Atelier MB
Urban Architects

Heritage Statement
to support a Listed Building Application
for Queens Chambers Lightwell, Manchester

Client
Queens Chambers Property Co Ltd.

October 2018
Job: 1656
Rev. C



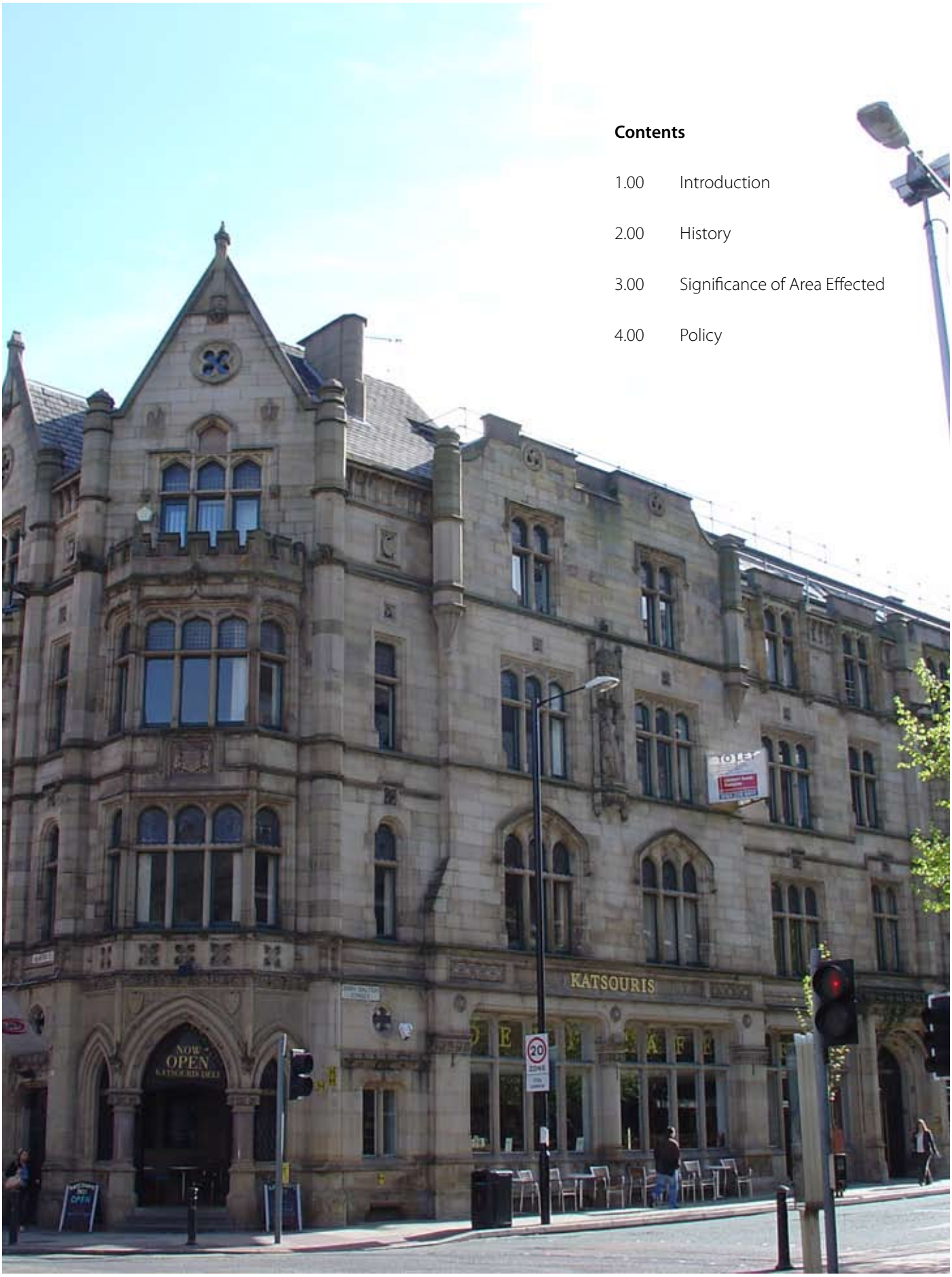
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Queens Chambers taken from Deansgate



Aerial view of Queens Chambers within its context



Aerial perspective of Queens Chambers

1.00 Introduction

This heritage statement has been written to accompany a planning and listed building application for Queens Chambers, Deansgate, Manchester. It has been written by Atelier Heritage.

