



# St Neots Public Stage

RIBA Stage 2 Report

January 2025

Rev.A

# Project Information

Project	St Neots Stage Market Square St Neots
Client	Huntingdon District Council  St Mary's St, Huntingdon PE29 3TN

# Consultant Team

Architects Project Director Associate Architect Architectural Assistant	AOC Architecture Tom Coward Hannah Stringer Sung Pai
Theatre Consultant Consultant	Stage Right Ryan Funnell
Quantity Surveyors & Project Manager	MEA Mike O'Hanlon David Tiley
Structural Engineers Director Structural Engineer	Simple Works Phil Isaac Tim Izatt
Project Contact	Tom Coward Director tom.coward@theaoc.co.uk 020 7739 9950  38-50 Pritchards Road London E2 9AP  www.theaoc.co.uk



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# Introduction

In April 2024 AOC were appointed Lead Designer to develop a public Stage for St Neots from RIBA Stage 0 through to completion of Stage 2.

This report forms the RIBA Stage 2 Report by AOC Architecture and is supported by the appendices A1-A5.

This report captures the Stage 2 design process and the outputs of the Stage 1 process.

It includes design input from the full design team and supporting technical reports. It is intended to capture a concept design developed in response to an evolving brief that meets the needs of and reflects on the findings from the ongoing stakeholder engagement.



Existing site photo

# **1.**

## **Brief**



# Initial Project Brief

## Methodology and Scope

Huntingdonshire District Council's Market Towns Programme (MTP) is an ambitious programme of economic-led interventions to support Huntingdonshire's town centres to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, while also looking forward to renewing and reshaping our town centres and high streets for the future in a way that promotes growth, improves experiences, and ensures sustainability.

The MTP is underpinned by creating a renewed sense of place, igniting civic pride and providing attractive new destinations for our residents and businesses alike. The longer-term ambition is to stimulate public and private sector investment, bringing forward future opportunities for jobs and skills. HDC has secured funding, from a range of sources, for an ambitious investment in St Neots town centre, specifically targeted at the High Street and Market Square.

The improvements to the Market Square will redevelop the former car park to create an attractive and versatile public realm space by introducing new landscaping and improved facilities for the market and other events. We will also be introducing seating areas to encourage more people to come and stay for longer and improving the pedestrian and cycling experience throughout the town centre. Disabled parking spaces will be provided on the southern side of the square. Works will begin on-site in early November 2023. The project should be complete by January 2025.

St Neots Town Council and others host many events throughout the year at the market square. Therefore, having a permanent stage will give existing cultural events more prominence and encourage additional use of the square as an event space. Design and construction of a permanent stage sits outside the scope of the main project and is to be delivered separate to but concurrent with

the construction phase of the Market Square project.

The successful bidder is required to complete a Stages 0 – 2 of the RIBA Plan of Work for a 7x6m raised and covered performance stage on the Market Square in St Neots including a cost estimate for the remainder of the design and build. The successful bidder is expected to engage with stakeholders identified by HDC to understand the requirements for the stage and determine design priorities, before producing three concepts to allow HDC to select the most suitable design route to proceed with. On conclusion of the preliminary design, the successful bidder will provide a cost estimate for the subsequent stages of design and build.

*Extract from the Invitation to Tender for the Refurbishment of the Priory Centre, March 2023.*

# Summary of Brief

**1. Raised platform** measuring 6x7m (2 feet high is proposed, height in feet so it can be extended with Metrodeck portable staging for larger events)

**2. Canopy** to protect against rain & sun (permanent or demountable)

**3. Disabled Access** requirements

**4. Protection from falling** requirements

**5. Power Supply** for AV / Lighting

**6. AV Requirements:**

- All Weather PA System
- Plug & Play for use by none technical people (in secure lockable cupboard)
- Distributed speaker array through out Market Square (wiring inc. in Market Square specification)
- Build-it stage lighting
- Truss or similar to support more substantial PA / Lighting System for larger events

**7. Secure storage** for:

- 50 no. folding chairs
- Amps and Equipment

**8. Design out ASB** (Climbing of structure, skateboarding etc)

**9. Materiality**

- High Quality materials to be used, consider matching material pallet to the Day Column in the Market Square

# Schedule of Services

The design team is comprised of specialist consultants with the required design and project management expertise for the project.

The scope of services covers RIBA Stages 0-2 as detailed on page: 9

- Stage 0: Strategic Definition
- Stage 1: Preparation and Briefing
- Stage 2: Concept Design

We anticipate that following surveys will be required and are to be procured by the design team as part of the works:

- Topographic Survey (Completed)
- Utilities Search (Completed)
- Soil Investigation
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Traffic Assessment / Travel Plan
- Ecology Survey
- Drainage CCTV Survey
- Intrusive opening up surveys

## Design Team Summary

### AOC

Architect and Lead Consultant  
Project Management

### MEA

Quantity Surveyor  
Project and Cost Management

### Simple Works

Engineering Consultancy  
Structural Engineer

### Stage Right Theatre Consultants

Theatre Consultancy  
Technical theatre design  
Specialist AV

### RIBA stage 0 Strategic Definition

From our appointment we will work to survey and analyse the site and undertake initial option studies and priorities. This will be an opportunity for our team to engage with the site, the client team, community, key stakeholders and other consultants. We will:

- Collate and review all relevant information.
- Undertake site appraisals, developing existing information on the market square
- Develop the stakeholder directory and agree engagement plan.
- Lead and facilitate the Co-design Workshop 1, exploring challenges and benefits of the stage, and review findings with the client stakeholder group
- Lead and facilitate 1:1 interviews with key stakeholders (max. 5) for example representatives of Huntingdonshire District Council and St Neots Town Council.
- Develop a business case for feasible options including project risks and project budget
- Strategic appraisal of planning consideration
- End of stage will confirm the client requirements - the project brief

### RIBA Stage 1 Preparation & Brief

From our appointment we will work to survey and analyse the site and undertake initial option studies and priorities. This will be an opportunity for our team to engage with the site, the client team, community, key stakeholders and other consultants. We will:

- Lead and facilitate a client priorities workshop; including consideration of the performance requirements for audience, AV and lighting requirements; and in determining sustainability aspirations of project stakeholders
- Lead and facilitate the Co-design Workshop 2, exploring the proposed new stage
- Prepare Stage 1 Project Brief and Design Options.
- Undertake Stage 1 Cost Benchmarking.
- Commence the Energy strategy and benchmarking
- Establish contact where possible with Huntingdonshire District Council planning officer and review the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and market square proposals
- Gain client approval of Project Brief and preferred design options.

### RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design

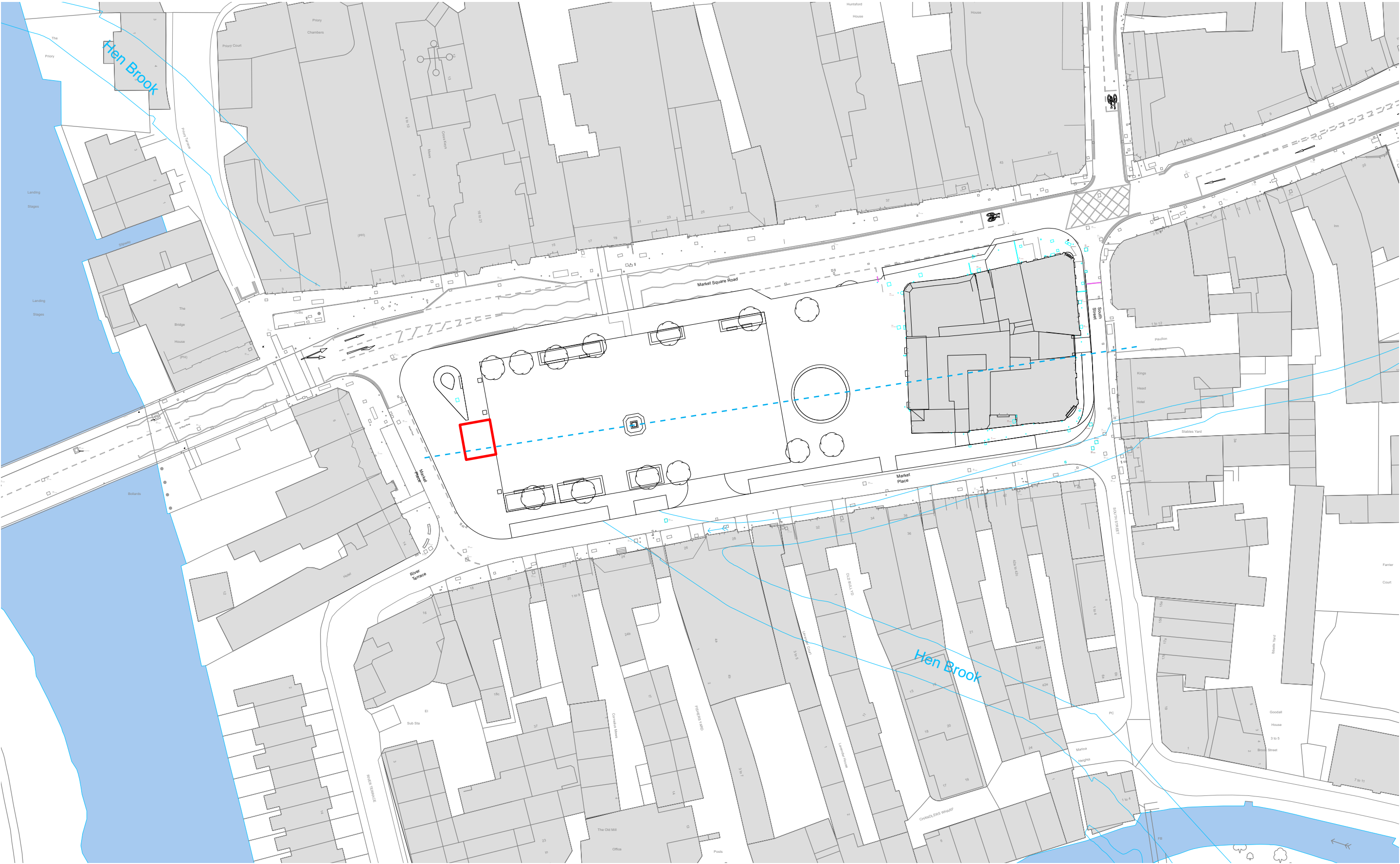
We will develop our Stage 2 Concept Design with an engagement process:

- Co-ordinate and provide a Stage 2 Concept Design
- Lead and facilitate the Co-design Workshop 3, exploring material look and feel
- Develop a Stage 2 Cost Plan and Risk Review to establish a realistic capital costs budget.
- Prepare and submit a planning pre-app, as necessary, to Huntingdonshire District Council
- we will present to the Project Board and allow a one week period for feedback and minor amendments.
- CDM Health & Safety Review including designer risk assessment and access and maintenance plan • Undertake Building Regulation Review and prepare outline specification
- Develop the social value plan
- The stage will conclude with a confirmation of project concept design.

**2.**  
**Site**







# Proposed Plan Overview

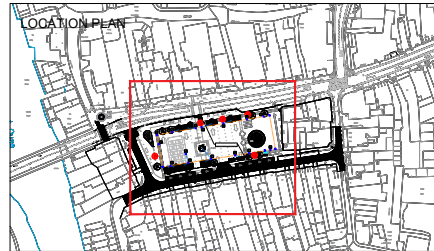


# Market Square Works

## Electrical provision













### HEALTH AND SAFETY SYMBOLS LEGEND

-  INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK REQUIRING A COMPULSORY ACTION
-  INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK FOR INFORMATION
-  INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK REQUIRING A PROHIBITIVE ACTION
-  INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK AS A WARNING



- Notes
- Do not scale this drawing.
  - All dimensions are in metres unless otherwise stated.
  - This drawing should be printed in colour.
  - This drawing is based on OS map as supplied by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and topographical survey.
  - This drawing shall be read in conjunction with all relevant scheme drawings and documents.
  - This drawing shall be read in conjunction with electrical drawings.
  - 70095787-WSP-SN-DR-EE-1411 to 1420 & T446 Design Risk Management Schedule.
  - PP09 is proposed to contain a water supply and the location on this plan is indicative. For the exact location please refer to landscape drawing: 70089650-WSP-SN-DR-LS-3011

### Legend

Sym.	Qty.	Description
	4	Type A - GIFAS PIAZZA 800 c-safe with 3 x 16A sockets
	6	Type Ai - GIFAS PIAZZA 800 c-safe with 3 x 16A sockets and audio interface
	1	Type Aii - GIFAS PIAZZA 800 c-safe with 3 x 16A sockets and water supply
	1	Type B - GIFAS PICCOLINO 200 with 1 x 32A socket
	1	Type C - GIFAS PICCOLINO 200 with 1 x 16A socket
	1	Type D - GIFAS PIAZZA 800 c-safe with 2 x 16A sockets
	1	Type E - GIFAS PIAZZA 800 c-safe with 1 x 32A & 4 x 16A sockets
	1	Proposed Three Phase GRP Feeder Pillar
	4	Proposed 1000mm x 1000mm D400 NAL Stakkabox Duct Chamber
		6 x 100mmØ Twin Wall UPVC Orange Duct
		1 x 50mmØ Twin Wall UPVC Orange Duct
		Existing Lighting Column 2m TT Earth Exclusion Zone

Please refer to drawing 70095787-WSP-SN-DR-LS-3001 landscape general arrangement for detail of market square.

C01	25/10/2023	AA	FOR CONSTRUCTION	LM	DS
REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP



The Mailbox, Level 2, 100 Wharfedale Street, Birmingham, B1 1RT, UK  
T+44 (0) 121 352 4700, F+44 (0) 121 352 4701  
wsp.com

CLIENT: Cambridgeshire County Council

PROJECT: St Neots Future High Street Fund  
Detailed Design

TITLE: Market Square  
Electrical General Arrangement  
Sheet 1 of 1

MODEL No: 70095787-WSP-SN-DR-EE-1401 REV: C01

MODEL STATUS: A - FIT FOR CONSTRUCTION

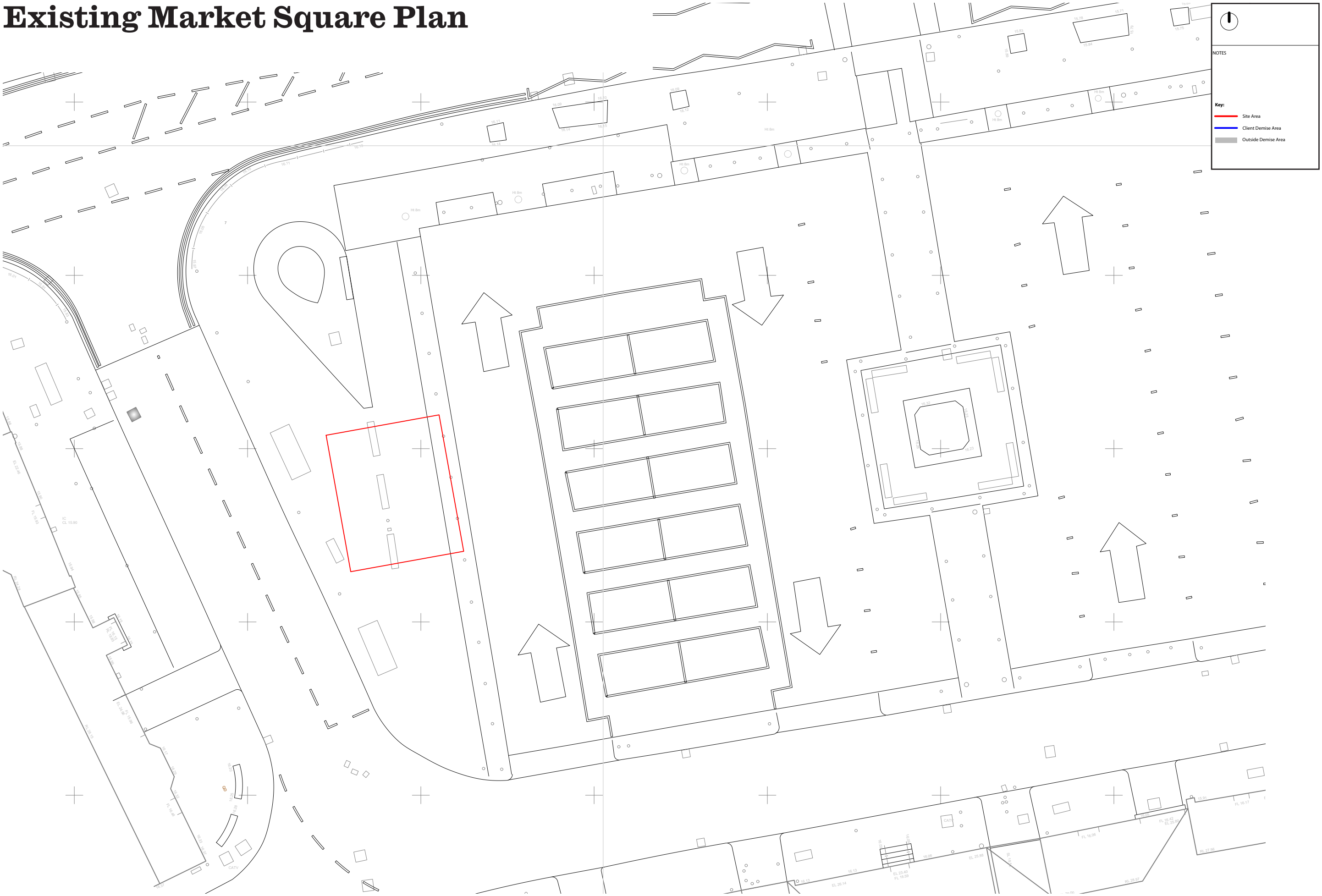
DESIGNED: AA	DRAWN: AA	CHECKED: LM	APPROVED: DS
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DATE: October 23	PROJECT No: 70095787
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© WSP UK Ltd

