Westminster Reference Library

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1430775

Date first listed: 17-Mar-2016

List Entry Name: Westminster Reference Library

Statutory Address 1: City Of Westminster, Westminster Reference Library, 35 St. Martin's Street, London, WC2H 7HP

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

 $\underline{Understanding\ list\ entries}\ (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)$

Corrections and minor amendments (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address: City Of Westminster, Westminster Reference Library, 35 St. Martin's Street, London, WC2H 7HP

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: City of Westminster (London Borough)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TQ2988280625

Summary

Reasons for Designation

Westminster Reference Library of 1926-28, by A N Prentice for the City of Westminster, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest: it is an assured composition in Edwardian baroque by A N Prentice, executed with good quality materials and craftsmanship; * Historic interest: for the survival of the vaulted cellars to the former house on the site lived in by Sir Isaac Newton and later by the novelist Fanny Burney; * Degree of survival: for the high degree of exterior and interior intactness, particularly the retention of both library floors and many of their fixtures and fittings, the book hoist, main stairs and entrance hall features; * Group value: for the proximal group value with the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery (both Grade I).

History

The library was built on a parcel of land leased by Westminster City Council from the Orange Street Congregational Chapel in 1925. The land was formerly the site of no. 35 St Martin's Street, built in the late C17, and subsequently occupied by Sir Isaac Newton and later by Dr Charles Burney and his famous novelist daughter, Fanny. It is recorded that during their tenures a number of nationally important historical figures visited the house including Sir Christopher Wren, Dr Edmund Halley and Dr Johnson. A description and illustration of this C17 house in the Survey of London indicates that it had a two room plan with a projecting rear wing, and had three storeys, with a plat band between the first and second floors, and tall sash windows. The interior is noted as having bolection moulded panelling and fireplace surrounds, and a staircase with a moulded close string, turned balusters and square newels, all in keeping with the date of its construction. Newton conducted much of his research from 1710-1727 and revised his 'Principia' here: he built a wooden observatory on the roof, taken down in the 1860s. The building was carefully dismantled in 1913, with the intention of re-erecting it elsewhere, but it is unclear whether this ever occurred. The vaulted cellars of Newton's house remain beneath the west elevation of the library adjacent to its basement level, and extend further to the west beneath the library's light well and the pavement to St Martin's Street.

After a short competition, the City Council selected the design of A N Prentice assisted by W M Dean for the library. Building work started in January 1927; the contractors were Walden and Co of Reading. The library comprised basement storage, a lending library on the ground floor and a reference library on the first. At the second floor there was a caretaker's flat and on the third and attic floors further accommodation for City officials, most recently the City Engineer and his family. A leaflet of 1928, produced by the City of Westminster describing and celebrating the library's opening on 8th October of that year by the Very Reverend the Dean of Westminster, states that many of the fittings came from the St Martin's Lane library (further to the east) and were adapted for the new building.

Plans of the constructed building and later alterations are retained in the library. Minor internal modifications were made in the 1950s and 1980s. Most of the book stacks on the ground and first floors of the library have been removed and the issue desk on the ground floor repositioned. The second floor caretaker's flat was remodelled to form offices and a specialised reference collection. The original floor covering of the hall and main stairs has been covered. The library was renamed the Central Reference Library in 1948.

A N Prentice (1866-1941) was a Scottish architect who studied under William Leiper and T E Collcutt; he opened his own office in 1891. Most of his work was designing houses including a number he extended on the High Street in Broadway, Worcestershire, listed at Grade II, and his own compositions at Little Snowfield in Kent (1912, Grade II) and the Six Bells Public House in Witham on the Hill, Lincolnshire (1905, Grade II). His largest work is the Joint Examination Halls for the Physicians and Surgeons, Queen Square, London in the 'Wrenaissance' style which he won at competition in 1909. He also designed interiors for steamships and metalworks.

Details

Westminster Reference Library, built 1926-28 for the City of Westminster to the designs of A N Prentice in a simple Edwardian Baroque style.

MATERIALS: Portland stone cladding to a London stock brick structure with some glazed brick principally to the north elevation,
Portland stone and red brick dressings and a slate roof. The interior fixtures and fittings are mostly of oak.

PLAN: the two library floors are served by a main stair at the north-west corner of the west-facing façade. Above the library are two former residential floors (offices in 2015) and an attic dwelling accessed additionally from a secondary entrance at the north elevation leading to back stairs and a contemporary passenger lift. At the south-east corner is the book hoist.

EXTERIOR: a four-storey building with a basement and attic, the third floor and attic set back under a hipped roof with five dormers beneath gablets, four facing west and one to the south lighting the attic accommodation. Two further flat-roofed dormers project to the east and north. Two wide chimney stacks are located at the north side of the building, one central and the other an end stack to the east. The windows are a combination of metal framed casements and timber sliding sashes.

The four-bay façade fronts St Martin's Street to the west and the three-bay south elevation fronts onto Orange Street; both elevations share the same treatment. The basement has wide, segmental arch windows with enlarged keystones terminating in a deeply moulded stone band, and rusticated treatment. The continuous light well to the front of both elevations is defined by a cast-iron balustrade. Above, the ground and first floors are executed in ashlar with deeply moulded panels to each bay containing tall, metal-framed casement windows of 12 glazes to the ground floor and 8 glazes to the first, both with margin lights. The ground floor windows have stone cills on scrolled brackets and a moulded pediment over. Between the first and second floors is a deep moulded cornice. The second floor is simply treated; the centrally opening casement windows have stone surrounds and an enlarged keystone. The cornice above is topped by an open stone balustrade with a moulded coping. The third floor shares the simplicity of the second, and, along with the attic, is recessed beneath the roof, providing a walkway around the west and south sides accessed by a French window on the west elevation.

