



Heritage Statement

We are acutely aware and sensitive to the value and character in the site in question. We seek to enhance the heritage features, and bring the site back into use in a sympathetic manner to the era of its construction. Windows currently boarded at high-street level will be revealed, columns carefully cleaned and preserved and ceiling painted and preserved in view. Currently the site is in need of care, and has sat derelict for 20 years.

The following is excerpted from Donald Insall Associates Heritage Statement for the refurb of the entire hotel which was completed in 2018.

'Central House was built in 1880 as Galbraith's Shipping Warehouse to the designs of architects Corson and Aitken and is Grade II listed. It is the only Scots Baronial building in Manchester and is faced in red brick with sandstone embellishments and a symmetrical front elevation. It comprises four storeys with basement and attic and has an almost rectangular plan set at right angles to the street and parallel to the Rochdale Canal. Its north wall slightly follows the north bend in the canal.'

'The windows are timber, with a number of replacements and some have been converted from sashes to casements – false ceilings installed behind have had a 'deadening' effect on the upper half of the windows, compromising the appearance of the building. The original entrance doors from the central atrium into the blocks have all been replaced. The glazed canopy structure which now forms the atrium/reception area over Galbraith Street dates from works in the 1990s.'

'The interior of Central House was altered during the early 20th century and again in 1989. The hotel conversion work in 1989 completely concealed the warehouse interior with significant reworking of the plan form, the installation of suspended ceilings, boxing-in of columns, replacement of doors, walls and removal of a significant amount of plaster work. All current doors, ceilings, and architraves date from the 1990s, along with all except two of the staircases.'

'In the interior, after the 1989 conversion of Central House, the main visible elements of historic interest were the chimney stacks which remain exposed within the rooms backing on to Johnson House. All other historic fabric was concealed by the hotel fit out. The special



interest of the building is manifest in its fabric, which has the following hierarchy of significance.

'Of high significance and particularly sensitive to change are:

- All external elevations*
- The decorative architectural features to the exterior, tourelles etc*
- Original chimney stacks where they remain internally/externally*
- Stone staircase between basement and ground*
- Original windows where they remain, particularly at basement level*
- The remaining warehouse fabric above ceilings and where boxed in (cast iron columns/beams etc) Of significance and also sensitive to change are:*
- Roof and roof structure*

'Of neutral significance and therefore broadly adaptable are:

- The internal plan form*
- Modern doors/architraves, stairs, lift core and partitions*
- The 1990s glazed/cast metal atrium structure*

'Factors that detract from significance and should therefore wherever possible be removed or improved upon are:

- Suspended ceilings*
- Ducts and grills, both internal and external Whitworth Conservation Area*

'The hotel lies at the junction of Princess Street with Whitworth Street. Both are busy arterial routes running through the City Centre, with Princess Street running north to south and Whitworth Street west to east. The other buildings in close proximity to the site are of a similar scale, with most in use as either offices or hotels with bars/clubs at ground floor level.

'Victorian architecture is predominant with the majority of the buildings dating from the latter part of the 19th century... On the northern side of the canal, directly opposite the site lies the Grade II listed Winsor Street former power station and Grade II listed Lioness House. Across Whitworth Street, to the south, lie the Grade II listed India and Lancaster Houses. The conservation area developed through the 19th century as the city grew industrially and*



commercially supported by the growth of the canal and railway networks; the Rochdale Canal which runs to the south of the conservation area is key to its significance.

‘This is an urban area which contains many of Manchester’s most important buildings and is dominated by a number of substantial textile warehouses with strong defined building lines and robust architecture of both architectural and historic interest which contribute to the area’s significance.

‘Whilst in decline during the 20th-century the industrial significance of the area is once again being celebrated alongside the rise of the ‘Gay Village’ with a number of bars and restaurants running along Canal Street.’

‘Central House

‘It has not been possible to trace original plans for the buildings. However the construction and materials used for the main central staircase within Central House, along with existing elevation drawings from a 1989 scheme (see Appendix IV), would suggest that the building was altered in the first part of the 20th century. From 1989 onwards all of the buildings which now form the site were continuously adapted and altered in connection with the creation of the hotel/aparthotel.

Please see additional document ‘Method Statement’ for details on preparation and decoration of the heritage features.