

Heritage Statement

Manchester Town Hall

April 2020

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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 connection works (the 'Proposed Works') to the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall (the 'Application Site'). The works are confined to connecting the listed building into the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network (MCQHN).
- 1.2 The Proposed Works form part of the wider 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 project involves 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) with low-carbon energy. The Proposed Works now seek to connect the Town Hall into the heat network.
- 1.3 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority in considering whether to grant planning permission or 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).
- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) 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.
- 1.5 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 I Listed Manchester Town Hall. 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.
- 1.6 Section 4 provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Works, in light of the statutory duties 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 Manchester Town Hall was included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade I Listed on 25 February 1952. The list description states the following:

“Town Hall. 1868-77, by Alfred Waterhouse. Sandstone ashlar facing to brick carcass, slate roofs. Triangular island site, with three main ranges enclosing a triangular courtyard mostly filled by a rectangular Great Hall. Gothic style. Three storeys and attics. Building of major importance. Contains mural paintings by Ford Madox Brown, and statuary by W. Theed jun. (B of E Lancashire: Pevsner: P280-1; Guide Across Manchester: Civic Trust: P 43-7).”

Conservation Areas

- 2.4 The Application Site is located within the Albert Square Conservation Area which was designated by Manchester City Council in April 1972. The nature of the Proposed Works (confined to the listed building, lightwell and perimeter wall) are not considered to affect the special interest of the conservation area. It has therefore not been assessed within the report.

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.

Manchester Town Hall (Grade I Listed)

- 3.4 Manchester Town Hall is located in Manchester City Centre on a large triangular site bounded by Princess Street to the north, Albert Square to the west and Lloyd Street to the south and east.

Architectural and Historic Interest

- 3.5 The Town Hall is a vast sandstone faced building dating to 1867-1877, of four storeys with attics, in an elaborate Victorian Gothic style. It is described in the Pevsner Architectural Guide to Manchester as *“massive and powerful”*.⁴ The building was designed by the noted architect Alfred Waterhouse and constructed between 1868-77. It was conceived by Manchester City Council as a building to be of *“equal, if not superior, to any similar building in the country.”* The Council decided on the site following consideration of Piccadilly as the proposed location. It was decided to use the site that faced the newly constructed Albert Square to the west.
- 3.6 The design of Manchester Town Hall was determined through competition, on the first round the deciding panel included the editor of The Builder. GE Street and TL Donaldson were on the deciding panel for the final stage of the competition. This

³ MHCLG (2019), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Annex 2: Glossary

⁴ Hartwell, C (2002) Pevsner Architectural Guides: Manchester

resulted in a highly efficient building, a potent civic symbol and a distinguished work of architecture.



Figure 3.1: Manchester Town Hall (Exterior)

- 3.7 The building is a hollow triangular plan form, with a steeply pitched slate roof. The western principal elevation to Albert Square (Figure 3.1) contains central projecting entrance with deeply recessed entrance below a traceried pediment with three light pointed windows above. Two storey canted bay windows are enlivened by rectilinear lights with quatrefoil heads. And all windows have deeply moulded and enriched surrounds. The roof contains regular pedimented gables.
- 3.8 Waterhouse was sparing of external decoration for practical reasons, but on a very limited scale statuary was introduced at points along the building. The striking four stage central clock tower rises to three moulded openings drawing attention to the clock faces which are framed by turrets linked to flying buttresses to the base of the spire. This dramatic, Gothic tower provides a landmark to the city centre.
- 3.9 The interior is just as impressive and Pevsner notes that its most memorable feature is its spaciousness. It was not produced by the dimensions of the separate chambers but by linking of spaces through open arcading, which gives unexpected views either into individual spaces or across a whole sequence of them. The principal space is the south corner staircase with foyer, screens and staircases. These represent Waterhouse's hallmark in terms of plan, space and structure. There is a sense of hierarchy in terms of the detail to each floors with the basement being plainer and more utilitarian when compared to the ground and upper floors.



