

Ancoats Dispensary

Old Mill Street, Ancoats, Manchester M4 6EB

Heritage Statement



May 2021

Consultancy for the
Historic Built Environment

KM Heritage

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support pre-application discussions for proposals affecting the former Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary, Old Mill Street, Ancoats, Manchester M4 6EB. The report has been prepared for Great Places Housing Group Ltd.
- 1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the accompanying pre-application materials prepared by Buttress Architects.

Organisation

- 1.3 This introduction is followed by a description and analysis of the building in Section 2 and its heritage context is discussed in Section 3. Section 4 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment relevant to this matter. Section 5 considers the proposals and their impact on heritage significance and section 6 the proposals compliance with policy and guidance.

Author

- 1.4 The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick has twenty years' experience in the property sector, including most recently as a Director of the Conservation Team at integrated design consultants, Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent nine years at English Heritage as Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas where he led a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects in East & South London. Previously Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at international real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor. This experience has given Nick an in-depth understanding of the property industry, listed building and planning process, heritage policy and guidance and funding bodies.
- 1.5 Drafting, research and analysis was carried out by Anne Roache MA MSc. Anne is a conservation professional who has extensive experience working for leading commercial organizations in the fields of property, planning and law. Anne specialises in the architectural and social history of urban areas.

2 The site and its context

Overview

- 2.1 The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary ('Dispensary') is a Grade II listed former dispensary and hospital situated on Old Mill Street in the Ancoats (New Islington) district of Manchester close to the city centre (cover photograph¹ and fig. 1²).
- 2.2 The present building, the third incarnation of the Dispensary but the first on this site, was opened in 1874. Established for the benefit of 'the labouring population' it aimed to provide them with a basic level of healthcare, complementing the work of the Manchester Infirmary.³
- 2.3 The Dispensary quickly became a hospital and over the next century grew larger as many additional buildings and facilities were added at the site. The hospital closed in 1979 and the building has since lain empty becoming increasingly derelict. Presently deemed to be a dangerous structure it is supported by a complex scaffold construction. Access is limited to the exterior parts only.
- 2.4 New Islington, historically part of Ancoats, has taken on a separate identity to reflect its changed status as a regeneration area.
- 2.5 In the 1970s, this formerly industrial area was redeveloped by the Manchester City Council ('MCC') who created the Cardroom Estate comprising of low density housing and including pubs, shops and a primary school. In 2002, the area was identified as one of seven Millennium Community redevelopment projects, to be delivered as a public-private partnership by MCC working with Urban Splash, Great Places, Manchester Life, Waterside Places and McCauls. The local community were facilitated to feed into the design of the masterplan by architect Will Alsop. New Islington now features a mix of homes including social housing, private apartments and family homes, business premises, public spaces and a primary health care centre.
- 2.6 The regeneration of New Islington is nearing completion with only a few brownfield sites remaining including the site of the former Central Retail Park, which lies to the south west of the

¹ Photograph taken prior to 2010. © Aidan O'Rourke, www.aidan.co.uk/ancoats-dispensary-its-future-secured-men

² Ordnance Survey online: <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>

³ Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, 9th August 1828.

Dispensary and is earmarked for development as a 'new neighbourhood'.

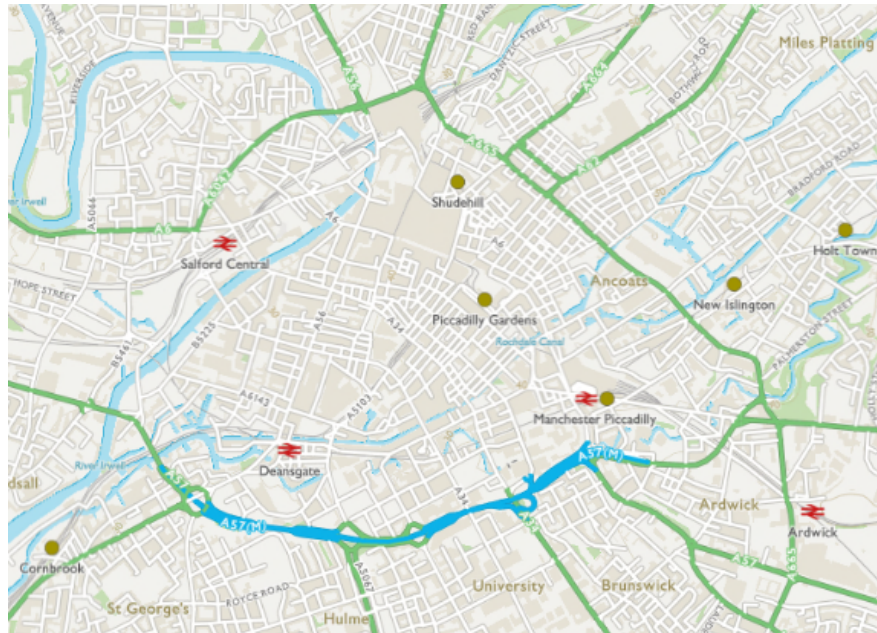


Figure 1: Site location in relation to Manchester City Centre (starred)

Sources and surveys

- 2.7 Considerable archival resources relating to the history of the Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary, comprising documentary, illustrative and photographic materials, is held by the Manchester Libraries Information and Archives Service.
- 2.8 In 2001 the University of Manchester carried out a photographic survey of the Ancoats hospital site prior to demolition works of curtilage buildings. This record provides important information about the appearance of the hospital's interior before historic finishes were lost: Nevell, M. and Hradil, I. (2003) *Ancoats: An archaeological Photographic Survey of a late 19th century Corridor Hospital*. University of Manchester Archaeological Unit.
- 2.9 In December 2012 David Narro Associates made a visual assessment of the building in order to determine its condition and make recommendations for stabilisation works. Their report was produced for the Ancoats Dispensary Trust.
- 2.10 In 2016 The Ancoats Dispensary Trust commissioned a Conservation Management Plan from Purcell as part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for project funds. The report set out the site's history to date, defined elements of its significance,

and drafted a set of conservation policies to guide change on the site. A site visit was made by the author in January 2016 however the dangerous condition of the building prevented internal inspection: Kerr, B. (2016) *The Ardwick And Ancoats Dispensary, Old Mill Street, Manchester Conservation Management Plan*, Purcell, March 2016.

- 2.11 The detailed and comprehensive analysis contained within Purcell's 2016 report remains relevant and has been used as a basis for this assessment. We acknowledge our indebtedness to the author in this respect. It is not intended to reproduce here the extensive and apposite research contained within that document; rather the present document is intended to amplify and update the findings in the light of changes which have occurred since the report was published in March 2016.
- 2.12 In January 2020 Great Places commissioned photography, condition surveys and analysis of the site from Buttress Architects and Scott Hughes Design Engineers. These surveys were constrained by the dangerous condition of the building and the scaffolding and hoarding which limited access therefore a visual inspection only was made supported by high-resolution photography and a drone survey: Buttress Architects (2020) *Ancoats Dispensary Summary Condition Report*, 31 January 2020; Scott Hughes Design Engineers *Ancoats Dispensary Condition Survey*, 31 January 2020.

A brief history of Ancoats

- 2.13 The history of The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary must be examined in the light of its place in the story of Ancoats, Manchester which has "a unique place in the history of both global industrialisation and urbanisation as the world's first industrial suburb".⁴
- 2.14 Manchester emerged in the early modern period as a centre for textile finishing processes and by the 17th century it had become the principal commercial centre for the north west region.⁵ By the 1790s, Manchester had begun to displace London as a centre for overseas trade in cotton cloth. This was connected in no little way to the revolutionising effect that the development of an extensive canal network had had upon the transport network across the North West post-1765, which, by

⁴ Historic England, *National Heritage List for England*. Online: historicengland.org.uk/listing

⁵ Oxford Archaeology North 'OAN' (2009) *Bradford Road, Ancoats, Manchester: Archaeological Desk based Assessment prepared for Maryland Securities Group*.

the first decade of the 19th century had joined the east and west coasts of England giving unhindered access to the coastal ports.

- 2.15 Ancoats was perfectly placed to benefit from the Manchester Canal whose branches dissected it – the Ashton-under-Lyne Canal (1796) through its southern half and the Rochdale Canal (1804) its northern – as well as a proliferation of sub-branches created to serve the new steam-powered factories and textile mills. These would be built on an unprecedented scale to satiate the burgeoning consumer demand for textiles and other goods at home and abroad. By 1800 there were more than 40 cotton spinning mills in the Manchester area, more than half steam-powered, with Ancoats at its centre.⁶
- 2.16 Ancoats' transformation from a semi-rural district into an industrial suburb and its eventual pre-eminence could not have been achieved without the vision and drive of a small group of entrepreneurs who were able to understand and quickly apply this new steam technology for commercial ends.
- 2.17 Chief amongst these visionaries were Adam and George Murray, James McConnel and John Kennedy. In 1797, McConnel and Kennedy built a large mill in Union Street, Ancoats. It was probably the first mill to house steam-powered spinning mules and with eight floors and 11 bays, dwarfed the nearby water-driven mills. Shortly afterwards, in 1798, Adam and George Murray began to build their mill on a plot which Adam had leased in 1790 beside the line of the then proposed Rochdale canal. These four men were part of a first wave of industrial entrepreneurs who were to transform Manchester industry with their new steam powered machinery.⁷
- 2.18 Economic success brought, in its turn, population growth. By 1801, Manchester's population had tripled to 75,281.⁸ Squeezed into the gaps between the canals and the looming, multi-storey mills and associated industrial buildings were streets of small, terraced houses occupied by workers. The health of these workers and their families was affected not only by conditions in their cramped insanitary homes - surrounded by polluted canals and noxious air, a result of the industrial-scale burning of coal to power the steam driven mills - but they

⁶ Palmer, M, Nevell, M and Sissons, M (2012). *Industrial archaeology handbook*. York: Council for British Archaeology

⁷ Rose, M. *et. al.* (2011) *Ancoats cradle of industrialisation*. English Heritage.

⁸ *Op. cit.* OAN, 2009.

also ran the risk of serious occupational injury whilst working with the heavy machinery of the mills.⁹

The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary

- 2.19 The dispensary movement originated in the poorer districts of London and was supported by philanthropy and small subscriptions from the community. Dispensaries offered medical treatment on an out-patient basis either at the dispensary or in people's own homes. Many hospitals were to emerge from these small establishments.
- 2.20 Until 1820, the Manchester Infirmary was the only medical institution in the city but as the city's population grew, it became increasingly clear that more provision was required to meet growing demand for medical assistance. The Infirmary Board complained they spent a great deal of time treating the inhabitants of Ancoats but gained little in return from subscriptions and recommended that Ancoats should have its own independent dispensary for the benefit of 'the labouring population'. It was therefore left to a number of philanthropically minded people in the district to establish the new institution.¹⁰
- 2.21 The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary was initially established in 1828 at 181 Great Ancoats Street, providing a basic level of healthcare and complementing the work of the Manchester Infirmary.¹¹ One of the founders, Sir James Phillips Kay Shuttleworth, a doctor and a son of a Manchester cotton merchant, was a leading advocate for improving the health and living conditions of the poor. As well as philanthropic donations and endowments, the movement encouraged local businesses to encourage their workforces to subscribe and in 1848, the workforces of the McConnel and Murray Mills were among the first to do so in numbers.¹²

The 1874 building

- 2.22 In 1850 the dispensary moved to 270 Great Ancoats Street but by 1866 the site had been sold to the Midland Railway Company and a new site identified on Mill Street. It occupied temporary premises there whilst funds were raised for a new, purpose-built building. The foundation stone was laid in 1872

⁹ *Op.cit.* Rose, 2011.

