

APPENDIX B – BEACH BALLROOM

BEACH BALLROOM AS EXISTING

The Beach Ballroom is a unique art deco venue located on the Promenade of Aberdeen's Beachfront. It was built in 1926 and is a Category B listed building.

The venue first opened in 1929, the culmination of a decade of planning and development along the Beachfront which led to the transformation on Aberdeen into a first class holiday resort equipped with a range of entertainment facilities, including the new dance hall.

The image adjacent highlights the facility as existing and begins to hint at what a spectacular asset the building could be for the City of Aberdeen.

The approach to the building is currently car-dominated, however an enhanced public realm setting would create a grand entrance to the venue and a real sense of arrival, with opportunities in feature lighting to showcase the impressive art deco façade.

The ACC Vision is for the Beach Ballroom to become 'iconic' once more.



Beach Ballroom as Existing

HISTORY & HERITAGE

BEACH BALLROOM ORIGINAL SETTING

The Beach Ballroom was a key element of Aberdeen's Beachfront resort back in its 1930s heyday. The Beachfront destination created a focal point for the city that was well-used and well-loved by locals and tourists alike.

The below picture-postcard images show the venue in its original setting, with a hive of activity surrounding the popular Beach Dance Hall venue.



HISTORY & HERITAGE

AN ICONIC ART DECO BUILDING

The splendour and grandeur of the original interior design of the Beach Ballroom is highlighted on the below historic photographs.

These images showcase the unique and iconic art deco internal features of the main Dance Hall, including the impressive octagonal domed ceiling and the world-famous maple sprung dance floor.



Beach Ballroom Impressive Original Art Deco Interior with Maple Sprung Dance Floor and Central Feature



Beach Ballroom Impressive Original Octagonal Domed Feature Ceiling

HISTORY & HERITAGE

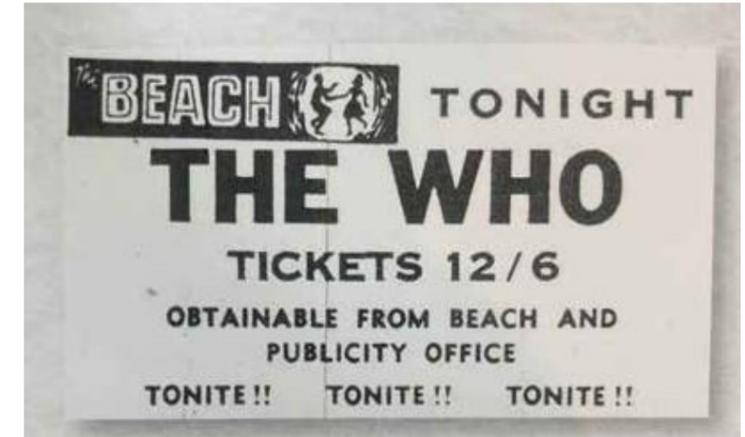
THE PEOPLE'S BALLROOM

The Ballroom was an extremely popular events venue during those early decades through to the 1960s/70s, when it hosted world-famous acts such as The Beatles, The Small Faces, The Who and Pink Floyd.

Known affectionately as 'The People's Ballroom', the facility was a real community asset well-used by the people of Aberdeen. The venue was also a popular tourist destination, known as 'Scotland's Finest Dance Hall' the Ballroom regularly attracted crowds from further afield.



Concert Tickets from the 1960s



Central Ballroom Feature to Celebrate The Queen's Coronation (1953)



A Packed Beach Ballroom Hosted Many Legends of the 1950s, 60s & 70s

DESIGN TEAM SITE VISIT: 13 JULY 2021

Key members of the Design Team visited the site together in mid-July for a guided tour of the Beach Ballroom facility as existing.

The below photographs reflect the current tired condition of the Ballroom building. Although perhaps showing some signs of wear and tear, the building has real potential for redevelopment both internally and externally.



