

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

UNIT 10 THE ROYAL EXCHANGE ARCADE, CROSS STREET, MANCHESTER AMENDMENTS TO SHOP(Door only)

June 2021

ANALYSIS OF SITE & SURROUNDINGS

The Royal Exchange Manchester is a Grade II Listed Building, situated in the heart of the city looking out onto St Ann's Square. It is set within Manchester's bustling retail heart in close proximity to a number of iconic stores. The Royal Exchange hosts as an eclectic mix of uses such as retail, restaurants, cafés and bars.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES & CONCEPTS

Unit 10 is an existing retail unit. It is enclosed by other units on two sides with a glazed frontage.

The unit is currently Jewellery Store. There is currently a non-original timber framed shop frontage (with paint finish) which consists of a fixed glazed unit and a single doorset within the original masonry façade. The applicant seeks approval to retain the timber frontage and replace only the non original solid door glazed door in keeping with other doors in the arcade and accessible simple barrel style handle. The door is fully glazed for accessibility with level threshold. The proposal for the new handles adhere with the principles set out within the Royal Exchange Design Guide.

Significance & Contribution of Heritage Asset

The materials and style of construction, together with its location and relationship to the nearby listed buildings, identifies a form of development typical of its era. The unit itself is not of a unique design, though the external design is typical of its period. The significance of the property perhaps relates more to its relationship to surrounding buildings and the area generally than the property's own individual characteristics.

Impact of Proposal on Heritage Asset Significance

The proposal seeks to achieve modest change to the external door.

Externally, the proposal seeks only to alter the front elevation by the removal of the existing door and replacement of a modest yet contemporary glazed door within the existing openings.

The overall appearance therefore, whilst altered by this addition, will not affect the urban landscape.

The proposals seek therefore to have no impact upon the existing layout and will not have any effect upon the existing building's elements and it will not involve removal or damage to any of the existing building's structure. The unit will remain as existing in terms of its design and accessibility.

Heritage Statement

The term 'heritage asset' is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework section 16 (NPPF) 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'.

The significance of a heritage asset is defined within the NPPF as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from the physical fabric of a heritage asset but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance'.

In determining applications, the NPPF stipulates that 'great weight should be given to the assets conservation' and that 'substantial harm to or loss of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens should be exceptional' whilst 'substantial harm to or loss of assets of highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, and grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional'.

The significance of the Royal Exchange building (in which Unit 10 is located), in heritage terms, has already been established through its designation as a Grade II listed building. Whilst it is not of national significance, through its listing as a Grade II listed building, it has been recognised as being regionally important.

The significance of the Royal Exchange building is derived from its architectural, artistic and historic interest, being a fine example of an early 20th century commercial building, erected on the site of earlier examples which served the same function. The building is a dominant structure located within the centre of Manchester, and currently provides retail, theatre and commercial accommodation, and therefore has communal value. Its setting within the centre of the city, in close proximity to the historic and contemporary commercial zones, is an important factor in how the building is experienced; all sides of the structure are important and busy thoroughfares, whether for vehicles or pedestrians, with multi-storied built form surrounding the structure. St Ann's Square to the west side of the Royal Exchange building is a pedestrianised area which allows passers by to step back and appreciate the structure.

Unit 10, Royal Exchange Arcade forms one of several retail units along the Royal Exchange Arcade which bisects the building on the ground floor. The arcade is distinctly modern in appearance in comparison to the exterior of the building. It does not contribute to the significance of the building and appears to have been created relatively late in the life of the building in the late 20th century. Unit 10 is one of a number of units in the arcade, all with a unified style and colour scheme. The pilasters which separated the individual units are original to the creation of the arcade as a retail space and provide unifying element to the arcade, although the upper portions are currently hidden.

The interior of Unit 10 has no historic fixtures or fittings which add to its heritage significance, as the coving does not appear to be original to the building. The current shopfront is not of historic or architectural interest and currently does not contribute to the significance of the building as a whole.

With regards the exterior of the unit, the proposals only involve the replacement of the existing door solid door to a glazed door. It has already been noted that the current shop frontage does not contribute positively to the significance of the Royal Exchange building as a whole, therefore the replacement with new glazed doors would have no impact, also there are numerous other units which have glazed doors in the arcade. The unit would continue to be similar in character to existing units Royal Exchange Arcade. It is considered that the changes to the existing shop frontage would not negatively impact on the significance of the Royal Exchange building, the heritage interest of which is derived from its architectural, artistic and historic attributes, and its communal value.

The external works would not negatively impact on the setting of the Royal Exchange building as there are no works intended which extend beyond the shop frontage apart from the new glazed door. The setting of the building as a whole, which relates to the vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfares which surround it, and the built form which exists on the surrounding streets, would not be negatively impacted as the proposals relate to a small fraction of the building as a whole. There would also be no impact on important views within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area.

Internally there are no proposed changes. The proposed glazed door works would allow better visual connections into the unit.

An assessment has been made of the historical development and the existing unit at the Royal Exchange. The rapid desk-based assessment has indicated that there has been an exchange building on the site of the current Royal Exchange since the early 19th century. The site was redeveloped in the middle of that century, only to be replaced by the Mills and Murgatroyd building of 1869-74. The current building dates to 1914-21. It appears from cartographic and photographic evidence that this later incarnation of the Royal Exchange was constructed to include arcades of retail units along its

four street frontages on Cross Street, Market Street, Exchange Street and Old Bank Street. Units may have also existed within the building in Royal Exchange Arcade, but no unit is depicted on historic maps of the site and Unit 10 may not have come into existence until the late 20th century.

The site visit has identified Unit 10, located on the south side of Royal Exchange Arcade, to be an amalgamation of two small retail units defined by timber pilasters, which provide a unifying element to the arcade as a whole. The unit is located at the east end of the arcade near the Cross Street entrance but is not easily visible from Cross Street. The existing shop frontage is modern, constructed of timber and glazing with a double doorway. Externally the only changes proposed are to replace the door handles. Internally, no historic fixtures or fittings of significance were noted.

It is considered that the heritage significance of the Royal Exchange building as a whole is derived from architectural, artistic and historic interest, as well as its communal value. The setting of the property, i.e. within an urban environment and as part of a busy commercial area within the city centre, also contributes to the significance of the building. It is considered that the proposals would not negatively impact on this heritage significance, as Unit 10 forms only a small fraction of the building as a whole, the proposed changes would be minimal, and the heritage values would be maintained. With regards to the St Ann's Square Conservation Area, it is considered that the proposals would not negatively impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the area, and the character would be preserved.

Conclusion

Overall the proposal, which consists of relatively modest replacement of door replacement to the shop frontage with no other changes.

The character and appearance of the conservation area will remain intact following the completion of the proposed alterations and the unit will off the same level of good design and accessibility as before.