



MANCHESTER
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY
PORTICO BANNERS

Design and Access Statement

April 2021

Allies and Morrison

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Photo of the restored portico façade frontage to the new Arts & Humanities

1 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Allies and Morrison to accompany the application for Listed Building Consent and Advertising consent submitted on behalf of Manchester Metropolitan University for the introduction of three banners to the front to the new Arts & Humanities Building portico façade, located in the University’s All Saint’s campus in central Manchester.

1.1 PROJECT TEAM

Applicant	Manchester Metropolitan University
Architect	Allies and Morrison
Planning Consultant	Turley
Heritage Consultant	Turley
Structural Engineer	Arup

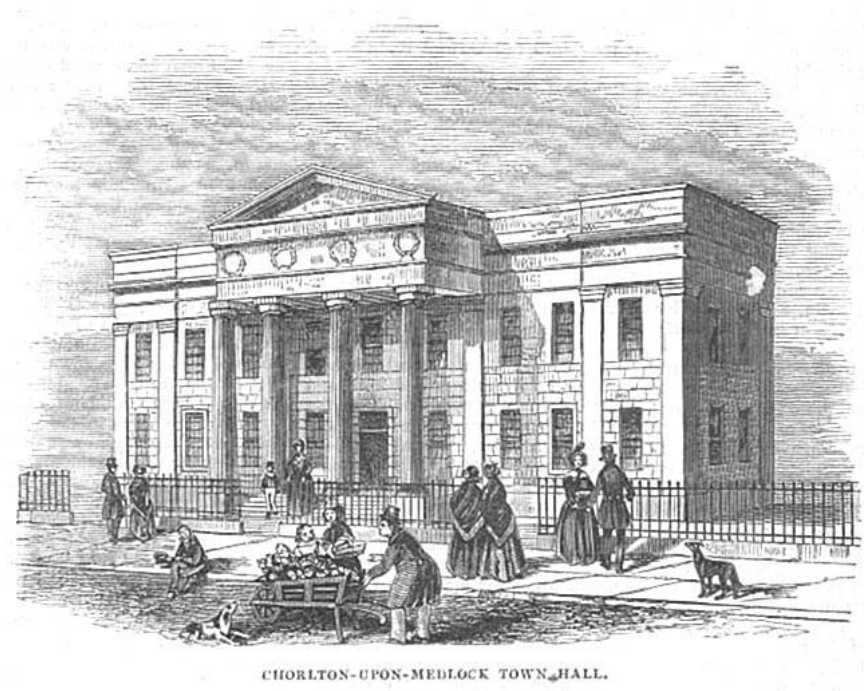


Image of Chorlton on Medlock Town Hall



Aerial view of Chorlton on Medlock from the NW 1937. All Saints Church is the dominant landmark in the centre of the square, which contrasts with the dense grid of streets in the locality. Building

2 THE BUILDING

2.1 EXISTING BUILDING

The Chorlton-on-Medlock Town Hall was commissioned in 1830 by the Police Commissioners of Chorlton Row and opened the following year. The chosen site was on the north side of Grosvenor Square, which had been laid out in the late 1790s as part of a speculative development of streets and squares, to be fashioned on the London model. The Town Hall was completed on 14 October 1831. It lived only a short life as a town hall, but it also served as the home of the Chorlton-on-Medlock Poor Law Guardians Dispensary, which had been established in 1825 as a welfare and medical charity to meet the needs of the growing working class population. The Dispensary was funded by the Chorlton Select Vestry. Committee rooms were on the first floor.

In 1842 the area was transferred to the newly formed municipal Borough of Manchester and the Town Hall was reduced to a support role as a local lock-up; a two storey Police Parade Room was added in 1849-63. Following Fenian disturbances in 1867 the doors to the building were plated in iron and shutters were reinforced.

Thereafter its main role was as a meeting place for local societies and religious groups. The building has an interesting footnote in history as the venue for the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945, attended by several of the leading figures in the African independence movement including Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore.

