

Planning Statement

Helical (Churchgate) Limited
Churchgate House, Oxford Street

March 2020

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Signing off Sheet

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Final

Authorised for and on behalf NJL Consulting



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Plans

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by NJL Consulting, on behalf of Helical (Churchgate) Limited. It supports applications submitted under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) (as Amended) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), for the change of use of part of the basement level at Churchgate House, Oxford Street, from car parking (Sui Generis) to offices (Use Class B1(a)), with associated alterations.
- 1.2 This application relates only to part of the basement level, as shown on the submitted Proposed Basement Plan. The remaining basement space is unaltered.
- 1.3 The basement has been used for several years for car parking associated with the wider use of the building. However, the lack of demand for parking (driven in part by the city centre location) has presented an opportunity for the basement to be repurposed as a separate lettable unit.
- 1.4 This Statement summarises the nature of the site and proposed development, it then identifies all relevant local and national policy, demonstrating the change of use and associated alterations are compliant with the Development Plan and National Policy.
- 1.5 It should be read alongside the suite of planning documents which include:
- Planning drawings (Atelier MB Urban Architects);
 - Design & Access Statement (Atelier MB Urban Architects);
 - Heritage Statement (Atelier MB Urban Architects);
 - Transport Note (Vectos); and
 - Crime Impact Statement (Design for Security).

2. Factual context

The application site

- 2.1 The application site is part of the basement at Churchgate House, a Grade II* Listed office building at the gateway to the Oxford Road 'Corridor' within the heart of Manchester City Centre.
- 2.2 Churchgate House is bound by Great Bridgewater Street to the north, Oxford Street to the east, Rochdale Canal to the south and Lee House adjoining to the west (rear). It is arranged over 7 floors; with a basement, ground floor and five upper floors. The basement is used for parking with the ground and upper floors forming office space.
- 2.3 In terms of statutory designations; Churchgate House and the adjoining Lee House are Grade II* Listed, and both are adjacent the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. The site is within Flood Zone 1 as identified on the Flood Map for Planning.

Surrounding uses

- 2.4 The site is in a prominent city centre location within an active commercial area on Oxford Road. Surrounding uses are typical of the location and include a mix of residential, commercial and food and drinks uses. The NCP Manchester Oxford Road Car Park is located adjacent north, with the NCP Manchester Cheapstow Street Car Park north-west and Euro Car Park 165m south-east.
- 2.5 Other notable nearby uses include London School of Business & Finance (109m north-east), Palace Theatre (70m south-east), O2 Ritz (130m south-west), Bridgewater Hall (245m west) and Genting Casino (120m north). There are several restaurants, offices, supermarkets, and educational establishments within walking distance.
- 2.6 It is an area which benefits from excellent transport links, with Manchester Oxford Road train station 85m south and several bus stops located on Oxford Street (directly outside Churchgate's entrance), Cheapstow Street (97m north-west) and Whitworth Street West (108m south).

Planning history

- 2.7 Churchgate House has a lengthy planning history, with various consents for changes of use, building works, internal and external alterations as well as more recent proposals

for the wholesale refurbishment. Of note, there are historic applications relating to the basement levels including:

- Use of vacant basement as a wine bar / restaurant (ref: 026600) (approved 28th May 1986);
- Change of use of basement, lower ground floor and ground floor to car parking, change of use of part ground floor to showroom use, and elevations alterations to Lee House (ref: 033146) (approved 10th February 1989);
- Alterations and refurbishment to Lee House. Basement car parking and basement / ground floor showrooms to Churchgate House (ref: 033109) (approved 10th February 1989);
- Change of permitted use for showroom areas to provide 665sqm Class A3 retail food outlet on ground floor and basement (ref: 035196) (approved 27th October 1989); and
- Change of use of part of ground and basement floors from A3 Use to B1 Use with extension at courtyard level into existing courtyard (ref: 050597/FO/CITY3/96) (approved 6th January 1997).

