



Proposed Hotel

Former Post Office & Sorting Office,
Abingdon & Edward Street, Blackpool

Design & Access Statement

11/06/2021

Contents

1.0 Introduction **1**

2.0 Site Context & Analysis **7**

3.0 Design Development **35**

4.0 Proposed Design **44**

5.0 Sustainable Design & Construction **60**

6.0 Involvement **61**

7.0 Summary **62**



The Post Office and Listed Telephone Boxes, Abingdon Street

1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Franklin Ellis Architects on behalf of Ashall Projects in support of a Detailed Planning Application and Listed Building Application for the refurbishment and extension of the Former Post Office on Abingdon Street and associated Sorting Office on Edward Street into a branded hotel in Blackpool City Centre.

This Design and Access Statement covers the key criteria involved in the design process and the design principles on which the scheme is based. The statement looks at the site context, its history, townscape, and relation to local planning policy. It describes the detailed design of the proposal and the impact this will have on the local area.

This statement includes a Heritage Assessment to account for the Listed elements of the proposals and the historic setting of the development, within Section 2.0 of the document.

Application Background

Full planning permission has previously been granted for similar hotel led schemes. The current application has been developed to accommodate changes in the market and current demand. As such the revised proposals incorporate several changes to the previous approvals which are outlined in this document.



Figure 1.00 Blackpool Town Centre, Aerial View

Executive Summary

Key Scheme Objectives

1.0 To regenerate and reinvigorate a large under-utilised site within a key regeneration zone in Blackpool City Centre.

2.0 To make a positive contribution to local heritage via the renovation of the Listed Former Post Office and associated Sorting Office, bringing two of Blackpool's finest early 20th century buildings back into long term and appropriate use, safeguarding them for the future.

3.0 To provide market demand high quality hotel provision in an ideal location.

4.0 To enhance the activity of the street frontages to Abingdon Street and Edward Street, through the provision of active frontage and amenity.

5.0 To improve the safety, attractiveness, and animation of the adjacent Public Realm.

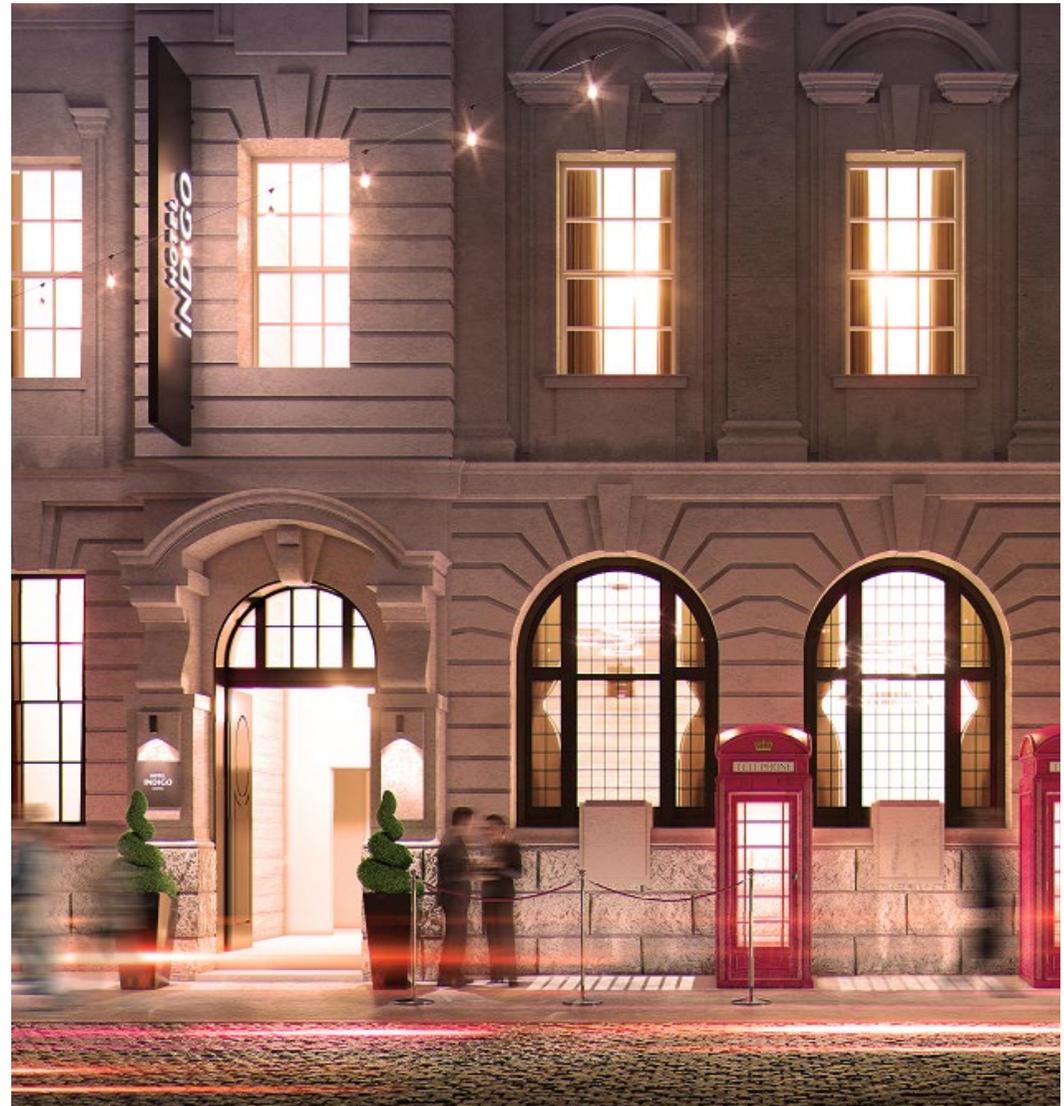


Figure 1.01 Proposed Development when viewed from Abingdon Street

The Proposal

The 3,645sq.m site as defined by the red line is located between Edward Street and Abingdon Street in Blackpool.

The proposed development includes the renewal and redevelopment of the existing Former Post Office Building and associated Sorting Office in Blackpool Town centre into a high-quality hotel, including a mix of around 150 quality rooms that are suitable both for the conference/corporate market and the leisure market.

The development will include an attractive and market appropriate dining option which appeals to both hotel and non-resident guests, situated in a highly appropriate location within the town centre.

The development will seek to provide an 'Oasis in the Centre of Town' feel for visitors and guests, whilst enhancing Blackpool's high end guest room offering alongside the provision of several options for events and meetings to improve the towns corporate and conferencing offering.

The development will provide several unique selling points, including the provision of guest lounges on the top floor of the Sorting Office building, ensuring a one-of-a-kind development in the heart of the town.

The proposals will seek to not only respect the Heritage Assets being redeveloped but also to enhance and safeguard their use, further assisting the wider regeneration of the locality and its place at the heart of Blackpool's Town Centre Conservation Area.



Figure 1.02 – Site Location Plan

The Client

The development is being brought forward by Ashall Property, a private property investment and development company which focuses on creating investment value through property development and asset management. In recent years Ashall have developed projects with an investment value in excess of £500m, comprising over 1 million square feet of office and commercial space.

This has included the development of Cobalt Park, the UK's largest office park, in conjunction with a joint venture partner, and the award-winning refurbishment of the Grade II* listed former Royal Insurance building in Liverpool and its conversion into a 116 room Aloft Hotel.

Ashall's experience with the Aloft Hotel development ideally places it for the successful redevelopment of similarly Grade II listed Post Office. A selection of Ashall's recent developments, including Aloft, can be seen adjacent.



Figure 1.03 – Ashalls, Previous Developments

Figure 1.04 – Ashalls, Previous Developments

The Hotel Brand

The proposed hotel brand is part of the Intercontinental Hotel Group Portfolio.

IHG

IHG Hotels & Resorts is one of the world's leading hotel brand holders, with around 350,000 employees working across more than 100 countries in IHG branded hotels, delivering close to 6,000 hotels with over 880,000 beds.

Their diverse portfolio of differentiated brands is well known and loved by millions of consumers around the world. Of these, the Hotel Indigo brand has been selected as the most appropriate brand for the proposed hotel.

Hotel Indigo

With hotels in culturally diverse locations all over the world, no two Hotel Indigo's are the same. Each hotel draws on the story of its local area to inspire every aspect of the hotel, from intriguing design to distinctive local ingredients in their menus.

The proposed offering at Blackpool will be no different, drawing from the rich history and culture of Blackpool to develop a unique, distinctive and outstanding hotel.

A portion of the rooms will be delivered in a range of suited format providing a range of accommodation types to suite the range of potential guests.



Figure 1.05 Hotel Indigo – Previous Developments

Franklin Ellis Architects

Franklin Ellis Architects, an award-winning Midlands based practice, in operation since 1993, and with extensive experience in the hospitality sector, are leading the Design Team for the proposed development.

Relevant Experience

Franklin Ellis Architects have extensive experience within the hospitality sector and have worked on a range of successful city centre hotel developments, ranging from new build dual brand hotels, such as the recent Moxy / Residents Inn in Slough, and the Holiday Inn / Staybridge Stratford City Hotel at the Olympic Park in London, through to the recent development of a new Hotel Indigo, the brand chosen for implementation at the Post Office, in the heart of Chester City centre's conservation area.

Franklin Ellis' hospitality experience is also reinforced by wide-ranging involvement in the renovation and restoration of heritage assets, including Leicester City Council City Hall and the recent refurbishment of the Exeter House of Fraser, a 1930's art deco building, into another new Hotel Indigo.

Examples of FEA's experience can be seen adjacent.



Figure 1.06 Franklin Ellis – Previous Developments

2.0 Site Context & Analysis

In this section we have looked at the site context in terms of the city centre, townscape, heritage, and local planning policy. As a conclusion we have identified the key development constraints and opportunities presented by the site.

Wider Context

The site is located within Blackpool Town Centre and as such is easily accessible to the wide range of retail, leisure, and transport facilities.



Figure 2.01 – Site in Wider Context

City Context

The site is located in the town centre boundary, as defined in the Blackpool Core Strategy. The development site is within a short walk to several of Blackpool's key cultural and historic assets, including St Johns Church and Square, and the Winter Gardens to the immediate south, and the Town Hall and Metropole Hotel to the west.

It is within easy walking distance of both the North Pier and Blackpool Tower, which are primary tourist attractions and key landmarks within the town centre.

The sites' location, within the heart of the town, is also ideally situated within a short walk from Blackpool Railway Station, and Talbot Road, which is a key arterial vehicular route into Blackpool from the North.



Figure 2.02 – Blackpool Tower



Figure 2.03 – The Winter Gardens



Figure 2.04– The Metropole



Figure 2.05 – Blackpool Town Hall



Figure 2.06 – St Johns Church and Square



Figure 2.07 – Site in Wider Context with Distances



Figure 2.08 – Blackpool from Above



Figure 2.09– Site Aerial View

Immediate Site Context

The site is currently occupied by the Former Post Office building, fronting Abingdon Street, and its associated Sorting Office, fronting Edward Street, with a large interior courtyard separating the two buildings. The site is in the historic city centre and sits within a wider urban block, which lies adjacent to St Johns Square to the south and Deansgate to the North. Abingdon Street, adjacent the Post Office frontage, is a semi – pedestrianised road which leads towards Church Street and the Winter Gardens, acting as a primary city centre pedestrian corridor. Edward Street to the east, adjacent the Sorting Office, is a secondary road characterised by low rise Victorian housing and the sorting office itself, previously acting as servicing access for the post office. The surrounding area is the heavily built up and has also been the focus of recent public realm improvements,

The primary street facing frontages to the existing buildings are in good condition and are of high architectural value, both in heritage terms and within the setting of their respective streetscapes. Fronting the Post Office on Abingdon Street a row of eleven listed telephone kiosks, further enhancing the heritage setting. The interior courtyard includes sections of elevation which are in a poor state of repair and these will be carefully renewed as part of the development.

Whilst the surrounding urban fabric retains much of its historic character and street patterns, it is interceded by several post war buildings of poorer architectural quality which detract from the local character. However, the redevelopment of the Post Office and Sorting Office will generally uplift the immediate context and result in an improved setting, enhanced street scenes and a strengthened historic character.

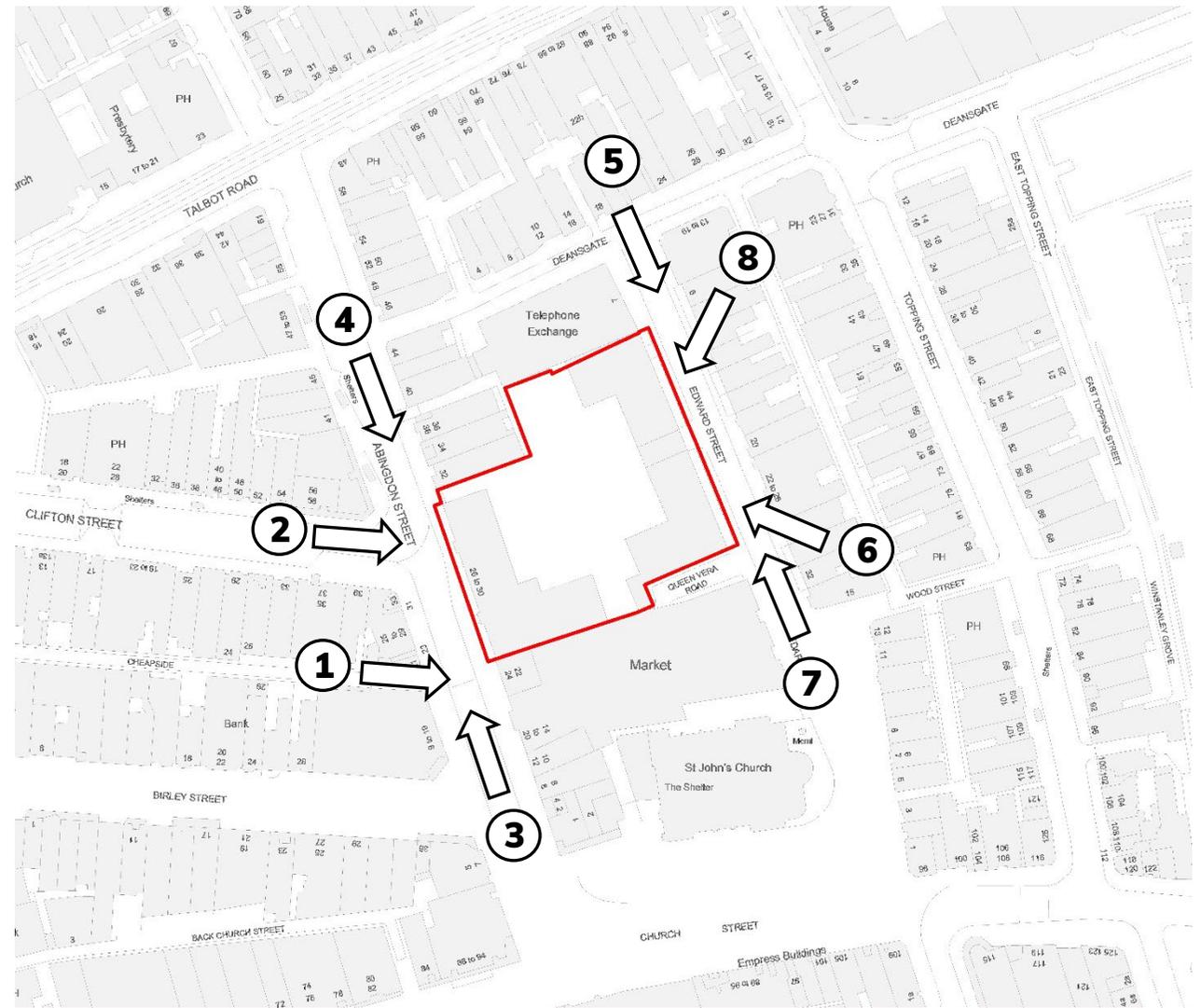


Figure 2.10 – View Key Plan



Figure 2.11 – Site viewed from Cheapside



Figure 2.12 – Site Viewed Clifton Street



Figure 2.13 – Site viewed from Abingdon Street



Figure 2.14 – Site viewed from Abingdon Street



Figure 2.15 – Site viewed from Howard Street



Figure 2.16 - Site viewed from Howard Street



Figure 2.17 – Site viewed from Howard Street

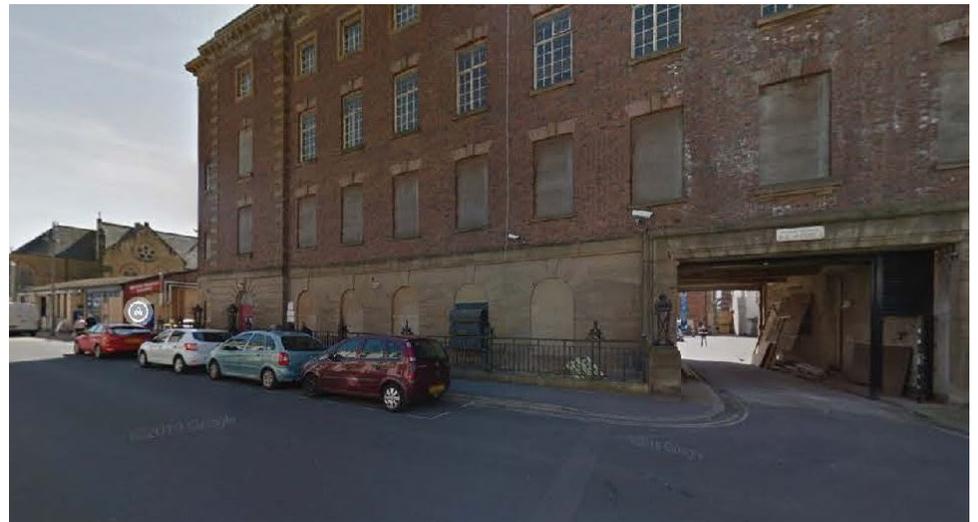


Figure 2.18 – Site viewed from Howard Street

Former Post Office, Abingdon Street

The Former General Post Office Building, located on Abingdon Street, is a Grade II listed neo renaissance building and is a key building in defining Blackpool's civic character.