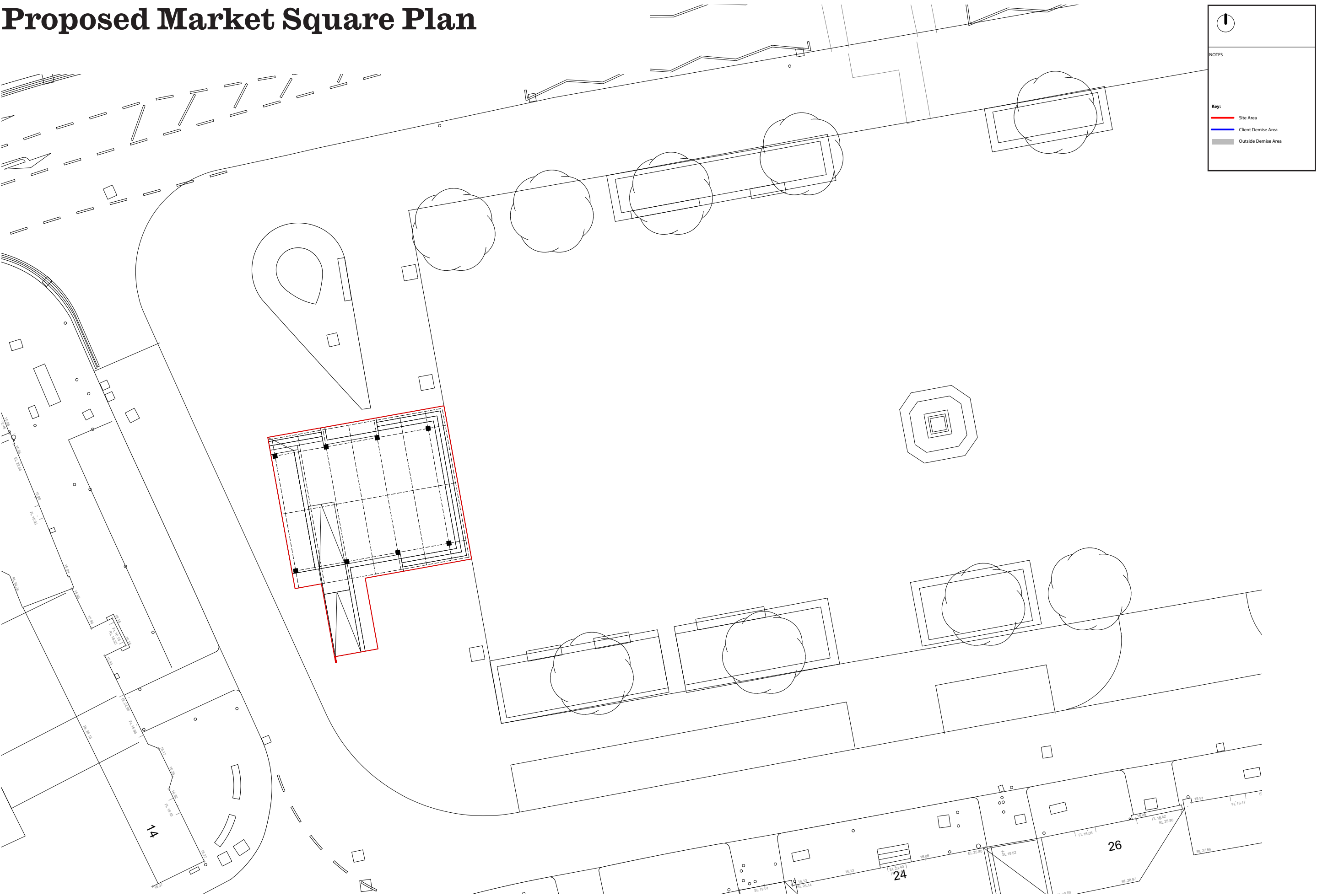


# Existing Market Square Plan

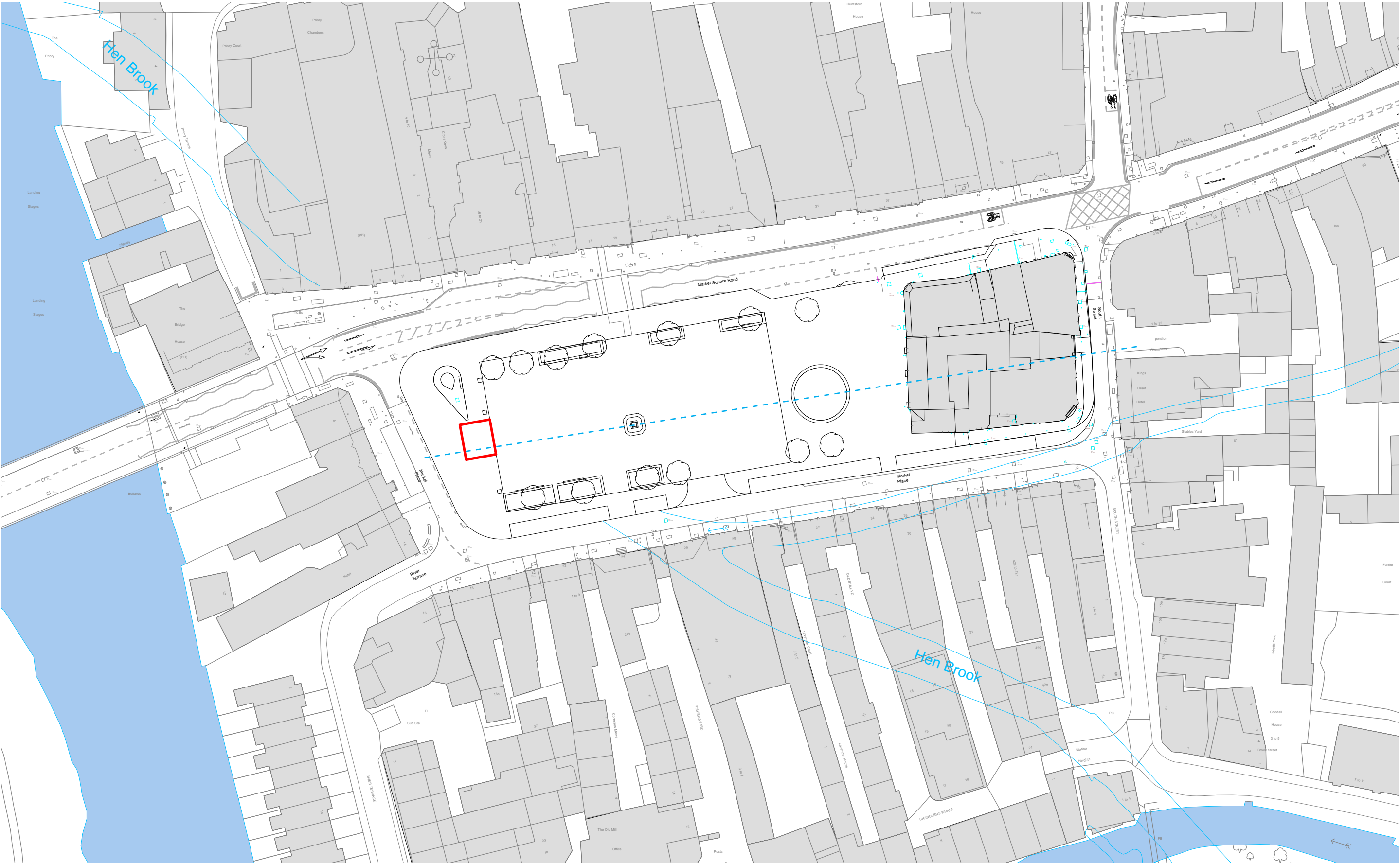




# Proposed Market Square Plan



# Proposed Plan Overview



# **3. Consultation**



# Public Consultation

## Stage 1: July 2024





# Public Consultation

## Stage 1: July 2024

Public Engagement was undertaken on 27.07.24 at a Saturday morning market in the Market Square. Attendance was from 10.00 till 13.15. The market closed at 1300. Attendance was constant and steady, and dwell time was good with a high level of engagement.

The majority of voices were positive about the proposal, and generally, although a number of people did want to come up and complain around the market square proposals - bus management, the extent of pedestrianisation and the time taken for the works.

Approximately 25 consultees provided feedback. Each consultee spent approximately 7 minutes providing feedback. Approximate number of visitors who engaged was 50. People were invited to add stickers. Most comments were written and added by the facilitator.

The Presentation boards asked a number of questions, with opportunities for making choices and adding further detail.

The following pages 15 to 22 document the boards presented and a summary of the feedback received in the grey text boxes:

Would you like to see a performance space in the square?

Yes 23

No 1

One comment was made to explain the no vote;

*“keep things mobile and flexible. Temporary staging in the square should be flexible -invest in a portable stage that can also set up in Riverside Park”.*

Another comment was from frequent visitors to the area:

*“As visitors it is great to have things going on in the square - keeps us coming back”*

## What’s happening in the Market Square?



Up coming changes to the Market Square - Image by WSP

### Works to the Market Square

Work has started on the Market Square to pedestrianise the space and introduce improved landscaping and planting.

### The future of the Market Square

Huntingdonshire District Council wish to improve the amenities of the square with the provision of a stage to support live events in St Neots.

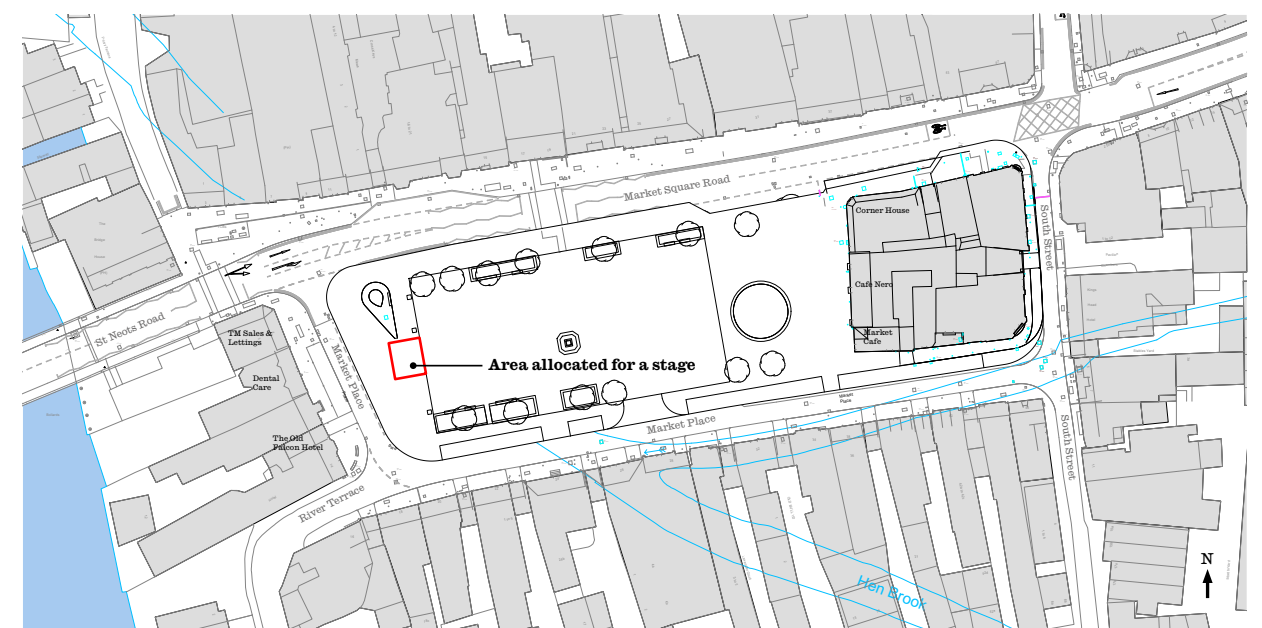
Area already allocated for a stage

Would you like to see a performance space in the square?

Put your sticker in one box

Yes, I would love a stage

No, I would prefer something else



AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

Plan of St Neots Market Square 0 10 20 30m

# You are already having fantastic events

Live events are a regular feature in the Market Square, ranging from live music and theatre to seasonal events such as the annual turning on of the Christmas Lights.

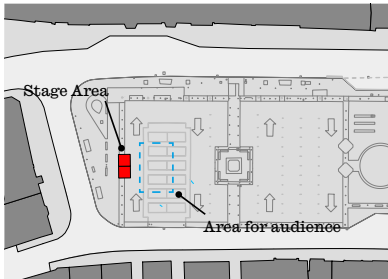
Music at the weekly Farm & Craft Market



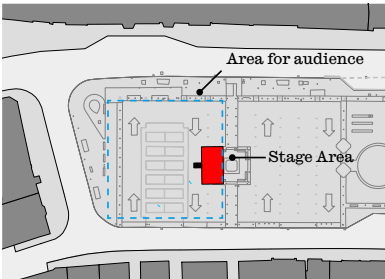
Passion of the Christ Performance



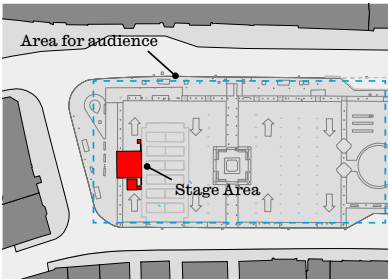
Christmas Tree Lights



Two gazebo's used as a stage



Temporary Stage - Open air



Temporary Stage and lighting

## How can we make hosting events easy?

A stage can take many forms, from simple markings on the floor, a temporary stage erected for specific events or a permanent structure available year round.



### 1. Provide Busking Pitches

**Positive:**

- Clearly defines a space for performance
- Allows Flexible use of the space

**Negative:**

- No weather protection
- Small Audience Capacity & limited view of the performance area



### 2. Infrastructure for temporary events

**Positive:**

- Flexible to needs of event & location
- Good weather protection

**Negative:**

- Needs to be hired in for each event
- Increased set up time and cost per event



### 3. Provide a permanent Structure

**Positive:**

- Reduces set up time and cost per event
- Good weather protection

**Negative:**

- Reduces flexibility of square when not in use.
- May become a space for loitering & anti-social behaviour

## How can we make hosting events easier?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Provide busking pitches             | 0 |
| 2. Infrastructure for temporary events | 1 |
| 3. Provide a permanent Structure       | 3 |

Broader conversations looked at the history of different sized events in the square  
*“Small enough to not be imposing - big enough for bigger events”*

Two residents who perform asked for a space equivalent to the area shown with standing space for 20-30 performers or a band.  
*“make it medium sized supporting flexible growth for big events”.*

With a pick’n’mix of stage parts different people saw the benefit of  
a raised stage (2),  
a back wall (2)  
a roof for protection from the weather (3).

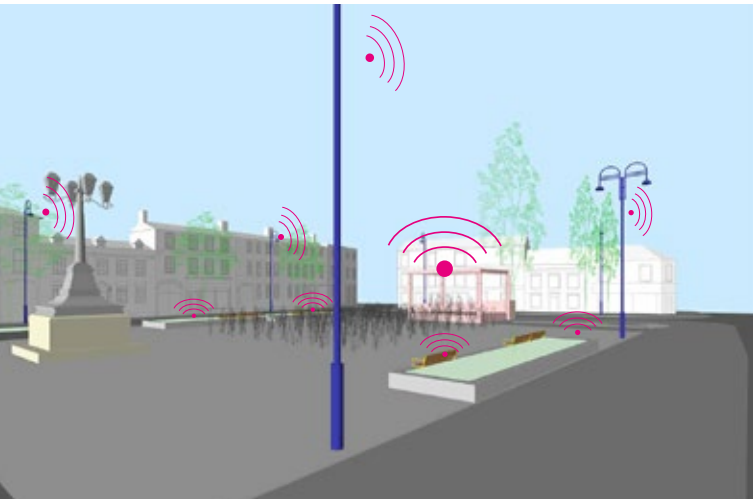
Less people saw the benefit in all parts - worried about impact:  
*“A back wall is good for acoustics - it doesn’t need to be too high”.*



# Music in the Square



A stage would form part of the identify of the square, creating a focal point at its western end



View across square from north east

## Plug in and play

Some events will wish to use audio equipment to amplify their performance.

Amplification could be provided by permanent infrastructure in the square or bought in for events as and when required.

A permanent audio system would provide quick and easy set up.

A temporary audio system allows greater flexibility, tailored to specific events.

## Would you like to see permanent Audio Equipment in the square?

Yes, I like the idea of plug and play = 6  
No, it can be hired in when needed = 6

Many people wanted to check that events would be planned and well managed;  
*“Acoustics need to be managed for residents and businesses”*

People against the plug and play were concerned it would take too much of the budget, fail too quickly or potentially become outdated.

Others asked us to invest;  
*“It is only worth doing if we get a good sound system that works at all the frequencies for singers and music”*

## Would you like to see permanent Audio Equipment in the square?

Yes, I like the idea of plug in and play


No, it can be hired in when needed

Put your sticker in one box

# Setting the Stage

A Pick n Mix Kit of Parts


A stage can be formed using one or more of the elements below, a floor, a wall, a roof or a combination of these elements.



