DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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REV 01 19/08/2021

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PURPOSE

This design and access statement has been prepared by Fortis Design Ltd on behalf of EXP Property Investments and seeks to outline the proposal for a Planning and Listed Building Application at 41 London Street, Reading. It aims to help explain the development and its positive contribution to the existing property and its context.

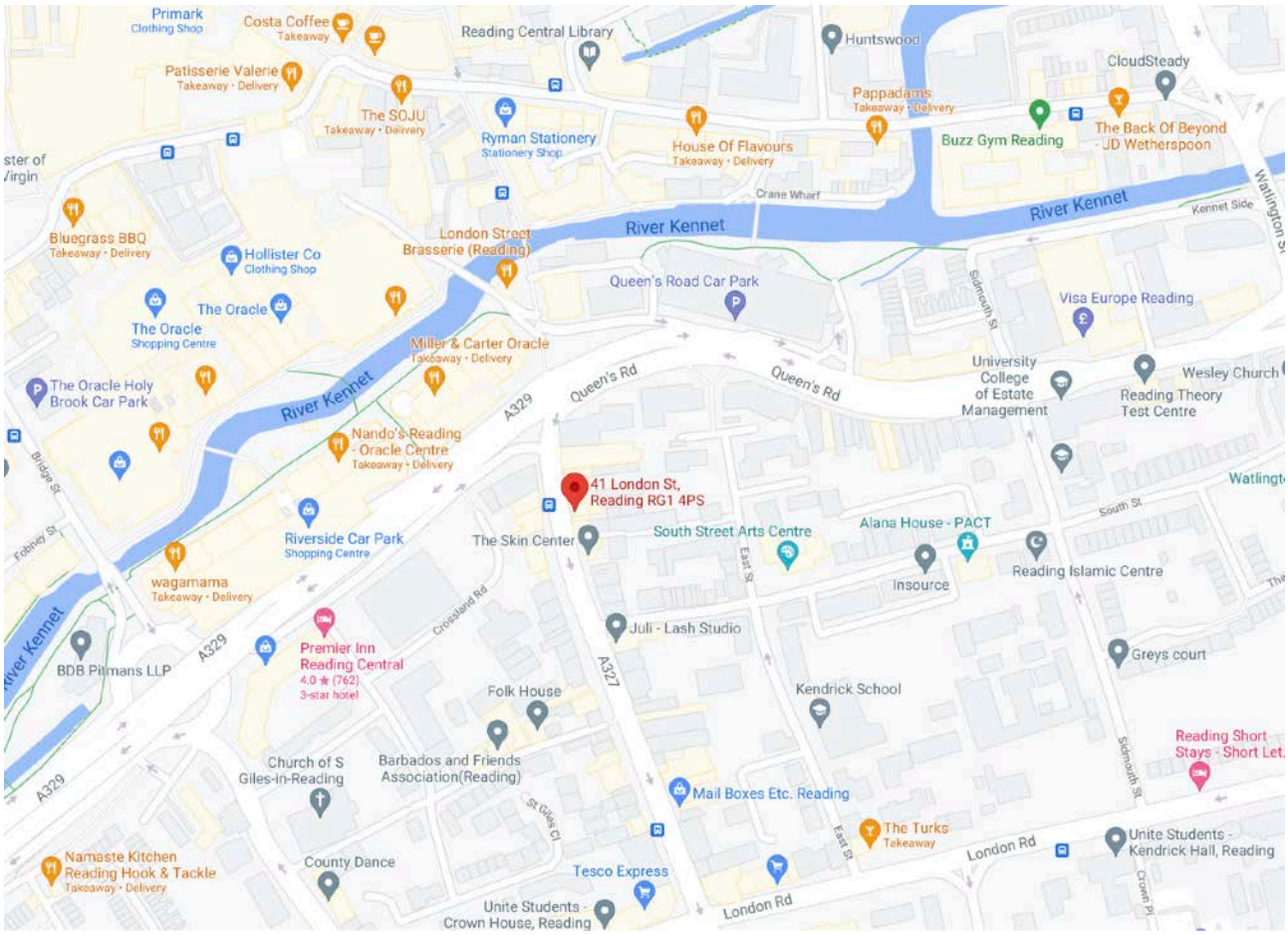
This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings prepared by Fortis Design and the Planning and Heritage Statements prepared by Pegasus Group and all other application material.