The building, set across 3 storeys above a basement level, helps define the status of Abingdon Street as a primary town centre corridor, and is one of several historically important buildings in the vicinity.

The façade of the Post Office is a key heritage asset to the street and the proposals will include no alterations to the general fabric façade. The proposals will however seek to repair and restore elements of the existing façade, including the windows, where appropriate.



Figure 2.19 – Listed Telephone Kiosks



Figure 2.20 – General Post Office Facade



Figure 2.22– Post Office Aerial View



Figure 2.22 – Entrance Door



Figure 2.23 – Stone Detail

Sorting Office, Edward Street

The Edward Street Sorting Office is a later addition to the Post Office complex. The Sorting Office is a locally listed structure in the neo renaissance style and along with the earlier Post Office is a key building in defining Blackpool's civic character.

The building, set across 4 storeys above a basement level, is the most prominent structure along Edward Street. Although being the service face of the Post Office complex, the retention of wrought-iron railings and lamps to the back of the footway strengthen the buildings and streets overall civic character. Due to its prominence and scale as an historical asset, proposals will seek to maintain the existing façade and to restore features where they have been damaged or fallen into disrepair.



Figure 2.24 – Sorting Office Façade



Figure 2.25 – Sorting Office Façade



Figure 2.26 – Sorting Office Aerial View



Figure 2.27 – Entrance Door



Figure 2.28 – Façade Detail

The Courtyard, Edward Street

The Courtyard which links the Post Office and Sorting Office is partially cleared of more recent development and remains in a largely derelict state.

Historic mapping indicates that major changes to the rear of the property, within the existing courtyard, occurred between 1956 and 1963. This suggests that these alterations are of that era and therefore of lesser heritage significance.

In enhancing the character and presence of the Post Office and Sorting Office the repair and alteration of the inner facades to the courtyard will be necessary.



Figure 2.29 – Courtyard View



Figure 2.30 – Courtyard View



Figure 2.31 – Courtyard Aerial View



Figure 2.32 – Courtyard View



Figure 2.33 – Courtyard View

Policy Context

The Blackpool Core Strategy identifies the site as within the town centre boundary, characterizing the town centre as the focus for major new development in the Borough, and contains a number of planning policies supporting town centre development.

The site is also defined with Blackpool's Town Centre Strategy as being within Zone F, the Mixed Use Zone, with the Post Office identified as a key building.

The Town Centre Strategy identifies an over-supply of older hotels and guest houses, which are prevalent on the edge of the town centre, with the majority offering budget accommodation. It highlights that there are a limited number of hotels within the defined town centre boundary.

The proposals will assist in meeting the objectives of the Town Centre Strategy, specifically:

Objective 2: Strengthen the town centre as a vibrant leisure, entertainment, cultural and business tourism destination for residents and visitors,

The proposals will assist in developing an enhanced conference and business tourism offer as part of what will be a high quality hotel offer,

and Objective 5: Improve the quality of buildings, streets and spaces and their maintenance and management.

The proposals will Improve the quality of buildings, streets and spaces and their maintenance and management.

The proposals will deliver a high quality development on a key vacant sites e.g. Post Office building

The proposals include the refurbishment of key buildings complementing public realm investment.



Figure 2.34 – Blackpool Town Centre Strategy Zones

Historical Context

Blackpool Town Centre

In the early eighteenth century Blackpool consisted mainly of a few modest cottages along the shoreline, and Fox Hall, a large late medieval half-timbered house. By the end of the eighteenth century, the town had become a fashionable sea bathing resort, and the first visitor accommodation was built to meet this demand.

By the late 18th century there were only around 50 houses on the seafront. Blackpool's subsequent expansion was in large part due to the town's growing popularity with working people from the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile districts. By the 1830s there were more than a thousand visitors a year. The town became more accessible with the opening of the railway to Blackpool North station in 1846.

By 1848 Talbot Road became the principle east-west thoroughfare, linking the north railway station with the Promenade. Town centre development swelled in the 1850s when Blackpool's principal shopping area was conceived, and by the late 1860s the fields surrounding Upper Church Street, Topping Street and Edward Street were developed. Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Market Street and West Street, and later Abingdon Street, Birley Street and Clifton Street became the heart of Blackpool's commercial centre in the late 19th century. In addition, the construction of North and Central piers, and a new promenade which was both a tourist attraction and part of the town's sea defences, helped attract the development of respectable accommodation, and new streets were laid out in a grid behind the seafront.



Figure 2.35 – Historic Site Plan 1847

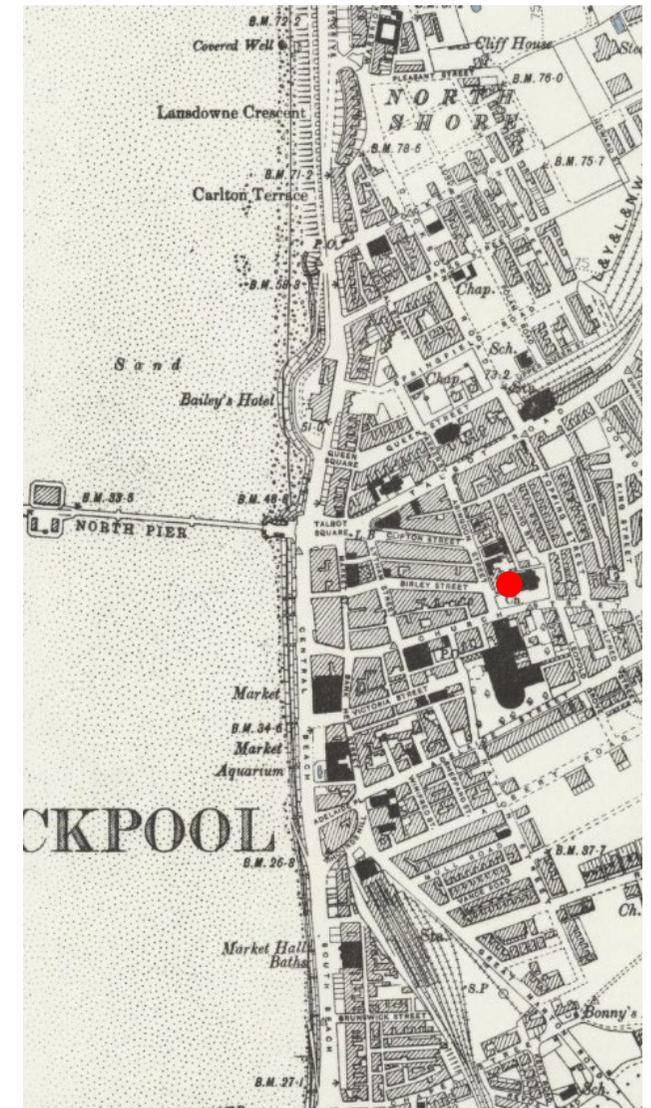


Figure 2.36 – Historic Site Plan 1895

Blackpool's second railway station, Central Station, the terminus of the Blackpool and Lytham Railway to the south-west of Albert Road, was opened in 1863 (closed in 1964). The transport links were conveniently placed for entertainment complexes, the central shopping district and the boarding houses to the south of the Winter Gardens.

Banks, public houses, and theatres and, from the early 20th century, cinemas were also constructed to service and entertain the growing resident and visitor population.

Many of these buildings survive relatively intact across town and within the conservation area and are included on the local list.



Figure 2.38 – Historic Site Plan 1931



Figure 2.37 – Aerial View – Early 20th Century



Figure 2.39 – Aerial View – Early 20th Century

The Development Site

The Old General Post Office was opened in 1910 and is Grade II listed. Constructed in the renaissance style, the Post Office signified Blackpool's growing importance as an urban centre in the early 20th century and reflects a grandeur and solidity typical of civic building in the UK at the time. Clad with Portland stone with a hipped roof of green slate, with a rectangular plan parallel to the street, with three storeys over cellars, the building was a key asset in developing Blackpool's early civic character. The later addition of the neo renaissance styled Sorting Office, fronting Edward Street, further enhanced the functionality of the Post Office as the town further expanded. More austere in its material and detailing, however, due to its prominence and scale, it remains a major feature in the Conservation Area.



Figure 2.40 – Aerial View Early 20th Century



Figure 2.41 – General Post Office Early 20th Century



Figure 2.42 – Historic Site Plan 1938



Figure 2.43 – General Post Office Early 20th Century

Conservation Area

The proposed development site is located within Blackpool Town Centres' designated Conservation Area.

Despite containing a mix of retail, civic and entertainment buildings the character of the Conservation Area is homogenous in that it contains the historic commercial and entertainment heart of the town.

The Town Centre Conservation Area brings together many of the town's key entertainment and public buildings. This includes listed buildings such as the Tower, Winter Gardens, Post Office, Grand Theatre, and listed churches but also locally listed buildings such as public houses, banks, and other commercial premises.

The seafront has always been Blackpool's key driver, from its early days attracting visitors eager to bathe and promenade to today's collection of leisure facilities along its length. The historic shopping area is focused on Abingdon Street, with a grid of north-south and east-west streets containing shops and other commercial premises running off it.

The spatial character of the of the conservation area is uniformly dense, with a regular, tight urban grain and a strong sense of enclosure in the street scene. The spatial character of streets is related to the role of each street in the street hierarchy. East-west streets leading to the sea and close to the town centre tend to be wider than those further inland, which have a homogenous spatial character, narrower in width than principal routes and with well-defined building lines.

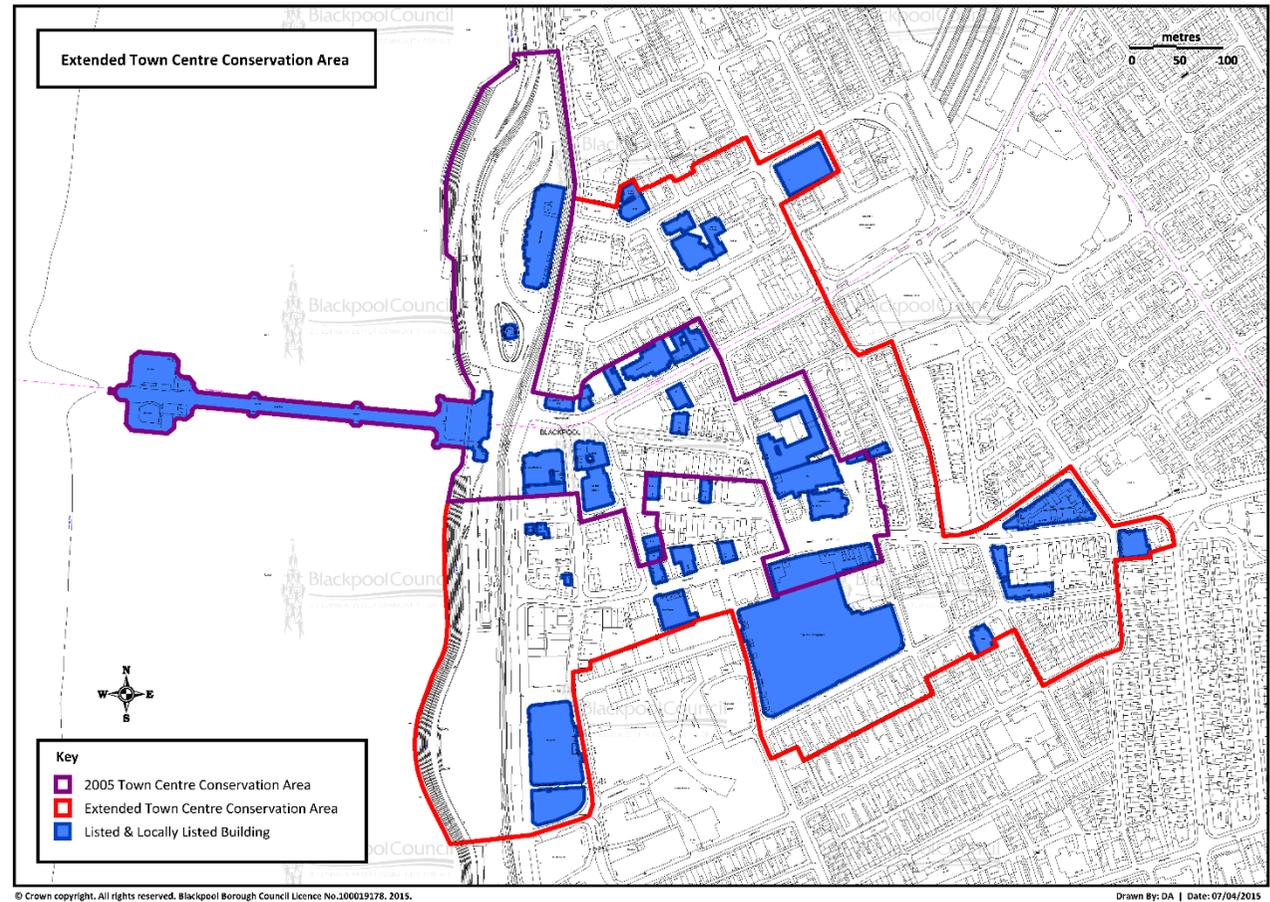


Figure 2.44 – Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area

Designations

The area denoted in red opposite is the Town Centre Conservation Area. The original area was designated in 1984, extended in 2004 and extended again to its current extents in 2014.

The designated area contains much of the Town's Civic Building Stock and is described as Blackpool's civic heart.

- A. North Pier
- B. Post Office / Sorting Office
- C. Bailey's Hotel / Metropole
- D. Blackpool Tower
- E. Winter Gardens
- F. Former Public Library
- G. Odeon Building
- H. St John's Blackpool
- I. Abingdon St Market
- J. Cedar Tavern / Churchills
- K. Church of the Sacred Heart
- L. Town Hall
- M. Stanley Buildings, Counce St



Figure 2.45 – Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area



Figure 2.46 – North Pier



Figure 2.47 – Metropole Hotel



Figure 2.48 – Blackpool Tower



Figure 2.49 – Winter Gardens



Figure 2.50 – Former Public Library



Figure 2.51 – The Odeon



Figure 2.52– St Johns



Figure 2.53 – Abingdon Street Market



Figure 2.54 – Cedar Tavern



Figure 2.55 – Church of the Sacred Heart



Figure 2.56 – Town Hall



Figure 2.57 – Stanley Buildings

Heritage Assessment

The General Post Office

Key features of the façade to the Listed General Post Office Building are identified in the adjacent photograph.

