



Atelier Heritage

Churchgate Basement
Heritage Statement

Mar 2020
Job 1819

Introduction

This heritage assessment has been commissioned to inform a proposal to convert the basement area of Churchgate House from car parking to a new use as office space. The assessment relates to the basement and relevant external parts only and follows a number of successful applications for the wider refurbishment of the building. This report was written by Atelier Heritage in March 2020. Its author is Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PG Cert. Conservation of the Historical Environment.

Location and Description

Churchgate House is the former headquarters of textile company, Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee. The building is located on the west side of Oxford Street in Manchester city centre. An extract from the Historic England listing is below.

SJ8497NW OXFORD STREET 698-1/32/265 (West side)
03/10/74 No.56 Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Building
GV II*

Textiles warehouse, now offices. 1896-8 (dated 1896 over doorway), by J. Sankey Gibbons. Probably steel-framed, clad in red brick with liberal dressings of buff and yellow terracotta (roof not visible). Large rectangular plan. Baroque style. Five storeys with basements and attic, 7 bays plus canted corners; glazed terracotta to ground floor with raised banding, alternating bands of red brick and yellow terracotta to all upper floors; cornice over ground floor, banded piers to 1st floor serving as pedestals to giant Corinthian colonnade at 2nd and 3rd floor which has a modillioned cornice and finishes as an arcade of semi-circular windows at 4th floor; very prominent modillioned cornice, attic treated as a parapet and raised in the centre; set-in semi-octagonal corner turrets rising from 2nd floor and capped by colonnaded octagonal cupolas with prominent cornices and apex finials with flag masts. Massive central round-headed doorway with banded surround and cartouche dated 1896, set in architrave of coupled banded columns and broken pediment; 6-light windows with transoms. Right-hand return to Great Bridgewater Street, 5:2:5 bays in matching style, but the 2-bay centre with coupled round-headed loading-bay arches at ground floor (furnished with wrought-iron gates in Art Nouveau style), and pedimented attic. Interior not inspected.

Listing NGR: SJ8402497647

To the front elevation are six altered basement windows, three to either side of the main entrance. To the canal-side elevation there is a set of double doors to the centre and three tripartite windows to either side, all in-filled with louvres. To the Great Bridgewater Street elevation, the basement has openings with louvres fixed and metal railings fitted externally. Internally the basement houses carparking spaces, a sub-station, boiler house, two staircases and two lifts.

History

Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee

Churchgate House was initially built to provide city centre premises for the Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Co. Ltd. textile company.

The company was established by Robert Gardner in 1799. In 1817, Gardner's company was absorbed by Atkinson, Tootal & Co. Edward Tootal had previously been working with his brother Henry in a silk manufacturing company in Cannon Street, Manchester. Following Atkinson's departure in 1851, Henry Lee and Henry Tootal Broadhurst became partners and Tootal Broadhurst Lee and Co was formed. The company's address is given as 56 Mosley Street, Manchester.

In the 1860s the company acquired Sunnyside Mills in Bolton and Newton Heath Mills in Manchester. There were a series of name changes until, on the 17 January 1888, Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Co Ltd was formed and took over the business of spinners and manufacturers with addresses in Manchester and London. The company also traded as Lee Spinners.

Following success and expansion, the company acquired a site for their own building alongside the Rochdale Canal, on Oxford Street, from the Atlas Iron Works. Its location close the Great Northern Goods Warehouse and Central Station was useful for import/export trade.

The Building

In 1895 Salford architect Joseph Gibbons Sankey commenced the design of a building to contain warehousing and offices for the company. His original design was described by Pevsner as 'large, in red brick striped with orange terracotta, but comparatively classical'. It is generally classed as being in 'Edwardian Baroque' style. The building was completed in 1898/1899 and was one of Joseph Gibbons Sankey's last works: he died before it was finished, aged 37. His practice continued as Sankey, Cubbon and Cubbon, overseeing the building to completion. The date stone over the entrance reads 1896, a reference to the year works started.

Continued success of TB&L resulted in a brick store house being built on site: alongside the canal on land to the west, but separate from the main building. Designs by Sankey, Cubbon and Cubbon, dated 1900, were executed and appear on the O.S map of 1922.

