

Victoria Bridge Heritage Statement

Renaissance, Deansgate, Manchester

December 2021

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Heritage Asset and Assessment of Significance	4
3.	Assessment of Impact	9
4.	Summary and Conclusions	14
Appendix 1: Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance		15

Client

Property Alliance Group (PAG) and Starwood Capital Group (SCG)

Our reference

PROH3016

Dec 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Deansgate SOF Alliance LeaseCo Limited, a joint venture between Property Alliance Group (PAG) and an affiliate of Starwood Capital (SCG). It is prepared in connection with an application for listed building consent for removal of existing structure and creation of a stair connection to the grade II listed Victoria Bridge ('the Proposed Works').
- 1.2 This application for listed building consent is associated with wider proposals for the Renaissance complex, for which planning permission has been separately sought (planning application reference: 132088/FO/2021).
- 1.3 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority in determining applications for development affecting listed buildings to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of a listed building (s.16 and s.66).
- 1.4 The NPPF provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 194 states the following:

'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 level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'¹.
- 1.5 To comply with these requirements, Section 2 of this statement assesses the significance of the grade II listed Victoria Bridge and the impact of the Proposed Works is set out in Section 3.
- 1.6 This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of published information, proportionate archival research and has been informed by site visits. It has been prepared in accordance with Historic England Good Practice Advice on 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment' (GPA 2).

¹ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - para. 194

2. Heritage Asset and Assessment of Significance

- 2.1 The NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”²

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under the relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

- 2.3 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting”.

Listed Buildings

- 2.4 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (2018) are published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

Assessment of Significance

- 2.5 Victoria Bridge was grade II listed in 1988 and is located to the north west of the Renaissance complex.

² MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 – Annex 2: Glossary



Figure 2.1: View of the north east side of Victoria Bridge from the east bank of the River Irwell

- 2.6 Victoria Bridge is a public road bridge which dates to 1837-9. The bridge is constructed from sandstone ashlar with quarry faced rusticated sandstone voussoirs that are not keyed in. The bridge spans the river with a single semi elliptical arch, whilst the road bed drops in elevation from the south east to north west due to the difference in height between the two sides of the river bank. The parapets sit above a roll moulded string course and have central raised panels, each of which is surmounted by a Grecian scroll with words 'Victoria Bridge' and an orb. It is of significance as an example of large scale Victorian infrastructure, which is both functional and also decorative. The Proposed Works affect the south facing elevation of the bridge where it interacts with the Renaissance complex. There is evidence that the bridge has been previously altered at parapet level.



Figure 2.2: View towards the elliptical arch of the southern elevation of Victoria Bridge, looking north west

- 2.7 The bridge was constructed to replace an earlier medieval bridge³, known as the Salford Old Bridge that crossed the river at roughly the same point. The previous bridge was a narrow stone structure, with three gothic arches over the central arch. The medieval bridge was found to be too narrow for the needs of the expanding towns of Manchester and Salford in the 19th century. A new bridge was proposed and in 1838 the first stone was laid. The bridge was completed a year later in 1839 and it was opened on the 20th of June that year. This particular date was chosen as it was the anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Queen Victoria herself reportedly visited and crossed the bridge two years later in 1851⁴. The bridge still bears an inscription that finishes with the phrase:

"by Her Majesty's permission called Victoria Bridge"

- 2.8 It is of significance for its historic interest and age and as an example of large scale Victorian infrastructure, which is both functional and decorative.

³ Information taken from ManchesterHistory.net, accessed at <https://manchesterhistory.net/manchester/bridges/victoria.html> (08/12/21)

⁴ Morning Post, Saturday 11 October, 1851: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> [accessed 08/12/21]



Figure 2.3: View towards the stone abutments of the bridge on the west bank of the River Irwell

Setting

Physical Surroundings

- 2.9 Victoria Bridge traverses the River Irwell connecting Salford to the northern part of Manchester City Centre. To the north is the river and another more recent bridge which connects Chapel Street to Cathedral Approach. Directly to the west of the bridge is the Premier Inn building, a 22-23 storey mid-20th century tower, beyond which are a number of other recently developed buildings in residential and office use. To the east the bridge connects Victoria Bridge Street to the Deansgate/Victoria Street junction, with the open paved space of Medieval Square beyond. The south parapet of the bridge splays towards the river bank at the east side, where it is separated from the Renaissance Complex by a short stretch of railing. The stone abutments below the parapet at this location interface with the Renaissance Complex, as the north wall of the subterranean car park abuts them.

