

**Heritage Impact Assessment on  
Block M at the Kowloon Hospital at No. 147A Argyle Street, Mong Kok**

**BACKGROUND**

Block M (“the Block”), Kowloon Hospital (“the Hospital”) is located at 147A Argyle Street (please refer to Figure 1 for the location plan of the Block). It was accorded with a Grade 2 historic building status by the Antiquities Advisory Board in December 2009.

2. A change in use is envisaged for Block M for the adaptive reuse from storage and function rooms for staff wellness and amenities into offices and training centre for the Hospital Authority.

**STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

3. Kowloon Hospital was established in 1925 as the first public hospital in the Kowloon Peninsula. Block M is one of the early-built hospital blocks believed to have been built in 1932 as a maternity block. The development of the Hospital and the Block illustrated the population boom in the Kowloon Peninsula as well as the evolution of medical services in Hong Kong.

4. The Block is a two-storey building constructed on a gentle slope. It demonstrates features of Classical Revival with Arts and Crafts, as well as local influences. It has rendered and painted external walls and a dark Chinese tiled hipped and pitched roof with “cow’s horn” curling ends at ridge and corners. Its external appearance is similar to Blocks A, B and C at the Hospital.

5. Block M is built to a rectangular plan where both floors have identical layout. There is a central corridor. Wards are found on one side attached to the south-facing verandah, and on the north side are the delivery rooms, toilets, kitchens, service rooms etc. Some wards are equipped with cupboards containing wardrobe and wash basin.

6. Being the only government hospital in Kowloon in the early years, Kowloon Hospital played an important role in the provision of medical services to the local community. It remained significant as a tuberculosis and

convalescent hospital after conversion in the 1960s. Block M, being part of the Kowloon Hospital, and more importantly as a maternity block greeting the newly born, made it especially memorable for some individuals.

7. There are a total of ten graded historic buildings, including Block M, within the site of the Kowloon Hospital. The buildings together formed a historic complex of significant heritage values (please refer to Figure 2).

## **HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)**

8. The HIA on Block M, Kowloon Hospital was conducted in accordance with the HIA mechanism introduced by the Development Bureau vide Technical Circular (Works) No. 6/2009 to examine the impact of the proposed conversion works to the historic building concerned and to devise mitigation measures if adverse impact is unavoidable.

### **A. Conservation Guidelines to Conserve the Cultural Significance of Block M**

9. The recommended conservation principles for devising and implementing necessary mitigation measures to conserve the Block are as follows-

#### **a) Building Fabrics**

- (i) Authenticity of the Block and its architectural merits should be maintained with minimum intervention. The key character-defining elements (CDEs) identified should be preserved *in-situ* and restored as far as possible, such as:
  - External elements including the building form, fenestration, window, verandah, roof, and chimney.
  - Internal elements including the central corridor, grand staircase, door and fanlight, floor and wall finishes, furniture.
- (ii) Alteration to the identified original building fabrics should be allowed only if it is needed to suit the new use. It should be kept to the minimum, and must not impair the structural integrity of the building.
- (iii) New works should minimise physical damage to and visual impact on the heritage fabrics. New elements should be of

compatible design but distinguishable from the existing building fabrics, and also be reversible to avoid unnecessary damage to the Block.

b) **Building Services and Setting**

- (i) New systems should aim to upgrade the fire safety of the building, enhance the interior working environment of the future office space while reducing energy consumption.
- (ii) New outdoor air-conditioning units and fire service tanks should be positioned to minimise visual impact on the heritage fabrics.
- (iii) New pipes/ conduits/ trunkings should be grouped together when entering the building through existing wall openings to avoid making new openings on the peripheral structural walls.

c) **Documentation and Monitoring**

- (i) Cartographic and photographic surveys would be conducted. They should be available prior to the commencement of actual site works.
- (ii) Any renovation and maintenance works during the conversion and in future operation should follow the principles/ guidelines/ management plan laid down in the HIA report, be properly guided and supervised by conservation professionals, and documented for record.

d) **Interpretation**

- (i) Interpretation facilities and programmes should be established to facilitate understanding of the history of the Block.

