



Shire Hall, Monmouth (cc-by-sa/2.0), © Philip Pankhurst (geograph.org.uk/p/5452789) license by Creative Commons



Plan of Town Centre - 1881



Plan of Town Centre - 1969



Plan of Town Centre - 1986



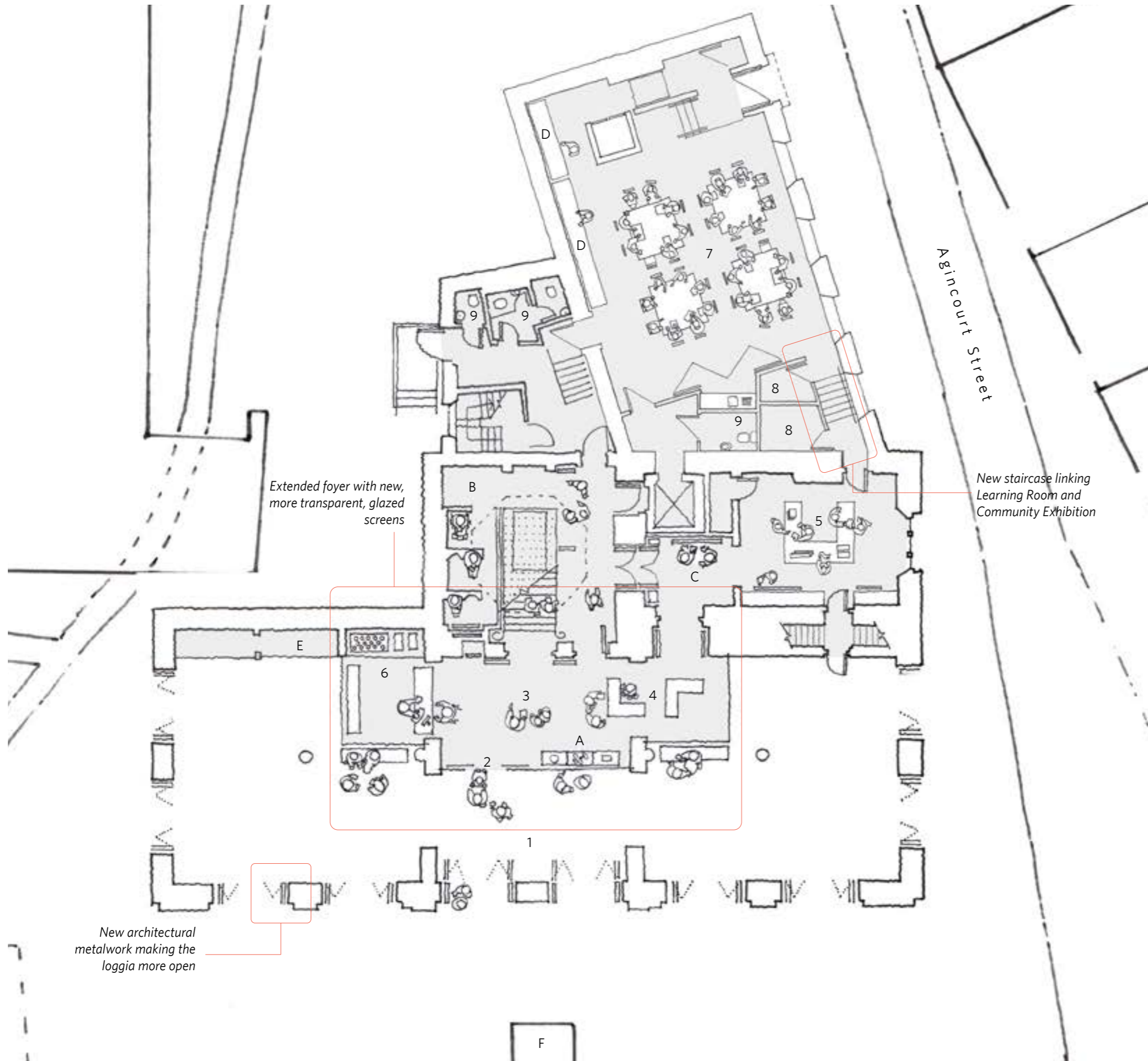
Configuration of existing railing and gates, while performing a necessary function, hinders open access to the loggia



Current screens to entrance foyer do not allow view to the inside from some angles



Entrance foyer is small and does not have much room for the shop



Key:

