

A permanent Library for Waterloo Options Appraisal

July 2013

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INTRODUCTION

Bisset Adams was commissioned by Lambeth Council in January 2013 to appraise options and make recommendations for a site for a new permanent library in Waterloo, which will provide a much-overdue replacement for the temporary building on Lower Marsh. This process has involved extensive consultation and research, and our recommendations attempt to find a solution which is acceptable to all groups; we believe there is a synergy and complementarity between the library and local community groups, both in the customers and the type of usage they attract, which could be the basis of a powerful and exciting partnership on whatever site the library is located.

Successful modern libraries around the UK are based on this idea of partnership and the extended role of the library:

- Tower Hamlets' Idea Stores (large and small) bring libraries together with adult education, council information and other service providers, youth services and community space for a variety of activities;
- The Discovery Centres in Hampshire bring together library, café, arts and performance facilities to create a cultural and arts hub;
- High Wycombe library includes 'Headspace', a youth library and events space, flexible space for hire by community groups, a highly creative and original children's library with storytelling 'theatre' and 'story trees' as well as space for wet play and arts;
- Blackpool Central Library has space for community and arts groups, performances (including band nights!), learning and training as well as quiet reading and study space.



INTRODUCTION

In this study our priority has been to find the best possible site for a new library within the area, to enable the library service to build its offer and become a significant and vibrant part of the local community. We envisage reaching out to a range of people including current non-users, as well the local business community, visitors and tourists, commuters, providing library services and an exciting range of services and events as befits a modern library in one of London's most significant centres for both transport and the arts.

We have looked at a number of possible sites and partnerships in the area, and assessed them first and foremost in terms of realistic viability within a relatively short timeframe; a similar appraisal was carried out by Bisset Adams and Urban Practitioners in 2005, and we are very aware that this had no practical outcome in terms of the new library, and are aware that the current report should result in a real solution within the next 1-2 years.

The current library is relatively small, but used and liked by a loyal user group. The 2012 report 'The Future of Lambeth's Libraries' by the Co-operative Council commission recommended that to improve its usage and reach, relocation from the current site would be beneficial. Waterloo Action Centre was identified as a potential new location, with the added benefit of the potential for partnership working to provide a vibrant community hub.

For this report, a number of sites have been appraised for the new library, including both a new build development on the current site, a refurbishment and extension of the old library building housing the Waterloo Action Centre, other potential partners with space such as Oasis and Living Space, and potential opportunities from major new developments planned adjacent to Waterloo Station, particularly the Shell Building and Elizabeth House on York Way. Potential space within the railway arches was also considered.



Historic image of original library



Current library in Lower Marsh



Waterloo Action Centre



Hall in WAC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this options appraisal has been to find a genuinely feasible option for a new library for Waterloo which can be achieved within a reasonable timeframe. Various options have been appraised, and are not recommended unless they meet certain criteria:

- suitability for the library in terms of visibility, transparency, adequate and flexible space;
- definite availability for project to be completed within a timeframe of a maximum of two years.

The report finds only two genuine options to be recommended: a redevelopment of the existing site; and an extension and redevelopment of the Waterloo Action Centre building. Both these options have certain drawbacks, but in our opinion these could be overcome. We believe it is important to have some ground floor space for the library, at least for a children's library because of the issues with buggies, and both options present some problems with achieving this.

Existing site

The existing site is well located on the local high street, and offers a large area with the potential for up to three storeys above ground floor which could be developed to provide affordable housing. There is also room for a community partner on the site (this could be the Job Shop which currently shares the site with the library), and the library could have a dramatic double height entrance hall and further accommodation on the first floor. The main drawbacks to this site are:

- its lack of visibility from the main routes which could have a detrimental effect on attracting other users such as visitors to the area or business commuters;
- the fact the Network Rail has identified this site as key to its long-term plans for development and regeneration within the station, and has powers of Compulsory Purchase.

Waterloo Action Centre

This building is in need of updating and could be greatly improved by refurbishment and an internal replanning of some of the office and ancillary space to provide flexible space for office, meeting, computer skills training etc. It could provide a high profile site for the library, with the potential for a highly visible glazed extension to the side, and potentially a very positive partnership and complementarity with existing community services and fitness activities taking place within WAC. We have produced a number of sketch options for incorporating the library into the Centre, two of which involve an extension to the Lower Marsh side, and two of which involve locating the library within the first floor mezzanine space, currently used largely for external letting to raise revenue, and extending to the side of the mezzanine above the gallery space. Should the library inhabit this space, lost revenues could potentially be replaced by library budget through internal accounting. WAC currently pays a nominal rent on the building which belongs to Lambeth Council, so there could be a financial reconciliation which benefits all parties. All options involve a reorganisation of internal spaces to provide more flexible accommodation, which should both benefit existing users and create the opportunity for complementary services and partnership working with the library.

The main drawbacks to this option are:

- disruption to the existing uses within WAC during construction;
- changes required to the existing management of the centre to work in partnership with library services;
- potential problems arising from reduction of revenues from the mezzanine room;
- potential high costs required to refurbish and extend a historic building (although these are mitigated by the fact that such works are in part a maintenance necessity going forward).

There are a number of potential ways to reorganise the space within Waterloo Action Centre, and we would recommend a more detailed assessment of the optimum proposal once the principle of the site choice is agreed. Our design options have shown that it is possible to achieve the new library in a number of different locations on the site; we believe that it is possible without the need for an extension over the garden space, using the mezzanine space and potentially building over the flat roof to the east, and offering the most cost-effective way of achieving a new library and modernisation of the WAC building.

Costs

Gardiner and Theobald have been commissioned to provide budget costs for all options for these two sites; these range between approximately £1 million and £2 million for all options, including new build, refurbishment and extension options. These costs should be taken as estimates; more accurate costings will be prepared in response to more detailed design of a preferred option after an 'in principle' agreement is reached with WAC. An analysis of revenue budgets will also be undertaken at this stage.

Recommendation

We believe that the Waterloo Action Centre building is on balance the most feasible and best option for providing a permanent library within Waterloo, as potential drawbacks can be overcome, and a refurbishment of the building should bring benefits for existing users as well as an exciting new home for Waterloo Library.

We recognise that the existing site will not serve as a new permanent home for Waterloo Library owing to the long-term plans of Network Rail for the station. However, we recommend Lambeth Council investigate Network Rail's intentions in more detail before committing to the existing site in any form.

THE BRIEF

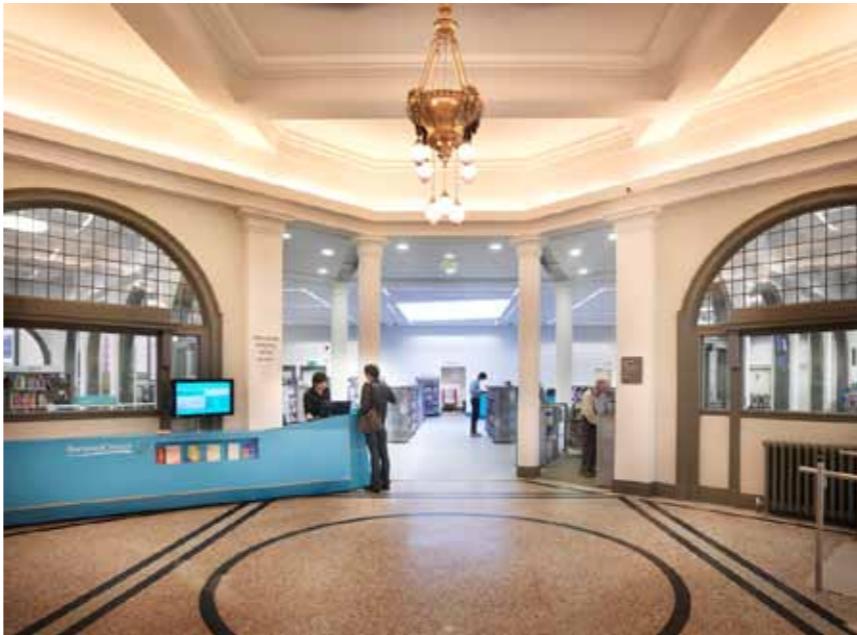
The consultants' brief is to appraise options to find a permanent site for Waterloo Library, which has been housed in a temporary building for at least twenty years, despite planning permission only having been granted for seven years. This project is part of a wider improvement programme for Lambeth's libraries, which have lacked investment over the past decades, recognising that many are housed in adequate and under-maintained buildings, with low levels of customer satisfaction and usage. The library service has produced a mission statement for libraries as places 'where communities come together in safe, flexible spaces with friendly, professional staff to learn, enjoy, discover, be the best that they can be.'

In 2012, the Lambeth Libraries Commission reported on the future of Lambeth's libraries, recommending that most of the borough's libraries should work in partnership with other community services to provide vibrant and varied community hubs.

The current temporary library in Waterloo is restricted in its appeal to certain groups, in particular teenagers and younger working people, and the aspirations is for a new library to widen participation enormously, on the model of other new libraries around the UK.

The brief requires the appraisal of a number of options for the new library, although it is clear that the two most immediately practicable are the existing site and the Waterloo Action Centre building, the former library and a historic library building. The consultants were asked to appraise these and any other potential sites.

The parameters of the new library are to provide it within its existing footprint of approximately 200 sq m (including office and ancillary space); a potential reduction in its revenue funding precludes an increase in size. The current library at 343 sq m also includes the Job Shop at approximately 150 sq m.



THE OPTIONS: CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

This options appraisal mirrors a similar appraisal carried out by Bisset Adams and Urban Practitioners in 2005, which failed to result in a new library owing to local opposition to a development of the Waterloo Action Centre building and the decision not to develop the existing site for similar reasons which exist today.

This project has been commissioned by Lambeth council, and has involved consultation with Waterloo Action Centre, the South Bank Forum, Waterloo Community Development Group, Lambeth Libraries and a library steering group assembled to feed into this process. In addition, meetings have been held with other interested parties including Network Rail, Canary Wharf Group (developers of the Shell Building), Chelsfield (developers of Elizabeth House), Imperial War Museum, South Bank University, British Film Institute, Kings College London, Kate Hoey MP and other individuals and parties through public meetings.

Most meetings have been held at the Waterloo Action Centre.

Exhibition and questionnaire

An exhibition of interim plans and proposals was exhibited in Waterloo Library as well as in Waterloo Action Centre, to gauge the views of local people and library users. A large number of questionnaires was completed and returned.

The general tenor of the consultation has been that all parties welcome the possibility of a new library, although no new sites have been suggested other than those in the initial appraisal brief. In general, parties close to WAC and current users of WAC are opposed to incorporating the library within the existing building, owing to fears of disruption of existing activities. All accept that there is a need for ongoing improvement and maintenance to the fabric of the building, and many indicated that the library would be welcomed as long as it does not replace or upset current uses.

