

Chancellors Hotel Conversion



Heritage Assessment
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1.0

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Heritage Assessment

This Heritage Assessment covers the proposed works associated with the conversion of the Grade II listed Chancellors Hotel at the University of Manchester from Hotel to Student Accommodation use. The building was formerly known as The Firs. It is intended to support the submission of a Planning/Listed Building Consent application, and change of use. The document has been written in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Historic England guidance.

1.2 Methodology

The document surveys the heritage, providing an overview of important information, in order to foster better understanding of the asset and its context. It does this through analysing the historical development of the building; its surviving fabric its wider cultural, aesthetic and social heritage; its local context and its position within a broader heritage context. This is followed by an assessment of significance, based on the information gathered. Significance is assessed in relation to the heritage values outlined by Historic England. The aims of the subsequent Statement of Significance is to understand the site through analysis of secondary documents and physical evidence. A description of the site and its history will help to provide context for this significance assessment and inform the basis for heritage impact judgements.

1.3 Authorship & Acknowledgements

This assessment has been prepared by Jenna Johnston MA(Hons) MSc, Senior Heritage Consultant at Buttress, with support from Lucy Furniss, Architect + Heritage Assistant at Buttress.

1.4 Location & Site Description

Chancellors Hotel is located close to the University of Manchester's student accommodation in Fallowfield. It is to the west of Richmond Park, and is situated to the east of Whitworth Lane of Moseley Road. The hotel is approximately 15-20 minutes away from the City Centre by car. The hotel is accessed through the 1997 alteration work to the building, and the original house is only seen from the gardens to the rear.



Figure 1 Historic Staircase, taken 2016

1.5 **Summary of Proposed Works**

The proposed works are intended to provide the University of Manchester with additional student accomodation space through the conversion of the hotel. The building will be used for a small catered community, with supporting ancillary spaces for study and leisure.

The accomodation will provide homes for 63 students and a residential advisor from the university. It will also support additional learning spaces, including a computer cluster provision, and is situated in good proximity to the University.

The works principally include removal of partitions and modern fixtures and fittings, and installation of moveable screens in the 1997 extension. These are to create new kitchens, and provide flexible communal space.

Works to the historic house are limited to strip out of modern interventions and the reinstaement of a previously blocked doorway.

Remedial works to drainage and the parapet of the 1997 extension are also covered.

2.0

Policy Context

2.0 Policy Context

2.1 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Chapter II, “Authorisation of Works Affecting Listed Buildings” of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory controls over the planning process for proposed changes to be made. The Act prohibits any works to a listed building, including ‘alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.’

2.2 Historic England Guidance

Proposed works to the designated heritage asset have been informed by Historic England’s Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment, as they are the government’s statutory heritage advising body. This document has informed the understanding of the heritage asset and assessing its significance, as well as managing change and policies for renewal, repair, new works, alterations and enabling development.

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

Section 16 of The Department for Communities and Local Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (2019) identifies policies for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This document has been created with the awareness that ‘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.’ (para 189).

The justification of the development is informed by Paragraph 192 which states, ‘in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable

- uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that the more important the asset, the greater weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Harm or loss to significance is also considered relative to the weight of the asset’s designation and the nature of the proposed works. For example, substantial harm or loss can be allowed as long as that intervention is ‘necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweigh the harm.’

2.4 Manchester City Council’s Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

The document also sets out policies that are relevant to this proposed scheme. The most relevant have been extracted and outlined below.

Policy	Content	Proposed Works
POLICY CC4: Visitors -Tourism, Culture and Leisure	The City Centre will be the focus for culture and leisure in the City Region. Proposals to improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported. The improvement of facilities for business visitors will also be supported	The proposed works will enhance the quality of Chancellors Hotel offer, as well as being a more appealing space for conferences. The hotel is well located in the City, particularly in relation to the University, and therefore its accommodation offer is valuable to this area.

POLICY EN3: Heritage	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.	The proposed works will enhance the aesthetic value of the historic building through the execution of fabric repairs and maintenance.
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3.0

Understanding the Heritage



Figure 2 South Facade

3.0 Understanding the Heritage

3.1 Description of the Heritage

The Chancellors Hotel is described in the Pevsner Architectural Guide as follows:

Chancellors, Whitworth Lane, W side. Another hall based around a large house given to the University, this time the home of Sir Joseph Whitworth, by Edward Walters, 1851. Italianate, scribed stucco, of two storeys with an attic storey to the E, and a service wing. This part has upper tripartite windows in which consoles act as mullions. Bays to the garden front. Staircase with ornamental balusters and a wreathed rail. It was converted to a conference and teaching centre 1995-7 by Short & Associates. The playful new buildings E of the villa delight in the variety of materials: polychrome brick, cedar shingles and metal roof cladding.

