

NETHERLANDS CONSULATE GENERAL

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COMPLEX

RE 9245, CNR STRAND & BUITENGRACHT STREETS, CAPE TOWN

HERITAGE REPORT

in terms of section 27 of the NHRA

30 August 2017



PREPARED FOR:

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Evangelical Lutheran Church Complex, bounded by Strand, Buitengracht and Waterkant Streets and the Martin Melck warehouse on Bree Street in Cape Town is currently in the process of declaration as a National Heritage site.

The Netherlands Consul General has been the tenant and occupants of the old Sexton's house, bordering the Buitengracht, since 1958. They wish to make minor internal changes to the building, most of which are reversing older alterations made during their extended tenancy partnership with the ELC.

The need to insert new security measures (bullet-proof glass screens across two staircase openings and the associated exposed ceilings) will allow for greater and more authentic use of two primary front rooms of the Consular building, and will return a large and primary room behind these to occupation by people.

The upgrading of two ±1970s toilet blocks for aesthetic and water-use reduction purposes will take place simultaneously.

The rationalisation of electrical and fire and safety services will take place as a separate application, but it follows the same Heritage guiding principles assigned by the ELC and undertaken by the Netherlands ministry of Foreign affairs.

This application should be favourably considered and monitored by the Church and its conservation architects, who should report on its process and completion.

**HERITAGE REPORT: RE9245, NETHERLANDS CONSULATE GENERAL [SEXTON'S HOUSE].
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COMPLEX, STRAND STREET, CAPE TOWN**

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Cover: Netherlands Consulate General, June 2017

AUTHORS OF THIS REPORT

This Heritage Report was compiled by Sally Titlestad and Stuart Hermansen, director of HB Architects [Pty] Ltd], as independent consultants, and has been prepared at the cost of the owner.

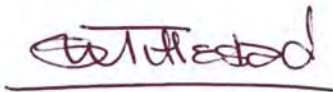
Declaration:

We declare that there are no circumstances that compromise our objectivity in compiling this Report. Further, we have no vested or financial interest in the outcome of the application, whether successful or not.



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LIMITATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

It is tacit that the information supplied by the owner and their consultants is current and correct.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) complex, a National Heritage site in the process of declaration, consists of an ensemble of buildings forming a distinctive and unique landmark feature along Strand Street, Cape Town. The ensemble consists of four buildings, three of which belong to the Church and are located on erf 9245, Cape Town.

The western building, abutting the Buitengracht, is the old Sexton's House and has been occupied by the Netherlands Consul General since 1958.

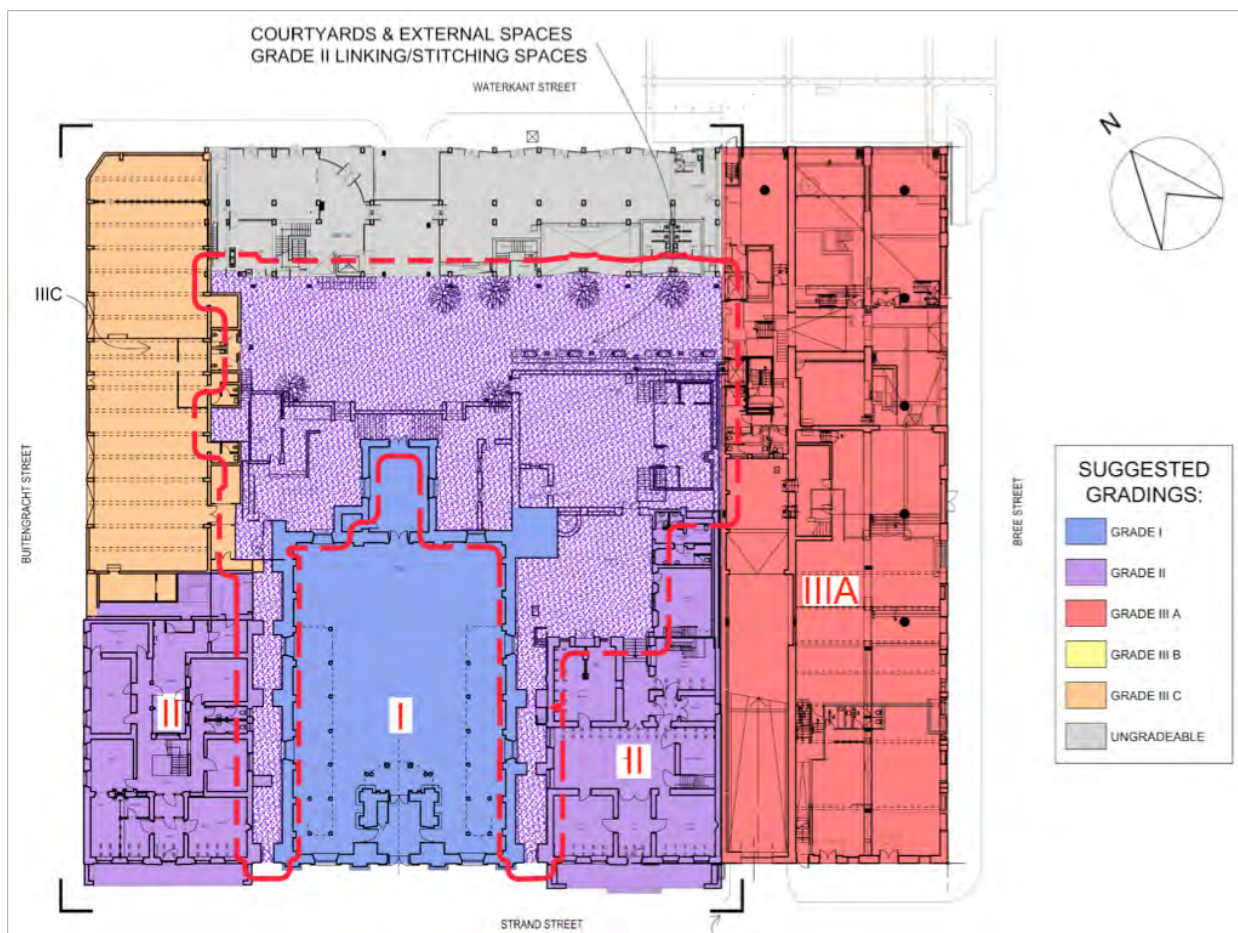


Figure 1: Grading and linkage between the spaces of the ELC complex, Strand Street (Mike Scurr, 2013)

Although the Sexton's House forms an integral part of the ELC complex, it lacks sufficient authenticity itself to be considered of Grade I status, and is considered a Grade II resource (Provincial Heritage Site) within the overall Grade I site because of its rarity, representivity and social significance. This elemental grading provides guidance on the extent that changes may be permitted¹.