- 1 Loggia
- 2 Main Entrance
- 3 Foyer
- 4 Shop
- 5 Community Exhibition
- 6 Refreshment Bar
- 7 Learning Space [+Multi-Use]
- 8 Store
- 9 WC

- A. Museum shop-window display
- B. Video installation
- C. Extension area for community exhibition
- D. Collection Storage - cases and open display
- E. Amended Storage for Market
- F. Charles Rolls' statue



Shop Window, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter



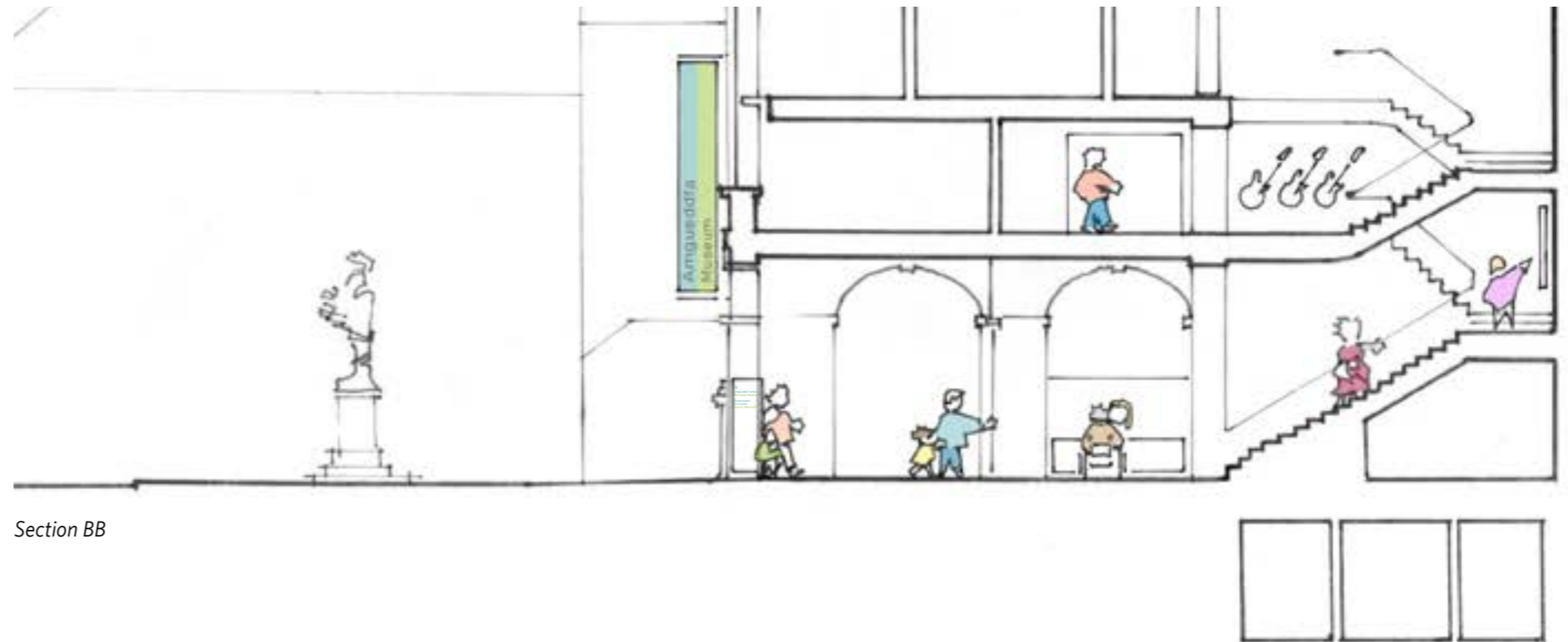
Sound sculpture giving a playful interpretation of the history of Stortorget town square as a location of vital wells, Kalmar, Sweden

Ground Floor Plan, approximately 1:150 @ A3

3.2 Approach, Entrance and Transition to Main Displays



Main Entrance



Section BB

Approach and Connection with Agincourt Square

New signage to the exterior will give the building a new visual identity and guide visitors towards the front entrance. There is a wider opportunity to take the museum out into the loggia and Agincourt Square with objects, interpretation and a playful interaction with the landscape. Examples installations such as the museum "shop window" for the *Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter* and the playful sound-sculptures in Stortorget, Kalmar show how a cultural destination can increase its presence in the town context.

New architectural metalwork able to be fully opened between stone piers will make the loggia space more accessible. Replacing the current part glazed, part timber-clad with fully glazed screens, including the new extended area, will make the entrance foyer more visible from the Square and give opportunities to entice visitors with a display of museum objects [as at Exeter], views of the shop and the other activities within. Either side of the screens are benches to give an opportunity to visitors for rest or decision-making, a sheltered place to drink a coffee.

