



11th August 2020

The Corn Exchange, Atrium Unit

Heritage Statement for the introduction of a new bar to the central atrium area.

Background and Proposals:

Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) were commissioned by AVIVA to assess the impact of the current proposals to install a permanent bar to the centre of the central atrium of the Grade II listed Corn Exchange, Manchester. A Heritage Statement is consequently required to assess the impact of the proposals upon the designated heritage asset.

A thorough significance assessment of the building was previously undertaken by SLHA in 2012, to assess the previous scheme for introducing new food offerings to the ground and basement floors and hotel usage to the upper floors. These have since formed approved documents under planning permissions 109267/FO/2015/C1 (hotel) and 105209/JO/2014/C1 (tenant re-design). Due to the minimal nature of the current proposals, this Heritage Statement focuses only on the central atrium space. For further historical information on all parts of the building please refer to SLHA's original Heritage Statement (issued 2012).

Planning Policy Context

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

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 7**). 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.

Furthermore, the NPPF stresses that 'great weight' should be given to the objective of conserving designated heritage assets (**paragraph 193**), emphasising the need to avoid harming their significance. Consequently, any identified harm impacting on the Grade II listed Corn Exchange will require both 'clear and convincing justification' and mitigation.

In accordance with **paragraph 189**, 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. Due

to the nature of the proposals, a heritage note is proportionate to assess the impact of the proposals to the atrium unit.

The relevant, local heritage planning policy maintains the same focus as the NPPF. The City Council's heritage policies focus on the fundamental importance of *"preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment"*. The following policies from Manchester's Core Strategy are of importance to the heritage assets considered within this statement.

Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. The policy also establishes that new development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that throughout the City, MCC will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. New developments must be designed to support MCC in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

The Council's key regeneration objective is tempered by the need to ensure that: *"historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced for their own heritage merits and as part of wider heritage regeneration proposals"* (**paragraph 12.21, Policy EN3**). The policy thus evidently requires development proposals to be sensitive to the inherent values of the designated heritage asset, with any impact justified by clear, documentary evidence. This report aims to demonstrate how this requirement is met by the current proposal.

History and Development of The Corn Exchange

A grocery and provision market has been established in the area since medieval times. A permanent building was first erected in Hanging Ditch in 1837, which was located on the site in the area known as 'Hanging Ditch'. The 1837 building was first extended through to a building on Fennel Street in 1891 by the architects Ball and Elce.

Construction work on the present building, to meet the growing requirements of the North West's Grocery and Provision Traders, began in 1891 in a piecemeal fashion and continued for a period of 12 years. The existing building is largely designed by Edward Potts and his various collaborative practices.

Following street widening to the west of the island site, along Cathedral Street (then called Half Street), in 1895, Potts, Dixon and Pickup were appointed architects to the Corn and Produce Company. Property along the remaining west side of Fennel Street and the corner of Cathedral Street was also acquired and Potts, Son and Pickup were commissioned to make the two ranges harmonious, thereby altering Ball and Elce's original design. Following further street widening to Hanging Ditch, by the City Corporation in 1900, Potts, Son and Henning were then tasked with designing the third frontage to the building.

The building was finally completed in 1903 and contained over 300 offices, shops and warehouses, a 40 bedroom hotel and a central Exchange Hall with a domed glazed roof (**see Figures 1 and 2 below**). In 1922,

three properties to the west of the site were acquired and the Exchange Hall was extended, as was the provision for office and warehouse space. Following severe bomb damage in December 1940 the interior of the building was largely reconstructed and internally sales offices were added around the periphery of the Exchange Hall.

The interior was greatly damaged following the IRA bomb attack in 1996 and consequently an extensive restoration project was undertaken to create a new shopping and food/beverage destination, designed by the Ratcliffe Partnership. The scheme provided 55 retail units on three floors and opened in 2000 as 'The Triangle'.



Figure 1: The Corn Exchange, pictured in 1906 following the alterations made by Potts, Son and Henning, completed in 1903. **Source:** Manchester Image Archive.



Figure 2, the interior of the exchange / atrium pictured in the 1900s when it was a trading floor, note the glazed dome. The interior has since been subject to alteration following the IRA bomb of 1996. **Source:** Manchester Image Archive.

In recent years, the ground floor and lower ground floor units and central atrium have been redeveloped to accommodate food outlets. **Figure 3** below illustrates the extensive redevelopment of the atrium area c.2015. The grand, openness of the ground floor was re-established, providing a sense of the former spatial quality which contributes to the special interest of the Grade II listed building (**Figure 4**).



Figure 3. The Corn Exchange, central atrium pictured in 2015. Note the new floor being installed. **Source:** Manchester Evening News.