LOCATION

Located on the eastern side and fronting London Street, no 41 is a mid terrace 3 storey quasi-Italianate building. The site is on the edge of Reading town centre and offers excellent pedestrian links to amenities including cafes, shops, Reading Railway Station and the Oracle Shopping Centre. A bus stop is located directly in front of the property ensuring additional ease of access to public transport links to wider amenities.

The property is Grade II listed, and is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

For a full description of the site and its context please refer to the Heritage Statement submitted with this application.



Map showing location of the site and local amenities

Photograph showing existing front elevation of the property

Photograph showing rear of the property

USE

The existing building is of Class B1 offices. The proposal seeks for this to be converted to 1 x No. Class C3 self-contained flat on the ground floor and basement and 7 bedroom Sui generis HMO across the basement, ground, first and second floor.

PROPOSAL

The proposal sees the conversion and upgrade of existing basement and all upper levels. The majority of works are to be within the existing building envelope. A small extent of existing and non original walls and partitions are proposed to be removed to accommodate the conversion. Existing historic fabric and features are intended to be retained and/or protected as far as practically possible.

The existing basement is currently under-utilised as a storage area and is in an unkept condition. The proposal sees the upgrade of this space, including new insulation and finish to floor and walls. A well as the addition of a cavity drain waterproofing system to ensure the space is fit for use as a habitable space and in line with BS 8102.

The works to the basement include the removal of the central pillar structure and other internal walls and then replacement of the existing steel structure which is in a poor condition.

The floor to the rear of the self contained flat on the ground floor is proposed to be removed and replaced at a higher level. The existing floor is a later replacement and not part of the original building fabric. This will increase the headroom and allow the installation of a window and light-well which will provide the basement with natural light and ventilation. This will, in turn, require the existing ground floor window above to be replaced by a larger window which re-instates the original arrangements here. This strategy also prevents the need to excavate and lower the basement floor which would negatively impact on the original basement flooring.

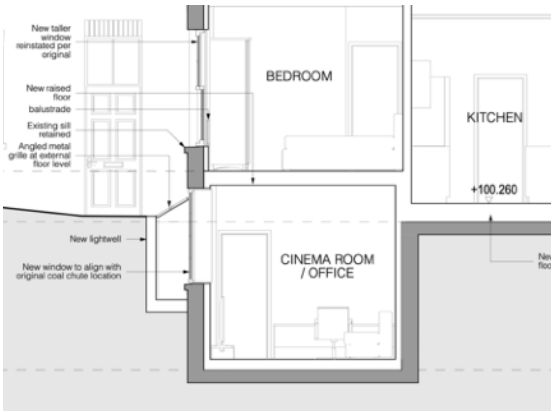
Proposed works to all levels include the thermal upgrade to existing walls where required. Secondary glazing will be installed to existing windows to both improve thermal performance and also mitigate potential noise impact from London Street. Furthermore, windows to the front elevation are to remain closed and all rooms will be mechanically ventilated to improve air quality of occupants.

A new Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery Unit (MVHR) is positioned in the vacant loft space with two small ducts vented through the roof. False ceiling zones will be installed below the existing floor joists for ducting so as not to penetrate the building fabric internally

The existing timber floors are proposed to be exposed, repaired as required, sanded and re-sealed as a feature within the spaces.

Existing chimney breasts are retained and expressed within the layouts.

Section through existing basement



Section through proposed basement and light-well

Photograph showing existing steel structure which is in a poor condition and is intended to be replaced

Photograph showing existing timber floor boards which will be made good and exposed as a feature. This small area shown was exposed for inspection purposes only.

Plans showing extent of proposed demolition. Please refer also to all drawings submitted.

AMOUNT

The layout of the existing building is split by the internal staircase. The proposed self contained flat will occupy the front section of the ground floor and basement. The rear of the basement will provide a new shared laundry facility, store and shower room, as well as cycle storage for use by the HMO. The rear of the ground floor closet wing provides a kitchen/dining area, with 3 bedrooms and shared kitchen/dining/living space on first floor and 4 bedrooms on the second floor. 5 bedrooms will have dedicated ensuite shower rooms and 3 shared shower rooms will be provided for sharing across the floors.