Imaginative lighting and light and sound projections within the loggia space could extend the visual and audible identity further and create an interstitial space for intrigue and story-telling out of daylight hours.

Entrance and Foyer

Entering the new foyer through a new glazed door a visitor will see:

- > reception desk is placed to the left of the front door, freeing up the middle of the space for the route to the main staircase, and the right-hand side for the enlarged shop and route through to the Community Exhibition Space;
- > two of the three original archways remain open, the larger central one opening onto the main staircase up to the first floor and Main Displays, the smaller on the right leading to the Community Exhibition room;
- > behind the now closed left-hand archway is a space for an AV installation. This can provide an introduction, conclusion or extension of interpretation to the visit.

Education/Learning Room

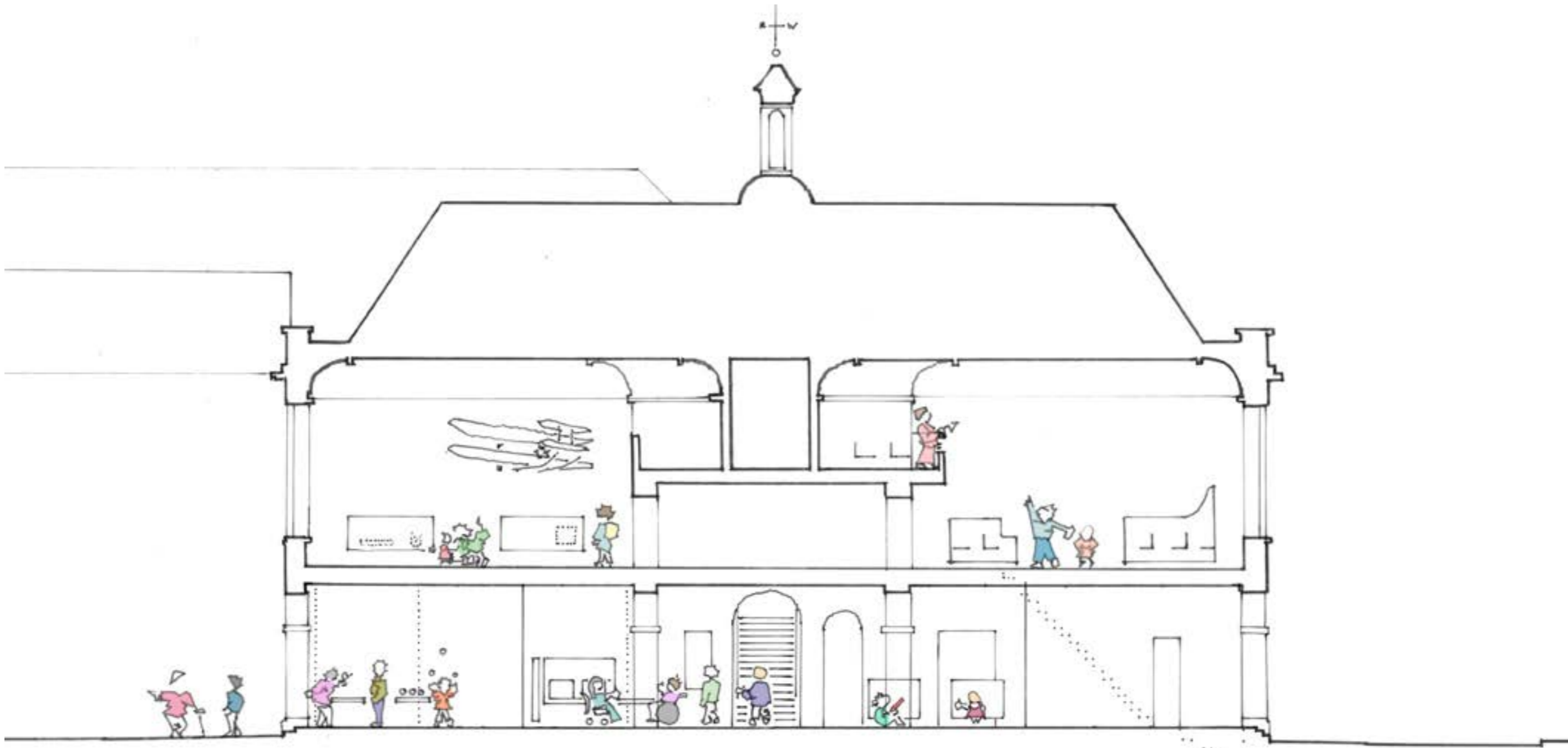
This new proposed use for the Community Room provides a space large enough to meet the Clore Education space standards. It already includes an independent front door, accessible WC, kitchenette and storage.

