



Atelier MB
Urban Architects

Queens Chambers Lightwell Design and Access Statement

Client:
Queens Chambers Property Co.
October 2021
Job 1656
Revision -



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Image1 - Queens Chambers

I.0 Introduction

Queens Chambers occupies a block within Manchester city centre, bounded by John Dalton Street, Deansgate, Back King Street and Ridgefield. The building is Grade II listed. This original building dates from 1876 and was designed by Manchester architects Pennington and Bridgen in an eccentric gothic style. The building is constructed in ashlar sandstone with a slate roof having 5 symmetrical bays (plus corner) to Deansgate and 7 asymmetrical bays to John Dalton Street.

The remainder of the trapeziform plan seems to have been completed in two stages. The first of these two buildings would seem to have been the one at the junction of Ridgefield with Back King Street. This is a brick building with stone detailing. The final piece of the puzzle is the infill building facing Back King Street and this is a plain, largely brick, structure creating a single room at each level. The floor levels of this building generally relate to the Ridgefield building suggesting that this was a simple warehouse extension in support of the trade being carried out in the earlier building. Neither of these buildings is likely to be the work of the original architects.

The address of the listing is given as 105 to 113 Deansgate, rather than John Dalton Street, reflecting that the initial building was the 'L' shaped structure fronting Deansgate and John Dalton Street and that the primary entrance was at the corner of the building into the Queens Building Society, for whom the building was constructed. The entrance to the upper floors of the building, now the primary entrance, was located on John Dalton Street and appears to have targeted professional services such as solicitors, accountants etc. This is evidenced by the rather fine panelled partitions above the ground floor and the absence of any obvious textile warehouse aesthetic. Its original use was as offices. A Goads insurance plan shows these individual business units and a restaurant in the basement.

The group of buildings was damaged in the Second World War, particularly the Pennington and Bridgen building, and a great deal of the detail to Deansgate and John Dalton Street was lost or has been altered.

At some stage the various properties were linked together by a variety of internal openings and stairs. This process appears to have been piecemeal and carried out over an extended period of time. As a result, some internal detail (plaster cornices, skirtings, etc) have been lost.

2.0 Present Condition

Generally, the building is in good condition. Part of the gable pikes on Deansgate have been removed some time in the past, but aside from this the principle elevations facing Deansgate and John Dalton Street, first floor upwards, remain intact.

The retail units have been significantly altered over the years and each retail use has taken a slightly different approach to the shop front solution. All recent refurbishments, however, have restricted the shopfront to the area within the stone reveals and the rounded corners of the original openings.

Over the past few years, the building owners, in association with Atelier MB and others have upgraded all but one of the shop units on the two major facades of this building. The lightwell has been subject to change however, particularly at lower level where M and E equipment has been sited, escape stairs inserted, and parts of the wall surfaces altered and refinished over time.

3.0 Brief

Proposals in this scheme are limited to the courtyard and one of the ground floor E(b) units (Katsouris deli) leading off the courtyard. The proposal aims:

- To provide additional external seating within the existing lightwell area for customers at Katsouris deli through the insertion of a new timber deck.
- To reconfigure the rear of the café unit to enable external access onto a deck via a previously approved altered doorway.

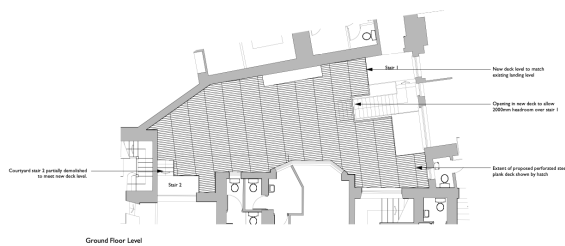


Image 2 - Approved application plan 2010



Image 3 - Approved application section 2010

- To remove the secondary external escape stair from the post office unit and to reconfigure the rear of the unit reducing the travel distance and ensuring compliance.
- To reduce the size of one of the bin stores previously approved in application 120500/FO/2018 creating an additional escape route for Katsouris Deli from the deck to the existing fire exit, located off the ginnel from South King Street.
- To relocate various external pipes, ducts and mechanical air conditioning units within the courtyard.
- To lower the lintel of an existing opening to ensure fire safety.

4.0 Outline of Scheme

The courtyard in the centre of Queens Chambers has developed as a service zone in addition to its original use as a light well and has been subject to a previously approved application (ref: application 120500/FO/2018) to rationalise the fire escape, refuge provisions and air conditioning units within the space.

A similar application for a lightwell deck was submitted and approved in 2010 (ref 093974/LO/2010/C1). This application proposed a perforated steel deck covering the entire lightwell (see image 2 & 3). This however was not built. As the floor was considered unsuitable for the public and did not meet fire regulations.