**B. Key Design Proposal**

10. The key proposed works for conservation and adaptive reuse are listed as follows –

(a) **Restoration and adaptive reuse of Block M as office and training centre**

- (i) Block M will be restored and adaptively reused as office and training centre meeting the latest standards and requirements.
- (ii) Heritage building fabrics including external wall, verandah, window, roof, chimney, door etc. would be preserved.

- (iii) Original wall tiles and floor finishes such as timber floor and terrazzo would be preserved *in-situ*.
- (iv) The open yard at the east end would be restored by removing the existing polycarbonate cover (please refer to Figure 4).
- (v) Two partitioning walls of the original wards on the G/F, and three on the 1/F would be removed to suit the layout of future training rooms, and offices.
- (vi) Replacement of the existing asbestos contaminated false ceiling on the 1/F.

(b) Upgrading of fire safety provisions and building services systems

- (i) Two small portions of parapet walls of the verandah on the G/F would be removed to provide means of escape.
- (ii) A fire rated wall has to be installed on the G/F next to the grand staircase and at the landing of the grand staircase on the 1/F to provide fire compartmentation.
- (iii) Automatic sprinkler system would be introduced to improve the fire safety of the whole building.
- (iv) Window type air-conditioners would be replaced by centralized ceiling air-conditioning system. False ceiling would be installed on the G/F and 1/F to conceal the ducts. Louvres for fresh air and exhaust air would be installed on the facades.

**C. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works**

11. For areas where possible impact of the conversion works could not be avoided, the following mitigation measures are to be implemented based on the previously stated conservation guidelines:

(a) Adaptive reuse of Block M as office and training centre

- (i) The original delivery room on the G/F would be preserved including the original headroom, floor and wall finishes, electric lighting fixtures/ fans / heating devices, terrazzo counter top with sink etc. A cabinet found on the delivery room on the 1/F would be relocated here (please refer to Figure 4 & 8).
- (ii) One of the wards on the 1/F would be preserved including the original headroom, floor and wall finishes, and cupboards with basin and wardrobe (please refer to Figure 6 & 9).

- (iii) Structural survey would be carried out to investigate the condition of the existing structures before the commencement of works especially the removal of existing partitioning walls.
  - (iv) The original style of the false ceiling would be adopted for the new false ceiling on the 1/F.
  - (v) Interpretation display panels would be provided at the entrance porch, and other areas of the building.
- (b) Upgrading of fire safety provisions and building services systems
- (i) Red bricks from the demolished parapet walls would be salvaged for reuse.
  - (ii) Materials with high transparency such as fire rated glass blocks would be used to enhance the transparency of the new fire rated wall at 1/F landing, and allow natural lighting to reach the central corridor (please refer to Figure 11).
  - (iii) New fire service tanks would be located near Block N which is not a historical building, and at a distance from Block M (please refer to Figure 1).
  - (iv) Outdoor units of the new air-conditioning system would be grouped together and located at the open yard and east end of the Block enclosed by existing walls and new screening barrier (please refer to Figure 4).
  - (v) Level of the new false ceiling on the 1/F and G/F would be installed at a level higher than existing fanlights and windows (3.4m H). Treatment of the edge would try to inform the original high headroom of the corridor and rooms (please refer to Figure 8).
  - (vi) New louvres would be installed at the original location of window air-conditioning units to avoid making new openings on the walls (please refer to Figure 7).
12. Plans and illustrations showing the proposed works on Block M are at Figures 3 – 9.