2.8 More recent consents include:

- Listed Building Consent for an office refurbishment of the 3rd floor of Churchgate House and 6th & 7th floors of Lee House (ref: 123883/LO/2019) (approved 21st November 2019);
- Listed Building Consent for an office refurbishment of the 5th floor of Churchgate House and 4th & 5th floors of Lee House (ref: 123979/LO/2019) (approved 21st November 2019);
- Full Planning Application and Listed Building Consent for louvres to internal courtyard windows (refs: 124914/LO/2019 & 124913/FO/2019) (approved 21st November 2019); and
- Listed Building Consent for one internally mounted internally-illuminated individual letter sign and one externally mounted internally-illuminated projecting sign to the main entrance (ref: 125634/LO/2019) (approved 18th February 2020).

2.9 The planning history demonstrates this is an established, commercial, location where change of use and associated works to the basement are entirely appropriate.

3. Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposed development involves the change of use of part of the basement from car parking (Sui Generis) to offices (Use Class B1(a)), with associated internal and external alterations.
- 3.2 There is potential that, as the car parking and basement is within an existing office building and is part of the wider use as a planning unit, the car park already has, in effect, an assumed B1 Use. However, in the interests of robustness, and considering the planning history of the basement, a change of use is sought.
- 3.3 The proposals are partially speculative at this stage as a defined user is not formally confirmed but there is demand for new office space in the city centre. The proposal is for one unit to be created of circa 1,300sqm.
- 3.4 Internal alterations will involve the complete refurbishment of the space to enable the conversion from car parking to offices. This will include the creation of internal partitions as required, amenity areas and communal facilities, toilets and other required spaces along with general infrastructure such as lighting and heating.
- 3.5 External alterations will be required to create suitable high quality office space, which is likely to include:
- Oxford Street elevation – Removing existing covered windows and replacing with an entrance and two windows on each side of the central main entrance, to align with the internal layout;
 - Rochdale Canal elevation – Removing of a section of louvers and replacement with new glazing to bring natural light to the basement area, with retention of other louvers as required for the internal configuration;
 - Bridgewater Street elevation – Reopening pavement lights and replacing several existing the louvers within glazing in the existing window spaces.
- 3.6 The detail of the proposed changes is shown in the proposed plans pack.
- 3.7 Overall, the works proposed are sensitive to the significance of the property and will result in the beneficial reuse of what is currently underutilised city centre floorspace.

4. Policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Development Plan consists of the Manchester Core Strategy ('CS') (2012) and 'Saved' policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') (1999). The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2019), draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework ('GMSF') and local supplementary documents are material considerations.

Development Plan

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

- 4.3 Policy **SP1** identifies the spatial principles that will guide strategic development in Manchester until 2027. It establishes that Manchester City Centre as the 'Regional Centre' will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living.
- 4.4 **EC1** identifies the need to ensure the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the city as a priority for continued economic growth. It highlights a requirement of 140ha of B1(a) space across the plan period (2012-2027).
- 4.5 **EC3** supports employment generating uses, including offices, within the city centre. EC3 states office developments will be appropriate providing that:
1. *'They are in locations which are well connected by sustainable transport to both the City Centre and residential areas; and*
 2. *The scale and type of office development does not undermine delivery of employment space within the City Centre.'*
- 4.6 **T2** seeks to ensure that city centre development provides a level of car parking which reflects the highly accessible nature of the location, as well as the realistic requirements of the uses of the development. Parking standards are set out in CS Appendix B.
- 4.7 **CC1** recognises the need for employment growth within the city centre. CC1 identifies B1a high density offices as the focus for employment growth, with the council giving specific encouragement and support for proposals in the City Centre, including the

Corridor. Of note, CC1 states the City Centre is expected to accommodate 33ha of office or similar employment development.

- 4.8 **CC8** supports development which contributes towards the city centre's role in terms of employment, but that such developments must respect the city's heritage and character.
- 4.9 **CC9** highlights that development should preserve or enhance heritage assets.
- 4.10 **EN3** states proposals which enable the reuse of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.11 **DM1** requires development to have regard to detailed matters, including appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail, including the impact on the surrounding area and effects on amenity.

Unitary Development Plan (1999)

- 4.12 The UDP was adopted in 1999. Since adoption, several policies have been deleted or superseded by CS Policies. Nevertheless, 'Saved' UDP policies remain part of the Development Plan.
- 4.13 **DC19.1** identifies six criteria relating to listed buildings, which if met, the council will, or will not, approve the application. These criteria are:
 - a) *'Not grant Listed Building Consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;*
 - b) *Not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;*
 - c) *Not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;*
 - d) *Seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;*
 - e) *Permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract; and*

- f) *Not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.'*

- 4.14 Overall, the Development Plan sets a positive position for promoting new commercial uses, and B1(a) space, which supports the city centre economy, subject to certain details relating to the proposed use.