1. 26 - 30 Abingdon Street - General Post Office. Designed by Architects of the Office of Works and built by R Neill & Son of Manchester in 1910.

2. Group of 8 Telephone Kiosks. Designed by Sir Giles Scott in 1935 and made by various contractors, Grade II Listed on 14th June 1988.

A. Plain Frieze

B. Giant Pilasters to the Upper Floors of the 5 Bay Centre with Ionic Caps

C. Modillioned Cornice

D. Balustraded Parapet

E. Large Round-Headed doorways with a prominent segmental canopy borne by a pair of Atlantes on tall pedestals. Canopy with moulded head and scrolled key block.

F. Round-Headed windows with run-out voussoir's triple keystones and tripartite sashed glazing. With panelled-pilaster mullions and original stained glass

G. Two colonnaded 3-light sash windows with set-in Tuscan colonettes

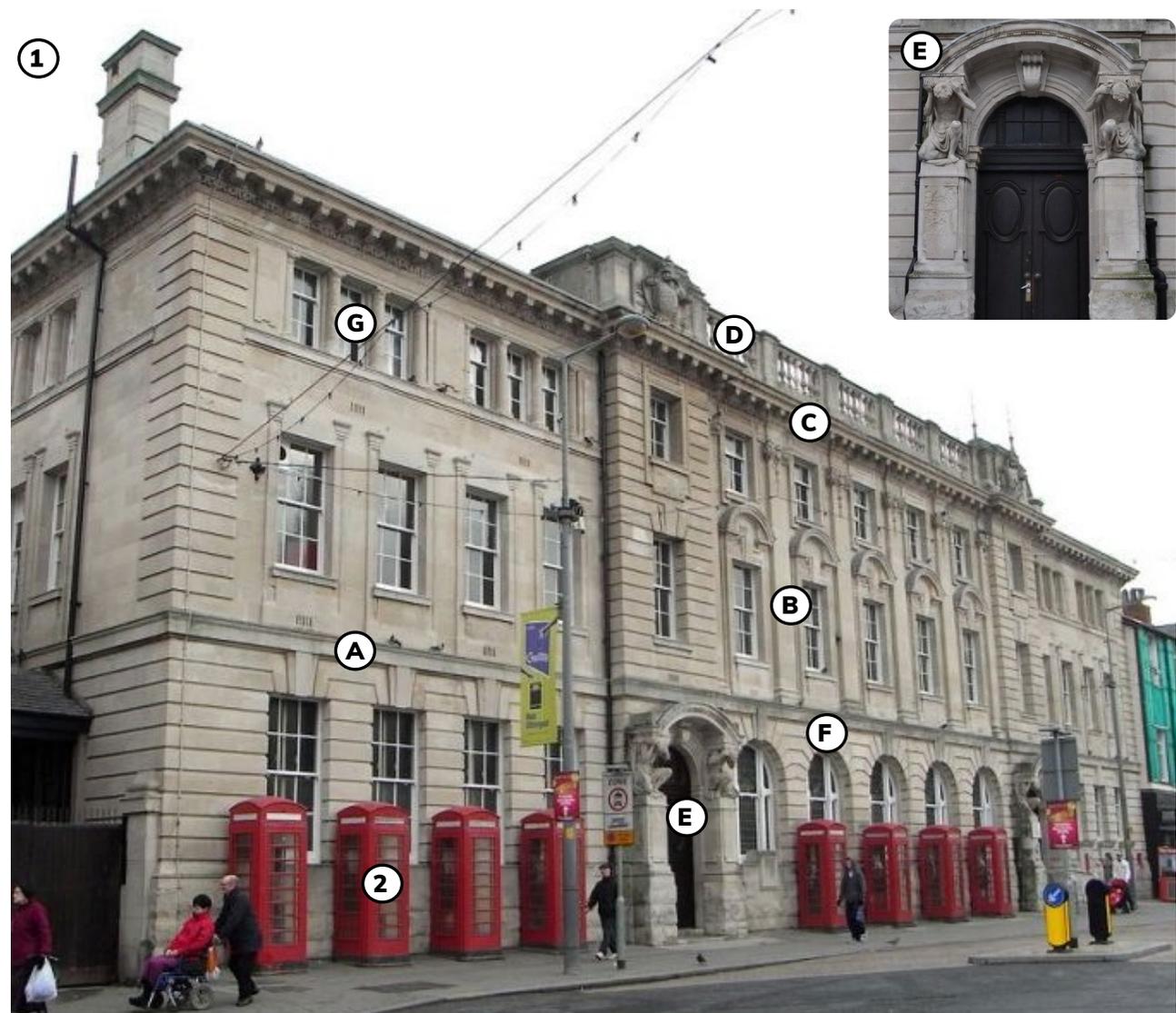


Figure 2.58 – The General Post Office Architectural Detail

The Sorting Office

Key features of the façade to the Locally Listed Sorting Office Building are identified in the adjacent photograph.

- A. Plain Frieze
- B. Modillioned Cornice
- C. Stone Quoins
- D. Large Round-Headed doorways with a prominent stone surround and key block.
- E. Round-Headed windows with voussoirs and keystones.
- F. Sashed glazing with brick decorative brick lintels and stone keystone.
- G. Sashed glazing with decorative Stone surrounds.

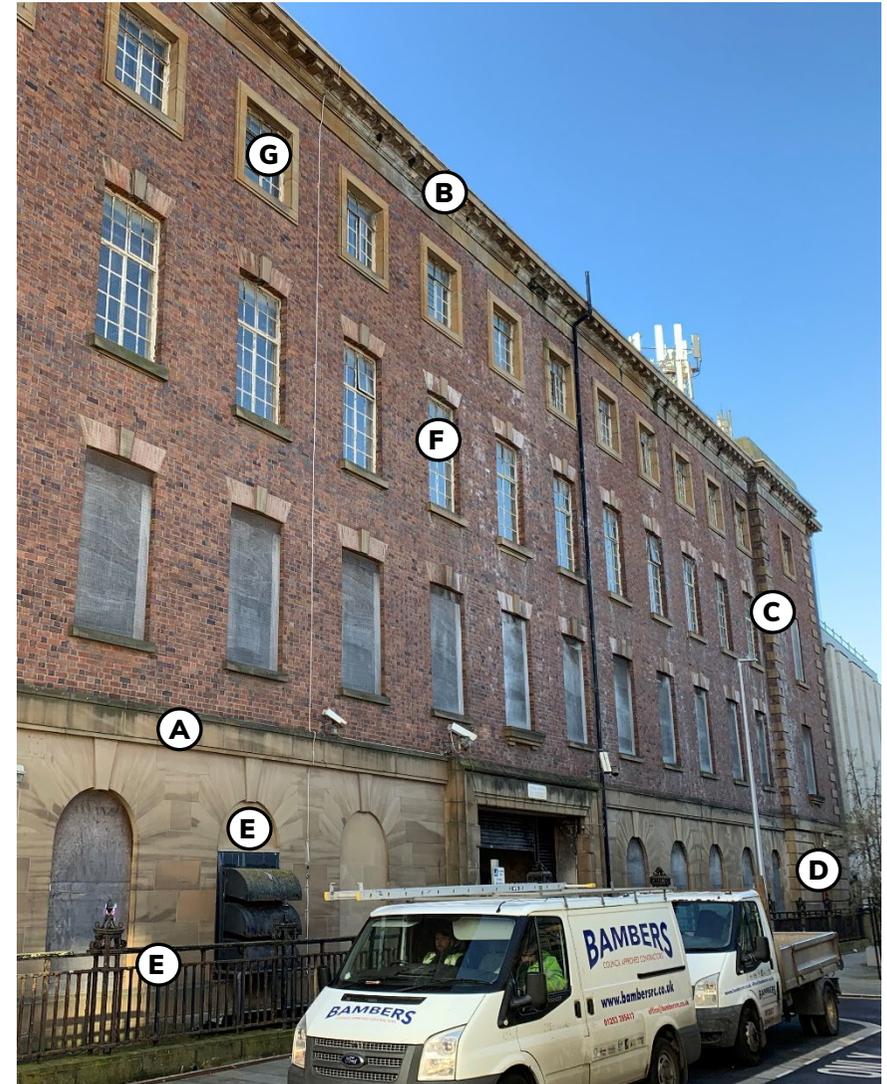


Figure 2.59 – The Sorting Office Architectural Detail

Condition Survey

Street Facing Facades

The existing facades of the two buildings offer a unique opportunity to provide a quality hotel development.

for the town of Blackpool. The Grade II Listed facade of the Former Post Office has a great street presence and is ideal for a Food & Beverage offering and Hotel Front of House accommodation.

The Portland Stone frontage is in good condition and would only require minor remedial works. The Grade II Listed telephone kiosks also add character to the street scene.

The slightly more modern sorting office, circa 1930, fronting Edward Street equally offers a unique opportunity to provide quality, sought after hotel accommodation within the town centre. Due to its massing and grandeur, it is a positive addition to the Edward Street scene.

No modifications to the exterior of the building is proposed aside from general repairs and remedial works. Window positions to the front facades are proposed to remain as existing.



Figure 2.60 – General Post Office



Figure 2.61 – General Post Office



Figure 2.62 – Sorting Office



Figure 2.63 – Sorting Office

Courtyard Facades

The facades to the rear of the two properties are in a state of dereliction in parts. Much of the demolitions approved as part of the 2019 approval have been carried out and the courtyard has generally been cleared.

Stair cores have been removed to both buildings and the buildings are both currently open to the elements.

Windows have generally been boarded or vandalised and both buildings are accessible via ground floor openings. Water ingress and vermin are visible within both buildings and a full structural and condition survey is required.

The Sorting Office building has also had a roof top extension constructed which is in a similar state of disrepair and appears damaged in various locations.

The rear facade of the sorting office building has been rendered and would need completely replacing.



Figure 2.64 – Courtyard



Figure 2.65 – Courtyard



Figure 2.66 – Courtyard



Figure 2.67 – Courtyard

Interior – General Post Office

There are several internal elements relating to the listing of the Former Post Office Counter Hall that have outstanding heritage value. In line with the principles of an Indigo Hotel all these features are to remain and inform and compliment the internal design of the space.

Stained-Glass Windows - Although currently boarded up the Stained-Glass Windows fronting Abingdon Street remain intact and will be retained as part of the development. Repairs and remedials will be carried out where relevant.

Internal Porches - Existing Porches complete with carved wooden architraves and barrelled coffered ceilings remain to both entrances off Abingdon Street.

Marbled Flooring - It is believed that marble mosaic flooring to the porch entrances has been covered over with a modern floor covering and it is proposed to expose and repair these dependent on condition.

Post Office Counter - The existing Post Office Counter is still present within the counter hall however it has been damaged in places and in its current form is an impediment to development owing to its size.

The proposal, in line with the previously approved planning application looks to re-use the counter as a central bar as part of a new Food & Beverage offering.

Perimeter Cornicing - Egg and dart cornicing is visible to much of the perimeter of the internal counter hall spaces. Although this has been damaged in places, largely where modern partitions have been taken up

to the soffit, it is proposed that these will be re-instated and repaired as part of the development.

Internal Columns - Feature columns with low level timber cladding and feature cornicing appear intact and will be renovated as part of the development.

There is no intention to remove any of these columns.

Upper Floor Accommodation within the Post Office is sub-divided by brickwork walls creating cellular spaces. They do not contribute to the quality of the property and will be removed as part of the development.



Figure 2.68 – Post Office Interior



Figure 2.69 – Post Office Interior



Figure 2.70 – Post Office Interior

Interior – Sorting Office

The Ground and Upper Floors of the Sorting Office Building comprise largely uninterrupted floor plates.

A small number of internal partitions have been added to create cellular accommodation.

All internal walls will be removed as part of the development as the building will be largely used for hotel guest bedrooms. Window positions to Edward Street will remain although some alterations will be required to the rear elevation overlooking the courtyard.

It is considered that the removal of any internal walls will not have an adverse effect on the heritage status of the building.



Figure 2.71 – Sorting Office Interior



Figure 2.72 – Sorting Office Interior



Figure 2.73 – Sorting Office Interior



Figure 2.74 – Sorting Office Interior

Constraints

There are several site constraints to be addressed as part of the proposed development.

1. **Post Office – Grade II Listed** – The Post Office is a Listed Building.
2. **Sorting Office – Locally Listed** – The Sorting Office is Locally Listed.
3. **Access Limited by Existing Entrances** – User access is limited to the existing access points.
4. **Listed Telephone Kiosks** – Adjacent telephone kiosks are listed.
5. **No Physical Connection between Buildings** – There is currently no built connection between the buildings.
6. **Servicing Access Limited** – Service access to the courtyard is limited to the existing locations.
7. **Courtyard** – Development of the courtyard must carefully consider the existing arrangement and general setting.
8. **Vehicular Access Limited** – Vehicular access to the site is primarily restricted to Edward Street
9. **Noise** – The site is flanked by busy town centre streets.
10. **Adjacent Buildings** - The site flanks several existing properties and the party wall condition must be considered.
11. **Views** – Respect the setting of the heritage assets

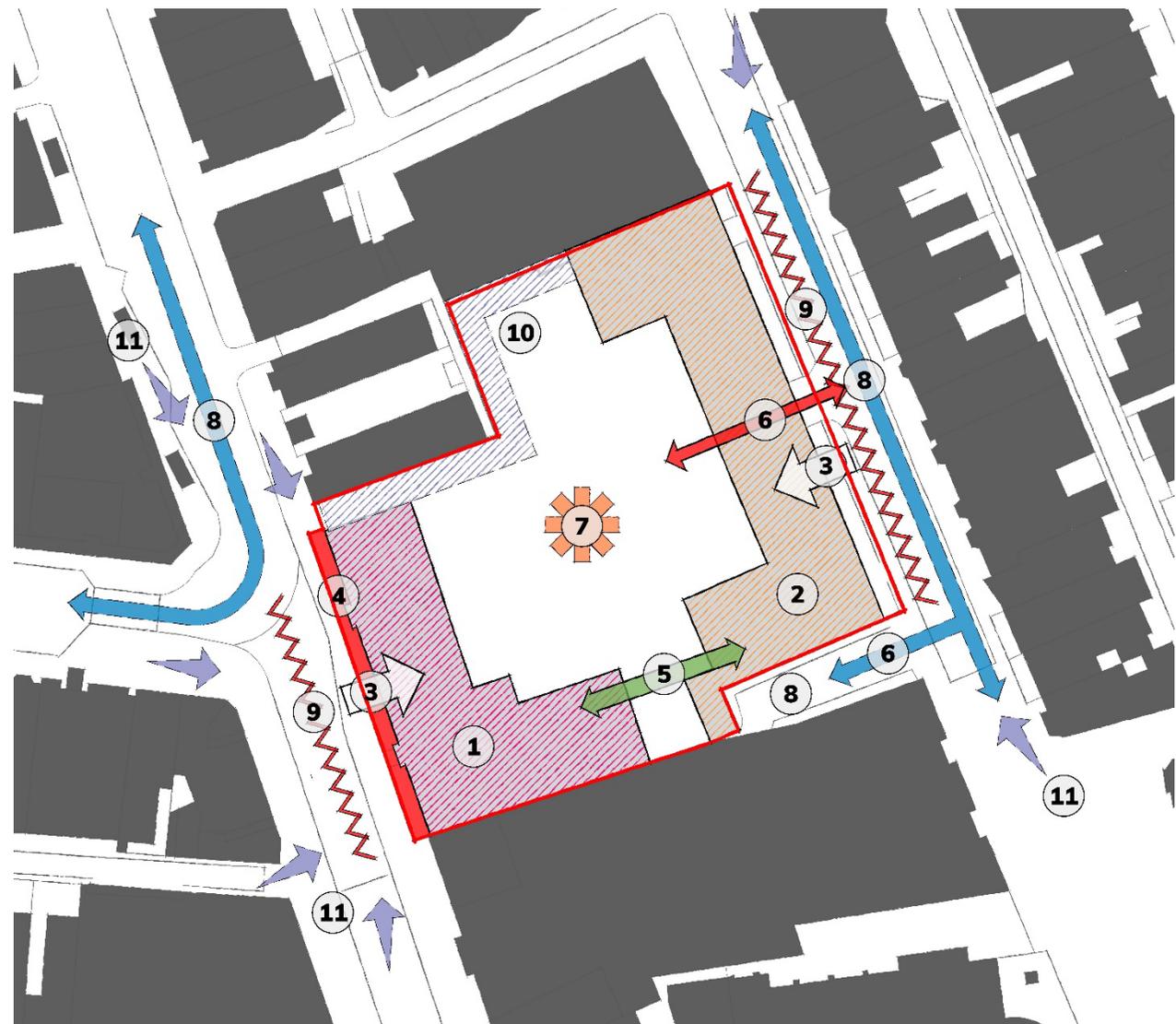


Figure 2.75 – Site Constraints

Opportunities

There are many opportunities to improve and enhance the area whilst realising the potential of the site.