Despite numerous sources describing the building as stucco on brick, the photograph from 1971 demonstrates that the building has not always been stuccoed. The elevation clearly has the same finish as the adjoining stable’s gable, which currently retains its brick facing. As the 1974 listing description also references the building’s stucco, it must be concluded that the current finish was executed somewhere between 1971-1974 and is therefore a modern intervention. It has not been possible at this time to discern whether the building was originally designed to be finished in brick or stucco, however, some Edward Walters works are discussed in “4.4 Historical Value” as comparative context.

3.1.1 Exterior

Chancellors Hotel is a principally two storeyed building over cellars, of stucco on brick with a slate roof which is part gabled and part hipped. Its design and plan form is asymmetrical, and it has classical detailing. Both primary and secondary facades are seven bays in length, with two and three bay returns to east and west. The 1995 building record suggests that the westernmost bay of the original house was an extension added before 1881. Ground floor windows, with the exception of this western bay, and the kitchen at the eastern end, have lugged

architraves with shaped feet. The windows to the north façade have moulded panels beneath hung-sash frames. Ground floor windows to the south do not have this feature as they are longer, sitting on stone sills and plinths.

There is a decorative latticework band that wraps around most of the building at first floor level, with the exception of the terminating west bay wall and on the section behind the current conservatory. It is likely that the current conservatory is in the position of a similar glass structure from an earlier scheme of work. All first floor windows have moulded architraves. The third floor attic storey over the eastern bays has tripartite windows to north and south and a pair of blind windows to the east. A dentilled eaves course runs around the whole house

Other buildings in the vicinity dating from the same period include a two storeyed gate lodge and service yard, east of the house, with stable and coach house, added laundry, and outbuildings associated with the maintenance of the gardens and grounds. A shaped gable on the west frames the chimney stack. The 1995 report describes the chimney stacks as modillioned, but this appears to only be relevant to chimneys in the eastern part of the building. A stainless steel flue has been installed adjacent to the easternmost chimney; this was powder coated white during the 2016 refurbishment works. It is possible this was installed during the 1997 extension works but it is unclear. Chimney stacks to the west have crowned caps.

The primary entrance to the house would have been from the north, indicated by the more elaborate doorway in a projecting bay. It has a roundheaded doorway with a moulded head and scrolled keyblock, and banded rustication below. The first floor of this entrance bay is defined by rusticated quoins, and the listing descriptions suggests that this was originally surmounted by a turret, though this has not been possible to corroborate at this time.

The 20th century extension to the historic house is of its time. Generally brick with some brick detailing. Windows, doors and downpipes etc are upvc. There are no particularly distinguishing features or areas of interest.



3.1.2 Interior

Original interior fittings of the historic building include doors, chimneypieces, enriched cornices and an elaborate main staircase with an iron balustrade. The balustrade has been repeatedly painted over the years which has obscured some of its finer detailing.

The 1995 report suggests that family and living spaces for the house were primarily restricted to the two storey western section of the building, with service accommodation occupying the three storeyed eastern part. The primary entrance opens into a vestibule, which in turn opens into the entrance hall through a four panelled door with translucent glass etched in gold. Doors in the entrance hall are all four panelled with raised mouldings. Doors to previous reception rooms, and the entrance door, all have a central bead detail.

The 20th century extension to the building is generically decorated with no specific features of interest.



3.2 History & Development

In the late 1840s, there was a small house on the land currently occupied by Chancellors Hotel. A new house, originally known as The Firs, was built in 1851 for Sir Joseph Whitworth by architect Edward Walters. It is possible that Whitworth was introduced to Walters through Richard Cobden. Whitworth and Cobden were both associated with the Anti-Corn-Law League, and Cobden had made Walters’ acquaintance whilst living in Constantinople between 1832 and 1837, and Walters designed 14-16 Moseley Street for Cobden in 1839.

The grounds of the house were developed in 1851, with the parkland created by taking in surrounding fields to the east. A shooting gallery was built by the War Office in the grounds in order to help Whitworth enhance the accuracy of his Whitworth Rifles.

