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FOREWORD

The York Guildhall complex is currently owned and occupied by the City of York Council. In advance of moving into their new headquarters at West Offices, the Council is considering the future use and enhancement of the complex as part of its accommodation strategy. To inform this process Purcell Miller Tritton have been commissioned by the City of York Council to prepare:

- A **Statement of Significance** to understand the origins and historical development at the Guildhall complex, what survives today and how significance the site is;
- A **Key Views Analysis** to understand the setting of the Guildhall and identify the principal views from a range of important vantage points;
- An **Options Appraisal** informed by the understanding of the complex and its significance as set out in the Statement of Significance and Key Views Analysis. The Options Appraisal explores opportunities for innovative new uses that also address the potential for retrofitting the existing buildings for energy efficiency. The Options Appraisal also identifies ways in which to improve public access to the complex and its setting, especially the riverside of the Ouse. The Options Appraisal has also taken into consideration and been informed by a number of relevant existing studies and reports, including the Quinquennial Inspection Report 2007; the Equality Impact Assessment 2011 and Disability Access Audit Report 2007 and City Of York Light Plan 2006.

Executive Summary of the Options Appraisal

The findings of this study for reuse of the Guildhall complex and wider site are summarised:

- The **Guildhall** is developed with ancillary supporting toilets, kitchen and access improvements in the east wing so that it can provide an attractive venue for public and civic events, lectures and conferences, private functions with food and drink, exhibitions and small business commerce and markets.
- The **Guildhall Offices** continue to accommodate the civic duties associated with the Council Chamber with designated supporting meeting and office accommodation. Accessibility improvements will be made including new passenger lift to all floors from the improved reception space.
- The **Guildhall Annexe and Hutments** are proposed for redevelopment to form a virtual office base and a new creative businesses hub with meeting rooms, conference space, tenanted office suites, gallery and tenants lounge.
- External landscape, lighting and accessibility improvements are recommended to

Common Hall Yard.

- A wider site analysis to the York Boat Yard and **Riverfront** proposes access to the river front and a new raised terrace accessed from Lendal Bridge and connecting to a new boat landing area.

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February 2012

Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of the Development and Significance	4
Key Views Analysis	10
Quinquennial Inspection Report 2007	11
Equality Impact Assessment 2011 and Disability Access Audit Report 2007	12
City Of York: Light Plan	16
Options Appraisal	18
• Guildhall	22
• Guildhall Offices	26
• Guildhall Annexe and Hutments	26
• Common Hall Yard	30
• Site Context Analysis and Urban Opportunities	33
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38



The Guildhall complex from the River Ouse

Guildhall Site - Listed



Site plan with the main heritage assets and features marked

Summary of the Statement of Significance

Historical Summary and Architectural Character

The current Guildhall was built by the lord-mayor, corporation and the community of the Guild of St Christopher from 1445. This took place on the site of an earlier Guildhall building. A chapel, kitchen, buttery, pantry and maison dieu (sheltering the poor and infirm) were built in association with the 15th century Guildhall, although none of these have survived. The Mansion House was erected on the site of the former chapel in 1726. A two-storey chamber block was added to the Guildhall on the south side in 1810. It was designed by Peter Atkinson the younger, the City Steward. These rooms accommodated the Upper and Lower Council Chambers of the Corporation when they moved from offices on Ouse Bridge. In 1889-1891 E. G. Mawbey, the City Surveyor, built the Victorian Gothic Council Chamber and associated offices on the north side of the 15th century building. The South Range was added c.1900 on the east side of the Atkinson Block and functioned as cells during Assizes. It also included offices and additional WCs. The North Annex, also erected in c.1900, was used by the post office. It was added to the north side of the 1889 offices. In the 1920s the rockery in Common Hall Yard was established and the garages erected. Sadly, the medieval Guildhall was heavily damaged during a German Baedeker raid in April 1942, although the Assizes and other civic events continued to be held in the shell of the building. In the 1960s the repaired and restored Guildhall was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

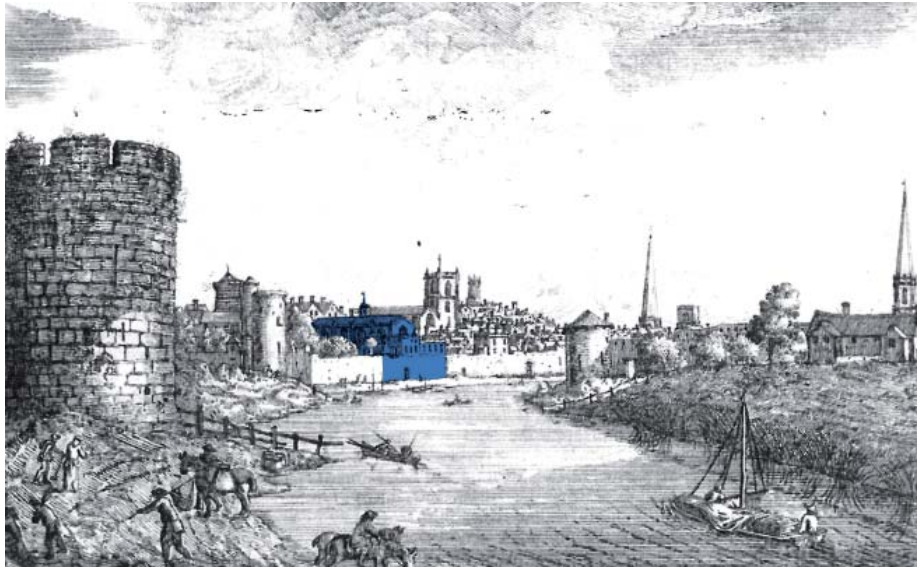
York's Guildhall stands on the east bank of the River Ouse, between Lendal Bridge and Ouse Bridge. Further to the east, along the Coney Street side, it is set back behind the 18th century Mansion House and is fronted by a courtyard known as 'Common Hall Yard'. From Coney Street it is accessed via a passageway, formerly part of Common Hall Lane. This lane continues below the medieval Guildhall from behind a gateway in the north east corner of the yard, emerging onto the edge of the Ouse on the west side. Originally, the entrance to the lane was through a low archway in the east elevation of the Guildhall itself

The Guildhall and Municipal Offices comprise five main elements:

- The 15th century Guildhall, a large rectangular hall structure incorporating smaller Committee Rooms at the western end with cellars below. The walls are of magnesian limestone, with c.1960 restoration work in Portland oolitic limestone;
- The Atkinson Block (the former Council Chamber block), erected on the south west corner of the medieval Guildhall c1810. A two-storey block with cellars, it replaced the old Council Chamber on Ouse Bridge and became meeting rooms when the present Council Chamber was built 1889-91. The riverside elevation comprises magnesian and Portland limestones and millstone grit sandstone, with the remainder comprising 19th and 20th century brickwork;
- The Municipal Offices and Council Chamber, built against the north side of the medieval Guildhall between 1889-1891. The building is of three main storeys with a substantial basement. The riverside elevation is of magnesian limestone, while the remaining walls are of calcium silicate brickwork;
- The Post Office Building, or 'Guildhall Annex', constructed c.1900 on the north side of the Municipal Offices. The Riverside elevation is built of stone and is of four storeys. The range extending east behind the tower is built of both red and calcium silicate bricks and is of two storeys. The interior was fitted out in the late 20th century to serve as additional office space to the Municipal Offices;
- The single-storey South Range extension behind the c.1810 Council Chamber Block, incorporating cells (now strong rooms) and the former Liberal Democrat Meeting Room. The cell range is a plain brick building, while the former meeting room is a sympathetically designed magnesian limestone building.

Significance

Overall the medieval Guildhall is of high (i.e. national) significance due to its associated history, grand civic architectural character and role in the political and ceremonial life of York. It is an important example of the English medieval Guildhall and civic building type. Its fabric also conveys one of the key events in the history of York – the Baedeker raid of 29 April 1942. Externally the c.1810 extension is of high significance due to its architectural design and association with Peter Atkinson the younger. The 1889-1891 Council offices are of medium significance and the Council Chamber of high significance as the heart of democracy in York. It also retains many original features. The 20th century annexes to the north and south are deemed to be of relatively low significance, and the nearby hutments of neutral significance.



A view of the River Ouse illustrating the Guildhall with cupola and the visual importance of the Friary wall by the riverfront, Drake 1736 (based on Francis Place c.1705)

