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Cathedral

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Cathedral

Cathedral is a unique and vibrant headquarters building for the innovative property development Cathedral Group located in St Thomas's Church, Southwark. The new headquarters and refurbishment has built upon the existing special qualities of the Grade II* listed building.

By creating a 5,000 sq ft contemporary working environment and location for Cathedral's own art collection, the architects have designed a place that would enable the company to attract and retain the very best staff and which was inspiring and convenient for everyone they work with. The project has also provided improved access and amenities for The Old Operating Theatre Museum, located in the church roof space.

Sector :	Offices
Location :	London, UK
Address :	St Thomas's Church, St Thomas Street, London SE1 9RY
Client :	Cathedral Group PLC
Value :	£1.3m
Start :	August 2007
Completion :	August 2009
Contract Type :	JCT

Key Dates

August 2007:	Design team appointed
October 2007:	Stage C
December 2007:	Detailed design strategy
January 2008:	Planning/Listed building approval
Feb - May 2008:	Phased tender
January 2008:	Start on site
October 2008:	Partial PC of ground floor/basement
October 2008:	Occupation of ground floor/basement
November 2008:	Full occupation
April 2009:	Final PC

Areas

Gross Internal :	5,330 ft ² 495 m ²
Offices :	1,240 ft ² 115 m ²
Staff shared	400 ft ² 37 m ²

Project Team

Client:	Cathedral Group PLC
Architect:	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Conservation Architect:	Richard Griffiths Architects
Main Contractor:	Linford Group Limited
Structural Engineers:	Train and Kemp LLP
Project Manager:	Atisreal
Quantity Surveyor/ Contract Administrator:	William G Dick Partnership
Mechanical/Electrical Engineer:	Mecserve
Lighting Designer:	Mindseye

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Team Members

Simon Allford, Ming Chung, Eric Chan, Jonathan Hall, Susan Le Good, Paul Monaghan, Peter Morris, Gabriel Musat, Matt Thornley

For further information and images please contact

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Project Description

Cathedral is a unique and vibrant headquarters building for the innovative property developers Cathedral Group located in St. Thomas's Church, Southwark. The new headquarters and refurbishment has built upon the existing special qualities of the building. By creating a contemporary working environment and location for Cathedral's own art collection, the architects have designed a place that would enable the company to attract and retain the very best staff and which was inspiring and convenient for everyone they work with.

After nine years growing the business, the decision was taken that Cathedral needed a central London base and specifically, within the London Bridge area. They wanted a building that reflected their own ideals – professional, radical and entrepreneurial. The brief required 5000 sq ft of usable space for 30 people within an open plan office that reflected the flat organisational structure within the company. They also required a variety of group spaces from informal breakout spaces to cellular meeting space to encourage creative thinking in staff and visitors.

Working on the neglected Grade II* listed church presented a number of challenges. The existing form and structure of the 1700's church provided constraints to layout, servicing and accessibility. The building also shared services and entrances with the Old Operating Theatre Museum, located within the roof space of the church and accessed only from the tower. This venue is one of London's most interesting museums housing London's first operating theatre which opened in 1829 and its associated Herb Garret where medicines were made for the adjoining St Thomas's Hospital.

The approach to the scheme was to establish a clear contrast between old and new by accentuating the qualities of both. The new office accommodation was designed as a series of elements that could be dismantled and so would allow the space to be brought back to its original form. These objects and insertions were designed as free standing elements that could be choreographed to suit the clients needs. Within the tight conservational constraints usable floor space was extended by raising and cantilevering a new balcony floor.

The services strategy was developed by working within the existing constraints of building and treading lightly on the existing fabric. Services integration was key - providing discrete solutions both internally and externally. Existing panelling was adapted to conceal air supply behind and to provide an unobtrusive solution and flexible floor space. Joinery insertions and the void created between the existing balcony and the new balcony floor were used to conceal the air supply and data/power that connected all three floors.

The lighting was designed for the dual purpose of emphasising the qualities of the existing space and creating a bold, contemporary impact. The furniture and servicing strategy developed to allow for desks to be configured as group tables or individual work spaces on the balcony to allow for future expansion.

As well as encouraging use of public transport and extensive recycling, Cathedral Group requested that either natural ventilation or mechanical ventilation be used to provide a suitable office environment rather than mechanical cooling. This came from a strong desire from the client to use a sustainable method of environmental control in their own headquarters so they can promote this approach in their work. A study showed a displacement system with night time purge was suitable and this was accepted by the client as appropriate for their needs.

Although the principle aim of the project was to create office space for Cathedral Group, the project has also delivered the refurbishment of this Grade II* listed building and has made a considerable contribution to St. Thomas Street. It has also improved the amenities and fabric of the Old Operating Theatre Museum including the installation of new water supplies and WC facilities. The shared entrance lobby has been significantly improved and the refurbishment and new lighting elements celebrate the grand double height space. New disabled call bells improves accessibility for all, allowing for a new managed accessibility strategy to be put into place. The installation of a new glazed entrance within a portal insertion creates a striking and legible entrance sequence to the office space. The improvement in visibility between the spaces captures the client's ethos of openness and allows the public a view into a previously concealed local treasure. The new strong link between lobby and reception also improves the security/management of the space by combining passive and active surveillance

At Cathedral, an innovative new headquarters building has been created through the creative re-use of a listed church building and delivered enhanced amenities for one of London's hidden secrets.

Site Surrounding Area



Aerial perspective of existing site showing St. Thomas's Church / Cathedral HQ Building ①