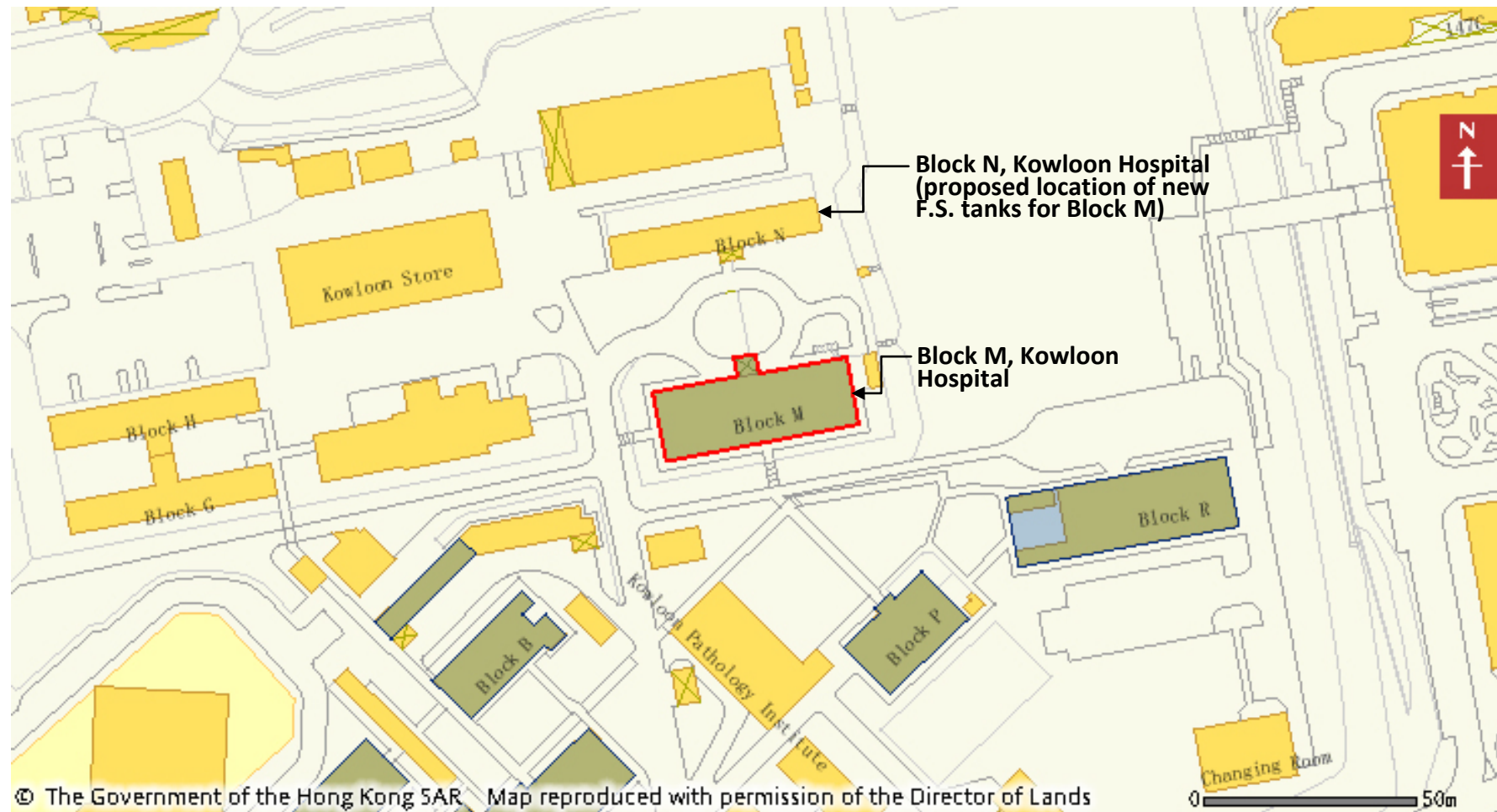