2.00 History

Queens Chambers was designed by architects Pennington and Bridgen and dates from 1876. It is in the Gothic style with a variety of window openings and an ornate sandstone façade featuring a decorative corner entrance with pointed arches and a porch.

The architectural partnership of Nathan Glossop Pennington and Thomas Edwards Bridgen designed a number of buildings in the city centre including 70-72 Portland Street designed in 1873 for T. Hyland (Grade II listed); Lawrence Buildings (1874, Grade II* listed), Mount Street; 42-44 Sackville Street (Grade II listed); the Royal Eye Hospital on Oxford Road (1884-1910, Grade II listed); Glasgow Assurance Buildings in Albert Square/ Cross Street (1877, Grade II listed); and 62 King Street (1877, Grade II listed).



Image from Manchester Library, Queens Chamber, 1878.

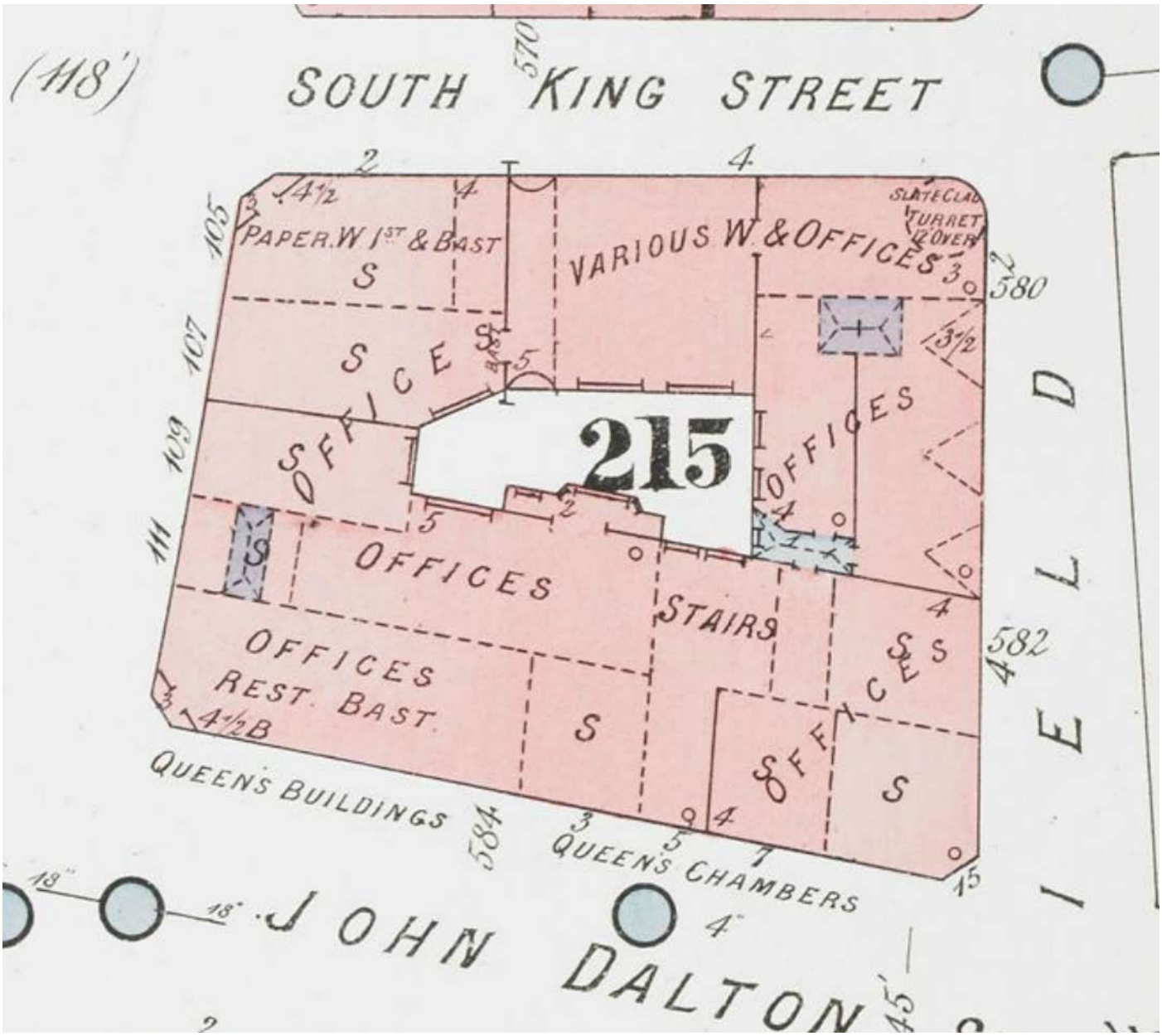
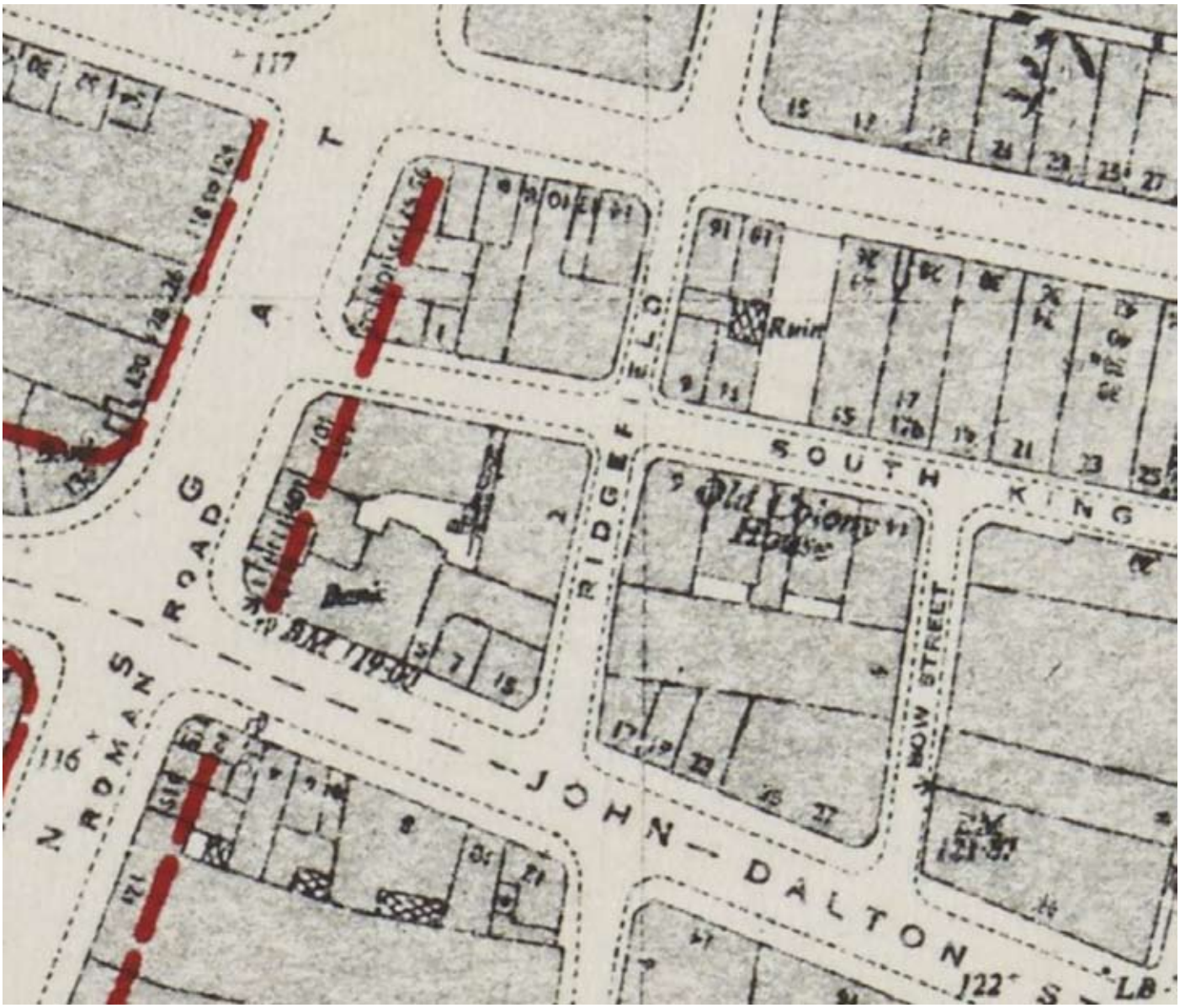
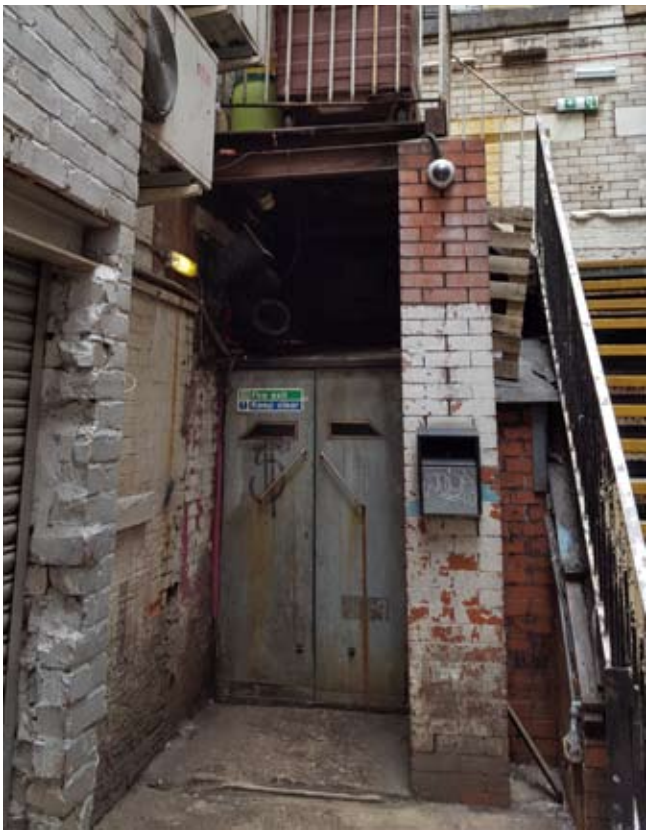


