

Heritage Statement

Central Library, Manchester

January 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage in support of a full planning application and application for listed building consent for minor internal alterations (the 'Proposed Works') to the grade II* listed Central Library, Manchester (the 'Application Site').
- 1.2 Listed Building Consent (118871/LO/2018) was granted by Manchester City Council in 2018 for works to Central Library as part of the wider proposals for the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network (MCQHN) project which is part of Manchester City Council's climate change action plan within 'Manchester – A Certain Future' (MACF). The proposals involve creating an Energy Centre which connects to a number of key Manchester City Council owned buildings (Manchester Art Gallery, Town Hall Extension and Central Library) and other buildings (Manchester Central) with low-carbon energy.
- 1.3 Following consent, and the commencement of works at Central Library, it has become apparent that a number of minor modifications are required for technical reasons, including additional pipework and openings at basement level to form part to the previously approved route. This application therefore seeks consent for these works.
- 1.4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority in considering whether to grant listed building consent 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 (s.16 and s.66).
- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, it sets out 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. 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"*¹.
- 1.6 Section 2 of the statement identifies the heritage assets that will be affected by the Proposed Works. Section 3 provides an assessment of the significance, in terms of the special architectural and historic interest, of the grade II* Central Library. This assessment of significance is proportionate to both the importance of the identified heritage assets and the likely impacts of the application proposals. It is undertaken on the basis of published information, archival research and on-site visual survey.
- 1.7 Section 4 provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Works, in light of the statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF, and local planning policy for the historic environment (set out in detail at **Appendix 1**).

¹ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – para. 189

2. The Heritage Assets

- 2.1 The NPPF (2019) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”².

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

Listed Buildings

- 2.3 Central Library was included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at grade II* on 03 October 1974. The list description states the following:

“Public library. 1930-4, by Vincent Harris. Portland stone, slate roof with concealed glazed lantern light. Circular plan with rectangular portico on east side. Classical style. Four storeys with basement and attic (surrounding a large central reading room); with a chamfered plinth, rusticated masonry to ground and 1st floors with a Greek-key frieze, a continuous Tuscan colonnaded screen to set-back 2nd and 3rd floors, with a plain frieze, cornice and parapet concealing a low set-back attic storey. The east side (to the square) has a rectangular 2-storey projection with a central 5-bay portico of giant Corinthian columns tetrastyle in antis, with round-headed arches in the returned ends, and entablature with dentilled cornice. Otherwise, the ground floor has tall round-headed windows with keystones, the 1st floor has tall square-headed windows, and the 2nd and 3rd floors have smaller rectangular windows; all these windows with metal-framed small-paned glazing. Interior: domed circular reading room surrounded by giant Tuscan colonnade.”

²

MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

3. Assessment of Significance

Significance and Special Interest

- 3.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset 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.”³

Listed Buildings

- 3.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and supported by Historic England Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

Assessment

- 3.3 The following assessment of significance is proportionate to both the significance of the identified heritage asset and sufficient so as to understand the impact of the Proposed Works, given their nature and extent. The assessment has been undertaken on the basis of published information, archival research and on-site visual survey.

Central Library (Grade II* Listed)

