

Public Art Commission:

Acoustic Curtain for the North Kensington Social Justice Archive

Section 1: Project Background

- 1.1 – Background
- 1.2 – Overview
- 1.3 – Who we're looking for
- 1.4 – Fabricaton Scope
- 1.5 – Performance specification

Section 2: Tender Return

- 2.1 – Price
- 2.2 – Quality & Methodology

Appendices

- Appendix A – Existing Drawings
- Appendix B - Visual

1.1 - Background

For more than 150 years, North Kensington has been at the heart of campaigns for social justice. In 2022, members of Friends of North Kensington Library and Grenfell United proposed the idea of creating a Social Justice Archive – a place where these important stories and community histories could be preserved and shared.

This year, that vision is becoming a reality. Kensington & Chelsea Archives & Local Studies already holds archive collections that link to social justice campaigns throughout North Kensington's history. These stories are told through historic documents, photographs, oral histories, written accounts, artworks, community posters and more.

The Social Justice Archive at North Kensington Library aims to make these archive collections, stories and experiences accessible within the heart of North Kensington.

As part of the development of the archive space at North Kensington Library, we are seeking to commission an artist or artist collective to create a large-scale artwork for an acoustic curtain that will become a permanent feature of the archive space.

1.2 - Overview

The commissioned work will function both as a significant public artwork and also provide acoustic separation from the wider library, creating a more intimate environment for workshops and events.

As one of the first things visitors encounter on entering the archive, the artwork should respond to the histories, themes and values represented within the local archive. Artists are encouraged to draw inspiration from the archive in whatever way best supports their practice. This may involve direct engagement with archival material or a broader conceptual response to the archive's themes.

We welcome a broad range of artistic approaches. Proposals might include printed illustration, graphic or photographic work, textile-based practice, woven or embroidered approaches, or other suitable methods. We are equally interested in proposals that incorporate participatory or community-led processes where these form a meaningful part of the artistic concept.

Following appointment, the successful artist will undertake a period of research within the archive and work closely with the project team to develop the final design before moving into fabrication.

1.3 - Who We're Looking For

We welcome expressions of interest from artists and artist collectives working across a range of disciplines, including visual art, textiles, illustration, graphic design and socially engaged practice.

We particularly encourage applications from artists with a connection to North Kensington and/or whose practice explores themes of social justice.

1.4 – Fabrication Scope

The successful artist will work collaboratively with the project team to develop the commission from an initial concept through to a final design & fabrication.

The applicant should quote for the below scope of works:

- Undertaking research within the local archives and with official RBKC archivists
- Developing an initial concept into a resolved design through dialogue with the project team.
- Developing a construction methodology - What materials are proposed to be used, will there be handmade / woven elements, approach to curtain tie back, will there be printed elements? Etc.
- Attending meetings with the Social Justice Archivist and Jan Kattein Architects
- Producing artwork suitable for fabrication as an acoustic fire rated curtain.
- Fabrication and installation of acoustic curtain on site
- Fabrication and installation of curtain tie back on site.
- Accept 6 months defects liability for the design from date of completion/hand-over.

The applicant will be responsible for the purchase of all materials, relevant tools and equipment, logistical arrangements including handling and delivery (both to site or to specialist suppliers for professional back coatings) and vice versa.

The curtain **rail** will be installed by others and will be in place ready for hanging upon completion. The curtain rail specified (installed by others) is of type: Doughty Engineering Curtain Rail. The Doughty Rail (a low-profile curtain track system) supports a maximum weight of 60 kg.

Size of the curtain fabric. The physical opening to the Social Justice Archive access point is 2.73m wide and 3.94m high. To ensure the curtains longevity, the curtain should be clear of the finish floor by 100mm. Height = 3.7m. To achieve a pleated quality, the length (width) of the fabric of the curtain would be 1.5x ~3.5m = ~5.25m.

Measurements of the curtain fabric to be, L: ~5.25m x H: ~3.7m.