The house’s blue plaque states that Whitworth occupied the house until 1872, though it was not until 1881 that Charles Prestwich Scott leased the property. His tenancy was originally for three years, but continued to live there until 1932, renewing his contract with subsequent owners of the property. Whilst Scott was in residence, Thomas Grundy was tenant of the farm on the estate from 1897.

Upon Scott’s death in 1932, the Firs became the University of Manchester’s Vice-Chancellors residence. The Owens College (the University’s predecessor) acquired part of the estate in 1989, and the remainder in 1902. In 1997, it received a large extension and was converted into a hotel. Planning consent was approved for the demolition of the 1997 conservatory extension and associated works in 2007, though this work was never carried out.

Chancellors Hotel is one of only a few grand residences remaining from the Victorian period of prosperity in Manchester. The building is situated in an area heavily populated by students, and therefore its scale and setting are unusual within its context.

3.3 Current Use

The building has been used as a hotel for almost 20 years, and has remained the property of the University of Manchester and its predecessors for over 100 years. The hotel is also used as a conference and wedding venue.

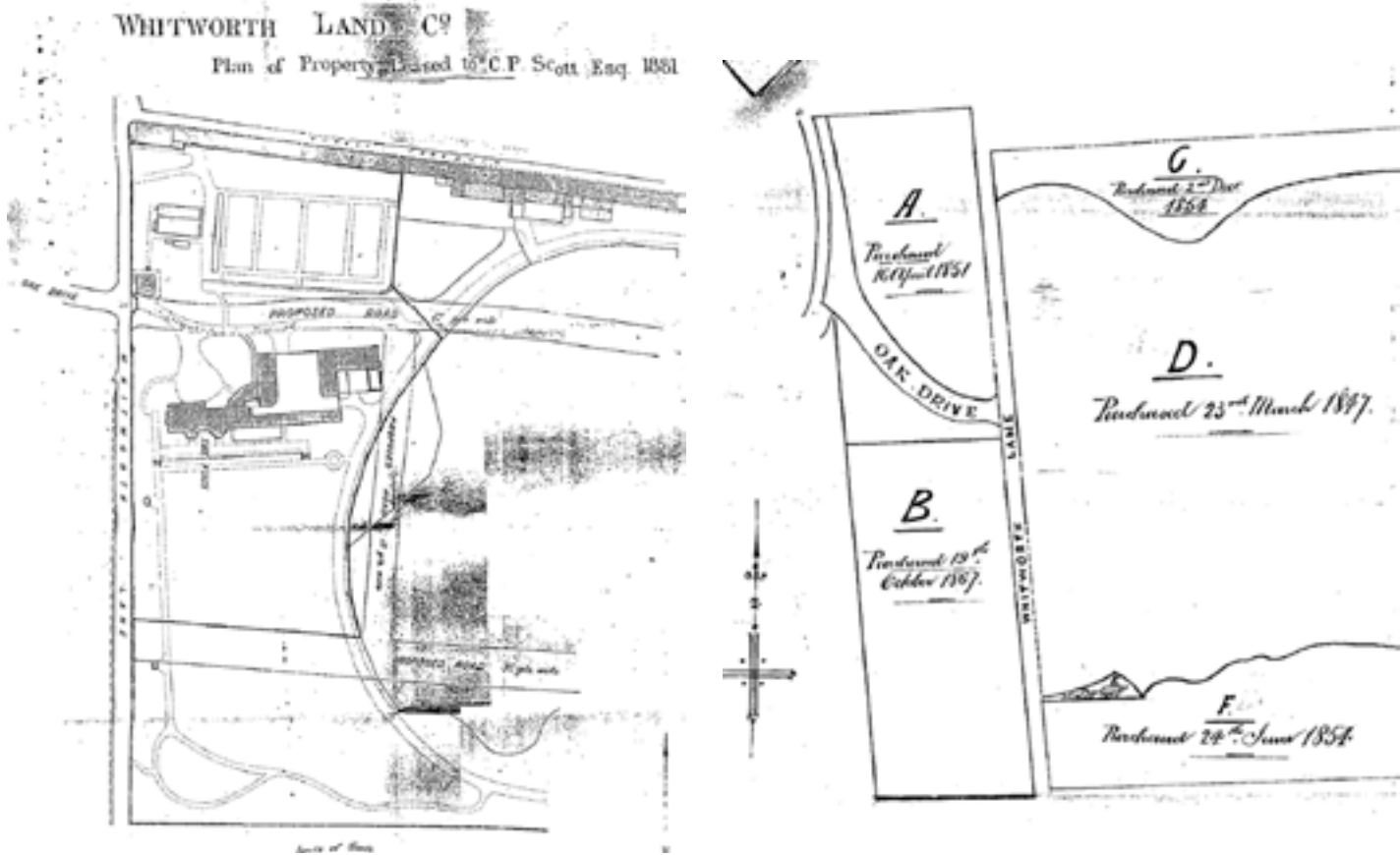


Figure 3 Plan surveyed on 23 March 1881 in connection with an Agreement to let the First to C. P. Scott. Reproduced from 1995 RCHME report.



Figure 4 The Firs (1971) Reproduced courtesy of rusholmearchive.org

4.0

Assessment of Significance

4.0 Assessment of Significance

Exceptional	Exceptional historic interest that is intact and clearly legible. Making an important contribution to the wider significance and understanding of the heritage.
High	High historic interest that is intact and clearly legible. Making an important contribution to the wider significance and understanding of the heritage.
Medium	Less special historic interest, altered, with a less important contribution to the wider significance and understanding of the heritage.
Low	Lost or very little special historical interest, significantly altered or largely obscured.
Neutral	Historically unimportant but having negligible impact on the heritage.
Intrusive	Historically unimportant with a harmful impact on the heritage.

4.1 Introduction

The significance considerations for Chancellors Hotel are informed by the conservation values outlined by Historic England in *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008). Each value will be assessed to a level of significance; the scale has been based upon the British Standard for assessing value and expanded upon. This scale is outlined here.

It is acknowledged, however, that the significance of a historic place is understood in more intangible terms, and with a broad holistic understanding, therefore best efforts have been made to explore these. Additionally, a building’s significance is usually more than the sum of its parts, and it is important that the place is considered as a whole.