Emerging policy

- 4.15 The NPPF (paragraph 48) allows weight to be given to emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the Framework.
- 4.16 The Great Manchester Combined Authority published the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework ('GMSF') in November 2016, with associated consultation commencing simultaneously. This consultation concluded in January 2017. A follow-up draft was published in January 2019 with an associated consultation published in January and ending in March 2019. However, further consultation on the GMSF has been delayed meaning it can only be attributed very limited weight and will not be considered further in this Statement.
- 4.17 The Manchester Local Plan is at a very early stage of preparation, with an early Issues Consultation ongoing until 3rd April 2020. The emerging Local Plan has no weight in decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 4.18 The overarching principle of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2019) is one of promoting sustainable development (paragraph 8). Paragraph 11 requires 'a *presumption in favour of sustainable development*' in approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan.
- 4.19 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

4.20 Paragraph 85 identifies that:

'Planning policies and decision should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption.'

4.21 The NPPF also promotes the effective use of land and buildings. Paragraph 118(d) states local planning authorities should *'promote and support the development of under-utilized land and buildings.'* Paragraph 121 requires:

'... a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.'

Heritage and conservation

4.22 Paragraph 189 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail required is proportionate to the asset and proposed development.

4.23 Paragraph 192 identifies that local authorities should take account of:

- a. *'The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b. *The positive contribution the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and*
- c. *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'*

4.24 Paragraph 196 then establishes that where development proposals will lead to *'less than substantial harm'* to a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits such as securing optimum viable use for the asset.

5. Assessment of development

- 5.1 This section demonstrates that the proposed development is entirely appropriate in planning terms, having regard to the site context and relevant local and national planning policies.
- 5.2 The CS (adopted 2012) is generally up to date, with some 'Saved' UDP policies remaining applicable. The Manchester Local Plan and GMSF are still at an early stage of preparation and have no or little weight respectively in this instance.

Principle of development

- 5.3 The reuse of vacant space within town and city centres to provide economically beneficial development is fundamentally sustainable development which should be supported and encouraged.
- 5.4 National policy places significant emphasis on encouraging 'main town centre uses' (which explicitly includes office uses) within city centre locations. The CS also highlights the importance of office uses as the key employment sector to drive and support future economic growth. Fundamentally, the Development Plan and national policy specifically encourage economically beneficial development within city centres. This is particularly the case where it reuses existing underutilised space and makes positive changes to a listed building.
- 5.5 The change of use at Churchgate House is evidently in accordance with these key policy aims.
- 5.6 EC3 supports employment generating uses, including offices, within the city centre, providing that they are; (1) In locations well connected by sustainable transport to both the city centre and residential areas, and (2) The scale and type of office development does not undermine delivery of employment space in the City Centre.
- 5.7 The proposed development is well located in terms of sustainable transport and this is demonstrated throughout the accompanying Transport Note. Given the context of the proposed site located in the basement space of an existing office building (Churchgate House), the scale and type of the proposed will not undermine the delivery of employment space elsewhere in the City Centre. Indeed, the reuse of largely vacant space should be supported.

- 5.8 It is also relevant that the basement space is currently used for car parking and is under-utilised, thus makes no beneficial contribution to the area. As such, the proposal directly responds to CS Policy EC1 by supporting the social and economic regeneration of the city centre through the creation of new office space and associated refurbishment works to a listed building.
- 5.9 Furthermore, the proposed will make a small contribution to the requirement for 140ha additional B1(a) space in Manchester as a whole, as identified in CS Policy EC1 and the 33ha requirement as identified in CS Policy CC1. Employment generating uses in the city centre are directly supported by CS Policies SP1, EC3, CC1 and CC8 and relevant NPPF policies.
- 5.10 The principle of the use is wholly in accordance with local and national policy.