The main entrance is in the northernmost bay of the façade. The entrance is framed by two stone columns with capitals detailed with ovolo mouldings and egg and dart motifs. Above, a frieze is carved with the Westminster Coat of Arms with the Latin inscription 'CUSTODI CIVITATEM DOMINE' ('Guard the City O Lord'), and surmounted by a pediment, above which is a window with the words 'Public Library' carved in the stone apron. The two-leaf oak door, each leaf with three panels and a lion's head knocker, is approached by two steps. Between the second and third bay of the façade is an inscription noting that Sir Issac Newton lived on a house on this site.

The northern elevation fronts Longs Court. It has a stock brick plinth, the ground and first floors above are clad with white-glazed brick terminating in the moulded cornice between the first and second floors which wraps around from the facade. Above, the elevation is of stock brick with red brick dressings. The secondary entrance is central to the ground floor; it has a moulded stone surround and flat hood on two stone corbels. The two-leaf door is partly glazed with rectangular lights over. The windows are irregularly spaced.

The east elevation is mostly blind; there is a wide, end-stack to the north.

INTERIOR: the vestibule to the entrance hall leading to the main stairs is flanked internally by two oak-framed, part-glazed booths, that to the left being the former Porter's lodge and to the right originally a lodge for umbrellas and shoes. The original floor covering

here is marble mosaic, covered with linoleum; it remains exposed in the booths. The stone, cantilevered, open-well stairs have a wrought-iron balustrade with a bronze handrail. The walls to the staircase and landings have moulded oak panels and dado rails. The landings have a moulded frieze supported by two pilasters and one central column constructed with a composite stone, with variant ionic capitals. The floor covering to all landings was originally a marble composition known as 'biancola', likely to remain beneath the linoleum. On the second floor landing is a wall plaque commemorating the occupants of Newton's house.

In general, the oak doors, their architraves and other joinery are original.

The library floors: two-leaf oak, part-glazed doors lead off the landing into the ground floor and first floor libraries. Both library floors have wide-panelled coffered ceilings supported on square-section columns and pilasters incised with linear and simple greek key motifs. Both floors have wall shelving which may be original. The ground floor library has an oak gallery on the east wall (accommodating the Pavlova Memorial Library), supported with oak columns and capitals of the Tuscan order, with an oak balustrade of turned newels and a hand rail. On the first floor, galleries of the same style are against the east and north walls. The wall stacks to the galleries are original, but all other furniture is modern and mostly free standing.

At the south-east corner is the book hoist with an oak, panelled door and a moulded oak architrave; the caged cabin within is likely to have been replaced.

To the north-east of the ground floor library is a staff office with some original fittings. A separate entrance leads from the office to the back stairs accessed at the ground floor from the secondary entrance on Longs Court. This stone dog-leg stair is simpler, denoted as a service stair in Prentice's drawings, but also has a wrought-iron balustrade and bronze handrail. Adjacent to the service stair is a passenger lift, illustrated on the original plans and therefore contemporary.

The residential floors: the primary access to the second, third floors and attic is via the service stairs and passenger lift, although the main stairs provide access to all floor levels. On both the second and third floors simple plaster cornices, ceiling mouldings and joinery remain.

The second floor comprised the caretaker's flat arranged along the west and north sides of the building and book storage above the library floors with a telephone room to the east, inserted in the 1950s. Although remodelled to form offices and an arts reference room, simple fire surrounds and joinery remain in the former residential rooms and kitchen. The book storage area has modern metal stacks. The third floor comprised four bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room and drawing room, converted into offices (by the time of the inspection in September 2015), but retaining the original layout arranged around a central corridor with a panelled ceiling and simple decorative plasterwork. In most rooms fire surrounds remain, one having colourful tiling (presumably a nursery). The attic space, a separate residential flat was not accessible.

The basement: accessed via a secondary stair to the south of the main vestibule, the basement retains many original fixtures and fittings. The stairs, remodelled at the lowest flight, are of terrazzo; a partly glazed oak screen and door led into the mess room as identified on the plans. The book storage area has modern shelving and a glass mezzanine floor; the latter was inserted in the 1950s, but was envisaged as part of the 1920s design. The flooring is parquet. The vaulted cellars to Newton's house are accessed from the basement and are partially flooded in 2015. They are not mapped as their true extent was not apparent at the time of inspection.

Sources

Books and journals

Gray, A S, Edwardian Architecture A Biographical Dictionary, (1985), 294

Pevsner, N, Bradley, S, The Buildings of England: London 6 Westminster, (2003), 395

Websites

Extract from the Survey of London, accessed 13/10/15 from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol20/pt3/pp106-108 (http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol20/pt3/pp106-108)

Other

Booklet by City of Westminster Public Libraries 'Description of the Public Library in St Martin's Street' 1928

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 29-Oct-2023 at 09:35:51.