In 1952 the Dispensary sold their interest and the building became part of the College of Art. It was listed at this time, but in 1970 the building was demolished behind the classical façade to make way for the new College. Mabel Tylecote was one of the few purpose-built colleges of adult education in the country. The College closed in 1991 and was taken over by the Polytechnic, now Manchester Metropolitan University.

Allies and Morrison Architects, saw opportunity to unify the new Arts and Humanities building with the adjacent Grade II listed, 19th Century Grosvenor Building; the best preserved and most architecturally important building on the Square; thus adding the Holden Gallery to the public offer presented in the scheme, whilst also allowing opportunity to address access issues encountered in the Grosvenor Building.

The classical architecture of the Chorlton-on-Medlock portico facade presented a formal and grand entrance appropriate for a public building with a civic presence. Therefore over a period of three years, completing in 2020, the Grade II listed façade was restored and altered to allow for accessible entrances into the main atrium-foyer of the new Arts and Humanities building; thus allowing direct access to the adjacent Grosvenor Building/Holden Gallery as well as access to the main pedestrian thoroughfare within the new building leading to a new public Theatre, the Manchester Poetry Library, Café as well as all associate academic parts of the building.



Photo of the Portico façade prior to the demolition of the 1970's Mabel Tylecote building and restoration of the listed building



Photo of the Portico façade following its restoration as part of the complete new Arts and Humanities development Building



Detail photo of new lead roof and weatherings

2.2 RECENT RENOVATIONS AND ALTERATIONS

The Grade II listed facade of the former Chorlton-on-Medlock town hall has recently been integrated and restored as part of the new Arts & Humanities building for Manchester Metropolitan University, completed in 2020.

Prior to the development, this building was a subsidiary façade to the 1970's Mabel Tylecote building and had degraded after years of neglect. As part of the new development, this façade has been reinstated as the main entrance and frontispiece to the new building.

The building was restored and selected alterations were made to the façade to ensure it was fully accessible allowing step-free access into the building. Other alterations included replacement of the fenestration and doors to ensure the maximum amounts of light could enter and escape this building, highlighting it as a main entrance with a real civic presence onto Grosvenor square.

As part of the restoration process, the stonework was repaired, cleaned, repointed and protected in accordance with good conservation practice by expert stonemasons, and the roof and weatherings were replaced with high grade lead in keeping with a building of this type and age.

3 DESIGN PROPOSALS

3.1 REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

It is essential to the success of the Arts & Humanities Building that the rejuvenated portico is clearly legible as the main entrance to the new building.

Although reviving the portico's originally intended function as principal entrance, the building now provides access to a very different function to that of the town hall.

The Arts & Humanities Building has a certain civic quality necessary of its public function and status in the community/campus. A message of invitation and open access is integral to the recent revival of town hall façade. Since the Arts & Humanities opening for the start of the academic year in September 2020, there has been feedback from the university that students are struggling to identify the building within the campus, with there currently being little building signage on the exterior of the building.

This document therefore sets out proposals to further enhance the status of the Portico as the primary entrance to the new Arts & Humanities building by introducing fabric banners between the columns, to both advertise the name and faculty of the building, but also provide opportunity for the University to promote the fantastic cultural and civic enterprises and events that take place within the building and the adjacent Grosvenor building.

By introducing banners there is real opportunity to for the Arts & Humanities building, and portico façade to become a real destination within the area as well as Manchester as a whole.



Portico façade with Banner



Manchester Central library with banners suspended from its portico façade and fixed to stone columns



National Gallery London, with banners suspended from wires fixed to inside of stone columns at its portico façade



UCL Wilkins Building London, with banners used as pride artwork 'Queer Without Borders 2.0' suspended from temporary supports



Manchester Art Gallery with banners suspended from the pediment to its portico façade, and ratcheted around the columns



Scottish National Gallery Edinburgh with banners suspended from wires fixed to soffit and inside of stone columns at its portico façade



UCL Wilkins Building London, with columns wrapped in coloured fabric as a degree show final year artwork 'The Bias' by Boon & Baum



Walker Art Gallery with banners supported from horizontal rails supported in between the columns on its portico façade supported in between the columns on its portico façade



Tate Britain London, with banners suspended from wires ratcheted around columns with rubber face at its portico façade



UCL Wilkins Building London, with columns integrated into woven artwork 'Woven Portico' by Nicolas Feldmeyer

3.2 PRECEDENT EXAMPLES

There are many examples where banners of this kind have been introduced to buildings of civic and cultural worth.