**Raised stage**

- Ramped access
- Increased audience visibility


**+**



**Wall**

- Back drop to performance

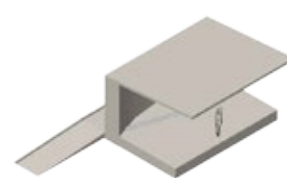
**+**



**Roof**

- Protection from weather

**=**

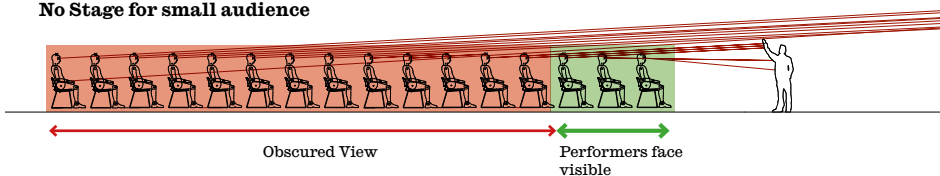


**Floor, wall & roof**

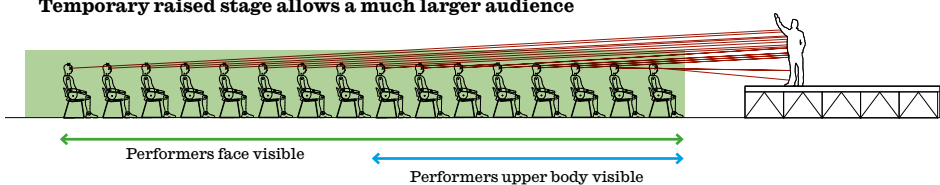
- Ramped access
- Increased audience visibility
- Back drop to performance
- Protection from weather

## Sight Lines & Visibility

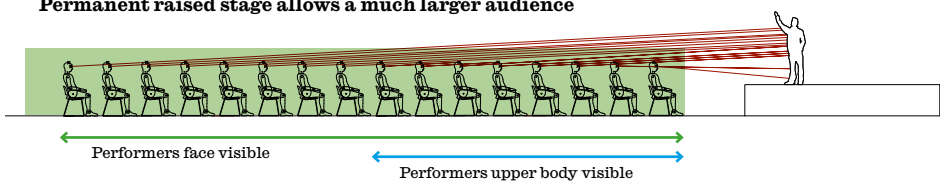
No Stage for small audience



Temporary raised stage allows a much larger audience



Permanent raised stage allows a much larger audience



### The Height of a Stage

A raised stage increases the number of people who can see the stage clearly

A permanent raised stage would provide better views & easy set up for live events.

A flat stage is more flexible for a variety of uses.

Would you like to see a permanent raised stage in the square?

Yes, I would love a stage permanent stage

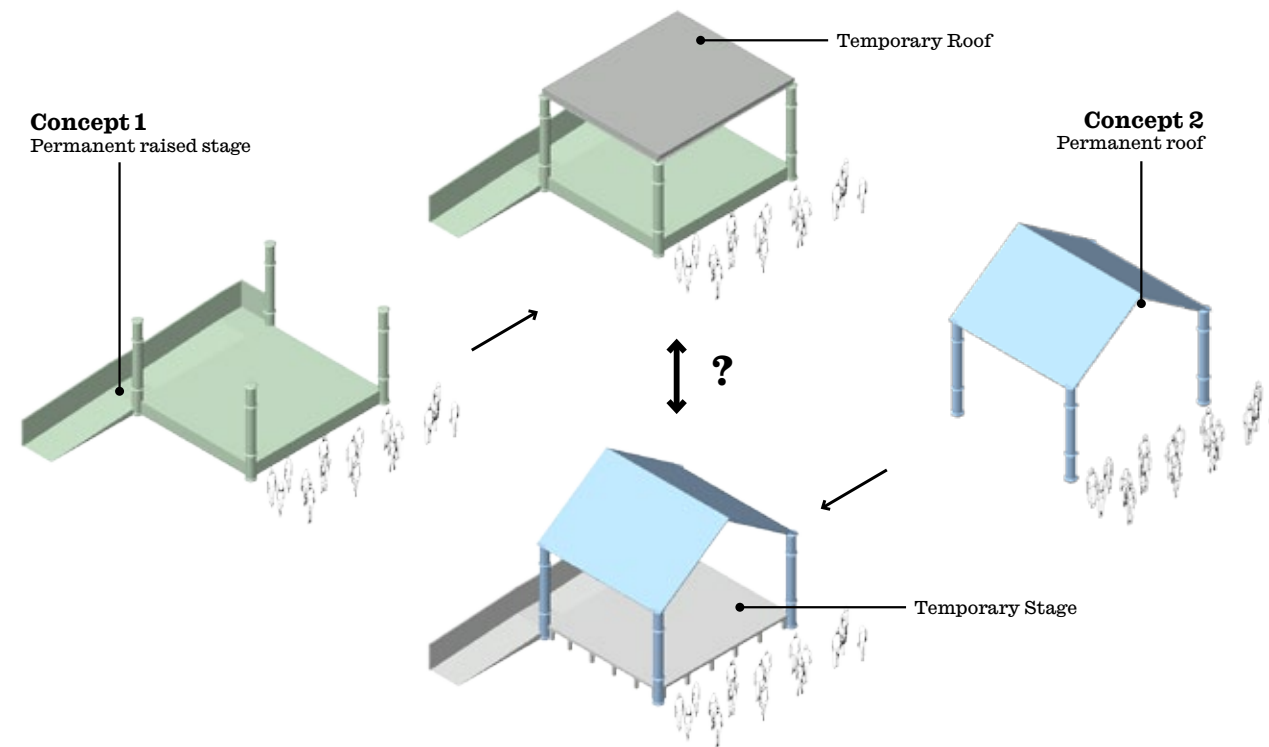
No, it can be hired in when needed

Put your sticker in one box

Would you like to see a permanent raised stage in the square?

Yes, I would love a permanent stage = 4  
No, it can be hired in = 0

# Concept Design



## Concept 1

Permanent raised stage with temporary roof

### Positive:

- Clearly defines a space for performance
- Quick set up time when roof cover is not required

### Negative:

- Additional set up time when using roof cover

## Concept 2

Permanent roof with temporary stage

### Positive:

- Clearly defines a space for performance
- Quick set up time when stage is not required

### Negative:

- Reduced audience visibility when not using temporary stage

Do you prefer Concept 1 & Concept 2?

Concept 1, I think a permanent stage and temporary roof is the best idea

Concept 2, I think a permanent roof and temporary stage is the best idea

Put your sticker in one box

## Do you prefer concept 1 or concept 2?

Concept 1,

I think a permanent stage and temporary roof is the best idea = 3

Concept 2,

I think a permanent roof and temporary stage is the best idea = 8

A number of consultees wanted to see the designs develop at a later design review.



# Material & Sustainability

## Accessing Sustainability

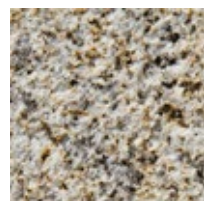
The sustainability of a material is often accessed by it's 'embodied carbon' - this is the amount of carbon produced in the manufacturing or extraction of that material.

But other factors should be considered such as a materials 'whole life' carbon. Whole life carbon is measurement of the amount of energy used in the production, use and demolition of a product or material.

So when considering environmental impacts it is important to look at the expected life span, reusability and impact of transport and shipping.



Day Column - Stone & Cast Iron



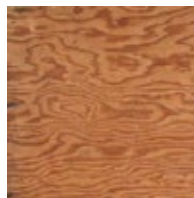
Stone



Concrete



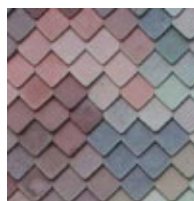
Brick



Timber



Solar Panels



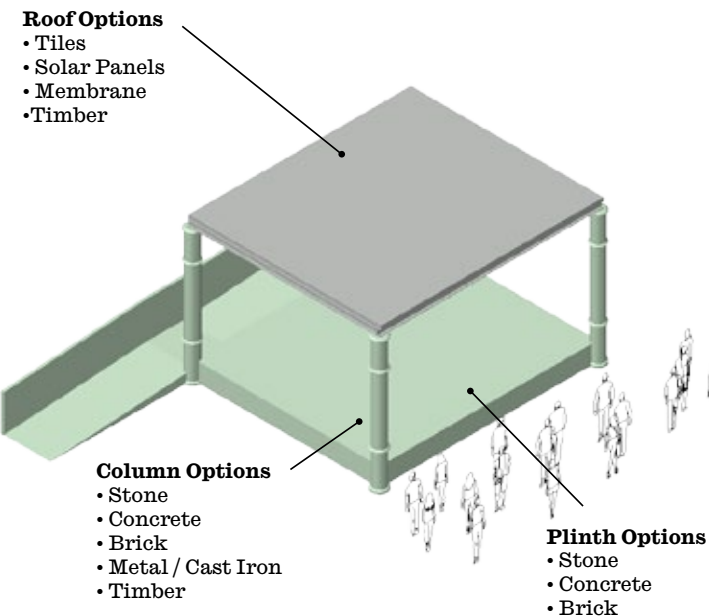
Tiles



Cast Iron



Membrane



Would materials should we use?  
Draw your stage on a post-it a place it below

Put your post -it notes here

## Material & Sustainability

Much of the conversation was here around long lasting robust materials and things that would last and resist abuse.

*"The stage should marry in with the day column"*

*"Use stone or concrete & long lasting materials"*

*"Use reclaimed materials"*

Many people referred to wood as a good idea, but not appropriate PV panels were divisive - most worried they would fit in

Stone / concrete = 5

brick = 0

timber = 0

PV = 3 *"get those new ones that look like tiles"*

tiles = 2 *"look around, there are lots of tiles"*

cast iron = 1

membrane = 0

In reference to the cast iron image (multicoloured) one comment said *"it doesn't need colour - it should have a timeless quality - background to the performances on stage."*

One consultee referenced Bedford Park bandstand - it was octagonal - and managed a stage with height and access. There was a conversation that the stage didn't need to be square - semi circular? that the shape might help integrate planting or an access ramp.

There was useful discussion around managing the risks of providing a stage - the stage as something to fall off when not in use. A roof as something to climb on or congregate under

*"it would be nice to have a band stand - metal is good - they have railings"*

*"Bring in staging when it is required - this will help manage the H&S concern"*

*"Provide a retractable wall and roof - keep it feeling open"*

There was 1 request for a permanent Christmas tree



# Material & Form

Look & Feel

## Materials Options

Material choices impact many aspects of the design from how it looks, the environmental impact and how long it will last. Materials can be used in lots of different ways. Traditional materials can be used in a modern way and vice versa.

Do you want the structure to feel light and minimal or robust and grounded?



Serpentine Pavilion 2009 by SANAA



Dalston Curve Garden by Muf Architecture/Art



Butter cross - Chippingham



Thin flat roof



Open gable roof



Hipped roof

What style of roof do you prefer?

Flat roof

Open gable roof

Hipped roof

Put your sticker in one box

## Material & Form

The discussion on this topic was the most diverse and dynamic. Resources included reference images showing modern to traditional buildings. There was also a range from flat to open gabled to a hipped roof

- Serpentine pavilion = 3
- Dalston Curve = 3
- Butter cross = 7
- Thin flat roof = 0
- Open gable roof = 1
- Hipped roof = 0

What style of roof do you prefer?

- Flat Roof = 0
- Open gable roof = 5
- Hipped roof = 7

The flat roof got an additional comments  
*“flat roofs cause drumming in the rain”*  
*“flatroofs are easier to climb on - people climb on the bus stops!”*

There is overlap in the resources, but consultees reacted differently and personally to different images. One comment around the serpentine image was how well it worked to support all round flow through - more modern is more transparent *“if its more open it will be less misused”*.

One comment liked the hipped roof - wanting something more modern-ish, they wanted a take on the hipped roof - something that fits in.

Others put the challenge to the design team - *“that it looks good - that’s important! - I don’t mind if it looks old or modern - I don’t mind if it needs to be modern to look good”*

There was healthy but largely inconclusive conversation around the impact of the stage in blocking views through to the old Falcon - mixed views and level of concern. Many citing the current poor quality of the old falcon as a reason to conceal it - but hopeful for a future with it brought back into use.

There was more clear sentiment that the stage should feel like something and have a civic presence beyond its functional use as a stage - this seems to correlate with the positive response to the open gable and hipped roof. The history of a multi use buttercross resonated with a number of consultees.

# What have we learnt?

Lessons learnt from the Stage 1 consultation:

- strong desire for a stage
- moderately sized that can grow for bigger events
- sound system across the square
- roof and plinth preferred - but manage antisocial behaviour and other risks
- long lasting materials
- not just infrastructure - but a positive contribution to the square
- it needs to be good - it doesn't have to look old



# Public Consultation

## Stage 2: Nov-December 2024





# Public Consultation

## Stage 2: Nov-December 2024

The Stage 2 public engagement was held on 7.11.24 at the Thursday morning market in the Market Square. Attendance was from 11.00 till 14.00. Approximately 15 people filled out a questionnaire on site while, a further 300 completed the questionnaire online between 5.11.24 and 7.12.24. On average each online consultee spent nearly 7 minutes providing feedback.

The second round of public consultation attracted much more attention both online and during the live consultation events. The consultation period was extended to allow more time for those who missed the event to see the designs on display at the Priory Café. Over 300 feedback forms have been returned, which is around 10 times the feedback from the first round.

The following pages 25 to 30 document the boards presented and a summary of the feedback received in the grey text boxes:

The Stage 2 design was developed in response to the Stage 1 consultation feedback to explore concept designs for a new permanent stage.

In response to July’s feedback all the options propose:

- a moderately sized permanent raised stage
- a fixed roof structure
- ramp access
- lockable storage
- AV for events

The boards test form, materiality and layout across three different designs.



# Public Consultation

## Stage 2: Design Options Boards



1. View from Market Square



1. View from Market Square



1. View from Market Square

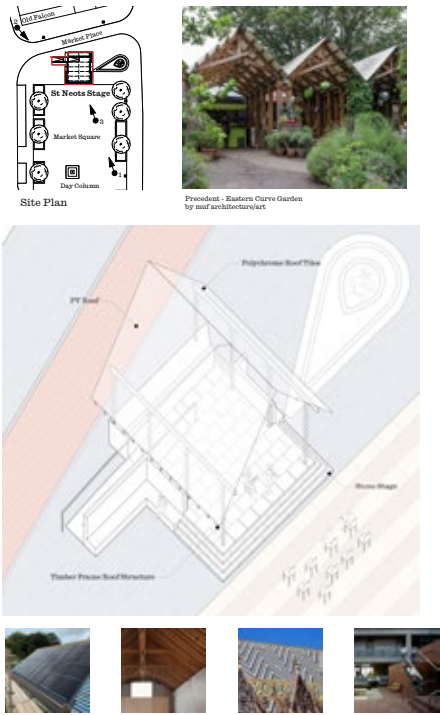


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

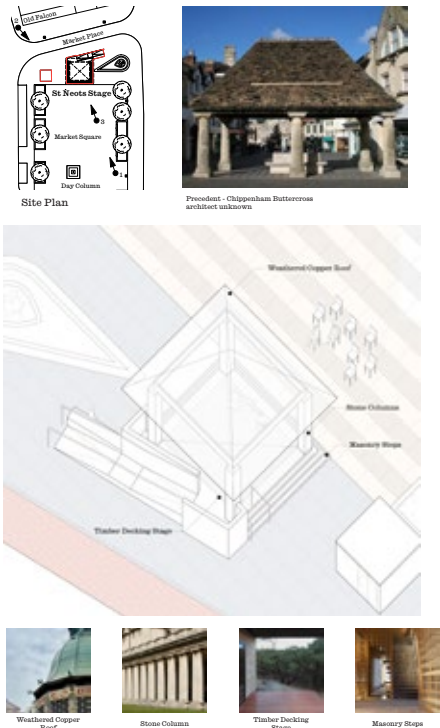


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

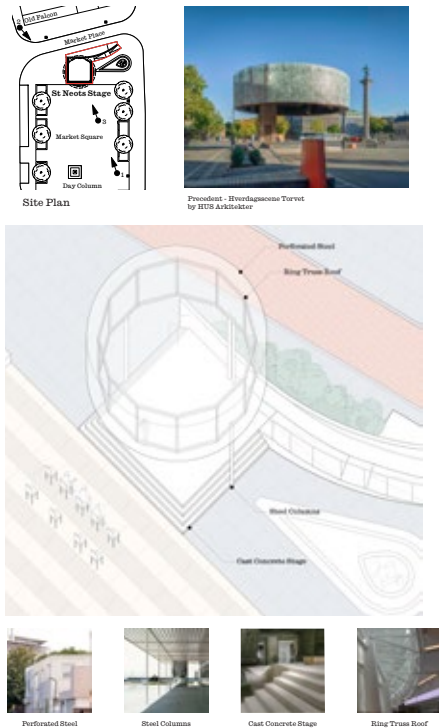


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL



A summary of the second round of feedback follows:

**Q1 Do you think the design proposals shown today would support events and performances in the Market Square?**  
**316 responses gave an average score of 5.5 out of 10.**

**Q2 PREFERRED OPTION**

- 59 Option 1 – Open gable roof
- 96 Option 2 – Hipped buttercross roof
- 43 Option 3 – Floating drum roof
- 62 None of the above

260 out of 316 responses made a choice (82%), 203 of the responses picked one of the options (76%).  
The hipped buttercross (option 2) was preferred 37% by some margin. The open gable (option 1) came third with 23%. The floating drum (option 3) came fourth 17%. None of the above was derived from text comments, came in 2nd position at 24%.

