



Welcome to our public consultation event

Oakham Baptist Church is a growing church, with worship, social and community activities taking place on every day of the week. Hundreds of people pass through the doors every week, for activities as diverse as youth clubs, Lego club, counselling and debt management groups, choral singing, parent and toddler groups, community café and, of course, for worship and prayer.

Since the pandemic, numbers at all of these events and activities have grown substantially, and we now found ourselves in need of more space. We need more space for worship, more space for the social services that we provide and more space that we can make available to the local community.



WORSHIP



SOCIAL



COMMUNITY



The Baptists first started to meet in Rutland in the 1650's, following the upheaval to practices of worship that arose during the Civil War. In Oakham, a local preacher called Samuel Oates stirred controversy in 1646 for the *"gathering together of unlawful, and disorderly assemblies and dispensing of unsound doctrine unto the people"*. Oates lived at 29 Melton Road, opposite the present Baptist Church, and so this part of the town has a long history of being associated with non-conformist worship.

The first documented mention of a Baptist meeting in Oakham dates from 1651, when they were worshipping with a group centred at Burley-on-the-Hill. This meeting was still in existence in 1715 in spite of persecution from the town. From 1766 a meeting was held at a private house in Oakham and births of children from the group began to be formally recorded as Baptists. This meeting included William Smith, who would later become the first minister of Oakham Baptist Church.

A Particular Baptist group from Morcott relocated to Oakham in 1770 and the private meeting house was judged too small. The congregation established a Chapel on the High Street in 1771. On the 5th November 1772, 22 people made a solemn covenant to form a Baptist congregation. This was not without controversy, as worship outside of the Anglican communion was not always tolerated. Purchasing land to construct the Chapel in 1771 was made difficult due to this social stigma, and a private agreement was eventually made to buy a group of old cottages and an orchard.

The building was enlarged in 1830 and the 1836 Oakham Enclosure Map shows the Baptist Chapel within its present site on Melton Lane. A few years after this the burial ground was formally closed for burials in 1857, subject to the terms of the 1853 Burial Act. In 1870 the Chapel was thoroughly restored at a cost of £500.

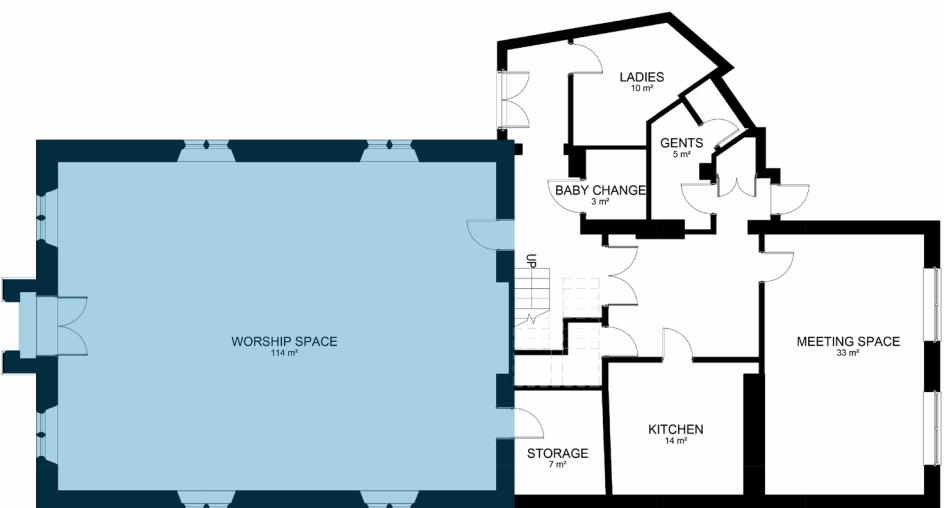
In 1894, a two-storey brick extension was added to the rear of the building to house the schoolrooms.



The rear of the church today, showing the 1894 extension



Congregation members standing at the back of the church during a Baptism service in October 2023.