1 PLAN Basement - Existing 1:50

2 PLAN Ground Floor - Existing 1:50

3 PLAN Level 1 - Existing 1:50

4 PLAN Level 2 - Existing 1:50

Existing floor plans

1 PLAN Basement - Proposed 1:50

2 PLAN Ground Floor - Proposed 1:50

3 PLAN Level 1 - Proposed 1:50

4 PLAN Level 2 - Proposed 1:50

5 PLAN Loft - Proposed 1:50

Proposed floor plans

The proposal sees a decrease in Gross Internal Area (GIA) from the existing. This is due to the addition of new wall linings to the internal face of external walls where required to achieve the necessary thermal upgrade. As well as a loss of area to the existing basement where walls are upgraded, not only thermally, but also to accommodate the cavity drain waterproofing system.

EXISTING GIA

Floor (Story)	Area (GIA)
Basement	39.51
Ground Floor	79.94
Level 1	80.90
Level 2	80.83
	281.18 m²

PROPOSED GIA

Floor (Story)	Area (GIA)
Basement	36.51
Ground Floor	77.69
Level 1	79.28
Level 2	78.14
	271.62 m²

Of the proposed GIA, the self contained flat occupies 74.49m2 and the HMO 197.13m2. Regardless of the above loss in area, the self contained flat is still designed to meet technical space standards, and all HMO spaces to meet the Amenity Standards applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation as set out below.

HMO KEY AREAS

Floor (Story)	**Room**	**Area**
Basement		
	LAUNDRY / STORE *(excl. Shower Room)*	6.98
Ground Floor		
	KITCHEN / DINING	11.10
Level 1		
	BEDROOM 1	11.00
	BEDROOM 2 *(excl. Ensuite)*	12.66
	BEDROOM 3 *(excl. Ensuite)*	10.82
	KITCHEN / DINING / LIVING	17.55
Level 2		
	BEDROOM 4	12.13
	BEDROOM 5 *(excl. Ensuite)*	12.02
	BEDROOM 6 *(excl. Ensuite)*	10.62
	BEDROOM 7 *(excl. Ensuite)*	13.96

FLAT GIA

Floor (Story)	Area
Basement	
	17.24
Ground Floor	
	57.25
	74.49 m²

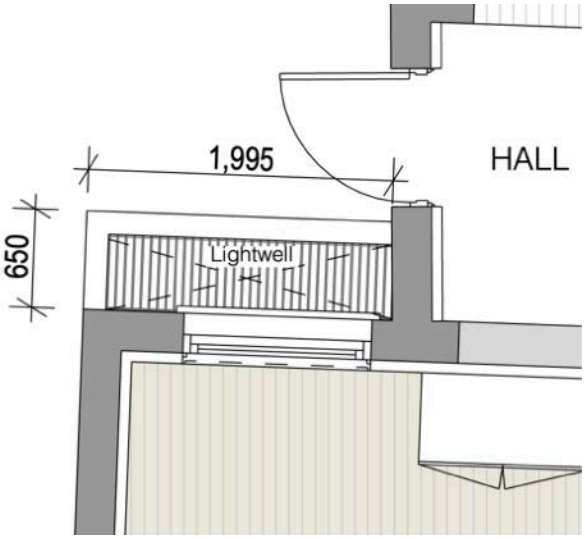
All Shower rooms and ensuites within the HMO contain showers that are 1200mm x 800mm, and the kitchen/Dining area contains cooking facilities and fridges, as well as sinks. All of which also aligns with the required Amenity Standards.

SCALE

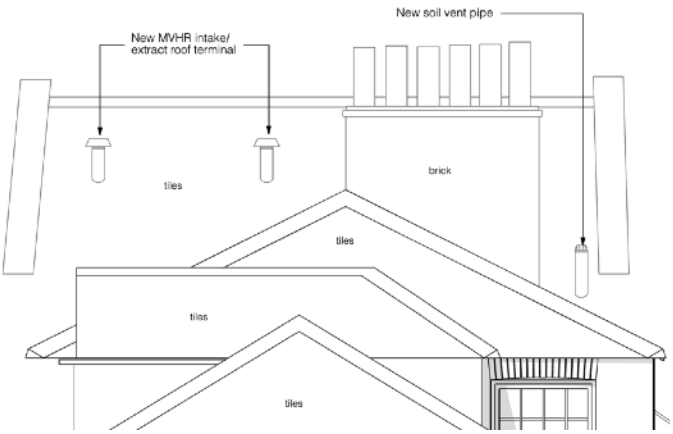
The majority of changes will all be within the existing building envelope with only minor changes to the external arrangements which do not affect the scale of the existing building. These changes include the addition of a small light-well to the rear elevation and some alterations and additions to existing windows at the rear and rear and side of the closet wing. The opening of the light-well will measure 650mm x 1995mm.