“I feel this design would blend well with the current architecture of the market square. I like the reference to the buttercross buildings”.

**Q3a LAYOUT**

- 63 Option 1 - bench integrated into the stage facing north and south side
- 47 Option 2 - bench integrated into the ramp facing east
- 87 Option 3 - planting integrated along the west side of the stage and ramp
- 32 None of the above

230 out of 316 responses made a choice (73%),  
199 of the responses picked one of the options (86%).  
The planting integrated along the west side of the stage and ramp (option 3) was preferred 38% by some margin. The bench integrated into the stage facing north and south side (option 1) came second 27%. The bench integrated into the ramp facing east (option 2) came third 20%. None of the above was derived from text comments, in 4th position at 14%.

“Integrated planting and seating are both welcome if the design allows it, but I’m not sure how it would best fit into (my preferred) buttercross design”.

“Planting important to soften the hard edges/faces, and make it attractive when no performance is happening. Benches to north and south a nice idea but consider if they invite climbing/play and if that’s welcome”.

**Q3b Provision of chair storage and event equipment**

218 out of 316 responders made a choice (69%)  
66% of responders thought that an enclosed store would be a good idea.



#### Q4a ROOF MATERIALS

- 75 Option 1 - Polychrome roof tiles and photovoltaic panels
- 97 Option 2 - Weathered Copper
- 26 Option 3 - Perforated Steel
- 17 None of the above

215 out of 316 responses made a choice (68%),  
199 picked one of the options (93%).

The copper finish (option 2) was preferred 45% by some margin. The tiles and PV panel finish (option 1) came second 35%. The perforated steel finish (option 3) came third 12%. None of the above was derived from text comments, in 4th position at 7.5%.

“I think having a copper roof would be an attractive feature which would stand out and weather the element well. My only concern is that it could be subject to theft and we would left with an inferior roof or building”.

#### Q4b STAGE MATERIALS

- 115 Option 1 - Stone
- 47 Option 2 - Timber decking with masonry steps
- 36 Option 3 - Cast Concrete
- 17 None of the above

215 out of 316 responses made a choice (68%),  
198 of the responses picked one of the options (92%).

The stone finish (option 1) was preferred 53% by some margin. The timber decking with masonry steps finish (option 2) came second 22%. The cast concrete finish (option 3) came third 17%. None of the above was derived from text comments, in 4th position at 8%.

“Stone is long lasting but uses less energy to produce than concrete”.

## Q5 OTHER COMMENTS

Of all the returns 107 (34%) made open text responses at the end.

36% of responses were against any form of stage. In terms of more positive responses; 4.7% thought a stage would be better in a park, and a further 4.7% thought a temporary stage would be better. 24.3% responses were positive in support of a permanent stage on market square.

“I’m fully in favour of revitalising the square. I’m happy to walk to the parking, and I’m excited to see the final result. But I am sad about the trees still, though! However, I think you’ve really gone wrong with this stage idea. It just doesn’t make sense. My children have performed on stages erected in the square many times and it was fine....it looked like a stage. If you add this, it’s just going to get ruined. HDC can’t even keep the existing town free of litter (it’s shameful) and yet you’re going to be able to maintain this? Put the money into litter pickers to finally clean up our disgusting roads and alleyways. We’re tired of living in filth”.

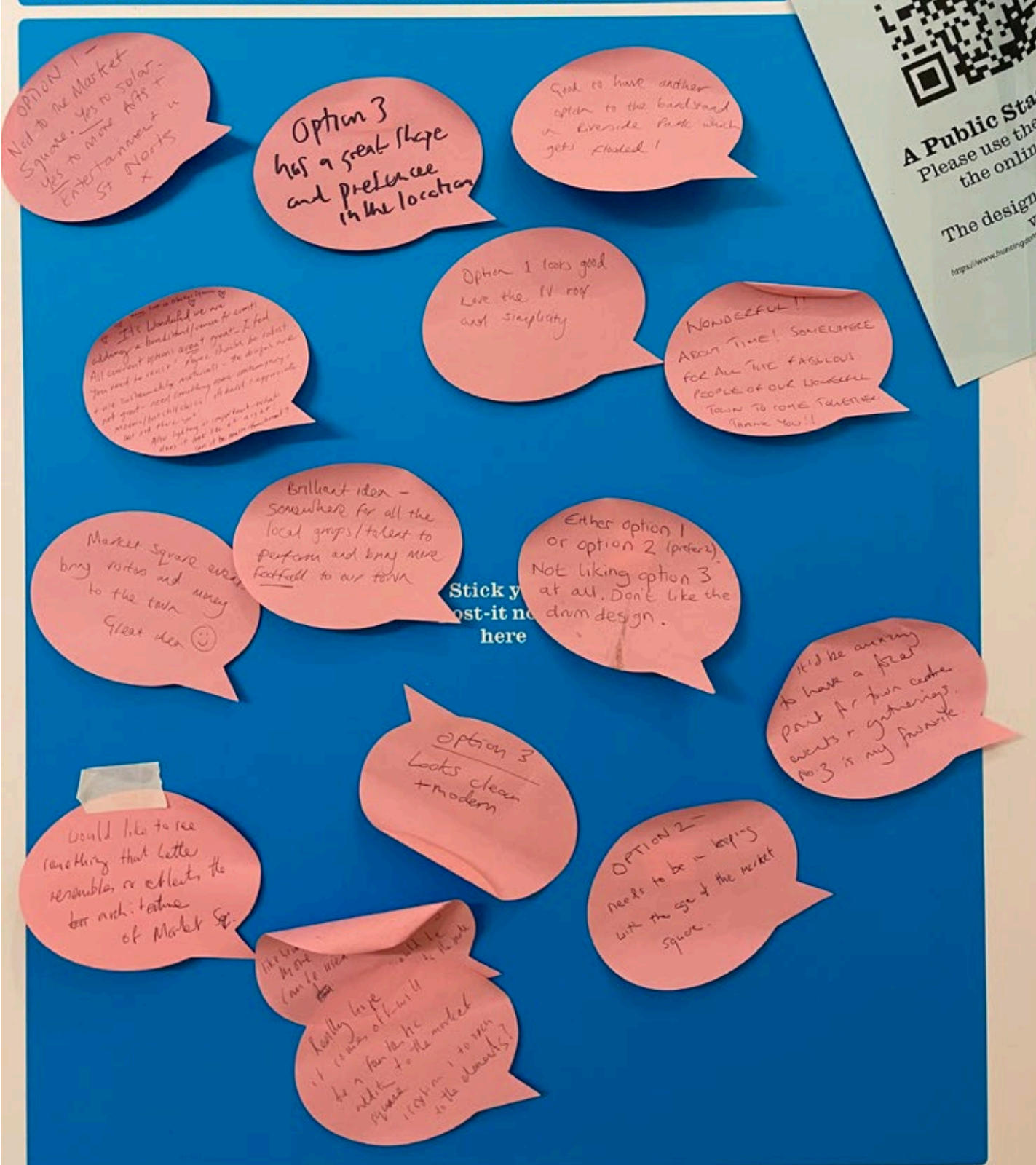
“I think the investment in providing such a stage in St Neots would be very beneficial to the local economy, especially if used for events in the summer, as it could pull in a lot of people to the town. Other local events, such as the dragon boat race, already do this, and the stage could be a welcomed addition. It could also be a good space to hold cinema nights in the summer”.

In terms of a positive to negative free response for a stage the balance was only just negative 38/36.

31% of responses related to the consultation process and the potential of design development, please see more on the following page.

## Any further thoughts?

What have we missed? Any further comments, suggestions or concerns?



Please share your views on our website at:

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/people-communities/market-towns-programme/investment-in-st-neots/the-projects/>



# Public Consultation

## The Preferred Approach

### THE PREFERRED APPROACH

The balance of sentiment in a free text response is marginally to not provide a permanent stage in the Market Square. Some people think a temporary stage or a band stand in the park is a better idea. Many are against the idea of a stage.

However, when asked to pick an option, 76% of responders picked one of the three options provided. And more than half of those who responded thought a stage would help support events and performances in the square.

If it is decided to build a permanent stage then the feedback preferences are to further consider developing a hipped buttercross roof with a weathered copper roof and a stone stage. The layout would have planting integrated along the west side of the stage and ramp, with a store for chairs and performance equipment.