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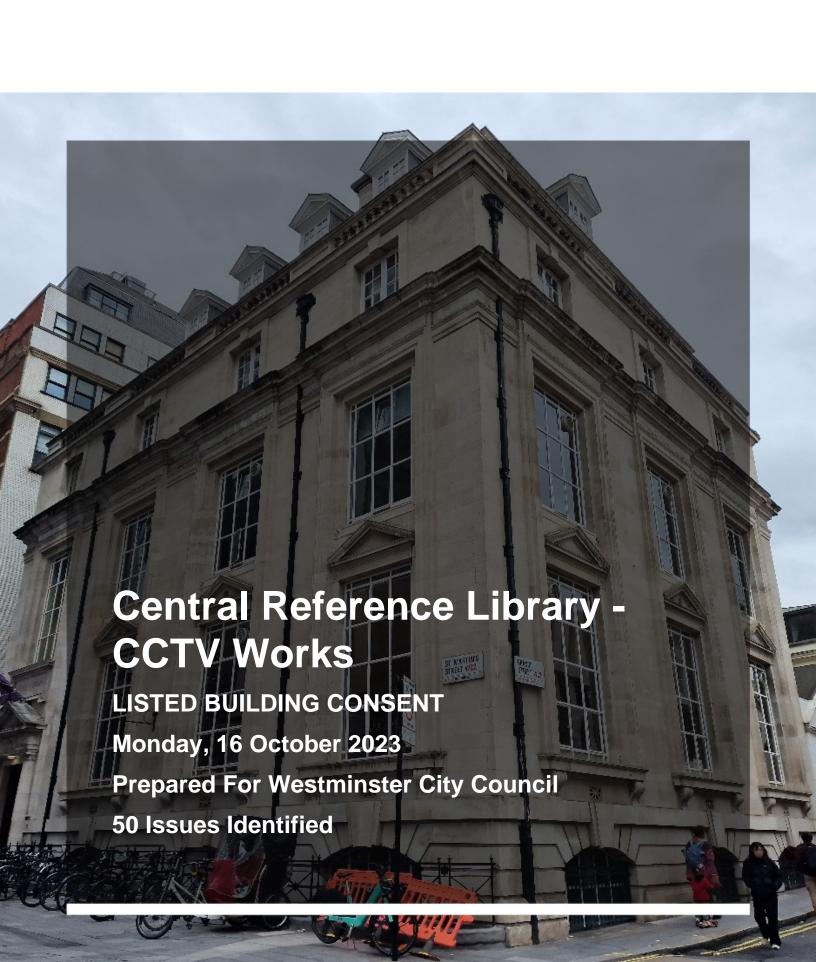
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End of official list entry



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3F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Stairwell

Figure Room Ref. RL03-08 - Stairs



3F - Existing Cable Runs & Trunking To New CCTV Camera Location

Figure Room Ref. RL03-08 Stairs



2F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Book Storage NE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RL02-02 - Book Storage



2F - Existing - Old CCTV Camera To Book Store Ceiling - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL02-02 - Book Storage



2F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Book Storage South Wall

Figure Room Ref. RL02-02 - Book Storage



2F - Existing - Old CCTV Camera To Library Work Area SE Corner -To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL02-14 - Library Work Area



2F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Library Work Area SE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RL02-14 - Library Work Area



2F - Proposed - Upgrade To Existing CCTV Camera To Library Work Area North Wall

Figure Room Ref. RL02-14 - Library Work Area



2F - Existing - CCTV To Library Work Area North Exit - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. 12-14 - Library Work Area



2F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera For Circulation Exit

Figure Room Ref. RL02 -12 - Circulation



2F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera For Main Stairwell NE Corner

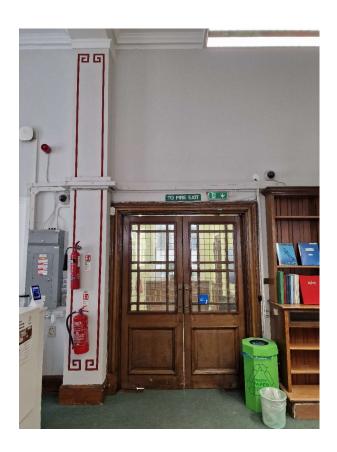
Figure Room Ref. RL02- 11 - Stairs



1F - Proposed - New Fisheye CCTV Camera To Ceiling Centre

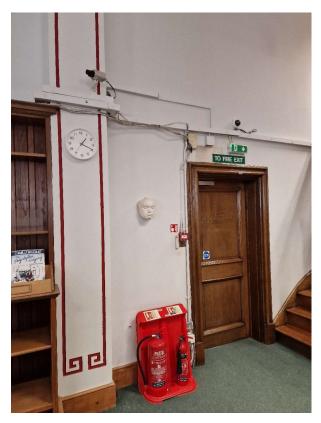
Figure Room Ref. 01-07 - Music Library

N.B. May Require c. 0.5m Cable Drop to Ensure 360-degree Room Coverage



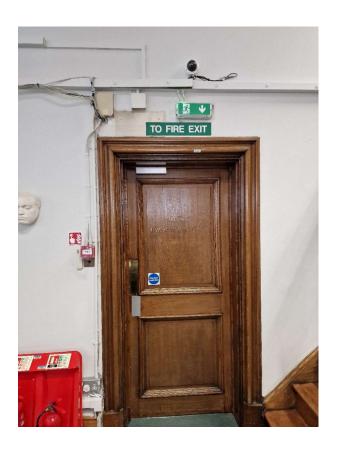
1F - Existing - 2 No. CCTV Cameras Around Entrance Doors - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library