1.5 – Performance specification

Fire

The design and performance of the curtain will need to meet the relevant UK fire standards for furnishing and fabrics. The relevant fire standards in question are Crib 5. By law under the UK Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, Crib 5 compliance is mandatory in commercial environments to protect the public and slow down the spread of fire.

There are two widely accepted methods by which to achieve Crib 5. When submitting your tender return, please make it clear which methodology you are looking to adopt.

Method [1] – Using a [*****] flame-retardant fabric as the curtain fabric in conjunction with a [******] fire rated internal curtain lining.

Method [2] – Using an untested or bespoke fabric. Once completed, the curtain fabric must be sent to a specialist supplier to apply a [*******] professional back-coating. This process applies FR coating to the fabric achieving FR rating, used in conjunction with a [******] fire rated curtain lining. Method 2 provides more flexibility in terms of fabrics or artistic approaches.

The following materials / products must achieve the following performance specifications:

[*] flame-retardant fabric specs / certifications

- UK Upholstery Fire Safety Certificate: BS 5852:2006
- BS 5852 Crib 5
- Fabric weight: $\geq 140\text{gsm}$

[] fire rated internal curtain lining specs / certifications**

- UK Upholstery Fire Safety Certificate: BS5867 Part 2B
- BS 5852 Crib 5
- FR blackout with polyester fleece
- Acoustic performance - $\geq 9\text{dB}$ reduction
- Fabric weight: $\geq 380\text{gsm}$

[*] professional back coating specs / certifications**

- BS 5852 Crib 5
- BS5867, DIN 4102 B1 & B2, and NFPA 701
- Water-based, halogen-free FR textile coating OR for synthetic fabrics, back-coat with either acrylic resins or polyethylene terephthalate (PET)
- coating applied off-site

Weights

The design of the curtain should also allow for a weighted hem to improve the drape of the curtains. Your response should also include allowances for supply and install of curtain lead weight tapes along the full length of the curtain. Lead weights should be folded and stitched into the hem.

2.0. Tender Return

2.1. Price - 30%

We ask that you please return a **total price only**, alongside details on any fixed and time-based preliminary charges, in response to the information contained within the briefing documentation and appendices. A full breakdown of costs marked against each scoping item is **not** required for this tender. Price for the following but not excluding costs associated with artist's fee, material costs, fabrication costs, logistics incl. deliveries and any anticipated project expenses.

Additionally, please submit together with your tender:

- your available start date and required timescales to complete the works

2.2. Quality & Methodology – 70%

Please provide a written response to the quality questions below. You may include photographs, graphic information, precedents and case studies of previous projects. Please note that any pages submitted that exceed the stated page limit cannot be considered.