- > additional space is also available for further storage of MonLife collections. This is conceived as open storage, extending display and enabling collections to be used in learning exercises
- > new linking stair provided to the former Jury Room, now proposed as a community exhibition space. This increases possibilities for bookable spaces.

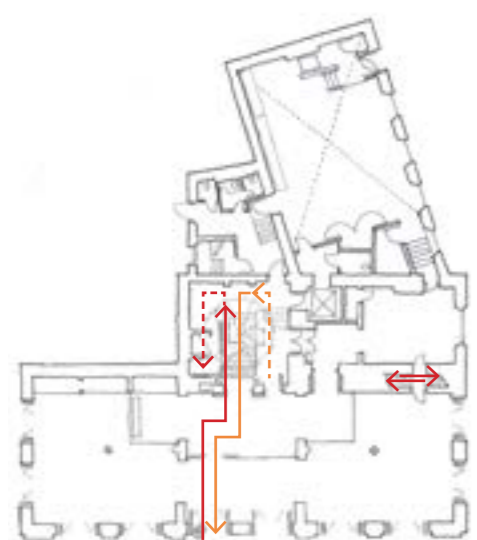
Transition to Displays

Guiding visitors up the main staircase is an intriguing installation on the wall rising above the half-landing level at the end of the first flight. Natural daylight from the elegant lantern naturally draws the eye upwards and to this surface. Either an object, interpretative device such as the costumed figure described in the Phase 1 Visitor Journey above, or a striking graphic can create a suitable invitation.

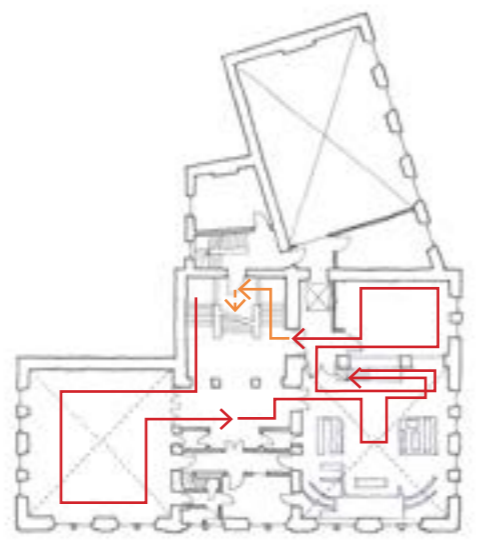
Although the Main Displays will be installed within the controlled conditions of Courtroom No.2 and the former first floor Education Room the main staircase and landings are opportunities for further display and interpretation. Projections, less-environmentally sensitive objects and interpretation can all add to these attractive and bright intermediate spaces.



