



24th March 2022

Land at Atherton Street, Manchester: Heritage Statement

1.0 Introduction and Proposals

- i. This Heritage Statement has been written by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd (SLHA), a specialist practice of conservation architects, surveyors, planners and heritage consultants which specialises in the historic environment.
- ii. SLHA were commissioned in July 2021 by Euan Kellie Property Solutions, on behalf of The Hut Group (THG), to assess the potential indirect (visual) impact of the proposed minor alterations to a plot of land at Atherton Street (the Site) on surrounding heritage assets.
- iii. The works are proposed to support the re-development of Great John Street Hotel (currently under construction) and comprise the introduction of three new car parking places, alterations to modern perimeter boundary treatments to the western side of the site, and general relandscaping (**Figures 1-3**).
- iv. The Site is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area, and close to the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel (**see Figure 4**). Therefore, the focus of the following Heritage Statement will be on the potential, indirect (visual) impact the proposed minor works could have on the setting of the Grade II Great John Street Hotel, and on the character and appearance of the Castlefield Conservation Area.
- v. Due to the minor nature of the proposed works, and the enclosed nature of the Site, the designated heritage assets scoped in for assessment are limited to those identified in **Figure 4, below**.

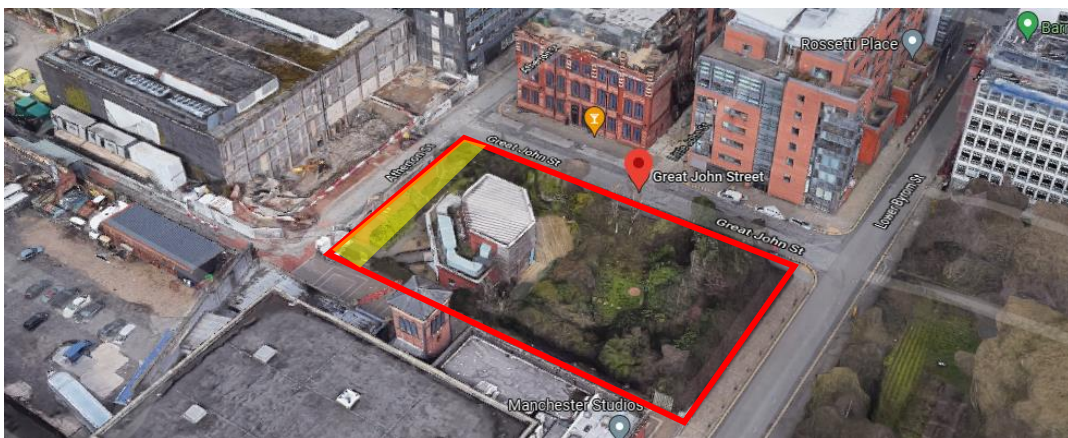


Figure 1: An aerial view looking north over the land at Atherton Street (The Site - outlined red) and location of the proposed parking (shaded yellow).



Figure 2: Looking north-east along Lower Byrom Street, showing the land at Atherton Street to the left.



Figure 3: Looking west along Great John Street, showing the land at Atherton Street to the left.

