Atelier Heritage

Heritage Statement in Support of a Planning Application for Amenity Breakout Spaces to 8-16 Newton Street

Date July 2021

Job 1665a



Introduction

This heritage statement forms part of a planning and listed building application for Newton Street, Manchester. It relates specifically to proposals for the creation of amenity breakout space. A previous application for works to refurbish the building was approved in early 2018 (118678/LO/2017) and is currently underway.

The statement was produced in June 2021 by Atelier Heritage and its author is Laura Jessup, PGCert Conservation of the Historic Environment, MA History and Theory of Architecture.

Location

Newton Street is located within Manchester's Northern Quarter, to the north-east of the city centre. It is a busy vehicular route running between Great Ancoats Street and Piccadilly. Numbers 08-16 form a block, bounded by Newton Street, Mangle Street, Back Piccadilly and Dale Street.

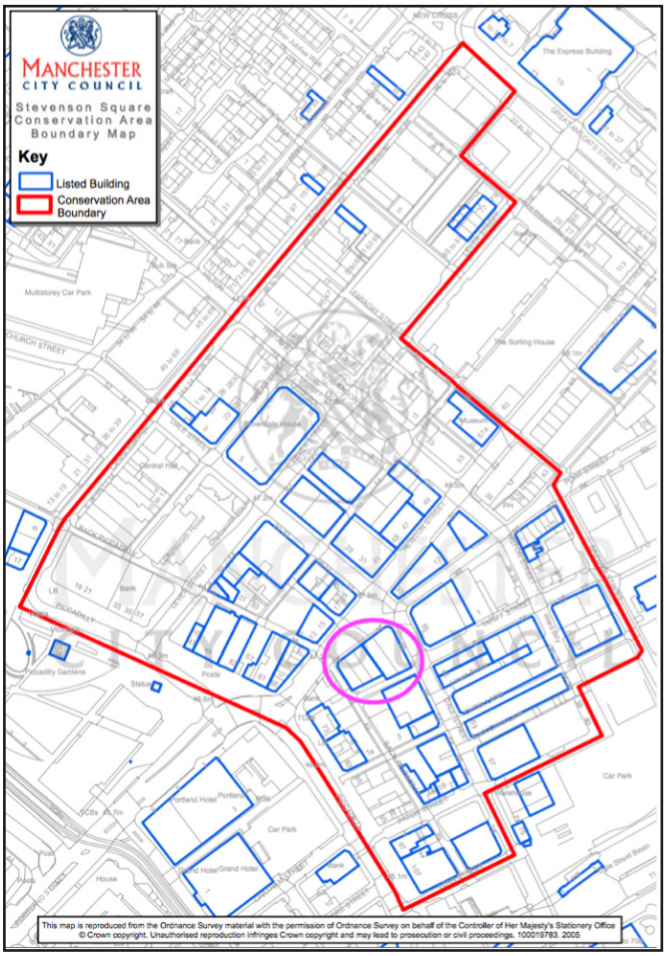

IMAGE 1: Site in pink, within Stevenson Square Conservation Area.

Description

The buildings at 08-16 Newton Street were listed Grade II in 1994. They also fall within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The property is one of a cluster of listed buildings, the majority of which are warehousing of a similar scale and nature.

The listing extract is provided here for reference:

SJ8498SE NEWTON STREET 698-1/29/248 (South East side) Nos.14 AND 16
GV II

Includes: No.36 DALE STREET. Manufacturers' warehouses and agents' offices, now shops, etc. Late C19, altered. Red brick in Flemish bond (part painted white), with sandstone ashlar plinth and dressings, slate roof. Trapezoidal plan with rounded corner to Dale Street. Basement, 4 storeys and attic, No.14 having a narrow 4-window facade treated as one wide bay, and No.16 to the left a wider 6-window facade in 3 bays; with a high plinth (interrupted by basement openings), cornice to ground floor, string courses to the upper floors, a moulded stone cornice over the top floor on thin brick brackets, and a parapet with chimneys over 2 piers of No.16. Doorways adjacent to the junction, tall, with panelled doors, square overlights, and cornices on elongated consoles; No.14 to the right has 3 sashed windows at ground floor and 4 on each of the next 2 floors, with continuous stone lintels; No.16 to the left has altered windows at ground floor, sashed windows on the next 2 floors with stone lintels to each pair; both have coupled sashed windows at 4th floor and square dormers in a mansard roof. The fenestration of No.16 carries round the curved corner and continues in the 5-bay side to Dale Street, with chimneys over 4 piers, and 2 dormers. Interior not inspected. History: occupied c.1905-13 by various manufacturers' agents, No.14 by Horrocks Crewdson & Co.