Existing Site



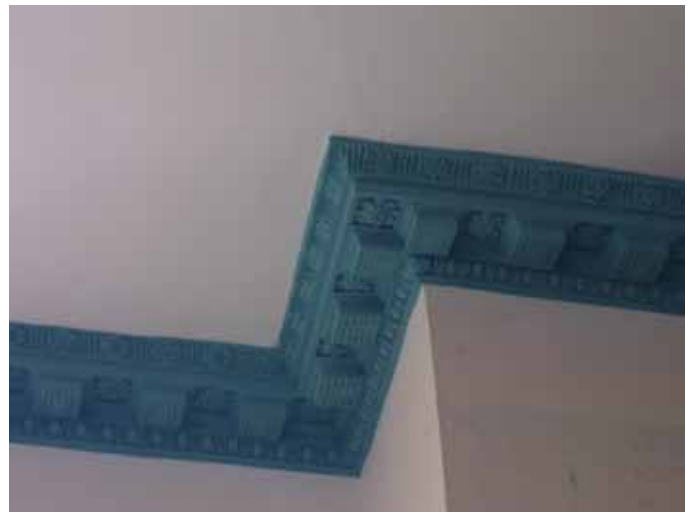
Existing Site



Composite images of the original interior



Original entrance with double height wooden doors



Original cornice



Original balcony area facing the altar



Large structural crack through existing wall



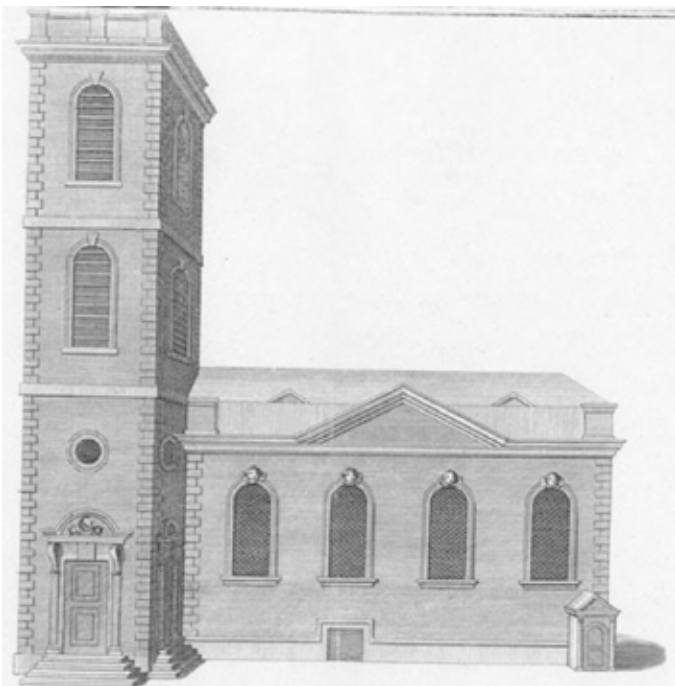
Original feature windows with stain glassed crests

History of St. Thomas's Church

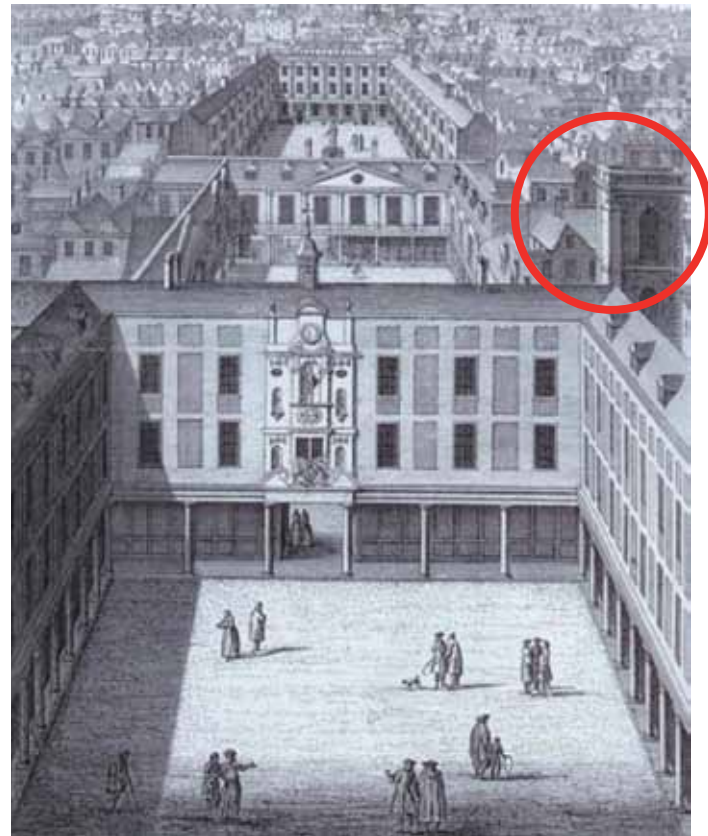
St Thomas's Church was completed in 1703, and was overseen by Thomas Cartwright, master builder to Sir Christopher Wren. The building is seen as one of the best examples of the Queen Anne Style.

The building originally formed inside of the St Thomas's Hospital Courtyards, which were demolished when the hospital relocated to Lambeth and the railways of London Bridge were developed.

The church is now one of the few remaining buildings that date back to the time of the original hospital.



Drawing of St. Thomas's Church 1753



View of the hospital courtyards 1759, with St. Thomas's Church circled

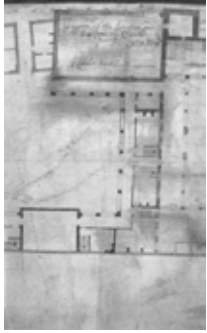


View of the modified courtyards from the late 1800's



Drawing of the original interior of St. Thomas's Church

Timeline



1703



1758



1830



1850



1901

1756



1800



1830

1901



The Old Operating Theatre and Herb Garret Museum

Located within the roof space of St Thomas's Church is the Old Operating Theatre and the Herb Garret Museum. Both museums provide a window back in time to when St Thomas's Hospital was built around the church.

The operating theatre is the oldest surviving operating theatre in Europe. In 1815 the Apothecary's Act, required apprentice apothecaries to attend at public hospitals to watch operations. Until 1846, surgeons had no recourse to anaesthetics and depended on swift technique (surgeons could perform an amputation in a minute or less), the mental preparation of the patient and alcohol or opiates to dull the patient's senses. Thereafter ether or chloroform started to be used. The Operating Theatre had closed down before antiseptic surgery was invented.

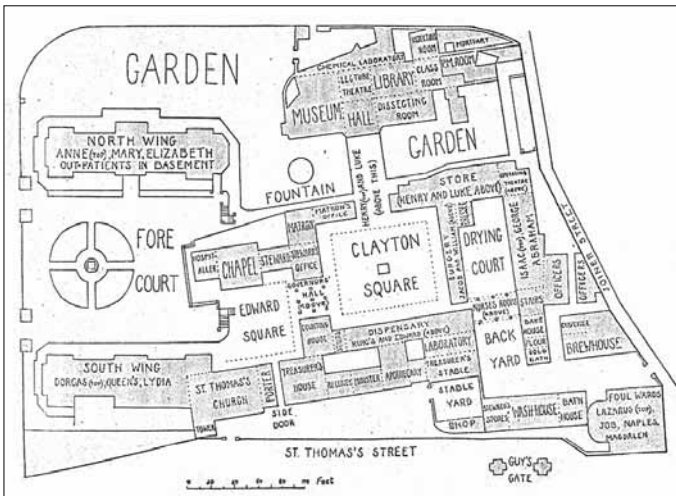
The Herb Garret, is the old dispensary of the hospital, which contains original artefacts and provides an insight into the history of modern medicine.



The Old Operating Theatre Museum



The Herb Garret Museum



Plan of St. Thomas's Hospital 1853



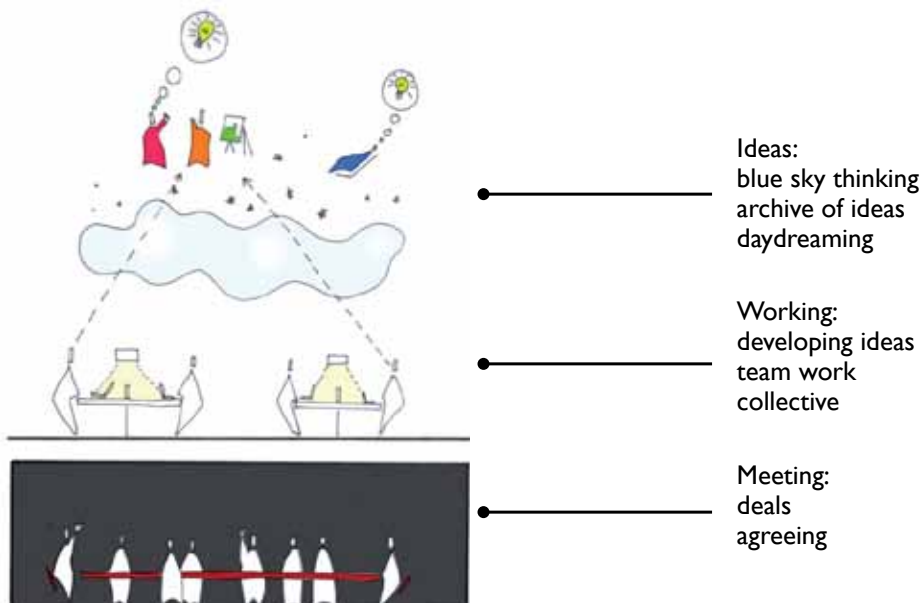
Early operations being observed from the surrounding gallery