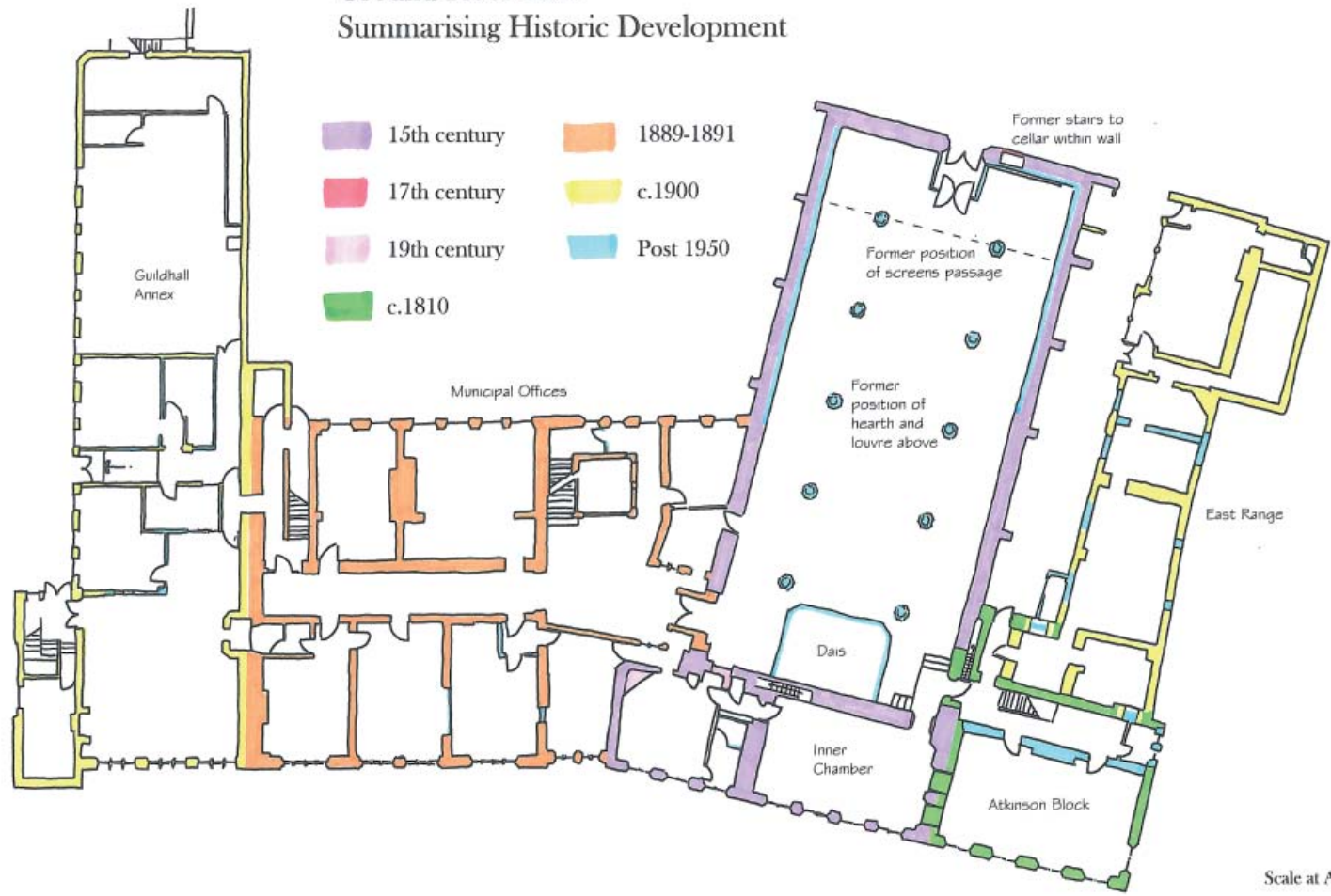


Aerial view of the River Ouse and Guildhall Complex

YORK GUILDHALL

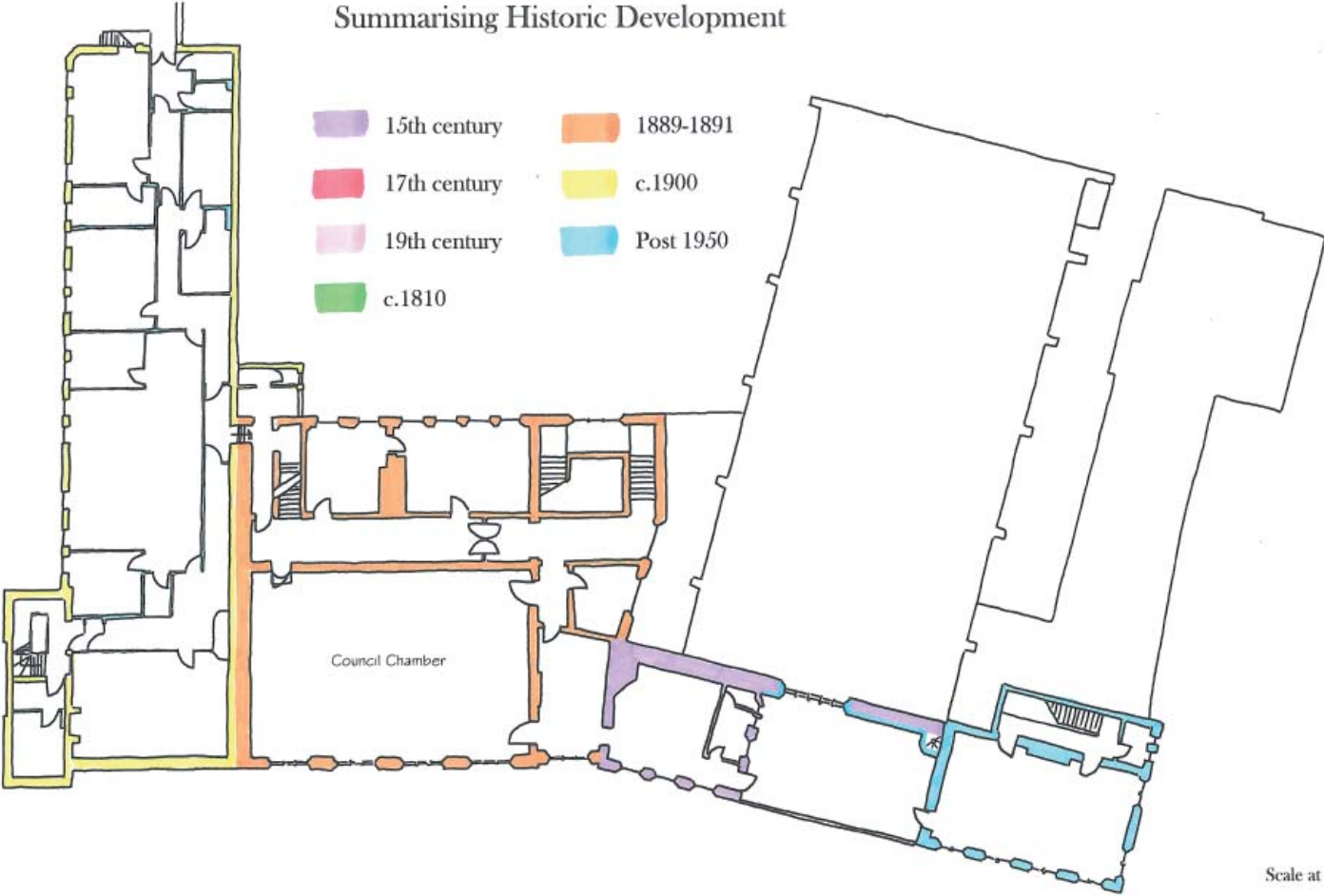
Ground Floor Plan

Summarising Historic Development



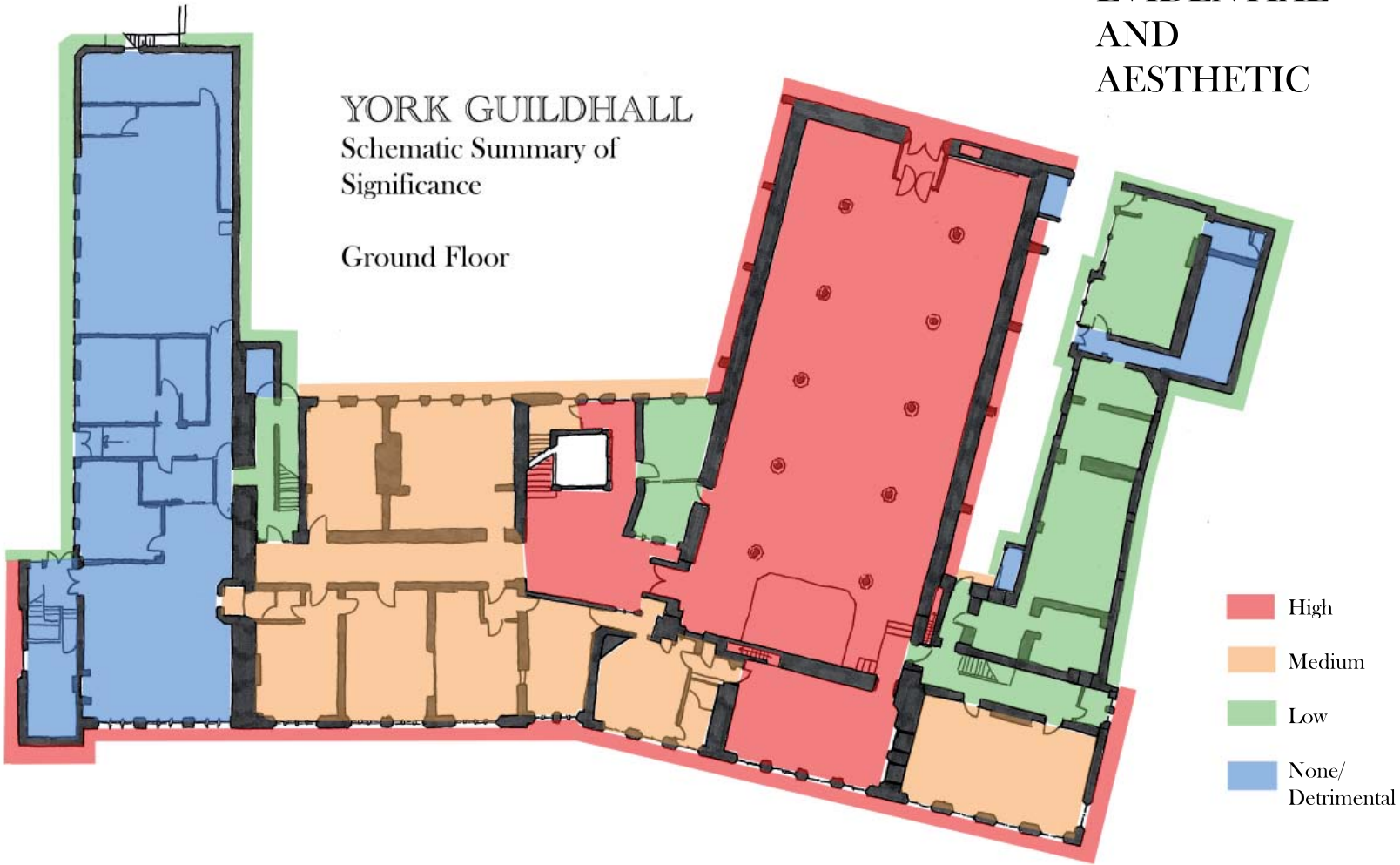
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YORK GUILDHALL
First Floor Plan
Summarising Historic Development