Heritage and conservation

- 5.11 The application is for the change of use and associated works to enable the conversion from vacant car parking to an office use. As such, this application is supported by a Heritage Statement prepared by Atelier MB.
- 5.12 In accordance with UDP Policy DC19.1, there is no notable demolition proposed and there will be no detrimental effect of the character or appearance of the building, nor on its architectural and historic character. Churchgate House has undergone significant refurbishment works, with various applications for external alterations approved by the council. It is therefore an established location for development such as the proposed.
- 5.13 The supporting Heritage Statement demonstrates there will be no harm, and certainly no 'significant harm', on the Churchgate House appearance and spatial characteristics as a Grade II* Listed Building. Any perceived harm is outweighed by the; opening of the basement to a wider number of users, the conservation of the most historical elements, restoration and enhancement of some currently altered features (most notably the windows) and the provision of a viable end use. Therefore, the proposal will ensure optimum viable use of a listed building, adjacent a conservation area, as specifically encouraged in the NPPF (paragraph 192 and 196), CS Policies CC8, CC9 and EN3 and UDP Policy DC19.1.
- 5.14 The works will have a positive effect on the building by fully refurbishing the space, introducing active uses and restoring several external features (such as glazing in place of more modern louvers).

Highways, access and parking

- 5.15 A Transport Note has been submitted in support of this application, which provides technical justification for the loss of car parking, trip generation, servicing arrangements and refuse management. The Note concludes there are no matters in which should preventing development.

Loss of parking

- 5.16 The change of use results in the loss of existing car parking. However, as detailed in the Transport Note there is an identified oversupply of car parking for the property leading to the basement being significantly underutilised.
- 5.17 The Note confirms that Churchgate House is in a sustainable prime city centre location and benefits from excellent access to public transport. Of note, Manchester Oxford Road train station 85m south and bus stops are located close by. Considering the site's location, and an identified oversupply of car parking at the property, the loss of car parking is entirely reasonable. Cycle storage will remain as existing. There are clear benefits of reducing parking at accessible sites, thus encouraging sustainable travel. The loss of car parking is both justified and beneficial.
- 5.18 As such the loss of car parking will have no notable impact and is entirely justified.

Pedestrian access

- 5.19 At this stage, the intention is for the unit to have a separate access from Oxford Street via a dedicated entrance with necessary security controls. However, the office space will be designed such that, should a potential occupier require it, access can also be created from the main building reception area. The proposed access will comply with all necessary legislation and regulations.

Vehicle access

- 5.20 The application site is in an accessible location with excellent public transport links. There is existing suitable access to the basement and no changes are proposed to the vehicle access. Therefore, the proposals are in accordance with CS Policies EC3 and T2.

Servicing and waste management

- 5.21 An indicative servicing approach is identified in the supporting Transport Note. Fundamentally Churchgate House operates predominantly as a successful office location. Servicing will tie in with existing arrangements in place for the wider building

with the frequency of collections not increasing or changing from that which currently exists for other premises in the building. The proposal is in accordance CS Policy T2 and NPPF policy.

Other considerations

Amenity and crime

- 5.22 There will be no effect from the proposed change of use when considered alongside existing uses in the area, nor will there be any impact on residential amenity. Of note, the majority of Churchgate House operates under B1 (a) Use. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed change from car parking to office space is entirely acceptable and appropriate in this location.
- 5.23 A Crime Impact Statement (Greater Manchester Police) has also been submitted, which concludes that subject to standard specification items to be implemented during the fit out there are no matters which would prevent development there is no expected impact on the local area.
- 5.24 The proposed use will be properly managed, as per the rest of Churchgate House, and therefore given the site is in a commercial city centre location where B1(a) Uses are commonplace there are no amenity issues arising from the change of use. Therefore, the proposed accords with CS Policy DM1.

Flood risk and drainage

- 5.25 The site lies within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1, therefore is at the lowest risk of flooding and there are no external works which could impact the building in terms of increased flood risk, nor would the works increase flood risk elsewhere.

Design

- 5.26 The submitted Plans Pack, Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement all show the proposed development to be of a quality design in keeping with Churchgate House and the surrounding area. The changed will have a positive effect on Churchgate House and the adjacent Whitworth Street Conservation Area.
- 5.27 The external alterations are proportionate to the proposed use and entirely acceptable in design terms. Therefore, the proposed is in accordance with CS Policy DM1.

