

Design and Access Statement

35 Liverpool Road, Castlefield.

Introduction

Calum McGowan moved to Manchester in 1996 and has lived in Castlefield for fifteen years. He currently lives two minutes away from the site in the Vicus Building, also on Liverpool Road. He is the Chair and Head of the trustees of the Castlefield Forum - a community charity formed by local residents. They have secured planning permission to rebuild the Roman gardens on Liverpool Road. They have also been working with the National Trust on developing a spirit of place framework and strategy for Castlefield.

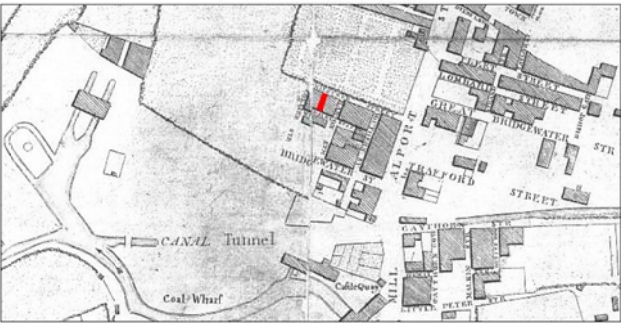
Calum bought 35 Liverpool Road in 2012. It is a Grade II listed weavers cottage built in 1786 which is now in the Castlefield Conservation Area. His dream is to breathe life back into this forgotten piece of built history by restoring it to its original function as a dwelling house and to live in it for the rest of his life. He sees it as a once in a lifetime project. An illustration of his unusual level of commitment can be found in his architectural brief which is 67,000 words long, a document packed with local history and ideas about contemporary living.

He specifically bought a listed building in Castlefield because he has a deep appreciation for history. He also loves architecture - both from our past and of modern design. He describes his role as the owner of number 35 as a custodian. And it is his job to give the building a future by restoring its past and adding a new layer suitable for twenty first century living.

Context

Number 35 Liverpool Road sits in a terrace of weavers' cottages with the busy main road to

the front and a narrow ginnel to the rear. The immediate surrounding uses are mostly restaurants, pubs, cafes and various businesses. This building has an unusually diverse context - being modest in scale, surviving for 235 years and finding itself a few minutes walk from a modern glass skyscraper and a Roman ruin. When the building was originally constructed it was surrounded by open fields.



Map from 1800



History

A detailed history of number 35 and its surrounding context can be found in the

Heritage report. Its last use was as offices for an insurance company, but it has been empty for many years. Currently it stands empty in a state of disrepair.

The Building

The brick structure is three storeys high with a basement. There's a single storey extension at the rear with a mono pitched felt roof covering what was once the backyard. The main roof is slate with timber rafters and purlins. The floors are timber cross joists with floor boards. All the staircases are timber. The windows are timber sashes with single glazing.

Internally there are two chimney breasts on the west party wall. They converge into a single chimney on the top floor. In the basement there's a fireplace at the front and chimney supporting nibs at the rear. There are two fireplaces on the ground, first and top floors.

The stair is enclosed by plasterboard partitions at ground and first floors. It is open on the top floor.

There are single rooms on all floors apart from the basement which has a brick partition in the middle dividing it into two rooms.

What was a sunken access to the cellar on Liverpool Road has been filled in and tarmacked over.

The timber floor at ground level is in poor repair as can be seen by temporary concrete block support columns crudely constructed in the basement.

Heritage

There are a number of original elements identified in the Heritage Report. The timber stair from ground to first floor intermediate landing level. The cast iron and brick fireplaces on the ground and first floors. The brick fireplaces in the basement. And some original facade details. The next section will

describe how these elements are integrated into the proposed scheme.