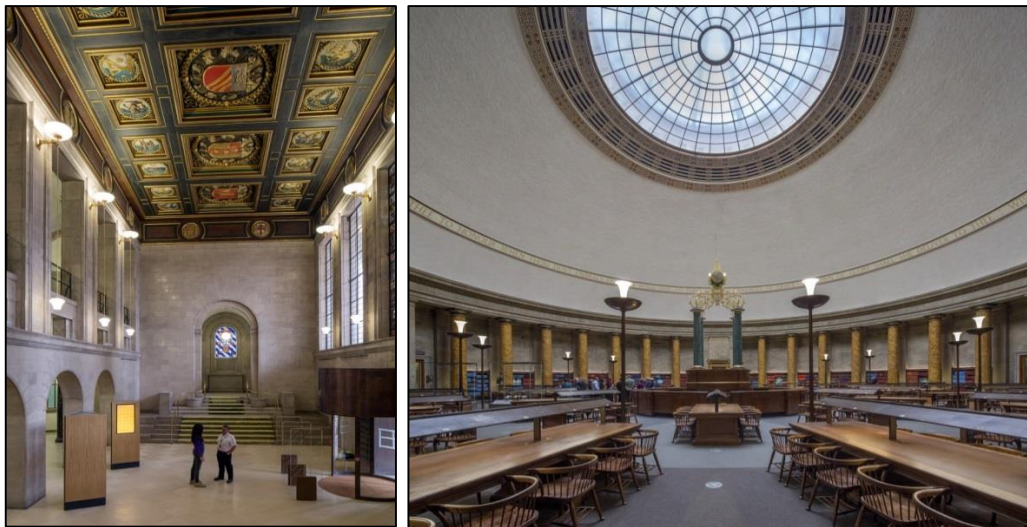


Figure 3.1: Central Library

- 3.4 The Central Public Library occupies a prominent position on St Peter's Square within Manchester City Centre. To the immediate south of the grade II* Town Hall Extension and to the north of the Midland Hotel.

Architectural Interest

- 3.5 The Central Public Library is a distinctive, circular building dating to the 1930s, designed in Classical style with a striking two storey portico. It is faced in Portland stone. It is described in the Pevsner Architectural Guide as a landmark of the city.
- 3.6 At ground floor the stone walling is smooth tooled ashlar with a series of regularly spaced round-headed vertical windows with rustication beginning at the springing line, and projecting keystones. The portico rises to two storeys with four substantial Corinthian columns, framed by outer squared columns forming archways to the north and south, with a plain entablature above.
- 3.7 At first floor, windows are set within deep reveals with square heads, emphasised by channelled rustication. Above, a continuous Tuscan colonnade accentuates the circular plan form of the library and provides elegance to its design. The roof is domed with a concealed glazed lantern light, and is tiled in slate.
- 3.8 The circular form and massing of the Central Library is lightened by the colonnade and portico, which provide a sense of verticality to massing of the building. The library is described in the Pevsner Architectural Guide of Manchester as Vincent Harris's "*most confident, assured, and bombastic essays in the Roman Imperial manner.*"⁴



Figures 3.2 & 3.3: Interior to Central Library

- 3.9 Internally there is a large central reading room on the first floor, originally known as the Great Hall. It is lit by a glazed oculus with bookshelves lining the walls with Art Deco style lights. Furniture in the Great Hall was also designed by Harris: bookcases, tables, chairs, map cabinets, and lecterns. At basement level there are no finishes or features of interest to the walls or ceilings with numerous areas of modern pipework/cabling.

Historic Interest

- 3.10 The building is of historic interest as a public library building dating to 1930-4. The Free Libraries Act of 1850 enabled local authorities the power to establish free public libraries. The Mayor of Manchester, John Potter, was instrumental in the successful campaign to purchase a building for Manchester's first free library. Manchester was the first authority to establish a public lending library in 1852, and the Manchester Free Public Library opened at the Hall of Science, Campfield.
- 3.11 The Central Library was built as a result of a design competition held in c.1925/6. It was designed by Emmanuel Vincent Harris, also responsible for the design of the grade II* Town Hall Extension to the immediate north. Following news of his commission, Harris visited several libraries in the United States alongside the Librarian Charles Nowell, which is believed to have influenced the overall design.
- 3.12 The library was declared open by King George V on 17 July 1934, declaring *"In the splendid building which I am about to open, the largest library in this country provided by a local authority, the Corporation have ensured for the inhabitants of the city magnificent opportunities for further education and for the pleasant use of leisure."*
- 3.13 The Pevsner Architectural Guide states the plan form of the building may have been influenced by the circular plenum heating system that was installed.

4. Impact Assessment

Summary of Legislation and National Planning Policy

- 4.1 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Manchester City Council (MCC), in determining the submitted full planning application and application for listed building consent, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest it may possess (s.16 and s.66).
- 4.2 The NPPF also requires that great weight is given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and this reflects the statutory duty of the 1990 Act with respect to listed buildings.
- 4.3 The key heritage issue to be taken into consideration is therefore the effect of the works on the significance and the special interest of the grade II* listed Central Library.
- 4.4 In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the significance of the heritage asset has been described at Section 3 of this report.
- 4.5 Paragraph 192 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.6 Paragraph 193 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. 'Conservation' is defined by the NPPF as *'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance'*⁵.