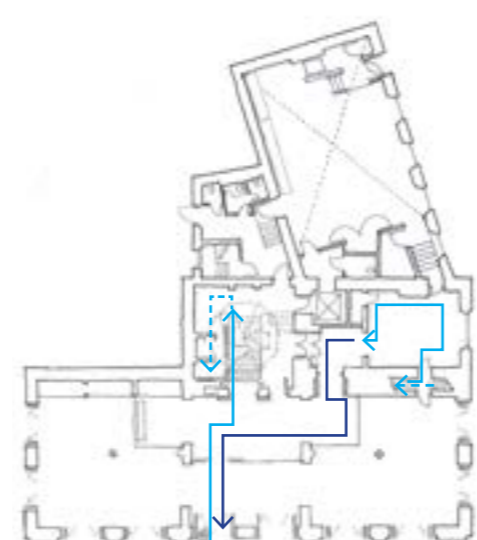
Section AA



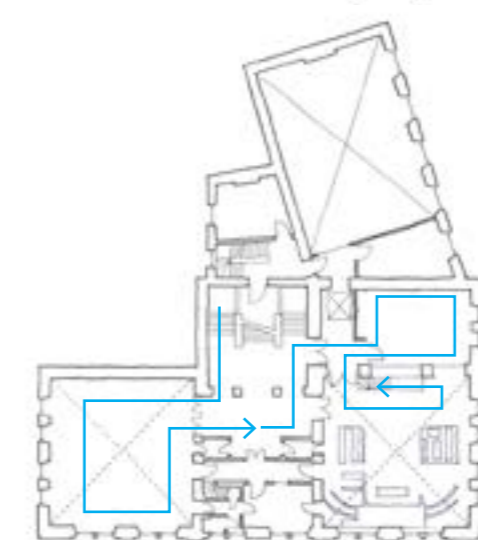
Option A - Ground Floor



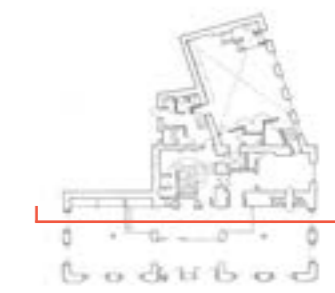
Option A - First Floor



Option B - Ground Floor



Option B - First Floor



Key Plan showing position of section

- Entrance - Option A
- Exit - Option A
- Entrance - Option B
- Exit - Option B

Plans Showing Options for Visitor Journeys Through the Building

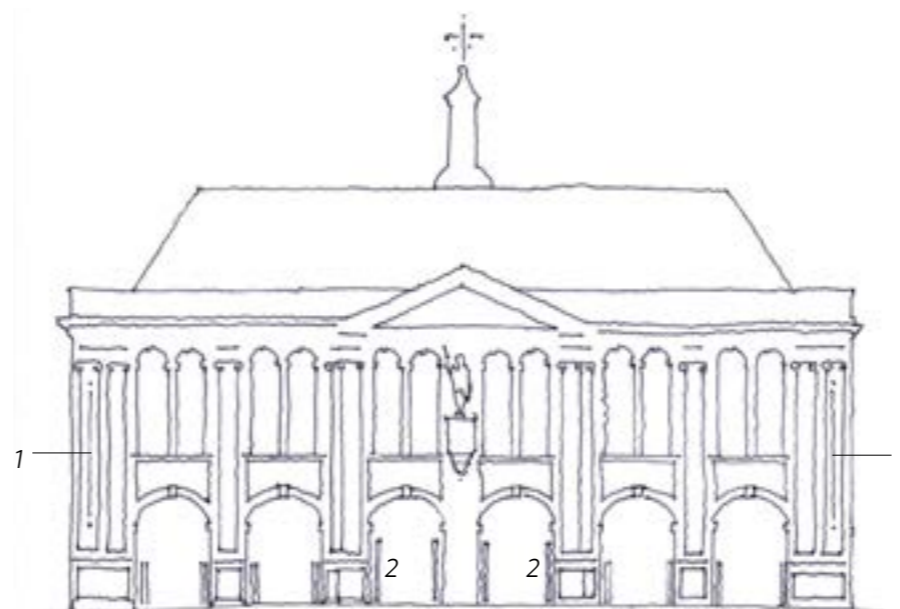
3.4 Signage and Wayfinding



Front Entrance from Agincourt Square



Flags and Banners at London's Science Museum and the RA



Sketch Elevation showing Signage Positions [1 - banner, 2 - totem]

Using the Building for Signage

Shire Hall is its own best sign, so prominent and so well-positioned it is within the town. What is needed is to communicate to townspeople and visitors the new identity, treasures within and activities to be provided when its new life begins. Our thoughts on the permanent condition and transitional Phases 1 and 2 are set out below.

Permanent Condition

Previous work has identified the potential for applying banners to the pilasters of the front elevation and we think this is a suitable proposal to help the Museum establish its presence in the Square. To this we could add the use of the flagpole and a modification to the existing fingerpost system to augment the identity when viewed from a distance. Many examples exist of sensitive banner designs for listed buildings and the consented proposals appears consistent with these.

Further consideration is necessary of how to guide visitors to the front entrance within the loggia and how to communicate the range of displays and activities available. We illustrate a slender totem adjacent the flanks of the central pilasters, both marking the entrance and providing a surface for identity and information. From this position the new glazed entrance area is clearly visible. Other museums have successfully used the idea of the "shop window" in which selected objects from the collection are displayed as an enticement to further attractions inside.

One additional possibility is the sensitive use of internal hangings to windows carrying graphics and information facing outwards. These would need to be carefully considered not to compromise the building character.

As with all work to Shire Hall detailed consultation will be required with MCC Heritage and Cadw.

Transitional Phase 1

Temporary signage inviting visitors to participate in Phase 1 will be necessary, it would be right to conserve funds until detailed proposals for storytelling and content of the museum are worked through. Sandwich boards offer a low-cost option.