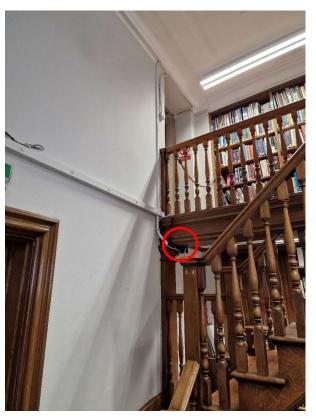
1F - Existing - 2no. Old CCTV Cameras On North Wall - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 Music Library



1F - Existing - Camera Over Door To RL01-03 Storage - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library



1F - Proposed - Corner Location For 1 No. Additional CCTV Camera

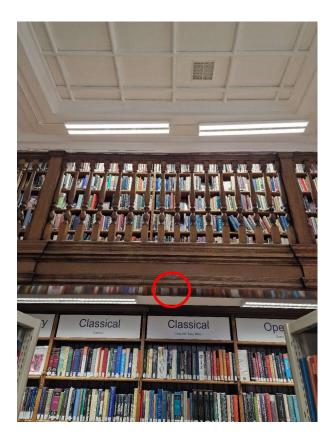
Figure Room Ref. 01-07 - Music Library

N.B. Corner Location Based on Existing Cable Routes



1F - Existing - CCTV Camera On Balcony Edge - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Room



1F - Proposed - New Location For 1no. CCTV Camera

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Room

New centralised location for camera to ensure coverage



1F - Proposed - 1 No. New CCTV Camera To SE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

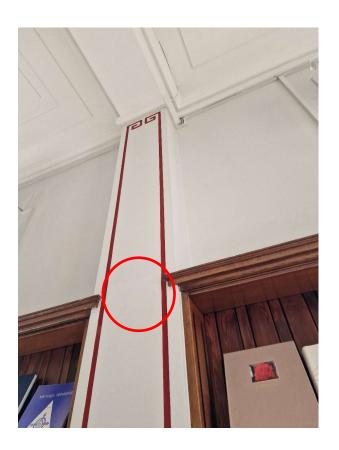
Note - Alternative location for corner camera if ceiling corner not considered feasible by contractor. Along existing cable trunking route.



1F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera Location Full Height SE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

Full height camera proposed to ensure room coverage.



1F - Proposed - New CCTV To South Central Pilaster

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

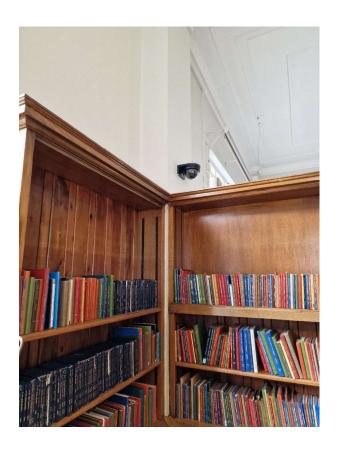
Camera height confirmed by FHP as shelf-top-level. Note painted cable trunking in-situ nearby.



1F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To SW Corner Pilaster

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

Camera height confirmed as full height by FHP. Note existing cable trunking nearby.



1F - Existing - Old CCTV Camera To West Elevation Pilaster - To be Removed

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library



1F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Middle Of West Pilaster

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

Camera Location on pilaster to replicate that of existing camera.



1F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To NW Corner Pilaster

Figure Room Ref. RL01-07 - Music Library

Camera height confirmed by FHP as mid-height to monitor library desk users. Existing wiring runs along mid-rail in close proximity.



1F - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Main Stairwell NE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RL01-06 - Stairs

Camera height & location per red circle on photo.



GF - Existing - Old Camera To NE Lobby Corner - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-07 - Stairs



GF - Proposed - New Camera To Lobby NE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-07 - Stairs Camera location to match existing.



GF - Existing - Old CCTV Camera Location In Lobby SE Corner -To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-07 - Stairs



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Lobby SE Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-07 - Stairs

Camera location to match that of existing camera. To eliminate blind spots in conjunction with other new lobby camera.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera Location Looking Into Main Library

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 Main Library

Camera location confirmed by FHP as affixed to base of balcony.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To Monitor Desk

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Camera position to match that of existing camera.



GF - Existing - Old CCTV Camera Over Desk - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library



GF - Existing - Old CCTV Camera On NE Balcony Corner - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To NE Balcony Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

New camera to be installed in same location as existing, subject to fixing bracket detail confirmation.



GF - Existing - Old CCTV Camera To East Balcony Underside - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To East Balcony Underside

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Note - location to match existing CCTV camera.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To SE Room Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Note nearby existing cable trunking to fan which could run CAT6 data cables to feed camera.



GF - Existing - Old CCTV Camera To SE Balcony Side - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To South Wall

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Note - new camera to sit on central pilaster at top-of-shelf height. Existing lighting cable runs nearby.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To SW Room Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

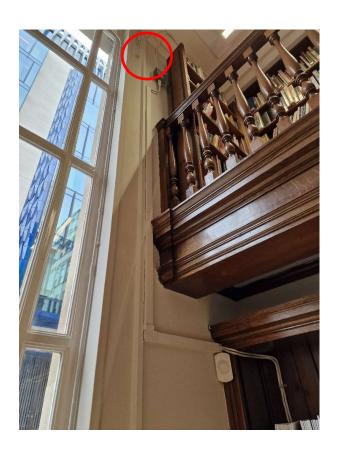
Note - existing shelf lighting cable runs in close proximity.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To NW Main Library Wall

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Note - existing lighting cable runs in close proximity.