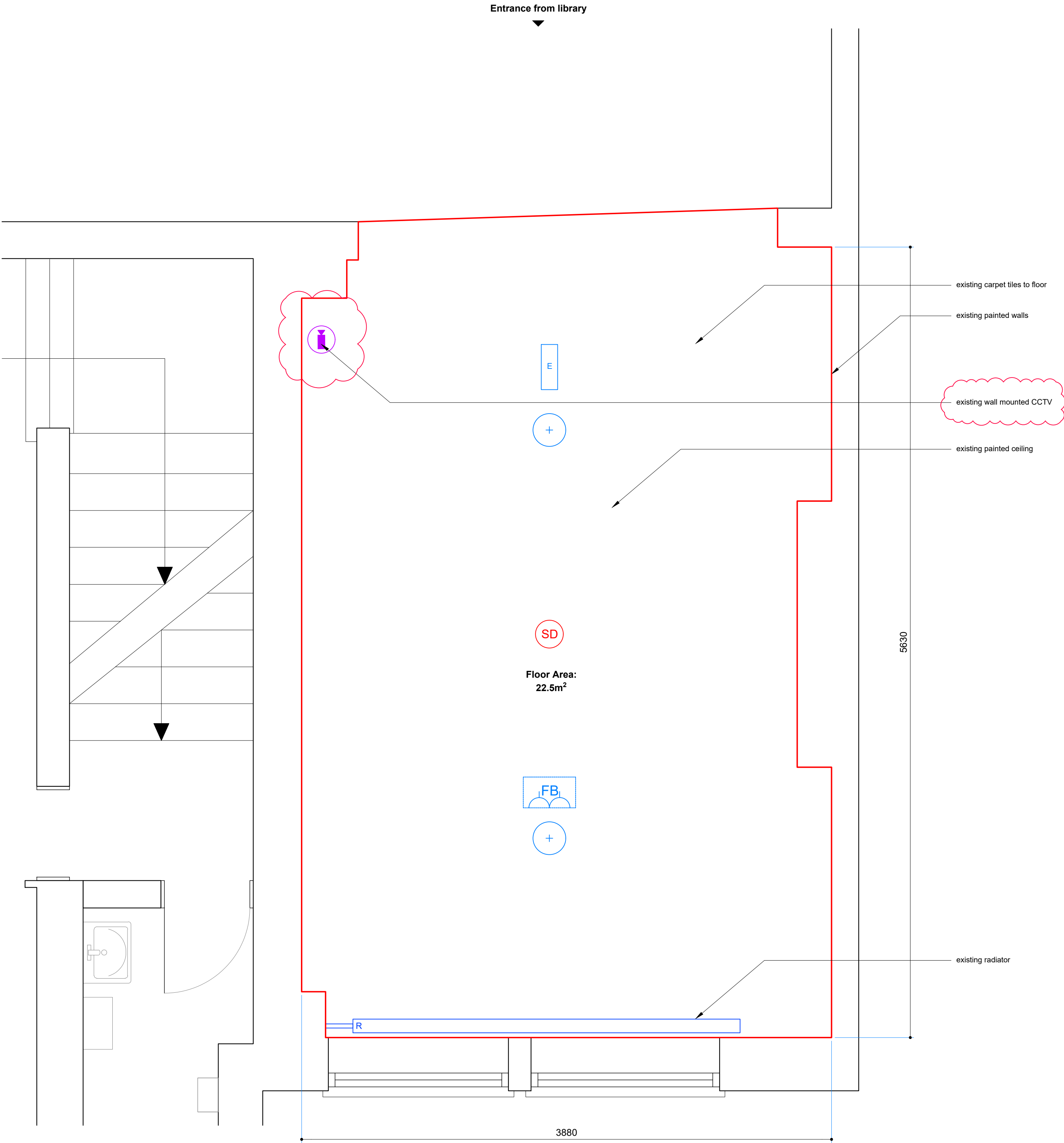
1. Provide details of your experience in providing and demonstrating experience of delivering high-quality public art, socially engaged or participatory projects. Please submit three examples of recent relevant examples, detailing the project title, key dates, details of your role, CVs, summarised key project details and a delivery methodology would be welcomed.
[10% - 1 x A4 page maximum]
2. Set out your methodology for how you will deliver the works set out in the brief and specification. Please detail how you propose to effectively deliver the works and your approach to socially engaged and or participatory projects, including outlining your proposed concept and artistic approach. Please explain how you intend to ensure that all work is completed to a high standard and how you will manage the works programme to guarantee completion on time.
[10% - 1 x A4 page maximum]

3.0. Appendix

Appendix A – Existing Drawings

Appendix B - Visual

Appendix A:



01 Existing Floor Plan

Scale: 1:20

Key:

— site boundary

ELECTRICAL KEY

- + pendant light
- E emergency luminaire
- FB floor box outlet
- SD smoke detector/fire alarm
- CCTV

General Notes:

- Any discrepancies between drawings to be reported to the Architect immediately.
- All dimensions to be checked on site. The contractor must rely on their own site measurements taken before commencing fabrication of all joinery items. Any impacts on setting out of joinery to be reported and approved by Architect before fabrication.
- Dimensions denoted on drawings are for pricing purposes only.
- Do not scale from this drawing. Use figured dimensions only.
- Copyright owned by Jan Kattein Architects.

