Atelier MB
Urban Architects

Design and Access Statement to support a Listed Building Application for Queens Chambers Lightwell, Manchester

Client
Queens Chambers Property Co Ltd.

October 2018
Job: 1656
Rev. C



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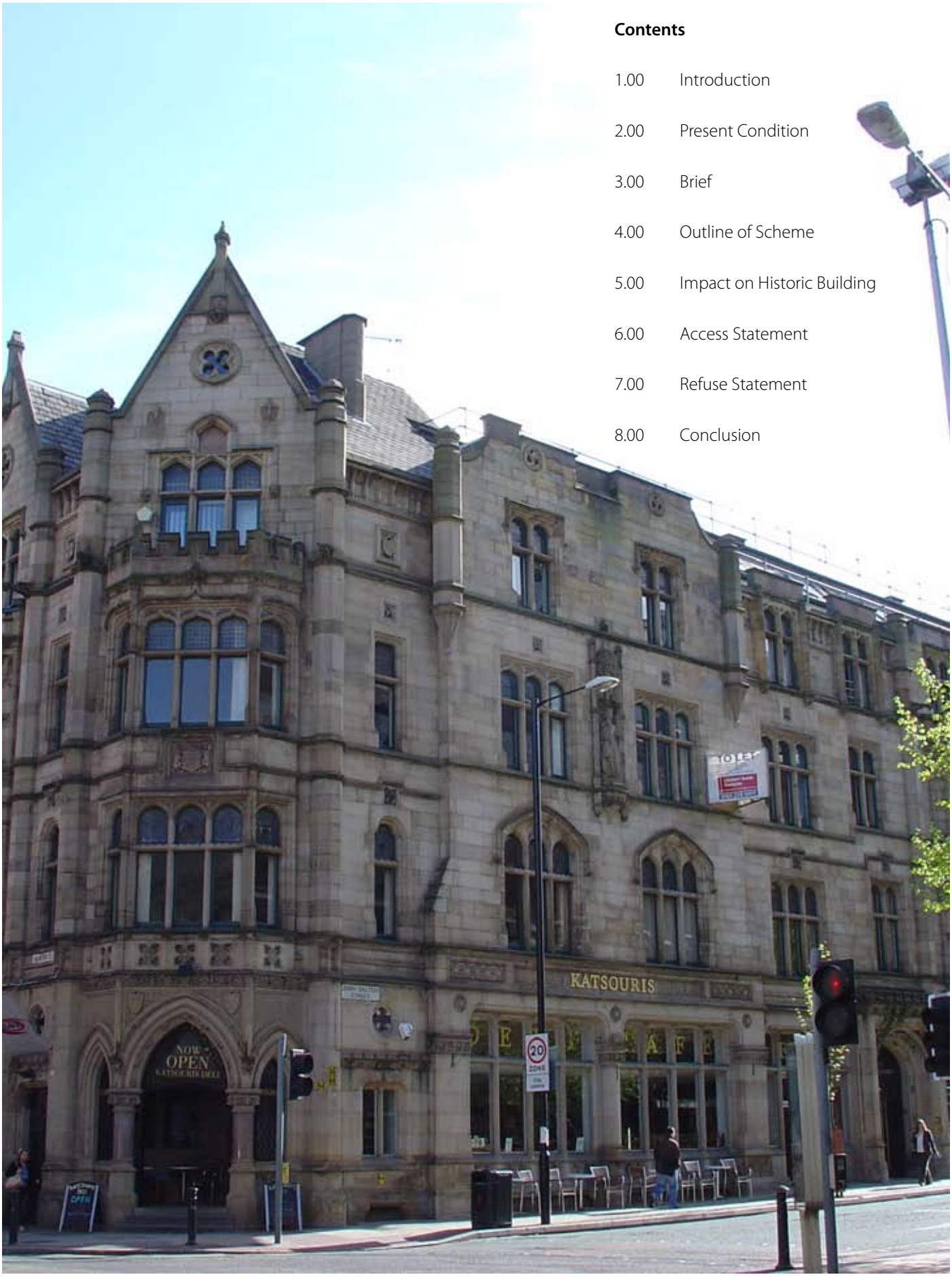
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Queens Chambers taken from Deansgate



Aerial view of Queens Chambers within its context



Aerial perspective of Queens Chambers



View of the existing courtyard which has developed into a service zone

1.00 Introduction

Queens Chambers occupies a city block bounded by John Dalton Street, Deansgate, Back King Street and Ridgefield.