GF - Proposed - New CCTV Camera To NW Balcony Corner

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Camera location proposed as full -height corner on route of existing cable trunking - to ensure room coverage.



GF - Existing Network Video Recorder - To be Replaced

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library



GF - Proposed - New Network Video Recorder In Same Location

Figure Room Ref. RLG-12 - Main Library

Lockable security enclosure to be added to prevent theft - c. 0.5m3 metallic mesh.



External (GF) - Existing CCTV Camera To Side Entrance - To be Removed (Not on Plans)

Figure Ref. North Side Entrance



External (GF) - Proposed New CCTV Camera In Same Location as Existing

Figure External Side Entrance (North)

Camera to be fitted with flash capabilities linked to PIR sensor to avoid need for separate security light.



External (GF) - Existing Glazed Wall Tiles Adj. Side Entrance

Figure External Side Entrance To North

Note - no changes proposed here.

External Side Entrance - Overview



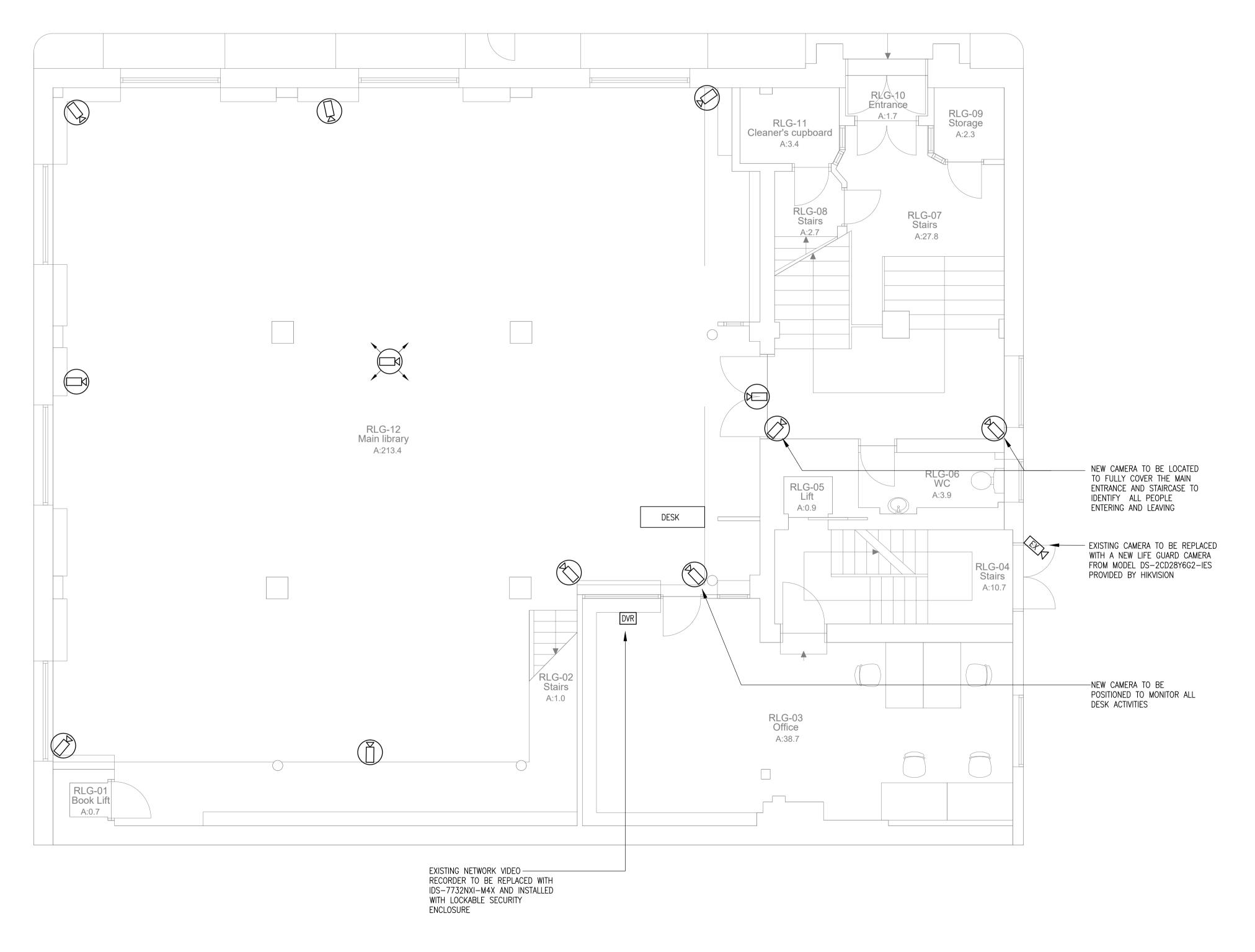


External Side Entrance - Alleyway Context

Hotel opposite with own night lights

Cosmo Phillipps





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- 10. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL ENSURE THAT ALL CABLES ARE CAT5/6 CABLES
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NETWORK FISHEYE CAMERA PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