¹ Mike Scurr and Sally Titlestad, Draft Guidelines for the Netherlands Consulate General, 2016.

Over time relatively small and cumulative additions of services has taken place internally, and the 1990s conversion of the two front rooms to a waiting room and visa applications space has had a dulling impact on the clarity of the internal spaces and the experience of their historical significance.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands wishes to upgrade the ground floor of their Consulate-General (NCG) located in the Sexton's House, adjoining the main Lutheran Church building in Strand Street.

Historically, changes to the Sexton's House have taken place in four main periods, all significantly affecting the authenticity of the fabric. Its current state is one of a "1950s restoration of the original 1788 building", where mid-twentieth century aesthetics, materials and detailing is exposed. The resultant interior gives a fairly muddled view of the historical layering, further confused by decades of accumulated services and fittings.

Four key dates/ ages of the building are noted:

- 1788 – original construction completed
- c1860 – internal alterations and changes to front facade to divide the building into two separate buildings. Work undertaken by Master builder Wocke.
- *Unknown date (c1915)* – Victorianisation of facade with the addition of a double-storied timber verandah and balcony.
- 1950s – renovation to "restore" the layout and appearance of the building by Andrews and Niegeman Architects as protectors of the fabric by the National Monuments Council (mostly known locally for their modernist architecture).
- 1980s – exterior plaster stripping and replacement by Fagan Architects

The building retains none of the late twentieth century Victorian era external detailing and the 1950 "restoration" undid the subdivision into two. The building therefore reads as the 1950s restoration of the original 1788 building. To their credit perhaps (in terms of current conservation thinking, Andrews and Niegeman did not resort to historic detailing for the reinserted stairwell as one example, but instead allowed the mid twentieth century aesthetic to be seen – in the slatted timber soffits etc. But compared to the Martin Melck house for example, the building seems a lot less convincing as a historic space, and this historical approach does merit further heritage consideration in the future².

² Mike Scurr, Rennie Scurr Adendorff Architects, 2016.

2 HERITAGE GUIDELINES

In the case of the Netherland's Embassy, the conservation approach can be summarised as follows:

- Conservation of the exterior to the highest standards in line with the other core buildings on the site. No exterior alterations are permitted, and any external renovation/ redecoration is to be in line with the work and processes outlined in the Heritage Agreement and overarching conservation policies.
- The interior layout and historic fabric is to remain undisturbed, save for service spaces where alterations may be permitted. Physical changes to walls, doors, floors, openings and rooms are not permitted given the overall grading.
- The modern and non-original interior finishes, fittings, design and decoration can be considered for change provided these are carefully planned and integrated into the whole. Recovery of significance, rather than a continual accumulation of minor changes and additions, must be a key component of this process.

This recovery of significance and integration into the whole will be a key consideration of evaluation of any proposed internal alteration and upgrade. While tenants certainly have both rights and requirements, in the case of a highly graded building such as this, heritage considerations must override tenant requirements³

2.1 GENERAL APPROACH,

Adapted from guidelines compiled by the US Dept of the interior (National Park Service) are being applied⁴

- Retain and preserve floor plans and interior spaces that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Avoid subdividing spaces that are characteristic of a building type or style or that are directly associated with specific persons or patterns of events.
- Avoid making new cuts in floors and ceilings where such cuts would change character-defining spaces and the historic configuration of such spaces.

3 Mike Scurr, Rennie Scurr Adendorff Architects, 2016.

4 Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings, Identifying and Preserving Character-defining elements, H. Ward Jandl. (US Govt Printing works).

- Avoid installing dropped ceilings below ornamental ceilings or in rooms where high ceilings are part of the building's character.
- Retain and preserve interior features and finishes that are important in defining the historic character of the building.
- Retain stairs in their historic configuration and location.
- Retain and preserve visible features of early mechanical systems that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Avoid removing paint and plaster from traditionally finished surfaces, to expose masonry and wood.
- Avoid using destructive methods.

2.2 **SPECIFIC ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES THE SEXTON'S HOUSE5**

- Better use to be found for ground floor records room as a primary space
- The primary ground floor waiting room space should be respected as a primary and visible historic space. An appropriate interior design layout and expression is to be found for this area.
- The carving up of the main front room with the "balie" cubicles should be reconsidered and the space returned to a single volume, or at least, be seen as a single volume.
- The non-functioning fireplaces are from different periods and are to be protected and integrated into layouts.
- An interior design strategy is to be prepared for the finishing and presentation of the key internal spaces in terms of paint colours, lighting, artwork, graphics, furniture etc. It is understood the working offices require a degree of flexibility and autonomy, but as best international practice shows, this does not need to affect the reading of historic interiors.
- Historic doors and windows are to be protected and treated as per general guidelines.
- Historic ironmongery is to remain and to be refurbished as per standard specs contained in the Heritage Agreement.
- The upstairs floors are 1950s beech and should be protected.
- Timber varnished/ oiled ceilings and beams are to remain unpainted

- Faux-historic detailing and presentation is discouraged.
- Services generally to be rationalised on an ongoing basis. As a general principle, no chasing is to be done, unless in specific back of house areas and agreed to.
- The modern bathroom, kitchen and spaces are utilitarian and can be/ should be upgraded and better presented in keeping with the historic building.
- Integration of services and concealing in ducting or housing in cable trays requires an overall strategy and must not be done on a continuous ad-hoc basis. Agreements with the tenant need to be arrived at whereby the addition of new installations meets rationalising requirements.
- A long term strategy for the external AC units should be developed. No further proliferation of unsightly external units should be permitted.
- Fire signage and equipment and monitoring systems are to be rationalised and simplified wherever possible.
- Signage and posters should not be affixed to doors.
- Overall electrical compliance is to be ensured on an ongoing basis. The main db is presently housed in an unsightly half height boxing and this should be replaced with a better integrated unit.
- Door wiring and release mechanisms to be rationalised. No notching of doors and frames permitted.
- Roof level security measures are to be reviewed as part of the overall exterior.

Overall, a simplicity and clarity of the original spaces is desired, rather than the uncoordinated profusion of added elements and fixtures as at present.

3 PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORKS:

3.1 EXTERIOR:

No alterations or work to the exterior of the building is proposed. The 40mm waste pipe from the proposed new kitchenette will exit through existing drainage space in the adjoining modern toilet block.

3.2 GROUND FLOOR:

The core of the proposed changes are to render half of the ground floor open to the public and to reconfigure the visa application area, reducing its size and returning the remainder

of the space to its original form. This requires the insertion of bullet proof screens across two staircase openings to ensure consular security, and the conversion of the 'archival storage-room' to a kitchenette and meeting space.