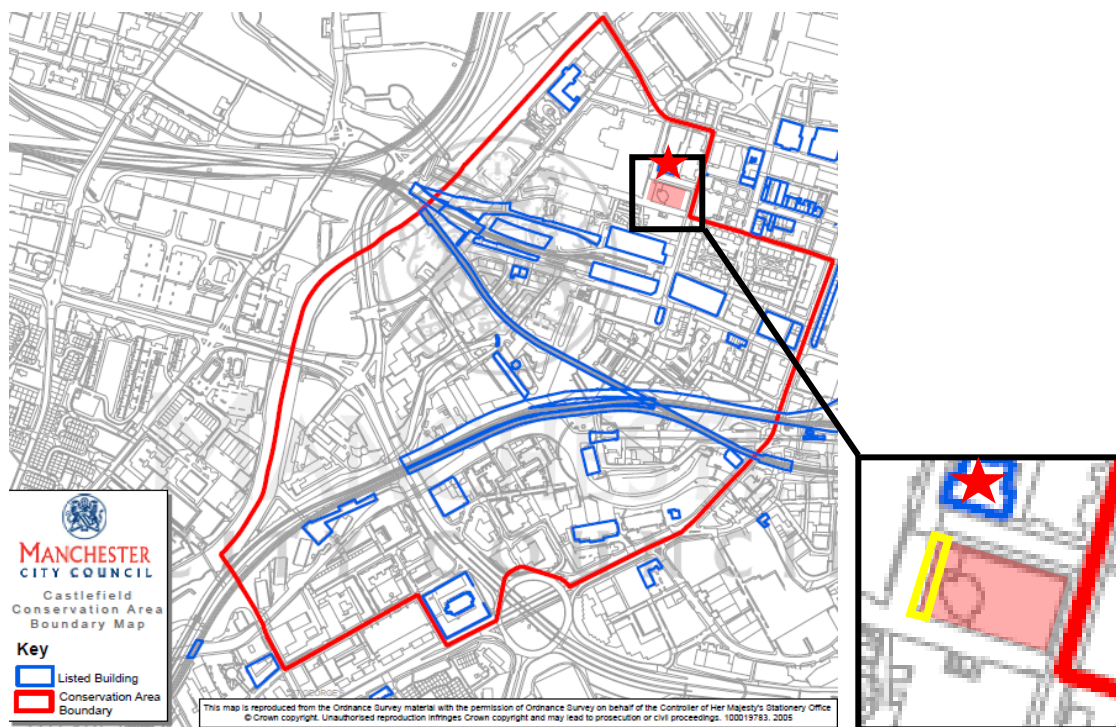


Figure 3a: Looking south from Great John Street towards the location of the proposed three car parking spaces, which are to be located behind the modern wall and planting to the centre.



Figure 3b: Current view looking north along the modern seating area to the western perimeter of the land at Atherton Street.

- vi. As identified in **Figure 4 below**, as well as being located to the north-east corner of the Castlefield Conservation Area, there is one listed building within the immediate vicinity of the Site, comprising the Grade II listed current Great John Street Hotel (marked with red star).



Figures 4: Map showing the Castilefield Conservation Area (outlined red) and the Site shaded red. The enlarged view to the right highlights the location of the proposed car parking spaces (outlined yellow). The Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel can be seen marked by the red star.

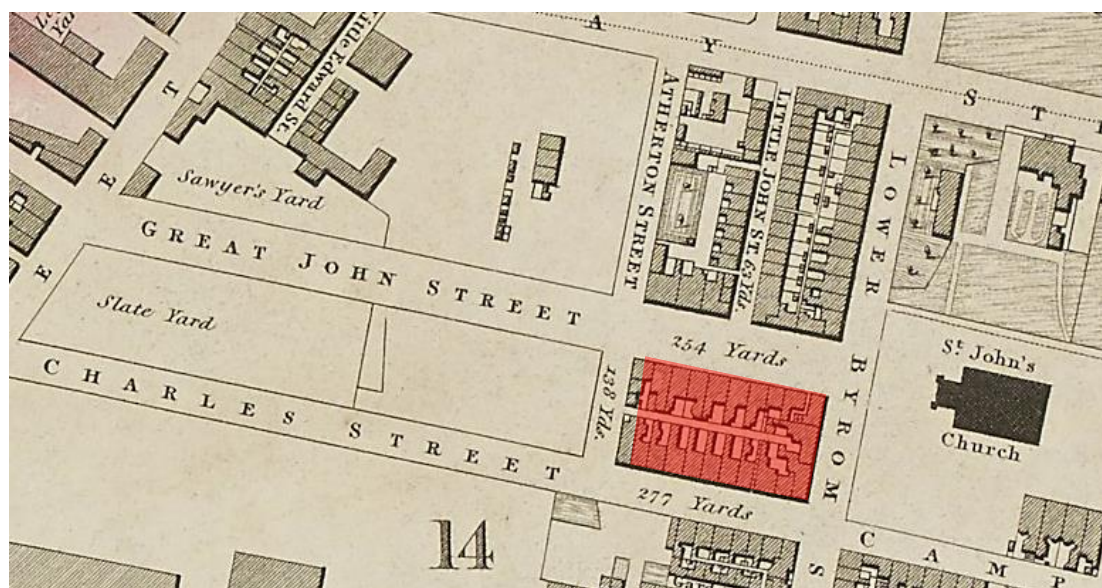
2.0 Planning Policy Context and Relevant Planning History

- i. The key planning policy documents are, respectively, the: Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), and Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012).