There is also the discreet addition of a single new soil vent pipe which is positioned to the back of the existing pitched roof and will not be readily visible, and 2 new roof terminals for the extract/ intake of new Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery Unit (MVHR)

None of the above will be visible from the front elevation facing London Street.



Plan showing proposed size of light-well



Rear elevation showing new soil vent pipe and MVHR roof terminals

APPEARANCE

Proposed changes to the appearance of the existing building are minimal and have been approached sensitively and with careful consideration. All changes have been developed with advice from Heritage Consultants, Pegasus Group to ensure all proposals will not only be sympathetic to the heritage fabric, but also positively contribute to re-instating historic aspects of the building. Please also refer to the Heritage Statement submitted with this application. These proposals include:

Addition of the light-well and low level window to provide natural light and natural ventilation to the basement. The position of this window will be in the position of the original coal chute opening at the rear elevation. The window will match existing window style and colour. The existing ground floor window above this location, due to the raising of the internal floor to provide additional headroom and installation of basement window, is required to be replaced with a larger window. This larger window will re-instate the original arrangements here, of the which the opening has currently been infilled. This window will match existing window style and colour. The existing stone sill will be kept in place.

To the side elevation of the closet wing, the small window which was later added and original opening infilled, will be removed and new larger window installed to reinstate original arrangements here. The existing door leaf will also be replaced, to one that better matches the existing front door to London Street. The small window to the rear elevation of the closet Wing, is low to the external ground level and does not provide much light currently due to its location backing onto an alleyway. As such, it does not positively contribute to the space internally and is proposed to be removed and the opening filled with brickwork to match existing.

Existing arrangements to the rear of the building and side of closet wing

Proposed arrangements to the rear of the building and side of closet wing

Existing extract vents and flues will be re-used where possible, and removed where redundant and filled with brickwork to match existing. New vents for the extract have been placed discreetly to locations on the side elevation to ensure that these are not readily visible and will be of a suitable type and high quality to avoid any negative visual impact to the historic fabric.

The new roof vent and any amendments to the existing rainwater downpipes required with the addition of the light-well, will be metal and finished in black colour to match existing black cast iron downpipes.

All changes are to the rear of the building and will not be visible from London Street. There will be no external changes the front elevation. Only some repair and cleaning to external facade and detailing, along with removal of redundant cabling/services is proposed.

Although not visible externally, proposed new secondary glazing will be sensitively installed, where required, to preserve existing window arrangements and detailing internally.

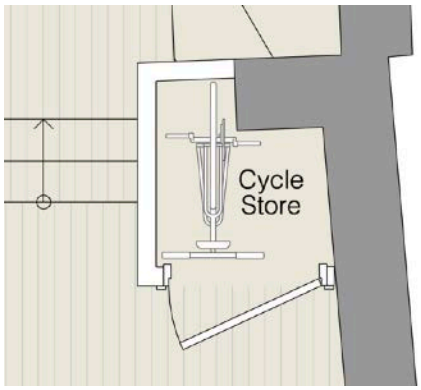
SUSTAINABILITY

Thermal elements of the existing building envelope will be upgraded where required, and any new new elements will be installed to comply with building control requirements.

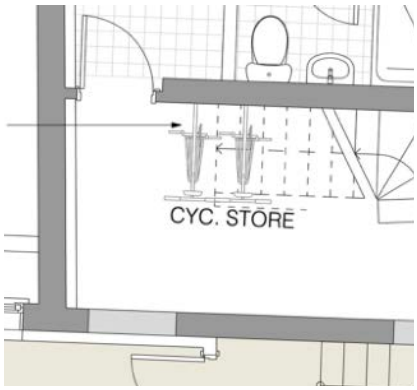
Part of the project sees the addition of new boiler heating systems for the self contained flat and for the HMO which will have improved efficiency and comply with building control requirements.

Secondary glazing will improve both thermal comfort and acoustic properties of the existing envelope where required.

Both the self contained flat and the HMO are provided with dedicated cycle storage facilities to encourage cycling for the occupants.