Listing NGR: SJ8460698288

SJ8498SE NEWTON STREET 698-1/29/247 (South East side) Nos.8, 10 AND 12
GV II

Warehouses, workshops and offices, now shops and offices.



IMAGE 2: External view from Newton Street.

c.1860-70; altered. Brown brick with some polychromy, sandstone dressings (roof not visible). Rectangular plan. Eclectic style, with Gothic accent. Basement and 4 storeys, 4 unequal bays divided by brick pilasters, with sill-bands, cornice and parapet. The ground floor has coupled doorways in the 2nd bay, with banded plinths to the height of the tall basement, then short colonettes with carved capitals, and arched heads (rounded intrados with pointed extrados), and linked hoodmoulds, and a large mullioned 3-light window to the left (tripartite basement openings below); but is otherwise altered by C20 shop fronts, with numerous large signboards attached. The upper floors have 3-light windows with brick mullions in the 1st and 3rd bays, coupled windows in the 2nd and 4th, those at 2nd floor with banded arched heads and linked hoodmoulds, and all sashed. Prominent cornice and panelled parapet. The right-hand return wall has a 2-storey canted bay (altered at ground floor), arched windows at 2nd floor, and a gabled arched window at 3rd floor. Rear and interior not inspected.

History: occupied c.1905 by umbrella manufacturer, sewing machines, etc. Included for group value. Listing NGR: SJ8458498270

The Stevenson Square Conservation Area is described as representing 'a significant portion of the city centre in which the majority of Victorian buildings remain intact. Many are listed by the Department of the Environment as being of special architectural or historic interest.' MCC conservation Area appraisal at https://manchester.gov.uk

History

The buildings at 8-16 Newton Street are former home trade warehouses, dating from the late 19th century. They are in two separate parts (8 – 12 forming one building, and 14-16 a second) and together they form one block, with main elevations facing Newton Street. Both are in the same architectural style, but they differ slightly in appearance and height. It is possible they were built for two different owners, but the fact that they share internal walls and read as one, indicates they date from the same period.

16 Newton Street does not appear on the 1851 map, but is visible on the 1891 map. The listing dates the buildings as 1860-70, but there is no reference to the buildings in the trade directory of 1879 when Hilton Street is listed as appearing straight after number 12, indicating there was a different street layout. The buildings do appear in 1883. From the available evidence therefore, the buildings can be dated to 1879-1882. No reference has been found to the architect/s, nor has it been possible to locate any original drawings or plans within the Manchester Central Library archives.

The Slater Trade Directory from 1883 lists one manufacturer per building in numbers 08, 10 and 12. By 1911 there is further separation within the buildings, particularly at numbers 08 and 14. Tenants are a mixture of manufacturers and agents.

The properties were home trade warehouses. The goods were supplied by manufacturers and agents who visited, and buyers were usually wholesale drapers. Home trade warehouses were common in the city in the 19th century, and typical of this area of the Northern Quarter.

There is no documentary evidence of internal layout, but it is almost certain to have followed the typical plan of home trade warehouses in the area and of this period. It was common for floors to be sub-divided for different businesses. The ground or main floor often had a counting house for credit customers, along with consulting rooms, and offices positioned towards the front. Upper floors were used for the lightest goods and were often top-lit. Light wells allowed for natural light to penetrate the central areas. The lower floors housed heavier goods and the basement was for packing. It was common to have a more decorative formal stair for customers and a distinct functional service stair at the rear, for workers. Goods were moved internally by internal hoists and packed in the basement, ready for dispatch through the openings on to the street, often through the open-walled loading bay.