The new proposal looks to enhance this scheme and provide additional solid floor external space for customers at Katsouris Deli through the insertion of a new deck within the existing lightwell area. The proposed 'multideck' is a concrete on metal structure, finished with a decking surface. It sits on fire protected steelwork, with 5 columns supporting the horizontal deck. We have consulted with building control and this solution meets their requirements

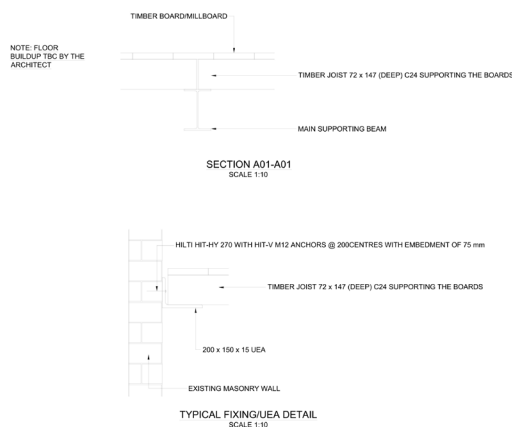


Image 4 - Original Structural Engineers Proposal Sections

The original structural solution proposed by the structural engineer showed steel beams penetrating into the existing lightwell walls. This was at 10 locations with multiple wall mounted drilled angles around the perimeter of the deck (see image 4 & 5). This proposal was significantly harmful to the listed building and irreversible in damage.

A process of design mitigation has ensured that penetration to existing fabric has been carefully avoided. The creation of a 99mm perimeter gap separates the new and existing fabric and columns designed to support the deck from underneath. In effect, the structure sits on the supporting verticals like a tabletop. The insertion of this deck is therefore fully reversible without further damage to the heritage asset.

There are no new changes to the lightwell façade and external access onto the deck is via a previously approved altered doorway to the rear of the café unit. Internal access is proposed by the forming of a doorway within an existing internal wall and re-configuration of the space to create a short corridor. An amendment to the already approved bin store (ref: application I20500/FO/2018) is also proposed in order to allow for a passing route.

The relocation of various external pipes, ducts and mechanical AC units currently within the lightwell also forms part of the application. These changes are necessary due to the introduction of the deck and by repositioning some of the air conditioning units away from the deck level the visual appearance of the lightwell looks to be enhanced.

In addition, the proposal will also lower an existing lintel. In doing so, potential risk in the event of a fire within the bin store will be reduced.

5.0 Impact on Historic Building

Please refer to the heritage statement which describes the impact of these proposals in relation to this listed building.

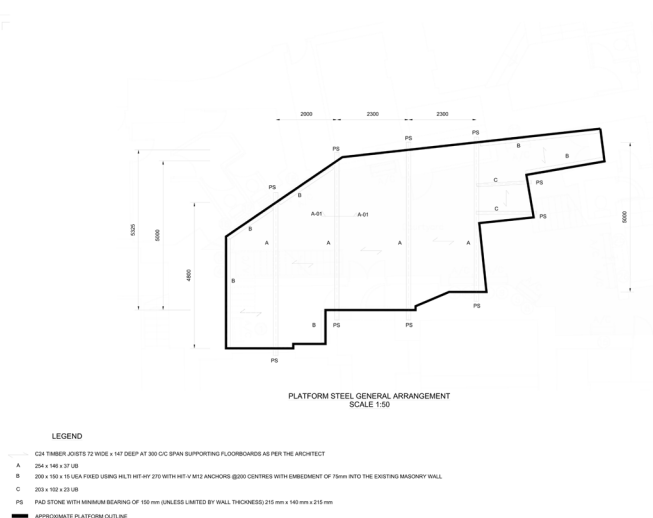


Image 5 - Original Structural Engineers Proposal Plan

6.0 Access Statement

As this application applies only to deck and the escape provision, there will be no impact on the existing access to the building. As noted above the deck will assist egress for customers of Katsouris Deli situated on the deck.

7.0 Refuse Statement

Refuse provisions, although slightly reduced, have been approved and outlined in already approved application (ref: application 120500/FO/2018).

8.0 Conclusion

This application seeks to provide usable external space and improve the visual quality of the lightwell, which currently solely functions as a fire escape and service zone for various basement and ground floor units. It will allow access to the lightwell and form a recognisably modern intervention within the space. Any degree of harm caused by the limited loss of original wall is considered to outweigh the benefit of providing external amenity and creating a high-quality addition to secure viable ongoing use. The proposals are deemed to meet the requirements of both national and local policy and will be an enhancement to the building. There will be no impact upon the wider conservation area, other than the contribution of the proposal in ensuring the asset remains in viable use.