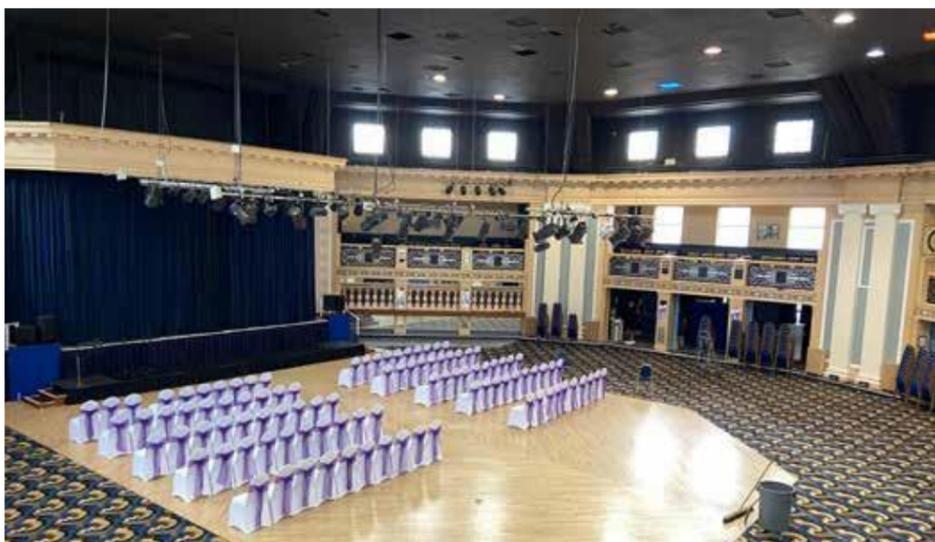
There is no grand public realm setting for the Ballroom and the approach is car-dominated. The main entrance is currently inaccessible for wheelchair users.



The Star Ballroom extension is uncomplimentary to the original Ballroom design. The heavy form sits awkwardly on top of the original building and dominates the beachfront façade.



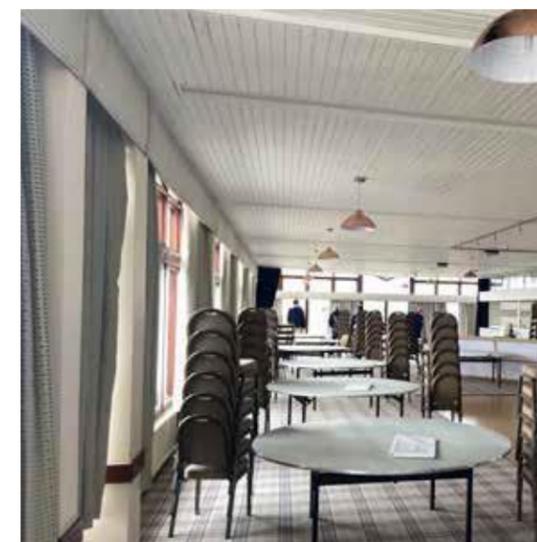
The original art deco façade is in need of maintenance and restoration.



The original feature dome has been completely concealed internally by an uncomplimentary suspended ceiling system.



Elements of the main façade are tired and would benefit from updated signage and feature lighting opportunities.



The interior of the Star Ballroom is dated and uninspiring.



Soft furnishings are dated and in need of replacement.

CONSTRAINTS

Below are a number of project constraints identified by the Design Team following our initial site visit and analysis of the venue as existing:

- Venue not operating to **full potential** / loss making
- Lack of ability to host multiple / **concurrent events**
- No **grand setting**
- No real **sense of arrival**
- **Car dominated** approach / roundabout
- Poor **accessibility** / wheelchair access / no lift
- Lack of quality external / **break out** space
- Does not take full advantage of **beach views**
- Original **feature ceiling** concealed
- Dated **AV, sound** and **lighting**
- Awkward **relationship** to existing **leisure** buildings
- Poorly considered star ballroom **extension**

Following analysis of initial constraints identified by the Design Team, a critique of the existing building floor plans was carried out, highlighting some high-level areas of opportunity and potential for further development.



Beach Ballroom Context as Existing

LOWER GROUND FLOOR

The 1200 capacity main Ballroom will be re-imagined as a state of the art multi-purpose events space.