Cycle store within the Flat



Shared Cycle store within the HMO

Example of vertical bike racks proposed

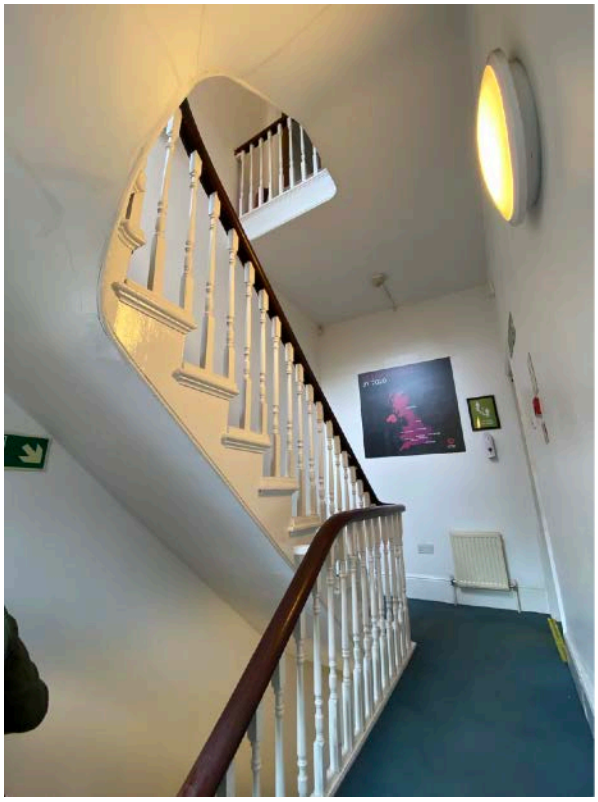
ACCESS

Currently there is only pedestrian access to the property, via the main entrance door directly off London Street. Access to the rear of the building is also off London Street, via an alleyway to the northern side of the building, known as Sims Court, which continues to lead eastwards towards East Street. This door to the rear is currently used for egress purposes from the main internal staircase.

There will be minimal change to the existing access arrangements. The main entrance door to London street will continue to provide pedestrian access as the dedicated entrance and egress to the self contained flat only. The rear door accessed via Sims Court will be replaced and will act as both egress and as the main dedicated entrance to for the HMO. This door provides access to the existing internal staircase to all levels.

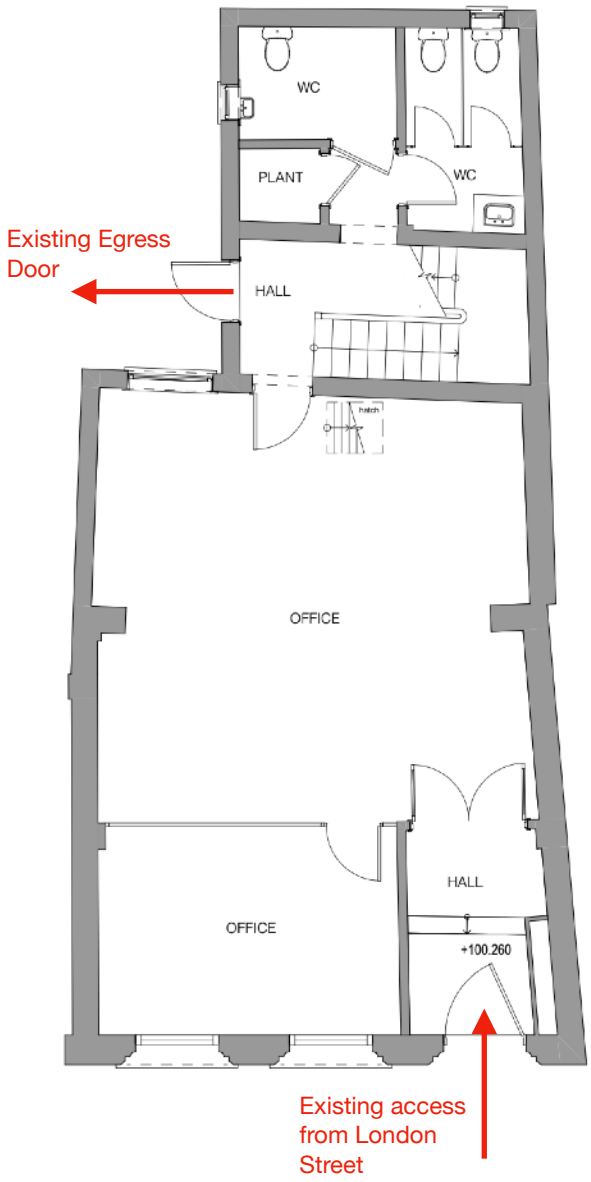
The basement is currently accessed from within the building via a poor and unsafe access hatch on the ground floor.