1. Regenerate, renovate and secure the long-term future of the Post Office.
2. Regenerate, renovate and secure the long-term future of the Sorting Office.
3. Integrate a sympathetic and high-quality connection between the Sorting Office and Post Office, providing further enclosure to the courtyard.
4. Increase interest and activity along all adjacent streets through active frontages.
5. Provide enhanced passive surveillance on adjacent streets.
6. Create enhanced connectivity to the inner courtyard, envisioned as an oasis in the town centre,
7. Provide a high quality and appropriately design external amenity space in the courtyard which is functional not only for hotel guests but also for potential corporate and hospitality functions.
8. Integrate at roof level a terrace area for guest amenity, providing vistas across Blackpool towards the sea front and Blackpool Tower.

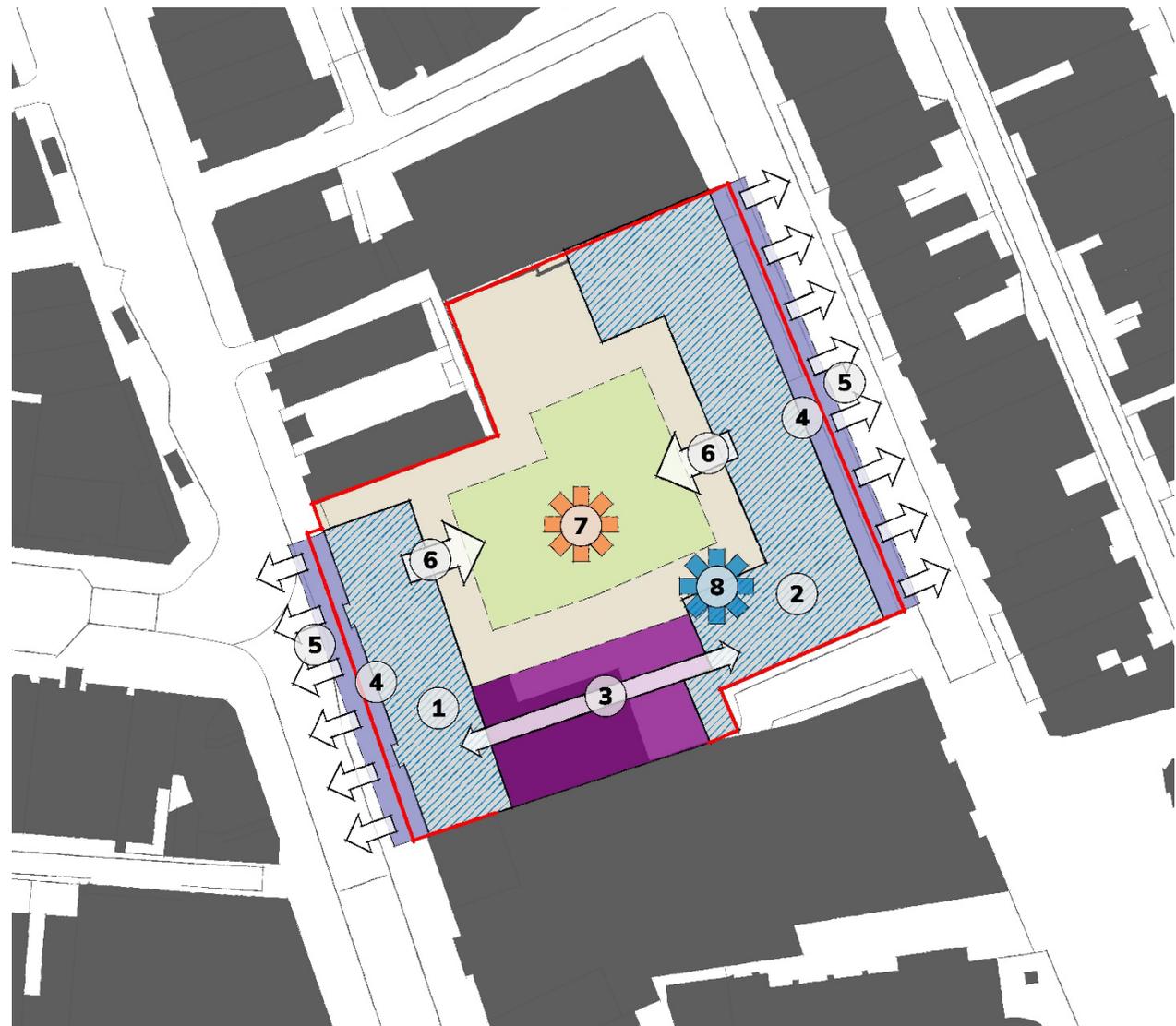


Figure 2.76 – Site Constraints

Opportunities Continued

The existing Post Office and Sorting Office presents several opportunities which would make a positive contribution to the character and amenity of the immediate area. The repurposing of the buildings into a high-quality hotel development presents several opportunities for not only the renovation of the existing facades and refurbishment of the historic fabric, which will uplift the street scene, but also the integration of amenity provision adjacent the Abingdon and Edward Street. The form of development will include restaurant and front of house provision which will also result in the repair and uplifting of the street facing interiors of the Post Office and Sorting Office.

A series of precedent images which have informed the interior strategy are shown adjacent, highlighting how the renovation of the existing interior features and refurbishment of a buildings historic fabric can secure its long-term future.



Figure 2.78 – General Post Office

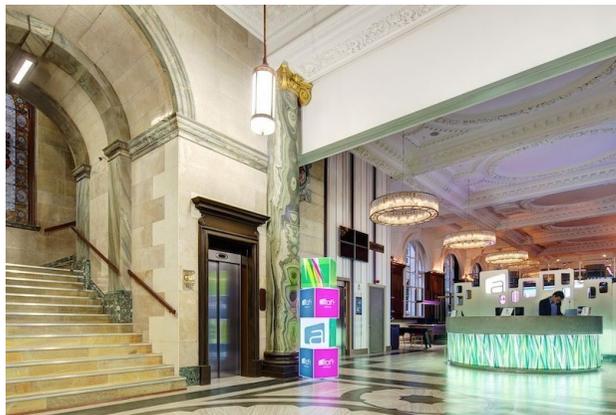


Figure 2.79 – Precedent of potential space usage



Figure 2.80 – Precedent of potential space usage



Figure 2.81 – Precedent of potential space usage

3.0 Design Development

Design Rationale

The following section includes a series of concept diagrams to illustrate the sequence of design rationale which has informed the development of the proposals. The design concept has been informed by both the client requirements for a high-quality development, a need to restore the heritage assets which make up the bulk of the development, whilst regenerating an important town centre site.

The response also seeks to ensure that additions to the Post Office complex, are sympathetic to the existing architecture and character of the heritage buildings and are well-considered additions to the existing built form, positively contributing to their overall character.

The design proposal involves the demolition of some sections of the existing buildings on the site, which have fallen into disrepair. These demolitions have previous approval by virtue of the previous planning applications. This will allow the consolidation of the existing buildings into a single development via the newly built connection, with the retention of most of the existing built fabric.

The design rationale can thus be divided into three key approaches – Removal and replacement, concerned with the required demolitions and features requiring replacement, Enhancement and Connection, concerning the enhancements and additions being proposed to form a high quality and coherent scheme which satisfies the brief, and Retention and Restoration, concerned with the retained and restored elements of the heritage assets.

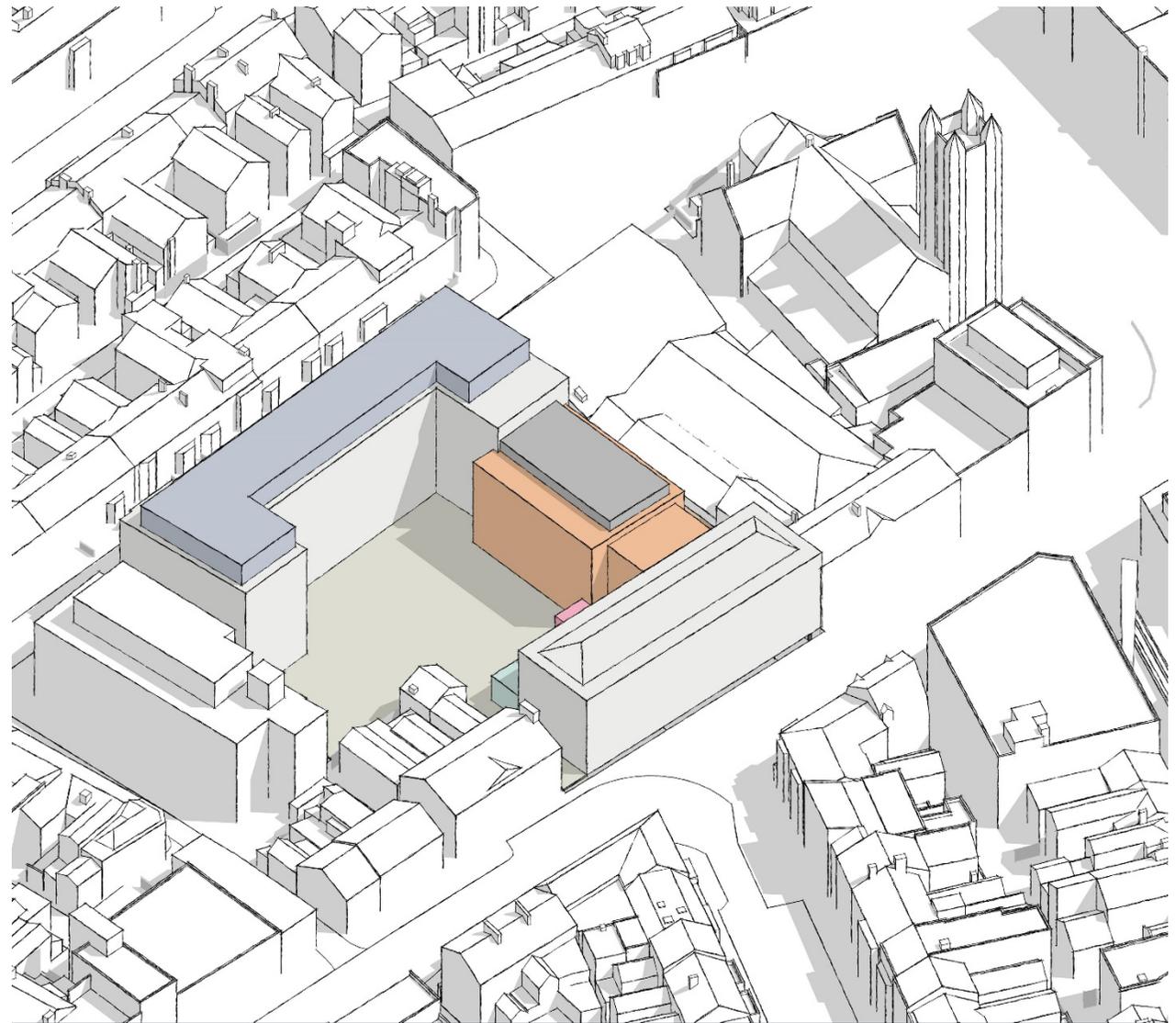


Figure 3.01 – Design Development Sketches

Built Form – Removal and Replacement

The proposals include several interventions within the existing built fabric where removal and replacement are required, either due to dilapidation of existing fabric or the requirement to ensure that the fabric of the proposed hotel is fit for purpose. It is proposed that the Post Office Building will include a refurbished roof, to match the existing in form and external materials, whilst upgrading its specification to ensure its long-term viability. The existing rear single storey extension will be removed, alongside the multi storey stair core, both later editions to the fabric of the original post office building which are inappropriate for integration into the proposed development, facilitating the space for the connection between the Post Office and Sorting Office.

The Sorting Office will also require the removal of its top storey, primarily a later addition to the Edwardian building and in a state of relative disrepair. This will facilitate the introduction of a more appropriate and sympathetic upper storey which will provide further quality accommodation for the hotel. Several remnants of additional structures in the courtyard adjacent the Sorting Office, which are neither integral to nor sympathetic to the overall character of the building, will also be removed to facilitate the new build connection. For further details on the proposed demolitions, please consult the planning drawings.

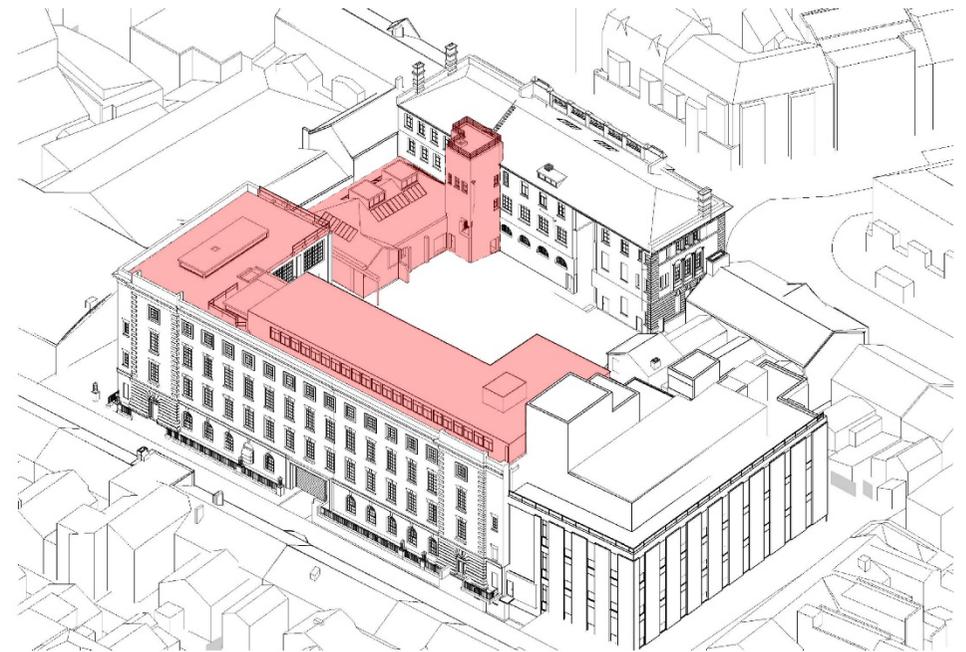
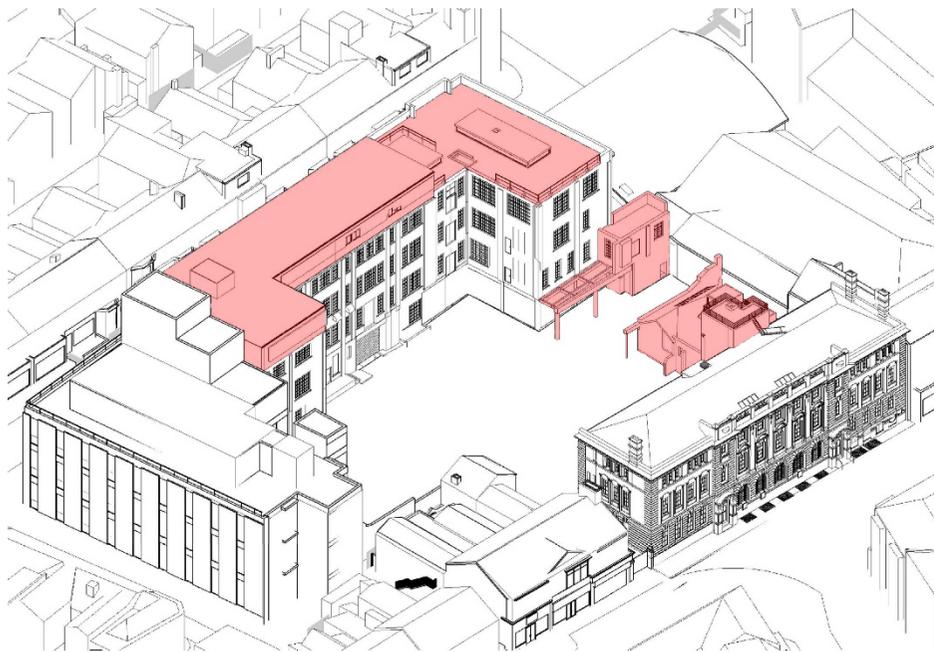


Figure 3.02 – Axonometric Views highlighting proposed Demolition

The adjacent elevations highlight the key elements of the courtyard façades where demolition of existing fabric or replacement is proposed.