# **4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**



# Stage 2 Design Options

## Public consultation boards



1. View from Market Square



1. View from Market Square



1. View from Market Square

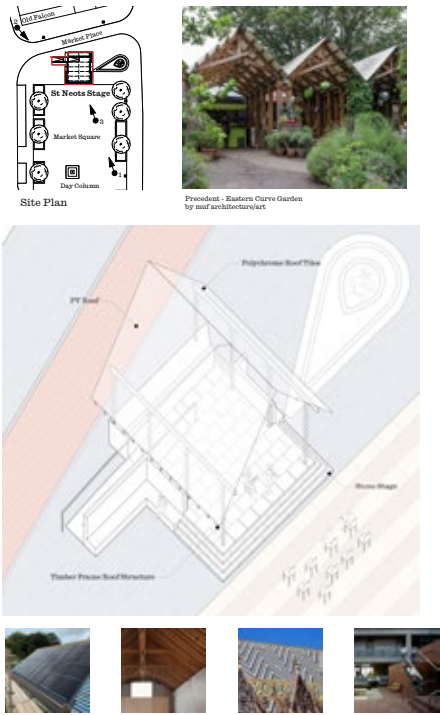


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

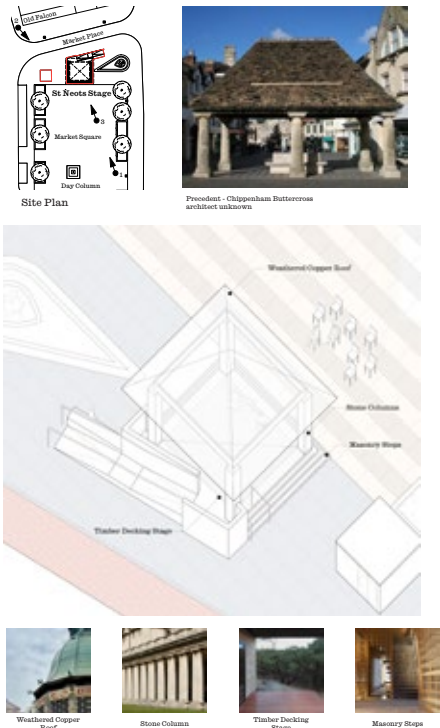


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

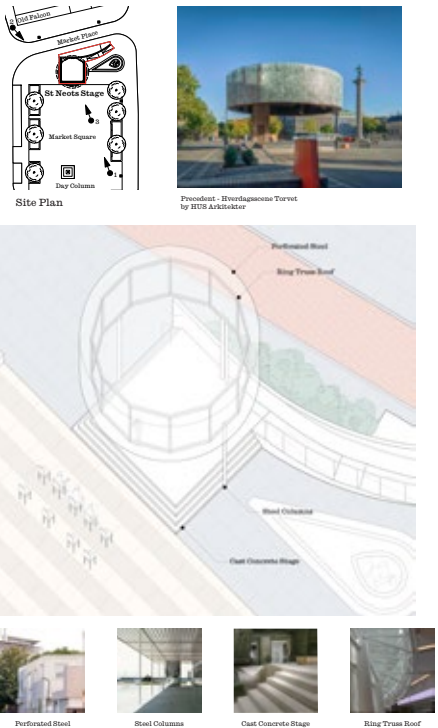


2. View from Old Falcon Inn



3. View of Stage

AOC Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL





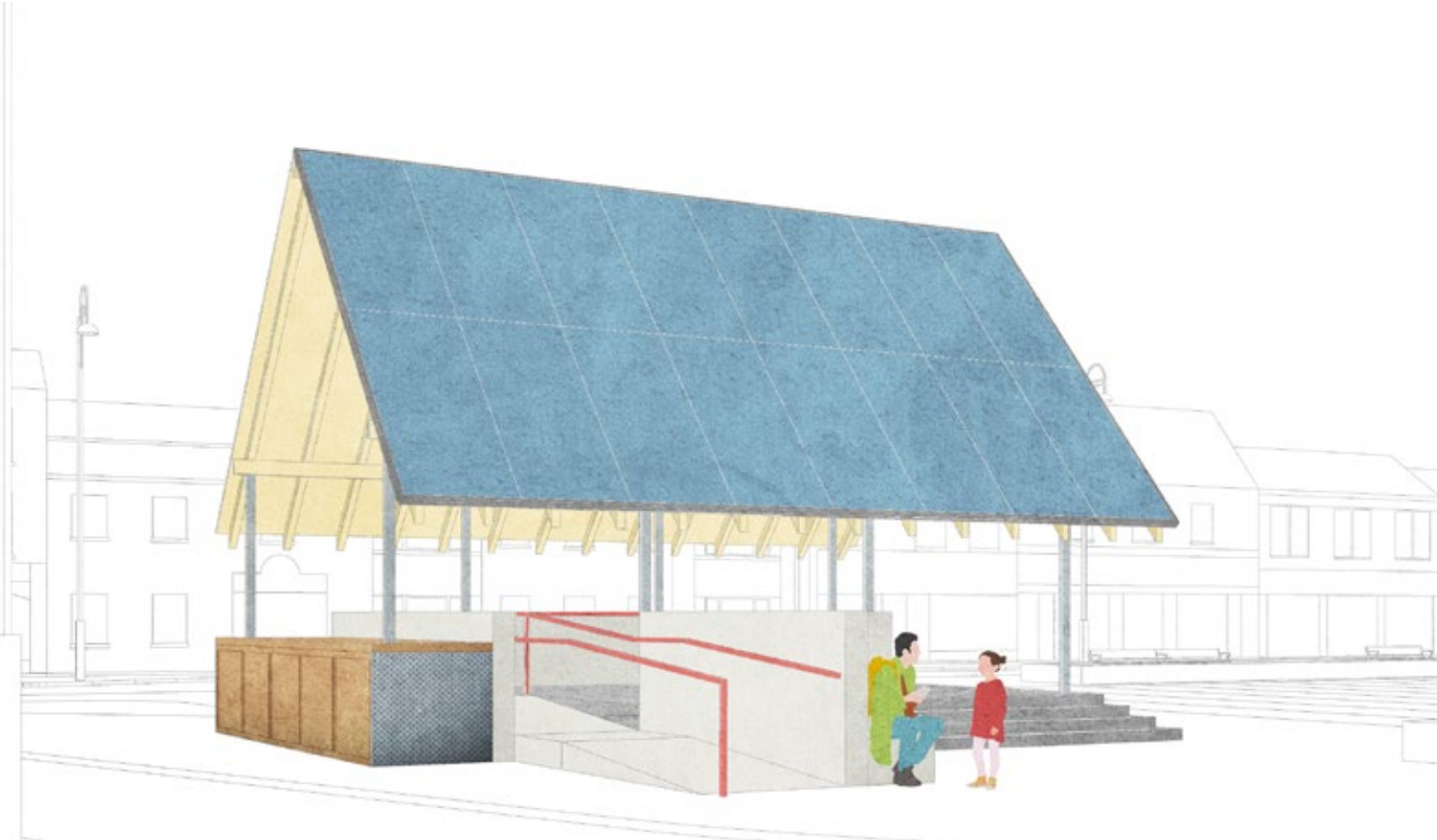
# Option 1 - The Open Gable

View from Market Square

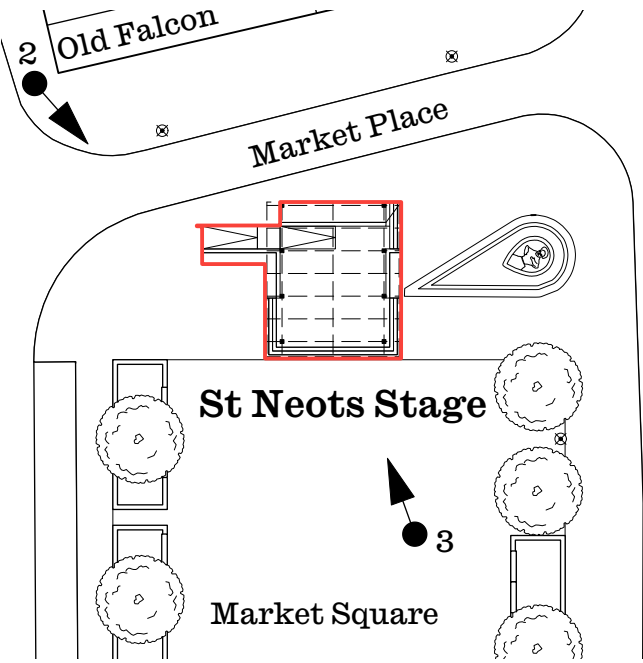




# Option 1 - The Open Gable



2. View from Old Falcon Inn



Site Plan



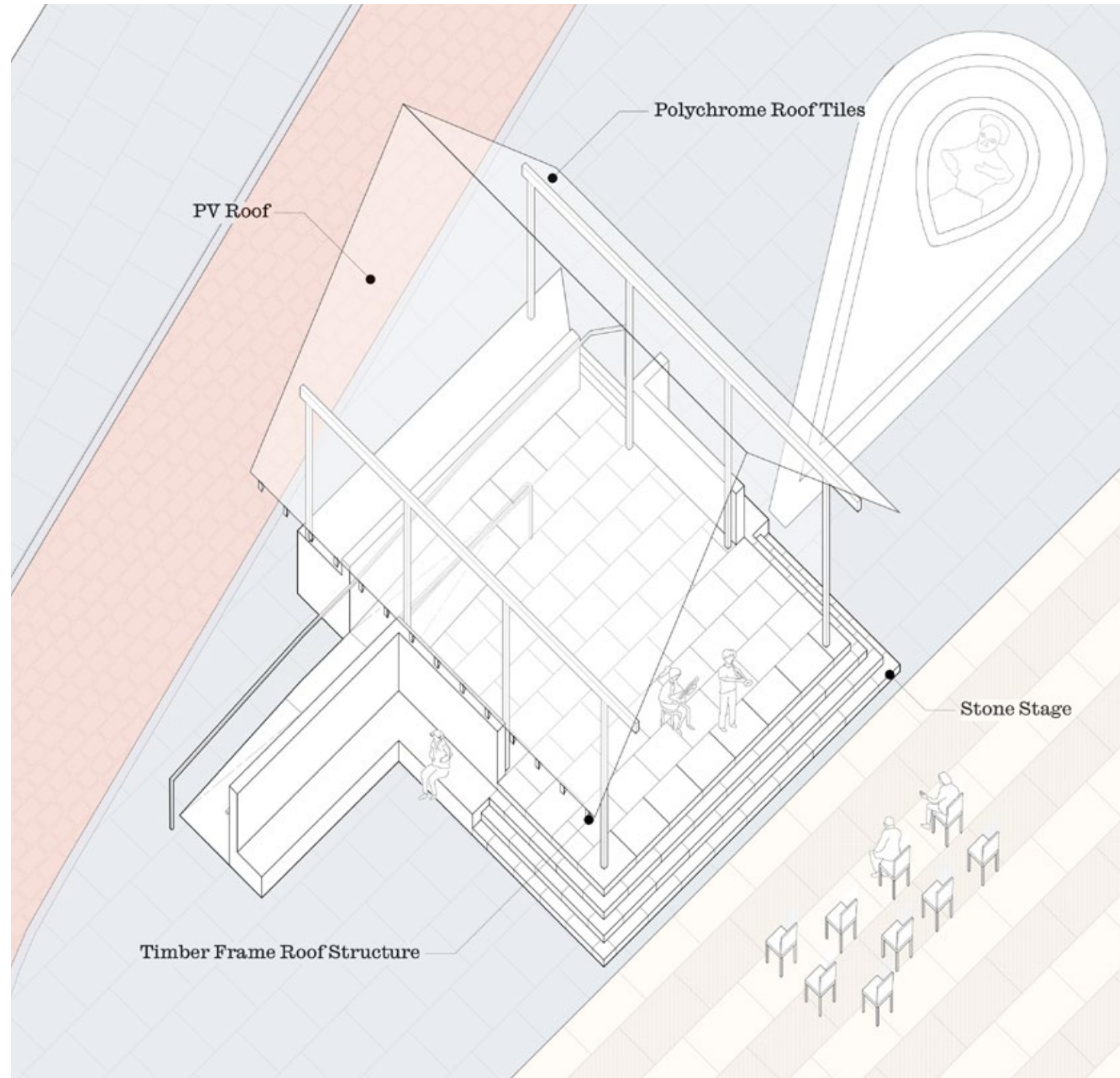
3. View of Stage



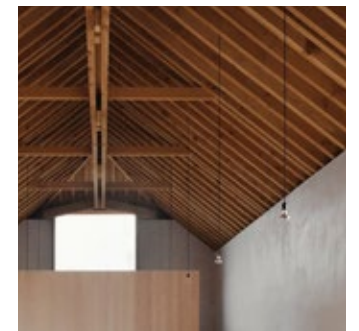
# Option 1 - The Open Gable Materials



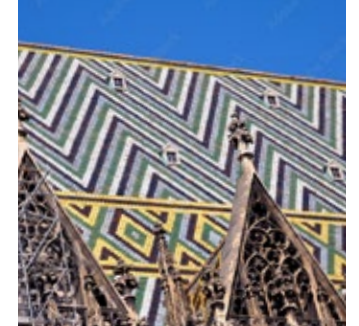
Precedent - Eastern Curve Garden  
by muf architecture/art