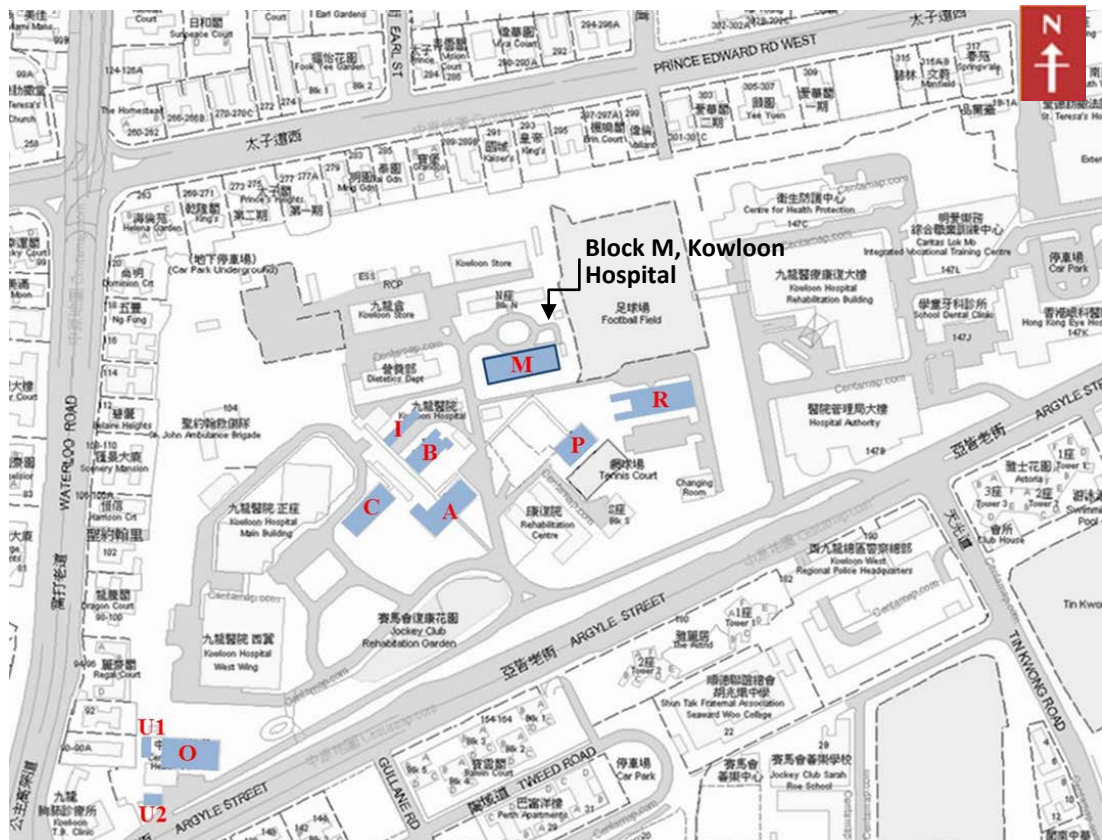