These diagrams are not exhaustive and are for indicative purposes. Please see the planning drawings for further details.

Key

- (A)** Roof, refurbished
- (B)** Existing Roof light removed.
- (C)** Existing Stair Core & Extension removed.
- (D)** Windows removed where conflicting with proposals.
- (E)** Doors removed where conflicting with proposals.
- (F)** Existing Fourth floor removed.
- (G)** Existing drainage and extract plant removed.
- (H)** Windows removed where conflicting with proposals.
- (I)** Existing external structures removed.
- (J)** Existing doors removed.

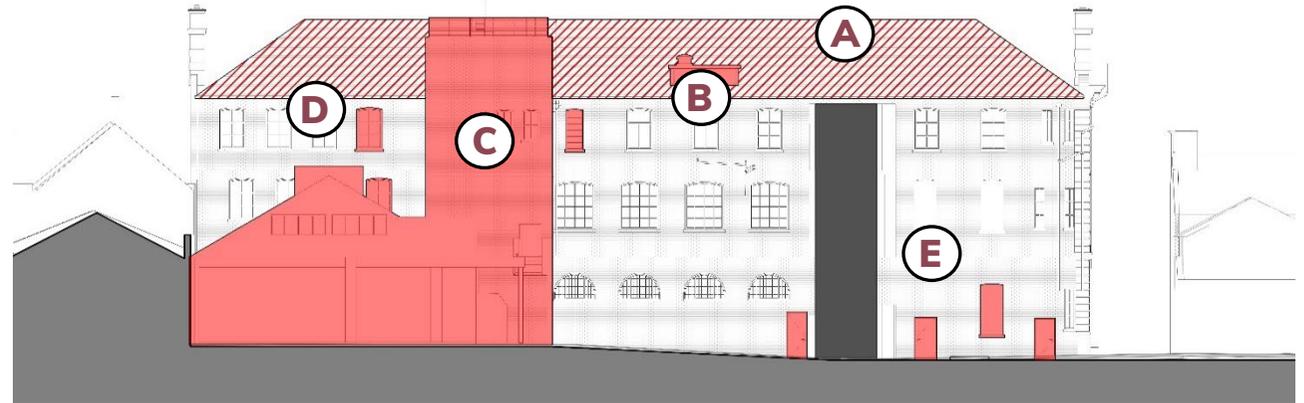


Figure 3.03 – Proposed Demolition, Courtyard Façade, Post Office



Figure 3.03 – Proposed Demolition, Courtyard Façade, Sorting Office

Built Form – Enhancement and Connection

The proposals include several areas of enhancement to the existing fabric of the current buildings on the site as well as a proposed new build connection between the Post Office Building and the Sorting Office, allowing for the development of a fully integrated hotel scheme. An appropriately scaled and sited connection is proposed to the southern edge of the site, inclusive of guest room accommodation at the upper levels and amenity and servicing at the ground floor level. Circulation is included to allow for seamless movement between the Post and Sorting office buildings. The new linking block assists in creating a sense of enclosure to the inner courtyard, which will be enhanced to include space for external amenity, landscaping, and guest parking, offering the potential for an attractive and multi-functional external space. The rear façade of the Post office will also include a proposed new stair core, which will provide

vertical circulation from the ground floor through to the guest room levels above, and a toilet block, which will serve the front of house restaurant and bar, enhancing amenity for users. The stair core will be appropriately sited on the existing area of façade to the Post Office which has seen prior demolition and is in its current state open to the elements, whilst the toilet block is appropriately scaled and sited to enhance enclosure to the courtyard. The primary enhancement to the Sorting Office is on the Fourth Floor, where further guestroom accommodation is proposed in a considerably scaled addition, recessed on Edward Street to remain recessive to the existing building – and including a space on the southern wing for an open terrace, providing further external amenity for guests with views across Blackpool towards Blackpool Tower and the sea beyond.

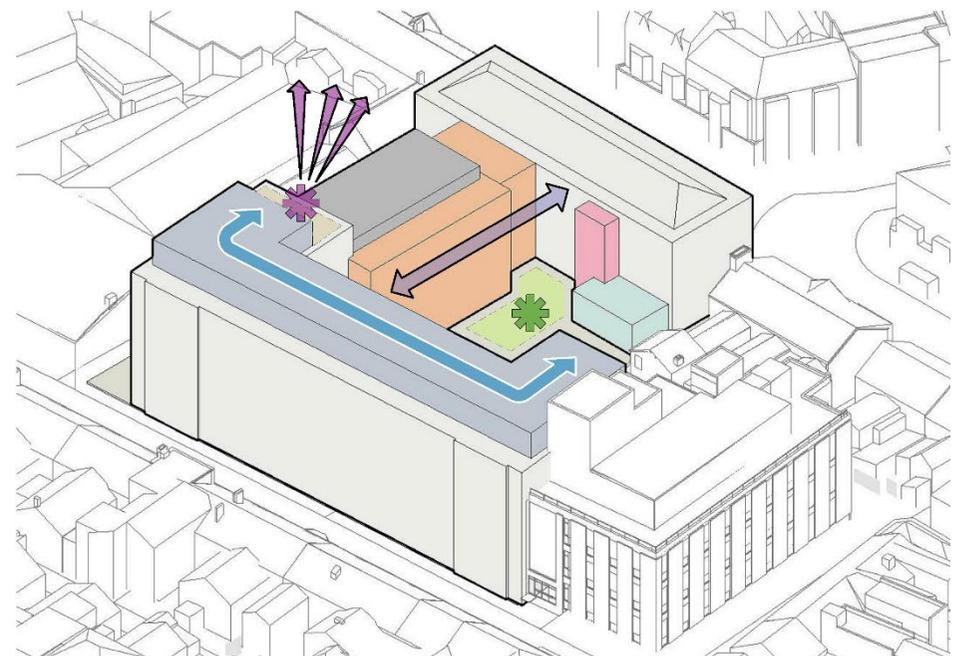
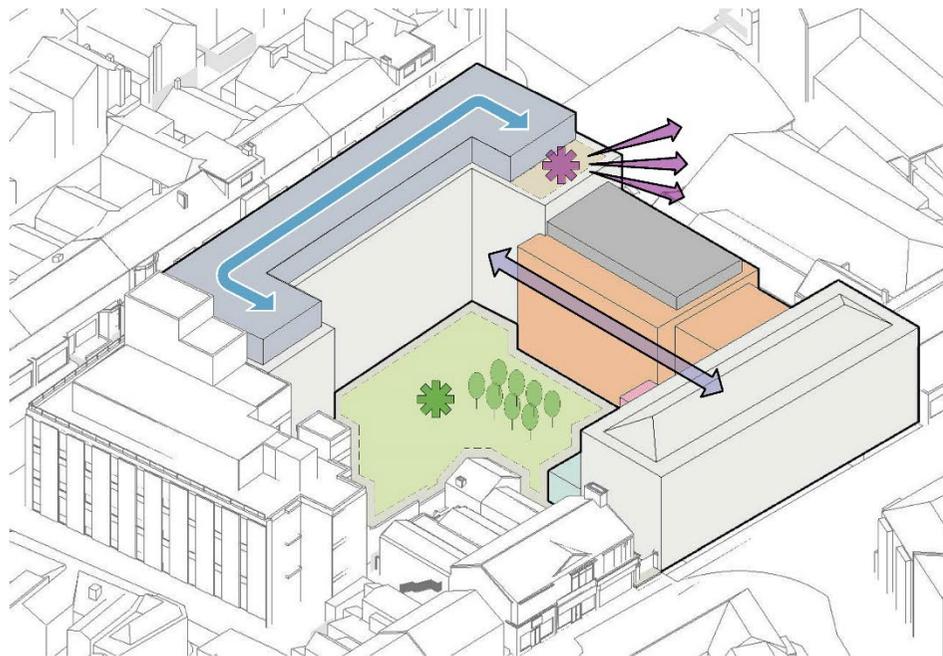


Figure 3.04 – Design Development Sketches – Enhancement and Connection

The adjacent elevations highlight the key elements of the courtyard facades where additions and enhancements are proposed.

The elevations highlight the proposed connecting block between the existing buildings, as well as the proposed new stair core and toilet block, and new fourth floor to the Sorting Office. Also highlighted is the refurbished roof to the Post Office, to match the existing in appearance, as well as proposed fenestration to enhance the visual coherence of the façades, and lastly, adjustment to the façade of the Sorting Office, particularly at Ground level and parapet level. The introduction of appropriate fenestration, a clear rusticated 'base' referencing the existing architecture, and the levelling of the parapet to a consistent and appropriate scale, assist in creating a more coherent 'tripartite' appearance utilising the existing intermediate piers, without replacing an excessive amount of existing fabric.

These diagrams are not exhaustive and are for indicative purposes. Please see the planning drawings for further details.

Key

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (A) New Connecting Block | (F) New Fourth Floor |
| (B) New Roof | (G) New Fenestration |
| (C) New Stair core | (H) Façade redesigned |
| (D) New Toilet Block | (I) Parapet redesigned |
| (E) New Fenestration | |

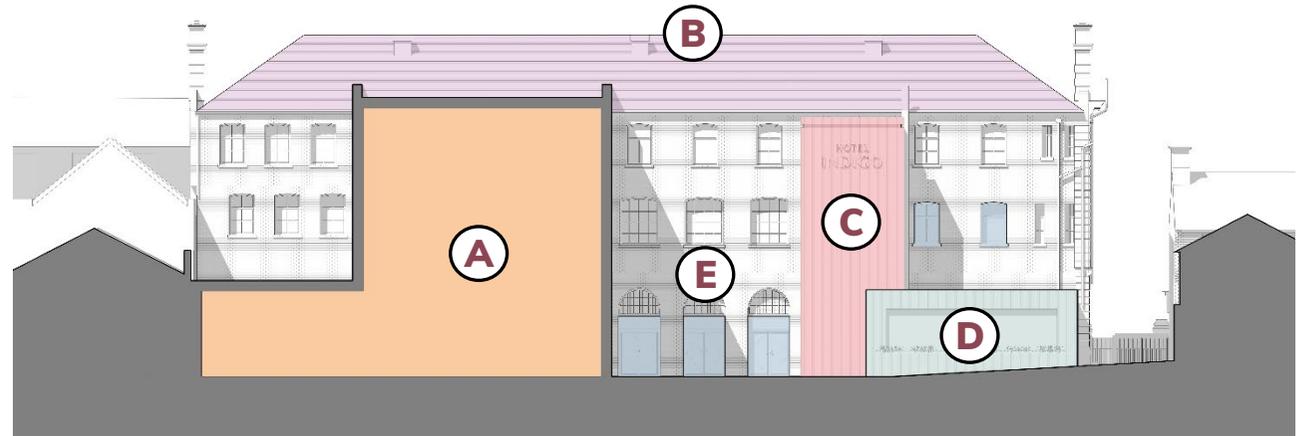


Figure 3.05 – Proposed Alterations & Additions, Courtyard Façade, Post Office

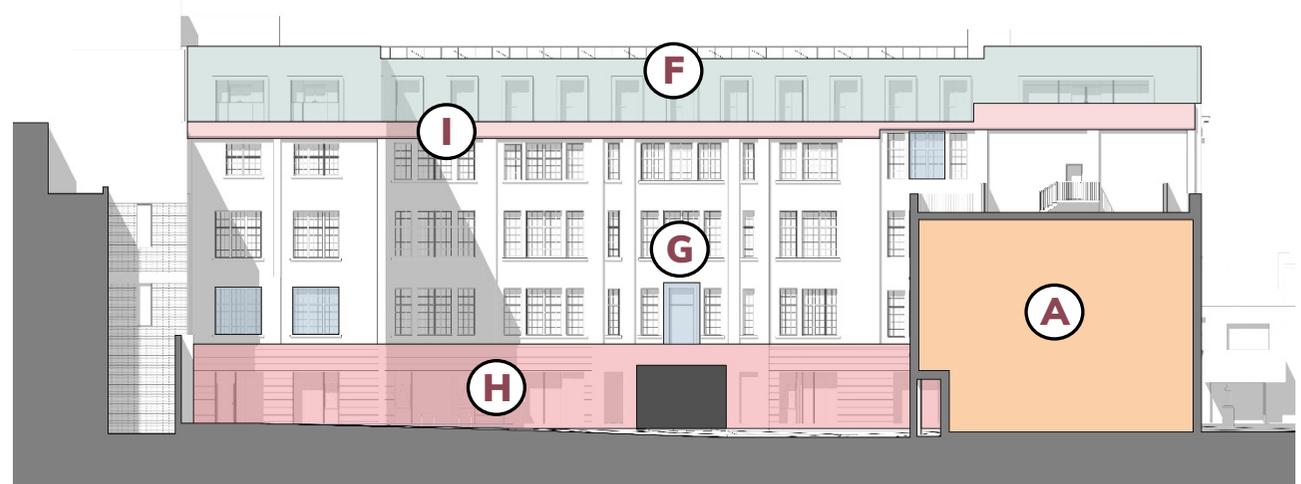


Figure 3.06 – Proposed Alterations & Additions, Courtyard Façade, Sorting Office

Built Form – Retention and Restoration

The proposed development of the Hotel will include the retention and restoration of much of the historic fabric of the Post Office and Sorting Office, particularly regarding the street facing frontages, ensuring their viability for the future whilst guaranteeing that the historical fabric and detail features are appropriately restored.

Regarding the Abingdon Street façade to the Post Office, the proposed works will include the restoration, and, where appropriate, replacement of all retained windows and frames, the refurbishing of the primary entrance doors, restoration of stone cladding and detail elements, and the repair and where appropriate replacement of weatherproofing such as lead flashings and drainage elements. The Edward Street façade to the Sorting Office will be restored under much the same

circumstances, with the renovation of existing windows and doors, with replacement of fenestration where appropriate, repair of stone elements and brickwork, and repointing where necessary, and the repair of existing weather proofing and drainage. Further restoration will be carried out on the existing ironmongery and historic lighting fixtures to the external railings. Appropriately designed and positioned brand signage and lighting will be included to enhance the setting and appearance of the facades and provide appropriate wayfinding for arriving guests. The remaining facades will be treated much the same – with repairs and restoration prioritised where required. Further details can be found in the planning drawings submitted.