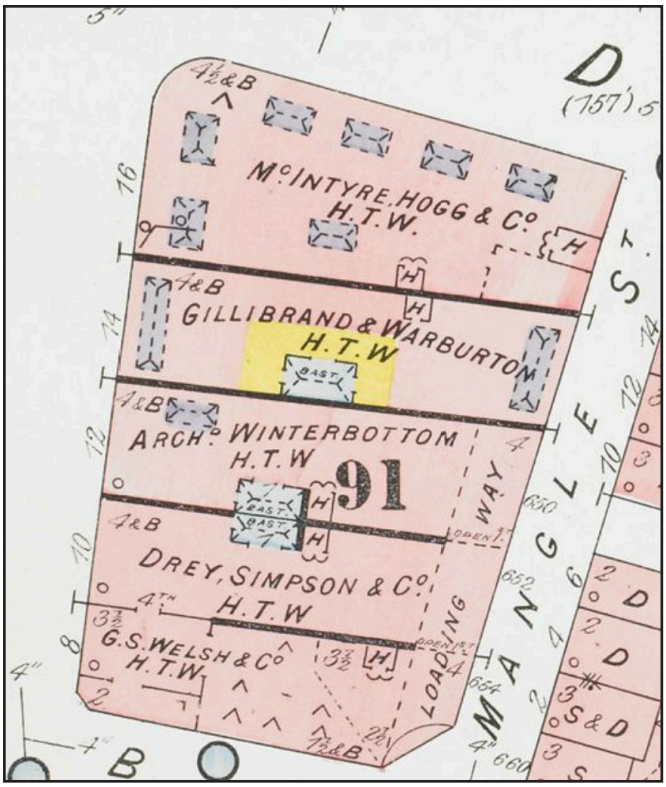

IMAGE 3: Goad's plan, 1886.

This kind of warehouse was particularly common around Portland Street (grander in form) and Dale Street (often smaller). The only found reference with any detail for 8-16 Newton Street is the Goads Insurance Plan from 1886.

Hoists, with iron doors, are identified by letter 'H'. 8 and 10 have an internal connection through an opening in the internal brick wall. The Mangle Street elevation of the building features a loading way across 8-12 which is open at 1st floor level. The main roof is indicated as being of slate, over four storeys and a basement to the main part of the building. There is a mansard roof to number 16, which is 4 and a half storeys plus basement. At the end closest to Back Piccadilly there are 1 and a half storeys plus basement, and 2 storeys with a 'metal' roof over, to the front Newton Street corner.

Following the decline in the textiles industry, there was little need for warehousing of this nature in the city. The buildings continued in office and light manufacturing use into the 20th century and each building was occupied by several individual tenants, the result of which was piecemeal alterations including additional internal partitions and walls. Recent uses of the ground floor include a variety of food/drink outlets and a skate/clothing retail unit. The basement of number 08 operated as a nightclub and music venue until recently.



IMAGE 4: Site in 1966 (08 Newton Street corner).

The buildings are currently undergoing refurbishment. The interiors have been altered over the lifetime of the building, mainly through the insertion of new partitions and over covering of floors. The lightwell of 08-12 has also been altered, as has the appearance of the external elevations at street level, on the Newton Street side in particular.

The insurance plans show there were 6 hoists in 08-16. Of these, three remain (two at 10/12 and one at 16), and an additional one has been added to number 14.



IMAGE 5: Site in 1967 (16 Newton St corner).

Significance, Proposals and Impact

The assessment of significance has been undertaken in relation to a) the listed asset b) the Conservation Area and c) the elements subject to change as part of this application.

a) Building
Assessment is based on Historic England's criteria found within Conservation principles, 2008.

Setting: The setting of the buildings is a contributor to their significance. They form a group of warehouses sharing similar characteristics (eg. height, mass, materials and historic uses) within this part of the city, and are positive contributors to both the streetscape and the wider Conservation Area.

Historical: The buildings are of high historical value. They are associated with the period of rapid industrial and commercial growth in the city, which is a crucial part of the history of Manchester. Their place within a wider group in this area in also recognised as highly significant. The degradation to the exterior through inappropriate change, and the removal of most historical features internally has lowered this value in places. Later internal additions are of a low historical value.

Evidential: The Newton Street buildings have a medium/ high degree of evidential value. Warehouses are an important characteristic architectural type in Manchester and these are typical examples, with the plan and parts of the interior and exterior illustrating how these buildings worked, particularly the vertical hoists and lightwells, columns, windows and entrances. They are however of an average quality when compared to others. The original parts of the exterior are of high significance. The altered parts are of low/negative significance.

Aesthetic: 08-16 Newton Street have some interesting features, particularly in the external stonework detail, the form of the rear sloping roof and the characteristic roof spaces internally, giving them a medium aesthetic value. They are in the vernacular tradition of brick Manchester warehouses. The internal spaces are almost entirely functional and most have a medium aesthetic value. The later changes have low/negative value.