In February 1910, a further extension was proposed to the north wing, alongside Great Bridgewater Street. This was also designed by Sankey and Cubbon in a style which closely echoed the original building. At ground level the two buildings are separated by two openings allowing

access to the courtyard whilst above, doorways were formed to link the buildings. Windows had to be in filled at all levels. This extension was designed as an open plan space and the aim was to accommodate a further 200 workers.

Alterations over the next few years were confined to a glazed roof over the rear loading bay (1911 by Sankey and Cubbon and altered in 1916 by the same company) and some alterations to the lavatories. In 1924, J Henry Sellers produced proposals for further conveniences, seemingly never implemented.

J Henry Sellers achieved a rather more prestigious instruction in 1928 when Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee asked him to design a 17 storey warehouse on the west end of the site. Clearly influenced by American skyscrapers, at 217ft it would have been the tallest building in Europe but was capped at 8 storeys in 1931, with no further additions. This building became Lee House. Little change took place until after World War II when, in the early 1950s, the two loading ways were in filled to the height of ground and first floor and in 1953 an 8 storey canal side building connected the 1898 building to Lee House (facilitated by the demolition of the 1900 warehouse). The initial use for this building was 'comptometers' and the 'invoice department': an indication of the size of the operation of Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee.

As the 20th century progressed the cotton industry boom ended and, in 1963, Tootal Broadhurst and Lee merged with the English Sewing Company Ltd. In 1966, the Manchester architect Harry Fairhurst produced designs for alterations to the 1950s canal side buildings and to remove the partitions on the first floor alongside the Oxford Street elevation to create showrooms for Barlow & Jones and Ogden & Madeleys. At the same time suspended ceilings were installed and many of the original features, including parquet flooring, timber and glass partitions, fireplaces, board room panelling, wall tiles and doors, were removed as part of a 'modernisation'. The proposals also show the windows on the south canal side elevation being replaced with double glazing. It is probable that the mosaic floor to the entrance hall was also lost at this time as it was not in-situ when the 2002 re-modelling took place. During the 1980s other alterations were made, including the creation of the basement car parking in 1989. In the early part of the 1990s the building was extensively stripped out to create offices to rent. In 1995 the main elevations were restored, and replacement terracotta was supplied by Shaws of Darwen.

Further re-modelling by Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams took place in 2002 and whilst there were some attempts to reinstate the spectacular tiling of the entrance hall, it bears no resemblance to that which once existed. In 2012

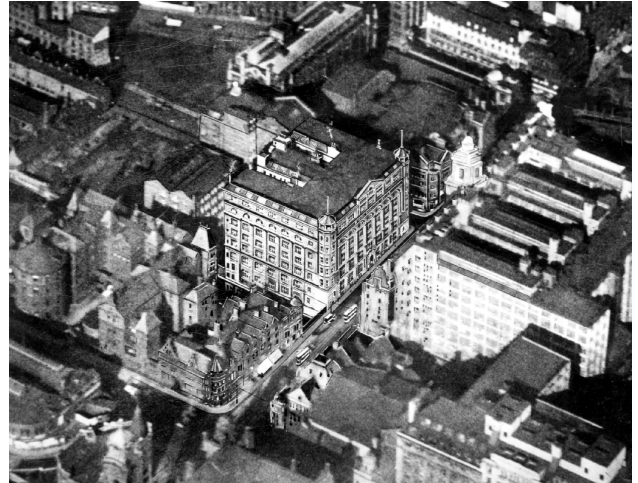


Image 1 of Churchgate House taken in 1926 (from Manchester library archives).

the building's new owners undertook a strip out of the first floor. The restoration reveals the column heads and better views of the window heads by cutting back the suspending ceilings. This work, to the designs of Makin Architecture, was a first step in the ongoing heritage led upgrade of the building for improved office use.

Design

The building has a basement and a partial sub-basement. The ground floor circulation and entrance hall were finished in new mosaics incorporating the logo TBL in intertwined Arts and Craft style, at various locations.