Proposal

When Calum bought number 35 he knew it wouldn't be big enough to house all his ideas and that an extension would be an integral part of bringing the building back to life. Not only in pure spatial terms, but as a way of adding architecture from our particular time, an expression of space and form to contrast the technology and ways of living in 1786 and to create a dialogue with the past and secure the building's future. Leaving it as a relic, by only restoring it to what it once was, would leave the building at risk. Museum pieces are interesting to look at, but have no value practically. Architecture must be useful in order to survive. By adding current ideas and technology you can enhance a building's cultural and functional value - value equates to future security.

To this end a three-storey uncompromisingly modern and architecturally autonomous extension is proposed at the rear. Two levels above ground and one below. A dramatic triple height volume in contrast to the small, tightly arranged living conditions of 1786.

In contrast, the existing building is arranged so that the various new functions marry with the types of space within its structure, and to return the building back to its original configuration with two rooms per level.

The Existing Building

The Top Floor - Second

The large open space on the top floor was originally the workshop. It has larger horizontal windows that let more natural light in. The space extends up into the underside of the pitched roof giving a lofty feel. In our age this type of semi-industrial space is perfect for a living room.

Within this living space is a small kitchenette, a wc and a shower. At high level in the roof space is a mezzanine deck for a spare bed. The roof is cut back at the front and rear with glass doors to external balconies providing views of the city. Over the mezzanine is a glass roof which gives views to the Beetham Tower - a reminder that you are in the twenty first century within a building from 1786.

The First Floor

The first floor is more intimate with a lower flat ceiling level, two fireplaces and a traditional sash window at each end. The idea here is to split the floor into two rooms - as it would have been when built in 1786. The front room would be Calum's main bedroom. The other - the main bathroom. A storage pod separates the two rooms.

The Ground Floor

For the ground floor a similar approach - the single room is split into two as it would have been traditionally, with a parlor at the front and the kitchen at the rear. The pantry pod separates the two rooms.

The Basement

The basement also follows tradition by retaining the existing brick partition. The front room being the second bedroom and to the rear is a bathroom. Access is from the ground floor via stair and from the old cellar access at the front on Liverpool Road. The infill will be excavated and a new stair installed. Entry will be through the remains of the old brick doorway which is of high priority in the Heritage Report.

The Extension

While the existing building contains all the functional requirements for living - requirements that have not changed that much since 1786 - the extension adds elements that were inconceivable for the average person when the house was built for artisans.

A generous (relative to 1786) triple height space sits over the dining area below ground. It is a testament to progress that a modest person can achieve what was unthinkable in 1786. Five households with fourteen people were once crammed into the existing building. We should celebrate and express this contrast through architecture - a record for the future. In the same way we read, with incredible interest, the heritage report documenting the living conditions of the past, future historians will marvel at how far we have progressed in a couple of hundred years. The blink of an eye in evolutionary history.



The ground at the rear is excavated down to extend the basement. This space will be used for dining. The extent of Calum's property pushes further out from the rear building line into half the width of the ginnel. The lower floor will be excavated into this extra area creating an external green space with opening glazing from the dining room. A metal permeable walk-on floor at ground level will allow natural light, air and sound down into the basement.

At high level a cube floats above - it contains a study - a space for Calum to pursue his love

of painting. A bridge flies across at ground floor level connecting the existing house to the rear ginnel. Another platform on the opposite side is a library. Keep walking and there is access to an external green balcony at first floor level.

The Roof Garden

On top of the extension is a sculpted roof terrace with built-in planters and seating. This small green oasis can be accessed from three parts of the house - from the top floor, from the roof and from the cube below. The roof garden will have a direct relationship with the living space. It will be visible through the glass and therefore always present for the people inside. As we have all seen over the last year, people who live in cities need an outdoor space. It is a basic minimum requirement for general well being. Again, this contemporary addition will document our changes in attitude to future historians, showing what our priorities are as we come out of a global pandemic. The need for an outdoor escape becomes essential as working from home becomes more common. There is also enough room in the concrete planter trays to grow vegetables. Calum is very keen to help take the load off industrial scale agriculture - although it is a small gesture it does show a certain intention. Currently he bakes his own bread and distributes it to residents in the building where he lives.