Client
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Project name
Social Justice Archive

Project number
286

Drawing name
Existing Floor Plan

Drawing number	Scale	Revision
101	1:20	A
Drawing status	Page size	Date
Tender	A1	27 03 2026

Drawn by
TB

Checked by
AJ

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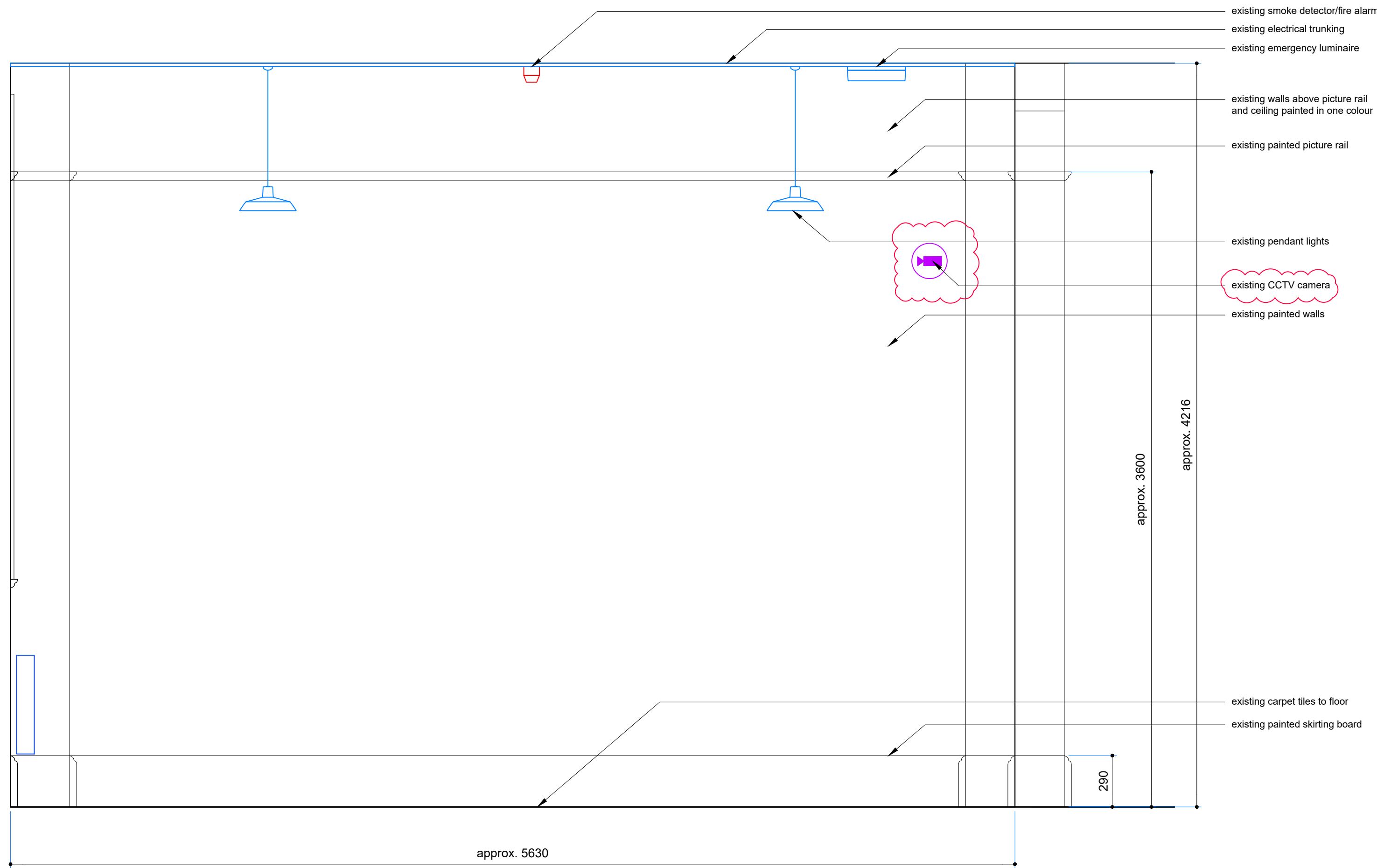
Rev A: Tender - 15/07/26