Figure 3.2: Manchester Town Hall (Interior)

- 3.10 The interior is stylistically consistent with the exterior, and the design of detail and finishes share the same values (Figure 3.2). The decorative programme throughout the building illustrates two themes, Manchester's history and the nature and extent of its commerce.⁵ The first is seen in the external sculpture and the murals by Ford Madox Brown, and the second appears in numerous motifs incorporated in internal finishes and decorations. Where the decoration is not thematic much of it is highly innovative and reflects the contemporary modernity of the Aesthetic Movement.⁶
- 3.11 Pevsner concludes that Manchester Town Hall has the complexity, imagination and invention of a great work of architecture. Its richness is not revealed immediately but it is a classic; the memorable expression of a city, an age and the mind of its exceptional architect.⁷

⁵ Hartwell, C (2002) Pevsner Architectural Guides: Manchester

⁶ Hartwell, C (2002) Pevsner Architectural Guides: Manchester

⁷ Hartwell, C (2002) Pevsner Architectural Guides: Manchester

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 I Listed Manchester Town Hall.
- 4.4 In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the significance of the affected 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'*⁸.

Planning Context and Pre-Application Discussions

- 4.7 In November 2019, the Our Town Hall Project team submitted a full planning application (ref: 125552/VO/2019) and application for listed building consent (ref: 125553/LO/2019) to Manchester City Council for the restoration, refurbishment and alteration of Manchester Town Hall. This included works to both the exterior of the building and all floors to the interior; including the basement. The application(s) were approved by the City Council in January 2020.
- 4.8 The Proposed Works have been subject to on-going discussions with the Our Town Hall Project team to ensure they align with the wider works to the listed building. The proposals have also been informed by pre-application discussions with Historic England

⁸ MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

and the MCC conservation officer in July 2019 and without prejudice, were considered to be acceptable in principle.

The Proposed Works

- 4.9 The Proposed Works involve connecting the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall into the MCQHN with heating and high voltage power connections. All the Proposed Works are confined to the basement level of the listed building. This includes the following work:

Heating Connection – Albert Square:

- New Heating pipework and a communications duct will be extended from the existing buried heating mains within Albert Square, through the external moat wall and through an existing window at basement level, to the existing plate heat exchanger plantroom.

High Voltage Power Connection – Princess Street:

- High voltage and communication cabling will be installed to serve new Ring Main Units (RMU). The works for the HV cabling will be undertaken from the existing ducting within Princess Street and will be extended from the footpath, through a former window opening (currently infilled with modern blockwork), into the existing RMU room.

- 4.10 Further detail on the Proposed Works is set out in the supporting Design and Access Statement prepared by Vital Energi.

Impact on the Significance and Special Interest of Manchester Town Hall

Heating Connection – Albert Square:

- 4.11 The Proposed Works involve connecting the existing heating connection from Albert Square into Manchester Town Hall. The plantroom, as approved under the previous consent by the Our Town Hall Project team, is to be located in the western corner of the listed building at the junction of Albert Square and Lloyd Street. The connection from Albert Square therefore needs to connect to this part of the building.
- 4.12 Various options have been explored to identify the most suitable approach. Broadly this included the following:
- Access from Lloyd Street Elevation: this was not practically possible due to the extent of existing services on the street.
 - Access from Princess Street Elevation: this would require significant intervention to the interior of the building, leading through various rooms and corridors before reaching the plantroom.
 - Access from Albert Square Elevation: this would require crossing the lightwell into an existing window. This would limit intervention elsewhere within the building and is the closest position to the existing heat connection.

- 4.13 From this analysis, it was concluded that the most suitable approach from both a heritage and construction perspective was accessing the building via the Albert Square elevation. This approach was agreed in principle during pre-application discussions with Manchester City Council and with the Our Town Hall Project team.
- 4.14 In order to reduce impact, it is proposed to span the lightwell at its shortest point. This also allows for supports to be provided from the pipework within Albert Square and the plantroom, limiting the extent of fixings required and reducing potential for manifestation.