The opportunity to upgrade the adjoining toilets from their ±1970s installation for water-use reduction purposes will accompany this. Refurbishment of the first floor toilet block following the same principles is proposed.

It is intended that this upgrade will reverse approximately five decades of accumulated and ad-hoc installations resulting in well thought out, neutral volumes improving the sense of clarity in understanding the spaces, thereby enhancing the significance of this Grade II heritage resource.

3.3 DETAILED DESCRIPTION (SEE PHOTOGRAPHS IN APPENDIX):

The spatial upgrade work is focused on the ground floor. No structural or physical changes to the historic fabric is proposed, save from the insertion of a drainage pipe from the new kitchen sink through the old wall to exit the building through the toilet block on the ground floor. This is seen as preferable to adding to a proliferation of services on the external wall of the building in the passage between the buttress walls linking the Church and its adjoining buildings.

Several contemporary non-original "dry" fittings and finishes installed in the 1990s will be removed. These include the removal of: a small area of raised floor; dry panelling closing off an original doorway; dry panelling closing off an original window; counters and shelves. The removal of the raised floor and counter in the 1990s waiting room will return the space back to a single volume, thereby increasing the spatial experience and thus significance of the front room previously lost with the contemporary counter across it. Existing historical clay floor tiles under the raised floor will be exposed, and may require some remedial attention, to specialist specification.

For security reasons, the NCG wishes to close off the openings between the stair hall and the side passage with bullet-proof glass screens. These screens are framed in aluminium and will have to be anchored into the side walls of each opening. They are treated as a modern insertion that can be removed in the future.

There is also a requirement to secure the ceiling above this side passage with the installation of steel panels between the joists, similar to those previously installed in the front room/current waiting room. This will be unobtrusive and appear as the underside of the floor above, painted a hue that blends in with the adjacent beams. They are removable.

The NCG wishes to install a small kitchenette in the previous store room, proposing to insert counters/cupboards to accommodate this.

The contemporary (±1970s) toilet blocks inserted within a larger volume are proposed to be totally upgraded with new fittings and replacing the floor & wall tiles.

3.4 ELECTRICAL:

Establishing modern electrical compliance and the rationalisation of cumulative electrical installations will be undertaken as a directive of the Heritage guidelines for the building. This will form part of the maintenance programme covered by the Heritage Agreement in place between the SAHRA and the Church. A consultant electrical engineer will be appointed and will work with guidance from HB Architects (conservation architects appointed by the ELC) under the heritage design indicators established for the Consulate in 2016. This will form a separate application.

The intention is to use penetrations through existing walls where possible, to reuse existing recessed switches and plugs, and to surface-mount all new services in newly planned and integrated system of suspended cable tubes and power skirtings. The new electrical installation will show itself as a contemporary layer within the various historic spaces.

3.5 PAINT:

The ground and first floor internal spaces will need to be repainted after the alterations. A fresh and light neutral colour will be selected to provide elegance and restraint. The consulate walls were replastered with contemporary compatible plaster in the 1980s and there is no need to use specialist paint products on these surfaces.

3.6 PROJECT METHODOLOGY:

Appointed contractors will be required to follow a rigorous methodology with regard to working on the existing structure. Where necessary, ELC Method Statements and specifications will be followed. Particular care must be taken to protect existing floors and exposed timber finishes during painting.

3.7 COMPLIANCE WITH SANS 10400:

The building will be assessed for compliance in terms of National Building Regulations, in particular those pertaining to health and safety, and on completion, an occupancy certificate will be issued by the local authority.

4 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

The ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands has appointed Louise van Riet, a professional architect with conservation skills and experience, to undertake the design and implementation of the proposed changes on their behalf, and have followed the general and specific Heritage guidelines for interventions provided to them by the ELC and its conservation professionals.

5 SPECIFIC PROPOSALS:

The upgrading of the waiting area/consular counter, re-opening of the internal doorway between the front and second room and associated minor alterations are a positive and contributing change.

The conversion of the storeroom to a kitchenette will restore the experience of a room currently not accessible.

The upgrade to wc's and the toilet blocks on ground and first floor is an improvement on the current situation, and will in addition provide toilet access to members of the public visiting the Consulate (they currently use facilities at the Lutheran Church as there are no accessible facilities at the Consulate).

The rationalization of electrical services and fire equipment [bringing the building in line with health and safety standards], and the removal of cluttered services that detract from the experience of the building, is visually a distinct improvement, the details of which will form a separate application.

The installation of the bullet-proof screens and ceilings as a necessary security measure, and the approach outlined is removable and as un-intrusive as is possible, and is therefore supported, particularly given that their insertion will result in more of the building being publicly accessible.

The remaining proposed minor alterations are considered insignificant.

6 CONSULTATION WITH I & A P'S

As there are no structural changes and the alterations are very minor and largely reversals of previous alterations, SAHRA requires consultation only with the neighbours and CIBRA. This consultation is currently underway, and the outcomes will be submitted as soon as they are available.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that SAHRA consider these proposals favourably and issue a permit for the implementation of the changes detailed herein.

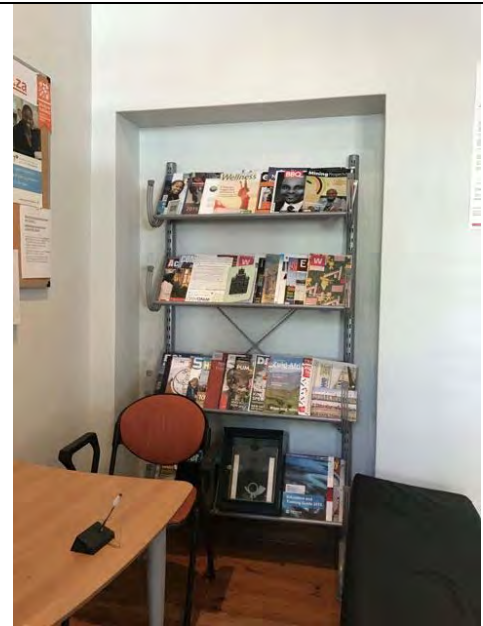
It is recommended that the process of works be monitored and reported on by the Conservation Architect appointed by the ELC, and a close-out report submitted to SAHRA within 30 days of practical completion.