Scale at 1:20

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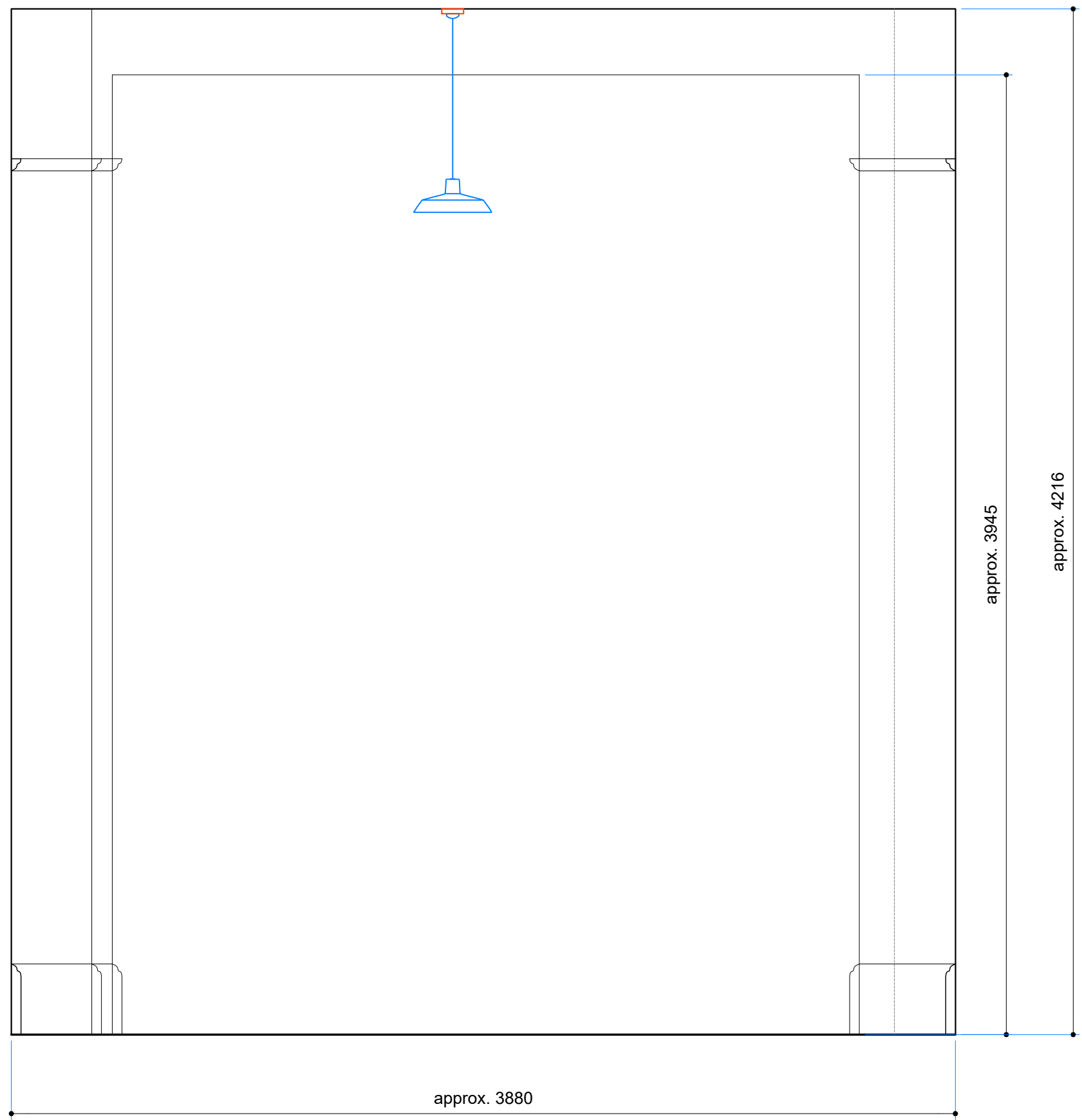