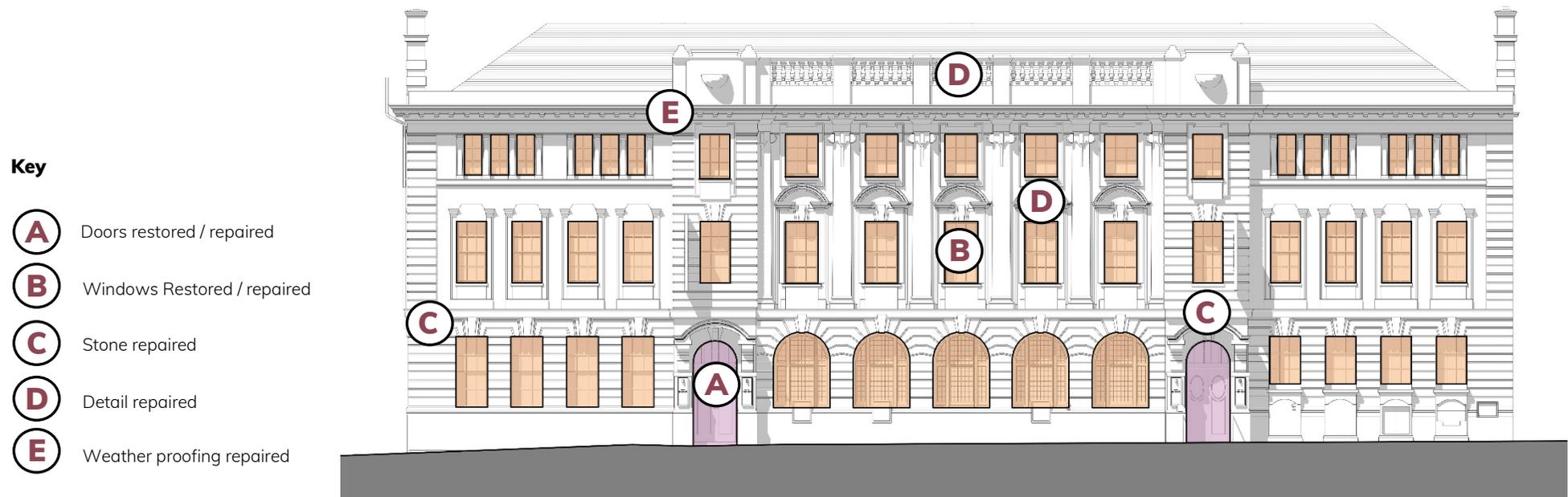


Figure 3.02 – Proposed Restoration, Abingdon Street Façade, Post Office

Key

- A** Windows Restored / repaired
- B** Doors restored / repaired
- C** Brick repaired
- D** Stone repaired
- E** Weather proofing repaired
- F** Ironmongery repaired

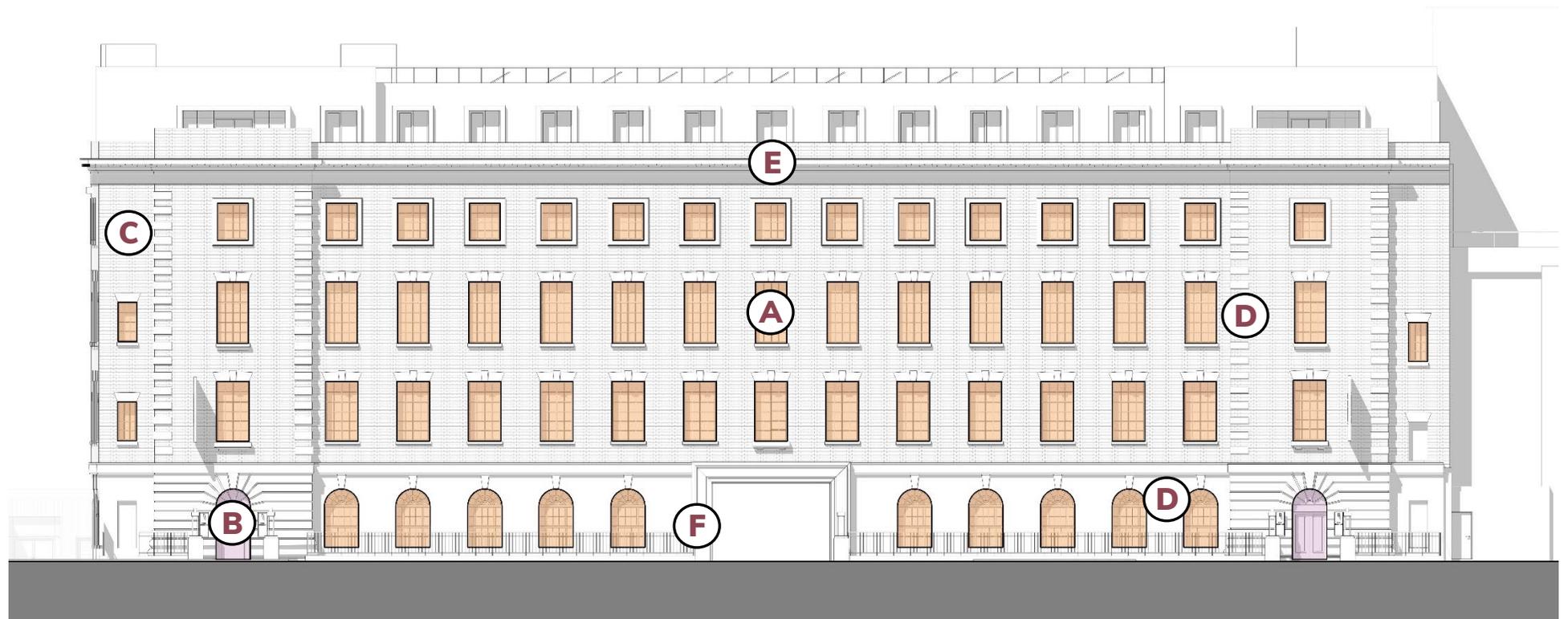


Figure 3.02 – Proposed Restoration, Edward Street Façade, Sorting Office

Built Form – Layout and Spaces Ground Floor Level

The sketch concept floor plans illustrated on the following pages show the design intent for the layout of the development, including how the new connection interfaces and interacts with the existing buildings.

Entrance - The primary entrance is ideally located fronting Abingdon Street, within the retained Post Office entrance.

External Amenity - External amenity is located within the central courtyard, providing a high-quality outdoor space for guest use and potentially for corporate and hospitality functions.

Front of House Amenity – Front of House Amenity provision is ideally located fronting onto Abingdon Street and Edward Street, ensuring activity and animation is provided to the adjacent streets. The amenity provision may include public restaurant provision onto Abingdon Street, further enhancing the development offering.

Circulation - Efficient and effective means of movement through the proposals is provided, with the addition of the connecting block between the Post Office and Sorting Office forming a fully integrated scheme across both buildings.

Back of House – Back of House and servicing is primarily located in the Edward Street Sorting Office, ideally located due to existing vehicular access on Queen Vera Road and through the vehicular entrance of the Sorting Office.



Figure 3.03 – Ground Floor Sketch Plan

Upper Floor Level

Bedrooms - Bedrooms are situated along the external facades – with adequate views, daylighting and adequate distances to adjacent properties ensured.

Circulation – The circulation strategy is kept as simple as possible for maximum efficiency. The new link provides seamless access between the Post Office and Sorting Office whilst the lift and stair cores are optimally positioned for ease of movement across floors.

Back of House – Linen facilities are positioned adjacent the primary cores in order to allow for efficient servicing of rooms.

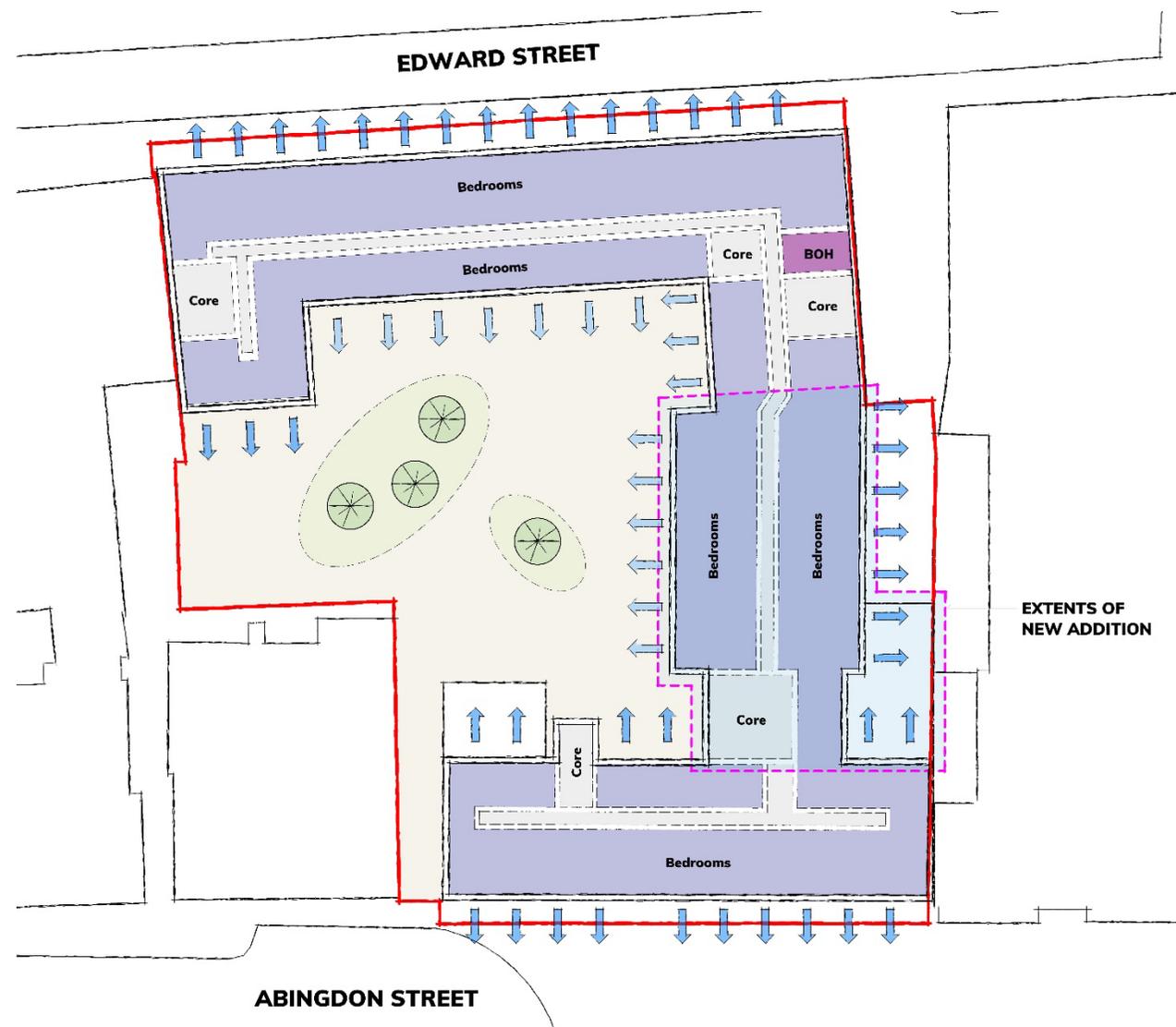


Figure 3.04 – First Floor Sketch Plan

4.0 Proposed Design

Built Form – Massing and Scale

The view adjacent shows the proposed massing in context and presents an indication of how the proposed alterations and additions to the built fabric can positively enhance the existing buildings.

The proposal is appropriate in form and scale, assists in repairing the existing fabric to the inner courtyard of both the Post Office and Sorting Office, whilst providing a high-quality connection and addition to the Post Office complex generally.

A balance is achieved between reinforcing the character of the existing buildings whilst integrating a sympathetic addition and providing a strong sense of enclosure to the new courtyard amenity space.

The addition of the built connection between the Post and Sorting Office is scaled such that it remains secondary to the existing architecture – however, its scale and detail ensures it positively contributes to the overall setting.



Figure 4.01 – Proposed Massing



Figure 4.02 – Proposed Massing

Layout – Ground Floor Arrangement

The proposed layout of the Ground Floor is shown adjacent. The primary space to the Post Office Hall is proposed as restaurant and bar, with associated amenity and ancillary spaces. The Sorting Office is divided by the vehicular access route, with Front of House to the Hotel located adjacent to Queen Vera Road and guestroom accommodation provided in the neighbouring section. The new connecting block includes most of the back of house facilities including the kitchen, plant and bin stores, all accessible via Queen Vera Road. The colonnaded walkway and amenity space adjacent fronts onto the landscaped courtyard.

Key

- (A)** Restaurant
- (B)** Bar
- (C)** Servicing and Plant
- (D)** Toilet Block
- (E)** Colonnade and Amenity
- (F)** Front of House
- (G)** Guestrooms
- (H)** Landscaped Courtyard



Figure 4.03 – Ground Floor Plan

Layout – Typical Floor Arrangement

The upper floor plans from first to third floor level follow similar general arrangements. The guestrooms are located to suit existing fenestration in the Sorting and Post Office, with central corridors linking to several conveniently located stair cores and lifts which provide vertical circulation through the hotel. Ancillary spaces for linen and storage are provided adjacent the primary cores. The new linking block serves to provide seamless circulation between the Post Office and Sorting Office as well as additional space for guestrooms.

Key

-  Primary Lift Core
-  Stair core
-  Lift core
-  Guestrooms
-  Ancillary – Linen / Storage

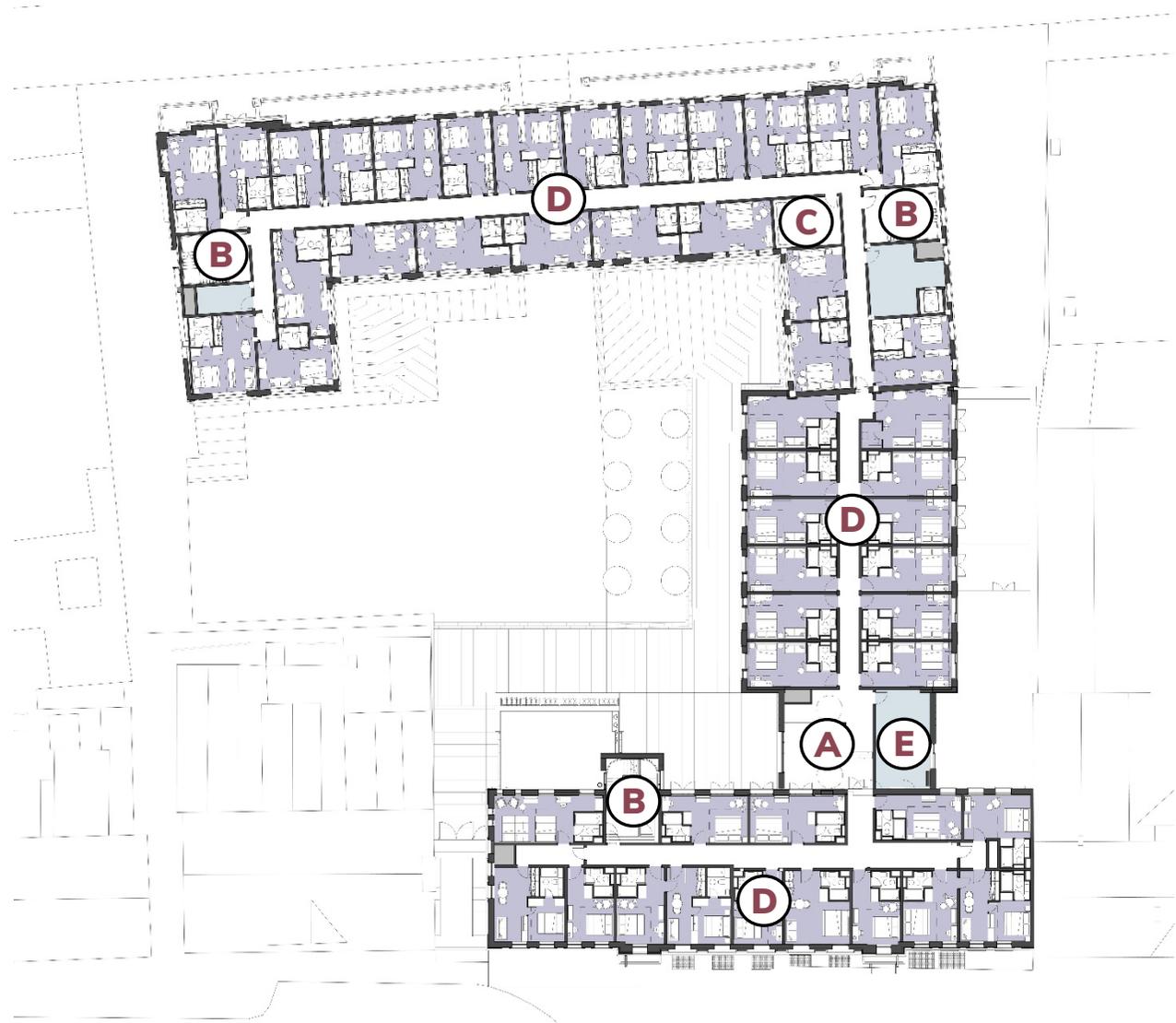
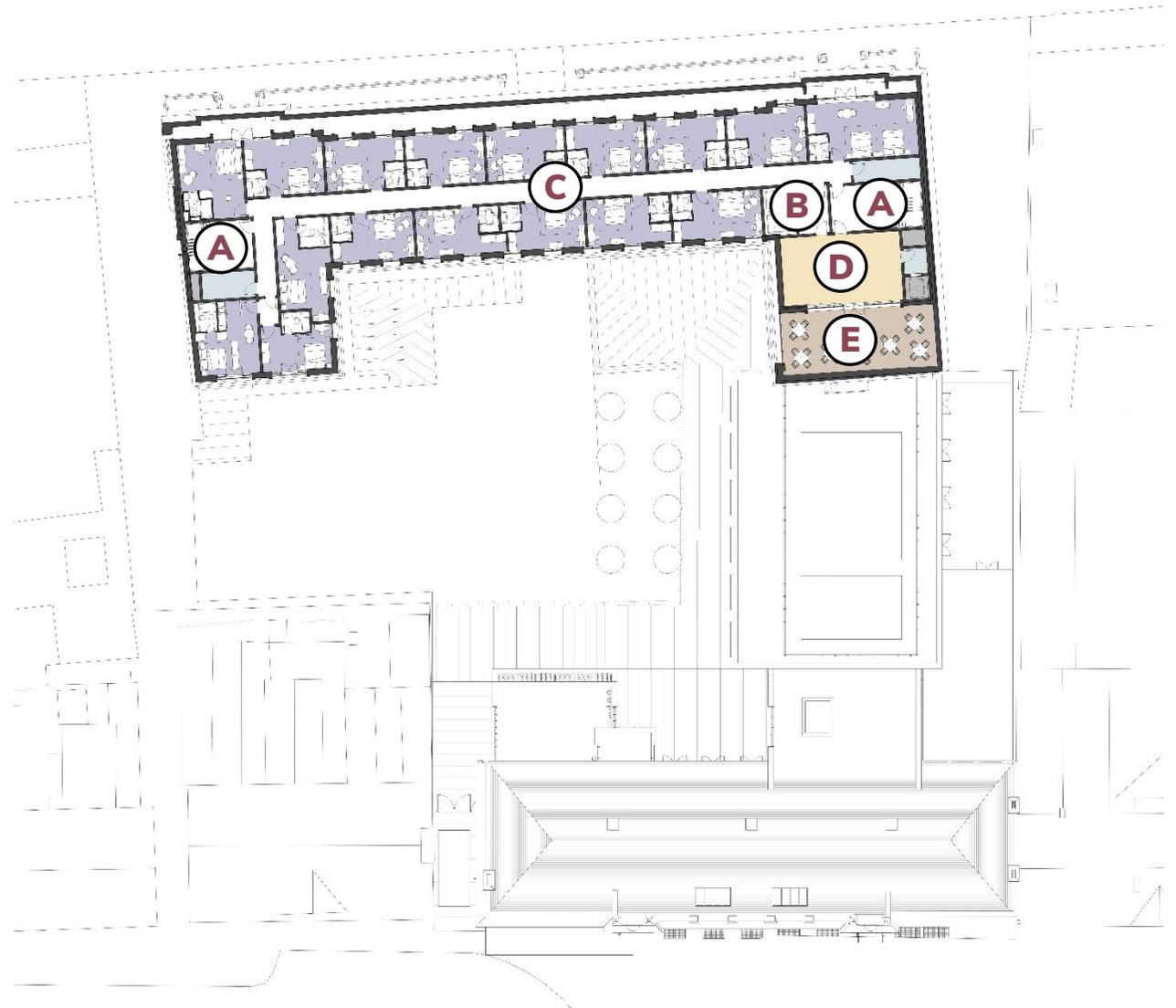