Experience of the Asset

- 2.10 The bridge is principally experienced from the open area to the north around Victoria Bridge Street and Victoria Street where it's functional significance, and to a lesser extent its architectural interest, can be appreciated in combination with the other river crossings. It has group value with Blackfriars Bridge and its architectural interest and relationship with the other grade II listed structure is appreciable in river views northwards from Blackfriars Street.

- 2.11 In its current vacant and deteriorated state and due to the blank elevations it presents towards the bridge, the existing Renaissance complex detracts from the significance of Victoria Bridge. The length of inactive frontage presented to the river Irwell is prominent in views from both Victoria Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge.

3. Assessment of Impact

- 3.1 Under s16 and s66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Manchester City Council, in determining the submitted application for listed building consent has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of the listed building.
- 3.2 Case law has established that 'considerable importance and weight' should be given to these duties.
- 3.3 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.4 Paragraph 199 requires when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. 'Conservation' is defined by the NPPF as 'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.'
- 3.5 Paragraphs 201 and 202 differentiate between 'substantial' and 'less than substantial harm' and provide a framework for the consideration of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets where it arises, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duties of the 1990 Act.
- 3.6 The relevant heritage legislation, policy and guidance context for consideration of the Proposed Scheme is also set out in full in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.7 The key heritage issue to be taken into consideration in assessing the Proposed Works is therefore impact on the significance of the grade II listed Victoria Bridge from both physical alterations and from changes within the setting of the heritage asset.

The Proposed Works

- 3.8 The Renaissance site has been vacant for a considerable period and is the last undeveloped site of a 1999 City Centre Renewal Masterplan, prepared by MCC following the IRA bombing of this area of Manchester City Centre in 1996. Planning permission was granted for redevelopment of the site in 2008 with a scheme comprising 4 new buildings, the tallest of which extended to 35 storeys. Listed building consent was also granted for works to Victoria Bridge (application ref: 088257/LO/C1).
- 3.9 This was not implemented and other proposals have not come to fruition. A Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) was subsequently prepared by MCC in 2018 in anticipation of and to guide future proposals. Subsequently, a planning application was submitted in September 2021, in relation to the northernmost plot of the Renaissance Complex, where full planning permission is sought for residential development. A

Heritage Assessment and a Built Heritage ES Chapter was submitted with this application.

Form and Appearance

- 3.10 Listed building consent is sought for the construction of a steel stair to connect the riverside residential deck, which is to the west of the Renaissance complex, to Victoria Bridge Street and Victoria Bridge.
- 3.11 The steel stair will be orientated so that it runs parallel to the River Irwell and at an oblique angle to the orientation of the proposed residential building. The stairs will be constructed from grated steel steps with steel corduroy paving slabs at its base and head.
- 3.12 The stair set will not tie into the parapet of the bridge and will be offset slightly south east of it. Access to the stairs will be controlled by double doors in an aluminium metallic louvre fin at the head of the stairs. The existing short section of steel railings that sits between the parapet and the Renaissance Complex will be removed. In its place aluminium metallic louvre fins will extend from the head of the stairs to the parapet. Aluminium metallic louvre fins will also be erected along the riverside of the staircase and will contain a hand rail.
- 3.13 Yorkstone paving slabs will be used for the pavement between the complex and Victoria Bridge Street, as well as at the head of the stairs and the existing damaged paving will be removed. Building edge protection bollards will be erected around the head of the staircase. A small area of steel decking will be constructed at Victoria Bridge Street level, between the staircase and the proposed residential building to the east. Further east along Victoria Bridge Street stone steps rising towards the residential building are proposed.
- 3.14 The proposals will require the existing concrete basement carpark retaining wall, which is attached to the bridge abutments, to be retained. However, all columns, slabs and beams that form a part of this retaining wall, but that are not flush with the abutments, are proposed to be removed. A new concrete retaining wall will be constructed against the retained existing concrete retaining wall. This new wall will have no interface with the bridge abutments, and will not obscure any currently visible sections of the abutments.



Figure 3.1: Image showing the interface between the existing concrete column and the stone abutments

Assessment of Impact on Significance

- 3.15 The proposals will create stepped access from Victoria Bridge down to the riverside residential deck to the west of the Renaissance Complex. This route will allow access from Victoria Bridge, along the river bank to the public riverbank gardens and enable greater appreciation of the elliptical arched span of the bridge and its voussoirs from River level. Opening up this view to greater numbers of the public will be beneficial to the way in which the structure is experienced in its setting.
- 3.16 The proposals have taken the significance and sensitivity of the listed bridge's fabric into consideration and have been designed with a "best practice approach" to limit interaction with the fabric and screening or reduced visibility of the structure of the bridge. The existing concrete car park retaining wall, which abuts the bridge's stone abutments will be retained in situ to avoid damaging the abutments. The proposed design will remove all columns, slabs and beams from the existing retaining wall and a

further concrete retaining wall will be constructed against the existing. The new retaining wall will finish at the point the existing retaining wall terminates, so will not obscure any more of the stone abutments.