Design Development: Spatial Strategy

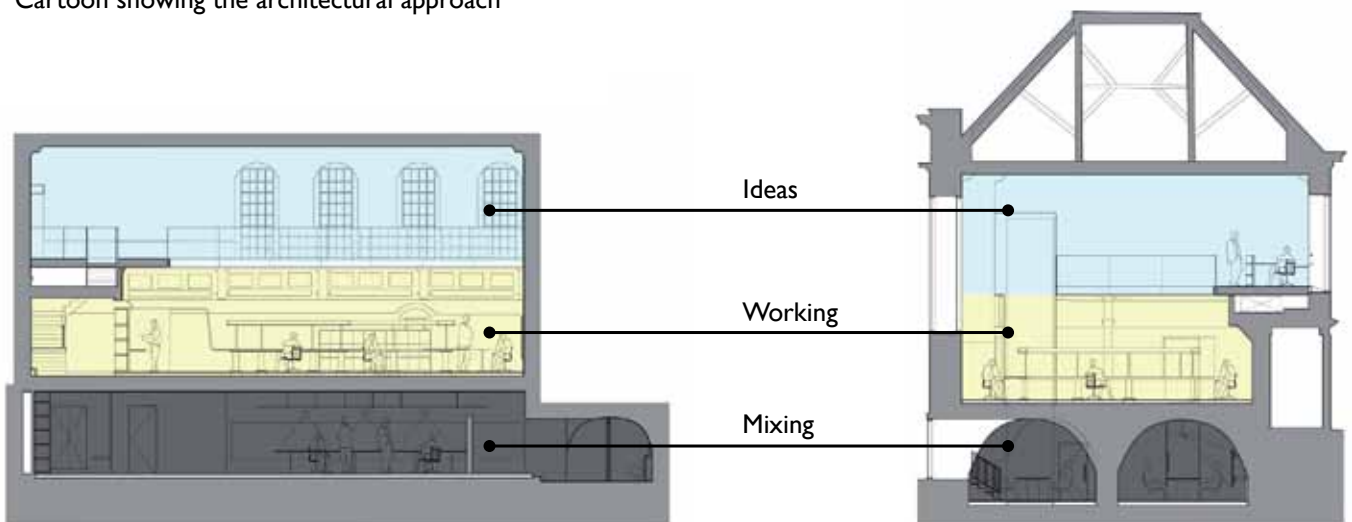
The architectural strategy for the fit-out has been generated by both the physical restrictions of the existing building and philosophy of Cathedral Group as a company,

From the outset the ambition has been to create a variety of working environments to promote free thinking and creativity, all of which are central to Cathedral's approach. It is also important to maintain the strong sense of community which exists between all members of the office.

The proposal was broken down sectionally into three main work areas - as shown in these diagrams. These zones have a direct relationship to the sectional spaces within the existing building.



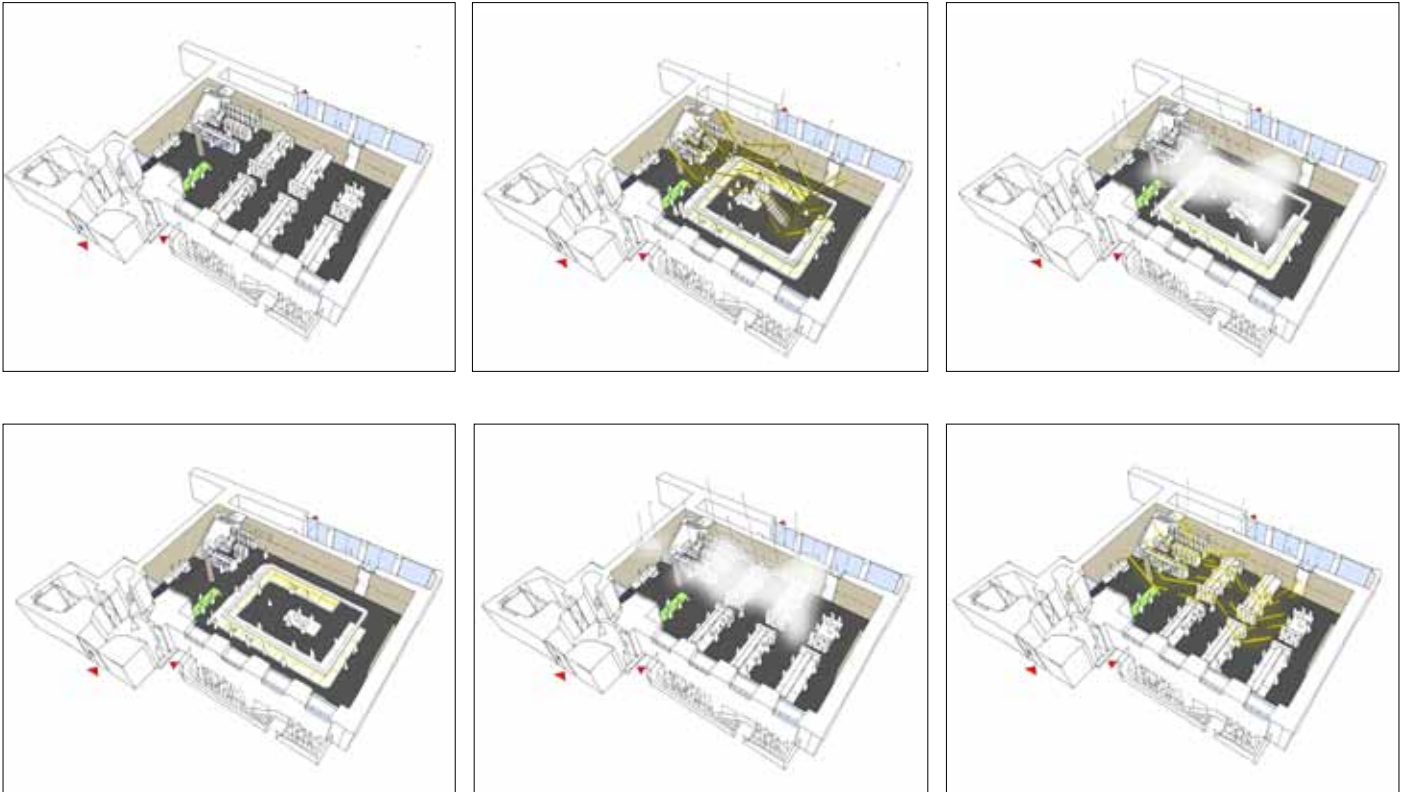
Cartoon showing the architectural approach