1 kilometre up the road from the Arts and Humanities building, both the the Grade I listed Manchester Art Gallery, completed in 1835, and the Grade II listed Manchester Central Library completed in 1934, use fabric banner suspended between the columns to the portico frontages, to advertise the exhibitions within.

In Liverpool the Grade II* listed Walker Art Gallery, displays exhibition advertisements between its portico columns from metal bars.

In addition to the local examples listed above, some of the UK's most important cultural hotspots such as the National Gallery in London, the National Gallery of Scotland, and Tate Britain all use large fabric banners as a means for displaying the exhibitions/events that are taking place within between the columns of their respective portico frontages.

There are also several examples of educational establishments, and galleries using their porticos as an extension of the art exhibitions within. UCL's Wilkins building is a good example of a secondary educational facility, like that of the Manchester School of Art, Holden Gallery & New Arts & Humanities building, that has decorated the buildings columns, taking the creative endeavours on display within into the civic realm outside.

4 METHOD STATMENT

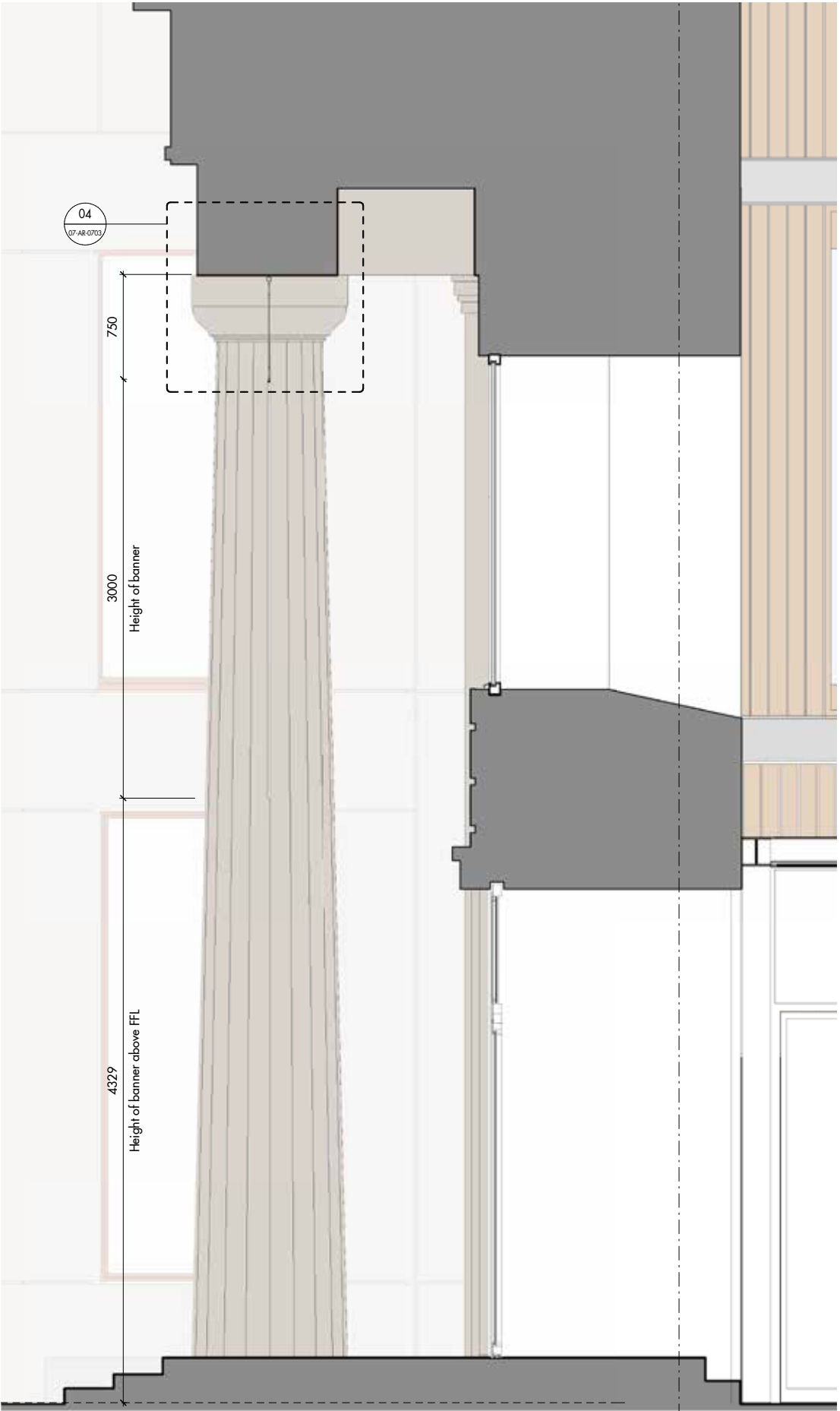
4.1 SIZE, SCALE AND LAYOUT

The scale needs to be large enough such that it allows sufficient room to introduce a banner with a graphic legible from across the other side of Cavindish square or from the pavement on Oxford Rd, but not so large as to obstruct light coming in through the windows or detract form the scale of the Portico itself.

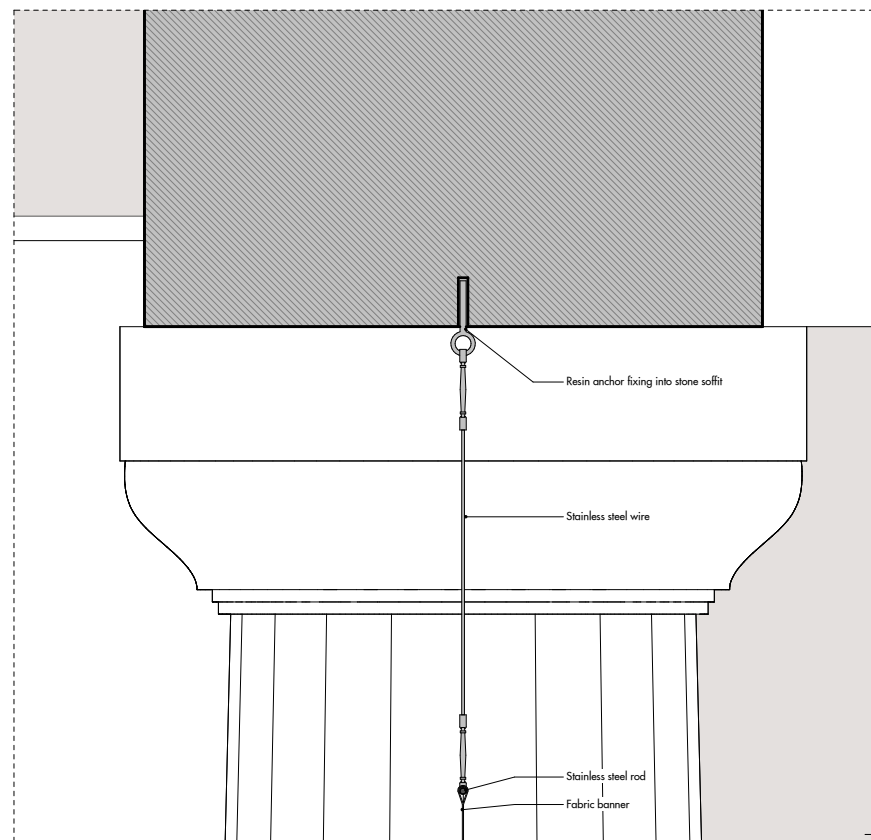
The proposal is therefore for three separate banners to be suspended between each set of columns, with a size of 3m tall by 1.2 m wide, thus allowing sufficient air to either side of the banners, to the face of the columns.