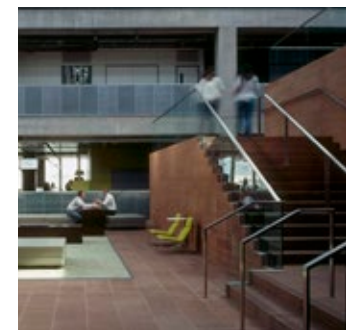
PV Roof



Timber Frame Roof Structure



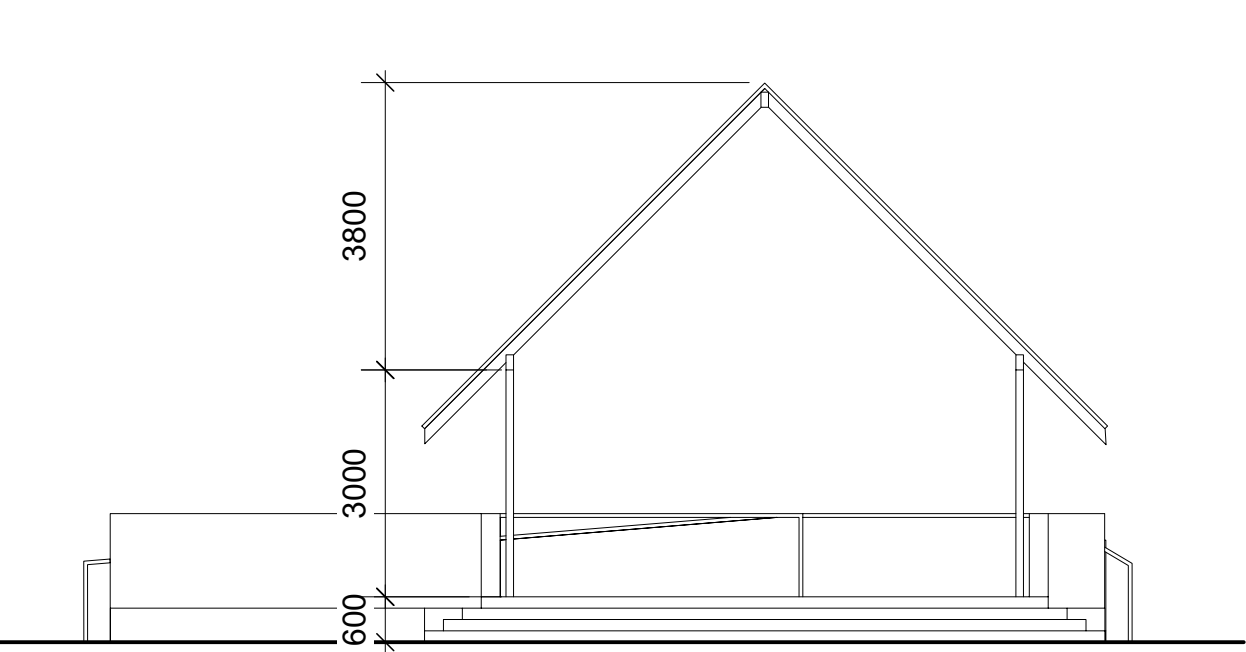
Polychrome Roof Tiles



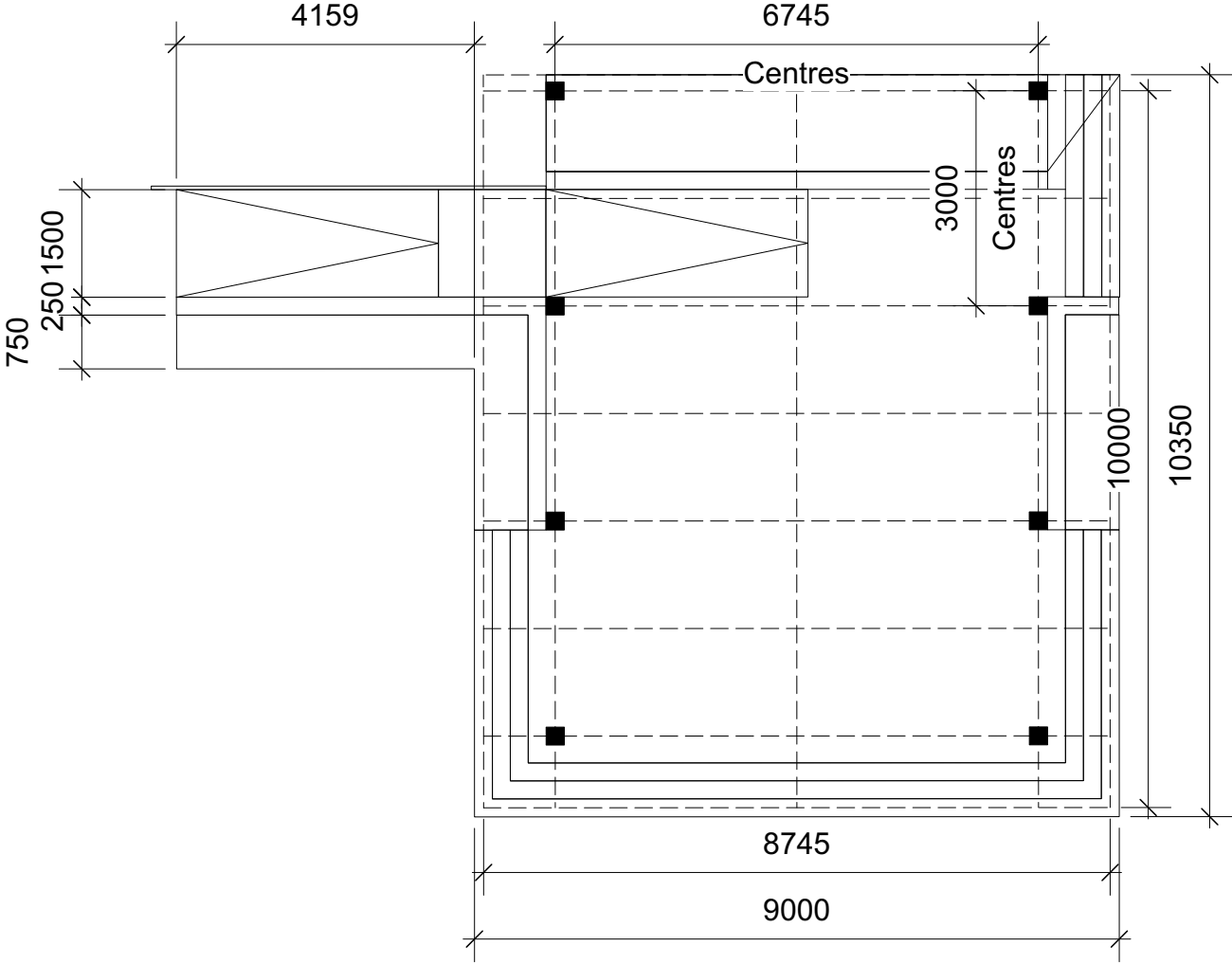
Stone Stage



# Option 1 -The Open Gable



Elevation



Plan



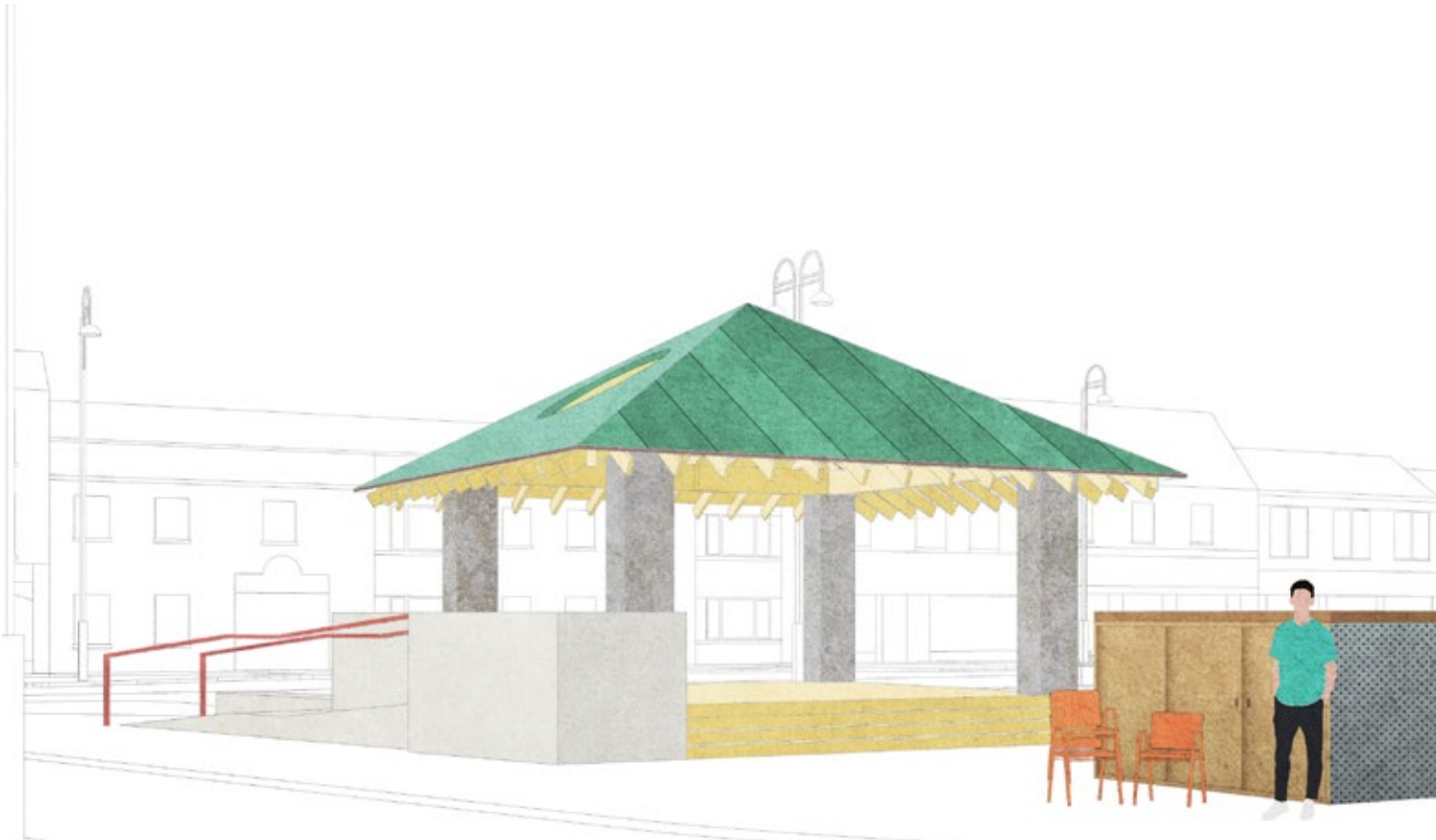
## Option 2 - The Hipped Buttercross

View from Market Square

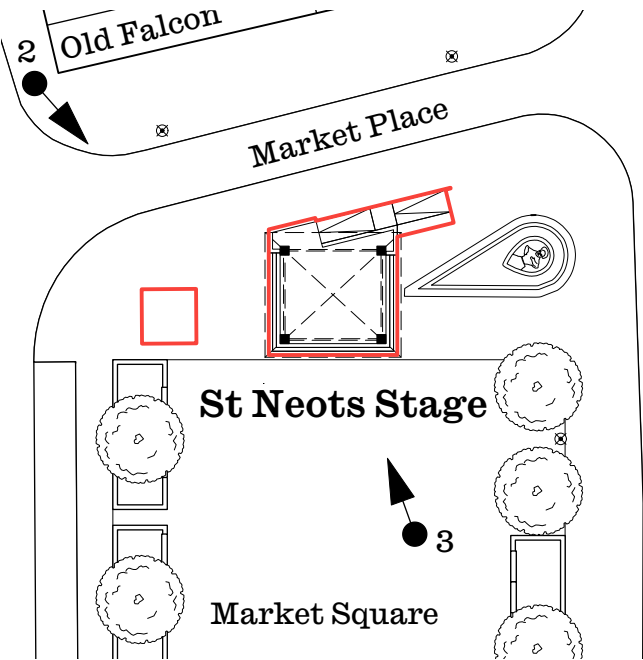




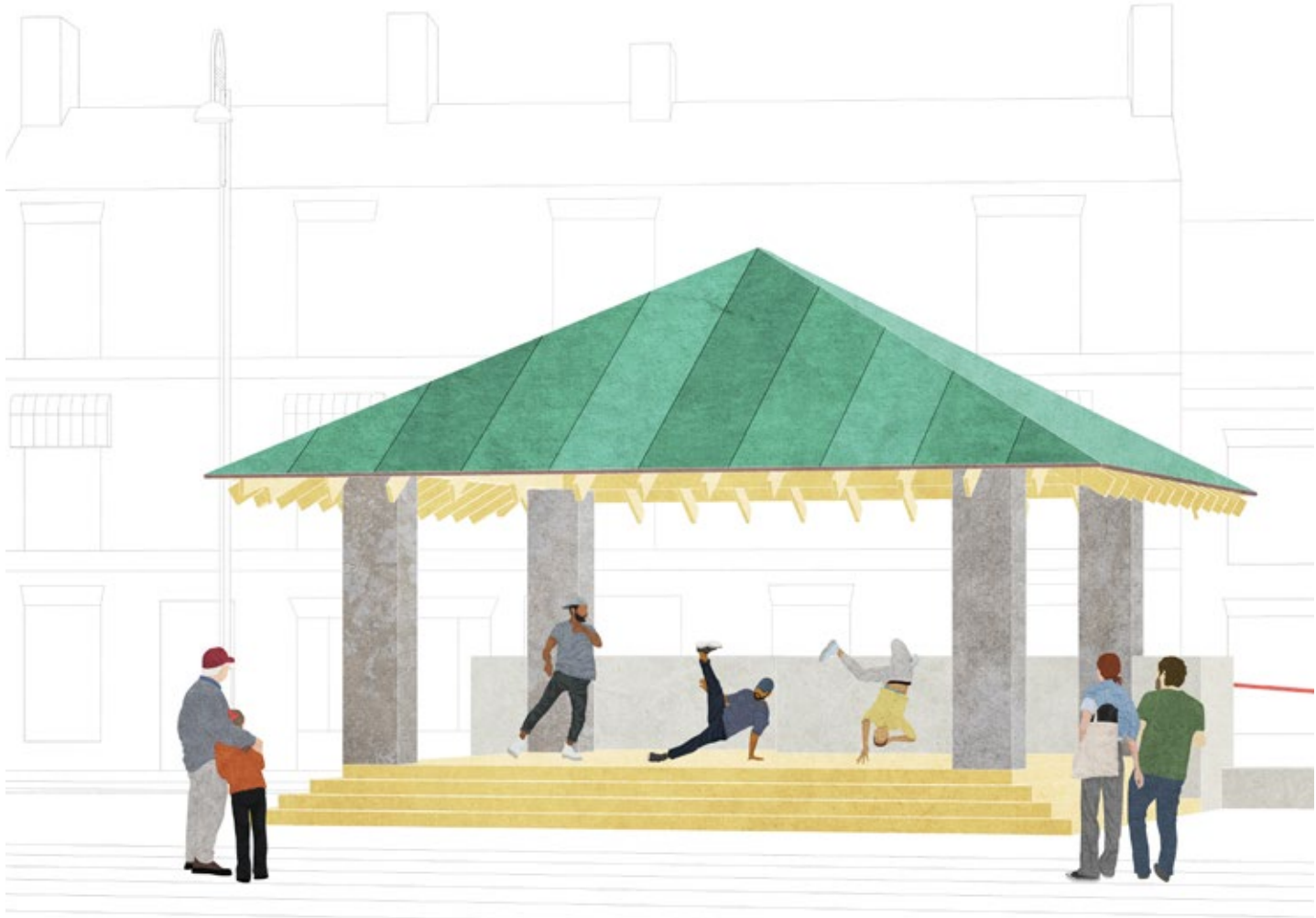
# Option 2 - The Hipped Buttercross



2. View from Old Falcon Inn



Site Plan



3. View of Stage

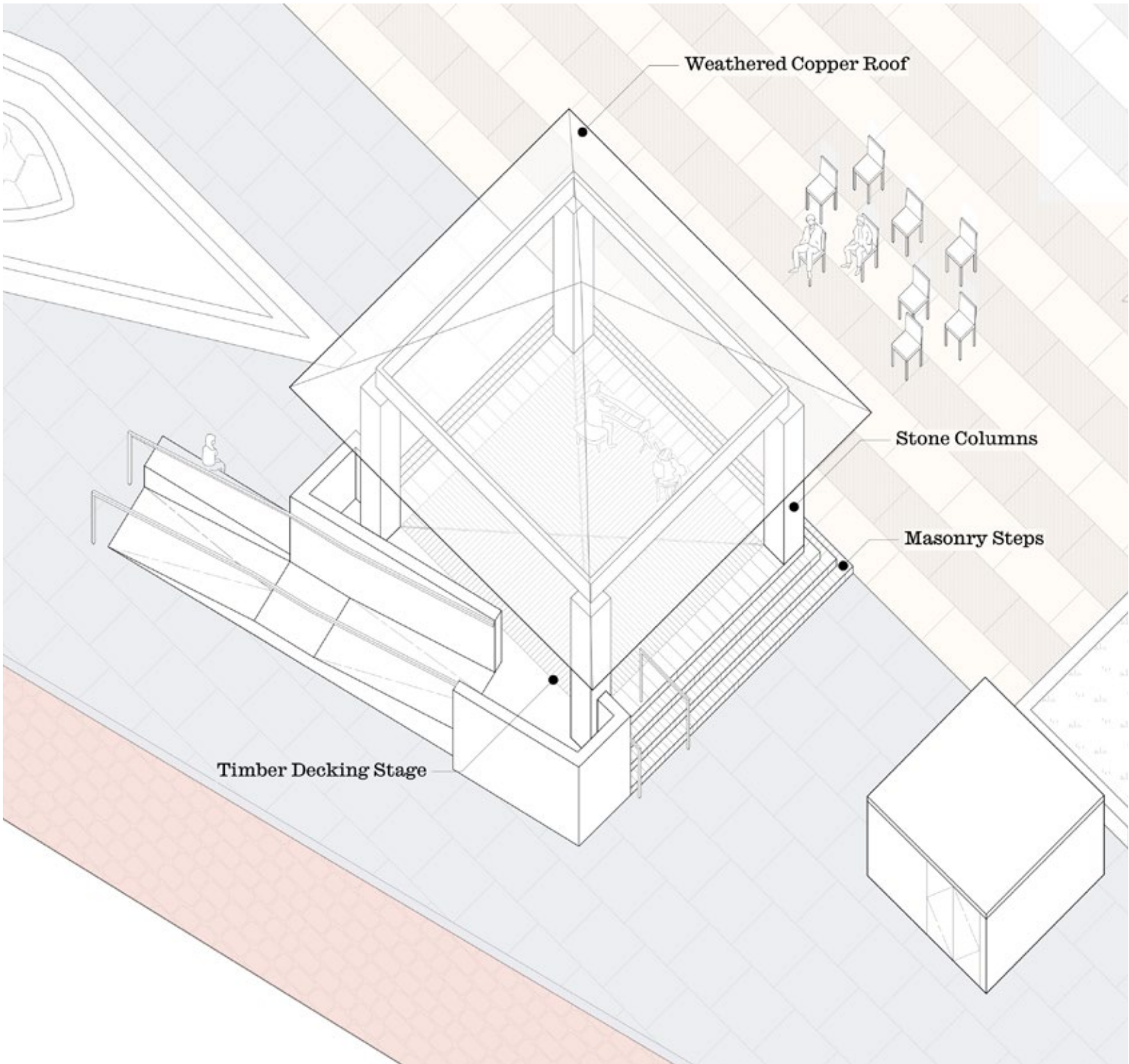


# Option 2 -The Hipped Buttercross

## Materials



Precedent - Chippenham Buttercross  
architect unknown



Weathered Copper  
Roof



Stone Column



Timber Decking  
Stage

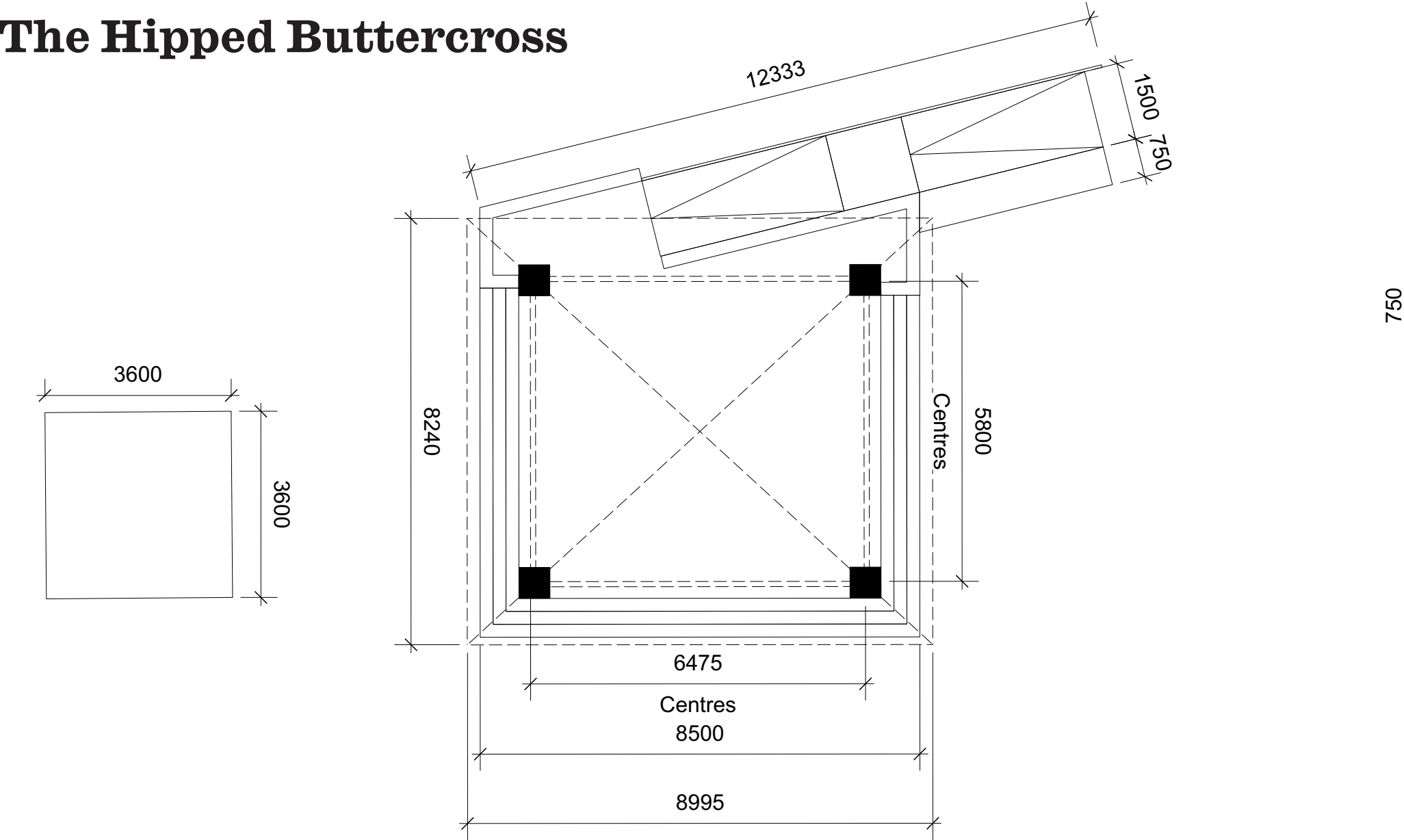


Masonry Steps



Option 2: The Hipped Buttercross

Plan



Elevation



# Option 3: The Floating Drum

View from Market Square

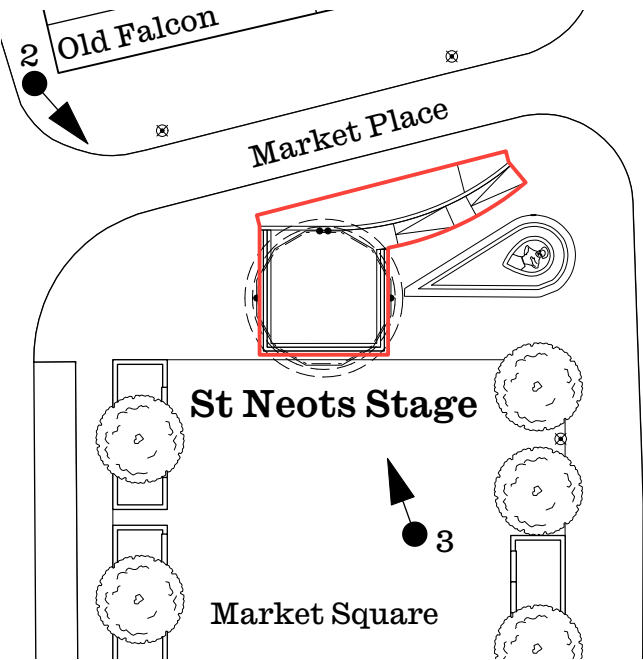




Option 3: The Floating Drum



2. View from Old Falcon Inn



Site Plan



3. View of Stage

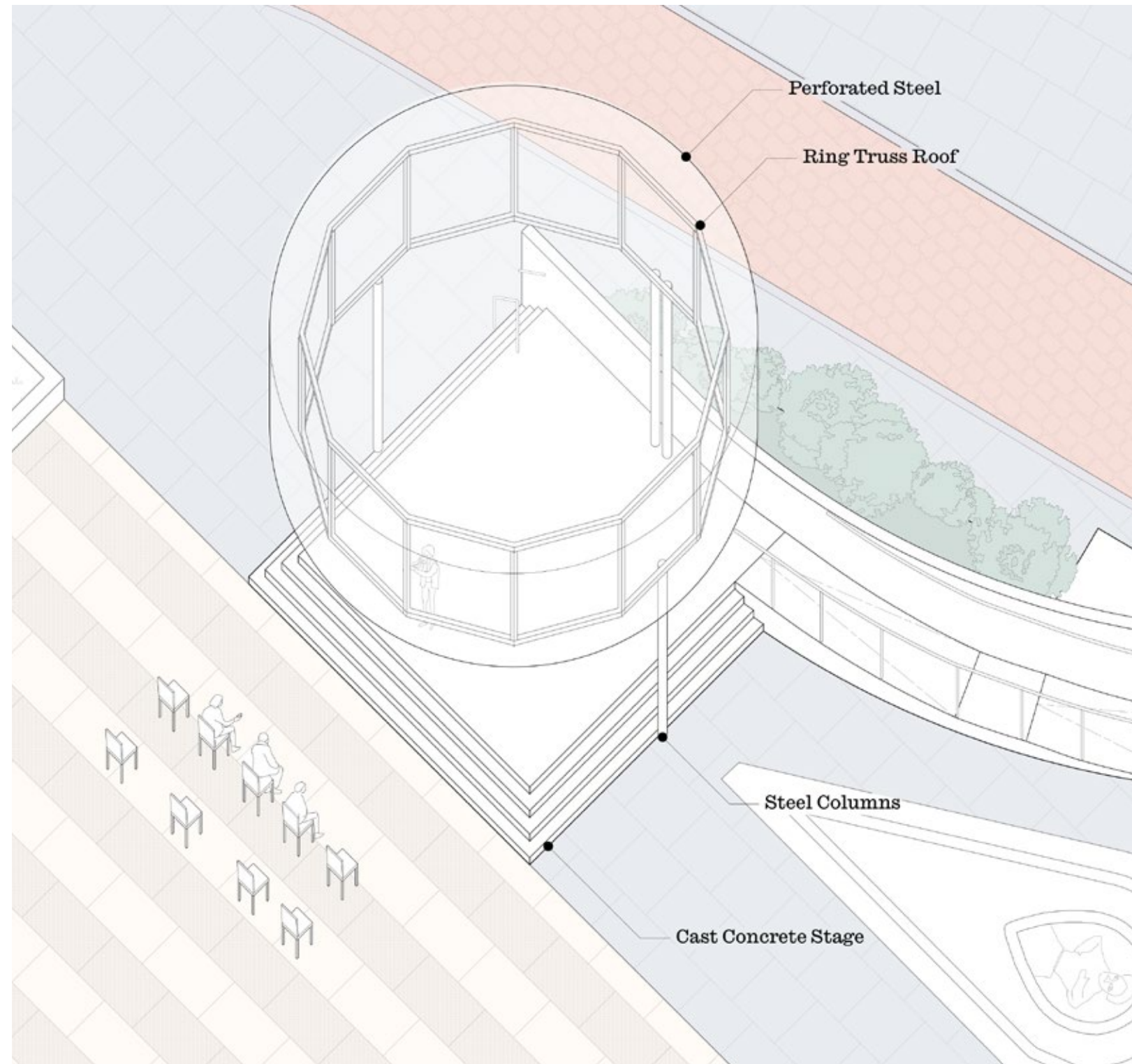


# Option 3: The Floating Drum

## Materials



Precedent - Hverdagsscene Torvet  
by HUS Arkitekter



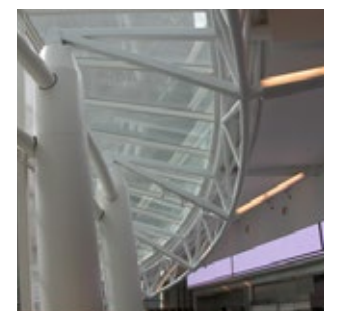
Perforated Steel



Steel Columns



Cast Concrete Stage

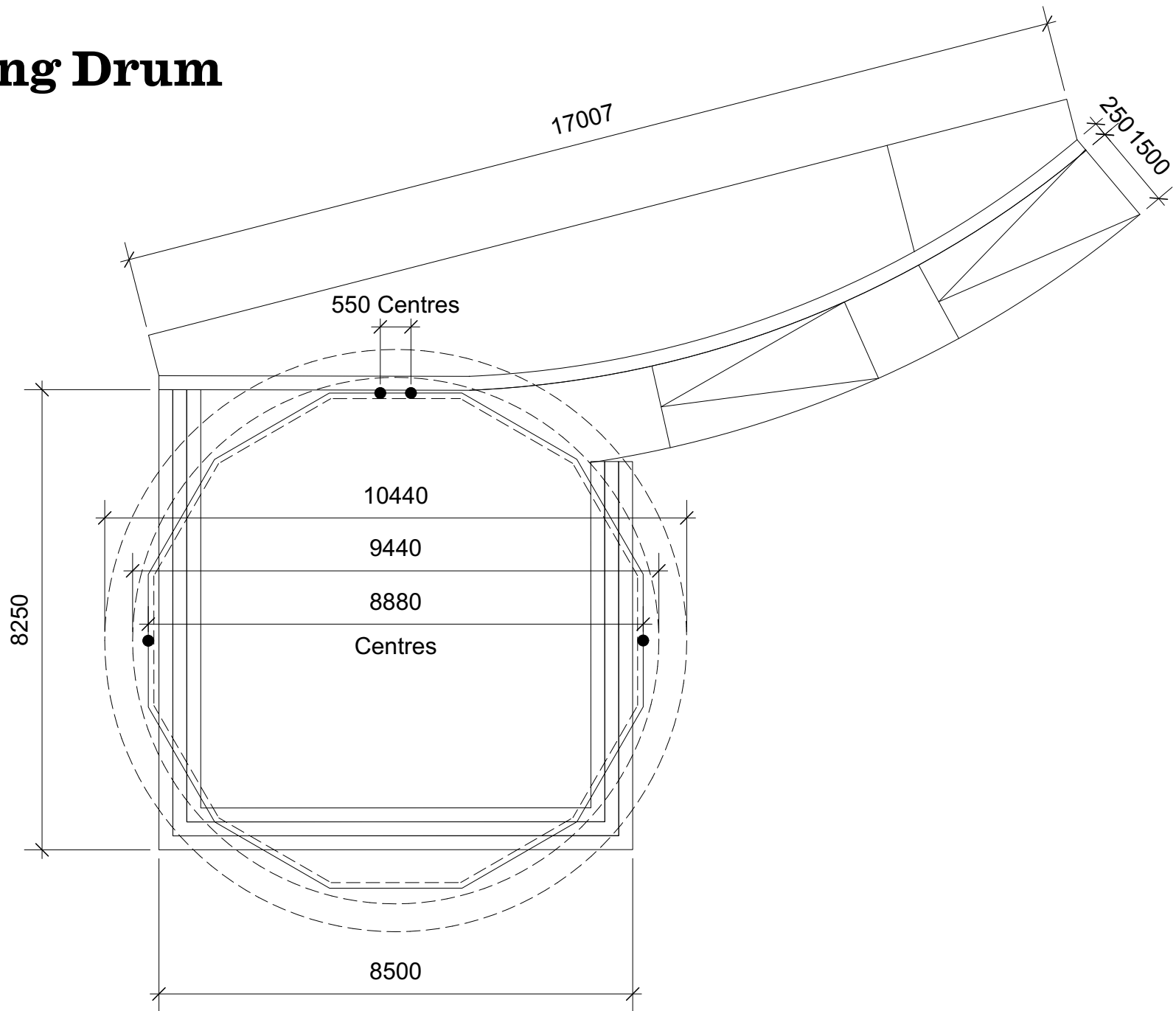


Ring Truss Roof

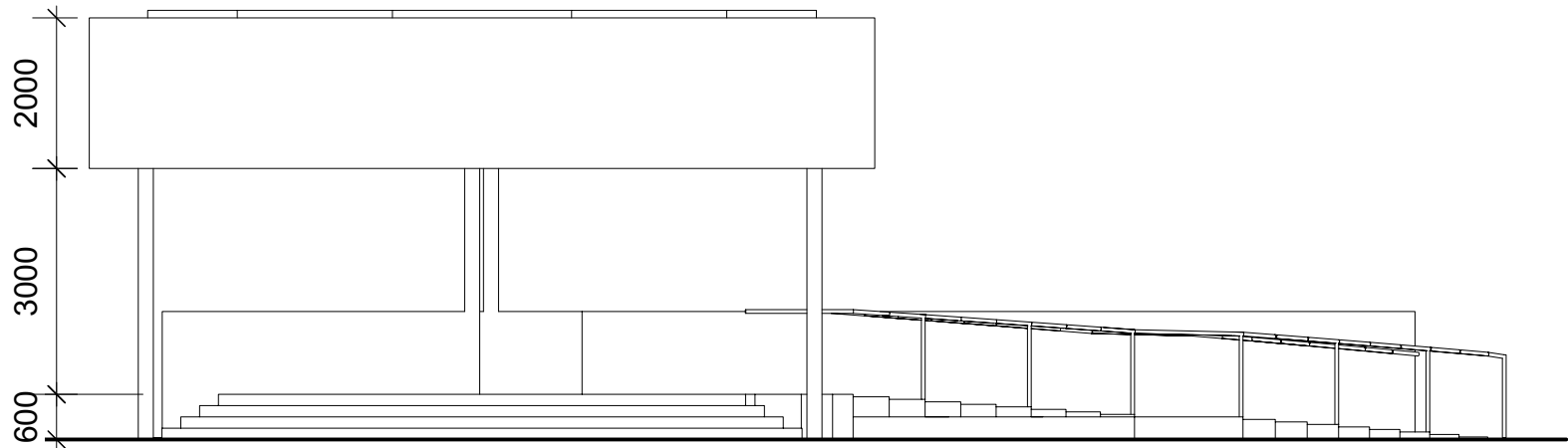


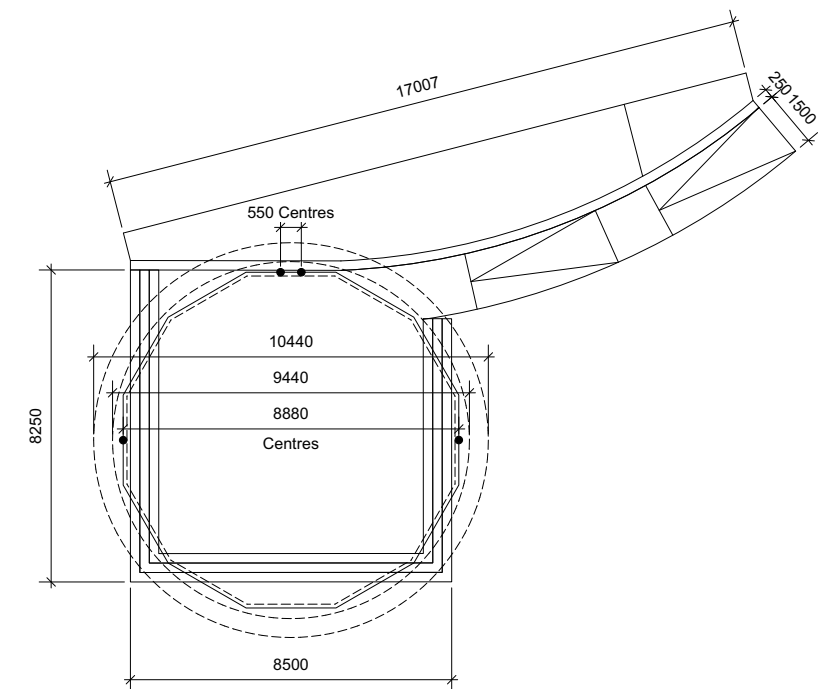
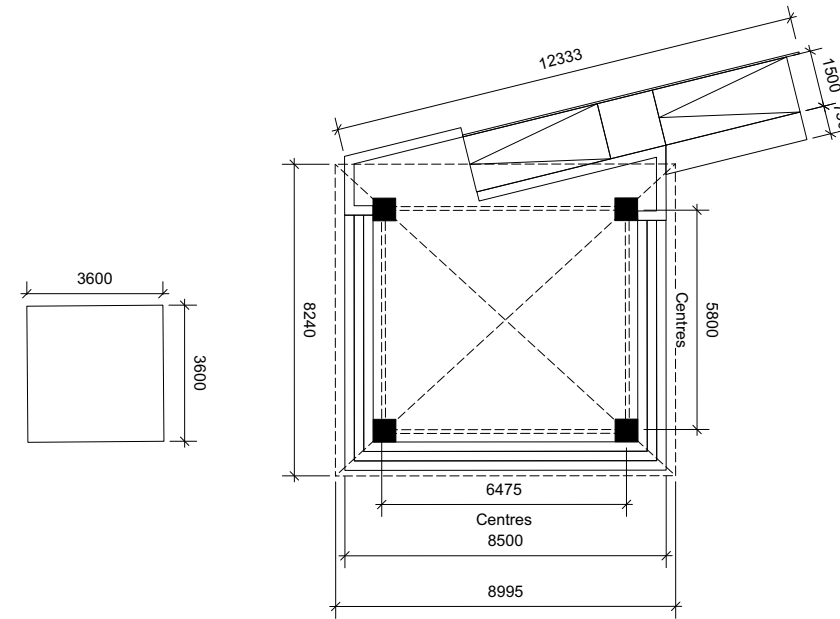
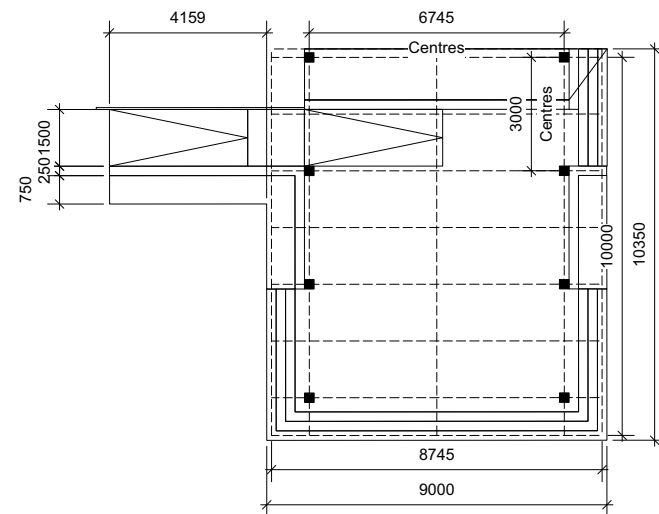
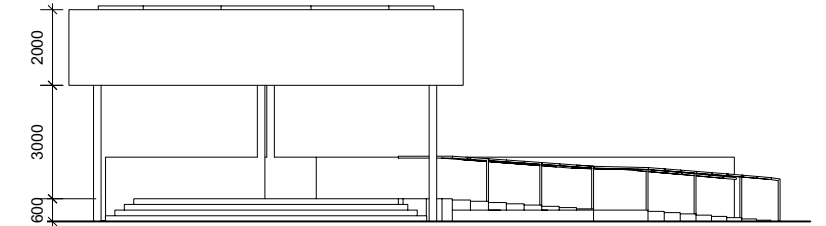
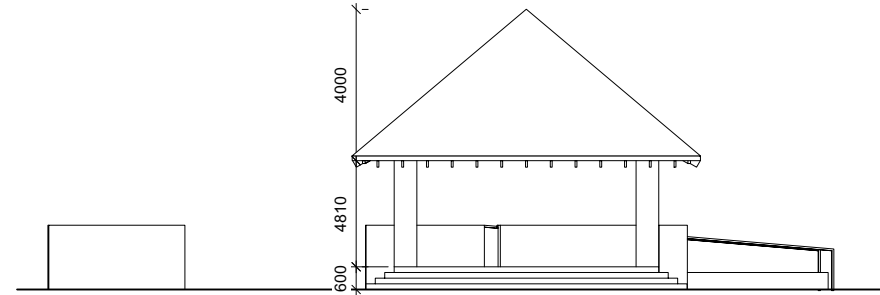
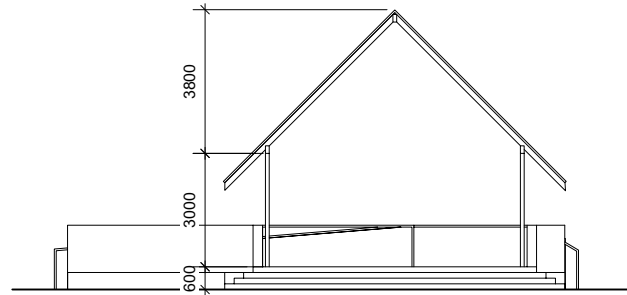
# Option 3: The Floating Drum

Plan



Elevation





**Option 1: The Open Gable**

**Option 2: The Hipped Buttercross**

**Option 3: The Floating Drum**



# **5.**

## **Theatre & AV and Structural Design**

# Theatre Design

Refer to Appendix A3 by Stage Right

Stage Right Theatre Consultants have developed theatre and AV design for the Stage 2 designs, this is described in Appendix A3 and covers:

Sight-lines

Design Options Review

Technical Equipment Rack Provision

Facility Panels/Infrastructure

Power Requirements/ Outlet Required

Installed Audio System

Audio Infrastructure Layout

Lighting Infrastructure Layout

# Structural Design

Refer to Appendix A4 by Simple Works

Structural Engineers, Simple Works, designed a Stage 2 structural design for each of the three concept design. These are described in Appendix A4



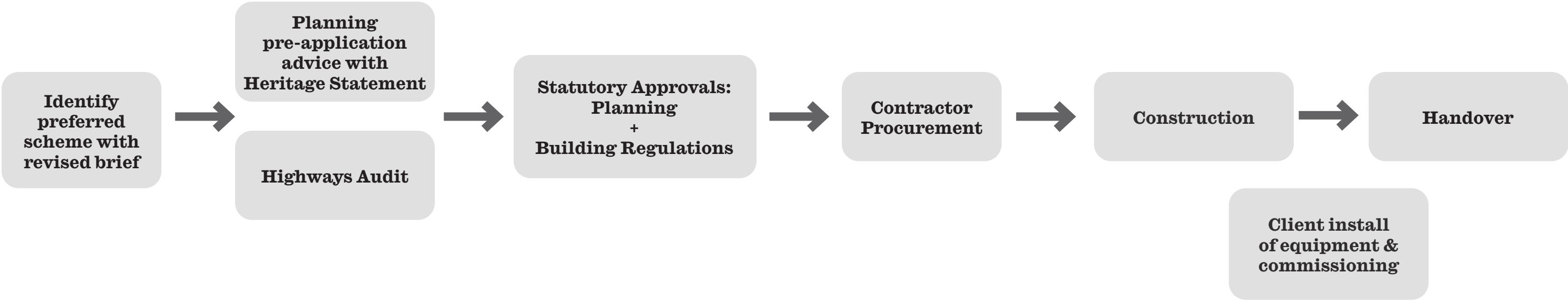
# **6. Delivery**

# Next Steps

## Delivery

This page sets out the key activities for project delivery.

Section 8 concludes the key project considerations and next steps.



**RIBA STAGE 5**  
MANUFACTURING &  
CONSTRUCTION



# Project Risk Assessment

STRATEGIC/PROJECT MANAGEMENT RISKS												
	Risk	Prob (1:5)	Impact (1:5)	Total (R)	Recommended Action/Comments	Owner	Residual Risks			Comments	Deadline	Implication of non-action
							Residual Prob	Residual Impact	Total			
A	EXTERNAL RISKS											
A1	COVID 19 outbreak or similar variant that causes major disruption	1	5	5	Vaccination, social distancing, mask wearing etc. Use of video meetings.	ALL	1	3	3	Low a risk at present		
A2	Cost uncertainty due to global market conditions.	5	5	25	Monitor conditions and BCIS inflation indexes. Plan ahead for key materials. Increase contingency budgets	Design / QS	3	4	12			
B	FUNDRAISING & FINANCIAL											
B1	Lack of clear brief / project requirements results in delay to programme, abortive works or lacking design.	5	5	25	Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and arrangements updated to reflect feedback. Building Client engagement is ongoing.	Client	1	2	2			
B2	Failure to meet project budget	5	5	25	Cost estimating carried out through Stage 2. Costing updated following ongoing consultant input.	Client/Design / QS	4	4	16	Ongoing cost reporting required. Change of budget or scope reduction required to meet project budget		Cost
