

PETERHOUSE BOATHOUSE SCHEME DEVELOPMENT



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1.0 Introduction

At our last meeting, the Committee came to the following conclusions:

- 1.1 The ground floor proposals for boat storage were considered successful, with the wall between the Vllls bay and small boats bay removed (and replaced with a line of columns) to allow more efficient use of space.
- 1.2 Maintenance bay space was felt to be tight. We were asked to try to give a little more room for working on a boat on slings by increasing the width of the space. This would probably be by moving and probably reducing the Boatman's dedicated office, kitchen and toilet space and reducing the incursion of the entrance hall/stairwell.
- 1.3 It was agreed that blade storage could be towards the back of the boat bays, rather than at the front. We all concluded that achieving vertical storage by having a pit in the boat bay was impractical, but we agreed to investigate vertical storage at the rear by using roof space. If vertical storage proved impossible, horizontal racking was considered a possible alternative by most members.
- 1.4 Outside, the simpler arrangement of parking and handling of the changes in level at the site entrance were considered more successful. We felt that it would be preferable to find storage space for the tub away from the large trees to the west (in order to avoid the risk of root damage), and promised to do so.
- 1.5 There was much discussion of the first floor layout and our proposal to keep the original clubrooms as "social" spaces (a relatively neat club room and a more robust coaching room), with the new gym and changing rooms in the extension. More particularly, it was noted that the layout included quite a generous landing circulation space from which everything else was reached. While it was agreed this wasn't the most efficient layout, the Committee felt that we should aspire to a spacious and uplifting building, rather than simply a utilitarian one.

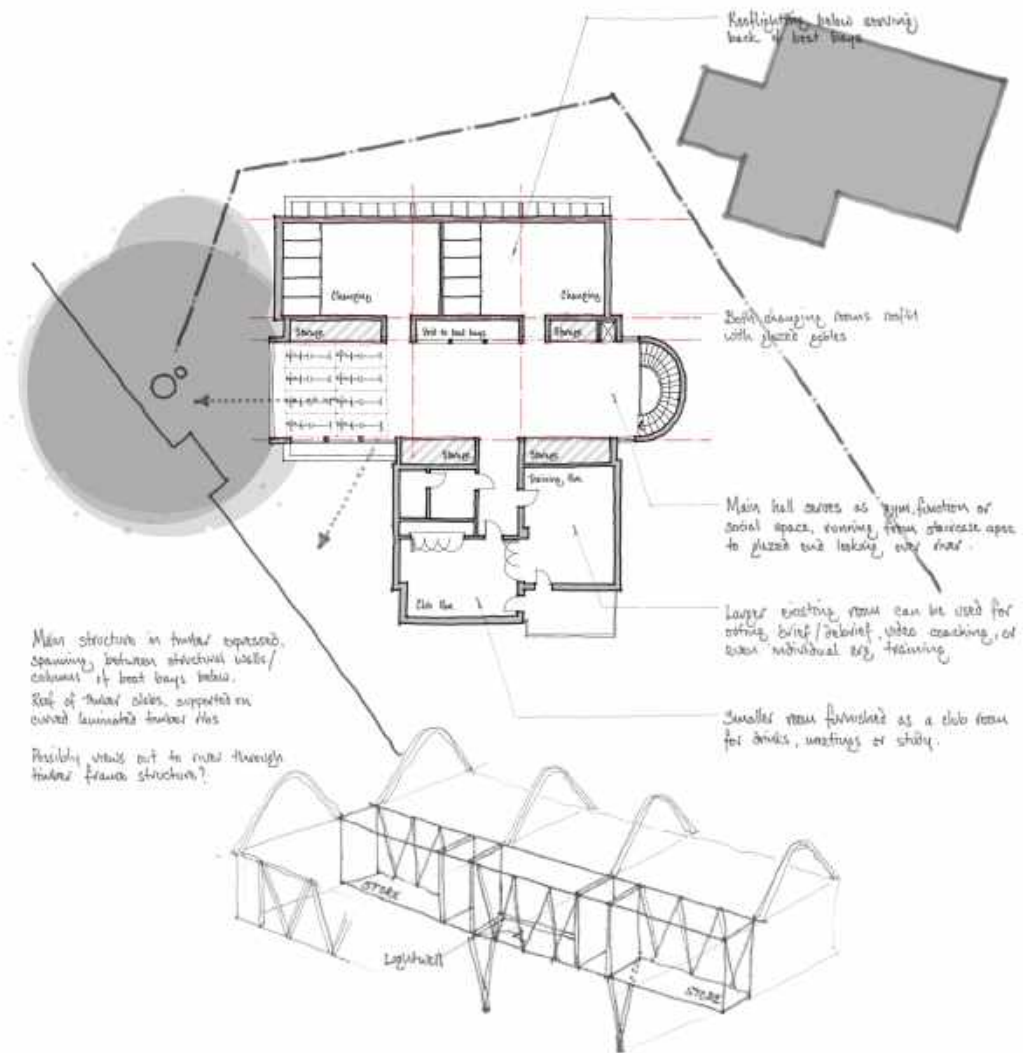
- 1.6 The downside of a relatively generous layout, of course, is that it requires larger building envelope. We all remained aware of the potential impact of any extension on the outlook from No. 45 Pretoria Road. To try to minimise this impact, we were asked to reduce the size of the entrance extension on the east side as far as possible. It was suggested that this might be possible if we were to move the accessible toilet from the entrance lobby to the first floor (where it would also be available to club room users); this might also help us to increase the space in the maintenance bay.
At the same time, we agreed that the changing rooms should remain as large as possible. It was felt that the shower and toilet provision might be reduced slightly, but that plant room space might need to be slightly larger.
- 1.7 The Committee's final conclusion was that you preferred the more modern stylistic treatment, rather than the alternative "Arts and Crafts" style approach. We felt this gave us much more freedom in placing openings, detailing for energy efficiency and so on - and set of the original boat house as a historic "pavilion" at the front of the building.