The garden can also be accessed from the roof mezzanine with steps down the roof, as well as from the cube with steps on the rear facade. This extension is multi-layered with many ways to traverse its spaces - an Escher-like experience where space is unpredictable. The new rear facade is active with depth, circulation and a green zone, or

natural filter, from the basement to the first floor and onto the roof.

Design Approach to Historic Fabric

The renovation approach for this Grade II listed building is to strip it back to its original structure, to remove all the unsympathetic additions that have been made over the years. A lot of the layers are from the seventies in the form of boxing out and plasterboard. All this will be removed to reveal old fireplaces and timber structure etc., to allow the original simplicity of the structure to be seen and lived.

The plasterboard ceilings will be removed and the timber joists and the underside of the floorboards will be left exposed on view. All floor coverings, which are mostly carpet and some vinyl, will be removed down to the old floorboards. An acoustic layer will be placed over the old boards and a screed for the wet underfloor heating system. The final finishes are yet to be determined. Underfloor heating will be the approach for all levels in the building. This is to eliminate any form of wall heaters or radiators that historically wouldn't have been there.

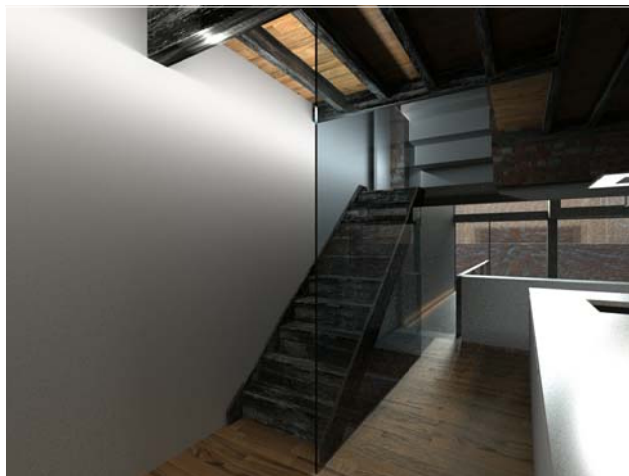
The party walls to both sides will have to be covered with sound insulation to comply with building regulations. We therefore cannot expose the brickwork - as it would have been in its original state. The covering material will be expressed as something new from our time - birch-faced ply.

Each floor will be divided into two rooms by a pod - on the ground floor it is the pantry, on the first floor it will be the bedroom storage and toilet. The idea is to detail these as separate objects constructed from our time, with lower ceilings and walls that are separated from the existing structure and ceilings. The covering material will also be from our time - birch-faced ply.

Stairs

The timber stairs from first to second floor are of no heritage value and will be removed and replaced with a more minimal steel design.

The stair from ground to first floor intermediate landing is classed as original and of high value in the Heritage Report. It will be stripped of all the later additional plasterboard and revealed as a stand-alone piece of functional history. To deal with the barrier from falling a sheet of 15mm toughened glass from floor to ceiling will be installed next to the stair. It will allude to a museum piece protected by a minimally detailed glass cabinet.



Stairs in the new extension will be of minimal steel design - 10mm folded steel plate with slender steel balustrades and rails.

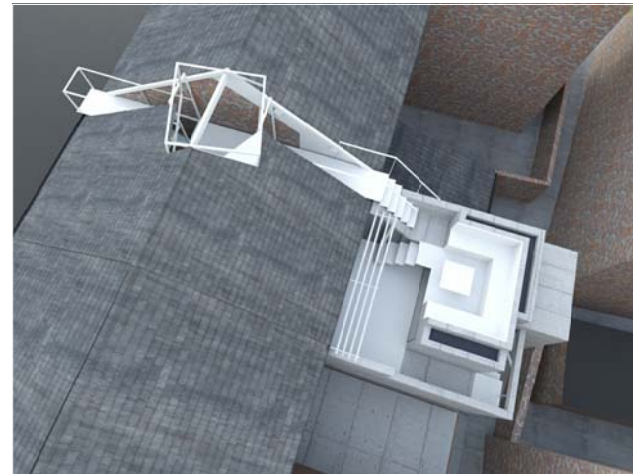
The Existing Roof

The existing roof structure will be revealed by removing all the later addition plasterboard. The purlins and rafters will be exposed to view. Currently there is no insulation in the roof and it looks like there is no felt either. To comply