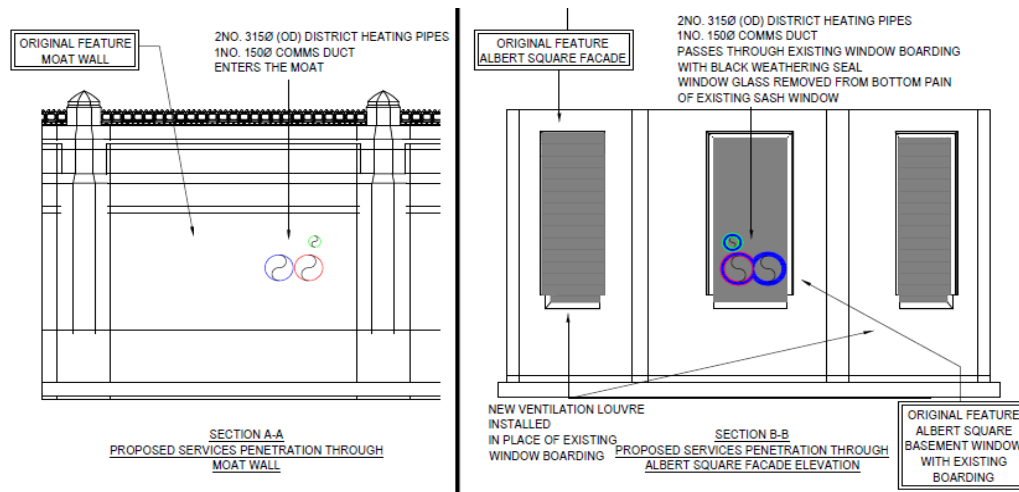


Figure 4.1: Sections of the Proposed Pipework to Manchester Town Hall (Extract from Drawing Ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5606 P1)

- 4.15 The works involve three small openings within the existing perimeter wall to the lightwell (identified as the 'moat wall' on the accompanying drawings) which will be created through core holes drilled within the wall. This will consist of 2No. 450mmDia holes and 1 No. 200mmDia hole. These works are detailed further at Figure 4.1 and within the Method Statement prepared by Vital Energi.

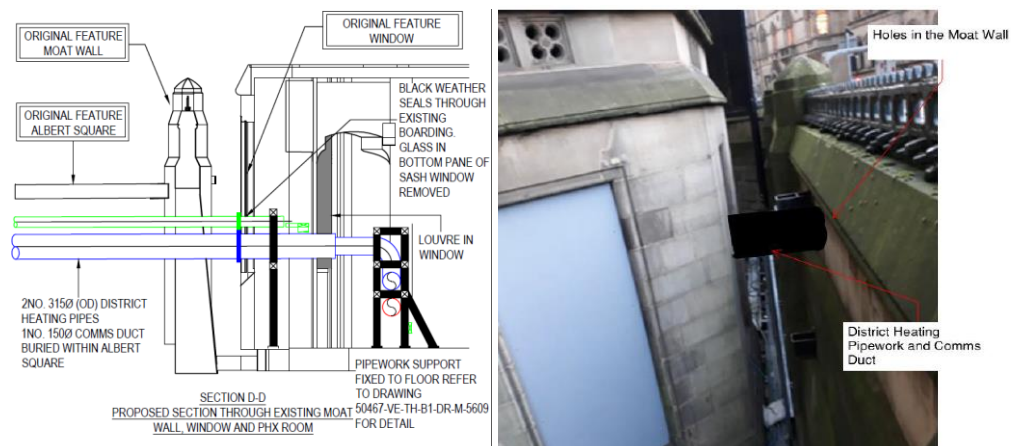


Figure 4.2: Drawing and visual illustrating the proposed connection works from Albert Square (Extract from Drawing Ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5606 P1 and Design and Access Statement)

- 4.16 The pipework then crosses over into an existing window (currently blocked up with modern boards) at its lowest point (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The pipework is to be finished in black to reduce its visual appearance within the lightwell.
- 4.17 In addition to these works, louvres are required in order to provide adequate ventilation within the room for the plant equipment. Various options have been explored to identify the most suitable approach for the louvres including new openings within the façade and the removal of the existing timber sash windows (currently boarded over). It was concluded that the removal of the existing windows/ boarding and introduction of recessed louvres would limit the extent of intervention elsewhere within the building, including to the external masonry. The existing windows are to be sensitively removed and stored on-site, with new metal louvres installed within the recess of the opening. They are to be coloured black (RAL 9004) so they don't distract from the principal elevation in close-range views. These are detailed further within the Design and Access Statement and can be subject to a
- 4.18 The Proposed Works will involve the removal of some historic fabric but this is confined to the two outer windows of the bay which will then be stored on-site. The works have been designed to be reversible so that the windows could be easily re-installed should the louvres and plant equipment no longer be required. The detail of this can be agreed via condition.