4.2 Evidential Value

Derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

At this time, it has not been possible to discover any potential underground archaeology deposits in the vicinity of the site. It is acknowledged that there was a small property on the site before The Firs was commissioned, but it is not currently possible to identify the date of this earlier building’s construction, or whether any of it remains.

Evidential: Neutral

4.3 Communal Value

Derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

The building was created as a private residence, and remained as such for almost 150 years. In its current use as a hotel, conference and wedding venue means that members of the public are offered the opportunity to engage with the building. However, these engagements are short-term and limited, and do not contribute to a sense of local identity or history.

Communal: Neutral

4.4 Historical Value

Derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

4.4.1 Illustrative Value

The perception of a place as a link between past and present people.

4.4.2 Chancellors Hotel is illustrative of the economic development of Manchester in the mid-19th century. By commissioning the construction of The Firs in a suburb of Manchester’s City Centre, Joseph Whitworth was establishing a domestic estate for himself outside of the centre’s freneticism. The original house is a symbol of Manchester’s developing wealth during this time, its continued existence illustrates the changing needs of its owners, and the surrounding community, in the 165 years since the old house’s construction.

Illustrative: Medium

4.4.3 Associative Value

Association with a notable family, person, event, or movement.

4.4.3.1 Association with Sir Joseph Whitworth (1803–1887)

Joseph Whitworth was a nationally important engineer and industrialist whose works in Manchester played an intrinsic part of the formulation of the City in the Victorian period. For example, he provided financial contributions to Owens College, which largely funded the first Manchester Museum building.

Whitworth would have used the building as a base for his political and business dealings within the city. It is also believed that Whitworth tested his Whitworth rifle in the grounds to the rear of the Chancellors, in a range funded by the War Office.

Whitworth has an enduring legacy within Manchester; his

name identifies streets and museums intrinsic to the City’s identity, which therefore places property constructed for him within a much broader context of Victorian Manchester.

Sir Joseph Whitworth is commemorated by a blue plaque on the building.

Associative: High

4.4.3.2 Association with Charles Prestwich Scott (1846–1932)

Scott joined the Manchester Guardian at the beginning of 1871 whilst attending his second year at Oxford University. He became editor less than a year later in January 1872 at the age of 25.

Scott leased The First from Whitworth in 1882, and could often be seen cycling from his home in Fallowfield to the offices of the Guardian in Cross Street.