with building regulations the slate will be removed and re-laid over a new waterproof membrane and insulation installed over the old rafters.

Glass Roofs

The new openings in the roof will be double glazed with metal frames and steel structural beams - steel to keep the sizes to a minimum. The projected steel and glass lantern will allow views of the Beetham Tower - another reminder of the passing of time, of history and technological progress. In a way the skyscraper is the ultimate conclusion of the industrial revolution, steel, in the form of steel reinforced concrete, pushed to its limit.



The Front Facade

The existing front brick facade above the sign has been painted a sandy cream colour. Below it is painted black. Our proposal is to remove the sign and sandblast the whole facade back to its original brick.

A large graphic number '35' will emerge from the stenciled retention of the original paint, a layer held from the past to remind us of what once was. A specialist graphic artist will outline a '35' onto the facade. A plywood mask will be applied and sandblasted around to expose the original brickwork.

The eaves timber detailing identified in the Heritage Report will be restored back to its original condition by specialist contractors.



The timber windows are not original and of no heritage value. We therefore intend to remove them and replace with thermally broken slender framed steel pivot windows. The aim here is to show how glazing technology has progressed and accept that the original timber windows perished many many years ago. To recreate the old style timber windows with twelve panes of glass would give rise to a feeling of inauthenticity. This approach has been adopted at number 39 and 41. These facades don't seem real. Something deep inside us senses fakery. The buildings have lost their dignity. Rather than standing proudly as incredible survivors, they feel like the backdrop of a Sherlock Holmes television episode.

The top floor window has been made smaller by being partly bricked up. Our intention is to reinstate the original size.

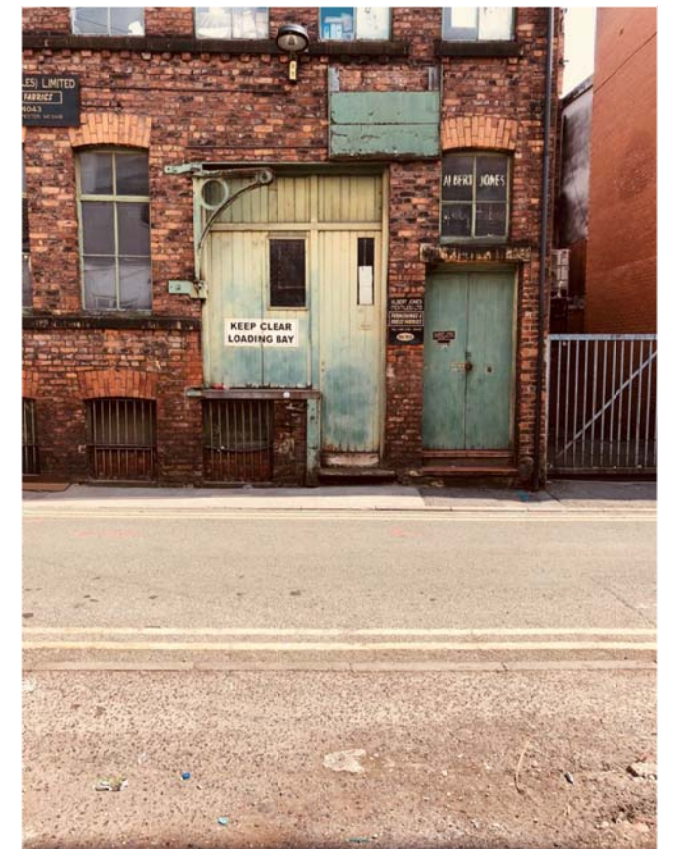
The shop window opening will be retained at its current size. A timber internal seating box with privacy shutters will be inserted into the existing opening. The box will be expressed externally as a glazing frame. Space will be left on the left side for an opening window. Again the frames will be steel to keep the frame depth as minimal as possible.