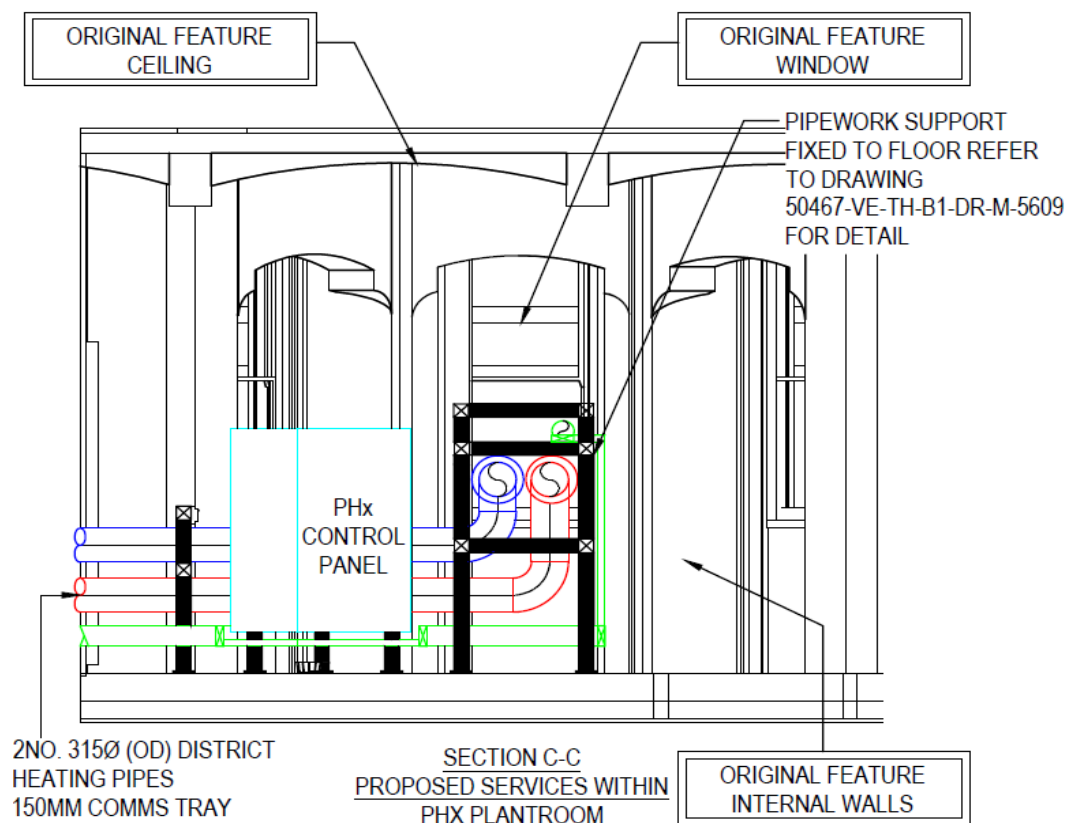


Figure 4.3: Drawing of the internal basement level to Manchester Town Hall (Extract from Drawing Ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5606 P1)

- 4.19 Internally, the pipework will connect to a steel frame support which is fixed to the ground with anchors (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). This will then be carried around the perimeter of the room (not touching the original masonry walls) before connecting into the plate heat exchangers located side by side in the centre of the room. All fixings are located to the ground and there is no conflict with any features of architectural or historic interest.