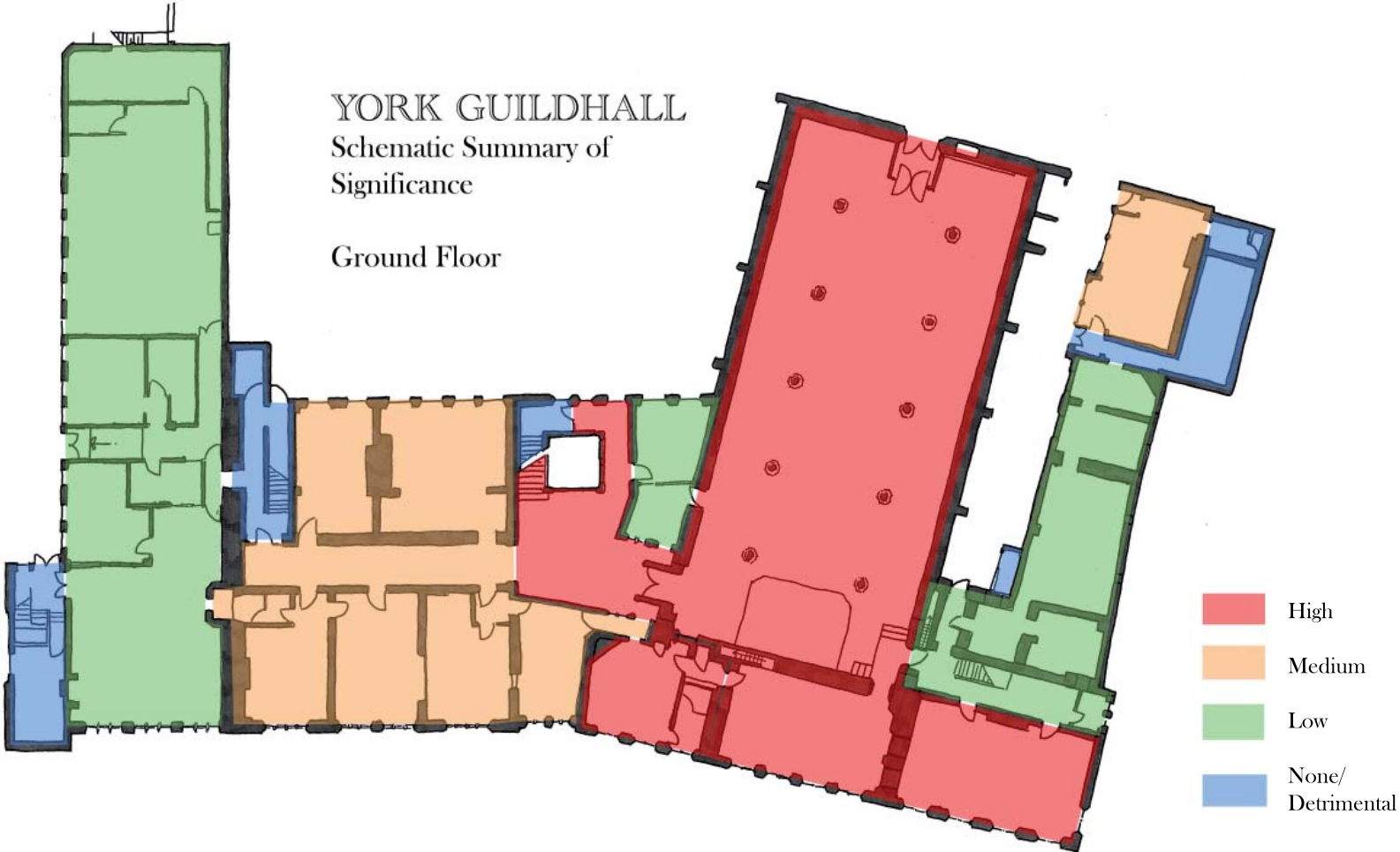


EVIDENTIAL
AND
AESTHETIC

YORK GUILDHALL
Schematic Summary of
Significance
Ground Floor

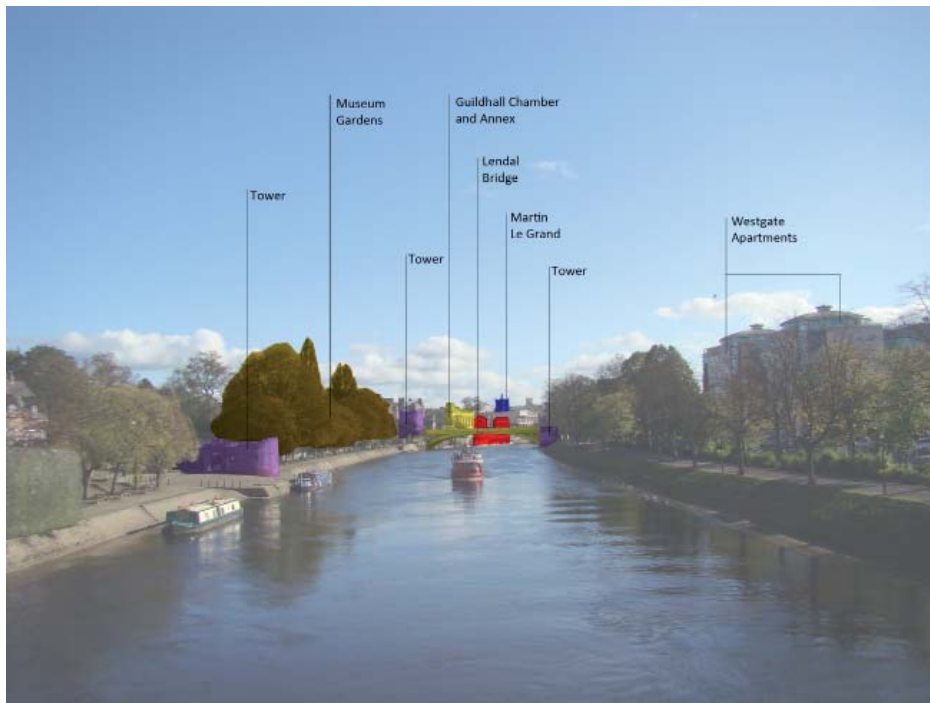


HISTORIC

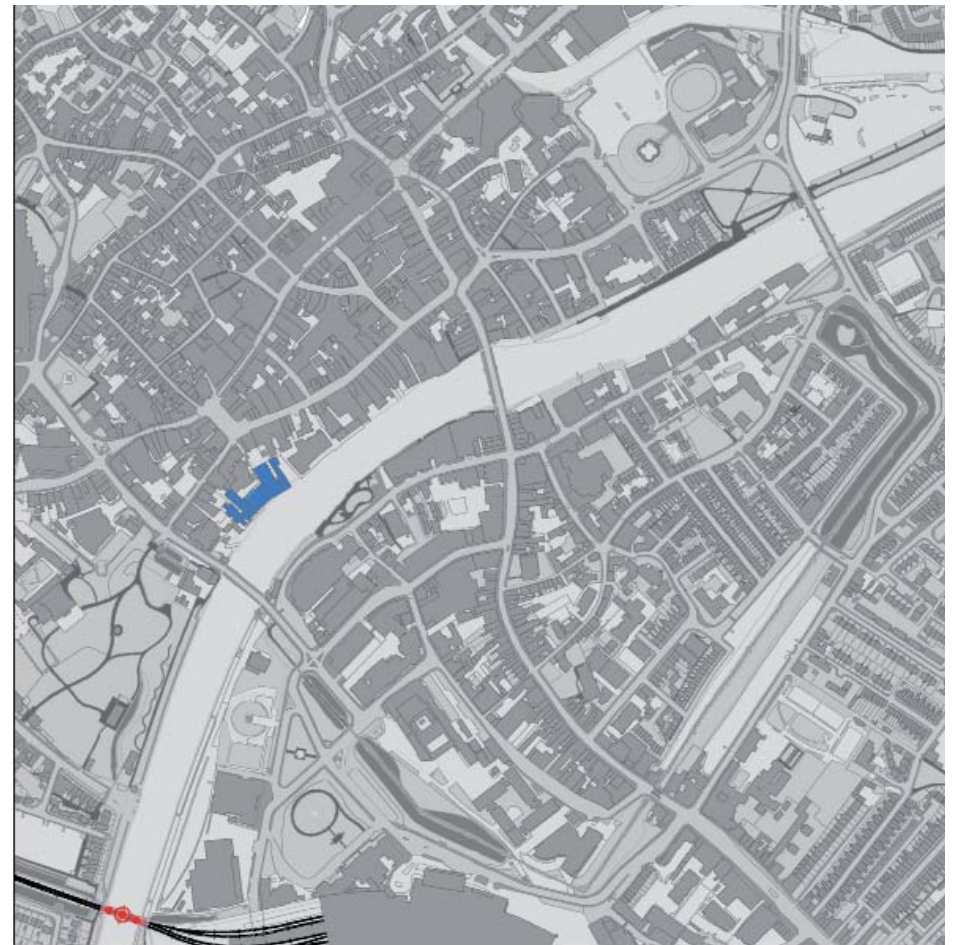


Key Views Analysis

Sixteen key views were identified that best capture the Guildhall and its setting. Of particular aesthetic value is the relationship between the Guildhall complex and the River Ouse. This is both an historic relationship and an important experience for modern visitors and residents enjoying the river and its banks. It illustrates the successful integration of architecture and natural form and is a key means of orientation within the city. The cluster of traditional buildings behind and adjacent to the Guildhall adds to the texture and interest of the setting, and therefore the aesthetic value of the site as a whole.