Communal: The industrial past of Manchester is a key element of the city's heritage. The associated architecture

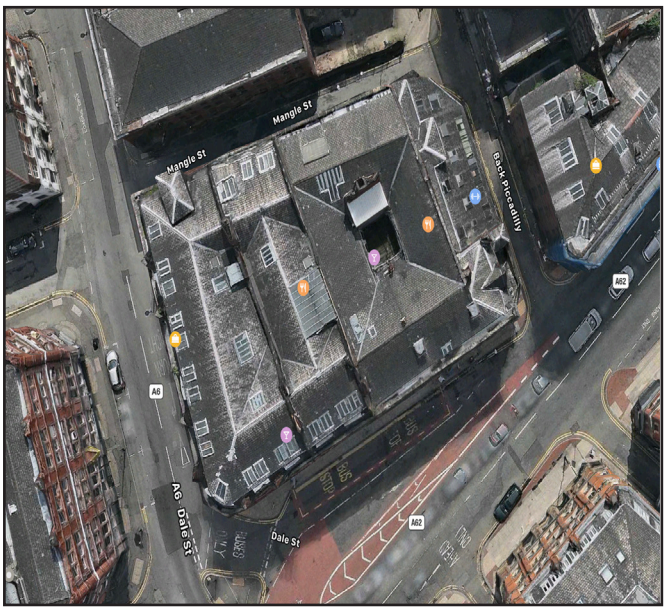

IMAGE 6: Site from above.

has formed the character of the city and is recognised by people as what sets it apart from other places. The personal links to this building are considered low but there is a degree of associational value to the wider city for residents and visitors.

b) Conservation Area

8-16 Newton Street form a large, prominently positioned block within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. Newton Street was developed for commercial warehousing in the second part of the 19th century and retains a good number of original structures, in varying designs but with a typical shared characteristics in use of materials and general architectural form.

Rather than any individual building, it is the concentration of 19th/20th century commercial architecture that forms the main significance of the CA. The MCC appraisal states, 'Most are related to the cotton industry, often warehouses, showrooms or workshops. These buildings are taller than the earlier examples and create a varied matrix of building mass, divided by largely dark, narrow streets. Wealth produced by the cotton industry can be seen reflected in the buildings, either stone or brick with stone dressings, many of which are elaborately decorated.' and 'The main characteristic of the Stevenson Square conservation area is one of a closely woven network of narrow streets intersecting at right angles.'

c) Specific elements and proposals

The proposals are centred around the provision of open-air amenity space within the existing footprint of the building. The intention is to create spaces which, whilst within the property, connect to outside by omission of glazing within openings, in a number of specific locations.

Alternative options included the provision of external spaces on the roof, additions to the elevations, or removal of parts of the brick fabric. These were discounted as being invasive and the proposed design is the result of a process of mitigating any harm to significance.



IMAGE 07: Internal supports and windows at floor one.

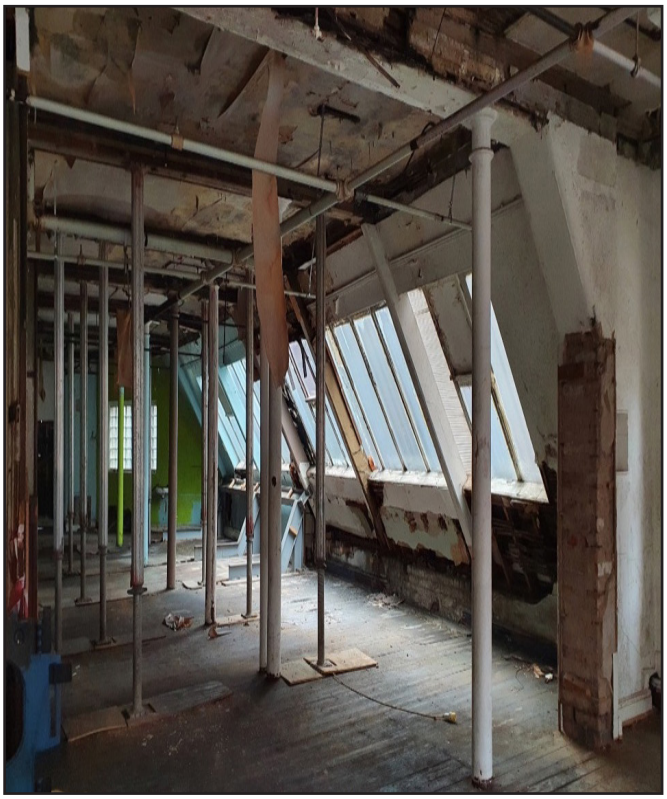

IMAGE 08: Area of proposed work at floor one showing windows and columns.