Figure 4.04 – Typical Upper Floor Plan

Layout – Upper Floor Arrangement

The fourth floor is limited to the Sorting Office. Alongside further guestroom accommodation, the fourth floor also includes both an external terrace with views across Blackpool, and an associated amenity space, for the enjoyment of guests.

Vertical circulation is provided in both wings of the floor plan for convenient movement through the building.



Key

- A** Stair core
- B** Lift Core
- C** Guestrooms
- D** Amenity
- E** External Terrace

Figure 4.05 - Upper Floor Plan

Room Typology

The guestroom layouts have been planned to meet client requirements and appropriately respond to the layout of the proposed scheme and the existing fabric of the Post Office and Sorting Office – whilst providing high quality and spacious accommodation for guests. The interior design of the guestrooms will meet the brand requirements of Indigo.

A portion of the rooms will be delivered in a range of suited format providing a range of accommodation types to suite the range of potential guests.

Precedents of the interior design of some typical Indigo branded hotel guestrooms are shown adjacent. These images are taken from IHG's recently completed Indigo Hotel in Chester, where the architectural and interior design was undertaken by Franklin Ellis.

A similar approach and quality of finish will be provided in this scheme.

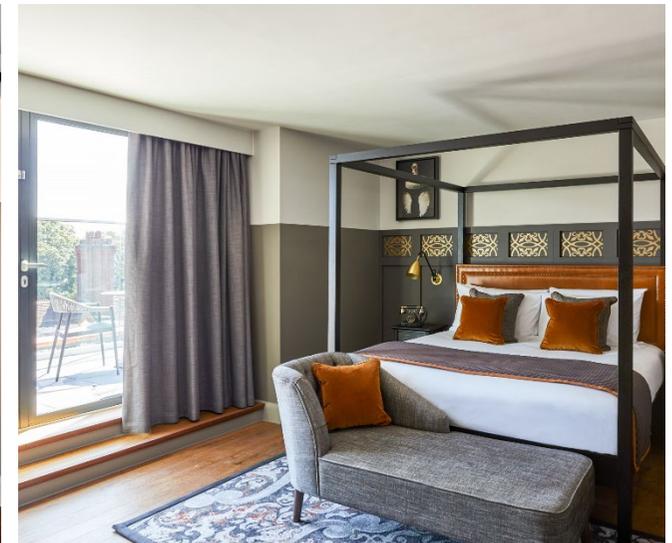
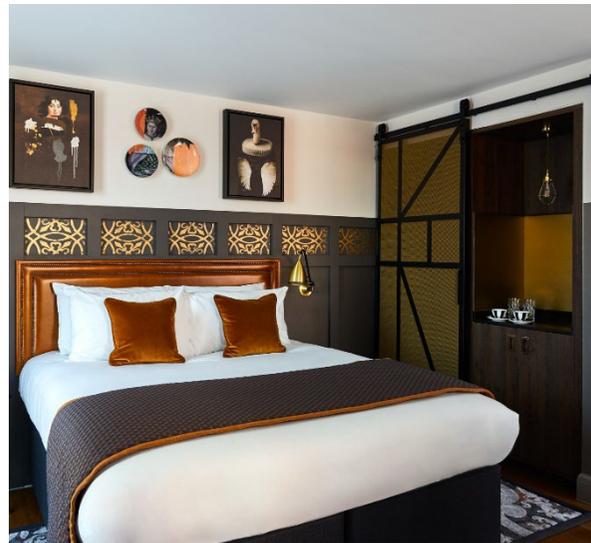


Figure 4.06 – Precedents of Guest Rooms

Amenity & Activity

External amenity space is primarily situated within the courtyard at ground floor level with paving, seating, planting, and areas for guests to break out in groups or individually.

Internal amenity is provided for the occupants of the building, offering a variety of spaces for dining, relaxation, socialising and entertainment.

Rooftop Amenity

External amenity space is also provided at roof level on the sorting office, situated to take advantage of views towards Blackpool Tower and the coastline beyond.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

Several semi-mature trees with appropriate soft planting are proposed within the courtyard area. Bench seating could be provided around the trees. Further planting will be provided where appropriate.



Figure 4.07 – View of the proposed courtyard



Figure 4.08 – Views from the Courtyard

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The Abingdon Street façade is restored and repaired where appropriate. Discrete signage and lighting is proposed to provide appropriate wayfinding for guests and enhance the appearance and setting of the heritage frontage. The existing roof is refurbished to match the existing in form and materials.

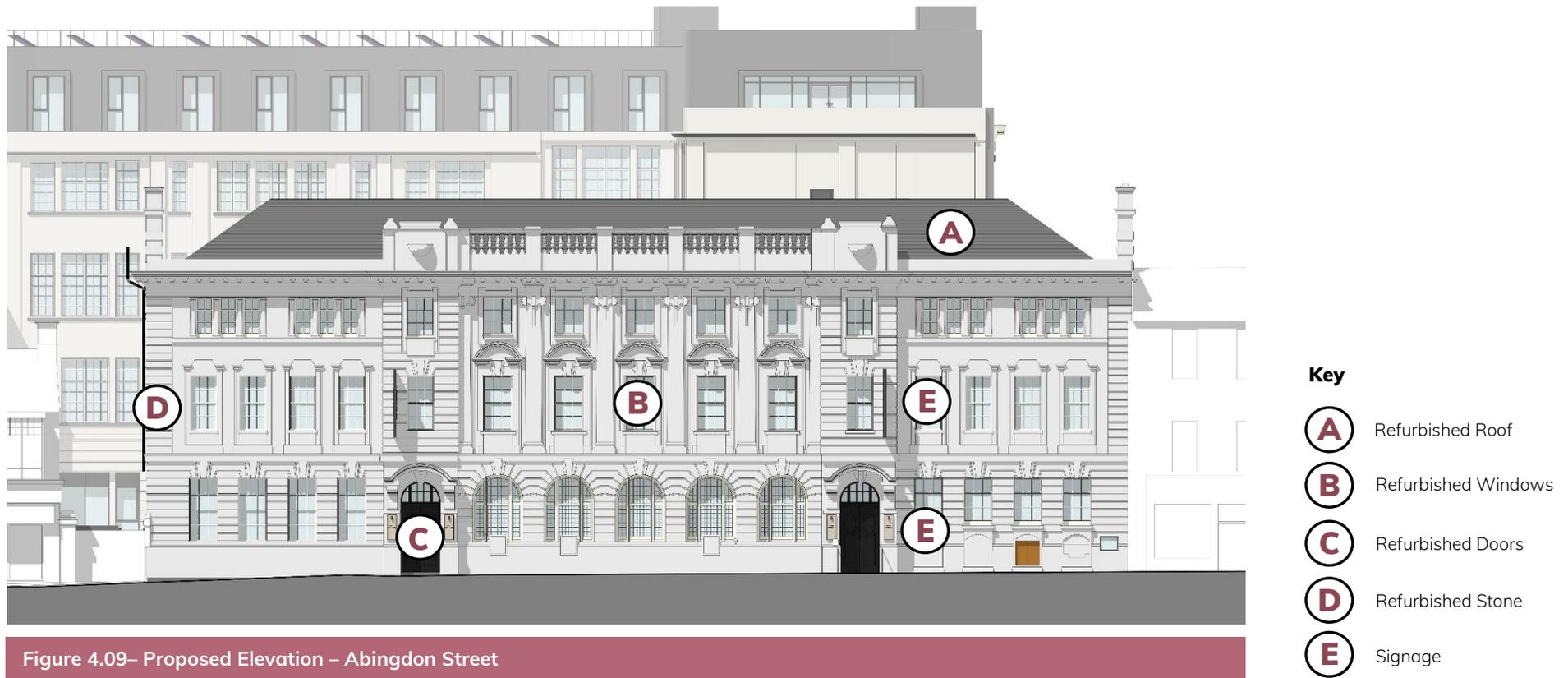


Figure 4.09– Proposed Elevation – Abingdon Street

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The Courtyard façade of the Post Office is restored and repaired where appropriate. Additional fenestration and glazed doors are provided to enhance connectivity to the courtyard and provide appropriate daylighting. The new stair core and toilet block are appropriately scaled and the material selection, a light grey render, is chosen to reflect the Portland stone cladding of the frontage of the Post Office.



Figure 4.10 – Proposed Elevation – Post Office, Courtyard

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The proposed new connection between the Post Office and Sorting provides guestroom accommodation on its upper levels and amenity and servicing at ground level. The fenestration is proposed in a regular grid pattern with detailed reveals and surrounds, whilst at ground floor an open colonnade provides covered external

circulation. The proposal is sited beneath the ridge level of the existing Post Office to remain a secondary element, whilst the material selection, primarily a light grey render to match the existing Portland stone cladding to the Post Office, is chosen to integrate the new mass sympathetically with the heritage building.



Figure 4.11 – Proposed Elevation – Courtyard

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The proposed new connection, when viewed from the elevation on Queen Vera Road, is designed much like the elevation to the courtyard. The fenestration is proposed in a regular grid pattern with detailed reveals and surrounds, whilst at ground floor a series of access doors form a base with expressed piers.

The proposal is sited beneath the ridge level of the existing Post Office to remain a secondary element, whilst the material selection, like the courtyard façade, is a light grey render to match the existing Portland stone cladding to the Post Office.

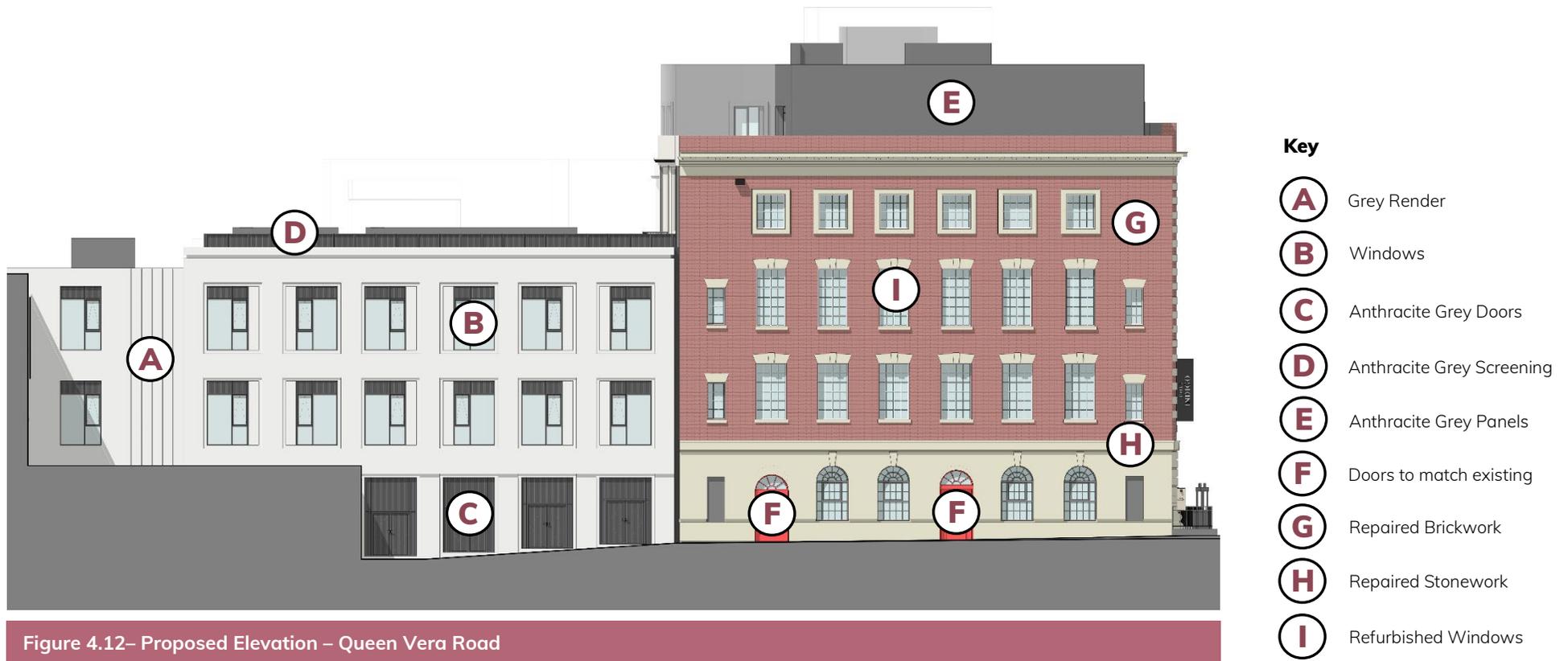


Figure 4.12– Proposed Elevation – Queen Vera Road

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The elevation to the Sorting Office on the Courtyard integrates the new proposed fourth floor level, which is proposed a zinc or similar clad, recessive extension, forming a clearly defined top to the building. At ground level new fenestration is included which reflects the scale and rhythm of the existing fenestration above. A 'rusticated' render finish to the ground floor reflects the heritage of the Sorting Office and is proposed as similar in form and scale to the stonework of the Edward Street façade.