Key Views Analysis - view point 1



View Point 1 Location Plan

Quinquennial Inspection Report 2007

The Report, prepared by Atkins, confirmed the complex of buildings were generally in fair condition. A number of shortcomings with regard to general maintenance were observed during the inspection, the most significant relating to high level roofs and rain water goods. The buildings are affected by structural movement which is not wholly surprising given their riverside location and the large fluctuations in water level. Four areas of more specific structural concern were identified where specialist consultancy advice should be sought from qualified a structural engineer, experienced in the care and repair of historic buildings.

Further investigations in to the shrinkage and movement patterns of the internal timber frame structure of the Guildhall space were carried out. The report advised the structure was generally stable, but fluctuating environmental conditions, such as changes in relative humidity, often related to fluctuations in temperature and occupancy, were having a detrimental effect, a section of moulded timber had dried and fallen. Any major project work should seek to address these concerns through provision of improved thermal efficiency of the building, reduction in heat loss and upgraded heating and ventilation. Improving the environmental conditions will also benefit the viable use of the space.

Maintenance regimes should be continued for vacant buildings. Any comprehensive refurbishment project present opportunities to address major construction and repair programme of works.



Interior timber frame structure of the Guild Hall

Equality Impact Assessment 2011 and Disability Access Audit Report 2007

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010. Under the Act there is an obligation to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) at the development stages of any project.

Due regard has therefore been given in the development of this feasibility options appraisal for the need and future opportunity to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

EIAs assess the impact of the council's actions on people from the protected characteristics identified in the Act. One of the recommendation for this report is a process of engagement is undertaken at the development stages of any project.

The Equalities Review 2007 and the Equality Framework for Local Government identifies Quality of Life Indicators also known as "the 10 dimensions of equality", the feasibility study has taken these into consideration in the option analysis and development of the preferred option, particular emphasis to identify beneficial improvement has been given to:

- Physical security, through the design and development of safe public environments.
- Health, including both well-being and access to high quality healthcare.

- Education, through the development of a potential creative business hub that can support creative skills learning as well as access and interpretation of heritage and civic role of democracy
- Standard of living, including being able to live with independence and security; creating accessible external public spaces, as well as internal access to the public civic events and work places with accessible links to transport and leisure facilities.
- Productive and valued activities, such as accessible environments for employment and leisure.
- Participation, influence and voice, including participation in decision-making and democratic life through improved access to the Council Chamber.

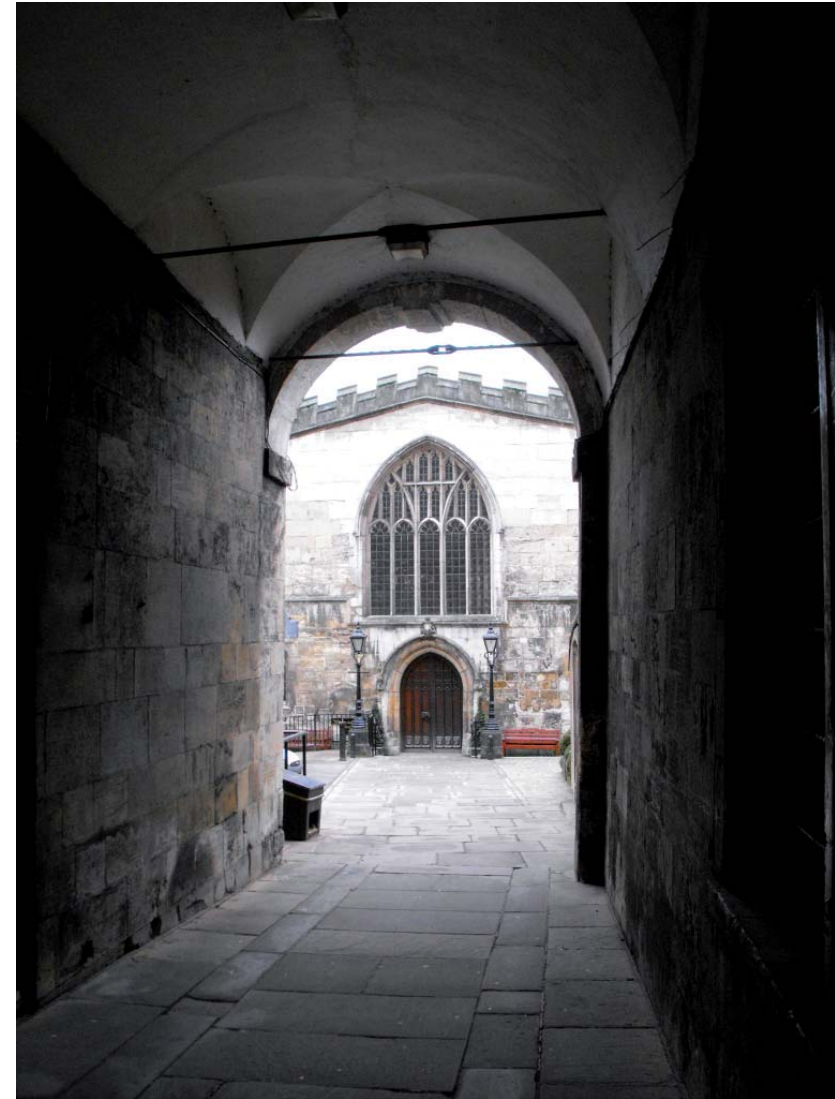
The Disability Access Audit Report (2007) identified the existing access provisions to the Guildhall complex raise a number of significant areas of concern, particularly with regards to external areas and other safety related matters such as trip hazards and inadequate lighting. The implementation of the management recommendations contained within this report would enable access for the majority of disabled people on an assisted basis are likely to be achievable.

There are a number of physical works projects, both short and long term, and opportunities as part of routine works that should be considered to further improve access and offer services on a more equal and dignified basis.

In the interests of safety, economy and to reduce the amount of disruption to the service we consider it prudent to consult any future capital works programme and Asbestos Register for this property prior to carrying out any works.

The issues raised in this document should be considered as part of the wider access issues associated with other services and premises operated by York City Council to ensure a “reasonable” approach is applied.

We would recommend that consultation with local user groups, including those with disabilities be entered into to help confirm priorities and gain users insight into the access issues identified within this report.



Improvements to lighting and stonework cleaning in Mansion House passage would create a more welcoming, attractive and publicly inviting space. There are concerns about the gradient across the site.



The Guildhall Office access and entrance is very unsatisfactory. This could be dramatically improved by replacing the single storey building shown here with a new glazed welcoming entrance that also reveals the historic buildings.



The existing Guildhall office entry is very unsatisfactory and not worthy of such an important Civic building. Accessibility is very poor.



Accessibility in Common Hall Yard is confusing and non-compliant to modern standards and expectations . It does not contribute in a positive way to the setting of the listed building. There is an opportunity to resolve unsatisfactory access, presentation and complex way-finding through a well considered high quality landscaping scheme. The removal of the garages may increase space and help resolve these issues.

City Of York Light Plan 2006

The aims of the light plan is to focus on lighting projects which will have the greatest potential effect, as well as to provide a broad method and application guide for those making decisions about new lighting in that can be overseen by the City Authorities.

Light plan embodies a number of intended social and economic effects. One over-riding aim is to enhance the after-dark appearance of the city's extensive architectural and heritage assets and therefore make the city more attractive, more visually comfortable and safer after dark.

The improvement in the night-time appearance of the city is intended to increase the number of affluent evening visitors and help in the growth of the evening economy – and hopefully, contribute to an improvement in the quality of the evening economy. However, these benefits are not confined to visitors and tourists, but also residents, improved lighting can help to reduce crime, and the fear of crime.

The main lighting themes embodied in the strategy include:

- State-of-the-art, sensitively realised architectural lighting treatments of key historic buildings and structures, to facilitate a unique visual experience of York's historic heritage.
- Improvements to the street, road and amenity lighting to create a safer, more comfortable environment for residents and visitors – and to enhance the overall pedestrian ambience and navigability of the city.
- Lighting which is used to create new, contemporary night-time events or experiences, such as the proposed 'lighting walk', interactive lighting installations and the son et lumiere.

The Light Plan specifically identified the opportunity presented by the River Ouse passing through the city, creating an extraordinarily open space amidst the city's famous narrow streets. The river is important in that its openness allows long views of lit structures and facades, while its more neutral architectural character allows potentially greater freedom for the introduction of innovative installation lighting. The lighting of the bridges will be can be counter-balanced by the introduction of several installation pieces, along with sympathetic architectural lighting of the Guildhall.

The opportunities within the options appraisal are the spaces and setting of the buildings of the riverside frontage, as well as the Guildhall building and space of Common Hall Yard. The connecting passages and routes are also a



The River Ouse at night - City of York Plan 2006



The River Ouse and Guildhall complex at night, City of York light plan 2006.