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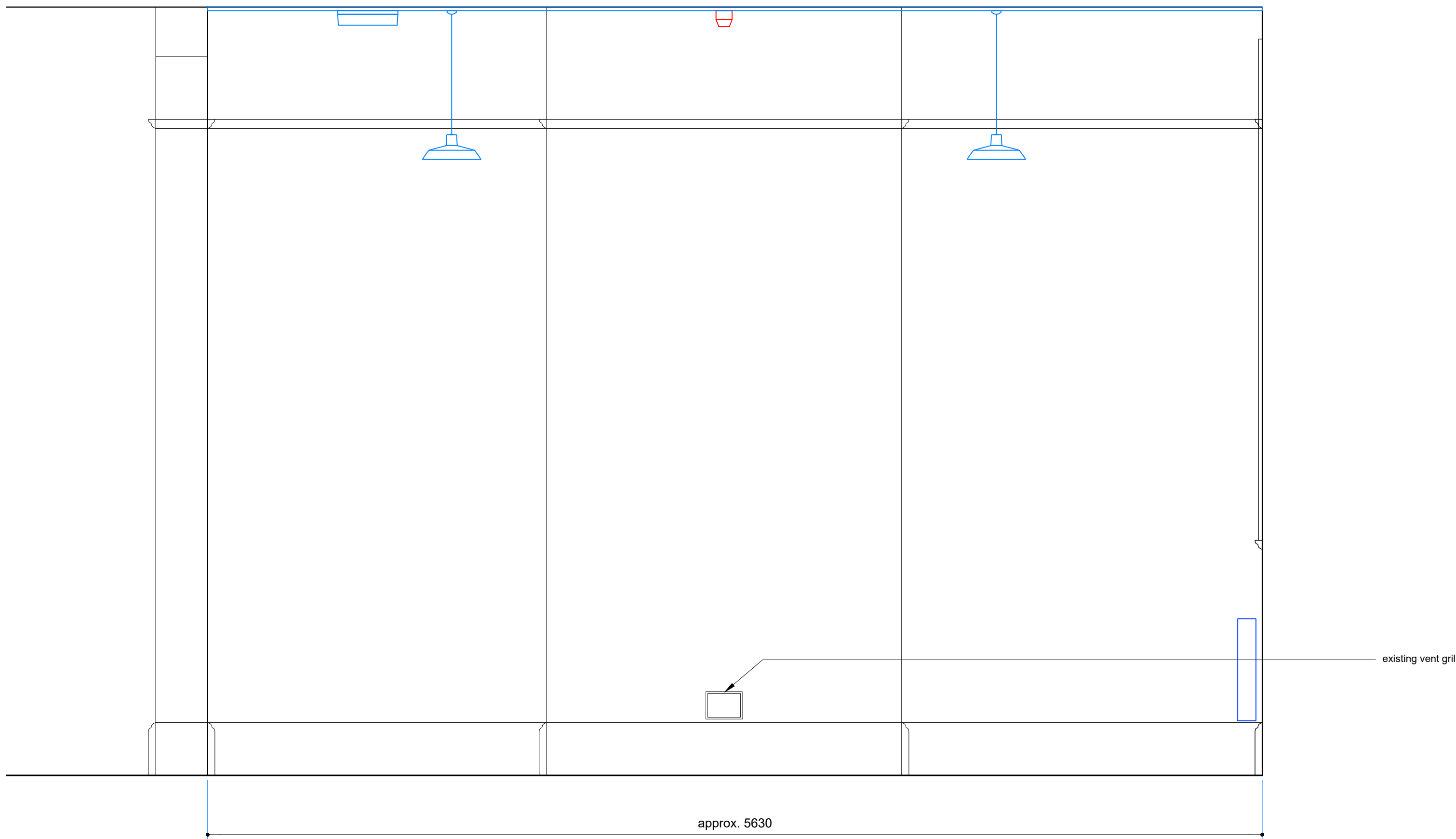
01 Existing Elevation 01