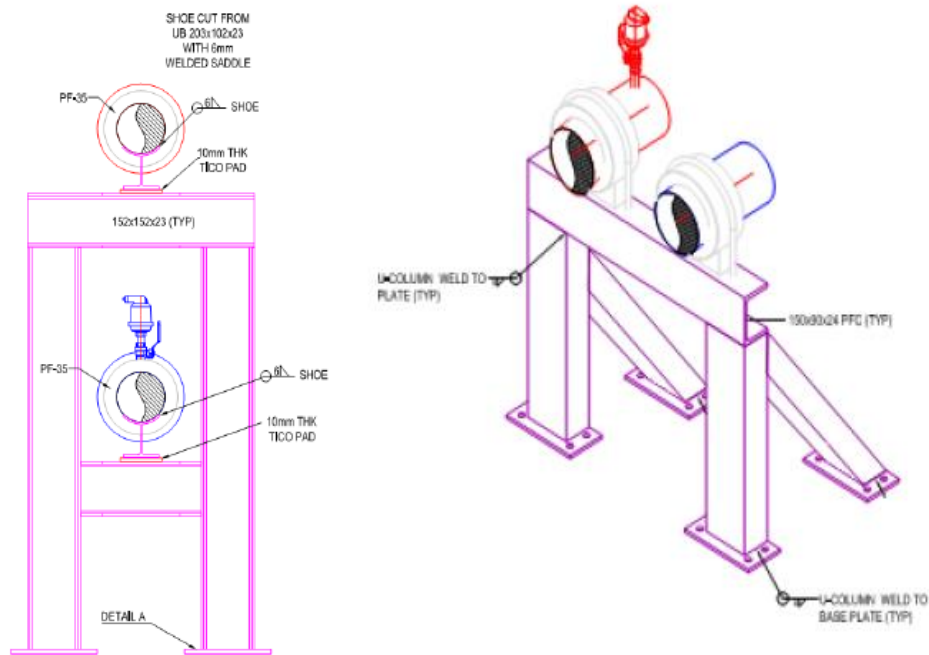


Figure 4.4: Detail of proposed fixings to ground floor and steel frame support (Extract from Drawing Ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5606 P1)

High Voltage Power Connection – Princess Street:

- 4.20 The proposed entry point for the high voltage (HV) power connection is below-ground underneath Princess Street. The works for the HV cabling will be undertaken from the existing ducting within Princess Street and will be extended from the footpath, through a former window opening (currently infilled with modern blockwork), into the existing Ring Main Unit (RMU) room. This is detailed further on drawing ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5607 P1 and at Figure 4.5.

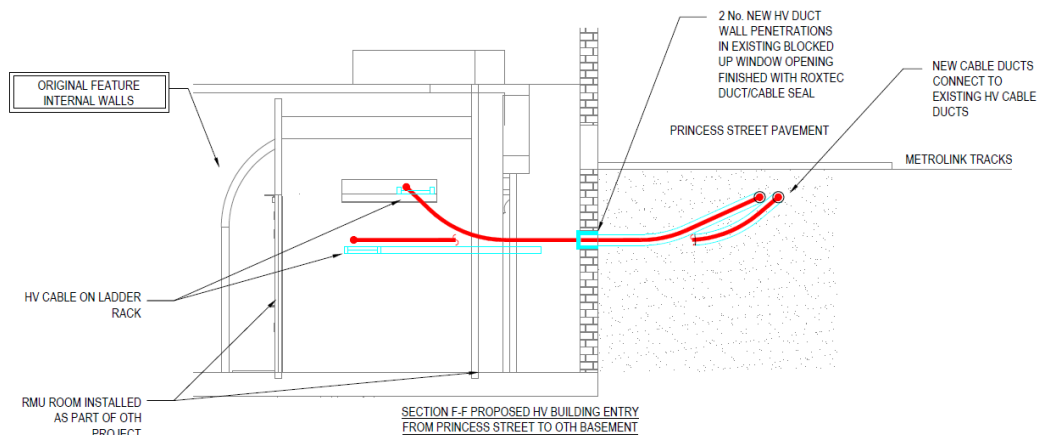


Figure 4.5: Cross Section of the Proposed Pipework and Cabling to Manchester Town Hall (Extract from Drawing Ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5607 P1)

- 4.21 This part of the works is confined to modern fabric only and consists of two small openings for the HV cables. The openings will be adjacent to existing cable duct openings which currently provide power to the existing ENW substation.