The elevation to Oxford Road contained a board room, together with private offices with timber and glass walls to the corridors. On return to the canal side elevation was a large room with tiled walls and columns and plaster cornices to the beams. This room was known as the counting house and was adjacent to the cashiers office. There are clear photographs, taken at the time, which show the building, those relevant to the basement are included in this report.

The plan of this original building was 'E' shaped: the Counting House occupied the south leg of the E (along the canal side) whilst the north leg is labelled as 'No.10 Department and Sales Room'. Separating the two legs from the centre section were two loading ways entered from the west end, which was an open area. These loading areas had loading docks opening into the central leg of the 'E', two on the south side and one on the north, and each side has two crane wells. The two loading ways were linked at the east end by a gangway which appears to have been separated from the main building by a mixture of masonry walls, including a door into 'Mr Smiths' office'. A type of timber and glass screen wall, to the west of the gangway, separates the area from what was known as the 'Towns Room'. The meaning is unclear. The room had two pairs of double swing doors opening onto the loading dock of the south loading way and a single pair to the north side, and seems to have been a receiving and shipping facility. As well as the crane wells, there were 3 hoists which travelled up the building. Two of these opened onto the gangway but the most northerly one seems to have opened into the loading way.

The function of the counting house is ambiguous; possibly a place where the goods were 'counted' in and out, or, as it was next to the cashier office, related to book-keeping. Found images suggest the latter. At the rear of the Towns Room there were another set of taking-in doors flanked by windows. A stub jetty is shown on the drawings, to enable vehicles to load/unload. The windows and doors were separated by large piers which have the appearance of masonry, though what is evident on site is a cast or wrought iron frame with uprights shown in the positions shown on the blueprint.

The ground floor was always sub-divided whilst journeying up the building, the sub-division was much less defined: there are notes on the 5th and 6th floors which refer to areas being sub-divided to suit departmental requirements. Photographs show that the top floor was partially used by the pattern makers, but it is clear that most of the upper floors were open spaces used for manufacturing or storage.

Similar to many other commercial buildings in the city, Churchgate House was used for warehousing, though the presence of power lines feeding each floor makes it likely that some manufacturing did take place in addition to export and packing. The layouts of the floors from the 4th floor down are more cellular, especially on the Oxford Street frontage and the architect's original drawings note that 'floors are to be sub-divided to meet the requirements of the several departments'.

In recent history, the building has undergone a series of upgrading works to ensure the office suites remain lettable and to comply with current standards, as well as a more comprehensive refurbishment of the entrance and courtyard areas, successfully intensifying commercial interest in the building.

Basement

The original architects' plans have been located and show the historical layout of the various floors, including the basement. The drawings show a typical use for a 19th century warehouse basement: packing areas with hydraulic presses to compress goods; the shipping room; strong room; joiner and mechanics rooms for maintenance; strong room, for keeping valuables; engine room; boiler room and associated coal store; and a tearoom. Various hoists and cranes were also placed in and above the basement area to enable movement of goods vertically up the building and from external deliveries.

Significance

The Grade II* listed status recognises the historical and architectural significance of Churchgate House as an example of commercial premises built specifically for a leading 19th century textiles company.

The front elevation and more decorative original internal details are of a high heritage significance and good design quality. The majority of the upper floors are of medium evidential significance with the columns and windows identifiable as the main features. The side elevations to the canal side have significance as part of the whole. The basement has evidential significance, illustrating past use and giving an insight in to the architectural hierarchy of the internal spaces. However, the loss of the majority of features from within the space detracts from its potential significance.

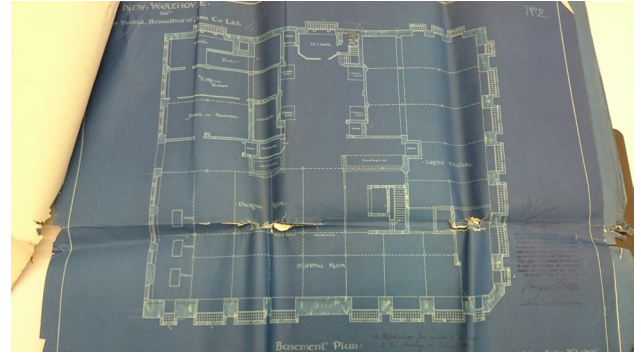


Image 2. Photograph showing the basement plan from the original architect's scheme. Areas are labelled including boiler, engine room, shipping and packing rooms.