C.P. Scott is a significant historical figure, both in Manchester and Nationally. As well as being a prominent Liberal personality with a strained relationship with Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and a vocal opponent of the Boer War, Scott’s long-serving career as editor of the Guardian helped to form its guiding morality and approach to journalism and politics.

He received Freedom of the City of Manchester in 1930.

Associative: High

4.4.3.3 Association with the University of Manchester

The University is a highly visible and well-respected presence in the City. Its origins go back to the foundation of Owens College in 1851, and it is a member of the Russell Group of Universities. Though this building is not used for teaching or research, it was home to the University’s Vice-Chancellors for a period, and has remained in the institution’s ownership for 80 years. It makes a contribution to the University’s historic building stock.

Associative: Medium



Figure 5 Sir Joseph Whitworth (before 1908), Thomas Benjamin Kennington.
© The Whitworth, University of Manchester

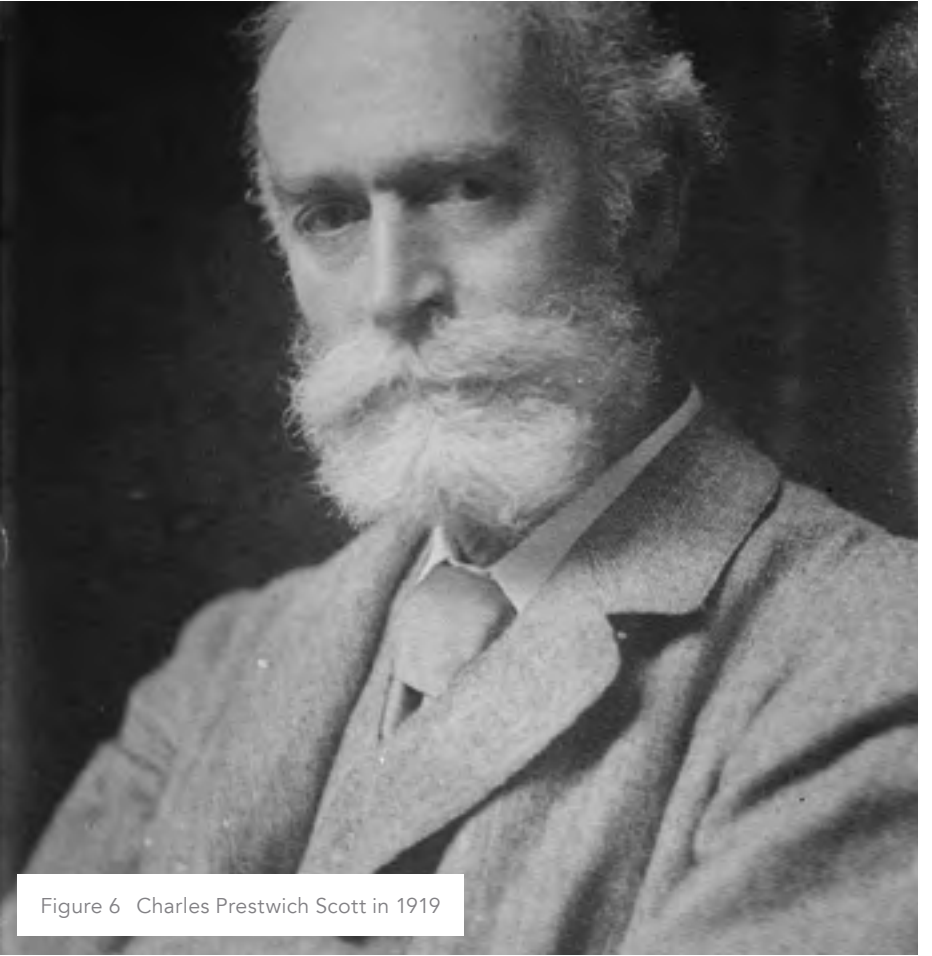


Figure 6 Charles Prestwich Scott in 1919

4.5 Aesthetic Value

Derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

4.5.1 Architectural Work of Edward Walters (1808–1872)

There are 19 works on the National Heritage List for England attributed to Edward Walters, 13 of which are situated within Manchester. The majority carry Grade II listings, with the exception of the Grade II* listed Royal Bank of Scotland on Mosley Street, and the Free Trade Hall on Peter Street. The latter is generally considered to be Walters’ greatest work, and the building has a commanding presence on the Manchester streetscape.