DS-2CD2T47G2-L 4MP BULLET CAMERA FOR EXTERNAL AREAS PROVIDED BY HIKVISION

ISD-7732NXI-M4/X DEEP IN MIND M SERIES DIGITAL VIDEO RÉCORDER, PROVIDED BY HIKVISION

02 31.10.23 BJH TENDER DRAWING 01 11.09.23 RB TENDER DRAWING

Rev Date Drn Description

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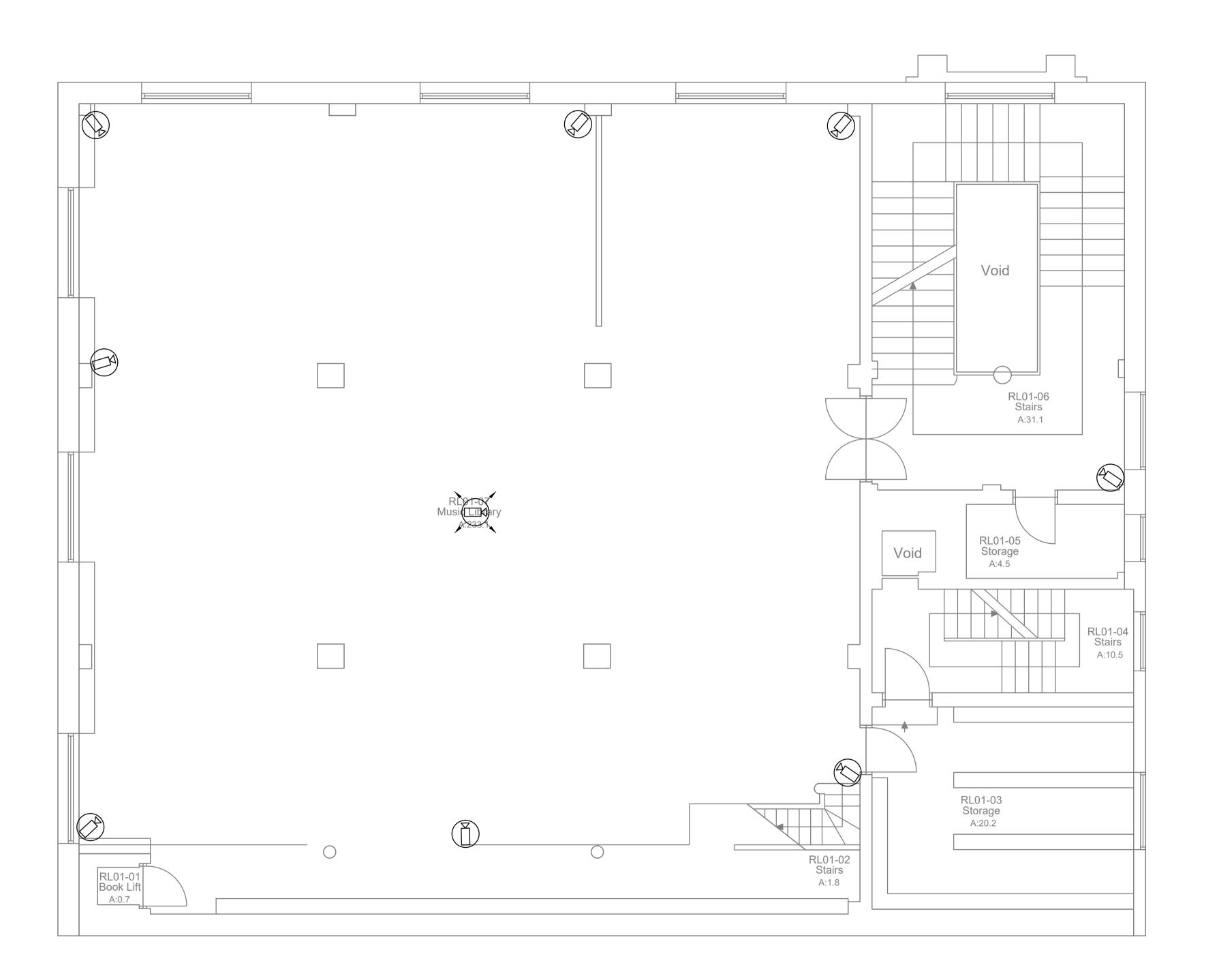
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ELECTRICAL SERVICES SECURITY, CCTV & ACCESS CONTROL GROUND FLOOR

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STAGE 3 TENDER

Project number/Drawing number 43619C-E-680-00-100 T02

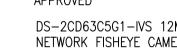


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LEGEND



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DS-2CD63C5G1-IVS 12MP DEEP IN VIEW IR NETWORK FISHEYE CAMERA PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