Image of Goads Insurance Plan from the 1890s showing 'Queens Buildings' and 'Queens Chambers'.



Map of Manchester Central Area, 1955 from Manchester University Archive online.



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



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

3.00 Significance of area affected

The areas included in these proposals are limited to the part of the light well at the basement and ground floor level that have had modern interventions in the recent past and one of the basement units. The locations of the works are clearly marked on the drawings. The proposals are designed to improve the existing situation relating to escape provision, refuse storage and air conditioning units at Queens Chambers, as well as encouraging the use of cycles to commute, through the insertion of shower/changing facilities.

Removal of steel staircase

Proposal:
To replace the existing rotten non-original staircase with a new steel staircase.

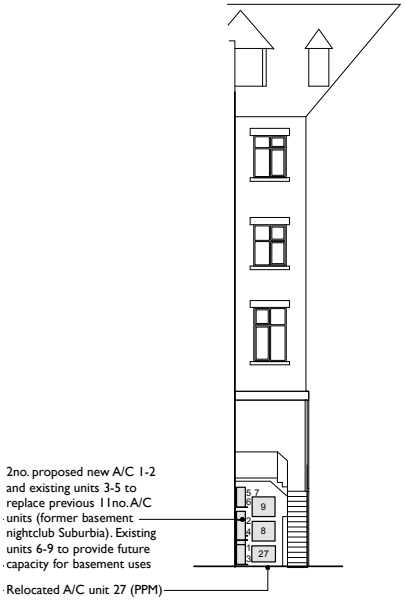
Justification:
Existing steel stair is of low quality and is now beyond repair. The treads are loose and the rust has penetrated into many joints rendering structure unsafe.

Impact:
Low: evidence suggests but this is not an original feature of the building as the design of the stair is a modern appearance. There may well have been an original staircase at some point in the past but it has not been possible to determine if this was indeed the case. We intend to replace the existing non-original low quality stair with a more robust but similar steel staircase.

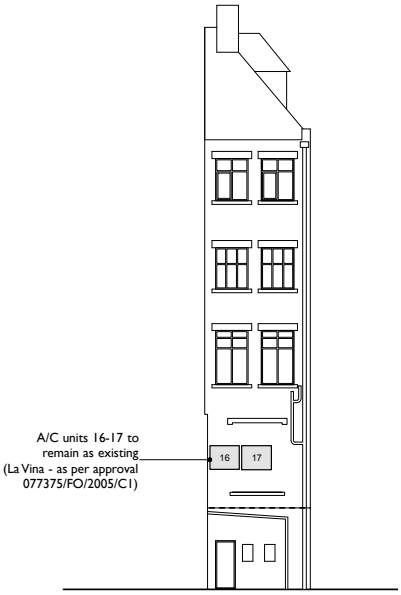
Removal of building below steel staircase

Proposal:
To replace the existing structure of the DJ booth and WC to south nightclub.