Existing Floor Plan

Baptism Service 2023

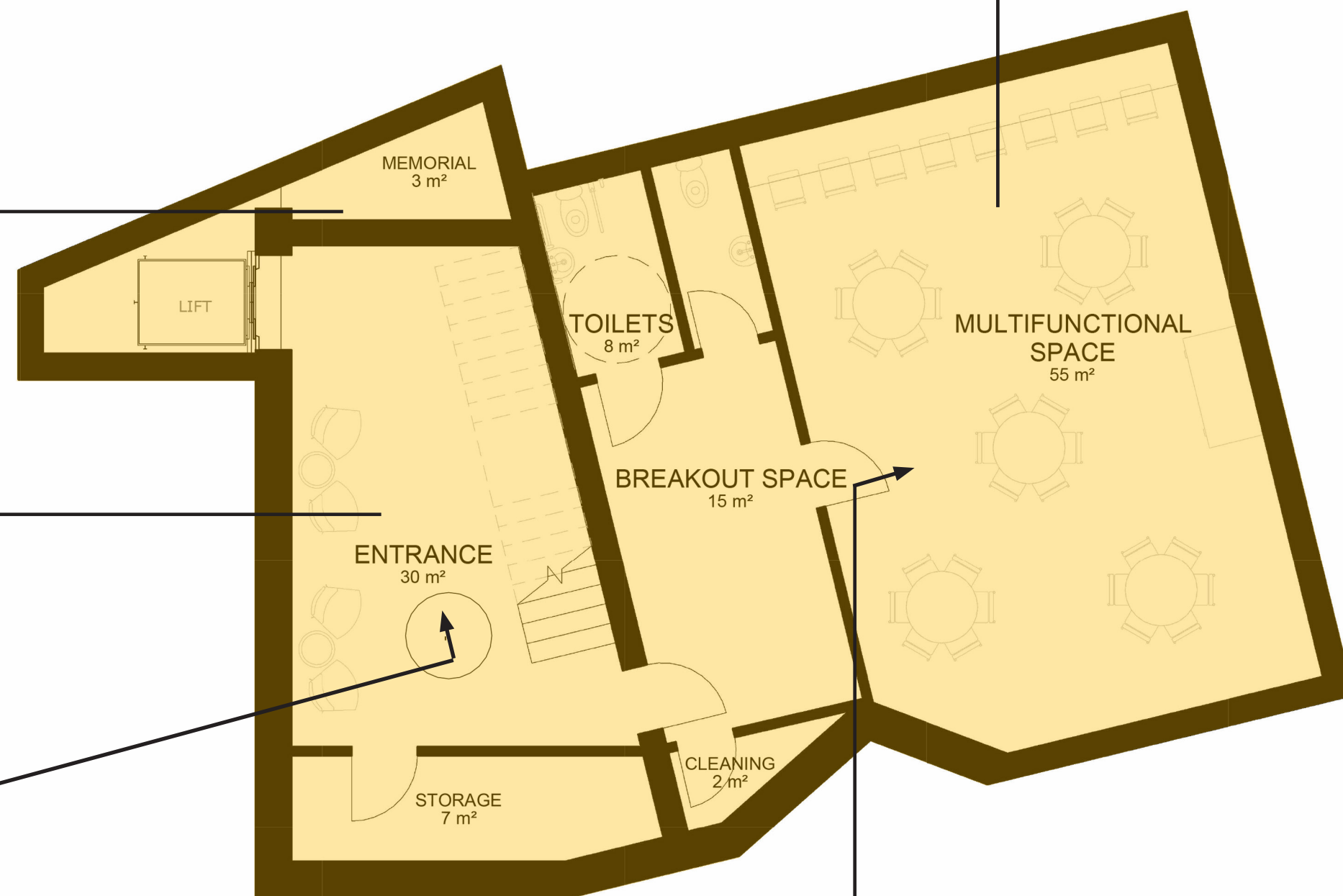
The church is regularly at, or beyond capacity on Sunday mornings.