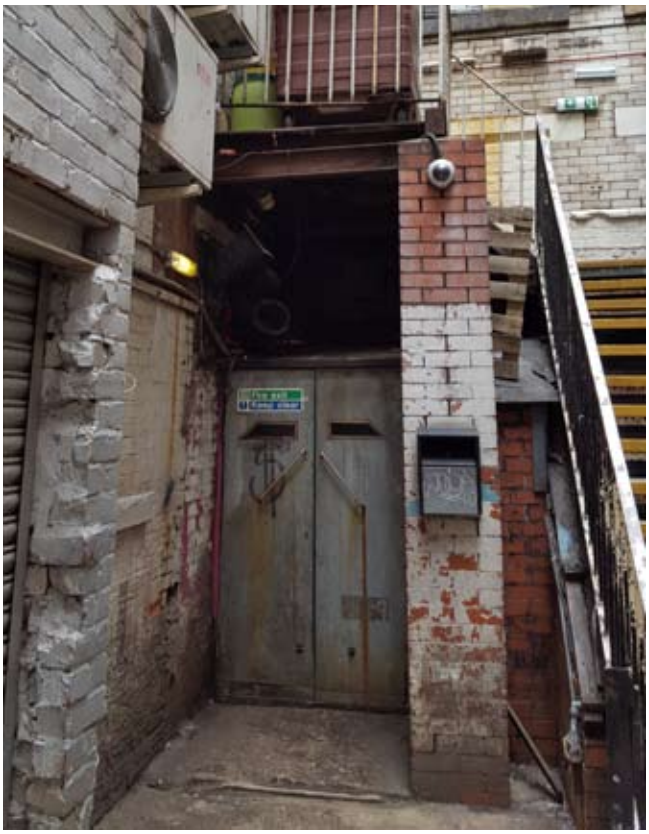
The listing of the building is given as 105 to 113 Deansgate, rather than John Dalton Street, reflecting that the initial building was the 'L' shaped structure fronting Deansgate and John Dalton Street and that the primary entrance was at the corner of the building into the Queens Building Society for who the building was constructed. The entrance to the upper floors of the building, now the primary entrance, was located on John Dalton Street and appears to have targeted professional services such as solicitors, accountants etc. This is evidenced by the rather fine panelled partitions above the ground floor and the absence of any obvious textile warehouse aesthetic.

This original building dates from 1876 and was designed by Manchester architects Pennington and Bridgen in an eccentric gothic style. The building is constructed in ashlar sandstone with a slate roof having 5 symmetrical bays (plus corner) to Deansgate and 7 asymmetrical bays to John Dalton Street.

The remainder of the trapeziform plan seems to have been completed in two stages. The first of these two buildings would seem to have been the one at the junction of Ridgefield with Back King Street. This is a brick building with stone detailing. The final piece of the puzzle is the infill building facing Back King Street and this is a plain, largely brick, structure creating a single room at each level. The floor levels of this building generally relate to the Ridgefield building suggesting that this was a simple warehouse extension in support of the trade being carried out in the earlier building. Neither of these buildings are likely to be the work of the original architects.

The group of buildings was extensively damaged in the Second World War, particularly the Pennington and Bridgen building, and a great deal of the detail to Deansgate and John Dalton Street is lost or greatly amended.

At some stage, all of these buildings were linked together by the formation of a variety of openings and flights of stairs. This process appears to have been piecemeal and haphazard and carried out over a lengthy period of time. The result has been the loss of some internal detail (plaster cornices, skirtings, etc) but most of this was of a common and basic form and better examples are found throughout the City.



View of the existing fire escape for South nightclub to be reconfigured



View of the non-original steel escape staircase and building below to be replaced

2.00 Present Condition

Generally, the building is in good condition. Part of the gable pikes on Deansgate have been removed some time in the past, but aside from this the principle elevations facing Deansgate and John Dalton Street, first floor upwards, remain intact.

The retail units have been significantly altered over the years and each retail use has taken a slightly different approach to the shop front solution. All recent refurbishments, however, have restricted the shop-front to the area within the stone reveals and the rounded corners of the original openings.

Over the past few years, the building owners, in association with Atelier MB and others have upgraded all but one of the shop units on the two major facades of this building. The most recent upgrade was at 7 John Dalton Street (application 092366/FO/2010/C1). This unit which is the subject of the application is very similar in many respects to the 7 John Dalton Street unit, and we have used the same successful approach for the shop-front treatment.