Summary

- 5.28 The proposed development is entirely acceptable in planning terms and there are no site-specific matters which prevent the development. Moreover, there are clear benefits of the proposed, not least through the provision economically beneficial uses in a prominent city centre location.
- 5.29 The application site is an already established location for commercial development, with previous consents for B1(a) Uses across Churchgate House. The benefits from the occupation of under-utilised car parking space, providing required employment space, in direct accordance with the Development Plan.
- 5.30 The change of use of part of the basement level at Churchgate House is entirely compliant with local and national policy.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This application, on behalf of Helical (Churchgate) Limited, seeks the change of use from Sui Generis (car parking) to Use Class B1 (a) (offices) at part of the basement level below Churchgate House, Oxford Road.
- 6.2 This application is for a change of use and minor external alterations which will facilitate the refurbishment and reuse of underutilised car parking for high quality office space. The application is supported by a Heritage Statement and associated Listed Building Consent, owing to Churchgate House being Grade II* Listed.
- 6.3 This application forms part of Helical's wider investment strategy in Manchester, with the refurbishment of Churchgate House being one of several ongoing projects in the city centre to bring vacant floorspace back into active use.
- 6.4 The principle of employment generating uses within the city centre is specifically supported in the Development Plan, not least through CS Policy EC1 which identifies a requirement of 140ha of B1(a) space across the plan period and CC1 which identifies a requirement of 33ha of B1(a) space in the City Centre. The proposed directly responds to this.
- 6.5 The proposed use can deliver notable benefits, not least by enabling the occupation of under-utilised basement space, in line with Development Plan Policies SP1, EC1, EC3, EN3 and NPPF paragraphs 8, 11 and 118(d).
- 6.6 The change of use will enable the beneficial reuse of the heritage assets and this is a significant benefit of development. There will be no harm to the listed building or adjacent conservation area, and indeed the works will have a positive effect on the building. Even if 'less than substantial harm' (as per NPPF paragraph 196) is identified it is significantly outweighed by the benefits of development.
- 6.7 The beneficial use of heritage assets is specifically encouraged through national policy (paragraph 192) and Development Plan Policies CC9 and EN3.
- 6.8 There are no technical considerations (such as flood risk, access and highways) which would prevent development.
- 6.9 Development is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the Development Plan, national policy, site context and other material planning considerations, and therefore should be approved without delay.

Appendix 1

- 1 Existing ramp levelled by adding new steps within corridor.
- 2 Existing ramp levelled and staircase to Store Room added in its place.
- 3 Existing ramp edge feathered.
- 4 Blocked arched opening - to be kept as existing - TBC.
- 5 Existing windows to be reopened at street level.
- 6 Existing timber door pinned back and new glazed box installed in front internally.
- 7 Escape route to remain clear at all times.
- 8 Existing metal fence to be retained, brushed and repainted. To have a new locking mechanism.
- 9 Note: low headroom.
- 10 120min fire rated bulkhead
- 11 Secondary glazing to Canal elevation windows
- 12 Existing floor to receive levelling screed and 100mm raised access floor.

Extract/intake louvres - refer to M&E drawings

Section M-M
P(370)

Extract/intake louvres - refer to M&E drawings

BOILER HOUSE

SUITE 1 AND 2 - Economic Solutions

Area = 340sqm/3660sqft

KITCHEN

8

ESCAP STAIR

7

VOID

RAMP UP

VOID

ROL

35

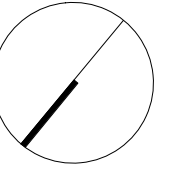
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DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING
DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE

All dimensions to be checked on site prior to any commencing work.

KEY

Existing
Proposed



H	Door to rear fire escape revised, Access to bikes revised, Access to Oxford Street Entrance revised.	AB	AB
G	Layout converted to serve an Office use.	ZS	HW
F	Revisions following Fire Engineer's comments.	ZS	HW
E	GIAs removed.	ZS	ZS
D	Revisions to doors.	ZS	ZS
C	Gas room reinstated. Existing walls within Unit 2 demise removed.	ZS	ZS
B	Revisions to proposed doors and openings. Stair No.5 revised.	ZS	HW
A	Revisions to existing and proposed layout following updated survey.	ZS	HW