Many favour a redevelopment of the current site, as an asset to Lower Marsh as a community high street. The library would be a key part of the regeneration of Lower Marsh, although as mentioned there would be a question mark over its long term security of tenure.

In general the feeling was that the current library should be improved, creating a more modern, airy, light and varied space, with new services and facilities to attract a range of users. The views on the site were split; the majority favoured retaining the library on the existing site, but this should be seen within the context of the view that current usage

of WAC should continue, and many of those voting believed that the library would interrupt or discontinue current community activities within WAC; in fact the plans to relocate the library to WAC would involve major refurbishment and reorganisation, but would aim to retain all existing uses within a building reconfigured to be used more efficiently. In all, over four hundred questionnaires were completed, although there was some duplication; approximately a quarter of respondents expressed no preference for either site.

A petition was also drafted by some users of Waterloo Action Centre independently of the overall consultation, offering only two choices: to retain the library on the current site, and to relocate the library into an extension of WAC. This showed a result overwhelmingly in favour of rebuilding on the existing site.

Consultation programme

A steering group for the library was set up by members of the Waterloo Action Centre and Waterloo Community Development Group, including organisations and groups who use Waterloo Action Centre as well as many other local community groups and education providers in the Waterloo area. The project team from Bisset Adams and LB Lambeth have met with the steering group and consulted with wider stakeholders and interested parties at a number of open public meetings and workshops.

1. Presentation and open discussion at Waterloo Community Development Group meeting, January 23 at the Shall Centre
2. Steering group consultation and workshop, Waterloo Action Centre, 28 January.
3. Meeting with library staff, 4 February
4. Presentation and consultation at the South Bank Forum meeting, 7 February
5. Steering group workshop, Waterloo Action Centre, 6 March.
6. Waterloo Library Steering group - Presentation and discussion of draft options 10th April 2013
7. Exhibition and consultation on options - Waterloo Library 25th April 2013; Waterloo Action Centre
8. Exhibition and consultation on options - Waterloo Action Centre 29th April - 3rd May 2013 (staffed 1st May only)
9. Meeting with WAC and Lambeth Councillors on options - 30th May 2013
10. Draft options appraisal report sent to Waterloo library steering group for comments 27th May 2013

OPTIONS 1: THE EXISTING SITE

Waterloo Library is currently housed in a temporary single storey 'Yorkon' building on a level square site on Lower Marsh, towards the Leake Street end of the road. The rear of the site abuts a service road to the rear of Waterloo Station, and also would potentially connect with a broad underground passage to York Way, which has been identified as key to the future regeneration plans for Waterloo Station by Network Rail. The library occupies approximately half the current footprint, with the Job Shop sharing the site; it's recognised that the Job Shop represents an appropriate and complementary partner for the library, and would be provided if it were possible in any new site.

The site has drawbacks owing to its lack of visibility more than half way down Lower Marsh; it attracts local people and existing users, but other potential users (teenagers, visitors etc) are unlikely to investigate. Responses at consultation events revealed a mixture of loyalty to the current library and a significant number of respondents who did not use the library and many who were unaware of its existence.

The option to build on this site, which could involve complementary development such as affordable housing, community partners or retail, is compromised by the stated long-term plans of Network Rail for regeneration based around Waterloo Station; the current library site is important to their plans to provide links to York Way, and they have stated that they would need to obtain the site at some point.

Another drawback to developing the current site, is that owing to the need to share the site with other partners, the main part of the library would necessarily be located on the upper floors, resulting in poor access, particularly for mothers with children in buggies.

Our view is that this leaves the option to build a library accepting its lifespan might be relatively short-term, 15-20 years, but it would preclude the option of residential development. The speed of development and decision-making within Network Rail might allow this to be seen as a realistic option.

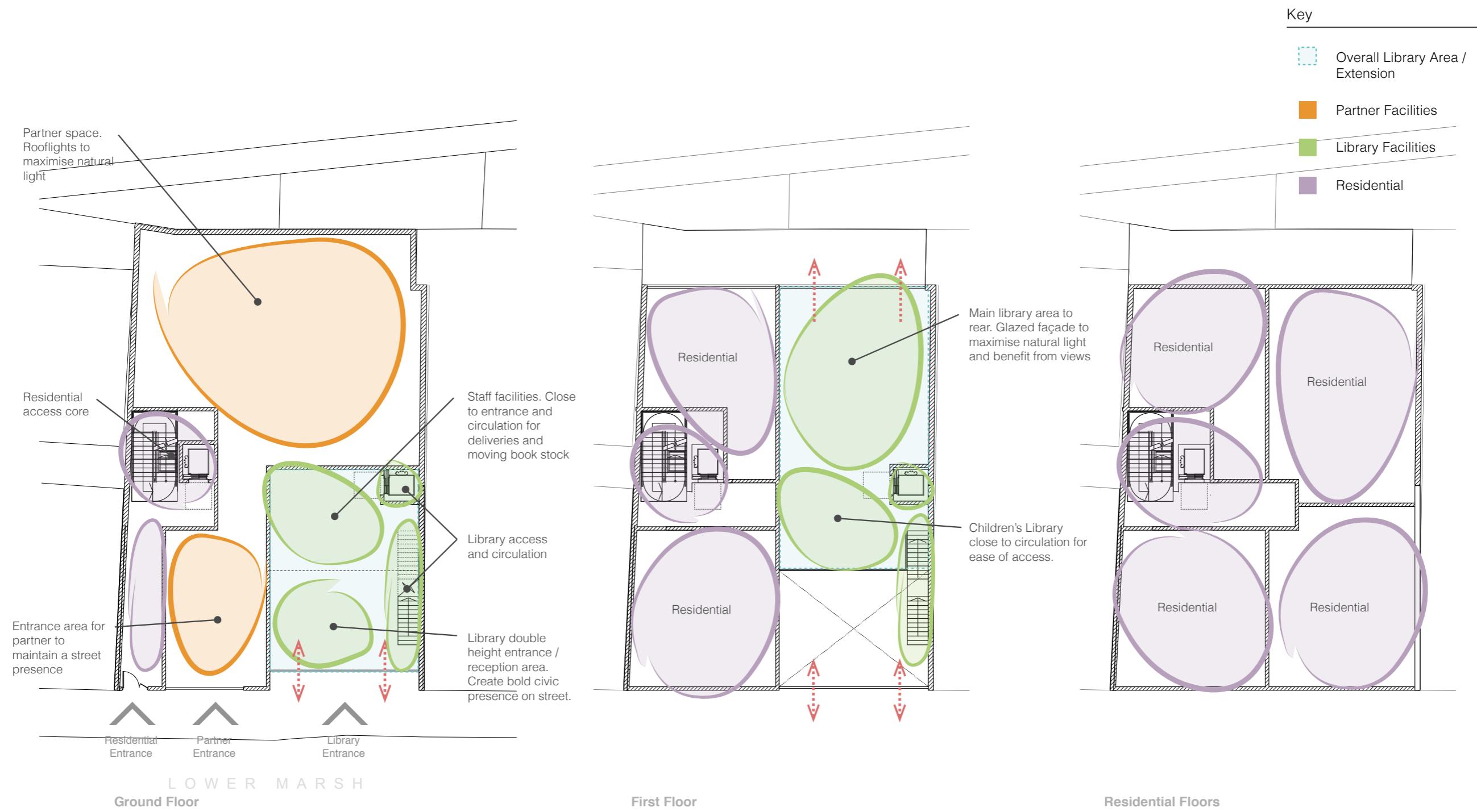
The option to combine the library with a route through to the station is not appropriate according to Network Rail, resulting in a dark and enclosed passageway. It is unlikely that Lambeth Council would invest in redeveloping a site for a period of 15 - 20 years if the site would then be used for the purposes required by Network Rail. Further discussion is required to better understand the longer term plans and requirements of Network Rail. It should also be noted that Lambeth Council's Supplementary Planning document (SPD) for the Waterloo area the current library site is safeguarded from development for the purposes of providing additional access to

Waterloo Station and to support the wider regeneration of the Waterloo area

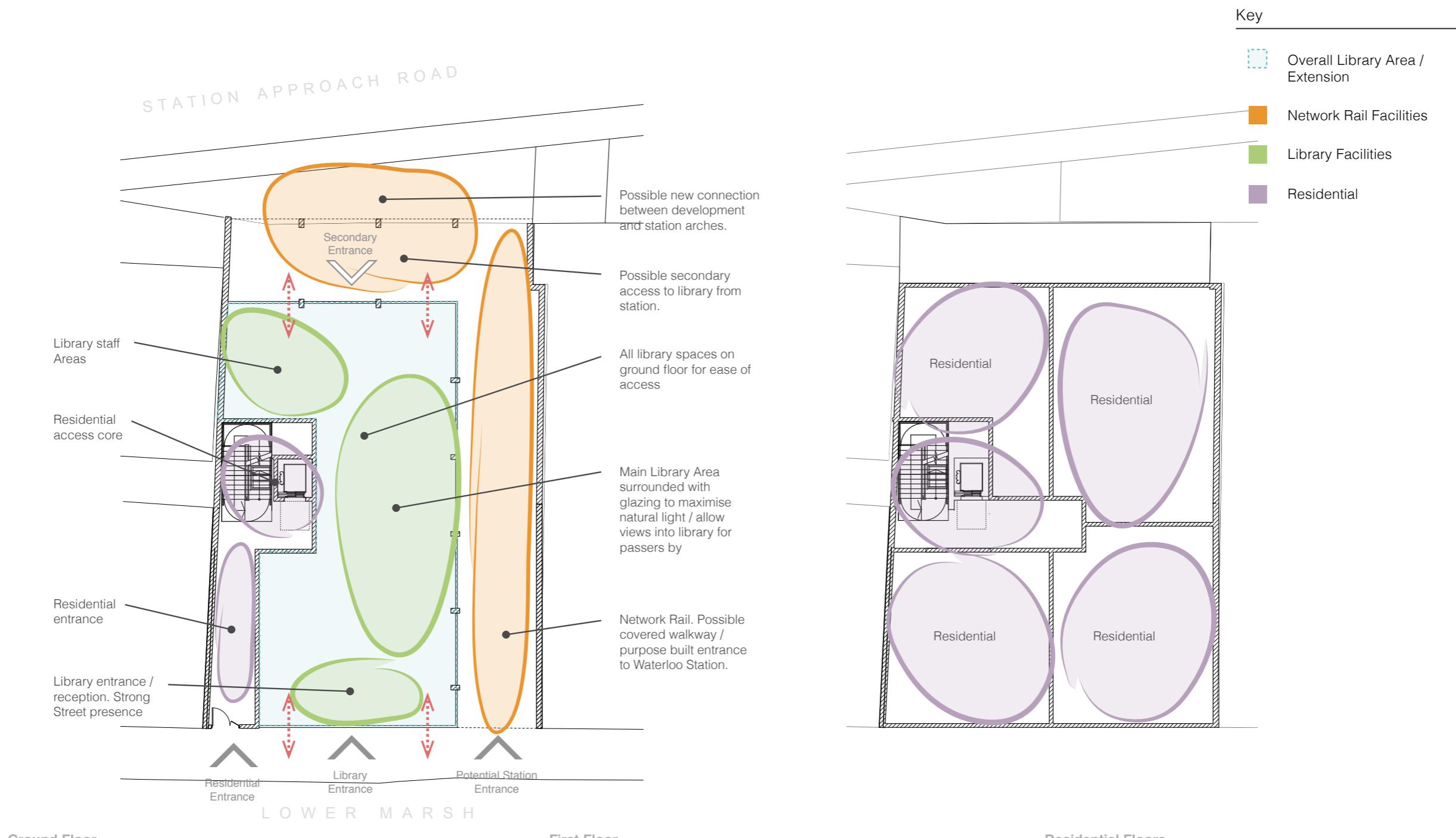
The following pages show zoning options for a library, partner organisation and residential development on the site. Also shown is the potential for the library to be rebuilt to incorporate a ground floor passage through to Waterloo Station.