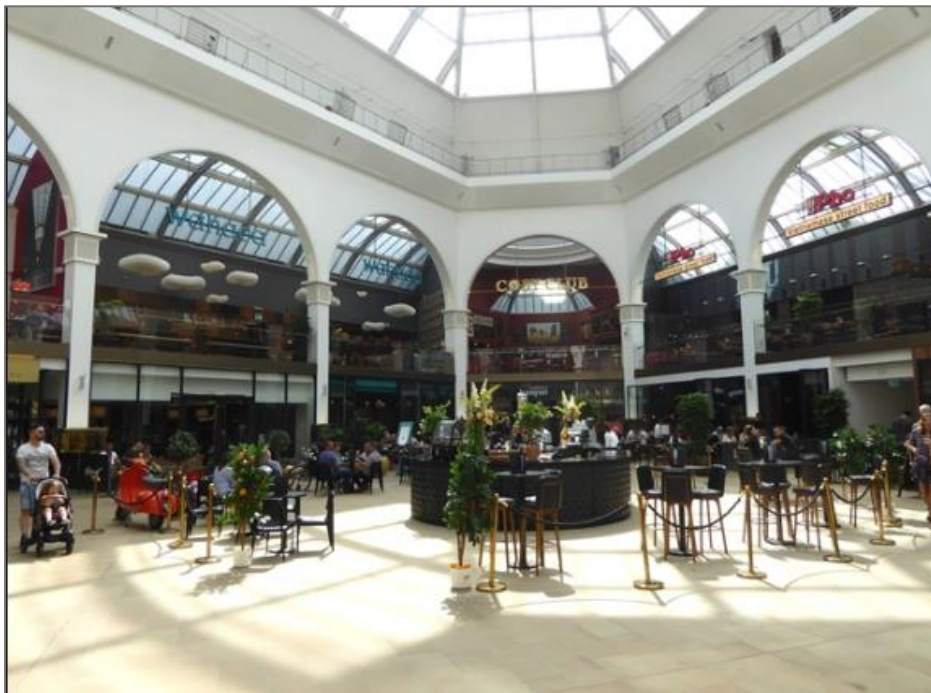


Figure 4 the completed atrium pictured post 2015, illustrating the refurbished interior complete with new bars and restaurants. The existing temporary bar can be seen to the centre of the image, signalling the area which is the focus for the current redevelopment proposals. **Source:** Geograph Britain.

Significance

Although the interior of the building has been substantially altered, the retention of the historic plan form (in part), fenestration patterns to the upper floors and the large space of the central atrium are of significance and allow for the historic use of the building to still be read and understood.

The atrium retains little original historic fabric except for the original Art Nouveau railings around the perimeter at ceiling level. The majority of internal fit-out, including the ground floor structure, dates to c.2015 and as such are of **no historic interest**. The spatial quality of the central atrium space is of **high significance**, which, following its reintroduction/restoration in 2015 has greatly enhancing the heritage values, understanding and appreciation of its original function and appearance.

Proposals

The minor and sensitive proposals seek to introduce a new bar to the centre of the atrium space, which will replace the existing temporary bar. The proposed bar will be triangular in shape, surrounded by group booth seating. The current design intent for booth seating and screening to support the bar is to reinforce a circular enclosure reflecting the unit's demise. The seating area is to be flexible are not to be fixed to the atrium floor (**Figure 5**, below).