Rev Note DRN CHK

Churchgate House

Proposed Basement Plan - Cat A

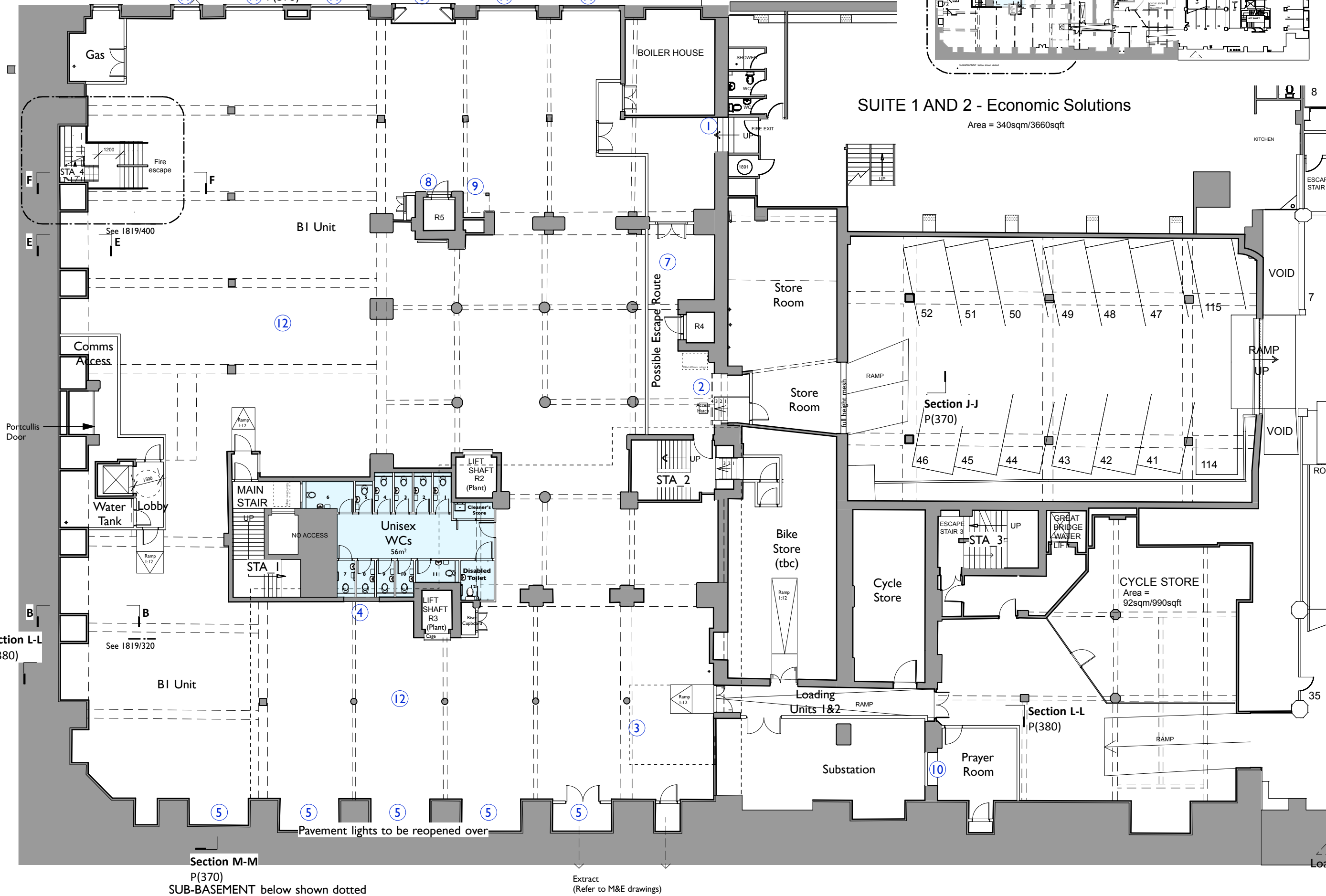
scheme 1819
drwg no. P(102)
revision H

scale 1:200 @ A3
date first drawn Oct 18
drawn FA

SK sketch E existing P proposed T tender C construction FI final issue

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Section L-L
P(380)

Section M-M
P(370)
SUB-BASEMENT below shown dotted

Extract
(Refer to M&E drawings)

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