3.00 Brief

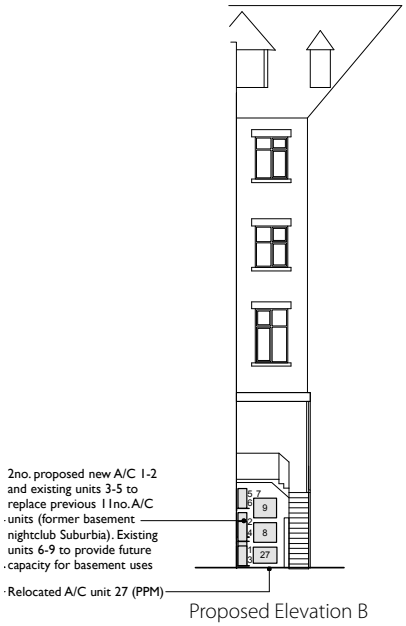
Proposals in this scheme are limited to the courtyard and one of the basement units leading off the courtyard. The proposal aims:

- to rationalise the fire escape provision from the units on the lower basement floor of Queens Chambers. In addition, there will be additional refuse provision for those units.

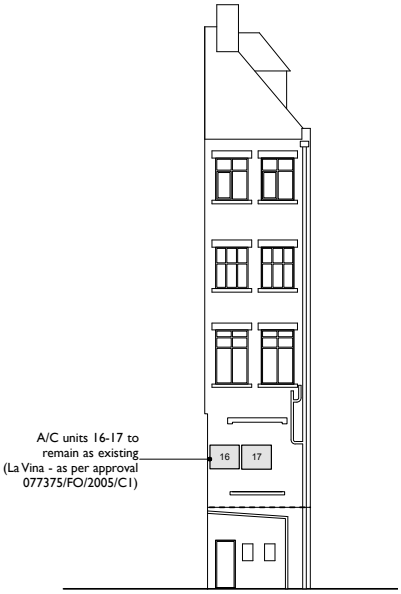
- to replace existing escape stair and associated basement extensions with more sympathetic interventions into the courtyard.

- to reduce, re-align and reposition the air conditioning units within the courtyard

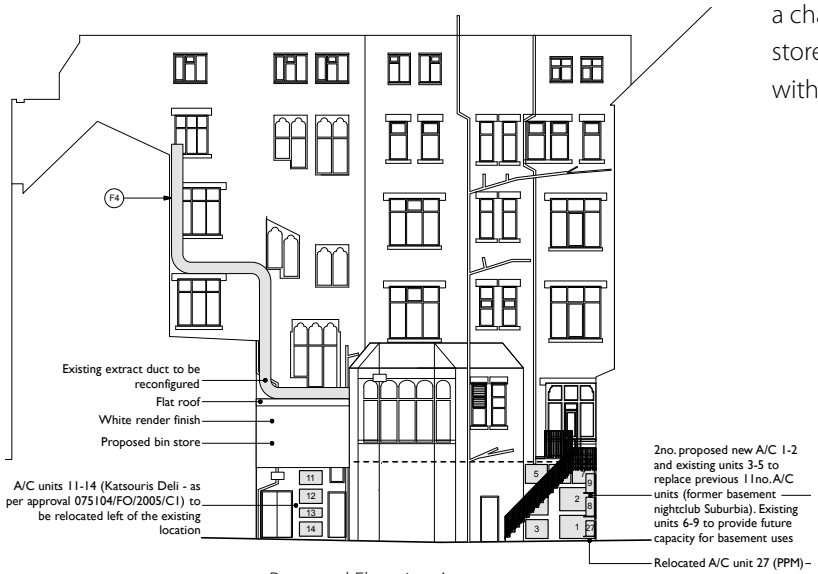
- to insert new shower/changing facilities and a cycle store.



Proposed Elevation B



Proposed Elevation C



Proposed Elevation A

4.00 Outline of Scheme

The courtyard in the centre of Queens Chambers has developed as a service zone in addition to its original use as a light well. Unfortunately, it has been developed in a piecemeal manner over the years resulting in an ill-considered collection of blisters and fire escape provision. There is also a lack of refuse provision at ground floor for the following units:

- Suburbia nightclub
- South nightclub
- Arcane bar
- La Bandera

As well as the lack of refuge stores, the non-original steel escape staircase is rotten and in urgent need of replacement. The proposal seeks to replace the staircase with a fully compliant staircase to assist safe egress from the basement units. In doing so, we will ensure the ability to continue safe use of the basements spaces by providing adequate secondary means of escape.

Together with this, the visual appearance of the lightwell has been further damaged by the installation of several air conditioning units, haphazardly arranged around the courtyard space. The proposal seeks to rationalise the existing air conditioning units by relocating them to 3 distinct locations of the courtyard and reducing the number of units, to lessen its visual impact on the building.