The proposed rear extension creates the opportunity for a basement that could be used for a variety of purposes. We envisage a youth space, a learning space, a place for quiet prayer and contemplation or a mix of all of these.

The remains from the excavation of the graveyard will be able to be reinterred in the new extension, so that they can stay in the place where they were originally buried. We want to honour the faithful believers who built our church down the years.

Additional spaces include an informal social area, a breakout space, toilets and storage.



Proposed Basement

View from entrance hall

View from door

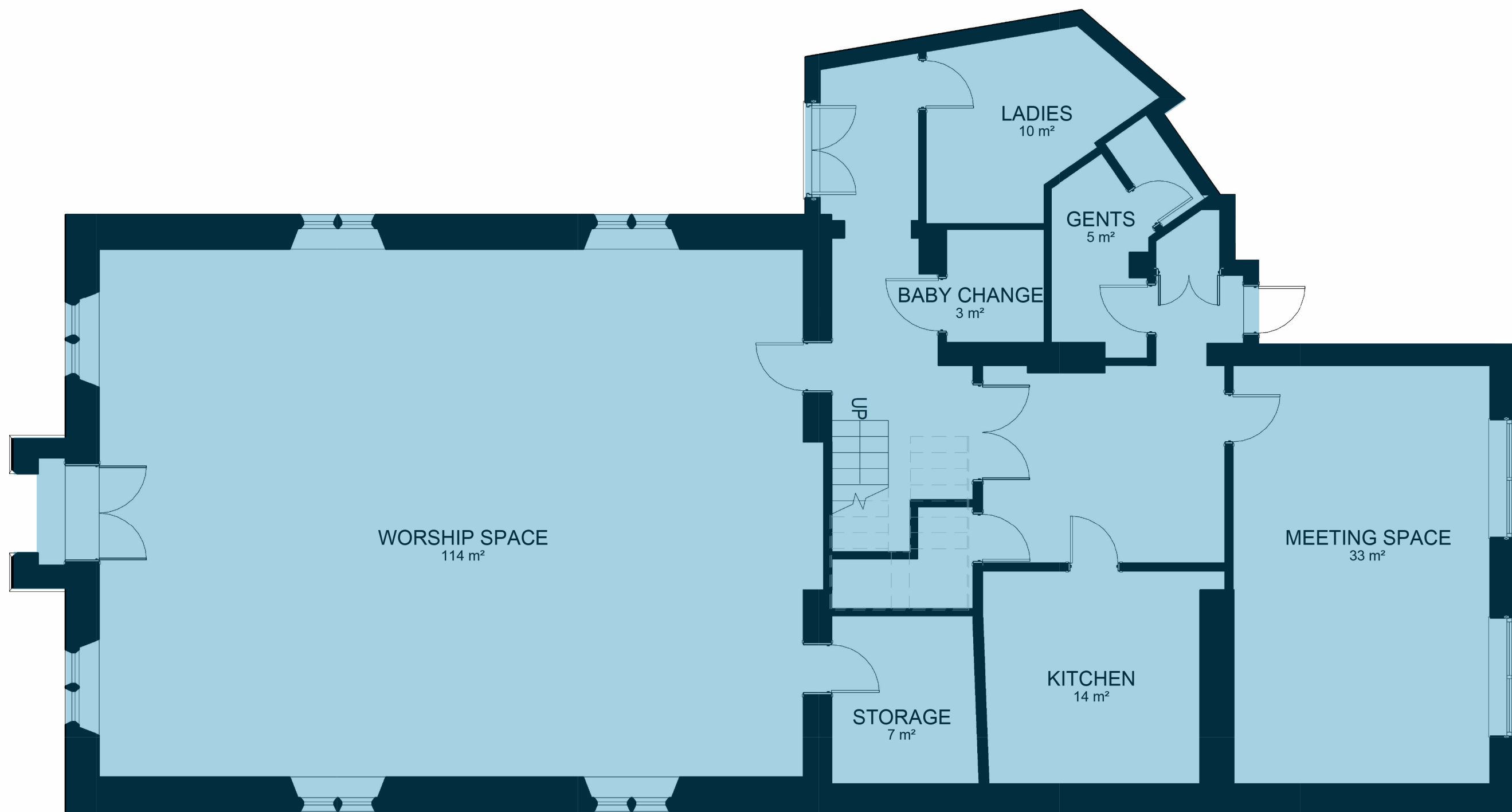




Main entrance lobby from the the door to Westgate car park



Artist's impression of how the new cafe space might be configured

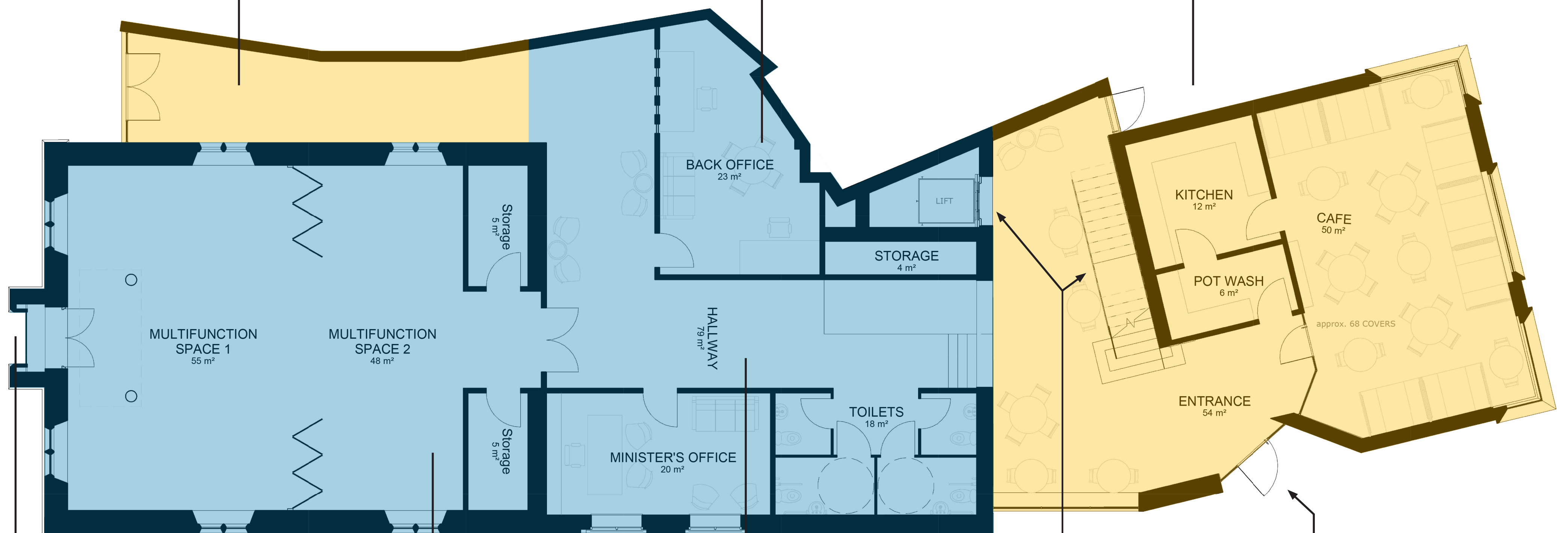


Existing Ground Floor

New main entrance from Melton Road with space to store bikes and pushchairs during public events and activities.

Back office area for staff and private meetings.

Proposed rear extension and relocated rear entrance door, kitchen and cafe area on the ground floor.



Proposed Ground Floor

Existing front entrance to be replaced with a window.