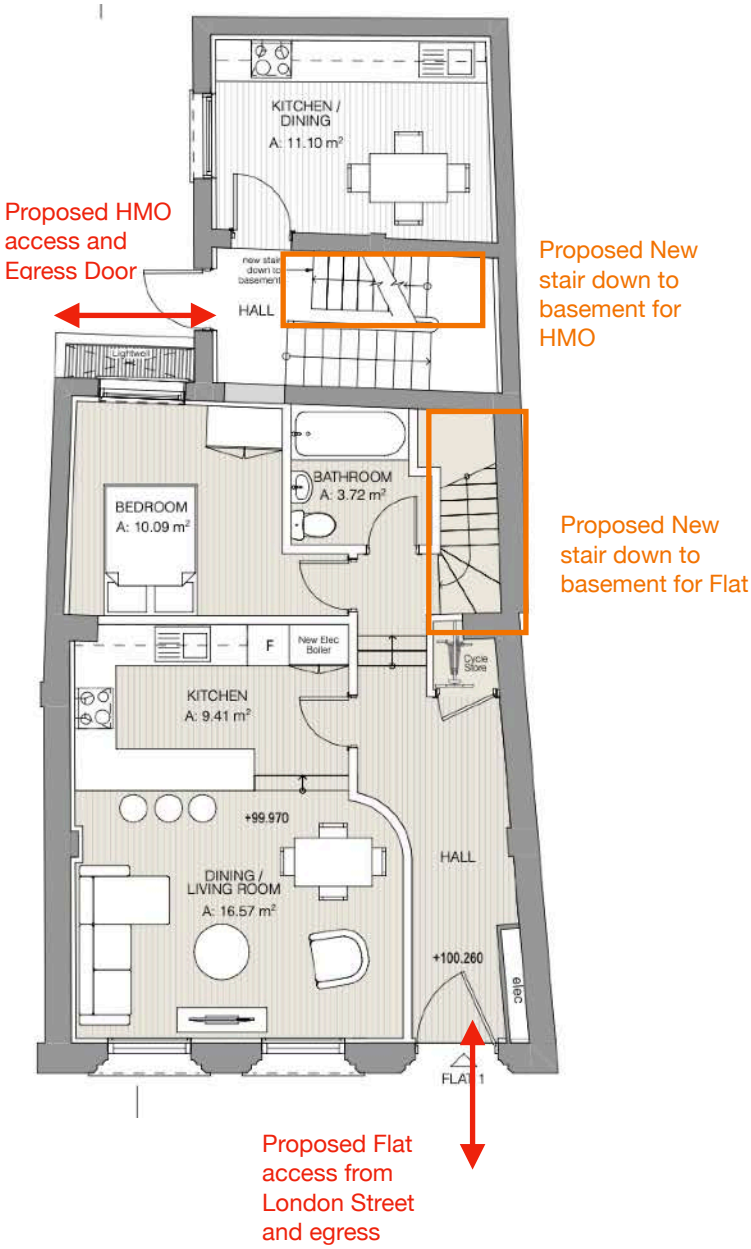
Existing hatch access to the basement from ground floor



Existing staircase providing access and egress to all levels

To provide improved and safe access to the basement, the proposal sees the partial removal of the floor below the existing staircase and rear of existing ground floor office and addition of two new complaint stairs. The new stair in the common staircase will provide access to a new shared laundry facility, store and shower room, as well as cycle storage for the HMO. The other new stair will provide access from within the proposed ground floor flat to a cinema room, home office and store.


WC
PLANT
WC
Existing Egress Door
HALL
OFFICE
OFFICE
HALL
+100.260
Existing access from London Street


KITCHEN / DINING
A: 11.10 m²
Proposed HMO access and Egress Door
HALL
Proposed New stair down to basement for HMO
BATHROOM
A: 3.72 m²
BEDROOM
A: 10.09 m²
Proposed New stair down to basement for Flat
F
New Elec Boiler
Cycle Store
KITCHEN
A: 9.41 m²
+99.970
DINING / LIVING ROOM
A: 16.57 m²
HALL
+100.260
elec
FLAT 1
Proposed Flat access from London Street and egress