¹⁰ Kerr, B. (2016) *The Ardwick And Ancoats Dispensary, Old Mill Street, Manchester Conservation Management Plan*, Purcell, March 2016.

¹¹ Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser, 9th August 1828.

¹² *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

and the Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary was formally opened in January 1874. A floor plan of c.1873 shows the proposed uses of the ground floor spaces (Appendix A¹³).

- 2.23 The name of the Dispensary's architect has been the subject of some confusion. The National List description believes the architect to be Thomas Worthington whilst other publications name Lewis and Crawcroft. However, contemporary newspapers describe the architect as 'Mr D Lewis of Cross Street' whose name also appears on an early plan of the building. Lewis does not appear to have been a prolific architect and his career is thought to have spanned just three years.¹⁴
- 2.24 It very soon became clear that the Dispensary would become a bedded hospital and it admitted its first six in-patients in 1879. By 1887 it had 50 beds. An illustration of 1885 shows the Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary and Ancoats Hospital in its original form. The original waiting room can be seen extending to the rear east elevation (fig. 2¹⁵).



Figure 2: Ancoats Hospital, 1885

- 2.25 Demand for its services were such that the Dispensary, now hospital, would need to expand. Land was acquired to the rear of the building and a new extension, the Albert Victor Pavilion, named after The Duke of Clarence, who laid the foundation

¹³ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

¹⁵ Inside cover image of 'Report of the Committee of the Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary', 1885, Manchester Library, Information and Archives M325/1/1.

stone, opened in 1888. Its extent can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1893 (fig. 3¹⁶). This shows the original building fronting Mill Street and the new extension to the south, forming a roughly 'H' shaped building on plan. A new spinal corridor connects the original Dispensary building with the new wards which are placed either side of the corridor at its southern end. The extension was also intended to provide better accommodation for the hospital's nurses. A number of smaller buildings, possibly including the mortuary, lie on the southern boundary of the site.¹⁷ Appendix B is an indicative plan illustrating the various phases of development.



Figure 3: OS Surveyed: 1888 to 1891, Published: 1893 (extract)

20th century

- 2.26 In 1900, a new, single-storey Accident and Outpatients department was built against the west flank of the building and soon afterwards the southern extended portion of the old

¹⁶ OS Lancashire CIV.7 (Manchester) Surveyed: 1888 to 1891, Published: 1893.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

waiting room was demolished to make way for a larger children's ward and new nurses home.

- 2.27 In 1907, Dr Alfred Barclay established Manchester's first radiology department at Ancoats Hospital. Noted orthopaedic surgeon Sir Harry Platt set up the country's first dedicated fracture clinic here in 1917 followed by the North of England's first physiotherapy department.
- 2.28 In the first decades of the century the hospital's 114 beds was said to be 'totally inadequate' to deal with the 33,000 patients attending the facility. After the First World War the hospital received many endowments from Board members as well as from local businessmen in the name of fallen sons.¹⁸ The revised OS of 1915 shows its extent at this time (fig. 4¹⁹). The map also illustrates the surrounding urban condition where large-scale industrial sites contrasted strongly with cramped residential terraces.

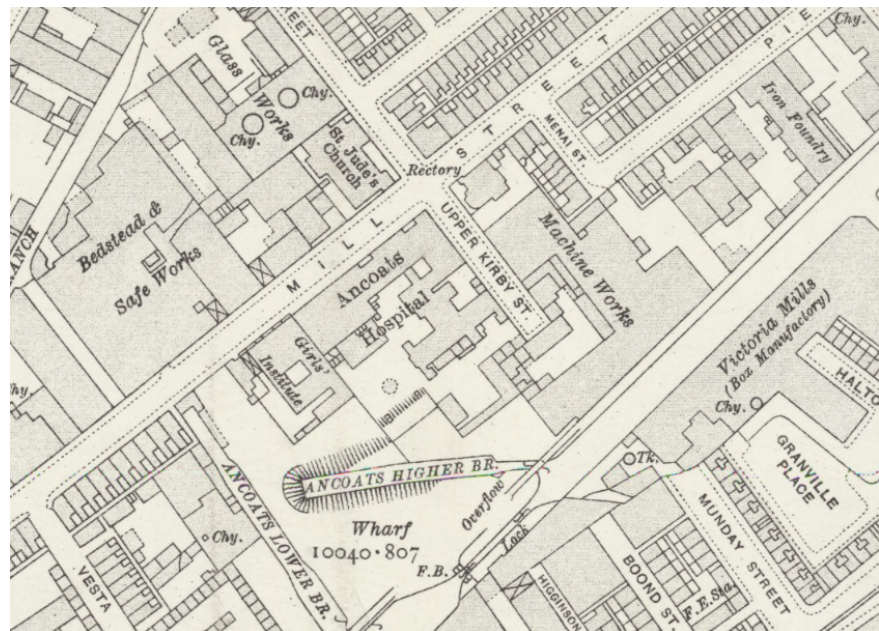


Figure 4: OS Revised: 1915 (extract)

- 2.29 By 1935 the hospital had acquired extensive additional and updated facilities including a new four-storey ward block, two new operating theatres, new pathology and physiotherapy departments and new mortuary and laundry facilities. A new, large, nurses home has been built behind the 'Girls' Institute' and new hospital buildings can be seen on the 1931/2 OS

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

¹⁹ OS Lancashire CIV.7 (Manchester) Revised: 1915, Published: 1922

extending over what was previously the site of a canal wharf (fig. 5²⁰).

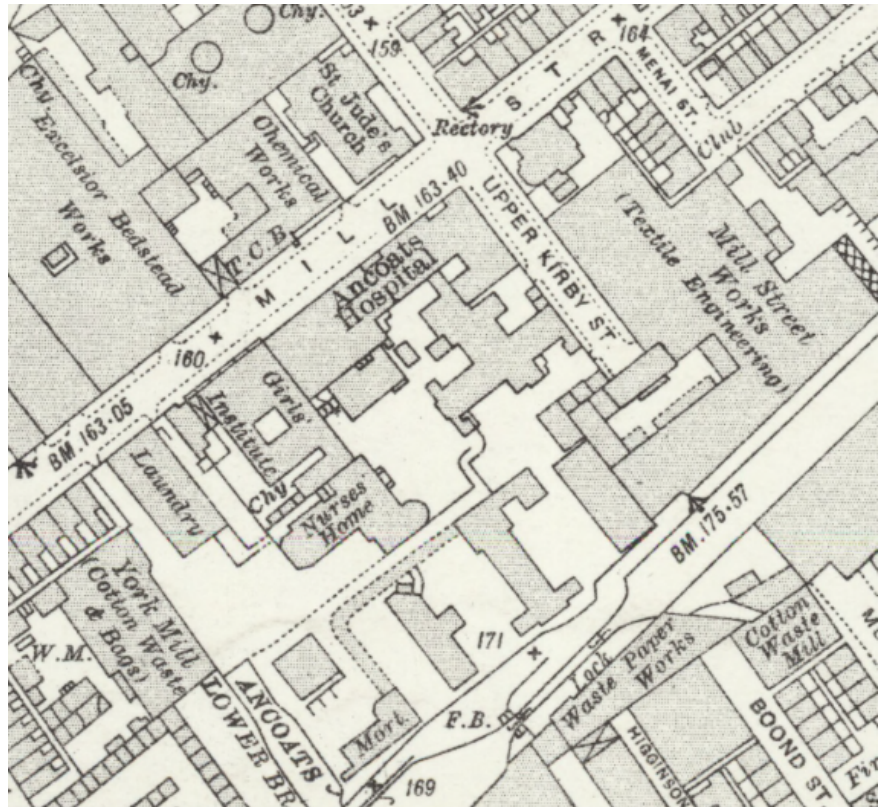


Figure 5: OS 1936 (extract)

- 2.30 The formation of the National Health Service in 1948 saw the hospital come under its aegis; no longer having to rely on private donations and subscriptions for its survival. By 1950 it was looking to expand but the constraints of its site were made clear as it had to continue to accommodate the late-19th century Girls' Institute building to its west, the canal to its south and the factories and warehouses all around (fig. 6²¹).

²⁰ OS Lancashire CIV.7 (Manchester) Revised: 1931 to 1932 Published: 1934

²¹ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

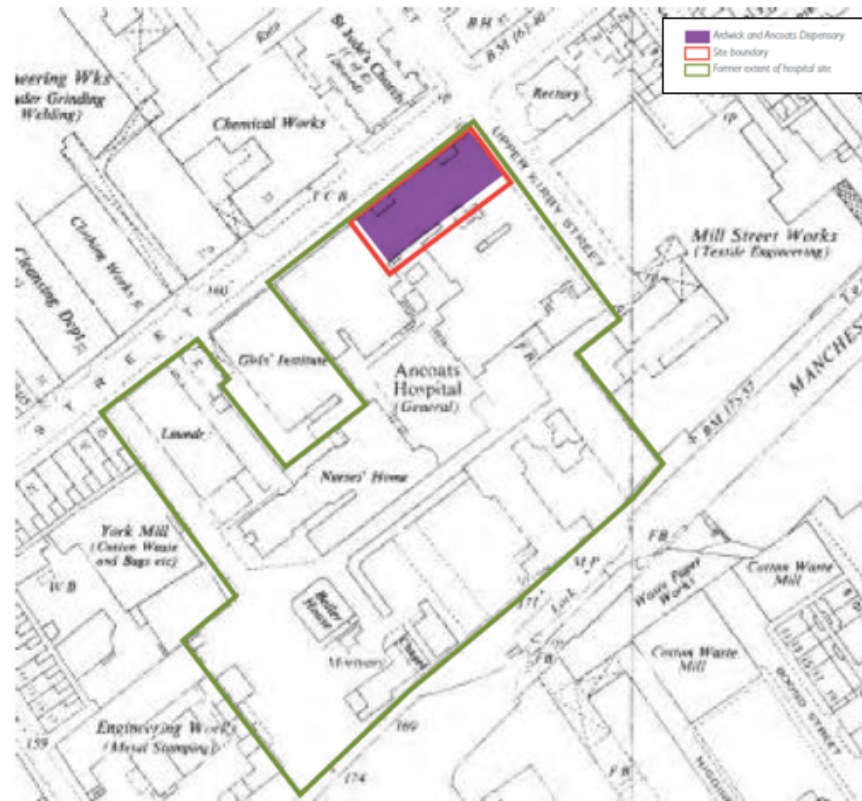


Figure 6: OS 1951

- 2.31 It was during this period that local artist LS Lowry made his evocative image of The Outpatients Waiting Room (1952). This painting hung in the hospital until 1974 when it was moved to the Whitworth Art Gallery where it remains. The outpatients extension itself would later be demolished.
- 2.32 By the 1970s, the nature of the surrounding area had changed drastically. The mills and associated industry had been running-down for decades post-war, crippled by cheaper imports and new ways of manufacturing which the Victorian-era buildings could not accommodate. The inner city population too began to decline but despite this, the hospital continued to treat large numbers of patients and continued to plan for the expansion of its services making alterations and extensions within its existing boundaries. The main building was listed grade II in 1974 (fig. 7²²).