2.0 Subsequent development

- 2.1 Although the Committee meeting in spring/early summer had to be postponed because of Covid lockdown, we have worked to develop the scheme with feedback and guidance from the Bursar.
- 2.2 During discussions with the structural engineer we tried to develop an overall structural strategy for the building that would avoid too many down stand beams below the first floor, limiting headroom in the boat bays. One possible approach investigated was to use the east-west walls on the first floor to span across the boat bay divisions. Using the walls structurally in this way would limit the scope for large openings, however, and so didn't work with the previously-proposed north-south orientation of the gym (running from front to back of the extension above the small boats bay).

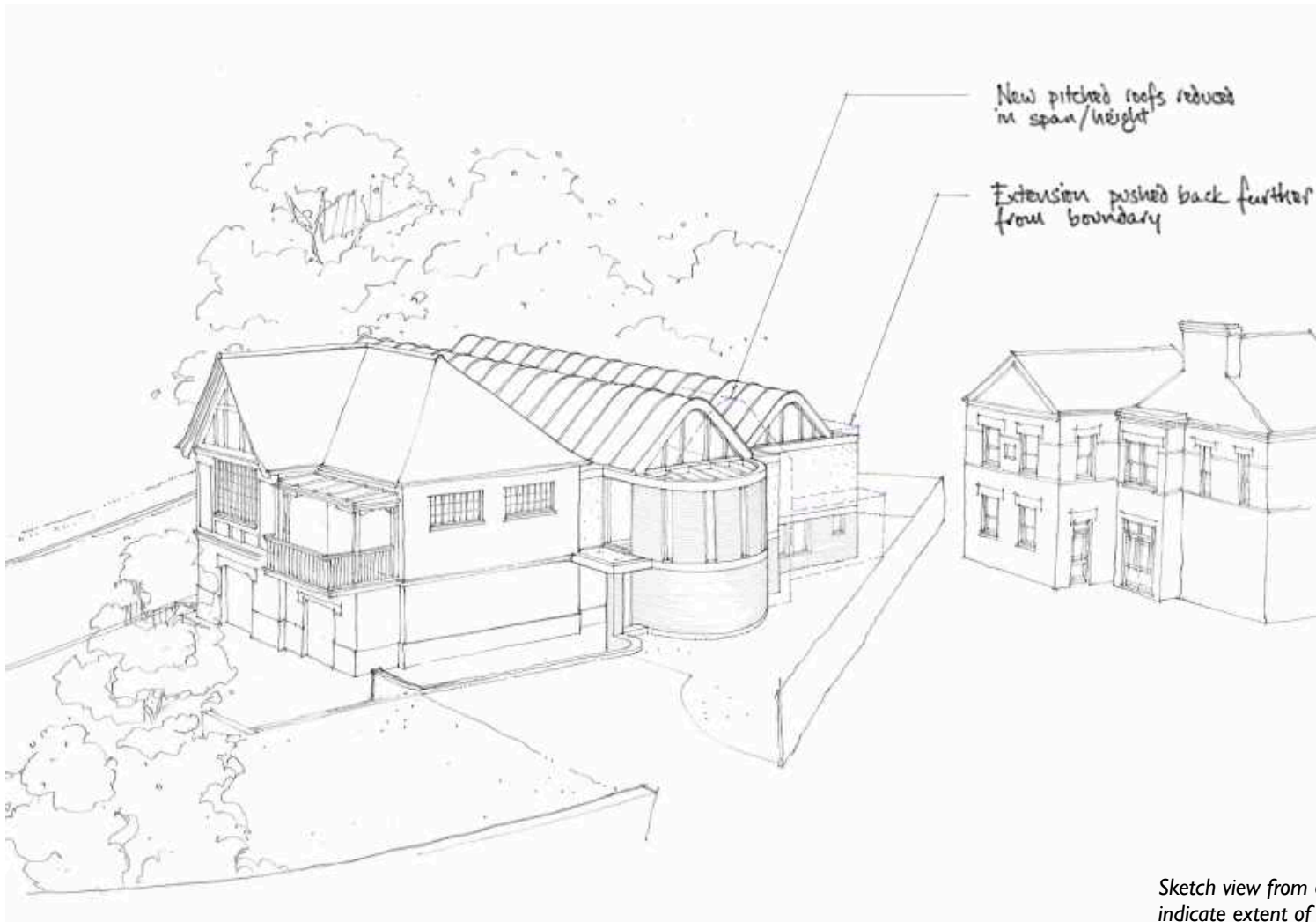
2.3 Although this approach was incompatible with our previous layouts, then, it did seem worth exploration. Running the main spaces east-west (and perhaps making the main walls structural) might be more efficient and would correlate closely with the roof forms we had been sketching. Expressing the structure of the frame could give the spaces architectural interest, too. Finally, by ordering the first floor accommodation as two main east-west ranges, one accommodating the main gym space and one the changing rooms, we might be able to provide more accommodation on an even smaller footprint, drawing the first floor even further away from No.45 Pretoria Road. The key would be to combine the gym space with the large and generous first floor circulation that has always characterised the scheme.

2.4 At the same time, we revised and simplified the proposed new entrance and stair. The accessible toilet, previously on the ground floor, was moved upstairs, freeing additional space for the maintenance bay and making the toilet available to serve social functions or guests. The stair now rises in a brick drum, giving a little more generosity but still avoiding any encroachment on the sightline from No.45 towards the river.