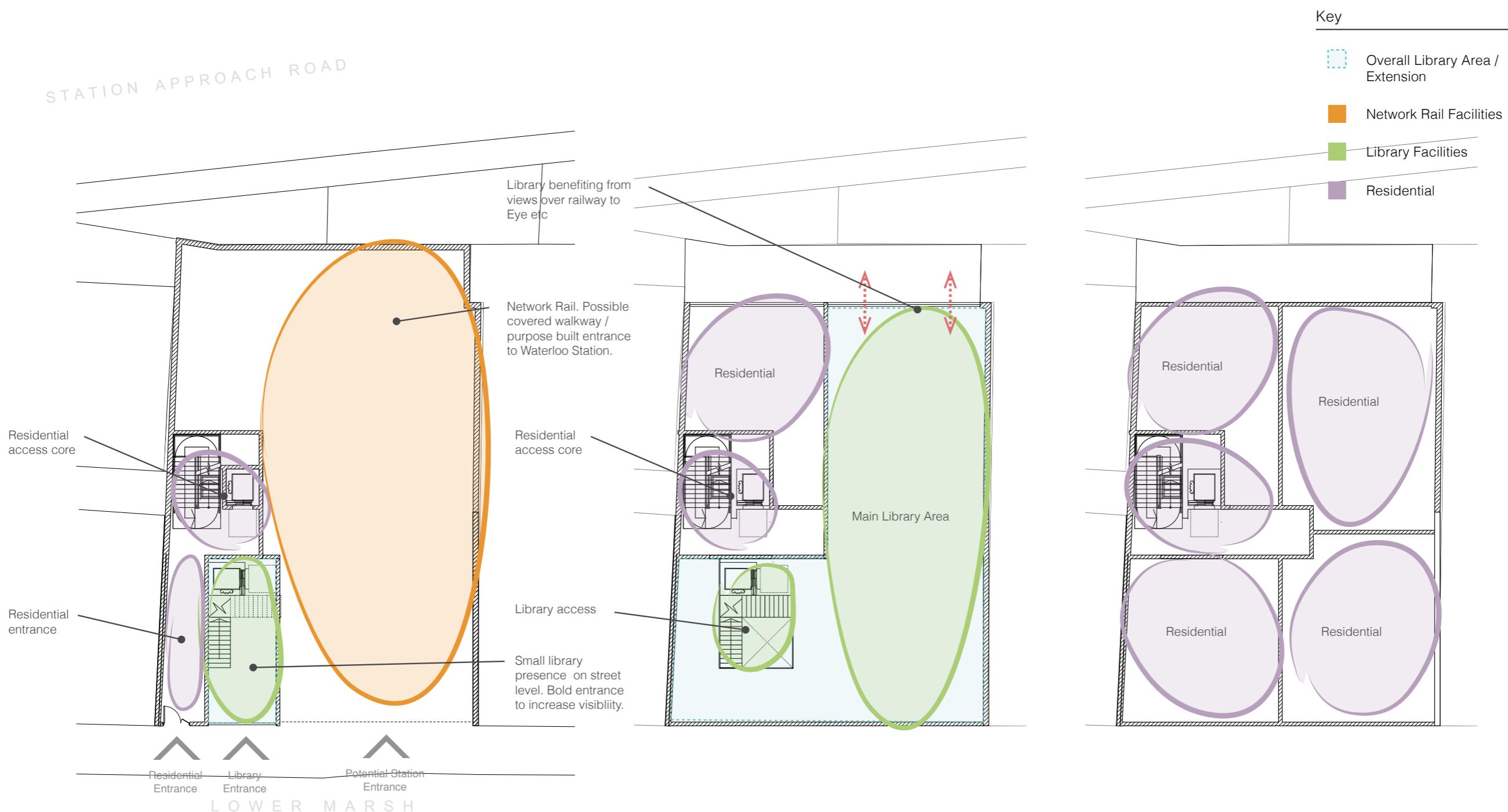
OPTION 1: EXISTING SITE



OPTION 1: EXISTING SITE



OPTION 1: EXISTING SITE



OPTION 1: EXISTING SITE

OPTION 2: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE

This has been a contentious option owing to perceived disruption to the existing users, and was similarly contentious in 2005 when it was appraised as an option then. The Waterloo Action Centre and other groups occupying the building do so on a gratis basis; as a valuable resource belonging to the people of Lambeth, it is reasonable to explore options for other community uses to be incorporated within the building without disrupting the good work which takes place there.

In our opinion, the building is in need of upgrading and improvement, and could be replanned to better serve the existing community groups as well as to incorporate a new library which would work well as a partner complementing the Waterloo Action Centre user groups. The library offers a more informal level of engagement: anyone can drop in, read, study, use computers, borrow a book, join a class, activity or children's storytime etc, without a formal or regular commitment. The WAC users are more timetabled, form part of groups, as well as the drop-in legal aid service. We believe that users of one type of service would welcome the provision of another on the site.

A café might also provide a welcome addition to the service in WAC; concerns about the impact on local cafes is unlikely to be founded, given the additional overall footfall the development would provide.

The Waterloo Action Centre is the original library building dating from 1892, and is on Lambeth's Heritage list of notable buildings. It occupies a highly visible location close to the junction between the Cut and Waterloo Road, and has a yard to the side which is largely paved with some planters.

The consultants believe that in principle there is a good synergy and complementarity between the existing uses and a new library within WAC, and have produced three optional layouts involving replanning the building and extending to the side. In all options some outside space is retained, as well as green space across the road in the park. The option showing an extension over the garden may be constrained by a fire exist reported to lead from Network Rail; this would be explored and addressed in any further development of these options.

Option 2A shows the library occupying a relatively small modern extension to the side of the main building, with stairs and lift leading to first floor infill extension on an existing flat roof, and leading directly into the existing mezzanine room as the main library space.

The strength of the roof providing the location of the infill space is a concern and may have to be reinforced.

Option 2B shows a far larger two-storey extension to the side of the building pushed to the rear of the yard, and a reconfiguration of existing offices and kitchen to provide shared office, computer, meeting facilities. A new computer/training suite can be used by both library and the Waterloo Action Centre. Both Options 2A and 2B

Option 2C shows how the library could be incorporated into the building without external extension; it takes over the first floor, using both WCDG's offices, the existing mezzanine room and an additional mezzanine inserted over the rear dance hall. Light is reintroduced to the rear dance hall through two new skylights stretching the length of the room.

Option 3 shows the library occupying the ground floor space currently used as a gallery space, along with the upstairs mezzanine room and potentially an extension over the flat roof to the east. This is our recommended option.

In all options, we propose reorganising the access through the building with a new corridor leading off the current ground floor gallery space, new toilets in the existing meeting space to the rear of the reception room, and opening up existing offices to provide shared spaces and more flexibility of use.

As mentioned, currently revenues from outside letting of the mezzanine room is a key part of WAC's business model; any proposal to incorporate the library into this room would need to indicate how this revenue shortfall could be made up. The consultants believe that by keeping this room as a flexible study space for the library by day, it will be possible to retain revenue generating activities during the evening to partially bridge this gap. The room in any case is not designed to bear the loadings associated with library bookstock.