Scale: 1:20



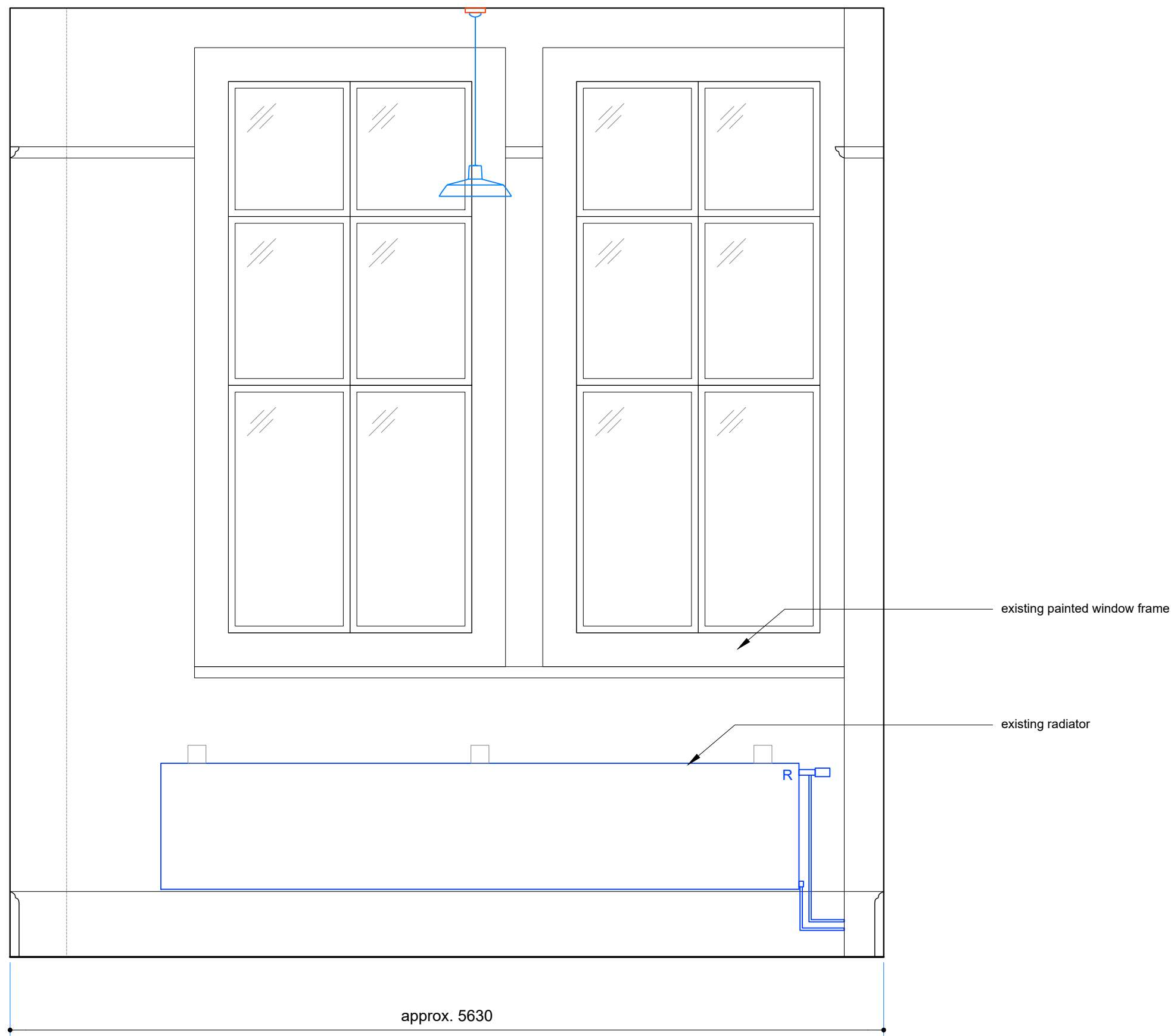
02 Existing Elevation 02

Scale: 1:20



03 Existing Elevation 03

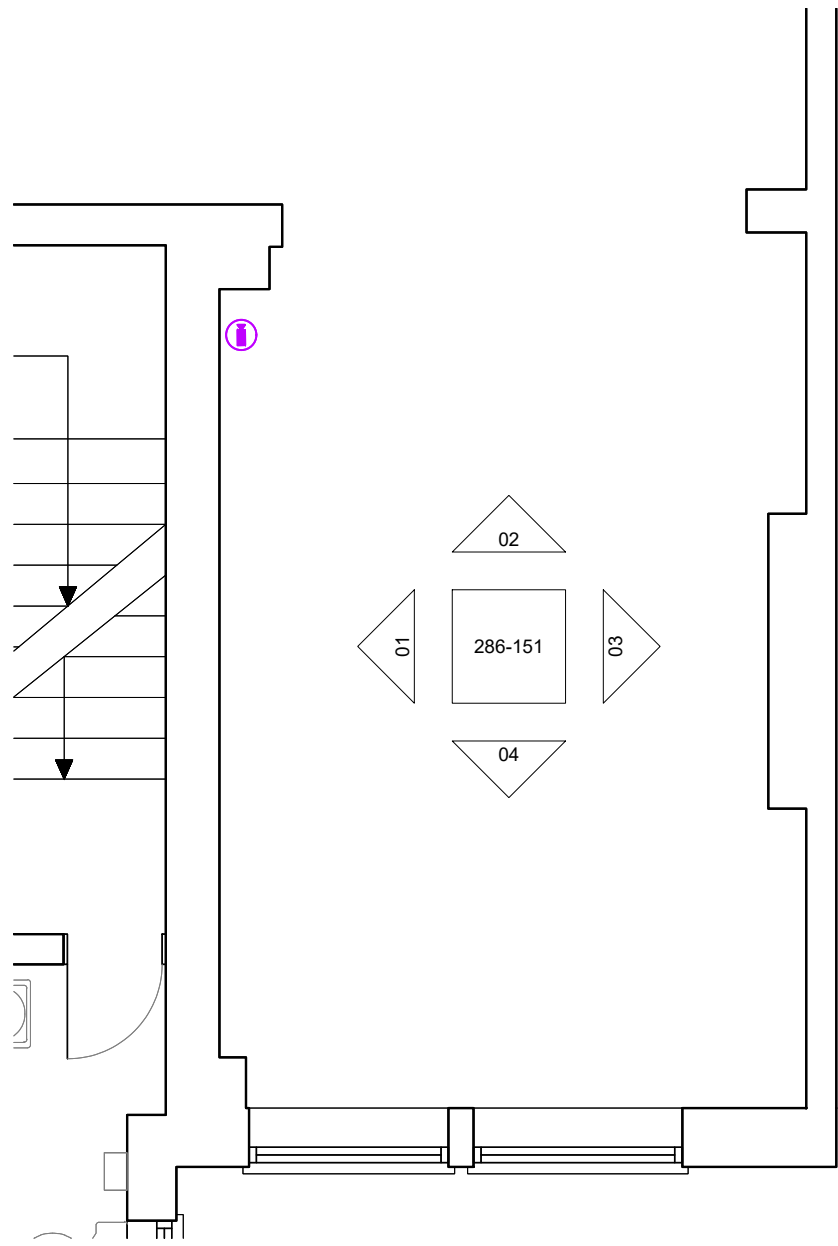
Scale: 1:20



04 Existing Elevation 04

Scale: 1:20

KEY PLAN



General Notes:

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Client

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Project name
Social Justice Archive

Project number
286

Drawing name

Existing Elevations

Drawing number	Scale	Revision
151	1:20	A
Drawing status	Page size	Date
Tender	A1	27 03 2026

Drawn by	Checked by
TB	AJ

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Rev A: Tender - 15/07/26

Scale at 1:20

0 0.1 0.5 1m

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Appendix B:

SOCIAL JUSTICE ARCHIVE