Image 3 showing the basement of Churchgate House, taken in 1900 (Historic England archives). Original form of basement windows is just visible, as are the three presses.

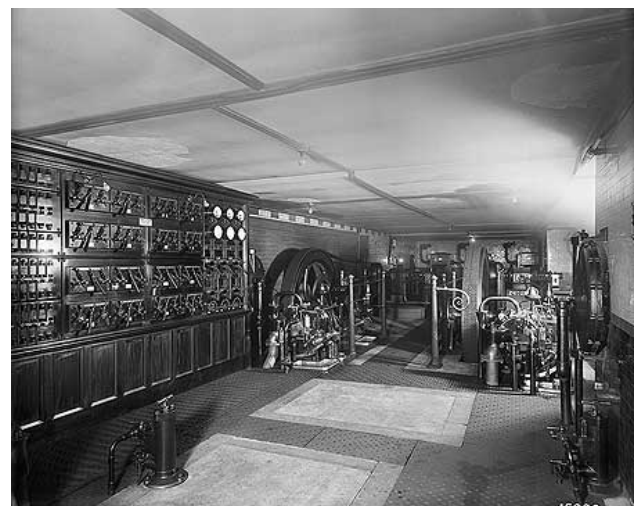


Image 4 showing engine room, taken in 1900 (Historic England archives). Original tiling to walls is no longer present.

Within the area of this application, individual elements considered to have significance have been assessed below.

Element: Oxford Street elevation windows

The window openings have tiled surrounds, rising above their original size and encroaching over the ground floor window space. The bay with the access door has a modern three part frame with a thick profile. Here the threshold is at pavement level, other openings have a small band of red tiles to the bottom.



Image 5 showing the front elevation of Churchgate House on Oxford Street. The later altered windows at street level (basement internally) are clearly different when compared to the rest of the building's façade.



Image 6 showing detail of later added tiled surrounds to display windows.



Image 7 shows the display window in its intended use in 1981 (Manchester archives).



Image 8 showing Churchgate house in 1900 (Historic England). Of note is the different appearance of the basement windows and lack of pavement lights.

The historic photograph from 1900 shows the basement windows have been much altered. The original form would likely have been glazed openings into the basement, with a sloped surface on the interior to guide light downwards. The modern alteration has extended the size of the windows and framed them within additional tiled surrounds. These were possibly introduced when street level openings were converted to display windows in the second part of the 20th century. Regardless of specific date, they are not original and have changed the look of the external elevations and altered the subservient relationship of the basement to the whole. Whilst in the original locations, the form is modern and, as existing, they have limited heritage value.

Significance: high in terms of openings. The later altered surrounds and modern windows are of a much lower heritage value, though they have a degree of evidential value in illustrating the evolution of the building.

Proposed changes: Non-original framework to back of display windows to be removed, allowing more daylight to permeate basement. Non-original glazed display windows to be replaced with slim aluminium-framed glazing. Automated sliding doors fitted within one bay, with street level thresholds.

Impact upon significance: low, neutral, affecting mid-20th century fabric only, changes will enhance light quality to basement and do not detract from the overall historic elevation.

Element: Disabled access from Oxford Street

The modern three part entrance inserted into the front elevation has no heritage value. Its detail is thick in profile and does not match the rest of the façade.

Significance: low. No changes are proposed within this area.



Image 9 showing disabled access from Oxford Street, added in recent years.

Element: Canal side elevation

To the canal-facing elevation, the windows are within white painted tripartite timber frames with louvres. Sills are stone and there are ornate metal security bars fitted. There is a timber doorway to the canal with double doors and side panels, all painted white. Behind the timber panels to the top part of the door there is evidence of glazing.