Front dance hall

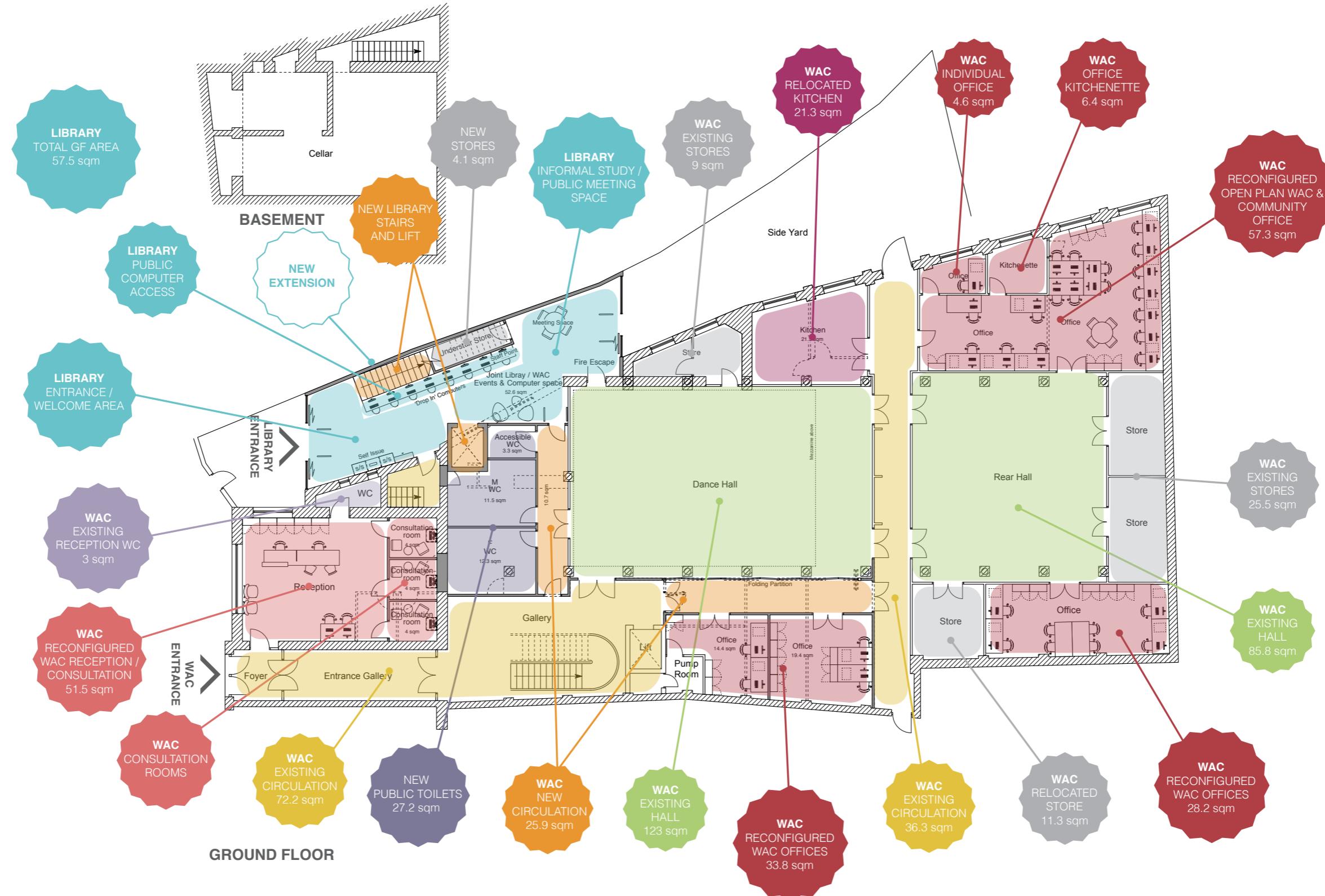


The Mezzanine

OPTION 2/A: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE

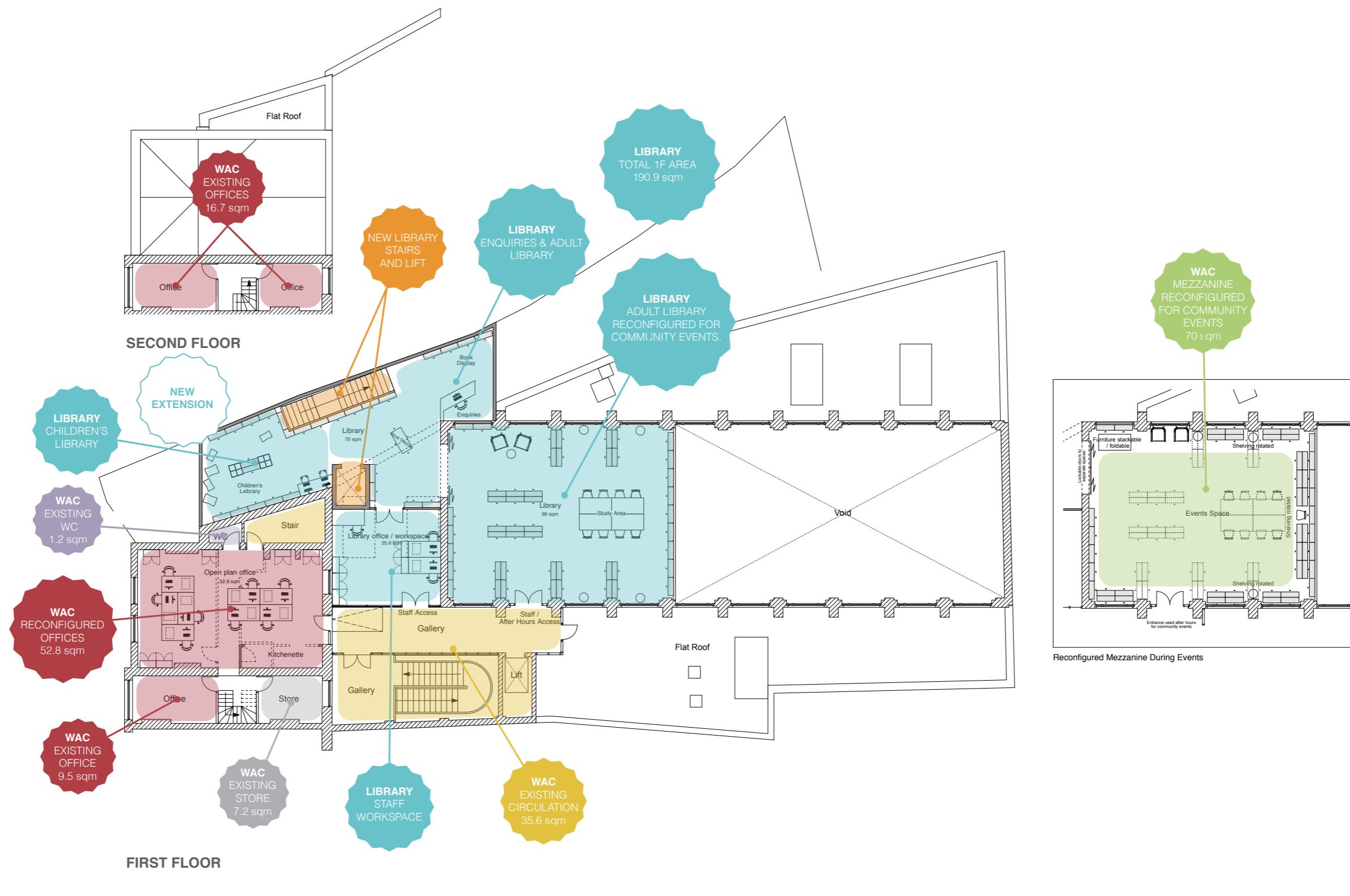


OPTION 2/A: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



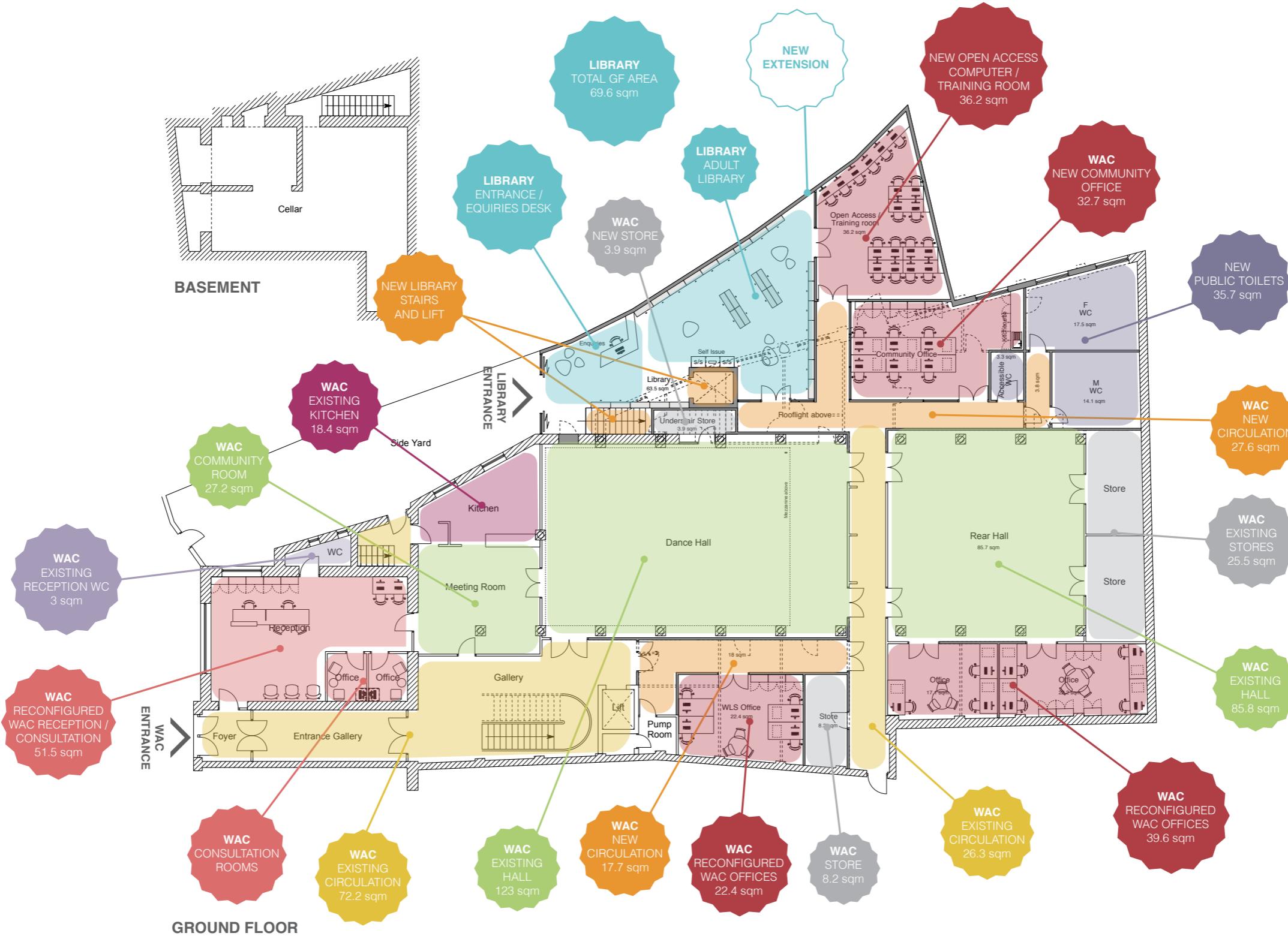
WAC OPTION A BF & GF

OPTION 2/A: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



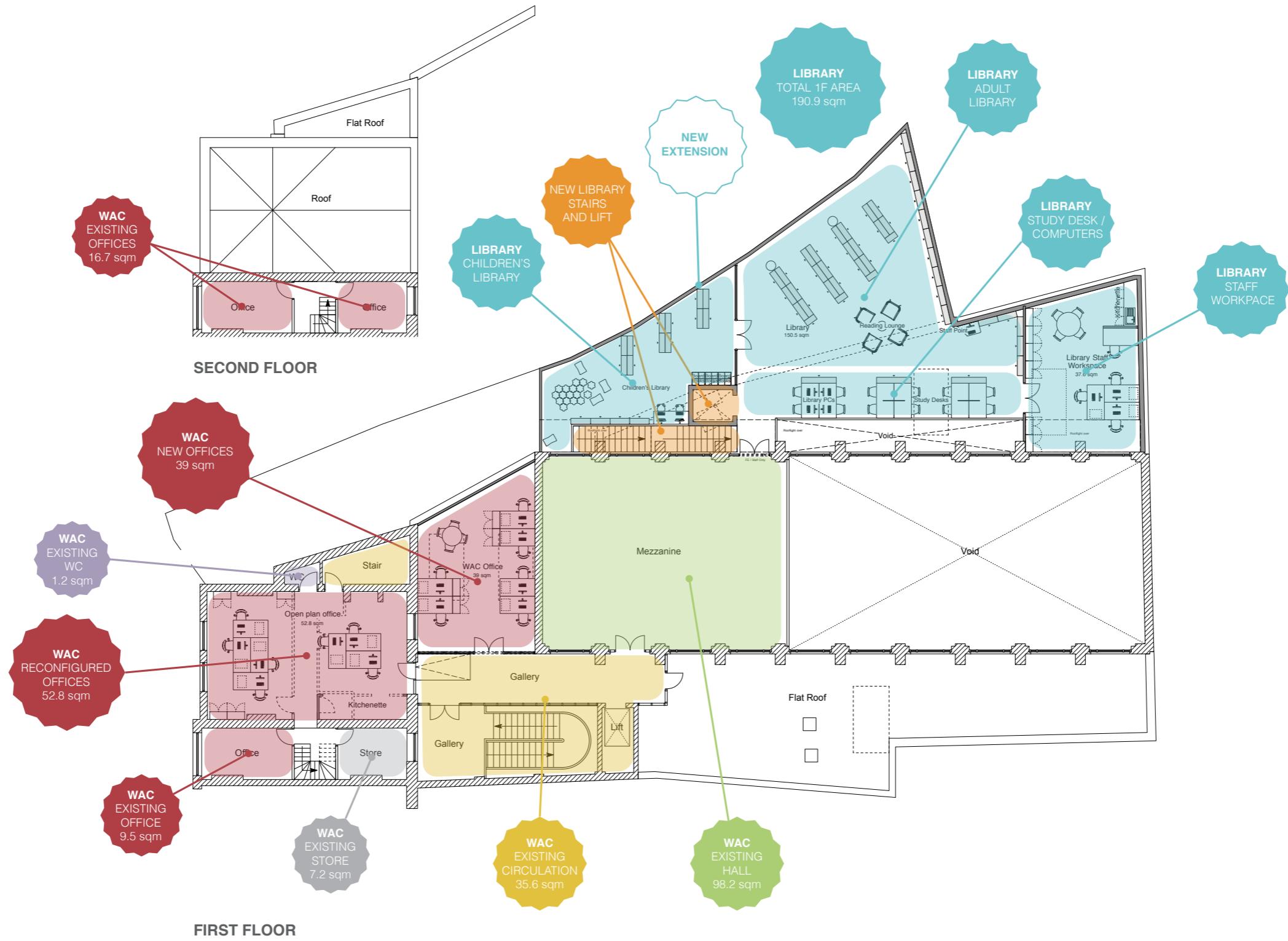
WAC OPTION A 1F & 2F

OPTION 2/B: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



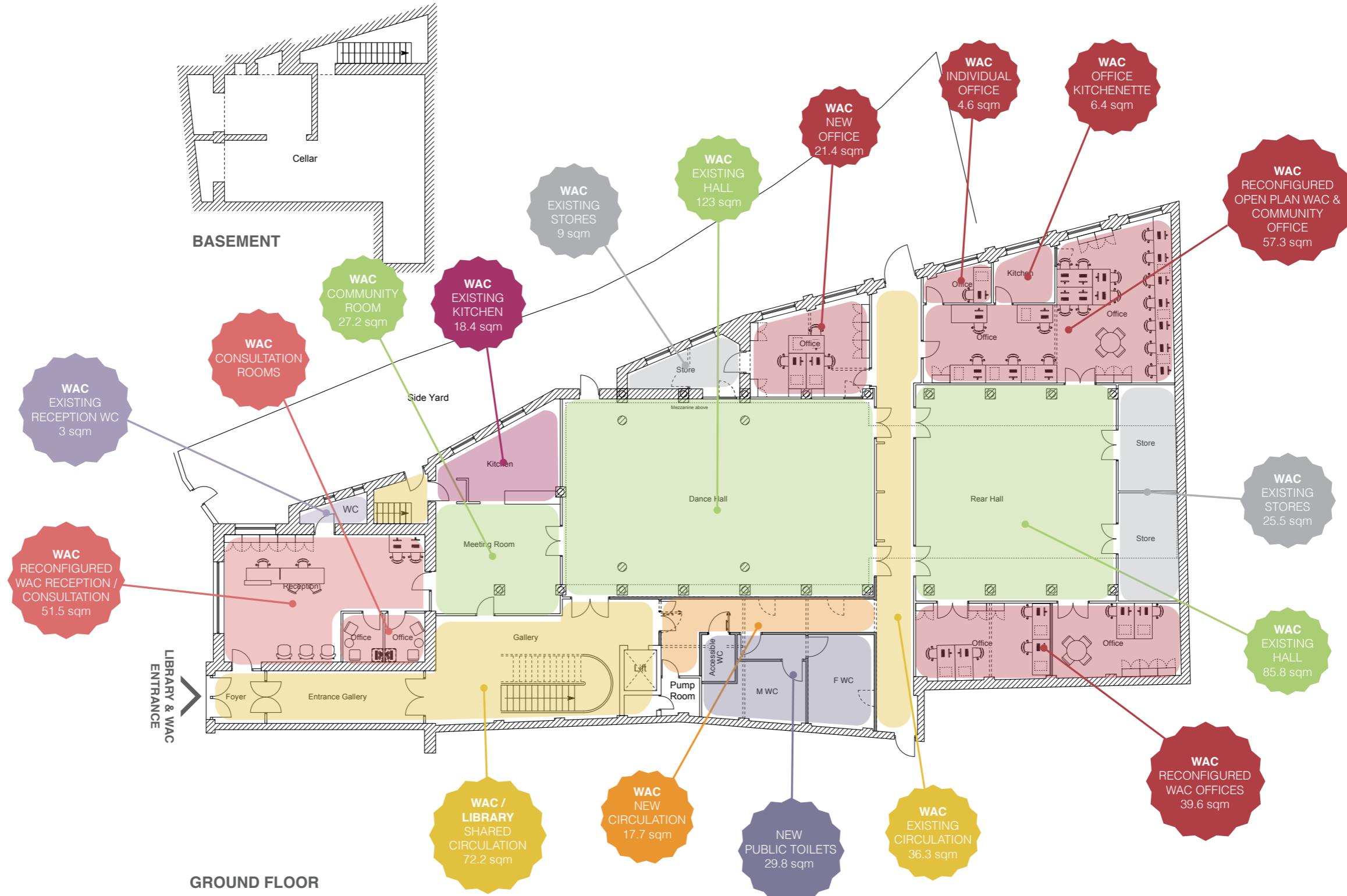
WAC OPTION B BF & GF

OPTION 2/B: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



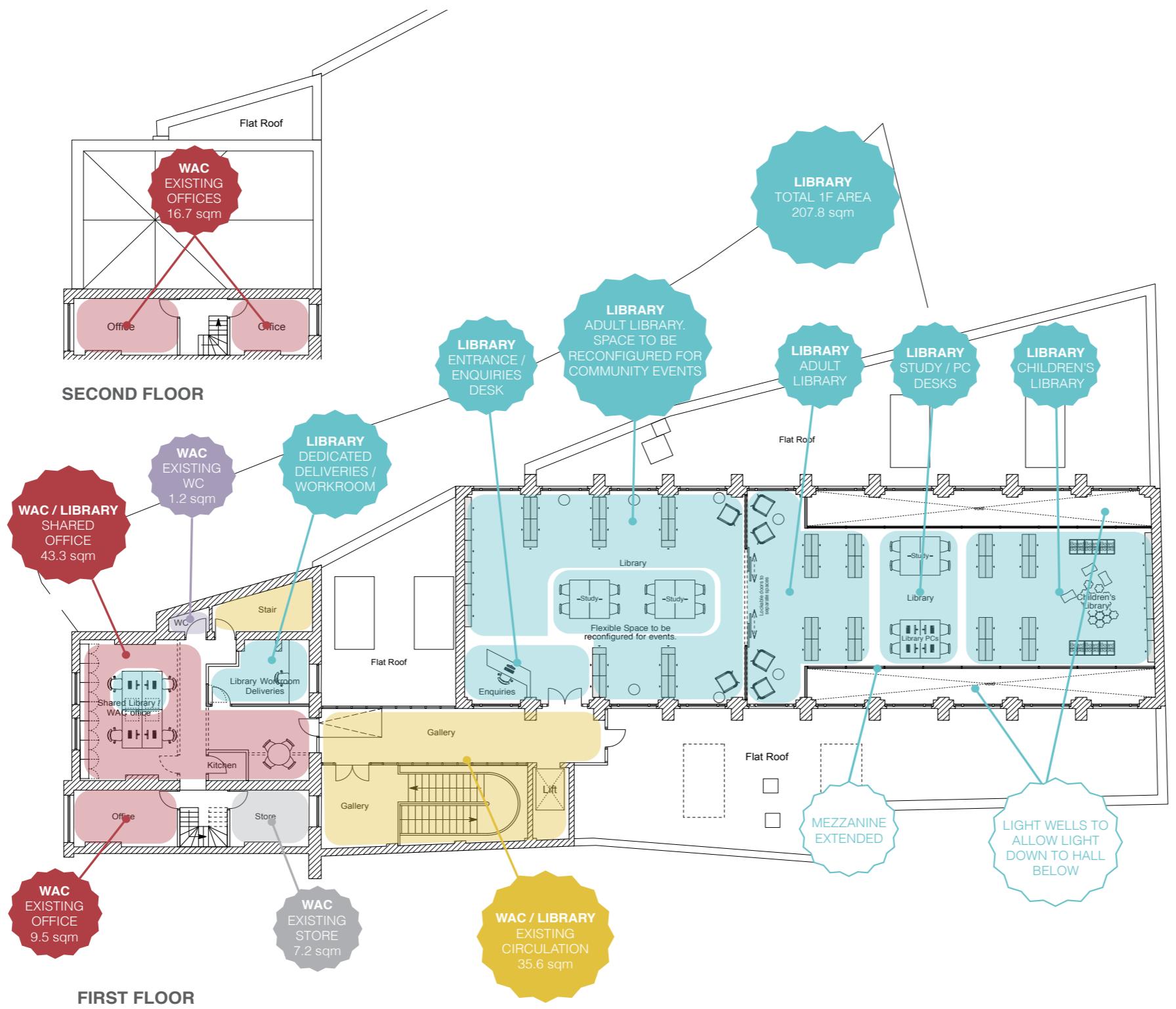
WAC OPTION B 1F & 2F

OPTION 2/C: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE