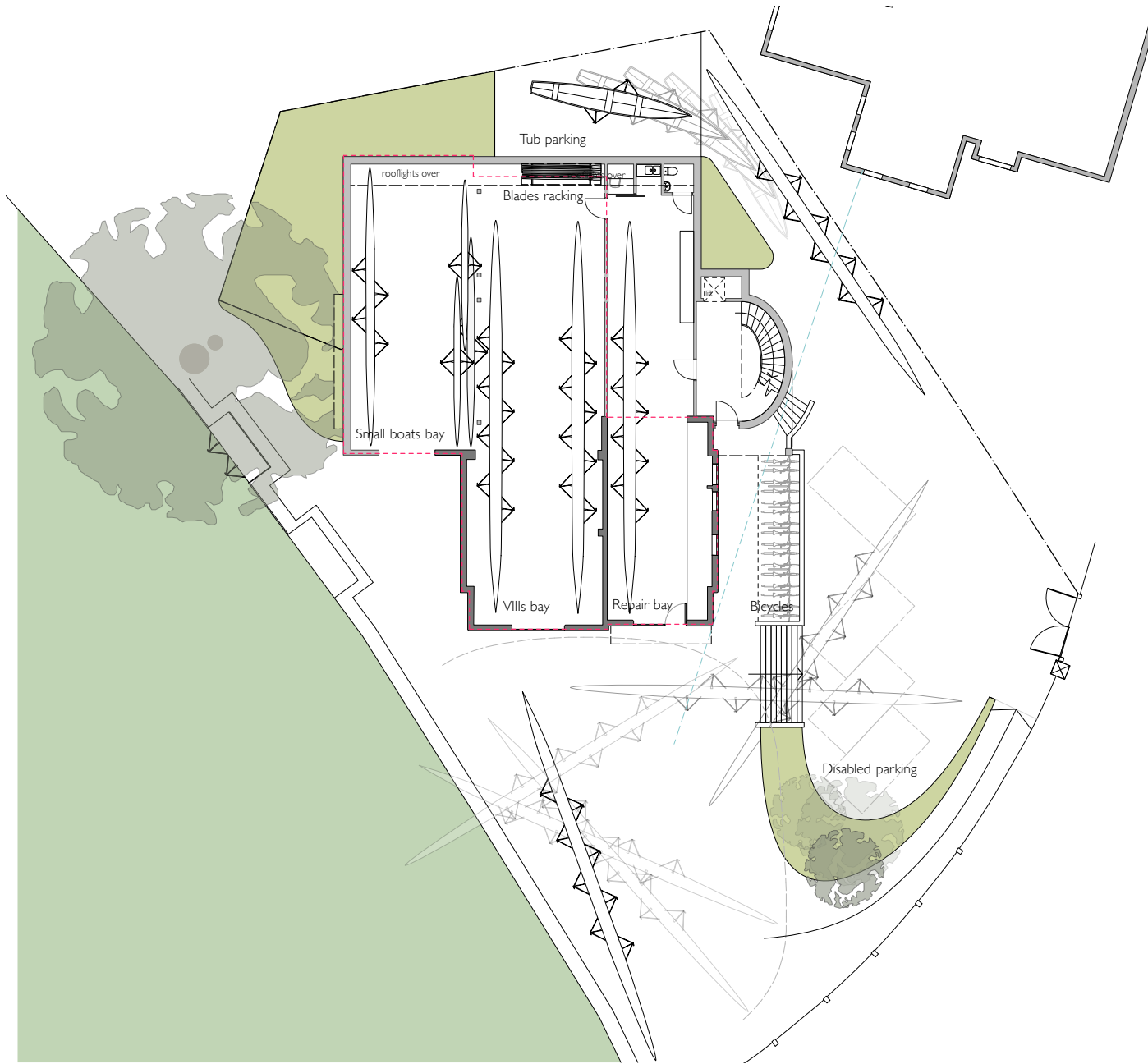


Schematic development sketch, Spring 2020

Structural first floor walls spanning east-west across the boat bay divisions

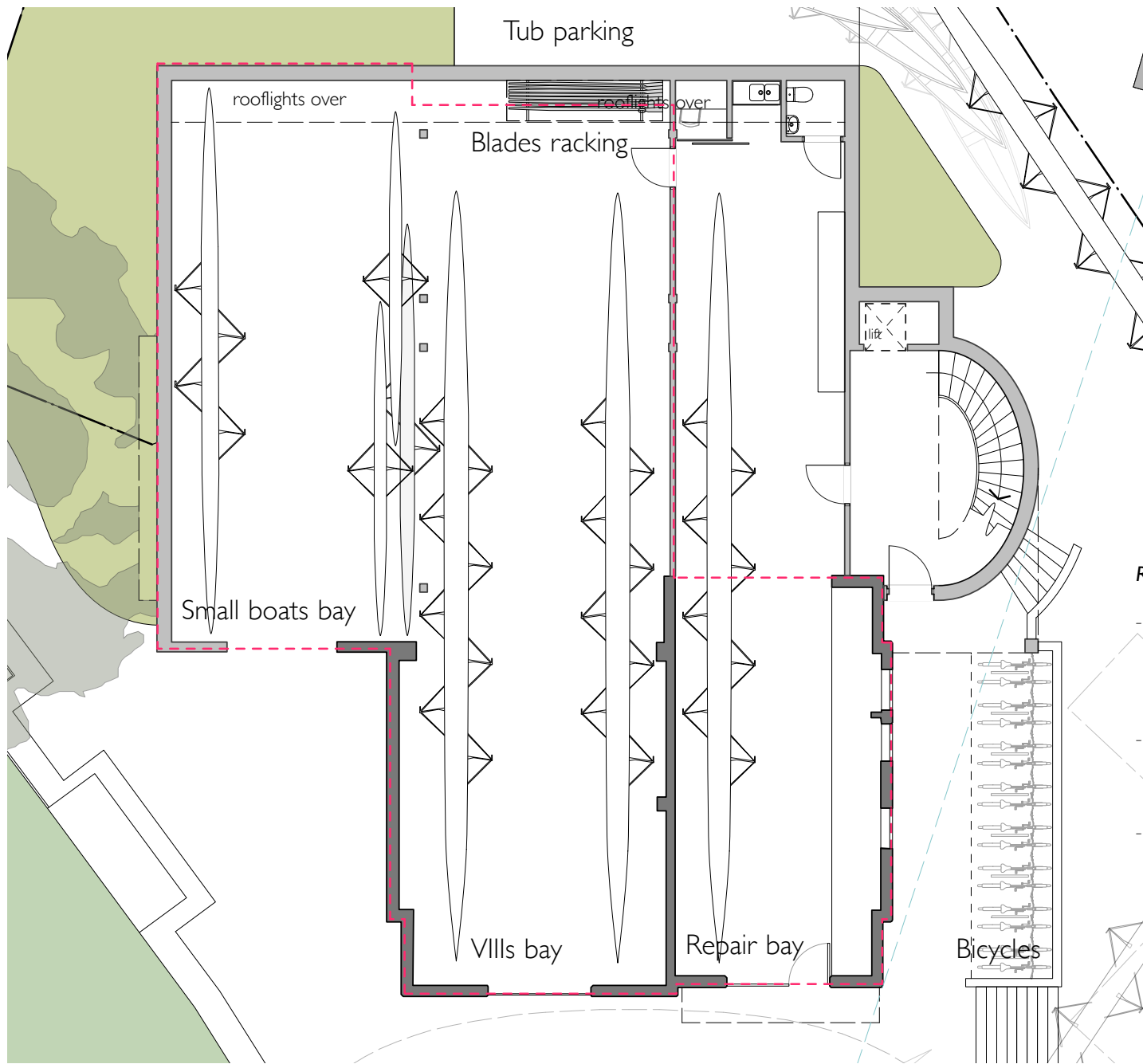


- 2.5 With this approach, the gym is no longer a separate room but would now be accommodated in the large, central hall at the heart of the building. This hall follows the open pitch of the roof, running all the way from the stair drum at the east end to the glazed gable at the west; it would be a very striking space. Much of the time, ergs could be set out at the west end of the space, with views out of the glazed west gable and south towards the river, ready for pre-outing warm-up and coaching; other gym equipment would be racked in generous storage down each side of the space. Changing rooms (which are a little more spacious in this arrangement) and the older part of the boathouse open off this hall.
- 2.6 Provisional feedback from the Bursar was that this new layout appeared to offer promise, with more efficient use of space and greater separation from No. 45, and that we should investigate further. We were asked to try develop the scheme to allow access to the changing and club rooms without disturbing a full crew warming up or training on ergs. These slight changes are included in the plans below.
- 2.7 The more efficient layout has allowed us to reduce the size of the proposed extension a little. The first floor has been pulled in on the north and east sides, reducing the impact on No.45 and allowing a strip of roof glazing to admit daylight at the north end of the boat and maintenance bays. Outside, the site layout is large unchanged, although the reduced footprint now gives enough space for storage of the tub to the north of the building.
- 2.8 Although the use of the main hall as gym space would allow flexibility to accommodate larger training groups on occasion, it might make it slightly more awkward for one or two rowers to come and complete a piece on an erg while a crew is training. This may be a relatively infrequent problem, but it could be easily tackled by rolling an erg or Rowperfect machine into the larger of the front clubhouse rooms. Characterising the larger existing space as a training room (for individual erg sessions, video coaching, crew briefing and debriefing and so on) and the smaller room as a more comfortably furnished club room (for relaxation, private study or refreshments) might be a good way of making the most use of these spaces.
- 2.9 Having the gym in the centre of the building like this, rather than shut away in a separate space, may seem a little counterintuitive. Athletic effort is central to the entire purpose of the boathouse, though, so it does seem quite appropriate. Overall, this layout suggests a more flexible way of using the building - with a main multi-function hall and smaller spaces that can be connected or used separately. It is an approach that could provide more useful accommodation in a slightly smaller building footprint, with more effective use of the spaces we have available, all within the a very similar outer envelope to that we have shown the Committee before.