The Chancellors Hotel bears some stylistic similarities to Walter’s work at 14-16 Moseley Street (Harvest House) which was commissioned by Richard Cobden in 1839, though the contrast between brick and stone is less marked due to the later stucco work. Similarities include sandstone detailing, such as quoins on projecting bays defining an entrance; dentiling; string courses, and segmental-headed recessed sash windows. Walter’s brick and stone palette can also be seen in Manchester in the Congregational Chapel in Deansgate (1858), Fraser House on Charlotte Street (1839), 54 -72 Spring Gardens (1851), Manchester Associated Mills, 34 Charlotte Street (1855), Charlotte House, and 10 Charlotte Street (1857).

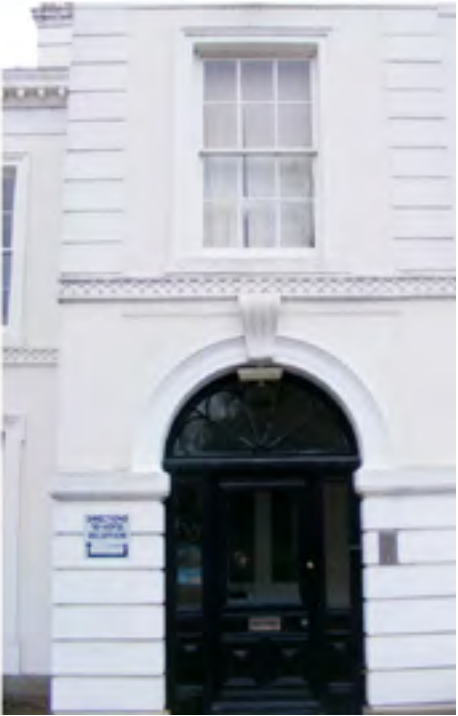
Associative: Medium



Figure 7 14-16 Moseley Street © Les Prosser (2012)



Figure 8 Chancellors Hotel (2016)



4.6 Statement of Significance

The heritage significance of Chancellors Hotel is intrinsically linked to its associative values. The building's patron, architect, and subsequent resident are all important figures, particularly in Manchester history, but ranging more broadly to national history also. Joseph Whitworth and C.P Scott are currently memorialised within the building through the naming of ground floor meeting rooms. With the exception of the blue plaque for Whitworth on the north entrance, these tokens are the only way that visitors can engage with this aspect of the building's history. Without turning the building into a museum or heritage centre, this is the most appropriate way to acknowledge the building's origins whilst keeping it in active use. Due to the private nature of the building, as a personal residence, and to a lesser extent, as a hotel, the building's communal values are negligible. However, improving the building's aesthetic will provide a more memorable first impression for guests and passers-by. Evidential value is also neutral due to the lack of evidence regarding earlier structures or developments.

The aesthetic of the building is important, however, it is not as important as its historical values. The villa-style of the original house, in conjunction with the large gardens, are unusual within its urban location. The 1997 extension, which may now be considered dated, has reinstated a form of viewing gallery along the south wall, enhancing the relationship between the building and its natural surroundings. Due to the uncertainty regarding to provenance of the current stucco finish, it is important to acknowledge that the building did not always look as it does today, particularly as a turret appears to have been removed also. However, as previously stated, the white finish of the building is now an iconic part of its identity and best efforts should be made to repair, maintain, and refurbish this aspect of the building.

The proposed scheme of work seeks to keep the Chancellors Hotel in a viable use by providing student accommodation for the University of Manchester. The proposals attempt to isolate the key areas of intervention to the 1997 extension, rather than the core of the historic house in order to minimise heritage impacts. Where changes are required, these have been identified as the minimum required.



Figure 9 Chancellors Hotel (2016)

5.0

Impact on Heritage Significance

5.0 Impact on Heritage Significance

5.1 Historic House

Rooms 1.301 to 1.305 are to be converted into offices, primarily involving the removal of the existing bridal en-suite, fixed fittings such as headboards in the bedrooms, and redecoration work generally. The conversion to offices requires little alteration that will affect the historic fabric. It is recommended that proposed finishes in these spaces are appropriate for the character of the historic building in order to minimise harmful impacts.

The principal relevant intervention proposed in the historic house is the installation of dado height trunking around the walls. This trunking is considered to be surplus to requirements, having a harmful impact on the historic fabric and the character of the space. Therefore the heritage assessment recommends that services supported by this trunking are chased through existing services in the walls to allow for power and data. Otherwise, the extent of the trunking, how it is fixed to the wall, and the visual specification will need to be agreed with the conservation officer.