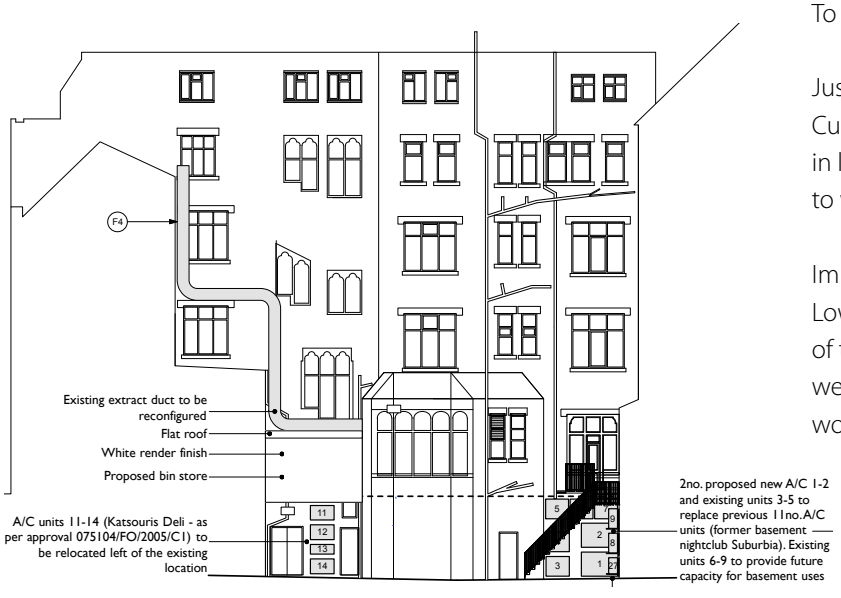
Justification:
Looking at the old light well photographs and inspecting quality of the brickwork and methods of construction of this structure, it is clear that the booth is a later addition to the light well. It has a poorly applied felt roof which is trapped underneath the rotten steel staircase and is currently leaking. In addition, the walls which are built from brickwork are not properly tied in to the existing building.



Proposed Elevation B



Proposed Elevation C



Proposed Elevation A

Impact:
Low: this structure is not original, it is poorly constructed and has a negative impact on the light well.

Insertion of new bin stores

Proposal:
To install refuse provision at pavement level and associated basement uses at the lower floor.

Justification:
Currently the basement uses have no effective ground floor bin store provision and this is having a negative impact on the surrounding streets and the courtyard itself. This intervention is justified on those grounds and also has the added advantage of tidying up the existing DJ booth extension and fire escape provision

Impact:
Medium: whilst it is recognised that the insertion of the stores will have some impact on the courtyard we have reduced the impact as much as possible by rendering of the exterior of these new stores in white render to replicate the white glazed brickwork of the light well. The render indicates a new intervention whilst recognising that these interventions should be visually unobtrusive. It is considered that the advantages of providing these stores and tidying up the existing extensions outweigh any small negative impact they may have.

Insertion of new showers & cycle store

Proposal:
To insert new showers in basement unit.

Justification:
Currently the building has no shower and bicycle store facilities in line with policies to encourage the use of cycles to commute to working facilities.

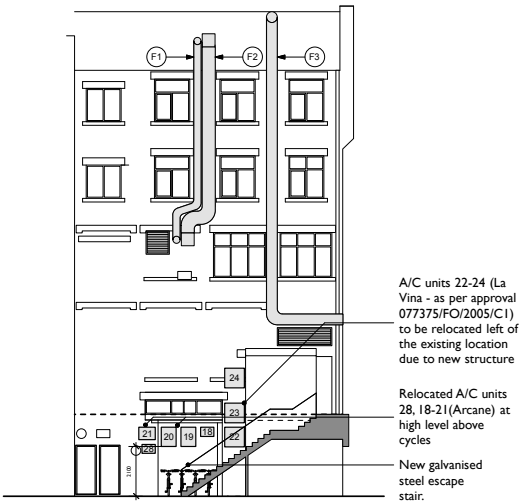
Impact:
Low: The basement space has no detail features, so the impact of the proposals are minimal. The added facilities are to be welcomed and more than offset by any small impact that they would have on the existing basement.