ISD-7732NXI-M4/X DEEP IN MIND M SERIES DIGITAL VIDEO RÉCORDER, PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



WALL MOUNTED LIGHT CONTROLLED BY PIR AND PHOTOCELL SENSOR

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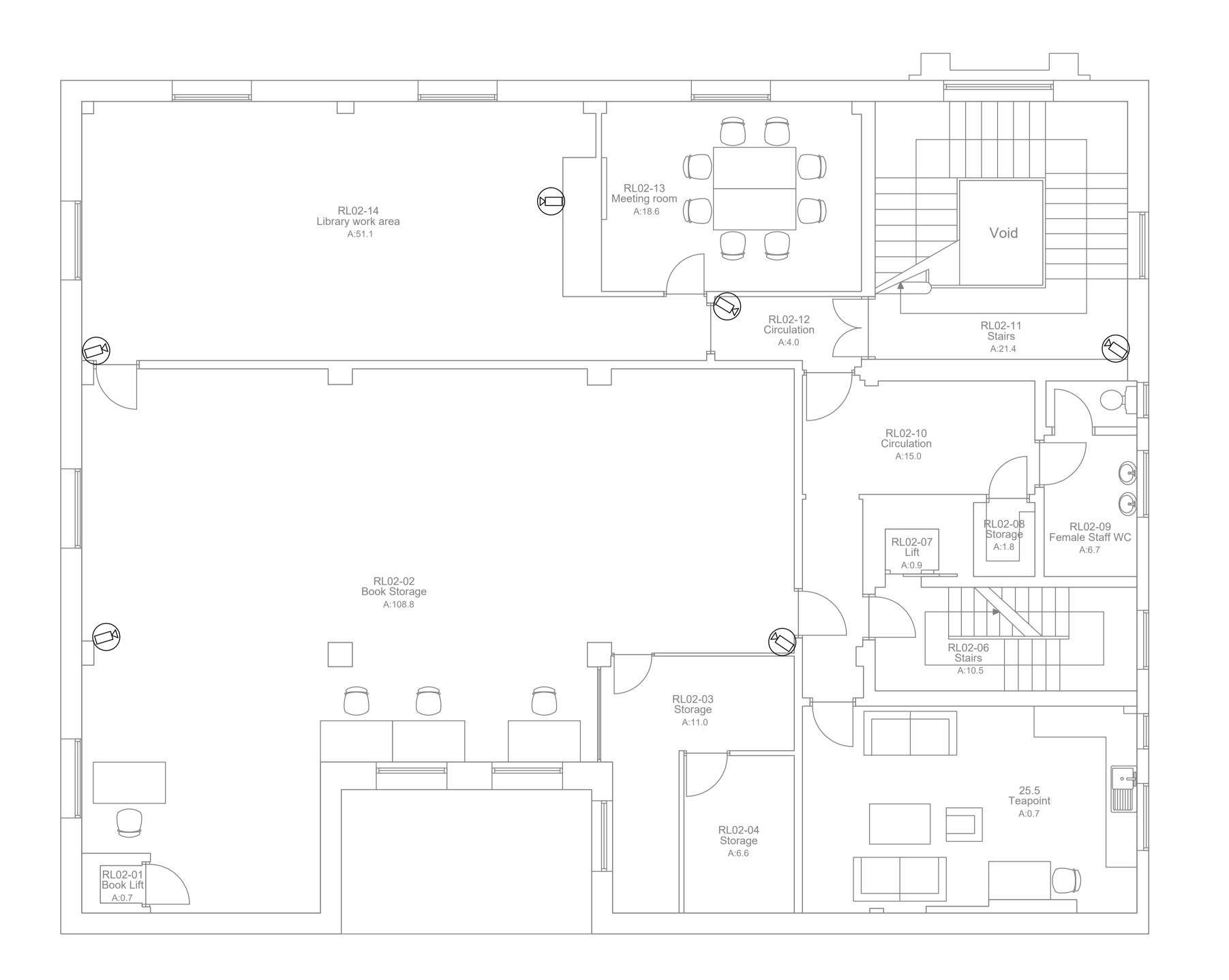


ELECTRICAL SERVICES SECURITY, CCTV & ACCESS CONTROL FIRST FLOOR

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STAGE 3 TENDER

Project number/Drawing number 43619C-E-680-01-100 T01



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DS-2CD63C5G1-IVS 12MP DEEP IN VIEW IR NETWORK FISHEYE CAMERA PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