Room 1.304a is the most involved work, with the strip out of sanitary fittings and a central, non-full height wall. These works will enable the room to be read as originally intended - as one open space with no subdivisions. As long as fixtures and walls are removed and installed carefully, there will be limited impact on the historic fabric.

A blocked up opening in the wall of room 1.304a is to be re-opened as a fire exit on to the stair. This is a necessary alteration to comply with Building Regulations and is of low significance, having been an opening previously.

Making good to the plaster in the original house generally is to be in accordance with the Plaster Sample Analysis Report dated December 2016.

5.2

5.3 1997 Extension

5.3.1 Ground Floor

The removal of the suspended ceiling in the Main Production Kitchen is to be removed and replaced like for like. This has no impact on the significance of the building.

The removal of two 2no. walls in the existing meeting rooms either side of the circular Flowers Room to create two larger rooms for study and a common room, is beneficial to the function as a student hall and is of neutral significance, as these areas are part of the 1997 extension. Sliding doors and associated structural work (to the foundations and additional steels) are proposed so that the rooms remain flexible and again have minimal impact on the fabric of the extension.

New full height partitions and double doors are proposed to the south of the Flowers Room and are necessary as part of the effective function of the building as student halls.

Room G.008 is currently a meeting room that is to be converted into a kitchen with appliances requiring extraction. A louvre is therefore required on the south elevation of the building but is far enough from the original house that it will not be read.

5.3.2 First Floor

A number of first floor partitions at the west end of the 1997 extension are to be removed to create the Blue Kitchen. New portal frames are to be added to provide support for this new open plan space. The partitions are modern therefore their removal is of little importance, likewise the introduction of new structure does not affect the significance of the original building.

Further partitions are to be removed on the first floor to create the Green Kitchen, Pink Kitchen and bedrooms 1.226 and 1.226a. Again, these are modern partitions therefore their removal is of little importance. Additional steelwork will be added into the kitchens to provide an open plan space which will have no impact on the 1997 fabric. New partitions are to be added to create bedrooms 1.226 and 1.226a, and again this has no impact on the 1997 fabric and increases the capacity of the building.

The extract louvre to the south elevation of the 1997 extension has no impact on the significant historic fabric.

5.3.3 External Remedial Works

There are some limited remedial works required to the parapets and guttering on the 1997 extension building. These works are proposed on areas of neutral significance, therefore have no impact on the significance of the heritage asset. The improved drainage on site should support the proper management and maintenance of the historic house.

The proposals also cover some limited making good works to the york stone paving to the main entrance, carried out on a like-for-like basis, in line with best conservation practice.

5.3.4 Change of Use

The proposed Change of Use has a negligible impact on the 1997 extension as the conversion from hotel to student accommodation requires very little alteration in the fabric of the building. The principal impact of the change of use is likely to be through intensified use.

The historic house is proposed for conversion from hotel into offices for support staff from the University. This is a more substantial change, especially as it will limit public access to the historic building. The historic house was built as a residence, therefore conversion to a commercial use is contrary to the character of the building. However, the offices are required to support the continued operation of the site, and the proposals for alteration are minor. This means that there is future scope for reversibility, on the understanding that no further or more harmful works are carried out.

Due to the relatively small scale of change, and the continued operation and occupation of the historic house, the proposed change of use is considered to be of less than substantial harm.

6.0

Justification Statement

6.0 Justification Statement

The Univeristy of Manchester has identified Chancellors Hotel as a part of their student accommodation provision, to utilise the building in a more cost effective way for the institution.

The proposals for the associated change of use are focussed on the 1997 extension, which is of neutral heritage value, and therefore of negligible impact. Where changes are required to the historic house, these have been kept to the minimum necessary to support the change of use.

During the implementation of any works to the historic house, care should be taken in the specification of any new services or other fabric that will be attached directly to historic fabric, or take a prominent place in a room, impacting on the character of the space. Additionally, internal features in the historic house, such as doors, skirtings and cornices are largely original, and these should be maintained in order to preserve the distinctive character of the listed building.



Figure 10 Historic staircase (2016)



Figure 11 Rooms in 1997 Extension



Figure 12 North entrance (2016)

7.0

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7.0 Bibliography & Sources

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