The proposal is that they will be located at the top half of the portico such that they are clearly visible from below, and up Oxford St/Cavendish Sq, as well as being heigh enough to be well above the top of the fanlight over the main central entrance door.

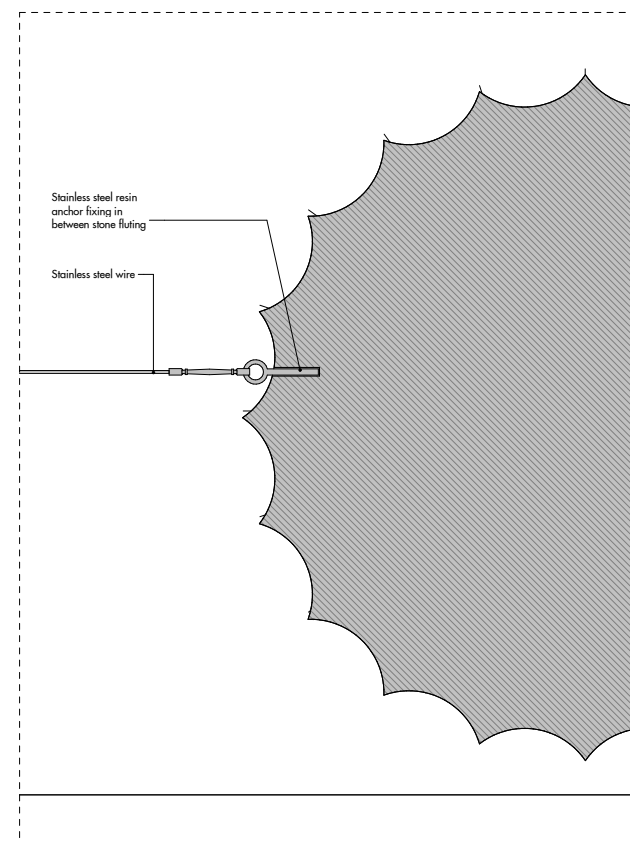
It is proposed that they are positioned centrally within the column, such that they are not in shadow below the pediment, but can also gain the benefit of the uprights set into the ground Infront of the columns. Any fixings will be centred within the depth of the fluting on the column, not on the outer ridge of the flute.



Proposed Portico Banner setting out section



Proposed portico banner fixing detail into soffit



Proposed portico banner fixing detail into column

4.2 FIXING PROPOSAL

The proposals are for discreetly positioned stainless steel, anchors with resin fixing into the stone soffit, and columns. From these fixings tensioned, thin-profile, stainless steel wires can be suspended by which the fabric banners can be fitted to. Any fixings into the stone will be verified by a structural engineer to ensure their integrity.

By fixing the anchors, it means that the whole system, including both the banners and the wires can be removed, therefore, if there are periods where no banners are on display, for example when they are being changed, then the only visible elements left behind will be the small, discreetly positioned stainless steel anchors.

Alternative methods for fixing explored, reasons for ruling them out:

horizontal bars fitted in-between the columns as per Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery:

- Horizontal bars will likely require that there is some degree of permanent, mechanical fixing into the stone given the likely wind loads inflicted onto the banners.
- Bars that are not mechanically fixed, that are only held in place by outward pressure against the stone columns, run the risk of popping out of position and injuring someone below.
- The pressure inflicted on the columns by pressure fitted bars would likely damage and wear away at the soft sunstone over time causing a greater level of damage to that of a considered permanent fixing.
- The thickness of the bars would be much more visually imposing than the thin stainless-steel wires proposed.

Ratcheting a wire around the column, similar to the Manchester Art gallery:

- A plastic coated, flat-faced, wire could be used to ratchet around the columns in place of the proposed lower fixings. However, over time, movements of the banners when blowing in the wind will likely result in small movements in the wire which could wear away the outer face of the fluting on the columns.
- A flat-faced, plastic coated wire wrapped around each column will be more visually imposing than that a considered, discreet, stainless steel fixing.