Figure 3.2: Detail of the existing interface between the concrete retaining wall and the stone abutments

- 3.17 The steel stair set will not interface with the stone parapet of the bridge, and will be offset from the parapet to the east. This will avoid any physical damage to the parapet. The head of the stairs will be tied into the road deck of the bridge, in a position that has been reworked previously and will not damage historic fabric. The louvered fins will not tie into the fabric of parapet and will be offset from it. The stair set itself will be orientated to run parallel with the river bank and this positioning will obscure slightly more of the stone abutments when viewed from the riverbank. However, this will not obscure any more of the abutments in the view from Blackfriars Bridge, where the existing concrete column and retaining wall already obscure much of the abutments.

- 3.18 The steel structure of the bridge is intended to be lightweight, without heavy masonry supports, and complementary to the heavy stone structure of the bridge and the sandstone cladding of the proposed residential building.
- 3.19 Construction of the Proposed Works will bring plant, scaffolding and construction work activity into the immediate setting of the bridge. It is considered that this would have an adverse effect on the significance of the listed bridge crossing, however this impact would be temporary and limited to the duration of construction works.
- 3.20 The proposed stair set and related street furniture will represent a change in the character of the setting of the listed bridge. However, the existing Renaissance structure has a negative relationship with the bridge and detracts from its significance. The proposed stepped access will improve access and enable greater appreciation of the bridge structure from River Level. The Proposed Works have been off set and the steel construction of the bridge will complement the heavy stone structure of the listed crossing. As such, the significance of the bridge, attributed to its historic interest and as an example of large scale Victorian infrastructure, which is both functional and decorative, would be sustained.

Statutory Duties and National Planning Policy

- 3.21 Based on our assessment of the Proposed Works it is concluded that there would be no harm to the significance of Victoria Bridge. The Proposed Works will meet the objectives of Paragraphs 197, 199 and 206 of the NPPF and the requirements of s.16 and s.66 (1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be satisfied if MCC grants listed building consent.

4. Summary and Conclusions

- 4.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Deansgate SOF Alliance LeaseCo Limited, a joint venture between Property Alliance Group (PAG) and an affiliate of Starwood Capital (SCG). It is prepared in connection with an application for listed building consent for removal of existing structure and creation of a stair connection to the grade II listed Victoria Bridge ('the Proposed Works').
- 4.2 This application for listed building consent is associated with wider proposals for the Renaissance complex for which planning permission has been separately sought (planning application reference: 132088/FO/2021).
- 4.3 The proposed stair set and related street furniture will represent a change in the character of the setting of the listed bridge. However, the existing Renaissance structure has a negative relationship with the bridge and detracts from its significance. The proposed stepped access will improve access and enable greater appreciation of the bridge structure from River Level. The Proposed Works have been off set and the steel construction of the bridge will complement the heavy stone structure of the listed crossing. As such, the significance of the bridge, attributed to its historic interest and as an example of large scale Victorian infrastructure, which is both functional and decorative, would be sustained.
- 4.4 Based on our assessment of the Proposed Works it is concluded that there would be no harm to the significance of Victoria Bridge. The Proposed Works will meet the objectives of Paragraphs 197, 199 and 206 of the NPPF and the requirements of s.16 and s.66 (1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be satisfied if MCC grants listed building consent.

Appendix 1: Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

The proposals for the site should be considered in light of policy and guidance in respect of heritage assets. The statutory duties, national policy, and regional and local plan policy and guidance relevant to the Proposed Development are summarised below:

Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that listed building consent is required for:

“(s.7) ... any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest...”

In determining such applications the following duty is placed upon the decision maker:

“s.16(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority, or as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm’.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2021

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets, stating that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the

desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Conservation is defined as:

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

Paragraph 200 confirms that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 201 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027)

Manchester Local Plan

The Manchester Local Plan is formed of the Core Strategy 2012-2027 and Proposals Map, the extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies and relevant Development Plan Documents (DPDs).

Policy EN 3 (Heritage) of the Core Strategy states that:

‘Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains...'

Policy DC19 of the UDP relates to the determination of planning applications for development which involve or have an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. It states that the Council will have regard to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

"d) seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features..."

Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance

Whilst not planning policy the Planning Practice Guidance provides a clear indication of the Government's approach to the application of national policy contained in the NPPF. Where there is conflict between the guidance in the PPG and earlier documents the PPG will take precedence.

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

GPA Note 2 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the Framework and the related guidance given in the NPPG. These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.

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