



20th April 2021

Heritage Statement for works to the second, fourth and fifth floor levels of the Grade II Listed Fourways House, Hilton Street, Manchester.

Introduction

Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) have been commissioned by PREC ManOff Propco 3, S.À R.L. to prepare a Heritage Statement for minor refurbishment works to units on the second, fourth and fifth floor levels of the Grade II listed Fourways House (see Figures 2, 9 & 14). Reference should be made to the information and plans prepared by OMI architects.

Fourways House was constructed in 1906 as a packing warehouse and was designed by the architect James William Beaumont of Manchester. The building is an exemplar of this type and retains a large number of original features alongside a clearly legible original planform, including hoist locations, stair cores and former warehouse rooms designed to be used by multiple companies.

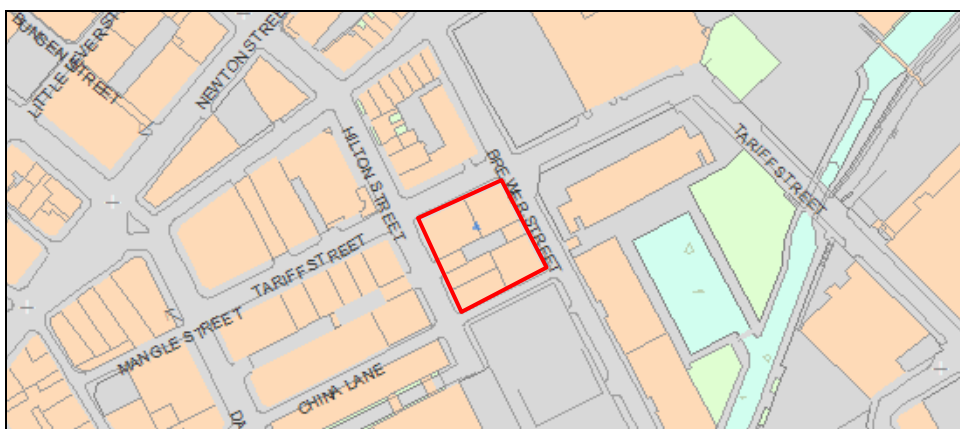


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Fourways House outlined red.

Statutory Designations

Fourways House was statutorily designated as Grade II Listed on the 1st June 2000, and subsequently amended on the 9th July 2002.

With regards to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 66 of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to “*have special regard to the desirability of preserving [a listed building] or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*” when considering whether to grant planning permission.

Consequently, this Statement, and the preceding conservation advice to the project team, has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local heritage planning policy.

Planning Policy Context

The key planning policy documents are, respectively, the: Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), and Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012).

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - With regards to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, **Section 66** is relevant to the current scheme as it requires the Local Planning Authority to *"have special regard to the desirability of preserving [a listed building] or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"* when considering whether to grant planning permission. The Site is also adjacent to a number of listed buildings, the settings of which could be impacted upon by the Proposals for the Site.

The Council is thus, required, by legislation and national planning policy, to have regard to the impact of any Proposed Development which has the potential to affect designated heritage assets. This consideration needs to be proportionate to the relative significance of the designated heritage asset and the actual impact of the Proposed Development.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 - The policies in the NPPF constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice. The definition requires development to give due weight to the appropriate conservation of heritage assets in order to be defined as sustainable development (**paragraph 8**). This is because one of the key dimensions of sustainability is protecting and enhancing the historic environment. It is thus necessary to demonstrate that the proposals for the site are demonstrably sustainable.

Of particular relevance is **paragraph 189**, which states that *"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."* (NPPF, 2019).

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014 and as subsequently amended) - The PPG provides current advice to assist with the interpretation of the NPPF. Of particular relevance is the PPG's commentary upon the importance of 'significance' in decision taking (**Paragraph 7**). This section advises that *"being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals."* This report provides such information.

Also of relevance is **Paragraph 8**, which identifies the importance of pre-empting or minimising potential harm to heritage assets or their settings by obtaining *"a clear understanding of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting...to develop proposals which avoid or minimise harm."* This approach has been adopted during the development of the Current Proposals.

Finally, the PPG emphasises that, in general terms, *"substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases"* (**Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723**). For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.

Historic England's guidance - This Heritage Statement accords with the requirements of the NPPF, and the guidance set out in Historic England's Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in heritage Assets (October 2019). The recent guidance calls for a staged approach, which provides relevant and proportionate information sufficient to inform decision-making by the Council.