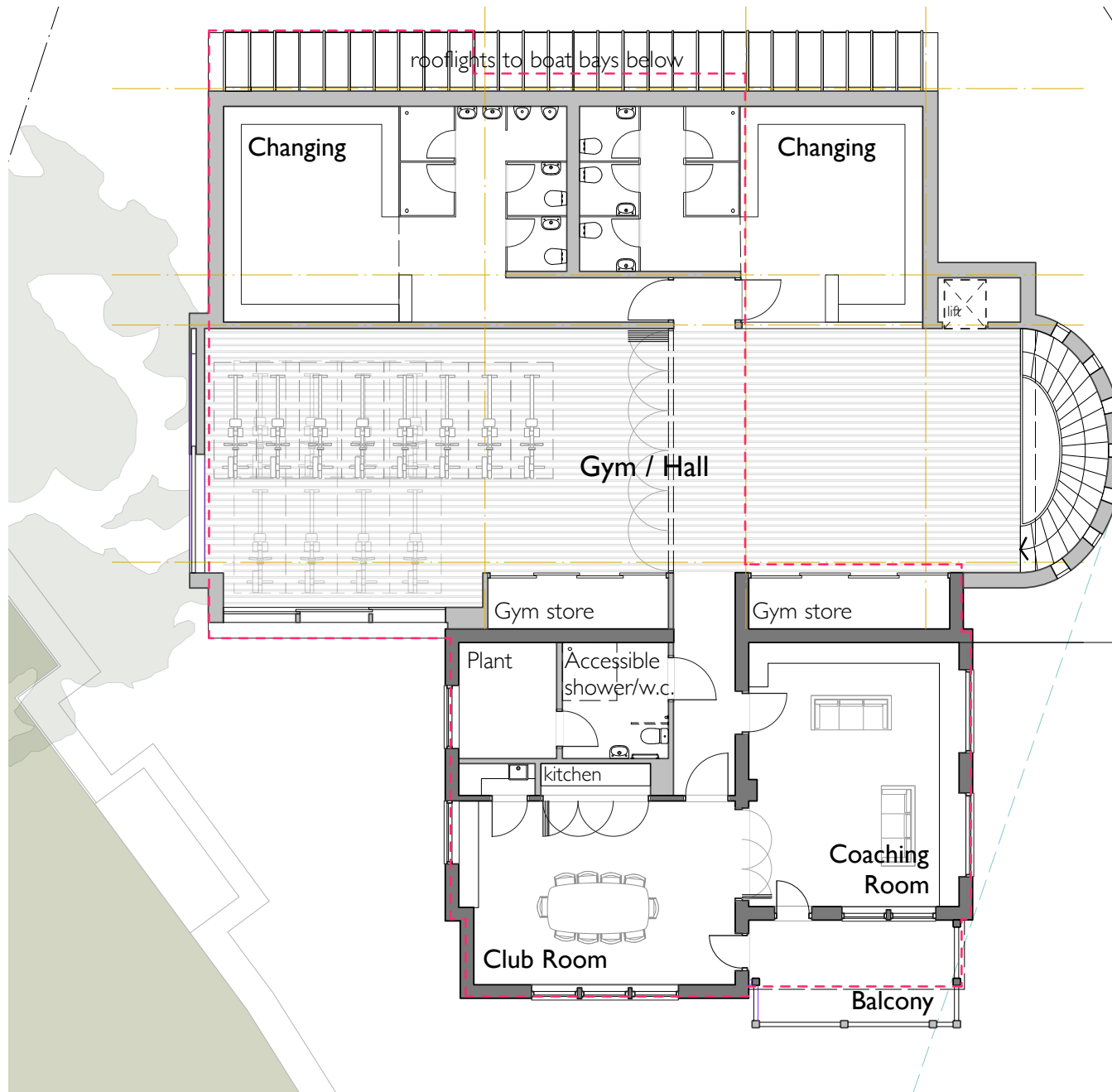
Revised Site Layout Plan

- Reduced building footprint allows space for tub storage to the north
- Cycle parking for two crews immediately outside the main entrance



Revised Ground Floor Plan

- Entrance hall has become an apse or drum with the stair winding up the curved wall, preserving existing sightlines from No.45
- Moving the accessible toilet to the first floor has increased working space in the Maintenance Bay
- Roof glazing drops daylight down into the north end of the boat bays and boatman's facilities



Revised First Floor Plan

- Stair rises into a main hall with a glazed and folding central divider.
- West half can be used as a dedicated erg space, or hall can be opened up for larger groups, circuit training or social events
- Original boathouse provides a coaching room for debriefing or individual erg training, and a club room for refreshments or private study
- The two rooms can open to each other for social events
- Both changing rooms are lit by high glazed gables. A flat ceiling over the toilet and shower areas can accommodate services above



