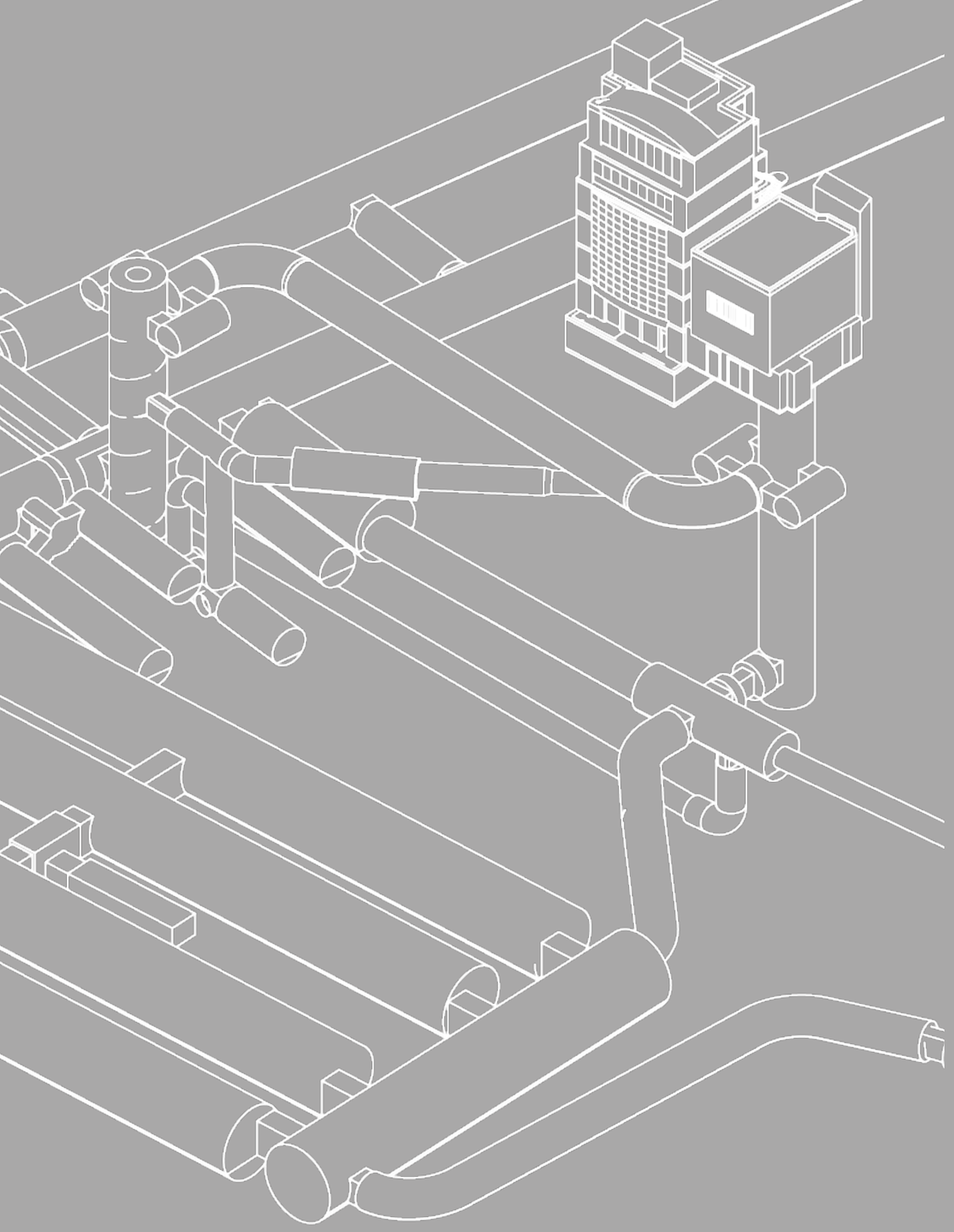


4.3 31-33 High Holborn

4.3.1 31-33 High Holborn

When the Central London Railway was inaugurated on July 30, 1900, Chancery Lane Station was initially accessed through 31-33 High Holborn building. In the 1930s, when all London's public transport came under public ownership, an initiative was sanctioned to modernize existing stations, which included plans at Chancery Lane to replace the four existing lifts with inclined escalators. Due to logistical constraints, the escalators couldn't be constructed at the Fulwood Place site, leading to the relocation of the station entrance 120 yards to the East near the junction of High Holborn and Gray's Inn Road. The original station entrance remained unused until the 1940s when the Government mandated the construction of ten deep shelters linked to existing tube stations, including Chancery Lane Station. The subterranean connections between Chancery Lane Station and the Kingsway Tunnels were sealed off in the 1950s leaving the remaining access points at Fulwood Place and Furnival Street.

Currently, 31-33 High Holborn comprises of two entrance shafts, each approximately 7.20m in diameter, accessible via ground floor level. Based on 'point-cloud' and 3D scan surveys, it is suspected that the structure consists of two primary levels: the ground floor and the basement, with restricted landing levels between them.

The upper levels of 31-33 High Holborn comprise of residential units on the upper floors and commercial premises on the ground floor. Both of these are accessed directly off High Holborn.

Access to the Tunnel's shafts is now via the side entrances on Fulwood Place alleyway.

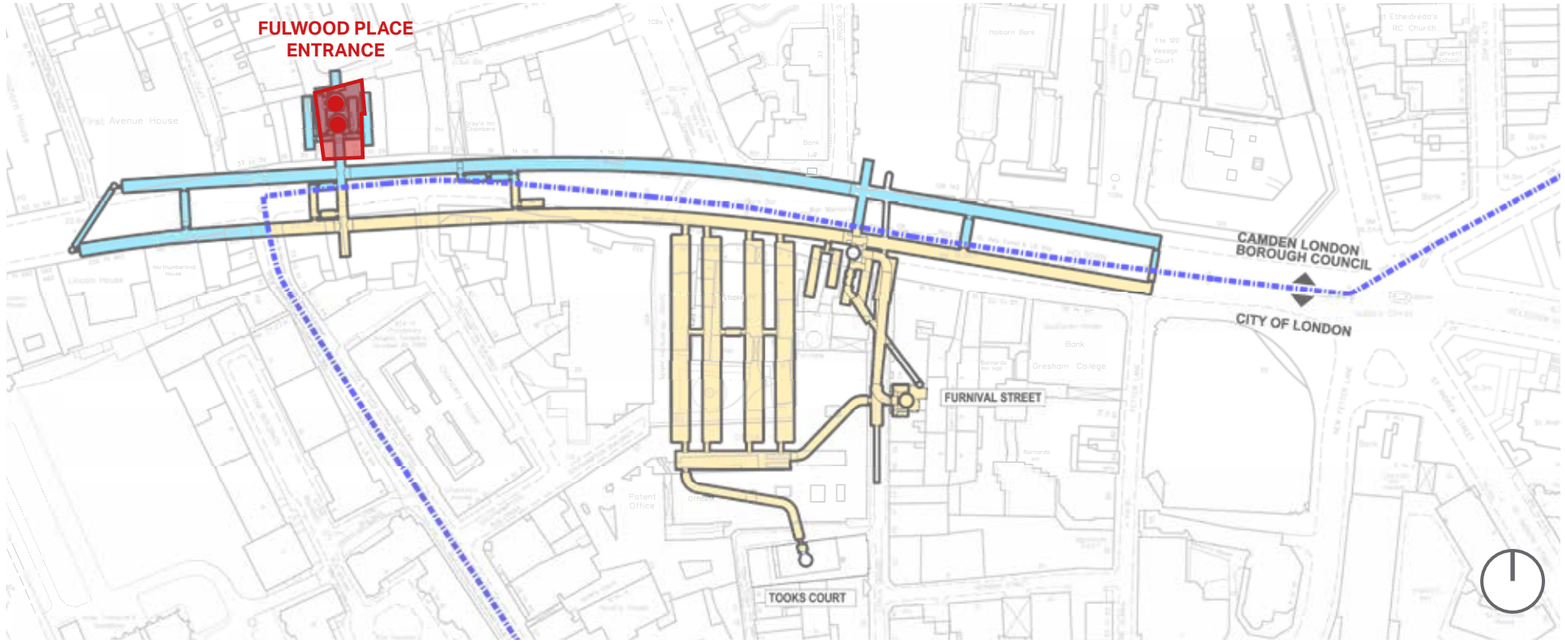
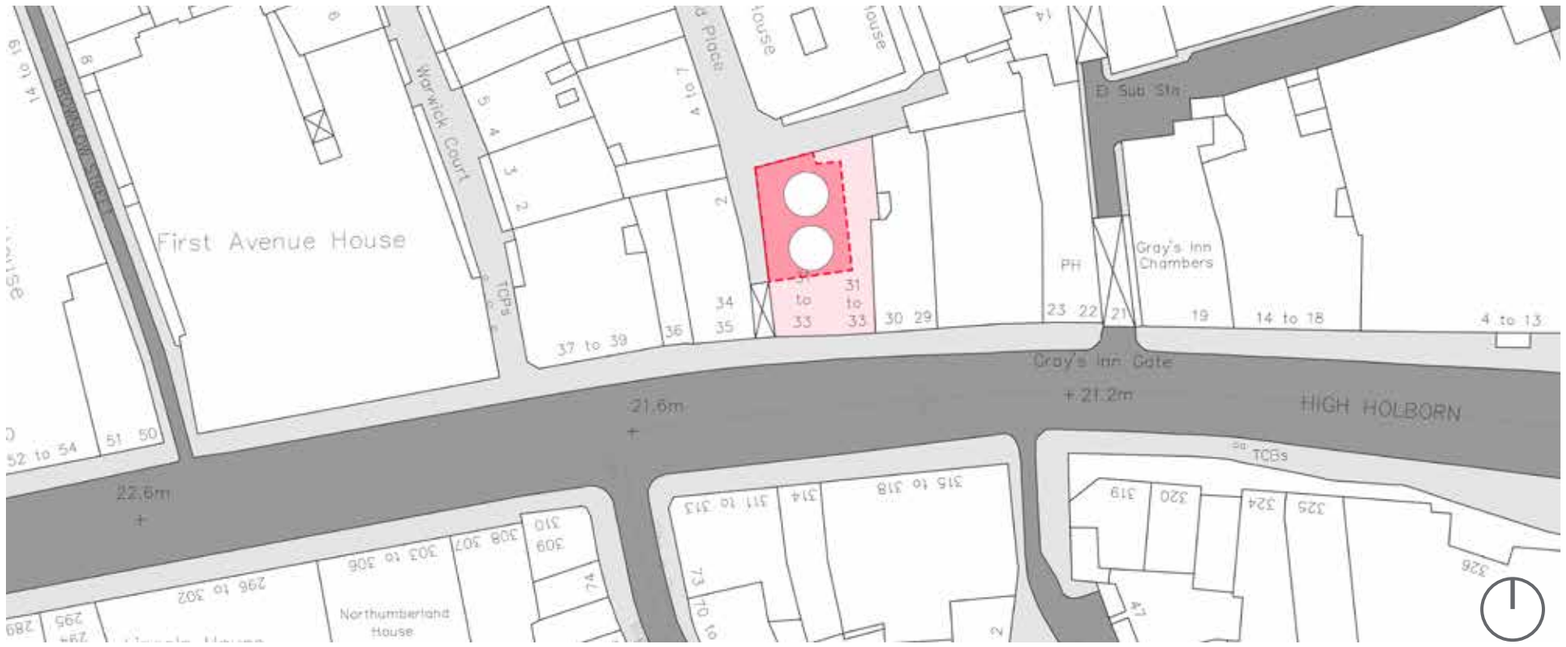


Figure 123. Site plan - urban (not to scale)



Freehold boundary
Indicative intervention area

Figure 122. Site plan (not to scale)

Figure 124. Current High Holborn elevation (30-31 High Holborn) Dotted white line indicates scope of facade included in the Proposed Scheme

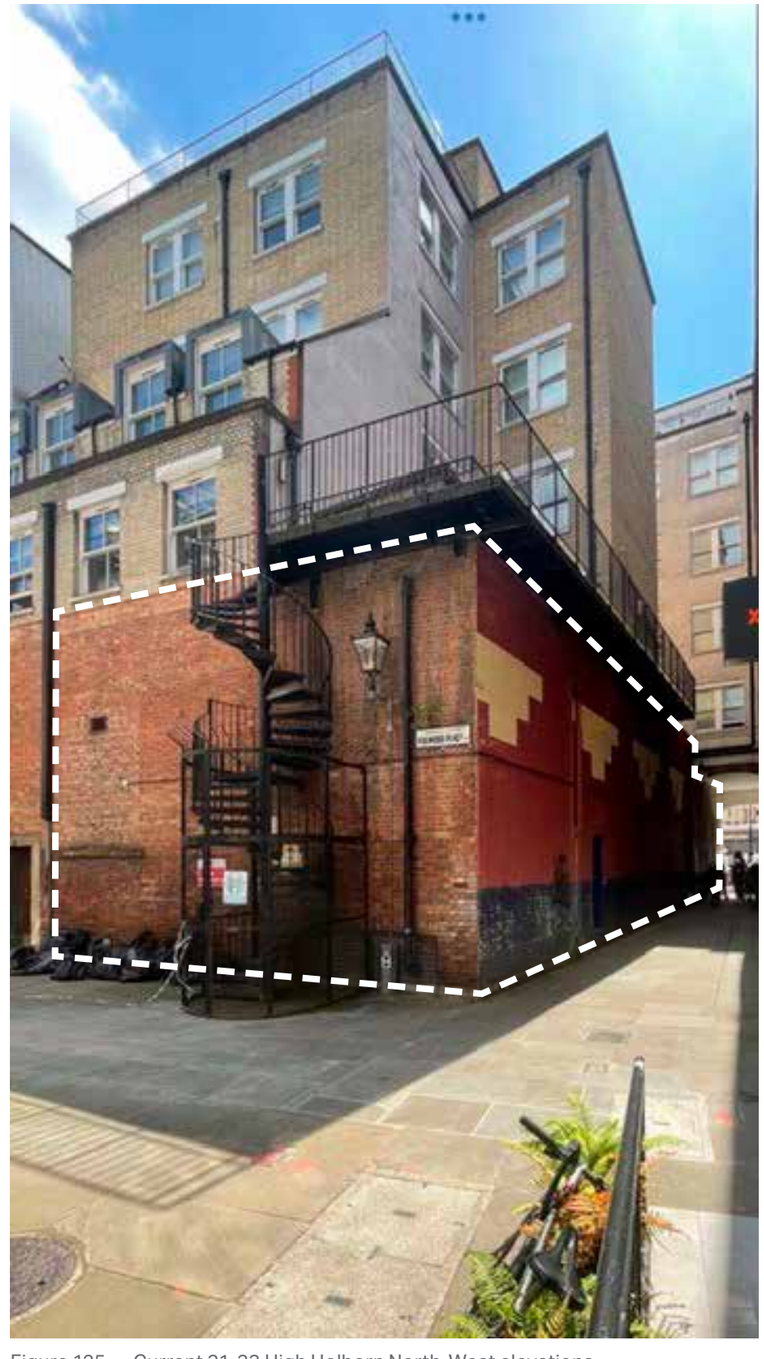


Figure 125. Current 31-33 High Holborn North-West elevations

4.3.2 Existing Context

High Holborn and Fulwood Place feature a mix of contemporary and heritage structures, interspersed with traditional buildings. The contemporary structures, aligning with the traditional façades, exhibit a restrained palette and moderate glazing. The colour palette on both sides of the street spans a wide spectrum. Ground-level modernizations, if present, are modest maintaining the traditional buildings' historic allure.

29-30 High Holborn

Mixed use of materiality. Stone cladding with aluminium curtain walling infill. Poor quality.

24- 28 High Holborn

Terracotta fascia tiles with mid grey tone aluminium glazing units. Turquoise back painted glazing to full height slot. Poor quality facade glazing at ground level retail outlet.

37- 39 High Holborn

Portland stone base and traditional brown brick above. Restrained detailing. 'Frameless' glazing at ground level. dark aluminium glazing above.

34- 35 High Holborn

Cream, pink and burgundy Post Modern style facade with oversized keystone decoration. Double storey glazed fenestration tat ground level in dark-grey.

311-318 High Holborn

Neo Edwardian style detailing with Portland stone base and detailing with red brick infill at upper levels. Stone mullions at upper levels, aluminium glazing at street level.

Portland Stone to upper levels, Decorative cream render upper and Strong traditional detailing throughout with dark basalt stone to base around semi-traditional glazed windows.

Fulwood Place

Mix of late Victorian warehouse type buildings both brick faced and rendered. Wrought iron railings.

Figure 127. 24-28 and 29-30 High Holborn

Figure 128. 311-318 High Holborn

Figure 126. 37- 39 High Holborn

Figure 129. 34-35 High Holborn

Figure 130. Fulwood Place

Figure 132. Current Ordnance Survey Map

Figure 131. Historic London Map c. 1792

4.3.3 Design Drivers

The proposal is fundamentally driven by the need to upgrade and re-activate the two key shafts at Fulwood Place.

- The Northern shaft, dedicated to firefighting and means of escape, requires an extension to connect at tunnel level, thus providing a crucial secondary means of egress for the entire project.
  This shaft needs extending 5 m down to tunnels level, and connected to the tunnels through a new corridor.

- The Southern shaft also serves for emergency use, and aligns with safety priorities and accessibility by providing two lifts for the sake of resilience.

These modifications to the shafts are fundamental to enable the wider project to provide 2 means of escape.

The detailed design of the shafts within the confined site will also enable 31-33 High Hoborn to be used as a Group entrance for Schools and VIPs and visitors to The Bar who will not be visiting the exhibition areas.

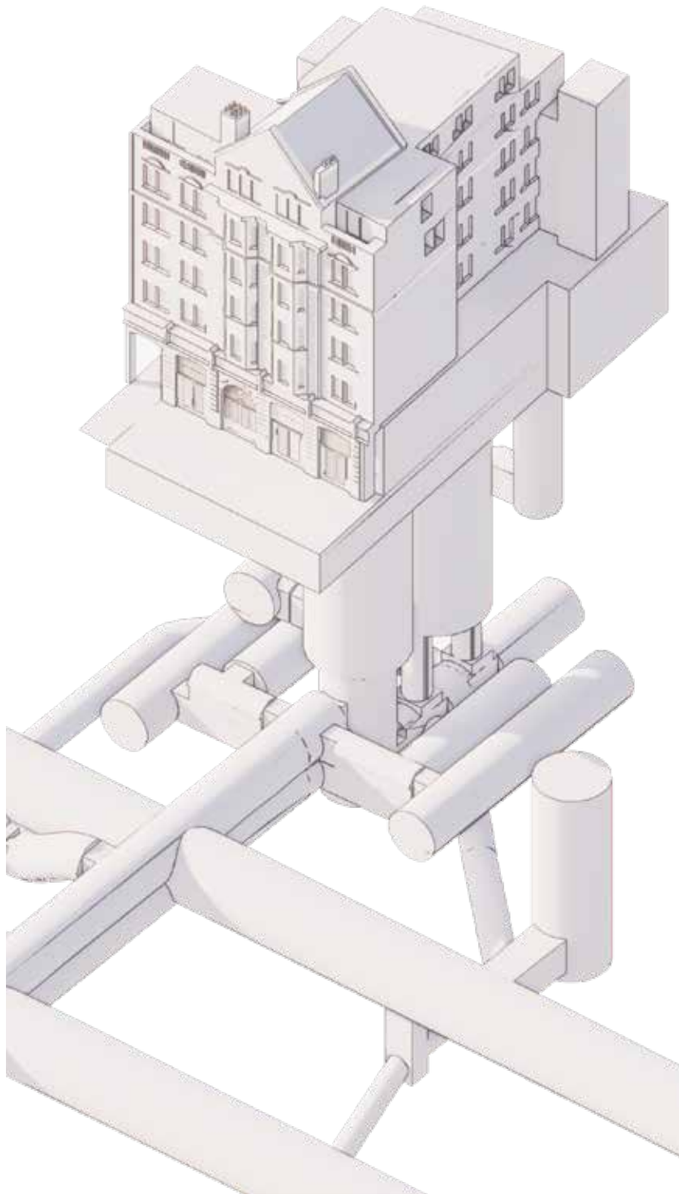


Figure 133. 31-33 High Holborn:: Existing Shafts

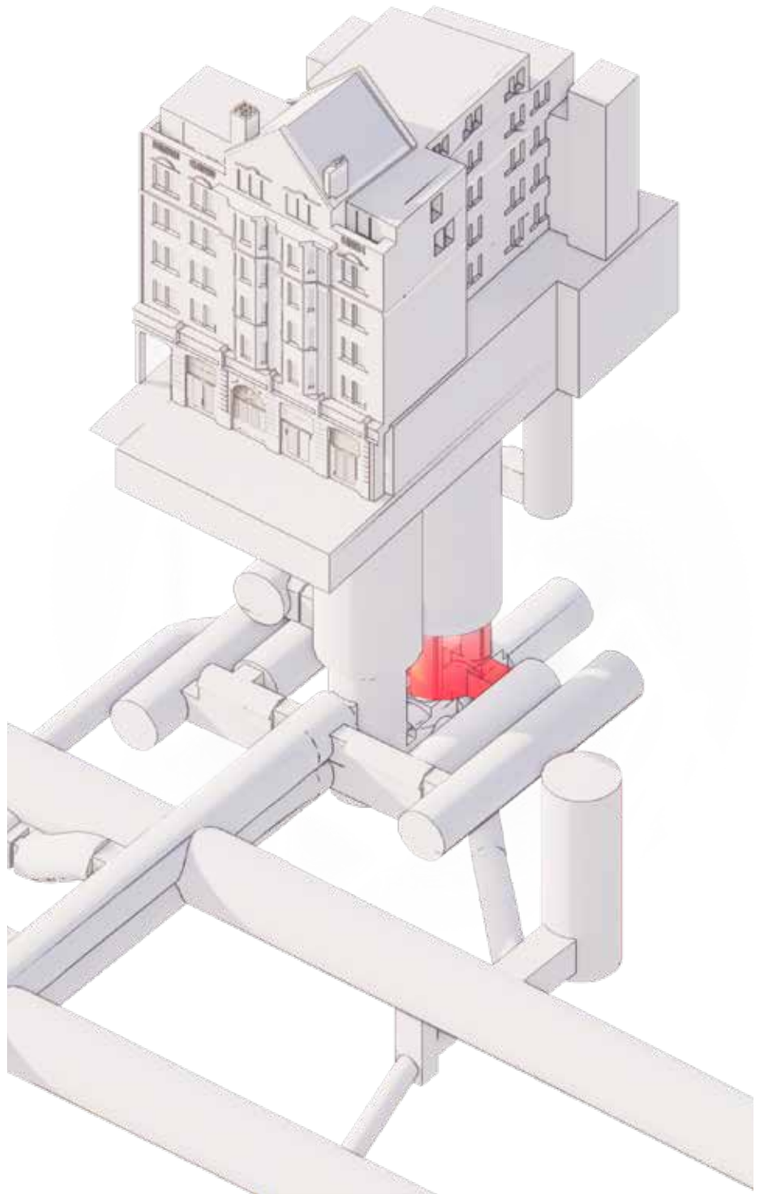


Figure 134. 31-33 High Holborn: Proposed Shaft extension

Figure 135. Available area at ground floor and basement level

Figure 136. Model of 31-33 High Holborn including proposed commercial frontage

4.3.4 Ground Floor - Existing

31-33 High Holborn Plans

There is limited information on the existing layout and condition of 31-33 high Holborn which has necessitated extensive research through planning portals and historic plans from Transport for London archives.

The building appears to have undergone numerous alterations, both structural and spatial - with undocumented changes posing a challenge to gaining a full understanding of the history of the site.

The Proposed Scheme relies on a number of assumptions, pending the availability of a comprehensive survey.

A full site and condition survey will be required at the next stage.

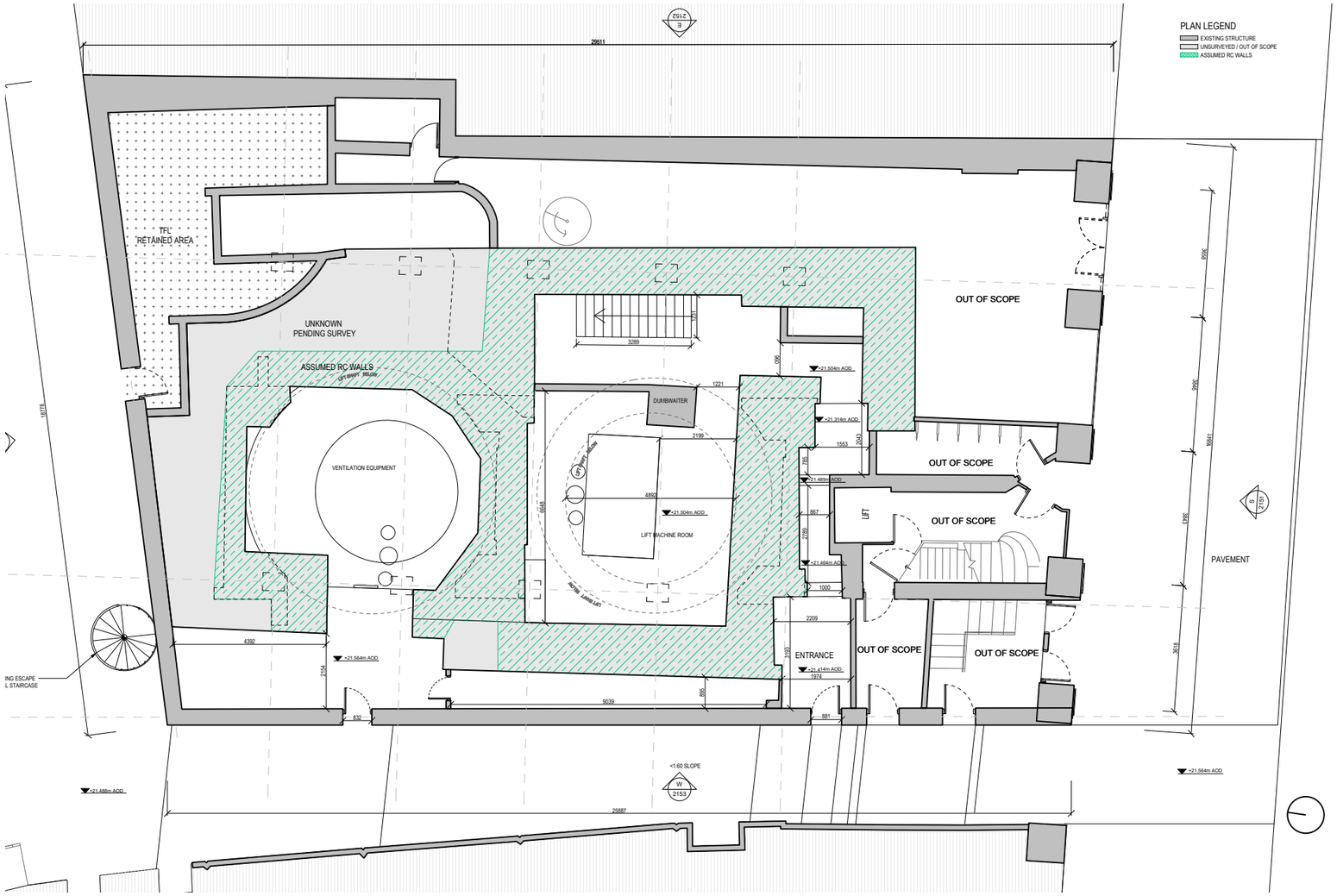


Figure 137. Existing Ground Floor Plan

4.3.5 Structural Strategy

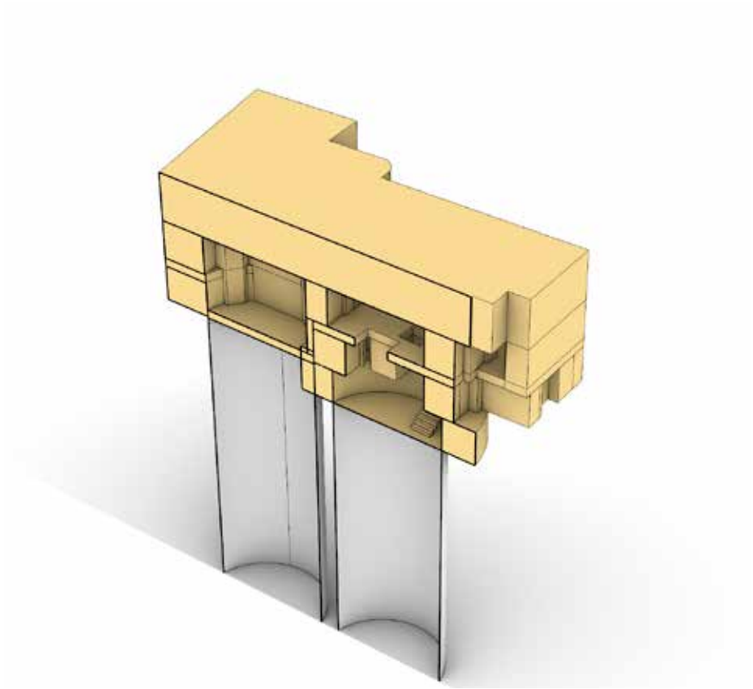


Figure 138. Basement cross section

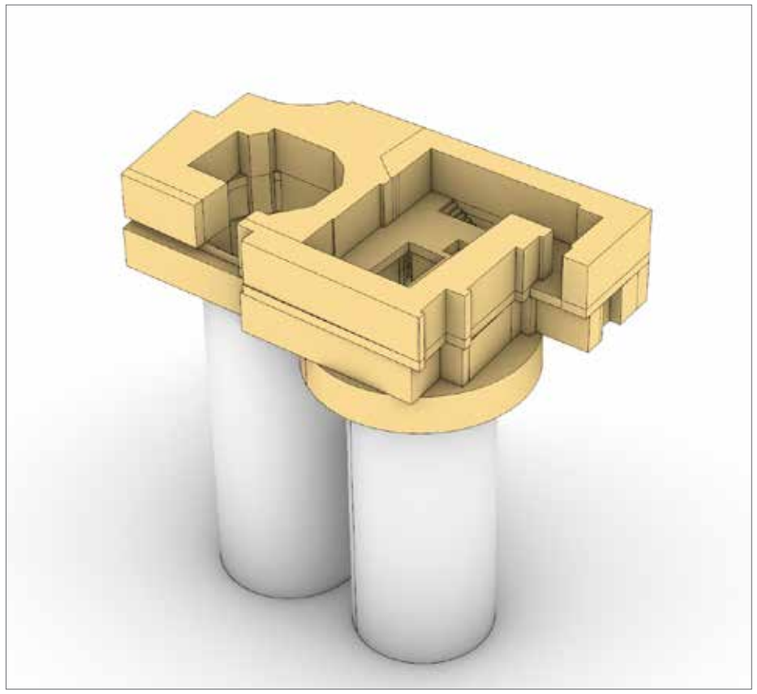


Figure 139. Basement axonometric view

From studying historical records and our point-cloud survey it seems a 'pillbox' type concrete construction caps the existing shaft, above which . sit the existing residential units. Lacking detailed knowledge of its extent, our proposal strategically avoids proposing alterations to the existing concrete construction. Instead, the approach involves lowering current slab levels locally to enable us to integrate a viable vertical transportation solution that meets current standards for accessibility and efficiency .

The proposed structural alterations are limited to the Ground and Basement floors at 31-33 High Holborn. No alterations are proposed to the building above the 1st Floor.

- Alterations are required to incorporate new lift shaft and associated stair landings and to enable visitor circulation.

- Further alterations are required to facilitate the MEP strategy. Alterations to the reinforced concrete structure include openings to be made through the concrete 'Pillbox'/'Bunker' walls and replacement of the concrete floor slabs at a lower level.

- In addition, openings are required through perimeter load bearing masonry walls.

- Structural alterations and the relevant temporary works will be designed to minimise the impact on the structures above and adjacent.

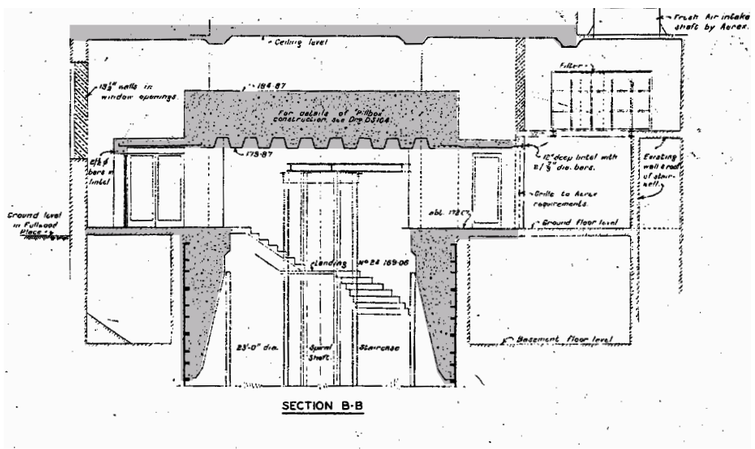


Figure 141. Archive drawing showing ' pillbox' construction

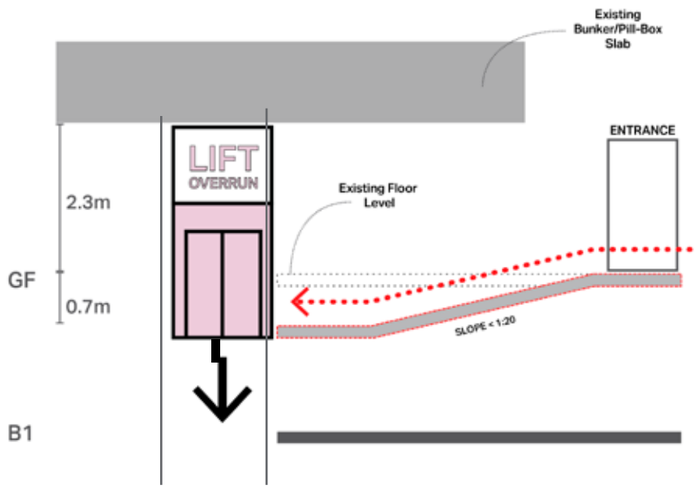


Figure 140. Schematic cross section diagram showing proposed level change

4.3.6 Shaft Requirements

It is proposed that 31-33 High Holborn will function as a secondary visitor entrance and emergency egress point for The Tunnels. It is not suitable for a high capacity lifting but will be a very useful entrance and exit point for School Groups/VIPs and users of The Bar.

The shaft requirements at this location are summarised below:

- 1no. Fire Fighter lift (FF)- Pressurized.
- 1no. Emergency lift - Pressurized.
- 1no. Escape stair (FE) - Pressurized - Can be spiral.
- The escape stairs and lift must share a protected lobby.
- The Fire Fighting Lift and Escape Stairs must be pressurized positively.
- Passenger lifts need resilience for rescue if needed.

In order to accommodate these requirements spatially, the strategy proposes the utilisation and retrofit of both existing shafts.

It is proposed that the northern-most shaft will be for service use and firefighter's use in case of emergency. It will accommodate a FF stair, FF lift, as well as service risers. This shaft will require extension down to Level B of the tunnels, and the provision of a new lateral connection into the adjacent existing chamber to the east of the shaft.

It is proposed that the southern shaft accommodates a new lift assembly, providing twin single-deck lifts for visitor and staff use.

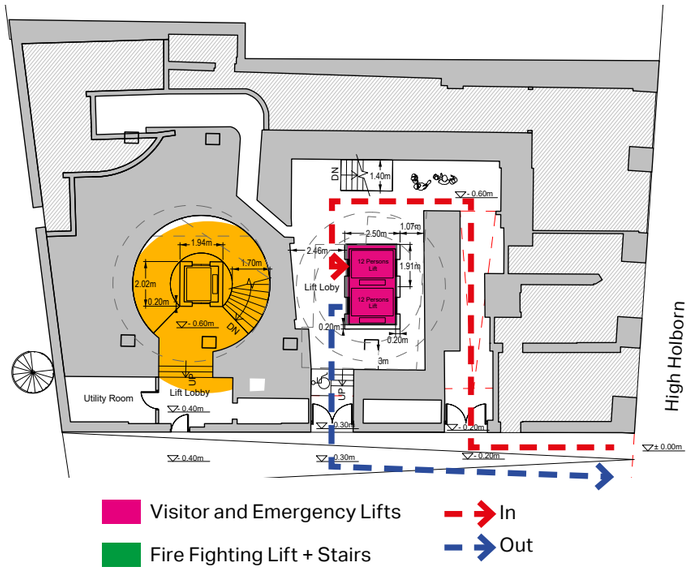


Figure 142. 31-33 High Holborn Shaft Uses - Firefighting & Visitors

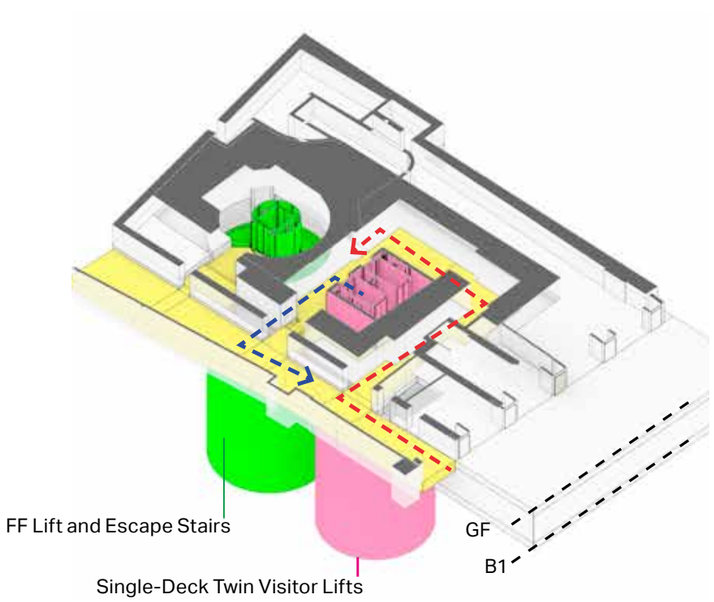
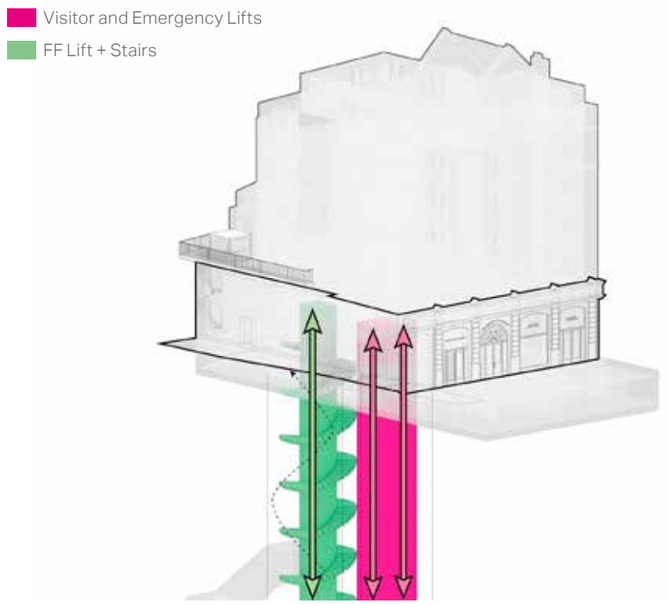
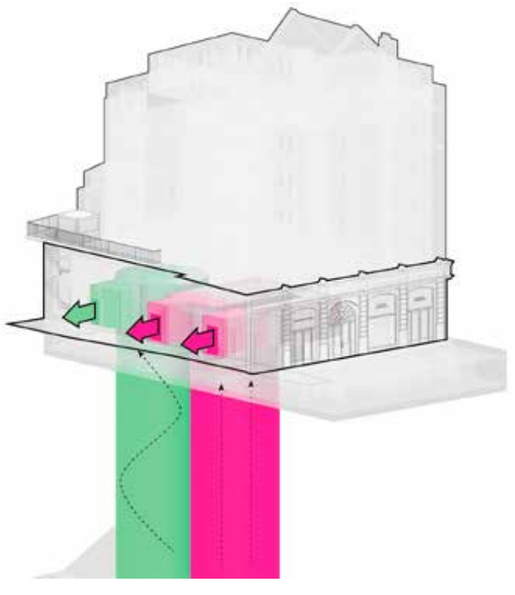


Figure 143. 31-33 High Holborn Shaft - Fire Protection Evacuation Routes





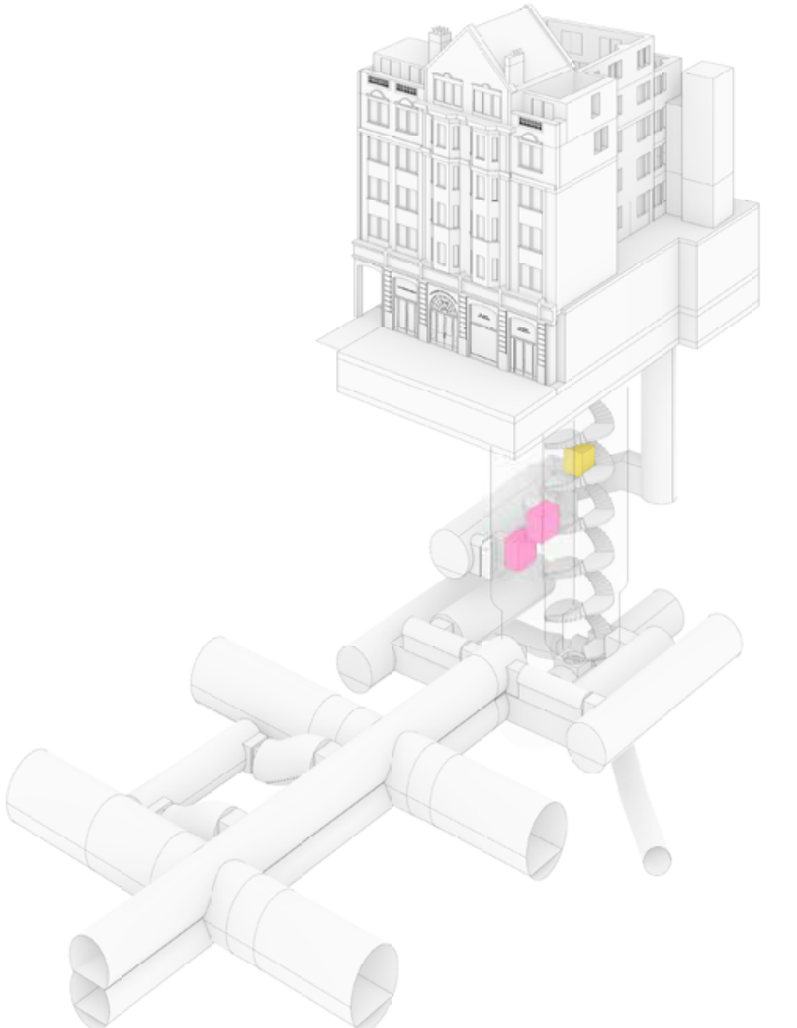


Figure 144. Fire Fighter and Visitor Lifts

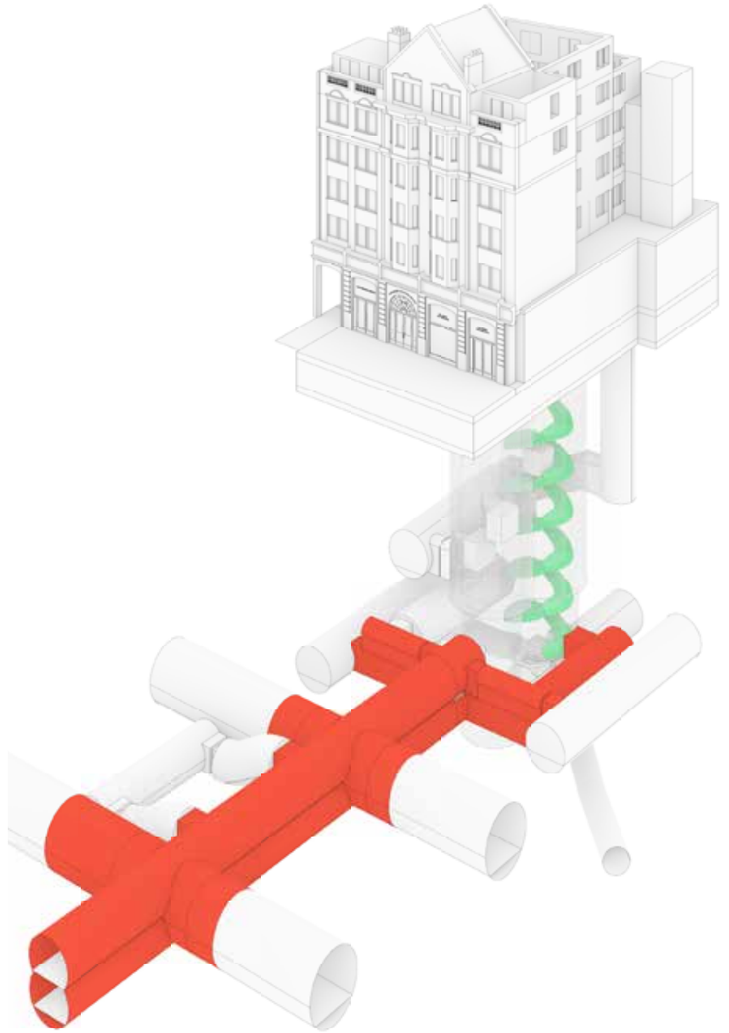


Figure 145. Escape Stairs and Fire Protected Lobby

The southern shaft at 31-33 High Holborn is designated for visitor access and emergency escape, while the northern shaft houses the firefighting lift alongside fire escape stairs.

The imperative for extending the northern shaft to tunnel level arises from compliance with the mandated minimum of 250 square meters for fire-sterile pressurized tunnels, ensuring optimal safety standards throughout.

4.3.7 Ground Floor - Proposed

The Ground Floor of the Proposed Scheme for 31-33 High Holborn provides a secondary entrance to the Tunnels, principally for school groups, users of The Bar and VIPs.

Due to the extremely constrained nature of the site the visitor facilities at ground level are very minimal and are supplemented by a multi-function zone at Tunnel Level for Group Gathering & Orientation/Classroom/Cloaks etc and there are a large number of WC.s at Tunnel level at the base of the shaft.

Entrance is off the alleyway that runs between High Holborn and Fulwood Place. As at the Furnival Entrance the visitors will be greeted and security checked before making their way via lifts to the Tunnel level.

Exit will be via the same lift up to Ground level and out via the alleyway.

The main shaft is retained as a BOH Firefighting stair and Lift.. Emergency egress from the Tunnels and The Bar would use this staircase.

There is a limited area allocated to bin storage. this will be managed in conjunction with waste storage areas at Tunnel Level.

Note that the rest of the floorplate is out of scope of this project.

- There is a commercial office to the east of the ground floor which will remain with access directly off High Holborn.

- The upper levels of 31-33 High Holborn are currently residential and are accessed directly off High Holborn.

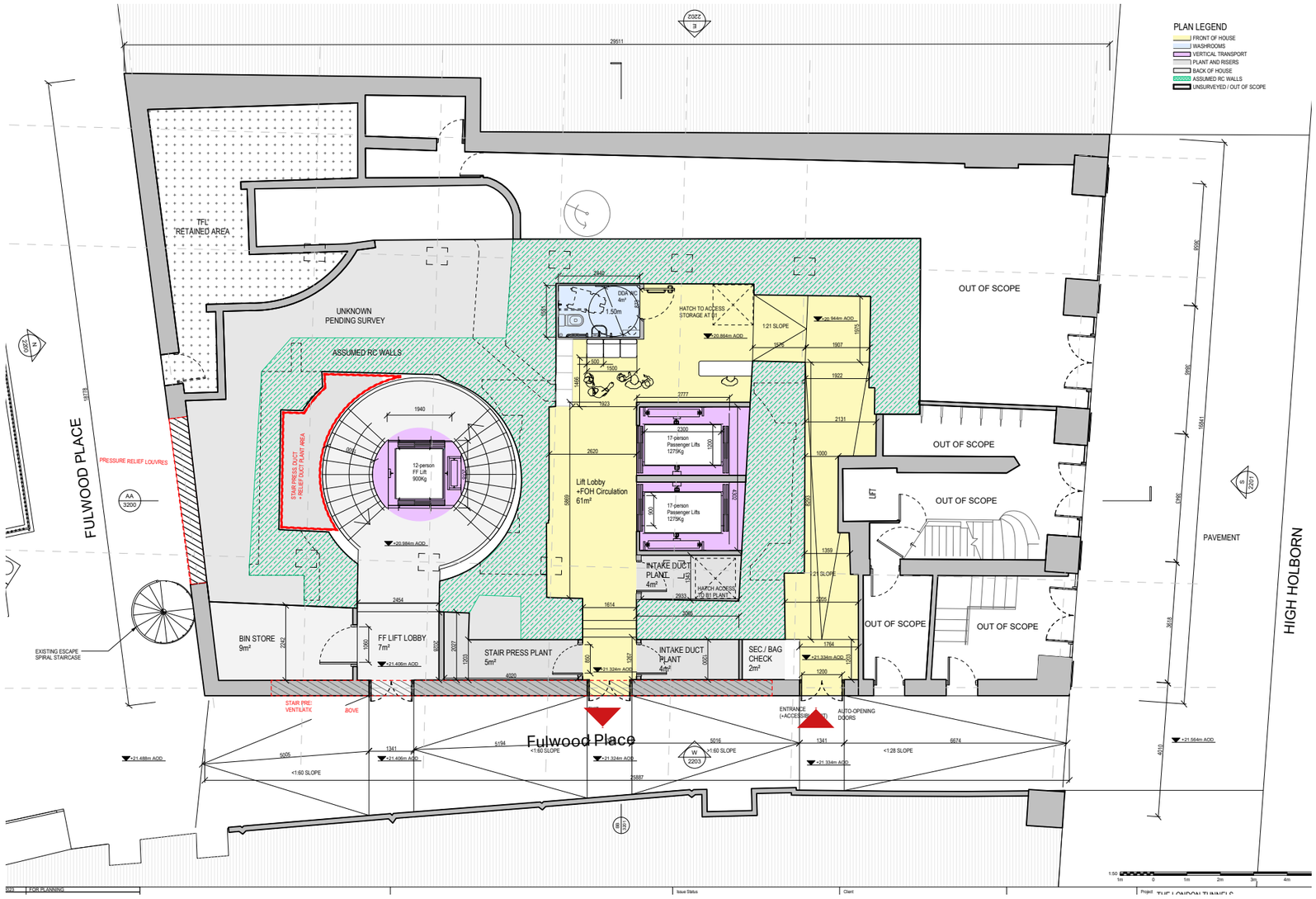


Figure 146. Proposed Ground Floor Plan

1. External Queue Zone
2. Ticket Check
3. Bag Check
4. Lockers
5. Lift Lobby
6. Lift
7. Return to Lockers
8. Exit
9. Fire Fighter Lift
10. Fire Egress from Tunnels and Bar

Out of Scope

Unsurveyed

Bin Storage

Plant

Plant

Fulwood Place

High Holborn

In
Out
Fire Egress

Figure 147. Proposed User sequence diagram

4.3.8 MEP Strategy

Developed primarily as an emergency escape and as Group, Bar and VIP entrance31-33 High Holborn contains its own smoke extraction and stair pressurisation system, along with ventilation plant for the bar area.

The equipment serving the shafts in this location needs to be connected to atmosphere, either to supply air or to exhaust.

The scheme proposes the introduction of intake louvres on ground floor of the west facade at 31-33 High Holborn.

These are located at high level, 4 meters above pavement level.

The North facade will include the pressure relief louvres. These will be active only in the event of evacuation from the tunnels.

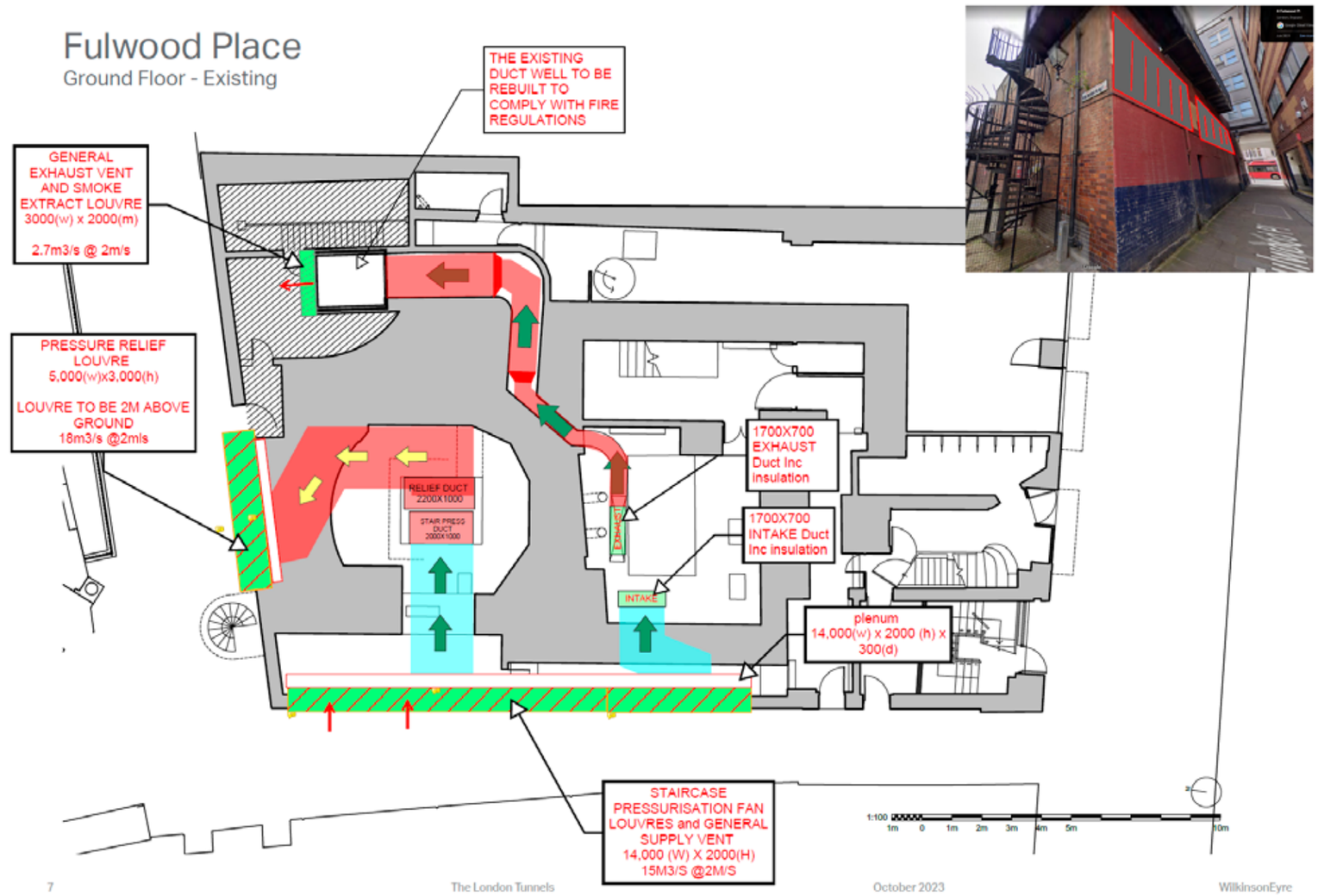


Figure 148. Schematic MEP Ground Floor diagram

4.3.9 Louvre Requirement

Figure 149. Proposed Western elevation

Figure 150. Proposed Northern elevation

Fulwood Place Ventilation Requirements

Upgrading the ventilation plant is a critical consideration for the proposed design at Fulwood Place, particularly on the alleyway facade. It is intended to allow for a deep clean and upgrade to the existing brick facade (scope within the project) and a carefuly considered integration of the required louvres.

- On the alleyway facade (western) approximately 28sqm of intake louvres are strategically incorporated to facilitate fresh air intake for the stair pressurization systems and overall ventilation, ensuring compliance with fire and safety regulations.

- On the rear elevation (northern) , the proposal is for a series of long and slender louvres that will provide 15sqm of stair pressurisation exhaust. Primarily reserved for emergency scenarios these louvres are intended to complement the facade and will be silent during regular (non-emergency) use.

Ventilation Louvres

Bronze Cladding

Reisntated Heritage Brick

4.3.10 31-33 High Holborn Facade Proposal

The Fulwood Place Scheme (31-33 High Holborn) proposes a transformative intervention along all three of its visible façades, which have over time been subject to many alterations, obscuring features and original intentions.

Emphasising functionality - aside from inherent re-sanitisation-, the alleyway and rear façades take precedence in the scheme, playing a critical role in the technical feasibility of The London Tunnels.

As for the high street-facing frontage, though non-essential, it undergoes enhancement for public benefit.

Overall, blocked windows and degraded paint underpin the need for revitalisation, and lead the strategy to ensure cohesion and visual appeal across the diverse faces of the building.

The High Holborn façade at Fulwood Place (31-33 High Holborn), once the entrance to Chancery Lane station, has experienced extensive modifications over time, deviating significantly from its original architectural intent.

Our scheme advocates for the enhancement and upgrade of this facade, with the intention to de-clutter the erroneous additions and reintroduce heritage details.

Figure 151. Former Chancery Lane Underground entrance - 1930's

Figure 153. Current 31-33 High Holborn Facade

Figure 152. Proposed 31-33 High Holborn Facade

High Holborn Facade

The proposed new facade for 31-33 High Holborn would remove the unsympathetic additions and restore the original aim for symmetry and unification to the facade and its multiple access points.

The intention is for the entrance to The Tunnels accessed from the alleyway from High Holborn to Fulwood Place to remain 'discrete'.

The choice of materials will be developed in consultation with conservation experts in the next stages to ensure a thoughtful and harmonious material palette that aligns with the wider architectural context.

Lighting Strategy - Fullwood Place Bar Entrance

It is recommended that local planning authorities specify the environmental zones and curfew times for exterior lighting within their development plans. Curfew time is defined in ILP GN01-21 Guidance Note on Obtrusive Lighting as the time after which stricter requirements will apply, often a condition of the use of lighting applied by the local planning authority. If not otherwise stated - 23:00hrs is advisable.

All internal downlighting, should be designed to be set back at a minimum measurement of 1.5 meters from the large, glazed windows and luminaires will require appropriate beam angles to control the light distribution and avoid light spill through the glazed facade.

Any exterior façade lighting to the historical façade and lighting to the entrance will follow ILP GN01-21 Guidance Note on Obtrusive Lighting and be carefully positioned and angled below the horizontal with shielding accessories where required to avoid unnecessary upward light spill into the sky or light trespass onto adjacent buildings.