²² Manchester Evening News Archive:
www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/devastated-campaigners-admit-defeat-epic-14284041



Figure 7: Ancoats Dispensary in 1975

- 2.33 In 1987 an application for a first floor extension to Armitage Ward was approved. Unfortunately, the need for a full-service hospital in this area – expensive to upgrade and maintain – began to be questioned by the local health authority and it was announced that the A&E department was to be relocated elsewhere. A passionate local campaign was mounted by the Ancoats Action Group to try and prevent this culminating in the occupation of the Casualty department which began on 1 February 1987, the day it was due to close. The sit-in would last for two years but be ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the change. The Local Authority provided Ancoats with a Community Clinic instead which provided a walk-in service for minor injuries.
- 2.34 Finally, in 1989, as part of a consolidation of local NHS services, the entire hospital was closed for good. Figure 8 shows the extent of the hospital at this time.²³

²³ OS Published Date(s): 1989-1992 Originally plotted at: 1:1,250

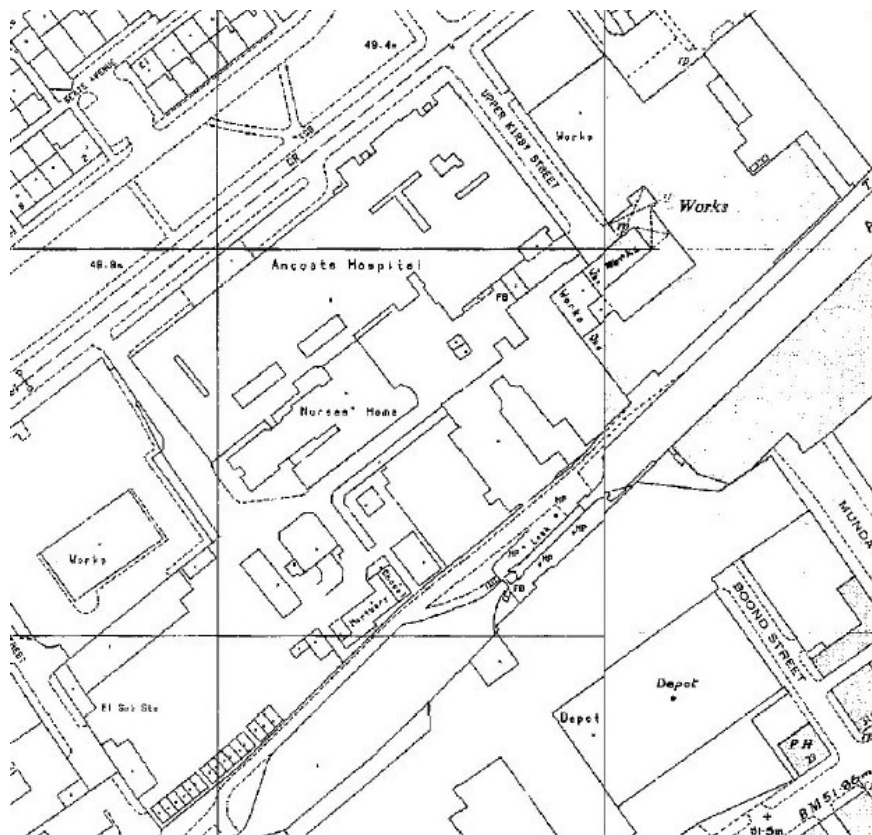


Figure 8: Ancoats Hospital (1998-92)

Post-closure

- 2.35 The Dispensary building was to lie vacant and derelict for 12 years before the site was purchased for redevelopment by Urban Splash in 2001. The developer's plans were for a mixed-use development of residential units and office space and include construction of a new arm of the Ashton Canal. A revised scheme comprising 12 residential units, together with commercial space received Planning permission and Listed Building Consent in May 2005.²⁴
- 2.36 Planning and listed building consent had already been granted, in 2002, to demolish all of the non-listed buildings within the curtilage of the Dispensary.²⁵ In 2003 Urban Splash received permission for the demolition the former ward block and nurses home to allow construction of proposed canal arm and in 2004 permission for the demolition of extensions to the

²⁴ Manchester City Council 074453/FO/2005/N2 & 074454/LO/2005/N2

²⁵ Manchester City Council 064865/FO/NORTH2/02 & 064864/LO/NORTH2/02

original dispensary building was granted alongside the originally assented development proposal.²⁶

- 2.37 Although the curtilage building were demolished as per consent, Urban Splash did not commence building its scheme. The Dispensary building became derelict and vulnerable. Due to concerns raised by the City Council over the safety of a brick gable fronting Upper Kirby Street (a public highway used for access to the car park), the gable was dismantled and stored for rebuilding and a complex scaffolding was erected all around the building in order to help stabilise it.²⁷
- 2.38 In response to the loss of grant funding and in recognition that the building could become dangerous, an approach was made to Heritage Works Budling Preservation Trust (HWBPT) to determine if they were interested in taking ownership of the Dispensary with a view to securing its redevelopment. The HWBPT undertook an options appraisal study but were unable to take on the Dispensary as a project due to the substantial conservation deficit and lack of grant availability.
- 2.39 The roof and remaining interiors further deteriorated.
- 2.40 In June 2011, Urban Splash applied to demolish the listed Dispensary building²⁸ and in September, a building notice was issued by the City Council after concern over the instability of the structure. This resulted in the dismantling of the central tower fronting Old Mill Street and the removal of elements of three top floor arched windows as well as chimney stacks.²⁹ The dismantled elements were put into storage in Grey Mare Lane police station.
- 2.41 The Victorian Society described the building as "a roofless shell secured by scaffolding" and placed it on its list of 'Top Ten Endangered Victorian Buildings'.
- 2.42 Despite its listed status, Manchester City Council were 'minded to approve' an application for demolition of the Dispensary (Report of the Planning and Highways Committee, Manchester City Council, 096729/LL/2011/N2 28th June 2012) on the grounds that its restoration for viable use was unsustainable.³⁰
- 2.43 The community galvanised into action forming the Ancoats Dispensary Trust and successfully lobbying for the decision on demolition to be postponed until further options could be

²⁶ Manchester City Council 067653/LO/NORTH2/03 & 067657/LO/NORTH2/03

²⁷ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

²⁸ Manchester City Council 096729/LL/2011/N2

²⁹ Retrospective LNC was given in 2015: MCC 107983/LO/2015/N2

³⁰ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

explored. The demolition application was withdrawn in June 2013.³¹

- 2.44 In July 2014, the Ancoats Dispensary Ltd (ADL) a subsidiary of Ancoats Dispensary Trust (ADT) received £770,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to help stabilise the building (provided under the Heritage Enterprise Scheme which aims to save historic buildings deemed not commercially viable to restore). In September 2015, successful fundraising enabled ADL to take over the lease of the Dispensary from Urban Splash.³²
- 2.45 The ADT developed a scheme which would restore the building and enable it to operate as a 'community hub'. It commissioned a Conservation Management Plan from Purcell as part of the bid to HLF for further enabling project funds of £4.3m. The report detailed the site's history to date, defined elements of its significance, and drafted a set of conservation policies which could be used to guide restoration and change on the site.³³
- 2.46 In 2017 the Trust submitted a detailed planning and Listed Building Consent application for its proposals to Manchester City Council³⁴ however it relied on Heritage Lottery Fund funding in order to carry out the scheme which, ultimately, it was unsuccessful in obtaining.
- 2.47 The building was handed back to Urban Splash in January 2018 and in February 2018, it was returned to Manchester City Council.
- 2.48 In 2019 Great Places Housing Group purchased the lease. It is in pre-application discussions with Manchester City Council to adapt the building and provide social housing on the site.

The Building

- 2.49 A detailed site description can be found in *The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary, Old Mill Street, Manchester, Conservation Management Plan* (Kerr, 2016). The following is a summary of its key attributes based on that report.

Principle elevation to Old Mill Street

- 2.50 The building is Neo-Gothic in style and constructed in red brick with decorative polychrome bands. Roughly rectangular in plan, the principle façade is of three storeys above a basement. The

³¹ Manchester City Council 096729/LL/2011/N2

³² *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

³³ *Op. cit.* Kerr, 2016.

³⁴ Manchester City Council 116665/FO/2017 & 116666/LO/2017

building is symmetrical and of seven bays, the central three bays and end bays project slightly forward. The building's principle entrance is centrally placed.

- 2.51 The central entrance door is arched with nook shafts and capitals. The inner arch is inscribed with 'ANCOATS HOSPITAL', whilst above the outer arch are the words 'ARDWICK AND ANCOATS DISPENSARY'. Originally this section rose as a four storey tower which included an oculus and small corner turrets - architecturally the most distinctive feature of the building (figs. 8 & 9³⁵).



Figure 8: Main elevation (2008)

³⁵ © Aidan O'Rourke. www.aidan.co.uk/ancoats-dispensary-its-future-secured-men



Figure 9: Detail of lettering above main doorway

- 2.52 The building was topped by a saddleback roof which was destroyed in the 2010 fire (fig. 10³⁶). The chimneys, which would have been a feature of the roofscape, have all been removed, although the flues appear to be intact internally.



Figure 10: Main elevation showing the roofscape before destruction by fire

- 2.53 Windows are lancet with inset trefoils. The windows are arranged together in patterns of two, three or four; those in the central three bays also feature shafts with decorative capitals, indicating that the more important rooms lay behind. The lancet windows are characterised by polychrome voussoirs. The windows to the third floor are all paired, the majority of which were originally set in gabled half dormers but are now in varying states of decay or lost.

³⁶ *Op. cit.* English Heritage, 2011.

- 2.54 Three small windows on the third floor within the second and sixth bays appear to be later insertions. Other later alterations include addition of vents, cabling and drainage pipes.

East elevation

- 2.55 This elevation faces Kirby Street. The decorative banding and polychrome detailing continue from the principle façade. To the first and second floor are a series of original paired and single lancet windows. The ground floor has a number of openings with lintels which appear to be later alterations. The southern end of this wall historically projected to the rear of the building, initially at ground floor level, and later extending upwards through to the first floor with a chimney above. This element of the building was demolished as part of the clearance of the site in 2003 (fig. 11³⁷).



Figure 11: East elevation (2004)

Rear (South Elevation)

- 2.56 The rear of the Dispensary was designed with few decorative features. The lancet windows arranged over nine bays are paired or in triple. It is clear from photographs taken before the scaffolding was erected, that this elevation has undergone a number of alterations. Historically these began shortly after the Dispensary was erected, and the need for an extension became quickly apparent.

³⁷ © Dominic Franklin, www.flickr.com/photos/frankldw

- 2.57 Alterations appear to have been concentrated in the eastern half of the elevation where modifications have been made to the ground floor and large openings made at first floor level. Alterations to the western end of this façade appear to have been restricted to the insertion of a rectangular opening on the second floor (fig. 12³⁸).



Figure 12: Rear elevation (2009)

West elevation

- 2.58 The western elevation is simply executed, probably being considered of lesser significance as it did not front a public highway. There are no decorative features and fewer window openings. The Outpatient waiting room built in 1900 was erected against this flank. A sign reading 'ANCOATS HOSPITAL' taken from the parapet of this building was relocated to the ground floor of this elevation. It is unknown if this sign is extant (fig. 13³⁹).