Table of Illustrations: Status Quo depiction of spaces where proposed alterations will take place

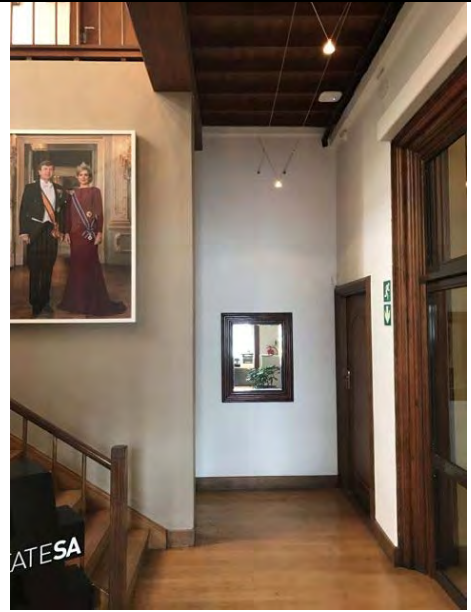
Consular counter + dry wall above to be removed and tiled floor behind exposed



Dry wall concealing door to be removed and door to passage to become operational again, original door to be re-inserted.



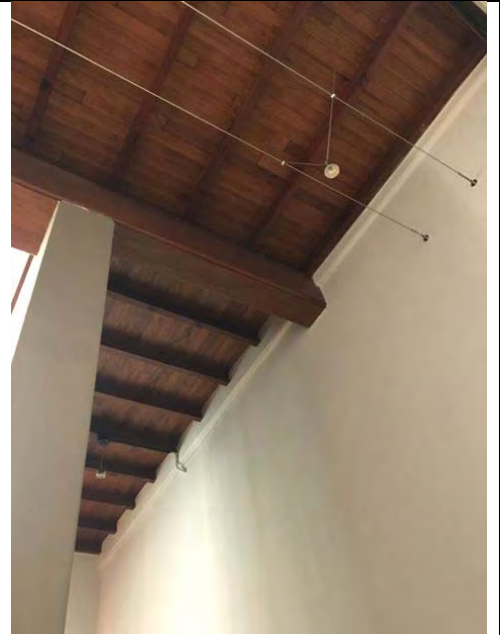
Opening to passge where bulletproof glass screen is proposed to be installed



Opening on landing where bulletproof glass screen is proposed to be installed