Flexible multifunctional spaces can be divided for coinciding activities.

Ground floor circulation offering wide hallways, public toilets, back office, storage and Minister's office.

The staircase and lift both go up to the worship space and meeting rooms and down to the basement.

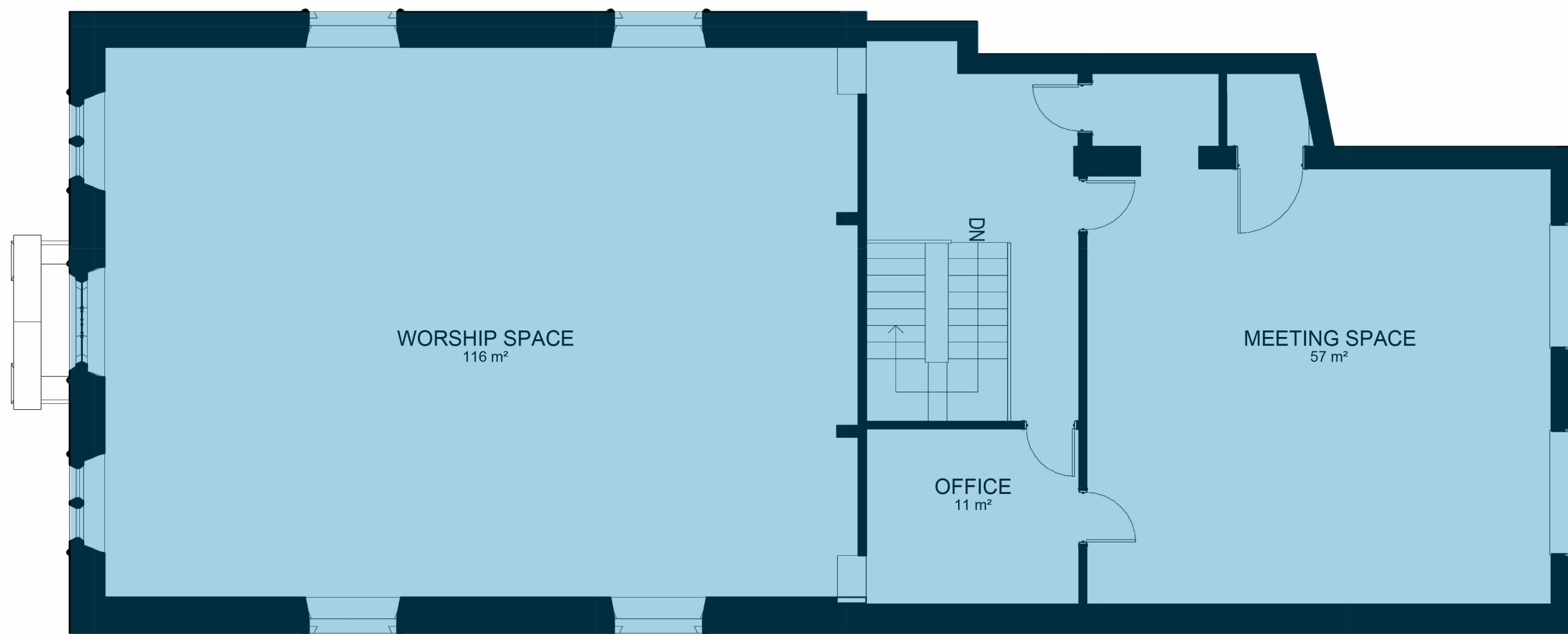
New entrance door from Westgate car park.