Significance: **high** to openings, **low** to added louvres. The frames are possibly original with louvres fitted and metal railings fixed externally (non-original addition). The openings are original. The doors are considered a later addition, as a working packing basement would have been unlikely to have featured part-glazed doors.

Proposed changes: To remove as many of the non-original louvres as possible, reinstating openings with glazing. Original frames to be retained where possible and replaced with like for like where condition dictates. Secondary glazing to be fitted internally to reinstated glazed openings (see drawings for detail).

Timber doors to be retained and refurbished. Upper timber boards within door and side panels, covering historic glazing, to be removed and glass replaced (single-glazed). Doors to be fixed open and a full height glass box inserted to allow for light and views out. Non-original louvres over door to be removed, frame retained, and glass inserted.

Impact upon significance: **Moderate, positive.** Removal of non-original louvres and restoration to windows is a return to historic form. Secondary glazing to some parts will respect external frame lines. Retaining the timber doors will retain significance and reinserting glass is acknowledged as a return to historic, if not necessarily original, form. The use of frameless glazing to allow light and views will retain the look of the doors being open, whilst being a recognisably modern intervention.



Images 10, 11, 12 showing the canal side elevation with later altered windows and the double timber door.

Element: Great Bridgewater Street elevation window openings

Openings are in the original places, but with altered louvred openings now fitted. These are neat and of a good quality, in-keeping with the building, but have limited heritage value. The pavement lights, which are not visible on the 1900 photograph, have been partially infilled in places. They are not original but are historic and do illustrate a use and former requirement for light in the basement.

Significance: **low** to modern infill, **medium** to pavement lights.

Proposed changes: In order to allow more natural light into the basement, louvred vents will be replaced with glazing set in aluminium frames to 4 of the openings. Railings will be retained. The existing (non-original) pavement lights are unlikely to be repairable due to concrete damage. They will be retained and restored where possible and replaced with like for like where this is not possible.

Impact upon significance: **low, positive.** The louvred vents are not original fabric and their replacement with glazing will enhance the basement space with no harm to the overall significance of the elevation. The pavement lights are not original but do have some heritage value and their restoration is considered a positive.



Image 13 showing the louvres added to the Great Bridgewater side elevation.

Element: Basement internal space

There are few remaining historic features within the basement as the area was stripped in 1989 to make space for the current car parking use. The walls are painted brick, the floor has a concrete finish to most parts. There are brick arches to some areas of the walls. Columns remain and are currently painted with yellow/black hazard stripes to the bottom.

Significance: medium to walls and columns as evidence of the structure of the building. These would have been exposed as the character of the basement was purely functional. The floor has negligible heritage value.

Proposed changes: To enable the viable end use of the basement space, toilets will be formed within the central area, within existing walls and made possible by relocating the sub-station. A limited number of internal partitions and doors will be required, but the space will remain predominately open plan with exposed columns, walls and ceilings. A new access stair is required to allow descent/ascent from street level. This will be in metal, with steel framed balustrade and mesh infill panels to side.

Impact upon significance: low. Partitions will be kept to the minimum required and will have little impact on the basement, which has few historic features. Staircases will be industrial in style and will not detract from the character of the space.

Proposed changes: All redundant plant will be removed. New ducting will be fitted where necessary. M and E will be exposed and hung from the ceiling with minimal fixings.

Impact upon significance: low.

Note: The ramp added to serve the function as a car park will be removed and the floor levelled. This will have no impact upon the heritage value of the basement as it does not involve works to any historic fabric.

Element: Portcullis

To one bay at the front is a metal entrance gate/portcullis which is raised on a winch system to block the upper entrance out of hours and lowered again in the daytime. This gate features the original Tootal, Broadhurst Lee monogram.

Significance: high. It is not certain if the gate is original or a replica but in either case it has heritage value. It will be retained within the new comms room.



Image 14 showing typical view of the basement area with columns.