Options Appraisal

Statutory Designations

The Guildhall and wider study area fall within the historic core of central York and therefore the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area, the City of York Area of Archaeological Importance and the Central Shopping Area Character Area as defined by the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal. Furthermore, there are a number of listed buildings within the Study Area, including the medieval Guildhall and some of its extensions, as illustrated on the designations plan below. These designations reflect the archaeological sensitivity of the area and the significance of the built heritage and impose constraints aimed at ensuring that any change is carefully considered and planned to protect wherever possible the architectural, archaeological and historic significance (the evidential heritage values), the views of important buildings and the aesthetic significance of the site. Constraints that such designations impose are likely to include:

- Removal or alteration of historic fabric, especially on listed buildings.
- New developments whose scale, massing, materials, height etc would have a negative impact upon the existing urban environment and riverscape.
- Development where foundations would destroy or remove potentially significant archaeological deposits.

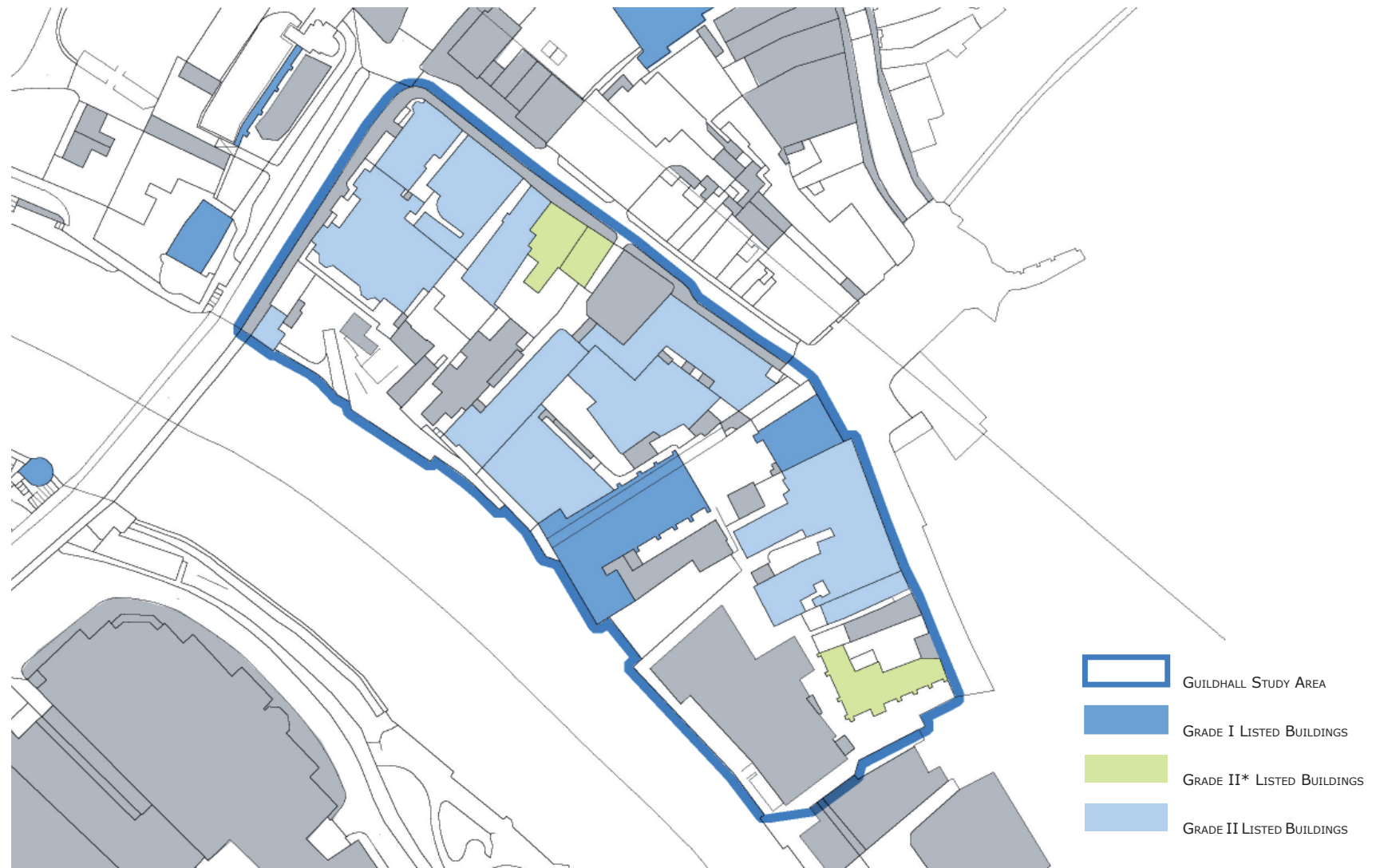
The detailed assessment of the historical and architectural development of the site is set out in the Statement of Significance, each of the separate thematic categories for significance, evidential, historic, communal, and aesthetic, including townscape, has been assigned a value. Overall, the Guildhall is of High Significance, the Atkinson c.1810 extension of High Significance externally, the 1888-1891 Council offices of Medium Significance, the Council Chamber of High Significance, the 20th century Annexes of Low significance and the 'hutments' of neutral Significance. These allocations of significance have been informed the process evaluating options and determining the preferred option.

The methodology for the options appraisal has begun with an understanding of the existing and emerging studies and policies that are there to help guide and inform the study as well as to ensure that relevant considerations for key policy issues such as accessibility, environmental sustainability or conservation of heritage value and asset embedded into the thinking. Site visits and investigations were made to gain first hand understanding of the building issues and opportunities, together with their spatial characteristics. A range of potential uses have been assessed and a preferred option for sympathetic reuse of the buildings that creates a synergy of complementary activities can be identified.

The study has looked widely at the complex urban site and the external spaces, broad options for the improvement of access, presentation and use of the spaces are made. A further more ambitious assessment has been carried out for the wider site context, and ideas for greater riverside access and leisure space developed.

The options appraisal is formatted so the buildings and their potential use are discussed, followed by the proposals for the wider site context.

Guildhall Site - Heritage



Options Appraisal

The Options Appraisal has assessed the potential opportunities for future uses of the Guildhall buildings complex within the context of the statement of significance, key views analysis and accessibility report together with an informed understanding of the spatial characteristics of the buildings.

The fifteenth century Guildhall use as a large city centre cultural, social and commercial events space can be significantly enhanced through the provision of improved accessibility and supporting ancillary accommodation such a large number of public toilets and a commercial kitchen. This ancillary accommodation could be located in the remodelled historically less significant southeast range. The combination of large events space and smaller meeting, conference and exhibition rooms to the river front with the ancillary accommodation would enable this space to be more useable and financially viable as a major city centre events venue of the highest quality.

The nineteenth century Guildhall Offices and Council Chamber are developed to continue to provide the Council Chamber functions; these would be upgraded so that the historic character and fabric is conserved, but accessibility improvements made through the insertion of a public lift. The entrance and reception space would be enhanced and ancillary offices retained for the Council's use in association with the civic duties and events.

The twentieth century Guildhall Annexe and Hutments detract from the historic setting and buildings. It is proposed these sites are redeveloped to form a virtual office and creative business hub; this would include, a shared reception and tenant lounge, conference and meeting spaces, a display gallery, and a variety of tenanted office incubator units. The annexe could be developed as a three storey building, the hutments could be two storey with glazed atrium between the two. This could generate 2000m² of new business accommodation.

The analysis has also investigated how connections between St Helen's Square, Mansion House Square, the riverside, York Boatyard and Lendal could be linked and made accessible. The study has suggested there may be a very exciting opportunity to access from Lendal Bridge through the small garden space a new stair and lift that would descend to a raised riverside terrace over the present boatyard. This could be accessible from York House and the other listed buildings as a small commercial area. Access to a pontoon landing for the boats could also be achieved. This raised riverside terrace could be connected to the Friary Garden which then could provide level ramped access down to the riverside and entry to Common Hall Lane where the link to Mansion House Square can be made. Mansion House Square needs to be designed as a creative and intelligent piece of hard landscaping, linking together the various routes and accesses that feed of it.



Guildhall

The Guildhall is a building of high significance, its interior is remarkable, and despite there being considerable post-war reconstruction it retains high evidential, historical, cultural and aesthetic significance, it has little potential for subdivision, other than in reforming historic partition lines that may help in understanding its former use and development. The building is currently used for a wide range of events, from civic receptions to conferences and lectures, exhibitions and small business trading events. It is successfully administered from the Mansion House. The range of brick buildings to the east of the Guildhall are of lesser significance and have the potential for alteration.

The Guildhall is a building of great potential, the success of its present operations are hugely compromised by a number of issues, such as the lack of adequate internal and external access; limited and inaccessible toilet facilities; no catering facilities for hosting large events; poor arrangements for storage within the space. The historic building also suffers from poor environmental conditions; it is a large poorly insulated volume that undergoes rapid heat loss.

The preferred option is to retain the Guildhall as a large multi-purpose events space, increasing its viable and sustainable use by the provision in the east range of ancillary accommodation, including accessible toilets to accommodate large gatherings, a catering kitchen and use of the two meeting rooms.

This could be done by forming a glazed roof atrium between the Guildhall east wall, below the window sill level, and the ancillary east range. Access between the two spaces would be through the formation of an opening in the Guildhall east wall north bay. This would be an important intervention with loss of fabric, detailed similarly to the corresponding opening in the west wall. There are historic accounts of a door to a buttery at this location, but little visible evidence. An access at this point would allow a level accessible route to the toilets and meeting rooms from the rear of the Guildhall space, as well a connection from the catering kitchen into the rear of the Guildhall. The

north end of the atrium would have an external door that would allow separate external access through the atrium to the meeting rooms at the south of the Guildhall.