Floor One

Proposals for alterations at first floor level relate to a section of the Back Piccadilly elevation of number 08.

Existing: Run of rooflights from the Newton Street end to the Mangle Street end.

Significance: The Goads plan indicates 'skylights' but does not note a run of windows in this location. As a fire plan, this omission would be unusual. Existing windows differ from those on the floors immediately above and, internally, the relationship between structural timbers and windows is awkward. The frames do not finish at the same level as the opening and are of poor quality and fit. It is assumed, based on this evidence, that this arrangement is a later alteration. There is a degree of evidential significance as the openings provide natural lighting for internal use, but in overall terms, the significance of these windows and associated openings is limited. They are of minor significance.

Proposal: To remove roof lights and retain opening with additional lead finish to create weather-proof edges to fabric. New roof slates and guttering will be added.

Impact: The loss of a feature of limited heritage significance will have a minor impact upon the overall asset. The decision to not replace windows, retaining the opening only, will alter the roofscape. This change in form will have a minor adverse impact, but, when balanced against the creative re-purposing of this large historic block, there is a public benefit to securing a long-term re-use. If external amenity space is needed to secure tenants, this location, on a side elevation, incorporating non-original form and fabric, is a solution which demonstrates a limited, low level, of harm.

Existing: Modern structural supports. Added to as support as a medium-term solution to failing structure.

Significance: These are modern and intrusive within the existing original space and have no heritage significance.

Proposal: To be removed and new reinforcement added to existing beams.

Impact: Moderate positive impact by removal of non-original and invasive supports and fitting more suitable alternatives.

Existing: Internal columns and timber skirting are original.



IMAGE 09: External view of first floor windows and roof to Back Piccadilly elevation.



IMAGE 10: Proposed terrace from above.

Significance: These items are of some historic value; the columns are of moderate significance and the skirting of low significance.

Proposal: Remove skirting to breakout space. Install glazed screen and bi-fold doors behind opening to create open-air space.
New downstand to meet existing ceiling and new glass partitions. New glass will be spaced away from columns, which will remain exposed.
Outside wall and floor in amenity space to be tanked, insulated and laid with new floor finish. New 'external' raised deck to be fitted, draining to existing system.

Impact: There is minimal loss of historic fabric (skirting). Glass screens are positioned to avoid columns and will use minimum fixings. The flow of natural light will be retained. There is a negligible impact from adding internal screens, but it does not demonstrate any degree of harm to significance and visual transparency will be retained. The decking will sit over existing flooring, which is retained beneath. These changes have a minimal adverse impact upon significance.

Floor Two

Existing: At second floor level there is a corner terrace above the Newton Street/Back Piccadilly corner, with a low stone parapet. The is an area which is decorative and currently has no external access.

Significance: This is an attractive feature and focal point for the corner of the block, on its main Newton Street elevation. It works well in combination with the ornate arched corner entrance and angled corner. It is a feature of moderate significance. The brickwork to be removed is original fabric, but with no ornate or special architectural features.

Proposal: New internal step.
New glass balustrade behind existing parapet wall.

Removal of existing pitched slate roof.
Proposed new flat roof to create external terrace, to be drained through existing drainage system.
New opening and door within existing brick wall to tower to create access.

Impact: There is a limited loss of historic fabric required to the roof (currently not flat) and to create an access point. The roof and wall proposed to be removed are of minimal significance in the context of the whole. The fitting of a glass balustrade will have minimal impact. Overall the effect



IMAGE 11: Showing brick work to side of tower, proposed to be removed in one recessed area to form door.



IMAGE 12: Windows in mansard roof at floor 4, facing Mangle Street.

is considered to be minor adverse in loss of fabric.

It is accepted that in order to secure long term uses for vacant listed buildings, change is inevitable. The degree of harm (less than substantial) in this instance is considered justified when balanced against the potential to enhance this focal point.