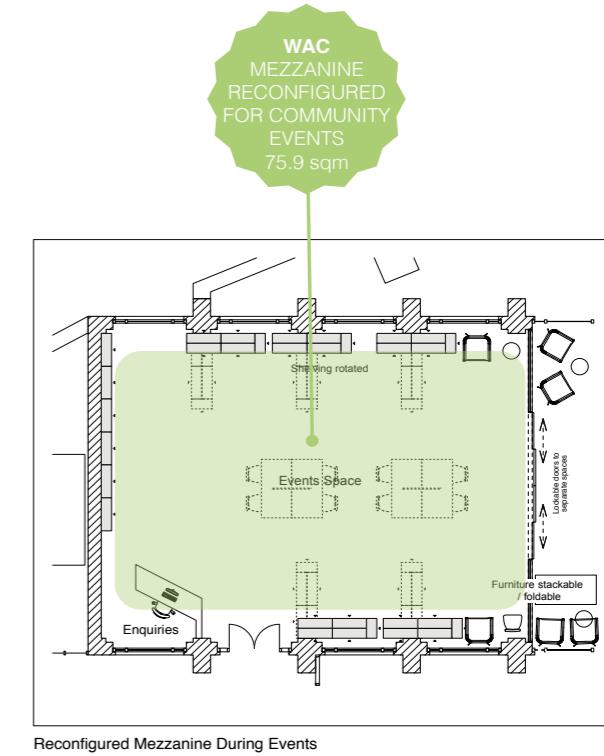


WAC OPTION C BF & GF

OPTION 2C: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



WAC OPTION C 1F & 2F



OPTION 3: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION

Having consulted on a number of options to reconfigure or extend the space in Waterloo Action Centre, the team would recommend a further option which incorporates many of the elements of the three options previously developed, and answers some of the concerns aired in the public consultation. We recognize that to achieve this option, the library service and the management of Waterloo Action Centre will have to work together as a team, which we feel would provide a positive outcome for local people and a vibrant and well-used new community hub.