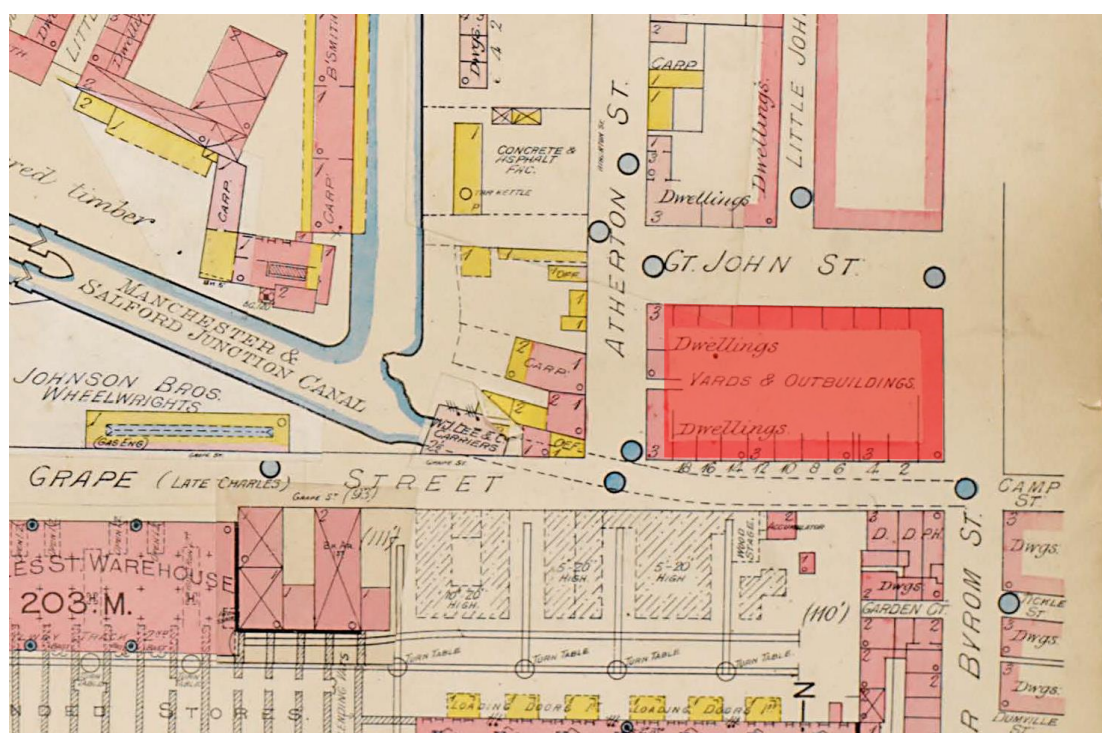
- ii. This Statement has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local heritage planning policy. With regards to the 1990 Act, **Section 66** is relevant to the current scheme as it requires the Local Planning Authority to *“have special regard to the desirability of preserving [a listed building] or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”* when considering whether to grant planning permission.
- iii. Due to the location of the Site, within the Castlefield Conservation Area, **Section 72** is also of relevance as it requires *“special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area”*.
- iv. The policies in the NPPF constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development means in practice. Of particular relevance is **paragraph 194 (NPPF, 2021)**, which states that *“in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.”* The following Heritage Statement is written in this context.
- v. This Heritage Statement accords with the guidance set out in Historic England’s Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in heritage Assets (October 2019). The recent guidance calls for a staged approach, which provides relevant and *proportionate* information sufficient to inform decision-making by the Council.

3.0 Historic Development of the Site

- i. The land at Atherton Street was formally used by Granada Television Studios as an outdoor garden studio area called Breeze Gardens from the c1980s until the studio’s closure in 2013. The land forms an island site bounded by Great John Street to the north, Lower Byrom Street to the east, the private Grape Street to the south and the private southern half of Atherton Street to the west.
- ii. The Site originally contained a number of terraced houses to all four sides that were built in the early-19th century (**see Figures 5-8 below**) and demolished piecemeal between the 1950s and 1960s, with the site eventually being purchased by Granada Studios for use as a studio and private garden space.