Rationalisation of air conditioning units

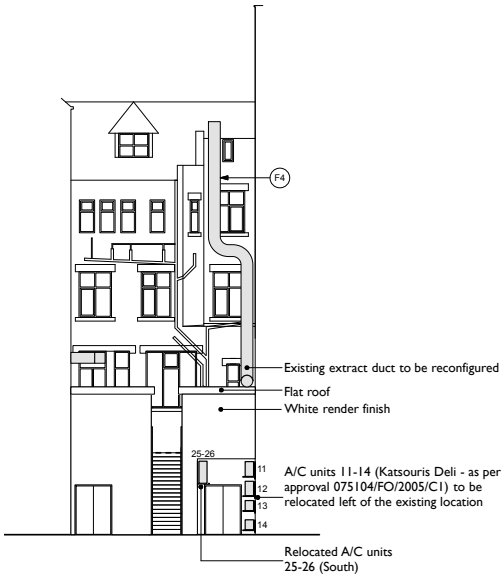
Proposal:
To reduce, re-align and reposition the condenser units.

Justification:
It is recognised that the existing ground floor and basement floor uses (essentially leisure based) require a high degree of servicing in the form of heating and cooling in order to allow comfortable usage of the spaces. The condensing units that provide this comfort are located in the courtyard on the basis that they are relatively easy to service and have no impact on the building from the street.

Impact:
Medium: The courtyard has historically been a service space and lightwell, but by virtue of the listed nature, this space should be considered with similar weight to the rest of the building. Many of the current condensers are approved in various planning applications. However, over the years, the haphazard process of separate applications has produced a somewhat chaotic layout. This proposal attempts to rationalise the layouts to reduce the overall impact of the units in the courtyard.