³⁸ © Lydia McNeeney, www.flickr.com/photos/ickle_angel

³⁹ © Camm33, www.flickr.com/photos/chris-mason32



Figure 13: West elevation (2006)

Interior

- 2.59 A study of the architect's original plan of the building suggests that the historic layout is still largely intact. Although the condition of the building has prevented a full examination of the fabric, the photographic surveys that have been obtained have revealed evidence of alteration in the form of original layout as well as blocked or modified openings
- 2.60 The architects' plan of the ground floor layout (c.1873) shows a large waiting room, consulting rooms, a treatment room for accidents and a large dispensary as well as various service rooms required for the running of the enterprise. The upper two floors contained three large wards and the necessary ancillary rooms (it has not been established if there was a board room within the building). A photograph of 1892 of the Children's Ward shows a large and airy open-plan room. It is likely that the other wards would have been the same or similar in style (figs.14 & 15⁴⁰).

⁴⁰ Manchester Library, Information and Archives, M325/1/2.

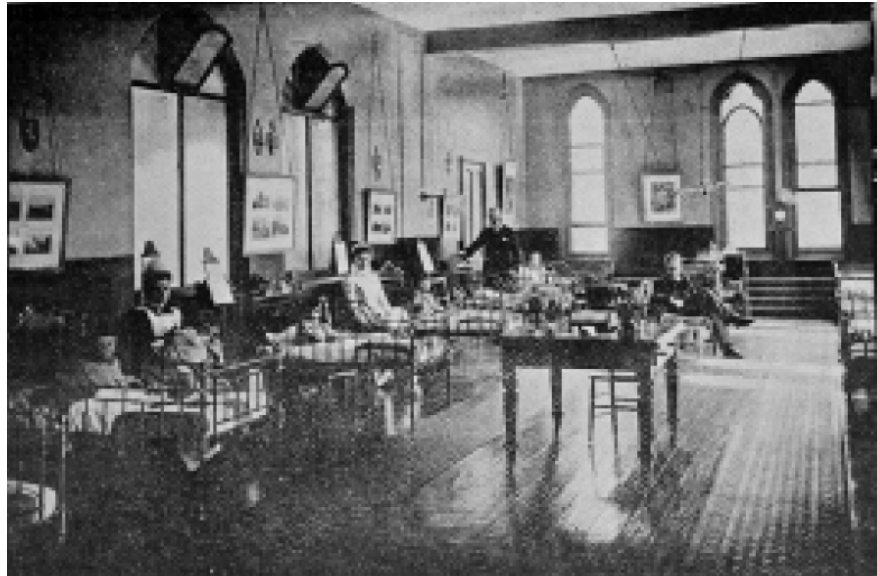


Fig. 14: Children's Ward, 1896



Fig. 15: Children's Ward, 1902

- 2.61 Opposite the main entrance lobby, the principal staircase rose through the three storeys. A lateral corridor gave access to the various rooms. These corridor junctions each had a high arched opening. No early plans have been located to show how the upper floors were laid out and used and so most of what has been deduced about how the building operated and functioned at these levels is as a result of the partial survival of the plan form combined with other documentary and illustrative evidence about the main rooms, wards and circulation and access routes around the building.

- 2.62 Historical photographs, as well as those from the 2011 survey, show that the interiors were simply detailed using high quality materials. Polished wood floors, high ceilings and windows onto internal corridors lent a feeling of light and space to the wards whose walls were tiled to dado level for ease of cleaning. The gothic trefoil detailing found in the exterior was carried over into the internal decoration, for example on the capitals decorating the junctions of the arched corridors.

Present condition

- 2.63 The following summary of the present condition of the building is based upon the January 2020 visual surveys by Buttress Architects and Scott Hughes Design Engineers. Inspection was made from the scaffold supported by high-resolution photography and a drone survey (figs. 16 & 17). These, as well as images from previous surveys, provide a general indication of the condition and appearance of the interiors.



Figure 16: Aerial view of the interior showing remaining interior walls



Figure 17: Present condition, Old Mill Street elevation, 2020

- 2.64 The condition surveys carried out in 2020 do not diverge in their overall findings from the 2016 or earlier reports. Emergency works were carried out in 2013/14 to stabilise the structure, removing vegetation and capping exposed wall-heads, however the structure remained exposed to the elements and has continued to deteriorate.
- 2.65 In summary, the condition reports find that the Dispensary is a dangerous structure due to its overall instability (currently stabilised externally by complex scaffolding which is restraining the structure) with a risk from falling masonry, collapsed floors and unconsolidated debris at ground floor and basement levels. The lack of a roof means that exposed wall tops and window heads continue to allow water and plant growth to further threaten the integrity of both the external structure and internal walls. Load bearing brickwork masonry walls are of various thickness with possible steel or iron wall ties (possibly degrading). It was not possible to inspect the timber or remaining interior finishes however photographs indicate that damaged staircase and some internal timber floors remain in place on the Old Mill Street elevation but these are not thought to be salvageable.
- 2.66 The remains of the tower, which was dismantled and put into storage following the destabilising fire of 2010 along with other pieces of architectural salvage, is in safekeeping in a building on Jersey Street in Ancoats. This stock comprises more than 40 pallets of bricks, tiles and stone decorative features as well as roof trusses and a water tank.
- 2.67 Internally, the principle brick dividing walls have survived at ground floor level however their intactness decreases with each subsequent storey. Floors have been removed or have collapsed into the ground floor and basement where the debris may be causing lateral pressure on upstanding walls. Wall plaster, fixtures and fittings including joinery and fireplaces have been lost.
- 2.68 Where evidence of historic interior finishes survive they are fragmentary – these include part of a staircase, window architraving, plaster capitals to some corridor archways, fragments of plaster cornice and the remains of a green tiled dado. These are not salvageable but enough detail remains for them to be reproduced if required.
- 2.69 The main standing elements of the building are therefore the internal and external load-bearing walls.

Recommendations

- 2.70 Recommendations are made in the Buttress document for immediate, short and long term stabilisation, rectification and rebuilding works. The preferred route is to retain the Old Mill Street and Lampwick Lane façades which are in reasonable structural condition, constructing a new structural frame within the footprint to tie the masonry back and provide permanent restraint.
- 2.71 The primary scope of works that will be required is summarised as follows:
- Retained façades: clean and repoint;
 - Masonry walls: rebuild to required level and add new coping detail to match original; Voids to be filled with reclaimed bricks from the site (these are typically on the internal elevations where floors and beams etc have fallen or been removed); Vegetation growth to be removed and damaged and decayed mortar replaced;
 - Reinstall central tower and terracotta or stone enrichments using original salvaged and stored materials;
 - Roof: install new roof (form tbc);
 - Window heads and mullions: repair internally where frames have collapsed;
 - Rainwater goods to be removed and repaired/replaced with cast iron.

3 The heritage context of the Dispensary

Conservation Area

- 3.1 The building is not located within a conservation area. The Ancoats Conservation Area lies c.400m to the north west above the Rochdale Canal (fig. 18⁴¹). The Ancoats Conservation Area, designated in 1989, contains one of the largest concentration of Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings in Manchester.



Figure 18: Conservation areas in the vicinity of the site (coloured blue)
Listed Building

- 3.2 The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary is listed Grade II under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. It was first listed in 1974. The listing entry reads:⁴²

'Dispensary and hospital, now hospital. 1879-91, by Lewis and Crawcroft. Red brick with polychrome bands, steeply-pitched hipped slate roofs. Irregular plan. Gothic style. Three storeys and basements, 1:1:3:1:1 bays, symmetrical, the 3-bay centre and the ends projecting. The centre bay, treated as a 4-stage tower, breaks forwards slightly, has a 2-centred arched doorway with

⁴¹ Manchester City Council, www.manchester.co.uk

⁴² National Heritage List for England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1283019>

shafts, the arch inscribed "ANCOATS HOSPITAL" and an arched extrados band inscribed "ARDWICK AND ANCOATS DISPENSARY", 2-light windows to the 1st and 2nd floors, weathered coping with stone turrets, and an elaborate turret with an oculus and tall oversailing parapet with corner tourelles (and formerly a saddle-back roof). All the windows have narrow arched lights with polychrome heads and impost bands, all those of the 3-bay centre with shafts: the ground floor has mostly 3-light windows and the 1st floor has mostly 2-light windows, but the recessed bays which have 4 and 3-light windows to these floors; the 2nd floor has 2-light windows rising into gabled half-dormers. Later additions to rear. Interior not inspected.

- 3.3 There are seven listed buildings with the vicinity of the site. Hope Mill is graded at II* whilst the other six, all related to the Ashton Canal and its workings, are listed at Grade II (fig. 19⁴³).



Figure 19: Listed buildings in the vicinity of the site (coloured blue)

⁴³ Ordnance Survey online: <https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>

The significance of the Dispensary and its context

- 3.4 The Ancoats Dispensary is of national significance, as recognised by its inclusion in the National Heritage List for England at Grade II. Its significance is principally related to its origins as an example of a Victorian dispensary and hospital for the urban working classes and is important for its association with medical innovations and its history of public use. Whilst the hospital illustrates the development of the modern urban hospital from older pre-National Health Service beginnings, the loss of its associated buildings on the south site has lessened this element of its value. The building's history, architectural design and communal value have been described in detail in above. How these attributes relate to elements of heritage significance is assessed below.

Definitions

- 3.5 Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.6 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF 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'. The English Heritage 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.
- 3.7 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

'Historic interest' or 'Historical' and 'Evidential' value

- 3.8 Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. Evidential value relates to the abilities of a place or building to demonstrate evidence of past human activity. It may also include evidence of past technologies or ideas that have been expressed through the built environment.
- 3.9 The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary, the listed buildings nearby and their relationship to one another and the Ancoats Conservation Area to the north, collectively help to illustrate the development of this part of Manchester. The story of the Dispensary illustrates a good deal about how the city of

Manchester evolved from the late 18th century to the 20th century, about the transformation of the pre-industrial landscape to an intensively industrial one and about social change and lifestyles in that period. In terms of Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' the building provides us with 'evidence about past human activity' and by means of its fabric, design and appearance communicates information about its past. The building retains its ability to do this not just through its physical fabric, but also through its historic uses and its relationship with the development of the city.

- 3.10 The Ancoats Dispensary was constructed at a time when there was a growing need for accessible health provision for the labouring poor of cities such as Manchester. It was a purpose built voluntary dispensary and hospital which was in continual use as a medical facility until its closure in 1989. It was inextricably linked with the Industrial Revolution that shaped Manchester and contributed to the growth of the British Empire and was initially funded by some of the largest mill owners in Ancoats. The dispensary has the potential to provide evidence of how the buildings contributed to caring for the health needs of the local population and, indeed, how that care developed during 19th to mid-20th centuries.
- 3.11 The dispensary has historical significance in its being at the vanguard of bringing new services to this part of the country including firsts in radiology, orthopaedics and physiotherapy departments and through these has associations with important medical personages of the day including Sir Harry Platt (FRCS) (7 October 1886 – 20 December 1986) president of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, founder of the British Orthopaedic Association.
- 3.12 Our knowledge of how the early hospital operated within the building is limited. Only one early plan (c. 1873) of the ground floor has been located and so it is unclear how the upper floors were laid out and used, and how the building changed over the ensuing century. Most of what we have deduced about how the building originally operated and functioned is as a result of the partial survival of the indicative plan form of the main rooms, wards and original circulation and access routes around the building.
- 3.13 The building's historical context has been largely lost due to physical change in its immediate setting in losing both its later extension buildings as well as the 19th century townscape which has been largely replaced with modern developments of

varying sizes which disconnect it from the Ashton Canal and the remaining warehouses and mills.