Bisset Adams would therefore recommend a radical reorganization of the available space within WAC to accommodate the library as a close partner, and to improve access and circulation within the building. Our preferred option does not involve an extension at ground floor level, and retains the garden. We believe it is a cost-effective option which would create a vibrant mixed use centre, retaining WAC's existing activities and complementing them with the different activities and offer of a modern library. In particular, this partnership would broaden the user group for both WAC and the library. We are aware that any proposal to alter WAC or its way of functioning has been highly contentious, partly owing to a misapprehension that WAC's activities will be curtailed by any alteration to the building. We feel this proposal shows how the library and WAC can coexist and benefit from a partnership approach to serving local people.

Currently the building is busy at times, but very underused at other times of day, and the partnership with the library makes the most of the complementary opening hours to ensure the building is well used throughout the day. Both the library and WAC currently serve similar number of users, and it makes a great deal of sense to pool these members and visitors to maximize uptake of all services, and also the best use of a LB Lambeth owned building in a high profile location in Waterloo. Nothing in the proposals will act to prevent the current level of activities at WAC.

Our recommended proposal involves a main shared entrance for library and Waterloo Action Centre, with the current ground floor of the gallery

as a reception/informal library welcome area, with the existing reception (currently with buzzer only entrance) used for meeting and consultation. The single open entrance offers the best and most effective access into the building, with out of hours access retained through the garden as at present. The front hall and kitchen are reconfigured as a children's library with buggy space, and the ground floor offices (used by legal aid) and ground floor disabled toilet are refurbished as a new toilet suite. The rest of the library and library offices are situated on the first floor using the current mezzanine room as a flexible study/meeting/events space, with a new extension over the flat roof to the east of this room housing the main library collection. All furniture within the mezzanine space will be mobile and will be relocated when the space is used for community events. In addition, an extension over the flat roof separating the front part of the building from the mezzanine will house a computer suite used by both Library and WAC users and will remain accessible after Library hours..

On the ground floor, we would propose relocating the legal aid offices to the other side of the main hall; the kitchen would be incorporated into the small kitchen which would be enlarged, to the rear of the building, allowing the lunch club to operate in the rear hall and in the garden during summer. The Thursday night free legal aid service could operate as before with no interruption or reduction. Community offices in general would be refurbished and reorganized to allow greater flexibility of use, and less down time. Storage is to be retained, but office storage should be rationalized and reduced in line with offices everywhere.

In general, this recommendation is a radical reorganization of the existing building, with some additional space added at first floor level. We believe it is the best option to ensure a fully functioning partnership between WAC and the library service, and will offer the best services for local people.

Note: since the first draft of this report was circulated for discussion, further discussion with Canary Wharf group who are the developers of the nearby Shell Centre site have occurred. Although they had originally

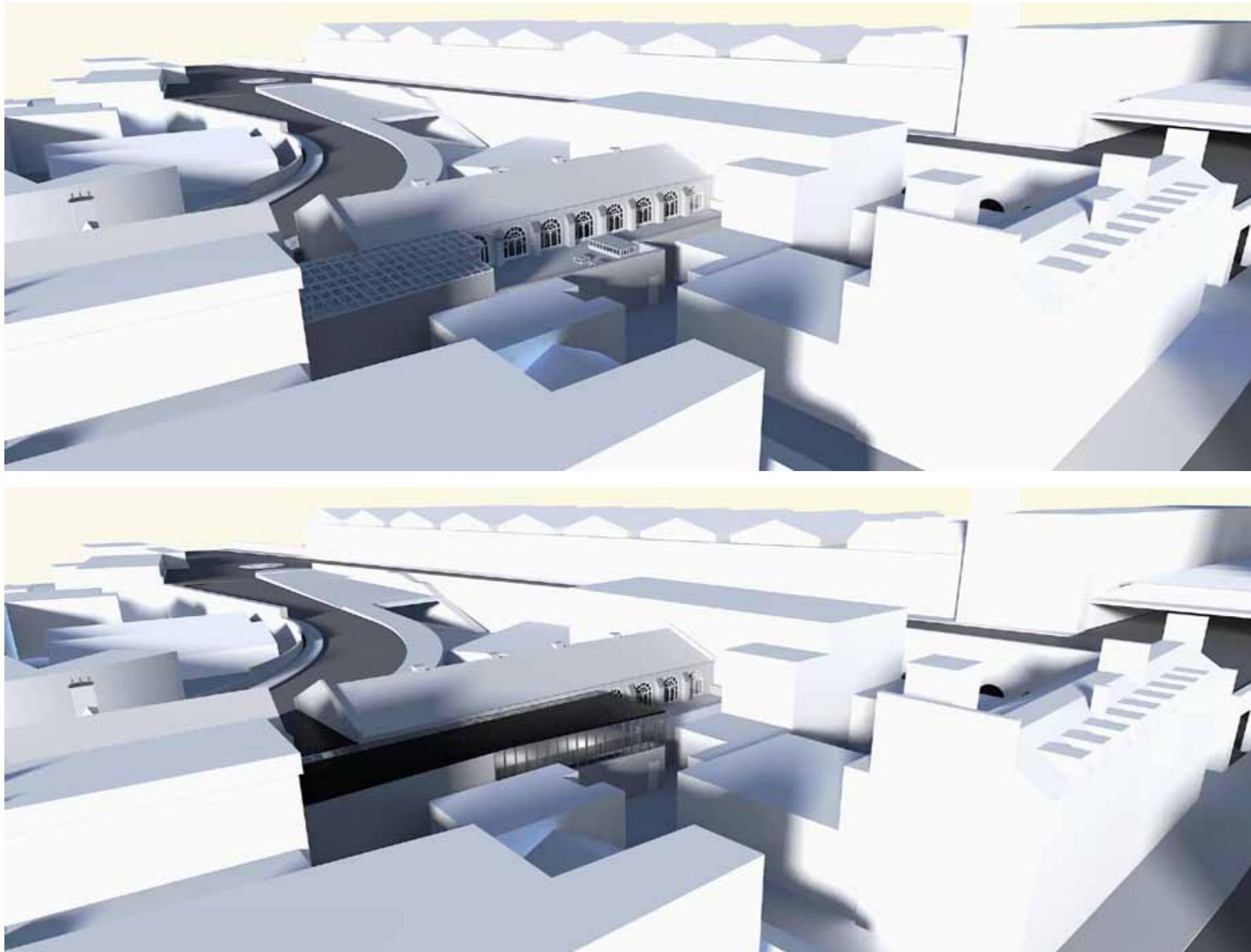
been consulted and the location of the library into this space been discounted as not appropriate, the developers have recently had their planning application approved and therefore have negotiated a Section 106 agreement which includes an allocation for Library and Community provision. Canary Wharf group have indicated they would like to support the extension of a local free school, in which there will be a library, and would like to explore the potential to use their Section 106 to develop this into a combined school and public library site. Discussion with the developers has commenced to also explore this option. As such, although this report recommends the library service relocation into the Waterloo Action Centre, there is additional investigative work that is required to progress this option within the two year period set at the outset of this report. A report to provide an in principle recommendation relating to the location of the Waterloo library will be put to Lambeth Council's Cabinet this autumn.

OPTION 2/D: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION



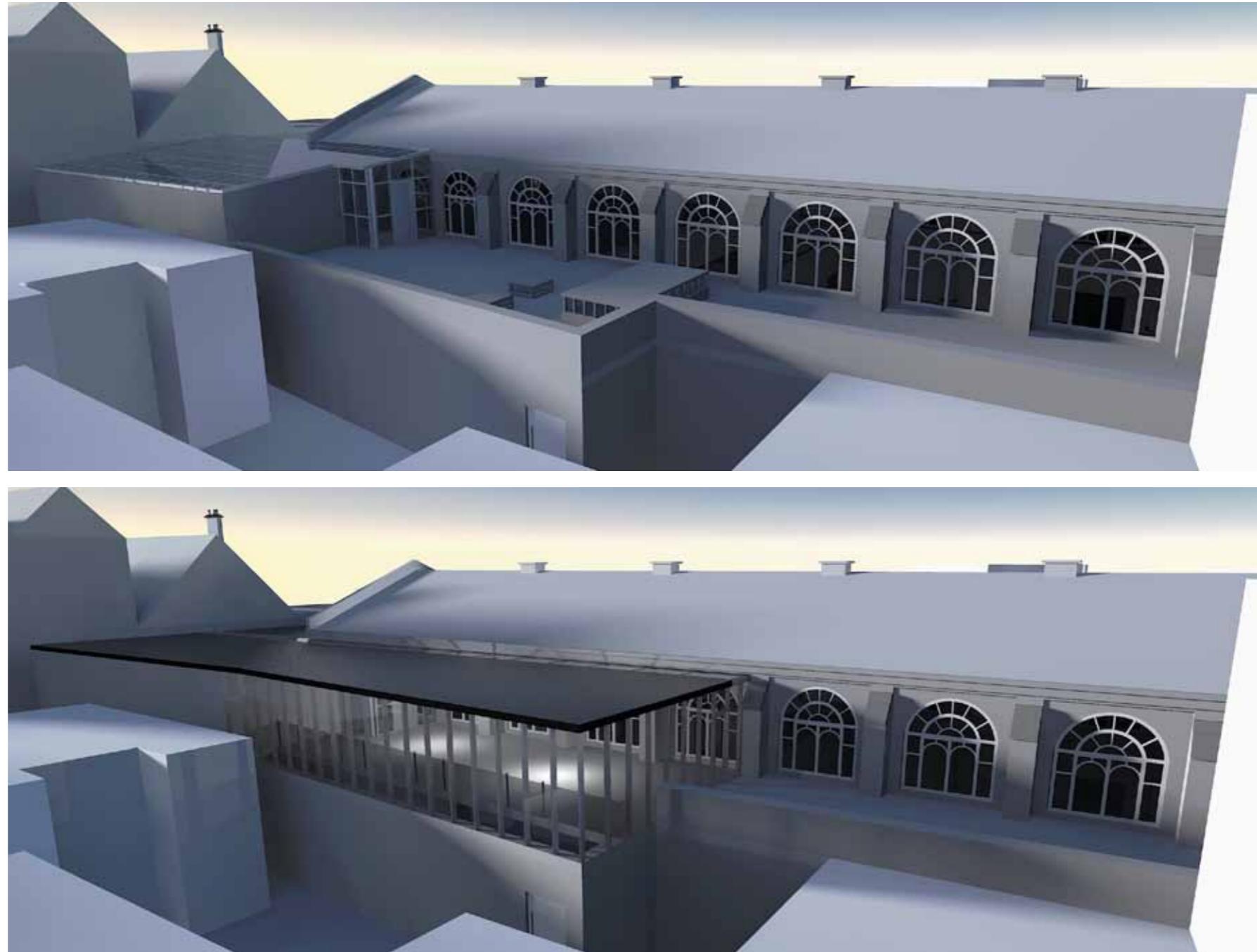
Exterior Visuals of new Library extension existing & proposed