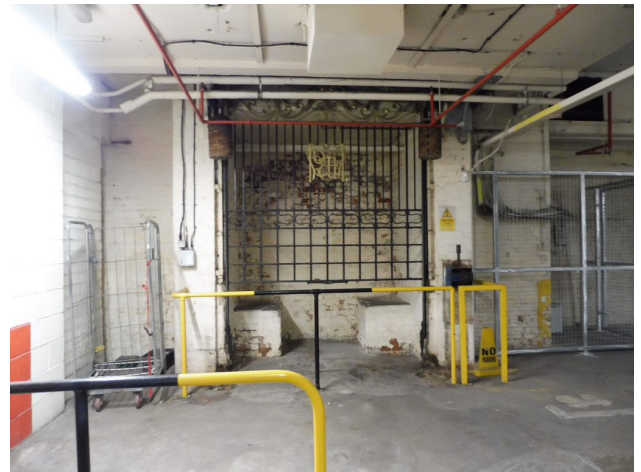


Image 15 showing entrance gate, which is raised and lowered on a weighted system.

Element: Under-window boxing

There is some additional framework and boxing to the back of the display windows. This is not original and was added at the time the windows were altered.

Significance: low.

Proposed changes: to be removed.

Impact upon significance: low, as this is non-original fabric with little heritage value.

Elements: lifts and openings

There are two original hoist locations now identified on current existing drawings as R2 and R3. The (now) gated hoist is altered and originally had the opening to the reverse side, the other is now shuttered (to the left of the image). A further hoist/lift is located towards the front elevation, which has a platform lift to street level. There is no evidence of this on original plans and it therefore assumed to be a later addition.

Significance: low (none in original form).

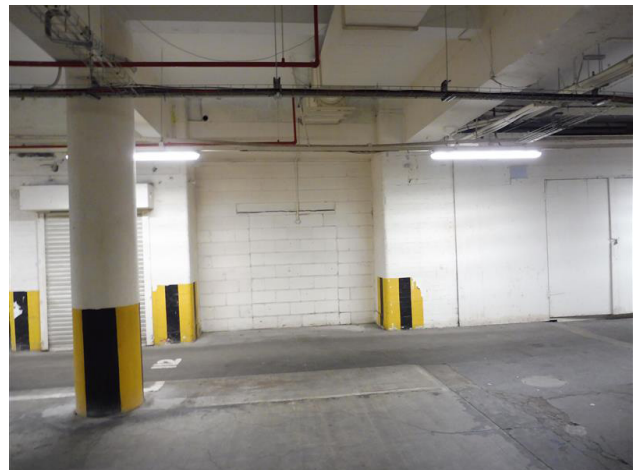
Proposed changes: any changes here have negligible impact on significance, as elements are of very limited historical or architectural interest.



Image 16 showing the underside of the windows to the Oxford Street elevation.



Image 17 showing later-dated lift and hoist openings, towards the front elevation in the basement.



Images 18 and 19 showing the two original hoist locations.

Planning Context

Proposals for works to Churchgate House have been considered within the relevant legislation, policy and guidance.

As a listed building, the building is protected by law contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requiring authorisation of works affecting heritage assets where they affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated 2019), provides the policy for heritage assets and the historic environment. The NPPF recognises that sympathetic changes to heritage assets are necessary to ensure their viable ongoing use. Of relevance is NPPF, paragraph 192, which states,

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to 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.'*

The proposed changes to Churchgate House will enhance the listed building and its significance by returning the basement to an active use rather than the car parking function it currently serves. The changes are considered to be appropriate and necessary in order to facilitate an ongoing viable economic end use.

When considering potential impacts of proposed development on an asset's significance, NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.....this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm'. NPPF, para. 193.
and that

'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm....this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.' NPPF, para. 196.

Proposals will have a low level of impact upon the significance of the building and demonstrate, at most, a less than significant level of harm. This is outweighed by the opening of the basement to a wider number of users, the conservation of the most historic elements, restoration and enhancement of some currently altered features (most notably the windows) and the provision of a viable end use.

Relevant local policy set by Manchester City Council follows the principles established in the NPPF. In particular, Policy EN3, 'historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced for their own heritage merits...'

It is considered that the proposals are a positive response to above council policy and will ensure the basement area has an active role and can be restored to a meaningful commercial end use.