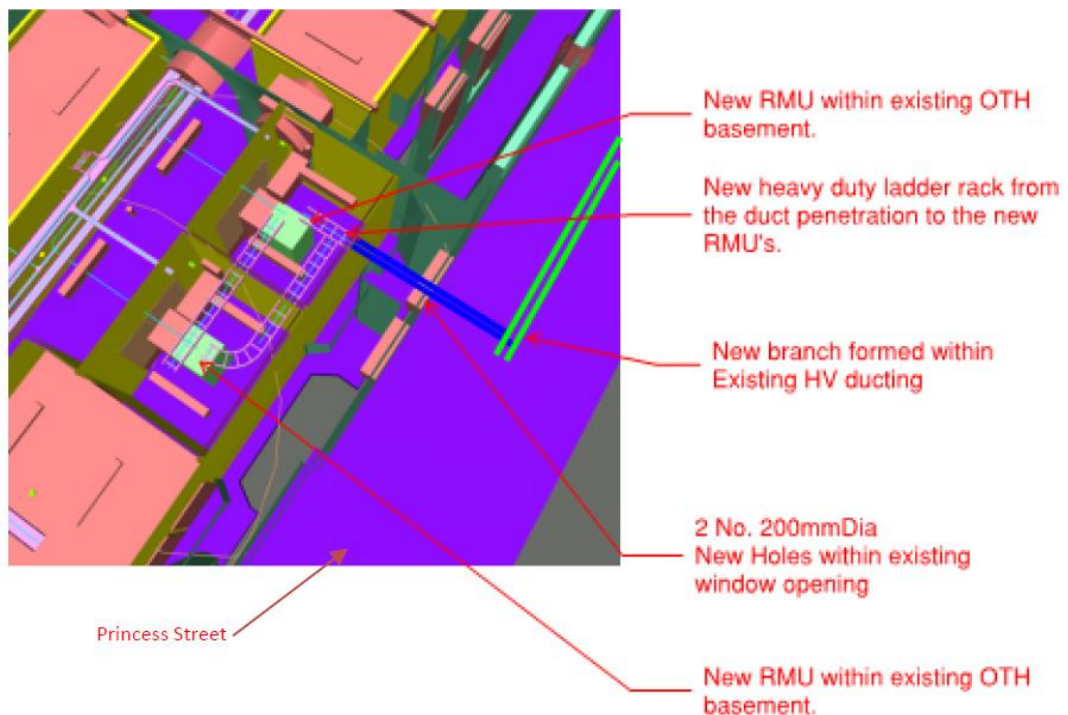


Figure 4.6: Visual of the Proposed Pipework and Cabling to Manchester Town Hall (Extract from Design and Access Statement)

- 4.22 Internally, the cables will be installed on top of cable ladders. The ladders will be supported by drop rod style fixings to the modern ceiling with resin anchors – these have been approved under the previous consent by the Our Town Hall Project team and are not included within this application. This is detailed further on drawing ref: 50467-VE-TH-DR-M-5607 P1 and at Figure 4.5. The cables and ladders will terminate at

two new ring main units located within the centre of each room. It is proposed to install one RMU within each room (Figure 4.6).

- 4.23 Further information and specifications of the proposed pipework, pipe support brackets, heat substations, ladder racks and cables are detailed within the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Method Statement.

Summary

- 4.24 The Proposed Works are confined to the basement level of the building and the affected rooms do not contain any features of architectural or historic interest. The effect on historic fabric is isolated and only occurs where the pipework enters the lightwell perimeter wall and the Albert Square elevation (removal of windows). The remainder of the works relate to modern fabric and/or installation of steel frame supports to carry pipework. All holes and bracketry systems will be sensitively undertaken and the existing windows are to be sensitively removed and stored on-site (to be agreed via condition).

Statutory Duty

- 4.25 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Manchester City Council, in determining the application(s) 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.
- 4.26 The connection of the Manchester Town Hall to the heat and power network has been carefully considered and has also been informed by pre-application discussions with the Our Town Hall Project team, the MCC conservation officer and Historic England. It is proposed that the heat and power connections will enter the building in areas of least significance and any alteration of historic fabric has been kept to a minimum.
- 4.27 Overall, there will be no harm to the significance of the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall. The requirements of s.16 and s.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be satisfied if Manchester City Council grants planning permission and listed building consent.

National and Local Planning Policy

- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 In accordance with Policy EN3 of the Core Strategy, the Proposed Works sustains the significance of the historic environment, including the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall. 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 a full planning application and application for listed building consent for connection works (the 'Proposed Works') to the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall (the 'Application Site'). The works are confined to connecting the listed building into the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network (MCQHN).
- 5.2 The Proposed Works form part of the wider 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 project involves 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 (the Midland Hotel and Manchester Central) with low-carbon energy. The Proposed Works now seek to connect the Town Hall into the heat network.
- 5.3 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority in considering whether to grant planning permission or 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).
- 5.4 The connection of the Manchester Town Hall to the heat and power network has been carefully considered and has also been informed by pre-application discussions with the Our Town Hall Project team, the MCC conservation officer and Historic England. It is proposed that the heat and power connections will enter the building in areas of least significance and any alteration of historic fabric has been kept to a minimum. Overall, there will be no harm to the significance of the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall. The requirements of s.16 and s.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be satisfied if Manchester City Council grants planning permission and listed building consent.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.”

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, 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.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

This Good Practice Advice (GPA) note is not a statement of Government policy, but supports the implementation of national government policy. It provides advice on assessing the significance of heritage assets and the impact of proposals on that significance.

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