The existing front door opening will be retained and a new hardwood door and frame inserted.



A falling barrier will protect the new dropped stair down to the basement. It will be made from slender steel slats with a lighting feature at the base. The gate for the protection of the front door will be detailed to blend in with the barrier as a continuous piece.

The steel window frames, the barrier and gate will be powder-coated matt green. The front door will also be painted the same colour. This green is a traditional Manchester colour chosen to compliment the warm orangey brick - they are opposites on the colour wheel.



As the facade drops into the basement the existing window and door arrangement will be restored. This is one of the elements of high priority in the Heritage statement. The brickwork will be sandblasted and repaired where necessary. A minimal steel frame opening window will be inserted and a hardwood timber door - again painted green.

The Rear Facade

The existing brick will be sandblasted clean. The first floor timber window onto the stair will be removed. The brickwork below will be removed so the opening can work as an entrance to the upper levels of the new extension. The bricked up first floor window will be opened up and filled with opaque glass to allow light into the new bathroom whilst maintaining privacy. On the top floor the timber window will be removed and the base brickwork dropped. A glazed sliding screen will provide visual and physical access to the roof garden.

Basement Access

The filled-in stair access at the front will be excavated out and a new steel stair will be inserted. The balustrades at pavement level, to protect people from falling into the well, will be made of minimalist powder-coated steel sections. Again this follows our philosophy of expressing new elements as simply and unobtrusively as possible, a record of our current aesthetic and technology.

Fire and Historic Buildings

Our approach is to expose historic fabric and eliminate the clutter of additional fire walls and doors. For a three-storey structure extra fire measures are required to facilitate this. A sprinkler suppression system will be installed. We have used this in the past on listed buildings and feel that the incredible protection and safety they provide, coupled with the freedom from fire enclosures, greatly outweighs any visual intrusion. The ceiling pipes are only 25mm diameter and add an interesting industrial aesthetic that won't feel out of place.

Sustainable Services

Our sustainability consultant has outlined a scheme for the building. Initially we wanted to install a ground source heat pump. This has proved impossible due to constraints of the rear ginnel access for the bore hole rig. We are therefore proposing an air source heat pump with low temperature under floor heating. This also works well in terms of not having radiators on existing walls - something that was historically not part of the building.

We intend to utilise heat recovery ventilation (MVHR). This will reduce PM2.5 penetration into the property, which is desirable given the location and the quality of the air in the city centre. Please see the Air Quality Report.

The new extension and the roof of the existing building will be highly insulated. Well above building regulations' requirements. This, and making the building highly airtight, are required in order to make the MVHR work as efficiently as possible.

Solar PV will also be installed on the south facing slope of the existing slate roof. We are also exploring PV roof tiles to reduce the visual impact to the building - although they do not appear to be as efficient.

All these measures will aim to achieve a zero carbon dwelling. Again, this is one for future historians to gauge where we are now in terms of climate change and the technologies we employ in trying to slow it down.

All heating will be provided by wet under floor heating embedded into a screed. Lighting will be low voltage LED mostly concealed into recesses built into new walls.