OPTION 2/D: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION



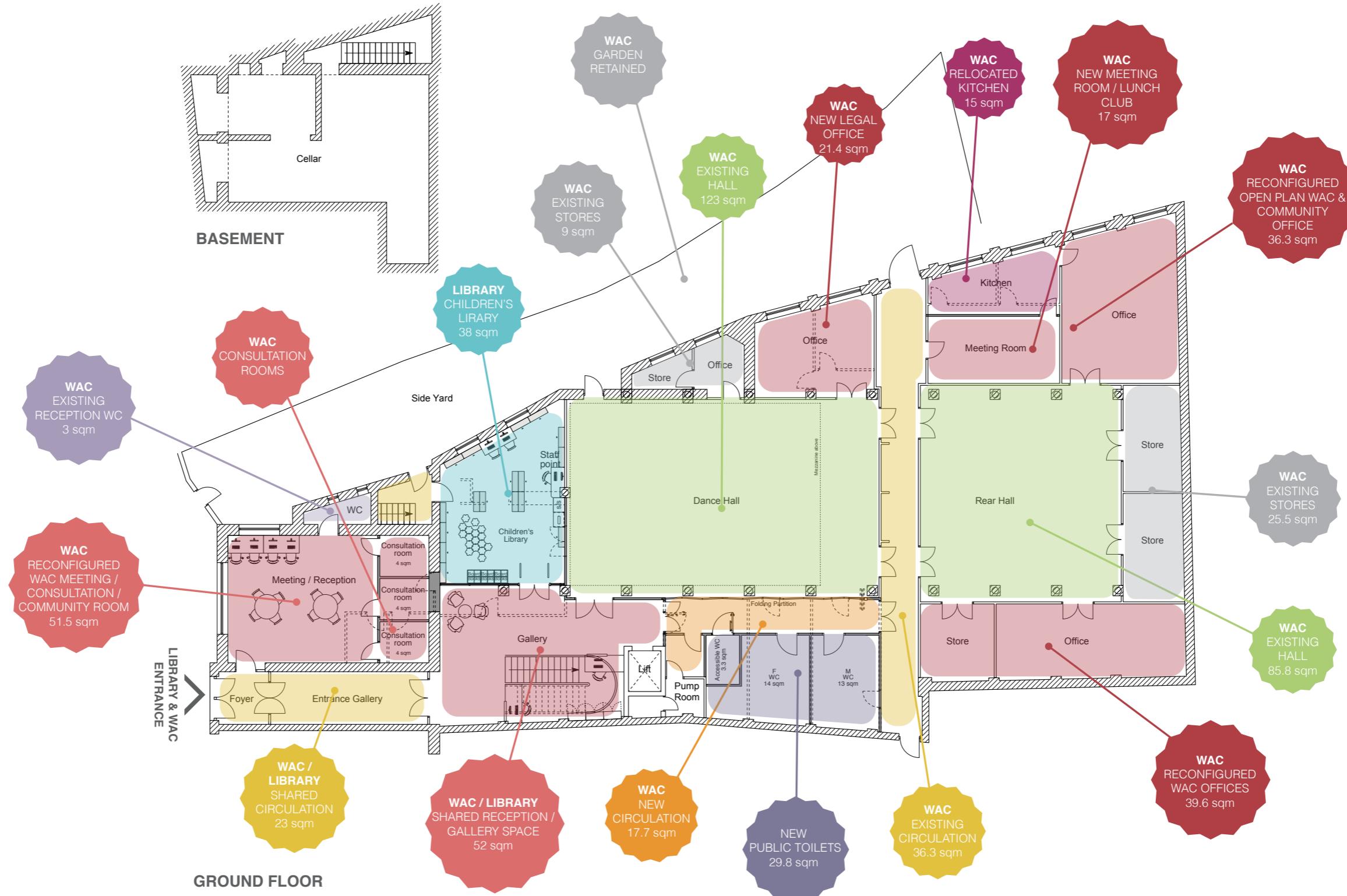
Exterior Visuals of new Library extension existing & proposed

OPTION 2/D: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION



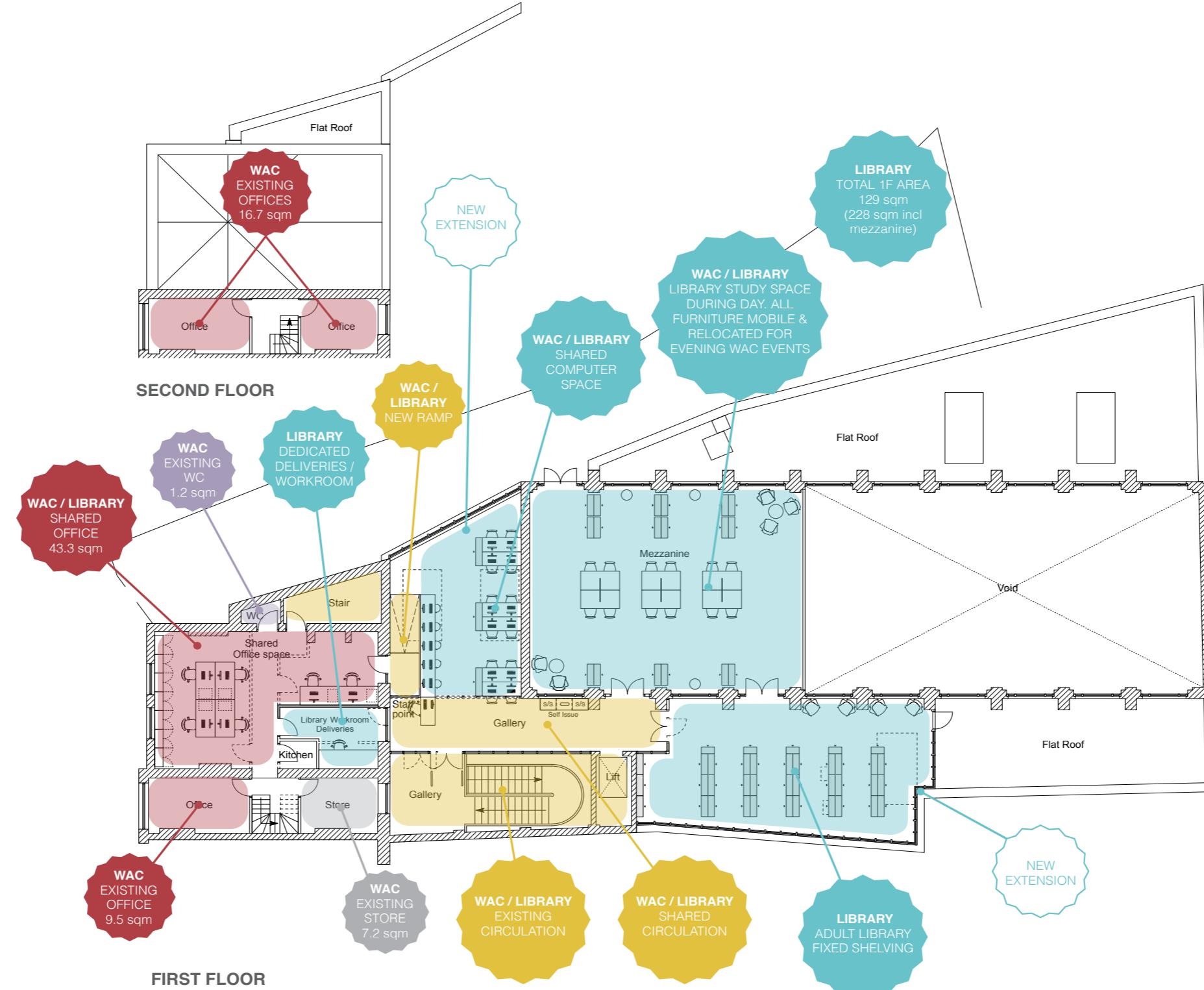
Exterior Visuals of new Library extension existing & proposed

OPTION 2/D: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION



WAC OPTION D BF & GF

OPTION 2D: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE RECOMMENDED OPTION