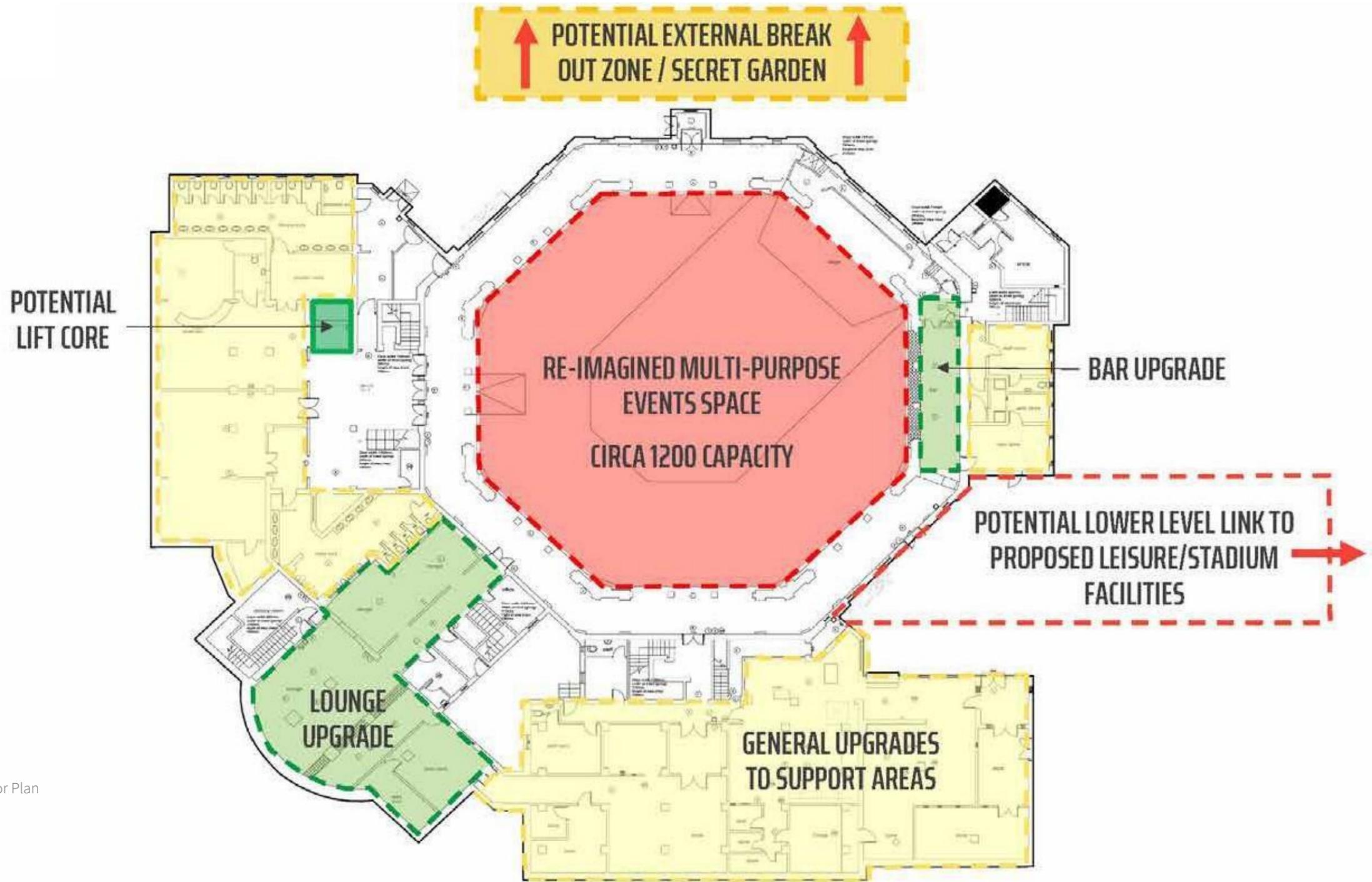
Opportunities for external breakout should be explored to the West of the Ballroom, with the potential for an intimate 'Secret Garden' at lower level, offering shelter from the elements.

The introduction of a central lift core adjacent to the main entrance would improve accessibility down to lower Ballroom level.

The existing bar/lounge areas would benefit from upgrade and modernisation.