'Architectural interest', 'artistic interest' or 'aesthetic value'

- 3.14 It is clear that The Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary has 'architectural' and 'artistic interest' (NPPF) or 'aesthetic value' ('Conservation Principles'). In respect of design, 'Conservation Principles' says that 'design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship'.
- 3.15 The architectural interest of building encompasses its architectural design and external appearance, its shape, massing and urban presence. Externally, its form is a good example of the type of Neo-Gothic design favoured for municipal buildings of the late Victorian period. Its red brick, stone dressings and slate roof were characteristic of the area, and although employed much more decoratively, were reflective of the materials used in the surrounding mill buildings and terraced houses.
- 3.16 Externally the building retains features of the original design that contribute to its artistic and aesthetic qualities. This is most evident in the front elevation where the decorative, symmetrical form, gives it presence. This fabric contains physical evidence of Victorian construction techniques and also the evidence of later modifications. Although not by a noted architect, nor of an innovative design, the building would have been one of the most unusual and architecturally striking in the area. Historical photographs show that the central tower, decorated with machicolations and oculus, topped with four corner tourelles above an expanse of saddle-back roof; would have been an important feature within the Ancoats roofscape.
- 3.17 The southern elevation has undergone alterations which have affected the eastern part of the hospital most. It was released fairly soon after the Dispensary opened that it would need more space. The addition of new wards and departments, in 1888, in new buildings to the rear, necessitated modifications to the original building at ground and first floor levels. This was the start of a pattern of building that would carry on through the life of the hospital.
- 3.18 Although the building has been adapted and altered as needs changed, the basic layout of the 19th and early 20th century plan form is still legible in the remains of the present building.

This is most evident where the original configuration of loadbearing partitions and spine walls remain.

- 3.19 Internally its Gothic archways within the main corridors to the ground, first and second floors, some with decorative capitals, are of significance however the almost total loss of all other fixtures, fittings and decorative fabric has reduced the building's integrity giving these spaces less significance than if they had remained intact.
- 3.20 The building is currently of low aesthetic value because of its condition being derelict and supported by scaffolding and surrounded safety hoardings.

'Communal value' or 'artistic interest'

- 3.21 Communal value derives from the meanings of place for the people who relate to a building or a place. Ancoats dispensary has been used by the community since the 1828 and in the present building since 1878. It is evident that the hospital clearly has significance for people locally and therefore has a strong communal value.
- 3.22 A hospital is a key public place for large numbers of people who might interact with it on a regular basis and therefore it is part of a communal consciousness in the same way that a church, public house or municipal or civic building would be. The dispensary buildings formed part of Ancoats' historic townscape over many generations and remains a physical landmark as much as a social one.
- 3.23 The building has high communal value locally and is seen to represent the identity and heritage of the community in its history of public use and most recently in the campaigns first to keep it open as hospital and more recently to save it from demolition. The local community continues to show an interest in the development of plans to create a new use for the building.
- 3.24 Cultural and artistic associations include a reference to Ancoats Dispensary in Elizabeth Gaskell's first novel, *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848) and it is the subject of L.S Lowry's painting *Ancoats Hospital Outpatients' Hall* (1952).⁴⁴

Significance of elevations and individual spaces within the building

- 3.25 The *Ardwick and Ancoats Dispensary, Old Mill Street, Manchester, Conservation Management Plan* (Kerr, 2016)

⁴⁴ The Outpatients' Hall was demolished in the later 20th century.

describes in detail (S4.7) the significance of discreet areas of the Ancoats Dispensary by awarding each a level of high, medium, low neutral and intrusive significance and showing these on a series of plans and elevations.

- 3.26 Our updated analysis of these plans and elevations follows below. We gratefully acknowledge the use of Kerr's (2016) floor plans as a base over which our grading has been superimposed. The plans are intended as a tool which may be used to identify areas where there is the greatest and least potential for beneficial intervention and enhancement.
- 3.27 Significance plans of this type have inherent limitations, for example, they do not easily communicate the significance of individual features or communal interest. They are used here as a means of communicating a broad indicative significance – especially given the lack of access to the site
- 3.28 Clearly not all of the spaces within the building are of a similar significance, with some being higher than others. Assessment of significance is based on their historical and communal importance – the nature of their original and subsequent purpose - and also architectural interest. Architectural interest includes plan form as well as the nature, originality and quality of any detailing that remains.

Levels of significance definitions

- 3.29 There are several, similar, methods commonly used to define levels of significance. In this report significance is defined in five levels: A - E. The first four are derived from Semple Kerr's guidance.⁴⁵ These are A - Exceptional significance, B - Considerable significance, C - Some significance and D - Little significance. These categories broadly reflect international/national, regional/national and local significance.
- 3.30 Levels of significance definitions:
- High (Exceptional) Significance is attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which has a high cultural value and forms an essential part of understanding the historic value of the site, while greatly contributing towards its character and appearance. This includes features fundamental to the design concept. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

⁴⁵ Semple Kerr, J. (2013) *The Conservation Plan: A guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European cultural significance* (7th Seventh (partly revised) edition, January 2013) Australia ICOMOS.

- Medium (Considerable) Significance is attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which has some cultural importance and helps define the character and appearance of the site. This includes features forming essential parts or elements specific to the vocabulary of the design. Efforts should be made to retain features of this level if possible, though a greater degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible.
- Low (Some) Significance is attributable to themes, features, buildings or spaces which have minor cultural importance and which might contribute to the character or appearance of the site. Includes features forming important parts or elements of the vocabulary of the design and contribute to design complexity. A greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.
- Neutral (Little) Significance relates to themes, spaces, buildings or features which have little or no cultural value and neither contribute to nor detract from the character or appearance of the site with little significant value. Considerable alteration or change is likely to be possible.
- Intrusive Significance relates to themes, features or spaces which actually detract from the values of the site and its character and appearance and negative, poorly sited or intrusive features, which detract from the historic character and value of a site, including impact on views. Efforts should be made to remove or screen these features.

3.31 The plain colours on each plan or elevation indicate the significance level of the remaining fabric, whilst the hatched areas indicate the significance of the spaces within based upon assumed former uses and any remaining decorative features: figures 20-25.⁴⁶

3.32 It must be stressed that the significance of the internal spaces related to their 'assumed' uses is based upon the original floorplan of 1873. There is very little evidence of the uses of specific internal spaces of the core listed building in subsequent years when these may well have changed. The propensity of

⁴⁶ These figures are based upon those in the Kerr report (2016).

the building to change is illustrated by the alteration in the building's footprint brought about as early as 1888 by the addition of the Albert Victor Pavilion. The significance that is ascribed to the remaining discernible spaces is in relation to their historical and communal values rather than architectural value. There is little, if any, fabric of architectural merit remaining internally, what there is being confined mainly to remnants of the decorative capitals forming the junctions of the arched main corridors.

External Elevations

- 3.33 The front elevation is architecturally the most important and although not by a noted architect, nor of an innovative design, the building would have been one of the most unusual and architecturally striking in the area. Its significance is High and this significance will be further strengthened by the reinstatement of the previously removed and stored elements such as the central tower and decorative enrichments (fig. 20).
- 3.34 The south elevation was designed with a clear pattern of balanced fenestration which was designed to look across and be seen from the wharves to its rear. It is, however, this elevation which has been most affected by interventions in the form of extension buildings. Within 15 years of opening the central corridors of the original Dispensary building had been broken through this rear wall and large openings had been made in the eastern half of the elevation to accommodate new building. After these extensions were demolished post-2003, the extent of the damaging effect upon the original design became clear (fig. 16). Alterations to the western portion of this elevation were restricted to the insertion of a rectangular opening on the second floor and it remains relatively intact in terms of design intent. Because of these contrasting effects, the eastern half of this elevation is judged to be of Low significance however the western half is accorded Medium significance (fig. 21).
- 3.35 The east elevation has had some intrusive interventions to the ground floor windows; however, it largely retains its original and decorative configuration and is therefore of High significance (fig. 23).
- 3.36 The west elevation is much plainer than the east but nevertheless remains largely unchanged from when it was built. It was against this flank that the 1900 A&E waiting room was built. That has since been removed and has left some brick

scarring (fig. 13). It is judged to be of Medium significance (fig. 22).

Internal spaces

- 3.37 For each floor, the cruciform central circulation space is judged to be of High significance and the radial corridors of Medium significance reflecting their roles of the first being fundamental to the design concept and the latter an essential part of that concept.
- 3.38 The central four rooms at ground floor level area are rated as having Medium significance. These are spaces which were fundamental to the ethos of the foundation of the building being the Dispensary room and the accident treatment room, both underpinned by the surgeons and the nursing staff (represented by the Matron). Their historical importance is evident by their central positioning close to the main entrance (fig. 23) however they do not retain any architectural features at all.
- 3.39 The consulting and waiting rooms, although of importance to the service, were flexible spaces and the waiting room in particular was modified with partial demolition and additions to its rear within 15 years of its opening. Similarly, the kitchen, pantry and dining room although important in the day-to-day life of the hospital were not significant spaces. The placement of the kitchen at the front of the building is a quirk of design rather than an expression by the architect of its relative importance in the scheme. These spaces did form important elements of the design however and therefore they are judged to be of Low significance.
- 3.40 As noted above, it is unclear how the upper floors were laid out and used or how this changed over the ensuing century. At first floor level, the two rooms flanking the central bay retain a distinct plan form and may have been reserved for management offices, even perhaps a board room, although we do not have evidence for this use it is reasonable to deduce this therefore they have been assigned a level of Medium significance. The two other small rooms to the front have lost any wall that may have separated them from the corridor and therefore their spatial integrity. The remaining small rooms to the south were possibly wards and treatment rooms. The children's ward is thought to have been located in the south east section. Each of these spaces judged to be of Low significance (fig. 24).

- 3.41 At second floor level the plan is more open reflecting both the large open plan nature of wards at this period but also perhaps loss of internal walls. The significance of these ordinary spaces is Low. The front, centre room no longer appears to be part of the main circulation but is a small room whose use is unknown. The two flanking rooms carry up the plan form of the rooms underneath. There is nothing about these rooms which would lead them to be judged as fundamental to the design concept or to the historic interest of the building but they do form elements specific to the vocabulary of the design therefore they are judged to be of Medium significance (fig. 25).