Passage ceiling where bulletproof panels are proposed to be installed between the beams, the result will be similar to the photograph below. The temporary visual loss of the floorboards above will be offset by the increased public access to the spaces and the fact that the intervention is removable.



Bullet proof screens inserted between ceiling beams to protect the floor above in the Consular offices.

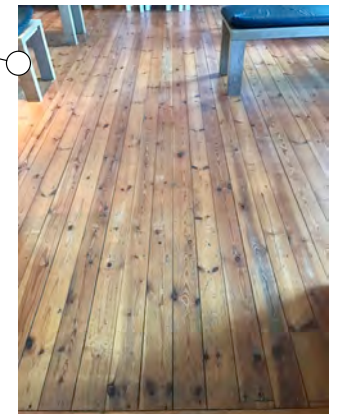
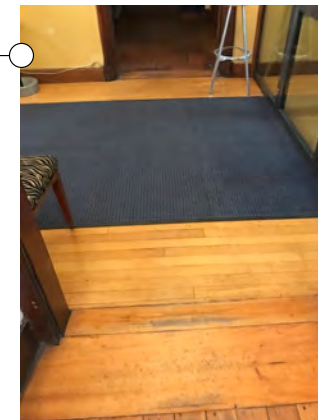
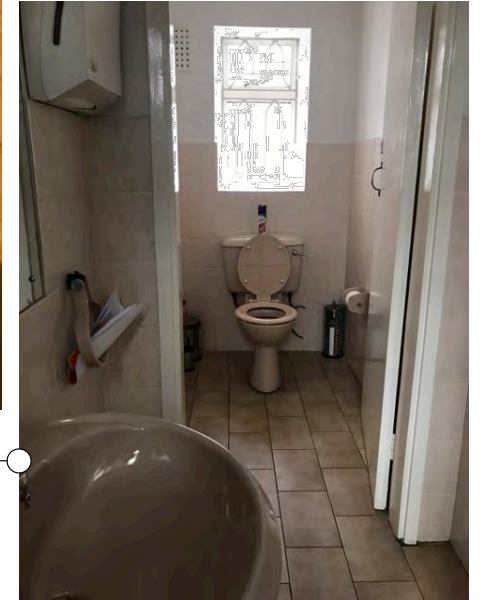
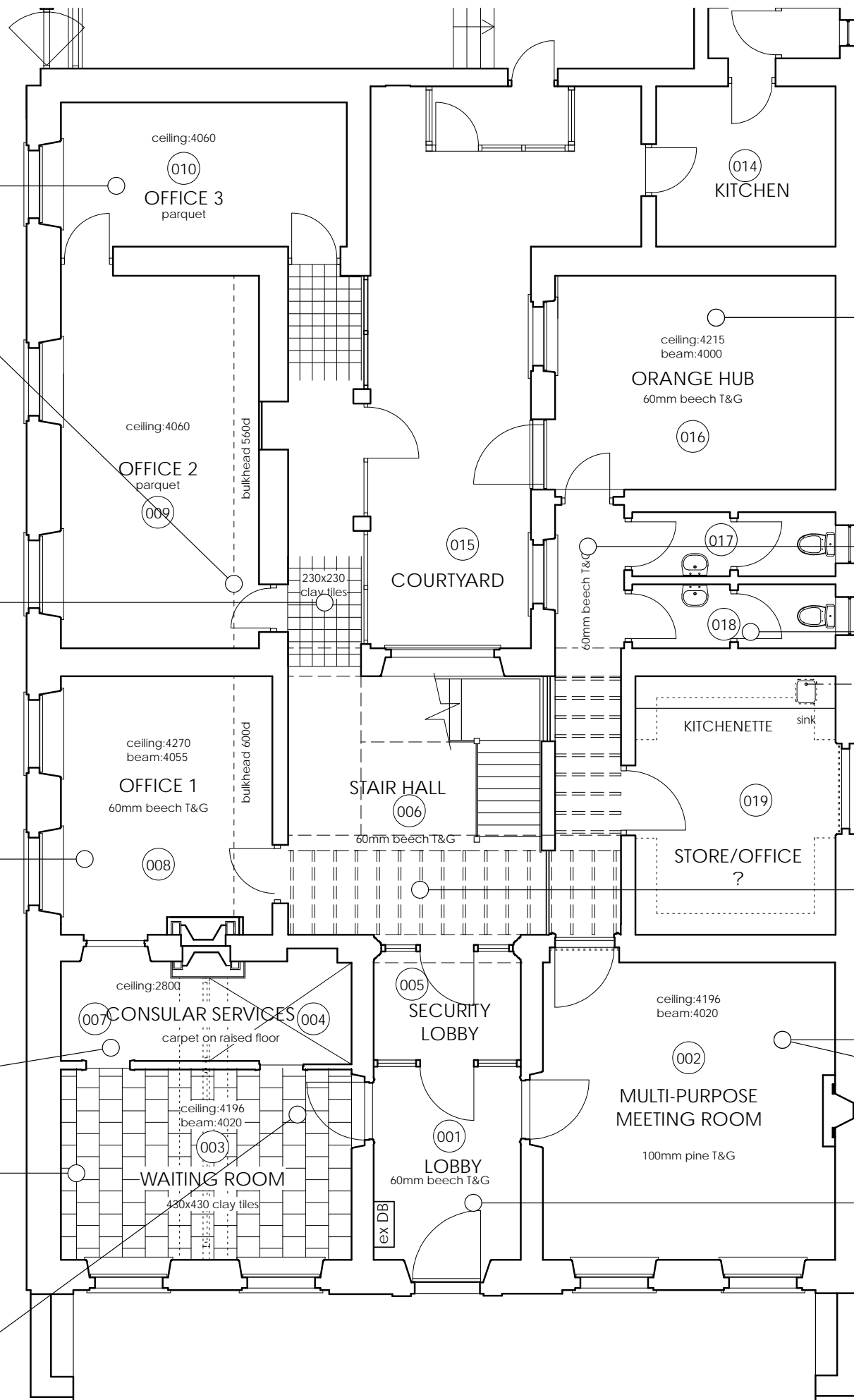
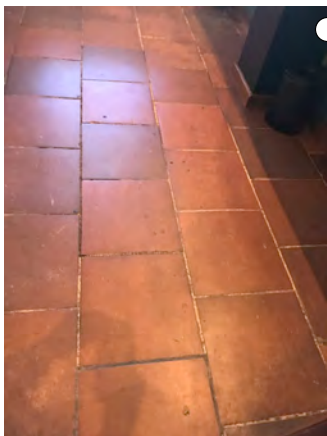
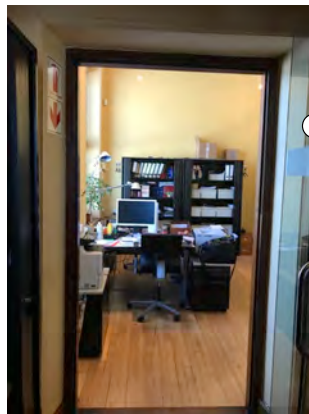
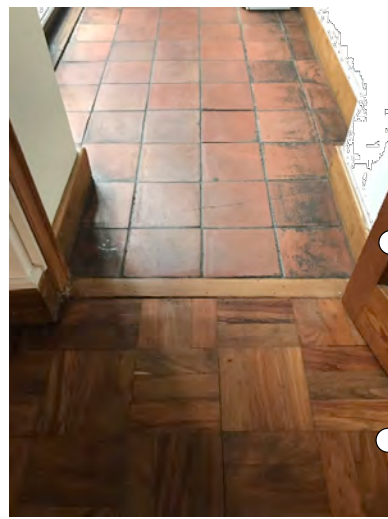