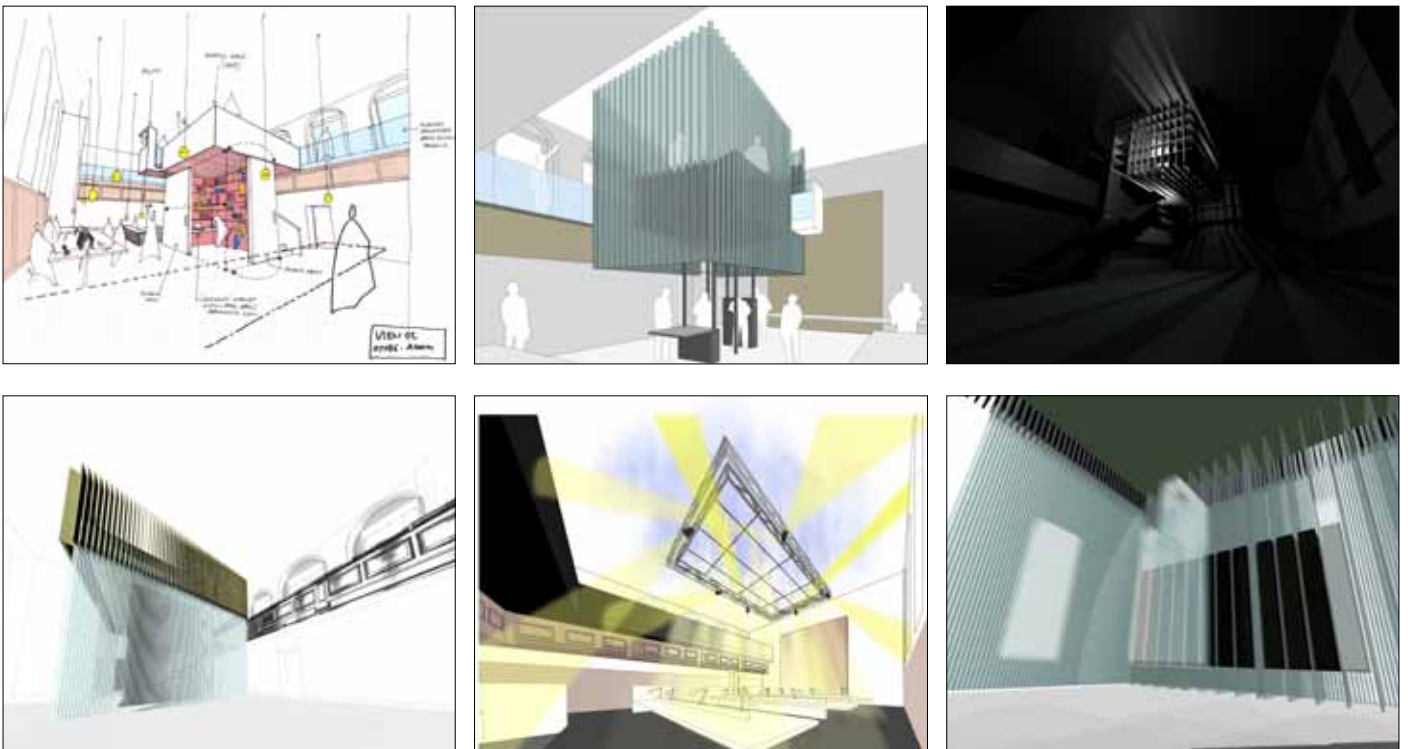
Long section indicating the architectural approach

Short section showing the architectural approach

Design Development



Ground floor office desk arrangements



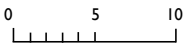
Studies investigating the insertion of an 'object' housing archive, meeting/breakout space etc.