In 2015 Historic England released three Good Practice Advice notes supporting the implementation of national policy and the related guidance in the PPG. The advice notes do not constitute a statement of Government policy itself, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology or particular data sources.

Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment – (March 2015), was utilised as part of this assessment in order to gain a full understanding of the relevant issues, alongside the NPPF and PPG.

Assessment of Significance

The purpose of the significance assessment is to use recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site.

The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF (2019) and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in its 2019 document, "Statements of Heritage Significance". Historic England's "Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance," 2008, has also been utilised as part of the following assessment.

High significance relates to those parts or elements of the Site deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are *fundamental* to the understanding of the building and its architectural design concept and play a major role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

Considerable significance relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of special interest. They are *important* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and play a considerable role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

Low significance relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a relatively *minor contribution* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

No significance/Detrimental features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can *detract from the significance* of the building and maybe evidence of modern or ad-hoc refurbishments, or poor craftsmanship.

Significance of the Second floor level

The extent of the second floor subject to the current proposals is illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Existing second floor plan showing the extent of the application site shaded red.

The second floor level was initially converted in the 1990s to form office accommodation with associated kitchen area and toilets, modern suspended ceilings to the eastern side, glass office partitions, and current, modern wood effect flooring, which are all of **no significance**.

Areas of **high significance** include the cast iron columns and former metal hoist doors.

Figures 3 to 8 illustrate the current office arrangement following the 1990s works and highlight particularly the existing sub-division of the floorplates and modern fixtures and fittings.



Figure 3: Looking north across the middle unit illustrating modern glass partitions that subdivide the space.

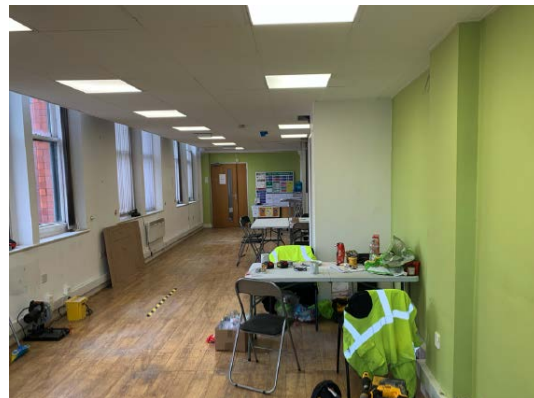


Figure 4: Looking south across the eastern unit illustrating modern suspended ceilings.



Figure 5: Looking north across the eastern unit illustrating modern partitions and suspended ceilings.



Figure 6: Looking north across the western unit illustrating modern partitioning.

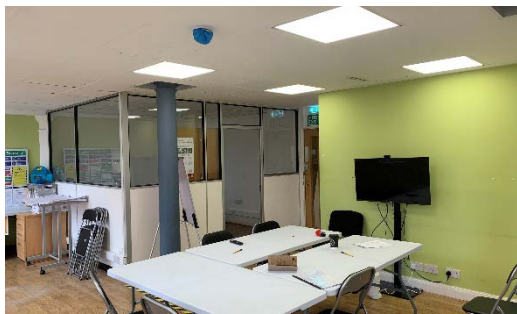


Figure 7: The south-west corner of the eastern unit illustrating modern partitioning and suspended ceilings.



Figure 8: The original metal hoist doors to the south-west corner of the western unit.

Significance of the Fourth-floor level

The extent of the fourth floor subject to the current proposals is illustrated in Figure 9.