Ground Floor toilets to be upgraded

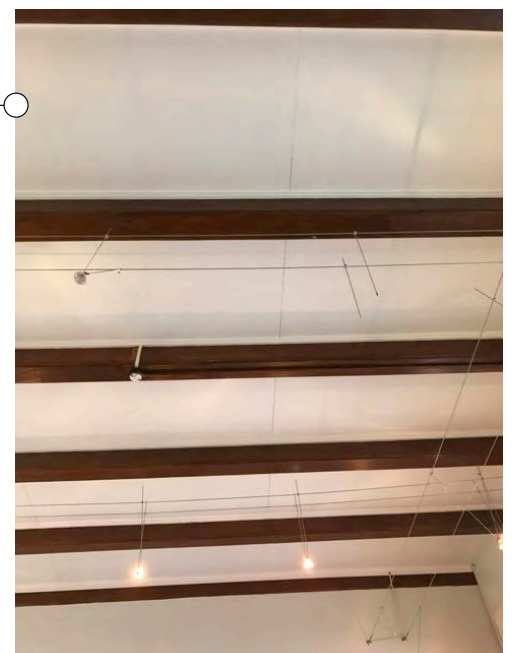
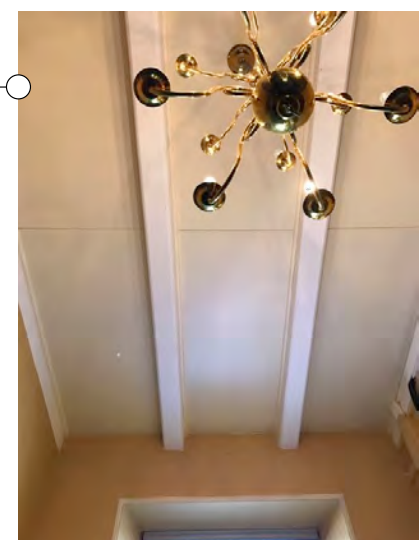
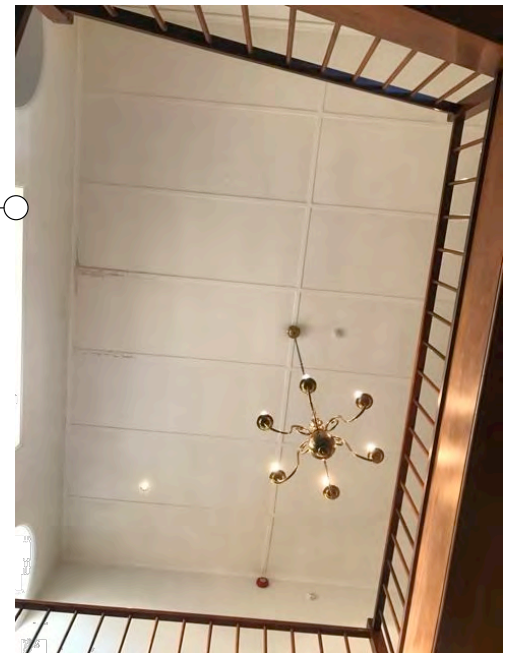
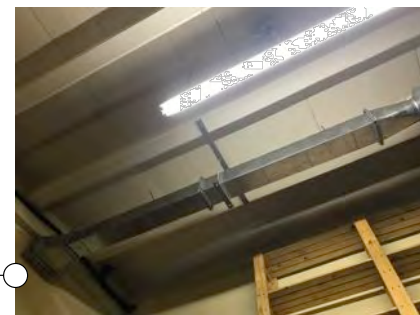
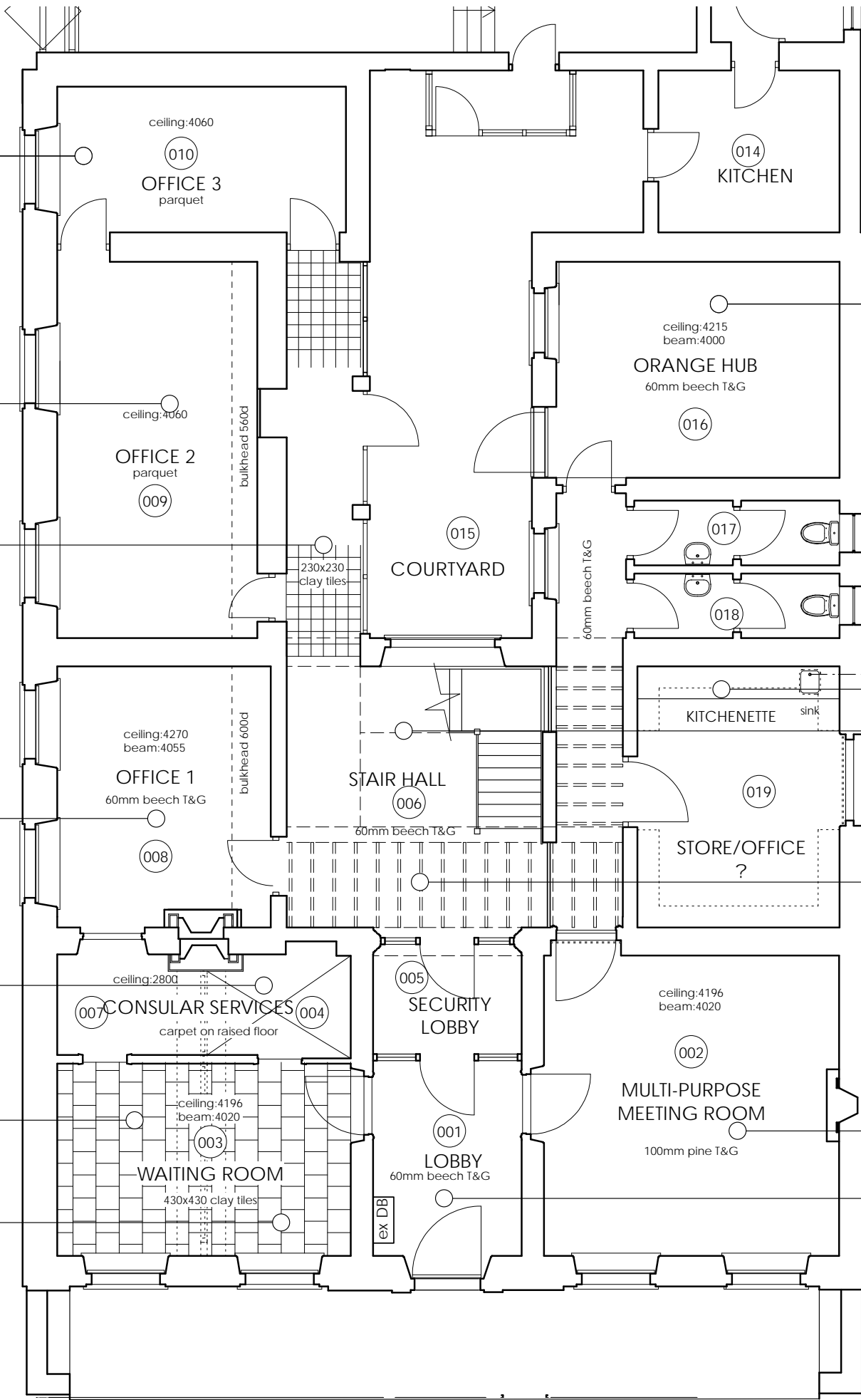
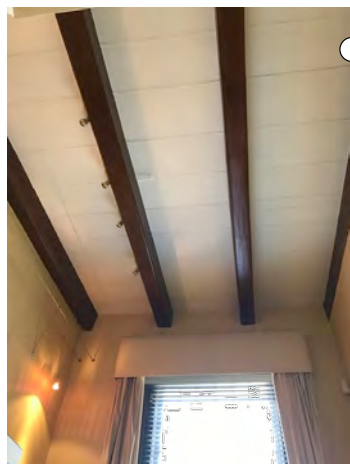
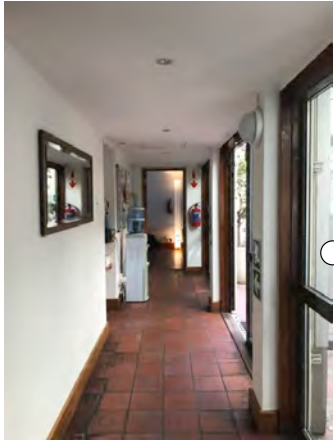
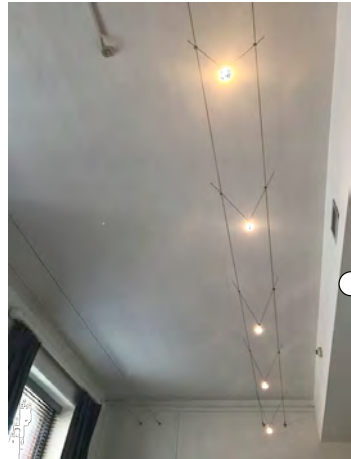
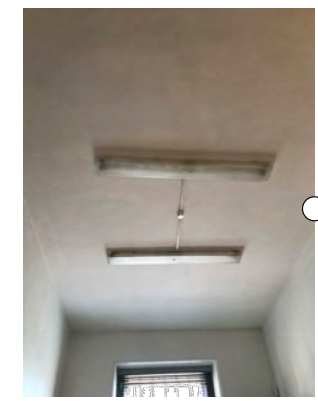


