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Heritage Note
40 Spring Gardens, Manchester M2 1EN
40 Spring Gardens Ltd

Introduction

This Heritage Note is supplied to provide an overview assessment of the significance of 40 Spring Gardens, Manchester (henceforth 'the Site'), and to consider the effect of the proposed development upon this significance and the significance of nearby heritage assets.

The Site is not a designated heritage asset, nor has it been identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the local authority through, for example, local listing. The Site is located close to multiple Listed buildings and it is situated within the Upper King Street Conservation Area.

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Historic Development of the Area

The Site is located in the centre of Manchester city; its situation on Spring Gardens likely denotes its proximity to two ancient springs which served the town during its development in the fifteenth century. At this time, Manchester existed as a dominant marketplace for the production and trade of linen and cloth. This role of the town as a centre for textile manufacture expanded during the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, largely due to the construction of the Bridgewater Canal in 1761 which facilitated the transportation and distribution of goods and raw materials.

In 1853, Manchester was granted city status by the British Government in recognition of its prominent role within the economic and social condition of the country. Whilst the city maintained its industrial character throughout the nineteenth century – the number of cotton mills in Manchester was recorded to be 108 in 1853 – its centre was increasingly populated by financial and commercial buildings. For example, the Bank of England opened branch on King Street in 1845 and the Bank of Manchester Ltd moved to Pall Mall in 1862. An insurance map of Manchester dated 1886 further reveals the extensive presence of office and warehouse buildings located throughout the city.

Manchester was also associated with the collation of varied, and occasionally radical, political ideologies throughout the nineteenth century. Political movements included Capitalism and Marxism, and the establishment of the Manchester Reform Club in response to the Second Reform Act in 1876 led to an increase in the popularity of Liberalism within Manchester. In 1889, Manchester was made a county borough.

The built environment of Manchester city was altered extensively throughout the twentieth century as a result of a decline in its industrial character and the increased commercialisation of the area. Large-scale rebuilding was also carried out in response to repeated bomb damage inflicted during the Second World War and attacks by the IRA in the 1990s.

Historic Development of the Site

The Site is first recorded on an Ordnance Survey map dated 1851 and is shown to have comprised a collection of buildings situated to the rear of the Manchester Reform Club. These buildings appear to have been defined by carriageways and internally divided into multiple occupancies or property boundaries.

An insurance map dated 1886 reveals that the Kings Arms Hotel was located at the north end of the Site and suggests that the former carriageways had been developed into enclosed courtyards.

It is unclear when this grouping of buildings was demolished, however a new building named Amethyst House was erected on the Site in 1973 to designs by Howitt and Tucker. Amethyst House was described as a 'large office block',¹ however planning records reveal it to have comprised multiple units which held uses such as a night club, a restaurant, a bank and shops.²

In 1996, planning permission was granted for the demolition of Amethyst House and construction of a new office building formed of seven stories plus two levels of basement car parking.³ Execution of the permitted development, named 40 Springgardens was deferred until 2003 and completed in 2007. The following year, the building was sold to Himor Group.⁴

Various permissions for changes to the building were awarded by Manchester City Council after 2008. These include permission for the installation of illuminated signage, high level advertisements, an ATM and replacement entrance doors at ground floor level of the elevation facing Spring Gardens.⁵ In 2014, consent was granted for the erection a part single, part two-storey side and rear extension following the demolition of an existing detached garage.⁶

Site Description, Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

The Site is located in the centre of Manchester city and is bounded by Marriott Court, Spring Gardens and Brown Street to the north, east and west respectively. It is occupied by an office building comprising nine storeys including basement levels which was constructed in 2007 to a modern design.

The Site derives limited historic interest from its documented development as a former cluster of buildings located in the city centre, however this previous composition of the Site is not expressed through its existing form and it thereby holds low architectural interest. As such, the Site is considered to hold low significance.

The Site is bounded to the south by the Grade II* Listed Former Reform Club Manchester Club. This asset was constructed in 1870-1 to a design by Edward Salomons which expresses a Venetian Gothic style. The five-storey building presents a symmetrical frontage which retains much of its original decorative detailing, including corner turrets with slanted spirelets, a porched entrance and elaborate round-headed doorway, a projecting, balustraded balcony at first floor level and other elements of classical character.