WAC OPTION D 1F & 2F

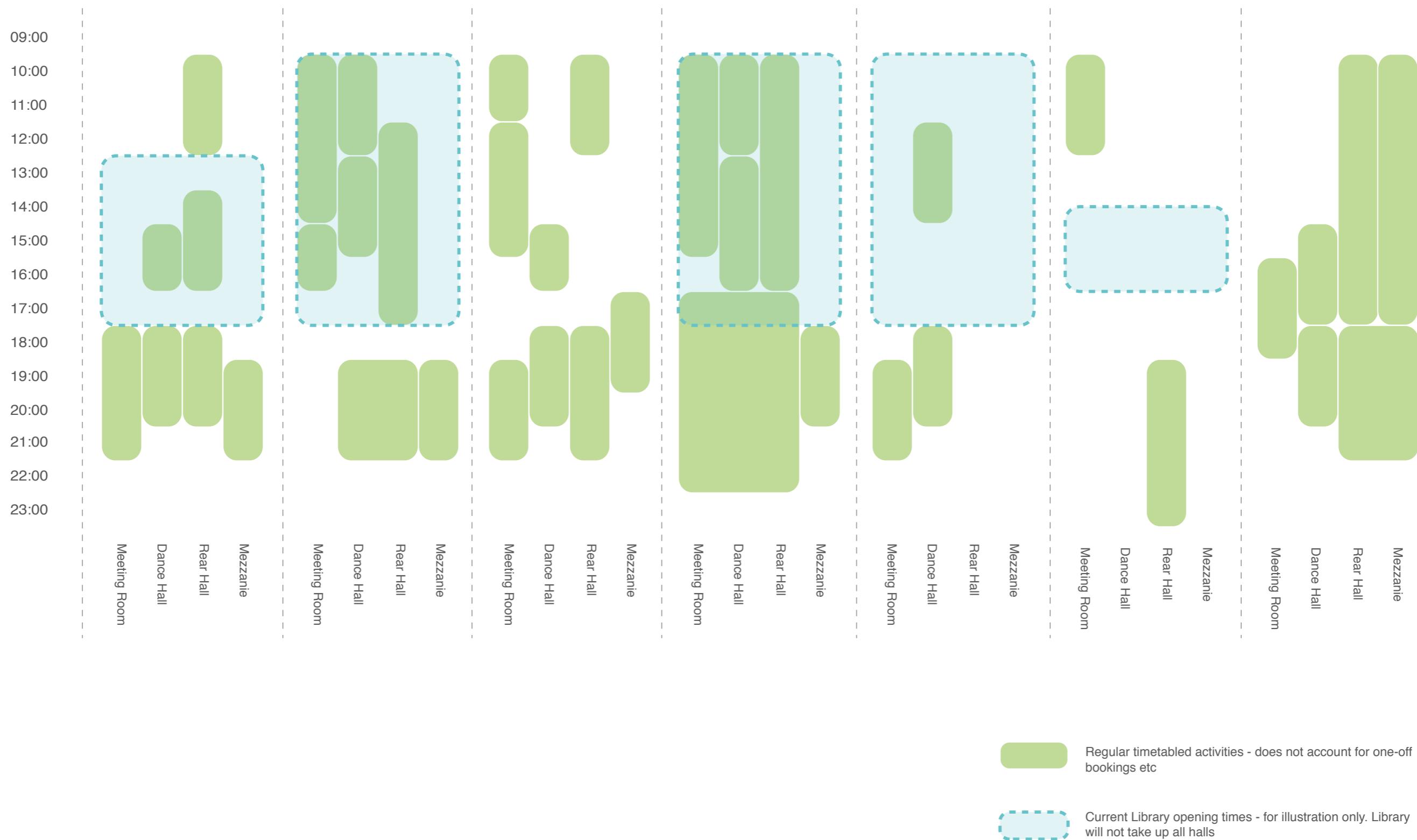
OPTION 2: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE

In order to understand how the library could fit within the building or in an extension, we have undertaken an analysis of space usage in the building and throughout they day, which indicates a degree of capacity which could be used through a reorganisation of activities within the building. Diagrams showing this analysis follow the spatial diagrams, as well as a graph showing the new areas of space provided.

Note: The times indicated for the library in the first diagram do not take into account the fact that the library will not be using all the hall space.

The final graph shows the comparative space allocated to each type of usage, indicating that there will not be major reductions if either option is pursued.

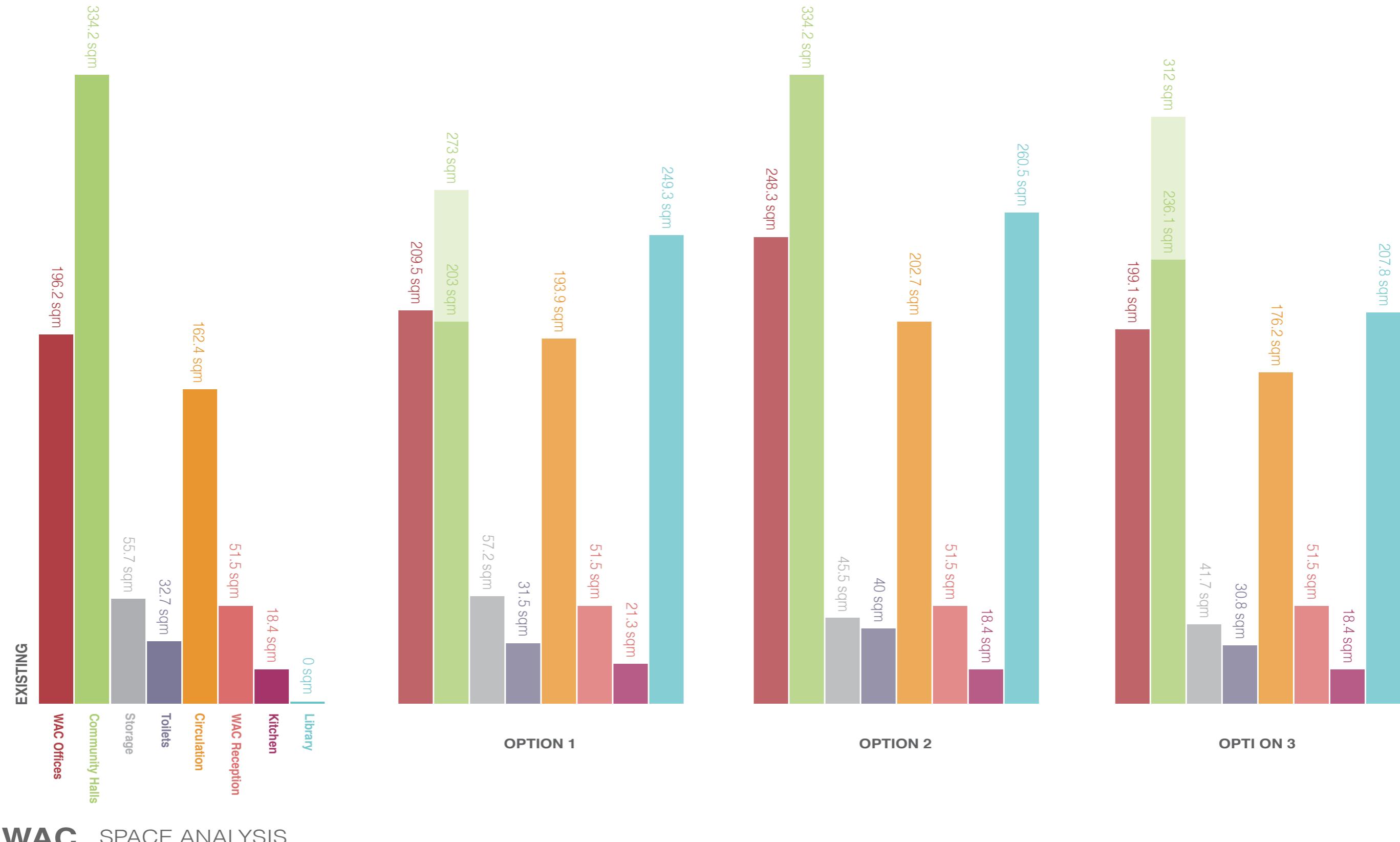
WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE: USAGE SUMMARY



OPTION 2: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



OPTION 2: WATERLOO ACTION CENTRE



FURTHER OPTIONS

The options below have been explored and discounted as not feasible for a variety of reasons.

Option 3: Oasis

Test-fit zoning diagrams were produced which showed the library incorporated within the Oasis building near North Lambeth station.

The space was adequate for the library, although lacked visibility from the street and was generally felt to be too far south for Waterloo library catchment.

Oasis are now planning to redevelop this site for their own uses, and this option has been revoked.

Option 4: Living Space

This option was put on hold during negotiations between Blackfriars South East and Lambeth Council, which are now resolved. The centre will be assessed as a possible location for the library, but would involve an extension which would take up open green space in the park, and might be refused on planning grounds. This option is yet to be fully considered.

Option 5: Development opportunities attaching to the Shell Building and Elizabeth House

These are two very high profile development proposals which have been under consideration for many years; clearly both developments will result in Section 106 money being payable to Lambeth, which may or may not be available for a new library.

Representatives from both development groups were met, and neither could offer any suitable space for a new library, nor showed interest in the Lower Marsh site as a location for affordable housing, which may be part of their commitment to the local community.

Option 6: Railway arches

As part of the discussion with Network Rail, a proposal for the library

to be located in one of Waterloo's many railway arches was suggested. This would in principle provide a unique and appropriate location for the library. However, there would be an unacceptable time lag in line with the long-term proposals for the regeneration of the station. Currently available spaces, including Mepham Street, would not be suitable in terms of size and location. British Rail Board (Residual) which owns the arches towards the Leake Street end of the station, are also unwilling to relinquish space at this time, and in addition, the current state of this area would be unsuitable for the library until regeneration is in process.

As mentioned earlier in this report, recent discussions with Canary Wharf group who have just had their planning application for the Shell Centre redevelopment approved have indicated they might be interested in investing some of the Section 106 for Community and Library provision from this development into a local free school extention which could potentially hold a small public library. Council officers are meeting with Canary Wharf group to explore this option further although this option was considered and discounted earlier in the options appraisal process. In terms of potential benefits from co location it is more likely a relocation to the Waterloo Action Centre would be beneficial than to a local school. A report to provide an in principle recommendation relating to the location of the Waterloo library will be put to Lambeth Council's Cabinet this autumn.

COSTS

Martin Cash of Gardiner and Theobald was commissioned to provide budget costs for the two preferred options, the existing site and the current Waterloo Action Centre, and for different options for each of these sites. The costs reflect the need for general refurbishment of the WAC building, and provide general rebuild costs for a development on the existing site.

In summary, costs for all options shown above in diagram form, range between £1.5 million and £2 million.

Additional costing on the preferred option suggested by colleagues at Waterloo Action Centre will be explored outside of this report and form part of the Cabinet report making a recommendation on the location of the Waterloo Library. Once in principle agreement on the location is reached, additional architectural design and business planning work will be undertaken.

CONCLUSION

The team from Bisset Adams has attempted to assess all immediately feasible options for a new library within the Waterloo area, within the parameters of the brief and in consultation with local people, council officers, librarians and groups from the Waterloo area.

Although there were many potential options, most were discounted for a variety of reasons to do with availability and location. The two possible options remaining were to rebuild on the existing site, and to redevelop or extend the old library building, the current home of the Waterloo Action Centre. There are disadvantages to both these options: the former may not be viable owing to long-term plans of Network Rail for the redevelopment of Waterloo Station; the latter could be unpopular with its potential for disrupting the activities currently offered within the WAC building.

The team has explored all these issues, and feel that on balance, it would be possible and indeed desirable to locate the library within the Waterloo Action Centre building, with the potential for an extension. We have analysed the current usage timetable, and feel there is enough flexibility within it to redeploy space more effectively. The synergy between a modern library service and a community centre like WAC should provide a strong and useful partnership to serve local people better.

The consultants recognise this report is a first step towards a consensus on the best location for a permanent library in Waterloo, although with all current information our recommendation remains that the Waterloo Action Centre is the most suitable location for a new library, as all other options have drawbacks. We would expect a new partnership between the community groups and library service, along with much needed maintenance to the building, would result in an exciting new centre to benefit both local residents and visitors from farther afield.

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