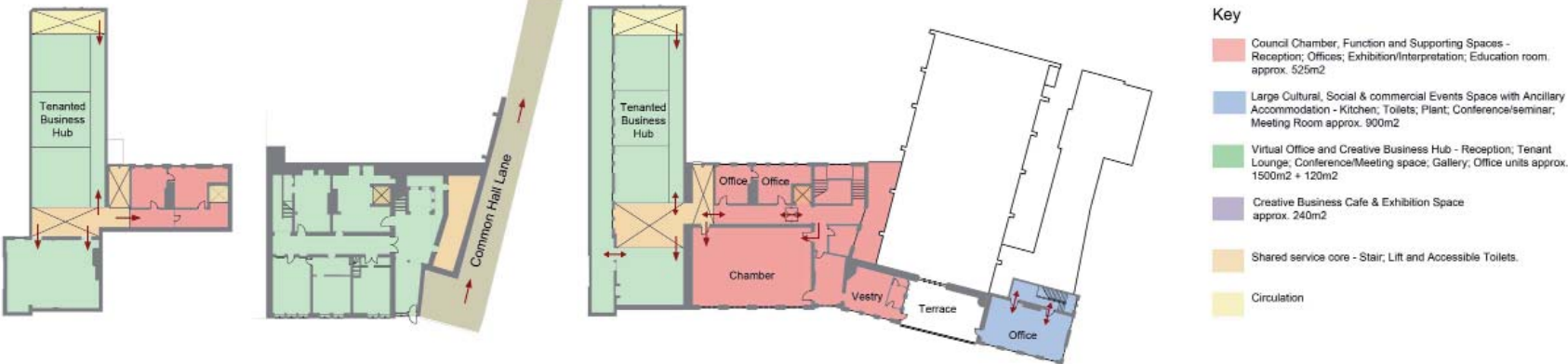
Historically the Guildhall had a north end minstrels gallery and likely partition screen below. It is proposed this feature be re-constructed. This will enable the existing small and unwelcoming porch could be replaced with a larger more welcoming entrance vestibule, to the west could be a designated storage room. To the east would be the lobby to the atrium and above a viewing gallery to the space.

Potential environmental improvements to the Guildhall include:

- Addition of 150mm rigid foam insulation above the existing roof decking, formation of warm roof ventilation void and re-leading. Abutments and gutters would need to be carefully detailed to avoid additional chasing of weathering into masonry.
- Provision of slim-line double or secondary glazing units in minimal bronze frames set between the vertical mullions 25 mm from the existing 1950's glazing, terminated at the head at the high level ferramenta bars. This would significantly reduce heat loss with the space. (A trial could be arranged to assess visual impact).
- Consider the need for replacement and improvement of the current underfloor heating system. A specialist historic buildings heating engineer should evaluate this together with
- Consider use of renewable energy such as photovoltaic cells on the roof.

These proposals would create the potential for the Guildhall to be a highly attractive and accessible community and civic events venue with ancillary accommodation of a high modern standard within the heart of the historic city. The impact of the interventions to achieve this proposal are minimal and would on balance be beneficial to the long-term use and financial viability of the Guildhall.

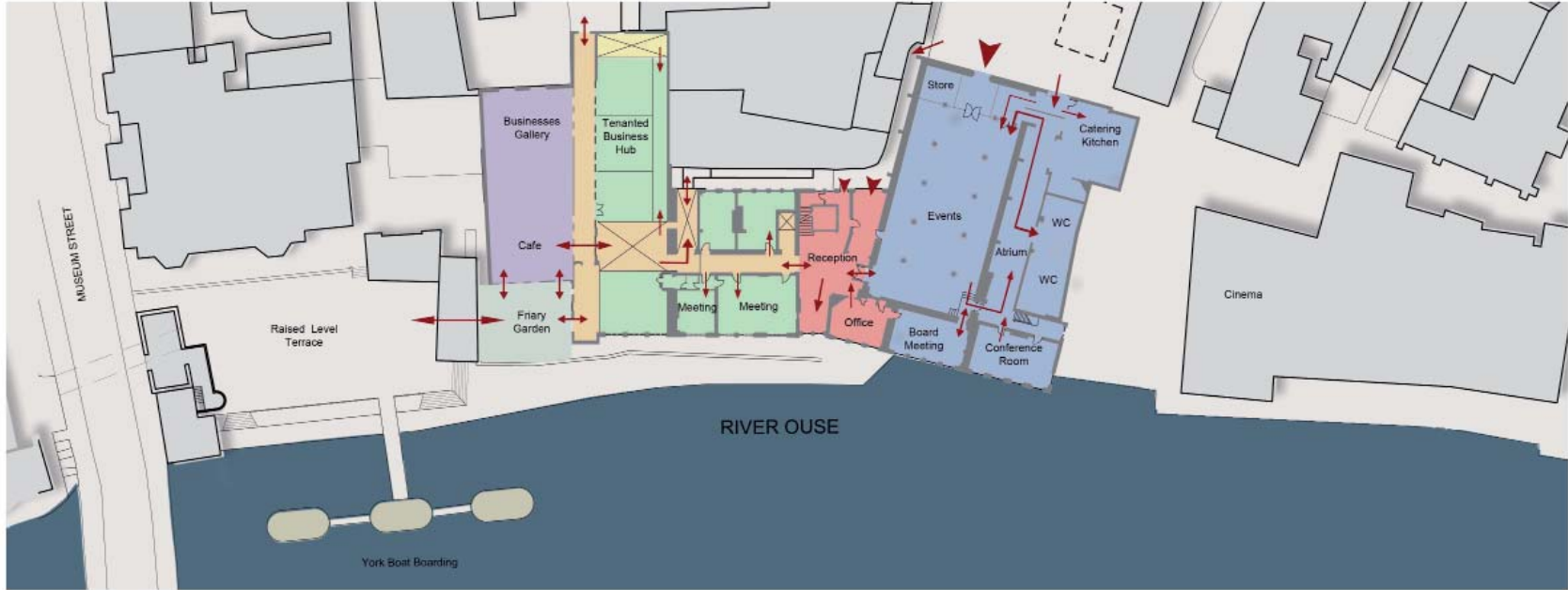
York Guildhall: Options Appraisal



Proposed Second Floor

Proposed Basement

Proposed First Floor



Proposed Ground Floor



Guildhall space, arranged for a concert with 100 guests.



Access improvements to the Guildhall will be a necessary part of any development of the spaces (current non-compliant ramp)



The East range and yard offer opportunity to form a glazed atrium space - providing separate access to toilets and meeting rooms from the Guildhall and Common Hall Yard.

The proposed arrangement works would allow the management and operation of the Guildhall as part of the Mansion House complex; or it could be separately operated and managed as a venue in its own right.

Guildhall Offices

The Council Chamber and processional stair within the Guildhall Offices are of high significance and therefore have only, limited potential for change. Any use other than as a council chamber is likely to require substantial alteration to the designed joinery. A number of the other rooms within the building have interesting features and are of medium significance.

The proposal is that the Council Chamber will continue to accommodate the civic duties and meetings required by the Council. In order to do this some of the very concerning limitations of the building need to be addressed, such as the lack of acceptable means of access, as well as technical improvements within the Chamber to improve its efficient use.

The use of the Council Chamber for Council meetings creates a need for ancillary supporting accommodation. This includes on the ground floor a publicly accessible welcoming reception area with adjoining administrative office. This reception space could be opened so that a larger seating is created with riverfront views. From the reception it is proposed a new large accessible passenger lift be installed, that connects vertically all floors of the building.

The small office and vestry briefing space adjoining the Chamber would with roof terrace access, would be retained for council use.

The ancillary accommodation will also require the provision four separate 'political party' briefing rooms and offices. Rooms for Part briefings could also

be utilised in the proposed business hub in the ground floor of the Guildhall Offices.

It is proposed that toilet and vertical circulation accommodation by shared with the proposed redevelopment of the Guildhall Annexe, economising on space and allowing more appropriately sized provision

Guildhall Annexe and Hutments

The twentieth century Guildhall Annexe are designated as only some significance and the Hutments of neutral significance; both sites have a high potential for comprehensive change in such a way that brings beneficial use and is meaningfully sympathetic to the historic setting of the site. The river frontage of the annexe building is of medium significance with respect to aesthetic townscape values and key views of the river, this frontage should therefore be retained.

The site beneath the existing structures will in places be of high evidential significance, being a former Friary.

It is proposed these two sites are redeveloped to form a virtual office and creative business hub; this would include, a shared reception and tenant lounge, conference and meeting spaces that could be available for hire, a display gallery, and a variety of tenanted office incubator units. The annexe could be developed as a three or possibly a four storey building between 1000-1300 square metres of accommodation; the ground floor river frontage rooms could also form a part of this facility, providing a further 100 sq. m of accommodation. The hutments site could be redeveloped as a one or two storey building with glazed atrium covering the lane that leads to Lendal. This could generate between 225 - 450 sq. m of new business accommodation.

It is proposed the new business hub would be accessed from the lane leading from Lendal. To the south it is suggested the new building on the hutments site is set back to form a river frontage garden space on part of the former Friary site. This space

York Guildhall: Options Appraisal



Proposed Second Floor

Proposed Basement

Proposed First Floor



Proposed Ground Floor



The Council Chamber - this highly significant space will continue as the Council Chamber, improvements for accessibility are recommended.



The Guildhall Annexe and Hutments has the potential for redevelopment to form a creative business hub.



The existing Hutments on the site of a former Friary has potential for development.

within the wider scheme presents the potential opportunity of forming a ramped access to Common Hall Lane.