The glass atrium creates a new entrance to the worship space



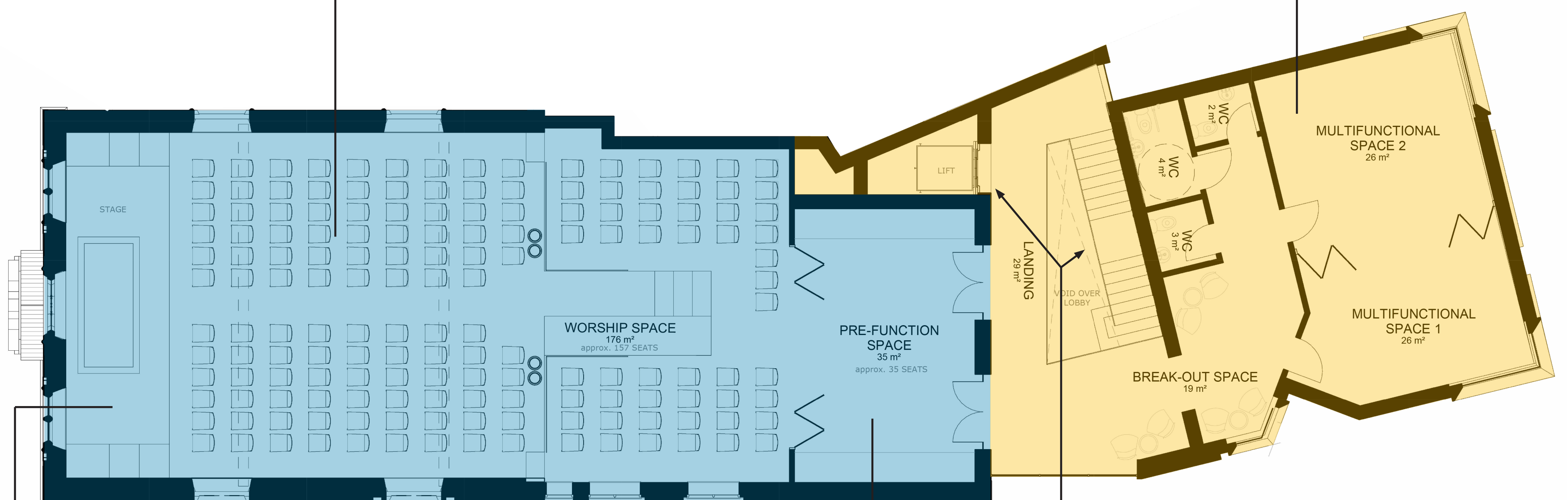
How the multifunctional space on the first floor might look



Existing First Floor

Large, flexible space for worship with a raised area at the northern end and moveable seating to accommodate a range of activities and events.

Proposed rear extension with two additional, flexible, multifunctional spaces.



Proposed First Floor

Front stage with in-built baptistry, which can be covered when not in use for talks and live performances.

Pre-function space / waiting area encouraging social interactions before and after events.

The staircase and lift both go up to the worship space and meeting rooms and down to the basement.