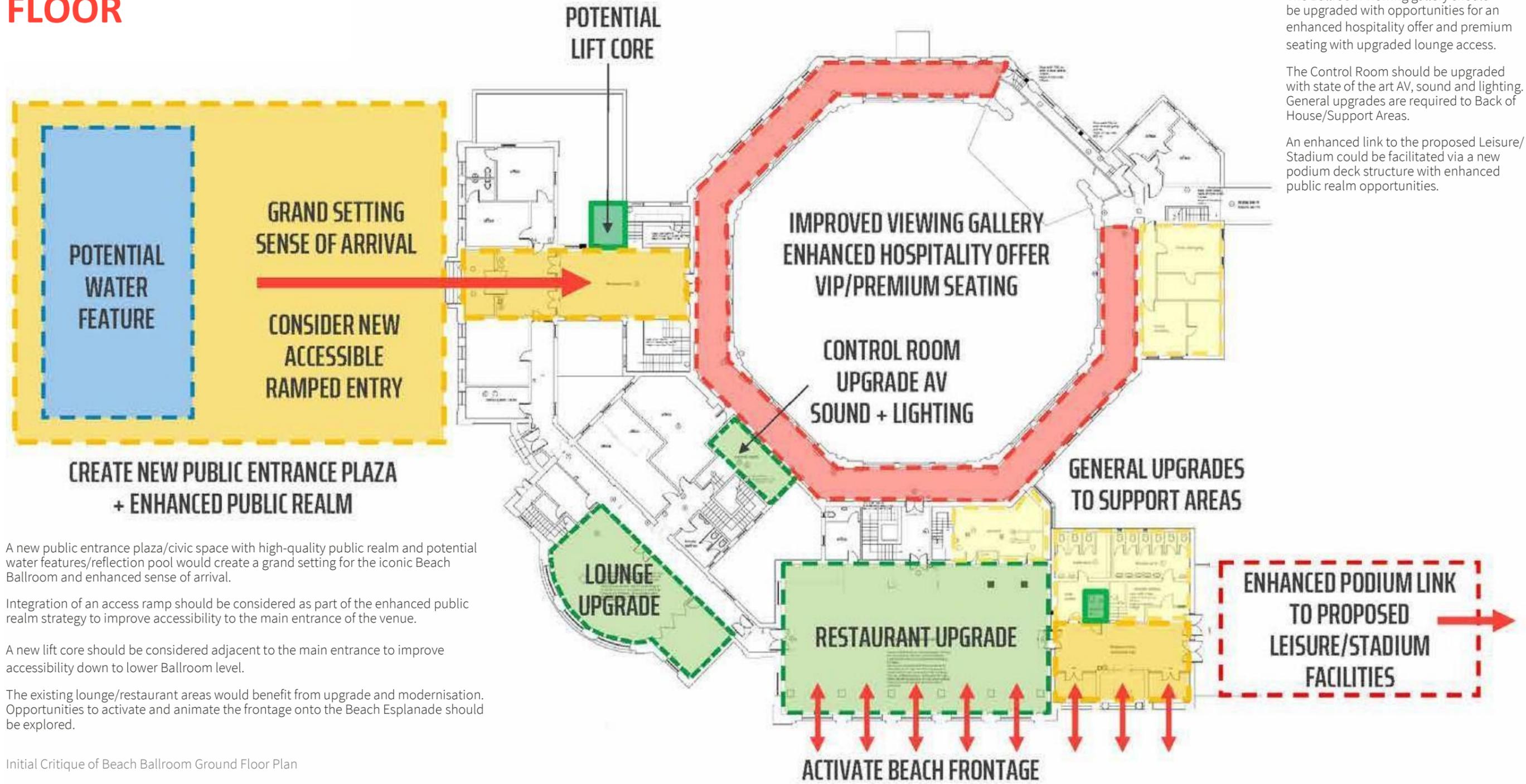
General upgrades are required to Back of House/Support Areas.

A potential lower level link into the proposed new Stadium/Leisure facilities should be explored.



Initial Critique of Beach Ballroom Lower Ground Floor Plan

GROUND FLOOR



A new public entrance plaza/civic space with high-quality public realm and potential water features/reflection pool would create a grand setting for the iconic Beach Ballroom and enhanced sense of arrival.

Integration of an access ramp should be considered as part of the enhanced public realm strategy to improve accessibility to the main entrance of the venue.

A new lift core should be considered adjacent to the main entrance to improve accessibility down to lower Ballroom level.

The existing lounge/restaurant areas would benefit from upgrade and modernisation. Opportunities to activate and animate the frontage onto the Beach Esplanade should be explored.

Initial Critique of Beach Ballroom Ground Floor Plan

The Ballroom viewing gallery should be upgraded with opportunities for an enhanced hospitality offer and premium seating with upgraded lounge access.