B3	Global economic or market instability disrupting supply chains. Changes in labour, materials, equipment and plant costs	3	3	9	Early engagement with preferred suppliers. Ensure tender package is developed to allow timely procurement.	Design / QS	1	2	2			Cost/Programme Risk
C	STATUTORY APPROVALS											
C1	Planning risk	3	5	15	Use of pre-application and thorough consultation with community and authorities. Pre-app conversation with planning and conservation officer required.	Architect	3	4	12	Pre-application required before planning risk can be acceptability mitigated		Risk of failed planning application and abortive costs
C2	Failure to gain building control approval causing delay and abortive costs	3	4	12	Use of pre-application.	Architect	2	2	4			
D	PROGRAMME											
D1	Failure to deliver the project within agreed time frames risking additional costs and loss of funding	5	4	20	Awareness of project programme activities and risks. Project programme from Stage 3 onwards required to be developed with client and design team outlining activities and risks. Confirmation of funding amounts and deadlines is required from client. Design Team to propose options based on differing budgets.	Client/QS/Architect/ Design Team	2	4	8			
E	PROCUREMENT / CONTRACT											
E1	Inappropriate procurement method has time/cost/quality risk for project	4	5	20	Procurement route analysis was carried out by project manager.	ALL	2	2	4			
E2	Failure to obtain sufficient market interest	4	5	20	Liaise with client and PM on PQQ processes. Proactive promotion capturing interest. Ensure appropriate tender package and programme with fair risk transfer.	ALL	2	3	6			
E3	Contractor or supply chain insolvency	3	5	15	Careful selection and PQQ process, inclusion of bond, abide by contract payment system	PM / QS	2	3	6			
F	SITE CHARACTERISTICS											
F1	Surveys reveal issues that could not be resolved within budget or represent too large a risk to continue	4	5	20	Early engagement of survey specialists to reduce risk of unknowns.	Design	2	4	8			
F2	Risk of flooding - approach to design coordination and specification	1	1	1		Architect/PM/Client	1	1	1			
G	CONSTRUCTION											
G1	Injury to visitors or public during building works	4	5	20	Rigorous consideration of site works and protection measures.	ALL	1	3	3			
G2	Nuisance to neighbours	3	4	12	Rigorous consideration of site works, access and protection measures under supervision of Principal Designer	ALL	2	3	6			
H	OPERATIONAL											
H1	Impact of construction on Market Square.	4	5	20	Strategy for delivery needs to be developed with client in Stage 3 onwards. Timing of works after main Market Square works will cause additional disruption.	Architect/PM/Client	3	3	9			
H2	Misuse and antisocial behaviour	4	5	20	Robust design and materials required to mitigate harmful impact. Lighting should be considered to mitigate disuse mis-use. An open structure will always carry a degree of risk of ASB.	ALL	3	3	9			
J	BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY											
K	SURVEYS											
K1												
L1	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS											
L1				0					0			
M	Theatre & AV Design											
M1	Appropriateness of design - failure to meet stakeholder brief	3	5	15	Coordination with design team/client and specialist client team members. Ensure key stakeholders identified and adequate sign off procedures are set out to ensure design meets requirements.	Design Team/Architect/Client	3	2	6			
M2	Failure to meet budget	4	5	20	Alignment with budget required. Potential development of good/better /best specification and/or identification of baseline infrastructure for Stage 3	Design Team/Architect/Client	3	3	9			
N	MEP Design											
N1	Coordination with existing infrastructure	4.0	4	16	Designs developed utilising Market Square design information. Additional surveys to be established for Stage 3.	MEP	2	4	8			
O	Structural Design											
O1				0					0			

Interpretation of Risk

15 - 25

Unacceptable

9 - 14

Close Monitoring

0 - 8

Acceptable

# Costs

Refer to Appendix A5 by MEA

The current construction cost estimate, is outlined in Appendix A5.