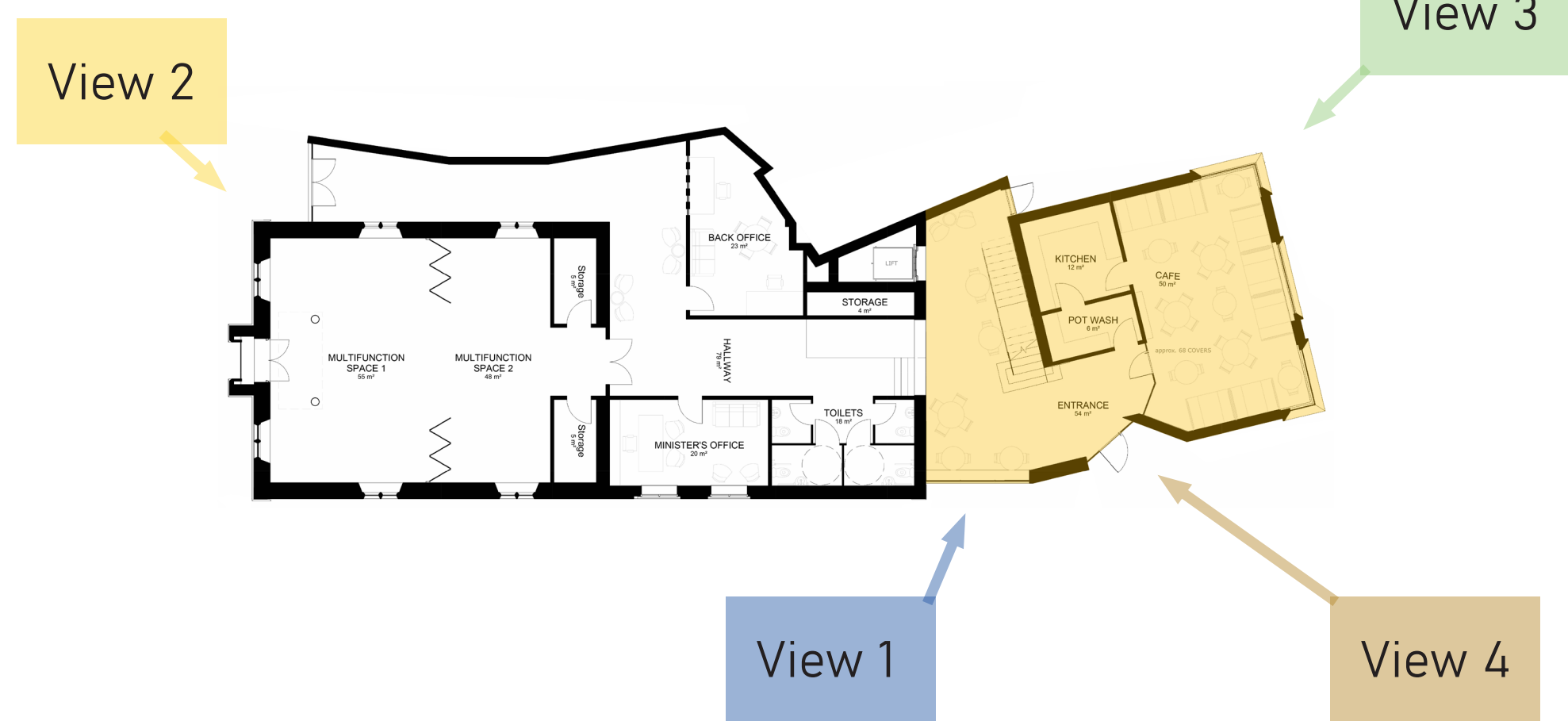
View 1 - The glass atrium and new entrance looking towards Westgate car park