The existing access archway is enhanced in appearance with a rendered surround to reflect the classical nature of the existing heritage buildings whilst the existing parapets are brought to consistent levels to terminate the existing pilasters of the façade, forming a classically inspired tripartite appearance to the façade. Existing fenestration is repaired and refurbished whilst new openings are provided where a more coherent pattern of windows is required. Above the gateway, a feature window is proposed to provide a central focal point to the elevation.

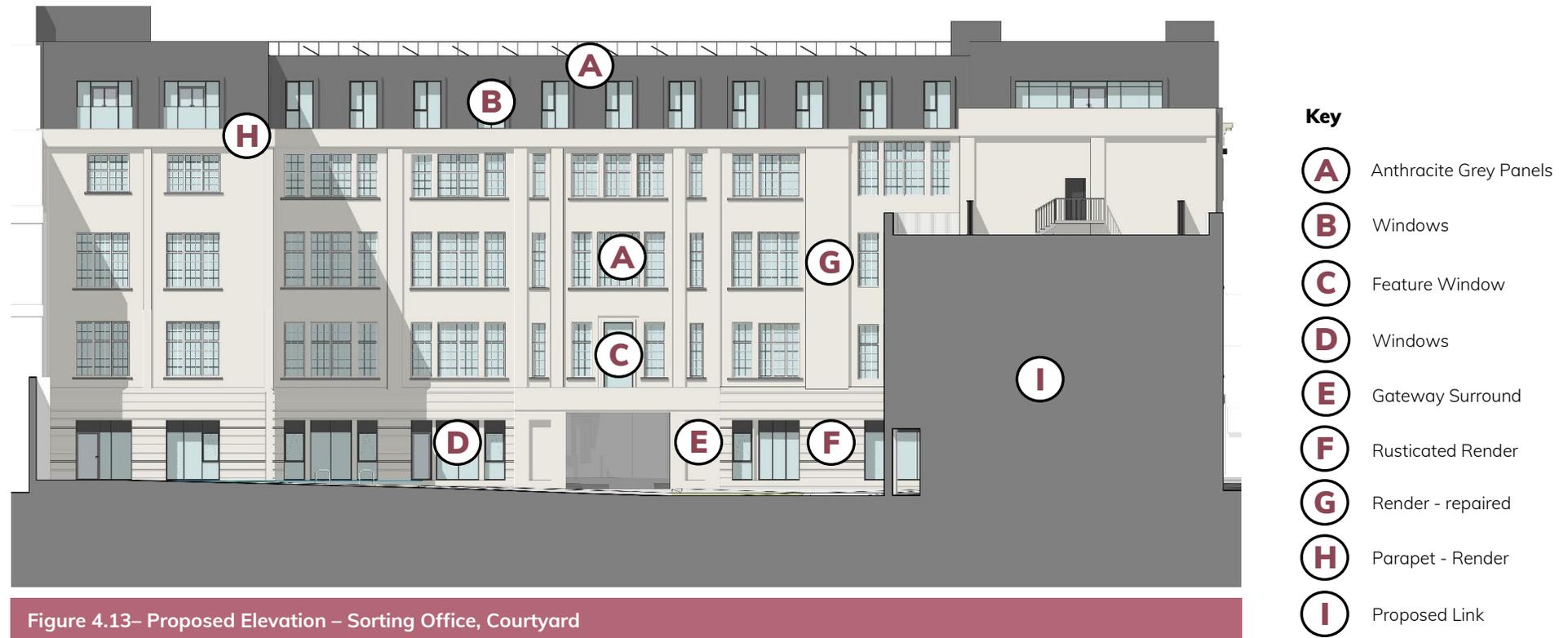


Figure 4.13– Proposed Elevation – Sorting Office, Courtyard

Identity – Appearance, Material and Detail

The Edward Street façade is primarily retained, with the primary intervention being the reconstitution of the fourth-floor level into a more appropriate mass which allows for the introduction of further guestrooms. Alongside the restoration and refurbishment of the façade, the new fourth level sits as a recessive mass, clad in zinc or similar cladding, allowing the existing heritage facade to retain its primacy in the overall composition.

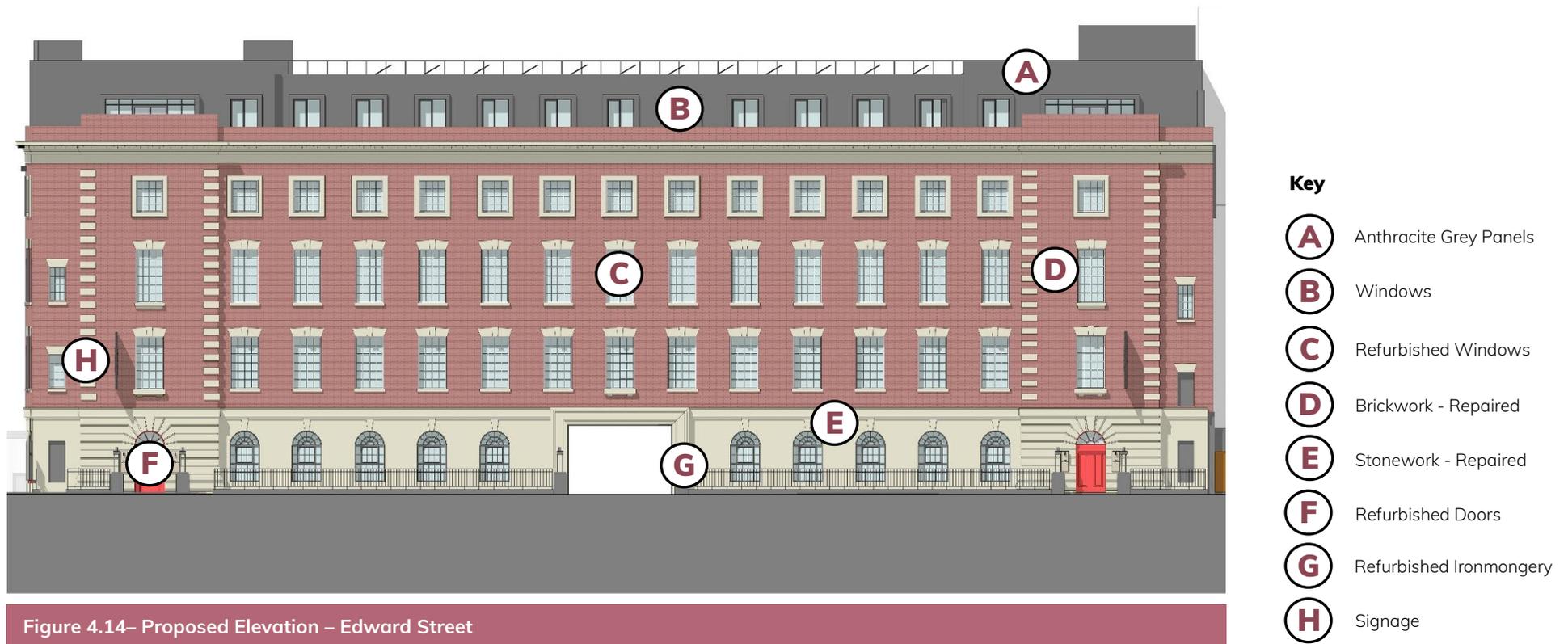


Figure 4.14– Proposed Elevation – Edward Street

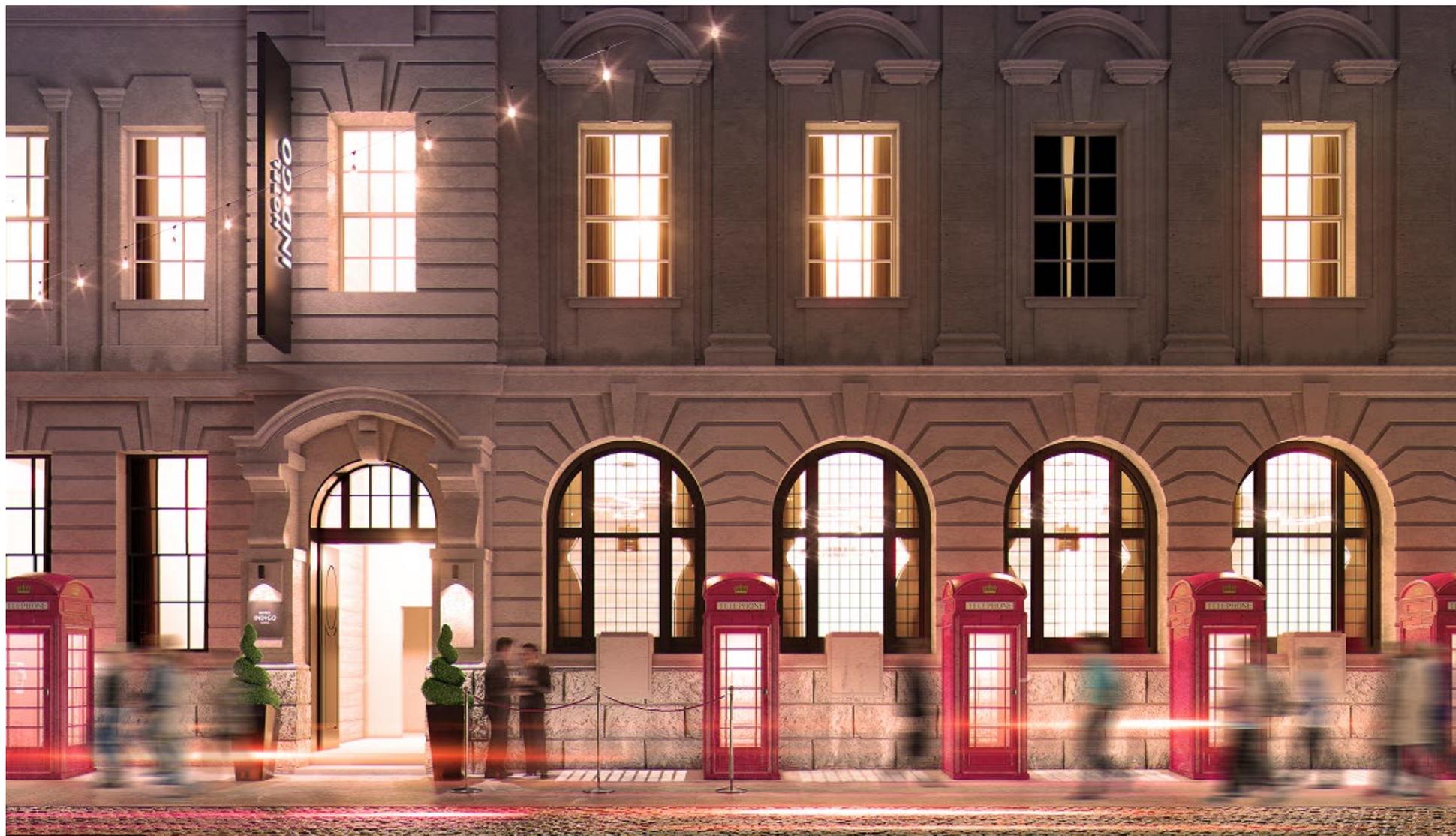


Figure 4.15 – Proposed View from Abingdon Street

Movement – Access, Parking & Servicing

Please refer to the Transport Statement and Travel Plan submitted with this application for further information.

Site Access

The site has good public transport connections providing guests and users with sustainable modes of transport for journeys considered to be beyond walking and/or cycling. Blackpool Railway Station is within walking distance while local bus stops are located along Talbot Street. The town tram network is also located within walking distance.

Vehicular access and drop off for deliveries are envisioned from Queen Vera Road, off Edward Street. It is proposed that on-site parking provision is provided within the courtyard, which is accessed via the gateway in the Sorting Office off Edward Street. The site's location within the town Centre, also provides proximity to sustainable transport modes and core services.

Building Access

Existing access locations to the façade of the Post Office and Sorting Office frontage will be retained. Servicing access for back of house and deliveries by foot will be via the new build extension off Queen Vera Road. An entrance reception provided off both Abingdon Street and Edward Street will welcome guests to the restaurant and hotel respectively, enabling functional accessibility and management of

the building. Fire escapes are located adjacent each stair core.

Building Servicing

The building will be primarily serviced off of Queen Vera Road with access to plant, the bins store and deliveries located directly off the accessway. Lift access off the linen and holding store adjacent Queen Vera road will allow for a simple and effective vertical circulation strategy for the movement of linen and goods through the building.

Access Key

-  **Vehicular Access**
-  **Primary Entrance**
-  **Secondary Access**
-  **Plant Access**
-  **Service Access**
-  **Fire Escape**



Figure 4.16 – Proposed Access and Servicing

5.0 Sustainable Design & Construction



The following statement has been prepared by Clark Degnan Consulting Engineers.

Energy Use & Sustainability

The energy performance of the building will be a major consideration within the design, with the aim of delivering a scheme that reduces energy demand through the implementation of passive and active carbon reduction methods that achieves the highest EPC rating possible within the constraints of the existing building.

Particular focus will be given to the following: -

High building insulation standards, (where practicable).

Low building air permeability to reduce heating and cooling demands.

Integration of onsite renewable energy generators.

The feasibility of integrating solar PV (electrical) and solar thermal (hot water) panels will be assessed during the early stages of the design, with the aim of maximising the renewable energy contribution and reducing the reliance on grid supplied electricity and

gas. The implementation of such technologies will be subject to a detailed feasibility study.

Low or Zero Carbon technologies for heating and hot water generation including Air Source Heat Pumps.

The buildings hot water energy demands will be met through a combination of technologies, which will be carefully considered during the feasibility stages and may include:

Solar thermal energy

Air source heat pumps

Waste heat recovery from comfort cooling systems

Combined Heat and Power

Mechanical Vent / heat recovery systems

Mechanical ventilation systems will deliver filtered fresh air to common areas to improve indoor air quality and meet the requirements of Part F of the Building Regulations. The energy demands of these systems will be reduced using low energy fans and incorporating high efficiency heat recovery systems to recover heat from the exhaust air.

Low energy comfort cooling

Where comfort cooling is required to achieve acceptable levels of thermal comfort, high efficiency heat pump technology will be in used to deliver both heating and cooling. Electrically driven heat pumps will also contribute towards the buildings decarbonisation target and reduce the reliance on fuels such as natural gas with higher carbon intensities.

Low energy fans, motors and pumps will be specified throughout.

Low energy lighting will be installed throughout the scheme.

Both internal and external lighting will be designed to minimise electrical energy use by maximising the use of LED lighting technology and automatic controls to operate lighting only when required. This will include the use of presence, absence detection, night set back and potentially daylight dimming.

Implementing power factor correction on the mains electric supply

Energy metering and monitoring systems

The building will be provided with an automatic energy metering and monitoring system that will allow the user to monitor and manage energy use across major end usages and help identify energy wastage. This can help significantly reduce energy use in operation, by giving the user the opportunity to identify and reduce energy waste.

Low water consumption toilets, rainwater recycling, water leak detection

Minimising water consumption will be key consideration with the design of the building and services. low water consumption fittings will be used to reduce total water consumption.

6.0 Involvement

Pre-Application Advice

A series of meetings have been held with the Local Planning Authority at Pre-Application Stage where the proposals have been welcomed.

Public Consultation

The previous approved applications for a hotel development at the Post Office Site included public consultation, where the schemes were positively received. Given the existing consent it is considered further extensive consultation should not be required.

However, the client is currently arranging consultation on the proposals including presentations to the Civic Trust, the Blackpool BID and the Blackpool Business Leadership Group, in order to further gauge the reception to the scheme.

Summary

The proposed scheme benefits can be summarised as follows:

- 1.0 To regenerate and reinvigorate a large under-utilised site within a key regeneration zone in Blackpool City Centre,**
- 2.0 To make a positive contribution to local heritage via the renovation of the Listed Former Post Office and associated Sorting Office, bringing two of Blackpool's finest early 20th century buildings back into long term and appropriate use, safeguarding them for the future,**
- 3.0 To provide much needed high quality hotel provision in an appropriate location,**
- 4.0 To enhance the activity of the street frontages to Abingdon Street and Edward Street, with the provision of a publicly accessible restaurant and front of house amenity,**
- 5.0 To improve the safety, attractiveness, and animation of the adjacent Public Realm.**