Unlike some of the fixing methods listed above, the fixing proposal ensures that the visual impact on the building, when the banners are both in place as well as when taken down, is minimal, with no structure, other than the fixing points left in place when the banners are not hung. These fixings will be permanent and will require destructive measures in order to remove them, however, there is justification that there will be no reason to remove them given the specialist nature of the new Arts and Humanities building, and the adjacent Grosvenor building. The Arts & Humanities building will always house a theatre, and performances spaces, therefore, certainly for the lifetime of the new building there will be a need and a desire to suspend banners to promote the events within the building on the Portico frontage.



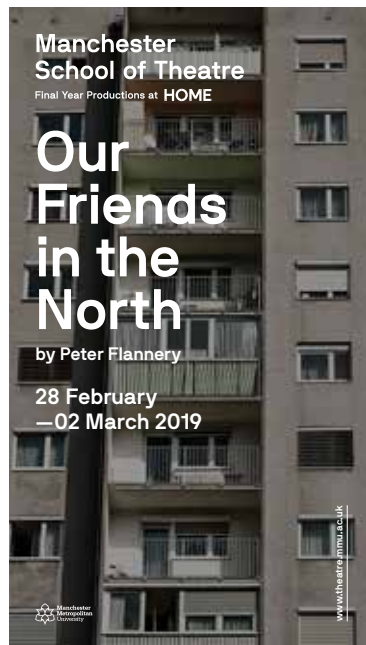
Examples of banners used for Holden Gallery

4.3 MATERIAL

The materials used for the banners is dependent on the length of time they will be erected for. Given that light will be spilling out from within the building, through the clear glass windows behind, as well as possibly shining up onto the banners from the uplights at the base of the columns to the front, the material will need to be opaque, and not a mesh to ensure maximum visibility of the banner.

A polyester based fabric would be suitable for banners for more transient, changeable exhibitions. They are lightweight and will be sheltered from heavy rain below the pediment but will not be suitable for long periods of time as they are relatively delicate and susceptible to wear and weathering.

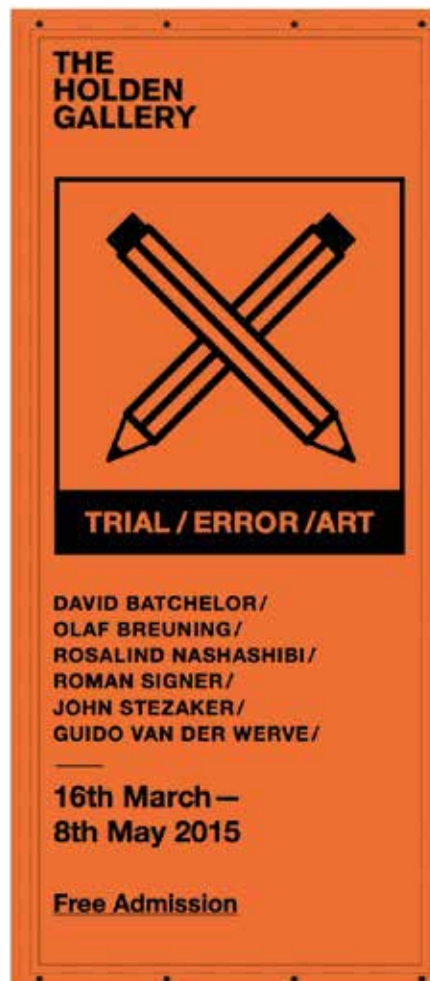
Vinyl Banners are extremely durable, water resistant and weatherproof, and are more appropriate for any banners that are likely to be reused or more permanent, for example banners that state the University name and building faculty. Banners made from vinyl will weather very well and will be easy to clean.



4.4 EXAMPLE BANNERS

The intention is that these banners are changeable, such that the University can advertise not only the university name, and faculty, but also advertise any events, performances and exhibitions that are taking place within the buildings, be them posters and imagery for a theatre production, an event or reading in the Manchester Poetry library, or an art exhibition or degree show associated with the adjacent Holden Gallery and Manchester School of Art.

On the opposite pagee are some examples of posters produced by the Holden Gallery and MMU for such events.



Examples of banner & posters by MMU, Manchester School of Theatre & Manchester School of Art