The Control Room should be upgraded with state of the art AV, sound and lighting. General upgrades are required to Back of House/Support Areas.

An enhanced link to the proposed Leisure/Stadium could be facilitated via a new podium deck structure with enhanced public realm opportunities.

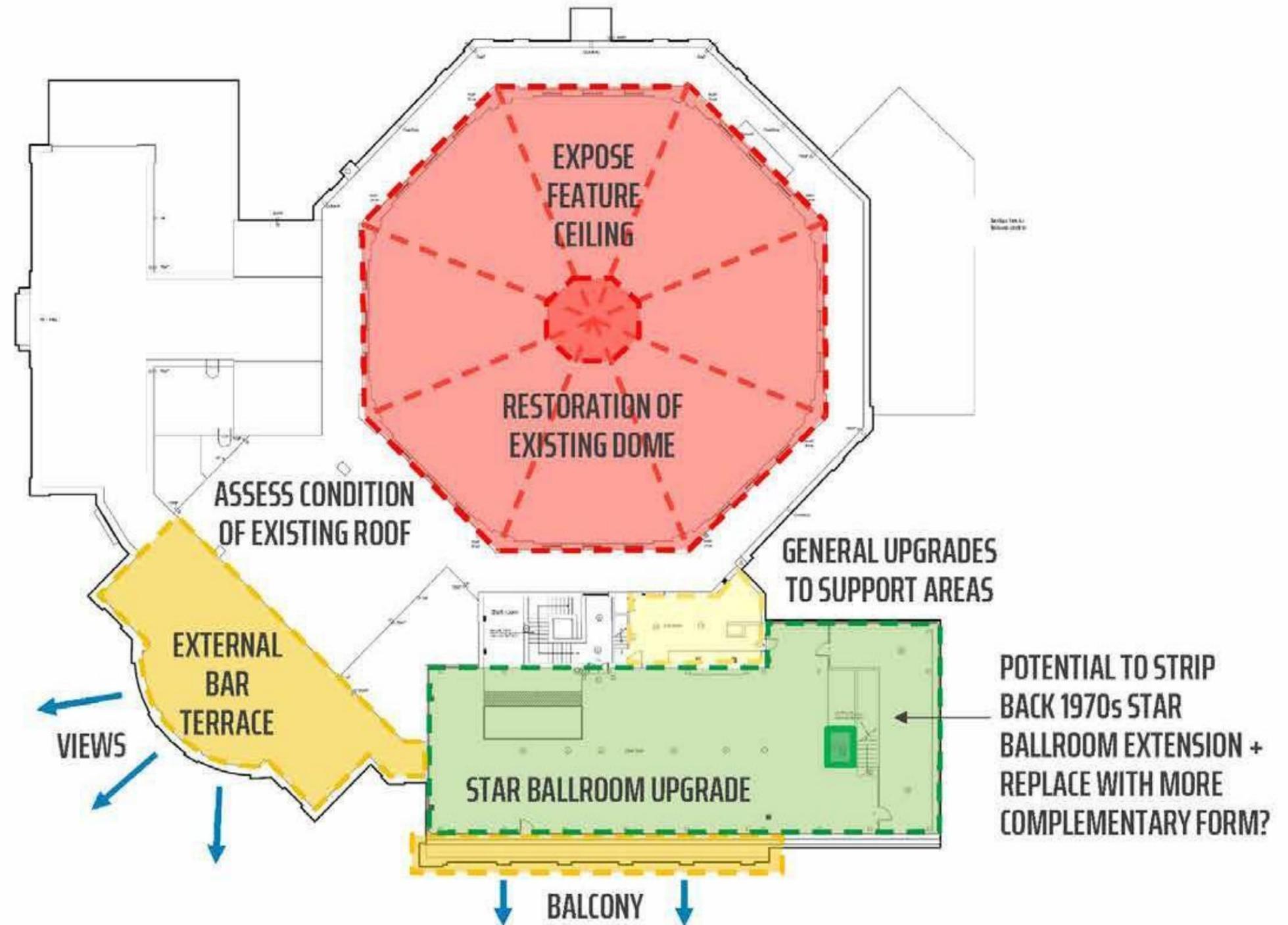
FIRST FLOOR

The impressive existing dome structure and existing feature ceiling should be exposed and restored back to its former glory.