Figure 1 Location plan of Block M, Kowloon Hospital



Buildings	Completion Year	Grading (Accorded Year)	Index no.
Outpatient Block	1935	Grade 2 (2009)	O
Utility Building	1945	Grade 3 (2010)	U1
Utility Building	1945	Grade 3 (2010)	U2
Block A	1925	Grade 2 (2009)	A
Block B	1925	Grade 2 (2009)	B
Block C	1934	Grade 2 (2009)	C
<b>Block M</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>Grade 2 (2009)</b>	M
Block P	1934	Grade 2 (2009)	P
Block R	1934	Grade 2 (2009)	R
Isolation Block	1938	Grade 2 (2009)	I

Figure 2 Location plan of all graded blocks at Kowloon Hospital

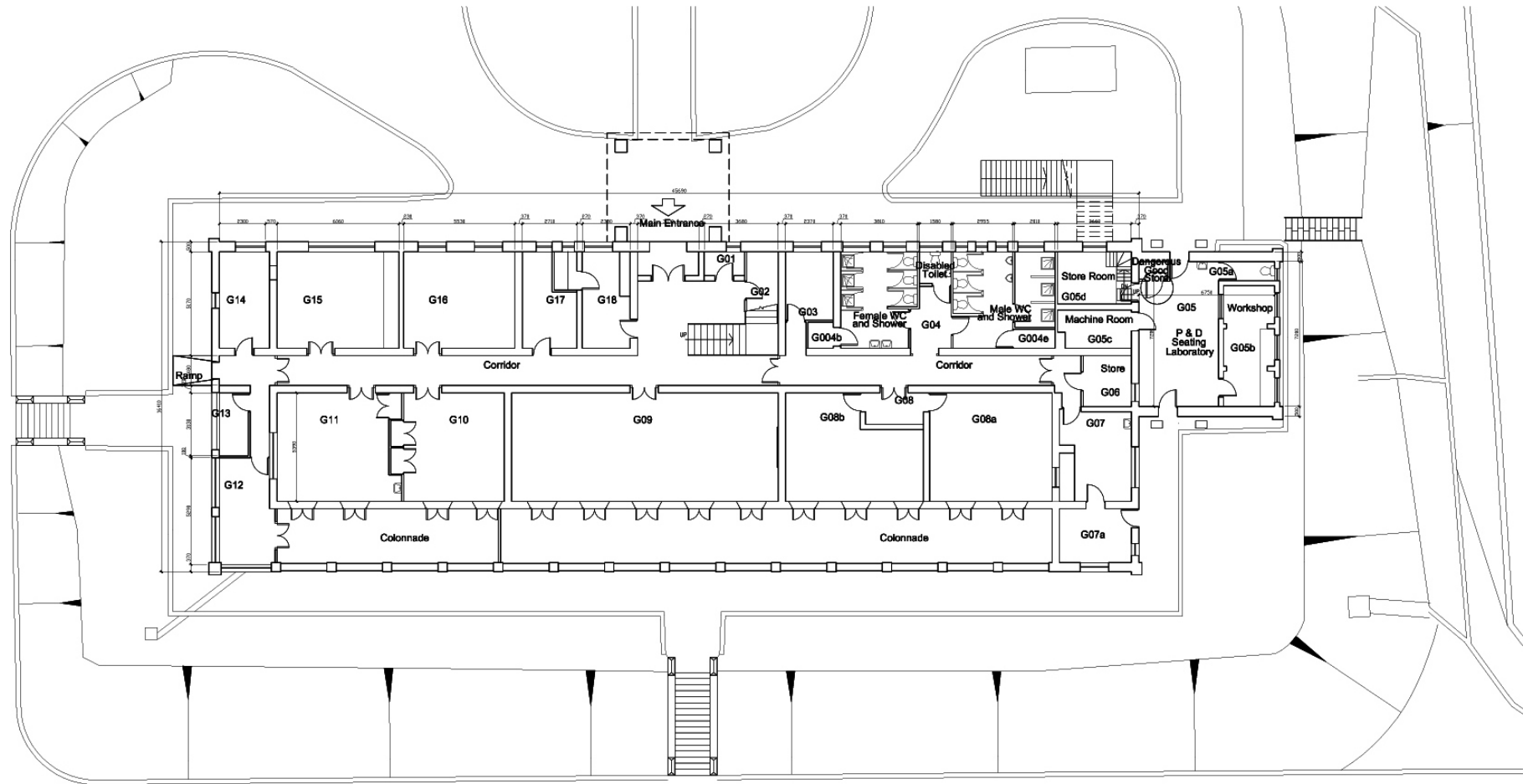


Figure 3 Existing layout plan of the G/F



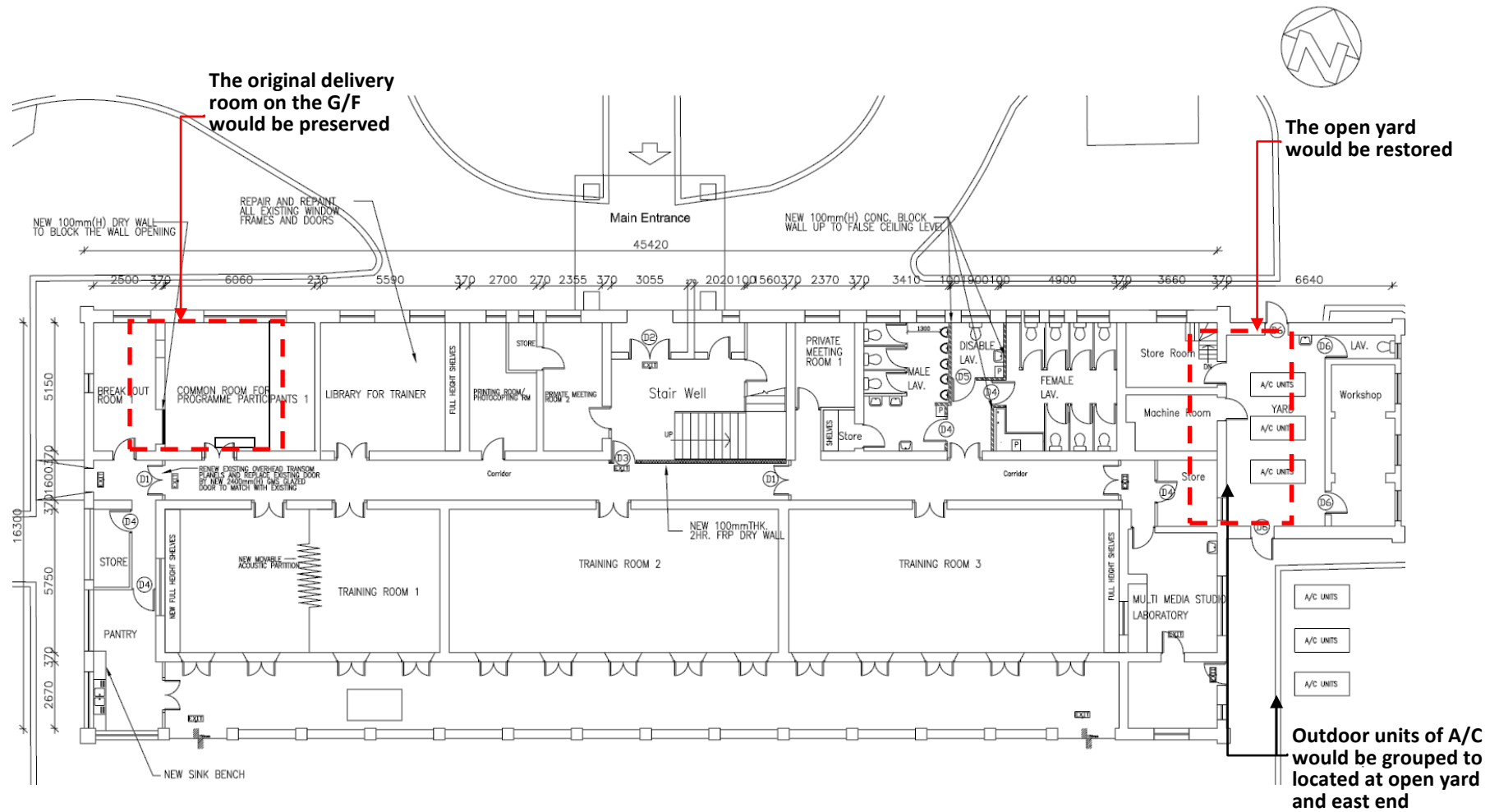


Figure 4 Proposed layout plan of the G/F

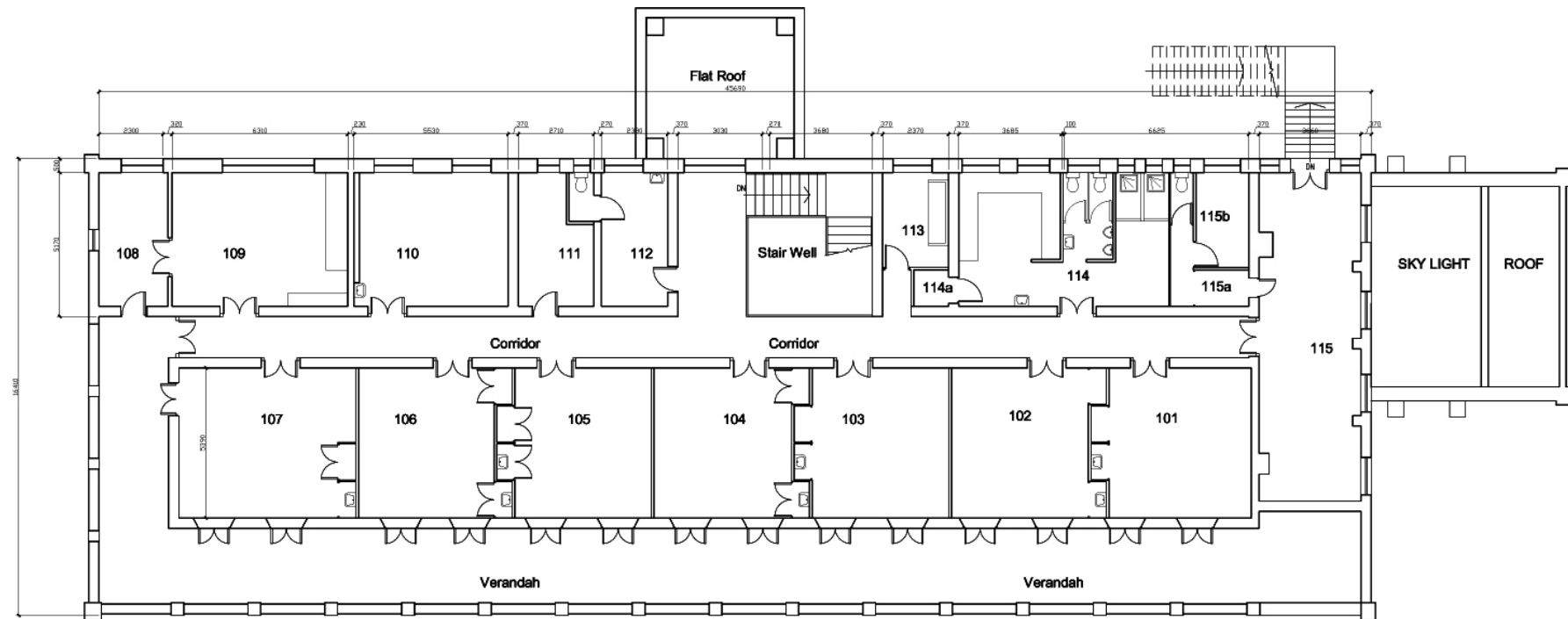


Figure 5 Existing layout plan of the 1/F

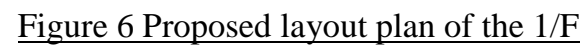


Figure 6 Proposed layout plan of the 1/F



Figure 7 Artist impression of the restored façade with new louvres  
for the new air-conditioning system



Figure 8 Artist impression of the preserved delivery room on the G/F



Figure 9 Artist impression of the preserved ward on the 1/F



Figure 10 Artist impression of one the training rooms on the G/F  
with the new false ceiling maintaining at 3.4m from the floor level





Figure 11 Artist impression of new fire rated glass block wall  
at the 1/F landing of the grand staircase