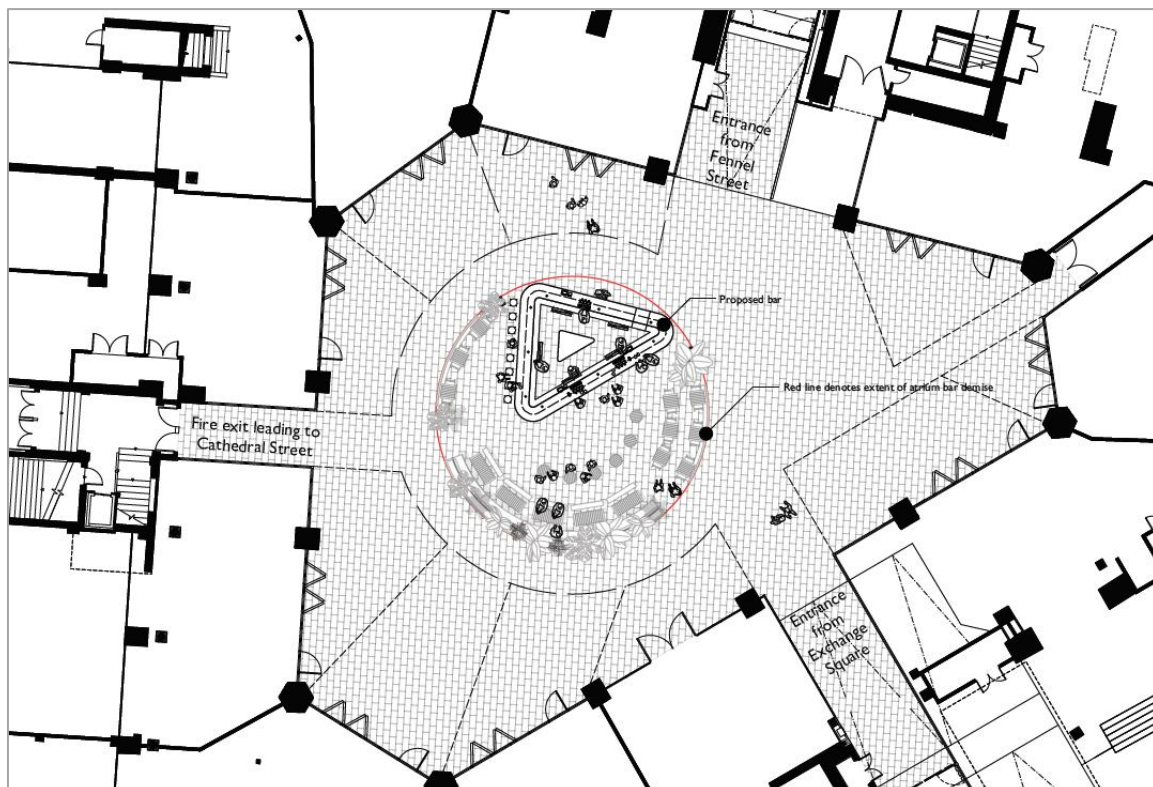


Figure 5. Proposed UGF Plan of the proposed bar. The red line drawing is indicative of the extent of the atrium bar demise.

Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

As recommended by the revised Historic England Guidelines, the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is supported by a comparative methodology identifying the scale of the impact incurred by the proposed development upon the setting of each identified designated heritage asset and the significance of effect of the change in each case which may broadly be **adverse**, **beneficial** or **neutral** (see Appendix II for full criteria). These terms, and the processes for their use and implementation, follow the recommendations set out in the technical guidance document published by ICOMOS, Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (2011).

Due to the recent date of construction of the ground floor level of the atrium, there will be no physical impact on the historic building fabric caused by fixings and service runs.

The high quality design, lightweight construction and low-rise appearance of the proposed bar can be seen to not adversely affect the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage values of the central atrium space, nor its re-established spatial qualities. The introduction of the bar within the atrium space will not impede on the sense of openness which is integral to the character of the atrium. The minimal nature of the proposals will ensure views across the space are retained, as such, the **visual impact** of the proposals is considered to be **neutral**.

Therefore, it is considered that the Current Proposals will not result in any unmitigated “harm” to the character, fabric or appearance of the listed building within the terms of the NPPF and local planning policy.

Consequently, this introduction of a sensitive bar area to the central atrium does not detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the heritage values of the building, and is considered to result in a neutral impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Corn Exchange as a whole.

Appendix I - List Description

GV II

Corn exchange with shops and offices, now market hall with shops and offices. Dated 1903. Iron frame with cladding of sandstone ashlar, slate roof with glazed atrium. Very large curved triangular plan on island site. Baroque style. Four diminishing storeys with basement and attic (east corner of different build and lower), 14 bays (plus 7-window east end), the bays divided by piers which finish as tall chimneys, the 3 western bays slightly lower and finished with a domed cupola at the corner, the next 11 bays forming a symmetrical composition with the centre and ends breaking forwards slightly and carried up to shaped gables above the attic. The projected centre bay has the main entrance, a giant elliptical archway in triumphal-arch form with coupled pilasters of polished pink granite with debased Ionic capitals, corniced entablatures to these, and a banded head with keystone, and containing a pedimented doorway with similar columns and frieze lettered "PRODUCE EXCHANGE". The upper levels of this portion have (inter alia) 3 windows to each floor including the attic, with various forms of decoration including a colonnade to the top floor, pulvinated frieze and prominent mutule cornice, and a pedimented Baroque gable flanked by chimneys. The slightly smaller end bays are in similar style. Otherwise, the intermediate bays have rectangular shop fronts to ground floor, coupled round-headed windows to 1st floor, and mullioned windows of 3 lights to 2nd floor and 4 lights to 3rd floor and attic. West side and rear similar but simpler. INTERIOR: unaltered entrance hall to staircase, and central atrium with round-headed arcades and glazed roof with central dome.

Listing NGR: SJ8395598720

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Appendix II – ICOMOS Criteria

Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact (ICOMOS)		
Magnitude	Direct (physical) heritage impacts	Indirect (visual) heritage impacts
Major adverse Impact. <i>Substantial harm of this nature, which fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.</i>	Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component, or fundamental compromise of the setting of a designated heritage asset.	Substantially harmful change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development severely erodes the heritage values of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Moderate Adverse Impact. <i>Such less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.</i>	Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a designated heritage asset or its setting.	Less than substantial harm to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage assets in the view, or the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Minor Adverse Impact. <i>The negative impact will need to be 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 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 values of the assets in the view, or the view as a whole, 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 a neutral 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.	Negligible perceptible 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, the townscape as a whole, 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.	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 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, the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact.	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 character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage values. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage assets in the view, or the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Major beneficial Impact.	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 values.	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 values. Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset

		where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage values of the heritage assets in the view, the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
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