The condition of the existing flat roof should be assessed to explore opportunities for a new external terrace area which could be utilised as a Sky Bar with spectacular views over Aberdeen Beach.

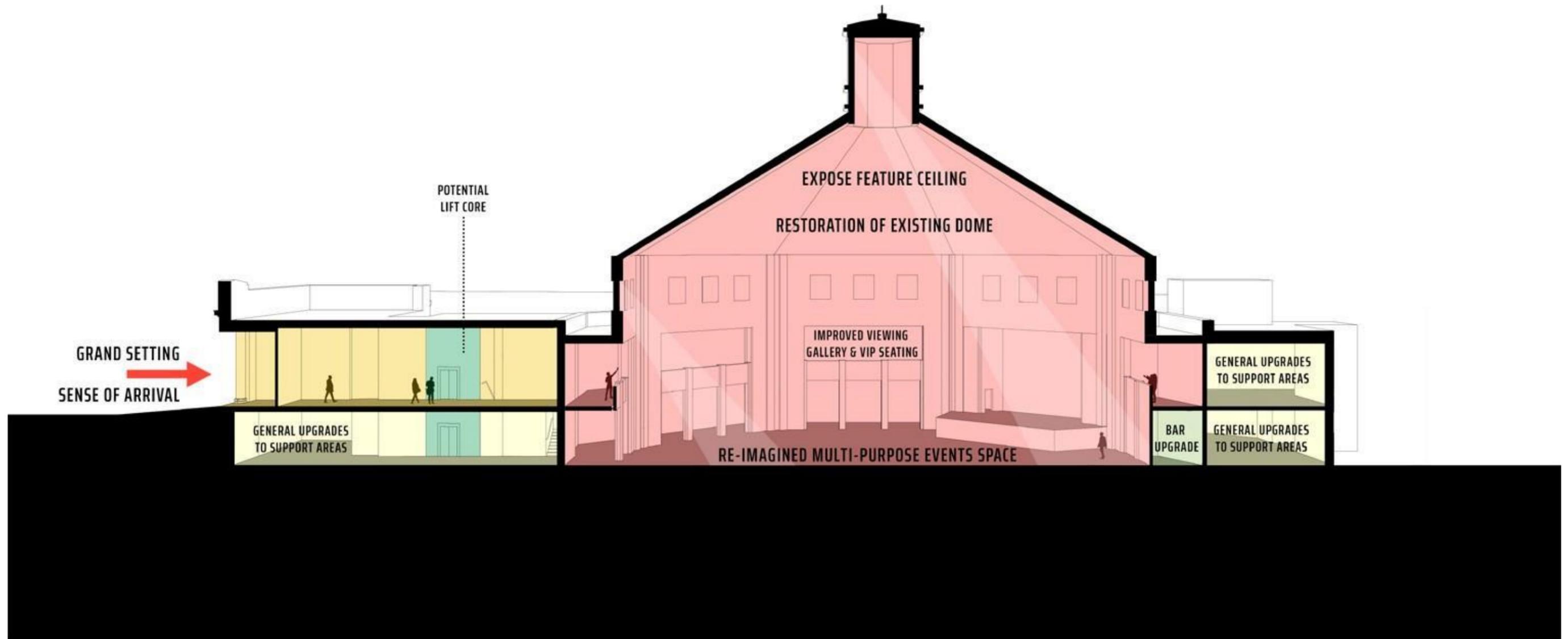
There is potential to strip back the existing Star Ballroom extension and replace with a lighter, more complementary form.

The existing balcony area is currently unused – this should be upgraded to provide external breakout for the enhanced Star Ballroom, taking advantage of Beachfront views.



Initial Critique of Beach Ballroom First Floor Plan

SECTION DIAGRAM



Initial Critique of Beach Ballroom Section

OPPORTUNITIES

The ambitious vision for the Beach Ballroom is to create an iconic, flexible, multi-purpose events space capable of hosting a variety of different types of events, standalone or concurrently, improving the commercial performance of the venue.

The precedent examples adjacent give a flavour of initial opportunities to be explored which could transform the venue, building upon and enhancing the current offer for the 1200 capacity events space, which would be complementary to larger scale events held at The Event Complex, Aberdeen (TECA).