Common Hall Yard

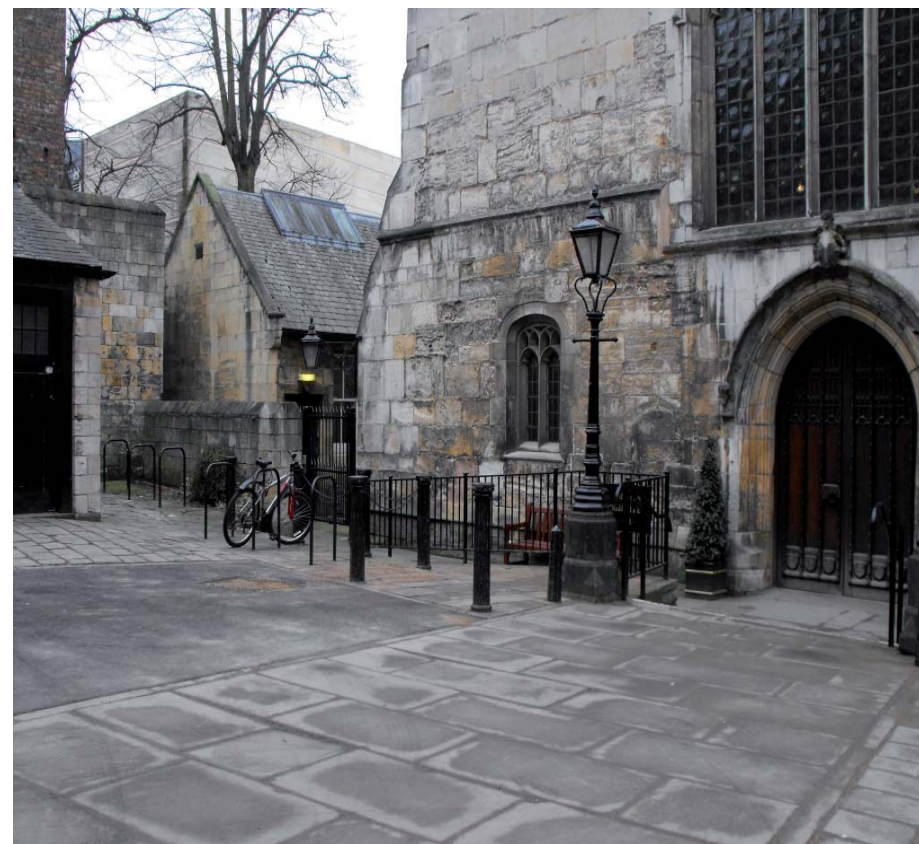
Common Hall Yard is situated between the rear, south elevation, of the Mansion House and the North entrance front of the Guildhall. The principal access to the space is from St Helen's Square through the vaulted passage beneath the Mansion house. The principal urban 'grain' or direction of streets, both historic and current is from St Helen's Square, Lendal and Coney Street, south to the river frontage. There are secondary cross-routes from Common Hall Yard, east to St Martin's Church, West to the Guildhall Offices alley and also via a stair to Common Hall Lane, which passes beneath the Guildhall to the opening at the river front.

Common Hall Yard is a key space that needs to be carefully considered as a creative landscape design challenge that achieves a number of complex objectives. It needs to tackle concerns of accessibility; it needs to provide a worthy urban space and inviting setting for the north front and entrance to the Guildhall; it needs to clearly enable way-finding access to the Guildhall Offices; it needs to be beautifully lit at night, as should the passage from St Helen's Square so that a more inviting space is created. Access should also be considered for those who during restricted hours would like to use Common Hall Lane to access the riverfront.

This study proposes the garage is removed from the space so that the design of the landscape is given more space to better resolve the above challenges without the need for it to function as a large vehicle turning space. It is also proposed that the rocky be reviewed within any landscape design proposals. The north elevation of the Guildhall would be more welcoming if it were conserved and cleaned as well as lit architecturally.

The use of Common Hall Lane to connect the river front and St Helen's Square is discussed in the wider site analysis later in this report.

The Access Audit has identified the concerns with access through Common Hall Yard to the Guildhall arising from the slope of the site and its present configuration as well as poor lighting and details.



Common Hall Yard : there is an opportunity to resolve the unsatisfactory access arrangements, presentation of the setting of the Listed Buildings and complex way-finding to the Guildhall Offices, through a well considered high quality landscaping scheme. The removal of the garages may improve the opportunity for creation of a delightful historic public square.



Connections to Public Spaces



Aerial sketch of urban spaces and redevelopment of the annexe and hutments proposed for the wider site.

Site Context Analysis and Urban Opportunities

The wider site analysis has sought to develop two key opportunities within the urban context. First, improving the existing connections from Lendal, St Helen's Square and Coney Street through the current lanes and yards to the river front. Secondly, developing an accessible leisure space along the river frontage from Lendal Bridge to the entry to Common Hall Lane, providing a new boat embarking 'jetty', as well as a green space on part of the former Friary.

The existing use of the historic connections from Lendal and St Helen's Square are obstructive to the presentation and understanding of this part of the city and hinder the potential using the historic routes to enrich the city's character and activity. A large and dominant portion of the riverbank, which is visually crucial to the setting and views of the historic frontage and building groupings behind them is blighted by the unsightly York Boat Yard.

York Boats are an important business to the vibrant life and character of the City of York; the boats provide an excellent offer to visitors to see York from the river. This study seeks to develop a more visible and better opportunity for this leisure offer by improving access to and visibility of the embarkation point. This proposal would need the York Boat servicing and docking yard to be relocated elsewhere.

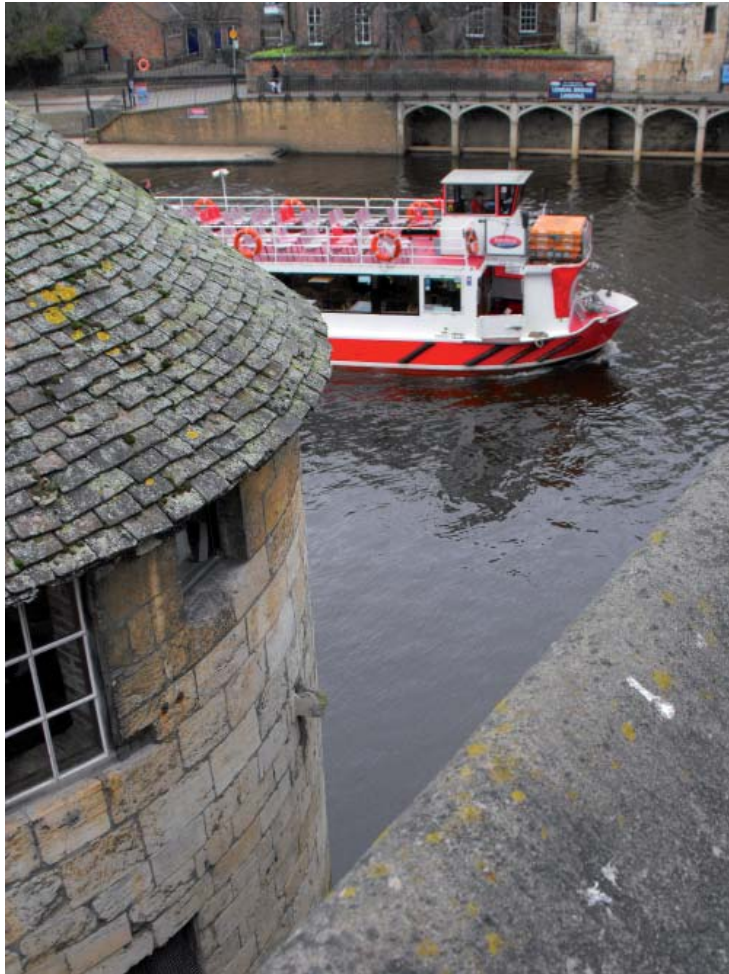
This study has been carried out to identify creative opportunity to create a vibrant riverside leisure space that will enhance the enjoyment and commercial success of the city. In order to set out a range of exciting opportunities within the confines of a relatively short study the details of ownership, rights and technical feasibility have been deferred to the subsequent stage of development.



The Guildhall from the River Ouse



Historic routes from St Helen's Square and Lendal leading down to the river front that could be developed to provide improved access to a public river frontage space.



There are long term strategic opportunities to improve and enhance the River Ouse as a wonderful open space that can be enjoyed, a major opportunity for enhancement is the York Boats Yard. The York Boat landing could be relocated to a more publicly noticeable and accessible space.

Lendal Bridge Access to Riverfront

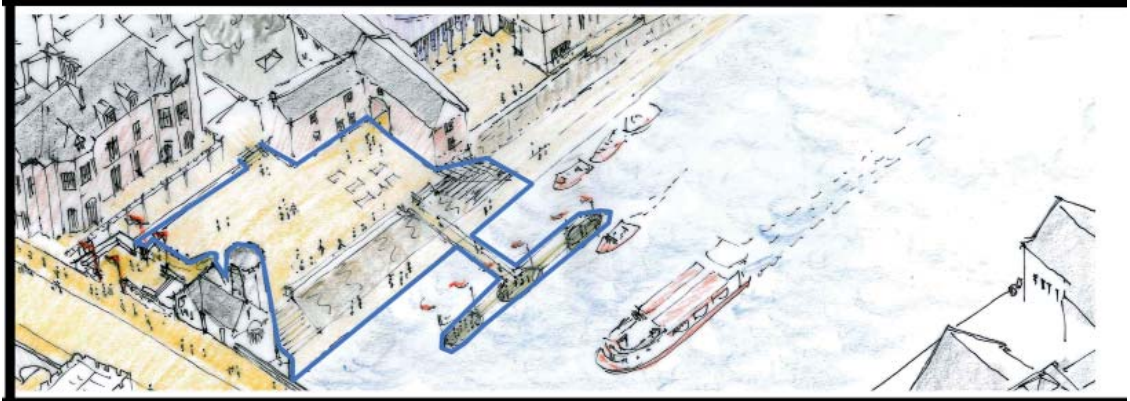
From the north end of Lendal Bridge it is proposed that a gated access be formed through the small garden space, this will lead to a new stair and passenger lift that will descend to the proposed river terrace that is presently the boatyard. This access is very well located, to the many visitors who cross Lendal Bridge, which also provides a good space from which to look down cross the river view.