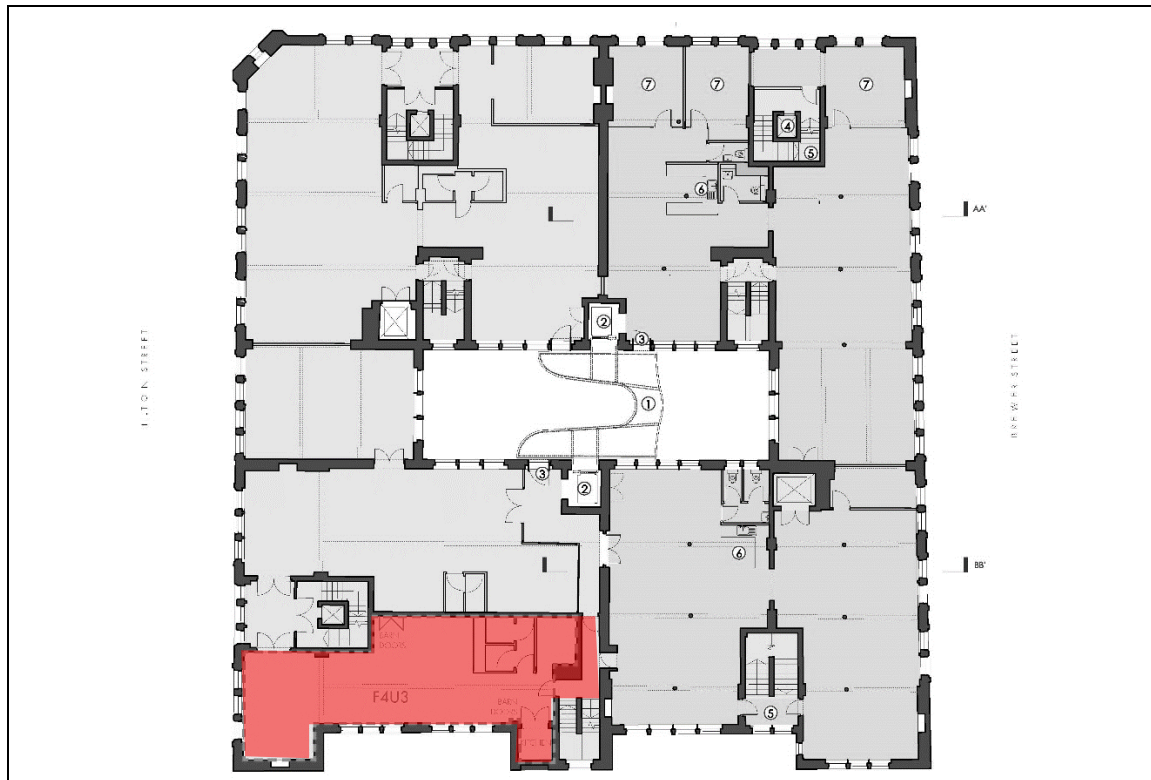


Figure 9: Existing fourth floor plan showing the extent of the application site shaded red.

The fourth floor level was initially converted in the 1990s and was subsequently refurbished during the 2000s to form office accommodation with associated new toilets, and a small kitchen placed within the former hoist. Both the toilets and the kitchen fit-out (including all tiled surfaces) are of **no significance**.

Areas of **high significance** include the cast iron columns, former hoist doors, including ironmongery and stay-bars, and exposed brickwork and floorboards. Note – the skirting boards are of a modern date. Figures 10 to 13 illustrate the current office arrangement following the 1990s works.

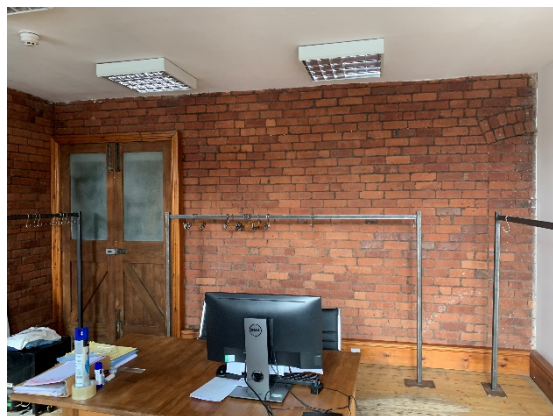


Figure 10: The north elevation showing the original former connecting doors between this and the adjacent unit.



Figure 11: The modern kitchenette within the former hoist to the south-east corner.



Figure 12: The modern kitchen within the original hoist to the south-east corner.



Figure 13: The original hoist doors to the south-east corner.

Significance of the Fifth-floor level

The extent of the fifth floor subject to the current proposals is illustrated in Figure 14.



Figure 14: Existing fifth floor plan showing the extent of the application site shaded red.

The fifth floor level was initially converted in the 1990s to form office accommodation with associated kitchen area and toilets, and was subsequently refurbished during the 2000s.

Areas of **no significance** include all modern partitioning, fitted cupboards beneath internal windows, mezzanine level and ladder access, kitchen and toilet fit-outs. Figures 15 to 18 illustrate the current arrangement of the top floor unit and show the exposed original timber roof structure and original floorboards.