The costing has been split into elemental items for each of the three options.

The table opposite summarises the costs for the stage, canopy and tech for the three options.

The cost estimate attached splits technical items into split into two parts:

**1. Base wiring**  
This is included within project costs allowing for the subsequent installation of required technical equipment.

**2. Technical Equipment**  
This is included below the line as items that can be procured with the main works, client direct or subsequent to main works construction. The specification of this is to be tested and refined with the client and stakeholders through Stage 3.

The current project cost estimate exceeds the allocated funding budget. The scope of the costed scheme has been developed in response to the Stage 1 consultation feedback and direction; to include a raised platform, canopy structure and AV tech. These items are shown elementally on the adjacent summary table. The costing demonstrates cost variation across different materials and forms approaches. Significant cost reductions would require a reduction in the size or scope of the stage, the roof structure or the AV and speaker technical provision.



	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
STAGE	£ 65,200.00	£ 63,200.00	£ 74,700.00
CANOPY	£ 63,500.00	£ 82,500.00	£ 111,500.00
TECH	£ 32,000.00	£ 32,000.00	£ 32,000.00
TOTAL	£ 160,700.00	£ 177,700.00	£ 218,200.00
OHP, CONTINGENCY & INFLATION	£ 119,492.00	£ 121,660.00	£ 126,824.00
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST	£ 280,192.00	£ 299,360.00	£ 345,024.00
FEES & SURVEYS	£ 41,123.00	£ 43,423.00	£ 48,903.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	£ 321,315.00	£ 342,783.00	£ 393,927.00
TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT	£ 85,000.00	£ 85,000.00	£ 85,000.00
TOTAL COST	£ 406,315.00	£ 427,783.00	£ 478,927.00

Cost summary - refer to A5 for full cost estimate



**7.**

**Health & Safety**

# Designer's Risk Assessment

By AOC

RISK RATING GUIDE						
	SERVERITY	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major/ Severe	Critical/Fatal
LIKELIHOOD	Risk Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Very Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	4	8	12	16	20
Highly likely	5	5	10	15	20	25
	low	Moderate	Considerable	High		Extreme

Project risks are assessed by the design team on the case of severity and likelihood. Risks are recorded where the resultant risk is not acceptable. The register records further risk control measures applied, the residual risk rating and highlights where action is required. Where the risk rating cannot be reduced an alternative means would be sought.

## 1.0 RISK FOR CONSTRUCTION

Ref No.	Activity / Element	Potential Hazards	Population at Risk	Is the risk acceptable?	Initial Risk Rating			Risk Management Action Required	Residual Risk Rating			Action Required By
					L 5	S 5	R 25		L 5	S 5	R 25	
1.01	Site Establishment	The works site is near a busy public highway and active market square	Site Staff Visitors Adj. residents & business owners General public	N	3	3	9	Develop an appropriate Traffic Management strategy, including adequate signage and markings. If works require any road closure, consider scheduling this outside peak hours for pedestrians and	1	2	2	Contractor
1.02	Security & Containment	Trespass Dust pollution Acoustic pollution	Site Staff Visitors Adj. residents General public	N	5	3	15	Erect and install hoarding to contain contractors work area Establish acoustic requirements.	1	3	3	Contractor
1.03	Access / Delivery	Trespass Vehicle movements infringing public or site works	Staff Site Staff Visitors General public	N	5	3	15	Establish control method for entry and direction to area of works Provide secure entrance to works area Have a works area sign in book for all visitors Define methods for open hours and	1	3	3	Contractor



## 1.0 RISK FOR CONSTRUCTION

Ref No.	Activity / Element	Potential Hazards	Population at Risk	Is the risk acceptable?	Initial Risk Rating			Risk Management Action Required	Residual Risk Rating			Action Required By
					L 5	S 5	R 25		L 5	S 5	R 25	
1.04	Existing Services	Inappropriate use of existing services for construction tools and equipment	Site staff Visitors Adj. residents	N	4	3	12	Existing survey and as built information provided by client & design team Contractor to confirm existing services strategy prior to commencement	1	3	3	Contractor
1.05	Existing Services	Striking live services during construction works	Site staff Visitors Adj. residents	N	4	3	12	Existing survey and as built information provided by client & design team Contractor to confirm existing services locations prior to commencement	1	3	3	Contractor
1.06	Emergency Procedures	Infringement with existing site emergency procedures for fire or other emergency evacuation	Staff Visitors Adj. residents	N	5	4	20	Ensure site procedures are not infringed Ensure all site staff are inducted to emergency procedures Define methods for public hours and non-public periods	1	4	4	Contractor
1.07	Materials & storage strategy	Infringement upon site works, resident or public areas Hazardous storage Confined spaces Theft Dust pollution	Site staff Adj. residents Visitors to site	N	5	3	15	Allocate area on site Provide secure storage on the premises Allow for clear circulation around storage Site cleanliness Store flammable and other hazardous materials securely	2	3	6	Contractor
1.08	Materials Handling	Danger to health from inappropriate methods of moving materials and material installation / demolition	Site Staff Visitors	N	5	4	20	Design team to consider feasible methods of moving materials and size modules appropriately Install products as per manufacturers recommendations Observe requirements for protective gloves or clothing Observe safe methods of lifting and carrying Ensure heavy objects are adequately supported	1	4	4	Design Team / specialist subcontractor Contractor
1.09	Erection of structural elements	Dangerous manipulation of structural elements during construction	Site Staff Visitors	N	4	5	20	Offsite fabrication has been optimized throughout the design.	1	5	5	Contractor
1.10	Working around general public	The works site is in a busy market square. Extra care should be taken with regards to safety, access and security, in particular during busy periods	Visitors General Public	Y	2	1	2	Provide adequate signage and markings and site containment	1	1	2	Contractor
1.11	Working in Neighbourhood	Damage to existing buildings on and adjacent to site caused by inappropriate construction	Local residents General Public	N	5	5	25	Local residents to be informed of proposed construction schedule, times and methodology.	1	5	5	Contractor
1.12	Finishes and edge details	Rough finishes or edges could cause injury	Site Staff Visitors	N	5	3	15	Establish quality of finishes prior to Completion Contractor to ensure no rough or sharp finished edges that could cause injury. Client to agree procedure for identification, reporting and completing repairs	1	3	3	Contractor / Client

## 1.0 RISK FOR CONSTRUCTION

Ref No.	Activity / Element	Potential Hazards	Population at Risk	Is the risk acceptable?	Initial Risk Rating			Risk Management Action Required	Residual Risk Rating			Action Required By
					L 5	S 5	R 25		L 5	S 5	R 25	
1.13	Contractor and Visitor Welfare	Provide adequate welfare facilities on site	Site Staff Visitors to Site	N	2	3	6	Contractor is responsible for ensuring all attendees to site are provided with necessary H&S & welfare facilities which allow for necessary breaks, in the event of falling ill or to attend to injury.	1	1	1	Contractor
1.14	Solvents and Hazardous Materials	Risk of breathing vapours, ingestion, skin and eye contact	Site Staff	N	2	4	8	Use of PPE and well ventilated spaces. Omit if possible.	1	4	4	Design Team / Contractor
1.15	Working at height	Risk of falling / injury Risk of falling objects	Site Staff	N	5	5	25	Designer to remove need to work at height where possible. Contractor is responsible for procedures and temporary structures where working from height necessary	1	5	5	Contractor
1.16	Removal of existing paving	Risk of injury and hearing damage due to use of heavy plant.	Site Staff Visitors	N	3	3	9	Method statement to prioritise quiet works. Ensure all works are prohibited on site when visitors are present to avoid unnecessary injuries. Provide PPE appropriate to	1	3	3	Contractor
1.17	Working around retained elements. Risk of damaging existing fabric	Damage to existing retained elements	Site Staff Visitors	N	5	3	15	New building elements sized with regard to existing space and entry routes. Contractor to ensure protection of retained elements.	1	3	3	Design Team / Contractor
1.18	Working in vicinity of live services	Risk of any undocumented services. Risk of electrocution. Risk of damage to the landlord drainage systems	Site Staff	N	5	5	25	Contractor shall survey the installation areas and shall plan their installation to avoid disturbing existing systems. The contractor shall carefully carry out the installation works around the existing services.	1	5	5	Contractor
1.19	Dust pollution from cut paving slab	Inhalation of dust	Site Staff	N	5	2	10	Use of PPE and well ventilated spaces. dust suppression equipment. Keep area unobstructed.	2	2	4	Contractor
1.20	Covid-19	Spread of infection	Site Staff	N	4	4	16	Ensure upto date guidance is followed and appropriate PPE used as necessary	1	4	4	Contractor



## 2.0 RISK FOR CLEANING/MAINTENANCE & USERS – RESIDUAL RISKS

Ref No.	Activity / Element	Potential Hazards	Population at Risk	Is the risk acceptable?	Initial Risk Rating			Action at Design Stage	Residual Risk Rating			Action Required By
					L 5	S 5	R 25		L 5	S 5	R 25	
2.01	Working around General public	The works site is on busy public street. Extra care should be taken with regard to safety, access and security, in particular during busy periods	Visitors General public	Y	2	1	3	Ensure secure access to works areas.	1	1	1	Contractor
2.02	Finishes and edge details	Rough finishes or edges could cause injury	Users	N	2	3	6	Establish quality of finishes prior to Completion Contractor to ensure no rough or sharp finished edges that could cause injury. Client to agree procedure for identification, reporting and completing repairs	1	3	3	Contractor / Client
2.03	Everyday use of structure	Breakage	General Public	N	1	5	5	Specification of materials and quality of workmanship	1	3	3	Design Team / Contractor
2.04	Unexpected abuse to structure or attack due to anti-social behaviour	Breakage, Arson, Sharp edges, use of object as weapon or missile	General Public	N	3	5	15	Specification of durable materials, location and supervision. Consideration of condition after abuse	1	5	5	Design Team / Client
2.05	Demolition at end of life	Danger to health due to release of dust or requirement for destructive processes	Maintenance Staff	N	3	3	9	Consider future dismantling and separation of materials for reuse or recycling	1	3	3	Design Team
2.06	Light and equipment fitting replacement	Risk of falling	Maintenance Staff	N	4	4	16	Use of long life LED 50,000 hours Incorporate safe maintenance plan within H+S File. Secure area around works.	1	4	4	Contractor
2.07	External ground finishes	Risk of slipping	General Public	N	5	4	20	Appropriate level of slip resistance to be agreed with client	4	5	4	Design team to issue specification for approval
2.08	Vermin infestation and fouling to structural elements, hygiene impact	Removal of waste/debris and hygiene risk	Visitors General public	N	3	3	9	Designers to consider mitigation to limit infestation/fouling and appropriate access for cleaning	2	2	4	Design Team

**8.**

**Next Steps**



# Next Steps

The Project has been tested as a feasibility. This consultation process is part of a process that considers costs, constraints and opportunities surrounding the idea of a permanent stage in Market Square.

The next stage of design would be to work up an agreed concept proposal in further detail to confirm if the project remains viable. At this stage of design you would typically apply for planning and highways approval. This next stage would therefore include further statutory consultation and more detailed information on particular proposals.

Many people offered thoughts on the development of the design, and many of these comments considered constraints and opportunities discussed during the first round of public consultation. It is vital as the project develops and moves out of the feasibility stage that all such matters remain prominent and are retested. The issues raised in this section correlate well with some of the feedback provided in comparing one option to another – so a summary of some of the issues follows under some key themes.

## Revised Designs

There is a request for high quality design using high quality materials that will last.

People request that the permanent stage is not overbearing in size or use – it shouldn't diminish the sense of open space nor restrict other uses and neighbours. There were questions regarding the stage impact or incorporation into larger temporary events, and to ensure it could be used for other purposes. There was concern that the one size fits all permanent stage might not work for all current and anticipated events.

Many reiterated the need for the permanent stage to be 'in keeping'. There was a number of people interested in a traditional bandstand, although typically located in parkland and often of the Victorian period, and not as old or historic as the market square.

More radical suggestions included incorporating the performance function into the opened-up upper floors of the Falcon Pub. Two requests were made for fountains to be incorporated, and 1 request for additional buildings such as the Ramsey 'small-shops' proposal.

## Design Development

There was interest in how the project could proceed. As a design develops there was a request to see better visuals with more emphasis on the material specification (a usual process would provide this). Some felt these initial feasibility options did not provide the 'wow' factor required to match the town square works – and different people could see how the knee jerk modern vs historic reactions might not get an outcome that St Neots deserves. They asked for a richer narrative and material response and a respectful yet innovative 'bandstand of the future'.

There was a request to make a final design that can uniquely identify the structure and locate it to St Neots – helping to create a visual identity (the typical concept and detailed design process that follows can help secure this outcome).

## Management & Vandalism

There was a lot of concern regarding anti social behaviour and vandalism when the stage is not in use – and whether it needed protection such as locking down or using CCTV. Wood was considered risky due to fire damage – its needs to be 'as vandal proof as possible'.

A permanent raised platform seemed to be the understood priority – with the flexibility to be made bigger for larger performances. The roof covering is potentially a risk of attracting anti-social behaviour after dark.

There was concern about the increased programming of events and their impact on neighbours and other square users. There was a request for an events business plan and public notice of the programme. People wanted the town council consulted during the entire process.

## Maintenance

There was concern that a permanent stage will 'be trashed'. There was a request to know how the structure will be maintained – ensuring a non-slip surface for performers. There was concern around timber finishes.

## Technology & Capacity

A number of comments were raised regarding the use of technology, power and AV. Useful concerns regarding both ambient lighting when not as a stage, but also ensuring the right level of investment to get the best levels of performance. The feasibility study concludes with design work by AV theatre consultants and electrical engineers, so more information will be forthcoming as the project proceeds.

## Impact on the Market Square

The permanent stage feasibility overlaps with the completion of the works to the market square. There was some concern that this additional work will add to the inconvenience and impact upon work just completed.

## Local Resident Support

The free response section of the Stage 2 consultation was only just negative with a 38/36 split between negative and positive comments. Many of the respondents requested an option to say whether they would like to see a stage at all, citing concerns about cost, disruption, maintenance and ASB. There is a need to continue the open discussion through the development of any proposals to ensure that residents continue to feel listened to. We would propose a statement of community engagement to be submitted with any planning application, that would capture all engagement from stage 1 onwards, charting how the design has evolved in line with considered feedback.

## Planning Approval

Market Square is a historic sensitive site. The stage will require planning approval to proceed and this will include statutory consultation. Pre-application engagement with the planning and conversation officer are required as a next step.

## The Preferred Option

The conclusion of the public consultation provided a potential best-fit solution. If it is decided to build a permanent stage then the feedback preferences across the 3 options are to further consider developing a hipped buttercross roof with a weathered copper roof and a stone stage. The layout would have planting integrated along the west side of the stage and ramp, with a store for chairs and performance equipment.

# Appendices

**Appendix A1**  
**Appendix A2**  
**Appendix A3**  
**Appendix A4**  
**Appendix A5**

RIBA Stage 2 Consultation Boards by AOC  
RIBA Stage 2 Consultation feedback Summary by AOC  
Structural Design by Simple Works  
Theatre and AV design by Stage Right  
Stage 2 Cost Estimate by MEA