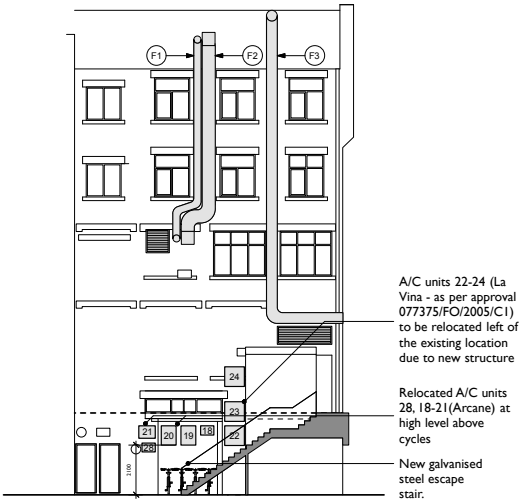
Currently the building has no shower/changing facilities for workers who commute by cycle. Acting upon this and working in line with the Manchester City Council Travel Strategy policies, the proposal seeks to the convert one of the lower basement units, currently occupied by Rupert Hayes Hairdressing, into a changing room and shower facility with a connecting cycle store. This facility will be secured and accessible to all workers within the building.

5.00 Impact on Historic Building

Please refer to the heritage statement which describes the impact of these proposals in relation to this listed building. The proposed provision for refuge stores will help to ensure that solid temporary refuge storage will be removed from the exterior of the building where it is currently left for collection. This will have the effect of improving the quality of the local environment around the building and in the city in general.

6.00 Access Statement

As this application applies only to escape provision and to refuge storage, there will be no impact on the existing access to the building. As noted above the proposed escape stair will assist egress from the basement units.



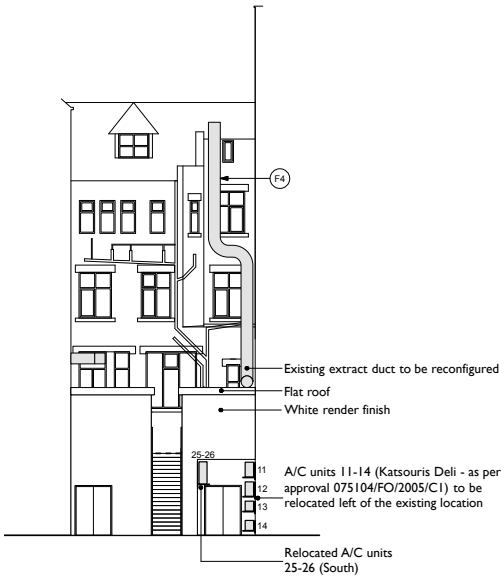
Proposed Elevation D

7.00 Refuse Statement

The following new refuse stores are to be provided at ground floor level. Please refer to drawing P(1111):

- Suburbia nightclub
- Arcane Bar
- South night club
- La Bandera

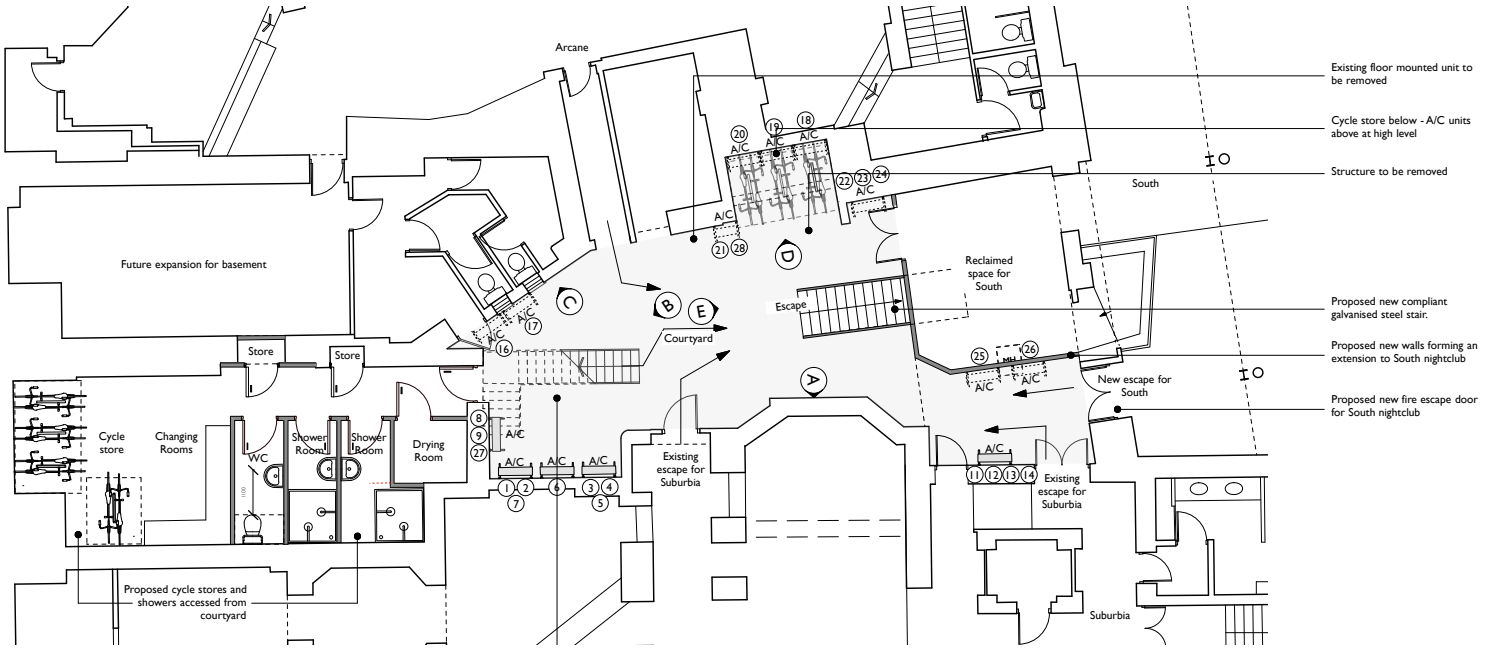
Refuse will be stored in the locations as noted (stores 1 to 3) and the 1100ltr bins will be wheeled out via the existing passage on to South King Street on collection days.