Refuse and Drainage

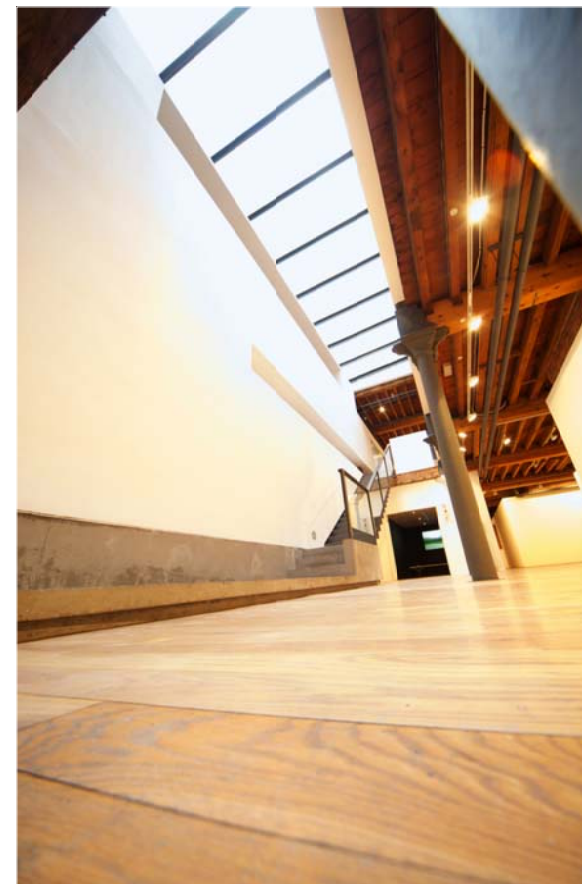
The bins will be stored at the rear of the property in a timber bin store. Collection is from Collier Street where the bins will be taken weekly for green and black and fortnightly for brown and blue.

There are future plans to gate off the ginnel at each end making it a private communal space belonging to the residents and business owners. A communal bin store will be part of the plans.

The existing sewer runs along the rear ginnel. Surface and foul water will connect into this sewer.

Historic Buildings

Maurice Shapero has worked on a number of historic listed buildings in the past: The Cube architecture centre on Portland Street in Manchester in a Grade II cotton warehouse.



An office space in the Grade II listed Derros Building on Great Ancoats Street. The Grade II Albert Mill apartments in Castlefield. The Grade II * Beehive Mill offices. Lutyens crypt in Liverpool for the Le Corbusier exhibition. And most recently a complex of Grade II * buildings at Weedon Royal Ordnance Depot.

The approach adopted is always to restore existing surviving fabric in as honest a way as possible whilst adding a contemporary layer.

Some buildings survive. Even though they were designed for a particular purpose they have a way of adapting to new culture, functions and circumstances. These buildings tend to be archetypal. They transcend their own time, function and culture. The art is to recognise the fundamental elements of the building that has given it its endurance. They involve spatial proportion, materiality and character.

For number 35 the space inside makes two beautifully proportioned rooms at each level apart from the top. Rooms that we would all enjoy living in. The top floor is higher and works as a single space. It was designed for people to work in and feel comfortable. As we have seen this year, living and working spaces are not necessarily all that different. Because this space was designed at a human scale functions can be interchangeable and the building has the ability to adapt because it is archetypal.

The windows are the perfect size for views, just the right balance of internal natural light and privacy. Their value is their shape, size and position in the wall. The stairs are in the right place. They are comfortable and intimate to walk on. The floor joists and roof rafters break the ceilings into a beautiful rhythm.

It is these things that should be celebrated and expressed as clearly as possible, it is these things that have allowed the building to survive.

Precedent

A similar approach, in terms of adding a contemporary form, can be seen in numbers 39 and 41 of the terrace. A two-storey unambiguously modern extension with a roof terrace has been built. The existing conditions at the rear and the massing of the new structure are almost identical to our proposals for number 35.

Legacy

The names and dates of all the previous residents will be cast into the internal concrete wall of the new extension. Starting with the first owner in 1876 and ending with Calum. Space will be left for future owners to add their names. These would have to be chiseled in by a suitably qualified stone mason - Calum is exploring how this can be added as a covenant in the lease for future owners.