MAIN ELEVATION

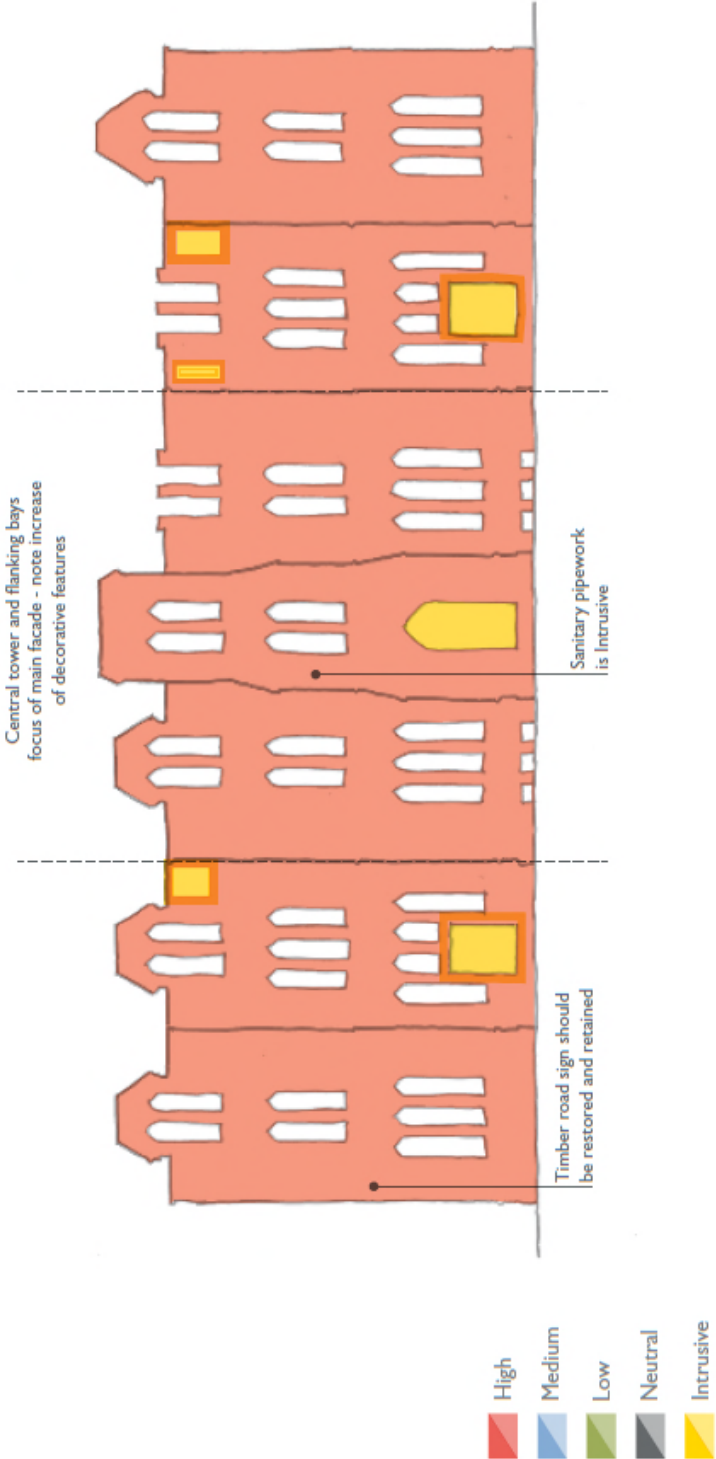


Figure 20: Main elevation - significance

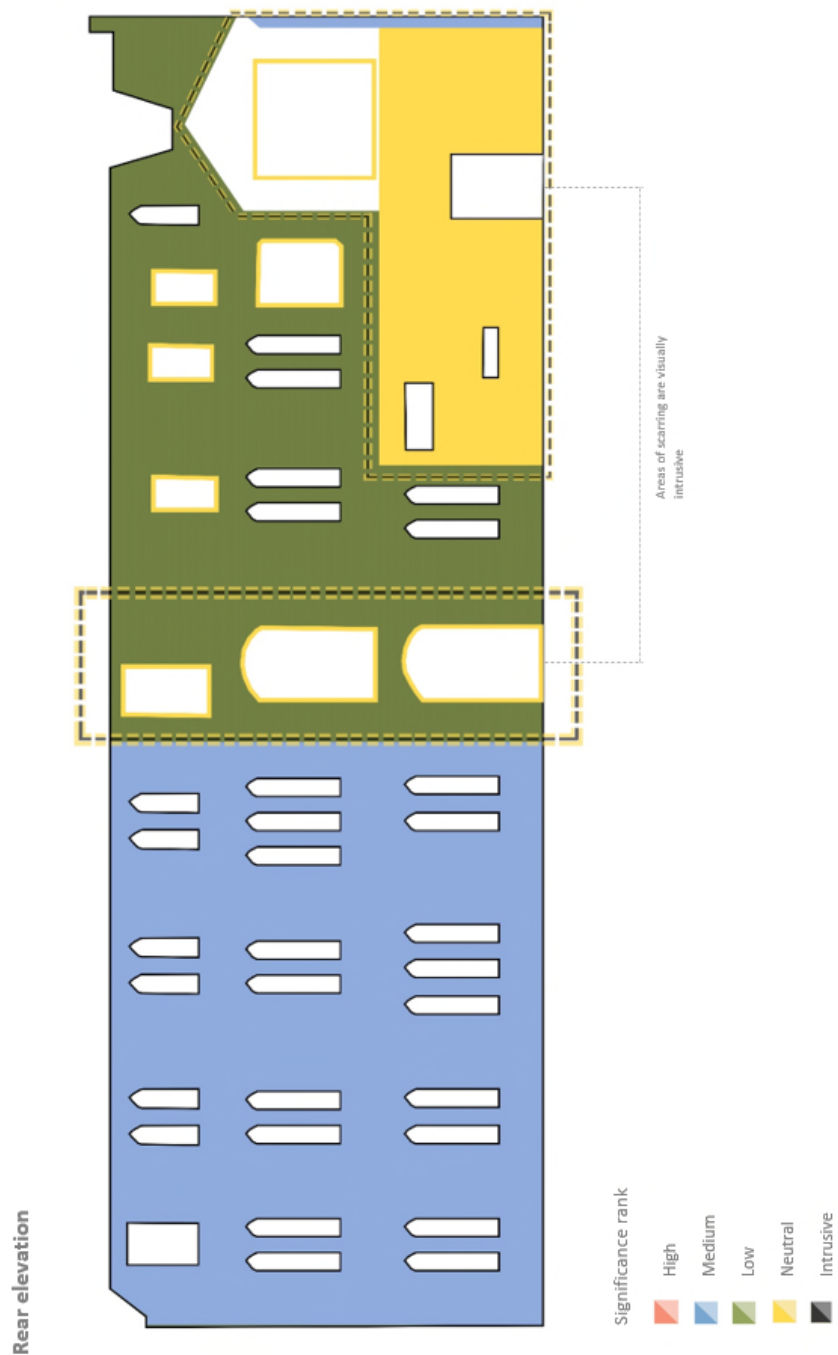


Figure 21: Rear (South) elevation - significance

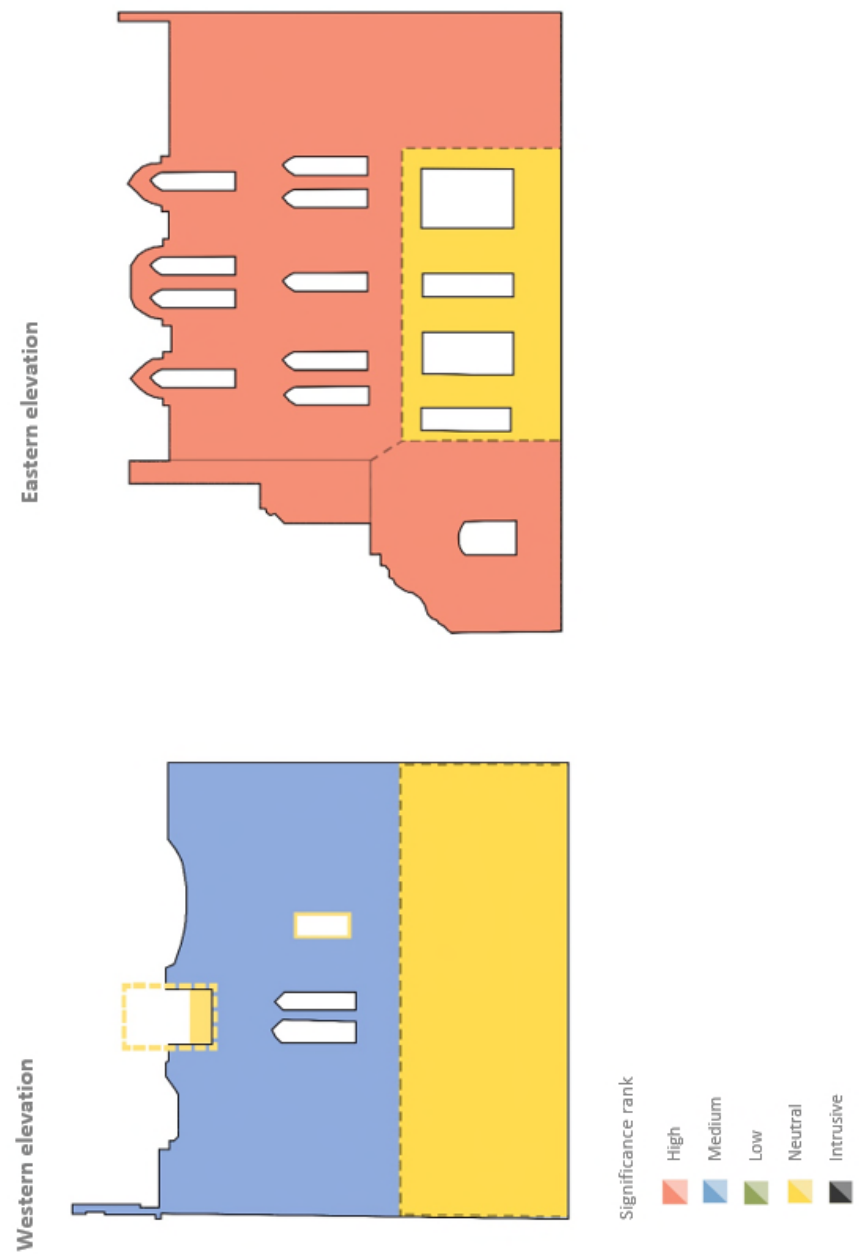


Figure 22: Eastern and Western elevations - significance

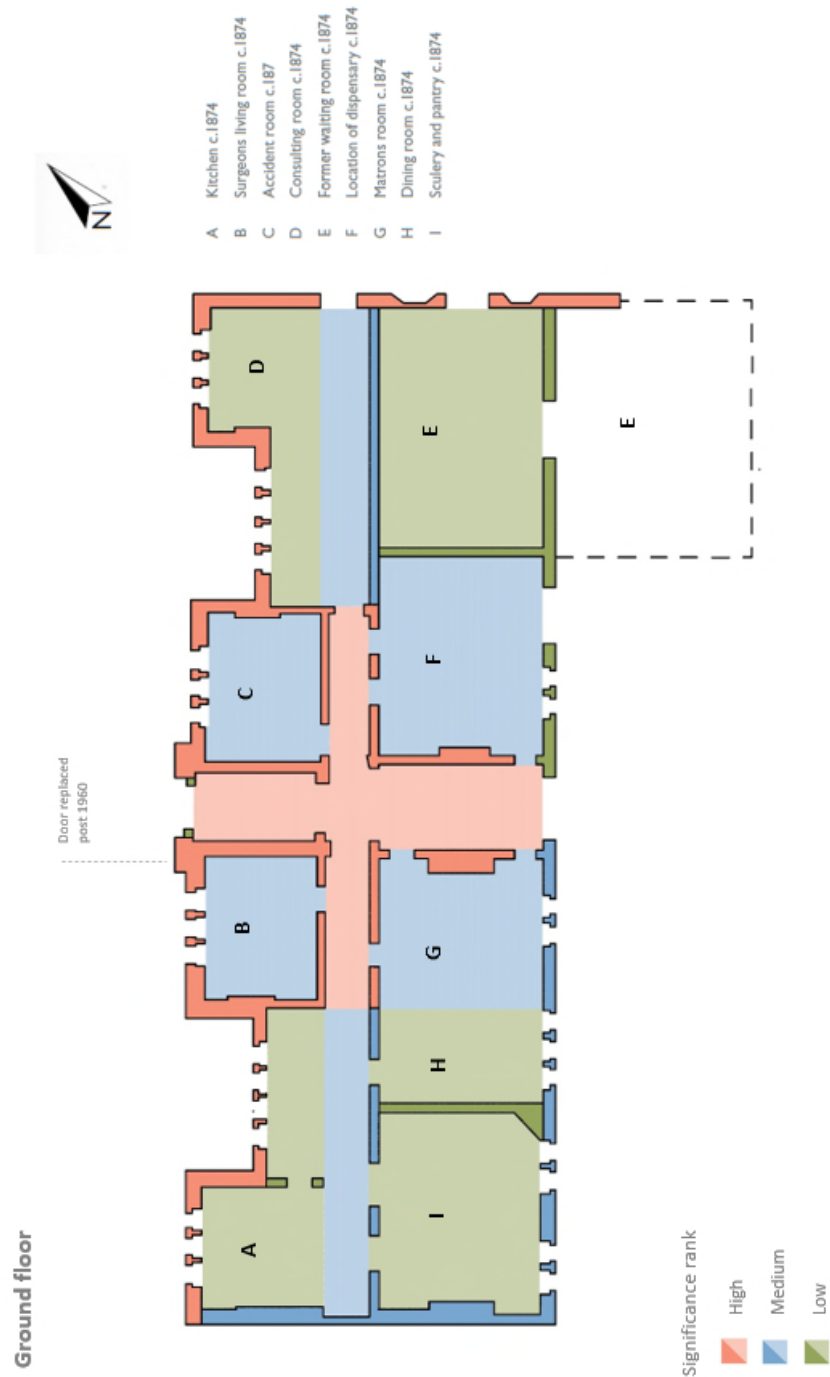


Figure 23: Ground floor - internal significance

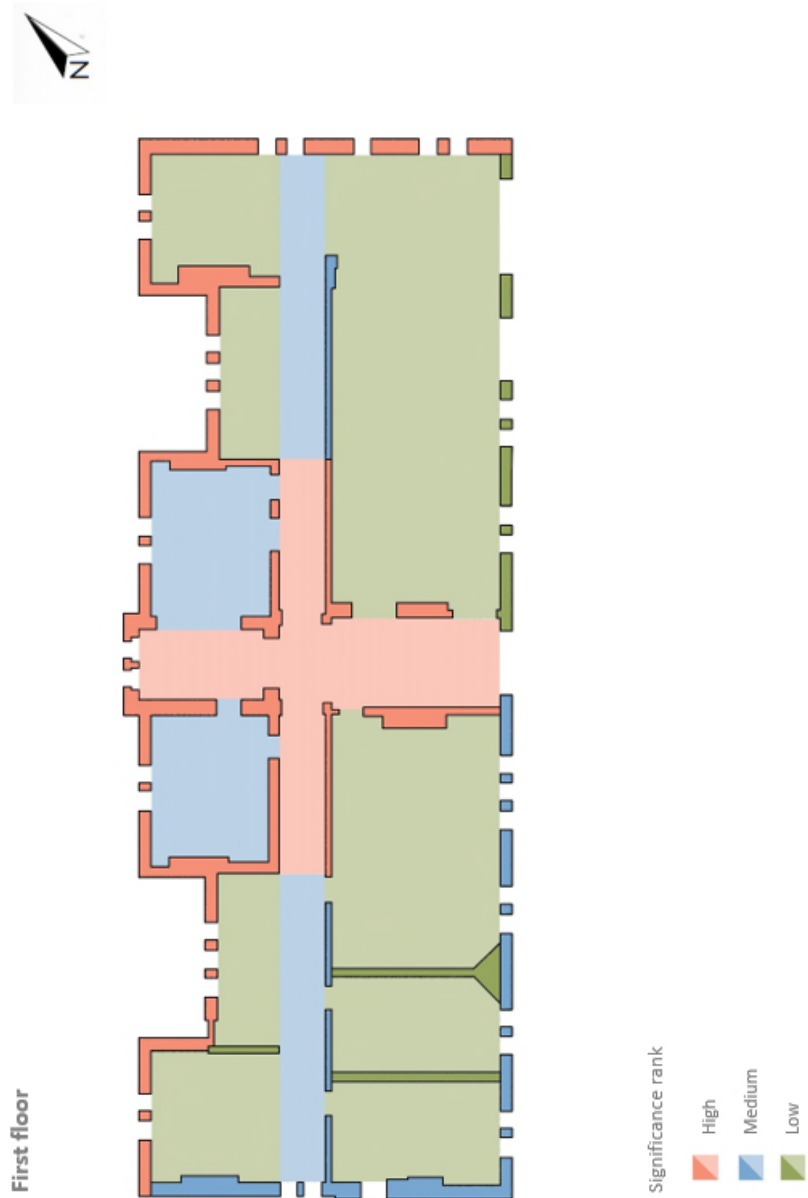


Figure 24: First floor - internal significance

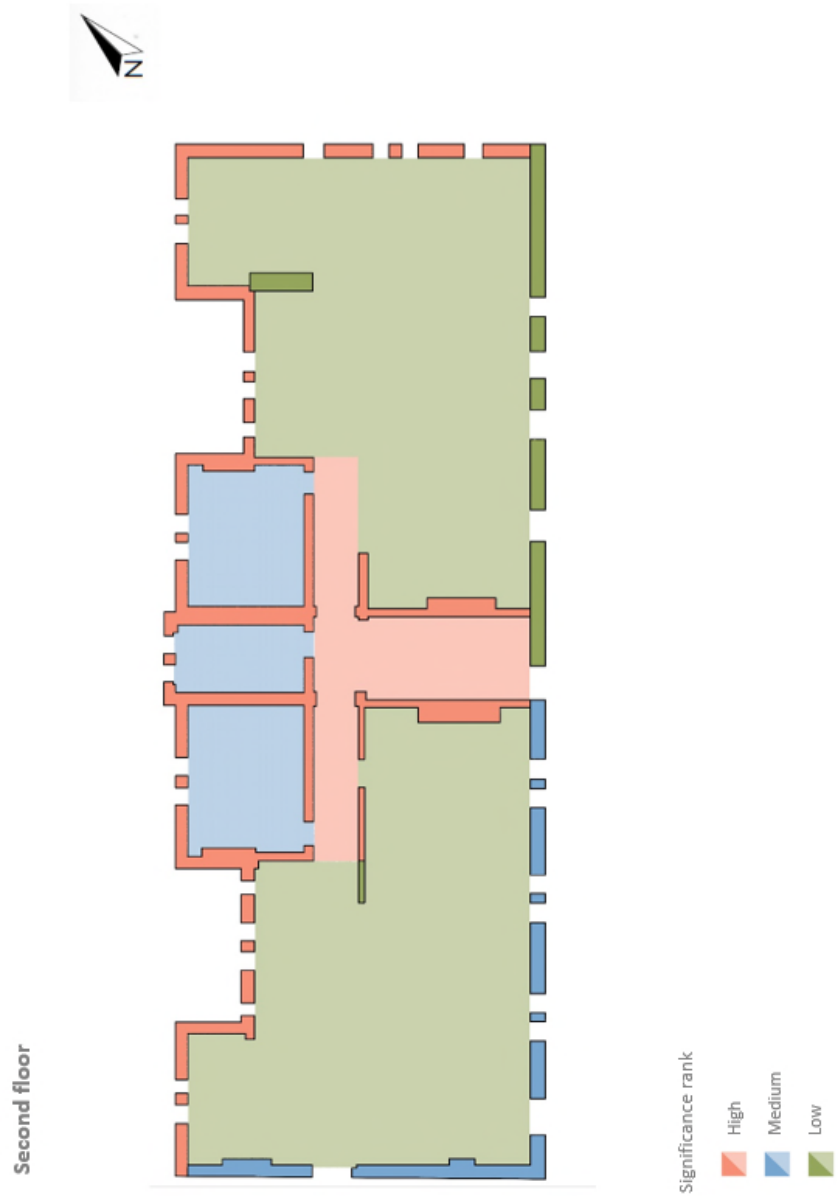


Figure 25: Second floor - internal significance

The Policy Context

Introduction

- 3.42 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 3.43 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to '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' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay 'special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.44 The revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 19 February 2019 and updated on 19 June 2019⁴⁷.
- 3.45 Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' deals with Heritage Assets describing them as 'an irreplaceable resource' that 'should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.'⁴⁸

Proposals affecting heritage assets

- 3.46 Paragraph 189 brings the NPPF in line with statute and case law on listed buildings and conservation areas. It says that:

⁴⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019). Revised National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁴⁸ The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

‘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.’

- 3.47 In terms of the local authority, paragraph 190 requires that they ‘identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’
- 3.48 Further, ‘Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision (paragraph 191).
- 3.49 Paragraph 192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Considering potential impacts

- 3.50 Paragraph 193 advises local planning authorities 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 3.51 Paragraph 194 continues, ‘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. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.⁴⁹

3.52 In terms of proposed development that will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, paragraph 195 states that '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:

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

3.53 It continues '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' (paragraph 196).

3.54 In taking into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset the local authority should employ a 'a balanced judgement' in regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 197).

3.55 The NPPF introduces the requirement that 'Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a

⁴⁹ Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (paragraph 198).

- 3.56 Where a heritage asset is to be lost, the developer will be required to 'record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible' (paragraph 199).⁵⁰
- 3.57 In terms of enhancing the setting of heritage assets the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably (paragraph 200).

Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.58 Planning Practice provides streamlined guidance for the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning system. It includes guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section entitled 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' which gives advice under the following headings:
- Overview: historic environment;
 - Plan making: historic environment;
 - Decision-taking: historic environment ;
 - Designated heritage assets;
 - Non-designated heritage assets;