Example of services to be rationalised

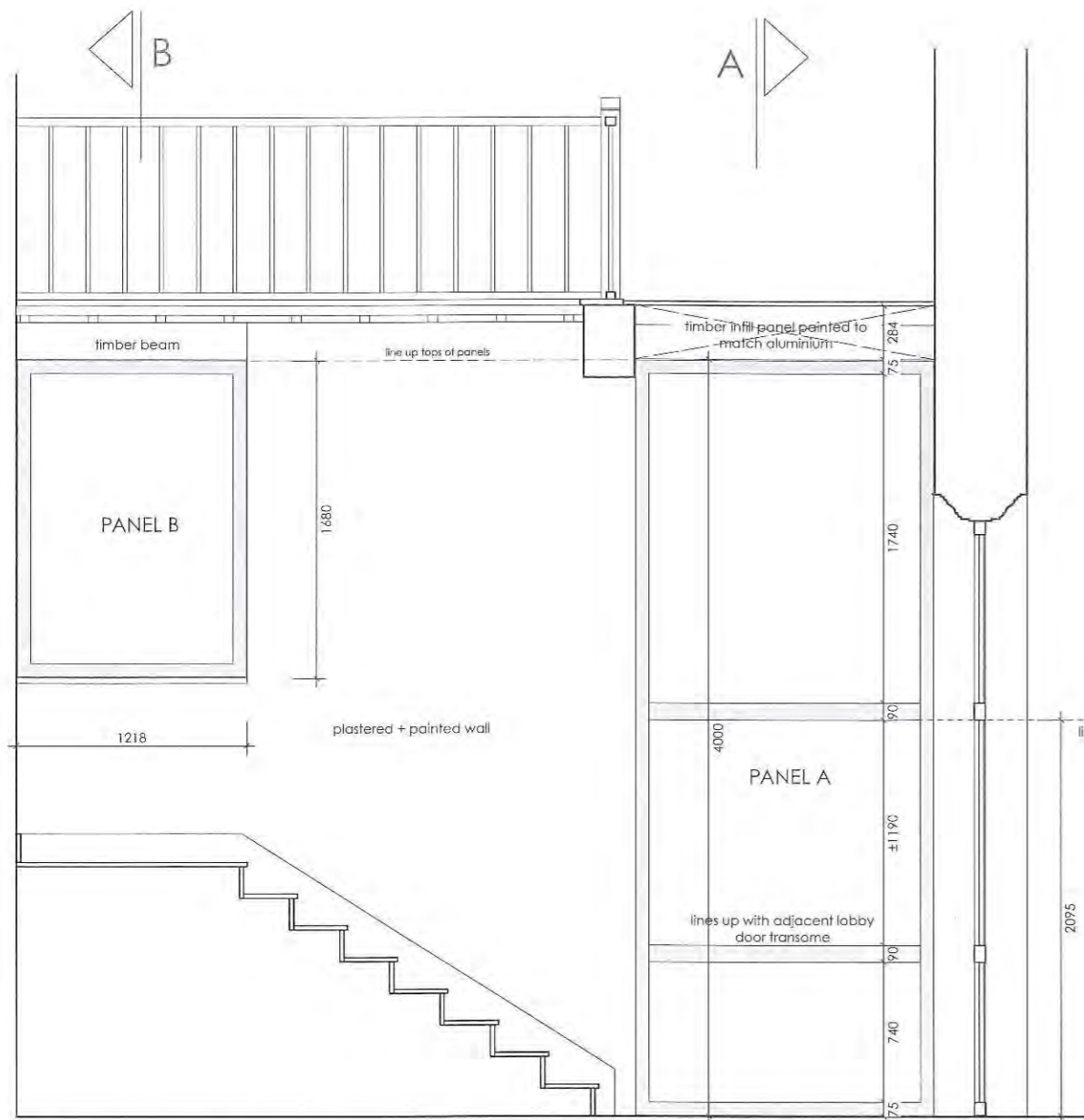




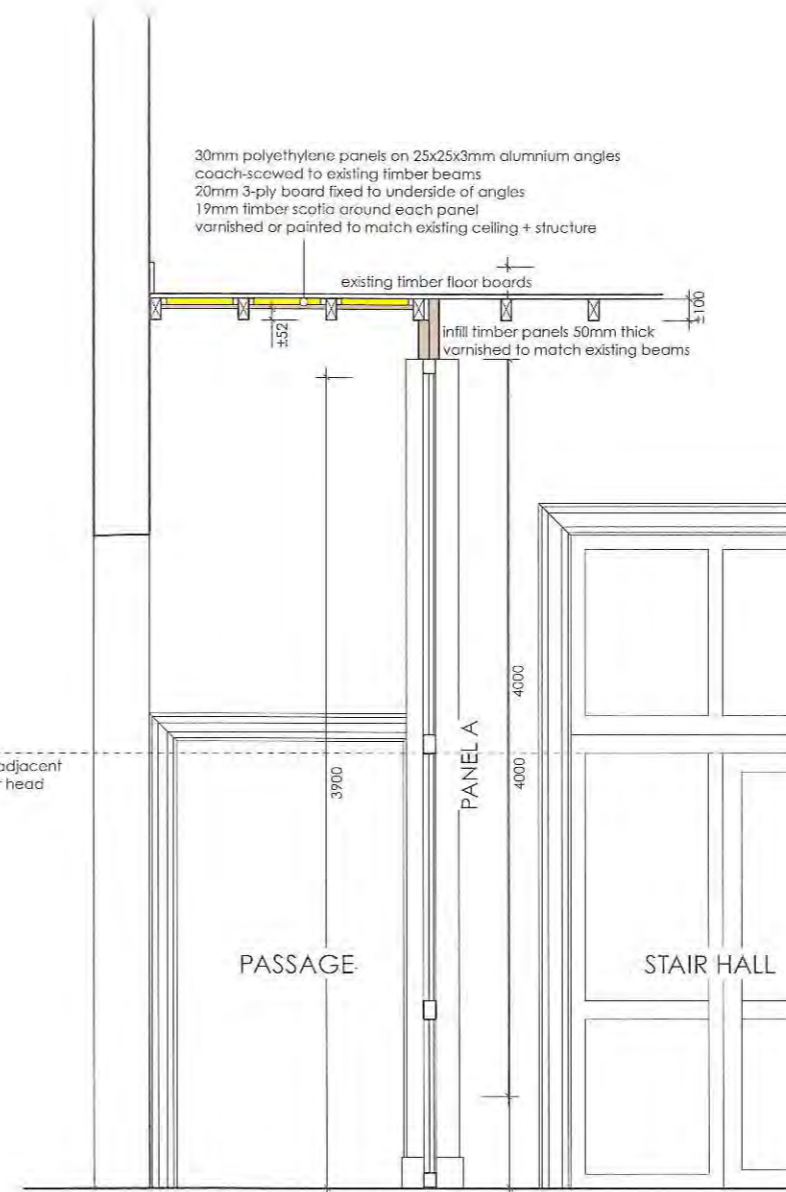
NETHERLANDS CONSULATE-GENERAL, CAPE TOWN
 SURVEY OF EXISTING FLOOR FINISHES GROUND FLOOR
 - LOUISE VAN RIET ARCHITECT + HERITAGE PRACTITIONER | 17 MAY 2017 -