View 2 - The new main entrance to Melton Road



View 3 - The new extension viewed from Westgate car park



Alternative red brick finish to extension

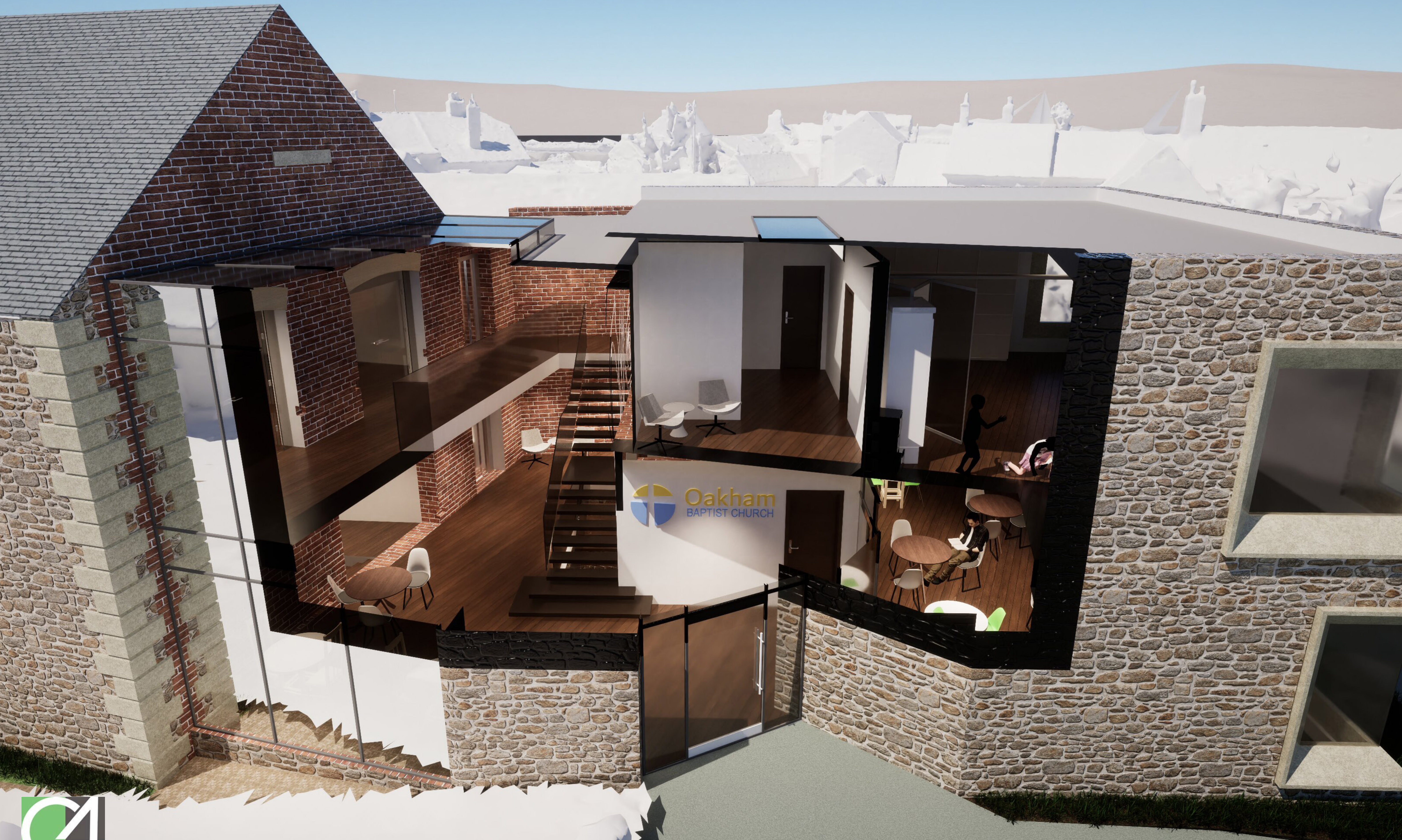


View 4 - The new rear entrance into the glass atrium from the car park



CHURCH RECONFIGURATION











The arches and structural columns seen in the existing church are to be maintained within the new design.

The aim is to preserve and refine the key elements of the church as it is seen today, complementing them with a modern design and selection of materials, creating an elegant contrast between the old and the new.

The worship space has been designed to accommodate baptism services, with the baptistry built into the stage at the front of the church. However, the room is entirely flexible and can be rearranged for a variety of activities and events.

The baptistry can be covered over for other uses of the stage.

Access to the first floor worship space would be via the new staircase or the new lift in the atrium.





There are feedback forms and leaflets with some of the display information reproduced for you to take away to remind you of what you have seen, or to share with people who weren't able to make this event. Copies of the display boards will also be available on the church website - www.oakhambaptist.org.uk/buildingproject

If you want to email any additional comments, or have queries about the scheme, you can drop us an email at respond@oakhambaptist.org.uk

Following the consultation, we will review the comments and feedback that we receive and take these on board as part of the design process as we prepare a planning application. We hope to submit an application for the scheme early in 2024, and, once submitted, the Council will provide the opportunity for formal feedback on the scheme.

Thank you for attending the consultation and providing comments.