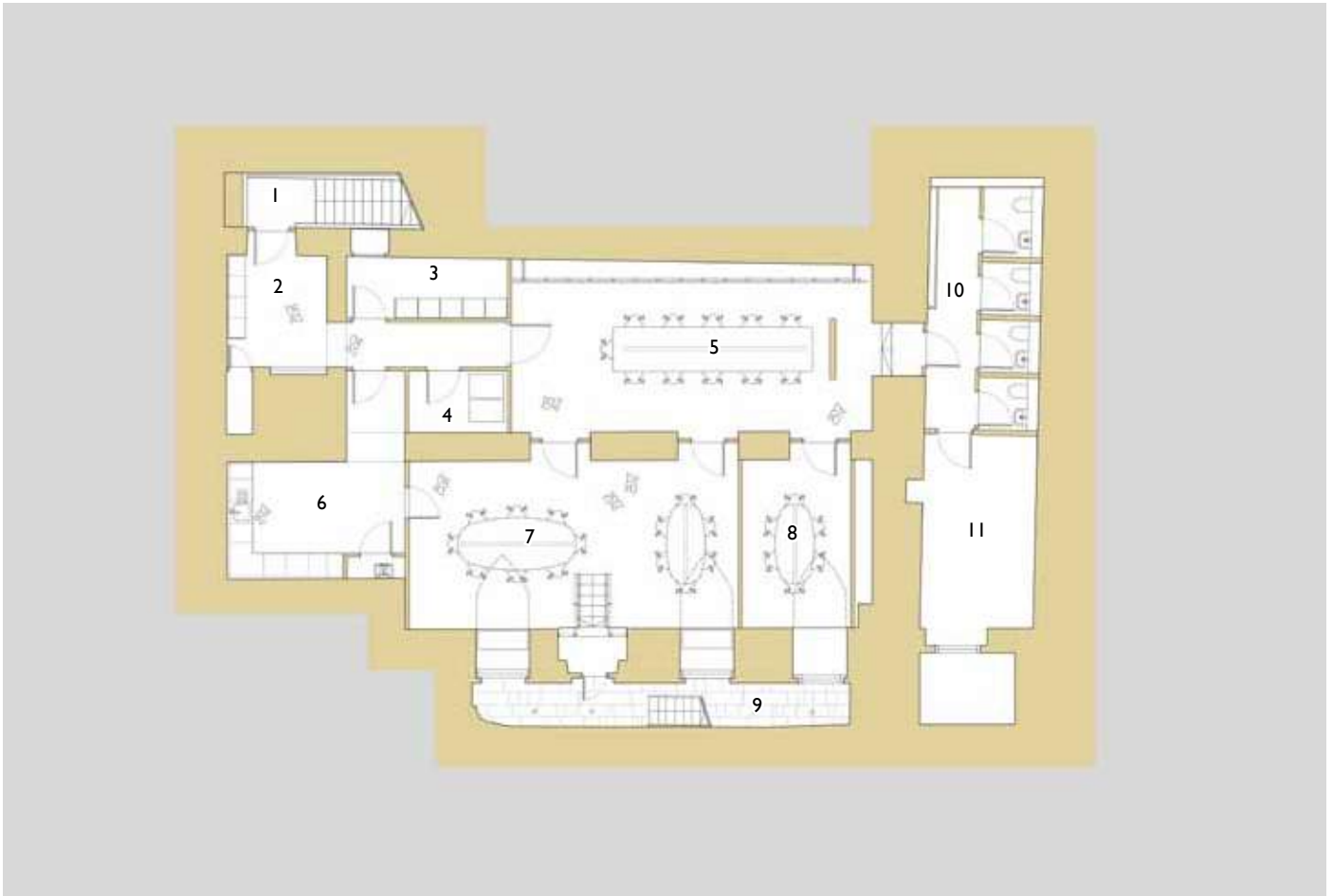
Modelshots



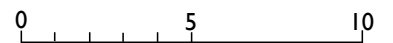


Location Plan



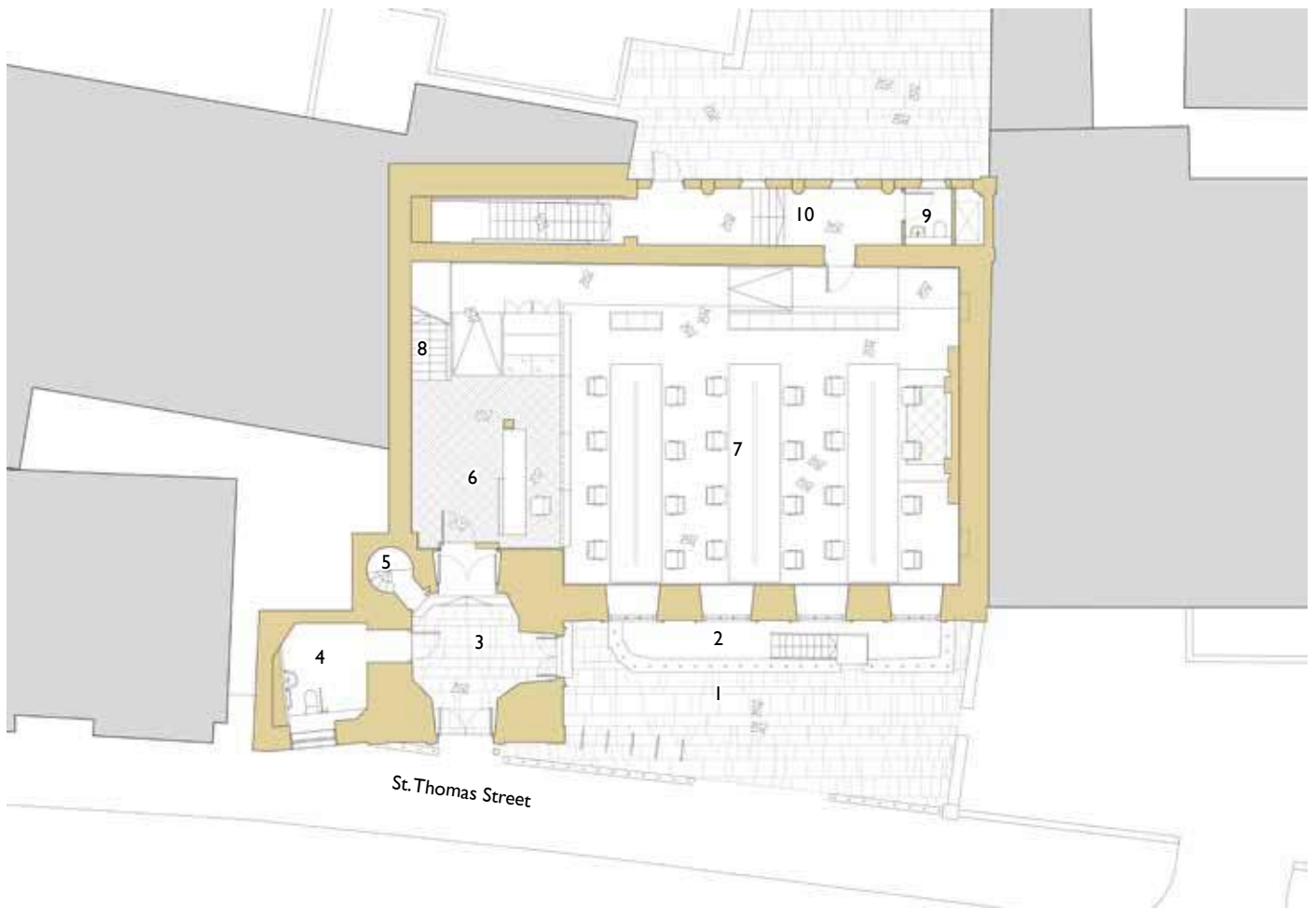


Basement Plan

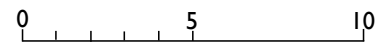


KEY

- 1 Stair from ground floor
- 2 Lobby
- 3 Archive store
- 4 Server room
- 5 Project room
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Large meeting room
- 8 Meeting room
- 9 Lightwell and escape route to courtyard
- 10 WC's
- 11 Plant room

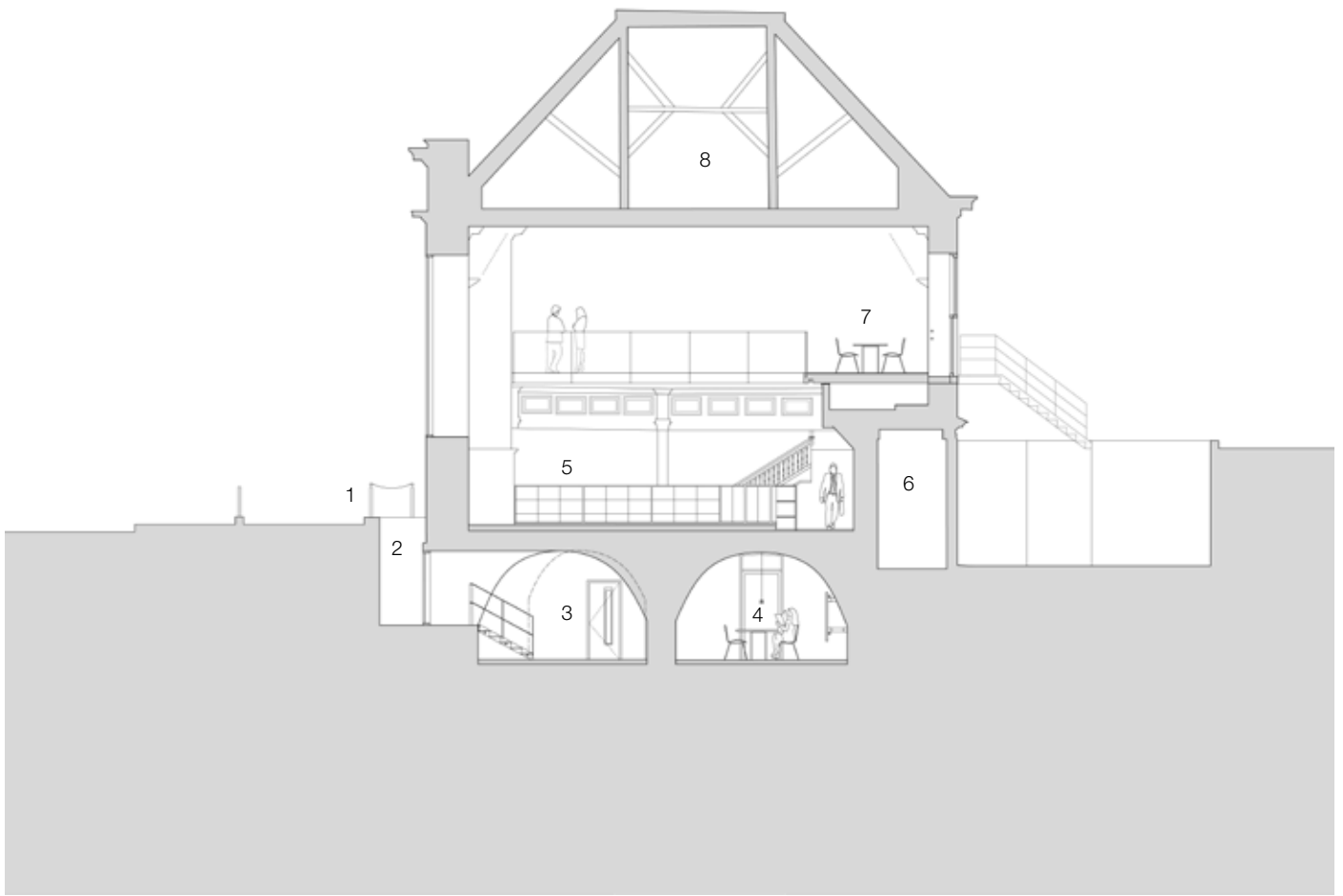


Ground Floor Plan

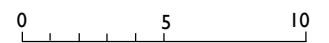


KEY

- 1 Forecourt
- 2 Lightwell crypt
- 3 Entrance lobby
- 4 Disable WC
- 5 Stair to The Old Operating Theatre Museum
- 6 Reception
- 7 Main office area
- 8 Stair gallery
- 9 WC
- 10 Corridor/stair crypt



Cross Section



KEY

- 1 Forecourt
- 2 Lightwell crypt
- 3 Meeting room
- 4 Project room
- 5 Office space
- 6 Rear corridor
- 7 Flexible seating area
- 8 The Old Operation Theatre Museum