Throughout the city and in numerous locations within the Northern Quarter, including at nearby Stevenson Square, permission has been given for roof gardens and new external access. The re-purposing of the roof as terrace will bring animation to this corner, in-keeping with the adaptations evident in this part of the city where part of its attraction and character is the creative re-use of old buildings.

Floor Four

Existing: The area subject to proposals is at fourth floor roof level (mansard roof). Proposals relate to a small section of the Mangle Street facing elevation at number 14.

Significance: Mangle Street is the rear facing elevation of the building. It is less ornate and of secondary significance to the Newton Street elevation, which is visible in longer views. The Mangle Street roof is experienced only obliquely from street level, given the narrow nature of the street. The three windows are behind the existing parapets and within the face of the mansard roof. They are in very poor condition and appear to be replacement windows from a later date. Their significance is minor.

Proposal: Removal of existing three windows within mansard side elevation.
Treatment and protection of remaining openings with lead to create weather-proof finish to fabric. New 'external' raised deck to be fitted, draining to existing system. Bi-fold doors and glass screens to be installed from downstand to create barrier between internal and external space. These will fix to existing walls (end wall and riser wall) with minimum fixings. New downstand to meet existing ceiling and new glass partitions. Set away from existing ceiling joists. Outside wall and floor in amenity space to be tanked, insulated and laid with new floor finish. New 'external' raised deck to be fitted, draining to existing system.

Impact: There is minimal loss of existing fabric (windows) which do not appear original and are in poor condition. The physical loss of a feature of minor significance is considered to be of minor adverse impact. It is considered the removal of windows from the 3 openings will alter the roofscape and elevations to a limited extent. The void/solid



IMAGE 13: Internal view of floor four with timber joists (to be retained).

relationship remains with the retention of the openings, albeit in an altered form. The rooflights also remain unaltered and the proposal involves the frames and glass of the side windows only.

Glass screens are positioned to avoid columns and will use minimum fixings. The flow of natural light will be retained. There is a negligible impact from adding internal screens, but it does not demonstrate any degree of harm to significance and visual transparency will be retained. The decking will sit over existing flooring, which is retained beneath. These changes have a minimal adverse impact upon significance.

The less than substantial harm caused to historic fabric is balanced against the benefit of securing the optimum long term viable use for the space. The vast majority of the upper floors of numbers 08-16 Newton Street have remained vacant and in poor condition for several decades. Their refurbishment is a substantial project and a significant enhancement to the buildings and the wider Conservation Area.

These proposals are in response to the requirements of potential tenants who desire external space and access to fresh air break out zones. There is a degree of historic fabric loss but that is minimal in the context of the whole, and does not involve fabric of high importance. On balance, these changes will not erode the historical importance of this building or its architectural value and represent an effort to make modern interventions which, unlike a full conversion of the roof level or additional terrace space, are subservient to the existing form.

Planning Context

The main heritage planning considerations affecting this site are its Grade II listed status and its position within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area.

The legislation concerning built heritage is contained within Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Government Policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated 2019). Local planning policy is set by Manchester City Council.

Statutory legislation states that special regard should be given to '*the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*' Clause 66. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

The NPPF recognises that sympathetic changes to heritage assets are necessary to ensure their viable ongoing use, but that alterations must be justified and their impact upon significance assessed.

NPPF, paragraph 192 states,
'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

When considering potential impacts of proposed development on an asset's significance, NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation……. this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm'. NPPF, para. 193.*

And that, *'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm….this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'* NPPF, para. 196.

Government Historic Environment Guidance (2014, updated 2019) states that *'in general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so may not arise in many cases' and that 'an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest'*. In this case, the degree of harm arising from the proposals is less than substantial.

This 'less than substantial harm' is mitigated by the upgrading of the currently vacant space will ensure the benefit of its ongoing viable use. It is considered that the degree of harm upon significance is limited to the loss of limited areas of historic fabric. The nature of the roofscape is also altered, but this is in limited areas. It is a change in the way the internal/external space is used. This does have an impact upon the original character but this is true for any modern re-use of the space. Of the available options to create break out space, the proposals are considered to be the least harmful alternative.

Local Manchester City Council policy follows the principles established in the NPPF. In particular, Policy EN3, 'historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced for their own heritage merits…'

The best way to safeguard a building is to ensure it is tenanted and maintained. If the provision of amenity space will make the end use more viable, then this the limited harm caused by changes is considered justified.