4.0 Design Statement – Building Layout

4.1.3 Internal Arrangements

The internal layouts have been designed to meet the specific requirements of the Construction department, with the proposed floor plans developed through an iterative consultation process. The proposed designs are best understood through the adjacent floor plans, but in summary the concepts include:

Ground Floor
A key concept for the design was that the vocational activity should be at the heart of the new facility, with views into the workshop environments as users move around the building.

Entering the new centre from the arrival plaza, users will therefore move directly into the double height 'street' where extensive glazed screens will offer views straight into the main workshops. The central street will function as the main circulation route, eliminating corridors whilst also providing opportunities for social and informal learning areas.

The eastern end of the street and narrow teaching block will provide the open plan Personalised Learning Zone (PLZ) with extensive glazing framing views to the northeast and providing a shop window to the activity within. To the west, the front block accommodates smaller formal classrooms with access to both internal break out areas in the street and a potential external teaching area.

To the south of the street, changing areas provide access to the practical workshop environments. These are currently envisaged as a single workshop accommodating the full range of construction trades including brickwork and cladding in the central zone with joinery, plastering and drylining arranged to either side. Large external doors will provide access from the workshops to the covered area which will be used not only for the secure storage of materials but also provide valuable space for large scale and cross discipline construction projects.

First Floor
The first floor will provide a similar mix of formal teaching spaces, more informal open plan learning areas and large scale workshops for plumbing, gas, and painting and decorating. The emphasis on the first floor will be higher level students including design and construction management. This will be supported by specialist facilities including a large CAD/BIM suite. A large flexible studio will overlook the main workshop area, providing the College with a wide range of potential opportunities, from interior design courses to external training events and exhibitions.

As with the ground floor the aim has been to eliminate corridors through the use of open balconies overlooking the ground floor street. Internal glazing will provide views into the classrooms, workshops and design studios ensuring that the learning activity is always visible as one moves around the building, whilst the design studio can double up as a viewing gallery for events or assessment.

Lower ground Floor
The steep fall across the site creates the opportunity to form a small lower ground floor area fronting onto the access road to the northeast. This area is too small and isolated from other facilities in the building to be used by any of the core teaching functions. Nevertheless it is a prominent street level frontage and it was important that a positive function be found for this space. In line with the College's ambition to create a highly sustainable facility, it is proposed that a biomass boiler be accommodated in this area, with street front glazing celebrating this rather than hiding it.



Internal street with views into main workshops