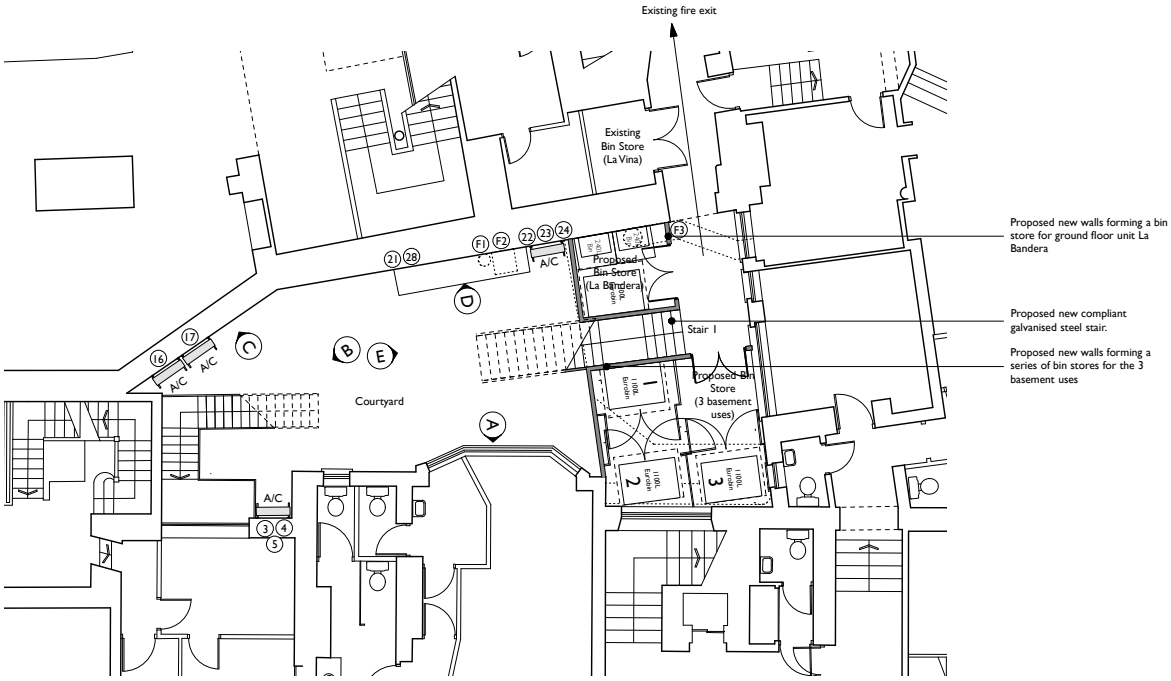
Proposed Elevation E

8.00 Conclusion

This application seeks to improve and rationalise the escape provision, refuge storage and air conditioning units for Queens Chambers. It represents a significant improvement in these areas and continues the redevelopment work for this important building. The addition of the changing facilities and cycle store shows the clients commitment to the Manchester City Council Travel Strategy, encouraging workers to cycle to work and providing the necessary conditions to facilitate it.



Proposed Basement Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan