

tatehindle

Sicilian Avenue  
Units 5, 9, 11, and Entrance Hall No. 7  
Design and Access Statement  
LABS 20th August 2018

L A B S



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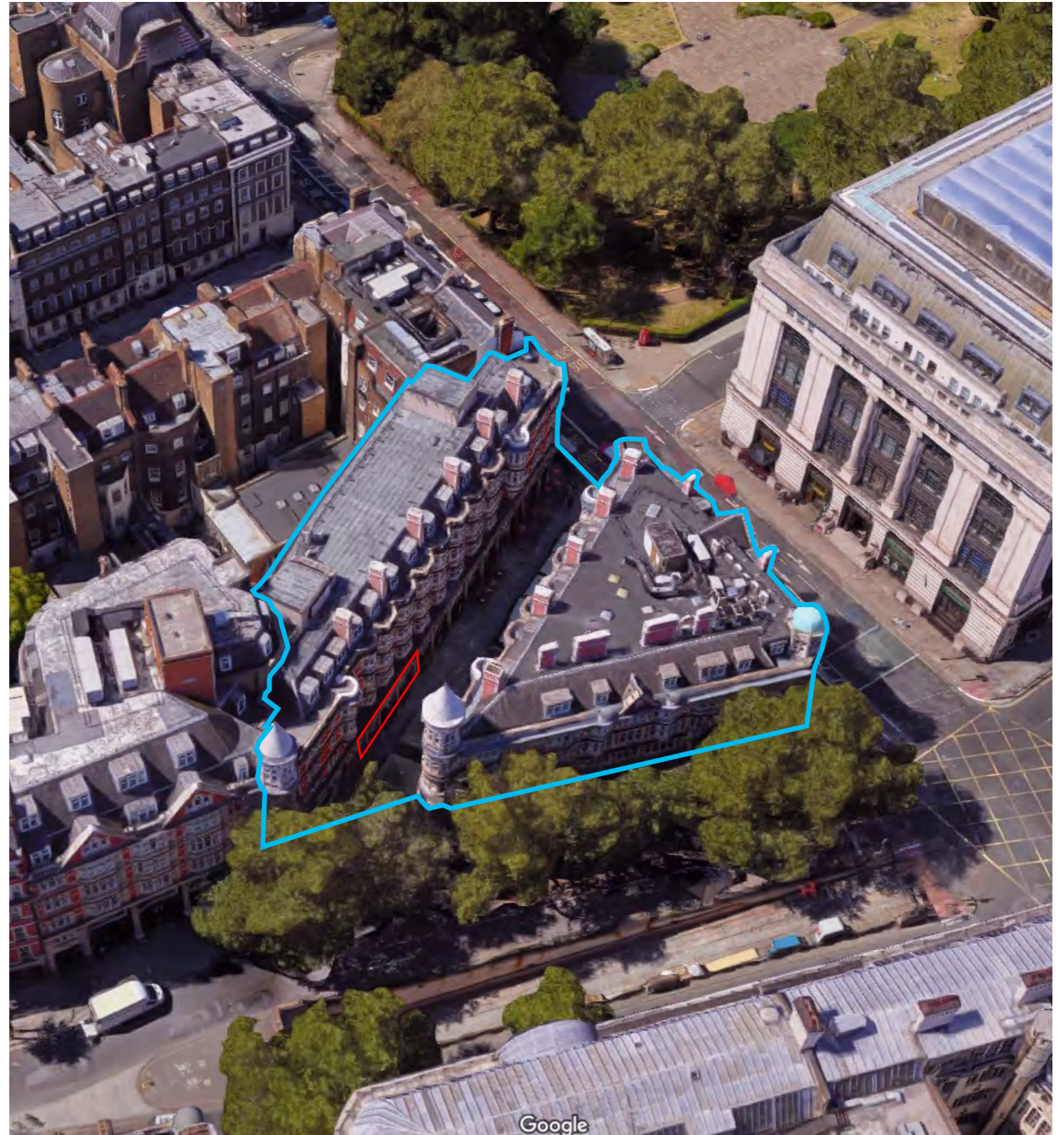




## Introduction

This report sets out the initial proposals for works to 5, 7, 9, and 11 Sicilian Avenue. The site consists of three existing retail units, and the office entrance to Sicilian House, which form part of the historic development of Sicilian Avenue in Holborn.

The proposals seek to retain the existing retail uses (class A1 & A3) of the ground and basement floors. The proposals also look to update and enliven the interior through the introduction of internal openings, to help create high quality cafe and restaurant spaces. Rationalizing the staircase arrangement by removing one stair out of four, allows the usable floor space to be maximised. This will allow for the retail units to run successfully, whilst retaining access to the basement and upper floors.

Number 7 would remain the main entrance to the office space on 1st to 5th floors above. This existing office use will remain unchanged. Externally, a small amount of signage is proposed, some repair and cleaning works, and a small step removed. New paving slopes down in the door threshold to improve accessibility. There would be no other changes to the exterior of the building. All external signage works would be designed to be in keeping with the current signage approach along Sicilian Avenue.



-  Units 5, 9, 11, and No. 7 entrance hall
-  Extent of site in LabTech ownership in relation to Sicilian Avenue



## Site Location

Sicilian Avenue is located in the London Borough of Camden, near Holborn Junction. It is on the 'Museum Mile' and is only a short distance away from the West End theatres and nearby hotels. The area has changed considerably in recent years as a result of investments and resulting redevelopment opportunities. Whilst the avenue hasn't enjoyed the same scale and investment as some of the larger arcades and pedestrian streets in London, it has retained its presence in Camden as a historical street-scape.

The diagonal cut through provides a respite from the vehicular dominated street activity of Southampton Row. The colonnade gateways at either end mark it as a different and special place.

Sicilian Avenue is listed as a shopping parade with offices above. As such, its main heritage value is placed on the historic and architectural contribution to the area at large.

Units 5, 7, 9, and 11 are located to the south of the Avenue near Southampton Row, and are adjacent to one another.



## Historical Context

The Grade II listed building, Sicilian House, was designed for the Duke of Bedford by little known architect RJ Worley and completed in 1910. The avenue was very striking with its lively mix of contrasting red brick and white 'Carrara' faience together with the original paving scheme featuring white Carrara marble with black diamond pattern. When the name was changed from Vernon Arcade to Sicilian Avenue during the course of construction, the branding opportunities were embraced in details including the free standing stone screens at each end of the avenue and the bracketry to the signage and logo.

Over the past 15 years, the paving stones, lighting, and signs have been renewed. Refurbishment to the building itself has been random and infrequent, as tenants vacate units. This has resulted in mismatched shop fronts, with some looking worn and tired, whilst others are relatively well kept. The external fabric has been treated in a similar manner, with some repair work undertaken several years ago to selected areas of the facade. The wider design agenda is to add back a consistency of design and quality, with a heritage approach, which would raise the quality of experience for shoppers and diners.

Historically Sicilian Avenue was arranged to suit very small retail vendors. Over time units have been evolved to suit the demands of tenants. In multiple units, openings between units have been created, and redundant staircases have been removed. This has allowed for a more successful utilisation of internal space. As the openings have remained modest in relation to the scale of the rooms, the external appearance of cellularization has not been compromised, and the avenue looks as it did originally.

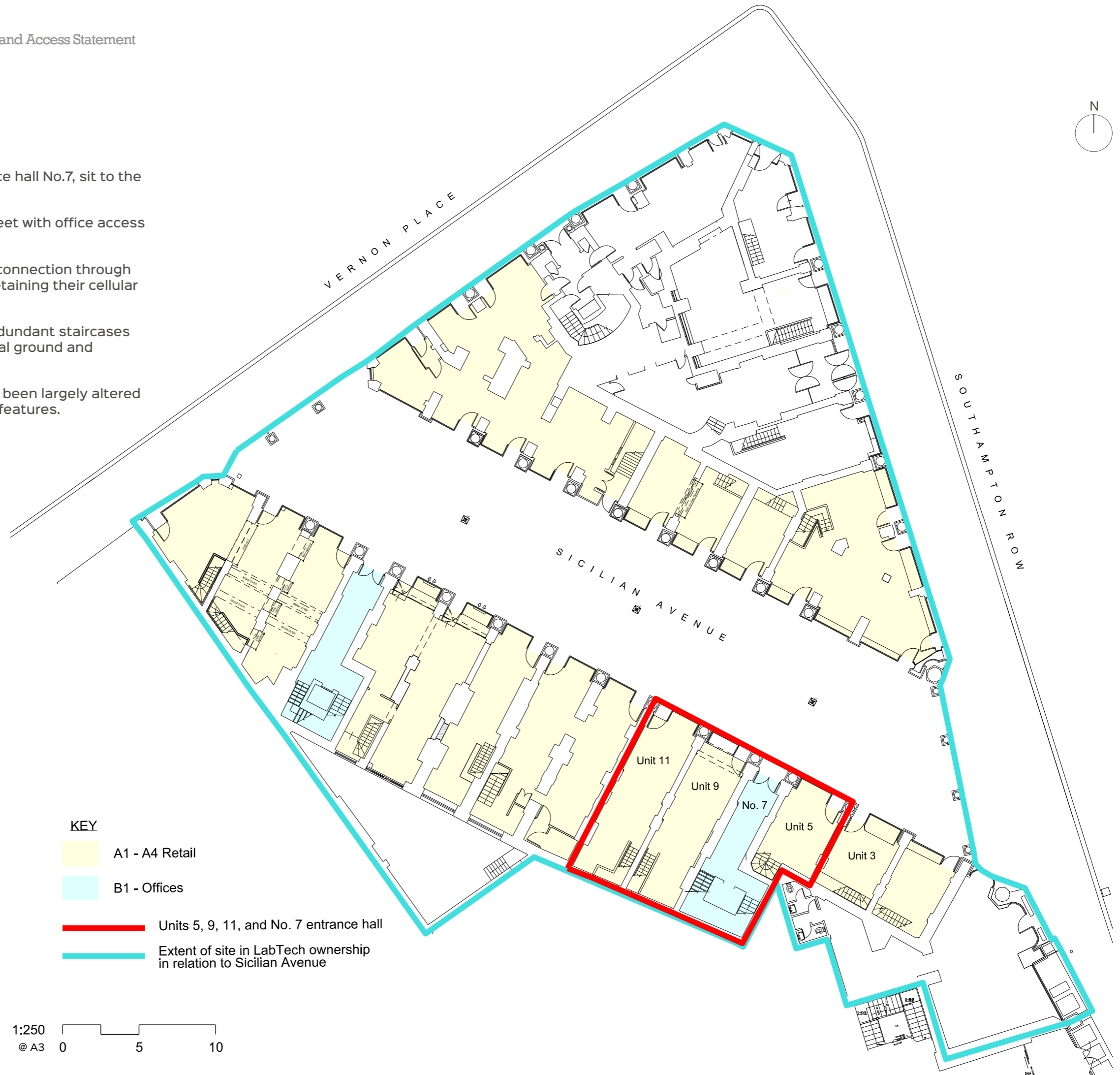
### Grade II listing description :

Shopping parade with offices, formerly flats, over. 1906-10. By RJ Worley. For the Bedford Estate. Red brick with white terracotta dressings and 1st floor. 5 storeys 11 window bays. Ground floor with later C20 shopfronts separated by Corinthian columns on plinths carrying an entablature with plain terracotta frieze at 2nd floor level. Pilasters at either end. 1st floor with 4 and 2-light square-headed casement windows with mullions. 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors with canted transom and mullion bay windows, flanked by 2-light transom and mullion windows and bowed oriel windows rising from the 2nd floor. End bays with 2-light windows. All windows with small leaded panes, some with shields. Projecting modillion cornice surmounted by a balustrade. Tall slab chimneys. INTERIORS: not inspected. Nos 6-20 (even) Sicilian Avenue form a homogeneous development with Nos 1-29 (odd) Sicilian Avenue (qv), 15-23 (odd) Southampton Row (qv), 25-35 (odd) & 35A Southampton Row (qv) and 1-6 Vernon Place (qv). (Harwood E & Saint A: Exploring England's Heritage, London: -1991).



## Existing Site Plan

- › Retail units 5, 9, 11, and entrance hall No.7, sit to the south of the Avenue.
- › Mixed retail uses along the street with office access in two locations
- › Most smaller units have some connection through to neighbouring units, whilst retaining their cellular external appearance
- › Several units have removed redundant staircases in favour of more usable internal ground and basement floor plates
- › The interior of the building has been largely altered and stripped out of its original features.



## Design Approach and Proposals

Sensitivity to the heritage of the site will be paramount during the refurbishment of numbers 5, 7, 9, and 11. The intention is to not only preserve, but to future-proof the Avenue, and keep it thriving as a rich, historic streetscape. Although the Grade II listing of Sicilian House focuses on the external appearance of the Avenue, internal alterations will be carefully considered in their historical context.

### New Openings

This proposal looks at creating openings to allow internal connections between units 9-11, plus a door way from unit 5 to the office entrance located in No 7. The openings proposed seek to increase the functionality of the units whilst respecting the existing historical fabric. Careful consideration has been given to the size of the openings and their locations. The external appearance will therefore be unchanged, and the interior spaces will retain their separation.

The new opening between units 9 and 11 will allow flow between the rooms, which is essential for the mix of potential operators here, and to ensure that the restaurant can operate successfully. Unit 5 would function as a small coffee shop open to the public, serving drinks and snacks. The link to the office above would be a discrete ancillary element. Creating an opening through to the office entrance gives guests to the offices a sign-in point, and adds an additional line of security to the office entrance. The main entrance at No.7 would be used by all day-to-day staff entering the building.

### Staircase Alterations

There are three existing back of house timber staircases in the retail units 5, 9 and 11 which provide access to the basement. Numbers 5 and 9 appear historic however the stair in unit 11 appears to be a modern replacement. This is in the original's location, but is not of a high quality, and has no high value detailing. The proposals render one of the staircases redundant, and so it is proposed that in unit 11, the modern staircase is removed. The remaining historic staircases in units 5, 9, and the stair to No.7, will provide adequate basement access and fire escape. This rationalisation of the staircase arrangement will allow better utilisation of the floor plate by the retail vendors, which will help the units to function successfully. The remaining staircases will be refurbished to a high quality.

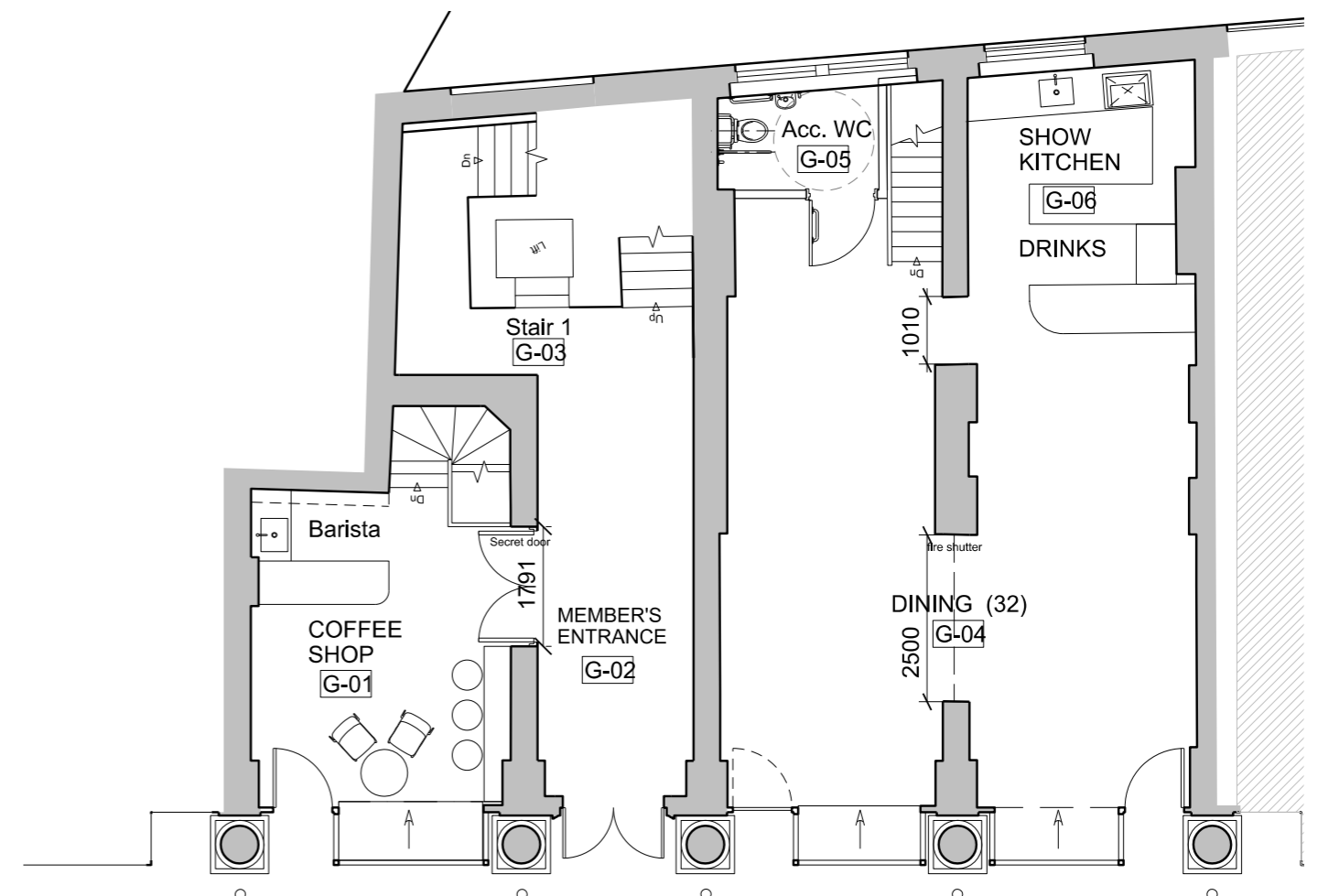
### Details and External Works

Detailing with historic value, such as original skirting, coving, and shop fronts will also be retained and refurbished. No. 7 has lost its historical character through recent refurbishment. The design intention is to reinstate this lost character through covings, skirting and other finishes.

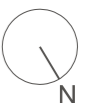
Externally, the paving directly outside the entrance for No.7 will be modified to provide level access, and signage updated.



Existing Shop Fronts



1:100  
@ A3  
0 5m



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

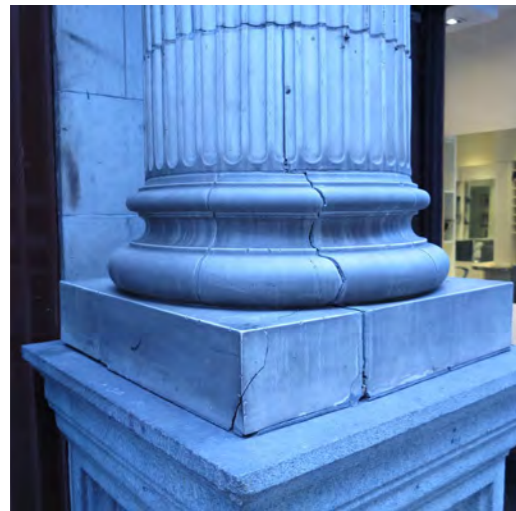


## Existing External Photographs

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Unit 11 metal grille detail



Stonework damage



Unit 5

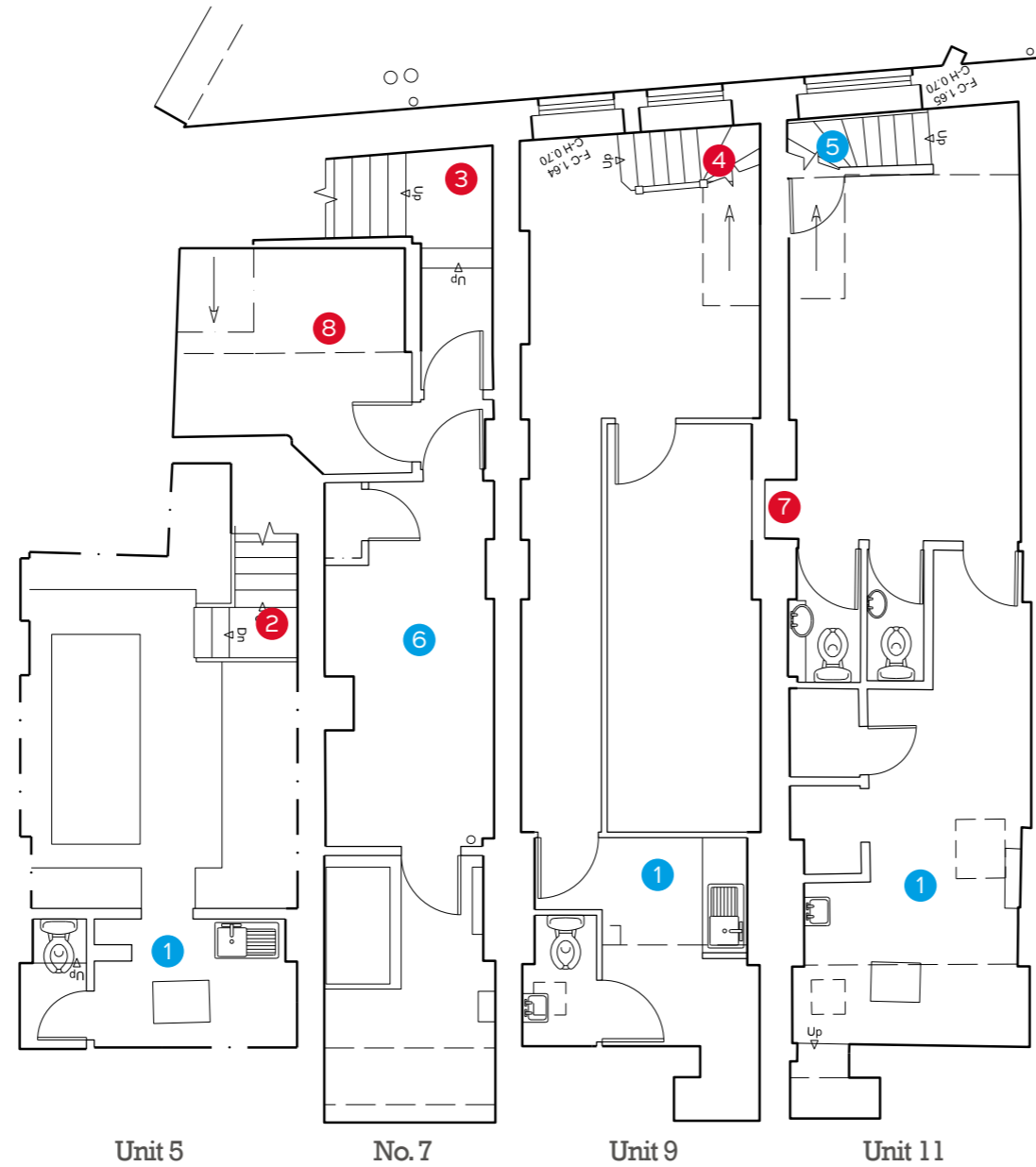


Unit 5, entrance 7 & unit 9



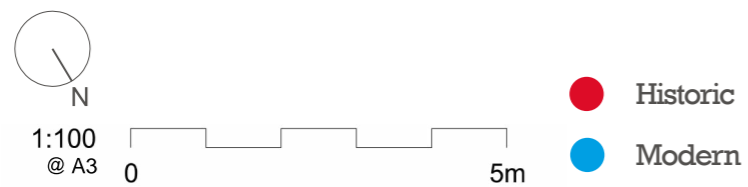
Unit 9-11

## Existing Basement Floor Plan

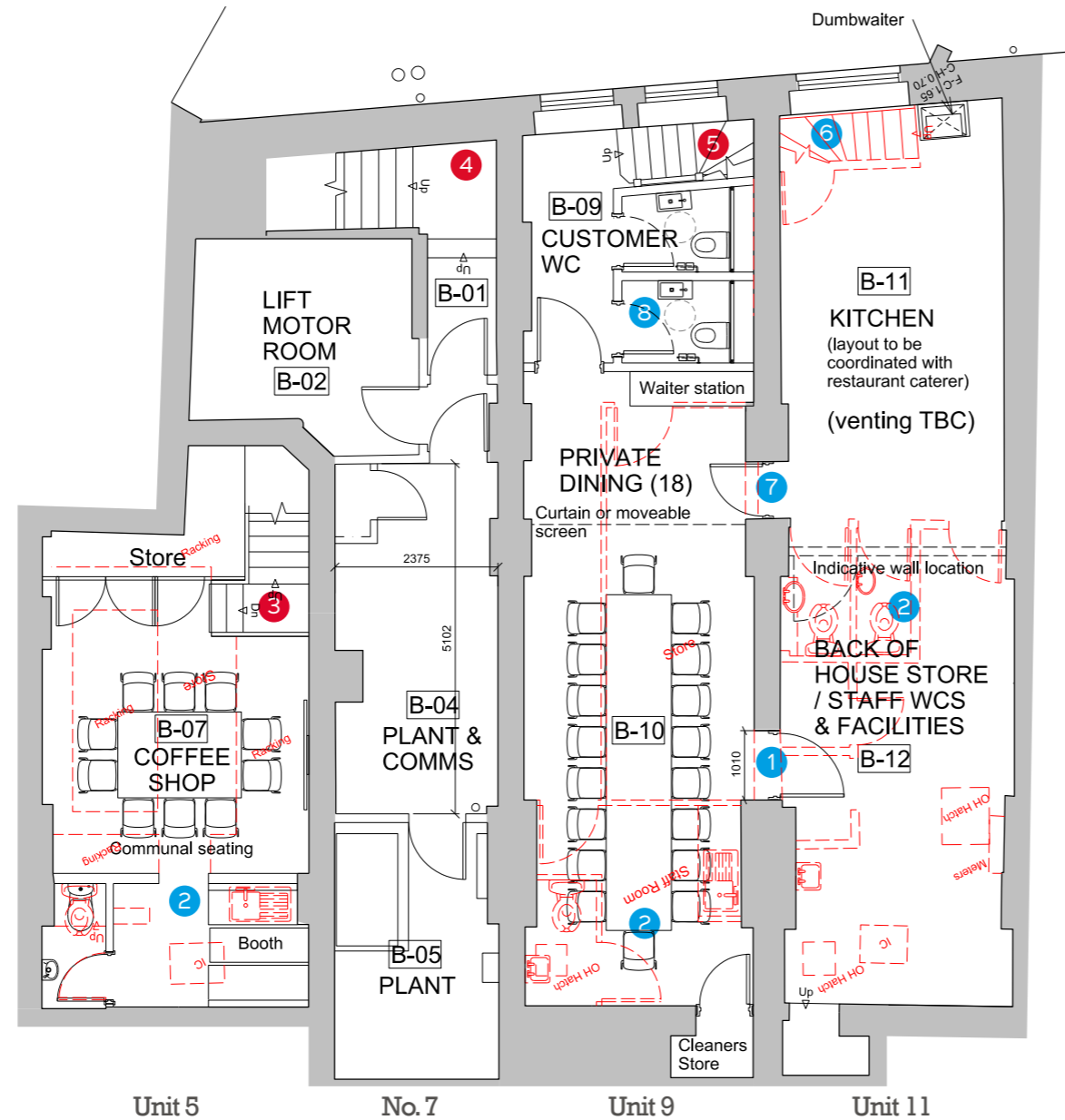


### Basement Floor

- 1 Existing location of toilets and kitchen facilities
- 2 Unit 5 Historic staircase
- 3 No. 7 Historic staircase
- 4 Unit 9 Historic staircase
- 5 Unit 11 Modern staircase
- 6 Modern switch room
- 7 Existing opening between units 9 and 11 currently blocked off
- 8 Lift motor room



## Proposed Alterations - Basement Floor Plan



### Basement Floor

- 1 Proposed opening to create link between units 9 and 11. Proposed opening width as 1010mm (single doorway).
- 2 Internal partitions retained, and toilet facilities refurbished for public cafe access. Kitchen removed.
- 3 Unit 5 Historic staircase - Historic staircase retained and refurbished to provide access to ground floor.
- 4 No. 7 Historic staircase retained and refurbished to provide access to upper floors, basement. Location of lift in centre of no.7 staircase retained.
- 5 Unit 9 Historic staircase - to be retained and refurbished with high quality detailing
- 6 Unit 11 Modern staircase - redundant stair to be removed to maximise usable floor space
- 7 Existing fire escape opening unblocked and used as doorway.
- 8 New customer toilets

The use of the basement spaces would be associated with the retail units above, as dining seats, customer WCs, and kitchen facilities. No. 7 will remain as the existing electrical plant and comms room serving the office floors.

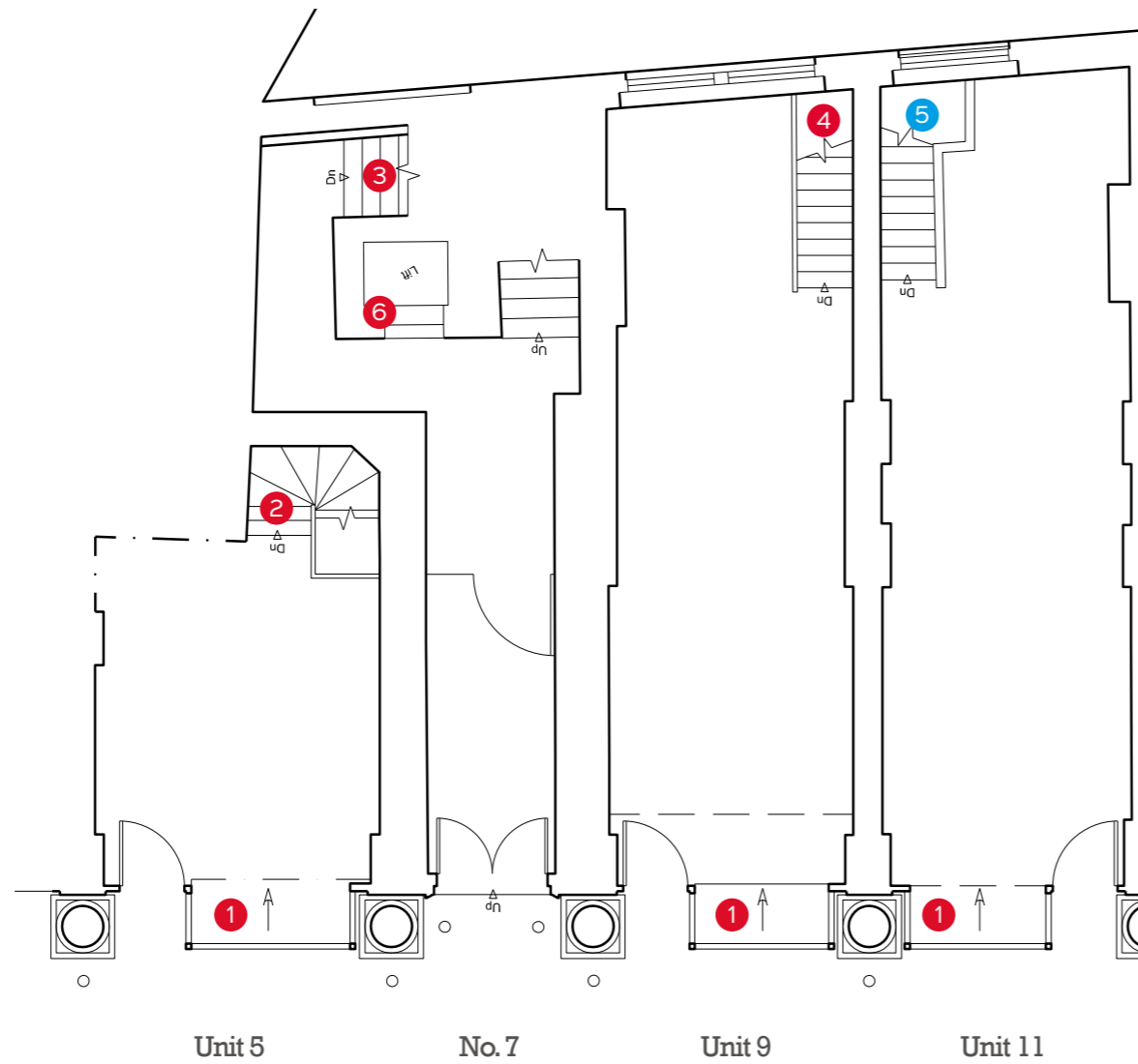


1:100  
@ A3



- Historic - to be retained
- Proposed alteration

## Existing Ground Floor Plan

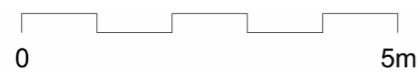


### Ground Floor

- 1 Existing bay windows and entrances retained
- 2 Unit 5 Historic staircase
- 3 No. 7 Historic staircase
- 4 Unit 9 Historic staircase
- 5 Unit 11 Modern staircase
- 6 Lift to upper floor offices

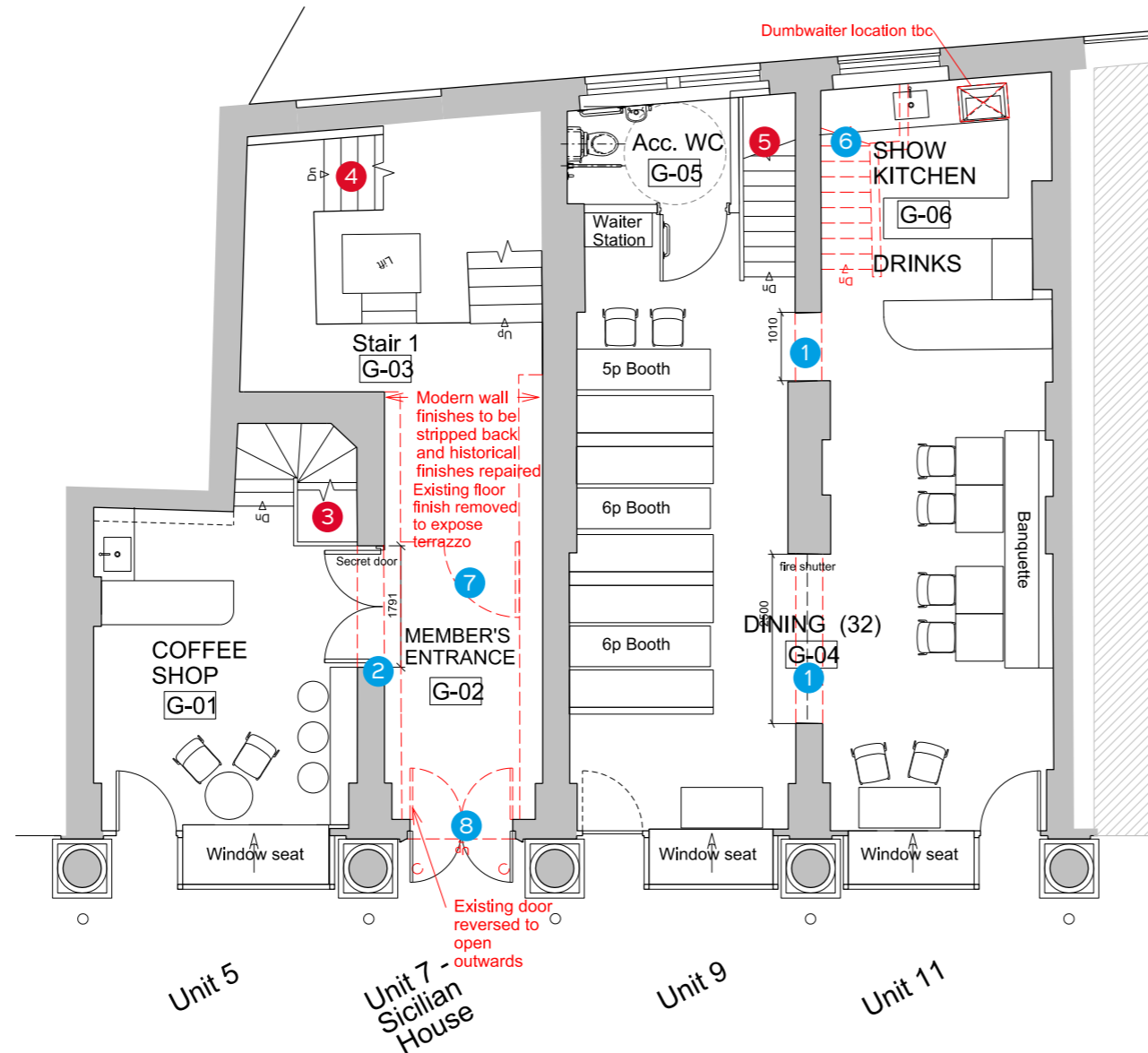


1:100  
@ A3



- Historic
- Modern

## Proposed Alterations - Ground Floor Plan



### Ground Floor

- 1 Proposed openings to create links between units 9 and 11. Proposed opening widths as 2500mm (double doorway) and 1010mm (single doorway).
- 2 Proposed opening to create access between No.7 and unit 5. This would be a 'secret' door with a hidden door frame, and finishes to match the adjacent walls. This is for minimal impact on the linear nature of the office entrance corridor.
- 3 Unit 5 Historic staircase retained and refurbished to provide access to basement. Modern balustrade replaced with higher quality balustrade.
- 4 No. 7 Historic staircase retained and refurbished to provide access to upper floors, basement. Location of lift in centre of no.7 staircase retained.
- 5 Unit 9 Historic staircase - to be retained and refurbished with high quality detailing
- 6 No. 11 Modern staircase - redundant stair to be removed to maximise usable floor space
- 7 Internal door and modern wall linings to be removed to open up entrance hall. Historical wall finishes refurbished / reinstated.
- 8 Existing external double doors to be reversed to open outward for escape

The character of each unit is to remain individual. This will be expressed further in the interior styling, fixtures and fittings, to differentiate between spaces. The shop module would remain strongly articulated both internally and externally, so that the interconnection of units by the introduction of these openings would have no effect on the perception of the cellular organisation. The historic ceiling would remain unaltered, which is essential for the feel of separation between the units.

The ceiling heights are approximately 3.4m high. The openings would be 2.5m high, making them fairly modest in relation to the scale of the room. They would also be located between structural columns, so would not appear out of place. The retail units would not become open-plan as the separating walls would remain mostly intact.



1:100  
@ A3 0 5m

- Historic - to be retained
- Proposed alteration

## Proposed No.7 / Unit 5 Link

Currently the offices in Sicilian and Vernon House have no reception area. In order to create a secondary guest entrance into the offices, and provide an additional line of security, the design proposal utilises the existing A1 retail unit, and introduces a door between Unit 5 and the No. 7 main entrance.

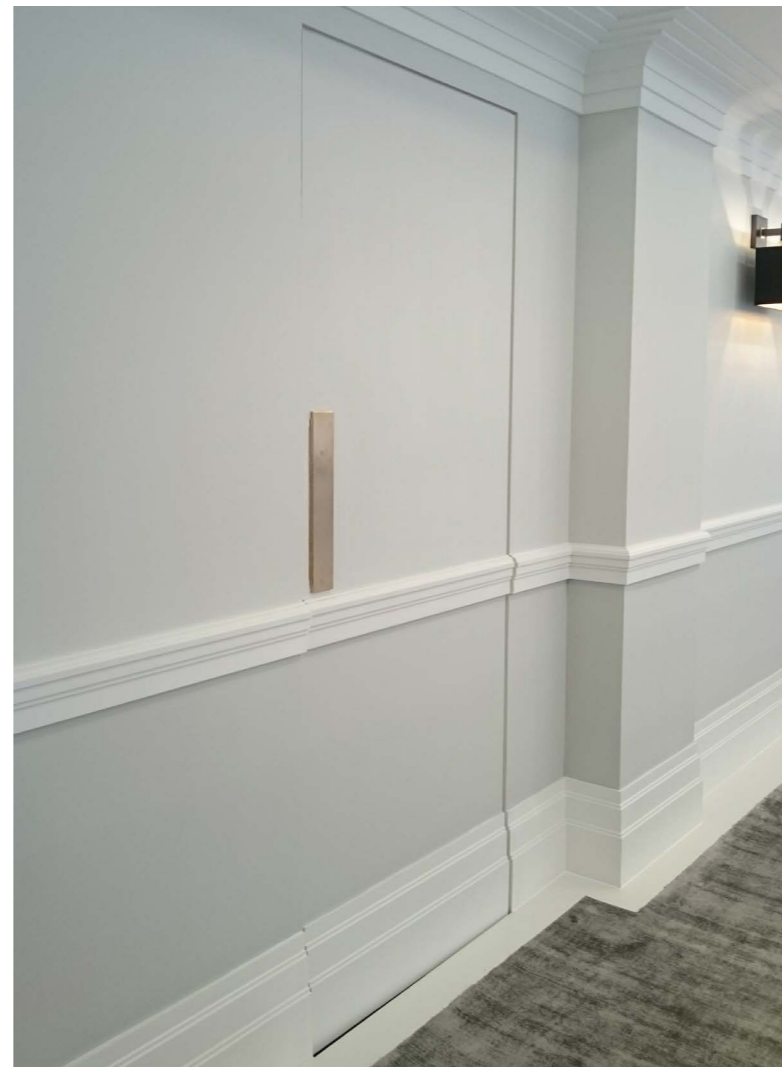
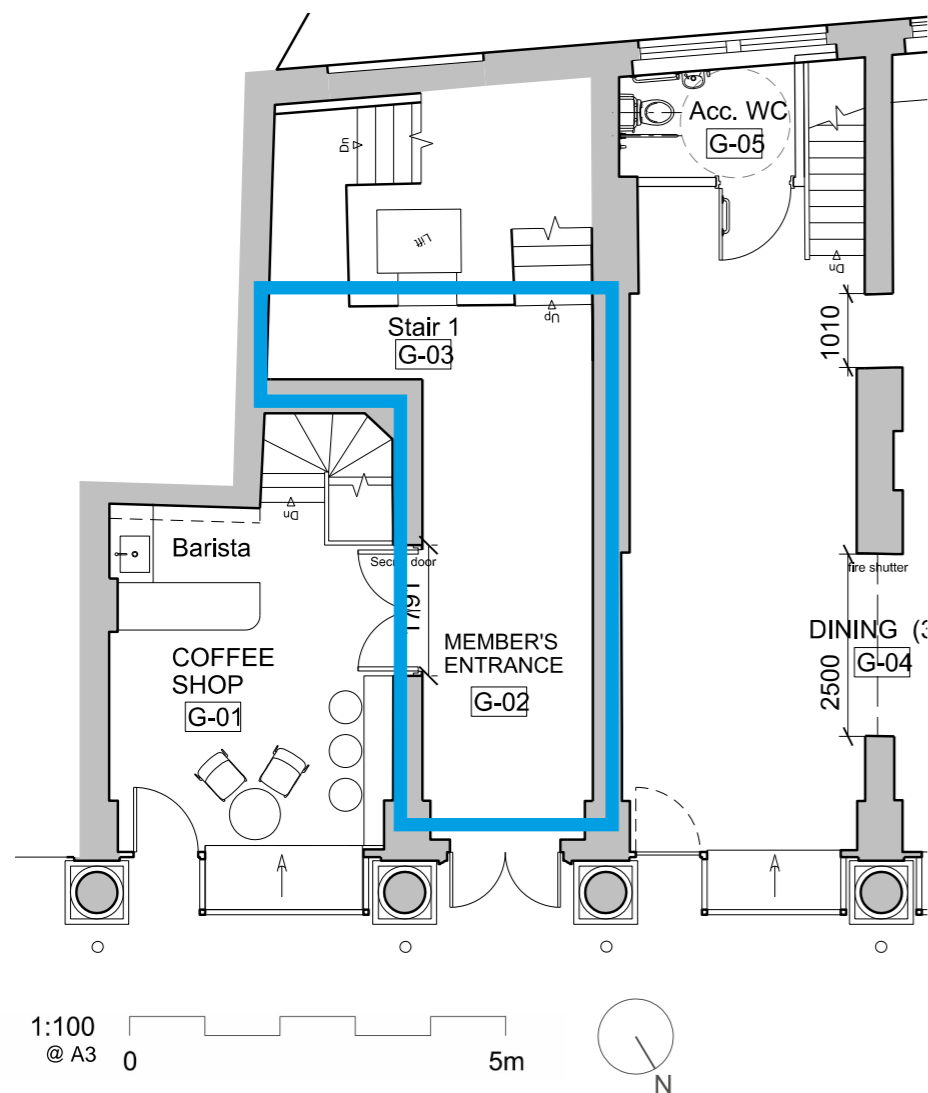
Guests to the offices will enter the A1 retail unit, which will function as a small coffee shop, and identify themselves through an electronic sign-in device (Ipad) on the coffee counter. The fundamental benefit of this subtle internal link to the office entrance is that all visitors can be accounted for, increasing security and safety in the case of emergency procedures. Following their registration, visitors will be directed to the stairwell and lift lobby through the proposed jib door instead of having to exit

the building and re-enter through the main entrance. The front entrance to No. 7 (Sicilian House) will remain the main staff entrance to the offices, with access control.

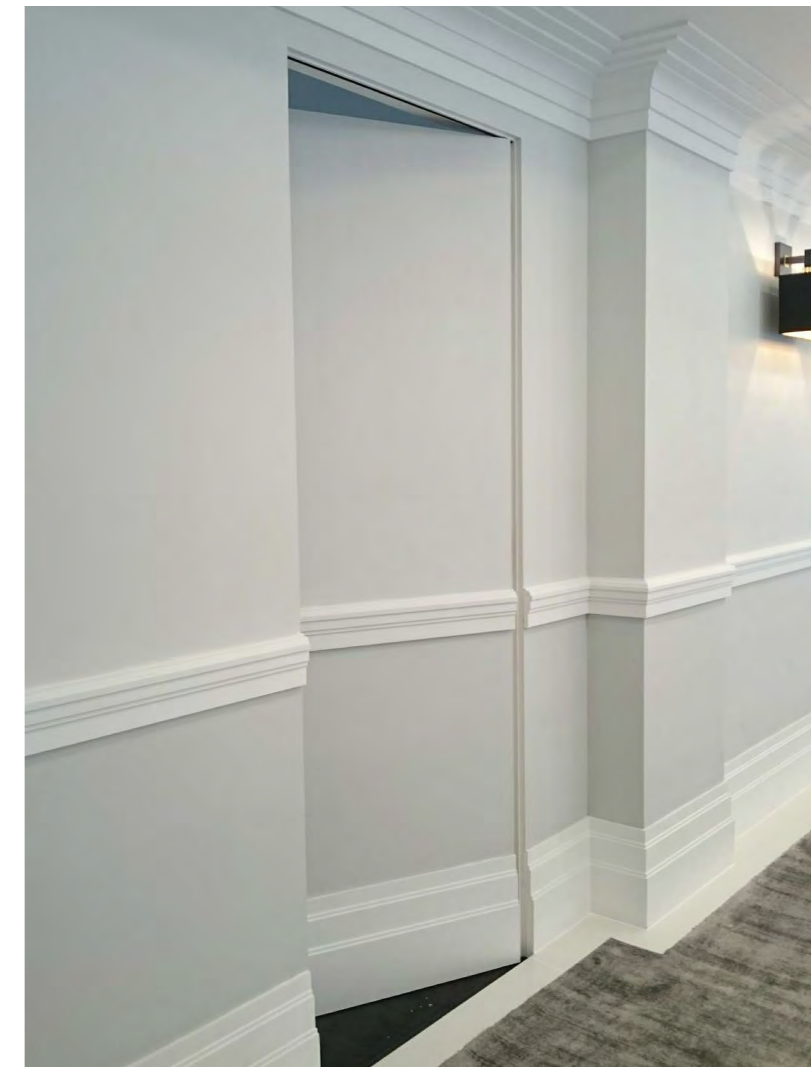
The intention is to ensure that the link door has minimal visual impact on the historical layout of the units, and also to improve the current character of the office entrance at No.7. It is proposed that the modern wall linings and ceilings are stripped back to their original historical state, and any pilasters, coving, and other historical details are repaired. The jib doorway would have a concealed frame and finishes would match the adjacent walls. The below images demonstrate how effective this can be to allow the doorway to blend in with historical features.

Whilst unit 5 will be linked to the existing office entrance, it will operate as, and have the look and feel of, a small independant coffee shop, which falls within the existing A1 use class. It will have a fully attended barrista counter open to the public. There will be a small amount of seating provided on the ground floor and in the modest basement space, as well as a unisex WC for customers. The front entrance to No. 7 (Sicilian House) will remain the main day-to-day entrance with access control for all co-working members.

The existing office entrance (unit 7) will be branded / signed as Labs co-working space which will be used by co-working tenants. Unit 5 will have its own signage and it will set a selection of hot and cold drinks along with pastries.



Example of a jib door at 60 Lombard Street



Example of a jib door at 60 Lombard Street