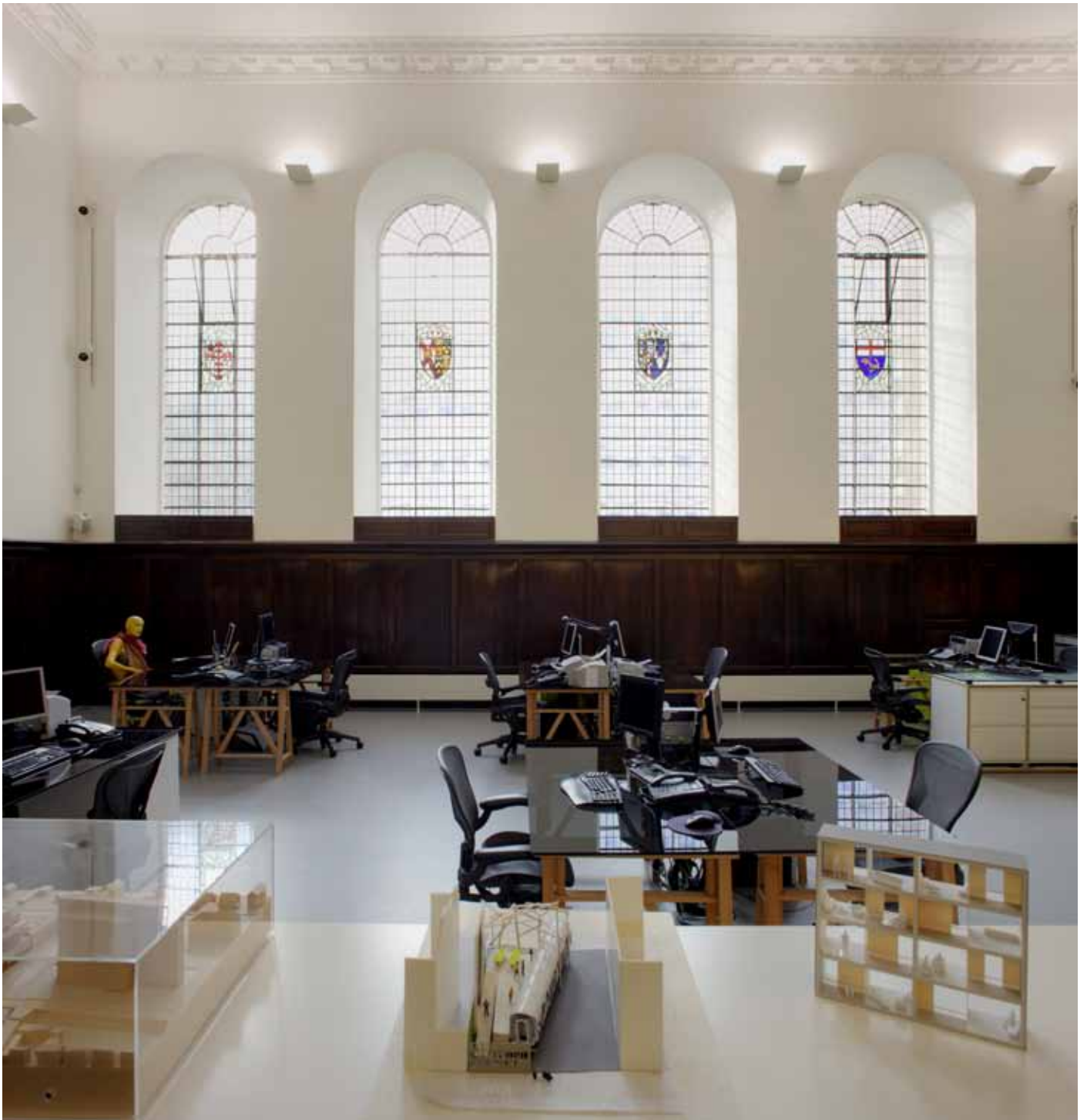


View from St Thomas Street



Main office space looking towards altar

07086_07 © Rob Parrish

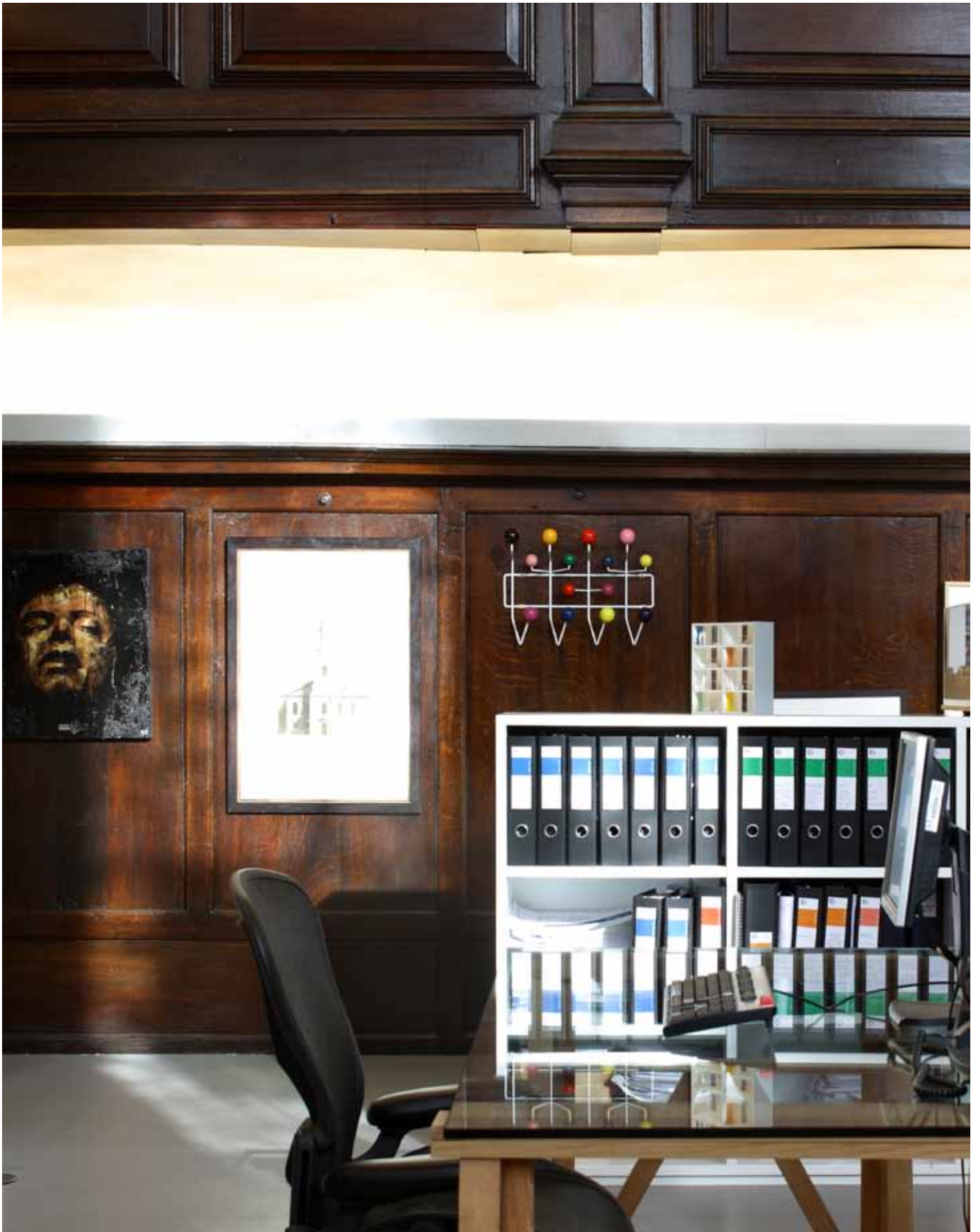


Main office space looking towards the south windows

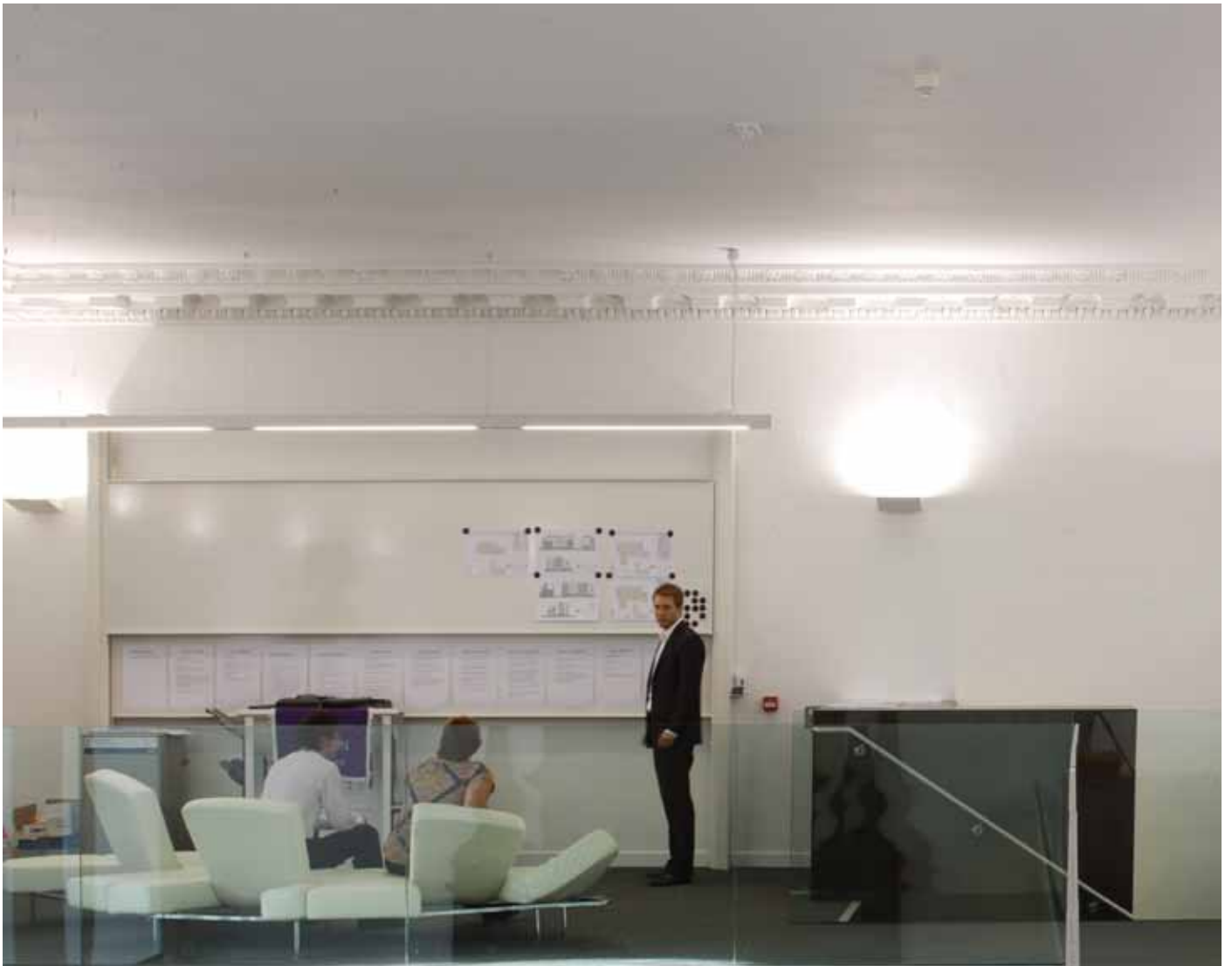
07086_08 © Rob Parrish