This asset is considered to derive its significance from its high historic and architectural interest as a former reform club which retains much of its original design and stylistic composition which expresses its function as a late nineteenth-century political club. The Site is considered to make a neutral contribution to this significance.

The Site is also situated adjacent to the Grade II* Listed Former National Westminster Bank on Corner at Junction with Spring Gardens. This asset was constructed in 1902 to a design by Charles Heathcote for Parr's Bank. It comprises a four-storey building which expresses high quality stylistic treatment amongst its elevations, including classical elements such as banded piers supporting Doric columns with shaped entablatures, moulded window architraves and pedimented openings. Art Nouveau details are also present along the exterior, including domed turrets, a curved balcony with moulded railings.

This asset is considered to derive its significance from its high historic and architectural interest as a bank building designed by Charles Heathcote. Its retention of its original architectural composition elevates the

¹ Clare Hartwell, *Pevsner Architectural Guide: Manchester* (Yale University Press; London, 2002), p.205

² Manchester City Council Planning References:
no. F04987, no. F04969, no. F05044

³ Ibid, no. 051252/FO/CITY1/9

⁴ 40 Spring Gardens, www.NetworkSpace.co.uk

⁵ Manchester City Council Planning References:
no. 083289/AO/2007/C1, no. 083783/FO/2007/C1, no. 083780/AO/2007/C1, no. 091894/AO/2009/C1, no. 116091/AO/2017

⁶ Ibid, no. 106863/FH/2014/S2,

building's status as a high-quality example of the Edwardian Baroque style which is characterful of civic and commercial buildings that were constructed throughout Manchester at this time. The Site is considered to make a neutral contribution to this significance.

The Site is located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area. This Conservation Area is characterised by a collection of large building which express ranging architectural styles yet nevertheless create a harmonious street scene. In particular, the area south of Market Street, where the Site is located, is characterised by a variety of building materials which include a mixture of coloured brickwork, stone, glass in concrete or metal frames and other modern high-tech fabric. The ground floor levels of buildings are often externally treated with alternative materials to the main façade, and thereby create a distinctive architectural appearance within the Conservation Area.

The Site is considered to make a low contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through its provision of a high-quality architectural design which conforms to the typical elevational treatment, commonly found within the Conservation Area.

Assessment of Impact

It is proposed that the main entrance to 40 Spring Gardens be refurbished. These works will comprise the removal of the existing projecting canopy and the recladding of the vestibule utilising an aluminium wrap. It is also proposed that the existing signage on the entrance frontage be replaced, with a single new sign installed within the vestibule. These signs will have perimeter halo lighting.

The proposed works will be limited to the main entrance to the Site and will maintain the existing relationship between the building's frontage and the public pavement bordering Spring Gardens. An exception to this fact is the proposed removal of the existing projecting cover, as this proposed change would serve to regularise the building's façade and reinstate the historic building line of the Site.

The proposed installation of cladding and an aluminium wrap on the walls and ceiling of the vestibule is considered to improve the appearance of the existing entrance through its better visual definition of the entrance as a feature of interest along the façade. In addition, the proposed introduction of modern signage is considered to further improve the aesthetic quality of the façade and maintain its significance.

The proposed works to the entrance to 40 Spring Gardens are not considered to alter the existing neutral contribution of the Site to the significance of the Grade II* Listed buildings, Former Reform Club and Former National Westminster Bank. This conclusion is based upon the finding that the proposed changes will have no impact on the architectural, nor historic interest of the assets, from which their significance is derived.

The proposed works are furthermore considered to make very minor enhancement to the existing low contribution of the Site to the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area. The proposed removal of the existing entrance canopy is considered to improve the compositional relationship between the Site and the public space along Spring Gardens and the revised materiality of the vestibule better defines the feature, as well as the ground floor level, which is in keeping with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This assessment has considered the historic development of the Site and the surrounding area to demonstrate and inform an assessment of significance of the building. The Site is considered to hold no special architectural or historic interest and make a neutral and low contribution to the identified nearby Listed buildings and Upper King Street Conservation Area, respectively.

Whilst the proposed changes will improve the aesthetic quality of the building's exterior, they are overall considered to have no impact on, and thereby maintain, the special interest of the nearby heritage assets.