Figure 15: Looking north towards the internal atrium illustrating modern cupboards below the window.



Figure 16: Looking west towards the modern mezzanine illustrating the exposed original roof structure..



Figure 17: Beneath the modern mezzanine illustrating the underside of the modern mezzanine.



Figure 18: The modern kitchen fit-out to the north-west corner of the unit.

Impact Assessment

Table 1 below defines the terms used to describe the physical (direct) impact of the Proposals on the character and fabric components of the Grade II listed building and the degree of heritage impact which would result from the Proposals.

Table 1: Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact		
Definition of magnitude and nature of heritage impact.	Direct heritage impacts (physical alteration or change to the site's character)	Indirect heritage impact (visual change to the experience or setting of the site and its context).
Major adverse Impact. <i>Substantial harm of this nature, which results in total loss of significance or fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.</i>	Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component which results in total loss of significance, or fundamental compromises the setting of a designated heritage asset.	Substantially harmful change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development severely erodes the heritage interest of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values and thus results in total loss of significance.
Moderate Adverse Impact.	Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a	Less than substantial harm to the fabric and character of a designated heritage

<i>Less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.</i>	designated heritage asset or its setting.	asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Minor Adverse Impact. <i>The negative impact on the setting or overall character will need to be clearly balanced by appropriate mitigation.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a designated heritage asset which result in minor compromise of its fabric or erosion of its character.	Minor compromise to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a minor extent the heritage interest of the assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Negligible adverse impact. <i>This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree.</i>	Development resulting in negligible direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor, original fabric component, but avoids diminishing its character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would alter, but not diminish, the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area to any appreciable degree.
Neutral Impact. <i>This does not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.</i>	Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a component of no heritage value which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric.	Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Negligible beneficial impact. <i>The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which is detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area.

Minor Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest.	Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development enhances to a minor extent the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character.	Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Major beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in substantial improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in restoration or alterations to a designated heritage asset which comprises substantial restoration of its fabric and historic character and an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.	Substantial improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in a significant enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

The Proposals

At **second floor** level the proposals include:

- the removal of modern floor coverings and the restoration of original floorboards beneath
- the removal of all modern partitions
- the removal of plastered wall surfaces to expose the brickwork beneath
- the removal of modern toilet and kitchen facilities and their replacement
- the removal of modern suspended ceilings and the repair and redecoration of original plastered ceiling beneath
- the creation of three openings through of original brick walls between the four units to allow for better circulation between the spaces
- the redecoration of original columns and hoist doors
- the renewal of modern lighting fixtures.

At **fourth floor** level the proposals include:

- the removal of all modern partitions
- the removal and replacement of modern toilet and kitchen facilities
- the repair of the original floorboards
- the replacement of modern lighting fixtures
- the replacement of modern entrance and emergency exit doors
- the redecoration of original hoist doors, columns and ceilings
- to the landing, the modern laminate flooring will be removed and original floorboards repaired.

At **fifth floor** level the proposals include:

- the removal of all modern partitions to toilet, mezzanine and kitchen
- removal of modern mezzanine level
- removal of modern toilet and kitchen facilities and their relocation to the eastern side of the unit
- remove modern fitted cupboards
- the repair of the original floorboards
- the replacement of modern lighting fixtures
- plaster ceilings and painted timber rafters to be repainted
- the replacement of modern entrance and emergency exit doors
- the redecoration of original hoist doors, columns and ceilings

Conclusion

The proposed, minor internal works to the second, fourth and fifth floor levels of the Grade II Listed Fourways House aim to continue the style and quality of the previously completed refurbishment schemes to the other units within the building. The proposed scheme is in response to market demand and is necessary to ensure the sustainable use of the building as modern office spaces by upgrading the now outdated spaces to a high quality standard.

The proposed new stud partition walls and enclosed toilet and kitchen areas will be fixed back to the historic fabric of the building, but due to the proposed light-weight construction of these elements this will ensure minimal intervention to the historic fabric in these localised areas only.

There will be isolated examples of low adverse impact resulting from the need to connect the four units to the fourth floor level. However, all features of heritage significance will remain unaltered, and building elements and features of high significance will be uncovered, repaired and redecorated. The redecoration of the cast iron columns, hoist doors, ceilings and floorboards, will all result in beneficial impacts.

Consequently, it is considered that the current proposals will result in an overall negligible adverse impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Fourways House as a whole.