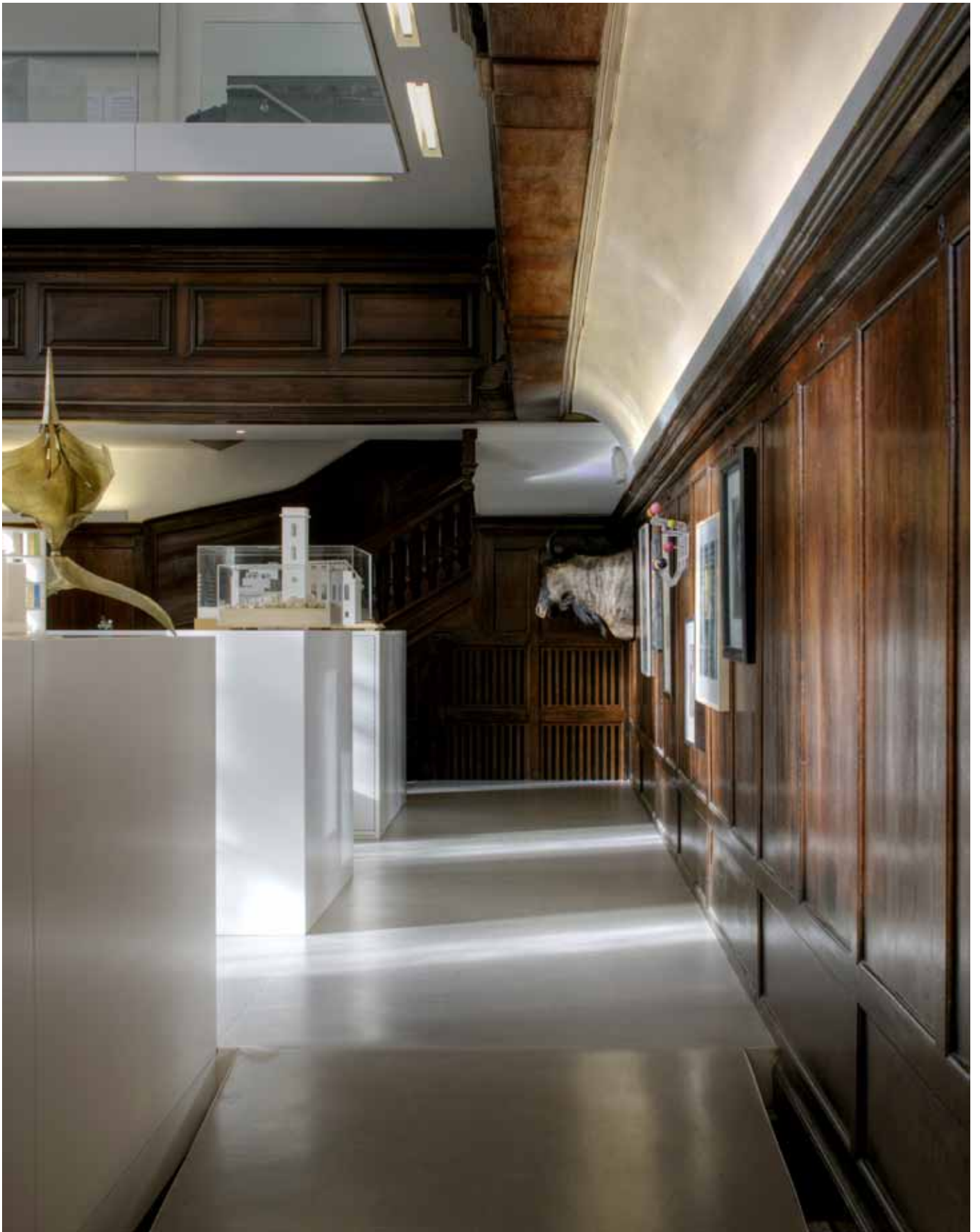
Main office space looking towards south windows



Detail of main office space



View from balcony towards breakout area



Detail of main office space

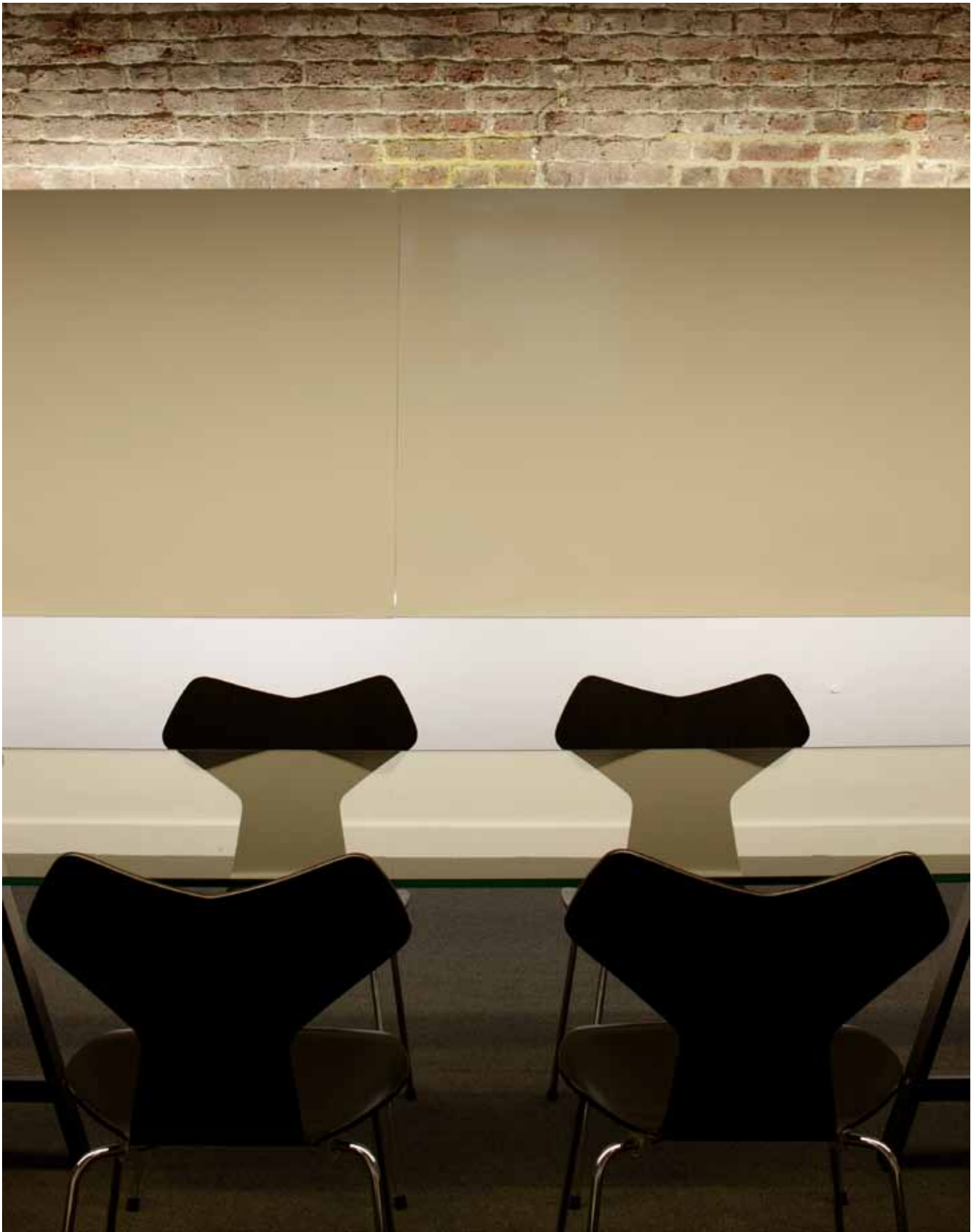


Lighting in rear corridor



Project Room

07086_16 © Rob Parrish



Project Room