- Create a focal point for the Beachfront Masterplan: **'The Jewel in the Crown'**
- An iconic **multi-purpose** events space
- Capable of hosting multiple / **concurrent** events:
- Live **entertainment** / concerts
- Pre-match **hospitality**
- **Fanzone** / family entertainment
- Upgraded **wedding** venue
- Potential **Esports** overlay
- **Creative Industries** Centre (as Legends Report) with integrated **teaching** facilities at stadium
- Potential fashion / **music** / drama / **film & TV** / photography courses, in partnership with **local universities**

We look forward to developing these ideas in partnership with Aberdeen City Council.



Live Entertainment



Hospitality



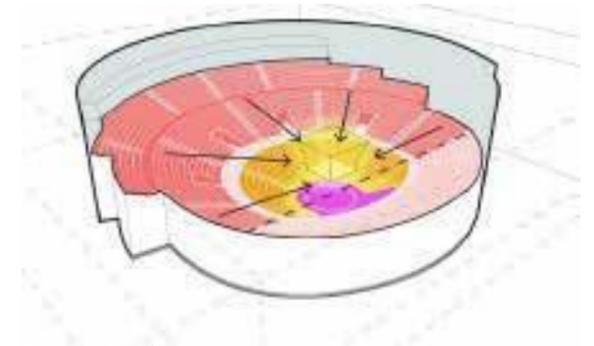
Fan Zone



Wedding Venue



Esports



Esports Overlay Geometry



Education Partnership



HALO Digital Innovation Centre



BBC Scotland HQ



Creative Industries



Live Broadcasting



TV Studio

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

The Design Team suggest a number of potential improvements/study areas for the Beach Ballroom that should be explored in more detail moving forward:

- Celebration of Entrance - creating a **grand** setting for the building with a real sense of arrival and enhanced public realm
- Improve **accessibility** / wheelchair access and install lift core
- Potential for **water feature** / fountain / reflection pool
- Enhanced **Link** to proposed leisure / stadium facilities
- Upgrade & **restoration** of external impressive art deco facade
- Dome restoration / expose and enhance original **feature ceiling**
- Improved **viewing gallery** & enhanced **hospitality** offer (VIP / Premium seating)
- Upgrade to **state of the art AV**, sound & lighting **technology**
- Utilise **external balcony** / roof areas to create bar / **terrace** taking advantage of **spectacular views** of Aberdeen Beach
- Potential for **external break-out** space, creating more intimate / sheltered private external space (Secret Garden)
- External **feature lighting** opportunities to showcase unique art deco architectural features on building façade
- **Re-branding** and **marketing** opportunities to align with **100 year anniversary** (+60 years since **The Beatles** played)
- Potential to strip back **star ballroom extension** and replace with more **complementary** and lighter roof form



Restored Building Facade



The adjacent images highlight precedent examples which illustrate the potential improvements suggested for the Beach Ballroom.

Celebration of the main entrance will create a more grand setting for the venue and an enhanced sense of arrival. The existing art deco facade will be carefully restored to its former glory. The impressive concealed feature dome structure will be exposed and restored with an enhanced premium gallery viewing experience at the upper level. An external terrace will take advantage of spectacular Beach views with opportunities for an exclusive Sky Bar.

At lower level, a more intimate external space will provide opportunities for further external break out. Lastly, the unique features of the original art deco facade could be further enhanced through the creative use of external lighting to bring the building to life at night.