Planning Context

- 4.7 An application for listed building consent (Ref: 118871/LO/2018) for internal alterations to Central Library as part of the MCQHN was submitted to MCC in January 2018 and was granted in March 2018. The proposals seek to follow the same principles outlined within this consent but involve minor alterations for technical reasons, as set out below.

The Proposed Works

- 4.8 The consented works to Central Library involve the installation of heating pipework which will distribute heat from the new energy centre to the main plant room of Central Library (which also serves the Town Hall Extension). The main artery of pipework runs from through the basement level of the building.

⁵ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

- 4.9 Following commencement of the works approved under the listed building consent described above, the route has been re-aligned and now access into Central Library needs to be taken from Peter Street with new openings created and a re-aligned route internally.
- 4.10 Detail on the Proposed Works, together with the Method Statement for attachment is set out in the supporting Design and Access Statement prepared by Vital Energi.

Impact Assessment

- 4.11 The proposals involve the creation of two openings at basement level from Peter Street into Central Library. The existing area has been excavated and two openings in the masonry wall are proposed below ground (Figures 4.1 and 4.2), approximately 2x 200m in size. These works are hidden below ground and will not be visible following remediation of the public realm.



Figure 4.1: Proposed openings from Peter Street (basement level) following excavation work



Figure 4.2: Proposed openings within Central Library (basement level)

- 4.12 Internally, the new openings would lead to a re-aligned route with ladder rack. The openings are minor and involve minimal removal of original fabric and the works do not conflict with any high quality materials, finishes or architectural detailing as evidenced by Figure 4.2. The significance of the listed building will not be affected.

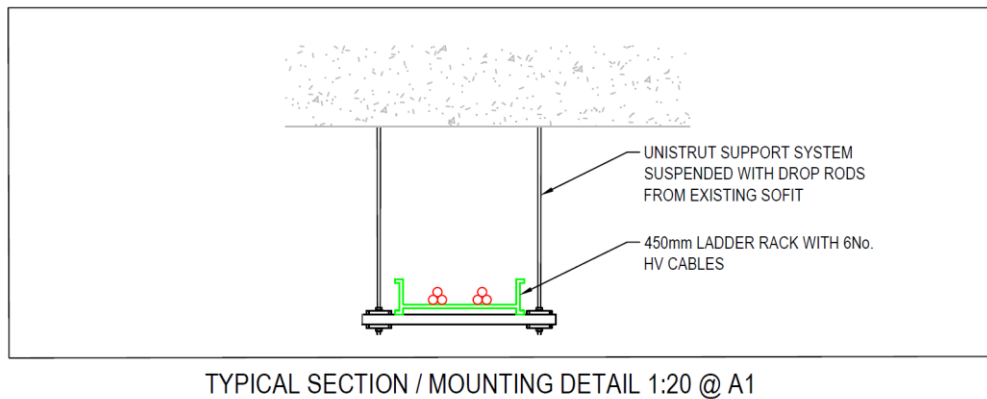


Figure 4.3: Proposed openings within Central Library (basement level)

- 4.13 The proposed ladder rack (Figure 4.3) involves less pipework than the previously approved consent but will follow the original route. As per the approved consent, the ladder rack and pipework will be contained within a suspended support system fixed to the ceiling by drop rods (illustrated at Figure 4.3). The drop rods will be attached with proprietary fixings and will be installed using mobile mechanical access and handling equipment with “wedge anchor” fixings. The proposed works are located in an area with existing pipework and suspended ceiling, with no features of interest. The installation of these works, as per the previous consent, will not affect the significance of the listed building
- 4.14 Further information and specifications of the proposed pipework, insulation cladding, pipe support brackets, heat substations, ladder racks and cables are detailed within the accompanying Method Statement / Design and Access Statement.
- 4.15 Overall, the proposed works are minor in their nature and extent and represent a minimal change to the existing consented scheme. The works are confined to the lower basement of the building and this part of the building is of lesser significance, and the works do not conflict with any features of interest to this space. The significance of the listed building will be sustained by the proposals.