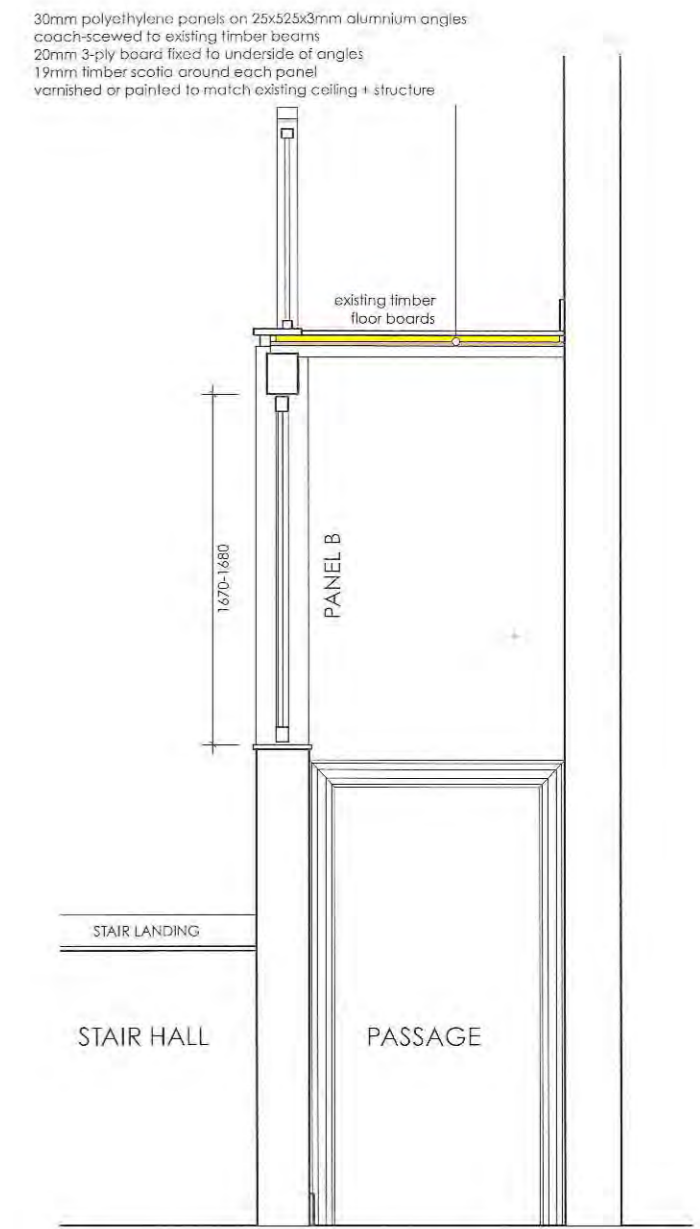
NETHERLANDS CONSULATE-GENERAL, CAPE TOWN
 SURVEY OF EXISTING CEILING FINISHES GROUND FLOOR
 - LOUISE VAN RIET ARCHITECT + HERITAGE PRACTITIONER | 17 MAY 2017 -



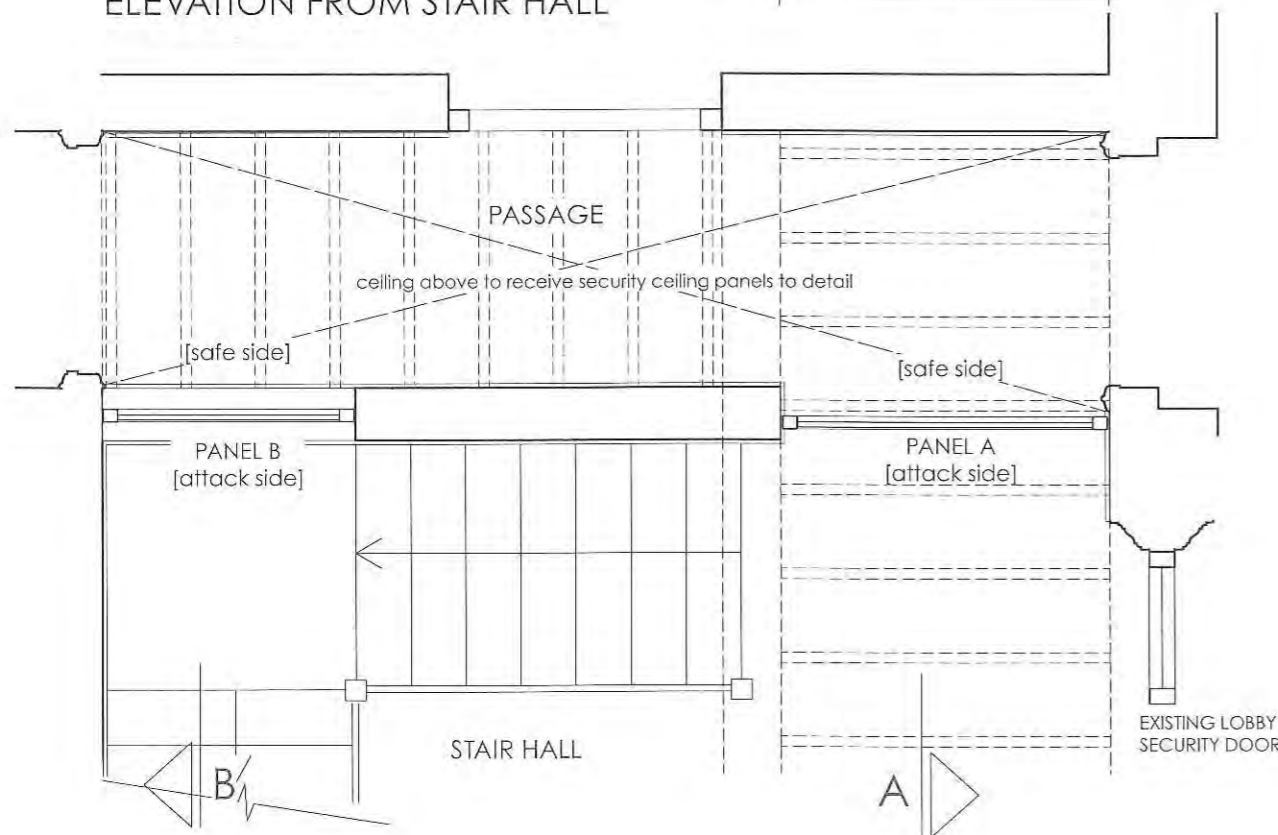
ELEVATION FROM STAIR HALL



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B



POWDER-COATED ALUMINIUM FRAMES [colour RAL8014] with 24mm LAMINATED GLASS

REV 1 | 27/07/17 | ISSUED FOR HERITAGE APPROVAL

NETHERLANDS CONSULATE GENERAL
SEXTON'S HOUSE | LUTHERAN CHURCH COMPLEX
cnr Strand + Buitenkant Streets, Cape Town

INTERNAL SECURITY SCREENS

dwg no- 1702_3-02
rev- 1
scale- 1:25
date- 27 JULY 2017

CIBRA City Bowl Ratepayers' & Residents' Association
Application No: _____
This plan seen & supported for: Heritage Town Planning
Date: 04 SEP 2017 Signed: *[Signature]*

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