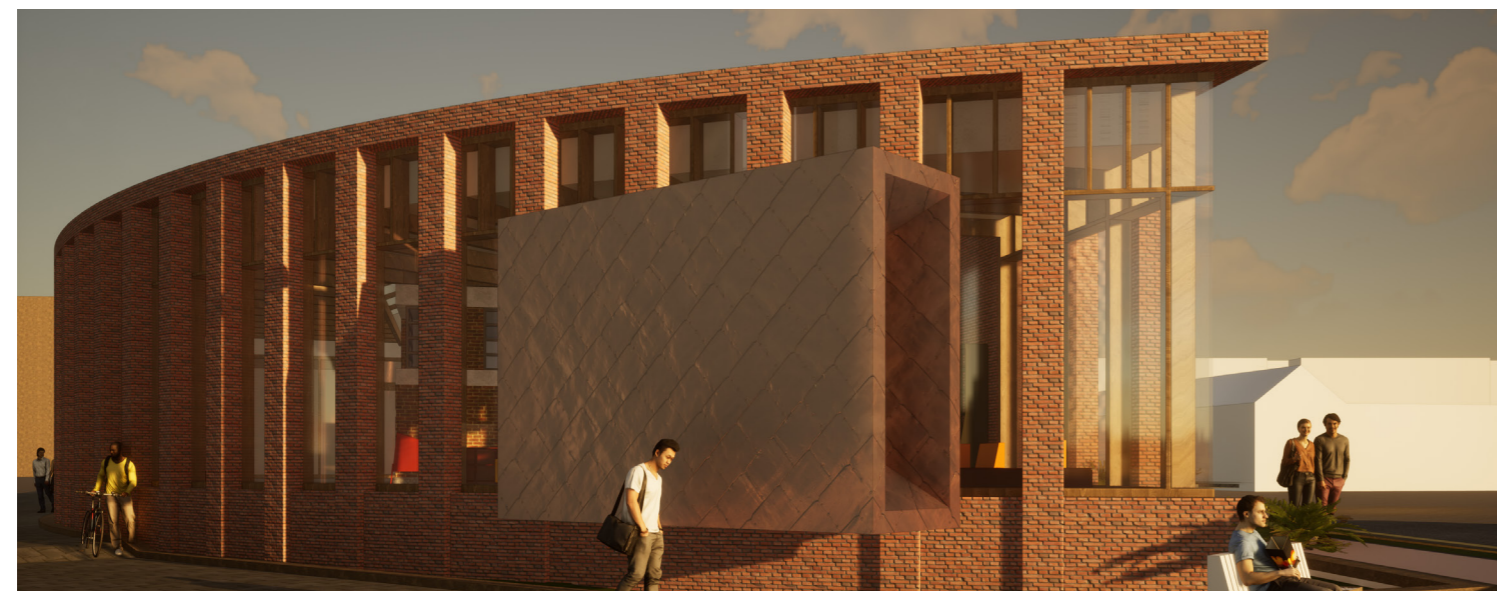
IRISHTOWN ROAD CGI STREET VIEW



FITZWILLIAM STREET / IRISHTOWN ROAD ELEVATION



FITZWILLIAM STREET / IRISHTOWN ROAD CGI STREET VIEW



FITZWILLIAM STREET / IRISHTOWN ROAD CGI STREET VIEW

## 5.6 FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS

The north elevation and entrance façade forms the backdrop to the library square and shares much of its geometry with the square landscape design. The long axis of the existing building on which the new entrance sits, extends out into the square in the alignment of the paving. The planter immediately to the left of the entrance is aligned to the chamfered entrance wall, this in turn is aligned to the pedestrian crossing at the top of the square. The library square façade is off set from the central axis of the existing building so the entrance is located to the left of the new façade.

The façade (much like the Irishtown Road elevation) takes its cues from the existing building and in particular the existing building entrance. The entrance portico has a deep corbeled reveal with the entrance door set far back in the portico, the library square façade is an abstraction of this idea with the whole façade forming an asymmetrical concave surface leading back to the library entrance. The façade through this arrangement makes it very clear that this is the library entrance.



IRISHTOWN ROAD CGI VIEW OF LIBRARY SQUARE



LIBRARY SQUARE ELEVATION



LIBRARY SQUARE CGI VIEW



FITZWILLIAM STREET CGI VIEW OF ENTRANCE

## 6.0 3D VISUALISATIONS



## 6.0 3D VISUALISATIONS





## 6.0 3D VISUALISATIONS



## 6.0 3D VISUALISATIONS



## 7.0 CONCLUSION

In summary we believe that the proposed Ringsend Library Extension coupled with the Library Square works will represent a significant improvement to the public amenity on offer, serving as a central hub for public life in Ringsend. The building extension strikes the balance between respecting the historic character of the existing Art Deco Library building and creating a new library based on an architecture that reflects the 'spirit of the time'.

That spirit we believe, is based on preserving and working with the existing buildings on a site. An understanding that each layer of the built environment is laid over and around the existing city fabric. An understanding that each layer needs to be responsive and respectful of what has come before. A spirit that holds integrity, robustness and quality of materials at its centre. A spirit that holds above all, the belief that Architecture and place making is more than bricks and mortar, it is also about creating narratives around buildings and what they represents, it is about drawing connections to the past, to the place, to the social history, and infusing the building with a character that represents all of these elements.

We believe that through the design process we have produced a building that meets all of the ideals set out above, satisfies the library services programme requirements and creates a building that the local community can identify with and feel proud of. A building and public space that will act as a catalyst for change and improvements in the area and deliver a vibrant village centre in Ringsend.

Taking into account all of the reasons outlined above, we respectfully request that a positive decision be returned when considering this application.