 - Heritage Consent Processes and;
 - Consultation and notification requirements for heritage related applications.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Notes

- 3.59 Historic England provide guidance regarding the setting of heritage assets and how to assess the effect of change on that setting. They provide 'information on good practice to assist

⁵⁰ Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the national Planning Practice Guide (PPG)'.

3.60 These notes are:

- GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (2015);
- GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015);
- GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd ed., 2017);
- GPA 4: Enabling development and heritage assets (2020).

Manchester Local Plan

3.61 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on the 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan. It sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against

3.62 Policy EN3 deals with heritage, and says 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.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset'.

3.63 Some former UDP policies have been saved and form part of the Local Plan. They include City-wide Development Control Policies relating the heritage matters.

3.64 Policy DC18.1 deals with conservation areas, and says:

'The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a) The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;

ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;

iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);

iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;

v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

b) The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c) Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.

d) Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e) Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

3.65 Policy DC19.1 deals with listed buildings and says:

‘In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy the Council will:

a) not grant Listed Building Consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;

- b) not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
- c) not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
- 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;
- e) permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;
- f) not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

5 The proposed scheme and its effect

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly describes the proposed scheme and its effect on the heritage significance described earlier. The proposed scheme is described in detail and illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Buttress Architects.

The proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance

- 5.2 The following baseline design principles have guided the design of the Proposed Development:

- Preservation and restoration of as much of the historic fabric as possible, with the focus on the retention of the areas of highest significance.
- Seek to reinstate the central tower, a key feature of historic and architectural significance
- Construction methodology requires the removal of the west elevation to facilitate safe access and deliver any redevelopment on site. For further details please refer to Section 4 of the Design & Access Statement, the Construction Management Strategy and Outline Demolition Methodology Statement prepared by Eric Wright.
- Strike a careful balance between the need to deliver high quality architecture, with the conservation deficit challenges presented due to the nature of the Site and the condition of the Dispensary to deliver a viable and visually attractive scheme.
- Limited scope for provision of car parking.