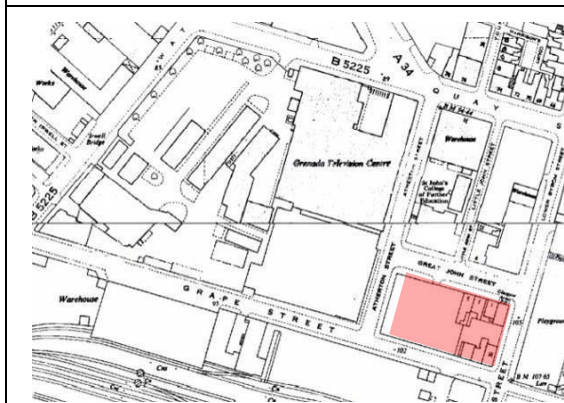
Figures 5: 1832 Banks & Co.'s Plan of Manchester & Salford, with their Environs – An early map showing the extent early 19th century housing across the Site.



Figures 6: 1889 Goad's Fire Insurance Plan – The Site as seen in the late-19th century, showing the unaltered terraced buildings across the Site.



Figures 7: 1891 OS – A clearer depiction of the Site in 1891.



Figures 8: 1963-5 – This map illustrates the completion of the last main phase of the Granada Studios development (left), and the demolition of the western and central parts of the Site.



Figures 9: A modern map showing the current layout of the Site, comprising a small c1990s detached garden studio building to the western side, with lawn and planting to the rest of the Site.

Note the slightly reduced width of the original western side of the Site resulting from the previous widening of Atherton Street by Granada Studios.



Figures 10: A view looking west along Grape Street from its junction with Lower Byrom Street (now private) in 1944, showing the early 19th century housing to the right side, which formed the southern boundary of the Site.



Figures 11: A view looking west along Great John Street in 1944, showing the early-19th century houses that formed the northern perimeter of the Site.



Figures 12: A view looking north along Lower Byrom Street (right), at its junction with Grape Street (left) in 1964, showing one of the few remaining buildings on the site (left) shortly before demolition.



Figures 13: Another view looking west into Grape Street from Lower Byrom Street in 1964, showing one of the last remaining buildings on the Site (right) as shown in Figure 12 above.



Figures 14: A view looking north along Lower Byrom Street towards its junction with Great John Street in 1964, showing the demolition of all buildings to the north and east sides of the Site by this time. The building to the left is now the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel.

4.0 Statement of Significance

- i. The Site retains no historic features; with all perimeter walls, railings, garden features/structures and landscaping dating to the c1990s-2000s, and of **no heritage interest**.
- ii. The Site is situated within the setting of the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel, however, due to the scale of the proposed minor works and the location of the Site, the works will not affect the setting of the listed building.
- iii. The Site is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area, which forms the largest and most varied conservation area in Manchester, the character and appearance of which is largely defined by the early canal network, basins and warehousing, and later railway viaducts to the south of the area.

- iv. The immediate environs surrounding the land at Atherton Street comprises the large former Granada Studios site, which is currently being redeveloped, a number of modern former studio buildings, the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel, and a number of modern apartment buildings.
- v. Although the land at Atherton Street has historically always formed a fully developed city block, from the early-19th century to the c1960s, its current mature planting is a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which sits comfortably in the context of the adjacent St Johns Gardens to the east.

4.0 Proposals

- i. The scheme will retain much of the existing planting across the site and will introduce examples of new mature trees along with herbaceous planting. The existing modern railings and wall/planter will be removed and a new central reservation introduced using high quality, charcoal grey permeable paving and kerb stones, whilst the retained laurel hedge will continue to provide low-level visual division between the parking area and the wider gardens.

5.0 Impact Assessment and Conclusion

- i. Due to the minor proposed works to the Site, and the Site's orientation/location, the proposals are considered to have **no impact on the character or appearance of the Castlefield Conservation Area or the setting of the Grade II Great John Street Hotel**, thereby resulting in '**no harm**' as defined within the NPPF (2021, paras.199-202). The proposals are thus considered to comply with relevant national and local planning policy.

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