ISD-7732NXI-M4/X DEEP IN MIND M SERIES DIGITAL VIDEO RÉCORDER, PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



WALL MOUNTED LIGHT CONTROLLED BY PIR AND PHOTOCELL SENSOR

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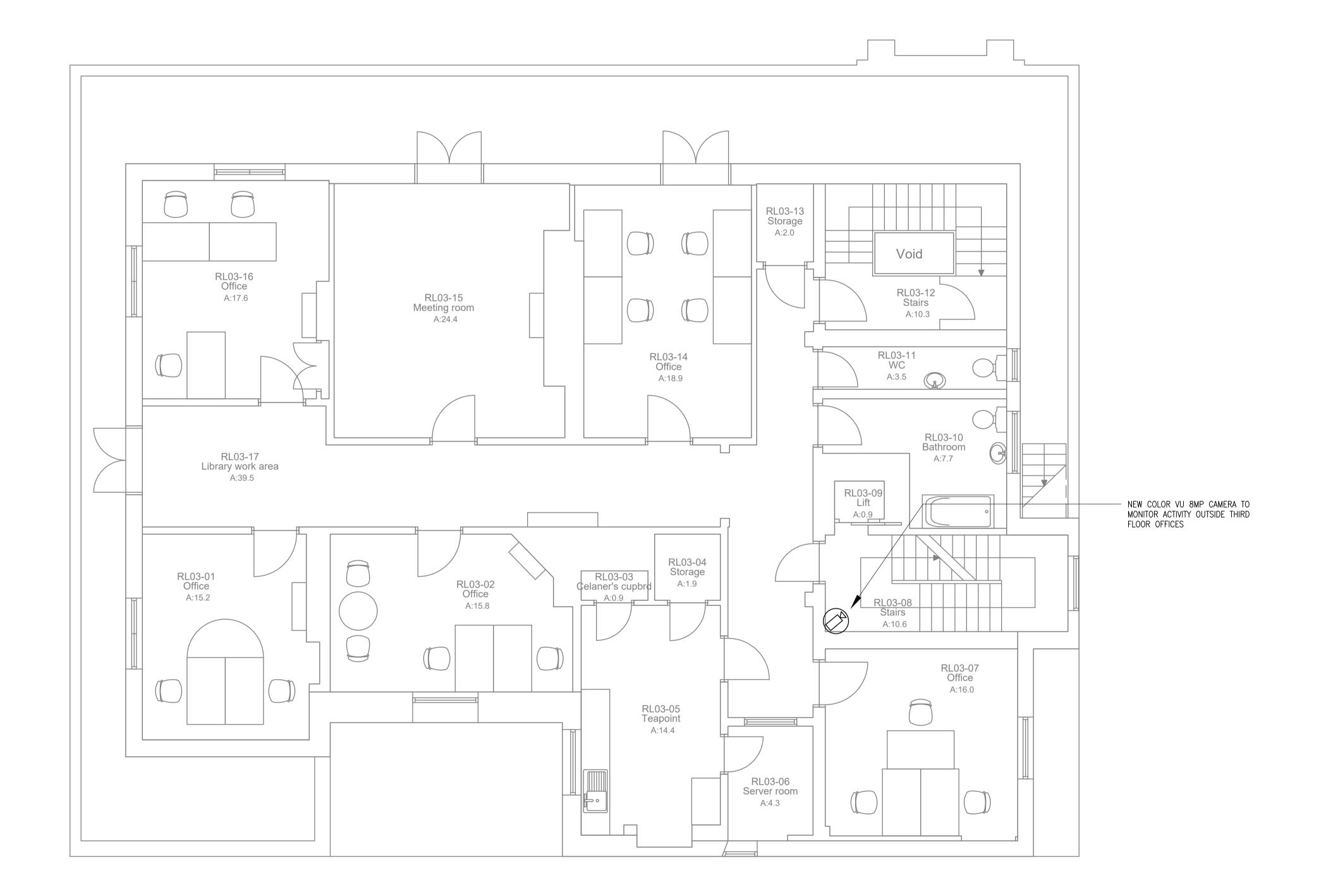
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ELECTRICAL SERVICES SECURITY, CCTV & ACCESS CONTROL SECOND FLOOR

Scale 1:50 @ A1 Drawn
AutoCAD/RB Date SEP 23

STAGE 3 TENDER ISSUE

Project number/Drawing number 43619C-E-680-02-100 T01



- 1. DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING
- 2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ARCHITECTS, STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS AND MEASURED SURVEY
- 3. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL REFER TO THE ARCHITECTS AND MEASURED SURVEY DRAWINGS FOR SETTING OUT LINES
- 4. ALL SERVICE DUCTS AND FIRE COMPARTMENTATION TO BE MADE GOOD AFTER INSTALLATION OF THE SERVICES BY THE CONTRACTOR TO THE ARCHITECTS DETAILS
- 5. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STANDARD AND PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS
- 6. SEPARATION OF SERVICES SHALL BE APPLIED FOR LIGHTING & POWER, I.T CABLING, SECURITY & ACCESS CONTROL AND FIRE ALARM CABLING. CONTAINMENT SHALL BE PROVIDED WHERE SERVICES CROSS-OVER (MINIMUM SEPARATION OF 150mm SPACING BETWEEN SYSTEMS)
- 8. INSTALLATION OF SERVICES SHALL BE COORDINATED WITH ALL OTHER TRADES AND SITE INSTALLATIONS.
- 9. ALL EXISTING CAMERAS AND NVR SHALL BE VALIDATED TO BE RETAINED AND REUSED
- 10. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL ENSURE THAT ALL CABLES ARE CAT5/6 CABLES
- 11. THE NEW CONTAINMENT SYSTEM MUST BE SURFACE MOUNTED USING WHITE PVC TRUNKING

LEGEND



MICRODOM-DS-2CD2387G2-LSU/SL COLORVU 8MP CAMERA PROVIDED BY HIKVISION OR EQUAL AND



DS-2CD63C5G1-IVS 12MP DEEP IN VIEW IR NETWORK FISHEYE CAMERA PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



ISD-7732NXI-M4/X DEEP IN MIND M SERIES DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDER, PROVIDED BY HIKVISION



WALL MOUNTED LIGHT CONTROLLED BY PIR AND PHOTOCELL SENSOR

T01 | 11.09.23 | RB | PRELIMINARY ISSUE

Rev Date Drn Description

FAITHFUL & GOULD

Architect

CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY 35 St Martin's St,

WC2H 7HP



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ELECTRICAL SERVICES SECURITY, CCTV & ACCESS CONTROL THIRD FLOOR

Scale 1:50 @ A1 AutoCAD/RB Date SEP 23

STAGE 3 TENDER ISSUE

Project number/Drawing number 43619C-E-680-03-100 T01