Statutory Duty

- 4.16 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Manchester City Council, in determining the full planning application and application for listed building consent has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess. The meaning of ‘preservation’ in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

- 4.17 The Proposed Works will not affect historic fabric of the listed building. Where interventions are required, this will be minimal and are confined to the basement level of the building where there are no features of interest. The creation of small openings and additional pipework will not affect the appreciation of the form and character of the building. There will be no harm to the significance of the grade II* listed Central Library and the Proposed Works address s.16 and s.66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National and Local Planning Policy

- 4.18 With respect to the core planning principle of the NPPF in relation to the historic environment, the Proposed Works will have no adverse impact on the identified heritage asset and will sustain and thereby conserve its significance. The application proposals therefore meet the objectives of paragraphs 192 and 193 of the NPPF.
- 4.19 In accordance with Policy EN3 of the Core Strategy, the Proposed Works sustains the significance of the historic environment, including the grade II* listed Central Library. The proposals also comply with Policy DC19 by not resulting in any adverse effect on the buildings architectural or historic character.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage in support of an application for listed building consent for minor alterations (the 'Proposed Works') to the grade II* listed Central Library, Manchester (the 'Application Site').
- 5.2 Listed Building Consent (118871/LO/2018) was granted by Manchester City Council in 2018 for works to Central Library as part of the wider proposals for the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network (MCQHN) project which is part of Manchester City Council's climate change action plan within 'Manchester – A Certain Future' (MACF). The proposals involve creating an Energy Centre which connects to a number of key Manchester City Council owned buildings (Manchester Art Gallery, Town Hall Extension and Central Library) and other buildings (Manchester Central) with low-carbon energy.
- 5.3 Following consent, and the commencement of works at Central Library, it has become apparent that a number of minor modifications are required for technical reasons, including additional pipework and openings at basement level to form part to the previously approved route. This application therefore seeks consent for these works.
- 5.4 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Manchester City Council, in determining the full planning application and application for listed building consent has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess. The meaning of 'preservation' in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.
- 5.5 The Proposed Works will not affect historic fabric of the listed building. Where interventions are required, this will be minimal and are confined to the basement level of the building where there are no features of interest. The creation of small openings and additional pipework will not affect the appreciation of the form and character of the building. There will be no harm to the significance of the grade II* listed Central Library and the Proposed Works address s.16 and s.66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.6 In accordance with Paragraphs 192 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Proposed Works will sustain the significance of the heritage asset identified in this report. For the reasons set out above, the Proposed Works accords with Policies EN 3 and DC19 of the Manchester Local Plan.

Appendix 1: Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Heritage Legislation and Planning Policy Considerations

Statutory Duty

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that listed building consent is required for:

“(s.7) ... any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest...”

In determining such applications the following duty is placed upon the decision maker:

“s.16(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority, or as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall 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.”

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

One of the twelve core planning principles of the NPPF is that planning should:

“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

Chapter 16 outlines the Government’s guidance regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 189 outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets. It states that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

With regard to determining such planning applications, Paragraph 192 provides that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage assets, and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset’s conservation when considering the impact on a Proposed Scheme on the significance of a designated asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be. Annex 2: Glossary defines conservation (for heritage policy) as:

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

It also specifies that any harm to, or loss, of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 195 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss

of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied. Paragraph 196 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

In considering development affecting non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 197 only requires that the effect of an application on the significance of such an asset should be taken into account in determining the application. It requires decision makers, in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, to make a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 200 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development 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 or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

Local Policy

Manchester Core Strategy, July 2012

Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) requires that developers within the City Centre consider the City's heritage and continue the *"rich pattern of activity in the core area"*.

Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of the City Centre. New development should support and enhance the historic environment and the character, setting and accessibility of listed buildings. The support text (paragraph 12.21) confirms that: *"The re-use of empty listed buildings will be encouraged subject to consideration of the building's special interest and significance."*

Manchester Unitary Development Plan (saved policies)

Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) states that, when determining applications for listed building consent, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of listed buildings and to protecting their general setting.

In giving effect to this policy, the Council will, inter alia, not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where there would be an adverse effects on its architectural or historic character.

Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019

Whilst not planning policy the Planning Practice Guidance provides a clear indication of the Government's approach to the application of national policy contained in the NPPF. Where there is conflict between the guidance in the PPG and earlier documents the PPG will take precedence.

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