Feature Ceiling & Gallery





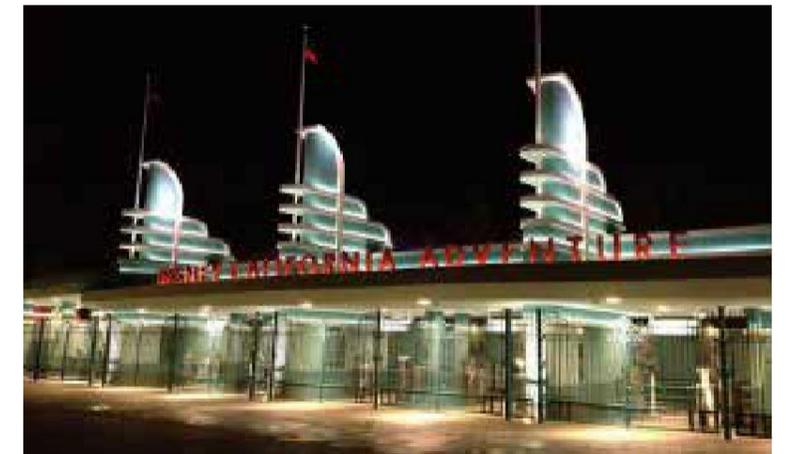
External Terrace



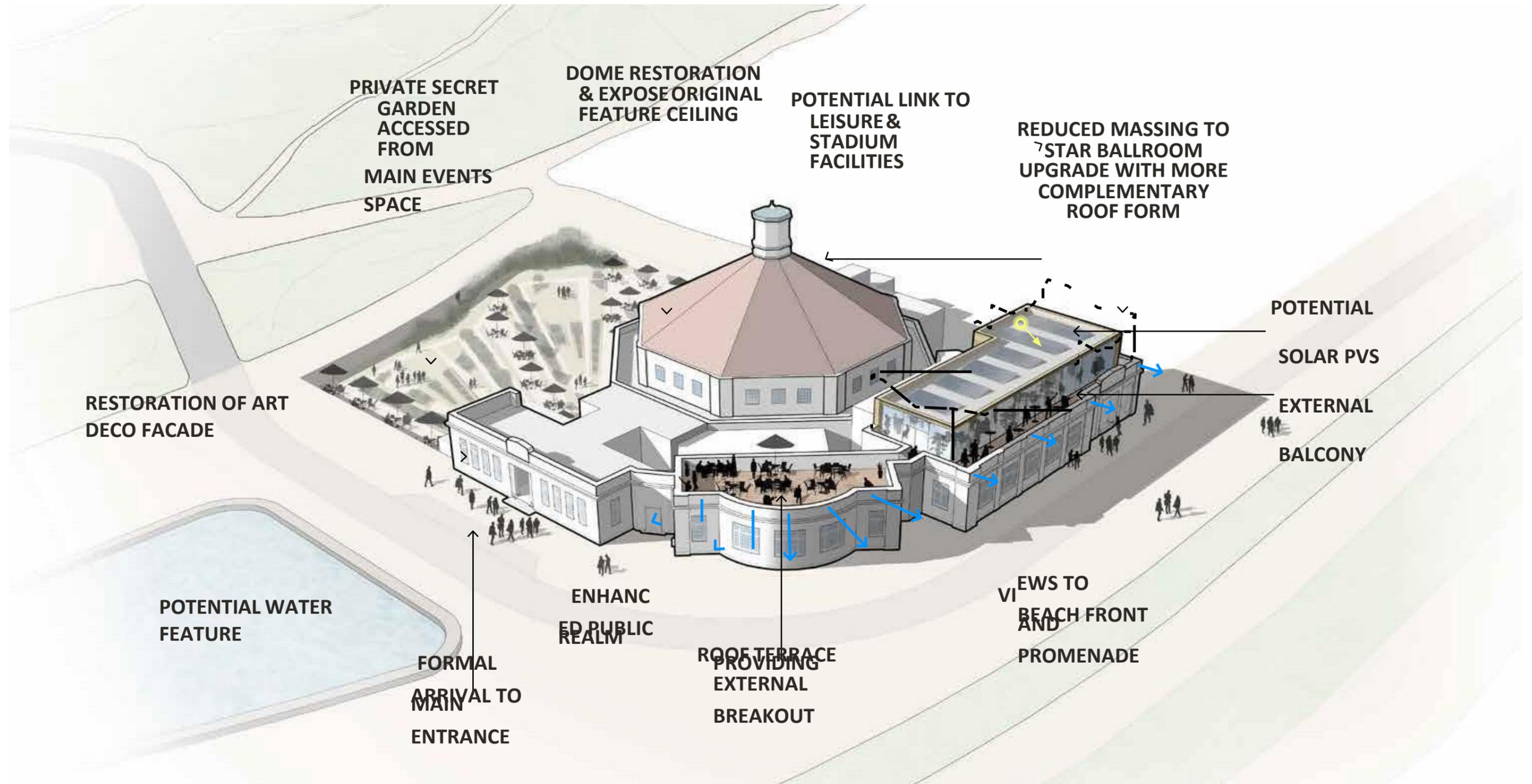
External Break Out / Secret Garden



Feature Lighting



CONCEPTUAL MASSING STUDY



Initial 3D Massing Study Exploring Beach Ballroom Opportunities

Iterations are to be checked on site before any work is put to hand. © 2024