Access to the River front terrace will also be maintained beneath the bridge.



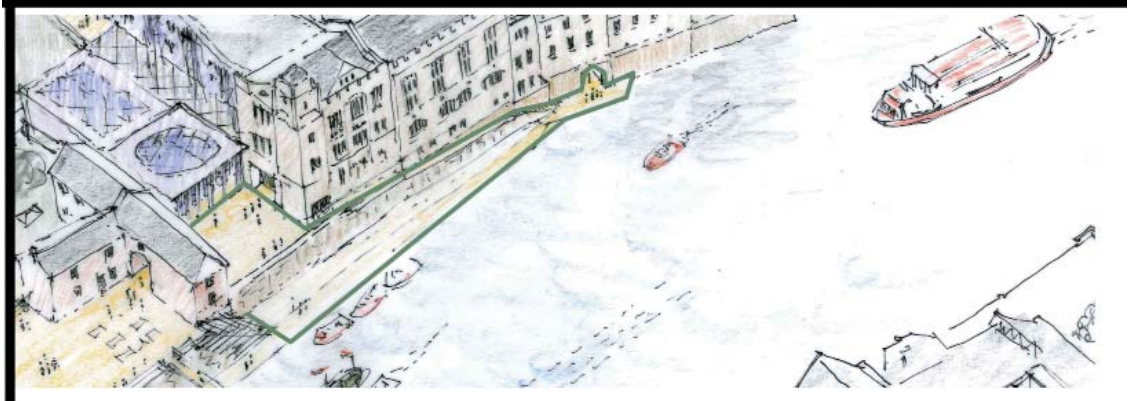
Boat Yard Square and Landing Access

The proposal is to create a new raised terraced space, level with the threshold of the present York Boats building, which is above the known flood limit. This level space will be a vibrant leisure space, making easy connections to the basement of York House, and the two adjacent listed buildings, as well as the lane that leads back up to Lendal. The paved terrace will embank down to the river where there will be a lower promenade level connecting to the entrance of Common Hall Lane. From the terrace there will also be an accessible route to the proposed York Boats embarkation landing. These are envisaged as a modern structure floating in the river, providing a unique way to see the river front and bridges.



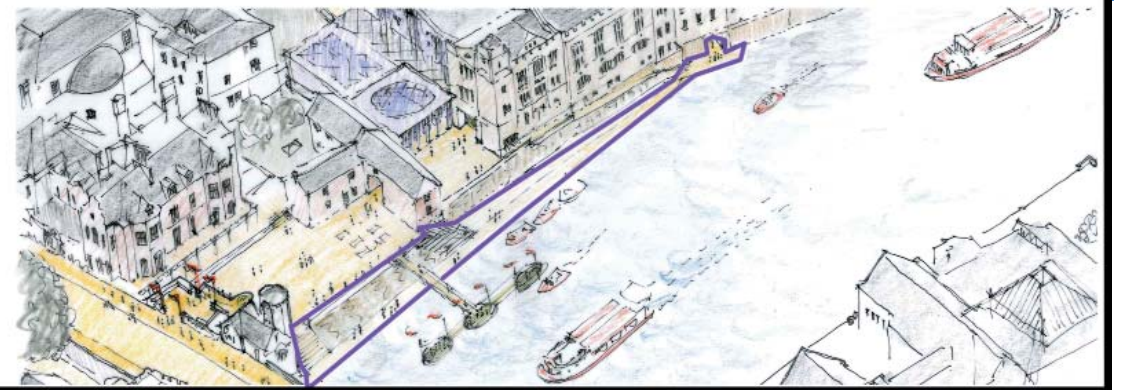
Friary Garden

From the new Boat Yard Terrace, a passage connection could be made through the warehouse building to the 'Friary Garden', this could be a raised green space from which views across the river can be made, as well as access via a ramp behind the existing screen wall down to Common Hall Lane. The Friary Garden will also connect into the new development of the Annexe and Hutment and also via the lane back up to Lendal.



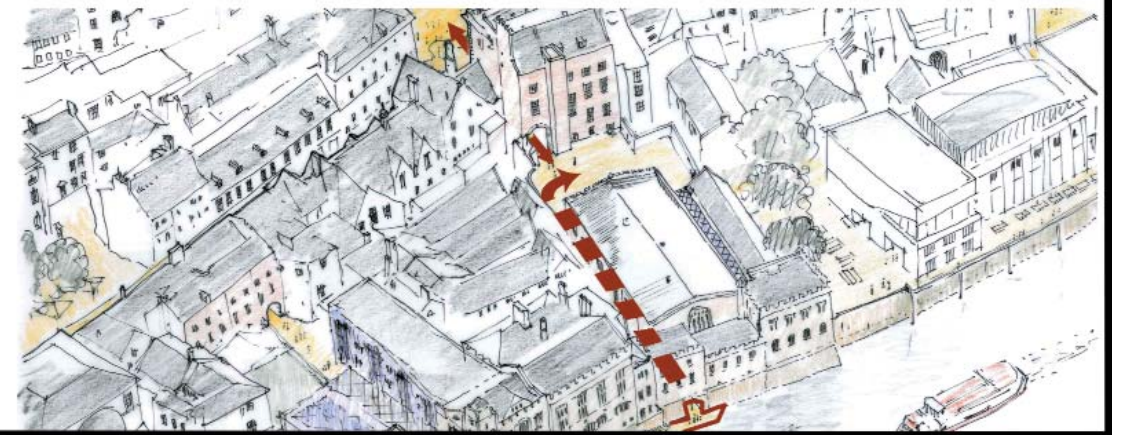
Water Edge

From the proposed Boat Yard Terrace stepped access can be made down to a water edge walk that connects to common Hall Lane. The possibility of this space being accessible from Friary Garden via the ramped access should be explored. This low level river side view of the York Bridges is a delightful experience. When the river is in flood the use of this lower walk would not be possible.



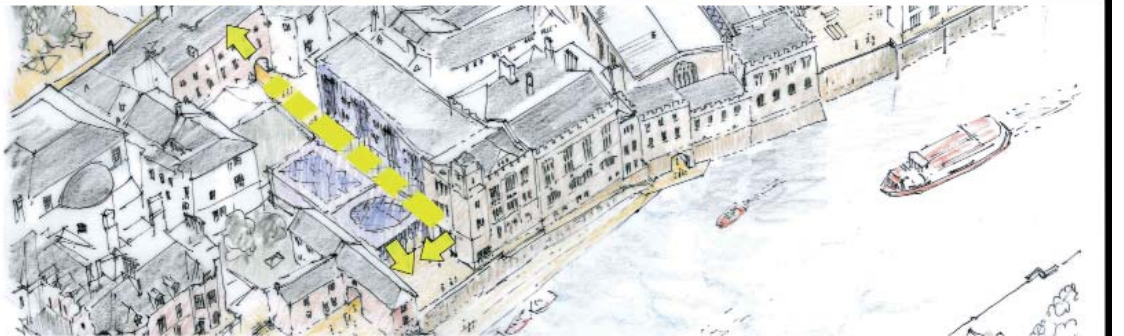
Common Hall Lane, Common Hall Yard and St Helen's Square

The proposal is to allow some controlled access via the water front up Common Hall Lane to Common Hall Yard and St Helen's Square. This will bring back into use one of York's lanes, which will help in enrich the understanding and presentation of this interesting aspect of the city.



Lendal to the new annexe building

From Lendal it is proposed that the lane is developed so that it connects via a covered link to the proposed Friary Garden.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed transfer of the Council services to the new west offices will require that a detailed plan for the reuse of the Guildhall complex is developed. This study has identified that this change will be an opportunity to improve the facilities, use and viability of the Guildhall. It has also identified the Guildhall offices need improvement with respect to public accessibility and has suggested both external and internal alterations to this end, as well as reconfiguring the accommodation to provide improved facilities to some of the Council Chamber function. The Annexe and Hutments have potential for a spectacular riverside creative business use and virtual offices supporting services and facilities that would also be available for use by the Council.

As a comprehensive project, there is an opportunity to improve the use of the buildings; address issues of condition and environment; improved accessibility across the whole site; improvements to setting and urban landscape as well as joint with the wider city policies for environmental and heritage improvements. The approach for these improvements has been to use the opportunity to enhance the heritage value and mitigate loss to historic fabric and archaeology. Where possible the opportunity to positively contribute to the wider environment with new buildings and spaces has been proposed.

Equalities Impact Assessment – It is recommended that a process of engagement covering a range of different activities, from formal public consultations to direct engagement with people from protected groups takes place. The level of engagement to be undertaken will depend on the scale of project being developed.

Environmental Conditions in the Guildhall – Consider the appointment of a specialist historic buildings environmental engineer to technically assess the options and benefits of environmental improvements.

Landscape Design Common Hall Yard – consider developing a brief for the landscape design followed selection of a specialist landscape designer with exemplary design credentials.

Guildhall Complex – consider developing the study so that viability of the option can be tested and developed.

Lighting – consider integrated external lighting strategy as any proposals for the site development.

River front - consider further the viabilities of improving connections to the river front by opening the lanes from Lendal and St Helen's Square, consider strategic proposals for the redevelopment of York Boat Yard to form a publicly accessible space that makes appositive contribution to the river frontage setting and heritage assets. Studies that will help inform this include an understanding into the ownership and legal right relating to the site area; the River Authority restrictions and requirements relating to flood levels and protection.

York Guildhall: Options Appraisal