- 5.3 The Project Team has undertaken an options appraisal to check that the Proposed Development will bring forward the optimum viable use for the building and secure its long-term use. The appraisal was based on the baseline design principles set out above. An extension of 4m to the rear and 1.5 storeys was also assumed for each option due to the clear conservation deficit and need to create a viable footprint for development within the constrained site boundary. Each option was therefore assessed assuming the same baseline principles.
- 5.4 The Project Team assessed a number of different uses including office, hotel, market residential (standard and higher value product), community/leisure, and affordable housing.

- 5.5 This has included analysing the impact of proposals in terms of heritage, architecture and the commercial context and market, alongside understanding whether each use would be viable. The appraisal of each use has been informed by Viability Assessments undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton and submitted with this application.
- 5.6 In summary, this appraisal identified that affordable housing represents the only viable use because of the range of grant funding solutions which are available to schemes delivering affordable housing. The study also demonstrates that affordable housing presents the most sustainable long-term use of the building, consistent with the retention of its heritage values and significance as far as possible, and the conservation-led approach to the project that has been adopted.
- 5.7 Detail of this research is included in other documents submitted with the application, but for the purposes of the Heritage Statement it was concluded that affordable residential use was the most appropriate and this was agreed with the Council during the pre-application process.
- 5.8 Understanding the significance – and remaining significance - of the building was at the heart of the design approach, recognising not just what was left of the building but the value it has within the local community.
- 5.9 In reality, whilst the relative historic significance of the interior of the building is recognised, the majority of its architectural interest has been lost through dereliction, demolition and decay. Externally the most significant loss to the remaining building is the top of the central tower.
- 5.10 Nevertheless, the proposals do require considerable demolition of elements of the remaining structure. This has been carefully considered to ensure that it has been kept to an absolute minimum and always based on necessity in order to deliver a viable scheme.
- 5.11 A number of construction challenges have also impacted on the design decisions: external masonry walls have been secured around the perimeter by scaffold; the basement is filled with loose masonry with the potential for collapse; walls previously restrained by floors have lost this rigidity and are at risk of collapse; no machinery can access the building interior from ground level without the removal of a section of wall; there is no space on the site to locate a crane.
- 5.12 Following preparation and consideration of the Initial Statement of Significance it was recognised that the front and

eastern elevation were of the highest significance. These contained the highest quality detailing, architectural modelling and were the most in-tact remaining elevations of the building. It was also recognised that reinstating the tower was an important heritage benefit – to -reinstate the integrity of the front, most important, elevation of the building. The retention, repair and restoration of these elements has been a key driver in the scheme.

- 5.13 The rear, south elevation was always a secondary elevation, and is now marked by the scars of the more recent demolition.
- 5.14 In order to deliver the necessary level of accommodation to be viable whilst also delivering the re-constructed tower, it was recognised that the building would need to be extended to the rear and also upwards. This has inevitably meant that the rear elevation (identified as containing elements of Medium/Low/Neutral significance) will be demolished in order to facilitate the new accommodation, and as well as the western wall (Medium/Neutral significance) which needs to be demolished as per the construction methodology.
- 5.15 It also meant that a re-instatement of the original roof form would not be viable. A number of different roof options were considered during the pre-application process to reach the finally agreed form. A contemporary two-teared roof form was agreed as the preferred arrangement.
- 5.16 The scheme replicates the gables to give the retained façade an apparent depth and ensures the full height of the windows on the retained elevations is maintained.
- 5.17 Roof lights provide visual separation between the old and new. The new accommodation is set back from the façade to retain the prominence of the tower.
- 5.18 Flat roofs provide maintenance access and space for the provision of PVs.
- 5.19 As mentioned earlier, the re-instatement of the original tower roof is a key heritage benefit of this scheme. The re-introduction of the steeply pitched roof along with its turrets and detailing will ensure that the listed building's prominence and dignity is clearly visible along Old Mill Street and the surrounding area. The front and side elevations will replicate the original whilst the rear, unseen from the public realm, will be recreated in brick but with no decoration.
- 5.20 The simple approach to the extension means that it will still allow the tower to be the dominant element in the streetscape.

5.21 This is illustrated in the following views, agreed with the Council.

5.22 These can be seen in the following 'existing' and 'proposed' CGI illustrations:



5.23 This view is taken from the corner of Weybridge Road and Old Mill Street looking south west. The existing image shows not only the existing state of Ancoats Dispensary encased in scaffolding, but also the scale of the surrounding development.

5.24 The following image showing the proposed scheme illustrates how the scheme will not only restore the architectural quality

of the historic fabric on its most prominent and significant elevations, but also the re-instated tower roof will be the most prominent element of the building. The historic façade will be cleaned and repaired, and natural slate used on the pitched roofs.

- 5.25 The extension to the rear and roof have been carefully designed, and the materials carefully chosen to ensure that they remain recessive behind the architecturally most important part of the building.



- 5.26 This is further re-enforced in views looking east along Old Mill Street, where again, the prominence of the re-instated tower is

clear and dominant, with the extensions to the rear sitting comfortably and contextually behind. It is also important to note that the scheme allows for the removal of scaffolding which currently shields the building from view. Without a viable scheme (the Proposed Development is the only one) scaffolding has to stay in place.



- 5.27 These final views are taken from Old Mill Street further to the east, looking west beyond the junction with Weybridge Road and provides a wider context to the Dispensary within this part of New Islington.

- 5.28 The image shows that whilst currently the building is perhaps slightly overwhelmed by the surrounding modern development, the reinstatement of the tower immediately re-instates its prominence and status within the street and community.
- 5.29 The design approach to the rear extension has been to recognise the symmetry and rhythm that the more decorative front elevation provides but to deliver it in a much more restrained way.
- 5.30 There is a clear separation between the old and the new, and in contrast to the highly decorative front elevation the rear is very simple in brick with bronze powder coated aluminium windows. The top two additional floors will be clad in an aluminium curtain walling which will be given relief by deep fins to provide depth to the façade.
- 5.31 Internally the majority of the building is lost. Floors have either been removed or collapsed into the basement and only a number of precariously propped spine walls remain.
- 5.32 However, in order to facilitate the required accommodation and delivered in a viable way, it has been necessary to propose the demolition of all remaining structure within the building behind the front and east façade. This includes walls identified as being of High and Medium significance. To mitigate this, the layout of the apartments has been arranged to ensure that the original main entrance continues in that function, along with the positioning of the main staircase – retaining the central focus to the building – and the proportions of the main hall have been retained within. Accommodation then radiates off a central corridor – much as it did in the original configuration.
- 5.33 The ground floor has been lowered to be ‘at grade’ to facilitate level access and also provide the necessary space for accommodation within. This will require the entrance doors and steps to be re-configured.
- 5.34 Overall, the scheme does require a considerable amount of demolition that will arguably lead to a fundamental change to the significance, completeness and understanding of the listed building. However, considering the extent of demolition previously permitted and the existing state of the building, we believe that this is at the lower end of the scale in terms of substantial harm – much of the harm had already been done.
- 5.35 In reality this scheme offers a unique opportunity to preserve, restore and enhance the most important element of its architectural significance – its street elevations and the tower –

a structure that has been a landmark in this part of Manchester for nearly 150 years.

- 5.36 The remaining structure will be repaired and restored – returning the key elevations to their former glory.
- 5.37 Within the wider townscape, the proposals will positively enhance the area, re-instating a historic reference point.
- 5.38 The proposed extension to the rear and roof has been carefully designed to ensure the status and dominance of the re-constructed tower remains the visually most important element of the building.

6 Compliance with policy and guidance

- 6.1 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of Ancoats Dispensary and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the report also describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.2 In respect of Paragraph 192 of the NPPF, the proposals have been developed in consultation with Manchester City Council and other stakeholders to ensure that they sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset through positive regeneration of a near-derelict site and ensuring that as much of the listed building can be retained, restored and re-instated as possible. Further, the proposals have been borne out of a full understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.3 With regard to Paragraph 193, great weight has been given to the asset's conservation through an understanding of the significance of the listed building and by ensuring that where it is to be physically impacted it is kept to an absolute (and justified) minimum. A clear justification has been provided for each element of the proposal as required by paragraph 194.
- 6.4 The NPPF (para.194) identifies two levels of potential 'harm' that might be caused to a designated heritage asset by a development: 'substantial harm...or total loss of significance' or 'less than substantial'. To be susceptible to a specific level of harm, that level of harm must be caused to a designated heritage asset – in this instance the Ancoats Dispensary.
- 6.5 As discussed in the previous section, this assessment has concluded that, whilst regarded as being at the lower end of the scale, an element of substantial harm will be caused to the Grade II listed Ancoats Dispensary by these proposals – through a fundamental change to the significance, completeness and understanding of the listed building.
- 6.6 Given the level of harm, the tests within Paragraph 194 and 195 of the NPPF must be met.
- 6.7 In summary, the nature of the heritage asset in terms of its condition prevents all reasonable uses of the Site. The Options Appraisal undertaken has also identified that affordable housing represents the only viable use because of the range of grant funding solutions which are available to schemes

delivering affordable housing. The study also demonstrated that affordable housing presents the most sustainable long-term use of the building, consistent with the retention of its heritage values and significance as far as possible, and the conservation-led approach to the project that has been adopted.

- 6.8 Given its current condition, the building in its existing form (without substantial harm) would have no viable use in the short or medium term through appropriate marketing. Even with redevelopment of the Site, the scheme is not viable without the provision of grant funding to support its conservation. A Viability Assessment prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton is submitted in support of this application and demonstrates the fine margins of viability that the proposals must operate within.
- 6.9 Evidently several attempts have been made to redevelop the building, which have ultimately never come into fruition due to project funding shortfalls. Grants identified through MCC and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority via their Brownfield Housing Fund are critical to bridging the building's conservation deficit. However, given the scale of the conservation deficit, these grants alone would be insufficient to enable the long-term conservation of the heritage asset. The interventions that are proposed to the Grade II Listed Building and considered to lead to substantial harm at the lower end of the scale, are necessary to close the conservation deficit as far as possible and deliver a viable scheme.
- 6.10 In summary, the Proposed Development is considered necessary to secure the long-term conservation of the heritage asset and there are significant public benefits, including heritage benefits. It is therefore considered that the heritage tests in NPPF Paragraph 194 and 195 have been met and this is set out in more detail in the Planning Statement.
- 6.11 The proposals will have no impact on any other heritage assets.

Manchester City Council's Local Plan

- 6.12 In appropriately addressing the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the works also meet the policy requirements of Manchester City Council.
- 6.13 In accordance with Policy EN3, we believe that considering the state of the existing structure and the issues surrounding viability of any proposals, that they, at the least, preserve and enhance the contribution that the building makes to the

character and setting of the surrounding area – particularly with the re-instatement of the tower and the restoration of the principal facades.

- 6.14 With regards to saved policy DC19.1, the applicant shares the Council's desire to 'secure the retention, restoration maintenance and continued use...' of the listed building and has undertaken to achieve this in a way that whilst recognising that some harm to significance is caused, this has been justified, minimised and also includes elements of heritage benefit to both the building and wider townscape.

Appendix B: Historic development of plan form



Source: Kerr, 2016, p53

KMHeritage

72 Pymer's Mead
London SE21 8NJ
T: 020 8670 9057
F: 0871 750 3557

mail@kmheritage.com
www.kmheritage.com

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