Proposed Elevation D



Proposed Elevation E

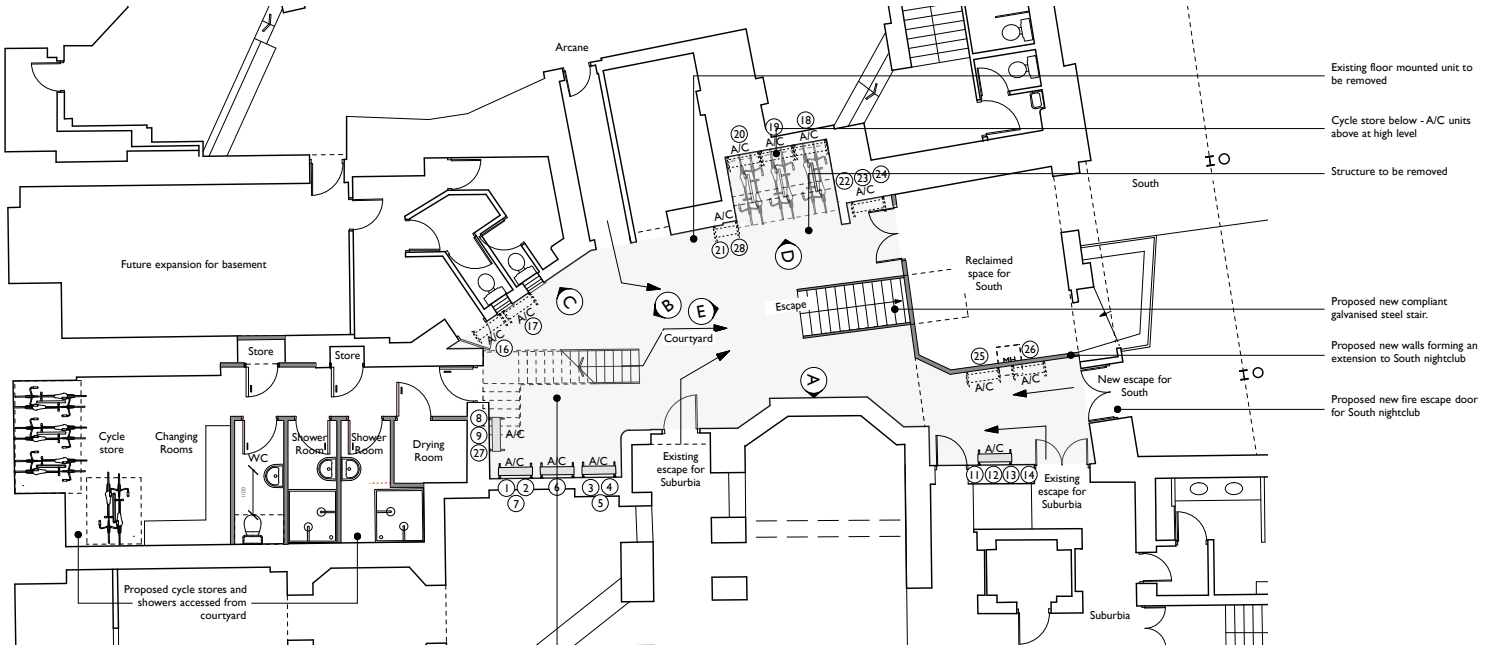
4.00 Policy

The legislation for changes to listed buildings is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, specifically section 12, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'.

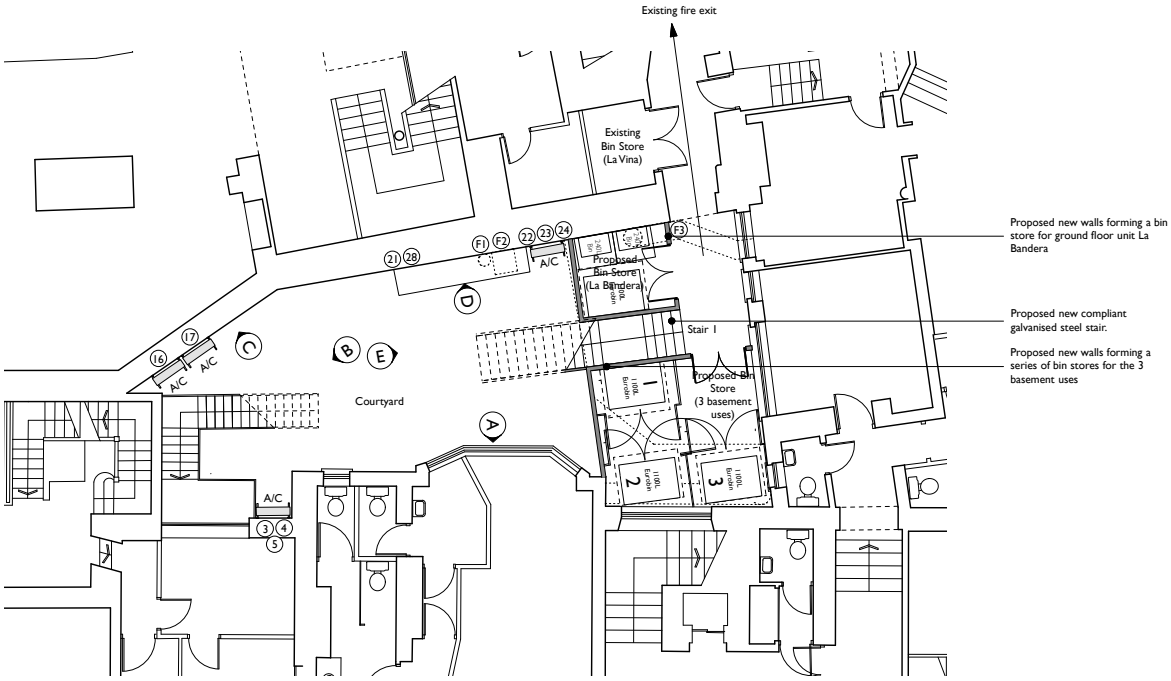
Paragraph 128 states that local authorities should require a description of the significance of the heritage asset affected by the application. This document fulfils this requirement.

Paragraph 131 requires that the local planning authority takes account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the asset and putting it to viable uses consistent with its conservation. The proposals for Queens Chambers are consistent with its conservation as an asset: the ground floor retail and upper floor office use are continued. There are no parts of high significance that will be damaged or lost, and exposing historic features to the front elevation and internal ceilings will enhance the building.

This application does not represent harm to the significance of the listed building, nor are there considered to be any harmful impacts on the significance of the St Ann's Square Conservation Area, which will benefit from the improvements to the street frontage and secure the long-term use of the building.



Proposed Basement Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan